

The Shropshire Bird Report 2018

Shropshire Ornithological Society



A simplified birdwatcher's Code of Conduct

- The welfare of birds must always come first.
- Do not damage habitat.
- Keep disturbance to a minimum.
- Keep the sites of rare breeding birds confidential. If you feel protection is necessary inform the Society. We have close co-operation with the RSPB Regional Office.
- Do not harass rare migrants. Consider all the circumstances very carefully before making the sighting known. If necessary keep the sighting secret until the bird has moved on.
- Abide by the legal requirements of the Wildlife and Countryside Act at all times.
- Respect the rights of landowners.
- Obey the Countryside Code.
- Respect the rights of other birdwatchers and other countryside users.
- Keep records of important sightings and make sure the Society receives them via the County Recorder.
- When bird watching abroad behave as you would expect to behave in Britain.

The 2018 Shropshire Bird Report

**The 59th Annual Report of the
Shropshire Ornithological Society**

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Whimbrel, Venus Pool, 17 April 2018 (*Dawn Micklewright*)

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Thanks to all registered ringers whose results are included in this report

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in this report:

BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
BBS	BTO Breeding Bird Survey
BoCC	Birds of Conservation Concern
BTO	British Trust for Ornithology
BOU	British Ornithologist's Union
CSVFC	Caradoc and Severn Valley Field Club
CWG	Community Wildlife Group
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
EC	European Commission
EEC	European Economic Community
EGM	Ellesmere Group of Meres
IOC	International Ornithological Congress
LBAP	Local Biodiversity Action Plan
RBBP	Rare Breeding Birds Panel
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SBOG	Shropshire Barn Owl Group
SBR	Shropshire Bird Report
SMAD	Shropshire Migrant Arrival Database
SOS	Shropshire Ornithological Society
SRSG	Shropshire Raptor Study Group
SPG	Shropshire Peregrine Group
STW	Sewage Treatment Works
SWT	Shropshire Wildlife Trust
UC	Upper Clun
UKBAP	UK Biodiversity Action Plan
VP	Venus Pool
WeBS	Wetland Bird Survey

Editorial

Opinions and comments in this column are those solely of the Editor, and are not those of the Shropshire Ornithological Society

The Editorial Board and team of account compilers have achieved a great deal over the last few years in bringing the annual reports up to date. This has been a great team effort and one which cannot have been achieved without the support of the Management Board and in particular Graham Walker and Geoff Holmes. Our aim in the future is to produce the Bird Report for each year before the following Christmas, to make sure it is as relevant and current as we possibly can.

As observers and recorders you can help this by submitting your records promptly throughout the year, ideally to Birdtrack (either one by one or in bulk), or to the County Bird Recorder, and especially for those of you who have been fortunate enough to see a County or National rarity in Shropshire, to submit a description and other evidence. It is just not possible to keep track of all the blogs, Twitter and Facebook accounts, and we urge you to submit records through the formal channels.

To this end, we have included this year an up-to-date County Checklist which clearly identifies County and national rarities. This will be updated and maintained with each Annual Report and we hope will be a help in quickly determining whether your sighting needs a supporting description or other evidence. If you enter records via Birdtrack the system will prompt you for a rarity description.

John Tucker is well-known to many of you as a county ornithologist and originator and compiler of the superb 'Histo' web pages, with Peter Tucker. John has a keen interest in the ornithological history of our county, and his research continues to dig up some fascinating information. So, his article in this edition about Shrewsbury's Rookeries and their history is a welcome addition to our knowledge of this species.

The 2017 record of Night-heron in the county has now been accepted by BBRC but is under consideration by the Records committee of the BOU as to its likely origin. Graham Walker has provided an update in this Report.

Fresh from his stupendous efforts with the Avifauna, Leo Smith has provided a welcome update to his inventory of county Research projects, whilst Helen Griffiths has provided an update to the popular Venus Pool Reports for both 2017 and 2018 as well as having completed the report proof-reading and some species accounts!

Curlews are getting a lot of attention throughout the country and our county is at the

forefront of initiatives to understand what is going on and to attempt to stem the tide of declining populations. 'Curlew Country' and local Wildlife Group projects are in full swing with investment now in head-starting chicks. This technique removes the eggs from nests, under licence, and rears the chicks to fledging, releasing them again as a flock about the time of natural fledging in their natal area. This builds on the experience especially of the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust and RSPB who have had success with the technique with the *limosa* subspecies of Black-tailed Godwit, not to mention Spoon-billed Sandpiper! Whilst we hope for success with these methods, it is of course habitat management and perhaps also climate change which are key, and without the right initiatives here, too, then real progress is likely to be elusive.

A recent paper in the Journal of Animal Ecology has started to illustrate and provide evidence for the previously anecdotal impacts of gamebird rearing across the country. The most eye-opening statistic is that the sheer biomass of over 40 million Pheasants released for shooting each year is significantly more than double the biomass of all wild bird species breeding throughout the UK. With only a small percentage of these birds being shot *and* retrieved, most of the rest are then available to the medium and large avian and mammalian predators we have left, hence potentially causing a real imbalance in the ecosystem. The paper by Pringle *et al*, using data from the last Bird Atlas and from the annual Breeding Bird Survey, showed that large scale variation in avian predator populations (Raven, Buzzard, Magpie, Carrion Crow) is positively associated with gamebird releases, so predator numbers are increased by gamebird releases. It therefore seems unlikely that effort and money spent conserving ground-nesting species e.g. Curlew and Lapwing, will be of great benefit in regions or on estates where game releases are significant.

Reference

Pringle H., Wilson M., Calladine J., Siriwardena G.M., 2019. Associations between gamebird releases and generalist predators, *J. Animal Ecology*, Vol. 56, Issue 8, pp 2102-2113.

Rarities Committee Report

Ian Grant

The year began where 2017 left off, with the continued influx of Hawfinches into the County. Records were received from some 27 sites, with the highest count of over 60 birds at Whitcliffe on 18 January.

Ellesmere had a great month for gulls in February with a second-winter Ring-billed Gull found on the evening of the 21st and still present the following day. The site was also host to both Iceland (13th) and Glaucous (26th).

A Nightingale was present at Badger on 2 July and is only the second accepted record this century in the County.

One of the rarest birds of the year was the male Little Bittern at Chelmarsh Reservoir, found on 6 July. The bird was initially heard-only but with a lot of perseverance (and patience) was eventually seen several hours later. This was a very popular bird (and county tick for all) and drew many admirers during its stay until its eventual departure on the 14th. This is the first record in Shropshire since 1908.

Another excellent record was of a Red-rumped Swallow seen by a couple of lucky observers at Church Stretton on 1 September.

A Yellow-browed Warbler was ringed at Candy Woods (near Oswestry) on 22 October.

A juvenile Rose-coloured Starling visited a Shrewsbury garden in October. The identity of the bird was initially unknown. However, the bird was subsequently confirmed by the video footage taken by the finders.

Four Great White Egrets seen early morning at Priorslee Lake on 6 November was an excellent find of what is an ever-increasing species to the County.

And finally, what must have been a bizarre sight of Little Auk found under the feeders in a garden at Stapleton on 5 December; the bird was found in an exhausted state and taken to Cuan Wildlife Rescue. It was successfully rehabilitated and released at Hunstanton (north Norfolk) on the evening of the 6th. This is the first record in the County since 1987.

Records accepted by County Rarities Committee and under consideration by BOU:

2017

Night-Heron, 1, VP and then The Dingle, Shrewsbury,

Records considered to be unproven by the County Rarities Committee:

Most of the records listed below were either submitted without supporting evidence, i.e. description or photographs, or the submitted evidence was considered not conclusive. Observers with details of any of the sightings below are urged to submit these to the County Bird Recorder for further consideration.

2018

Brent Goose, 8, Oswestry, 14 Mar

Bewick's Swan, 1, Edgebolton, 16 Mar

Scaup, 1, Priorslee Flash, 8 Nov

Common Scoter, 1, Whixall Moss, 4-8 Mar

Common Scoter, 3, Colemere, 14 Apr

Green-winged Teal, 1, VP, 2 Apr

Black-necked Grebe, 1, Edgmond, 31 Jan

White Stork, 1, Market Drayton, 8 Apr

Night-heron, 1, Much Wenlock, 19 Jan

Bittern, 1, Edgebolton, 3 Feb

Great White Egret, 70 records, various sites and dates

Osprey, 1, VP, 2 Apr

Osprey, 1, Bridgnorth, 6 Apr

Osprey, 1, VP, 24 Apr

Osprey, 1, Bridgnorth, 5 Jun

Osprey, 1, Leighton, 1 Jul

Osprey, 2, Chelmarsh, 6-14 Jul

Osprey, 1, VP, 31 Aug

Honey Buzzard, 1, Site Confidential, 29 Jun

Marsh Harrier, 1, Bucknell, 16 Feb

Marsh Harrier, 1, Whixall Moss, 25 Nov

Hen Harrier, 10, Yell Bank, 26 Feb
Hen Harrier, 1, Newport, 7 Jun
Hen Harrier, 1, Aston-on-Clun/Kempton, 1 Dec
Avocet, 1, Longden-on-Tern, 22 Mar
Wood Sandpiper, 1, VP, 13 Aug
Black Tern, 1, Colemere, 22 Sep
Short-eared Owl, 1, Bury Ditches, 14 Jan
Short-eared Owl, 4, Stiperstones, 26 Feb
Short-eared Owl, 1, Long Pike Hollow, 15 Jul
Short-eared Owl, 1, Shrewsbury, 5 Nov
Short-eared Owl, 1, Whixall Moss, 26 Nov
Alpine Swift, 1, Broseley, 29 Jun
Hoopoe, 1, Lower Shortditch Turbary, 9 May
Gyr Falcon, 1, Bromlow near Minsterley, 3 Jan
Red-backed Shrike, 1, Site Confidential, 19 Jul
Waxwing, 3, Worthen, 18 Mar
Waxwing, 1, Market Drayton, 21 Nov
Woodlark, 1, Cleehill, 1 Jan
Cetti's Warbler, 1, Crosemere, 5 Feb
Cetti's Warbler, 1, Whixall Moss, 5 Jun
Siberian Chiffchaff, 1, Choulton, 6 Feb
Melodious Warbler, 1, Priorslee Lake, 10 Jun
Firecrest, 1, Pontesbury, 1, Apr
Rose-coloured Starling, 1, Church Stretton, 4 Jun
Nightingale, 1, Clun, 11 Apr
Black Redstart, 1, Shifnal, 22 Mar
Water Pipit, 1, Edgebolton, 15 Mar
Water Pipit, 1, Whixall Moss, 19 Sep
Common Redpoll, 1, Bury Ditches, 6 Mar
Common Redpoll, 1, Pontesbury Hill, 25 Mar

Review of the Year

Bird Report Editor

Temperatures and rainfall measurements are based on the long-term meteorological data set from RAF Shawbury. Unless specified, comparisons are against the 53-year mean values from 1965 to 2017.

Another exciting ornithological year in the County with one new species for the County in ‘modern’ times, the Little Bittern, together with some more unusual sightings such as Little Auk, Rose-coloured Starling and at last, a Nightingale! The southern European herons are continuing their invasion of the UK; it cannot be too long before we have our first Little or Great White Egret breeding in Shropshire, despite our lack of extensive wetlands. Wetland habitats are at a premium in our County. The loss of the Mirelake pools is keenly felt, with a noticeable reduction in the numbers and variety of species of waders being a real ornithological loss. Still, with the potential incorporation of the flooded fields by the canal at Whixall Moss into the network of Wildlife Trust reserves and the provision of a hide, hopefully this will rectify the balance somewhat.

A total of 177 species was recorded in the County this year, substantially down on recent years.

Two scarce but usually regular species failed to appear in the County this year, Dotterel and Grasshopper Warbler. Both are perhaps getting scarcer in the UK generally; certainly, their ranges appear to be affected by climate change with a distinct northerly trend in their occurrences now in the country.

One species, the Osprey, was recorded several times, but no evidence or rarities descriptions were submitted, so it does not appear in the Systematic List. Likewise, only five of over 70 sightings of Great White Egret have been included for the same reason.

2018 was a year when the weather took on something of a continental feel, with anticyclonic conditions especially early in the year heralding the ‘beast from the east’ at the very end of February into March bringing cold and snowy conditions. Unusually dry and sunny conditions in May and June perhaps resulted in rather a quiet spring migration period. Rainfall was significantly below average across the year.

January

January was slightly warmer than usual with average rainfall but nevertheless brought with it no fewer than four named storms with Eleanor bringing in the New Year on 2/3 Jan followed by Fionn on 16th, David on 18th and Georgina on 24 Jan. Despite the stormy weather, birding this month was relatively quiet. **Hawfinches** were the undoubted highlight with some large flocks now gathered at favoured locations, mainly in the south of the County. 60+ at Whitcliffe Wood near Ludlow was the biggest assembly.

A **Great Grey Shrike** was found again near Clunton from 6th and **Whooper Swans** gathered in some numbers in the Melverley area. **Hen Harriers** were found at Whixall Moss, Ratlinghope and Pentre with a **Short-eared Owl** on 14th near Bury Ditches and a **Great White Egret** frequented Crose Mere and the surrounding area most of the month. A **Black-necked Grebe** was found at Edgmond on 31st.

February

A very continental feel to February especially with the arrival of the ‘beast from the east’ at the end of the month. Cooler and much drier than the 10-year mean, February had no fewer than 17 days on which air frost was recorded.

Hawfinches continued to grace the county in February, but the scarcer gulls perhaps provided the most interest, at least at The Mere, Ellesmere with a **Kittiwake** on 10th and **Iceland Gull** here on 13th. A **Ring-billed Gull** was found on 21st/22nd and **Glaucous Gulls** both at The Mere and at Chelmarsh on the last days of the month. **Mediterranean** and **Yellow-legged Gulls**, too, were well-represented this month and into March.

Crose Mere continued to host a **Great White Egret**, with a **Cetti’s Warbler**, a find here on 5th. Of the raptors, a couple of **Hen Harriers** continued to frequent The Long Mynd. The sole **Short-eared Owl** of the month was on The Stiperstones. A very early **Wheatear** appeared at Edgmond on 28th.

March

March opened with the cold and snowy weather from the Russian Arctic lasting well into the month but followed by a rapid switch to more maritime conditions. Overall, the month recorded lower temperatures than average, but with significantly higher levels of precipitation, especially later in the month, so rainfall ended up twice the average for the month.

The only recorded evidence of impacts of the 'beast from the east' was the apparent absence of **Goosanders** from their usual stretch of the Severn at Ironbridge due to swollen river levels in early March.

A **Glaucous Gull** lingered at Chelmarsh for a few days and other wintering species were in evidence early in the month with **Short-eared Owl** at VP on 5th. **Great Grey Shrike** at Clunton on 5th, and **Hen Harriers** at Whixall Moss.

Migrants appeared, though, as soon as the colder weather abated. An **Avocet** showed at VP on 12th with another **Kittiwake** at Priorslee Lake next day. **Black Redstart** at Shifnal, **Little Ringed Plover** at Wood Lane and a couple of **Garganey** towards the month-end gave a hint of spring. Despite the bird at Edgmond in February, only one March record for **Wheatear**, a bird at Llanfair Hill on 30th was unusual but was mirrored with the late and slow arrival of hirundines. As usual, **Sand Martin** did put in an early appearance with two at VP on 12th and birds seen at Priorslee Lake, but then no arrivals until the very end of the month reflected the cold and wet conditions. There were no March **Swallows** this year. Probable summer migrant **Chiffchaffs** were found in March especially from 16th but remained in low numbers with almost all records of one or two birds. The number of **Hawfinches** declined, though birds remained until the end of the month and 40+ were still to be found in the Ludlow area.

April

April conditions continued the wet early spring with only average temperatures.

Hawfinches lingered into April until the last at Adderley on 10th.

As is usual, migration did speed up this month, though rather in fits and starts. An arrival of hirundines on 6th, 7th and 8th gave the first significant counts of **Sand Martin** (at VP and The Mere, Ellesmere) and **Swallow** (at VP). Six **House Martins** were the first of the year (at Priorslee Pool on 6th). **Willow Warblers** were found at VP and **Yellow Wagtail** at Chirbury in this period with the first significant arrival of **Chiffchaffs** of the spring being unusually late. An early **Reed Warbler** was at Priorslee Pool on 6th. A **Black Redstart** was found at Adderley on 7th.

A **Common Whitethroat** was found on 9th at Preston Montford but this was an isolated record and further birds were not found until 18th. A **Cuckoo** at Tibberton on 16th was first of the year on a typical date and **Pied Flycatcher** and **Redstart** were both found at Craig Sychtyn on 14th, with **Wood Warblers** from 15th at Whitcliffe Wood and Dowles Brook.

Another significant arrival occurred around 18th with many more records of summer visitors and first arrivals for **Spotted Flycatcher**, **Lesser Whitethroat**, **Sedge Warbler** and **Garden Warbler**.

A **Little Gull** at Whixall on 15th too, was a good bird to find but not unexpected at this time of year, whilst both **Greenshank** and **Whimbrel** were found on 17th with a handful of the latter on migration during the remainder of the month.

May

May heralded a return to warmer conditions. It was slightly warmer than average with average rainfall, but significantly more sunshine hours than normal.

Generally, an unusually quiet month with little in the way of obvious movements or arrivals of birds. The 24th was perhaps the exception that proves the rule with new **Black Tern** and **Common Tern** at White Mere and **Wood Sandpiper** at Knighton Reservoir. Scarce songsters were **Cetti's Warbler** at Norbroom Marsh on 3rd and **Firecrest** at Hopesay from 19th giving a continental feel, whilst **Turtle Dove** made a welcome return with birds found at Bicton and Knighton Reservoir.

June

Warm weather continued in June with continental type conditions prevailing for much of the month, though interrupted on 15th/16th with summer storm Hector which deposited significant rainfall. Nevertheless, temperatures were nearly 3°C warmer than the 53-year average, with over 50% more sunshine hours than average.

The first **Quail** of the year was a calling bird at Edgebolton on 1st. Singing **Nightjar** were found at Black Hill, and **Spotted Flycatchers** became more widespread in the county.

July

July continued very warm with peak max temperatures 5°C higher than average. Average rainfall.

Chelmarsh had a real purple patch this month. The first county record of **Little Bittern** of modern times was found on 7th, staying for a week. A **Cetti's Warbler** was singing here, too, on 7th. Summer **Short-eared Owls** have been few and far between in recent years so one at Long Pike Hollow on 15th was notable. **Nightjar**

was found at Haughmond Hill.

August

Slightly warmer and drier than normal this month.

Passage waders, albeit in low numbers, gave some variety to the birding this month. **Black-tailed Godwits** were found at VP and at Chelmarsh, with **Wood Sandpiper** at VP on 13th and **Greenshank** here on 31st. Immigrant gulls, too, were found, **Yellow-legged Gulls** leading the way with six at Chelmarsh from 12th and others at The Mere Ellesmere, Cantlop and Wood Lane. Both **Mediterranean** and **Caspian Gulls** were found at Chelmarsh this month. A **Black Tern** was found at Priorslee Lake on 26th and other species of interest were a juvenile **Marsh Harrier** at Whixall Moss on 10th and **Ruff** at VP on 31st.

September

Much wetter than usual this month with average temperatures. Storm Bronagh went through on 20th/21st.

A **Red-rumped Swallow** at Church Stretton on 1st was a really good start to the month. **Hen Harriers** and **Short-eared Owl** appeared early on The Long Mynd from 2nd and 12th respectively and a **Marsh Harrier** was recorded here on 4th. Over 100 **Golden Plovers** were on The Long Mynd from 22nd. Gulls built up in numbers with over 3,000 **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** roosting at both Chelmarsh and The Mere, Ellesmere mid-month, and **Yellow-legged Gulls** peaked with eight at The Mere on 19th and seven at Chelmarsh on 18th. Cole Mere hosted a **Black Tern** on 22nd.

Goldfinches peaked at 250 at VP on 8th.

October

Weather-wise an average month, in terms of both temperature and rainfall.

The first **Fieldfare** of the autumn was seen on 3rd and **Redwings** from 7th. A **Brambling** was found near Abdon on 15th with numerous records across the county from 20th. Another **Black Redstart** was found on 17th at Ticklerton. The bird of the month though was a **Yellow-browed Warbler** trapped for ringing and released near Oswestry on 22nd. **Lesser Redpoll** passage at Whixall Moss peaked on this date when 80 birds were recorded.

Hen Harriers were present on The Long Mynd and at Whixall Moss.

November

November was dry with average temperatures.

Several **Caspian Gulls** returned to Chelmarsh this month. One or more **Great White Egrets** were widespread in the Wood Lane/meres area and a **Common Scoter** was found at Cole Mere on 26th. **Shoveler** numbers at Chetwynd Pool reached 158 during the WeBS count. A **Firecrest** was caught for ringing at Whixall Moss on 10th.

December

Warmer than average, with only five days of air frost (usually 10+) during the month. Storm Deirdre deposited significant rain on 15th/16th.

An immature **Great Northern Diver** at Chelmarsh from 1st started things off well this month, with another wind-driven bird being a **Little Auk** picked up exhausted at Stapleton a few days later. Five **White-fronted Geese** were nice to see at VP on 21st whilst a keen observer found the returning **Great Grey Shrike** between Clun and Clunton on Christmas Day. A **Cattle Egret** was found roosting on the Heron Island at The Mere, Ellesmere on 28th and stayed into 2019. Though **Reed Buntings** are regularly found at feeders in the County throughout winter, a roost of 400 estimated at Shifnal Sewage Works on 16th was exceptional.

Finders Account – Little Bittern at Chelmarsh

Chelmarsh Reservoir 6 to 13 Jul 2018

John Reeves

On 6 July I decided to visit Chelmarsh Reservoir for the first time in months to see what it was looking like before autumn migration started, and maybe get an Osprey or Garganey for the year, if lucky! I arrived around 1pm and decided to view from the causeway as the path to the hide looked unsuitable for shorts. I walked towards the far side, as the vegetation is lower, to scope over the reservoir. As I put my scope down, I heard a quiet barking in the reeds in front of me. At first, I couldn't think what it was, was it some frog call or... actually it sounds like a Little Bittern (which I had heard barking twice previously)! I checked the call on xeno-canto, and it was almost identical!

The calls became louder and was a spot-on match for the recording I listened to. Not believing there could be a barking Little Bittern in the County and being unfamiliar with non-avian calls I thought there must be a frog or something that sounds the same. I recorded the call on my iPhone and sent it to a few contacts who all agreed it sounded like a Little Bittern. A later recording was put on the Shropshire WhatsApp group, to check if anyone knew of some amphibian that sounded the same. I had visions of a message along the lines of 'reported Little Bittern is a frog'. Instead more people confirmed it was a Little Bittern call.

A few locals started to turn up, with the bird barking frequently through the afternoon and evening, but it remained hidden despite moving 100 metres or so! An Osprey appeared over the reservoir in this period, so one target species was acquired! At around 9:50pm Jim Almond picked it up as it flew a short distance. I only caught three or four wingbeats and it dropped back into the reeds. Wanting better views, I returned the following morning, arriving about 4:30 am. It was barking as I opened the car door and I walked onto the causeway, set my tripod up, looked at the direction it was barking from and it flew! Shortly after, Mike Stokes relocated it in another section of the reedbed and we had brilliant 'scope views, including one period watching it in the open for thirty minutes. It showed its small red bill, pale iris, blackish cap and pale-yellow buff wings with black back. It was typically crouched and hunched for the most part but did extend its long neck once.

The History of Shrewsbury's Rookeries

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Wood engraving by Thomas Bewick (1753-1828).
It summarises the bird, its habitat and habits as well as
any photograph.

Introduction

There have been no rookeries within Shrewsbury's loop of the River Severn for four decades, the last being that by the footbridge over the Severn to Frankwell, vacated in the late 1980s (Horan 1989 & JT, *pers. obs.*). In 1938 there were around 32 rookeries in and close to Shrewsbury town and now just three remain.(see Box 1). This account traces the recorded history and decline of these rookeries. All maps referenced are included at the end of the account.

Sources

2.1 Early Rook records

If we presume that Rooks were then as fond as they are now of breeding close to human habitations it might be safe to assume that there were rookeries in or close to what passed for Shrewsbury at that time. Bones allocated to Rook were excavated at Roman Wroxeter, 12km east of Shrewsbury and dated around 350-700 AD (Meddens 1987). No signs of butchery were reported on the bones (Hammon 2011) but it could be that those found at Wroxeter were being taken as food, since Rook is palatable (e.g. <http://www.scottish-recipes.com/rook-pie.html>),

2.2 The nineteenth century and to 1938

There appear to have been a few rooks breeding in Shrewsbury in the nineteenth century and the references are centred on a large rookery, perhaps the only central Shrewsbury colony, comprising over one hundred nests. It was situated along

the Severn at the Quarry between the Welsh and English bridges and initially concentrated at the eastern end (Map 1) – Forrest recalled them there in the 1860s and '70s. The birds were so numerous that from time to time some were shot to keep their numbers “within bounds” and it was regarded by some to be “dangerous” to walk beneath them though whether that was from the risk of droppings or falling twigs is not stated.

At some stage in the 1880s a storm blew down some of the favoured trees after which most nests were built towards the western end of the Quarry (Map 2) and things began to change. At around that time ‘a score or more’ moved towards town and began nesting at St Mary’s church and two nests were found behind the Free Library (the same building as today). Lloyd also reported two nests here in 1938. Other birds apparently moved to Abbey Foregate, a site of which nothing more is known until Lloyd reported it in 1938.

A splinter group left the Quarry colony in the 1890s and moved 200 metres south across the Severn to nest in the grounds of Shrewsbury School, close to the chapel. References to a colony in Kingsland probably refer to this site. By the late 1890s the colony in the Quarry was dwindling while that at Shrewsbury School chapel grew. The colonies at St Mary’s and the Free Library were still extant (Map 3). The noise from the small colony of four or five nests at St Mary’s annoyed residents and that may have hastened their departure (date not known). On 26 March 1900 the three nests at the library colony were raided and dismantled by a gang of Rooks from elsewhere.

Also, at the turn of the twentieth century, there was the first news of another site near town, 2km north at Berwick where young hatched on 19 April 1903. By 1911, the Quarry site was almost deserted with only three nests, four the following year. The Shrewsbury School chapel site survived, but never reached the numbers at the Quarry three decades earlier (Map 4).

In 1936 there is a record of 27 nests at the School chapel, Lloyd suggesting that by that stage it was somewhat smaller than it had been. Three nests were reported on 15 March that year at Sundorne, in the minute books of the recently founded Shrewsbury School Ornithological Society (SSOS 1936). This was another previously unreported site to the east of town., The SSOS was also the first to report a colony at the town’s cemetery with 26 nests on 29 March 1936 and 25 in the following year.

The following chronology has been assembled especially from Forrest (1928) and with reference to the Caradoc & Severn Valley Field Club (CSVFC) Record and Transactions which began in 1892, together with additional historical comments by Lloyd (1939a,b).

2.3 1938 and the work of Llewelyn Cyril Lloyd (1905-1968).

Lloyd (1939a), as part of his substantial contribution to ornithology in the County, reported the results of his systematic 1938 survey of rookeries carried out within the area defined and discussed in Box 1. Lloyd’s work pre-dates modern OS maps and the opportunity they offer to specify locations with grid references for both his boundaries and rookeries.

Box 1 – The area surveyed

Lloyd defined his 1938 field survey area as “a rectangle measuring 3.5 miles N-S. and 4 miles E-W, centred upon the town ... chosen so as to enclose the borough”; 14 square miles (36.26 sq. km). This is interpreted here as a rectangle centred precisely on St Mary’s Church though his east-west orientation has been moved by this author by around 100m to include his rookery at Sundorne Pool. Lloyd mentions a colony at Shelton, just outside his rectangle.

The rectangle used by Lloyd (1939a) for his study in 1938, defined in the text Box 1. The smaller rectangle is the central Shrewsbury area shown in Maps 1-4.

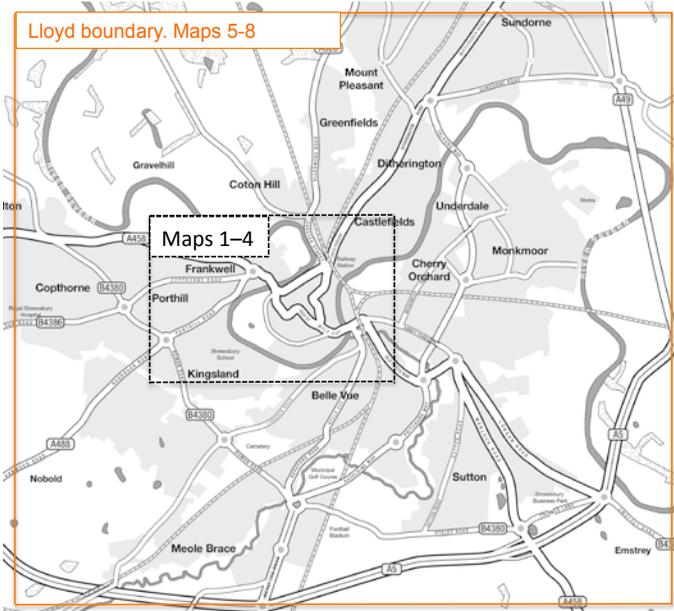


Figure 1

Lloyd (*ibid.*) identified 349 nests at 32 locations at which Rooks were breeding and ‘lumped’ them into 17 ‘rookeries’ (see Appendix and Map 5) encountering the usual problem of defining ‘a rookery’. His seventeen defined rookeries varied in extent; he listed the 12 which he regarded as ‘compact’ with the other five ‘dispersed’ (which would today be subdivided by applying the more recent convention of 100m as separating threshold). Thus, his Abbey Foregate site 2, with its components, straggled “over an area nearly a mile long and up to half a mile wide”. Of the individual locations of the 11 component parts of Lloyd’s site, two have been resolved with the help of Dr Andrew Pattison and are individually plotted in Map 5.

Meole Brace consisted of three groups 200 yards apart while Greenfields, Sundorne and Belle Vue were broadly alike in comprising two well-separated groups in each. He identified three sub-sites with only one nest each, something only recorded once among those reported to the Shropshire Rookery Survey of 2008.

Lloyd estimated the town’s total Rook population in 1938 to be 820 individuals. These included an estimated 698 breeding adults (349 nests) and 122 non-breeders. The estimate of non-breeding birds (17.5% of breeding birds) is in line with the methods of Tucker (1935).

Lloyd was punctilious in his recording and subsequent analyses of sites, examining relationships with several environmental variables including for example their proximity to houses and to water. His paper is on-line at ‘Histo’ (Tucker & Tucker 2012): <http://www.pgt7.uk/sos/caradocTRAN/sos-caradoc1939-.html>

2.4 The Agricultural Research Council (ARC) enquiry of 1944

As related by Lloyd (1944) the ARC “were anxious to ascertain whether there had been any significant increase in the county Rook population during the war” perhaps in response to reduced pressure from keepers. So “in connection with the Rook investigation organised by Mr. James Fisher on behalf of the British Trust for Ornithology, I was asked to repeat the survey” (of 1938). Lloyd resurveyed his 1938 sites (*ibid.*) and found a decline of 30% over the five years, from 349 nests to 248. Regrettably he did not itemise the changes by site.

The results of the national 1944 study are unpublished, but the survey found the species to have increased nationally.

2.5 The 1975 BTO National Rookery Survey

The BTO organised a national Rookeries Survey in 1975 (Sage & Vernon 1978) and

the SOS contributed data from County volunteers, each allocated a 10km square and organised by Colin Wright, then the BTO County Representative. To improve coverage, the survey was extended in Shropshire into 1976 and reported 460 sites with 12,092 nests (Wright 1976), commenting that rookeries appeared to be moving out of Shrewsbury town.

From the Shrewsbury area the evidently less-than-detailed fieldwork reported only five colonies (Map 6). Within Lloyd's rectangle, from NW to SE, they were Shelton (nine nests), Berwick Lodge (five), Smithfield Road near the bus station (nine), just east of the Column (10) and Longnor Hall (114) at the eastern end of Raven's Nest wood near Emstrey.

2.6 Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Shropshire 1992

The Atlas (Deans *et al.* 1992) published a tetrad map of the distribution of breeding records. Confirmed breeding was evidenced by an active rookery or, in an indeterminate number of instances, 'fledged young apparently of local origin.' The Atlas did not produce a list of rookeries and the Shrewsbury data are not considered further here.

