LONDON BIRD REPORT **2018**

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LONDON BIRD REPORT 2018

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Front cover: Cetti's Warbler declined in 2018. (Russ Sherriff)

Back cover: Purple Sandpiper is one of London's rarest waders. (Magnus Andersson)

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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 2018.

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.

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The Society publishes ornithological and other natural history records for the area within 20 miles (32km) of St Paul's Cathedral. As well as Ornithology, other interests in natural history are catered for through the Society's Sections which record and study the major groups of flora and fauna, and the habitats in which they are found. Meetings organised by each Section are open to all members.

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LONDON BIRD REPORT FOR 2018

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Introduction

Following suggestions made in a review of *LBR* 2017, in this edition we have two new features. In the Review of the Year section, we give the total number of species recorded in *LBR* 2018 (excluding escapes and subspecies). In the Birds of the London Area section we have indicated species in the report which are rare breeding birds and breed (or may have bred recently) in London. For this purpose, we have used the Rare Breeding Bird Panel list and the abbreviation RBBP on the status line for these species.

We have also changed the way we credit observers for scarce birds in the Birds of the London Area section. Instead of showing these by abbreviations, we now print the initials and surnames for the observers.

Covid-19 restrictions have meant that it has not been possible to circulate physical copies of some of the report for proof-reading. Instead, this proof-reading has been carried out from electronic copies. I hope this has not left us with more errors than usual in the text.

David Campbell, who has been the recorder for our Surrey sector since *LBR* 2013, has now stepped down from this role as he has moved away from London. Our thanks to David for the work he has carried out. We are looking for someone else to take over as our Surrey recorder, so do let me know if you would be interested in doing this or if you know of someone else who might be.

I will also be stepping down from my role as Chair of the Editorial Board at the next AGM of the London Bird Club this November. I have done this job since the Editorial Board was set up in September 2010 but am now hoping someone younger than I can continue this work. Once again, please get in touch if you might be interested in this job, or if you know anyone else who you think might be.

As always, your comments on this issue are very welcome, especially any suggestions for 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); Dawn Painter for her illustration; all the photographers who kindly donated their photos; Liz Andrew, John Archer, Dave Bradshaw, Derek Coleman, Katrina Dixon, Mike Howard, Sean Huggins, Pete Lambert, Roger Payne, Mavis Pilbeam, Tara Wikramanayake and Gus Wilson 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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Surrey: Vacant

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.

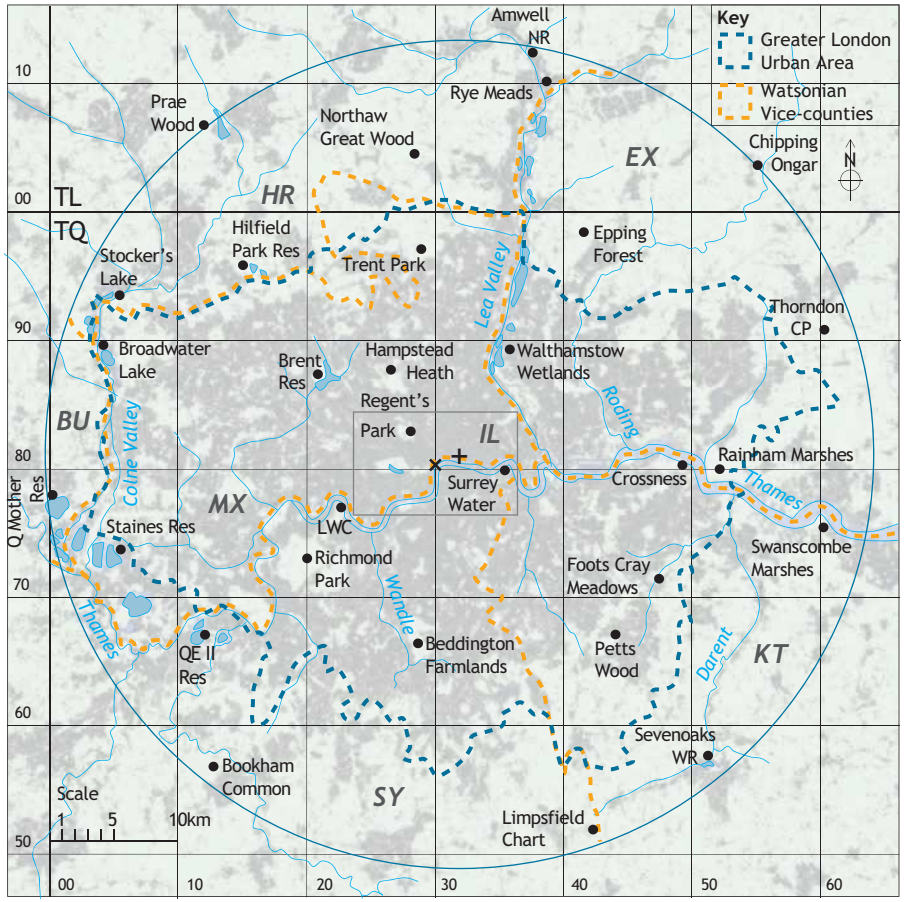
All records are welcome from LNHS members and non-members alike. We would particularly like information on the local status of common species, breeding records, notes on passage (including first and last dates and main movements), regular counts of wintering populations, notes on behaviour, as well as 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 235 to 245, together with Breeding Criteria (page 246), give guidance on what information we would like for each species. Records should be sent to the appropriate Recorder listed on page 9 or to the Chair of the LBR Editorial Board. Please use site names as listed in our Gazetteer (see page 11) 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 10). 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 8).

REVIEW OF THE YEAR 2018

No firsts for London were recorded this year, but notable records included Britain's highest-ever count of Hawfinch, London's second Rustic Bunting, 11th Little Bunting, fourth Marsh Sandpiper, sixth Bonaparte's Gull, seventh Kumlien's Gull and fifth Savi's Warbler. Other highlights included Ferruginous Duck (the first April record since 2010), the first Eider since 2011, the first Long-tailed Duck since 2013, the highest numbers of Red-breasted Merganser since 2014, single White Stork, Glossy Ibis and Purple Heron, Spoonbill at nine sites, up to 14 Gannet, the first Black Kite and Rough-legged Buzzard since 2012, a Stone-curlew, a Temminck's Stint, a Pectoral Sandpiper, at least seven Glaucous Gull and ten Iceland Gull, a Ring-billed Gull (the first since 2009), two White-winged Black Tern, four Hoopoe, two Red-backed Shrike, one Great Grey Shrike, the first Penduline Tit since 2011, a Bluethroat, the first Red-breasted Flycatcher since 1998, two Richard's Pipit (the first since 2012), three Parrot Crossbill, a Serin, a Snow Bunting and an Ortolan Bunting. It was another record year for Caspian Gull and Great White Egret records. In contrast, the decline in Smew records continued, and there were only ten records of Turtle Dove. No auks were recorded this year, for the first time since 2006. In total, 241 species were recorded in London during the year (excluding escapes and subspecies).

The first winter period saw records of Bittern from eight sites, up to seven Glaucous Gull and ten Iceland Gull, 112 Blackcap from 89 sites, up to ten Dartford Warbler, Firecrest at 40 sites, Stonechat at 48 sites and Chiffchaff at 58 sites, with two Siberian Chiffchaff. Up to nine Merlin were at Rainham Marshes. Birds remaining from the previous year included the Shore Lark at Staines Res (now accepted as one of the subspecies known as North American Horned Lark and the second for Britain), the *blythii* Lesser Whitethroat at Richmond, the Twite at Beddington Farmlands, three Parrot Crossbill at Broxbourne Woods, and the Hawfinch flocks from 2017's record influx. There were possibly no more than ten Smew, but a flock of 22 Scaup at Gallions Reach was the largest since 1974. Long-eared Owls were recorded at Fairlop Waters and Beddington Farmlands. Late February and early March saw extremely cold weather, resulting in movements of Lapwing, Golden Plover, Dunlin, Woodcock and Jack Snipe. The bitterly cold snap may have been the cause of lower numbers of Cetti's Warbler and Long-tailed Tit this year.

Spring passage included single White Stork, Goshawk and Honey-buzzard, 17 Osprey, up to 280 Bar-tailed Godwit and 205 Whimbrel. No Little Stint were recorded. Little Gull passage saw 64 records in March and 108 in April. Among the passerines, records included two Wood Warbler, 86 Ring Ouzel, 23 Spotted Flycatcher, 24 Redstart, 78 Whinchat and 16 Tree Pipit. April saw an exceptional influx of Common Scoter.

Notable breeding records included Goldeneye (a ringed female) at Springwell Lake, Marsh Harrier (two sites), Red Kite (four pairs), Barn Owl (four pairs), Raven (four pairs), Cuckoo (three sites), Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (one pair confirmed, and two more probable), Marsh Tit (three pairs), Bearded Tit at Rainham Marshes, Firecrest (one pair),

Spotted Flycatcher (one pair) and Yellow Wagtail (11 pairs). There were at least 41 pairs of Peregrine, of which 25 bred, rearing a record total of at least 63 juveniles, while breeding pairs of Hobby were confirmed at 11 sites. There were no successful breeding records of Black-necked Grebe, and no proven breeding of Black Redstart, though 19 singing birds were recorded (including 14 in Inner London). No Turtle Doves or Woodlark bred. The first record of Ruddy Duck breeding since 2012 ended with three birds being culled. It was a good year for Grey Heron breeding, whereas Little Egret saw a decrease in breeding sites, though the number of nests overall increased. Herring Gull breeding numbers increased slightly, while breeding pairs of Black-headed Gull and Common Tern also increased. Numbers of breeding pairs of Tree Sparrow reduced this year at both of the last two breeding sites.

Autumn saw unprecedented numbers of Spoonbill at Beddington Farmlands, while Cattle Egret were recorded from eight sites and Great White Egret were recorded at 14 sites in October. Three Rough-legged Buzzard were recorded in October, while 16 Osprey were recorded from mid-August. A strong passage of Mediterranean Gull saw 87 recorded in July. Wader records included a Pectoral Sandpiper, 12 Little Stint, 18 Wood Sandpiper and both Grey and Red-necked Phalaropes at Staines Res. There were 11 records of Yellow-browed Warbler. Other passerine migrant records included eight Wood Warbler, 27 Ring Ouzel, 33 Pied Flycatcher, 79 Redstart and about 50 Tree Pipit. Spotted Flycatcher were recorded from 77 sites and Whinchat from 73.

The second winter period was much warmer than average. The period saw the first December Reed Warbler since 2015. Short-eared Owl were recorded at 19 sites, Bittern at eight sites, Chiffchaff at 66 sites, 75 Blackcap at 63 sites and eight Dartford Warbler. Up to seven Scaup were recorded, with three Slavonian Grebe. The period saw 125 Crossbill. At least three Merlin were at Rainham Marshes. Mid-November saw an influx of Red-breasted Merganser.

January

The month saw year highs at Rainham Marshes of 1,100 Wigeon, at least 50 Avocet, 10,000 Black-headed Gull, over 400 Great Black-backed Gull and eight Rock Pipit (the same number were also recorded there in March). Year highs at other sites included 500 Pochard and five Ruddy Duck at Staines Res, 1,000 Common Gull at Hilfield Park Res (with a similar number there in February), 3,000 Ring-necked Parakeet roosting at Danson Park, 200 Magpie roosting at Ruxley GPs, 220 Skylark at Rushett Farm, 350 Chaffinch roosting at Fishers Green Island, 90 Brambling at Ingrebourne Valley and 35 Greenfinch at Broomfield Park. The year began with three Parrot Crossbill still at Broxbourne Woods until February 10th, while a Twite remained at Beddington Farmlands until 28th. On 6th, two Bewick's Swans were at Ingrebourne Valley. On 13th, at least 110 Goldfinch roosted at Marylebone. A Little Bunting found at Walthamstow Wetlands on 19th stayed until April 5th. 2017's Shore Lark (now accepted as one of the subspecies known as North American Horned Lark and the second for Britain) was rediscovered at Staines Res on 22nd, remaining until April 14th.

February

Year highs this month included 22 Scaup at Gallions Reach, 42 Goldeneye at Wraysbury

GP, four Smew at Amwell NR, 20 Goosander at KGV Res, 145 Red Kite at Iver Heath, 2,000 Lapwing at Rainham Marshes, 11,660 Herring Gull and 2,875 Jackdaw at Beddington Farmlands, 259 Pied Wagtail roosting in Epping, 220 Siskin in Waltham Abbey Woods and 40 Yellowhammer at Tyttenhanger GP. A Serin found at Walthamstow Wetlands on 10th stayed until March 8th. On 11th, a Ring-billed Gull was at Thames Barrier Park. A Siberian Chiffchaff was at Creekmouth, Barking on 11th and 17th, while another was recorded at Rye Meads on 24th, staying until March 10th. Hard weather on 28th led to Lapwing movements including 25 over South Kensington and at least 30 over Marylebone, while Golden Plover reached a year high of 170 at Canons Farm and a peak winter count of 19 Chiffchaff was recorded at Broadwater Lake.

March

The month saw year highs of 40 Pintail, 12 Ruff and 300 Redshank at Rainham Marshes, 700 Teal at Crossness, 15 Turnstone at both Swanscombe Marshes and Grays, 13 Woodcock at Richmond Park, 45 Wren at Beddington Farmlands, at least 15 Nuthatch at Broxbourne Woods and 25 Corn Bunting at Longfield Gallops. Single Dunlin were at Hyde Park/Kensington Gardens and Russia Dock Woodland on 1st. On 5th, a Pink-footed Goose was at Rainham Marshes. On 9th, a Stonechat was at Regent's Park. A Purple Sandpiper found at Swanscombe Marsh on 9th stayed there and at Grays until 22nd. On 11th, a Spotted Redshank was at Rye Meads; another was recorded at Rainham Marshes from March 23rd to April 5th. A Pheasant was at Fulham on 12th. On 13th, a record-breaking 600 Hawfinch were at Bramblehall Wood; that day also saw 128 Kittiwake moving past Rainham Marshes. A Shag was at Millwall Docks from 15th to 23rd. On 17th, a Stone-curlew flew over Beddington Farmlands and a Woodlark was at Walthamstow Marshes. On 18th, a Kumlien's Gull was at Crayford Marshes while a Hen Harrier was at London Wetland Centre on 19th. A Red-throated Diver was at Island Barn Res on 22nd, a Bluethroat was at Walthamstow Wetlands and a Ring-billed Gull was at Rainham Marshes on 23rd. A Penduline Tit was at Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) from 24th to 25th.

April

Year highs this month included 19 Black-necked Grebe at Hilfield Park Res, 35 Buzzard and 66 Curlew at Rainham Marshes, and 15 Wheatear at Richmond Park. On 3rd, a Bullfinch was at Bermondsey, while on 4th a Manx Shearwater was at Staines Res. Single Hoopoe were at Brent Res and at Walthamstow Wetlands on both 6th and 7th. A Spotted Redshank was at Beddington Farmlands on 7th. Two Arctic Skua were at Rainham Marshes on 8th and the same number were at Q. Mother Res on 9th. Also on 9th, possibly more than 75 Common Scoter were recorded, including 48 on the Thames at Dartford Marshes. Ring Ouzel passage peaked on 12th, with 11 birds recorded. A spring peak of 15 Little Gull were at Staines Res on 14th, while that day also saw a Ferruginous Duck at Ponders End Lake, a Red-necked Grebe at Q. Mother Res, a Goshawk at Rye Meads, ten Willow Warbler in Hyde Park/Kensington Gardens and a Lesser Whitethroat in Regent's Park. On 15th, 17 Brent Goose were recorded over Q. Mary Res (also seen over QE II Res and Walton Res), while a Hoopoe was at Beddington Farmlands. A Penduline Tit was at Tyttenhanger GP from 16th to 17th, while a Pied Flycatcher was at Hyde Park/Kensington Gardens on the latter date, followed by a Whinchat on 21st. On 19th,

a Woodlark was over Belhus Woods CP. A Black Kite was recorded at Walthamstow Wetlands on 24th. On 28th, a Garden Warbler was at Victoria Tower Gardens and a Red-rumped Swallow was found at Nazeing GP, staying till 30th. Migration counts on 28th included spring peaks of 400 Sand Martin at Hilfield Park Res, 19 Whimbrel at Rainham Marshes, and 80 Wheatear and 46 Common Sandpiper across the area. Bar-tailed Godwit passage on 29th saw 40 at Barking Bay, 36 over Walthamstow Wetlands and 35 over Richmond Park, while that day also saw peak spring counts of 500 Swallow at Hilfield Park Res and 20 Yellow Wagtail at London Wetland Centre. Single Blue-headed Wagtails were recorded at QE II Res on 29th and Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough) on 30th; on the latter date, a spring high count of 250 House Martin was recorded at Nazeing GP.

May

May saw year highs of 31 Grey Plover, 51 Ringed Plover, 20 Sanderling and 18 Hobby at Rainham Marshes. On 1st, Whinchat passage peaked with a total of 30 birds, a Redstart was at Chelsea and a Garden Warbler was at London Zoo. A Pied Flycatcher was at Putney Heath on 2nd. A Lesser Whitethroat was singing at the Natural History Museum on 4th. On 7th, three Little Tern were seen at Purfleet, while London Wetland Centre hosted a Temminck's Stint, which stayed until the 8th. On 14th, a White Stork flew over West Molesey and a Honey-buzzard was over Alexandra Park. On 20th, ten Cuckoo were at Rainham Marshes, while a Curlew Sandpiper was recorded there on 18th and on 31st. Black Tern passage peaked on 21st, with 27 at Q. Mother Res and 29 at Rainham Marshes, with two White-winged Black Tern also recorded there. A Quail was singing at Orsett Fen on 20th, and one flew over Sidcup on 26th. On 30th, Hyde Park/Kensington Gardens hosted two Black-necked Grebe and a Cetti's Warbler.

June

A year high 420 Gadwall were at Rye Meads. A Curlew Sandpiper was at Rainham Marshes on 1st. Singing Marsh Warblers were at Rainham Marshes from 1st and Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) on 7th, while a singing Savi's Warbler was at London Wetland Centre on 3rd. On 23rd, a Bonaparte's Gull was found at Crossness, staying in the area until July 4th.

July

The month saw year highs of 167 Shelduck at Crossness, 173 Great Crested Grebe at Staines Res, 13 Mediterranean Gull at QE II Res, 1,000 Swift at Brook Farm, Upminster, 806 Carrion Crow at Beddington Farmlands and 18 Bearded Tit at Rainham Marshes. On 7th, a Cetti's Warbler was at Victoria Park, while on 16th a Cuckoo was at Hyde Park/Kensington Gardens. A Purple Heron was at Sevenoaks WR from 20th to 21st, and a Marsh Sandpiper was at Rainham Marshes from 27th to 29th.

August

Year highs this month included 170 Egyptian Goose at QE II Res, four Garganey at Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), 1,979 Tufted Duck at Walthamstow Wetlands, at least 12 Little Ringed Plover and 79 Yellow-legged Gull at Rainham Marshes, 390 Common Tern

at Gallions Reach, 19 Green Sandpiper at Beddington Farmlands, 750 Swallow at Sewardstone Marsh, 35 Willow Warbler at Canons Farm and eight Spotted Flycatcher at Dagnam Park on 27th (with the same number there on September 1st). On 6th, 36 Whitethroat were trapped by ringers at Stanwell Moor. At Regent's Park, there was a Wood Warbler on 12th, a Garden Warbler on 21st, single Lesser Whitethroat on three dates from 22nd, a Whinchat on 29th, two Redstart on 30th and a single Redstart on 31st. A Spotted Redshank was at Brent Res from 17th to 22nd, with one recorded at Gallions Reach on 29th. Two Whinchat were at Hyde Park/Kensington Gardens on 25th. A Red-backed Shrike found at Wanstead Flats on 28th stayed until September 7th. On 29th, two Curlew Sandpiper were at Rainham Marshes. Autumn passage of Common Sandpiper peaked on 31st, with 66 birds recorded, while a Red-necked Phalarope was at Staines Res on that date.

September

The month saw year highs of 900 Cormorant at Q. Mary Res, seven Little Stint, seven Greenshank and 600 Meadow Pipit at Rainham Marshes, 50 Arctic Tern, 36 Black Tern, 2,000 House Martin and 40 Yellow Wagtail at Staines Res, 400 Stock Dove at Canons Farm, 15 Jay at Tyttenhanger GPs, 700 Rook at Brook Farm, Upminster and 35 Chiffchaff at both Rye Meads and Q. Mary GP. Autumn Whinchat passage peaked on 1st, with 34 birds recorded, including ten at Richmond Park. On 2nd, an Ortolan Bunting was at Alexandra Park. On 6th, four Wood Sandpiper flew over Walthamstow Wetlands. A Spotted Redshank was recorded at Beddington Farmlands on 3rd, with another record there on 23rd. On 5th, three Redstart and four Whinchat were at Regent's Park. An exhausted Manx Shearwater was found in Tooting on 8th, and was taken into care. On 13th, a Tree Pipit was at Marylebone and a Purple Sandpiper was at Staines Res. A Grey Phalarope found at Staines Res on 22nd stayed until 27th. A Pectoral Sandpiper found at Rainham Marshes on 23rd stayed until 30th. An influx of Great Skua on 23rd included four at Rainham Marshes, three at Q. Mary Res and one at Q. Mother Res, while that day also saw 19 Spoonbill at Beddington Farmlands. On 24th, Gannet records included four at Rainham Marshes, three at Q. Mother Res and one at Alexandra Park. A Glossy Ibis flew over Beddington Farmlands on 28th.

October

Year highs this month included 600 Greylag Goose and 300 Linnet at Rainham Marshes, 1,311 Coot at KGV Res, 15 Oystercatcher at Dartford Marshes and 21 Goldcrest at Belhus Woods CP. On 4th, a Red-breasted Flycatcher was at Rammey Marsh. Redwing passage on 8th saw a year high 4,145 over Banstead. On 9th, a Red-legged Partridge was at Regent's Park, while a Pheasant was at Kennington Park on 11th. A Hen Harrier was at Thamesmead on 10th; later in the month, Hen Harrier records included two at Rainham Marshes and Dartford Marshes on 30th. A Whooper Swan was at Staines Res on 13th, also seen at Q. Mary Res on 14th, Island Barn Res from 14th to 15th and QE II Res on 15th; five Whooper Swans were at Amwell on 19th. On 16th, a Yellow-browed Warbler was at St James's Park and a Woodlark flew over Putney. A Rustic Bunting found at Wanstead Flats on 17th stayed until 21st. On 18th, 30 Buzzard were recorded at Bushey Park. On 19th, a Richard's Pipit flew over Chafford Hundred; a further record of Richard's Pipit

was at Beddington Farmlands from 29th to 30th. On 20th, 20 Crossbill flew over Gallions Reach and a Woodlark was at Rainham Marshes, while a year high 11,000 Woodpigeon flew over Brook Farm, Upminster. Chaffinch passage peaked on 28th, with over 2,100 recorded, and the same day saw a year high 846 Fieldfare at Wanstead Flats as well as peak Starling passage: 7,400 birds included 2,000 at Gallions Reach. On 29th, over ten Grey Partridge were at Essendon, while a Rough-legged Buzzard was at Primrose Hill. Another Rough-legged Buzzard was at Rainham Marshes and Dartford Marshes on 30th; this bird remained at Dartford Marshes on 31st, when a second bird was seen at Rainham Marshes.

November

The month saw year highs of 340 Shoveler at Staines Res, 346 Mallard and 411 Moorhen at London Wetland Centre, 108 Mandarin Duck at Black Park, 60 Little Grebe at Walthamstow Wetlands, 17 Water Pipit at Beddington Farmlands and 60 Lesser Redpoll at Ruislip Wood. On 2nd, a Hen Harrier was at Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth). A Woodlark was over Banstead on 3rd. A Red-backed Shrike was found at Crossness on 4th, and was last seen on 12th. On 6th, a Cetti's Warbler was at Regent's Park. A Penduline Tit was at Crossness on 10th. On 11th, a Hoopoe was at Aveley and three Great Northern Diver were at KGV Res. On 17th, five Red-breasted Merganser were at Island Barn Res and a Great Grey Shrike was at Whitewebbs Farm. A Red-throated Diver was found on a drive in Orpington on 19th; later in the month, a Black-throated Diver was in more normal habitat at Walthamstow Wetlands from 24th to 25th. A year high 22 Little Gull flew downriver at Northfleet on 22nd. On 23rd, five White-fronted Goose flew over Rainham Marshes. An Eider was at Gallions Reach, and later near the Thames Barrier, on 24th. On 26th, a Caspian Gull was at Regent's Park. A Shag was at Rainham Marshes from 27th to 28th, while that site saw a record count of 19 Caspian Gull on 29th.

December

Year highs this month included 42 Red-crested Pochard at Stocker's Lake, 14 Water Rail at London Wetland Centre, 2,000 Lapwing and 140 Snipe at Rainham Marshes, 50 Knot over Greatness Pits, 2,000 Dunlin at Crossness, 600 Lesser Black-backed Gull at Hilfield Park Res, up to 300 Goldfinch at Ponders End and 25 Reed Bunting at Sloemans Farm. On 2nd, a Caspian Gull was at Rotherhithe. An unseasonal Reed Warbler was at Walthamstow Wetlands from 10th to 11th. A Pink-footed Goose was at Dartford Marshes on 22nd and 24th.

CONTRIBUTORS TO BIRDS OF THE LONDON AREA

All contributors of ornithological records to the Society in 2018 are listed in the table 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.

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Walthamstow Birders
Walthamstow Wetlands staff
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BIRDS OF THE LONDON AREA 2018

BIRDS OF THE LONDON AREA, 2018

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 follows the British Ornithological Union (BOU) 9th Edition order and - with one exception - nomenclature; we have retained the common name Feral Pigeon. The Checklist of Birds of the London Area appears on pages 235-245.

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)
f, 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	RBBP	=	Rare Breeding Bird Panel
KGVI	=	King George VI	Res	=	Reservoir(s)
LBR	=	*London Bird Report*	RG	=	Recreation Ground
LNR	=	Local Nature Reserve	SF/SW	=	Sewage Farm/Works
m	=	male	SP	=	Sand Pit(s)
mo	=	many observers	WeBS	=	Wetland Bird Survey
NR	=	Nature Reserve	WR	=	Wildfowl Reserve
N, S, E, W	=	North, South, East and West			

Observer names 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 4 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 2018 appears on pages 18 to 24.

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: Goldfinch. (Russ Sherriff)

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

Status: occasional migrant and winter visitor.

This year around 86 birds were recorded at 20 sites, an improvement on the previous two years (66 birds in 2017 and 82 in 2016); however, these numbers are well below the totals recorded from 2010 to 2015, which peaked at 506 in 2014.

As last year the first records were singles on January 1st at both Rainham Marshes and Staines Res; two flew over Tottenham Marshes on the 10th and singles were at London Wetland Centre and Beddington Farmlands the next day. A flock of ten were at Wraysbury Res on the 13th and one was at Rainham Marshes on the 13th and 14th, with another there on the 18th. One at KGVI Res on February 17th was the only record for that month. In March, singles were at Purfleet on the 4th. Ardleigh Green on the 17th, Staines Res on the 19th and Rainham Marshes on the 31st, when another was seen at Q. Mary Res. In April, a flock of 24 flew downriver past Rainham Marshes on the 4th, two flew over Hook on the 7th, and one was at Walthamstow Wetlands on the 11th, with presumably the same bird at KGV Res the following day. The latter site then held five birds on the 15th, with a flock of 17 on the same day at Q. Mary Res. This flock was also seen over both QE II Res and Walton Res.

The first returning birds were three at Rainham Marshes on October 19th, then two at Crossness on the 21st. The next were not until November 17th, with possibly the same individual at Q. Mother Res, and over QE II Res, and Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough). Singles were at Gallions Reach on the 18th, and over Beddington Farmlands on the 20th and West Molesley on the 21st, when one was also at Rainham Marshes, with probably the same individual reported there again on the 23rd to 25th, and also at Gallions Reach and Purfleet on the latter date. One was then at Beddington Farmlands on 28th. The final record of the year was two at Rainham Marshes on December 10th.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Status: very common, introduced breeding resident.

There was another increase in breeding records, with 263 pairs/broods from 117 sites (219 from 87 last year and 193 from 67 in 2016); the Breeding Bird Survey shows no significant change in London from 2007-17, but there has been a 46% increase in the South East from 1995-2017. The top breeding sites were Beddington Farmlands and Rainham Marshes.

Below are breeding records for sites with three or more pairs/broods (number in brackets), and the highest overall counts from sites where more than 300 were recorded.

Essex: Breeding records from 21 sites (19 last year). Brook Farm, Upminster, 337 on Aug 26th. Hainault (4+). KGV Res, 321 on Aug 11th. Rainham Marshes (57); 410 on Dec 10th. Walthamstow Wetlands (13); 634 on Jun 21st. Warren Gorge (3).

Herts: Breeding records from 30 sites (16 last year). Aberford Park (3). Essendon (3). Rye Meads (6). Stocker's Lake (9).

Middx: Breeding records from 24 sites (18 last year). Brent Res (4+). Q. Mary Res (4). Tottenham Cemetery (3).

Bucks: No breeding records (one last year). Q. Mother Res, 330 on Aug 3rd.

Kent: Breeding records from 12 sites (nine last year). Lamorbey Park (4). Sevenoaks WR

(9+); 355 on Jan 27th.
Surrey: Breeding records from 21 sites (19 last year). Beddington Farmlands (38). Buckland SP (5+). Dulwich Park (3). London Wetland Centre, 357 on Sep 9th. Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) (10+).
In Lond: Breeding records from nine sites (five last year). Regent's Park, 319 on Jul 19th.

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. All but one of this year's records probably relate to the regular flock recorded at various West London reservoirs every winter since 2014/15. The June record was more unusual although it may have involved the same birds.

Middx: Staines Res, c30 flew NW on Feb 17th.
Surrey: Esher, 24 on Jan 19th and 35 on Nov 8th. Island Barn Res, c29 on Jan 23rd, 28 on Feb 2nd, 30 on 4th, 31 on Oct 23rd & 24th and Nov 16th. Leatherhead, 24+ low NNW on Oct 16th. QE II Res, 14 high NW on Jun 23rd. Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), 30 on Jan 6th, 13th-28th and Feb 3rd, and 31 on Dec 31st.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Status: common breeding resident.

Breeding records increased again to 88 pairs from 33 sites (79 from 29 last year), plus three hybrid broods (all with Canada Goose as the second parent). As noted in previous years, coverage of breeding sites varies annually.

The highest count was c600 at Rainham Marshes, well above last year's high (420 at Hooks Marsh Lake). Counts of 100 or more came from 18 sites (21 last year). Below are all breeding records (no. of pairs/broods in brackets) along with the highest count for each sector.

Essex: Belhus Woods CP (4). Fairlop Waters (2). Glen Faba (1). Hainault CP (4). Holyfield Lake (1). Hooks Marsh Lake (1). Rainham Marshes (21); c600 on Oct 3rd. Walthamstow Wetlands (13). Wanstead Park (1). Warren Gorge (3+).
Herts: Amwell NR (4); 150 on Jan 1st. Bowyer's Water (1). Essendon (1). Frogmore Lakes (2). Lynsters Farm (2+). North Met Pit (1). Seventy Acres Lake (1). Stocker's Lake (1). Tyttenhanger GP (1).
Middx: Broadwater Lake (1); 90 on Jun 25th. Springwell Lake (1).
Bucks: Horton Brook Quarry, 191 on Feb 2nd.
Kent: Darenth Lakes (2). Kelsey Park (1). Sevenoaks WR (7), plus one hybrid brood; 440 on Sep 22nd. Swanscombe Marshes (2).
Surrey: Buckland SP (2). Dulwich Park, one hybrid brood. Holmethorpe SP (1). Richmond Park (1). Thorpe Water Park (1); 151 on Oct 20th.
In Lond: Buckingham Palace Gdns (1). Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (1+); 331 on Aug 10th. Regent's Park (1). Russia Dock Woodland, one hybrid brood. St James's Park (1).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Status: scarce winter visitor.

After two blank years there were records from five sites, probably relating to a maximum of just three birds. Given that the Lee Valley bird remained in the area until May its status as a wild bird is uncertain. All records are given below.

Essex: Holyfield Hall Farm, one from Mar 24th to May 2nd (A Wilson *et al*). Rainham Marshes, one on Mar 5th (A Tweed). Sewardstone Marsh, one on Mar 9th (M Shepherd).
Herts: Amwell NR, one from Mar 8th-21st (R Cousins, P Ball *et al*) and the same or another on May 13th (B Reed).
Kent: Dartford Marshes, one on Dec 22nd & 24th (A Lawson, D Shepherd & R Bonser).

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

Status: scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

Another below-average year for this species, with nine records of 42 birds from six sites. This compares most recently with eight records of 11 birds last year and 11 records of 164 birds in 2016.

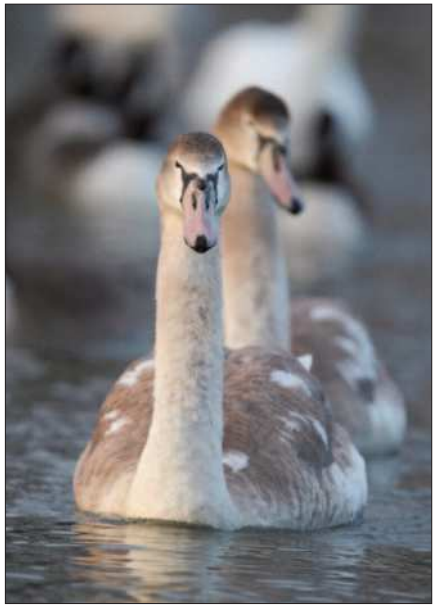
The first record was one at Sevenoaks WR on February 25th, then another was at Glen Faba on March 16th, with three at Rainham Marshes on the 18th and 25 high east over the same site on the 26th; this flock was also seen over Primrose Hill 20 minutes earlier.

In the second winter period the first record was four at Amwell NR on November 21st. Five flew high north over Rainham Marshes on the 23rd and were seen passing over Bury Farm soon after. The final record was three at Amwell NR, reported on December 20th, 26th and 29th to 31st.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Status: common breeding resident.

The latest Breeding Bird Survey shows no significant change for this species in the South East from 2007-17; this trend is reflected in our area. There were 126 breeding records this year, down slightly from 133 in 2017. Although both are much higher than the 79 in 2007, numbers fluctuate annually due to differences in reporting rates, and there were 138 pairs in 2005. Two sites hosted flocks of 100+ (also two last year), and nine sites had flocks of 50+ (eight last year). As ever, more regular peak counts and breeding records would be welcome. Below are breeding record totals followed by the highest counts for each sector.



Mute Swan. (Jonathan Lethbridge)

Mute Swan breeding records (including nest building)

Essex	Herts	Middx	Bucks	Kent	Surrey	In Lond	Total
18	31	34	2	5	20	16	126

Essex: Harrow Lodge Park, 121 on Feb 22nd.
Herts: Rye Meads, 76 on Jun 15th.
Middx: Brent Res, 64 on Aug 11th.
Bucks: Denham, 30+ on Feb 1st.
Kent: Kelsey Park, ten on Sep 11th.
Surrey: Truss's Island, 91 on Jan 6th.
In Lond: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, 157 on Jan 16th.

Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus*

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

The number of birds seen in recent years has dropped considerably, and the trend continued this year with just one record of two birds in January. The table below shows the records and total number of birds in the past ten years.

Bewick's Swan records 2009-2018: 25 records, 182 birds

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Number of records	3	9	5	3	2	4	0	1	1	1
Number of birds	12	94	21	15	32	11	0	2	7	2

Essex: Ingebourne Valley, two on Jan 6th (P Hawkins, S Harvey, D Morrison *et al*).

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Status: rare winter visitor.

There were six birds this year, all in October, including one that toured four of the West London reservoirs over a three-day period. This species has now been recorded for ten years in a row. Another in Kent in April was considered likely to be a free-flying feral bird from Leeds Castle and is included in App I.

Herts: Amwell NR, five on Oct 19th (P Ball).
Middx: Q. Mary Res, one on Oct 14th (RE Innes). Staines Res, one on Oct 13th (RE Innes *et al*).
Surrey: Island Barn Res, one from Oct 14th-15th (C Wilkinson, DM Harris, C Turner). QE II Res, one on Oct 15th (DM Harris).

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

Status: increasing, introduced breeding resident.

The local population has steadily increased in the past decade, and there was another increase in the number of sites this species was recorded at, up from 303 last year to 317. In addition, there was a further rise in the number of breeding records (83 broods at 58 sites, up from 75 at 58 sites last year). As last year, the highest count was of roosting birds at QE II Res, although this year's high of 170 was lower than last year's 215.

The table below shows the number of sites in each sector. Breeding records are summarised by sector below that, with sites where two or more broods (except Bucks) were seen (no. of broods in brackets), along with selected high counts.

Egyptian Goose: number of sites

Essex	Herts	Middx	Bucks	Kent	Surrey	In Lond	Total
43	36	82	12	36	78	30	317

Essex: 11 broods at nine sites. Walthamstow Wetlands (3).
Herts: Five broods at four sites. Lynsters Farm (2).
Middx: 15 broods at 12 sites. Grovelands Park (2). Home Park (3); 80 on Sep 9th.
Bucks: Denham CP (1). Horton GP, 108 on Oct 30th. Q. Mother Res, 82 on Jul 31st.
Kent: 14 broods at eight sites. Crystal Palace Park (2). Danson Park (3). Sevenoaks WR (4).
Surrey: 22 broods at 15 sites. QE II Res, 170 on Aug 28th and 107 on Sep 10th. Richmond Park (4). South Norwood CP (3). Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) (3).
In Lond: 15 broods at nine sites. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (4); 127 on Oct 19th. Regent's Park (4); 89 on Jul 19th.

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

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

Breeding records increased to 17 broods from ten sites (assuming those at Rainham Marshes and Erith Reach involved the same broods), up from eight broods at eight sites last year, and more in line with the 17 broods at eight sites reported in 2016. In addition, pairs or juveniles were reported at 11 further sites where breeding was not proven. For the sixth consecutive year the highest count was at Crossness, with this year's 167 being the highest since 190 at Barking Bay in 2011.

All breeding records are shown below, with number of broods in brackets, and total number of ducklings per site where known, along with selected high counts.

Essex: Barking Bay/Marsh, 70 on Apr 1st. Rainham Marshes (6); 111 on Apr 4th. Walthamstow Wetlands (1), none of three ducklings survived.
Middx: KGVI Res (2), 11 ducklings. Q. Mary Res (1), eight ducklings. Staines Res (2), 18 ducklings.
Bucks: Horton GP (1), one duckling. Q. Mother Res (1), seven ducklings.
Kent: Crossness (2), 20 ducklings; 167 on Jul 15th and 163 on Dec 9th. Erith Reach (3), 24 ducklings.
Surrey: Beddington Farmlands (1), one duckling.

2017 Additions

Essex: Rainham Marshes, 111 on Feb 12th.
Kent: Crossness, 156 on Mar 1st.

Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata*

Status: introduced breeding resident, established and locally common.

The number of broods this year was 32 (40 in 2017, 24 in 2016 and 25 in 2015). Overall numbers are similar to last year. All breeding records (no. of broods in brackets) and significant counts are given below.

Mandarin Duck. (Magnus Andersson)

Essex: Connaught Water (1); 43 on Jan 23rd. High Beach, 36 on Nov 10th. Strawberry Hill Ponds (2). Weald CP (1).
Herts: Bayfordbury (1). Cassiobury Park (1). Essendon, 24 on Jun 4th. Hatfield Park (1). Hilfield Park Res (1).
Herts/Middx: New River, Enfield to Cheshunt (5); 14 on Jun 12th.
Middx: Bushy Park (1). Grand Junction Res (1). Grovelands Park (2); 56 on Jan 26th. Osterley Park (1). Parkside Farm/Res, 52 on Aug 16th. Trent Park (2); 39 on Aug 9th. Wildwoods, Enfield (2); 61 on Nov 7th.
Bucks: Black Park (1); 108 on Nov 12th. Iver Heath (1).
Kent: Kelsey Park (2); 38 on Jan 9th. Ladywell Fields (1).
Surrey: Common Meadow (1). Kew Gardens, 71 on Oct 11th. Richmond Park (1); 39 on Feb 18th. R Thames: Kew to Richmond, 32 on May 21st.
In Lond: Battersea Park (1). Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, nine on Aug 7th. London Zoo (1); 15 on May 24th. Regent's Park (1); 24 on Dec 17th.

Garganey *Spatula querquedula*

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

The first migrant arrived at Totteridge Valley on March 15th (March 12th last year). Another followed on March 16th at Swanscombe Marshes and one at Rainham Marshes on the 31st. During April and May one or two birds were seen at Horton Brook Quarry, Ingrebourne Valley, KGV Res, London Wetland Centre, Rainham Marshes, Rye Meads and Totteridge Valley.

In June, there were singles at London Wetland Centre and Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), and a pair was at Rye Meads from 8th-9th, a male on 10th and 13th and a female on 15th, and the site also had the last spring migrant, a female from July 2nd-

3rd. It is possible that the Rye Meads records relate to a breeding attempt, although no evidence of this was observed.

The first presumed returning birds were two at London Wetland Centre on July 25th, (July 9th last year). Others followed from August 1st at Rye Meads, Gallions Reach, Rainham Marshes, Molesey, Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), Stain Hill Res, Brent Res, Sewardstone Marsh, Amwell NR, Thorpe Water Park and Wraysbury GP. The last bird was at Rye Meads on November 1st (October 3rd last year).

The highest count was four at Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) on August 28th. Birds were recorded at 17 sites this year, compared to 22 sites in 2017, 23 sites in 2016 and 18 sites in 2015.

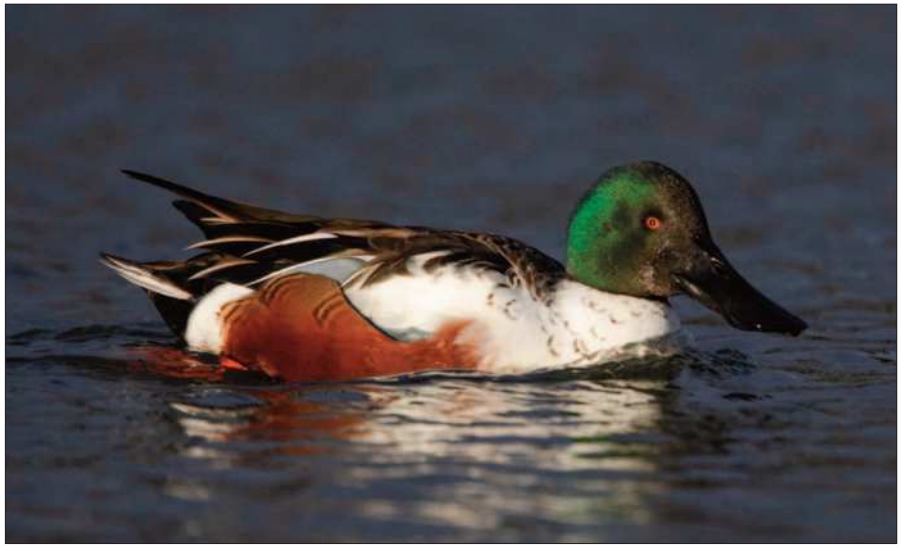
Shoveler *Spatula clypeata*

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

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 close to being of international significance (400 for BTO WeBS counts). The highest count there was 340 on November 26th, 91 lower than the 2017 peak of 431, but close to the 338 from 2016. No other sites had numbers of national significance (180 for BTO WeBS counts), but Rye Meads (164) and Crossness (161) came closest.

At Rainham Marshes there were 16 broods, an increase on the ten broods last year. As usual, a few birds summered elsewhere, but there were no other confirmed breeding records. The table below gives monthly figures for the key sites. Below that are significant records from other sites.

Shoveler. (Jonathan Lethbridge)



Shoveler		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
EX	Rainham Marshes	100	40	103	149	16	20	14	14	50	115	151	82
	Walthamstow Wetlands	8	9	47	16	4	2	4	9	80	114	116	36
HR	Hilfield Park Res	90	77	125	88	4	-	4	4	63	80	63	11
	Rye Meads	51	40	76	67	5	9	15	32	78	85	76	164
MX	Brent Res	25	15	18	11	2	5	3	64	70	24	32	49
	Broadwater Lake	34	120	60	8	-	-	-	-	22	64	90	63
	Staines Res	88	125	45	100	2	-	3	14	170	180	340	144
KT	Crossness	161	141	77	11	3	-	2	-	14	8	38	60
SY	Beddington Farmlands	60	25	70	45	4	4	6	31	78	120	120	47
	Walton Res (C&L)	19	14	50	55	3	6	4	37	68	111	71	53
	Wetland Centre	132	138	113	48	6	5	19	48	103	116	96	97

Essex: KGV Res, 130 on Sep 14th. Rainham Marshes (16).
Herts: Aldenham CP, 61 on Jan 11th. Amwell NR, 62 on Dec 30th. Stocker's Lake, 100 on Jan 17th.
Middx: Moorhall Lake, 70 on Feb 18th. Ruislip Lido, 87 on Nov 1st. Springwell Lake, 81 on Jan 24th.
Bucks: Colnbrook, 90 on Mar 19th.
Kent: Erith, 30 on Feb 16th.
Surrey: South Norwood CP, 41 on Nov 12th.
In Lond: Battersea Park, 34 on Jan 7th. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, 20 on Feb 28th and Dec 11th. Regent's Park, 37 on Sep 25th. Southwark Park, 17 on Jan 5th. Victoria Park, 16 on Mar 10th.

Gadwall *Mareca strepera*

Status: local breeding resident and common winter visitor.

Rye Meads had 23 broods this year (27 pairs), down from 29 broods in the previous year. The overall total of 50 broods was eight more than 2017. The peak count was 420 at Rye Meads, well below the 538 there last year. Wintering numbers there were higher than last year.

Counts for the major sites are shown in the table, all breeding records (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	Dagenham Chase	111	26	4	4	5	-	-	-	-	-	5	86
	Rainham Marshes	107	110	62	23	22	34	6	10	15	59	51	40
	Wanstead Park	7	38	6	5	-	-	1	40	80	96	105	48
HR	Amwell NR	15	14	13	6	7	14	13	30	29	35	1	100
	Bowyer's Water	52	-	4	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	102
	Maple Lodge NR	4	2	6	8	7	51	108	10	19	-	-	4
	Rye Meads	119	158	176	60	11	420	133	60	327	317	118	79
	Tyttenhanger GP	72	64	61	50	10	32	60	75	80	110	70	60
KT	Crossness	100	90	100	166	52	72	12	26	6	9	100	66
SY	Beddington Farmlands	63	75	49	30	12	22	6	16	52	70	74	67
	Wetland Centre	101	52	30	28	22	45	21	62	111	93	113	106

Essex: Mar Dyke Valley (1), first site breeding record. Rainham Marshes (11), 17 pairs summered.
Herts: Hilfield Park Res (2). Maple Lodge NR (1). Rye Meads (23).
Middx: Brent Res (3). KGVI Res (4). Q. Mary GP (1).
Kent: Crossness (1).
Surrey: London Wetland Centre (2).
In Lond: Battersea Park, ten on Jan 7th was the lowest peak count for at least ten years and compares to January counts of 55 in 2016 and 115 in 2015. St James's Park (1); 62 on Nov 14th.

Wigeon *Mareca penelope*

Status: common winter visitor with occasional summer records.

Rainham Marshes again had the highest counts, which peaked at 1,100 on January 17th. This is well up on the 2017 peak of 552, and also above the 2016 peak which was 1,000. There were a few birds present during the summer. Winter numbers appeared slightly higher 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. (Alan Reynolds)

Wigeon		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
EX	Rainham Marshes	1100	1071	1000	400	1	2	-	1	2	96	284	800
HR	Amwell NR	55	100	135	-	-	-	-	-	25	36	1	72
	Hilfield Park Res	57	86	112	-	-	-	1	-	6	16	7	9
	Lynsters Farm	-	100	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	-
MX	Broadwater Lake	21	120	25	-	-	-	-	-	11	26	7	-
	Staines Res	213	267	238	25	-	-	-	-	10	26	90	150
SY	Island Barn Res	106	74	82	6	-	-	-	-	-	3	9	71
	Walton Res (C&L)	26	37	100	19	3	3	1	2	35	75	62	20
	Wetland Centre	172	96	94	26	-	-	-	-	81	120	119	117

Herts: Radlett Aero GP, 101 on Mar 11th.
Kent: Greenwich Park, two on Nov 17th, first record since 1966.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Status: very common and widespread breeding resident.

The total number of broods was 288, down from 370 last year. The peak count was 346 at London Wetland Centre on November 20th, lower than the 426 on R Thames (Putney Bridge to Barnes Bridge) last year and the peak summer count was 299 on R Thames (Kew to Richmond) on August 13th (235 at the same location 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
EX	Rainham Marshes	100	65	76	48	29	92	167	58	80	129	125	90
MX	Ruislip Lido	38	28	17	12	22	74	172	-	23	25	35	31
KT	Crossness	24	22	10	13	52	18	23	160	145	23	60	37
	Sevenoaks WR	97	55	53	48	48	48	51	60	78	71	64	185
SY	Kew to Richmond	150	116	-	106	101	87	101	299	158	88	99	-
	Putney Bridge-Barnes	217	221	131	-	-	-	-	-	332	228	294	317
	Wetland Centre	275	168	183	191	207	142	129	231	248	185	346	256

Essex: 70 broods from 18 sites. Connaught Water, 140 on Dec 28th. Rainham Marshes (35). Wanstead Park, 101 on Oct 19th.
Herts: 68 broods from 25 sites. Cheshunt GPs, 111 on Mar 8th. Cuffley, 116 on Dec 1st. Rye Meads (24); 126 on Mar 16th.
Middx: 76 broods from 33 sites. Brent Res, 135 on Aug 11th. Hampstead Heath, 105 on Jan 22nd.
Kent: 17 broods from seven sites. Kelsey Park, 118 on Jul 10th.
Surrey: 39 broods from 21 sites. Clapham Common, 148 on Nov 8th. London Wetland Centre (10+).
In Lond: 18 broods from nine sites. Battersea Park, 75 on Aug 12th. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, 61 on Feb 19th. Regent's Park, 70 on Dec 15th. St James's Park, 92 on Jul 17th and Dec 16th.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

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

Wintering numbers were similar to 2017. The peak count was 40 at Rainham Marshes between March 3rd and 18th (peak count last year there of 54). The last record in the first half of the year was on May 26th at Rainham Marshes and the first returning bird was on August 13th at London Wetland Centre. The table below gives counts from the key sites and, below that, all the records from other sites.

Pintail		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
EX	Rainham Marshes	33	30	40	32	1	-	-	-	4	12	20	37
	Mar Dyke Valley	-	2	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
HR	Amwell NR	-	-	13	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
	Hilfield Park Res	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-
	Rye Meads	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-
BU	Q. Mother Res	-	8	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
MX	Brent Res	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
	Staines Res	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	5
SY	Beddington Farmlands	-	-	15	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	1	-
	QE II Res	-	-	8	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-
	Walton Res (C&L)	6	-	8	-	-	-	-	-	2	9	3	-
	Wetland Centre	22	13	16	6	-	1	-	1	-	2	5	7

Essex: Barking Bay/Marsh, one on Mar 3rd. Beckton SW, two on Nov 2nd. Connaught Water, singles on Jan 8th, Feb 26th, Oct 26th and Dec 8th-10th & 26th-27th. Dagenham Chase, pair on Feb 26th and one on Nov 21st. Fairlop Waters, three on Mar 3rd. Gallions Reach, three on Apr 15th and one on Nov 11th. Ingrebourne Valley, one on Feb 21st. KGV Res, one from Mar 11th-22nd. Sewardstone Marsh, singles on Jan 5th and Apr 1st-2nd. Walthamstow Marshes, two on Mar 2nd. Walthamstow Wetlands, singles on Mar 1st and Nov 10th and two on Nov 19th. West Thurrock Marshes, two on Mar 1st.
Herts: Maple Lodge NR, one on Nov 17th.
Middx: Broadwater Lake, two on Mar 10th. KGVI Res, singles on nine dates from Sep 2nd to 30th. Stain Hill Res, four on Oct 16th.
Bucks: Horton Brook Quarry, one on Dec 25th. Horton GP, two on Mar 24th.
Kent: Crayford Marshes, four on Mar 5th. Crossness, one from Mar 3rd-6th. Sevenoaks WR, three from Mar 3rd-4th and two on 17th. Swanscombe Marshes, one on Mar 3rd.
Surrey: Island Barn Res, one on Oct 14th. Richmond Park, singles on Mar 7th and Nov 17th.

Teal *Anas crecca*

Status: common winter visitor and rare breeder.

Breeding was not confirmed this year, although summering pairs were recorded and may have bred at both Rainham Marshes and the London Wetland Centre, and birds were present in June at several other sites. Overall, wintering numbers were slightly higher than last year, comparing average numbers at 11 sites. However, the peak count of 700 at Crossness on March 26th was lower than the 928 there last year, while at Rainham

Marshes the peak count was 600 on January 1st (2017 peak there of 500). 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	Dagenham Chase	46	19	7	10	-	-	-	-	2	-	300	152
	Rainham Marshes	600	518	356	45	1	22	18	149	249	300	500	481
HR	Rye Meads	119	129	95	48	-	6	13	45	79	224	109	49
	Tyttenhanger GP	76	120	57	50	2	5	6	25	25	62	88	90
KT	Crossness	450	452	700	387	5	20	50	175	400	681	350	600
	Sevenoaks WR	85	65	39	28	1	6	5	14	20	25	110	225
MX	Brent Res	75	106	49	53	2	8	1	12	57	120	109	73
	East India Dock Basin	125	73	48	27	-	1	1	8	48	188	162	112
	Staines Res	100	20	20	17	-	-	2	8	12	44	49	38
SY	Beddington Farmlands	315	245	199	30	2	4	4	10	50	143	250	370
	Kew to Richmond	108	79	-	4	-	2	-	-	8	19	74	-
	Putney Bridge-Barnes	129	227	125	-	-	-	-	-	15	89	121	217
	Wetland Centre	130	136	98	18	2	12	31	66	98	123	145	143

Essex: Beckton SW, 335 on Jan 21st. Ingrebourne Valley, 123 on Oct 25th. Gallions Reach, 220 on Jan 28th. KGV Res, 150 on Sep 24th.
Herts: Maple Lodge NR, 75 on Sep 18th.
Middx: Bow Creek, 100 on Jan 13th. Hackney Marsh, 84 on Feb 7th.
Kent: Crayford Marshes, 100 on Jan 30th and Mar 5th. Dartford Marshes, 105 on Jan 19th. Erith, 300 on Feb 16th. Swanscombe Marshes, 100 on Feb 2nd.
Surrey: Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), 138 on Sep 10th.
In Lond: Battersea Park, five on Oct 16th. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, one on Mar 6th and three on Nov 19th. Limehouse, 38 on Nov 6th. Russia Dock Woodland, one on Nov 27th. Victoria Park, two on Mar 5th.

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*

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

There were records from around 45 sites confirming how widespread this introduced duck now is in London. For the first time since 2010 when the species was judged to be self-sustaining, the peak count was not in Inner London but at Stocker's Lake with 42. Although this was a slight increase on the 36 at Regent's Park last year, it is fewer than half the peak counts in the early years of the decade. Five broods, compared to one last year, were confirmed. Peak counts at sites with ten or more are listed below, with breeding records (no. of pairs/broods) in brackets.

Herts: Bury Lake, 40 on Dec 14th. Stocker's Lake, 42 on Dec 9th. Maple Lodge NR (1).
Middx: New River, Harringay, ten on Mar 3rd.
Surrey: Hogsmill SW (1). Richmond Park (1).
In Lond: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, 26 on Aug 7th. Regent's Park (1); 24 on Dec 15th. St James's Park (1); 30 on Jan 1st. Victoria Park, 15 on Nov 3rd.

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Status: common winter visitor and migrant, scarce breeder. **RBBP**

Staines Res remains the winter stronghold with, as last year, the peak count of 500 in January. No other site recorded over 150. Breeding records are likely to be incomplete but the 59 confirmed broods were five higher than last year's total. Rye Meads again had the highest number with 19 broods, up on last year's 13, with Rainham Marshes also seeing an increase from six to 11. Peak monthly counts of over 50 are included in the table followed by all submitted breeding records (no. of broods in brackets).

Pochard		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
EX	KGV Res	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	67	-	-
	Rainham Marshes	-	-	50	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	52
	Walthamstow Wetlands	52	-	-	-	-	-	94	124	-	-	-	-
HR	Hilfield Park Res	-	-	-	-	-	86	131	-	-	-	-	61
	Stocker's Lake	62	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	91	75	118
MX	Bedfont Lakes CP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	103	-	-	-
	Brent Res	56	55	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Broadwater Lake	-	-	50	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	57
	Stain Hill Res	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	64	-	-	-
	Staines Res	500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	80	344	470
BU	Wraysbury GP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	60
KT	Sevenoaks WR	60	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	50	66
SY	Walton Res (C&L)	-	54	-	-	-	-	-	104	-	-	-	68
	Wetland Centre	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	128	89	-	-
IL	Hyde Park/Ken Gdns	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	77	125	86	55
	Regent's Park	63	62	71	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	St James's Park	-	-	-	-	-	53	66	-	-	-	52	-

Essex: Belhus Woods CP (1). Rainham Marshes (11). Walthamstow Wetlands (5).
Herts: Amwell NR (2). Maple Lodge NR (2-3). Rye Meads (19).
Middx: Brent Res (1). Red House Res (1). Springwell Lake (1).
Kent: Crossness (2). Swanscombe Marshes (1).
Surrey: Kew Green Pond (1). London Wetland Centre (3). R Thames, Putney Bridge to Barnes Bridge (1). Richmond Park (1). Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) (3).
In Lond: Regent's Park (3). St James's Park (1).

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*

Status: rare vagrant.

A return to form after a blank year in 2017. The last year that London had more than one record of this internationally declining (www.iucnredlist.org) duck was in 2010. A one-day stay is not unusual, but it was the first to turn up in April since one of the 2010 birds.

Ferruginous Duck arrival dates 1990-2018: 25 records, 25 birds

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

Middx: Ponders End Lake, female on Apr 14th (A Middleton).

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Status: regular resident breeder and common winter visitor.

Walthamstow Wetlands again had the highest count, but the post-breeding flock fell just below 2,000 for the first time since 2010. Only KGVI Res also recorded over 1,000 (compared to four sites last year) but here the total increased from 1,275 to 1,622. In all, seven sites had counts of over 500, three fewer than last year. The highest total in Inner London was 138 at Regent's Park in December. This year, however, saw an increase in breeding records with 204 broods compared to 168 in 2017. Rye Meads remains the breeding stronghold with 59 broods, slightly down on last year's record 61 but well above the 22 broods in 2015. The table contains all monthly counts of 500 and above, with the total of submitted broods for each county and sites with four or more broods below.

Tufted Duck		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
EX	KGV Res	-	-	-	-	-	-	712	700	-	710	-	-
	Walthamstow Wetlands	-	-	-	-	-	-	1119	1979	-	-	741	-
	William Girling Res	-	-	-	-	-	-	873	-	-	-	-	-
MX	KGVI Res	-	-	-	-	-	-	871	1126	1622	-	-	-
	Staines Res	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	749	-	-	-	-
SY	QE II Res	-	-	-	-	-	-	668	664	-	-	-	-
	Walton Res (K&B)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	703	-	-	-	-

Essex: 35 broods. Rainham Marshes (10). Walthamstow Wetlands (16).
Herts: 74 broods. Maple Lodge NR (4). Rye Meads (59).
Middx: 41 broods. Red House Res (9). Stain Hill Res (7). Staines Res (4).
Bucks: One brood.
Kent: 8 broods. Sevenoaks WR (5)
Surrey: 35 broods. Beddington Farmlands (8). London Wetland Centre (15+).
In Lond: Ten broods.

Scaup *Aythya marila*

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

The 22 seen flying down the Thames at Gallions Reach during the bitterly cold spell in late February is the biggest flock in London since 1974. There were also two unseasonal birds seen on the Lee Valley reservoirs in July. Leaving aside these exceptional records, numbers continued their downward trend with perhaps as few as eight birds in the first winter period, compared to ten last year and 18 in 2016. A maximum of seven birds were recorded during the second winter period, including the drake at Walthamstow Wetlands which returned to its favourite reservoir in December for its fifth year. All records are given below.

Essex: Gallions Reach, 22 on Feb 28th. KGV Res, male from Jan 1st to Apr 13th, with three on Mar 4th and two from March 11th-13th, two from Jul 6th-12th, two from Nov 14th to Dec 28th and three on Dec 16th. Leyton Flats, female on Jan 11th. Walthamstow Wetlands, male until Mar 26th and from Dec 6th. William Girling Res, one on Jul 16th.
Middx: KGVI Res, male on Apr 8th & 12th-13th (believed same as Staines bird), with two on final day. Q. Mary Res, one on Jan 20th. Staines Res, male from Feb 2nd to Mar 25th.
Bucks: Horton GP, one on Mar 23rd and Apr 1st (same as Wraysbury GP), one on Dec 1st. Wraysbury GP, one from Mar 18th-31st.
Kent: Northfleet, male on Nov 20th.
Surrey: Island Barn Res. female from Jan 1st to Mar 26th and again from Nov 17th until end of year. QE II Res, four on Nov 17th. Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) female on Jan 11th. Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough), one on Jan 18th and from Feb 25th to Mar 26th (both presumed same as Island Barn Res), female from Sept 29th to Nov 11th.

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

Status: scarce visitor, usually in winter.

An immature female seen on the Thames at Gallions Reach and then near the Thames Barrier was the first record in London since 2011. This large sea duck was recorded every year bar one in the 1980s but is now a much rarer visitor with records in only six years since 2001.

Essex: Gallons Reach, female on Nov 24th (GA James). Later seen near the Thames Barrier (R Bonser, J Jones).

