

Rare breeding birds in the UK in 2019

Mark Eaton and the Rare Breeding Birds Panel



Alan Harris

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Abstract This report documents the status of the 99 species and subspecies of rare or scarce native birds that bred, or showed signs of breeding, in the UK in 2019. Nine species reached record totals in 2019, with a particularly notable increase in Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* numbers. However, there is an even spread between increase and decline across the species for which we can produce trends, and concern for a number of declining species such as Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*.

This is the 46th report published by the Rare Breeding Birds Panel (RBBP) and includes details of 99 rare or scarce native taxa that bred, or showed signs of breeding, in the UK in 2019. In addition, Appendix 2 summarises the records received for ten rare non-native species reported breeding in 2019.

The area covered by the RBBP includes the four countries of the UK (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland), plus the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands. Using 'UK' as a shorthand reference, this is the same unit used by other national monitoring programmes, such as the BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey (BBS, Harris *et al.* 2021), and by Birds of Conservation Concern (e.g. Eaton *et al.* 2015). The RBBP species list is available at

www.rbbp.org.uk/species-overview. There were no changes to the list for this report, although Crested Tit *Lophophanes cristatus* has now been readmitted to the list and will be included in our report for 2020.

Review of the year 2019

Meteorologically, 2019 was a year of extremes. While there was a cold and wintry spell in late January, it was brief and unlikely to have had a major impact on resident bird species. By the end of February – a year on from 2018's 'Beast from the East' winter storm – the country was experiencing record temperatures for the time of year, with highs of 20°C reported from as far north as Rochdale, Lancashire & North Merseyside. Overall, the 2018/19 winter was the sixth warmest on record. Warm and dry weather continued through much of the

spring, with many weather stations reporting record April temperatures and with April rainfall in East Anglia just 25% of the long-term average. Cooler weather followed in the first half of May, then again through June, and there were some notable rainfall episodes in mid June, for example 230% of the monthly average in Lincolnshire.

Thereafter, the summer was hot – the twelfth warmest on record – with a new UK record, 38.7°C in Cambridge on 25th July, as well as the hottest August bank holiday on record. Rather unusually for a hot summer, it was also a wet one, the seventh wettest since 1910. This was particularly marked in Scotland, where only the summer of 1985 was wetter.

In all, 99 rare breeding species or subspecies were reported in 2019, bettered only by the 100 reported in 2014 and 2015, though it should be remembered that the list of species for which the RBBP requests records has varied across the years, and this of course has an impact on these totals. No new species were added to the RBBP's list in 2019, but White Stork *Ciconia ciconia* and Pallas's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus* feature for just the second time, and Lesser Scaup *Aythya affinis* for the third time. The attempted breeding by White Stork in Sussex is, of course, the more significant record of the three. It joins a growing list of species – Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus*, Great Bustard *Otis tarda*, Corn Crake *Crex crex*, Common Crane *Grus grus*, Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*, Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*, White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla* and Cirl Bunting *Emberiza cirlus* – for which the numbers we report are at least partly influenced by reintroductions and translocations.

Three long-staying out-of-range American birds continued their sojourns in Scotland, but it seems that the Black Duck *Anas rubripes*, Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps* and Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis* were not lucky in hybrid love in 2019.

Last year, we reported that ten species had reached the highest total yet recorded by the RBBP. Eight of these species had increased further by 2019: Common Crane, Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*, Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*, Eurasian Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*, Great White Egret

Ardea alba, Northern Goshawk, White-tailed Eagle and Common Redpoll *Acanthis flammea*. A ninth species, Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*, also bred in record numbers and fledged at least 24 young in 2019 – the on/off colonisation by this species seems, this year, to be firmly back on. Until the 1990s, reports from RBBP included records of only one heron, Eurasian Bittern. Remarkably, this year's report features seven heron species, as well as White Stork and Eurasian Spoonbill. The combination of improved legal protection and wetland habitat provision across the Continent, and a warming climate, has prompted range expansion in these species which are now reaching the UK. Given the recent rates of increase, it would be a surprise if Eurasian Spoonbill, Great White Egret and Cattle Egret did not become firmly established within our avifauna in the near future, though it remains to be seen if others – such as Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus* and Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* – will improve on their currently tenuous presence.

Many other species are prospering, either as the apparent consequence of the changing climate (e.g. Mediterranean Gull *Ichthyophaga melanocephalus*, despite lower numbers in 2019) or conservation efforts at a range of scales. The continuing recovery of Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii* resulted in the highest breeding total since 1997 thanks to meticulous efforts at their main breeding colony in Northumberland, while Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus* numbers remain high owing to protection from hunting across the entirety of their European flyways.

The most obvious weather-related (as opposed to climate) impact on rare breeding birds reported in 2019 was the partial recovery of all four species that were noticeably affected by the hard weather in early 2018: Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*, Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*, Woodlark *Lullula arborea* and Dartford Warbler *Curruca undata*.

Inevitably, there are some species for which we continue to report declines. This report features only a single record for Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris* and just two for Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*. Confirmed breeding of the latter has not been recorded in the UK since 2009. Although Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* was declared as a 'former

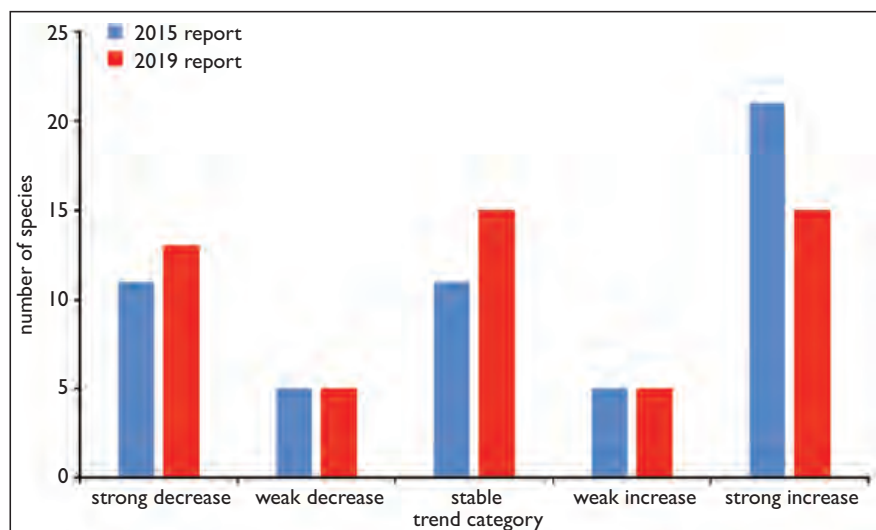


Fig. 1. Categorical 25-year trends in RBBP species as reported in 2015 (Holling *et al.* 2017) and 2019 (Eaton *et al.* 2021).

breeder' by Eaton *et al.* (2015), possible and probable breeding attempts are reported most years, though not in 2019, which was only the fourth blank year in 47 years of RBBP reporting. Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus* teeters perilously close to disappearing from the UK, with just a single confirmed breeding pair reported for the second year in a row. While clearly not close to that level of threat, it is concerning that the total for Little Tern *Sternula albifrons* was the second lowest in 25 years of reporting, and that three species where breeding is confined to northern areas, Capercaillie, Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus* and Redwing *Turdus iliacus*, all had poor years.

Two rapidly declining species, Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur* and Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*, have been added to our species list in recent years and, while we are unable to produce trends from RBBP data as yet, results from the BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) indicate that they continue to decline (Harris *et al.* 2020). We await the results of RSPB/RBBP surveys of both species, which were completed in 2021. In addition, an exploration of RBBP data for Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dryobates minor* presented in this report suggests that the decline in that Red-listed species also continues.

It can be hard, with data on 101 taxa and a range of stories of both remarkable increases and worrying declines, to gain a wider sense of how our rare breeding birds are faring. As a simple measure, we have summed the number of species falling into five categories of change from 'strong decline' to 'strong

increase' (fig. 1; categories defined in table 1). This analysis is restricted to 53 species for which we have sufficiently robust data (from our data collation or other sources such as national surveys) to report trends over 25 years (restricted to 15 years for some species) in the banners above the species' accounts. In the latest report, there is an almost-even split between the 'winners' and 'losers', with totals of 20 species in the two increasing categories and 18 in the two decreasing categories. This is a slightly poorer situation than in 2015 (the first year for which we reported such trends), when we reported more species in the 'strong increase' category.

Seeing the bigger picture

The fortunes of the UK's rare breeding birds are closely tied to drivers acting upon them across a wide spatial scale. This can be due to the interaction between populations, e.g. as birds colonise the UK from elsewhere, or because the drivers of change acting upon species are similar across huge areas. Even for resident species such as Willow Tit, for which there is no interaction between birds in the UK and populations elsewhere, there is a close match in trends across Europe and, quite probably, their causes.

We have made a particular effort in this year's report to reference relevant changes in populations of species across Europe, and to summarise what is known on the causes of those changes. To do so, we have drawn on a number of standard sources, most notably the recently published *European Breeding Bird Atlas 2* (EBBA2; Keller *et al.* 2020),

which not only gives maps of recent (2013–17) breeding ranges but also presents changes since the first atlas, which drew on data collected in the mid 1980s (Hagemeijer & Blair 1997). Where available, we have also used results from the Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme (PECBMS; www.pecbms.info), which pools data from monitoring schemes (such as the UK's BBS) in order to generate trends for 170 species of common breeding bird; though some of these species, such as Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris* and Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*, are not at all common in the UK. We have also drawn upon BirdLife International's work, synthesising data from multiple sources to provide European and Global Red Lists (BirdLife International 2021a, 2021b).

We have been selective in what we have presented, but much more can be found in the references above and via the European Bird Census Council (www.ebcc.org).

Data sources and submission

The most important sources of information behind this report are the detailed submissions compiled by the UK's county and regional bird recorders. These recorders, all of whom are volunteers, are uniquely placed to understand the relevance and context of the records they receive from birders. The volume of original data received by recorders has risen substantially in recent years, increasing their workload but underlining the key role that they play. Of course, county recorders, and in turn RBBP, are highly dependent on observers submitting records in the first place. It is vital that birders across the UK continue to make their sightings available, not least for the value these records have for conservation, as outlined in this report.

We are delighted to have received data from all recording areas across the UK in 2019, for the third year in a row, although a substantial number of submissions arrived rather late. Other important data sources include returns from Schedule 1 licence holders, the BTO/JNCC Nest Record Scheme, Raptor Study Groups (although not from the Northern Ireland RSG for 2019), annual species' monitoring, periodic national surveys, and counts from RSPB reserves. For

the first time, we checked data submitted by volunteers in the BBS for additional records not received from recorders. The standard BBS method means that most records contain too little information to be regarded as evidence of breeding, but for some sedentary species (e.g. Willow Tit and Lesser Spotted Woodpecker), presence in the breeding season can be regarded as possible breeding, and the recent addition of recording the method of detection for birds counted in BBS surveys means we also know when singing birds were recorded. Counts submitted to the BTO/RSPB/JNCC Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) during the breeding season (April to August) were checked for records of non-native waterbirds, as, even without information on breeding activity, these provided a useful measure of how widely distributed some of these under-recorded non-native species are.

Best efforts are made to capture information on rare breeding birds from other sources, but the identification of such additional records is only possible when county recorders submit site-level information for all species on which they report, rather than county totals. If only species' totals are available, it is not possible for us to determine whether records from other sources are additional or have been counted already. We wish to encourage recorders to provide site-level data for *all* species covered by the RBBP.

The volume of data from which this report is sourced rose again, to 9,100 individual records, of which just over 6,500 were unique. Additional data for any year are still welcome, since these make valuable additions to our archive. Birders should consider not only their local records but also those from encounters elsewhere in the UK, especially from more remote and less well-covered areas, particularly northern and western Scotland. Additions, amendments and corrections to published reports from 2005 onwards are available on the RBBP website (www.rbbp.org.uk), alongside copies of our annual reports and an 'explore reports' facility, which allows bespoke report extracts for chosen species and years to be generated. These files are updated regularly, and anyone using the RBBP reports for reference or study should always check the online amendments.

If you hold records you think are missing from this report, please submit them to the relevant county recorder (and if you are a county recorder, please submit such old records to the RBBP Secretary).

Receiving accurate grid references with species data is especially important. Site information is not published and these data remain confidential and securely stored. The lack of accurate site data remains a particular problem for raptors, for which we receive many records summarised by area, or without grid references. Either way, we are unable to eliminate the possibility that some of these may duplicate records submitted via other routes. As a consequence, we cannot use the majority of those records in the compilation of the figures reported here, diminishing the value and quality of our archive. Our annual totals for species such as Osprey, Northern Goshawk and Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* are likely to be underestimates, because some imprecise data cannot be included in our summaries.

Recommendations and guidelines on data submission are available online, together with our recording standards and species-specific guidelines (www.rbbp.org.uk). Anyone with experience in monitoring a rare species is encouraged to share their expertise through the further development of these guidelines.

Conservation and other uses of RBBP data

Stroud (2019) reviewed the work of the RBBP, and how this serves to support a range of conservation purposes. RBBP policy is to make data available for relevant conservation uses, with appropriate controls over the spatial resolution at which data are provided. Site-specific information is used by JNCC and the national statutory nature conservation bodies, and national datasets by the RSPB for survey and conservation planning. Over the 12-month period up to August 2021, we received 12 requests for data or summary information. In addition, population totals published in the *BB* reports are widely used by conservation organisations. Projects supported with RBBP data in the last year include the writing of various species accounts for *The Birds of Wales* (Pritchard *et al.* 2021), an assessment of the potential

impact on rare breeding species from reintroducing White-tailed Eagles to East Anglia, and planning for national surveys of Turtle Dove and Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*. Our data were extremely important in the *Birds of Conservation Concern 5* assessment (Stanbury *et al.* in press), along with a new IUCN Red List assessment for birds in Great Britain. Trends for selected species were also supplied for use in the UK, England and Scotland Wild Bird Indicators, the UK Priority Species Indicator and the Scottish Marine and Terrestrial Species Indicators.

Population estimates

In recent years, county recorders have been asked to supply their best estimate of the populations (as well as the total number of known pairs) for a small selection of species (16 species in 2019). These species are those that occur across large parts of the UK and which we believe are under-recorded in at least some counties, usually where local populations are relatively high. An increased number of recorders submitted such estimates in 2019, either by indicating that the number of pairs for which they submitted records represented the number present in the county or by giving a higher number (or range) that they felt better represented the true number. For the first time, we are able to present these estimates at the county level, rather than just summed by region and country.

The Panel

The nine members of the RBBP serve in a personal capacity, but some also reflect the interests and requirements of the funding partners. The membership of the Panel remained unchanged from 2020: Helen Baker, Dawn Balmer (Chair), Mark Eaton (Secretary), Ian Francis, Mark Holling, Andrew King, David Norman, Andy Stanbury and David Stroud. The Panel is funded by the JNCC (on behalf of the country nature conservation bodies) and the RSPB, with an additional financial contribution from the BTO. Panel membership aims to achieve broadly representative geographic coverage and to include members who have active involvement in monitoring schemes and specialist research groups, or who participate in various external groups, to

facilitate liaison between the Panel and researchers, nest recorders, ringers, surveyors and conservationists.

Terminology

Recording areas

The recording areas used in this report are the same as in previous reports (see Holling *et al.* 2007a and www.rbbp.org.uk); these match the bird recording areas used by county bird recorders across the UK, with Gower and East Glamorgan presented separately *contra* Ballance & Smith (2008). We attempt to collate all breeding records by recording area wherever possible and urge contributors to submit records in the same manner, via recorders.

To reduce the possibility of duplication with surrounding areas, records from the Greater London recording area, which covers all areas within a 20-mile radius of St Paul's Cathedral, are reported as follows. Under the Greater London heading we list only records from the Inner London area and the old county of Middlesex. Records away from this area and within the counties surrounding London – Hertfordshire, Essex, Kent and Surrey – are listed under those county headings.

Species banners

Shown for every species in the report, the species banners present key information on status, numbers and trends. A **regular** breeder is defined as a species that has bred (i.e. confirmed breeding has been recorded) at least once in the UK *and* which has bred (or was strongly suspected to have bred) for any five consecutive years within the last 25 (unless the last breeding was more than ten years ago). This definition is the same as used in the Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) reviews (Eaton *et al.* 2015). Other species may be classed as an **occasional** breeder (a species which has bred at least once in the UK but is not a regular breeder); a **potential** breeder (one which has not bred previously in the UK but, in some years, shows signs that it may do so (e.g. presence of singing males holding territory or pairs in suitable breeding habitat); a **colonising** breeder (a new colonist which first bred in the UK in the most recent five years (2015–

19, or subsequently, if known at the time of writing), or one which may have occasionally bred in the past but for which breeding now appears to be becoming more regular); or a **former** breeder (one which bred regularly in the past but for which there has been no confirmed breeding record in the last ten years).

For all **regular** breeding species, the species banners give additional information, as follows:

1. The population status (Red, Amber or Green) as determined by BoCC4 (Eaton *et al.* 2015); see below.

2. An indication of population status in one of four categories:

- **Very rare** (mean of <30 breeding pairs (bp) per annum);
- **Rare** (30–300 bp per annum);
- **Scarce** (301–1,000 bp per annum);
- **Less scarce** (>1,000 bp per annum).

3. Published estimate or RBBP 5-year mean. If a recent estimate from a published national survey is available, this is used and referenced. Otherwise the estimate is based on RBBP data, using the mean maximum population size from the last five years (in this report, 2015–19). If annual RBBP coverage is poor, the best available national population estimate is used. The unit varies, but is most frequently 'breeding pairs' (bp). We acknowledge that, for some species, estimates based purely on RBBP data may be contrary to other estimates, especially where RBBP coverage is moderate or low (see below).

4. A population trend, where one can be calculated; this is presented as a 25-year trend where possible. For species that were added to the RBBP list in 1996, a 15-year trend is given. Trends are calculated by comparing the 5-year mean ending in 2019 with that for either 25 or 15 years earlier (1994 or 2004). Trends are categorised into five bands, based on thresholds of rate of change used to classify species trends in the Wild Bird Indicators (e.g. Defra 2020), and shown in the Table 1 below. Most trends are derived from RBBP data, although in some cases trends from periodic surveys are used if they are more robust; these may cover different trend periods (the thresholds

for categorisation are scaled appropriately). For two species for which RBBP data do not yet provide a trend, Turtle Dove and Willow Tit, we give trends from the BBS.

Table 1. Thresholds for defining 25-year and 15-year trend categories.

	thresholds based on 25 years of data	thresholds based on 15 years of data
strong increase	> +100%	> +52%
weak increase	+33% to +100%	+19% to +52%
stable	-25% to +33%	-16% to +19%
weak decrease	-50% to -25%	-34% to -16%
strong decrease	> -50%	> -34%

5. The degree of coverage, defined as follows:

- **Near-complete** (RBBP reports present more or less complete annual totals);
- **High** (a good estimate of the number of pairs breeding annually, though an unknown (but thought to be small) proportion has not been recorded/reported);
- **Moderate** (a less accurate estimate of the number of pairs breeding annually, which is nonetheless thought to be a significant proportion of the total population);
- **Low** (the volume of the data received is such a small proportion of the total population that RBBP totals are of little value for conservation or status reviews; however, maintaining an archive of known sites is useful, and this information can be used in the design of future targeted surveys).

Coverage categories (reassessed in this report) are based on comparisons between the 5-year mean and the most reliable population estimate, where possible, taking into account known factors in the monitoring and detectability of the species.

The BoCC4 status can be Red, Amber or Green. The majority of Red- and Amber-listed species on the RBBP list are categorised as such because of some criteria related to their breeding status, whether it be population size (rarity or recent/historical decline), breeding range (localisation or decline) or international importance of the UK breeding population. Some species, which do not have regular breeding or wintering populations in the UK, are not classified. The only species in this report which is Amber-listed for criteria that are not related to the breeding popula-

tion is the Eurasian Wigeon *Mareca penelope*, which owes its status to the localised distribution and international importance of its wintering population. Note that new Red, Amber and Green lists will be published in BoCC5 in December 2021 (Stanbury *et al.* in press).

Species accounts

The headline figure for 2019 (number of sites, breeding pairs, singing males, territories, etc.) is indicated in bold for easy reference. Any regular breeding species classed as Very rare (see above), plus occasional, potential, colonising and former breeders, receive more detailed text describing the records by county. For all other species (with only a few exceptions, generally where available data are limited), the data are tabulated, with each line representing a county or RBBP region. Within the tables, note the use of the following abbreviations:

S	=	sites
T	=	territories
CP	=	confirmed breeding pairs
TP	=	maximum total breeding pairs (typically possible, probable and confirmed breeding)
SM	=	singing males
M	=	males
I	=	individuals or singles
YF	=	minimum number of young fledged

Definitions of breeding evidence

The definitions of 'Confirmed breeding', 'Probable breeding' and 'Possible breeding' follow those recommended by the European Bird Census Council (EBCC) (Hagemeijer & Blair 1997), but precise definitions are species specific, as defined on www.rbbp.org.uk. Thus, for some species, e.g. Whooper Swan and Eurasian Wigeon, records of summering birds are excluded if we can be sure breeding was not attempted. Where tables show the number of occupied territories, these are the sum of confirmed and probable breeding pairs, as territorial birds are classed as being probably breeding, unless a nest has (at least) progressed to the stage where eggs have been laid, in which case the pair is classified as a confirmed breeding pair. It is important to note that confirmed breeding is *not* the same as successful breeding; nests that fail with eggs or with young still fall into the confirmed

category. A successful breeding pair is one that fledges at least one young bird from a nesting attempt. Readers should note that in all cases the identity of the birds has been confirmed; it is only breeding *status* that is possible/probable/confirmed. The report does not routinely include breeding records of hybrid individuals but where young are hatched, they will be noted in an Appendix. Mixed pairs are, however, included where one of the parents is a species or race on the RBBP list.

Definition of numbers used

Within each species account, numbers given in the format '1–4 pairs' indicate (in this case) one confirmed breeding pair and a maximum total of four breeding pairs (thus also including possible and probable breeding pairs). In the tables, 'n/a' indicates

that no data were received from that county, but the species normally breeds there.

For 16 of the more abundant species reported upon, county bird recorders are asked to provide estimates of populations based upon available evidence; for the first time, these are presented at county level in this report. Estimates, where provided, are given in parentheses after the county name and preceded with 'e'. They are summed at regional and country level, using the actual number of pairs reported for those counties with no estimate, and a + indicating that the regional or national estimate may have been higher in the instances where some county estimates are absent. Where county estimates are provided as a range, the upper limit was used in calculating regional and national totals.

Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus*

Rare 1,114 individuals* 22y trend: **strong decrease -49%**

Red
High

174 males at 59 active leks. A total of 100 lek sites was monitored across four recording areas. This year's total is the lowest number of lekking males reported since Capercaillie was added to the RBBP's species list in 2003. As highlighted in last year's report (Eaton *et al.* 2020), there is considerable uncertainty over how lek counts relate to total population size and how well lek counts can measure population change, but the drop in numbers since 2016 does give cause for concern for this already beleaguered species. A national Capercaillie survey, the sixth in a series stretching back to 1992/93, will be conducted over the 2021/22 winter, giving a robust measure of population change since the last survey in 2015/16 (Wilkinson *et al.* 2018).

While it is estimated that there are approaching five million Capercaillies across Scandinavia and Russia (Storch 2007), populations farther south in Europe are small, fragmented and declining, with pressures – including habitat loss and fragmentation, human disturbance, predation, grazing pressure and climate change – being similar to those faced in Scotland (Keller *et al.* 2020).

* Wilkinson *et al.* (2018).

