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# The 2007 Shropshire Bird Report

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## Acknowledgements

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County Recorder:

Geoff Holmes

Annual Report Committee:

Helen Griffiths, Geoff Holmes, Gordon Leel, Martyn Owen  
and Graham Walker

Photographic Editorial Team:

Jim Almond and Yvonne Chadwick

Compilers of the Systematic List:

John Arnfield, Glenn Bishton, Alan Dawes, David  
Farncombe, Martin Grant, Helen Griffiths, Geoff Holmes,  
Pete Jordan, Jim Martin, Martyn Owen, Alan Reid, Leo  
Smith, Gerry Thomas, John Tucker, Graham Walker and  
Colin Wright.

Special thanks also to Richard Moores who wrote a number of species accounts and provided much advice and general assistance

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## Editorial

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This issue of the Annual Report is my first as editor, having volunteered to take over from Graham Walker. I would like to extend my thanks to the editorial committee for guidance and assistance throughout the Report compilation and editorial process.

I volunteered to take on the role of editor with the primary aim of increasing the regularity of report production. To this end, by the time you read this the 2008 Report should be near completion. To facilitate this increased production rate, compilers who assisted with the species account production have worked especially hard for which the Society is grateful.

2007 was a fairly quiet year for rare birds in Shropshire. It did, however, include one national rarity and addition to the Shropshire list in the form of a black-throated thrush which frustratingly only stayed at Walcot for a couple of hours on 8 Apr. An interesting and informative finder's account is included within this Report. A County second, in the form of a woodchat shrike, was also recorded.

More important than rare vagrants (to most) is the monitoring and conservation of the UK's wild birds. Survey work for the BTO Atlas commenced during November this year. Upon its completion in 2013 (in Shropshire), data gained during this survey will provide reliable information on how the nation's and County's birds are faring. An overview to The Atlas is included within the introduction to the Systematic List.

Finally, those with a very keen eye will notice that this is the 48th Annual Report although there has never been a 47th Report. It has been noticed that both the 1990 and 1991 reports were called the 31st Annual Report.

Martyn Owen

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## Research Reports

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*Leo Smith*

There are several groups undertaking monitoring and conservation of individual species within the County. These groups produce information and annual reports which are summarised in the appropriate species accounts within the Systematic List.

Species covered in this way in this 2007 Bird Report are:

- Red kite
- Dipper
- Barn owl
- Raven

In addition, there are a number of research surveys that cover more than one species, usually as part of multi-annual systematic monitoring. Where these take the form of projects over a specific number of years, the Annual Report will not include interim reports, although some data may be included within the species accounts. These projects will be written up in full in the year when the final project report is published.

On-going annual surveys with no planned end date will be summarised annually.

The summary of Annual and Research Surveys for 2007 is provided below.

### **Lapwing, Curlew & Other Wildlife in the Upper Onny Valley**

*The Upper Onny Wildlife Group*

The Upper Onny Wildlife Group has undertaken a Breeding Bird Survey annually since 2004, concentrating on curlew and lapwing. It covers a total area of around 126 km<sup>2</sup>, between the Long Mynd and the Welsh border. Most of this area is within the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and the Shropshire Hills Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA). Skylark were also counted, and members were asked to record several other species; cuckoo, dipper, red kite, grey partridge, snipe, wheatear, yellow wagtail, yellowhammer and brown hare.

Both lapwing and curlew have declined substantially in this area in recent times, and very few breeding pairs were found by the survey, or during intensive follow-up work:

- 17 pairs of lapwing (only 11 within the designated AONB and ESA boundaries, eight of which were on one farm)
- 37 pairs of curlew (all except 4–5 pairs within the AONB and ESA boundaries).

A slight increase was found in the lapwing population. Seventeen pairs in 2007 compares with 13 pairs found in 2006, 18 in 2005 and 19 in 2004. Breeding success was the best since the group's survey work started, with at least 15 of the 17 pairs eventually producing broods and at least 26 chicks fledged. However, this welcome increase is not sufficient to compensate for the very poor breeding success found 2004–06, and lapwing are still threatened with local extinction as a breeding species. Almost two-thirds of the total number of pairs (11 out of 17) nested on cattle pasture within the AONB and ESA, and more than three-quarters of these (at least nine out of 11) produced broods. Six pairs nested on agricultural land, on set-aside or on a specially prepared 'lapwing field', in very well-kept areas, and all eventually produced broods. None failed as a result of agricultural activity. However, most broods on both pasture and arable land came from repeat layings to replace lost clutches, so many clutches must have been lost as a result of predation, and at least one clutch on pasture was trampled.

The population increased at two sites, where Natural England accepted the group's recommendations and enhanced farm agri-environment agreements, but nesting habitat is still disappearing, with the loss of set-aside arable farmland. Although 2007 was a relatively good year, the total number of chicks and fledged young found over the last four years is insufficient to sustain even the existing small remnant population. The group's report concluded that "Unless radical and swift action is taken to improve and increase habitat and breeding success, and compensate for continuing habitat loss, Lapwings are likely to become extinct in the area, except at one site, within the next few years."

Curlew are more difficult to monitor, but around half the pairs had apparently failed by mid-June. This level of breeding success is insufficient to halt, let alone reverse, the decline. Some nests were predated, and others were lost to agricultural activity, particularly hay and silage cutting. However, cold wet weather delayed the date when cutting could start, enabling chicks from first clutches to fledge just in time. Curlew are long-lived, and breeding success seems slightly better than that of lapwing, so local extinction is likely to take somewhat longer. Curlew are likely to become extinct in the area within ten years unless action is taken. The timing of preparing and cutting hay and silage appears to be the biggest factor limiting breeding success, and a Please Conserve Our Curlews Campaign has been launched.

Nest boxes for dipper have now been installed under most bridges in the area.

Twelve dipper nests were found, ten in boxes. Shortage of nest sites limits the population; it is believed that the project has already helped increase the local population by about five pairs. A long term population monitoring project, carried out in the River Teme catchment by Tony Cross since the mid-1980s, found a small decline in the Upper Onny area, but a much larger decline in the Teme catchment as a whole.

With the support and help of the Shropshire Barn Owl Group, a nest box scheme has been implemented. This should increase the population of barn owls, currently estimated at around nine pairs.

More nest boxes for woodland birds were installed; 130 were monitored at 10 separate sites, and 38 were used by three different species. At least 20 broods, comprising 120 young, fledged. More nest box sites are planned.

The group's work has been actively promoted in the area. This work, together with the Bird Survey and nest box scheme results, and the Programme of Action to increase the area of suitable habitat and improve breeding success, for both lapwing and curlew, including recommendations to Defra, Natural England, and the AONB Partnership, is detailed in the group's 2007 report.

## **Lapwing, Curlew & Other Target Birds in the Upper Clun**

### *The Upper Clun Community Wildlife Group*

A survey of the Clun Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) was carried out each year between 2004 and 2006, to ascertain the lapwing population, and its level of breeding success. The survey aimed to establish what progress, if any, has been made towards achieving the Shropshire Biodiversity Action Plan target – 'to increase the Lapwing population in the Clun ESA from six pairs (1998) to 50 pairs in 2005'. Curlew territories were also mapped on an incidental basis.

This survey work was taken over by the newly-formed Upper Clun Community Wildlife Group (UCCWG) in 2007, to provide more systematic coverage, particularly of curlew. In addition to establishing the population and distribution of lapwing and curlew, the group aimed to begin to map the distribution of other species of conservation interest (skylark, cuckoo, dipper, red kite, grey partridge, snipe, wheatear, yellow wagtail, yellowhammer, tree sparrow, corn bunting and reed bunting, together with brown hare). The area covered comprises 31 tetrads to the west of Clun Bridge.

Just 2–4 pairs of lapwing were found, occupying only two sites in the whole area. No young fledged. The population has been in steep decline for many years, and few young have fledged in recent years. The report concluded that “Unless immediate and effective action is taken to recreate suitable habitat, and protect nests from predation, farm machinery and trampling, the Lapwing breeding population is likely to become extinct within 2–3 years”.

Only 20–22 pairs of curlew, were found. Curlew too have declined, but there are two ‘hot spots’, around Rhos Fiddle and Black Mountain, where conservation work will be concentrated.

Of the other 12 species surveyed, skylark and yellowhammer were found in more than half the squares, with good numbers in a few places, but other important farmland birds were not found at all.

Also, 13 breeding pairs of dipper were found, four barn owls and, for the first time in over 130 years, two red kite nests (one fledged two young, the other failed). The survey results suggest that, of the other target species, only red kite is increasing in both number and range.

Comparison of the results of the current survey with the distribution maps for lapwing and curlew shown in *An Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Shropshire* (1992) shows a substantial decline in the range of both species.

Detailed results and distribution maps were published in the UCCWG Report 2007, which also included recommendations to a number of statutory and voluntary organisations to implement appropriate action.

### **BTO Little Ringed Plover & Ringed Plover Survey 2007**

*Allan P Dawes, BTO Representative for Shropshire*

The last national breeding survey of little ringed plover and ringed plover took place in 1984. A UK wide survey was organised by the BTO in 2007 to assess population change over the intervening years. All sites that previously held breeding little ringed plover or ringed plover were targeted (‘core sites’), along with a sample of randomly selected tetrads to determine numbers elsewhere. For little ringed plover a list of breeding sites was provided by the SOS to add to the core sites found during the 1984 survey. Ringed plover has not nested in the County so only sample tetrads were used. For little plover this amounted to 30 sample tetrads and 15 core sites, for ringed plover 10 sample tetrads.

Due to the special breeding habitat requirements of these species, sample tetrads could be discounted if suitable habitat was not present, either using local knowledge or after the initial site visit. Core sites could also be discounted after a single visit if the habitat was deemed to have changed rendering it no longer suitable.

Three visits, evenly spread through the breeding period were made to suitable sites and the position of any birds was mapped along with any breeding behaviour noted. Maps and codes were then assessed by the BTO to provide an estimate of breeding pairs.

For ringed plover six sample tetrads were discounted without a visit and the remaining four were discounted after an initial inspection.

Twelve little ringed plover sample tetrads were visited, 13 were discounted without a visit and five further tetrads were not visited because volunteers could not be found. Access could not be arranged at two core sites. Of the core sites visited, little ringed plover were found at four with a total of eight pairs estimated. The 1984 survey in Shropshire found five pairs at three sites although two additional sites came to light following the survey.

Some natural shingle banks are present along Rivers but apart from these, working quarries and wetland Reserves are the most likely habitats. Little ringed plover are opportunists and will nest wherever conditions are right but without appropriate management bare areas where they nest soon become overgrown and unsuitable. It is likely that the odd breeding pair goes undetected but the County population remains small and is limited by the availability of suitable habitat.

Since little ringed plover first nested in England in 1938 numbers have risen steadily. The current survey found 746 pairs, sampling also discovered new pairs away from known key sites enabling a national estimate of 1,115 pairs for the UK to be calculated. Since the last survey when 608–631 pairs were found the species has continued to expand its range to the north and west. Sand and gravel pits accounted for 30% of the pairs and River shingle 21%.

Ringed plover numbers have fallen nationally since the previous survey, declining in England by 47%. The largest decreases have occurred at inland sites so the chances of breeding in Shropshire are extremely remote.

Thanks are due to everyone who helped with the survey and to land owners for allowing access.

## The Stiperstones Breeding Bird Survey 2004 - 2007

*Leo Smith*

A project to survey the breeding birds of The Stiperstones was started in 2004. Three categories of species were defined in the specification for the survey:

- target species,
- incidental species, and
- excluded species.

Four separate areas were surveyed in 2004:

1. the southern part of the National Nature Reserve (NNR),
2. the site of the former Gatten Plantation,
3. the Heathland Restoration Area around Nipstone Rock, and
4. the open areas at the centre of the proposed Heathland Restoration Areas (HRAs) at The Rock (Rock House and Rock Farm).

In 2005, the northern part of the NNR was surveyed. Black Rhadley Hill, Cefn Gunthly and Heath Mynd (the ‘Three Hills’) were covered in 2006.

The part of the SSSI not included in the NNR (The Hollies and Brooks Vessons) was surveyed in 2007.

In addition, the skylark and meadow pipit population on the NNR was monitored by surveying four one-kilometre transects in 2006.

The estimated breeding population of target species found in these separate areas during the survey is set out in the below table.

Table 1a. Estimated Number of Breeding Pairs of Target Species (NNR & HRAs)

Species	National Nature Reserve			Heathland Restoration Areas			
	Southern NNR	Northern NNR	Total (NNR)	Gatten Plantation	Nipstone Rock	The Rock	Total (HRA)
Curlew	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cuckoo	2	2	4	0–1	0	0	0–1

Skylark	Excluded	Excluded	n/a	Excluded	4	0	n/a
Tree pipit	8–9	14	22–23	5–6	8	1–2	14–16
Meadow pipit	Excluded	Excluded	n/a	Excluded	2	1	n/a
Redstart	1–2	15	16–18	2–6	0	0	2–6
Stonechat	10	15–17	25–27	1	0	0	1
Whinchat	5–6	2	7–8	0	0	0	0
Wheatear	3–6	2	5–8	0	0	0	0
Ring ouzel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Whitethroat	12–14	27–28	39–42	7	1-3	0	8–10
Reed bunting	4	1	5	0	0	0	0

Table 1b. Estimated Number of Breeding Pairs of Target Species Found (Three Hills, The Hollies and Brook Vessons)

Species	Three Hills				The Hollies	Brook Vessons	Total	Stiperstones Grand Total
	Black Rhadley	Cefn Gunthly	Heath Mynd	Total (Three Hills)				
Curlew	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cuckoo	1	0	1	2	1	0	1	7–8
Skylark	3	3	9–11	15–17	0	0	0	n/a
Tree pipit	12–13	3	5	20–23	5	6	11	67–70
Meadow pipit	9+	5+	18+	32+	0	0	0	n/a
Redstart	1	3	5	9	10	9	19	46–52
Stonechat	4	1	4–6	9–11	0	0	0	35–39
Whinchat	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7–8
Wheatear	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	6–9
Ring ouzel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Whitethroat	5	2	3	10	1–2	1	2–3	59–65
Reed bunting	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	6

The results of the current survey of the NNR, along with data for some species collected from other sources, have been compared with results from an earlier survey, carried out in 1995-96. The population trends are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2 Population trends on the NNR 1995–2005

Species	Change since 1995-1996	Note
Red grouse	Decrease	Estimated 16 pairs in 1995-96, with 12–14 pairs in 2004-05. However, annual grouse counts show that numbers fluctuate and there is no evidence for a trend over the years between surveys
Common snipe	Decrease	Not found on the NNR during 2004-05 surveys or during the targeted snipe surveys in 2004. A single drumming bird was present on Cotton Grass Bog in 2007. However, numbers are still less than those found in 2005-06
Curlew	Extinct	
Cuckoo	Decrease	
Skylark	Decrease?	Transect counts in 2006 indicated a large reduction in the skylark population, but this may reflect a redistribution due to habitat change, and/or different timing in the fledging of young, rather than a population decline
Tree pipit	No change	The number of tree pipit on the NNR is broadly unchanged, but there has been a big increase since 1995-1996 in the area as a whole as a result of additional habitat creation through felling at the Gatten Plantation and Nipstone Rock
Redstart	No change?	The survey method is not ideal for this species, but the results of the two surveys are broadly similar.
Stonechat	Increase (>100%)	
Whinchat	Decrease	
Wheatear	Increase	
Ring ouzel	No change	
Grasshopper warbler	Extinct	
Common whitethroat	Increase (>100%)	
Reed bunting	Increase (>100%)	

The results of the current Survey of the Three Hills have been compared with the relevant part of the distribution maps at Tetrad level in *An Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Shropshire* (1992). The population trends are summarised in Table 3. The numbers in the below table represent the level of breeding evidence observed, and give no indication of the actual number of birds:

1. not found
2. observed in breeding habitat (possible breeding)
3. evidence of probable breeding observed
4. evidence of confirmed breeding observed

Table 3 Population Trends on the Three Hills 1990 – 2006

Species	Atlas 1992			2006			Change
	G	H	M	G	H	M	
Curlew	2	3	2	0	0	0	Extinct
Cuckoo	2	2	2	0	0	2	Large decrease
Skylark	2	3	2	2	2	2	No change?
Tree pipit	2	1	3	2	3	3	No change?
Meadow pipit	3	3	3	3	3	2	No change?
Redstart	3	3	3	1	2	1	No change?
Stonechat	0	0	0	3	3	3	Large increase
Whinchat	3	3	3	0	0	0	Extinct
Wheatear	3	3	3	0	3	0	Large decrease
Ring ouzel	0	0	0	0	0	0	No change?
Common whitethroat	3	1	2	2	2	2	?
Reed bunting	0	0	0	1	0	0	Small increase

A number of Incidental Species recorded during the four years of the Survey are on the Red or Amber List in the Population Status of Birds in the UK – Birds of Conservation Concern: 2002-2007. Recorded incidental species on the Red List are bullfinch, hen harrier, linnet, marsh tit, song thrush, spotted flycatcher, starling and yellowhammer

Incidental Species recorded during the Survey that are on the Amber List are hedge accentor, goldcrest, house martin, kestrel, lapwing, lesser redpoll, merlin, mistle thrush, peregrine falcon, red kite, stock dove, swallow, willow warbler and wood warbler.

The numbers of all the Incidental Species found in the area, together with minimum population estimates, are also set out, apart from those explicitly excluded by the Survey Specification.

Criteria are outlined for establishing the conservation priorities for bird species on The Stiperstones, based on the conservation status of the species (on the Red List or Amber List of Birds of Conservation Concern 2002-2007) and the proportion of the Shropshire population found on The Stiperstones. Applying these criteria suggests the priorities outlined in Table 4. Species in the column headed ‘Very High (?)’ should be given Very High status if they are found breeding in future.

Table 4 Proposed conservation status – Priorities for the Stiperstones Management Plan

<b>High</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>?Very high</b>
Red grouse	Whinchat	Curlew	Common whitethroat
Common snipe	Stonechat	Cuckoo	Merlin
Tree pipit	Wheatear	Skylark	Nightjar
Meadow pipit	Reed bunting	Redstart	Ring ouzel
			Grasshopper warbler

A number of recommendations have been made concerning adoption of these priorities, and on the bracken spraying programme and other habitat management issues in the area. Natural England has been requested to consider and adopt the recommendations.

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## Venus Pool Report

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*Helen J. Griffiths*

After a rather unsettled summer, the hayfields were cut late in the season and the hay baled into black bags rather than into the usual small bales. Although traditional haymaking into small bales is the preferable method of managing species-rich hayfields, the most important thing is to remove the year's growth so that the flowering plants do not become replaced by coarse grasses which would dominate, and eventually reduce, the species diversity of the fields.

As well as our neighbour's cattle, brought in for aftermath grazing on the hayfields, three visiting sheep moved in, to graze the area in front of the hides. These three sheep (two Dorsets and a Dorset x Suffolk) were on loan for the summer, organised by Duncan Norman who ran the Shropshire Grazing Animals Project (GAP); this project matched up sites which needed grazing with cattle and sheep available on loan. A number of other projects throughout the County were very successful, including the introduction of a herd of Hereford cattle into the meadow at Cole Mere. Unfortunately, funding for the GAP project was only short-term and Duncan moved on, but its success highlighted the need for such a project because there are a number of sites in the County which are losing their botanical interest for want of grazing, the owners (for whatever reason) being unable to arrange this.

Shropshire Ornithological Society, however, was more successful in arranging grazing for Venus Pool Nature Reserve, and in October its own flock of six Hebridean sheep moved in, from the English Nature (now Natural England) flock on The Stiperstones. This breed was chosen because they are very hardy and used to being out of doors in all weathers, and because they are primarily browsers and very good at removing willow, birch, and their particular favourite, brambles.

Several work parties took place during the year, a length of hedge was restored between the Barn Field and the arable field, willow and reeds were cut, and a mini-tractor was hired to cut various areas on the Reserve. During one work party, a raised pathway of stone was laid on a stretch of the causeway between Venus Pool and the Fishery, which becomes particularly wet at times.

The birding year at the site had several highlights, including little egret on at least 23 occasions, a pink-footed goose in late December and early January, a ring-necked duck in December, and, in early May, several sightings of osprey, whimbrel and garganey, and a Mediterranean gull.

As usual at Venus Pool, breeding success was mixed - little grebe (two broods), great crested grebe, mallard, ruddy duck (two broods), black-headed gull, sedge and reed warbler, lesser whitethroat, blackcap, willow warbler, tree sparrow, long-tailed tit and song thrush were all successful. A pair of kestrels raised three or four young in a kestrel box on a conifer tree, mute swans bred again after a gap of some years, raising two cygnets, and little ringed plover was also successful, with one juvenile fledging from two pairs. Other wader species were less successful, however - the oystercatcher pair failed five times, with at least three clutches of eggs lost, and the two or three pairs of lapwing also failed (see the Systematic List for more details). Non-breeders passing through the Reserve this year included yellow wagtail, spotted flycatcher, redstart, whinchat and wheatear, all en route to breeding sites elsewhere.

Other records of note from 2007 were tree sparrow, recorded in every month of the year in small numbers, a single corn bunting (a rare bird at Venus Pool) reported from the arable field on 8 May, and five species of tern – sandwich, common, arctic, little and black. A greylag goose with a colour ring, seen on 10 Aug, was ringed as a gosling on 25 Jun 2004 at Speech House in the Forest of Dean, with sightings at Slimbridge in 2004/05, and recorded at Venus Pool on 31 Dec 2005 and 3 Aug 2006.

Fifteen species of duck were seen on the Reserve this year, including a ring-necked duck on 16 December, a garganey for ten days during May, up to four wigeon in the first winter period, with 21 in December, and pintail present during January, February (max six present) and early March, and again during September and late December. A pair of gadwall was again present for much of April and May, but no evidence of attempted breeding was observed.

Eighteen species of wader were recorded during 2007, including a red knot in the third week of September, three sanderling at the end of May, three little stint in early September, lapwing in all months (max count was 300 in February), dunlin in nine of the twelve months (max 22 in mid-May), ruff (actually a reeve, present for 10 days in mid-August), common snipe (max count 23 in late February), and several records of black-tailed godwit, all single birds this year.

There were records of eight species of raptor; five records of red kite, sparrowhawk (all records of a single bird), common buzzard (max count of 14 in March), osprey (seen on two dates in April, one date in May and one in September), common kestrel (bred on the Reserve this year – see above), five records of merlin, hobby (observed hawking for dragonflies), and peregrine (seen catching young coot and moorhen chicks).

The arable fields continue to provide plenty of seed for winter finches, buntings and other passerines, with flocks of 70 chaffinch, 100 goldfinch, 150 linnet,

20 lesser redpoll, 20 yellowhammer and 30 reed bunting all recorded during the winter months. The chicory strips are particularly successful and act as extra 'hedges' for the small birds to use as cover when feeding in this large field.

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## Finder's Account

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### **Black-throated thrush *Turdus atrogularis*, Walcot, 8 Apr 2007**

*Andy Latham*

I was returning home from an early morning birding session at VP and decided to have a look along Isombridge Lane for any early summer migrants. As I drove over the road bridge at Walcot Mill on the River Tern I noticed a group of thrushes in the paddock c100 m away beyond the Roden Brook. I stopped the car to look as this was probably the last sighting of winter thrushes I was likely to see this spring.

As I started counting the assembled fieldfare and redwing I was stopped in my tracks, a medium sized thrush with a brownish grey back, looking away from me. I knew immediately it was different; after what seemed like an eternity which was probably less than five seconds, it turned and faced me. Now I could see its under parts and my reaction, not printable, female black-throated thrush! I have seen this species several times in the UK, and in this plumage on the Scillies several years earlier, so identification was relatively straightforward.

I telephoned several local birders and sat quietly in my car noting the plumage features, not quite believing what I was watching. After 15 minutes, for no apparent reason, the thrushes flew east up the River Tern towards ASF. By now Geoff Holmes had arrived to the news it had just flown! We both tried likely looking areas but could not find the flock. We split up and I decided to return to Walcot Mill where I originally found the bird.

Incredibly, at least an hour later the flock had returned to the paddock along with the black-throated thrush. Geoff arrived closely followed by Janet and Joyce Jones, and the four of us had excellent views through the telescope for the next 20 minutes.

Just as other birders arrived the flock flew again, this time in a northerly direction towards the village of Roddington. Despite being searched for over the remainder of the day and subsequent days by several birders, it was not relocated.

#### **Description:**

General impression was like a small version of a fieldfare, very upright stance, the wings drooped slightly along its side and head tilted up. Feeding on short turf in a typical thrush fashion, short runs and tilting forward. Intermediate in size between

redwing and fieldfare.

**Upper parts:**

Overall brownish grey. The head, mantle, rump, tail showed no contrast. The only contrast being on the closed wing, the median coverts were pale tipped indicative of 1st winter plumage; the tertials were dark centred with pale edges. The primaries and secondaries were pale edged also. The supercillium was white contrasting against the lores which were darker.

**Under parts:**

The chin was white bordered by black streaks demarcating the throat which was also white. A bold whitish moustachial stripe was also noted. Faint dark streaking on the breast ended abruptly across the upper breast. The streaking down the breast sides and flanks became finer. The rest of the under parts were off white.

The bill was short and pointed with a dark upper and yellow base to the lower mandible. The legs looked flesh coloured and the eye dark.

The record was accepted by BBRC.

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## Introduction to the Systematic List

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The Systematic List draws upon records received from a variety of sources, a summary of these sources is provided below.

### **Breeding Bird Survey (BTO)**

The Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) is the main scheme for monitoring the population changes of the UK's common and widespread breeding birds, providing an important indicator of the health of the countryside. BBS trends are produced each year for over 100 species, and the results are widely used by government and non-governmental organisations to set conservation priorities.

The BBS was launched, in 1994, to provide more representative habitat coverage than the main survey running at the time, the Common Birds Census (CBC). The CBC ended in 2000, and the overlap period between 1994 and 2000 allowed the BTO to develop methods for calculating long-term trends (from the 1960s to the present) using information from both schemes.

The BBS is a line-transect survey based on randomly located 1 km squares. Squares are chosen through stratified random sampling, with more squares in areas with more potential volunteers. The difference in sampling effort is taken into account when calculating trends. BBS volunteers make two early-morning visits to their square during the April–June survey period, recording all birds encountered while walking two 1 km transects across their square. Birds are recorded in three distance categories, or as 'in flight', in order to assess detectability and work out species density. Observers also record the habitat along their transect, and record any mammals seen during the survey. Surveying a BBS square involves around six hours of fieldwork per year, and the aim is for each volunteer to survey the same square (or squares) every year. The BBS provides reliable population trends for a large proportion of our breeding species. Trends can also be produced for specific countries, regions or habitats.

If you are interested in becoming involved in the BBS, please contact Allan Dawes (BTO representative for Shropshire) via the SOS website.

## **Bird Atlas (2007–2011) (BTO & SOS)**

The Bird Atlas 2007–2011 aims to produce maps of distribution and relative abundance for all bird species breeding and wintering in Britain and Ireland. It will allow an assessment of the changes in bird distributions since previous breeding atlases in 1970 and 1990, and since the last winter atlas of the early 1980s. Fieldwork will span four winters and four breeding seasons, and commenced on 1 Nov 2007. During the survey period the whole of Britain and Ireland will be cumulatively surveyed. To fulfil these objectives there are two core methods:

**Timed Tetrad Visits:** Timed Tetrad Visits (TTVs) are principally concerned with discovering the broad patterns of relative abundance across Britain & Ireland by counting birds for fixed periods in tetrads. (2 km × 2 km squares). TTVs do not aim to produce a complete species list for the tetrad, but a sample of what one can find during a pair of visits (one early, one late) in winter and/or breeding season annually during the survey period.

**Roving Records:** A means of submitting lists for grid squares, one-off records of hard to find species, and anything in between. They are also a means of accumulating evidence of breeding and for providing records of nocturnal species.

Although fieldwork for the National Bird Atlas will conclude in 2011, in Shropshire fieldwork for the local Atlas will continue until 2013. This should ensure the same degree of coverage as the previous Atlas, published in 1992, enabling comparisons to be made.

## **Wetland Bird Survey (BTO)**

The Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) is administered by the BTO in partnership with the WWT/RSPB/JNCC. WeBS monitors all waterbird species throughout the year, primarily during September-March, at inland and coastal habitats. The monitoring objectives are to: (1) detect UK population changes; (2) identify sites of conservation importance for particular species; (3) detect changes in locations of populations; (4) compute species thresholds for sites of UK and international importance and (5) the reasons for population changes at site, regional and national scales. Survey methodology is 'look-see' within site boundaries. To minimise statistical bias by double counting, surveys are undertaken on synchronised monthly core count priority dates.

## Casual Records

In addition to records obtained through the above structured surveys, the County Recorder receives and compiles records submitted directly on an ad hoc basis. Such records are termed ‘casual records’ within this report.

Causal records can be submitted via BirdTrack, this is an online bird recording system developed through an exciting partnership between BTO, RSPB and BirdWatch Ireland. It is a year-round recording scheme that will use data from birdwatchers records to support species and site conservation at local, national and international scales. Results produced by BirdTrack will include mapping the migration and movements of birds and monitoring of scarce birds in Britain and Ireland. All Shropshire records submitted to BirdTrack can be accessed by the County Recorder provided the observer gives his consent.

## Nomenclature and Order

The Systematic List follows the species order within ‘The British List – The Official List of Bird Species Recorded in Britain’ (2010), published by the British Ornithologists’ Union. Species names adhere to the British (English) vernacular names within this list.

## Species Accounts

The introduction to each species account has been altered slight this year. Each account now includes the Shropshire Status, with detail included relating to the regularity of occurrence and abundance. Each species is allocated to at least one of the following categories:

The below status descriptors are used in the headers to the species texts.

Vagrant	A bird well outside its usual range
Irruptive Visitor	Occurs erratically in response to food shortages in the home range
Passage Migrant	Mainly a migrant in spring and/or autumn
Resident	Breeds and present all year
Winter Visitor	Mainly occurs in winter
Summer visitor	Mainly occurs as a breeding visitor in summer
Naturalised	Introduced deliberately or accidentally by man and now breeds

in the wild

Feral Present in the wild although a self-sustaining population not present in the British Isles

The below abundance descriptors are used in the headers to the species texts. These figures are the estimated number that occur within Shropshire during the year, or over previous years for rare and very rare species.

Abundant	60,000+ per year
Very common	10,001 – 60,000 per year
Common	2,001 – 10,000 per year
Fairly Common	201 – 2,000 per year
Scarce	21 – 200 per year
Very Scarce	2 – 20 per year
Rare	Annual or near-annual
Very Rare	Less than annual

It is anticipated that these categories will be refined when Atlas data are available, providing a reliable indication of the status of species within the County.

The national conservation status of each species is now included. Where species are included on one of the below lists, this is now indicated:

- Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1987 (as amended)
- Annex 1 of the the EC Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds.
- Shropshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP).
- UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP).
- Red, Amber and Green Lists of Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC), see below.

The State of Birds in the UK analyses on-going population trends, each species status within ‘The State of the UK’s Birds 2007’ has been used within this Report. Species are assigned to one of three lists of BoCC. These are the Red, Amber and Green lists. 52 species are included on the Red List for one of the following reasons:

- Their population or range has declined by more than 50% in the last 25 years.
- The species has declined in the long-term (since 1800).
- It is a globally-threatened species.

Species are included on the Amber List because they are either:

- In moderate decline;
- Restricted to a small number of sites;
- Present in internationally-important numbers in the UK; or
- In unfavourable conservation status across Europe.

Birds on the Green list are not considered threatened.

The BBS status remains as in previous reports. Where this is omitted, the species was not recorded during BBS surveys.

### **Observer Initials**

Selected records within the systematic list are accompanied by observer initials in parentheses. The following guidelines are used to maintain consistency:

- The initial finder of any species for which a description is required (Shropshire or National).
- Exceptional counts.
- Exceptional behavioural observations.
- Species for which two or fewer records were received during the year.

### **Abbreviations**

AONB	Area of Outstanding National Beauty
ASF	Allscott Sugar Factory
BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
BBS	BTO Breeding Bird Survey
BoCC	Birds of Conservation Concern
BTO	British Trust for Ornithology
CBC	Common Bird Census
EGM	Ellesmere Group of Meres
ESA	Environmentally Sensitive Area
LBAP	Local Biodiversity Action Plan

LMBBP	Long Mynd Breeding Bird Project
NNR	National Nature Reserve
NR	Nature Reserve
RBBP	Rare Birds Breeding Panel
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SBOG	Shropshire Barn Owl Group
SRSB	Shropshire Raven Study Group
SVCP	Severn Valley County Park
SOS	Shropshire Ornithological Society
VP	Venus Pool
WeBS	Wetland Bird Survey

## **2007 – Review of the Year**

A total of 189 species (including escapes/feral residents) were recorded in Shropshire during 2007. There was a single addition to the County list, the black-throated thrush at Walcot (see Finders Account). A summary of the weather and species recorded during each quarter are provided below.

### **January – March**

January was very mild, except for one colder interlude around 22nd to 26th. Rainfall was above average for the month, despite a fairly dry last week to the month. There were widespread strong winds on 11th and 18th. February was also mild although unsettled, with a dry and fine start to the month. Significant and widespread snow occurred on 8th and 9th. March was generally sunny, with slightly below average rainfall. A cold spell brought some snow in the middle of the month.

Gull enthusiasts were kept entertained during this period with a series of rare gulls present within the County. The year started with a Caspian gull at Granville Landfill Site from the 6 Jan and up to six yellow-legged gulls at the same site. This was followed by a Mediterranean gull at The Mere, Ellesmere (13 Jan). Mediterranean gulls continued to be reported from The Mere irregularly throughout the quarter, with two records also from Trench Pool (12/13 Mar) and one record from Wall Farm

(17 Mar). A little gull was at Wood Lane for a single day (30 Jan) and an adult of this species was also at The Mere for around a week at the end of March.