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

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

A very good year with an extraordinary influx across London in early April. There were records from 11 sites on April 8th, more than in the whole of last year. Gauging the number of birds involved is difficult because of probable movement between sites. The flocks of eight at Hilfield Park Res and KGV Res, for example, both included five drakes and were suspected to involve the same birds. However, there may have been over 75 across the area on April 9th, above the average annual total for the previous five years. This included 48 on the Thames at Dartford Marshes, the largest flock in London since 2004. Over the year, there may have been around 120 individuals, the highest total since 2012. All records are given below.

Essex: KGV Res, two on Apr 8th, eight on 9th, 10 on 10th, two from 11th-13th, two on May 10th, five on Jul 8th and one on Aug 16th. Nazeing GP, five on Apr 8th. Rainham Marshes, four on Mar 25th, 42 on Apr 9th (same as Dartford Marshes), seven on 14th, one on May 11th, singles on Oct 6th & 15th, two on 17th and one on Nov 17th. Walthamstow Wetlands, two from April 8th-9th and one on Nov 6th. William Girling Res, two on May 13th.
Herts: Hilfield Park Res, imm male from beginning of year until Apr 10th, eight more on Apr 8th with three the next day. Stanstead Innings, five on Apr 8th. Tyttenhanger GP, one on Apr 8th.
Middx: KGVI Res, one on Apr 8th, two on 13th and two on Sep 12th. Staines Res, two on Mar 31st, three on Apr 8th, 12 from 9th-16th, 16 on 14th, five on 17th, singles on Aug 4th and Sep 15th and two on Dec 5th. Wraysbury Res, one on Apr 7th and three on 9th.

Bucks: Q. Mother Res, two on Mar 31st, eight on Apr 8th, one on July 1st, nine on July 7th and one next day.
Kent: Crossness, seven on Apr 14th. Dartford Marshes, 48 on Apr 9th. Sevenoaks WR, two on Apr 8th.
Surrey: Brockwell Park, four on Apr 8th. Holmethorpe SP, two on Apr 8th. Island Barn Res, two on Apr 8th and one on Dec 16th. London Wetland Centre, two on Mar 19th. Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough), two on Apr 9th.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

Status: scarce recently, but was annual visitor.

A pair in full breeding plumage at Walthamstow Wetlands was the first record of this beautiful sea duck since 2013. A summer record is unusual but in 2013, when a remarkable nine occurred, a female arrived in June and remained until August. Unfortunately, the Walthamstow pair stayed for just one day this year.

Essex: Walthamstow Wetlands, pair on Jun 21st (T Rawlins *et al*).

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Status: common winter visitor, occasional summer records.

The highest count was 42 at Wraysbury GP on February 2nd, the first time since 2012 that the largest total has not been on Staines Res. Numbers at Staines Res, which reached 76 in 2016 and 43 last year, continue to fall with a maximum count of just 21. But while the overall trend is for fewer birds to winter in London, there were counts of above ten at 11 sites rather than last year's eight. A pair, where the female has a metal ring, bred at Springwell Lake (first bred in 2014). Away from the breeding site, birds were recorded in June at KGV Res and Stocker's Lake. Peak monthly counts of over ten are recorded below.

Goldeneye		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
EX	KGV Res	30	28	28	16	-	-	-	-	-	-	18	30
	Walthamstow Wetlands	12	12	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
HR	Amwell NR	12	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Stocker's Lake	12	15	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
MX	Broadwater Lake	-	22	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	KGVI Res	-	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Princes Lake	-	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Staines Res	20	21	12	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17
	Wraysbury Res	20	-	-	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
BU	Wraysbury GP	38	42	40	22	-	-	-	-	-	-	16	32
SY	Walton Res (K&B)	-	-	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Smew *Mergellus albellus*

Status: winter visitor in highly variable but declining numbers.

After last year's welcome increase in numbers, the long and dramatic decline of this stunning duck in London, once its UK stronghold, resumed. The peak count of four at Amwell NR in February is the lowest for many years, well down on the nine seen at Wraysbury GP last year and below the highest daily total of five in 2016. It is always difficult to assess numbers accurately because of movement between sites but it seems as if the maximum number in the first winter period may have been as few as ten. This compares with 20 last year, 14 in 2016 and 55 as recently as 2013. If this decline – likely caused by milder winters on the continent – continues, it may not be long before Smew becomes a genuine scarcity in London. Several records of a female/imm which over-summered in the Lee Valley are believed to relate to a presumed escaped female which has been present in recent years (see App I) and it is possible that some other records relate to this individual, in particular the first winter records on Friday Lake. All records are given below.

Essex: KGV Res, male from Jan 13th to Apr 18th and female/imm on Nov 18th.
Herts: Amwell NR, female/imm on Jan 19th, two from 20th, three from Jan 28th to Mar 9th, with four on Feb 11th and the last on Mar 10th. Bowyer's Water, records of up to one male and two females/imms in both winters. Friday Lake, female/imm on 17 dates between Jan 1st and Mar 26th, male and female/imm on Dec 21st, male from Dec 24th-26th. Seventy Acres Lake, pair on Dec 19th. Stocker's Lake, two females/imms from Mar 4th-6th.
Middx: Bedfont Lakes CP, male from Jan 17th-27th. Princes Lake, male on Jan 26th and Feb 26th.
Bucks: Wraysbury GP, male on Jan 7th, on Feb 5th & 8th, two males on Feb 14th and Mar 1st with one the next day.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Status: regular winter visitor, very rare in summer.

A slightly better spread with eight sites recording counts of over ten compared to last year's four. The peak count of 20 at KGV Res, however, was down on the peak of 25 in both of the last two years, another indication of the downward trend in numbers in recent years. The last record of the first winter period was at Watford on April 26th, over three weeks later than in 2017, and the first returning birds were three days later than last year, at Sewardstone Marsh on October 4th. Peak counts for sites that recorded over ten are listed for both winter periods.

Essex: Holyfield Lake, 15 on Dec 29th. KGV Res, 20 on Feb 4th.
Herts: Turnford Marsh GPs, 16 on Jan 5th & 13th and on Dec 21st.
Middx: Frays Valley LNR, 11 on Dec 22nd. Wraysbury Res, 19 on Jan 19th.
Surrey: QE II Res, 13 on Feb 3rd and 12 on Dec 20th. Richmond Park, 14 on Nov 2nd. Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough), 16 on Jan 14th and from Dec 3rd until end of year.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Status: scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

The best year since 2014 thanks largely to an influx in mid-November. Allowing for likely duplication because of movement between sites, there may have been more than 25 over the year. Records came from 18 sites, compared to eight last year. The November movement included a peak count of five at Island Barn Res. The drake thought to have wintered since at least 2014 on the Surrey reservoirs did not return for the second winter unless it switched homes to Denham Quarry Lake. All records given below.

Essex: Gallions Reach, one on Oct 28th. KGV Res, one on Feb 18th, one from Mar 6th-11th. Rainham Marshes, two on Oct 11th, one on Nov 15th with two on Nov 17th, 20th & 27th. Walthamstow Wetlands, two on Nov 17th.
Herts: Amwell NR, three on Apr 3rd. Cheshunt GP, two on Jan 1st, Hilfield Park Res, pair from Nov 16th-17th. Troy Mill Lake, male on Dec 16th (presumed same as Denham Quarry Lake). Tyttenhanger GP, male on Nov 17th.
Middx: Broadwater Lake, male on Dec 16th (presumed same as Denham Quarry Lake). Denham Quarry Lake, male from Dec 13th-28th. Q. Mary Res, male and two females/imms on Nov 16th.
Bucks: Q. Mother Res, three on Nov 16th and one next day. Tilehouse North Lake, male on Dec 17th (same as Denham Quarry Lake).
Kent: Northfleet, one on Nov 20th.
Surrey: Canons Farm, three over SW on Nov 27th. Island Barn Res, male on Jan 5th & 7th, five females/imms on Nov 17th. Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough), male on Jan 14th (presumed same as Island Barn Res).

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*

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

The first record of successful breeding in London since 2012 occurred at Walton Res (Chelsea and Lambeth) with two small young seen in late May. Three birds stayed until December when they were shot as part of the eradication programme. Opposition to the culling of this introduced North American duck is likely to have led to some records being withheld but birds were reported from four sites, one fewer than last year. The highest count was five at Staines Res, down from nine at the same site in 2017. From a peak of 6,000 birds in the UK in 2000 (*British Birds* 102: 680-690), the cull saw numbers fall to an estimated 23 by 2016 (*British Birds* 113: 90).

Essex: KGV Res, one on Jul 14th and Aug 1st.
Middx: Kempton NR, male on Apr 12th & 25th and May 19th. Staines Res, five on Jan 1st, four on 3rd, one on Aug 16th and three on Nov 23rd.
Surrey: Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), two pairs on four dates between Jan 28th and Apr 2nd, female with two chicks on May 31st, three until Dec 13th.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Status: breeding resident, of introduced origin.

Records were received from 87 sites (90 sites in 2017). As previously, the vast majority of records hailed from Essex, Hertfordshire and Middlesex, where 68 sites provided records. All breeding records are given (nos. of pairs/territories in brackets), with high counts and other significant records.

Essex: Reported from 20 sites. Aimes Green, Claverhambury, 25+ on Dec 30th. Chigwell (1). Cornmill Meadows, 35 on Oct 28th. Lodge Farm, Nazeing (7). Orsett Fen (3); 24 on Nov 18th. Rainham Marshes, one on Apr 21st. William Girling Res, one on Apr 2nd-3rd.
Herts: Reported from 29 sites. Berrybushes Woods (1). Coopers Green GP (3). Cuffley (1); 65 on Aug 23rd were released birds. Little Berkhamsted (1). Radlett (1). Wildhill,

22+ on Sep 26th.
Middx: Reported from 19 sites. Bulls Cross, two on Mar 22nd in Myddleton House Gdns. Enfield Chase Area: Brayside Farm (1); Ferny Hill Farm (1); Holly Hill Farm (1); Park Farm (1); Parkside Farm/Res (1); Rectory Farm (2); Sloemans Farm, 20 on Dec 30th; South Lodge Farm (1); Vicarage Farm (2). Enfield Lock, one on Oct 13th in housing estate. Fryent CP, one on Jul 30th. KGVI Res; six records. Totteridge Valley (1). Whitewebbs Farm (2).
Bucks: Reported from one site. Horton Brook Quarry, two on Apr 18th and three on Oct 28th.
Kent: Reported from six sites. Crossness, one on five dates between Aug 24th and Sep 24th, the first site record for 25 years. Ruxley (1).
Surrey: Reported from 11 sites. Cheverells Farm, 500+ on Sep 21st (4,000 released there this autumn). Croydon, singles on Nov 13th & 18th. London Wetland Centre, one on Apr 21st. Richmond Park, present May 4th to Nov 22nd.
In Lond: Regent's Park, one on Oct 9th.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Status: breeding resident, declining.

Records came from 12 sites in three sectors (eight sites and three sectors in 2017). Potential breeding activity was noted at four sites, a big improvement on recent years. All records are given below, with one pair/territory in brackets.

Essex: Brook Farm, Upminster, one on Jun 8th and two on Nov 5th. Ingrebourne Valley, two on Jan 3rd, Mar 3rd & 10th, and singles on Apr 14th, 16th & 21st and six on Oct 9th. North Ockendon, five on Nov 15th. Orsett Fen, pair on Mar 22nd and Apr 17th.
Herts: Coopers Green GP, three on Mar 18th and one on 19th. Coursers Farm, one on Apr 6th. Essendon (1); two on Jan 7th, Apr 5th & 17th, May 14th & 25th, singles on May 26th and Oct 8th, and 10+ on Oct 29th. St Albans (Jersey Farm), one on Jun 21st heard calling. Nashe's Farm, pair on Apr 25th. Tyttenhanger GP, one on Apr 4th. Wildhill, juv on Aug 9th and one on Sep 10th.
Middx: Vicarage Farm, one on Jun 25th.

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Status: rare summer visitor. **RBBP**

This year, three birds were seen, the same as in 2017. Remarkably the observer in Sidcup had a bird calling at night at the same locality on May 27th the previous year!

Essex: Orsett Fen, singing male on May 20th (RL Barnes).
Middx: Princes Lake, female picked up injured or dehydrated outside Heathrow's T2 was taken into care but sadly died (A Cheeseman).
Kent: Sidcup, one flew over calling at 00:58 on May 26th (I Stewart).

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Status: common breeding resident, of introduced origin.

There were records from 236 sites (245 in 2017), with again half accounted for by the Hertfordshire and Surrey sectors. The RSPB Croydon Garden Bird Survey reported the species in 12 gardens during the year. The numbers of pairs/territories are given (in

brackets) below for sites with at least five pairs and comments given where breeding confirmed. High counts and unusual site records are noted, especially in urban areas.

Essex: Reported from 42 sites, with 16+ pairs at six sites. Epping Forest Woodland Burial Park, 12 on Apr 5th and Dec 6th. Orsett Fen (9), young seen. Wanstead Flats, male on Mar 17th and May 12th. Wanstead Park, one on Aug 31st.
Herts: Reported from 62 sites, with 28+ pairs at 22 sites. Brickendonbury, 23 on Sep 11th. Cuffley, 40 on Oct 26th. Ellenbrook Fields, young seen. Essendon, 31 on Apr 16th. North Mymms Park, brood of three. Rye Meads, three broods. Stockers Farm, two juvs seen.
Middx: Reported from 28 sites, with 15 pairs at eight sites. Alexandra Park, male on Nov 23rd & 30th and Dec 25th. Mudchute Farm, one on Apr 23rd. Ten Acre Wood, Yeading, 14+ on Apr 19th. Tottenham Marshes (5).
Bucks: Reported from four sites. Denham CP, eight on Nov 13th.
Kent: Reported from 37 sites, with at least four pairs at four sites. Beckenham Place Park, one on May 24th. Cudham, 14 on Apr 18th. Greenwich Peninsula Ecology Park, one on Feb 22nd. Kelsey Park, one on Nov 13th. Riverhead, 25 on Oct 4th. Sevenoaks WR, 14 on Jan 11th.
Surrey: Reported from 61 sites, with at least six pairs at six sites. Kingston-upon-Thames, one on Sep 11th in back yard and allotments. Mayflower Park, male on Feb 2nd. Richmond Park, male on Apr 20th. Southfields, male on Oct 21st. Streatham Cemetery, male on Jan 16th and Feb 16th. Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), one on Oct 23rd and three between Dec 22nd & 30th.
In Lond: Fulham, male on Mar 12th. Kennington Park, one on Oct 11th.

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

Status: rare winter visitor and occasional migrant.

The total of two birds is the highest since 2014 when there were also two. The bird at Orpington was found stranded on a driveway and was taken into care.

Kent: Orpington, one on Nov 19th (S Williams).
Surrey: Island Barn Res, one on Mar 22nd (DM Harris *et al*).

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

Status: rare winter visitor and occasional migrant.

This is the rarest diver in the London Area, with 17 birds recorded between 2000 and 2018, an annual average of just under one, so the single bird this year was typical.

Essex: Walthamstow Wetlands, one from Nov 24th flew off S at 09:50 on 25th (L Bodini *et al*) (also seen on Banbury Res on Nov 24th).

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

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

All records from Middlesex and Bucks (including overlapping date ranges) are believed to relate to the same returning adult present in both winters. At least five birds were observed elsewhere. All records are given below.

Essex: Fairlop Waters, one from Mar 3rd-4th. KGV Res, three on Nov 11th and up to two from Nov 12th to Dec 2nd. Rainham Marshes, juv on river on Oct 28th flew off N.
Middx: KGVI Res, adult from Jan 12th to Apr 13th and Dec 6th-23rd. Staines Res, adult from Jan 1st-23rd, Apr 10th-26th and Dec 22nd-31st.
Bucks: Q. Mother Res, summer plumaged adult circled reservoir on May 10th.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

Status: rare visitor, usually in autumn.

The second year in succession that this species has been recorded after four blank years from 2013 to 2016. Between 1998 and 2018, 17 of the 23 records have been in September; however, the April record is more unusual and is the first during that period.

Middx: Staines Res, one on Apr 4th (KL Purdey *et al*).
Surrey: Tooting, one taken into care on Sep 8th (J Tobias).

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

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

A minimum of 123 pairs/territories were reported, fewer than the 149 in 2017. The breeding count at Rye Meads was down from 16 pairs last year, but numbers were similar to last year at two other major sites, Rainham Marshes and Beddington Farmlands (29 and nine pairs respectively in 2017) and up at Walthamstow Wetlands (four broods).

Records were received from 118 sites in January and February and from 96 sites in November and December, fewer than in the respective periods in 2017 (128 and 111 sites). 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: 45 pairs at ten sites. Rainham Marshes (28). Walthamstow Wetlands (c8); 60 on Nov 2nd.
Herts: 20-21 pairs at nine sites. Rye Meads (10); 24 on Sep 7th.
Middx: 19 pairs at 13 sites. Bedfont Lakes CP, 29 on Aug 31st. Ponders End Lake (3). Stain Hill Res (4).
Bucks: Denham, five on Oct 2nd & 25th and Dec 18th.
Kent: Six pairs at five sites.
Surrey: 31 pairs at 15 sites. Beddington Farmlands (9); 27 on Aug 14th. R Wandle (6+).
In Lond: Regent's Park (1-2). Southwark Park (1). St James's Park, 13 on Nov 14th.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

Status: scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

A single record, after three last year, one of which was also in April. As shown by the table spring records are extremely unusual and hence it is tempting to question whether the same individual could have been involved in both years.

Red-necked Grebe arrival dates 2000-2018: 59 records, 60 birds

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

Bucks: Q. Mother Res, one in summer plumage on Apr 14th (CDR Heard).

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Status: common breeding resident and winter visitor.

There were 142 pairs/broods observed at 75 sites, compared with 142 at 87 sites in 2017. At the two main sites, breeding numbers were slightly higher than last year at Walthamstow Wetlands but slightly lower at Hilfield Park Res (ten broods recorded at both sites in 2017).

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 (no. of pairs given unless stated as broods), 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	7	6	14	30	25	44	63	72	62	53	38	38
MX	Q. Mary Res	16	13	14	15	11	30	45	115	126	75	51	35
	Staines Res	30	30	12	25	52	39	173	135	90	27	81	11
BU	Q. Mother Res	5	2	6	8	8	25	78	97	38	21	14	5
SY	QE II Res	5	12	11	12	15	40	36	86	99	36	14	5

Essex: 25 pairs at ten sites. KGV Res, 75 on Jun 16th. Walthamstow Wetlands (c12); 130 on Nov 2nd.
Herts: 40 pairs/broods at 19 sites. Aldenham Res (5 broods). Hilfield Park Res (7 broods).

Great Crested Grebe chick. (Tony Duckett)

Pynesfield North Lake (4). Seventy Acres Lake area (4). Stocker's Lake (3).
Middx: 28 pairs/broods at 17 sites. Brent Res (3 broods). Broadwater Lake (4+). Q. Mary GP, 115 on Aug 25th and 123 on Sep 1st. Springwell Lake (5).
Bucks: Six pairs at three sites. Denham CP (3+).
Kent: 12+ pairs at nine sites. Darenth Lakes (3). Sevenoaks WR, 42 on Feb 28th.
Surrey: 23 pairs/broods at 12 sites. Gatton Park/Lake (3). Holmethorpe SP (5). Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) (4 broods).
In Lond: Battersea Park (1). Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (3); 14 on Jul 17th and Aug 13th. Regent's Park (2). St James's Park (1). Victoria Park (1).

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

Status: scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

A maximum of six birds, with three in the first winter period and three in the second winter period, which is slightly below the recent average of eight to nine birds over the period 2010-17. All records are given below.

Essex: KGV Res, one from Jan 3rd to Mar 18th, (D Shepherd, J Partridge *et al*) with another also present from Jan 13th to Feb 9th (DG Darrell-Lambert *et al*), one on Dec 16th (N Smith, S Huggins). Walthamstow Wetlands, one on Nov 10th (D Bradshaw *et al*).
Middx: Staines Res, one on Dec 29th (R Warden, D Kendrick, D Carlsson).
Surrey: Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), one on Jan 11th (DM Harris).

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

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

At Hilfield Park Res, display and nest building was observed and a predated egg was found, but there were no records of any chicks hatching. Away from the main wintering sites, most records were of short-stayers during the spring migration period, although there was also an intriguing nocturnal migration ('NOCMIG') recording over Chafford Hundred in mid-July. Counts from the main sites are summarised in the table and all other records are listed below.

Black-necked Grebe		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
EX	KGV Res	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	3	1	-	1	2
	William Girling Res	8	-	1	-	1	-	6	-	8	17	8	-
HR	Hilfield Park Res	1	1	13	19	12	11	12	6	3	-	-	-
MX	Staines Res	1	2	4	5	6	1	2	5	4	2	3	3

Essex: Banbury Res, one on Apr 18th. Nazeing Meads, three on Nov 22nd. Chafford Hundred, one over at night on Jul 11th. Rainham Marshes, one from Apr 12th-17th. Royal Albert Dock, one on Mar 13th.
Herts: Aldenham CP, two on May 13th. Amwell NR, three on Apr 18th. Rye Meads, two on Jun 7th.
Middx: Brent Res, four on Jul 6th. KGVI Res, two from Apr 12th-13th, two on Sep 4th, three on Sep 7th and one from Sep 13th-16th. Woodberry Wetlands, one from Nov 16th-17th.
Bucks: Q. Mother Res, two from Jun 29th-30th, two on Aug 22nd. Wraysbury GP, one on Jan 13th.

Kent: Sevenoaks WR, one from Jan 1st to Mar 10th, eight from Apr 12th-14th with four remaining to 15th.
Surrey: Island Barn Res, three from Sep 23rd-24th, one on Oct 7th and three on Nov 16th. QE II Res, four on Nov 17th. Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough), one on Jan 11th, two from Apr 5th-11th with three on 6th, two on Apr 14th, three from Jun 4th-11th (June birds also seen on Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth).
In Lond: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, two on May 30th.

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*

Status: scarce vagrant.

Just one bird in spring this year compared to last year's two records of four birds. (See App I for presumed escapes and App III for details of other reports for which descriptions would be welcome.)

Surrey: West Molesey, one circled over the observer's house on May 14th (D Spragg).

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

Status: rare vagrant.

A poor year: there was just one bird seen after four in 2017 and six in 2016. (See App III for details of other reports for which descriptions would be welcome.)

Surrey: Beddington Farmlands, one W on Sep 28th (R Browne).

Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

Status: scarce migrant.

In the last two years, there were five records of eight birds in 2017 and five records of seven birds in 2016. This year, with birds being seen at some sites intermittently, it was difficult to estimate the number of birds involved. It was, however, an exceptional year with birds seen at nine sites (three sites in 2017, four sites in 2016 and one site in 2015), which may reflect the change in UK status for this species. Since 2010 there has been a colony at Holkham, Norfolk, where 28 pairs bred in 2017 (*British Birds* 112: 721) so it is possible that we will see more records in the London Area. Counts of 19 and 16 at Beddington Farmlands in September are unprecedented with the highest previous count being nine in 2013. All records are given below but there is likely to be some duplication of sightings.

Essex: Ingrebourne Valley, imm from Jul 10th-12th. Rainham Marshes, adult on Mar 12th, up to two (adult and imm) on 28 dates from May 12th to Jul 13th, imm on Sep 25th, Oct 11th and two on Nov 18th.
Herts: Amwell NR, adult on May 21st, 28th-29th and Jun 8th. Rye Meads, adult on Jun 13th. Tyttenhanger GP, adult on May 22nd.
Middx: Brent Res, adult on Mar 11th.
Surrey: London Wetland Centre, one on Mar 11th (presumably Brent Res bird). Beddington Farmlands, 19 on Sep 23rd and 16 on 28th.
In Lond: Battersea Reach, one over on Mar 11th (presumably Brent Res bird).

As Spoonbills increase in number across the UK, more are expected in London. (Magnus Andersson)

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

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

This charismatic reed-dweller was reported from nine sites compared to 18 last year, with only five sites having records in the first winter period compared to 14 in 2017. At the London Wetland Centre, the peak count was four (six in 2017). The last wintering bird was recorded on March 31st at Rainham Marshes. In the species' stronghold of the Lea Valley, perhaps surprisingly, none were seen after February 18th, when the last bird was seen at Seventy Acres Lake. Last year birds were seen in the valley up to May 7th.

Returning birds were at Rye Meads on August 14th, Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) on September 1st, Sevenoaks WR on September 6th, Maple Lodge on September 14th but not until October 31st at the London Wetland Centre. The second winter period had records from eight sites (nine in 2017). At the London Wetland Centre, the peak count was four (four in 2017). All sites at which birds were recorded are listed below with peak counts.

Essex: Rainham Marshes, one on five dates from Mar 8th-31st and 11 dates between Oct 20th and Dec 8th.
Herts: Amwell NR, singles on Jan 26th, Feb 8th, Oct 7th and 18 dates from Nov 23rd to Dec 31st. Maple Lodge NR, one on Sep 14th. North Met Pit, one on Jan 3rd & 7th. Rye Meads, one on Aug 14th & 16th. Seventy Acres Lake, singles on Jan 1st, Feb 18th and six dates from Oct 10th to Nov 4th with two on Oct 13th.
Kent: Sevenoaks WR, one from Sep 6th-7th.
Surrey: London Wetland Centre, peak counts of four in February and December. Walton

Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), two on Nov 3rd, singles on Nov 21st, Dec 1st and on five dates from 21st to 31st.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Status: rare (but increasing) vagrant.

Last year, there were four records of four birds. This year, there were records from eight sites between September and December. Allowing for birds seen at more than one site, it is estimated that there were seven records of seven birds. It is possible that just two birds accounted for all of the records. Two birds were at Rainham Marshes during October and November, which are the first long stayers since one at Higher Denham in 2002. This formerly very rare species, along with Great White Egret, is now an expected addition to many London birders' year list.

Cattle Egret records 1992-2018: 27 records, 35 birds

Year	1992	1995	1998	2001	2002	2007	2008	2010	2016	2017	2018
No. of records	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	2	5	4	7
No. of birds	8	1	1	1	1	3	1	2	6	4	7

Essex: Rainham Marshes, one from Oct 4th was joined by a second bird from Oct 21st to Nov 4th, with one on Nov 12th (RSPB Rainham Marshes *et al*). Warren Gorge, one left roost on Oct 19th (RL Barnes). Wanstead Flats, two on Nov 4th (Wanstead Birders).

This Cattle Egret was one of two that stayed for two months at Rainham Marshes RSPB. (Russ Sherriff)

Middx: Brent Res, singles on Sep 18th (ASM Self, RJ Watts) and Dec 23rd (M Robinson, A Haynes). Staines Moor, one flew E on Sep 3rd seen earlier at Walton and QE II Res (K Campbell).

Kent: Dartford Marshes, the birds from Rainham Marshes were seen going to roost on several days (DG Darrell-Lambert, LGR Evans).

Surrey: QE II Res, one over on Sep 2nd, then one on 3rd, which flew over Walton Res (Chelsea and Lambeth) returning to QE II Res (DM Harris).

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Status: common breeding resident.

A bumper year with 463 nests recorded, up from last year's 388 and the highest total since 472 in 2010. Some of the increase comes from the biggest colony at Walthamstow Wetlands, where 43 nests were counted; last year, there was only an estimate of at least five nests.

A leucistic bird superficially resembling a Great White Egret was seen at Trent Park in June and on several other dates in the area. It is thought likely to have been one of two leucistic young that fledged at Boxer's Lake, Enfield in 2017.

Grey Heron nests 2009-2018

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
No. of nests	523	472	437	367	352	381	366	398	388	463

Grey Heron are doing well in London. (Tony Duckett)

Below are breeding records with the number of nests in brackets and significant counts away from known colonies or outside the breeding season. The LNHS thanks the BTO for permitting the use of data from its Heronries Census.

Essex: Fairlop Waters (3). Glen Faba (1). Highams Park (1). Holyfield Lake (4). Ingrebourne Valley (7). Mayesbrook Park (1). Netherhall GP (31). Rainham Marshes, 43 on Aug 7th. Thorndon CP North (3). Waltham Abbey Woods (4). Walthamstow Wetlands (43). Warren Gorge (10).

Herts: Amwell NR (16). Bowyer's Water (1). Frogmore Lakes (1). Stanborough Lakes (4). Stocker's Lake (21). Tyttenhanger GP (10). Verulamium Park (6).

Middx: Bedfont Lakes CP (1). Boxer's Lake, Enfield (3). Brent Res (2). Broadwater Lake (5). Frays Wildfowl Lake (10). Home Park (6). Hurlingham Park (5). Isleworth Ait (2). Kempton NR (2). Little Britain Lake (15). Osterley Park (13). Q. Mary GP (1). Red House Res (3). Wildwoods, Enfield (2).

Bucks: Q. Mother Res (1). Wraysbury GP (14).

Kent: Danson Park (1). Kelsey Park (21). Manor House Gardens (5). Sevenoaks WR (4). Swanscombe Marshes (7).

Surrey: Beddington Farmlands, 44 on Aug 15th. Bookham Common (20). Brentford Ait (16). Carshalton Ponds (1). Corporation Island (9). Gatton Park/Lake (29). Hogsmill SW (1). Horton CP (6). Leg O Mutton NR (12). Morden Hall Park (13). Richmond Park (8). R Thames, Kew to Richmond, 51 on Jan 22nd. Thorpe Water Park (6). Weybridge (6).

In Lond: Battersea Park (24). Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (2). Regent's Park (20).

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

Status: scarce vagrant.

One bird this year was the first since 2016 and only the third since 2009. Unlike the white egret species, Purple Heron has not increased markedly in recent years. The number of birds seen in each decade is shown in the table.

Purple Heron records by decade: 28 records, 28 birds

Decade	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s
Number of records	2	2	8	5	3	5	3

Kent: Sevenoaks WR, a juvenile from Jul 20th-21st. (C Gibbard, J Phillips *et al*).

Great White Egret *Ardea alba*

Status: rare but increasing visitor.

Another record year for this species, it can now be anticipated at almost any substantial wetland in the London Area. It was recorded from 46 sites (24 last year) with three birds together at five sites. As in 2017, there were records in every month except June with October being the best month (as last year). All records are given below.

Great White Egret number of sites by month

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of sites	7	2	4	6	3	0	2	7	11	14	13	5

Essex: Belhus Woods CP, one over on Jul 1st. Berwick Ponds, one over on Nov 14th. Chafford Hundred, one over on Oct 19th. Fairlop Waters, two on Jan 1st, singles from Jan 2nd-3rd and on Nov 17th. Gallions Reach, singles on Sep 2nd & 6th. Hangman's Wood, one over on Oct 5th. Ingrebourne Valley, singles on Aug 12th, Oct 9th and Nov 14th. KGV Res, one on Aug 10th. Mar Dyke Valley, one over on Apr 20th, one over on Sep 3rd, two over on 7th and one over on 10th. Mayesbrook Park, one on Jan 6th. Rainham Marshes, one from Mar 28th to Apr 15th, singles on Apr 28th, Jul 27th, Aug 12th, Sep 6th, 11th & 28th and three over on Nov 20th. Walthamstow Wetlands, singles on Sep 4th, over on 11th & 30th. Wanstead Flats, singles on Jan 16th, over on Mar 24th, Oct 9th & 24th. Wanstead Park, singles on Jan 8th, 16th, 17th & 25th. Warren Gorge, singles on Feb 1st and May 22nd. William Girling Res, one over on Sep 30th (seen later over Walthamstow Wetlands).

Herts: Amwell NR, two on Feb 18th, singles on Apr 25th, Oct 1st, 2nd, 22nd & 25th and Nov 3rd. Maple Lodge NR, one on Oct 11th. Pynesfield North Lake, singles from Nov 23rd-24th and Dec 10th & 14th. Rye Meads NR, singles on Apr 25th, Sept 30th and Oct 14th. Seventy Acres Lake, one on Aug 11th. Stocker's Lake, one on May 19th. Tyttenhanger GP, singles on Apr 7th, Nov 4th & 27th.

Middx: Brent Res, one on Nov 16th. Broadwater Lake, one over on Dec 16th. Enfield Lock, one on Aug 6th. Kempton NR, one on Jan 12th. Springwell Lake, singles on Mar 2nd & 4th, Nov 23rd and Dec 17th. Staines Moor, one on Oct 29th. Trent Park, one on Mar 28th.

Bucks: Q. Mother Res, three circled and flew W on Oct 11th and one on Oct 28th. Wraysbury GP, one over on Sep 1st.

Kent: Darenth Lakes, singles on Jan 8th and May 7th. Ruxley GP, singles on Jan 9th & 30th. Sevenoaks WR, one on Aug 12th.

Surrey: Beddington Farmlands, singles on Oct 7th, 22nd, 28th and Nov 28th-29th. East Dulwich, one over on Sep 6th. Gatton Park/Lake, one on Oct 21st. Holmethorpe SP, one over on Oct 25th. Leg O Mutton NR, three over on Sep 1st. London Wetland Centre, three on Sep 1st (presumed same as Leg O Mutton NR), one from Nov 18th-19th and one over on Dec 6th. Long Ditton, one over on Oct 19th. Richmond Park, one on Aug 31st, three on Oct 20th and one from Oct 21st to Nov 19th.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

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

Breeding was confirmed from eight sites (nine last year) with seven of these having breeding birds last year. There was no report from Maple Lodge NR where they bred last year. A record was set for number of nests this year with at least 68 compared to 58 in 2017 and 54 in 2016. The Breeding Bird Survey shows surprisingly a fall of 21% in the UK this year, but the long-term trend is relentlessly upward, a 2,316% increase from 1995-2017. Below are all records of nests with the number 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: Netherhall GP (7). Walthamstow Wetlands (28), 17 broods with a total of 44 young (17 broods and 46 young last year); 26 roosted on Dec 20th. Warren Gorge (16), 27 young from 12 nests. William Girling Res, 19 on Jan 22nd.

This juvenile Gannet got a bit lost in West London. (Dave Harris)

Herts: Amwell NR (6). Stanborough Lakes (1). Stocker's Lake (5). Verulamium Park (4).
Middx: Dews Farm Lake, 20 on Oct 15th.
Bucks: Wraysbury GP (1); 19 on Feb 2nd.
Kent: Sevenoaks WR, 22 on Mar 14th.
Surrey: QE II Res, 25 on Aug 22nd.
In Lond: Reported at six sites with peak count of two at Limehouse on Sep 2nd.

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

Status: scarce visitor.

There was a total of nine records this year, the highest this century, totalling 14 birds, although there may have been some duplication, with four of the records (nine birds) being seen on September 24th. Between 2000 and 2018, 34 of the 53 records have been in September or October.

Gannet arrival dates 2000-2018: 53 records, 66 birds

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of records	1	-	-	-	2	5	3	-	18	16	3	5
No. of birds	1	-	-	-	2	5	3	-	31	16	3	5

Essex: Gallions Reach, one on Sep 24th (KJ McManus). Rainham Marshes, four W on Sep 24th (H Vaughan), one juv on Oct 10th (T O'Brian).
Herts: Hatfield, one S on Oct 2nd (G Knight).
Middx: Alexandra Park, juv N on Sep 24th (B Carson, D Mitchell, RJ Watts).
Bucks: Q. Mother Res, three over on Sep 24th (CDR Heard).
Kent: Northfleet, dead imm on Nov 20th (S Connor).
Surrey: Island Barn Res, juv over on Oct 1st (DM Harris, A Quinn). Worcester Park, juv NE on Sep 23rd (I Rowe).

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

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

Two records continued the poor run for this species since there were ten in 2011, although it is also the highest annual total since 2013. The table below shows recent arrival dates.

Shag arrival dates 2000-2018: 77 records, 77 birds

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of records	9	5	8	4	-	1	2	7	10	1	15	15

Essex: Rainham Marshes, imm from Nov 27th-28th (D Shepherd, H Vaughan, D Tuck).
Middx: Millwall Docks, imm from Mar 15th-23rd (S Huggins *et al*).

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

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

At least 287 occupied nests were reported from eight sites this year. Similar numbers to 2017 were recorded at the sites where breeding counts were received in both years. The Estonian ringed bird was seen on February 17th at East India Dock Basin and returned to that site on December 4th, its sixth winter here, also being seen at Greenwich on December 28th. The table below shows the monthly maxima at sites with larger numbers. The peak count this year was 900 at Q. Mother Res on September 13th. Breeding records (no. 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	KGV Res	16	-	13	50	216	126	214	220	-	21	12	-
	Walthamstow Wetlands	104	138	149	40	-	168	103	-	380	40	75	-
MX	Q. Mary Res	75	60	70	60	60	220	558	20	180	45	36	4
	Staines Res	3	1	1	8	10	5	640	8	750	4	320	4
BU	Q. Mother Res	1	-	-	-	-	-	230	700	900	-	-	1
SY	Island Barn Res	18	20	7	5	2	3	65	282	270	94	17	24
	QE II Res	155	140	124	37	43	20	270	260	270	195	250	195
	Walton Res (K&B)	11	16	1	1	1	3	150	284	300	158	148	14
	Wetland Centre	27	220	167	10	5	3	5	13	22	43	291	30

Essex: Holyfield Lake (34). Netherhall GP (1). Walthamstow Wetlands (168).
Herts: Amwell NR (37). Stocker's Lake (2).
Middx: Broadwater Lake (16); 105 on Sep 8th. Q. Mary GP (31+).
Bucks: Denham, 101 on Dec 18th. Wraysbury GP (bred).
Surrey: R Thames: opposite Wandsworth Park, 150 sheltering from snow on rafts on Feb 28th.
In Lond: Battersea Park, 110 on Feb 6th. Limehouse, c100 on Thames on Feb 28th.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Status: scarce passage migrant.

In a slight increase from last year, a maximum of 32 birds were seen (26 birds last year); 16 of these birds were in spring and 16 in autumn.

The first records were in March, with two birds seen on the 29th (the same date as last year), followed by 11 in April. The only birds after April 18th were singles on May 28th and June 9th. Autumn passage began on August 20th, the latest since 2013. There were another five in that month and eight in September. There was one bird on October 7th followed by the last on November 18th. November records are unusual and this is the first since 2013. All records are given below.

Essex: Gallions Reach, singles on Aug 25th and Sep 23rd & 30th. Ongar Park Wood, one on May 28th. Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, one NE on Apr 10th. Rainham Marshes, singles N on Mar 29th, W on Aug 31st and S on Sep 22nd. Romford, one on Mar 29th. Sewardstone Marsh, one N on Apr 5th. Walthamstow Wetlands, one NW on Apr 2nd. West Horndon, one on Apr 18th. Woodford Green, one S on Oct 7th.

Herts: Amwell NR, singles on Apr 3rd & 4th, Aug 28th and Sep 13th. East End Green, one on Sep 16th. Panshanger Park, one from Sep 8th-20th. Rye Meads, one on Aug 12th. Stocker's Lake, one on Apr 3rd. Tyttenhanger GP, one on Nov 18th.
Middx: KGVI Res, one N on Apr 5th. Springwell Lake, one NE on Apr 3rd (presumed same as Stocker's Lake). Staines Moor, one on Sep 16th. Totteridge Valley, one S on Aug 25th. Vicarage Farm, one SW on Sep 22nd.
Kent: Crossness, singles on Apr 4th & 14th.
Surrey: Addlestone, one N on Apr 1st. Beddington Farmlands, one E on Apr 14th. Fetcham, one on Aug 20th. Wallington, one on Jun 9th.

Honey-buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

Status: scarce visitor.

A single record in May was the only accepted record this year. There are other reports listed in App III for which descriptions would be very welcome. May and September remain the best months for this species.

Middx: Alexandra Park, one over on May 14th (G Rawcliffe, B Carson, RJ Watts).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Status: common breeding resident.

This year saw a total of around 2,500 records, fewer than last year's 2,850 and 2016's 3,000. This decrease may be due to the differences in reporting. The total of 50 territories this year was similar to last year's 48, and 27 confirmed breeding pairs matches the total from last year. As in previous years, Middlesex continues to hold the majority of the reported territories and together with Surrey and Essex accounted for a total of 35. The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 30% decrease in the South East from 1995-2017, with the sample being too small to produce trends for London alone.

Prey items included: Lapwing, Feral Pigeon, Woodpigeon, Great Tit, Starling, Blackbird, Goldfinch and one report of bats being pursued at dusk.

Sparrowhawk	Essex	Herts	Middx	Bucks	Kent	Surrey	In Lond	Total
Territories	11	6	15	0	4	11	3	50
Proved	5	4	8	0	3	5	2	27

In Lond: Records were received from 39 sites, with breeding records from: Brockley NR, male and 2 juvs seen on Aug 5th; Holland Park, pair seen nest building; Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, one pair bred.

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Status: rare passage migrant. **RBBP**

There was a single accepted record this year, in April, which is the peak month for records of this species. As usual, there were a number of other reports listed in App III for which descriptions would be very welcome.

Herts: Rye Meads, one soaring over on Apr 14th (Rye Meads Partnership, D Spensley).

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Status: scarce but increasing passage migrant; scarce breeder. **RBBP**

The Thames-side marshes continue to dominate the records, making up 79% of sightings, with confirmed breeding at Rainham Marshes. The species is however becoming an increasingly common sight away from the marshes, with the proportion of records from these sites increasing steadily in the last three years (10% in 2016, 15% last year and 21% this year). The exact number of birds seen remains difficult to establish, due to the likely interchange of birds between sites.

There were 46 records away from the Thames this year (about 37 last year), with March and April being the peak passage months. The highest count was again at Rainham Marshes, with ten birds in total (two pairs and six fledged juveniles). All records away from the Thames are given below, with records summarised for Essex and Kent sectors and breeding records in brackets (no. of pairs). The total number of individuals/months present in the below table is likely to be an underestimate of the actual number of birds.

Marsh Harrier	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Records	38	27	64	55	46	29	34	42	31	39	40	27
Records (not Thames-side)	5	0	8	10	2	1	6	3	4	4	2	1
Individuals/month	18	11	17	21	14	14	24	12	12	22	14	8

Essex: Reported at 17 sites. KGV Res, one N on Jul 13th. Rainham Marshes (2). Walthamstow Wetlands, male on May 1st & 2nd. Wanstead Flats, singles on Mar 26th and Sep 1st.
Herts: Amwell NR, one on Apr 19th. Dobb's Weir, one N on Apr 24th. Rye Meads, singles on 11 dates. Stanstead Innings, one on Aug 27th. Tyttenhanger GP, one S on Apr 16th.
Middx: Totteridge Fields NR, one N on May 19th.
Bucks: Horton, one over on Apr 2nd. Q. Mother Res, one over on Jun 2nd.
Kent: Reported at six sites. Swanscombe Marshes, present in breeding season but breeding not confirmed.
Surrey: Beddington Farmlands, one on Nov 18th. Canons Farm, one W on Aug 26th. London Wetland Centre, singles recorded on eight dates. Molesey, one over on Sep 3rd. Putney, one SW on Oct 19th. Richmond Park, one SSW on Oct 20th.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

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

Following on from last year's disappointing count of four, there were nine records this year, involving a maximum of ten individuals. October was the best time to see the species with six of the records in this month. After no records at Rainham Marshes last year, their return there this year was a welcome sight. All records involve 'ringtails' (females or immatures), unless otherwise stated.

Essex: Purfleet, one on Oct 28th (F Simpson). Rainham Marshes, two on Oct 30th (NT Keogh *et al*)) & 31st (P Hawkins, D Morrison *et al*).
Herts: Coursers Farm, one on Oct 28th (RJ Pyrah).
Middx: Heathrow Airport, one E on Oct 28th (M Shepherd). Whitewebbs Farm, one on Nov 5th (RM Callf).

Kent: Dartford Marshes, two on Oct 30th (DG Darrell-Lambert *et al*) (same as Rainham Marshes) and male on 31st (B Wright). Thamesmead, one over on Oct 10th (M Mac).
Surrey: London Wetland Centre, one E on Mar 19th (DC Johnson). Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), one over on Nov 2nd (M Lawford).

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

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

This year saw a total of around 2,590 records of this unmistakable species, a slight increase from last year, although overall counts have remained relatively stable for the last three years (2,380 in 2017 and 2,300 in 2016). The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 71% increase in the South East from 2012-17.

The overall distribution of records within sectors remains very similar to 2017, with close to half the records in Hertfordshire and a quarter in Middlesex. Records peaked in March to May, as is typical, likely reflective of passage across London.

There was an increase even on last year's impressive high count with 145 at Iver Heath on February 2nd, where birds are fed (Last year's peak of 135 was at the same site on December 15th.) There were also large counts at this site later in the year: 110 on February 7th, 66 on March 16th and 42 on March 14th. Aside from this site, the largest count was 17 at Woldingham on October 18th.

Red Kite sightings by month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	187	217	308	371	304	279	206	121	177	151	141	125

At least four pairs bred successfully, all in the core area of Hertfordshire, equalling last year as the highest total since 2011, when five pairs were counted in Hertfordshire. An additional 15 pairs were suspected of breeding, including pairs nest building in Bucks and Essex and pairs believed to be on territory in Essex, Middlesex and Surrey.

Red Kite by sector	Essex	Herts	Middx	Bucks	Kent	Surrey	In Lond
Sightings	189	1165	607	173	80	359	14
Percentage	7	45	23	7	3	14	1

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

In Lond: Battersea Park, May 8th. Battersea Power Station, May 10th. Camden Town, May 1st. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, Mar 16th. London Zoo, Apr 5th. Natural History Museum, Mar 16th and May 23rd. Notting Hill, Mar 6th. Russia Dock Woodland, Apr 10th. St James's Park, two on May 9th. St John's Wood, Apr 22nd, Jun 9th and Sep 13th. Stave Hill, Apr 10th.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*

Status: rare vagrant.

One confirmed record this year is the first sighting of this rare migrant since two confirmed records in 2012. This brings the total number of records for London to 13. There were a number of other reports listed in App III for which descriptions would be very welcome.

Black Kite is a major London rarity. This individual, from Walthamstow, represents the 13th record. (Jamie Partridge)

Essex: Walthamstow Wetlands, one W on Apr 24th (J Partridge, D Bradshaw).

Rough-legged Buzzard *Buteo lagopus*

Status: rare migrant.

There were three records this year of three birds, the first records since 2012. This brings the total to 19 records since 1900. All the birds were seen in a period of three days in October, which remains the most likely month to see the species. The table below shows the records since 1966.

Rough-legged Buzzard records 1966-2018: 16 records, 16 birds

Year	1966	1968	1969	1973	1974	1979	1994	2007	2012	2018
No. of records	1	1	1	2	3	2	1	1	1	3

Essex: Rainham Marshes, one on Oct 30th which moved across to Dartford Marshes (NT Keogh *et al*) and a different individual on Oct 31st (R Sherriff *et al*).
Kent: Dartford Marshes, one from Oct 30th-31st (mo).
In Lond: Primrose Hill, one SW on Oct 29th (G Henson).

Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

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

The species continues to show stability following the large increase from 2014-2015, with just under 4,000 records this year. There were 49 territories this year, which was slightly fewer than last year's record figure of 54, but still higher than the 27 territories recorded in 2016, although this may reflect differences in the interpretation of territories and reporting.

The Breeding Bird Survey shows only a 13% increase in the South East from 2012-17 (compared to a 16% increase from 2011-16) again suggesting the spread is slowing down.

Buzzard	Essex	Herts	Middx	Bucks	Kent	Surrey	In Lond	Total
Territories	8	15	13	1	5	7	0	49
Proved	5	10	5	0	0	2	0	22

Significant movements were seen between mid-March and mid-April. Rainham Marshes saw the highest total of the year, with 35 birds on April 14th. Notable counts during spring passage also included 26 at Totteridge Valley on April 14th and at least 22 birds at Richmond Park on March 26th.

There were also some very high counts in autumn, mostly of birds recorded flying south. There were 30 birds at Bushey Bank on October 18th, 26 at Rainham Marshes on September

29th and 25 at Richmond Park on September 24th (last year the highest count was 17). Additional notable gatherings and a summary for Inner London are listed below.

Essex: At least eight young fledged. Brook Farm, Upminster, 15 on Oct 5th. Ingrebourne Valley, 13 on Apr 21st. Wanstead Flats, 14 on Mar 16th.
Herts: At least ten young fledged. Rye Meads, 11 on Apr 14th. Wildhill, 11 on Sep 10th.
Middx: At least five young fledged. Brent Res, 11 on Apr 14th. KGVI Res, 16+ on Apr 5th. Teddington, 14 on Aug 30th.
Kent: Sidcup, 11 on Sep 25th.
Surrey: Beddington Farmlands, 15 on Apr 14th. Canons Farm, 18 on May 18th. London Wetland Centre, 17 on Apr 5th. Putney, 16 on Apr 14th.
In Lond: Records were received from Battersea PS, Brockley NR, City of London, Clerkenwell, Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, Kennington, London Zoo, Maida Vale, Natural History Museum, Notting Hill, Regent's Park, Russia Dock Woodland, St James's Park, Stave Hill and Westminster.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

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

Reported numbers in the first and last four months of the year were 166 and 117 (162 and 165 birds in 2017). Records came from 105 sites (122 last year) including six sites in Inner London, two more than in 2017. There were 12 breeding pairs reported from six sites this year, compared to 11 from six sites in 2017 and 16 from four sites in 2016 but – as noted at Rainham Marshes – breeding is likely to be very under-recorded. All breeding records are given below (no. of pairs/territories in brackets) as well as high counts.

Water Rail winter totals of birds

	Essex	Herts	Middx	Bucks	Kent	Surrey	In Lond	Total
First winter	38	40	32	4	23	22	7	166
Second winter	20	20	17	3	13	38	6	117

Essex: Ingrebourne Valley, six on Jan 10th and Nov 15th. Rainham Marshes (4+); five on Jan 9th, Feb 15th and Dec 23rd.
Herts: Amwell NR (1). Rye Meads (3); eight on Feb 2nd.
Middx: Brent Res, seven on Mar 1st. Stanwell Moor (1).
Kent: Ruxley GP, six on Jan 10th. Swanscombe Marshes, seven on Mar 24th.
Surrey: London Wetland Centre, 14 on Dec 10th. Richmond Park (1). South Norwood CP, eight on Oct 29th. Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) (2); seven on Aug 11th.
In Lond: Battersea Park, one on Mar 18th. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, singles on Mar 22nd and Oct 23rd. Regent's Park, up to two intermittently from Jan 9th to Mar 24th, three on Nov 6th and one intermittently to Dec 17th. Russia Dock Woodland, one on Mar 20th. St James's Park, one in January and up to two from Oct 30th to end of year.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Status: very common breeding resident.

Moorhens were reported from 347 sites, up from 255 in 2017 but fewer than the 477 in 2016, perhaps due to differences in reporting effort rather than change in abundance.

The Breeding Bird Survey shows no significant change in London between 2017 and 2018, although there was a significant decline in England over the same period.

Breeding was reported at 122 sites including 13 in Inner London. Very high counts of wetland birds in London are often associated with harsh cold weather; but the very high peak of 411 at the London Wetland Centre in November compares to a peak of 283 in February 2017, and was not associated with very cold weather. Below are breeding records for sites where five or more pairs 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, 35 on Sep 15th. Fairlop Water, 52 on Feb 18th. Rainham Marshes (10+); 77 on Nov 11th. Walthamstow Wetlands (16); 56 on Jan 25th and on Nov 10th.
Herts: Amwell 50 on Sep 20th. Rye Meads 91 on Oct 14th.
Middx: Brent Res, 59 on Feb 18th. Hampstead Heath, 44 on Jan 22nd. Home Park (8).
Surrey: Beddington Farmlands (45); 173 on Aug 15th. London Wetland Centre (10+); 411 on Nov 20th. R Thames: Kew to Richmond, 37 on Jan 22nd. R Wandle: Butter Hill to Morden Hall Park (34); 50 on Mar 23rd. R Wandle: Mitcham Bridge to Morden Hall Park, 46 on Jan 22nd. Richmond Park (20+).
In Lond: Barbican (1). Buckingham Palace Gardens (8). Holland Park (3). Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (bred); 50 on Jan 16th and Nov 5th. Kensal Town (1). Meanwhile Gdns, North Kensington (1). Mile End Park (1+). Natural History Museum (1). Paddington (1). Regent's Park (bred); 52 on Feb 21st. Russia Dock Woodland (1). St James's Park (bred); 64 on Oct 15th. Wapping Canal (1-2).

Coot *Fulica atra*

Status: very common breeding resident and winter visitor.

The Breeding Bird Survey shows no change in the South East from last year, but there was a significant decrease in England in that period. They were reported from 324 sites, up from 310 sites in 2017, although down from 415 sites in 2016. Breeding was reported at 158 sites, compared to 178 sites in 2017 and 74 sites in 2016. This is likely to be due to differences in recorder effort. The highest count was 1,311 at KGV Res, compared to 836 at this site in 2017. Below are breeding records for sites where five or more pairs were recorded (no. of broods/pairs/nests in brackets) and counts over 300 (200 in Kent and Inner London).

Essex: Belhus Woods (9). Highams Park (8). KGV Res 1,311 on Oct 13th and 1,006 on Nov 14th. Rainham Marshes (52). Walthamstow Wetlands (25); 440 on Jan 22nd.
Herts: Aldenham CP (5). Bowyers Water, 350 on Dec 22nd. Hilfield Park Res (7). Lynsters Lake, 312 on Nov 24th. Maple Lodge NR (7+). Pynesfield North Lake (8). Rye Meads, 523 on Sep 7th. Stockers Lake, 452 on Nov 23rd. Troy Mill Lake, 350 on Jan 25th.
Middx: Bedfont Lake CP, 452 on Sep 28th. Brent Res, 449 on Sep 9th. Broadwater Lake, 921 on Jan 7th. Hampstead Heath (5+). Home Park (27). Millwall Docks (5). Springwell Lake (7). Stain Hill Res (8). Staines Res, 324 on Aug 11th. Tottenham Marshes (6). Woodberry Wetlands, 368 on Nov 18th.
Kent: Foots Cray Meadows (6). Sevenoaks WR (16); 205 on Oct 6th, 20th & 27th. Thamesmead, 264 on Dec 29th.
Surrey: Beddington Farmlands (47); 450 on Oct 27th. Gatton Park/Lake (7). London

Wetland Centre (15+); 373 on Nov 20th. R Wandle: Butter Hill to Morden Hall Park (18). Richmond Park (10+). Waddon Ponds (6). QE II Res, 327 on Sep 4th.

In Lond: Buckingham Palace Gardens (12). Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (8+); 279 on Jan 16th. Regent's Park, 237 on Jan 23rd. St James's Park, 269 on Dec 16th.

Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus*

Status: scarce passage migrant.

There was just one record, the first since 2016, on a relatively early date. The only earlier spring records during the years since 1980 were on February 28th 2000 and March 3rd 2007, with 18 of the 29 spring records first seen in April and three in May.

Stone-curlew arrival dates 1980-2018: 38 records, 39 birds

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of records	-	1	7	18	3	-	1	4	1	1	2	-

Surrey: Beddington Farmlands, one flew over heading SE at 07:20 on Mar 17th (GW Jones).

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

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

It was another typical year for this species, with the majority of records occurring between February 4th and September 24th and coming from widely scattered sites across the recording area. There were only four confirmed breeding pairs, at Amwell NR, Ponders End Lake, Rainham Marshes and Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), but at least 13 breeding territories were reported, including seven pairs along the stretch of the R Thames near Rainham Marshes.

Outside of this period, there were 15 at Dartford Marshes on October 30th and singles at Walthamstow Wetlands on January 8th and November 25th, Sewardstone Marsh on November 16th and Wraysbury Res on November 17th. The 15 at Dartford Marshes was the highest count of the year, with most records involving between one and four individuals.

In Lond: Tate Modern, one flew W at 13:00 on Aug 17th (I Bradshaw).

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Status: scarce visitor in all months of the year, with small numbers wintering on Lower Thames; occasional breeder. **RBBP**

Avocets were present during all months of the year, with most seen at sites along the Lower Thames between January and mid-March and from early September to December. Counts of over 20 were regularly made at both ends of the year, with the highest being 50+ at Rainham Marshes on January 13th.

There were 17 records from sites away from the Lower Thames: three singles from February 28th to March 1st seemingly linked to cold weather movements, ten records of 17 birds on spring passage between March 11th and May 24th, just two records of three autumn migrants on June 21st and July 13th and two singles in November. Below are all records away from the Lower Thames and a summary for the Lower Thames sites.

Essex: KGV Res, one on Mar 26th. Lower Thames, recorded in all months but scarce from April to August; peaks of 50+ at Rainham Marshes on Jan 13th and 46 at West Thurrock Marshes on Feb 24th. Walthamstow Wetlands, one on Nov 19th.

Herts: Hilfield Park Res, one on Apr 2nd. Rye Meads, two on Apr 11th and one on May 24th.

Middx: East India Dock Basin, three on Mar 19th, 21st & 22nd. Staines Res, one on Apr 7th.

Bucks: Q. Mother Res, four on Mar 26th and one on Apr 15th.

Kent: Recorded irregularly from sites on the Lower Thames with a maximum of 28 at Crayford Marshes on Jan 29th.

Surrey: Beddington Farmlands, singles on Mar 1st and Nov 24th. London Wetland Centre, singles on Mar 1st & 11th and Jul 13th. Putney, one W on Feb 28th. Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), two on May 13th and Jun 21st.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

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

At least 94 pairs were present during the breeding season at 38 sites. This is considerably lower than the 168 territories in 2017, but is likely due to the absence of full counts from some key sites such as Rainham Marshes where there were 68 pairs last year.

Cold weather and snow at the end of February and beginning of March resulted in some noticeable cold weather movements over London, and also meant that small flocks and individual Lapwings were reported from some sites where they are not usually seen as they sought out areas where they could feed.

Below are breeding totals for each sector and for sites where 12 or more breeding pairs were recorded (no. of pairs in brackets), plus all Inner London records and a summary of counts of over 200 (including counts of flocks passing overhead).

Essex: At least 21 pairs/territories. Chingford Plain, 232 on Feb 28th. Copped Hall, 250+ on Feb 25th. Rainham Marshes (14+ territories); peaks of 2,000 on Feb 10th and Dec 31st. Romford, 250 on Feb 28th. Waltham Abbey, 228 on Feb 28th. Wanstead Flats, 299 on Feb 27th. Wanstead Park, 665 on Feb 28th.

Herts: 10-11 pairs/territories. Rye Meads, peaks of 220 on Jan 13th and 300 on Nov 24th. Seventy Acres Lake, 200 on Nov 24th. Sutton's Farm, Sandridge, 205 on Dec 5th. Tyttenhanger GP, peaks of 300 on Jan 10th and 500 on Nov 25th.

Middx: 18-21 pairs/territories. Staines Res, 126 on Mar 7th was the highest count from the sector.

Bucks: Four pairs/territories. Q. Mother Res, 380 on Feb 28th.

Kent: Eight pairs/territories. Crayford Marshes, 200 on Mar 5th. Crossness, peak of 288 on Jan 12th. Sevenoaks WR, peaks of 243 on Jan 1st and 200 on Dec 12th. Swanscombe Marshes, 212 on Feb 21st.

Surrey: 33 pairs/territories. Beddington Farmlands (13); peak of 350 on Mar 1st. Canons Farm, 617 on Feb 28th. London Wetland Centre (12). Richmond Park, 250 on Feb 28th.

In Lond: On Feb 28th there were: 19 over London Zoo, 30+ over Marylebone, 25 over South Kensington and one over St James's Park. Battersea Park, one on Mar 2nd. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, 22 on Mar 6th.

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

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

It was a poor year for this species with low numbers during both winter periods continuing a recent downward trend. There were only nine counts above 50 during the year, which includes five from Rainham Marshes and a total count of 170 flying over Canons Farm made up from several groups. Only three counts were in triple figures.

Like Grey Plover, this species was also caught up in the cold weather movement at the end of February and early March. February 28th saw 271 over the area including the Canons Farm movement, 25 at Beddington Farmlands and 24 at Richmond Park. After that numbers were much lower.

The last one of the spring was at Rainham Marshes on April 25th and the first of the autumn seen over Richmond Park on August 31st. Counts are given below for all sites from which at least 20 were reported on any single day.

Essex: Fairlop Waters, peaks of 30 on Jan 10th and 39 on Dec 16th. Ingrebourne Valley, 36 on Mar 18th. Rainham Marshes, peaks of 95 on Feb 23rd and 144 on Dec 10th.
Herts: Rabley Park Farm, 29 on Jan 28th. Radlett Aero GP, 160 on Apr 1st. Tyttenhanger GP, 30 on Dec 18th. Water End, 22 over on Feb 25th.
Middx: Harmondsworth, 71 on Dec 14th and 57 on 15th. Kentish Town, 30+ N on Jan 28th. Potters Bar, 40 on Jan 1st.
Surrey: Beddington Farmlands, a maximum count of 25 on Feb 28th. Canons Farm, a total of 170 on Feb 28th in several small flocks. Richmond Park, 24 S on Feb 28th.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

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

Small numbers were seen at sites along the Lower Thames during both winter periods. Usually just singles but there were six at Swanscombe Marshes on January 5th and four at Rainham Marshes on December 10th.

There was a cold weather movement commencing at the end of February continuing into March, particularly the first few days. On the Lower Thames, there were about 35 birds involved, including six at Grays on February 28th and ten at Rainham Marshes on March 3rd. Away from the Lower Thames, ten birds were seen at eight sites with the last at Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) on March 24th.

The first spring birds on the Lower Thames were two on April 2nd at Rainham Marshes with peaks there of 21 on April 11th and 31 on May 27th, with no other count being above four. Away from the Lower Thames, there were three at Staines Res on April 8th (the highest count away from the Lower Thames) with another 11 birds at eight sites; seven of the 11 birds were between May 24th and 28th. The last spring migrant was at QE II Res on June 8th. A total of about 78 individuals passed through 11 sites.

Autumn passage was much lighter with perhaps as few as 11 individuals at three sites between July 29th and October 15th. On September 30th, there were singles at Staines Res and Island Barn Res. Rainham Marshes was the other site with seven from October 14th to 15th and singles on three other dates.

Ringed Plover is both a passage and wintering bird. This individual was at Rainham Marshes. (Russ Sherriff)

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

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

Low numbers were seen irregularly at various sites along the Lower Thames at both ends of the year, with the highest counts from Rainham Marshes where there were maxima of 30+ on January 13th and 20 on December 27th. Away from the Lower Thames there was one winter record at Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) on January 31st.