Capercaillie			Moray & Nairn	4	5	Scotland, N & W	47	157
	leks	M	North-east Scotland	7	11	Highland	47	157
Scotland, Mid	12	17	Perth & Kinross	1	1	TOTALS	59	174

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Scarce 370 males 25y trend: **stable +3%**

Amber
High

3–584 singing males. In the report for 2018, we described the poorest year for Common Quails in the UK since 1991, with just 168 singing males, but highlighted the tendency of the species to fluctuate massively between years. True enough, numbers increased more than three-fold in 2019, to the highest total since the 'Quail year' of 2011. EBBA2 (Keller *et al.* 2020) revealed a substantial northward range expansion in Quails since the 1980s, in northern Britain and most noticeably in southern Scandinavia (fig. 2). It seems likely that this shift is driven by climate

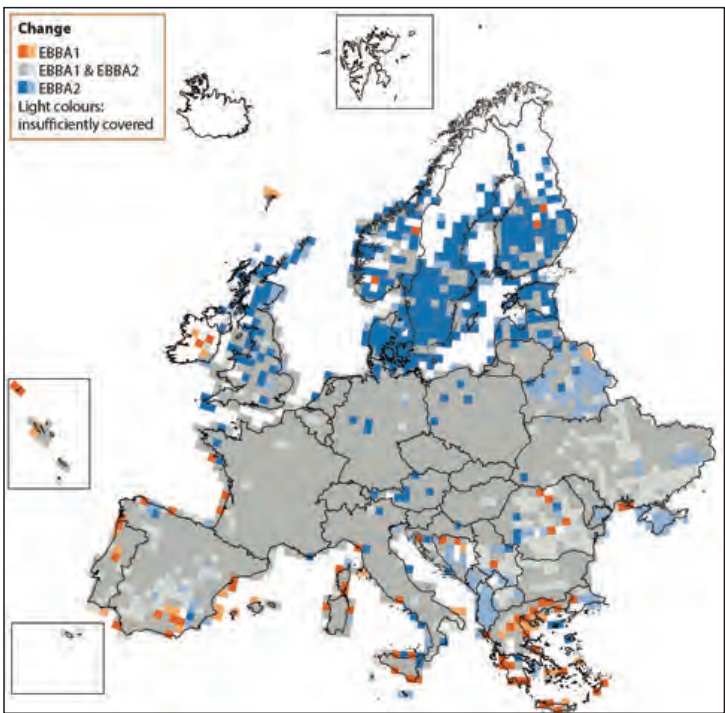


Fig. 2. Range change in Common Quails *Coturnix coturnix* between the two European Breeding Bird Atlases (mid 1980s and 2013–17). Orange squares show range losses, blue squares show range gains, and grey squares are those with records in both atlas periods. Paler squares of all three colours are those with poorer coverage in the first atlas, thus assessments of range change may be less reliable. Reproduced from *European Breeding Bird Atlas 2* (Keller et al. 2020), © European Bird Census Council (EBCC).

change, as predicted by Huntley *et al.* (2007). There is also some indication of a contraction at the southern edge of the European range. An analysis of the mean latitude of Quails reported to the RBBP each year since 1987 (assigning each record to county and using the mid-latitude for each county) shows quite clearly how mean latitude has increased over the last three decades by a mean shift of nearly 5 km per year (fig. 3). The red points indicate years of high Quail abundance (over 800 singing males), and there is some suggestion that the species’ distribution reaches farther north in years with high numbers.

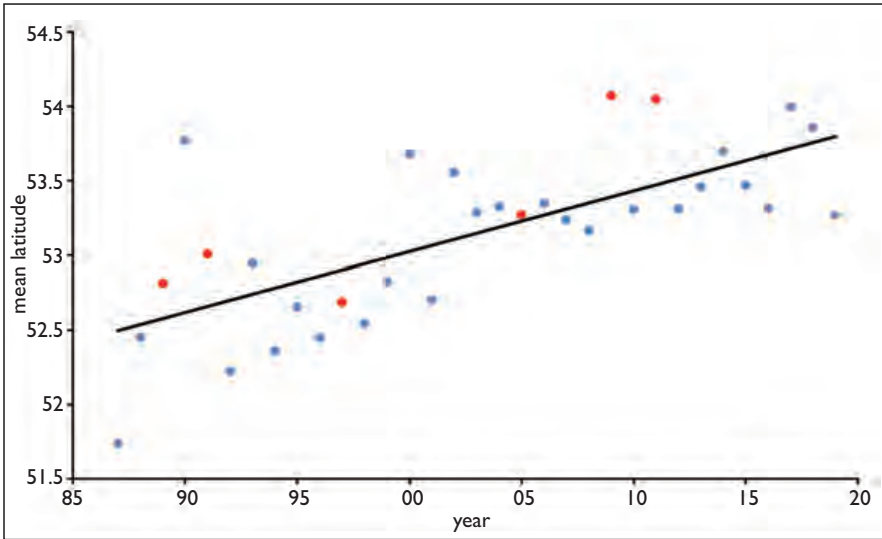


Fig. 3. Mean latitude of Common Quails reported to the RBBP, 1987 to 2019. Years of high Quail abundance (>800 singing males) are shown with red symbols.

Common Quail		Dorset	28	Berkshire	11
	SM	Gloucestershire	11	Buckinghamshire	4
England	459	Hampshire	13	Greater London	1
England, SW	166	Somerset	11	Hertfordshire	1
Avon	9	Wiltshire	89	Kent	9
Cornwall	4	England, SE	46	Oxfordshire	8
Devon	1	Bedfordshire	1	Sussex	11

Common Quail <i>cont.</i>		Greater Manchester	4	North-east Scotland	15
	SM	Northumberland	35	Perth & Kinross	2
England, E	93	Yorkshire	44	Upper Forth	2
Cambridgeshire	8	Wales	14	Scotland, N & W	43
Lincolnshire	17	Breconshire	6	Argyll	5
Norfolk	51	Ceredigion	2	Caithness	3
Northamptonshire	3	Denbigh & Flint	2	Highland	8
Suffolk	14	East Glamorgan	1	Orkney	18
England, C	49	Radnorshire	3	Outer Hebrides	3
Derbyshire	17	Scotland	105	Shetland	6
Herefordshire	1	Scotland, S	29	Northern Ireland	5
Leics & Rutland	8	Borders	12	Co. Antrim	3
Nottinghamshire	9	Dumfries & Galloway	5	Co. Londonderry	1
Staffordshire	5	Lothian	12	Co. Tyrone	1
Warwickshire	9	Scotland, Mid	33	Isle of Man	1
England, N	105	Angus & Dundee	2	Isle of Man	1
Cheshire & Wirral	17	Fife	11	TOTAL	584
Cumbria	5	Moray & Nairn	1		

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Rare 3I bp

25y trend: **strong increase +488%**

Amber

Near-complete

29 sites: 24–31 pairs. Numbers of Whooper Swans breeding in the UK remain high after a steady increase since the turn of the century. This increase mirrors a massive range expansion and population growth in recent decades in both the Icelandic breeding population (the source of the UK's wintering birds and our expanding breeding population) and in Fennoscandia. Once almost extinct in Finland and Sweden, the Whooper Swan now breeds throughout both countries, having increased ten-fold in Finland since 1986 (Laubeck *et al.* 2019). It has extended its range south through the Baltic countries into Belarus, Poland and even as far south as Hungary (Keller *et al.* 2020). This increase can be attributed to the improved legal protection from hunting across the European Union and in Iceland, as well as increased utilisation of intensively managed agricultural land for winter feeding (Deinet *et al.* 2013).



Whooper Swans *Cygnus cygnus*

Axel Emil Thorenfeldt

England, E

Norfolk One site: two pairs bred; both were seen with broods but fledging success was not reported.

Scotland, S

Ayrshire Two sites: one pair bred and fledged a single bird; one probable breeding pair. Dumfries & Galloway One site: one probable breeding pair.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll Two sites: one pair bred but the eggs were predated; one probable breeding pair. Highland Four sites: one pair bred although failed; three probable breeding pairs. Orkney One site: one pair bred, fledging two young. Outer Hebrides Four sites: three pairs bred, two failed during incubation, the other fledged three young; one probable breeding pair. Shetland 13 sites: 13 pairs bred. At least seven were successful, with fledged broods of one (2), two, three, four (2) and seven; broods were reported with five other pairs, although two are known to have been lost subsequently.

Northern Ireland

Co. Londonderry One site: two pairs with broods of three and two.

Garganey *Spatula querquedula*

Rare 120 bp

25y trend: **stable** -6%**Amber**

High

96 sites: 30–136 pairs. Numbers of breeding Garganeys in the UK over recent years have remained rather stable. The 2019 maximum of 137 is just three less than that reported for 2018. The population has increased steadily since a dip in the mid 2000s but has not yet reached the high numbers of the early 1990s, when a peak of 163 pairs was reported in 1993. Declines have been reported in several countries including Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, which are believed to hold approximately 90% of the European breeding population (Viksne *et al.* 2010).

Garganey				Norfolk	9	5	9	Scotland	13	1	16
	S	CP	TP	Northamptonshire	1	0	1	Scotland, S	3	0	3
England	76	29	113	Suffolk	4	0	5	Ayrshire	1	0	1
England, SW	11	2	14	England, C	3	0	4	Clyde	1	0	1
Devon	1	0	1	Staffordshire	1	0	1	Dumfries & G'way	1	0	1
Gloucestershire	3	2	3	Warwickshire	2	0	3	Scotland, Mid	2	0	3
Hampshire	3	0	4	England, N	18	9	28	North-east Scotland	1	0	2
Somerset	3	0	5	Cheshire & Wirral	2	1	2	Upper Forth	1	0	1
Wiltshire	1	0	1	Cleveland	1	0	2	Scotland, N & W	8	1	10
England, SE	16	5	21	Cumbria	1	0	1	Argyll	1	0	1
Essex	3	3	6	Greater Manchester	1	0	1	Highland	1	0	1
Hertfordshire	1	0	1	Lancs & N Mersey	2	1	3	Orkney	1	1	2
Kent	7	1	7	Yorkshire	11	7	19	Outer Hebrides	5	0	6
Oxfordshire	2	0	2	Wales	5	0	5	Northern Ireland	2	0	2
Sussex	3	1	5	Carmarthenshire	1	0	1	Co. Antrim	1	0	1
England, E	28	13	46	East Glamorgan	1	0	1	Co. Londonderry	1	0	1
Cambridgeshire	10	4	23	Gower	2	0	2	TOTALS	96	30	136
Lincolnshire	4	4	8	Meirionnydd	1	0	1				

Shoveler *Spatula clypeata*

Less scarce 1,241 bp (no trend available)

Amber

High

268 sites: 258–1,384 pairs. Another good year for this species, though still below the record maximum of 1,459 reported in 2018. Numbers submitted to the RBBP have increased since it was added to our species list in 2006, although it is not certain whether this is a genuine increase or the result of greater observer awareness and reporting.

Rare breeding birds in the UK in 2019

Shoveler				Cumbria (e 3)	3	0	3
	S	CP	TP	Co. Durham (e 10)	1	1	1
England (e 1,313)	184	233	1,146	Greater Manchester (e 12)	6	1	11
England, SW (e 39)	12	9	36	Lancs & N Mersey (e 50)	8	45	50
Devon (e 2)	1	0	2	Northumberland (e 10)	9	3	10
Dorset (e 3)	2	3	3	Yorkshire (e 120–140)	17	32	119
Gloucestershire (e 3)	2	1	3	Wales (e 52+)	9	2	34
Hampshire (e 5)	2	2	2	Anglesey (e 35)	1	2	20
Somerset (e 21)	2	3	21	Caernarfonshire (e 2)	1	0	2
Wiltshire (e 5)	3	0	5	Carmarthenshire (e 1)	0	0	0
England, SE (e 381)	36	46	328	Denbigh & Flint	4	0	7
Berkshire (e 1)	1	0	1	Gwent (e 4)	2	0	4
Essex (e 179)	9	35	179	Meirionnydd (e 2)	0	0	0
Hertfordshire (e 4)	4	2	4	Pembrokeshire	1	0	1
Kent (e 60–120)	14	6	67	Scotland (e 207+)	71	22	183
Oxfordshire (e 30)	3	1	30	Scotland, S (e 35+)	14	1	34
Surrey (e 2)	1	0	2	Ayrshire	1	1	1
Sussex (e 45)	4	2	45	Borders (e 2)	1	0	1
England, E (e 573)	67	57	495	Clyde	5	0	5
Cambridgeshire (e 228)	13	5	228	Dumfries & G'way (e 27)	7	0	27
Lincolnshire (e 47)	13	3	47	Scotland, Mid (e 28)	9	2	27
Norfolk (e 100–150)	17	39	72	Angus & Dundee (e 12)	3	0	12
Northamptonshire (e 2)	2	2	2	Fife (e 1)	0	0	0
Suffolk (e 146)	22	8	146	North-east Scotland (e 5)	4	1	5
England, C (e 53)	19	21	51	Perth & Kinross (e 10)	2	1	10
Derbyshire (e 10)	2	1	8	Scotland, N & W (e 144)	48	19	122
Leics & Rutland (e 2)	1	2	2	Argyll (e 30)	11	0	30
Nottinghamshire (e 14)	3	6	14	Highland (e 8)	2	0	8
Shropshire (e 3)	2	0	3	Orkney (e 46)	20	9	46
Staffordshire (e 11)	2	7	11	Outer Hebrides (e 50–60)	15	10	38
Warwickshire (e 3)	2	1	3	Northern Ireland (e 18+)	1	0	18
West Midlands (e 2)	2	0	2	Co. Antrim	1	0	18
Worcestershire (e 8)	5	4	8	Channel Islands (e 1)	1	1	1
England, N (e 267)	50	100	236	Jersey (e 1)	1	1	1
Cheshire & Wirral (e 10)	3	10	10	Isle of Man (e 2)	2	0	2
Cleveland (e 32)	3	8	32	TOTALS (e 1,595+)	268	258	1,384



Mark Rayment

453. Pair of copulating Shovelers *Spatula clypeata*, Suffolk, April 2019.

Eurasian Wigeon *Mareca penelope*

Rare 216 bp

(no trend available)

Amber

Moderate

89 sites: 50–210 pairs. The species' breeding range is largely confined to northern areas. A female with six young was the first confirmed breeding record for Somerset. This species remains under-recorded across much of its breeding range.

Eurasian Wigeon				Nottinghamshire	1	0	1	Angus & Dundee	2	0	5
	S	CP	TP	England, N	8	8	18	North-east Scotland	6	0	7
England	18	10	54	Cumbria	3	3	4	Perth & Kinross	1	0	2
England, SW	2	1	3	Northumberland	3	4	6	Scotland, N & W	55	40	131
Somerset	1	1	1	Yorkshire	2	1	8	Argyll	4	3	8
Wiltshire	1	0	2	Wales	2	0	3	Caithness	5	0	6
England, SE	2	0	2	Anglesey	1	0	2	Highland	16	2	54
Kent	2	0	2	Denbigh & Flint	1	0	1	Orkney	6	0	14
England, E	4	1	29	Scotland	69	40	153	Outer Hebrides	19	25	39
Cambridgeshire	3	1	28	Scotland, S	5	0	8	Shetland	5	10	10
Norfolk	1	0	1	Ayrshire	1	0	1	TOTALS	89	50	210
England, C	2	0	2	Dumfries & G'way	4	0	7				
Leics & Rutland	1	0	1	Scotland, Mid	9	0	14				

Black Duck *Anas rubripes*

Occasional breeder

One site: one male. In Highland, the male remained at Strontian. Copulation was reported with an apparent Black Duck × Mallard *A. platyrhynchos* hybrid. In 12 years of occupancy, successful breeding has been proven only once, in 2016. It is highly likely that the hybrid with which the male was seen copulating in 2019 is one of the offspring of the 2016 breeding.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Very rare 28 bp

25y trend: **weak decrease -45%****Amber**

Near-complete

18 sites: 3–29 pairs. The declining trend in the UK's breeding Pintail population reflects a wider pattern of range loss through Fennoscandia and central Europe (Keller *et al.* 2020) and echoes population declines reported in core parts of the range such as Finland (Laaksonen *et al.* 2019) and Russia (Kalyakin & Voltzit 2020).

England, SE

Essex One site: two probable breeding pairs. Kent Two sites: two possible breeding pairs.

England, E

Cambridgeshire One site: one possible breeding pair. Lincolnshire One site: one probable breeding pair.

England, N

Cumbria Two sites: two probable breeding pairs.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll Three sites: (1) & (2), one pair bred; (3) six probable breeding pairs. Dumfries & Galloway One site: one possible breeding pair. Orkney Six sites: (1) one pair bred (three young fledged) and one possible breeding pair; (2) two probable breeding pairs; (3) one probable and one possible breeding pair; (4) & (5) one probable breeding pair; (6) three possible breeding pairs. Outer Hebrides One site: one possible breeding pair.

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Scarce 734 bp

25y trend: **weak increase** +57%**Red**

High

167 sites: 349–725 pairs. Numbers of breeding Common Pochards have fluctuated between around 600 and 800 pairs for the last decade. As discussed in last year's report (Eaton *et al.* 2020), this followed a three-fold increase in numbers since the Panel started monitoring the species in 1986 and is in stark contrast to the picture elsewhere in Europe, where widespread declines and range loss have led to the species being listed as Vulnerable on the Global IUCN Red List (BirdLife International 2021b; see Fox *et al.* 2016 for further detail).

Common Pochard				Suffolk (e 5)	4	3	5
	S	CP	TP	England, C (e 15)	13	9	15
England (e 841)	159	341	702	Leics & Rutland (e 1)	1	1	1
England, SW (e 95)	17	19	93	Nottinghamshire (e 2)	1	1	2
Devon (e 1)	1	1	1	Staffordshire (e 4)	4	4	4
Dorset (e 3)	1	3	3	Warwickshire (e 3)	2	1	3
Gloucestershire (e 5)	1	3	5	West Midlands (e 1)	2	0	1
Hampshire (e 10)	6	3	8	Worcestershire (e 4)	3	2	4
Isle of Wight (e 2)	1	0	2	England, N (e 169)	27	122	150
Isles of Scilly (e 2)	1	2	2	Cheshire & Wirral (e 22)	1	22	22
Somerset (e 67)	2	7	67	Cleveland (e 9)	5	9	9
Wiltshire (e 5)	4	0	5	Co. Durham (e 5)	1	1	1
England, SE (e 397)	68	166	326	Greater Manchester (e 2)	1	0	2
Bedfordshire (e 2)	2	2	2	Lancs & N Mersey (e 21)	1	20	20
Berkshire (e 7)	4	3	7	Northumberland (e 5)	3	2	5
Buckinghamshire (e 2)	0	0	0	Yorkshire (e 95–105)	15	68	91
Essex (e 136)	18	92	136	Wales (e 23)	4	7	19
Greater London (e 12)	9	8	10	Anglesey (e 15–20)	2	4	15
Hertfordshire (e 24)	4	24	24	Carmarthenshire (e 2)	1	2	2
Kent (e 100–150)	18	18	82	Gwent (e 1)	1	1	2
Oxfordshire (e 4)	1	0	4	Scotland (e 3)	3	1	3
Surrey (e 10)	8	3	15	Scotland, S (e 1)	1	1	1
Sussex (e 50)	4	16	46	Lothian (e 1)	1	1	1
England, E (e 165)	34	25	118	Scotland, Mid (e 2)	2	0	2
Cambridgeshire (e 74)	13	3	74	North-east Scotland (e 2)	2	0	2
Lincolnshire (e 8)	4	3	8	Northern Ireland (e 1+)	1	0	1
Norfolk (e 75)	11	16	28	Co. Antrim	1	0	1
Northamptonshire (e 3)	2	0	3	TOTALS (e 868+)	167	349	725

Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*

Potential breeder

Two sites: two males.

Wales**Denbigh & Flint** One site: a male was present from 6th March to 22nd July.**Scotland, N & W**

Outer Hebrides A male was present between 1st April and 14th June at two sites, including one at which possibly the same individual was seen displaying to a female Tufted Duck *A. fuligula* in 2018. No evidence of breeding was recorded in 2019.

Lesser Scaup *Aythya affinis***Potential breeder**

One site: one male. A male was present at a site in **Borders** between 27th June and 10th July and was seen displaying to and attempting to mate with female Tufted Ducks.

This is the third time that this Nearctic species has featured in a RBBP report, following similar reports of equally enthusiastic drakes in Caithness in 2013 and East Glamorgan in 2015. Whilst hybridisation in *Aythya* ducks is not infrequent, there has been no sign of any offspring arising from these attempts.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra***Rare 52 bp*****25y trend: stable -22%****Red****High**

Nine sites: 16–47 pairs. The Flows of Caithness and Sutherland (Highland) are treated as one extensive site. *EBBA2* (Keller *et al.* 2020) shows that there have been losses along the southern margin of the range since the 1980s, in southern Finland and Norway and from areas in southern Scotland and the Republic of Ireland.

* Eaton *et al.* (2008).

Common Scoter			Scotland, N & W			8	13	44	Highland	2	4	17
	S	CP	TP	Argyll		1	2	3	Shetland	1	0	1
Scotland, Mid	1	3	3	Caithness		3	3	3	TOTALS	9	16	47
Perth & Kinross	1	3	3	Caithness/Highland		1	4	20				

Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula***Rare 200 bp*****(no trend available)****Amber****Moderate**

68–88 breeding females. Monitoring of nestbox-breeding Goldeneyes is undertaken by a few dedicated individuals in part of the core breeding range in Strathspey, Highland, but, since the cessation of wider monitoring in 2010, we are unable to report on population trends. The population does, however, clearly remain at elevated levels – as Goldeneyes are a familiar aspect of birding in parts of north Scotland nowadays, it is easy to forget how rare they once were, with the breeding population in single figures in the 1970s. Elsewhere, the small population in Northumberland continues to grow, with 11 pairs producing 40 young in 2019. There was no repetition of 2018's breeding in Bedfordshire or Staffordshire, but a pair bred in Greater London for the third year in a row.

* Woodward *et al.* (2020).

Common Goldeneye			Northumberland			11	11	Moray & Nairn	0	1
	CP	TP	Scotland			56	76	North-east Scotland	4	4
England	12	12	Scotland, S			0	2	Scotland, N & W	52	67
England, SE	1	1	Clyde			0	2	Highland	52	67
Greater London	1	1	Scotland, Mid			4	7	TOTALS	68	88
England, N	11	11	Angus & Dundee			0	2			

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator***Less scarce 1,565 bp* (no trend available)****Green****Low**

89 sites: 51–194 pairs. It is pleasing to see the increase in numbers reported to the Panel in 2019, our third year of data collection for this species, and we continue to encourage observers to submit

all records of birds in suitable habitat in the breeding season to county bird recorders. There is, of course, still a long way to go to achieve more complete reporting, and this is likely to remain a struggle owing to the remote nature of the core breeding range in north and west Scotland.

* Humphreys *et al.* (2016).