2.7 The BTO resurvey of 1996

In 1996 the BTO organised a national partial resurvey of sites reported in the 1975 survey. In Shropshire it involved an examination of 27 tetrads none of which were within the boundary of Shrewsbury currently under consideration (Dawes 1996).

2.8 The Shropshire Rookery Survey 2008 (SRS08).

This survey (Tucker, unpublished) invited observers to contribute records of rookeries encountered during 2008 and the data were used to enhance the database for *The Bird of Shropshire* (Smith 2019 *in press.*). The records received were in effect a random sample of sites from around the county and 552 were logged in 2008 with a further 26 added during 2009-18. The work for SRS08 covered Shrewsbury in detail; Map 7.

2.9 Shrewsbury rookeries audit 2012

In 2012 this author carried out a survey of Shrewsbury area rookeries and the data, not mapped here, are integrated into the Appendix.

2.10 Bird Atlas 2013

Survey work for the Bird Atlas (Balmer *et al.* 2013) spanned 2007–11. This author organised the Shropshire Rookery Survey 2008 (SRS08) within that period and its records were complementary to the Bird Atlas.

2.11 The Shropshire Rookery Survey 2019/20 (SRS19).

The work for this survey covered Shrewsbury in 2019 and the results are shown on Map 8.

3 The changes in the 19th and 20th centuries

The following analyses trace the eight decades from 1938 to the present.

Maps 1–8 present the extent of the overall changes within Lloyd’s rectangle from 32 colonies in and around the town in 1938 (Map 5) to the three which remain today (including Bowbrook, Lloyd’s Copthorne).

The first notable event for Rooks in Shrewsbury was the late nineteenth century collapse of the 100+ rookery in the Quarry, the reasons for the decline being unknown. Lloyd discounted shooting as the cause and the waning health of the old trees, implicated by Forrest, received no support from Lloyd. The role of loss of foraging habitat is considered below.

Site/sub-site size	Lloyd 1938	SRS19 2019	'38-'19 loss
1-5	17	1	
6-10	6		
11-20	3	1	
21-30	4	1	
31-40	1		
>41 (max)	1 (87)	1 (52)	
Colonies	32	4	87.5%
Nests	349	98	71.9%

Table 1 The numbers of rookeries and total nest counts of rookeries within Lloyd’s defined rectangle round Shrewsbury town in 1938 and 2019.

Lloyd had no explanation for the decline between 1938 and 1944 (Lloyd 1944)

adding that “Shrewsbury was one of the very few areas where the Rook population had decreased. Taking England as a whole, during the ten years 1933-1944, the Rook population increased significantly – probably more than 9 per cent.” He later adds “In ... Cheshire, however, decreases were noted in both areas which were surveyed – 4.3 per cent in Wirral and 30 per cent in the Marbury area, a figure which corresponds strikingly with Shrewsbury’s 29 per cent decline.”

4 The 21st Century

The decline in Shrewsbury must relate at least in part to the increase in the human population of the town, roughly doubling from around 37,000 in the 1930s to around 72,000 in 2011. That has led to the spread of urbanisation and corresponding loss of open/agricultural land and foraging habitat for the birds.

Agricultural land – “arable, pasture and parkland” – was estimated by Lloyd to cover about 67.9% of his study area. The author has re-examined the situation within Lloyd’s rectangle and the current analogous figure is 25.1% ‘open ground’ remaining*. This loss of open ground for foraging may at least in part explain the decline. It should be added that the most recent housing, industrial and commercial developments around Shrewsbury, since the preparation of the 2012 OS map, will have exacerbated the losses considerably.

The lack of large trees for nesting may be a contributing factor and casual observations might support this. Beyond that, Lloyd (1944) was correct in saying “The possible causes of such decreases are obscure and cannot profitably be discussed without a good deal of research and field-work which at present cannot be undertaken”. The same is true today but see below.

* Open ground was assessed using the 1:25,000 OS map as revised in 2012, and including all types of farmland, school playing fields, parkland and other public open spaces but excluding wetland (e.g. the Old Riverbed).

5 Shrewsbury’s Rookeries in 2019

The Appendix summarises the histories of all Shrewsbury’s rookeries past and present while the brief biographical notes below relate to the three active sites within this survey’s area in 2019 (Map 8). The colour scheme used on the dedicated 1:25,000 OS rookery maps, is explained in Box 2. The same colours are used in the Appendix.

The following three sites remain within Lloyd’s rectangle:

- Site 65, Bowbrook was first recorded by Lloyd as site 9 Copthorne with ten nests. Not reported in 1975, in subsequent surveys it has settled to the remarkably constant nest-counts of 54, 50 and 52. The colony may initially have been situated somewhat east of its location today; it is some 300m west of Lloyd's rectangle as currently interpreted.
- Site 502, Weir Hill Farm, the smallest survivor in the study area, was first recorded in 2008 with eight nests, seven in 2012 and by 2019 was down to three.
- Site 55, Crematorium was until 2018 at Weeping Cross hollow, situated in the flooded depression close to the roundabout of that name on the Shrewsbury bypass. It was first recorded in 2008 with approximately 25 nests – it was a very difficult site to count. It held around 49 nests in 2012, was still active in the hollow in 2018 but in 2019 the birds moved some 750m north to the Crematorium and had 28 nests.

Box 2 – The Shropshire rookeries colour scheme

Black refers to sites reported to the 1975/76 BTO/SOS survey with the number allocated by Colin Wright, the local organiser. The original hard copy list is with this author and will ultimately revert to the SOS.

Red refers to site recording in 2008, on maps and in the spreadsheet.

Green refers to site recording in 2019/20, on maps and in the spreadsheet.

Blue is used in Map 5, solely in this paper, for Lloyd's 1938 sites, Map 5 and the sites list in the Appendix.

Acknowledgements

My thanks to all the observers who have contributed Shropshire rookery surveys and nest counts over the last decade. They are too numerous to name, although my special thanks go to Geoff Holmes, often working with Graham Walker. Thanks, also to Dr Andrew Pattison who was able to pin-point the individual locations of the eleven component parts of Lloyd's Abbey Foregate cluster for Map 5. Rob Rees, Gerry Thomas, Graham Walker and Tom Wall kindly commented on early drafts. The BTO have sanctioned the use of Figure 2 from BBS data. The woodcut of the Rook is by Thomas Bewick (1753-1828), courtesy of the Natural History Society of Northumberland.

Appendix. Histories of Shrewsbury's Rookeries within Lloyd's area

Source	Ref.	Site (abbreviated)	NGR* (S.J)	SSOS		nests			
				1936	1938	1975	2008	2012	2019
Lloyd	1	Berwick Lodge	480147		87	5	13	x	x
"	2a	AF Merevale	497125		1	x	x	x	x
"	2b	AF Dun Cow and Brookeleigh	510127		6	x	x	x	x
"	2c	AF Monklands	503124		4	x	x	x	x
"	2d	AF Nearwell	508122		2	x	x	x	x
"	2e	AF Chaddeslode	504121		4	x	x	x	x
"	2f	AF Woodlands	507121		1	x	x	x	x
"	2g	AF Belvidre Road	507122		3	x	x	x	x
"	2h	AF Near Monk's Mill	503122		12	x	x	x	x
"	2i	AF Wenlock Road	506118		2	x	x	x	x
"	2j	AF London Road (ca. Column)	509118		8	10	x	x	x
"	2k	AF Burnt Mill	504114		14	x	x	x	x
"	3a	MB Near Ice Factory	(486105)		9	x	x	x	x
"	3b	MB Churchyard	486105		20	x	x	x	x
"	3c	MB Near Meole Hall	(486105)		23	x	x	x	x
"	4	Berwick House	471148		32	x	x	x	x
"	5	Cemetery (MB end)	(488113)	26	27	x	x	x	x
"	6	Monkmoor Farm	518139		21	x	x	x	x
"	7	Kingsland (=SS chapel, plus)	484122	27	20	x	x	x	x
"	8a	GR Ellesmere Road	(494138)		6	x	x	x	x
"	8b	GR Approach to Broom Hall	(494138)		6	x	x	x	x
"	9	Cophorne (later Bowbrook)	461123		10	NR	54	50	52
"	10a	SU Sundome Pool	(528164)	3	5	NR	NR	NR	x
"	10b	SU Pimley Manor	522143		3	NR	NR	NR	x
"	11	Gravel Hill (Showground entr.)	486137		5	x	x	x	x
"	12a	BV Old burial ground	(494117)		4	x	x	x	x
"	12b	BV The Limes	(494117)		1	x	x	x	x
"	13	Kemp's Eye	(496112)		5	x	x	x	x
"	14	The Mount	(4861340)		2	x	x	x	x
"	15	Free Library	493127		2	x	x	x	x
"	16	St Julian's Friars	(496123)		2	x	x	x	x
"	17	Bradford Street	(496123)		2	x	x	x	x
"	out?	Shelton Hall (see text)	-529109		12	9	x	x	x
BTO	169	Smithfield Road	491129	NR	NR	9	x	x	x
"	174	Longner Hall	5528108	NR	NR	114	x	x	x
"	175	Near Column	(508129)	NR	NR	10	x	x	x
SRS08	55	Weeping Cross (now Crematorium)	514104	NR	NR	NR	25	49	28
"	502	Weir Hill Farm	521123	NR	NR	NR	5	7	3

KEY

AF = Abbey Foregate, MB = Meole Brace, GR = Greenfields, SU = Sundome & BV = Belle Vue

SS = Shrewsbury School. SSOS = SS Ornithological Society (1936-1960s)

SRS = Shropshire Rookery Surveys of 2008 & 2019

NR = not recorded x = extinct

See Box 2 for the rationale of the colours

*Grid Refs in parenthesis are approximate

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Map 1 (1860s-70s)



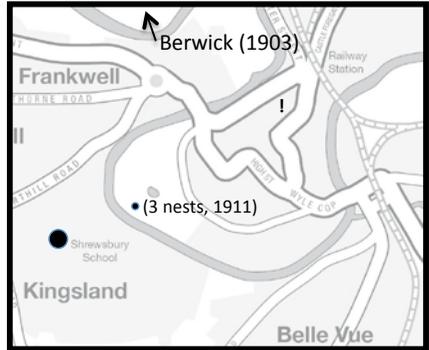
Map 2 (1880s)

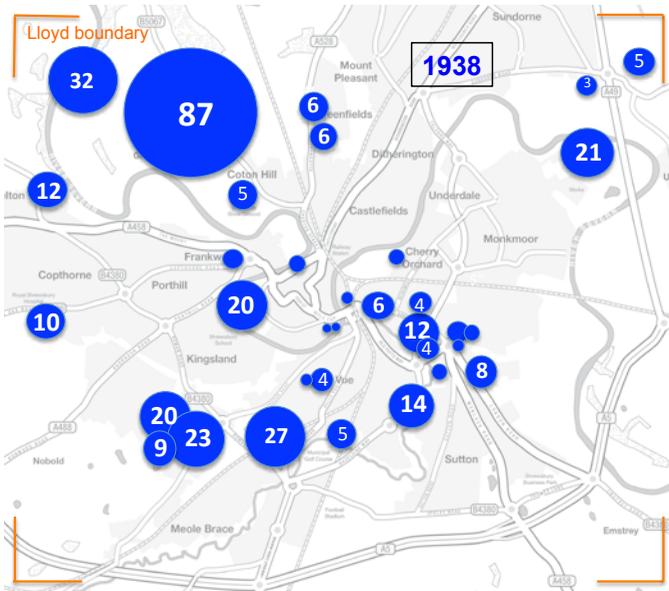


Map 3 (1890s)

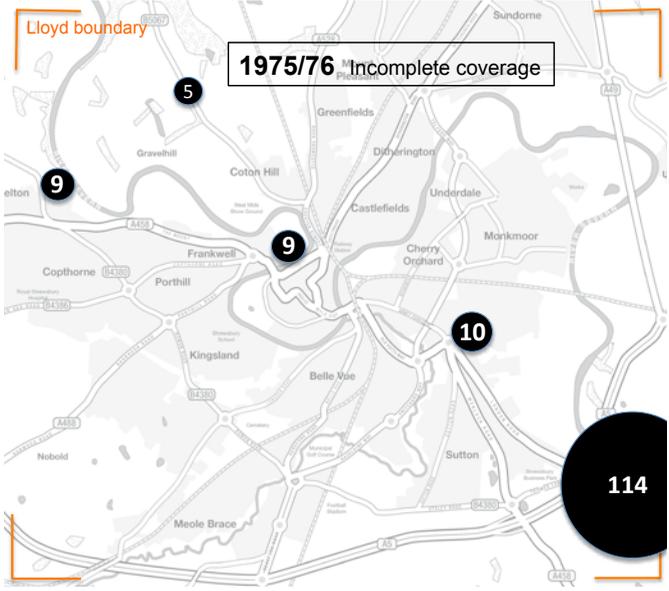


Map 4 (1900s)

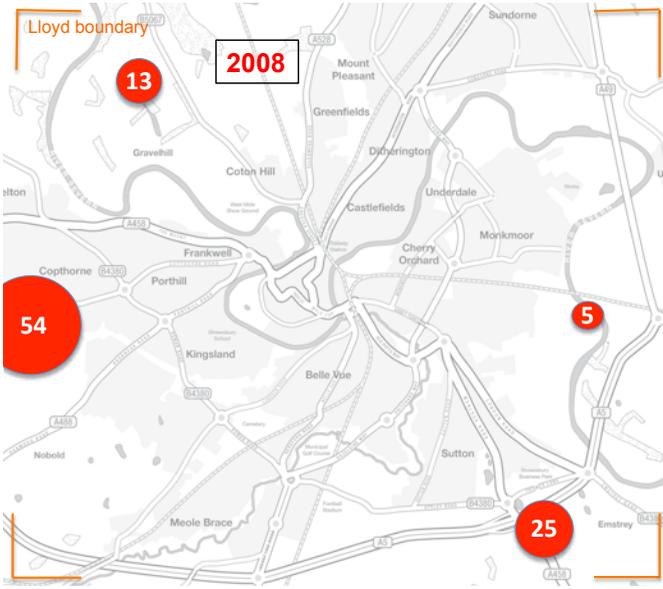




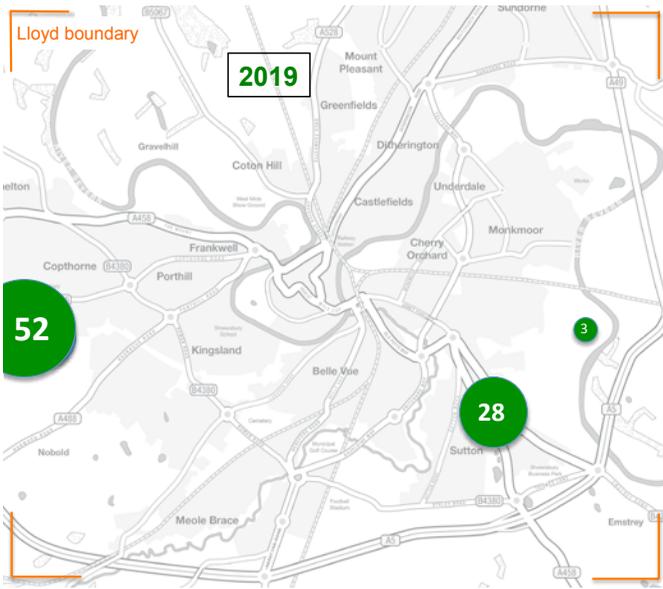
Map 5



Map 6



Map 7



Map 8

The Shropshire Night-heron in 2017

Graham Walker

On 7 April 2017 an adult in breeding plumage was found at VP. Although difficult to view as it sat in willow bushes by the small pool in the feeding station, it was nevertheless seen by many visitors. Eventually, however, it moved to a part of the reserve where it was much less visible and was last seen on 18 April. On 22 April the same adult was found in The Dingle, Quarry Gardens, Shrewsbury.

Although almost always present in The Dingle, it did occasionally appear on the nearby River Severn and at other local pools. Because it often fished under the boardwalk it afforded excellent views and was seen to show characteristics consistent with the American race *N. n. hoactli*; this was subsequently confirmed through DNA analysis. On occasions, it appeared to use bread offered for the pool's ducks to attract fish (J Almond *pers. comm.*). Eventually, however, it became more approachable, having apparently exhausted its food supply, and was taken into care on 27 November by Cuan Wildlife Rescue. After most of the winter, by which time it was rehabilitated, the decision was taken that it couldn't be released back into the wild and, after a period in quarantine, was taken to a collection elsewhere.

At the time of publication, it has been accepted as an individual of the American race by British Birds Rarities Committee, but the British Ornithologists' Union Records Committee are reviewing whether it was likely to be of captive origin or a genuine vagrant because, if accepted, it would be the first occurrence of this race in Britain.

Previously, there had been one modern record of the species, an adult in breeding plumage in April 1988 on a small pool at Caynham near Ludlow, and three historic records: one in 1830, one in 1912 and one in 1914.

Research Reports List and Summaries for 2018

Leo Smith

There are several Groups or projects undertaking monitoring and conservation of individual species. These Groups produce information and annual reports which are summarised in the appropriate Species Account in the Systematic List.

Species covered in this way in this 2018 Bird Report are

- Red Kite
- Peregrine
- Red Grouse
- Curlew
- Snipe
- Dipper
- Barn Owl
- Swift

In previous years, there were reports from the Raven Study Group as well, but the last of these was in 2016, when no colour-ringed birds remained at known nest sites.

The Shropshire Raptor Study Group was founded in 2010, to monitor Hobby, Merlin and Goshawk, and support the Welsh Kite Trust in monitoring Red Kite. SRSG records for these species are included in the individual species accounts. More information about SRSG can be found on the SOS website, www.shropshirebirds.com.

Several Community Wildlife Groups are monitoring Lapwing, Curlew and other target species important in their own area.

Apart from the above, there were no Research surveys with published reports undertaken in 2018. A survey of the Stiperstones was carried out by Biome Consulting, but at the time of writing the report had not been finalised. The Long Mynd Breeding Bird Project started a repeat multi-annual survey of several species in 2017.

A summary of the Community Wildlife Group surveys for 2018 is as follows:-

Community Wildlife Group Bird Surveys

The Upper Onny Wildlife Group has carried out a Breeding Bird Survey annually since 2004, concentrating on Curlew and Lapwing. By 2016, five further Community Wildlife Groups CWGs have been established, all of which also carry out an annual Lapwing, Curlew and other birds survey. The areas covered, other species surveyed, and Pied Flycatcher, Barn Owl and Dipper nest box schemes were described in SBR 2015.

In 2017, the Three Parishes CWG was established, covering Weston Rhyn, Gobowen and St Martins (28 tetrads north and north-east of Oswestry), and the Strettons Area CWG, formed in 2011, started a bird survey in 30 tetrads east of Church Stretton.

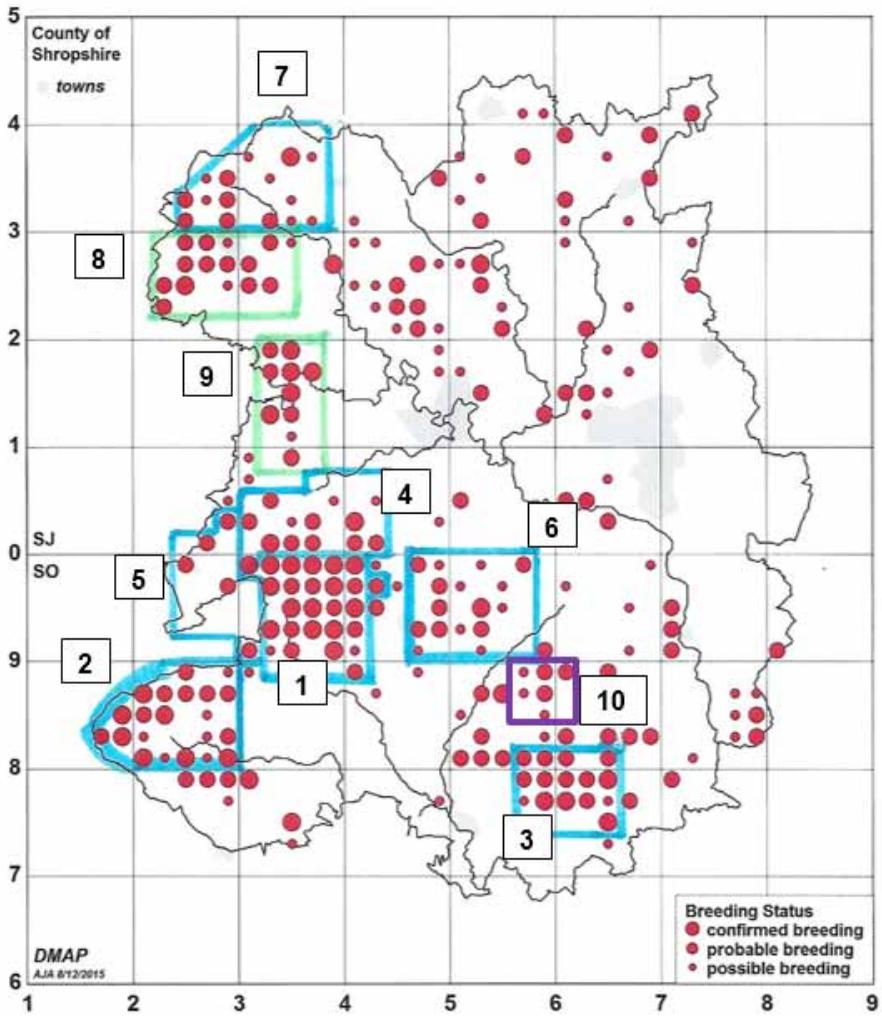
In 2018, as part of the SOS/SWT “Save our Curlews” Campaign, the areas covered by the CWGs were superimposed on the Curlew distribution map from the 2008-13 Bird Atlas, and it was decided to promote two new CWGs, one covering the area south and south-west of Oswestry (the Tanat to Perry CWG) and the second to cover the Severn-Vyrnwy Confluence. A separate local initiative led to the formation of the Abdon CWG, to the west of Brown Clec.

The resulting areas covered by CWGs in 2018, overlain on the Curlew distribution map, are shown on the map.

Few breeding pairs of Lapwing and Curlew have been found, and their populations have mainly declined substantially in these areas. The table shows the estimated number of pairs in the first year the survey was carried out, the results of monitoring in 2018, and the declines since CWG monitoring began. The figures for the Camlad area relate only to the 11 tetrads mainly in Shropshire.

Table 1. Community Wildlife Groups – Lapwing & Curlew Surveys 2018

Group	Area		First Year	Lapwing				Curlew				No. of Participants
	Survey squares (tetrads)	(sq. kms.)		Breeding Pairs			% decline since First Year	Breeding Pairs			% decline since First Year	
				First Year	2018			First Year	2018			
1 Upper Onny	31.5	125	2004	19	11	11	42	38	23	25	37	27
2 Upper Clun	31	110	2007	3	0	0	100	21	8	9	60	19
Kemp Valley	21	84	2009	9	2	2	78	0	0			
3 Clee Hill	20	80	2012	3	2	4	0	13	7	10	35	28
4 Rea Valley	25.5	80	2014	5-6	7	7	122	9-16	8	9	32	21
5 Camlad Valley	11	**44	2014	3-4	0	0	100	4-6	3	3	40	15
6 Strettons area	30	120	2017	8-9	6	8	n/a	4-6	6	8	n/a	35
7 Three Parishes	28	100	2017	10-13	24	30	n/a	4	3	4	n/a	29
8 Tanat to Perry (Oswestry south)	43	172	2018	44-47	44	47	n/a	12-15	12	15	n/a	70
9 Severn-Vyrnwy Confluence	27	108	2018	7	7	7	n/a	7	7	7	n/a	22
10 Abdon	9	36	2018	2	2	2	n/a	5-8	5	8	n/a	11
Total	137	536		113-122	105	118		117-134	82	98		277



Map 1.
Curlew Distribution 2008-13, and Community Wildlife Group areas, 2018

Notes to table and map

- 1 Kemp Valley CWG does not appear on the map, as no Curlews have been found during its surveys
- 2 Orange highlight = 3 CWGs in “Curlew Country” area (76 tetrads)
- 3 ** Camlad Valley CWG comprises 20 tetrads, 11 mainly in Shropshire, and 9 mainly in Wales. The latter had 2-3 pairs of Curlew in 2014
- 4 Green highlight = 2 CWGs established in 2018 to extend coverage of Curlew
- 5 Magenta highlight = CWG established by local initiative.
- 6 Negative figures in % decline column = a percentage increase

The Lapwing population in the Upper Onny area increased from 19 pairs in 2004 to 31 pairs in 2009, as a result of a Lapwing Recovery project, and very wet weather in 2007, but by 2014 numbers had declined back to the same as when monitoring started. The total in 2018 of 11 pairs was a slight improvement on nine pairs in 2017, the lowest since UOWG started. The population is restricted to only six or seven farms in the whole area and concentrated on two or three.

The Curlew population has steadily declined from 38 pairs, by more than one third since 2004. Even so, losses elsewhere in Shropshire have been much quicker, and the Upper Onny may now hold a fifth of the County population.

Lapwing numbers in the Upper Clun have been in steep decline for many years, and there have been none since 2013. The Curlew population was the same as last year, but it has declined by well over half since 2007.

Curlew is a target species in the Kemp Valley area, but none have been found there. The Lapwing population has fluctuated over the years, but the two pairs in 2018 was the lowest recorded.

Monitoring in Clee Hill started in 2012, but it takes some years for a new group to develop a thorough knowledge of its area. The Lapwing population has fluctuated, and there was no evidence of breeding in 2015 or 2016, there have been two to four pairs in 2017 and 2018. Coverage of Curlew was better than usual in 2016, and for the first time it was then possible to identify the remaining territories. Making the reasonable assumption that pairs are site faithful, so pairs returning each year occupy the same territories, it was also possible to determine occupancy in each previous year. There has been a net loss of five pairs (38%) from the estimated population of 13 in 2012

Coverage in the Rea and Camlad valleys has been incomplete, and comparison between years is difficult, but the range of both species has declined considerably,

compared to the relevant part of the maps in “*An Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Shropshire*” (1992). Again, it has taken time to develop an understanding of the numbers and distribution of both species. Although Lapwing in Rea Valley has shown a slight increase in comparison with the under-recording in the first year, more thorough surveys in the next two years found nine to ten pairs in 2016, with a subsequent decline. Detailed analysis of Curlew records in the Rea Valley CWG annual report shows that two long-established pairs have disappeared from the area, a minimum loss of almost 20% in only five years. In the Camlad, Curlew have declined by at least one pair and Lapwing have disappeared altogether.

The five CWGs established in 2017 or 2018 are still establishing baselines for their areas, and it is too soon to establish trends. It will be seen that, not surprisingly, the Lapwing population is much higher in the CWG areas in the northern part of the County, but the areas covered by CWGs do not include a high proportion of the County population, only about 15%.

Collectively, 277 individuals helped with the 10 CWG Curlew surveys, covering 137 tetrads, and they spent well over 2,400 hours on the surveys.

Comparison of the Curlew distribution and population estimate in the Shropshire Breeding Bird Atlas (1992), based on fieldwork between 1985 and 1990, with results from the 2008-13 Atlas, published in *The Birds of Shropshire*, suggest a disappearance from 62% of tetrads over the 23 year period, and a population decline of 77%, from about 700 pairs in 1990 to around 160 pairs in 2010. If the declines in the Upper Onny, Upper Clun and Clee Hill areas are typical of the County as a whole, the population has declined by a further 20%, to only 130 pairs, in 2018.

It will be seen that between them, the CWGs found an estimated 82-98 pairs of Curlew, most of the County population.

All the CWGs produce an Annual Report, and each has concluded that breeding success of both Lapwing and Curlew was again poor, and insufficient to sustain the population. Both species are threatened with local extinction, and swift and radical action is needed to improve and re-create suitable habitat and combat predation.

The Annual Reports, and more information about each CWG, can be found on the Community Wildlife Groups website, www.ShropsCWGs.org.uk. The annual reports include more detailed results of the bird surveys and the nest box schemes. All these groups would welcome new helpers.

Venus Pool Nature Reserve Report 2017

Helen J Griffiths

The birding year at Venus Pool was off to an excellent start on New Year's Day with the discovery, by Simon Davies, of a **Pine Bunting** in the arable field hedge (see SBR 2017 for the Finder's Account). The weather was awful with strong wind, heavy rain and sleet showers, but a few intrepid locals turned up as soon as the news was out and we all had reasonably good views of the bird, despite the conditions. There were even some photos!

Pine Bunting is a national rarity and the bird was bound to attract a large crowd, with accompanying parking problems. A quick plan to manage the logistics was made and although two of us arrived at dawn the next morning, a few visitors were already on site, including a car-load of birders from Cornwall who had travelled overnight in the hope of seeing "our" rarity! We quickly roped-off the area the bird was favouring, to avoid it being flushed. The bird was relocated quickly that morning and showed well at times throughout the day; we estimated that about 500 people had visited the reserve that day, and almost all had managed to see the bird. We managed to park 40 cars within the reserve at any one time, but any more than that had to find space elsewhere. Messages about limited parking and the narrow lane were posted on Twitter, bird info services etc and although there were cars parked in the lane and on the verges, we only received one complaint from a local ... oh! ... and had a visit from the police, a friendly woman who came to see what was attracting the crowd and even had a view of the bird through someone's 'scope! As the week progressed, the bird became more elusive and the number of visitors fewer, but it still showed well at times, particularly when perching on the kale in the field. The final sightings recorded were on 6 January when a small group of five or six of us saw it in its usual hedge, this time in a snow shower. A collection was made during the week and the proceeds donated to Severn Hospice and Cuan Wildlife Rescue.

Not content with one rarity, the reserve was host to a second later in the year when a **Black-crowned Night Heron** turned-up on 7 April. The bird was seen by most of the local birders that evening and by a steady stream of visitors over the next few days. The bird was present until at least 18 April, although mostly skulking and difficult to see, after which it re-located to The Dingle in Shrewsbury.

(For more details, see Jim Almond's article in the Autumn 2017 Buzzard, and Graham Walker's article in SBR 2018).

The records from VP continue to show the importance of the reserve for wintering wildfowl, finches and buntings, spring and autumn passage birds, and summer migrants, as well as for our residents, with a total of 130 species recorded during the year.

Species of note were a Black Tern on 1 May, a Quail heard calling from the arable field over a couple of days in mid-July, a Cattle Egret in October, and two reports of a single Tree Sparrow. Both Bewick's and Whooper Swans were present during the early part of the year, spending time between the reserve and the Coundlane swan field. There were several reports of single Yellow Wagtails from mid-April to mid-May, arriving later than usual this year and in lower numbers, and apparently going straight to their breeding areas.

Twelve species of duck were recorded during the year, with maximum counts of 66 Shoveler in March, 27 Gadwall in February, 50 Wigeon in March and 110 in November, one or two Pintail in both winter periods, 125 Teal in January, and 11 Pochard in November (although ones or twos were the norm), and 32 Tufted Ducks in January. A Green-winged Teal was present for one day in January, a Mandarin for one day in March, and two Goosander were seen on six dates in February. Shelduck bred successfully this year, with a brood of eight being seen in mid-May.

Sixteen species of wader were reported from the reserve this year, including a pair of Oystercatchers and of Little Ringed Plovers during the breeding season, Ringed Plover on spring and autumn passage and Curlew in the first winter period, with a maximum of 18 on 3 March and just one present on six dates in November. Black-tailed Godwits on return passage were present on four dates, with eight on 27 July, one Pectoral Sandpiper was seen on 29 August, and one Ruff on 28 September. Single Dunlin were seen on only four dates on return passage. There were two records of Jack Snipe, and Common Snipe numbers built-up to 65 by early March. Single Redshank were seen on four days during March and April and on one day in November, a Wood Sandpiper was present on 23 August and a Greenshank on three days in March and one in August. Lapwing were present throughout the year with maximum counts of 350 in January, 140 in February, 60 in March, five in April with two pairs sitting, 4 in May, 11 in June, 10 in July, 29 in August, 86 in September, 130 in October, 195 in November and 144 in December.

The arable field again proved popular, with wintering finches and buntings in both winter periods, with up to 110 Linnets in March, up to 22 Corn Buntings in January (two of which were singing early in the year) and a good number of Yellowhammers (100 in January) and Reed Buntings (150 in January).

