

## **Shropshire Ornithological Society**

### **Shropshire Bird Report 1955 – unpublished MS**

This document came to light in late 2014.  
It was passed to John Tucker, for Histo, on 22 October 2014.

Scanned and converted to .PDF format 23 October 2014 and circulated to species account writers for The Birds of Shropshire the same day.

**NOTE.** The original was typed onto foolscap paper, vertically longer than modern A4, and the scans of each page are in two parts, upper and lower.

The original will be returned to Helen Griffith, S.O.S. Hon. Sec.  
A .PDF copy will be available on the Histo website from late 2014.

It is proposed to publish this work as part of the celebrations in 2015.

File Copy  
Corrected

SHROPSHIRE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
INTERIM BIRD REPORT TO 31ST DECEMBER, 1955

CLASSIFIED NOTES

(The number preceding the name of each bird refers to the Check List of the Birds of Great Britain & Ireland.)

4. RED-THROATED DIVER Oiled bird at Ellesmere March 11th. Cleaned but subsequently died. (A.C.)

5. GREAT CRESTED GREBE 35 pairs noted as breeding in the County, of which 14 bred in the Ellesmere group of meres. Peak numbers 47 on Nov. 13th Ellesmere group (A.C.)

9. LITTLE GREBE Bred in small numbers in pools in Wellington area. (F.B.C.)

28. CORMORANT A regular visitor to all Shropshire waters from August onwards. Main arrival early Nov. Most numerous in the Ellesmere group where up to 80 birds winter. The majority, if not all, roost at Whitmere. The majority of the Ellesmere birds appear to come from the River Dee, though birds come in ones and twos from the direction of the River Severn. On the Shropshire section of the Severn up to 46 birds have been recorded at one roost. (T.W.P.: A.C.)

30. HERON Occupied nests: Halston 33; Attingham 3; Bicton (nr. Clun) 3; Total 39. (Total 1954 - 54)(E.M.R.)

45. MAILLARD Peak numbers: Ellesmere group c.750 March 10th (T.W.P. & E.M.R.). Shavington c.500 Oct. 16th (J.S.R.) Buildwas 150 Dec. (T.W.P.)

46. TEAL Peak numbers: Ellesmere Group 240 March 10th (T.W.P. & E.M.R.), Shavington c.40 Oct. 16th and Dec. 11th (J.S.R.) Buildwas 20 in Oct. (T.W.P.)

50. WIGEON Peak numbers: Ellesmere group c.600 March 10th (T.W.P. & E.M.R.), Buildwas 150 Dec. 27th (T.W.P.)

52. PINTAIL 5 at Colemere March 10th (T.W.P. & E.M.R.)

52.	<u>PINTAIL</u>	5 at Colemere March 10th (T.W.P. & E.M.R.)
53.	<u>SHOVELER</u>	Ellesmere group: 22 on Nov. 13th & Dec. 11th. (A.C.)
56.	<u>TUFTED DUCK</u>	Peak numbers: Ellesmere group 125 Nov. 13th (A.C.)
57.	<u>POCHARD</u>	Peak numbers: Ellesmere group 82 Dec. 11th (A.C.)
60.	<u>GOLDENEYE</u>	Peak numbers: Ellesmere group 44 December 11th (A.C.)
64	<u>COMMON SCOTER</u>	Ellesmere - Nov. 17th 1 Female (S.B.)