Owing to some birds wintering and summering, it is difficult to determine when passage begins and ends but taking when the first and last bird were seen away from the Lower Thames, then passage took place from March 1st to June 15th and July 13th to October 6th. Highest counts again came from Rainham Marshes with maxima of 51 in spring on May 27th and 21 in autumn on August 29th.

There were no confirmed breeding attempts this year, but a pair was seen displaying and holding territory at Laleham. Others were present in suitable breeding habitat, but may have only been migrants passing through.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

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

One, which circled the main pit, at Tyttenhanger GP on March 9th was the first of the year, with the second seen at Ponders End Lake on March 13th and a more widespread arrival following over the next few days. The highest spring counts came from Staines Res with seven on March 22nd and six at Sevenoaks WR on April 8th.

The number of breeding pairs was a slight improvement on 2017, when there were seven confirmed breeding pairs and 22 pairs present in total.

Little Ringed Plover	Pairs confirmed breeding	Pairs probably breeding	Other pairs present	Total
Essex	3	1	4	8
Herts	2	1	0	3
Middx	4	2	2	8
Bucks	1	0	1	2
Kent	0	1	2	3
Surrey	0	0	2	2
Total	10	5	11	26

Numbers after the breeding season and during autumn migration remained low, with the only double-figure counts coming from Rainham Marshes where there were ten on July 22nd and 12+ on August 26th. In September, records came from Beddington Farmlands, Rainham Marshes and Staines Res, with up to three at the latter site and the last of the year there being a juvenile on September 28th.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Status: regular passage migrant.

About 205 passed through between March 30th and May 19th. Peak passage occurred in the last four days of April with the highest count being 19 on April 28th at Rainham Marshes. Reports suggest that most individuals passed straight through, at most only pausing briefly to feed.

Return migration was much lighter with only about 50 birds passing through between June 22nd, when one was at Rainham Marshes, and September 18th, when one flew south at Walthamstow Wetlands. The highest count was eight on July 26th at Rainham Marshes.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Status: winter visitor and passage migrant.

Curlew were present at Rainham Marshes, or on the adjacent R Thames, in all months, although generally only in low numbers. Double-figure counts were made there on just 18 days, with 66 on April 11th, 26 on April 13th and 42 on November 7th being the only counts higher than twenty.

There were smaller numbers recorded elsewhere on the Lower Thames in most months, and a scattering of records from sites elsewhere across London that can mostly be attributed to cold weather movements between February 21st and March 13th, spring migration from April 3rd to May 8th, and autumn passage from June 12th to September 1st. No count away from Rainham Marshes exceeded five.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

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

A good spring passage between March 1st and May 30th involved somewhere in the region of 210 to 280 birds, including several flocks on April 29th when 40 were seen at Barking Bay, 36 flew north over Walthamstow Wetlands, 35 over Richmond Park, 31 through QE II Res, 20+ flew downriver past Crossness and nine were seen at Rainham Marshes.

Autumn passage involved just two singles at Rainham Marshes on August 26th and Crossness on September 13th. The year ended with four records at Rainham Marshes and Crossness between December 10th and 18th, all singles apart from two at Crossness on the 17th.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Status: passage migrant and winter visitor in variable numbers.

Numbers on the Lower Thames at the beginning of the year seemed to be slightly up on recent years, with the highest count being 450+ at Rainham Marshes on January 13th. Away from the Lower Thames, only one individual was seen at the London Wetland Centre on February 4th.

Spring sightings away from the Lower Thames were between March 1st and May 5th. There was a peak in early March, which may have been related to the cold snap, when the highest count was five at Rye Meads on the 8th. On April 28th, there were 96 at Tyttenhanger GP, and 53 at Brent Res that roosted overnight.

Autumn passage, which began on June 11th, was fairly light with a maximum of 85 at Rainham Marshes on July 28th, and the largest flock away from the Thames being 21 flying south at Walthamstow Wetlands on July 20th. Wintering flocks on the Lower Thames began to build from the end of September with a peak in November when an estimated 600+ were at Erith Reach on 21st. One at the London Wetland Centre

Black-tailed Godwit on autumn passage. (Tony Brown)

from October 11th to 15th and two there on December 16th were the only records away from the Lower Thames later than September 19th.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Status: passage migrant and localised winter visitor.

Counts of up to nine were made at Swanscombe Marshes during the first two months of the year, with occasional records of up to four from the Thames at Grays and Rainham Marshes. Spring passage may have started in mid-March, with numbers at Swanscombe Marshes reaching 15 from March 16th to 17th and 15 at Grays on March 19th. About 44 individuals then passed through ten sites, between April 5th and June 8th, with the only counts of more than two coming from Swanscombe Marshes where there was a maximum of 13 on April 13th, Rainham Marshes with eight on May 27th and Staines Res with four on May 18th.

Autumn passage, between July 13th and September 17th, probably involved at least 32 birds, with records from eight sites, mainly reservoirs, and no single count higher than three. The only records in the second winter period came from Swanscombe Marshes where birds were present intermittently from October 19th to December 28th with a maximum of 12 on December 7th.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Status: passage migrant and winter visitor in small numbers.

One was seen at Rainham Marshes on February 4th. In spring, there were at least 16 reported from nine sites between March 1st and 30th. Most were singles but there were three at West Thurrock Marshes on March 17th.

The first sign of a light autumn passage was at Rainham Marshes on August 3rd. Between September 7th and October 2nd, a maximum of 11 were seen at four sites with the final autumn migrant being at Rainham Marshes on October 28th. The only count of more than two together was five at KGVI Res on September 7th. The last sighting of the year, and by far the biggest flock, was of 50 that flew west over Greatness Pits on December 30th.

Ruff *Calidris pugnax*

Status: regular passage migrant and scarce winter visitor.

Rainham Marshes continues to be a regular wintering site, with frequent counts of up to five during January and February and up to two between October and December. There was only one other winter record this year at Crossness on December 22nd. Away from Rainham Marshes, up to three individuals at nine sites between February 28th and March 10th were likely to have been birds trying to escape freezing conditions.

Spring passage was very light with only one seen away from Rainham Marshes at Q. Mary Res on May 20th. At Rainham Marshes, birds were present throughout March to May 29th peaking at 12 on March 31st and April 1st.

Return passage began on June 12th, when two breeding plumaged males were at Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth). The first returning bird at Rainham Marshes was a male on June 29th, after which there were regular sightings of up to four birds in July and August and three in September. Away from Rainham Marshes, counts of up to four came from

seven sites with the last on September 24th. Below are all records with a summary for Rainham Marshes.

Essex: KGV Res, two on Mar 4th and one on Sep 5th. Rainham Marshes, present in all months with peak counts of 12 on Mar 31st and Apr 1st. Sewardstone Marsh, one from Mar 3rd-7th. Stubbers Outdoor Pursuits Centre, four on Jul 11th.
Herts: Tyttenhanger GP, one on Mar 7th. Woodoaks Farm, one on Mar 4th.
Middx: Q. Mary Res, one on May 20th. Staines Moor, one with Lapwings on Mar 7th. Staines Res, singles on July 23rd, Aug 8th & 25th and Sep 7th-8th.
Bucks: Q. Mother Res, singles on Feb 28th, Mar 2nd-3rd, Aug 7th-8th and Sep 5th, three on 16th and one on 24th.
Kent: Crossness, one on Dec 22nd.
Surrey: Beddington Farmlands, one to two from Mar 1st-4th and three on 10th, two on Jul 29th and three on Sep 15th. London Wetland Centre, one NE on Aug 10th. Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), one on Mar 7th, two from Jun 12th-13th, two on Jul 2nd, singles on Jul 17th and Sep 1st.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

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

Three birds seen between May 18th and June 1st was comparable to the 2017 spring passage, when there were two or three individuals seen between April 30th and May 25th.

In contrast to 2017, when there were at least 34 individuals during the autumn, there was just one autumn record involving two birds. All the records were at Rainham Marshes.

Essex: Rainham Marshes, singles on May 18th (P Hart) & 31st (A Tweed, D Smith, H Vaughan), Jun 1st (B Haines *et al*) and two on Aug 29th (A Tweed, H Vaughan, S Shippey).

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

Status: rare passage migrant, predominantly occurring during May.

Following three birds in April last year, there was one in May; the month when most records occur. The table below shows all recent records.

Temminck's Stint records 2010-2018: 12 records, 16 birds

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
No. of records	1	2	1	0	2	1	1	3	1
No. of birds	2	2	1	0	2*	4	1	3	1

*assuming the records at two sites were the same birds

Surrey: London Wetland Centre, one from May 7th-8th (D Simon, J Klavins *et al*).

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

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

About 102 birds were recorded this year, quite similar to last year's total of 107. However, unlike last year, there were seven in winter (none last year) and a heavier spring passage of 78 birds (56 last year).

Rainham Marshes hosted most of the winter birds with four on January 17th and one

on March 3rd; there was also one at Gallions Reach on February 28th.

The first of the spring were two on April 17th at QE II Res. The larger reservoirs, particularly Q. Mother, claimed all the next migrants between April 28th and May 22nd, except for three at Rainham Marshes on May 13th. There were two at Tyttenhanger GP on May 23rd and another at Rainham Marshes on May 24th with others again on the concrete-banked reservoirs. Passage increased during the last week of May, especially at Rainham Marshes where there were 20 on 25th and 11 on 27th. Elsewhere the highest count was five at KGV Res on 27th. The only June record was one at Q. Mother Res on 9th.

Q. Mother Res also claimed the first autumn records on July 23rd and 31st. In August, they were seen at Q. Mother Res on the 4th and 8th, and at Staines Res between the 4th and 12th, including five on the 5th. Away from these two reservoirs, the only records were singles at Purfleet on August 9th and the Thames Barrier on August 21st. All the September records were at Staines Res between 16th and 21st.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Status: common passage migrant and winter visitor.

The highest count of overwintering birds along the Lower Thames was 2,000 at Crossness on December 29th (1,500 in January 2017).

Dunlin peak site counts along Lower Thames marshes

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
EX	Rainham Marshes	650	500	647	88	600	611
	West Thurrock Marshes	500	-	455	-	-	165
KT	Crayford/Dartford Marshes	100	-	600	300	650	-
	Crossness	810	600	500	50	580	2000
	Erith	500	300	-	4	70	110
	Swanscombe Marshes	150	3	20	-	91	212

Dunlin records away from Lower Thames

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of sites	0	3	38	11	11	5	11	11	4	5	12	0
No. of records	0	3	101	23	20	7	30	36	32	9	23	0
Minimum no. of birds	0	3	321	39	32	9	68	91	65	13	35	0

There was a notable increase of Dunlin into the area during cold weather at the beginning of March. There were two in Inner London on 1st and high counts of 12 at Sewardstone Marsh on 2nd; then 30 at William Girling Res, 26 at KGV Res and 13 at Wraysbury GP on 3rd.

In Lond: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, one on Mar 1st. Russia Dock Woodland, one on Mar 1st.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Status: rare late autumn and winter visitor.

One of the wader highlights of the year was a Purple Sandpiper that spent two weeks on the foreshore of the Lower Thames in March. For many birders this was their first sighting in the London Area of a bird which is surprisingly difficult to encounter in London. This

was the first March record since at least 1990. A more typical record was a one day bird at Staines Res in September. The table below shows the arrival dates for all the records from 1990.

Purple Sandpiper arrival dates 1990-2018: 22 records, 22 birds

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Arrival dates	1*	2	1	-	-	-	1	1	4	5	4	3

*overwintered from 1991

Essex: Grays, the Kent bird was seen on Mar 18th, 19th & 21st (DG Darrell-Lambert).
Middx: Staines Res, one on Sep 13th (P Watts).
Kent: Swanscombe Marshes, one from Mar 9th-22nd (R Keith *et al*).

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

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

After the large number that were seen last year, this was a return to more typical numbers with no spring birds and only 12 in autumn.

Essex: KGV Res, one on Jul 31st (N Smith). Rainham Marshes, two on Aug 27th (H Vaughan, S Patel, B Husband), seven on Sep 14th (P Hart, H Vaughan), one on Sep 15th & 17th (S Huggins, A Tweed, D Mitchell).
Surrey: Beddington Farmlands, one on Aug 25th (GW Jones).

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

Status: rare passage migrant, mostly during September.

There have been 33 'Pecs' since the beginning of this century, 13 of which have been at Rainham Marshes. September is the most popular month for arrivals this century with 21 birds so this year's single was a very typical record.

Essex: Rainham Marshes, juv from Sep 23rd-30th (G Beevor).

This Pectoral Sandpiper was discovered in September at Rainham Marshes, and was the only record in 2018. (Russ Sherriff)

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

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

This species was recorded at 39 sites in January and February compared to 67 last year. The highest count was five at both Balls Wood and Richmond Park with another seven sites hosting two or three birds. There were records in March from 54 sites which included a mixture of overwintering, passage and likely breeding birds. There was a noticeable increase at the beginning of the month associated with snowy conditions and the peak count at Richmond Park was 13 on March 8th. The last passage birds of spring were seen in mid-April.

Likely breeding records were one roding at Prince's Coverts in May and one at Headley Heath in July.

The first arrival in autumn was at Regent's Park on October 22nd, followed by just four more birds before the end of October. Birds were seen at 39 sites during the last two months of the year (56 sites last year) with most records relating to migrants including a good number in central London. The highest count was again at Richmond Park with six on December 10th.

In Lond: Blackfriars Bridge, one flew over on Dec 5th. Commercial St E1, dazed bird on Nov 22nd. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, one on Mar 21st. Natural History Museum, one on Oct 31st. Packington Street N1, one on Mar 21st. Regent's Park, two on Mar 26th and one on Oct 22nd. Russia Dock Woodland, one on Mar 1st & 3rd. Southwark Park, one on Nov 9th. St James's Park, one on Dec 5th. Westminster, one taken into care on Nov 7th.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocryptes minimus*

Status: widespread but elusive winter visitor and passage migrant.

Just like the previous species, there was a clear increase in numbers during freezing weather and snow in March. The last bird to leave the area was at London Wetland Centre on May 1st. Returning birds began to arrive on October 6th with one at the same site and two more at Brent Res.

Monthly totals of peak counts for each sector are given below, followed by a selection of sites listing the peak counts in each winter period.

Jack Snipe	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Oct	Nov	Dec
Essex	2	3	19	2	-	3	1	2
Herts	4	9	6	1	-	3	14	9
Middx	1	2	7	3	-	2	2	3
Bucks	1	3	2	1	-	-	-	3
Kent	4	9	4	1	-	3	3	2
Surrey	7	8	24	9	1	7	8	4
Monthly total	19	34	62	17	1	18	28	23

Essex: Orsett Fen (4:0). Rainham Marshes (8:1).
Herts: Rye Meads (9:13).
Middx: Brent Res (0:2). Staines Moor (2:0). Woodberry Wetlands (3:0).
Bucks: Horton (3:3).
Kent: Greenwich Peninsula Ecology Park (1:2). Swanscombe Marshes (8:1).

Surrey: Beddington Farmlands (6:2). Holmethorpe SP (1:2). London Wetland Centre (8:3). Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) (4:1).

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

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

Compared to last year there were more Snipe present during the first three months of the year. The highest count was 89 at Beddington Farmlands on March 16th. Elsewhere there were peaks of 71 at Sevenoaks WR on January 1st, 60 at Ingrebourne Valley on January 2nd, 58 at Rye Meads on January 20th, 48 at Tyttenhanger GP on January 12th and 39 at Rainham Marshes on January 4th. The latter site had the highest count in April with 35 on 13th. Most birds had departed before the first week of May was out with just the odd single bird remaining. Surprisingly, there were single birds at three sites in June: London Wetland Centre, Rainham Marshes and Rye Meads.

Returning migrants slowly began to appear in July with records from nine sites including five at Beddington Farmlands on the 28th. Migration increased in August with 16 sites hosting birds and a high of 18 at Rye Meads during the last few days of the month. The same site recorded the highest counts for the next three months (83 in September, 93 in October, 98 in November) but the highest count of the year came from Rainham Marshes with 140 on December 23rd, the most in the London Area since 143 at Rye Meads in 2014.

In Lond: Regent's Park, one on Apr 14th. St James's Park, one on Mar 21st.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

Status: rare passage migrant.

The second year in a row that one of these delicate waders was seen at Staines Res. The table below shows all recent records.

Red-necked Phalarope records 2010-2018: 7 records, 7 birds

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Number of records	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	2	1

Middx: Staines Res, juv on Aug 31st (D Pia *et al*).

Grey Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius*

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

This is the third year in a row that a Grey Phalarope has been seen at Staines Res. Although it stayed for six days, it was not seen on September 23rd and 25th so may have visited another reservoir on those days.

Middx: Staines Res, juv from Sep 22nd-27th (R Warden *et al*).

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Status: common passage migrant and localised winter visitor.

There was the usual smattering of overwintering birds along the Thames during the first three months. However, numbers were generally down on previous years with the highest count of five being made on New Year's Day at Bow Creek. Otherwise, the maximum was

three at Crayford Marshes in late March. Elsewhere there were a few birds on the Lea Valley reservoirs, one at Grand Junction Res on February 18th and March 24th and three at London Wetland Centre on March 26th.

A sprinkling of migrants arrived during the first half of April, but it was not until later in the month that they started to become more widespread, particularly from the 25th when seven were at Walthamstow Wetlands. The peak date of spring was April 28th when 46 birds were present. Passage during May was disappointing compared to previous years. The only bird in the first half of June was at Crossness on 10th and was either particularly late or a failed breeder.

Early autumn migrants were seen at four sites on June 16th and a further eight sites had single birds before the end of the month. Passage increased quickly during July with a high of nine at KGV Res on 7th during the first week; 15 at Gallions Reach on 13th; 21 at KGV Res on 20th and an area-wide total of 66 on 31st. The latter count and August's area-wide total of 55 on 12th were both considerably down on last year's totals (116 in July and 92 in August). Migration started to wind down in September after peaks of 13 at Walthamstow Wetlands on 7th and 15 at Gallions Reach on 8th.

No more than three birds were seen at any site during the last quarter of the year as birds settled into their overwintering locations.

In Lond: Battersea PS, one on May 6th. Greenland Pier, one on Aug 18th. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, two on Jul 22nd. Limehouse, ten flew W on Aug 10th. Regent's Park, two on Apr 28th. St James's Park, singles on Apr 24th, May 8th & 11th and Aug 10th.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

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

This species was reported from 33 sites during the first two months of the year (39 in 2017). The highest count away from the sites tabulated below was three at Ellenbrook Fields and Island Barn Res. Most spring migrants went through in March and April with only a few in May. Probably the last sighting was one on June 3rd at the London Wetland Centre. A few others were seen the following week but these could have been going in either direction.

Mid-June saw the beginning of a more obvious wave of southbound migrants with many birds settling in for short periods before moving on. During the last quarter of the year birds were reported from 38 sites (40 in 2017).

Monthly maxima for sites with at least six birds during the year are listed below.

Green Sandpiper		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
BU	Horton GP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	5	1	-	-
EX	Ingrebourne Valley	-	1	4	-	-	-	7	9	8	4	-	-
	William Girling Res	1	5	7	5	-	-	7	7	6	5	4	5
HR	Coopers Green GP	1	-	6	5	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
	Maple Lodge NR	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	8	5	6	3	5
	Rye Meads	5	4	3	4	2	4	5	6	5	4	6	3
	Tyttenhanger GP	2	2	3	2	-	3	5	5	6	1	2	2
MX	Brent Res	2	3	3	3	1	1	6	6	6	5	4	2
SY	Beddington Farmlands	3	2	5	5	1	1	12	19	9	16	7	10
	Walton Res (C & L)	1	1	1	-	-	2	5	7	3	1	5	4

Green Sandpiper. (Dave Harris)

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

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

Monthly maximum counts from the main sites along the Lower Thames are given below. Other peak counts along the river were 186 at Purfleet on October 14th and 166 at West Thurrock Marshes on December 24th. Away from the river the highest count was a flock of 17 juveniles at Q. Mother Res on September 18th.

Redshank		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
EX	Gallions Reach	40	52	20	20	-	-	1	1	3	67	120	-
	Rainham Marshes	116	138	300	35	55	21	8	4	120	225	187	197
KT	Crayford Marshes	45	-	48	38	1	1	3	-	20	70	65	-
	Crossness	110	124	64	65	3	2	-	20	25	207	181	100
	Erith Reach	100	100	140	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	60	90
	Swanscombe Marshes	51	100	100	37	-	-	-	-	-	34	70	109

Breeding records are listed below.

Essex: Rainham Marshes, bred.
Herts: Rye Meads, pair bred, no young hatched.
Surrey: London Wetland Centre, present during breeding season.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*

Status: rare vagrant.

The wader highlight of the year; this was just the fourth record for London following previous birds at Swanscombe and Rainham Marshes in 1963, Chigwell SW in 1966 and Broxbourne GP and Holyfield Marsh GP in 1984.

Essex: Rainham Marshes, one from Jul 27th-29th (P Hart *et al*).

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Status: uncommon passage migrant.

There were just six birds recorded in spring compared to 11 in 2017. Five of these were at Rainham Marshes: singles on April 28th, May 10th and 18th with two on May 21st; the other was at Tyttenhanger GP on May 19th.

Autumn was considerably better with around 18 birds seen (16 in 2017). An early returnee was at Sevenoaks WR from June 27th to 29th. There were three in July with singles at Beddington Farmlands on 4th, William Girling Res from 16th to 18th and Rainham Marshes from 22nd to 23rd. The main passage occurred in August beginning with one at Rainham Marshes on 1st; two at Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) from 6th to 8th with further records of singles there on 13th, 26th and 29th, which may be different birds, and two at Rainham Marshes on 31st. Two more were at Tyttenhanger GP on September 3rd, followed by a group of four flying over Walthamstow Wetlands on 6th, with the last of the year being at Sevenoaks WR from 15th to 16th.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

Status: scarce passage migrant with occasional winter records.

At least six birds were seen this year compared to at least eight last year.

Essex: Gallions Reach, one on Aug 29th. Rainham Marshes, one from Mar 23rd to Apr 5th.
Herts: Rye Meads, one on Mar 11th.
Middx: Brent Res, one from Aug 17th-22nd.
Surrey: Beddington Farmlands, singles on Apr 7th and Sep 3rd & 23rd.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Status: regular passage migrant, rare in winter.

About 40 migrants were recorded in spring, well down on last year's total of 100. The first was on April 3rd at Q. Mother Res, followed by a gentle sprinkling from mid-April onwards. All records were of single birds except for two birds at three sites: Rainham Marshes on Apr 19th, May 12th and 29th; Rye Meads on May 21st; and London Wetland Centre on May 24th.

As usual the autumn passage was significantly stronger; it began with two records in June: on 16th at Rainham Marshes and 27th at Crossness. After two more in the first week of July, migration started to pick up from mid-July onwards, particularly at Rainham Marshes where there was a good showing throughout autumn with a peak of seven on September 4th. Elsewhere, the highest counts were six at Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) on September 12th, five at Crayford Marshes on September 6th (possibly Rainham birds)

and four at Staines Res on August 31st. The last records of the year were in October with singles at QE II Res on 3rd, Beddington Farmlands on 14th and Dartford Marshes on 31st.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

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

A very good year by recent standards with 215 birds compared to 38 in 2017 and 22 in 2016. The total was boosted by a remarkable 128 birds through Rainham Marshes on March 13th.

The first record of the year was two at Gallions Reach on February 28th, preceding four on March 1st at the start of a cold weather movement into London, which included two upriver at the Greenwich Peninsula. A massive movement occurred at Rainham Marshes on March 13th, with 128 birds flying downriver including a single flock of 87. A further 30 were at Rainham Marshes on March 16th, with another 12 across London between then and the end of March, all singles except two at Amwell NR on 31st. April records included two at Rainham Marshes on 8th and ten adults at Dartford Marshes on 9th. During May there were six records of single birds. Two were at Q. Mother Res on June 4th and the last bird of the spring was an adult at the Greenwich Peninsula on June 30th.

Autumn passage was very poor by comparison, with one at Gallions Reach on August 12th, five in the roost at Hilfield Park Res on October 27th, a 1st-winter the next day at KGV Res. The final records were adults at Creekmouth, Barking on November 19th and Gallions Reach the next day.

Kittiwake monthly records

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	-	2	176	18	7	3	-	1	-	6	2	-

Bonaparte's Gull *Chroicocephalus philadelphia*

Status: rare vagrant.

London's sixth record, all since 2012, continues the excellent run of the species. True to form, this year's individual occurred in the May to July period like all previous records and was the fourth to be found (and fifth to be seen) at Crossness.

Essex: Creekmouth, Barking, 1st-summer on Jul 1st, same as Crossness (J Partridge, D Shepherd).
Kent: Crossness, 1st-summer from Jun 23rd to Jul 4th (R Bonser *et al*).

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

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

One of London's commonest winter visitors, the breeding population is increasing rapidly. From just 14 pairs in 2000 and 158 pairs in 2010, there were at least 1,051 pairs from 18 sites (compared to 804 pairs from 12 sites in 2017 and 795 pairs from 12 sites in 2016).

The year's highest count was 10,000 at Rainham Marshes on January 3rd. This compares to 22,900 in 2017 and 18,300 in 2016 which were both from Hogsmill SW where the highest number this year was 7,300 on December 25th. There were just 28 counts of 2,000 or more birds, compared to 76 and 63 counts in 2017 and 2016 respectively. This fall does

not necessarily indicate a decline in the species overall, as many of the previous high counts were from a single site, Hogsmill SW, where admittedly counts have dropped this year. There were six sites that recorded totals of 5,000 or more birds this year in comparison to three sites in 2017. Leucistic birds were at Hilfield Park Res, Island Barn Res and Q. Mother Res and colour ringed birds from Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Lithuania, Norway and Poland were seen. Below are peak counts for each sector along with breeding pairs.

Essex: Fishers Green Island (1), 2 young. Rainham Marshes, 10,000 on Jan 3rd.
Herts: Amwell NR (73), 106 young. Hilfield Park Res (34), 45 young; 8,000 on Oct 20th and Dec 2nd. Maple Lodge NR (8). Rye Meads (294), 106 young. Seventy Acres Lake (22), 43 young. Stocker's Lake (50). Verulamium Park (40).
Middx: Broadwater Lake (36); 2,500 on Dec 18th. Ponders End Lake (41), 22 young. Staines Res (126), 42 young.
Bucks: Denham, 2,500 on Dec 18th. Wraysbury GP (2).
Kent: Crossness, 2,000 on Oct 12th.
Surrey: Hogsmill SW (2); 7,300 on Dec 25th. Leg O Mutton NR (4). London Wetland Centre (31), 29 young. Richmond Park (1). Thorpe Water Park (11). Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) (275), 190 young.
In Lond: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, 1,187 on Feb 19th.

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

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

It was an above-average year for the species with 235 birds reported (following 165 in 2017 and 203 in 2016), the best showing since 2014. Of the year's total, 73% came in March and April, although the year's highest count was 22 downriver at Northfleet on November 20th. Easterlies with rain, particularly during spring, facilitate decent passage numbers while the species can also be prone to autumnal movements with the same dreary (and often cold) conditions.

Little Gull monthly records

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of birds	-	3	64	108	1	1	-	7	5	14	32	-

The year's first records were in February at Holmethorpe SP on the 17th followed by singles at Southmere Lake and Swanscombe Marshes on the 24th. March saw an increase in records with 25 seen on the 2nd and 3rd, including ten at Rainham Marshes and nine flew west over Putney. There was a further pulse from March 15th to 17th with 27 birds including six at Rainham Marshes and five at Sevenoaks WR, both on the 17th. Predictably, April was dominated by the passage of birds at Staines Res throughout the month, peaking at 15 on the 14th. Elsewhere in April, high counts were 13 at Q. Mother Res on the 8th, 14 at KGV Res on the 14th and six at Hilfield Park Res on the 15th. Late spring was very poor with just two records: an adult at Q. Mother Res on May 10th and a lingering 1st-summer at Staines Res from June 8th to 24th.

Autumn records started with juveniles at Broadwater Lake and Crossness on August 13th. There were then single adults at Rainham Marshes on the 25th and Gallions Reach

on the 29th, and three juveniles at Staines Res on the 31st. September records were all singles at either Rainham Marshes or Staines Res, except for one at Gallions Reach on the 2nd. Of the 14 birds seen in October, nine were at Island Barn Res on the 15th and four were at Staines Res on the 28th. The year's peak count was not until November, when 22 flew through Northfleet on the 20th, with the last birds of the year aptly being two at Staines Res on November 26th.

Mediterranean Gull *Ichthyaetus melanocephalus*

Status: regular winter visitor, passage migrant and has recently bred. **RBBP**

There were similar numbers and patterns to last year with London benefitting from two waves of passage – adults in spring and juveniles in July. The July passage was very strong, with 87 birds seen, although this quickly tailed off into August and September. However, spring passage this year was disappointing with 29 birds in April compared with 133 birds in April 2017.

A peak count of 13 birds at QE II Res on July 20th included three adults and ten juveniles (compared to high counts of 21 and 17 in 2017 and 2016 respectively). There were 26 counts of three or more birds from 12 sites, fewer than the 50 counts from 14 sites in 2017, but more than the previous two years. A fall in the number of records from Hilfield Park Res, which last year had 18 daily counts of three or more birds, may explain some of this reduction. Eight Inner London records represented an excellent showing, as there were no records from this sector in 2017.

Mediterranean Gull. (Richard Bonser)

Spring passage started in earnest in mid-March, largely with birds moving through in singles or groups of up to three birds, and continued steadily into April and May. The R Thames east of the Thames Barrier dominated records, with eight adults at Gallions Reach on April 18th being the highest spring count.

Though there were no breeding attempts this year, two juveniles seen at Q. Mother Res on July 4th were the earliest on record and the prelude to an influx of a further 47 juveniles by the end of July, including ten together with three adults at QE II Res on 20th. Records quickly tailed off in August, and as now seems to be the norm for this species, reports during the second winter period were relatively scarce. 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	28	23	56	29	26	27	87	18	7	11	21	16
No. of sites	22	18	40	13	14	16	23	12	5	7	13	7

In Lond: Houses of Parliament, adult on Jun 24th. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, one from Feb 6th-7th and adult on Apr 14th. Rotherhithe, four: adult on Jul 6th, juv from Jul 15th-21st with two juvs from Jul 16th-17th and a different juv on Aug 21st. St. James's Park, 1st-winter from Sep 24th to Nov 9th.

Common Gull *Larus canus*

Status: common winter visitor and passage migrant.

Numbers remained relatively steady compared to previous years. This species is susceptible to hard weather movements, and the cold spell during the first winter period did see an influx of the species into London. There were 67 counts of 100 or more (from 27 sites), compared to 53 (from 21 sites) in 2017 and 46 (from 18 sites) in 2016. However, there were just were six counts of 500 or more birds (compared to 11 in 2017 and 12 in 2016), and like the previous year, peaking at 1,000 at Hilfield Park Res on January 2nd and February 1st.

Small numbers continue to over-summer (but not breed), with just ones and twos noted in May and June, with the exception of ten at Q. Mother Res on June 30th. The year's first juvenile was at Q. Mother Res on August 7th, later than the first on July 11th in 2017 and July 24th in 2016. Below are details of peak counts from sites with numbers of 100 or more (50 for Inner London).

Essex: Fairlop Waters, 150 on Jan 28th. KGV Res, 200 on Jan 13th. Mansfield Park, 100 on Feb 14th. Roding Valley Meadows NR, 190 on Apr 1st. Wanstead Flats, 600 on Mar 19th.
Herts: Bowyer's Water, 400 on Jan 7th. Brookman's Park, 220 on Dec 24th. Cuffley, 250 on Oct 9th. Hilfield Park Res, 1,000 on Jan 2nd and Feb 4th. Monks Green, 150 on Jan 7th. Tyttenhanger GP, 200 on Dec 31st. Wildhill, 110 on Dec 25th.
Middx: Brent Res, 200 on Feb 25th. Bushy Park, 136 on Feb 18th. Guy Lodge Farm, 100+ on Mar 3rd. Hendon, 118 on Nov 22nd. Home Park, 233 on Mar 18th. Q. Mary Res, 351 on Mar 18th. Totteridge Valley, 800 on Mar 14th. West Hendon, 165 on Jan 11th. Yeading Brook Meadows, 160 on Dec 23rd.
Bucks: Denham, 100+ on Jan 29th and Feb 4th.

This Ring-billed Gull bucked the recent trend in the national decline of vagrant birds in the UK. It was found at Thames Barrier Park in February. (Dante Sheppard)

Kent: Sevenoaks WR, 115 on Mar 14th.
Surrey: Marden Park Woods, 200 on Feb 18th. QE II Res, 350 on Mar 4th. Richmond Park, 233 on Jan 29th. Sandown Park, 250 on Jan 27th.
In Lond: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, 89 on Jan 16th.

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis*

Status: rare visitor.

The first record since 2009, mirroring the national decline which began in the 1990s with a three-fold decline since 2010 (*British Birds* 112: 464). Given the extreme rarity of the species nowadays, it is likely that the two sightings this year relate to the same individual despite the different ages given. The Thames Barrier Park bird was seen very well, while the bird at Rainham Marshes did not allow minute feather details to be noted (with adults and 3rd-winters indistinguishable at range).

Essex: Thames Barrier Park, 3rd-winter on Feb 11th (J Partridge, D Shepherd). Rainham Marshes, adult on Mar 23rd (D Mitchell).

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

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

Confirmed breeding was last recorded in 2016, though at least one pair almost certainly

bred again near Q. Mary Res, with a dependent juvenile, as happened last year, there on August 5th. The highest count for the year was 400 at Rainham Marshes on January 4th (183 in 2017 and 160 in 2016), and there were 27 counts of over 50 birds (29 in 2017 and 22 in 2016). Numbers are certainly under-recorded, with very few counts made of the species even at sites where birders look specifically for gulls. Several Norwegian ringed birds were recorded, as was one from Russia. Listed below are high counts for sites for each sector.

Essex: Purfleet, 83 on Nov 18th. Rainham Marshes, 400 on Jan 4th.
Herts: Rye Meads, 88 on Jan 10th.
Middx: Q. Mary Res, 25 on Mar 31st.
Bucks: Q. Mother Res, 83 on Dec 30th.
Kent: Greenwich Peninsula, 40 on Jul 26th.
Surrey: Beddington Farmlands, 60+ on Jan 6th. Island Barn Res, 160 on Jan 5th. Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), 105 on Jan 28th. Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough), 185 on Jan 14th.
In Lond: Rotherhithe, 21 on Dec 27th.

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

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

It was another good year for the species, with at least seven seen, following the five birds in 2017 and three in 2016. Through specific plumage traits, individuals can be tracked across the recording area, illustrating how mobile London's gulls are on a daily basis. All records were in the first winter period, with the last being a juvenile at Crayford on the relatively late date of April 29th.

Essex: Leyton, juv on Jan 28th and a different juv intermittently from Feb 27th to Mar 19th, which was also seen at Walthamstow Wetlands from Feb 23rd-26th and Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park on Mar 18th.
Herts: Hilfield Park Res, juv on Apr 15th.
Bucks: Colnbrook, 2nd-winter on Jan 19th.
Kent: Crayford, different juvs on Mar 9th and Apr 29th.
Surrey: Beddington Farmlands, juv intermittently from Jan 27th to Apr 14th. Island Barn Res, juv sporadically from Jan 23rd to Apr 13th. QE II Res, juv intermittently from Mar 8th to Apr 11th. Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough), juv on Apr 15th (all Surrey records relate to one wide-ranging bird).

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoides*

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

There were at least ten birds seen at various sites across London this year (compared to ten in 2017 and 14 in 2016). Lots of interchange between sites on a daily basis happened once again, with birds from the landfill site at Rainham Marshes regularly seen at the recycling centres at Crayford and Creekmouth, Barking while birds spending their days at Beddington Farmlands were often noted roosting at Island Barn Res. All records were between January and May.

Essex: Creekmouth, Barking, juv on Feb 24th and two juvs from Mar 18th-25th (same as at Rainham Marshes). Gallions Reach, juv on Apr 17th. Nazeing GP, one roosted from Feb 2nd-4th. Rainham Marshes, up to two juvs intermittently from Jan 4th to Apr 14th, adult on Apr 7th, 3rd-summer on Apr 14th and 2nd-winter from Apr 21st to May 6th.
Bucks: Q. Mother Res, adult on Mar 11th.
Kent: Crayford, juv from Jan 6th-21st, another juv intermittently from Mar 17th to Apr 29th and 2nd-winter from Apr 29th to May 4th (same as at Rainham Marshes).
Surrey: Beddington Farmlands, juv intermittently from Jan 3rd to Apr 24th, 2nd-winter intermittently from Jan 6th to Mar 28th and adult on Apr 7th. Island Barn Res, juv sporadically from Jan 5th to Mar 21st, 2nd-winter intermittently from Jan 5th to Feb 9th and adult on Jan 31st. London Wetland Centre, juv intermittently from Jan 10th to Mar 31st. QE II Res, 2nd-winter on Mar 9th & 13th (all Surrey records relate to just three birds).

Subspecies: Kumlien's Gull *L. g. kumlieni*

There was one record of a bird showing features consistent with the Greenland and Nearctic form of Iceland Gull. This is the seventh record for London, and the first since 2013.

Kent: Crayford Marshes, adult-type on Mar 18th (R Bonser, J Partridge, D Shepherd *et al*).

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

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

The commonest large gull found in London, breeding in small yet grossly under-recorded numbers (due to the inaccessibility of their rooftop nesting sites). There were 15 breeding pairs located this year, compared to 12 in 2017 and four in 2016.

Winter counts are also in need of increased recording. The year's highest count was 11,660 at Beddington Farmlands on February 23rd (compared to peak counts of 10,000 in both 2017 and 2016). There were 47 counts of over 1,000 birds (93 in 2017 and 106 in 2016). This decline is due to both a reduction in counts from Hogsmill SW but also reflects that this species is becoming less numerous as landfill sites are closed. Leucistic birds were seen at Crayford, Island Barn Res and QE II Res.

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

Essex: Orsett Fen, 700 on Sep 11th. Rainham Marshes, 1,086 on Jul 9th. Walthamstow Wetlands (8). West Thurrock Marshes, 983 on Jan 1st.
Herts: Hilfield Park Res, 1,000 on Nov 24th. Hoddesdon (2), 2 young. Rye Meads, 650 on Jan 13th. Watford (1), 1 young.
Middx: Hornsey (1), 3 young. KGVI Res, 500 on Nov 3rd and Dec 23rd. Tottenham Marshes (3), 5 young.
Kent: Crayford, 1,000 on Dec 31st. Greatness Pits, 500 on Aug 19th.
Surrey: Beddington Farmlands, 11,660 on Feb 23rd. London Wetland Centre, 520 on Mar 3rd.

Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans*

Status: scarce visitor mainly in winter.

London continues to be one of the best places in the country to see this species, yet observers who regularly scan the huge numbers of the capital's gulls still consider a day

seeing a Caspian Gull makes for an above average day. Once again, it was another record year and though difficult to separate all individuals, an estimated 140 birds were seen (compared to 100 in 2017 and 90 in 2016). There was a record count of 19 seen at Rainham Marshes on November 29th, one if not the highest number seen in the UK at one site on a single day.

Numbers in the first winter period were relatively low, largely comprising long-staying birds that arrived in London during a relatively lacklustre autumn in 2017. A few birds moved through during early spring this year, though a large influx in mid-November augmented numbers significantly, particularly at Crayford/Dartford and Rainham Marshes. Two juveniles at Rainham Marshes on July 17th were the first juveniles to be seen in the UK this year. The increasingly early dates of young birds may be due to dispersal of juveniles as they spread westwards on the continent as well as London's larophiles on the hunt to find this species during midsummer.

Caspian Gull monthly records

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
EX	Rainham Marshes	2	2	3	-	2	-	4	6	4	2	28	10
HR	Amwell NR	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	4	2
BU	Q. Mother Res	1	2	2	-	2	1	1	-	2	6	-	1
KT	Crayford/Dartford	5	4	-	2	1	1	1	-	2	-	3	14
SY	Beddington Farmlands	3	2	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	2	2	-

London's gulls are highly mobile, with birds commuting between sites. Individuals are tracked by either their distinctive plumage traits or ring details, with birds occasionally being seen at two sites during the same day (regular daily movements being Rainham Marshes to Crayford/Dartford, and Beddington Farmlands to Island Barn Res to roost). What is also apparent is the propensity of birds to return to London to winter annually – notably a 4th-winter at Eagle Pond and an adult at a few Surrey sites. Several birds with German rings were seen at sites throughout the year, as well as smaller number of Polish-ringed birds. Listed below is a summary for each sector and all records for Inner London.

Essex: 65+ seen at 18 sites (most prolific sites being Creekmouth (Barking), Rainham Marshes and Thames Barrier). Maximum count 19 at Rainham Marshes on Nov 29th.

Herts: c15 seen at three sites (Amwell NR, Hilfield Park Res & Tyttenhanger GP. Maximum count four at Amwell NR on Nov 30th.

Middx: seven seen at five sites (Fulham Reach, KGVI Res, Q. Mary Res, Staines Res & Wraysbury Res). All records were of single birds.

Bucks: 17+ seen at three sites (Horton GP, Q. Mother Res & Wraysbury GP). Maximum count two at Q. Mother Res on six dates in February, May and October.

Kent: c40 seen at eight sites (most prolific site being Crayford/Dartford). Maximum count 12 at Crayford on Dec 30th.

Surrey: 20+ seen at nine sites (most prolific sites being Beddington Farmlands and London Wetland Centre). Maximum counts of two coming from Beddington Farmlands, Island

This Caspian Gull returned to Eagle Pond, Snaresbrook once again in 2018. (Tony Brown)

Barn Res and London Wetland Centre.
In Lond: Regent's Park, 1st-winter on Nov 26th. Rotherhithe, 1st-winter on Dec 2nd. Wapping, 3rd-winter on Dec 2nd.

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*

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

There has been a gradual decline in the summer influx of this species over the past decade, although the four counts of over 50 birds this year is an improvement on the single count in 2017. The highest count was 79 at Rainham Marshes on August 9th, with the R Thames east of the Thames Barrier continuing to be the area dominating records. The species does become a lot scarcer the further away from the R Thames you go, with the peak count for Hertfordshire being eight at Amwell NR on November 23rd and 30th, and for Surrey being four at the London Wetland Centre on December 23rd.

It is a species that can be found year-round and although significantly scarcer in winter, birds are more site faithful, either favouring specific stretches of the R Thames or being seen regularly at evening roost sites. Observer inexperience continues to be a barrier in recording immature birds, which does mean that particularly during winter (when non-adult birds tend to dominate) the species is likely to be under-recorded.

Yellow-legged Gull monthly maxima

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
EX	Rainham Marshes	7	2	5	2	2	2	42	79	31	6	12	3
BU	Q. Mother Res	-	3	2	1	2	6	16	13	8	3	2	2
KT	Crayford/Dartford	2	1	2	1	1	1	20	-	20	4	1	2

In Lond: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, adult on Sep 2nd. Rotherhithe, 1st-summer on Jun 17th, juvs on Jul 8th & 16th, August peak of six (adult & 5 juvs) on Aug 23rd and 1st-winter from Dec 22nd-30th.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

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

There were 54 breeding pairs of which 27 were confirmed to have bred with 38 young recorded (29 pairs in 2017 and 22 pairs in 2016). Once again, breeding records are likely to be significantly lower than the actual pairs because of the inaccessibility of their rooftop nesting sites.

There were two counts of 300 or more birds, with 600 at Hilfield Park Res on December 2nd the highest count of the year (and the highest since 2015), and 300 at Roding Valley Meadows NR on April 3rd. However, there were only 12 counts of 100 or more birds (23 in 2017 and 16 in 2016). Listed below are all breeding records (no. of pairs/nests in brackets), as well as peak counts of over 100 birds.

Essex: Rainham Marshes, 100 on Jul 18th. Roding Valley Meadows NR, 300 on Apr 3rd. Walthamstow Wetlands (24). William Girling Res, 282 on Jul 16th.
Herts: Hilfield Park Res, 600 on Dec 2nd. Hoddesdon (1). London Colney (18), 28 young.

Tyttenhanger GP, 142 on Mar 5th. Watford (3).
Middx: Brent Res, 150 on May 7th. East India Dock Basin (1). Home Park (1).
Bucks: Q. Mother Res (2), five young.
Kent: Greenwich Peninsula (1), two young.
Surrey: Beddington Farmlands, 189 on Jan 18th. Island Barn Res, 245 on Feb 26th. London Wetland Centre, 100 on Jan 2nd. Molesey (1), three young.
In Lond: London Bridge (1). Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (1), one young.

Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis*

Status: uncommon passage migrant, often in small flocks.

Spring passage started six days earlier than in 2017 with one at Q. Mother Res and two at Rainham Marshes on March 17th, followed by singles at Gallions Reach and Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park on March 18th. March 25th saw one at Gallions Reach, another at Rainham Marshes on 26th then three over Q. Mother Res on 31st. Passage was in low figures as April started, with one at Rainham Marshes on 3rd and 4th, and two at Q. Mother Res, Staines Res and Walton Res on 4th. On 6th, six were reported at KGV Res, and singles at Q. Mother Res, Amwell NR and Staines Res. Four were reported at Holmethorpe SP and two at Rainham Marshes on 8th. Ones and twos continued to be reported during April at Amwell NR, KGV Res, Leg O Mutton NR, London Wetland Centre, Q. Mother Res, Purfleet, Rainham Marshes, Staines Res, Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) and Walthamstow Wetlands. May began with singles at Rye Meads on 7th and Staines Res on the 9th. There were no further sightings until three birds were seen at Q. Mother Res on 25th. Two birds followed at Rainham Marshes on 30th and at Q. Mother Res on June 1st. Spring passage ended with one at Hilfield Park Res on June 15th giving a total of 65 birds (51 in 2017).

In the autumn passage 115 birds were recorded (65 in 2017). The first was at Dartford Marshes on July 3rd (June 30th in 2017). There were low single figures in July and early August including two at Bury Lake on July 15th and two at Q. Mother Res on August 13th. There were no further August records until passage picked up from August 25th with five birds at Rainham Marshes, followed by 17 at Gallions Reach on the 29th. In September counts were again in single figures except at Purfleet with ten on 13th and 12 on 23rd. Also on 23rd, two juveniles were recorded with five adults at Q. Mother Res. The last birds of autumn passage were a 1st-winter at Q. Mother Res and eleven at Rainham Marshes on October 7th.

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

Status: uncommon spring and autumn passage migrant.

The first spring bird arrived on April 19th at KGV Res, with two there on the 20th. This was in line with recent arrival dates, which have spanned April 9th to 30th since 2000. The next birds were singles at Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough) on April 29th and KGV Res on May 6th. On May 7th, there were two at Gallions Reach and three at Purfleet. One at Gallions Reach on May 13th and three at Staines Res on 21st ended spring passage, bringing the spring movement to a fairly typical 14 birds (14 in 2017, 19 in 2016, 17 in 2015).

Autumn passage started with a lone bird at Rye Meads on July 31st, possibly a failed

breeder. There were no further sightings until one at Gallions Reach on August 29th, followed by three at Beckton SW on September 1st. The final autumn bird was at KGV Res on October 19th, which is exceptionally late being the latest and only the second October record this century (the other one was on 13th in 2001). There was a total of six autumn birds, a slight improvement over the four or five birds in 2017, but a long way off the 20 birds in 2016 and 15 in 2015.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Status: common summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first birds arrived on March 31st with singles at Q. Mother Res, Q. Mary GP, Q. Mary Res and Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough). Double-figure counts started on April 5th, when there were ten at Gallions Reach and 12 at Rainham Marshes. Daily sightings continued throughout April, many in double figures, with highs of 61 at Rainham Marshes on the 17th, at least 60 at Staines Res on the 28th and 77 at the same location on the 30th. There continued to be healthy sightings throughout May with peaks of 60 reported at Rainham Marshes on the 10th and 50 at KGV Res on the 23rd.

There were at least 172 breeding pairs at 25 sites this year (118 at 16 sites in 2017). With just one reported pair, Walthamstow Wetlands continued to see a decline from the 40 pairs reported in 2010.

Common Tern is a frequent sight on the London reservoirs in summer. (Dave Harris)

The large number of breeding birds made identifying the start of autumn passage typically challenging. A group of 96 adults at Staines Res on July 21st may have included some early returners, but counts of 70 at KGV Res on August 1st and 50 at Q. Mother Res on the 7th seem more likely to mark the start of autumn passage, given the low number of breeding pairs across both sites. Movement continued across August with larger flocks of 74 birds at Crossness on 12th, and around 80 on the 14th. The month closed on a high with 55 birds passing through Q. Mother Res, 56 at Swanscombe Marshes and the year's peak count of 390 reported at Gallions Reach on 29th. At least 50 were at Gallions Reach on September 2nd, with the last large groups of the year a compact flock of 70 on 22nd at Poyle, 22 the next day at Rainham Marshes and 28 at Gallions Reach on October 6th. A handful of sightings followed before the last birds, an adult and 1st-winter, on October 21st at Staines Res, the same date as the latest departing bird in 2017.

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

Essex: Brook Farm, Upminster (1). Rainham Marshes (1). Walthamstow Wetlands (1), significant decline with only two young seen.

Herts: Amwell NR (2), two young. Croxley Common Moor (1). Maple Lodge NR (6), 16 young. Rye Meads (18), 36 young. Seventy Acres Lake (16), 11+ young. Stanstead Innings (1). Stocker's Lake (1), two plus young. Tyttenhanger GP (1), three young.

Middx: Brent Res (6), eight young. Broadwater Lake (11+), several young. Bushy Park (1). Ponders End Lake (45), 69 young. Ruislip Lido/Poor's Field (5+), 12 chicks. Staines (1), two chicks. Staines Res (20), 14 chicks.

Bucks: Q. Mother Res (3), two young from second attempt.

Kent: Greenwich Peninsula Ecology Park (8), 13 young.

Surrey: Holmethorpe SP (1). Leg O Mutton NR (4), 3+ young. London Wetland Centre (1), two young. Richmond Park (3), three fledged. Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) (14), 12+ fledged.

In Lond: Battersea Reach, one on May 1st. Greenland Pier, three on Aug 19th. Notting Hill, Grand Union Canal, one on May 30th. Russia Dock Woodland, two on May 5th and one flew W on May 6th. Shadwell Basin, one on Jul 13th. Surrey Water, two on May 5th.

2001 Correction

Daniel Whitelegg, after carrying out a study of Common Tern breeding in the Lea Valley from 1972 to 2018, has drawn our attention to some errors in the counts given for breeding Common Terns in some past issues of the LBR. The most important one of these is for the numbers breeding at Rye Meads in 2001. The LBR stated there were 100 breeding there then, whereas the figure for that year was only 45. As a result, the highest historical London breeding count was not for 2001 but for 2000. While checking the original published figures, we also found a number of discrepancies for breeding counts given in several of these years. We hope to publish full details of all revised breeding counts in LBR 2019.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

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

Spring passage followed typical dates, starting on April 3rd and ending on May 22nd. Birds were seen at 22 sites, as usual mainly sites along the R Thames, gravel pits and reservoirs.

This flock of Arctic Terns is a sight to make any urban patch worker green with envy. Seen at Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth). (Dave Harris)

The first was one at Rainham Marshes and sightings continued in single figures until April 30th when numbers suddenly leapt to 34 at Staines Res. This was followed by 12 at Crossness on May 1st, then 12 at Staines Res and a flock of at least 25 at Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough) on May 2nd. From May 3rd onwards, sightings were in low single figures. The last of the spring was one at Q. Mother Res on May 22nd.

Autumn numbers were lower than last year, when there were two counts of over 100, but it was still a good year with 17 double-figure counts. Purfleet was the location for the first autumn birds, with two arriving on August 9th, the latest arrival since 2014 (July 24th in 2017). Low single figures were recorded until August 16th, when there were 15 at Purfleet and 21 at Rainham Marshes. Movement continued sedately with adult and juvenile birds until the next double- figure count of 14 on August 27th at Gallions Reach. Counts remained low to the end of August and into September with the exceptions of 22 at Gallions Reach on August 29th and 34 there on September 2nd, 24 at Swanscombe Marshes on August 29th and 20 at Rainham Marshes on September 5th. An influx of birds arrived from mid-September, with 20 at Beckon on 13th, 21 at Rainham Marshes then seen at Crayford Marshes on 14th, 27 at Gallions Reach on 16th, 43 at Rainham Marshes on 21st and 36 on 22nd, 50 at Staines Res on 22nd, 12 at Purfleet on 23rd and 16 at Rainham Marshes on September 23rd. A lull was then followed by 46 at Purfleet on October 6th. On October 28th the final birds of the year were singles at Gallions Reach and Q. Mary Res, bringing autumn passage to a close somewhat later than in recent years (October 14th in 2017).

White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*

Status: rare vagrant.

Two birds were at Rainham Marshes on May 21st. This brings the total number of birds to 20 since 2000, with sightings in two years out of three, on average.

White-winged Black Tern records 2000-2018: 17 records, 20 birds

Year	2000	2004	2006	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2017	2018
No. of records	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	1
No. of birds	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	1	4	2

Essex: Rainham Marshes, two on May 21st (A Tweed *et al*).

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

Status: regular spring and autumn passage migrant, with numbers varying annually.

Spring passage began with nine at Staines Res on April 20th, but there were no more until one at Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough) on 29th and one at Rainham Marshes on May 2nd. The main passage began on May 19th and was steady until the last at Rye Meads on 29th. Only small numbers of birds were involved, with the only double-figure counts

being 29 at Rainham Marshes and 27 at Q. Mother Res both on 21st, and 11 at KGV Res on 23rd. About 116 birds were involved in the spring passage.

Autumn passage began on July 27th with one at KGV Res and there were up to three there until August 1st. The only other record at this time was one seen at West London reservoirs from 6th until 23rd. After one was seen at both Purfleet and Rainham Marshes on 21st, the main passage began on 25th with birds being seen daily. This continued until September 11th, then there were more from 16th to 26th. The only double-figure counts were from August 31st to September 3rd, the peak being 36 at Staines Res on September 1st. Almost all of these records were at the Lower Thames and West London reservoirs; the only records away from these areas were six at Walthamstow Wetlands on August 31st, two at Beddington Farmlands on September 3rd, one at Hilfield Park Res on 19th and four at Sevenoaks WR on 26th. There were no more until October, with two on 6th (seen at both Purfleet and Rainham Marshes) as well as one at Staines Res, which stayed until 7th. This final date was 11 days earlier than last year. The total return passage is hard to count with lingering birds but perhaps about 209 birds were involved.

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

Status: regular but scarce migrant.

It was an excellent year, with eight birds seen on September 23rd. On this day, there was an influx along the north Kent coast, including 450 at Oare Marshes. It was the best year since 1990, except for 2014 when there was a major influx. September is the most likely month for this species to turn up.

Great Skua records 2010-2018: 13 records, 18 birds (excluding 2014)

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
No. of records	1	2	2	2	23*	1	2	0	3
No. of birds	1	2	2	2	46	1	2	0	8

*estimate as it is unclear how many lingered in October

Essex: Gallions Reach, three on Sep 23rd (GA James). Purfleet, one on Sep 23rd (F Simpson). Rainham Marshes, four on Sep 23rd (RL Barnes, H Vaughan, A Tweed *et al*). All these records are considered to involve just four different birds.
Middx: Q. Mary Res, three on Sep 23rd (FJ Maroevic).
Bucks: Q. Mother Res, one on Sep 23rd (CDR Heard).

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

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

Six birds were seen, which is the best showing since 2014 when 11 were seen. Unusually, five were seen in spring, occurring within a two-day window in early April. The single autumn bird was a typical fly-over along the R Thames.

Essex: Gallions Reach, one on Sep 5th (KJ McManus). Rainham Marshes, two on Apr 8th (S Harvey, H Vaughan, J Headley) and one on Sep 5th (A Tweed) (presumed same as at Gallions Reach).
Herts: Amwell NR, one on Apr 8th (B Reed).
Bucks: Q. Mother Res, two on Apr 9th (AB Tomczynski).

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*

Status: abundant feral resident.

In 2017 this very common but often ignored species was reported at only 285 sites so the jump to 561 sites in 2018 is welcome. The number of flocks reported of over 400 birds also increased, from two to five, with Regent's Park taking first prize with 750 on August 12th: perhaps more such flocks would be found if observers could take the time to count them. Confirmed breeding, however, remained as elusive as ever with ten sites reporting this (one up from last year) although 31 sites reported possible/probable breeding or territories held, a slight decline from the 42 sites in 2017. The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 22% decrease in London from 1995-2017. Peak counts for sites with 100 or more are listed below.

Essex: Barking Abbey, 200 on Sep 9th. Leyton Flats, 160 on Jan 31st. Rainham Marshes, 250 on Mar 6th. Wanstead, 100 on Jan 22nd. Wanstead Flats, 200 on Oct 20th.
Herts: Bushey, 100+ on Dec 29th. Coursers Farm, 150 on Dec 16th. Ellenbrook Fields, 150 on Dec 14th & 17th. Essendon, 200 on Sep 24th. Tyttenhanger GP, 150+ on Sep 23rd & 28th and Oct 2nd.
Middx: Cranford CP, 125 on Feb 11th. Ealing, 200+ on Oct 21st. Forty Hall, 128 on Aug 13th. Harrow, 120 on Jan 6th. Wembley, 150+ on Dec 18th.
Kent: Crystal Palace Park, 150+ on Aug 30th. Erith, 106 on Feb 12th. Kelsey Park, 150 on Dec 11th.
Surrey: Beddington Farmlands, 100+ on Aug 11th, 18th & 25th. Canons Farm, 100 on Oct 7th. Croham Hurst, 445 on Oct 9th. Croydon, 200+ on Jan 12th. Hogsmill OS, 200 on Oct 18th. Hogsmill SW, 210 on Dec 9th. Kingston-upon-Thames, 700 on Dec 31st. London Wetland Centre, 175 on Nov 6th. New Malden, 200 on Feb 8th and Oct 18th. Norbiton, 155 on Dec 30th. Tolworth, 100 on Nov 8th. Waddon Ponds, 100+ on a number of dates.
In Lond: Brompton Cemetery, 225 on Feb 8th. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, 400 on Nov 11th & 26th. Limehouse, 185 on Apr 29th. Mayfair, 110 on Jun 5th. Paddington, 124 on Oct 5th. Regent's Park, 750 on Aug 12th. South Bank, 100 on Feb 9th. St James's Park, 400 on Jul 9th. Victoria Park, 138 on Nov 12th.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Status: breeding resident and passage migrant.

The records for 2018 show a slight drop from the previous year. The number of sites reporting this species was down from 438 to 415, sites with pairs from 128 to 114 and the number of pairs from 259 to 251. However, it is more than probable that this species breeds at some of the sites where it is regularly reported. This is endorsed by the results of the Breeding Bird Survey, which shows no significant change in London from 2007-17, although there has been a 45% increase in the South East from 1995-2017.

Stock Dove: sites and pairs

	Essex	Herts	Middx	Bucks	Kent	Surrey	In Lond	Total
Sites	59	80	105	5	60	94	12	415
Sites with pairs	14	20	35	2	13	25	5	114
No. of pairs	24	52	68	2	45	54	9	254

Below are breeding records for sites where five or more pairs were reported (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: Copped Hall, 50 on Oct 28th. Orsett Fen, 150 on Aug 14th. Rainham Marshes, 70 on Dec 10th.

Herts: Berrybushes Wood, 90 on Dec 28th. Bricket Wood (18). Cuffley, 78 on Apr 14th. Essendon, 85 on Mar 8th. Langleybury, 52 on Feb 4th. Rye Meads (15); 64 on Mar 17th. Tyttenhanger GP, 70 on Jan 3rd. Woodoaks Farm, 300 on Oct 12th.

Middx: Home Park (10). Staines Res, 80 on Nov 11th. Totteridge Valley, 80+ on Aug 27th.

Kent: Foots Cray Meadows (14). Greenwich Park (10). Longfield Gallops, 85 on Mar 4th. Sevenoaks WR, 90 on Oct 27th.

Surrey: Banstead Wood (13). Beddington Farmlands, 50 on Sep 8th & 18th. Canons Farm (6); 400 on Sep 25th. Howell Hill NR, 150 on Jan 4th. Morden (10). Walton Downs, 120 on Dec 21st. Worcester Park, 100 on Oct 12th.

In Lond: Battersea Park (1). Holland Park (5). Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (1). Regent's Park (1). Victoria Park (1). Birds were also reported from London Zoo, Natural History Museum (for the first time), Paddington Old Cemetery, Russia Dock Woodland, Southwark Park, St James's Park and Stave Hill.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

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

The Breeding Bird Survey for London shows an increase from 2017-18 following a decrease from 2016-17; annual changes are likely to fluctuate but the long term trend for London is a 52% increase from 1995-2017. The number of sites where birds were either breeding or holding territories was 147 (154 last year). Over 30 sites confirmed breeding or reported the presence of juveniles.

Autumn passage continues to be a notable feature of the birding year for Londoners. This year, though, only three sites reported total passage of more than 3,000 birds, a very significant drop from the 11 sites in 2017. This may well be due more to a lack of coverage than to a lack of birds. The first sizeable total was 700 birds over Rainham Marshes on October 17th but October 20th was the first big day and it was then that the highest daily total of the autumn was reported with 11,000 birds being seen over Brook Farm, Upminster. As usual, late October until mid-November saw most of the sizeable flocks, with isolated counts continuing into December.

Woodpigeon: highest autumn counts

Site	Total	No. of counts	Highest count (date)
Chafford Hundred	18,200	3	8,000 (Oct 19th)
Brook Farm, Upminster	17,340	5	11,000 (Oct 20th)
Wanstead Flats	3,540	7	850 (Nov 4th)
Rainham Marshes	2,550	5	800 (Oct 25th)
Tyttenhanger GP	2,070	7	1,000 (Nov 19th)

There was a welcome increase in the number of flocks of over 1,000 birds seen outside the autumn migration period. There were eight such flocks in 2018 (three in 2017) with Beddlestead Valley reporting 3,000 birds on December 30th, Epsom Downs 2,000 on August 22nd and Canons Farm 2,000 on September 15th. Five other sites reported flocks of around 1,000 birds during the year.

Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

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

The records for 2018 show a further deterioration in what was already a desperate situation. There were only ten records between April and July this year, compared to 16 last year. All were singles, so there was no suggestion of breeding, and only once was that distinctive purring song heard: this was once one of the most typical sounds of an English summer. The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 96% decrease in the South East from 1995-2017.

The first record was one at KGV Res on April 15th. This was followed by singles at Rainham Marshes on April 29th and Mar Dyke Valley on May 1st. North Weald Bassett (where there had been a possibility of breeding last year) had one on May 5th then there was another at Amwell NR on May 15th. There was then a gap until May 31st when Rainham Marshes recorded its second of the year and there was also a bird through Totteridge Valley. The only June record was at Sutton at Hone on the 14th and there were two July records: at Woodford Green on the 11th and Hartley on the 16th.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Status: common breeding resident, scarce in central London.

The number of sites reporting this species showed a slight decline to 360 sites from 374 sites in 2017. Rather more sites (ten) reported two or more breeding pairs than 2017 (five) and many sites reported the presence of singing males: many must go unreported. Gatherings of more than thirty birds are becoming less and less frequent and only two sites, Rainham Marshes and Hogsmill SW, reported them. There were six such sites last year and seven in 2016. The Breeding Bird Survey shows no significant change in London from 1995-2017 but a significant decrease of 45% from 2007-17. The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported that they have become less common in gardens in recent years. They were reported from 68% of gardens in 2018, similar to 67% in 2017, down from 77% in 2016 and well down from 94% in 1995. Below are listed the number of sites in each sector, breeding records for sites where two or more pairs were reported (no. of pairs/territories in brackets), some of the larger counts and a list of Inner London sites.

Essex: Reported from 64 sites. Brook Farm, Upminster (2). Lion Gorge (2). Mar Dyke Valley (2). Rainham Marshes (3); 50 birds present throughout the year. Warren Gorge (3).

Herts: Reported from 64 sites. Rye Meads (4). Woodoaks Farm, Maple Cross (2).

Middx: Reported from 76 sites.

Bucks: Reported from four sites.

Kent: Reported from 67 sites. Darenth Lakes, 30 on Dec 10th.

Surrey: Reported from 77 sites. Ashtead Common (3). Hersham (2). Hogsmill SW, 104 on Nov 3rd & 4th. Molesey Heath (5).

In Lond: Reported from Bermondsey, Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, Limehouse, Regent's Park, Rotherhithe, Russia Dock Woodland, Southwark Park and Victoria Park.

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Status: breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

On the basis of sites reporting this species the verdict is – no change. Cuckoos were reported from 104 sites, two up from 2017. Birds were reported from 92 sites between March and May (82 last year), 23 in June (28) and 14 between July and September (nine). As last year there was an unusually early March record.

As far as breeding goes, the position was also much the same as 2017. Only three locations confirmed breeding, with Rainham Marshes again the key site with, as last year, six territories. Once again though, quite a few sites held singing males for greater or lesser periods of time and it is hard to believe that some of these did not ultimately translate into breeding. The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 74% decrease in the South East from 1995-2017.

Although not as early as last year, the first bird of the year at Dagenham Chase on March 22nd (and again on 24th) was still very early. There were no further sightings until April 8th when one was at Panshanger Park and after that they were regularly reported throughout the month and this continued into May. The highest total recorded on one day during this period was ten at Rainham Marshes on May 20th, which must have been a wonderful sight. As usual sightings then began to tail off. The first juvenile was reported at Parkside Farm/Res on July 12th, with the last bird of the year being one at Sidcup on September 7th.

The only Inner London record was one at Hyde Park & Kensington Gardens on July 16th.

This Barn Owl graced Wanstead Flats in the middle of the Rustic Bunting twitch, quickly diverting the attention of all the locals. (Bob Vaughan)

Cuckoo: sites where reported

	Spring (Mar-May)	Summer (June)	Autumn (Jul-Sep)
Essex	29	7	1
Herts	27	4	2
Middx	12	3	2
Bucks	3	1	1
Kent	8	3	3
Surrey	13	5	4
Inner London	0	0	1

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Status: rare breeding resident and scarce winter visitor.

There were records from 68 sites, more than in 2017 (51) and 2016 (55), but fewer than 2015 (77). 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. Four pairs were confirmed to have bred (three in 2017): two in Essex (three and two young), one in Hertfordshire (four young) and one in Surrey (two young). There were also three reports of probable breeding (one in 2017).

Barn Owl: sites where reported

	Winter (Jan-Apr)	Summer (May-Aug)	Winter (Sep-Dec)
Essex	11	6	8
Herts	10	6	11
Middx	5	7	7
Bucks	1	1	1
Kent	4	2	3
Surrey	5	4	6

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

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

This owl was reported from 160 sites (167 in 2017). There were 13 breeding pairs from 13 sites, compared with 13 pairs from ten sites in 2017 and 35 pairs from 16 sites in 2016. This species is clearly under-recorded as there were two or more birds present at another 25 sites during the breeding season, an increase from 19 sites in 2017. Most breeding records were from the Surrey sector with none from Middlesex. Kent had four breeding records (none in 2017). There were two pairs reported in Inner London, which were not considered to have bred, the last successful pairs were in 2014. 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 19 sites. Mar Dyke Valley (1).
Herts: Reported from 25 sites. Balls Wood (1). Wildhill (1).
Middx: Reported from 40 sites.
Bucks: Reported from three sites. Black Park (1).
Kent: Reported from 23 sites. Bexley Park Woods (1). Foots Cray Meadows (1). Greenwich

Park (1). Lamorbey Park (1).

Surrey: Reported from 45 sites. Chertsey (1). Dulwich Village (1). Horton CP (1). Norbiton (1). Banstead Wood (1).

In Lond: Reported from five sites. De Beauvoir Town, one on Jan 13th. Hyde Park /Kensington Gdns, two pairs present but no evidence of breeding. Marylebone, one on Dec 4th. Paddington RG, one on Sep 24th. Regent's Park, one on Oct 10th, 11th &16th.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

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

There were records from 102 sites, a decrease from 2017 (116) and 2016 (108). There were only nine pairs reported to have probably bred (21 in 2017 and 35 in 2016) but there were no reports from Cannons Farm (5 pairs in 2017) and Totteridge Valley (5+ in 2017). They may have bred at several other sites where more than one bird was reported throughout the breeding season and territorial behaviour was observed at four sites. One pair bred in Inner London (four probably bred in 2017). The number of sites at which they were reported is shown below together with estimates of breeding pairs (in brackets).

Essex: Reported from 14 sites. Wanstead Flats (2), fledged five young.

Herts: Reported from 16 sites. Cassiobury Park (1). Panshanger Park (1). Tyttenhanger GP (1). Woodoaks Farm, Maple Cross (1).

Middx: Reported from 29 sites.

Kent: Reported from four sites.

Surrey: Reported from 37 sites. Morden Cemetery (1). Richmond Park (1).

In Lond: Reported from two sites. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (1+), four pairs present, one pair raised one young (4+ pairs in 2017). Regent's Park, singles on Jan 13th and Sep 1st.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

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

Last year, a pair bred at one site and they were seen in winter at two sites; this year, they were seen wintering at the same two sites.

Essex: Fairlop Waters, up to two intermittently from Jan 23rd to Mar 18th were probably the birds seen at the end of last year (H Vaughan, R Sherriff *et al*).

Surrey: Beddington Farmlands, singles on Jan 5th and Dec 12th (Beddington Farmlands Bird Group).

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

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

There were reports from 19 sites, fewer than in 2017 (25), but much fewer than in 2016 (54) and 2015 (76). The only year since 2010 to report fewer sites was 2013 (18 sites) yet from 2000-09 it never exceeded 20 sites. There were no records in February, May, July or August.

Short-eared Owl sites

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of sites	2	-	5	2	-	3	-	-	1	9	7	4

There were reports from six sites between January and April and 16 sites between September and December. The highest counts were three birds at Rainham Marshes in March, April and December and at Bayhurst Wood CP in December. In June, two were reported at Rainham Marshes and one at Staines Res and Staines Moor, which could relate to the same bird, but there were no reports of breeding. All records are given below, summarised in some cases.

Essex: Chingford Plain, one over on Oct 15th. Rainham Marshes, one on Jan 1st & 2nd, up to three in March and April, one on Mar 13th, two on Jun 1st & 22nd, one on Sep 24th, up to two from October to November and up to three in December. Sewardstone Marsh, one on Oct 3rd. Wanstead Flats, one on Oct 17th, 18th & 25th. Woodford Green, one over on Oct 18th.

Herts: Woodoaks Farm, Maple Cross, one from Dec 10th-16th.

Middx: Bayhurst Wood CP, three on Dec 30th. Hampstead Heath, one on May 26th. Staines Moor, one on Jun 5th & 8th. Staines Res, singles on Jun 30th and Nov 20th. Woodberry Wetlands, one over on Nov 17th.

Bucks: Q. Mother Res, singles on Mar 9th, Apr 11th and Oct 15th.

Kent: Catford, one on Jan 28th. Crayford Marshes, one on Mar 25th. Swanscombe Marshes, one on Dec 7th.

Surrey: Beddington Farmlands, singles on Oct 28th, Nov 17th & 24th. London Wetland Centre, one on Mar 19th and one intermittently from Oct 27th to Nov 8th. Richmond Park, one intermittently from Oct 22nd to Nov 2nd. Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), one from Nov 11th-17th.

Swift *Apus apus*

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

The first arrivals were much later than in 2017 (when the first arrival was on March 27th) with two seen at Croydon and Teddington on April 19th, which is a more normal first arrival date. They were then reported daily at many sites with April peaks of 450 at Staines Res on the 27th and 300 at Walthamstow Wetlands on the 28th. The highest count of the year was 1,000 at Brook Farm, Upminster on July 25th. The last of the year was one at Staines Res on September 18th.

The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported birds from just 31% of gardens in 2018 compared to 42% in 2017 and 43% in 2016, and well down from 73% in 1995. The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 58% decrease in London from 1995-2017.

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, however, this year 65 breeding pairs were reported compared to only ten in 2017, mainly due to the significant efforts of the RSPB Bromley Group. Breeding records are given below (no. of pairs in brackets), together with peak sector counts.

Essex: Brook Farm, Upminster, 1,000 on Jul 25th. Grays (3). Plaistow (1). Walthamstow (8).

Swift. (Jamie Partridge)

Herts: Hilfield Park Res, 250 on May 16th. St. Albans (1).
Middx: Ashford (1). Edgware (1). Fulham Reach (1). Staines Res, 750 on May 24th.
Bucks: Denham (1).
Kent: Bromley (7). Chelsfield (1). Crayford Marshes, 100 on Jun 1st. Downham (2). Eden Park (1). Elmers End (6). Foots Cray (1). Green Street Green (1). Orpington (8). Penge (5). Petts Wood (2). Southborough (1). St Paul's Cray (1). Sundridge (4). Sydenham (1). Widmore (1 but unsuccessful).
Surrey: Berrylands (2). Clapham (1). Forestdale (1). Stockwell (1). Surbiton (1). Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), 200 on Apr 28th.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

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

There were reports from 229 sites, fewer than in 2017 (281) and 2016 (282). Four or more were seen together at four sites during the winter months. Between April and June, they were reported from 45 sites on more than one occasion and 14 pairs were confirmed to have bred (16 in 2017). The number of sites where they were reported is shown below for each sector, with breeding records (no. of pairs in brackets), and a summary of records for Inner London.

There were four Hoopoe seen in London this year; this one was at Beddington Farmlands. (Pete Alfrey)

Essex: Reported from 41 sites. Brook Farm, Upminster (1). Grays Gorge (1). Rainham Marshes (1). Warren Gorge (2).
Herts: Reported from 41 sites. Amwell NR (1). Essendon (1). Rye Meads (1). Tyttenhanger GP (1).
Middx: Reported from 59 sites. Brent Res (1). Q. Mary GP (1).
Bucks: Reported from six sites.
Kent: Reported from 25 sites. Sevenoaks WR (1).
Surrey: Reported from 50 sites. Island Barn Res (1). Wilderness Island, Carshalton (1).
In Lond: Reported from seven sites. Of the 60 records, ten were between January and March, one in July, one in August and the rest from September onwards. More than five records were received from Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, St James's Park, Victoria Park and Russia Dock Woodland.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

Status: scarce passage migrant.

After a blank year in 2017, there were four records this year: three in April and one in November. Four records is the highest count since five in 2010 and the first record in November since 1993.

Hoopoe arrival dates 2000-2018: 29 records, 29 birds

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of records	-	-	1	12	4	3	1	3	1	3	1	-

Essex: Aveley, one on Nov 11th (J Railton). Walthamstow Wetlands, one on Apr 6th & 7th (J Datta, I Wappat).
Middx: Brent Res, one from Apr 6th-7th (ME Andersson).
Surrey: Beddington Farmlands, one on Apr 15th (PR Alfrey *et al*).

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

Status: scarce passage migrant.

This year, there were two records (three last year). Both were seen in Essex in August and September, the months of the majority of records. (See App III for other reports for which descriptions would be very welcome.)

Wryneck arrival dates 2000-2018: 70 records, 70 birds

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of records	-	-	-	10	1	-	-	20	37	2	-	-

Essex: KGV Res, one on Aug 31st (S Hamilton). Warren Gorge, one on Sep 7th (RL Barnes).

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dryobates minor*

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

This species was reported from 32 sites, which was fewer than 2017 (38 sites), although it was reported at more sites in Essex and Kent but fewer sites in Hertfordshire, Middlesex and Surrey. Most records were of single birds with two reported at four sites (five sites in 2017, 2016 and 2015). There was one report of confirmed breeding with probable breeding at two other sites (two reports of probable breeding but none confirmed in 2017). Breeding may be under-recorded as males were reported at nine sites and females at eight sites. Birds were recorded in every month and were present at the largest number of sites in March. All records are given below.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker: sites where recorded each month

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of sites	6	8	14	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	4	3

Essex: Belhus Woods CP, male on Feb 8th and Apr 6th. Cely Woods, one on Mar 25th. Connaught Water, one on Jun 6th and Jul 5th. Dagenham Chase, one on Jan 26th. Lippitts Hill, one on Mar 7th and female on Jul 14th. Netherhouse Farm, one on Dec 27th. Rainham Marshes, one on Nov 10th. The Mores, Brentwood, female on Mar 31st. Thorndon CP North, female on Jan 16th, one on Feb 3rd and male on Mar 11th. Thorndon CP South, male on Nov 18th. Wanstead Park, female on Nov 17th, 18th & 24th and Dec 3rd & 24th. Weald CP, one on Feb 26th and Mar 5th.

Herts: Broxbourne Woods, female on Jan 28th. Cassiobury Park, male from January to April with second male on Feb 27th and Mar 22nd. Moor Park GC, Northwood, one on Feb 3rd. Oxhey, male on Aug 16th. Stocker's Lake, male on Mar 6th & 22nd. The Withey Beds LNR, Watford, one on Mar 22nd.

Middx: Bushy Park (1). Enfield Chase, one on Mar 21st. Haste Hill GC, male on Mar 11th. Hilly Fields Park, female on Mar 4th. Mill Hill, one on Jul 15th. Totteridge Valley, singles on Jan 18th and Jun 21st. Whitewebbs Wood, male on Nov 19th and Dec 4th.

Kent: Darenth Lakes, one on May 7th. Green Street Green, one on Sep 30th. Sevenoaks WR, female on Mar 9th and one on Jul 21st.

Surrey: Leatherhead, female on Feb 15th, 18th, 23rd & 25th. London Wetland Centre, one on Oct 22nd. Weybridge, one on Feb 26th. Wimbledon Common, male and female seen intermittently from Jan 30th to Mar 30th and one on May 2nd.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Status: common breeding resident.

They were reported from 553 sites (578 in 2017). Breeding is undoubtedly under-recorded as birds were present at many sites throughout the year; however, the number of pairs confirmed breeding decreased to 71 pairs (93 in 2017, 119 in 2016, 126 in 2015 and even as high as 241 in 2011). This decrease is supported by the Breeding Bird Survey which shows a 16% decrease in London from 2012-17. From 1995-2017, the Survey shows a 35% increase and it seems as though the London population increased up to about 2010 but has been decreasing since then. The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported birds from 72% of gardens in 2018, similar to the 73% of 2016 and 2017, but down from the high of 84% in 2008. Below

are breeding records for sites where two or more pairs were recorded (no. of territories/pairs in brackets), plus a summary of Inner London records and some of the higher counts.

Essex: Reported from 100 sites. Belhus Woods CP (3). Epping Forest Woodland Burial Park, ten on Jun 7th. Grays Gorge (2). Highams Park (2). Mar Dyke Valley (2).

Herts: Reported from 83 sites.

Middx: Reported from 122 sites. Brent Res, ten on Apr 5th. Home Park (7).

Bucks: Reported from ten sites.

Kent: Reported from 85 sites. Foots Cray Meadows (4).

Surrey: Reported from 129 sites. Ashtead Common (4). Banstead Wood (2). Bookham Common, nine drumming on Apr 15th. Canons Farm (4). Esher Common (2). Horton CP, ten on Mar 25th. Molesey Heath (2).

In Lond: Reported from 24 sites. Regent's Park, up to two recorded in every month except July and September. Russia Dock Woodland, up to two recorded in every month except July and September with three on Jan 10th and Dec 31st. Victoria Park, up to two recorded in every month except June and August.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Status: common breeding resident.

They were reported from 470 sites, fewer than the 482 in 2017 and 508 in 2016. There were 67 breeding pairs, down from 76 in 2017 and 97 in 2016. Breeding numbers were

Green Woodpecker. (Nick Croft)

probably higher than reported as birds were present during the breeding season at many other sites. The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 35% increase in London from 1995-2017, there was an increase until 2003 after which they have declined. The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported birds from just 36% of gardens in 2018, noticeably down from 50% in 2017 and 51% in 2016. These represented an increase from 43% since the start of this survey in 1995, which had a peak of 65% in 2003, which matches the Breeding Bird Survey trend (mentioned above). Below are breeding records for sites where two or more pairs were recorded (no. of territories/pairs in brackets), plus a summary for Inner London and some of the higher counts.

Essex: Reported from 81 sites. Belhus Woods CP (8). Mar Dyke Valley (6). Orsett Fen (3). Rainham Marshes (2).
Herts: Reported from 75 sites. Ellenbrook Fields, eight on Jul 1st.
Middx: Reported from 116 sites. Brent Res, 11 on Apr 11th. Bushy Park, eight on Apr 8th. Home Park (10).
Bucks: Reported from eight sites.
Kent: Reported from 76 sites. Foots Cray Meadows (5). Greenwich Park (2).
Surrey: Reported from 107 sites. Molesey Heath (2).
In Lond: Reported from seven sites. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, singles on Jan 16th, Apr 17th, Jul 20th and Oct 4th & 27th. Regent's Park, up to four intermittently from Jan 16th to Apr 23rd, one on Jun 23rd and Oct 22nd. Victoria Park, one on Feb 8th & 27th, three on Mar 10th and one on 21st and one on Aug 20th.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Status: common breeding resident.

Reported from 449 sites, marginally fewer than the 458 in 2017. The number of pairs fledging young was at least 22, a substantial reduction on last year's total of 36, although this is a figure which fluctuates substantially from year to year without any obvious explanation. In any event it is likely to understate the number of breeding pairs, with a further 26 sites having indications of probable breeding and a total of 86 sites reporting two or more birds during April to July. However, the Breeding Bird Survey shows a 31% decrease in South East from 1995-2017 suggesting there has been a decline. At most sites there was just a single pair, but there were two pairs at Rye Meads. The highest count was eight at two sites in September: Orsett Fen on 11th and Rainham Marshes on 13th.

Once again there were very few specific prey items identified, with House Sparrow the only identified avian prey. There was one record of an adult female passing dragonflies to a juvenile on the wing.

Kestrel pairs breeding	Essex	Herts	Middx	Bucks	Kent	Surrey	In Lond	Totals
Territories	6	16	9	0	4	11	2	48
Proved	3	8	4	0	2	4	1	22

In Lond: Reported from 13 sites. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, pair and one young seen, nest site believed to be outside park. Weavers Fields, pair on Jun 7th with two recently fledged young.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Status: scarce migrant and winter visitor.

Merlin were reported from five sites this year. As in 2017, Rainham Marshes was the most productive site with singles seen on four days in the first winter period and six days in the second winter period. Dartford Marshes produced two records. Unlike in 2017, there were no obviously long-staying birds, but some of the sightings at these two sites may involve the same individuals, and all the records at these two sites could perhaps be accounted for by just three birds. Single birds were seen at a further three sites. (See App III for other records for which descriptions would be very welcome.)

Essex: Rainham Marshes, female on Jan 1st, one on Feb 7th, female on Feb 16th and Mar 3rd, juv male on Sep 8th, female on 17th & 18th, females on Oct 20th & 30th and Dec 29th. Wanstead Flats, male on Nov 16th.
Kent: Dartford Marshes, singles on Sep 21st and Oct 30th.
Surrey: Canons Farm, male on Jan 1st. London Wetland Centre, juv/female on Feb 28th.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

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

Records were received from 222 sites this year, slightly fewer than the 230 in 2017. Between June and July, they were reported from 86 sites, with multiple day sightings from 28 sites. Breeding was proven from eleven sites, five more than in 2017, but still likely to be an under-recording given the species' secrecy during the breeding season.

The first bird of the year was on April 5th at Buckland SP, closely followed by one at Canons Farm on April 7th. The first multiple record was three at Richmond Park on April 16th. The largest spring count was 18 at Rainham Marshes on May 18th. Autumn passage saw birds recorded every day through August and September, with sightings falling away rapidly in October. There were two exceptionally late birds in November, one on 4th at Hampstead Heath and the other on 16th at Sewardstone Marsh. These are the first November records since 2013. The highest autumn count was seven at Gallions Reach on September 2nd. The number of records from Inner London was very low, with no records from Hyde Park & Kensington Gardens, which has regularly featured birds over the last few years.

Hobby pairs breeding	Essex	Herts	Middx	Bucks	Kent	Surrey	In Lond	Totals
Territories	2	5	6	0	0	2	0	15
Proved	2	3	4	0	0	2	0	11

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

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

Another very successful year for this master-of-the-skies. There were sightings on almost every day of the year, with records from at least 266 locations. Although the number of reports was marginally down on 2017, there were still close to 1,900 – indeed in many locations around London they are an ever-present sight. Prey items included Ring-necked Parakeet (a very regular and unmistakeable victim), Gadwall, Feral Pigeon, Woodpigeon and Fieldfare, whilst two further species were seen to be pursued unsuccessfully: Lapwing and Common Sandpiper.

Peregrine is familiar bird to many in the capital. This juvenile was seen at Wanstead Flats in August. (James Heal)

It was the most successful breeding season ever with a minimum of 41 pairs on territory, of which 25 bred and raised a minimum of 63 juveniles. This completely eclipses the previous best ever total of youngsters reared, which was 53 in 2016. Thanks to Dave Morrison, and to Stuart Harrington and Dave Johnson (London Peregrine Partnership), for providing additional breeding information.

Peregrine breeding records	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
No. of pairs present	15	19	22	28	23	21	25	25	25	27	41
No. of successful pairs	4	5	5	9	10	15	18	16	21	17	25
No. of young fledged	9	11	8	23	28	38	51	47	53	41	63

Essex: At least eight pairs were present, of which five pairs bred and successfully fledged ten juveniles.
Herts: Disappointingly, after last year's two successful pairs, only one pair was present, but failed to breed.
Middx: At least eight pairs bred (compared with just two in 2017), five of which successfully raised a minimum of 13 juveniles.
Bucks: The regular pair fledged two juveniles, although four chicks were hatched.
Kent: Six pairs bred, one failed, but the other five raised at least ten juveniles.
Surrey: Seven pairs were present, of which three fledged 12 young.
In Lond: Ten pairs attempted to breed this year and, although four pairs failed, the remaining six pairs managed to fledge an impressive total of 16 juveniles.

Ring-necked Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

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

There were reports from 488 sites this year, an increase from the 361 last year and well below the 646 of 2016; this variation is almost certainly due to differences in reporting rather than a genuine change. Counts of over 100 were recorded at 27 sites, similar to last year's 29. There were only nine cases of confirmed breeding, reflecting how hard it is to be sure of breeding, and 55 of probable breeding, usually of birds entering presumed nesting holes. The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 74% increase in London from 2012-17. The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported birds in 89% of gardens, slightly down on recent years. Three instances of the mobbing of Red Kites were recorded.

Ring-necked Parakeet peak roost counts of 500 or more		
HR	Stanborough Lakes	690 (Dec)
MX	Northolt & Greenford CP	970 (Dec)
	Staines Moor	500 (Jan)
KT	Danson Park	3,000 (Jan)
SY	Mitcham Common	2,700 (Feb)

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

Essex: Reported from 51 sites. Belhus Woods CP, 79 on Jul 1st. Leyton Flats, 65 on Jan 6th.
Herts: Reported from 90 sites. Croxley Green, 110 to roost on Dec 30th. Hilfield Park Res, 150 from roost on Nov 21st. Watford, 244 roosting on Nov 28th.
Middx: Reported from 119 sites. Bushy Park, 100+ on Jan 10th. Kensal Green Cemetery, 500 to roost on Dec 29th. Lammas Park, 110 on Dec 28th. Staines Res, c200 E on Aug 18th. Woodberry Wetlands, 300 on Nov 19th. Wormwood Scrubs, 500+ on May 23rd.
Bucks: Reported from 11 sites. Denham, 30 on Oct 1st.
Kent: Reported from 68 sites. Kelsey Park, 1,284 NW on Sep 11th.
Surrey: Reported from 115 sites. Beddington Farmlands, 815 on Feb 15th. Berrylands, 2,450 W on Jul 25th. Hogsmill SW, 287 over on Nov 18th. Morden Hall Park, 400 N on Oct 18th.

Many Londoners spent a lot of money unintentionally feeding the capital's growing population of Ring-necked Parakeet. (Jonathan Lethbridge)

In Lond: Reported from 34 sites. Battersea Park, 40 on Sep 22nd. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, 60 on Jan 17th. Paddington Old Cemetery, 315 NNE on Jan 29th. Queen's Park, Kilburn, 400+ pre-roost on Jan 13th.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

Status: rare passage migrant.

Two records this year, the same as last year, but the arrival dates of both are unusual. As the table below shows, looking at the 38 records from 1990 to date, this is the first November arrival in that time and only the sixth August record.

Red-backed Shrike arrival dates 1990-2018: 38 records, 38 birds

Month	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
No. of records	7	4	6	6	12	2	1

Essex: Wanstead Flats, one from Aug 28th to Sep 7th (N Croft *et al*).
Kent: Crossness, one from Nov 4th-12th (G Kalli *et al*).

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*

Status: rare passage migrant and winter visitor.

With just one individual present for one day, this year was not a bumper one. Nevertheless it was the twelfth year in succession that the species has been recorded in the London Area.

Wanstead Flats hosted this juvenile Red-backed Shrike for over a week in late August and early September. (Russ Sherriff)

Great Grey Shrike records 2007-2018: 20 records, 20 birds

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
No. of records	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	2	3	2	3	1

Middx: Whitewebbs Farm, one on Nov 17th (RM Callf).

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

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

Although the Breeding Bird Survey shows no significant change in London from 1995-2017, in the shorter period of 2007-17 there has been a 26% decrease. Confirmed breeding this year was reported from 15 sites and probable breeding from 60 (this is an increase from the 50 sites reporting confirmed/probable breeding last year). The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported birds in 81% of gardens in 2018, down from 88% in 2017. Breeding records are shown for sites where breeding was confirmed or where the number of pairs were counted (no. of pairs in brackets), along with counts of ten or more individuals (three or more in Inner London).

Essex: Belhus Woods CP (2). Epping Forest Woodland Burial Park, 12 on Jul 5th. Hangman's Wood (1). Mar Dyke Valley (2-4); 12 on May 1st. Rainham Marshes (1). Roding Valley Meadows NR, 11 on Oct 8th. Warren Gorge (1).
Herts: Cuffley, ten on Sep 28th. Ellenbrook Fields (1). Garden Wood (1). Maple Cross (1). Oxhey Woods, 11 on Mar 29th. Seventy Acres Lake (1). Tyttenhanger GP, 15 on Sep 30th. Wildhill, ten on Oct 4th.
Middx: Hampstead Heath, 14 on Mar 25th. Home Park (5). Horsenden Hill, ten on Mar 29th. Q. Mary Res, 12 on Oct 13th & 27th. Teddington (1). Ten Acre Wood, Yeading, ten on Mar 18th. Tottenham Marshes (1).
Bucks: Denham, 11 on Jan 8th.
Kent: Lamborey Park, 17 on Mar 24th. Sevenoaks WR, ten on Sep 18th.
Surrey: Addington Hills, 12 on Oct 19th. Addlestone (1). Arbrook Common (2). Ashtead Common (5); 13 on Mar 30th and Apr 13th. Canons Farm, 14 on Apr 13th. Epsom Common, ten on Nov 30th. Esher Common (1). London Wetland Centre (1). Molesey Heath (1). Richmond Park (1). West End Common (2).
In Lond: Reported from 19 sites (23 in 2017). Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, three on Oct 27th and Nov 5th. Regent's Park, three on Mar 24th & 26th and Dec 15th. Russia Dock Woodland (1); four on Aug 1st. Victoria Park (1); six on May 5th.

Magpie *Pica pica*

Status: abundant breeding resident.

The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 36% increase in London from 1995-2017, but no significant change from last year. Looking at sites where we have breeding counts for 2017 and 2018, our records also show no sign of any change since last year. There were 89 reports of probable breeding and 37 of confirmed breeding, but in the vast majority of cases no counts were provided. Counts of two or more pairs/territories are shown below (no. of pairs/territories in brackets), along with the highest count at each site that had at least 30.

Essex: KGV Res, 49 on Mar 15th. Mar Dyke Valley (3). Rainham Marshes (6). Roding Valley Meadows NR, 51 going to roost on Nov 25th. Warren Gorge, 86 roosting on Nov 4th.
Herts: Abbots Langley, 74 going to roost on Nov 18th. Rye Meads (14); 44 on Dec 1st. Tyttenhanger GP, 60-100 roosting on Nov 4th.
Middx: Hampstead Heath, 36 on Feb 6th. Home Park (15). Minet CP, 62 on Jan 28th. Shepperton, 40 roosting on Nov 21st. Southall, 38 on Feb 5th. Tottenham Cemetery (2).
Kent: Darenth Lakes, 42 on Jan 8th. Ruxley GP, 200 roosting on Jan 10th.
Surrey: Arbrook Common (2). Ashtead Common (6). Esher Common (2). Molesey Heath (6). Morden Hall Park, 35 on Jan 7th and Mar 4th. West End Common (2).

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 144% increase in London from 2007-17. There were 42 records of confirmed breeding this year (including those with no count submitted) and another 39 probable breeding records. Breeding counts are shown below (no. of pairs/territories in brackets) along with high counts for each sector. Following probable breeding at two sites in Inner London last year, the first for many years, nesting was again reported from Hyde Park & Kensington Gardens.

Essex: Belhus Woods CP (6). Brook Farm, Upminster, 1,000 on Sep 17th and Nov 5th. Clay Tye Wood, 800 roosting on Nov 18th and Dec 17th. Hangman's Wood (3). Mardyke Woods (14). Osier Marsh, 2,000+ roosting during winter. Roding Valley Meadows, 700 roosting on Jul 13th. Warren Gorge (3).
Herts: Cuffley, 600 on Nov 7th. Ellenbrook Fields, 1,000 roosting on Dec 17th. Maple Lodge NR, 1,500 roosting on Mar 25th. Rye Meads (1); 500 on Aug 24th. Stanborough Lakes, 800 on Feb 20th. Stocker's Lake, 700 on Jan 4th.
Middx: Brent Res, 555 roosting on Jan 16th. Broadwater Lake, 600 on Dec 18th. Q. Mary GP, 1,500 on Jan 13th.
Bucks: Denham CP, 600+ roosting on Dec 18th. Wraysbury GP, 200 on Feb 2nd.
Kent: Sevenoaks WR, 1,100 ENE to roost on Dec 31st.
Surrey: Beddington Farmlands, 2,875 on Feb 15th. Epsom Downs, 650 to roost on Nov 13th. Hamsey Green, 300+ over on May 14th. Hogsmill SW (2); 300 on Dec 9th. Motspur Park, 600 at roost on Jan 31st. New Malden, 500 to roost on Feb 20th. Richmond Park, 550 on Oct 5th. Walton Downs, 442 to roost on Nov 26th.
In Lond: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (2+), 16 on Dec 11th. St James's Park, seven on Nov 5th.

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 change in the South East from 1995-2017 although in England there has been a 13% decrease in the same period. There were nest counts from 11 rookeries this year, with nesting confirmed at two further sites. However, there are only three sites where we have breeding counts for this year and last year: one was unchanged, one increased and one decreased. All breeding records are shown

below in brackets together with high counts from each sector. There were no records from Inner London this year after ten last year, although that was unusually high.

Essex: Brook Farm, Upminster, 700 on Sep 17th. Clay Tye Wood (46); c600 roosting on several dates throughout the year. Copped Hall, 200 on Oct 28th. Noak Hill, 220 on Oct 28th. Passingford Bridge, 140 on Feb 18th. Rainham Marshes, 120 on Sep 13th. Stapleford Tawney, 200 on May 26th. Theydon Mount (50); 200 on Mar 14th.
Herts: Brickendonbury (23). Hertford Heath (20). Little Berkhamsted (bred). Micklefield Green (bred); 120 on Mar 26th. Park Street (21). Rabley Park Farm (9). St Albans (19). The Commons LNR (20).
Middx: Ridge (33). Totteridge Valley (6); 50 into roost on Nov 10th.
Bucks: Northmoor Hill Wood, 23 on Feb 18th.
Kent: Sevenoaks WR (2); c20 around rookery on Mar 30th.
Surrey: Canons Farm, 17 on Jan 28th.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Status: abundant breeding resident.

The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 51% increase in London from 1995-2017. Confirmed breeding was reported from 32 sites this year. Breeding records for sites with five or more pairs are shown below (no. of pairs in brackets) along with counts of over 100 (over 50 in Inner London).

Essex: Barking Park, c120 throughout the year. Chigwell, 110 on Aug 16th. Hayes Hill Farm, 200 on Feb 2nd. Orsett Fen, 170 on Jun 9th. Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, 160 on Nov 30th. Walthamstow Wetlands (8). Wanstead Flats, 200 on Jan 27th. William Girling Res, 200 on Dec 2nd.
Herts: Chestnut GP, 200 on Feb 22nd. Rye Meads (5).
Middx: Alexandra Park (5); 119 on Mar 11th. Bentley Priory NR, 160 on Nov 3rd. Brent Res, 250 roosting on Jan 16th. Hampstead Heath, 800 at dusk on Feb 5th. Home Park (9). Kensal Green Cemetery, 300+ on Dec 29th. Perivale Wood, 1,046 into roost on Jan 28th. Staines Moor, 101 on Nov 3rd. Tottenham Marshes (6). Wormwood Scrubs, 250 on Sep 28th.
Kent: Crossness, 102 on Oct 21st. Greatness Pits, 150 on Jun 10th. Sevenoaks WR, 120 on Dec 25th.
Surrey: Arbrook Common (5). Beddington Farmlands, 806 on Jul 31st. Hogsmill SW, 101 on Aug 12th. Howell Hill NR, 120 on Apr 28th. London Wetland Centre, c160 on Dec 2nd. South Norwood CP, 150 on Oct 2nd. Worcester Park, 110 in June.
In Lond: Battersea Park, 85 on Feb 13th. Burgess Park, 60 on Jun 6th. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, 80 on May 21st. Limehouse, 64 on Sep 4th. Regent's Park, 80 on Jan 14th. St James's Park, 117 on Dec 16th. Victoria Park, 67 on Jun 24th.

Raven *Corvus corax*

Status: scarce but increasing visitor and recent breeder.

Although the Breeding Bird Survey shows no significant change in England from 1995-2017, there has been a 146% increase in the South East from 2007-17. The number of sites in London with records shows an even greater increase from 21 in 2009 to 111 this

year (for details see table below). Also, in addition to breeding at Swanscombe Marshes for the sixth year running, breeding was confirmed at two other sites: one in Surrey where they bred in 2016 and the other in Hertfordshire, which becomes the third London breeding site. Only sites with records of more than two birds are specified below, along with breeding numbers in brackets.

Raven site records 2009-2018

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
No. of sites with record	21	24	33	33	48	69	59	70	92	111

Essex: Reported from 18 sites with records of two birds at eight sites.
Herts: Reported from 25 sites with records of two birds at 23 sites. Site A (1). Essendon, three E on Aug 2nd. Wildhill, three on Jul 21st.
Middx: Reported from 15 sites with records of two birds at five sites. Totteridge Valley, three on Mar 29th.
Bucks: Reported from eight sites with records of two birds at four sites. Black Park, four on Nov 26th.
Kent: Reported from seven sites with two birds at one site. Swanscombe Marshes (1), two young fledged.
Surrey: Reported from 27 sites with two birds at nine sites. Site A (1), three young fledged. Richmond Park, three on Sep 24th.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Status: common breeding species.

The number of territories/pairs reported was at least 54, lower than the counts of 63 in 2017 and 72 in 2016 (all totals exclude singing males). As with Blue Tit and Great Tit, breeding tends to be under recorded although many more singing males were again reported. The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported them in 76% of gardens surveyed (87% in 2017, 78% in 2016). The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 24% increase in the South East from 2012-17.

Coal Tit is a common breeding species in London. (Russ Sherriff)

Below are breeding records for sites where two or more pairs were recorded (no. of territories/pairs in brackets), plus a summary for Inner London and some of the higher counts.

Essex: Three pairs. Epping Forest Woodland Burial Park, 11 on Jul 5th.
Herts: Five pairs. Northaw Great Wood, 20+ on Jun 27th.
Middx: Ten pairs. Home Park (2).

Bucks: Two pairs. Black Park, 11 on Apr 19th.
Kent: Four pairs. Greenwich Park (2). Shoreham, ten on Nov 4th.
Surrey: 27 pairs. Ashtead Common (3). Banstead Wood (8); 13 on Jun 24th. Esher Common (3).
In Lond: Three pairs. Reported from 14 sites (20 in 2017, seven in 2016). Holland Park (1). Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (1). Natural History Museum (1).

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

Status: localised and declining breeding resident and scarce winter visitor.

This species was reported from 37 sites (36 in 2017, 39 in 2016); with reports from 21 sites between March and July (14 in 2017, 26 in 2016). Of these potential breeding sites, 15 sites had records on only a single day (seven in 2017, 14 in 2016) of which 12 were of a single bird. At least three pairs were confirmed to have bred, with juveniles seen at Northaw Great Wood in Hertfordshire and at both Bookham Common and Kings Wood in Surrey. In the March to July period, singing was also observed at Ashtead Common and courtship/display at Brookmans Park. The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 39% decrease in the South East from 1995-2017. All records are given below.

Essex: Holyfield Lake, one on Mar 5th.
Herts: Bencroft Wood, one on Jan 6th and two on Nov 23rd. Brookmans Park, one on Feb 22nd and Mar 15th, two courting on Apr 17th and May 21st. Broxbourne, one on May 30th. Essendon, two on Jul 12th, singles on Aug 2nd, Oct 24th and Nov 6th, three on Nov 19th and one on Dec 10th. Moor Park GC, Northwood, one on Jan 27th. Northaw Great Wood (1). Rye Meads, singles on Sep 2nd, Oct 8th, and Dec 30th. The Commons LNR, up to two seen from February to March and October onwards. Wormley, two seen regularly in garden in January. Wormley Wood, one on Mar 13th and three or four on Nov 23rd.
Middx: Freezy Water, one on Mar 28th. Little Britain Lake, one on Dec 18th. Potters Bar, one on Jun 10th. Teddington, one on Oct 27th and Dec 7th.
Kent: Cudham, one on Apr 1st and two on Jun 14th. Sevenoaks WR, one on Oct 13th and Dec 3rd.
Surrey: Ashtead Common, singing male on Mar 16th. Bletchingley, one on Mar 25th. Bookham Common (1). Cobham, one on Jan 19th and two on Feb 12th. Downside, one on Feb 22nd and May 5th. Headley Heath, one on Feb 15th and May 7th. Hinchley Wood, one regularly in garden January to mid-March. Holmethorpe SP, one on Jan 1st & 21st. Juniper Bottom, one on Feb 5th, at least four (including two singing males) on Feb 21st and one on Mar 11th. Juniper Hall, one on Feb 17th. Kings Wood, up to two in January, adult and young on Jul 11th and one on Nov 5th. Lumberdine Wood, one on Oct 28th. Marden Park Woods, one on Nov 4th. New Addington, one on Jan 30th. Prince's Coverts, four on Jun 23rd. Redhill Common, one on Nov 10th. Selsdon Wood, two on Jan 10th and Feb 3rd, one on Jul 1st and October to December. Spring Park Wood, one on Feb 10th. Titsey, one on Jul 1st. Wimbledon Common, one on Jan 5th.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Status: abundant breeding resident.

The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 30 % decrease in London from 2007-17 but no significant change in London from 2017-18. Our records show the number of territories/pairs has

gone down to 371 from 417 last year, but this figure was 224 in 2016 and 341 in 2015, so has been subject to change. There are 12 sites where we have breeding counts for both this year and last year: seven went down, three went up and two showed no change, so perhaps there has been a decline in London since last year. Below are the number of pairs for sites where six or more pairs were recorded (probable/confirmed breeding) and some of the higher counts, plus a summary for Inner London.

Essex: 109 pairs. Belhus Woods CP (27); 41 including 24 juv on Jun 3rd. Grays Gorge (8). Mar Dyke Valley (17); 58 including 38 juv on Jun 12th. Orsett Fen (8). Roding Valley Meadows NR, 42 on Dec 4th. Walthamstow Wetlands (7). Warren Gorge (9).
Herts: 47 pairs. Broxbourne Woods, 52 on Jan 8th. North Mymms Park, 65+ on Aug 21st. Rye Meads (20); 49 on Feb 17th. Stocker's Lake, c50 on Aug 14th.
Middx: 61 pairs. Frays Valley LNR, 30+ on Dec 30th. Home Park (29). Park Farm, Enfield, 30+ on Sep 5th. Perivale Wood, 286 fledged from nest boxes.
Bucks: Three pairs. Denham CP, 30+ on several dates in November and December. Wraysbury GP, 33+ on Dec 31st.
Kent: 14 pairs. Chelsfield, 46 on Mar 24th. Chipstead Lake, 46 on Jan 23rd. Darenth Lakes, 37 on Jan 8th. Sevenoaks WR, 40 on Dec 3rd.
Surrey: 130 pairs. Ashtead Common (42); 75 on Apr 13th. Banstead Wood (14). Beddington Farmlands (13). Canons Farm (16). Kingston-upon-Thames, 45 on Dec 31st. London Wetland Centre, 43 on Dec 11th. Molesey Heath (6). West End Common (6); 47 on Nov 15th.
In Lond: Seven pairs. Reported from 36 sites (35 in 2017, 42 in 2016). Young seen at De Beauvoir Town, Holland Park, Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, Meanwhile Gardens (North Kensington), Natural History Museum, Regent's Park.

Great Tit *Parus major*

Status: abundant breeding resident.

The number of territories/pairs reported was 420 (390 in 2017). There are 13 sites where we have breeding counts for both this year and last year: six went up, five went down, and two showed no change, so there was no obvious sign of any change since last year. The Breeding Bird Survey shows a significant increase in London from 2017-18 and a 107% increase in London from 1995-2017. Below are the number of pairs for sites where six or more pairs were recorded (probable/confirmed breeding) and some of the higher counts, plus a summary for Inner London.

Essex: 118 pairs. Belhus Woods CP (21); 43 on Jun 3rd. Grays Gorge (6). Hangman's Wood (9); 32 on Jun 6th. Lion Gorge (6). Mar Dyke Valley (16); 67 on Jun 1st. Orsett Fen (9). Walthamstow Wetlands (14). Warren Gorge (9).
Herts: 60 pairs. Hilfield Park Res, 46 on Sep 2nd. Rye Meads (38); 53 on Feb 17th. Tyttenhanger GP, 45 on Aug 26th.
Middx: 52 pairs. Frays Valley LNR, 30+ on Dec 30th. Home Park (29). Perivale Wood, 74 fledged from nest boxes.
Bucks: Three pairs. Denham CP, 30+ on numerous dates. Wraysbury GP, 22+ on Dec 31st.
Kent: 13 pairs. Beckenham Place Park, 32 on Jan 4th. Chelsfield, 43 on Mar 10th. Darenth Lakes, 34 on Apr 9th.
Surrey: 164 pairs. Ashtead Common (29). Banstead Wood (20). Beddington Farmlands (47); 51 on Mar 15th. Canons Farm (14). Esher Common (6). Kingston-upon-Thames, 44 on Dec 31st. London Wetland Centre, 43 on Dec 14th. Molesey Heath (14). West End Common (11).
In Lond: Ten pairs. Reported from 33 sites (27 in 2017, 39 in 2016). Regent's Park, 15 on Feb 15th. Young seen at Brockley NR, De Beauvoir Town, Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, London Zoo, Mayfair, Meanwhile Gardens (North Kensington), Natural History Museum, Regent's Park, Russia Dock Woodland.

Penduline Tit *Remiz pendulinus*

Status: rare vagrant.

There were three records this year, the first since 2011. The Tyttenhanger bird was ringed on Alderney in autumn 2017 before overwintering at Longford, Gloucestershire. The arrival dates for two of these records are unusual, as, apart from the first record in 1982 (recorded as 'in June'), all the previous records have been between October and February. It is not easy to count the number of records there have been, since from 2004 to 2011 between one to six birds were seen at Rainham Marshes and several over-wintered, but these may be the 12th, 13th and 14th records for London. Details are shown in the table below.

Penduline Tit records 1982-2018: 14 records, 25 birds

Year	1982	1996	1997	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2018
No. of records	1	1	1	1	2	1*	0*	1	0*	2	1	3
No. of birds	1	1	3	3	4	3*	0*	2	0*	3	2	3

*also overwintering birds

Herts: Tyttenhanger GP, male from Apr 16th-17th (S Blake *et al*).
Kent: Crossness, one on Nov 10th (R Charter, S Charter).
Surrey: Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), male from Mar 24th-25th (DM Harris).

Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*

Status: rare autumn and winter visitor, scarce breeder. **RBBP**

Birds were recorded at seven sites, the fewest in recent years (12 sites in 2017, 14 in 2016) with birds seen at four sites in the first two months of the year and two sites in the last two months of the year (nine and ten sites respectively for the same periods in 2017). Unusually, no bird was recorded in Hertfordshire or Kent (the first time this has happened since at least 2010). Birds bred again at Rainham Marshes (seven pairs), but were not confirmed as breeding

Penduline Tit was a stunning find during March at Walton Reservoir. (Dave Harris)

at Swanscombe Marshes as in 2016 and 2017. All records are are given below, summarised for Rainham Marshes.

Essex: Beckton SW, one on Jun 30th. Gallions Reach, singles from Jan 14th-15th & 28th and Feb 11th. Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, one on Oct 4th. Rainham Marshes (7); seen in all months, peak of 18 on Jul 18th.

Kent: Crayford Marshes, two on Jan 9th & 12th, one on Apr 28th and two on Nov 8th. Dartford Marshes, one on Oct 31st. Swanscombe Marshes, one on Jan 5th and Mar 9th, six on 16th, one on 31st, two on Apr 19th and Jul 14th, five from Oct 19th-20th.

Woodlark *Lullula arborea*

Status: scarce passage migrant and occasional rare breeder. **RBBP**

Unlike in 2017, there was no report of breeding this year. There were just five records of single passage birds in March, April, October and early November. This is fewer than the eight last year and the fewest number of passage records for at least ten years.

Essex: Belhus Woods CP, one W on Apr 19th (RL Barnes). Rainham Marshes, one on Oct 20th (H Vaughan). Walthamstow Marshes, one on Mar 17th (P Whiteman).

Surrey: Banstead, one W on Nov 3rd (SW Gale). Putney, one SW on Oct 16th (R Kaye).

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Status: common breeding resident and passage migrant.

There were 12 winter flocks of 50 or more at 11 sites (compared with 14 at 11 sites last year). Seven of these were in the first winter period. The highest count was 220, the same as last year.

There was a total of 254 territories (down from 290 in 2017 and 260 in 2016) from 82 sites (two more sites than in 2017). The highest numbers of territories were at Rainham Marshes (47, down from 49 in 2017), Lodge Farm, Nazeing (20), Orsett Fen (13, down from 25), and Richmond Park (ten, down from 20). The largest counts on autumn passage were 263 over Beddington Farmlands and 94 over Wanstead Flats, both on October 28th.

Breeding Skylark continue to decline in the capital, including those on Wanstead Flats. (Tony Brown)

Below are listed the number of territories for each site, breeding records for sites were three or more pairs were recorded (no. of territories in brackets), plus some of the higher counts. There were no Inner London records.

Essex: 113 territories at 21 sites (94 at 17 sites last year). Lodge Farm, Nazeing (20). Orsett (Dunning's Lane) (9). Orsett Fen (13+). Rainham Marshes (47). Wanstead Flats (4+).

Herts: 19 territories at 13 sites (59 at 16 sites last year). Coursers Farm, 100+ on Dec 2nd. Tyttenhanger GP, 100 on Mar 2nd and Nov 2nd. Woodoaks Farm, Maple Cross (5); 100+ on Feb 6th.

Middx: 43 territories at 18 sites (31 at 15 sites last year). Heathrow Airport (4). Home Park (10). Plumridge Farm (4). Staines Moor (5+). Ten Acre Wood (4).

Kent: 22 territories at 12 sites (42 at 17 sites last year). Crayford Marshes (6+).

Surrey: 57 territories at 18 sites (64 at 17 sites last year). Banstead Heath (8). Canons Farm (5). Farthing Downs (4). Richmond Park (10). Riddlesdown (8). Roundshaw Downs (5). Rushett Farm (6); 220 on Jan 8th. Walton Downs, 135 on Dec 4th.

Shore Lark is a rare bird in the capital. This bird was of the American subspecies. (Richard Bonser)

Shore Lark *Eremophila alpestris*

Status: rare visitor.

Subspecies: North American Horned Lark *E. a. alpestris/hoyti/praticola*

Status: vagrant.

The BOU and BBRC have now decided that the bird reported in LBR 2017 as a Shore Lark was indeed one of the North American subspecies. That 2017 arrival is now the second British record of this subspecies group, the first being a 2014 record in the Outer Hebrides. It will be the first record for London. The bird reappeared at Staines Res on January 22nd and remained until April 14th.

Middx: Staines Res, one from Jan 22nd to Apr 14th (D Pia *et al*).

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Status: common summer visitor, localised breeder and passage migrant.

The first sighting was on March 10th (a week later than in 2017) with two at Brook Farm, Upminster. Thereafter, they were reported daily from 13th reaching double figures by the end of March. The highest spring counts were 400 at Hilfield Park Res and 150 at Walthamstow Wetlands, both on April 28th.

Breeding was reported at ten sites but only three of these gave a count of the number of nests. The Breeding Bird Survey shows a significant decrease in England from 2017-18.

The highest flocks of the summer were 220 at Staines Res on August 26th and 201 south at Brook Farm, Upminster, on September 2nd. These were much smaller than the late summer peaks in 2017 (590 at Staines Res and 500 at the London Wetland Centre). The last record was at Sewardstone Marsh on Oct 15th, 11 days later than 2017. Numbers of breeding pairs (if known) are given below, along with all Inner London sightings.

Essex: Barking (probably bred). KGV Res (c8). Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (bred). William Girling Res (probably bred).
Middx: Home Park (1). Millfields Park, Clapton (probably bred).
Surrey: Kingston-upon-Thames (bred). London Wetland Centre (bred). Oxted SP (bred). Richmond Park (7).
In Lond: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, one on Apr 29th, three on May 1st and singles on May 14th and Jun 22nd. Regent's Park, 12 on Jul 10th. Russia Dock Woodland, one on Jun 6th & 8th. Victoria Park, three on May 5th & 9th.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Status: common summer visitor and passage migrant, breeding confined to rural areas.

The first spring arrival was one at Hilfield Park Res on March 18th (three days later than last year). Although the date was fairly typical, the temperature at the time was 1C, with light snow falling. There were no more records until March 27th but records were daily from April. Thereafter, only small numbers were seen until a much larger arrival from April 27th to 30th, when there were 12 counts of 100 or more, with a peak of 500 at Hilfield Park Res. During spring passage as a whole, day counts of 100 or more were recorded from 16 sites (compared with five last year).

Breeding, or probable breeding, was recorded at 18 sites, two fewer than last year, but with only seven of these confirmed as having more than one nest (11 last year). The Breeding Bird Survey shows a significant decline in the South East from 2017-18.

The first large counts of the autumn passage were in the last week of August, with 300 at Rainham Marshes on 24th, 750 at Sewardstone Marsh on 25th and 200 at Canons Farm on 27th but passage was light overall. In total, there were 26 day counts of more than 100 (compared with 35 last year, 23 in 2016 and 99 in 2015). The last record was of one at Rye Meads on October 24th. Breeding sites are given below, with the number of nests in brackets.

Essex: Brook Farm, Upminster (2). Mar Dyke Valley (4).
Herts: Stocker's Farm (1). Tyttenhanger GP (probable).
Middx: Frith Manor Farm (probable at two locations). Staines (1). Stanwell Moor (1). Strayfield Road (4). Ten Acre Wood, Yeading (1). Trent Park Equestrian Centre (2). Vicarage Farm (1+).
Bucks: Q. Mother Res (1+).
Kent: Foots Cray Meadows (1).
Surrey: Bletchingley (probable). Epsom (2). Richmond Park (2+). Rushett Farm (2). Woodcote (1).

House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

Status: breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first bird of the year was at Wraysbury GP on March 29th, the same date as in 2017. Only small numbers were seen on most days in April before there were three figure counts from 28th. Spring passage was similar to the previous two years, with 13 counts of 50 birds or more (compared with ten in 2017 and 15 in 2016); they were concentrated in the period April 24th to May 1st, including 100 each at Hilfield Park Res, the London Wetland Centre and Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) on April 28th, 250 at Nazeing GP on 30th and 120 at Richmond Park on May 1st. There were also 132 at Brent Res on May 29th.

There were at least 134 active nests at 24 sites (compared with 144 nests at 35 sites in 2017, and 108 at 21 sites in 2016). The Breeding Bird Survey shows a significant decrease in the South East from 2017-18. As in other recent years, the figure for active nests is likely to be an underestimate because at some locations it was not possible to evaluate how many were in use. All records of active nests are given.

Post-breeding gatherings and early migrant flocks peaked with 750 birds south-west in an hour and a half at Sewardstone Marsh on August 25th. During late August and September there were 74 counts of 100 or more birds (compared with 35 in 2017 and 29 in 2016). The highest count was 2,000 at Staines Res during rain on September 22nd (one day later than the peak count in 2017). October numbers were lower than average and autumn passage closed with two at KGV Res on October 31st.

Essex: Chafford Hundred (14). Grays (9). North Ockendon (4). Orsett Fen (10). Walthamstow FB (bred). Wanstead Flats (5). Warren Gorge (8).
Herts: Bell Bar (1+). Hertford (7). St Albans (1+).
Middx: Ashford Hospital (15). Frith Manor Farm (probably bred). Isle of Dogs (8). Staines (7). Uxbridge (7). West Hendon Broadway (16).
Kent: Horton Kirby (1+). Lullingstone Castle (1). Sidcup (1+).
Surrey: Berrylands (3). Caterham (1). Putney (5).
In Lond: Hermitage Basin (5+). Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (5), nests located just outside S boundary of park.

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica*

Status: rare vagrant.

There were two records this year, only the third time this has happened. Most records have been in May and these are only the sixth and seventh record in April. But apart from one record on April 15th, all the other April arrival dates have been in the period from 25th to 28th, as these two were. The table below shows arrival dates for all the records.

Red-rumped Swallow arrival dates 1964-2018: 22 records, 22 birds

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of records	-	-	-	7	12	1	-	-	1	1	-	-
No. of birds	-	-	-	7	12	1	-	-	1	1	-	-

Essex: Nazeing GP, one from Apr 28th-30th (A Wilson *et al*). Rainham Marshes, one on Apr 26th (A Tweed, A Massey, D Smith, P Street).

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

Status: scarce migrant and winter visitor, but increasing breeder.

There was a decrease both in the number of sites where the species was recorded and in the number of breeding territories. There were 131 sites this year compared to 148 last year (a drop of 11%) and 143 territories compared to 177 (a drop of 19%). This is the first recent decrease and could be due to the intensely cold period in early spring. However, the breeding figures are very likely to be an underestimate, since they exclude birds singing in suitable habitat unless behaviour was described as territorial. Below are sector totals, all breeding records for sites (no. of territories/singing males in brackets), plus all Inner London records.

Essex: Reported at 35 sites. Belhus Woods CP (3). Bow Creek Ecology Park (1). Brook Farm, Upminster (1). Mar Dyke Valley (5). Orsett Fen (3). Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (2). Rainham LNR (3). Rainham Marshes (59). Walthamstow Marshes (1). Walthamstow Wetlands (3).
Herts: Reported at 27 sites. Panshanger Park (1). Rye Meads (16). Stocker's Lake (1+), five singing on May 7th & 20th.
Middx: Reported at 29 sites. Brent Res (2). Bushy Park (1). East India Dock Basin (1). Home Park (1). Staines Moor (3). Stocker's West Lake (1). Tottenham Marshes (1).
Bucks: Reported at six sites. Horton GP (2). Wraysbury GP (2).
Kent: Reported at 17 sites. Crossness (5+). Swanscombe Marshes (6).
Surrey: Reported at 14 sites. Beddington Farmlands (4). London Wetland Centre (14+). Molesey Heath (1).
In Lond: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, one on May 30th. Regent's Park, one on November 6th. Victoria Park, one on Jul 7th.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Status: common and widespread breeding resident.

There were 150 pairs reported this year (222 in 2017, 124 in 2016). As in previous years, this figure is likely to be a major underestimate. However, the apparent decline does correspond with Breeding Bird Survey which shows a significant decline in England from 2017-18. This may reflect the very cold conditions in early spring. Below are records for sites where three or more pairs were present (no. of pairs/territories in brackets), plus a summary of Inner London records and some of the higher counts.

Essex: Belhus Woods CP (5); 52 on Nov 21st. Mar Dyke Valley (5); 55 on Jun 12th. Orsett Fen (4). Rainham Marshes (10). Warren Gorge (4).
Herts: Bricket Wood (14). Cheshunt GP, 50 on Mar 8th. Rye Meads (17); 49 on Nov 17th.

Long-tailed Tit. (Russ Sherriff)

Middx: Golders Hill Park, 40 on Aug 24th.
Bucks: Denham, 40 on Feb 4th and Oct 3rd. Denham CP, 40 on Nov 24th and Dec 10th.
Kent: Sevenoaks WR, 40 on Dec 19th.
Surrey: Ashtead Common (9). Beddington Farmlands (4).
In Lond: Hammersmith Cemetery (1). Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (1); 28 on Oct 27th. London Zoo (1). Natural History Museum (1). Russia Dock Woodland (2). Victoria Park (2).

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Status: scarce passage migrant and former breeding summer visitor.

There were ten records this year (just two in spring and eight in autumn). This was an increase on the amended total of four records last year but one fewer than the 11 records in 2016. The first spring record was one on April 26th and the second, and last, on May 1st. All the eight autumn records were in August between 1st and 27th. All records are given below.

Essex: Bedfords Park, one on Aug 6th. Dagnam Park, one on Aug 8th. Ingrebourne Valley, singles on Aug 1st & 26th.
Middx: Alexandra Park, one on Aug 16th. Hanwell, one singing on Apr 26th. Hayes, one singing on May 1st.
Surrey: Beddington Farmlands, one on Aug 25th. Canons Farm, one on Aug 27th.
In Lond: Regent's Park, one on Aug 12th.

2017 Correction

Essex: Wanstead Flats, one on Aug 12th reported in LBR 2017 has been re-identified by the observer from photos as an abnormal Chiffchaff or Willow Warbler.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Status: scarce passage migrant.

There were 12 records this year, slightly fewer than the 15 last year. However, both these totals are much higher than in the years prior to the unprecedented 2016 autumn influx of 37 records. From the first record in 1930 until 2015 the highest number of records in any year had been just three.

Apart from one on January 1st, the other records were from September 29th to November 2nd. All records are given below.

Essex: Dagnam Park, one on Oct 10th. Enfield Island Village, one on Oct 16th. Fairlop Waters, singles on Jan 1st and Oct 15th. Mar Dyke Valley, one on Nov 2nd. Wanstead Flats, singles on Sep 29th and Oct 17th-18th.
Herts: Rye Meads, one on Oct 9th.
Surrey: Banstead Downs, one on Oct 19th. Morden Hall Park, one on Oct 24th. Tooting Common, one on Oct 18th.
In Lond: St James's Park, one on Oct 16th.

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 passage began on March 25th (a little later than in the previous two years) with singles at Brent Res and London Wetland Centre. Records were daily from then on, with the peak period being in mid-April.

The Breeding Bird Survey shows a significant decrease in the South East from 2017-18 which followed the decrease from 2016-17. The long-term trend shows a 78% decrease in the South East from 1995-2017. Taking birds singing after mid-May as indicative of breeding, there were just 14 territories at ten sites (18 territories at 12 sites in 2017). All the territories this year were in just two of our sectors, both north of Thames and this may be further sign of breeding decline.

Autumn passage started at the end of July and peaked at the end of August, similar to last year. By the end of September most had gone and there were just six October records with the last on October 25th at Q. Mary GP. Below are all breeding records (no. of territories in brackets), plus a summary of Inner London records and some of the higher counts.