A female common scoter was present at Crose Mere (7 Jan), lone scaup were at White Mere (21 Jan), Cole Mere (10 Feb) and Fenemere (16 Mar). A knot was present at Wood Lane for around a week at the end of January. Black redstart were reported from Shrewsbury Town Centre (6 Feb) and Heritage Park (20 Feb). The first noteworthy summer migrants arrived in the form of an osprey at Arlebury (13 Mar) and a ring ouzel at Brown Clee (16 Mar).

## **April – June**

Across England, April mean temperatures were the warmest on record since 1914, with well above average sunshine. The month was also very dry. In contrast, May was very wet, although temperatures remained above average. Unsettled weather dominated the mid-month, with a succession of Atlantic lows and frontal systems tracking east across the British Isles. June started warm and sunny with high pressure dominating, but became increasingly unsettled after 13th as a low pressure system moved in. Heavy rain led to widespread flooding at the end of the month

Ring ouzel were present at a number of upland sites at the beginning of April, although these did not claim the billing of star thrush within the County, this went to a black-throated thrush at Walcot briefly on 8 Apr. Grasshopper warbler were near Priorslee Lake (18Apr), at VP (24 Apr) and at Henley Common (27 Apr). A bar-tailed godwit was a Chelmarsh Reservoir scrape for around a week from 30 Apr, a trip of five dotterel made a welcome refuelling stop on northerly migration at the Long Mynd for four days from 1 May. A drake garganey was present at VP at the beginning of May and a marsh harrier was at Whixall Moss (5 May). VP hosted a trio of much sought-after terns, albeit briefly, in the form of a sandwich tern (6 May), little tern (11 May) and a black tern (8 Jun). Three sanderling were also at VP (14 May). Two hoopoe were reported with birds at Tetchill Moor (Jun, exact date unknown) and Bishop's Castle (10 Jun). A quail was at Ercall Heath (29 Jun). Nightjar and honey buzzard were reported from typical sites during June.

## **July – September**

July was unsettled throughout with a notable rainfall event on 20th. The first three weeks of August were very unsettles, including some long periods of rain. High pressure dominated the last week of the month, producing generally dry conditions. The three weeks of September were fine and dry, although a weak front moved west

between 1st and 3rd that produced some drizzle. It became more unsettled later, with rain at times and turned colder with below average temperatures at the end of the month.

Quail were reported from Childs Ercall and Tibberton at the beginning of July. Common tern were logged at various water bodies during this period with Arctic tern at VP (20 Jul, 12 Sept and 25 Sept). A woodchat shrike was present at Catherton Common for two days (28/29 Jul) which would surely have been star bird of year had it not been for the aforementioned black-throated thrush. Little stint were logged at Whixall canal floods (6 Aug) and VP (7 Sept). Whixall canal floods also hosted a garganey (14/15 Aug). A grasshopper warbler was present at Hawkstone Park (11 Aug). Knot were logged at ASF (19 Aug) and VP (21 Sept) and finally a pectoral sandpiper was at VP (12 Sept)

### **October – December**

High pressure dominated throughout October, producing generally settled conditions. This high pressure continued in November for the first two weeks. However, later in the month it slowly became more unsettled bringing some locally heavy rain at times. December was generally wet and windy. The month started very unsettled, with a constant stream of depressions and associated frontal systems coming across the Atlantic into north-west Europe. A brief lull occurred in the middle of the month, when high pressure became established, before giving way to low pressure from the 22nd.

Firecrest were trapped and rung at Hawkstone Park (20 Oct) and at Shavington Big Pool (24 Nov). A Cetti's warbler was found at Monkmoor Pool (29 Oct). Snow bunting flew over Wild Moor (2 Nov) with another bird at the Stiperstones (4 Nov). Great grey shrike were at Black hill (1 Nov) and The Rock (9 Nov). Ring-necked duck were reported from Monkmoor Pool (1 Dec), VP (16 Dec) and ASF (27 Dec), all of which probably related to the same bird. Up to six scaup were present at Cole Mere towards the end of December. An adult ring-billed gull was present at The Mere (28 Dec). There were reports of long-eared owls from two different sites on the same day (29 Dec), and two reports of a short-eared owl during November.

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## The Systematic List

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### MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common resident.

BBS: Present in 8% of plots, 21 birds recorded, an average of 4.2 per plot.

Conservation Status: Green List

Well reported this year as this was the start of surveying for the new Breeding Bird Atlas. Records were received from 138 sites, this compares well with the 157 sites recorded over the five years survey period of the previous Breeding Bird Atlas. As expected, the majority of records came from the preferred habitat in the north of the County. Only 20 sites were in the south, the same number as the Breeding Bird Atlas, 10 of which were along the River Severn. Observer coverage may also account, at least partially, for the distribution of records within the County.

Flocks in excess of 20 were recorded in January at Cound (42 on 12th) and Ponthen (37 on 21st), in February at Cae Howel (20 on 18th), (37 on 19th) and Tern Hill (25 on 19th). The largest gathering of the year occurred in March at Coundlane (74 on 12th), with other flocks at ASF (20 on 25th), Meverley (20 on 25th) and Babbinswood (21 on 18th). The largest count early in the year in the south was a meagre nine on the River Severn at Bridgnorth on 12 Apr.

Breeding was confirmed this year at 25 sites, which supported 31 pairs producing 119 cygnets from 25 successful broods.

Three pairs nested on the River Severn at Shrewsbury including a pair at the Welsh Bridge that were taken into care to Cuan House rescue centre, with their 10 eggs, on 14 May when the water level was rising around the nest. While in care they hatched seven cygnets. The family were released back at the nest site, when the waters subsided, three weeks later.

A pair nesting at the English Bridge was less fortunate. Floods washed away a nest with six eggs on 22 May. The final pair in the County town successfully raised eight cygnets from a nest near the Rea Brook.

In the south of the County four pairs were confirmed to have bred. Dudmaston supported two pairs with six cygnets and two cygnets, Chelmarsh held a pair with nine cygnets and Severn Valley Country Park held a pair with seven cygnets.

On 21 Jul a cob mute swan, ringed as an adult male on 9 Sept 2004 at Newport Canal where it also was paired and built a nest in 2005, was caught in a flock of 800 at Abbotsbury Swannery near Weymouth in Dorset, a distance of 236 kilometres.

A moulting flock gathered in June at The Mere, with 21 at the beginning of the month which increased to 34 on the 21st. Only 13 were recorded on 19 Jul with no count was received for August. In September there were 40 on 6th and 46 on 17th. The largest flock at The Mere this year occurred in October with 61 on the 8th.

It might be expected that there would be larger flocks at the end of the breeding season than the beginning of the year. This is not the case because although some pairs will chase their cygnets off as soon as they can fly in September, many allow them to stay at the breeding site until the beginning of the following year.

The largest flocks at the end of the year, other than the moulting flock at Ellesmere, was in the south of the County at Walcot Lake, Lydbury North where 56 were counted on 6 Dec and 42 three days later. While in the north there was only one other flock above 20, 24 at Coundlane on 30 Dec.

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## **WHOOPER SWAN** *Cygnus cygnus*

Shropshire Status: Annual winter visitor to the Severn/Vyrnwy confluence area, very scarce winter visitor elsewhere.

Conservation Status: Schedule 1, Amber List

Twenty records were received, all of which came from the Severn/Vyrnwy confluence which is the only regular wintering site in the County.

In January there were three at Cae Howel on the 17th and two at Ponthen on 21st, the last and highest count was of 11 at Crosslanes recorded during the WeBS on 18 Feb.

The first two birds to return for the winter were at Molverley Hall on 28 Oct. There were three at Molverley Green on 1 Nov and numbers built up gradually throughout the month until the maximum count of 23 was recorded on 28th at the same site, this being the final record of the year.

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**PINK-FOOTED GOOSE** *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Shropshire Status: Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Summer records may relate to feral/injured birds.

Conservation Status: Amber List

Two large flocks of wild birds were reported in late January, when 200 flew NW over Calverhall on 22nd and 200 were seen over Whixall a few days later on the 25th. These could have been the same birds but most large flocks are recorded in flight and are rarely known to stop over, large numbers on the Molverley floods last year being an exception. In late winter, movements between wintering sites around the Wash and Lancashire take place and skeins are often noted passing over the NE of the County.

A further 17 reports were received from six sites totalling just eight individuals. Two birds remained at VP from 28 to 31 Jan. In February a single was at Tern Hill on 3rd and another at Atcham Bridge from 7th to 17th. One at The Mere on 17 Mar completed the early winter season.

There were two summer sightings, one at Atcham on 12 May which may well have been the bird seen here during the winter and another at Middle Pool, Trench on 23 May. Towards the end of the year, singles were at Polemere on 4 Dec and at VP from 27 Dec to the end of the year.

The national wintering population of this species has risen steadily since the late 1980s. This has been reflected in the numbers seen passing over the County in recent years. This could be due to an increase in observers however, as flocks tend to cut across the NE without stopping many may have previously gone unnoticed.

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**GREYLAG GOOSE** *Anser anser*

Shropshire Status: Nominate form a fairly common naturalised resident. Wild birds from the Icelandic population may also occur.

BBS: Present in 3% of plots, 7 birds recorded, an average of 3.5 per plot.

Conservation Status: Amber List (nominate)

A total of 335 records, from 41 sites was received. Birds were mainly recorded from the north and east where most suitable habitat is located. No significant flocks were

noted in the early part of the year at sites other than those included in the below table.

The only breeding records came from Dudmaston where one was paired with a snow goose on 16 Mar and another was noted on a nest on 29 Apr.

Birds gathered at The Mere, in June with 220 present on 21st before relocating to Wood Lane. 215 at Tittenley Pool on 16 Dec probably explain the nil WeBS return from nearby Shavington Big Pool noted in the below table. The below table provides a summary of the monthly maxima at selected key sites within the County.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dudmaston	40	25	33	21	9	59	70	104	-	2	-	60
Polemere	-	150	-	-	-	-	-	200	-	50	220	250
Shavington Big Pool	150	160	-	-	-	-	-	60	80	3	97	-
VP	150	45	4	5	-	-	-	267	130	-	120	206
Wood Lane	-	38	2	-	-	-	-	300	200	150	1	3

Apart from those listed above, only one other site approached three figures, numbers peaked at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 22 Sept with 99. Many may have been tempted to round up the total.

A bird with an orange neck collar thought to have the letters VNH was at Priorslee Flash on 4 Feb and the colour ringed bird with white C6X on the right leg noted in last year's report was at VP again on 14 Aug.

The national population continues to rise and large flocks are now more regularly encountered within the County compared to previous years. The largest flock reported in the SBR for 1997 was just 100.

## **CANADA GOOSE** *Branta canadensis*

Shropshire Status: Nominate form a common naturalised resident.

BBS: Present in 36% of plots, 99 birds recorded, an average of 4.7 per plot.

The below table provides a summary of the monthly maxima at selected key sites within the County.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Atcham Bridge	150	240	110	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	30	120
Chelmarsh	-	8	10	2	-	3	13	21	227	217	-	144
Cole Mere	2	15	7	-	-	-	-	-	349	150	82	2
Croze Mere	202	5	39	-	-	-	-	-	3	4	178	135
Dudmaston	48	195	41	28	8	32	45	226	-	309	-	145
The Mere	120	81	166	-	-	344	100	-	178	56	34	120
VP	180	13	44	3	11	4	12	42	39	12	260	220

Away from the above sites the largest flocks in the early year were 69 at Monkmoor on 17 Jan and 98 at Whixall Floods on 19 Feb. Although non-breeding flocks remained at the favoured sites, overall numbers recorded reduced as birds dispersed to smaller water bodies to breed.

Finding young goslings is the easiest way to confirm breeding; these were noted at 12 sites with an occupied nest and egg shells at two additional locations. Of these breeding records, ten were from large, well watched water bodies and only four were from smaller water bodies. Successful breeders often use the same site year after year, a nest at a small pool near Trefonen being in exactly the same spot for at least four years and probably longer. The most productive sites were Priorslee Flash with 41 adults and 26 young on 8 May and Middle Pool, Trench with 50 adults and 11 young on 23 May while 15 adults and 18 young were at Monkmoor Pool on 2 Jun.

Wood Lane continues to attract the largest concentrations in late summer, a thousand was estimated to be present from 28 Aug to 4 Sept. Significant counts from other sites were 217 Ossmere (7 Oct), 222 White Mere (8 Oct) and 420 Tittenley Pool (11 Nov).

The continued rise in the national population has slowed since 2000 but because of the mobile nature of flocks of this species and their habit of feeding on farmland away from the main WeBS sites, it is difficult to ascertain the local situation. Birds were widely recorded with over 600 records from 76 locations.

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### **BARNACLE GOOSE** *Branta leucopsis*

Shropshire Status: Very scarce naturalised resident. Occasional wild birds may occur rarely.

Conservation Status: Annex 1, Amber List

With the exception of a bird on the River Severn at Emstrey on 8 May, all the other

sightings were during the winter period. Despite this, all records are thought to relate to birds of feral origin.

In January three were at Crose Mere on 11th and 21st and in February what may have been the same birds were at Cottage Pool, Nibs Heath on 17th, Polemere on 25th and then at Cottage Pool again on 19 Mar. In the south of the County a single was present at Dudmaston on 11 Feb. Later in the year two were on the flooded fields at Whixall on 17 Sept and three were at The Mere on 27th. A single was also seen at the latter site on 2 Nov. Singles were also logged at Chetwynd Park on 4 Oct and Polemere on 6 Nov. The last sighting of the year involved a pair at VP on 27 Dec.

Barnacle geese tend to associate with flocks of Canada geese and can wander widely. The above may represent just three birds in the north of the County and a couple of singles in the south and east.

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### **EGYPTIAN GOOSE** *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

Shropshire Status: Rare naturalised winter visitor

One bird was noted at Polemere on 6 and 8 Oct and again on 9 and 26 Dec. This was the first sighting since 2001 when two were at Bicton Heath during April.

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### **SHELDUCK** *Tadorna tadorna*

Shropshire Status: Very scarce breeder, scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

Conservation Status: Amber List

A total of 309 records was received from 16 sites, recorded in all months of the year except October. Wood Lane is clearly a stronghold for this specie within the County; the count of 25 on 4 February was the highest of the year. The only other site showing a double figure count was Cole Mere with 16 birds present on 4 Feb. Monthly maximum counts at Wood Lane are presented in the below table.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
13	25	10	10	10	7	2	4	1	-	6	12

There were no confirmed reports of breeding although two pairs were observed disputing territory at ASF on 8 Apr and a juvenile was seen overflying VP on 22 Jul.

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**MANDARIN DUCK** *Aix galericulata*

Shropshire Status: Very scarce naturalised resident.

Sixty-one reports were received from 16 sites, including Dowles Brook in the Wyre Forest, Chelmarsh Reservoir, VP and several locations on the River Severn. Birds were recorded in all months of the year except July, August and October. The sole double figure count for the year was a record of ten birds at Highley on 9 Feb.

Pairs were reported from the River Onny on 18 Feb and Chelmarsh Reservoir on 19 May, although breeding was not confirmed at these sites. Elsewhere, two juveniles were reported from VP on 3 Sept and on 2 Jun, a female with seven newly fledged young was reported from the River Severn at Highley.

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**WIGEON** *Anas penelope*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common winter visitor and scarce passage migrant. Rare during breeding period.

Conservation Status: Amber List

A total of 256 records was received, originating from approximately 38 sites (excluding Atlas records). Monthly maxima from key sites within the County are included in the below table, there were no records from these locations during the months omitted.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
The Mere Ellesmere	150	254	30	-	-	8	-	55	55
Hayes Farm Alberbury	77	91	70	-	-	-	30	84	68
Whixall canal floods	34	98	30	-	-	-	-	27	-
Shavington Big Pool	-	55	2	1	40	50	50	58	24

In the early part of the year, there were only three reports of birds after the end of March with one particularly late individual reported on 10 May at Cranmere Bog. Unusually, 78 were recorded on the River Severn at Buildwas on 27 Jan.

The first returning birds were two at Wood Lane on 17 Aug and 40 at Shavington Big Pool on 18 Aug. In addition to the monthly maxima above, counts of in excess of 30 birds were logged at White Mere (30 on 2 Feb) and Wall Farm (30 on 1 Mar).

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**GADWALL** *Anas strepera*

Shropshire Status: Scarce resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Conservation Status: Amber List

Birds were recorded during all months of the year except July. In total, 135 records was received from 20 sites. Maximum counts from selected key sites for this species within the County are provided in the below table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Chelmarsh Reservoir	4	6	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
VP	1	-	-	6	1	10	-	1	-	2	3	10
Priorslee Lake	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	5
Dudmaston	5	4	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	1
Wood Lane	5	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-

In addition to the above, 11 birds were recorded at Ellerton on 11 Dec, this being the highest count of the year. Only Ellerton and VP saw counts in double figures.

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**TEAL** *Anas crecca*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor and very scarce breeder.

Conservation Status: Amber List

This species is well reported, with 544 records from over 80 sites. Recorded in all months of the year except July. The highest recorded count of 320 birds occurred at Wall Farm, Cherrington Moor on 8 Jan.

Monthly maxima from selected key sites for this species within the County are included in the below table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
ASF	-	-	23	10	-	-	-	70	44	-	130	35
Shavington Big Pool	-	35	-	-	-			-	-	50	58	24
Venus Pool	27	36	16	14	-	4	-	6	6	7	15	36
Wood Lane	56	24	24	16	-	-	-	30	27	23	24	28
Whixall canal floods	93	106	100	-	-	-	-	50	37	-	37	-

In addition to the sites mentioned in the table above, other notable double figure counts were received from Betton Wood (32 on 27 Mar), Cloverley Pool (22 on 24 Jan), Polemere (32 on 27 Feb), Upper Brompton, River Severn (50 on 2 Feb) and Whixall Moss (48 on 10 Dec).

Reports from the breeding season (12 Apr to 31 Jul), were received from Hayes Farm, Alberbury (17 on 15 Apr), Chelmarsh Reservoir (2 on 6 May), Wood Lane (2 on 24 Apr) and VP (14 on 14 Apr).

No breeding was confirmed for 2007; although in the recent past breeding was confirmed at Whixall Moss in 2003 and 2004.

### **MALLARD** *Anas platyrhynchos*

Shropshire Status: Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

BBS: Present in 59% of plots, 198 birds recorded, an average of 5.7 per plot.

Conservation Status: Green List

Very well recorded with almost 1,400 reports from sites throughout the County. Maximum counts from selected key sites for this species within the County are provided in the below table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Priorslee Lake	36	44	6	14	29	-	-	-	56	44	38	27
The Mere, Ellesmere	100	57	48	-	-	14	80	-	107	-	20	63
Chetwynd Park	19	12	4	12	-	-	-	-	20	18	44	46
Shavington Big Pool	-	100	-	-	-	-	-	150	70	420	380	68
Whixall canal floods	202	125	62	-	-	-	-	91	37		334	

In addition to the above, three figure counts were received from a further ten sites including 280 birds at ASF on 31 Aug and the highest count of the year of 423 at Buttery Farm reservoir on 18 Oct.

Breeding was recorded from a number of sites, including reports of young from ASF, Chelmarsh Reservoir, Dudmaston, Monkmoor Pool and Priorslee Lake.

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**PINTAIL** *Anas acuta*

Shropshire Status: Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

Conservation Status: Amber List

A total of 104 records was received this year from 16 sites. Reported most regularly from VP, where birds were present throughout the first winter period.

The maximum count of 100 was reported from Whixall Moss on 19 Feb. Double figure counts were also received from Hayes Farm, Alberbury, with 38 birds on 21 Jan and 39 on 9 Dec. The Mere held 96 birds on 27 Jan and 93 were reported from Whixall canal floods on 19 Feb.

The last record from the first winter period was for ten birds on The Mere on 21 Mar. The first returning bird was a single on the Whixall canal flood on 26 Aug.

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**GARGANEY** *Anas querquedula*

Shropshire Status: Very scarce passage migrant

Conservation Status: Schedule 1, Amber List

This species has been recorded annually in the County since 1989. Reports for this year were limited to three sites: ASF, VP and Whixall canal floods.

All records were of single birds. At VP, a drake to up temporary residence from 2 May to 10 May. A single was present at Whixall canal floods on 14 Aug (PR) which stayed for two days, and the final record of the year was of an eclipse drake at ASF on 1 Sept (AL).

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**SHOVELER** *Anas clypeata*

Shropshire Status: Very scarce breeder, fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor

Conservation Status: Amber List

Well recorded throughout the County with more than 300 records submitted from over 40 sites. The table below outlines the monthly maxima from selected key sites within the County, no records occurred during the months omitted from this table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
VP	3	5	6	8	7	12	18	18	41
Chetwynd Park	105	90	25	-	-	22	33	2	5
Shavington Big Pool	-	8	22	-	11	16	27	72	6
Whixall canal floods	79	99	130	-	1	23	-	12	5

Birds were recorded during all months of the year except July with a maximum count of 130 on Whixall canal floods on 19 Mar. Double figure counts were also received from ASF (23 on 1 Nov), Brown Moss ( 28 on 11 Dec) and Monkmoor Pool (12 on 21 Mar).

A pair was reported nest building at VP on 14 Mar but young were not subsequently seen. On Whixall canal floods, however, a female with a very young brood was reported on 12 Aug.

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**POCHARD** *Aythya farina*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common winter visitor and very scarce in summer; previously bred.

Conservation Status: Amber List

A total of 280 reports was received from over 20 sites. Whilst records were received from all months of the year except June, only VP saw regular reports of this species in April and May. Elsewhere, the species was well recorded in the first and second winter periods with 59 birds at Priorslee Flash on 10 Jan the highest count for the

year. Priorslee Flash also held the highest count for the second winter period with 27 birds on 3 Dec. Maximum counts from selected key sites within the County are provided below.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monkmoor Pool	14	8	5	-	-	-	-	-		6	5	23
Venus Pool	7	30	25	3	3	-	2	-	-	2	8	6
Shavington Big Pool	-	15	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	7	1
Priorslee Lake	30	30	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	20	20
Priorslee Flash	59	28	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	27

The last report of breeding was a pair at VP in 1995. A pair was seen briefly at this site between 2 May and 7 May, although no evidence of breeding was observed.

**RING-NECKED DUCK** *Aythya collaris*

Shropshire Status: Very rare vagrant

A female was found at Monkmoor Pool on 1 Dec (GJW).

It remained in the area, mainly at this site, until 27 Mar 2008. However, in the year under review, it was also seen at VP on 16 Dec and ASF on 23 and 27 Dec.

This well watched, and photographed, bird was appreciated by many observers after a blank year in 2006. The previous record, also a female, was at VP in April 2005. Before that records in 2001 and 2002 followed a gap going back to 1995. Although being found more frequently, this species seems likely to remain less than annual.

**TUFTED DUCK** *Aythya fuligula*

Shropshire Status: Scarce breeder and fairly common winter visitor.

BBS: Present in 7% of plots, 13 birds recorded, an average of 3.2 per plot.

Conservation Status: Green

Well reported, with a total of 309 records received from over 60 sites. Recorded

throughout the year with the maximum count of 200 at Chelmarsh reservoir on 10 Nov. There was a total of 11 triple figure counts, ten of which were from Chelmarsh. The sole other record of greater than one hundred birds came from Dudmaston, and is likely to relate to the same birds which had relocated from Chelmarsh. Maximum counts from selected key sites within the County provided below.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Chelmarsh Reservoir	58	75	5	4	2	-	42	26	96	142	200	119
Colemere	22	6	52	-	-	-	-	-	3	46	10	20
Priorslee Lake	28	57	24	20	4	-	-	10	45	46	72	58
VP	18	40	35	20	14	16	12	7	6	27	23	40

Breeding was reported from ASF, which held several broods, Berrington Pool and Monkmoor Pool. A notable report was received from Ercall Heath of young fledged from a brood on a large garden pool.

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### SCAUP *Aythya marila*

Shropshire Status: Very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

Conservation Status: Schedule 1, UKBAP, Red List

Fifteen records were received from three sites, with ten of these reports received from Colemere with a maximum of seven birds present.

During the early winter period singles were reported from White Mere (probably a first winter male) (AL) on 21 Jan, Colemere (male) (AL) from 10-13 Feb and Fenemere on 16 Mar.

The only site to produce records during the late winter period was Colemere. A single female was found on 9 Dec (JA), which was also reported the following day. On 28 Dec this site held seven birds (DB); on 29 Dec six birds remained and constituted one adult male, one female and 4 juveniles. This flock stayed in residence for the remaining few days of the year.

These counts represent a small improvement compared to the numbers recorded in 2005 and 2006.

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**COMMON SCOTER** *Melanitta nigra*

Shropshire Status: Rare passage migrant and winter visitor

Conservation Status: Schedule 1, UKBAP, Red List

There were just two records for the year. Single female birds were reported by the same observer (AL) from Crose Mere on 7 Jan and The Mere, Ellesmere on 4 Apr.

This species appears in the County in small numbers in most years, with this year's two birds representing an average showing.

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**GOLDENEYE** *Bucephala clangula*

Shropshire Status: Scarce winter visitor

Conservation Status: Amber List, Schedule 1

A total of 172 records was received from 28 sites. As would be expected for this winter visitor, this species was absent from the County between May and September. The highest count for the year was a total of 36 birds at The Mere, Ellesmere on 30 Dec. Maximum counts from selected key sites within the County during the early and late winter periods are provided below. No records were received from these sites for the months omitted from this table

	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Mar</b>	<b>Apr</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>
The Mere, Ellesmere	32	21	32	20	-	14	36
Colemere	11	20	32	-	-	27	30
Dudmaston	6	8	6	-	-	-	9
White Mere	10	6	27	-	-	-	3

In addition to the above, double figure counts were also received from Crose Mere (12 on 21 Jan), White Mere (10 on 21 Jan and 27 on 3 Mar). Dudmaston held 12 birds as late as 2 Apr with The Mere, Ellesmere still hosting 20 birds on the same date.

The first returning bird was a single at Priorslee Lake on 20 Oct, comparing closely to the first returnee at the same site on 18 Oct 2006.

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**GOOSANDER** *Mergus merganser*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common winter visitor, passage migrant and scarce breeder.

Conservation Status: Green List

A total of 311 records was received from around 60 sites. Maximum counts from selected key sites within the County during the winter are provided below. There were no records from these sites during the months omitted from this table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Nov	Dec
Chelmarsh Reservoir	4	50	14	51	10	30
Priorslee Flash	41	8	12	3	15	24
Colemere	-	2	1	-	20	16
Dudmaston	6	10	-	-	-	28

Fourteen adults with ten ducklings were seen on the River Severn at Upper Brompton on 16 Apr. Two females, both with young were reported from the River Severn at Monkmoor on 23 May. A female with 10 young was also seen at Monkmoor on 10 June, a different brood from those recorded in May.

Breeding was not confirmed at any other sites. In common with 2006, Chelmarsh hosted the highest counts from both the early and late winter period. 51 birds at this site on 10 Apr was the highest count of the year.

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**RUDDY DUCK** *Oxyura jamaicensis*

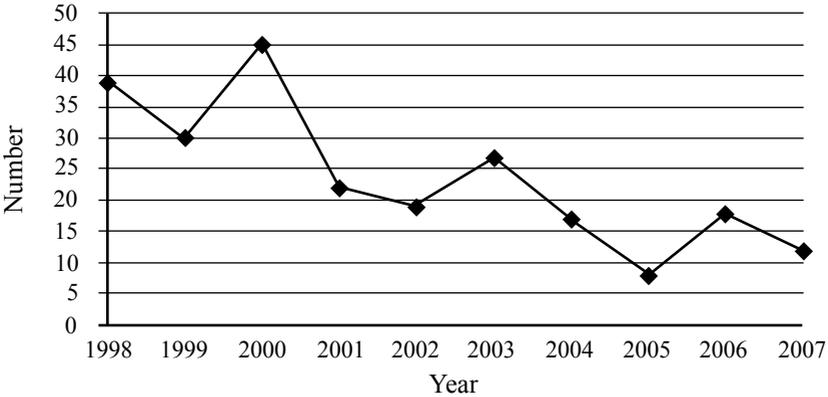
Shropshire Status: Scarce and declining naturalised resident. Currently the subject of an official national eradication programme.

A total of 175 records was received from 17 sites. The highest count for the year of 12 birds was recorded at Venus Pool on 19 Jun, the only site where a double-figure count was noted. Elsewhere, eight were recorded at Monkmoor Pool on 28 Sept.

Adults, together with juveniles from two broods, were recorded at VP on 4 Jul. In addition, a female with three young was reported at Monkmoor Pool on 27 Jun and two young were recorded at ASF on 4 Sept. No other breeding reports were received.

Numbers of this species within the County have diminished since the peak in the

late nineties and early part of the new millennium. This species will continue to decline within Shropshire as a consequence of the national cull ordered by the British Government in 2003 at the request of Spanish authorities. This cull aims to safeguard the white-headed duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*), with which ruddy duck cross-breed. The maximum single site counts over the last ten years are provided in the below graph.




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**RED GROUSE** *Lagopus lagopus scotica*

Shropshire Status: Scarce resident

Conservation Status: UKBAP, Amber List

This species survives in Shropshire on the Long Mynd and the Stiperstones ridge, but again no records were received from Brown Clee where the species bred in the last County Atlas period. Although observer coverage of this site is sparse, it would appear safe to assume that red grouse is now extinct, at least temporarily, from this site. Hopefully Atlas work may prove otherwise.

Both remaining moorland sites are managed with the isolated populations of red grouse in mind. The National Trust practice managed burns on the Long Mynd to provide a mosaic of young and old heather with shoots as feed for young chicks interspersed with denser areas for nesting and escape from predators.

The red grouse is extremely vulnerable in Shropshire, and an initiative to link the two remaining populations by establishing a habitat corridor, between the Long Mynd and Stiperstones would probably help to protect what is the southernmost natural English population of this species (those on Dartmoor and Exmoor are introduced).

Grouse are usually located by the calls of territorial males hence the majority of records are at times when the birds are most vocal – early winter (November and December especially) and again in early spring from March to May. Summer records are very scarce despite, or perhaps because of, the larger number of people visiting the moorlands in summer.

The annual winter dawn count on the Long Mynd recorded 23 calling males but estimated approximately 38 territories based on the coverage achieved, though some areas of the Mynd where birds are known to be present, including Round Hill and the north end of the Portway, were not counted.

Only eight of 39 records were received from the Stiperstones but this did include the only proven breeding record in 2007; a female with two half-grown young in June.

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### **RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE** *Alectoris rufa*

Shropshire Status: Common naturalised resident. Population supplemented by releases.

BBS: Present in 27% of plots, 48 birds recorded, an average of 3 per plot.

The vast majority of records of this species, 152 of 183 were Atlas records. This perhaps suggests that observers outside these prescribed surveys do not generally report its presence or that casual observer coverage of this species favoured habitats is low.

Of the 183 records in 2007 53% derive from the ‘SO’ Ordnance Survey grid squares which included the southern part of the County; the corresponding figures in 2006 were 106 and 51%. For a bird whose population is supported by releases for hunting, as with the common pheasant, the difference between the two is interesting. Common pheasant records derive almost 60% from SJ grid squares and fieldwork for the Atlas may show up the disparity between them.

The peak count during this year of 52 was logged during Atlas fieldwork and was from a tetrad to the west of Hope on 1 Dec. There were also 46 reported, again during Atlas fieldwork, from a tetrad to the east of Cleobury Mortimer on 23 Nov. Seven other reports of 20 or more were received between 7 Oct and the last day of the year, presumably birds put down for seasonal shoots.

There were no reports of breeding.

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## **GREY PARTRIDGE** *Perdix perdix*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common but declining resident. Population supplemented by releases.

BBS: Present in 3% of plots, 4 birds recorded, an average of 2 per plot.

Conservation Status: UKBAP, Red List

Of 32 records for the year at 23 sites, only two records of confirmed breeding were received, at The Rea, Upton Magna when three juveniles accompanied an adult pair in July, and at Cound on the late date of 6 Sept when a covey of 12 birds included ten juveniles.

Very few records were received early in the year. The first records were in February with single birds at Wroxeter, Waters Upton and Noneley. A single bird at The Rea, Upton Magna was the only March record and April sightings were again at The Rea, at Whitton Hall Farm, Northwood and Bomere Heath.

Between May and July small coveys were seen at just two sites, The Rea and Wood Lane. A single bird calling at Tibberton was the only record in August. The breeding record at Cound was the only September record but the start of the first winter Atlas period in November added a further 11 records in the last two months of the year including coveys of eight in the Hadnall area on 25 Nov and nine in the Oreton area on 29 Dec, though it is possible many of these winter records are of birds laid down by gamekeepers.

The grey partridge is experiencing a continuing catastrophic decline in the UK and many countries in Western Europe. Studies on the breeding performance have shown very poor productivity due to the lack of insect life in field margins for chicks as a result of extensive use of herbicides in the general countryside. Farmland across north and east Shropshire, former strongholds of the grey partridge, has experienced landscape scale changes in the character and especially the cropping regimes and types of crop grown. Mixed and rotational farming has declined with intensification of both arable cropping and grass ley production and the widespread use of chemicals to control weeds, fungal and insect pests. Entry and high-level stewardship schemes do not seem to have altered the fortunes of the Grey Partridge and perhaps other factors are adding to the continuing failure of the species to breed successfully.

Though the BBS survey only started in 1994, well after significant country-wide declines of grey partridge had been identified, the BBS data itself show a continuing fall in numbers in the County in the 13 years since. The table below shows a number

of statistics from the County BBS surveys for the species, which, while probably not allowing significant conclusions to be drawn, do strongly suggest the species is struggling to survive in the County and has been at a very low ebb since 1994. A low average of only 0.28 birds per plot was recorded in the first five years of BBS (1994-98). This recording rate fell even further to just 0.09 birds per plot in the five years from 2003-2007 despite wider coverage. Meanwhile, the number of plots recording Partridges remains in low single figures.

