# LONDON BIRD REPORT **2017**

LONDON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

# LONDON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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# LONDON BIRD REPORT

## NO.82 FOR THE YEAR 2017

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London Natural History Society

PUBLISHED MAY 2019

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## Links to files on the LNHS website: http://www.lnhs.org.uk

Please follow these sequences on the new LNHS website to find links to files.

About Us> LNHS Sections> London Bird Club. 'The London Bird Report': Rare Birds in London 1900 to 2017.

About Us> LNHS Sections> London Bird Club. 'Bird Recording': Gazetteer of Sites, LNHS Bird Recording Form, Checklist and Guide and Breeding Criteria, Details of an Unusual Bird (description form).

Publications> London Bird Report> Downloads: Consolidated contents, past issues of the *London Bird Report*, Foreign-ringed Black-headed Gulls by Alan Gibson, Indexes of Common and Scientific Names.

***Front cover:*** *Reed Bunting. (Jamie Partridge)*
***Back cover:*** *Trees with Egyptian Goose. (Jonathan Lethbridge)*

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# LONDON BIRD REPORT FOR 2017

This *London Bird Report* has been produced by an Editorial Board, comprising:

Chair of Editorial Board ..... Pete Lambert
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## Introduction

The British Ornithologists' Union drew up a new British List (the Ninth edition, as amended at 1 February 2019) while we were preparing *LBR* 2017. So we have decided to follow their new order of species, their British names (with one exception) and their scientific names throughout this report. You can see the new order in the Checklist of Birds of the London Area at the back of this report. For the vast majority of species where there have been changes, this just means a slight change in the order of the species. So our Birds of the London Area now starts with Brent Goose as the first species rather than Mute Swan, but all the Geese and Swans are still together in one section. There are though, some major changes in order. Falcons have been separated from the other Raptors and now appear after Woodpeckers; Pipits and Wagtails have moved from being near Larks, to follow after Sparrows; the old section on Thrushes has been split into two sections following Warblers. Several common birds also have been moved away from the 'families' they used to be with. For example, Long-tailed Tit now follows Cetti's Warbler; Wren now follows Crests; Starlings have moved away from Sparrows and Dunnock and now follow Sparrows. This may take us all a bit of getting used to, so we have in this report an alphabetical index of common names of birds which you may wish to use to find some species. There have been some changes to scientific names too; all changed names are shown in blue type in the Checklist and are also on our website.

We welcome Liz Andrew, who has taken over the role of Papers Editor, to the Editorial Board. Her contact details are on the inside back cover of this issue.

The General Data Protection Regulation, which affects the holding of personal data of people, came into effect since our publication of LBR 2016. The LNHS has a Privacy Notice which explains what personal data the LNHS holds, why and how we use it and an individual's rights in relation to that data:

see http://www.lnhs.org.uk/index.php/about-us/dataprotection

For the publication of the 2017 *London Bird Report* we gathered records from a number of sources and stored these records. These records will normally include the name of the person reporting the sighting. If you would like our records not to retain your name and/or contact details, please contact the Chair of the LBR Editorial Board. In some cases, we identify contributors of some particular records in *LBR*. This means it shows where that person was on a particular date. If you would not like to be identified in the text of *LBR* in this way, please let us know. In addition, in *LBR* 2017 we publish a list of the names of anyone whose records we have used in writing the report. If in future you do not wish us to include your name in this list, please contact the Chair of the LBR Editorial Board.

From this edition onwards, the site previously referred to as Walthamstow Reservoirs will now be called Walthamstow Wetlands.

We ran into some problems in processing the data we held for our Essex vice-county and some records were mislaid for a while. We hope we have now caught up with all those records that were relevant; they are in the report, but please let us know if we seem to have lost any of your records.

As always, your comments on this issue are very welcome, especially any suggestions as to how we could improve things even more. My contact details are given below.

## Acknowledgements

On behalf of the London Natural History Society, I would like to thank the many individuals and organisations who have contributed their records. Without your enthusiastic support we could not produce the annual *London Bird Report*.

I would also like to thank all those volunteers who helped with the production of the report: the authors of the Review of the Year and the Systematic List, and the authors of the papers (listed above); all the photographers who kindly donated their photos; Jean Trier, Mavis Pilbeam, Sean Huggins and Tara Wikramanayake for proof-reading the text; and all the members of the Editorial Board. Thanks also to Nigel Partridge for designing the layouts; and Swallowtail Print for printing and distributing this issue.

I am particularly grateful to all the Recorders, who, in addition to the time-consuming tasks of inputting all the data for their area, checked the species accounts in the Systematic List and provided comments and corrections. I would also like to thank the many people who looked at the draft text and made comments to improve it. If you would also like to see draft copies of future reports for comment, please let me know. Thanks also to Thames Water for the many courtesies extended to our members, and to the following organisations for their generous help in the exchange of records:

BirdGuides, British Birds Rarities Committee, British Trust for Ornithology,
Buckinghamshire Bird Club, East London Birders Forum,
Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC,
Hertfordshire Natural History Society, Kent Ornithological Society,
Londonbirders Yahoo group, Surrey Bird Club

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# RECORDING ARRANGEMENTS

http://www.lnhs.org.uk > About Us> LNHS Sections> London Bird Club. 'Bird Recording'

The London recording area covered by this Report, 'the London Area', lies within a 20-mile radius of St Paul's Cathedral. The Area covers the whole of Greater London and parts of Hertfordshire, Essex, Kent, Surrey, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire. However, for continuity of recording, we still use the Watsonian vice-counties in this Report rather than the present administrative areas (but we combine vice-counties 18 and 19 as Essex). These vice-county boundaries are all shown on the map opposite. We also use a special recording zone for 'Inner London', which covers parts of Middlesex, Surrey and (just) Kent. This is a rectangular area, five miles north to south, eight miles east to west, centred on the site of the old Charing Cross on the south side of Trafalgar Square.

All records are welcome from LNHS members and non-members alike. We would particularly like information on the local status of common species, breeding records, notes on passage (including first and last dates and main movements), regular counts of wintering populations, notes on behaviour, as well as details of unusual birds. Regular reports from the same sites are a great help in seeing population trends and such reports, along with comments on changes in status, are always very welcome. Our Checklist of Birds of the London Area and Guide to Contributors of Records (pages 228 to 236), together with Breeding Criteria (page 237), give guidance on what information we would like for each species. Records should be sent to the appropriate Recorder listed on page 7 or to the Chair of the LBR Editorial Board. Please use site names as listed in our Gazetteer (see page 9) if you can, when sending in records. **If you send in details from sites not listed in the Gazetteer, please give an OS Grid Reference for the site.**

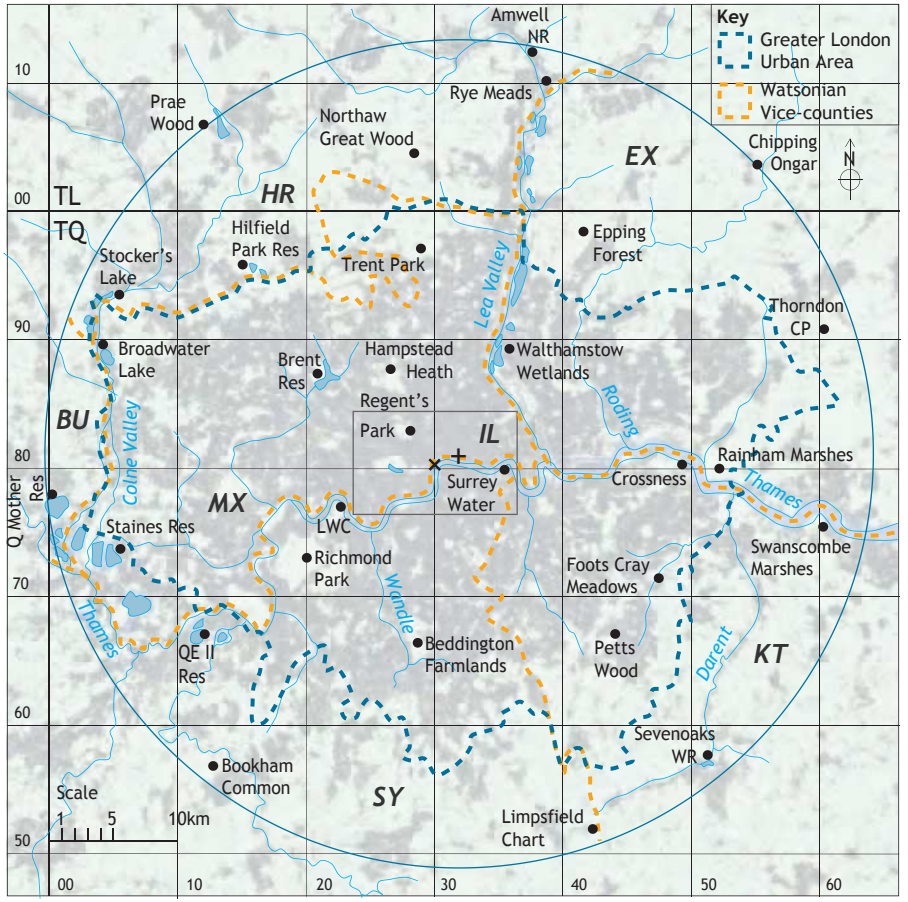
**For records of any year to appear in the *LBR*, we must have them no later than March 31st of the year after. Records received thereafter will just be added to our database.**

We have now set up on-line recording facilities on our website using Going Birding and we would prefer that you input records this way; alternatively, send us records on a spreadsheet. See our website (above) for both of these. Otherwise contact one of our Recorders or the Chair of the Editorial Board. It would also help if you list different species in the order used in this Report. Separate sheets should be used for each recording area.

Records of nationally rare species have to be considered by the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC). Their website (www.bbrc.org.uk) gives details. You should send these records as soon as possible after the sighting, with a copy to the relevant Recorder. Breeding records of rare species should be sent to the relevant Recorder. Details will then be sent to the Rare Breeding Birds Panel (www.rbbp.org.uk). Where requested, records will of course be treated in strict confidence. Records of other rare and unusual species in the London Area are considered by our Rarities Committee before being included in the *London Bird Report*. Species for which we need a full description or brief description/field notes are listed in the Checklist and Guide to Contributors. Please send these as soon as possible after the sighting.

Our records are stored with Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL) and if you would like to use any of our records for study purposes, please contact GiGL for details: http://www.gigl.org.uk/contact/






*LNHS Area map with locations of some well-known bird-watching sites. Boundary sites give an indication of the extent of the LNHS Area. A grey background shows a built-up area. (Contains Ordnance Survey data ©Crown copyright and database rights 2012)*

## Gazetteer of Sites

The Gazetteer of Sites is on the LNHS website (see top of page 8). It lists open spaces and the names of towns, villages etc. It does not list streets; you should be able to locate these easily with a street map, but contact us if you have difficulty.

Each site name is followed by the recording area for that site and an OS Grid Reference; this should help you to find the site on a map. The Grid Reference either refers to the centre of the site or to a point of particular ornithological interest. Not all of these sites are open to the public; some are private, for some you need to have a permit. Contact the Chair of the Editorial Board if you need information on any site (details on page 6).

# REVIEW OF THE YEAR 2017

The year saw only one first for London, which was Parrot Crossbill. Other highlights included London's third Laughing Gull, fifth Bonaparte's Gull, fourteenth and fifteenth Night-heron and twentieth Red-rumped Swallow. Other notable scarcities included Ring-necked Duck, three Quail, Leach's Petrel, Fulmar, four Manx Shearwater, two White Stork, four Glossy Ibis, five Spoonbill, four Cattle Egret, two Gannet, five Honey-buzzard, two Goshawk, Corncrake, two Spotted Crake, Crane, a pair of Black-winged Stilt, three Temminck's Stint, Purple Sandpiper, three Pectoral Sandpiper, two Red-necked Phalarope, five Grey Phalarope (the highest count since the Great Storm of 1987), two Sabine's Gull, Roseate Tern, two White-winged Black Tern records (one involving three birds), two Arctic Skua, two Common Guillemot, one record of seven Bee-eater together, three Wryneck, two Red-backed Shrike, three Great Grey Shrike, Shorelark, Grey-headed Wagtail, Twite, Lapland Bunting and two Snow Bunting. There was a new high of Great White Egret records with them being recorded at 24 sites this year: this included a flock of 14 over Rainham Marshes in October. There were 15 records of Yellow-browed Warbler and six Siberian Chiffchaffs. It was an astonishing year for Hawfinch records with an autumn invasion.

In the first winter period there were low numbers of Brent Goose, Scaup, Snipe and Short-eared Owl. There had been a few Waxwing at the end of 2016 but numbers increased in January, making it an irruption similar to that in the winter of 2012-2013. There were more Brambling this year, in both this winter period and the second.

Spring saw fewer Osprey than last year, fewer Yellow Wagtail and fewer Spotted Flycatcher. But there were more Wood Sandpiper and Greenshank and the largest spring passage of Bar-tailed Godwits since 2012. There were only two spring records of Wood Warbler and only three spring records of Blue-headed Wagtail.

There were increased breeding numbers of Egyptian Goose, Little Egret, Red Kite, Black-headed Gull, Stock Dove, Skylark and Stonechat, but Shelduck were down. Garganey, Shoveler, Teal, Great Black-backed Gull and Long-eared Owl all bred. There were also territorial Nightjar, Woodlark and Marsh Warbler. There was the first breeding record for Mediterranean Gull in London (which unfortunately was unsuccessful).

In autumn, at Staines Res the partial draining of one basin led to exceptional numbers and variety of waders there. As usual, there were several high counts of passage Wood Pigeon in late October and early November. There was a very large movement of House Martin on September 21st when 6,710 were counted over Canons Farm; this is probably the largest passage count ever recorded in London. There were only three autumn records of Wood Warbler.

The second winter period had all the Whooper Swan records. Wintering Teal numbers were down. About four Great Northern Diver were recorded in this period. Numbers of Ringed Plover on the Lower Thames were fairly low. Counts of Siskin were much higher in this winter period than in the first one.



**January**

The month saw year highs of 1,500 Dunlin at Swanscombe Marshes, nine Smew at Wraysbury GP, 11 Grey Plover at Grays Riverside and nine Ruddy Duck at Staines Res. A Siberian Chiffchaff was at Creekmouth, Barking on 3rd, staying for most of the month. On 5th, a Great Grey Shrike was at Ingrebourne Valley and stayed until 29th. Another Siberian Chiffchaff was at Beddington Farmlands on 7th, seen on some other January dates too, with a second at Broadwater Lake on 8th, where one or two stayed until February 17th. The first of three Red-necked Grebes was at Hilfield Park Res on 17th, and on 22nd a Hen Harrier was at Bulphan Fen. A wintering Whitethroat was found in a West Drayton garden on 25th. A Hen Harrier was at Brook Farm, Upminster on 27th. On 29th, there was a Common Guillemot at Gallions Reach.

**February**

Year highs this month included 100 Lesser Redpoll at Thorndon CP North. A Siberian Chiffchaff was at Walthamstow Wetlands from 26th and seen several times up to April 9th.

**March**

The month saw year highs of 15 Turnstone at Swanscombe Marshes. Summer visitors and passage migrants began to arrive, with the first Sand Martin on 3rd at QE II Res, the first Bar-tailed Godwit at Crossness on 6th, and on 7th the first Willow Warbler was at Brookmill Park and the first Wheatear at Q. Mother Res. A male Ring-necked Duck appeared at Brent Res on 11th, staying until 20th. The first two Garganey of the year were at London Wetland Centre on 12th. On 15th, the first Little Ringed Plovers were at Horton Brook Quarry and Rye Meads, and the first Swallow was at Creekmouth, Barking. The first Ring Ouzel of the year was at Beddington Farmlands on 17th. The earliest ever Cuckoo was recorded on 18th at Riddlesdown. The first Spoonbill of the year was at Rainham Marshes on 22nd and the first Sandwich Tern was at Q. Mother Res the next day. The only Red-throated Diver of the year was at Q. Mary Res on 25th, and three Glossy Ibis flew south over Rainham Marshes the same day that the first Sedge Warbler was there. The 27th was a good day for Little Gull with 29 being recorded; there was also a very early Swift on that day at Alexandra Park, as well as the first Lesser Whitethroat of the year at Horton CP. The first spring Sanderling was at Staines Res on 28th as well as the first Common Tern. The first Ospreys of the year were seen on 29th at Amwell NR and at Dagenham, and the first House Martin was at London Wetland Centre. On 30th, the first Yellow Wagtail of the year was at Upminster.

**April**

The month began with a harrier at KGVI Res, which couldn't be identified to species, as well as the first Arctic Tern of the year at Rainham Marshes, the first Redstart at Greenwich and the first Garden Warbler at Sevenoaks WR. The last Goosander of the first winter period was on 2nd at Broadwater Lake, as was the first Reed Warbler of the year at two sites, and the first Tree Pipit, which was at West Hyde. On the same day a Goshawk was seen at Beddington Farmlands. The first Hobby were at two sites on 3rd. Rainham Marshes had the first Grasshopper Warbler of the year on 5th and the last

Brambling was at Sevenoaks WR too. The first Whimbrel was at Rainham Marshes on 8th and the next day the peak Curlew count of 35 for the year was at this site too. There were also two early Little Terns at Walthamstow Wetlands on 9th, the same day that the first Nightingale of the year was at Crossness. On the 12th, the first Whinchat of the year was at Fairlop Waters. The first Cattle Egret of the year was at Richmond Park and the first Pied Flycatcher at Streatham Common, both on 13th. On 16th, a Red-necked Grebe was at Staines Res. The first Black Tern of the year was at KGV Res on 18th. The last Golden Plover of the first winter period was at Rainham Marshes on 20th. The only Wryneck of the spring was at Sidcup on 23rd. The only Red-rumped Swallow of the year was at Island Barn Res for two days from 27th. The first Temminck's Stint of the year was at Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough) on 28th; this moved the next day to QE II Res and then to Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) where it stayed until May 5th. A Spoonbill flew west over Enfield Lock Village on 29th; the first Turtle Dove was at North Weald Bassett on this date too. On 30th, the only Fulmar of the year flew over Amwell NR (the fourth record since 2008), two more Temminck's Stints appeared at Beddington Farmlands and Tyttenhanger GP, and the first Curlew Sandpiper of the year was at Rainham Marshes.

**May**

The last wintering Great Northern Diver was seen on 1st. On the 4th, the first Wood Sandpipers of the year were at Rainham Marshes. The first of two singing Quail at Rainham Marshes appeared on 6th, which was the same date as the last Jack Snipe of the first winter period, seen at London Wetland Centre. A Night-heron was flushed at Walthamstow Wetlands on 8th and on the same day a Grey-headed Wagtail was at Hilfield Park Res. There was a Laughing Gull at Rainham Marshes on 9th. On 10th, three Spoonbill flew south over Rainham Marshes and a pair of Black-winged Stilts were there too. This was also the day when the first Spotted Flycatcher of the year was at Holmethorpe SP. A pratincole was seen over Q. Mother Res on 11th, but the exact species couldn't be decided. A Bonaparte's Gull was at Creekmouth, Barking on14th and was seen here and nearby until 23rd.The only Crane of the year was at Rainham Marshes on 21st, staying to the next day. A juvenile Glaucous Gull lingered at Beddington Farmlands until 23rd. This was also the day when three White-winged Black Terns appeared at Staines Res with one staying for the next day. On 25th, a Marsh Warbler began to sing at Rainham Marshes. A Quail flying over Sidcup, calling, was an unusual sight on 27th; this was the same day as the first Honey-buzzard of the year over Purley.

**June**

A Glaucous Gull at Thames Barrier Park on 4th was unusually late. A Gannet was over Leyton on 6th. There was a late Brent Goose at Staines Res on 25th. On 28th, the first returning Whimbrel was at Rainham Marshes.

**July**

The month started with the only Roseate Tern record of the year, at Staines Res, and the first returning Garganey was at Hilfield Park Res on 9th. There was a Bittern at Osterley Park on 16th. A Honey-buzzard was over Regent's Park on 19th and the first of



three Manx Shearwater records was on 21st at KGV Res. Returning Black Tern appeared on 22nd and returning Sanderling from 24th. The first of three Pectoral Sandpipers seen this year arrived at Rainham Marshes on 29th, staying for two days. On 30th, a Goshawk was seen over Putney. The month ended with 12 Green Sandpiper at William Girling Res, the highest count of the year.

**August**

A Sabine's Gull was at Beddington Farmlands on 9th, and a Cattle Egret there on 14th was the first for the site. Seven Bee-eaters at Bayford on 16th and 17th (the largest ever group for London) were thought to be from the breeding attempt in Nottinghamshire. On 17th, there was a very high count of 121 Arctic Tern at Rainham Marshes. The first Red-backed Shrike of the year was at Hampstead Heath on 22nd and the second Night-heron of the year was at Wandsworth Common on 27th. The second Common Guillemot of the year was at Rainham Marshes on 29th. A Pectoral Sandpiper arrived at Staines Res on 30th and stayed for five days. The last Grasshopper Warbler of the year was at Chelsham on 31st.

**September**

One of two autumn records of Wryneck was at Bushey on 1st. The first of just two White Stork records this year involved three birds flying NW over Totteridge Valley on 2nd. A Merlin was seen at Staines Res on 3rd and remained in the area until early November. A Wryneck was at Amwell NR on 7th, and the first of three Honey-buzzard records this month was one over Canons Farm on 8th. There were 97 Ringed Plovers at Staines Res on 9th, the highest count of the year. The second Sabine's Gull of the year appeared at Q. Mother Res on 10th. On 11th, there was a Red-necked Phalarope at Staines Res as well as another Pectoral Sandpiper there. On the same day, a freshly dead Manx Shearwater was found in Surbiton, another one (alive) was at KGV Res on 13th, and a third was found near King's Cross Station on 15th and taken into care. A White-winged Black Tern was at Tyttenhanger GP on 12th, staying for six days. The first Grey Phalarope of the year appeared on 13th at Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough). Remarkably, this was followed by a second the next day at Staines Res and a third at Swanscombe Marshes on 15th. One of just two Arctic Skuas this year was at Staines Res on 14th. On 15th, a Honey-buzzard was over Richmond Park and the first returning Golden Plover was at Staines Moor/Res. A Glossy Ibis spent two days at London Wetland Centre from 17th and was seen over Richmond Park the next day. On 19th, a Grey Phalarope was at William Girling Res. A Hen Harrier was seen over Beddington Farmlands on 20th. The last Swift of the year was on 21st at Ingrebourne Valley. A Red-necked Grebe appeared at Roding Valley Meadows NR on 22nd and stayed to mid-December. Also on 22nd, a Honey-buzzard flew S over Romford. London Wetland Centre hosted a Cattle Egret for two days from 23rd; this was also the date of the first returning Jack Snipe, seen at Holmethorpe SP. At Wormwood Scrubs, on 23rd, there was the second Red-backed Shrike of the year as well as a very high count of 7,000 Ring-necked Parakeets, presumably going to roost. There was an internationally significant count of 431 Shoveler at Staines Res on 24th. The last Little Ringed Plover of the year was at Rye Meads on 25th, as were the last Sandwich Terns, and there was also an Arctic Skua at

Q. Mary Res. On 26th, the last Osprey of the year was at London Wetland Centre, the last Black Terns were at KGV Res, a second Spotted Crake was at Rye Meads and the first Brambling of the autumn was at Battersea Park. The last Sedge Warbler of the year was at Rye Meads on 27th and the last Pied Flycatcher at Oxleas Wood on 29th. The last Reed Warblers were on 30th at Brent Res and Rye Meads.

**October**

The last Garganey of the year was at Rainham Marshes on 3rd and on the same day, a radio-tagged Hen Harrier was at Orsett Fen. The first returning Brent Goose was at Staines Res on 8th and the last Spotted Flycatcher was at Denham. On 9th, a White Stork circled over Heathrow Airport. The last Arctic Tern of the year was at Gallions Reach on 14th, and the last Whitethroat of the year was at Colnbrook. Autumn passage of Chaffinches peaked on 15th, when several sites reported them flying W, with a total count of 3,150. There was another Spoonbill at Rainham Marshes on 16th which stayed to the 25th, being joined by a second bird on 19th. Also on 16th, a Spotted Crake was seen at Ingrebourne Valley, which stayed to October 2nd. There was an amazing sight of 14 Great White Egrets in flight over Rainham Marshes on 19th as well as a Gannet flying E there. Rainham Marshes also had a Common Redpoll on 20th and the last Common Tern of the year on 21st. A Corncrake, the only record of the year, was flushed at Wanstead Flats on 22nd; on the same day a second Red-necked Phalarope appeared at Staines Res, and the last Yellow Wagtail of the year was at Primrose Hill. On 24th, a Siberian Chiffchaff was at East India Dock Basin and the only Lapland Bunting of the year was spotted over Regent's Park. The last Wheatears of the year were at three sites on 27th. On 29th, three Whooper Swans (the first of the year) were at Rainham Marshes and the last Garden Warbler of the year was at Holmethorpe SP. The only Purple Sandpiper of the year was at Q. Mother Res on 30th, the same date as the last Willow Warbler at London Wetland Centre and the first Snow Bunting of the year over Chafford Hundred.

**November**

The month opened with a Spoonbill at KGV Res. On 2nd, a Cattle Egret was at Rainham Marshes, as well as the second Great Grey Shrike of the year at Little Woodcote. The last Swallow of the year was on 3rd at Tottenham Marshes. Two Whooper Swans were at Stanstead Innings and then at Rye Meads, on 5th. An unusual sighting in the window of a restaurant in Liverpool Street was a live Water Rail on 9th! There was a second Common Redpoll at Rainham Marshes on 9th. A late Whinchat was at Rainham Marshes on 10th and stayed until 16th. Beddington Farmlands had its second Siberian Chiffchaff on 11th and 12th. A Shore Lark at Q. Mary Res on 12th was then seen at Staines Res, staying to 28th; it was probably one of the North American races. A Shag was seen swimming on the R Thames near Victoria Tower Gardens on 13th, and the fifth Grey Phalarope of the year was at KGV Res. On 17th, there were 400 Black-tailed Godwits at Erith, the highest count this year. On 19th, ten Whooper Swans were at Staines Res and seen later at Hilfield Park Res. A Twite was found at Beddington Farmlands on 22nd; this was a ringed bird from the Pennines and it stayed into 2018. The second Snow Bunting of the year was at Rainham Marshes on 24th. The only Leach's Petrel of the year was at



William Girling Res on 25th, when the first returning Great Northern Diver was at KGV Res, as well as the last Hobby of the year at Sydenham Hill Wood.

**December**

The month started with the last Whooper Swan for the year, seen over Tottenham Marshes and then relocated on nearby Banbury Res. At Richmond Park, 15 Woodcock were seen on 7th. Three Little Gulls at Rainham Marshes on 11th were the first since the end of October. There was a remarkably late House Martin on 12th at Nore Hill. Food put out for Red Kites at Iver produced a count of 135 birds together there on 15th. The year's only Bewick's Swans flew over Wanstead Flats on 16th: this involved seven birds and was the first record at this site for 70 years. The only winter record of Greenshank was also on 16th, at Rainham Marshes. Perhaps the birds of the year were three Parrot Crossbills at Broxbourne Woods on 18th, which stayed until 25th. Also on 18th, a Lesser Whitethroat was found in a garden in Richmond; DNA evidence confirmed this as the *blythi* subspecies. There were 130 Pied Wagtails going to roost at Epping on 20th. The third Common Redpoll of the year was at Ten Acre Wood, Yeading on 24th. The third Great Grey Shrike of the year was at Molesey Heath on 30th.

*Grasshopper Warbler. (Russ Sherriff)*

# CONTRIBUTORS TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

All contributors of ornithological records to the Society in 2017 are listed below. We apologise if any names have been omitted inadvertently.

In order to save space, contributors' initials have been combined under each surname and separated by commas - except when an abbreviation is attributed to a contributor: in this case the surname, initials and abbreviation stand alone and are in blue type.

To assist you in identifying a contributor from an attributed abbreviation, look in the main list under the name given against the abbreviation in the table below.

AGr: Grist
AGs: Gouldstone
AQ: Quinn
ARD: Duckett
ASa: Salmon
ASc: Skotnicki
ASh: Shearman
ASMS: Self
ATn: Tanner
AW: Wilson
BGo: Goldsmith
BH: Haines
BJ: Jones
BR: Reed
BTr: Tranfield
BV: Vaughan
CBe: Beach
CDRH: Heard
CFa: Farthing
CFl: Farrell
CJ: Jupp
CTu: Turner
DA: Annal
DCn: Callahan
DJ: Johnson
DJM: Morris
DK: Kendrick
DKC: Campbell
DKy: Key
DL: Leach
DMH: Harris
DMl: Mitchell
DMn: Morrison
DP: Pia
DSh: Shepherd
DSm: Smith
DT: Tarran
DTM: McKenzie
ES: Stobart
FJM: Maroevic
FS: Simpson
GAJ: James
GCn: Caine
GLo: Longstaff
GSm: Smith
GWJ: Jones
HLy: Lacey
HV: Vaughan
IB: Bennell
IJ: Jones
IS: Stewart
JF: Free
JKA: Archer
JL: Lethbridge
JPa: Partridge
JPPW: Wilczur
JT: Tilbrooke
JTa: Taylor
KG: Guest
KL: Laban
KLP: Purdey
KSt: Standbridge
MAs: Andersson
MCr: Crutch
MHe: Hellicar
MJ: Jordan
MWn: Whyman
NAn: Anderson
NC: Croft
NGa: Gardener
NRu: Rutter
NS: Smith
NTw: Twyford
PBa: Ball
PDu: Dunn
PG: Goodman
PH: Hawkins
PHy: Hyland
PJA: Aylward
PJC: Castleton
PLa: Larkin
PLt: Lambert
PLw: Lewis
PP: Pentek
PRA: Alfrey
PSt: Street
RBA: Rare Bird Alert
RBd: Braddock
RBk: Baker
RBr: Browne
RBs: Barnes
REI: Innes
REv: Evershed
RFr: Flesher
RJP: Pyrah
RJW: Watts
RK: Kaye
RMP: Rye Meads Partnership
RS: Sherriff
RSe: Seymour
RWa: Warden
SB: Bacon
SBl: Blake
SE: Elwell
SH: Hamilton
SHy: Harvey
SL: Levy
SMy: Murray
ST: Thomas
TB: Blake
TBl: Bell
TCl: Clancy
TCn: Caine
TJP: Peck
TWn: Whyman
WB: Wanstead Birders

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Leech C
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Longstaff G GLo
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Lowbridge C
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Luckhurst P
Lyburn A
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Lyle T
Lynch R
Lyness D
Lyons D
Maas S
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McBadger L
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McCulloch JI
McDonagh M
McDonald I
McDonnell J
McGeeney A
McGilvray KL
McGlynn E
McGough D
Mckellar C
McKenzie DT DTM
McLaughlin J
McLoughlin M
McMahon K
McManus KJ, M
McNabb M
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Moll N
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Morden R
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Morris DJ DJM
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Mortimer M
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Moss A, B, J, P
Moulton T
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Murray J, K
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Murton S
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Muthalib D
Napper E
Nash C, M, R
Nasir J
Neal D, SM
Neale M
Neate W
Neil B
Nelhams A
Ness R
Netherwood M
Neville LG
Newbound PJ
Newham J
Newmark PA
Newnham W
Newson J
Newton D
Nichols D, SC
Nicholson B, JP
Nicholson-Ross G
Niloc A
Noakes J
Noes M
Norcott B
Norman I, R
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Nowers MD
Nugent F
Nuns M
Nurse M
Oakenfull P
Oakes A
Oakland M
Oakley T
Oates SJ
O'Brien JW, T
O'Flynn C
Ogun J
O'Hanlon J
Oldfield M
O'Leary J, T
Oliverio C
O'Malley S
Onn C
Orchard M
Orme M
Osborn P, S
O'Shaughnessy A
Osmond J
Osterberg F
O'Sullivan F
Owen D
Packer M
Padmore MG
Page B, J
Page-Jones R
Paice J, M
Painter D
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Palmer C, J, JC, K, KJP, M
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Parish C
Parker B, M
Parkes A
Parr M
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Partridge J JPa
Pask R
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Patient S
Patmore S
Patrick C
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Pearce J, S
Pearson A
Peck TJ TJP
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Peggs G
Pegram B
Pell EA
Pennington M
Pentek M
Pentek P PP
Pentek S
Pentell P
Percival P
Perfect S
Perry A, R
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Petley R
Phelps MS
Phillips M, P
Pia D DP
Piccolo A
Picken V
Pilbeam M
Pinkham D
Piotrowski S
Plume I
Podmore A
Pollitt M
Pond D, N
Pont S
Poole C
Pople RG
Porritt D
Porter NR
Portugal S
Posen S
Potter N
Potts R
Powell J, R
Power R
Powlesland M
Poynter S
Prater F
Pratley I, J
Pratt D
Presosh S
Preston N, T
Price B, G, M, V
Prideaux RH
Prior B
Pritchard J
Procter R, S
Proddow SK
Pulsford N
Purdey KL KLP
Puritz J
Pursglove MS
Purvis S, T
Puttock B
Pyrah RJ RJP
Quail J
Quig A
Quinn A AQ
Radcliffe S
Rae A
Ralph C
Ralston CS
Ramsay C
Ramsey D



Rand C
Randall A
Randle K
Randon N
Ranger P
Raper S
Rare Bird Alert RBA
Ratcliffe C
Rawlings ND, T
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Read D, S
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Reding B, C, E, P
Redmond P
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Richmond Park Bird Group
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Ripley S
Rivoire JR
Rix A
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Robson I, M
Roche S
Rocksborough-Smith J, S
Rodger A
Rodway LM
Roffey B
Rogers S
Rolf J
Rollinson T
Roman AJ
Root SM
Roper P
Rose C, I, J, W
Rossiter BN
Rossor M
Ross-Smith VH
Rowbotham I
Rowe I
Rowland AJ, J
RSPB Bexley Local Group
RSPB NW London Local Group
Ruby B
Ruis C
Ruislip Natural History Society
Rumsby B, L, M, T
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Sketch PA
Skinner A
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Smallshire P
Smart S
Smith B, C
Smith D DSm
Smith G GSm
Smith K, KR, L, M
Smith N NS
Smith R, RN, S, SF, TA
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Smout C, TC
Smy GW
Snead S
Soane J
Soor S
Sorrell D
Southam G
Southcott M
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Sparrow M
Speller T
Spence AJ, IM
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Spicer M
Spinks C, G
Spittles M
Squires C
Stacey G
Stachnicki IA
Stallard B
Standbridge K KSt
Stanesby A
Stanger A
Stanley D, M, R
Stannard E
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Stephenson L
Stevens M, P, T
Stewart, A, C, G
Stewart I IS
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Stocks N
Stockwell B
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Stones T
Stowers B
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Stratton A, ND
Straw T
Street P PSt
Strickland I
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Stuart T
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Sweetman C
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Tate J, M
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Taylor J JTa
Taylor L, M, N, RC, RE, S, T
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Tendler C
Theobald RC
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Thomas S ST
Thomason E
Thompson A, J, P
Thomson DJ
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Trevis B
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Trim C
Triston P
Trollope A, CE
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Tuck D, R
Tucker R
Tuke A
Tulloch E
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Turner D, DP, J, R, RM
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Tutt D
Tweed A, T
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Tyrrell C
Tyttenhanger Birders
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Unite R
Upstone M
Upton G
Utting D, S
Utton BM
Vale Countryside Volunteers
Vale M
Vallas JC
Valsamidis A
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Van Werneskarken C
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Vaughan A
Vaughan B BV
Vaughan H HV
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Wanstead Birders WB
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Warwick JC
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Wasse J
Waters S
Watson IR, J, M
Watts C, K, M, P
Watts RJ RJW
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WeBS
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Willett JD
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Wilton C
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Woodall R
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Woodward ID, J, R
Woolfenden J, S
Woolley RH
Wormald L
Worsfold S
Worsley D
WREN Group
Wren R
Wright B, C, D, I, J, N, T
WWT
Wyatt T
Wyllie R
Wyn-Jones H
Yates J
Youell C
Young G, I, J
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Zimmer D

# BIRDS OF THE LONDON AREA 2017

# BIRDS OF THE LONDON AREA, 2017

## WITH SOME ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS FOR PREVIOUS YEARS

## A Report on Bird-life within Twenty Miles of St Paul's Cathedral

This section of the Report now follows the British Ornithological Union (BOU) 9th Edition order and - with one exception - nomenclature; we have retained the common name Feral Pigeon. The new Checklist of Birds of the London Area appears on pages 228 to 236.

The six vice-counties within the London Area are denoted in the report as follows: Essex or EX, Herts or HR = Hertfordshire, Middx or MX = Middlesex, Bucks or BU = Buckinghamshire, Kent or KT, Surrey or SY, and In Lond or IL = Inner London (the central rectangular area shown on the map on page 9). Other abbreviations are:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CP | = | Country Park | OS | = | Open Space |
| FB | = | Filter Beds | PF | = | Playing Field(s) |
| fem | = | female | PS | = | Power Station |
| GC | = | Golf Course | QE II | = | Queen Elizabeth II |
| Gdn(s) | = | Garden(s) | Q. Mary | = | Queen Mary |
| GP | = | Gravel Pit(s) | Q. Mother | = | Queen Mother |
| imm, juv | = | immature, juvenile | R | = | River |
| KGV | = | King George V | Res | = | Reservoir(s) |
| KGVI | = | King George VI | RG | = | Recreation Ground |
| *LBR* | = | *London Bird Report* | SF/SW | = | Sewage Farm/Works |
| LNR | = | Local Nature Reserve | SP | = | Sand Pit(s) |
| NR | = | Nature Reserve | WeBS | = | Wetland Bird Survey |
| N, S, E, W | = | North, South, East and West | WR | = | Wildfowl Reserve |

Observer abbreviations are shown only against records for species which are rare in the London Area. To report an unusual bird, please download the new 'Details of an Unusual Bird (description form)' - see page 3 under **Links to files on the LNHS website:** About Us> LNHS Sections> London Bird Club. 'Bird Recording'. A list of all the observers who have contributed records for 2017 appears on pages 16 to 22.

The abbreviation 'mo' used for some records, indicates 'many observers'. All running totals of rare or unusual birds that are provided in the systematic list refer to occurrences since 1900.

The term 'Lower Thames' is used for the section of the R Thames from the Thames Barrier to the eastern edge of our recording area. The term 'West London reservoirs' is used for the following reservoirs: Island Barn, KGVI, QE II, Q. Mary, Q. Mother, Staines, Walton and Wraysbury.

**Status** refers to the status of a species in the London Area - not in the UK as a whole.

*Previous page: Green Woodpecker numbers have increased in London in recent years. (Tony Duckett)*



## Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

**Status**: occasional migrant and winter visitor.

There were only 36 records this year, involving possibly just 66 birds, recorded at 14 sites. This was the lowest total in the London Area for many years, and a decrease for the third consecutive year (82 birds in 2016 and 135 in 2015).

The first records were singles on January 1st at Rainham Marshes and Staines Res; one was at Q. Mary Res on the 14th, then three flew over London Wetland Centre on the 30th, with 12 at Rainham Marshes the same day. One was at Staines Res on February 2nd, then a single was reported at Rainham Marshes on four dates from the 8th to 12th, with one at Crossness on the 9th possibly being the same bird. One was at Holmethorpe SP on the 11th, then six more flew over London Wetland Centre on the 15th, with four also at Rainham Marshes that day. One was at QE II Res on the 25th, with another at Rainham Marshes on the 28th. Two were at Q. Mary Res on March 28th, when one was also seen at Q. Mother Res. One flew high over Beddington Farmlands on April 14th, and one was reported at London Wetland Centre on May 3rd and 5th. There was one at Staines Res on the unusual date of June 25th.

The first returning bird was at Staines Res on October 8th, with one at Rainham Marshes on the 15th, where two more were seen on the 29th, when one was also at Walthamstow Wetlands. On the 31st, singles were at Horton Brook Quarry and Q. Mother Res. A bird at KGVI Res on November 4th was subsequently seen on Staines Moor on the 5th and 6th, on which latter date one flew over Primrose Hill. One was at QE II Res on the 12th, then 12 flew over Rainham Marshes on the 17th, with a single there on the 19th and two on December 10th, with the last of the year being two flying over London Wetland Centre on the 28th.

## Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

**Status**: very common, introduced breeding resident.

The number of broods recorded rose to 219 from 87 sites (193 from 67 last year). Breeding totals fluctuate year on year, and observer coverage is a factor, but the Breeding Bird Survey shows a 33% increase in the South East since the previous year, and a long-term increase of 66% in England from 1995-2016, so this year's totals seem to indicate a real increase, in line with the national picture. As usual the top breeding sites were Beddington Farmlands and Walthamstow Wetlands, although the success rate at the latter fell from 48 broods in 2016 to 27 in 2017.

Below are breeding records for sites with three or more broods (number in brackets), and the highest overall counts in all sectors.

**Essex**: Breeding records from 19 sites (nine last year). Connaught Water (3). Hainault CP (3+). Lodge Farm, Nazeing, c600 on Sep 10th. Rainham Marshes (23). Roding Valley Meadows NR (5+). Walthamstow Wetlands (27); 619 on Jul 9th.

Herts: Breeding records from 16 sites (ten last year). Bury Lake (3). Lynsters Farm (5). Rye Meads (8). Stocker's Lake (4). Tyttenhanger GP, 350 on Sep 9th.

**Middx**: Breeding records from 18 sites (20 last year). Alexandra Park (3). Broadwater Lake, 287 on Aug 23rd. Q. Mary Res (5).

**Bucks**: Breeding record from one site (none last year). Q. Mother Res, 818 on Aug 28th.

**Kent**: Breeding records from nine sites (11 last year). Sevenoaks WR (7+); 315 on Sep 3rd. Sundridge (3).
**Surrey**: Breeding records from 19 sites (14 last year). Beddington Farmlands (31). Claremont Landscape Garden (3). Holmethorpe SP, 805 on Oct 2nd.
**In Lond**: Breeding records from five sites (three last year). Regent's Park, 395 on Jun 29th.

## Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

**Status**: rare winter visitor and occasional visitor from self-sustaining population outside the London Area.

As usual, birds believed to be escapes are listed in App I of this report. Below are records believed to be from wild or self-sustaining populations outside the London Area. There were 17 such records this year: seven from January to March and ten from October onwards (not all of which are listed); most of these relate to the regular flock seen in south-west London, which has been recorded in the area every year since 2010, except in 2013.

**Middx**: Staines Moor, 40 NW on Oct 27th. Staines Res, four on Oct 7th.
**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands, 68 high NW on Mar 4th. Island Barn Res, 19 on Jan 7th, 21 on Feb 24th, five on Oct 16th, 28 on 28th, then present until the end of the year with peak count of 32 on Nov 14th. Leg O Mutton NR, 14 high SW on Oct 29th. Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), 19 on Jan 1st, 22 on 14th, 21 on Feb 15th and ten on Oct 29th (same flock as Island Barn Res). Walton-on-Thames, eight N on Jan 8th.

## Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

**Status**: common breeding resident.

The number of broods recorded increased slightly to 79 from 29 sites (74 from 26 last year). Coverage of breeding sites can fluctuate year on year, but breeding totals are certainly now much higher than in the first few years of this century, reflected in the latest Breeding Bird Survey result of a 104% population increase in the South East from 1995-2016.

The highest count was 420 (up from 405 at Rainham Marshes last year). Counts of 100 or more came from 21 sites (16 last year). Below are all breeding records (no. of broods in brackets) along with the highest counts for each sector.

**Essex**: Belhus Woods CP (8). Dagenham Chase (1). Fairlop Waters (1+). Glen Faba (1). Hainault CP (3). Hooks Marsh Lake (1); 420 on Jan 28th. Rainham Marshes (11). Roding Valley Meadows NR (1). Valentines Park (1). Walthamstow Wetlands (21). Warren Gorge (2+).
**Herts**: Amwell NR (1); 169 on Dec 15th. Frogmore Lakes (1). Lynsters Farm (3). Maple Lodge NR (1). Tyttenhanger GP (1).
**Middx**: Broadwater Lake (1). Canons Park (1). Laleham, 86 on Feb 11th. Savay Lake (1).
**Bucks**: Q. Mother Res, 190 on Aug 31st.
**Kent**: Crossness (2). Darenth Lakes (4). Kelsey Park (1). Sevenoaks WR (1+), 45 goslings; 400 on Jul 8th and Sep 27th. Swanscombe Marshes (1).

*Canada Goose. (Jonathan Lethbridge)*

**Surrey**: Claremont Landscape Garden (1). Holmethorpe SP (1+); 183 on Aug 29th. Richmond Park (1).
**In Lond**: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (3); 370 on Aug 30th. St James's Park (3).

## White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

**Status**: scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

All this year's records came in the first three months of the year, with the number of individual birds probably totalling just 11. This total compares with seven records of 43 birds in 2015 and 11 records of 164 birds last year. Assessing the number of wild birds is difficult, as a feral pair bred in Upminster and is assumed to have accounted for some of the sightings (see App I).

The first record was at Rainham Marshes on January 12th, before one was seen at Netherhall GP on January 24th, and presumably the same individual was at Rye Meads on the same date. Five were at Rainham Marshes on February 3rd, with probably the same five seen at Dartford Marshes area on the 5th and 6th, then back at Rainham Marshes on the 11th and 12th with four still there on the 13th. Up to three were then in the Holyfield Hall Farm area from the 16th to 24th. In March, one was at Walthamstow Wetlands on 1st, and one was at Holyfield Hall Farm from 11th to 13th - perhaps one of the three seen there the previous month.

## Grey Goose sp

**Kent**: Two SW over Foots Cray Meadows on Oct 5th were considered to probably be Pink-footed Geese by the observer (SJG).
**Surrey**: Three geese over Barn Elms PF on Nov 13th were considered possibly White-fronted Geese (RK).

## Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

**Status**: common breeding resident.

Breeding records vary considerably year on year, with this year's 133 well up on last year's 100, but only slightly up on the previous year's 125. A pair breeding at Brockwell Park may have been the first there for 60 years, indicating there is still room for expansion. Only two sites hosted flocks of 100+ (four last year), and eight sites had flocks of 50+ (13 last year). More regular peak counts and breeding records would help paint a truer picture of its status and would be welcome. Below are breeding record totals followed by the highest counts in each sector.

**Mute Swan breeding records** (including nest building)

| Essex | Herts | Middx | Bucks | Kent | Surrey | In Lond | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 25 | 25 | 28 | 2 | 14 | 29 | 10 | 133 |

**Essex**: Harrow Lodge Park, 131 on Feb 13th.
**Herts**: Rye Meads, 62 on May 28th.

*Mute Swan. (Jonathan Lethbridge)*

**Middx**: R Thames: Richmond to Teddington, 75 on Jul 23rd.
**Bucks**: Wraysbury GP, 86 on Jun 5th.
**Kent**: Southmere Lake, 27 on Dec 28th.
**Surrey**: Kingston-upon-Thames, 54 on Aug 4th.
**In Lond**: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, 148 on Jan 17th.

## Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus*

**Status**: scarce migrant, usually in autumn, and winter visitor.

There was just one record, the third year in succession that fewer than ten birds have been recorded.

**Essex**: Wanstead Flats, seven flew E on Dec 16th (NC); the first record at this site for 70 years.

## Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

**Status**: rare winter visitor.

Fourteen birds were recorded, all during the second winter period, including a flock of ten which was seen in November at Staines Res before moving to Hilfield Park Res and then later flying north, and two seen earlier that month at two different sites in Hertfordshire. This is the third time in the last four years that ten or more birds have been recorded, and the ninth consecutive year the species has been recorded in the London Area.

**Essex**: Banbury Res, one on Dec 1st, seen earlier at Tottenham Marshes (PLt *et al*). Rainham Marshes, three on Oct 29th (PJA).
**Herts**: Hilfield Park Res, ten on Nov 19th (TB, IB); seen earlier at Staines Res. Rye Meads, two on Nov 5th (RMP), seen earlier at Stanstead Abbots (JF).
**Middx**: Staines Res, ten (two adults, eight juv) on Nov 19th (RWa *et al*).

## Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

**Status**: increasing, introduced breeding resident.

This species was recorded at 303 sites, up from the 278 in each of the previous two years. Following the decline in breeding records noted last year (59 broods at 37 sites, down from 64 at 48 sites in 2015), there was an increase to 75 broods at 58 sites. Additionally, pairs or juveniles were recorded at a further 24 sites where breeding was not actually proven. The 215 recorded at QE II Res in September is the highest ever count for the London Area.

The table below shows the number of sites in each sector. Below that are all breeding records, with the number of broods in brackets, along with selected high counts.

**Egyptian Goose: number of sites**

| Essex | Herts | Middx | Bucks | Kent | Surrey | In Lond | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 51 | 36 | 67 | 8 | 34 | 77 | 30 | 303 |

**Essex**: Dagenham Chase (1). Netherhall GP (1). Stubbers OPC (1). Three Mills (1). Valentines Park (1). Walthamstow Wetlands (6). Wanstead Flats, 53 on Sep 30th.



**Herts**: Brocket Park (1). Grove Mill (1). Lynsters Farm (1). Moor Park GC (1). Rickmansworth Aquadrome (1).
**Middx**: Boxer's Lake, Enfield (1). Brent Res (1). Broadwater Lake (1). Bushy Park (2+). Grovelands Park (1). Hammersmith Bridge (1). Home Park (3); 133 on Sep 10th. Mill Hill (1). Osterley Park (1). Pymmes Park (1). Q. Mary Res, 148 on Oct 22nd. Totteridge Valley (1).
**Bucks**: Black Park (1). Q. Mother Res (1); 122 on Sep 4th.
**Kent**: Blackheath Village (1). Chipstead Lake (1). Crystal Palace Park (1). Kelsey Park (1). Sevenoaks WR (1). Southmere Lake (1).
**Surrey**: Barnes Green Pond (1). Beddington Park (2). Buckland SP (1) Egham (1). Esher Common (1). Hogsmill SW (1). Island Barn Res (1). Kew (1). Kew Gardens (1). London Wetland Centre (2). Mitcham Common (1). Morden Cemetery (1). Morden Hall Park (2). QE II Res, 215 on Sep 27th. Richmond Park (1). R Wey Navigation: Coxes Lock (1). South Norwood CP (2). South Norwood Lake (1). Tooting Common (1). Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) (1). Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough) (1). Wandsworth Common (1). West End Common (1).
**In Lond**: Burgess Park (1). Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (5); 114 on Oct 6th and 97 on Dec 12th. Regent's Park (5); 78 on Jun 29th. Shadwell Basin (1). St James's Park (2). Surrey Water (1).

## Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

**Status**: passage migrant, decreasing breeding resident on Lower Thames, regular visitor to major waters where it breeds in small numbers.

Following recent increases reported last year, breeding records dropped substantially this year to just eight broods at eight sites (17 at eight sites last year and 21 at 16 sites in 2015). This mirrors the decrease of 22% in England since last year recorded by the Breeding Bird Survey. There were also pairs or juveniles recorded at 14 other sites where breeding was not proven.

Crossness again had the year's highest total with 156, well up on last year's 108. Breeding records are shown below, with number of broods in brackets, and total number of young if known, along with selected high counts.

**Essex**: Barking Bay, 102 on Mar 23rd. Rainham Marshes (1). Walthamstow Wetlands (1), six ducklings; 60 on Mar 18th.
**Herts**: Tyttenhanger GP (1), one duckling.
**Middx**: East India Dock Basin, 26 on Dec 8th. KGVI Res (1), six ducklings. Staines Res (1), four ducklings; 24 on May 14th. Wraysbury Res (1), nine ducklings.
**Surrey**: London Wetland Centre (1), eight ducklings; first breeding record for this site. Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough) (1), ten ducklings; none survived.

## Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata*

**Status**: introduced breeding resident, established and locally common.

The number of broods this year was 40 (24 in 2016, 25 in 2015 and 39 in 2014). Overall numbers show a small increase compared with last year. All breeding records (no. of broods in brackets) and significant counts are given below.

*Mandarin Duck can be found in a few London parks. (Nick Croft)*

**Essex**: Connaught Water (2); 44 on Nov 6th. Wake Valley Pond (1).
**Herts**: Aldenham CP, 21 on Jan 4th. Brookmans Park (1). Croxley Green (1). Ellenbrook Fields (1). Essendon, 22 on Jun 5th. Hatfield Park (2). Wildhill, 14 on Aug 21st.
**Middx**: Beech Hill Lake (1). Boxer's Lake (1). Broomfield Park (1). Bushy Park (2). Enfield Wash (1). Forty Hall (1). Grovelands Park (2); 106 on Dec 3rd. Hampstead Heath (1); 38 on Nov 19th. New River Walk (3). Osterley Park (1). Parkside Farm/Res (1). Q. Mary GP (1). Totteridge Valley (1). Trent Park (3); 27 on Nov 8th. Whitewebbs Park, 71 on Jan 24th. Wildwoods (2); 61 on Jan 17th.
**Bucks**: Black Park, 30+ on Mar 7th.
**Kent**: Kelsey Park, 50 on Feb 14th. Sevenoaks WR, 20 on Jan 21st.
**Surrey**: Egham, 28 on Jan 3rd. London Wetland Centre, 21 on Jan 11th. Richmond (1). Richmond Park (2+); 38 on Oct 15th. R Mole, Leatherhead (3). The Ledges, Esher (2). Wimbledon Common, 23 on Jan 20th.
**In Lond**: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (1). Regent's Park (1); 21 on Jan 24th and Feb 21st.

## Garganey *Spatula querquedula*

**Status**: scarce passage migrant, rare in winter; occasionally breeds.

Successful breeding was confirmed at Rainham Marshes, where a brood was seen on June 3rd, and one bird fledged, and up to five birds were also present at Rye Meads from late June until early August but with no evidence of breeding. Elsewhere, the first two migrants arrived at London Wetland Centre on March 12th (nine days earlier than last year). More



followed from March 17th to June 5th (singles unless stated, sites ordered by date seen) at Bushy Park (two), Stanborough Lakes (two), Walthamstow Wetlands, Sevenoaks WR (four), Amwell NR (three), Cassiobury Park, London Wetland Centre (two), Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), Tyttenhanger GP, Holmethorpe SP, Dagenham Chase, Staines Res, Beddington Farmlands, Island Barn Res, Stanstead Innings and Brent Res. Birds at Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) on June 19th, London Wetland Centre on 23rd and Amwell NR on 25th may have been late spring or early returning migrants, or wandering summering birds.

The first presumed returning bird was one at Hilfield Park Res on July 9th, seven days earlier than last year, with two on July 16th at Tyttenhanger GP. Others followed from July 23rd until October at (sites ordered by date) Beddington Farmlands, Highgate, Holmethorpe SP, Dagenham Chase, Staines Res, Amwell NR, Q. Mother Res, Wraysbury GP and Hilfield Park Res. The last bird was at Rainham Marshes on October 3rd. There were birds recorded at 22 sites this year, compared with 23 sites in 2016 and 18 sites in 2015.

## Shoveler *Spatula clypeata*

**Status**: common passage migrant and winter visitor, scarce breeder, with small numbers recorded in summer.

Most of our wintering population had left by late-April and began to return in mid-August, similar to last year. Staines Res was the only site with numbers of international significance (400 for BTO WeBS counts). The highest count there was 431 in September, 93 higher than the 2016 peak of 338, and also above the 2015 peak of 393. Cheshunt GPs, Crossness, London Wetland Centre and Stocker's Lake were the other sites to have numbers of national significance (180 for BTO WeBS counts). The only breeding reports were from Rainham Marshes. The table below gives monthly figures for the key sites. Below that are significant records from other sites and a summary of records from Inner London.

| Shoveler | | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EX | Rainham Marshes | 40 | 80 | 103 | 124 | 26 | 3 | 50 | 7 | 54 | 104 | 49 | 23 |
| | Walthamstow Wetlands | 20 | 35 | 25 | 12 | 2 | - | 3 | 11 | 80 | 129 | 14 | 14 |
| HR | Hilfield Park Res | 79 | 76 | 94 | 17 | - | 1 | 1 | 8 | 32 | 32 | 24 | 64 |
| | Rye Meads | 30 | 101 | 178 | 44 | 4 | 10 | 12 | 21 | 110 | 41 | 82 | 34 |
| | Stocker's/Bury Lakes | 221 | 105 | 22 | 15 | - | - | 2 | 23 | 22 | 53 | 68 | 54 |
| MX | Staines Res | 377 | 200 | 118 | 20 | 2 | - | - | 125 | 431 | 287 | 160 | 37 |
| KT | Crossness | 190 | 114 | 42 | 20 | 2 | - | 2 | 12 | 1 | 27 | 50 | 123 |
| SY | Beddington Farmlands | 80 | 75 | 46 | 25 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 73 | 121 | 74 | 82 |
| | Richmond Park | 125 | 133 | 3 | - | - | - | - | - | 5 | 1 | 1 | 16 |
| | Walton Res (C&L) | 56 | 113 | 105 | 35 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 14 | 55 | 55 | 31 | 9 |
| | Wetland Centre | 212 | 223 | 188 | 20 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 58 | 94 | 119 | 129 | 152 |

**Essex**: Holyfield Lake, 200 on Jan 28th. KGV Res, 200 on Oct 1st. Rainham Marshes (10), ten broods seen although 15 pairs were present.
**Herts**: Amwell NR, 60 on Jan 18th and Feb 26th. Cheshunt GPs, 275 on Jan 28th. Tyttenhanger GP, 62 on Jan 11th.
**Middx**: Springwell Lake, 82 on Dec 15th. Stain Hill Res, 55 on Jan 11th and Oct 3rd.
**Bucks**: Orlitts North Lake, 70 on Dec 25th.

**Kent**: Crystal Palace Park, 22 on Jan 8th. Sevenoaks WR, 30 on Nov 16th.
**Surrey**: Holmethorpe SP, 80 on Mar 9th. Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough), 86 on Jan 24th.
**In Lond**: Battersea Park, 30 on Dec 12th. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, 13 on Jan 11th. Regent's Park, 40 on Feb 21st. St James's Park, ten on Nov 1st & 3rd. Victoria Park, 21 on Dec 15th.

## Gadwall *Mareca strepera*

**Status**: local breeding resident and common winter visitor.

Rye Meads had 29 broods this year (30 pairs bred), up from 25 broods in the previous year. The overall total of 42 broods was six less than last year. The peak count this year was 538 at Rye Meads, above the 495 there last year, but well below the 702 at Wraysbury GP in 2015. Wintering numbers appeared slightly higher than last year. Two at The Tarn, Mottingham on January 11th, were the first record for the observer at the site in 16 years of observation. Counts for the major sites are shown in the table, all breeding (no. of broods in brackets), and other interesting records are given below.

| Gadwall | | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EX | Wanstead Park | 60 | 17 | 8 | 2 | - | - | - | 8 | 62 | 73 | 120 | 128 |
| HR | Hilfield Park Res | 59 | 13 | 6 | 15 | 10 | 57 | 116 | 16 | 22 | 23 | 23 | 28 |
| | Rye Meads | 97 | 109 | 145 | 182 | 10 | 343 | 120 | 538 | 344 | 145 | 52 | 64 |
| | Tyttenhanger GP | 30 | 26 | 20 | 13 | 7 | 52 | 75 | 62 | 95 | 117 | 107 | 66 |
| MX | Bedfont Lakes CP | - | - | 18 | 6 | 6 | 71 | 224 | 64 | 49 | 104 | - | 127 |
| | Broadwater Lake | 48 | 20 | 6 | 8 | 12 | - | 184 | 56 | 32 | 29 | 119 | - |
| | Staines Res | 143 | 81 | 59 | 42 | 20 | - | - | 45 | 90 | 120 | 44 | 14 |
| SY | Beddington Farmlands | 85 | 110 | 50 | 25 | 15 | 6 | 5 | 15 | 45 | 75 | 30 | 29 |
| | Holmethorpe SP | 80 | 57 | 14 | 11 | 6 | 10 | 3 | 51 | 35 | 35 | 45 | 140 |
| | Wetland Centre | 46 | 38 | 17 | 22 | 41 | 67 | 25 | 90 | 96 | 82 | 86 | 116 |

**Essex**: Leyton Flats, 51 on Jan 24th, a site record. Rainham Marshes (5), 12 pairs summered. Walthamstow Wetlands, a few summered.
**Herts**: Hilfield Park Res (1). Rye Meads (29). Tyttenhanger GP (1).
**Middx**: Staines Res (1). Tottenham Marshes (1), only the third breeding record.
**Surrey**: London Wetland Centre (3+).
**In Lond**: Battersea Park, 75 on Jul 16th. St James's Park (1). Victoria Park, 42 on Jan 8th.

## Wigeon *Mareca penelope*

**Status**: common winter visitor with occasional summer records.

Rainham Marshes again had the highest counts, which peaked at 552 on March 12th. This is well down on the 2016 peak which was 1,000, and less still than the 1,200 recorded in 2015. There were a few birds present during the summer, but no confirmed breeding. Winter numbers appeared slightly lower than last year.

The table below gives monthly peaks from regularly watched sites with counts of 100 or more, with other significant counts below that.



| Wigeon | | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EX | Rainham Marshes | 479 | 500 | 552 | 31 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 18 | 32 | 107 | 500 |
| HR | Amwell NR | 97 | 250 | 120 | 5 | - | - | - | - | 8 | 4 | 75 | 150 |
| | Hilfield Park Res | 127 | 5 | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | 25 | 10 | 6 | 36 |
| | Stocker's Lake | 140 | 54 | 4 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 5 | 12 | 5 |
| | Troy Mill Lake | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | 72 | 172 | 40 |
| MX | Broadwater Lake | 200 | 25 | 15 | 8 | - | - | - | - | - | 24 | 122 | - |
| | Kempton Park RC | 80 | 115 | 95 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 6 | 10 | 38 |
| | Staines Res | 251 | 282 | 229 | 5 | 1 | 1 | - | - | 23 | 50 | 98 | 121 |
| KT | Crossness | 32 | 52 | 50 | 4 | 1 | - | - | - | 2 | 8 | 100 | 26 |
| SY | Walton Res (C&L) | 87 | 121 | 83 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 33 | 26 | 24 | 33 |
| | Wetland Centre | 136 | 133 | 133 | 17 | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | 38 | 71 | 119 | 208 |

**Essex**: Brook Farm, Upminster, 240 on Mar 9th. Holyfield Hall Farm, 107 on Feb 24th. Holyfield Lake, 100 on Jan 1st & 28th.
**Herts**: Radlett Aero GP, 116 on Jan 8th.
**Middx**: Little Britain Lake, 100 on Nov 20th.
**Bucks**: Horton GP, 100 on Mar 4th.

*Wigeon. (Jonathan Lethbridge)*

## Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

**Status**: very common and widespread breeding resident.

The total number of broods was 365, up from 320 last year. The peak count was 426 on the R Thames (Putney Bridge to Barnes Bridge) on January 14th (616 at London Wetland Centre last year) and the peak summer count was 235 on the R Thames (Kew to Richmond) on July 24th (388 at London Wetland Centre last year). The table below shows regularly watched sites that had a count of 150 or more. Breeding records and other high counts are summarised below the table.

| Mallard | | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| MX | Staines Res | 20 | 25 | 19 | 47 | 37 | 31 | 24 | 70 | 117 | 150 | 47 | 30 |
| KT | Sevenoaks WR | 80 | 95 | 80 | 95 | 65 | 60 | 46 | 50 | 98 | 155 | 130 | 120 |
| SY | Kew to Richmond | 94 | 112 | 135 | 94 | 128 | - | 235 | - | 64 | 69 | 160 | - |
| | Putney Bridge-Barnes | 426 | 315 | 185 | - | - | - | - | - | 139 | - | 238 | 164 |
| | Wetland Centre | 296 | 373 | 240 | 178 | 189 | 212 | 153 | 166 | 277 | 226 | 239 | 254 |
| IL | Battersea Park | 30 | 21 | 45 | 18 | - | - | 157 | 113 | 38 | 96 | 25 | 26 |
| | St James's Park | 57 | 163 | 120 | 65 | 63 | 82 | 85 | 85 | 127 | 121 | 70 | 68 |

*Mallards are routinely overlooked but are a fine looking duck. (Jonathan Lethbridge)*

**Essex**: 57 broods from 13 sites. Rainham Marshes, 32 broods.
**Herts**: 80 broods from 22 sites.
**Middx**: 77 broods from 38 sites.
**Bucks**: Two broods from two sites.
**Kent**: 42 broods from 22 sites.
**Surrey**: 96 broods from 24 sites. R Wandle (Carshalton Ponds-Wandsworth), 280 on Dec 28th.
**In Lond**: 12 broods from six sites.

## Pintail *Anas acuta*

**Status**: passage migrant and winter visitor in small numbers, very occasional summer visitor.

Wintering numbers were similar to 2016. The peak count was 54 at Rainham Marshes on March 12th (peak count last year there of 56). The last record in the first half of the year was on May 25th at London Wetland Centre and the first returning birds were on July 17th at Holmethorpe SP. The table below gives counts from the key sites, and below that are all the records from other sites.

| Pintail | | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EX | Rainham Marshes | 29 | 64 | 54 | 13 | 3 | - | - | - | 5 | 8 | 12 | 27 |
| HR | Amwell NR | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4 | - |
| MX | Brent Res | 1 | 2 | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | Staines Res | - | 2 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 15 | 17 | 5 | 7 |
| BU | Q. Mother Res | 2 | - | 13 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| SY | Walton Res (C&L) | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 6 | 2 | - | - |
| | Wetland Centre | 9 | 9 | 6 | 4 | 2 | - | - | - | - | 2 | 3 | 4 |

**Essex**: Connaught Water, singles in January and December. Creekmouth, Barking, one on Oct 24th. Dagenham Chase, one on Mar 16th-19th. KGV Res, drake on Apr 9th, two on Apr 17th and three on Nov 26th. Sewardstone Marsh, one on Jan 21st.
**Herts**: Hilfield Park Res, one on Sep 17th. Panshanger Park, drake on Mar 12th, 15th & 19th.
**Middx**: Kempton NR, one on Feb 22nd.
**Bucks**: Horton Brook Quarry, two from Jan 21st to Feb 1st. Horton GP, two on Jan 19th & 28th and 21 on Sep 19th. Wraysbury GP, singles on Sep 19th and Dec 5th.
**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands, singles on Jan 1st & 7th, Feb 1st & 4th, Apr 8th-9th, and Dec 24th. QE II Res, two on Nov 7th. Morden Hall Park, one over on Sep 16th. Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough), one on May 9th-10th.