Essex: Belhus Woods CP (4). Cely Woods (2). Connaught Water (1). Fairlop Waters (1). Lion Gorge (1). Lippitts Hill (1). Mar Dyke Valley (1). Orsett Fen (1). Walthamstow Wetlands, 17 on Aug 30th.
Herts: Colney Heath, seven on Apr 21st. Ellenbrook Fields (1). Frogmore Lakes (1).
Middx: Alexandra Park, 27+ on Aug 13th.
Kent: Sevenoaks WR, seven on Aug 12th.
Surrey: Canons Farm, 35 on Aug 27th.
In Lond: Birds were reported from 14 sites. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, ten on Apr 14th.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Status: common and widespread breeding summer visitor and passage migrant, and widespread in winter.

They were reported from 58 sites in January and February, somewhat down on last year's 82. The peak count during this period was 19 at Broadwater Lake on February 28th. The peak of spring migration was in early April, a little later than last year.

The Breeding Bird Survey shows a significant decrease in London since last year, and a 144% increase in London from 1995-2017. Looking at breeding estimates where we have those for both this year and last year, 15 out of 22 of these showed a decline, in line with the Breeding Bird Survey results.

The autumn migration peaked in early September, rather earlier than last year. Birds were present at 66 sites in November and December, similar to the 64 in the same period last year. The peak count during that period was 11 at London Wetland Centre on December 17th. Below are breeding records for sites where five or more pairs were recorded (no. of territories in brackets), some high counts and a summary of Inner London records.

Essex: Belhus Woods CP (17+). Mar Dyke Valley (14+). Rainham Marshes (15). Wanstead Flats, 25 on Sep 23rd.
Herts: Rye Meads (20); 35 on Sep 22nd & 29th.
Middx: Brent Res (6). Home Park (8). Q. Mary GP, 35 on Sep 29th. Tottenham Marshes (19). Totteridge Valley (10). Trent Park (5).
Kent: Foots Cray Meadows, c20 on Sep 12th. Sevenoaks WR, 20 on Sep 9th.
Surrey: Arbrook Common (7). Ashtead Common (19). Banstead Wood (10). Beddington Farmlands (6); 30+ on Aug 25th. Bookham Common (21). Esher Common (5). Molesey Heath (14). West End Common (6). Worcester Park (9).
In Lond: Brockley NR (1). Holland Park (1). Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, nine on Apr 14th. Russia Dock Woodland (2). There were records in January or February at King Edward Memorial Park, Russia Dock Woodland and Southwark. There were records in November or December at Russia Dock Woodland and St James's Park.

Subspecies: Siberian Chiffchaff *P. c. tristis*

Status: rare winter visitor and passage migrant.

There were just two birds this year, both in February, although there are another two reports listed in App III for which descriptions would be very welcome. This is well down on the six records of seven birds in 2017. The Rye Meads bird was trapped and its identification confirmed by DNA analysis.

The table below shows all the records since 2007. The recent report on scarce migrant birds in 2017 suggests that much of the national increase in records of this species in recent years is 'due to clearer diagnosis and greater observer awareness' (*British Birds* 112: 646).

Siberian Chiffchaff records 2007-2018: 34 records, 35 birds

Year	2007	2008	2009	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
No. of records	2	2	3	2	6*	1*	10*	6	2
No. of birds	2	2	3	2	6*	1*	10*	7	2

*also overwintering birds from previous year

Essex: Creekmouth, Barking, one on Feb 11th & 17th (D Shepherd, J Partridge, S Huggins).
Herts: Rye Meads, one from Feb 24th to Mar 10th (Rye Meads Partnership).

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Status: common and widespread migrant and breeding summer visitor.

The first birds of the year were two at Waterworks NR on April 2nd, about a week later than last year (March 25th). Records were then daily from 5th with most arrivals being in mid-April. The Breeding Bird Survey shows no significant change in the South East from 1995-2017. For sites where we have reports of breeding for both this year and last year, there was no obvious sign of any change.

Autumn passage was quite spread out although there were more records in mid-August and again in early September. There were just two October records: singles on 7th at Crossness and on 8th at Woodberry Wetlands. Below are breeding records for sites where two or more pairs were recorded (no. of territories in brackets), plus all Inner London records and some of the higher counts.

Essex: Cornmill Meadows (12). Mar Dyke Valley (3). Rainham Marshes (122). Walthamstow Marshes (4). Walthamstow Wetlands (2).
Herts: Rye Meads (40).
Middx: Staines Moor, five on May 6th.
Kent: Swanscombe Marshes, five on May 3rd.
Surrey: Beddington Farmlands (5). Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), ten on Aug 11th.
In Lond: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, one on Apr 30th. Regent's Park, singles on Apr 10th & 13th, two on 14th & 27th, singles on May 17th & 25th and Jun 12th. Russia Dock Woodland, one on Apr 13th. Southwark, one on Aug 28th & 30th.

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Status: common and widespread passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

The first record was one at Brent Res on April 6th (April 2nd last year) and records were daily from then on. Spring records peaked in the second half of April. The Breeding Bird Survey shows a significant decrease in the South East from 2017-18 however this follows a significant increase from 2016-17. There was no significant change in the South East from 1995-2017. For sites where we have reports of breeding for both this year and last year, there was no obvious sign of any change.

Autumn records peaked in mid-August but most had gone by mid-September. There were three singles in October: on 10th at Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), on 17th at Rainham Marshes and on 19th at Rye Meads. There was then one at Walthamstow Wetlands from December 10th-11th. This is the first December record since 2015. Below are breeding records for sites where two or more pairs were recorded (no. of territories in brackets), some high counts and a summary of Inner London records.

Essex: Belhus Woods CP (4). Mar Dyke Valley (12+). Mayesbrook Park (3). Orsett Fen (5). Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (3). Rainham Marshes (238). Walthamstow Wetlands (25). Warren Gorge (3+). West Thurrock Marshes (bred).
Herts: Bury Lake (4). Hilfield Park Res (2). Maple Lodge NR (4). Rye Meads (112).
Middx: East India Dock Basin (2+). Q. Mary GP (3). Springwell Lake (5). Tottenham Marshes (2). Woodberry Wetlands, 40 on Jun 24th.
Kent: Greenwich Peninsula Ecology Park (2). Sevenoaks WR (7). Swanscombe Marshes (9+).
Surrey: Beddington Farmlands (47). Esher Common (4). London Wetland Centre (10+). Mayflower Park (9). Richmond Park (10). Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) (25).
In Lond: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (2+). Mile End Park, one singing on Jun 8th. Regent's Park (1+). Russia Dock Woodland (1). Southwark, one on May 2nd. St James's Park, one on May 25th, two on 31st and one on Jun 2nd.

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*

Status: rare summer visitor and passage migrant. **RBBP**

As in 2017, there was a territorial male at Rainham Marshes which was thought to have bred. In addition, this year, there was a singing bird at Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) on June 7th. This is the first time that there have been records from more than one site since 2007, when there was one at East India Dock as well as one at Rainham Marshes. The table below shows all the records since 2000.

Marsh Warbler records 2000-2018: 17 records

Year	2000	2001	2002	2007	2008	2012	2013	2014	2017	2018
No. of records	1	3*	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	2

*breeding confirmed

Essex: Rainham Marshes, singing male from Jun 1st (H Vaughan, A Tweed *et al*).
Surrey: Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), one singing on Jun 7th (M Lawford *et al*).

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

Status: scarce passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

There seems to have been a lot fewer records this year than last year and less evidence of breeding. Records came from 17 sites this year compared to 27 sites last year, and there only appeared to be breeding at one site, down from eight sites last year. The Breeding Bird Survey shows a significant decrease in England from 2017-18, although this followed a significant increase in the UK from 2016-17. There has been no significant change in England from 1995-2017.

The first record was on April 11th at Bookham Common. After May, away from Rainham Marshes, the only records were at Staines Moor on June 14th, Netherhouse Farm on June 28th, Bushy Park on August 20th, Richmond Park on August 29th and September 8th, and the last on October 4th at Island Barn Res. All records are given below.

Essex: Netherhouse Farm, singles singing on May 5th and Jun 28th. Rainham Marshes (6). Roding Valley Meadows, one singing on May 20th. Walthamstow Wetlands, one singing on May 1st.
Herts: Amwell NR, one singing on Apr 19th, 22nd & 25th. Rye Meads, one on Apr 22nd, 26th & 27th and May 6th. Tyttenhanger GP, one singing Apr 25th-29th.
Middx: Bedfont Lakes CP, one singing on Apr 15th. Bushy Park, one on Aug 20th. Rammey Marsh, one singing Apr 22nd-23rd and May 17th-18th. Staines Moor/Stanwell Moor, singles on Apr 17th, 21st-22nd, two on Apr 23rd, then one on Jun 14th.
Bucks: Wraysbury GP, one on Apr 22nd.
Kent: Swanscombe Marshes, singles on Apr 19th and May 7th.
Surrey: Bookham Common, one singing on Apr 11th. Island Barn Res, one flushed on Oct 4th. Richmond Park, singles on Aug 29th and Sep 8th.

Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides*

Status: very rare summer visitor.

Only the fifth record for the London Area, this bird was heard singing at 10:00 and continued for most of the day. This record was the first since 2009, the first in June, the first in the Surrey sector and the only bird that has stayed for just one day. All the four previous records were in the Lee Valley in the Hertfordshire sector and were also singing birds. The table below shows all records.

Savi's Warbler records 1979-2018: 5 records, 5 birds

Year	1979	1981	1989	2009	2018
No. of records	1	1	1	1	1

Surrey: London Wetland Centre, one singing on Jun 3rd (MJ Bradbury *et al*).

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Status: common summer breeding visitor and passage migrant, common and widespread in winter.

There were 112 birds reported in January or February at 89 sites, fewer than the 127 reported at 98 sites last year. Spring arrivals began in early April, with the highest number of records being on April 5th. The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 182% increase in London from 1995-2017. The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported them in 43% of gardens surveyed in 2018, slightly down on the 49% in 2017. Looking at the 18 sites where we have breeding estimates for this year and last year, there seems little sign of change from last year: nine sites had an increase, eight had a decrease and one was unchanged.

Autumn passage peaked in early September. In November and December, there were fewer birds reported from fewer sites than in January and February with about 75 birds at 63 sites (84 birds at 57 sites in November and December 2017). Below are breeding records for sites where five or more pairs were recorded (no. of territories in brackets), some high autumn counts and a summary of Inner London records.

Essex: Belhus Woods CP (29). Grays Gorge (7). Hangman's Wood (6). Mar Dyke Valley (15+). Mayesbrook Park (7). Orsett Fen (8+). Rainham Marshes (25). Warren Gorge (7).
Herts: Bury Lake (6). Maple Lodge NR (7). Rye Meads (37). Stocker's Lake (8). Woodoaks Farm, Maple Cross (5).
Middx: Broadwater Lake (20). Grovelands Park (5). Home Park (30). Q. Mary GP, 60 on Sep 1st & 8th. Rammey Marsh (6). Springwell Lake (8). Ten Acre Wood, Yeading (10). Tottenham Marshes (30). Totteridge Valley (18). Trent Park (6+). Wormwood Scrubs (8).
Bucks: Denham CP (9).
Kent: Greenwich Park (9).
Surrey: Arbrook Common (7). Ashtead Common (27). Banstead Wood (10). Beddington Farmlands (38). Bookham Common (38). Canons Farm (10). Esher Common (5). London Wetland Centre (5). Molesey Heath (21). Worcester Park (18).
In Lond: Battersea Park (4). Hammersmith Cemetery (1). Holland Park (1). Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (2). London Zoo (1). Mile End Park (1+). Natural History Museum (1). Victoria Park (1).

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Status: widespread passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

The first bird of the year was on April 3rd at the London Wetland Centre but the next was not until the 16th. Records were daily from then on, peaking in the first week of May. There were 90 breeding pairs, similar to the 93 recorded last year. The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 39% decrease in the South East from 1995-2017.

Autumn passage appeared to start slower than last year with only nine sites reporting birds in September (12 last year) and the last of the year was one at the London Wetland Centre on 22nd. Below are all breeding records (no. of territories in brackets) and all Inner London records.

Essex: Hall Marsh Scrape (1). Lippitts Hill (1). Mar Dyke Valley (1). Rainham Marshes (5). Waterworks NR (1).
Herts: Amwell NR (1). Ellenbrooks Fields (1). Hilfield Park Res (1). North Mymms Park (1). Rye Meads (19). Stocker's Lake (1). Tyttenhanger GP (2).
Middx: Brent Res (1). Broadwater Lake (4). Poor's Field (2). Springwell Lake (1). Totteridge Valley (1). Trent Park (2).
Bucks: Denham CP (1).
Kent: Sevenoaks WR (bred).
Surrey: Arbrook Common (1). Ashtead Common (12). Banstead Wood (1). Bookham Common (22). Cobham (1). London Wetland Centre (1). Molesey Heath (5).
In Lond: London Zoo, one on May 1st. Regent's Park, one on Aug 21st. Victoria Tower Gardens, one on Apr 28th.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Status: widespread passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

The first of the year (apart from the overwintering subspecies below) was at Hampstead Heath on April 12th and birds were reported daily from then on. Passage peaked in the second half of April. The Breeding Bird Survey shows no significant change in the South East from 1995-2017. Sites where we have breeding estimates for this year and last show no significant change.

Return passage peaked in the last week of August. There were 27 sites with records in September although after 15th there were just three records with the last on 30th at Island Barn Res. Below are all breeding records (no. of territories in brackets) and all Inner London records.

Essex: Belhus Woods CP (1). Chafford Hundred (1). Chigwell (1). Grays (1). Leyton Flats (1). Lion Gorge (1). Mar Dyke Valley (1). Rainham Marshes (5). Walthamstow Marshes (2). Walthamstow Wetlands (1). Wanstead Flats (1). Warren Gorge (1).
Herts: Ellenbrook Fields (1). Frogmore Lakes (1). Rye Meads (5). Tyttenhanger GP (1).
Middx: Roxeth RG, South Harrow (1). Tottenham Marshes (4). Totteridge Valley (3). Vicarage Farm (1). Wormwood Scrubs (2).
Bucks: Denham (1).
Kent: Albany Park (1). Braeburn Park (1). Crossness (1). Swanscombe Marshes (1+).
Surrey: Beddington Farmlands (2). Bletchingley (1). Farthing Downs (1). Horton CP (1). Island Barn Res (1).

In Lond: Natural History Museum, one singing on May 4th was the first site record. Regent's Park, singles on Apr 14th and Aug 22nd, 29th & 30th.

Subspecies: *S. c. blythi*
Surrey: Richmond, the bird from 2017 remained in 2018 until Apr 21st.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Status: common and widespread passage migrant and breeding summer visitor.

Spring passage began with one at Copped Hall on March 21st but there were no more records until April 3rd with daily records from 9th. Passage peaked in the second half of April. The Breeding Bird Survey shows a significant decrease in South East between 2017-18, although a 34% increase in the South East from 1995-2017. Our data also suggest a decrease this year. There are ten sites where we have breeding estimates for both this year and last year: six of these show a decrease, three an increase and one no change.

Return passage peaked in the last week of August, but after September 8th there were records at only 20 sites with the last at Brent Res on 30th. Below are breeding records for sites where ten or more pairs were recorded (no. of territories/singing males in brackets), one high count and all Inner London records.

Essex: Mar Dyke Valley (14+). Orsett Fen (15). Rainham Marshes (118).
Herts: Rye Meads (22).
Middx: Stanwell Moor, 36 trapped on Aug 6th. Tottenham Marshes (31).
Surrey: Beddington Farmlands (46). Bookham Common (15). Richmond Park (23).
In Lond: Burgess Park, one present from Apr 13th to late June. Hammersmith Cemetery, one on Apr 29th. Regent's Park, three on May 17th, up to three in August. St James's Park, one on May 14th.

Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata*

Status: rare breeding species, scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. **RBBP**

Assuming that the Bushy Park and Richmond Park records in January related to birds overwintering from 2017, the first new birds were in January at Colnbrook, Stanwell Moor and Beddington Farmlands. In February, there were new birds at Harmondsworth and Theydon Bois followed by two at Beddington Farmlands on March 2nd and one at Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) on April 7th. This makes a total of eight new birds in the first half of the year.

Birds returned to Richmond Park from October 5th with two there by 22nd. These were the only birds reported in November. By December, the Richmond Park counts had increased to five and there were also singles at Wimbledon Common, Staines Moor and Colnbrook. This represents a total of eight birds for the second half of the year: a total of 16 new birds for the whole year. This is slightly fewer than last year's record high of 19.

Essex: Theydon Bois, one on Feb 15th.
Middx: Bushy Park, perhaps remaining from 2017, there was one on Jan 17th and Feb 4th with two on Feb 15th. Harmondsworth, one on Feb 7th. Staines Moor, one on Dec 24th & 31st. Stanwell Moor, one on Jan 12th.
Bucks: Colnbrook, singles on Jan 12th and Dec 27th.

Surrey: Beddington Farmlands, one on Jan 27th and two on Mar 2nd. Richmond Park, up to five birds remained from 2017 with one staying until Feb 21st, then one from Oct 5th, with two in late October and five on Dec 12th, four were seen on 13th but none after that. Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), one on Apr 7th. Wimbledon Common, one on Dec 16th and from 22nd-24th.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*

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

There were only reports from 71 sites this year, which is a big drop from the last few years (116 in 2017, 120 in 2016 and 123 in 2015). But the figures for the years before 2014 were similar to this year. It is possible that the 2015 increase may have come to an end. Unlike last year, breeding was confirmed at only one site and probable breeding at another.

Firecrest: number of sites

	Essex	Herts	Middx	Bucks	Kent	Surrey	In Lond	Totals
Jan-Mar	10	3	9	0	4	12	2	40
Oct-Dec	9	4	7	0	2	8	4	34
Jan-Dec	16	9	13	0	6	19	8	71

During the first winter period, ten sites had birds for prolonged periods: Brook Farm, Bookham Common, Brookmill Park, Bush Wood/Wanstead Park, Middlesex FB, Oxleas Wood, Rainham Marshes, Tooting Common, Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park and Tufnell Park. There were at least three at Middlesex FB on January 10th, three at Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park on March 13th and seven at Oxleas Wood on March 14th. In April there were reports from 13 sites and between May and July from four sites.

There were no reports in August but from six sites in September with the first on the 8th at the Natural History Museum. During October to December, birds stayed for longer periods at four locations: Belhus Woods CP, Lamorbey Park, London Zoo and Mar Dyke Valley. Three were seen at Sydenham Hill Wood on October 17th.

The only breeding records this year were from Hertfordshire, with a family party seen at one site and singing males at another.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Status: breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

There were 79 territories reported this year, a substantial decrease on the 241 in 2017, 146 in 2016 and 187 in 2015. The Breeding Bird Survey shows a significant decrease in the South East since last year, supporting the evidence from our area. This follows a 34% increase in the South East from 1995-2017.

Breeding records are given below for sites where two or more territories or singing males (no. in brackets) were recorded, along with counts of over ten and a summary for Inner London.

Essex: 14 territories. Lion Gorge (2). Belhus Woods CP, 21 on Oct 6th. Mar Dyke Valley, 18 on Nov 15th. Wanstead Park, 17 on Dec 3rd.
Herts: 12 territories. Rye Meads (3).
Middx: 20 territories. Northaw Great Wood, 11 on Oct 25th. Trent Park, 11 on Dec 28th.

Bucks: Two territories.
Kent: Seven territories. Chelsfield, 11 on Oct 25th. Oxleas Wood, 18 on Jan 13th.
Surrey: 15 territories. Banstead Wood, 18 on Nov 11th. Morden Hall Park, 13 on Mar 4th.
In Lond: Nine territories. Battersea Park (1). City of London, Inner Temple Gardens (1). Holland Park (3). Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (3). Regent's Park (1).

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 much lower than last year, with only 18 sites with more than ten territories compared with 37 in 2017. This is similar to previous years with 20 in 2016 and 26 in 2015. The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 42% increase in London from 1995-2017. This species shows large decreases after cold winters and, following such a winter, there was a significant decrease in England from 2017-18. The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported them in 79% of gardens in 2018, only slightly down from the 82% of 2016 and 2017, and the 81% of 1995.

Breeding records are given below for sites where ten or more territories or singing males (no. in brackets) were recorded, along with some of the higher counts.

Essex: Mar Dyke Valley (26); 31 on Nov 15th. Rainham Marshes (83).
Herts: Maple Lodge NR (15). Rye Meads (68); 34 on Feb 17th. Rickmansworth, 43 on May 11th. Stocker's Lake (29); 37 on Apr 15th.
Middx: Broadwater Lake (29); 43 on Jun 25th. Home Park (46). Queen's Wood (20). Springwell Lake (13).
Bucks: Black Park (17). Colne Valley Park, 40+ on several dates in April and May. Denham CP (14). Northmoor Hill Wood (10).
Kent: Sevenoaks WR, 38 on Apr 7th.
Surrey: Arbrook Common (12). Ashtead Common (36). Banstead Wood (30). Beddington Farmlands (103); 45 on Mar 16th. Canons Farm (19). Esher Common (19). Hogsmill SW, 37 on Feb 18th. Thorpe, 36 on Jun 3rd.
In Lond: Limehouse, 11 on May 27th. Victoria Park, 13 on Jun 24th.

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Status: common breeding resident.

There were reports from 363 sites, which is an increase on the 344 sites reported in 2017. However, there were 83 pairs/territories reported this year, a decrease on the 127 pairs in 2017 and 109 pairs in 2016. Comparing sites with a count of territories for both this year and last does not show evidence of a change, as of seven sites only two show a decrease in territories.

The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 61% increase in the South East from 1995-2017 and a significant increase in the South East since last year. Below are all breeding records of two or more pairs/territories or singing males (no. in brackets), plus all Inner London records and some of the higher counts.

Essex: 52 sites, nine territories. Thorndon CP North (6). Weald CP, 14 on Jul 15th.
Herts: 58 sites, nine territories. Broxbourne Woods, 15+ on Mar 21st.
Middx: 83 sites, 30 territories. Coldfall Wood (2). Grovelands Park (5). Home Park (2).

Nuthatch is on the increase in the south-east overall, but reported territories declined this year in London. (Russ Sherriff)

Monken Hadley Common, 12 on Mar 26th. Queen's Wood (3). Trent Park (3).
Bucks: Three sites, two territories. Black Park (2).
Kent: 58 sites, three territories.
Surrey: 104 sites, 27 territories. Ashtead Common (3). Banstead Wood (10); 16 on Jun 24th. Canons Farm (6).
In Lond: Five sites, three territories. Hammersmith Cemetery, up to two on several dates from Jun 30th to Aug 30th and one on Dec 17th were the first records for the site. Holland Park (1). Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (2), 1 fledged young bird seen. St James's Park, one on Mar 16th. Victoria Park, one on Mar 10th.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Status: common breeding resident.

There were only 26 pairs reported this year, compared to 66+ in 2017 and 79+ in 2016. Reports came from 201 sites which is similar to previous years (232 in 2017 and 211 in 2016), so may indicate that the decline in pairs may reflect changes in reporting of territories. We would appreciate records specifying the number of territories for next year. The Breeding Bird Survey shows no significant change in the South East or England from 1995-2017.

Below are sector totals, all breeding records (no. of territories/singing males in brackets), plus a summary for Inner London records and some of the higher counts.

Essex: 34 sites. Mar Dyke Valley (1). Thorndon CP South (1). Weald CP, six on Mar 5th.
Herts: 46 sites. Bishop's Wood (1). Cassiobury Park (1). Hilfield Park Res, six on Jul 8th.

Treecreeper. (Jonathan Lethbridge)

North Mymms Park (1). Northaw Great Wood (1). Rye Meads (1). Stocker's Lake (1).
Middx: 48 sites. Broadwater Lake (1). Forty Hall (1). Grovelands Park (1). Hampstead Heath (1). Harefield (1). Hilly Fields Park (1). Home Park (1). Totteridge Valley (1). Trent Park (3). Whitewebbs Wood (2).
Bucks: Five sites.
Kent: 20 sites. Oxleas Wood (1). Sevenoaks WR (1); eight on Aug 21st.
Surrey: 46 sites. Bletchingley (1). Cobham (1). Richmond Park (1).
In Lond: Two sites. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, one on Sep 5th, three on Oct 24th and one on Nov 11th. St John's Wood Church Grounds LNR, one on Mar 10th.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Status: common, but declining breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 60% decrease in London from 1995-2017. Many more breeding records would be welcome to help monitor what seems like a continuing decline. The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reports have been slightly variable in recent years. Starlings were reported from 72% of gardens in 2018 compared to 76% in 2017 and 73% in 2016, but significantly down from 98% in 1995.

Autumn passage over London was light, with the peak date being October 28th (same as 2017) when around 7,400 birds were observed at 11 sites with 2,000 at Gallions Reach. The predominant direction was north-west, but others were moving between north and south-west.

Below are some of the highest counts, a summary of the most important passage numbers and some breeding records.

Essex: Gallions Reach, 2,000 on Oct 28th. Hangman's Wood (9). Mar Dyke Valley (11). Orsett Fen (5). Rainham Marshes, 2,000 on Aug 15th and 2,500 on Nov 21st. Wanstead Flats, 1,000+ on Oct 13th, 1,600 on Oct 28th, 1,150 on Oct 29th. Warren Gorge, 1,395 on Jul 1st.
Herts: Rye Meads, 430 on Jun 11th.
Middx: Brent Res, 1,681 on Oct 28th and 886 on Nov 2nd. Home Park (4). Staines Res, 600 on Oct 6th. West Harrow (25).
Bucks: Q. Mother Res, 100 on Jan 12th.
Kent: Greenwich Park, 610 W on Oct 28th, 910 W on Oct 29th. Sidcup, 1,000 on Aug 22nd. Upper College Farm, 700+ on Sep 5th.
Surrey: Beddington Farmlands, 2,971 on Jan 18th, 3,613 on Feb 23rd, 2,500 on Mar 10th, 2,000 on Aug 25th, 2,000 on Sep 1st and 2,098 on Nov 22nd. Hogsmill SW, 600 on Dec 9th. Richmond Park, 700 on Mar 13th.
In Lond: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, 100 on Aug 22nd, Sep 26th and Nov 5th.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

Status: regular passage migrant, but never common.

Spring passage started on March 25th at Richmond Park and continued to May 1st at Ham Lands. Around 78 birds were seen, more than the 69 in 2017. The peak day count was eleven on April 12th.

An unusually showy Ring Ouzel at Walthamstow Wetlands in mid-April. (Jamie Partridge)

There were 27 birds on autumn passage (25 in 2017, 72 in 2016). Passage started on September 25th at Warren Gorge and continued until November 10th at Staines Moor. The peak day count was three seen on October 20th.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Status: abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

The Breeding Bird Survey shows no change in London since last year, but there has been a 30% decrease in London from 1995-2017. We see no change this year when comparing sites where we have territory counts for both this year and last year (five have increased and six have decreased). Regular breeding counts from more sites would be very welcome. Once again, Blackbirds were seen in 100% of participating gardens in the RSPB Croydon Bird Survey.

Breeding records are given below at sites where five or more pairs were recorded (no. of territories/singing males in brackets), as well as higher counts.

Essex: Belhus Woods CP (17). Mar Dyke Valley (16). Rainham Marshes (31); 40 on Nov 1st. Wanstead Flats, 40+ on Oct 17th.
Herts: Bishop's Wood (13). Bury Lake (6). Croxley Common Moor (6). Maple Lodge NR (10). Mill End (5). Rye Meads (27); 79 on Jan 20th. Stocker's Lake (6). Symondshyde Great Wood (5). Whippendell Wood (5). Woodoaks Farm, Maple Cross (8).
Middx: Broadwater Lake (5). Home Park (34). Queen's Wood (10). Springwell Lake (6).
Bucks: Black Park (5). Denham CP (12). Northmoor Hill Wood (7).
Kent: Darenth Lakes, 55 on Mar 6th. Ladywell Fields (5+).
Surrey: Arbrook Common (11). Ashtead Common (27). Banstead Wood (15). Beddington Farmlands (47). Canons Farm (23). Esher Common (5). Leg O Mutton NR (5). London Wetland Centre (6). Molesey Heath (15). West End Common (13).
In Lond: Limehouse, 30 on May 27th. Regent's Park, 51 on Apr 10th. Victoria Park, 31 on Jun 24th.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Status: regular passage migrant and winter visitor.

There were 47 counts of 200 or more birds, of which only 17 were in the first winter period, and 30 in the second winter period. The highest count at the start of the year was 625 (substantially fewer than last year with 1,160) at Woodoaks Farm on January 18th. The last bird of the first winter period was on April 20th, five days earlier than last year.

Autumn migration started on September 28th at Cheshunt Park and peak migration was between October 25th and 28th. There were 30 counts of 200 or more at the end of the year (37 in 2017 and 29 in 2016), with a peak of 836 at Wanstead Flats on October 28th (1,160 in 2017 and 600 in 2016). Below are high counts for each sector.

Essex: Orsett Fen, 346 on Feb 4th. Purfleet, 250 on Mar 1st. Wanstead Flats, 836 on Oct 28th. Wanstead Park, 300 on Feb 28th. Upminster, 227 on Dec 10th.
Herts: Amwell NR, 550 on Oct 25th. Highfield Park, 200+ on Feb 19th. Tyttenhanger GP, 300 on Nov 25th. Woodoaks Farm, 625 on Jan 18th.
Middx: Woodberry Wetlands, 700 on Oct 28th. Staines Moor, 500+ on Nov 25th.
Kent: Greenwich Park, 530 on Oct 25th. Swanscombe Marshes, 250+ on Dec 26th.

Surrey: Banstead Wood, 310 on Oct 28th. Barn Elms PF, 550 on Oct 28th. Richmond Park, 400 on Feb 28th.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Status: common passage migrant and winter visitor.

In the first winter period there were 15 counts of 200 or more birds. The highest count was 300+ at Danson Park on January 5th, and the last bird was on April 23rd at Alexandra Park.

The first autumn birds were on September 9th at Brook Farm, Upminster; somewhat earlier than last year when the first birds were seen on September 20th. Autumn passage was low with only 31 counts of 200 or more birds (down on the 48 counts of 2016 and 50 of 2015). The largest movement was on October 8th when 4,145 were seen mainly moving west at Banstead. Below are high counts for each sector.

Essex: Brook Farm, 252 on Mar 2nd. Orsett Fen, 225 on Mar 5th. Rainham Marshes, 211 on Oct 11th. Sewardstone March, 245 NW on Oct 8th. Wanstead Flats, 353 on Oct 28th. Walthamstow Wetlands, 530 NW on Oct 28th.
Herts: Highfield Park, 200+ on Jan 4th. Maple Cross, 500 WNW on Oct 20th. Tyttenhanger GP, c300 on Nov 26th.
Middx: Brent Res, 335 over on Oct 28th. Hampstead Heath, 245+ on Feb 15th. Lake Farm CP, 367 W on Oct 11th. Ruislip Woods, c200 on Jan 27th. Stanmore CP, c200 on Nov 25th. Tottenham Marshes, 262 E on Oct 20th.
Kent: Danson Park, 300+ on Jan 5th. Greenwich Park, 260+ over on Oct 28th.

Redwing. (Tony Brown)

Surrey: Banstead, 4,145 W on Oct 8th. Banstead Wood, 1,100 W/SW on Nov 22nd. Epsom Downs, 850 on Nov 23rd. Juniper Bottom, 2,570 E on Nov 22nd. Richmond Park, 360 W on Oct 8th.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Status: common, but locally declining, breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

The Breeding Bird Survey shows no significant change in London since last year, but there has been a 31% decrease in London from 1995-2017. The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported them in 63% of gardens surveyed in 2018, slightly down on the 69% in 2017. There were 11 sites where we have breeding estimates for this year and last year; these sites do not indicate a change, as six showed an increase, four a decrease and one showed no change.

Below are breeding records for sites where five or more pairs were recorded (no. of territories/singing males in brackets) and the highest sector counts.

Essex: Belhus Woods CP (10). Chafford Hundred, 25 on Apr 13th. Cornmill Meadows, 25 on Oct 15th. Mar Dyke Valley (6). Rainham Marshes (9).
Herts: Rye Meads (10); 19 on Jan 20th.
Middx: Home Park (15). Lake Farm CP, 40 W on Oct 11th. Tottenham Marshes (19).
Bucks: Denham, 14 on Jan 26th.
Kent: Darenth Lakes, 11 on Apr 9th.
Surrey: Arbrook Common (12). Ashtead Common (8). Beddington Farmlands (17); 30 on Jan 18th. Canons Farm (10). Molesey Heath (14).
In Lond: Holland Park (1). Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (1). Regent's Park (1+); five on May 25th.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Status: common but declining breeding resident.

The Breeding Bird Survey shows a significant 19% decrease in England from last year. There has also been a 58% decrease in London from 1995-2017. The total number of territories this year was 61, well down on the 79 last year.

Below are sector totals, breeding records for sites where two or more pairs were recorded (no. of territories/singing males in brackets), the highest sector counts, plus all Inner London breeding records.

Essex: Ten territories. Belhus Woods CP (2). Leyton, 30 on playing fields on Sep 20th. Mar Dyke Valley (3).
Herts: Five territories. Hilfield Park Res (2). Radlett, 25+ on Aug 15th.
Middx: 17 territories. Forty Hall (2). Grovelands Park, 17 on Aug 6th. Home Park (3). Walpole Park (3).
Bucks: Denham CP (1). Northmoor Hill Wood, nine on Jul 24th.
Kent: Seven territories. Crystal Palace Park (3). Foots Cray Meadows (2). Greenwich Park, 13 on Sep 6th.
Surrey: 14 territories. Banstead Wood (2). Juniper Bottom, 32 on Jul 30th.
In Lond: Seven territories. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (2). Mile End Park (1). Regent's Park, ten on Dec 15th. Victoria Park (4).

Mistle Thrush. (Richard Bonser)

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Status: declining breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

In spring there were 23 birds from 20 sites, up on the 17 birds from 16 sites in 2017. The first was at Russia Dock Woodland on April 27th. All the reports up to the end of June were of single birds other than two at Greensted on June 17th. There were also two at Whippendell Wood on July 2nd. Unfortunately, there were no further reports from either Greensted or Whippendell Wood. There was however one confirmed case of breeding at Vicarage Farm where one juvenile was seen. The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 40% decrease in England from 2007-17.

Autumn birds were reported from 77 sites with the highest count being eight birds at Dagnam Park on August 27th and September 1st. There were six at Trent Park and Wanstead Flats, both on August 30th. The last of the year was one at Wanstead Flats on October 1st. Below are the records showing breeding or 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 five sites, autumn 23 sites (four and 19 in 2017). Dagnam Park, eight on Aug 27th. Greensted, two on June 17th.
Herts: Spring five sites, autumn sites ten (four and 15 in 2017). Maple Lodge NR, four on Sep 7th. Whippendell Wood, two on Jul 2nd.
Middx: Spring one site, autumn 16 sites (one and 19 in 2017). Trent Park, six on Aug 30th. Vicarage Farm (1) successfully raised one juvenile.
Bucks: Four records (two in 2017), single birds in August at Denham CP and Colnbrook.
Kent: Spring three sites, autumn six sites (Three and seven in 2017). All sightings of single birds.

Spotted Flycatcher breeds in small numbers in London, but this is an autumn passage bird. (Jamie Partridge)

Surrey: Spring three sites, autumn 14 sites (Four and 12 in 2017). Canons Farm, three on Aug 27th and Sep 2nd. London Wetland Centre, three from Sep 16th-17th.
In Lond: Spring three sites, autumn six sites. Russia Dock Woodland, two on Sep 19th. Regent's Park, two on Aug 30th. St James's Park, two on Aug 21st.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Status: abundant breeding resident with influxes in autumn and winter.

The Breeding Bird Survey shows a significant decrease in London from 2017-18, however an 88% increase from 1995-2017. We have not seen any evidence of a change, when looking at counts from sites where we have received records both this year and last.

Below are breeding records for sites where ten or more pairs were recorded (no. of territories/singing males in brackets), plus some Inner London records.

Essex: Belhus Woods CP (19). High Beach (16). Mar Dyke Valley (17). Rainham Marshes (27).
Herts: Bishops Wood (15). Rye Meads (33).
Middx: Broadwater Lake (22). Home Park (67). Queen's Wood (20). Rammey Marsh (10).
Bucks: Northmoor Hill Wood (11).
Surrey: Arbrook Common (10). Ashtead Common (48). Banstead Wood (23). Beddington Farmlands (47). Canons Farm (19). Esher Common (17). Molesey Heath (12). West End Common (13).
In Lond: Holland Park (3). Hyde Park & Kensington Gdns (4). Regent's Park (8).

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*

Status: rare passage migrant.

The first Bluethroat since 2015 was at Walthamstow Wetlands on March 23rd. It was of the white-spotted race (*L. s. cyanecula*), as was the one in 2015. This is only the second bird to arrive in March out of the 22 records since 1936. The table below shows the last 12 records.

Bluethroat records 1982-2018: 12 records, 12 birds

Year	1982	1983	1994	1996	1997	1999	2004	2006	2010	2015	2018
No. of records	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1

Essex: Walthamstow Wetlands, one on Mar 23rd (D Bradshaw *et al*).

Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*

Status: breeding summer visitor in small numbers, scarce passage migrant.

The first of the year was at Prince's Coverts on April 17th. There were daily records from another five sites from then until 25th. There was only one other site with a record, which was in late May. Only Fishers Green Island had reports of more than one bird singing with at least three reported on several dates. There were probably just five territorial birds at three sites, down on the 12 birds at five sites last year. The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 62% decrease in England from 1995-2017. All records are given below with numbers of territories in brackets.

Essex: Belhus Woods CP, one on Apr 19th. Chingford, one on Apr 21st. Fishers Green Island (3). The Warren, Copped Hall, one on Apr 18th.
Middx: Minet CP, one on May 22nd.
Kent: Swanscombe Marshes (1).
Surrey: Prince's Coverts (1).

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Status: passage migrant in variable numbers.

There were just two spring records this year (six in 2017): one at Hyde Park & Kensington Gardens on April 17th and one at Putney Heath on May 2nd.

The number of autumn birds increased on 2017 with an estimated total of 33 (16 last year), the highest count since the 36 birds in 2015. After the first autumn record on August 2nd at Alexandra Park, there were almost daily records until 13th. There were no more for a week, but then records were almost daily until 25th. After a gap of four days there were more records from

It was an excellent autumn for records of Pied Flycatcher. (Tony Duckett)

29th. There were only four records of five birds in September with the last at South Norwood CP on 10th. This is the earliest end of autumn passage since at least 2007. The reports came from 22 sites, including Inner London records from Regent's Park of singles between August 8th and 29th.

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva*

Status: rare vagrant.

One bird was trapped and ringed on October 4th at Rammey Marsh. It is the eleventh to be recorded since the first in 1939, and is the first since 1998. It is the only bird to have been recorded in October.

Red-breasted Flycatcher arrival dates 1939-2018: 11 records, 11 birds

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

Middx: Rammey Marsh, one on Oct 4th. (G Gardiner *et al*).

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Status: breeding summer visitor, passage migrant and winter visitor in small numbers. **RBBP**

There was one report of breeding and five of probable breeding with another nine singing birds, six of them in Inner London. Last year there was one record of breeding and up to 17 singing birds. 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	-	-	1
Middx	-	1	1
Kent	-	-	-
Surrey	-	1	1
In Lond	1	3	6

Essex: Gallions Reach, one on Apr 3rd. KGV Res, one on Apr 27th and two on Oct 21st. Rainham Marshes, singles on Feb 12th and Oct 12th. Walthamstow Marshes, one on Apr 28th. West Thurrock Marshes, one on Oct 15th. Woodford Green, one on Apr 13th.

Herts: East Barnet, one on Nov 23rd. Rye Meads, one on Jun 8th. Wildhill, one on Apr 13th.

Middx: Alexandra Park, one on May 7th. Heathrow Airport, one on Jan 11th. Holly Hill Farm, one on Apr 17th. KGVI Res, one on Nov 22nd. Q. Mary Res, up to two intermittently from Jan 20th to Feb 18th. Staines Res, one on Nov 18th.

Bucks: Q. Mother Res, one on Aug 14th.

Kent: Beckenham, one on May 19th. Crayford Marshes, one on Apr 14th. Crossness, one on Feb 23rd, Mar 3rd & 19th, Apr 3rd & 23rd and one on Nov 13th. Greenwich Peninsula Ecology Park, singles on Jun 6th and Oct 26th. Ladywell Fields, one on Mar 2nd. Sevenoaks WR, one on Oct 14th.

Black Redstart. (Tony Brown)

Surrey: Canons Farm, one on Mar 5th. Common Meadow, one on Mar 4th. Little Woodcote, one on Apr 5th. London Wetland Centre, one on Apr 11th. Morden Hall Park, one on Feb 25th. Richmond Park, one on Apr 5th. Thames Ditton, one on May 16th.

In Lond: Nine Elms, one on Jan 25th. Regent's Park, one on Mar 22nd. Shoreditch, one on Jan 21st and Feb 4th. Soho, one on Sep 20th. St Pancras, one on Oct 25th.

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Status: passage migrant and former breeding summer visitor

The first bird of the spring was at London Wetland Centre on April 10th. This was followed through mid-April by regular sightings of one or two birds predominantly in Surrey and Essex. There were just five records of singles in May and a late spring sighting in Teddington on June 6th. There were 24 spring birds across 15 sites. This is the lowest count since 2010, although spring counts are extremely variable from year to year.

There were 79 birds seen during autumn, the lowest total since 2013, the first at Vicarage Farm on August 7th with the last report at Wanstead Flats on October 7th. August was a busy month with 41 birds reported from 18 sites. These included three together at Lake Farm CP, Rainham Marshes, Richmond Park and Wanstead Flats, as well as two together at Colnbrook and Regent's Park. The table below shows the recent totals for spring and autumn.

Redstart totals 2010-2018

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Spring	21	40	32	126	30	33	120	53	23
Autumn	78	55	92	72	133	120	100	83	79

In Lond: Chelsea, one on May 1st. Regent's Park, two on Aug 30th, one on 31st and three on Sep 5th.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Status: regular passage migrant and former breeding summer visitor.

About 78 birds passed through London in the spring, the lowest total since 2011. The first was on April 12th at Staines Moor, the exact same date as in the previous two years. Daily numbers were low, aside from a few days in late April and early May, with passage peaking at 30 birds on May 1st.

The last definite passage bird was on May 21st at Richmond Park. There were, however, two very late birds seen in June in the far north of the recording area. The first was at East End Green on June 2nd, and a male was heard singing at St Albans on June 13th. This singing bird is unusual since the nearest known breeding site is Salisbury Plain.

The earliest returning autumn migrant was on July 10th at Walthamstow Wetlands. Passage became steady from the first week of August onwards, with 73 sites recording birds. The peak was 34 birds recorded on September 1st, with a high count that day of ten at Richmond Park. The last bird was seen at London Wetland Centre on October 24th.

In Lond: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, one on Apr 21st and two on Aug 25th. Regent's Park, one on Aug 29th and four on Sep 5th.

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

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

There were reports of overwintering birds from 48 sites in January and 40 in February. This is slightly down on 2017 figures of 49 sites in January and 59 in February. However these figures still show an overall gradual rise from 2011, when following cold winters, they were only reported from five sites in January. Notable high counts were 11 at Richmond Park on January 13th, ten at Staines Moor on February 7th and ten at Rainham Marshes on February 17th.

Only three sites had confirmed breeding records this year, down from five in 2017. Aside from those seen at the confirmed breeding sites there were only three other records during the breeding season.

The first returning birds (outside of breeding areas) were late this year, with the first record at Hilfield Park Res on August 23rd. Passage increased from September, but numbers

were generally modest, and only four sites recorded double-digit counts. In December 27 sites had records, compared to 33 in 2017, 39 in 2016 and 27 in 2015. Below are breeding records (no. of territories in brackets) and all Inner London records.

Essex: Rainham Marshes (1), one pair, two broods.
Kent: Swanscombe Marshes (1), one pair with three fledged young.
Surrey: Richmond Park (4), fledged 13 young.
In Lond: Regent's Park, one on Mar 9th.

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Status: common passage migrant and very occasional breeding visitor.

The first arrival of the spring was on a very typical date, on March 14th at Brook Farm, Upminster. From then onwards there were records almost daily, with consistent double-

Wheatear is a favourite annual passage migrant. (Nick Croft)

digit day totals from April 11th. The highest counts were 62 on April 20th and 80 on 28th, with the highest site count being 15 at Richmond Park on 20th. From May 5th day totals returned to single digits, with the last migrant on May 23rd at QE II Res.

Autumn passage was lighter than the spring, with only 56 sites recording the bird (compared to 91 in spring). The first returning bird was at Rainham Marshes on July 8th, with another at Coursers Farm on July 25th. Passage then became steady from early August, increasing to counts of around ten on most days from August 22nd to September 16th. After an unusually high count of 34 on September 23rd, all daily totals were under ten. The final bird was at Crossness on October 27th, the same last date as 2017.

It was a fairly good year for birds of the race *leucorrhoa* 'Greenland Wheatear', with 14 birds recorded compared to 25 last year and only two in 2016. All reports were in the spring, between April 20th and May 6th, with birds seen at Alexandra Park, Bushey Bank, Q. Mother Res, Richmond Park (up to five birds) and Staines Res.

In Lond: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, singles on Apr 14th, 21st & 30th and May 5th. Regent's Park, two on Apr 10th & 12th, one on 13th.

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 long-term decline of 70% from 1995-2017 but the index for London suggests that the population stabilised from about 2000 and may be slowly increasing. The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported them in 42% of gardens surveyed in 2018, which is similar to the last few years, with 42% in 2017, 44% in 2016 and 41% in 2015, but well down from 91% in 1995. 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.

Essex: Chafford Hundred, 113 on Dec 13th. Grays, 117 on Nov 16th. Lion Gorge (2). Mar Dyke Valley (8). Orsett Fen (6); 130 on Sep 11th, including c30 juv. Rainham Marshes (40); 200+ on Jan 13th. Walthamstow Wetlands, c100 on Jul 31st. Warren Gorge (5). William Girling Res (24). Also bred at Barking, Brook Farm, Codham Hall, Hangman's Wood, Ilford, Loughton and Roding Valley Meadows.

Herts: Borehamwood (5 broods). Stocker's Farm, 50 on Aug 12th & 18th. Stocker's Lake, 30 on Feb 11th, Jun 18th and Dec 17th. Also bred at Ellenbrook Fields, Maple Cross, Wildhill and Woodoaks Farm.

Middx: Alexandra Park, 60+ on Aug 20th. Lower Clapton, c100 on Aug 26th. Wood Green (4 broods). Also bred at Enfield Town, Hackney, Harlesden, Oakwood, Ponders End, Staines Res, Trent Park Equestrian Centre, Vicarage Farm and West Harrow.

Bucks: Denham, 20+ throughout the year. Q. Mother Res, c20 on Mar 9th.

Kent: Cudham, 45 on Jul 22nd. Darenth Lakes, 45 on May 7th and Jun 18th. Hayes, 40 on Sep 22nd. Lullingstone Park, 120 on Nov 3rd. West Wickham, 45+ on Aug 30th. Also bred at Albany Park, Greenwich and Hilly Fields.

Surrey: Ashtead Common (3). Beddington Farmlands, 161 on Nov 22nd. Croydon (5). East Dulwich, 60+ on Aug 30th. Molesey Heath (2). Rushett Farm, c65 on Jan 7th. Tooting (4). Worcester Park (10). Also bred at Chertsey, Kingston-upon-Thames, New Malden, South Norwood Lake, Stockwell and Streatham Cemetery.

In Lond: Barbican, 40 on Sep 1st. De Beauvoir Town, 30 on Jul 14th. Hemans Estate Community Gdn, 60 on Sep 22nd. Limehouse, 33 on May 27th. Pimlico (2); 50 on Feb 18th. Southwark (6); 100 on Nov 18th. Also bred at Clerkenwell, Fortune Street Park, London Zoo and Tower of London.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Status: scarce breeding resident, confined to two sites; occasional passage migrant or dispersing visitor.

There were reports from six sites this year, the same as last year. At Beddington Farmlands, there were two pairs (five last year) with 26 young fledging (13+ last year). In the Coursers Farm area, there were 11 pairs (15 last year) with 33 young fledging (only 24 last year). The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 63% increase in England from 1995-2017. Below are all records, summarised for breeding sites.

Essex: Rainham Marshes, two on Oct 24th and three on 26th.

Herts: Coursers Farm (11), 58 eggs laid and 33 young fledged. Maple Cross, two on Oct 29th. Tyttenhanger Farm, peak of 25 on Oct 26th.

Surrey: Beddington Farmlands (2), 27 eggs laid and 26 young fledged from five broods. Worcester Park, one on Oct 18th.

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

Status: abundant breeding resident.

The Breeding Bird Survey shows no significant change from 2017-18. There are five sites where we have breeding counts for both this year and last year: three went up and two went down so little evidence of change. The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported them in 88% of gardens in 2018, down from 92% in 2017 although 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: Belhus Woods CP (17). Mar Dyke Valley (21). Rainham Marshes (35).

Herts: Frogmore Lakes (13). Rye Meads (42); 46 on Feb 17th. Tyttenhanger GP, 12 on Apr 5th.

Middx: Alexandra Park, 34 on Apr 8th. Bow, ten on Mar 4th. Broadwater Lake, 17 on Mar 10th. Home Park (16). Minet CP, 30 on Mar 30th. Springwell Lake, 13 on Mar 4th. Tottenham Marshes, 12 on Mar 14th.

Bucks: Denham, 18 on Jan 4th.

Kent: Chipstead Lake, 16 on Mar 22nd. Darenth Lakes, 15 on Oct 5th.

Surrey: Ashtead Common (16); 19 on Mar 30th. Beddington Farmlands (54). Hogsmill SW, 28 on Feb 18th. London Wetland Centre, 14 on Mar 7th.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

Status: common passage migrant and decreasing, now scarce, breeder.

The first birds to arrive were on April 5th at Staines Res and Tyttenhanger GP, then during spring passage there were five counts of ten or more birds, slightly up from the four such

Yellow Wagtail on passage at Walthamstow Wetlands. (Jamie Partridge)

counts in 2017. The largest counts in spring were 20 on April 29th at London Wetland Centre and 20 at Walton Res on April 30th (Knight & Bessborough). Numbers dropped off in May with the peak London count being eight.

Breeding was reported from three sites (two last year). The number at Lodge Farm, Nazeing was the highest this century (previous highest was six pairs at Perry Oaks SF in 2000). The Breeding Bird Survey shows there has been a 45% decrease in England from 1995-2017.

Small numbers of birds were seen intermittently throughout June and July, then larger groups from the beginning of August. In the autumn passage the largest count was 40 birds at Staines Res on September 15th, and counts of more than ten were seen at this location daily from September 14th to 21st. After five birds at Staines Res on October 4th, only singles were seen with the last at KGV Res on 20th. There were 40 counts of ten or more birds, higher than the 23 such counts in 2017, 33 in 2016 and 31 in 2015.

Below are breeding records (no. of territories in brackets), plus all Inner London records.

Essex: Orsett Fen (2). Lodge Farm, Nazeing (8).
Herts: Tyttenhanger GP (1).
In Lond: Holland Park, one over on Apr 11th. Limehouse, two over on Aug 31st. Regent's Park, singles on Apr 10th & 27th.

Subspecies: Blue-headed Wagtail *M. f. flava*

Status: passage migrant, more commonly seen in spring than in autumn.

There were two spring records this year (three in 2017, one in 2016 and four in 2015).

Surrey: QE II Res, one on Apr 29th (C Turner). Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough), one on Apr 30th (DM Harris).

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Status: common breeding resident and passage migrant.

There were only 44 breeding records in 2018, including probable breeders and singing males, well down from the 73 in 2017 and 66 in 2016. The Breeding Bird Survey shows a significant decrease in England from 2017-18. The largest winter count was ten at Beddington Farmlands on November 22nd.

There were counts of ten or more in autumn from Rye Meads (ten in September) and Walthamstow Wetlands (peak of 15 in September). This was down from the peak autumn count of 20 in 2017. All breeding records are given below (no. of territories/singing males in brackets).

Essex: KGV Res (1). Rainham Marshes (1).
Herts: Amwell NR (1). Essendon (1). Hatfield Park (1). Osidge (1). Rickmansworth (1). Rye Meads (3). Tyttenhanger GP (1).
Middx: Alexandra Park (1). Dollis Brook (1). Enfield Town (1). Grovelands Park (1). Osterley Park (1). Parkside Farm/Res (1). Vicarage Farm (1). Winchmore Hill (1). Woodberry Wetlands (1).
Kent: Bromley (1). Eynsford (1). Foots Cray Meadows (1). Greenwich Peninsula Ecology Park (1). Horton Kirby (1).
Surrey: Beddington Farmlands (5). Berrylands (1). Buckland SP (1). R Wandle (8).
In Lond: Battersea (1). Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (1). Lisson Grove (1). Notting Hill (1).

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Status: common breeding resident and winter visitor.

There were 41 breeding records in 2018 (including probable breeders and singing males), down from the 73 in 2017 and 66 in 2016. The highest count was 259 birds going to a roost at Epping in February. Other large roost counts were 200+ at Darenth CP on January 10th, 81 at Hertford on March 14th and 73 at Upminster on December 6th.

Large counts during the autumn included 50 birds at Walthamstow Marshes on September 27th and 47 at Cassiobury Park on October 12th. All breeding records are given below (no. of territories/singing males in brackets).

Essex: Brook Farm, Upminster (1). Mar Dyke Valley (1). Orsett Fen (2). Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (1). Rainham Marshes (2). Walthamstow Marshes (1). Walthamstow Wetlands (2). Wanstead Flats (1).
Herts: Abbots Langley (1). Brookmans Park (1). Cockfosters (1). Coursers Farm (1). Ellenbrook Fields (1). Essendon (1). Garston (1). Hilfield Park Res (1). Radlett (1). Rye Meads (1). Tyttenhanger GP (1). West Hyde (1).
Middx: Enfield Town (1). Home Park (3). Park Farm, Enfield (1). Parkside Farm/Res (2).

Pied Wagtail. (Jonathan Lethbridge)

South Lodge Farm (1). Staines Res (1). Vicarage Farm (1).
Kent: Sevenoaks WR (1).
Surrey: Arbrook Common (1). Buckland SP (1) Croydon (3). Leatherhead (1).
In Lond: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns (1).

Subspecies: White Wagtail *M. a. alba*

Status: passage migrant, more commonly seen in spring than in autumn.

Nearly all records were in spring, with the first on March 23rd and the last on May 15th, most were in April and a few in May. There were three records in autumn at Q. Mother Res. (See App III for details of other reports for which descriptions would be welcome.) All records are given below.

Essex: Fairlop Waters, one on Apr 29th. KGV Res, one on Apr 9th. Walthamstow Wetlands, three on Mar 27th, between one and 14 from Apr 8th-17th. Wanstead Flats, singles from Apr 10th-25th.
Herts: Tyttenhanger GP, one or two on nine dates from Apr 17th to May 15th.
Middx: Brent Res, one on Apr 28th. KGVI Res, one on Apr 8th. Staines Res, one or two from Apr 1st to May 3rd. Vicarage Farm, one on Mar 27th.
Bucks: Q. Mother Res, singles from Mar 23rd to Apr 27th, Jul 3rd, Aug 4th and Sep 15th.
Surrey: Beddington Farmlands, three on Apr 28th. Richmond Park, two on Apr 21st. Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough), three on Apr 11th and one on May 12th.

Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi*

Status: rare visitor.

There were two records in October, which is the month they are most likely to be seen (see table below). The last records were in 2012, when there were also two records.

Richard's Pipit arrival dates 1956-2018: 28 records, 29 birds

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of records	-	-	-	6	2	-	-	-	6	11	2	1
No. of birds	-	-	-	6	2	-	-	-	6	12	2	1

Essex: Chafford Hundred, one flew SW on Oct 19th (RL Barnes).
Surrey: Beddington Farmlands, one from Oct 29th-31st (PR Alfrey *et al*).

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

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

There were seven winter flocks of 50 or more birds (up from two in 2017 and three in 2016) with the highest being 65 at Chelsfield on January 3rd and 60 at Ellenbrook Fields on February 18th.

Spring passage was lighter than last year with just five counts of 50 or more birds at four sites: 70 at Beddington Farmlands on March 1st, 60+ at Richmond Park on March 26th, 60 at Aldenham on April 3rd and 50+ at Ten Acre Wood, Yeading on March 3rd and 18th. In 2017, there were seven such counts, although only one in 2016 but 19 in 2015.

Breeding records came from nine sites (down from 12 in 2017). However, looking at the seven sites where we have breeding counts for this year and last year, five of these show an increase this year. The Breeding Bird Survey shows that there has been a 44% decrease in the South East from 1995-2017.

Autumn passage was lighter than last year with 21 counts of 50 or more birds (down from 30 counts in 2017) although it included 13 counts of 100 or more birds (up from eight in 2017). The highest count of the autumn was 600 at Rainham Marshes on September 24th, this is the first count of over 500 birds since 2012.

All territories are given below (no. of territories/singing males in brackets).

Essex: Rainham Marshes (33). Wanstead Flats (5).
Herts: Frogmore Lakes (1). Maple Cross (6).
Middx: Bushy Park (1). Home Park (3). Staines Moor (4).
Surrey: Banstead Heath (4). Riddlesdown (2).

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Status: passage migrant and scarce (possibly former) breeding summer visitor

The first of the year was on April 11th at Dagenham Chase, which is the latest arrival date since 2012. Spring passage was heavier than last year, involving 16 birds (13 in 2017), at least six of which were heard flying over, with the final bird over Totteridge Valley on May 31st.

For the seventh year running, there were no records of birds breeding or holding territory.

Autumn passage consisted of about 50 birds (up from 41 in 2017 and 45 in 2016) with

the first at Leyton Flats on August 6th and the last over Beddington Farmlands on October 20th. All records are given below.

Essex: Brook Farm, Upminster, one over on Apr 14th. Connaught Water, one on Aug 20th. Dagenham Chase, one on Apr 11th. Ingrebourne Valley, singles on Apr 12th, Aug 25th and Sep 16th. Leyton Flats, singles on Aug 6th & 15th. Rainham Marshes, two on Apr 12th & 14th and one on 27th, one on Aug 17th, two on 18th and one on Sep 24th. Wanstead Flats singles on Apr 13th, May 3rd, Aug 29th and Sep 8th.

Middx: Alexandra Park, one on Aug 17th, flock of six S on 21st, one over on Sep 1st and two over on 6th. Bayhurst Wood CP, one on Aug 30th. Brent Res, singles on Sep 1st & 6th. Harefield, two over on Aug 26th. Lake Farm CP, one on Aug 30th. Q. Mary GP, one on Sep 8th. Stanwell Moor, two on Aug 31st. Totteridge Valley, one over on May 31st. Vicarage Farm, one on Aug 24th and two on 25th. Woodberry Wetlands, one on Apr 27th.

Bucks: Colnbrook, singles on Aug 24th & 29th and Sep 2nd.

Kent: Crossness, one on Sep 13th.

Surrey: Beddington Farmlands, singles over on Aug 22nd and Oct 20th. Canons Farm, singles on Apr 29th and Sep 25th. Richmond Park, singles on Apr 28th, May 5th and Sep 13th, 15th & 28th. Wimbledon Common, one over on Sep 14th.

In Lond: Marylebone, one over on Sep 13th.

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

Status: regular but localised winter visitor and passage migrant.

There were reports from 18 sites (same as in 2017). The highest counts were at Beddington Farmlands, with counts of 17 on November 22nd and 12 on December 19th and at Staines Moor with 12 on December 24th. The peak count at Rainham Marshes was ten, much higher than the five in 2017. 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	2	2	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	7	10	8
MX	Staines Moor	9	3	8	5	-	-	-	-	-	3	1	12
	Staines Res	1	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	-
SY	Beddington Farmlands	5	5	5	5	-	-	-	-	-	2	17	12
	Wetland Centre	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	5	4	3

Essex: KGV Res, one on Mar 9th. Wanstead Flats, one on Oct 21st.

Herts: Amwell NR, singles on Oct 17th, Nov 5th & 23rd. Rye Meads, singles from Jan 20th to Feb 3rd and from Feb 25th-26th, two on Oct 14th and one on Nov 24th.

Middx: KGVI Res, two on Feb 17th and Mar 16th, one on Nov 9th. Q. Mary Res, one on Nov 25th. Stanwell Moor, nine on Jan 11th & 12th.

Bucks: Horton, one to three from Jan 7th-31st and one on Dec 25th. Q. Mother Res, one on Oct 25th and two on Nov 21st.

Kent: Crayford Marshes, singles on Mar 5th & 30th and Nov 2nd. Dartford Marshes, one on Feb 21st, two on Apr 9th and three or four on Oct 31st. Swanscombe Marshes, singles on Jan 1st & 5th, Feb 2nd and Mar 18th, two on Nov 3rd and one on 30th.

Surrey: Island Barn Res, one on several days in November with two on 5th.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Status: passage migrant and winter visitor.

Reports came from 30 sites (up from 22 in 2017). The peak count was eight at Rainham Marshes on January 28th and March 3rd (the same as the eight in 2017). 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	KGV Res	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	1	-
	Rainham Marshes	8	2	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	3	4
KT	Crossness	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-
	Erith Reach	2	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	1
	Swanscombe Marshes	4	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	3

Essex: Beckton Creekside NR, one on Mar 2nd. Beckton SW, three on Nov 2nd and two on 28th. Gallions Reach, one on Feb 28th. Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, one on Mar 18th. Thames Barrier, one on Mar 4th. Walthamstow Wetlands, singles on Mar 14th and Apr 2nd and three on Nov 1st. Wanstead Flats, one on Oct 16th. West Thurrock Marshes, one on Jan 1st, three on Mar 1st, one on Mar 17th and four on Dec 24th.

Herts: Amwell NR, one on Oct 4th. Hilfield Park Res, one on Oct 18th. Tyttenhanger GP, one on Mar 2nd.

Middx: East India Dock Basin, one on Oct 23rd. Isle of Dogs, two on Nov 11th. Staines Res, singles in January, March and October.

Bucks: Q. Mother Res, singles on Mar 6th and Sep 25th, two on Oct 14th & 15th.