Red-breasted Merganser			Scotland, Mid (e 30)	5	6
	CP	TP	Angus & Dundee (e 2)	1	1
England, N (e 19)	7	15	Moray & Nairn (e 10)	2	2
Cumbria (e 11)	5	11	North-east Scotland (e 15)	0	0
Lancs & N Mersey (e 6)	0	2	Perth & Kinross (e 1)	0	1
Northumberland (e 2)	2	2	Upper Forth (e 2)	2	2
Wales (e 35)	3	14	Scotland, N & W (e 472)	30	108
Anglesey (e 15)	2	2	Argyll (e 100–300)	0	5
Caernarfonshire (e 5)	1	1	Highland (e 50)	7	17
Meirionnydd (e 9–15)	0	11	Orkney (e 8)	3	9
Scotland (e 524+)	41	129	Outer Hebrides (e 80–100)	20	62
Scotland, S (e 22+)	6	15	Shetland (e 14)	0	15
Clyde	2	8	Northern Ireland (e 36+)	0	36
Clyde Islands	4	4	Co. Fermanagh	0	36
Dumfries & Galloway (e 10)	0	3	TOTALS (e 614+)	51	194

Great Bustard *Otis tarda*

Very rare 6 bp

(no trend available)

Near-complete

One extensive site: 12 nesting females. In addition to at least ten wild-fledged birds, four eggs were taken from English nests and the birds were reared and released along with a further 20 individuals raised from eggs imported from Spain in 2019.

England, SW

Wiltshire One extensive site: at least 12 females laid eggs; a minimum of ten young fledged from a minimum of five successful nests.

Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

Less scarce 3,600 bp* 23y trend (BBS): strong decrease -95%

Red

Moderate

321 sites: 29–652 pairs. An increase in numbers during the second year of inclusion by the Panel is presumably due to an increase in reporting, rather than an upturn in fortunes for this rapidly declining species. Estimates provided to the Panel by county bird recorders suggest a population of just over 1,000 pairs – far less than the most recent estimate of 3,600 pairs from the Avian Population Estimates Panel (Woodward *et al.* 2020). Results from the 2021 RSPB/RBBP national Turtle Dove survey will clarify the population size and provide a baseline for future monitoring.

As discussed in last year's report (Eaton *et al.* 2020), this species' problems are continent-wide, and it is classified as Vulnerable on the Global IUCN Red List (BirdLife International 2021b). The European population trend (PECBMS 2019) bears a resemblance to that for the UK (fig. 4).

* Woodward *et al.* (2020).

Turtle Dove				Dorset (e 5)	3	0	3
	S	CP	TP	Hampshire (e 20)	6	0	20
England, SW (e 37)	16	2	31	Isle of Wight (e 2)	1	0	2
Cornwall (e 2)	2	1	2	Somerset (e 1)	1	0	1
Devon (e 5)	1	1	1	Wiltshire (e 2)	2	0	2

Turtle Dove cont.				Lincolnshire (e 50)	19	0	25
	S	CP	TP	Norfolk (e 80–125)	39	3	82
England, SE (e 524)	103	15	229	Northamptonshire (e 5)	4	0	5
Bedfordshire (e 9)	6	1	9	Suffolk (e 105)	80	4	105
Berkshire (e 1)	1	0	1	England, C (e 25)	20	2	22
Buckinghamshire (e 2)	1	0	2	Derbyshire (e 5)	5	0	6
Essex (e 20)	13	2	20	Nottinghamshire (e 5)	1	0	1
Kent (e 200–400)	78	11	152	Warwickshire (e 6)	5	1	6
Oxfordshire (e 2)	2	1	2	Worcestershire (e 9)	9	1	9
Surrey (e 5–10)	1	0	1	England, N (e 110)	6	1	106
Sussex (e 80)	1	0	42	Yorkshire (e 110)	6	1	106
England, E (e 332)	176	9	264	TOTALS (e 1,028)	321	29	652
Cambridgeshire (e 47)	34	2	47				

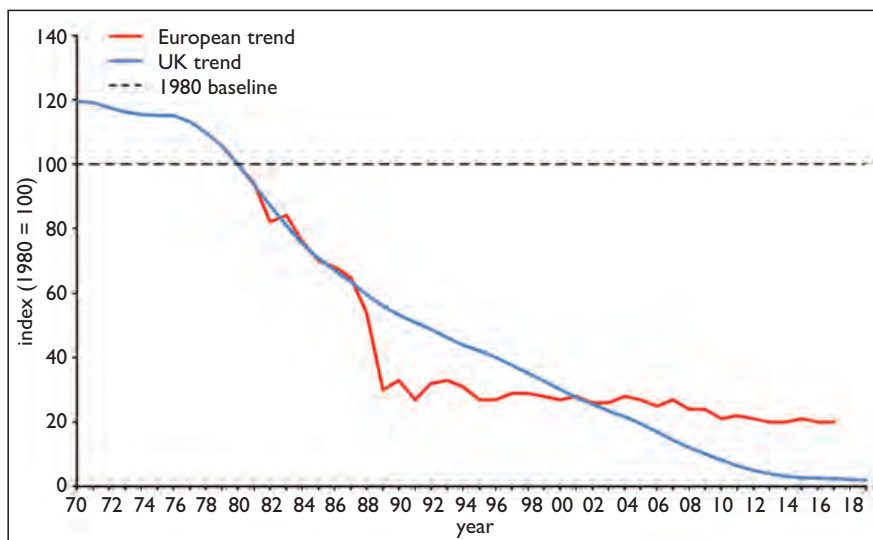


Fig. 4. Trends in breeding Turtle Doves *Streptopelia turtur* in the UK (from the BTO/JNCC Common Birds Census and BBS) and Europe (from PECBMS). UK data has been rescaled to 100 in 1980 to enable easier comparison.

Corn Crane *Crex crex*

Scarce 992 bp*

25y trend: **strong increase +108%**

Red

Near-complete

904 singing males. In recent RBBP reports, we have commented on how the recovery of this species has faltered somewhat in recent years. The total for 2019 is the lowest reported number since 2003.

* Wotton *et al.* (2015).

England, E

Cambridgeshire Four: Nene Washes 1, Ouse Washes 3. Norfolk Six, at four sites.

England, C

Warwickshire One.

England, N

Yorkshire Four, at three sites.

Scotland, S

Ayrshire One.

Scotland, Mid

Perth & Kinross Two, at one site.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll Total 437: Coll 47, Colonsay & Oronsay 20, Iona 12, Islay 54, Jura 1, Staffa 1, Tiree 300, Treshnish Isles 2. Caithness Four, at two sites. Highland Total 23: mainland 10, Skye 13. Orkney Total 19. Outer Hebrides Total 400: Barra & Vatersay 58, Benbecula 13, Berneray 1, Harris 6,

Lewis 77, Mingulay and other islands south of Vatersay 4, North Uist 130, South Uist 111.

[Northern Ireland](#)

Co. Antrim One site, two. Co. Tyrone One.

Spotted Crane *Porzana porzana*

Very rare 20 bp

25y trend: **weak decrease** -37%

Amber

High

11 sites: 0–19 singing males/pairs. Only one more singing male than reported in 2018, but the details are quite different: five of the counties listed here did not have Spotted Cranes in 2018. Indeed, the birds on the Isle of Wight were the first-ever singing males reported from that county.

[England, SW](#)

Isle of Wight One site: two singing males from 22nd June to 29th August. **Somerset** Two sites: (1) two singing males; (2) one singing male.

[England, E](#)

Cambridgeshire One site: two singing males. **Norfolk** Two sites: (1) one singing male from 21st June to 5th July; (2) one singing male from 1st June to 2nd July.

[England, N](#)

Cheshire & Wirral One site: one singing male from 1st to 21st July. **Yorkshire** One site: three singing males.

[Scotland, Mid](#)

Angus & Dundee One site: three singing males on two dates. **North-east Scotland** One site: at least two singing males heard between mid June and 8th July. **Upper Forth** One site: one singing male.

Baillon's Crane *Zapornia pusilla*

Potential breeder

Two sites: three possible pairs. This is the fourth time this species has featured in a RBBP report, with numbers only bettered by the six recorded in 2012 (Ausden *et al.* 2013). As well as birds in the UK in 2019, there were unusually high numbers in the Netherlands (34 calling males), Belgium (seven, including confirmed breeding), Denmark (four) and Switzerland (one) (Boele *et al.* 2021). These incursions of birds into northwest Europe have been linked to drought conditions in southern Spain, causing drying of wetlands, in particular in the Coto de Doñana, and dispersal of the population of several hundred pairs usually found there. Both 2012 and 2019 were drought years. There has been a widespread disappearance from sites in the Iberian Peninsula, and in southeast Europe (Keller *et al.* 2020).

Most of the rare breeding species covered in this report are much commoner somewhere within their European breeding range. Baillon's Crane is an exception, being thinly spread and never common across its range, which stretches right across Europe.

[England, SW](#)

Somerset One site: one singing female on 12th June.

[England, E](#)

Norfolk One site: two singing males on 7th July.

Common Crane *Grus grus*

Rare 40 bp

25y trend: **strong increase +1,446%****Amber**

Near-complete

30 sites: 38–47 pairs; an additional 11 non-breeding pairs. The RBBP uses the criteria developed by the UK Crane Working Group to assess and classify records. These seek to reduce the risk of double counting by excluding itinerant pairs not settled at a breeding site, and thus some records of apparent breeding activity are excluded from our totals. One pair bred in an unknown location in eastern England, and so is included in the regional summary but not assigned to a county. As well as the breeding attempts summarised in the table, there were 11 non-breeding pairs: three at two sites in Somerset, three in two sites in Yorkshire, and single pairs at two sites in North-east Scotland and single sites in Cambridgeshire, Suffolk and Wiltshire. In addition, a single female summered at a site previously used for breeding in East Glamorgan.

Common Crane					Cambridgeshire	5	8	9	4
	S	CP	TP	YF	Norfolk	9	10	13	8
England	26	35	43	23	Suffolk	1	1	1	1
England, SW	8	12	16	9	England, N	2	3	3	1
Dorset	1	0	1	0	Yorkshire	2	3	3	1
Gloucestershire	1	2	3	0	Wales	1	1	1	0
Somerset	6	10	12	9	Gwent	1	1	1	0
England, SE	1	1	1	0	Scotland, Mid	3	2	3	2
Oxfordshire	1	1	1	0	North-east Scotland	3	2	3	2
England, E	15	19	23	13	TOTALS	30	38	47	25

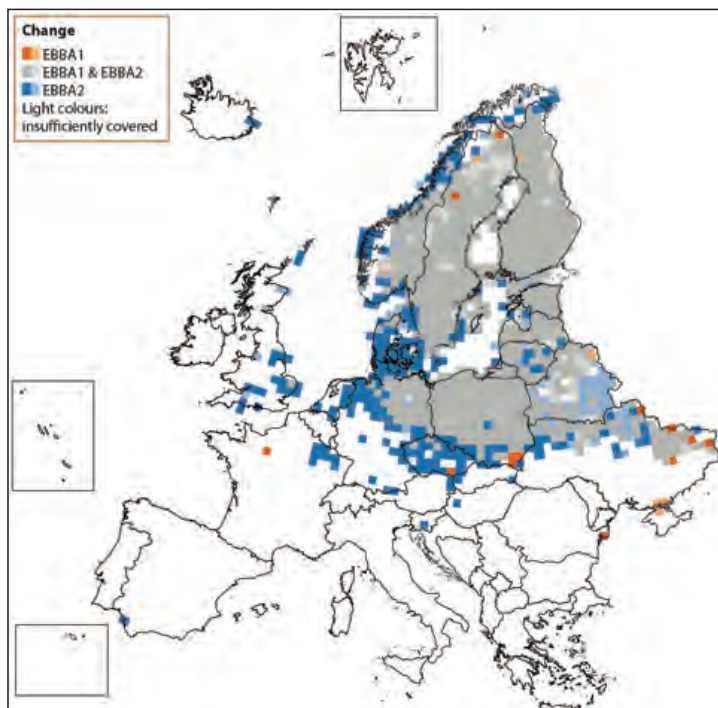


Fig. 5. Range change in Common Cranes *Grus grus* between the two European Breeding Bird Atlases (mid 1980s and 2013–17). Orange squares show range loss, blue squares range gain, grey squares are those with records in both atlas periods. Paler squares of all three colours are those with poorer coverage in the first atlas so assessments of range change may be less reliable. Reproduced from *European Breeding Bird Atlas 2* (Keller et al. 2020), © European Bird Census Council (EBCC).

Unsurprisingly, given the upward trajectory of the population since around 2005, boosted by the release of birds by the Great Crane Project between 2010 and 2014, 48 pairs is a new high. The total of 25 fledged birds, another record, points to further increase in the future. Biggins & Maggs (2021) reviewed the colonisation of North-east Scotland since the first breeding there in 2012 and concluded that further colonisation and range expansion is likely, potentially extending the breeding range to Caithness and possibly even Shetland.

Soriano-Redondo *et al.* (2019) found that the increase in the UK population had been driven largely by ongoing immigration from the continent and projected that the population will reach 275 breeding pairs within 50 years. This immigration has been supported by a remarkable increase in Cranes across Europe, estimated at 5–8% per year, owing to improved protection from hunting, milder winters, and the increase in maize production (Deinet *et al.* 2013). The change map from EBBA2 (fig. 5; Keller *et al.* 2020) shows that the UK is not alone in gaining breeding Cranes in recent decades.

Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps* **Occasional breeder**

One site: one male. A male at a site in Argyll, present since 2014, was again paired with a Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* but there was no evidence of a breeding attempt. The only year in which breeding has occurred is 2017.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena* **Occasional breeder**

Red

Six sites: two pairs and one individual. Although numbers have been low in recent years, this species still features regularly in RBBP reports. There is, however, just the one record of successful breeding in the UK, from southern Scotland in 2001. The scatter of records from Cambridgeshire is no surprise, as Red-necked Grebe has been reported from this county in seven of the last ten years, whereas the Kent record is the first there since 1994.

[England, SE](#)

Kent One site: a pair present since the winter were seen displaying until 18th April.

[England, E](#)

Cambridgeshire Five sites: what was presumably the same single male was seen at four sites between 6th and 24th April, and a pair was present at another site from 24th June to 1st July, although there was no evidence of breeding.



Red-necked Grebes *Podiceps grisegena*

Axel Emil Thorenfeldt

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus***Very rare** 29 bp25y trend: **strong decrease** -61%**Red**

Near-complete

16 sites: 25–28 pairs. A typical year. *EBBA2* (Keller *et al.* 2020) shows the almost complete loss of this species from its previously fragmented range in central Europe and the Baltic States and some range expansion in northern Fennoscandia, although population declines have been reported from both Norway and Finland. A decline of 76% over 40 years in the much larger North American population is the principal reason for the species being classified as Vulnerable on the Global IUCN Red List (BirdLife International 2021b).

In addition to the records presented here, an injured individual summered in Devon for its 13th year.

Scotland, N & W

Highland 13 sites: 25 pairs bred, fledging 15 young. **Moray & Nairn** Two sites: single birds in suitable habitat. **Shetland** One site: a single bird returned to the site at which breeding occurred in 2018.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis***Rare** 55 bp25y trend: **stable** +1%**Amber**

Near-complete

20 sites: 41–57 pairs. The record in Co. Armagh was of a single, territory-holding bird, notable as the first RBBP record from Northern Ireland for this species since a similar occurrence in 1995 and 1996.

Black-necked Grebe					Nottinghamshire	1	12	12	9
	S	CP	TP	YF	Staffordshire	1	2	2	2
England	19	41	56	32	England, N	10	21	30	13
England, SE	4	5	8	6	Cheshire & Wirral	2	9	11	0
Essex	2	1	2	1	Greater Manchester	2	0	2	0
Hertfordshire	1	3	3	5	Lancs & N Mersey	1	0	1	0
Kent	1	1	3	0	Northumberland	1	0	1	0
England, E	3	1	4	2	Yorkshire	4	12	15	13
Lincolnshire	2	1	2	2	Northern Ireland	1	0	1	0
Northamptonshire	1	0	2	0	Co. Armagh	1	0	1	0
England, C	2	14	14	11	TOTALS	20	41	57	32

Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus***Scarce** 328 bp25y trend: **strong increase** +106%**Amber**

Moderate

293–307 pairs. In addition to these totals, it is estimated that there were another 57 pairs in unsurveyed areas in Norfolk and Suffolk. Complete coverage is no longer achieved after EU-LIFE+ funding ended in 2016. Fig. 6 shows the recovery of the UK population since a low point in the 1970s. The apparent dip in 2001 was due to poor coverage during the foot-and-mouth outbreak that year, but the decline in 2013 was genuine, caused by high adult mortality in an unusually cold spring.

Stone-curlew								
	CP	TP	Berkshire	6	7	Suffolk	80	81
			Oxfordshire	2	2	England, C	1	1
England, SW	129	139	Sussex	3	5	Leics & Rutland	1	1
Hampshire	32	32	England, E	152	153	TOTALS	293	307
Wiltshire	97	107	Cambridgeshire	6	6			
England, SE	11	14	Norfolk	66	66			

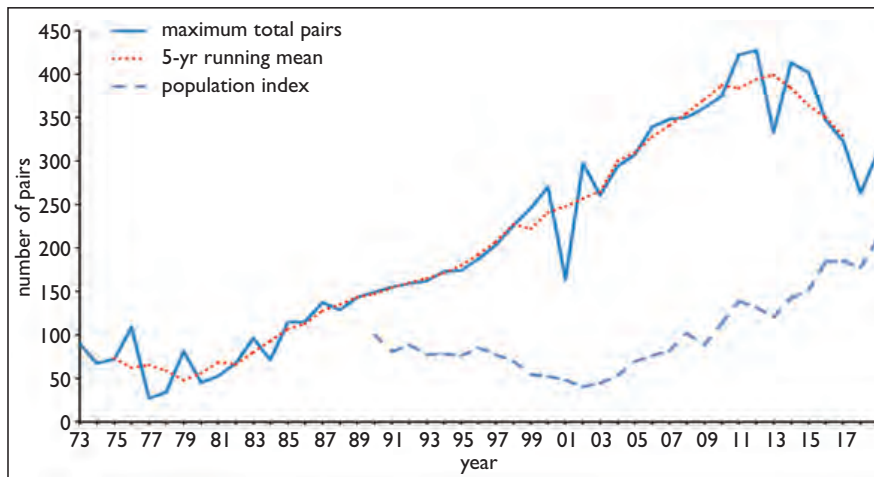


Fig. 6. Maximum total number of breeding Stone-curlews *Burhinus oedicnemus* in the UK, 1987 to 2019, and 5-year running mean. Adjusted numbers are shown for 2017–19 to account for estimated uncounted pairs.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* Colonising breeder

Three sites: one breeding pair, another two pairs briefly present at sites. This is the sixth consecutive year that Black-winged Stilts have attempted to nest in the UK. In last year's report (Eaton *et al.* 2020), we showed how the slow colonisation of the UK is an extension of a range expansion across much of southern and central Europe (Keller *et al.* 2020).

England, SW

Somerset One site: a pair present for three days, but no breeding activity observed.

England, E

Norfolk One site: one pair bred, eggs were laid but did not hatch and the pair abandoned. **Suffolk** One site: a pair present for just two days but were observed copulating.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Less scarce 2,138 bp 25y trend: **strong increase +326%**

Amber

Near-complete

121 sites: 2,154 pairs. The table gives totals of confirmed breeding pairs only, so may underestimate the size of the breeding population slightly and does not include one of the most remarkable occurrences of 2019, a pair present on the Outer Hebrides between 27th April and 24th June. These birds were seen mating and established a territory, before disappearing in late May, then reappearing weeks later. It is suspected they may have attempted to breed nearby, most likely at the site where they were subsequently confirmed as breeding in 2020. The birds that bred successfully in Upper Forth in 2018 did not return in 2019.

Avocet			England, E					
	S	CP	Cambridgeshire	9	41	Cleveland	1	18
England	120	2,105	Lincolnshire	9	70	Cumbria	1	4
England, SW	8	166	Norfolk	18	449	Co. Durham	1	24
Gloucestershire	1	60	Suffolk	15	309	Lancs & N Mersey	8	138
Hampshire	6	75	England, C	5	32	Northumberland	2	9
Somerset	1	31	Leics & Rutland	1	1	Yorkshire	12	154
England, SE	28	617	Nottinghamshire	2	7	Wales	1	49
Essex	13	310	Staffordshire	1	5	Gwent	1	49
Kent	11	219	Worcestershire	1	19	TOTALS	121	2,154
Sussex	4	88	England, N	28	421			

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius***Scarce** 604 bp15y trend: **stable** +3%**Green**

Moderate

421–669 pairs. To maintain comparability with the last national survey in 2007 (Conway *et al.* 2019), the table below shows only confirmed and probable breeding pairs. Although information on a further 75 possible breeding pairs was also submitted to the Panel, these may have been passage birds or using sites only temporarily. This is the highest total reported since 2011, and the sum of county estimates provided by county bird recorders suggests at least another 160 pairs. This still leaves a considerable gap between the sum of these estimates and that of 1,239 pairs produced by the last national survey. Given that totals in the years before and after the 2007 survey averaged 658 pairs (i.e. very close to the 2019 total), it seems unlikely that there has been a significant change in numbers. Little Ringed Plovers remain under-recorded and it may be that some county estimates are conservative.

Little Ringed Plover		Norfolk (e 22–30)	21	Ceredigion (e 1–2)	0
	TP	Northamptonshire (e 11)	11	Denbigh & Flint	3
England (e 695+)	566	Suffolk (e 2)	2	East Glamorgan (e 4)	3
England, SW (e 64)	59	England, C (e 150+)	120	Gower	2
Avon (e 1–3)	3	Derbyshire (e 28)	24	Gwent (e 6)	5
Devon (e 5)	5	Herefordshire	6	Meirionnydd (e 6)	3
Dorset (e 5)	5	Leics & Rutland (e 21)	21	Montgomeryshire (e 10)	0
Gloucestershire (e 6)	3	Nottinghamshire (e 8)	7	Radnorshire (e 3–5)	3
Hampshire (e 30)	29	Shropshire (e 5)	1	Scotland (e 60+)	48
Somerset (e 5)	5	Staffordshire (e 35)	31	Scotland, S (e 37+)	34
Wiltshire (e 10)	9	Warwickshire (e 20–30)	15	Ayrshire	3
England, SE (153)	128	West Midlands (e 4)	4	Borders (e 8)	8
Bedfordshire (e 21)	21	Worcestershire (e 13)	11	Clyde	13
Berkshire (e 12)	12	England, N (e 234)	176	Dumfries & G'way (e 8)	5
Buckinghamshire (e 12)	10	Cheshire & Wirral (e 26)	20	Lothian (e 5)	5
Essex (e 36)	36	Cleveland (e 7)	4	Scotland, Mid (e 23)	14
Greater London (e 2)	2	Cumbria (e 17)	17	Angus & Dundee (e 4)	3
Hertfordshire (e 7)	7	Co. Durham (e 10–20)	5	Fife (e 7)	0
Kent (e 32)	12	Greater Manchester (e 29)	24	Moray & Nairn (e 1)	1
Oxfordshire (e 9)	9	Lancs & N Mersey (e 30)	22	North-east Scotland (e 8)	8
Surrey (e 7–10)	7	Northumberland (e 20)	14	Perth & Kinross (e 2)	2
Sussex (e 12)	12	Yorkshire (e 70–85)	70	Upper Forth (e 1)	0
England, E (e 94)	83	Wales (e 78+)	55	TOTAL (e 833+)	669
Cambridgeshire (e 14)	12	Breconshire (e 10)	6		
Lincolnshire (e 37)	37	Carmarthenshire (e 30)	30		

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus***Scarce** 423 males*24y trend (survey): **strong decrease** -57%**Red**

Low

19–46 'pairs'. As is normal for this species of remote mountainous areas, relatively few records were received in 2019. Notable, however, were a bird giving an apparent distraction display in Meirionnydd, and pairs at two sites in Cumbria, one of which was brooding a clutch of three eggs and the other displaying near the site of confirmed breeding in 2016. Callion & Strowger (2018) gave an excellent account of the history of breeding Dotterel in Cumbria, and the ornithologists who studied them, from 1784 onwards – breeding was confirmed there in every year from 1976 to 1994, but in only two years since then.