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
No. BBS squares surveyed	16	16	18	61	55	51	54	45	53	53	52	59	59
No. Grey Partridges seen	7	5	1	22	12	5	7	2	8	3	7	2	4
No. squares with Grey Partridges	2	3	1	10	5	2	4	1	4	2	4	1	2
Avg. No. birds per occupied plot	3.5	1.7	1.0	2.2	2.4	2.5	1.8	2.0	2.0	1.5	1.8	2.0	2.0
Avg. No. birds – all plots	0.44	0.31	0.06	0.36	0.22	0.99	0.13	0.04	0.15	0.06	0.14	0.04	0.07

Hopefully, the forthcoming Atlas results will show a wider spread of birds than this, but all the available information suggests that the grey partridge is likely to disappear from Shropshire very shortly.

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### QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*

Shropshire Status: Very scarce summer visitor in erratic numbers

Conservation Status: Schedule 1, Red List

A poor year with only three records, all by one observer (SJ). Suggestive of breeding was one heard from a hay field at Ercall Heath on 29 Jun and again on 27 Jul and 31 Jul. The other two records were of one heard near Childs Ercall in early July and another heard calling briefly from a barley field at Tibberton on 16 Jul.

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**PHEASANT** *Phasianus colchicus*

Shropshire Status: Abundant naturalised resident. Population supplemented by releases.

BBS: Present in 93% of plots, 317 birds recorded, an average of 5.8 per plot.

Of the 684 records received more than half (358) are derived from Atlas fieldwork, the methods for which demand reporting and counting every species. The resulting data, despite its volume, does little more than confirm that the species is generally widespread and may occur in large concentrations where released by shooting estates. The only instance of more than 100 this year was of (with admirable accuracy) 171 at Butter Cross on 28 Sept.

The only records of confirmed breeding were of three adults with three chicks in a garden in Church Stretton on 12 May and a group of 5 young birds at Upton Magna on 28 Sept.

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**CORMORANT** *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Shropshire Status: Nominate Atlantic form *carbo* ('Atlantic Cormorant') probably a scarce visitor. European and south-east British form *sinensis* ('Continental Cormorant') probably a fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor. Recorded in all months of the year.

BBS: Present in 5% of plots, 5 birds recorded.

Conservation Status: Green List

The total of 453 records emanating from as many as 60 sites, illustrating that this species can turn up almost anywhere offering the chance of fish to eat. Atlas records contributed 81 records to the total though they are not at the site level, only to tetrad.

The largest congregation of this species was reported from The Mere (23 in Nov and Dec), with a very similar peak of 22 at VP in September. Overall the results are similar to those of the previous year. The below table provides a summary of the monthly maxima at selected key sites within the County.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Chelmarsh Reservoir	-	11	-	4	-	2	1	1	4	8	4	6
Dudmaston	1	3	1	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	-	3
Monkmoor	3	4	4	3	1	1	1	-	2	3	-	4
Priorslee Lake	16	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	2	-	-
The Mere, Ellesmere	13	21	5	-	-	2	-	-	18	10	23	23
VP	1	1	1	2	2	5	14	19	22	9	7	2
Wood Lane	3	3	3	2	-	-	-	1	2	1	4	3

Most records come from north of the River Severn (with a few on the river itself) or to the north or east of it, the exceptions being three at Bromfield (7 Jan and 30 Dec), one over Kempton (25 Mar) and at Walcot (four on 6 Dec eight on 7 Dec).

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### **LITTLE EGRET** *Egretta garzetta*

Shropshire Status: Very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

Conservation Status: Annex 1, Amber List

Perhaps surprisingly, records were down by a quarter on the previous year, from 56 to 42, half of which emanated from VP with all reports relating to single birds. While this species is now firmly established in the country as a breeding bird, there is as yet no suggestion of it doing so within Shropshire.

Records are clustered and ascribed to an estimated ten individuals. In January, records were received from Hayes Farm on the River Severn confluence on 17th, at VP on 26th and at Whitchurch on 30th. During February, one was further south at Stokesay on 1st and 2nd and at Chelmarsh on 6th. In April, one was recorded on five dates between 25th and 30th VP.

After another gap the Shrewsbury area appears to have hosted one first on the Severn at Monkmoor on 10 Jun, VP on 13 to Atcham Bridge on five dates between 15th and 29th and back to VP on 30th. Presumably the same bird was recorded from VP into July on nine dates until 22nd and the same, or another in August on five dates between 18th and 31st. Meanwhile, in the north one was at Ellesmere on 10 Aug and on the same day (and the 12th) one was at Priorslee Lake.

At the end of the year records were from received from Allscott (5 Nov), Candy

Valley (21 Dec), Cound (22 Dec) and finally Hopesay (4 & 30 Dec), with presumably the same individual on to the Teme near Lingen on the latter date.

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**GREAT WHITE EGRET** *Ardea alba*

Shropshire Status: Very rare vagrant.

One was present at Guilden Down, Clun on 3 Nov (FG).

A ‘white’ heron had been reported to the landowner who, with his wife, relocated the bird feeding in a forage crop. Its large size and yellow bill were obvious and after a short time it flew past them at a range of about 20 feet. Unfortunately, it was not seen again. The observer contacted the warden at Lake Vyrnwy RSPB who forwarded details to the County Recorder.

This is the second Shropshire record; the first was at Wood Lane on 25 Jul 1995. However, increasing numbers are being seen in the UK and it might not be such a long wait for the next.

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**GREY HERON** *Ardea cinerea*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

BBS: Present in 31% of plots, 21 birds recorded, an average of 1.2 per plot.

Conservation Status: Green List

Reports of breeding were received from two locations, Ellesmere and Halston Hall, approximately four miles distant. At The Mere seven nests were being attended on 2 Feb, 4 birds were sitting among a total of ten nests on 3 Mar and on 4 May 18 nests were occupied; whereas 25 were occupied on 4 Apr the previous year. At Halston Hall there were an estimated 21 occupied nests on 21 Apr; there were 16 on 17 Apr 2006. The below table provides details of the number of records received by month.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
25	30	34	39	31	17	28	33	49	32	33	38

There was only one double-figure count away from breeding sites, ten at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 5 Jul. At Tibberton a few days later, on 18th, “A loose flock [of eight] flew over calling, disturbed by an approaching thunder storm”.

The vast majority of records related to one to four birds, representing 90.0% of records where numbers were provided away from breeding sites. Eight records in excess of four were received. Eight at Tibberton (outlined above), seven twice (7 and 22 Jul) and six on three occasions (May, Jun and Jul) at Chelmarsh. Finally, six birds were recorded at Shrewsbury Sewage Farm (14 Jan) and Wall Farm (8 Jan).

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**LITTLE GREBE** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common resident and winter visitor.

BBS: Present in 2% of 59 plots, 1 record

Conservation Status: Amber List

Of 366 records received, 38 derived from Atlas fieldwork and are accurate only to tetrad level (four square kilometres). BirdTrack records are likewise limited only to tetrad.

Of the 34 named localities where this species was recorded, only seven have conservation designations. This species therefore appears relatively independent of such sites. Monkmoor produced the most records (42), of up to seven birds (a pair with five young) on 18 Jun. This site held two pairs, one on the large and one on the small lagoon, both of which bred. Severn Valley Country Park produced the next highest count of 28 records where the single pair was present with their second brood on 18 Sept. ASF produced 18 records with apparently three pairs, two of which produced young. Castlefields and Polemere provided ten records each; a single young bird was recorded at the latter site on 6 Sept. The only other sites with breeding records were a pool adjacent to Sweeney Fen on 21 May (adult with 2 young) and VP where not until 4 July was breeding confirmed by a sitting bird culminating in two successful breeding attempts by a single pair.

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**GREAT CRESTED GREBE** *Podiceps cristatus*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common resident and winter visitor.

BBS: Present in 3% of 59 plots, 2 birds recorded

Conservation Status: Green List

A total of 462 records was received from 28 named sites, with an additional 33 records from the Atlas scheme known only to the tetrad. Maximum counts remain

low (as last year) with a County maximum of 32 at The Mere on 30 Dec. Some sites peak in the breeding season, some during the winter and only three (Chelmarsh Reservoir, Cound Fishery and The Mere) have maxima into double figures. The below table provides a summary of the monthly maxima at selected key sites within the County.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Chelmarsh Reservoir	7	13	10	13	12	11	14	6	5	11	7	6
Cound Fishery	2	6	10	-	6	-	-	5	3	5	1	-
Oss Mere	-	-	6	2	4	2	4	7	5	4	4	3
Priorslee Flash	9	4	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	3	4	-
Priorslee Lake	3	4	1	4	6	-	2	2	4	5	4	1
The Mere, Ellesmere	1	1	2	-	1	9	-	-	8	-	18	32
VP	2	3	4	2	3	3	4	7	5	4	4	3

Breeding was recorded from seven sites: Cound Fishery (one pair raising one youngster), Dudmaston (one raising one), Monkmoor Pool (one, no report of success), Priorslee Flash (one, perhaps two, raising one), Priorslee Lake (one raising one or two), VP (one raising one) and Wood Lane (one probably raising two).

Most records came from still waters with the exception of a two on the River Severn near Monkmoor on 15 May, and further downstream a single immature bird near Chelmarsh on 14 and 16 Jul. There were no records from south Shropshire, within SO grid squares, that is Shropshire south of Dorrington and west Chelmarsh.

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### **HONEY-BUZZARD** *Pernis apivorus*

Shropshire Status: Rare summer visitor and passage migrant

Conservation Status: Schedule 1, Annex 1, Amber List

A male honey buzzard that has been present within the County annually for several years appeared once again during May, and proceeded to build a nest at a favoured location. This bird was observed displaying regularly throughout the spring. In July he was recorded in a different area and the original nest had become decrepit. At no time was a female seen and there was no evidence of breeding.

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**RED KITE** *Milvus milvus*

Shropshire Status: Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Recently established breeder.

Conservation Status: Schedule 1, Annex 1, Amber List

Following the first successful breeding in the County last year, the number of records received has increased substantially as the number and range of the Welsh population has grown rapidly, and expanded to this side of the border.

A total of 175 records was received from 80 different locations, more than double the number of records in 2006 (80 records from 57 different locations) and considerably more than the 44 records from 38 locations in 2005, and 57 records from 36 locations (including several of a summering bird at each of two locations) in 2004. The 2004 total was itself more than twice the number of records and locations as recently as 2000. Some of the increase was due to Bird Atlas work, which started in November 2007, and produced 22 of the records.

Most of the records continued to come from the south-west of the Shropshire. However, 19 records were from the northern half of the County, with three from the south-east, reflecting the continued spread of the species from the south-west Shropshire hills.

There were four records of more than two birds together (max 5 near Knighton on 24 Mar), and 16 of two birds. Only four of these appeared to relate to known nesting pairs, reflecting the increasing tendency for two young non-breeding birds to be seen together, perhaps in the early stages of pair formation.

Kites have been wing-tagged at the nest on behalf of the Welsh Kite Trust, and at all the release sites in England and Scotland, for several years. The tags are different on each wing, but all the information can be gained from only one tag if the colour of the letters and of the background, and, importantly, the colour of the horizontal bar at the bottom of the tag, which identifies the area of origin or the year, are noted, as well as which wing the tag is on. There were two reports of read tags in 2007:-

One of the two young tagged in the first recently-known successful nest in 2006 was observed near the top of the hill south-east of Stoney Pound in the Clun Uplands on 27 Mar 2007.

An adult was photographed on 4 Nov, one mile north of Clun over the A489 road, and the tag was readable in the photo. Its natal site was near Devils Bridge, and the

bird was the younger of two in the nest, tagged on 8 Jun 2004. Last year it nested north of Llangollen in Denbighshire, but failed. It has been seen at Gigrin since then, but was not found at a nest this year.

Another three reports noted the presence of wing tags, but none of these were read.

The Welsh Kite Trust has been searching for nests in the County since 2003, monitoring the expansion of the breeding population on this side of the border. Their publicity produced many additional reports to the Trust, including a few of two birds together. These records were mainly from the south-west Shropshire hills, but several were from further afield.

Six nests were found by the Trust, all in the south-west Shropshire hills, in 10-kilometre squares SO27, SO28 (2), SO37, SO39 and SO48. Three were successful, producing five fledged young. Three of the five young were tagged in the nest. The adult male at one of the nests, near Craven Arms, was already tagged – he came from a site just over the border in Herefordshire, and fledged in 2005. Two other birds at nest sites also had tags: both were males, one red tag (2003) and the other orange (2005), but both nests failed before the tags could be read.

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**MARSH HARRIER** *Circus aeruginosus*

Shropshire Status: Rare passage migrant

Conservation Status: Schedule 1, Amber List

Only one record was received, of a female at Whixall Moss on 5 May (PR).

Marsh harrier has been seen in Shropshire during every year since 2000.

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**HEN HARRIER** *Circus cyaneus*

Shropshire Status: Very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

Conservation Status: Schedule 1, Annex 1, Red List

Sixteen records were received, all of which related to wintering or passage birds, and almost all from the Long Mynd.

Seven records were received between 5 Feb and 1 May. All records related to single males and it is considered likely that all related to the same bird. Six of these records

originated from the Long Mynd, with a single record from Clunbury Hill on 19 Apr.

The first record from the late winter period occurred on 15 Oct, when a female was present on the Long Mynd. This, or another, female was reported on three further occasions before the end of the year. A male was also reported at this location on 5 Nov, 6 Dec and 23 Dec. The final report from this location during 2007 was of an unsexed bird on 31 Dec.

The only report in this period from elsewhere was a male just north of Little Ness on the minor road to Ruyton-XI-Towns on 8 Nov.

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**GOSHAWK** *Accipiter gentilis*

Shropshire Status: Scarce resident

Conservation Status: Schedule 1, Green List

Thirty-seven casual records were received for this species, which was recorded during all months of the year with the exception of October. As with most previous years, the majority of records were received from the south of the County during the breeding season.

Nineteen sites were surveyed on Forestry Commission land during 2007. Of these sites, nine were occupied of which seven were successful. The two sites that failed were both recorded as being disturbed prior to egg-laying. The seven successful sites fledged a total of 14 juveniles.

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**SPARROWHAWK** *Accipiter nisus*

Shropshire Status: Common resident

BBS: Present in 8% of plots, 5 birds recorded.

Conservation Status: Green List

A total of 379 casual records from 208 widely distributed sites. Of these 379 records, 109 are from the national Atlas scheme.

Typically for this species, a number of records relate to birds in observers' gardens. The sole record of a successful foray related to an immature male that caught a house sparrow in a private garden at Edgmond Marsh on 27 Jan.

One bird was ringed at The Rea, Upton Magna and was subsequently found injured at Atcham possible due to a gunshot injury.

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**BUZZARD** *Buteo buteo*

Shropshire Status: Common resident

BBS: Present in 75% of plots, 94 birds recorded, an average of 2.1 per plot.

Conservation Status: Green List

It is fitting that the species at the centre of the Society's logo is one of the best recorded in terms of both the number of sightings and locations. However, it is becoming increasingly difficult to make detailed comparisons with previous years. An increasing number of observers are submitting their records via Birdtrack, in the knowledge that they are also supplied to the County Bird Recorder by the BTO. Also, observers have been engaged in fieldwork for the Bird Atlas from 1 Nov, and again the records are also supplied to the Recorder. The number of records has therefore been boosted substantially - 355 Birdtrack Records from 102 sites, and 572 Atlas records from 361 different tetrads, were received.

There were eight records of ten or more birds together, from (in descending order) Lower Edenhope (20 on 7 Ma), Millichope Park (19 on 3 Mar), Stiperstones (15 on 24 Mar), VP (14 on 28 Mar), Honeysuckle Row, Shrewsbury (11 - two family groups of six and five birds circling over the house on 9 Sept), Merry Hill (ten on 18 January), Bury Ditches (ten on 25 Mar), and The Rea, Upton Magna (ten on 28 Aug). There were a total of 168 records of more than two birds.

Double-figure Atlas counts included 12 in a two hour Timed Tetrad Visit in SO57E (north of Ludlow) on 29 Nov, and 11 were counted in one hour in SO28N (near Mainstone) on 14 Nov and in SO79Y (Chesterton) on 13 Nov. Counts of 10 in SO37G (Weston) on 4 Nov, and in SO37H (north of Weston) on 14 Nov, were submitted as Atlas Roving Records.

Excluding Atlas records, there were 835 records from 251 sites. Of these, 355 records from 102 different sites were via Birdtrack. Out of a total of 835 records, 674 (80.7%) came from 175 different sites in the northern half of the County, with 194 records from 60 sites from the north-west quadrant and 480 records from 115 sites in the north-east quadrant. Seventy-seven records came from 40 sites in the south-west, and 84 records from 36 sites in the south-east.

Breeding season records (255) came from 119 sites. Buzzards are largely sedentary

and they almost certainly breed within a kilometre or two of everywhere they are recorded. However, behaviour was very poorly reported, and breeding was confirmed at only six sites.

Although the number of records, and sites, has increased, the pattern is the same as that found in each of the last three years. Although it tends to reflect the distribution of recorders, rather than birds, it does highlight the rapid spread of this species from their stronghold in the south-west Shropshire Hills to all parts of the County since the publication of *An Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Shropshire* in 1992. The distribution maps that will be produced as part of the new Atlas, will show the full extent of the expansion of range.

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**OSPREY** *Pandion haliaetus*

Shropshire Status: Very scarce passage migrant

Conservation Status: Schedule 1, Annex 1, Amber List

Osprey is currently a passage migrant in Shropshire, though the expanding population elsewhere in Britain opens the possibility of eventual breeding here.

Eight records were received (excluding duplicates). Five were from the spring passage period between 13 Mar, at Alberbury, and 14 May, at VP, with reports in between these dates at VP on 10 and 29 Apr, and at Brown Moss on 16 Apr.

In the autumn passage period, one bird was seen at Wood Lane on 18 Aug and another at VP on 20 Sept.

One outside the main passage periods was seen at Castlefields, Shrewsbury, on 27 Jun, which was probably an immature non-breeding bird, although it may perhaps have been a failed breeder, making an early start on its long journey south, probably to west Africa.

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**KESTREL** *Falco tinnunculus*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common resident and passage migrant

BBS: Present in 13% of plots, 12 birds recorded, an average of 1.1 per plot.

Conservation Status: Amber List

A total of 367 records from 119 different and widely scattered sites was received,

covering all months of the year. Of these, 281 records came from 88 sites in the northern half of the County, 53 from 25 sites in the north-west quadrant, and 228 records from 63 sites in the north-east quadrant; whilst only 17 records from 10 sites came from the south-west quadrant and 69 from 21 sites in the south-east. This pattern is the same as the last two years, suggesting that kestrels are much more common in the north-east than elsewhere.

There were only three sites with confirmed breeding. Many records were received from VP, the most significant being four chicks in the nest box on 1 Jun, and three fledged young out of the box but still in the trees around it, on 28 Jun. At Norton-in-Hales, near Market Drayton an adult plus three chicks were recorded on 2 Jun. Finally, at Monkmoor a pair was present on 10 Jul, one carrying a small animal which flew into trees, following which the male mobbed a buzzard.

Apart from the confirmed breeding, there was only one record of more than two birds – four were seen on The Lawley on 3 Aug, which may have been a family party. Although several observers reported the sex of the birds, few reported behaviour or other evidence of breeding.

In addition, there were counts of more than two during Atlas Timed Tetrad Visits in tetrad SJ32Y (near Haughton) - five birds, and in SJ42Z (near Loppington), SJ50M (Cound), SO29Y (Priest Weston) and SO78Y (Six Ashes) where three birds were recorded.

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**MERLIN** *Falco columbarius*

Shropshire Status: Very scarce resident, passage migrant and winter visitor

BBS: Present in 2% of plots, 1 bird recorded.

Conservation Status: Schedule 1, Annex 1, Amber List

In total, 32 records were received from 17 sites, compared with 21 records from 13 sites in 2006.

Bird Reports in previous years have commented on the scarcity of records from outside the breeding season, but 2006 and 2007 produced the opposite result. Reports have reflected an increasing tendency for merlin to remain on the breeding grounds all year, as prey species are also remaining in increasing numbers, presumably as a result of milder winters. This year there were five records from the Long Mynd outside the breeding season, the same as last year, on 3 Feb, 17 and 26 Mar, and 28 Oct and 11 Nov.

In the early part of the year, merlin were recorded at VP (12 Jan, 2 Mar and 25 Mar), Whitchurch (4 Feb), Linley (17 Feb), The Rea, Upton Magna (17 Feb), Clunton Coppice (3 Mar), Priorslee Lake (6 and 17 Mar) and Walcot (8 Apr).

Six breeding season records were received from the Long Mynd between 11 Apr and 14 May. The Long Mynd Breeding Bird Project found two nests, but both failed.

Two other breeding season records were received, from Battlefield Shrewsbury on 2 May, and Stapeley Hill on 17 Jun.

After the breeding season, merlin were seen at Whixall Moss (21 Oct), VP (17 and 22 Nov), Berwick Wharf (2 Nov), Monkmoor Pool (2 Dec), The Rea, Upton Magna (21 Dec), and, the last record for the year, at Wern Ddu, near Trefonen (23 Dec).

Merlin were also found during Bird Atlas work in November or December in tetrads SO28M (west of Bicton), SO37G (Weston) and SJ71C (Muxton).

The merlin population is increasing nationally, from a low point in the 1960s caused by the effects of organo-chlorine poisoning, doubling in the last 25 years.

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### **HOBBY** *Falco subbuteo*

Shropshire Status: Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant

Conservation Status: Schedule 1, Green List

The 60 records from 28 sites was considerably less than the 91 records from 29 sites in 2006.

The first sighting occurred on 22 Apr at VP. This species was seen here again on 25 and 29 Apr and 16 May. Also during April and May, three reports came from Whixall Moss (27 Apr, 5 May and 20 May), and two came from Long Mynd (1 May and 3 May). Single reports came from Crossgreen, Berwick (17 May), Monkmoor Pool (19 May), Bromfield (20 May) and Acton Scott (24 May).

Hobby usually lay eggs in early June, and young fledge in August. Thirty-seven records were received from this period, including four from VP, six from Whixall Moss and seven from Wood Lane. Only one other site produced more than two records - Woolston near Wistanstow (one bird on 8 Jul and on 1, 8, 25, 26 and 28 Aug). Together with two records from nearby Leamoor Common, this pattern suggests a nest with young nearby. All the breeding period records were of a single bird, apart from the two referred to below, and six seen at Whixall Moss on 12 Aug.

There were no records of confirmed breeding, although two juveniles seen amongst eight birds at Whixall Moss on 18 Aug may have fledged nearby. There was only one record of probable breeding – a pair near Uckington on 28 Jun.

In early September, late pairs may still be feeding dependent young, or even nestlings, but return passage is also underway. 11 records were received from this month (compared with 21 last year), mainly of single birds. These were from VP (four dates, the last being 24 Sept, with two birds on 23 Sept), ASF (9 Sept), Whitcott Keysett (11 Sept), Wrekin (three birds, all juveniles, hunting insects over the summit on 12 Sept), Maesbury Marsh (two adults and a juvenile hawking insects high over the canal on 13 Sept), Chirbury (three birds on 17 Sept) and Woolston near Wistanstow (17 Sept).

Hobby are one of the most elusive of our breeding raptors, due to their tendency to nest very late in scattered trees on arable farmland, a habitat infrequently visited by birdwatchers. Consequently, breeding is almost certainly under-recorded.

Hopefully the new Atlas, due to cover its first breeding season in 2008, will provide a clearer picture of the distribution and population of this graceful falcon.

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## **PEREGRINE FALCON** *Falco peregrinus*

Shropshire Status: Scarce resident, passage migrant and winter visitor

Conservation Status: Schedule 1, Annex 1, Amber List

A total of 131 records was received from 74 sites. Breeding was confirmed at six sites. Records were received during every month of the year, with November providing the most records (27). Whilst no new nest sites were discovered this year, the Shropshire Peregrine Group monitored 18 occupied nests from which 18 young fledged.

Interesting records involved a bird that mobbed a saker falcon (*Falco cherrug*) during a falconry display, a bird that caught a moorhen at VP, although dropped it and did not return and finally an adult that caught two young coot at VP.

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**WATER RAIL** *Rallus aquaticus*

Shropshire Status: Very scarce breeder and winter visitor

Conservation Status: Amber List

Following 95 record in 2005 and 154 in 2006 this year's total of 185 seems encouraging. However, with the level of observer coverage and reporting from Wood Lane (96 records) and VP (30 records) the new high is not surprising. Chelmarsh produced 18 records, Priorslee Lake 12 and Monkmoor Pool three, while the other ten sites contributed only one or two records each. The five sites producing three or more reports had conservation designations, revealing both their suitability for the species and the level of observation cover. Most records were of one or two birds but there were single records of three, at Wood Lane on 10 Feb and four at Chelmarsh on 22 Dec.

The lesser-known and less frequently visited sites were one near Worsley, All Stretton, when a small and unassuming pond turned up a single on 15 and 20 Feb. Other sites with single records were Alscott, Colemere (west of), Isle Pool Bicton, Market Drayton, Mirelake, Queen's Head Canal, Shavington Bog Pool and The Links at Hinstock. It is to be hoped that fieldwork for the forthcoming national and Shropshire Atlases will produce a clearer picture of the true distribution of this unobtrusive species. The below table presents the total number of water rail records received by month (from all sources) throughout 2007.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
27	36	18	-	-	-	-	2	3	8	34	54

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**MOORHEN** *Gallinula chloropus*

Shropshire Status: Common resident

BBS: Present in 22% of plots, 27 birds recorded, an average of 2.1 per plot.

Conservation Status: Green List

Of the 826 records received, 178 were from Atlas work and located only to the tetrad rather than the site; the remaining 648 records originated from 93 sites. The below table presents the monthly maxima at selected key sites for this species within the County.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
ASF	-	-	13	6	4	3	8	14	-	-	12	7
Chelmarsh Reservoir	3	4	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	5	12	-
Chelmarsh Scrape	-	3	5	5	6	3	6	14	4	10	5	3
Dudmaston	5	4	7	3	3	2	4	5	3	6	-	4
AGM	7	7	1	-	-	2	-	-	7	-	8	3
Monkmoor	5	2	7	6	11	8	9	12	9	8	7	7
Priorslee Lake	11	10	5	5	-	-	-	-	19	13	-	-
Highley/ Upper Arley	-	5	1	1	-	-	9	1	3	7	1	19
SVCP	-	11	8	5	6	4	3	6	6	6	6	8
VP	12	30	11	4	10	4	10	6	12	14	20+	11
Wood Lane	8	12	7	4	-	8	1	-	5	14	8	10

There appears to be no single trend in peak numbers among the above 11 sites other than that in August/September created by young of the year; otherwise peaks seem to be broadly during the winter period. More diligent recording of numbers of this common species by observers would produce an enhanced view of the trends suggested above.

The very close County peak counts were of 30 at VP (18 Feb), 29 on Whixall Moss (15 Aug) and 26 on Walcot Lake, Lydbury North on 6 Dec.

Breeding was reported from 11 sites. Sites reporting broods of young were ASF (one), Chelmarsh Scrape (one), Dothill Pools (three pairs), Middle Pool, Trench (one), Monkmoor (two or three), Newport Canal (one), Norbroom Marsh West (one), Priorslee Lake ('several'), SVCP (one), VP (up to four) and Wood Lane (one).

### **COOT** *Fulica atra*

Shropshire Status: Common resident and winter visitor

BBS: Present in 7% of plots, 9 birds recorded.

Conservation Status: Green List

Of 691 records received 81 were from the national Atlas scheme and available only to the tetrad level.

Similar in size to the moorhen but a more gregarious bird, numbers can build up dramatically, peaking this year in Shropshire at 664 (The Mere - 8 Oct). All nine counts greater than 210, ranging upwards to 410, come from The Mere. Priorslee Lake pulled in the next highest counts with 210 (30 Dec) and 19 other counts of 100 or more between 11 Oct and the end of the year. Chelmarsh Reservoir also produced numbers in the 100-200 range on 20 Jan, 8 Feb., 10 Feb and 21 Dec. The below table presents the monthly maxima at selected key sites for this species within the County.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
ASF	-	-	12	5	4	4	2	15	-	-	-	3
Chelmarsh Reservoir	101	168	24	6	4	-	42	74	63	61	69	129
Colemere	1	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	27	10	17	7
Cound Fishery	32	31	13	-	-	-	-	16	29	26	32	-
Dudmaston	5	14	11	9	10	17	13	22	14	19	-	13
The Mere	76	29	12	-	-	60	-	-	499	664	540	568
Priorslee Lake	55	53	17	18	22	146	-	-	146	174	200	210
SVCP	-	2	4	4	16	17	9	6	5	5	4	4
Trench Pool	87	33	-	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
VP	35	45	21	14	23	50	70	38	28	42	66	70

Breeding was confirmed from 14 sites as follows with the maximum number of broods noted at each; Aqualate Golf Course (one), Chelmarsh Scrape (one), Dothill Pools (three), Dudmaston (three), Middle Pool, Trench (two), Monkmoor Pool (three), Polemere (one), Pool Hall, Alveley (one), Priorslee Flash (three), Priorslee Lake (three), Severn Valley Country Park (four), Trench Pool (four), VP (seven) and Wood Lane (one).

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## **OYSTERCATCHER** *Haematopus ostralegus*

Shropshire Status: Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant. Rare in second winter period.

Conservation Status: Amber List

The last national BTO Atlas covering the years 1988-91 reported that the inland breeding habit of the oystercatcher was spreading southwards in the U.K. from Northern England and Scotland. This was reflected in Shropshire where breeding was confirmed, or regarded as probably occurring, in no fewer than nine tetrads

in the County in the first County Atlas project from 1985-1990. Since then, the oystercatcher has continued to breed in the County but still appears to be restricted to a small number of favoured sites.

Oystercatcher typically appears in Shropshire during January in small numbers, building up in February and March but generally disappearing in the autumn months after the breeding season. 2007 was no exception to this pattern.

No fewer than 332 of the total of 383 records reported in 2007 were from Wood Lane and VPs and a further 29 from three other sites, Whixall Canal floods, Chelmarsh and ASF. Perhaps this reflects the relative observer effort at sites, rather than the true overall distribution within the County.

A single bird was at Wood Lane on 7 Jan with two reported here on 9th and then up to six birds on 19 different dates until the end of February. A single bird at VP on 18 Jan was joined by a second on 3 Feb. Additional birds appeared at both sites from March with Wood Lane regularly recording up to six birds on many dates between March and July. The peak number of 11 occurred on 30 Mar with eight on 31 Mar, 22 Apr and 15 Jun. The last summer record here was of a single bird on 31 Jul.

At VP a similar pattern of observations in spring and summer occurred with a maximum of six birds. Two adults remained on the site until 4 Jul but this was the last observation here for the year.

Despite the daily presence of birds at Wood Lane from January to July, the only evidence of breeding was of a bird apparently sitting on a nest on 26 Apr. There was no confirmation of successful breeding at this site and indeed this was the single instance of breeding behaviour reported from Wood Lane.

In contrast, the fortunes of a breeding pair at VP read like a soap opera in the hide logs. A pair were established here in early February and showed territorial behaviour on 24 Feb driving off four other birds from the site. Mating was noted on 9 Mar and by 15 Mar the adult birds were sitting on their first clutch of eggs. Thereafter the breeding chronology of this pair read:-

- 22 Mar nest abandoned or predated
- 1 Apr pair mating
- 7 Apr a second pair were chased off the site by the resident pair
- 10 Apr sitting on nest (2nd attempt)
- 22 Apr sitting at new site on stump (3rd attempt)
- 25 Apr sitting on stump

15 May no longer sitting  
24 May pair sitting (considered the 4th attempt)  
9 Jun pair sitting  
11 Jun failed

No evidence for the cause of the repeated failures was reported.

It seems probable that a pair at Chelmarsh Scrape was successful. A pair was noted here on several dates in March, April and May with a possible sitting bird on 28 Apr. On 2 Jun a group of five birds included three immatures. Seven birds were at Chelmarsh on 7 Jul with the last birds of the summer at this site on 15 Jul.

The only other definite attempt to breed was at Bromfield (a bird sitting in May), though pairs were reported in suitable habitat on multiple dates at ASF, Whixall Canal Floods, the River Severn between Atcham and Wroxeter, and between Leighton and Buildwas. A series of records from arable habitat on Ercall Heath were received from March to June suggesting at least attempted breeding. Other pairs were seen on single dates in the breeding season at Ludlow Racecourse, Noneley, Isombridge and Devils Dingle.

Between the end of July and the end of the year only two records were received, with a single bird calling while flying south-west at Tibberton on 30 Sept and a bird at Wood Lane on Christmas Eve.

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### **LITTLE RINGED PLOVER** *Charadrius dubius*

Shropshire Status: Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant

Conservation Status: Schedule 1, Green List

A total of 198 records was received, from eight sites. The majority of records were from VP (95) and Wood Lane (69).

The average return date over the past ten years is 23 Mar and one arrived at Wood Lane right on schedule. The next day one was on the River Severn at Leighton and two were at VP the following day. First sightings at other locations in April were 9th at Bromfield, 10th at Chelmarsh and 16th at Polemere.

Birds were present throughout the breeding season at Bromfield, Chelmarsh, VP and Wood Lane with maxima of five, two, six and four respectively. The only breeding report was from VP. A magpie was seen by several observers to remove an egg

from a nest here on 11 May but despite this, a juvenile was later seen regularly and reported as fledged on 2 Jul. This was also the last sighting at this location.

The sole sighting at ASF was of two birds on 4 Jun. Passage birds were at Whixall canal floods from 5 to 18 Aug with a maximum of four on the 14th. At the other main sites it can be difficult to distinguish passage birds from those breeding. At Bromfield after three on 16 Jul there was a gap until four on 3 Sept and three on 6 Sept was the latest from this site. At Wood Lane the last breeding birds were noted on 22 Jun, after which a single from 12 to 14 Sept was the final bird of the year.