## Teal *Anas crecca*

**Status**: common winter visitor and rare breeder.

The highlights of the year were the three broods at Crossness (including one on Southern Marsh) and one (or possibly two) broods at London Wetland Centre. This is the first recorded breeding since 2014, and may be the largest number of broods recorded in the London Area. Overall, wintering numbers were down on last year. The peak count was 928 at Crossness on September 25th (2016 peak there was 1,254), while at Rainham Marshes the peak count was 500 on December 30th (2016 peak there of 2,000).

The table below gives counts for the major sites, with significant records from other sites below the table.

| Teal | | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EX | KGV Res | - | 142 | - | 3 | - | - | - | 3 | - | 40 | - | 147 |
| | Rainham Marshes | 453 | 425 | 333 | 85 | 8 | 3 | 18 | 72 | 269 | 143 | 71 | 500 |
| | Thames Barrier | 4 | 10 | 36 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 50 | 110 |
| | West Thurrock Marshes | 58 | 123 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | 38 |
| HR | Rye Meads | 36 | 50 | 106 | 26 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 27 | 59 | 53 | 79 | 101 |
| MX | East India Dock Basin | 142 | 198 | 82 | 51 | - | - | - | 5 | 46 | 96 | 92 | 150 |
| | Fulham Reach | 103 | 104 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | Staines Res | 73 | 50 | 46 | 40 | 2 | 2 | - | 50 | 280 | 350 | 298 | 204 |
| KT | Crossness | 475 | 250 | 500 | 250 | 7 | 15 | 32 | 156 | 928 | 826 | 600 | 500 |
| | Dartford Marshes | - | 20 | 70 | 11 | - | - | - | 2 | 2 | 1 | - | 110 |
| | Sevenoaks WR | 80 | 53 | 24 | 20 | - | - | 2 | 10 | 17 | 37 | 50 | 100 |
| SY | Beddington Farmlands | 175 | 212 | 175 | 100 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 14 | 190 | 100 | 170 | 100 |
| | Kew to Richmond | 135 | 207 | 103 | 4 | - | - | - | - | - | 16 | 54 | - |
| | Putney Bridge-Barnes | 261 | 282 | 186 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 123 | 135 |
| | Wetland Centre | 254 | 202 | 96 | 15 | 3 | 7 | 14 | 46 | 85 | 80 | 103 | 104 |

**Essex**: Creekmouth, Barking, 300 on Jan 24th. Grays Riverside, 100 on Mar 31st. William Girling Res, 100 on Sep 25th.
**Herts**: Amwell NR, 62 on Jan 17th. Maple Lodge NR, 61 on Nov 3rd. Tyttenhanger GP, 62 on Mar 26th.
**Middx**: Brent Res, 74 on Jan 15th. Hackney Marsh, 76 on Jan 20th. Woodberry Wetlands, pair seen mating on Feb 28th.
**Bucks**: Horton GP, 83 on Jan 22nd.
**Kent**: Crossness (3). Woolwich, 100 on Jan 21st.
**Surrey**: R Wandle: Carshalton Ponds to Wandsworth, 80 on Dec 28th. Holmethorpe SP, 86 on Jan 9th. Watermeads, 95 on Jan 28th and Feb 10th. London Wetland Centre (1-2).
**In Lond**: Battersea Park, four on Nov 1st & 17th. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, 20 on Nov 1st. Regent's Park, one on Sep 26th was outside the collection (several other records which may involve collection birds). R Thames: Battersea Bridge to Wandsworth Bridge, five on Feb 14th. Southwark Park, one on Jan 1st.

## Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*

**Status**: introduced breeding resident, probably also rare autumn and winter visitor from the continent.

Records from over 40 sites again showed that this species, judged in 2010 to have a self-sustaining population in London, can turn up on any body of water. Numbers vary, however, with the peak count of 36 at Regent's Park well down on the highest total of 61 at Hyde Park & Kensington Gardens in 2016. Outside Inner London, Stocker's and Bury Lakes both had counts of 32. The only confirmed breeding records were of a single youngster at Lynsters Lake and a brood in the Ingrebourne Valley. Peak counts at sites which recorded ten or more birds are listed below (no. of broods in brackets).

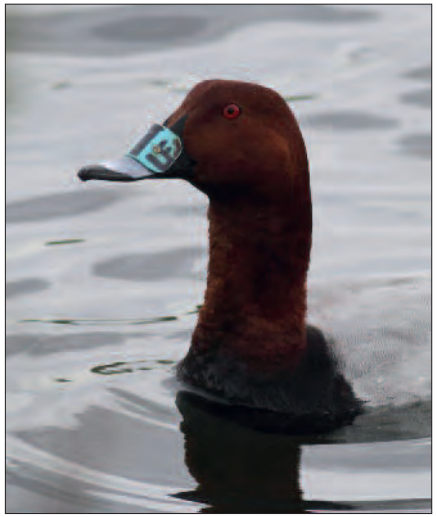
*Red-crested Pochard. (Jonathan Lethbridge)*

**Essex**: Ingrebourne Valley (1).
**Herts**: Bury/Stocker's Lakes, 32 on Nov 5th, 17th, 19th, 22nd & 23rd. Lynsters Lake (1).
**Middx**: Bushy Park, 11 on Jun 11th.
**In Lond**: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, 24 on Jul 31st. Regent's Park, 36 on Oct 23rd. St James's Park, 31 on Nov 24th. Victoria Park, 18 on Jan 20th.

## Pochard *Aythya ferina*

**Status**: common winter visitor and migrant; scarce breeder.

Staines Res again recorded the peak count with 500 on January 23rd when a cold snap may have frozen birds out of nearby gravel pits. Only two other sites, as last year, had totals of over 150 with 202 at Wraysbury GP and 166 at Hilfield Park Res. Richmond Park recorded its highest count this century with 95 on October 19th. Breeding records are likely to be incomplete but those submitted showed an increase with 54



*Some ringing schemes in Europe use nasal saddles, such as on this Pochard seen in Walton-on-Thames. (Dave Harris)*

broods from 19 sites compared with 41 from 16 in 2016. Rye Meads again had the highest number of broods with 13, slightly down on last year's 15, but numbers at Walthamstow Wetlands recovered from just one brood in 2016 to eight this year. Peak monthly counts of 50 and over are included in the table along with all submitted breeding records (number of broods in brackets).

| Pochard | | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EX | KGV Res | - | 68 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 81 |
| | Holyfield Lake | 60 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | Walthamstow Wetlands | 57 | - | - | - | - | - | 141 | 142 | - | - | - | - |
| HR | Amwell NR | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 50 | - | - | - | - |
| | Bury & Stocker's Lake | 64 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 100 | - | - | 63 |
| | Hilfield Park Res | - | - | - | - | - | 98 | 166 | 85 | - | - | - | - |
| MX | Brent Res | 81 | 70 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | Broadwater Lake | 150 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 150 | - |
| | Staines Res | 500 | 300 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 70 | - | 74 | 356 |
| BU | Horton GP | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 72 | - | - |
| | Wraysbury GP | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 202 |
| KT | Sevenoaks WR | 70 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 50 | 72 |
| SY | Richmond Park | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 95 | - | - |
| | Thorpe Water Park | - | 70 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | Walton Res (C & L) | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 56 | - | - | - | - |
| | Wetland Centre | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 97 | 65 | 53 | - |
| IL | Hyde Park/Ken Gdns | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 60 | 80 | - | - | - |
| | Regent's Park | 88 | 97 | 52 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | St James's Park | 54 | 54 | 83 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |

**Essex**: Belhus Woods CP (1). Rainham Marshes (6). Walthamstow Wetlands (8).
**Herts**: Amwell NR (1). Maple Lodge NR (1). Rye Meads (13). Troy Mill Lake (1). Verulamium Park (2).
**Middx**: Alexandra Park (1), Broadwater Lake (1), Clissold Park (3). Red House Res (1).
**Kent**: Crossness (1).
**Surrey**: Leg O Mutton NR (1). London Wetland Centre (4+). Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) (4)
**In Lond**: Meanwhile Gardens (1). Regent's Park (3). St James's Park (1).

## Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*

**Status**: rare vagrant.

A drake at Brent Res enjoyed by many over its ten-day stay was the 21st record for London but only the second since 2003. It was also the first to arrive in March although April and May are the two favoured months for this North American duck to be found. Past records have been spread widely across London but this was the first for this well-watched site.

**Middx**: Brent Res, drake from Mar 11th-20th (J Taylor *et al*).

*This superb drake Ring-necked Duck was at Brent Reservoir in March, and stayed for over a week allowing many to see it. (Magnus Andersson)*

## Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

**Status**: regular resident breeder and common winter visitor.

The highest count was again at Walthamstow Wetlands where the post-breeding flock reached 2,209 in August, only slightly below last year's figure of 2,265. However peak counts were well down at Staines Res (939) and KGVI Res (1,275), which also had flocks of over 2,000 in 2016. The birds may have been spread more widely as ten sites rather than last year's seven had counts of 500 or over. Inner London's peak count of 230 at Regent's Park in January was also higher than last year's total of 148 at St James's Park. Breeding success was lower with 168 broods submitted from 42 sites compared with 194 at 44 in 2016. But the total was broadly in line with recent years with annual fluctuations often reflecting inconsistency in submitted records. Breeding success at Rye Meads continues to grow with 61 broods, up from 58 last year and 22 in 2015. The table contains all monthly counts of 500 and above with submitted broods for each county and at sites with four or more broods below.

| Tufted Duck | | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EX | KGV Res | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1100 | - | - | 539 | - | 1083 |
| | Walthamstow Wetlands | - | - | - | - | - | 1511 | 2209 | 1440 | 826 | - | - | - |
| | William Girling Res | - | 1272 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 533 | - | - |
| MX | Broadwater Lake | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 700 |

*Tufted Duck breeds in low numbers in London, but the counts are increasing at some sites. This female and her brood were at Rye Meads. (Alan Reynolds)*

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | KGVI Res | - | - | - | - | - | - | 931 | 1275 | - | - | - | - |
| | Q. Mary Res | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 500 | - | - | - |
| | Staines Res | 575 | - | - | - | - | 500 | 734 | 939 | - | - | - | - |
| BU | Wraysbury GP | 600 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| SY | Island Barn Res | 820 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | Walton Res (K&B) | 621 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |

**Essex**: 17 broods. Rainham Marshes (7). Walthamstow Wetlands (8).
**Herts**: 71 broods. Rye Meads (61).
**Middx**: 26 broods. Oakwood Park (4). Stain Hill Res (4).
**Kent**: 14 broods. Crossness (4).
**Surrey**: 36 broods. Beddington Farmlands (4). Carshalton Ponds (4). London Wetland Centre (6). Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) (20).
**In Lond**: 4 broods.

## Scaup *Aythya marila*

**Status**: regular but uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant, occasional large influxes during cold weather.

A poor year for a duck whose numbers are falling in London. Individuals clearly move between sites, particularly in west London, but there may have been as few as ten in the first winter period, down from 17 last year. Up to four birds were present in the second winter period, including the drake at Walthamstow Wetlands which returned for its fourth winter.

**Essex**: Ingrebourne Valley, one on Jan 21st. KGV Res, one from Nov 11th to Dec 21st. Walthamstow Wetlands, drake until Mar 11th, then on Oct 18th and from Dec 3rd.
**Middx**: Brent Res, drake from Feb 12th to Apr 1st. KGVI Res, drake from Feb 26th to Apr 22nd. Staines Res, one from Jan 1st to Mar 21st, two from Feb 4th to Mar 4th and Mar 16th & 18th, three on Feb 9th.
**Bucks**: Horton GP, one from Jan 29th to Feb 4th. Wraysbury GP, drake from 2016 to Jan 30th.
**Surrey**: Holmethorpe SP, one on Oct 25th and Nov 2nd-15th. Island Barn Res, two from Jan 2nd-15th, three from Mar 6th-27th, one to Apr 4th, fem from Oct 28th into 2018. Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), two from 2016 until Feb 27th, three on Feb 17th, and at least one until Mar 26th when two drakes seen. Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough), singles on Jan 13th & 21st and fem on Mar 26th, one on Oct 28th and Nov 5th (same as Island Barn Res).

## Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

**Status**: passage migrant and occasional winter visitor, never numerous.

The best showing since 2012 with over 90 individuals. Birds were recorded every month except February and June with July (28) and August (33) seeing the most arrivals. Rainham Marshes with 40 birds had the most records and also the biggest flock of 12. The west London reservoirs, as usual, were also favoured sites.

**Essex**: KGV Res, two on Jul 23rd, six on Jul 25th. Rainham Marshes, eight on Mar 23rd, two on 28th, two on Apr 30th, one on Jul 6th, 10th & 14th, one on Aug 9th-10th, ten on 22nd, one on 30th, one on Sep 24th and 12 on Nov 20th.

*This photo of Scaup amongst Tufted Duck makes it appear easier than it looks to separate the species. (Dave Harris)*

**Herts**: Hilfield Park Res, eight on Jul 3rd, one from Dec 14th to end of year.
**Middx**: Q. Mary Res, singles on Apr 15th, Sep 23rd and Nov 24th. Staines Res, one on Jan 5th, one on Jul 2nd & 7th, two on 24th, one on Aug 8th, two on 9th, four on 22nd, one on 28th, three on Sep 19th. Wraysbury Res, one on Aug 13th and three on Sep 25th.
**Bucks**: Q. Mother Res, four on Mar 27th with one remaining until Apr 1st and three on Jul 24th.
**Kent**: Crayford Marshes, one on Jul 6th and Aug 10th (both presumed same as Rainham Marshes).
**Surrey**: Island Barn Res, one on Sep 27th-28th, one on Nov 14th.

## Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

**Status**: common winter visitor, occasional summer records.

The peak count at Staines Res of 43 was well down on recent years (76 last year). KGV Res also saw its peak count fall from 43 in 2016 to 22. But Wraysbury GP saw increased numbers across the first winter period and Broadwater and Stocker's Lakes, the other traditional main sites, had peak counts broadly in line with 2016. Breeding took place again at Springwell Lake where the female is metal-ringed. Away from the breeding site, the last of the first winter period was seen on May 9th at KGV Res (compared with April 17th last year) with the first returning bird at the same site on July 16th, two days earlier than in 2016. Peak monthly counts over ten are listed in the table below followed by peak counts for other sectors.

| Goldeneye | | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EX | KGV Res | - | 20 | 21 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 13 | 22 |
| | Walthamstow Wetlands | 13 | 14 | 12 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| HR | Amwell NR | - | 16 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | Stocker's Lake | 19 | 16 | 13 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 13 | 11 |
| MX | Broadwater Lake | 15 | 22 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | KGVI Res | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 11 | - |
| | Staines Res | 20 | 43 | 38 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 11 | 12 | 16 |
| BU | Wraysbury GP | 34 | 38 | 34 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 33 |

**Kent**: Thamesmead, one on the Thames on Dec 1st.
**Surrey**: Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough), nine on Mar 7th.

## Smew *Mergellus albellus*

**Status**: winter visitor in highly variable but declining numbers.

A better showing for this beautiful duck whose numbers have been falling dramatically in London and across the UK. The peak count of nine at Wraysbury GP was the highest since 2013 and well above last year's maximum of five at Bedfont Lakes CP. It is always difficult to gauge accurately how many birds are involved but London may have hosted over 20 individuals early in the year compared with just 14 in 2016. Leaving aside records from a presumed feral female (see App I), the last in the first winter period was on March 28th and the first returning bird on November 18th. All records (except those thought to involve the feral bird) are given below.



**Essex**: Connaught Water, drake on Dec 4th. Ingrebourne Valley, one on Jan 17th. KGV Res, drake from Feb 19th to Mar 15th. Rainham Marshes, two on Jan 30th. Sewardstone Marsh, drake on Mar 19th & 28th. Walthamstow Wetlands, drake on Mar 4th. William Girling Res, one on Dec 13th.
**Herts**: Amwell NR, from Jan 1st to Mar 12th with peak of three from Jan 5th to Feb 1st. Bowyer's Water, one from Jan 18th to Feb 16th. Friday Lake, recorded from Jan 1st to Feb 16th with maximum of four on Feb 6th, one from Nov 30th to Dec 28th. Seventy Acres Lake, from Jan 5th to Feb 26th, one on Nov 18th. Stocker's Lake, one from Jan 1st-15th.
**Middx**: Bedfont Lakes CP, from Jan 6th to Feb 4th with maximum of three on Jan 13th & 14th. Princes Lakes, from Jan 5th to Feb 7th with peak of six on Jan 26th. Staines Res, three on Jan 5th.
**Bucks**: Horton GP, two on Jan 23rd. Wraysbury GP, from Jan 5th to Mar 2nd with a maximum of nine on Jan 21st.
**Kent**: Ruxley Lakes, one on Feb 24th.

## Goosander *Mergus merganser*

**Status**: regular winter visitor, very rare in summer.

Only four sites, compared with last year's eight, recorded counts of over ten. The highest count of 25 at Trent Park was the same as in 2016 (at Wraysbury Res). Records came from over 50 sites but, for the third year running, there were none from Inner London. The last birds of the first winter period were at Broadwater Lake on April 2nd, one week earlier than in 2016, and the first of the autumn at KGV Res on October 1st was over two weeks later. Peak counts at sites which recorded over ten are listed for both winter periods.

**Essex**: KGV Res, 15 on Mar 25th and 12 on Dec 15th.
**Herts**: Turnford Marsh GP, 12 on Jan 1st, 13 on Dec 3rd and 15 on 22nd.
**Middx**: Trent Park, present from Nov 16th to Dec 8th, peak of 25 on Nov 30th.
**Surrey**: Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough), 22 on Jan 7th and 15 on Dec 31st.

## Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

**Status**: scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

A pretty typical showing for recent years with around 18 birds recorded, up from last year's 14 individuals. The regular drake which is thought to have wintered since at least 2014 again toured Surrey reservoirs at the beginning of the year and returned in November.

**Essex**: Banbury Res, one on Dec 3rd & 6th. KGV Res, two on Apr 4th with one remaining on Apr 5th. Rainham Marshes, drake on Mar 11th, five on 27th, two on 30th, females on Apr 8th and Oct 14th and two on Dec 27th. Walthamstow Wetlands, one on Nov 25th and Dec 8th (presumed same bird as Banbury Res).
**Middx**: KGVI Res, two fem/imm on Oct 12th, one of which stayed until Nov 5th.
**Bucks**: Q. Mother Res, two fem/imm on Oct 24th.
**Surrey**: Island Barn Res, one on Nov 29th. QE II Res, one on Jan 13th, 19th & 24th, Feb 17th, Nov 24th-25th and Dec 28th. Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough), one from Jan 7th to Mar 15th. (All Surrey records are thought to refer to the same drake).

## Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*

**Status**: formerly a widespread winter visitor and localised breeder of non-native origin; now much declined due to nationwide eradication programme.

A large and surprising increase given that there were only estimated to be 40 surviving across the UK in 2014. Records from five sites including a flock of nine, the biggest in London since 2013, compare with a total of four birds across London in both the previous two years.

**Herts**: Hilfield Park Res, two drakes on Mar 26th-27th.
**Middx**: Bedfont Lakes CP, drake on Dec 19th. Kempton NR, two drakes from Jul 13th-23rd. Staines Res, present from Jan 28th to Feb 11th, with peak of nine including at least four drakes from Jan 29th to Feb 1st, one on Jul 7th, five from Dec 20th-28th with four until 31st.
**Surrey**: London Wetland Centre, two drakes from Mar 25th to Apr 4th with one on Jul 17th.

## Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

**Status**: breeding resident, of introduced origin.

Records were received from 90 sites (88 sites in 2016). As usual, the vast majority of records hailed from Essex, Hertfordshire and Middlesex, where 66 sites provided records. All breeding records are given (nos. of pairs/territories in brackets), with high counts and other significant records.

**Essex**: Reported from 27 sites. Little Belhus CP (1). Mar Dyke Valley (1). Orsett Fen (5); 24 on Oct 2nd.
**Herts**: Reported from 24 sites. Bernards Heath, an urban bird running around parked cars on Nov 14th. Borehamwood, a pair on a garden lawn on May 12th. Chess Valley, 13 on Feb 16th. Coursers Farm (1). Moor Lane, one in a garden on Mar 31st. Tyttenhanger GP (1+), juvs seen. Wildhill, 21 on Oct 17th.
**Middx**: Reported from 15 sites. Alexandra Park, singles on Mar 26th and May 3rd. Archway, one on Mar 15th in a garden. Brent Res, one on Mar 29th on a raft in East Marsh. Clay Hill (1). Enfield Chase Area: Park Farm (1); Parkside Farm/Res (1); Rectory Farm (1); Sloemans Farm, 13 on Dec 18th; South Lodge Farm (1); Vicarage Farm (2); Whitewebbs Farm (1); 17 on Jan 24th. Totteridge Valley (4+).
**Bucks**: Reported from two sites. Colnbrook, two on Jan 1st and one on May 7th. Horton Brook Quarry, five on Jan 22nd, two on Feb 18th, one on Jul 5th and three on Nov 26th.
**Kent**: Reported from 11 sites. Chalk Wood, Swanley, four on Sep 17th. Chislehurst, one on Feb 3rd found dead on a residential road. Knockholt, eight on Sep 13th. Lamorbey Park, one on Mar 5th was the first site record. Longfield Gallops (1-2). Sundridge, ten on Jan 2nd.
**Surrey**: Reported from 11 sites. Barn Elms PF, one on Apr 8th. Canons Farm (2), juvs seen. London Wetland Centre, one Apr 5th-9th (same as at Barn Elms PF). Richmond Park, one on Mar 31st. Rushett Farm, ten on Oct 27th and Nov 29th. Sydenham Hill Wood, one on Nov 19th.



## Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

**Status**: breeding resident, declining.

Records came from eight sites in three sectors (eight sites in two sectors in 2016). All records are given below.

**Essex**: Bulphan Fen, four on Jan 22nd. Ingrebourne Valley, one on Mar 3rd, two on Apr 20th and four on Nov 15th. North Ockendon, three on Dec 22nd. Orsett Fen, ten on Jan 3rd, 11 on 26th, two on Feb 14th and Oct 2nd.
**Herts**: Cromerhyde Farm, one on Dec 2nd in a covey of c20 Red-legged Partridge. Ellenbrook Fields, two on Aug 21st and one on Dec 15th. Essendon, recorded on ten dates between Feb 21st and Dec 6th, and present May to July, with peak of 8+ on Feb 21st.
**Bucks**: Q. Mother Res, one flushed from the west bank on Nov 3rd.

## Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

**Status**: rare summer visitor.

Three birds this year is below the average for the past decade, although there have only been six in total in the four years 2014-2017.

**Essex**: Rainham Marshes, two singing males in May and June (mo).
**Kent**: Sidcup, one flew over calling at 00:22 on May 27th (IS).

## Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

**Status**: common breeding resident, of introduced origin.

There were records from 245 sites (205 in 2016), with half accounted for by the Hertfordshire and Surrey sectors. An incredible count of 160 near Sevenoaks WR on May 17th was unprecedented at the site and was presumably a recent release but the source of the birds was unknown. The total number of breeding pairs for each sector is shown below, with numbers of pairs/territories listed (in brackets) for sites with five or more pairs. Other high counts and unusual site records are also noted, especially in urban areas.

**Essex**: Reported from 47 sites, with 13+ pairs at five sites. Cornmill Meadows, peak of 15 on Oct 26th. Epping Forest Woodland Burial Park, 13 on Apr 4th. Orsett Fen (6), juvs seen; 50 on Nov 3rd. Wanstead Park, one on Feb 12th.
**Herts**: Reported from 62 sites, with 17+ pairs at 13 sites. Beech Farm GP, 24 on Jan 10th. Brookmans Park, 25+ on Apr 6th. Chess Valley, 21 on Aug 22nd. Essendon, 27 on Apr 15th. North Mymms Park, 35 on Nov 7th. Wildhill, 30+ on Dec 22nd.
**Middx**: Reported from 24 sites, with 22 pairs at 12 sites. Home Park (6). Tottenham Marshes (5), juvs seen. Winchmore Hill, male on Mar 15th in garden.
**Bucks**: Reported from four sites. Colne Valley Park, present all year with peak of eight on Jan 23rd.
**Kent**: Reported from 45 sites, with seven pairs at five sites. Albany Park, albino on Dec 4th. Cudham, 14 on May 8th. Greenwich Peninsula Ecology Park, male between Nov 18th and Dec 14th. Hog Wood, 20 on Aug 22nd. Honor Oak, fem on Oct 6th. Lewisham, male on Oct 10th in Orchard Estate Allotments. Manor Farm, Dryhill, 18 on Mar 21st included six melanistic individuals.
**Surrey**: Reported from 60 sites, with eight pairs at seven sites. Brockwell Park, one on

Nov 1st. Canons Farm, 20 on Apr 14th. Island Barn Res, male on Mar 7th, Apr 13th and May 1st. Morden Cemetery, male on Mar 23rd. Streatham Cemetery, one on Mar 30th and Apr 1st. Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), male on Jan 13th, pair from Mar 5th-29th. Wandsworth Common, one on Oct 29th.

**In Lond**: Lambeth Walk, one on Jun 11th and fem photographed on Nov 6th. Regent's Park, fem from Apr 18th-20th. Southwark, male on Mar 14th observed wandering beneath Southwark Bridge overpass. Westminster, male photographed in The Strand on Mar 5th on the roof of St Clement Danes Church.

## Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

**Status**: rare winter visitor and occasional migrant.

Like last year, there was a single record. In the last ten years (2008-17), ten birds have been seen. The fact that it was in summer plumage is more unusual for the London Area.

**Middx**: Q. Mary Res, one from Mar 25th-27th (FJM *et al*).

## Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

**Status**: scarce winter visitor and occasional migrant, often after hard weather.

Two birds were present in the first winter, both remaining from 2016, and probably four in the second winter. Since 2010, there have been more than two new birds every year, except 2014.

**Great Northern Diver records 2010-2017: 38 birds**

| Year | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of birds | 8* | 3* | 7* | 4* | 2* | 4 | 6* | 4* |

*ignoring overwintering birds

**Essex**: Fairlop Waters, one on Dec 18th (NTw). KGV Res, singles on Nov 25th, Dec 13th & 18th-22nd (NS *et al*).

**Middx**: KGVI Res, adult from 2016 until May 1st, also seen on Staines Res (REI, KLP *et al*). Q. Mary Res, juv from 2016 to Mar 11th (REI *et al*); juv from Dec 3rd-7th (FJM, DK).

**Surrey**: Island Barn Res, juv on Nov 29th (believed same as Q. Mary Res) (DMH).

## Diver sp

**Middx**: Woodberry Wetlands, one unidentified diver, suspected to be a Great Northern, flew NE on Apr 24th (CFa).

## Leach's Petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

**Status**: rare visitor, often during 'wreck' conditions.

The second consecutive year this species has been recorded after six blank years. All 22 records (23 birds) since 1990 have been between September and December.

**Essex**: William Girling Res, one on Nov 25th (HLy).



## Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

**Status**: rare visitor.

This is only the eleventh record since 2000. Records tend to be from the Thames and the major reservoirs with the last away from such sites at Beddington Farmlands in May 2008.

**Fulmar records 2000-2017: 11 records, 13 birds**

| Year | 2000 | 2001 | 2003 | 2008 | 2012 | 2013 | 2016 | 2017 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of records | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| No. of birds | 2 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |

**Herts**: Amwell NR, one W on Apr 30th (PBa).

## Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

**Status**: rare visitor, usually in autumn.

There were four records this year, the highest count this century (see table below). They were the first records since 2012, with the Surbiton bird an unfortunate victim of a cat. September is a typical date, with 14 of the 18 birds since 1998 occurring in this month; July is more unusual (just one of these past records).

**Manx Shearwater records 2000-2017: 18 records, 18 birds**

| Year | 2003 | 2004 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2017 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of records | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| No. of birds | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 3 |

*KGV Reservoir hosted this Manx Shearwater in July in what was a good year for the species in London. (Tony Brown)*

**Essex**: KGV Res, singles from Jul 21st-22nd (NS *et al*) and Sep 13th (NS, IL).
**Surrey**: Surbiton, one found freshly dead on Sep 11th (CTu).
**In Lond**: Somers Town, one found in Pancras Square on Sep 15th and taken into care (PDu).

## Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

**Status**: widespread breeding resident on most suitable waters, also passage migrant and winter visitor.

A minimum of 149 pairs/broods/territories were counted, similar to the 152 in 2016. Numbers at Rainham Marshes and Walthamstow Wetlands were down from 35 pairs and nine broods respectively last year, but they were similar at two other major sites, Rye Meads and Beddington Farmlands (15 and nine pairs respectively in 2016).

Records were received from 128 sites in January and February and from 111 sites in November and December, similar to the reporting rate for 2016 (128 and 120 sites for the respective periods). Below is a breeding summary for each sector, breeding counts for Inner London and all sites with three or more pairs, plus some of the higher counts.

**Essex**: 42+ pairs/broods at 11 sites. Rainham Marshes (29). Walthamstow Wetlands (4 broods); 50 on Jan 8th.
**Herts**: 30 pairs/broods at 13 sites. Rye Meads (16); 35 on Sep 17th.
**Middx**: 22 pairs at 13 sites. Bedfont Lakes CP, 27 on Oct 16th. Parkside Farm/Res (3). Red House Res (5). Stain Hill Res (3+ broods).
**Bucks**: Denham, ten on Sep 17th. Langley Park (2); ten on Aug 24th.
**Kent**: 15 pairs at seven sites. Crossness (8, including 2 on Southern Marsh). Lullingstone Park, 25 on Mar 6th. Shoreham, 20 on Feb 22nd.
**Surrey**: 33 pairs at 16 sites. Beddington Farmlands (9); 36 on Aug 21st. Hogsmill SW (3). Leg O Mutton NR (3). R Wandle (7).
**In Lond**: Battersea Park (1). Regent's Park (2 broods). St James's Park (1); nine on Dec 20th. Victoria Park (1).

## Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

**Status**: scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

Three records this year. The Staines Res bird was in summer plumage and was the first April record this century (see table).

**Red-necked Grebe arrival dates 2000-2017: 59 birds, 58 records**

| Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of records | 11 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 11 |
| No. of birds | 11 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 11 |

**Essex**: Roding Valley Meadows NR, juv from Sep 22nd to Dec 16th (BJ *et al*).
**Herts**: Hilfield Park Res, one on Jan 17th (SMy).
**Middx**: Staines Res, one on Apr 16th (mo).

*This Red-necked Grebe appeared at the Roding Valley in September and stayed until mid December. (Russ Sherriff)*

## Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

**Status**: common breeding resident and winter visitor.

There were 142 pairs/broods observed at 87 sites, compared with 105 at 58 sites in 2016. The increase may relate partly to extra reporting, but increases were observed at the two main sites, Walthamstow Wetlands and Hilfield Park Res (seven broods and five pairs respectively in 2016).

Numbers at the more significant sites with regular counts are shown in the table. Below that is a breeding summary for each sector, breeding counts for Inner London and all sites with three or more pairs, plus some of the higher counts at sites not listed in the table.

| Great Crested Grebe | | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| HR | Hilfield Park Res | 20 | 13 | 16 | 30 | 30 | 52 | 78 | 92 | 80 | 15 | 8 | 20 |
| MX | Q. Mary Res | 278 | 80 | 37 | 26 | 14 | 57 | 80 | 126 | 191 | 190 | 84 | 266 |
| | Staines Res | 20 | 14 | 19 | 57 | 50 | 61 | 162 | 225 | 85 | 20 | 28 | 11 |
| SY | QE II Res | 14 | 17 | 23 | 17 | 30 | 45 | 68 | 62 | 28 | 16 | 22 | 15 |

**Essex**: 26 pairs/broods at 14 sites. KGV Res, 100 on Aug 22nd. Walthamstow Wetlands (10 broods); 75 on Oct 24th.
**Herts**: 44 pairs/broods at 24 sites. Aldenham CP (5). Helicon Lake (3). Hilfield Park Res (10 broods).
**Middx**: 32 pairs at 20 sites. Broadwater Lake (4+). Osterley Park (3-4). Springwell Lake (4).

*There is marked contrast between winter and summer plumaged Black-necked Grebes. (Jamie Partridge/Dave Harris)*

**Bucks**: Three pairs at three sites.
**Kent**: 13+ pairs at ten sites. Sevenoaks WR (3+); 28 on Jan 21st.
**Surrey**: 16 pairs at 11 sites. Richmond Park (1-3).
**In Lond**: Battersea Park, four on Feb 12th. Canada Water (1). Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (3); 15 on Aug 9th. Regent's Park (2). St James's Park (1). Victoria Park (1).

## Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

**Status**: scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

A total of seven birds, with four seen in the first winter and one in the second winter and, more surprisingly, a displaying pair in breeding plumage present for nine days in April/May, which presumably moved on to either the small and declining breeding population in the Scottish Highlands or to Scandinavia.

**Essex**: Fishers Green, one on Jan 24th (P & L Vaughan). William Girling Res, one from Jan 29th to Feb 15th (AW *et al*).
**Herts**: Hilfield Park Res, pair from Apr 29th to May 7th, one on Nov 9th (SMy *et al*).
**Middx**: Staines Res, one from Feb 6th to Apr 10th, with two on Mar 18th (the long-stayer also on KGVI Res on Apr 7th) (BH *et al*).

## Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

**Status**: passage and winter migrant and rare breeder.

At least seven pairs attempted to nest at Hilfield Park Res: seven pairs bred but only three fledged a total of five chicks. The peak winter count at the William Girling Res was the highest there since 2011. Counts from the main sites are summarised in the table and all other records are listed below. Counts from Walton Res include both Chelsea & Lambeth and Knight & Bessborough.

| Black-necked Grebe | | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EX | KGV Res | 4 | 1 | 2 | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| | William Girling Res | 6 | 7 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 26 | 16 | 4 | 5 |
| HR | Hilfield Park Res | 1 | 5 | 15 | 12 | 14 | 23 | 19 | 14 | 10 | 4 | 1 | - |
| MX | Staines Res | 2 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| SY | Walton Res | - | - | - | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | - | - | 4 | 4 | 1 |

**Essex**: Holyfield Lake, one on Dec 17th. Walthamstow Wetlands, two on Jan 4th, two on Mar 4th, four on Oct 20th one of which stayed until Nov 5th.
**Herts**: Amwell NR, two on Jul 6th. Hilfield Park Res (7). Rye Meads, two on May 23rd.
**Bucks**: Q. Mother Res, one from Sep 25th-26th; one from Oct 25th to Nov 4th.
**Kent**: Ladywell Fields, one on R Ravensbourne on Dec 14th.
**Surrey**: Island Barn Res, seven on Mar 17th, singles on Nov 6th & 17th. QEII Res, one on Jul 13th.

## White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*

**Status**: scarce vagrant.

Both records this year occurred in the autumn. The September record was the first record

of more than one bird together since 2006, when four were seen over Godstone. This was followed by the first to arrive in October, which is considered to have been from a reintroduction scheme based at Wintershall Estate, near Guildford. (See App III for other records for which descriptions would be very welcome.)

**Middx**: Heathrow Airport, one circling at c16:00 on Oct 9th (per MCr). Totteridge Valley, three flew very high NW on Sep 2nd (SL, TCl).

## Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

**Status**: rare vagrant.

There were four birds this year after six last year, three birds together in March and one in September. The only previous record of more than one together was also in March, in 2012, when two were at QE II Res. The September bird stayed at the London Wetland Centre for two days but flew off for a couple of hours when it was seen over Richmond Park. This is only the second September record in London.

**Glossy Ibis records 1974-2017: 22 records, 25 birds**

| Year | 1974 | 1977 | 2008 | 2009 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of records | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 2 |
| No. of birds | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 4 |

**Essex**: Rainham Marshes, three S on Mar 25th (HV).

**Surrey**: London Wetland Centre, one on Sep 17th-18th. It flew off SW at 10:30 on 18th, returning at 12:40 and then flew off high SW at 17:40 (AGr *et al*). Richmond Park, one flew low over Lower Pen Pond at 10:40 on Sep 18th, same as London Wetland Centre (PP).

## Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

**Status**: scarce migrant.

There were five accepted records this year involving eight birds, similar to last year when there were five records of seven birds. The first bird was on March 22nd, followed by one on April 29th, three birds on May 10th, up to two birds in October and the last on Nov 1st. (See App III for other records for which descriptions would be very welcome). The table below shows the arrival dates for all records since 2000.

**Spoonbill arrival dates 2000-2017: 59 records, 92 birds**

| Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of records | - | - | 4 | 6 | 15 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 6 | 8 | 4 | 3 |
| No. of birds | - | - | 4 | 10 | 21 | 4 | 7 | 4 | 17 | 18 | 4 | 3 |

**Essex**: Enfield Lock Village, one over W on Apr 29th (NS). KGV Res, juv on Nov 1st (SH *et al*). Rainham Marshes, one on Mar 22nd (AGs), three imm S on May 10th (RS, DMn) and juv from Oct 16th-25th with two birds on 19th (SE *et al*).

## Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

**Status**: scarce winter visitor, often returning to favoured sites.

Records were received from 18 sites. Of these, 14 sites had records in the first winter



period, two more than last year. Away from the Lee Valley, the last wintering bird was recorded on March 16th, although in the Lee Valley, singles were recorded at Amwell NR on April 29th and at Rye Meads from April 4th-6th and on May 7th. There was one intriguing midsummer record at Osterley Park on July 16th and records from Amwell NR on five dates between August 21st and October 13th. The second winter period had records from nine sites, one more than in 2016. The first returning bird at the London Wetland Centre was on October 24th. As in previous years, the Lee Valley and the London Wetland Centre remain the species' strongholds in London. All sites at which birds were recorded are listed below with peak counts.

**Essex**: Brook Farm, Upminster, one on Mar 7th. Ingrebourne Valley, singles on Jan 24th and Feb 7th, with two on Feb 20th. Rainham Marshes, singles on five dates between Dec 10th & 29th. Walthamstow, Hale End Road, one over on Sep 28th. Warren Gorge, one on Feb 2nd & 10th.

**Herts**: Amwell NR, singles on 20 dates including Apr 29th and Aug 21st & 28th. Hilfield Park Res, one from Feb 1st-8th. North Met Pit, one on Dec 12th. Rye Meads, peak of three on Jan 22nd, one on May 7th and one on Dec 17th. Seventy Acres Lake, peaks of four on Jan 22nd and two on Nov 18th. Stanstead Innings, one on Jan 7th and singles on six dates between Oct 3rd and Dec 14th.

**Middx**: Bedfont Lakes CP, one on five dates between Jan 7th and Feb 2nd. Kempton NR, one on Jan 28th, 30th & 31st and one on Oct 20th. Osterley Park, one on Jul 16th. Woodberry Wetlands, one on Jan 25th.

**Surrey**: Holmethorpe SP, one on Jan 21st. London Wetland Centre, winter peaks of six in late January and four on Dec 17th. Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), singles on Jan 3rd, 14th & 28th, Feb 5th & 11th and one on Oct 29th.

## Night-heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

**Status**: rare vagrant.

This species continues to be a true rarity in the London Area and these two records were the first since 2011 and only the 14th and 15th in total. This was the first time two live birds have been recorded in one year – one of the two records in 1980 was of a bird found dead at Walthamstow Res. Five of the previous 13 records were in May, but there has only been one previous August record.

**Essex**: Walthamstow Wetlands, one adult on May 8th was flushed from reeds on No3 Res, but could not be relocated (DCn).

**Surrey**: Wandsworth Common, an adult or 2nd-summer on Aug 27th was first seen at 07:50 flying onto a small island on the southern lake pursued by parakeets and corvids. It was subsequently seen by many observers (NRu *et al*).

## Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

**Status**: rare (but increasing) vagrant.

The four accepted records, one in spring and three in the autumn/winter period, take the total up to 20 records of 28 birds. Although there were no records between 2011 and 2015, it is hard to envisage another blank year for this species in the foreseeable future.

**Essex**: Rainham Marshes, one on Nov 2nd (KL, BGo *et al*).
**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands, one on Aug 14th was the first for the site (PJC *et al*). London Wetland Centre, one from Sep 23rd-24th (ASa). Richmond Park, one on Apr 13th (JPPW).

## Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

**Status**: common breeding resident.

There were at least 388 nests reported, a decrease on the 398 reported in 2016. Nest numbers and breeding success continued to vary from site to site, and a full count was again not received from Walthamstow Wetlands where the count of five is believed to be much lower than the true figure (no count in 2016, 33 in 2015).

**Grey Heron nests 2008-2017**

| Year | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of nests | 473 | 523 | 472 | 437 | 367 | 352 | 381 | 366 | 398 | 388 |

Below are details of nest counts at heronries, with the number of nests in brackets. Notable high counts away from known breeding colonies and/or outside the breeding months are also given with the highest count as usual coming from Beddington Farmlands. Once again, the LNHS thanks the BTO for permitting the use of data from its Heronries Census.

**Essex**: Holyfield Lake (8). Fairlop Waters (bred). Netherhall GP (39). Valentines Park (1). Walthamstow Wetlands (5+). Warren Gorge (10, produced 20 young).
**Herts**: Aldenham CP (1). Amwell NR (16). Frogmore Lakes (2). Seventy Acres Lake (1). Stanborough Lakes (6). Stocker's Lake (20). Tyttenhanger GP (8). Verulamium Park (6).
**Middx**: Boxer's Lake, Enfield (3). Broadwater Lake (10). Frays Valley NR (11). Home Park (5). Isleworth Ait (1). Kempton NR (6). Little Britain Lake (10). Princes Lake (bred). Red House Res (4). Wildwoods, Enfield (2).
**Bucks**: Q Mother Res (1+). Wraysbury GP (16).
**Kent**: Crystal Palace Park (1). Danson Park (1). Kelsey Park (23). Manor House Gardens (5). Sevenoaks WR (2). Swanscombe Marshes (2+).
**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands, 30+ on Jan 2nd. Bookham Common (19). Brentford Ait (20). Corporation Island (19). Gatton Park/Lake (32). Hogsmill SW (1). Horton CP (4). Leg of Mutton NR (13). London Wetland Centre, 21 on Sep 26th. Morden Hall Park (15). Richmond Park (8). River Thames: Kew to Richmond, 26 on Oct 9th and Nov 20th. Thorpe Water Park (4).
**In Lond**: Battersea Park (5). Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (3, one young fledged). Regent's Park (17).

## Great White Egret *Ardea alba*

**Status**: rare but increasing visitor.

Records came from a new high of 24 sites, with two together at five sites, and an incredible record of 14 photographed flying past Rainham Marshes on October 19th. They were recorded in every month apart from June, and were seen at 12 different sites in October which was the peak month. All records are given below.

*Great White Egret is now annual in London. (Shaun Harvey)*

**Essex**: Chafford Hundred, one S on Oct 24th. Dagenham Chase, one on Oct 14th. Fairlop Waters, one from Nov 25th to Dec 31st, with two on Dec 18th-19th & 22nd-31st. Gallions Reach, singles on Mar 12th, May 11th, Sep 24th and two N on Oct 29th. KGV Res, one N on Oct 25th. Mar Dyke Valley, one on Feb 2nd; two on Jul 16th. Plaistow, one W on Mar 12th. Rainham Marshes, one on Feb 2nd, two on Jul 15th-16th, 14 flew W at 13:34 on Oct 19th and one on Oct 27th & 31st.
**Herts**: Amwell NR, one on Mar 29th. Maple Lodge NR, one from Nov 5th to Dec 7th. Panshanger, one on Oct 11th. Park Street, one S on Nov 6th. Stocker's Lake, one on Nov 18th (probably same as Maple Lodge NR). Tyttenhanger GP, up to two from 2016 to Jan 21st; two on Oct 19th; one from Nov 3rd-18th; one from Dec 4th-9th.
**Middx**: Brook Farm OS, one on Jul 14th. Staines Res, singles on Sep 28th and Oct 4th & 18th. Woodberry Wetlands, one NE on Apr 25th.
**Bucks**: Wraysbury GP, singles on Jan 17th, Aug 26th and Sep 1st.
**Kent**: Crossness, one on Oct 6th. Greatness Pits, one on Dec 24th.
**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands, one on Oct 27th and one NW on Oct 30th. London Wetland Centre, singles on Sep 28th, Oct 16th (also seen over Barn Elms PF), Nov 29th and Dec 18th. Wimbledon Park, one on Aug 24th.

## Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

**Status**: scarce breeder and visitor, increasing.

This species is now a common sight in many parts of the London Area with an established breeding population. Birds can make long distance movements within the UK: one at the

London Wetland Centre in March was colour ringed as a nestling in Lincolnshire in 2013. As in 2016, breeding took place at nine sites. The 58 pairs/broods was a new peak, exceeding the 54 in 2016 (although the increase was substantially below the 32% increase in England recorded by the Breeding Bird Survey since last year). The highest counts outside the breeding season were 44 at Walthamstow Wetlands and at Mar Dyke Valley (well down on the 78 at Mar Dyke Valley in October 2016). Below are all breeding records (no. of nests/broods in brackets), together with some notable counts outside the breeding season. Once again, the LNHS thanks the BTO for providing data from its Heronries Census.

**Essex**: Mar Dyke Valley, 44 on Jul 16th. Netherhall GP (7). Walthamstow Wetlands (17 broods produced 46 young); 44 on Jan 2nd. Warren Gorge (12).
**Herts**: Amwell NR (7). Maple Lodge NR (1). Frogmore Lakes, 15 on Jan 5th. Stanborough Lakes (3). Stocker's Lake (7); 31 roosted on Nov 23rd. Tyttenhanger GP, 24 on Oct 28th. Verulamium Park (3).
**Middx**: KGVI Res, 14 on three dates in September. Staines Res, c15 on Sep 16th.
**Bucks**: Denham, 20+ on Sep 19th. Horton GP, 12 on Oct 25th. Wraysbury GP (1); 20 roosted on Oct 28th and Nov 4th & 13th.
**Kent**: Sevenoaks WR, 12 on Nov 26th.
**Surrey**: Morden Hall Park, eight on Dec 31st.
**In Lond**: Recorded at seven sites, with a peak count of two flying over Angel Street, EC1A and Tower Bridge on Jun 18th.

## Gannet *Morus bassanus*

**Status**: scarce visitor.

There were two records of two birds, the same as in each of the last three years (see table below). Over half the records since 2000 have been in either September or October.

**Gannet records 2010-2017: 26 records, 34 birds**

| Year | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of records | 6 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| No. of birds | 14 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |

**Essex**: Leyton, near-adult over on Jun 6th (JPa). Rainham Marshes, juv E on Oct 19th (DSm *et al*).

## Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

**Status**: irregular visitor, usually in winter, occasionally in good numbers.

One record this year, as last year. The arrival date is typical: since 2000, September, November or December have been the most likely months for their appearance in London. There seem to be fewer records recently: from 2000-2009 there were 53 records, from 2010-2017 there have only been 22 records. Breeding abundance data for the UK shows an apparent decline since about 2002 (JNCC Seabird Monitoring Programme), so our records may reflect this decline.

**In Lond**: Westminster, adult near Victoria Tower Gardens on Nov 13th (GSm).

*Little Egret is now a common sight in London. (Jonathan Lethbridge)*

## Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

**Status**: increasing breeding resident and common on suitable waterbodies elsewhere, especially in winter.

Breeding was reported from seven sites this year. Similar numbers to 2016 were recorded at the sites where breeding records were received in both years. The Estonian ringed bird at East India Dock Basin was seen again on February 17th and March 1st but was not recorded later in the year. The table below shows the monthly maxima at sites with larger numbers. The peak count this year was 888 at Staines Res on August 4th, with counts of at least 400 recorded on four other west London reservoirs. Breeding records (number of nests in brackets) and peak counts of over 100 from other sites are shown below the table.

| Cormorant | | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EX | Walthamstow Wetlands | 49 | 67 | 200 | 150 | 200 | 82 | 139 | 85 | 235 | 250 | 47 | 73 |
| MX | Q. Mary Res | 760 | 400 | 100 | 200 | 120 | 80 | 350 | 250 | 40 | 89 | 475 | 856 |
| | Staines Res | 8 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 4 | - | 587 | 888 | 9 | 1 | 20 | 1 |
| BU | Q. Mother Res | - | - | - | - | - | - | 485 | 700 | 500 | - | - | - |
| SY | Island Barn Res | 23 | 12 | 12 | 8 | 12 | 9 | 139 | 187 | 44 | 10 | 4 | 48 |
| | QE II Res | 230 | 100 | 38 | 28 | 16 | 105 | 205 | 236 | 78 | 123 | 225 | 310 |
| | Walton Res (K&B) | 4 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 130 | 230 | 120 | 205 | 400 | 72 |
| | Wetland Centre | 20 | 208 | 230 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 14 | 11 | 12 | 21 | 45 | 28 |

**Essex**: Fairlop Waters, 108 on Nov 19th. Holyfield Lake (40). KGV Res, 200 on Aug 31st. Netherhall GP (1). Walthamstow Wetlands (c140).
**Herts**: Amwell NR (35); 110 on Mar 4th.
**Middx**: Broadwater Lake (28). KGVI Res, 660 on Sep 15th. Q. Mary GP (c40).
**Bucks**: Wraysbury GP (1+).
**Surrey**: R Thames: Putney Bridge to Barnes Bridge, 108 on Nov 19th. Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), 164 on Jul 17th.

## Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

**Status**: scarce passage migrant.

A very disappointing year for London birdwatchers hoping to catch up with this popular raptor, with a maximum of 26 birds; 12 in spring and 14 in autumn. This was the lowest total since 16 in 2007 following last year's bumper figure of 57. Wind direction and general weather conditions are always a factor in determining how many birds are seen on migration.

Two birds were seen in March, both on the 29th, three in April and seven in May. Autumn passage began on August 5th, with four birds in that month and ten in September. All records are given below. There may be duplication, particularly when birds were seen from different sites on the same day.

**Essex**: Brentwood, one on Aug 10th. Dagenham, one on Mar 29th. Gallions Reach, singles on Apr 20th and May 7th. Harold Wood, one on Aug 5th. Ingrebourne Valley, singles on Sep 19th, 20th & 21st. Rainham Marshes, singles on May 20th and Sep 1st, 2nd, & 15th.

*Other than in rare influx years, definitive sightings of Honey Buzzard are very rare in London. (Magnus Andersson)*

Walthamstow Wetlands, one E at 12:20 on May 25th. Woodford Green, one E at 12:30 on May 25th, presumed same as at the Wetlands
**Herts**: Amwell NR, one on Mar 29th. Chess Valley, one on Apr 8th. Hertford, one on Aug 12th. Hilfield Park Res, one on May 8th. Moor Park GC, Northwood, one on Apr 6th. Panshanger Park, one on Sep 6th. Rye Meads, one on May 21st. Stocker's Lake, one on May 23rd.
**Kent**: Dartford Marshes, one on Sep 3rd. Sevenoaks WR, one on Aug 27th.
**Surrey**: Holmethorpe SP, one on Sep 25th. London Wetland Centre, one on Sep 26th. South Norwood CP, one on May 29th.

## Honey-buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

**Status**: scarce visitor.

There were five records this year (the same as last year) including one notable find in Inner London. One was in May, one in July, and three in September. May and September are the best months for this species and the July bird was only the fourth out of 72 birds since 2001.

**Essex**: Romford, one S on Sep 22nd (SB).
**Surrey**: Canons Farm, one over on Sep 8th (DKC, IJ). Purley, one over on May 27th (DT). Richmond Park, fem low on Sep 15th may have landed (JPPW).
**In Lond**: Regent's Park, one NE on Jul 19th (MAs).

## Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

**Status**: common breeding resident.

A total of around 2,850 records was slightly lower than last year's 3,000 but there was a welcome increase in reports of breeding. The number of territories increased from 32 last year to 48 and reports of confirmed breeding from 23 to 27 pairs. The Hertfordshire and Middlesex sectors accounted for 26 of the territories.

The sample in the Breeding Bird Survey is too small to produce trends for London but in the South East the long-term trend shows a 26% decline from 1995-2016. The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported them in 40% of gardens surveyed in 2017, similar to the 41% in 2016, but down from 54% in 1995.

Prey items included Collared Dove, Feral Pigeon, Song Thrush, Long-tailed Tit and Goldfinch. One bird was unsuccessful in its pursuit of a Teal and another was seen carrying a rodent species.

| Sparrowhawk | Essex | Herts | Middx | Bucks | Kent | Surrey | In Lond | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Territories | 9 | 12 | 14 | 0 | 1 | 10 | 2 | 48 |
| Proved | 5 | 7 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 27 |

*Close encounters with Sparrowhawks are rare but exhilarating! (Dave McGough)*

**In Lond**: Records were received from: Battersea Park, Bermondsey, Canada Water, City of London, Elephant and Castle, Hammersmith Cemetery, Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (pair frequent, display observed in March, but no further breeding evidence so may have bred off-site), Islington, Kennington, Kensington, Limehouse, London Zoo, Primrose Hill, Queen's Park, Kilburn, Regent's Park, Rotherhithe, Soho, Southwark Park, St James's Park, St Katherine's Dock, Stave Hill, Victoria Park (bred).

## Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

**Status**: rare passage migrant.

After a blank year in 2016, there were two accepted records this year. They were in April, which is one of the most likely months for records and in July (see table below). There were a number of other reports (listed in App III) for which descriptions would be very welcome. There was also an additional record for 2013.

**Goshawk arrival dates 1955-2017: 46 records, 51 birds**

| Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of records | 3 | 1 | 8 | 14 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 7 | 2 | - | 4 | 1 |
| No. of birds | 3 | 1 | 8 | 15 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 11 | 2 | - | 4 | 1 |

**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands, one on Apr 2nd (RBr). Putney, one over on Jul 30th (RK, JPPW).

### 2013 addition

**Surrey**: Richmond Park, one over on Sep 24th (JJPW).



## Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

**Status**: scarce, but increasing passage migrant; has recently bred.

This raptor is one of the great conservation success stories of recent decades and is now a familiar sight on the Thameside marshes. About 85% of sightings came from this part of the London Area, with confirmed breeding at two sites. There were 37 records away from the Thames (about 30 last year), with March, April, August and September the best months for overland passage. The highest count was ten, two pairs and six fledged juveniles, at Rainham Marshes. All records are given, singles unless stated, summarised in some cases, with breeding records in brackets (number of pairs):

| Marsh Harrier | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Records | 31 | 16 | 24 | 31 | 26 | 14 | 14 | 16 | 25 | 13 | 19 | 18 |
| Records (not Thames-side) | 3 | 2 | 6 | 10 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 9 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Individuals/month | 17 | 20 | 30 | 35 | 31 | 17 | 23 | 25 | 27 | 16 | 21 | 21 |

**Essex**: Fairlop Waters, one on Apr 9th. Gallions Reach, singles on Apr 22nd and Sep 23rd. Holyfield Lake, one on Oct 19th. Ingrebourne Valley, singles on Feb 22nd, Sep 21st and Dec 1st. Orsett Fen, one on Jan 23rd & 26th. Rainham Marshes (2); present all year. Romford, one on Apr 11th. Walthamstow Marshes, one on Apr 1st. West Thurrock Marshes, one on Jan 6th.

**Herts**: Amwell NR, two on Apr 12th, singles on Aug 4th, Sep 24th and Oct 12th. Rye Meads, singles on Mar 31st, Jun 4th, Jul 22nd, Sep 10th & 26th. Tyttenhanger GP, one on Apr 29th.

**Middx**: Brent Res, one on Sep 23rd. Hampstead Heath, one on Mar 28th. Pinner, one on May 27th. Q. Mary Res, one on Feb 4th. South Mimms, one on Apr 26th. Staines Moor, one on Sep 9th. Staines Res, one on Aug 10th. Woodberry Wetlands, one on Apr 11th.

**Kent**: Crayford/Dartford Marshes, up to two all year. Lullingstone CP, one on Dec 30th. Swanscombe Marshes (1); present all year.

**Surrey**: Barn Elms PF, one on Nov 13th (also seen at Wetland Centre). Beddington Farmlands, singles on Mar 25th and Sep 2nd. Canons Farm, one on Aug 6th & 7th. Holmethorpe SP, one on Jan 2nd. London Wetland Centre, singles on Mar 26th & 27th, Apr 15th and Nov 13th. South Norwood CP, one on Sep 16th. Wallington, one on Aug 17th. Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), singles on Mar 25th and Sep 16th.

**In Lond**: Primrose Hill, one on Aug 13th. Regent's Park, one on Apr 3rd.

## Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

**Status**: scarce migrant; formerly a regular winter visitor to the Thames-side marshes.

There were four records this year, following the very high count of 15 in 2016. This species suffers persecution on its breeding grounds which is likely to limit the number of birds wintering in southern Britain.

**Essex**: Brook Farm, Upminster, a ringtail (probably fem) on Jan 27th (RBs). Bulphan Fen, a ringtail on Jan 22nd (NC). Orsett Fen, a radio-tagged juv on Oct 3rd & 4th (RSPB).

**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands, fem N on Sep 20th (ST).

## Harrier sp

An unidentified ringtail harrier species was seen at KGVI Res on Apr 1st (DJM).

## Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

**Status**: increasingly common resident, and scarce breeder, in the north and west of the area, fairly regular migrant elsewhere.

There were about 2,380 reports of this graceful raptor, an increasingly familiar sight in Hertfordshire and parts of Middlesex. The Breeding Bird Survey shows a much smaller rate of increase in the South East from 2011-2016 than it does from 1995-2016, so perhaps the spread may be slowing down. The spread of reports shows a rise from 221 to 349 in Surrey, where birds bred for the first time this year.

The highest count soared to a new level this year with an impressive 135 at Iver Heath (where food was put out for the birds) on December 15th (31 there on December 23rd was last year's peak). Other big gatherings at this site were 97 on December 28th, 85 on October 8th and 55 on December 1st. Elsewhere, the largest count was 20 at Q. Mother Res on October 8th. The peak period for numbers was, as usual, March to May, reflecting spring passage across London.

| Red Kite sightings by month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 144 | 260 | 335 | 343 | 253 | 213 | 160 | 109 | 128 | 176 | 140 | 133 |

At least four pairs bred successfully (three last year), two in Hertfordshire and single pairs in Middlesex and Surrey. This was the highest total since five in 2011, when they were all in the core area of Hertfordshire, and is more evidence of the species' gradual spread from that county. There was also a big rise in the number of pairs suspected of breeding from just four in 2016 to 18: ten in Hertfordshire, three in Middlesex, two each in Buckinghamshire and Surrey and one in Essex.

| Red Kite by sector | Essex | Herts | Middx | Bucks | Kent | Surrey | In Lond |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sightings | 173 | 1049 | 592 | 137 | 62 | 349 | 18 |
| Percentage | 7 | 44 | 25 | 6 | 3 | 15 | < 1 |

All records for Inner London are given below, singles unless stated.

**In Lond**: Battersea Park, Apr 22nd. Bloomsbury, Feb 21st. Hammersmith Cemetery, two on May 14th. Kensington, May 7th. London Zoo, Mar 22nd. Paddington, May 2nd. Primrose Hill, Feb 24th, two on Mar 27th & 28th and one on Jun 26th. Regent's Park, Apr 3rd and Jun 22nd. Royal Albert Hall, Jun 3rd. Southwark, Apr 25th. St Paul's Cathedral, Apr 19th and Jun 4th. Victoria Park, Jun 2nd.

## Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

**Status**: scarce but increasing breeder; regular migrant/visitor.

In the past three years the number of records has been remarkably stable after a rapid increase: just over 4,000 records was about the same as last year and 2015. The 54 territories this year was a record figure, double that of 2016 (27) though this probably reflects differences in reporting and interpretation of territories rather than a real change since last year. The Breeding Bird Survey recorded a 1,104% increase in the South East from 1995-2016, but only shows a 16% increase from 2011-2016 in the same region, suggesting the spread may be slowing down. It is worth recalling that as recently as 2000, just two pairs bred in the London Area. (See also the paper on Buzzards, page 207.)



| Buzzard | Essex | Herts | Middx | Bucks | Kent | Surrey | In Lond | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Territories | 10 | 17 | 10 | 0 | 3 | 14 | 0 | 54 |
| Proved | 4 | 11 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 22 |

Spring passage peaked between early March and early April. On March 4th there were 15 between Cornmill Meadows and Upshire, 14 at KGV Res and 14 at Canons Farm & Banstead Woods. The highest total of the year was 32 at Rainham Marshes on April 1st; other notable April counts included 20 at Box Hill on the 9th and 20 at Rainham Marshes on the 11th. The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported them over 16 gardens this year compared with 15 last year and just one in 1995. They were most frequent in April, when seen over nine gardens.

In autumn, the highest counts were 17, mostly flying south-east, at Richmond Park on September 24th and the same number at Bushey Bank on October 10th.

Some more high counts and all records from Inner London are listed below.

**Essex**: At least 22 young raised. Copped Hall, 11 on Mar 26th. Gallions Reach, nine on Apr 2nd. Rainham Marshes, 22 on May 7th, 14 on Sep 2nd and 12 on Sep 17th.
**Herts**: Panshanger, 12 on Mar 15th. Rye Meads 11 on Oct 25th.
**Middx**: Pinner Park Farm, 11 on Apr 1st.
**Bucks**: Colnbrook Landfill, 14 on Sep 22nd.
**Surrey**: At least four young fledged. Banstead Wood, 11 on Oct 27th. Beddington Farmlands, 12 on Apr 1st & 6th. Canons Farm, 19 on Aug 25th.
**In Lond**: Records were received from Battersea Park, Bethnal Green, Camden Town, Charing Cross Hospital, Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, Kensington, Primrose Hill, Regent's Park, St James's Park, St Paul's Cathedral, Stave Hill, Tower of London, Victoria Park.

## Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

**Status**: common, but elusive, winter visitor; scarce breeder.

Estimated numbers in the first and last four months of the year were 162 and 165 (141 and 157 birds in 2016). Records came from 122 sites, similar to last year's 115. There were 11 breeding pairs reported from six sites this year, compared with the 16 from four sites last year and 17 from six sites in 2015. In Inner London they were reported from four sites, the same as 2016, including one out of place bird in a restaurant in central London! All breeding records are given below (no. of pairs/territories in brackets) and high counts.

**Water Rail winter totals of birds**

| | Essex | Herts | Middx | Bucks | Kent | Surrey | In Lond | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| First winter | 39 | 31 | 28 | 2 | 23 | 35 | 4 | 162 |
| Second winter | 54 | 35 | 17 | 2 | 10 | 44 | 3 | 165 |

**Essex**: Ingrebourne Valley, seven on Dec 12th. Orsett Fen (1). Rainham Marshes (4+); six on Nov 13th. Walthamstow Wetlands, five on Jan 6th.
**Herts**: Amwell NR, five on Jan 28th. Hilfield Park Res, four on Oct 31st. Rye Meads (2); five on Mar 16th. Seventy Acres Lake, four on Nov 18th.
**Middx**: Brent Res, four on Feb 18th.
**Bucks**: Horton GP, two on Dec 14th.
**Kent**: Crossness (1). Ruxley GP, five on Jan 19th. Swanscombe Marshes, five on Jan 25th.
**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands, four on Dec 21st. London Wetland Centre (1); ten on Jan 15th. Richmond Park (2); five on Feb 25th. South Norwood CP, ten on Nov 6th. Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), five on Jan 5th.
**In Lond**: Liverpool Street, one in a Brasserie, alive, later released, on Nov 9th. Regent's Park, two on Dec 16th. St James's Park, one on Nov 21st.

## Corncrake *Crex crex*

**Status**: rare passage migrant.

The first record since 2014 and only the third this century. Only one previous record has been later in the calendar year (Addlestone on 25th October 1963). The table below shows arrival dates. The RSPB reported that 866 calling males were recorded in Scotland in 2017, a drop of 33 per cent from the 2014 high of 1,289 (RSPB website).

**Corncrake arrival dates 1950-2017: 32 records, 32 birds**

| Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of records | 1 | - | - | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 14 | 4 | - | - |

**Essex**: Wanstead Flats, one flushed on Oct 22nd (NC).

## Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana*

**Status**: scarce migrant.

Two birds were recorded, the first since 2014. Clearly September is the peak month for sightings (see table below).

*Left: Spotted Crake. This popular bird graced the Ingrebourne Valley for a week from late September. (Russ Sherriff)*

*Right: Water Rail. (Tony Brown)*

**Spotted Crake arrival dates 1989-2017: 22 records, 22 birds**

| Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of records | 1 | - | - | 2 | 1 | - | - | 5 | 9 | 4 | - | - |

**Essex**: Ingrebourne Valley, juv from Sep 16th to Oct 2nd (AGs, ES, SHy *et al*).
**Herts**: Rye Meads, one on Sep 26th (BR).

## Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

**Status**: very common breeding resident.

Moorhens were reported from just 255 sites in 2017, a big fall from the 477 sites in 2016 but comparable to 256 sites in 2015. These changes almost certainly relate to differences in reporting rather than abundance: the Breeding Bird Survey showed no change in the UK or in London since last year, but a 33% decline in the South East from 1995-2016 (there were insufficient data to produce a London trend from 1995-2016). Breeding was reported at 119 sites including eight in Inner London. Below are breeding records for sites where five or more were recorded and all Inner London breeding records (no. of pairs/broods in brackets), plus peak counts from sites with records of 35 or more.