Kent: Belvedere, R Thames, one on Nov 26th. Crayford Marshes, one on Mar 5th and two on Nov 2nd. Dartford Marshes, one on Mar 3rd, two on Oct 14th, one on Oct 28th, two on Oct 31st, singles on Nov 3rd & 25th. Greenwich Peninsula, three on Mar 1st and one on 2nd.

Surrey: Island Barn Res, singles on Oct 9th & 10th and two on Oct 31st. Holmethorpe SP, one over on Oct 8th. Island Barn Res, one on Oct 10th and two on 31st. London Wetland Centre, one from Mar 29th to Apr 1st, then singles on Apr 10th and Dec 12th. Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough), one from Sep 27th-30th.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Status: common breeding resident, augmented by continental influxes in autumn and winter.

There were 47 counts of 100 birds or more, compared with 54 in 2017. This was still almost double the 26 counts in 2016 and treble the 16 counts in 2015. The highest winter counts were 350 roosting on January 21st at Fishers Green Island and 200 feeding on December 28th at Woodoaks Farm, Maple Cross. There were few high counts in spring with a peak of 115 over Brent Res on March 25th but a good autumn passage from October 7th to November 15th, peaking on October 28th, when over 2,100 were observed flying over with counts from all sectors. The Breeding Bird Survey shows no significant change in London from 1995-2017, but a 37% decrease from 2012-17. The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported that Chaffinches seem to have suffered, as they were reported from 69% of gardens in 2018, down from 76% in 2017 and 78% in 2016. This was still slightly

up from the 65% recorded in 1995, but down from the high of 91% in 2008. At the seven sites where we have breeding counts for both this year and last year, there is no sign of any change: three sites had an increase, three had a decrease and one had no change. Below are breeding records of five or more pairs (no. of territories in brackets) plus counts of 100 or more, summarised in some places, and selected records for Inner London.

Essex: Beckton SW, 107 on Nov 2nd. Belhus Woods CP (9). Bell Common, 140 on Nov 26th. Chigwell (7). Cornmill Meadows, 100 on Oct 28th. Fishers Green Island, 350 roosting on Jan 21st, 150 on Feb 12th. Gallions Reach, 275 on Oct 28th. Ingrebourne Valley, 200 on Jan 21st. Mar Dyke Valley (11). Orsett Fen (15). Rainham Marshes (12). Wanstead Flats, 550 on Oct 28th.

Herts: North Met Pit, 100 on Feb 7th. Woodoaks Farm, Maple Cross, 200 on Dec 28th.

Middx: Alexandra Park, 163 on Oct 20th. Brent Res, 115 over on Mar 25th, 114 over on Oct 28th and 111 over on Nov 2nd. Hampstead Heath, 200 NW on Oct 20th. Home Park (6).

Bucks: Q. Mother Res, 300 NW on Oct 28th.

Kent: Greenwich Park, 160 on Oct 20th, 130 on 25th, 240 on 28th, 125 on 29th, 210 on Nov 2nd and 310 on 3rd, all moving west.

Surrey: Banstead, 308 on Oct 8th, 120 on 17th, 156 W on 29th, 239 NW on Nov 2nd and 136 on 3rd. Banstead Wood, 120 W on Oct 28th. Barn Elms PF, 115 W on Oct 25th. Beddington Farmlands, 235 mainly NW on Oct 20th and 429 on 28th. Canons Farm (10); 400 NW on Oct 14th and 300 NW on 16th. Holmethorpe SP, 150 mainly NW on Oct 28th. Putney, 109 mainly NW on Oct 16th. Richmond Park, 260 SW/W on Oct 17th. Worcester Park (10).

In Lond: Reported from 20 sites; 13 of these between April and July. The highest count was six at London Zoo on Mar 7th.

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 15 counts in 2017, three in 2016 and two in 2015. These 15 counts were made at eight sites with some counts made on consecutive days. The highest count was 90 at Ingrebourne Valley on January 16th. The last bird of spring was one at Lodge Farm, Nazeing on April 22nd (April 5th in 2017) and the first of autumn were singles at the London Wetland Centre and Rainham Marshes on September 30th (September 26th in 2017). There were at least five reports of birds coming into gardens, including up to twelve in Maple Cross from January to March and up to three in Hertford in February and March. There were no records from Inner London for the first time since 2013. Below are high sector counts.

Essex: Ingrebourne Valley, 90 on Jan 16th. KGV Res, six on Apr 10th and seven on Oct 20th. Rainham Marshes, three on Nov 1st. Thorndon CP, five on Oct 20th. Walthamstow Wetlands, eight on Apr 12th and four W on Oct 28th.

Herts: Brickendon, ten on Jan 5th. Brookmans Park, three on Jan 25th. Broxbourne Woods, 20 on Jan 2nd and ten on Mar 9th. Hertford, up to three from Feb 1st to Mar 1st. Maple Cross, up to 12 from Jan 21st to Mar 23rd. Northaw Great Wood, six on Apr 2nd. Wormley Wood, ten on Feb 25th.

Middx: Brent Res, two over on Oct 20th & 28th. Lake Farm CP, two on Nov 28th. Tottenham Marshes, three on Nov 18th.

Many London patches recorded Hawfinch in 2018, some in very large numbers. (Nick Croft)

Bucks: Horton GP, two on Jan 13th.

Kent: Greenwich Park, up to nine from Oct 20th to Nov 15th. Hazelwood, 40 on Mar 21st. Sevenoaks WR, four on Apr 11th.

Surrey: Banstead, seven W on Oct 8th. Beddington Farmlands, three on Oct 9th. Holmethorpe SP, four on Jan 29th. Juniper Bottom, ten E on Nov 22nd. Nutfield, ten on Jan 25th, four W on 29th. Richmond Park, three on Oct 9th. Selsdon, three on Mar 1st. Woldingham, six on Mar 20th.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Status: very scarce breeding resident; occasional passage migrant. **RBBP**

Numbers early in the year continued to astonish with a total of 422 records from January to April following the 372 records from October 9th last year. There were 18 counts of at least 100 birds (17 in Surrey and one in Hertfordshire). The largest flock was 600 at Bramblehall Wood in March. This 2017/2018 winter invasion in the UK was believed to be birds leaving mainland Europe due to scarcity of food. The last of the invasion was on April 29th at Beddington Farmlands. Records during the rest of the year were much scarcer with two in September, six in October, two in November and two in December with the highest count being just three birds. Below are some of the higher counts for each sector.

Essex: Reported at 34 sites. Thorndon CP North, 25 on Jan 26th. Thorndon CP South, 25 on Jan 6th & 13th.

Herts: Reported at 30 sites. Broxbourne Woods, 35 on Mar 4th. Garden Wood, 30 on Jan 13th. Highfield Farm, 40 on Feb 19th. Wormley, 52 on Feb 21st. Wormley Wood, 137 on Feb 22nd.

Middx: Reported at 29 sites. Bayhurst Wood CP, 15 on Mar 8th. Bentley Priory NR, 16 on Jan 14th. Mad Bess Wood, 30 on Mar 28th. Ruislip Woods, 45 on Feb 21st. Totteridge Valley, 46 on Mar 26th.

Bucks: Reported at one site. Denham, two on Jan 22nd.

Kent: Reported at five sites. Hartley, six on Feb 5th.

Surrey: Reported at 17 sites. Bramblehall Wood, near Mickleham, monthly peaks of 420 on Feb 22nd, 600 on Mar 13th and 200 on Apr 1st. Juniper Bottom, monthly peaks of 300 on Feb 21st and 250 on Mar 15th. Juniper Top, 200 on Jan 30th.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Status: fairly common breeding resident.

There were records from 209 sites this year, fewer than the 257 sites in 2017 and close

to the 205 sites in 2016. There were 31 records of breeding (seven more than in 2017) and there were another 11 pairs reported in the breeding season, giving a possible 42 breeding pairs (47 reported in 2017). There were records from 98 sites from mid-March to June, fewer than the 122 in 2017 and 105 in 2016. The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 31% increase in the South East from 2007-17 with a significant decrease of 24% since last year. Below are all breeding records (no. of pairs/territories in brackets) and pairs reported mid-March to June, together with high counts, and an Inner London record.

Essex: Reported at 39 sites. Belhus Woods CP (2). Connaught Water (1). Dagenham Chase, pair on Apr 10th & 13th. Fairlop Waters, pair on Mar 24th. Rainham Marshes (1). South Ockendon (1). Upminster, pair on Jun 18th. Warren Wood, pair on Apr 20th.

Herts: Reported at 44 sites. Cassiobury Park (1). Cheshunt Marsh, pair on May 25th. Cuffley (1). Essendon, four on May 10th. Frogmore Lakes (1). Hilfield Park Res, pair on May 15th. Mill End (1); four on Jun 14th. Rye Meads (1); four on Apr 21st. South Mimms (1). Tyttenhanger GP (1); four on Apr 22nd.

Middx: Reported at 44 sites. Brent Res, pair on Mar 15th. Cranford (1). Horsenden Hill, pair on Jun 9th. Stanwell Moor, pair on Apr 18th. Totteridge Valley, five on Mar 15th and pair on Apr 6th. Trent Park (1). Vicarage Farm (1).

Bucks: Reported at seven sites. Black Park (1).

Kent: Reported at 27 sites. Chelsfield, five on Apr 14th.

Surrey: Reported at 47 sites. Ashtead Common (4). Banstead Heath (2). Bletchlingley (1). Bookham Common (4). Canons Farm (1). Holmethorpe SP (2). Riddlesdown (1). South Norwood CP, pair on Apr 8th.

In Lond: Reported at one site. Bermondsey, one over on Apr 3rd.

Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*

Status: common breeding resident and passage migrant.

This species has continued to decline in the London Area. This year, unlike in 2017 when there was one large count of 112 birds, the largest count was 35 at Broomfield Park. There were no other counts of 30 or more birds (nine last year) and 25 counts of 20 or more birds. The Breeding Bird Survey in London shows a decrease of 79% from 2012-17 and 53% from 1995-2017. The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported that Greenfinches continue to suffer. They were reported from just 42% of gardens in 2018, well down from 59% in 2017 and 65% in 2016. The survey showed a severe decline since the 90% or so reported in the mid-2000s. Below are breeding records of three or more pairs (no. of territories in brackets), followed by high counts for each sector.

Essex: Belhus Woods CP, 28 on Oct 14th. Brook Farm, Upminster, peak of 26 on Jan 4th. Dagenham Chase, 20 on Nov 3rd. Mar Dyke Valley (6). Rainham Marshes (12); 21 on Oct 16th & 17th. Wanstead Flats, up to 20 between January and April with a peak of 23 on Mar 11th & 12th.

Herts: Croxley Common, 20 on Nov 6th. Hertford, 12 on Feb 6th and ten on Mar 1st. Wildhill, 11 on Jan 4th. Woodoaks Farm, Maple Cross, ten on Nov 29th.

Middx: Brent Res, 22 on Nov 2nd. Broomfield Park, 35 on Jan 12th. Hampstead Heath, 25 on Jan 9th and Oct 20th. Home Park (5). Trent Park, 20 on Jan 29th. Woodberry Wetlands, up to 25 in August.

Kent: Darenth Lakes, nine on Apr 9th. Dartford Marshes, eight on Jul 3rd. Forest Hill, eight on Mar 2nd. Otford, nine on Sep 8th. Sevenoaks, ten on Jan 26th.

Surrey: Ashtead Common (8). Beddington Farmlands (21). London Wetland Centre, peak of 20 on Sep 13th. Molesey Heath (3). Richmond Park, 22 on Oct 16th. South Norwood CP, 22 on Feb 18th. Worcester Park (13).

In Lond: Reported from 15 sites with 11 of these between April and July. Barbican, up to seven throughout the year. Russia Dock Woodland, up to eight throughout the year.

Twite *Linaria flavirostris*

Status: scarce, late autumn and winter visitor.

The bird that was first seen at Beddington Farmlands on November 22nd 2017 remained until January 28th. It had been ringed in the High Peaks, Derbyshire in 2016 and returned to its natal site in early March 2018 where it bred successfully (with thanks to J Dunning). The table below shows all records since 1998.

Twite records 1998-2018:15 records, 29 birds

Year	1998	1999	2000	2002	2004	2007	2008	2009	2012	2015	2017	2018
No. of records	1	3	1*	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	0*
No. of birds	2+	10	1*	3	1	4	3	1	2	1	1	0*

*ignores overwintering bird

Surrey: Beddington Farmlands, one from 2017 on several dates from Jan 1st-28th (Beddington Farmlands Bird Group).

Linnet *Linaria cannabina*

Status: common but declining breeding resident and passage migrant.

There were a similar number of large flocks this year (35 of 100 or more, 38 last year). The peak count was the same as last year (300) but lower than previous years (500 in 2016, 400 in 2015). There were 132 breeding pairs, up on 95 pairs in 2017 with an increase at Rainham Marshes to 58 pairs where there were 52 pairs in 2017. But of the 11 sites where we have breeding counts for last year and this year, there seems little sign of change: five showed no change, four went up and two went down. The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 31% decrease in the South East from 1995-2017 but there are signs of a recovery with a 28% increase in England from 2007-17. Below are all records of breeding (no. of breeding pairs, singing males/territories in brackets), with counts from sites with 100 or more and all Inner London records.

Essex: Barking (1). Fairlop Waters (1). Gallions Reach, 110 on Aug 12th. KGV Res (2); 200 on Dec 11th. Lodge Farm, Nazeing (8). Mar Dyke Valley (1). Orsett Fen (2); 220 on Sep 11th. Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (1). Rainham Marshes (58); 300 on Oct 18th. Walthamstow Wetlands (2).

Herts: Brookmans Park (1). Cuffley (2). Ellenbrook Fields (1). Frogmore Lakes (1). Maple Cross (1). Rye Meads (1). Tyttenhanger GP, 100 on six dates between Nov 30th and Dec 17th. Woodoaks Farm, Maple Cross, 100 on Nov 29th. West Hyde (1).

Middx: Brimsdown, 250 on Feb 5th. Bushy Park (1). Holly Hill Farm (1). Little Wormwood

Scrubs (1). Park Farm, Enfield (1). Parkside Farm/Res (1). Rectory Farm (1). South Lodge Farm (1). Staines Moor (3). Tottenham Marshes (2). Vicarage Farm (2). Woodberry Wetlands (1). Wormwood Scrubs (2).

Bucks: Colnbrook, 200 on Dec. 16th.

Kent: Erith Reach, 100 on Jan 7th & 26th. Foots Cray Meadows (1). Swanscombe Marshes (1). Upper College Farm (4).

Surrey: Beddington Farmlands (13). Canons Farm (5); 200 on Mar 17th and 170 on Apr 27th. Cobham (1). Farthing Downs (1). Headley Heath (1). Hogsmill SW (1). Molesey Heath (3).

In Lond: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, one over on Apr 14th. Islington, one flying NW on Mar 27th. London Zoo, 13 on Oct 16th. Mile End, six on Apr 18th. Regent's Park, seven on Apr 14th. Russia Dock Woodland, four over on May 6th. St James's Park, one over on Oct 22nd.

Common Redpoll *Acanthis flammea*

Status: scarce irruptive winter visitor.

There were six records this year involving eight birds, which is the highest total since 2014 when there were 20 records.

Essex: Rainham Marshes, one on Oct 20th (H Vaughan).

Herts: Amwell NR, one on Feb 10th (D Mitchell). Hatfield Garden Village, three on Feb 17th (J Moss). Oxhey, one on Mar 3rd (J Fearnside).

Surrey: Richmond Park, one on Mar 31st (JPP Wilczur). Tandridge, one ringed on Jan 13th (PE Jones).

Lesser Redpoll *Acanthis cabaret*

Status: passage migrant and winter visitor; former breeding resident.

There were more records this year (750) than in 2017 (652) but the highest count of 60 was less than last year's peak of 100. There were more records between January and March (446) than between October and December (204). The peak monthly counts were 50 in January, 31 in February, 55 in March, 20 in April with a few remaining until May 6th (April 20th in 2017). During the summer, singles were seen at Holmethorpe SP on May 19th, June 30th and July 15th. There were three records in September with the first on the 6th (September 26th in 2017). The peak monthly counts were 30 in October, 60 in November and 45 in December. High sector counts and all Inner London records are given below.

Essex: Highams Park, 20 on Dec 2nd. Leyton Flats, 45 on Jan 1st. Thorndon CP South, 40 on Nov 18th. Warren Gorge, 27 on Mar 18th.

Herts: Cangsley Grove, 30 on Dec 30th. Frogmore Lakes, 22 on Nov 5th. North Mymms Park, 45 on Dec 31st. Northaw Great Wood, 25 on Dec 5th. Oxhey Woods, 30 on Jan 9th. Watercress LNR, 25 on Feb 18th. Wildhill, 23 on Feb 8th.

Middx: Hampstead Heath, 50 on Nov 6th. Poor's Field, 25 on Oct 25th. Ruislip Wood, 60 on Nov 1st & 16th.

Bucks: Wraysbury GP, 15 on Apr 14th.

Kent: Sevenoaks WR, 32 on Jan 3rd. Shrewsbury Park, 20 on Mar 31st.

Surrey: Canons Farm, 35 on Dec 2nd. London Wetland Centre, 50 on Jan 10th. Richmond Park, 55 on Mar 31st. Riddlesdown, 30 on Oct 26th. Wimbledon Common, 20 on Dec 22nd.

In Lond: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, one on Feb 1st. Regent's Park, one on Apr 13th. St James's Park, up to four on several dates from Jan 22nd to Feb 13th.

Parrot Crossbill *Loxia pytyopsittacus*

Status: rare vagrant.

The two males and a female found at Broxbourne Woods on December 18th 2017 remained in the same area into 2018, being reported from January 1st until February 10th.

Herts: Broxbourne Woods, two males and a female from 2017, on several dates from Jan 1st to Feb 10th (M Ilett *et al*).

Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Status: irruptive visitor, rare breeding species (usually following irruptions).

There were more records following a small irruption making it the best year since 2015. Seven birds were seen between April 14th and July 1st and 125 birds were seen following an irruption from October 19th until the end of the year. In total, there were 25 records of 132 birds at 18 sites (19 birds in 2017, 32 in 2016, 142 in 2015). The table below shows the monthly records followed by all records.

Crossbill records	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of records	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	9	9	4
No. of birds	-	-	-	4	-	1	2	-	-	73	42	10

Essex: Gallons Reach, 20 NW on Oct 20th. Plaistow, one S on Oct 21st.

Herts: Amwell NR, six on Oct 30th and two on Nov 25th. Broxbourne Woods, two on Jul 1st, 18 on Oct 30th, six on 31st, 12 on Nov 1st, six on 23rd and three W on Dec 27th. Essendon, five on Nov 24th. Hatfield Park, four on Dec 25th. North Mymms Park, one on Dec 2nd. Stocker's Lake, one N on Nov 10th.

Middx: Hanwell, one W on Nov 2nd.

Bucks: Black Park, six on Nov 12th and two on Dec 12th.

Kent: Greenwich Park, seven W on Nov 3rd.

Surrey: Banstead Heath, two on Nov 11th. Holmethorpe SP, 15 E on Oct 31st. Horton CP, one on Jun 10th. Mogador, five E on Oct 19th. Nork Park, one on Oct 20th. Putney, one NE on Oct 29th.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Status: breeding resident and passage migrant, now common throughout the year.

There were 13 counts of 100 birds or more, far fewer than the 29 in 2017. The highest count was an estimated 250-300 at Ponders End on December 28th and there was a high count for Inner London of 110 or more roosting at Marylebone on January 13th. The Breeding Bird Survey shows a 463% increase in London from 1995-2017. The RSPB Croydon Bird Survey reported that Goldfinches are now well-established as garden birds in Croydon. They were reported from 89% of gardens in 2018, compared with 85% in 2017 and 88% in

2016, all significantly up from 34% in 1995. Below are breeding records of three or more pairs (no. of territories in brackets) and high counts from each sector.

Essex: Belhus Woods CP (6). Lion Gorge (4). Mar Dyke Valley (6). Orsett Fen (6). Rainham Marshes (43); 150 on Aug 22nd and 100 on Sep 1st & 21st. Romford, 212 on Feb 2nd.
Herts: Stanstead Abbotts, 85 on Feb 11th.
Middx: Brimsdown, 200 on Nov 23rd. Home Park (10). Northolt & Greenford CP, 100 on Aug 11th. Ponders End, 250-300 on Dec 28th. Staines Moor, 140 on Aug 11th and 120 on Sep 12th. Stoke Newington, 120 on Jan 1st.
Bucks: Colnbrook, 80 on Oct 7th.
Kent: Sevenoaks WR, 80 on Nov 7th.
Surrey: Ashtead Common (5). Beddington Farmlands (3); 110 on Oct 20th. Molesey Heath (3). South Norwood CP, 150 on Jul 21st. Walton Downs, 100 on Nov 6th. Worcester Park (10).
In Lond: Reported from 47 sites with 33 of these between April and July. Burgess Park, 40 on Aug 13th. Hammersmith Cemetery, 54 on Sep 22nd. Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, 30 on Nov 5th. Marylebone, 110 on Jan 13th.

Serin *Serinus serinus*

Status: rare vagrant.

A male at Walthamstow Wetlands was first seen in February; it was the first since 2016 and only the ninth record since 2000. Most records have been between January and May. Apart from 1969 and 2008-2010, all the records have been single birds.

Serin records arrival dates 1951-2018:24 records, 32 birds

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of records	3	5	3	2	3	1	1	-	-	1	5	-
No. of birds	4	5	3	2	3	1	2	-	-	3	9	-

Essex: Walthamstow Wetlands, male on Feb 10th & 17th and from Mar 5th-8th (R Hargreaves *et al*).

Siskin *Spinus spinus*

Status: common winter visitor and passage migrant; occasional in summer and has bred.

There were ten counts of 100 or more birds this year compared with four in 2017, five in 2016, and eight in 2015. One of these counts was in January, seven in February and two in March. The highest count was at least 220 birds at Waltham Abbey Woods on February 19th. The last spring bird was on May 3rd at Hertford (April 18th in 2017). After that, there were two at Greenwich Peninsula Ecology Park on July 18th and one at Sevenoaks on August 27th. However, the main return started on September 7th (September 21st in 2017) with one at Rainham Marshes. In the second winter period numbers were much lower and there were only four counts of 50 or more. Below are high sector counts, sometimes summarised by month, and all Inner London records.

Essex: Belhus Woods CP, 182 on Mar 13th. Cornmill Meadows, 120 on Feb 5th. Hall Marsh Scrape, 50 on Mar 17th. Waltham Abbey Woods, 220+ on Feb 19th. Weald CP, 50 on Feb 4th.
Herts: Brickendon, 60 on Jan 5th. Brookmans Park, 50 on Jan 1st. Cassiobury Park, 60 on Jan 3rd. Stocker's Lake, 50 in January. Willowmead, 50 on Dec 24th.
Middx: Trent Park, 50 on Jan 30th.
Bucks: Denham, 50 on Jan 9th, Feb 27th and Nov 5th. Horton GP, 60 on Mar 2nd.
Kent: Maple Lodge NR, 100 on Feb 9th & 13th. Sevenoaks WR, 75 on Jan 20th, 120 on Feb 24th, 100 on Mar 3rd and 50 on Nov 24th.
Surrey: Buckland SP, 60 on Feb 3rd. North Downs GC, 50 on Nov 15th.
In Lond: Burgess Park, seven on Mar 5th. London Zoo, 11 on Oct 24th. Regent's Park, present on Feb 21st, Mar 9th, 14th & 26th. St James's Park, six on Oct 23rd and one on Nov 2nd.

Siskin. (Nick Croft)

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Status: scarce autumn and winter visitor.

There were two sightings of the same bird in flight this year compared to two records last year. Snow Buntings are much more likely to be seen in the last three months of the year: of the last 76 records, all but 11 have been in this period. The table below shows the arrival dates of all the records since 1990.

Snow Bunting arrival dates 1990 to 2018: 76 records

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of records	7	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	36	16

Surrey: Richmond Park, one flew SW at 10:15 on Oct 16th (the observer having been alerted by the earlier observer) (JPP Wilczur). West Putney, one flew SW at 10:10 on Oct 16th (R Kaye).

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*

Status: declining and increasingly localised breeding resident.

They were reported from ten sites this year (12 in 2017). There were seven territorial males (nine in 2017) from three sites (seven sites in 2017). The largest flock of 25 from Longfield Gallops was an improvement on ten in 2017 but well down on the flock of 71 seen there in 2015. Below are all records, summarised in some cases, with no. of breeding pairs, singing males/territories in brackets.

Essex: Copped Hall, one on Mar 21st. Orsett Fen, male on Jun 9th. Rainham Marshes (4).
Herts: Coopers Green GP (2); four on Jul 12th. St Albans, two over on Oct 16th. Woodoaks Farm, Maple Cross, one on Mar 25th.
Bucks: Colnbrook, a juv on Aug 27th, was the first sector sighting this century.
Kent: Crayford Marshes (1). Longfield, one on May 12th. Longfield Gallops, 14 on Mar 2nd and 25 on 4th.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Status: widespread but declining breeding resident, scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

They were reported from 96 sites this year (91 in 2017) and there were at least 47 territories/pairs (53+ in 2017), although there were several additional sites where birds were present during the breeding season. The Essex and Hertfordshire sectors again accounted for about 60% of the sites and the breeding records. Below are all breeding records (no. of breeding pairs/territories in brackets), some unusual records and some of the higher counts.

Essex: Reported at 27 sites, 20+ pairs. Brook Farm, Upminster (2). Copped Hall, 50 on Mar 17th. Greensted (1), juvs seen. Ingrebourne Valley, 30 on Feb 1st. Lodge Farm, Nazeing (9). Mar Dyke Valley (1), juvs seen. Orsett Fen (7+), juvs seen; 21 on Jan 16th. Thorndon CP North, c30 on Jan 6th. Thorndon CP South, 50 on Jan 13th. Wanstead Flats, two on Feb 28th, with singles on Oct 8th, 21st & 27th and Nov 3rd.
Herts: Reported at 30 sites, 10+ pairs. Coopers Green GP (1). Coursers Farm, 26 on Mar 3rd. Cuffley (1). Essendon (1). Highfield Park (1); 30+ on Jan 4th. Maple Cross (1). North Mymms Park (1+). Potters Crouch (1). Tyttenhanger GP, 40 on Feb 25th. West Hyde (1+). Wildhill (1+). Woodoaks Farm, Maple Cross (1).
Middx: Reported at eight sites, 3+ pairs. Enfield Chase Area: Holly Hill Farm (1); Parkside Farm/Res (1); Sloemans Farm, 25+ on Dec 4th; Vicarage Farm (1+).
Kent: Reported at 13 sites, two pairs. Cudham (1). Knockholt (1).
Surrey: Reported at 18 sites, 12+ pairs. Beddington Farmlands, one on Nov 17th. Brixton, one over Coldharbour Lane on May 5th. Canons Farm (3-4); 21 on Dec 23rd. Cheverells Farm (4). Farthing Downs (1). Holmethorpe SP (1). Itchingwood Common (1). Leatherhead (1). Putney, one SE on Oct 19th. Rushett Farm (1+).

Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana*

Status: rare migrant, mostly in autumn.

There was one accepted record which was the first since 2016 and the second site record (first in 1987). There have been 13 accepted records of 14 birds since 2000 and 29 (31 birds) in total. It was an autumn record, as have been 19 of the 29 records (see table below for details). Interestingly there were two additional heard only reports in the previous week from Primrose Hill and Sidcup; the former was not accepted without a sound recording and the latter was not submitted. Recent nocturnal migration recordings have considerably boosted the national numbers recorded annually.

Ortolan Bunting arrival dates 1908 to 2018: 29 records, 31 birds

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of records	-	-	-	1	8	1	-	5	11	3	-	-
No. of birds	-	-	-	1	9	1	-	5	12	3	-	-

Middx: Alexandra Park, 1st-winter on Sep 2nd, photographed after alighting briefly (RJ Watts).

Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla*

Status: rare vagrant.

A long-staying male was at Walthamstow Wetlands from January 19th. This well-watched individual, twitched by several hundred observers, was the eleventh for London and only the second in the current century. The last bird was also long-staying, from January 31st until April 18th 2007 at Amwell GP.

Essex: Walthamstow Wetlands, male from Jan 19th to Apr 5th. (D Bradshaw, P Whiteman *et al*).

This Little Bunting, the 11th record for London, spent nearly three months at Walthamstow Wetlands and was admired by many. (Jamie Partridge)

Rustic Bunting *Emberiza rustica*

Status: rare vagrant.

A 1st-winter female found on the ground at Wanstead Flats on October 17th stayed for five days. This obliging and well-watched bird was only the second record since 1900. The previous individual was as long ago as February 1993 at Beddington Farmlands, which also hosted a Little Bunting at the same time.

Essex: Wanstead Flats, one from Oct 17th-21st (N Croft et al).

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Status: fairly common but declining breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

A minimum of 169 territories/pairs (172 in 2017) with birds present at several additional sites during the breeding season. Essex, Hertfordshire and Surrey again provided over 80% of breeding records. Below are all breeding records (no. of singing males/breeding pairs/territories in brackets), some unusual records and some of the higher counts.

Essex: Reported at 31 sites, 77+ pairs. Belhus Woods CP (1-2). Cornmill Meadows (1+). Hall Marsh Scrape (1). Lodge Farm, Nazeing (4). Mar Dyke Valley (3). Orsett Fen (6). Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (1). Rainham Marshes (54). Roding Valley Meadows (1+). Walthamstow Marshes (1+). Walthamstow Wetlands (2+). Wanstead Flats (1). Waterworks NR (1-2).

Herts: Reported at 31 sites, 36 pairs. Amwell NR (8). Dobb's Weir (1). Ellenbrook Fields

Another great bird for Wanstead Flats, this was only London's second Rustic Bunting, and the first for a quarter of a century. (Jonathan Lethbridge)

Reed Bunting. (Dave Harris)

(2+). Frogmore Lakes (1). Hilfield Park Res (1). Maple Lodge NR (1). Munden Estate (1). Rye Meads (19). Stocker's Lake (1). Tyttenhanger GP (1+). Verulamium Park, one on Apr 15th.

Middx: Reported at 38 sites, 15+ pairs. Brent Res (1). Bushy Park (1). East India Dock Basin, three on Feb 13th. Home Park (2). Horsenden Hill (1). Kempton NR (1). Parkside Farm/Res (1). Q. Mary GP (1-2). Sloemans Farm, 25 on Dec 27th. Springwell Lake (1). Staines Moor (3). Ten Acre Wood, Yeading (1). Tottenham Marshes (1). Totteridge Valley (1).

Bucks: Reported at three sites. Wraysbury GP, one on Apr 8th.

Kent: Recorded at 11 sites, 11 pairs. Crayford Marshes (1). Crossness (6). Sevenoaks WR (1). Swanscombe Marshes (3).

Surrey: Reported at 29 sites, 30 pairs. Beddington Farmlands (2). Bletchingley (1). Buckland SP (1). Holmethorpe SP (1+). London Wetland Centre (5+). Mayflower Park (1). Richmond Park (16). South Norwood CP (2). Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth) (1+).

In Lond: Regent's Park, singles on Mar 14th and Apr 10th & 13th.

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 Regent's Park.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Essex: Belhus Woods CP, two on May 8th & 12th, Aug 7th & 12th and Sep 9th. Brook Farm, Upminster, singles on Mar 22nd and Apr 14th. Dagenham Chase, singles on several dates from Mar 7th-19th. Fairlop Waters, three on several dates from Apr 11th to May 1st and one on May 12th. Rainham Marshes, one on Jan 4th & 9th, present on Mar 24th, singles on several dates from Nov 23rd to Dec 30th. Walthamstow Wetlands, singles on Sep 4th, 6th & 11th. Wanstead Flats, singles on several dates from Oct 4th-27th and on Nov 18th.

Herts: Aldenham CP, singles on May 3rd & 13th. Amwell NR, singles on several dates from Jun 20th to Dec 31st with two on Nov 5th. Bowmansgreen Farm, singles on Feb 8th and Mar 24th. Hilfield Park Res, singles on several dates from Apr 1st to Sep 26th. Lynsters Farm, one on Jan 1st, eight on Jan 10th, up to three from Jan 16th to Mar 4th, one on May 21st, singles on several dates from Sep 12th to Dec 4th. Lynsters Lake, singles on Jan 14th, Mar 30th and Sep 29th. Maple Lodge NR, singles on Feb 3rd, Mar 4th, Oct 23rd and Nov 27th. Rye Meads, one on Sep 8th. Seventy Acres Lake, one on Sep 8th. Stanborough Lakes, one on May 11th. Stocker's Lake, singles on Mar 4th, Aug 21st and Dec 28th. Troy Mill Lake, one on Mar 20th & 24th. Tyttenhanger GP, singles on several dates from Jan 5th to May 5th with two on Apr 13th.

Middx: Broadwater Lake, one on Feb 25th, two on Mar 10th, singles on Apr 4th and Dec 16th. Ruislip Lido, one on Feb 12th. Woodberry Wetlands, one on Sep 11th.

Bucks: Horton Brook Quarry, one on Feb 1st. Q. Mother Res, one on Jun 3rd.

Kent: Dartford Marshes, one on Dec 24th.

Surrey: Canons Farm, one on Sep 24th. Hersham GP, one on Jan 19th. London Wetland Centre, four on May 6th, present on Jun 16th. Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), singles on Mar 10th and Apr 3rd.

Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*

Essex: Fairlop Waters, one on Apr 26th.

Middx: Woodberry Wetlands, one on May 2nd.

Bucks: Horton GP, one on several dates from Dec 25th-31st.

Surrey: London Wetland Centre, singles on Jul 2nd, Nov 20th and Dec 29th. Truss's Island, one on May 12th.

Emperor Goose *Anser canagicus*

Surrey: London Wetland Centre, present on Jun 3rd.

Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens*

Bucks: Q. Mother Res, one blue-type on Jun 11th.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Kent: Sevenoaks WR, one on Apr 12th & 14th.

Black Swan *Cygnus atratus*

Herts: Cassiobury Park, six on Jan 6th.

Middx: Isle of Dogs, one on Sep 8th. Kempton Park Water Works, one on Feb 20th.

Kent: Kelsey Park, two on several dates from Mar 23rd to May 15th. Woolwich, two on May 28th.

Surrey: Brockwell Park, one on Apr 9th. Claremont Landscape Garden, singles on Jul 5th and Nov 6th. Esher Common, singles on several dates from Jan 16th to May 23rd and on Sep 9th. Holmethorpe SP, one on Nov 26th. Kingston-upon-Thames, one on Mar 8th. London Wetland Centre, one on Apr 9th. Wimbledon Common, present on Mar 21st. Wimbledon Park Lake, four on Mar 14th.

In Lond: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, singles on several dates from Oct 27th to Dec 9th and two on Dec 11th. Rotherhithe, one on Jul 19th.

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

Middx: Kempton NR, two on Apr 28th and May 8th. Osterley Park, two on several dates from Sep 11th to Nov 5th. Princes Lakes, two on Jul 9th. Staines Res, five over on Apr 14th.

Bucks: Horton, two over on Apr 27th.

Surrey: Holmethorpe SP, pair on Mar 5th. QE II Res, two on Mar 31st and May 6th (same as Walton Res). Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), two on several dates from Mar 25th to May 21st.

Muscovy Duck *Cairina moschata*

Essex: Hainault Forest, singles on several dates from May 20th to Dec 14th.

Herts: Aldenham CP, singles on Jan 11th & 15th, May 3rd & 13th and Dec 27th & 28th.

Kent: Otford, two on Jan 12th.

Surrey: Walton-on-Thames, one on May 29th & 30th.

Wood Duck *Aix sponsa*

Kent: Kelsey Park, up to three on several dates from Jan 9th to Dec 11th.

Surrey: London Wetland Centre, two on Apr 23rd. Millers Pond, one on Sep 12th.

Ringed Teal *Callonetta leucophrys*

Essex: Connaught Water, pair on Sep 9th, Oct 26th, Dec 7th & 19th. William Girling Res, one on Feb 14th.

Silver Teal *Spatula versicola*

Essex: William Girling Res, one on Jan 22nd.

White-cheeked Pintail *Anas bahamensis*
Middx: Brent Res, singles on several dates from May 28th to Jun 17th.

Bufflehead *Bucephala albeola*
Surrey: Beddington Farmlands, female on Apr 15th.

Smew *Mergellus albellus*
Herts: Friday Lake, female/imm on Apr 19th & 28th and May 11th. Seventy Acres Lake, female/imm on Jun 5th and Aug 6th & 8th.
Middx: Grovelands Park, female/imm on Nov 29th and Dec 5th, 7th & 22nd.

Helmeted Guineafowl *Numidia meleagris*
Herts: Berrybushes Wood, five on Dec 28th. Cuffley, three on Aug 4th, at least one on Aug 25th and Oct 9th, at least seven on Dec 1st, six on Dec 17th. Essendon, up to two on several dates from Jan 7th to Dec 27th. Hatfield Park, two on Aug 22nd. Shenley, ten on Sep 10th.

Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus*
Essex: Epping Forest Woodland Burial Park, singles on Apr 5th, May 3rd and Aug 9th, four on Sep 6th. Warley Place NR, one on Feb 18th.
Herts: Cheshunt GP, three on Jan 1st. Essendon, one on Jun 4th. Essendonbury, one on Apr 21st. Tyttenhanger GP, up to two on several dates from Apr 13th to Oct 25th. Wildhill, one on May 18th.
Surrey: Godstone, present on Aug 5th. Hurst Green, Oxted, present on Jun 25th, Jul 8th, Aug 19th and Sep 3rd. Kew, one on May 12th.

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*
Kent: Dartford, one W on Sep 10th, seen also over Ebbsfleet. Sevenoaks WR, singles on Jul 30th and from Sep 11th-17th.
Surrey: Holmethorpe SP, one from Oct 11th-15th.

Goshawk *Accipter gentilis*
Middx: Brent Res, female with damaged tail flew W on Mar 30th.

Harris's Hawk *Parabuteo unicinctus*
Middx: Bedfont Lakes CP, one on Oct 21st. Heathrow Airport, one on Dec 11th.
In Lond: St James's Park, singles on Feb 22nd and Mar 7th.

White-cheeked Turaco *Tauraco leucotis*
Essex: Wanstead Flats, one intermittently from Mar 11th to end of year.

Turaco sp
Middx: Hampstead Cemetery, one on Nov 6th, reported as probable Livingstone's Turaco present in the area for several months.

Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus*
Essex: Dagenham Chase, one with jesses on Jun 24th.

Cockatiel *Nymphicus hollandicus*
Essex: Rainham Marshes, one on Jul 19th.
Middx: Brent Res, one on Sep 2nd & 15th.
Kent: Petts Wood, one or two on Aug 7th.
Surrey: London Wetland Centre, one on Oct 24th.

Monk Parakeet *Myiopsitta monachus*
Essex: Grays, one on Jun 15th.
Middx: Isle of Dogs, five on Dec 29th. Millwall Park, four on Jan 16th. Mudchute Farm, three on Jan 30th, two on Mar 23rd, one on Jul 2nd.

Amazona sp
Middx: Staines, one over on Feb 18th.

Orange-winged Amazon *Amazona amazonica*
Bucks: Langley Park, one on Jan 6th.

Blue-crowned Parakeet *Thectocercus acuticaudatus*
Kent: Beckenham, two on Jun 5th.

Alexandrine Parakeet *Psittacula eupatria*
Middx: Totteridge Valley, one over on Apr 29th.

Budgerigar *Melopsittacus undulatus*
Essex: Rainham Marshes, singles on May 27th, Jul 10th and several dates from Aug 11th-17th. Roding Valley Meadows NR, one on Jan 24th & 25th. Wanstead Flats, singles on Aug 29th and Sep 6th.
Herts: Hilfield Park Res, one on Sep 9th.
Middx: Alexandra Park, two on May 5th, one on Aug 17th & 19th. Brent Res, two on May 21st. Springfield Park, one on Jun 10th.
In Lond: Russia Dock Woodland, one on Jul 25th.

APPENDIX II: HYBRIDS

The following records are of wild or feral hybrids, but records of Canada x Greylag Goose and unspecified Canada Goose, Greylag and Mallard hybrids are not reported here. All are reported as described by the observers and are listed in order of the first species involved. **It would be helpful if observers could send photographs of hybrids, where available**.

Canada Goose x Barnacle Goose

Essex: Holyfield Hall Farm, one on Mar 30th.

Canada Goose x Snow Goose

Surrey: London Wetland Centre, one on Jan 12th.

Canada Goose x Bar-headed Goose

Surrey: London Wetland Centre, one on Jun 24th and Jul 11th.

Barnacle Goose x Emperor Goose

Herts: Smug Oak, singles on Mar 25th, Nov 20th and Dec 12th.

Barnacle Goose x Greylag Goose

Surrey: Clapham Common, one on Nov 8th and Dec 9th.

Shelduck x Ruddy Shelduck

Kent: Crossness, singles on Jun 6th and Jul 28th.

Shelduck hybrid

Surrey: QE II Res, one on Aug 27th.

Ruddy Shelduck x South African Shelduck

Essex: Rainham Marshes, one from Jun 14th-16th.

Pintail hybrid

Essex: Connaught Water, one on Dec 27th.

Aythya hybrids

Aytha hybrids are listed below under the described type, where such a description is given.

Essex: KGV Res, one on Aug 1st.
Herts: Ellenbrook Fields, one on Aug 27th. Hilfield Park Res, one on Mar 4th. Tyttenhanger GP, one on Feb 10th and two on Aug 25th.
Middx: Alexandra Park, singles on several dates from Feb 18th to Apr 23rd (two on Apr 5th) and Sep 22nd to Oct 14th.
Bucks: Horton GP, singles on Jul 28th, Aug 7th, Oct 26th and Nov 17th. Wraysbury GP, one on Nov 11th.
Surrey: London Wetland Centre, one on Jan 23rd.
In Lond: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, singles on Mar 6th & 13th and Jun 3rd. St James's Park, one on Jun 13th. Victoria Park, two on May 5th.

Red-created Pochard x Tufted Duck

Surrey: Richmond Park, one on Oct 27th.

Pochard x Ferruginous Duck

Herts: Tyttenhanger GP, one on Feb 10th.
Middx: Staines Res, one on Jan 6th.
Bucks: Horton GP, singles on Jan 12th and Feb 13th, two on Dec 1st. Wraysbury GP, one on Dec 29th.

Pochard x Tufted Duck

Essex: Walthamstow Wetlands, singles on Jan 2nd, Mar 31st and Sep 25th.
Herts: Stocker's Lake, one on Nov 21st.
Middx: Alexandra Park, singles on Mar 18th & 19th and Apr 7th. Grovelands Park, one on May 11th. Woodberry Wetlands, singles on Apr 27th and Jun 6th.
Bucks: Horton GP, one on Dec 2nd. Wraysbury GP, one on Sep 30th.
Surrey: London Wetland Centre, singles on several dates from Jan 6th to Feb 23rd and one on Nov 14th. Walton Res (Chelsea & Lambeth), singles on Mar 29th and Nov 11th & 15th, two on Dec 5th. Walton Res (Knight & Bessborough), one on Mar 22nd.
In Lond: Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns, one on Oct 27th.

Tufted Duck x Scaup

Essex: Leyton Flats, one on Jan 4th.
Middx: Staines Res, one on Apr 2nd. Wraysbury Res, one on Apr 7th.
Surrey: London Wetland Centre, singles on Jan 24th and Apr 2nd.

Tufted Duck hybrid

Essex: Fairlop Waters, one on Jan 10th.
Surrey: London Wetland Centre, singles on Feb 14th and Nov 14th.

Black-headed Gull x Mediterranean Gull

Kent: Crayford, one on Jul 1st. Crayford Marshes, one on Mar 11th.

Glaucous Gull x Herring Gull

Middx: KGVI Res, one on Dec 28th.
Surrey: Island Barn Res, one on Jan 30th and Feb 1st. London Wetland Centre, one on Mar 31st and Apr 7th. QE II Res, one on Jan 28th.

Herring Gull x Caspian Gull
Essex: Rainham Marshes, one on Jan 26th.
Kent: Crayford Marshes, one on Mar 11th.

Herring Gull x Lesser Black-backed Gull
Bucks: Q. Mother Res, singles on Jan 14th, May 27th, Aug 3rd & 22nd and Sep 1st.
Surrey: Barn Elms PF, one on Apr 4th.

Yellow-legged Gull x Lesser Black-backed Gull
Kent: Thamesmead, one on Jun 17th.

Hybrid falcon
Middx: Blackwall Basin, Gyr-like hybrid on Feb 20th. East India Dock Basin, same Gyr-like hybrid again on Mar 6th. Poplar, one resembling a Lanner on May 10th.

Saker x Gyr Falcon
Bucks: Q. Mother Res, one on Sep 21st.

Peregrine hybrid
Bucks: Q. Mother Res, one on Oct 7th.

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.

Honey-buzzard	Richmond Park	Oct 18th
Black Kite	Wanstead Flats	Apr 6th
Roseate Tern	KGV Res	Apr 19th
Siberian Chiffchaff	Cornmill Meadows	Feb 5th & 18th
Richard's Pipit	Harmondsworth Moor	Nov 15th
Parrot Crossbill	Regent's Park	Jan 28th
Ortolan Bunting	Primrose Hill	Aug 27th

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	Fairlop Waters	Mar 10th-12th
Pink-footed Goose	Gallions Reach	Nov 18th
Pink-footed Goose	Mayesbrook Park	Apr 11th-15th
Pink-footed Goose	Rainham Marshes	Sep 23rd
Pink-footed Goose	Rainham Marshes	Nov 25th
Tundra Bean Goose	Mayesbrook Park	Apr 16th
Bewick's Swan	Putney	Jan 26th
Whooper Swan	Barn Elms Playing Field	Oct 22nd
Eider	Staines Res	Apr 6th
Red-throated Diver	Gallions Reach	Nov 11th
Red-throated Diver	KGV Res	Apr 10th
White Stork	Chingford	Mar 31st
Glossy Ibis	Rainham Marshes	Aug 9th
Glossy Ibis	Regent's Park	Apr 26th
Spoonbill	Harold Park	Aug 22nd
Spoonbill	Upminster	Mar 13th
Spoonbill	Watford	Jul 21st
Spoonbill	Sevenoaks WR	Mar 29th
Purple Heron	North Weald Bassett	Apr 20th
Gannet	City of London Cemetery	Sep 24th
Gannet	Hampstead Heath	Sep 24th
Gannet	Beddington Farmlands	Jun 5th

Honey-buzzard	Black Park	May 29th
Honey-buzzard	Rainham	Sep 9th
Honey-buzzard	Rainham Marshes	May 22nd
Honey-buzzard	Woodford Green	May 28th
Honey-buzzard	Crossness	May 15th
Honey-buzzard	Oxleas Wood	May 18th
Honey-buzzard	Sevenoaks WR	May 11th
Honey-buzzard	Bookham Common	Sep 7th
Honey-buzzard	Epsom Downs	Aug 15th
Honey-buzzard	Hook	Sep 25th
Honey-buzzard	Kew	May 17th
Honey-buzzard	Putney	Sep 4th
Honey-buzzard	Wimbledon Common	Oct 18th
Goshawk	Cornmill Meadows	Apr 5th
Goshawk	Fairmead Bottom	Aug 21st
Goshawk	Holyfield Lake	Apr 29th
Goshawk	Woodford Green	Jun 12th & 13th, Jul 15th
Goshawk	Amwell NR	Oct 25th
Goshawk	Sevenoaks WR	Feb 17th
Goshawk	Putney	Mar 16th
Black Kite	Dagnam Park	Oct 10th
Black Kite	Camden Town	Apr 24th
Black Kite	City of London	Apr 24th
Black Kite	Fitzrovia	Apr 24th
Black Kite	Westminster	Apr 24th
Black Kite	Bromley	Apr 24th
Black Kite	Crayford Marshes	Mar 26th
Black Kite	Sevenoaks WR	May 11th
Black Kite	Totteridge Valley	Sep 15th
Black Kite	Beddington Farmlands	Apr 23rd
Black Kite	Selsdon Woods	Apr 24th
Black Kite	South Norwood CP	Apr 26th
Bonaparte's Gull	Rainham Marshes	Jun 25th
Glaucous Gull	KGV Res	Apr 13th
Glaucous Gull	Tyttenhanger GP	Jan 3rd
Glaucous Gull	Ponders End Lake	Apr 6th
Glaucous Gull	London Wetland Centre	Apr 13th
Iceland Gull	Greenwich Peninsula Ecology Park	Apr 5th
Iceland Gull	Morden Hall Park	Jan 21st
Roseate Tern	Rainham Marshes	Sep 23rd
Great Skua	Rainham Marshes	Oct 7th
Great Skua	Gallions Reach	Oct 7th
Alpine Swift	Gidea Park	Aug 2nd
Bee-eater	Rainham Marshes	Jun 28th

Bee-eater	Teddington Lock	Aug 7th
Hoopoe	Greenwich Park	Oct 11th
Wryneck	Ealing	Sep 5th
Wryneck	Island Barn Res	Sep 21st
Merlin	Sewardstone Marsh	Mar 31st
Merlin	Downe	Dec 12th
Merlin	Hampstead Heath	Mar 14th
Merlin	Trent Park	Feb 28th
Merlin	Beddington Farmlands	Oct 30th
Merlin	Canons Farm	Jan 3rd and Apr 2nd
Merlin	London Wetland Centre	Mar 11th
Merlin	Putney	Oct 28th
Merlin	Richmond Park	May 9th
Shore Lark	Hatton	Feb 16th
Red-rumped Swallow	Leyton Flats	Sep 5th
Siberian Chiffchaff	Sevenoaks WR	Nov 29th to Dec 2nd
Siberian Chiffchaff	Broadwater Lake	Feb 28th
Rose-coloured Starling	Blackfriars Bridge	Jun 19th
White Wagtail	Rainham Marshes	Sep 24th & 25th and Nov 4th
White Wagtail	Tylers Hall Farm	Aug 22nd
White Wagtail	Coursers Farm	Sep 30th
White Wagtail	Wildhill	Oct 4th
White Wagtail	Beddington Farmlands	Sep 15th
White Wagtail	Holmethorpe SP	Sep 4th
White Wagtail	Wandle Park, Colliers Wood	Nov 12th
Tawny Pipit	Putney	Oct 18th
Lapland Bunting	Heathrow Airport	Nov 20th
Lapland Bunting	Barn Elms Playing Field	Oct 25th
Ortolan Bunting	Sidcup	Sep 1st

Records still in circulation

The following records are still being considered by our Rarities Committee.

Iceland Gull (2nd-winter)	London Wetland Centre	Feb 13th, Mar 29th, 31st

FIRST AND LAST DATES OF REGULAR MIGRANTS

Summer Migrants	Arrival		Departure	
Garganey	15 Mar	Totteridge Valley	1 Nov	Rye Meads
Osprey	29 Mar	Rainham Marshes/Romford	18 Nov	Tyttenhanger GP
Little Ringed Plover	9 Mar	Tyttenhanger GP	28 Sep	Staines Res
Whimbrel	30 Mar	Rainham Marshes	18 Sep	Walthamstow Wetlands
Sandwich Tern	17 Mar	Q. Mother Res/ Rainham Marshes	7 Oct	Q. Mother Res/ Rainham Marshes
Little Tern	19 Apr	KGV Res	19 Oct	KGV Res
Common Tern	31 Mar	Four sites	21 Oct	Staines Res
Arctic Tern	3 Apr	Rainham Marshes	28 Oct	Gallions Reach/Q. Mary Res
Black Tern	20 Apr	Staines Res	7 Oct	Staines Res
Turtle Dove	15 Apr	KGV Res	16 Jul	Hartley
Cuckoo	22 Mar	Dagenham Chase	7 Sep	Sidcup
Swift	19 Apr	Croydon/Teddington	18 Sep	Staines Res
Hobby	5 Apr	Buckland SP	16 Nov	Sewardstone Marsh
Sand Martin	10 Mar	Brook Farm, Upminster	15 Oct	Sewardstone Marsh
Swallow	18 Mar	Hilfield Park Res	24 Oct	Rye Meads
House Martin	29 Mar	Wraysbury GP	31 Oct	KGV Res
Wood Warbler	26 Apr	Hanwell	27 Aug	Canons Farm
Willow Warbler	25 Mar	Brent Res/London Wetland Centre	25 Oct	Q. Mary GP
Sedge Warbler	2 Apr	Waterworks NR	8 Oct	Woodberry Wetlands
Reed Warbler [W1]	6 Apr	Brent Res	19 Oct	Rye Meads
Grasshopper Warbler	11 Apr	Bookham Common	4 Oct	Island Barn Res
Garden Warbler	3 Apr	London Wetland Centre	22 Sep	London Wetland Centre
Lesser Whitethroat [W2]	12 Apr	Hampstead Heath	30 Sep	Island Barn Res
Whitethroat	21 Mar	Copped Hall	30 Sep	Brent Res
Ring Ouzel	25 Mar	Richmond Park	10 Nov	Staines Moor
Spotted Flycatcher	27 Apr	Russia Dock Woodland	1 Oct	Wanstead Flats
Nightingale	17 Apr	Prince's Coverts	26 May	Swanscombe Marshes
Pied Flycatcher	17 Apr	Hyde Park & Kensington Gdns	10 Sep	South Norwood CP
Redstart	10 Apr	London Wetland Centre	7 Oct	Wanstead Flats
Whinchat	12 Apr	Staines Moor	24 Oct	London Wetland Centre
Wheatear	14 Mar	Brook Farm, Upminster	27 Oct	Crossness
Yellow Wagtail	5 Apr	Staines Res/Tyttenhanger GP	20 Oct	KGV Res
Tree Pipit	11 Apr	Dagenham Chase	20 Oct	Beddington Farmlands

[W1] excludes winter record: Dec 2018 record

[W2] excludes winter record: Jan-Apr 2018 record from 2017

Winter Migrants	Departure		Arrival	
Smew	18 Nov	KGV Res	29 Mar	KGV Res
Goosander	4 Oct	Sewardstone Marsh	26 Apr	Watford
Bittern	14 Aug	Rye Meads	31 Mar	Rainham Marshes
Jack Snipe	6 Oct	Brent Res/London Wetland Centre	1 May	London Wetland Centre
Fieldfare	28 Sep	Cheshunt Park	20 Apr	Mitcham
Redwing	9 Sep	Brook Farm, Upminster	23 Apr	Alexandra Park
Water Pipit	27 Sep	Staines Res	14 Apr	Staines Moor
Rock Pipit	24 Sep	KGV Res	10 Apr	London Wetland Centre
Brambling	30 Sep	London Wetland Centre/ Rainham Marshes	22 Apr	Lodge Farm, Nazeing

PAPERS ABOUT BIRDS IN THE LONDON AREA

Ringing Report *by Paul Roper and Daniel Whitelegg* 180

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The Garden Birdwatch Survey in the London Area 1995-2018 *by Ian Woodward* 189

WeBS Feats: Tales of a Wildfowl Counter *by Rob Innes* 200

The Birds of Bexley Park Woods, 1993-2018 *by Andrew S. Waller* 206

The Deplorable Loss of the Nightingale: Observations of a Teenage Bird Recorder in 1940s Dulwich from the Winter of 1947 *by Mathew Frith* 213

The Hawfinch Irruption in London: Autumn 2017-Spring 2018 *by David Campbell* 227

Walthamstow's Spring in the Sun *by David Bradshaw* 230

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 2018'

Opposite: Some London sites harbour wintering Stonechat. This bird was at Wanstead Flats. (Jonathan Lethbridge)

RINGING REPORT

PAUL ROPER AND DANIEL WHITELEGG

Red-breasted Flycatcher – ringed at Rammey Marsh. (Adam Wilson)

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 2018 can be found on the BTO web site at:

https://www.bto.org/our-science/projects/ringing/publications/online-ringing-reports

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) website:

https://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/ringing/surveys/ces

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 relatively stable in 2018 although numbers of Gadwall, Pochard, Egyptian and Canada Goose exceeded 38% of national totals. Visits to Little Egret and Grey Heron colonies led to recoveries around the south and east coastal marshes and inland as far as Oxford. Favourable netting conditions at Rye Meads resulted in welcome increases in Jack and Common Snipe numbers, in a year when all other wader species saw a decrease and reduction in the diversity of species ringed. This reflects a continued lack of suitable locations for catching waders in the capital. On a positive note, numbers of Common Terns and Black-headed Gulls remained moderately stable or increased with both these species continuing to utilise artificial rafts. An unexpected increase in full-grown Herring Gulls is a pleasant occurrence, given that opportunities to catch birds in significant numbers remains scarce. A single adult Cuckoo is an excellent bird for the area, however this is balanced against poor totals for Owls and Swifts. Great Spotted Woodpeckers exceeded 100 birds for the first time since 2015, reflecting the species continued growth in capital. Hirundine numbers were conflicting, with strong pullus Sand Martin totals against a continued slide for Swallows. Five Water Pipits is excellent in the context of only 12 being ringed nationally. The star bird for the year was certainly a Red-breasted Flycatcher ringed at Rammey Marsh, believed to be a ringing first and the eleventh record for London and the first since 1998. Autumnal Chats were all represented, not a common event. Mostly it was a poor year for Warblers, with six out of nine species recording totals down on previous years. This may reflect a bad breeding season. It is encouraging to see the continued presence of Marsh Tit, especially with pullus making up such a large proportion of the total. Ringing of both Sparrow species saw increases, with that of the Tree Sparrows down to the concerted efforts of the ringers at their remaining two colonies. Goldfinches continued to dominate the finch totals, whilst Siskin once again passed 100 birds. Unfortunately, Linnet and Yellowhammer numbers remain meagre, but an outstanding effort at Rye Meads saw a superb 41 Reed Bunting chicks ringed.

Table 1. Species totals of birds reported as ringed in the London Area during 2018.

2018 Pullus	2018 Full Grown	2018 Total	Species	2017 Total	2016 Total
57	402	459	Canada Goose	189	217
10	9	19	Greylag Goose	23	13
86	248	334	Mute Swan	383	343
23	42	65	Egyptian Goose	87	83
5	6	11	Mandarin Duck	8	0
0	0	0	Shoveler	5	0
0	18	18	Gadwall	29	15
10	75	85	Mallard	116	80

2018 Pullus	2018 Full Grown	2018 Total	Species	2017 Total	2016 Total
0	28	28	Teal	17	13
0	2	2	Red-crested Pochard	6	0
8	3	11	Pochard	2	6
19	15	34	Tufted Duck	44	46
0	1	1	Little Grebe	10	5
0	0	0	Great Crested Grebe	3	1
36	0	36	Grey Heron	24	19
37	2	39	Little Egret	9	22
0	0	0	Cormorant	2	0
0	13	13	Sparrowhawk	15	22
0	0	0	Buzzard	4	0
0	0	0	Water Rail	5	2
3	35	38	Moorhen	50	29
11	206	217	Coot	232	206
0	0	0	Lapwing	18	8
0	0	0	Little Ringed Plover	2	0
0	0	0	Woodcock	0	1
0	15	15	Jack Snipe	1	7
0	8	8	Snipe	4	16
0	1	1	Common Sandpiper	3	2
0	4	4	Green Sandpiper	6	7
409	115	524	Black-headed Gull	443	138
0	14	14	Herring Gull	0	0
0	0	0	Yellow-legged Gull	0	0
0	0	0	Lesser Black-backed Gull	1	0
57	0	57	Common Tern	76	46
42	11	53	Stock Dove	66	32
3	45	48	Woodpigeon	73	74
2	24	26	Collared Dove	15	11
0	1	1	Cuckoo	2	0
7	0	7	Barn Owl	6	34
2	0	2	Tawny Owl	8	6
0	0	0	Little Owl	3	3
3	0	3	Swift	13	27
0	57	57	Kingfisher	64	62
0	102	102	Great Spotted Woodpecker	96	69
0	13	13	Green Woodpecker	23	33
25	2	27	Kestrel	40	30
0	0	0	Hobby	0	1
11	2	13	Peregrine	3	1
0	56	56	Ring-necked Parakeet	78	57
0	29	29	Jay	42	33
20	37	57	Magpie	45	43

2018 Pullus	2018 Full Grown	2018 Total	Species	2017 Total	2016 Total
12	29	41	Jackdaw	26	24
0	3	3	Carrion Crow	5	5
7	140	147	Coal Tit	181	105
8	3	11	Marsh Tit	8	0
1,520	2815	4,335	Blue Tit	4348	2934
1,138	1577	2,715	Great Tit	2401	1912
0	1	1	Bearded Tit	3	4
0	0	0	Skylark	4	0
361	35	396	Sand Martin	571	353
124	97	221	Swallow	355	544
0	148	148	House Martin	26	11
1	77	78	Cetti's Warbler	114	120
0	740	740	Long-tailed Tit	880	785
0	281	281	Willow Warbler	231	334
0	987	987	Chiffchaff	2265	2169
30	260	290	Sedge Warbler	449	470
62	915	977	Reed Warbler	1178	1369
0	0	0	Grasshopper Warbler	6	4
2	2642	2,644	Blackcap	2611	2231
0	273	273	Garden Warbler	345	334
0	103	103	Lesser Whitethroat	66	93
0	565	565	Whitethroat	688	630
0	2	2	Firecrest	19	9
0	332	332	Goldcrest	828	750
8	437	445	Wren	630	684
9	26	35	Nuthatch	28	28
0	53	53	Treecreeper	56	51
4	1278	1,282	Starling	1662	1915
15	482	497	Blackbird	644	658
0	11	11	Fieldfare	20	9
0	212	212	Redwing	301	318
0	178	178	Song Thrush	272	268
0	1	1	Mistle Thrush	3	3
5	1	6	Spotted Flycatcher	1	0
35	747	782	Robin	955	979
0	0	0	Nightingale	1	0
0	1	1	Red-breasted Flycatcher	0	0
0	1	1	Black Redstart	0	0
0	1	1	Redstart	2	3
0	1	1	Whinchat	1	1
0	4	4	Stonechat	6	2
0	1	1	Wheatear	0	1
0	249	249	House Sparrow	191	166

2018 Pullus	2018 Full Grown	2018 Total	Species	2017 Total	2016 Total
58	20	78	Tree Sparrow	40	81
5	576	581	Dunnock	821	785
0	0	0	Yellow Wagtail	4	0
19	7	26	Grey Wagtail	32	42
5	4	9	Pied Wagtail	12	10
0	134	134	Meadow Pipit	179	136
0	0	0	Tree Pipit	3	2
0	5	5	Water Pipit	1	2
0	151	151	Chaffinch	166	236
0	2	2	Brambling	1	0
0	43	43	Bullfinch	50	80
1	186	187	Greenfinch	263	217
0	25	25	Linnet	57	28
0	13	13	Redpoll Sp*	3	0
0	97	97	Lesser Redpoll	234	117
4	1009	1,013	Goldfinch	1122	800
0	153	153	Siskin	17	369
0	11	11	Yellowhammer	9	13
41	102	143	Reed Bunting	148	88
4,360	**19888**	**24,248**	**Total**	**27929**	**25206**

* Taken from the National Ringing Database which offers three selection options: Common, Lesser or Redpoll sp.