* Hayhow *et al.* (2015).

Dotterel				Meirionnydd	1	0	1	North-east Scotland	4	1	4
	S	CP	TP	Scotland	30	18	43	Perth & Kinross	3	0	3
England, N	2	1	2	Scotland, Mid	19	7	22	Scotland, N & W	11	11	21
Cumbria	2	1	2	Angus & Dundee	2	0	2	Highland	11	11	21
Wales	1	0	1	Moray & Nairn	10	6	13	TOTALS	33	19	46

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Rare 290+ bp* (no trend available)

Red

Low

0–19 pairs. A typical year, with no records away from the few received from the core of the range in Shetland. Initial reports are that good coverage was achieved by volunteers in the 2021 national survey, so we await the results from survey analyses for a robust update on the status of the species.

* Jackson (2009).

Scotland, N & W

Shetland Records were received from 19 territories, although there were no reports of confirmed breeding.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Rare 53 bp 25y trend: **stable** +9%

Red

Near-complete

Six sites: 47–51 pairs. An identical total to that in 2018. As described last year (Eaton *et al.* 2020), Project Godwit is working to bolster the East Anglian population of *L. l. limosa* by raising birds in captivity. In 2019, 48 juveniles were released as a result of this head-starting intervention, which is intended to tackle poor productivity of pairs breeding in the wild. The *limosa* subspecies has shown range loss and declines throughout much of Europe (Keller *et al.* 2020). In the Netherlands, the population has declined rapidly, from 47,000 pairs in 2007 to 33,000 in 2015 (Kentie *et al.* 2016).

Fledged numbers in parentheses refer to birds fledged from wild-laid eggs collected from first clutches, raised in captivity, and released.

Black-tailed Godwit					England, N	1	2	2	0
	S	CP	TP	YF	Lancs & N Mersey	1	2	2	0
<i>L. l. limosa</i>					<i>L. l. islandica</i>				
England, E	3	45	45	6 (48)	Scotland, N & W	2	0	4	0
Cambridgeshire	2	37	37	6 (15)	Orkney	2	0	4	0
Norfolk	1	8	8	0 (33)	TOTALS	6	47	51	6 (48)

Ruff *Calidris pugnax*

Very rare 13 females 25y trend: **strong decrease** -52%

Red

Near-complete

Eight sites: 1–10 breeding females. Numbers reported in 2019 were just below par, but the record from Shetland is notable – this is only the seventh year in this millennium that breeding has been confirmed in the UK. Breeding was proven in Shetland in 2003 and may also have occurred in 2016. The distribution in the UK has shifted northwards, along with a decline in numbers, since the Panel began monitoring in 1973. Regular breeding in the East Anglian Fens has ceased, and the Hebrides and Northern Isles have gained importance. Both the northward shift and the decline in numbers mirror the pattern seen in the much larger populations across Europe. The change map (fig. 7) from EBBA2 (Keller *et al.* 2020) shows considerable range loss since the first atlas in the 1980s, and

massive declines have been reported in Sweden, Finland and the Netherlands. Probable and/or confirmed breeding of Ruff was mapped in 316 10-km squares in the first Dutch breeding bird atlas (1973–77), but by the third atlas (2013–15) this had fallen to just 30 squares (Sovon Vogelonderzoek Nederland 2019) and there were no confirmed breeding records in 2019 (Boele *et al.* 2021).

England, E

Lincolnshire One site: 12 males at two leks in late May.

England, N

Yorkshire One site: three females and 11 males at a lek in late April and early May.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll One site: one female with up to seven males at a lek. Orkney One site: two females and six males lekking in June. Outer Hebrides Three sites: (1) a pair on two dates in May, one additional male; (2) one female and two males from 14th to 17th May with one male present until 16th June; (3) one female and two males on 16th May. Shetland One site: one breeding pair, a nest with three eggs on 8th June, later predated.

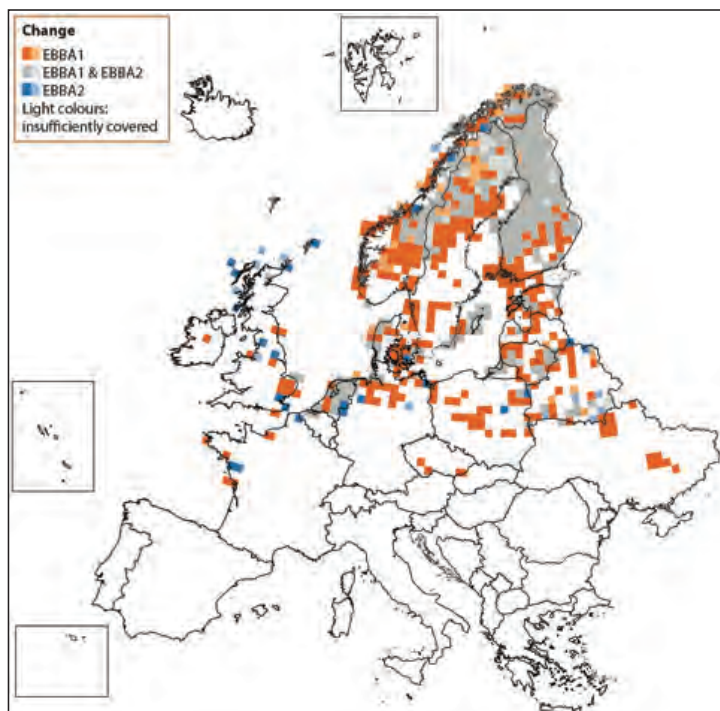


Fig. 7. Range change in Ruffs *Calidris pugnax* between the two European Breeding Bird Atlases (mid 1980s and 2013–17). Orange squares show range loss, blue squares range gain, grey squares are those with records in both atlas periods. Paler squares of all three colours are those with poorer coverage in the first atlas so assessments of range change may be less reliable. Reproduced from *European Breeding Bird Atlas 2* (Keller *et al.* 2020), © European Bird Census Council (EBCC).

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Very rare 1 bp

25y trend: **strong decrease** -67%

Amber

Near-complete

One site: one probable breeding pair. A pair was present at the traditional site in North Scotland.

Scotland, N

One site: one pair was reported 'early in the season', but no subsequent reports were received.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

Rare 78 bp

25y trend: **strong increase** +267%

Red

Near-complete

34 sites: 38–91 breeding pairs/males. In the 2018 report, we commented on the remarkable increase in Red-necked Phalaropes in recent years. There was a considerable drop in numbers in 2019, but 91 breeding males is still the second-highest total we have reported. Argyll continues to

grow in importance for this species. Elsewhere, a female returned to summer at a site in Northumberland for the fifth consecutive year.

The current good fortunes of Red-necked Phalarope in the UK are somewhat at odds with the situation across Europe. The population in Fennoscandia fell by 7.9% per annum between 2006 and 2018 (Lindström *et al.* 2019), and there has been a marked range contraction in the south of the region (Keller *et al.* 2020). Both range and population size are holding up in Iceland, however, and Shetland's Red-necked Phalaropes (and possibly those breeding elsewhere in the UK) share the same migration route and wintering grounds in the Pacific Ocean as Icelandic birds, rather than the Arabian Sea wintering grounds of Fennoscandian breeding birds (van Bemmelen *et al.* 2019) – could this be an influence on population trends?

Red-necked Phalarope				Caithness	1	1	1	Shetland	21	12	45
	S	CP	TP	Fair Isle	1	1	2	TOTALS	34	38	91
Scotland, N & W	34	38	91	Orkney	1	1	1				
Argyll	3	16	32	Outer Hebrides	7	7	10				

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Very rare 2 bp

15y trend: **stable** +9%

Amber

Near-complete

Three sites: 2–5 pairs. After breeding was confirmed in 2018 for the first time since 2011, two successful breeding pairs were recorded in 2019. Keller *et al.* (2020) reported little change in the European breeding range of this species, other than a slight contraction at the southern edge, but there have been population increases within the large Fennoscandian population (e.g. Lindström *et al.* 2015).

Scotland, N & W

Highland Three sites: (1) one confirmed breeding pair fledged three young, and two probable breeding pairs; (2) one confirmed breeding pair fledged four young; (3) one singing male.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Rare 36 bp

25y trend: **strong increase** +528%

Amber

Near-complete

27 sites: 5–44 pairs. Another record total following a steady increase this century. Not many people would have predicted an increase in this species but, in contrast to many northern wader species, there has been little in the way of range contraction across Europe in recent decades, and the population is believed to be stable (Keller *et al.* 2020).

Wood Sandpiper				Argyll	1	0	1	TOTALS	27	5	44
	S	CP	TP	Caithness	6	0	6				
Scotland, N & W	27	5	44	Highland	20	5	37				

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Less scarce 1,080 bp* (no trend available)

Amber

Low

14–108 pairs. A typical return for this under-reported wader.

* Hancock *et al.* (1997).

Greenshank				Argyll	7	Outer Hebrides	12
		TP		Caithness	39	Shetland	1
Scotland, N & W		108		Highland	49	TOTALS	108

Mediterranean Gull *Ichthyaeetus melanocephalus*Less scarce 1,560 bp 25y trend: **strong increase +5,810%****Amber**

Near-complete

49 sites: 1,136–1,187 pairs. After the record total of 2,400 pairs in 2018, numbers dropped by over 50% in 2019. This was due mainly to a dramatic reduction at the colony at Langstone Harbour, Hampshire, from 1,736 to an estimated 600 pairs. Such fluctuation in numbers of breeding Mediterranean Gulls has been observed previously (e.g. between 2016 and 2017). The bulk of the population is concentrated in a few large colonies, which are susceptible to human disturbance, predation, weather and tidal events. In addition, monitoring coverage may vary between years, partly depending on which colonies are being used, with some being more accessible to counters than others. We know, for example, that a large colony in Dorset, which held 155 pairs in 2018, was occupied by Mediterranean Gulls in 2019 but no count was made.

The range of the Mediterranean Gull has expanded massively in northwest and central Europe since the 1980s (Keller *et al.* 2020), but the European population as a whole is believed to have declined over the same period, due principally to losses from the very large population along the Ukrainian Black Sea coast.

Mediterranean Gull (* mixed pair)				England, C	3	2	3
	S	CP	TP	Derbyshire	1	1	1
England	43	1,135	1,176	Staffordshire	1	1*	1*
England, SW	6	617	635	Warwickshire	1	0	1
Dorset	1	na	na	England, N	10	84	88
Hampshire	4	605	605	Cheshire & Wirral	2	15	15
Isle of Wight	1	12	30	Cumbria	1	1	1
England, SE	13	329	340	Greater Manchester	1	0	1
Berkshire	1	2	2	Lancs & N Mersey	2	65	65
Essex	3	1	8	Northumberland	1	0	2
Kent	3	285	285	Yorkshire	3	3	4
Surrey	2	0	3	Wales	2	0	2
Sussex	4	41	42	Anglesey	2	0	2 (1*)
England, E	11	103	110	Scotland, S	1	0	1
Cambridgeshire	2	0	2 (1*)	Dumfries & Galloway	1	0	1
Lincolnshire	3	0	3	Northern Ireland	3	1	8
Norfolk	3	67	67	Co. Antrim	2	0	7
Northamptonshire	2	0	2	Co. Fermanagh	1	1	1
Suffolk	1	36	36	TOTALS	49	1,136	1,187

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis*

Occasional breeder

One site: one individual. An adult Ring-billed Gull returned to the Common Gull *L. canus* colony in Perth & Kinross that it has frequented since 2009, although there was no sign of mixed breeding in 2019.

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*Very rare 3 bp 15y trend: **weak decrease -28%****Amber**

Near-complete

Three sites: One pair, and one probable and one possible mixed pair. Keller *et al.* (2020) show substantial range increase in Europe since the 1980s, with the species colonising inland areas across much of central Europe. Despite this, there has been no sign of an increase in the UK since the first breeding in 1995.

England, SW

Avon One site: an adult female paired with a Lesser Black-backed Gull *L. fuscus* in a colony of the latter. Although mating occurred, no further breeding activity was observed. **Hampshire** One site: one pair bred for the sixth successive year, two young fledged. One of the pair is believed to have some Herring Gull *L. argentatus* ancestry, and this was apparent in the plumage of the offspring.

England, N

Yorkshire One site: an immature (4CY) bird was present in a colony of Lesser Black-backed Gulls in late April and early May.

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

Less scarce 1,375 bp 15y trend: **stable -14%**

Amber

Near-complete

58 sites: 1,303 pairs. Fewer pairs than in 2018, and indeed this is the second-lowest total reported since the species was added to the RBBP's species list in 1995. There was, however, a welcome increase in productivity – Gronant, Denbigh & Flint, and Eccles, Norfolk, were the standout colonies in that regard.

Little Tern				Northumberland	2	103	71
	S	CP	YF	Yorkshire	1	25	39
England	28	927	648	Wales	2	165	212
England, SW	3	96	18	Denbigh & Flint	2	165	212
Dorset	1	36	14	Scotland	27	193	31
Hampshire	2	60	4	Scotland, Mid	2	32	2
England, SE	7	71	28	Moray & Nairn	1	4	2
Essex	2	34	11	North-east Scotland	1	28	0
Kent	2	7	4	Scotland, N & W	25	161	29
Sussex	3	30	13	Argyll	6	85	21
England, E	11	554	475	Caithness	1	4	0
Lincolnshire	1	10	1	Highland	5	9	5
Norfolk	7	526	460	Orkney	1	10	0
Suffolk	3	18	14	Outer Hebrides	12	53	3
England, N	7	206	127	Isle of Man	1	18	14
Cleveland	1	36	8	TOTALS	58	1,303	905
Cumbria	3	42	9				

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

Rare 115 bp 25y trend: **stable +26%**

Red

Near-complete

Three sites: 125 pairs. In addition, hybrid pairs with Common Tern *S. hirundo* were recorded at a site in **Anglesey** (two chicks fledged), the **Isle of May** (one chick fledged), and **Lothian** (possibly paired). The last site also hosted a pair of Roseate × Common Tern hybrids. Numbers at the UK's most important Roseate Tern colony, Coquet Island in Northumberland, continue to grow, posting a new record number in 2019. Productivity was also high, with the second-highest number of fledged birds since 1970, thanks in part to the hasty erection of electric fencing when a Eurasian Otter *Lutra lutra* arrived on the island. While immigration from the much larger colonies of Rockabill (1,564 pairs in 2019) and Lady's Island Lake (195 pairs) in the Republic of

Roseate Tern				Northumberland	1	122	157	Northern Ireland	1	1	1
	S	CP	YF	Wales	1	2	4	Co. Antrim	1	1	1
England, N	1	122	157	Anglesey	1	2	4	TOTALS	3	125	162

Ireland has driven the increase on Coquet (Seward *et al.* 2019), ringing studies indicate that the percentage of Coquet’s breeding adults that were hatched on the island itself has risen steadily from 20% in 2006 to nearly 60% in 2019.

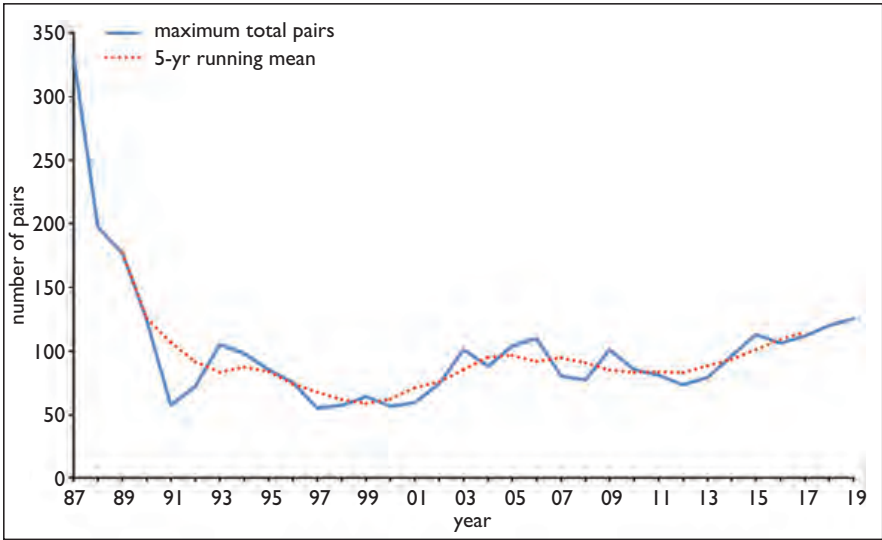


Fig. 8. Maximum numbers of breeding Roseate Terns *Sterna dougallii* in the UK, 1987–2019, with a 5-year running mean.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*
Occasional breeder

Green

One site: one individual. What was presumed to be the same bird that summered at Swillington Ings, Yorkshire, in 2016–18 was again present in 2019, albeit with a briefer visit than in previous years, from 11th to 21st May 2019.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*
Scarce 785 bp*
19y trend (SMP): **strong decrease -70%**

Red
Low

272 apparently occupied territories (AOT). For many of the territories reported on, breeding success is not monitored, so the numbers of fledged young we report cannot be taken as a measure of productivity, and it is not always clear where breeding success has been monitored to enable us to separate out those counts. The increase in numbers in 2019 is related to an increase in counting effort connected with the *Seabirds Count* national census, for which fieldwork was completed in 2021 and results are due in 2023. This will give a much more comprehensive assessment of Arctic Skua numbers and trends. Sample-based monitoring by the Seabird Monitoring Programme (SMP) reported a decline of 70% since the last census (JNCC 2021).

* Woodward *et al.* (2020).

Arctic Skua				Caithness	10	19	0	Outer Hebrides	5	7	2
				Fair Isle	1	28	18	Shetland	54	99	20
Scotland N & W				Highland	3	22	0	TOTALS	91	272	44
Argyll				Orkney	17	96	4				
				S	AOT	YF					
				91	272	44					
				1	1	0					

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*
Less scarce 1,255 bp*
12y trend (survey): **weak increase +38%**

Green
Low

151–230 pairs. As usual, data were received for only a small proportion of the population.

* Dillon *et al.* (2009).

Red-throated Diver			Moray & Nairn	1	5	Highland	7	16
	CP	TP	North-east Scotland	0	1	Orkney	72	88
Scotland, S	1	2	Perth & Kinross	0	1	Outer Hebrides	8	13
Clyde	0	1	Scotland, N & W	149	221	Shetland	56	59
Clyde Islands	1	1	Argyll	0	32	TOTALS	151	230
Scotland, Mid	1	7	Caithness	6	13			

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

Rare 217 bp*

12y trend (survey): **stable** +16%

Amber

Low

12–62 pairs. Numbers reported have been low over the last decade since intensive monitoring by the RSPB, allied to a programme of nest-raft provision, ceased, but there was an increase in records submitted to the RBBP in 2019. While this is a welcome development, which we hope will continue, only a relatively small fraction of the population is reported on annually, and we have no knowledge of trends over the considerable period since the last national survey in 2005.

* Eaton *et al.* (2007).

Black-throated Diver			Dumfries & Galloway	0	2	Argyll	0	13
	CP	TP	Scotland, Mid	2	3	Caithness	0	3
Scotland, S	1	4	Moray & Nairn	1	1	Highland	9	32
Ayrshire	0	1	Perth & Kinross	1	2	Outer Hebrides	0	7
Clyde	1	1	Scotland, N & W	9	55	TOTALS	12	62

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*

Potential breeder

One site: one breeding pair. White Stork has featured in only one previous RBBP report, when a male built a nest in Nottinghamshire in 2012. Since 2016, the White Stork Project (www.whitestorkproject.org) has released 166 storks in Sussex. This year's record was the first breeding attempt as a consequence of the project, involving a released, Polish female and what was believed to be a wild (unringed) male.

England, SE

Sussex One site: one pair bred, they laid three eggs but the attempt failed during incubation.

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

Very rare 27 bp

(no trend available but increasing)

Amber

Near-complete

Five sites: 34–37 pairs. Another record total and, while there was a slight dip in numbers at the most important site, Holkham, in Norfolk, successful breeding in Suffolk as well as an attempt at a new site in Cheshire & Wirral and a nest-building bird in Hertfordshire maintained the growth seen since 2010 (fig. 9). Bloomfield (2021) gave an overview of the establishment of the breeding colony in Decoy Wood, Holkham, from the first nest-building in 2004 and the first successful breeding in 2010, through to 2020, by which point 345 birds had fledged from the site. He highlighted how, in recent years, nesting birds have moved into denser willow *Salix* thickets, making direct observation of nests very difficult, meaning that future monitoring at the site may be more reliant upon estimates.

As with the other long-legged wetland birds in the process of colonising the UK, Keller *et al.* (2020) report a pattern of huge range expansion in Spoonbills since the 1980s. This has accompanied a steady population increase, estimated at 5% per year (Deinet *et al.* 2013), attributed to improved protection of both birds and sites, as well as the banning of organochlorine pesticides.

England, SE

Hertfordshire One site: a single bird built a nest.

England, E

Norfolk One site (Holkham): 26 pairs bred, fledging 41 young. Suffolk One site: six breeding pairs. One nest in April failed at the egg stage; five nests in July, of which three hatched eggs but all failed, predated by a Badger *Meles meles*.

England, N

Cheshire & Wirral One site: one pair built a nest, but the breeding attempt appeared to be halted by intervention from a second male. Yorkshire One site: three breeding pairs. Two pairs bred, each fledging one young; a third pair built a nest.

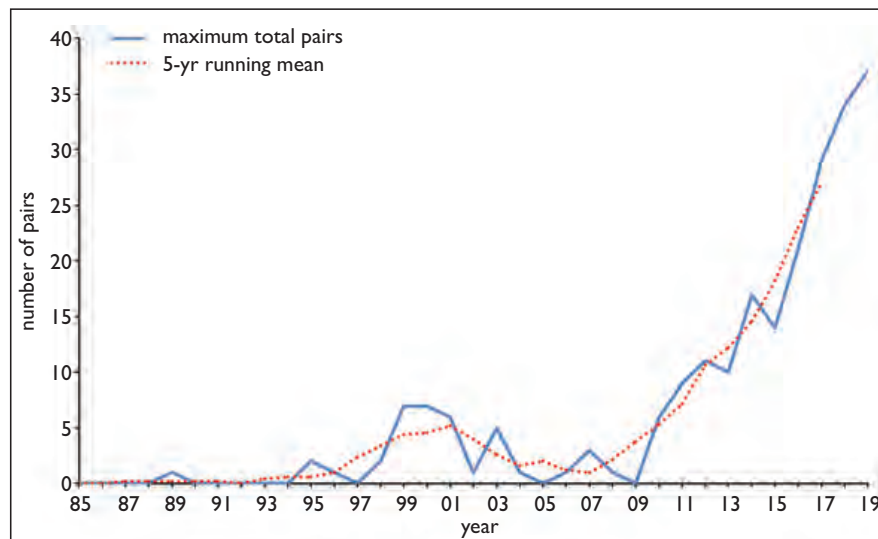


Fig. 9. Maximum numbers of Eurasian Spoonbills *Platalea leucorodia* breeding in the UK, 1985–2019, with a 5-year running mean.

Eurasian Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Rare 201 booming males 25y trend: **strong increase** +1,128%

Amber

Near-complete

109 sites: 78–227 pairs. A new record total, for the 13th successive year.

These figures are based on the RSPB monitoring methodology, with the minimum figure based on the number of nests found. The minimum number of booming males is based on residency at a site for at least a week, while the maximum figure includes males booming for a shorter period and cases where it was not possible to confirm that different males were involved. The maximum total number of pairs (TP) combines information on both booming males and nests found. Sometimes the number of nests at a site exceeds the number of boomers heard.