**Essex**: Dagenham Chase, 39 on Oct 22nd. Mar Dyke Valley, 43 on Feb 21st. Rainham Marshes (10+); 70 on Feb 12th. Tottenham Marshes (5 broods). Walthamstow Wetlands, 47 on Feb 12th. Wanstead Flats, 40 on Jan 15th.
**Herts**: Rye Meads, 97 on Sep 17th. Tyttenhanger GP, 40+ on Jul 12th.
**Middx**: Brent Res, 48 on Jan 15th. Hackney Marshes, 38 on Sep 22nd. Hampstead Heath, 49 on Jan 14th. Ruislip Woods, 50 on Jan 6th.
**Kent**: Crossness, 54 on Jan 26th. Crystal Palace Park, 43 on Mar 12th. The Tarn, Mottingham, 38+ on Jan 18th.
**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands (48); 120 on Jan 14th. London Wetland Centre (14+ broods); 283 on Feb 14th, 216 on Nov 21st. R Wandle: Carshalton Ponds to Wandsworth, 134 on Dec 28th.
**In Lond**: Holland Park (1). Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (5+); 50 on Dec 22nd. Kensal Town (1). Meanwhile Gardens (1). Mile End Park (1). Natural History Museum (1). Paddington (1). Regent's Park, 69 on Mar 14th. St James's Park, 75 on Jan 25th. Victoria Park (1).

## Coot *Fulica atra*

**Status**: very common breeding resident and winter visitor.

The Breeding Bird Survey had too small a sample to produce a London trend from last year, but there was a 24% decrease in the South East in that period. They were reported from 310 sites, down from 415 sites in 2016 but still higher than other recent years (276 in 2015, 224 in 2014). Breeding was reported at 178 sites, up from 74 sites in 2016 and 111 in 2015. The highest count was 836 at KGV Res, compared with 1,000 at this site in 2016. Below are breeding records for sites where five or more were recorded (no. of broods/pairs/nests in brackets), and counts over 300 (200 in Kent and Inner London).

**Essex**: KGV Res, 836 on Oct 7th. Rainham Marshes (48). Walthamstow Wetlands, 825 on Sep 17th.
**Herts**: Lynsters Farm, 317 on Jan 28th. Rye Meads, 348 on Oct 7th. Stocker's Lake, 455 on Jan 5th. Troy Mill Lake, 452 on Nov 22nd.
**Middx**: Bedfont Lakes CP, 763 on Sep 15th. Brent Res, 308 on Jan 15th. Broadwater Lake, 817 on Sep 11th. KGVI Res, 346 on Sep 15th. Q. Mary Res, 606 on Oct 7th. Staines Res, 435 on Jun 11th.
**Kent**: Ruxley GP, 250 on Jan 5th. Sevenoaks WR (12). Southmere Lake, 300 on Dec 28th.
**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands (51); 400+ on several dates in October and November.
**In Lond**: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, 325 on Dec 12th. Regent's Park (23); 348 on Dec 13th. St James's Park, 307 on Nov 23rd.

*Coot are a common sight on any site with water. (Jonathan Lethbridge)*

## Crane *Grus grus*

**Status**: rare vagrant.

As in 2016, there was just one record this year, although it stayed longer than the one in 2016 which was a fly-over in early April.

**Essex**: Rainham Marshes, one on May 21st–22nd. (AGs *et al*).

## Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

**Status**: localised breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Oystercatchers tend to start arriving at potential breeding sites in the London Area in early to mid-February and are typically scarce after breeding pairs and autumn passage migrants have left. This year was no exception, with most records falling within the period from February 16th to September 19th. Outside of this period the only records were from the Lower Thames between January 25th and February 5th, at Rainham Marshes on September 24th, KGV Res on September 29th and October 1st, Hampstead Heath one

over on November 26th, Q. Mary GP on December 2nd, and Rainham Marshes on December 20th. The highest counts came from Swanscombe Marshes, where there were 13 on April 21st and Rainham Marshes with ten on March 12th and April 21st. No other count involved more than nine together.

There were at least 12 breeding pairs (16 pairs in 2016), including seven pairs at Rainham Marshes. Six pairs were confirmed breeding: at Amwell NR, Crossness, Rainham Marshes, Tyttenhanger GP, Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) and Wraysbury GP.

**In Lond**: Hays Wharf, one on Apr 7th. Southwark, one on May 9th, two on Jun 5th. All three records involve birds flying over the Thames.

## Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

**Status**: rare vagrant.

A pair at Rainham Marshes is the eleventh record for the London Area, and the fourth in May. Black-winged Stilts have now been recorded in London in three years in a row and the previous record also involved two together in May – at Island Barn Res on May 4th 2016. Nationally the species seems to be becoming more regular, mainly as a spring 'overshoot', and pairs occasionally stay to breed.

**Black-winged Stilt arrival dates 1918-2017: 11 records, 15 birds**

| Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of records | - | - | - | 1 | 4 | - | 1 | 2 | 3 | - | - | - |
| No. of birds | - | - | - | 1 | 7 | - | 1 | 2 | 4 | - | - | - |

**Essex**: Rainham Marshes, a pair on May 10th (ATn).

## Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

**Status**: scarce visitor in all months of the year; occasional breeder.

During the first winter period there were regular double-figure counts of up to 40 from Thameside sites. From mid-March until May 23rd, spring passage brought records from gravel pits and reservoirs across London in addition to sites on the Thames. The highest count during this period was five at Walthamstow Wetlands on March 11th.

There were no further records until July 19th, when there were eight at Rainham Marshes. Peak counts during the autumn included 16 at Crayford and Rainham Marshes on August 30th and 11 at Staines Res on September 25th, but numbers were generally low until late November when counts of over ten again became regular along the Lower Thames. The highest count in the second winter period was 26 at Rainham Marshes on December 30th.

**Essex**: Ingrebourne Valley, one on Mar 28th. KGV Res, two on Apr 30th. Rainham Marshes, 28 on Jan 8th and 26 on Dec 30th. Walthamstow Wetlands, five on Mar 11th. West Thurrrock Marshes, peak of 40 on Feb 27th.

**Herts**: Amwell NR, one on May 5th. Hilfield Park Res, two on May 7th and three on 8th. Tyttenhanger GP, two on May 7th.

**Middx**: Brent Res, three on May 8th. Staines Res, three on Mar 23rd and one on 28th, three from Aug 26th-28th, one on Sep 18th and 11 on 25th, two on Oct 10th and one on 18th, and four on Nov 12th.



**Bucks**: Q. Mother Res, two on Aug 14th and Dec 4th.

**Kent**: Highest counts were: Crayford Marshes, 16 on Aug 30th. Crossness, 13 on Jan 25th & 26th and 15 on Dec 31st. Dartford Marshes, 20 on Dec 15th. Swanscombe Marshes, ten on Jan 2nd.

**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands, two on Mar 24th. Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), one on Mar 17th and two on Jul 20th.

## Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

**Status**: widespread breeding species, common winter visitor and passage migrant.

The number of breeding pairs/territories rose slightly to 168 (151 in 2016, 138 in 2015), which includes an estimate of 68 territories at Rainham Marshes (the same as 2016). Rainham Marshes remained the main wintering site, with large winter flocks also recorded in the Hertfordshire sector and Thameside marshes in Kent.

**Essex**: 75 pairs/territories. Fairlop Waters, 200 on Jan 7th and 145 on Nov 19th. Grays Riverside, 140 on Dec 31st. Ingrebourne Valley, 250 on Nov 18th. Orsett Fen, 164 on Jan 3rd. Rainham Marshes (68); winter peak counts of 2,000 on Feb 12th and 1,000 on Dec 30th. West Thurrock Marshes, 200 on Feb 20th.

**Herts**: 24 pairs/territories. Amwell NR, 300 on Feb 1st and 100 on Nov 29th. Ellenbrook Fields, 117 on Jan 2nd and 140 on Dec 3rd. Rye Meads, 512 on Jan 15th and 250 on Aug 22nd. Tyttenhanger GP, 46 on Feb 14th, up to 250 in October and on Nov 12th.

**Middx**: 19 pairs/territories. KGVI Res, 93 on Feb 7th. Staines Res, 120 on Feb 7th and 95 on Dec 4th. Ten Acre Wood, 130 on Feb 12th.

**Bucks**: Q. Mother Res, 150 on Jan 2nd.

**Kent**: 17 pairs/territories. Crayford Marshes, 450 on Feb 21st and 366 on Nov 24th. Crossness, 336 on Jan 17th and 120 on Dec 14th. Sevenoaks WR (13); 245 on Feb 11th and 300 on Dec 23rd. Swanscombe Marshes, 275 on Jan 7th.

**Surrey**: 33 pairs/territories. Beddington Farmlands (12). London Wetland Centre (14); 75 on Jan 3rd and 77 on Dec 11th. Holmethorpe SP, 115 on Jan 30th and 80 on Dec 7th. Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), 173 on Feb 1st and 98 on Dec 5th.

**In Lond**: Regent's Park, singles over on Jun 26th and Oct 28th. St James Park, one over on Feb 28th.

## Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

**Status**: regular winter visitor to parts of the area, scarce passage migrant and winter visitor elsewhere.

As usual, the majority of records came from the northern parts of the London Area with the largest flocks in Hertfordshire, Middlesex and at the Thameside Marshes in Kent. Several three figure counts from Heathrow Airport were far more unusual, with a flock seemingly resident in January until February 15th and from November 16th to December 1st. The last one of the spring was at Rainham Marshes on April 20th, with the first returning individual at Staines Moor and Staines Res on September 15th.

**Essex**: Ingrebourne Valley, 60 on Dec 9th and 100 on 16th. Rainham Marshes, peak counts of 113 on Feb 12th and 180 on Dec 24th.

**Herts**: Brookmans Park, 330 on Dec 1st. Shafford Farm, peak counts of 500 on Mar 16th

and 60 on Nov 19th. South Ridge, Shenley, 65 on Dec 24th. Theobalds Park Farm, peak counts of 127 on Mar 12th and 51 on Oct 12th. Tyttenhanger GP, 50 on Nov 18th.

**Middx**: Harmondsworth, 140 on Jan 4th. Heathrow Airport, peak counts of 156 on Jan 19th and 100 on Dec 17th. Ridge, 65 on Dec 24th. South Mimms, 330 on Dec 1st.

**Kent**: Crayford Marshes, peak count of 128 on Dec 21st. Crossness, 20 flew W on both Jan 25th & 26th.

**Surrey**: Barn Elms PF, one S on Oct 15th. Canons Farm, at least one over on Sep 16th. Holmethorpe SP, one on Dec 24th.

**In Lond**: Regent's Park, one flew N on Dec 12th.

## Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

**Status**: passage migrant in variable numbers, and scarce winter visitor.

During the winter months at either end of the year, small numbers were irregularly recorded from various Essex and Kent sites along the Lower Thames. Most counts involved three or less individuals, but there were high counts of 11 at Grays Riverside on January 22nd and five at Swanscombe Marshes on December 8th.

Spring passage involved about 90 birds (70 in 2016), at wetland sites spread across the area, between March 11th and May 14th, peaking between April 30th and May 7th when counts of 22 and 32 were made at Rainham Marshes on May 5th and 6th respectively. As has been the case in recent years, autumn passage was very light with perhaps 15 birds (16 in 2016). The majority of these were from Staines Res where one to three were seen on ten dates between August 28th and October 23rd, with the remaining records coming from London Wetland Centre on November 6th, KGV Res on October 8th and Rainham Marshes on October 15th.

## Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

**Status**: localised breeder and winter visitor; common passage migrant.

This species was recorded in all months. Spring and autumn passage overlapped with wintering and summering birds, making it very difficult to estimate numbers at different periods. Numbers on the Lower Thames were fairly low in both winter periods, with the highest counts being 15 at Erith Reach on January 28th and 19 at Belvedere on December 1st. The peak spring count of 46 on May 5th at Rainham Marshes was higher than usual, but passage was light elsewhere with a high of 14 at QE II Res on May 17th. Much larger numbers passed through in the autumn when numbers at Staines Res peaked at 97 on September 9th. Elsewhere the highest autumn count was 35 at Rainham Marshes on September 10th.

A pair hatched three chicks at Hertford and another pair may have attempted to breed at Horton Brook Quarry.

## Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

**Status**: breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first migrants were seen at Horton Brook Quarry and Rye Meads on March 15th, a day later than in 2016 and the latest spring arrival since 2006 when the first one was also reported on March 15th. In contrast, the earliest ever in the London Area was February 27th in 2010.



It was another poor breeding season in our area, although seven pairs were confirmed to have bred. The presence of passage migrants and individuals moving between nearby sites confuses the overall picture though and some breeding pairs may be overlooked or go unreported.

| Little Ringed Plover | Pairs confirmed breeding | Pairs probably breeding | Other pairs present | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Essex | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Herts | 3 | 0 | 3 | 6 |
| Middx | 0 | 0 | 5 | 5 |
| Bucks | 3 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| Kent | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Surrey | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Total | 7 | 2 | 13 | 22 |

The best spring counts were 12 at Staines Res on March 31st and April 2nd, and 11 at both Walthamstow Wetlands on April 4th and Tyttenhanger GP on April 25th, with 19 at Staines Res on four dates in late June and early July being the highest post-breeding totals. The last and only records in September were at Rainham Marshes on 23rd and Rye Meads on 25th.

**In Lond**: Tower of London, one on the shore of the Thames on Jun 1st.

## Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

**Status**: regular passage migrant.

Spring passage was recorded between April 8th (one at Rainham Marshes) and May 21st (one flew north-east over the London Wetland Centre). In total about 247 (112 in 2016) passed through, with 98 of these in the four days from April 21st–24th, and 104 during a more extended period from April 27th to May 10th. The highest count was 17 at Grays Riverside on April 23rd, a day when a total of about 46 were recorded across the London Area.

The return passage in the autumn involved around 143 individuals between June 28th and September 17th, with the highest counts being 16 over Amwell NR on July 31st and ten at Staines Res on August 3rd.

## Curlew *Numenius arquata*

**Status**: winter visitor and passage migrant.

The vast majority of Curlew sightings came from sites on the Lower Thames where there were records in all months of the year. The highest count during the first two months was 24 at Rainham Marshes on February 19th. Away from the Thames, 12 flew SE at Twickenham on January 21st and one flew over Rye Meads on February 22nd and one over Banbury Res on February 25th. Spring passage peaked between the last few days of March and mid-April, with peak counts of 30 at Grays Riverside on March 31st and 35 at Rainham Marshes on April 9th.

Autumn passage was light with seven at Rainham Marshes on July 2nd and 11th and also on October 20th being the highest counts. Records were received from eight sites away from the Lower Thames between July 1st and September 19th. During the last two

months, the only record away from the Thames was one over Walthamstow Wetlands on December 3rd, and the highest count was 20 at Rainham Marshes on November 24th.

## Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

**Status**: passage migrant in variable numbers, scarce in winter.

The first record of the year was of one at Crossness on March 6th. Somewhere in the region of 180-200 individuals (12 in 2016) then passed through between April 9th and May 11th, the majority during the first six days of May when eight double figure counts included 40 at Rainham Marshes on 4th and 12 at Staines Res on 5th. This is the first large spring movement since 2012 when over 500 were recorded.

In contrast, autumn passage involved just 17 birds, far fewer than last year's 75: one at Grays Riverside on July 8th, two at Rainham Marshes on July 13th, a total of 13 at Rainham Marshes, Staines Res and Crossness between September 19th and 28th and one at Rainham Marshes on October 22nd.

Singles were then seen at Rainham Marshes on three dates between November 15th and December 20th, with three there on December 15th.



## Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

**Status**: passage migrant and winter visitor in variable numbers.

Flocks of wintering Black-tailed Godwits were present on the Lower Thames during the first part of the year, with the highest count being 300 at Rainham Marshes on February 27th, while elsewhere, six visited the London Wetland Centre on February 3rd and one was at Tyttenhanger GP on February 18th. Numbers on the Thames dropped off rapidly during April, but there were some fairly high counts well into the spring, including 90 at Crossness on May 7th.

Spring passage away from the Thames was fairly light with records of one to three individuals coming from just eight sites across the area between March 18th and June 4th.

The first returning bird of the autumn was at Rainham Marshes on June 21st, with small numbers visiting sites across London from June 25th until November 19th. Away from the Thames, flocks were usually of less than ten, but a few larger flocks were seen with the

*These Black-tailed Godwits were photographed in early July and still retain a lot of their summer plumage. (Dave Harris)*

largest being 24 at Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) on July 2nd. Numbers on the Thames increased slowly from July onwards, with a peak of 400 at Erith on November 17th.

## Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

**Status**: passage migrant and localised winter visitor.

Small numbers were seen on the Lower Thames between January and April, with peak counts of seven at Grays Riverside on February 3rd and 15 at Swanscombe Marshes on March 11th. Spring passage, between April 28th and May 23rd, involved 24 individuals (23 in 2016) at 11 sites, mainly reservoirs, with no more than two seen together.

Autumn passage was also mainly at reservoirs across the area, with at least 44 (35 in 2016) recorded between July 21st and September 6th. The autumn total may have been higher if there were different individuals daily at Staines Res where up to six were seen most days between July 24th and September 6th.

## Knot *Calidris canutus*

**Status**: passage migrant and winter visitor in small numbers.

Singles at Creekmouth (Barking), Gallions Reach and Rainham Marshes on January 1st and 2nd and two at the latter site on 4th were the only winter records.

Rainham Marshes was the only site to report birds in spring with one on March 24th, two on April 21st and one on April 30th, two on May 5th and four on May 6th. A late 1st-summer bird was seen at Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) on June 20th.

Autumn passage started with one at Staines Res on July 17th and picked up during August with perhaps as few as 16 birds between August 9th and October 2nd. Most of the autumn records came from Staines Res where they were reported on 20 dates between August 19th and October 2nd, including some that are presumed to have stayed for several days.

**In Lond**: Chelsea, one on Sep 12th heard calling at 02:48 near Lots Road on the Thames (DTM).

## Ruff *Calidris pugnax*

**Status**: regular passage migrant and scarce winter visitor.

There was just one record in the first winter period in January at Rainham Marshes. Spring passage was between March 11th and June 2nd at Rainham Marshes, which accounted for most of the records; single birds were seen at four other sites during this period. Autumn passage was far more pronounced, with records coming from ten sites between June 28th and October 25th. The highest numbers were recorded in the second half of September. In the second winter period, up to five were at Rainham Marshes through November and December.

**Essex**: Gallions Reach, one on Sep 26th. Rainham Marshes, two on Jan 21st, 12 males on Mar 11th, male from Apr 19th increasing to peak of nine birds on Apr 30th with the last of spring being four on Jun 2nd; one from Jun 28th-30th, two on Jul 19th, one on Aug 26th; several September and October records, with peak of 15 on September 29th and up to five in November and December. Walthamstow Wetlands, one on Mar 22nd.
**Herts**: Rye Meads, singles on Jul 13th, Sep 11th–12th & 16th. Tyttenhanger GP, one on Apr 23rd, two from Sep 11th–16th, with three from Sep 17th–18th and one on 19th.



**Middx**: Staines Res, recorded regularly between Aug 23rd and Oct 23rd, mainly during September with high counts of 20 on 16th and 25 on 25th. Wormwood Scrubs, one on May 7th.
**Kent**: Crayford Marshes, five on Oct 12th and two on 16th. Crossness, one on Oct 6th.
**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands, one on Aug 9th, two from Sep 3rd-9th, singles on 10th, 15th, 20th, three on 27th & one on 28th. London Wetland Centre, two on Apr 22nd, one from Sep 10th–14th. Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), one on Oct 4th.

## Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

**Status**: passage migrant in variable numbers, mainly in autumn.

Spring passage brought two, perhaps three, individuals between Apr 30th and May 25th. This was followed by a very good autumn passage involving at least 34 individuals, mostly between September 1st and October 8th, with the majority at Staines Res, where a minimum of 28 were recorded during the autumn. A total of at least 36 makes this the best year for Curlew Sandpipers since at least 2004 when there was a similar series of records from Staines Res.

**Essex**: Rainham Marshes, one from Apr 30th to May 3rd, the same or another on May 5th, singles from Sep 22nd–24th and Oct 6th–8th, three on Oct 16th. William Girling Res, two on Sep 19th.
**Middx**: Staines Res, present on most days from Sep 1st-28th with peaks of seven on 11th & 12th, eight on 15th & 11 on 25th; then two on Oct 20th-21st and one on Oct 24th.
**Surrey**: Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), one on May 25th.

## Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

**Status**: rare passage migrant, predominantly occurring during May.

Three birds were seen this year, all of which arrived in the last few days of April; only one remained for longer than one day, which was seen at three sites. Most spring records are in May as the table below shows, so these were a little early. The last April record was in 1991.

**Temminck's Stint arrival dates 1990-2017: 42 records, 52 birds**

| Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of records | - | - | - | 4 | 27 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 1 | - | - |
| No. of birds | - | - | - | 4 | 37 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 1 | - | - |

**Herts**: Tyttenhanger GP, one on Apr 30th (RFr).
**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands, one on Apr 30th (KG). Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough), one from Apr 28th-29th flew to QE II Res on 29th, quickly moving on to Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) where it remained until May 5th (DMH *et al*).

## Sanderling *Calidris alba*

**Status**: passage migrant in variable numbers, rare in winter.

Around 107 birds were seen this year, similar to last year's total of 99. Of these, 56 were in spring and 51 in autumn.

The first spring migrant was on March 28th at Staines Res, a relatively early date. Two

more were seen in the first week of April but the main passage occurred between April 30th and May 30th with a late bird on June 7th. The highest count was six at Q. Mother Res on May 14th. Returning migrants began arriving from July 24th and continued until September 25th. After this there were two records from Gallions Reach of two on October 19th and three on November 7th.

## Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

**Status**: common passage migrant and winter visitor.

There is considerable overlap of counts at sites along the Lower Thames, particularly from sites opposite each other. The highest count was 1,500 at Swanscombe Marshes on January 17th.

**Dunlin peak site counts along Lower Thames marshes**

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rainham Marshes | 700 | 887 | 427 | 300 | 434 | 1435 |
| Crayford/Dartford Marshes | 600 | 200 | - | 25 | 350 | 600 |
| Crossness | 400 | 420 | 300 | 1 | 500 | 420 |
| Erith | 400 | - | - | 3 | 350 | 400 |
| Swanscombe Marshes | 1500 | 400 | - | - | - | 107 |
| West Thurrock Marshes | 1100 | 600 | - | - | - | 673 |

There was a particularly good passage of Dunlin away from the Thames, mainly concentrated at Staines Res on one of the drained basins; the highest count was 82 on September 15th.

**Dunlin counts away from Lower Thames**

| Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of sites | 0 | 0 | 10 | 15 | 15 | 2 | 9 | 12 | 10 | 9 | 7 | 1 |
| Minimum no. of birds | 0 | 0 | 26 | 66 | 71 | 3 | 38 | 130 | 281 | 42 | 21 | 1 |

**In Lond**: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, one by Serpentine on Mar 29th (PHy).

## Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

**Status**: scarce late autumn and winter visitor.

A fairly typical record of one on a west London reservoir in late autumn on one day only. Of the five records, including this one, since 2010, four have been at Q. Mother Res and the other at Staines Res.

**Bucks**: Q. Mother Res, one on Oct 30th (CDRH).

## Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

**Status**: scarce passage migrant in variable, but usually small numbers, rare in winter.

An excellent year for this species. There was one bird in each winter period at Rainham Marshes and at least two birds in spring. It was difficult to estimate the number of birds in autumn due to birds being almost continuously present at Rainham Marshes and Staines Res. At Rainham Marshes, birds were present from July 25th to October 25th with at least

*This September Little Stint was an excellent record for Walton-on-Thames. (Dave Harris)*

ten birds. The birds seen at Crayford Marshes may well be birds that were at Rainham Marshes. At Staines Res, birds were present from September 4th to October 27th with at least 17 birds. Away from Rainham Marshes, Crayford Marshes and Staines Res, there were four records of four birds in the autumn.

**Essex**: KGV Res, one on Sep 27th. Rainham Marshes, one on Jan 3rd, May 1st, 4th & 6th, two on Jul 25th, one on Aug 2nd, up to four from Sep 19th-Oct 1st, one on most dates between Oct 6th-18th, two on Oct 19th, three on Oct 22nd & 25th and one on Nov 25th.
**Herts**: Tyttenhanger GP, one from Oct 7th-8th.
**Middx**: Staines Res, one from Sep 4th-11th, four from Sep 16th-19th increasing to seven on Sep 20th and 12 on Sep 24th reducing to four by Sep 30th; eight on Oct 1st gradually reducing with the last two on Oct 27th.
**Bucks**: Q. Mother Res, two on Sep 25th and one on Oct 20th. Both records relate to birds flying in from Staines Res.
**Kent**: Crayford Marshes, one on Sep 28th and Oct 16th. Sevenoaks WR, one on May 15th.
**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands, one on Sep 20th. Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), one from Sep 24th-25th.

## Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

**Status**: rare passage migrant, mostly during September.

A good year, there were probably two different birds at Staines Res and another at Rainham Marshes. The last time there were three records in a year was 2005.

**Pectoral Sandpiper records 2008-2017: 13 records, 13 birds**

| Year | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of records | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |

**Essex**: Rainham Marshes, one from Jul 29th-30th (MHe *et al*).
**Middx**: Staines Res, one from Aug 30th to Sep 3rd and another on Sep 11th (REI *et al*).

## Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

**Status**: localised breeding species, passage migrant and winter visitor.

During January and February, birds were seen at 67 sites (34 in 2016). The peak count was eight in Richmond Park on February 18th; all other sites held only one or two birds except Hilfield Park Res, Rye Meads and Woldingham, all of which had three birds. Passage birds were seen at 26 sites during March with the last on 29th.

The only breeding activity was at Prince's Coverts where at least one bird was roding on April 15th (seven last year from five visits). This species may be under-recorded but perhaps more likely it has declined. A BTO survey in 2013 found a 29% decline in the British breeding population since 2003 (*Bird Study* 62: 535-551). More records in the breeding season would be welcome.

Autumn migrants began arriving at the end of October with eight birds seen from October 28th to 30th. During November and December, birds were seen at 56 sites (32 in 2016), although some of these were clearly migrants rather than overwintering birds. The peak counts were 15 in Richmond Park on December 7th and six at Epping Forest Woodland Burial Park on November 8th.

**In Lond**: City of London, one rescued on Nov 15th and another picked up dead on Dec 7th. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, singles on Mar 13th and Nov 6th. Lambeth, one on Nov 16th. Primrose Hill, one over on Mar 17th, Regent's Park, singles on Mar 9th, 13th & 15th and Nov 8th & 20th. Southbank, one on Nov 7th was presumably the same bird that was found dead on the 9th.

## Jack Snipe *Lymnocryptes minimus*

**Status**: widespread but elusive winter visitor and passage migrant.

The highest count this year was 17 at Rye Meads on March 3rd compared with 20 at the same site in 2016. Single birds lingered until May 6th at the London Wetland Centre and Rainham Marshes, otherwise the last bird was seen on April 11th. The first autumn migrant was seen on September 23rd at Holmethorpe SP. Multiple records from sites are summarised below (numbers in brackets are for each winter period) along with all other records.

**Essex**: Cornmill Meadows, one on Dec 12th. Gallions Reach, one on Dec 24th. Fairlop Waters, one on Mar 26th. Harold Wood, one on Oct 9th. Ingrebourne Valley, one on Apr 6th-7th. Rainham Marshes (12:1). Sewardstone Marsh, one on Feb 19th and Dec 19th. Upminster, one on Jan 3rd. Walthamstow Marshes, one on Jan 6th & 13th. Walthamstow Wetlands, one on Jan 13th. West Thurrock Marshes, two on Jan 6th.
**Herts**: Amwell NR, one on Mar 17th. Rye Meads (17:4). Stocker's Lake, one on Feb 6th.
**Middx**: Minet CP, one on Jan 26th. Pinner Park Farm, one on Feb 19th. Ruislip Woods (2:0). Staines Moor (5:2). Ten Acre Wood, Yeading (1:1). Woodberry Wetlands (2:0).
**Bucks**: Horton (2:0).
**Kent**: Greenwich Ecology Park (0:1). Swanscombe Marshes, one on Jan 2nd.
**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands (5:2). Holmethorpe SP (6:3). London Wetland Centre (5:1). Priest Hill, one on Mar 7th. Richmond Park, one on Dec 9th. Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) (4:0). Wimbledon Common (1:0).
**In Lond**: Regent's Park, one on Mar 5th.



## Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

**Status**: common winter visitor and passage migrant; former scarce breeder.

There were fewer Snipe present during the first three months of the year compared with 2016; the only site with counts over 50 was Beddington Farmlands where the peak was 80 on February 28th. Elsewhere the peaks were 48 at Rainham Marshes, 38 at Rye Meads, 36 at Brent Res and 32 at Holmethorpe SP. There were also fewer birds around in April with a maximum of just 12 at Rainham Marshes on 6th. All birds had left by the middle of May except for singles at Greenford on 21st and Rainham Marshes on 25th and at the London Wetland Centre where up to two birds lingered throughout May and into July with three present on June 30th.

July saw the first autumn migrants with one at Holmethorpe SP on 2nd, two at Rainham Marshes on 28th and one at Rye Meads on 29th. After a slow start, they started to become a little more widespread from mid-August with 21 in the Ingrebourne Valley on August 28th. The rest of the year saw fewer birds return than last year with a peak of just 48 at Sevenoaks WR on December 20th and 31st. Elsewhere the peak counts were 44 at Rye Meads on November 17th, 40 at Ingrebourne Valley on October 7th, 37 at Rainham Marshes on December 27th, and 25 at Brent Res on December 3rd and 23rd.

**In Lond**: Regent's Park, one flushed on Nov 4th, two over on 6th.

*Snipe. (Alan Reynolds)*

## Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

**Status**: rare passage migrant.

The drained south basin at Staines Res proved the perfect habitat for this species with two separate juveniles spending a few days here in autumn. On one of the days it was possible to see two species of phalarope at Staines!

**Middx**: Staines Res, one from Sep 11th-14th (PRA, REI *et al*), another from Oct 20th-22nd (FJM *et al*).

## Grey Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius*

**Status**: rare visitor, normally in late autumn and winter.

This year was the first time this century that five birds were seen. Four were seen between September 14th and 19th and one in November.

**Grey Phalarope records 2008-2017: 19 records, 19 birds**

| Year | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of records | 4 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 5 |

**Essex**: KGV Res, 1st-winter from Nov 13th-14th (NS *et al*). William Girling Res, one on Sep 19th (AW).
**Middx**: Staines Res, 1st-winter from Sep 14th-16th (PRA *et al*).
**Kent**: Swanscombe Marshes, one on Sep 15th (PLa).
**Surrey**: Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough), 1st-winter from Sep 13th-14th (DMH, AQ).

## Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

**Status**: common passage migrant and localised winter visitor.

Away from the Thames, two birds overwintered at Walthamstow Wetlands; elsewhere one or two birds were seen at five other sites on occasional dates between January and March. Along the river the highest count was four at Creekmouth, Barking and Beckton SW.

Spring migrants began to appear in the second week of April and were fairly widespread by the end of the month; the highest count was 14 at Rainham Marshes on April 30th. Like last year, the peak passage occurred on May 6th when 62 birds were seen including a high of 13 at Beddington Farmlands. Migrants tailed off significantly after the middle of May and only a few birds were seen in the first half of June.

Early returning birds were seen from mid-June with six at Woodberry Wetlands on the 24th being a surprisingly high count for June. There was a good build-up of migrants in the second half of July with a peak of 116 on July 23rd, including 45 at KGV Res. This continued throughout August although the highest total was 92 birds on the 1st. There was a noticeable drop in numbers from mid-September and during October only two sites (Brent Res and Creekmouth, Barking) had five or more birds.

During the last two months of the year birds were reported from nine sites away from the Thames; the most regular site was again Walthamstow Wetlands. The highest count along the river was four at Creekmouth, Barking.

**In Lond**: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, singles on Apr 30th and Nov 6th. Limehouse, two

*Common Sandpiper are a commonly seen migrant in London in late April. (Jonathan Lethbridge)*

on Apr 29th. Regent's Park, one on May 26th. Rotherhithe, one on Aug 22nd. Victoria Park, one on Apr 28th.

## Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

**Status**: widespread winter visitor and passage migrant (mainly in autumn).

Birds were recorded at 39 sites in January and February (33 in 2016). Apart from the sites listed below, the highest count was five at Walthamstow Wetlands on January 10th. Migrants started passing through in March and continued through to May 6th with the highest count being eight at Ingrebourne Valley on April 4th and 10th and William Girling Res on April 1st.

The first returning bird was on June 15th at Kempton NR and there were records from 11 sites by the end of the month. The peak passage months were July through to September when the peak count was 12 at William Girling Res on July 31st. During the last quarter of the year, there were records from 40 sites. Apart from the sites listed below, the highest count was four at Island Barn Res on November 15th and December 1st. Monthly maxima for sites with at least six birds recorded during the year are listed below.

| **Green Sandpiper** | | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EX | Rainham Marshes | - | - | - | 2 | - | 3 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | - |
| | William Girling Res | - | 5 | 6 | 8 | - | - | 12 | - | 1 | - | 1 | - |
| HR | Rye Meads | 3 | 3 | 5 | 4 | - | 2 | 10 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 4 | 2 |
| | Tyttenhanger GP | 4 | 2 | 3 | 1 | - | 1 | 3 | 6 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| MX | Brent Res | - | 2 | 3 | 2 | - | 3 | 5 | 7 | 7 | 3 | 2 | - |
| KT | Swanscombe Marshes | 1 | 6 | - | 1 | - | 3 | - | 1 | - | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| SY | Beddington Farmlands | 3 | 2 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 11 | 11 | 11 | 6 | 1 | 6 |

## Redshank *Tringa totanus*

**Status**: common winter visitor and passage migrant, localised breeder.

Monthly maximum counts from the main sites on the Lower Thames are given below. Other peak counts along the river included 188 at West Thurrock Marshes on February 27th and 100 at Gallions Reach on January 22nd; elsewhere the highest count was 49 at London Wetland Centre on April 4th.

| Redshank | | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EX | Rainham Marshes | 131 | 200 | 80 | 94 | 70 | nc | nc | 103 | 118 | 164 | 112 | 57 |
| KT | Crayford Marshes | 30 | 17 | - | 15 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 40 | 150 | 25 | 3 |
| | Crossness | 65 | 145 | 110 | 62 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 50 | 167 | 50 | 126 | 75 |
| | Erith | 150 | 50 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 70 | 180 | 150 |

Breeding records are listed below.

**Essex**: Rainham Marshes, 53 territories (60 in 2016) had good brood success.
**Herts**: Amwell NR, pair in April and May. Letty Green, pair probably bred. Rye Meads, two pairs but no young fledged. Tyttenhanger GP, pair in April and May.
**Middx**: KGVI Res, pair mating in April. Staines Moor, pair in April and May. Stanwell Moor, two pairs with young.
**Surrey**: London Wetland Centre, two pairs with one having three young but none fledged.

## Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

**Status**: uncommon passage migrant.

There were at least 11 birds in spring (five in 2016) between May 4th and 13th: three at Rainham Marshes on May 4th, five from May 5th to 7th with one still present on 13th; two at London Wetland Centre on May 5th and 10th; one at Beddington Farmlands on May 6th and 8th; and one at Rye Meads from May 11th to 13th.

The first of at least 16 birds in autumn (eight in 2016) was at Staines Res from June 24th to 25th. Single birds were seen in July at Rainham Marshes on 4th to 6th and 19th to 23rd (with two on 21st), Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) on 15th, William Girling Res on 25th and 29th to 31st, Fairlop Waters on 30th, and Holmethorpe SP on 31st. In August, there were singles at Beddington Farmlands on 15th and 23rd and Dagenham Chase from 18th to 19th. In September, there were singles at Beddington Farmlands on 2nd, 15th, and 21st to 23rd and at Staines Res, there was one on 26th.

## Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

**Status**: scarce passage migrant with occasional winter records.

At least eight birds were seen this year. The long-staying overwintering bird on the Lower Thames Marshes did not return this year.

**Essex**: Rainham Marshes, singles on Jan 16th, Apr 30th and one or two on most days from Sep 3rd-21st with three on 14th. Walthamstow Wetlands, two on Aug 26th, then most days until Sep 10th and one on 16th.
**Middx**: Staines Res, one from Sep 2nd-6th.
**Kent**: Crossness, one on Sep 22nd (presumed to be one of the Rainham birds).



## Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

**Status**: regular passage migrant, rare in winter.

Around 100 birds were seen in spring compared with 70 last year. An early bird appeared on March 12th at Tyttenhanger GP with the main passage occurring between April 9th and May 26th. The largest flocks were nine over Kempton NR on May 9th, eight at Rainham Marshes on May 1st and six over Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) on May 2nd.

Autumn migrants began to appear from June 29th and passage continued until October 3rd. There were particularly good numbers at Staines Res with at least four birds seen daily between August 23rd and September 4th and a peak of eight on September 1st. Elsewhere, the highest counts were six at Rainham Marshes on August 23rd and four in the Crayford/Dartford area from September 19th to 28th.

The only winter record was one at Rainham Marshes on December 16th.

## Pratincole sp. *Glareola* sp.

**Status**: rare vagrant.

A pratincole was seen flying over Q. Mother Res heading north-west. This is the third record of an unidentified pratincole in the London Area with the others being in 1948 and 1971; there have also been two records of Collared Pratincole in 1983 and 2005.

**Bucks**: Q. Mother Res, one on May 11th (CDRH).

## Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

**Status**: regular, but scarce, passage migrant and winter visitor.

It was a poor year for this species with 38 birds seen; though this trumps the 22 in both 2015 and 2016, it pales into insignificance compared with over 1,000 birds recorded in 1993 and 1999. The peak site was Gallions Reach with four records involving six birds.

Four were seen in January: one at Purfleet on 14th, singles at Gallions Reach and Q. Mother Res the next day and one at Staines Res on 29th. Two were noted at Regent's Park on February 25th, the same day one was at Q. Mother Res. Four were seen in March, with one at Staines Res on 18th, two at Walthamstow Wetlands on 22nd and one past Gallions Reach on 23rd. Spring passage was distinctly average, with the six April records all single adults including one at Regent's Park on 3rd, Amwell NR on 5th and a lingerer, which died, at KGV Res from 28th to May 4th. Three adults flying downriver at Gallions Reach on May 2nd was the largest group of the month; all other records were of singles, with the last being one at Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) on 26th. The only June record was an adult at KGVI Res on 2nd. A juvenile at Rainham Marshes on August 10th was the sole autumn record. The year ended with adults in the roost at Hilfield Park Res on November 12th and December 20th, and on December 11th, seven at Rainham Marshes and a 1st-winter at Q. Mother Res.

**Kittiwake monthly records**

| Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of birds | 4 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 9 | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | 9 |

**In Lond**: Regent's Park, two on Feb 25th and one on Apr 3rd.

## Sabine's Gull *Xema sabini*

**Status**: rare autumn vagrant.

It was another good year, with two adults, both in autumn. These are the 13th and 14th records since 2000, while remarkably the two sites where they were found have a monopoly of records of the species since 2014.

**Sabine's Gull records 2000-2017: 14 records, 16 or 17 birds**

| Year | 2000 | 2003 | 2007 | 2009 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2016 | 2017 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of records | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| No. of birds | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4-5 | 1 | 2 | 2 |

**Bucks**: Q. Mother Res, adult summer on Sep 10th (CDRH).
**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands, adult summer on Aug 9th (PRA *et al*).

## Bonaparte's Gull *Chroicocephalus philadelphia*

**Status**: rare vagrant.

The fifth London record continues the amazing run of this BBRC description species in the London Area, since the first two in 2012. Initially found at Creekmouth, Barking, this year's individual then commuted between there, Rainham Marshes and Crossness. Like this year's bird, the first was seen at Crossness and Barking and was joined by a second at Crossness. The third and fourth birds were at Crossness and Staines Res respectively. All five records have been between May and July. Although there has been an upsurge in national records, London's recent run of this Nearctic species is remarkable.

**Essex**: Creekmouth, Barking, 1st-summer intermittently from May 14th-23rd (PH *et al*). Rainham Marshes, 1st-summer from May 16th-17th & 20th (SB, MJ, HV) (same as Creekmouth, Barking bird).
**Kent**: Crossness, 1st-summer intermittently from May 14th-20th (JT *et al*) (same as bird above).

## Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

**Status**: very common winter visitor and passage migrant, increasing breeder.

The most regularly encountered of London's gulls. There were at least 804 breeding pairs from 12 sites (compared with 795 pairs from 12 sites in 2016 and 556 pairs from nine sites in 2015), with 248 pairs at the Rye Meads colony (289 pairs in 2016 and 185 pairs in 2015). The overall number of pairs recorded is slightly up on last year, and the species continues to consolidate itself as a breeding species. There were only 14 pairs in 2000.

The highest count was 22,900 flying over Hogsmill SW on January 21st (compared with the 2016 and 2015 peak counts of 18,300 and 14,500 at the same site) with 76 counts of 2,000 or more birds (63 in 2016 and 43 in 2015), 75% of these coming from Hogsmill SW from a single dedicated observer. Hilfield Park Res and Rainham Marshes were the only other sites to host counts of 5,000 or more birds. Leucistic birds were at Beddington Farmlands, Hilfield Park Res, Island Barn Res, Queen Mary Res and Walton Res (Knight &

*This Black-headed Gull was one of many on a frozen pond in late January.*
*(Jonathan Lethbridge)*

Bessborough) and colour-ringed individuals from Denmark, Germany, Norway, Poland and the UK were noted. Below are peak counts for each sector along with breeding pairs.

**Essex**: Rainham Marshes, 5,000 on Feb 23rd.
**Herts**: Amwell NR (91). Hilfield Park Res (33); 8,000 on Oct 7th. Maple Lodge NR (18). Rye Meads (248). Seventy Acres Lake (10), 12 young. Stocker's Lake (65).
**Middx**: Broadwater Lake (40), 110 young. Staines Res (71); 1,000 on Apr 6th & 21st.
**Bucks**: Q. Mother Res, 600+ on Nov 2nd. Wraysbury GP (5), 12 young.
**Kent**: Crossness, 1,346 on Jul 31st.
**Surrey**: Hogsmill SW, 22,900 on Jan 21st. Leg O Mutton NR (5). London Wetland Centre (42). Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) (176).
**In Lond**: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, 758 on Feb 8th.

## Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

**Status**: regular passage migrant, occasional in summer and winter.

It was a poor year with 165 birds reported (following 203 in 2016 and 189 in 2015), with 81% of the year's total reported in March, April and May. Peak counts of ten came from Rainham Marshes on May 18th, Staines Res on April 23rd and 30th, and Wraysbury GP on March 27th. The occurrence of this species in London is largely dependent on drizzle and easterly winds in spring and early autumn, which failed to materialise in both periods this year.

**Little Gull monthly records**

| Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of birds | 1 | 1 | 56 | 50 | 27 | 1 | - | 8 | 5 | 12 | 0 | 4 |
| No. of sites | 1 | 1 | 11 | 9 | 6 | 1 | - | 3 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 1 |

There were singles at Rainham Marshes on January 31st and February 9th, before two at Tyttenhanger GP and four at Walthamstow Wetlands, both on March 11th. The March total significantly increased on 27th when 29 were recorded, including ten at Wraysbury GP, nine at London Wetland Centre and six at Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough), while eight were at Staines Res the next day with one to three birds recorded at a further four sites until the month's end. April passage was dominated by birds at Staines Res throughout the month, peaking at ten on 23rd and 30th; elsewhere in April, just singles were reported apart from two at Hilfield Park Res on 3rd, seven at KGV Res on 9th and two at Q. Mother Res on 30th. May records were typified by small groups of between one and four birds on the West London reservoirs until 10th, elsewhere two were at KGV Res on 9th and ten past Rainham Marshes on 18th. One at Beddington Farmlands on June 7th was the final spring sighting.

Between August 15th and October 28th, 25 birds were recorded. The highest count was ten flying north at Bexley on October 21st. Most records came from Staines Res and Hilfield Park Res. In August, Staines Res had one on 15th, two from 23rd to 24th, and one on 30th. A first-winter roosted at Hilfield Park Res intermittently from October 3rd to 27th. Otherwise one or two were seen at a further six sites.

The only records after October were at Rainham Marshes in December with three on 11th and a 1st-winter on 29th.

*A few lucky observers saw this rare Laughing Gull at Rainham in May. (Alan Shearman)*

## Laughing Gull *Leucophaeus atricilla*

**Status**: rare vagrant.

This bird was at first thought to be a Franklin's Gull but photos of it in flight were good enough to determine its real identity. It was first seen late morning, relocated on the river briefly and then on the landfill. Unfortunately for the many birders who would have liked to have seen it, it was not seen again. It is the third record of this Nearctic gull in the London Area following singles at Amwell NR and Hilfield Park Res both in 2006. There was a national influx of around 75 birds during 2005 and 2006 but usually just one or two are seen each year (*British Birds* 110: 588).

**Essex**: Rainham Marshes, adult on May 9th (AGs, ASh *et al*).

## Mediterranean Gull *Ichthyaetus melanocephalus*

**Status**: regular winter visitor, passage migrant and bred this year for first time.

It was a decent year for the species, with slightly increased numbers overall compared with 2016 mainly due to a strong spring passage. A peak count of 21 birds at Beddington Farmlands on April 22nd involved three flocks all heading north (compared with high counts of 17 and seven in 2016 and 2015 respectively). There were 50 counts of three or more birds from 14 sites during the year, an increase compared with previous years due to an excellent April passage and several counts of three or more birds in the Hilfield Park Res and Q. Mother Res roosts. However, there were no Inner London records for the first time since 2005.

January to March numbers typically compared favourably to those in November and December, with most of these relating to birds in gull roosts. There were no wintering returnees to London's parks, with the Burgess Park bird failing to show for what would have been its tenth winter.

Spring passage was largely confined to a two-week window from April 15th to 28th, with peak counts of 18, 21 and 13 at Beddington Farmlands on 21st, 22nd and 25nd respectively, 18 at Gallions Reach on 22nd, and 14 at Swanscombe Marshes on both 14th and 15th, with eight counts of five or more birds during the period. A pair on a nest at Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) in April and May had their nest predated by a fox, which ended what would have been London's first successful breeding record of the species.

The first juvenile of the year was at QEII Res on July 6th (compared with July 20th in 2016 and July 10th in 2015) with another 13 seen by the end of August, including two Dutch metal-ringed birds on the Greenwich Peninsula on August 13th.

Records during the second winter period were relatively scarce, now following the annual trend, with high counts being four at both Hilfield Park Res on November 1st and 29th, and Q. Mother Res on December 25th.

*Wanstead Flats, with so many small gulls, can be a good place to pick out rarer species such as Mediterranean Gull. (Richard Bonser)*

There was an Irish ringed adult at Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) in April and an Essex-ringed adult at Pymmes Park in December. The table below shows the number of individuals recorded each month and the number of sites.

| **Mediterranean Gull records** | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of birds | 17 | 29 | 20 | 133 | 22 | 18 | 28 | 13 | 11 | 13 | 16 | 18 |
| No. of sites | 12 | 21 | 15 | 17 | 12 | 10 | 21 | 12 | 8 | 9 | 12 | 11 |

## Common Gull *Larus canus*

**Status**: common winter visitor and passage migrant.

Numbers of this species remained relatively consistent with previous years. There were 53 counts of 100 or more (from 21 sites), compared with 46 (from 18 sites) in 2016 and 53 (from 21 sites) in 2015. There were 11 counts of 500 or more birds (compared with 12 in 2016 and two in 2015) – peaking at 1,000 at Hilfield Park Res on March 4th and 5th and December 18th.

May and June records were largely lingering 1st-summers, with a flock of 16 at Q. Mother Res on May 2nd being unusual. Birds started returning fairly late, with the first double-figure count coming from Cuffley on August 16th and Roding Valley Meadows NR

*Numbers of wintering Common Gull on Wanstead Flats are frequently impressive, with a good possibility of ringed individuals. (Jonathan Lethbridge)*

on August 19th, while the year's first juvenile was at Rainham Marshes on the early date of July 11th (compared with July 24th in 2016 and August 1st in 2015). Below are details of peak counts from sites with counts of 100 or more.

**Essex**: Fairlop Waters, 103 on Mar 12th. Rainham Marshes, 180 on Jan 26th. Wanstead Flats, 750 on Mar 1st. William Girling Res, 102 on Dec 13th.

**Herts**: Amwell NR, 310 on Jan 8th. Brookmans Park, 280 on Feb 26th. Hilfield Park Res, 1,000 on Mar 4th & 5th and Dec 18th. Rye Meads, 200 on Jan 28th. Tyttenhanger GP, 136 on Feb 18th.

**Middx**: Brent Res, 310 on Jan 1st. Horsenden Hill, 231 on Feb 2nd. Totteridge Valley, 300 on Mar 10th. Yeading Brook Meadows, 200 on Feb 26th. Woodberry Wetlands, 100 on Jan 27th.

**Kent**: Chipstead Lake, 200 on Jan 24th. Sevenoaks WR, 155 on Mar 11th.

**Surrey**: Richmond Park, 241 on Mar 9th. Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough), 620 on Jan 23rd.

**In Lond**: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, 100 on Jan 12th. Victoria Park, 140 on Mar 6th.

## Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

**Status**: fairly common winter visitor in small numbers, less common at other seasons; has bred recently.

It appeared to be a decent year for this species. Following breeding in 2013 and 2016, a pair almost certainly bred near Q. Mary Res, with consistent territoriality noted several times in spring and an adult seen with dependent juveniles on August 13th. The nest was probably at the adjacent Ashford Common Water Treatment Works. The year high was 183 at Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) on January 7th (160 in 2016 and 155 in 2015). There were 29 counts of over 50 birds (22 in 2016 and 26 in 2015) though observer coverage does provide bias (for example 24 of these counts over 50 birds were from a sole observer in the Surrey sector). Danish and Norwegian birds, which bear black rings, were noted at several sites during the year. Listed below are high counts for sites within each sector.

**Essex**: Rainham Marshes, 86 on Jan 26th. Wanstead Flats, 30 on Dec 17th.
**Herts**: Amwell NR, 94 on Dec 15th.
**Middx**: R Thames: Richmond to Teddington, 80 on Nov 18th.
**Bucks**: Q. Mother Res, 32 on Dec 26th.
**Kent**: Crayford Marshes, 25 on Jul 29th.
**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands, 62 on Dec 28th. Island Barn Res, 134 on Jan 2nd. Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), 183 on Jan 7th.
**In Lond**: Rotherhithe, eight on Nov 12th.

## Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

**Status**: scarce winter visitor in varying numbers, more regular in cold weather.

A good year for the species, with at least five birds seen (compared with three in 2016 and one in 2015), all within the first half of the year. The mobile nature of London's gulls, and the distinctiveness of this species, meant that specific individuals were easily tracked from site to site, particularly in Surrey where on certain dates one bird could be seen at three sites. A juvenile lingered at Beddington Farmlands until the exceptionally late date of May 23rd, and provided a spectacle as it followed the Women's Boat Race up the River Thames on April 2nd.

**Essex**: Creekmouth, Barking, juv on Jan 22nd. Leyton, juv on Jan 21st & 28th. Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, juv on Jan 22nd (same as Leyton bird). Rainham Marshes, 2nd-winter and juv on Jan 26th. Walthamstow FB, juv from Jan 28th-30th (same as Leyton bird).
**Middx**: Hammersmith, juv on Mar 27th and Apr 2nd. Q. Mary Res, juv on Jan 22nd and Feb 11th. Twickenham, juv on Mar 27th (same as Hammersmith bird).
**Bucks**: Q. Mother Res, juv on Feb 8th, 19th & 20th. Wraysbury GP, juv on Feb 19th (presumed to be Q. Mother Res bird).
**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands, juv intermittently from Jan 2nd to May 23rd, and another juv on Mar 4th. Island Barn Res, juv intermittently from Jan 5th to Mar 14th, with two juvs present on Mar 4th & 14th. London Wetland Centre, juv from Mar 23rd to Apr 29th. QE II Res, juv in roost on Jan 13th & 29th, and one over on Mar 16th. Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), juv sporadically from Feb 8th to Apr 23rd.

## Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoides*

**Status**: scarce winter visitor, more regular in cold weather.

It was another good year for this species, with at least ten birds recorded (compared with 14 in 2016 and nine in 2015). A juvenile that lingered into June was noteworthy, with this bird recorded with certainty at five sites, illustrating how easy duplication of birds can be across London. Surrey again dominated the records, and at least seven birds were seen during the first winter period while three were recorded in November and December.



**Essex**: Rainham Marshes, juv on Apr 17th. Thames Barrier Park, juv on Jun 4th.
**Herts**: Hilfield Park Res, juv on Feb 26th and Mar 5th, and another juv on Dec 29th. Tyttenhanger GP, juv from Apr 24th-25th.
**Bucks**: Q. Mother Res, juv on Feb 12th and 3rd-winter intermittently from Mar 27th to Apr 5th.
**Kent**: Crossness, one on May 16th.
**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands, juv Jan 4th to May 31st and juv from Dec 16th-21st. Coombe Road PF, Croydon, juv on Dec 25th. Island Barn Res, juv intermittently in roost Jan 31st to Feb 15th and another juv on Feb 10th, 2nd-winter from Nov 30th to Dec 4th and juv intermittently from Dec 6th-23rd. London Wetland Centre, juv intermittently from Mar 5th to Apr 2nd. Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), juv in roost on Feb 15th, Apr 25th and May 10th.

## Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

**Status**: common, most regular in winter; breeds in small numbers.

This species breeds in small numbers but is heavily under-recorded due to the inaccessibility of the breeding sites on rooftops. There were 12 breeding pairs noted this year, in comparison to four in 2016 and 19 in 2015.

There were 93 counts of over 1,000 birds (106 in 2016 and 64 in 2015), with every one of these coming from Surrey. Observers from Beddington Farmlands and Hogsmill SW continue to submit regular counts of the species, while once again there was a dearth of counts from the previous stronghold of Rainham Marshes. Peak counts were 10,000 birds on three December dates – consistent with the same total for 2016 and 10,520 in 2015. Leucistic birds were seen at Beddington Farmlands on September 21st and Island Barn Res on December 22nd.

Listed below are all confirmed breeding records (no. of pairs/nests in brackets), as well as peak counts of over 500 birds.

**Essex**: Mill Meads (1). Purfleet (1). Walthamstow Wetlands (3), six young.
**Herts**: Amwell NR, 540 on Dec 29th. Borehamwood (1). North Watford (4), 1 young.
**Middx**: KGVI Res, 850 on Apr 7th. Q. Mary Res, 1,000 on Mar 25th. Staines Res, 800 on Apr 21st. West Harrow (1), 2 young.
**Surrey**: Banstead Wood, 600 on Oct 29th. Beddington Farmlands, 10,000+ on Dec 16th, 21st & 30th. Croydon (1), young in nest. Hogsmill SW, 6,400 on Jan 21st. London Wetland Centre, 520 on May 4th. Watermead Lane, 5,965 on Jan 7th.

## Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans*

**Status**: scarce visitor mainly in winter.

London continues to have an excellent reputation for the species, being one of the best places to see it in a national context. It was another record year with an estimated 100 birds (previous highest totals were 90 in 2016 and 78 in 2015). The general increase in

records is due to more of the capital's birders being aware of the species' salient features, while the westward range expansion on the continent continues too. The largest count of the year was six at Beddington Farmlands on March 6th (2016 high count was 14).

The first winter period was significantly better than the second this year, potentially due to lack of easterlies and cold continental weather during the latter part of the year. Records focused around half a dozen localities, largely where there is sufficient observer interest and large numbers of gulls. There was a sharp increase in Inner London records this year, due to concerted observer effort rather than natural increase, while the Greenwich Peninsula and Thames Barrier now seem to be recording the species with increasing regularity, with counts of over four birds here on five dates in January and February. The following table shows the number of different individuals recorded each month at favoured sites.

**Caspian Gull monthly records**

| | | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EX | Rainham Marshes | 5 | 2 | 1 | - | 3 | - | 2 | - | - | 3 | - | 3 |
| | Thames Barrier | 12 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 1 | - | 2 | - | 1 | 2 | 1 | - |
| HR | Amwell NR | 3 | 5 | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | - | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| BU | Q. Mother Res | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | 3 |
| KT | Crayford/Dartford | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3 |
| SY | Beddington Farmlands | 6 | 4 | 8 | 1 | 1 | - | - | 1 | 2 | - | 2 | 1 |

*Caspian Gull. (Richard Bonser)*

London's gulls are highly mobile, with some Caspian Gulls identifiable as the same individual based on certain plumage traits - an exceptional example of this being a first-winter at Rotherhithe on January 17th that was seen on the Dutch coast in November 2016. There were several ringed individuals too, with at least six from Germany, but also singles from Poland and Ukraine. A ringed German bird in Rotherhithe on February 18th was an obvious Caspian/Herring Gull hybrid from a colony where interbreeding is known to take place. Listed below is a summary for each sector and all records for Inner London.

**Essex**: Reported from ten sites (Creekmouth, Eagle Pond, Gallions Reach, KGV Res, Lion Gorge, Lyle Park/Thames Barrier Park, Purfleet, Rainham Marshes, Thorndon CP North, Walthamstow Wetlands).

**Herts**: Reported from four sites (Amwell NR, Hilfield Park Res, Rye Meads, Tyttenhanger GP).

**Middx**: Reported from ten sites (Alexandra Park, Brent Res, Chiswick, East India Dock Basin, Fulham Reach, Hammersmith, KGVI Res, Q. Mary Res, Saunders Ness, Staines Res).

**Bucks**: Reported from three sites (Colnbrook, Horton GP, Q. Mother Res).

**Kent**: Reported from seven sites (Belvedere, Crayford/Dartford Marshes, Crossness, Greenhithe, Greenwich Peninsula, Swanscombe Marshes, Thamesmead).

**Surrey**: Reported from ten sites (Beddington Farmlands, Chiswick Eyot, Hogsmill SW, Island Barn Res, Kingston-upon-Thames, London Wetland Centre, QEII Res, Waddon Ponds, Walton Res complex, Walton-on-Thames).

**In Lond**: Reported from two sites. Rotherhithe, 1st-winter on Jan 19th and two 1st-winters on Feb 26th. Westminster, one on Sep 16th.

## Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*

**Status**: regular late summer and autumn visitor, widely reported in smaller numbers at other times of year.

This species appears to be declining in London, with another poor year and again just one count of over 50 birds. The annual high count on August 3rd was 52 at Rainham Marshes and c50 at Crayford Marshes so may relate to the same birds (compared with 51 in 2016 and 154 in 2015). Away from the River Thames, the species becomes significantly scarcer, with the maximum counts for Surrey and Hertfordshire being five at Beddington Farmlands on March 3rd and four at Amwell NR on January 17th. Six birds seen together in Rotherhithe on August 22nd is an Inner London record count.

Observer coverage can and does distort year-on-year records. This year, for example, there were considerably more Inner London records but this is likely due to concerted observer coverage in Rotherhithe rather than an obvious increase. The pattern of a late summer/early autumn peak with a few birds present throughout the year remains despite the continuing reductions in overall numbers.

**Yellow-legged Gull monthly maxima**

| | | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EX | Rainham Marshes | 7 | 3 | 12 | 1 | 1 | 15 | 40 | 52 | 26 | 16 | 10 | 12 |
| | Thames Barrier | 1 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 13 | 4 | - | 5 | 5 | 4 |
| BU | Q. Mother/Wraysbury Res | 2 | 2 | 1 | - | 1 | 3 | 27 | 16 | 24 | 2 | - | 1 |
| KT | Crayford/Dartford | 1 | - | - | - | - | 15 | 40 | 50 | 6 | 8 | 1 | - |
| | Greenwich | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | - | 4 | 4 | - | 1 | - | - |

*Yellow-legged Gull, Wanstead. (Nick Croft)*

**In Lond**: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, singles on Aug 30th and Nov 1st. Lambeth Bridge, adult on May 11th. Regent's Park, singles on Jul 31st, Oct 19th & 26th. Rotherhithe, one on Feb 25th, three on Apr 16th, July peak of three on 22nd, August peak of six on Aug 22nd, one on Oct 26th and two on Nov 12th. St James's Park, 1st-winter on Jan 13th. Vauxhall Bridge, two on Oct 28th. Westminster, two on Sep 16th.

## Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

**Status**: common, most regular in autumn and winter; breeds in small but increasing numbers.

There were 29 confirmed breeding pairs with 20 young noted (22 pairs in 2016 and 51 pairs in 2015). However, this is likely a significant underestimate of London's breeding population due to the inaccessibility of rooftop breeding locations as begging, recently fledged, juveniles are found across London's water bodies in late summer, suggesting it is a more common breeder.

The three counts of 300 or more birds all came from Amwell NR: the previous two years' high counts came from Beddington Farmlands. However, the annual high count of 500 was again down on the previous two years (570 in 2016 and 1,150 in 2015) though the 23 counts of 100 or more birds was an increase on the 16 in 2016. Listed below are all confirmed breeding records (no. of pairs/nests in brackets), as well as peak counts of over 100 birds.

**Essex**: Orsett Fen, 140 on Sep 1st. Roding Valley Meadows NR, 180 on Aug 6th. Walthamstow Wetlands (10); 126 on Apr 10th. William Girling Res, 119 on Dec 13th.



**Herts**: Amwell NR, 500 on Oct 4th. Hilfield Park Res, 150 on Mar 26th. London Colney (1), 1 young. North Watford (4), 3 young.
**Middx**: East India Dock Basin (1), 3 young. Tottenham Marshes (2), 3 young.
**Bucks**: Q. Mother Res (3), 2 young.
**Kent**: Woolwich (3), 5 young.
**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands, 116 on Mar 16th. London Wetland Centre, 123 on May 23rd. Molesey Industrial Estate (1), 1 young.
**In Lond**: Soho (3). Southwark (1), 2 young.

## Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis*

**Status**: uncommon passage migrant, often in small flocks.

Spring passage commenced on March 23rd with one at Q. Mother Res, the earliest arrival date since 2013 when March 11th saw the first returning bird. The next were at Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) and Staines Res on March 28th before three passed through London Wetland Centre on 30th. These were seen later at Q. Mother Res. On 31st, one at Q. Mother Res was joined by two seen earlier at Staines Res. April began with two at both Staines Res and KGV Res on 1st, these sites attracted four each on 9th, when seven were at Q. Mother Res. Staines Res had a further two on April 10th then one on 13th. Other April records included singles at Q. Mother Res on 12th, Rainham Marshes on 15th and Woolwich Ferry on 18th. Two visited Rainham Marshes on April 22nd, the month closing with a lone bird at Swanscombe Marshes on 28th. Passage extended quietly into May, with one at Purfleet on 1st then two at Deptford on 2nd and at Walthamstow Wetlands on 7th. Rainham Marshes had singles on 10th and 14th. On 18th, there was one at Staines Res followed by one seen at both Island Barn Res and Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) on 19th and one at Buckland SP on 20th. Spring passage ended with two at Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) on June 1st and one at KGV Res on 4th giving a total of 51 birds (46 in 2016).

The first returning bird was on June 30th at Rainham Marshes. It was followed by three there on July 6th, four on 13th and two on 14th and 19th. The only other July record was one over London Wetland Centre on 27th. These were followed in August by two at Amwell NR on 1st then singles at Q. Mary Res on 10th, Staines Res on 14th, Regent's Park on 16th, Staines Res again on 17th and four at Rainham Marshes on 23rd and 30th. On 31st, the first two juveniles were at Crossness. In September, there were 11 on 1st and two on 3rd at Gallions Reach and an adult and a juvenile at Q. Mother Res on 17th. On 24th and 25th, there were 10+ and six at Gallions Reach and seven and 11 at Rainham Marshes, which may have involved the same birds heading downriver. This brings the autumn passage to at least 65 birds.

## Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

**Status**: uncommon spring and autumn passage migrant.

Two at Walthamstow Wetlands on April 9th equalled the earliest ever arrival date, sharing the honour with 1999. The first dates since 2000 have ranged from April 11th to 28th with the average being the 21st. The next birds to show up, singles at Gallions Reach and Rainham Marshes on April 21st, were far more typical. One was at Staines Res from

24th-25th and another visited KGV Res on 28th. April 30th saw two at Staines Res and one at Rainham Marshes. May started with one at Staines Res on 1st, followed by singles at Rainham Marshes on 3rd and 5th. The final two birds of the spring passage were at Staines Res on May 6th and London Wetland Centre on May 12th. Despite the head start, a total of 14 birds made it the weakest spring movement since 2014 when there were only six or seven (19 in 2016 and 17 in 2015).

There were only four or five returning birds: singles at Island Barn Res on July 1st and at Q. Mother Res and Staines Res on 24th, which could well have involved the same bird, and KGV Res on 27th. The last for the year was one at Rainham Marshes on August 30th. This was the poorest return passage since 2013 when there was just one returning bird (20 in 2016 and 15 in 2015).

## Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

**Status**: rare passage migrant.

After a blank year in 2016, one bird this year was a return to the norm: since 2000, the average has been about one a year. It stayed long enough to attract a crowd and for its age to be established, its reduced tail streamers indicating a 3rd-calendar-year bird.

**Roseate Tern records 2000-2017: 16 records, 18 birds**

| Year | 2001 | 2002 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2015 | 2017 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of records | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| No. of birds | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 1 |

**Middx**: Staines Res, one on Jul 1st (RWa *et al*).

## Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

**Status**: common summer visitor and passage migrant.

This species returned to the London Area in late March, the first being seen at Staines Res on 28th. It took until April 3rd for any site to produce a double-figure count, Crossness managing ten birds that day. A new peak of 23 was reached at Rainham Marshes on April 11th, soon exceeded at Crossness with 41 on April 14th. The main passage took place over the second half of April, with counts from Crossness of 75 on 16th and 155 there two days later, followed by a high of 210 at Barking Bay on 22nd, then 104 at Rainham Marshes on 30th. By early May, many birds were settled in and passage simmered down, though reasonable concentrations included 52 at Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) on 4th and counts from Crossness of 60 on 9th, 96 on 11th and 100+ on 14th. Figures later in May included 80 at Crossness on 19th and 130 there on 29th, while Staines Res and Rainham Marshes both produced 60 on 23rd.