The first of the summer migrants to arrive were Chiffchaff on 9 March, Blackcap

on 10 March, and 35 Sand Martins on 12 March. There was a Willow Warbler on 31 March, 3 Swallows on 7 April, 2 House Martins on 10 April, Sedge and Reed Warbler on 18 April, Lesser Whitethroat on 22 April, Swift on 25 April, and Garden Warbler and Whitethroat on 9 May,

Breeding attempts were made by Oystercatcher, Lapwing and Little Ringed Plover, all, unfortunately, unsuccessful. Those having more success included Little Grebe, Shelduck, Coot, Moorhen, Great, Blue, Long-tailed and Coal Tit, Greenfinch, Blackcap, Chiffchaff and Song Thrush, all of which produced fledged young.

During the early part of the year, the Management Board took the decision to extend two of the hides to better cater for the increasing number of visitors to the reserve. The Board decided to double the size of both the Memorial hide and North hide, and to designate them both for use by SOS Members only. Plans were made, specifications drawn-up and estimates received from Gilleards; and I then spent hours over the summer completing the planning application which was finally approved in mid-October. Work was to begin in early in 2018.

Venus Pool Nature Reserve Report 2018

Helen J Griffiths

Big changes took place on the reserve early in the year with the erection of extensions to the Main and Memorial hides, doubling the size of both, and the re-location of the sand martin wall to a more suitable position. Following the completion of the ground works, Gilleards completed the work in four days of spring-like conditions in February, during a few days of respite from the wretched wintery conditions experienced for most of the rest of the winter! Both new hides become “SOS Members Only” with keypads fitted to both for entry.

More scrub clearance took place around the pool during the winter, continuing the agreed programme, and as well as the usual day-to-day jobs which need to be done, we held a two-day work party in November, at which we cleared islands and removed scrub, had two large bonfires and used our hired tractor and topper in several areas around the reserve. The kale crop in the arable field was particularly good this year and was retained for a second year, to flower and set seed.

We lost another of the reserve’s Hebridean sheep this year ... RIP No 107 who died from natural causes at sunset on 1 August, with the sound of a Curlew in the background. The three remaining sheep were finally sheared during a short break in the weather later that week; they are a very hardy breed and withstood the winter well, topped-up with a feed of hay and sheep nuts every day. The hayfields were finally cut in some fine early-autumn weather, after which nine cattle moved in during October for after-math grazing.

The records from the reserve continue to show the importance of the reserve for wintering wildfowl, finches and buntings, spring and autumn passage birds, and summer migrants, as well as for our residents, with a total of 121 species recorded during the year.

Species of note were a single Pink-footed Goose on 29 September and on several dates during November, five White-fronted Geese on 21 December, an Avocet on 12 March, a Great White Egret on 30 August and 9 September, a Short-eared Owl during the early evening of 5 March, and a Green-winged Teal on 2 April. There were no reports of Bewick’s Swan during the year, and only a few of Whooper, with maxima of two on 14 January and six on 31 December.

Twelve species of duck were recorded during the year, with maximum counts of 63

Shoveler in February, 20 Gadwall in February and 28 in December, 65 Wigeon in January and 83 in December, one or two Pintail in both winter periods with three on 6 March, 125 Teal in January and 140 in November, and 43 Tufted Duck on 2 February. It was a much better year for Pochard with several double-figure counts, of 12 on 23 February, 17 on 9 March (12 male and five female), 23 on 12 March, and 20 on 17 March.

Seventeen species of wader were reported from the reserve this year, including a pair of Oystercatchers and of Little Ringed Plover for much of the spring and early summer, although no evidence of successful breeding was reported. There was one record each of Woodcock on 5 March, Avocet on 12 March, Whimbrel on 17 April, Ringed Plover on 19 August, Ruff on 31 August, and Wood Sandpiper on 22 October. Lapwing were present throughout the year with a maximum count of 600+ on 19 December.

The first of the summer migrants to arrive were two Sand Martins on 12 March, Chiffchaff on 25 March, and Blackcap on 5 April. The last Swallow was recorded on 13 October.

Breeding attempts were made by Oystercatcher, Lapwing and Little Ringed Plover, all, unfortunately, unsuccessful. Those having more success included Little Grebe, Shelduck, Coot, Moorhen, Great, Blue, Long-tailed and Coal Tit, Greenfinch, Blackcap, Whitethroat, Chiffchaff and Song Thrush, all of which produced fledged young.

The arable field again proved popular, with wintering finches and buntings in both winter periods, with up to 250 Goldfinches in September, 80 Linnets in December, two Corn Buntings in January and reasonably good numbers of Yellowhammers (25+ in February) and Reed Buntings (40+ in February).

Shropshire Ringing Report 2018

Martin George

In 2018 26 bird ringers were registered in Shropshire, five fewer than 2017, with at least five ringers from outside the county also ringing here regularly.

A total of 14,042 birds of 86 species were ringed for the first time in 2018, of which 2,741 were nestlings. This compares with the 2017 total of 15,801 new birds of 82 species (2,813 nestlings). A further 3,225 birds were retrapped (caught again by the original ringer or ringers) and 179 were recovered (caught or found away from the original place of ringing).

The five most ringed species in 2018 were Blue Tit (3,124), Great Tit (1,836), Pied Flycatcher (1,064), Goldfinch (899) and Blackcap (428). For nine species just one individual was ringed: Mallard, Water Rail, Moorhen, Collared Dove, Tawny Owl, Little Owl, Green Woodpecker, Yellow-browed Warbler and Firecrest. A detailed breakdown of species ringed in Shropshire in 2018 is given in Table 1.

Table 2 lists recoveries, including retraps. Highlights include the now regular moult migration of Canada and Greylag Geese between Cumbria and Shropshire, revealed by the diligence of field observers who log and submit colour ring details; a Mute Swan that lived to be twenty-three; a Swedish-ringed Dunlin found dead in Whitchurch and a Starling ringed in the same country found dead near Craven Arms. It's also interesting to look at the site faithfulness and longevity of some garden birds, such as the Blue Tit that seems to have lived near the home of SOS president Peter Deans for all of its seven years, or the Great Tit that has been caught at Shavington Park, Calverhall over a period spanning almost seven years.

Many recoveries are snapshots of isolated moments in a bird's life, typically the time and place of ringing and the time and place of a subsequent recapture or an event such as the bird being found dead or injured. An accumulation of such events from many individuals can provide valuable information, but the most useful data generated from ringing usually arise from long term, focused project work.

The use of colour rings can reveal much more information as the bird can be identified by sight to class or individual without the need to recapture it, often resulting in quite detailed histories thanks to keen field observers across Europe who look out for colour-ringed birds and submit the data via simple online forms. Several projects were active in 2018. The following list is incomplete but includes all the groups and individuals who responded to my request for information. Table 2 includes the recoveries arising from these projects in 2018.

Mute Swan

Colour ringing around Telford, but with a few sites in the Shrewsbury area.

Paul Ashworth.

Goshawk

Colour ringing of nestlings at confidential sites.

Shropshire Ringing Group (Paul Ashworth and Allan Heath)

Coot

Colour ringing on the North Shropshire meres to investigate survival and dispersal.

Lee Barber

Golden Plover

Colour ringing and remote sensing in the Shropshire Hills as part of a long-term project across the Marches and Mid Wales. The Shropshire ringing total for this species represents more than 25% of the Golden Plovers ringed in Britain and Ireland in 2018.

Mid Wales Ringing Group

Curlew

Colour ringing and remote sensing in the Shropshire Hills for the UK Lowland Curlew Recovery Project, better known as Curlew Country.

Tony Cross

Winter farmland birds (Woodcock; Snipe; Jack Snipe; Skylark)

Nocturnal ringing to investigate movements and mortality, increasingly using the thermal imaging technology pioneered by West Midlands Ringing Group. More information on the technique can be found at www.westmidlandsringinggroup.co.uk

Shropshire Ringing Group; West Midlands Ringing Group.

Barn Owl

Long term project of nest box provision and ringing of nestlings. 209 chicks

were produced in sites monitored in 2018. Shropshire Barn Owl Group is a voluntary group which has been working since 2002 to increase the breeding population of Barn Owls in Shropshire by providing nestboxes in areas of suitable habitat and working with farmers and other landowners to improve and conserve the birds' habitat. For more information, including annual reports, go to **shropshirebarnowlgroup.org.uk**

Shropshire Barn Owl Group.

Kestrel

Natural sites and boxes throughout the county; colour ringing of nestlings. Investigating the productivity of nests (as part of the national Nest Recording Scheme); survival and recruitment of young into the breeding population. If any ringers or landowners would like to get involved with the project, please contact **Shropshirekestrels@hotmail.com**

Shropshire Ringing Group and Mid Wales Ringing Group, in association with independent ringers.

Peregrine

A project to assess the survival and recruitment of young into breeding populations. This is one of several colour ringing projects for this species up and down the country. All sightings to Gerry Thomas at **gerry.thomas7@btinternet.com** but please note that as this is a Schedule 1 species breeding birds should not be photographed or approached without a Schedule 1 licence.

Joint project by Shropshire Peregrine Group and Shropshire Ringing Group.

Marsh Tit

Colour ringing is used as part of a Retrapping Adults for Survival project at a population in a private estate in North Shropshire. Shropshire Ringing Group.

Warblers

An ongoing project targeting migrant warblers, working in partnership with the National Trust rangers at Attingham Park to actively manage the habitat near the river Tern as a warbler hot spot.

Chris Whittles and Peter Deans

Dipper

Colour ringing as part of a long-term project across the Marches and Mid Wales.

Mid Wales Ringing Group

House Sparrow

Colour ringing Retrapping Adults for Survival studies to assess survival, recruitment and dispersal.

Independent projects by Paul Ashworth and Dr Bob Harris (Shropshire Ringing Group)

Pied and Grey Wagtails

Colour ringing at Severn Trent Water wastewater sites.

West Midlands Ringing Group.

Reed Bunting

Long term roost ringing at Severn Trent Water wastewater sites, most notably the large roost at the Shifnal site. Over half of the county's annual total were ringed there in just two visits.

West Midlands Ringing Group.

Many of the results of ringing rely on the kindness of members of the public who share details of the ringed birds they encounter. If you find a ringed bird, or see one carrying a colour ring or other mark (such as a leg flag, wing tag, or collar), please report the sighting via www.ring.ac You will receive details of the place of and date of ringing, and will be making a positive contribution to ornithology.

Data citation: Robinson, R.A., Leech, D.I. & Clark, J.A. (2018) The Online Demography Report: Bird ringing and nest recording in Britain & Ireland in 2017. BTO, Thetford.

Table 1. Birds ringed in 2018

Species	Pullus	Juvenile	Adult	Unaged	2018 Total	Retrap	Recovery
Mute Swan	0	10	8	0	18	3	15
Mallard	0	0	1	0	1	0	0

Species	Pullus	Juvenile	Adult	Unaged	2018 Total	Retrap	Recovery
Sparrowhawk	0	2	4	0	6	0	0
Goshawk	11	0	0	0	11	0	0
Red Kite	7	0	0	0	7	0	1
Water Rail	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Moorhen	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Coot	0	2	8	0	10	1	3
Oystercatcher	2	0	0	0	2	0	0
Lapwing	26	0	0	0	26	0	1
Golden Plover	0	65	60	0	125	14	4
Curlew	18	0	0	0	18	5	1
Woodcock	0	21	17	0	38	0	1
Jack Snipe	0	3	2	0	5	1	0
Snipe	0	7	11	1	19	0	0
Stock Dove	4	1	1	0	6	0	0
Woodpigeon	0	0	3	0	3	1	0
Collared Dove	0	0	1	0	1	1	0
Barn Owl	188	0	1	0	189	1	14
Tawny Owl	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Little Owl	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Swift	6	0	3	0	9	3	0
Kingfisher	0	3	0	1	4	0	0
Great Spotted Woodpecker	0	41	22	1	64	47	0
Green Woodpecker	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Kestrel	27	0	0	0	27	0	2
Hobby	11	0	0	0	11	0	0
Peregrine	11	1	0	0	12	0	1
Jay	0	2	2	0	4	0	0
Magpie	0	4	1	0	5	0	0
Jackdaw	11	3	21	0	35	11	0
Rook	0	15	8	0	23	21	1
Coal Tit	9	128	81	5	223	107	0

Species	Pullus	Juvenile	Adult	Unaged	2018 Total	Retrap	Recovery
Marsh Tit	12	28	10	0	50	68	0
Willow Tit	0	1	2	0	3	2	0
Blue Tit	353	1,633	1,138	0	3,124	939	9
Great Tit	396	1,043	390	7	1,836	547	2
Skylark	0	1	17	21	39	1	0
Sand Martin	0	53	27	0	80	0	1
Swallow	199	60	20	0	279	0	0
House Martin	0	3	0	0	3	0	0
Cetti's Warbler	0	1	1	0	2	1	0
Long-tailed Tit	0	15	91	152	258	90	1
Willow Warbler	0	32	29	0	61	9	0
Chiffchaff	0	167	47	9	223	6	2
Wood Warbler	6	0	0	0	6	0	1
Yellow-browed Warbler	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Sedge Warbler	0	41	21	0	62	59	1
Reed Warbler	0	99	44	0	143	107	10
Blackcap	0	324	104	0	428	18	0
Garden Warbler	0	59	23	0	82	7	0
Lesser Whitethroat	0	6	9	0	15	0	0
Whitethroat	0	26	13	1	40	6	0
Firecrest	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Goldcrest	0	74	19	0	93	8	1
Wren	6	111	55	2	174	25	0
Nuthatch	53	15	33	13	114	45	0
Treecreeper	0	13	10	12	35	12	1
Starling	5	153	85	0	243	1	1
Blackbird	19	63	126	1	209	52	6
Fieldfare	0	15	32	0	47	0	1
Redwing	0	37	43	2	82	0	1
Song Thrush	4	25	16	0	45	4	0
Robin	1	172	95	0	268	115	3

Species	Pullus	Juvenile	Adult	Unaged	2018 Total	Retrap	Recovery
Pied Flycatcher	939	1	124	0	1,064	35	20
Redstart	53	4	4	0	61	1	0
Whinchat	2	0	1	0	3	0	0
Stonechat	177	3	42	0	222	27	0
Dipper	156	23	4	0	183	116	44
House Sparrow	7	219	115	74	415	251	4
Tree Sparrow	0	0	2	0	2	0	0
Dunnock	6	127	127	8	268	131	2
Grey Wagtail	0	11	1	0	12	0	0
Pied Wagtail	4	21	0	0	25	0	0
Meadow Pipit	3	46	13	2	64	0	0
Chaffinch	0	79	191	2	272	9	3
Brambling	0	0	79	0	79	0	0
Bullfinch	0	21	19	0	40	12	0
Greenfinch	0	163	253	2	418	35	2
Linnet	0	4	4	0	8	1	0
Redpoll species	0	0	93	0	93	1	2
Lesser Redpoll	0	145	175	12	332	35	6
Goldfinch	5	399	494	1	899	167	4
Siskin	0	0	306	0	306	30	4
Yellowhammer	0	3	15	0	18	0	0
Reed Bunting	4	190	110	1	305	36	3
Grand Total	2,741	6,040	4,931	330	14,042	3,225	179

Table 2. Selected recoveries and controls (birds caught by ringers which have been ringed elsewhere)

This is a selection of birds reported in Shropshire or ringed in Shropshire and reported in the County or elsewhere. Finding details in italics, includes distance travelled in kilometres and time elapsed since the bird was ringed. Please check dead or injured birds for metal rings and submit details online at www.ring.ac or by letter to the BTO.

Canada Goose

5274309

Adult	25-06-2016	near Waterhead, Ambleside (Cumbria)
Alive (colour rings seen)	08-08-2016	Brockholes Nature Reserve (Lancashire) 74km SSE 0y 1m 14d
Alive (colour rings seen)	23-12-2018	Venus Pool, near Cross Houses (Shropshire) 197km N 2y 5m 28d
Alive (colour rings seen)	27-12-2018	Venus Pool, near Cross Houses (Shropshire) 197km N 2y 6m 2d

5274359

Adult	25-06-2016	near Waterhead, Ambleside (Cumbria)
Alive (colour rings seen)	19-06-2017	Bowness-on-Windermere (Cumbria) 5km 0y 11m 25d
Alive (colour rings seen)	04-06-2018	Bowness-on-Windermere (Cumbria) 6km N 1y 11m 10d
Alive (colour rings seen)	28-12-2018	Venus Pool, near Cross Houses (Shropshire) 197km N 2y 6m 3d

5274451

Adult	25-06-2016	near Waterhead, Ambleside (Cumbria)
Alive (colour rings seen)	17-11-2018	Venus Pool, near Cross Houses (Shropshire) 197km N 2y 4m 23d

5272610

Adult Male	02-07-2013	Bowness-on-Windermere (Cumbria)
Alive (colour rings seen)	22-09-2013	Polemere, near Yockleton (Shropshire) 189km S 0y 2m 20d
Caught by ringer	28-06-2015	Bowness-on-Windermere (Cumbria) 0km 1y 11m 26d
Alive (colour rings seen)	24-04-2018	Earls Hill, Pontesbury (Shropshire) 193km S 4y 9m 22d
Alive (colour rings seen)	24-04-2018	Earl's Hill, near Pontesbury (Shropshire) 193km S 4y 9m 22d

5272591

Adult Male	02-07-2013	Bowness-on-Windermere (Cumbria)
Alive (colour rings seen)	13-08-2016	Frodsham Marsh (Cheshire & Wirral) 120km S 3y 1m 11d
Alive (colour rings seen)	07-10-2016	Venus Pool Nr, near Cross Houses (Shropshire) 208km S 3y 3m 5d
Alive (colour rings seen)	10-01-2017	Venus Pool, near Cross Houses (Shropshire) 192km S 3y 6m 8d
Alive (colour rings seen)	27-12-2018	Venus Pool, near Cross Houses (Shropshire) 191km N 5y 5m 25d
Alive (colour rings seen)	28-12-2018	Venus Pool, near Cross Houses (Shropshire) 191km N 5y 5m 26d

Greylag Goose

5272963

Adult	29-06-2014	Rayrigg Hall, Windermere (Cumbria)
Caught by ringer	27-06-2015	Rayrigg Hall, Windermere (Cumbria) 0km 0y 11m 29d
Alive (colour rings seen)	13-05-2018	Weston-under-Redcastle (Shropshire) 170km S 3y 10m 14d

Mute Swan

Z87119

Second-year Female	13-09-1995	Shrewsbury (Shropshire)
Alive (ring read in field)	22-08-2017	Showell Mill, Sambrook, near Newport (Shropshire) 25km ENE 21y 11m 9d
Freshly dead	15-05-2018	Showell Mill, Sambrook, near Newport (Shropshire) 25km ENE 22y 8m 2d

W03518

Nestling Male	02-09-2000	Priorslee, Telford (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	06-10-2011	Priorslee, Telford (Shropshire) 0km 11y 1m 4d
Caught by ringer	21-09-2017	Priorslee Lake (Shropshire) 0km 17y 0m 19d
Freshly dead(injury)	05-07-2018	Priorslee, Telford (Shropshire) 0km 17y 10m 3d

ZZ8814

Second-year Male	17-06-2007	Belvide Reservoir (Staffordshire)
Alive (ring read in field)	11-07-2018	Sambrook Mill (Shropshire) 21km NW 11y 0m 24d

ZZ8529

Nestling Female	15-09-2008	Priorslee, Telford (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	06-10-2011	Priorslee, Telford (Shropshire) 0km 3y 0m 21d
Caught by ringer	21-09-2017	Priorslee Lake (Shropshire) 0km 9y 0m 6d
Sick (disease)	22-07-2018	M54, Priorslee Lake, Telford (Shropshire) 0km 9y 10m 7d

ZY7657

Nestling	17-09-2014	Newport (Shropshire)
Alive (colour rings seen)	20-08-2018	Conwy RSPB Reserve (Conwy) 110km N 3y 11m 3d
Alive (ring read in field)	30-11-2018	RSPB Reserve, Conwy (Conwy) 111km N 4y 2m 13d

Teal

EL41947

Adult Male	19-02-2016	Saltmarsh, Nash, Newport (Newport)
Freshly dead	12-12-2018	Oswestry (Shropshire) 146km N 2y 9m 23d

Red Kite

GR87762

Nestling Female	16-06-2014	Site Confidential, near Craven Arms (Shropshire)
Long dead	12-01-2018	North Sutton, Ludlow (Shropshire) E 3y 6m 27d

Lapwing

DN90036

First-year Male	18-11-2014	Clun Forest, Clun (Shropshire)
Freshly dead predated)	15-03-2018	Threecliff Bay, Gower (Swansea) 120km SW 3y 3m 25d

Golden Plover

DD91745

Adult	27-10-2011	Clun Forest, Clun (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	13-11-2018	Two-Crosses, Clun Forest, Clun (Shropshire) 2km 7y 0m 17d

DK38998

First-year	25-10-2013	Clun Forest, Clun (Shropshire)
Alive (colour rings seen)	02-11-2018	Ynyslas National Nature Reserve, Borth (Ceredigion) 62km N 5y 0m 8d

DK38526

First-year	11-12-2015	Clun Forest, Clun (Shropshire)
Long dead (bird of prey)	23-05-2018	Ramsey Island (Pembrokeshire) 165km WSW 2y 5m 12d

DE69272

Adult	09-11-2017	Clun Forest, Clun (Shropshire)
Alive (colour rings seen)	19-10-2018	Skер Point (Bridgend) 116km N 0y 11m 10d

DK38004

Adult	03-10-2014	Clun Forest, Clun (Shropshire)
Alive (colour rings seen)	13-10-2014	Clun Forest, Clun (Shropshire) 0km 0y 0m 10d
Alive (colour rings seen)	06-10-2018	Skер Point (Bridgend) 115km N 4y 0m 3d

Curlew

FH25241

Adult Male	14-09-2012	Wood Lane, Colemere (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	12-01-2018	Dolydd Hafren, Forden, Montgomery (Powys) 38km N 5y 3m 29d

Dunlin

3598926

Second-year	05-08-2016	Ottenby (Öland) Sweden
Dead (natural causes)	01-03-2018	Whitchurch (Shropshire) 1,280km WSW 1y 6m 24d

Woodcock

EY11597

First-year	12-02-2016	Gadlas, Ellesmere (Shropshire)
Freshly dead (animal)	27-01-2018	Gripping (Suffolk) 279km ESE 1y 11m 15d

Woodpigeon

FB41832

Full-grown	09-03-2014	Wyke, Much Wenlock (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	27-06-2014	Wyke, Much Wenlock (Shropshire) 0km 0y 3m 18d
Caught by ringer	25-12-2018	Wyke, Much Wenlock (Shropshire) 0km 4y 9m 16d

Barn Owl

GR54209

Nestling Female	04-06-2012	Rack Lane, Whixall (Shropshire)
Freshly dead (in building)	28-03-2018	Pear Tree Farm, Prees Green (Shropshire) 7km ESE 5y 9m 24d

Swift

SB43418

Adult	16-07-2011	Prees (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	14-07-2012	Prees (Shropshire) 0km 0y 11m 28d
Caught by ringer	19-07-2014	Prees (Shropshire) 0km 3y 0m 3d
Caught by ringer	26-07-2018	Prees (Shropshire) 0km 7y 0m 10d

SB43423

Adult	27-07-2013	Prees (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	12-07-2014	Prees (Shropshire) 0km 0y 11m 15d
Caught by ringer	26-07-2018	Prees (Shropshire) 0km 4y 11m 29d

Great Spotted Woodpecker

LC25490

First-year Female	22-01-2011	Sutton, Shrewsbury 52°41'N 2°44'W (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	28-05-2018	Sutton, Shrewsbury 52°41'N 2°44'W (Shropshire) 0km 7y 4m 6d

LC86127

First-year Male	22-11-2011	Attingham Park (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	10-07-2013	Attingham Park (Shropshire) 0km 1y 7m 18d
Caught by ringer	09-07-2014	Attingham Park (Shropshire) 0km 2y 7m 17d
Caught by ringer	18-07-2016	Attingham Park (Shropshire) 0km 4y 7m 26d
Caught by ringer	18-10-2017	Attingham Park (Shropshire) 0km 5y 10m 26d
Caught by ringer	05-07-2018	Attingham Park (Shropshire) 0km 6y 7m 13d

LE51329

First-year Female	04-07-2012	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	14-07-2012	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 0km 0y 0m 10d
Caught by ringer	02-06-2013	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 0km 0y 10m 29d
Caught by ringer	02-06-2014	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 0km 1y 10m 29d
Caught by ringer	29-10-2014	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 0km 2y 3m 25d
Caught by ringer	23-10-2015	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 0km 3y 3m 19d
Caught by ringer	16-02-2016	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 0km 3y 7m 12d
Caught by ringer	14-06-2016	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 0km 3y 11m 10d
Caught by ringer	07-03-2018	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 0km 5y 8m 3d

Kestrel

EZ83545

Nestling	10-06-2018	Heely Dod (Northumberland)
Freshly dead (in building)	17-12-2018	Avenue Farm, Peplow, Market Drayton (Shropshire) 275km N 0y 6m 7d

EY36168

Nestling	13-06-2016	Twyning (Gloucestershire)
Long dead	10-06-2018	Stanley Green, Whixall (Shropshire) 106km NNW 1y 11m 28d

EW87269

First-year 24-10-2016 Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire)
Sick (in net or cage) 19-08-2018 Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 2km 1y 9m 26d

EN58386

Nestling 17-06-2017 Severn Valley Country Park (Shropshire)
Long dead 15-06-2018 New House Farm, Sleaf, Wem (Shropshire) 51km NNW
0y 11m 29d

Peregrine

GR78132

Nestling Female 07-06-2017 Site Confidential (Shropshire)
Sick (storm) 16-07-2018 Wrexham (Wrexham) N 1y 1m 9d

Jackdaw

EY83678

Adult Female 17-05-2015 Grove Farm, Bicton (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer 30-06-2018 Grove Farm, Bicton (Shropshire) 0km 3y 1m 13d

Coal Tit

Y302678

First-year 08-10-2011 Big Pool, Shavington Park, Calverhall (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer 12-11-2011 Big Pool, Shavington Park, Calverhall (Shropshire) 0km 0y
1m 4d
Caught by ringer 29-12-2014 Big Pool, Shavington Park, Calverhall (Shropshire) 0km 3y
2m 21d
Caught by ringer 27-12-2015 Big Pool, Shavington Park, Calverhall (Shropshire) 0km 4y
2m 19d
Caught by ringer 15-02-2017 Big Pool, Shavington Park, Calverhall (Shropshire) 0km 5y
4m 7d
Caught by ringer 16-02-2018 Big Pool, Shavington Park, Calverhall (Shropshire) 0km 6y
4m 8d
Caught by ringer 17-11-2018 Big Pool, Shavington Park, Calverhall (Shropshire) 0km 7y
1m 9d

Z479157

First-year 21-11-2015 Wyke, Much Wenlock (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer 25-12-2017 Wyke, Much Wenlock (Shropshire) 0km 2y 1m 4d
Caught by ringer 17-12-2018 Wyke, Much Wenlock (Shropshire) 0km 3y 0m 26d

Marsh Tit

D618793

Full-grown 19-04-2014 Big Pool, Shavington Park, Calverhall (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer 28-06-2014 Big Pool, Shavington Park, Calverhall (Shropshire) 0km 0y
2m 9d
Caught by ringer 11-04-2015 Big Pool, Shavington Park, Calverhall (Shropshire) 0km 0y
11m 23d
Caught by ringer 28-12-2016 Big Pool, Shavington Park, Calverhall (Shropshire) 0km 2y

		8m 9d
Caught by ringer	26-09-2017	Big Pool, Shavington Park, Calverhall (Shropshire) 0km 3y 5m 7d
Caught by ringer	29-12-2018	Big Pool, Shavington Park, Calverhall (Shropshire) 0km 4y 8m 10d

Blue Tit

L581759

First-year Female	21-11-2010	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	11-12-2010	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 0km 0y 0m 20d
Caught by ringer	17-12-2011	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 0km 1y 0m 26d
Caught by ringer	22-02-2013	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 0km 2y 3m 1d
Caught by ringer	26-11-2013	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 0km 3y 0m 5d
Caught by ringer	24-12-2014	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 0km 4y 1m 3d
Caught by ringer	27-12-2015	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 0km 5y 1m 6d
Caught by ringer	26-01-2018	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 0km 7y 2m 5d

Y698430

Adult

		09-08-2012	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	26-08-2012	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire) 0km 0y 0m 17d	
Caught by ringer	21-04-2013	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire) 0km 0y 8m 12d	
Caught by ringer	16-02-2014	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire) 0km 1y 6m 7d	
Caught by ringer	16-01-2016	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire) 0km 3y 5m 7d	
Caught by ringer	16-11-2018	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire) 0km 6y 3m 7d	

Y615578

First-year		27-12-2012	Wyke, Much Wenlock (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer		09-12-2013	Wyke, Much Wenlock (Shropshire) 0km 0y 11m 12d
Caught by ringer		26-11-2014	Wyke, Much Wenlock (Shropshire) 0km 1y 10m 30d
Caught by ringer	31-12-2018		Wyke, Much Wenlock (Shropshire) 0km 6y 0m 4d

Y480249

Juvenile	04-09-2012	Newport (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	21-08-2018	Newport (Shropshire) 0km 5y 11m 17d

ABC0294

Adult Female	16-04-2018	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	01-11-2018	Rowney Wood (Essex) 196km N 0y 6m 16d

Z768291

Juvenile	12-08-2017	East Shefford, near Great Shefford (West Berkshire)
Caught by ringer	05-02-2018	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire) 183km N 0y 5m 24d

AXB8812

Nestling	19-05-2018	Queen Mary Reservoir (Surrey)
Caught by ringer	16-06-2018	Queen Mary Reservoir (Surrey) 0km 0y 0m 28d
Caught by ringer	27-08-2018	Chelmarsh Reservoir, near Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 177km N 0y 3m 8d

Great Tit

X770433

Juvenile	31-08-2009	Sutton, Shrewsbury (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	12-09-2009	Sutton, Shrewsbury (Shropshire) 0km 0y 0m 12d
Freshly dead (injury)	25-01-2018	Shrewsbury (Shropshire) 2km 8y 4m 25d

L926444

First-year Female	23-01-2012	Wyke, Much Wenlock (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	09-01-2015	Wyke, Much Wenlock (Shropshire) 0km 2y 11m 17d
Caught by ringer	27-12-2015	Wyke, Much Wenlock (Shropshire) 0km 3y 11m 4d
Caught by ringer	31-12-2018	Wyke, Much Wenlock (Shropshire) 0km 6y 11m 8d

Y577330

Adult Male	25-02-2012	Big Pool, Shavington Park, Calverhall (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	29-12-2014	Big Pool, Shavington Park, Calverhall (Shropshire) 0km 2y 10m 4d
Caught by ringer	27-12-2015	Big Pool, Shavington Park, Calverhall (Shropshire) 0km 3y 10m 2d
Caught by ringer	12-10-2017	Big Pool, Shavington Park, Calverhall (Shropshire) 0km 5y 7m 17d
Caught by ringer	24-08-2018	Big Pool, Shavington Park, Calverhall (Shropshire) 0km 6y 5m 30d
Caught by ringer	17-11-2018	Big Pool, Shavington Park, Calverhall (Shropshire) 0km 6y 8m 23d

Y577477

First-year Male	16-09-2012	Market Drayton (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	28-09-2012	Market Drayton (Shropshire) 0km 0y 0m 12d
Caught by ringer	09-03-2014	Market Drayton (Shropshire) 0km 1y 5m 21d
Caught by ringer	02-11-2018	Market Drayton (Shropshire) 0km 6y 1m 17d

D417387

First-year Female	12-06-2014	Polstead (Suffolk)
Caught by ringer	11-02-2017	Market Drayton (Shropshire) 250km WNW 2y 7m 30d
Caught by ringer	24-12-2018	Market Drayton (Shropshire) 250km N 4y 6m 12d

Sand Martin

Z009910

Adult	09-08-2015	Wood Lane, Colemere (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	16-08-2018	Tour Aux Moutons, Donges (Loire-Atlantique) France 621km N 3y 0m 7d

Chiffchaff

HRC941

Juvenile	25-06-2017	Chelmarsh Reservoir, near Bridgnorth (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	14-04-2018	Landguard Point, Felixstowe (Suffolk) 260km ESE 0y 9m 20d