Eurasian Bittern	sites	booming males (min)	booming males (max)	nests (min)	nests (max)	TP
England	103	206	218	74	76	219
England, SW	18	53	54	22	23	55
Avon	1	0	1	0	0	1
Dorset	1	1	1	0	0	1
Gloucestershire	1	1	1	0	0	1
Isle of Wight	1	1	1	2	2	2
Somerset	12	48	48	20	21	48
Wiltshire	2	2	2	0	0	2
England, SE	13	17	17	5	5	17
Bedfordshire	2	2	2	0	0	2
Kent	9	12	12	4	4	12
Oxfordshire	1	2	2	1	1	2

Eurasian Bittern cont.

	sites	booming males (min)	booming males (max)	nests (min)	nests (max)	TP
Sussex	1	1	1	0	0	1
England, E	55	109	118	32	33	118
Cambridgeshire	14	33	35	7	7	35
Lincolnshire	7	8	10	4	4	10
Norfolk	22	28	28	4	4	28
Suffolk	12	40	45	17	18	45
England, C	1	3	3	1	1	3
Nottinghamshire	1	3	3	1	1	3
England, N	16	24	26	14	14	26
Greater Manchester	1	0	1	0	0	1
Lancs & N Mersey	2	2	2	1	1	2
Northumberland	1	1	1	0	0	1
Yorkshire	12	21	22	13	13	22
Wales	6	8	8	4	4	8
Anglesey	4	6	6	3	3	6
Breconshire	1	1	1	0	0	1
Gwent	1	1	1	1	1	1
TOTALS	109	214	226	78	80	227

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus***Very rare** 3 males (no trend available)

Near complete

One site: one male. The secretive behaviour of this species, and the extensive area of Somerset's Avalon Marshes, means there is a level of uncertainty over whether this small heron is establishing a breeding population in the UK. The absence of any Somerset records in 2018, after an unbroken run from 2009 to 2017, suggested not, so it is pleasing to note the return in 2019. As with other heron species in Europe, there has been an expansion in the Little Bittern's range since the 1980s, although there appears to have been some range loss in western France and northern Spain (Keller *et al.* 2020).

England, SW

Somerset One site: one male barking from 14th May to 1st June; there are suggestions that a second male may have been present.

Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax***Colonising breeder**

One site: one possible pair. After a run of five years with records, there were no records from the Avalon Marshes, Somerset, the site of the UK's only confirmed breeding, in 2017.

England, SE

Kent One site: two birds present, possibly a pair, an adult present from 28th April to 23rd May and a subadult from 13th May to 29th June.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Colonising breeder

Nine sites: 10–19 pairs; 24+ young fledged. Cattle Egret first featured in a RBBP report in 2008, when two pairs bred in Somerset, and it was speculated that the species was ‘here to stay’. After that, there was a gap of nine years without confirmed breeding! However, with confirmed breeding in 2017–19, perhaps we can speculate that they are, again, here to stay? This time, supporting evidence comes from EBBA2 (Keller *et al.* 2020), which shows considerable northward expansion (fig. 10), and Cattle Egret had the greatest change index (a measure of range change in areas of comparable coverage in the two atlases) of any native species in Europe other than Red-flanked Bluetail *Tarsiger cyanurus*.

England, SW

Cornwall One site: one pair bred, fledged three young. **Hampshire** One site: four pairs bred, fledged 11 young, plus one probable breeding pair and a single male. **Somerset** One site: three probable breeding pairs. Six recently fledged birds were seen elsewhere in Somerset, so it seems highly likely that at least one pair bred in the county, quite possibly at a different site from the one reported on here.

England, SE

Essex One site: one pair bred, fledged four young. **Kent** Two sites: (1) one pair bred, fledged two young; (2) one probable breeding pair.

England, E

Norfolk One site: four probable breeding pairs. **Northamptonshire** One site: one pair bred, fledged four young.

England, E

Cheshire & Wirral One site: one pair bred, failed during incubation.



Simon Stirrup

454. Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*, Norfolk, February 2019.

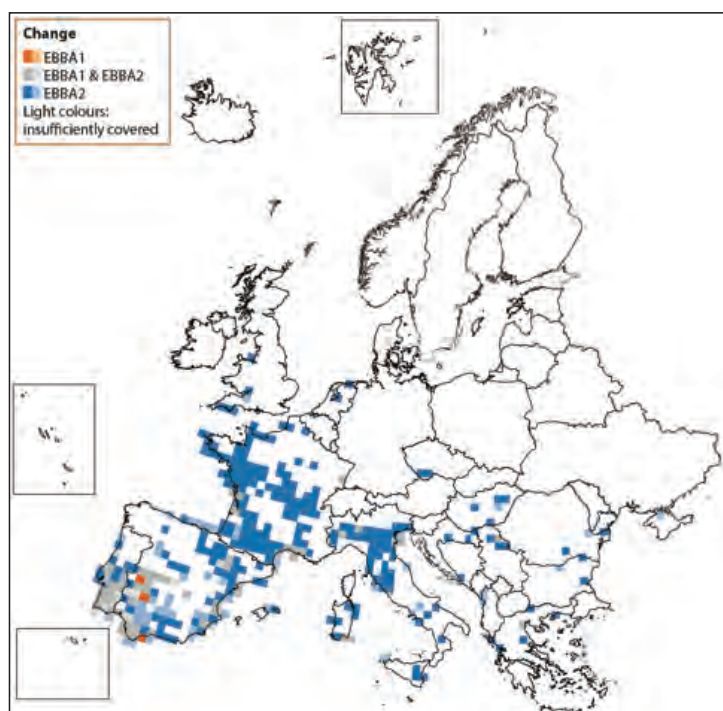


Fig. 10. Range change in Cattle Egrets *Bubulcus ibis* between the two European Breeding Bird Atlases (mid 1980s and 2013–17). Orange squares show range loss, blue squares range gain, grey squares are those with records in both atlas periods. Paler squares of all three colours are those with poorer coverage in the first atlas so assessments of range change may be less reliable. Reproduced from *European Breeding Bird Atlas 2* (Keller *et al.* 2020), © European Bird Census Council (EBCC).

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* Occasional breeder

Two sites: two possible pairs. The series of sightings in Norfolk is intriguing and, although no more than one bird was seen at a time, it is possible that a pair was present and that the juvenile seen nearby was the result of an undetected breeding attempt.

England, SW

Somerset One site: one bird present between 15th June and 14th July.

England, E

Norfolk One site: intermittent sightings of at least one adult, 21st April to 3rd July, followed by a juvenile nearby, 24th July to 19th September.

Great White Egret *Ardea alba*

Very rare 13 bp

(no trend available but increasing)

Near-complete

Ten sites: 16–24 pairs; 35 young fledged. RBBP notes records of possible breeding where two or more birds are present at a potential breeding site through the breeding season. A new record total was recorded, with another increase at the key site on the Avalon Marshes, Somerset, and the first breeding in northern England, in Cheshire & Wirral.

The colonisation of the UK by wetland species from farther south in Europe is a familiar story, well covered by RBBP reports in recent years. In many cases, climate change is presumed to be the primary driver of this northward range expansion (see Ausden *et al.* 2015). The role of other drivers should not be overlooked, however; improved protection from hunting due to the requirements of the European Union's Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) has enabled a westward expansion of Great White Egrets from Hungary and the Ukraine, as shown by the change map from EBBA2 (fig. 11; Keller *et al.* 2020). Great White Egrets bred in 13 new countries between 1980 and 2012 (Ławicki 2014). New wetland habitat creation, whether for conservation purposes or agriculture (e.g. rice fields), has also aided this expansion.

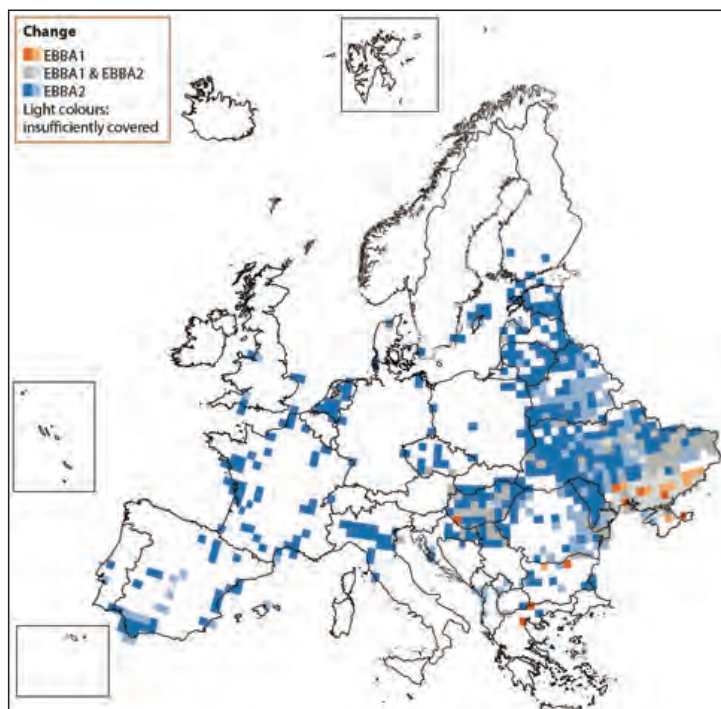


Fig. 11. Range change in Great White Egrets *Ardea alba* between the two European Breeding Bird Atlases (mid 1980s and 2013–17). Orange squares show range loss, blue squares range gain, grey squares are those with records in both atlas periods. Paler squares of all three colours are those with poorer coverage in the first atlas so assessments of range change may be less reliable. Reproduced from *European Breeding Bird Atlas 2* (Keller *et al.* 2020), © European Bird Census Council (EBCC).

England, SW

Avon One site one possible breeding pair. Hampshire One site: one probable breeding pair. Somerset One site: 14 pairs bred, all successfully, fledging 31 young. Wiltshire Two sites: two possible breeding pairs.

England, E

Cambridgeshire Three sites: three possible breeding pairs. Norfolk One site: one pair bred, fledging two young; one probable breeding pair.

England, N

Cheshire & Wirral One site: one pair bred, fledging two young.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Less scarce 1,337 bp 15y trend: **strong increase +648%**

Green

High

182 sites: 1,387–1,458 pairs. Last year we reported on a marked between-year decline likely due to high mortality during the ‘Beast from the East’ winter storm in February and March 2018, most noticeably in the east of England, where breeding numbers almost halved. There was a partial recovery in 2019, with increases in nearly all east-coast counties, although there were no breeding records from Co. Durham or Northumberland.

Little Egret			Kent	9	179	Greater Manchester	2	2
	S	TP	Oxfordshire	3	7	Lancs & N Mersey	3	24
England	152	1,212	Surrey	1	9	Yorkshire	5	39
England, SW	35	224	Sussex	7	45	Wales	22	170
Avon	1	2	England, E	36	308	Anglesey	4	20
Cornwall	7	30	Cambridgeshire	9	64	Breconshire	3	3
Devon	5	28	Lincolnshire	9	118	Caernarfonshire	3	71
Dorset	5	27	Norfolk	9	57	Carmarthenshire	2	13
Gloucestershire	3	11	Northamptonshire	2	9	Denbigh & Flint	3	37
Hampshire	4	49	Suffolk	7	60	Gower	1	5
Isle of Wight	5	14	England, C	13	39	Gwent	3	14
Somerset	3	39	Derbyshire	1	1	Meirionnydd	2	4
Wiltshire	2	24	Leics & Rutland	5	10	Radnorshire	1	3
England, SE	51	420	Nottinghamshire	3	12	Northern Ireland	4	38
Bedfordshire	2	6	Warwickshire	3	12	Co. Down	4	38
Berkshire	1	1	Worcestershire	1	4	Channel Islands	4	38
Buckinghamshire	6	17	England, N	17	221	Guernsey	1	20
Essex	14	130	Cheshire & Wirral	2	104	Jersey	3	18
Greater London	3	5	Cleveland	1	11	TOTALS	182	1,458
Hertfordshire	5	21	Cumbria	4	41			

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Rare 242 bp

25y trend: **strong increase +207%**

Amber

High

196–236 pairs. Monitoring coverage has been incomplete in some parts of Scotland in recent years, which is understandable as the population has increased and expanded; more frustrating is the fact that not all records reach the RBBP, so we can no longer track the UK population accurately. Such problems do not (yet) exist in England and Wales, and 31 pairs in England is a new record high. A Rutland-hatched female spent the summer paired with a young male in Poole Harbour, the latter being one of the cohort of eight birds translocated from Scotland in 2017 in the first phase of the Poole Harbour Osprey Project (www.birdsofpooleharbour.co.uk/osprey). The pair was observed nest-building at a number of sites, and copulation was attempted, raising hope for the future success of this project.

Ospreys have prospered in most European countries in recent decades, as improved legislation and enforcement have enabled recovery from past persecution and organochlorine pollution; conservation measures such as the provision of artificial nest sites and reintroductions (in Spain and Italy as well as England) have played an important role (Schmidt-Rothmund *et al.* 2014). Predation from the flourishing White-tailed Eagle (Treinys *et al.* 2011) and Eagle Owl *Bubo bubo* population is an issue in some regions; Schmidt-Rothmund *et al.* (2014) described how in Finland ‘The noisy begging of the young at sunset from the middle of a clear-cut is like a dinner bell for an Eagle Owl starting to hunt.’

News from southern Europe is, however, not so good: extinction, or near-extinction, has been reported from Turkey, Bulgaria, Moldova and Ukraine (Keller *et al.* 2020), and very few pairs remain in North Africa (Schmidt-Rothmund *et al.* 2014).

Osprey	CP	TP	YF	Wales	5	6	10	Scotland, Mid	64	74	75
England	27	31	56	Denbigh & Flint	1	1	0	Angus & Dundee	6	8	6
England, SW	0	1	0	Meirionnydd	2	3	4	Moray & Nairn	0	1	0
Dorset	0	1	0	Montgomeryshire	2	2	6	North-east Scotland	19	19	24
England, E	3	3	4	Scotland	164	199	224	Perth & Kinross	23	27	29
Northamptonshire	3	3	4	Scotland, S	30	41	52	Upper Forth	16	19	16
England, C	10	10	23	Ayrshire	3	3	4	Scotland, N & W	70	84	97
Leics & Rutland	10	10	23	Borders	7	12	15	Argyll	13	19	19
England, N	14	17	29	Clyde	9	10	15	Caithness	4	6	10
Cumbria	8	10	18	Clyde Islands	2	3	2	Highland	53	59	68
Northumberland	6	7	11	Dumfries & G'way	8	12	14	TOTALS	196	236	290
				Lothian	1	1	2				

Honey-buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

Rare 38 bp

25y trend: **weak increase +57%**

Amber

Moderate

17–31 pairs. A slightly lower-than-average return, but this was the year before the start of fieldwork for the 2020–21 national Honey-buzzard survey. We expect to be able to give a much more accurate (and considerably higher) account of numbers once all the data for that survey has been received.

Honey-buzzard	I	CP	TP	YF	England, N	1	0	2	0
England	15	13	24	20	Cumbria	0	0	1	0
England, SW	3	6	9	9	Yorkshire	1	0	1	0
Dorset	1	2	3	4	Wales	0	1	1	2
Hampshire	0	4	6	5	Gower	0	1	1	2
Somerset	1	0	0	0	Scotland	4	3	6	3
Wiltshire	1	0	0	0	Scotland, S	0	0	2	0
England, SE	8	7	12	11	Dumfries & G'way	0	0	2	0
Kent	2	0	2	0	Scotland, Mid	2	2	2	2
Surrey	1	1	1	2	Perth & Kinross	1	2	2	2
Sussex	5	6	9	9	Upper Forth	1	0	0	0
England, C	3	0	1	0	Scotland, N & W	2	1	2	1
Herefordshire	2	0	0	0	Argyll	1	0	0	0
Nottinghamshire	1	0	1	0	Highland	1	1	2	1
					TOTALS	19	17	31	25

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos***Scarce** 508 bp*33y trend (survey): **stable** +16%**Green**

Moderate

175–288 pairs. Data were received from 308 home ranges monitored by Scottish Raptor Study Group members and submitted to the Scottish Raptor Monitoring Scheme (Challis *et al.* 2021).

* Hayhow *et al.* (2017).

Golden Eagle					Scotland, N & W	7	137	229	92
	I ¹	CP	TP	YF	Argyll	2	39	66	18
Scotland, S	1	2	4	2	Caithness	1	0	0	0
Scotland, Mid	1	36	55	30	Highland	2	66	114	53
Angus & Dundee	0	2	4	4	Outer Hebrides	2	32	49	21
Moray & Nairn	0	2	2	2	TOTALS	9	175	288	124
North-east Scotland	0	16	18	9	¹ Total includes home ranges occupied by single birds or showing signs of occupation but no pair seen.				
Perth & Kinross	1	10	22	13					
Upper Forth	0	6	9	2					

Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis***Scarce** 712 bp25y trend: **strong increase** +206%**Green**

Moderate

558–820 pairs. The Northern Goshawk is one of Europe's most widespread raptor species; EBBA2 (Keller *et al.* 2020) mapped records in all countries except the Republic of Ireland and Iceland. Whilst the UK's population is not showing signs of the urbanisation that has been recorded across central and eastern Europe (Rutz *et al.* 2006), it continues to increase strongly. Two young fledged from the first confirmed breeding attempt in Kent.

Northern Goshawk			Shropshire (e 27)	22	27
	CP	TP	Staffordshire (e 6)	1	6
England (e 575+)	352	516	Worcestershire (e 8)	1	6
England, SW (e 259)	163	233	England, N (e 117+)	75	107
Cornwall (e 11)	5	11	Cheshire & Wirral	1	2
Devon (e 51)	47	51	Cumbria (e 8)	5	8
Dorset (e 15)	1	6	Co. Durham (e 5)	1	5
Gloucestershire (e 43)	37	43	Lancs & N Mersey (e 2)	0	2
Hampshire (e 80)	43	69	Northumberland (e 50)	39	50
Isle of Wight	0	1	Yorkshire (e 40–50)	29	40
Somerset (e 12)	2	6	Wales (e 319+)	44	105
Wiltshire (e 46)	28	46	Breconshire (e 50–60)	13	25
England, SE (e 45)	16	34	Caernarfonshire (e 5)	0	5
Berkshire (e 1)	1	1	Carmarthenshire (e 6)	6	6
Essex (e 2)	0	0	Ceredigion (e 20–25)	2	2
Kent (e 1)	1	1	Denbigh & Flint	3	8
Oxfordshire (e 5)	4	5	East Glamorgan (e 15)	1	1
Surrey (e 6)	3	6	Gower	2	2
Sussex (e 30)	7	21	Gwent (e 75)	4	25
England, E (e 43)	32	40	Meirionnydd (e 20–30)	3	7
Lincolnshire (e 1)	1	1	Montgomeryshire (e 50)	0	1
Norfolk (e 25–30)	19	27	Pembrokeshire	3	13
Suffolk (e 12)	12	12	Radnorshire (e 30)	7	10
England, C (e 111+)	66	102	Scotland (e 281+)	162	199
Derbyshire (e 30)	18	23	Scotland, S (e 104+)	61	74
Herefordshire	14	30	Ayrshire	3	5
Nottinghamshire (e 10)	10	10	Borders (e 45)	32	41

Northern Goshawk cont.			Fife (e 15–20)	2	12
	CP	TP	Moray & Nairn (e 20)	5	5
Clyde	0	1	North-east Scotland (e 77)	68	77
Clyde Islands	1	1	Perth & Kinross	8	11
Dumfries & G'way (e 50)	25	26	Upper Forth	4	5
Lothian (e 2)	0	0	Scotland, N & W (e 40)	10	11
Scotland, Mid (e 137+)	91	114	Highland (e 30–40)	10	11
Angus & Dundee	4	4	TOTALS (e 1,175+)	558	820

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Scarce 401 bp

25y trend: **strong increase +389%**

Amber

High

321–406 breeding females/pairs. Some 'pairs' actually refer to two or more females paired with a single polygynous male.

Marsh Harrier				England, N (e 62)	39	53	62
	CP	TP	YF	Cheshire & Wirral (e 4)	2	4	5
England (e 408)	289	365	303	Cleveland (e 1)	1	1	2
England, SW (e 33)	29	33	35	Lancs & N Mersey (e 5)	4	5	6
Avon (e 1)	0	1	0	Northumberland (e 2)	2	2	2
Dorset (e 5)	5	5	7	Yorkshire (e 45–50)	30	41	47
Hampshire (e 2)	0	2	0	Wales (e 6+)	5	6	6
Isle of Wight (e 4)	4	4	10	Anglesey (e 4)	3	4	3
Somerset (e 20)	19	20	14	Gower	1	1	3
Wiltshire (e 1)	1	1	4	Gwent (e 1)	1	1	0
England, SE (e 91)	35	57	45	Scotland (e 13+)	11	13	25
Bedfordshire (e 1)	0	1	0	Scotland, S (e 1)	0	1	0
Essex (e 12)	10	12	8	Dumfries & Galloway (e 1)	0	1	0
Kent (e 50–70)	19	37	23	Scotland, Mid (e 12+)	11	12	25
Oxfordshire (e 1)	1	1	4	Angus & Dundee	3	3	6
Sussex (e 7)	5	6	10	North-east Scotland (e 1)	1	1	3
England, E (e 219)	184	219	158	Perth & Kinross	6	7	13
Cambridgeshire (e 33)	26	33	15	Upper Forth	1	1	3
Lincolnshire (e 31)	23	31	34	Channel Islands (e 28)	16	22	18
Norfolk (e 89)	69	89	39	Guernsey (e 5)	3	5	0
Suffolk (e 66)	66	66	70	Jersey (e 23)	13	17	18
England, C (e 3)	2	3	3	TOTALS (e 455+)	321	406	352
Nottinghamshire (e 3)	2	3	3				

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Scarce 575 bp*

12y trend (survey): **weak decrease -29%**

Red

High

209–331 pairs. Another increase in the much-depleted English population, with a rise in the number of breeding attempts and in the number of young fledged (Smith & NERF 2020). Five of the birds fledged did so under Defra's 'brood management trial': they were removed from a nest on a grouse moor in the Yorkshire Dales, reared in captivity and released elsewhere. Satellite tracking revealed that three of these five chicks disappeared in the months following release, in a continuation of the pattern shown by Murgatroyd *et al.* (2019), who found first-year survival on managed grouse moors to be half that in other studies, with the birds being more likely to die or disappear.

* Wotton *et al.* (2018).

Hen Harrier				Scotland, S	24	32	38
	CP	TP	YF	Borders	7	9	12
England	15	23	47	Clyde	8	11	8
England, C	1	1	2	Clyde Islands	3	3	0
Derbyshire	1	1	2	Dumfries & G'way	6	9	18
England, N	14	22	45	Scotland, Mid	30	38	32
Cumbria	1	1	3	Angus & Dundee	2	2	0
Co. Durham	0	1	0	Moray & Nairn	7	7	12
Greater Manchester	0	1	0	North-east Scotland	10	10	8
Lancs & N Mersey	5	8	22	Perth & Kinross	11	19	12
Northumberland	6	9	10	Scotland, N & W	115	195	131
Yorkshire	2	2	10	Argyll	22	22	19
Wales	20	36	40	Caithness	5	11	2
Caernarfonshire	2	7	2	Highland	22	27	27
Denbigh & Flint	2	6	7	Orkney	42	98	40
Meirionnydd	13	18	31	Outer Hebrides	24	37	43
Montgomeryshire	0	2	0	Isle of Man	5	7	0
Radnorshire	3	3	0	TOTALS	209	331	288
Scotland	169	265	201				

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus***Very rare** 5 bp25y trend: **strong decrease** -60%**Amber**

Near-complete

Two sites: one pair bred, one probable breeding pair. The UK's population of Montagu's Harriers is clearly at a low ebb – for the second year in a row only a single pair bred.