There were considered to be at least 118 breeding pairs (135—137 in 2016). Breeding was reported from two sites where there have been no recent breeding records (Aldenham CP and Pynesfield GP). No breeding reports were received from four sites where they bred last year (Blackwell Basin, Broadwater Lake, Brook Farm and Thorney CP).

The start of autumn passage is impossible to determine with breeding birds being present at many sites. The highest July figure was 98 at Staines Res on 28th, which may have included some returning birds as well as juveniles bred on site. Early August counts

*Common Tern. (Tony Brown)*

included 70 at Crayford Marshes on 3rd and 105 at Staines Res on 4th and it was probably around this time that birds started to filter through on their return movement. There were 70 at Rainham Marshes on 10th while smaller numbers pushed through a variety of water bodies and along the R Thames throughout the month. The year's highest count was 275 at Rainham Marshes on August 30th. Regular sightings continued throughout September but numbers were much lower and reports mostly involved small groups, the biggest being 16 at Staines Res on 6th. Late birds in October included singles at Gallions Reach on 4th, London Wetland Centre and QEII Res on 7th, Kew Pond on 10th and Rainham Marshes on 21st.

Below are breeding numbers (pairs shown in brackets) together with all records for Inner London.

**Essex**: Walthamstow Wetlands (6), six young seen.
**Herts**: Aldenham CP (1), two fledged. Amwell NR (1), one fledged. Hilfield Park Res (1) none fledged. Pynesfield GP (1), one fledged. Rye Meads (26). Stocker's Lake (12).
**Middx**: Brent Res (4), two fledged. Ruislip Lido (2), two fledged. Staines Res (c28), only three known to have fledged.
**Bucks**: Q. Mother Res (3+), two fledged.
**Kent**: Greenwich Ecology Park (3+), 11 young.
**Surrey**: Holmethorpe SP (1). Leg O Mutton NR (5), six young. London Wetland Centre, pair present but not considered to have bred. Richmond Park (5), eight young. Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) (19), 11 fledged.
**In Lond**: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, one at Long Water on Jul 30th. Pimlico Gardens,

one flew downriver on May 1st. London Zoo, one flew S on Aug 5th. Regent's Park, one on May 1st. Rotherhithe, singles at Surrey Water on Apr 30th and at Greenland Dock on Jul 8th then five flew S through Greenland Dock on Jul 22nd.

## Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

**Status**: regular spring and autumn passage migrant, often in small flocks with numbers varying annually.

Spring passage got off to an early start with one at Rainham Marshes on April 1st, although the next birds were not until 15th with singles at Amwell NR and Rainham Marshes; by 18th, there were 34 at Staines Res. During the rest of April, small numbers were at Amwell NR, Brent Res, KGV Res, Staines Res, Walthamstow Wetlands and the Walton Res complex. The month ended with larger numbers: 33 at Creekmouth, Barking and 27 at Rainham Marshes on April 30th. Movement continued in May but the peak count was just six; these included records at new sites such as Broadwater Lake, Hilfield Park Res, Sevenoaks WR, Stansted Innings and Wraysbury GP. After two records on May 20th, there were no more until two at Rainham Marshes on 31st.

Unusually there were four June records: a first-summer on 8th at Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough), three at Broadwater Lake on 16th, one at Staines Res from 24th-26th and an adult at Q. Mother Res on 25th.

There were no more until July 24th with three at Q. Mother Res, eight at Staines Res and three at Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough). These were followed by singles at London Wetland Centre on 27th and Crayford Marshes on 31st. In August, there were seven at Rainham Marshes on 9th, followed by one at Staines Res on 15th. Numbers rose dramatically on 17th with 121 at Rainham Marshes and 88 at Gallions Reach. Numbers at Rainham Marshes dropped to 23 on 18th, but there were 62 there the next day and also five at Crossness. Gallions Reach had 53 on 21st, when a juvenile visited Staines Res. There were six at Gallions Reach on 22nd and 41 at Creekmouth, Barking on 23rd. After one at Rainham Marshes on 28th, the month closed with a spectacular 325 there on 30th, and there were also 56 at Staines Res and seven at Gallions Reach the same day. The only September records were one at Staines Res on 4th, 11 at Rainham Marshes on 8th, a juvenile at Q. Mother Res from 11th-14th and two at Gallions Reach on 25th. There were three records of singles in October: at Gallions Reach on 3rd, over Dulwich Park on 11th and at Gallions Reach on 14th – a typical last date.

## White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*

**Status**: rare vagrant.

There were two records this year, which has happened several times recently (see table below). It was, however, the first time that three birds were seen together. The fact that one of these was a 1st-summer, an age very seldom encountered in Europe, made it an extraordinary year for the species.

**White-winged Black Tern records 2000-2017: 16 records, 18 birds**

| Year | 2000 | 2004 | 2006 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2017 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of records | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| No. of birds | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 |

*White-winged Black Tern is a rare bird in London with only a few records. This bird was at Tyttenhanger Gravel Pits. (Alan Reynolds)*

**Herts**: Tyttenhanger GP, adult from Sep 12th-17th (SBl *et al*).

**Middx**: Staines Res, two adults and a 1st-summer on May 23rd, the latter staying to May 24th (DP *et al*).

## Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

**Status**: regular spring and autumn passage migrant, with numbers varying annually with weather conditions and breeding success on the continent.

The first arrival was one at KGV Res on April 18th. This was closely followed by two at Rainham Marshes and one at Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) on 21st, one at Amwell NR on 23rd, followed on 24th by six at Staines Res and two at Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth). There was one at Staines Res on 29th, with four there the following day, when two were at Creekmouth, Barking, three at Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) and one at QE II Res. The most intense passage was in early May with 15 at Staines Res on 1st, as well as two at both Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough) and Amwell NR and one at Rainham Marshes. On 2nd, Staines Res and Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough) had one each with the Staines one still there on 3rd when six were at KGV Res. One lingered at KGV Res to 5th, when singles were also at Amwell NR and Hyde Park & Kensington Gardens and six at Staines Res. The six at Staines Res stayed overnight, as did the Amwell NR bird and May 6th also saw a new bird at Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough). On 7th, two were at Staines Res and another was at Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth). Staines Res had four on 8th but

this dropped back to two the next day. Three were at Tyttenhanger GP on 12th, when Staines Res had one. There were then singles on 14th at Q. Mother Res, Staines Res and Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth). The final two birds of the spring were at Rainham Marshes on May 27th.

The return movement started with one at Staines Res on July 22nd and three more there on 26th. The next were four at the same site on August 14th. Indeed, Staines Res dominated much of August owing to the enticing condition of its drained South Basin, with records each day from 22nd, including the autumn's peak count for London of 14 on 30th. Away from Staines Res, August records involved singles at KGV Res on 15th (the first juvenile of the year), at Creekmouth, Barking on 23rd and at Q. Mother Res on 24th with 11 at Rainham Marshes on 30th. September started with singles at Swanscombe Marshes on 1st, and at KGV Res and Island Barn Res on 3rd. Rainham Marshes had what was probably the same lingering individual from 12th-17th. Two were at Walthamstow Wetlands on 20th, followed by one at Staines Res from 21st-22nd. On 24th, there was one at KGV Res and three at Q. Mother Res. On 25th there was one at Q. Mother Res and another at Staines Res. The last of the year were two at KGV Res on 26th.

## Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

**Status**: regular but scarce autumn migrant; rare in other seasons.

It was an average year for the species, with two autumn records. Both were away from the R Thames.

**Middx**: Staines Res, juv W on Sep 14th (PRA).
**Bucks**: Q. Mother Res, pale morph adult N on Sep 25th (CDRH).

## Common Guillemot *Uria aalge*

**Status**: scarce autumn and winter visitor, subject to occasional winter influxes.

Two records this year make it the tenth consecutive year in which this species has appeared in the London Area, although there has been no significant influx since the 90+ in 1986. The locations were typical but the months were not: the first January record since 1997 and the first August record since 2012.

**Essex**: Gallions Reach, one on Jan 29th (GAJ), Rainham Marshes, one on Aug 29th (FS).

## Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*

**Status**: abundant feral resident.

Only 285 sites recorded this species in 2017, which is disappointing following the huge total of 538 sites in the previous year. It should, however, be noted that at some of these sites observers have been particularly industrious in making regular records of the numbers of this frequently overlooked species, which is very welcome. Large flocks were also notable by their absence, with only South Croydon and Hyde Park & Kensington Gardens recording totals of over 400. Confirmed breeding proved as elusive as ever, with only nine sites reporting it although possible/probable breeding was noted at a further 42. The Breeding Bird Survey for London recorded no significant changes over the past year: indeed, the population has been stable now for the last decade. Peak counts for sites with 100 or more are listed below.



**Essex**: Ilford, 200 on Sep 26th. Leyton Flats, 200 on Oct 11th. Rainham Marshes, 300 on Oct 13th. Wanstead, 100 on Dec 18th.
**Herts**: Blackbirds Farm, 133 on Sep 1st. Ellenbrook Fields, 120 on May 14th. Essendon, 100 on Nov 11th. Stanborough Lakes, 100+ on Mar 4th. Tyttenhanger GP, 250 on Sep 11th.
**Middx**: Eel Pie Island, 208 on Nov 4th. Forty Hall, 110+ on Dec 24th. Shepherd's Bush, 120+ on Mar 11th. Southgate, 107 on Oct 16th. West Harrow, 200+ on Jan 29th.
**Kent**: Darenth Lakes, 270 on Sep 4th. Erith Reach, 225+ on Nov 17th. Kelsey Park, 120+ on Dec 12th.
**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands, 100+ on Apr 8th. Canons Farm, 300+ on Sep 1st. Croydon, 150+ on Dec 12th. Hogsmill SW, 243 on Mar 14th. Holmethorpe SP, 370 on Oct 17th. London Wetland Centre, 113 on May 8th. New Malden, 200 on four separate dates. Richmond, 123 on Mar 20th. South Croydon, 431 on Oct 4th. South Norwood Lake, 107 on Jan 1st. Waddon Ponds, 150+ on Jul 3rd.
**In Lond**: Hammersmith Cemetery, 138 on Jan 14th. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, 420 on Nov 22nd. Limehouse, 209 on Apr 22nd. Marylebone, 100+ on Dec 19th. Paddington, 120+ on Jul 28th. Regent's Park, 100 on Aug 28th. St James's Park, 350+ on Nov 29th. Victoria Park, 150 on May 13th.

## Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

**Status**: breeding resident and passage migrant.

Although the number of sites recording this species showed only a marginal improvement over 2016 (from 412 to 438) there was a significant increase in breeding records. The number of sites recording confirmed or probable breeding rose from 45 to 128 and the number of breeding pairs at those sites also rose, a little less spectacularly, from 190 to 259. This is welcome news and lends support to the view that this species is increasing in the London Area, if in a slightly inconspicuous manner. In that context, the RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported birds in 23% of gardens in 2017 (19% in 2016 and 3% in 1995) provides further evidence, and the Breeding Bird Survey shows an increase of 13% in England from 2016-17.

**Stock Dove: sites and pairs**

| | Essex | Herts | Middx | Bucks | Kent | Surrey | In Lond | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sites | 69 | 68 | 98 | 11 | 67 | 111 | 15 | 438 |
| Sites with pairs | 14 | 24 | 39 | 0 | 10 | 36 | 5 | 128 |
| No. of pairs | 29 | 52 | 59 | 0 | 36 | 75 | 8 | 259 |

Below are breeding records for sites where five or more pairs were recorded (no. of pairs in brackets), plus a summary of records from Inner London sites and peak counts from sites with 50 or more birds.

**Essex**: Barking Park (5). Chigwell, 56 on Jul 15th. Mar Dyke Valley (5). Orsett Fen, 145 on Aug 6th. Rainham Marshes, 160+ on Jan 30th.
**Herts**: Rye Meads, 70 on Oct 28th. West Hyde, 100+ on Nov 5th. Wildhill, 51 on Oct 17th. Woodoaks Farm, Maple Cross, 110 on Feb 9th.
**Middx**: Home Park (15). Totteridge Valley, 76+ on Sep 2nd.
**Bucks**: Colnbrook, 80 on Nov 11th. Horton GP, 190 on Dec 2nd. Q. Mother Res, 120 on

Dec 2nd.

**Kent**: Foots Cray Meadows (12). Greenwich Park (12). Longfield Gallops, 86 on Jun 8th. Upper College Farm, 100 on Jun 28th.

**Surrey**: Banstead Wood (15). Barn Elms PF, 66 on May 4th. Bookham Common (16). Canons Farm (8); 200+ on Mar 24th. Headley Heath, 170 on Dec 22nd. Holmethorpe SP, 182 on Oct 19th. Kings Wood, 50 on May 11th. Morden Cemetery (12); 50 on Oct 1st & 18th. Priest Hill, 100 on Apr 24th.

**In Lond**: Holland Park (1). Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (2+). Mile End Park (1). Primrose Hill, passage on several days with 30 N on Jan 24th. Regent's Park, small numbers throughout the year. St James's Park (1). Victoria Park (3). Also recorded at Battersea Park, Brompton Cemetery, Burgess Park, New River Walk, Ranelagh Gardens, Southwark Park, Stave Hill and Westminster.

## Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

**Status**: abundant breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

This remains one of our commonest and most familiar species, although interestingly, the results of the Breeding Bird Survey for London show a decline of 12% from 2016-17: this figure, though, needs to be taken in the context of an increase of 47% overall in London from 1995-2016. The RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch for 2017 listed it as the fifth commonest garden bird. It was particularly encouraging that the number of sites recording the presence of birds either breeding or holding territories rose from 20 in 2016 to 154 in 2017, although in only a small number of these was breeding actually confirmed. The true number of sites holding breeding birds must of course be substantially higher.

The passage of birds over London in autumn, usually in a SW or S direction, is a familiar and often highly impressive sight. This movement began as usual in the middle of October, the first birds being seen on October 13th, and reached its peak a little earlier than last year with the bulk of birds going through in the last few days of October. Sites which recorded a total passage of more than 3,000 birds are listed below. Chafford Hundred was clearly the place to be: not only was a huge total of 49,300 birds seen on October 27th but this was followed on October 30th by an equally impressive 23,273. Unlike last year, there were no significant movements after the middle of November.

**Woodpigeon: highest autumn counts**

| Site | Total | No. of counts | Highest count (date) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Chafford Hundred | 84,942 | 6 | 49,300 (Oct 27th) |
| Wanstead Flats | 12,900 | 6 | 12,000 (Oct 27th) |
| Richmond Park | 9,630 | 6 | 4,050 (Oct 23rd) |
| Brook Farm, Upminster | 7,900 | 2 | 7,000 (Nov 5th) |
| Rainham Marshes | 6,340 | 6 | 3,250 (Oct 23rd) |
| Brent Res | 6,161 | 20 | 1,640 (Oct 27th) |
| Staines Moor | 5,904 | 3 | 3,717 (Oct 28th) |
| Barn Elms PF | 5,650 | 4 | 2,500 (Oct 30th) |
| Greenwich Park | 4,960 | 10 | 2,150 (Oct 28th) |
| Grays | 4,633 | 2 | 2,533 (Nov 13th) |
| Regent's Park & Primrose Hill | 3,204 | 7 | 1,400 (Oct 23rd) |



Also unlike last year, there were only two four-figure counts outside the autumn migration period: a flock of 1,000 at Canons Farm on July 8th and 1,000+ at Q. Mary GP on July 22nd.

## Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

**Status**: rare summer breeding visitor and scarce passage migrant.

Sadly, the tale gets worse. There were only 16 records (14 in spring and two in autumn) with 14 from Essex and one each from Hertfordshire and Surrey. The one bright spot (however faint) is that it is just possible that a pair might have bred at North Weald Bassett in Essex. It is sobering to realise that in 1957, when the first Collared Dove was recorded in London, Turtle Doves were still a widespread London breeding species.

The first bird of the year was one at North Weald Bassett on April 29th followed by one at Beddington Farmlands on 30th. In May, Rainham Marshes had singles on 4th, 7th, 14th, 29th and 31st. Birds were recorded as present at Tyttenhanger GP on May 14th and on the following day at KGV Res and 17th. A single at Brook Farm, Upminster on May 19th was followed by two birds in suitable breeding habitat at North Weald Bassett on May 24th: sadly, there was no further news of this pair. The last birds of spring were one at Woodford Green on June 9th and a singing male at Brook Farm, Upminster on June 25th: likely to be the same bird as the one seen in May, which presumably remained unpaired.

The only autumn records were from Rainham Marshes on August 24th and September 12th.

*The national decline of Turtle Dove is also reflected in London sightings. (Nick Croft)*

## Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

**Status**: common breeding resident, scarce in central London.

The position in terms of sites recording this species seems more or less stable: a slight reduction from last year but nothing too significant. However, although the Breeding Bird Survey for the South East shows an 18% increase from 2016-17, the figures for London show a 43% decrease from 2006-16. Likewise, the RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported birds in only 67% of gardens, a drop from 77% in 2016 and 94% in 1995. So these figures do suggest a decline. As before, the breeding records submitted probably do not reflect the status of the species in full. Below are listed the number of sites in each sector, breeding records for sites where two or more pairs were recorded (number of pairs/territories in brackets) some of the larger counts and a summary of the Inner London records (where again a slight reduction was noted).

**Essex**: Reported from 74 sites. Brook Farm Upminster, 42 on Sep 23rd. Mar Dyke Valley (3). Rainham Marshes (3). Stanford Rivers, 60 on Oct 18th.
**Herts**: Reported from 67 sites.
**Middx**: Reported from 69 sites.
**Bucks**: Reported from four sites.
**Kent**: Reported from 71 sites. Crayford Marshes, 50+ on several dates in August and September. Darenth Lakes, 45 on Aug 10th.
**Surrey**: Reported from 79 sites. Ashtead Common (4). Hogsmill SW, 20+ minimum throughout the year with 107 on Jan 2nd, 104 on 10th and 134 on 22nd. Holmethorpe SP, 40 on Oct 30th. Morden Hall Park, 31 on Nov 19th. Molesey Heath (5). Worcester Park (5).
**In Lond**: Reported from Barbican, Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, London Fields, Primrose Hill, Regent's Park, Rotherhithe, Southwark Park, Stave Hill, St James's Park and Victoria Park.

## Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

**Status**: breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

In terms of sites recording this species there is little change to report: 102 sites recorded Cuckoo in 2017, up two from 2016. There was little difference either in the distribution of sightings. Birds were reported from 82 sites from March to May (94 last year), 28 in June (22) and nine in July onwards (eight). The first total includes an exceptionally early record in March.

Although a good number of sites, mostly in Hertfordshire and Essex, had singing males present, breeding could only be confirmed at four of them. Rainham Marshes remained the stronghold, where the number of birds holding territories increased from five to six. London appears to at least have held its own this year, although the Breeding Bird Survey shows a 73% decrease in the South East from 1995-2016.

The first bird of the year was a single at Riddlesdown on the astonishingly early date of March 18th: this, by a full week, is the earliest spring record for the London Area. There were no others until April 6th and from then birds were present most days in April, with the best of the month being three at Ingrebourne Valley on April 29th. There were a number of sites holding two to three birds throughout May, with sightings beginning



slowly to tail off in June. A juvenile at Panshanger Park on July 5th was probably local. The first autumn migrant was a juvenile at South Weald on July 24th with the last being a single at Lodge Farm, Nazeing on October 8th.

There were two Inner London records: a single at Primrose Hill on April 8th and another at Regent's Park on May 19th.

**Cuckoo: sites where reported**

| | Spring (Mar-May) | Summer (June) | Autumn (July-Oct) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Essex | 17 | 10 | 5 |
| Herts | 33 | 8 | 1 |
| Middx | 11 | 4 | 2 |
| Bucks | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Kent | 5 | 2 | 0 |
| Surrey | 12 | 4 | 1 |
| Inner London | 2 | 0 | 0 |

## Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

**Status**: rare breeding resident and scarce winter visitor.

Records came from 51 sites, slightly fewer than in 2016 with 55, but a much lower total than in 2015 with 77 records. There were sightings throughout the year, with reports in the summer period at many sites where there were no reports of breeding, but most of these were of singles only. Details are shown in the table below. Only three pairs were confirmed to have bred, three fewer than in 2016: one in Essex, Hertfordshire and Surrey. This is the lowest number of confirmed breeding since 2009. There was also one report of probable breeding (two in 2016).

**Barn Owl: sites where reported**

| | Winter (Jan-Apr) | Summer (May-Aug) | Winter (Sep-Dec) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Essex | 10 | 4 | 4 |
| Herts | 4 | 8 | 6 |
| Middx | 3 | 7 | 6 |
| Bucks | 1 | - | - |
| Kent | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| Surrey | 4 | 4 | 2 |

## Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

**Status**: common breeding resident in the outer parts of the London Area, scarce towards the centre.

Reported from 167 sites (156 in 2016). There were 13 breeding pairs from 10 sites, compared with 35 pairs from 16 sites in 2016 and 11 pairs from six sites in 2015. This species is clearly under-recorded as there were two or more birds present at 19 other sites during the breeding season, up from 16 sites in 2016. Most breeding records were from the Hertfordshire sector with none from Middlesex and Kent. There were four pairs in Inner London although no confirmed breeding, the same as in 2016. The number of sites at which they were reported is shown below together with estimates of breeding

pairs (in brackets), higher counts and all records from Inner London.

**Essex**: Reported from 32 sites. Mar Dyke Valley (1).
**Herts**: Reported from 25 sites. Bernards Heath (1). Garden Wood (1). Moor Lane (1). Moor Park Golf Course, Northwood (1). Panshanger Park (1). Rye Meads (1).
**Middx**: Reported from 37 sites. Totteridge Valley, six on Nov 3rd.
**Bucks**: Reported from two sites.
**Kent**: Reported from 17 sites
**Surrey**: Reported from 48 sites. Egham (1). Richmond Park (bred), several young reported.
**In Lond**: Reported from five sites. Holland Park, singles on Apr 29th and Jul 13th. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (4), although none were considered to have bred successfully (three pairs in Kensington Gdns and one in Hyde Park). Regent's Park, two on Feb 7th. Swiss Cottage, one on Jul 13th. West Kilburn, one on Sep 7th.

## Little Owl *Athene noctua*

**Status**: localised breeding resident, introduced to UK in the 19th century.

Records were received from 116 sites, a small increase from 2016 (108 sites) and 2015 (104 sites). There were 21 pairs reported to have probably bred (35 in 2016), but birds may have bred at several other sites where more than one bird was reported throughout the breeding season. Four pairs probably bred in Inner London. The number of sites at which they were reported is shown below together with estimates of breeding pairs (in brackets).

**Essex**: Reported from 21 sites. Wanstead Flats (1).
**Herts**: Reported from 26 sites. Chiswell Green (1). Tyttenhanger GP (1). Woodoaks Farm, Maple Cross (1).
**Middx**: Reported from 33 sites. Horsenden Hill (1). Totteridge Valley (5+).
**Bucks**: Reported from one site.
**Kent**: Reported from five sites.
**Surrey**: Reported from 28 sites. Canons Farm (5). Holmethorpe SP (1). Morden Cemetery (1). Richmond Park (1).
**In Lond**: Reported from two sites. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (4+), recorded in every month, at least three breeding pairs in Kensington Gdns and at least one pair in Hyde Park. Regent's Park, singles on Feb 6th and Apr 2nd.

## Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

**Status**: scarce winter visitor and passage migrant; rare breeder.

There were reports from three sites, down from four in 2016. A pair bred in Essex, where they bred last year, and two were reported in December.

**Essex**: Site A (1). Fairlop Waters, two on several dates between Dec 9th and 28th (TJP).
**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands, one on Dec 28th (GWJ).

*Long-eared Owl at a winter roost site. (Russ Sherriff)*

## Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

**Status**: scarce winter visitor and passage migrant, with occasional influxes; rare breeder.

There were records from 25 sites, far fewer than 2016 (54 sites) and 2015 (76 sites), but more typical of previous years (29 sites in 2014 and 18 in 2013). There were no records from June to August.

**Short-eared Owl sites**

| Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of sites | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 1 | - | - | - | 3 | 8 | 10 | 1 |

There were reports from 11 sites in the first half of the year and 18 sites in the second half. The highest counts were five birds at Rainham Marshes in April. Only two other sites had more than one bird: there were two in January and February at Fairlop Waters and two in October at Wanstead Flats. All records are given below, summarised in some cases.

**Essex**: Fairlop Waters, two on Jan 2nd & 7th, one on Jan 14th, one on Feb 2nd, two on Feb 5th & 12th. Gallions Reach, one on Nov 3rd. Gunpowder Park, one on Nov 26th. Hainault CP, one on Feb 14th. Ingrebourne Valley, one on Feb 24th. Leyton Jubilee Park, one on Oct 15th. Rainham Marshes, up to four in January, two in February, three in March, five in April and two until mid-May. Walthamstow Wetlands, singles on Oct 15th, 25th and Nov 1st. Wanstead Flats, two on Oct 15th and one on Nov 19th.
**Herts**: Ellenbrook Fields, singles on Jan 8th, 14th & 18th and Apr 7th. Hatfield, singles on Jan 14th and Apr 7th.
**Middx**: Palmers Green, one on Mar 21st. Rammey Marsh, one on Oct 29th. Staines Moor, singles on Jan 4th, Mar 11th, Sep 23rd & 28th and Nov 28th. Tottenham Marshes, one on Oct 15th (also seen at Walthamstow Wetlands).
**Bucks**: Horton GP, one on Mar 14th. Q. Mother Res, one on Oct 15th.
**Kent**: None reported.
**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands, singles on Apr 16th and Sep 22nd. Beddington Park, one on Nov 12th. Berrylands, one on Nov 20th. Brockwell Park, one on Oct 20th. Canons Farm, one on Nov 17th. London Wetland Centre, singles on Mar 13th and Sep 30th. Richmond Park, singles on Nov 8th & 18th.
**In Lond**: Regent's Park, one flew E on Oct 31st.

## Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

**Status**: rare passage migrant, occasionally breeding.

There were two records this year. Encouragingly, there was a pair displaying on a site where they have bred in the past; the last breeding report was in 2008 at another site in Surrey. It is possible that the juvenile seen in July may have dispersed from a site in the London Area.

**Middx**: Bushy Park, a juvenile flushed from bracken on Jul 24th (ARD).
**Surrey**: Site B, a pair churring and displaying on Jun 2nd (DKC, PG *et al*).



## Swift *Apus apus*

**Status**: common, though probably declining, breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first arrivals were much earlier than usual with the first at Alexandra Park on March 27th (almost certainly the first record of the year for the UK), then singles at Norbury on April 1st and at Alexandra Park and Wandsworth on April 2nd. More usual first arrival dates are mid-April (April 15th in 2016 and April 12th in 2015). There were further records on the 4th and 9th and then almost daily from April 15th, gradually increasing until May 5th when there were 300 at Rainham Marshes, 250+ at Wimbledon Common and Island Barn Res and 200 at Brent Res and Walthamstow Wetlands. The highest count of the year was 1,600 at Staines Res on July 29th. The last of the year was one at Ingrebourne Valley on September 21st.

The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported birds from 42% of gardens in 2017, similar to 43% in 2016, but down from 73% in 1995. The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 58% decline in London from 1995-2016. There were reports of 10+ pairs this year (16 in 2016 and 38 in 2015). Obtaining evidence of breeding and counting pairs is difficult for this species with most observers just recording one or one plus pairs so it is probably very under-recorded. Breeding records are given below (numbers of pairs in brackets), together with peak counts.

**Essex**: Brook Farm, Upminster (1); 530 on Jul 7th. Grays Riverside (1+). Rainham Marshes, 600 on May 9th. Walthamstow Wetlands, 400 on May 8th and Aug 4th.
**Herts**: Abbots Langley (1). Hertford (1), three hatched. Hilfield Park Res, 1,200 on May 9th. North Watford (1). St Albans (1).
**Middx**: Staines (1). Staines Res, 1,600 on Jul 29th. West Drayton (1).
**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands, 400+ on Jun 4th. Egham (1). Stoneleigh (1).
**In Lond**: Limehouse, 200+ on Jul 6th.

## Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

**Status**: locally common breeding resident with additional birds in winter.

Reported at 281 sites, almost the same as in 2016 (282 sites) but fewer than 2015 (305 sites). Four or more were seen together at 11 sites (15 in 2016): Denham, Enfield Lock, Ewell, Hoddesdon, Hogsmill OS, Holmethorpe SP, Princes Lake, Q. Mary GP, Roding Valley Meadows NR, Rye Meads and Walthamstow Wetlands. There were many records of single birds in the breeding season and 16 pairs bred and there were another ten pairs reported (18 breeding pairs in 2016). The number of sites where they were reported is shown below for each sector, with breeding records and a summary of records for Inner London.

**Essex**: Reported from 56 sites. Belhus Woods CP (1). Brook Farm, Upminster (1). Rainham Marshes (1). Warren Gorge (1).
**Herts**: Reported from 55 sites. Amwell NR (1). Essendon (1). Frogmore Lakes (1). Rye Meads (1). Shafford Farm (1). Tyttenhanger GP (1).
**Middx**: Reported from 69 sites. Alexandra Park (1). East India Dock Basin (1). Enfield Lock (1). Q. Mary GP (1).
**Bucks**: Reported from five sites.
**Kent**: Reported from 28 sites. Foots Cray Meadows (1).
**Surrey**: Reported from 59 sites. Wilderness Island, Carshalton (1).

*This Kingfisher was photographed at the new Walthamstow Wetlands reserve. (Jamie Partridge)*

**In Lond**: Reported from nine sites from the beginning of the year until Mar 9th, one record in June and one in July and then from Aug 14th to the end of the year. More than five records were received from Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, St James's Park, Stave Hill and Victoria Park.

## Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*

**Status**: rare vagrant.

For the third consecutive year there was a record. This one was very unusual though as it consisted of seven birds, the highest count ever for London. It was the 11th record for London and also the latest ever in London.

**Bee-eater records 1955-2017: 11 records, 29 birds**

| Year | 1955 | 1958 | 1963 | 1979 | 1993 | 1997 | 1999 | 2007 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of records | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| No. of birds | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 7 |



**Herts**: Bayford, seven on Aug 16th & 17th, which were thought to be from a breeding attempt at East Leake, Nottinghamshire (MWn, TWn *et al*).

## Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

**Status**: scarce passage migrant.

There were three records this year, one in the Kent sector and two in the Hertfordshire sector. The first was in April and the other two in September; September is the most likely month to see this species in London in recent years. The table below shows all recent records.

**Wryneck records 2010-2017: 32 records, 32 birds**

| Year | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of records | 4 | 6 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 3 |

**Herts**: Amwell NR, one on Sep 7th (BR). Bushey, one in a garden on Sep 1st (DA).
**Kent**: Sidcup, one in a garden on Apr 23rd (DKy).

## Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dryobates minor*

**Status**: scarce and declining breeding resident.

This species was reported from 38 sites (37 in 2016 and 55 in 2015). Most records were of single birds with two or more recorded at five sites (five in 2016 and 2015). There were two reports of probable breeding but none were confirmed, which is an improvement on last year when there were no reports of breeding. The number of records at the previous stronghold of Richmond Park decreased to only one (seven in 2016). There were no reports from Inner London sites (same as 2016). Fairly typically, most records were in January to April and December as shown below:

**Lesser Spotted Woodpecker: sites where recorded per month**

| Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of sites | 3 | 10 | 12 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 7 |

All records are given below.

**Essex**: Belhus Woods CP, two on Feb 1st, singles on Feb 6th, 7th & 12th and Nov 6th. Cely Woods, singles on Feb 1st, Mar 11th and Apr 29th. Chingford, one on Mar 13th & 21st. Claybury Woods & Park, one on Apr 19th. Dagnam Park, singles on Feb 1st and Mar 1st. Harlow, one visiting garden from Jul 14th-19th. Highams Park, one on Nov 20th. Ongar Park Wood, one on Dec 4th. Thorndon CP North, one on Dec 24th. Warley Place NR, two on Feb 18th and one on 28th.

**Herts**: Broxbourne Woods, one on Dec 2nd. Brunswick Park, Barnet, one on Feb 19th. Cassiobury Park (1); up to three birds, two males and one female were reported on many dates from Mar 1st to May 6th. Croxley Common Moor, one on May 16th. Hertford Heath, one on Feb 15th. Moor Park GC, Northwood, one on Feb 12th & 19th. Rye Meads, one on Feb 19th. Stocker's Lake (1); one on Mar 11th & 30th and two on Apr 28th. The Withey Beds LNR, Watford, one on Mar 19th. Wormleybury, one on Apr 6th.

**Middx**: Alexandra Park, one on Dec 9th. Bounds Green, one on Mar 22nd. Bushy Park,

Cowley, one on Jan 4th. Finchley, one on Jul 4th. Forty Hall, one on Mar 16th. Hilly Fields Park, one on Apr 19th & 21st. Monken Hadley Common, one on Apr 10th. Totteridge Valley, one on Apr 6th. Trent Park, one on Dec 2nd. Whitewebbs Wood, one on Feb 4th.

**Kent**: Holly Oak Wood Park, one on Dec 14th. Sevenoaks WR, one on Mar 12th.

**Surrey**: Banstead Wood, one on Feb 18th. London Wetland Centre, singles on Jun 2nd and Dec 24th. Mitcham Common, singles on Jan 14th and Mar 4th. Richmond Park, one on Jan 2nd. Roehampton, one on Mar 15th. Wimbledon Common, singles on Mar 30th and Oct 15th.

## Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

**Status**: common breeding resident.

Reported from 578 sites (553 in 2016). Breeding is undoubtedly under-recorded as birds were present at many sites throughout the year; however, the number of pairs confirmed breeding decreased to 93 pairs (119 in 2016, 126 in 2015, 157 in 2014). This decrease is supported by the Breeding Bird Survey in London, which shows a fall of 20% from 2011-16, although over a longer period, 1995-2016 there has been an increase of 40%. The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported birds in 73% of gardens in 2017, the same as 2016, but down from the high of 84% in 2008. Below are breeding records for sites where two or more were recorded (no. of territories/pairs in brackets), plus a summary of Inner London records and some of the higher counts.

**Essex**: Reported from 103 sites. Belhus Woods CP (2). Mar Dyke Valley (3).

**Herts**: Reported from 87 sites. Cassiobury Park, six on Apr 28th.

**Middx**: Reported from 132 sites. Bushy Park, 12+ on Feb 6th. Home Park (3). Trent Park (3).

**Bucks**: Reported from 11 sites.

**Kent**: Reported from 80 sites. Beckenham Place Park, nine on Jan 28th. Foots Cray Meadows (4). Greenwich Park (3).

**Surrey**: Reported from 142 sites. Arbrook Common (2). Ashtead Common (5). Banstead Wood (5). Canons Farm (3). Esher Common (3). Holmethorpe SP, 13 on Sep 18th. The Ledges, Esher (2).

**In Lond**: Reported from 23 sites. Green Park, five on Dec 19th. Hyde Park/ Kensington Gdns, three pairs present. Regent's Park, up to three reported through the year. Stave Hill, reported from Feb 6th to Apr 12th, Jun 7th and Sep 13th to Dec 26th.

## Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

**Status**: common breeding resident.

Reported from 482 sites, fewer than in 2016 (508) and 2015 (514). There were 76 breeding pairs, down from 97 in 2016 and 130 in 2015. Breeding numbers were probably higher than reported as birds were present during the breeding season at many other sites. The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 41% increase in London from 1995-2016. The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported birds in 50% of gardens in 2017, similar to 51% in 2016 and an increase from 43% since the start of the survey in 1995, but down on a high of 65% in 2003. Below are breeding records for sites where two or more were recorded (no. of territories/pairs in brackets), plus all Inner London records and some of the higher counts.

**Essex**: Reported from 96 sites. Belhus Woods CP (3). Chigwell, 12 on Jul 15th. Mar Dyke

*This Kestrel must have been hovering directly over the photographer! (Peter Alfrey)*

Valley (7). Rainham Marshes (2).

**Herts**: Reported from 77 sites. Rye Meads (2).

**Middx**: Reported from 106 sites. Home Park (13). Q. Mary GP, 12 on Jul 22nd.

**Bucks**: Reported from eight sites.

**Kent**: Reported from 77 sites. Foots Cray Meadows (4). Greenwich Park (2).

**Surrey**: Reported from 111 sites. Ashtead Common (2). Banstead Wood (5). Canons Farm (4). Esher Common (2). Holmethorpe SP, 12 on Jul 10th. Molesey Heath (2). The Ledges, Esher (2).

**In Lond**: Reported from seven sites: Battersea Park, Green Park, Holland Park, Hyde Park/ Kensington Gdns (three pairs with at least one breeding successfully), Regent's Park, St James's Park and Victoria Park.

## Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

**Status**: common breeding resident.

Reported from 458 sites. The number of pairs fledging young was at least 36, which was much higher than the relatively low figure of 19 in 2016. The total is still likely to substantially understate the numbers of breeding pairs as 75 territories were reported

and 86 sites reported one or more pairs during April to July. At most sites there was just a single pair but there were 12 at Richmond Park, three at Rainham Marshes and two at Bookham Common. At Richmond Park, there were at least 12 pairs with ten broods fledging at least 23 young. The highest counts were ten birds at Crayford Marshes on September 9th and at Staines Moor on August 24th. There were very few specific prey items identified this year, although once again the targeting of Pied Wagtail was recorded.

| Kestrel | Essex | Herts | Middx | Bucks | Kent | Surrey | In Lond | Totals |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of territories | 11 | 12 | 14 | 0 | 8 | 27 | 3 | 75 |
| No. where breeding proved | 4 | 8 | 6 | 0 | 3 | 15 | 0 | 36 |

**In Lond**: Reported from 17 sites: Barbican, Battersea Park, Burgess Park, City of London, Farringdon, Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, London Bridge, Marylebone, Mile End, New Covent Garden Market, Primrose Hill, Regent's Park, Soho, St James's Park, St Paul's Cathedral, Tower of London and Whitechapel.

## Merlin *Falco columbarius*

**Status**: scarce migrant and winter visitor.

There were multiple sightings from two sites. At Rainham Marshes, they were seen in both winter periods with perhaps five birds involved. At Staines Res, a long-staying immature female was reported on September 3rd and then there and at other nearby sites until November 5th. Elsewhere, single birds were seen at five sites but some may relate to Rainham birds. Consequently, it difficult to estimate numbers but assuming five birds at Rainham Marshes that were seen elsewhere on the Lower Thames and one bird at Staines Res, there were possibly ten birds seen this year. Last year, there were at least four and perhaps up to nine birds from the Lower Thames and another eight birds at eight sites. There was also an additional record from 2015.

**Essex**: Brook Farm, Upminster, male on Mar 9th. Orsett Fen, fem on Jan 26th. Rainham Marshes, one on Jan 6th, 7th & 25th, male on Feb 22nd and Apr 21st, fem on Oct 15th, 22nd, 25th & 28th, fem on Dec 20th.
**Middx**: Staines Res, imm fem on Sep 3rd. This bird then remained in the area until Nov 5th, also being recorded at KGVI Res, Staines Moor, Stanwell Moor and Wraysbury Res.
Bucks: Q. Mother Res, 1st-summer male on Mar 22nd and juv/fem on Sep 21st.
Kent: Dartford Marshes, one on Apr 6th. Swanscombe Marshes, one on Oct 24th.

### 2015 Addition

**Surrey**: Richmond Park, one on Sep 25th.

## Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

**Status**: breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

Records were received from 230 sites during the year. Between June and July, they were reported from 93 sites, being seen more than once from 33 sites. At 12, the total number of breeding territories was in line with 2016 and 2015, although the distribution is different in each year. Breeding was proven at only six sites. This is a lower total than in recent years, and is likely to be under-recording given the species' secrecy during the breeding season.



The first birds of the year were on April 3rd at Rainham Marshes and Stocker's Lake, closely followed by birds at Potters Bar on 4th and Laleham Park on 7th. The first multiple record was of two at Rainham Marshes on April 10th. The largest count of the spring was of ten birds at Rainham Marshes on May 18th. Autumn passage saw birds recorded on every day through August and September, with sightings falling away rapidly into October. The last of the year was a relatively late record on October 25th at Sydenham Hill Wood. The highest autumn count was nine at Rainham Marshes on August 28th.

| Hobby pairs breeding | Essex | Herts | Middx | Bucks | Kent | Surrey | In Lond | Totals |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of territories | 2 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 12 |
| No. where breeding proved | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 6 |

**In Lond**: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, singles on Apr 23rd & 27th, two on May 6th, singles on May 7th, 9th, 12th & 15th and Sep 25th. Kensington, one on Sep 1st. Ranelagh Gardens, one on Apr 16th. Regent's Park, singles on Apr 16th, Aug 1st & 19th and Sep 10th. Rotherhithe, one on Apr 30th.

## Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

**Status**: scarce but increasingly regular breeding resident and winter visitor.

Peregrines continue to flourish across the London Area. They were recorded on all but one day of the year at a total of 265 locations. Adjusting for obvious multiple submissions of the same bird(s), the total number of records exceeded 2,000 for the first time, up from 1,700 in the two previous years. This total reflects regular sightings of (presumably) the same birds at several well-watched sites. Prey items recorded include Lapwing, Dunlin, Greenshank, Feral Pigeon, Woodpigeon, Ring-necked Parakeet, Jackdaw and Starling. Unsuccessful attacks were observed on Mallard, Teal, Tufted Duck, Cormorant, Oystercatcher, Snipe, Black-headed Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Swift and Redwing.

The number of birds fledged is the lowest since 2013. This is most probably attributable to normal population fluctuations, as well as the difficulty, at many sites, of observing nests many hundreds of feet above ground! Thanks to London Peregrine Partnership, in particular D Johnson and S Harrington, for additional breeding information.

| Peregrine | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of pairs present | 5 | 13 | 15 | 19 | 22 | 28 | 23 | 21 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 27 |
| No. of successful pairs | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 9 | 10 | 15 | 18 | 16 | 21 | 17 |
| No. of young fledged | 2 | 8 | 9 | 11 | 8 | 23 | 28 | 38 | 51 | 47 | 53 | 41 |

**Essex**: Five pairs present, of which four pairs successfully fledged 12 juveniles.
**Herts**: Two pairs bred successfully and raised four juveniles (two each).
**Middx**: Two pairs present, of which one was successful, raising four juveniles.
**Bucks**: One pair was present, but failed to breed.
**Kent**: Three pairs present and bred successfully, rearing four juveniles.
**Surrey: Six pairs present, three of which were successful, fledging five juveniles.**
**In Lond**: Eight pairs present, of which four bred successfully, raising 12 juveniles.

## Ring-necked Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

**Status**: naturalised breeding resident, increasing in range and numbers.

There were reports from only 361 sites this year, the lowest since 2013 and only just over half the number of last year. However this seems likely to be a case of familiarity leading to under-reporting. The number of sites with counts of over 100 was only slightly down (29 this year compared with 36 in 2016). Only about 50 reports of confirmed breeding or pairs holding territories were reported, which is half of last year's total, but the reduction is probably accounted for by the lack of data from two sites. The Breeding Bird Survey in London showed no significant change over the past year but a 56% increase from 2011-2016. The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported birds in well over 90% of gardens, as has been the case since 2012. Many Hyde Park parakeets are now taking hand-held food. Mobbing of both Red Kites and Sparrowhawks was recorded this year.

**Ring-necked Parakeet: peak roost counts of 500 plus**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| HR | Stanborough Lakes | 500 (Dec) |
| MX | Hackney Marsh | 900 (Nov) |
| | Wormwood Scrubs | 7,000 (Sep) |
| SY | Esher | 5,000 (Sep) |
| | Hogsmill SW | 1,250 (Sep) |
| | Holmethorpe SP | 1,035 (Sep) |
| | Mitcham Common | 1,200 (Mar) |

For each sector, the number of sites and high counts other than those at sites listed above are given below.

**Essex**: Reported from 51 sites. Belhus Woods CP, 146 on Oct 17th. Ingrebourne Valley, 120 on Sep 19th and Oct 5th.
**Herts**: Reported from 75 sites. Hilfield Park Res, 120 over on May 7th.
**Middx**: Reported from 82 sites. Ashford, 800 on Feb 18th. East Acton, 3,000 over to roost on Sep 23rd. Grovelands Park, 250 on Dec 6th. West Drayton, 450+ over to roost on Jul 2nd.
**Bucks**: Reported from eight sites. Langley Park, 34 on Oct 10th.
**Kent**: Reported from 43 sites. Danson Park, 550 on Dec 9th.
**Surrey**: Reported from 76 sites. Beddington Farmlands, 1,000 on Oct 28th. Brockwell Park, 200 in roost on Oct 17th. Morden Hall Park, 463 on Oct 21st. Sandown Park, 357 pre-roost on Aug 16th. Waddon Ponds, 250 on Jan 15th.
**In Lond**: Reported from 26 sites. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, 60 on Mar 7th.

## Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

**Status**: rare passage migrant.

There were two records this year after none last year. Since 2005 when four were seen, there have been no more than two in any year (see table below). Since 1990, 12 of the 36 records have occurred in September and five in August.

**Red-backed Shrike records 2002-2017: 20 records, 20 birds**

| Year | 2002 | 2003 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2010 | 2012 | 2013 | 2015 | 2017 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of records | 3 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |



**Middx**: Hampstead Heath, juv on Aug 22nd (RBd *et al*). Wormwood Scrubs, fem on Sep 23rd & 24th (CFl *et al*).

## Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*

**Status**: rare passage migrant and winter visitor.

There were three records this year; the 11th year in a row that this species has been seen in the London Area. One was in January (staying for over three weeks), the others were in November and December. Perhaps surprisingly, the December record was the first since 1990.

**Great Grey Shrike arrival dates 1990-2017: 34 records, 34 birds**

| Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of records | 6 | - | 1 | 2 | - | - | - | - | 2 | 15 | 7 | 1 |

**Essex**: Ingrebourne Valley, one on several dates from Jan 5th to 29th (TBl, BTr, SE *et al*).
**Surrey**: Little Woodcote, one on Nov 2nd (JSi). Molesey Heath, one on Dec 30th (TCn, GCn).

## Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

**Status**: common breeding bird, the resident population boosted by immigrants in the autumn and winter.

The Breeding Bird Survey shows a significant 26% decrease in London from 2006- 2016, which suggests numbers may be falling, whereas the RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported

*Jay. (Jamie Partridge)*

birds in 88% of gardens in 2017, which is similar to last year (84%) and even to 1995 (90%). Confirmed or probable breeding was reported from 50 sites. Breeding records are given below for sites where breeding was confirmed or where the number of pairs were counted (no. of pairs in brackets) as well as site counts of more than ten individuals for sectors (three for Inner London).

**Essex**: Belhus Woods CP, 12 on Oct 17th. Gernon Bushes, 11 on Nov 15th. Hangman's Wood (2). Knighton Wood, 15 on Jan 29th. Mar Dyke Valley (1); 13 on Sep 19th. Roding Valley Meadows NR, 12 on Oct 17th.
**Herts**: Amwell NR (1). Bricket Wood Common (1). Northaw Great Wood, 11 on Oct 30th. Rye Meads (2).
**Middx**: Broadwater Lake (1). Home Park (2). Pinner, eight on Oct 8th. Queen's Wood (1). Tottenham Marshes (2)
**Bucks**: Denham, 11 on Oct 8th.
**Kent**: Crystal Palace Park (1). Greenwich Park (2). Sevenoaks, 11 on Dec 5th. Sevenoaks WR, 12 on Sep 27th.
**Surrey**: Ashtead Common (5). Banstead Wood (6). Barn Elms PF, 22 on Oct 8th. Bookham Common, 11 on Sep 30th. Canons Farm (9); 12 on Feb 8th. Hogsmill SW, 16 on Oct 15th. Holmethorpe SP (1); 11 on Nov 6th. Kings Wood (1). Richmond Park (1). Riddlesdown, 11 on Oct 17th. Sydenham Hill Wood (1). Worcester Park (3).
**In Lond**: Reported from 23 sites (22 in 2016). Kensington Green, four on Mar 11th. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, up to six. London Zoo, three on Oct 15th. Victoria Park, seven on Oct 8th. Wapping, three on Jun 11th.

## Magpie *Pica pica*

**Status**: abundant breeding resident.

The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 10% increase in London from 2006-2016. We still receive rather few confirmed breeding records although there are many reports of nest building. Breeding records for sites with two or more pairs are given below (no. of pairs/territories in brackets) as well as the highest count for each site that had at least 30.

**Essex**: Belhus Woods CP (2). Dagnam Park, 110 on Nov 12th. Grays Gorge, 50 on Oct 30th. Hangman's Wood (2). Mar Dyke Valley (2). Orsett Fen, 39 on Feb 14th. Rainham Marshes (5); 38 on Dec 4th. Roding Valley Meadows NR, 54 on Dec 23rd. Warren Gorge, 74 roosting on Oct 11th.
**Herts**: Eastbury, 34 on May 14th. Rye Meads (14); 34 on Jan 21st.
**Middx**: Fryent CP, 35 on Mar 9th. Grovelands Park, 35 on Oct 13th. Home Park (14).
**Kent**: Bromley Common, 40 on Jan 23rd. Chipstead Lake, 40 on Jan 9th. Darenth Lakes, 55 on Mar 3rd. Husseywell OS, 42 on Dec 8th. Ladywell Fields (2). Otford, 40 on Nov 23rd. Sevenoaks WR, 38 on Jan 28th. Swanscombe Marshes, 33 on Feb 4th.
**Surrey**: Arbrook Common (2). Ashtead Common (5). Esher Common (3). Holmethorpe SP, 58 on Oct 19th. Island Barn Res, 36 on Dec 14th. London Wetland Centre, 33 on Dec 5th. Molesey Heath (6). Morden Hall Park, 148 roosting on Jan 8th. The Ledges, Esher (2).
**In Lond**: Seven breeding pairs at six sites.



## Jackdaw *Coloeus monedula*

**Status**: common breeding resident and passage migrant; much scarcer in the inner suburbs and city centre.

The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 149% increase in London from 2006-2016. The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported birds in 37% of gardens, which is much the same as in recent years, although well up from the 11% in 1995. Nest building was observed in both Regent's Park and Hyde Park & Kensington Gardens: breeding was last confirmed in Inner London in 1969 and these are the first records of probable breeding for many years. Breeding counts are given below (no. of pairs/territories in brackets) as well as the highest site counts for each sector.

**Essex**: Belhus Woods CP (3). Clay Tye Wood, 700 roosting on Dec 14th. Codham Hall, 200 on Jan 6th and Dec 15th. Hangman's Wood (4). Holyfield Lake, 400 on Feb 12th. Leyton Jubilee Park, 200 on Oct 15th. Loughton, 200 on Jun 24th. Mar Dyke Valley (15). Roding Valley Meadows NR, 350 on Jul 31st. Valentines Park (1+).
**Herts**: Amwell NR, 300 on Jan 8th. Brookmans Park, 250 on Sep 18th. Cuffley, 200 on Jun 22nd. Ellenbrook Fields, 1,100 on Jan 21st. Essendon, 200 on Aug 1st. Frogmore Lakes, 500 on Nov 12th. Hatfield Park, 200 on Mar 12th. Hilfield Park Res (2+). Lynsters Farm, 200 on Jan 13th. Maple Lodge NR, 1,000 roosting on Sep 1st. Rye Meads (3); 320 on Dec 23rd. Tyttenhanger GP, 300 on Nov 12th. West Hyde, 500 on Nov 5th. Wildhill, 350 on Aug 3rd.
**Middx**: Bayhurst Wood CP, 210 on Nov 14th. Home Park (56). Q. Mary GP, 4,000 to roost on Jan 14th. Southall, 350 over to roost on Sep 23rd.
**Bucks**: Langley Park, 118 on Oct 10th.
**Kent**: Petts Wood, 200 on Jan 3rd. Sevenoaks WR, 600 to roost on Dec 7th.
**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands, 2,000 on Jan 20th and Dec 21st. Hersham GP, 2,000 at roost on Dec 22nd. Holmethorpe SP, 2,000 on Oct 30th and in November. Kingston-upon-Thames, 1,000 leaving roost on Feb 6th. Molesey Heath, 500 on Sep 5th. Morden Hall Park, 233 on Oct 14th. New Malden, 200 on Mar 13th and Dec 1st. Rushett Farm, 400 on Aug 23rd.
**In Lond**: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (1+); max of ten on Feb 14th. Primrose Hill, six over on Mar 9th. Regent's Park (1). Victoria Park, two over on Mar 4th.

## Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

**Status**: common breeding resident in the outer part of the London Area, much scarcer in urban localities.

The Breeding Bird Survey shows no significant changes from 1995-2016 in the South East. There were counts from 16 rookeries, of which only Clay Tye Wood was counted last year and had the same number of nests. We would welcome regular counts of rookeries. Details of all rookeries are given below with the number of occupied nests in brackets, followed by the highest site counts for each sector.

**Essex**: Clay Tye Wood (46); 700 roosting on Jul 5th and Sep 24th. North Weald Bassett, 160 on Oct 10th. Orsett Fen, 112 on Aug 6th. Stapleford Tawney, 200 on Jun 19th. Upminster, 201 on Jun 1st including 103 juvs.
**Herts**: Bayfordbury (74). Brickendonbury (25). Cole Green (28). Cuffley (1+). Ellenbrook

Fields, 50 on Nov 26th. Essendon (13). Frogmore Lakes, 300+ on Nov 12th. Hertingfordbury (7). Little Berkhamsted (34). London Colney (15). Maple Lodge NR, 200 on Jan 3rd. Marshalswick (24). Radlett (9). Rye Meads, 80 on Dec 23rd. Shenley (5). St Albans (6), total from two sites.

**Middx**: Ridge, 45 on Dec 24th. Totteridge Valley, 50 pre-roost on Dec 1st.

**Bucks**: Denham (5). Northmoor Hill Wood, 26 on Sep 27th.

**Kent**: Hayes, 20 on Dec 16th.

**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands, 27 on Jan 21st. Canons Farm, 24 on Dec 23rd. Downside, 25 on Apr 30th. Holmethorpe SP (1+); 85 on Jun 15th. Leatherhead, 30 on Oct 15th. Titsey Park (20).

**In Lond**: Primrose Hill, singles flying over on Mar 7th & 13th and Apr 5th & 9th. Regent's Park, two flying over on Apr 5th, singles flying over on Apr 7th and May 10th. South Kensington, one flying over on Dec 12th. St James's Park, singles flying over on Jan 3rd and Apr 3rd.

## Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

**Status**: abundant breeding resident.

The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 46% increase in London from 1995-2016, and these increasing long-term trends have been repeated in other recent *LBRs*. Regular breeding counts from sites would be very welcome. The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported birds in 92% of gardens, similar to 91% in 2016. Breeding records are given below for sites with five or more pairs (no. of pairs in brackets) followed by counts of at least 100 for each sector and of over 50 in Inner London.

**Essex**: Barking Park, c120 throughout the year. Holyfield Hall Farm, 100 on Feb 18th. Holyfield Lake, 100 on Jun 16th. Hooks Marsh Lake, 100 on Mar 29th. Leyton Flats, 100 on Dec 5th. Orsett Fen (5). Rainham Marshes, 113 on Feb 4th. Walthamstow Wetlands, 104 on Mar 1st. Wanstead Flats, 100 on Aug 19th.

**Herts**: Ellenbrook Fields, 150 on Jan 19th. Rye Meads (5). Tyttenhanger GP, 100+ on Nov 12th. Wildhill, 100+ on Oct 31st.

**Middx**: Gospel Oak, 100+ on Nov 25th. Hackney Marsh, 100 on Jan 20th. Perivale Wood, 981 roosting on Jan 28th. Pymmes Park, 100 on Feb 12th. Wormwood Scrubs, 188 on Sep 23rd.

**Kent**: Beckenham Place Park, 100 on June 10th. Dartford Marshes, 120 on Feb 12th. Greatness Pits, 210 on May 12th.

**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands, 221 on Jul 25th. Canons Farm, 220 on Nov 25th. Hogsmill SW, 194 on Mar 11th. Holmethorpe SP, 455 on Jul 27th. London Wetland Centre, 233 on Jan 3rd. Long Lane Woods, 100 on Dec 29th. Molesey Heath, 160 on Feb 12th. Riddlesdown, 100 on Oct 17th. Rushett Farm, 300 on Aug 23rd. Worcester Park (10).

**In Lond**: Battersea Park, 91 on Jan 3rd. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, 53 on Apr 10th. Regent's Park, 80 on Aug 10th. Victoria Park, 67 on Jul 4th.

## Raven *Corvus corax*

**Status**: scarce but increasing visitor and recent breeder.

Records have been increasing year on year since 2008 and this year was no exception,



with records from 92 sites compared with 70 last year. Breeding was recorded from Swanscombe Marshes for the fifth year running. The Breeding Bird Survey reported a 51% increase in the South East from 2016-17. Records in Hertfordshire and Surrey are only listed below when three or more birds were seen, reflecting the continued increases in sightings in these sectors. Records of two or more birds are shown for the other sectors.

**Essex**: Reported from 16 sites. Orsett Fen, two on Jan 26th and Feb 14th. Rainham Marshes, three on Jun 14th with one or two on dates in most months of the year. Warley, two on Mar 25th. Weald CP, two on Nov 17th and Dec 31st.

**Herts**: Reported from 31 sites with records of two or more birds from 19 sites. Amwell NR, three on Mar 9th and Aug 18th. Shafford Farm, five on May 23rd. West Hyde, three on Aug 20th. Wildhill, adult with two juvs on Jul 17th. Woodoaks Farm, Maple Cross, three on Sep 27th.

**Middx**: Reported from 11 sites. Q. Mary GP, two on Dec 23rd. Vicarage Farm, two on Feb 19th. Wildwoods, Enfield, two on Mar 4th.

**Bucks**: Reported from six sites. Black Park, two on Nov 28th. Q. Mother Res, three on Mar 31st and two on Apr 1st.

**Kent**: Reported from six sites. Bluewater Shopping Centre, two on Jan 28th. Swanscombe Marshes (1); five including three young on several dates in May.

**Surrey**: Reported from 24 sites with records of two or more birds from 12 sites. Holmethorpe SP, three on Jul 27th.

## Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*

**Status**: uncommon but sometimes numerous irruptive visitor.

The trickle of birds at the end of 2016 developed into a moderate irruption. This was the first irruption since 2012/2013 and was more like that one than the much larger one in 2010/2011. The last record was on April 21st at Hatfield Park and there were no records at the end of the year. Only counts of around 50 or more are listed below, except for Inner London, and only the highest count per site is given.

**Essex**: Reported from 29 sites. Chafford Hundred, 50 on Jan 26th. Hornchurch, 55 on Feb 11th. Purfleet, 50 on Jan 27th.

**Herts**: Reported from 12 sites.

**Middx**: Reported from 41 sites. Finsbury Park, 50 on Feb 18th. Hackney, 50 on Mar 4th-5th. Hampstead Heath, 100 on Apr 1st. Holloway, 66 on Apr 5th. Southgate, 49 on Jan 30th. Muswell Hill, 40-50 on Mar 11th.

**Bucks**: Reported from 23 sites.

**Kent**: Reported from 11 sites. Northfleet, 84 on Jan 22nd.

**Surrey**: Reported from 20 sites.

**In Lond**: Camden Town, two on Jan 5th. City of London, two on Jan 5th. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, 11 on Jan 27th. Islington, 66 on Apr 5th. London Fields, 50 on Mar 4th-5th. Primrose Hill, two on Jan 10th. Spa Fields, one on Feb 23rd.

## Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

**Status**: common breeding species.

The number of territories/pairs reported was at least 63. This is well below the total of

*Coal Tit. (Russ Sherriff)*

111 in 2016, but this is because singing males were counted then. The total of probable and confirmed breeding (as used this year) for 2016 was 72, although this included 40 at Wimbledon Common where we have no count this year. Looking at sites where we have data for both 2017 and 2016, there may in fact have been an increase. More territorial estimates would be very welcome. The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported birds in 87% of gardens surveyed in 2017, more than the 78% in 2016 but similar to the 82% in 2015. The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 22% increase in the South East from 2016-17. Below are breeding records for sites where two or more were recorded (no. of territories/pairs in brackets), plus a summary of Inner London records and some of the higher counts.

**Essex**: One pair. Gernon Bushes, 25 on Nov 15th.
**Herts**: Three pairs. North Mymms Park, 20 on Aug 26th.
**Middx**: Ten pairs. Totteridge Valley (2+). Trent Park (2+); seven on Mar 14th.
**Bucks**: Black Park, eight on Jan 20th.
**Kent**: 4-5 pairs. Greenwich Park (2-3). Oxleas Wood, 14 on Sep 30th.
**Surrey**: 45 pairs. Ashtead Common (3). Banstead Wood (7). Canons Farm (5). Esher Common (7). Wimbledon Common, ten on Oct 7th.
**In Lond**: Reported from 20 sites (seven in 2016, 12 in 2015). No records of breeding, but recorded in breeding season at Brompton Cemetery, Burgess Park, Camley Street Natural Park, Holland Park, Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (six pairs), Meanwhile Gardens, Primrose Hill/Regent's Park and St James's Park.



## Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

**Status**: localised and declining breeding resident and scarce winter visitor.

Recorded from 36 sites during the year (39 in 2016 and 36 in 2015); only 14 sites recorded them during the period March to July (26 in 2016 and 19 in 2015) and seven of these had records on only one day in that period. At Bookham Common a detailed survey carried out this year found 14 territories. It still seems to be clinging on in the outer area of London at some of the woods in Hertfordshire, Kent and Surrey. Birds reported from Amwell NR may be outside the London Area and will only be reported if they are confirmed to be within the area.

**Essex**: Rainham Marshes, one on Nov 26th. Raphael Park, one on Aug 14th.
**Herts**: Brookmans Park, singles on Mar 7th, Apr 18th, Oct 6th and Dec 8th. Broxbourne Woods, singles on Jan 1st, Oct 30th and Nov 18th. Cuffley, one on Nov 21st. Garden Wood, one on Jan 2nd. Hatfield, one on Jan 4th. Marshalswick, one on Jan 24th. Moor Park GC, one on Feb 12th. Northaw Great Wood, up to five reported; although there were no reports between March and May, two on Jun 13th suggests they could still be breeding here. Stanstead Innings, one on Sep 14th. The Commons LNR, singles on Sep 30th, Oct 1st & 8th and Dec 29th. Wormley Wood, two on Nov 16th.
**Middx**: Bounds Green, one in garden on Jan 2nd. Hadley Green, one on Apr 4th.
**Kent**: Blackbush Shaw, one on Mar 13th. Downe Bank, one on Feb 5th. Green Street Green, one on Apr 2nd. Hazelwood, singles on Jan 21st, Oct 29th and Dec 16th. High Elms CP, singles on Jan 7th and Feb 4th. Knockholt, one on Aug 15th. The Tarn, Mottingham, one on Jan 24th.
**Surrey**: Bookham Common (14+). Chaldon, one on Jul 17th. Chapel Bank, two on Feb 3rd. Downside, two on Feb 14th and one on Oct 31st. Esher, one regularly at garden feeder from Oct 22nd. Farthing Downs, one on Dec 30th. Headley Heath area, five on May 31st, two on Nov 3rd and three on 6th. Juniper Bottom, two on Feb 14th. Kings Wood, one on Apr 30th and on a number of dates outside the breeding season, including two in adjacent gardens. Marden Park Woods, two on Nov 2nd and one on Dec 27th. Norbury Park, Leatherhead, two on Jun 22nd. Petersham, one on Mar 27th. Redhill, one on Jun 11th. Selsdon Wood, two in April and outside the breeding season in two adjacent gardens.

## Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

**Status**: abundant breeding resident.

The number of territories/pairs reported was 417, up from the 224 in 2016 and slightly higher than the 341 in 2015. Looking at sites where we have records for this year and last year there is no obvious change overall. Regular breeding counts from more sites would be very welcome. The Breeding Bird Survey shows an 8% decrease in the South East from 2016-17 and a 33% decrease in London from 2006-2016. Below are breeding records for sites where six or more were recorded (probable/confirmed breeding) and some of the higher counts.

**Essex**: 146 pairs. Belhus Woods CP (31). Dagnam Park, 80 on Sep 10th. Grays Cemetery (6). Grays Gorge (14). Hangman's Wood (17). Lion Gorge (10). Mar Dyke Valley (20). Orsett Fen (17). Warren Gorge (10).

**Herts**: 40 pairs. North Mymms Park, 130 in two flocks on Aug 26th. Rye Meads (20).
**Middx**: 54 pairs. Home Park (25). Perivale Wood, 34 on Jan 1st. Ruislip Woods (6).
**Bucks**: Three pairs. Denham CP, 30+ on Jan 30th.
**Kent**: Seven pairs. Darenth Lakes, 40 on Jan 6th.
**Surrey**: 160 pairs. Arbrook Common (8). Ashtead Common (31). Banstead Wood (33); 80 on Jan 23rd. Beddington Farmlands (12). Canons Farm (45). Molesey Heath (6). The Ledges, Esher (6).
**In Lond**: Reported from 35 sites (42 in 2016) with at least 11 pairs. Young seen at Leathermarket Gardens, Houses of Parliament, Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (5), Marylebone, Meanwhile Gardens, Regent's Park, Soho.

## Great Tit *Parus major*

**Status**: abundant breeding resident.

The number of territories/pairs reported was 390, slightly higher than the 354 in 2016 but down on the 577 in 2015. Looking at sites where we have records for this year and last year there is no obvious change overall. Regular breeding counts from more sites would be very welcome. The Breeding Bird Survey shows an 11% decrease in the South East from 2016-17 but a 101% increase in London from 1995-2016. Below are breeding records for sites where six or more were recorded (probable/confirmed breeding) and some of the higher counts.