EAD570

Adult Female	25-05-2015	Chelmarsh Reservoir, near Bridgnorth (Shropshire)
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Caught by ringer	07-06-2015	Chelmarsh Reservoir, near Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 0km 0y 0m 13d
Caught by ringer	27-08-2018	Chelmarsh Reservoir, near Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 0km 3y 3m 2d
JDD886		
First-year	29-09-2018	Whixall & Fenn's Mosses (Wrexham)
Freshly dead	07-10-2018	Whixall & Fenn's Mosses (Wrexham) 0km 0y 0m 8d
Wood Warbler		
Z721328		
Nestling	11-06-2016	The Hurst, Clun (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	07-05-2018	Burley New Inclosure (Hampshire) 199km SSE 1y 10m 26d
Sedge Warbler		
AZB6951		
Adult	05-05-2018	New Mills (Derbyshire)
Caught by ringer	06-05-2018	Chelmarsh Reservoir, near Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 104km SSW 0y 0m 1d
Caught by ringer	17-06-2018	Chelmarsh Reservoir, near Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 104km N 0y 1m 12d
Reed Warbler		
L123225		
Juvenile	11-07-2010	Chelmarsh Reservoir, near Bridgnorth (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	10-07-2011	Chelmarsh Reservoir, near Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 0km 0y 11m 29d
Caught by ringer	27-07-2014	Chelmarsh Reservoir, near Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 0km 4y 0m 16d
Caught by ringer	01-05-2016	Chelmarsh Reservoir, near Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 0km 5y 9m 20d
Caught by ringer	03-06-2018	Chelmarsh Reservoir, near Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 0km 7y 10m 23d
Caught by ringer	17-06-2018	Chelmarsh Reservoir, near Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 0km 7y 11m 6d
AAD0445		
First-year	08-07-2018	Chelmarsh Reservoir, near Bridgnorth (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	15-07-2018	Chelmarsh Reservoir, near Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 0km 0y 0m 7d
Caught by ringer	08-08-2018	Pett Level, Sussex (East Sussex) 275km N 0y 1m 0d
D519275		
Adult Female	13-07-2014	Chelmarsh Reservoir, near Bridgnorth (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	18-05-2018	Ibsley Water, Blashford Lakes (Hampshire) 183km SSE 3y 10m 5d
Caught by ringer	30-06-2018	Ibsley Water, Blashford Lakes (Hampshire) 183km SSE 3y 11m 17d

AXB8042

First-year	15-07-2018	Chelmarsh Reservoir, near Bridgnorth (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	19-07-2018	Chelmarsh Reservoir, near Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 0km 0y 0m 4d
Caught by ringer	12-09-2018	Chew Valley Lake (Bath and N. E. Somerset) 130km N 0y 1m 28d

Goldcrest

HRN216

First-year Male	22-10-2016	Newport (Shropshire)
Freshly dead (cat)	03-03-2018	Newport (Shropshire) 1km 1y 4m 9d

Wren

EKH825

First-year	15-11-2014	Whixall & Fenn's Mosses (Wrexham)
Caught by ringer	16-05-2015	Whixall & Fenn's Mosses (Wrexham) 0km 0y 6m 1d
Caught by ringer	08-04-2018	Whixall & Fenn's Mosses (Wrexham) 0km 3y 4m 24d

Nuthatch

TS63109

First-year Female	30-06-2012	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	07-07-2012	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire) 0km 0y 0m 7d
Caught by ringer	25-01-2015	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire) 0km 2y 6m 26d
Caught by ringer	08-06-2018	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire) 0km 5y 11m 9d

Treecreeper

CJA453

Adult Female	11-06-2016	Bridges (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	13-01-2018	Barratt's Coppice (Staffordshire) 49km N 1y 7m 2d

Starling

4672862

Nestling	25-05-2017	Hog, Rödbo, Hisingen (Västra Götaland) Sweden
Freshly dead	16-04-2018	Craven Arms (Shropshire) 1,113km WSW 0y 10m 22d
LE36186		
First-year Male	30-12-2014	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire)
Dead	09-07-2018	Tattenhall, Chester (Cheshire & Wirral) 25km N 3y 6m 9d

Blackbird

LC16512

First-year Male	11-03-2010	Chelmarsh Reservoir, near Bridgnorth (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	27-12-2018	Chelmarsh Reservoir, near Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 0km 8y 9m 16d

LE34305

Juvenile Male	23-06-2012	Newport (Shropshire)
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Freshly dead (injury)	20-06-2018	Newport (Shropshire) 0km 5y 11m 28d
LE51433		
Juvenile Male	24-08-2013	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	30-10-2013	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 0km 0y 2m 6d
Caught by ringer	09-04-2014	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 0km 0y 7m 16d
Caught by ringer	08-12-2014	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 0km 1y 3m 14d
Caught by ringer	20-01-2016	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 0km 2y 4m 27d
Caught by ringer	26-06-2017	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 0km 3y 10m 2d
Caught by ringer	04-12-2018	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 0km 5y 3m 10d
LC79741		
First-year Male	14-12-2013	Big Pool, Shavington Park, Calverhall (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	17-11-2018	Big Pool, Shavington Park, Calverhall (Shropshire) 0km 4y 11m 3d
Caught by ringer	19-12-2018	Big Pool, Shavington Park, Calverhall (Shropshire) 0km 5y 0m 5d
4549121		
Adult Male	16-05-2012	Eggegrund (Gävleborg) Sweden
Unknown (ring only)	15-01-2018	Broncroft, Diddlebury, Salop (Shropshire) 1,536km SW 5y 7m 30d
Fieldfare		
LH76841		
First-year Female	01-03-2016	Two Crosses, Clun Forest, Clun (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	26-10-2018	Oosthoven (Antwerpen) Belgium 568km N 2y 7m 25d
Redwing		
RT75618		
First-year	19-02-2017	Chelmarsh Reservoir, near Bridgnorth (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	02-11-2018	Erlecom, Ubbergen (Gelderland) The Netherlands 574km N 1y 8m 14d
Robin		
D221885		
Juvenile	27-07-2013	Big Pool, Shavington Park, Calverhall (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	20-09-2014	Big Pool, Shavington Park, Calverhall (Shropshire) 0km 1y 1m 24d
Caught by ringer	29-12-2014	Big Pool, Shavington Park, Calverhall (Shropshire) 0km 1y 5m 2d
Caught by ringer	17-11-2018	Big Pool, Shavington Park, Calverhall (Shropshire) 0km 5y 3m 21d
Pied Flycatcher		
Y148104		
Second-year Male	06-06-2011	near Selley Hall, near Purlogue (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	18-06-2014	near Selley Hall, near Purlogue (Shropshire) 2km 3y 0m 12d
Caught by ringer	05-06-2015	near Selley Hall, near Purlogue (Shropshire) 2km 3y 11m 30d

Caught in nestbox	04-06-2018	near Selley Hall, near Purlogue (Shropshire) 0km 6y 11m 29d
L785596		
Nestling Male	20-06-2013	Bucknell Wood (Shropshire)
Caught in nestbox	21-06-2018	near Selley Hall, near Purlogue (Shropshire) 7km N 5y 0m 1d
S986014		
Nestling	04-06-2017	The Hurst 52°24'N 3°0'W (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	07-06-2018	Deerpark Wood, Arlington (Devon) 156km N 1y 0m 3d
S986081		
Nestling	11-06-2017	The Hurst (Shropshire)
Caught in nestbox	22-05-2018	Bearda (Staffordshire) 107km NE 0y 11m 11d
Stonechat		
Z901120		
Nestling	20-05-2016	Site Confidential, near Sutton Common (Suffolk)
Caught by ringer	01-05-2017	Clee Hill, Cleobury Mortimer (Shropshire) 274km W 0y 11m 11d
Alive (colour rings seen)	14-04-2018	Clee Hill, Cleobury Mortimer (Shropshire) 274km N 1y 10m 25d
D519134		
Nestling Male	27-04-2014	Clee Hill, Cleobury Mortimer (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	09-05-2015	Clee Hill, Cleobury Mortimer (Shropshire) 0km 1y 0m 12d
Alive (colour rings seen)	03-04-2016	Clee Hill, Cleobury Mortimer (Shropshire) 0km 1y 11m 7d
Alive (colour rings seen)	22-04-2018	Clee Hill, Cleobury Mortimer (Shropshire) 0km 3y 11m 26d
Dipper		
RF78915		
First-year Male	18-09-2011	Knighton (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	29-09-2012	Knighton (Shropshire) 0km 1y 0m 11d
Caught by ringer	01-10-2013	Knighton (Shropshire) 0km 2y 0m 13d
Caught by ringer	21-10-2014	Knighton (Shropshire) 0km 3y 1m 3d
Alive (colour rings seen)	16-03-2015	Panpunton, Knighton (Shropshire) 2km 3y 5m 26d
Alive (colour rings seen)	14-12-2015	Knighton (Shropshire) 0km 4y 2m 26d
Alive (colour rings seen)	03-04-2016	River Teme, Panpunton, Knighton (Shropshire) 2km 4y 6m 16d
Alive (colour rings seen)	08-04-2017	River Teme, Panpunton, Knighton (Shropshire) 2km 5y 6m 21d
Caught by ringer	17-11-2017	Wylcwm Brook, Knighton (Shropshire) 2km 6y 1m 30d
Alive (colour rings seen)	27-04-2018	River Teme, Panpunton, Knighton (Shropshire) 1km 6y 7m 9d
Caught by ringer	03-10-2018	Wylcwm Brook, Knighton (Shropshire) 1km 7y 0m 15d
RF78645		
Nestling Male	11-04-2011	Marshbrook (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	14-04-2018	River Teme, Hendy, near Felindre (Powys) 30km N 7y 0m 3d

RL15093

Nestling Female	16-04-2012	Llananno (Powys)
Caught by ringer	14-05-2017	River Unk, Cefn Einion, Clun (Shropshire) 23km NE 5y 0m 28d
Caught by ringer	14-10-2017	River Unk, Cefn Einion, Clun (Shropshire) 23km NE 5y 5m 28d
Caught by ringer	17-10-2018	River Unk, Birches Mill, Cefn Einion (Shropshire) 22km N 6y 6m 1d

RL15229

First-year Female	02-10-2012	Pentiken, Newcastle (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	04-10-2013	Hall of The Forest, Clun (Shropshire) 2km 1y 0m 2d
Alive (colour rings seen)	06-04-2014	Hall of The Forest, Clun (Shropshire) 2km 1y 6m 4d
Caught by ringer	12-10-2015	Hall of The Forest, Clun (Shropshire) 2km 3y 0m 10d
Alive (colour rings seen)	29-04-2016	River Clun, Hall of The Forest, Clun (Shropshire) 2km 3y 6m 27d
Caught by ringer	10-10-2016	River Clun, Hall of The Forest, Clun (Shropshire) 2km 4y 0m 8d
Alive (colour rings seen)	06-04-2017	River Clun, Hall of The Forest, Clun (Shropshire) 2km 4y 6m 4d
Alive (colour rings seen)	04-10-2017	River Clun, Hall of The Forest, Clun (Shropshire) 2km 5y 0m 2d
Alive (colour rings seen)	01-05-2018	River Clun, Hall of The Forest, Clun (Shropshire) 1km 5y 6m 29d
Caught by ringer	16-10-2018	River Clun, Hall of The Forest, Clun (Shropshire) 1km 6y 0m 14d

House Sparrow

TP81477

Juvenile Male	02-07-2011	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire)
Alive (colour rings seen)	10-09-2012	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire) 0km 1y 2m 8d
Alive (colour rings seen)	05-05-2013	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire) 0km 1y 10m 3d
Alive (colour rings seen)	24-12-2013	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire) 0km 2y 5m 22d
Alive (colour rings seen)	05-06-2014	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire) 0km 2y 11m 3d
Alive (colour rings seen)	07-10-2015	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire) 0km 4y 3m 5d
Caught by ringer	06-03-2016	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire) 0km 4y 8m 4d
Alive (colour rings seen)	26-04-2017	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire) 0km 5y 9m 24d
Alive (colour rings seen)	01-09-2017	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire) 0km 6y 1m 30d
Alive (colour rings seen)	21-02-2018	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire) 0km 6y 7m 19d
Alive (colour rings seen)	29-05-2018	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire) 0km 6y 10m 27d

TP81466

Juvenile Female	29-06-2011	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire)
Alive (colour rings seen)	06-07-2011	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire) 0km 0y 0m 7d
Caught by ringer	16-10-2011	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire) 0km 0y 3m 17d
Alive (colour rings seen)	28-10-2012	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire) 0km 1y 3m 29d
Alive (colour rings seen)	10-03-2013	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire) 0km 1y 8m 9d
Caught by ringer	12-01-2014	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire) 0km 2y 6m 14d
Alive (colour rings seen)	14-12-2014	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire) 0km 3y 5m 15d
Alive (colour rings seen)	28-07-2015	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire) 0km 4y 0m 29d

Alive (colour rings seen)	30-08-2016	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire)	0km	5y	2m	1d
Alive (colour rings seen)	01-01-2017	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire)	0km	5y	6m	3d
Caught by ringer	22-06-2017	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire)	0km	5y	11m	24d
Alive (colour rings seen)	20-05-2018	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire)	0km	6y	10m	21d

TL05232

Full-grown Female	06-03-2011	Mossley, near Whixall (Shropshire)				
Caught by ringer	03-03-2013	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire)	0km	1y	11m	25d
Alive (colour rings seen)	14-01-2018	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire)	0km	6y	10m	8d

TP81486

Adult Male	06-07-2011	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire)				
Alive (colour rings seen)	07-07-2011	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire)	0km	0y	0m	1d
Alive (colour rings seen)	19-05-2012	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire)	0km	0y	10m	13d
Alive (colour rings seen)	28-02-2018	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire)	0km	6y	7m	22d

Dunnoch

X322029

Adult Female	26-09-2008	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire)				
Caught by ringer	29-09-2008	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire)	0km	0y	0m	3d
Caught by ringer	07-03-2010	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire)	0km	1y	5m	9d
Caught by ringer	10-03-2012	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire)	0km	3y	5m	13d
Caught by ringer	09-04-2014	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire)	0km	5y	6m	14d
Caught by ringer	10-11-2014	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire)	0km	6y	1m	15d
Caught by ringer	25-02-2015	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire)	0km	6y	4m	30d
Caught by ringer	14-06-2015	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire)	0km	6y	8m	19d
Caught by ringer	07-03-2016	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire)	0km	7y	5m	10d
Caught by ringer	23-06-2018	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire)	0km	9y	8m	28d

Y861288

Full-grown Male	26-01-2013	Grove Farm, Bicton (Shropshire)				
Caught by ringer	16-02-2013	Grove Farm, Bicton (Shropshire)	0km	0y	0m	21d
Caught by ringer	05-04-2014	Grove Farm, Bicton (Shropshire)	0km	1y	2m	10d
Caught by ringer	22-11-2014	Grove Farm, Bicton (Shropshire)	0km	1y	9m	27d
Caught by ringer	04-07-2015	Grove Farm, Bicton (Shropshire)	0km	2y	5m	8d
Caught by ringer	16-01-2016	Grove Farm, Bicton (Shropshire)	0km	2y	11m	21d
Caught by ringer	21-07-2018	Grove Farm, Bicton (Shropshire)	0km	5y	5m	25d

D159081

Full-grown Female	26-10-2012	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire)				
Caught by ringer	11-09-2014	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire)	0km	1y	10m	16d
Caught by ringer	13-01-2016	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire)	0km	3y	2m	18d
Caught by ringer	10-03-2017	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire)	0km	4y	4m	12d
Caught by ringer	07-03-2018	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire)	0km	5y	4m	9d
Caught by ringer	09-04-2018	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire)	0km	5y	5m	14d

Grey Wagtail

ADA0058

First-year	25-09-2017	Heysham Harbour, Heysham (Lancashire)					
Freshly dead (cold)	01-03-2018	Stoke Park, Market Drayton (Shropshire)	135km	S	0y	5m	4d

Chaffinch

S817951

Adult Male	21-02-2018	near Venus Bank, Cound (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	04-05-2018	Hoburgen, Sundre (Gotland) Sweden 1,410km N 0y 2m 13d
Caught by ringer	08-05-2018	Hoburgen, Sundre (Gotland) Sweden 1,410km N 0y 2m 17d

14569875

Full-grown Female	25-11-2016	Zerkegem (West-Vlaanderen) Belgium
Freshly dead	15-01-2018	Wem (Shropshire) 438km WNW 1y 1m 21d

S381358

Adult Male	28-03-2017	Lilleshall (Shropshire)
Freshly dead (disease)	05-03-2018	Donnington, Oakengates (Shropshire) 1km 0y 11m 5d

Greenfinch

TX84854

First-year Male	28-12-2015	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire)
Freshly dead	02-06-2018	Dorrington (Shropshire) 24km WNW 2y 5m 5d

TT98962

First-year Female	13-03-2018	Walcot (Shropshire)
Freshly dead	23-03-2018	Wellington, Telford (Shropshire) 5km 0y 0m 10d

Redpoll species

Z009728

First-year Male	30-10-2014	Whixall & Fenn's Mosses (Wrexham)
Freshly dead	30-01-2018	Mossley Well, near Whixall (Shropshire) 1km 3y 3m 0d

AFA1690

First-year	09-01-2018	Cressage, near Shrewsbury (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	09-03-2018	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 14km SE 0y 2m 0d

Lesser Redpoll

D159814

Adult Male	09-03-2013	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	20-02-2015	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 0km 1y 11m 11d
Caught by ringer	06-01-2016	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 0km 2y 9m 28d
Caught by ringer	10-01-2018	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 0km 4y 10m 1d
Caught by ringer	30-03-2018	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 0km 5y 0m 21d

S463367

Adult Female	26-10-2016	Whixall & Fenn's Mosses (Wrexham)
Caught by ringer	06-10-2018	Teindland Forest, Carraburn, near Rothes (Moray) 518km N 1y 11m 10d

S792067

First-year Female	03-02-2017	Cressage, near Shrewsbury (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	15-10-2018	Leswalt (Dumfries and Galloway) 303km N 1y 8m 12d

D619050

First-year Male	03-10-2015	Whixall & Fenn's Mosses (Wrexham)
Caught by ringer	14-02-2018	Chilworth (Surrey) 243km SE 2y 4m 11d

Goldfinch

X770490

Juvenile	19-09-2009	Sutton, Shrewsbury (Shropshire)
Freshly dead	01-07-2018	Shrewsbury (Shropshire) 1km 8y 9m 12d

S223838

First-year Male	10-02-2017	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	13-04-2018	Souter's Croft Wood (Dumfries and Galloway) 287km NNW 1y 2m 3d

S686557

First-year	23-10-2017	Garden, Penrhiw (Conwy)
Caught by ringer	11-01-2018	Wrockwardine (Shropshire) 102km SE 0y 2m 19d

Siskin

ABC0111

Adult Male	09-03-2018	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	17-05-2018	Deer Park Forest Croft (Highland) 569km N 0y 2m 8d

Z438671

First-year Male	12-03-2016	Hanwood, near Shrewsbury (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	04-01-2018	Kintore (Aberdeenshire) 508km N 1y 9m 23d

S903213

First-year Female	17-02-2018	Market Drayton (Shropshire)
Caught by ringer	01-04-2018	Peebles (Scottish Borders) 310km N 0y 1m 15d

D721053

Adult Male	21-04-2014	Mackenzie Rd, Thetford (Norfolk)
Freshly dead	26-03-2018	Bishop's Castle (Shropshire) 254km W 3y 11m 5d

D848641

First-year Male	09-04-2016	Gleadthorpe Grange, Meden Vale, Warsop (Nottinghamshire)
Caught by ringer	09-03-2018	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 116km SW 1y 11m 0d

Reed Bunting

D515061

Juvenile	02-07-2016	Catterick Garrison (North Yorkshire)
Caught by ringer	18-11-2018	Chelmarsh Reservoir, near Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 215km N 2y 4m 16d

S371385

First-year	15-09-2016	Middleton Nature Reserve (Lancashire)
Caught by ringer	16-02-2018	Chelmarsh Reservoir, near Bridgnorth (Shropshire) 175km S 1y 5m 1d

Introduction to the Systematic List

Records used in the systematic list

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

Birdtrack (BTO)

Birdtrack is an online bird recording system developed through a partnership between BTO, RSPB and BirdWatch Ireland. The system uses data from birdwatchers' records to support species and site conservation at local, national and international scales. Results produced by BirdTrack include mapping the distribution and chronology of bird observations throughout the country. All Shropshire records submitted to BirdTrack can be accessed by the County Recorder provided the observer gives his consent. In recent years, most Shropshire observers have submitted their records to the Birdtrack system. It has many advantages in that it enables the observer to submit records wherever the birds were seen in the UK and know that the records would be made available to the County Recorder(s). In addition, the system allows an observer to retain a history of observations and analyse these by location, species or date. Observers who do not yet use the system are encouraged to do so.

Records submitted directly to the County Recorder

Records can be submitted to the County Recorder on an *ad hoc* basis. This involves additional work, however, and has more manual intervention and therefore the possibility of error.

Birdguides Data

Data submitted via the Birdguides web pages have been used in this report, unless a county rarity which has not been accepted by the County Rarities Committee. Birdguides do not pass on the identity of observers, so if a description of a County rarity has not been submitted elsewhere, it is impossible for the County Bird Recorder to trace the original observer and therefore such records will be recorded as 'unproven'. Observers submitting records to Birdguides are asked to send descriptions of County or national rarities to the County Bird Recorder.

Breeding Bird Survey (BTO)

The Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) is the main scheme for monitoring the population

changes of the UK's common breeding birds, providing an important indicator of the health of the countryside. BBS trends are produced each year, nationally and regionally for over 100 species, and the results are used widely by governmental and conservation organisations to set priorities and inform conservation action.

The BBS was launched in 1994, to provide more representative habitat and regional coverage than the Common Bird Census (CBC) which it replaced completely in 2000 after a period of overlap. This was to ensure that the results were compatible, enabling long term trends to be calculated from 1960 to the present, using data from both schemes.

Increased uptake of the BBS, which requires only two survey visits, enables trends to be compiled for common and widespread species for individual counties and regions in the UK and for specific habitats. Since 1997 when the number of plots surveyed in Shropshire increased significantly, it has been possible to calculate local trends for those species which are regularly found in 40 or more 1 square km. survey plots. For these species the County trend index for 2018 is given in the relevant species account. The 1997 index is set to 1.0 so a current index of 0.6 indicates a decline of 40% and a current index of 1.6 indicates an increase of 60% since 1997, the annual change from the previous year is also provided. If a Shropshire BBS index is not included in the species account, then there are insufficient data points to calculate the index.

Fifty-one plots were surveyed in 2018. The percentage of plots where a species was present and the number per occupied plot is also given, for less common species this gives a crude indication of how widespread they are, and for some, the change in this percentage since the BBS began can indicate an increase or decline in range.

Full details of the BBS can be found at: www.bto.org/bbs.

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

Wetland Bird Survey (BTO)

The Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) is administered by the BTO in partnership with the WWT/RSPB/JNCC. WeBS monitors all water bird 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 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. Records submitted in Shropshire are used in the species accounts.

Nomenclature and order

The official British list is maintained by the British Ornithologists’ Union (BOU). From time to time the list changes as knowledge on the relationships of birds develops and new species are accepted to the list. The latest version is the ninth edition. The formal citation is **British Ornithologists Union (BOU). 2017.** The British List – A Checklist of Birds of Britain (9th edition) *Ibis* 160: 190-240 by McNerny *et al.*

New editions are published approximately every five years, but in the interim changes may be made as new species are accepted, or changes to the category classification of a species are determined (see below). Interim updates to each edition have appropriate version numbers allocated and are published on the BOU web site, www.bou.org.uk/british-list. As at 1 September 2019, the latest version is: BOU_British_List_9th_Edition_IOC_Jan_2019_v7_1_august_2019.

The order and nomenclature of all species in the systematic list follows this version. Species names adhere to the British (English) vernacular names within this list.

As at 1 January 2018 the BOU decided to conform to the taxonomic decisions and of the International Ornithological Congress (IOC) and therefore all taxonomic decisions made by the IOC are currently automatically adopted by the BOU.

Species in the list are included in various categories according to their British status:

Category A – species which have apparently been recorded in an apparently natural state at least once since 1 January 1950

Category B – species which would otherwise be in Category A but have not been recorded since 31 December 1949

Category C – species that, although originally introduced by man either deliberately or accidentally, have established self-sustaining breeding populations

Category D – species which would otherwise occur in categories A or B except there is doubt that they have ever occurred in a natural state

Category E – species recorded as introductions or escapes from captivity and whose breeding populations are not thought to be self-sustaining

The species accounts within the Systematic List in this report all fall into Categories A, B or C. Any species recorded which are currently included in Categories D or E are included in the list of escapees.

National and county rarities

All occurrences of national or county rarities are published if they have been accepted by the relevant rarities Committee(s). Rejected or not yet accepted occurrences of rare species are listed in the Appendices.

Observers are urged to report rare birds promptly to the County Recorder, either directly or via Birdtrack and submit a Rarities Description with supporting evidence e.g. photographs.

Species accounts

A summary of key indicators is given at the start of each species account. These include Shropshire status, results of BBS surveys for the year, Shropshire BBS index if enough data exists, and Conservation Status. The author for each species account is also given.

Shropshire Status

Each species account includes the Shropshire status, with each species 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 and has or is believed to have a self-sustaining population
Feral:	Present in the wild although not self-sustaining

The abundance descriptors below are used in the headers to the species texts. These numbers are the estimated numbers 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

Conservation Status

The national and international conservation status of each species is also included within each species account. Where species are included on one of the below lists, this is indicated:

- Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1987 (as amended)
- Annex 1 of 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).
- Species monitored by the Rare Breeding Birds Panel (RBBP). The RBBP collects breeding data on the rarer birds breeding in the United Kingdom, allowing the production of annual totals of breeding pairs for each of the species monitored. Observers within the County are asked to be especially vigilant for these species during the breeding season, and to forward all records to the County Recorder.
- Red, Amber and Green Lists of Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC), see below.

The RSPB periodically review the most up-to-date information on the status of birds in the UK and elsewhere within their range. These data are analysed, and birds are allocated to one of three lists; the Red, Amber and Green lists. The status of species published within the ‘*Birds of Conservation Concern 4*’ (Dec 2015) has been used within this Annual Report.

64 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); and/or
- 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
- 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. A total of 51 1km squares was surveyed in 2018. The number of birds per occupied plot, included in the species introduction text, refers to the mean number of birds within the plots where birds were present.

Species Account Author

The initials of the account author have been included within the species account heading data. The following SOS members have authored this year's accounts: -

John Arnfield (AJA), Glenn Bishton (GB), Peter Carty (PC), Allan Dawes (APD), Michelle Frater (MF), Martin Grant (MGG), Helen J Griffiths (HJG), Jonathan Groom (JGG) Bob Harris (RJH), Geoff Holmes (GEH), Tom Lowe (TCL), Josie Owen (JO), Rob Rees (RR), Gerry Thomas (GT), John Tucker (JTT), Graham Walker (GJW), Tom Wall (TW)

Location Names

Where the location of observations is given, the location or site names use the name provided by the recorder if it is on the Ordnance Survey maps at 1:25000 or 1:50000 scale.

Observer Details

Selected records within the systematic list are accompanied by the observer's name in parenthesis. 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

Systematic List

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

Shropshire status:	Uncommon naturalised resident
Conservation status:	Green List
BBS:	Present in 35% of plots, 60 birds recorded, an average of 3.3 per occupied plot
Author:	GJW

A very noticeable and noisy species, and the County's most common goose. There were five counts of 250 or more in the first two months of the year with 390 at Leighton on 3 Jan, 600, 250 and 350 at VP on 11 Jan, 14 Jan and 1 Feb respectively, and a further 271 at Leighton on 20 Feb.

By March, as the breeding season approached, the large flocks had reduced in size and most records were of pairs or small groups of up to 50 birds, although 286 were still on the floodplain at Atcham on 18 Apr. Breeding was confirmed at 15 sites from across the County, although the greater proportion was certainly in the northern half.

After breeding, flock size begins to build and 134 were on The Mere, Ellesmere, on 18 Jun; as with Greylag, this may have largely consisted of non-breeders and failed breeders because most successful pairs would still have non-flying, dependent young at that time. By August, however, flocks of over 100 birds were being regularly reported, several of which were from VP, including 146 on 7 Aug, 184 on 18 Aug and 270 on 11 Sep. Elsewhere, 120 were on Tittenley Pool on 31 Aug, 107 on Chetwynd Pool on 10 Sep and 100 on The Mere, Ellesmere, on 30 Oct.

The final two months of the year saw the largest counts with five of 400 or more, four of which were from VP: 730 on 27 Dec with 850 the next day, 600 on 30 Dec and 400 on the last day on the year. Away from this site, 790 were on Cole Mere on 16 Nov. Interestingly, this appears to differ from Greylag when the larger flocks occur in the late summer/early autumn period.

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*

Shropshire status:	Rare naturalised resident, has bred, possible vagrant
Conservation status:	Amber List
Author:	GJW

Singles were reported from the River Severn at Cressage on 31 Jan and Chetwynd

Pool on 22 Nov. Although both occurred during the winter period when truly wild birds could be anticipated, there is nothing to suggest that these individuals were from anywhere other than Britain's growing naturalised population.

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

Shropshire status: Uncommon naturalised resident
Conservation status: Amber List
BBS: Present in 20% of plots, 37 birds recorded
Author: GJW

Although well-reported, most records were from the northern half of the County or, in the south, from Chelmarsh. As in previous years, it is clear that flock size can be divided into three distinct periods: February to May when most birds have formed pairs and dispersed to breed; June to September when sizeable, post-breeding, flocks assemble; and November to January when wintering flocks have formed. The latter are not generally as large as the post-breeding flocks but can still be substantial.

In January, there four counts of over a hundred birds: 181 at Hayes Farm on 7th, 120 at VP on 28th, 110 at Smythemoor near Tern Hill on 29th and 130 at Tittenley Pool on 31st. During the breeding period, there were only six counts of thirty or more birds: 70 at both Chelmarsh on 9 Mar and Felton Butler Pool on 18 Mar. 30 birds were counted at Felton Butler Pool on 17 Feb, Shawbury on 15 Mar, Silligrove Farm, Wyre, on 16 Mar and Tittenley Pool on 19 Mar. Although classified as an uncommon resident, breeding was only reported from five sites: Bromfield, Trench Middle Pool, Shrewsbury, Bow House Caravan Park and Crose Mere.

As well as 227 at The Mere, Ellesmere on 18 Jun, a very early date for such a large number but possibly a gathering of non-breeders and failed breeders, there were 17 reports of flocks of over 200 birds, 15 of which came from VP. The largest of these being 260 on 6 and 7 Aug, 290 on 18 Sep, 260 on 20 and 27 Sep and 340 on 30 Sep. Elsewhere, 277 were at Wood Lane on 13 Aug with 203 at Nib Heath on 15 Sep.

At the end of the year, there were only eight counts of 150 or more, six from VP, the largest being 240 on 4 Dec with 180 on 8 Dec, and two from Polemere with 269 on 11 Nov and 222 on 31 Dec.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Shropshire status: Scarce winter visitor
Conservation status: Amber List
Author: GJW

After one on The Mere, Ellesmere on 3 Jan, there was a significant movement on the 6th when 613, in six flocks (50, 50, 80, 184, 195 and 54, the last three counted from photographs), flew in a generally northerly direction over Sweeney Mountain and 70 were over Newport. Subsequently, three were at Tittenley Pool, with one at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 31st.

In the second half of the year, a single bird was regularly reported from VP between 27 Sep and 21 Dec and what may have been the same bird appeared at Priorslee Flash on 2 Oct as the dates do not overlap.

A typical year for this species with individuals or very small flocks appearing on our various open waterbodies and large skeins, usually one or two days, overflying the County as part of winter movements that are often weather related. The bird at VP was probably the long-staying individual that has been present in the Severn Valley for several years.

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons*

Shropshire status: Rare winter visitor
Conservation status: Red List
Author: GJW

At the start of the year, four were at The Mere, Ellesmere on 4 Jan (*JH Thomson*) with a single at Oerley Reservoir on 4 Feb (*A Cawthray*). Later in the year, three adults with two juveniles graced VP on 21 Dec (*HJ Griffiths, GE Holmes*).

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

Shropshire status: Uncommon resident
Conservation status: Amber List
BBS: Present in 10% of plots, 15 birds recorded, an average of 3.0 per occupied plot
Author: MGG

Widely reported from northern and central areas of the County but from fewer sites in the south.