England, S

One site: one pair bred, fledging three young.

England, N

Yorkshire One site: one pair at a former breeding site; they built a nest and were seen mating but no eggs were laid.



Axel Emil Thorenfeldt

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus***White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*****Rare** 116 bp25y trend: **strong increase** +1,216%**Red**

Near-complete

99–123 pairs. The total number of pairs matches the record reached in 2017, although the true population was likely to be a little higher; the number of young fledged is substantially higher than for any other year as the population continues to flourish (fig. 12). White-tailed Eagle is recovering its previous range across much of Europe, showing one of the greatest range expansions between the two European Breeding Bird Atlases of any species (Keller *et al.* 2020). This has

White-tailed Eagle				Scotland, N & W	98	120	103
	CP	TP	YF	Argyll	33	37	31
Scotland, Mid	1	3	0	Highland	43	52	45
Angus & Dundee	1	1	0	Orkney	1	1	1
Fife	0	1	0	Outer Hebrides	21	30	26
North-east Scotland	0	1	0	TOTALS	99	123	103

been enabled by legal protection and the banning of organochlorine pesticides (Deinet *et al.* 2013); reintroductions have helped the process in the Republic of Ireland and Czech Republic, as well as in the UK. A new reintroduction began in 2019, with the release of six young birds on the Isle of Wight (www.roydennis.org/isleofwight).

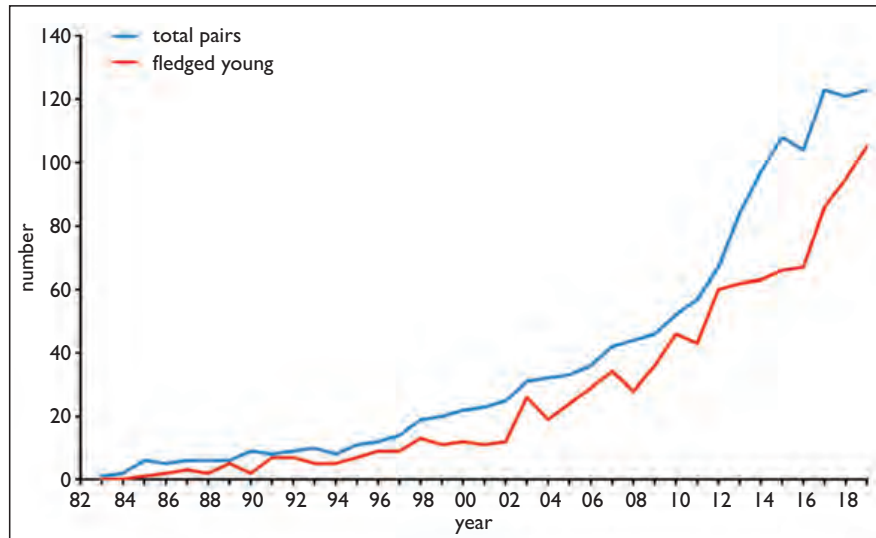


Fig. 12. Numbers of breeding White-tailed Eagles *Haliaeetus albicilla* in the UK, 1982–2019: maximum total pairs and fledged young.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

Less scarce 1,800+ bp* (no trend available)

Green

Low

166–234 pairs. The elusive nature of this nocturnal species means that it continues to be one of the most under-reported species on the Panel's species list.

* Woodward *et al.* (2020).

Long-eared Owl			Staffordshire (e 2)		2	
	CP	TP	England, N (e 343)		56	78
England (e 553+)	114	165	Cheshire & Wirral (e 2)		1	2
England, SW (e 38+)	15	22	Cumbria (e 5)		2	3
Cornwall	1	1	Co. Durham (e 100)		0	1
Dorset (e 2)	0	0	Greater Manchester (e 36)		11	15
Hampshire (e 10)	1	1	Lancs & N Mersey (e 30)		3	4
Isle of Wight (e 16)	11	16	Northumberland (e 100)		6	13
Somerset (e 4)	1	3	Yorkshire (e 40–70)		33	40
Wiltshire (e 5)	1	1	Wales (e 57+)		7	11
England, SE (e 125+)	12	23	Anglesey (e 1)		0	0
Essex (e 4)	4	4	Breconshire (e 5)		1	3
Kent (e 20)	3	10	Caernarfonshire (e 5)		0	0
Oxfordshire	1	1	Ceredigion (e 5–10)		0	0
Sussex (e 100)	4	8	Gower		0	1
England, E (e 27+)	17	23	Gwent (e 5)		2	3
Cambridgeshire (e 13)	9	13	Meirionnydd (e 10)		0	0
Lincolnshire (e 5)	1	1	Radnorshire (e 10–20)		4	4
Norfolk (e 4)	2	4	Scotland (e 480+)		19	32
Suffolk (e 5)	5	5	Scotland, S (e 81+)		7	11
England, C (e 20)	14	19	Borders (e 5)		4	5
Derbyshire (e 7)	3	6	Clyde		0	1
Leics & Rutland (e 2)	0	2	Dumfries & Galloway (e 30)		0	0
Nottinghamshire (e 8)	8	8	Lothian (e 45)		3	5
Shropshire (e 1)	1	1				

Long-eared Owl cont.			Argyll (e 10–50)	1	1
	CP	TP	Caithness	1	2
Scotland, Mid (e 232+)	5	10	Highland (e 70–100)	2	3
Fife (e 20–50)	1	1	Outer Hebrides (e 15)	3	5
Moray & Nairn (e 30)	0	1	Isle of Man (e 1+)	1	1
North-east Scotland (e 150)	2	6	Channel Islands (e 30)	25	25
Perth & Kinross	1	1	Guernsey (e 8)	3	3
Upper Forth	1	1	Jersey (e 22)	22	22
Scotland, N & W (e 167+)	7	11	TOTALS (e 1,121+)	166	234

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*
Scarce 620+ bp* (no trend available)

Amber
Moderate

70–139 pairs. This is the lowest total reported by the RBBP since Short-eared Owl was added to our list in 2010. It was widely reported that 2019 was a poor year for voles.

* Woodward *et al.* (2020).

Short-eared Owl			Pembrokeshire	5	5
	CP	TP	Radnorshire (e 10)	4	7
England (e 110)	28	71	Scotland (e 187+)	32	49
England, SE (e 3)	1	3	Scotland, S (e 18+)	6	10
Kent (e 2–3)	1	3	Ayrshire	0	1
England, E (e 5)	0	5	Borders (e 2)	0	2
Cambridgeshire (e 2)	0	2	Clyde	0	1
Lincolnshire (e 3)	0	3	Clyde Islands	6	6
England, C (e 18)	7	18	Dumfries & G'way (e 1–8)	0	0
Derbyshire (e 14)	7	14	Scotland, Mid (e 37+)	0	7
Staffordshire (e 4)	0	4	Angus & Dundee (e 5)	0	0
England, N (e 84)	20	45	Moray & Nairn (e 5)	0	0
Cumbria (e 5)	0	1	North-east Scotland (e 25)	0	5
Co. Durham (e 5)	3	3	Perth & Kinross	0	2
Greater Manchester (e 2)	1	2	Scotland, N & W (e 132+)	26	32
Lancs & N Mersey (e 30)	2	2	Argyll (e 5)	0	0
Northumberland (e 2)	2	2	Caithness	1	3
Yorkshire (e 35–40)	12	35	Highland (e 10–20)	0	2
Wales (e 29+)	10	19	Orkney (e 13)	13	13
Breconshire (e 3)	0	3	Outer Hebrides (e 60–90)	11	13
Caernarfonshire (e 5)	0	0	Shetland	1	1
Ceredigion (e 1)	0	1	TOTALS (e 326+)	70	139
Meirionnydd (e 5)	1	3			

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*
Occasional breeder

One site: one singing male. A fairly typical record, a male was reported singing in Wiltshire from 1st to 6th June. There has not been a confirmed breeding record of Hoopoe in the UK since 1977 when, remarkably, pairs fledged young in Avon, Somerset, Surrey and Sussex.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dryobates minor*

Less scarce 1,000+ bp* (no trend available)

Red

Moderate

38–275 territories. This is the lowest total reported since Lesser Spotted Woodpecker was added to the Panel's species list in 2010. A new analysis by Smith *et al.* (2021) of data from county tetrad-atlases at around the time of *Bird Atlas 2007–11* (Balmer *et al.* 2013) produced an estimate of 1,750–2,300 pairs for that period, as well as demonstrating the considerable potential of this approach for estimating population size of well-dispersed and hard-to-monitor species. What is less clear is how the population has fared since that estimate date. Summing the estimates provided by county recorders for 2019 gives a total of just 789 territories, although estimates are missing for a few areas. We suspect that the number of Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers may have been underestimated in some counties. Given the difficulty of finding this elusive species, and issues of under-reporting in the few counties in which it remains more widespread, we have doubts over how well the annual totals reported by the RBBP reflect the trend in the population, so it is not possible to simply adjust the estimate from Smith *et al.* with a RBBP trend over the intervening period.

Smith *et al.* (2021) tabulated estimates provided in local avifaunas and atlases, including nine from survey periods in 2008–11 (with some variation in the start and end years). Comparing those estimates with those from the six counties for which 2019 estimates are available in this report shows that the total has fallen from 605 to 519 territories (a decline of 14%, which equates to 1.7% per annum, taking a mid-point of 2010 for the first estimate period), although of course the approaches to deriving estimates may not have been consistent between the two periods.

Reporting of Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers was undoubtedly boosted in 2010 and 2011 by fieldwork for the last two years of the national atlas. Limiting an analysis of regional trends in RBBP data to 2012–19 (2013–19 for southeast England due to the influence of Kent atlas fieldwork in 2012), we can see a decline in numbers reported in Wales and every English region (fig. 13). If we restrict the analysis to those counties for which reporting is believed to reflect true numbers reasonably accurately (those for which the county estimate for 2019 was within one territory of the number recorded), the decline over those seven years was 3.9% per annum. It is of course possible that trends are different in the core counties for this species, where numbers substantially exceed annual reporting (e.g. Hampshire, Kent and Sussex).

Data submitted to the RBBP do therefore suggest an ongoing decline over the last decade, although this is difficult to quantify robustly. It may be that an analysis of numbers and occupancy at the scale of individual sites may allow a more precise estimate of change, one reason why we encourage all county bird recorders to submit records at the site level rather than summarised for the county, for this and all other species.

* Woodward *et al.* (2020).

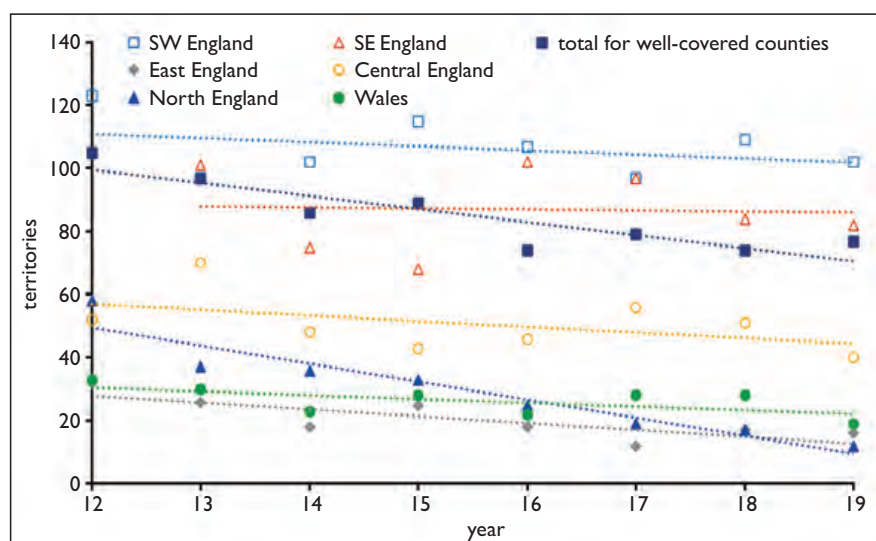


Fig. 13. Annual totals and trends in Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dryobates minor* territories submitted to the RBBP, 2012–19, for English regions and Wales.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker		Hertfordshire (e 5)	5	Warwickshire (e 20)	11
TP		Kent (e 150–200)	37	West Midlands (e 1)	1
England (e740+)	256	Surrey (e 20–25)	12	Worcestershire (e 12)	10
England, SW (e 314)	102	Sussex (e 50)	21	England, N (e28)	13
Avon (e 1)	1	England, E (e 17)	16	Cheshire & Wirral (e 4)	4
Devon (e 10–20)	5	Cambridgeshire (e 3)	3	Greater Manchester (e 3)	1
Dorset (e 13)	13	Lincolnshire (e 3)	3	Lancs & N Mersey (e 1)	0
Gloucestershire (e 11)	11	Norfolk (e 3)	2	Yorkshire (e 10–20)	8
Hampshire (e 250)	58	Northamptonshire (e 5)	5	Wales (e 49+)	19
Somerset (e 15)	10	Suffolk (e 3)	3	Breconshire (e 10)	6
Wiltshire (e 4)	4	England, C (e 85+)	42	Caernarfonshire (e 3)	0
England, SE (e 296+)	83	Derbyshire (e 11)	1	Ceredigion (e 3)	3
Bedfordshire (e 3)	3	Herefordshire	4	Gwent (e 1–5)	0
Berkshire (e 2)	0	Leics & Rutland	2	Meirionnydd (e 7)	5
Buckinghamshire (e 2)	2	Nottinghamshire (e 10)	5	Pembrokeshire	1
Essex (e 6)	0	Shropshire (e 20)	3	Radnorshire (e 20)	4
Greater London (e 3)	3	Staffordshire (e 5)	5	TOTALS (e 789+)	275

Merlin *Falco columbarius*Less scarce 1,160 bp* 25y trend (survey): **weak increase +94%****Red**

Moderate

279–358 pairs. The last survey of Merlin in the UK was in 2008 (Ewing *et al.* 2011) and plans to resurvey the species in 2020 failed through lack of funding.

* Ewing *et al.* (2011).

Merlin			Wales	17	25	Dumfries & G'way	7	8
CP	TP		Breconshire	2	3	Lothian	2	3
England	135	159	Caernarfonshire	0	1	Scotland, Mid	46	56
England, C	6	16	Ceredigion	1	1	Angus & Dundee	3	4
Derbyshire	6	12	Denbigh & Flint	4	5	Moray & Nairn	9	10
Herefordshire	0	2	East Glamorgan	1	1	North-east Scotland	29	32
Staffordshire	0	2	Meirionnydd	5	7	Perth & Kinross	5	10
England, N	129	143	Montgomeryshire	2	2	Scotland, N & W	62	93
Cheshire & Wirral	1	1	Radnorshire	2	5	Argyll	0	3
Cumbria	15	16	Scotland	127	174	Highland	17	27
Co. Durham	44	47	Scotland, S	19	25	Orkney	4	10
Lancs & N Mersey	10	13	Ayrshire	0	1	Outer Hebrides	8	17
Northumberland	23	29	Borders	8	9	Shetland	33	36
Yorkshire	36	37	Clyde	2	4	TOTALS	279	358

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Scarce 735 bp

25y trend: **weak increase +48%****Green**

Moderate

267–678 pairs. Estimates provided by county bird recorders suggest that the UK population is around double the number of records submitted, although there is evidence to suggest it could be higher still (Clements *et al.* 2016).

Hobby			Devon (e 50)	7	44
CP	TP		Dorset (e 30–35)	10	17
England (e 1,256+)	234	609	Gloucestershire (e 20)	14	20
England, SW (e 371+)	58	163	Hampshire (e 175)	11	13
Avon (e 3)	3	3	Isle of Wight (e 1)	0	1
Cornwall (e 9)	5	11	Somerset (e 28)	5	6

Hobby cont.			Warwickshire (e 20)	2	11
	CP	TP	West Midlands (e 2)	0	2
Wiltshire (e 50)	3	48	Worcestershire (e 11)	6	11
England, SE (e 372)	28	118	England, N (e 118)	39	83
Bedfordshire (e 85)	1	1	Cheshire & Wirral (e 23)	8	23
Berkshire (e 8)	0	0	Co. Durham (e 2)	0	0
Buckinghamshire (e 10)	2	10	Greater Manchester (e 8)	1	8
Essex (e 3)	3	3	Lancs & N Mersey (e 15)	0	2
Greater London (e 6)	2	6	Yorkshire (e 50–70)	30	50
Hertfordshire (e 25)	1	6	Wales (e 90+)	28	61
Kent (e 100)	7	52	Breconshire (e 18)	8	15
Oxfordshire (e 15)	0	0	Carmarthenshire (e 12)	2	12
Surrey (e 15–20)	9	15	Ceredigion (e 2)	2	2
Sussex (e 100)	3	25	East Glamorgan (e 5)	1	2
England, E (e 255)	53	150	Gwent (e 25)	7	16
Cambridgeshire (e 45)	3	33	Meirionnydd (e 5)	0	1
Lincolnshire (e 60)	4	56	Montgomeryshire (e 3)	0	0
Norfolk (e 10–20)	9	13	Radnorshire (e 20)	8	13
Northamptonshire (e 50)	29	29	Scotland (e 11+)	5	8
Suffolk (e 80)	8	19	Scotland, S (e 4)	1	1
England, C (e 140+)	56	95	Dumfries & Galloway (e 4)	1	1
Derbyshire (e 35)	25	35	Scotland, Mid (e 7+)	4	7
Herefordshire	5	10	Angus & Dundee	2	3
Leics & Rutland (e 22)	0	0	Moray & Nairn (e 1)	1	1
Nottinghamshire (e 5–10)	1	3	Perth & Kinross	1	3
Shropshire (e 20)	14	20	TOTALS (e 1,357+)	267	678
Staffordshire (e 10)	3	3			

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

Less scarce 1,701 bp* 22y trend (survey): stable +5%

Green

Moderate

823–1,110 pairs. A typical year for this, the most widespread species reported on by RBBP.

* Wilson *et al.* (2018).

Peregrine Falcon			Kent (e 30–40)	11	21
	CP	TP	Oxfordshire (e 5)	4	5
England (e 683+)	410	551	Surrey (e 13)	9	13
England, SW (e 184)	102	136	Sussex (e 45)	35	35
Avon (e 13)	12	13	England, E (e 51)	43	49
Cornwall (e 18)	9	18	Cambridgeshire (e 4)	3	4
Devon (e 48)	25	33	Lincolnshire (e 25)	21	23
Dorset (e 32)	14	16	Norfolk (e 9)	7	9
Gloucestershire (e 16)	11	14	Northamptonshire (e 4)	4	4
Hampshire (e 22)	17	22	Suffolk (e 9)	8	9
Isle of Wight (e 5)	2	4	England, C (e 114+)	75	113
Isles of Scilly (e 2)	2	2	Derbyshire (e 36)	20	36
Somerset (e 22)	6	8	Herefordshire	3	6
Wiltshire (e 6)	4	6	Leics & Rutland (e 12)	6	12
England, SE (e 144)	84	115	Nottinghamshire (e 5)	5	5
Bedfordshire (e 6)	2	6	Shropshire (e 25)	21	25
Berkshire (e 3)	2	3	Staffordshire (e 8)	8	8
Buckinghamshire (e 2)	1	2	Warwickshire (e 10)	4	9
Essex (e 3)	3	3	West Midlands (e 4)	4	4
Greater London (e 24)	14	24	Worcestershire (e 8)	4	8
Hertfordshire (e 3)	3	3	England, N (e 190)	106	138

Peregrine Falcon cont.			Clyde Islands	9	9
	CP	TP	Dumfries & G'way (e 59)	47	59
Cheshire & Wirral (e 10)	10	10	Lothian (e 15)	10	13
Cleveland (e 3)	3	3	Scotland, Mid (e 94+)	69	94
Cumbria (e 40)	12	15	Angus & Dundee	6	14
Co. Durham (e 7–10)	7	7	Fife	14	15
Greater Manchester (e 16)	12	16	Moray & Nairn (e 3)	3	3
Lancs & N Mersey (e 35)	15	19	North-east Scotland (e 32)	26	32
Northumberland (e 16)	7	16	Perth & Kinross	12	19
Yorkshire (e 60)	40	52	Upper Forth	8	11
Wales (e 264)	111	170	Scotland, N & W (e 134+)	41	60
Anglesey (e 10)	9	9	Argyll (e 9)	8	9
Breconshire (e 18)	10	15	Caithness	2	3
Caernarfonshire (e 20)	4	6	Fair Isle (e 1)	0	1
Carmarthenshire (e 7)	4	7	Highland (e 90)	17	24
Ceredigion (e 10–15)	1	2	Orkney (e 16)	12	16
Denbigh & Flint	7	10	Outer Hebrides (e 15)	2	7
East Glamorgan (e 36)	19	33	Northern Ireland (e 77+)	69	77
Gower (e 35)	4	10	Co. Antrim	20	24
Gwent (e 30)	12	21	Co. Armagh	6	7
Meirionnydd (e 15)	3	9	Co. Down	8	10
Montgomeryshire (e 18)	1	1	Co. Fermanagh	14	14
Pembrokeshire (e 35)	27	35	Co. Londonderry	11	11
Radnorshire (e 15)	10	12	Co. Tyrone	10	11
Scotland (e 399+)	226	305	Isle of Man (e 25)	1	1
Scotland, S (e 171+)	116	151	Channel Islands (e 6)	6	6
Ayrshire	10	14	Guernsey (e 3)	3	3
Borders (e 58)	29	40	Jersey (e 3)	3	3
Clyde	11	16	TOTALS (e 1,454+)	823	1,110

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio***Very rare 4 bp****25y trend: weak decrease -44%****Red****High**

Nine sites: 1–10 pairs. Remarkably, the unsuccessful breeding attempt in Suffolk was the first confirmed breeding in eastern England since 1992. Devon has been the most popular English county with Red-backed Shrikes in recent years, and the scatter of prospecting birds in 2019 suggests that the potential for breeding there remains. The species thus retains a toehold in the UK, but we are yet to see any sign of the resurgence that has been observed across the Channel.

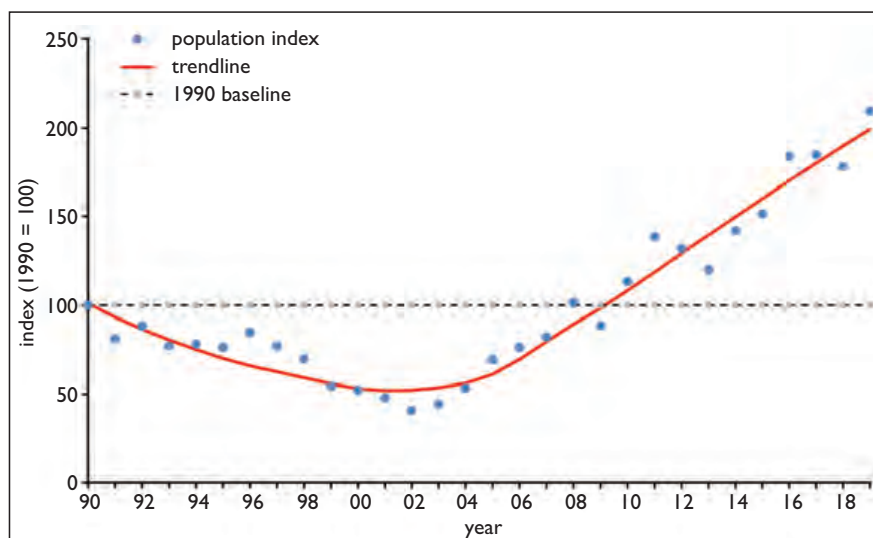


Fig. 14. Index of breeding Red-backed Shrike numbers in the Netherlands, 1990–2019, reproduced from Boele et al. (2021).