**Essex**: 97 pairs. Belhus Woods CP (25). Gernon Bushes, 50 on Nov 15th. Grays Cemetery (6). Grays Gorge (8). Lion Gorge (6). Mar Dyke Valley (18). Orsett Fen (8).
**Herts**: 57 pairs. North Mymms Park, 50 on Aug 26th. Rye Meads (37).
**Middx**: 39 pairs. Fryent CP, 23 on Mar 29th. Home Park (18).
**Bucks**: Two pairs. Denham CP, 30 on Jan 30th.
**Kent**: 12 pairs. Darenth Lakes, 30 on Jan 6th.
**Surrey**: 156 pairs. Arbrook Common (6). Ashtead Common (13). Banstead Wood (34). Beddington Farmlands (44). Canons Farm (32). Esher Common (6). London Wetland Centre, 48 on Jan 10th. Molesey Heath (10). The Lodges, Esher (8).
**In Lond**: Reported from 27 sites (39 in 2016) with at least 14 pairs. Young seen at Barbican, Elephant & Castle, Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (7), Meanwhile Gardens, Mile End Park, Regent's Park (2), Soho.

## Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*

**Status**: rare autumn and winter visitor, scarce breeder.

Twelve sites recorded birds during the year (14 sites in 2016) with birds seen at nine sites in the first winter period and at ten in the second winter period (in 2016, they were at six sites and ten sites in these two periods). As last year, birds bred at Rainham Marshes and also at Swanscombe Marshes. Below are all records, summarised in some cases.

**Essex**: Gallions Reach, singles on Oct 19th & 31st. Ingrebourne Valley, one on Mar 12th and two on Aug 16th. Mar Dyke Valley, singles on Feb 2nd and Nov 7th. Rainham Marshes (6); peak count of 16 on Jul 10th.
**Herts**: Amwell NR, two on Oct 10th, then singles on 14th & 15th. Rye Meads, one from Jan 21st-27th, two on Feb 5th and three ringed on Feb 12th. Stanstead Innings, singles on Feb 28th and Mar 3rd & 9th.
**Kent**: Crayford Marshes, four on Jan 27th and also on Oct 16th. Crossness, two on Jan 2nd, one on 17th and four on 28th, then two on Feb 4th, five on Mar 15th, one on Apr 10th, up to two in June, then one on Sep 22nd, six on Sep 27th and three on Dec 18th. Swanscombe Marshes (bred); peak count of 18 on Oct 6th and Dec 2nd.
**Surrey**: London Wetland Centre, one on many dates from Jan 1st to Apr 10th, and one on Nov 6th. Richmond Park, one on Oct 17th.

*Bearded Tit are annual at Rainham Marshes. (Russ Sherriff)*

## Woodlark *Lullula arborea*

**Status**: scarce passage migrant and occasional rare breeder.

For the first time since 2007, there was a breeding record in London, interestingly at the same site as that year. Apart from that, there were eight records of single birds, in late April, and September to early November. This is the fewest number of passage records for at least ten years.

*Apart from any breeding birds, Woodlark is a scarce passage migrant. This bird was at Wanstead Flats in May. (Nick Croft)*

**Essex**: Bedfords Park, one on Sep 17th (PSt). Gallions Reach, one on Oct 15th (GAJ). KGV Res, one on Sep 24th (NS). Rainham Marshes, singles on Sep 21st (HV) and Oct 14th (FS). Wanstead Flats, singles on Apr 23rd (WB), Oct 15th (JL, NC, BV) and Nov 1st (BV).
**Middx**: Fryent CP, one W on Oct 6th (JTa).
**Surrey**: Site B (1).

## Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

**Status**: common breeding resident and passage migrant.

There were 14 winter flocks of 50 or more at 11 sites, which is the same number of sites as last year. Six of these were in the first winter period. The highest count was 220, up on the 2016 peak of 100 but below that of 2015 (250).

There was a total of 290 territories (up from 260 in 2016 and 236 in 2015) from 82 sites (up from 67 in 2016 and 54 in 2015). The highest number of territories were at Rainham Marshes (49, up from 46 in 2016), Orsett Fen (25, down from 28 in 2016) and Richmond Park (20, up from 16 in 2016). The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 29% decrease in the South East from 1995-2016. There were no large counts on autumn passage in October and early November, the highest being 28 over Barn Elms PF on November 6th.

Below are listed the number of territories for each sector, breeding records for sites where three or more were recorded (no. of territories in brackets), plus all Inner London records and some of the higher counts.

**Essex**: 94 territories at 17 sites (101 territories at 15 sites last year). Belhus Woods CP (3). Cornmill Meadows, 150 on Jan 10th. Ingrebourne Valley, 70 on Dec 20th. Orsett Fen (25); 119 on Jan 3rd, 123 on Jan 26th and 52 on Feb 14th. Rainham Marshes (49). Upshire, 80 on Mar 4th. Waltham Abbey, 220 on Jan 5th. Wanstead Flats (3).
**Herts**: 59 territories at 16 sites (50 at 16 sites last year). Coursers Farm, 70 on Dec 13th. Ellenbrook Fields (4). Frogmore Lakes (4). Maple Cross (13). Stanborough Lakes (10). Stocker's Lake (4). Tyttenhanger GP (10); 60 on Dec 16th. West Hyde (7).



**Middx**: 31 territories at 15 sites (27 at 12 sites last year). Home Park (14). Vicarage Farm (3).
**Kent**: 42 territories at 17 sites (32 at 12 sites last year). Chelsfield (3). Downe (3). Layhams Farm (9). Longfield Gallops (7). Rushmore Hill (3). Upper College Farm (3).
**Surrey**: 64 territories at 17 sites (50 at 12 sites last year). Canons Farm (9); 50 on Feb 16th and 75 on Sep 28th. Cheverells Farm, 90 on Oct 31st. Richmond Park (20). Riddlesdown (9). Rushett Farm, 50 on Nov 3rd, 70+ on Nov 29th and 120+ on Dec 19th.
**In Lond**: Primrose Hill, two over on Nov 1st. Regent's Park, a total of eight over on four dates between Oct 26th and Nov 5th.

## Shore Lark *Eremophila alpestris*

**Status**: rare visitor.

One found at Q. Mary Res on November 12th was the same as the well-watched individual that frequented the north side of the causeway at Staines Res on Nov 19th and from Nov 24th to 28th. DNA analysis of a faecal sample collected when the bird reappeared at Staines Res in early 2018 indicates that it belongs to one of the North American subspecies, probably *alpestris* or *hoyti*. The American forms may be split as a separate species in future, and this bird is under consideration by the *British Birds* Rarities Committee and British Ornithologists' Union as a potential first British record.

There have been 15 previous records of Shore Lark, the most recent being one at Q. Elizabeth II Res from October 25th to 31st 2011.

**Middx**: Q. Mary Res, one on Nov 12th (REI) then Staines Res, Nov 19th and 24th-28th (GLo *et al*).

## Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

**Status**: common summer visitor, localised breeder and passage migrant.

The first sighting was on March 3rd (ten days earlier than in 2016) with one at QE II Res. From the 11th, birds were noted daily during the spring, with the highest counts being 300+ at Staines Res on April 24th, 300 at Island Barn Res on 27th, 150 at Hilfield Park Res on 14th and 115 at Holmethorpe SP on 18th.

Phenomenal breeding success was achieved at the London Wetland Centre sand wall, where by mid-August 634 young had fledged. About 80 nest holes were occupied at Coursers Farm.

The biggest feeding flocks of the summer were 590 at Staines Res on July 29th and 500 at London Wetland Centre on August 11th (both much larger than last year's maximum of 200 at Rainham Marshes on July 30th). There were also 500 at Hilfield Park Res on September 14th and 300 at Staines Res on 12th. The last record of the year was two at Gallions Reach on October 4th, nine days earlier than in 2016. Numbers of breeding pairs (if known) are given below, along with all Inner London sightings.

**Essex**: Barking (10). Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (probably bred). William Girling Res (probably bred).
**Herts**: Coursers Farm (c80). Panshanger Park (bred).
**Middx**: Hampton Wick (3). Home Park (2). Limehouse Cut (3+).
**Surrey**: Kingston upon Thames (1). London Wetland Centre (bred but no count of pairs received), 634 young fledged, 476 of these ringed. Oxted SP (29). Richmond Park (1),

first breeding record for the site.
**In Lond**: Victoria Park, 25 on Apr 3rd.

## Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

**Status**: common summer visitor and passage migrant, breeding confined to rural areas.

One at Walthamstow FB from January 25th to 28th was the first record in that month since one at an unknown location in Middlesex on 29th in 1809. The first spring record was one at Creekmouth, Barking, on the fairly typical date of March 15th (four days later than last year). Then there were eight at Rainham Marshes on 17th and daily spring sightings from 29th. Spring passage was relatively light. There were 300 at Hilfield Park Res on April 17th, 600 there on 25th, and 300 at Island Barn Res on 27th. During spring passage as a whole, day counts of 100 or more were recorded from five sites (compared with 11 last year and six in 2015). Breeding was reported at 20 sites (up from 17 in 2016), with 11 of these having more than one nest.

The first large counts of the autumn passage were 200 at Canons Farm on August 31st and 200 at Staines Res on September 3rd. In total, there were 35 day counts of 100+ in autumn (compared with 23 last year and 99 in the exceptional autumn of 2015). The heaviest passage was in late September, with 3,000 mostly flying north-west at Q. Mother Res on 20th and 4,000 flying south at Canons Farm on 21st. The last record was of one at Tottenham Marshes on November 3rd. Breeding sites are given below, with the number of nests in brackets.

**Essex**: Brook Farm, Upminster (2). Mar Dyke Valley (6). Orsett Fen (1). Upminster (1+).
**Herts**: Brookmans Park (1). Munden Estate (1+). Stocker's Farm (1+).
**Middx**: Guy Lodge Farm (1). Kempton Park Race Course (2). South Lodge Farm (1). Strayfield Road (4). Ten Acre Wood, Yeading (1). Trent Park Equestrian Centre (3). Vicarage Farm (1).
**Surrey**: Canons Farm (1). Garsons Farm (5). Redhill (1). Richmond Park (2). Rushett Farm (1). Wimbledon Common (2).

## House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

**Status**: breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first bird of the year was at London Wetland Centre on March 29th (two days later than in 2016 and three days earlier than 2015). Small numbers were recorded in the next three days and then almost daily from April 7th. Spring passage was light, with ten counts of 50 or more birds in late April and May (compared with 15 in 2016 and 11 in 2015). The largest count was 250 at Brent Res on May 9th. There were 100 each at Hilfield Park Res and Broadwater Lake on April 25th, and 100 at Island Barn Res on 27th.

There were at least 144 active nests reported from 35 sites (compared with 108 nests at 21 sites in 2016, and 211 nests and 50 sites in 2015). Fourteen of the 2017 sites had been used in 2016 and 16 had been used in 2015, but only ten were active in all three years. Does this represent a lack of observer coverage rather than the birds' fickleness? Breeding Bird Survey data showed a 57% decrease in the breeding population in the South East from 1995-2016. The figure for active nests below is doubtless an underestimate because at several locations it was impossible to evaluate how many were in use. All records of active nests are given.



Post-breeding gatherings and early migrant flocks in August peaked with 500 birds at Rainham Marshes on August 30th. During September and early October there were 35 counts of 100 or more birds (compared with 29 in 2016 and 90 in 2015). The biggest movement was on September 21st, when 6,710 were counted flying south over Canons Farm between 07:15 and 13:15 and at least 1,200 flew over Upper College Farm. This Canons Farm count is probably the largest recorded in London, exceeding "more than 6,000" over Ongar on September 29th 1971 and 6,000 over Dartford on September 30th 2001 (Self A, 2014. *The Birds of London*. Bloomsbury, London.). Autumn passage closed with one at Brent Res on October 28th, but a mid-winter bird at Nore Hill on December 12th equalled the latest date ever, when one was seen at New Addington in 1974 (Self A, 2014. *The Birds of London*. Bloomsbury, London.). All breeding records are given below with number of nests in brackets.

**Essex**: Grays (19). Orsett Fen (11). Stapleford Tawney (4). Walthamstow FB (1+). Wanstead Flats (5). Warren Gorge (11).
**Herts**: Bell Bar (1+). Chess Valley (1+). Ellenbrook Fields (6). Hunton Bridge (1). Moor Lane (12). Stocker's Farm (1+). Watford (1).
**Middx**: Ashford Hospital (8). Staines (5+). Stanwell Moor (1+). Uxbridge (15). West Hendon, The Broadway (3).
**Bucks**: Iver (5).
**Kent**: Eynsford (1). Greenhithe (1+). Horton Kirby (1). Lullingstone Park (1). Sidcup (3). Swanley (1). Swanscombe Marshes (1).
**Surrey**: Berrylands (3). Caterham (1). Garsons Farm (1+). Holmethorpe SP (1+). Oxted (1).
**In Lond**: Knightsbridge (5). Limehouse (1). Primrose Hill (6). Regent's Park (5).

## Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica*

**Status**: rare vagrant.

One at Island Barn Res in cold, unpleasant weather on April 27th remained until the morning of 28th. It was the 20th record for London, and the 11th record of the 21st century, but only the fifth in April; most records have been in May.

**Surrey**: Island Barn Res, one from April 27th-28th (DMH *et al*).

## Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

**Status**: scarce migrant and winter visitor, but increasing breeder.

There was yet another increase in the number of sites where the species was recorded, up 8% in comparison with 2016. In Essex, this was particularly marked, up 26%. Breeding numbers (territories in brackets) were 10% up on 2016, but since they exclude birds singing in suitable habitat during the breeding season unless breeding was proven or behaviour is described as territorial, the figures are very likely to be an underestimate.

**Essex**: Reported at 49 sites. Belhus Woods CP (6). Brook Farm, Upminster (1). Mar Dyke Valley (5). Netherhall GP (4). Orsett Fen (3). Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (1). Rainham Marshes (71). Rainham LNR (5). Walthamstow Marshes (1). Walthamstow Wetlands (3). Warren Gorge (2).
**Herts**: Reported at 29 sites. Panshanger Park (1). Rye Meads (16). Stocker's Lake (2).
**Middx**: Reported at 28 sites. Bushy Park (1). Home Park (1). Springwell Lake (2). Staines

Moor (4). Stanwell Moor (1). Tottenham Marshes (1). Woodberry Wetlands (2).
**Bucks**: Reported at eight sites, with birds in suitable breeding habitat at five sites.
**Kent**: Reported at 16 sites. Crossness (15+). Swanscombe Marshes (14).
**Surrey**: Reported at 16 sites. Beddington Farmlands (5). London Wetland Centre (8+). Molesey Heath (1). South Norwood CP (1).
**In Lond**: Camley Street Natural Park, one present from March to December, sometimes singing and eventually ringed. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, one seen on many dates between March and October.

## Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

**Status**: common and widespread breeding resident.

There were at least 222 pairs reported this year (124 in 2016, 218 in 2015). The big increase in 2017 probably reflects a change in observer coverage rather than in status and even this figure is likely to be a major underestimate. Breeding Bird Survey data shows an 80% increase in the breeding population in London from 1995-2016. The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported the species in 87% of gardens surveyed in 2017, similar to the 88% in 2016. Below are records for sites where three or more were recorded (no. of territories/pairs in brackets), plus a summary of Inner London records and some of the higher counts.

**Essex**: Belhus Woods CP (6); 58 on Nov 19th. Mar Dyke Valley (13); 61 on Jun 2nd. Rainham Marshes (10), 40 on Dec 18th. Warren Gorge (3). Walthamstow Wetlands, 60 on Sep 15th.
**Herts**: Rye Meads (20); 60 on Jul 1st.
**Middx**: Home Park (4). Totteridge Valley, 79 on Sep 6th. Trent Park (3).
**Bucks**: Wraysbury GP, 33 on Feb 11th.
**Kent**: Foots Cray Meadows, 40 on Sep 17th. Sevenoaks WR, 40 on Nov 15th.
**Surrey**: Ashtead Common (8). Banstead Woods (13). Beddington Farmlands (5). Bookham Common (3). Canons Farm (3). Holmethorpe SP, 60 on Oct 2nd and Nov 2nd. Worcester Park (4).
**In Lond**: Hammersmith Cemetery (1). Holland Park (1). Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (1); 24 on Nov 20th. Mile End Park (2). St James's Park (1). Victoria Park (1).

## Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

**Status**: scarce passage migrant and former breeding summer visitor.

There were just five records this year (two in spring and three in autumn), down on last year's 11 records (nine in spring, two in autumn). This is the lowest total of records since 2009 when there were also just five records. The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 62% decrease in UK from 1995-2016. The last record of breeding in London is as far back as 1996. It appears that a zero year is fast approaching for this species. All records are given below.

**Essex**: Dagnam Park, one on Aug 10th (CJ). Wanstead Flats, one on Aug 12th (NC).
**Middx**: Brent Res, one on Aug 5th (ASMS).
**Kent**: Danson Park, one on Apr 28th (RBA).
**Surrey**: London Wetland Centre, one on May 10th (TWo).



## Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

**Status**: scarce passage migrant.

Last year's unprecedented autumn influx was not quite matched by the 15 records this year, but even this number would have been unthinkable just two years ago. It will be fascinating to see whether this higher level of records will be sustained, or even increase, in the near future. One remained from 2016, at Wanstead Flats, but was seen on only two dates in early January. The next was a March record in Inner London before the bulk of records which, as would be expected, were in autumn. Dates in autumn spanned from September 19th to November 13th; no birds attempted to winter this year. All records are given below.

**Yellow-browed Warbler records 2010-2017: 64 records, 65 birds**

| Year | 2010 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of records | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 38 | 15* |
| No. of birds | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 38 | 16* |

*ignoring one overwintering bird

**Essex**: Belhus Woods CP, one on Oct 17th. Gidea Park, one on Nov 15th. Hornchurch, one on Oct 24th. Rainham Marshes, one on Nov 13th, 15th & 16th. Wanstead Flats, one from 2016 on Jan 1st & 4th.
**Herts**: East End Green, one on Oct 12th.
**Middx**: Alexandra Park, one from Sep 30th to Oct 1st. Brent Res, one on Sep 28th. Cowley, one on Sep 27th. Rammey Marsh, two on Oct 29th.
**Kent**: Brookmill Park, one from Oct 16th–20th.
**Surrey**: Kings Wood, one on Oct 29th. Wimbledon Common, one on Sep 28th.
**In Lond**: Elephant & Castle, one on Sep 19th. Notting Hill, one on Mar 12th. St James's Park, one on Nov 13th.

### 2016 Alteration

**Bucks**: Q. Mother Res, one on Oct 8th. This record published in *LBR* 2016 confused this bird with one reported at Q. Mary Res on the same date. This change also affects the totals of Yellow-browed Warblers mentioned in the report.

## Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

**Status**: common and widespread passage migrant, declining as a breeding species in the London Area and UK-wide, which has caused it to be Amber-listed.

Spring migration started with a bird at Brookmill Park on March 7th, slightly earlier than March 12th in 2016. By the end of the month birds had been reported from a further 19 sites. The bulk of spring passage occurred during the middle of April. The Breeding Bird Survey showed a 30% decrease in the South East from 2016-17. Taking birds singing after mid-May as indicative of breeding, there were just 18 territories at 12 sites (32 territories at 21 sites in 2016). Autumn passage peaked during the last week of August. Three sites recorded birds in October, the last at London Wetland Centre on 30th. Below are all breeding records (no. of territories/singing males in brackets), plus a summary of Inner London records and some of the higher counts.

**Essex**: Belhus Woods CP (1). Orsett Fen (1). Wanstead Flats, singing male on May 20th.
**Herts**: Amwell NR (1). Ellenbrook Fields (2). Frogmore Lakes (1). Stanstead Innings (1). Sutton's Farm, Sandridge (2).
**Middx**: Whitewebbs Wood (1).
**Surrey**: Banstead Wood (1). Bookham Common (1). Headley Heath (6+). Holmethorpe SP (1); c10 on Apr 17th. Redhill (1).
**In Lond**: Birds were reported from Bankside, Barbican, Burgess Park, Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, Lincoln's Inn Fields, Mile End Park, Primrose Hill, Regent's Park, Rotherhithe, Southwark Park, St James's Park, Stave Hill, Victoria Embankment Gardens, Victoria Park and Wapping.

## Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

**Status**: common and widespread breeding summer visitor and passage migrant, and increasingly widespread in winter.

Reported from 82 sites during January and February, although there may be some overlap, as some of these sites were very close together. This was somewhat down on last year's 109 but still a good showing. The peak winter count was 25 at Creekmouth, Barking on February 26th. The peak of migration in spring was during the last ten days of March. The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 31% increase in London since last year, and a 162% increase in London from 1995-2016. The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported birds in 23% of gardens surveyed in 2017, slightly down on the 27% of the previous year.

High numbers were seen throughout the autumn but peaked in the second half of September. Birds were present at just 64 sites in November and December, compared with 98 in the same period last year, the largest count was 12 at Creekmouth, Barking on December 30th. Below are breeding records for sites where five or more were recorded (no. of territories in brackets), some high counts and a summary of Inner London records.

**Essex**: Belhus Woods CP (12). Fairlop Water (5). Grays Gorge (6). High Beach (7). Lion Gorge (5). Mar Dyke Valley (7). Netherhall GP (12). Orsett Fen (10). Rainham Marshes (16). Warren Gorge (5).
**Herts**: Amwell NR (7). Balls Wood (10+). Bricket Wood Common (7). Croxley Common Moor (5). Dobb's Weir (5). Frogmore Lakes (10). Rye Meads (25); 60 on Jul 1st & 8th. Seventy Acres Lake (5). Stocker's Lake (6).
**Middx**: Bayhurst Wood CP (7). Brent Res, 65 on Aug 12th. Fir & Pond Woods (5). Home Park (7). Horsenden Hill (5). Q. Mary GP, 621 ringed during the year, most in autumn. Springwell Lake (6). Staines Moor, 50+ on Aug 24th. Tottenham Marshes (16). Totteridge Valley (10+). Wormwood Scrubs (7).
**Bucks**: Langley Park (7).
**Kent**: Foots Cray Meadow (19). Swanscombe Marshes (7).
**Surrey**: Arbrook Common (10). Ashtead Common (12). Banstead Heath (18). Banstead Woods (14). Beddington Farmlands (12); 50+ on Sep 15th. Bookham Common (24). Canons Farm (5). Esher Common (8). Headley Heath (8). Holmethorpe SP (7). Molesey Heath (20). Redhill (6). Riddlesdown (9). South Norwood CP (6). The Ledges, Esher (6). Worcester Park (9).
**In Lond**: Recorded in the first winter period from Brompton Cemetery, Stave Hill/Russia Dock Woodlands and St James's Park. Passage birds recorded at 18 sites. Recorded in the second winter period from Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, St James's Park, Stave Hill and Surrey Water.



### Sub-species: Siberian Chiffchaff *P. c. tristis*

**Status**: rare winter visitor and passage migrant.

This species is prone to runs of good years followed by years with no records and 2017 marks the fifth year in a row of occurrence in London. There were six birds this year, four in the first two months of the year, followed by singles in October and November. Seemingly none overwintered from 2016 although the birds found in early January may have already been present but not detected. There is an additional record from 2016. There were also a number of un-submitted records which are listed in App III.

**Essex**: Creekmouth, Barking, one from Jan 3rd-29th (JPa, DSh). Walthamstow Wetlands, one on several dates from Feb 26th to Apr 9th (JPa *et al*).
**Middx**: Broadwater Lake, one to two on several dates from Jan 8th to Feb 17th (PLw *et al*). East India Dock Basin, one on Oct 24th (JKA, RJW).
**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands, one on Jan 7th & 8th (GWJ), Jan 17th & 20th (DKC), and Nov 11th & 12th (NGa *et al*).

#### 2016 Addition

**Essex**: Waterworks NR, one from Mar 23rd to Apr 21st (JPa *et al*).

## Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

**Status**: common and widespread migrant and breeding summer visitor.

The first birds of the year arrived at Rainham Marshes on March 25th and Rye Meads on the 31st. The peak arrival period was during the last week of April and first week of May. The Breeding Bird Survey showed an 18% decrease in the UK from 2011-2016; for sites where we have reports of breeding for both this year and last year, numbers were fairly similar to last year. A territorial male was present for 91 days at Regent's Park but probably failed to attract a mate.

Migration was prolonged with peak numbers being recorded during the very beginning of September. Unusually there were no October records, with the last of the year at Rye Meads on September 27th. Below are breeding records for sites where two or more were recorded (no. of territories/singing males after mid-May in brackets), plus all Inner London records and some of the higher counts.

**Essex**: Rainham Marshes (112).
**Herts**: Amwell NR (3); 15+ on Apr 24th. Rye Meads (64); 17 on Apr 7th.
**Kent**: Crayford Marshes (2). Swanscombe Marshes (5).
**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands (2). London Wetland Centre (2).
**In Lond**: Bankside, one on May 2nd. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, one on Apr 23rd and two on 30th. Regent's Park (1); two on Apr 7th. Stave Hill/Russia Dock Woodland, one on May 10th.

## Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

**Status**: common and widespread passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

The first birds of the year turned up at Rye Meads and Stocker's Lake on the typical date of April 2nd. Migration peaked around the last week of April and first week of May. The Breeding Bird Survey recorded a 36% increase in the South East from last year; the figures below show a 13% increase for sites for which we have records. The largest numbers recorded during autumn passage were in July and the first half of August. The last birds of the year were recorded at Rye Meads and Brent Res on September 30th. Below are breeding records for sites where two or more were recorded (no. of territories/singing males after mid-May in brackets), some high counts and a summary of Inner London records.

**Essex**: Belhus Woods CP (9). Bow Creek Ecology Park (2). Brook Farm, Upminster (2). Hooks Marsh Lake (3+). Mar Dyke Valley (11). Orsett Fen (2). Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (4+). Rainham Marshes (206). Walthamstow Wetlands (22). Warren Gorge (5).
**Herts**: Amwell NR (3). Hilfield Park Res (3+). Rye Meads (133).
**Middx**: Home Park (3). Horsenden Hill (3). Q. Mary GP (7). Tottenham Marshes (2). Woodberry Wetlands, 50 on Jul 29th and Aug 4th.
**Kent**: Crossness (65). Sevenoaks WR (2+). Swanscombe Marshes (4+).
**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands (47). Esher Common (5). London Wetland Centre (12). Mayflower Park (6). Richmond Park (10). South Norwood CP (4). Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) (10+).
**In Lond**: Burgess Park, one on May 14th and Jun 11th. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (1+); five singing males on May 15th, brood seen on Jul 24th. Limehouse, one on May 11th. Mile End Park (1). Regent's Park (7). Rotherhithe, one on Apr 22nd and three on 30th. St James's Park, singles on Apr 21st, May 10th & 12th, three on 19th, one on 30th and at least three on Jun 29th. Stave Hill, one on Jun 7th.

## Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*

**Status**: rare summer visitor and passage migrant.

There was a singing bird at Rainham Marshes this year with breeding suspected but not confirmed. This follows singing birds at this site each year from 2012-2014 and is the first London record since 2014. With just six records so far this decade we seem to be in a downturn of fortunes for this scarce visitor (18 records in the 1990s and nine in the 2000s).

**Essex**: Rainham Marshes, singing male from May 25th to Jun 2nd (mo).

## Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

**Status**: scarce passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

The first of the year was on April 5th at Rainham Marshes, a little earlier than last year (April 8th). Excluding breeding sites, birds were seen or heard during April and May at Crossness, Dagenham Chase, Darlands Lake, Ewell, Fairlop Waters, Frays Valley LNR, Hampstead Heath, Hall Marsh Scrape, Island Barn Res, London Wetland Centre, Minet CP, Mudchute Farm, Priest Hill, Purfleet, Riddlesdown, Sanderstead, Sevenoaks WR, Stanwell Moor, Swanscombe Marshes and Uxbridge. Breeding was likely at the eight sites shown below, which is near the average for recent years, though many once-occupied sites no longer support this species.

The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 39% increase in the UK since last year, but a 29% decrease from 2011-2016. There have been wide fluctuations in these counts since 1994, with no clear trend. As is typical, birds melt away in the autumn and the last records of the year were also the only records in August, at Rainham Marshes on the 5th and Chelsham on the 31st. This was considerably lower than the five autumn records from five sites in 2016. Below are breeding estimates (no. of territories/singing males after mid-May).

**Essex**: Orsett Fen (1). Rainham Marshes (6).
**Herts**: Rye Meads (3). Shafford Farm (2).
**Middx**: Fray's Farm Meadows (1). Rammey Marsh (1+). Staines Moor (1). Totteridge Valley (2).

## Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

**Status**: common summer breeding visitor and passage migrant, increasingly common and widespread in winter.

There were 127 wintering birds recorded from 98 sites during January and February, which is fewer than the 144 reported from 100 sites in the same period in 2016. New arrivals were obvious from mid-March and migration peaked during the first ten days of April. The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey showed them in 49% of gardens surveyed in 2017, similar to the 50% in 2016. The Breeding Bird Survey suggests that the increase in numbers, which started in the 1980s, may be slowing down. Although there was a 181% increase in London from 1995-2016, from 2016-17, the increase was only 8% in the South East. Autumn migration peaked at the end of August but there were still good numbers throughout September. There were fewer birds recorded, and from fewer sites, in the second winter period than in the first winter period: 84 birds recorded from 57 sites in November and December (105 reported from 77 sites in the same period in 2016). Below are breeding records for sites where five or more were recorded (no. of territories/singing males after mid-May in brackets), some high autumn counts and a summary of Inner London records.

**Essex**: Ingrebourne Valley, 58 on Mar 30th. Rainham Marshes (19). Mar Dyke Valley (18). Orsett Fen (10). Walthamstow Wetlands (11). Warren Gorge (5).
**Herts**: Rye Meads (52); 60 on Jul 8th.
**Middx**: Fir & Pond Woods (5). Home Park (26). Markfield Park (5). Q. Mary GP, c75 on Sep 9th. Tottenham Marshes (27). Totteridge Valley (8). Wormwood Scrubs (7+).
**Kent**: Lullingstone Park (10).
**Surrey**: Arbrook Common (9). Ashtead Common (30). Banstead Woods (20). Beddington Farmlands (30). Bookham Common (30). Canons Farm (7). Esher Common (6). Headley Heath (14). London Wetland Centre (9). Mayflower Park (7). Molesey Heath (21). Morden Cemetery (8). South Norwood CP (10). The Ledges, Esher (11).
**In Lond**: Reported from Bermondsey, Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, Islington, Kensal Town, Meanwhile Gardens, Mile End, Mile End Park, Pimlico Gardens, Ranelagh Gardens, Regent's Park, Southwark Park, St James's Park, St John's Wood, Stave Hill/Russia Dock Woodland, Victoria Embankment, Victoria Park, Wapping and West Kilburn.

## Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

**Status**: widespread passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

The first bird of the year arrived at Sevenoaks WR on April 1st and at a further three sites by the end of that week; spring migration peaked in the first third of May. Breeding records showed a good increase over last year, with 93+ territories/singing males after mid-May (74 in 2016, 118 in 2015 and 92 in 2014). The Breeding Bird Survey has too small a sample in London for trends to be produced, but showed that there was a 38% decrease in the South East from 1995-2016. Autumn migration peaked in the first half of August; birds were noted at 12 sites during September but just two in October, with the last birds being seen at London Wetland Centre on 23rd and Holmethorpe SP on 29th. Below are all breeding records (no. of territories/singing males after mid-May in brackets) and all Inner London records.

**Essex**: Belhus Woods CP (2). Chigwell (1). Chingford Plain (1). Fairlop Waters (1). Grays Cemetery (1). Hall Marsh Scrape (1). Mar Dyke Valley (1). North Weald Bassett (1). Pimp Hall Park (1). Rainham Marshes (1). Walthamstow Marshes (1). Walthamstow Wetlands (1). Warren Gorge (1).

**Herts**: Amwell NR (1). Helicon Lake (1). Hilfield Park Res (1). Maple Lodge NR (2+). North Mymms Park (1). Panshanger Park (1). Pynesfield GP (1). Rye Meads (16). Seventy Acres Lake (1). Stocker's Lake/Bury Lake (3). Troy Mill Lake (1). Tyttenhanger Farm (1). Tyttenhanger GP (1). West Hyde (1). Wildhill (1).

**Middx**: Brent Res (1). Broadwater Lake (1). Rammey Marsh (1). Ruislip Woods (1). Springwell Lake (1). Tottenham Marshes (1). Trent Park (1). Yeading Brook Meadows (1).

**Bucks**: Northmoor Hill Wood (1).

**Kent**: Crossness (1). Crystal Palace Park (1).

**Surrey**: Ashtead Common (7). Banstead Woods (2). Bookham Common (13). Box Hill (2). Canons Farm (1). Cobham (1). Headley Heath (7). Holmethorpe SP (1). Hogsmill SW (1). Molesey Heath (4). Redhill (1). Richmond Park (1). Wimbledon Common (1).

**In Lond**: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, singles on April 27th-28th & 30th, two on May 2nd and one on Jul 4th. Pimlico, one on May 1st. Regent's Park, one or two on nine dates between Jul 25th and Aug 11th. Southwark one on Apr 27th-28th and May 2nd & 4th-5th.

## Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

**Status**: widespread passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

The first of the year was on the moderately early date of March 27th at Horton CP; eight more appeared in the next two weeks and birds were arriving daily from April 13th. Peak spring arrivals were during the last ten days of April. The Breeding Bird Survey had too small a sample to produce any London trends, but there has been a 16% increase in the UK from 2006-2016. Breeding numbers reported similarly increased to 64+ territories/singing males noted after mid-May (52 in 2016 and 50 in 2015). Autumn passage peaked in the last half of August and birds were noted in ones and twos from 24 sites in September, with the only October record from Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park on the 1st. There was also a winter record in gardens in Richmond from December 18th which stayed into 2018. This was identified as the race *blythi* (see below for details). Below are all breeding records (no. of territories/singing males after mid-May in brackets) and Inner London records.



**Essex**: Belhus Woods CP (1). Chingford Plain (1). Fairlop Waters (1). Mar Dyke Valley (4). Orient Way, Leyton (1). Rainham Marshes (5). Roding Valley Meadows NR (1). Stanford Rivers (1). Waterworks NR (1). Walthamstow Marshes (1). Walthamstow Wetlands (1). Wanstead Flats (1).

**Herts**: Angerland Common (1). Bayfordbury (1). Coopers Green GP (1). Ellenbrook Fields (1). Frogmore Lakes (3+). Maple Cross (1). Nashe's Farm (1). North Mymms Park (1). Rye Meads (3). The Commons LNR (1). Tyttenhanger Farm (1). Tyttenhanger GP (1+).

**Middx**: Horsenden Hill (1). Roxeth RG (1). Ten Acre Wood, Yeading (1). Tottenham Marshes (2). Totteridge Valley (4+). Wormwood Scrubs (2).

**Bucks**: Colnbrook (1).

**Kent**: Braeburn Park (1). Scadbury Park (1). Upper College Farm (1).

**Surrey**: Ashtead Common (2). Banstead Wood (2). Beddington Farmlands (1). Ewell (1). Farthing Downs (1). Hogsmill SW (1). Holmethorpe SP (1). Horton CP (1). Island Barn Res (1). South Norwood CP (1). Tolworth Court Farm (1). Worcester Park (2).

**In Lond**: Regent's Park, one on May 10th, up to three on four dates in July, up to two on five dates in August. Russia Dock Woodland, one on Aug 21st. Southwark, one on Apr 24th. St James's Park, one on May 10th.

### Sub-species: *S. c. blythi*

One was in a garden in Richmond from December 18th until the year's end (FJM). The identification as '*blythi*' was confirmed by an examination of DNA evidence at the University of Aberdeen, and this was the first confirmed record of this subspecies in the London Area; however identification cannot yet be confirmed by plumage features alone and it is thought to be a regular scarce migrant to the UK (*British Birds* 110: 8-26). It is believed likely that all overwintering birds are either this subspecies or one of the other eastern races and this is one of just a handful of Lesser Whitethroats to have wintered in the London Area.

## Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

**Status**: common and widespread passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

One in a West Drayton garden on January 25th means that this species has been seen in five winters out of six since the first winter records in January 2012. Normal spring migration started on March 27th with one at Horton CP. They were seen daily from April 7th and migration peaked during the last week of April. The Breeding Bird Survey had too small a sample to produce London trends, but there has been a 46% increase in the South East from 1995-2016. Numbers from sites where we have regular breeding counts show some losses and some gains. The largest numbers recorded in autumn were during the last two weeks of August. There were four records in October, with the last at Colnbrook on the 14th. Below are breeding records for sites where ten or more were recorded (no. of territories/singing males after mid-May in brackets), some high counts and all Inner London records.

**Essex**: Belhus Woods CP (11). Netherhall GP, 25 on May 12th. Mar Dyke Valley (14). Rainham Marshes (101). Wanstead Flats, 24 on Aug 5th.

**Herts**: Rye Meads (31).

**Middx**: Tottenham Marshes (21). Totteridge Valley (20+); 40+ on Aug 31st.
**Kent**: Crayford Marshes, c50 on Aug 5th. Crossness LNR (13). Swanscombe Marshes (10).
**Surrey**: Ashtead Common (8). Beddington Farmlands (53). Bookham Common (24). Canons Farm (14). Holmethorpe SP, 32 on May 2nd. Priest Hill, 32 on May 1st. Richmond Park (19). South Norwood CP (20).
**In Lond**: Burgess Park (1). Canada Water, singles on Apr 22nd and Aug 20th. Holland Park, one on Apr 15th. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, one on May 2nd. Meanwhile Gardens, one on May 13th. Mile End Park, one on Apr 28th. Regent's Park (1-2); six on Aug 7th, and four on Sep 12th. Southwark, two on Apr 28th, one on May 3rd-4th and 10th-11th. Victoria Park, two on Apr 4th.

## Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata*

**Status**: rare breeding species, scarce passage migrant and winter visitor, subject to large fluctuations in abundance following severe weather.

Four birds seen at the end of 2016 seem to have made it through to the New Year; singles at Beddington Farmlands and Wimbledon Common and two at Richmond Park. Another bird appeared in February, at Holmethorpe SP. In August singles were trapped at Kempton NR and Q. Mary GP. During the last three months of the year 16 birds were recorded at eight sites. So we have 19 new birds at 11 sites in 2017, which is the highest number of birds in recent years. All records are shown below.

**Essex**: Rainham Marshes, one on Oct 14th & 18th.
**Middx**: Bushy Park, two on Oct 30th, Nov 1st and Dec 5th, one on Dec 15th. Kempton NR, one on Aug 13th. Q. Mary GP, one on Aug 26th. Staines Moor, one on Oct 10th.
**Kent**: Swanscombe Marshes, one on Dec 26th.
**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands, one from 2016 remained until Feb 4th, a male on Nov 4th. Esher Common, at least two on Dec 4th. Hogsmill OS, one on Oct 27th. Holmethorpe SP, singles on Feb 28th and Mar 2nd. Richmond Park, two from 2016 were seen on Jan 2nd with one still on 14th, then present again from Oct 13th, with peak count of seven, including three males, on Nov 3rd. Wimbledon Common, one from 2016 was seen from Feb 15th to Mar 9th.

## Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*

**Status**: scarce passage migrant and winter visitor; rare breeder.

Reports came from 116 sites during the year (120 in 2016, 123 in 2015). See table below for details. Breeding was not confirmed this year.

**Firecrest: number of sites**

| | Essex | Herts | Middx | Bucks | Kent | Surrey | In Lond | Totals |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jan-Mar | 14 | 3 | 9 | 1 | 5 | 17 | 3 | 52 |
| Oct-Dec | 23 | 11 | 15 | 1 | 8 | 14 | 6 | 78 |
| Jan-Dec | 29 | 13 | 23 | 3 | 9 | 31 | 8 | 116 |

During the first winter period, 12 sites had birds for prolonged periods: Bookham Common, Grovelands Park, Highams Park, Lamorbey Park, London Wetland Centre, Oxleas Wood, Stave Hill, Scratch Wood, Tooting Common, Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park, Wanstead Park and Woodford Green. There were four at Warley Place NR on March 31st and three at Kelsey Park on March 5th. Most birds had gone by mid-April.

In Surrey, birds were present at four sites in the period late-April to June, with singing males at two of these locations. Elsewhere, birds were recorded at seven sites in July and early August.

After a bird at Alexandra Park on August 27th, records were then almost daily. There were five in Oxleas Woods for most of September. During October to December, 15 sites had birds for prolonged periods: Belhus Woods CP, Brookmill Park, Grays Gorge, Greenwich Park, Highams Park, Lamorbey Park, Leyton Flats, Mar Dyke Valley, Oxleas Wood, Q. Mary GP, Rainham Marshes, Regent's Park, Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park, Trent Park and Wimbledon Common. There were four in Dulwich Woods on October 21st and four at Waterworks NR on November 28th.

## Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

**Status**: breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

There were 241 territories reported this year, a significant increase on the 146 reported in 2016 and the 187 in 2015. Along with many other common birds, it must be massively under-recorded. The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported the species in 34% of gardens surveyed in 2017, down from 45% in 2016. The Breeding Bird Survey reports a 49% increase in the South East from 1995-2016.

Breeding records are given below for sites where two or more territories or singing males (number in brackets) were recorded, along with some of the higher counts and a summary for Inner London.

**Essex**: 30 territories. Belhus Woods CP (4); 30 on Nov 6th. Grays Cemetery (2). Mar Dyke Valley, 32 on Oct 19th. Upminster (3).
**Herts**: 31 territories. Rye Meads (4); 35 on Nov 19th.
**Middx**: 68 territories. Denham Quarry Lake (3). Fir & Pond Wood (3). Grovelands Park (2). Home Park (2). Monken Hadley Common (3). Parkside Farm/Res (2). Pymmes Park (2). Q. Mary GP, 60+ on Oct 28th. Stanwell Moor (3). Strayfield Road (2). Trent Park (2). Woodberry Wetlands (2).
**Bucks**: Six territories.
**Kent**: 11 territories. Oxleas Wood, 35+ on Sep 29th.
**Surrey**: 81 territories. Ashtead Common (3). Banstead Woods (15); 27 on Oct 24th. Canons Farm (4). Esher Common (5). Kings Wood (6). Purley Beeches (2). Sanderstead (3). Selsdon Park GC (5). South Norwood Lake (2).
**In Lond**: 20 territories. Holland Park (5). Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (6).

## Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

**Status**: abundant breeding resident with influxes in autumn and winter.

Breeding counts from those regular sites with a high number of territories were mostly similar to last year, although more locations reported ten or more territories than in 2016. The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 10% decrease in London since last year, following a 44% increase in London from 1995-2016. The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported them in 82% of gardens surveyed in 2017, the same as in 2016. Breeding records are given

below for sites where ten or more territories or singing males (number in brackets) were recorded, along with some of the higher counts.

**Essex**: Belhus Woods CP (15). Grays Gorge (13). Hangman's Wood (10). Mar Dyke Valley (21); 24 on Dec 1st. Orsett Fen (16). Rainham Marshes (73). Warren Gorge (8).
**Herts**: Bricket Wood Common (11). Cassiobury Park (18). Croxley Moor (13). Ellenbrook Fields (12). Frogmore Lakes (15). Maple Lodge NR (33). Munden Estate (13). Rickmansworth Aquadrome (14). Rye Meads (65); 43 on Dec 9th. Stocker's Lake (1). Woodoaks Farm, Maple Cross (14).
**Middx**: Bayhurst Wood CP (13). Broadwater Lake (50). Home Park (52). Queen's Wood (19). Ruislip Woods (14). Springwell Lake (17). Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park (17).
**Kent**: Ladywell Fields (13+). Sevenoaks WR (20+).
**Surrey**: Arbrook Common (14). Ashtead Common (30). Banstead Woods (60). Beddington Farmlands (118). Canons Farm (49). Dulwich Park (23). Esher Common (16). Holmethorpe SP, 24 on Nov 16th. Molesey Heath (27). The Ledges, Esher (20).
**In Lond**: Mile End Park (10+). Victoria Park, 14 on Apr 15th.

## Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

**Status**: common breeding resident.

There were at least 127 pairs/territories reported this year, an increase on 2016 (109 pairs) and 2015 (99 pairs). There were reports from 344 sites, slightly more than in 2016 (340). The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported them from 53% of gardens surveyed in 2017, similar to the 57% in 2016 (but much higher than the 1995 figure of 21%). The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 49% increase in the South East from 1995-2016. Below are all breeding records of two or more territories/singing males (number in brackets), plus a summary of Inner London records and some of the higher counts.

**Essex**: 33 sites, seven pairs/territories.
**Herts**: 57 sites, 17 pairs/territories.
**Middx**: 86 sites. 47 pairs. Grovelands Park (5). Hilly Fields Park (3). Home Park (2). Laleham Park (2). Monken Hadley Common (5). Trent Park (5). Whitewebbs Wood (2).
**Bucks**: Eight sites, three pairs/territories.
**Kent**: 54 sites, ten pairs/territories. Foots Cray Meadows (3). Kelsey Park, ten on Mar 14th. Lullingstone Park (2). Oxleas Wood (2); 13 on Aug 31st.
**Surrey**: 99 sites, 42 pairs/territories. Arbrook Common (2). Ashtead Common (2). Banstead Woods (7); 14 on Feb 24th. Canons Farm (4).
**In Lond**: Seven sites, one pair/territory. Burgess Park, one on Jul 5th. Holland Park, one on Mar 4th & 12th. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, up to two on several dates between Jan 2nd and Jun 2nd, with four on Feb 19th. Kensington Green, one on Mar 11th. Regent's Park (1). St James's Park, singles on Aug 7th, Sep 26th and Oct 25th. Victoria Park, singles on Nov 2nd & 6th and Dec 3rd.

## Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

**Status**: common breeding resident.

There were 66+ pairs recorded, compared with 79+ pairs/territories in 2016. Reports came from 232 sites (211 in 2016 and 226 in 2015). Below are all breeding records (no. of territories/singing males in brackets), plus a summary for Inner London records and some of the higher counts.



**Essex**: 38 sites, four pairs. Leyton Flats (1). Thorndon CP North (1). Wake Valley Pond (1). Warley Place NR (1).
**Herts**: 54 sites, 14 pairs. Amwell NR (1). Bottom Wood (1). Bricket Wood Common (1). Brookmans Park (1). Bury Lake (1). Cassiobury Park (1). Colney Heath (1). Frogmore Lakes (1). Garden Wood (1). Lower Woodside (1). Maple Lodge NR (1). Northaw Great Wood (1). Pond Wood (1). Stocker's Lake (1).
**Middx**: 50 sites, 20 pairs. Broadwater Lake (1). Fir & Pond Woods (1). Forty Hill (1). Grovelands Park (1). Highgate Woods (1). Hilly Fields Park (1). Isleworth (1). Lavender Hill Cemetery (1). Monken Hadley Common (1). Parkside Farm (1). Ruislip Woods (1). Springwell Lake (1). Stanwell Moor (1). Syon Park (1). Totteridge Valley (1+). Trent Park (4). Whitewebbs Wood (1).
**Bucks**: Eight sites, one pair. Northmoor Hill Wood (1).
**Kent**: 34 sites, two pairs. Hazlewood (1). Oxleas Wood (1). Sevenoaks WR, 6+ on Aug 27th.
**Surrey**: 42 sites, 24 pairs. Ashtead Common (1). Banstead Woods (10). Bookham Common (1). Canons Farm (5). Cobham (1). Holmethorpe SP (1). Kings Wood (2). Redhill (1). Richmond Park (1). Sydenham Hill Wood (1).
**In Lond**: Six sites, one pair. Battersea Park, one on Jan 18th. Hammersmith Cemetery, one on Sep 22nd. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, three on Jan 12th, with singles on other dates. Regent's Park (1). St James's Park, one on Nov 13th. Victoria Park, one on Nov 4th.

## Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

**Status**: common, but declining, breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 59% decrease in London from 1995-2016. The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported the species in 76% of gardens, up slightly from 73% in 2016 but much lower than the 98% figure in 1995. Many more breeding records would be welcome to help monitor what seems like a continuing decline. Autumn passage over London was light, with the peak date being October 28th when 3,214 birds were counted flying west or south-west from eight sites. On October 30th, 1,953 migrating passage birds were counted from five sites. Below are some of the highest counts, a summary of the most important passage numbers and some breeding records.

**Essex**: Gallions Reach, 580 on Oct 28th. Hangman's Wood (8). KGV Res, 2,000 on Aug 1st. Leyton Flats, 500 on Nov 3rd. Mar Dyke Valley (3). Rainham Marshes, 500+ on Jan 27th, 2,000 on Feb 15th, 1,000 on Aug 28th, Nov 16th and Dec 14th. Wanstead Flats, 600 on Sep 25th.
**Herts**: Amwell NR, 900+ on Jan 8th. Broxbourne Woods, 300+ on Dec 23rd. Rye Meads, 930 on Nov 1st. Stocker's Lake, 450 on Dec 3rd. Tyttenhanger GP, 450+ on Oct 28th.
**Middx**: Alexandra Park, 250+ on Oct 28th. Brent Res, 504 on Oct 28th and 769 on 31st. Home Park (4). Staines Res, 300 on Aug 23rd. Stanwell, 800+ on Jun 16th. Ten Acre Wood, 1,100 W on Oct 28th. Tottenham Marshes, 425 W on Oct 31st.
**Bucks**: Q. Mother Res, c170 on Jul 4th.
**Kent**: Blackheath Village, 500 on Oct 1st. Crayford Marshes, 1,000 on Jul 19th. Greenwich Park, 650 W on Oct 30th.

**Surrey**: Barn Elms PF, 650 on Oct 27th. Beddington Farmlands, 1,500 on Mar 4th, 2,000+ in late October and 4,000+ in December. Hogsmill SW, 450 on Jul 15th. Morden Hall Park, 609 SW on Oct 28th. Richmond Park, 760 W on Oct 27th and 640 W on 30th.
**In Lond**: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, 100+ on Aug 8th and 128 on Oct 11th. Primrose Hill, 102 W/SW on Oct 15th. Vauxhall Bridge, 400 in roost on Sep 17th.

## Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

**Status**: regular passage migrant, but never common.

Spring passage started on March 17th with one at Beddington Farmlands and continued to May 12th with the last at Rainham Marshes. Around 69 birds were seen, similar to the 70 spring migrants last year. The passage peak day count was seven birds on April 23rd.

In autumn 25 birds were recorded (70 last year, 24 in 2015). Autumn passage began on September 26th with a female seen briefly at Wanstead Flats and continued to November 12th at London Wetland Centre. Peak autumn passage was low this year with no more than two birds being seen on the same day, compared with 13 last year and eight in 2015.

**In Lond**: Primrose Hill, singles on Oct 22nd and Nov 1st. Regent's Park singles on April 15th and Oct 30th.

## Blackbird *Turdus merula*

**Status**: abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 30% decrease in London from 1995-2016. The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported them in 100% of gardens, similar to the 99% in 2016. More breeding counts would be welcomed, as well as any records suggesting autumn movements.

Breeding records are given below at sites where five or more were recorded (no. of territories/singing males in brackets), as well as higher counts.

**Essex**: Grays Cemetery (8). Hangman's Wood (9). Mar Dyke Valley (9). Orsett Fen (10). Rainham Marshes (23). Warren Gorge (10).
**Herts**: Amwell NR (5). Rye Meads (22); 86 on Dec 9th.
**Middx**: Home Park (43); 43 on Jun 1st. Q. Mary GP, 50 on Dec 2nd.
**Kent**: Chipstead Lake, 48 on Dec 1st. Darenth Lakes, 75 on Jan 6th. Sevenoaks WR, 52 on Jan 4th. Swanscombe Marshes, 50 on Jan 25th.
**Surrey**: Ashtead Common (24). Banstead Wood (25). Beddington Farmlands (46); 46 on Jun 1st. Canons Farm (26). Esher Common (7). Holmethorpe SP, 68 on Jan 30th. Horniman Museum (5). London Wetland Centre (9). Mayflower Park (6). Molesey Heath (13). The Ledges, Esher (13).
**In Lond**: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, 27 on Jun 2nd. Limehouse, 40 on Apr 22nd. Victoria Park (10); 30 on Jan 14th.

## Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

**Status**: regular passage migrant and winter visitor.

There were 37 records of counts of 200 or more birds. Of these 15 were at the start of the year, with the largest count being 1,160 at Swanscombe Marshes on January 2nd. The last bird of the first winter period was at Pinner Park Farm on April 25th.

Returning birds first appeared at Kensal Green, Wallington and Wimbledon Common on September 27th. Autumn migration peaked at the end of October and in mid-November. There were 22 counts of 200 or more at the end of the year, with the peak being 1,180 over Regent's Park on Nov 14th.



**Essex**: Creekmouth, Barking, 431 on Oct 31st. Fairlop Waters, 300 on Jan 7th. Holyfield Lake, 215 on Jan 2nd. Orsett Fen, 362 on Jan 26th. Upminster, 324 on Dec 18th. Walthamstow Marshes, 250 on Jan 26th,
**Herts**: Highfield Farm, 200 on Feb 19th. Rye Meads, 402 on Oct 28th. St Albans, 200 on May 5th. Tyttenhanger Farm, 220 on Feb 22nd. Tyttenhanger GP, 200 on Feb 10th.
**Middx**: Brent Res, 210 on Nov 14th. Hampstead Heath, 300+ on Oct 30th.
**Kent**: Swanscombe Marshes, 1,160 on Jan 2nd.
**Surrey**: Banstead Wood, 560+ on Oct 31st. Barn Elms PF, 299 on Nov 13th. Beddington Farmlands, 295 on Oct 28th. Brockwell Park, 300+ on Oct 31st. London Wetland Centre, 203 on Oct 30th. Morden Hall Park, 202 on Nov 18th. Richmond Park, 360 on Oct 30th.
**In Lond**: Islington, 200+ on Jan 22nd. Regent's Park, 1,180 on Nov 14th.

## Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

**Status**: common passage migrant and winter visitor.

The start of the year had generally low numbers, and the peak count was 406 at Orsett Fen on January 26th. There were no counts over 100 after the end of February and the last was at Morden Hall Park on April 30th.

*Redwing. (Tony Duckett)*

Numbers were higher at the end of the year than at the start: of the 69 counts of more than 200, 48 were in the second winter period. This compares to 50 counts of 200 or more last year, with 29 in the second winter period. The first returning bird was at Hilly Fields on September 20th. Autumn passage was concentrated in late October to early November, with 1,655 birds recorded over Staines Moor on October 28th and around 2,550 over Banstead Wood on 31st.

**Essex**: Orsett Fen, 406 on Jan 26th. Mar Dyke Valley, 265 on Oct 19th. Rainham Marshes, 520 on Oct 23rd. Thorndon CP South, 200 on Feb 25th. Upminster, 237 on Dec 18th. Wanstead Flats, 300 on Oct 28th.
**Herts**: Highfield Farm, 300 on Feb 2nd. Ellensbrook Fields, c200 on Feb 19th. Oxhey Park, 200 on Oct 31st. Tyttenhanger GP, 200 on Nov 18th.
**Middx**: Alexandra Park, 300 on Oct 31st. Brent Res, 581 on Nov 7th. Staines Moor, 1,655 on Oct 28th. Ten Acre Wood, Yeading, 260 on Oct 28th. Woodberry Wetlands, 450 on Oct 28th and 400 on Nov 7th.
**Kent**: Greenwich Park, 510 W on Oct 28th.
**Surrey**: Banstead Wood, 2,550 on Oct 31st. Canons Farm, 400 on Feb 8th. Chipstead, 800 on Oct 29th. Headley Heath, 483 on Nov 3rd. London Wetland Centre, 500 on Dec 2nd. Morden Hall Park, 975 on Oct 28th. Nore Hill, 400 on Oct 31st. Richmond Park, 1,030 on Oct 9th.
**In Lond**: Regent's Park, 850 on Oct 23rd.

## Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

**Status**: common, but locally declining, breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 32% decrease in London from 1995-2016 but a 4% increase in England from 2016-17. The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported them in 69% of gardens surveyed in 2017 (67% in 2016). In general, the number of territories reported this year appears similar to those of last year. As in 2015, we had unusual reports of passage of large groups of Song Thrushes in Surrey in mid-October.

Below are breeding records for sites where five or more were recorded (no. of territories/singing males in brackets) and some of the higher counts. There were no breeding records in Inner London this year.

**Essex**: Mar Dyke Valley (13). Rainham Marshes (7); 19 on Oct 19th. Wanstead Flats, 20 on Oct 23rd.
**Herts**: Rye Meads (10); 21 on Dec 9th.
**Middx**: Home Park (13). Lake Farm CP, 42 on Oct 26th. Tottenham Marshes (14). Wormwood Scrubs (5).
**Kent**: Chipstead Lake, 22 on Jan 24th.
**Surrey**: Arbrook Common (8). Ashtead Common (10). Barn Elms PF, 73 on Oct 15th. Beddington Farmlands (19). Brockwell Park, c100 over on Oct 31st. Molesey Heath (11). Richmond Park, 103 over on Oct 15th and 88 over on 16th. Riddlesdown (5). The Ledges, Esher (5).
**In Lond**: Holland Park, five on Apr 29th. Regent's Park, six on Jan 17th.



## Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

**Status**: common breeding resident.

The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 55% decrease in London from 1995-2016. The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported them in 27% of gardens surveyed in 2017, similar to the 26% in 2016.

We have listed the number of territories for each sector this year, and there seem to be some differences between sectors. The number of sites recording two or more breeding birds has decreased from 16 in 2016 to eight this year, however it is similar to the nine sites in 2015. More regular breeding reports would be very welcome. Below are sector totals, breeding records for sites where two or more were recorded (no. of territories/singing males in brackets), plus all Inner London breeding records and some of the higher counts.

**Essex**: 18 territories. Belhus Woods CP (3). Mar Dyke Valley (4). Thorndon CP South, 25 on Oct 8th. Walthamstow Wetlands, 21 on Oct 8th.
**Herts**: Ten territories. Hatfield Park, 15 on Sep 27th. Tyttenhanger GP, 15 on Aug 7th.
**Middx**: 27 territories. Forty Hall (2). Home Park (3). Oakwood (2). Totteridge Valley (2). Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park, 15 on 12th Oct.
**Bucks**: One territory. Q. Mother Res, c20 on Jul 13th.
**Kent**: Four territories. Darenth Lakes, 27 on Sep 4th.
**Surrey**: Nine territories. Canons Farm, 17 on Sep 19th.
**In Lond**: Ten territories. Primrose Hill, c15 over on Jan 27th. Victoria Park (2). Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (3).

## Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

**Status**: declining breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

In spring there were records from just 16 sites (almost half of the 30 in 2016) with the first on May 10th at Holmethorpe SP, 17 days later than the first record in 2016. All but one of these records were single birds, with two only at Hatfield Park on May 13th. Only about 17 birds were involved, again almost half the 31 in 2016 and similar to 2010's low figure of 17.

Spotted Flycatcher's status as a London breeding bird is now extremely tenuous with just one probable breeding record of a pair in suitable habitat in mid-June. This compares with four breeding records in 2016 and continues the downward trend of the last decade. The Breeding Bird Survey in England shows decreases of 26% since last year and 65% from 1995-2016.

Away from the one probable breeding site, there were reports from July 21st onwards at 72 sites (74 sites in 2016) with the highest counts being 12 at Park Farm, Enfield on August 19th, 12 at Wanstead Flats on 24th and seven at Totteridge Valley on 25th. Looking at the number of birds that were reported each day, the total from July onwards was 326 birds, although some of these were probably the same bird staying for a few days. This total was slightly up on last year's figure of 296. There were just two records in October, with the last at Denham on 8th.

Below is the only record showing signs of breeding, number of sites in spring/autumn or all records for some sectors, highest counts in the sector and all Inner London records.

**Essex**: Spring four sites, autumn 19 sites (seven and 25 in 2016). Dagnam Park, six on Aug 13th. Stapleford Tawney, pair in suitable habitat in June. Wanstead Flats, 12 on Aug 24th.
**Herts**: Spring four sites, autumn 15 sites (five and ten in 2016). No breeding records compared with three in 2016. Tyttenhanger GP, three on Aug 26th.
**Middx**: Spring one site, autumn 19 sites (four and 21 in 2016). Park Farm, Enfield, 12 on Aug 19th.
**Bucks**: Colnbrook and Denham, singles on Aug 5th and Oct 8th respectively.
**Kent**: Spring three sites, autumn seven sites (one and two in 2016). Crossness, three on Aug 24th.
**Surrey**: Spring four sites, autumn 12 sites (nine and nine in 2016). Highest counts of two at Cobham on Aug 20th, Horton CP on Aug 25th, and London Wetland Centre on Sep 5th.
**In Lond**: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, one on May 11th. Regent's Park, records on nine autumn days from Aug 15th to Sep 26th, with a highest count of five on Aug 24th.

*Robin on an improvised perch in the Essex sector. (Dave McGough)*

## Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

**Status**: abundant breeding resident with influxes in autumn and winter.

There is very little sign of any change this year. Although the Breeding Bird Survey shows a 5% decrease in the South East since last year, there has also been a 90% increase in London from 1995-2016. Looking at sites where we have territorial estimates for this year and last year, there is no evidence of any decline in London. Below are breeding records for sites where ten or more were recorded (no. of territories/singing males in brackets), plus some Inner London records.

**Essex**: Belhus Woods CP (28). Hangman's Wood (12). Mar Dyke Valley (10). Orsett Fen (10). Rainham Marshes (24).
**Herts**: Rye Meads (46).
**Middx**: Home Park (55). Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park (10).
**Surrey**: Arbrook Common (12). Ashtead Common (37). Banstead Wood (37). Beddington Farmlands (36). Canons Farm (47). Esher Common (17). Molesey Heath (18). The Ledges, Esher (19).
**In Lond**: Holland Park (1). Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (10). Meanwhile Gardens (1).

## Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*

**Status**: breeding summer visitor in small numbers, scarce passage migrant.

The first of the year was on April 9th but as usual there were few records after early June and only two in July. There appeared to be 12 territorial birds at five sites, up from 11 at four sites last year. There were no breeding records at Bookham Common this year. The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 26% decrease in England from 2011-2016. All records are given below with numbers of territories in brackets.

**Essex**: Creekmouth, Barking, one on Apr 22nd. Fishers Green Island (5). Rainham Marshes, one on May 18th. Sewardstone Marsh, one on Jun 24th. Wanstead Flats, one on Apr 22nd.
**Herts**: Birch Green, one from May 9th-15th. Rye Meads (2). Seventy Acres Lake (2).
**Middx**: Bushy Park, one on May 14th. Stanwell Moor, one on Apr 14th.
**Kent**: Crossness, one on Apr 9th. Sevenoaks WR, one on Apr 13th. Swanscombe Marshes (2).
**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands, one on Apr 30th. Epsom, one on May 12th. Holmethorpe SP, one on Apr 18th. Prince's Coverts (1).

## Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

**Status**: passage migrant in variable numbers.

The first of the year was at Streatham Common on April 13th. There were three more singles seen through to the end of April at Ruxley GP, Regent's Park and Walthamstow Wetlands. There were just two May records, at The Hollies in Sidcup on 1st and at the Inner London site of Temple on May 8th. These six spring records, while much lower than the 13 of last year, are high for recent years.

The number of autumn records was, however, lower than recent years with around 16 individuals (compared with 22 in 2016 and 36 in 2015). The first was at Alexandra Park from August 3rd-4th, but there were no more until 20th when one was at Dagnam Park, then one on 21st at London Wetland Centre. These were followed by a very unusual record of a male and female at Oxleas Wood on 24th as well as one at Regent's Park and

Ingrebourne Valley. After this, there were singles at Alexandra Park and Wanstead Flats on 28th, at Rainham Marshes on September 1st, Canons Farm on 3rd and at Rainham Marshes on 9th. There were then what was probably four more birds in late September. One was at Bedfords Park on September 19th. One at Staines Moor on 23rd was believed to be the same seen at Stanwell Moor from 24th-26th; there was also one at Brent Res on 24th and one at Oxleas Wood on Sep 29th.

## Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

**Status**: breeding summer visitor, passage migrant and winter visitor in small numbers.

This year there was one record of breeding and one of probable breeding (three in total last year) and up to 17 singing birds (nine last year) of which 11 were in Inner London. Records came from 27 sites outside Inner London, which is in line with recent years. Breeding records are shown in the table and records for other sites are listed below.

| Black Redstart | Pairs proved breeding | Other pairs present | Additional singing males |
|---|---|---|---|
| Essex | - | - | 3 |
| Middx | - | 1 | 2 |
| Kent | - | - | - |
| Surrey | - | - | 1 |
| In Lond | 1 | - | 11 |

**Essex**: Creekmouth, Barking, two on Jan 24th. Rainham Marshes, singles on May 1st & 27th, then one from Nov 16th-23rd. Royal Victoria Dock, one on May 26th. Walthamstow FB, one from Jan 25th to Feb 9th & 28th (seen also at adjacent Walthamstow Marshes and Walthamstow Wetlands).

**Herts**: Hilfield Park Res, one on May 12th. Hoddesdon, one on Mar 16th. Rye Meads, one on May 6th. Tyttenhanger GP, one on Apr 29th. Wood Oaks Farm, Maple Cross, one on Apr 2nd.

**Middx**: Alexandra Park, one on Mar 30th. Fryent CP, one on May 10th. Hampstead Heath, one from Mar 28th-29th. Poplar, one on Aug 3rd. Q. Mary Res, singles on Nov 21st and Dec 9th. Staines Res, one on Oct 18th.

**Bucks**: Q. Mother Res, one on Mar 26th.

**Kent**: Crossness, singles on nine days through January, then on Mar 6th and Apr 30th to May 1st. Swanscombe Marshes, one on Jun 13th.

**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands, one on May 3rd. Canons Farm, one on Apr 23rd. London Wetland Centre, singles on Mar 21st, Apr 28th and Aug 6th. Streatham Cemetery, one on Apr 6th.

**In Lond**: Charing Cross Hospital, one on Nov 4th. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, male from Dec 4th-8th & 13th.

## Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

**Status**: passage migrant.

Compared with last year's spring 'bumper' numbers, this year was more in line with previous years. In the spring passage, 53 birds were seen on 22 dates across 25 sites (last year, 120 birds on 36 dates across 64 sites). The first record was on April 1st at Greenwich

*This male Common Redstart was one of several to be seen during autumn passage on Wanstead Flats, one of the best migrant locations in London. (Jonathan Lethbridge)*

Peninsula Ecology Park. From April 8th to 21st there were records on each day, with four birds seen at Priest Hill on April 17th. The last spring record was one at Staines Moor on May 9th.