70. GOOSANDER Peak numbers: Ellesmere group 36.  
Dec. 11th (A.C.); Shavington 45.  
Dec. 11th (J.S.R.)
76. WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE Usual flock of c.800 in Chirbury area.
78. PINK-FOOTED GOOSE One with Canada Geese at Ellesmere for  
5 weeks from April 3rd. (A.C. & S.B.)
82. CANADA GOOSE May 2nd Isle Pool 1 pair; Alkmond  
Pool 7; Shrawardine 7 (E.M.R.); Aston  
Hall 50 in Feb. (E.J.P.); Nov. 17th  
Acton Burnell 11 (T.W.P.); Oct. 16th  
Shavington 85 (J.S.R.); Peak numbers  
Ellesmere group 124 on Nov. 13th (A.C.).  
Breeds on a number of waters in  
Shropshire (E.M.R.)
84. MUTE SWAN See separate note.
91. BUZZARD See separate note.
103. OSPREY A bird presumed to be of this species  
seen at Ticklerton in mid-Sept. by  
R.P.G.B. and two others flying South  
at an altitude of 150-200 ft. In  
sight for about 300 yards. About the  
size of a Herring Gull, but wings  
narrower and with pronounced "kink".  
Underparts pure white. Species known  
to the observers in Germany.]
107. MERLIN One flying W. up the Iron Bridge Gorge  
on March 22nd. (T.W.P.)
111. RED GROUSE Seen in fair numbers on Longmynd on  
April 27th (E.M.R., T.W.P.)
115. RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE April: pair seen on several occasions  
nr. Weeping Cross (L.C.L.).  
April 9th, pair near Kynnersley (F.B.C.);  
May 22nd nest with eggs at Shirlett  
(S.O.S. field meeting); June 20th pair  
nr. Wrekin (E.L.E.W.); Bred Donnington  
area (W.G.L.)
120. WATER RAIL Aug. 15th One on canal by Trench Pool  
(F.B.C.); Nov. 17th one at Acton Burnell  
Pool (F.B.C. & T.W.P.)

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125. CORNCRAKE Numbers increased in Chirbury area to 10 or 11 (T.H.). One calling at Buildwas for several days in April (T.W.P.)
127. COOT Acton Burnell 50 Nov. 17th (T.W.P.)
131. OYSTERCATCHER Single bird heard in Ironbridge Gorge, flying W. Oct. 7th and again on Oct. 9th (T.W.P.)
133. LAPWING Parties passing E. over Ironbridge Gorge March 13th; 700 at Atcham Oct. 7th (T.W.P.) c.150 nr. Oakengates, March 19th (E.L.E.W.)
140. GOLDEN PLOVER Flock at Tern Hill airfield from Aug. 14th; last seen Dec. 6th, max. 50 + (J.S.R.); 100 Rednall airfield April 7th (T.W.P.)



145. SNIFE Feb. 25th. Plentiful in Severn valley (T.W.P.). May 9th. One drumming at Horsehay (F.B.C.)
148. WOODCOCK ✓ Feb. 3rd. One near Lilleshall (E.L.E.W.)  
March 30th. One Wrekin area (F.B.C.)  
May 10th. Up to 6 roding on Whitcliffe, Ludlow (J.F.W.B.). May 29th. One with young Haughmond (E.J.P.)
150. CURLEW March 10th. First seen Wroxeter; Night passage Ironbridge Gorge, July 8th and Sept. 6th (T.W.P.). Breeding on Weald Moors (F.B.C. & E.S.E.W.).  
June 13th. Two or three pairs Whixall Moss (E.M.R.). A flock of 500/600 regularly winters in the Camlad Valley Nr. Chirbury (E.M.R.)
159. COMMON SANDPIPER ✓ April 26th. One on small lake near Bromfield (J.F.W.B.). April 19th. First seen Buildwas; May 25th. One Trench Pool (A.D.M.G.). Night passage Ironbridge Gorge, July 8th and Sept. 6th (T.W.P.). Ellesmere 3, July 11th (S.B.)
161. REDSHANK ✓ First seen Buildwas Apl. 19th; pairs nesting all along the river between Buildwas and Cound June 1st (T.W.P.).  
May 1st One pair Wappensall; Aug. 2nd Two pairs near Newport (E.L.E.W.).  
Tern Hill one Apl. 17th; pair nesting May 21st (J.S.R.)
199. LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL Passage heaviest along Severn March 28/29th; Atcham 1, May 3rd (T.W.P.)
201. COMMON GULL March 10th, 50 Whitmere (T.W.P.)  
Aug. 11th. Very many in Weston Rhyn area (T.W.P.)
208. BLACK-HEADED GULL March 10th. Crosemere 1000, Whitmere 400 (T.W.P.)  
Dec. 2nd c.1000 on Trench Pool (F.B.C.)
212. BLACK TERN Ellesmere: Present from Aug. 14th to Sept. 18th. Peak number 10 on Sept. 8th (A.C. & S.B.)