Across Europe, there has been a long-term decline of 18% between 1980 and 2017, but the short-term (2008–17) trend is +32% (PECBMS 2019). At a finer scale, there has been a notable recovery in the Low Countries; numbers in the Netherlands have tripled from a low point at the turn of the century, reaching an estimated 530–610 pairs in 2019 (fig. 14), and in Belgium there has been a recovery from complete absence in 1998–99 to 70 pairs by 2019 (Vermeersch *et al.* 2020).

England, SW

Devon Five sites: (1) a pair apparently prospecting, but for one day only; (2) a female at the site used for successful breeding in 2018, for one day; (3)–(5) single males in suitable habitat.

England, E

Suffolk One site: one pair bred, although appeared to have failed at the egg stage.

Scotland, Mid

North-east Scotland Three sites: (1) & (2) pairs on single dates; (3) two singing males on a single date.

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor* Potential breeder

One site: one singing. One singing at a site in **Devon** from 7th to 11th April. Both male and female Great Grey Shrikes sing.

Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

Very rare | singing male 25y trend: **strong decrease -96%**

Red

Near-complete

Two sites: two singing males. Golden Orioles last bred in England in 2009, when two pairs fledged four young at Lakenheath, Suffolk. Across Europe, the breeding population is broadly stable (+16%, 1980 to 2017, PECBMS 2019) and has expanded into Sweden and Finland, although range loss has been observed in Denmark and Norway as well as the UK (Keller *et al.* 2020).

England, SE

Kent One site: one singing male at two locations within the same woodland complex on 13th and 26th May, thought to be the same bird.

England, E

Suffolk One site: one singing male from 24th to 28th May.

Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*

Scarce 381 bp*

32y trend (survey): **stable -1%**

Green

Near-complete

320–358 pairs. A typical year, with a high proportion of the population being counted on an annual basis.

* Hayhow *et al.* (2018b).

Red-billed Chough					
	T	TP			
England, SW	19	22	East Glamorgan	0	1
Cornwall	19	22	Gower	2	2
Wales	225	255	Meirionnydd	11	11
Anglesey	42	43	Pembrokeshire	65	78
Caernarfonshire	88	90	Scotland, N & W	50	51
Ceredigion	15	28	Argyll: Colonsay & Oronsay	5	6
Denbigh & Flint	2	2	Argyll: Islay	45	45
			Isle of Man	26	30
			TOTALS	320	358

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus***Less scarce** 2,750 bp* 23y trend (BBS): **strong decrease -82%****Red**

Moderate

206–1,048 pairs. There was a near doubling in the numbers of Willow Tits reported to the RBBP in 2019, an increase which can be attributed to the fieldwork conducted by hundreds of volunteers contributing to the RSPB/RBBP national Willow Tit survey. While that survey aimed to achieve complete census coverage in counties at the edge of the range, a sampling approach was employed in counties with larger populations, so the resultant estimates calculated may be considerably higher than the numbers given here. Unfortunately, Covid-19 restrictions impacted on fieldwork in 2020 and the survey was cancelled in 2021, but the impressive survey coverage achieved in 2019 means that it will still be possible to produce a robust population estimate and baseline for future monitoring, for which analyses are under way.

Willow Tit is the UK's fastest declining resident species, but conservation concern is not just restricted to the UK: there was a 73% decline across Europe between 1980 and 2017 (PECBMS 2019).

* Woodward *et al.* (2020).

Willow Tit		Derbyshire (e 80)	80	Wales (e 430)	234
	TP	Herefordshire	21	Breconshire (e 50)	38
England (e 1,269+)	756	Leics & Rutland (e 20)	12	Cardiganshire (e 10)	10
England, SW (e 235)	40	Nottinghamshire (e 14)	7	Ceredigion (e 70)	70
Avon (e 1)	1	Shropshire (e 17)	16	Denbigh & Flint	7
Cornwall (e 70)	18	Staffordshire (e 85)	65	East Glamorgan (e 12)	1
Devon (e 50–150)	9	Warwickshire (e 16)	16	Gower (e 44)	2
Gloucestershire (e 2)	2	West Midlands	1	Gwent (e 3)	2
Hampshire (e 10)	8	Worcestershire (e 9)	9	Meirionnydd (e 10)	4
Wiltshire (e 2)	2	England, N (e 735)	453	Montgomeryshire (e 100)	40
England, SE (e 2)	2	Cheshire & Wirral (e 22)	22	Pembrokeshire (e 44)	44
Berkshire (e 2)	2	Cleveland (e 58)	58	Radnorshire (e 80)	16
England, E (e 34)	34	Cumbria (e 5)	5	Scotland, S (e 74+)	58
Cambridgeshire (e 1)	1	Co. Durham (e 150)	12	Ayrshire	4
Lincolnshire (e 10)	10	Greater Manchester (e 125)	115	Dumfries & G'way (e 70)	54
Norfolk (e 19)	19	Lancs & N Mersey (e 50)	32	TOTALS (e 1,773+)	1,048
Northamptonshire (e 4)	4	Northumberland (e 150)	71		
England, C (e 263+)	227	Yorkshire (e 175)	138		

Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus***Scarce** 673 bp25y trend: **strong increase +82%****Green**

Near-complete

94 sites: 706 pairs. In 2018, we reported on the fall in numbers (to 602 pairs), most obvious in eastern England, because of high mortality during the 'Beast from the East' winter storm in February–March 2018. As is typical for this species, numbers had already bounced back by the

Bearded Tit			Greater London	1	1	Lancs & N Mersey	3	33
	S	TP	Kent	12	46	Northumberland	1	1
England	90	576	Sussex	2	3	Yorkshire	10	131
England, SW	10	68	England, E	41	252	Wales	1	3
Dorset	6	32	Cambridgeshire	8	14	Gwent	1	3
Hampshire	3	14	Lincolnshire	6	62	Scotland, Mid	3	127
Somerset	1	22	Norfolk	10	56	North-east Scotland	1	1
England, SE	24	89	Suffolk	17	120	Perth & Kinross	1	125
Bedfordshire	2	2	England, N	15	167	Upper Forth	1	1
Essex	7	37	Cheshire & Wirral	1	2	TOTALS	94	706

following breeding season, although not completely so – while six pairs in the mid-Yare valley, Norfolk, was an increase on the complete absence of birds in 2018, it is still much depleted from the 48 pairs reported in 2017.

Winter weather appears to be an influence on numbers and distribution on a wider scale, and the trend towards milder winters has enabled substantial range increases through central Europe, up through Denmark and along the Baltic coasts. There do, however, appear to have been range losses in southern Europe (Keller *et al.* 2020).

Woodlark *Lullula arborea*

Less scarce 3,064 bp* (no trend available)

Green

Moderate

963 singing males. A return to close to 2017 levels (974 singing males) suggests a rapid recovery from the impact of the storm in early 2018.

* Conway *et al.* (2009).

Woodlark		Berkshire (e 27)	27	England, C (e 57)	40
	SM/T	Buckinghamshire (e 1)	1	Derbyshire (e 2)	1
England, SW (e 381)	354	Kent (e 1–2)	1	Nottinghamshire (e 20)	18
Devon (e 5–10)	5	Surrey (e 129)	129	Staffordshire (e 34)	20
Dorset (e 70)	58	Sussex (e 100)	75	Warwickshire (e 1)	1
Hampshire (e 300)	290	England, E (e 330)	318	England, N (e 25)	17
Wiltshire (e 1)	1	Lincolnshire (e 15)	11	Yorkshire (e 20–25)	17
England, SE (e 260)	234	Norfolk (e 85–90)	88	TOTALS (e 1,053)	963
Bedfordshire (e 1)	1	Suffolk (e 225)	219		



Mark Rayment

455. Woodlark *Lullula arborea*, Surrey, April 2019.

Pallas's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus*

Potential breeder

One site: one singing male. A wintering individual, present at a site in **Cornwall** from 23rd January, was reported singing from 29th March until its departure on 20th April. This is the second time this species has featured in a RBBP report, following a singing bird in Norfolk in 2014.

Iberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus ibericus*

Colonising breeder

Four sites: four singing males. Birds are included in RBBP totals if they held territory in suitable breeding habitat for a minimum of five days; six other birds were present for shorter periods (Holt *et al.* 2020). This is a fairly typical showing for this species, which has become a rare but expected feature of spring birding in the last decade. It is likely that increased observer awareness has played a role, particularly since Iberian Chiffchaff was split from Common Chiffchaff *P. collybita* in 1999 (BOU 1999), but there has surely been a genuine increase as well.

The 32 records featured in RBBP reports since 1999 come from a wide scatter of 19 counties, as far north as Orkney; but, perhaps unsurprisingly, the largest number – 12 – has been recorded from southwest England.

England, E

Suffolk One site: one singing male, 27th May to 19th June.

England, N

Lancashire & North Merseyside One site: one singing male, 3rd May to 23rd June. **Yorkshire** One site: one singing male, 27th April to 22nd June.

Scotland, Mid

North-east Scotland One site: one singing male, 11th to 25th May.

Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

Potential breeder

Six sites: five singing males. This species is now a regular feature of RBBP reports, with singing males having occurred in the UK in 18 of the last 20 years. Regardless, 2019 was notable as having the highest total since 1994, when five were also recorded. Despite the regular occurrence of singing males, none have yet been successful in attracting a mate, which is perhaps surprising given the volume at which they sing! However, there has been considerable range loss in western France since the 1980s (Keller *et al.* 2020), and a 37% decline in the European population trend between 2008 and 2017 (PECBMS 2019), so perhaps colonisation is unlikely.

England, SW

Isles of Scilly One site: a single male singing between 29th and 30th May was still on site, if no longer singing, on 8th June.

England, N

Cleveland One site: one singing male, 22nd May to 3rd June. **Co. Durham** One site: one singing male, 13th to 19th June. **Yorkshire** Three sites: (1) one singing male, 8th May to 13th June; (2) one singing male, 23rd May to 10th June; (3) one singing male, 10th–29th June, presumed to be the same bird as at site (2).

Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum***Potential breeder**

One site: one singing male. A male was singing at a site in **Shetland** between 23rd June and 6th July. Whilst *EBBA2* (Keller *et al.* 2020) shows a common pattern of range loss to the south and west of many species' ranges, and range gain to the north and east, Blyth's Reed Warbler is one of a number of exceptions. Once restricted to Finland, European Russia and farther east, it has undergone rapid increases in population size (e.g. 500% in Finland since the mid 1980s, Lehtikoinen *et al.* 2019a) and a marked westward range expansion, through Sweden into Norway, and southward through the Baltic States reaching Poland. Previous westward species' expansions, such as that of Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*, have led to predictions of UK colonisation that have subsequently proved unfounded – so we shall exercise caution over making predictions for the future of the Blyth's Reed Warbler in the UK!

Individuals are included in RBBP reports only if they maintain territories for at least five days. White & Kehoe (2021) report that there were an additional seven birds in spring 2019 that did not fulfil this requirement.

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris***Very rare** 10 bp25y trend: **strong decrease** -75%**Red**

Near-complete

Seven sites: 2–8 pairs. Bell *et al.* (2021) reviewed the decline and ultimate extinction (in 1999) of Marsh Warblers in the former stronghold in Worcestershire. They also examined patterns in numbers and distribution since then, noting a move to east-coast locations and a shift northward, as illustrated by the records in this report. This shift matches a latitudinal expansion in the breeding population along the edge of the range in Fennoscandia (Keller *et al.* 2020). Bell *et al.* also found that a relationship now exists between variation in numbers of spring migrants and the number of Marsh Warbler pairs recorded subsequently. It seems that the relatively low site-fidelity (Dowsett-Lemaire 1978) of Marsh Warblers is making it difficult for them to establish new regular breeding locations, therefore the continuance of the species as a breeding bird in the UK relies on the weather conditions in late May and early June being suitable to ensure migrant birds continue to arrive. White & Kehoe (2021) report there has been no upwards or downwards trend in migrant numbers since 1990.

England, SW

Dorset One site: one singing male, 21st to 26th June.

England, N

Northumberland One site: one pair bred, and one probable pair. **Yorkshire** One site: one pair bred, two young fledged.

Scotland, N & W

Shetland Four sites: (1) one singing male, 9th June to 7th July; (2) one singing male, 9th June to 7th July; (3) one singing male, 16th to 30th June; (4) one singing male, 11th to 19th June.

Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides***Very rare** 7 bp25y trend: **strong decrease** -48%**Red**

Near-complete

Nine sites: 1–11 pairs. A slightly better-than-average year for this species, which has declined substantially since a high point in the 1980s. Included in this report is the first confirmed breeding since 2010, which, even more notably, was the first proven breeding in Wales. *EBBA2* shows a pattern of range losses in the west, and expansion in the east, which does not bode well for the long-term future of this species in the UK.

England, SE

Hampshire One site: one singing male, 16th to 26th July.

England, E

Norfolk Three sites: (1) one singing male, 22nd April to 12th May; (2) one singing male, 30th April to 23rd May, (3) one singing male, 14th May to 7th July. Suffolk Two sites: (1) two singing males, one from 2nd April to 10th July, the other from 23rd April to 29th June; (2) one singing male, 11th May to 29th June.

England, C

Nottinghamshire One site: one singing male, 21st April to 7th May.

Wales

Anglesey One site: one pair bred, present 14th June to 25th July and seen carrying faecal sacs.

Gwent One site: one singing male, 25th to 30th May.

Scotland, Mid

North-east Scotland One site: one singing male, 23rd April to 6th May.

Dartford Warbler *Curruca undata*

Less scarce 3,214 bp* 25y trend: **weak increase** +41%

Amber

Moderate

1,450 territories. As with the other species affected by the winter storm in February–March 2018, Dartford Warbler numbers fell in 2018 (to 1,133 territories) and then bounced back in 2019, although not yet to 2017 levels (1,639 territories). The European population declined by 37% between 1980 and 2017, and consequently this species is listed as Near Threatened on the Global IUCN Red List (BirdLife International 2021b).

* Wotton *et al.* (2009).

Dartford Warbler		England, SE (e 638)	632	Carmarthenshire	1
	TP	Berkshire (e 8)	8	Gower	4
England (e 1,723+)	1,436	Kent (e 1–3)	2	Meirionnydd (e 1)	0
England, SW (e 958+)	674	Surrey (e 572)	572	Pembrokeshire	3
Cornwall (e 14)	14	Sussex (e 55)	50	Channel Islands (e 52+)	6
Devon	23	England, E (e 130)	130	Jersey (e 50)	4
Dorset (e 500)	412	Norfolk (e 5)	5	Guernsey	2
Hampshire (e 400)	204	Suffolk (e 125)	125	TOTAL (e 1,786+)	1,450
Isle of Wight (e 7)	7	Wales (e 11+)	8		
Somerset (e 14)	14	Caernarfonshire (e 2)	0		

‘Fair Isle Wren’ *Troglodytes troglodytes fridariensis*

Rare 39 bp 15y trend: **weak increase** +41%

Red

Near-complete

34 territories. This endemic race occurs only on Fair Isle and the entire population is monitored every year.

Scotland, N & W

Fair Isle 34 territories; fledged young recorded in a minimum of seven territories.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Very rare 1 bp 25y trend: **strong decrease** -84%

Red

High

One site: 0–1 pairs. Collin (2021) reviewed recent records in Dumfries & Galloway, suggesting that there may be breeding attempts going undetected, and urging observers to put more effort

into looking for Fieldfares in conifer plantations adjoining damp, rushy pasture, particularly in northern England and southern Scotland.

Scotland, S

Ayrshire One site: one bird in suitable habitat in mid June.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Very rare 27 bp

25y trend: **stable** +21%

Red

High

12 sites: 0–12 pairs. As the five-year mean given above shows, numbers of breeding Redwings reported have been relatively high in recent years, so 12 pairs – and no confirmed breeding records – is a considerable drop. It was only the third time in 13 years that there has been no confirmed breeding on Shetland (Pennington 2021). The UK (or more pertinently, Scotland) lies at the southern edge of the breeding range of Redwing, and as the change map from EBBA2 (fig. 15; Keller *et al.* 2020) shows, this range is contracting northwards, which is consistent with predictions of climate change impacts (Huntley *et al.* 2007). Of greater concern are population declines across the core of the range in Scandinavia and Russia: the population in European Russia declined by 30% between 1980 and 2010 (BirdLife International 2015) and that in Finland by 20% between 1975 and 2017 (Väisänen *et al.* 2018).

Scotland, N & W

Highland Ten sites: four probable breeding pairs and six possible breeding pairs including three singing males. **Shetland** Two sites: one probable breeding pair and one singing male.

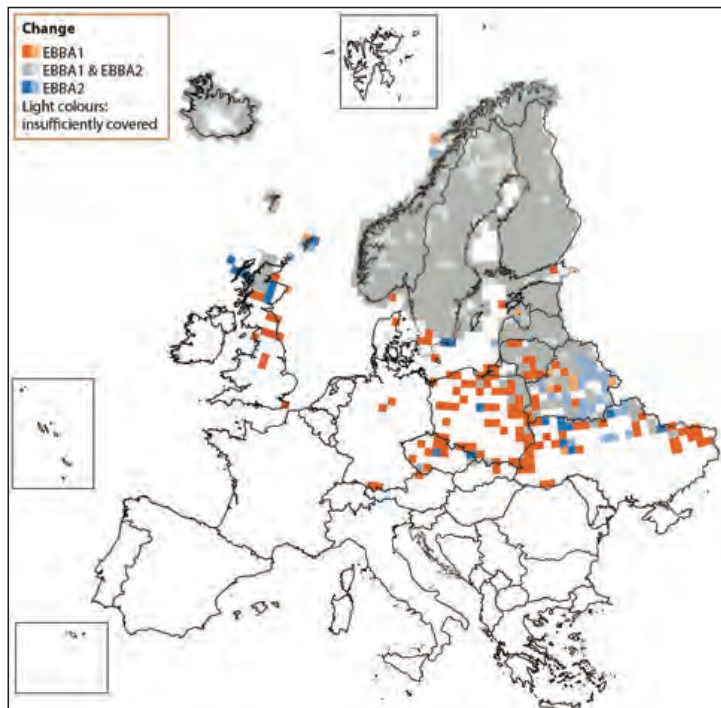


Fig. 15. Range change in Redwings *Turdus iliacus* between the two European Breeding Bird Atlases (mid 1980s and 2013–17). Orange squares show range loss, blue squares range gain, grey squares are those with records in both atlas periods. Paler squares of all three colours are those with poorer coverage in the first atlas so assessments of range change may be less reliable. Reproduced from *European Breeding Bird Atlas 2* (Keller *et al.* 2020), © European Bird Census Council (EBCC).

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*

Occasional breeder

One site: one male. Whilst this bird was known to be present on one day only, both the date and the location – an upland boulder field not dissimilar to the habitat used by a successful breeding pair in Moray & Nairn in 2017 (Ince 2018) – make this sighting of considerable interest.

Scotland, Mid

North-east Scotland One site: one male of undetermined race was seen on a single date, 14th July.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Rare 65 bp

25y trend: **stable** -16%**Red**

High

51 sites: 18–68 pairs. Although we have reported occasional records from Scotland in the last decade, there is no sign of substantial northward range shift for this species, unlike the pattern in Fennoscandia (Keller *et al.* 2020). Black Redstarts have been bred as far north as Murmansk, on the Barents Sea coast, in recent years (Kalyakin & Voltz 2020).

Black Redstart				Berkshire	1	0	1	Suffolk	7	5	16
	S	CP	TP	Greater London	12	0	12	England, C	1	0	1
England	50	18	67	Kent	11	7	16	Derbyshire	1	0	1
England, SW	3	1	3	Surrey	1	0	1	England, N	1	0	1
Dorset	1	0	1	Sussex	4	0	4	Lancs & N Mersey	1	0	1
Hampshire	2	1	2	England, E	17	9	29	Wales	1	0	1
England, SE	30	8	35	Cambridgeshire	3	0	3	Breconshire	1	0	1
Bedfordshire	1	1	1	Norfolk	7	4	10	TOTALS	51	18	68

White Wagtail *Motacilla a. alba*

Very rare 21 bp

(no trend available)

Green

High

One site plus the Channel Islands: 20 pairs and one mixed pair. It is estimated that there are ten breeding pairs on both Guernsey and Jersey, Channel Islands. Away from there, there was only one mixed pair reported for 2019.

Scotland, N & W

Highland One site: one mixed pair, a female fledged four young with a male Pied Wagtail *M. a. yarrellii*.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Occasional breeder

Green

Two sites: 1–2 pairs. The Highland record – of a lone, singing male – is typical of recent years. More notable, the confirmed breeding record from Clyde is the first such occurrence since 2002, and only the fourth successful breeding since 1988. There were eight confirmed records in the ten years before that but, in line with the disappearance of other isolated breeding populations in Iceland, the Netherlands, Germany, Belarus and the Baltic States (Keller *et al.* 2020), Bramblings lost their toehold in the birch *Betula* woods of northern Scotland. With a 49% decline across the Scandinavian breeding range between 1980 and 2017 (PECBMS 2019), a significant return seems unlikely.

Scotland, S

Clyde One site: one pair bred, and eight chicks were seen in the nest.

Scotland, N & W

Highland One site: one singing male, 12th May to 10th June. Singles were seen at two other sites on single days in June.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Less scarce 500+ bp* (no trend available)

Red

Moderate

18–382 pairs. This is the second-highest number reported by the Panel since the Hawfinch was added to our species list in 2006, owing to considerable effort by those studying the species in Hampshire to quantify the size of the New Forest population. Clements (2013) collated county estimates to derive an estimate of the UK population of 500–1,000 pairs. The estimates submitted to the Panel for 2019 suggest a population lying at the upper end of that range. Two pairs fledged six young at a site in the Highlands in 2019 (not in 2018, as erroneously reported in Eaton *et al.* 2020).

Although we do not yet have robust measures of trends in the size of the UK's Hawfinch population, it is well demonstrated through atlases (e.g. Balmer *et al.* 2013), analyses of bird club records (Langston *et al.* 2002) and repeat woodland surveys (Amar *et al.* 2006) that there has been a considerable decline in numbers and range over recent decades. This is in marked contrast to the species' fortunes in Europe, where PECBMS (2019) reports a population trend of +23% between 1980 and 2017.

* Clements (2013).