Fewer birds were reported in autumn than usual, with around 83 birds across 36 sites (100 from 50 sites last year). An early migrant at Wanstead Flats on July 2nd was followed by several August records. These included one on 6th at London Wetland Centre, one on 11th at Walthamstow Wetlands, two on 13th at Fairlop Waters, one on 19th at Dagnam Park followed by singles at three sites on 21st. After this there were daily appearances until September 6th, with six as the peak number on September 1st. Thereafter they were seen on intermittent days until the end of September, followed by a straggler on October 19th at Deptford.

**In Lond**: Regent's Park, one on Aug 21st and two on 24th.

## Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

**Status**: regular passage migrant and former breeding summer visitor.

Overall, the number of birds and their locations continued the downward trend of the last two years.

About 87 birds recorded in the spring compared with 96 last year and 160 the year before. However, this is quite similar to the 84 recorded in 2014 and the 85 in 2015. The spring migrants began arriving from April 12th at Fairlop Waters, and the peak passage

was on April 30th with a count of 19 birds. The last spring bird was on May 19th at Richmond Park.

Autumn migrants were recorded between July 15th and October 16th, with singles being seen at Vicarage Farm on both dates. There was a straggler seen at Rainham Marshes on November 10th and 16th. The highest count of the year was at Vicarage Farm with 11 birds seen on September 12th and 14th. There was a peak passage of 31 on September 11th, while last year's peak (also on the same date) was 51.

**In Lond**: Regent's Park/Primrose Hill, five on May 10th, two on Aug 25th, then singles on Aug 26th, Sep 8th, 10th & 12th.

## Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

**Status**: localised breeding resident, regular passage migrant and winter visitor.

There were records from 49 sites in January (up from 40 last year) and 59 sites in February (much higher than the 28 last year). Most of these wintering birds had gone by early March.

Breeding was confirmed at five sites this year and was probable at a sixth. This was a great improvement on last year when none were confirmed breeding.

There were some returning birds in July, but most began to arrive in late September. At the end of the year, there were records from 33 sites in December. This was less than the 39 last year but similar to the 27 and 26 in the two years previous to that. Sites with records in the breeding season (mid-April to end of August) and Inner London records, are given below.

**Essex**: Fairlop Waters, two on Aug 6th. Orsett Fen, pair with one juvenile on Jun 20th. Rainham Marshes (3).
**Herts**: East End Green, two on Apr 23rd. Rye Meads, one on May 12th.
**Middx**: Bushy Park, one on Jul 23rd. Stanwell Moor, one on Apr 19th.
**Kent**: Crayford Marshes, pair from Jul 31st to Aug 23rd. Crossness, one on May 12th. Swanscombe Marshes (1).
**Surrey**: Canons Farm, one on Apr 19th. Chelsham (1). Esher Common (1). Holmethorpe SP, singles on Apr 23rd & 30th. London Wetland Centre, singles on Apr 30th and Jul 3rd & 22nd. Richmond Park (5).
**In Lond**: Lord's Cricket Ground, one on Oct 18th. Regent's Park/Primrose Hill, one on Oct 22nd. Regent's Park, singles on Feb 20th and Oct 23rd. St James's Park, one on Jan 30th.

## Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

**Status**: common passage migrant and very occasional breeding visitor.

The first migrant this year was at Q. Mother Res on March 7th, on almost exactly the same date as two years ago, in comparison with the relatively late first arrival last year, on March 23rd. Birds were then seen almost daily until the end of May, with peak migration in the last two weeks of April. The last were at Rainham Marshes on May 22nd. Spring

*Stonechats can often be found wintering in London's parks. This bird favoured a small area on Wanstead Flats for several weeks. (Jonathan Lethbridge)*

counts were lower than last year with a peak of 73 on April 23rd compared with 133 on April 12th last year.

The first autumn migrant was at Wanstead Flats on July 20th, with most passing through between mid-August and the first week of September. Records continued into October with the last on 27th at three sites. The number of birds appeared to be higher than last year, with a peak of 47 on September 2nd compared with a high of ten on August 31st last year.

This year, 25 birds were considered to be of the *leucorrhoa* subspecies (only two birds last year). In the spring these were at Alexandra Park (including five on April 29th), Canons Farm, London Wetland Centre, Regent's Park, Richmond Park, Ten Acre Wood, Yeading and Walthamstow Wetlands. In the autumn they were at Gallions Reach, London Wetland Centre, Rainham Marshes and Richmond Park.

**In Lond**: Burgess Park, one on May 12th. City of London, one on a rooftop on Aug 31st. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, one on May 5th. Regent's Park, two on Apr 10th and on Aug 16th. Victoria Park, one on Apr 10th.

## House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

**Status**: breeding resident, declined severely since 1990s, and still showing a decrease in breeding populations.

The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 16% increase in London since last year, with a long-term decline of 71% from 1995-2016. The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported them in 42% of gardens surveyed in 2017, similar to the 44% in 2016, although with a substantial drop from the 91% of 1995. This may suggest that the House Sparrow's decline has slowed for the second consecutive year, however they are still thinly scattered.

Below are breeding records (no. of territories/singing males in brackets), plus a summary of Inner London records and some of the higher counts. More breeding records would be welcome. (See also the paper on House Sparrows, page 217.)

**Essex**: Brook Farm, Upminster, 57 on Oct 13th. Chafford Hundred, 103 on Aug 10th. Grays (5). Grays Riverside, 65 on Aug 14th. Mar Dyke Valley (4). Orsett, 111 on Sep 1st, including 58 juv. Orsett Fen, 190 on Aug 6th. Rainham Marshes, c150 feeding in summer. Upminster, 118 on Aug 23rd. Also bred at Codham Hall, Loughton and Roding Valley Meadows NR.

**Herts**: Borehamwood (9). Ellenbrook Fields, 50+ on Jan 24th. Stanborough Lakes, 50+ on Sep 3rd. Also bred at Abbots Langley, Bernards Heath, Clarence Park, Cockfosters, Moor Lane, Stocker's Farm and Tyttenhanger GP.

**Middx**: Alexandra Park, 60+ on Jul 23rd. Hackney, c70 on Mar 6th. Lower Clapton, 65 on Aug 20th. Pinner Park Farm (15); 54 on 20th Aug. Also bred at Broomfield Park, Edmonton Green, Hampton, Ruislip Woods, Southgate, West Harrow and Wood Green.

**Bucks**: Denham, 30 on Jul 30th. Bred at Northmoor Hill Wood.

**Kent**: Chipstead Lake, 30 on Jan 9th and Aug 22nd. Darenth Lakes, 45 on Jun 2nd and Jul 3rd. Lewisham (3). Also bred at Albany Park and Horton Kirby.

**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands, 45 on Aug 22nd. Berrylands, 30 in July and on Sep 9th.

*The earliest London Wheatear was recorded on March 7th. This bird was a little later, in late April, close to the peak of passage. (Jonathan Lethbridge)*

Brockwell Park, 40 on Sep 22nd and Oct 12th. Canons Farm, 38 on 7th Feb. Hogsmill SW, 53 on Jul 23rd. Rushett Farm, c40 during year. Worcester Park, 50 on Aug 16th. Also bred at Addlestone, Holmethorpe SP and Worcester Park.

**In Lond**: Bayonne Park, 44 on Jan 28th. Bethnal Green, 25 on Oct 30th. Haggerston, c70 on Mar 6th. Larkhall Park (2); 30 on Mar 16th. Norway Dock, 70 on Jul 28th. Pimlico (20); 40 on May 27th. Also bred at Bermondsey.

## Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

**Status**: scarce breeding resident, confined to a few sites in the London Area. UK population recovering, following severe decline since the late 1970s.

There were reports from six sites this year, a decrease from nine sites last year. At Beddington Farmlands, there were two breeding pairs, down from five last year. In the Coursers Farm area there were 15 pairs (same as last year) but only 24 young fledged (53 last year). The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 64% increase in England from 1995-2016. Below are all records, summarised for breeding sites.

**Essex**: Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, two on Sep 2nd. Rainham Marshes, present on Sep 10th, one on Oct 14th, four on Oct 19th.

**Herts**: Coursers Farm (15), 24 fledged. Tyttenhanger Farm, peak of 26 on Feb 21st

**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands (2), five broods; ten on Feb 23rd. New Addington, one on Mar 28th.

## Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

**Status**: abundant breeding resident.

The Breeding Bird Survey shows no significant change in London since last year, but a 30% increase from 1995-2016. The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported them in 92% of gardens in 2017, up from 88% in 2016 and substantially increased from 73% in 1995.

Breeding records are given below for sites where ten or more territories (three or more in Inner London) or singing males were recorded, along with some of the higher counts.

**Essex**: Mar Dyke Valley (11); 23 on Oct 19th. Rainham Marshes (28). Sewardstone Marsh (10).

**Herts**: Frogmore Lakes, 15 on Oct 15th. Rye Meads (50); 48 on Dec 9th. Stocker's Lake (10). Tyttenhanger GP, 20+ on Mar 25th.

**Middx**: Broadwater Lake, 17 on Oct 12th. Home Park (15). Mudchute Farm, 13 on Mar 4th. Also bred at Boxer's Lake, Broadwater Lake and Harlesden.

**Bucks**: Denham, 21 on Mar 30th.

**Kent**: Chipstead Lake, 17 on Jan 24th. Crossness, 16 on Oct 30th. Darenth Lakes, 28 on Feb 7th. Sevenoaks WR, 15 on Mar 4th.

**Surrey**: Ashtead Common, 18 on Mar 17th. Banstead Wood (24). Beddington Farmlands (61). Canons Farm (31). Hogsmill SW, 34 on Mar 11th. Holmethorpe SP, 36 on Mar 27th. Molesey Heath (11). West Ewell, 16 on Feb 27th.

**In Lond**: Camden Town, three on Apr 2nd. Holland Park, three on Apr 29th. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (3). London Bridge, three on May 4th.



## Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

**Status**: common passage migrant and decreasing, now scarce, breeder.

The first bird to arrive was on March 30th at Upminster, then during spring passage there were only four counts of ten or more birds, well down from the 12 such counts in 2016. The largest day count in spring was 16 birds on April 28th at London Wetland Centre and Harold's Park Farm, Claverhambury. There were no spring counts of more than eight birds after May 11th. The last spring bird was seen at Shafford Farm on May 22nd.

There were two breeding records from two sites this year, which is the same as in 2016. The Breeding Bird Survey had too small a sample in London to show any changes since last year, but there has been a 43% decrease in England from 1995-2016.

Birds were seen intermittently throughout June and July, then almost daily from the beginning of August. In autumn passage the largest day count was 49 birds at Staines Moor on September 16th. There were only 23 counts of ten or more birds, way down from the 38 such counts in 2016. This suggests passage numbers are declining. There were no counts of more than five birds after September 26th and the last record of the year was one at Primrose Hill on October 22nd.

Below are breeding records (no. of territories in brackets), plus all Inner London records.

**Essex**: Orsett Fen (3). Stapleford Tawney (1).

**In Lond**: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, one over on Apr 30th. Primrose Hill/Regent's Park, two over on Apr 6th, singles over on Apr 12th and Oct 22nd.

### Sub-species: Blue-headed Wagtail *M. f. flava*

**Status**: passage migrant, more commonly seen in spring than in autumn.

There were three spring records this year (one in 2016 and four in 2015).

**Essex**: KGV Res, one on Apr 26th (DL).

**Herts**: Rye Meads, one on May 8th (RMP).

**Surrey**: London Wetland Centre, one on May 6th (RK).

### Sub-species: Grey-headed Wagtail *M. f. thunbergi*

**Status**: rare migrant.

This male, photographed in the Hertfordshire sector, was the first record for the county of Hertfordshire. It is the first in London since 1995 when one was at Dagenham Chase on May 6th. Andrew Self's *Birds of London* says there have been 18 records in London since the first in 1945.

**Herts**: Hilfield Park Res, one on May 8th (RSe).

## Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

**Status**: common breeding resident and passage migrant.

There were 73 breeding records in 2017, including probable breeders and singing males, up from the 66 in 2016 and 69 in 2015. The largest winter count was 15 on the River Wandle from Carshalton Ponds to Wandsworth on December 28th.

In summer the only double figure count was of 15 birds at Rye Meads on August 28th. There were double figure autumn counts from Rye Meads and Hogsmill SW, with the peak

*Birds can be seen in even the busiest of urban locations, as this Grey Wagtail at Canary Wharf proves. (Jonathan Lethbridge)*

count being 20 at Rye Meads.

The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 29% increase in the UK from 2016-17 and a 54% increase in South East from 2011-2016. There is insufficient data to show a significant result for London in 2017. All breeding records are given below.

**Essex**: Mar Dyke Valley (1). Purfleet (1). Rainham Marshes (1). Roding Valley Meadows (1). Walthamstow Wetlands (1).

**Herts**: Bury Lake (1). Cassiobury Park (1). Croxley Hall GP (1). Ellenbrook Fields (1). Frogmore Lakes (1). Hatfield Park (1). Hilfield Park Res (1). Rye Meads (4). Sopwell Mill (1). Stanborough Park (1). Troy Mill Lake (1). Tyttenhanger GP (1).

**Middx**: Bentley Priory NR (1). Boxer's Lake, Enfield (1). Broadwater Lake (1). East India Dock Basin (1). Enfield GC (1). Enfield Town (1). Grovelands Park (1). Hackney Marsh (1). Hilly Fields Park (1). Oakwood (1). Palmers Green (1). Pymmes Park (1). Q. Mary GP (1). Staines (1). Poplar (1). Vicarage Farm (1). Whitewebbs Wood (1). Wildwoods, Enfield (1). Woodberry Wetlands (1).

**Kent**: Chinbrook Meadows (1). Deptford (1). Danson Park (1). Foots Cray Meadows (1). Horton Kirby (1). Kelsey Park (1). Lullingstone Park (1). Shoreham (1).

**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands (5). Carshalton Ponds (1). Common Meadow (1). Ewell Court Park (1). Hogsmill SW (1). Holmethorpe SP (1). Mickleham (1). Morden Hall Park (1). R Wey Navigation (1). Richmond Park (2). Wandle Park, Croydon (2). Wandsworth (1). Wimbledon Common (1).

**In Lond**: Battersea (1). Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (1). Islington (1). Kensal Town (1). Limehouse Basin (1). Notting Hill (1). Wapping (1).



## Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

**Status**: common breeding resident and winter visitor.

There were 60 territories reported in 2017 (including probable breeders and singing males) up from 26 in 2016, 28 in 2015 and 33 in 2014. The biggest count was 130 birds going to a roost at Epping on December 20th. Other large roost counts were 100 at Croydon on December 19th, 90 at Wimbledon on Jan 13th (with 85 there on October 12th), 75 at both Brentwood on January 28th and Hertford on February 2nd and 64 at Upminster on January 19th.

Away from roosts, there was one count of 50+ birds during March and April (none being reported in 2015). Large counts during the autumn included 50 birds at Beddington Farmlands on October 28th. All breeding records are given below.

**Essex**: Brook Farm, Upminster (1). Chingford Plain (1). Codham Hall (1). Eastbrookend CP (1). Mar Dyke Valley (1). Navestock Church (1). Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (1). Rainham Marshes (2).

**Herts**: Brookmans Park (1). Ellenbrook Fields (1). Hilfield Park Res (1). London Colney (1). Radlett (1). Rye Meads (1). Tyttenhanger GP (1). Wildhill (1). Woodoaks Farm, Maple Cross (1).

**Middx**: Boxer's Lake, Enfield (1). Broomfield Park (1). Forty Hall (1). Grand Junction Res (1). Home Park (2). Kempton Park Race Course (1). Oakwood (1). Park Farm, Enfield (1). Park Royal (1). Parkside Farm/Res (1). Ridge (1). Ruislip Woods (1). South Lodge Farm (1). Southgate (1). Staines Res (1). Stanwell (1). Trent Park (2). Vicarage Farm (1). West Harrow (1). Woodberry Wetlands (1).

**Bucks**: Northmoor Hill Wood (1).

**Kent**: Foots Cray Meadows (1). Lullingstone Park (1).

**Surrey**: Arbrook Common (1). Canons Farm (1). Egham (1). Hogsmill SW (1). Holmethorpe SP (1). Juniper Hall (1). Kew (1). Leatherhead (1). Richmond Park (1). Sanderstead (2). Worcester Park (2).

**In Lond**: Holland Park (1). Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (2). Victoria Park (1).

### Sub-species: White Wagtail *M. a. alba*

**Status**: passage migrant, more commonly seen in spring than in autumn.

As usual most records were in spring, with the first on March 25th, most in April and a few in May. The last record was on May 29th.

**Essex**: Fairlop Waters, one on Apr 4th. KGV Res, five on Mar 15th. Rainham Marshes, singles on Apr 6th & 18th and May 13th. Sewardstone Marsh, one on Mar 9th. Walthamstow Wetlands, singles on Apr 2nd & 8th, six on 13th and two on 16th, singles on May 1st & 11th.

**Herts**: Rye Meads, two on Apr 16th. Tyttenhanger GP, one or two on ten dates in April.

**Middx**: Alexandra Park, singles on Mar 30th and Apr 18th. KGVI Res, one on Apr 10th. Staines Res, one or two from Apr 10th-18th.

**Bucks**: Horton Brook Quarry, one on Apr 28th. Q. Mother Res, up to four on several dates from Mar 30th to May 29th.
**Kent**: Hall Place Gardens, one on Apr 23rd. Sevenoaks WR, one on Apr 19th.
**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands, one on Apr 23rd. London Wetland Centre singles on Apr 12th and May 28th. QE II Res, one on May 11th. Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough), one on Apr 28th.
**In Lond**: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, one on Mar 19th. Regent's Park, one on May 2nd.

## Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

**Status**: common passage migrant and winter visitor, localised breeder.

There was just one winter flock of 50 or more birds (down from three in 2016 and five in 2015): 110 at Rainham Marshes on January 24th.

Spring passage was heavier than last year with seven counts of 50 or more birds at five sites: 100 over Q. Mother Res on March 16th, with some landing to feed; 100+ at Tyttenhanger GP on Mar 20th; 60 over Primrose Hill on March 17th and 50 on 28th, 54 over Walthamstow Wetlands on March 16th and 50 on April 21st, and 50+ at Hampstead Heath on April 21st. This was down from the unusually high 19 such counts in 2015, but up on the single count in 2016.

Breeding records came from 12 sites (same as 2016). The Breeding Bird Survey had too small a sample in London to show any changes since last year, but there has been a 47% decrease in the South East from 1995-2016.

Autumn passage was heavier than last year with 30 counts of 50 or more birds (up from 28 counts in 2016) including eight counts of 100 or more birds (up from five in 2016). The highest count of the autumn was 186 over Priest Hill on September 14th.

All territories are given below (no. of territories/singing males in brackets). These figures are very likely to be an underestimate.

**Essex**: Orsett Farm (2). Rainham Marshes (24). Wanstead Flats (4).
**Herts**: Ellenbrook Fields (1). Frogmore Lakes (1). Tyttenhanger GP (1).
**Middx**: Bushy Park (1). Home Park (2). Staines Moor (1). Wormwood Scrubs (1).
**Surrey**: Banstead Heath (1). Canons Farm (1).

## Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

**Status**: passage migrant and scarce (possibly former) breeding summer visitor.

The first record of the year was on April 2nd at West Hyde. This is a typical arrival date for this species but slightly later than the first record of 2016 (which was March 28th). Spring passage was lighter than last year, involving 13 birds (14 in 2016) with the final bird at Richmond Park on May 7th.

For the sixth year running, there were no records of birds breeding or holding territory.

Autumn passage consisted of about 41 birds (down from 45 in 2016 and 109 in 2015) with the first at Hilfield Park Res on August 6th and the last at Beddington Farmlands on September 23rd. All records are given below.

**Essex**: Grays Riverside, one over on Aug 20th. Holyfield Hall Farm, one over on Aug 28th. Leyton Flats, two on Aug 21st. Leyton Jubilee Park, one on Aug 20th. Netherhall GP, two on Apr 16th. Rainham Marshes, singles on Aug 20th, Sep 1st and Oct 15th. Wanstead Flats, two on Apr 22nd, singles on Apr 23rd, Aug 28th and Sep 3rd and two on Sep 9th.
**Herts**: Ellenbrook Fields, one on Apr 28th. Hilfield Park Res, one over on Aug 6th. Rye Meads, one ringed on Aug 26th. Tyttenhanger GP, singles on Apr 17th and Aug 13th. West Hyde, one singing on Apr 2nd.
**Middx**: Alexandra Park, one on Aug 17th. Hampstead Heath, two on Aug 19th and one on 23rd. Mill Hill, one on Aug 16th. Stanwell Moor, one on Aug 21st. Totteridge Valley, one on Aug 26th and three on Sep 2nd.
**Bucks**: Horton GP, one on Apr 14th.
**Kent**: Swanscombe Marshes, one on Apr 24th.
**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands, singles on Apr 29th and Sep 23rd. Canons Farm, two on Aug 23rd and one on 26th. London Wetland Centre, singles on Aug 19th, 21st & 26th. Morden Hall Park, one on Apr 15th. Richmond Park, one on May 7th, three on Aug 22nd and two on 23rd. Wandle Meadow Nature Park, one on Sep 3rd.
**In Lond**: Primrose Hill/Regent's Park, singles on Aug 10th & 11th, Aug 24th and Sep 12th.

## Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

**Status**: regular but localised winter visitor and passage migrant.

Reports came from 18 sites (down from 23 in 2016). Peak counts were all at Beddington Farmlands with nine on March 15th and six on December 14th and 16th. The peak count at Rainham Marshes was five, lower than the seven in 2016. Monthly maxima are given for sites with records in five or more months. All other records follow, summarised in some cases.

| Water Pipit monthly maxima | | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EX | Rainham Marshes | 5 | 3 | 4 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | 5 | 1 |
| HR | Rye Meads | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | - |
| KT | Swanscombe Marshes | 2 | 2 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| MX | Staines Moor | 3 | 3 | 7 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 4 | 4 | 2 |
| | Staines Res | - | 1 | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| SY | Beddington Farmlands | 5 | 8 | 9 | 7 | - | - | - | - | - | 4 | 4 | 6 |
| | Wetland Centre | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | 1 | 3 |

**Essex**: Walthamstow Wetlands, one on Oct 27th & 28th. West Thurrock Marshes, singles on Feb 27th and Dec 12th.
**Middx**: KGVI Res, two on Feb 9th, singles on Nov 16th and Dec 3rd. Q. Mary Res, singles on Jan 14th, Feb 4th-18th and Mar 25th-26th.
**Bucks**: Horton, six on Feb 5th & 18th. Q. Mother Res, singles on various dates from Jan 5th to Mar 26th, four on Feb 21st.
**Kent**: Crayford Marshes, singles on Jan 28th and Oct 27th. Erith Reach, one on Jan 7th.
**Surrey**: Richmond Park, one on Mar 24th.

## Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

**Status**: passage migrant and winter visitor.

Reports came from 22 sites (down from 23 in 2016). The peak count was eight at Rainham Marshes on January 1st (up from seven in 2016). Monthly maxima are given for sites with

records in four or more months. All other records follow.

| Rock Pipit monthly maxima | | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EX | Creekmouth, Barking | 3 | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| | KGV Res | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| | Rainham Marshes | 8 | 3 | 3 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 7 | 6 | 6 |
| | Walthamstow Wetlands | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | 2 | 1 | - |
| KT | Erith | 5 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| | Swanscombe Marshes | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | - |
| MX | Staines Res | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | 3 | 1 | - |
| BU | Q. Mother Res | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | 3 | 1 | - |

**Essex**: Gallions Reach, one on Jan 2nd, three on 8th, singles on 22nd and on Oct 8th & 27th. Walthamstow Wetlands, singles on Sep 18th & 20th, two on Oct 28th and one on Nov 8th. Wanstead Flats, singles on Oct 15th & 22nd. West Thurrock Marshes, singles on Jan 6th, Feb 27th and Dec 12th.
**Herts**: Amwell NR, singles on Oct 10th, 13th & 19th. Hilfield Park Res, singles on Oct 16th & 18th.
**Middx**: Q. Mary Res, one on Oct 7th.
**Bucks**: Horton Brook Quarry, one on Feb 4th-5th.
**Kent**: Belvedere, one on Jan 1st and two on 14th. Crayford Marshes, four on Oct 27th. Crossness, one on Jan 28th. Dartford Marshes, two on Feb 12th. Thamesmead, two on Nov 23rd.
**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands, one on Mar 15th. Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough), one on Oct 13th.

## Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

**Status**: common breeding resident, augmented by continental influxes in autumn and winter.

There were 54 counts of 100 birds or more, over double the counts of 26 in 2016 and only 16 counts in 2015. There was no notable spring passage; autumn passage was reported from October 3rd to November 30th, peaking on October 15th when a total of 3,150 were seen flying mostly W over several sites. The high counts were found mainly in Essex and Surrey. The Breeding Bird Survey showed a 16% decrease in the South East from 2016-17 but a 71% increase in London from 1995-2016. The RSPB Big Garden BirdWatch for 2017 reported Chaffinches in 76% of London gardens in 2017, the same as in 2016, and a good increase from the 65% of 1995, but down from the high of 91% in 2008. The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported Chaffinches in 76% of gardens, compared with 78% in 2016 and a good increase from the 65% of 1995, but down from the high of 91% in 2008. Below are breeding records of five or more birds (no. of territories in brackets) plus counts of 100 or more, summarised in some places, and selected records for Inner London.

**Essex**: Belhus Woods CP (8). Ingrebourne Valley, 250 on Dec 1st & 25th. Mar Dyke Valley (8). Orsett Fen (18). Rainham Marshes (8); 780 on Oct 15th. Wanstead Flats, 263 on Oct 14th.
**Herts**: Ellenbrook Fields (6).



**Middx**: Brent Res, 194 on Oct 26th. Hampstead Heath, 531 W on Oct 15th and 300 on Nov 1st. Home Park (9).
**Kent**: Albany Park, 120 on Nov 2nd. Crystal Palace Park, 200 S on Oct 19th. Swanscombe Marshes, 120 over on Oct 27th.
**Surrey**: Banstead Wood (5). Barn Elms PF, 476 mainly W on Oct 15th. Canons Farm (15). Richmond Park, 880 SW on Oct 14th and 340 on 15th. Worcester Park (10).
**In Lond**: Reported from 18 sites with 11 between April and July. Primrose Hill, 53 over on Nov 1st. Regent's Park, 430 over on Oct 23rd, 150 on 26th and 330 on 30th.

## Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

**Status**: regular autumn migrant and winter visitor, sometimes in large numbers.

There were 15 counts of ten or more birds, compared with three in 2016 and two in 2015. In fact this seems to have been the best year for Brambling in London since 2009. The highest count was 50 at Bury Wood on March 21st. The last bird of spring was one at Sevenoaks WR on April 5th (April 27th in 2016) and the first of the autumn was one at Battersea Park on September 26th (September 27th in 2016). Below are high sector counts and all Inner London records.

**Essex**: Bury Wood, 20 on Mar 13th & 50 on 21st. High Beach, 12 on Jan 14th. Woodman Road Cemetery, 13 on 20th.
**Herts**: Broxbourne Woods, five on Nov 19th, ten on Dec 2nd, 12 on 19th and 20 on 22nd. Monks Green, six on Dec 21st.
**Middx**: Brent Res, three on Nov 2nd. Fryent CP, four on Oct 28th. Hampstead Heath, three on Nov 6th.
**Bucks**: Q. Mother Res, two on Nov 2nd.
**Kent**: Albany Park, five on Nov 5th. Foots Cray Meadows, six on Nov 4th. Greenwich Park, seven on Nov 5th. Sidcup, five on Oct 15th.
**Surrey**: Barn Elms PF, 46 W on Oct 16th and 17 W on 24th. Ewell, eight on Nov 19th and nine on 30th. Beddington Park, eight on Nov 6th. Holmethorpe SP, ten on Nov 17th & 20th.
**In Lond**: Battersea Park, one on Sep 26th. Primrose Hill, four on Nov 3rd. Regent's Park, singles on Apr 3rd and Oct 30th, three on Nov 2nd, one on 3rd, three on 7th, singles on 8th & 13th. St James's Park, one on Nov 2nd. Stave Hill, two on Nov 15th. Victoria Park, one on Nov 4th.

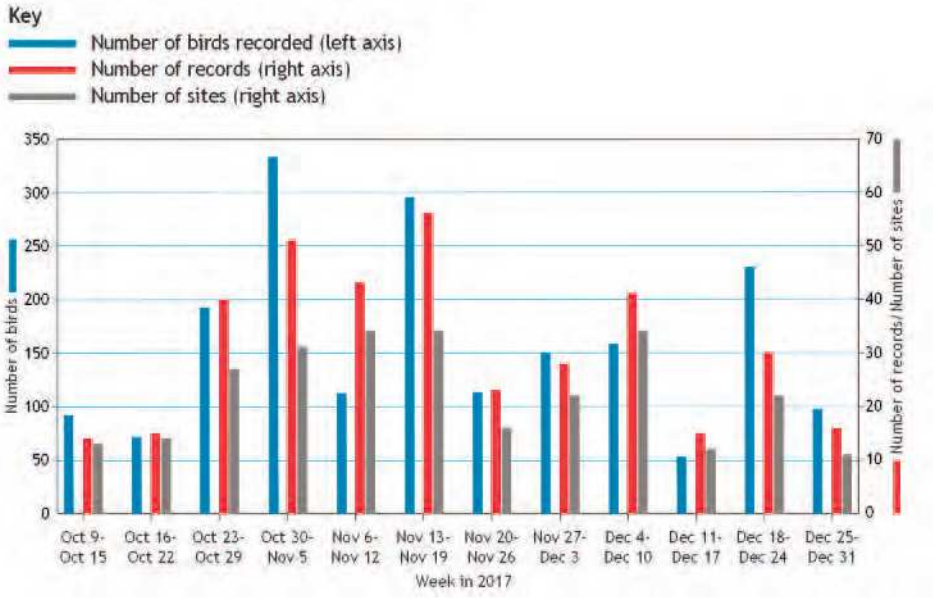
## Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

**Status**: very scarce breeding resident; occasional passage migrant.

This was an astonishing year for Hawfinch records. There were just two records in January, one in February and one in April, but then there were another 372 records in the period from October 9th onwards. This autumn invasion in the UK was believed to be birds leaving mainland Europe due to scarcity of food.

The two records in January were both singles on January 8th and 24th around Broxbourne Woods, followed by singles on February 25th at Stanmore CP and on April 20th at Regent's Park. The autumn invasion began on October 9th but records were then almost daily until late December (see table below). In the first week, there were 14 records from 13 sites

Hawfinch numbers per week during winter 2017




involving 92 birds, almost all of which involved small numbers flying over; the only exception was a flock of 40 over Hampstead Heath on October 15th. Records for the next week were similar, with again just one flock of 40 at Chess Valley. Sightings really began to increase in the week commencing October 23rd when there were 40 records from 27 sites involving 192 birds. The following three weeks from October 30th to November 19th was the peak period in terms of the numbers of birds recorded. High roost counts began to appear from November with 79 at Headley Heath on 2nd and 70 at Broxbourne Woods on 17th.

**In Lond**: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, six over on Oct 24th, one on Nov 14th. Primrose Hill, eight over on Oct 23rd, one over on 27th, eight over in one hour on 31st and one over on Nov 3rd. Regent's Park, one on Apr 20th, singles over on Oct 24th, 26th & 30th, two on Nov 3rd & 7th, three over on 8th, one over on 13th.

## Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

**Status**: fairly common breeding resident.

There were records from 257 sites this year, more than the 205 sites in 2016. There were 24 records of breeding/territories (one more than in 2016) but there were another 23 pairs reported in the breeding season, giving a possible 47 breeding pairs (45 reported in 2016). There were records from 122 sites in the period mid-March to June, more than the 105 in 2016. The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 21% increase in the South East from 2006-16. Below are all breeding records (no. of pairs/territories in brackets) and pairs reported mid-March to June, together with high counts, and all Inner London records.



**Essex**: Reported at 60 sites. Chigwell, pair on May 21st. Connaught Water, pair on Apr 11th. Gunpowder Park, pair on Apr 2nd. Ingrebourne Valley, pair on Mar 12th. Mar Dyke Valley (1). Thorndon CP North, seven on Dec 2nd. Tylers Common, pair on Apr 2nd.

**Herts**: Reported at 49 sites. Amwell NR, pair on Apr 26th. Angerland Common, South Hatfield (1). Bernards Heath, pair on Jun 10th. Brookmans Park, pair on Jun 13th. Cassiobury Park, pair on Apr 5th. Chiswell Green (1). Ellenbrook Fields, pair on Apr 15th. Essendon, 12 on Nov 27th. Frogmore Lakes, pair on Apr 23rd. Hilfield Park Res (1). Rye Meads (3). Seventy Acres Lake, pair on Apr 15th. Stocker's Lake, pair on Apr 9th. The Withy Beds LNR, pair on Apr 14th. Tyttenhanger GP, pair on Apr 15th. Watercress LNR, pair on Apr 18th.

**Middx**: Reported at 50 sites. Potters Bar, pair on Mar 28th. Totteridge Valley (2); six on Sep 10th. Trent Park, pair on May 8th. Vicarage Farm, pair on Apr 21st.

**Bucks**: Reported at six sites. Wraysbury GP, seven on Dec 10th.

**Kent**: Reported at 29 sites. Chelsfield, pair on Apr 8th. Sevenoaks WR, eight on Jan 26th.

**Surrey**: Reported at 61 sites. Banstead Wood (8); 16 on Feb 17th. Bookham Common (4). Canons Farm (2). Holmethorpe SP (1). Purley, pair on May 4th. Redhill, pair on May 6th. Riddlesdown, pair on Mar 23rd.

**In Lond**: Reported at two sites. Primrose Hill, one over on Oct 27th. Regent's Park, two over on Oct 19th & 24th, singles over on Oct 30th and Nov 2nd & 3rd.

## Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*

**Status**: common breeding resident and passage migrant.

This year, unlike 2016 when the highest count was 55, there was one large count of 112 birds at West Thurrock Marshes on December 12th and nine counts of 30 or more birds. The Breeding Bird Survey reported a fall of 24% in the South East in 2016-17 and a 42% decrease in London from 1995-2016. However, the RSPB's Big Garden BirdWatch found a 5% rise in sightings in London this year, a good sign as they have decreased by 60% since this annual survey began in 1979. It appeared that this rise was due to good conditions during their breeding season in 2016. The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported Greenfinches in 59% of gardens in 2017, down from 65% in 2016 and a decline since the 90% or so in the mid-2000s. Below are breeding records of three or more birds (number of territories in brackets), followed by counts of ten or more, sometimes summarised by month, and counts of four or more for Inner London.

**Essex**: Belhus Woods CP (4); 19 on Feb 1st. Brook Farm, Upminster, 25 in December. Rainham Marshes (10). Warren Gorge (3). West Thurrock Marshes, 112 on Dec 12th.

**Herts**: Essendon, 12 on Nov 24th. Hatfield Park, 13 on Mar 12th. Moor Park GC, 12 on Oct 26th.

**Middx**: Alexandra Park, 25 on Sep 19th. Brent Res, 38 on Oct 23rd. Broomfield Park, 43 on Jan 7th. Hampstead Heath, 50 over on Nov 1st. Home Park (8).

**Kent**: Crayford Marshes, ten on Aug 7th. Crystal Palace Park, ten on May 13th. Sevenoaks, 12 on Sep 20th and 15 on Nov 27th.

**Surrey**: Barn Elms PF, 21 on Oct 15th. Beddington Farmlands (24); 16 on Apr 8th. Hogsmill SW, 23 on Nov 19th. Morden Hall Park, 28 on Oct 21st. Richmond Park, 39 on Oct 15th. Worcester Park (10).

**In Lond**: Reported from 17 sites with six of these between April and July. City of London, four on Jul 9th. Fulham, 20 over on Jan 12th. Primrose Hill, four on Nov 1st. Regent's

Park, eight on Aug 28th. St Pancras, five on Jan 21st. Stave Hill, eight on Jan 17th and six on Nov 8th. Victoria Park, 11 on Mar 7th.

## Twite *Linaria flavirostris*

**Status**: scarce, late autumn and winter visitor.

A colour-ringed bird was at Beddington Farmlands with Linnets from November 22nd and stayed into 2018. It was ringed in the Pennines in September 2016 and is part of a breeding population there that often winter in the east of England. It was also seen at Titchwell, Norfolk in October 2016. This was the first record since 2015 of this less than annual arrival. The arrival date was fairly typical, with eight of the last 11 records being in the period October to December.

**Twite arrival dates 2000-2017: 11 records, 17 birds**

| Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of records | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | 4 | 1 |
| No. of birds | 1 | 2 | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4 | 4 | 4 |

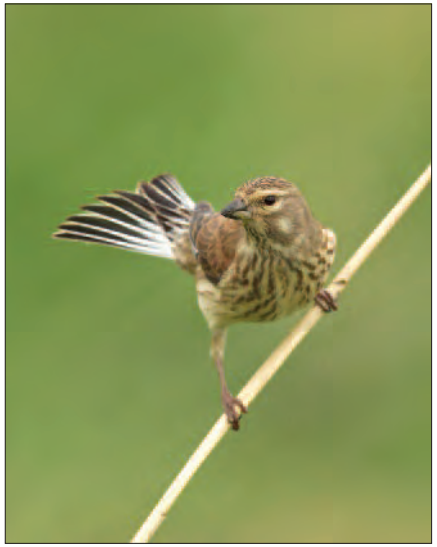
**Surrey**: Beddington Farmlands, one from Nov 22nd to end of year (DKC, MAs *et al*).

## Linnet *Linaria cannabina*

**Status**: common but declining breeding resident and passage migrant.

There were a lot more large flocks this year (38 of 100 or more, compared with 21 last year), but the peak count was lower (300 compared with 500). There were only 95 breeding pairs, up on the 83 pairs in 2016, but most of this increase was due to a higher count

*Linnet male and female. (Russ Sherriff)*





from Rainham Marshes where there were 41 pairs in 2016. The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 31% decrease in the South East from 1995-2016. More regular breeding counts from sites would be very welcome. Below are all records of breeding (number of breeding pairs, singing males/territories in brackets), with high counts and all Inner London records.

**Essex**: Little Belhus Park (1). Mar Dyke Valley (1). Orsett Fen (8). Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (1). Rainham Marshes (52); 100 on Jan 22nd.
**Herts**: Aldenham (1). Berrybushes Wood (3). Cheshunt GP, 220 on Jan 28th. Ellenbrook Fields (1). Frogmore Lakes (1). Hilfield Park Res (1). Rye Meads (2). Tyttenhanger GP (1).
**Middx**: Staines Res, 300 on Nov 9th & 22nd. Q. Mary GP, 28 on Dec 23rd. Tottenham Marshes (1). Totteridge Valley (1).
**Bucks**: Q. Mother Res, ten on Apr 1st.
**Kent**: Crayford Marshes, 200 on Oct 3rd. Longfield Gallops (1+).
**Surrey**: Banstead Wood (1). Beddington Farmlands (12); 90 on Jan 25th, 164 on Nov 22nd, 118 on Dec 14th. Canons Farm (5); 300 on Oct 1st. Molesey Heath (1).
**In Lond**: Islington, one over on May 4th. Mile End, one over on Jul 5th, three over on 20th and three over on Aug 7th. Primrose Hill/Regent's Park, one to three over on several dates from Mar 7th to Apr 11th, ten over on Apr 16th, eight over on Oct 15th and one on Nov 5th.

## Common Redpoll *Acanthis flammea*

**Status**: scarce irruptive winter visitor.

Just three records, the same as last year, all of single birds.

**Essex**: Rainham Marshes, singles on Oct 20th (HV) and Nov 9th (DSm).
**Middx**: Ten Acre Wood, Yeading, one on Dec 24th (NAn).

## Lesser Redpoll *Acanthis cabaret*

**Status**: passage migrant and winter visitor; former breeding resident.

There were a similar number of records to last year (652 compared with 689) but the highest count of 100 at Thorndon CP North on February 12th was much higher than last year's peak of c50. There were more records in the second winter period than in the first winter period with the largest number of records during October and November. Apart from an unusual record of one singing at Ruxley GP on July 31st, there were no records after April 20th, until birds returned from September 26th. The peak monthly counts at the start of the year were 50 in January, 100 in February, 60 in March and just nine in April. At the end of the year peak counts were 50 in October, 40+ in November and 25 in December. High sector counts and all Inner London records are given below.

**Essex**: Belhus Woods CP, 18 on Oct 17th. Leyton Flats, 36 on Oct 24th. Thorndon CP North, 50 on Jan 8th, 100 on Feb 12th, 60 on Mar 11th. Wanstead Flats, 20 on Oct 6th & 15th and Dec 16th.
**Herts**: Cuffley, 40+ on Nov 1st. Northaw Great Wood, 45 on Mar 18th.
**Middx**: Q. Mary GP, 50 on Oct 28th. Ruislip Woods, 40+ on Oct 17th.
**Bucks**: Black Park, ten on Feb 26th.
**Kent**: Sevenoaks WR, 15 on Mar 24th.

*The Parrot Crossbills that favoured Broxbourne Woods in December were the first in London for over a century. (Alan Reynolds)*

**Surrey**: Banstead Wood, 50+ on Feb 14th. Canons Farm, 40 on Feb 15th.
**In Lond**: Primrose Hill/Regent's Park, birds over on several dates from Oct 15th to Nov 14th, with 30 on Oct 30th. St James's Park, one over on Nov 1st.

## Parrot Crossbill *Loxia pytyopsittacus*

**Status**: rare vagrant.

The only previous record of this species in London was before 1900, so the three birds below were a great surprise. Full details of their discovery are given in the Papers section on page 223. This was part of a small invasion into the UK which started on Shetland in October, with flocks then appearing in south and east England in November and December.

**Herts**: Broxbourne Woods, two males and a female from Dec 18th-25th (BR *et al*).

## Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

**Status**: irruptive visitor, rare breeding species (usually following irruptions).

There were just eight records from eight sites involving a total of 19 birds this year. This is even worse than last year, when there were 17 records, and which was the worst year since 2007. There was just one record in February and the second in May, with the other six records scattered across June to December.

**Herts**: Amwell NR, two over on May 6th (BR, CBe). Balls Wood, one on Jul 9th (K St). Hatfield Park, six on Sep 9th (RJP). Symondshyde Great Wood, two on Dec 18th (REv).
**Surrey**: Barn Elms PF, two over on Oct 24th (RK). Holmethorpe SP, four on Feb 13th (RBk). London Wetland Centre, one on Oct 19th (ASa). Mickleham, one on Jun 5th (ASc).



## Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

**Status**: breeding resident and passage migrant, now common throughout the year.

There were 29 counts of 100 birds or more, compared with 20 counts in 2016. There were an amazing 400 birds in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park on September 2nd and 300 birds in Regent's Park on October 23rd.

The Breeding Bird Survey showed a 21% increase in London from 2016-17 and a 450% increase in London from 1995-2016. The RSPB Big Garden BirdWatch for 2017 showed a 29% increase in London gardens. The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported them in 85% of gardens in 2017, down slightly from 88% in 2016, but significantly up from 34% in 1995. Below are breeding records of three or more birds (number of territories in brackets) and counts of 100 or more and ten or more for Inner London.

**Essex**: Belhus Woods CP (7). Grays Cemetery (4). Mar Dyke Valley (10). Orsett Fen (7). Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, 400 on Sep 2nd. Rainham Marshes (38); 200 on Jul 19th. West Thurrock Marshes, 120 on Sep 9th.
**Herts**: Rye Meads (5); 100 on Oct 7th.
**Middx**: Brent Res, 82 on Oct 26th. Home Park (10). Wormwood Scrubs, 150 on Jul 23rd.
**Bucks**: Langley Park, 100 on Oct 10th.
**Kent**: Bexleyheath Cemetery, 100 on Dec 31st. Crayford Marshes, 200 on Aug 5th. Wormwood Scrubs, 150 on Jul 23rd.
**Surrey**: Ashtead Common (3). Beddington Farmlands (5); 100 on Oct 28th. Molesey Heath (3). Morden Hall Park, 164 on Oct 21st. Ravens Ait (4).
**In Lond**: Reported from 43 sites during the year and 24 sites from Apr and Jul. Battersea Park, 15 on Sep 26th. Camden Town, ten on Jan 4th. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, 12 on Jan 6th. Primrose Hill, 32 on Oct 15th. Regent's Park, 300 on Oct 23rd. Soho, 12 on Oct 26th. Victoria Park, 28 on Nov 4th. Wyvil Estate, 24 on Nov 12th.

## Siskin *Spinus spinus*

**Status**: common winter visitor and passage migrant; rare breeder although increasingly regular in summer.

There were four counts of 100 or more birds this year compared with five in 2016, eight in 2015 and four in 2014. Three of these counts were in December and one was in November. Counts of Siskins were much higher in the second winter period than in the first winter period. The last spring bird was on April 18th at Essendonbury. On July 2nd, there were single birds at two sites, and on August 13th there was another bird; all three of these may have been returning birds. But the main return started on September 21st with one at Leyton Flats. A flock of forty at Stocker's Lake was buzzed by a Sparrowhawk on November 28th. Below are high sector counts, sometimes summarised by month, and all Inner London records.

**Essex**: Gunpowder Park, 62 on Dec 20th. Weald CP, 80 on Dec 26th.
**Herts**: Amwell NR, 70 on Dec 15th. Brookmans Park, 60 on Dec 12th. Frogmore Lakes, 60 on Feb 16th. Lower Woodside, 70 on Dec 26th. Maple Lodge NR, 80 on Dec 27th. Panshanger Park, 97 on Feb 12th. Stocker's Lake, 200 on Dec 20th.
**Middx**: Bentley Priory NR, 50 on Dec 3rd. Brent Res, 41 on Oct 26th. Broadwater Lake, 100 on Nov 18th. Ruislip Woods, 50 on Jan 9th. Trent Park, 53 on Dec 21st.

**Bucks**: Black Park, 60 on Dec 4th and 100 on 22nd. Denham, 40 on Feb 4th & 22nd.
**Kent**: Chipstead Lake, 40 on Jan 9th. Foots Cray Meadows, 50 on Feb 5th. Sevenoaks WR, 60 on Jan 26th and 110 on Dec 23rd.
**Surrey**: Arbrook Common, c30 on Feb 12th. Richmond Park, 60 on Oct 14th. The Ledges, Esher, 60 on Mar 18th. West End Common, 36 on Feb 15th.
**In Lond**: Camley Street Natural Park, five on Dec 4th. Regent's Park/Primrose Hill, peaks of 20 on Oct 26th and 14 on Nov 14th. St James's Park, three on Feb 21st and one on Oct 25th. St John's Wood, one on Nov 15th. Stave Hill, one on Oct 29th. Victoria Park, six on Nov 4th.

## Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*

**Status**: rare, but annual, autumn and winter visitor.

A typical return following a blank year in 2016. The second Inner London record this century – the first was another fly-over at the same site during the 2010 influx.

**In Lond**: Regent's Park, one NW on Oct 24th (DJ, ARD).

## Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

**Status**: scarce autumn and winter visitor.

There were two records this year, the same as last year, although there were 19 records (of 22 birds) in the three years from 2010 to 2012.

**Essex**: Chafford Hundred, calling male flew SW at 08:25 on Oct 30th (RBs). Rainham Marshes, female on Nov 24th (DMl).

## Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*

**Status**: declining and increasingly localised breeding resident.

They were reported from 12 sites this year (12 in 2016). There were at least nine territorial males (12 in 2016) from seven sites (just three in 2016). The largest count of 14 at Dartford and Rainham Marshes was a considerable reduction from the 35 at Longfield Gallops in 2016 (71 there in 2015). Below are all records, summarised in some cases, with no. of breeding pairs, singing males/territories in brackets.

**Essex**: Ingrebourne Valley, singles on May 6th and Jul 20th. Orsett Fen (1-2); two calling juvs on Aug 6th. Rainham Marshes (3); 14 on Feb 12th.
**Herts**: Tyttenhanger GP, two on Oct 30th. West Hyde (1).
**Kent**: Crayford Marshes (1-2); four on Aug 4th. Darenth Valley GC (1). Dartford Marshes, 14 on Feb 12th likely to have been same flock seen at Rainham Marshes. Longfield Gallops (1+); recorded March to October, ten on Apr 21st. Lullingstone Park (1).
**Surrey**: Cheverells Farm, male singing on May 10th. Warren Barn Farm, one on May 10th.

## Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

**Status**: widespread but declining breeding resident, scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

They were reported from 91 sites this year (104 in 2016) and there were 53+ territories/males singing after mid-May (54 in 2016), although there were several additional



sites where birds were present during the breeding season. The Essex and Hertfordshire sectors again accounted for 60% of the sites and the breeding records. Below are all breeding records (no. of pairs/territories in brackets), some unusual records and some of the higher counts.

**Essex**: Reported at 11 sites, 12 pairs. Belhus Woods CP (1). Brook Farm, Upminster (2). Nazeing (1). Orsett Fen (7+), two broods observed; 43 on Jan 3rd and Dec 18th. St Mary's Lane, Upminster (1), pair feeding two juvs.
**Herts**: Reported at 42 sites, 22 pairs. Brickendon (1+). Chiswell Green (1). Coursers Farm (1). Cuffley (1+). Essendon (1+). Highfield Farm (6); 30 on Dec 26th. Hunton Bridge (1). Nashe's Farm (1). North Mymms Park (1). Radlett (1). Rye Meads (1). Symondshyde Farm (4). The Commons LNR (1). Woodoaks Farm, Maples Cross (1).
**Middx**: Reported at 7 sites, 7+ pairs. Parkside Farm/Res (1). Pinner, one over on Oct 29th. Ridge (3). Trent Park, one on Feb 20th. Vicarage Farm (3+); juvs seen. Whitewebbs Farm, 86 on Mar 13th was an exceptionally high count.
**Kent**: Reported at 16 sites, 3+ pairs. Chelsfield (1+). Darenth Valley GC (1). Lullingstone Park (1). Otford, 20 on Nov 23rd. Twitton, 20 on Nov 8th.
**Surrey**: Reported at 14 sites, 9+ pairs. Barn Elms PF, one N on Oct 27th. Bletchingley (1). Canons Farm (4); juvs seen. Farthing Downs (1+). Holmethorpe SP (1+), juvs seen; 35+ on Dec 3rd. Morden Hall Park, one E on Oct 14th. Redhill (1). Rushett Farm (1).
**In Lond**: Regent's Park, one over SW on Nov 5th.

## Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

**Status**: fairly common but declining breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

There were a minimum of 172 territories/males singing after mid-May (195 in 2016) with several additional sites with birds present during the breeding season. Essex, Hertfordshire and Surrey provided over 80% of breeding season records. Below are all breeding records (no. of pairs/territories in brackets), some unusual records and some of the higher counts.

**Essex**: Reported at 28 sites, 70+ pairs. Belhus Woods CP (1). Brook Farm, Upminster (1). Chigwell (1). Chingford (1). Cornmill Meadows (1+). Fairlop Waters, present in June. Hall Marsh Scrape (1). Leyton Flats (1). Mar Dyke Valley (2); juvs seen. Orsett Fen (8); juvs seen. Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (2+). Rainham Marshes (47). Roding Valley Meadows (1+). Walthamstow Marshes (1+). Walthamstow Wetlands (2).
**Herts**: Reported at 37 sites, 33+ pairs. Amwell NR (3). Broad Colney Lakes (1). Dobb's Weir (1). Ellenbrook Fields (2+). Essendon (1). Frogmore Lakes (2). Hilfield Park Res (1+). Maple Lodge NR (1); breeding proven. Rye Meads (18); 26 on Dec 9th. Seventy Acres Lake (1); 45 on Nov 10th. Stocker's Lake (1). Tyttenhanger GP (1+).
**Middx**: Reported at 41 sites, 18+ pairs. Brent Res (2). Bushy Park (1). East India Dock Basin, four on Jan 3rd. Frays Farm Meadows (1). Home Park (2), juvs seen. Horsenden Hill (1). Parkside Farm/Res (1). Q. Mary GP (2). Springwell Lake (2); juvs seen. Staines Moor (1+). Stocker's Lake (1). Ten Acre Wood, Yeading (2+). Tottenham Marshes (1). Totteridge Valley (1).
**Bucks**: Colne Valley Park, Denham, up to three present April to July.
**Kent**: Reported at 13 sites, 13+ pairs. Crayford Marshes (1). Crossness (10+). Sevenoaks WR (1). Swanscombe Marshes (1+); 27 on Jan 25th.

*Reed Bunting. (Tony Coombs)*

**Surrey**: Reported at 28 sites, 37+ pairs. Beddington Farmlands (3). Buckland SP (1). Clapham Common, male on May 20th. Esher Common (1). Hogsmill SW (1). Holmethorpe SP (3+), juvs seen. London Wetland Centre (6). Molesey Heath (1). Richmond Park (19). Rushett Farm (1). South Norwood CP (1).

**In Lond**: Reported at three sites, one pair. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, male on Mar 11th. Primrose Hill, three S on Oct 15th. Regent's Park (1); pair first observed early April and then seen mating on May 10th, male on Nov 2nd.



# APPENDIX I: ESCAPES

The following records relate to birds known, or presumed, to be of captive origin. In addition to those listed, there are fully-winged individuals of several species of wildfowl in collections such as at St James's Park and Bushy Park.

## Wood Duck *Aix sponsa*

**Essex:** Harrow Lodge Park, one on Feb 13th and two on Aug 16th.

**Middx:** Bushy Park, one on Aug 26th.

**Kent:** Kelsey Park, singles on Jan 22nd, Feb 14th, May 9th, Jun 13th, Jul 11th, Aug 8th and Nov 3rd, three on Nov 9th, two on Nov 14th and three on Dec 12th.

## Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus*

**In Lond:** St James's Park, free-flying bird on Mar 16th, May 29th and Oct 5th.

## Fulvous Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor* or Lesser Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna javanica*

**Essex:** Connaught Water, three on Dec 3rd.

## Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

**Essex:** Fairlop Waters, three on Jun 2nd, two on Jul 13th & 30th, four on Aug 6th and two on 10th. Fishers Green, one on Feb 3rd. Langridge Scrape, six on May 4th. Rainham Marshes, one on Jan 6th.

**Herts:** Aldenham CP, singles on Feb 16th, Apr 8th & 15th and Jul 2nd. Amwell NR, two on May 20th. Frogmore Lakes, one on Mar 11th & 12th. Hilfield Park Res, singles on Jun 18th and Aug 11th. Lynsters Farm, singles on Mar 21st, 23rd & 31st, Oct 10th, 16th & 25th, Dec 1st & 27th. Maple Lodge NR, singles on Nov 29th and Dec 28th. Rickmansworth Aquadrome, one on Feb 6th. Rye Meads, one on Jun 3rd. Stocker's Lake, one on Jun 2nd & 7th. Tyttenhanger Farm, one on Jan 10th. Tyttenhanger GP, singles on Jan 3rd, and intermittently from Jun 2nd until the end of the year. Watford, one on Jan 19th. Wormleybury, one on May 25th.

**Middx:** Bayhurst Wood CP, one on Nov 11th. Broadwater Lake, singles on Jan 24th, Mar 14th and Nov 12th. Home Park, singles on Sep 15th, Nov 14th & 19th and Dec 9th. Kempton Park Race Course, one on Nov 19th.

**Bucks:** Q. Mother Res, singles on Aug 14th & 26th, and two on 27th.

**Kent:** Chipstead Lake, one on Dec 21st. Crossness, one on Apr 11th. Danson Park, one on Jan 16th & 19th and one on Feb 13th. Hall Place Gardens, singles on Feb 12th, 14th & 20th and Mar 5th. Kelsey Park, three on Jun 7th. Ruxley GP, one on Jan 24th. Sevenoaks WR, one on Dec 20th, 23rd, 26th, 28th & 31st. Swanley Park, one on Feb 3rd.

**Surrey:** Holmethorpe SP, singles on Jan 26th and Sep 4th. London Wetland Centre, two on May 26th & 27th.

## Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*
**Essex:** Walthamstow Wetlands, one on Sep 6th.
**Bucks:** Q. Mother Res, one on Aug 30th & 31st.
**Surrey:** Island Barn Res, one on May 1st. Kew Gardens, one on Feb 19th. Kingston-upon-Thames, one on Sep 22nd. London Wetland Centre, one on Jun 7th and two on Sep 8th.
**In Lond:** Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, one on Sep 11th. St James's Park, one on Mar 26th.

## White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*
**Essex:** Brook Farm, Upminster, pair with two young on Aug 27th. These did not breed at this site but earlier records of a pair at Orsett Fen on Jan 3rd and at Belhus Woods CP on Feb 1st were believed to be this feral pair. Any further information on these birds would be very welcome.

## Black Swan *Cygnus atratus*
**Essex:** KGV Res, one on Aug 22nd.
**Herts:** Bury Lake, one on Apr 4th. Lynsters Farm, two on Aug 31st. Stocker's lake, singles on Feb 28th and Apr 1st. Try Mill Lake, singles on Nov 22nd and Dec 12th. Tyttenhanger GP, one on Apr 5th.
**Middx:** Brent Res, one intermittently from Jan 2nd to Nov 16th. Eel Pie Island, one on Mar 14th & 19th. Isleworth, one on Jun 22nd. Q. Mary Res, one on Jan 22nd. Staines Res, one on Feb 4th. Twickenham, one on R Thames on Apr 28th.
**Bucks:** Denham Quarry Lake, one from Mar 3rd-6th. Q. Mother Res, one on Apr 20th & 21st, two on Aug 28th & 30th, Sep 2nd and one on Oct 1st.
**Surrey:** Beddington Farmlands, one on several dates from Jan 15th to Mar 25th. Claremont Landscape Garden, singles on Feb 1st and Jun 8th. Esher Common, singles on Jan 17th, Feb 13th, Oct 11th, Nov 16th and Dec 17th. Kingston-upon Thames, one on the R Thames from Jan 2nd-9th. London Wetland Centre, one or two from Sep 7th to Nov 1st. QE II Res, one on Nov 9th. Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), one on Nov 12th.
**In Lond:** Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, one on several dates from Jul 4th to Nov 1st.

## Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*
**Essex:** Brook Farm, Upminster, one on May 18th. Rainham Marshes, three E on Dec 18th.
**Herts:** Tyttenhanger GP, one from Aug 14th to Sep 1st.

## Pintail *Anas acuta*
**Essex:** Connaught Water, one on May 1st & 4th and Jun 2nd.
**Surrey:** Holmethorpe SP, singles in January, February, March, April, May and on Jul 17th.

## Bufflehead *Bucephala albeola*
**Middx:** Staines Res, one on Dec 17th.

## Smew *Mergellus albellus*
**Essex:** Connaught Water, females on Jan 9th & 17th, Feb 24th & 28th and May 1st. Woodford, female on Mar 8th & 11th.
**Middx:** Grovelands Park, female on Feb 8th.



## Muscovy Duck *Cairina moschata*
**Essex:** Hainault CP, singles on Jan 13th, Feb 10th & 13th and Jun 16th. Rainham Marshes, singles on Feb 5th and Sep 22nd. Woodford, singles on Dec 11th, 19th, 22nd & 30th.
**Herts:** Aldenham CP, two on Feb 16th and one on Oct 8th.
**Middx:** Brent Res, three from Jan 2nd-10th.
**Kent:** Darenth Lakes, one on Jan 6th. Otford, one on Jan 12th and three on Apr 5th.

## Ringed Teal *Callonetta leucophrys*
**Essex:** Connaught Water, two on Feb 3rd.
**Surrey:** London Wetland Centre, one on Jan 25th & 26th.

## Puna Teal *Spatula puna*
**Essex:** KGV Res, one on Jul 25th.

## Cinnamon Teal *Spatula cyanoptera*
**Surrey:** Kingston-upon-Thames, one on Sep 22nd.

## Helmeted Guineafowl *Numidia meleagris*
**Herts:** Essendon, present on Feb 21st, three on Mar 27th, May 6th & 23rd, Jun 16th, two on Jul 20th, one on Sep 21st and two on Dec 26th.

## Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus*
**Essex:** Epping Forest Woodland Burial Park, one on Jun 14th.
**Herts:** Brookmans Park, one on Jun 17th. Tyttenhanger GP, one on Apr 19th. Wildhill, singles on Apr 3rd, Jul 2nd and Nov 19th.
**Middx:** Isle of Dogs, one on Jul 19th.
**Kent:** Lewisham, one on Sep 5th.

## African Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus*
**Bucks:** Wraysbury GP, three on Dec 30th.

## African Spoonbill *Platalea alba*
**Bucks:** Wraysbury GP, one on Dec 30th.

## Harris's Hawk *Parabuteo unicinctus*
**Surrey:** QE II Res, one on Mar 15th.

## Demoiselle Crane *Grus virgo*
**Middx:** Hampstead Heath, one on Oct 30th.

## Cockatiel *Nymphicus hollandicus*
**Surrey:** Epsom, one on Apr 3rd.
**In Lond:** Southwark Park, one on Mar 28th.

### Grey Parrot *Psittacus erithacus*
**Essex:** Rainham Marshes, one on Oct 15th.

### Monk Parakeet *Myiopsitta monachus*
**Herts:** Borehamwood, three on Mar 19th and two on Nov 23rd.
**Middx:** Isle of Dogs/Mudchute Farm, 14 on Jan 22nd, six on Jan 29th, 16 on Feb 13th, six on Mar 24th and four on Mar 28th.
**Surrey:** London Wetland Centre, one over on Aug 16th.

### Plum-headed Parakeet *Psittacula cyanocephala*
**Middx:** Greenford, one on Nov 30th.

### Alexandrine Parakeet *Psittacula eupatria*
**Essex:** Netherhouse Farm, one on Aug 25th.
**Surrey:** London Wetland Centre, one on Aug 22nd.

### Parakeet sp
**Surrey:** Raynes Park, one on Nov 4th (distinctly yellow bird). Richmond Park, one on Oct 13th (all yellow bird).

### Budgerigar *Melopsittacus undulatus*
**Middx:** Sudbury, one on Aug 31st.
**Surrey:** Beddington Farmlands, one on Jul 26th.

### Zebra Finch *Taeniopygia guttata*
**Essex:** Rainham Marshes, one on Aug 22nd & 26th.
**Surrey:** London Wetland Centre, one on Jun 28th.

### Atlantic Canary *Serinus canaria*
**Surrey:** Banstead Wood, one on Aug 1st.



## APPENDIX II: HYBRIDS

The following records are of wild or feral hybrids, but records of Canada x Greylag Goose hybrids are not reported here. All birds are reported as described by the observers and are listed in order of the first named species involved. **It would be helpful if observers could send photographs of hybrids, where available.**

### Barnacle Goose x Canada Goose
**Herts:** Coursers Farm, two on Feb 19th. Frogmore Lakes, one on several dates between Mar 11th and May 21st and on Oct 26th and Dec 24th. Tyttenhanger GP, one on Jan 28th, two on Feb 19th, one on Feb 25th and Apr 19th.

### Bar-headed Goose x Canada Goose
**Surrey:** London Wetland Centre, one on Aug 9th and Sep 8th.

### Bar-headed Goose x Greylag Goose
**Kent:** Kelsey Park, one on Apr 29th.

### Bar-headed Goose hybrid
**Essex:** Leyton Flats, one on Dec 5th.

### Greylag Goose x White-fronted Goose
**In Lond:** St James's Park, one on Jan 25th.

### Ruddy Shelduck x Shelduck
**Kent:** Crossness, one on Jul 12th.

### Shelduck hybrid
**Surrey:** QE II Res, one on Aug 27th.

### Gadwall x Mallard
**Surrey:** Island Barn Res, one from Apr 4th to May 11th and on Aug 29th.

### Mallard x Pintail
**Surrey:** Holmesthorpe SP, one from January to Jul 17th.

### *Aythya* hybrids
*Aytha* hybrids are listed below under the described type, where such a description is given.

### *Aythya* hybrid
**Surrey:** Beddington Farmlands, one on Mar 6th. Island Barn Res, one on Jan 26th & 27th (same as Walton Res). London Wetland Centre, singles on Jan 12th, Feb 23rd & 25th, Mar 5th, 20th & 21st, Nov 15th and Dec 3rd. QE II Res, one on Apr 4th (same as Island

Barn and Walton Res). Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), one on Jan 7th, May 19th and Nov 4th.
**In Lond:** St James's Park, one on Oct 19th.

## Pochard x Scaup

**Surrey:** London Wetland Centre, one on Jan 13th.

## Pochard x Tufted Duck

**Middx:** Alexandra Park, male from Feb 4th-18th, Apr 19th, May 14th & 18th, Jun 11th, Jul 23rd and Oct 22nd & 27th. Woodberry Wetlands one on Mar 18th & 25th.
**Bucks:** Horton GP, male on Sep 10th and Oct 1st & 3rd. Wraysbury GP, regular male on Sep 26th, Oct 23rd & 26th and Nov 4th & 25th (same as Horton GP) and another bird on Dec 22nd.
**Surrey:** Beddington Farmlands, male on Feb 9th & 21st and Mar 20th. London Wetland Centre, male on Jan 14th, Feb 11th, Mar 28th, Apr 19th and May 6th & 13th,
**In Lond:** St James's Park, male on Oct 16th.

## Ferruginous Duck x Pochard

**Essex:** Walthamstow Wetlands, male on Oct 22nd.
**Herts:** Hilfield Park Res, one on Dec 14th & 19th. Tyttenhanger GP, one on Dec 6th & 16th.
**Middx:** Staines Res, male on Dec 17th & 31st.
**Bucks:** Wraysbury GP, one on Feb 26th, Mar 2nd and Dec 3rd, with a different bird on Dec 15th.

## Scaup x Tufted Duck

**Middx:** Staines, female on Mar 18th.
**Surrey:** London Wetland Centre, female on May 6th & 13th.

## Herring Gull x Lesser Black-backed Gull

**Middx:** Q. Mother Res, adult on several dates in January and on Feb 10th. Swallow x House Martin
**Essex:** Fairlop Waters, one on Apr 10th.