The table below presents the monthly maxima at sites where the species was regularly recorded in double figures.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Chetwynd Pool	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	26	14	-	5
EGM	7	4	8	-	3	7	20	22	24	12	11	9
Marton Pool, Baschurch	36	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	51	56
Newport Canal		4	9		4			4			8	12
Priorslee Lake	11	17	12	10	7	4	2	-	-	5	3	3
River Severn/Vyrnwy Confluence	11	30	4	2	-	-	-	-	3	4	-	37
Shavington/Tittenley	2	2	2	9	24	-	3	6	9	6	6	-
Trench Pool	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	-	15	-
Venus Pool/Cound Fishery	16	2	6	42	4	8	18	14	11	2	1	66
Walcot Lakes, Lydbury North	78	70	60	58	59	47*	84*	67*	76*	81	81	80

*Counts not including cygnets:

Counts in double figures, other than those sites in the table above, were at Smythemoor, near Tern Hill, 25 in January and 34 in February; Berrington Top Pool, with 20 in February and up to 36 in March. 40 were at Eyton racecourse on 7 May and 52 on the Severn Floods at Atcham in October. Other counts included 22 at Stoke-on-Tern by the river on 10 Nov and 12 on the Newport Canal on 12 Dec. The Cound Lane (swan field), where a large flock is regularly recorded coming off the River Severn to graze on the shoots of oil-seed rape, did not see a flock building up until December when 35 were first recorded on the 4th of the month building up to 58 on 15th and 64 on 27th. 95 here on 30 Dec was the highest count of the year for the County.

Walcot Lakes was the only count in double figures from the south of the County and is noticeable both for the highest counts in Shropshire and for the increase in numbers in July, presumable of birds moving there from nesting locations.

Confirmed breeding was predominantly at sites in the north with widespread reports from 16 sites, totalling 18 nests producing a total of 67 cygnets. Two nests were at Newport Canal (seven and six cygnets) and at Priorslee Lake (four and three cygnets). A third pair was present at the Lake but there was no room for another nest. The old pair that had been resident for seven years at Priorslee Lake were both driven off at the beginning of July. The four cygnets they had raised were lost and the cob sustained a broken wing and died. This cob had been resident since 2005, had paired in 2011 with one of his 2008 cygnets and they had bred there every year since. A pair at VP were on a nest in April but gave up at the end of the month and it was taken over by a pair of Canada Geese. The swans had not re-laid, but were still territorial, quickly driving off another incoming pair.

Breeding was confirmed at five sites in the south of the County. An adult was on a nest by the River Teme at Whitcliffe on 12 Apr. At Walcot Lakes, Lydbury North three swans were on separate nests on 15 Apr and a brood of four cygnets was reported in June. Three cygnets were still present here in October. There were further nests at Chelmarsh (with five cygnets on 7 Jul), Knuckwood, near Cefn Einion (one cygnet on 12 Jun) and Bicton, near Clun where again the nest produced one cygnet seen on 21 Jul.

WHOOPER SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*

Shropshire status: Scarce winter visitor
Conservation status: Schedule 1, Annex 1, Amber List, RBBP.
Author: MGG

This species can now be found annually wintering in the Severn Valley flood plain around Melverley and Edgerley, and from Atcham to Cound. Reported in increasing numbers since the millennium, there have been flocks of 20 or more recorded in every year, except one, since the winter of 2004/05 and flocks around Melverley and Edgerley of 29 in 2017, 38 in 2016 and 39 in 2015.

Two were recorded on New Year's Day at VP and again on 6 Jan, increasing to four by 14th. Surprisingly these were the only sightings early in the year from the well-watched area between Atcham and Cound, including VP.

A report also received away from the main wintering areas of one on 10 Jan near Ruewood Pastures, south-west of Wem.

The first report from the Melverley area was the WeBS count on 7 Jan when 17 were recorded at Hayes Farm, then 16 at Melverley on 29 Jan. This flock had increased to

18 by 8 Feb. The WeBS count at Hayes Farm was again 17 on 18 Feb but by 20 Mar only three were recorded and these were the last seen in the first winter period.

The first record of the second winter period was also the only record from the south of the County with two at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 22 Sep. The first bird arrived at VP on 16 Oct and was still present next day, but the five seen there on 23 Oct were only flying over heading north. These were followed by 15 more on 26 Oct (one pair with three juveniles; another pair with one juvenile and four adults) that stopped for a rest on migration. Jim Almond took photographs for his blog and commented “the swans were clearly deadbeat on the water, from time to time nodding off”.

Eight were at Shavington Park on 1 Nov, then on 4-11 Nov there were 10, with the final record there being nine on 17 Nov. The counts of 10 were all the same birds, a family party of an adult pair with four first year birds and two additional pairs without young.

In the favoured area of the Severn/Vyrnwy confluence around Molverley and Edgerley there were just four on 17 Dec with more arriving by 27 Dec when 22 were counted.

Also, on 27 Dec a family party of six (a pair with four cygnets) were back at Coundlane swan field during the day and then roosting at VP. They were still present at the end of the year.

EGYPTIAN GOOSE *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

Shropshire status: Rare naturalised visitor, very rare breeding species
Conservation status: Green List
Author: GJW

A relatively high count of five birds at Molverley on 8 Feb was the first report of the year, with one at Hayes Farm on 18 Feb and 15 Apr. It is interesting to speculate whether this group was also present at nearby Edgerley on 17 Dec, albeit some 10 months later. Otherwise, most records were of one or two birds and it is likely that these individuals wandered around the County and were responsible for most of the sightings. A single was at Chetwynd Park on 15 Apr while two were seen at Leighton, VP and Harnage on several dates between 14 Apr and 23 Jun. Two more, or the same two, were at Lyneal on 4 Jun, Blake Mere and Newton Mere on 26 Nov, Cole Mere on 30 Nov and again at Newton Mere on 10 Dec. Also, singles were seen on the canal at Ellesmere on 22 Sep and at VP on various dates between 20 Oct and 30 Dec. There was no evidence of breeding in 2018.

SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

Shropshire status: Scarce summer and winter visitor
Conservation status: Amber List
BBS: Present in 2% of plots, one bird recorded.
Author: MGG

This year recorded in greater numbers than in 2017. It was regularly reported from eight sites with pairs in the breeding season at a further nine sites.

Monthly maxima recorded at five favoured sites are in the table below.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Oct	Nov	Dec
River Severn/Vyrnwy Confluence	15	-	6	6	-	-	-	-	-	8
Shavington Park & Tittenley	-	2	6	4	-	-	1*	-	2	-
VP/Cound Fishery	7	16	16	4	2	-	1	-	1	10
Whixall Moss & canal floods	-	4	2	2	-	2*	-	-	1	-
Wood Lane	18	9	6	6	7	-	-	-	2	1

(*Not including juveniles seen that month)

Confirmed breeding was reported from Whixall Moss on 2 Jun with a pair and four chicks. On 27 Jul three fledged juveniles were with an adult at Tittenley Pool and a pair bred at a small pool at Gains Park, Shrewsbury and were reported with a 'large brood' on 18 Jul.

Other possible breeding sites in north Shropshire included Adderley where five birds were present on 23 Feb. Pairs were found at Broad Oak in April and May, Chetwynd Park, Halston Hall, Noneley, Polemere, Rednal and Wall Farm.

In the south following one at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 21 Feb, six were found on the River East Onny on 7 May, 11 were on a pond near Chirbury on 11 Jul but it was not clear from the record as to whether this group included any juvenile birds.

MANDARIN *Aix galericulata*

Shropshire status: Scarce, but increasing, naturalised resident
Conservation status: Not assessed
BBS: Present in one plot, one bird recorded
Author: TW

Mandarins were recorded in all months except August. The maximum count was of 15 at Walcot Lakes, Lydbury North, on 9 Nov; the only other double-figure count was of 12 in the Wyre Forest on 11 Jun. The latter was surely a family party, although the record makes no mention of this possibility, and the only confirmed breeding records were of a nest found at Newcastle-on-Clun on 9 May, a brood on the Kemp at Kempton on 21st and a recently fledged bird on the Clun at Whitcott Keysett on 23 Jul. Otherwise, there were reports of pairs in the breeding season on the Teme at Whitcliffe, on the Clun at Beambridge and near Beckjay, and on the Severn at Leighton. Further north, display was observed on two March dates at Market Drayton, but, as usual, there were more records from SO than SJ parts of the County: 14 and 8 locations respectively.

An original observation was of two spotted after dark at Wolverley on 14 Jan through use of a thermal imaging device. But an anecdotal account from someone living close to pools at Stead Vallets, near Ludlow, tells us rather more, indicating that Mandarins are more numerous than records suggest. Regarded as a reliable observer, he reported having seen nearly 40 there on occasion over recent years and that males outnumbered females by four or five to one, though whether throughout the year or at a particular season was not stated. The 2015 report includes two records of over 50 birds about 2km away on the River Onny in late May and early Jun, although in this case the ratio was more like ten males to one female.

GARGANEY *Spatula querquedula*

Shropshire status: Rare passage migrant, very rare summer visitor
Conservation status: Schedule 1, Amber List, RBBP
Author: MGG

After only one report the previous year of an adult male that stayed for two days at Sambrook Mill 11/12 Apr, we did not fare much better this year with just single birds for one day each at four scattered locations.

The first; an adult male at Madeley Court on 25 Mar (*A Peters*) and on the same

day another breeding-plumage adult male on wet farmland floods at Edgebolton (*W Arrowsmith*) that flew off north-west.

One at Cliffey Wood near Craven Arms on 5 Apr (*M Needham*), was the first from south Shropshire since one at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 22 Aug 2014. The final sighting of the year came from Whixall canal floods with a single report of one bird on 7 May (*Birdguides*).

SHOVELER *Spatula clypeata*

Shropshire status: Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant, very rare breeding species

Conservation status: Amber List, RBBP

Author: MGG

Widespread at lakes, meres and mosses in the north of the County.

The table below presents the monthly maxima at favoured sites:-

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Chetwynd Pool	100+	-	43	3	-	-	-	-	2	32	158	105
Cottage Pool-Nib Heath	-	18	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
EGM	30+	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	13	-
Shavington Park	1	1	2	-	-	-	1	5	75	25	32	34
VP /Cound Fishery	63	35+	50	25	2	-	7	-	42	42	35	23
Wall Farm	7	9	14	12	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
Whixall canal floods	73	61	67	15	11	3	-	-	-	10	1	-

There were no other counts in double figures.

The 158 at Chetwynd Pool was the highest count since the 176 at Whixall canal floods in January 2016 although the County record is 275 at Chetwynd Pool in October 2008.

The only records from south Shropshire were two at Cranmere Bog on 31 Jan, one at Bridgnorth Cemetery on 12 Mar and a series from Chirbury, with two on 25 Jan, four on 26 Mar and two still here on 19 Apr. At the end of the year, eight on 17 Dec and six on the 21st.

No confirmed breeding this year but pairs were found early in the breeding season at Priorslee Flash, VP and Wall Farm in April and May. The last confirmed breeding was at Whixall Moss in both 2014 and 2015.

GADWALL *Mareca strepera*

Shropshire status: Scarce winter visitor, rare summer visitor
 Conservation status: Amber List
 Author: MGG

Recorded at pools and meres especially in the north of the County in increasing numbers as a winter visitor, with very few staying to breed. There was a confirmed breeding this year at Ellerton Mill, where a female with three juveniles was recorded on 11 Jul. This follows a confirmed breeding of an adult with nine young the previous year at Wood Lane and a pair with eight ducklings Wall Farm in 2014. There appears to be an increase in numbers in the summer months with confirmed breeding in six of the last ten years.

Monthly maxima recorded at the favoured sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Ellerton/Sambook	12	14	5	1	4	9	10	18	60	17	15	6
Shrewsbury Sewage Farm	16	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	9
Priorslee Lake	2	8	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	-
Quarry Farm, Howle	-	7	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
Shavington Park	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	14	-	2	-
VP/Cound Fishery	12	20	18	16	6	1	4	14	8	5	-	28
Wall Farm, Kynnersley	2	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wood Lane	2	6+	1	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2

Other records early in the year were three at Brown Moss on 15 Feb, eight at White Mere on 19 Mar and a pair at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 19 Mar, with a single male at Bow House Caravan Park on 20 Mar. A pair were found at Dodecote on 3 Apr and a singleton at Whixall Moss on 6 May.

Later in the year, single birds were noted from White Mere on 16 Jul and 12 Nov;

Marton Pool Baschurch on 10 Sep and Chetwynd Pool on 11 Nov with up to six here on 9 Dec. The Mere, Ellesmere recorded three on 10 Dec and five were at Cae Howel on 27 Dec.

The flock of 60 at Ellerton Mill on 14 Sep is the largest wintering flock ever recorded in the County improving on the 57 at the same site on 13 Sep 2017. Since the turn of the century the record wintering flock has shown a steady increase from 17 at Dudmaston in October 2000, 23 at Ellerton Mill in November 2003 and 42 at Sambrook on 24 Oct 2011.

WIGEON *Mareca penelope*

Shropshire status: Uncommon winter visitor
 Conservation status: RBBP, Amber List
 Author: APD

The table shows the monthly maxima from the main sites (summer months are not included), the total number counted during WeBS surveys and the number of sites contributing is also shown.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
EGM	30	195	130				4	7
Severn/Vyrnwy confluence	464	4	318			12	42	150
Polemere		14	37	3				6
Shavington	140	22	63	1	4	2	65	90
Venus Pool	65	12	30	1	4	40	70	80
Whixall canal floods	67	123	56	1				
WeBS total (no. of sites)	494 (4)	187 (7)	417 (6)	4 (2)	5 (2)	37 (3)	89 (10)	190 (10)

Present at 24 sites during the first winter period. Regular counts from a pool near Chirbury reached a maximum of 60 on several dates in February, after 55 on 17 Mar numbers declined to 10 by 27th and these remained until 12 Apr. At Wall Farm, there were 44 on 23 Jan and 59 on 22 Mar but none were reported during February. Twenty-four were on the flood plain at Atcham on 21 Jan, 26 at Pepperhill Calverhall on 5 Mar and 36 at Quarry Farm Pool, Howle on 16 Mar. Twelve was the maximum number at the remaining sites and three at Polemere on 17 Apr were the last of the season.

A female was at VP on 18 Jun and a single was reported here on six days during July, a single was also at Trench Pool on 23 Jul. Four at Shavington Park on 31 Aug was the only other report until 6 Sep when four were at Pitchford, there were six further reports up to 10 Sep after which they became more widespread, being located at 25 sites in the final part of the year.

Twenty at Lydham Heath Pool on 12 Nov, 16 on a pool near Chirbury on 28 Nov and Wall Farm with a maximum of 39 on the final day of the year were the only double figure totals.

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*

Shropshire status: Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor
 Conservation status: Amber list
 BBS: Present in 59 % of plots, 152 birds recorded, an average of 5.2 per occupied plot
 Shropshire BBS index 1.25, annual change +0.09
 Author: APD

The table shows the monthly maxima from the main sites (summer months are not included), the total number counted during WeBS surveys and the number of sites contributing is also shown.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Chetwynd Park	6		4		14	19	33	48
Dudmaston	16				17	13	13	16
EGM	255	138	115	375	363	256	272	400
Fenemere					55		108	3
Marton Pool Baschurch	21	73	13		293	514	437	80
Polemere	29	57	17	45	8	38	32	87
Severn/Vyrnwy confluence	47	61	16			82	20	93
Shavington	168	45	5	177	105	76	146	131
Venus Pool	60	29	25	18	16	25	69	93
Walcot Lake	29	36	14	160	212	181	281	145
Whixall canal floods	106	70	20			16		
WeBS total (no. of sites)	1114 (39)	863 (35)	476 (32)	1046 (18)	1584 (31)	1638 (31)	1718 (34)	1554 (36)

Other locations with over 50 in the first winter period were: Wall Farm 102 on 1 Jan, Cottage Pool, Nib Heath 56 on 14 Jan, River Teme, Ludlow 86 on both 19 Jan and 18 Feb, Chelmarsh Reservoir 53 on 25 Jan and Oerley Reservoir 96 on 29 Jan.

A nest with eggs at Stead Vallets on 30 Mar was the first breeding report. Breeding was subsequently confirmed at 19 further sites with several broods noted at Polemere and VP. Mallard were more widespread at this time with records from 74 tetrads and a larger proportion - 28% coming from the south, during the main winter period records came from 52 tetrads with just 13% from the south. Seventy-four on the River Teme at Ludlow on 12 Jun were all adult, these would have been either non-breeding or failed breeders and 114 on 14 Jul included only one juvenile. This concentration was probably due to local feeding, which was also the case at The Mere, Ellesmere where 161 were present on 18 Jun. By July numbers were increasing elsewhere; on 16th 200 were at The Mere, Ellesmere with 120 nearby at White Mere, and 163 at Shavington Big Pool on 22nd.

At least 100 were on a pool north of Myndtown on 25 Aug and 150 were present on 16 Sep, this observer noted that they had been released for shooting. Sixty-three were at Cottage Pool, Nib Heath on 15 Sep, 93 at Oerley Reservoir on 9 Dec and 71 at Linley Pools on 15 Dec with counts of 50+ received from 10 further sites.

PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

Shropshire status: Scarce winter visitor
Conservation status: Amber List, RBBP
Author: APD

Good numbers were attracted to the Severn/Vyrnwy confluence at the start of the year with counts of 115 on 7th, 432 on 2nd and 300 on 29 Jan and 91 on 17 Feb. Smaller numbers were present on the flooded fields at Whixall; 47 on 25 Jan, 40 on 23 Feb and 43 on 21 Mar. They are not a regular visitor to the Ellesmere meres so 27 at Cole Mere and 85 at the Mere, Ellesmere on 2 Feb were unusual, 10 were also found during a WeBS count at Marton Pool on 19 Feb. One was seen occasionally at VP in January and February with two males and a female there on 5 Mar. Singles were also reported from Priorslee Lake on 3 Mar and Wall Farm on 13 and 22 Mar. A few lingered at the confluence until 15 Apr when the final six were reported.

One visited VP on 18 Sep but it was 17 Nov before the next sighting, a single at Shavington Park, which the observer described as 'a scarce species here'. There were five more reports; three at Whixall Moss on 26 Nov, one at VP on 30 Nov, a pair at Monkmoor Pool on 4 Dec, 51 at Hayes Farm on 8 Dec and two drakes at VP on 31 Dec.

TEAL *Anas crecca*

Shropshire status: Fairly common winter visitor, rare breeding species
Conservation status: Amber List
Author: MGG

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Brown Moss	8	-	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Devils Dingle	55	-	50	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ellerton/Sambrook	1	4	4	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Hayes Farm & Hillely Farm Pentre	-	6	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	150+	-	74
Hardwick Pool	9	19	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
Lydham Heath	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	4	5	20	30
Marton Pool, Baschurch	1	39	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ponthen, Cae Howel & Crosslanes, Molverley	-	1	31	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	3	-
Polemere	115	-	24	3	-	-	-	-	2	-	31	-
Shavington Park	11	7	5	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	25
Shrewsbury Sewage Farm	95	29	4	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	5	-
VP/Cound Fishery	125	102	40	18	-	8	4	1	7	40	58	68
Wall Farm	250	80	30	17	2	1	1	-	-	-	10	17
Whixall Moss (canal floods *)	158*	6	80	25*	-	-	-	-	90	2	521	144
Wood Lane	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	21	2	-	-

Other double figure counts were Cottage Pool, Nib Heath 21 on 15 Jan, Abdon 12 on 5 Feb, Rednal 10 on 6 Feb, Pepperhill, near Market Drayton 10 on 12 Mar, and at the end of the year a WeBS Count on 11 Dec of 19 at The Mere Ellesmere, with a further nine near-by at White Mere.

Although pairs were recorded in the breeding season at both VP and Wall Farm, there was no confirmed breeding in the County this year. A pair was at More Pool on 14 Apr.

POCHARD *Aythya ferina*

Shropshire status: Scarce winter visitor; has bred
Conservation status: Red List, RBBP
Author: APD

VP dominated both sightings and numbers during the first winter period. Eight were present on New Year's Day and single figures were present until March (apart from 12 on 23 Feb). In March there was an increase in numbers which peaked at 23 on 12th falling to nine on 25th which was the last report from VP for some time. In January five were at Shavington Park on 7th, four at Priorslee Lake on 13th, two at Trench Pool on 2nd with singles at Chetwynd Pool and the Mere, Ellesmere. A male was at Crose Mere on 23 Mar, two at a pool near Chirbury on 11 Apr with just a single found there the following day. At VP, after an absence of two months, a male was seen on 25 and 26 May.

At least one was at VP on 29 Oct and another at Priorslee Lake on 31st. Two males and two females at Shavington Park on 11 Nov started a run of records from this site; three males on 17th, 12 on 26th six females and two males on 10 Dec. The high proportion of females is unusual but a small sample size; five males and two females at Monkmoor STW on 4 and 11 Nov is more expected, details of the composition of any flocks encountered would be appreciated. Numbers remained low in the final two months with up to three at VP and two at Priorslee Lake and four at Monkmoor STW on 9 Dec.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

Shropshire status: Uncommon resident
 Conservation status: Green List
 BBS: Present in 2% of plots, four birds recorded
 Author: APD

The table shows the monthly maxima from the main sites (summer months are not included), the total number counted during WeBS surveys and the number of sites contributing is also shown.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
EGM	61	46	86	44	32	26	40	67	79
Priorslee Lake	12	12	25	7			20	78	60
Shavington	6	6	22	8	47	36	17	45	15
Trench Pool	30	6							
Venus Pool	17	43	31	18	1	14	5	13	35
WeBS total	208	113	176	92	103	113	129	148	203
(no. of sites)	(12)	(13)	(12)	(9)	(9)	(10)	(8)	(13)	(13)

In January, away from the sites listed, 24 were at Cottage Pool, Nib Heath on 14th, 29 at Chetwynd Pool on 17th, 27 at Chelmarsh on 21st, 21 at Dearnford Lake on

25th and 35 at Oerley Reservoir on 29th. Numbers then fell with just 20 at Oerley Reservoir on 4 Feb and 19 Mar 20 at Chelmarsh on 1 Mar.

Although present in 33 tetrads during the breeding season, breeding was only confirmed at Ellerton Mill, Sambrook Mill and Shavington Park where a female was seen with 10 ducklings. Twenty-one males moulting at the Mere, Ellesmere on 18 Jun had either completed or abandoned thoughts of breeding.

Flocks began to build in late summer with 35 at Shavington Park on 25 Jul. At Chelmarsh Reservoir 48 on 23 Aug had increased to 54 by 18 Sep. Elsewhere, counts of only 24 at Monkmoor STW on 14 Oct, 36 at Chetwynd Park and 34 at Oerley Reservoir, both on 9 Dec, exceeded 20.

COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*

Shropshire status: Rare passage migrant and winter visitor
Conservation status: Schedule 1, UKBAP, Red List, RBBP
Author: MGG

Cole Mere seems to be a favoured location for this species and a juvenile was reported here on 26 Nov (*TC Lowe*) and again on 2 Dec.

Although a scarce species, 2011 is the only year since the turn of the century that the species was not recorded.

GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*

Shropshire status: Scarce winter visitor
Conservation status: Amber List, RBBP
Author: APD

The table shows the monthly maxima from the main sites.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Nov	Dec
Cole Mere	9	7	12	10	12
The Mere, Ellesmere	15	16	15	12	20
White Mere	6	3		7	9
EGM WeBS total	25	22	24	18	36

During the winter of 2017-18 the WeBS maximum total for the Ellesmere meres was just 36 in December. This was the lowest number since 1992-93 when the total

was 29. Hopefully, this is just a blip and not part of the general decline in wintering numbers.

Priorslee Lake was the only other site to record this species at this time, two were present on 21 Mar and one on 24 Mar. This is a well-watched site and no further reports suggests that these birds were heading back to their breeding grounds and passed through quickly.

Fifteen on 28 Mar at the Mere, Ellesmere was the last spring report and the first three of the winter were also found there on 1 Nov. Away from the meres, a female was at Chetwynd Pool on 22 Nov.

GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser*

Shropshire status: Scarce resident and uncommon winter visitor
 Conservation status: Green List
 BBS: Present in 4% of plots, 11 birds recorded, an average of 5.5 per occupied plot
 Author: GB

A total of 187 records was received (up from 133 in 2017), mainly from larger rivers, lakes, pools and reservoirs. Recorded in all months except July, 66% of the records were from sites in the north of the County (SJ grid references).

The first winter period saw male and female Goosander congregated in flocks, the largest of which comprised 101 roosting at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 21 Feb, declining to 63 on 27 Feb. Additional high counts, in addition to monthly winter maxima for important and regularly monitored sites included in the table below, comprised 66 at Ponthen on 7 Jan, 26 at Leighton on 14 Jan, 17 at Dudmaston Pools 21 Jan, 60 at Melverley 29 Jan and 14 at Walcot Hall Lakes 18 Feb. Flocks persisted into March and April with 29 on Chelmarsh Reservoir 21 Mar, 12 by the Atcham floodplain on 14 Apr, increasing to 42 on 18 Apr, but dwindling numbers on the large water bodies indicated a movement away to breeding waters on the River Severn and other rivers.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
Chelmarsh Reservoir	40	101	39	9	9	-
Colemere	28	8	1	-	54	-
The Mere, Ellesmere	35	2	1	1	-	13
River Severn	66	16	9	-	21	16

Both male and female Goosander were recorded in the flocks throughout January to March with pairing noted as early as 22 Jan at Bow House Farm. Subsequent records of pairs were confined to rivers and included a pair on the River Tern on 13 Feb, three pairs on the River Severn at Leighton on 25 Feb and two pairs on the same river at Buildwas the same day, with two pairs nearby at Ironbridge on 4 Mar. One pair was on the River Clun at Beambridge on 26 Feb.

High water levels as a result of the ‘Beast from the east’ appeared to force Goosander off the River Severn where none were recorded between Ironbridge and Coalport on 6 Mar. Two pairs were on the River Teme at Bromfield on 8 Mar, but the river was noted as “swollen and fast flowing after snow melt”. Additional pairs comprised one on the River Severn at Bridgnorth on 17 Mar where the high-water level was “possibly inhibiting breeding”, a pair on the River Kemp at Kempton on 24 Mar and a pair at Beckjay on 7 Apr. Eight at Leighton included a pair with the male mate guarding the female and chasing off another male and a pair was at Newcastle on 21 Apr. Evidence from elsewhere suggests that male Goosander migrate to Norway in spring to moult and remain there throughout July and August. The final male of the spring was recorded at Leighton 24 May.

Breeding was poorly recorded. A female alongside the River Clun at Clun on 14 May landed in a large beech tree where it was suspected she was nesting in a large hole. Confirmed breeding was noted on the River Severn between Cressage and Leighton on 6 May, where a female and eight young plus an additional 6 “redheads” were recorded, and at Bridgnorth on 18 Jun.

Records of post breeding flocks were limited, with no records of Goosander in July and only one in August, comprising two females at Leighton on 28th. Breeding waters appeared to be gradually deserted during this period with five September records including 20 at VP on 11th and 10 there on 13th. Six were back at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 18 Sep, indicating a return to the large open water bodies. Seven on the River Clun at Beambridge on 2 Sep was “unprecedented in my 14 years on the Clun”.

The first large flock in the second winter period was noted earlier than in 2017 with 21 at Bow House Caravan Park on 14 Oct. Subsequent large gatherings included 27 at White Mere on 1 Nov increasing to 57 on 12 Nov, with other groups of 15 at Holmer Lake on 7 Nov, 10 at Cantlopgrove on 10 Nov, 15 at White Mere on 26 Nov and 21 at Shrewsbury on 28 Nov. The first record of a male in the second winter period returning from its summering grounds comprised several males at Holmer Lake on 7 Nov.



Pink Footed Goose, Venus Pool, 28 October 2018 (*Jim Almond*)



Whooper Swans, Venus Pool, 26 October 2018 (*Dave Chapman*)



Egyptian Geese Venus Pool, 2 June 2018 (*Jim Almond*)



Pintail, Venus Pool, 5 March 2018 (*Jim Almond*)



Great Northern Diver, Chelmarsh Reservoir, 2 December 2018 (*Jim Almond*)



Great crested Grebes, Venus Pool,
2 June 2018 (*Jim Almond*)



Great White Egret, Wood Lane
29 December 2018 (*John Hawkins*)



Little Bittern, Chelmarsh Reservoir, 8 July 2018 (*Jim Almond*)



Little Egret, Venus Pool, 16 October 2018 (*Terry Arch*)



Goshawk, South Shropshire, 19 March 2018 (*John Hawkins*)



Red Kite, Venus Pool, 18 September 2018, (*Terry Arch*)



Water Rail, Venus Pool, 3 March 2018 (*Dave Chapman*)



Avocet, Venus Pool, 12 March 2018 (*Jim Almond*)



Ruff and Green Sandpiper, Venus Pool, 31 August 2018 (*Jim Almond*)



Common Sandpiper, Venus Pool, 8 April 2018 (*Jim Almond*)



Kittiwake, Priorslee Lake, 16 March 2018 (*Jim Almond*)



Common Tern, Venus Pool, 21 May 2018 (*Jim Almond*)

RED GROUSE *Lagopus lagopus scotica*

Shropshire status: Scarce resident
Conservation status: UKBAP, Amber List
Author: TW

The largest covey recorded on The Stiperstones was eight, but on The Long Mynd it was just three; as usual these were the only locations where birds were seen. A spring survey of males calling at dawn on The Stiperstones recorded 21–24, which continued a downward trend from the peaks since counts began, in 1989, of 30–38 and 35–37 in 2014 and 2015. However, prior to that, one must go back to 2006 and 2007 (with 26 in each year) to find a higher count. There was no summer count there this year.

On The Long Mynd the spring survey of males calling at dusk provided an estimate of 64–66. These surveys, undertaken by the Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group, began in 2011, and this year’s tally equals the highest previous count of 63–66 made in 2012.

An agitated individual on The Stiperstones on 10 Jul was suggestive of breeding but there was no confirmation from either site.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa*

Shropshire status: Uncommon naturalised resident, population supplemented by annual releases
BBS: Present in 22% of plots, 13 birds recorded, an average of one per occupied plot
Author: TW

That birds were reported from 36 locations in the northern, SJ ‘half’ of the County, and just 11 in the southern, SO ‘half’, is indicative of the distributional bias for this species. However, as birds are released in considerable numbers in the County (an estimated 125,000 each year), it seems likely that game interests are releasing larger numbers in the more arable parts of the County where they expect that the birds will be most at home and where, traditionally, partridge shooting (though historically of Grey Partridge) is most frequent. However, given that most birds will be released in August, and shooting is from September through to January, it appears anomalous that the only months in which the number of records reached double figures were February (17) and March (20). To some extent this reflects the national picture as

the BirdTrack graph shows numbers rising in February and March before reaching a peak in April, despite shooting having presumably reduced the population to a low ebb at this time of year. It may be that spring-time territorial calling may lead to a higher recording rate. Observations then fall to a low point in July and August (also a lean time in Shropshire), rising to a smaller peak in October (a better month in the County) before declining towards the year-end (there were no Shropshire records at all in December).

There were only nine double-figure counts, all in SJ locations: five of them were at Shawbury in the months Jan–Apr, with a maximum of 40 in January; 17 and 31 were seen at Aston Locks, both in October; and 12 and 21 near Blake Mere in February and November. Single pairs and/or territory-holding were reported from Nedge Hill, Tibberton Moor and Childs Ercall Airfield, but the only breeding record was of a female with five young at Wellington on 4 Jul.

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix*

Shropshire status: Uncommon resident, continues to decline despite occasional releases
Conservation status: UKBAP, LBAP, Red List
BBS: Present in 6% of plots, six birds recorded
Author: TW

There were 11 records from eight locations. In the winter months 10 were at Dodecote in January, nine at Ercall Heath in November and six at Edgebolton in February, and ‘presence’ was noted at Ellesmere Town in January. Spring and summer records came from Ercall Heath (one in May, two in June), east of Lower Dinchope and near Ercall Mill (two and three respectively in May), while singles were noted at Painsbrook in June and Tibberton in July. Over the year only five 10km squares were involved; four were prefaced SJ (33, 51, 52 and 62) and one SO (48). ‘Song’ was heard on one occasion at Tibberton in July, but there was no other statement made of territorial or breeding activity, although in some cases pairs may have been involved.