The BTO undertook a national survey of this species during 2007. Full details of this survey are provided within the Research Reports Section.

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**RINGED PLOVER** *Charadrius hiaticula*

Shropshire Status: Scarce passage migrant

Conservation Status: Amber List

Recorded at five sites (Chelmarsh, VP, Whixall Moss, Whixall canal floods and Wood Lane), relating to a maximum of 16 individual birds. The maximum count occurred at Whixall canal floods on 14 Aug when eight were present (AL).

Typically, fewer records from the spring migration period with four reports relating to a maximum of four birds. All records for this period were between 8 and 25 Apr. The autumn migration of this species through Shropshire commenced on 12 Aug, when two were present at Whixall canal floods, where the maximum of eight was present two days later. The final birds of the year were logged on Sept 29 at Chelmarsh when two were present, one of which was juvenile.

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**DOTTEREL** *Charadrius morinellus*

Shropshire Status: Rare passage migrant

Conservation Status: Schedule 1, Annex 1, Amber List

A party of five were seen on the Long Mynd on 1 and 2 May (DB).

The finder had been visiting the Long Mynd for a couple of weeks in search of this species so his efforts were rewarded when these birds were found near the gliding station. However, after a few minutes they moved a few hundred metres east. News

was quickly released, and many birders enjoyed excellent views in the short grass of the sheep fields between the gliding station and Pole Cott.

Two of the five birds were certainly bright females. The other three were duller and some observers reported them to be males. However, the finder thought them still to be too bright to be males and considered all five to be females.

This was a very welcome record. Dotterel had been seen on the Long Mynd in most years during the 1990s but, despite being searched for annually, this is the first record since 1998. Let us hope that this is the start of another run of regular sightings.

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### **GOLDEN PLOVER** *Pluvialis apricaria*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant

Conservation Status: Annex 1, Amber List

A total of 59 reports was received from 32 sites.

Very scarce this year during the first winter period. A single bird was at Wood Lane between 10 and 14 Jan, with probably the same bird on 2 Feb. A small flock was on the Long Mynd in late January with 23 seen at Pole Bank on 19th, and 25 above Cardingmill Valley on a patch of burnt heather on 31st. The largest flock of this period was of 44 birds at Noneley on 22 Feb.

There were no records in March. No doubt the sole April record of a flock of 17 on 28th on a recently sown field on high ground near Mardu, was of passage birds.

The first returning birds were in October with 50 at High Park, Long Mynd on 4th, and 20 at Portway on 10th. A single calling bird flew over Ercall Heath on 9 Oct. Other October flocks were seen at Lower Dolfawr (37 on 20th) and Hunkington (38 on 24th).

More birds appeared in November when wintering flocks returned to some traditional sites. There were a series of records from the Allscott / Walcot area from 1 Nov when 75 birds were seen. 18-40 birds were in the vicinity between 5 – 21 Nov until 27th, when a count of 127 was made at this location. 50 birds were nearby at Walcot on 14 Dec. A group of 40 at Crudgington on 17 Nov may relate to the same flock as at Allscott.

Alderley Lane near Wem held a small flock between 3 Nov and 26 Dec. There were 40 birds counted here on 3 Nov and again on 10th and a peak of 50 on 26 Dec.

A peak count of 400 was made in the Churchtown Hill area, Clun Forest on 9 Nov and birds were seen in the vicinity until 27 Nov.

100 birds at Condoover on 10 Nov increased to an estimated 700 by 5 Dec, by far the largest flock seen in the County in 2007. 300 were still here on 14 Dec.

Birds were regularly seen flying over Priorslee Lake between 11 -24 Nov with a peak of 150 on two dates in this period. Other November records were from Lower Dolfawr, Nantypyllau where over 300 were seen on 4 Nov, Bayston Hill, Church Aston and Prees Lower Heath.

Observations were less frequent in December but there were flocks of 400 in the Colemere area on 4 Dec, 100 birds at Donington on 21st and Morville Heath on 29th, plus small groups at Prees Lower Heath and Ollerton.

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**GREY PLOVER** *Pluvialis squatarola*

Shropshire Status: Very rare passage migrant

Conservation Status: Amber list

One was at Whixall Moss on 20 May (EH).

A superb bird in near full summer plumage, it was found whilst the recorder was undertaking a weekly transect survey of dragonflies and butterflies. Although only present for one day, it was also reported independently by two other observers.

This species is less than annual in Shropshire and this was the first record since one at Venus Pool on 30 Mar 2003.

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**LAPWING** *Vanellus vanellus*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common, though declining, resident and common passage migrant and winter visitor

BBS: Present in 27% of plots, 46 birds recorded, an average of 2.9 per plot.

Conservation Status: UKBAP, LBAP, Amber List

Wintering flocks in the first two months of the year included up to 560 at Wood Lane (on 10 Jan), 900 at Noneley on 22 Feb, 550 on ploughed ground at Tittenley Pool on 23 Feb, 310 at Whixall canal floods on 19 Feb, 275 at Broughall on 3 Feb.

Counts in excess of 100 birds were recorded at several locations along the Severn valley, including 250 between Atcham and Wroxeter on 20 Jan, 136 at Hayes Farm, Alberbury on 21 Jan, 100 at Melverley on 26 Jan and 120 at Melverley Green on 18 Feb.

Cold weather movements were noted in early February when there was significant snowfall in the County. Over 1000 birds flew over Strefford on 9 Feb. Other apparent cold weather movements included 110 over Monkmoor Pool on 8 Feb and 300 at VP on 13 Feb.

Numbers rapidly reduced at all sites in early March. Wood Lane recorded 250 birds on 3 Mar but then 150 on 9th, 78 on 12th and only 32 by 15th.

Birds were back on breeding sites as early as 6 Mar (at Bicton, Clun) and breeding behaviour was noted in the month at Norbroom Marsh (with up to 35 birds), Poole Hall at Alveley, Hampton Loade, Ditton Priors, and Clun. Further evidence of breeding was recorded from VP, Ollerton, Kynnersley, Yockleton, Trefonen and Rushbury in April and at Rodway near Crudgington, Wall Farm, Edgmond, Bromfield and Burwarton in May. The below table presents the monthly maxima at selected key sites for this species within the County.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
ASF			31								390	
Chelmarsh		48	11	1	1	2	64	4	28	12		1
Noneley	450	900	49									
Venus Pool	2	90	25	4	3	1	70	100	61	100	200	60
Whixall, canal floods	216	310	34					200	9		100	90
Wood Lane	560	500	245	12	9	31	120	250	600	600	500	500

Chicks or fledged young were recorded at Bromfield where at least two of three hatched chicks fledged and at Poole Hall, Alveley. Surprisingly no breeding evidence was recorded from Wood Lane despite the presence of birds throughout the breeding season.

Despite the fact that the species is declining throughout southern Britain (especially in arable habitats), a fairly widespread breeding population does remain in the County though no doubt in far fewer numbers than the 2,300 pairs estimated in the last County Atlas period. Lapwing have traditionally nested on open bare fields sown with spring cereals, ideally not too far from permanent grass where chicks are taken to feed after hatching. This cropping regime is now unusual but there is evidence that lapwing have taken to nesting on fields prepared for late crops such as maize in

recent years. Whether breeding success is sufficient in these new habitats to stem the decline in the County breeding population would be a worthwhile study.

As usual there was some evidence either of non- or failed breeding birds starting to flock or possibly of early immigration from the continent in June. 34 birds in an 'itinerant' flock at Stapeley on 15 Jun and 34 birds flying over VP on 22 Jun were perhaps in one of these categories.

The Wood Lane flock built up to 72 birds by 5 Jul and then 120 by 10 Jul, 200 by 13 Aug, 250 on 25 Aug and then a rapid increase to 500 on 4 Sept.

Other late summer flocks were of 64 birds at Chelmarsh on 16 Jul, 70 at VP on 10 Jul increasing to 98 by 17 Aug and 150-200 at Whixall canal floods from 12 – 28 Aug.

Wood Lane was the only site to hold consistently large flocks in September and October but 200 were noted flying north over Colemere on 26 Sept and a large flock of 500 was at Adeney on 12 Oct. Numbers seemed to increase in November with flocks of over 100 becoming widespread. An Atlas Timed Tetrad count in the Severn Valley near Cae Howel recorded 1,050 birds on 27 Dec whilst 250 birds at Concover on 10 Nov increased to over 500 birds in early December. Other large flocks at this time were of 390 at Mirelake on 1 Nov, 100 at Whixall canal floods on 17 Nov, 200 at VP on 21 Nov, 250 near Hopton Wafers on 26 Nov (counted in Atlas TTV), 200 at Colemere on 9 Dec, 200 at Walcot on 14 Dec, 450 at Castle Farm Way, Priorslee on 24 Dec, 400 on Stoke-on-Tern on 28 Dec and 500 at Morville Heath on 29 Dec.

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**KNOT** *Calidris canutus*

Shropshire Status: Very scarce passage migrant

Conservation Status: Amber List

Probably only four individuals were involved in the 15 casual records for the year. This is a typical set of records for Shropshire of this largely estuarine wader.

At Wood Lane a first winter bird was present between 21 Jan and 4 Feb (AL). A further winter record was of a single bird at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 30 Nov (DF). At this time of year, knot are regularly recorded at inland sites and ringing studies have shown a general move from the east to west coast in the face of decreasing temperatures in eastern counties.

In the autumn, single birds were at ASF on 19 & 20 Aug (AL) and at VP on 21 Sept (GEH).

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**SANDERLING** *Calidris alba*

Shropshire Status: Very scarce passage migrant

Conservation Status: Green List

Three birds flew into VP in the late afternoon of 30 May. Though still present later in that day they were not recorded subsequently.

A single May record for the year is typical for this very scarce County bird.

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**LITTLE STINT** *Calidris minutus*

Shropshire Status: Very scarce passage migrant

Conservation Status: Green List

A poor year for records of this species with only three reports involving four individuals.

No spring records were received in 2007. A single bird on the canal floods at Whixall on 6 Aug preceded a group of three birds at VP on 7 Sept.

The British Isles are on the western fringe of the migration route for the little stint and it is thought that autumn passage numbers in the U.K. are strongly linked to the substantial fluctuations in breeding success in the tundra regions of northern European Russia. Recent autumn passage has tended to be very light, though numbers are variable.

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**PECTORAL SANDPIPER** *Calidris melanotos*

Shropshire Status: Rare vagrant

One was present at VP on 12 Sept (JBU).

This bird was found at 12.10 pm. feeding on the main island. The finder immediately released the news and excellent views were had by a number of other observers, and photographs were obtained. It was seen to depart high to the east at 5.00 pm.

Records suggest that we can expect to see this species in Shropshire about every other year. There are just two records in spring, the remainder being in autumn where the main period is from mid-August until the end of September.

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**DUNLIN** *Calidris alpina*

Shropshire Status: Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

Conservation Status: Red list

A total of 79 records was received from eight sites, with the majority of records from the well watched sites of VP and Wood Lane.

An unusually large group for the winter period was at Wood Lane between 11-21 Jan. Five birds on 11th increased to seven on 21st. Dunlin is a regular, if scarce, winter visitor to Shropshire; and this group was an exceptional number for this time of year.

Additional winter records were of single birds at VP on 16 Jan, Ellesmere on 30 Jan and Noneley on 22 Feb.

A single bird at Wood Lane on 12 & 13 Mar preceded five at VP on 31 Mar. A further single dunlin at VP on 21 Apr was joined by a second bird on 25th, but an impressive if brief spring passage occurred at VP in May. Two birds on 10 May increased to 13 the following day and 22 on 14th. Three were present on 29 May.

Other sites at which this species was recorded during May were singles at Wood Lane on 6th, 9th, 11th and 19th and two at Bromfield on 25th. A single bird was at VP on 15 Jun.

Ringling statistics have shown that many birds on spring passage in the UK are destined for breeding sites in Iceland or Greenland and these birds use west coast estuaries such as the Dee, Morecambe Bay and the Solway as staging posts on this migration.

As is usual, autumn passage was much lighter than that in spring, starting perhaps with a single bird at Wood Lane on 30-31 Jul. VP held up to three birds from 14-17 Aug. Three juveniles were on the canal floods at Whixall the following day with singles at ASF on 23 Aug and Chelmarsh on 4 Sept, two were also here on 29 Sept.

During October three were at Chelmarsh on 2nd with Wood Lane holding one bird from 24th-27th and VP a single on 25th.

A flush of records occurred from 16-24 Nov with up to six at Mirelake (on 21st) and up to four at VP on the same date.

Single birds in December were at VP on 3rd and Mirelake on 19th.

The below table presents the monthly maxima at selected key sites for this species within the County.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
ASF	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	6	-
Chelmarsh	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	-	-
VP	1	-	5	2	22	1	-	3	-	1	4	1
Wood Lane	7	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	1	1	-	-

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**RUFF** *Philomachus pugnax*

Shropshire Status: Very scarce passage migrant

Conservation Status: Schedule 1, Annex 1, Red List

There were no records during the spring passage migration period. However, 28 records were received from three sites during a 28 day period between 8 Aug and 6 Sept.

One female/juvenile was reported at Bromfield (northwest of Ludlow) on 6 Sept. 15 records came from VP, all of a single bird between 8 & 17 Aug, which was recorded as a reeve (female). From Whixall canal floods records were received between 11 & 23 Aug; three birds on 14th, two noted on five occasions between 15 & 23 Aug and the remaining records were of single birds, one of which was noted as a reeve.

In England the ruff, formerly widespread and locally numerous, is now an extremely rare breeding bird, uncommon and local in winter, but relatively numerous on passage. Passage birds occur at sites around the coast, and at marshes, gravel pits and reservoirs inland. In 2007 only one area exceeded 100 birds in a WeBS count, on the Norfolk Coast in October.

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**JACK SNIFE** *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Shropshire Status: Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

Conservation Status: Amber List

About 32 records were received from 15 sites. During the early winter period the maximum count was of three at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 18 Feb and again on 3 Mar, with two at SVCP on 9 Feb. Other reports from the early part was a single at

Colemere (10 Feb) and Whixall Moss (19 Feb). A single at Wood Lane recorded ten times between 24 & 27 Mar was the last record from this period.

Between September and the end of December the maximum reported was on 28 Oct, when six were at Chelmarsh Reservoir, two of these birds were ringed. Two birds were present at Whixall canal floods on 1 Sept. Reports of single birds came from: Chelmarsh Reservoir (11 Nov, 16, 21, 22 & 27 Dec); Market Drayton (25 Nov); Molverley Hall (28 Oct) and Whixall Moss (10 Dec).

This unobtrusive wader is a passage migrant and winter visitor to Great Britain, breeding in bogs, marshes and flood plains from north-eastern Europe to eastern Siberia. In Shropshire, they are most frequently found in ones or twos, and nationally ringing recoveries suggest that they are highly site faithful between years.

**SNIPE** *Gallinago gallinago*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant and scarce and declining breeder.

Conservation Status: Amber List

509 records were received from around 90 sites from all parts of the County. There were 203 reports in the early part of the year (January to May) with the three maximum counts all originating from Wood Lane (93 on 4 Mar, 60 on 21 Feb & 50 on 9 Jan).

A further 306 records were received during the latter part of the year from August to the end of December, with the maxima again all from Wood Lane (100 on 5 Nov, 60 on 8 Nov & 59 on 30 Oct).

There were only two casual records during the breeding season, both of a single bird at VP on 5 May.

The below table presents the monthly maxima at selected key sites for this species within the County. No records were received from these sites during the months omitted from this table.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
ASF	-	-	-	-	-	2	5	-	13	-
Chelmarsh Reservoir	3	25	11	-	-	-	5	2	11	22
VP	5	23	19	8	1	1	8	-	1	1

Whixall Canal Floods	-	-	4	-	-	40	-	-	6	-
Wood Lane	50	60	93	14	-	2	18	59	100	36

The importance of Wood Lane for wintering and passage birds is clear from this table, with higher figures in most months than the combined totals of the other sites.

The Atlas of Breeding Birds of Shropshire estimated that the number of breeding pairs in the period 1995-1990 was unlikely to exceed 200-300 pairs. The two main areas of breeding habitat then were the damp meadows of the lowland, especially the Weald Moors (north of Telford) and wet hollows of the uplands. Since this report, drainage of lowland areas has continued and many former meadows have been turned over to arable farming.

The Shropshire Bird Report of 2004 estimated a likely breeding population of 20-25 pairs, a sad decline in fewer than twenty years.

## **WOODCOCK** *Scolopax rusticola*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor and scarce breeder

Conservation Status: Amber List

Its predominantly woodland habitat preference and secretive and crepuscular habits combined with its cryptic colouring, all point towards a species that is likely to be under-recorded. Nevertheless, 98 records were received from across the County. Records were received from all months except August, September and October, and by far the highest number of records were received from November and December.

There were nine records in the first two months of the year, with the highest count received from Forest Farm, Westbury, where of three put up by dogs and beaters one was shot. The remaining records were of single birds.

Roding (the display flight of males seeking mates) can occur from late February, with egg laying from mid-March and the breeding season may extend to the end of July. There were no records of confirmed breeding, but single roding males were reported from Earnswood Copse in Wyre Forest and Black Hill nr Clun, both on 1 Jun. Other reports were of single birds at Chorley Covert, west of Highley (16 Mar), Shavington Big Pool (2 Apr), The Wrekin (26 Apr), Haughmond Hill (16 May, 5 Jun, 11 Jun) and Birchen Park, southwest of Highley (22 Jul).

To observe roding males, visits are required at dusk and the nesting bird's habit of sitting tight and relying on its colouring makes it extremely difficult to obtain an accurate idea of numbers; and this species is certainly under-recorded by all visits except for specific Woodcock surveys. For details of such a survey see Shropshire Bird Report 2003, page 37.

Numbers in the UK are augmented by wintering birds from eastern Europe and Fennoscandinavia, at which time the number of visitors may outnumber resident birds by 10:1. 79 reports were received in November and December from across the County. Counts of three individuals came from Merrington (14 Dec), a site north of Baschurch (16 Dec) and Sibdon Carwood nr Craven Arms (27 Dec). Reports of two birds came from six sites widely scattered across the County.

The woodcock's Amber status is a consequence of declining numbers in Europe, but clearly more needs to be learnt about this rather mysterious bird's ecological requirements if effective conservation is to ensure its numbers in Shropshire and the UK as a whole.

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### **BLACK-TAILED GODWIT** *Limosa limosa*

Shropshire Status: Icelandic form *islandica* ('Icelandic black-tailed godwit') a scarce passage migrant and rare winter visitor. Nominate European and British form ('continental black-tailed godwit') likely to be a very scarce passage migrant.

Conservation Status: Schedule 1, UKBAP, Red List

None recorded during first winter period. The first of the year were two birds at Wood Lane on the early date of 13 Mar with further singles at the same site 31 Mar–2 Apr and 7 Apr. Singles were noted almost daily at VP between 5 Apr and 19 Apr with two birds present on 7th. The only other spring record involved two birds that flew over Priorslee village on 15 Apr.

The first records of the autumn were a single at VP between 9 and 10 Jul, followed by up to two at Wood Lane on 17 and 18 Jul. Typically, August proved to be the most productive month with the first at Wood Lane on 2nd followed by a further single at VP on 8th. On 14th, what was considered to be an adult male and adult female along with two juveniles arrived at VP, representing the largest count of what was a poor year by recent standards. Three on the canal floods, Whixall on 16th could have been the same trio recorded at Wood Lane the next day. A further single was noted at Wood Lane on 31st. Three September records all at Wood Lane with singles on 1st, 9th and 27th. The last record of the year occurred on 8 Oct when singles were at Wood Lane and Whixall Moss.

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**BAR-TAILED GODWIT** *Limosa lapponica*

Shropshire Status: Rare passage migrant

Conservation Status: Annex 1, Amber List

The only record of the year was a single at Chelmarsh scrape from 30 Apr until at least 1 May (RBP et al.).

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**WHIMBREL** *Numenius phaeopus*

Shropshire Status: Nominate British and Scandinavian form and Icelandic form (*islandica*) scarce passage migrants

Conservation Status: Schedule 1, Red List

A fairly poor year for this species with records only from the spring. The first record of the year was two birds reported from one of the sheep pastures on the Long Mynd on 26 Apr. All other records originated from VP between 2nd and 12 May with peaks of four on 10th and two on 2nd and singles on 3rd, 5th, 6th, 9th and 12th.

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**CURLEW** *Numenius arquata*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common breeding species, passage migrant and winter visitor

BBS: Present in 20% of plots, 24 birds recorded, an average of 2 per plot.

Conservation Status: UKBAP, LBAP, Amber List

The highest count of the year was made during the first winter period and involved an impressive 164 birds at Hayes Farm, Alberbury on 18 Feb. During this time, the traditional wintering sites around the Severn/Vyrnwy confluence again attracted birds, with 35 at Cae Howel on 17 Jan and 80 at Molverley on 26 Jan. Other notable counts at this time included 27 at Shrewsbury sewage farm on 7 Jan and 25 by the River Severn at Monkmoor on 7 Feb (with 23 birds roosting on Monkmoor Pool on 14 Feb).

Regular roosting flocks at both VP and Wood Lane started to build up in numbers from late February and peaked at the latter site on 26 Feb when 36 birds were counted. Numbers fluctuated at both sites throughout the rest of the spring with 30

birds at Wood Lane on 24 Mar being the last significant count at that site, whilst a peak of 42 birds was reached at VP on both 9 and 12 Mar. The single spring count from Hayes Farm, Alberbury of 81 birds on 18 Mar eclipsed both these sites. Numbers declined significantly at well-watched sites from early April.

Confirmed breeding records comprised a pair engaged in distraction display at Newton, near Bomere Heath and a pair on Wild Moor, Long Mynd, both on 17 May, and a pair with three large young at Craig Sychtyn on 26 Jun.

Curlew are extremely faithful to breeding grounds, returning to lowland territories as early as February and upland territories in late March. Birds show strong selection for nesting in recent burns on upland heaths/moors and in the damper, particularly rushier areas of enclosed fields. Therefore, whilst there were few confirmed breeding records, other late winter/spring records from potential breeding sites that were not re-visited by birders later in the season undoubtedly held nesting pairs. Example records include a pair in the Hope Valley on 13 Mar, four birds near Darnford Brook, Ratlinghope on 2 Apr, a pair at Long Synalds on 10 Apr, a pair calling near Bridges on 11 Apr, a pair at Cae Howel on 15 Apr, a pair at The Hollies, Gatton, Stiperstones on 20 Apr, two pairs at Bromwich Park on 7 May, and up to 12 birds on Whixall Moss throughout the spring period. In addition, two pairs were actively displaying at a site near Ditton Priors on 27 Mar where they are known to have successfully bred for a number of years.

Small numbers of non-breeding, over-summering birds were seen, mostly at well-watched sites before autumn numbers started to build from early July when 30 were present at Wood Lane on 2nd, with 12 at VP the following day (numbers dwindled at this site thereafter) and 22 at Black Marsh on 4th. Roosting numbers at Wood Lane peaked at 98 birds on 31 Jul, although numbers remained fairly high throughout the autumn with 59 birds still using the site on 7 Nov. Away from Wood Lane there were relatively few autumn and second winter period records, notable exceptions being 28 roosting birds at Monkmoor Pool on 18 Dec and 67 at Cae Howel on 30 Dec.

The only records received from Chelmarsh were from March. The scrape at Chelmarsh has been used as a late summer/autumn roost site for curlew for a number years and the absence of any casual records from the site at this period is potentially misleading.

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## COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos*

Shropshire Status: Very scarce summer visitor and scarce passage migrant. Rare in winter.

Conservation Status: Amber List

Records were received from 16 sites, with VP providing the greatest number of casual records (31).

The first record of year was on the extremely early date of 27 Jan from the River Severn at Leighton/Buildwas (SD), suggesting an overwintering bird. This, or another, was recorded by the same observer at the same site on 24 Mar.

Spring passage commenced on 15 Apr with a singleton at VP, this was quickly followed by another on 16 Apr at Upper Brompton. An influx was then observed on 18 Apr, with records from five sites (Betton Wood, Polemere, Priorslee Lake (four), VP and Wood Lane).

No evidence of breeding was observed, although two birds were recorded throughout May and June at Bromfield suggesting that breeding may have taken place. A third was also present at this site on 24 Jun and 16 Jul. No details of the age of this third bird were received.

Return passage commenced on 1 Jul, with a single at VP, followed by a single at Chelmarsh on 5 Jul. Passage birds continued to be recorded from numerous sites until 4 Aug. The highest counts were of four from Priorslee Lake on the 18 Apr and 24 Apr. The final record of the year was of two at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 22 Dec. The below table summarises the peak monthly counts from selected key sites within the County. No records were received from these sites during the months omitted.

	<b>Mar</b>	<b>Apr</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>Jun</b>	<b>Jul</b>	<b>Aug</b>	<b>Sept</b>
ASF	-	-	-	-	3	1	1
Bromfield	-	2	2	3	3	2	-
Chelmarsh	-	1	-	-	2	-	-
Priorslee Lake	-	4	-	-	-	2	1
VP	-	3	2	1	3	-	-
Wood Lane	-	1	-	-	1	1	1

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**GREEN SANDPIPER** *Tringa ochropus*

Shropshire Status: Scarce passage migrant and very scarce winter visitor

Conservation Status: Schedule 1, Amber List

During first winter period records were received from two sites only, both on 27 Jan. Two were noted at ASF and three along the River Severn at Leighton/Buildwas. Numbers remained low throughout the spring period with two at Wood Lane on 7 Mar preceding almost daily records of single birds at that site between 31 Mar and 18 Apr (two present 9 Apr). The only other early spring records were from the River Severn; two were at Leighton/Buildwas on 24 Mar and one was at Atcham/Wroxeter on 16 Apr. The last record during the spring and the only May record was a single at Wood Lane on 9th.

A protracted return passage commenced 20 Jun with one at Wood Lane, while the first of the autumn at ASF was noted on 24th. Numbers started to pick up slowly during July with records from four sites, including a notable count of 15 birds made from a flooded pasture at Ponthen on 31st. Passage peaked during August with birds noted throughout the month from a total of six sites (peak counts for five of those sites are listed in the table below).

September and October saw more birds recorded away from traditional stop-over sites in comparison to earlier in the autumn, presumably southbound juveniles not yet familiar with the most productive foraging areas! For example, up to three birds were recorded at Bromfield during September with singles also noted at Priorslee, and at Tibberton in October. Numbers at ASF remained high during the second winter period with an exceptional nine birds recorded there on 27 Dec. Records away from traditional sites during the final two months of the year included singles at Melverley Hall on 3 Nov, Aston on Clun on 22 Dec, Alderley Lane (near Wem) on 26 Dec and three together at Bromfield on 2 Dec.

The below table presents the monthly maxima at selected key sites for this species within the County.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
ASF	2	-	-	-	-	1	5	16	15	-	14	9
Chelmarsh	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	6	4	-	-	-
VP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Whixall, canal floods	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	2	-	-
Wood Lane	-	-	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	-

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**GREENSHANK** *Tringa nebularia*

Shropshire Status: Scarce passage migrant

Conservation Status: Schedule 1, Green List

Spring passage was extremely light with singles at VP on 29 Apr and 1 May the only records.

Return passage noted from 9 Aug when three birds were present at VP/Cound Trout Fishery where one bird remained until 11 Aug. The canal floods at Whixall attracted four birds on 12 Aug with singles there on 14th and 15th. Other August records comprised three birds together at Wood Lane on 15th with one there on 20th, two at ASF on 23rd reducing to one by 25th, and a singleton that flew north over Tibberton on 26th.

Aside a single on the canal floods, Whixall on 17th, all September records were from VP with singles on 1st, 5th, 12th, 13th, 17th and 25th. Final records of the year from VP (singles on 5 and 11 Oct) and Mire Lake, ASF when one present on 1 Nov.

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**WOOD SANDPIPER** *Tringa glareola*

Shropshire Status: Very scarce passage migrant

Conservation Status: Schedule 1, Annex 1, Amber List

Another good year for this species in Shropshire with a minimum of five birds recorded, although there were no spring records for the first year since 2003.

A single on the canal floods at Whixall on 12 Aug proved to be the harbinger of a remarkable series of records from this site as over the following days numbers peaked at four birds on both 21st and 23rd.

Almost as noteworthy was an exceptionally late individual at ASF between 1 and 12 Nov.

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**REDSHANK** *Tringa totanus*

Shropshire Status: Nominate British and continental form a scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Icelandic form (*islandica*) ('Icelandic redshank') presumably a rare passage migrant and winter visitor.

Conservation Status: Amber List

Common redshank was only recorded at six sites during 2007, with birds noted during every month except January and May. The first of the year was at Hayes Farm, Alberbury on 18 Feb and was the only record during the first winter period. Numbers remained relatively low during spring with singles noted at Wood Lane on 4 Mar, 2-4 Apr and 14-16 Apr, intermittently at VP between 15 Mar and 3 Apr (with two together 22 Mar), at ASF on 8 Apr and two at Hales on 18 Apr.

What was to be an almost imperceptible return passage commenced on 30 Jun when one was at VP. June-October saw birds recorded from only two sites, Wood Lane and VP, with peak counts of two birds occurring at the former site on 19 Jul and 16 Aug.

November and December saw a glut of records from ASF, peaking at seven birds on 20 Nov and with five still present there on 19 Dec. The only records away from ASF during the final two months of the year involved single birds at Wood Lane on 10 Dec and Cae Howel on 30 Dec.

The below table presents the monthly maxima at selected key sites for this species within the County.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
ASF	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	5
Wood Lane	-	-	1	1	-	-	2	2	1	1	-	1
VP	-	-	2	1	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	-



Pied flycatcher, Hawkstone Park, June 2007 (*John Hawkins*)



Common redstart, Dowles Brook, Wyre Forest, April 2007 (*John Robinson*)



Northern wheatear, Titterstone Clee, August 2007 (*John Robinson*)



Common sandpiper, Venus Pool, April 2007 (*Jim Almond*)



Blackcap, Duddlesstone Heath, January 2007 (*John Hawkins*)



Black redstart female, Long Mynd, Nov 2007 (*Jim Almond*)



Yellow wagtail, Cranmere Bog, May 2007 (*John Robinson*)



Sand martins, Wood Lane, August 2007  
*(John Hawkins)*



Treecreeper, Pentrecoed, June 2007  
*(John Hawkins)*



Wood warbler, Near Coopers mill, Wyre Forest, April 2007 *(John Robinson)*



Arctic tern, Venus Pool, July 2007 (*Jim Almond*)



Kingfisher, Venus Pool, August 2007 (*Paul King*)



Sandwich tern, Venus Pool, May 2007 (*Jim Almond*)



Dipper, Dowles Brook, Wyre Forest, April 2007 (*John Robinson*)



Grey heron, Cranmere Bog, May 2007 (*John Robinson*)



Jack snipe, Chelmarsh Scrape, December 2007 (*Jim Almond*)



Woodchat shrike, Catherton Common, July 2007 (*Paul King*)



Garganey male, Venus Pool, May 2007 (*Jim Almond*)

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**BLACK-HEADED GULL** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common resident and very common winter visitor

BBS: Present in 7% of plots, 12 birds recorded, an average of 3 per plot.

Conservation Status: Amber List

Including Atlas records, 590 records covering every month were received from about 150 sites. Widespread and common outside the breeding season, but under-reported, and the number of breeding records was particularly low. The below table summarises the peak counts from selected key sites.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
The Mere	300	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	130	3000
Wood Lane	250	230	161	39	3	6	-	-	-	180	150	100
Colemere	-	-	1000	-	-	-	-	-	-	60	180	17
Trench Pool	410	70	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Priorslee Lake	1100	775	6	-	-	-	-	-	715	335	500	350
Venus Pool	40	142	280	270	8	6	4	8	70	94	66	50
Chelmarsh Reservoir	-	2400	-	1	-	-	275	625	140	500	425	125

There were six records of four figure counts in the early part of the year: 3,000 at The Mere (4 Feb), 2,400 at Chelmarsh Reservoir (19 Jan) and 1,050 (8 Jan), 1,100 at Priorslee Lake (19 Jan) and 1,000 (11 Jan) and finally 1,000 at Colemere (16 Mar). A further 11 counts of between 250 and 1,000 birds were reported, mostly from the sites already mentioned.

Breeding was very poorly reported. The sole records were from VP where two pairs were sitting on 21 and 30 May. A pair with one chick was noted on 11 Jun and a pair with two chicks on 17 Jun.

During the second winter period there were just two four figure counts: 3,000 at The Mere (23 Dec) and 1,200 at Chelmarsh Reservoir (17 Nov). There were a further 13 counts of between 250 and 1,000, again mainly from the sites mentioned previously.

To put the figures for the County into a wider context, across Great Britain 22 sites, either estuaries or large reservoirs held a mean number between 2002 and 2007 in

excess of 10,000 birds.

Perhaps surprisingly, Brown & Grice give an estimated figure of 200 pairs nesting in Shropshire between 1998 and 2002, with a total for England of 82,700 pairs including 17,200 pairs at inland sites.

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**LITTLE GULL** *Larus minutus*

Shropshire Status: Rare passage migrant

Conservation Status: Schedule 1, Amber List

There were 18 casual records in total, with all but one of these relating to single birds from three different sites within the EGM. The first was of an adult at Wood Lane on 30 Jan, followed by 16 records from eight different observers between 21 Mar and 5 Apr at The Mere. On 31 Mar an additional first winter bird was also recorded there. Finally a second winter bird was seen at Colemere on 9 Apr. These are records area considered to involve a minimum of three birds.

Little gull winters in a wide area from the Irish Sea to the Mediterranean, and the records from the County are likely to be of passage birds migrating to their Arctic breeding grounds. Recent years have seen an increase in birds recorded from the south and east coasts of England. This may be due to a westerly extension of their breeding grounds into Finland. It seems likely that little gulls seen in Shropshire have been blown inland during westerly gales.