# APPENDIX III: NON-PROVEN AND NON-SUBMITTED RECORDS

## Non-proven records

The following records were submitted to the LNHS but have not been accepted, either by the *British Birds* Rarities Committee or by our Rarities Committee.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **2016** | | |
| Serin | Leyton Flats | Oct 12th |
| **2017** | | |
| Goshawk | Fryent CP | Apr 8th, Sep 23rd & 24th, Oct 6th |
| Black Kite | Bromley-by-Bow | Apr 20th |
| Spotted Crake | Beddington Farmlands | Sep 18th-30th |
| Crane | Beddington Farmlands | Mar 29th |
| Bee-eater | Willesden | Apr 21st |
| Wryneck | Alexandra Park | Apr 24th |
| Merlin | Hampstead Heath | Nov 1st |
| Merlin | Holmethorpe SP | Apr 13th, Dec 23rd |
| Red-backed Shrike | Richmond Park | May 1st |
| Black-throated Thrush | Finchley | Jan 24th-25th |
| White Wagtail | Alexandra Park | Sep 4th-5th |

## Non-submitted records

The following records have been reported but to date no details have been received by the LNHS. Photos and descriptions (or notes where appropriate) for any of these records would be welcomed, so that in due course they may be published as accepted records.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Pink-footed Goose | Battersea Bridge | Apr 11th |
| Whooper Swan | Staines Res | Jan 19th |
| Whooper Swan | Morden Hall Park | Feb 10th |
| Bewick's Swan | Frogmore Lakes | Mar 18th |
| Bewick's Swan | Sevenoaks WR | Dec 3rd |
| Ferruginous Duck | Tyttenhanger GP | Dec 6th |
| Ferruginous Duck | Staines Res | Jan 26th |
| Leach's Petrel | Barn Elms PF | Oct 8th |
| White Stork | St Albans | Apr 30th |
| White Stork | Bushy Park | Nov 18th |
| White Stork | Pinner/Ruislip | Apr 19th |
| White Stork | Beckenham | Aug 26th |
| White Stork | Purley | Jul 28th |
| Spoonbill | Rainham Marshes | Aug 31st |
| Spoonbill | Rainham Marshes | Sep 18th |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Spoonbill | Crossness | Nov 1st |
| Spoonbill | Swanscombe Marshes | Apr 13th |
| Cattle Egret | Ingrebourne Valley | Jul 22nd |
| Cattle Egret | Rainham Marshes | Jan 10th |
| Cattle Egret | London Wetland Centre | Aug 6th |
| Gannet | Bedfont Lakes CP | Dec 11th |
| Honey-buzzard | Creekmouth, Barking | Sep 10th |
| Honey-buzzard | Fairlop Waters | Aug 29th |
| Honey-buzzard | Gallions Reach | Oct 8th |
| Honey-buzzard | Rainham Marshes | Aug 28th |
| Honey-buzzard | Romford | May 11th |
| Honey-buzzard | Romford | May 12th |
| Honey-buzzard | Woodford Green | May 16th |
| Honey-buzzard | Fryent CP | Sep 17th |
| Honey-buzzard | Woodlands Farm | Oct 17th |
| Honey-buzzard | London Wetland Centre | Aug 25th |
| Honey-buzzard | Elephant & Castle | Sep 19th |
| Goshawk | Epping Forest | Jun 17th |
| Goshawk | Gallions Reach | Apr 2nd |
| Goshawk | Leyton | Aug 15th |
| Goshawk | Rainham Marshes | Aug 25th |
| Goshawk | Romford | Aug 6th |
| Goshawk | Weald CP | Jan 20th |
| Goshawk | Woodford Green | Feb 1st & 24th, Jul 10th |
| Goshawk | Bayhurst Wood CP | Nov 25th |
| Goshawk | Kensal Green Cemetery | Nov 17th |
| Goshawk | Bookham Common | Jul 29th |
| Goshawk | London Wetland Centre | Apr 1st |
| Goshawk | Putney | Mar 13th |
| Goshawk | Hyde Park/K'ton Gdns | Mar 30th, Aug 7th |
| Harrier sp | Walthamstow Marshes | Sep 20th |
| Black Kite | Gidea Park | May 10th |
| Black Kite | Lewisham | Jun 21st |
| Black Kite | Thorpe Water Park | May 24th |
| White-tailed Eagle | Brookman's Park | Jan 12th |
| Spotted Crake | Tyttenhanger GP | Oct 20th |
| Spotted Crake | Morden Hall Park | Sep 29th |
| Crane | Mitcham | Mar 28th |
| Stone-curlew | Ellenbrook Fields | Apr 22nd |
| Stone-curlew | Field Common GP | Apr 18th |
| Temminck's Stint | KGV Res | Aug 8th |
| Sabine's Gull | Gallions Reach | Nov 12th |
| Glaucous Gull | Watermeads Lane | Jan 7th |
| Iceland Gull | Watermeads | Feb 10th |
| Iceland Gull | West Molesey | Jan 6th |



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Roseate Tern | Weybridge | May 24th |
| Roseate Tern | Rainham Marshes | Aug 17th, 18th & 30th |
| White-winged BlackTern | Rainham Marshes | May 14th |
| Great Skua | Stocker's Lake | Aug 21st |
| Arctic Skua | London Wetland Centre | Apr 30th |
| Skua sp | Connaught Water | Sep 13th |
| Nightjar | Hartham | Apr 26th |
| Bee-eater | Wanstead Park | May 2nd |
| Bee-eater | Bexleyheath | Jul 7th |
| Red-footed Falcon | Bedfords Park | Aug 27th |
| Merlin | Ingrebourne Valley | Jan 26th |
| Merlin | KGV Res | Nov 2nd |
| Merlin | Walthamstow Wetlands | Jan 14th |
| Merlin | Ten Acre Wood, Yeading | Jan 8th |
| Merlin | Longfield Gallops | Mar 16th |
| Merlin | Sevenoaks WR | Dec 14th |
| Merlin | Canons Farm | Jan 1st |
| Merlin | Headley Heath | Nov 6th |
| Merlin | Wandle Meadow Nature Park | Sep 10th |
| Woodchat Shrike | Brent Res | May 20th |
| Hooded Crow | Tyttenhanger GP | Apr 17th |
| Siberian Chiffchaff | Creekmouth, Barking | Dec 30th |
| Siberian Chiffchaff | Fairlop Waters | Jan 6th |
| Siberian Chiffchaff | Rainham Marshes | Oct 24th |
| Siberian Chiffchaff | Walthamstow Wetlands | Nov 23rd |
| Siberian Chiffchaff | Rye Meads | Jan 1st, 7th & 8th, Feb 19th-20th, Mar 4th & 16th |
| Siberian Chiffchaff | Troy Mill Lake | Jan 9th |
| Siberian Chiffchaff | Shepperton | Dec 11th |
| Siberian Chiffchaff | Tottenham Marshes | Mar 23rd |
| Siberian Chiffchaff | Greenwich Peninsula Ecology Park | Mar 26th |
| Siberian Chiffchaff | Beddington Farmlands | Jan 17th & 20th |
| Siberian Chiffchaff | Mitcham | Jan 26th |
| Siberian Chiffchaff | Morden Hall Park | Nov 25th-26th |
| Siberian Chiffchaff | Poulter Park | Jan 7th to Feb 12th |
| White Wagtail | KGV Res | Aug 31st |
| White Wagtail | Rainham Marshes | Jan 6th |
| White Wagtail | Wanstead Flats | Oct 5th |
| White Wagtail | Wamstead Park | Nov 4th |
| White Wagtail | Brookmans Park | Oct 7th |
| White Wagtail | North Mymms Park | Sep 28th |
| White Wagtail | Tyttenhanger GP | Sep 12th, 14th-16th, 18th & 22nd |
| White Wagtail | Staines Res | Sep 23rd |
| White Wagtail | Q. Mother Res | Oct 8th |
| White Wagtail | Ruxley | Sep 12th |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| White Wagtail | Holmesthorpe SP | Jan 9th |
| White Wagtail | Wandle Park, Croydon | Nov 20th |
| White Wagtail | Wimbledon Common | Oct 22nd |
| Red-throated Pipit | Rainham Marshes | Oct 9th |
| Red-throated Pipit | Berrylands | Oct 17th |
| Lapland Bunting | Gallions Reach | Oct 25th |
| Lapland Bunting | Rainham Marshes | Sep 23rd |
| Lapland Bunting | Rainham Marshes | Nov 3rd |
| Snow Bunting | Gallions Reach | Oct 15th |

## Records still in circulation

The following records are still being considered by our Rarities Committee.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Pink-footed Goose | Tottenham Marshes | Oct 29th |
| Glossy Ibis | Walthamstow Wetlands | Sep 16th |
| Goshawk | Brook Farm, Upminster | Sep 25th |
| Black Kite | Rainham Marshes | May 18th |
| Merlin | Hogsmill SW | Jan 30th |



# FIRST AND LAST DATES OF REGULAR MIGRANTS

| Summer Migrants | Arrival | | Departure | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Garganey | Mar 12 | London Wetland Centre | Oct 3 | Rainham Marshes |
| Osprey | Mar 29 | Amwell Nature Reserve/ Dagenham | Sep 26 | London Wetland Centre |
| Little Ringed Plover | Mar 15 | Horton Brook Quarry/ Rye Meads | Sep 25 | Rye Meads |
| Whimbrel | Apr 8 | Rainham Marshes | Sep 15 | Staines Res |
| Sandwich Tern | Mar 23 | Q. Mother Res | Sep 25 | Gallions Reach/Rainham Marshes |
| Little Tern | Apr 9 | Walthamstow Wetlands | Aug 30 | Rainham Marshes |
| Common Tern | Mar 28 | Staines Res | Oct 21 | Rainham Marshes |
| Arctic Tern | Apr 1 | Rainham Marshes | Oct 14 | Gallions Reach |
| Black Tern | Apr 18 | KGV Res | Sep 26 | KGV Res |
| Turtle Dove | Apr 29 | North Weald Bassett | Sep 12 | Rainham Marshes |
| Cuckoo | Mar 18 | Riddlesdown | Oct 8 | Lodge Farm, Nazeing |
| Swift | Mar 27 | Alexandra Park | Sep 21 | Ingrebourne Valley |
| Hobby | Apr 3 | Rainham Marshes/ Stocker's Lake | Oct 25 | Sydenham Hill Wood |
| Sand Martin | Mar 3 | QE II Res | Oct 4 | Gallions Reach |
| Swallow [W] | Mar 15 | Creekmouth, Barking | Nov 3 | Tottenham Marshes |
| House Martin [W] | Mar 29 | London Wetland Centre | Oct 28 | Brent Res |
| Wood Warbler | Apr 28 | Danson Park | Aug 12 | Wanstead Flats |
| Willow Warbler | Mar 7 | Brookmill Park | Oct 30 | London Wetland Centre |
| Sedge Warbler | Mar 25 | Rainham Marshes | Sep 27 | Rye Meads |
| Reed Warbler | Apr 2 | Rye Meads/Stocker's Lake | Sep 30 | Brent Res/Rye Meads |
| Grasshopper Warbler | Apr 5 | Rainham Marshes | Aug 31 | Chelsham |
| Garden Warbler | Apr 1 | Sevenoaks Wildfowl Reserve | Oct 29 | Holmethorpe SP |
| Lesser Whitethroat [W] | Mar 27 | Horton CP | Oct 1 | Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park |
| Whitethroat [W] | Mar 27 | Horton Country Park | Oct 14 | Colnbrook |
| Ring Ouzel | Mar 17 | Beddington Farmlands | Nov 12 | London Wetland Centre |
| Spotted Flycatcher | May 10 | Holmethorpe SP | Oct 8 | Denham |
| Nightingale | Apr 9 | Crossness | Jul 23 | Rye Meads |
| Pied Flycatcher | Apr 13 | Streatham Common | Sep 29 | Oxleas Wood |
| Redstart | Apr 1 | Greenwich Peninsula Ecol Pk | Oct 19 | Deptford |
| Whinchat | Apr 12 | Fairlop Waters | Oct 16 | Vicarage Farm |
| Wheatear | Mar 7 | Q. Mary Res | Oct 27 | Three sites |
| Yellow Wagtail | Mar 30 | Upminster | Oct 22 | Primrose Hill |
| Tree Pipit | Apr 2 | West Hyde | Sep 23 | Beddington Farmlands |

[W] excludes winter records

| Winter Migrants | Departure | | Arrival | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Smew | Mar 28 | Sewardstone Marsh | Nov 18 | Seventy Acres Lake |
| Goosander | Apr 2 | Broadwater Lake | Oct 1 | KGV Res |
| Bittern [S] | May 7 | Rye Meads | Aug 21 | Amwell NR |
| Jack Snipe | May 6 | London Wetland Centre/ Rainham Marshes | Sep 23 | Holmethorpe SP |
| Fieldfare | Apr 25 | Pinner Park Farm | Sep 27 | Three sites |
| Redwing | Apr 30 | Morden Hall Park | Sep 20 | Hilly Fields |
| Water Pipit | Apr 13 | Rainham Marshes | Oct 3 | London Wetland Centre |
| Rock Pipit | Mar 17 | Rainham Marshes | Sep 5 | Swanscombe Marshes |
| Brambling | Apr 5 | Sevenoaks WR | Sep 26 | Battersea Park |

[S] excludes summer records

# PAPERS ABOUT BIRDS IN THE LONDON AREA

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The Breeding Bird Survey in London *by Ian Woodward* 194

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A Snapshot of Bird Life in the City of London and the Immediate Surrounds *by Helen Baker* 211

Could we get House Sparrows back into the London Parks? *by Michael N Mac* 217

Parrot Crossbills in Broxbourne Woods, December 2017 – A First for London *by Barry Reed* 223

**Foreign-ringed Black-headed Gulls *by Alan Gibson***
Data on foreign-ringed Black-headed Gulls, observed by Alan Gibson in four Inner London parks and two parks in Middlesex, now include 350 records from 2013 to 2018.

The records are arranged on a spreadsheet in date order, in order of metal and plastic ring markings, and in order of the metal rings in each of the 12 foreign countries in which the gulls were originally ringed. The combined file can be downloaded from the LNHS website:

http://www.lnhs.org.uk > Publications> London Bird Report> Downloads. 'London Bird Report 2017'



# RINGING REPORT

PAUL ROPER

*Firecrest - ringed at Stanwell Moor on November 3rd. (C Lamsdell)*

In London bird ringing is undertaken by a range of groups, partnerships and individuals covering a wide range of sites throughout the capital. Full details of ringing in 2017 can be found on the BTO web site at:
https://app.bto.org/ring/countyrec/results2017/ringGBLO2017.htm

Numbers of many species ringed vary year on year due to a range of factors such as ringer effort and coverage or weather conditions, which can have a marked effect on catching success and final totals for any year. These variable reasons mean that any changes in species figures in this type of report are not a reflection on population levels but more often ringer activity. A much better reflection of population levels is through Constant Effort Sites (CES) and there are a number running in the London area. The data is pooled nationally and can be found on the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) web site:
https://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/ringing/surveys/ces

In 2017 a grand total of 27,929 birds were ringed of which 4,194 were nestlings and 23,735 were full-grown fledged birds.

Table 1 gives totals for each species and annual totals are also given for the previous two years to enable comparison.

Numbers of wildfowl remained stable in 2017 although of note are six Red-crested Pochard and five Shoveler. Clearly only one single adult Little Egret suggests regular colonies where young have been ringed in past years were not visited in 2017. Buzzards return to the list with four young ringed. Lapwing were the only wader species ringed in higher numbers than the last few years with most other species continuing to be down – this almost certainly reflects a reduction in effort and opportunity rather than anything significant. A welcome increase in the numbers of Common Terns ringed is opposite to the numbers of gulls reduced by no activity from North Thames Gull group. It would seem only Black-headed Gull young will be represented in future ringing totals. Two Cuckoos is excellent but Barn Owls down to six almost certainly reflects a poor year for them. Three Tree Pipits and a single Water Pipit were of note as is the return of Yellow Wagtail to the list. Four Skylarks are very much of interest and twenty Fieldfare is noteworthy. Warbler totals remain remarkably constant and a total of nineteen Firecrests ringed almost certainly suggests this species had an excellent year. Finches and Buntings were reasonably stable but the extraordinary total of 1,122 Goldfinches continues to suggest this species is thriving.

*Stonechat – ringed at Stanwell Moor on October 31st. (C Lamsdell)*

**Table 1.** Species totals of birds reported as ringed in the London Area during 2017

| 2017 Pullus | 2017 Full Grown | 2017 Total | Species | 2015 Total | 2016 Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 28 | 355 | 383 | Mute Swan | 404 | 343 |
| 9 | 14 | 23 | Greylag Goose | 5 | 13 |
| 66 | 123 | 189 | Canada Goose | 221 | 217 |
| 32 | 55 | 87 | Egyptian Goose | 57 | 83 |
| 0 | 6 | 6 | Red-crested Pochard | 0 | 0 |
| 1 | 7 | 8 | Mandarin | 3 | 0 |
| 15 | 14 | 29 | Gadwall | 21 | 15 |
| 0 | 17 | 17 | Teal | 6 | 13 |
| 20 | 96 | 116 | Mallard | 68 | 80 |
| 0 | 5 | 5 | Shoveler | 1 | 0 |
| 0 | 2 | 2 | Pochard | 3 | 6 |
| 12 | 32 | 44 | Tufted Duck | 12 | 46 |
| 0 | 1 | 1 | Little Egret | 12 | 22 |
| 0 | 2 | 2 | Cormorant | 0 | 0 |
| 21 | 3 | 24 | Grey Heron | 21 | 19 |
| 0 | 10 | 10 | Little Grebe | 3 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | Great Crested Grebe | 0 | 1 |
| 0 | 15 | 15 | Sparrowhawk | 19 | 22 |
| 4 | 0 | 4 | Buzzard | 3 | 0 |
| 34 | 6 | 40 | Kestrel | 28 | 30 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | Hobby | 3 | 1 |
| 3 | 0 | 3 | Peregrine | 4 | 1 |
| 0 | 5 | 5 | Water Rail | 6 | 2 |
| 4 | 46 | 50 | Moorhen | 26 | 29 |
| 19 | 213 | 232 | Coot | 56 | 206 |
| 17 | 1 | 18 | Lapwing | 8 | 8 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | Ringed Plover | 0 | 0 |
| 1 | 1 | 2 | Little Ringed Plover | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 3 | 3 | Common Sandpiper | 7 | 2 |
| 0 | 6 | 6 | Green Sandpiper | 10 | 7 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | Redshank | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | Woodcock | 0 | 1 |
| 0 | 1 | 1 | Jack Snipe | 5 | 7 |
| 0 | 4 | 4 | Snipe | 5 | 16 |
| 75 | 1 | 76 | Common Tern | 66 | 46 |
| 412 | 31 | 443 | Black-headed Gull | 431 | 138 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | Common Gull | 5 | 0 |
| 0 | 1 | 1 | Lesser Black-backed Gull | 4 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | Herring Gull | 19 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | Yellow-legged Gull | 1 | 0 |
| 43 | 23 | 66 | Stock Dove | 24 | 32 |
| 0 | 73 | 73 | Woodpigeon | 45 | 74 |

| 2017 Pullus | 2017 Full Grown | 2017 Total | Species | 2015 Total | 2016 Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 13 | 15 | Collared Dove | 18 | 11 |
| 1 | 1 | 2 | Cuckoo | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 78 | 78 | Ring-necked Parakeet | 27 | 57 |
| 3 | 3 | 6 | Barn Owl | 22 | 34 |
| 3 | 0 | 3 | Little Owl | 3 | 3 |
| 6 | 2 | 8 | Tawny Owl | 6 | 6 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | Nightjar | 0 | 0 |
| 6 | 7 | 13 | Swift | 4 | 27 |
| 0 | 64 | 64 | Kingfisher | 78 | 62 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | Wryneck | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 23 | 23 | Green Woodpecker | 19 | 33 |
| 0 | 96 | 96 | Great Spotted Woodpecker | 72 | 69 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | Lesser Spotted Woodpecker | 1 | 0 |
| 476 | 95 | 571 | Sand Martin | 118 | 353 |
| 177 | 178 | 355 | Swallow | 665 | 544 |
| 0 | 26 | 26 | House Martin | 11 | 11 |
| 0 | 3 | 3 | Tree Pipit | 0 | 2 |
| 0 | 179 | 179 | Meadow Pipit | 122 | 136 |
| 0 | 1 | 1 | Water Pipit | 0 | 2 |
| 0 | 4 | 4 | Yellow Wagtail | 0 | 0 |
| 24 | 8 | 32 | Grey Wagtail | 27 | 42 |
| 0 | 12 | 12 | Pied Wagtail | 8 | 10 |
| 6 | 624 | 630 | Wren | 661 | 684 |
| 0 | 1 | 1 | Spotted Flycatcher | 1 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | Pied Flycatcher | 1 | 0 |
| 28 | 927 | 955 | Robin | 972 | 979 |
| 0 | 1 | 1 | Nightingale | 1 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | Black Redstart | 1 | 0 |
| 0 | 2 | 2 | Redstart | 3 | 3 |
| 0 | 6 | 6 | Stonechat | 7 | 2 |
| 0 | 1 | 1 | Whinchat | 1 | 1 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | Wheatear | 0 | 1 |
| 4 | 0 | 4 | Skylark | 0 | 0 |
| 5 | 816 | 821 | Dunnock | 875 | 785 |
| 7 | 637 | 644 | Blackbird | 595 | 658 |
| 0 | 20 | 20 | Fieldfare | 3 | 9 |
| 2 | 270 | 272 | Song Thrush | 257 | 268 |
| 0 | 301 | 301 | Redwing | 173 | 318 |
| 0 | 3 | 3 | Mistle Thrush | 6 | 3 |
| 0 | 3 | 3 | Bearded Tit | 0 | 4 |
| 3 | 111 | 114 | Cetti's Warbler | 126 | 120 |
| 5 | 1 | 6 | Grasshopper Warbler | 0 | 4 |
| 71 | 378 | 449 | Sedge Warbler | 577 | 470 |
| 111 | 1067 | 1178 | Reed Warbler | 1249 | 1369 |
| 6 | 2605 | 2611 | Blackcap | 2883 | 2231 |
| 1 | 344 | 345 | Garden Warbler | 453 | 334 |
| 0 | 66 | 66 | Lesser Whitethroat | 104 | 93 |
| 12 | 676 | 688 | Whitethroat | 766 | 630 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | Yellow-browed Warbler | 0 | 1 |
| 39 | 2226 | 2265 | Chiffchaff | 1990 | 2169 |
| 0 | 231 | 231 | Willow Warbler | 191 | 334 |
| 0 | 828 | 828 | Goldcrest | 1033 | 750 |
| 0 | 19 | 19 | Firecrest | 15 | 9 |
| 0 | 880 | 880 | Long-tailed Tit | 982 | 785 |
| 1480 | 2868 | 4348 | Blue Tit | 4217 | 2934 |
| 800 | 1601 | 2401 | Great Tit | 2405 | 1912 |
| 11 | 170 | 181 | Coal Tit | 143 | 105 |
| 7 | 1 | 8 | Marsh Tit | 1 | 0 |
| 7 | 21 | 28 | Nuthatch | 20 | 28 |
| 0 | 56 | 56 | Treecreeper | 50 | 51 |
| 9 | 36 | 45 | Magpie | 58 | 43 |
| 0 | 42 | 42 | Jay | 42 | 33 |
| 13 | 13 | 26 | Jackdaw | 37 | 24 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | Rook | 1 | 0 |
| 0 | 5 | 5 | Carrion Crow* | 1 | 5 |
| 0 | 1662 | 1662 | Starling | 1356 | 1915 |
| 0 | 191 | 191 | House Sparrow | 132 | 166 |
| 30 | 10 | 40 | Tree Sparrow | 36 | 81 |
| 0 | 166 | 166 | Chaffinch | 223 | 236 |
| 0 | 1 | 1 | Brambling | 0 | 0 |
| 5 | 258 | 263 | Greenfinch | 244 | 217 |
| 0 | 1122 | 1122 | Goldfinch | 743 | 800 |
| 0 | 17 | 17 | Siskin | 43 | 369 |
| 1 | 56 | 57 | Linnet | 54 | 28 |
| 0 | 3 | 3 | Redpoll Sp | 2 | 0 |
| 0 | 234 | 234 | Lesser Redpoll | 205 | 117 |
| 0 | 50 | 50 | Bullfinch | 103 | 80 |
| 0 | 9 | 9 | Yellowhammer | 10 | 13 |
| 16 | 132 | 148 | Reed Bunting | 139 | 88 |
| **4194** | **23735** | **27929** | **Total** | **27004** | **25206** |

* or Hooded Crow

*The 400th Sand Martin pullus of 2017 at London Wetland Centre. A record number of 476 pulli were ringed in 2017 with an estimated 634 fledging. (W Haines)*

One of the main reasons for ringing birds is to generate recoveries of one type or another. Sadly many recoveries tend to be of dead birds but other ringers also catch birds from elsewhere and marked birds are also easily identifiable generating some excellent life histories of individual birds.

There are now many internet sources of recovered birds and the main one showing all the London Recoveries can be found on the BTO web site at:

https://app.bto.org/ring/countyrec/results2017/recGBLO2017.htm

The Southern Colour Ringing Group and North Thames Gull group also show recoveries on their respective web sites and information on interesting movements can be found here:

http://www.southern-colour-ringing-group.org.uk/

http://www.ntgg.org.uk/cgi-bin/content.cgi?p=recoveries&l=1

## References

ROBINSON, R.A., LEECH, D.I. & CLARK, J.A.(2018) The Online Demography Report: Bird ringing and nest recording in Britain & Ireland in 2017. BTO, Thetford (http://www.bto.org/ringing-report, created on 7-September-2018)

*Colour ringed Little Egret seen at Rye Meads. This bird ringed in 2013 at Netherhall is a regular at Rye Meads. (J Martin)*

## Acknowledgements

Thanks to Chris Lamsdell, Bill Haines and Janet Martin for providing photographs.

A number of ringing related projects are currently in the process of being worked up and some of these will be reported in future years. Ringers in London are encouraged to write up short projects or ringing activity for inclusion in this report and to send in photographs of interesting birds caught for inclusion. Photographers are also invited to send in pictures of birds with colour rings and details of these birds which may be of interest. Material can be sent to ntgg_sightings@hotmail.co.uk

Paul Roper. ntgg_sightings@hotmail.co.uk

# THE BREEDING BIRD SURVEY IN LONDON

IAN WOODWARD

The *BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey* (BBS) was introduced in 1994 to provide a measure of the population changes of our common and widespread birds. 1-km squares were chosen at random by BBS organisers at the BTO. Each square is allocated to a volunteer, who makes two early-morning transect walks between April and June, separated by at least four weeks. The survey is repeated each year, following the same route. All birds observed are counted; not just those known to be breeding. By comparing counts of birds made on the same squares in successive years, it is possible to measure population changes.

Where species are sufficiently widespread, changes in population can be measured at regional level as well as at national level. This report covers the London government office region, and therefore does not represent the entire LNHS area.

In 2017, a total of 110 squares were surveyed in the London region, an increase from 2016 (*see Table 1*).

**Table 1.** Number of squares covered over the most recent ten years.

| 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 109 | 110 | 105 | 98 | 99 | 112 | 108 | 106 | 106 | 110 |

In 2017, a total of 96 species were recorded during BBS visits in London, including Black Swan, Golden Pheasant and Raven, the first time these species have been recorded on BBS walks in the area, taking the total seen on London squares to 139 species. All species observed by BBS surveyors are recorded, so this total includes six 'escapes' which are not on the official London Bird Club list. Other more unusual sightings in 2017 included Oystercatcher, Ring Ouzel, Black Redstart and Whinchat. As in previous years, Feral Pigeon, Woodpigeon and Starling were again the most abundantly recorded species. The total number of Ring-necked Parakeets recorded on BBS walks in London passed 1,000 for the first time: it is now the seventh most abundantly recorded species.

Table 2 shows the population changes in London, with figures for England being shown for the 1-year and long term trends for comparison purposes. In 2017, 5-year and 10-year BBS trends have been reported for the first time in addition to the 1-year and long-term trends reported in previous years. The figures for England for these periods (and confidence limits for all periods) can be found on the BTO website.

The criterion for inclusion in the table is that a species occurs in an average of 30 squares per year over the survey period reported, which is considered to be the minimum number to provide reliable trends. London trends for three additional species have been produced for the 10-year period (Canada Goose, Moorhen and Jackdaw), although the sample size for these species remains too low to report trends from 1995/2017.

Fifteen species show a statistically significant increase in London between 1995 and 2016, and eight species show a significant decrease in London over the same period:



Feral Pigeon; Swift; Starling; Blackbird; Song Thrush; Mistle Thrush; House Sparrow; and Greenfinch. The BBS trend for Greenfinch since 1995 shows a significant decline for the first time this year: the gains made during the early years of the survey by this species have been completely reversed, probably as a result of trichomonosis disease.

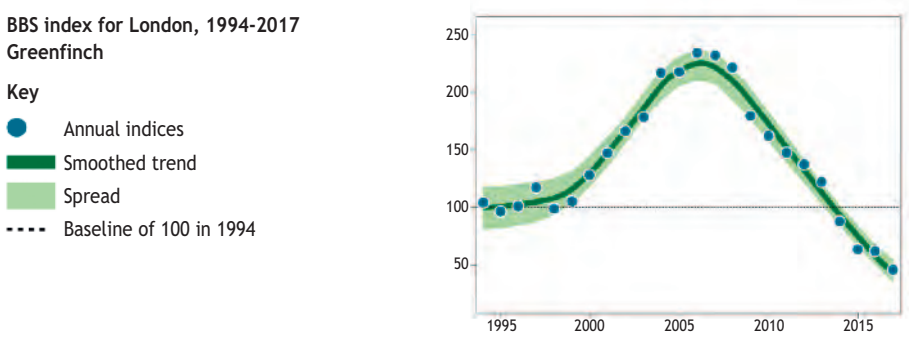


*Fig. 1: Graph showing the BBS trend for Greenfinch in the London government office region. The dark green line is the smoothed trend, the blue dots represent the annual indices. (BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey)*

The new 5-year and 10-year results indicate that six of the eight species showing a long-term decline in London have also declined significantly over one or both of the shorter periods, with Greenfinch decreasing by 61% in just five years. The exceptions are Feral Pigeon and Song Thrush, which have remained stable over the last ten years. They also highlight recent declines for Collared Dove, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Blue Tit and Chaffinch (over both shorter periods), and recent increases for Ring-necked Parakeet, Blackcap, Robin and Goldfinch. Of the new species included in this report, only Jackdaw shows a statistically significant change (an increase over 10-years), with the trends for Canada Goose and Moorhen being stable for both the 5-year and 10-year trends.

Just five species showed statistically significant population changes between 2016 and 2017 in London. Chiffchaff, House Sparrow and Goldfinch increased, and Woodpigeon and Wren decreased (the latter following a significant increase between 2015 and 2016).

**Table 2.** Population changes in numbers of birds in the BTO's London region with 1-year and long-term trends compared with England; figures in blue type are statistically significant. The long term trend has been smoothed. As smoothing involves truncation of the end points this trend is labelled as 1995/2016, even though the survey period is from 1994 to 2017.

| | Sample size London* | Change 2016/2017 London (1 year) | Change 2016/2017 England (1 year) | Change 2011/2016 London (5 years) | Change 2006/2016 London (10 years) | Change 1995/2016 London (23 years) | Change 1995/2016 England (23 years) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Canada Goose | 35 | 62 | 37 | -6 | -24 | N/A | 66 |
| Mallard | 43 | 7 | -9 | -5 | -11 | -19 | 27 |
| Moorhen | 38 | -5 | 2 | -9 | -2 | N/A | -13 |
| Feral Pigeon | 74 | 10 | 2 | -3 | -5 | -23 | -31 |
| Woodpigeon | 83 | -12 | -2 | -5 | -13 | 47 | 36 |
| Collared Dove | 53 | 6 | 8 | -30 | -43 | -13 | -1 |
| Ring-necked Parakeet | 44 | -6 | 2 | 56 | 139 | 26519 | 1480 |
| Swift | 59 | -26 | -1 | -28 | -47 | -58 | -53 |
| Green Woodpecker | 32 | 0 | -6 | -9 | -14 | 41 | 37 |
| Great Sp. Woodpecker | 38 | -12 | 4 | -20 | -15 | 40 | 99 |
| Magpie | 82 | -3 | 0 | 5 | 10 | 34 | 0 |
| Jay | 40 | -6 | -9 | -19 | -26 | -19 | 1 |
| Carrion Crow | 83 | -10 | -2 | -2 | 2 | 46 | 29 |
| Jackdaw | 35 | -12 | 9 | 21 | 149 | N/A | 68 |
| Blue Tit | 82 | -2 | -5 | -15 | -33 | 6 | -4 |
| Great Tit | 77 | -11 | -7 | -12 | -8 | 101 | 24 |
| Long-tailed Tit | 34 | 45 | 8 | 3 | 7 | 80 | 16 |
| Chiffchaff | 34 | 31 | 6 | 14 | 39 | 162 | 128 |
| Blackcap | 47 | 5 | 5 | 17 | 48 | 181 | 116 |
| Wren | 77 | -10 | -2 | 11 | -3 | 44 | 33 |
| Starling | 80 | 3 | 1 | -20 | -41 | -59 | -61 |
| Blackbird | 83 | -6 | 4 | -7 | -22 | -30 | 21 |
| Song Thrush | 51 | 7 | 4 | 11 | -8 | -32 | 28 |
| Mistle Thrush | 34 | -27 | 1 | -9 | -30 | -55 | -36 |
| Robin | 80 | 3 | -2 | 9 | 11 | 90 | 35 |
| Dunnock | 63 | 4 | -2 | 19 | 5 | 30 | 18 |
| House Sparrow | 70 | 16 | 8 | -5 | -18 | -71 | -17 |
| Chaffinch | 57 | -6 | -11 | -32 | -31 | 71 | -11 |
| Greenfinch | 59 | -25 | -21 | -61 | -74 | -42 | -51 |
| Goldfinch | 52 | 21 | 11 | 54 | 173 | 450 | 132 |

*The sample stated here relates to the longest period for which London results are available, i.e. the sample size for Canada Goose, Moorhen and Jackdaw refer to a 10-year period and for all other species it refers to the full BBS survey period 1994-2017. The sample size for shorter periods may be different and is usually higher.

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BBS information: www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/bbs



# BETWEEN TEN AND TWENTY KESTRELS

## A DULWICH SCHOOLBOY'S BIRD-WATCHING NOTES FROM THE WINTER OF 1947

MATHEW FRITH

Peter Branscombe collated a range of notes and papers of his bird records in and around Dulwich during the mid-1940s, whilst he was at school. A selection focus on the period from January to April 1947, when Britain became engulfed in one of its snowiest and coldest periods on record, followed by some profound flooding. This is an assessment of the impact of the weather on the birds Branscombe saw in and around Dulwich during that time.

## Introduction

Peter J. Branscombe, born in 1929, grew up in Dulwich, was schooled at the College, studied at Oxford University, and in due course became a lecturer in German and then Professor Emeritus of Austrian Studies at the University of St Andrews. A life-long musicologist and birdwatcher, he stimulated an interest in natural history in his eldest son, Julian, who I got to know through my work with London Wildlife Trust. Upon his father's death in 2008, Julian – knowing of my interest in the Dulwich and Sydenham area – passed to me a box of papers, notes and maps his father had made and kept. I promised to make something of them.

The bulk of Branscombe's records will form the basis of a more extensive article on his bird-watching studies in Dulwich during the mid-1940s for a future LBR. But his specific attention to the winter of early 1947 deserves particular interest. This is based on a 59-page log of records (Branscombe, 1947a) and two short draft reports (Branscombe, 1947b/c), all written in long-hand, and presumably (despite being full of dates, they are all undated) all from 1947.[1] It is not known whether any of these was published, although the longer of the two reports is set out for publication (the other is clearly a draft), and notes at the end 'I would like to 'borrow' this some time to make another copy for myself.' (Branscombe, 1947c). There is also reference in the set of records that some material was submitted or presented to the Junior Bird Recorders Club ('J.B.R.C. Report: January to March 1947' (Branscombe, 1947a)) although I have yet to find further evidence of this.[2]

I set out extracts from Branscombe's detailed records from January 2nd through to April 20th 1947 (focusing on the winter period within this), together with his assessments of the severe weather conditions on a selection of bird species that form the basis of his completed report. But before we delve into the detail, I set out the wintry context of the period.

[1] In one report he references 'last winter', which suggests being written towards the latter part of the year.

[2] Branscombe attended the first Easter Conference of the JBRC in London on 10-11th April 1947 (Burton, J., 2014, and pers. comm.), so it is possible he verbally presented this information here.

## The extraordinary winter of 1947

To all extents and purposes the winter of 1947 is known as one of the most severe in Britain on record. As ever, there are qualifiers, as to its duration, expression, severity and where in Britain these occurred. A few remarks in *The London Naturalist* for 1947 refer to the notable 'prolonged cold spell' (Hawkins, 1948). Kington's recent assessment of annual weather accounts in Britain over the past 2000 years requires picking through for 1947. However, clear conclusions are drawn: 'Very cold winter, one of the snowiest winters of the 20th century; January: very cold, most of the country snow-covered from mid-January to mid-March… 28-29 January: heavy snowfall in south England, worst snowstorm-blizzard conditions since 1891… February: one of the coldest snowiest Februarys on record, severe snowstorm-blizzard conditions, widespread heavy snowfall… March: one of the wettest Marches on record, this combined with the melting of deep snow caused the most severe floods of the 20th century.' (Kington, 2010).

At the start of January the conditions had generally been very mild and temperatures of up to 14ºC were recorded in places. However, all of this was to change as an area of high pressure set up a weather pattern which dominated Britain for the rest of the winter (Met Office, 2017). The first night frost came on January 20th, and then very cold easterly winds set in on the 23rd, carrying snow, falling heavily over southern England. Snow then fell every day somewhere in Britain for 55 consecutive days – until March 17th. On the night of January 28th-29th temperatures dipped; a minimum temperature early in the morning of below -9ºC climbed to a high of -2.7ºC.

## The deep freeze of February 1947

A contemporary account of February 1947 refers to the 'combination of persistent cold air and cloud' producing 'an extremely rare result in our climate; over a very large area [of the country] even on low ground, snow lay throughout the month' (Manley, 1952). Despite the cloud, frost occurred on every night after the 11th and there were eight consecutive days with continuous frost. Average daytime temperatures stayed at around 0ºC, although in many places they dropped below this (on the 17th the maximum temperature was only -2.4ºC), and because of this much of the snow settled.

At Kew Observatory the average over the month was -0.9ºC and didn't rise above 4.4ºC for the whole month (and only twice above freezing during the night). At Greenwich Observatory the average temperature was -1.5ºC; by the 24th Greenwich had been under 14 days of continuous frost. It was very dull; there was no sunshine occurring between the 2nd and 22nd inclusive. In Bedfordshire on February 25th, the temperature dropped to -21ºC. Sunny periods during the last week of the month were compounded by severe overnight frosts. Whilst London escaped the heaviest snowfalls of further north, falls at the end of February and early March 'covered not only the ground but trees and bushes' (Ashby, 1948a).

## From blizzards to melt in March 1947

If February hadn't been severe enough, March was even worse. There were strong gales and heavy snowstorms in the first half of the month, making for blizzard conditions. On March 4th and 5th one of the worst British blizzards of the 20th century occurred with heavy snow falling over most of England and Wales, with severe snow drifts forming. The following day drifts were three metres deep in the Chilterns and five metres deep in the Pennines. By this time south of a line from The Wash to the River Dee, mean maximum temperatures had been everywhere more than 5.5ºC below average and, in some places, more than 7ºC below average.

On March 10th milder air of 7-10ºC began to move north across the country from the south-west, rapidly thawing the snow lying on low ground. The ground had effectively turned to permafrost, causing much surface run-off which resulted in widespread flooding. Five days later a deepening depression moved in from the Atlantic, bringing heavy rain and gales, and the start of the wettest March for 300 years. On the 16th winds reached 90 km/h, gusting to 170 km/h, blowing many trees down and causing breaches in dykes in East Anglia resulting in the flooding of 260 sq km of land. In and around London the River Thames and the River Lea flooded (Met Office, 2007).



## The winter in Dulwich

How this impacted Dulwich in detail is difficult to determine from official meteorological records, although Dulwich stands almost mid-way between the Kew and Greenwich observatories. The South London Press rarely refers to details of the weather over that period other than its impact on coal supplies, power cuts and icy roads.[3] However, Branscombe does give us some good hints in his notes that tally with the general pattern; he makes a brief statement on the weather for each of his entries (although his definitions of temperature are not backed up by thermometer readings).

The start of the cold period on January 23rd is inauspicious – 'cold, a little snow, but bright at times', but by the 31st it is 'Very cold, more snow' and February 5th 'More snow, very deep later. Cold. Little wind.' The following day sees 'Much more snow, deepest yet.' and by February 9th 'Deepest snow of winter falls in night, thaw sets in later.' Two days later it is 'Freezing again, still some snow on ground.' and then from February 17th-24th it appears little changed; 'Still very cold' and 'No change in weather' are regular refrains. It 'snows very hard' on February 21st but on the 25th 'Thawing during the afternoon for a while but freezes again later' and the following day 'Thaw sets in under hot sun and clear sky; cold later' (Branscombe, 1947a).

The cusp of February and March appears much milder, and the blizzards affecting much of southern Britain on March 4th-5th are not referred to ('Thawing, bright at times'). On March 15th, the 53rd consecutive day of snow falling somewhere in Britain, the last gasps of winter are referenced – 'Cold weather, and a blizzard during the afternoon.' – but at a time when warm and wet weather was making its mark. By the following day 'All snow has disappeared.' and through to April 20th Branscombe's records reference the warmth and – at times – the rain (Branscombe, 1947a).

In his 'final report' Branscombe sums it up succinctly: 'snow, varying in depth between ¼ in. to 4 or 5 in, was on the ground from January 23rd to March 15th 1947; a period of nearly seven and a half weeks. During this period there were a few temporary thaws, but never a real break in the cold spell; and the ponds and lakes were frozen continuously.' (Branscombe, 1947c).

[3] Virtually the only references to Dulwich relate to local members of the Communist Party delivering coal to the 'old and infirm' from East Dulwich station depot in February, in response to the apparent inability of the Labour council to act.

## Around the greenery of Dulwich; Branscombe's patch

Peter Branscombe's area of observation was the environs of Dulwich around the axis of Dulwich Common (the South Circular) and College Road which crossed at the northern end of the grounds of Dulwich College. He lived to the south-west of the College, and refers to numerous sites in the area where he focused on bird-watching, in particular Belair Park, the extensive College grounds, Dulwich Park (with its lake and notable Rhododendron Garden), Dulwich & Sydenham Hill Golf Course, Cox's Walk, Dulwich Woods, and the stations of Sydenham Hill, West Dulwich and Lordship Lane.[4] A bird-feeder ('tit-basket') in his garden served as an additional focus.

Branscombe's notes suggest he generally undertook a circular clock-wise route on his longer walks, starting at home or in and around the College, walking north into Dulwich Park, then south up Cox's Walk and into Dulwich Woods, returning westwards down Grange Lane or Low Cross Wood Lane to either the College or home.

## London Bird Report 1947

Ashby was the first to make an assessment of the impact of the winter on London's birds in *The London Bird Report* for 1947.[5] As expected it is based on data from some of the then prime sites watched by recorders – the Lee Valley, Barn Elms, and Staines reservoirs, Beddington Sewage Farm, the Royal Parks, River Thames, etc. There is nothing from Dulwich; the closest location referenced is Wandsworth Park. That said many of his reports on the effects of the 'cold spell' chime with those of Branscombe, such as: 'Restriction of food supplies of many species caused by severe weather of this order very probably results in a high mortality, yet comparatively few birds are found dead. Other evidence is provided by reports of birds very weak and tame, and by later reductions observed (or deduced) in breeding populations.' and 'Redwings and Fieldfares were unusually approachable and some were obviously feeble and distressed by the cold, but only a few dead ones were reported except from Beddington S.F.' (Ashby, 1948a).

Branscombe reports one dead immature cock Blackbird ('presumably frozen' in a nest in the College Master's Garden) on January 25th, as well as being able to closely approach a Fieldfare feeding on hawthorn on February 8th.

Many of Ashby's references relate to the birds seen on London's reservoirs. The Dulwich area has few tracts of open water; the Mill Pond, ponds in Dulwich and Belair Parks, Dulwich Wood, and private gardens, as well as the occasional eruption of the River Effra and Ambrook mostly long-since covered. Birds, such as Grey Heron, Mallard, Tufted Duck and Moorhen, are largely confined to these ponds, and as these freeze over (first noted on January 22nd at College Pond) Branscombe notes the reaction of birds' behaviour, such as 'Two White Duck, 3 Drake and 4 Duck Mallard on ice. Three Moorhens roosting in trees' on College Pond, March 1st (Branscombe, 1947a).

[4] The latter station, and the railway through Dulwich Woods, closed seven years later.

[5] The only specific reference to the winter in *The London Naturalist* for 1947 is how it had disrupted the Society's activities at Bookham Common.



## Branscombe's 1947 notes

Peter Branscombe's notes of the birds he saw on his patch in 1947 cover the period from January 2nd to April 20th. It is not known why he started this, or why he finished when he did (this will be explored further in a future article); there is no preamble. Of the 108 day extent of this period, he recorded on 80 days.[6] The route, locations and time Branscombe spent is not consistent throughout; some days are extensive walks around his patch, others are merely sightings from his home or school, where no doubt other pressures precluded him bird-watching.[7] Whilst this was not a scientific survey (and is not viewed as one), there is a cool objectiveness to his records – as well as flourishes of descriptive behaviours that add colour to the notes. The prolonged cold weather clearly gets to him, and the notes become longer towards the warmer end of the period, when breeding behaviour and incoming migration intensifies.

## Records from January 1947

Branscombe begins January briskly on the 2nd with 'about ten Jays', 'ten Long-tailed Tits' and 'Great Spotted and Green woodpeckers' in Low Cross Wood Lane, where also, perhaps remarkably, he notes Wrens as his 'first record of this species for Dulwich.' By January 19th ('Cold, dull weather. Fog until afternoon, clears later') his notes become extensive, describing courtship behaviour of Mallard on the College Pond, a Starling 'imitating song of Black-bird' and 'Mistle Thrush in full song'. Later, in Dulwich Park, he notes '4 Lapwings flying south in small flock… Flying quite fast, distinctive flight noticed.' He takes particular interest in a group of Linnets: 'Small numbers arriving near Rhododendron beds up to about 4.pm. 14 seen in one tree N.W. of beds, 17 in one tree W. of beds. One flock flew up and grew larger as it passed trees where other birds were perching, these joining in. Finally a large flock of 80-100 birds had gathered, and these landed in large plane tree N. of beds, from which they occasionally flew out. Suddenly the whole flock flew down into beds N.W. of main beds. These birds took some time to settle down, and twittered and flew about for some time in the bushes.' Within an hour 'Redwings enter main beds in singles, two and threes, mostly flying very low, so numbers couldn't be counted. Only about ten seen, and soon flew up into some nearby trees. They later settled down in bushes. Large numbers of Blackbirds for roosting.'

On the afternoon of the first day of the oncoming cold spell, the 24th ('Cold, a little snow, and later lot more'), Branscombe spies a Great Spotted Woodpecker feeding in gardens, and at '5.10pm Rooks heard flying outside North Block during N.H.S. lecture, presumably preparing to roost in clump (c12)'.[8]

On January 31st ('Very cold, more snow') in the morning he sees a 'Sandy-coloured bird… flying, S of War Memorial near Main Gates. Clear view of bird not possible, but it

[6] An additional day, April 3rd, is spent at Staines Reservoirs with the Dulwich College Natural History Society, a half day at St James's Park on April 9th, and a day at St James's Park and Cripplegate on April 10th (with John Burton).

[7] Compared to his other records between 1944-46, there appear to be fewer days spent extensively outside, which suggests time at school is a determining factor; Branscombe will have been in his penultimate year in early 1947.

[8] The North Block is where the College's Natural History Society (NHS) is holding its lecture.

seemed like a Barn Owl', but he remarks as 'it was broad daylight, the possibility of it being this species seems remote.' He also states 'Dulwich records for Long-tailed tit and Goldcrest. P.J.B.' which suggests he hadn't seen them here until then.

## The February freeze

On the 1st ('Cold, snow falls, but gradual thaw sets in'), just after lunch a 'Sparrowhawk glides over South Croxted/Alleyn Roads in N.N.E. direction,' and a little later a 'Kestrel glides and flaps over Master's garden bird sanctuary in E. direction.' There's a 'persistent song of Great Tit in our garden.'

Four days later ('More snow, very deep later. Cold. Little wind') Branscombe espies 'Flock of at least fifty Redwing flying S. over Dulwich College, the birds being in a straggling line abreast formation (10.00 am). A few minutes later a flock of about eighty birds flew up, apparently off playing-fields near Clump, and flew S. after first flock.' In the afternoon 'Skylark's song heard for a short while in meadows S. of golf course, though bird itself not seen' and 'Bullfinches seen in garden N. of Sydenham Hill Station.' Mixed finch and tit flocks are reported in and around the woods.

On February 12th ('Still very cold') the Linnet flocks in Dulwich had grown to 'About 200… by Rhododendron beds by 4-15pm, small parties flying in from all direction, and joining with main flock… Whole flock restless and I can't get nearer than about 10-12 yards from them.'

On the 16th ('Still very cold, slight falls of snow in morning, and again later') Branscombe recorded 'Several flocks of small finches (40 birds), possibly Redpolls, fly S.S.E. into Dulwich Wood, near ruined Hall. No clear view possible of birds.'[9] There was also a 'Large flock of Chaffinches, and possibly some Bramblings, in Hawthorn-tree, S. end of Cox's Walk… of about 50 birds, which flew off singly or in twos in a S.S.W. direction.' He also found a 'Grey squirrel's remains… at entrance to a winter store. Squirrel was clutching a fir-cone which it had probably just got from store, and I suppose a Sparrowhawk had caught and killed it (Cox's Walk).'

On the 22nd ('Still very cold') the "Whee' note of Greenfinch heard for the first time in year by W. Dulwich Station, in the Station slip.' The following day ('Very cold most of day, but slight thaw during afternoon') Rooks were 'heard cawing in the south, Huntslip Road (c.10). Several Rooks later seen roosting in clump, and more heard after nightfall to the N.E. There may therefore be another roost in Gallery Road-Dulwich Village area.'

The weather had begun to change from February 25th although nights were still cold. On the 28th ('Bright sunny weather most of the day, warm in sun, Wind, N.W.') Branscombe was recording finch flocks and the Rooks in the Clump, but also 'One Skylark flying S, fairly high, over Pavilion… flying, fairly fast and direct (8.00 AM)' and a 'Flock of about 10 Fieldfares feeding on pitches during morning, and probably most of afternoon.'

## Into March and a warmer April

March started with a hint of Spring ('Warm and bright most of day, and much sun-shine'): 'Hedge-sparrow singing in Pear-tree outside kitchen window (7-20AM). About six Hedge-sparrows heard singing during day.' Later a 'Tawny owl perched in tree near house (No12 Alleyn Road). He was not mobbed by any other birds, although it was still broad daylight. He allowed me to approach quite close, merely following my movements with a turn of his head.' Two days later the same bird was observed being mobbed by 'several Gulls… Chaffinches, tits, sparrows, etc.'



The cold returned on March 3rd; the blizzards that had hit much of England on March 4-5th are not referenced. On the 6th ('Still cold, though thawing in sunshine') Branscombe sees a 'Flock of about 100 Redwings [flying] west, fairly high, at 10-30AM. The flock was spread out, and not compact.'

There is then a gap of nine days, before Branscombe returns on March 15th, with reference to a blizzard (q.v.), during which he records a 'Cock Chaffinch defends our garden as a territory; flying up from trees where he had been singing to chase starlings, on both sides of the garden. He harried the Starlings until they were well away.' The following day ('(F)ine and warm. All snow has disappeared') Chaffinches are 'singing everywhere.' A 'Kestrel perches on N.E. side of bombed mansion, Dulwich Wood. It flies into a tree when I approach. Another Kestrel, flying S.W., dives down over first one.' Later, the 'Playing fields S. of Pavilion [are] covered with gulls: One Lesser-Black Backed Gull, probably Scandinavian, among many Black-headed Gulls. Several Common, and probably some Herring-Gulls, near Huntslip Road.'

The three records of Branscombe's that were reported in the LBR are from this period.[10] The first is from Saturday March 22nd when the weather is 'dull, rain at times, fairly strong S.W. wind.' Branscombe is at school, and between 10:35 and 10:55 he notes 'between ten and twenty Kestrels flying S… Some were in pairs, and others single, but they were within sight of the ones in front of them.' (Branscombe, 1947a). The LBR notes that these were 'at a height of 100 to 150 feet.' (Ashby, 1948b)

The second is on March 26th ('Fine and warm most of the day') when he espies a 'Pair of Little Owls (first time seen in Dulwich), North of footbridge, Cox's Walk, on edge of the copse. I walked within five yards of one of the birds.' He notes them several times after at the same locale until April 19th. This is reported in the LBR as 'probably bred in Dulwich Wood.' The last, early in the morning on April 15th, when the winter had long since vanished ('Still beautiful fine weather'), is for Woodlark 'in rough grass, South of corner of gun-site boundary fence. I approached within three yards of the bird, a fine adult male. He flew off South West. I did not see him again.' The LBR states 'Dulwich, one on the golf course'.[11]

## What did these records tell him?

Branscombe recorded 50 species of birds over the period of January to March 1947.[12] A few were, perhaps surprisingly, new records for him and the area. He recorded some species on many days, those most frequently referenced were Blackbird (19 times), Redwing (19), Black-headed Gull/'gulls' (17), Moorhen (16), Great Spotted Woodpecker, Pied Wagtail, Fieldfare and Linnet (all 15). In comparison Grey Heron, Nuthatch, Blue Tit and Greenfinch were some of those only recorded once. The most numerous species recorded was probably Linnet, with a frequent number of flocks seen numbering between

[10] Peter Branscombe had become a member of LNHS in 1946-47.

[11] The 'gun-site' was a wartime gun emplacement constructed between Dulwich Wood and the golf course.

[12] He numbers this as 47 for the period January 23rd to March 15th (Branscombe, 1947b).

50-100 birds. Other flocks recorded included those of gulls, finches, Rook, Redwing, Fieldfare and, at the end of March, Meadow Pipit.

Branscombe clearly attempted to describe the impacts of the severe weather; from his extensive notes he drew up two reports sometime later in the year. The first (a 4-page draft) recognises that the combination of extensive cold and snow means that the birds' 'food supply was thus cut off, and though a well-fed bird can resist the snow and cold, a hungry bird cannot survive.' He also references that in Dulwich ('an urban area') 'the effects of the winter cannot have been as severe as they were outside the towns, because many people put out food and water for the birds.' This draft also references species not included later, including 'Heron less common. Ice, no fish' and 'Swifts late in arriving (May 8th)' (Branscombe, 1947b).

In Branscombe's finalised six-page report, which was probably verbally presented, the above details were excluded. He makes a succinct summary of the weather (q.v.), recognises that 'many species of birds suffered', and attempts to identify which of these 'whose status [I] consider to have altered as a result of the weather.' It lists 40 species, including a few he didn't record in his notes during the 'cold spell' (e.g. [Grey] Partridge, Treecreeper, Hawfinch), and makes comparisons to some of his earlier bird records (Branscombe, 1947c). Those of particular interest are set out, in the 'systematic order'[13] he listed them in, below:

**Rook**: Numbers roosting at Dulwich College dropped from 30 in October, 1946, to 6 in March, 1947.

**Jay**: Marked increase; flocks of up [to] 12 seen. Could catch weakened small birds, and overcame natural shyness visiting bird-tables.

**Hawfinch**: Had shown signs of increasing prior to 1947, but no doubt suffered from cold and subsequent lack of food. Only one pair suspected of breeding in 1947.

**Goldfinch**: Noticeable decrease; at one time feared extinct in Dulwich. Maximum seen since cold spell was 10, in comparison with 30-40 in autumn of 1946. Interesting change of habitat, as before cold spell the species was mainly found in copses and open districts. It now occurs almost entirely in gardens and waste-land.

**Lesser Redpol**l: No doubt driven to Dulwich by severe weather, as before 1947 I had never definitely identified the species in Dulwich.

**Linnet**: Marked decrease. Up to 300 roosted in Dulwich Park Rhododendron beds in autumn of 1946, and numbers had dropped to about 40 in February 1947.

**Bullfinch**: Marked decrease. Flocks of 25 in autumn of 1946, and not more than 6 since February 1947.

**Marsh Tit**: Until 1946 this species bred in Dulwich Wood in fair numbers, autumn flock of up to 10 being seen. However, since early 1947 the bird has apparently ceased to occur.

**Long-tailed Tit**: Until the winter of 1946-'47 I had not seen this species in Dulwich, but a flock of about 10 birds was present until late March 1947. They had probably been driven in to Dulwich by the weather, and this flock must have survived the cold spell. Incidentally, I saw several of the birds feeding and hopping about on the ground, unusual in this species.

**Redwing**: Decrease in numbers roosting in Dulwich Park from nearly 200 at end of 1946 to about 40 in late February, 1947, when the Rhododendron beds were last used. Many heard migrating during late evening of March 23rd.

**Wren**: Slight decrease, but still quite common.

**Green Woodpecker**: Marked decrease, though several pairs bred in 1947. This species suffered more than the other woodpeckers, as it feeds on the ground, and therefore found food almost unobtainable during cold spell. One fed on a pear on January 3rd 1947.

**Lesser Spotted Woodpecker**: Slight decrease, though at least two, and possibly four, pairs still present.

**Little Owl**: My first Dulwich Record for a pair of this species is on March 26th, 1947. They were probably driven to Dulwich by lack of food, and they almost certainly bred in 1947, and are still present.

**Kestrel**: Slight decrease. Possibly owing to shortage of mice, though the Kestrel will, of course, take birds when there are few mice. Probably only a temporary decrease as the species is now almost as common as ever.

**British Lesser Black-backed Gull**: Autumn passage 1947 several weeks later than in 1944-'45-'46, probably because breeding season delayed by cold spell.

It is apparent that many sightings of birds over this period were not jotted down, as Branscombe's reference to Wren, above, is not reflected in only two sightings in his records. We can only surmise that he focused on some species and behaviours of note, or when they were remarkable; others were taken for granted. There is a paucity of records of, for example, Robin, Blue Tit and House Sparrow, which one may have expected to have been reasonably common in Dulwich during the 1940s, and would have been impacted by the severe weather. However, he makes regular references to Blackbird and gulls, which would have been common and frequently seen in the same locations of his patch.

## Conclusions

Peter Branscombe's papers are a remarkable insight to a particular time and place, and possibly one of the few extensive records of birds during the snowy winter of 1947, certainly within London. They add colour and a more rounded picture to a rather slim assessment that was published in the London Bird Report for the year. Perhaps more remarkably is that Branscombe's narratives of the 'cold spell' appear to downplay the severity of the winter and its impact on bird populations, given what we now know about in the 70 years since. Few other winters of the 20th century were so cold for so long. However, in 1947 the country was emerging from a war, and only seven years earlier had also been hit by another very cold winter. This was perhaps not so strange a season for a young man in south London in the 1940s.

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[13] The list was numbered, in accordance with that set out in *The London Bird Report* (*Witherby's Check-list of British Birds* (1941)); the number and the residential status of each species have been left out for clarity.

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# BREEDING DENSITY OF BUZZARDS, 2017, IN TEN 1-KM SQUARES OF OUTER SURREY

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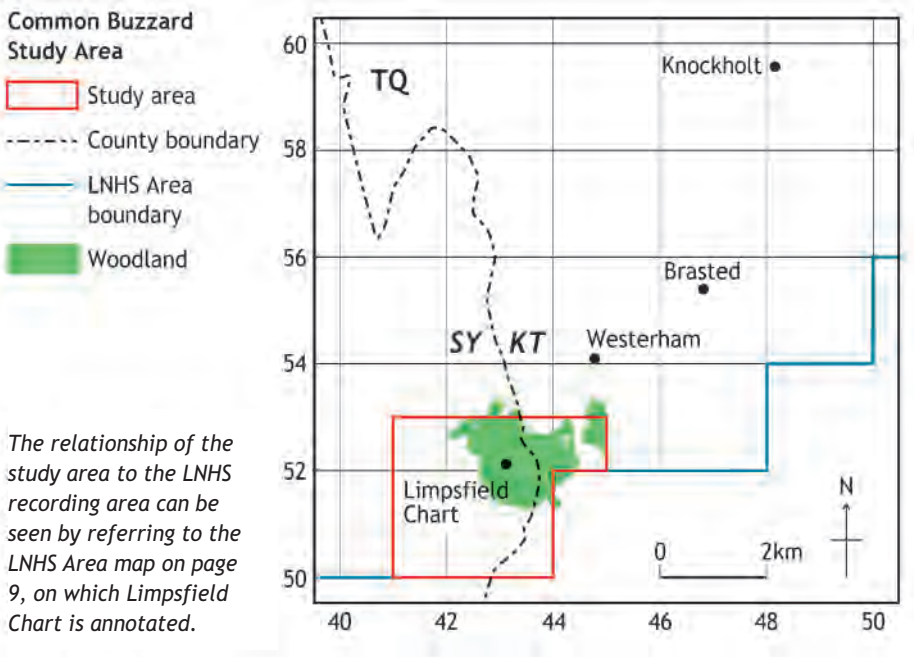
## Introduction

The first confirmed breeding of buzzards in the London Area in recent times was in Essex as recently as 1998, yet in the subsequent twenty years, this species has become so widespread as to be barely worthy of comment by bird-watchers and, certainly in the outer, more rural, areas, familiar to many non-birdwatchers as well. By 2007 there were at least 66 confirmed or potential breeding pairs, though confirmation of breeding was obtained for just three pairs (Oliver, 2011). At that time, I speculated that the number of breeding pairs in the London Area was unlikely to have been less than 90 pairs, but that the true figure was likely to have been not less than 100-120. Here I report a more detailed study of 10 x 1 sq km on the border of the London Area with Surrey. Using primarily the results of this study together with data drawn from Woodward *et al* 2017 (henceforth 'The Atlas') I then discuss the potential current number of territorial pairs of buzzards that may now be established in the London Area. This should not be taken as a reliable population estimate. Rather, it is an attempt to provide a realistic working guide to the potential population of this rapidly expanding species.

## Methods and Results

In 2017 I attempted to locate all territorial pairs in 10 x 1 sq km (2.5 tetrads) at the southern edge of the London Area across the Surrey/Kent county boundary (Figure 1) – the 'Area'. The Area was determined to the south and east principally by the LNHS boundary (though in order to avoid areas difficult to survey and to keep as compact an area as possible, I incorporated 1 x 1 sq km outside the LNHS tetrad map). About 30% of the Area is of mixed large houses with mostly large gardens, the majority of which have mature trees and/or abut wooded areas; about 35% consists of mostly dense woodland, principally in the north-east of the Area. The remaining 35%, mainly in the southern part, consists of farmland (arable and pasture), mature hedges, many with a few mature trees, and a scattering of small copses. It is possible to watch most of the Area from a variety of vantage points. Suitable breeding territory, much of it known to be occupied by buzzards, abuts the Area on all sides except the West. In addition to watching from vantage points, I was able to cover much of the Area on regular walks over different parts of it, so that in many cases I fairly quickly established the presence of territorial pairs without watching any given area for long individual periods. For those parts that I could not cover adequately in this way, I used multiple vantage points from which I watched from upwards of an hour, but it was not always possible to revisit all of these areas sufficiently frequently to be sure that I had identified all pairs, or to eliminate the possibility that birds I had seen on an earlier visit were not in fact wanderers from elsewhere.




*The relationship of the study area to the LNHS recording area can be seen by referring to the LNHS Area map on page 9, on which Limpsfield Chart is annotated.*

*Figure 1. (Mike Trier from The London Bird Atlas)*

I treated the following behaviours as indicating the presence of a territorial pair, based on the criteria described by Dare (2015):

- soaring over a fairly well defined area by one or two birds on at least three occasions;
- aggression between one or a pair and one or more intruders. Generally, the birds separated and went their different ways so that I could frequently relate them to known territories, or, sometimes, it would identify a potential new territory.
- a slow, exaggerated manner of flying described by Dare as 'display flapping' or 'deep wing-beat flapping', but which seemed to me to be more aptly described as 'rowing flight' which generally took place over a known territory.
- diving 'roller-coaster' displays where this ended with the male returning to a wooded area and diving almost vertically down into the canopy. This was assumed to be the area of a nest site.

I identified a minimum of eight active territories in the 10 x 1sq km surveyed, equivalent to 3.2 pairs per tetrad. I cannot, of course, be certain that I identified all active territories. Four of the pairs were confirmed as having bred, though confirmation of breeding was not the primary focus of the field-work.