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Ellesmere: Present from Aug. 14th to Sept. 18th. Peak number 10 on Sept. 8th (A.C. & S.B.)

226. LITTLE AUK

Dec. 2nd. One taken alive at Ashford Carbonel (R.S.P.C.A. Ludlow).

234. WOOD PIGEON

Flock of c.1000 at Winter roost in Forestry Commission plantation nr. Bishop's Castle (G.D.A.).

235. TURTLE DOVE

June 4th. Flock of 12 feeding near Lilleshall (E.L.E.W.)

241. BARN OWL

Two on several occasions nr. Chirbury (R.H.). Feb. 21st. One at Westbury (T.W.P.). March 28th. One near Battlefield (E.M.R.). May 19th. Two on outskirts of Ludlow (J.F.W.B.). Not infrequently seen in most parts of County when driving at night Oct. - March (L.C.L.).



246. LITTLE OWL

Common in Wellington and Coalbrookdale areas (F.B.C.). Frequent in Bishop's Castle area (G.D.A.).

252. NIGHTJAR

June 8th. Pair at Lodge Wood, Lilleshall (E.L.E.W.). Pair bred near Colebatch, Bishop's Castle (G.D.A.). 1 seen and heard at Donnington (W.G.L.).

255. SWIFT

General movement North across Shropshire noticed by T.W.P. on May 3rd during journey between Ironbridge and Cwastrey.

263. GREATER SPOTTED WOODPECKER

One trapped and ringed at Ketley while feeding on wheat during severe frost and snow on Feb. 12th. (E.L.E.W.) One drumming at Shrewsbury Dec. 26th (S.W.)

264. LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER

Jan. 25th One at Coalbrookdale;  
April 9th one at Ellesmere (T.W.P.);  
May 22nd one at Willey Park (S.O.S.Mtg.)  
Whitemere 1 pair March 13th (A.C.)

271. WOOD-LARK

May 22nd. Willey Park (S.O.S. Mtg.)

272. SKYLARK

Feb. 21st 100 at Atcham (T.W.P.).

274. SWALLOW

Llanymynech area, breeding started early, e.g. one pair started laying c.Apl 18th and had 3 broods; young of last brood leaving nest Aug. 29th. Fertility rate high (J.H.O.). Late brood left nest Oct. 10th Stoke St. Milbrough (J.F.). Flock of 12 apparently feeding on flowering heads of Ragwort at Ketley Aug. 14th (F.B.C.) E.L.E.W.

279. RAVEN ✓

April 24th nest with young in Scots Pine, Callow Hollow (E.M.R.). June 18th party of 5 on Longmynd; July 16th two on Longmynd (J.F.W.B.). Plentiful on high ground in Clun Forest area (C.F.T.). May 8th party of 6 at Pennerley (K.E.S.)

280. CARRION CROW

April 19th. Nest built of v. light coloured flotsam, brought by floods, in tree at Buildwas; Nov. 9th party of 48 at Little Wenlock (T.W.P.).



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282. ROOK

Feb. 1st Large weather movement of Rooks and Jackdaws observed at Stoke Heath flying S.W. on narrow front at 30 or 40 feet, lasting at least 10 minutes. Over 1000 birds passed at about 100 a minute, singly and in small groups. Presumed to be birds from N.Staffs and Derby where weather was v. severe. Local birds not affected. (J.S.R.).

283. JACKDAW

2000 at Buildwas Park roost (T.W.P.)

293. WILLOW TIT ✓

March 15th Wrekin (F.B.C.). Noted during the year at Tong, Buildwas, Coalbrookdale, Ironbridge gorge, Leighton, and Ellesmere. Appears to be widespread in Shropshire. (T.W.P.).

294. LONG-TAILED TIT

No scarcity in Ironbridge area. (T.W.P.)