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**MEDITERRANEAN GULL** *Larus melanocephalus*

Shropshire Status: Very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

Conservation Status: Schedule 1, Annex 1, Amber List

The first winter period produced a series of records from the gull roost at The Mere, commencing with a first winter bird on 13 Jan with what was considered to be the same bird again there on 27 Feb. At least three different adult birds were identified at The Mere between 20 Feb and 25 Mar although the maximum count at any one time was of two birds present on 5, 6, 12 and 25 Mar. What were presumably two of the same adult birds, were seen nearby at Colemere on 16 Mar. A possible hybrid Mediterranean gull x black-headed gull was also reported from The Mere on 6 Mar.

Elsewhere during the first winter period, a first winter bird was at Trench Pool on

21 Feb with probably the same bird again on 13 & 14 Mar. This bird also visited Middle Pool, Trench on the latter date. In addition, a first winter bird was seen at Wall Farm on 17 Mar. The final record of the year was of a first summer bird at VP on 15 May.

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**COMMON GULL** *Larus canus*

Shropshire Status: Common winter visitor and passage migrant

Conservation Status: Amber List

By far the highest counts came from The Mere; 450 on 4 Feb, 100 on 18 Feb, 60 on 11 Mar. 22 at Wood Lane and 12 at Colemere were the only double figure counts at other sites.

There were twice as many reports in the late winter period, with the highest counts again coming from The Mere. The highest were of 500 birds on 29 Dec and 300 on 23 Dec. Double-figure counts were recorded at Whixall canal floods with 17 on 17 Sept, ten at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 29 Sept, 15 at Whixall canal floods on 11 Nov, 17 at Preston upon the Weald Moors on 17 Dec and 75 at St. Martins on 29 Dec. These last two records appear to be the only ones made at sites on land rather than water.

Some background information puts the County records into perspective. 80 – 90% of the world population breeds in Europe, and most are in Norway and Sweden, with just an estimated 48,000 pairs nesting in Scotland. Only a few pairs nest in England.

This gull was the second most abundant species in England in 1993, accounting for 15% of the total gulls. The number of large roosts has increased dramatically over the last 50 years, mainly on reservoirs and flooded gravel workings.

A maximum for the year of some 60,000 wintering birds was recorded in GB in February. The largest roost occurred at Bewl Water, Kent with 19,000 recorded in December; 35 other sites in Great Britain had mean counts in excess of 3,000 birds.

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**RING-BILLED GULL** *Larus delawarensis*

Shropshire Status: Very rare vagrant

An adult or third-winter bird was at The Mere on 28 Dec (PW).

This bird was found in the roost but, whilst it had the general appearance of an adult,

the observer could not rule out the possibility of it being a third calendar year bird.

Ring-billed gull, which breeds in North America, is a much sought after species by County enthusiasts. Previous to this, there are eight published records but it seems likely that some will not be sufficiently well documented to survive the review of old records which is on-going.

**LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL** *Larus fuscus*

Shropshire Status: Common all year visitor and passage migrant, very common in winter

BBS: present in 8% of plots, six birds recorded.

Conservation Status: Amber List

Present during all months, with the highest counts occurring in the late winter months, as the monthly maxima in the below table indicate.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Max.</b>	450	850	120	10	5	150	300	750	265	281	1,500	1,200
<b>Site</b>	Priorslee Lake	Chelmarsh Reservoir	Priorslee Lake	Prees	VP	Cressage	Priorslee Lake	Quatt	Priorslee Lake	Priorslee Lake	Polemere	The Mere

The commonest of the large gulls within the County and records suggest that it is likely to be encountered anywhere within the County in flight, on arable land, larger water bodies and no doubt at rubbish tips and adjacent land, especially for example at Wood Lane. Small numbers of non-breeding birds are encountered in the summer months

Great Britain is important for this species, with an estimated 110,000 pairs or 61% of the global population of *graellsii* race, and 35–41% of the total population of all races. Around 20,000 pairs nested inland in 1998–2000 most of them in the Forest of Bowland in Lancashire and North Yorkshire.

In spite of the increases in population, it is listed as a species of conservation concern

because the internationally important breeding population is concentrated into a small number of large vulnerable colonies.

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**HERRING GULL** *Larus argentatus*

Shropshire Status: British form *argenteus* a scarce passage migrant and fairly common winter visitor. Nominate northern European form ('Scandinavian Herring Gull' (*argentatus*)) presumably a scarce winter visitor.

Conservation Status: UKBAP, Red List (*argenteus*) and Amber List (*argentatus*)

The majority of records were, typically, from the well-watched water-bodies. However, the lack of counts from sites such as Chelmarsh and the meres suggest that the records received reflect far from accurately the true status of this species in the County. During the first winter period, away from the below tabulated sites, records were few and far between. The sole double-figure count was of 27 at Trench Pool (14 Jan).

Numbers typically dwindled as spring progressed although ten were still visiting The Mere on 11 Mar. Single April (one at Merrington Green) and May (eight at Whitton Hall Farm) records were noteworthy. Mid-summer records were also scant with six birds at Wood Lane on 22 Jul together with three that flew over Priorslee Lake with a large lesser black-backed gull flock on 25 Jul the only records prior to September.

Numbers started to build from mid-September at favoured sites with four at Priorslee Lake on both 21 & 23 Sept, the peak count during September/October. During the second winter period, a number of records were received from BTO TTVs and roving records and although no significant counts were received, it again illustrates how such surveys can help give a truer reflection of the status of many species. The below table presents the monthly maxima at selected key sites for this species within the County.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Priorslee Lake/Flash	34	30	-	-	-	-	3	-	4	2	12	40
Wood Lane	12	3	-	-	-	-	6	-	4	-	3	2
The Mere, Ellesmere	-	10	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	150
Chelmarsh	-	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10

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**YELLOW-LEGGED GULL** *Larus michahellis michahellis*

Shropshire Status: Scarce all-year visitor, most common in winter; rare in spring.

Conservation Status: Amber List

A good start to the year in the Priorslee/Granville Tip area, no doubt helped by an upsurge in birders searching for an adult Caspian gull found at Priorslee Lake late in 2006. Birds are known to commute between these two sites and there was almost certainly some duplication of birds in the records that were received. Some of the gulls may roost overnight at Priorslee Lake but many have been proven to move east at dusk and spend the night just across the County border at Belvide Reservoir, Staffs. Six yellow-legged gulls, comprising five adults and a single 1st winter bird, was the maximum count made at Granville Tip (8 Jan), although a 2nd winter bird there on 12th indicates that at least seven individuals made use of the site during the month. The highest count at nearby Priorslee Lake during the first winter period was of three birds on both 8 Jan and 13 Jan, with a single at Trench Pool on 6 Jan. The last of the first winter period were two birds at Priorslee Lake on 9 Feb.

In the majority of English counties where yellow-legged gull occurs, they have been proven to be most common between mid-July and the end of August. This year, only one record was received during summer, a single bird reported from VP on 18 Aug. The lack of Shropshire records during summer is somewhat surprising but it may be a true reflection of the species status during those months. Alternatively, it may be a product of a mid-summer birding lull (waste disposal tips are not particularly attractive to birders during the hottest months!).

Prior to the second winter period the only other record concerned two birds, an adult and a juvenile, at VP on 19 Sept. November records comprised singles recorded on a BTO TTV in SO78I (Chelmarsh Reservoir) on 17th and at Priorslee Lake on 23rd. Numbers again built as winter took hold with up to five at Priorslee Flash during December (peak count comprising two adults and three 2nd-winter birds made on 29th) and three (adult, sub-adult and 2nd winter) at The Mere on 28th.

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**CASPIAN GULL** *Larus cachinnans*

Shropshire Status: Very rare all year visitor

A sub-adult was seen at Granville Landfill Site, Telford on four dates between 6 Jan and 21 Jan (KW, AL, MRA).

During this time, and in early February, there were additional reports of what might have been the same bird both from this site and Priorslee Lake. However, no details were received to substantiate them. Unfortunately, Granville Landfill Site is a location with restricted access.

Caspian gull was only recently split by the BOU, from yellow-legged gull and its status in Shropshire is uncertain. However, we can expect more frequent sightings as observers become more familiar with the identification criteria and it might well turn out to be an annual visitor in small numbers.

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## **GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL** *Larus marinus*

Shropshire Status: Scarce winter visitor

Conservation Status: Amber List

33 records from nine sites were received, all from four months - January (11), February (7) and November (4), December (11).

Maxima were two counts of ten, both from Priorslee Lake on 8 & 19 Jan. The latter report was recorded as nine adults and one first winter. During the early winter period, records were received from five sites: Calverhill (two) on 7 & 8 Feb; Chelmarsh Reservoir (one) on 8th Feb; Priorslee Lake on ten dates, Trench Pool (four) on 14 Jan, and a single at Wood Lane on 28 Jan.

Records from November and December involved six birds at Priorslee Lake on 28 Dec, two on 24 Nov and singles on 9 & 12 Dec. A single was at Priorslee Flash on 24 Nov, three at The Mere on 23 Dec and one on 29 Dec, three at VP on 30 Dec and singles at Wood Lane on five dates in December.

The maximum number recorded in Great Britain was 12,500 in October, and four figure counts, all from coastal sites, were exceptional. An estimated 16,680 pairs bred in Great Britain in 1998 – 2002 (about 10% of the world total). However, only about 1,500 pairs nest in England, mainly in small groups on the west and south-west coasts, with Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly having important numbers. Birds nesting in Great Britain are relatively sedentary after breeding but large numbers of birds arrive here from Norway and Russia from July to October. Movements are also affected by adverse weather conditions at sea.

The amber status of this species is due to declining numbers of non-breeding birds over the last 25 years.

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**LITTLE TERN** *Sterna albifrons*

Shropshire Status: Very rare passage migrant

Conservation Status: Schedule 1, Annex 1, Amber List

An adult was at VP briefly on 11 May (AL).

This bird flew in from the northeast, circled the pool for a while before settling in front of the main hide on the exposed mud island. It was seen by a number of others who were present at the time but departed to the east after ten minutes and was not seen again.

The date is typical for passage of this species which rarely lingers. There are fewer records than sandwich tern and the vast majority were seen between mid-Apr and the end of May. The previous record was also at VP on 26 Apr 2002.

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**BLACK TERN** *Chilidonias niger*

Shropshire Status: Very scarce passage migrant

Conservation Status: Schedule 1, Annex 1, Amber List

There were only two records of this charismatic marsh tern during 2007, both from VP where singletons were present on the 8 Jun and 11 Jun.

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**SANDWICH TERN** *Sterna sandvicensis*

Shropshire Status: Very rare passage migrant

Conservation Status: Annex 1, Amber List

An adult was at VP on 6 May (JA).

The tern flew in at 08.05 am. and landed on the shingle island in front of the memorial hide where it remained fairly static during a brief shower. Excellent photographs were obtained but it stayed just five minutes before departing to the south when the rain relented.

This was a fairly typical showing in two ways. One or two are seen most years but, nearly always, records are of birds which pass straight through or stay just brief

time. Consequently, it remains a much sought after species. Records are spread fairly evenly between spring and autumn with most during April/May and August/September.

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**COMMON TERN** *Sterna hirundo*

Shropshire Status: Scarce passage migrant

Conservation Status: Annex 1, Amber List

Reports of birds on 12 different dates were received from just three sites, mostly of singles, and involving a maximum of perhaps eleven different birds. The first record of the year was of a single bird at VP on 6 May, with further records in May including two birds on the 27th. Subsequent sightings at VP included two on 21 Jul and a single bird on 7 Sept.

A single bird was at Priorslee Lake on 26 May. Singletons were then recorded at Chelmarsh Reservoir on four dates between 5 Jul and 29 Sept, with this last record being of an immature bird.

These records represent a smaller number of birds, from fewer sites, than in most previous years. Surprisingly, no records were received from water bodies in the north of the County.

The BBS survey for 2007 shows a 39% increase in numbers of common tern breeding in England (with the caveat that counts may contain a high proportion of birds away from breeding sites). Although this species is more likely to breed inland than the Arctic tern, especially when floating platforms are provided, no reports of breeding have yet occurred in Shropshire.

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**ARCTIC TERN** *Sterna paradisaea*

Shropshire Status: Very scarce passage migrant

Conservation Status: Annex 1, Amber List

Just four records were received, all of single birds at VP. The first was seen on 20 Jul, followed by two records on 12 Sept, one of which was of a juvenile, with a further record of a juvenile on 25 Sept.

Arctic terns return to english waters in mid-April and the majority of birds have left

by mid-September. The largest breeding colonies in England are found on the east coast (notably in Northumbria), but around 60 nests were recorded in Cumbria in the 1990s, and very small numbers of nesting birds have occurred in west coast sites nearer to Shropshire.

Weather conditions, particularly adverse winds affect the numbers of birds migrating inland at lower levels, and this presumably plays a large part in the widely varying annual numbers of records in Shropshire.

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**FERAL PIGEON** *Columba livia*

Shropshire Status: Common naturalised resident

BBS: Present in 15% of plots, 56 birds recorded, an average of 6.2 per plot.

A bird ignored by most observers within the County, with only 13 records received.

The highest counts were at the sites where birds are regularly fed (i.e. Priorslee Lake and The Mere). Peak counts at these sites were 65 at The Mere (14 Jan) and 27 at Priorslee Lake (23 Sept).

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**STOCK DOVE** *Columba oenas*

Shropshire Status: Common resident

BBS: Present in 53% of plots, 109 birds recorded, an average of 3.5 per plot.

Conservation Status: Amber List

Reported throughout the County and in every month of the year but most records were single figure counts. Highest numbers were 44 at ASF on 25 Mar and 107 at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 7 Nov.

As expected most records were from open country but a few occurred in private gardens. Two birds were noted in Radbrook during the RSPB garden watch on 27 Jan.

There were few reports of breeding behaviour but a pair with an active nest with one egg in a building wall cavity at Calverhall was observed on 27 Feb. Also, a nesting pair was noted in Radbrook on 15 Mar.

There is an upward trend in the population of this species both locally and nationally.

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**WOODPIGEON** *Columba palumbus*

Shropshire Status: Abundant resident

BBS: Present in 97% of plots, 1523 records, an average of 26.8 per plot

Conservation Status: Green List

Commonly recorded throughout the County in all habitats, at all times of year.

Most counts were of single figures but there were several flocks of more than 500, with the largest being 750 birds at Kingsnordly on 23 Dec.

Large movements of birds were noted on two dates in Oct with several flocks totalling 5,000+ passing over Priorslee Lake heading south on the 18th and 1,200 heading southwest over Tibberton on 29th.

This is a very successful bird with a strong upward trend in its population both locally and nationally.

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**COLLARED DOVE** *Streptopelia decaocto*

Shropshire Status: Common resident

BBS: Present in 47% of plots, 113 birds recorded, an average of 4 per plot.

Conservation Status: Green List

Collared dove are present throughout the County but are particularly associated with rural and suburban gardens, especially farmsteads and associated outbuildings. Numbers are sparse away from human habitation and many of the upland areas of the southwest have low densities of this species.

Following the rapid colonisation of Shropshire in the 1960s and 1970s numbers had stabilised and perhaps even shown signs of slight decrease by the end of the 1980s (see Shropshire Atlas 1985-90). Since then this species has continued to be widespread across the whole County but there have been signs that the often large numbers seen around farms in the 1970s are now a thing of the past.

The large majority of the 522 records submitted were of low single figures, principally ones and twos but these records were spread over 250 sites. The months of November and December were the first months included in the first winter period

of the new Atlas project. Records collected in 170 two-hour timed tetrad counts in the County during these months, recorded 998 collared doves. This was an average of just under six birds per tetrad. The vast majority of counts were of single figures but higher numbers included between 10–18 birds at 20 locations, 20 birds in the Hadnall area on 25 Nov and 21 around Cheswardine on the same date. 27 birds were counted in the tetrad centred on Alcaston on 29 Nov but far and away the biggest number were no fewer than 111 birds counted in the Asterley area on 16 Nov.

In contrast the maximum count in the early winter period was just four birds at Edgmond on 8 Feb. Small numbers were reported throughout the spring and summer from many sites throughout the County with the only double-figure counts coming from Bomere Heath where there were 13 on 7 Apr and 17 on 22 Jul. Fewer records were received between August and October and it is during this period that the only confirmed breeding attempt was noted; a pair was on a nest at Waters Upton on 19 Sept. This isn't a difficult species for which to confirm breeding and observers are asked to submit breeding records wherever possible.

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#### **TURTLE DOVE** *Streptopelia turtur*

Shropshire Status: Very scarce, and declining, summer visitor and passage migrant

Conservation Status: Red list

Yet again, no confirmed breeding records were received for this species and, indeed, turtle dove is barely holding on in the County. This is a situation which is now typical of most northern and western parts of England.

Sixteen records were received from just five sites, from the first at The Rea, Upton Magna on 5 May until the last record at Henley Common on 4 Sept.

The only site where more than a single bird was seen was the Rea, Upton Magna where up to three were present in June. At Henley Common a single bird holding territory was reported on nine occasions from 18 May until 4 Sept.

Single records only were reported from Atcham Industrial Estate on 16 May, Highley on 1 Jun and Loppington on 25 Jun.

Once a widespread summer visitor to the County, the rapid decline of this species in the UK and much of Europe shows no sign of abating. From an estimated County breeding population of 250-600 pairs during the last Atlas period (1985-90), the lack of recent confirmed breeding records suggests that the species is now possibly extinct as a breeding species in Shropshire.

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## **RING-NECKED PARAKEET** *Psittacula krameri*

Shropshire Status: Naturalised in the UK. Rare winter visitor.

This, the UK's only naturalised parrot, with an estimated breeding population of 4,300 adults found mainly in the south-east of England, was recorded twice during 2007.

The first record was of a single bird at Priorslee Lake on 18 Apr (MRA), with a further lone bird overflying the Long Mynd, calling occasionally (MC) on 8 Oct.

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## **CUCKOO** *Cuculus canorus*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common, though declining, summer visitor and passage migrant

BBS: Present in 34% of plots, 29 birds recorded, an average of 1.4 per plot.

Conservation Status: UKBAP, Red List

This fascinating bird appears to have declined recently in the County, in line with the rest of the United Kingdom and Western Europe. It is, however, difficult to interpret trends and abundance from adhoc records reported annually. The forthcoming Atlas should give a better understanding of population trends in the County since the last Shropshire Atlas survey between 1985 and 1990.

The few previous intensive studies of cuckoos have shown that both males and females have overlapping breeding territories. Females tend to concentrate where the host species are most abundant and males, unsurprisingly, concentrate where there are females! Both sexes do, however, often vacate these territories to feed and may range over a wide area to forage.

No specific records of female cuckoos were received and, though many reports in 2007 did not report the sex of birds, it can be confidently assumed that the great majority of records received were of calling male birds. Birds were widespread throughout the County with 85 records received from 53 different sites. Most sites at which cuckoos were recorded were within a few kilometres of the larger rivers in the County, in particular the Severn. Only a handful of records were from the southwest upland areas. Despite the apparent wide distribution, multiple records of birds at the same location were received from only nine sites. Indeed only a single record was received from 83% of sites. Studies have shown that male cuckoos apparently tend

to call only in their breeding territories. However, the wide spread of single records tends to suggest either a high degree of mobility of male birds, or observer bias in not re-visiting places where cuckoos have been heard.

As is usual, almost all records received were from April to June. The first record was at Prees on the typical date of 8 Apr though the next record was not until 14 Apr from Harmer Hill. Single records at Berrington Pool and nearby VP on 15 May were possibly the same bird. From 20 Apr a flush of records occurred over a wide area including VP, Newport, Chetwynd Heath, Chirbury, Maesbury Marsh, Wall Farm, Quatt, Mawley, Yapsel Bank, Wellington, Chelmarsh, Rhosydagfa, Wood Lane and the Long Mynd.

A further 25 records were received in the first fortnight in May, 16 in the second fortnight and 11 June records from 1st to 9th. No records were received between 10-20 Jun until a single at Tibberton on 21 Jun. A male was in song at Crosshouses on the late date of 28 Jun and the sole July record of a single bird at Chelmarsh from 5th-7th was the last report for the year.

The only report of a juvenile was of a bird which flew into a window at Astley Abbots on 24 Jun. The bird recovered successfully and flew off after a brief period of recuperation.

Up to three males were recorded calling simultaneously at Whixall Moss on occasional dates between 24 Apr and 9 Jun, suggesting at least attempted breeding at this site. Multiple records of single birds at least five days apart were received at eight other sites suggesting territorial birds. These were mainly sites which are regular County birding sites (e.g. Wood Lane, VP, Chelmarsh, ASF, Long Mynd and Wall Farm) but such records were also received from Newport and Arscott. It is noteworthy, although perhaps not unexpected, that most of these sites have known breeding populations of either reed warbler or meadow pipit, two of the preferred host species of the cuckoo.

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## BARN OWL *Tyto alba*



*Providing nestboxes for barn owls  
and promoting the conservation  
of their habitat in Shropshire*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common resident

Conservation Status: Schedule 1, LBAP, Amber List

### **The Shropshire Barn Owl Group nestbox scheme**

Of 212 barn owl nestboxes made available by the Shropshire Barn Owl Group (SBOG) at the start of the 2007 breeding season, 42 supported breeding pairs and 25 were occupied by roosting birds at some point during the year. Table 1 includes both successful and unsuccessful breeding attempts by barn owl pairs. The occupancy rate of nestboxes by barn owls in 2007 was 35.8 %. SBOG had 259 nestboxes in place at the end of 2007. The below table summarises the results of nestboxes of monitored.

Nestbox type	No. nestboxes monitored	No. nestboxes occupied		Total occupied	% Occupied
		Breeding	Roosting		
Tree	101	25	14	39	38.6
Building	74	15	10	25	33.7
Pole	12	2	1	3	25.0
Total	187	42	25	67	35.8

The average yearly occupancy rate since 2002 is 36% and is greatest for tree nestboxes. Barn owl are notably site faithful and the exceptionally high occupancy of 27% of nestboxes by breeding birds in 2007 (compared with a previous maximum occupancy of 16%) would suggest that several pairs are now permanently established as breeding birds in nestboxes and are occupying them on a regular basis. With new pairs occupying nestboxes for the first time each year this momentum of establishing permanent pairs can hopefully be maintained.

### **Breeding success**

SBOG confirmed barn owls breeding in nestboxes monitored by the group at Anchor,

Attingham, Bagley (2 pairs), Buildwas, Childs Ercall, Chipnall, Colehurst, Colemere, Crudgington, Doley, Ellesmere, Elson, Haughton, Hordley (2), Kynnersley (2), Lyneal (2), Llwyn-y-Go, Mose, Norbury, Northwood, Puleston, Soundley (2), Spoonley (2), Sutton, Tunstall, Walton, Welsh Frankton (2) and Wem. The pair at Anchor is the highest breeding pair known to SBOG, at 340 metres/feet above sea level.

In addition, breeding in ‘natural’(those other than nestboxes) nest sites monitored by SBOG occurred at Adderley, Alkington, Almington, Bishops Castle, Cound, Cressage, Ellesmere, Hodnet, Lyneal Lodge, Nantmawr, Pipegate, Poynton, Upper Dryton, Upton Cressett, Waters Upton, West Lullingfields and Wolverley.

Breeding began early in 2007, following a mild winter and fine spring, with the first egg produced on 7 Mar and the first chick on 6 Apr. The season also extended later in the year than normal, apparently aided by an abundance of the barn owls preferred prey – the field vole - with young still in one nest in late October and probably fledging in the first or second week of November. Thirteen pairs were double-brooded, five of which were produced in the same nest site as the first brood. Breeding occurred for the first time in a natural site other than a tree cavity or building when a pair successfully produced three young in a disused quarry. The nest site was in a hole behind the rock face approximately ten metres above the quarry floor.

The below table summarises the breeding success of barn owls monitored by SBOG in 2007 in nestboxes and natural sites in Shropshire. The data is confined to successful breeding attempts, that is, pairs producing chicks and, in view of the difficulty in directly recording the fledging of young barn owls, breeding success of barn owl pairs is measured as chick productivity. 156 chicks were produced in the nestboxes and natural nest sites produced an additional 64 chicks. The total number of chicks produced in all sites monitored by the SBOG was 220. The largest clutch size was eight eggs in an internal building nestbox and broods ranged from 1 to 6 chicks, with a mean of 3.66. One chick ringed in Ellesmere on 10 Jun 2007 was found dead on a road in Trefechan, Dyfed, 62 days later on 11 Aug having travelled 99 kilometres. The net result was that more young were fledged in 2007 than in the previous five years combined. The below table provides information on the breeding success of monitored barn owl nests in Shropshire

<b>Nest site</b>	<b>No. nests</b>	<b>No. chicks</b>	<b>Mean No. chicks</b>
Tree nestbox	26	92	3.53
Building nestbox	15	56	3.73
Pole nestbox	2	8	4.00

Tree cavity natural	12	44	3.66
Building natural	4	17	4.25
Other natural	1	3	3.00
Total	60	220	3.66

The below table summarises breeding success at sites monitored by SBOG for the six years since its inception in 2002. Only those nest sites successfully producing chicks are included for analysis. A total of 434 chicks have been produced, with 262 chicks in SBOG nestboxes and 172 in natural sites. Nestboxes have produced an average of 3.4 chicks per nest site with productivity marginally highest in pole nestboxes. Natural nest sites have produced an average of 3.1 chicks. Productivity is highest in natural building nest sites at 3.7 chicks but the sample is small and the data should presently be treated with caution. The below table provides a summary of breeding success between 2002 and 2007.

Year	Tree nestbox		Building nestbox		Pole nestbox		Tree cavity natural		Building natural		Other natural		Total no. chicks	Mean no. of chicks
	No. chicks	Mean	No. chicks	Mean	No. chicks	Mean	No. chicks	Mean	No. chicks	Mean	No. chicks	Mean		
2002	4 (1)	4.0	0 (0)	0	0	0	20 (6)	3.3	0 (0)	0	0	0	24 (7)	3.4
2003	2 (1)	2.0	6 (2)	3.0	0	0	18 (8)	2.2	2 (1)	2.0	0	0	28 (12)	2.3
2004	12 (4)	3.0	12 (4)	3.0	0	0	14 (5)	2.8	5 (1)	5.0	0	0	43 (14)	3.0
2005	40 (12)	3.3	27 (8)	3.3	0	0	39 (12)	3.2	6 (2)	3.0	0	0	112 (34)	3.2
2006	0	0	0	0	3 (1)	3	4 (2)	2.0	0	0	0	0	7 (3)	2.3
2007	92 (26)	3.5	56 (15)	3.7	8 (2)	4.0	44 (12)	3.6	17 (4)	4.2	3 (1)	3.0	220	3.6
Total broods	44		29		3		45		8		1		130	
Total chicks	150		101		11		139		30		3		434	
Mean no. of chicks	3.4		3.4		3.6		3.0		3.7		3.0		3.3	

Notes: Figures in parentheses refer to number of broods

Productivity for all sites is lowest in tree cavities at 3.0 chicks. Perhaps this reflects the relative openness of many tree cavities as a result of deterioration and decay. The resultant exposure to the elements might adversely affect the breeding condition of females prior to the breeding season or during incubation or possibly the eventual development of the young whilst in the nest. SBOG has also recorded incidents of barn owls in large open internal cavities being mobbed by jackdaws either at the hole entrance or actually entering the cavity. It is feasible that the stress barn owls experience in these circumstances, depending upon their intensity, may affect their breeding condition.

The mean number of chicks produced per brood in Shropshire for the six years 2002-2007 is 3.3. Studies elsewhere suggest that a long-term average productivity of about 3.2 young per pair is required to maintain viable populations. SBOG's policy of targeting nestboxes at farms enrolled in agri-environment schemes with extensive areas of grassy margins and siting networks of new nestboxes near to existing pairs to allow for occupation by dispersing young is intended to assist the creation of viable populations of barn owl.

### **Barn owl road casualties**

SBOG has been collating data on barn owls found dead on roadsides since 2002. 94% of casualties occur on 'A' roads with relatively few birds found dead on 'B' roads. The A5 causes the most deaths and is a serious threat to barn owls. Of the 71 road victims identified 86% relate to the winter period October to March. This period correlates with the dispersal of juveniles from the natal site and an increase in the hunting range of adult barn owls of up to 5km from the nest site.

Four of the 12 casualties found in 2007 were on the Nesscliffe bypass section of the A5. The bypass only opened in 2004 and the SBOG recorded the first road death in March 2005. Five casualties have been recorded on the bypass so far. The extensive grassy verges are clearly proving attractive to hunting barn owls but in combination with the volume and speed of the traffic this is proving to be a bitter-sweet pill.

Two road casualties were recorded for the first time in May in 2007. One male found dead in March weighed 300g, below the normal weight for males of 330g and two females weighed 250g and 270g in May and September respectively, significantly below the normal weight for females of 370g. Death can be attributed to starvation when male and female body weights fall below 240g and 250g respectively. The below table provides detail relating to the location and number of recorded barn owl road casualties

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
A5 Telford– S’bury- Oswestry	1	5	3	2	1			2	1	1	6	2	24
A49 Ludlow- S’bury- Whitchurch	1		3		1				3	2			10
A53 Market Drayton Bypass		1	1	1					3	1			7
A483 Pant– Oswestry		3	2				1				1		7
A495 Oswestry- Whitchurch		1					1				2		4
A41 Albrighton- Whitchurch										2	1		3
A458 Halfway House- B’north										2	2		4
A442 Alveley- Telford- Prees		1											1
Other A roads		3							3	1	1		8
B roads				1			1	1		1			4
Total	2	14	9	4	2		3	3	10	10	13	2	72

In addition to data provided by SBOG, 95 records were produced by the SOS, BTO Birdtrack and Atlas recorders. Breeding was confirmed for one pair at Brownhills, near Market Drayton (18 Jun). The majority of the records related to single birds hunting in flight over fields, road verges, rough grassland, railway embankments and roundabouts or perch-hunting from posts and poles at the roadside. Birds were invariably observed flying across roads in front of vehicles and one recorded in the middle of a road at Meadowley Bank on 26 Jul may have just caught a prey item.

The long term population trend of the barn owl in the UK is one of decline and the barn owl is a target species in the Shropshire Biodiversity Action Plan (SBAP). The indications are that the SBAP targets are likely to be met.

The conservation of permanent, rough tussocky grassland is essential in providing hunting habitat for the barn owl. More records by SOS members of pairs during the breeding season and confirmed or suspected natural breeding sites are required by SBOG to assist the targeting of nestbox schemes and the conservation of threatened sites. SBOG regularly conducts site surveys and will inspect old trees and other potential nest sites at the request of SOS members and the general public.

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### **LITTLE OWL** *Athene noctua*

Shropshire Status: Scarce and declining naturalised resident

Conservation Status: Amber List

Fifty records were received from 41 locations across the County with a predominance of records from northeast and east of the County and on The Weald Moors. Birds were recorded in every month of the year except September and most records related to single birds, but two were noted on eight occasions. Little owls were either heard calling, particularly during the breeding season between April and July, or observed perched on wires or telegraph poles or flying across a road. No prey items were noted.

Breeding was confirmed at Edgmond on 25 May in a SBOG tree nestbox where an adult and four chicks were noted. A pair were observed making frequent visits to a hole in a tree at Whitcott Keysett (2 May) were assumed to be feeding young. A pair were also recorded at Tilstock (6 Jun), but breeding was not confirmed.

The BBS trend for little owl in the UK shows fluctuations but there has been a long-term decline of 24%, which has continued in recent seasons. Little owl was not recorded in BBS plots in Shropshire. Trends are poorly known because the species has large territories and is difficult to detect except by dedicated surveys. More evidence of territorial birds, the regular monitoring of known breeding sites and additional habitat details would be invaluable in determining the requirements and status of little owl in Shropshire.

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**TAWNY OWL** *Strix aluco*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common resident

BBS: Present in 5% of plots, 3 birds recorded.

Conservation Status: Green List

A total of 169 records was received from 134 locations across the County, during every month of the year. Most records related to one or two birds calling and proclaiming territories but three were heard calling in adjacent territories at Crib and Pentre Coed. Three were also recorded at Hawkstone Park and Market Drayton. Birds were typically recorded after dark but also at dusk and dawn and one called at Hampton Loade in daylight at 08.45 am.

Breeding was confirmed at Bridgnorth (22 Apr) when two young were observed fledging, SVCPC (7 May) where a nest box contained young, on The Wrekin (12 May) where a chick was recorded perched on a branch and probably at Dudmaston where a juvenile was heard calling.

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**LONG-EARED OWL** *Asio otus*

Shropshire Status: Very scarce resident

Conservation Status: Green List

Two records both of single birds and, rather oddly, on the same day – 29 Dec.

The first of these was at Upton Cressett (near Bridgnorth) where one was found at 00.30 am. three to four metres up within a tall hawthorn hedge (MW). It was seen from a passing car but the observers were fortunate that it was still in the same place when they had executed a three point turn.

The second bird was also seen from a car on the road between Adderley and Ridgwardine at 9.15 pm. (GT). The bird was perched in a fork between the trunk and a branch six metres high in an oak tree. Unfortunately, it took flight when the driver stopped.

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**SHORT-EARED OWL** *Asio flammeus*

Shropshire Status: Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

Conservation Status: Annex 1, Amber List

There were just two records for the year. The first was of two birds at Rhos Fiddle in the Clun Forest on 15 Nov (RS) and the second was a single at Round Hill, Long Mynd in 22 Nov (ML).

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**NIGHTJAR** *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Shropshire Status: Rare summer visitor

Conservation Status: Annex 1, UKBAP, Red List

Two or three were present at a site in the Clun area between 2 Jun and 17 Jun (JJT).