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*

Shropshire status: Rare summer visitor in erratic numbers
Conservation status: Schedule 1, RBBP, Amber List
Author: TW

A lean year, with reports on just nine dates. The first was on 1 Jun, at Edgebolton, the last on 3 Jul, at Noneley. In between, records came from only three other locations: Colehurst, Tilstock and Condover. Reports at three of these five locations were limited to single dates, but at Noneley up to two were recorded from 6 to 8 Jun, and one on 3 Jul, and at Tilstock one was reported on 16 and 17 Jun. Apart from two at Noneley all records were of single birds.

PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus*

Shropshire status:	Very common naturalised resident. Population supplemented by large releases each year
Conservation status:	Not assessed but releases may have a negative impact on other species
BBS:	Present in 92% of plots, 291 birds recorded, an average of 6.2 per occupied plot
BBS Index:	1.81, annual change +0.09
Author:	TW

Given the poor road-safety sense of Pheasants and their apparent readiness to feed the predator population, quite apart from their principal purpose in life – to fly suicidally over the guns of waiting sportsmen – it is surprising that any are still alive come the spring. Yet the BBS returns indicate that they remain common and widespread and as many as 30 were seen at Chelmarsh in March and 23 at the Stiperstones in April, although these were the only records of more than 20 in the first half of the year. The only confirmed breeding record was the finding of a nest at Nedge Hill in April, but an agitated female on the Stiperstones on 10 Jul was highly suggestive.

In view of the massive numbers (perhaps 850,000 or more) released in the County in late summer it is no surprise that the highest counts came in the second half of the year. One hundred at Black Knoll at the south end of The Long Mynd on 25 Aug were evidently recently released birds foisted on an environment which would surely sustain few if any ‘wild’ Pheasants for long. Other locations where in excess of 50 were recorded were Aston Locks (65), Wolverley (80) and Oerley Reservoir (110), all in October, then 80 were seen at Chelmarsh on 7 Dec. The 85 counted at Oerley Reservoir on 21 Dec may have survived to see their first Christmas, but in all probability, it was their last.

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER *Gavia immer*

Shropshire status: Very rare winter visitor
Conservation status: RBBP
Author: GT

A juvenile, found at Chelmarsh on 30 Nov stayed until the end of the year (*MR Owen, MG Grant, S Haycox, T Lowe, G Russon*). It favoured the dam end of the reservoir for the bulk of its stay.

LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Shropshire status: Uncommon resident
Conservation status: Green List
Shropshire BBS Index: Present in 2% of plots, six birds recorded
Author: JJT

A total of 178 records from 36 sites was received, slightly down on the 215 records from 37 sites last year. Evidence of confirmed breeding came from four sites; Granville with two chicks on 15 Jul, fledged young at Quarry Farm Pool, Howle on 16 Aug, probably two broods at VP on 2 Jul and a brood at Wall Farm in June where one of the two pairs had to rebuild after Coots built over their first attempt.

Normally associated with standing water, sometimes very small pools, this year there were two on rivers, on the Tern at Attingham Park on 13 Feb and the Teme above Dinham weir, Ludlow on 26 Nov.

WeBS counts were made at 24 sites and the table below presents the monthly counts for the nine sites where Little Grebes were recorded in at least four months of the year. Other high counts included eight birds at Quarry Farm Pool (Howle) on 16 Aug and six at Priorslee Lake on 13 Nov.

Little Grebe WeBS data for 2018

Highlighted counts are the peak count for the year at that site and may include birds of the year

Sites	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cound Fishery								1	2	2		1
The Mere, Ellesmere	3		1							1	3	2

Sites	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Linley Hall Pool	2	3	1		1				2	1	2	4
Oerley Reservoir	1	3	1						2	3	1	2
Polemere		1		2	2		2	4	3	1	1	
River Teme at Ludlow	2	1	1							1	1	1
Sambrook Mill Pond (Lower)	4	5	1				1	2	4	3	1	2
Shrewsbury STW		3	4	3		2	3	6	2	2	3	
VP						3	2	2				

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus*

Shropshire status: Uncommon resident
 Conservation status: Green List
 Author: JJJ

164 records were received from 25 sites, very similar to last year; 163 records from 24 sites.

WeBS counts produced records from 20 sites which are tabulated below. Four sites managed only single records, not tabulated; they were Chetwynd Pool 1 on 15 Apr, Dudmaston Pools 2 on 9 Sep, Oerley Reservoir 1 on 19 Feb. and VP 1 on 18 Jun. The eight sites producing five or more records for the year are included in the table. Sites are ordered on the sum of the monthly counts, which suggests that, overall, White Mere is the most significant site in the County.

WeBS counts for Great Crested Grebe 2018

Data shown for sites with five or more monthly counts above zero, ordered on sum of monthly counts, site peaks in bold

Sites	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Sum of monthly counts
White Mere	1	1	1	3	1	4	7	14	21	20	19	12	104
The Mere, Ellesmere	18	5	2		1	3	2	3	3	7	8	21	73
Croze Mere	2	6	12	8	1		2	1	2	1	2	2	39
Cole Mere		2	4	6					1	2	5	7	27

Sites	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Sum of monthly counts
Blake Mere			1	2	3	1	2	5		2	1	2	19
Marton Pool, Baschurch		6	4						3		2	3	18
Cound Fishery								4	2	4	2	4	16
Shavington Big Pool						2	2	2	2	2			10
Highest count in month	18	6	12	8	3	4	7	14	21	20	19	21	
Highest count in month (2017)	19	16	12	13	6	11	10	13	12	6	10	10	

Breeding was confirmed at Blake Mere, Crose Mere, Homer Lake, Howle Pool, Priorslee Flash, Shavington Park and Trench Pool with possible breeding at Chetwynd Pool, The Mere Ellesmere, Priorslee Lake and VP.

BLACK-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps nigricollis*

Shropshire status: Rare passage migrant; has bred
 Conservation status: Schedule 1, Annex 1, RBBP, Amber List
 Author: JJT

Thin on the water this year; a single bird was present on a pool at Edgmond on 31 Jan (*I Atkinson*).

WHITE STORK *Ciconia ciconia*

Shropshire status: Very rare vagrant
 Author: GT

A bird was photographed at Eyton Lane, Baschurch on a typical date of 8 Apr (*C Broadley*). The seventh record this millennium.

LITTLE BITTERN *Ixobrychus minutus*

Shropshire status: Vagrant
Author: GT

The first ever documented Little Bittern in the UK was from Shropshire, way back in 1768 when a bird was shot on the banks of the Severn in Shrewsbury. After a few records in the nineteenth century no Little Bitterns have been recorded in the County since 1908. So, the observer had a real surprise when he heard the characteristic bark of a male Little Bittern on 6 Jul at Chelmarsh (*J Reeves*), the first in the ‘modern’ era (see Finder’s Account). It wasn’t until the 7th that he actually saw the bird, a summer plumage male which remained in the area till 13th and was seen by many other observers.

Little Bitterns bred in Yorkshire in 1984 and then again at the Ham Wall reserve in Somerset in 2010. From 2013 onwards they have been present in the breeding season at Ham Wall each year (except for 2018), with successful breeding recorded. As it can breed in relatively small reed beds may be a good candidate to breed in our County at some stage.

CATTLE EGRET *Bubulcus ibis*

Shropshire status: Very rare visitor
Conservation status: RBBP
Author: GT

Following the records last year, just a single was noted on the heron island at Ellesmere on 28–31 Dec (*A Heath, AP Dawes*).

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

Shropshire status: Uncommon resident
Conservation status: Schedule 1, Green List
BBS: Present in 18% of plots, 11 birds recorded, an average of 1.2 per occupied plot
Author: JO

There were 323 records, 220 coming from the north (SJ grid references). 72% were of single birds. The largest number, nine, were seen at Quarry Farm Pool, Howle on 15 Jul.

Counts of apparently occupied nests were done at 11 known sites, yielding a total of 116 nests. Ellesmere and Peplow were not counted.

Heronries monitored in 2018:

Ashford	1
Bicton Heath	19
Bromfield	20
Chelmarsh	10
Chetwynd Park	1
Chirbury	6
Ellesmere	n/c
Halston Hall Whittington	19
Leighton	12
Llanymynech	5
Lydham	14
Peplow	n/c
Skyborry	9

The most notable event of the year was the discovery of a new colony by the Vyrnwy at Llanymynech, in Willow, 7.5 to 12 metres above water level.

A period of severe, cold and windy, weather, ‘The Beast from the East,’ presented very challenging conditions for nesting and breeding. Birds are often back at Bicton in January but just two birds were recorded, with no nesting activity on 25th. By 18 Mar there wasn’t much change with no obvious nesting activity, and it was not until 1 May that chicks were noticed with at most two chicks in each of five nests 3–10 days old and two adults still sitting, either brooding or on eggs.

This delay was probably common to all the colonies. The weather makes timing of visits critical as these notes from Bromfield on 22 Apr show: “visited after three warm (16°–28°C) days following very prolonged cold and wet. In these three days the vegetation ‘exploded’. If I had visited on 19th or 20th, I could probably have seen better into the Willows and through the Willows to the Common Laurels where there are 10 + nests, 2–7 metres above water level. Several nests located by listening and watching adults. No chicks visible”.

At Lydham on 5 Apr the field notes hint at a difficult site to count: “General

impression – fewer birds. Extremely difficult. High water levels – extending 15–30/40 m beyond usual edge. No sight or sound of chicks. «Chaotic» habitat – great for the birds. Challenging to monitor!!! ‘

The recently observed trend for nesting low was bucked at Bicton where four new nests were built, high (18 m), in Scots pine, spruce and larch. These were built in mid to late April possibly replacing two nests which had been displaced by a large limb falling out of the main nest tree, a Yew.

A bird at Ludlow on 14 Jul managed to catch an Eel, and in the same month birds were seen on weirs at Ludford and Mill Street in the town. It would be interesting to understand whether there are any significant fish movements at this time of year on the Teme.

GREAT WHITE EGRET *Ardea alba*

Shropshire status: Very rare vagrant
Conservation status: RBBP
Author: JO

Of all the species monitored, the account for the Great White Egret is one of the most frustrating to write, as the number of accepted records bears no relation to the number of reports. No fewer than 74 records were reported in all months except June and July, but only five records were accepted by the Rarities Committee. There is no doubt that many of the records referred to the same individual moving between locations, but it is unfortunate that so few descriptions or other evidence is submitted, and we are therefore failing to document the ‘colonisation’ of the County by a species now breeding annually in the UK.

Accepted records were of singles at Danesford on 30 Sep (*J Martin*); at Cole Mere on 26 Nov (*TC Lowe*) and at White Mere on the same date (*TC Lowe*) and at Wood Lane on 29 Dec (*J Hawkins*). The standout record though was a photograph of four in flight together over Priorslee Lake on 6 Nov (*EJ Wilson*).

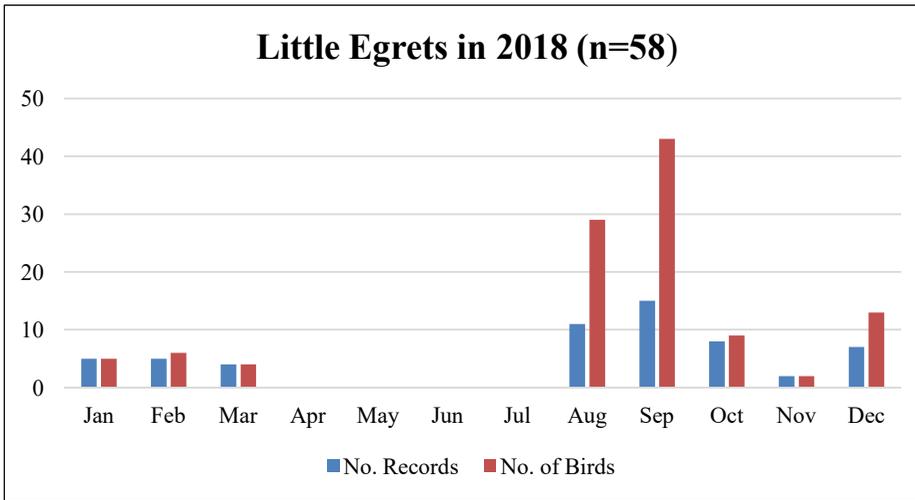
LITTLE EGRET *Egretta garzetta*

Shropshire status: Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor
Conservation status: Annex 1, RBBP, Green List
Author: JO

Of the 58 records submitted, 38 were of single birds, four of two birds eight of three, three of four, four of five and just one of six.

At the start of the year there were 14 sightings between 4 Jan and 29 Mar. All were singles, at Buildwas “Feeding in horse paddocks”, Chetwynd, Ellesmere, Fenemere, Leighton (again in horse paddocks), Melverley, Trefonen, and Whittington. The Chetwynd bird was in an occupied heronry. Records in the south of the County were from around Aston-on-Clun, Beambridge, Brockton and Onibury.

There were no sightings in the breeding season.



There were 44 post-breeding dispersal sightings. The first of these was at VP on 3 Aug and VP had the most records (25) in this period including five birds on three dates and a maximum of six on 18 Sep. Other records came from Atcham, Buildwas, Ironbridge, Leighton, Chelmarsh and Ludlow, with the vast majority from the Severn area between VP – Atcham and Leighton – Buildwas. There were noticeably fewer records and birds from October to December when there was also a dispersal away from the Severn; perhaps feeding conditions on the river at this time of year are more difficult.

Singles were seen at Aston Locks, at Ellesmere in an “evening roost with Cormorants”, Maesbury, Trefonen, Trench, three at Llanymynech and five at Hindford, near Whittington on 22 Dec. The single record in the south of the County was of one at Beambridge.

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Shropshire status: Nominate Atlantic form *carbo* ('Atlantic Cormorant') probably predominantly an uncommon winter visitor. European and south-east British *sinensis* ('Continental Cormorant') uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor. Scarce non-breeding summer visitor

Conservation status: Green List

BBS: Present in 6% of plots, three birds recorded

Author: MF

County records included 260 observations of Cormorant at 58 sites. WeBS counts produced a further 95, the majority from sites that already featured in the records. High counts included a 102-strong 'feeding and loafing flock' at White Mere in late November, 76 and 96 at the Mere, Ellesmere, and a pre-roost gathering of 70 on the mud by the lake at Shavington Park.

Cormorants were seen in all months, but only two, four and six respectively in May, June and July. The most prolific period this year was the first quarter, with January, February and March accounting for half the annual total. The few sightings on rivers, the Clun, Meese, Severn and Teme, came in the winter months: a series of 19 observations on a local patch at Aston-on-Clun covered the months of January to April, then late September to December.

At Chelmarsh Reservoir in December only one bird in a group of 15 Cormorants was the nominate form *carbo*, the others were identified as the Eurasian race *sinensis*.

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

Shropshire status: Uncommon resident

Conservation status: Green List

BBS: Present in 8% of plots, four birds recorded

Author: MF

Only a third of young Sparrowhawks survive their first year. The typical lifespan of those that reach adulthood is just four years, although they have the potential to live much longer: the oldest on record was over 17 years. Their lives are spent in a constant battle against the odds, as this year's County records amply illustrate.

The Sparrowhawk's hunting behaviour combines intensity and persistence. One observer 'in full view' watched a male and female make more than eight attacks on

a bird feeder in the space of half an hour. Five Blackbirds were taken in a Newport garden between January and April, including kills on three consecutive days at the beginning of February. Two fell prey to males operating at the limit of their capabilities: a Blackbird can weigh as much as a male Sparrowhawk, though is more typically about two thirds the weight.

In late April, an observer watched a female bouncing up and down on a dense, flat-topped hedge in which sparrows had taken cover. She beat on it with her wings, and even went so far as to dive inside, emerging with ruffled plumage and no sparrow. This smacks of desperation, as well it might in what was a spell of dreadful weather. Later in the year, a male standing on a lane, entirely focused on the roadside hedge where, again, sparrows were hiding, only narrowly escaped being run over. Many are not so lucky.

As if life weren't hard enough, the only instance of confirmed breeding this year, a nest in a conifer copse, ended in failure. It appeared to have been attacked: when found empty at least two chicks had been dislodged from it well before fledging; one was on the ground nearby and one in the river.

GOSHAWK *Accipiter gentilis*

Shropshire status: Scarce resident
Conservation status: Schedule 1, Annex 1, Green List, RBBP
Author: GEH

Twenty-one casual records were received, a small increase on last year. The records were spread evenly through most of the year although none were reported in January or the months of June, July and August.

The majority were of single birds with two seen at only two sites. Many came from known breeding areas in the south but this year there were rather more from less usual sites in the north, including an immature seen from the Fen hide at VP on 28 Apr. It was disturbed from near the feeder when the hide was entered and flew into the tree belt before later flying over the pool towards Eaton Mascot. Singles were also seen at Edgebolton (15 Mar), The Wrekin (6 May), Oswestry (10 Oct) and Conover (1 Nov).

Shropshire Raptor Group visited around 50 previously occupied sites. Twenty-one were apparently unoccupied, but 20 nests were found, and 15 were successful. At least 33 young fledged, of which nine were colour ringed.

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

Shropshire status: Rare passage migrant, has bred
Conservation status: Schedule 1, Annex 1, Amber List, RBBP
Author: GEH

Two records for the year fell short of the previous two years when five were seen. As in 2017, none were seen during the spring migration period which has often been the best time to find one. Both records were of single juvenile birds, at Whixall Moss on 10 Aug (*J Reeves*) and the Long Mynd on 4 Sep (*D Stafford*).

Marsh Harrier is not quite annual but the only blank years since the turn of the century were 2006 and 2009.

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

Shropshire status: Rare winter visitor and passage migrant
Conservation status: Schedule 1, Annex 1, Red List, RBBP
Author: PC

21 records from five areas/sites. 14 records were from Whixall Moss of which nine were in the first quarter as follows (all ringtails unless specified): 7, 13, 22, 26, 28 and 29 Jan, 4 and 12 Feb, and 19 Mar (male), 28 Oct, 4, 10, 25 Nov and 8 Dec.

Six records reported from the Long Mynd with a single bird on Feb 1. The remainder were all in autumn and all single unsexed birds, on 2, 22 and 26 Sep, and 18 and 20 Oct. Records at this site have declined in recent years.

Other records were from Pentre on 21 Jan (*CJ Pearson*), with a ringtail at Ratlinghope on the same date. An immature female was at Wall Farm on 23 Oct (*MG Grant*).

It is difficult to state how many birds were involved in these records. Records on the same day from different observers are likely to refer to the same bird and a run of records on dates separated by several days may be the same or different individuals. At least nine and perhaps 12 birds thought to have been involved.

RED KITE *Milvus milvus*

Shropshire status: Scarce resident
Conservation status: Schedule 1, Annex 1, Green List
BBS: 13 birds recorded
Author: GEH

The number of casual records almost doubled from previous years to nearly 400, from 116 widespread locations. These included 69 from 36 locations in the north and it is apparent that this species can now be encountered throughout Shropshire, including over urban areas. Records came from all months but with a significant peak in February and March and with fewer during the months of August, September and October.

Most records were of one or two birds with just three double-figure counts. Ten were seen at Bury Ditches on 2 Nov and the two highest counts were a very impressive 60 at Choulton near the south end of the Long Mynd on 21 Nov, with 34 at the same site on 13 Dec, probably indicative of a roost site nearby. Other notable counts included six at Oakeley Mynd (1 Jan) and nine at Clungunford (2 Dec).

The Welsh Kite Trust and the Raptor Group visited most of the sites occupied in the last three years, and cold-searched large parts of the south-west. Twenty-one nests were found, four others were reported in response to requests in the Buzzard and other outlets, and five further pairs were located but the nest couldn't be found: the total of 30 pairs was slightly fewer than the 31 in 2015, and the maximum of 34 found in 2014. All the nests found, and all except one of the additional five pairs, were in the south-west quadrant, but several reports were received of individuals in Shrewsbury and further north.

Only four nests failed, but access was refused to monitor one more, and the outcome is unknown. Twenty nests were successful and, if all chicks large enough to tag survived, at least 29 young fledged from them. Seven of the fledged young from four nests were ringed and tagged, bringing the total of tagged young from Shropshire nests since the first successful breeding for 130 years (in 2006) to 210.

Efforts are continuing to try and find all nests in the County, to locate tagged birds, and monitor the continued spread eastwards and northwards, so reports are wanted of evidence of breeding, please.

A full report, Red Kites in Shropshire 2018, can be found on the SOS website.

BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

Shropshire status: Fairly common resident
Conservation status: Green List
BBS: Present in 78% of plots, 94 birds recorded, an average of 2.4 per occupied plot
Shropshire BBS index: 2.04, annual change +0.29
Author: GEH

A total of 1,043 records were received, a 30% increase from the previous year. The records came from about 260 widespread sites, a similar percentage increase as the number of records. The number of records peaked during the period from February to May and were lowest during November and December. Around 57% came from sites in the north.

There were 32 double-figure counts, the highest of which was 36 at Shawbury on 26 Jan, and this site produced four more counts of between 12 and 16 during the first quarter. The second highest was 31 at Pitchford on 30 Oct. Twelve counts came from Oakeley Mynd, where the maximum was 14 on 5 Feb and 20 Mar. At Leighton, 13 were seen soaring, displaying and chasing each other round on 13 Mar, with another 10 soaring nearby at Buildwas in the same tetrad. At Lyth Hill, 12 were observed "worming" in a fodder beet field (sheep) as it was cultivated ahead of a new crop, and 10 were seen following a plough at Redhill Farm, Shifnal on 13 Sep. Fifteen were in one field hunting worms at Condover on 25 Nov and 16 were feeding together at Uckington on 12 May. Counts of 11 came from Marlow on 1 Feb and VP on 12 May.

Although Buzzard is a widespread breeding species, evidence was poorly reported with confirmed breeding only at Annscroft, Aston Locks, Cefn Einion, Llanfair Waterdine, Tibberton Moor, Wall Farm and Whitcott Keysett. Probable breeding was reported at another 16 sites where pairs were seen in suitable nesting habitat or territorial behaviour was noted.

Reported prey items include four, together with three Red Kites, disturbed from roadkill (Pheasant) at Bishops Castle on 1 Apr, one seen flying through trees with a young squirrel in its talons at Whitcliffe on 3 Jun and one was feeding on the remnants of a pure white pigeon/dove at Beambridge on 6 Jul.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

Shropshire status: Rare resident, scarce winter visitor
Conservation status: Green List
Author: MF

Last year's total of 42 records was the lowest since 2011, and 2018 saw another sharp drop to 18. They were spread over ten sites, all but two featuring once only. Last year VP accounted for over 60% of records; this year there were none. No observations were made in the peak breeding months of May to July. The highest count was a group of five, three visible and two more audible, at Shifnal Sewage works in September, by which time the autumn passage was well under-way, followed by four at the same site in December.

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

Shropshire status: Common resident
Conservation status: Green List
BBS: Present in 20% of plots, 17 birds recorded, an average of 1.7 per occupied plot
Author: AJA

With 728 records (similar to 2017), Moorhen is well-represented in 2018 data. Most reports come from within and north-east of the valleys of the River Severn and Rea Brook, with a secondary area in the catchments of the Rivers Teme and Onny. A broad belt of the County with virtually no records, running south-west to north-east lies between these two areas of concentration. All months were represented in the records with a peak in winter (32%) and a minimum on summer (18%). The list of sites with the largest numbers of records was topped by VP (123), the lower Sambrook Mill Pond (41) and the River Teme at Whitcliffe, Ludlow (31).

About 22% of the records were of five or more birds, many of which consisted of one or more adults accompanied by up to five young birds from up to three broods. The largest counts (17 birds) were from The Mere, Ellesmere (12 Nov and 10 Dec) and Wood Lane Reserve (13 Aug), closely followed by 15 at VP (5 Nov).

Breeding evidence was plentiful. Paired Moorhens were observed from 4 Jan. Other periods in the breeding 'timetable' were as follows.

Breeding Evidence	From	To
Nests with eggs	20 Apr	11 Jun
Nests with young	10 May	2 Jul
Recently fledged young	22 Apr	16 Aug
Juvenile young	12 Jun	4 Dec

COOT *Fulica atra*

Shropshire status: Fairly common winter visitor, uncommon resident

Conservation status: Green List

Shropshire BBS Index: Present in 12% of, 15 birds recorded, average of 2.5 per occupied plot

Author: JJT

Four hundred and fourteen records from 58 sites this year, with peak counts of 210 at both Chelmarsh Reservoir on 7 Dec and at White Mere on 26 Nov and there were 200 at Chelmarsh on 6 Nov.

Systematic counts from WeBS were from a total of 38 sites. Sites recording Coot in nine or more months, are tabulated below. There is an increase in numbers in July and August and then again in the winter months. The peak at Shavington, and perhaps at The Mere, Ellesmere and White Mere in the summer is apparently of birds moulting, perhaps birds coming from smaller breeding ponds in local movements. The winter birds may be from further afield.

Sites are listed in order of the sum of monthly WeBS counts through the year and suggest that through the year The Mere, Ellesmere and White Mere are by far the most significant sites for Coot.

Confirmed breeding records came from 15 sites, Aston Locks, Brown Moss, Cound Fishery, Furber's Lane (Whixall), Granville Country Park, Polemere, Priorslee Lake, Quarry Farm Pool (Howle), Sambrook Mill, Shrewsbury Sewage Works, Stokesay Castle pool, Wall Farm marsh (building on top of a Little Grebe's nest), Whittington Castle, Whixall Moss and canal floods and VP.

WeBS counts tabulated for sites with records from nine or more months and including VP.

Counts at VP* were count maxima for the month

Highlighted Counts (in bold) are the highest count for that site for the year

Site	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Sum of monthly counts
The Mere, Ellesmere	101	71	45	6	11	87	158	190	208	321	235	107	1,540
White Mere	42	29	26	10	12	27	114	186	55	202	260	80	1,043
Shavington Big Pool	10	3	2	10	3	22	68	94	38	9	11	66	336
Cole Mere	6	2	4	2	1				20	51	49	41	176
VP*	20	19	22	20	25	30	19	12	2	2	1	1	173
Polemere	26	16	8	13	12		18	30	1-	9	13	17	162
Shrewsbury STW	6	5	4	6	6	7	2	19	4	3	5	3	70
Tittenley Pool	3		4	2	4	4	5	1	1	3	10	5	42
Sambrook Mill Pond (Lower)		2	4	3		2	1	5		4	4	4	29
Walcot Hall Lakes		3	4	7	5	3		1	2	2	1		28
Ellerton Mill Pond	2	2			1	1		3	4	6	4	1	24
Sites with records	9	10	10	10	10	9	8	10	9	11	11	10	
Highest monthly count	101	71	45	20	25	87	158	190	208	321	260	107	
Sites with Peak counts for the year				1		2		4		3	2		

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*

Shropshire status: Scarce summer visitor

Conservation status: Amber List

Author: GT

One hundred records from 14 sites was a typical return, from the first birds at Wood Lane and VP on 28 Jan to the last of the year at VP on 26 Jul.

It seems remarkable that this species continues to maintain a foothold in the County considering the dearth of successful breeding attempts. Probable or confirmed breeding was reported from four sites: VP, Polemere, Buildwas and Pepperhill, near

Market Drayton. Only at VP were eggs confirmed and despite several laying attempts no chicks were reported.

Of the well watched sites, VP reported birds from 28 Jan to 26 Jul with a maximum of six on 9 Mar. Up to three birds were noted at Chelmarsh between 21 Feb and 11 Jul. There were no reports from Wood Lane this year after 1 Apr, a site where a breeding attempt normally takes place. Pairs were also seen at Noneley, Quarry Farm Pool (Howle) and Leighton and it is possible breeding attempts were made at these sites. Singles were noted at Cross Lane Head, Chirbury, Dodecote, Tibberton, Trench Pool and Ironbridge in the course of the breeding season.

AVOCET *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Shropshire status: Very rare passage migrant
Conservation status: Schedule 1, RBBP
Author: GT

Still an unusual occurrence in the County despite a growing English breeding population. One was photographed at VP on 12 Mar (*JA Almond*).

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

Shropshire status: Common winter visitor, uncommon breeding species
Conservation status: UKBAP, LBAP, Red List
BBS: Present in 18% of plots, 26 birds recorded, an average of 2.9 per occupied plot
Authors: GEH, LS

Generally, a popular and well-reported species, particularly during the winter months when big flocks are found, largely comprising birds which breed elsewhere in the UK or the Continent. This year 333 records were received from 68 sites, a small increase from 2017. However, only 59 records from 16 sites were received from the south (SO grid references). Records came from all months but with rather fewer during the period from June to September.

The highest count of the year was 700 at Shawbury on 26 Jan and other notable counts during the first winter period included 650 at Cherrington Moor (12 Jan), 500 at Shottaton (26 Jan), 290 at Polemere (10 Feb), 470 at Smythemoor (21 Feb) and 260 at Wall Farm (24 Feb).

Breeding was confirmed, with birds sitting on nests, or with unfledged chicks, at Childs Ercall Airfield, Ightfield, Nedge Hill east (two pairs including one with three downy chicks), Noneley (7–12 pairs, with maximum count of 11 downy young), Norbroom Marsh east (4–5 pairs, with three juveniles), Tibberton Moor (4–6 pairs), VP (distraction display), Wall Farm Marsh, Kynnersley (up to seven pairs), and Whixall Moss and canal floods (up to three pairs). In addition, small numbers (up to three pairs) were displaying at Arley Wood and Beacon Lane, Cherrington Moor, Ightfield, Leasowes and Hayes, Plex, Polemere, Rhiewes (near Calverhall), and Whixall Moss.

Lapwings were monitored by 11 Community Wildlife Groups (see Research Reports section), which found 105–118 pairs. Large declines have been found by the three longest established groups, and all the groups in the south have found only small numbers. None were found in the Upper Clun or Camlad areas. However apart from the two CWGs in the Oswestry areas, monitoring does not take place in the most-populated areas.

Post-breeding flocks started to gather in July with the first double-figure count at VP being 12 on the 20th, building up to 28 on the 26th and 47 by 6 Aug and monthly maxima were 60 (19 Aug), 109 (30 Sep), 135 (18 Oct), 320 (24 Nov) and 600 (19 Dec). Elsewhere, maximum site counts included 200 at Chelmarsh (3 Dec), 120 at Clungunford (6 Dec), 150 at Cherrington (16 Dec), 120 at Adderley (17 Dec), 140 at Bromfield (20 Dec), 160 at Wall Farm (29 Dec) and 500 at Wood Lane (26 Dec).

GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

Shropshire status: Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant, has bred
Conservation status: Annex 1, Green List
Author: RJH

A limited number of records this year (34) from 20 sites. January saw 76 at Wall Farm on 11th, with between 150-200 at Shawbury, 13–27th; 230 Cherrington Moor, 12th; 320 at Smythemoor, near Tern Hill and 50 at Hollywaste, near Cleobury Mortimer, both on the 29th. Numbers rose to 650 at Smythemoor in February but dropped to 16 at Wall Farm, and 30 appeared at Upper Battlefield, Shrewsbury on 27th. Three were at War Brook Reservoir on 10 Feb. In March, double-figure counts were returned from Knuck Bank (45), The Grove, Condover (19), with 10 at Polemere. Two birds were found at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 2 Mar and one at Market Drayton on 5th. The first half of the year finished with singles at The Grove, 30 Apr, and Noneley, 4 May.

Returning birds appeared typically in Sep with 100+ on the Long Mynd and 150 on Bicton Hill from 22nd. Similar numbers remained on the Long Mynd into Oct (several sites), with six at Condover on 14th. The 12 at Masons Bank UC Wetland on the 3 Oct rose to over 300 by the end of the month. Numbers rose again at Masons Bank in Nov with 450 recorded on the 10th; elsewhere nine were at Cantlopgrove, 2nd, and 40 at Stoney Pound, 17th. The year finished with a flock of 20 on the Long Mynd, 130 at Hollywaste and 58 at Wall Farm, rising to 150+ on 31 December.

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

Shropshire status: Scarce passage migrant
Conservation status: Red List
Author: RJH

Just four records, all single birds – Polemere, 19 Mar, Noneley, 20 Apr, Whixall canal floods 2 Jun, and VP 19 Aug.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*

Shropshire status: Scarce summer visitor
Conservation status: Schedule 1, Green List, BBP
Author: GB

A total of 27 SOS records was received, down on 67 in 2017, with an additional three WeBS records and none from the southern half (SO grid references) of the County. Little Ringed Plover was recorded at seven sites compared with eight in 2017 and down from 12 sites in 2016 and included regular breeding sites but some passage stop-over wetlands. Fifteen of the records were from VP, suggesting that other occupied sites may be under-recorded.