One of the main reasons for ringing birds is to produce recoveries of one type or another. Recoveries can be from dead birds, other ringers catching birds from elsewhere or field sightings of colour marked birds which are easily identifiable, providing some excellent life histories of individual birds.

There are now many internet sources of recovered birds, the main one showing all the London Recoveries can be found on the BTO web site at:

https://app.bto.org/ring/countyrec/results2018/ringGBLO2018.htm

For the purpose of this report a few notable recoveries are illustrated here: a Kestrel, ringed at the nest in 2006 near Wickford, Essex was sighted in 2018 at Brentford. An adult Shoveler, ringed at Wandsworth Common in January 2017 was shot near Oulu, Finland in August 2018. Despite none being ringed in London for many years, Dunlin continue to yield re-sightings. A first year bird ringed at Crossness in the winter of 2011 was recaptured at Malmo, Sweden in July 2018. This movement has been replicated by a few Dunlin across the previous reports. A first year Blackcap ringed at Sandwich Bay on September 24th 2018 was remarkably re-caught at Queen Mary Reservoir the next day, a distance of 130km. Lastly, an adult Fieldfare ringed in 2014 near Uxbridge was retrapped at the same location in 2018, a rare occurrence.

The Southern Colour Ringing Group and North Thames Gull group websites also show recoveries from birds in their respective projects and information on interesting movements can be found here:

Herring Gull - ringed at Pitsea. (Paul Rowe)

http://www.southern-colour-ringing-group.org.uk/
http://www.ntgg.org.uk/cgi-bin/content.cgi?p=recoveries&l=1

References

R A ROBINSON. D I LEECH, & J A ClARK (2019) The Online Demography Report: bird ringing and nest recording in Britain & Ireland in 2018. BTO, Thetford (http://www.bto.org/ringing-report, created on 7-August-2019)

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Adam Wilson and Paul Rowe 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 danielwhitelegg@ymail.com

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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. One-kilometre 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 2018, a total of 100 squares were surveyed in the London region, a decrease from 2017 (see Table 1).

Table 1. Number of squares covered over the most recent ten years.

2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
110	105	98	99	112	108	106	106	110	100

In 2018, a total of 97 species were recorded during BBS visits in London, including Hawfinch, the first time this species has been recorded on BBS walks in the area, taking the total seen on London squares to 140 species. Other more unusual sightings in 2018 included Common Sandpiper, 14 Redwing and six Lesser Redpoll. The most abundantly recorded species were Feral Pigeon, Woodpigeon and Carrion Crow, with the latter species replacing Starling. This is the first time the top three has changed since 2000, the last time House Sparrow was in the top three. It was only the second time the total number of Starling counted has been below 2,000: The previous occasion was in 1995 when only 36 squares were covered, highlighting the severe decline suffered by this species.

Table 2 shows the population changes in London, with figures for England being shown for the one-year and long term trends for comparison purposes. The figures for England for the five-year and ten-year 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. For four species, London trends are produced for five-year or ten-year periods but the sample size remains too low to report trends from 1995/2017 (Canada Goose, Moorhen, Stock Dove and Jackdaw). The sample size enables one-year and five-year results to be produced for Stock Dove for the first time, although they do not show significant changes for either period.

Thirteen species show a statistically significant increase in London over the longest

Table 2. Population changes in numbers of birds in the BTO's London region with one-year and long-term trends compared with England; figures in blue type are statistically significant). The longer term trends have been smoothed. As smoothing involves truncation of the end points these trends run to 2017 even though data to 2018 were used to calculate them, e.g. the longest trend is labelled 1995/2017.

	Sample size London*	Change 2017/2018 London (1 year)	Change 2017/2018 England (1 year)	Change 2012/2017 London (5 years)	Change 2007/2017 London (10 years)	Change 1995/2017 London (22 years)	Change 1995/2017 England (22 years)
Canada Goose	34	-17	-14	-2	-21	N/A	58
Mallard	44	-15	-9	-9	-10	-23	18
Moorhen	37	-8	-13	-5	-7	N/A	-18
Feral Pigeon	74	-3	9	-2	-4	-22	-31
Stock Dove	31	9	3	21	N/A	N/A	27
Woodpigeon	84	24	9	0	-10	52	39
Collared Dove	53	-14	-7	-26	-45	-17	-4
Swift	59	26	-18	-18	-44	-58	-56
Great Sp. Woodpecker	39	5	10	-16	-20	39	102
Green Woodpecker	32	-15	-5	-13	-14	35	32
Ring-necked Parakeet	46	22	22	74	138	24,652	1,711
Jay	41	4	13	-15	-26	-20	1
Magpie	82	11	0	5	9	36	-1
Jackdaw	36	18	-1	9	144	N/A	69
Carrion Crow	83	12	-4	-9	5	51	28
Blue Tit	82	7	12	-13	-30	5	-3
Great Tit	78	18	17	-9	-7	107	26
Long-tailed Tit	34	-16	-23	7	8	88	10
Chiffchaff	35	-40	-30	1	36	144	116
Blackcap	48	-8	7	12	54	182	121
Wren	78	-5	-18	13	-2	42	29
Starling	80	-5	-1	-17	-40	-60	-61
Blackbird	84	3	-5	-4	-19	-30	22
Song Thrush	52	-7	-17	12	0	-31	26
Mistle Thrush	33	-14	-19	-15	-35	-58	-38
Robin	81	-10	-13	7	9	88	32
House Sparrow	70	3	-1	3	-9	-70	-16
Dunnock	63	-12	-6	13	5	26	16
Chaffinch	57	-19	-4	-37	-42	57	-18
Greenfinch	58	-17	-2	-64	-79	-53	-57
Goldfinch	53	-12	0	41	142	463	142

*The sample stated here relates the longest period for which London results are available, i.e. the sample sizes for Canada Goose, Moorhen and Jackdaw refer to a ten-year period, for Stock Dove a five-year period and for all other species it refers to the full BBS survey period 1994-2018. The sample size for shorter periods may be different and is usually higher.

time period (between 1995 and 2017), a reduction of two species compared with last year's report. Following recent declines, the long-term increases for Dunnock and Chaffinch are no longer statistically significant in London. Eight species show a significant decrease in London over the same period, the same number as last year. These are: Feral Pigeon; Swift; Starling; Blackbird; Song Thrush; Mistle Thrush; House Sparrow; and Greenfinch.

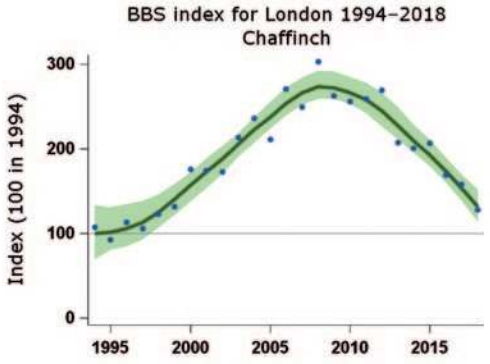

Figure 1. Graph showing the BBS trend for Chaffinch in the London government office region. The dark green line is the smoothed trend, the blue dots represent the annual indices. (BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey)

Just three species showed statistically significant population changes between 2017 and 2018 in London. Woodpigeon and Great Tit increased (the former following a significant increase between 2016 and 2017), and Robin decreased.

The five-year and ten-year results show little difference from last year, with the five-year Greenfinch decline worsening slightly to 64%. Chaffinch shows the second strongest decline over the most recent five-year period (37%). The gains made by Chaffinch during the first ten years of BBS have now been almost completely reversed (Figure 1): although the change between 1995 and 2017 is still positive, it is no longer statistically significant. The disease trichomonosis affects Chaffinches as well as Greenfinches but it is uncertain whether this is the main cause of the Chaffinch decline (Lawson *et al*. 2018).

References

LAWSON, B., ROBINSON, R.A., TOMS, M.P., RISELY, K., MACDONALD, S. & CUNNINGHAM, A.A. 018. Health hazards to wild birds and risk factors associated with anthropogenic food provisioning. *Phil. Trans. R. Soc*. B373:20170091.

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BBS information: www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/bbs

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THE GARDEN BIRDWATCH SURVEY IN THE LONDON AREA 1995-2018

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Introduction

The British Trust for Ornithology's (BTO) Garden BirdWatch (GBW) is a national survey involving members of the public which has been running since 1995 and currently has around 11,000 registered observers across the UK. The survey is funded by its participants, who count the birds they see in their garden every week throughout the year. Participants are asked to record birds at the same time(s) and for the same duration each week to ensure consistency in recording effort in each garden, although the number of hours spent by the observers may vary from garden to garden. From 2003 onwards, additional taxa have been added to the survey and observers are now able to record other species in addition to birds including mammals, reptiles, amphibians, butterflies, bumblebees and dragonflies. However, this paper focuses solely on birds.

The survey is sometimes confused with the RSPB's Big Garden Bird Watch, but is entirely independent from this survey and there are important differences between the two. The RSPB survey asks participants to observe their garden for just one hour during the same weekend every year and is one of the largest public surveys of its kind, with around 470,000 people taking part in 2019 (RSPB website). The very large sample provides the RSPB with a good measure to highlight large scale changes in garden use over time; however the survey takes place over a single weekend each year and therefore counts in any one year can be affected by the weather conditions over that particular weekend and do not give any information about what is happening in gardens for the rest of the year.

Whilst the BTO GBW has a smaller sample size, it is still larger than many other national surveys and therefore is more than sufficient to robustly identify changes in garden bird use over time, and, as records are collected every week, the volume of data generated by GBW is more than comparable with the Big Garden Birdwatch. In addition, the fact that observers record birds every week throughout the year also enables normal patterns of change in garden use across the year to be assessed, and also ensures that the results are not biased by short-term changes in garden use prompted by severe weather conditions.

Methods

Data coverage

Participation in GBW in the London Area[1] peaked in the early 2000s when around 750 gardens were regularly watched; around 300 gardens now contribute to the survey in our area. Results are presented on the BTO website for Greater London, and other gardens within the London area which are outside Greater London fall within the East of England and South-east regions on the BTO website (www.bto.org/gbw). In this paper however we present results covering all gardens falling within the London area, with results also shown separately for London area gardens within and outside Greater London. It should

[1] The London Area refers to the area covered by the LNHS recording circle

be noted however that this categorisation is based on the one-kilometre (1-km) square in which a garden is located and hence does not follow the borough boundaries exactly; gardens within 1-km squares which fall along the Greater London boundary are placed into whichever area covers a larger proportion in the square.

Data Collection

Survey participants observe the birds in their garden each week, and record the highest number of each species seen during their recording period. The recording duration may vary from garden to garden as a fixed recording duration is not set by the survey. However, observers are asked to keep their recording time and duration consistent to ensure results can be compared from week to week and from year to year. Observers also provide additional information about their garden when they join the survey (e.g. garden size) and additional information each week (e.g. food provided); however, this information has not been considered here.

In the early years of the survey, data were submitted on paper forms which could be read electronically, and counts were submitted for the top ten species only and were recorded within ranges rather than being a precise count. In more recent years, most data have been submitted via an online data entry system which has enabled precise counts to be submitted for all species.

Data Analysis

The results presented in this paper use records from gardens in the London area during the period 1995-2018. As precise counts were not available during the early years of the survey, we instead use 'reporting rate' in order to compare how garden use has changed in the London Area over this period. The 'reporting rate' shows the proportion of gardens in which a species was reported during a particular period. The reporting rate has been calculated for each 'quarter' of a calendar year, i.e. Quarter 1 covers the first thirteen weeks of the year and therefore corresponds approximately to January to March.

The reporting rates presented in this paper only take into account those gardens which have been watched regularly during each quarter, data have been excluded if counts from a garden have been received for fewer than eight weeks (out of a maximum of thirteen) for that quarter. This is to ensure that the reporting rate is likely to accurately reflect the proportion of gardens that a species is using during that quarter.

In order to compare garden usage between early and recent years, we have calculated the mean GBW reporting rate within the London Area across all quarters during 1996-2000 and 2014-2018 inclusive. Each five-year period therefore includes results from twenty different quarters. Records were used from a mean of 246 gardens per quarter for 1996-2000 (133 within and 113 outside Greater London) and from a mean of 279 gardens per quarter for 2014-2018 (153 within and 126 outside Greater London). Data from the first year of the survey (1995) was excluded as there were fewer than 100 participating gardens during the first three quarters of the survey.

Results and discussion

Table 1 shows the peak reporting rates for the first five years of the survey (1996-2000) and for the most recent five years (2014-2018) for the most regularly reported species in gardens in the London Area.

Table 1. GBW mean reporting rates across all quarters from 1996 to 2000 and from 2014 to 2018 shown for the London Area as a whole, and for gardens inside and outside Greater London (see Methods section for full details). Species are ordered according to the reporting rate for the whole London Area in 2014-2018. Note that the mean reporting rates for Fieldfare, Redwing, Brambling and Siskin are based on data from Q1 and Q4 only.

Species	Greater London		Outside Greater London		London Area Total	
	1996-2000	2014-2018	1996-2000	2014-2018	1996-2000	2014-2018
Robin	73.0	75.8	73.5	75.5	73.2	75.7
Blue Tit	78.4	75.0	78.4	74.5	78.4	74.8
Woodpigeon	66.2	75.0	60.7	74.5	63.7	74.5
Great Tit	71.7	72.4	73.0	70.9	72.2	71.7
Blackbird	76.2	67.0	75.5	71.1	76.9	68.8
Magpie	65.6	65.5	67.6	69.3	66.5	67.2
Dunnock	54.0	57.2	64.8	65.4	58.7	60.9
Goldfinch	8.0	51.4	10.3	55.2	9.0	53.1
Collared Dove	55.7	38.9	71.2	54.4	62.8	45.9
Starling	64.5	45.5	66.4	42.8	65.3	44.3
Coal Tit	32.5	37.2	37.4	44.9	35.0	40.7
Chaffinch	38.3	33.4	61.9	49.4	49.2	40.6
Feral Pigeon	39.2	48.1	18.4	29.3	29.6	39.6
House Sparrow	66.1	40.6	61.1	32.9	63.7	37.1
Carrion Crow	43.0	36.6	35.1	33.1	39.4	35.0
Great Spotted Woodpecker	29.5	29.6	32.0	35.3	30.6	32.2
Greenfinch	47.4	24.7	60.2	34.5	53.2	29.1
Long-tailed Tit	15.8	26.5	21.9	28.8	18.6	27.5
Ring-necked Parakeet	0	29.2	0	20.0	0	25.0
Wren	30.1	24.7	33.9	25.1	31.9	24.9
Jay	35.9	23.5	30.0	21.0	33.2	22.3
Jackdaw	2.5	11.2	13.1	31.2	7.4	20.2
Nuthatch	7.5	12.6	17.8	25.2	12.3	18.3
Song Thrush	21.1	8.4	27.7	17.1	24.1	12.3
Blackcap	5.1	8.7	6.1	9.5	5.6	9.1
Redwing	10.5	7.4	15.3	10.6	12.7	8.8
Goldcrest	5.6	7.3	6.3	7.4	5.8	7.3
Sparrowhawk	9.1	5.7	10.6	8.7	9.8	7.0
Stock Dove	0	4.9	0	7.0	0	5.9
Green Woodpecker	0	3.9	0	6.1	0	4.9
Siskin	5.4	2.8	8.4	6.4	6.9	4.4
Bullfinch	2.1	1.0	4.3	5.3	3.1	2.9
Pied Wagtail	0.8	1.4	5.5	3.6	3.1	2.5
Fieldfare	2.4	1.6	3.5	2.9	2.9	2.1
Mistle Thrush	3.9	1.5	5.7	1.9	4.7	1.7
Tawny Owl	1.0	0.8	1.3	1.7	1.1	1.2
Brambling	0.8	0.3	0.8	1.1	0.9	0.9
Rook	1.1	0.7	3.1	0.9	2.0	0.8

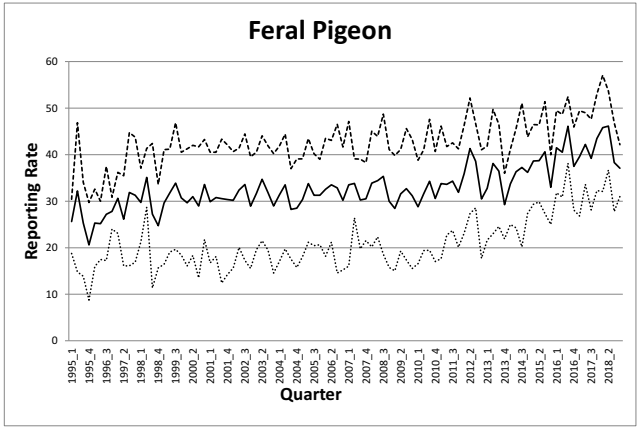
GBW has been running for a similar length of time to the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) (see pages 195–197), and the GBW data for many resident species are in line with the BBS trends for Greater London. Therefore the changes in garden use for these species may reflect real changes in populations within the London area. For example, the reporting rate in gardens has decreased over the long-term for House Sparrow, Starling and Song Thrush, and there have been more recent declines in the reporting rate for Collared Dove, Greenfinch and Chaffinch. In contrast, the number of gardens visited by Woodpigeon, Ring-necked Parakeet, Jackdaw, Long-tailed Tit and Goldfinch has increased over the last twenty years, with the number of gardens visited by parakeets reaching 40% in winter 2018. Recent research carried out by the BTO suggests that for some species, the provision of garden bird food may have been an important driver which has contributed to these population changes (Plummer et al. 2019), and the provision of niger seed may have prompted the increase in Goldfinch, which was recorded on average in 53% of gardens in 2014-2018, up from 9% in 1996-2000, the biggest reporting rate increase of all species (Figure 1).

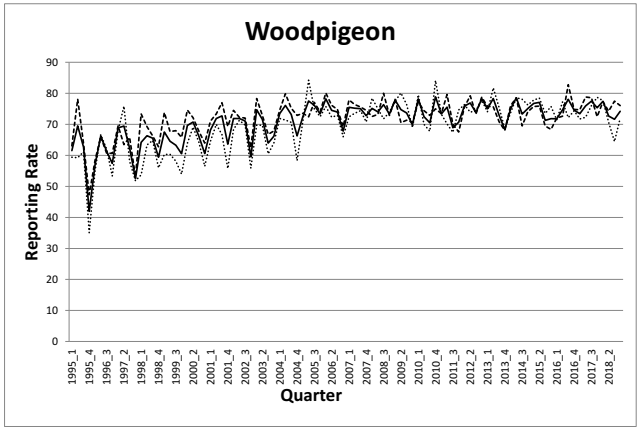
Blackcap is another species which is recorded in more gardens now than during the late 1990s and early 2000s; however in this case the fact that the BBS trend has also increased is likely to be coincidental as the birds recorded in gardens during winter are believed to originate predominantly from breeding populations in central Europe rather than from the British breeding population, and garden bird feeding may have helped drive the evolution of this new migration route (Plummer *et al*. 2015).

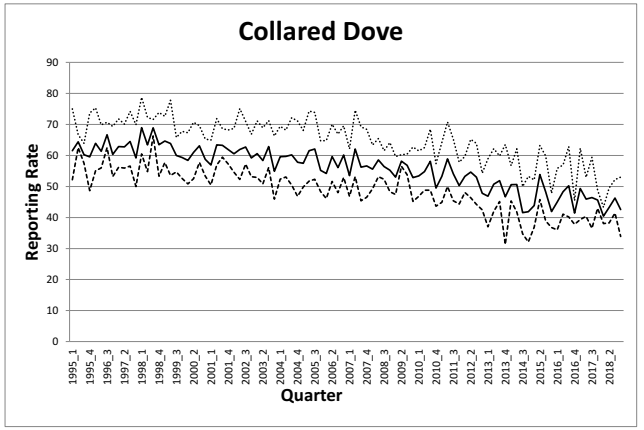
The increase in reporting rate for Feral Pigeon is more difficult to explain as BBS results show that this species decreased across Greater London by 22% between 1995 and 2017. However despite these declines it continues to be one of the three most abundantly reported species recorded on BBS walks, and the change in the GBW reporting rate is hence likely to reflect an increasing tendency to exploit gardens by this species, perhaps prompted at least in part by reduced opportunities elsewhere in urban areas where feeding of pigeons may have been discouraged by local councils to attempt to reduce the numbers of pigeons in public areas.

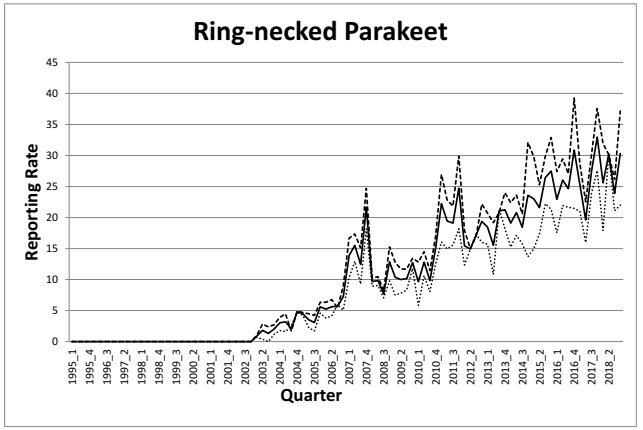
The average reporting rates for Feral Pigeon are much higher in gardens within Greater London compared with gardens within the LNHS area but outside the London boundary (48% and 29% respectively for 2014-2018). Unsurprisingly, this is consistent with the data from the London Atlas 2007-2013 (Woodward *et al*. 2017) which showed that this species was found at much higher densities within the Greater London boundary. The only other species which shows significantly higher reporting rates within Greater London is House Sparrow (41% and 33% for 2014-2018); however a number of species show the opposite pattern with GBW reporting rates being higher in gardens outside Greater London, including Collared Dove, Jackdaw, Song Thrush, Dunnock, Nuthatch, Chaffinch, Greenfinch and Bullfinch (Table 1 and Figure 1). As for Feral Pigeon, the differences in GBW are consistent with the results from the London Atlas.

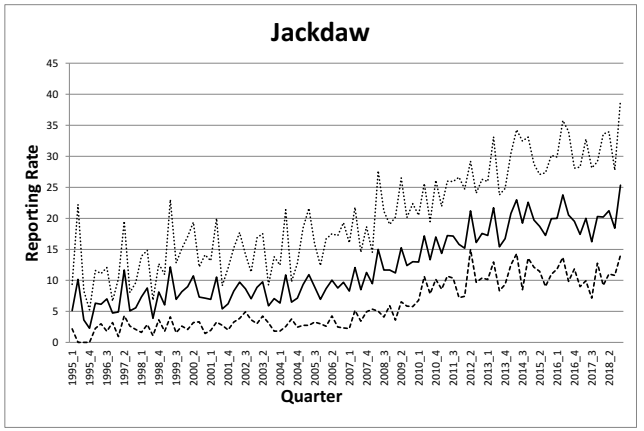
Figure 1. GBW Quarterly reporting rate from 1995 to 2018 for selected species for all gardens within the London Area (solid line), with separate trends shown for gardens within (dashed line) and outside (dotted line) Greater London. Note that the scale on the y-axis (reporting rate) is not identical on all graphs.








Ring-necked Parakeet
Reporting Rate
Quarter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Reporting Rate
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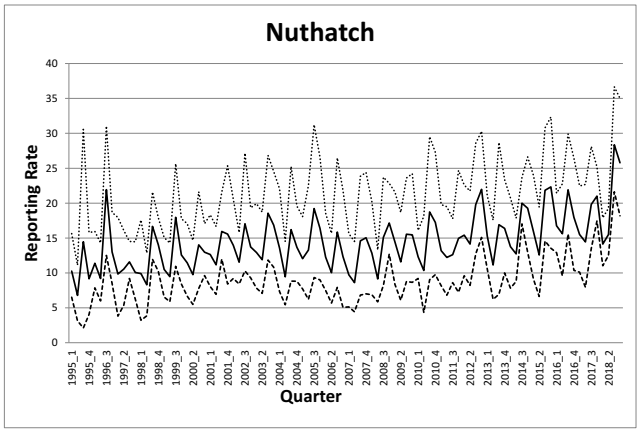
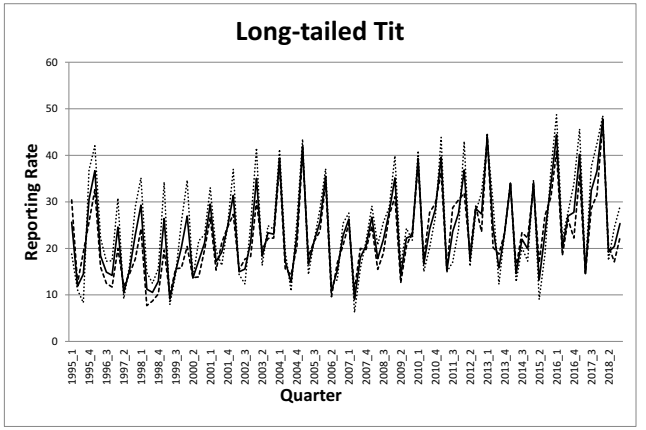

Nuthatch
Reporting Rate
Quarter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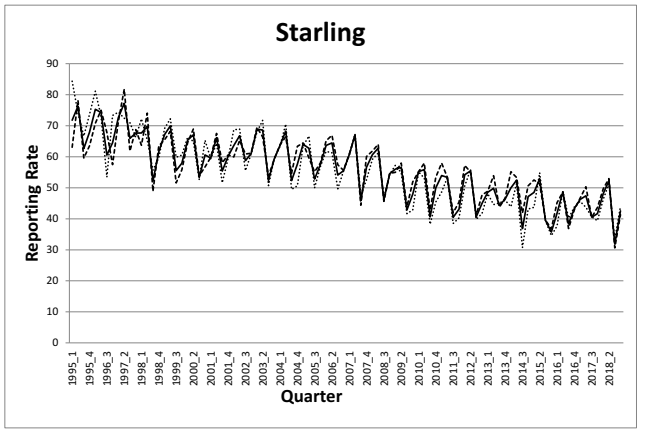
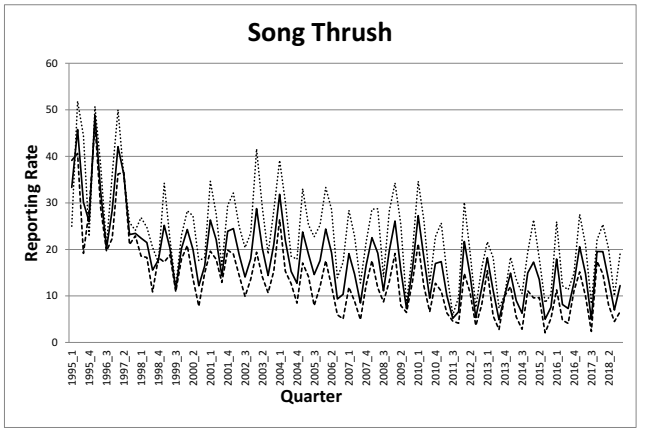
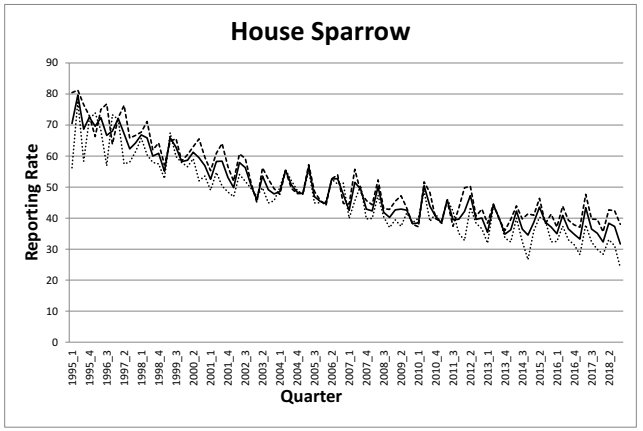
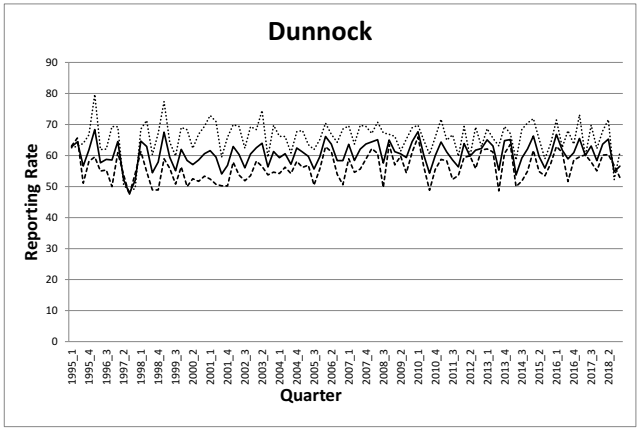
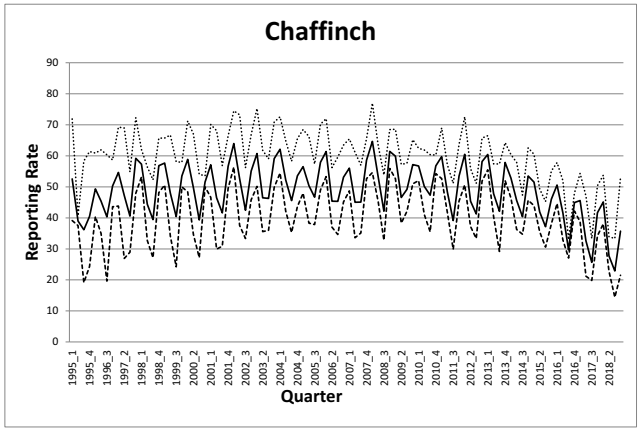
Reporting Rate
Quarter

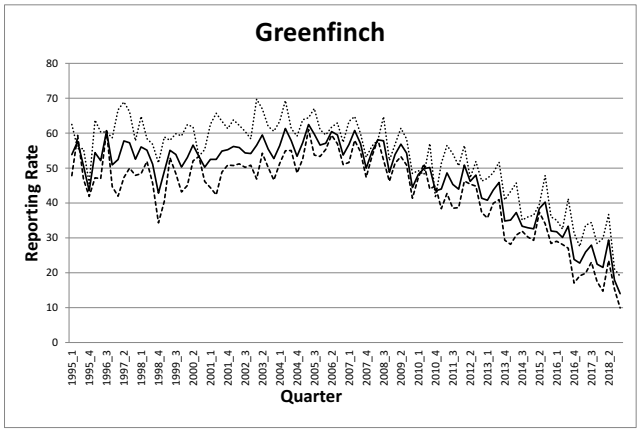

Starling
Reporting Rate
Quarter

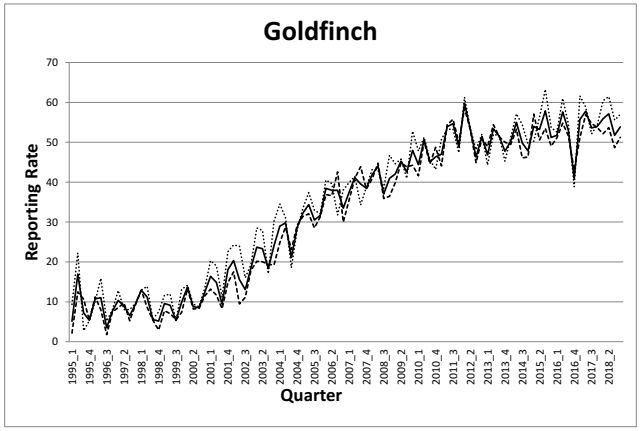

Song Thrush
Reporting Rate
Quarter









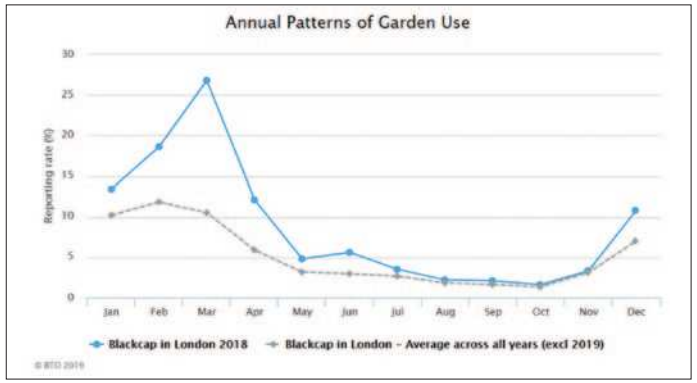


Seasonal trends

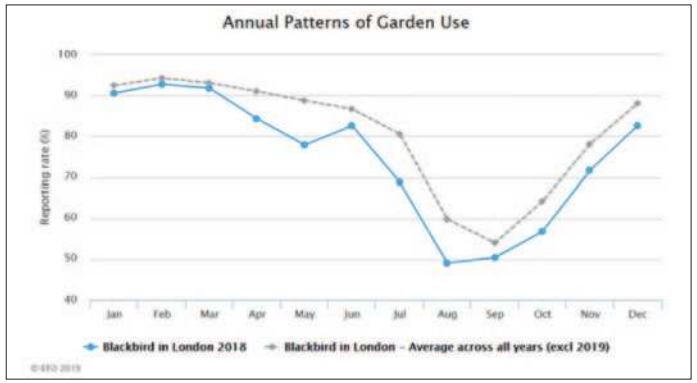
As BTO GardenBirdWatch data are collected on a weekly basis, one of the most interesting aspects of GBW is the opportunity to observe changes in garden usage over the course of the year, These seasonal trends can be seen in some of the London Area graphs in Figure 1, in particular the graph for Long-tailed Tit, but are more clearly shown in the GBW graphs for Greater London presented on the BTO website.

Annual patterns of garden usage are also clearly visible and reporting rates for most species peak during the winter, e.g. Blackcap, although there are some exceptions such as House Sparrow for which reporting rates peak in summer and Robin, for which reporting rates decrease in late summer when adults are moulting and become more secretive and hence less noticeable, and Blackbird reporting rate also dips in autumn. The graphs for these four species are shown in Figure 2 and interested readers can view other graphs at www.bto.org/our-science/projects/gbw/results.

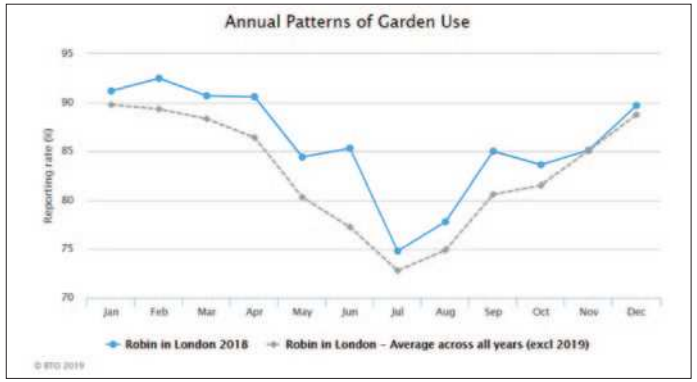
Figure 2: GBW monthly reporting rates in Greater London for selected species for 2018 (blue line) and all years (1995-2018; grey dashed line), reproduced with permission from the BTO.



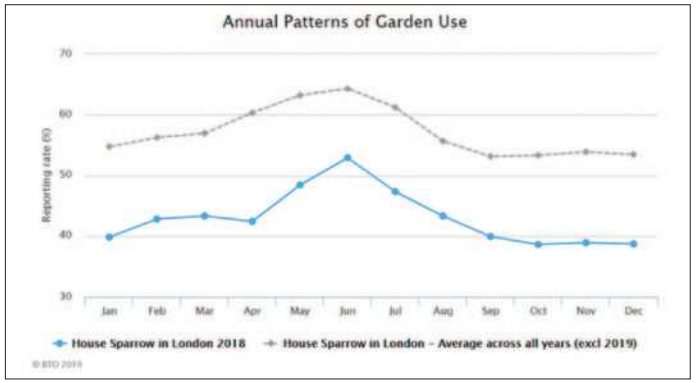
(a) Blackcap



(b) Blackbird



(c) Robin



(d) House Sparrow

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WeBS FEATS: TALES OF A WILDFOWL COUNTER

ROB INNES

The humble Cormorant is detested by two categories of people: anglers and wetland bird survey (WeBS) counters. Typically, when you arrive at the reservoir, there will be four Cormorants sitting on the pier. Three more are on the water straight out. Then one of the pier birds flies off. Six go over high north. Boats disturb the trio on the water, so they flap away towards the west bank and resettle. Five go over high south. Next, you notice the pier birds have vanished, but two (perhaps additional) then surface encouragingly just in front of you. This is all before you've even begun to walk round. So – what's the running total?

Alternatively, on your initial scan, you see that a section of the reservoir rim is furred with black like a mass of flies: a dense band of jostling Cormorants. Find the left-hand-most bird and start to count. There are always more Cormorants than you think. Was that 433 you just got to, or 333? It isn't easy to concentrate when the subjects keep projectile-defaecating in that winning way they have. Then, when you've counted as far as 771 – disaster. First, ragged clusters of Cormorants break off and blunder away from the right-hand end of the flock. Then the whole lot take wing in a great confused rabble. Will they stick together? They will not. Several hundred labour into the sky and head off to the north-west, to gladden the hearts of the WeBS lads over at King George. The rest flop down on to the water in front of the south bank, almost a mile away. Then they begin to dive. They're fishing, you see. That's what Cormorants do. They are not trying

WeBS Counting at a London Reservoir. (Dawn Painter)

to drive you mad. But anyway – what's the running total? For me, it's usually 771.

I have a confession to make to those nice people at the BTO: I don't think my Cormorant counts have been very accurate down the years. I always see some, and I always enter a number – indeed, an integer – in the handy online census form. This even has a 'comment' field so that you can insert an excuse such as 'mobile: approximate total'. I never trust myself with this. I'd be too tempted to put: 'Then they all sank, so hah!' Or: 'You are SADISTS.' My Cormorant nightmare would be to read a new stipulation on the WeBS form: 'Please count *carbo* and *sinensis* separately.' But it's all right, really; they're not daft, the BTO. They understand that their band of put-upon volunteers can only take so much. And they don't want any crazed axe-men turning up at their door.

Trusting the Naylor nose

How much does it really matter, whether it's 671 or 771 or 772? Over time, this question does tend to crop up. I suppose the best WeBS volunteers are those who treat every count as a challenge to their integrity. My introduction to the WeBS scheme at the south-west Middlesex reservoirs came via the late and much-missed Peter Naylor, who for many years was the nominated counter for King George VI (KGVI) Reservoir. As a wildfowl censuser, Pete was a merciless enemy of compromise, whose natural qualities of patience and truthfulness helped him to laugh in the face of even the most skittish Cormorants. His permit for the counts covered himself and up to two 'assistants'. Every month, I assisted. I was extremely keen.

For some reason, my debut WeBS count was not at KGVI but at the adjacent Staines Reservoirs. It was a Sunday in the pit of winter, a disgusting morning with unbroken freezing rain and lousy visibility. As always, wildfowl were scattered all around both basins. We couldn't see far enough to count from the preferred few vantage points, so we (Pete, Ken Purdey and I) had to keep on the move, pausing every few hundred yards

to catch up on species totals. The drawback with this is that you keep flushing birds and then have to try to allow for double-counting.

I'd been entrusted with the Wigeon. Wigeon! A key species at Staines. Each time we stopped, I'd write them down. (You must never rely on your memory, you know.) At the end of our grim circuit, we huddled, wiped our glasses for the fiftieth time, and totted up our totals for Pete, the counter-in-chief. Although drenched, I was buzzing as I passed across what I suspected was an exceptional count of Wigeon. Pete knew better, however, and I saw him set down, in his beautiful handwriting, a total about two-thirds of what I'd come up with. He was right, I'm sure. Long years of counting wildfowl had given him an infallible nose for how many ducks were actually there.

How it's run and what it's for

WeBS is a compound of the tenacity and veracity of thousands of individuals over some 70 years. Its roots lie in the 1940s, when the British part of the International Council for Bird Preservation (precursor to BirdLife International) founded a new scheme under its quirkily named Wildfowl Inquiry Committee. At that time, nobody knew anything about long-term trends in national wildfowl populations, let alone international ones. In its early years, the survey focused on winter counts, and by 1951/2 it had expanded to cover more than 500 lakes and reservoirs throughout Britain. Data was being amassed on a national scale, from the 1960s in parallel with the Birds of Estuaries Enquiry; wildfowl and waders were the respective focuses. In due course, the winter-only remit was replaced by all-year-round coverage – a full count every month, like endlessly rolling boulders.

From the outset, part of the funding for the scheme has come from the government, with the RSPB also a main contributor, though the actual work has been organised chiefly by the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust and, more recently, the BTO. Some employees of those organisations must breathe and perhaps sweat bird counts: the BTO's Andy Musgrove, for example, did a stint in charge of WeBS *and* the Breeding Bird Survey *and* BirdTrack *and* Bird Atlas 2007-2011. (It's partly as a tribute to such dedication that the answer to my question 'does it really matter whether it's 771 or 772?' has to be: 'shut up and count the birds.') At this writing, the WeBS database holds information from about 5.5 million counts. 'If all the WeBS counts were printed on A4 paper and then laid end to end,' writes one possibly data-drunk BTO-er, 'they would stretch for 40 miles, more than one-and-a-half times the entire length of Loch Lomond, the longest water body counted.'

A young Kittiwake gambolling in the surf was a surprise on one August count. (Rob Innes)

So what do they do with all those duck counts? 'WeBS data continues to be used to inform policy infra-structure development proposals on wetland and coastal sites,'

On one February count, the only diving duck present was this female Scaup. (Rob Innes)

declares the BTO, and it offers as examples the numbers' 'prominent role in preventing the development of a deep-water container terminal at Dibden Bay, on Southampton Water, and [contribution] to the decision to create Newport Wetlands as mitigation for the loss of mudflats on Cardiff Bay.' It also refers a little vaguely to helping out with bird-flu policy. But, thankfully, there is now a proper global dimension to the surveys, since they feed into the International Waterbird Count project organised by Wetlands International. WeBS participants have also helped to organise surveys in Sierra Leone: a small but important step towards a full understanding of the gigantic and complex Eurasian-African waterbird flyway.

Back at ground level

WeBS does possess big-picture credibility, therefore, yet in reality we don't need to pretend that these meta-schemes are our only justification for slogging away at the regular counts. Something approaching a constant-effort survey is, as numerous birdwatchers can testify, in itself satisfying for the participant. Thanks to my WeBS involvement, I now have complete and regular species totals for Queen Mary Reservoir running back to 2007. They tell a story, and help towards an understanding of the wider local avian scene. I don't need to rely on my own spreadsheets to review the Queen Mary WeBS data, either; I can log in to the excellent www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/webs and check out all the counts for Queen Mary that have ever been submitted, starting with the first on Sunday, September 18, 1960. I can see that during the "Big Freeze" of 1963, up to 188 Goosander visited the reservoir. I can compare the WeBS data with my own first visits to Queen Mary in the early, arctic months of 1985 (still Goosander a-go-go).

Was it all simply so much better in those good old days? There's little argument that wildfowl were more numerous, and more diverse too, back in the 1960s-1980s. From the 1990s onwards, however, plenty of those totals look decidedly familiar, and indeed certain species, notably Great Crested Grebes and Coot, have increased. Yet in general Queen Mary, for the past several decades, has been a poor relation among London's reservoirs: huge, deep, sterile and unattractive to most birds. Censusing its wildfowl is not exactly a plum job, but it is a relaxing and peaceful one, just that bit further away from the Heathrow hubbub which mars nearly every session at the much birdier Staines Reservoirs. And, even though the dearth of birds can verge on the comical, there's always the chance of stumbling across something unusual.

No rarities, thanks

It must be admitted, however, that very few goodies are found on WeBS counts, and if you think about it you'll see how fitting that is, since rare birds are alien to the WeBS

ethos. A goodie counts as one, one digit, one integer; it says nothing about the fitness or otherwise of the site for waterbirds. The online WeBS entry form firmly prioritises the set of species they are interested in. None are passerines, so if the highlight of your session was a moulting *littoralis* Rock Pipit, you may well choose to keep it to yourself. On the other hand you can, with a bit of clicking, add any species to the core list, and there are 'notes' tags that let you burble excitedly away about the possible return of last year's Caspian Gull or the likelihood that this Great Northern Diver is the one from Island Barn Reservoir a month ago. But you will be talking to yourself. It's good psychology, mind, for them to give you the scope to rabbit on about this stuff.

So, from a personal point of view, WeBS counts are mainly a record of the unremarkable – yet not entirely. I find that even on the quietest day there is usually *something* for the notebook apart from clusters of vertical strokes: the discovery of a Buzzard's nest, a previously unrecorded Lapwing territory, or an early Common Tern. One summer I 'found' a respectable Sand Martin colony (previously known to others), in another I watched a White Wagtail carrying food to a putative nest, and in 2017 Great Black-backed Gull was a new breeding species for the Staines area. All milestones of a sort, though more for the individual notebook than the WeBS record.

Very occasionally, the gods of birding do let slip a treat. At Queen Mary, any tern is worth scrutinising, and influxes of Black Terns are not unknown (well, not totally unknown, and it depends what you call an influx.) The August WeBS count in 2013 served up a small arrival of Common and Black Terns and, to my incredulity, also a spruce juvenile White-winged Black, which showed nicely before a Peregrine barged in and dispersed the terns. That was the first accepted WWBT at Queen Mary for 35 years – which is not very impressive. (I tell myself that the place has huge potential, which is another way of saying that I haven't seen much there.)

More recently, my WeBS effort on November 12, 2017 had pretty much croaked when an odd-sized passerine shuffled out of cover on the reservoir bank. It was a Shorelark, a dingy and unimpressive one, but an undeniable goodie. Birds like that aren't allowed at Queen Mary, though, and indeed in short order it moved to the more appropriate banks of Staines Reservoirs, where national scrutiny eventually led to it being fixed as a North American Horned Lark, a rarity successfully twitched by thousands. Great fun, but really not very WeBS.

A juvenile Hobby, September 2012. (Rob Innes)

As I type this, I am wondering (among other things) whether the stay of execution for the Beddington landfill will maintain the high population of non-breeding large white-headed gulls at Queen Mary; whether any of this summer's brood of Shelduck will have survived; whether last winter's slump in Great Crested Grebe numbers will be repeated; and whether the 600-odd Cormorants I counted last time (*sinensis*, every man Jack of them) will have considerately moved on to plague some other WeBS sucker, I mean counter. We shall see.

Seen our mates anywhere? (Rob Innes)

Acknowledgements

With many thanks to Dawn Painter for her illustration that so evocatively captures the lone WeBS counter.

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THE BIRDS OF BEXLEY PARK WOODS, 1993-2018

ANDREW S. WALLER

Introduction

Bexley Park Woods (Grid ref: TQ483736) consists of 12.8 hectares of ancient Hornbeam coppiced woodland to the west of Bexley Village. It is bordered by Park Hill Road, Elmwood Drive, West Woodside/East Woodside and Camden Road.

History

During the 15th Century, Bexley Park Woods was part of an Estate and used as a deer park for the medieval Lords of the Manor.

The 1870 map for Bexley shows that this woodland was at least twice as large as it is now, extending to the east and also to the south. It is saddening to see that part of the overall woodland was basically carved up for new housing developments from the late 19th Century onwards.

Habitats

The site is composed predominantly of Hornbeam-dominated broad-leaved woodland, with the River Shuttle running through the northern section. There is also a smaller area

River Shuttle running through the northern section of the wood. (Andrew Waller)

Dense woodland along a ride. (Andrew Waller)

of associated grassland at the western side which is described as vacant land or parkland in the records.

Hornbeam woodland is highly notable in this part of London and therefore, despite its smaller size, this is an important woodland in the London Borough of Bexley and for Greater London.

A variety of tree species are present, including Hornbeam, which has previously been coppiced, English Oak, Sycamore, Hazel, Holly, Yew, Field Maple, Silver Birch, Ash and English Elm. In places, Cherry Laurel has also unfortunately invaded the woodland from adjacent gardens.

Management

There is open access at this woodland which is managed by the London Borough of Bexley and is a Borough Site of Grade 1 Importance for Nature Conservation.

This woodland has been coppiced historically, with noticeable Hornbeam stools still present that are affecting the composition of the ground flora. It is hoped that a rotational

Hornbeam and Silver Birch within the woodland. (Andrew Waller)

Woodpecked hole in standing deadwood. (Andrew Waller)

coppice programme can be introduced that will greatly benefit this habitat and especially the Hornbeam.

The River Shuttle corridor which runs through part of this woodland has suffered from erosion, so this is another aspect that needs to be assessed and acted upon in the future.

Invasive non-native plant species such as Cherry Laurel should be removed completely as a matter of urgency, as species such as this are spreading within this notable woodland.

Recording

Bird recording by me at Bexley Park Woods covers the years 1993 to 2018, although with some gaps between the years due to my work. In order to fill some of these gaps the records presented here include those from the Bexley RSPB database and from my colleague Mr Leigh Aldrich. The Bexley RSPB database, diligently collated by the Bexley Borough RSPB Recorder, Mr Ralph Todd, includes LNHS records.

In total, 73 bird species have been recorded at the wood during this period. This astonishing number of bird species at what is a relatively small urban woodland, demonstrates the rewards of bird watching over a long period of time by different recorders.

The recording of various rare birds at or over the wood such as Woodlark, Wood Warbler and Crossbill is thanks to a number of very dedicated bird watchers in the area, some of whom I know, who have clearly put a large amount of effort into investigating this woodland. Some of these fascinating bird species include passage migrants such as Woodlark and Wood Warbler that are clearly stopping here for a short time during migration. This includes the grassland area associated with the wood and forms part of the overall site.

Flyover birds of prey over the wood and associated grassland are indicative of the increasing populations within the London area of Red Kite, Buzzard and Hobby. This is a positive nature conservation story for a change, where many birds of prey are making a comeback in Britain as a whole.

The River Shuttle provides connectivity to other habitats and is likely being used as a linear corridor by wetland birds such as Snipe and Green Sandpiper. The records provide a snapshot of how such birds use these features in the wider landscape.

Bexley Park Woods certainly deserves further study with regard to its very interesting and diverse bird fauna and also for its fascinating habitat composition with the Hornbeam

coppice and the River Shuttle that cuts through the wood. These characteristics make this a very special woodland that must be protected against any future development pressure.

Systematic List

Brent Goose: Flew over the parkland area next to wood in 2011 (Bexley RSPB).
Greylag Goose: Seen over the parkland area at the wood edge in 1998 (Bexley RSPB).
Mallard: Regular breeding species on the River Shuttle within the wood and recorded since 1996. One to two pairs recorded.
Teal: Recorded between 1997 and 1998 at the wood (Bexley RSPB).
Grey Heron: Recorded since 1995 on the River Shuttle within the wood or at the grassland adjacent to the wood edge. Normally, just a single bird noted.
Little Egret: Small number of records between 2002 and 2015 (Bexley RSPB); either a single bird flying over the wood or along the river corridor.
Sparrowhawk: Records from 1994 to 2015 (Bexley RSPB) but no confirmation of breeding. The most recent record I have includes one bird over the woodland on May 4th 2018. I would expect this raptor species to be breeding within the wood but the nest is clearly hidden well in the tree canopy. A pair has been seen in the wood in different months by different observers.
Harrier spp: One flew over the wood in 2010 (Bexley RSPB). From notes submitted on May 25th it was thought to be a Montagu's Harrier.
Red Kite: Records of single flyover birds for 2010 and 2015 over the woodland (Bexley Park Wood).
Buzzard: A single bird flew over the wood in 2006 (Bexley RSPB).
Water Rail: Seen as a single bird in the woodland in 2015 (Bexley RSPB).
Moorhen: Regular breeding species on the River Shuttle in the woodland; one present on the River Shuttle within the wood on April 21st 2017 and on May 9th 2017. Two birds also seen in 2008.
Whimbrel: Flew over the wood in 2006 (Bexley RSPB). This is a very interesting migration record for the wood.
Snipe: Recorded from 1997 to 2011 either on the river or on the parkland next to the wood (Bexley RSPB). Between one to two birds seen at any time.
Common Sandpiper: Single birds seen over the wood in 1995 and 2008 (Bexley RSPB).
Green Sandpiper: Seen along the River Shuttle during the winter in previous years (Leigh Aldrich, personal communication). Also, a single bird was noted in 1997 (Bexley RSPB).
Spotted Redshank: Two flew over the wood in 2002 (Bexley RSPB); a notable migration record for the wood.
Feral Pigeon: Regular flyover species at the wood; seen since 1996. My earliest record was three over the woodland on June 26th 1996. Seen in small numbers during 2018.
Stock Dove: Regular breeding species within the wood; records from 1995 to 2015 (Bexley RSPB), with between two to three pairs noted in some years. My records show one singing male as recently as March 30th 2018 and one pair present on a tree on the same date.
Woodpigeon: Regular breeding species in the wood; seen since 1993. Highest number of 20 seen in the wood by me on June 24th 1996.
Turtle Dove: One bird flew over the wood in 2002 (Bexley RSPB) - another very interesting migration record.

Collared Dove: Recorded within the wood since 1996, but unclear if nests in the woodland or close by as no nests found. My earliest record was two present in the wood on March 31st 1996.
Cuckoo: A few records of single birds from 1994 to 2008 (Bexley RSPB).
Tawny Owl: Scattered records of single birds within the wood from 1994 to 2006, including a bird calling (Bexley RSPB); likely to be breeding within the wood but this needs to be confirmed in the future.
Swift: Flyover species over the wood since 1996. One bird over the woodland on June 24th 1996 as my earliest record. Small flocks seen over the wood by other observers on two occasions.
Kingfisher: Seen along the River Shuttle. Various records between 1994 and 2014 (Bexley RSPB), with between one to two birds noted. Likely to be breeding nearby.
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker: Records between 1994 to 2002, mainly singles but including the occasional pair in 1998 (Bexley RSPB). No further records of this declining species since 2002, which is a concern.
Great Spotted Woodpecker: Regular breeding species in the woodland, noted since 1996. At least one territory present, with a drumming male noted on March 30th 2018 and on May 4th 2018. Overall, two to four pairs thought to be present during the breeding season. Young have been seen and heard at nest sites.
Green Woodpecker: Regular breeding species and seen since 1996. One territory noted at this site by me including on March 30th 2018. Other observers have noted at least one breeding pair with two young on two occasions in the wood.
Kestrel: Records from 1994 to 2015 (Bexley RSPB) from the wood. My records show this species since 1996, with one bird over the tree canopy on March 31st 1996. Normally one to two birds seen, but this species would be expected to be breeding elsewhere.
Hobby: A few records present of a single bird from 1996 to 1998 over the wood (Bexley RSPB). Some of these records will be of birds migrating to breeding sites elsewhere.
Ring-necked Parakeet: Regular breeder in the wood and seen since 2017. Two pairs noted within the wood on March 30th 2018. Sometimes large flocks seen within or over the wood.
Jay: Regular breeding species in the woodland; seen since 1993. Six birds noted in a group in the wood on April 19th 1996. Two birds seen in the wood as recently as March 30th 2018.
Magpie: Breeds every year within the woodland; seen since 1993. Maximum number of birds were four in the wood on April 19th 1996. One nest recorded on March 31st 1996 and two nests present in the wood on March 30th 2018.
Jackdaw: Flyover species since 1996, either over the wood or at the grassland at the wood edge (Bexley RSPB).
Carrion Crow: Breeds annually within the woodland. Seen since 1996. Maximum number of birds were six within the wood on April 19th 1996. One pair at a nest tree in the wood on March 30th 2018.
Coal Tit: Recorded since 1994 within the woodland. Breeding confirmed as juveniles were seen in 1997 in the wood (Bexley RSPB).
Blue Tit: Regular breeder; seen since 1996. A minimum of at least three territories regularly present in the woodland. Seven pairs reported in 2001 (Bexley RSPB). One pair present at a nest box as recently as March 30th 2018.
Great Tit: Regular breeder; seen since 1996. At least three territories present in the woodland; three males singing in the wood as recently as March 30th 2018.

Woodlark: A total of three birds seen in 2012, flying over the wood (Bexley RSPB). This is a very notable passage migrant record for the wood.
Skylark: Three birds seen singing nearby in 1998 (Bexley RSPB).
Sand Martin: Four birds seen in 1998 over the wood and the associated grassland (Bexley RSPB).
Swallow: Small numbers over the woodland since 1995.
House Martin: 70 over the woodland on September 18th 2000 (Bexley RSPB).
Long-tailed Tit: Regular breeding species; records from 1995 to 2017. One pair seen together by me on May 4th 2018. Breeding confirmed as juveniles have been seen in family parties.
Willow Warbler: Records of this migrant species between 1994 to 1998 (Bexley RSPB); between one to three birds seen normally, and one possibly in song in 2000, as noted by another observer.
Chiffchaff: Regular breeding species; between two to four singing males recorded (Bexley RSPB) within the woodland. One singing male recorded by me in the woodland as recently as April 21st 2017.
Wood Warbler: Recorded in 1999 and 2002 in the wood, including a singing male in 1999 (Bexley RSPB); a very notable passage migrant record for this woodland.
Blackcap: Regular breeding species, noted since 1994. At least three to six territories recorded in the woodland.
Whitethroat: Seen singing at the site in 1998 (Bexley RSPB).
Goldcrest: Recorded since 1994 in the woodland, including one pair with juveniles in 2001 (Bexley RSPB); one occupied territory can be proven.
Wren: Regular breeding species in the woodland during the survey period; a minimum of three to four breeding territories noted in the woodland since 1993. Three singing males in the wood recorded by me as recently as May 4th 2018.
Nuthatch: Regular breeding species in the woodland; seen since 1994. One to two pairs noted in the wood by different observers (Bexley RSPB). One bird seen by me as recently as May 9th 2017.
Treecreeper: Regular breeding species; seen in the woodland since 1994, with one pair confirmed. On March 30th 2018, one bird was seen by me collecting nest material and entering a tree nest site behind damaged bark.
Starling: Seen over the woodland and foraging on woodland floor; unclear if nesting in the wood or in adjacent houses. Three birds counted within the woodland on May 15th 1993, my earliest record. Two seen in the wood foraging as recently as May 4th 2018.
Blackbird: Regular species at this site since 1993. Two to three territories regularly noted in the woodland, including two males in the wood on March 30th 2018.
Fieldfare: Winter visitor; seen within the wood between 1997 to 2001, with a flock of 25 noted in 2001 (Bexley RSPB).
Redwing: Winter visitor; seen between 1995 and 2011, with the highest number of 41 noted in a flock in 2001 (Bexley RSPB).
Song Thrush: Regular breeding species, noted since 2017. Between one and three territories known to be present here in different years. One singing male noted in the woodland as recently as May 4th 2018.

Mistle Thrush: Noted in the woodland as a breeding species since 1993. My earliest record was one bird present in the wood on May 15th 1993. Juveniles have been seen, confirming breeding in the wood.
Spotted Flycatcher: One record from 2009 at or over the wood (Bexley RSPB). This is a seriously declining species and is a notable record for the wood, given its disappearance at other sites in the Borough.
Robin: Regular breeding species in the woodland; seen since 1996. At least three to five territories recorded; three territories noted in the woodland as recently as May 9th 2017 and March 30th 2018. Juveniles have been seen, confirming breeding here.
House Sparrow: Noted on houses at the woodland edge since 1993, with one male seen at wood edge on May 15th 1993 as my earliest record. Two birds were seen on March 31st 1996.
Dunnock: Regular breeding species at the wood. Seen since 1998, with between three to four territories noted. One singing male heard as recently as on March 30th 2018.
Grey Wagtail: Various records between 1994 to 2016, including that of a pair present on the River Shuttle (Bexley RSPB). My most recent record includes one bird feeding along the river within the wood on April 21st 2017. Single juvenile birds seen by other observers in 1997, 2002 and in 2012, so breeding is confirmed along this river channel.
Meadow Pipit: Single birds recorded flying over the wood in 1998 (Bexley RSPB).
Chaffinch: Regular breeding species in the woodland; maximum of one territory noted at the site, including one singing male heard on May 9th 2017.
Brambling: Seen in 1997 and 2011 in the woodland or at the associated grassland area (Bexley RSPB). Just one to two birds seen at any time at the wood.
Greenfinch: Regular breeding species; two birds noted in the woodland on May 19th 1996 as my earliest record. A family party of five birds recorded by an observer in 1998 (Bexley RSPB) proves breeding at the wood or close by.
Lesser Redpoll: Some records for the period 1997 to 2002 (Bexley RSPB); normally, small numbers seen in the wood, although a lucky observer saw a flock of 25 in 1999.
Crossbill: A small number of records between 1998 to 2010 of single birds (Bexley RSPB) mostly over the wood.
Goldfinch: Recorded between 1994 to 2015; all winter records of small numbers in the wood.
Siskin: Records between 1994 to 2016, including of large flocks (Bexley RSPB); an impressive record of up to 60 birds seen by one observer in 1997.

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THE DEPLORABLE LOSS OF THE NIGHTINGALE

OBSERVATIONS OF A TEENAGE BIRD RECORDER IN 1940s DULWICH FROM THE WINTER OF 1947

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Abstract

Dulwich has changed relatively little over the past 75 years in terms of the amount of natural greenspace and wildlife habitats found in and around its environs, although site specifics at a higher resolution show a more complex picture of change. A schoolboy's bird records of the area in the mid-1940s have been analysed to assess the character of the avifauna of Dulwich at that time, and the key changes of – or similarities to – bird species and status which have occurred since then. They also offer an insight to the practices and the issues of concern to a teenage ornithologist of the time.