The observer visited the site on three occasions. On 2 Jun a bird was heard churring and a different bird flew over. On 8 Jun and 17 Jun, one was heard calling at the same site with another at a separate location nearby.

This is the same site from which birds were reported during 2006.

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**SWIFT** *Apus apus*

Shropshire Status: Very common summer visitor and passage migrant

BBS: Present in 8% of plots, 68 birds recorded, an average of 3.8 per plot.

Conservation Status: Amber List

The earliest observations of this species were made in the third and fourth weeks of April with records reported from Wellington, Oswestry and Whitcott Keysett between 22 Apr and 2 May. Sightings described as unusually early for the location were noted for Ludlow (22 Apr) and Belle Vue (23 Apr). Larger numbers of swifts, however, were uncommon until somewhat later; weekly bird totals were less than 50 until the week of 2-8 May.

Reports of swifts were widespread across the County with the lowest incidence in the southern hills region around Bridgnorth, Ludlow and Church Stretton (although

this may be a consequence of a low density of birders in this area). Denser clusters of sightings occurred in Shrewsbury and in the Severn Valley south of Bridgnorth. The most frequent habitat type from which this species was reported is open water and wetland (44% of the total of 188 records), especially VP, ASF, the Ellesmere area, Monkmoor Pool, Priorslee Lake and Whixall Moss. The next commonest habitat was towns and villages (about 18% of the records), especially Shrewsbury and Oswestry. The largest numbers reported were 70 birds at VP on 12 May, and two records of 50 birds (VP on 19 May and ASF on 24 Jul). The total number of sites from which swifts were reported was 73.

Evidence of breeding was not plentiful. Chicks were observed in church buildings in Prees (7 Jul) and Loppington (22 Jul) and new young were seen at Prees on 21 Jul. A screaming party of 47 birds was reported for Trefonen on 10 Jul. Swifts had apparently left Shropshire by 25 Aug but departure dates were variable across the County. For example, the last swift was reported on 3 Aug at Oswestry.

Comparison with the last two published SBRs suggests a reduction in numbers of Swifts reported; there were no 100+ records in 2007, as in 2004 and 2005. This may suggest that the Shropshire population is showing the same sort of decrease as is evident nationally. Arrival dates were similar to previous years, but there were no mid-September records, as in 2005.

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### **KINGFISHER** *Alcedo atthis*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common resident

BBS: Present in 3% of plots, 2 birds recorded.

Conservation Status: Schedule 1, Annex 1, Amber List

This popular bird was the subject of 375 records from 48 sites across the County. The majority of these records were of one or two birds. The biggest count was of five individuals on the River Severn near Upper Brompton (16 Apr). The species shows a generally sparse distribution over Shropshire with clusters of contiguous tetrads in only two areas – along the Severn south of Bridgnorth and between Shrewsbury and Telford.

Previous SBR accounts have suggested that this species becomes most visible in autumn and winter when birds disperse from their breeding sites along Rivers to lakes and reservoirs. This is perhaps not entirely evident from these data but both the frequency of sightings and abundance appear to be low in the coldest part of the

winter with the sighting frequency higher in late summer-early autumn.

Breeding information is sparse in the records. Comments suggesting breeding-related activities occur from 13 Mar until 11 Jul. The earliest is a report of birds excavating nest holes along the River Tern and the last is of a male bird accompanied by two juveniles at VP. Reports of kingfisher at nest sites or on permanent territory occurred on 16 Apr (River Tern) and 23 Apr (Wall Farm). Adults carrying fish were observed on 9 May and 7 Jul (Monkmoor), 10 May (Newport Canal), 19 May (River Clun) and 4 Jun (ASF). Additional linear water features at which this species was observed (perhaps suggesting possible breeding activity) were Borle Brook, the Shropshire Union Canal (Market Drayton), the River Severn (Castle Fields in Shrewsbury, the Highley-Hampton Loade-Upper Arley area), the River Onny, the River Redlake, Dowles Brook (Wyre Forest) and Shell Brook. Additional larger water bodies with more than five records of kingfisher are Wood Lane and Priorslee Lake.

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**HOOPOE** *Upupa epops*

Shropshire Status: Very rare passage migrant

Singles were seen at the Long Mynd on 2 May (JAt), Tetchill Moor in June (per APD) and Oakley Mynd, Bishops Castle on 10 Jun (ASR).

The first of these records was seen to fly over the sheep fields at the Long Mynd by birders gathered to see the dotterel which were present at the time. The second record is not entirely satisfactory because the name of the observer is not known and neither is the exact date; however, it was seen in June and a photograph was provided. The Bishop's Castle bird was seen in the garden of Oakley Mynd, it was present for twenty minutes and was photographed.

Records of this species are certainly increasing. Hoopoe has now been recorded during each year since 2001 with these three records following a similar number in 2006 and two in 2005.

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**GREEN WOODPECKER** *Picus viridis*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common resident

BBS: Present in 10% of plots, 6 birds recorded.

Conservation Status: Amber List

A total of 572 records was received of this readily-observed species, from 72 sites in the County. The largest counts (four birds) were reported from Hampton Loade (16 Jul), Nedge Hill (15 Aug), SVCP (15 and 17 Aug, and 30 Sept) and the Highley-Upper Arley area (22 Dec). All but the second of these sites is along the River Severn, south of Bridgnorth. Green woodpecker distribution over the rest of Shropshire is irregular but widespread.

The largest numbers of records were submitted for Wood Lane (96), VP (71) and SVCP (52). This species was noted in all months of the year.

Evidence for breeding largely consists of two types of observations – possible territorial behaviour and sightings of young birds. An increase in vocalisations and sightings of males behaving as if on territory began in April at New Invention (Apr 2), Hawkstone Park (Apr 4), Priors Holt (Apr 16) and Nesscliffe (Apr 25) and continued through until June. A juvenile was seen accompanying an adult at VP on the 29 Jun and 23 Jul and in the Highley area on 3 Sept, while newly-fledged young were observed at Cefn Coch on 6 Jun. Lone juveniles were seen at Child's Ercall on 10 Jul, at Tibberton on 24 Aug and at Handless on 26 Sept. An observer reported the successful raising of two young by a pair at Nedge Hill (15 Aug).

An interesting behavioural observation from VP on 5 Sept was a juvenile green woodpecker harassing a common kingfisher in an apparent attempt to steal a newly-caught fish.

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**GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER** *Dendrocopos major*

Shropshire Status: Common resident

BBS: Present in 69% of plots, 83 birds recorded, an average of 2 per plot.

Conservation Status: Green List

This widespread bird was reported 915 times in 2007 from 138 locations. It is found virtually everywhere in the County with a noticeable concentration of records along

the River Severn south of Bridgnorth. The largest numbers observed was 11 at Dothill, Wellington, (15 Nov). Other noteworthy counts were ten at Benthall Edge (16 May), eight at Colemere (28 Mar), seven at Coalbrookdale (17 May), and also seven at Wyre Forest (23 Apr). The location with the largest number of records was VP, providing about seven percent of the total. Great spotted woodpecker was observed in every month of the year.

Drumming was reported in every month from January until May with no reports thereafter. Evidence of breeding occurs in various forms with varying degrees of reliability. Pairs of birds apparently on territory were reported on 20 Mar from Bridgnorth, 30 Mar from VP, 8 Apr from ASF, 17 May from near Lawley and 29 May at Dothill. A pair near a nest cavity were seen on 28 Mar at Colemere and display behaviour was observed on 31 Mar at Chirbury. At Atcham (19 May) and Haughmond Hill (3 Jun), parents were recorded carrying food to nest sites. A nestling in the nest cavity was seen along the River Severn, between Hampton Loade and Highley on 3 May, and juvenile birds (with or without adults) were identified on 19 May and 30 Jun (VP), 2 Jun (Hawkstone Park and Longford Moors), 7 and 11 Jun (Bridgnorth) and 9 Jun (Horderly).

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**LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER** *Dendrocopos minor*

Shropshire Status: Scarce and declining resident

Conservation Status: Red List

With its scarcity and elusive habits, it is not surprising that information on this species is sparse. There were 44 records from 25 sites, most of which were single birds recorded on a single occasion. Despite this apparent dearth of records this compares well with previous few years; 26 records were received in 2004 and there were just 14 records in 2005. Most sightings were in the north and east of the County, from lowland habitats. They were observed in all months of the year with the exception of July. The largest numbers of records were unsurprisingly received in March (seven) and April (nine) when this species is at its most vocal and tree canopies are sparse.

The largest counts (all of just two birds) were from Shavington Big Pool (14 Jan), Dowles Brook, Wyre Forest (15 Apr), and Upper Shadymoor (11 Jun). The greatest numbers of sightings were from these three locations, plus Hawkstone Park, the River Clun between Purslow and Broome, and Wood Lane.

Breeding was not confirmed within the County. The best evidence available for

territorial activity was a drumming male from Hawkstone Park (17 Mar) and vocalisations in the Clun valley (17 and 31 Mar) and from Dinchope (6 Apr and the period thereafter). A pair was observed at Upper Shadymoor on 11 Jun taking peanuts from a feeder.

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**GREAT GREY SHRIKE** *Lanius excubitor*

Shropshire Status: Rare winter visitor and passage migrant

Not a very good year for this much sought after and extremely attractive species. A bird was present at Black Hill on 1 and 4 Nov (JJT) and one was seen at The Rock on 9 Nov (JHS). Although the two sites are about twenty miles apart, it is possible that only one bird was involved.

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**WOODCHAT SHRIKE** *Lanius senator*

Shropshire Status: Very rare vagrant

An adult female was at Catherton Common, Clee Hill on 28-29 Jul (DBas & DF).

This excellent bird was found by members of the Chelmarsh Ringing Group who were looking for nests or pairs of stonechat as part of their on-going work for the BTO Ringing Adults for Survival (RAS). It was discovered initially by DB, and DF was quickly on the scene to confirm the identification.

The habitat was common land with low scrub, gorse and hawthorn and the shrike was observed catching bees and other large insects two of which were seen being impaled on hawthorn.

During its stay, the bird was photographed and showed very well to the delight of many observers from both Shropshire and adjoining areas of the West Midlands. No doubt all who made the trip to see such an attractive bird, in equally attractive surroundings, appreciated the quick release of the news and were grateful to the finders.

This is the second Shropshire record since the formation of the Society. The first was at Eardiston near West Felton from 22-25 July 1977, it is interesting to note the similarity of the dates.

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**MAGPIE** *Pica pica*

Shropshire Status: Common resident

BBS: Present in 81% of plots, 197 birds recorded, an average of 4.1 per plot.

Conservation Status: Green List

This conspicuous species was well reported from all parts of the County. Most records were of one or two birds but there were some larger gatherings. Most of the highest counts were at Priorslee Lake with a remarkably high count there of 54 (1 Feb). There were also 16 at SVCP (1 Jun) and 20 along the Shropshire Union Canal between Market Drayton and Adderly (11 Jun).

There were few records of breeding behaviour but a pair was noted nesting in a tall fir tree at Waters Upton (14 May), with a pair with two young being present on 29 May.

The controversial aspect of this species character was observed when a bird was seen stealing eggs at Upper Shadymoor (12 Jun). More unusual was a bird seen killing a short-tailed field vole (*Microtus agrestis*) near the North Hide at VP (24 Oct).

According to BBS data, the population of this species is more or less stable nationally but slightly increasing locally.

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**JAY** *Garrulus glandarius*

Shropshire Status: Common resident

BBS: Present in 31% of plots, 22 birds recorded, an average of 1.2 per plot.

Conservation Status: Green List

A popular species with observers with 552 records received. Most reports were of one or two but there were a few records of five or six birds.

Although primarily a woodland bird, there were several records from suburban gardens. The population of this species is stable both locally and nationally.

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**JACKDAW** *Corvus monedula*

Shropshire Status: Very common resident

BBS: Present in 78% of plots, 605 birds recorded, an average of 13.1 per plot.

Conservation Status: Green List

Most records were of less than ten birds but there were some sizeable counts. The highest count was of 520 near Bishops Castle (19 Dec) and there were 500 at Much Wenlock (15 Dec). Priorslee Lake produced several high counts, the highest being 378 (11 Jan). The species was noted throughout the County and was regular in some private gardens.

An interesting observation, and typical of the ingenuity and intelligence of this species, was of two birds seen pulling hair from an unconcerned horse lying down on pasture at Edgmond Marsh (10 May). The birds pulled out the hair while they were on the ground or perched on the horse. Presumably they were obtaining nesting material.

The BBS data for this species indicated that the population trend of this species is of a moderate increase both locally and nationally.

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**ROOK** *Corvus frugilegus*

Shropshire Status: Common resident

BBS: Present in 51% of plots, 631 birds recorded, an average of 21 per plot.

Conservation Status: Green List

As expected for such a gregarious bird, most records were of flocks. There were regular flocks of over 500 birds in Much Wenlock with a maximum of 1,500 there in December. Priorslee Lake area was also favoured with high numbers and in particular 348 (11 Jan).

Active rookeries were reported from Edgmond Marsh, Oswestry, Kynnersley, High Ercall, Caynham, Monkmoor, Stoddesdon and Wellington. The Kynnersley rookery appears very successful as 180 nests were counted on 18 Apr.

The BBS data for this species indicated that the population trend for this species is a gradual increase.

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**CARRION CROW** *Corvus corone*

Shropshire Status: Very common resident

BBS: Present in 98% of plots, 867 birds recorded, an average of 14.9 per plot.

Conservation Status: Green List

Most records related to one or two birds, but some flocks were noted. The highest count was of 235 near Bishops Castle (19 Dec).

Typical behaviour of this species was noted when one was seen mobbing a sparrowhawk near the Wrekin (26 Apr) and another mobbing a common buzzard over the Shrewsbury bypass (5 Jun).

There were few records of breeding behaviour but four fledged young were noted at VP (21 May) and three fledged young there on 28 Jun.

The BBS data for this species indicates that the population trend is a rapid increase.

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**RAVEN** *Corvus corax*



Shropshire Status: Fairly common and increasing resident

BBS: Present in 39% of plots, 48 birds recorded, an average of 2.1 per plot.

Conservation Status: Green List

This charismatic corvid continues to provide a good number of records; 240 casual records were received from 88 different sites. These were fairly evenly spread over the year, but with a marked peak in March and April when the territorial behaviour of nesting pairs is conspicuous. In addition, 308 Atlas records were received from 302 tetrads during November and December, and 117 Birdtrack records from 78 sites.

However, the number of large flocks reported and the size of these flocks was still lower than in previous years. Only seven separate reports were received of flocks of

more than ten birds, compared to three in 2006, ten in 2005 and 20 in 2004. Flocks of more than ten birds together were seen at Hopesay Hill (30 on 11 Jul), Pentre Coed near Dudleston Heath (26 on 13 Jan), Brown Clee (22 on 10 Apr), and Stiperstones (20 on 24 Mar, 16 on 30 Sept, and 12 on both 3 Jul and 9 Aug). Counts reported via Bird track (14 in SJ22N (Trefonen) on 29 Dec) and the Bird Atlas (17 in SJ41M (Bicton) on 21 Dec and 12 in SO38V (Aston on Clun) on 4 Dec) may also have been in single flocks.

These counts are considerably less than those of 84 at Stowe Hill, Bucknell, on 4 October and 55 at Cefn Coch on 10 April (both 2004), 53 on the Long Mynd in July 2000, and around 50 at Oaker Wood, near Aston on Clun, in November 2002.

Observers are specifically requested to report flocks of 10 or more ravens.

Nests were reported only from Callow Hollow, Cloverley Pool (the first time at this location), Condover, Ercall Heath (near Childs Ercall), Hawkstone Park, Knowle Wood and Knuck Wood (near Cefn Einion).

Records continue to reflect the recent expansion in range of this species, with a good proportion coming from the eastern half of the County, though direct comparison with previous years is difficult because of the increased number of Birdtrack and Atlas records. However, adding together the number of casual records, plus Birdtrack records (i.e. records from sites chosen by the observer, rather than Atlas records which aim to achieve systematic coverage), well over half the records (204 - 57%) came from 61 sites in the northern half of the County, while only 67 came from 31 sites in the south-western quadrant, undoubtedly still the species' stronghold.

The high number of records from VP has been maintained; 23, from eight months in the year, compared to 32 last year, 15 in 2005, 31 in 2004, seven in 2003 and four in 2002. Raven have also consolidated their position near Wood Lane, where they were recorded in every month of the year.

A better indication of the increase in population and range, and continued spread from the stronghold in the south-west hills, is the BBS result. Raven were found in 39% of survey plots, total 48 birds, average 2.1 birds per plot.

The Shropshire Raven Study Group concentrated on monitoring colour-ringed raven, and then the time-consuming task of reading the two-letter code on the ring. The last birds to be colour-ringed fledged in 1999, so it is unlikely that any such birds will join the breeding population for the first time now. Therefore most effort was concentrated on the 30 sites where 37 colour-ringed birds were found in 2006. Only five of these birds were missing, a very high survival rate. The unique two-

letter code on the colour-ring of all 32 surviving birds was read, so they have been individually identified, and their age and natal site is known.

One of the 27 birds ringed in 1994 (the first year of the Project) was located in the breeding population in 2007 as a 13-year-old bird, and another four of the 67 ringed in 1995 were found as breeding 12 year olds.

The Group estimates that the breeding population increased from around 50 pairs in 1990 to 175 pairs in 1999 and increased further to around 250 pairs in 2003. No concerted effort has been made to find new sites since 2003, but even so, several have been found and reports from the northern part of the County summarized above show that there are more to find. This suggests that the breeding population is continuing to grow.

The Study Group's work since 1994 was summarised in the 2005 Bird Report. The Group aims to continue to visit nest sites to seek colour-ringed adults. Reports of new nests are welcome (telephone below).

The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) awarded a three year grant towards the cost of the Group's fieldwork up until 2005, which is gratefully acknowledged. The report submitted to the BTO, which contains detailed results, can be viewed on the Society's website, or be obtained from the SRSG, c/o The Bryn, Castle Hill, All Stretton, Church Stretton, Shropshire, SY6 6JP (01694 720296).

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### **GOLDCREST** *Regulus regulus*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor

BBS: Present in 31% of plots, 45 birds recorded, an average of 2.5 per plot.

Conservation Status: Green List

344 records of the UK's smallest bird were received, from 208 sites. Of these records 164 are from the national Atlas scheme. 16 double-figure counts were received, with the highest count of 34 recorded during Atlas work in SO38G (north of Clunton).

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**FIRECREST** *Regulus ignicapillus*

Shropshire Status: Very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

Conservation Status: Schedule 1, Amber List

Three birds were recorded during 2007, with all of these records during the winter period.

Two of the records were of birds trapped and ringed; a male at Hawkstone Park on 20 Oct (AWH), and a juvenile male at Shavington Park on 24 Nov (GT).

The sole casual record was of a bird at Pentre-Newydd on 11 Nov (SS).

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**BLUE TIT** *Parus caeruleus*

Shropshire Status: Very common resident

BBS: Present in 100% of plots, 590 birds recorded, an average of 10 per plot.

Conservation Status: Green List

A species found throughout the County with a total of 1,360 records received. The long-term national trend is a shallow upward increase, again probably partly due to regular use of garden feeding stations.

Breeding blue tit were reported from Bridgnorth (one young fledged from a nest box on 25 May), from Dothill Pools (pair feeding young on 29 May), Knuck Wood, (where there was “at least one active nest”), Shadymoor Pool (five juveniles feeding together on 22 Jun), and VP (adult feeding fledged juveniles on 30 May). Breeding was also confirmed at Craig Sychtyn where 57 eggs were laid in eight nests, and five young fledged from two successful nests.

High counts included 20 at Bridges (10 Jan), 25 at Priorslee Lake (16 Jan), 29 at Merrington Green (9 Apr), 24 along the Shropshire Union Canal between Market Drayton and Adderley (2 May), 26 along Dowles Brook (7 Jun), 28 at Bomere Heath (22 Jul) and 20 at VP N (22 Sept and 10 Dec).

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**GREAT TIT** *Parus major*

Shropshire Status: Very common resident

BBS: Present in 95% of plots, 347 birds recorded, an average of 6.2 per plot.

Conservation Status: Green List

A widespread species in the County, with a total of 1,191 records received, many of which were from garden feeding stations. Nationally, great tit numbers have shown a steady moderate increase since the 1960s.

Breeding was reported only from Craig Sychtyn where 39 eggs were laid in seven nests, nine young fledging from four successful nests, and from Whitton Hall Farm where young from two nests had flown by 20 May, and adults were feeding chicks in a third nest. Three pairs were reported from ASF (30 Mar). Clearly, this is not a true reflection of the number of breeding great tits in the County, but perhaps this species is under-recorded because they are perceived to be so common.

Larger numbers included 17 at Dudmaston (15 Jan) and at Priorslee Lake (5 Feb), 20 at Attingham Park (5 Feb), 23 at Bomere Heath (6 Apr), 29 at Merrington Green (9 Apr), 20 at Benthall Edge (16 May), 21 along the Shropshire Union Canal between Market Drayton and Adderley (11 Jun), 27 in Bomere Heath (22 Jul), and 20+ at VP on several dates in November and December.

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**COAL TIT** *Parus ater*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common resident

BBS: Present in 29% of plots, 43 birds recorded, an average of 2.5 per plot.

Conservation Status: Green List

A total of 573 records of coal tit were received from throughout Shropshire. Recorded during all months of the year and was particularly frequent in coniferous woods, as well as being a regular visitor to garden feeding stations. The national trend is a probable moderate increase but numbers have been relatively stable since the 1970s; regular use of gardens is thought to contribute to this moderate increase.

Given the number of records received, it is somewhat surprising that no records confirming breeding were received this year. However, it is safe to assume that breeding does occur in the County, and evidence of probable breeding included a

singing male noted at Edgmond Marsh (1 Mar) with the bird present throughout the month, and a pair seen at Bridges (11 Apr).

Larger counts included 20 at Bury Ditches (25 Mar), 13 at Dowles Brook (Wyre Forest) (23 Apr), nine at Button Oak (25 Apr), 11 at Fletchers Coppice (23 May), 18 at Dowles Brook (7 Jun) and nine at Dudmaston (25 Oct).

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**WILLOW TIT** *Parus montanus*

Shropshire Status: Scarce resident

Conservation Status: UKBAP, Red List

A total of 86 records from all months of the year were received. Willow tit is scarcer in Shropshire than the similar in appearance marsh tit, with more specialised habitat requirements, preferring wetter, overgrown areas beside lakes, pools and streams, where it nests in rotting tree stumps. Nationally, this species has been in rapid decline since the 1970s and is becoming extinct in an increasing number of former haunts; the decline is thought to be a result of competition from other tit species, predation, and deterioration of habitat.

A singing bird was recorded in suitable breeding habitat at Whixall (22 Apr) and four birds were noted at Chelmarsh (22 Jul) which may have been a family party, but this is not recorded. Unfortunately, no records of confirmed breeding were received this year.

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**MARSH TIT** *Parus palustris*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common resident

BBS: Present in 8% of plots, 7 birds recorded.

Conservation Status: UKBAP, Red List

This species was recorded throughout the year, with a total of 288 records received from locations throughout the County. Regular visits were made to several garden feeders and to the feeding station at VP. Marsh Tit abundance has declined almost constantly since BTO monitoring began and the UK trend is a rapid decline; low survival rates of young is being attributed to the reduced diversity of woodland.

No records of confirming breeding were received in 2007, but two birds together, both collecting nesting material, were seen on Earl's Hill (24 Feb) and several

occurrences of probable pairs in potential breeding habitat were noted during the breeding season.

Most records were of one or two birds, but larger flocks included six at Highley (9 Feb), ten at Dudmaston (11 Feb), six on the Wrekin (5 May), eight on Benthall Edge (16 May) and seven at Shavington (11 Nov).

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**SKYLARK** *Alauda arvensis*

Shropshire Status: Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor

BBS: Present in 66% of plots, 179 birds recorded, an average of 4.6 per plot.

Conservation Status: UKBAP, LBAP (Farmland Birds), Red List

Skylark gather in flocks in winter, feeding on seeds particularly in fields of stubble. Resident birds are joined by passage migrants and winter visitors. During the breeding season, the male's song can be heard over open country almost anywhere from upland moors to lowland farmland.

384 records of skylark were received for every month of the year, ranging from one record in August to 88 in November.

64 records were received between January and the end of March, from 36 sites mostly in lowland areas. The highest counts were 103 at Tibberton in a field with cattle feeding on fodder beet (8 Feb), 97 at Hampton Loade (10 Feb) and 40 at VP (8 & 10 Feb).

The earliest records of singing birds were of four at Weald Moors on 18 Feb, with single birds singing on the same day at Buttery Farm nr Kinnersley and Rodway near Crudgington. These sites are all located in the area of the Weald Moors.

During the breeding season, records of about 218 birds were received from some 125 different sites. These figures are based on the highest number of birds recorded at each site, and thus exclude multiple records from any one site; such records being assumed to include some of the same birds each time. No records of confirmed breeding were received, although singing birds were widely reported.

Marked differences in distribution across the County are shown when these records are analysed by quadrants. In the northwest 34 birds were recorded from 27 sites; in the northeast 90 birds from 37 sites; in the southwest 12 birds from just nine sites and in the southeast 82 birds from 52 sites. On this basis nearly 80% of records are from the eastern half of the County.

The first record of birds in a flock post breeding was of 25 at Isle Pool Bicton (29 Sept). The highest counts were of 157 at Kingslow (13 Nov), 150 at Derrington on stubble (10 Dec) and 150 at Boraston (10 Dec). There were no other counts exceeding 100 birds.

The Skylark is Red listed and included in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. It has suffered a 21% decline in England since 1994.

There was a rapid decline from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s, with the rate of decline slowing somewhat since then. The main cause is thought to be the change to autumn sowing of cereals reducing the availability of stubble seeds. This change can also restrict opportunities for late season breeding attempts when the crop becomes too tall. Benefits have been shown to result from small rectangular patches of bare ground being left in autumn sown cereals.

The Shropshire Biodiversity Action Plan includes the skylark under Farmland Birds, with actions being aimed at encouraging farmers to make habitat improvement through Environmental Stewardship Schemes. The plan also requires that adequate BTO BBS surveys be undertaken.

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### **SAND MARTIN** *Riparia riparia*

Shropshire Status: Common summer visitor and passage migrant

BBS: Present in 2% of plots, 7 birds recorded.

Conservation Status: Amber List

There were 178 records of this species during 2007, from 21 different sites. The earliest sand martins to arrive in the County occurred at Colemere (11 Mar) and VP (12 and 14 Mar), although numbers were small (no more than six birds per record). By the fourth week in March, they were present in strength at various sites, with individual records of 40 or more and weekly totals exceeding 100. During the year, 19 counts exceeded 100 individuals, all at Wood Lane, VP and Hampton Loade. The largest number observed was 400 birds at the first site during July. National trends suggest no strong trends but with large year-to-year fluctuations.

Evidence of breeding can be difficult to obtain with this species. A small group (six birds) was observed flying over traditional communal nesting sites on the River Clun (9 Apr) and at Monkmoor Pool (10 and 23 Apr). At the latter location, birds were observed digging and entering nesting burrows on 15 May and visiting completed

nest holes on 11 Jun, 6 and 18 Jul, and 13 Aug. Fledged young were seen at Wood Lane (15 Jul). Eight birds were breeding at on the River Severn at Pitt's Island (near Hampton Loade) on the last day of May. Most sand martins had departed the County by the end of August although there were late records during September from Monkmoor Pool (6th), VP (17th) and Priorslee Lake (17th).

Because of its specialised nesting requirements, this species is not distributed uniformly across Shropshire, with records concentrated where sandy/gravelly mounds or River banks are available. There were two clusters of reports (the River Severn south of Bridgnorth, and east of Ellesmere), with more diffuse areas of records between Shrewsbury and Telford and in the southwest in the Clun and Onny valleys. The largest numbers of records come from riparian habitats, the top four of which are VP (61 records), Wood Lane (26), Monkmoor Pool (24), and Hampton Loade (13).

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## **SWALLOW** *Hirundo rustica*

Shropshire Status: Common summer visitor and passage migrant

BBS: Present in 88% of plots, 323 birds recorded, an average of 6.2 per plot.

Conservation Status: Amber List

There were 366 records of Barn Swallow during 2007 from 118 sites. The earliest arrivals were in late March (Stanton Heath (26th), Betton Wood (27th), Belle Vue, Priorslee Lake and Wood Lane (28th) and The Mere, Ellesmere (29th), all records of one or two birds. Arrival dates varied significantly over the County, with 'first of the year' birds reported from 28 Mar at Priorslee Lake to 24 Apr at Oswestry. There were no early large flocks suggesting the arrival of the main body of migrants, as in 2004 and 2005. The first group of 20 was not reported until 19 Apr and there were no groups of 40 or more until the beginning of September.

The first report of nesting was on 2 May (Oswestry), with additional occupied nests recorded throughout the rest of May (Cold Hatton Heath and Plealey), June (Upper Shadymoor) and July (the Wrekin), culminating in a late observation of an adult on the nest from Newport on 13 Aug.

All groups of 40 or more birds were in the period 1-23 Sept and presumably represent post-breeding, pre-migration flocking behaviour. The largest number was 100 at Polemere (22 Sept), which was also the largest group reported all year. The last two dates with reports were 29 Sept (Chelmarsh Reservoir, Isle Pool, Bicton and

Whitcott Keysett, with a total of 23 birds) and 1 Oct (Wood Lane, a single bird).

Barn swallow were reported over most of the County but the density of records was higher north and east of the River Severn. The triangle in the southern hills defined by Bridgnorth, Church Stretton and Ludlow was devoid of reports, although this surely the result of observers not submitting reports rather than the absence of birds.

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## **HOUSE MARTIN** *Delichon urbica*

Shropshire Status: Common summer visitor and passage migrant

BBS: Present in 49% of plots, 193 birds recorded, an average of 6.6 per plot.

Conservation Status: Amber List

Eighty-six sites yielded 225 records of house martin during 2007 with a maximum count of 250 noted on 14 Sept at Litley in the east of the County. The earliest arrival date was on the unusually early date of 16 Mar (ten birds at VP). Following which migrants were apparent at the same site on 9 and 10 Apr (both singletons), on 11 Apr at Craig-Llwyn (one bird) and on 12 Apr at Titterstone Cleve (two birds). Records identified by observers as 'first arrivals' for the locality arrived between 11 Apr and 29 Apr, with a median date of about 14 Apr. There were no springtime large numbers suggesting the arrival of the main migration. No double figure observations occurred after the early arrivals until 24 Apr, when ten were noted in Oswestry, 20 at SVCP and 32 at Priorslee Lake. The first three figure count was on 4 May at ASF (120 birds).

Breeding information is not abundant. Nest building was observed on 26 Apr (Hampton Loade), 17 May (Shrewsbury), and 24 Jun (Waters Upton). Records of occupied nests occur on 12 May (Cold Hatton Heath), 2 Jul (Tong) and 2 Oct (Tibberton). A pair of house martins was observed feeding young at Attingham Park on 3 Sept. Pre-migration aggregations of birds are suggested by large counts towards the end of the period they are present in the County. In chronological order, these occurred on 9 Aug (125 at Highley/Upper Arley), 14 Sept (the Litley record of 125 mentioned above) and 2 Oct (100 at Leamoor Common). Small numbers of birds were present after these dates; at Oswestry (5 Oct), Whitcott Keysett (11 Oct) and (the final record) at Baschurch (5 Nov).

Similarly to swallow, house martins were found in most parts of the County but there were more records from the plains of the north and east than elsewhere and no sightings from the southern hills. The site with the largest number of records was

VP with 36 records of from one to 30 of this species. These data are broadly typical of recent years, although the timing of the earliest and latest records appears to be unusual.

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**CETTI'S WARBLER** *Cettia cetti*

Shropshire Status: Very rare vagrant

One was seen or heard on and off at Monkmoor Pool, Shrewsbury from 29 Oct 2007 – 03 Jul 2008 (KL).

This long-staying individual was found and photographed by the warden for the owners of the land Severn Trent Water. Whilst there is restricted access the site, the bird was located in a private area. However, thanks go to the warden for arranging a general viewing day when the bird sang frequently, and showed surprisingly well to the many grateful observers, most of whom, added a new species to their Shropshire list. At other times, the bird could be heard, and sometimes seen, from outside the perimeter fence.

The first record of this species was at Fenemere (14-27 Feb 1975). Following this, there are published records at Chelmarsh in 1983, 1986 and 1992; however, it seems likely that some will not be sufficiently well documented to survive the on-going review of old records.

It is surprising that there have been so few reports and this record was extremely welcome and long overdue.

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**LONG-TAILED TIT** *Aegithalos caudatus rosaceus*

Shropshire Status: Common resident

BBS: Present in 51% of plots, 69 birds recorded, an average of 2.3 per plot.

Conservation Status: Green List

Long-tailed tit was recorded during all months of the year from throughout the County, with a total of 681 reports received. It is a regular visitor to gardens, particularly to peanut feeders. Numbers fluctuate widely; this species suffers high mortality in severe winters but recovers quickly due to its high breeding potential. The long-term trend in England is a moderate increase.

Evidence of breeding was received from SVCP (pair at a nest in brambles on 21 Mar), Priorslee Flash (pair with six fledglings on 8 May), Dudleston Heath (six newly fledged young were being fed on 10 May), VP (a large family party with newly fledged young on 27 Jul) and from Church Stretton (two adults and three juveniles in a garden on 28 Jul). Pairs were also noted at Edgmond Marsh (1 Mar), VP (two pairs on 10 Mar), and Colemere (three pairs on 16 Mar).

Over 70 reports of flocks of between ten and 20 birds were received during 2007, and larger counts were of 21 in Bomere Heath (22 Jul), 30 at ASF (25 Aug), 27 at Barnsley Tip (19 Oct) and 23 near Calverhall (11 Nov).

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**WOOD WARBLER** *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Shropshire Status: Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant

BBS: Present in 7% of plots, 24 birds recorded, an average of 6 per plot.