300. DIPPER Breeding R.Teme Nr. Downton Castle (J.F.W.B.). Two on R. Onny at Horderley (F.C.T.). One at Coalbrookdale April 6th (T.W.P.). Breeding at Farley Dingle (T.W.P.). Seen in Oct. on R. Clun & Onny. W: Onny Nov. 6th (E.J.P.). *Teme*
301. MISTLE THRUSH Feb. 13th two feeding on wheat in severe frost at Ketley (E.L.E.W.).
302. FIELDFARE ✓ All Fieldfares and Redwings left Ironbridge area in severe weather by Feb. 28th (T.W.P.).
304. REDWING ✓ See above under Fieldfare.
311. WHEATEAR ✓ May 5th two at Alscott Mill; May 16th one Shifnal; Sept. 9th one Horsehay (F.B.C.). Breeding in Small Batch, Longnynd (E.J.P.). Suspected breeding At Stoke-on-Tern (J.S.R.).
318. WHINCHAT ✓ Several pairs feeding young on Haughmond Hill, May 29th (E.J.P.).
320. REDSTART ✓ Common in Ludlow and Bromfield district (J.F.W.B.). Breeding in fair numbers at Willey Park (S.O.S. Mtg.).
321. BLACK REDSTART Possible male at Buildwas Power Station April 25th (per T.W.P.).
322. NIGHTINGALE ✓ May 22nd, Shirlett (S.O.S. Mtg.). Not so numerous in 1955 as in 1954 in Coalport-Buildwas area. Possibly not more than 8 pairs bred (T.W.P.). Aug. 5th one juvenile Albrighton, nr. Shifnal (E.M.S.).
327. GRASSHOPPER WARBLER ✓ April 21st, first seen. Still breeding in young conifer plantation at Horderley, though trees are growing up (F.C.T.). 3 pairs in Wombridge district, singing till Aug. 5th (E.L.E.W.). May 22nd Willey Park (S.O.S. Mtg.). A good year for this species in Ironbridge area (T.W.P.). May 29th one singing at Haughmond (E.J.P.).



327. GRASSHOPPER WARBLER ✓

April 21st, first seen. Still breeding in young conifer plantation at Horderley, though trees are growing up (F.C.T.). 3 pairs in Wombridge district, singing till Aug. 5th (E.L.E.W.). May 22nd Willey Park (S.O.S. Mtg). A good year for this species in Ironbridge area (T.W.P.). May 29th one singing at Haughmond (E.J.P.).

333. REED WARBLER

Numerous at Colemere and Crosemere (A.C.). April 22nd two pairs in rhododendrons at Norton Mere (T.W.P.).

337. SEDGE WARBLER ✓

May 7th, 30 pairs noted at Norton Mere; not so numerous in Severn valley as in 1954 (T.W.P.)

356. CHIFFCHAFF

One seen in Oswestry garden on Dec. 21st (and Jan. 14th 1956). Disappeared after falls of snow (P.W.C.)

357. WOOD WARBLER ✓

May 22nd, frequent at Willey Park (S.O.S. Mtg.). May 30th, one singing Radleth (E.M.R.). June 5th quite numerous Wrekin (J.S.R.). Frequent in Horderley area (F.C.T.).