Introduction

Peter Branscombe lived in Dulwich between 1935 and the late 1940s. Over a period of about five years whilst he was at school he made a series of records of the birds he saw and heard in and around the neighbourhood, which he wrote up in reports, drafting maps of their habitats and drawing conclusions about their local status. For many years these records stayed within the family, until in 2007 they were given to me by his eldest son, Julian (then Chief Executive at Gwent Wildlife Trust). Julian knew of my interest in the area as from 1990-96 I was the manager for London Wildlife Trust's Sydenham Hill Wood nature reserve. This paper, and an account of Peter Branscombe's observations of the birds in Dulwich during the severe winter of early 1947 (Frith, 2018), are the results of my promise to Julian to 'do something' with his father's records.

Peter Branscombe in 1944 © collection of Sophie Branscombe.

Peter Branscombe

Peter John Branscombe – he signed most of his reports P.J.B. - was born in Sittingbourne, Kent, in 1929; his family moved to Dulwich when he was six. He attended Dulwich College from 1944 to 1948 and then aged 18 he undertook two years' National Service, eventually serving with the Intelligence Corps in Vienna. Branscombe went on to read modern languages at Worcester College, Oxford, returning to London to write his thesis before, in 1959, accepting the post of junior lecturer in German at the University

of St Andrews. He was appointed senior lecturer at St Andrews in 1970 and was made professor emeritus after his retirement in 1995. Branscombe's time in Vienna laid the foundation of his lifelong love of the country and its culture; he became an authority on German and Austrian literature, and a renowned musicologist with a deep interest in composers such as Mozart, Schubert and Wagner (The Scotsman, 2009). In 1990, he was made an honorary Austrian citizen, showing the regard in which he was held in the country. He died on December 31st 2008 aged 79.

A teenage recorder

During his time at Dulwich College, Peter Branscombe, was clearly gripped by birdwatching. The collection of records passed to me indicate a young man with a good overview of birds and already skilled at listening to and observing birds in the wild. He became a member of the College's Natural History Society, which was formed in 1944 (Cerio, 2017), and by 1947 he had become the Society's 'elegant young' President (Burton, 2014), at a time when he was also an active member of the Junior Bird Recorders' Club (JBRC, precursor of the Young Ornithologists' Club) and the London Natural History Society.

He must have joined the JBRC in its formative years;[1] his records of Siskins in 1945 and '50 species identified in Dulwich including Bullfinch, Blackcap, Nuthatch and Little Owl' in 1946 are listed (as P. Branscombe) in early JBRC bulletins (Anon., 1946?, Anon., 1947?[2]). On April 10th-11th 1947 the JBRC's first Easter Conference was held at Buckingham Gate School, during which Branscombe and his friend John Burton spent time around the bombsites of Cripplegate watching two singing Black Redstarts and a Kestrel (Burton, 2014). They also got a close look at a female Long-tailed Duck in St James's Park which had arrived in March, attracting attention from other birdwatchers and a photograph in the London Bird Report for the year (Ashby (Ed), 1947).

In 1947 Branscombe joined the JBRC's 'small committee'. That year's Bulletin listed three of his records (as one of 81 contributors) from the previous year: 'Chiff-chaff. 9/10 Dulwich (PJB); Willow-Warbler. 9/10 Dulwich (PJB); Tawny Owl.' Reporting a decrease in the Dulwich area in the past two years, P.J.B. suggests that this may be due 'to the end of 'black-out' street lamps now being lit over the whole neighbourhood, or to increased traffic, or to a combination of these factors.' (Anon., 1948). A later undated JBRC Bulletin lists another three species under his initials: 'Spotted Flycatcher 19/9, Dulwich (P.J.B.); Nightjar. Reported present in Crystal Palace district during breeding season and heard almost every evening by two reliable members of the Dulwich College N.H.S. (Per P.J.B.); Cuckoo. 27/7, adult, Dulwich (P.J.B.)' (Anon., 1948?). Branscombe is listed as one of the JBRC's eight committee members in 1948 (and also described as Chair (Burton, 2014)), but after that his name disappears from JBRC material (Anon., 1949).[3]

Peter Branscombe is first listed as a LNHS member in The London Naturalist for 1946 (membership noted to have started in 1947) and listed again as a member for 1948 and 1949 (Currie, 1949).[4] There are no references to him in the Ornithological reports for

[1] It was formed in 1943, administered from the RSPB's offices in Victoria.
[2] The bulletins in the RSPB library were undated, so these are assumptions made from the dates referred to within.
[3] However, his younger brother, David Ronald ('Ron') Branscombe (1933-2016), contributed records and also became a member of the JBRC Committee between 1948 and 1952.

this period, but with over 600 members in the section and as a teenager, this is hardly surprising. Nevertheless, three of his Dulwich records of 1947 were listed in the *London Bird Report* for that year (Frith, 2018), albeit not those submitted to the JBRC Bulletin.

However, just as he was getting into his ornithological stride, he left school in 1948 for National Service and subsequently university, which no doubt curtailed his extra-curricular activities. He was a member of the RSPB all his life, but his son, Julian, believes that he wasn't actively birdwatching again until "I started showing an interest from the pram" (c1970), after which he was very supportive of Julian's growing interest. Later he joined the Fife Branch of the Scottish Ornithologists Club and at one point gave a talk, with soundtrack, on the representation of birdsong in classical music (Branscombe, J., pers comm; Taylor, P., 2009).

The reports, papers and maps

Peter Branscombe's papers handed to me are a collection of ten hand-written and typed reports - finished and unfinished - and species lists, together with eight hand-drawn maps, and some other copied material. The reports and records total 251 pages, although these are of varying sizes, not necessarily fully completed and, especially in the case of the reports, contain significant duplication. It is not clear whether any 'raw data notes' form these records; there are clearly jottings and scribbles on some, but the appearance is one of time taken to present these in a legible format (see Table 1). Most of the material suggests collation of sightings and other data that form the basis for two reports; one on the birds of the Dulwich area (Branscombe, 1947d/e), the other on the impacts of the winter of early 1947 on birds in the area (Branscombe 1947g/h).[5]

Although all of the papers and reports are full of dates, times and localities of the birds observed (often quite meticulously so), none is dated. Their focus suggests they were all written between 1945 and 1947, with it being noted that 'my own records start regularly from 1942' (P6); some are clearly drafts (e.g. P6, P8). From this perspective the dating of the papers in Table 1 is guesswork based on the last dates referred to in any paper, and in relation to each other.

It is not known whether these are the only papers Peter Branscombe produced on birds at this time, nor whether any were published. However, some of the material has been prepared for an audience; a few are clearly written to be read, and one (P7) is typewritten. This latter - *Bird Life in Camberwell* - includes a bibliography (e.g. Fitter, Power) and is signed by the author as an Hon. Member, Dulwich College Natural History Society (Branscombe, 1947e). One (P10) is signed with a request to be able to '"borrow" this some time' suggesting an intended audience (Branscombe, 1947h, Frith, 2018). However, I have not been able to find anything in the public domain other than three records published in the *London Bird Report* for 1947 (q.v.). As referred to above, it is likely that time took its toll and Branscombe's best intentions as a 17- or 18-year old got overtaken by life.

Peter Branscombe's writing style is jaunty and somewhat chatty; not unexpected for

[4] *The London Naturalist* was usually published the year after which it referenced; from 1944 all volumes were also numbered.
[5] Papers P1-7 and the maps provide the bulk of the material for this paper, papers P8-10 were used as the basis for Between ten and twenty kestrels (Frith, 2018).

No.	Title	Description	Likely date
P1	*Key to nest chart, 1945*	Table of 39 species' nests, with details of habitat, eggs, dates of laying/fledging, etc. No locations.	1945
P2	*Alphabetical list of Dulwich Birds (1944 (Jan) - 1945 (Dec)*	Status of 76 species, with some reference to locations. Added detail from 1946-47.	1946
P3	*Untitled: Part I. Birds recorded by myself, 1944-1947, January and also by F. D. Power. (Ornithological Notes from a South London Suburb, 1874-1909).*	68-page notes of 67 species taken from Power's book in respect of Dulwich area; only one addition made by Branscombe suggested this is unfinished.	1947
P4	*Untitled: Part II. Birds recorded only by F. D. Power, 1874-1909*	50-page notes of 50 species taken from Power's book in respect of Dulwich area, not recorded during 1940s.	1947
P5	*Untitled: Part III. Birds recorded only by myself, 1874-1909 (partly corrected to 1942-1944)*	Ten-page notes of eight species (with pencilled list of seven more with no detail), additional generic notes on migration.	1947
P6	*The Birds of Dulwich*	24-page report, heavily edited with multiple crossed lines, insertion marks, and marginal notes, etc. Draft for P7?	1947
P7	*Bird Life in Camberwell*	Six-page typed report, with bibliography. No specific references to dates sightings.	1947
P8	*Untitled*	59-page report of sightings from 2nd January to 20th April 1947. Forms the basis of P9 and P10.	1947
P9	*The Effects of the Cold Winter of 1946-1947 on the Wild Life of Dulwich in general, and on its Birds in particular*	4-page report that starts in written style and finishes with series of notes. The draft for P10?	1947
P10	*The Effects of the Winter of 1946-1947 on the Birds of Dulwich*	6-page report of annotated notes on 40 species.	1947

Table 1. Peter Branscombe's papers.

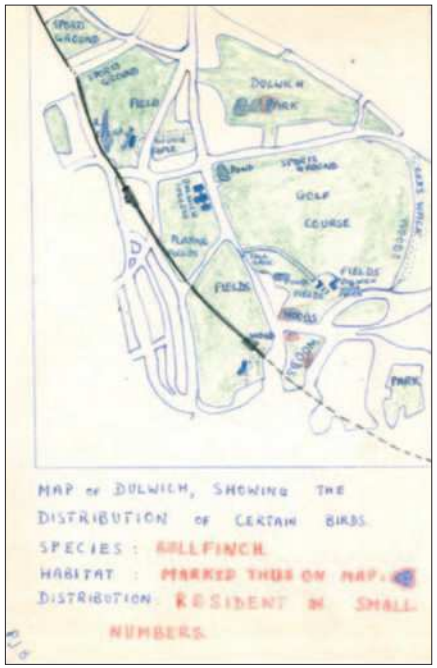
a teenager at those times. There is a boyish desire to demonstrate his knowledge in describing a bird's plumage or its behaviour, and the notes are peppered with asides about the weather or the paucity of open water in the district 'unfortunately for the bird watcher' (P7). Already by *Bird Life in Camberwell* he describes it 'as an attempt to stimulate the interest of the beginner' implying his knowledge had already developed a degree of confidence (Branscombe 1947e). He had also by that time begun to climb the ranks of the young naturalist societies and learn from older ornithologists on the styles that might make a mark.

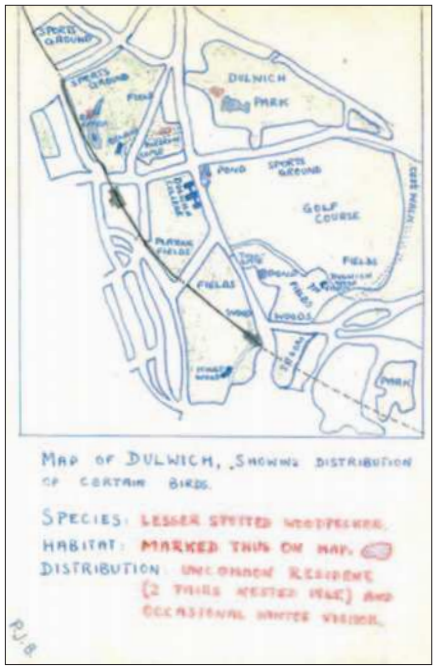
Branscombe rarely refers to equipment bar the occasional references to 'glasses' and 'binoculars'; whether he took notes *in situ*, or pencilled them after being out is not known. However, he pays attention to details; his notes of January to April 1947 (P8) provide dates (not days, bar one reference to a Saturday), time, weather, and location/direction details. His knowledge shines through many of his notes, and his desire to capture some of the behaviour of birds he espies. He describes the mating Mallard on

the College Pond on January 19th ('2-40pm'), and in 1946 a pair of Meadow Pipit 'bred on the golf-course, and reared their young successfully, but the species is mainly a winter visitor, flocks of up to twenty birds often being seen at this time of the year. On March 26th last [1946?] I saw about 150 of these birds feeding and resting while on passage' (Branscombe, 1947f,d). He also appears interested in change – two reports (P6 and P7) reference work of almost 40 years previously to demonstrate the differences of birds in Dulwich since the early 1900s and earlier.

The maps – *Map of Dulwich, showing the distribution of certain birds* - are indicative of Branscombe's 'patch' centred around the open spaces of the playing fields and golf course between the College and Dulwich Woods. They are all similar (i.e. not one copied directly eight times) albeit with little variances (e.g. two do not feature the railway between Herne Hill and Sydenham Hill). The maps have been drawn to identify known habitats used by eight species; Treecreeper, Bullfinch, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Meadow Pipit, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Blackcap, and Whitethroat. It is not clear why these species were chosen, or whether they were the only maps Branscombe prepared; they do not seem directly linked to any of the reports. The *Key to Nest Chart, 1945* (P1) references 39 bird species, only three of which are represented on the maps. This suggests that the maps may have been intended to feature in a more expansive paper that was never further developed.

Two of the undated distribution maps of eight species around Branscombe's patch.





The recording patch

Peter Branscombe's area of observation was the environs of Dulwich centred on the axes of Dulwich Common (the South Circular) and College Road which crosses at the northern end of the grounds of Dulwich College. He lived at 20 Alleyn Road, less than 1km to the south-west of the College where he was at school. He refers to numerous sites in the area where he focused on bird-watching, in particular Belair Park, the College grounds (which are extensive), Dulwich Park (with its lake and notable Rhododendron Garden), Dulwich & Sydenham Hill Golf Course, Cox's Walk, the woodlands of Sydenham Hill and Dulwich, and West Dulwich and Lordship Lane stations. Whilst many of his notes don't make particular site-specific references, some can be deduced by the ecology of the birds (e.g. the few waterbodies, such as those of the Mill Pond, Belair Park and Dulwich Park).

The records suggest Branscombe generally undertook a circular clock-wise route on his longer walks, starting at home or in and around the College, walking north-east into Dulwich Park, then south up Cox's Walk and into Dulwich Woods, returning westwards down Grange Lane or Low Cross Wood Lane, then down College Road/Hunts Slip Road to either the College or home.

His species maps suggest he was reasonably comprehensive in recording across Dulwich, but as he was clearly informed on the habitat requirements of these species, he may have focused his search accordingly. Not all of the open spaces were – or are – easily accessible but he appears – perhaps as being a College pupil - to have been able to enter Dulwich Woods and the Golf Course as well as the College grounds, otherwise all then closed to the public. Branscombe's first paper (P1) regarding a nest chart, is a stand-alone. It refers to some specific dates when nests were found or chicks hatched, and some locations, such as for Blackcap ('Middle of Low Cross-Wood Lane, in some climbing [ivy?] over ruined green-house'), but does not relate to the species maps (Branscombe, 1945).

External events

It is also worth noting that Peter Branscombe's records coincide with two major events. Firstly, whilst the Second World War was drawing to a close and Dulwich wasn't a major military target, it certainly lay within the 'bombing alley' (an anti-aircraft gun and munitions dump were sited at the northern edge of Dulwich Woods); over 55 high explosive bombs had fallen in the area during the blitz of 1940-1941. However, between June 1944 and January 1945, when Branscombe had already started recording birds, his bird-watching patch was subject to 12 flying bomb (V1 and V2) strikes, two of which landed less than 1km from his home including one in July 1944 which devastated part of the College (Hendon, undated). He makes no reference to this in any of his notes, perhaps a stoic belief in keeping such information quiet for public morale, but the possibility of imminent injury or death cannot have been far from his thoughts.

In addition, his penultimate year at school coincided with one of the major weather events of the 20th century, the prolonged cold winter of early 1947. In this Branscombe clearly recognises the significance of freezing temperatures and heavy snow and frosts over the 16 weeks that this period lasted, and he took particular effort to make observations of birds around Dulwich at this time (Branscombe 1947g/h, Frith, 2018).

Branscombe's Dulwich sightings

Peter Branscombe's records refer to 76 species mostly recorded between 1944 and 1947; excluding those of the winter of 1947, these are mostly covered in five papers. Of these P2 provides an alphabetical list over the course of two years,[6] P5 is an unfinished list with gaps to be filled, whereas P6 attempts to correlate this data, along with that of earlier records, into more of a narrative (Branscombe 1945, 1946, 1947a,c,d,f). His lists are in sharp contrast to the notes for January to April 1947, being generally short statements, a few precise dates and locations, and clearly using the records of Frederick Power (q.v.) to show similarities or differences in species' status. Examples from his lists (partly amended for clarity) include:

Bullfinch: Uncommon resident, numbers increased in winter by nomadic flocks
Flycatcher, Spotted: Summer resident in small numbers in more open wooded areas
Goldfinch: Resident in small numbers, flocks (charms) of 20-30 often seen in winter in several areas
Hawfinch: Rare visitor only a few recorded
Jackdaw: Somewhat rare resident, sometimes seen with rooks
Magpie: Winter visitor to Sydenham district (1944-45)
Nightingale: Summer resident to Sydenham woods, formerly common
Nuthatch: Irregular visitor, may be resident. generally distributed in Sydenham district in winter
Owl, Little: Status unknown, resident, general in woods
Owl, Long-eared: 1 recorded, winter of 1942-1943
Sparrowhawk: Resident in small numbers in Sydenham woods; not known to have nested
Sparrow, House: Commonest resident, may be seen everywhere
Sparrow, Tree: Resident in small numbers in old-wooded districts
Tit, Coal: Common resident, in open wooded areas
Tit, Long-tailed: Uncommon visitor to Sydenham woods, not known to have nested for many years. 10, 2.1.47
Tit, Marsh: Not uncommon visitor in Sydenham woods, especially in winter
Treecreeper: Uncommon resident in wooded districts
Woodpecker, Green: Generally distributed, resident in woods
Woodpecker, L-spot: Uncommon resident, recorded as nesting (1945). Only seen in Dulwich Village area

His 'final' paper, P7, the only typed one, covering the Metropolitan Borough of Camberwell in which the then Dulwich lay, waxes more lyrically, touching on some species with a flourish. For example, the Sparrowhawk 'is rare with us, but one or two pairs probably breed… it would be a sad day for the Borough to lose this dashing hawk', the 'Kestrel is the commonest bird of prey of the London area… which is probably as frequent in Camberwell nowadays as it has ever been. This is a good thing… In the more thickly populated districts this predator often helps in keeping down the Sparrow population… ' and the Tawny owl 'in Camberwell… is luckily fairly common…' But what stands out – perhaps as an indicator of many changes to bird populations (and those of woodlands in particular over the past 75 years) - is this: 'No loss is more deplorable than that of the

[6] Witherby's 'check list' is also referred to, plus the list includes a few records from outside its stated period

Nightingale. Dulwich Woods used to be far-famed for their Nightingales, and until the 1880s they used often to sing in the gardens of Peckham and Brixton; but the bird-catcher, and the destruction of so many woods and copses in the interests of building, drove this most famous of singers from its old haunts.'

Birdwatching for change?

Importantly Peter Branscombe's records also highlight an activity that has more or less disappeared for a boy of his age today. As a pupil at Dulwich College it is probable resources were available to him, and that birdwatching was unlikely to have been an exceptional hobby for his age, hence the activities of the College's Natural History Society (Branscombe, 1948a). Nevertheless, not one of his reports references anyone else with him whilst observing birds (not even his younger brother), and it is only later, when Branscombe was about 18, that John Burton references the two of them birdwatching in the bombed ruins of Cripplegate (Burton, 2014).

Birdwatching by amateurs had grown significantly during the 1930s, partly aided by the publication of cheaper guides and the increased availability of optics. James Fisher's *Watching Birds*, published by Penguin in 1940, eventually sold 3 million copies, 'a classic of its kind' reaching a significant lay audience, including young teenage boys (Allen, 1976). BTO's membership almost doubled between 1939 and 1944, and the RSPB not only founded the JBRC in 1943 but was soon advising would-be watchers of books to use, for example, 'C.A. John's British Birds in their Haunts (Routledge and Kegan Paul) is another old favourite.' (Hartley, 1949). 'Egging' (egg-collecting) was still popular, and Branscombe references this, if somewhat pompously, reflecting his sympathies towards the growing concern amongst conservationists about the practice (resulting in the Protection of Birds Act 1954): 'Much has already been achieved in the cause of Bird Protection, but no solution will be really successful that does not get to the heart of the problem; to overcome ignorance in our natural heritage, if only the young would realise how much fun it is to watch the habits of birds rather than cause suffering by collecting their eggs! It is on teachers and parents that this responsibility rests' (Branscombe, 1947e). His notes and writing hint, too, at the increasingly scientific approach encouraged in birdwatching at that time, with local records helping to build a national picture of species distribution, status and trends (for example the establishment in 1947 of the National Wildfowl Counts, what is now the WeBS[7]).

Branscombe's records show an insight into the ornithological character of Dulwich at that time, and help to contrast it with the avifauna of the area today. Changes since then clearly reflect national trends of decline, stability and increase, and others pose questions of more local scale, such as changes in habitat management.

Dulwich: a village then and still green now?

The village of Dulwich still retains a character somewhat at odds with the urban sprawl of south London. The white-posted fences that swing along College Road and the extensive expanses of greenfields around the College, together with hints of a more wooded past on the verdant Sydenham Hill ridge, give a sense of time slowed, where the hustle and

[7] WeBS, launched in 1993, is now managed jointly by BTO and WWT.

bustle of the city is kept at bay. The busy South Circular (A205) may run through Dulwich but otherwise the area remains remarkably open and bucolic. Much of this can be explained by the role of the Dulwich Estate, the principal landowner in the area, that has kept a very protective eye on its assets – covering just over 6 sq km - since the early 17th century.

The College, for which the Estate was established to support on its founding in 1619, in this respect dominates the landscape through its school grounds and playing fields around the NNW-SSE axis of College Road; to the north-west lie the expanses of Belair Park (a Grade II listed landscape, in public use since the 1960s) and other playing fields. To the east of these, across the road of the original College, lies Dulwich Park, opened in 1890 on the site of old meadows. South-east of this stretch a variety of playing fields and the extensive Dulwich & Sydenham Hill Golf Course, which rises towards the wooded summit of the Dulwich Woods. On the eastern fringes climbs the oak-lined avenue of Cox's Walk southwards to Sydenham Hill Wood, which is predominantly naturalised from the gardens of demolished Victorian villas and a lifted railway trackbed, and now managed as a nature reserve. Dulwich & Sydenham Hill Woods together now form a larger block of woodland than they did in 1947; it stretches south alongside the 1960s estates of Peckarmans Wood and Greater Brownings to almost the northern edge of Crystal Palace Park. To the west of the Woods lie the golf course, allotments and the College playing fields; this open area is more or less bounded to the west by the railway line between Herne Hill and Sydenham Hill stations. Outlying fragments of woodland at Hitherwood and Dulwich Upper Wood help to complement large tree-covered gardens of College Road, Fountain Drive and other nearby roads.

Not only has the Dulwich Estate sought to preserve much of this character over 400 years, many of these sites are currently subject of protective planning policies that help to avert damaging development. Almost all of the open space in this areas is defined as Metropolitan Open Land ('inner London's Green Belt'), and significant tracts (including gardens) fall under two Conservation Areas. In addition, a range of spaces are identified as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation including Dulwich & Sydenham Hill Woods and Cox's Walk (a Site of Metropolitan Importance), Belair Park, Dulwich Park, Dulwich & Sydenham Hill Golf Course, Dulwich Upper Wood, Hitherwood, Mill Pond, and Sydenham Hill station railsides (Sites of Borough Importance). Sydenham Hill Wood and Dulwich Upper Wood are also designated as Local Nature Reserves. Dulwich easily exceeds Southwark Council's current open space standards, as well as the borough's natural greenspace standards of 4.23ha per 1,000 population (Southwark Council, 2013).

Peter Branscombe's patch more or less covered this area; his maps include Sydenham Wells Park – on the eastern slopes of Sydenham Hill (which he doesn't refer to) – and the grounds of Kingswood to the south of Sydenham Hill station, which he only occasionally visited. What is striking is how similar the area is today to that portrayed and described by Branscombe. Dulwich has not remained preserved in aspic, but from a landscape perspective there are only a few significant differences between the area now and as it was in the mid-1940s, most of these are in and around the Dulwich Woods;

- Woodhall House and grounds, on the edge of Dulwich Woods, was partially demolished by a V1 bomb in July 1944, remaining derelict until 1955, when the Dulwich Estate started to design a new 42-dwelling estate completed in 1966 (Green, 2010a);
- Dulwich Wood Farm had largely been absorbed into use by the golf club by the 1930s,

but was requisitioned by the army for a gun and searchlight battery in 1939; and demolished by 1961, a Scout's Centre and allotments now occupy the site;
- Villas on the south-eastern edge of Dulwich Woods were demolished in the 1950-1970s; new estates at Great Brownings (1966) and Peckarmans Wood (1968) were completed in the grounds of some of these, the rest – although at one time planned for new housing – became absorbed into what is now Sydenham Hill Wood;
- The Crystal Palace (High Level) railway – which ran alongside the eastern edge of Dulwich Wood (and under Cox's Walk) and into Crescent Wood tunnel - closed in 1954, the site of Lordship Lane station being transformed into a new estate by the late 1960s, the rest becoming eventually absorbed into Sydenham Hill Wood by 1981;
- The landscaped grounds of Kingswood were purchased by the London County Council (LCC) in 1946, and transformed into the 750-dwelling Kingswood Estate by 1952, although it retains the original Kingswood House and sports a landscape with relatively mature trees (Green, 2010b).

Whilst the overall open green character of Dulwich appears to have remained largely unchanged since the mid-1940s; 'an unbroken line of open ground from Herne Hill South East towards Crystal Palace, and thus many of the migrants following the course of the Thames by-pass London and often alight in Dulwich to feed and rest' (Branscombe, 1947d), there are myriad factors that may have influenced the landscape in nuanced ways, affecting the area's avifauna accordingly.

Firstly, a lot of the sites that Peter Branscombe visited were closed to the public. This remains the case for the College playing fields, golf course, and the other sports grounds, whereas most of Dulwich & Sydenham Hill Woods[8] and Belair Park (acquired by the War Department during the early 1940s and turned into allotments) are now publicly open. Secondly, management practices have changed across many of the open spaces. Branscombe describes the woods as 'neglected', without describing what that meant but refers to the birds being able to live 'a fairly peaceful existence' (Branscombe, 1947e). Active management with nature in mind has recently become more commonplace (and is a primary objective in the area's two nature reserves, both established in the early 1980s), and the application of pesticides in parks and sports pitches has undergone significant reduction since the 1960s (but difficult to assess further back in time, as their widespread use didn't emerge until the 1950s). Thirdly, with air pollution, the impacts of the Clean Air Acts (1956, 1968 and 1993) have reduced the amount of smoke and atmospheric SOx since the 1940s, but there has been a rise of NOx (and other pollutants) with the significant growth in road traffic.[9] Finally, there have been societal changes which have included a continuing decline in game-keeping (Branscombe suggests 'the increase of Tawny Owl is concurrent with the decline in persecution' (Branscombe 1947d) which may have continued in Dulwich Woods until the 1960s), growth of bird-feeding in gardens,[10] and a significant rise in cat and dog ownership in London.[11]

[8] Southern sections of Dulwich Wood remain closed to the public
[9] SOx – sulphur oxides, NOx – nitrogen oxides
[10] Branscombe had a bird feeder in his back garden (Branscombe, 1947f)
[11] There is no data for the 1940s but there were 4.7million dogs and 4.1 million cats across the UK in 1965, and by 2019, 9 million dogs and 7.5 million cats.

The changes in the avifauna

Branscombe recognised that Dulwich was a relatively important area; he describes it as 'an oasis to many birds' as 'it contains one of the largest open spaces in South London' (Branscombe, 1947e). He acknowledged that the mosaic of woodland, parks, gardens and other green spaces of this part of London served to provide sufficient habitats for a broad range of birds, although its urban influences were already showing.

Branscombe witnessed a birdlife that in his view had already changed from the start of the 20th century from what he had read. He framed his records against one source of local data from almost 40 years earlier, Frederick Power's *Ornithological Notes from a South London Suburb*, to demonstrate some of the changes in species' status since those times. Power 'pioneered the study of birds of a local area and was one of the first to record birds over his garden' (Self, 2014) and it is tempting to suggest that Branscombe was aiming in his own way to update Power's findings. He relates his records to those of Power; a total of 128 species, of which 69 were recorded by Power and himself, 51 by Power alone, but only eight by himself. He suggests this equates to 51 species lost from Dulwich over 33 years, including resident and migrant species as well as 'many of which had rarely occurred' (Branscombe, 1947e).

Branscombe's data is also reinforced by another set of unpublished records by L. R. Evans (included with Branscombe's papers) collated between 1940 and 1946. Evans is listed as a bird observer for the LNHS in 1941-1943, 1945 and 1948, and as a member between 1942 and at least 1949 (full membership lists were not published after this date[12]). He lived in Camberwell at this time as from 1946 his address became 'c/o' suggesting he may have been a few years older than Branscombe (Fitter, 1947). I reference the most notable of Evans' points:
- Those species that had shown little change since the early 1900s: Starling, House Sparrow, Blue Tit, Song Thrush, Blackbird, Robin, Dunnock, Cuckoo, Woodpigeon, Moorhen. Of these the Cuckoo is now a very rare vagrant, and the House Sparrow much rarer since its steep decline in the late 1990s.
- Rook, lost as a breeding bird in the area c1918 but still winter roosting in College grounds
- Jackdaw, hadn't bred since 1909, appears to show signs of establishment
- Jay 'now too common' and 'often searching rubbish piles at the side of the road.'
- Hawfinch, first seen in 1946 by Branscombe in Dulwich Wood, feeding young.
- Goldfinch 'charms of up to 30 birds are no uncommon sight.'
- Linnet, has 'definitely increased', winter roosting in Dulwich Park rhododendron beds
- Bullfinch, widely distributed, autumn flocks of up to 30 birds
- Treecreeper, several pairs breed unlike the rarity recorded by Power
- Great Tit, common but not more so than Blue Tit
- Marsh Tit, common in Dulwich Woods up to c1945 but since 'unaccountably become rarer'
- Spotted Flycatcher, several pairs breed
- Chiffchaff, 'much more common' than Willow Warbler

[12] In itself described as a revolutionary change in the Editorial for *The London Naturalist* for 1949.

- Willow Warbler, less common 'probably because of the cutting of brambles and undergrowth'
- Wood Warbler, rare summer visitor; one or two pairs breed in Dulwich Wood; saw one 'exceptionally early' April 12th 1946.

Conclusions

Peter Branscombe was clearly an enthusiastic and adept bird-watcher by his mid-teens, and his notes indicate a growing ability to capture a sense of the avifauna of Dulwich in the mid-1940s. Already developing strong ornithological skills, his comments suggest a good awareness of the changes that had occurred to various species' status in the area over the previous 50 years or so, and why this may be so. His recording of his patch – particularly over the winter of 1947 – also suggests a relatively consistent application of a route on which he had begun to recognise changes to birds' presence or absence. Nevertheless, there is no indication he was applying a resolutely objective approach to his records, nor do his records give enough detail to demonstrate that a standard methodology was adopted at any time. Neither was he looking ahead; his notes do not give any hint of the future. This is perhaps no surprise; by the time of his final reports National Service was probably on the horizon.

Peter's Branscombe's records provide, in essence, an insight to the birds of the Dulwich environs for a five-year period in the 1940s. The area appears not to have been subject to regular and recorded bird watching activity in the previous 30 years or so. His knowledge gives little reason to doubt their veracity and his data, reinforced by Evans' available records from 1940-1946, although not especially detailed, do give some site-specific information from locations in Dulwich. In this respect Branscombe (and to a lesser extent, Evans) help to fill a gap between the records of Power (covering a wider area and a 30-year period) and those of Hubert Pounds that were gathered in the mid-1960s (but also drawing on some much older information).

Since the 1970s the Dulwich area has benefited from some dedicated recording of birds (and other wildlife) on behalf of the Dulwich Society, as well as London Wildlife Trust, The Conservation Volunteers and other organisations. However, there is relatively scant information on birds of the Dulwich environs over a 100-year period from the late 1870s, compared to, say, Wimbledon Common, the Royal Parks, Hampstead Heath or Lee Valley. This has probably been down to the relatively closed nature of many of the open spaces in and around the district. Many of them were – and even are today – relatively unknown, and not accessible unless one was associated with the College. In addition, as Peter Branscombe, recognised, there are few waterbodies of any size in Dulwich, automatically excluding a range of species of interest to the birdwatcher.[13]

Whilst they were made over a relatively short period these records provide a fascinating insight into the avifauna of Dulwich some 75 years ago, and of a locality that hasn't changed dramatically since that time. They also show a development from some simple lists through to more comprehensive and chronological reports by the first few months of 1947, undoubtedly relating to a growing knowledge and confidence, as well as the simple fact of growing up from a 13- to an 18-year old. The written overviews (P6, P7 & P10) clearly demonstrate a desire to see his material prepared for a wider audience, which might have eventually happened if Branscombe's life had taken a different turn.

[13] The Dulwich area is not referenced as a key green space in Self's The Birds of London (2014), or Homes's The Birds of the London Area (1964).

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THE HAWFINCH IRRUPTION IN LONDON AUTUMN 2017-SPRING 2018

DAVID CAMPBELL

The Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* is a famously imposing yet enigmatic finch, a favourite among birders but seldom easy to find. Indeed, its wild and cryptic nature is a large part of its appeal. A bird of extensive woodland, it is entirely logical that encountering the species in the London Area can be a particular challenge. That the Hawfinch was widespread and a regular breeding bird within 20 miles of St.Paul's Cathedral over the late 19th and early 20th centuries is a stark reminder both of the pace of urbanisation over the last 100 years or so, and the extent of the Hawfinch's nationwide decline since the mid-20th century. In a normal year nowadays, the best odds of an encounter in London would be on a winter visit to the larger tracts of woodland in the Hertfordshire, Essex and Surrey fringes, areas which were its last retreat as a London breeding bird. Whether it still breeds in London is contested. If any persist at all, there are surely very few.

For any London birder whose local patch is not one of the few remaining regular haunts, the Hawfinch is a rare treat. Though not a vagrant as such, it is often an equally satisfying discovery as some Continental overshoot, or scarce drift migrant. Beyond London, its range essentially stretches across the entire temperate Palearctic, with the nominate form being found across most of Europe, through which there is some autumn movement to the southwest. However, birds are more often sedentary, or move less than 50km.

In Northern Europe, it is known that Hawfinches occasionally move in response to changes in food availability, but in Britain it is not considered an irruptive species in the way that, for instance, Waxwings *Bombycilla garrulus* and Crossbills *Loxia curvirostra* are, whose influxes are regular enough to be expected from time to time. That said, there have been historical spikes in Hawfinch abundance in Britain, though any truly large-scale events in London pre-dated efficient bird recording and are hard to quantify now. For instance, there are mentions of 'several hundred' in Leatherhead in February 1927, and a spring movement of 'hundreds' across the recording area in 1909. More recently, some years have been slightly better than others, such as 2005 when a few more migrants were detected than normal. However, what is certain is that, at least in the recent decades blessed with modern bird recording, there has been no event in London, or indeed Britain as a whole, approaching the scale of the Hawfinch invasion from autumn 2017 to spring 2018.

2017 was an unremarkable Hawfinch year

Hawfinch at Juniper Top, Box Hill, January 30th 2018. (Steve Gale)

in London until October 9th. By then, there had been just four records, all of singles: two in January, the others in February and April. The first two birds of the autumn, on October 9th, were seen flying north over Leyton Flats. From this moment the tap was open, and birds continued to flow through over the course of the autumn, in unprecedented numbers. The first seven days of movement saw 92 birds logged from 13 sites, including a month-high of 42[1] through Hampstead Heath on October 15th. If it had all ended there it would have incredible enough, but by the end of the month some 444 had been logged between 48 sites. The overwhelming majority of these were seen to be actively migrating, with most often heading somewhere between south and west.

The influx continued to accelerate throughout November. While a high proportion of records continued to involve birds seen in active migration flight, regular sightings of grounded birds, with an unclear turnover rate, occurred at some sites. This is where the bird-days measure becomes the only manageable approach to quantifying the movement (adding together all day-counts with no attempt to establish changeover of individuals). November saw 793 bird-days in all, shared by 69 sites. The month's highest count was from Headley Heath, where there were 79 on November 2nd.

Come December, active movement seemed to slow down but there were still an incredible 690 bird-days in the month. Records from several sites, each with quite steady counts throughout the month, suggested that a significant number of birds were now wintering. This was also hinted at by the slight drop to 64 sites logging Hawfinch over the course of the month. Sites where a reasonable number of birds appeared to be established for the winter included Bookham Common in Surrey (up to eight birds), Broxbourne Woods in Hertfordshire (54, the overall peak count for the month), and, in Essex, Thorndon Country Park North (30) and Ongar Park Wood (14). It is possible that at least some birds which continued to be seen in apparent migration flight were roving individuals which had been in the country, and possibly London, for some time.

Between October 9th and the end of the year, reports in the London area amounted to a simply astounding 1,928 bird-days. The top counties were, unsurprisingly, Hertfordshire, with 34% of bird-days, and Surrey with 25%. Middlesex did quite well, too, with 16%. A share of under 2% for Inner London makes sense, but Kent and Buckinghamshire returning just 3% and 1.5% respectively is a little unexpected.

50 sites hosted Hawfinches during January, and by the end of February a total of 71 sites had logged the species in 2018, providing evidence that high numbers of Hawfinches were overwintering in the recording area. On January 30th, a count of 200 Hawfinches was recorded at Juniper Top, near Mickleham. This was the first three-figure flock of the invasion and the start of a spectacular accumulation of Hawfinches in this area of London's Surrey fringe.

Bramblehall Wood – also near Mickleham - was identified as the key site, and there numbers climbed to 260 by February 14th then to 420 on February 22nd before reaching a monumental 600 birds on March 13th. This is the highest accurate count of Hawfinches ever to be made in Britain, and it is worth remembering that the British breeding population is thought to be fewer than 1,000 pairs. Other important sites in the spring included Wormley Wood, which was the only other site to log a three-figure count, with 137 on February 22nd. Ruislip Woods, Tyttenhanger, Thorndon Country Park and Broxbourne

[1] published in error in LBR 2017 as 40

Woods all produced regular high double figure counts.

The final spring record from Bramblehall Wood was of three on April 9th, while the last London record associated with the influx involved one at Beddington Farmlands on April 29th. By this time, 2018 had added some 8,143 bird-days to the influx (of which 69% was accounted for by sites in the Mickleham area). This was split with 70% Surrey, 13% for both Middlesex and Hertfordshire, 4% Essex and less than 1% in Kent and Buckinghamshire.

Nobody has been able to identify the specific driving factor of the Hawfinch irruption. However, as in smaller historical peaks in abundance, and in some of the species' movements on the Continent, it is highly likely to have been linked to food availability in Europe. This time, the circumstances must have been extraordinary. The influx appeared to coincide with suspected crop failures of beech in Germany and hornbeam in Poland, two of the Hawfinch's staples, while it is thought that wild cherry in northern Europe may been affected by frosts in the spring preceding the arrival. Much more fanciful, but worth considering as an additional factor, is the idea that strong winds hanging over from Storm Ophelia in mid-October 2017 may have deflected migrating Hawfinches our way.

It is crucial, of course, that after experiencing such an ornithological phenomenon it is documented so that the scale of what occurred can be viewed in the context of past and future records. However, in doing so it is easy for the magnitude and wonder of the event to get lost somehow. No birder alive has experienced anything on this level in London or anywhere in Britain before, and it is entirely possible that even the youngest enthusiasts will never see anything approaching this number of Hawfinches here again.

For a time, one could see flocks of Hawfinches comparable to a large chunk of the British breeding population and expect to see these birds pouring through sites which hadn't recorded them for years. In their hundreds, they pushed through London airspace and filtered into our scattered parks and woods, which for a few months echoed together with their harsh ticking calls. It was unforgettable.

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WALTHAMSTOW'S SPRING IN THE SUN

DAVID BRADSHAW

Walthamstow Reservoirs – or Wetlands as we now have to get used to calling it – is a complex of ten working reservoirs towards the southern end of the Lea Valley. It is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and has RAMSAR status, largely because of its nationally-important gathering of moulting Tufted Ducks and the Grey Herony, once the second biggest in the country.

The mix of concrete-banked and reed-fringed reservoirs, some with wooded islands, makes for a pleasant day's birding with the chance, particularly in migration season, of seeing sixty species in a visit. It has resident Kingfishers, Peregrines and now Little Egrets, as well as recently being one of London's most regular wintering sites for Scaup.

Over the years, the reservoirs have also had their share of London rarities including the capital's first Dusky Warbler in February 2010 as well as the more expected scarce herons and ducks. But even its most ardent admirers would not claim it was rarity-rich.

The much larger King George V reservoirs, just a few kilometres to the north, tend to siphon off rarer waders and storm-driven seabirds. Neighbouring Alexandria Palace and particularly Wanstead grab the lion's share of migrant passerines, especially in the autumn. The height of ambitions for a visit doesn't usually stretch beyond a Greenshank or Spotted Flycatcher or, if extremely lucky, the annual fly-over of an Osprey or rarer grebe on Lockwood.

London's first Little Bunting since 2007 stayed for over two months. (Phil Aylen)

So nothing prepared the small group of birders who regularly watch the site for the remarkable run of genuine London rarities in early 2018. In just over three months, Little Bunting, Serin, Bluethroat, Hoopoe and finally Black Kite were seen. For a brief period, Walthamstow could justifiably claim to be the best rarity site in the capital and perhaps one of the most successful inland patches in the whole country.

This was even more unexpected following the well-publicised difficulties at the site – now thankfully largely overcome - following its full opening to the public. Publicity drew large crowds with over 7,000 people visiting on one of the first weekends. There were challenges, too, with the initial 'no barriers' vision with a complete lack of fences, no policing and little signage to tell visitors that it was a dog-free site or that cycling and running were not permitted around any of the reservoirs.

The inevitable result was the Wetlands in the first few months was treated as a park, not a protected nature reserve. It would be fair to say the mood among those who had regularly watched birds at Walthamstow was gloomy.

This gloom began to lift on January 19th with the discovery of Walthamstow's first ever Little Bunting. It dropped into the weedy patch at the north end of East Warwick almost next to the path as Paul Whiteman and I were walking past. Paul's excellent hearing and persistence turned a possible into a certainty and the news was immediately put out. It was the first Little Bunting in London since 2007 so not surprisingly proved quite a draw.

In the early weeks, the Bunting was elusive and only seen when it flew out of the tall weeds where it fed to rest in the hedge behind. But when it was spotted feeding regularly in a relatively open area close to the main path, seed was put out to see if it might make viewing easier and reduce the temptation for frustrated visitors to flush the bird. It worked with the Little Bunting, often in the company of Reed Buntings, giving wonderful views to all with patience.

The food supply, increased during the two bitter spells in March, may help explain why the bird remained until April 5th. In its final few days, it was heard singing to show it was not a female as had been originally thought. Over its three month-stay, it is thought that over 1,000 birders from as far afield as Lancashire, the East Midlands and Ireland came to see it, often as part of a two-target twitch with the Horned Lark at Staines.

My excited notes on the day of its discovery said, with the experience of 30-plus years of birding at Walthamstow, that 'I can't help thinking it won't get any better on the patch'. The prediction didn't last a month. On February 10th, visiting Herts birder Roy Hargreaves found a male Serin by the feeders close to the Engine House. It did not stay long but was heard to sing briefly and was photographed by Sara Morrison. There was no sign of the bird the next day and it seemed as if it would be one that got away. But almost a month later on March 6th what was presumably the same bird was found by Jamie Partridge with a flock of Linnets close by its original sighting. This time the Serin hung around to give all who could manage to get time off mid-week the chance to see it. The bird again showed well on the 7th – when it was possible to view it and the Little Bunting at the same time - before being seen briefly the following day.

Two London rarities on one day seemed incredible but it was to happen again three weeks later. After enjoying another look at the Little Bunting and topping up the seed on March 23rd, I continued onto West Warwick reservoir. As I walked down the east reed-

Walthamstow's first ever Serin visited the site twice. (Phil Aylen)

bed, I saw a bird perch up on a low bramble which I hoped might be a Stonechat. When I lifted my binoculars, I realised that I was instead looking at a Bluethroat which immediately flew further down the reservoir side out of sight. Rather than chase it, I waited for reinforcements which quickly arrived in the shape of Lol Cummings, Lol Bodini and David Darrell-Lambert. After a nervy wait, it was re-found and confirmed as a male White-spotted Bluethroat.

The London Wildlife Trust team immediately agreed to allow escorted access to West Warwick, which is usually out-of-bounds to non-permit holders and it was not long before the first visitors arrived. The Bluethroat was flighty at first but eventually settled down to feed out in the open until dusk. Sadly, there was no sign next day. It was the first Bluethroat recorded at Walthamstow since 1936 – just across the rail line on East Warwick – which was also the first ever seen in London.

After a stay of 77 days, the Little Bunting was seen for the last time on April 5th but the reservoirs did not have to wait long for another rarity. Next afternoon, a Hoopoe was found and watched by LWT volunteers and staff working on the path between No. 2 and 3 reservoirs - the same day as a bird was discovered at Brent Reservoir. Unfortunately, they did not fully realise that the last record of a Hoopoe on the site was in October 1993 and local birders were not told until early next morning.

More in hope than expectation Lol Bodini, Lol Cummings, Terry Rawlins and I walked down the path and were astonished to see the Hoopoe fly off towards East Warwick. It

The Bluethroat was found just yards - and over 80 years - from the site of London's first. (Magnus Andersson)

was not seen on the ground again but it flew back over our heads towards No. 5 and then again past us before it seemed to drop safely into its original area. Unfortunately, it obviously kept going as that was the last time it was seen.

April is traditionally the best period for birding at Walthamstow and, even without the rarities, it was a good month. Two Ospreys were seen along with a long-staying and ridiculously confiding male Ring Ouzel, a flock of up to eight Brambling and a Sandwich Tern which visited on three days – each good birds for the reservoirs.

The month is also one of the best times for Red Kite over the reservoirs with two seen on the 12th and singles on the 16th and 22nd. This was, perhaps unsurprisingly, the species Jamie Partridge and I thought we had through the trees low over East Warwick on the 24th. Fortunately, Jamie fired off a series of shots as it went west and, on checking back, quickly began to think it was a Black Kite. Although there was understandably some debate in social media when he posted the initial back of the camera pictures, he was proved right. His decision to stick his neck out and post the sighting also helped the bird be tracked across London.

The Black Kite, another new species for the reservoirs, was not the final good bird of the year. A pair of out-of-season Long-tailed Ducks turned up in the summer and a Black-throated Diver, the first for two decades, in the late autumn. But they are the sort of records expected at the reservoirs. Birding at the Wetlands was back to normal.

The Little Bunting drew birders throughout its 77 day stay. (David Bradshaw)

Is there any explanation why Walthamstow enjoyed such a stunning and unprecedented period for rarities? There were, of course, more birding visitors to the site since its opening, particularly after the discovery of the Little Bunting. But only the initial sighting of the Serin was by a visiting birder.

What is also certainly the case is that the Little Bunting encouraged more regular visits from those who regard the reservoirs as their 'patch'. Again, however, late March and April when most of the rarities were found is the time when coverage is at its most thorough.

It seems as if this remarkable run is simply another example of the phenomenon known in the States as the Patagonia Picnic Table Effect – named after a lay-by in Southern Arizona – where birders looking for one rarity turn up more. But Walthamstow does not border Mexico but Hackney and Haringey. In the end, serendipity appears the likeliest explanation which should give hope to all who regularly work unglamorous London sites that theirs, too, might enjoy a time in the birding limelight.

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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 372. 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 British Ornithologists' Union (BOU) List, 9th Edition, February 2019 and its nomenclature (apart from Feral Pigeon).

All records of ornithological interest, from LNHS members and non-members alike, are welcomed by the London Bird Club. 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 Rarities 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 Details of an Unusual Bird on 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 Details of an Unusual Bird on 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.

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

Previous page: Carrion Crow. (James Heal)

Pink-footed Goose	*Anser brachyrhynchus*	**R**	A, D
Tundra Bean Goose	*Anser serrirostris*	**R**	A, D
White-fronted Goose	*Anser albifrons*		A
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, B, S
Mandarin Duck	*Aix galericulata*		A
Garganey	*Spatula querquedula*		A
Blue-winged Teal	*Spatula discors*	**R**	BBRC
Shoveler	*Spatula clypeata*		MM, NR, B, S
Gadwall	*Mareca strepera*		MM, NR, B, S
Wigeon	*Mareca penelope*		A
Mallard	*Anas platyrhynchos*		MM, B, ST
Pintail	*Anas acuta*		A
Teal	*Anas crecca*		MM, NR, B, S
Green-winged Teal	*Anas carolinensis*	**R**	A, D
Red-crested Pochard	*Netta rufina*		A
Pochard	*Aythya ferina*		MM, NR, B, ST
Ferruginous Duck	*Aythya nyroca*	**R**	BBRC
Ring-necked Duck	*Aythya collaris*	**R**	A, D
Tufted Duck	*Aythya fuligula*		MM, NR, B, ST
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, B, ST
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, B, ST
Pied-billed Grebe	*Podilymbus podiceps*	**R**	BBRC
Red-necked Grebe	*Podiceps grisegena*		A
Great Crested Grebe	*Podiceps cristatus*		MM, NR, B, ST
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, B, ST
Purple Heron	*Ardea purpurea*	**R**	A, D
Great White Egret	*Ardea alba*		A
Little Egret	*Egretta garzetta*		MM, NR, B, ST
Gannet	*Morus bassanus*	**R**	A, N away from Lower Thames.
Shag	*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*		A
Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax carbo*		MM, NR, B, ST
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 all May to September records
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, B, ST
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**	A, D
Avocet	*Recurvirostra avosetta*		A
Lapwing	*Vanellus vanellus*		MM, NR, B, P
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, P, ST
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, B, ST
Red-footed Falcon	*Falco vespertinus*	**R**	A, D
Merlin	*Falco columbarius*	**R**	A, N away from Lower Thames.
Hobby	*Falco subbuteo*		MM, NR, B, ST
Gyr Falcon	*Falco rusticolus*	**R**	BBRC
Peregrine	*Falco peregrinus*		MM, NR, B, ST
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, P, ST
Magpie	*Pica pica*		MM, B, ST
Nutcracker	*Nucifraga caryocatactes*	**R**	BBRC
Jackdaw	*Coloeus monedula*		MM, NR, B, P, ST
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, B, T, F&L, 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, P, F&L
Redwing	*Turdus iliacus*		MM, NR, P, F&L
Song Thrush	*Turdus philomelos*		MM, NR, T, P, ST
Mistle Thrush	*Turdus viscivorus*		MM, NR, T, P, 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 welcomed.

Subspecies

All records of subspecies/races are welcomed. 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

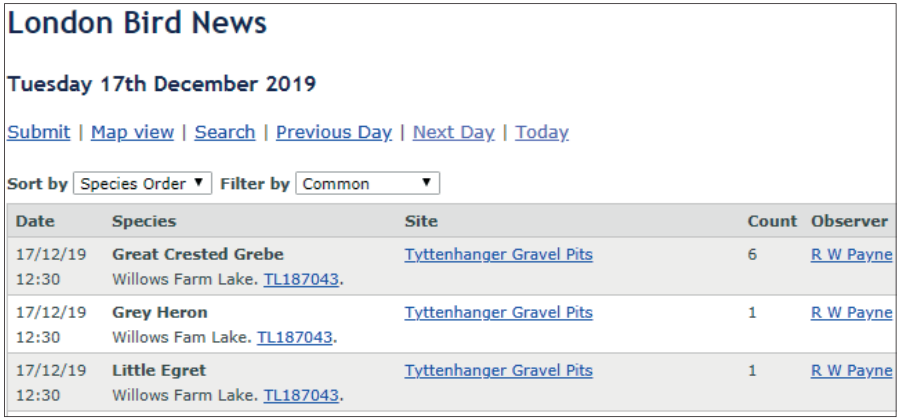
The above breeding categories are as used in the BTO Atlas project.

GOING BIRDING - THE LNHS RECORDING PORTAL

MIKE TRIER

Submitting and viewing bird records

We are now able to offer an alternative way for people to provide their records - the London Bird Club has been included in Marek Waldford's Going Birding system. It is still early days, but recent records can be seen here – https://www.goingbirding.co.uk/london/birdnews.asp - here is a sample Search page.



London Bird News

Tuesday 17th December 2019

Submit | Map view | Search | Previous Day | Next Day | Today

Sort by Species Order Filter by Common

Date	Species	Site	Count	Observer
17/12/19 12:30	Great Crested Grebe Willows Farm Lake. TL187043.	Tyttenhanger Gravel Pits	6	R W Payne
17/12/19 12:30	Grey Heron Willows Fam Lake. TL187043.	Tyttenhanger Gravel Pits	1	R W Payne
17/12/19 12:30	Little Egret Willows Farm Lake. TL187043.	Tyttenhanger Gravel Pits	1	R W Payne

Another option is to view the Year List, where a list of all recorded species is displayed; clicking on a species will display all records for that species during the year:

Species Year List 2019

The following list is automatically compiled from sightings species, possibles and probables are excluded.

Previous year | Next year

1. Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*
2. Greylag Goose *Anser anser*
3. Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*
4. Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

You can add your own records by clicking on the **Submit** button (and, on the first time, following the links to register). One advantage is that your sightings can be retweeted from the London Bird Club twitter account (@LondonBirdClub) and posted to the LondonBirders: (https://uk.groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/londonbirders/info)

The LBR Data Manager, Roger Payne, worked closely with Marek Waldford to tailor Going Birding for the LNHS website and ensure ease of use and accuracy of the submitted data. It is also the most helpful method of sending us your bird records so that they are in the correct format for the database from which the LBR is compiled.

Step-by-step guide to submitting records

1. https://www.goingbirding.co.uk/london/login.asp?referer=submitbirdnews.asp
You will first need to register as a user: select **Register** from the header bar.

Choose a Login name (eg. jrSmith) and create a Password (eg. IwatchStainesRes) – both are case-sensitive. Then complete your registration as directed and submit it.

When completed you will receive a confirmation email.

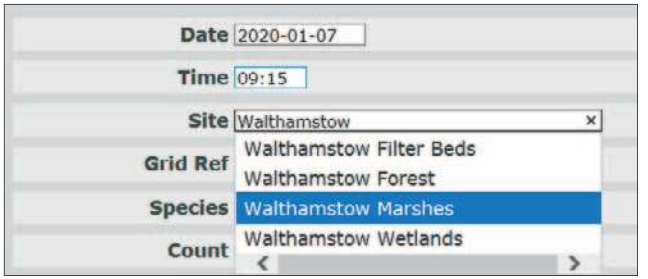
2. Sign-in to submit records
Click **Sign-in** on the top header bar (see top image on page 246).

3. Submit Bird News
Click **Submit** on the options bar.

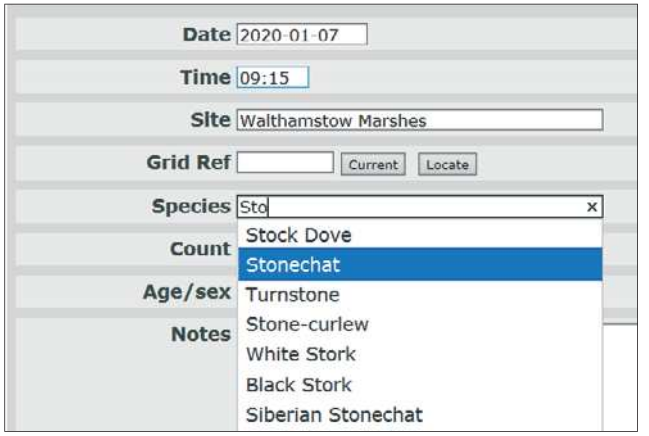
The opening screen has the current day's date and time. Amend these to the date and time of your observation using the displayed format.

4. Site
Start typing the name of the Site; and a drop-down list will appear – select the site name. Using this option will ensure that the site name matches a site on our gazetteer.

Alternatively type in a Grid Reference if you know it; or use the Locate option and find the exact position on the zoom-in map.



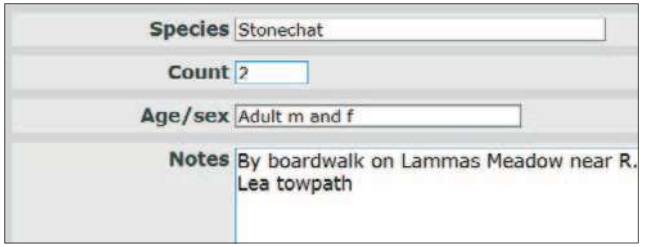
5. Species
Start typing the name of the species and use the drop-down list to select it.



6. Count
Enter the number counted – the default figure is 1.

7. Age/sex
Give a brief description of the age and sex of the bird(s). For example: Adult m and f

8. Notes
Enter any further description, such as the exact location at a site, observed behaviour etc.

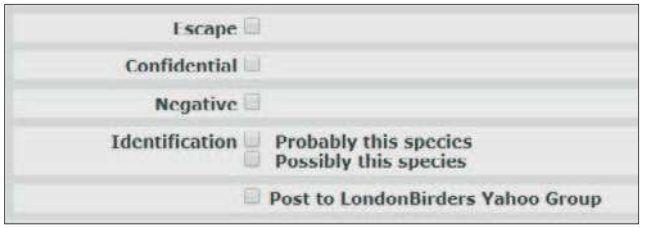


9. Breeding

If there is an indication of breeding activity, select the criteria from the drop-down list

10. Checkboxes

Click on any of the checkboxes that apply to this record, then click **Add**.



The form will revert to the date and time you entered and the site; all the other fields will return to the default so that you can easily enter further records.

Below will be displayed a summary of the data you have entered.

11. Submit

Once you have entered all your records, click **Submit**.

That's it! Now explore the features using the options on the header bar.

Thank you for using Going Birding. By doing so, you will:

- save the LBR editorial team a lot of time
- ensure that the data is ready to be used
- make your records open to other users to search
- help us in our attempt to reduce the time needed to produce the London Bird Report and to bring it back on schedule.

Mike Trier, 38 Maury Road, London, N16 7BP
miketrier@waitrose.com

INDEX OF SPECIES - COMMON NAMES

This alphabetical index lists the common name of each species in the systematic list with its page number in roman type. Page numbers of illustrations and photographs are in *italic type*. Papers on particular species have their first page number in **bold type**.

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4512	ELBF	305	Little Owl	Fairlop Waters	16-Jun-17	1	10
4513	ELBF	305	Little Owl	King George V Reservoir	23-Jul-17	1	10
4514	ELBF	305	Little Owl	Sewardstone Marsh	30-Jul-17	1	10
4515	ELBF	305	Little Owl	Sewardstone Marsh	19-Aug-17	1	10
4516	ELBF	305	Little Owl	Wanstead Flats	27-Aug-17	3	30
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4518	ELBF	305	Little Owl	Fairlop Waters	09-Sep-17	1	10
4519	ELBF	305	Little Owl	Wanstead Flats	15-Sep-17	2	20
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4521	ELBF	305	Little Owl	Sewardstone Marsh	30-Sep-17	1	10
4522	ELBF	305	Little Owl	Abridge	03-Oct-17	1	10
4523	ELBF	305	Little Owl	Fairlop Waters	08-Oct-17	1	10
4524	ELBF	305	Little Owl	King George V Reservoir	08-Oct-17	1	10
4525	ELBF	305	Little Owl	King George V Reservoir	14-Oct-17	2	20
4526	ELBF	305	Little Owl	Fairlop Waters	22-Oct-17	1	10

Are these familiar to you?

Would you like to use your knowledge and skills to help produce the London Bird Report?

Read on to learn more...

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. Winter numbers appeared slightly lower to 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	6	4	-	-	3	18	15	73	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	-

LBR 2019
WILL YOU BE PART OF IT?

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- CALL FOR SPECIES ACCOUNTS WRITERS -
SHARPEN YOUR SKILLS AS A BIRDER AND WRITER

Species Account Writer *Homo sapiens*

Status: Annual *LBR* contributor, stable and hopefully increasing.

The *London Bird Report* has a team of over 20 volunteers who compile the species accounts which are at the heart of the *LBR*. We are looking for up to 20 more writers to join the panel over the coming years, to strengthen the team and reduce the work for each writer.

Benefits to Writers

1. An opportunity to make a useful contribution that informs science and conservation.
2. Be recognised explicitly on the contents listing as a contributing writer. This is useful for people in an early career in research and conservation who want to build out their CVs with citable work.
3. Become familiar with handling large volumes of data and learning to extract the highlights.
4. Be part of a success story. The *LBR* was was first published in 1936 and has 83 issues.

You do not need to be an expert but should be a fairly experienced bird-watcher with knowledge of the current status of birds in London or in the UK.

Further details are on the LNHS website at:
http://www.lnhs.org.uk/index.php/publications/lbr-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.

References to publications should be given in full, with the name spelt out and in italics, and in the following style:

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.

Illustrations Figures and graphs in papers are welcomed. Graphs should be embedded in the text document. Digital figures (maps etc) should be sent as separate files, with their position indicated in the text. Some figures can be originated by us from hard copy: details for submitting them are under LINE DRAWINGS (below).

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Digital photographs should be in jpeg format, saved at the highest quality at 300dpi, and with a minimum length on one side of 2000 pixels. Each image should be accompanied by full details including species name, location, date and photographer's name; this can be in the image file name, or in an accompanying document. All images must comply with our Ethical Policy; details are on our website at:

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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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