Conservation Status: UKBAP, Red List

The meagre 15 records derived from a mere six sites. Dowles Brook in the Wyre Forest accounted for five records with an estimated six present on 23 Apr. The Wrekin contributed four records with four birds on 12 May, Clunton Coppice provided two records with four birds reported on 16 May and the Brown Clee produced two records, both of single birds.

There were also single reports from Fletchers Coppice and Whitcliffe. No records were received of breeding, beyond the presence of singing birds confirmed at more than ten day intervals at the Wrekin, Dowles Brook, Clunton Coppice and the Brown Clee.

The first of the year was on the Wrekin (21 Apr), with records the following day at Clunton Coppice and at Whitcliffe. The first bird was at Dowles Brook on 23 Apr.

This species is undoubtedly present more widely than reported here, though at low densities, and it is to be hoped that a better picture of its presence will derive from the forthcoming bird Atlas.

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**CHIFFCHAFF** *Phylloscopus collybita*

Shropshire Status: Common summer visitor and passage migrant, very scarce in winter

BBS: Present in 76% of plots, 184 birds recorded, an average of 4.1 per plot.

Conservation Status: Green List

A total of 458 records was received, from 140 sites. There were 11 double figure site counts, with the maximum of 17 recorded at Dowles Brook (23 Apr).

Recorded during every month, with in excess of 50% of records occurring during March and April, at which time migrants entering the County would have been more conspicuous. A minimum of 13 birds were recorded to have wintered in the County, with two birds at Priorslee Lake in November, the sole record of more than one bird in the winter period.

The below table summarises the number of records (from all sources) of this species by month.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	6	122	122	58	32	21	21	55	8	9	3

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**WILLOW WARBLER** *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Shropshire Status: Common summer visitor and passage migrant

BBS: Present in 64% of plots, 102 birds recorded, an average of 2.7 per plot.

Conservation Status: Amber List

A total of 182 records of willow warbler was received, from 87 sites. The first record of the year occurred at Wood Lane (3 Apr), with the next birds reported VP and Church Stretton (both on 7 Apr). Coincidentally, the final record of the year (17 Sept) was also from Wood Lane, when four were present.

Seven double-figure counts were received, with the maximum of 20 recorded at Whixall Moss (22 Apr).

The willow warbler population, especially in southern Britain, has undergone a moderate decline over the past 25 years resulting in this species inclusion on the Amber List of species of Conservation Concern.

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**BLACKCAP** *Sylvia atricapilla*

Shropshire Status: Common summer visitor and passage migrant, scarce though increasing in winter

BBS: Present in 73% of plots, 132 birds recorded, an average of 3.1 per plot.

Conservation Status: Green List

The first winter period produced three records (14 Jan, 19 Feb and 9 Mar) of over-wintering birds with the apparent return of migrants during the second week of April. End of the year records produced nine in September, 19 in November and 13 in December. No records were received for the period between 21 Sept and 1 Nov; perhaps the former was the last departing migrant and the latter the first arriving winter visitor.

Breeding reports were few and far between. Immature birds were present at Eardington (31 May) and three reports of young birds at VP at the end June and again in late July. Beyond those instances, the only evidence of breeding was of song on widely separated dates at a range of sites around the County. An interesting quantification of numbers came from Hilton, NE of Bridgnorth; "Singing males 130 - 145 on 5 mile circuit". This equates to around one every 55-60 m.

Blackcaps prompt frequent comments from observers, more than 30 this year among the total of 283 records received. Winter food items are often quoted and range through 'small insects (flies?)', apples (cultivated and crab), Cotoneaster, honeysuckle and ivy berries and the usual 'feeders' and fat balls. They can become defensive of their winter food resources, for example "on two occasions he has pinned blue tits down and really pecked them!" This species appear to thrive on our fare, from 10 Apr came the report "This was a male not singing and it appeared slimmer than the fat wintering birds recently seen".

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**GARDEN WARBLER** *Sylvia borin*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant

BBS: Present in 8% of plots, 31 birds recorded, an average of 3.1 per plot.

Conservation Status: Green List

The total records in the year numbered 94, about the same as in recent years. The

first of the year was logged on 15 Apr (Dowles Brook), with the last on 30 Sept, coincidentally at the same site.

There were no records of breeding over and above those suggested by song at sites on dates separated by ten or more days. At ASF, Cefn Coch, Chelmarsh Reservoir, Dowles Brook, Dudmaston, Hampton Loade, Hawkstone Park, Knuck Wood, Monkmoor, Newport Canal, Priorslee Lake, the River Severn Hampton Loade-Highley, Highley-Upper Arley and Quatford-Chelmarsh, SVCP, Shropshire Union Canal, Market Drayton to Adderley, Whitcott Keysett and the Wrekin. VP and Wood Lane contributed just one record each.

Two thirds of the records received were from designated conservation sites, hardly a true representation of the real distribution of the species, the exact nature of which should be better revealed by the forthcoming national and County bird Atlas projects.

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**LESSER WHITETHROAT** *Sylvia corruca*

Shropshire Status: Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant

BBS: Present in 10% of plots, 7 birds recorded.

Conservation Status: Green List

First arrivals were recorded during April at Dudleston Heath (13th), followed by one at Craig Syctyn (14th) and four reports from VP (all on 15th). These dates are early compared with the last ten years when 20 Apr to 27 Apr are typical.

In total, there were 52 records from 20 sites. Of these 22 were of singletons at VP. Only four reports were of more than a single bird, at ASF a maximum of four were recorded (25 May), and two each at VP (22 Jul) and Wood Lane (24 Jul). Singing was heard at eight sites and breeding confirmed at ASF and VP.

The final three reports all came in August at ASF (13th), VP (17th) and at SVCP (20th). These were also early compared to typical last departures of between 30 Aug and 20 Sept.

Between the years 2000 and 2005 there were an average of 76 reports from 40 sites and typically several counts of three, four or more. Therefore the 2007 records appear to show an appreciable drop in numbers.

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**COMMON WHITETHROAT** *Sylvia communis*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant

BBS: Present in 47% of plots, 71 birds recorded, an average of 2.5 per plot.

Conservation Status: Amber List

A total of 108 casual records from 44 widely distributed locations was received. The first report of the year was from Crosslanes, nr. Melverley Green (15 Apr).

The maximum number at any site was of eight at ASF, which included five signing males (20 May).

Breeding was confirmed at three locations, VP, River Redlake and ASF.

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**GRASSHOPPER WARBLER** *Locustella naevia*

Shropshire Status: Very scarce, and declining, summer visitor and passage migrant

Conservation Status: UKBAP, Red List

Six birds were recorded during 2007. The first record was on 18 Apr at Wood Lane. Other 'reeling' birds were recorded during the spring at VP (24 Apr), two at Henley Common (27/28 Apr) with the final record at Colemere (24 May).

The sole late summer record of 2007 was of a single bird trapped and released at Hawkstone Park (11 Aug).

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**SEDGE WARBLER** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant

BBS: Present in 7% of plots, 9 birds recorded.

Conservation Status: Green List

A total of 85 records from just 13 sites was received of this relatively secretive summer migrant, whose presence is often only betrayed by its song. The first record of the year occurred at VP (12 Apr), with none of this species reported elsewhere until 22 Apr at Wood Lane.

The maximum count was of four birds which occurred at Chelmarsh Reservoir, VP, Wood Lane and Monkmoor Pool although accurate counts are obviously difficult. The final bird of the year was at Shavington Big Pool on the late date of 8 Sept. Prior to this, the next latest bird was at VP on 17 Aug.

This species is surely far more widespread than is suggested by the paltry 13 sites from which it was reported this year. Improved observer coverage which will be afforded by the Atlas surveys in the summer of 2008 will provide a more accurate indication of this species true distribution within the County.

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**REED WARBLER** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant

BBS:

Conservation Status: Green List

There were 92 reports from 15 sites. Seven of the sites were well watched and had between eight and fifteen visits, the others having up to four reports only. In April the first reported arrival was on 21st at Priorslee Lake, with several sites reporting birds on 24th and 26th.

At ASF numbers quickly built from three (1 May) to 26 (20 May) and 25 (19 Jul), with a last report of four on 25 Aug.

Other notable counts were of five from Newport Canal (29 Apr), Monkmoor (27 May) and Chelmarsh (26 Jun) and also seven at Priorslee (3 May). Breeding was confirmed at just three sites (ASF, Newport Canal and SVCP) where adults were observed carrying food and juveniles seen.

The last bird at VP was on 21 Sept and was followed by an unusually late record at Wood Lane on 8 Oct. The only other recent October record was during 1995 (3rd).

The records are broadly similar to those of recent years with the exception of 25 and 26 birds at ASF, which exceeded all maxima at any site since 1995.

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**NUTHATCH** *Sitta europaea*

Shropshire Status: Common resident

BBS: Present in 41% of plots, 42 birds recorded, an average of 1.7 per plot.

Conservation Status: Green List

This species favours mature deciduous woodland and is widespread in the County in such habitats, with 635 records received during the year. The national trend is a rapid increase, nuthatch having increased rapidly in abundance since the mid-1970s; this seems to be due to range expansion and to increased brood size.

There were confirmed breeding records from a Church Stretton garden where a juvenile was seen (23 Jun and 8 Jul) and from Whitcott Keysett where an adult was feeding three fledged juveniles (17 Jun). Pairs were recorded in suitable breeding habitat at Bridges and Attingham Park, and a singing male was heard in Bromfield.

Typically recorded in small numbers, with counts of one to four birds the norm, although several counts of five were also received. Counts in excess of this included six at Bridges (18 Apr) and at Shavington Big Pool (24 Feb and 25 Aug), seven at Dudmaston (11 Feb) and Merrington Green (9 Apr), eight on Shavington Big Pool (11 Nov) and nine along Dowles Brook (23 Apr).

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**TREECREEPER** *Certhia familiaris*

Shropshire Status: Common resident

BBS: Present in 20% of plots, 19 birds recorded, an average of 1.6 per plot.

Conservation Status: Green List

A total of just 264 records were received from widespread locations, including one seen several times at Edmond Marsh in March on an electricity pole. Nationally, treecreeper numbers fluctuate widely with no long-term trend; cold and wet winter weather seems to be a significant factor in this fluctuation.

Breeding was reported from the Wrekin where a bird was seen on a nest only a couple of feet above the ground (6 May), and where three adults were seen and one nest with nestlings was found (12 May). These records may refer to one nest, although they were submitted by two different observers. Pairs were reported from Colemere (28 Mar) and from Bridges (11 Apr).

Most records of this species were of one or two birds but, in addition to the above, reports were received of three at Shavington Big Pool (24 Feb), Fletchers Coppice (23 May) and Whitcliffe (1 Jul), four at Dudmaston (11 Feb) and six at Finnalls Coppice (17 Nov). This is an unobtrusive bird which is likely to have been under-recorded in the County.

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**WREN** *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Shropshire Status: Very common resident

BBS: Present in 97% of plots, 569 birds recorded, an average of 10 per plot.

Conservation Status: Green List

A total of 486 records were submitted, excluding the Atlas counts, from 115 named sites by 55 observers. The records were spread widely throughout the County which, as the BBS data indicates, shows the distribution of the observers rather than the birds, this being one of the under recorded common species.

As the winter Atlas fieldwork commenced in November, a flood of TTV and Roving Records added 575 records to the total for the last two months of the year. It is the BBS data that gives a clue to the fortunes of this bird, suggesting that numbers were slightly up this year – one does wonder how many of the BBS tetrads in Shropshire could fail to produce a record of this delightful little bird with its powerful song, often heard but rarely seen. Over a quarter of the records merely noted the bird as present and over half the records were of five or less birds. Even the Atlas TTVs rarely counted more than five birds per visit and those that did exceed this figure were widely spread about the County. Two counts from adjacent tetrads were the maximum TTV counts, 11 in SJ62H (Peplow) and 12 in SJ62M (Ollerton).

Although habitats are not mentioned in the records, woodland and scrub probably hold more birds than farmland and the best counts came from Wyre Forest with 43 (23 Apr) and 49 (7 Jun). The Shropshire Union Canal between Market Drayton and Adderley produced counts of 26 (2 May) and 33 (11 Jun). Forty-seven of the records recorded evidence of breeding, but only two nests were reported and one party of fledged young reported.

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**STARLING** *Sturnus vulgaris*

Shropshire Status: Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor

BBS: Present in 58% of plots, 268 birds recorded, an average of 7.9 per plot.

Conservation Status: UKBAP, Red List

A total of 911 reports were received from around 150 sites, many of these records exceeded 100 birds. There were eight reports of 50 to 100 from Aston on Clun, Long Mynd, Priorslee, Shottaton, SO18W (west of Bettws-y-Crwyn), Tibberton and VP. Higher counts of 1,000+ were from 3,000 at Stapeley Hill (1 Feb) and 2,000 at Pulverbatch (4 Feb). During October there were 3,000 at Whixall (4th) and 5,000 at VP (24th). November peaks came at 2,000 in SJ31G (Wollaston) (1st), 5,000 at VP (3rd) and at SJ40U (Lythwood) (26th).

Sixty reports came from the breeding season and of them eight confirmed breeding.

The twenty largest winter flocks were in the range 500 to 5,000 birds. There were no estimates of ten thousand and above as occurred in 2003, 2004 and 2005. During the 1990s few estimates exceeded one thousand.

On 16 Nov the Society's chairman controlled a bird ringed at Shepstead in Leicestershire (11 Jul 2006) that had travelled 82 km in sixteen months.

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**DIPPER** *Cinclus cinclus*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common resident

BBS: Present in 3% of plots, 4 birds recorded.

Conservation Status: LBAP, Green List

Fifty-six records were received, originating from 20 different sites and reported during every month except June and October. This is similar to the 53 records from 25 sites in 2006 and 43 records from 26 sites in 2005, but considerably fewer than 87 from 40 sites in 2004. In addition, dipper were recorded during Atlas work in 25 different tetrads in November or December.

Breeding was confirmed only at Candy Valley, where a pair nested under a bridge for the seventh successive year ("Nest checked and empty so brood believed to have fledged" on 25 April), and at Market Drayton, where four birds including two fledged

young were seen (15 Jun). Nest building was observed at Horderley (12 May), and a dipper was reported at Whitcott Keysett “under the bridge where they nest annually” (20 Feb).

In addition, an independent juvenile was seen on the River Redlake near Bucknell (5 Jun).

Seventeen different Birdtrack records from Dowles Brook in the Wyre Forest between 3 Mar and 30 Sept were logged, reporting between three and nine birds. However, no detail was given relating to the number of different breeding pairs, or whether any juveniles were seen. There were no other records of more than one pair. Pairs were seen at Lower Wood near Church Stretton (28 Jan), Earls Hill near Pontesbury (24 Feb), Ifton Farm, St Martins (3 Mar) and on the River Clun near Purslow (19 Apr).

Reports came from only seven sites in the northern half of the County; two in the Oswestry uplands (Candy Valley and Candy Wood), Ifton Farm, St Martins, Shell Brook, Earls Hill near Pontesbury, Longnor, and the headwaters of the River Tern at Market Drayton. However, finally, dippers returned to breed on the River Tern for the first time in more than 15 years.

Of the 12 sites in the south, all except two are in the River Teme catchment, mainly on the Rivers Onny, Clun and Redlake, and the Teme itself.

The Upper Onny Wildlife Group started a nestbox scheme for dipper on the Rivers East and West Onny in 2005. The project was extended to the Upper Clun in 2006, and by 2007 had linked it with a resumption of monitoring the population at around 70 winter roost sites in the River Teme catchment, initially carried out from 1987 to 2000. By the 2007 breeding season, nest boxes had been installed at 55 sites, and 20 of them were used. Twelve nests were found in the Upper Onny area, and 13 in the Upper Clun.

Comparison of results obtained at winter roost sites in 2006 and 2007 with those from the 1980s and 1990s showed an overall decline in the number of dipper present, a much greater decline on the lower reaches of the Rivers than on the upper reaches, and a deterioration in the condition of the birds (measured by average body weight). This is attributed to a loss of food as a result of reduced quality of the Rivers, primarily due to pollution from, and silting up by, agricultural activities.

The full results are set out in the report ‘Dippers (*Cinclus cinclus*) in the River Teme Catchment 2007–2008’, submitted to the funding bodies: Natural England’s River Teme Catchment Sensitive Farming Project, the Shropshire Hills AONB Sustainable Development Fund, and the Upper Onny Wildlife Group.

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**RING OUZEL** *Turdus torquatus*



**THE LONG MYND  
BREEDING BIRD  
PROJECT**

Shropshire Status: Very scarce passage migrant, formerly bred

Conservation Status: UKBAP, LBAP, Red List

Thirty records were received originating from six sites, compared with 17 records from ten sites in 2006. All were of passage birds.

All except one of the records were of spring passage. The first record was of a single male at Brown Clee (16 Mar) followed by one on Long Mynd (5 Apr), at least three on Titterstone Clee (6 Apr) and a female with eight fieldfare at Nedge Hill (8 Apr).

Twelve further records were received from Titterstone Clee, between 9 and 18 April. These included four males (10 Apr), three males and two females (11 Apr), one adult male, one female and two immature males (12 Apr), at least four males and one female (13 Apr), five males and three females (13 Apr), at least four (unsexed) birds (14 Apr) with two present four days later (18 Apr).

Eight further records were also received from Nedge Hill. A male (16 Apr) and seven records of a female present daily between 26 Apr and 2 May.

Further records were received from the Long Mynd with one in Batch Valley (15 Apr), three males and three females in Ashes Hollow (20 Apr), one on Yapsel Bank (25 Apr) with a pair there the following day, and finally two in Carding Mill Valley (29 Apr).

There were two further sightings on Brown Clee, of four males and two females on 16 April, and four birds on 18 April.

Single records were received of a male at Cound (13 Apr), and a male and female in Blakeway Coppice (20 Apr).

Return passage was observed only at the former Gatten Plantation (Stiperstones) where one bird was seen on the unusually early date of 3 July, the last record of the year.

The Long Mynd Breeding Bird Project made a systematic search of almost all sites where breeding was observed between 1994 and 2003. In addition, the project has started repeating the population and distribution survey of all upland species carried out between 1994 and 1998, and around 30 days fieldwork was carried out during 2007. Project fieldwork failed to locate any ring ouzel, and none were seen or heard by National Trust staff after 29 April.

In view of the effort made to find ring ouzel during 2005, 2006 and 2007, the fact that none were seen or heard after the end of April in any of the three years suggests that there were no breeding attempts made. This species is now apparently extinct as a breeding bird on the Long Mynd.

As no breeding records have come from anywhere else in Shropshire in recent times (the last away from The Long Mynd was from The Stiperstones in 1982), the species is also presumed to be extinct as a breeding bird in the County as a whole.

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**BLACKBIRD** *Turdus merula*

Shropshire Status: Very common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor

BBS: Present in 100% of plots, 835 birds recorded, an average of 14.1 per plot.

Conservation Status: Green List

A total of 743 casual records was received from 160 sites, submitted by 70 observers. The Atlas data for November and December added a further 802 records.

High counts included 40 at Market Drayton (1 and 22 Dec), 41 at Kynnersley (23 Nov) and 51 at Bomere Heath (7 Apr). The 622 November and December TTVs averaged 9.33 birds per hour but the best per hour counts were from SJ54L (Terrick) with 53 (15 Nov), SJ33C (Rhewl) with 56 (1 Nov) and SJ61G (Admaston) with 58 (9 Nov). SJ41V (Meole Brace) produced a Roving Record of 100 birds (20 Dec) but how long this count lasted is not known. These figures reflect the influx of winter visitors and summer counts were usually quite small although there is one count of 38 birds at Ellesmere (1 Jun).

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**BLACK-THROATED THRUSH** *Turdus rufficollis*

Shropshire Status: Very rare vagrant

A female was seen at Walcot on 8 Apr (AL).

This bird was found feeding with a large, very mobile, group of fieldfare and a few redwings. Although the observer alerted others quickly, only a few arrived in time to see this County first before it quickly moved on.

Black-throated thrush is a national rarity and the record was accepted by BBRC. A full account appears within this report.

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**FIELDFARE** *Turdus pilaris*

Shropshire Status: Common passage migrant and winter visitor

BBS: Present in 5% of plots, 33 birds recorded.

Conservation Status: Schedule 1, Amber List

A total of 309 records was received from 124 sites, submitted by 56 observers. The Atlas data, recorded during November and December, logged a further 531 records.

Considering the non-Atlas records first, numbers were quite low in January compared to December 2006; it wasn't until 21 Jan that c.200 were reported at VP and again on 28 Jan. The only other large flock was of 120 at Wroxeter (26 Jan). Other records of up to 80 came from all areas of the County although thinly distributed in the southwest due to fewer observers in this area. Snow in February pushed many fieldfare into gardens, with up to 100 at Tibberton feeding on apples and larger flocks were reported with 350 at Bolas Heath (10th) and 300 at Buttery Farm, Weald Moors (11th). Flocks of up to 100 were widespread in March, VP continued to hold good numbers with 150 (3rd and 10th). Other notable counts were logged at Tibberton where numbers built up to 1,000 (25th) before moving north. Wall Farm held 300 (28th) and 200 at Moreton Say (30th). There were 28 casual records in April with 100 at Atcham (9th), 80 at Birchen Park (10th), 90 at Ebury Hill (19th) and the last record of a single bird at Childs Ercall (20th).

Coincidentally, the first record for the autumn also came from Childs Ercall with 8 (28 Sept). More records came in October with early counts including ten at Haughmond Hill (7th), 27 at Priorslee Lake (12th) and 180 at Ightfield (18th).

During November there were 200 at Allscott (6th and 10th) which increased to 400 (12th) and 300 at Whixall (17th). During December many counts were less than 30 birds, but notable flocks were 300 at Kynnersley (3rd), 300 at The Rea, Upton Magna (21st) and 500 at Ollerton on (29th).

The Atlas TTV counts averaged out at 24.57 birds an hour but there were some large counts –SO79C (north of Bridgnorth) held 260 (25 Nov), SJ33K (east of Whittington) held 352 (31 Dec) while SJ62N (south of Stoke On Tern) held 550 on the same day.

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### **SONG THRUSH** *Turdus philomelos*

Shropshire Status: British form *clarkei* ('British Song Thrush') a common, though declining, resident. Nominate continental form ('Continental Song Thrush') presumably a fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor

BBS: Present in 85% of plots, 234 birds recorded, an average of 4.7 per plot.

Conservation Status: UKBAP, LBAP, Red List

A total of 422 records was received from 58 observers at 136 sites, excluding the Atlas data for November and December which added a further 268 records.

BBS data shows a small decline in the percentage of plots where this bird was located but the numbers of birds were up, leading to an increase in the numbers per plot. This suggests a small increase in numbers which matches the increase in the number of casual records, although this is a less reliable indicator.

This is a bird that draws attention to itself with a powerful and familiar song in early spring, with the number of records peaking in April and yet, by mid-summer, it almost disappeared with just four records in August.

Probably under recorded, most records in January were of individual birds and came from the Shrewsbury and Telford areas, a few around Oswestry and just one in the southwest. Seven at Priorslee Lake (14 Jan) was the best count for the month. Singing birds were noted at Wrentnall and Pulverbatch (13 Feb), 15 were counted in song along the River Severn in Shrewsbury (11 Feb). In the southeast of the County, birds were noted at Dowles Brook (3 Mar), Bell Coppice (8 Mar) and four at Bromfield (11 Mar), ten were in the SVCPC (15 Mar). By April records were coming from all parts of the County, rarely more than four in a record but Ponthen held 11 (15 Apr) and there were five in song at Whitcott Keysetts (25 Apr).

Fledged young were noted at Bridges (2 May) and an adult was feeding young at

Monkmoor (3 May), 18 were counted at Benthall Edge (16 May) but most records were of single birds or just 'present'. The same level of recording was the case in June with eight at Dowles Brook (7 Jun) one of the better counts. After the August and September low there were a few more records in October with six at Catherton Common (8 Oct) and seven at Priorslee Lake (13 Oct). There were 12 near Harley (17 Nov) but thereafter just low numbers or 'present' at sites widespread over the County to the end of the year.

The Atlas TTV counts confirmed the low numbers in the autumn with 97% of the counts recording less than four birds per hour. The best counts came were 11 in SO37U (Twicken) on 29 Dec, 14 in SO59Z (north of Presthoke) on 17 Nov and 15 in SJ61M (Eyton upon the Weald Moors) on 10 Dec, all during one hour TTVs.

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### **REDWING** *Turdus iliacus*

Shropshire Status: Common passage migrant and winter visitor

Conservation Status: Schedule 1, Red List

A total of 286 records from 52 observers at 107 sites, excluding the Atlas data for November and December which added a further 497 records.

Between January and April 137 records, mostly in the north and east of the County, were received. Just occasional records were received from the southwest, usually small flocks with an average size of 14 birds and just a few counts exceeding 50 birds. 55 were at Ellesmere (30 Jan), 200 at Attingham Park (5 Feb), 50 at Chelmarsh Reservoir (6 Feb) (roosting in bushes at the edge of the water), 80 at Alveley (7 Feb), 90 at Butter Cross (11 Feb), 55 at Ellesmere (13 Feb), 70 at Shavington (19 Feb) and 120 at Moelydd (6 Mar). Most had departed by the end of March with just a few late birds including 13 at Moelydd (4 Apr) and the last records were two at Roden and two at Rodington (9 Apr).

September to December produced 149 records with the first records all from Priorslee Lake (one on 2 Sept, 2 on 19 Sept and one on 22 Sept). Following which there were nine at Tibberton (28 Sept), ten at Isle Pool, Bickton (29 Sept) and five at Market Drayton (29 Sept). The average count for the rest of the winter was 24 but some larger flocks were noted, 160 at Moelydd (22 Oct), 200 at Isle Pool, Bickton (3 Nov), 175 at Derrington (10 Dec), 150 at Pell Wall (16 Dec), 334 at Norton Hales (26 Dec) and 130 at Ollerton (29 Dec).

The Atlas TTV counts averaged 20 birds per hour but with the big flocks mentioned

above wandering about, some appeared in the TTV counts. 90% of the counts had less than 50 birds.

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**MISTLE THRUSH** *Turdus viscivorus*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common resident

BBS: Present in 47% of plots, 47 birds recorded, an average of 1.7 per plot.

Conservation Status: Amber List

A total of 273 records was received from 39 observers originating from 108 sites (excluding the Atlas data for November and December which added a further 278 records).

This large thrush is much thinner on the ground than the other two resident thrushes, only in October was it recorded more often than its cousin the song thrush. Most records were of one or two birds, but in January, Priorslee Lake held 7 (8th and 14th) while VP supported 17 on (26th). A pair were nesting in Alveley (12 Mar), with nest building also noted at Coalbrookdale (30 Mar) and at Aqualate Golf Course (8 Apr, two pairs). Moelydd held a loose flock of 26 (12 Jul) and 28 were at Cheney Longville (14 Jul). Another 28 were at Ercall Heath (4 Sept). 11 at Tibberton Grange (11 Oct) was the last record of more than four birds although there were some records of birds 'present' without a number being given. Records came from all parts of the County.

The Atlas TTVs in November and December produced more records in two months than all the other records for the year. However, numbers remained low with an average of 1.55 birds per hour.

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**SPOTTED FLYCATCHER** *Muscicapa striata*

Shropshire Status: Scarce and declining summer visitor and passage migrant

BBS: Present in 10% of plots, 7 birds recorded.

Conservation Status: UKBAP, Red List

Thirty-five reports were received during 2007, from widespread localities; this is a significant drop in the number of records received since the previous year, and reflects a significant national decline in population size between 2006 and 2007. Spotted flycatcher, which favours shady locations such as woodland clearings,

gardens and churchyards, particularly those close to water, continues to decline in Shropshire. This trend is mirrored nationally; BTO data shows a <50% population decline since the 1960s, which may be attributable to deterioration of woodland habitat and to declines in numbers of large flying insects, as well as factors operating outside UK.

The first County record of the year was of a singing male in Asterton (15 May). This was followed by single birds at Wood Lane (16 May), near Dowles Brook in the Wyre Forest (18 May) and on Haughmond Hill (23 May). Evidence of breeding was received from Wall Farm, Myndtown, Whitcott Keysett, and from a Market Drayton garden where five young were ringed in the nest (1 Jul). Four birds seen in the SVCP (23 Aug) were likely to be a family party.

Only one September record was received this year, of a bird at Attingham Park (24th).

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**ROBIN** *Erithacus rubecula*

Shropshire Status: Very common resident

BBS: Present in 98% of plots, 497 birds recorded, an average of 8.6 per plot.

Conservation Status: Green List

A total of 638 records from 140 sites submitted by 61 observers were received, excluding the Atlas data for November and December which added a further 734 records.

As with other common species, the records really illustrate the distribution of the observers and were widely spread across the County. An unmistakeable bird which makes itself known and is not difficult to approach is evidenced by the BBS data which is unchanged since last year suggesting that the population is doing well.

Of the 399 records where a count was given, almost half were of singletons. Outside the breeding season Priorslee Lake turned in notable counts of 40 (1 Feb), 50 (13 Sept and 10 Oct) and 58 (11 Oct). Other high counts were 28 at Bomere Heath (7 Apr), 30 at Merrington Green (9 Apr) and 24 at Dowles Brook (7 Jun).

There were just nine records of confirmed breeding. On the Atlas TTVs the average number of birds per hour was 3.84 but there were a few good per hour counts with 17 in SJ22I (Wern-Ddu) on 27 Nov, 19 in SO38Q (Clunbury) on 21 Nov, 21 in SO79C (north of Bridgnorth) on 25 Nov and 25 in SJ71N (Chetwynd Aston) on 25 Nov.

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**BLACK REDSTART** *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Shropshire Status: Very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

Conservation Status: Schedule 1, Amber List

Seven records at four sites from five observers. The February records probably involve just two birds; a female/immature was seen at Heritage Park, Oswestry on 20 Feb and again on 15 Mar (DH), whilst in Shrewsbury a male was seen at St Mary Water Lane on 6 and 11 Feb (RH & SH). Later in the year a female appeared briefly at Pole Cott on the Long Mynd on 4 Nov (JA & AL). Finally, a male bird appeared at Ironbridge Power Station on 12 Dec (JBU). This represents a similar pattern of records to the previous year.

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**REDSTART** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant

BBS: Present in 24% of plots, 34 birds recorded, an average of 3.4 per plot.

Conservation Status: Amber List

Over the past few years arrival dates have ranged from 1 to 19 Apr; this year the first bird was reported just two days later than average. A single at Bridges on 11 Apr was followed by two at the Moelydd the following day. More records quickly followed and by the end of the month first birds had been noted at 14 additional locations. With the exception of passage birds at Eaton-upon-Tern on 19 Apr and VP on 22 Apr all were from regular breeding sites. This pattern continued until the middle of June, a further 33 records were received during this period. Apart from four in the hills to the west of Oswestry and three from the Wrekin the others were from strongholds in the south and west. Mainly recorded as singles but five were at Brown Clee (28 Apr) and Ashes Hollow the following day. Five males and a female at Asterton (15 May) was the highest number of adults during this year.

Singing males were noted at six locations but breeding was confirmed at just three sites. Young were being fed at Whitcott Keysett (17 May) and Titterstone Clee (13 Jun) and recently fledged young were at Craig Sychtyn (26 Jun). Two juveniles and six adults, the highest number reported, were at Callow Hollow (31 Jul) but by this date juveniles have begun to wander extensively and may not have been raised locally.

The first autumn passage bird was at VP (22 Jun), others were at Hawkstone Park (23 Jun) and Nedge Hill (10 Aug). Birds continued to be reported from the breeding areas until 26 Aug when the last one was seen at Cefn Coch. A passage male was at VP on the same day and two males were present here on 2 Sept. The final two birds were also at this site, a female/immature on 7 Sept and the last one a week later on 14 Sept.

The BBS in England shows a significant upward trend whilst in Wales it remains constant. Most of the County population are found near the Welsh border and there appears to be no obvious change locally.

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### **WHINCHAT** *Saxicola rubetra*

Shropshire Status: Scarce, and declining, summer visitor and passage migrant

BBS: Present in 3% of plots, 11 birds recorded.

Conservation Status: Amber List

This increasingly scarce summer visitor now appears to be restricted to breeding sites on bracken covered slopes in the south Shropshire hills.

The first records were of a single bird at VP, and a male at Whixall Moss, both on 22 Apr. More spring passage birds were then seen at VP (24 Apr (two birds) and 25 Apr), Nedge Hill (25 Apr) and Trefonen (30 Apr).

There was a welcome increase in breeding season records. From eight different sites on the Long Mynd (the County stronghold) the following records were received; six birds in Ashes Hollow (29 Apr), one in Cwmdale (1 May), one on Yapsel Bank (1 May), one on Robin Hood Butts (7 May), a male in Carding Mill Valley, a pair in Lightspout Hollow, two near Wildmoor Pool (7 Jul) and three singing males on Wild Moor (all on 16 May). Four records were also received from Callow Hollow between 23 May and 4 Aug with a maximum of seven birds (excluding BBS data where a maximum of 19 were logged) present. These reports provided little information about breeding evidence, and no confirmed breeding records were received.

However, there was a very welcome confirmed breeding record from a different site, two adults with five young at Nordy Bank (16 Jun).

There was only one autumn migration record, from VP (26 Aug), this being the final record of the year.

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## STONECHAT *Saxicola torquata*

Shropshire Status: Scarce resident, passage migrant and winter visitor

BBS: Present in 3% of plots, 7 birds recorded.

Conservation Status: Amber List

Ten birds were reported during January and February. Of these, two had remained in their upland breeding sites, a female on the Stiperstones (10 Jan) and a male on the Long Mynd (31 Jan). Seeking milder conditions were a pair at Wall Farm (15 Jan) and a female at Hadley Pool, Whitchurch (20 Jan). A single bird was VP (8 Feb and 10 Feb), a male was at Priorslee Lake (19/20 Feb) and a pair at Pen-yr-estyn (28 Feb).