The first arrival comprised one bird at Wood Lane on 14 Mar. This was followed by one at Hayes Farm 20 Mar, three on the River Severn at Leighton 14 Apr, two at VP 22 Apr, one Priorslee Lake on 1 May with two there on 7 May. Three at Buildwas on 15 May comprised a pair which chased and displayed at a separate male.

Breeding activity was poorly documented, and the only tentative instance of confirmed breeding occurred at VP. A pair had created a nest scrape on the gravel island by the 18 May which was noted as occupied on 20 May. On the 27 May the nest was abandoned, “presumed predated”. Heavy rains around 28 May resulted in the inundation of the shingle beds on the two natural sites on the River Severn at

Buildwas and Leighton “which probably destroyed any nesting attempt”. A bird at Whixall Moss on 2 Jun was possibly on passage.

Dispersal from breeding areas usually begins in late June to early July with autumn passage noticeable in the second half of July and throughout August. Little Ringed Plover was recorded at one site only – VP – in July, the two records comprising one individual on 13 Jul and two, an adult and a juvenile, the latter noted as “not from VP” on 16 Jul.

Little Ringed Plover will return year after year to sites that remain suitable and are also opportunists and will nest at new sites where bare ground occurs adjacent to wetlands. Closer scrutiny for breeding at well-watched sites such as VP and Wood Lane, more frequent observations at other sites, particularly in the southern half of Shropshire, such as Chelmarsh Reservoir and scrape, and Bromfield, and the monitoring of potential new breeding sites such as redundant gravel and sand extraction sites and shingle bars on rivers, between May and July, might produce more breeding evidence.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

Shropshire status: Scarce passage migrant
Conservation status: Schedule 1, RBBP, Red List
Author: GT

A light spring passage with none in autumn yet again. The first, a singleton on 14 Apr was reported from Noneley. One at VP on the morning of 17 Apr was joined by a second bird in the early afternoon. Both flew off to the east. At 14.00 one of these or another flew over calling. On 30 Apr a bird was found standing on closely-cropped sheep pasture at Llanfair Waterdine Turbary. The single May record, on the 3rd, was also from Noneley.

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*

Shropshire status: Uncommon summer visitor, scarce winter visitor
Conservation status: UKBAP, LBAP, Red List
BBS: Present in 16% of plots, 14 birds recorded, an average of 1.8 per occupied plot
Authors: GEH, LS

One hundred and forty records were received, a small increase from last year.

Records were received for all months but 64% came from the period March to May with half of these in April. The number of locations was 52, slightly up on the previous three years when it was in the 40s.

The main winter months of January, February and December produced just nine records. WeBS counts at the traditional wintering grounds around the Severn / Vyrnwy confluence produced the only January record of 18 at Ponthen on the 21st. In February, 12 were at Ponthen on the 17th and 24 a day later at Hayes Farm, and finally nine were at Hayes Farm on 20 Mar.

Single passage birds were seen at Chelmarsh on 28 Feb and several dates from 2 Mar to 23 Mar, and at VP on 7 Mar, which was the only spring record, in contrast to recent years when it has been a favoured site. Five were at Isombridge on 26 Mar. The first birds returning to breeding areas in the south were singles at Hope Valley (9 Mar) and Bridges (14 Mar).

Most records received were from the 10 areas monitored by the Community Wildlife Groups (see Research Reports section), which located 82–98 territories in their core areas, and another 3–4 pairs nearby.

Otherwise, reports were received of two nests at Ightfield, but both were predated. Other locations with evidence of breeding were Whixall Moss and canal floods, with 2–4 pairs, and Annscroft, Arley (1–2 pairs), Merrington and Shawbury.

The SOS/SWT “Save our Curlews” Campaign appeal raised enough for a nest-finding and protection project to be carried out in both the Upper Clun and Clee Hill areas, in co-operation with the respective Community Wildlife Group. Three nests were found and protected with an electric fence in each area, and none were predated, although two eggs were lost from one nest in Clee Hill. Sixteen chicks were radio-tagged and monitored, and in Clee Hill one definitely fledged, and one probably did. A full report of each of these projects can be found on the website, together with details of the Campaign www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-curlews

The Stiperstones-Corndon Landscape Partnership scheme ended in March, but the Ground-nesting Bird Recovery Project continued as “Curlew Country”, under the auspices of the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust. It concentrated on “Headstarting” (removing eggs from nests of wild birds, incubating them, rearing the chicks and then releasing them after fledging), and 21 chicks were released (see www.curlewcountry.org).

Potential breeding areas were vacated by late July and the first bird arrived at VP on 26 Jul with three on 6 Aug, after which singles were reported on many dates up to

8 Dec, perhaps a lingering individual, although gaps in the reporting suggest there may have been several. A post-breeding flock usually builds up at Wood Lane from July but this year the first records were 21 (17 Aug) and 26 (26 Aug) and the only other counts received were 13 (4 Oct) and 22 (15 Oct). At Whixall Moss counts included 10 (29 Sep) and 15 (7 Oct). Elsewhere, 10 were at Cole Mere (26 Nov) and 22 at Edgerley (17 Dec).

The small size of passage flocks, in spring and autumn, are a further indication of the rapid decline of this species.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

Shropshire status: The Icelandic form *islandica* a scarce passage migrant and rare winter visitor. The nominate European and British form likely to be a very scarce passage migrant
Conservation status: Schedule 1, Annex 1, UKBAP, Amber List, RBBP
Author: RJH

There were no spring records this year. Apart from an individual present for a day on 27 Aug at Chelmarsh scrape all other records were from VP. The first returning bird was seen on the 5 Jul and was joined by four others on the 7th. One was present on the 6 Aug, rising to seven on the 8th. There were no further sightings until November with singles on 17th, 23rd and 24th.

RUFF *Calidris pugnax*

Shropshire status: Scarce passage migrant, very rare winter visitor
Conservation status: Schedule 1, Annex 1, RBBP, Red List
Author: GT

A single flew in at dusk at Chelmarsh on 28 Feb (*MR Owen*). The only other report was of a bird at VP on 31 Aug (*MG Grant*).

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*

Shropshire status: Uncommon passage migrant, scarce winter visitor
Conservation status: Amber list
Author: GT

The loss of the settling pools at Mirelake has significantly reduced the available habitat suitable for passage waders. The loss appears to be particularly acute for Dunlin, and passage birds overflying Shropshire do not now linger as they used to.

The eight records this year occurred in seven different months, mirroring the waves of passage which used to take place in the County. After the first at Chelmarsh on 1 Mar, another single was at VP on 12 Mar. Two at Noneley on 20 Apr and at Whixall canal floods on 2 Jun completed spring passage this year.

VP was the only site recording the species thereafter, with two on 25 Jul and single birds on 21 Aug, 20 Sep and 17 Nov.

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

Shropshire status: Common winter visitor, now a very scarce breeding bird
Conservation status: Red List
Author: TW

The pattern of records at the start of the year is interesting: there were four in January and only two in February, but then 15 in March, the last on 24th. Was this upturn a consequence of birds that had travelled further west being recorded on their way back through the County to breeding grounds in Russia and Fennoscandia? All these 21 reports in the early part of the year were of single birds, apart from three at Shavington Park in February and five and two at Wolverley in January and February, with these last two observations being made at night using a thermal imaging device.

It was 2 Jun before the next two records; they were from separate locations in the Wyre Forest and referred to 'presence' and to two birds. Both observations were made at twilight so were presumably of roding birds, and this was the case of the only other breeding season record: one on the Black Hill on 10 Jun.

There were no more reports until one at the Stiperstones on 29 Oct; this, the only October record, was followed by four reports in November and seven in December, including six birds, the maximum for the year, at Shavington Park. All other records were of singles apart from two at Shavington Park and three at Kinlet in November, and two at Ridgwardine in December.

JACK SNIPE *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Shropshire status: Scarce winter visitor
Conservation status: Green List, RBBP
Author: PC

This species is difficult to record and is known to be under recorded due to its crepuscular habits. It is more widely reported from shooting enthusiasts, but these records rarely reach the County Recorder.

2018 was another poor year for this species with a total of nine records involving 17 birds typically scattered widely over the County. One of three was ringed at Wolverley on 14 Jan, with another there on 4 Feb.

Singles were found at Wood Lane NR on 21 Feb, Masons Bank on 26 Mar and Mount Pleasant in Shrewsbury on 30 Mar, typical dates for the species. A notable seven were at Hayes Farm Alberbury on 18 Feb and one there on 15 Apr was the latest of the 2017–18 winter period.

In the second half of the year there were only two records of singles on 19 Oct at Eardington when one was flushed from the dragonfly pools in the middle of the reserve, and one on 10 Nov at Masons Bank.

SNIPE *Gallinago gallinago*

Shropshire status: Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant, now rare breeding species
Conservation status: LBAP, Amber List
Author: GEH

A total of 192 records was received; an increase from last year saw a return to the numbers for 2016 and the number of sites doubled to 52. Once again VP dominated with 35% of the records coming from this well-watched reserve, but this was well down on last year reflecting the increase in records from other sites. Most records came from the north with only 35 from 20 locations in the south. The majority were in the winter and autumn period with only four records in May and June.

In the early part of the year, records were received from VP on many dates from 1 Jan to 17 Apr with monthly maxima of 20 (23 Jan), 20 (21 Feb), 30 (9 Mar) and 20 (8 Apr). Counts of 60 at Wolverley on 14 Jan (using thermal imaging) and at Wood Lane on 21 Feb (flushed from the marsh by a working party) were the highest of

the year. Maximum counts elsewhere included 15 at Ightfield (28 Jan), 24 at Hayes Farm, Alberbury (18 Feb), 13 at Mount Pleasant, Shrewsbury (30 Mar).

In potential breeding locations, two were reported at Pinches Gate, north Stiperstones (20 Apr) and a single at south Stiperstones (21 Apr), one in flight at Motts Road (8 May) was thought to have been flushed by a group of walkers from the Boiling Well area, and singles were seen at north Stiperstones (9 May), Wild Moor (18 Jun) and Calf Ridge, Long Mynd (2 Jul). Away from this area, four were reported at Whixall canal floods (2 Jun).

Breeding was only reported from the two most reliable sites. A nest with four eggs was found on the Stiperstones, at the southern end of the National Nature Reserve, while the Long Mynd Breeding Bird Project recorded definitely five, probably six, different drumming males at dusk, a welcome increase on recent years: two on Wild Moor, and one near Boiling Well (the same as last year), plus new locations east of Duckley Nap and near the top of Callow Hollow. The occupant of the latter site may have been responsible for the record from near Pole Cottage, but it is likely to be a different male.

The first returning to VP was a single on 7 Jul with three reported here on 13 Jul and three on 20 Jul. From 6 Aug Snipe were present on and off until the end of the year with monthly maxima of 10 (8 Aug), 17 (11 Sep), five (11 Oct), 10 (27 Dec). Interestingly, none were reported during November. Maximum site counts from elsewhere included six at Leighton (24 Sep), nine at Hayes Farm, Alberbury (11 Nov), six at Polemere (11 Nov), 20 at Wood Lane (12 Nov), 12 at Whixall canal floods (26 Nov), six at Chelmarsh (2 Dec), nine at Crosslanes (9 Dec), eight near Chirbury (20 Dec), seven at Morton (23 Dec) and 26+ at Wall Farm (28 Dec).

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos*

Shropshire status: Uncommon passage migrant, rare summer visitor, very rare winter visitor
Conservation status: Amber List
Author: GEH

Just 26 records were received, and no wintering birds were recorded this year.

The first passage report of the year was of a single at VP on 12 Mar, quickly followed by three at Priorslee Lake on 13 Mar, with a single here on the 14th. There were further records of one or two birds up to 28 Apr when three were seen. The maximum spring count of three was matched at Aston Locks on 20 Apr. Elsewhere, singles

were seen at Polemere (28 Apr) and Preston Montford (29 Apr).

There were two late records on 20 May; a single at VP and two at Priorslee Lake. However, there were no reports of possible breeding and no further records until the middle of July when return passage started.

Return passage was generally light. The first arrivals were two at VP on 13 Jul with singles here on 15, 16, 17 and 22 Jul. Singles were also seen at Holmer Lake (15 Jul), River Teme, Whitcliffe (18 Jul) and two were at Shavington Park (25 Jul). The only August records were singles at Chelmarsh Reservoir and Chelmarsh scrape on the 27th. Finally, singles were seen at The Mere, Ellesmere (16 Sep) and Chelmarsh Reservoir (18 Sep).

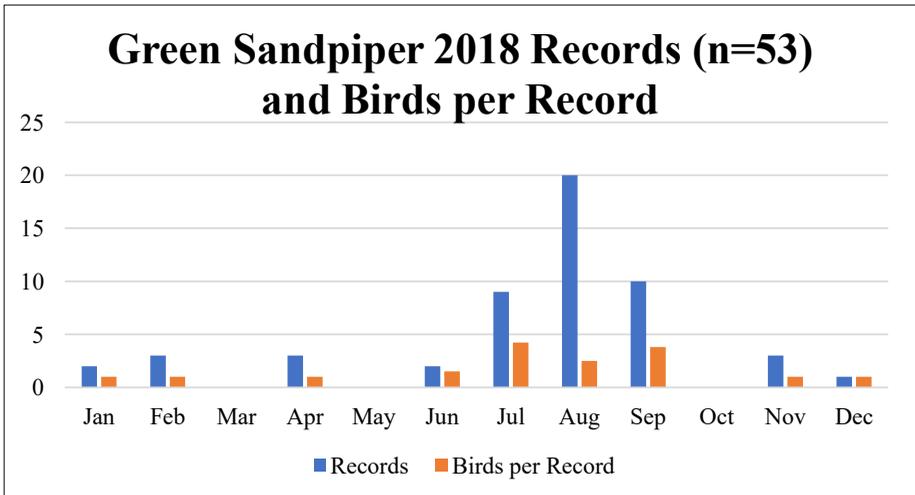
GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

Shropshire status: Uncommon passage migrant, scarce winter visitor

Conservation status: Schedule 1, RBBP, Amber List

Author: GT

Rather more records (53) than in the previous year. Decidedly scarce in winter and spring, but more predictable on return passage in most years. 2018 proved no exception. The figure shows the number of records by month and the mean number of birds counted per record.



Single birds only were counted in winter months at Wood Lane on 1 Jan, Melverley on 29 Jan, VP on 2 Feb, Edgebolton on 4 Feb and at Bridgnorth Cemetery on 23rd. In the second winter period too, single counts were the rule with November birds at Condover on 1st, VP on 8th and Shavington Park on 26th. The single December record was of a bird at Aston Locks on the last day of the year.

In spring, unusually no birds were recorded in March or May but there were three April singles at Church Preen on 3rd, VP on 19th, and Brockhurst Farm near Aston (Wem) on 22nd.

One at Wall Farm Kynnersley on 18th and two at VP on 23rd Jun might have been either late spring birds or early returners, but by July numbers picked up through the month and could be more conclusively assigned to returning migrants. As is usual in many boreal breeding waders, early returning migrants tend to be adult birds with juveniles following later in the autumn. Ageing is possible with good views, but no autumn birds were assigned either to adult or juvenile age classes.

Most autumn birds were reported from VP where the species was recorded on 27 dates between 2 Jul and 24 Sep. Numbers in July peaked at nine birds on 3rd. After a gap in records from 21 Jul to 5 Aug, six birds were newly arrived on 6 Aug and this proved the highest August count, but was exceeded by a count of 10 birds on 12 Sep. Elsewhere, birds were reported at Chelmarsh on just two dates with six on 14 Aug and three on 23rd. No records were received from Wood Lane, usually a regular site for the species.

Two were found at Holly Banks on 25 Aug; one high up on Rhos Fiddle on 29 Aug, and a single too at Gallows Bank by the Teme on 7 Sep.

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*

Shropshire status: Scarce passage migrant, rare winter visitor, formerly bred
Conservation status: LBAP, Amber List
Author: RJH

Records for this species in the County continue to fall. From seven records in 2017 there were only four this year. Two birds were seen at Shawbury on 15 Mar with singles at VP on the 22 Jul and 10 and 21 Nov.

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*

Shropshire status: Very scarce passage migrant
Conservation status: Schedule 1, Annex 1, RBBP, Amber List
Author: GT

The impression that this species is getting more frequent in the County continues to be reinforced and it has been recorded every year this millennium. A spring record on 24 May from Knighton Reservoir (*D Barnes*) was followed one at VP on 13 Aug (*C Cameron*).

Chisholm (2007) described the gradual increase in the number of breeding pairs and sites in Scotland since the first breeding record in 1959, and it is tempting to suggest the increase in sightings here is in some way related to a steadily growing population especially in Sutherland and in Ross and Cromarty.

Reference

Chisholm K. (2007) History of the Wood Sandpiper as a breeding bird in Britain, *British Birds*, 100, pp 112-121.

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

Shropshire status: Scarce passage migrant
Conservation status: Schedule 1, Amber List, RBBP
Author: RJH

An individual was present at VP for just over three hours in late morning on 17 Apr. The next bird to be reported was at the same site on the last day of August. Into September, one, sometimes two, were present at VP from 5–13th before the last individual in the County was seen at Wood Lane on 4 Oct.

KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*

Shropshire status: Rare passage migrant and winter visitor
Conservation status: Red List
Author: TCL

The slight upturn in records seen in recent years continued, with three records during February and March. An adult at The Mere, Ellesmere on 10 Feb (*G Edwards*) was followed by an adult at Priorslee Lake on 13–16 Mar (*M Grant*) and another adult at The Mere, Ellesmere on 24 Mar (*W Arrowsmith*).

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Shropshire status: Common winter visitor, uncommon breeding species
Conservation status: Amber List
BBS: Present in 8% of plots, eight birds recorded
Author: TCL

351 records were received from 58 locations in every month of the year.

Peak winter counts in January consisted of 2,500 at The Mere, Ellesmere on 5th, 500 at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 12th and 1,900 in the roost at Trench Middle Pool on 19th. 780 were counted feeding on slurried fields at Whixall on 20 Feb, and 1,500 roosted at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 28th. A high count of 2,800 in the roost at The Mere, Ellesmere on 2 Mar perhaps included spring passage birds as well as winterers.

As expected, there was a slump in reports during the summer, but breeding evidence came from Wood Lane where 160 nests were counted on 21 May (up from 133 nests in 2017), Whixall Moss where ten nests were recorded containing ten downy chicks and thirteen fledged young on 2 Jun, and VP where two pairs were sitting on 18 Jun. The first fledged juvenile away from a colony was seen at Priorslee Lake on 10 Jul where it was virtually the first bird seen since the wintering flock departed on 29 Mar.

During the autumn, counts included 1,500 at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 23 Aug, 800 following the plough at Cantlop on 8 Sep, 400 at The Mere, Ellesmere on 13 Sep and 2,500 in the roost at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 18 Sep, rising to 3,000 on 6 Nov. A roost count of 4,000 at The Mere, Ellesmere on 26 Nov was the highest anywhere in the County since 2011. 750 roosted at Priorslee Lake on 28 Nov and 2,100 roosted on nearby Trench Middle Pool the following day. In December, 2,750 roosted at The Mere, Ellesmere on 3rd, 1,200 at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 7th, and 890 at Priorslee Lake on 20th.

LITTLE GULL *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Shropshire status: Rare passage migrant
Conservation status: Schedule 1, Green List, RBBP
Author: TCL

As in 2017 there was just one record, an adult at Whixall Moss on 15 Apr (*R Dowley*).

MEDITERRANEAN GULL *Ichthyaetus melanocephalus*

Shropshire status: Rare but increasing passage migrant and winter visitor, has bred
Conservation status: Schedule 1, Annex 1, Amber List, RBBP
Author: TCL

An improvement on 2017 with 29 records compared with 19, partly as a result of increased observer effort during the second half of the year. The first was at The Mere, Ellesmere on 11 Feb and the annual late winter pattern of records then followed, with one to three adults recorded in the roost there on 15 dates up until 14 Mar. Four were noted on 24 Feb and five on 7 Mar. One was at nearby Wood Lane on 17 Feb, a second-summer was noted there on 26 Mar to 1 Apr, and a single bird was in the roost at The Mere, Ellesmere on 28 Mar.

Autumn passage commenced with a moulting juvenile in the roost at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 22–23 Aug. In September, a second-winter was seen following a plough amongst the hordes of Black-headed Gulls at Cantlop on 8th, two (an adult and a first-winter) were at Priorslee Lake on 11th, a second-winter roosted at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 21st and a first-winter was there on 23rd. Another first-winter was seen at Priorslee Lake on 28 Nov, an adult roosted at The Mere, Ellesmere on 22 Dec, and the final record of the year was of an adult on the Severn/Vyrnwy floods at Melverley on 27 Dec.

COMMON GULL *Larus canus*

Shropshire status: Uncommon winter visitor
Conservation status: Amber List
Author: TCL

Forty-six records in 2018 represents an almost fourfold increase on 2017, with birds seen in every month except April and May. Half of the records came from the species' stronghold of the Ellesmere meres, but increased coverage of the Chelmarsh Reservoir roost produced thirteen records.

During the first three months of the year most records were in single figures, but 40 were present at Cole Mere on 10 Jan, 150 at Adderley on 20 Jan, and 170 in the roost at The Mere, Ellesmere on 2 Mar. Unseasonal records of single birds came from Knuck Wood, Cefn Einion on 12 Jun and VP on 5 and 18 Jul.

Autumn passage got underway with a bird in the roost at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 13 Aug, followed by one to five seen there on eight dates in September to December. One was in the roost at The Mere, Ellesmere on 3 Sep and one was in a field with Lesser Black-backed Gulls at Micklewood, Dorrington on 7 Sep. Notable winter counts all came from the roost at The Mere, Ellesmere where there were 70 on 16 Nov, 250 on 26 Nov, 215 on 3 Dec and 500 on 17 Dec. The final record of the year was of eight at Oerley Reservoir on 21 Dec.

RING-BILLED GULL *Larus delawarensis*

Shropshire status: Vagrant
Conservation status: Amber List
Author: TCL

The twelfth County record, and the second this decade, was a second-winter photographed in the roost at The Mere, Ellesmere on 21–22 Feb (*R Dowley, M Breaks*).

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*

Shropshire status: Scarce winter visitor
Conservation status: Amber List
Author: TCL

This species appears to genuinely be on the decline in the County, with fewer feeding opportunities available to these huge birds with large appetites. Just 18 records were received from four sites, all in the winter months and all single birds except for two at Adderley on 20 Jan and two at Chemistry West, Whitchurch on 14 Feb. The Mere, Ellesmere was the favoured site with 14 records in the roost.

GLAUCOUS GULL *Larus hyperboreus*

Shropshire status: Rare winter visitor
Conservation status: Amber List, RBBP
Author: TCL

As in 2017, two juveniles were present in the County in the early part of the year, and again there was an overlap in dates (28 Feb) which helped eliminate the possibility of one bird passing through different sites. Both birds lingered for a few days.

One was seen in the roost at The Mere, Ellesmere on 26 and 28 Feb (*J Reeves*), whilst in the south of the County the other major gull roost at Chelmarsh Reservoir hosted one from 27 Feb to 2 Mar (*MR Owen*).

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucooides*

Shropshire status: Rare winter visitor
Conservation status: Amber List
Author: TCL

As with the previous species, 2018 represented a copy of 2017. Again, there was just one record, on one date, this time of a juvenile in the roost at The Mere, Ellesmere on 13 Feb (*R Dowley*).

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

Shropshire status: British form *argenteus* an uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant. Nominate northern European form *argentatus* presumably a scarce winter visitor
Conservation status: UKBAP, Red List (*argenteus*) and Amber List (*argentatus*)
BBS: Present in 2% of plots, one bird recorded
Author: TCL

An increase in observer effort focussed on gull roosts during the year was probably the primary cause of the surge in records compared with the previous two years, as opposed to a genuine rebound in the numbers of Herring Gulls. 99 records were received, a 395% increase on 2017 and a 280% increase on 2016. The number of double-figure counts also rose dramatically in 2018.

In January, there were 15 at Ifton Meadows on 1st, 40 at Wood Lane on 19th, 20 at Adderley on 20th, and 15 at Whixall on 30th. February's highest counts all came from Chelmarsh Reservoir where 120 were present in the roost on 22nd rising to 140 on 28th. The highest count of the year came in March when 450 were counted in the roost at The Mere, Ellesmere on 2nd, numbers perhaps boosted by the presence of northbound migrants.

During the spring and summer, 17 records were received from 11 locations, all ones and twos except for three at Priorslee Lake on 16 Jun and six in the roost at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 23 Aug. Two fresh juveniles in a field at Cantlop on 15 Aug were followed by four there on 8 Sep. September roost counts included 17 at

Chelmarsh Reservoir on 18th and six at The Mere, Ellesmere the following evening, whilst in October five roosted at The Mere, Ellesmere on 18th.

Numbers started to increase in November when 130 were counted in the roost at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 6th, 150 roosted at The Mere, Ellesmere on 16th and 200 roosted there on 26th. These figures may have included birds passing through from further north, as a decline in December saw roost totals of just 12 at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 7th and 132 at The Mere, Ellesmere on 17th.

CASPIAN GULL *Larus cachinnans*

Shropshire status: Rare winter visitor
Conservation status: Amber List
Author: TCL

Three records represented a slight dip following five in 2017 and 2016, but there were only three in 2015. For the first time there were no records from the Telford area, indeed all three were recorded in the roost at Chelmarsh Reservoir in the second half of the year, reward for a concerted effort of regular roost counts over the period.

The first was a fourth-winter on 22 Aug (*J Reeves*), followed by another sub-adult on 18 Sep (*T Lowe*), and a first-winter on 6, 23 and 30 Nov (*T Lowe, J Reeves*).

YELLOW-LEGGED GULL *Larus michahellis*

Shropshire status: Scarce all-year visitor, most common in winter; rare in spring
Conservation status: Amber List, RBBP
Author: TCL

During the first three months of the year there were 22 records from just two sites: the gull roosts at The Mere, Ellesmere in the north of the County (19 records) and Chelmarsh Reservoir in the south (three records). Four birds were recorded at the former site on 3 Jan and five were there on 12 Jan, with one to three recorded on a further 17 dates until 24 Mar. Chelmarsh Reservoir hosted singles on 12 and 28 Feb, and two birds on 22 Feb.

Typically, there were no records during April to July, but then there was a welcome return to August records following blanks in 2016 and 2017. Six (including five juveniles) in the roost at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 13 Aug got the ball rolling, followed by an adult at Cantlop on 15th. Two were in the roost at The Mere,

Ellesmere on 16th, rising to seven on 24th, the day after, seven were also recorded in the roost at Chelmarsh Reservoir. Two were seen at Wood Lane on 25 Aug.

During September, peak counts included four at Priorslee Lake on 4th, four at Cantlop on 8th, seven at Chelmarsh on 18th, eight at The Mere, Ellesmere on 19th, and two at Wood Lane on 21st. The year's highest count, and the first double-figure count since 2014, was of ten in the Chelmarsh Reservoir roost on 5 Oct, and four roosted at The Mere, Ellesmere on 18 Oct. In November, six roosted at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 6th and four at The Mere, Ellesmere on 17th. Numbers dwindled in December to three at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 9th, one on the floods at Melverley on 23rd, and one at The Mere, Ellesmere on 29th.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*

Shropshire status: Common winter visitor and passage migrant, very common in winter. Rare breeder
Conservation status: Amber List
BBS: Present in 22% of plots, 38 birds recorded, an average of 3.5 per occupied plot
Author: TCL

Still by far the commonest of the large gulls, records were received from all corners of the County and in all months, although with a significant autumn (and winter) bias, the highest counts coming from the two major gull roosts at The Mere, Ellesmere and Chelmarsh Reservoir. The first such counts of the year were of 2,000 at The Mere, Ellesmere on 5 Jan, and 815 (of which 15 were identified as belonging to the Scandinavian form *intermedius*) there on 2 Mar. Meanwhile, in the south of the County there were 175 at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 31 Jan and 600 on 22 Feb. 1,540 at Hayes Farm on 7 Jan represented the only other high count during this period.

During the spring and summer, small numbers were reported from 29 widely scattered locations. For the first time since 2015, breeding information was received from the traditional site of Harlescott on the north side of Shrewsbury where 28 birds were counted on the roofs of several large industrial units on 22 Jul, including six newly-fledged juveniles.

The first of the late summer arable gatherings concerned a flock of 140 feeding on barley stubble at Annscroft on 30 Jul, and 55 were following a plough at Whitcott Keysett on 3 Aug. 110 were in fields at Cantlop on 15 Aug rising to 560 on 7 Sep (with 147 nearby at Dorrington the same day) and 780 on 27 Sep (with 360 in a field

at Uckington the same day). Late summer roost counts included 1,720 at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 23 Aug, and 400 at The Mere, Ellesmere on 23 Aug.

Numbers rose further during the autumn, with 260 at Redhill on 13 Sep, 350 in fields at Noneley and 120 at Longslow on 14 Sep, and 450 at Crose Mere on 6 Oct. On 2 Oct, 850 were in fields at Condoover with 200 at nearby Cantlop, 370 at Nesscliffe and 350 at Myddle all on the same afternoon. During this time, monthly maxima of 3,000 roosted at The Mere, Ellesmere on 19 Sep and 18 Oct, and 3,300 at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 18 Sep rising to a peak of 3,500 on 5 Oct. There was then a slight reduction in numbers as the winter progressed, presumably due to a lack of feeding opportunities once agricultural activities waned, combined with a lack of County landfill sites. Late year roost counts peaked at 2,800 at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 6 Nov, falling to 2,000 on 21 Dec, and 1,600 at The Mere, Ellesmere on 16 Nov falling to 530 on 3 Dec.

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

Shropshire status: Scarce passage migrant and summer visitor, has bred
Conservation status: Annex 1, Amber List
Author: TCL

A slight return to form following a disappointing 2017, but spring passage was confined to one bird at White Mere on 24 May. Four records related to two birds at Priorslee Lake seen courtship feeding on 20 and 27 May, and then fishing on 10 and 26 Jun, suggesting a possible breeding attempt in the area for the second year running.

A protracted autumn passage commenced with two north over VP on 7 Jul, then two at Cole Mere on 10 Aug and one there on 21 Sep.

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger*

Shropshire status: Rare passage migrant
Conservation status: Schedule 1, Annex 1, Green List, RBBP
Author: TCL

Six records in spring and autumn from three sites was a notable improvement on 2017.

The favoured site of Cole Mere produced an early record of one on 27 Apr, followed

a month later by a flock of up to six on 24 May and one on 27 May, and one also visited nearby White Mere on 24 May.

On 26 Aug an adult was present at Priorslee Lake in the rain early morning, and probably the same bird was seen later in the day at Belvide Reservoir, Staffordshire. Finally, one was present at Cole Mere on 22 Sep, the day after Storm Bronagh delivered other seabirds such as Grey Phalaropes and Sabine's Gulls to various inland waters across the country.

LITTLE AUK *Alle alle*

Shropshire status: Vagrant
Author: GT

The eighth County record was of a bird picked up exhausted under bird feeders at Stapleton on 6 Dec (*M Woodall*). It was taken to Cuan Wildlife Rescue where after rest and recuperation it was recovered enough to be released. After transportation and ringing it was set free on the Norfolk coast at Hunstanton and flew off strongly.

FERAL PIGEON *Columba livia*

Shropshire status: Common naturalised resident
BBS: Present in 10% of plots, 11 birds recorded, an average of 2.2 per occupied plot
Author: JJT

There were 87 records, a considerable increase on the 46 of last year. The north of the County (SJ) produced 53 (61%) of the records from a scatter of sites, from Trefonen in the north-west to Shifnal in the south-east. From the south (SO) 21 of the 29 records came from the Ludlow/Whitcliffe area, the others being single records from a scatter of sites throughout, and with two records from Bridgnorth.

There were 10 records of 10 or more birds, the joint maxima being 53 birds at both Polemere on 21 Apr and Bridgnorth High Town on 1 Sep. There were 18 at Whittington Castle on 4 Feb, 15 at Shawbury on 26 Jan and 15 Mar and 12 at Shawbury on 8 Jan. Twelve were also counted passing Beambridge on 1 Oct, while 10 were recorded at The Mere, Ellesmere on 3 Jan, Shawbury on 6 Apr and Whitcliffe on 30 Oct.