## Discussion

A comparison of the results of this study of a very limited area with other information available from the London Area and from elsewhere is of interest when considering the



potential current breeding population in the London Area. So far as I am aware, the only relevant information about territorial buzzards in the London Area subsequent to 2007 is that reported in the London Bird Report and The Atlas. The LBRs for 2008 and 2009 reported that as a result of intensive efforts, between 38 and 44 known territories were identified in Herts, though the area surveyed was not mentioned. Subsequently reported numbers declined, attributed to less intensive efforts, though the LBR for 2010 suggested that by then the breeding population in the London Area 'may be close to saturation'. The Atlas plots confirmed breeding between 2008 and 2013 in 78 tetrads and possible breeding in a further 101 tetrads. Further afield, reporting on a major long-term study of 75 sq km West of Bristol, Prytherch (2013) reported rapid growth in the breeding population, leading to a marked increase in density, between 1982 and 2012. In that period, the number of pairs increased from 13 (equivalent to 5.8 sq km per pair) to 105 (0.7 sq km per pair). The growth in the early years was very rapid, slowing gradually as the population density increased. Elsewhere in the UK Dare (*op.cit.*) refers to three studies subsequent to 1990 reporting between 1.2 and 4.5 sq km per pair, but none of those extended beyond 1995, so refer to periods well before the recent expansion of this species. Nationally, in the period between 1968-72 and 2008-2013 there has been a massive increase in numbers and distribution over much of the eastern half of Britain (Balmer, 2013) and there can be little doubt that this species has prospered similarly in the London Area. But on present information a reliable assessment of the current London Area population is not possible. It is, however, possible, using both London and Bristol data, to develop a tentative estimate of what the potential might currently be. Thus:

- in 2007 there were estimated to be a minimum of 2 pairs per tetrad in London and a population of the order of 110-118 pairs (Oliver *op.cit.*).
- for Bristol, the relevant data can be drawn from 1987, the year when the Bristol population was first estimated to equate to 2 pairs per tetrad (i.e. equal to the minimum density in London in 2007). Comparable data can then be used from 1993 (i.e. six years later to match the end of the Atlas period in London) and 1997 (i.e four years later to equate with the present study). A confirmed density increase can then be taken into consideration when assessing any increase in London. Thus:

| Year | sq km/pair | Tetrad equivalent/pair |
|---|---|---|
| 1987 | 3.9 (~4) | 4/4 = 1 |
| 1993 | 2.0 | 4/2 = 2 |
| 1997 | 1.5 | 4/1.5 = 2.7 |

The Bristol study area contains no substantial conurbations and unlike most of London, is likely to be mostly prime buzzard habitat, so caution is required in applying that data to London. Similarly, in view of the small area of the present study, I have thought it prudent to assume a density for prime habitat in London marginally lower than that reported for Bristol at the same density. I have therefore made the following assumptions:

- the 78 tetrads where at least one breeding pair was reported in the Atlas are assumed to be prime habitat with a density of 2.5 pairs per tetrad, so 78 x 2.5 would be 195 pairs.
- for the 101 tetrads where presence only was reported in the Atlas, the number of

pairs would be half the above (i.e. 1.25 pairs per tetrad), so there would be 126 pairs (101 x 1.25).

This suggests a potential breeding population in London of the order of c320 pairs, but does not allow for any increase in range since the end of the Atlas period. Arguably, the assumed density for London is too conservative in the light of the results of the present study and if, for example, an assumption of 3 pairs per tetrad were to be assumed for prime habitat and a corresponding increase in other habitat, this could imply a population of the order of (78 x 3 plus 101 x 1.5) 380 pairs. The data is insufficient to enable a reliable figure to be deduced, but I suggest a reasonable working assumption could be a London breeding population of the order of 300-400 pairs. Given its ubiquity and widespread distribution in the London Area, combined with the considerable time required to confirm territorial occupation, it is probably not now realistically possible to achieve an accurate population estimate. Perhaps the only practicable approach would be to base an estimate on surveys of a number of smaller areas of differing habitat suitability for buzzards, but even that would require a major effort.

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# A SNAPSHOT OF BIRD LIFE IN THE CITY OF LONDON AND THE IMMEDIATE SURROUNDS

HELEN BAKER

## Introduction

During the winter of 2012/2013 I took on a couple of survey plots for the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) Winter Thrush survey. They were both primarily within the City of London. My routes took me to a number of churchyards and other public gardens and in the spring of 2013 I decided to continue visiting most of the sites to find out which birds used them during the breeding season and to see how the species composition changed through the year. I continued my visits until August 2016.

This was not a rigorous survey. As I lived in Rickmansworth I had to fit my visits in on days when I was going to be in London, usually for an evening event. Some visits were completed before mid-day but others were started in the late morning and continued into the afternoon. The weather was often far from favourable and, while I avoided wet weather, there was often a cold wind blowing. When the weather was good, the gardens were thronged with people particularly at lunchtime but sometimes by mid-morning. During the three-and-a-half-year period building work took place at or adjacent to a number of sites and access was periodically impossible because of private functions. This needs to be remembered when considering the results. However, with very little data being submitted for the City and its immediate surrounds it seems worth recording what I found.

In Baker (1990) I reported on the Birds of Small Open Spaces in Inner London 1987-1988 Survey ('the 1987-1988 Survey') and outlined how the bird population in Inner London had changed since 1898. Virtually all the sites in that survey were larger than those considered here and were further from St Paul's Cathedral. However, the garden at the ruined church of St Dunstan in the East featured in both surveys so it is possible to make a direct comparison.

## Method

I had two regular routes but did not always start at the same place. On reaching a site I recorded all the birds which were present, including those perched on buildings in or directly bordering the site. The time I spent at each site depended on its size and the number of birds and people present. There were 18 sites for which I got reasonable data (see Table 1). Breeding season visits were made between April and August (July in 2014). In 2013 and 2015 I made eight or nine visits to each site with six or seven visits in the other two seasons. During the breeding season I used standard BTO 'categories of breeding evidence' codes to determine which birds might be breeding but in analysing the data I have attempted to differentiate between those birds actually nesting in the garden and those nesting nearby. The highest code recorded during the four breeding seasons is given in Table 2. Non-breeding season ('winter') visits took place between September and March.

**Table 1.** The sites covered

| Site | Grid Ref | Comments |
|---|---|---|
| 1. The Anchor, Bankside | TQ324804 | The outdoor seating area and the gardens of two neighbouring buildings viewed from the Thames Path. |
| 2. Old Billingsgate Walk, off Lower Thames Street | TQ330805 | Thames Path, Old Billingsgate Walk to St Magnus the Martyr. |
| 3. Cannon Street/New Change | TQ322810 | The garden at the road junction. |
| 4. Christ Church Greyfriars, Newgate Street | TQ320813 | The beautiful flower garden in the ruined church and the area of grass and mature trees. |
| 5. Cleary Garden, Queen Victoria Street | TQ322808 | From May 2015 construction work took place adjacent to the garden. |
| 6. Cliffords Inn, off Chancery Lane | TQ312812 | In 2013 work started next to the site with some structures in the garden. Virtually no counts in 2014. |
| 7. Lincoln's Inn | TQ309814 | The area with flowerbeds, lawn and mature trees is open to the public at lunchtime only. Limited access to all areas from June 2016. |
| 8. Noble Street Gardens | TQ322814 | Including St Anne and St Agnes, St Mary Staining, Old London Wall and St Olave Silver Street. |
| 9. Postman's Park | TQ321814 | |
| 10. St Andrew Holborn, Holborn Viaduct | TQ314815 | In 2013 the garden had many trees and shrubs. A make-over took place in 2014 and it was closed. Thereafter there was much less cover. |
| 11. St Bartholomew the Great | TQ319817 | Including open garden and area of grass with large mature trees. |
| 12. St Bride's Church, off Fleet Street | TQ315811 | No counts in 2013 or 2016 because of building work. |
| 13. St Dunstan in the East | TQ331807 | A make-over took place in winter 2014/15 during which a lot of creeper was removed. |
| 14. St Dunstan in the West - fragment of former burial ground | TQ312813 | Small garden located on north side of Bream's Buildings. |
| 15. St Paul's Cathedral | TQ321811 | |
| 16. Staple Inn off Holborn | TQ311815 | Work took place in front courtyard in 2013. |
| 17. Southwark Cathedral | TQ327803 | Garden shut to the public from late June 2015. No counts possible in 2016. |
| 18. West Smithfield Rotunda Garden | TQ318816 | |

## Results

A total of 23 species was recorded during my visits. Table 2 lists all the sites and all the species seen at each at least once during any of the four breeding seasons using the highest recorded BTO code and highlights those species which bred in the garden. Twenty species were recorded. Of these ten bred (not necessarily successfully) in at least one of the gardens and another seven showed behaviour suggesting possible or probable breeding in the garden or in the vicinity. Feral Pigeon, Woodpigeon and Blackbird were the only species recorded at every site though there was no evidence of Feral Pigeons actually nesting in any of them. Blue Tit, Magpie and Carrion Crow were the next most commonly recorded species with Goldfinch and Dunnock recorded at over half of the sites.

Table 3 lists the sites and gives the maximum number of each species seen at each during the three winter periods. Twenty-one species were recorded. Feral Pigeon and Woodpigeon were again recorded at every site with Blackbird and Blue Tit both at 16 sites. Magpie, Robin, Great Tit and Carrion Crow were all recorded at over half of the sites. Feral Pigeon was by far the most abundant species recorded.



**Table 2.** Species recorded at each site in the breeding season

**Key to sites**

1. The Anchor, Bankside; 2. Old Billingsgate Walk; 3. Cannon Street/New Change; 4. Christ Church Greyfriars; 5. Cleary Garden; 6. Cliffords Inn; 7. Lincoln's Inn; 8. Noble Street Gardens; 9. Postman's Park; 10. St Andrew Holborn; 11. St Bartholomew the Great; 12. St Bride's Church; 13. St Dunstan in the East; 14. St Dunstan in the West; 15. St Paul's Cathedral; 16. Staple Inn; 17. Southwark Cathedral; 18. West Smithfield Rotunda Garden.

**Key to observations**

H = observed in (or near) suitable nesting habitat; S = singing male; P = pair; A = agitated behaviour; FL = recently fledged young; ON = occupied nest; FF = adult carrying food for young; NY = nest with young seen or heard; ? = present but not in suitable breeding habitat. Blue type = nested on site.

| Site (see key) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mallard | - | - | - | - | - | - | H | - | ? | - | - | - | - | - | ? | - | - | - |
| Sparrowhawk | - | - | - | - | - | - | ON | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Herring Gull | H | - | - | H | - | - | H | - | - | - | - | H | - | - | H | H | - | - |
| Lesser Black-backed Gull | - | - | - | H | - | - | H | - | - | FL | - | H | - | - | H | H | H | - |
| Feral Pigeon | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | FL |
| Woodpigeon | H | NY | P | FL | P | P | P | H | P | ON | ON | H | ON | P | ON | ON | H | ON |
| Magpie | H | - | - | H | H | P | FL | H | - | FL | FL | H | P | FF | H | H | H | H |
| Carrion Crow | - | P | - | H | - | H | ON | - | ON | H | H | ON | H | H | ON | H | H | P |
| Blue Tit | H | H | FL | FF | NY | - | NY | H | FF | FL | H | FL | FL | H | FL | H | P | P |
| Great Tit | - | - | H | - | FL | P | P | H | FF | S | - | - | P | - | FL | - | - | FL |
| Wren | - | - | - | - | FL | H | - | FL | S | - | - | - | - | - | S | - | - | - |
| Starling | - | H | H | FF | FL | - | P | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | FL | - | FL | - |
| Blackbird | FL | FL | FL | FF | FL | H | A | FL | FL | A | FF | H | FL | P | FF | A | FL | NY |
| Robin | - | H | S | - | P | - | FL | - | S | - | H | - | H | - | P | - | - | - |
| Black Redstart | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | FF | - | - | S | - | - | - |
| House Sparrow | H | H | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Dunnock | P | S | FL | FF | P | - | - | FF | S | - | - | - | S | - | H | - | H | - |
| Pied Wagtail | - | - | - | FL | - | - | H | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Greenfinch | H | H | - | - | H | - | H | - | FL | - | - | - | H | - | FL | - | - | - |
| Goldfinch | - | S | S | - | P | - | P | - | FLH | H | - | H | H | FL | - | - | - | |

**Table 3.** Maximum count for each species at each site over the three winters

**Key to sites** 1. The Anchor, Bankside; 2. Old Billingsgate Walk; 3. Cannon Street/New Change; 4. Christ Church Greyfriars; 5. Cleary Garden; 6. Cliffords Inn; 7. Lincoln's Inn; 8. Noble Street Gardens; 9. Postman's Park; 10. St Andrew Holborn; 11. St Bartholomew the Great; 12. St Bride's Church; 13. St Dunstan in the East; 14. St Dunstan in the West; 15. St Paul's Cathedral; 16. Staple Inn; 17. Southwark Cathedral; 18. West Smithfield Rotunda Garden.

**Key to observations**
hd = heard.

| Site (see key) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mallard | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - |
| Sparrowhawk | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Herring Gull | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - |
| Lesser Black-backed Gull | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Feral Pigeon | 29 | 14 | 6 | 8 | 9 | 2 | 23 | 3 | 9 | 32 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 1 | 7 | 2 | 6 | 4 |
| Woodpigeon | 3 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 7 | 2 | 6 | 4 |
| Great Spotted Woodpecker | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Peregrine | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Magpie | - | 1 | - | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 1 | - | 2 | - | 1 | 2 | - | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Carrion Crow | - | 2 | - | - | 1 | - | 3 | - | 2 | 2 | - | 1 | - | - | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Blue Tit | - | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | hd | 2 | 2 | - | 3 | hd | 2 | 2 |
| Great Tit | - | - | - | - | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | - | 3 | 2 | 2 | - | - | hd |
| Wren | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| Starling | - | 1 | - | - | 5 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 6 | - | 11 | - |
| Blackbird | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | - | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Redwing | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Robin | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | 2 | - | 2 | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | 2 | - | 2 | 2 | - | - |
| House Sparrow | 3 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Dunnock | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - |
| Greenfinch | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Goldfinch | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 4 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 6 | - | - | hd |

## St Dunstan in the East - Comparison with the 1987-1988 Survey

During the 1987-1988 Survey 80 visits were made to St Dunstan in the East over a 12 month period as opposed to just 34 spread over three and a half years during the current survey. Table 4 compares the results of the two surveys. Seven species were recorded during the first survey compared to 11 in the second. House Sparrow and Starling were lost but Robin, Great Tit, Magpie, Carrion Crow, Greenfinch and Goldfinch were gained though several of these were recorded on just one or two visits. Woodpigeons bred (or attempted to breed) during both periods. Blackbird showed territorial activity in the first and fledged young were seen in the garden during the second.



**Table 4.** St Dunstan in the East - Comparison with 1987-1988 survey

**Key** Occ = Occasional - seen on under half the visits; Reg = Regular - seen on half or more visits; Abs = Not Present; B = Bred at site; J = Juveniles seen at site but did not breed there (used only for House Sparrow); T = Territorial Activity.

| Species | 1987-1988 | | 2013-2016 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Status | Mean count | Status | Mean count |
| Feral Pigeon | Reg | 37 | Reg | 2 |
| Woodpigeon | Occ B | 1 | Occ B | 1 |
| Magpie | Abs | - | Occ | 0.5 |
| Carrion Crow | Abs | - | Occ | 0 |
| Blue Tit | Occ | 1 | Occ | 1 |
| Great Tit | Abs | - | Occ | 0 |
| Starling | Occ | 2 | Abs | - |
| Blackbird | Reg T | 2 | Occ | 0.5 |
| Dunnock | Occ | 1 | Occ | 0.25 |
| Robin | Abs | - | Occ | 0 |
| House Sparrow | Reg J | 23 | Abs | - |
| Greenfinch | Abs | - | Occ | 0 |
| Goldfinch | Abs | - | Occ | 0 |

## Discussion and interesting sightings

I concluded that relatively few of the species which visited the gardens actually nested in them. Woodpigeons nested in seven gardens, Blackbirds in six, Carrion Crows and Blue Tits in four, Wrens in two and Sparrowhawk, Magpie, Dunnock, Robin and Goldfinch in one. The Blue Tits invariably made use of nest boxes. I also saw relatively few fledged young. This may in part have been because my visits were not sufficiently frequent and that could explain why, when I did see juveniles, I may have lacked any evidence that they had been reared in the garden. However, I quite often saw adult birds gathering food and flying out of the garden with it. Over the years I located a number of Carrion Crow nests, seeing sitting birds in the spring and I was surprised that I did not see activity at any of them later in the season or any families. Likewise I had proof of successful breeding from just one Woodpigeon nest. The Sparrowhawk in Lincoln's Inn apparently gave up at an early stage. However, it was pleasing to see two Wren families and a Goldfinch family.

Most of the birds recorded during the breeding season were also recorded during the winter. The two exceptions were Pied Wagtail and Black Redstart though the former was probably present in the area. A Great Spotted Woodpecker at Lincoln's Inn on December 19th 2013 had presumably flown across the road from Lincoln's Inn Fields. The Redwing seen in the Old Billingsgate Walk gardens on December 19th 2015 was a winter visitor but the Peregrine which perched on the weathervane at Christ Church Greyfriars was presumably one of the resident City pair. Throughout the year it was noticeable that more birds were generally present in the gardens with well-stocked bird feeders, feeding directly from them or taking fallen items from the ground below.

The maximum winter counts show the Feral Pigeon to be by far the most abundant bird at these sites and presumably within the City. The House Sparrow which was once such a

familiar resident in this built up area now has barely a toe-hold. In the 1987-1988 Survey the only top predator which was recorded was the Kestrel, seen at ten sites, though not from St Dunstan in the East. I did not encounter any Kestrels during my visits to the gardens, though they do breed in the City, but I did see Sparrowhawk and the Peregrine.

Starlings nested near Southwark Cathedral and within foraging range of St Paul's Cathedral and several other gardens where they also brought their fledged young to feed. In June and July 2014 when Southwark Cathedral garden was still open to the public over 20 adults and juveniles were present, most taking handouts from lunchtime visitors. Starlings also took advantage of the feeders and the visitors at St Paul's Cathedral with a maximum of 42 on July 22nd 2015. While the highest winter count of Starlings at Southwark Cathedral was 11, on January 27th 2015 two flocks, one containing 14 birds and the other some 50 were circling above the Cathedral. High above them circled a Sparrowhawk.

Lesser Black-backed Gulls and Herring Gulls were usually seen perched on the buildings but they came down into the gardens occasionally. On June 26th 2013 at St Andrew Holborn a Blue Tit family with wing-shivering juveniles was feeding in a tree which provided good cover. A Lesser Black-backed Gull repeatedly flew low over the tree and then loitered on a nearby lamppost. The tits remained within the cover and the gull eventually lost interest. In the same garden on August 11th 2015 after the make-over which left it with much less tree cover, I saw a large juvenile Lesser Black-backed Gull running about and crying loudly while one parent perched on the roof and the other on a lamppost calling to it. Presumably the youngster had just left a nearby roof-top nest, landed in the garden and was having difficulty taking off again.

My winter sighting of the Sparrowhawk was interesting. It was on January 27th 2015 and a bitter wind was blowing. She was perched in a tree in the garden of St Anne and St Agnes, Noble Street, close to the trunk and quite low down where she had some shelter. It was lunchtime. People from nearby offices were walking past studying their mobile phones and unaware of the hawk perched just above them. She appeared unperturbed by me stopping to have a good look at her.

## Conclusions

The bird community in the City and immediate surrounds is continuing to change. The provision of bird food and nest boxes undoubtedly encourages birds to use public gardens but they do need good cover if they are to nest successfully. I suggest that anyone living or working in this part of London could make a useful contribution to our knowledge of the bird life by keeping records of the birds at specific sites and submitting them periodically.

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# COULD WE GET HOUSE SPARROWS BACK INTO THE LONDON PARKS?

MICHAEL N MAC

Back in 2014/15 I witnessed the destruction of some long-established, active House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) nest sites during the Lambeth Council Estate refurbishment project. Of 11 holes in brickwork used by the sparrows, eight had been filled and the other three were only spared after I complained to the Council, a Labour Councillor and the local Wild Life Protection Officer. In addition, at least six broken ventilation cases used by breeding Starlings had been removed so that the Starlings were no longer breeding there. This got me looking at House Sparrows in my area and asking the question: why have they declined in London and what can be done about it? In my local community garden there are still about 15 to 20 House Sparrows; some breed in the three holes left on the nearby Wyvil Estate and one single pair bred in a metal ventilation case on another block of flats across the road. After all my efforts of feeding them for eight years they did breed in the roof for the first time in 2017 which proves to me that they will come and breed if food is provided and there are suitable nest sites.

There are several other locations in my area that still have stable House Sparrow populations and I will briefly look at the habitats in these and in some others further afield, discuss the reasons for the sparrow population decline and offer solutions to reverse it.

## House Sparrow Populations in Lambeth and Elsewhere

**Brockwell Park**

In this 125 acre park just south-east of Brixton up to 50 individual birds can be counted throughout the year. They breed in three main areas. Brockwell Hall, the house on the hill at the centre of the park, has about five pairs of House Sparrows nesting in holes in

*Three pairs of House Sparrows nest in this building in Brockwell Park. (Michael Mac)*

*Above left: Churchill Gardens showing the hedge used by sparrows at the back. (Michael Mac)*
*Above right: Sparrow nests in the Pyracantha hedge in Churchill Gardens. (Michael Mac)*

the walls. Another three pairs nest in holes in a small brick building called The Temple in the walled garden, and probably around 12 pairs (or more) nest in holes in houses backing onto the park. In total there are about 20 breeding pairs.

**Churchill Gardens**
In this small garden area on the Churchill Gardens Housing Estate in Pimlico just over the river from Battersea Power Station, there are approximately 14 breeding pairs in a tall Pyracantha hedge and some also breed in holes in the back of the nearby pub. In 2016 there were two nests in a separate bush 50m from the main colony and one in a nest box. The hedge is on the perimeter of a square garden about half the size of a tennis court with small trees and lots of good cover. Residents of some of the nearby flats have put feeders on their balconies, and in the nesting season House Sparrows can be seen flying from them to their nests.

**Battersea Power Station**
On the opposite side of the river from Churchill Gardens the power station and surrounding area are being redeveloped and by 2020 will be a residential and commercial centre comprised of pristine buildings and manicured gardens. In 2015 a residential house nearby with about five pairs of breeding House Sparrows was demolished. Similarly, in September 2017 a building called Brooks Court, which was the site of about three to five House Sparrow and about three Starling nest sites, was also demolished. In addition, the Cringle Dock Solid Waste Transfer Station (where bin wagons are emptied) and where both House Sparrows and Starlings feed in the rubbish will also be gone. The sad reality is that in this area there is no longer a place for House Sparrows or Starlings to nest.

*Fledged House Sparrows feeding in the rubbish at Cringle Dock in 2016. (Michael Mac)*

**Larkhall Park**
This small, 13 acre park in Stockwell, has about 20 breeding pairs of House Sparrows. There are ten pairs nesting in holes in the brickwork and the gutter of a single house in the park, about two pairs in a dense creeper by a wall, and the others in holes in walls and roofs of residences backing onto the park.

A small wildlife area across the road from the house provides a habitat that seems to be the focus of feeding activity, but there are also some minor areas of rough grassland around the edges of the park that are often cut in late summer. In addition, although there are no feeders in the park, the many small gardens backing onto the park provide feeding opportunities such as invertebrates and seeds, some of which are probably from feeders. In fact, the idea that sparrows need only grass to get insects may not be true as the Sycamore trees in the park are filled with aphids that I suspect the sparrows are also feeding on.

**Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens**
This small, approximately six-acre, park in the very busy Vauxhall area is exposed to vehicle emissions from the intensely busy roads that run around it and some claim that that may contribute to House Sparrow decline. Yet in this park we find House Sparrows nesting in Schwegler boxes attached to residential flats, and there are also two Starling nest boxes that produce young every year. The sparrows also nest in wall cavities on some of the houses backing onto the park. A horse paddock, a city farm and areas of allotments are all factors contributing to stable House Sparrow populations. I would estimate that there are up to 15 pairs here. The park has no visible feeders, but again there are likely to be some in the nearby back gardens which are used by the sparrows.

**Hampstead Heath**
House Sparrows are occasionally reported on Hampstead Heath in ones or twos and I have found that all the sparrows near to the heath are breeding on Roderick Road which is about 500 metres away over a railway track. There are about 15 pairs here, all nesting in holes in walls and in gutters and roofs. As a generalisation; sparrows are very lazy and

*The changing rooms on Hampstead Heath, 500m from breeding sparrows on Roderick Road. A suitable place for installing sparrow nest sites and feeders? (Michael Mac)*

if they don't need to they won't venture far from nest sites. Unlike Brockwell Hall where sparrows breed, there are no sparrows at the larger, but similar Kenwood House on Hampstead Heath (both have cafes), and I bet that closer inspection would reveal that the brick work and gutters have been repaired so that there are now no suitable nest sites. Why can't this be reversed by putting up nest boxes or other artificial sites?

In 2008 the RSPB together with other conservation agencies initiated the 'London House Sparrow Parks Project'. They tested habitat types and planted a flower meadow to determine which habitat the House Sparrows favoured, but over three years of monitoring no House Sparrows were observed on any of the study areas. In my view, the absence of sparrows in the study areas was probably because of the lack of suitable nest sites nearby and this was a wasted opportunity. If, when the project was set up, nest boxes had been installed on buildings such as the nearby changing rooms, sparrows might have been encouraged to visit these areas and, by using the nest boxes, stayed on the Heath to build up a population, perhaps aided by some strategically placed feeders.

**Covent Garden - Odham's Walk and Drury Lane**

This area has a small number of House Sparrows but because it is densely urban it is hard to pin-point their nest sites. It is possible that some nest in the ivy at Odham's Walk or in the dense creepers at Drury Lane. There are no wild flower meadows or significant areas of rough grass in this area, yet the sparrows manage to survive. There are also small populations of sparrows on the South Bank at Gabriel's Wharf, and some breed on the Tower of London. I was told that they also used to frequent Phoenix Gardens at the back of Charing Cross Road but no longer do so; in 2016 a brand new centre was built in Phoenix Gardens that could have been designed with built-in sparrow nests sites - this was another missed opportunity.



## How to get sparrows back into the parks

The fact that House Sparrows began living in our villages, towns and cities was purely coincidental; they found food in our streets from rubbish bins, stables and livestock, and they built nests in the walls of our buildings. From looking at these few places that still have sparrows we can see that they all contain buildings with wall and roof cavities, and we still see at Battersea Power Station House Sparrows and Starlings getting insects and scraps from the rubbish pile there. At one time this was widespread right across London.

In London, the decline in House Sparrow numbers was first noticed in the early 1990s. At that time they still existed in large numbers in Regent's Park and Hyde Park/Kensington Gardens. The decline coincided with the property boom of the late 80s and early 90s in which many houses around these parks would have been refurbished (gutters and walls repaired). Many houses in London were in poor condition in the 60s and 70s: for example Notting Hill, which was described 50 years ago as 'a massive slum, full of multi-occupied houses, rats and rubbish" (in other words, a House Sparrow heaven!) is now prime real-estate. Extrapolating from Larkhall Park which has ten nests in the decaying brickwork of a single house, in the 70s and early 80s there were rows of houses in London in a similar or worse condition. This meant a street of 40 houses could have had 400 pairs of breeding sparrows that would have flocked to the parks to feed among the Feral Pigeons and Starlings. However, once the demand for property improvement began, these rows of houses would have been refurbished or in some cases demolished and replaced, removing suitable nesting sites for the sparrows. Therefore, in order to get House Sparrows back, it is crucial that we replace lost nest sites by creating artificial ones near parks, as well as providing suitable feeding habitats. House Sparrows will never return to their peak numbers but I believe if the right steps are taken we can have significant populations back in the parks, similar to those in the places I described above.

## What needs to be done

**The Sparrow Garden**: I only discovered the Churchill Gardens colony in 2016 and this gave me the idea for the perfect 'sparrow garden', an area in the parks about half the size of a tennis court that could be set aside and perhaps fenced off, planted with a Pyracantha hedge for nesting together with other types of shrubs and small trees to provide cover for the sparrows. This is a long-term project as it will take time for the plants to grow to a suitable size and density to provide appropriate protection and nest sites for the sparrows. Other types of shrubs and small trees will be planted to provide cover just like in Churchill Gardens.

**The Sparrow Wall**: this is a purpose-built brick structure with holes for House Sparrow nests (very similar to the Sand Martin bank at the London Wetland Centre). It would be located at the centre of the 'Sparrow Garden' and would provide nest sites from day one.

**Food Sources**: feeders would be put up initially to attract and support the sparrows, but could be removed later depending on the outcome. Areas of grassland and wild seed

plots to provide natural seed sources and invertebrates would be planted and cultivated in the parks. Once the sparrows are back in the parks people feeding the ducks will provide food for them too, just as today in Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens the Starlings flock around the ponds to pick up food from tourists and passers-by.

**Nest boxes**: in some parks nest boxes could be installed on park buildings such as works buildings and public toilets (I always remember as a child that in my local cemetery the sparrows bred in all the outhouses). It might even be possible to add a false wall containing nest holes to the end of a building or to make nest boxes that look like ventilation cases for buildings in conservation areas.

## In summary

Presently London is experiencing a wave of population expansion and gentrification which is generally not good for wildlife and biodiversity; old buildings are being demolished and replaced with spotless edifices, and areas of waste ground that were once feeding sites for passerines like House Sparrows and finches are being built on. By 2030 London's population is set to increase by two million to reach about ten million, putting greater demand on the parks to create amenities that could take away the habitats used by wildlife. Unless we create special areas in parks, House Sparrow numbers will continue to decrease. In addition, the hundreds of estates all over London could create sparrow gardens similar to Churchill Gardens described above. A Central London funded project needs to be initiated, perhaps by the RSPB or other conservation agencies, to build the sparrow gardens and install nest sites. I believe what I have proposed here will get House Sparrows back into the London parks. As it stands, House Sparrows will not go back into the big Central London parks because there are no longer suitable nest sites. As this document shows House Sparrows still breed successfully in smaller parks, some with less variety of habitats and less insect food sources than the larger parks. So surely the key issue is lack of nest sites in those parks.

## References

https://www.rspb.org.uk/our-work/conservation/projects/london-house-sparrow-parks-project

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# PARROT CROSSBILLS IN BROXBOURNE WOODS, DECEMBER 2017 – A FIRST FOR LONDON

BARRY REED

Regional or national influxes of rarer species can provide the occasional glimmer of hope for rarity starved inland patch workers. So, when a moderate number of Parrot Crossbills began arriving in southern and eastern England during late November 2017, I, like many others, reasoned that the local coniferous woodlands merited some increased attention. My initial endeavours drew a blank – by mid-December I felt that I had checked most suitable localities within a ten mile radius of my home in Ware at least once, without any success. I was due to travel overseas for a two month birding trip on December 21st, so it looked like the chance was slipping away – in fact I figured that a likely outcome was that, as soon as I was away, news would come through of a discovery somewhere in the local area.

Monday December 18th began with a gloriously calm, sunny morning – ideal conditions for woodland birding. I cut short my usual early morning visit to Amwell Nature Reserve and headed once again for the woods. Although I had already searched the Broxbourne Woods area a couple of times during the previous weeks, this seemed to be the obvious choice for one last attempt. The area has a good history of hosting Crossbills during invasion years and, with such a large area to cover, a repeat visit seemed to still offer a reasonable opportunity to turn something up.

*Parrot Crossbill in Broxbourne Woods, December 18th 2017. (Michael Ilett)*

*Parrot Crossbill feeding on a pine cone in Broxbourne Woods, December 18th 2017. (Michael Ilett)*

I arrived at the Monks Green entrance a little before 09:00 and entered the woods along the main bridle path. After a few hundred metres I cut off to the right away from the path, heading through the woods towards a stand of larches that had proved attractive to crossbills in previous years. There was nothing happening there, so I continued onwards and intersected the principal east-west forestry track about 300 metres west of the major crossroads. As I got to the track, I thought that I heard a single very distant crossbill-like call. I stood listening for some time but there was no repeat. I had a recording of Crossbill on my phone, so I gave that a blast. The response was almost immediate; I heard one or more crossbills approaching from the south side of the track. Within a few seconds 3 crossbills flew over, calling loudly, and continued flying north until I couldn't see or hear them anymore. This was an interesting development – there had been hardly any Crossbills in southern England at the time and the calls were strongly reminiscent of the Parrot Crossbills that I had seen at Santon Warren, Norfolk, just a few days previously. It seemed that the chance that the birds could actually be Parrot Crossbills was a distinct possibility. Hoping that they hadn't gone too far, I gave the recording another blast. Again the response was prompt – the three birds flew back over the track and landed in the top of a pine tree about two rows of trees into the woods. I didn't even bother with my binoculars; I just zoomed my bridge camera up to maximum magnification and held the button down, reeling off a long series of pictures. The light was terrible, especially



looking through a grainy viewfinder, but I could see that I must be getting some sort of images of the birds and they certainly looked the part – chunky, bull-headed and big billed. After about 300 exposures I hoped that I had got what I needed; I stopped to review the images and it became apparent that the birds were indeed, as hoped, Parrot Crossbills. I allowed myself a small celebratory clench fisted salute!

After several minutes the birds flew back onto the north side of the track, now affording much better views in perfect light. There were two red males and one green individual. All three were large billed birds, clearly all Parrot Crossbills. The brightest of the red males was also the heaviest billed of the three birds and was the most spectacularly obvious Parrot Crossbill that one could hope to encounter. I upgraded my photos and finally found time to enjoy watching them, now with binoculars and telescope rather than through the camera viewfinder.

The identification was surprisingly straightforward. All three birds showed large, deep-based and blunt-tipped bills, estimated (from photos) as bill length being about 1.2 times the bill depth at the base, with the lower mandible being conspicuously deep with a distinct bulge in the gonys region. They also seemed to be heavy and big-headed compared to Crossbill, though with nothing present for direct comparison this was never more than a highly subjective assessment. The flight calls, whilst obviously crossbill-like, were quite deep and lacked any obvious sharpness – a repeated 'peep peep' which recalled the Parrot Crossbills that I had seen and heard the previous weekend in Breckland.

With the identification firmly secured, I passed the news on via *Twitter*. Being a large area of woodland, it was not surprising that the birds proved to be difficult to find, disappearing for hours (or even days) at a time, though they returned with some regularity to the area where I first saw them; they were seen and photographed by large numbers of observers over the ensuing days. David Darrell-Lambert made a sound recording that is available on xeno-canto, recording number XC396391. The last sighting was by Mike Ilett on February 10th 2018.

This constituted the first record for Hertfordshire. The only previous ones for the London area concern a small number of records in the 19th century. This small group was part of a nationwide influx (itself part of a much larger movement of birds into the near-continent), with small numbers noted in Norfolk, Suffolk, Surrey, Berkshire and Derbyshire from late November onwards.

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# CHECKLIST
# BREEDING CRITERIA
# INDEX

# CHECKLIST OF BIRDS OF THE LONDON AREA AND GUIDE TO CONTRIBUTORS OF RECORDS

The total number of species recorded in an apparently wild state in the London Area in historic times is now 372 (Parrot Crossbill was previously recorded prior to 1900). Of these, the 12 species marked with an * in the checklist were recorded at least once prior to 1900 but have not been recorded in an apparently wild state since. The Checklist now follows the order of the BOU List, version 9, February 2019 and its nomenclature (apart from Feral Pigeon); new names are in blue type.

All records of ornithological interest, from LNHS members and non-members alike, are welcomed by the London Bird Club Records Committee. However, with an ever-growing number of active birdwatchers in the London Area, it seems sensible to issue a guide to our requirements.

This guide is not intended to be comprehensive, and contributors are asked to use their own guidance and common sense, but it does serve as a reference point for the type of records required. For example, with many common breeding species, comparative yearly breeding counts are especially welcomed. The Records Committee needs details of any rarities (denoted by **R**), and also reserves the right to request full details for any record, eg, out-of-season migrants. This guide does not apply to Inner London, where all records are required, but similar criteria regarding descriptions should be followed.

Please note: 'Lower Thames' is defined as the section of the R Thames from the Thames Barrier to the eastern edge of our recording area.

**Key to records required:**

A = all records.
B = all breeding records.
BBRC = full description required; form from www.bbrc.org.uk. *British Birds* Rarities Committee makes the decision.
D = full description required; form available on LNHS website (see page 3).
F&L = first and last dates for any site.
MM = dated monthly maximum counts.
N = brief notes required (how identified, view, distance, etc); form available on LNHS website (see page 3).
NR = all records from sites where bird not seen regularly.
P = passage movements.
S = all records mid-May to mid-July.
ST = annual statement of status at a site.
T = all territory counts.
W = records outside breeding season.

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|---|---|---|---|
| Brent Goose | *Branta bernicla* | | A |
| Red-breasted Goose* | *Branta ruficollis* | **R** | BBRC |
| Canada Goose | *Branta canadensis* | | MM, B, ST |
| Barnacle Goose | *Branta leucopsis* | **R** | A, N |
| Snow Goose | *Anser caerulescens* | **R** | A, D (unless obvious escape) |
| Greylag Goose | *Anser anser* | | MM, NR, B, ST |
| Pink-footed Goose | *Anser brachyrhynchus* | **R** | A, D |
| Tundra Bean Goose | *Anser serrirostris* | **R** | A, D |
| White-fronted Goose | *Anser albifrons* | | A |

*The first winter period of 2017 saw decent numbers of Waxwing in London, including some flocks of over 50. (Russ Sherriff)*



| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mute Swan | *Cygnus olor* | | MM, NR, B, ST |
| Bewick's Swan | *Cygnus columbianus* | **R** | A, N |
| Whooper Swan | *Cygnus cygnus* | **R** | A, N |
| Egyptian Goose | *Alopochen aegyptiaca* | | A |
| Shelduck | *Tadorna tadorna* | | MM, NR, S, B |
| Mandarin Duck | *Aix galericulata* | | A |
| Garganey | *Spatula querquedula* | | A |
| Blue-winged Teal | *Spatula discors* | **R** | BBRC |
| Shoveler | *Spatula clypeata* | | MM, NR, S, B |
| Gadwall | *Mareca strepera* | | MM, NR, S, B |
| Wigeon | *Mareca penelope* | | A |
| Mallard | *Anas platyrhynchos* | | MM, B, ST |
| Pintail | *Anas acuta* | | A |
| Teal | *Anas crecca* | | MM, NR, S, B |
| Green-winged Teal | *Anas carolinensis* | **R** | A, D |
| Red-crested Pochard | *Netta rufina* | | A |
| Pochard | *Aythya ferina* | | MM, NR, ST, B |
| Ferruginous Duck | *Aythya nyroca* | **R** | A, D |
| Ring-necked Duck | *Aythya collaris* | **R** | A, D |
| Tufted Duck | *Aythya fuligula* | | MM, NR, ST, B |
| Scaup | *Aythya marila* | | A |
| Lesser Scaup | *Aythya affinis* | **R** | A, D |
| King Eider | *Somateria spectabilis* | **R** | BBRC |
| Eider | *Somateria mollissima* | **R** | A, N |
| Velvet Scoter | *Melanitta fusca* | **R** | A, D |
| Common Scoter | *Melanitta nigra* | | A |
| Long-tailed Duck | *Clangula hyemalis* | **R** | A, N |
| Goldeneye | *Bucephala clangula* | | A |
| Smew | *Mergellus albellus* | | A |
| Goosander | *Mergus merganser* | | A |
| Red-breasted Merganser | *Mergus serrator* | | A |
| Ruddy Duck | *Oxyura jamaicensis* | | A, B, ST |
| Black Grouse* | *Lyrurus tetrix* | **R** | A, D |
| Red-legged Partridge | *Alectoris rufa* | | A |
| Grey Partridge | *Perdix perdix* | | A |
| Quail | *Coturnix coturnix* | | A |
| Pheasant | *Phasianus colchicus* | | MM, NR, ST, B |
| Red-throated Diver | *Gavia stellata* | **R** | A, N |
| Black-throated Diver | *Gavia arctica* | **R** | A, N |
| Great Northern Diver | *Gavia immer* | | A |
| Storm Petrel | *Hydrobates pelagicus* | **R** | A, D |
| Leach's Petrel | *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* | **R** | A, D |
| Fulmar | *Fulmarus glacialis* | **R** | A, D |
| Cory's Shearwater | *Calonectris borealis* | **R** | A, D |
| Manx Shearwater | *Puffinus puffinus* | **R** | A, D |
| Balearic Shearwater | *Puffinus mauretanicus* | **R** | A, D |
| Barolo Shearwater | *Puffinus baroli* | **R** | BBRC |
| Little Grebe | *Tachybaptus ruficollis* | | MM, NR, ST, B |

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|---|---|---|---|
| Pied-billed Grebe | *Podilymbus podiceps* | **R** | BBRC |
| Red-necked Grebe | *Podiceps grisegena* | | A |
| Great Crested Grebe | *Podiceps cristatus* | | MM, NR, ST, B |
| Slavonian Grebe | *Podiceps auritus* | | A |
| Black-necked Grebe | *Podiceps nigricollis* | | A |
| Black Stork | *Ciconia nigra* | **R** | BBRC |
| White Stork | *Ciconia ciconia* | **R** | A, D |
| Glossy Ibis | *Plegadis falcinellus* | **R** | A, D |
| Spoonbill | *Platalea leucorodia* | **R** | A, D away from Essex Marshes |
| Bittern | *Botaurus stellaris* | | A |
| Little Bittern | *Ixobrychus minutus* | **R** | BBRC |
| Night-heron | *Nycticorax nycticorax* | **R** | A, D |
| Squacco Heron | *Ardeola ralloides* | **R** | BBRC |
| Cattle Egret | *Bubulcus ibis* | **R** | A, D |
| Grey Heron | *Ardea cinerea* | | MM, NR, ST, B |
| Purple Heron | *Ardea purpurea* | **R** | A, D |
| Great White Egret | *Ardea alba* | | A |
| Little Egret | *Egretta garzetta* | | MM, NR, ST, B |
| Gannet | *Morus bassanus* | **R** | A, N away from Lower Thames. |
| Shag | *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* | | A |
| Cormorant | *Phalacrocorax carbo* | | MM, NR, ST, B |
| Osprey | *Pandion haliaetus* | | A |
| Honey-buzzard | *Pernis apivorus* | **R** | A, D |
| Golden Eagle* | *Aquila chrysaetos* | **R** | A, D |
| Sparrowhawk | *Accipiter nisus* | | A |
| Goshawk | *Accipiter gentilis* | **R** | A, D |
| Marsh Harrier | *Circus aeruginosus* | | A |
| Hen Harrier | *Circus cyaneus* | **R** | A, D for May-Sep records away from Lower Thames. |
| Montagu's Harrier | *Circus pygargus* | **R** | A, D |
| Red Kite | *Milvus milvus* | | A |
| Black Kite | *Milvus migrans* | **R** | A, D |
| White-tailed Eagle | *Haliaeetus albicilla* | **R** | A, D |
| Rough-legged Buzzard | *Buteo lagopus* | **R** | A, D |
| Buzzard | *Buteo buteo* | | MM, NR, ST, B |
| Great Bustard* | *Otis tarda* | **R** | BBRC |
| Water Rail | *Rallus aquaticus* | | A |
| Corncrake | *Crex crex* | **R** | A, D |
| Little Crake* | *Porzana parva* | **R** | BBRC |
| Baillon's Crake | *Porzana pusilla* | **R** | BBRC |
| Spotted Crake | *Porzana porzana* | **R** | A, D |
| Moorhen | *Gallinula chloropus* | | MM, B, ST |
| Coot | *Fulica atra* | | MM, B, ST |
| Crane | *Grus grus* | **R** | A, D |
| Stone-curlew | *Burhinus oedicnemus* | **R** | A, D |
| Oystercatcher | *Haematopus ostralegus* | | A |
| Black-winged Stilt | *Himantopus himantopus* | **R** | BBRC |
| Avocet | *Recurvirostra avosetta* | | A |



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|---|---|---|---|
| Lapwing | *Vanellus vanellus* | | MM, NR, P, B |
| Sociable Plover | *Vanellus gregarius* | **R** | BBRC |
| White-tailed Plover | *Vanellus leucurus* | **R** | BBRC |
| Golden Plover | *Pluvialis apricaria* | | A |
| Pacific Golden Plover | *Pluvialis fulva* | **R** | BBRC |
| American Golden Plover | *Pluvialis dominica* | **R** | A, D |
| Grey Plover | *Pluvialis squatarola* | | A |
| Ringed Plover | *Charadrius hiaticula* | | A |
| Little Ringed Plover | *Charadrius dubius* | | A |
| Killdeer | *Charadrius vociferus* | **R** | BBRC |
| Kentish Plover | *Charadrius alexandrinus* | **R** | A, D |
| Dotterel | *Charadrius morinellus* | **R** | A, D |
| Whimbrel | *Numenius phaeopus* | | A |
| Curlew | *Numenius arquata* | | A |
| Bar-tailed Godwit | *Limosa lapponica* | | A |
| Black-tailed Godwit | *Limosa limosa* | | A |
| Turnstone | *Arenaria interpres* | | A |
| Knot | *Calidris canutus* | | A |
| Ruff | *Calidris pugnax* | | A |
| Broad-billed Sandpiper | *Calidris falcinellus* | **R** | BBRC |
| Sharp-tailed Sandpiper | *Calidris acuminata* | **R** | BBRC |
| Curlew Sandpiper | *Calidris ferruginea* | | A |
| Temminck's Stint | *Calidris temminckii* | **R** | A, D |
| Sanderling | *Calidris alba* | | A |
| Dunlin | *Calidris alpina* | | MM, NR, P, S |
| Purple Sandpiper | *Calidris maritima* | **R** | A, D |
| Baird's Sandpiper | *Calidris bairdii* | **R** | BBRC |
| Little Stint | *Calidris minuta* | | A |
| White-rumped Sandpiper | *Calidris fuscicollis* | **R** | A, D |
| Buff-breasted Sandpiper | *Calidris subruficollis* | **R** | A, D |
| Pectoral Sandpiper | *Calidris melanotos* | **R** | A, D |
| Western Sandpiper | *Calidris mauri* | **R** | BBRC |
| Long-billed Dowitcher | *Limnodromus scolopaceus* | **R** | BBRC |
| Woodcock | *Scolopax rusticola* | | A |
| Jack Snipe | *Lymnocryptes minimus* | | A |
| Great Snipe | *Gallinago media* | **R** | BBRC |
| Snipe | *Gallinago gallinago* | | MM, NR, P, S |
| Wilson's Phalarope | *Phalaropus tricolor* | **R** | BBRC |
| Red-necked Phalarope | *Phalaropus lobatus* | **R** | A, D |
| Grey Phalarope | *Phalaropus fulicarius* | **R** | A, D |
| Common Sandpiper | *Actitis hypoleucos* | | A |
| Spotted Sandpiper | *Actitis macularius* | **R** | BBRC |
| Green Sandpiper | *Tringa ochropus* | | A |
| Solitary Sandpiper | *Tringa solitaria* | **R** | BBRC |
| Lesser Yellowlegs | *Tringa flavipes* | **R** | BBRC |
| Redshank | *Tringa totanus* | | MM, NR, P, S |
| Marsh Sandpiper | *Tringa stagnatilis* | **R** | BBRC |
| Wood Sandpiper | *Tringa glareola* | | A |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Spotted Redshank | *Tringa erythropus* | | A |
| Greenshank | *Tringa nebularia* | | A |
| Cream-coloured Courser* | *Cursorius cursor* | R | BBRC |
| Collared Pratincole | *Glareola pratincola* | R | BBRC |
| Kittiwake | *Rissa tridactyla* | | A |
| Sabine's Gull | *Xema sabini* | R | A, D |
| Bonaparte's Gull | *Chroicocephalus philadelphia* | R | BBRC |
| Black-headed Gull | *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* | | MM, B, ST |
| Little Gull | *Hydrocoloeus minutus* | | A |
| Laughing Gull | *Leucophaeus atricilla* | R | BBRC |
| Franklin's Gull | *Leucophaeus pipixcan* | R | BBRC |
| Mediterranean Gull | *Ichthyaetus melanocephalus* | | A |
| Common Gull | *Larus canus* | | MM, ST |
| Ring-billed Gull | *Larus delawarensis* | R | A, D |
| Great Black-backed Gull | *Larus marinus* | | MM, NR, B, ST |
| Glaucous-winged Gull | *Larus glaucescens* | R | BBRC |
| Glaucous Gull | *Larus hyperboreus* | R | A, D away from Lower Thames, West London reservoirs or Beddington. |
| Iceland Gull | *Larus glaucoides* | R | A, D away from Lower Thames, West London reservoirs or Beddington. |
| Herring Gull | *Larus argentatus* | | MM, B, ST |
| Caspian Gull | *Larus cachinnans* | | A |
| Yellow-legged Gull | *Larus michahellis* | | A |
| Slaty-backed Gull | *Larus schistisagus* | R | BBRC |
| Lesser Black-backed Gull | *Larus fuscus* | | MM, B, ST |
| Gull-billed Tern | *Gelochelidon nilotica* | R | BBRC |
| Caspian Tern | *Hydroprogne caspia* | R | BBRC |
| Sandwich Tern | *Thalasseus sandvicensis* | | A |
| Little Tern | *Sternula albifrons* | | A |
| Bridled Tern | *Onychoprion anaethetus* | R | BBRC |
| Sooty Tern | *Onychoprion fuscatus* | R | BBRC |
| Roseate Tern | *Sterna dougallii* | R | A, D |
| Common Tern | *Sterna hirundo* | | MM, NR, B, P, F&L, ST |
| Arctic Tern | *Sterna paradisaea* | | A |
| Whiskered Tern | *Chlidonias hybrida* | R | BBRC |
| White-winged Black Tern | *Chlidonias leucopterus* | R | A, D |
| Black Tern | *Chlidonias niger* | | A |
| Great Skua | *Stercorarius skua* | R | A, D |
| Pomarine Skua | *Stercorarius pomarinus* | R | A, D |
| Arctic Skua | *Stercorarius parasiticus* | R | A, D away from Lower Thames. |
| Long-tailed Skua | *Stercorarius longicaudus* | R | A, D |
| Little Auk | *Alle alle* | R | A, D |
| Common Guillemot | *Uria aalge* | R | A, D away from Lower Thames |
| Razorbill | *Alca torda* | R | A, D |
| Black Guillemot* | *Cepphus grylle* | R | A, D |
| Puffin | *Fratercula arctica* | R | A, D |



| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pallas's Sandgrouse | *Syrrhaptes paradoxus* | R | BBRC |
| Feral Pigeon | *Columba livia* | | MM, B, ST |
| Stock Dove | *Columba oenas* | | MM, NR, B, ST |
| Woodpigeon | *Columba palumbus* | | MM, B, ST, P |
| Turtle Dove | *Streptopelia turtur* | | A |
| Oriental Turtle Dove | *Streptopelia orientalis* | R | BBRC |
| Collared Dove | *Streptopelia decaocto* | | MM, NR, B, ST |
| Yellow-billed Cuckoo | *Coccyzus americanus* | R | BBRC |
| Cuckoo | *Cuculus canorus* | | A, F&L |
| Barn Owl | *Tyto alba* | | A |
| Scops Owl* | *Otus scops* | R | BBRC |
| Snowy Owl | *Bubo scandiacus* | R | BBRC |
| Tawny Owl | *Strix aluco* | | A |
| Little Owl | *Athene noctua* | | A |
| Tengmalm's Owl* | *Aegolius funereus* | R | BBRC |
| Long-eared Owl | *Asio otus* | | A |
| Short-eared Owl | *Asio flammeus* | | A |
| Common Nighthawk | *Chordeiles minor* | R | BBRC |
| Nightjar | *Caprimulgus europaeus* | R | A, N |
| Alpine Swift | *Tachymarptis melba* | R | A, D |
| Swift | *Apus apus* | | MM, B, P, F&L, ST |
| Roller | *Coracias garrulus* | R | BBRC |
| Kingfisher | *Alcedo atthis* | | T |
| Bee-eater | *Merops apiaster* | R | A, D |
| Hoopoe | *Upupa epops* | R | A, D |
| Wryneck | *Jynx torquilla* | R | A, D |
| Lesser Spotted Woodpecker | *Dryobates minor* | | T |
| Great Spotted Woodpecker | *Dendrocopos major* | | T |
| Green Woodpecker | *Picus viridis* | | T |
| Lesser Kestrel | *Falco naumanni* | R | BBRC |
| Kestrel | *Falco tinnunculus* | | MM, NR, ST, B |
| Red-footed Falcon | *Falco vespertinus* | R | A, D |
| Merlin | *Falco columbarius* | R | A, N away from Lower Thames. |
| Hobby | *Falco subbuteo* | | MM, NR, ST, B |
| Gyr Falcon | *Falco rusticolus* | R | BBRC |
| Peregrine | *Falco peregrinus* | | MM, NR, ST, B |
| Ring-necked Parakeet | *Psittacula krameri* | | MM, NR, B, ST |
| Brown Shrike | *Lanius cristatus* | R | BBRC |
| Red-backed Shrike | *Lanius collurio* | R | A, D |
| Daurian Shrike | *Lanius isabellinus* | R | BBRC |
| Lesser Grey Shrike | *Lanius minor* | R | BBRC |
| Great Grey Shrike | *Lanius excubitor* | R | A, D |
| Woodchat Shrike | *Lanius senator* | R | A, D |
| Golden Oriole | *Oriolus oriolus* | R | A, D |
| Jay | *Garrulus glandarius* | | MM, NR, B, ST, P |
| Magpie | *Pica pica* | | MM, B, ST |
| Nutcracker | *Nucifraga caryocatactes* | R | BBRC |
| Jackdaw | *Coloeus monedula* | | MM, NR, B, ST, P |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Rook | *Corvus frugilegus* | | MM, NR, B, P |
| Carrion Crow | *Corvus corone* | | MM, B, ST |
| Hooded Crow | *Corvus cornix* | R | A, N |
| Raven | *Corvus corax* | | A |
| Waxwing | *Bombycilla garrulus* | | A |
| Coal Tit | *Periparus ater* | | MM, NR, T, ST |
| Crested Tit | *Lophophanes cristatus* | R | A, D |
| Marsh Tit | *Poecile palustris* | | A |
| Willow Tit | *Poecile montanus* | R | A, D |
| Blue Tit | *Cyanistes caeruleus* | | MM, T, ST |
| Great Tit | *Parus major* | | MM, T, ST |
| Penduline Tit | *Remiz pendulinus* | R | A, D |
| Bearded Tit | *Panurus biarmicus* | | A |
| Woodlark | *Lullula arborea* | | A |
| Skylark | *Alauda arvensis* | | A, B, P, W |
| Crested Lark | *Galerida cristata* | R | BBRC |
| Shore Lark | *Eremophila alpestris* | R | A, D |
| Short-toed Lark | *Calandrella brachydactyla* | R | A, D |
| Sand Martin | *Riparia riparia* | | MM, NR, B, P, F&L, ST |
| Swallow | *Hirundo rustica* | | MM, NR, B, P, F&L, ST |
| House Martin | *Delichon urbicum* | | MM, NR, B, P, F&L, ST |
| Red-rumped Swallow | *Cecropis daurica* | R | A, D |
| Cetti's Warbler | *Cettia cetti* | | A |
| Long-tailed Tit | *Aegithalos caudatus* | | MM, NR, T, ST, W |
| Wood Warbler | *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* | | A |
| Hume's Warbler | *Phylloscopus humei* | R | BBRC |
| Yellow-browed Warbler | *Phylloscopus inornatus* | | A |
| Pallas's Warbler | *Phylloscopus proregulus* | R | A, D |
| Radde's Warbler | *Phylloscopus schwarzi* | R | A, D |
| Dusky Warbler | *Phylloscopus fuscatus* | R | A, D |
| Willow Warbler | *Phylloscopus trochilus* | | A, T, F&L |
| Chiffchaff | *Phylloscopus collybita* | | MM, NR, T, F&L, ST, W |
| Iberian Chiffchaff | *Phylloscopus ibericus* | R | BBRC |
| Eastern Crowned Warbler | *Phylloscopus coronatus* | R | BBRC |
| Aquatic Warbler | *Acrocephalus paludicola* | R | BBRC |
| Sedge Warbler | *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* | | MM, NR, T, F&L, ST |
| Paddyfield Warbler | *Acrocephalus agricola* | R | BBRC |
| Blyth's Reed Warbler | *Acrocephalus dumetorum* | R | A, D |
| Reed Warbler | *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* | | MM, NR, T, F&L, ST |
| Marsh Warbler | *Acrocephalus palustris* | R | A, D |
| Melodious Warbler | *Hippolais polyglotta* | R | A, D |
| Icterine Warbler | *Hippolais icterina* | R | A, D |
| Grasshopper Warbler | *Locustella naevia* | | A |
| Savi's Warbler | *Locustella luscinioides* | R | BBRC |
| Blackcap | *Sylvia atricapilla* | | MM, NR, T, F&L, B, ST, W |
| Garden Warbler | *Sylvia borin* | | A, T, F&L |
| Barred Warbler | *Sylvia nisoria* | R | A, D |
| Lesser Whitethroat | *Sylvia curruca* | | MM, NR, B, T, F&L, ST |



| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Whitethroat | *Sylvia communis* | | MM, NR, B, T, F&L, ST |
| Dartford Warbler | *Sylvia undata* | | A |
| Subalpine Warbler | *Sylvia cantillans* | R | BBRC if identified to subspecies, otherwise A, D |
| Sardinian Warbler | *Sylvia melanocephala* | R | BBRC |
| Firecrest | *Regulus ignicapilla* | | A |
| Goldcrest | *Regulus regulus* | | MM, NR, T, ST, W |
| Wren | *Troglodytes troglodytes* | | MM, T, ST |
| Nuthatch | *Sitta europaea* | | T |
| Treecreeper | *Certhia familiaris* | | T |
| Short-toed Treecreeper | *Certhia brachydactyla* | R | BBRC |
| Rose-coloured Starling | *Pastor roseus* | R | A, D |
| Starling | *Sturnus vulgaris* | | MM, B, P, ST |
| Grey-cheeked Thrush | *Catharus minimus* | R | BBRC |
| Ring Ouzel | *Turdus torquatus* | | A |
| Blackbird | *Turdus merula* | | MM, T, ST |
| Naumann's Thrush | *Turdus naumanni* | R | BBRC |
| Fieldfare | *Turdus pilaris* | | MM, NR, F&L, P |
| Redwing | *Turdus iliacus* | | MM, NR, F&L, P |
| Song Thrush | *Turdus philomelos* | | MM, NR, P, T, ST |
| Mistle Thrush | *Turdus viscivorus* | | MM, NR, P, T, ST |
| American Robin | *Turdus migratorius* | R | BBRC |
| Spotted Flycatcher | *Muscicapa striata* | | A |
| Robin | *Erithacus rubecula* | | MM, T, ST |
| Bluethroat | *Luscinia svecica* | R | A, D |
| Nightingale | *Luscinia megarhynchos* | | A |
| Pied Flycatcher | *Ficedula hypoleuca* | | A |
| Red-breasted Flycatcher | *Ficedula parva* | R | A, D |
| Black Redstart | *Phoenicurus ochruros* | | A |
| Redstart | *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* | | A |
| Whinchat | *Saxicola rubetra* | | A |
| Stonechat | *Saxicola rubicola* | | A |
| Wheatear | *Oenanthe oenanthe* | | A |
| Desert Wheatear | *Oenanthe deserti* | R | BBRC |
| Dipper | *Cinclus cinclus* | R | A, D |
| House Sparrow | *Passer domesticus* | | MM, NR, B, P, ST |
| Tree Sparrow | *Passer montanus* | | A |
| Alpine Accentor* | *Prunella collaris* | R | BBRC |
| Dunnock | *Prunella modularis* | | MM, T, ST |
| Yellow Wagtail | *Motacilla flava* | | A |
| Citrine Wagtail | *Motacilla citreola* | R | A, D |
| Grey Wagtail | *Motacilla cinerea* | | MM, NR, B, ST, W |
| Pied Wagtail | *Motacilla alba* | | MM, NR, B, ST |
| Richard's Pipit | *Anthus richardi* | R | A, D |
| Tawny Pipit | *Anthus campestris* | R | BBRC |
| Meadow Pipit | *Anthus pratensis* | | MM, NR, B, P, ST, W |
| Tree Pipit | *Anthus trivialis* | | A |
| Olive-backed Pipit | *Anthus hodgsoni* | R | A, D |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Red-throated Pipit | *Anthus cervinus* | **R** | BBRC |
| Buff-bellied Pipit | *Anthus rubescens* | **R** | BBRC |
| Water Pipit | *Anthus spinoletta* | | A |
| Rock Pipit | *Anthus petrosus* | | A |
| Chaffinch | *Fringilla coelebs* | | MM, B, P, ST |
| Brambling | *Fringilla montifringilla* | | A |
| Hawfinch | *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* | | A |
| Pine Grosbeak* | *Pinicola enucleator* | **R** | BBRC |
| Bullfinch | *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* | | A, B, ST |
| Common Rosefinch | *Carpodacus erythrinus* | **R** | A, D |
| Greenfinch | *Chloris chloris* | | MM, NR, B, P, ST |
| Twite | *Linaria flavirostris* | **R** | A, D |
| Linnet | *Linaria cannabina* | | MM, NR, B, W |
| Common Redpoll [Mealy] | *Acanthis flammea* | | A |
| Lesser Redpoll | *Acanthis cabaret* | | MM, NR, P, S |
| Arctic Redpoll | *Acanthis hornemanni* | **R** | BBRC if identified to subspecies, otherwise A, D |
| Parrot Crossbill | *Loxia pytyopsittacus* | **R** | A, D |
| Crossbill | *Loxia curvirostra* | | A |
| Two-barred Crossbill* | *Loxia leucoptera* | **R** | BBRC |
| Goldfinch | *Carduelis carduelis* | | MM, NR, B, P, ST |
| Serin | *Serinus serinus* | **R** | A, D |
| Siskin | *Spinus spinus* | | MM, NR, P, S |
| Lapland Bunting | *Calcarius lapponicus* | **R** | A, D |
| Snow Bunting | *Plectrophenax nivalis* | **R** | A, N |
| Corn Bunting | *Emberiza calandra* | | A |
| Yellowhammer | *Emberiza citrinella* | | A |
| Pine Bunting | *Emberiza leucocephalos* | **R** | BBRC |
| Ortolan Bunting | *Emberiza hortulana* | **R** | A, D |
| Cirl Bunting | *Emberiza cirlus* | **R** | A, D |
| Little Bunting | *Emberiza pusilla* | **R** | A, D |
| Rustic Bunting | *Emberiza rustica* | **R** | BBRC |
| Black-headed Bunting | *Emberiza melanocephala* | **R** | BBRC |
| Reed Bunting | *Emberiza schoeniclus* | | MM, NR, T, P, ST |

All records of escapes are also welcomed by the Society. All records of hybrids and birds showing plumage aberrance are also required.

## Subspecies

All records of subspecies/races are wanted. Full descriptions are required for the following: White Wagtail in autumn; Yellow Wagtail races other than *M. f. flavissima* and spring records of Blue-headed Wagtail; Siberian Chiffchaff; Northern Willow Warbler; Continental Coal Tit and Northern Bullfinch. For other subspecies please provide your reasons for assigning the record to a particular subspecies/race.



# BREEDING CRITERIA

When sending in breeding records, please enter: 'possible breeding', 'probable breeding' or 'confirmed breeding' in the Notes section on the electronic records form according to the definitions below. Additional information should also be given, such as number of territories, broods, nests, young fledged, etc.

## Possible breeding

- Species observed in breeding season in suitable nesting habitat
- Singing male present (or breeding calls heard) in breeding season in suitable habitat

## Probable breeding

- Pair observed in suitable nesting habitat in breeding season
- Permanent territory presumed on at least two different days, a week or more apart
- Courtship and display (judged to be in or near potential breeding habitat)
- Visiting probable nest-site
- Agitated behaviour or anxiety calls from adults, suggesting nest or young near by
- Brood patch on adult examined in the hand, suggesting incubation
- Nest-building or excavating nest-hole

## Confirmed breeding

- Distraction-display or injury-feigning
- Used nest or eggshells found (occupied or laid within period of survey)
- Recently-fledged young (for warblers and other birds whose young are fed at the nest for some time after hatching, 'nidicolous species') or downy young (for ducks and other birds where the young leave the nest soon after hatching, 'nidifugous species')
- Adults entering or leaving nest-site in circumstances indicating occupied nest
- Adult carrying faecal sac or food for young
- Nest containing eggs
- Nest with young seen or heard

The above breeding categories are as used in the BTO Atlas project.

# INDEX OF SPECIES - COMMON NAMES

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## - CALL FOR SPECIES ACCOUNTS WRITERS -
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# NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

The Editorial Board welcomes papers, short notes, photographs and drawings relating to the ornithology of the London Area and will be pleased to advise authors on the acceptability of material at draft stage if desired.

**PAPERS** should be submitted to the Papers Editor: Liz Andrew, 11 Stratford Villas, London, NW1 9SJ, email: lizmandrew@icloud.com

**Texts** should be sent as RTF or MS Word file attachments to an email. *The dates of all records included should be no later than the nominal year of publication.* Printed text (hard copy) can be scanned; please contact the Papers Editor first before submitting it.

**Style** English names of birds require initial capitals except after a hyphen, but group names, animals and flowers do not. Scientific names should be in italics, but only the first (generic) name should have an initial capital; their use in the text is optional, but should be included in the first mention in a paper about a particular species. Dates should take the form January 1st 2015; numbers under 11 should be spelt out in text; fractions should be decimalised. Full points should be omitted from well-known initials, such as BTO, LNHS and RSPB, and also from 'eg', 'ie' and 'et al'. Speech quotation marks should be double; all others should be single.

**Systematic lists** within papers should be in the order of Checklist of Birds of the London Area, and in the following format for economy of space: **Common name:** Description etc.

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HARRISON, J., & GRANT, P.J., 1976. *The Thames Transformed*. London.

MOON, A.V., 1988. The influx of Sabine's Gulls and other Seabirds in October 1987. *Lond. Bird Rep.* 52: 121–132.

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**PHOTOGRAPHS** should be submitted to the Photographic Editor, Jonathan Lethbridge: email: jonathan.lethbridge@btinternet.com.

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http://lnhs.org.uk/ethical-policy-for-photos.htm

**LINE DRAWINGS** should be submitted to Mike Trier, 38 Maury Road, London N16 7BP, email: miketrier@waitrose.com. They may be submitted as digital files or hard-copy.

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