From March through until August all records came from breeding localities. The majority of these records were from the southern hills and the Long Mynd dominated with 16 reports, followed by Brown Clee, Titterstone Clee, The Stiperstones and Shelve. Single reports came from The Lawley, Hopesay Hill, Nordy Bank and Corkins Bank. Breeding birds are not confined to the southern hills; six reports came from Whixall Moss and three from Rednal airfield, both in the north. Whixall Moss also recorded the highest count during this period when 12 were noted (22 Apr).

Pairs were widely reported and breeding was confirmed at Rednal airfield and Asterton where females were seen feeding young. Family parties were also seen at Whixall Moss, Stapeley Hill, Titterstone Clee, Nordy Bank, Black Marsh and Brown Clee.

Post-breeding dispersal was noted from September, when some birds began to move to lower levels. The first was at VP (8 Sept) with subsequent birds at Tibberton (25 Sept), Priorslee Lake (12 Oct) and Childs Ercall (28 Oct). However, many remained in the hills; six were on the Long Mynd (3 Sept) and the highest count of the year was of 20 at the Stiperstones (21 Sept). The number of reports during the final two months rocketed to 52 as a result of Atlas fieldwork. These came from all over the County with just 19 from the southern hills, while this reflects the areas covered for the atlas it does appear that wintering birds can be found almost anywhere.

The BBS shows a massive 216% increase in England and 338% in Wales. Because of the limited amount of suitable habitat in the County and the small number of BBS plots therein, the local BBS data is of limited value. However early indications from the first winter of Atlas fieldwork indicates a much wider winter distribution than found in Shropshire during the previous atlas.

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**WHEATEAR** *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant

BBS: Present in 7% of plots, 4 birds recorded.

Conservation Status: Amber List

With an average first arrival date of 17 Mar this species was noticeably later this year. A passage bird was at Wood Lane on 23 Mar and the next at the Long Mynd (26 Mar). Three were on Brown Clee the following day and on the last day of the month six were on Titterstone Clee. Titterstone Clee must be a good spot for wheatears or birders searching for them, 30 birds were noted here on 6 Apr and a further nine counts of 30 or more were received from this site with a maximum of 50 (12 Apr). Elsewhere the highest number recorded was of seven passage birds at Nedge Hill (16 Apr).

Breeding was noted at Nordy Bank (16 Jun) and juveniles were widely reported in July. This species is an early nester and although juveniles were noted with adults, they may not have bred at the reported sites.

A juvenile at Bromfield (9 Jul) was the first autumn bird away from breeding areas. Singles at Priorslee Lake (20/21 Jul and 14/15 Aug) and two at Oswestry Hill Fort (25 Sept) completed the obvious passage birds. After four on the Brown Clee (10 Aug) there were no more from the hills until Oct when late records came from Titterstone Clee (8 Oct and 20 Oct) and the Long Mynd (26 Oct). The average last date is 7 Sept, although there was one as late as 22 Oct last year.

A small decline has been noted over the border by the BBS in Wales but locally numbers are too small to judge trends.

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**PIED FLYCATCHER** *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant

BBS: Present in 5% of plots, 5 birds recorded.

Conservation Status: Amber List

45 reports from 16 locations, largely from oak woodland and often associated with nest boxes, is a slight increase from the number of records received in 2006.

Pied flycatcher has a marked westerly distribution in UK, where there is most suitable habitat, reflected in its presence in a higher percentage of plots in Shropshire than in the UK as a whole. This species seems to show a downward trend nationally; early research in the Netherlands seems to suggest that climate change is bringing forward the peak period of food availability but, so far, pied flycatcher do not seem to have responded to this by breeding earlier.

The first birds of 2007 were seen at Knowle Wood (12 Apr), Candy Valley (16 Apr - reported to be the earliest arrival date there for ten years) and Bridges (18 Apr). Breeding was confirmed at Craig Sychtyn (12 pairs attempted to breed, laying 82 eggs, and 26 young fledged from six successful nests), and Church Stretton. Singing males were noted at Brown Clee, Clunton Coppice, High Park, Knuck Wood and The Wrekin.

The last records of the year were of three in Hawkstone Park (3 Jun), and of one at Knuck Wood, near Cefn Einion (12 Jun).

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**DUNNOCK** *Prunella modularis*

Shropshire Status: Very common resident

BBS: Present in 93% of plots, 235 birds recorded, an average of 4.3 per plot.

Conservation Status: UKBAP, Amber List

A total of 963 records was received, with 534 of these occurring during November (290) and Dec (244) due to Atlas records. Apart from these two months, the average number of observer reports was 43 reports per month, suggesting that this species is generally overlooked.

There were 18 double figure counts, with the maximum (23) logged at Mynydd Myfyr (10 Apr). An interesting record involved a leucistic bird visiting a feeding station at Castlefields, Shrewsbury (11 Feb).

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**HOUSE SPARROW** *Passer domesticus*

Shropshire Status: Common but declining resident

BBS: Present in 73% of plots, 573 birds recorded, an average of 13.3 per plot.

Conservation Status: UKBAP, LBAP (Farmland Birds), Red List

In England, the rapid decline in the population of this species continues, with this decline mirrored across much of Europe.

The number of records submitted during 2007 was 831 and house sparrow was reported from 88 named sites.

The highest counts for the first winter period were all in January. Twenty were in Newport (7th and 27th), 19 at Woolston nr Wistanstow (28th) and 18 at Radbrook, Shrewsbury (18th and 19th). Larger flocks were noted in April, with 41 at Radbrook (3rd) and 36 at Bomere (7th). However, these latter counts were perhaps congregations of breeding birds rather than late wintering flocks.

Although approximately one hundred records were submitted for the breeding season, reports confirming breeding were only received from four locations, Newport, Radbrook, Waters Upton and Edgmond Marsh.

Whilst the highest counts from the first winter period were relatively low, much larger flocks were recorded from the second winter period. Fifty were recorded at Polemere (6 Sept), 58 at Worfield (16 Nov) and 65 Ollerton (29 Dec).

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**TREE SPARROW** *Passer montanus*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common resident

BBS: Present in 10% of plots, 20 birds recorded, an average of 3.3 per plot.

Conservation Status: UKBAP, LBAP (Farmland Birds), Red List

Although the population of this species has stabilised and slightly increased since 1994, the effects of the crash in tree sparrow numbers witnessed in the 1970s can still be seen both in Britain and across Europe. During 2007, 411 records were received for this species from 48 named sites and 59 tetrads, the latter being data collected through Atlas fieldwork.

During the first winter period the largest reported flocks were ten at VP (26 Jan), 20 at Adley Moor Common (9 Feb) and 14 near Shifnal (24 Feb). Five counts of twenty or more were received towards the end of the year. Twenty were at Prees (15 Sept), with the same number near Weston Heath (17 Nov), 26 were counted during Atlas fieldwork near Stoke on Tern on (25 Nov), approximately 50 were at VP (17 Dec) and 21 at Wistanstow (20 Dec).

Reports of juvenile birds confirmed breeding at four sites, Polemere (23 Jun), VP (28 Jun) and Whitcott Keysett (5 Aug), whilst twelve young birds at Tibberton (29 May) were thought to have bred in local nest boxes.

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### **YELLOW WAGTAIL** *Motacilla flava*

Shropshire Status: British form *flavissima* ('Yellow wagtail') a fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant

BBS: Present in 3% of plots, 3 birds recorded.

Conservation Status: UKBAP, Red List

A total of 81 records were received from 22 sites, the majority of these (42) originated from VP where a maximum of six were logged on 11 May. However, the two highest counts in the County occurred at ASF. Seven were present on 17 Aug, with 16 on 24 Aug.

The first record of the year occurred on 12 Apr, when two were present at VP. The final record for 2007 was a single juvenile at Bromfield on 6 Sept.

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### **GREY WAGTAIL** *Motacilla cinerea*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common resident

BBS: Present in 8% of plots, 7 birds recorded.

Conservation Status: Amber List

A total of 342 records was received, the majority of which were logged as Atlas records in November (101) and December (68). The maximum recorded was 12 at Mire Lake (ASF) on 21 May. Two other double figure counts were made; ten were present on Dowles Brook in the Wyre Forest (3 Mar) and 11 were recorded at Dudmaston (17 Mar).

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**PIED WAGTAIL (White wagtail) *Motacilla alba***

Shropshire Status: British form ('Pied wagtail') a common resident, summer visitor and passage migrant. Nominate continental form ('White wagtail') a scarce passage migrant.

BBS: Present in 51% of plots, 54 birds recorded, an average of 1.8 per plot.

Conservation Status: Amber List (*yarrellii*) and Green List (nominate).

**Pied wagtail *Motacilla (alba) yarrellii***

A total of 647 casual records was received. Of these, 58 were double figure count with three counts in excess of 100. Of these triple figure counts, three were of 150 and related to birds coming into roost at ASF (24 Jul), Chelmarsh reservoir (24 Mar) and at Nedge Hill (2 Feb). The maximum count of the year occurred in Shrewsbury, to the rear of the Proud Salopian public house, where in excess of 200 were observed on 14 Feb.

As would be expected due to the start of the Atlas TTVs, the majority of these records occurred in the last two months of the year, with 373 of the records occurring during these months (Nov – 245, Dec – 128).

**White wagtail *Motacilla (alba) alba***

Nine records of this species were received from five sites. All counts were of single birds with the exception of two that were present at Muckley Cross (21 Feb).

The maximum of four records were received during Apr, with other records during Feb (one), Aug (one), Oct (two) and Nov (one).

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**TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis***

Shropshire Status: Fairly common summer visitor

BBS: Present in 3% of plots, 6 birds recorded.

Conservation Status: UKBAP, Red List

There were 29 records of tree pipit, relating to a maximum of 72 birds from 17 locations within the County. The first records occurred from three sites on the same date (Bury Ditches, Dowles Brook and Cefn Goch) on 15 Apr, with the final bird

logged within the County on 5 Jul (Bell Coppice).

The maximum number of eight was recorded at two sites, Dowles Brook (23 Apr) and Ashes Hollow (29 Apr).

This species has demonstrated significant national decline, with a long-term trend (1970 – 2008) of -72%, hence its inclusion on the Red List of species of conservation concern. There are large areas of suitable breeding habitat for this species within the County. More comprehensive coverage of these predominantly upland areas during the summer months would result in a more complete picture of this species status within the County.

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**MEADOW PIPIT** *Anthus pratensis*

Shropshire Status: Common resident, summer visitor and passage migrant

BBS: Present in 10% of plots, 48 birds recorded.

Conservation Status: Amber List

There were a total of 312 casual records of meadow pipit, from 173 sites. The maximum number recorded was of 55 at Priorslee Lake on 23 Sept.

Breeding Season (1 Apr – 31 Aug) records were received from 123 sites, widely distributed within the County.

This species is included on the Amber List of species of conservation concern, due to its national decline of 43%.

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**CHAFFINCH** *Fringilla coelebs*

Shropshire Status: Abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor

BBS: Present in 100% of plots, 838 birds recorded, an average of 14.2 per plot.

Conservation Status: Green List

Nationally, the population in this species continues to increase, albeit slightly, and this is perhaps reflected in the BBS data for the County with an increase in the average number of birds per plot increasing from 13.8 to 14.2.

Seven counts of 50 or more birds were received between the start of the year and

April. The largest were 220 at Cefn Coch (14 Feb) and 70 at VP (13 Feb), with 60 at the same site (16 Jan). By contrast, there were 30 flocks of at least 50 birds from October through to December. One-hundred bird flocks were reported from Chelmarsh (27 Oct), VP throughout the period and Bishop's Castle (3 Nov) whilst 120 were seen at roost at Pell Wall (16 Dec) with 150 at The Rea (21 Dec).

Although numerous records were received throughout the breeding season, none were indicative of breeding.

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**BRAMBLING** *Fringilla montifringilla*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant

Conservation Status: Green List

With 133 records from over 75 sites (including Atlas tetrads), this appeared to be a better year for seeing Brambling than the previous one. Surprisingly, particularly given that most of the records in 2006 came during the second winter period, only 23 reports were submitted for the early part of the year compared to at least four times that number later on. Whilst Atlas work would undoubtedly have generated more records for November and December than would be normal, there was still over twice as many non-Atlas records in the second winter period.

Largest flocks reported in the first part of the year were 20 (8 Jan) and 60 (10 Jan) at Bridges, 12 at Attingham Park (8/9 Feb). The last record for the first part of the year was of a single male in Alveley (19 Mar).

The first returning birds were seen on 18 Oct at two separate sites, Oswestry and Prees Lower Heath. The largest count during this period was of a hundred birds in a tetrad between Bucknell and Chapel Lawn (16 Dec). Elsewhere, 30 were seen during a timed tetrad visit on the eastern slopes of Brown Clee (4 Nov) and 50 were in Wyre Forest (26 Dec).

This species was regularly seen visiting garden feeding stations so a species for everyone to look for.

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**GREENFINCH** *Carduelis chloris*

Shropshire Status: Common resident

BBS: Present in 63% of plots, 155 birds recorded, an average of 4.2 per plot.

Conservation Status: Green List

Over 700 records were received for this species from nearly 300 sites, including many counts from Atlas fieldwork. However, whilst both the number of submitted records and sites was well up on the previous year, this is almost certainly due to Atlas fieldwork and not an increase in the population of this species. The BBS data shows a reduction in the average number of birds per plot from 5.2 to 4.2 in Shropshire; a possible shallow decrease in the English population has been detected through the analysis of country-wide data.

There were 26 counts of 25 or more birds, all but one during either the first or last four months of the year, although the majority (22) were from the latter period. The highest eight counts were of 50 at The Rea, Upton Magna (30 Jan and 21 Dec), 75 roosting at Priorslee Lake (12 Aug), 50 (22 Sept and 6 Nov) and 100 (23 Sept) at VP, 70 in a tetrad near Weston Heath (17 Nov) and 50 in a tetrad between Highley and Chelmarsh Reservoir (29 Dec).

Although this species was reported throughout the breeding season, only one record provided any evidence of confirmed breeding, this involved young being fed in two nests in a Tibberton garden.

Birds ringed in a garden near Bridgnorth dispersed to the east, south and west being re-recorded at Harleston, Norfolk (re-trapped at a distance of 255 km 125 days later), Willingham, Cambridgeshire (retrapped/172km/151 days), Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire (found dead/90 km/89 days) and Bardsey Island (re-trapped/160 km/122 days). A bird rung at Chelmarsh was re-trapped in this Bridgnorth garden five days and 9 km later.

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**GOLDFINCH** *Carduelis carduelis*

Shropshire Status: Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor

BBS: Present in 73% of plots, 185 birds recorded, an average of 4.3 per plot.

Conservation Status: Green List

This popular finch was well reported with 564 casual records, complemented by 321 records originating from Atlas fieldwork. This was an increase on the previous year; whilst the number of sites was more-or-less the same as 2006 (if Atlas recorded are omitted). Overall, the English goldfinch population is thought to be on a shallowly increasing trend.

As might be expected, the largest flocks were reported from the post breeding/second winter period when 17 'charms' of fifty or more birds were reported. Only four such flocks were recorded for the period from January through to March. There were six reports of 100 birds or more, all of which came from VP between August and December with the largest, a count of c200 birds (17 Dec). Other large counts from this site were of 150 birds (23 Sept) and 100 birds (26 Aug, 11 Oct, 20 Oct and 27 Dec). Elsewhere, 80 birds were counted at The Rea, Upton Magna (21 Dec) with 60 by the River Severn at Monkmoor (10 Jan) and 58 at Butter Cross on (29 Sept).

Birds were reported nesting in a magnolia in Newport in April, a bird was seen carry food at Whitcott Keysett in May whilst young birds were reported from a Radbrook (Shrewsbury) garden in the same month.

One bird ringed at a site near Bridgnorth 21 Jan 2005 was re-trapped at Newburgh, Grampian on 22 April 2007, a distance of 531 km over 821 days. Another bird trapped in the same Bridgnorth garden on 26 Nov was re-trapped at Darlton, Nottinghamshire some 405 days later, having travelled 133 km.

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**SISKIN** *Carduelis spinus*

Shropshire Status: Scarce passage migrant and breeder and fairly common winter visitor

Conservation Status: Green List

The population of this species continues to increase both in England and across the UK. Although largely considered to be a winter visitor in the County, it is regularly

seen during the breeding season and this year some evidence of breeding was reported. Of the 337 records received, 157 were from Atlas work whilst 181 records were of sightings from individual sites. The latter figure is very comparable with 2006.

During the first winter period, the highest count by far was of 250 birds at Cefn Coch (29 Jan). Elsewhere, 50 were observed feeding on Riverside alders by the River Clun downstream of Newcastle (16 Jan) and 30 were in larch at Colemere (28 Jan).

At the end of the year, 80 birds were counted in a tetrad near Buckton (30 Dec), 58 were by the River Severn at Highley (26 Oct), 55 were counted in a tetrad near Whitcott Keysett (18 Dec), 50 were observed in a tetrad on the northern edge of Catherton Common (25 Nov) and 50 were at the Pen-yr-Estyn wetland (26 Dec).

Perhaps reflective of the numbers present at this site earlier in the year, a pair were seen nest building at Cefn Coch on 1 Apr.

Finally, a siskin ringed in a garden near Bridgnorth on 3 Feb 2006 was re-trapped at Ohra-aho, Sonkajarvi, Kuopio, Finland on 21 Jun 2007, a movement of 2,147 km over 503 days.

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**LINNET** *Carduelis cannabina*

Shropshire Status: Common resident

BBS: Present in 27% of plots, 78 birds recorded, an average of 4.9 per plot.

Conservation Status: UKBAP, LBAP (Farmland Birds), Red List

203 records were received of this attractive finch from just 16 sites, with surveying during the late winter period for the Atlas contributing 47 of these. Two triple figure counts were made; 140 at Wood Lane (25 Nov) and 150 at VP (12 Dec).

This species is obviously far more widespread than the records from 16 sites suggest. Increased observer coverage of typically under-watched farmland within the County during surveying for the Atlas will surely provide far more records in 2008.

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**LESSER REDPOLL** *Carduelis cabaret*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common winter visitor, scarce summer visitor and passage migrant

Conservation Status: UKBAP, Red List

Only 99 records were received from specific sites during the year, a decline of 42 on the previous year, although a further 50 records were collected during fieldwork as part of the Atlas project. This species was reported from 41 sites and recorded in 40 tetrads as part of the Atlas survey. Of the records received, all but one were associated with either the first or second winter periods. The exception was of male display fighting in a forestry area near Stapeley (15 Jun).

During the first winter period, 15 birds were reported from VP (8 Feb and 10 Feb) with 20 at the same site on 17 Feb. Elsewhere, 50, the highest count of the year, were reported from Chorley Covert (16 Mar). Later in the year, 30 were on Catherton Common (8 Oct) and 20 were logged at Chelmarsh Reservoir (22 Dec).

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**COMMON CROSSBILL** *Loxia curvirostra*

Shropshire Status: Scarce, occasionally fairly common, resident and irruptive visitor in summer and autumn

Conservation Status: Schedule 1, Green List

Although this species probably breeds in Shropshire in most years, the local population does not appear to be self-sustaining with its survival being dependent on irruptive influxes. As a result, the number of sightings often fluctuates from one year to the next. This year, 41 records were received from 19 separate sites which included seven tetrad counts associated with Atlas fieldwork.

Records were received from nine of the twelve months, the exceptions being May, July and September. Most counts were of six birds or fewer, but 13 were seen at Shirlett (11 Jan) with 12 reported the following day. Later in the year, 18 were at Black Hill (4 Nov), 14 were at Cefn Coch (25 Nov) and 40 on Brown Clee (26 Nov).

As with most years, there was again strong evidence of crossbills breeding in the County. This included a male was singing at Soudley Wood (3 Feb) and two juveniles seen at Cefn Coch (15 Apr).

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**BULLFINCH** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Shropshire Status: Fairly common resident

BBS: Present in 39% of plots, 43 birds recorded, an average of 1.9 per plot.

Conservation Status: UKBAP, LBAP (Farmland Birds), Amber List

Although BBS data for Shropshire appears to show that the County's population is relatively stable and may be increasing slightly, the long term trend in England is one of a rapid decline. This species continues to be well-reported with 273 site records and 242 records derived from Atlas fieldwork.

As would be expected, most reports were of five birds or fewer, but an astounding 17 were recorded in a tetrad encompassing Coalbrookdale (17 May) and 13 were seen on Benthall Edge (16 May). Elsewhere, nine were counted in a tetrad centred on Bucknell Wood (16 Dec), eight were around the entrance to Monkmoor Pool (28 Jan to 6 Feb) and eight were also reported from the SVCP (9 Dec and 22 Dec).

Although regularly reported during the breeding season, and often as pairs, only two reports confirming breeding were received. Four adults and three juveniles were visiting feeders at Crib, Dinchope in early July and another juvenile was sighted at Knuck Wood near Cefn Einion (6 Sept).

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**SNOW BUNTING** *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Shropshire Status: Very rare passage migrant

Conservation Status: Schedule 1, Amber List

There have been nine reports of this species in Shropshire since 1996. All were of single birds, all occurred during the winter months and eight of the nine were from the Stiperstones, Long Mynd or Brown Cleef. The exception to this was a bird on the shore of Knighton Reservoir in October 1996.

The first sighting during 2007 was of a bird high over Wild Moor pool (2 Nov). The observer (RMS) was first alerted to it when he heard it calling before he was able to locate it flying directly towards him from the south at about 30m and observe the white inner wing patches.

A second, or possibly the same bird, was observed two days later (4 Nov) by a group walking on the Stiperstones (DL). It was found foraging between the stones

and short vegetation on the path. Typically, it allowed close approach and was photographed.

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**YELLOWHAMMER** *Emberiza citronella*

Shropshire Status: Common resident

BBS: Present in 68% of plots, 168 birds recorded, an average of 4.2 per plot.

Conservation Status: UKBAP, LBAP (Farmland Birds), Red List

In all, there were 398 records from 240 sites. Of these 16 were of 20 birds or more. Although reports came in for every month, only one was for September and very few were in August and October.

Early winter groups included 40 at Knuck Bank (17 Feb) and 30 at Cheswardine (17 Mar).

There were somewhat surprising breeding season flocks of 25 at Wall Farm (22 Apr) and 18 at Eardington (31 May). A total of 104 records were received during the breeding season, but only 15 were stated as singing and one of confirmed breeding. VP provided the most records (32).

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**REED BUNTING** *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Shropshire Status: Common resident

BBS: Present in 12% of plots, 8 birds recorded.

Conservation Status: UKBAP, LBAP (Farmland Birds), Amber List

317 records were received during 2007 for this species. 26 of these records were double-figure counts, with the maximum (30) recorded at VP (22 Jan, 4 Feb & 10 Dec) and Kynnersley (23 Nov).

Recorded during every month of the year with a marked increase during Nov (41) and Dec (54), primarily due to Atlas records. This compares to the lowest monthly count of just three records during Aug.

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## **CORN BUNTING** *Miliaria calandra*

Shropshire Status: Scarce and declining resident

BBS: Present in 5% of plots, 9 birds recorded.

Conservation Status: UKBAP, LBAP (Farmland Birds), Red List

Corn bunting were reported at 28 sites during the year. This was substantially down on recent years when between 40 and 60 sites were involved.

Only 11 of the 42 records were for more than one or two birds. Winter flocks included 13 at Tibberton (11 Feb), five at Crudgington (5 Apr), 30 at Eaton on Tern (13 Apr), five at Kingslow (13 Nov) and five at SO79Z (north of Chesterton).

Breeding was confirmed with three pairs feeding young in barley at Beckbury (2 Jul). Singing was recorded at only 11 sites in all with five on a one kilometre stretch of road at Lilleshall (31 May), four at Eardington (31 May) and four at Tibberton (1 Jun).

These figures suggest further reductions in numbers for this Red Listed species in Shropshire. However, the species still retains a presence at traditional sites such as Beckbury, Erccall, Eardington, Isombridge, Kingslow, Lilleshall, Rednal Airfield and Tibberton, albeit in smaller numbers.

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## **Feral species**

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### **Black Swan** *Cygnus atratus*

Twelve records were received from just four sites, but this species does not settle at any site for long. Being a non-native species, black swan may be ignored by many observers. However, it is important to record and monitor the spread of non-native species and records are therefore requested of all observations.

A single bird was present at Folly Pool, Alderton during the WeBS (20 Jan). The next report was of a single bird at VP (19 Jun). A pair were present at Polemere during the last two weeks of August and what may have been the same pair was present at VP (19 Sept) but there was nothing to suggest that any breeding attempts occurred. Breeding was last confirmed in 2001 at Ollerton. There were no more sightings until December when a single bird was noted at Walcot Lake, Lydbury

North (6 Dec and 9 Dec).

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**Snow Goose** *Anser caerulescens*

Twenty-two records were received from just two locations. All referred to a single bird and from the dates it seems likely that a sole bird was involved, moving between both sites. The first sighting was at Dudmaston (29 Jan) and this was followed by one at Chelmarsh Reservoir (10 Feb), the next day the bird was back at Dudmaston where it was seen regularly every month until 27 Aug. It then returned to Chelmarsh where it was seen several times between 27 Sept and 27 Oct. No further sightings were made until Christmas Eve when it was again at Chelmarsh but four days later it was back at Dudmaston.

On 16 Mar it was reported to be paired with a greylag goose but the outcome is unknown.

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**Blue Winged Goose** *Cyanochen cyanoptera*

A single male of this species, endemic to the highlands of Ethiopia, was recorded on four occasions in the Ellesmere area.

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**Ringed Teal** *Callonetta leucophrys*

This small duck of the South American forests was recorded on four dates during August at Whixall canal floods.

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**Village Weaver** *Ploceus cucullatus*

A single of this species, native to sub-Saharan Africa, was photographed in a garden in Ellesmere on 7 Aug.

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## Hybrids

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### **Greylag x Greater Canada Goose** *Anser anser* x *Branta canadensis*

A hybrid greylag/greater Canada goose was recorded on three occasions at VP,

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### **Greylag x Bar-Headed Goose** *Anser anser* x *Anser indicus*

A hybrid greylag/bar-headed goose was recorded at VP on a single occasion

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## **Officers and Management Committee** April 2007 to March 2008

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President: Frank Gribble MBE, 22 Rickerscote Avenue, Stafford ST17 4EZ  
Tel: 01785 254166

Vice Presidents: Hugh Blofield, Molly Donoghue, Chris Whittles, Colin Wright

### **Officers:**

Chairman: Peter Deans, Springfield, Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth  
WV16 4SJ Tel: 01746 766718

Hon Treasurer: Brian Andrews, 6 Sytche Close, Much Wenlock TF13 6JJ  
Tel: 01952 727531

Hon Secretary: Helen J Griffiths, 104 Noel Hill Road, Cross Houses, Shrewsbury  
SY5 6LD Tel: 01743 761507

### **Management Committee:**

Chair Conservation Sub-committee: Graham Walker

Chair Development &  
Publicity Sub-committee: Sue Brealey

Other Elected Members: Jim Almond, Jason Buckley, Kevin Pryce

Non-elected Member: Annie Andrews (Membership Secretary)

### **Other representatives:**

County Bird Recorder: Geoff Holmes

Field Trip Co-ordinator: Andy Latham

Indoor Meeting Co-ordinator: Jude Duffy

Editor of "The Buzzard": Richard Camp

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## List of Observers

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Mr D Ackland	Ms M Cousins	Mr F Harley	Mr DG May
Mr M Adlam	Mr S Cowper	Mr A Harper	Mr DJ Mitchell
Mr J Almond	Mr T Cripps	Mr S Haycox	Mr R Moores
Ms D Andrew	Mr A Crossman	Mr AW Heath	Mr A Morris
Mrs A Andrews	Mr M Davies	Ms J Herries	Mr J Morris
Mr A Arnfield	Mr S Davies	Ms L Highway	Mr JB Murry
Mr J Atkinson	Ms C Davis	Mr S Holloway	Mr Paul Newman
Ms C Backshall	Ms JL Davis	Mr B Holmes	Miss AJ Nicholls
Mr R Bacon	Mr AP Dawes	Mr GE Holmes	Mr D Nicholls
Miss DE Balmer	Mr A Dawson	Mr A Hotspur	Mr P Nickless
Mr SRJ Barker	Mr CS Dawson	D Hudson	Mr Ken Noble
Mr D Barnes	Ms SA Deakin	Mrs EV Hughes	Mr Nick Oaks
Mr D Barrow	Mr PG Deans	Mr BL Hunt	Mr M Owen
Ms J Barrow	Mr SG Dodd	Mr G Hunt	Ms J Owens
Mr D Bastin	Mr WRB Dodwell	Mr GM Ireson	Mrs N Pacult
Mrs C Bateman	Mr DG Drake	Mr J Isherwood	Mr S Paling
Mr K Bates	Mr TW Edwards	Mr M Isherwood	Mr RB Palmer
Dr J Bent	Ms J Edwards	Mr S Jaggs	Dr R Parker
Mr GC Bird	Mr G Egarr	Mr PJ Jarrett	Ms K Patrick
Mr G Bishton	Mr J Elliot-Smith	Mr Paul Jenkins	Mr G Peach
Mr J Blair	MR I Ellis	Mrs J Jennings	Mr D Pearce
Mr JH Boden	Mr DJ Evans	Mr R Jones	Mr DJ Perks
Ms S Brealey	Mrs B Falconbridge	Mr W Jones	Mr R Phelps
Mr S Brierley	Mr DP Farncombe	Mrs JI Jones	Mr P Pickin
Mr D Briggs	Mrs J Finney	Mr P Jordan	Mr HM Prince
Mr JH Bronner	Mr S Fowkes	Mrs M Keeping	Mr KTP Pryce
Mr G Brown	Mrs M Frater	Ms H Kidd	Mr C Pygot
Mr N Brown	Mr DW Fulton	Mr PA King	Mr AS Rankin
Mr J Buckley	Mr RP Fussell	Ms J King	Mr AP Reid
Mr DW Burns	Mr AW Gaunt	Dr PJ Knights	Mr M Ridley
Mrs BE Burns	Mr M George	Mr P Lanaway	Mr A Roberts
Mr A Butter	Mr LJ Gibbons	P and H Lanaway	Mr B Roberts
Mr C Cameron	Mrs S Gibbons	Ms C Landles	Mr B Roberts
Mr R Camp	Mr GJ Gittins	Mr A Latham	P and T Rogers
M Carson	Mrs G Glover	Mr JA Lawrence	Mr P Rutter
Mr P Carty	Mr D Goodwin	Mr K Leah	Mr S Sandbrook
Mr L Cassidy	Mrs S Gorton	Mr D Lincoln	Dr PD Savage
Miss Y Chadwick	Mr MG Grant	Mr A Line	Mr D Scott
Mr S Churchill	Mr C Green	Mr J Lloyd	Mr J Shutt
Mr JE Clarke	Mr P Greenwood	Mrs S Lloyd	D Skidmore
Ms S Clement	Mr FC Gribble	Mr M Loft	Ms A Smith
Miss S Coates	Miss HJ Griffiths	Mr JH Luscombe	Mr LN Smith
Mr D Coath	Mr PJ Gruar	Mr PGK Maccutchan	Ms F Smith
Mr S Coney	Mr F Gwilliam	Mr JH Mackintosh	Mr R Smith
Mr B Cook	Mr R Hales	Mr W Marler	Mr J Snyder
DA Cookson	Mrs S Hales	Mr JP Martin	Mr M Southam
Mr R Corbett	Mr G Hall	Ms D Mathews	Mr J Speake

Mr J Stabler	Ms R Travis	Mr CJ Whittles
Ms J Steel	Mr JJ Tucker	Mr KM Whitworth
Ms S Stevens	Mrs L Tucker	Mr P Wigley
Mr M Stewart	Mr J Turner	Mr D Wilkinson
Mr D Stoddart	Mr JI Turner	DM Williams
Mr RM Stokes	Dr SN Twigger	Mr D Williams
Mr P Swales	Ms C Uff	Mr G Williams
Mr JH Swift	Mr R Vernon	CS Williamson
Mr/s R&S Swindells	Mr A Walker	Mr EJ Wilson
Mr G Taylor	Mr GJ Walker	Mr M Wood
Mr A Thomas	Mr MF Wallace	Mr MP Wooton
Mr FR Thomas	Mr A Warne	Ms J Worthington
Mr G Thomas	Mr WR Watkins	Mr D Wrench
Mr JA Thompson	Mr TC Weale	Mr CE Wright
Mr DJ Tittensor	Mr K Webb	Mr K Wycherley
Mr KW Tompson	Mr AL Wenger	Mr GE Young
Mr C Toms	Mrs S Whild	

Thanks also to all observers who have submitted records via Birdtrack and also to the Shropshire Peregrine Group, Barn Owl Group and to those observers involved with WeBS counts and Atlas surveys.

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## Field trips and indoor meetings 2007

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### Indoor meetings:

4 January	Land of Contrasts (Namibia)	Keith Offord
1 February	Despots in Pink tights (Oystercatchers)	Kevin Briggs
1 March	Lapland Summer	Gordon Langsbury
5 April	AGM & Around East Anglia in 80 Minutes	Chris Ward
4 October	Tree Nesting Great Cormorants	Stuart Newson
1 November	Mapping the Birds of Britain & Ireland (The new BTO atlas)	Simon Gill
6 December	St Kilda	Graham Wren

### Field trips:

20 January	Llanfairfechan
18 February	Wood Lane & the Meres
9/11 March	Weekend in Norfolk
22 April	Whixall Moss
12 May	The Wrekin (dawn chorus) & Venus Pool
2 June	The Norfolk Loop
14 July	Warton Crag & Arnside Knot
16 September	Belvide Reservoir
27 October	Point of Ayr
25 November	Parkgate

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