Hawfinch		England, C (e 6+)	5	Gwent (e 255–310)	31
	TP	Derbyshire (e 2)	1	Meirionnydd (e 100)	2
England (e 499+)	332	Herefordshire	1	Montgomeryshire (e 3)	0
England, SW (e 427)	310	Nottinghamshire	3	Radnorshire (e 10)	6
Gloucestershire (e 25)	12	England, N (e 8)	7	Scotland (e 6)	4
Hampshire (e 400)	296	Cumbria (e 6)	5	Scotland, Mid (e 4)	2
Wiltshire (e 2)	2	Lancs & N Mersey (e 2)	2	North-east Scotland (e 2)	0
England, SE (e 48)	6	Wales (e 441+)	44	Perth & Kinross (e 2)	2
Kent (e 10–20)	2	Breconshire (e 5)	0	Scotland, N & W (e 2)	2
Surrey (e 3)	1	Caernarfonshire (e 5)	0	Highland (e 2)	2
Sussex (e 25)	3	Carmarthenshire	1	Isle of Man	2
England, E (e 10)	4	Denbigh & Flint	1	TOTALS (e 948+)	382
Norfolk (e 10)	4	East Glamorgan (e 6)	3		

Common Redpoll *Acanthis flammea*

Very rare 20 bp (no trend available but increasing)

Amber

High

28 sites: 19–35 pairs. A new record total, with breeding birds recorded from a wide spread of sites, mainly in small plantations on Scottish islands.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll Six sites: (1)–(2) one pair bred, five fledged young in total; (3)–(4) one probable breeding pair; (5)–(6) one possible breeding pair. **Highland** Two sites: (1) one individual paired with a Lesser Redpoll *A. cabaret*; (2) one possible breeding pair. **Outer Hebrides** Four sites: (1) seven pairs bred around one extensive site; (2)–(4) one probable breeding pair. **Shetland** Sixteen sites: (1) two pairs bred, both seen with fledged broods; (2) one pair bred, seen with fledged brood of two; (3)–(4) one pair bred, fledged young seen; (5) one pair bred, six chicks in nest; (6)–(8) one pair bred, five chicks in nest; (9) one pair bred, nest destroyed; (10)–(11) one probable breeding pair, nest-building; (12) one probable breeding pair, present through breeding season; (13)–(14) one probable breeding pair, displaying; (15)–(16) one singing male.

European Serin *Serinus serinus***Former breeder**

One site: one singing male. A singing male was present at a site in Kent from 15th May to 21st July. This is only the sixth year this species has featured in a RBBP report this century; the last confirmed breeding was in 2006.

456. Male European Serin *Serinus serinus*, Kent, May 2019.



Oliver Slessor

Cirl Bunting *Emberiza cirlus***Red****Less scarce** 1,079 bp* 27y trend (survey): **large increase +814%** Low

152–325 pairs. As is usual outside of a survey year (the last was in 2016), limited information was received, and the total reported is only a fraction of the true population. A volunteer-based annual monitoring programme was launched by the RSPB in 2021 and will hopefully lead to higher reporting and the ability to track population changes on an annual basis.

*Jeffs *et al.* (2018).

Cirl Bunting			Devon	148	252	Jersey	3	3
	CP	TP	Somerset	0	3	TOTALS	152	325
England, SW	148	321	Channel Islands	4	4			
Cornwall	0	66	Guernsey	1	1			

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis***Amber****Rare** 79 bp* (no trend available)

Moderate

10–38 pairs. It is possible there is some duplication among records received from the core of the breeding range in the Cairngorms, and we request that observers submit records with precise location details, as well as age and sex of birds, and breeding evidence, rather than just counts.

As a species that breeds at the highest altitudes and at the very southern edge of its range, the Snow Bunting has been identified as being vulnerable to climate change in Scotland (Huntley *et al.* 2007), and populations across Europe are apparently already being impacted. Declines have been reported in Iceland, particularly in lower altitude areas (Icelandic Institute of Natural History 2018), and in Fennoscandia (a 4% decline per annum between 2002 and 2014; Lehikoinen *et al.* 2019b). *EBBA2* (Keller *et al.* 2020) shows broad range loss since the 1980s in Scotland, Fennoscandia and Svalbard.

* Hayhow *et al.* (2018a).

Scotland, Mid

Moray & Nairn Cairngorms: four pairs bred, one probable breeding pair, one possible breeding pair and nine singing males. **North-east Scotland** Cairngorms: two pairs bred and seven singing males.

Scotland, N & W

Highland Cairngorms: four pairs bred, two probable breeding pairs, two possible breeding pairs and two singing males. Ben Nevis range: three probable breeding pairs. Northern Highland: one probable breeding pair.

Appendix 1. RBBP taxa for which no data were received in 2019.

The following rare taxa are regular breeders in the UK. Confirmation of presence was received in 2019, but no breeding records were submitted: Short-toed Treecreeper *Certhia brachydactyla* (Channel Islands only), 'St Kilda Wren' *T. t. hirtensis* (St Kilda only), Parrot Crossbill *Loxia pytyopsittacus* (Highland only).

Appendix 2. Rare non-native species considered by RBBP recorded in 2019.

Data on the following rare non-native breeding species have been received for 2019.

Golden Pheasant *Chrysolophus pictus* Golden Pheasants were reported from Angus & Dundee (confirmed breeding at one site), Dorset (a pair at one site and two individuals at another), Isles of Scilly (at least five males at one site) and Suffolk (up to 20 birds, including six to eight females, at one site).

Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus* Breeding was confirmed in Cornwall (two pairs at one site), Derbyshire (single pairs at three sites) and may have occurred at a site in Dorset. The presence of free-ranging birds without breeding evidence was reported from Perth & Kinross and Sussex, but it is clear that this species is widespread and under-reported.

Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens* The long-established population on Coll, Argyll, continues to dwindle with only ten birds now remaining. However, one of the three pairs did succeed in producing a single offspring in 2019.

Black Swan *Cygnus atratus* Reported from nine counties, with confirmed breeding in four: Dorset (pair failed), Hampshire (three pairs at one site, with broods of five, five and two reported), Staffordshire (one pair, fledged four) and Sussex (unsuccessful attempt). In addition, a bird raised six hybrids with a Mute Swan *C. olor* in Wiltshire. Elsewhere, long-staying pairs were reported from Buckinghamshire, Cheshire & Wirral and Wiltshire. Although not records of breeding, Black Swans were reported from 29 Wetland Bird Survey sites during the breeding season.

Muscovy Duck *Cairina moschata* Records were received from just three counties: Breconshire (present), Cambridgeshire (three pairs at one site), and Derbyshire (single pairs at two sites). Muscovy Ducks were reported from 26 Wetland Bird Survey sites during the breeding season.

Wood Duck *Aix sponsa* Single confirmed breeding pairs were reported from two counties: Hampshire and Lancashire & North Merseyside.

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina* Reported from 11 counties, but these were often numbers of individuals without an indication of whether breeding occurred. Confirmed breeding records were received from Bedfordshire (one pair), Berkshire (two pairs at one site), Gloucestershire (three pairs, but with a further 40 individuals reported, Greater London (one pair), Lincolnshire (three pairs at two sites) and Norfolk (one pair). In addition, breeding records were received from Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire and Surrey. In total, records were received of 24 pairs, of which 11 were confirmed breeders. Red-crested Pochards were reported from 39 Wetland Bird Survey sites during the breeding season.

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis* Four breeding-season reports were received: a male in Greater London on one date, and unsexed individuals on single dates at sites in Cheshire, Greater Manchester and Leicestershire & Rutland. There was no indication of breeding activity with any of these records.

Harris's Hawk *Parabuteo unicinctus* The only report received was of a male resident in Cambridgeshire.

Eagle Owl *Bubo bubo* The regular pair in the Forest of Bowland, Lancashire & North Merseyside, was present but, after calling was heard early in the year, there was no sign of a breeding attempt. A single bird was present at a site in Highland.

Acknowledgments

The compilation of this report would not be possible without the support of the many contributors who have supplied the data that it is based upon. Birdwatchers across the country provide many of the original observations and we gratefully acknowledge these. Much of these data are submitted via the BTO/RSPB/BirdWatch Ireland/SOC/WOS BirdTrack system. In most cases, their records reach the RBBP via county and regional bird recorders. Their invaluable but time-consuming work is completed on a voluntary basis, and we salute the willing cooperation and assistance of recorders past and present. Recorders were invited to review an early draft of this report and many have given additional advice and information when called upon. The work of the RBBP simply would not be possible without the support of recorders. The names of the individual recorders and others who provided data for 2019, either directly or as part of their organisational responsibilities, are listed at <http://www.rbbp.org.uk/acknowledgements>.

Input from specialist study groups, conservation bodies and various key individuals means that the report can be even more comprehensive. Valuable supplementary data were submitted from several national monitoring schemes. Information for many species was supplied via the Schedule 1 licensing system by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), Natural England (NE), Natural Resources Wales (NRW), NatureScot and the BTO. For additional information on raptors we are grateful for the support of the Northern England Raptor Forum, the Northern Ireland Raptor Study Group and the Scottish Raptor Monitoring Scheme. The BTO also supplied additional data from the BTO/JNCC/RSPB UK Breeding Bird Survey, BTO/RSPB/JNCC Wetland Bird Survey (for non-native waterbirds), BTO/JNCC Nest Record Scheme and the BTO Heronries Census (for Little Egret). Supplementary seabird data were supplied by the Seabird Monitoring Programme (led and coordinated by JNCC in partnership with others). We also thank the RSPB for additional information from their network of nature reserves and from species surveys they coordinate including, in 2019, the RSPB/RBBP national Willow Tit survey. More generally, many individuals in these organisations provided friendly advice and information over the year, for which we are most grateful. The European Bird Census Council allowed us to reproduce maps from *European Breeding Bird Atlas 2* (Keller et al. 2020). We thank the JNCC, RSPB and BTO for their financial support for the work of the RBBP; in 2020–21 this has included additional funding from the JNCC to conduct database improvements, and we would like to thank Kirsie Peck for her particular assistance with this work programme. Jenny Donelan assisted with the database improvements and the processing of 2019 data. Louis Driver kindly volunteered to help with developing website content and other tasks. The Secretary would also like to thank the Panel members for their time and expertise.

References

- Amar, A., et al. 2006. *What's Happening to Our Woodland Birds? Long-term changes in the populations of woodland birds*. BTO Research Report 169; RSPB Research Report 19. BTO, Thetford & RSPB, Sandy.
- Ausden, M., White, G., & Eaton, M. 2013. Breeding Baillon's Crakes in Britain. *Brit. Birds* 106: 7–16.
- , Bradbury, R., Brown, A., Eaton, M., Lock, L., & Pearce-Higgins, J. 2015. Climate change and Britain's birdlife: what might we expect? *Brit. Wildlife* 26: 161–174.
- Ballance, D. K., & Smith, A. J. 2008. Recording areas of Great Britain. *Brit. Birds* 101: 364–375.
- Balmer, D. E., Gillings, S., Caffrey, B. J., Swann, R. L., Downie, I. S., & Fuller, R. J. 2013. *Bird Atlas 2007–11: the breeding and wintering birds of Britain and Ireland*. BTO Books, Thetford.
- Bell, B., Green, H., Hodson, J., & Holling, M. 2021. The recent history of breeding Marsh Warblers in Britain. *Brit. Birds* 114: 255–266.
- Biggs, A., & Maggs, H. 2021. The occurrence and recolonisation of Common Cranes in Scotland. *Brit. Birds* 114: 397–414.
- BirdLife International. 2015. *European Red List of Birds*. Office for official publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg. <http://datazone.birdlife.org/info/euroredlist>
- 2021a. *European Red List of Birds*. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg. <https://bit.ly/3BKLGJS>
- 2021b. IUCN Red List for birds. www.birdlife.org/projects/red-list
- Bloomfield, A. 2021. Breeding Spoonbills at Holkham NNR. Part 1: history and nesting. *Brit. Birds* 114: 316–330.
- Boele, A., et al. 2021. *Broedvogels in Nederland in 2019*. Sovon Vogelonderzoek Nederland, Nijmegen.
- British Ornithologists' Union (BOU). 1999. Records Committee: 25th Report (October 1998). *Ibis* 141: 175–180.
- Callion, J., & Strowger, J. 2018. A history of the Dotterel in Cumbria. *Transactions of the Carlisle Natural History Society* 13: 5–61.
- Challis, A., Wilson, M. W., Schönberg, N., Eaton, M., Stevenson, A., & Stirling-Aird, P. 2021. *Scottish Raptor Monitoring Scheme Report 2019*. BTO Scotland, Stirling.
- Clements, R. 2013. A UK population estimate for the Hawfinch. *Brit. Birds* 106: 43–44.
- , Everett, C., & Messenger, A. 2016. The Hobby in Britain: a revised population estimate. *Brit. Birds* 109: 316–323.
- Collin, P. N. 2021. Breeding Fieldfares: are we missing some? *Scott. Birds* 41: 132–133.
- Conway, G., Austin, G., Handschuh, M., Drewitt, A., & Burton, N. 2019. Breeding populations of Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* and Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* in the United Kingdom in 2007. *Bird Study* 66: 22–31.
- , Wotton, S., Henderson, I., Eaton, M., Drewitt, A., & Spencer, J. 2009. The status of breeding Woodlarks *Lullula arborea* in Britain in 2006. *Bird Study* 56: 310–325.
- Deinet, S., et al. 2013. *Wildlife comeback in Europe: The recovery of selected mammal and bird species*. Final report to Rewilding Europe by ZSL, BirdLife International and the European Bird Census Council. ZSL, London.
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). 2020. UK Biodiversity Indicators 2019. <http://bit.ly/2oy3eR8>
- Dillon, I. A., Smith, T. D., Williams, S. J., Haysom, S., & Eaton, M. A. 2009. Status of Red-throated Divers in Britain in 2006. *Bird Study* 56: 147–157.
- Dowsett-Lemaire, F. 1978. Annual turnover in a Belgian population of Marsh Warblers, *Acrocephalus palustris*. *Gerfaut* 68: 519–532.
- Eaton, M. A., et al. 2007. *The State of the UK's Birds 2006*. RSPB, BTO, WWT, CCW, EHS, NE and SNH, Sandy.

- , et al. 2008. *The State of the UK's Birds 2007*. RSPB, BTO, WWT, CCW, EHS, NE and SNH, Sandy.
- , et al. 2015. Birds of Conservation Concern 4: the population status of birds in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. *Brit. Birds* 108: 708–746.
- , & the Rare Breeding Birds Panel. 2020. Rare breeding birds in the United Kingdom in 2018. *Brit. Birds* 113: 737–791.
- Ewing, S. R., et al. 2011. Breeding status of the Merlin *Falco columbarius* in the UK in 2008. *Bird Study* 58: 379–389.
- Fox, A., et al. 2016. Recent changes in the abundance of Common Pochard *Aythya ferina* breeding in Europe. *Wildfowl* 66: 22–40.
- Hagemeijer, W. J. M., & Blair, M. J. (eds.) 1997. *The EBCC Atlas of European Breeding Birds*. Poyser, London.
- Hancock, M. H., Gibbons, D. W., & Thompson, P. S. 1997. The status of breeding Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*) in the United Kingdom in 1995. *Bird Study* 44: 290–302.
- Harris, S. J., et al. 2020. *The Breeding Bird Survey 2019*. BTO Research Report 726. BTO, Thetford.
- , et al. 2021. *The Breeding Bird Survey 2020*. BTO Research Report 736. BTO, Thetford.
- Hayhow, D. B., et al. 2015. Changes in the abundance and distribution of a montane specialist bird, the Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*, in the UK over 25 years. *Bird Study* 62: 443–456.
- , Benn, S., Stevenson, A., Stirling-Aird, P. K., & Eaton, M. A. 2017. Status of Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* in Britain in 2015. *Bird Study* 64: 281–294.
- , Eaton, M. A., Stanbury, A. J., Douse, A., & Marquiss, M. 2018a. The first UK survey and population estimate of breeding Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*. *Bird Study* 65: 36–43.
- et al. 2018b. Status of breeding Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax* in the UK and Isle of Man 2014. *Bird Study* 65: 458–470.
- Holling, M., & the Rare Breeding Birds Panel. 2007. Rare breeding birds in the United Kingdom in 2003 and 2004. *Brit. Birds* 100: 321–367.
- & — 2017. Rare breeding birds in the United Kingdom in 2015. *Brit. Birds* 110: 706–754.
- Holt, C., French, P., & the Rarities Committee. 2020. Report on rare birds in Great Britain in 2019. *Brit. Birds* 113: 585–655.
- Humphreys, E. M., Gillings, S., Musgrove, A., Austin, G., Marchant, J., & Calladine, J. 2016. An update of the review on the impacts of piscivorous birds on salmonid populations and game fisheries in Scotland. SNH Report No. 884. SNH, Inverness.
- Huntley, B., Green, R. E., Collingham, Y. C., & Willis, S. G. 2007. *A Climatic Atlas of European Breeding Birds*. Durham University, RSPB and Lynx Edicions, Barcelona.
- Icelandic Institute of Natural History. 2018. *Icelandic Red List – Birds*. Icelandic Institute of Natural History.
- Ince, R. 2018. First successful breeding of 'Red-spotted Bluethroat' in Moray in 2016. *Scott. Birds* 38: 217–222.
- Jackson, D. 2009. 'Interim report on 2009 breeding Whimbrel surveys.' Unpublished report by Natural Research Ltd to Scottish Natural Heritage.
- Jeffs, C., Croft, S., Bradbury, A., Grice, P., & Wotton, S. 2018. The UK Cirl Bunting population exceeds one thousand pairs. *Brit. Birds* 111: 144–156.
- JNCC. 2021. *Seabird Population Trends and Causes of Change: 1986–2019 Report*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.
- Kalyakin, M. V., & Voltzit, O. V. (eds.) 2020. *Atlas of Breeding Birds of the European Part of Russia*. Fiton XXI, Moscow. (In Russian)
- Keller, V., et al. 2020. *European Breeding Bird Atlas 2: distribution, abundance and change*. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona.
- Kentie, R., et al. 2016. Estimating the size of the Dutch breeding population of the Continental Black-tailed Godwit from 2007–2015 using resighting data from the spring staging sites. *Ardea* 114: 213–225.
- Laaksonen, T., et al. 2019. Inland waterfowl population trends 1986–2018. *Linnut-vuosikirja* 2018: 46–55.
- Langston, R., Gregory, R., & Adams, R. 2002. The status of the Hawfinch in the UK 1975–1999. *Brit. Birds* 95: 166–173.
- Laubeck, B., et al. 2019. Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus* January population censuses for Northwest Mainland Europe, 1995–2015. *Wildfowl Special Issue* 5: 102–122.
- Ławicki, Ł. 2014. The Great White Egret in Europe: population increase and range expansion since 1980. *Brit. Birds* 107: 8–25.
- Lehikoinen, A., et al. 2019a. Breeding population sizes of Finnish birds. *Linnut-vuosikirja* 2018: 38–45.
- , et al. 2019b. Declining population trends of European mountain birds. *Global Change Biology* 25: 577–588.
- Lindström, A., Green, M., Husby, M., Kålås, J. A., & Lehikoinen, A. 2015. Large-scale monitoring of waders on their boreal and arctic breeding grounds in northern Europe. *Ardea* 103: 3–15.
- , —, —, —, —, & Stjernman, M. 2019. Population trends of waders on their boreal and arctic breeding grounds in northern Europe. *Wader Study* 126: 200–216.
- Murgatroyd, M., Redpath, S. M., Murphy, S. G., Douglas, D. J. T., Saunders, R., & Amar, A. 2019. Patterns of satellite tagged Hen Harrier disappearances suggest widespread illegal killing on British grouse moors. *Nat. Comm.* 10: 1094.
- Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme 2019. *State of Common European Breeding Birds 2018*. CSO, Prague.
- Pennington, M. (ed.) 2021. *Shetland Bird Report 2019*. Shetland Bird Club.
- Pritchard, R., Hughes, J., Spence, I. M., Haycock, B., & Brenchley, A. 2021. *The Birds of Wales*. Liverpool University Press, Liverpool.
- Rutz, C., Bijlsma, R. G., Marquiss, M., & Kenward, R. E. 2006. Population limitation in the Northern Goshawk in Europe: a review with case studies. *Studies in Avian Biology* 31: 158–197.
- Schmidt-Rothmund, D., Dennis, R., & Saurola, P. 2014. The Osprey in the Western Palearctic: breeding population size and trends in the early 21st century. *J. Raptor Res.* 48: 375–386.
- Seward, A., et al. 2018. Metapopulation dynamics of Roseate Terns: sources, sinks and implications for conservation management decisions. *J. Anim. Ecol.* 2018: 1–16.
- Smith, A. J., & NERF. 2020. *Northern England Raptor Forum Annual Review 2019*. NERF, Heighington.
- Smith, K., Smith, L., & Clements, R. 2021. Using tetrad-atlas data to estimate the numbers and recent range changes of the Lesser Spotted Woodpecker in Britain. *Brit. Birds* 114: 465–479.

- Soriano-Redondo, A., et al. 2019. Understanding species distribution in dynamic populations: a new approach using spatio-temporal point process models. *Ecography*, 42: 1092–1102.
- Sovon Vogelonderzoek Nederland. 2019. *Vogelatlas van Nederland. Broedvogels, wintervogels en 40 jaar verandering*. Vierde druk, Kosmos Uitgevers, Utrecht/Antwerpen.
- Stanbury, A. J., et al. In press. The status of our bird populations: the 5th Birds of Conservation Concern in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man and 2nd IUCN Red List assessment of extinction risk for Great Britain. *Brit. Birds*.
- Storch, I. 2007. Conservation status of grouse worldwide: an update. *Wildlife Biology* 13: 5–12.
- Stroud, D. A. 2019. BB eye: The value of monitoring rare breeding birds. *Brit. Birds* 112: 366–367.
- Treynys, R., et al. 2011. Coexistence of protected avian predators: does a recovering population of White-tailed Eagles threaten to exclude other avian predators? *European J. Wildlife Res.* 57: 1165–1174.
- Väisänen, R. A., Lehtikainen, A., & Sirkiä, P. 2018. [Monitoring population changes of land bird species breeding in Finland in 1975–2017]. *Linnut-vuosikirja* 2017: 78–94. (In Finnish)
- van Bemmelen, R. S. A., et al. 2019. A migratory divide among Red-necked Phalaropes in the Western Palearctic – contrasting migration and wintering movement strategies. *Frontiers Ecol. Evol.* 7: 86.
- Vermeersch, G., et al. 2020. *Broedvogels in Vlaanderen 2013–2018. Recente status en trends van in Vlaanderen broedende vogelsoorten*. Mededelingen van het Instituut voor Natuur en Bosonderzoek, Brussels. doi.org/10.21436/inbor.18794135.
- Viksne, J., et al. 2010. *Atlas of Duck Populations in Eastern Europe*. Akstis, Vilnius.
- White, S., & Kehoe, C. 2021. Report on scarce migrant birds in Britain in 2019. Part 2: passerines. *Brit. Birds* 114: 443–464.
- Wilkinson, N. I., Eaton, M. A., Marshall, G., & Haysom, S. 2018. The population status of Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus* in Scotland in 2015–16. *Bird Study* 65: 20–35.
- Wilson, M. W., et al. 2018. The breeding population of Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* in the United Kingdom, Isle of Man and Channel Islands in 2014. *Bird Study* 65: 1–19.
- Woodward, I., et al. 2020. Population estimates of birds in Great Britain and the United Kingdom. *Brit. Birds* 113: 69–104.
- Wotton, S. R., Conway, G., Eaton, M. A., Henderson, I., & Grice, P. 2009. The status of the Dartford Warbler in the UK and the Channel Islands in 2006. *Brit. Birds* 102: 230–246.
- , Eaton, M. A., Ewing, S. R., & Green, R. E. 2015. The increase in the Corncrake *Crex crex* population of the United Kingdom has slowed. *Bird Study* 62: 486–497.
- , et al. 2018. Status of the Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus* in the UK and Isle of Man in 2016. *Bird Study* 65: 145–160.

Dr Mark A. Eaton, 21 Chapel Lands, Alnwick, Northumberland NE 66 1EL;
e-mail secretary@rbbp.org.uk

The Rare Breeding Birds Panel is supported by JNCC, RSPB and the BTO

Find out more about the Panel at www.rbbp.org.uk



Records of rare breeding birds in 2020 are now being collated;
county recorders are reminded that data should be submitted by 30th November 2021
using the spreadsheet downloadable from www.rbbp.org.uk.