368. PIED FLYCATCHER ✓  
April 24th, 1 male Callow Hollow (E.M.R.)  
May 22nd, 3 pairs breeding at Willey  
Park (S.O.S. Mtg.). June 11th, 1 male  
singing Nr. Bromfield (J.F.W.B.). 5 pairs  
in area S. of Bishop's Castle (G.D.A.).  
June 4th, one seen carrying food Hawk-  
stone (J.S.R.).
371. HEDGE SPARROW  
Jan. 11th, eleven together in kale field  
nr. Ironbridge (T.W.P.).
373. MEADOW PIPIT  
Breeds freely on Severn "flood-plain"  
especially nr. Cressage (T.W.P.).
376. TREE PIPIT  
April 18th, one at Priors Lee (E.L.E.W.).  
April 24th, one at Callow Hollow (E.M.R.).  
May 22nd, Willey Park (S.O.S. Mtg.).  
June 13th, 2 or 3 pairs Whixall Moss  
(E.M.R.). June 23rd, numerous on Brown  
Clee (T.W.P.).
382. YELLOW WAGTAIL  
April 19th, numerous at Buildwas (T.W.P.).  
April 24th, 3 males and 4 females togeth-  
er at Horderley (F.C.T.). Sept. 29th  
2 at Priors Lee (E.L.E.W.). Appears to be  
locally numerous in many parts of the  
County.
383. WAXWING  
Nov. 1st, one seen on outskirts of  
Oswestry (C.H.G.).
389. STARLING  
Large winter roost at Berwick, nr. Atcham.  
c.10,000 on Nov. 25th in pre-roosting  
flock nr. Atcham (T.W.P.).
391. HAWFINCH  
11th May, two at Fishmore Hall, Ludlow.  
(J.F.W.B.).
392. GREENFINCH  
Jan. 11th, 500 on stubble, Little Wenlock;  
Sept. 13th, 200 Tong (T.W.P.).
393. GOLDFINCH  
From Sept. 29th to Nov. 11th at Priors  
Lee. Numbers varying from 5 to 60,  
feeding on Burdock (E.L.E.W.).
394. SISKIN  
Flock of 30 (including some Redpolls)  
Tong, Jan. 27th; c.30 Wrekin Nov. 9th  
(T.W.P.). 40/50 Whitmere March 6th  
(J.S.R.).
395. LINNET  
Unusually large Autumn flocks in Clun  
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397. REDPOLL

May 10th, one at Coleham, Shrewsbury (L.C.L.)  
Jan. 27th, Tong (see Siskin above).  
March 2 & 3, one at Hadley. Numerous as breeding species in this area 25 years ago; now rarely seen. July 28th one heard at Norton Mere (F.B.C. & T.W.P.)

408. BRAMBLING

Jan. 17th, one at Horsehay; Nov. 9th 4 in Wrekin area (F.B.C.). Jan. 11th Little Wenlock 20 (T.W.P.). Feb. 2nd Several at Hawkstone (J.S.R.).

421. REED BUNTING

17 trapped and ringed - S.U. Canal nr. Trench Pool in Jan. & Feb. (F.B.C.).  
Nov. 17th Winter roost of 16+ in reedmace Acton Burnell Lake (T.W.P.).

425. TREE SPARROW

Colonies noted during the year at Little Wenlock, Homer, Wroxeter, Clee Hills and Wrekin. Locally numerous throughout the County (T.W.P.). Also noted at Wappensall & Newport (E.L.E.W.) and Smalley Bank, 6. Horsehay (F.B.C.).



MIGRANTS		
1. SUMMER		
	Arrival	Departure
TURTLE DOVE	May 3 Wroxeter (T.W.P.) May 8 Shrawardine (E.M.R.)	
CUCKOO	Apl 16 Clungunford (F.C.T.) Apl 23 Eyton-on-Severn (T.W.P.) Apl 23 Ellesmere (A.C.)	
SWIFT	May 1 Ellesmere (A.C.) Wellington (E.L.E.W.) Llanymynech (J.H.O.) May 2 Shrewsbury (E.M.R.)	Aug 2 Llanymynech (J.H.O.) Aug 12 Buildwas (F.B.C.) Aug 23 Ketley (E.L.E.W.)
SWALLOW	Mar 29 Llanymynech (J.H.O.) Apl 1 Ellesmere (A.C.) Apl 6 Ironbridge (T.W.P.) Apl 9 Trench (F.B.C.)	Nov 6 Buildwas (T.W.P. F.B.C.) (Juvenile)
HOUSE MARTIN	Apl 10 Buildwas (F.B.C.) Apl 18 Horderley (F.C.T.) Apl 27 Tern Bridge (T.W.P.)	Oct 1 Buildwas (F.B.C.) Oct 8 Ironbridge (T.W.P.)
SAND MARTIN	Mar 29 Llanymynech (J.H.O.) Apl 4 Ironbridge (T.W.P.) Ellesmere (A.C.) Apl 9 Trench Pool (F.B.C.)	Aug 20 Llanymynech (J.H.O.)
NIGHTINGALE	Apl 13 <del>Ellesmere (A.C.)</del> Apl 28 Buildwas (F.B.C.)	
REED WARBLER	Apl 28 Crosemere (A.C.) May 7 Norton Mere (F.B.C.)	
SEDGE WARBLER	Apl 10 Wombridge (E.L.E.W.) May 2 Ironbridge (T.W.P.) Ellesmere (A.C.)	Sep 18 Wombridge (E.L.E.W.)
BLACKCAP	Apl 14 Ellesmere (A.C.) Ironbridge (T.W.P.) May 7 Norton Mere (T.W.P. & F.B.C.)	



BLACKCAP	Apl 14 Ellesmere (A.C.)	Oct 2 Wellington
	Ironbridge (T.W.P.)	Nov 1 London
	May 7 Norton Mere (T.W.P. & F.B.C.)	
GARDEN WARBLER	May 7 Norton Mere (F.B.C. & T.W.P.)	
	Ellesmere (A.C.)	
WHITETHROAT	Apl 20 Ironbridge (T.W.P.)	
	Ellesmere (A.C.)	
	Apl 27 Hadley (F.B.C.)	
LESSER WHITETHROAT	Apl 21 Ellesmere (A.C.)	
	Ironbridge (T.W.P.)	
	May 4 Crudgington (F.B.C.)	
WILLOW WARBLER	Apl 2 Buildwas (F.B.C.)	Sep 25 Ketley (E.L.E.W.)
	Apl 9 Ellesmere (T.W.P.)	
	Apl 10 Hadley (E.L.E.W.)	

7.





BUZZARD

ELLESMERE

Single birds seen flying high over the area.  
Suspected breeding. (Cartwright)

LUDLOW AREA

On June 8th a B. stooped unsuccessfully at a flying Partridge in Fishmere. (Bricker)

SHRAWARDINE

May 8th. One B. in wood adjoining pool (E.M.R.)

WILLEY

2 pairs (?) bred 1954. Birds again present 1955.

STOKE ST. MILBURGH

Bevy of 8 seen on two occasions in Spring.  
Single birds often seen between Stoke and Ludlow.  
On Nov. 1st 10 circling just above flock of rooks.  
1 pair bred successfully Stoke St. Milburgh.  
(J.Flint)

HORDERLEY

Less successful breeding season in 1955.  
4 pairs attempted breeding against 7 in previous season. No knowledge of breeding success. No positive records of young birds. (F.C.Taylor)

SHAVINGTON

Birds present but did not breed. (They bred in 1954) (J.S.Ryland)

ANCHOR

Birds very hard pressed for food now rabbits have gone. Numbers getting less and less. Not only very poor laying season, but many birds did not even mate. Rarely seen in pairs - none seen with young. 2 local reports of birds carrying off chickens. On the Kerry Hills early in June, 2 miles West of Shropshire border, a Buzzard rose in front of lorry, carrying a Red Squirrel. (C.F.Thomas)

COLEBATCH

Seen as numerous as ever, but only one chick on average reared per brood. Has seen evidence of them taking small birds from the stubbles; bird perched on straw bale on which were remains of small bird. Skylark and Yellow Hammer identified. At end of year only 1 Buzzard left in Colebatch district, preying on chickens 5 months old. (G.D.Adams)

BUILDWAS

Nested successfully. Number of young unknown. Another pair frequented Buildwas area. Noted during the year at Atcham, Norton Mere, Ironbridge, Coalbrookdale, Acton Burnell. Noted by River Severn apparently chasing Moorhens.



MUTE SWAN - 1955.

A census organised by the British Trust for Ornithology was taken during the breeding season.

The total number of Swans counted in Shropshire was 327, consisting of 73 breeding pairs; 19 non-breeding pairs; 69 individual birds; and 4 herds totalling 74 birds, of which the largest was 46 birds on the Severn at Shrewsbury.

Of the total of 327 birds, 72% were on "stationary" waters (canals, meres, lakes etc.) and 28% were on "flowing" waters (rivers and streams).

Taking into account waters not covered and which were known to contain Swans, it was estimated that another 5% could be added, bringing the total population to approximately 350, including 80 breeding pairs.

A pair with fourteen cygnets was seen at Longden Coleham June 9th (L.C.L.)

KEY TO CONTRIBUTORS

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