The only nest reported was in buildings at Wall Farm in June and July.

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*

Shropshire status: Common resident
Conservation status: Amber List
BBS: Present in 61% 51 plots, 106 birds recorded, an average of 3.4 per occupied plot
Shropshire BBS Index: 2.35, annual change -0.04
Author: JJJ

Three hundred and sixty-one records last year, 438 this year, inflated by frequent and regular BBS submissions by a few observers.

While the distribution of records from the north (SJ grid squares) and south (SO grid squares) of the County were almost identical (219 and 217) the occurrence of high counts was certainly not; only three of the 21 counts in double figures came from the south.

The peak count was of 70 at Wall Farm on 23 Oct, the next highest being of 55 at Choulton on 14 Oct. The three counts of 20-39 were in all in the north while only two of the other 16 double-figure counts were from the south.

Of the flock of 25 at Wall Farm on 23 Jan, one was removed by a Peregrine and nine over Condover on 22 Oct were heading south-west amongst migrating flocks of Woodpigeons, perhaps suggesting some immigration into the County.

On 14 May a pair was seen flying at, and seeing off, a female Goosander visiting a large beech tree near the River Clun, presumably in competition for a nest-hole.

WOODPIGEON *Columba palumbus*

Shropshire status: Very common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor
Conservation status: Green List
BBS: Present in 100% of plots, 1,055 birds recorded, an average of 20.7 per occupied plot
Shropshire BBS Index: 1.15, annual change +0.05
Author: JJJ

Around 1,360 records were received of this ubiquitous species, so often assumed to be resident and unremarkable. Flocks of 100–1,000 birds (37 records) usually related to feeding flocks in winter (October to March), the largest being 750 at Tibberton West on 25 Feb with 868 there on 11 Mar and 500 on 11 Feb. The exception was a

count of 133, systematically counted feeding on collapsed barley near Annscroft on 6 Jul.

However, recent observations, notably by an observer with an elevated view of what appears to be a flightpath over Condoover, in concert with a Dutch visible migration monitoring website (Trekstellen.org), are producing intriguing data; Woodpigeons appear to move, in the autumn, in ways currently not understood.

In late October, the following flocks were recorded heading south-west over Condoover, in the mornings; on 21st – 2,200 birds, 22nd – 7,800, 23rd – 2,020, 28th – 5,930, and in early November on 2nd came 9,402 in the same direction. The flock of 350 heading south over Whixall on 22 Oct might have been part of the same general trend. Complimentary to these movements, also at Condoover, 1,082 flew in the opposite direction (north-east) on 10 Nov. On 29 Oct, in the morning, a total of 154 flew north-west over Beambridge in 40 mins and on the following day 377 flew north over the same place in the same time.

While the south-westerly movements might be explained by northern continental birds heading for Britain and perhaps beyond to Iberia, such an explanation is at odds with the view expressed in *The Migration Atlas* (Wernham *et al.* 2002) relating that ringing recoveries show the species to be highly sedentary, the same article allowing that more work is needed to explain the mass movements which are observed.

Observers are urged to watch out for and report movements of Woodpigeons in the autumn, noting both numbers and flight direction. It appears that this species has much to be accounted for.

Reference

Wernham C.V., Toms M.P., Marchant J.H., Clark J.A., Siriwardena G.M., Baillie S.R. (eds.). 2002. *The Migration Atlas: movements of the birds of Britain and Ireland.* T & A.D. Poyser, London.

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*

Shropshire status: Rare summer visitor
Conservation status: Red List
Author: AJA

With four reports (of seven birds) during the year (the largest number since 2013), the plight of this threatened species remains dire. Most encouraging was a report of two pairs at Bicton on 13 May. The remainder (all singletons) included ‘purring’

individuals at Knighton Reservoir (27 May) and at Crose Mere (28 Jun), and another at Knuck Wood, near Cefn Einion (12 Jun). These locations are dispersed, consistent with the pattern apparent over the past eight years in which no tetrad has received more than one Turtle Dove record, except in cases where it was believed the same bird was involved. The lack of any concentration of reports in specific locations suggests that passage birds or unmated individuals may be the main source (which is why the Bicton record is encouraging).

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

Shropshire status: Common resident
Conservation status: Green List
BBS: Present in 59% of plots, 111 birds recorded, an average of 3.7 birds per occupied plot
Shropshire BBS index: 1.16, annual change +0.05
Author: GT

Closely associated with man, the Collared Dove is predominantly a bird of rural villages and farms. The largest flocks this year were in villages: 23 at Longford and 14 at Puleston both on 14 Oct. Most flocks were of fewer than ten birds but the majority of the 276 records for the year were of one to four birds. It is likely that observers tend to ignore the species; it is one of those birds which seem to melt into the background rather than shout their presence.

Small numbers were regularly reported from Newport, Ellesmere, Oswestry and Ludlow. The population in Market Drayton is thought to have declined though it can still be found in pockets, and records from Shrewsbury town, too, seem much less frequent than formerly. Nevertheless, the BBS index and overall number of reports indicate a stable population.

The breeding season can be lengthy. Nest building was recorded on 15 Jan at Alveley, Whitcliffe on 9 Apr and Annscroft on 4 May. Display and copulation were recorded in April at Uppington and Newport, in May at Ludlow and in June at Longford, whilst display flights were observed at Market Drayton in November. The only successful breeding reported was of fledged young at Wall Farm on 19 Jul.

Whilst the vanguard of this species is still colonising new ground in the US and Canada, our population is now settled and stable. It is difficult to believe that just 60 years ago it was unknown in the UK.

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*

Shropshire status: Scarce summer visitor
Conservation status: UKBAP, Red Listed
BBS: Present in 14% of plots; seven birds recorded
Author: AJA

Records of this familiar harbinger of spring were down by 15% on last year, with a total of 70. The geographical distribution was sparse and patchy with clustering in the Church Stretton-Long Mynd-Stiperstones area and north of Telford, as in 2017. Specific sites with five or more records were Wyre Forest (seven), Stiperstones and Tibberton Moor (both six) and Whixall Moss and the Long Mynd (both five). Two thirds of records were in May with 12 in April, 11 in June and one in July.

The first of spring was at Tibberton on 16 Apr and the final report occurred on 9 Jul in the Wyre Forest, a period of less than three months. Reports of the bird's distinctive song occurred between 19 Apr and 22 Jun, including a case of both male song and female calling at Tibberton on 25 Apr. The only evidence of confirmed breeding was at Breakneck Bank (Wyre Forest) on 17 Jun when a nest that had been parasitised by a Cuckoo (host species unrecorded), was reported predated. No juveniles were reported this year; neither was there any information on host species.

Over half of all reports were of singletons but higher counts were noted at Whixall Moss (29 Apr) and Stiperstones (9 May) – both four individuals – and in the Wyre Forest (11 May) and Stapeley Hill (19 May) – both three birds.

BARN OWL *Tyto alba*



Providing nestboxes for Barn Owls and promoting their conservation in Shropshire

Shropshire status: Uncommon resident
Conservation status: Schedule 1, LBAP, Green List
Author: GB

The Shropshire Barn Owl Group nest box scheme

209 Barn Owl chicks were produced in sites monitored in 2018 (Table 1). The data is confined to those pairs successfully producing chicks and includes data from five breeding sites monitored by the Upper Onny Community Wildlife Group (UOCWG). An additional five nest box nests failed at the egg stage. Clutches ranged from one to five eggs and broods ranged from one to five chicks with an average of 2.8. Nest boxes produced 189 chicks and natural nest sites produced 20 chicks. Natural nest sites comprised four oak trees, an Ash and a Black Poplar. One Barn Owl pair at Ryton had the company of breeding Stock Dove within the same nest box! The indications in July were that Barn Owls were feeding their young predominately on Wood Mice which would indicate that their favoured prey, Field Vole, was in short supply at that time.

Table 1. Number of chicks produced according to type of nest site in 2018

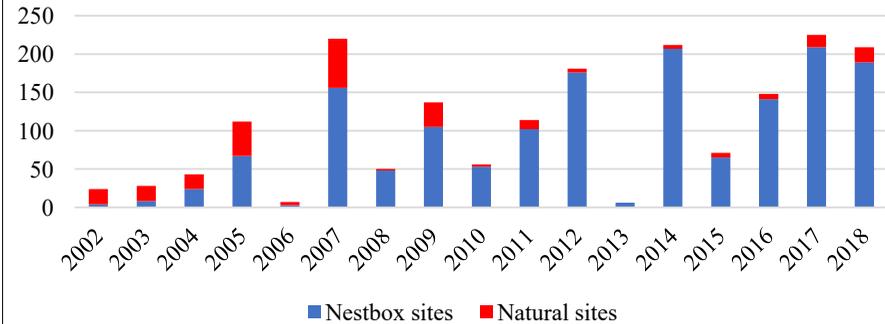
Figures in brackets refer to number of broods

Tree nest box		Building nest box		Pole nest box		Tree cavity natural		Building natural		Other natural		Total No. chicks	Mean No. chicks
No. chicks	Mean	No. chicks	Mean	No. chicks	Mean	No. chicks	Mean	No. chicks	Mean	No. chicks	Mean		
148 (52)	2.9	35 (12)	2.9	6 (2)	3.0	18 (6)	3.0	2 (1)	2.00	0	0	209	2.8

Six new breeding pairs were established in 2018 (fourteen in 2017) of which five were in nest boxes and one in a natural site.

SBOG confirmed Barn Owls breeding in nest boxes and natural sites monitored by the group at Adderley, Admaston, Albrighton, Attingham (2), Bagley, Berrington, Brogyntyn, Burlton, Charlton Hill, Chipnall (2), Clive Wood, Colehurst, Colemere (2), Cold Hatton, Cressage, Crifitins, Doley, Dorrington, Eaton Mascott, Ellesmere, Gobowen, Harley, Harmer Hill, Haughmond Hill, High Ercall (2), High Hatton, Hollinswood, Holly Banks, Hordley, Horton, Howle, Humbers, Kenley (2), Kynnersley, Leebotwood, Lower Kempley, Lwyn-y-Go, Lyneal, Lyneal Wood, Marchamley, Melverley, Morton, Much Wenlock, Oldfields, Pipegate, Rodway, Ruewood, Ryton, St. Martins, Sandford, Smethcott, Soundley, Spoonley (2), Stanton Lacey, Stanwardine, Tibberton, Tunstall, Welsh Frankton, Weston Lullingfields (2), Whitchurch, Willaston (2) and Woolaston. UOCWG also confirmed breeding at Bishops Castle (2), Eaton (2) and Hardwick.

Shropshire Barn Owl Group. Number of chicks produced in natural and nestbox sites 2002-18



The wide availability of nest boxes and the firm establishment of pairs at nest box sites means that they produce a significantly greater proportion of chicks compared with natural sites. A two-year cycle in breeding productivity, probably correlated with fluctuations in the Field Vole population, is also increasingly evident (see graph). Higher mean breeding productivity appears to be correlated with peak breeding years and therefore lower mean broods per pair are consistent with alternate dips in breeding productivity. For example, the highest mean of 4.1 chicks was recorded in the peak breeding year of 2014 and the lowest of 2.0 chicks in the poor season of 2013.

2018 was unusual in that it was a productive breeding year which exceeded the previous peak in 2017, which also followed a productive year in 2016. Peaks are usually followed by significant declines in breeding productivity and consecutive peak years have occurred only once before, in 2011 and 2012.

The indications are that whilst SBOG's survey work and data collection has undoubtedly contributed to a better knowledge of the Barn Owl in Shropshire, the sustained effort to replenish the loss of natural cavities by the siting of nest boxes in areas of good feeding habitat has promoted a real increase in the number of pairs.

Road Casualties

Twenty casualties were recorded on roads in Shropshire in 2018. Owls were located either directly on the road or on the central reservation or grass verge. 92% of casualties occur on 'A' roads with relatively few casualties on 'B' roads. The A5 is

the most serious threat to Barn Owls accounting for 66 (34%) of casualties between 2002 and 2018.

62% of the road victims relate to the winter period October to March, coinciding with juvenile dispersal and adults extending their hunting ranges. An emerging trend is a peak in casualties in March and the high mid-summer casualties in July, the latter possibly relating to dispersing juveniles from early or first broods.

Casual records

In addition to the data provided above by SBOG, 62 records (43 in 2017) were submitted by the SOS in all months. 54% of the records were from the northern half (SJ grid reference) of Shropshire.

Breeding was confirmed at one site only, near Albrighton, where three young were recorded in a nest box. This site was recorded to SBOG and is included in the above data. Road casualties comprised one at Bicton on 15 Jun and another at Mawley Oak on 8 Dec. One Barn Owl found grounded in a garden at Tibberton on 27 Dec appeared lethargic and unable to fly but had gone when later checked. A female caught and released at Wolverley 4 Dec had been originally ringed as a nestling at Colemere Jul 2017

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

Shropshire status: Uncommon Resident
Conservation status: Amber List
Author: HJG

Birds were reported from all months of the year, with a total of 72 records received from 49 sites. Of these records, seven were of birds heard calling, but there was only one record of birds seen; two owlets and one adult were present on Haughmond Hill on 2 Jun, the only record of confirmed breeding received this year. All other records were reported as presence only, without details. Most records were received for the months of April and November (both nine).

The maximum count for the year was of four in Wyre Forest on 2 Jun. Two together were reported from Ryton IX Towns on 31 Mar, Clun on 14 May, Woolston on 14 Jun, Haughmond Hill on 19 Jul, Pontesbury on 30 Jul, VP on 8 Sep, Shifnal on 12 Sep, Crose Mere on 6 Oct, Pitchford on 7 Oct and 28 Nov, Cross Lane Head on 25 Nov and 3 Dec, Shifnal on 16 Dec, Cockshutt on 22 Dec, and Pentre on 23 Dec. The remainder of records were of singles.

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

Shropshire status: Uncommon naturalised resident
Conservation status: Not listed because it is an introduced species. If included, it would be Red-listed due to its recent decline
Author: HJG

Records were received from eleven locations this year, compared with only six in 2017. They were reported from: Edgebolton on 2 and 4 Feb; Wolverley on 4 Feb; Newport Cemetery on 20 Mar; Wall Farm, Kynnersley on 20 May and 18 Jun; Muxton on 26 and 28 May; Child's Ercall on 22 Jun; Tibberton South on 4 Jul, when one alighted on a telegraph pole beside the B5062, the first the observer had seen locally for several years; Cockshutt on 21 Aug, when one was heard calling from a rooftop and then seen, the first seen here by the observer for ten or twelve years; also reported from Cockshutt on 13 Sep and 22 Dec; Whiston Hall, Albrighton on 21 Aug; Lower Walton on 22 Sep; and, Hilley Farm Pentre on 24 Oct.

The only record of confirmed breeding was from Albrighton where a pair bred in a nest box opposite a Barn Owl box.

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

Shropshire status: Rare winter visitor and passage migrant
Conservation status: Annex 1, RBBP, Amber List
Author: HJG

Two accepted records this year. A bird at VP on 5 Mar which was flushed from the arable field by a tractor and later re-located on a fencepost on the north side of the marsh (*GE Holmes*). One was found on the Long Mynd on 12 Sep (*G Hall*).

NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Shropshire status: Rare summer visitor
Conservation status: Annex 1, UKBAP, LBAP, Amber List
Author: RJH

At least one bird was present at Black Hill throughout June (*CJ Pearson, JJ Tucker*) with another at Haughmond Hill on 19 Jul (*M George*). A series of surveys on the Whixall/Fenn's Moss complex highlighted at least three, and possibly five, singing males in June. There was no subsequent evidence of breeding.

SWIFT *Apus apus*

Shropshire status:	Fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant
Conservation status:	Amber List
BBS:	Present in 22% of plots, 42 birds recorded, an average of 3.8 per occupied plot
Author:	TW

Despite reports of a sandstorm over the Sahara and bad weather over France and Spain possibly affecting migration, the first record, of one seen over Donington and Albrighton Nature Reserve on 23 Apr, matched the average first sighting date of the last 30 years, and from then on there were almost daily observations. The first report of a bird visiting a nest site was on 1 May, in Ludlow, but it was not until 16th that the first visit to a traditional site at Kempton was witnessed by a delighted observer who had by then reconciled himself to a Swiftless summer. The 35 over Newport Town on 8 May were thought to be migrating birds brought within sight by inclement weather, but this was the first of only 11 reports of 20 or more birds over the season, with the only ones in excess of 50 being of 100 over Ellesmere on 25 May and of four or five groups, each of 30 or so birds, over Ludlow in mid-July. Additionally, over the summer the Shrewsbury Swift Group recorded parties of about 30 at four different locations in the town. According to the Ludlow Swift Group's newsletter, from which comes much of the local information reported here, screaming parties in the town's Mill Street were much smaller than in 2017. Indeed nationally, records submitted to BirdTrack indicated that sightings in 2018 were markedly lower than the historical average.

The Shrewsbury Swift Group logged records of 177 birds entering or exiting 88 different nest sites. All sites located since 2014 have been mapped and the information shared with Shropshire Council in the hope of informing planning decisions. The Group estimated that there might have been 300–350 birds over the town in the summer. Success in raising public awareness and stimulating positive action was demonstrated by the erection of 10 boxes by the residents of Coton Crescent.

Not for the first time, the role of churches as would-be refuges for Swifts was to the fore, as illustrated by the examples that follow. Sadly, because of lack of awareness, they are not always granted sanctuary. As mentioned in last year's report, Swifts were excluded during roofing works at St Mary's, Ashford Carbonell, but following discussions with the church authorities and the contractor, some existing sites were retained, and in 2018 one of a series of newly created sites in the wall plate was seen to be used. Whilst it was pleasing that boxes were erected following building works

in 2017 at St Michael and All Angels, Lydbury North, they were a poor substitute for the nest sites in crevices in the masonry from which Swifts had been excluded by the re-pointing that had been carried out. At St Laurence's, Ludlow, one of the boxes erected four years ago in the belfry was used successfully for breeding for the first time.

That there are some successes is due to the effective advocacy and action of Swift group members. Such is the case at the Ditherington Flax Mill in Shrewsbury. The Main Mill building has been shrouded in scaffolding since 2007, making Swift access to the vents they had previously been using nigh-on impossible, but the scaffolding finally came down late this year and this should restore access in 2019 to 15 vents in addition to the 13 on the Cross Mill; the latter remained accessible and were being visited. Historic England's staff have been helpful throughout.

At the end of the summer, records were frequent up until 19 Aug, but there was then a hiatus until 26 Aug followed by three seen at Lydbury North on 28 Aug. The last observation, made by the Kempton observer as he ate his breakfast, was of a bird leaving a nest site on 29th, a little ahead of the average latest sighting date over the last 30 years of 4 Sep.

KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

Shropshire status: Uncommon resident
Conservation status: Schedule 1, Annex 1, Amber List
Author: PC

A highly noticeable species with 106 records received from widespread sites.

HOOPOE *Upupa epops*

Shropshire status: Rare passage migrant
Conservation status: Schedule I, RBBP
Author: GT

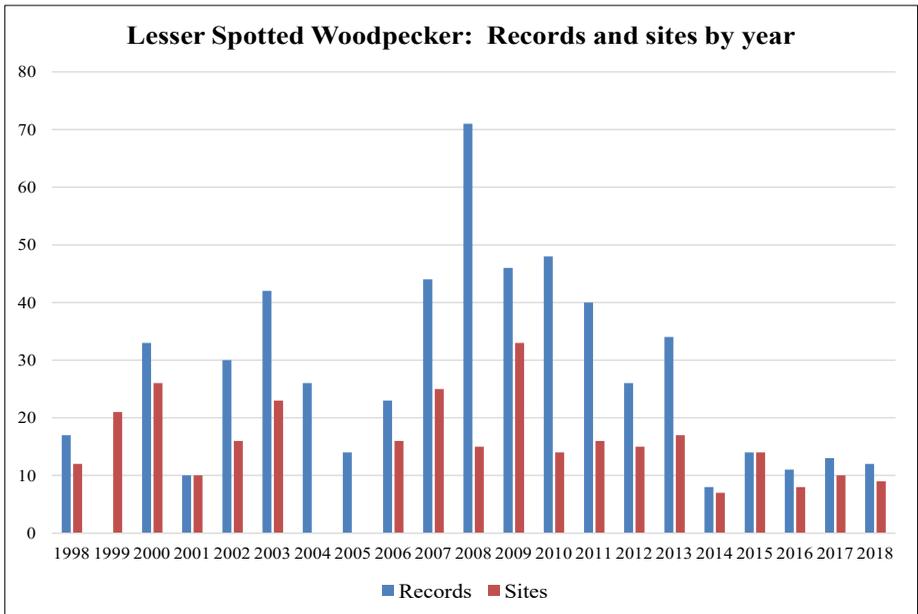
A single accepted record again this year. A bird was reported from Shavington Park on the typical date of 22 Apr (*H Lloyd*).

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos minor*

Shropshire status: Scarce resident
Conservation status: Red List
BBS: Present in 2% of plots, one bird recorded
Author: AJA

This species remains scarce, with only 12 records during 2018, half of which occurred during winter (Dec–Feb). Records were widely scattered over the County with only one area of concentration – the Wyre Forest area, which yielded one third of the total.

The graph shows the number of both records and distinct sites reported, by year, going back to 1998. Record numbers were considerably higher during the BTO/SOS Atlas survey period during 2007–2013, averaging 44 (compared with 20 outside that period). The enhanced workforce of observers during the Atlas survey would appear to have yielded more records than both before and after this project. Unfortunately, comparison of the pre- and post-atlas periods suggests that this tendency is superimposed on an overall decline and range contraction. Annual average record count dropped from 24 to half that number between these two periods: sites went from 18 to 10.



No evidence of confirmed breeding was forthcoming during this year. Drumming and vocalisations were reported from the Wyre Forest (February and March), Haughmond Hill (April) and Whixall Moss and Hopton Titterhill (both November). One garden sighting was submitted – from Bayston Hill (6 Jul).

While the species is undoubtedly under-reported, there appears to be little doubt that it is becoming scarcer.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major*

Shropshire status: Common resident
 Conservation status: Green List
 BBS: Present in 73% of plots, 71 birds recorded, an average of 1.9 per occupied plot
 BBS Index: 2.93, annual change +0.35
 Author: AJA

This species maintained its status as the County’s commonest woodpecker with 762 records, 40% more than in 2017. Observations were plentiful in all months of the year with the largest numbers (80 or more) from February to March, when noisy and visually conspicuous display activities at a time of incomplete tree canopies no doubt enhanced its visibility. Although characteristically a bird of mixed woodlands, ‘Greats Spots’ are adaptable and thrive in a variety of habitats with more scattered tree cover. Consequently, records were well-distributed; the largest area of sparse records was in south-central Shropshire, including Wenlock Edge, Corve Dale and the Clee Hills. There was little apparent difference between the range in the breeding season and the rest of the year, suggesting sedentary habits.

Fifty-seven percent of all records were of singletons. The largest counts were of seven birds. A group of this size at Haughmond Hill on 2 Jun was reported as the adults from multiple nests, with two of the occupied nests located with well-grown young. A count of seven was also noted in the Wyre Forest on 17 Feb.

The ‘calendar’ for the abundant breeding-related evidence is shown in the following table.

Pairs occupying suitable territory	January – May
Territorial displays	February – April
Drumming	February – May
Nest excavation	March – April
Occupied nests	May – June

Nests with young	June
Fledged birds seen	June – July
Juvenile birds seen	June – September

Of interest is a report from Aston-on-Clun of a male excavating cavities in a silver birch trunk in September. Three were attempted and one completed. The construction went beyond mere prey-hunting activity but culminated in a breeding cavity with the characteristic circular entrance hole. The bird abandoned the hole later in the month. This species has been reported as excavating cavities in advance for use at the next breeding season and/or for shelter during the winter months.

Use of garden environments and feeders (especially those providing peanuts and suet) was reported from Church Stretton, Newport, Madeley and Much Wenlock.

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

Shropshire status: Uncommon resident
 Conservation status: Green List
 BBS: Present in 8% of plots, five birds recorded
 Author: AJA

The 204 records submitted (up by 13% over last year) represent a welcome reversal of the decline depicted in the graph shown in SBR 2017. Every month of the year yielded observations, with a peak in April (36) and a minimum in November (5). Three-quarters of the reports were from spring and summer. The species was found in most areas of the County with the most distinct cluster being in the Long Mynd – Stiperstones – Stretton Hills area. Other, more diffuse, areas on concentration were the Severn Valley, the area around Telford and the hills west of Oswestry. The data suggest that birds may favour the lowlands of the east and southern river valleys in winter. Specific sites with large numbers of records include Granville Country Park, VP and the Wyre Forest.

Green Woodpeckers are solitary birds out of the breeding season and over 80% of the sightings were of a single bird. The maximum counts of five or more birds were from Granville Country Park and the Wyre Forest. Evidence of breeding is not plentiful. Recently-fledged birds were observed at Whitcott Keysett on 26 Jun and at Eardington Nature Reserve on 7 Sep. A juvenile was at VP on 31 Aug. Signs of territorial behaviour other than vocalisation were observed from February until July. “Yaffling” occurred throughout the year except the period August-November, with most occurrences in April.

Only one garden record was received – from Bridgnorth on 13 Feb.

The improved representation of this bird this year is encouraging, and we can hope that this continues to maintain the species' Green List status.

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

Shropshire status: Uncommon resident and probably passage migrant
Conservation status: Amber List
BBS: Present in 8% of plots, four birds recorded.
Author: MF

There was some welcome progress in Kestrel recording this year: the overall number of observations topped 300 for the first time in several years, and more supplementary information was included. The nest monitoring project by Shropshire Raptor Study Group (SRSG) accounted for most of the breeding data, and the accompanying publicity may have prompted some of the rise in submissions.

Courtship was observed as early as February at Pentre Cefn, the male displaying, the female visiting a possible nest site in a large tree. In late March and early April Kestrels were investigating nest boxes in the Clun Forest, one of which had been put up only a fortnight earlier. The timing of breeding varied considerably between sites: the first chicks hatched in early June, the last not until early July.

Breeding was confirmed at nine sites in boxes installed and monitored by SRSG, two between Shrewsbury and Ellesmere and five in the Market Drayton area in the north, and two in the Clun Forest. The nests produced 24 chicks, all of which were ringed and colour-ringed as part of the project. It is not known how many fledged, but one brood of three was predated before fledging by another raptor or raptors, and one of four disappeared, also before fledging, cause unknown. There were indications of probable breeding at three further sites, Clee Hill, Newport and Wall Farm.

Members can help by checking any Kestrels seen for colour-rings: they will be on the left leg, and are either white or yellow, with two characters in black.

A series of observations near Aston-on-Clun illustrated the value of regular visits to a 'local patch'. As last year, a male and female were seen throughout the winter in favoured hunting places, but this time a male was seen regularly in July and August, hinting that there may have been a nest in the vicinity.

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*

Shropshire status: Rare resident, scarce passage migrant and winter visitor
Conservation status: Schedule 1, Annex 1, Red List, RBBP
Author: GEH

Only 13 casual records were received compared with 17 last year and only ten in 2016. No records at all were received for the months of May, June, July and August.

In the first quarter, singles were reported at Rhos Fiddle (30 Jan), Whixall Moss (3 Feb), Edgebolton (4 Feb), Ercall Heath (24 Mar) and Shawbury (6 Apr).

The Long Mynd was searched with the usual diligence by the Raptor Group, but, for the first time since the group was formed in 2010, and indeed for the first time this century, no nests were found, and no Merlins were seen during this searching. Both nests found last year (probably both of one pair) failed, and adult Merlins are usually short-lived, so perhaps the absence is not surprising.

Post-breeding season, singles were reported at Robin Hoods Butts on the Long Mynd (22 Sep) and at Bicton Hill (26 Sep). In the final quarter singles were seen at Tibberton (3 Oct), VP (18 Oct), Wall Farm (18 Nov), Whixall Moss (26 Nov) and Newcastle-on-Clun (30 Dec).

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

Shropshire status: Scarce summer visitor
Conservation status: Schedule 1, Green List, RBBP
BBS: Present in 4% of plots, two birds recorded
Author: GEH

Fifty-eight casual records were received from 36 locations, a very similar number of records to last year but rather more widespread. Twenty records from 14 sites were in the south. No large gatherings were reported and the only count of more than two birds was three at Clungunford on 11 Sep.

The first arrivals were singles at Tibberton (28 Apr), VP (28 Apr), Condover (30 Apr) two together between Cressage and Leighton (6 May). The dearth of records from Whixall Moss was noticeable and the only records were that it was present on 12 May and that two were seen on 2 Jun and 5 Jun. At VP singles were seen on just seven dates between 26 May and 24 Sep.

Shropshire Raptor Group results were unusually poor. Although most previously-occupied sites were revisited, only six nests were found. One, in the north east near Shavington, failed at the egg stage, but the other five, four in the south-west and one in the south-east, were successful. In the Upper Clun, despite intensive searching and visits to all previous sites, no breeding evidence was found. The five successful nests produced 12 fledged young, 10 of which were ringed. In addition, three recently fledged young were seen at a new site near Highley.

The last reports of the year were singles at Isombridge (25 Sep) and Conover (28 Sep and 14 Oct).

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus*

Shropshire status: Scarce resident and winter visitor
Conservation status: Schedule 1, Annex 1, RBBP, Green List
Author: JGG

Twenty-five nest sites were monitored during the 2018 breeding season by members of the Peregrine Group. Two new sites were found, and these replaced two sites which have become retired after not holding Peregrines for many years. Of these, 20 were occupied and 13 were successful, producing a total of 31 confirmed fledged young. This total is comparable with that of 2017 and 2015, further indicating that 2016 was a particularly good year for them.

This year was, thankfully, a quiet year with regards to incidents at nests. A young bird was trapped in some wire netting installed on a cliff near one nest site for the second year running. The bird was rescued and, once more, Cuan Wildlife Rescue was able to rehabilitate and release the bird.

A bird caught a Stock Dove out of a flock of 25 at Wall Farm in January and in November a juvenile stooped at a Canada Goose which was lagging behind a flock but it didn't follow through the attack.

RING-NECKED PARAKEET *Psittacula krameri*

Shropshire status: Rare naturalised visitor or escapee
Author: GT

A species which is now a common sight in south-east England, especially in parks and gardens, and consolidating in the Midlands, it remains a rather scarce visitor to Shropshire.

Annual from 2009-2016, it was not found last year. A bird at Meole Brace on 4 Oct (*A Page*) was almost certainly the same individual as later spotted at Belle Vue, Shrewsbury on 8 Oct (*P Wilcox*) and in Sydney Avenue, Shrewsbury on 11 and 26 Nov (*G Egarr*). One was at Priorslee Flash on 30 Dec (*EJ Wilson*).

GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor*

Shropshire status: Rare winter visitor
Conservation status: RBBP
Author: GT

A rare species in the County, yet one usually of traditional haunts. A bird, perhaps the same individual, was reported this year from the Radnor Wood–Clunton areas on 6 and 13 Jan and again on 5 Mar (*E Griffiths, H Sherwood, D Stafford*). An observer reported it was most likely the bird seen for the last few winters at Black Hill, across the Clun valley, relocating to a new site.

In the second winter period further sightings were from Hurst Barn, near Clunton on Christmas Day (*CJ Pearson*) and nearby Purslow Quarry on 31st by the same observer.

JAY *Garrulus glandarius*

Shropshire status: Fairly common resident
Conservation status: Green List
BBS: Present in 33% of plots, 23 birds recorded, an average of 1.4 per occupied plot
Author: AJA

With 396 records, Jay observations are up over last year (by about 50%). They were submitted for every month of the year, with peaks in April (59) and October (47). Jays occur in all parts of the County, with a suggestion of a more widespread pattern in autumn/winter than spring/summer. Of those records that include a count, 88% were of singletons or pairs. The largest numbers were of eight individuals from Shavington Park (5 Mar), Dodecote (30 Mar), Ragleth Hill (8 Apr) and Trefonen (22 Oct).

For such a common (albeit shy) species, the records contained little conclusive evidence of breeding, although pairs of birds in suitable habitat, display and agitated and territorial behaviour were recorded mostly from March until June. A recently

fledged bird was observed on 9 Jun in the Wyre Forest and a juvenile on 20 Jul in Whitcott Keysett. Likewise, very little behavioural information was forthcoming. A pair was observed collecting acorns at Bettws-y-crwyn on 29 Sep and, on 4 Oct, a Jay was seen “systematically excavating a molehill by sweeping its bill from side to side through the soil and picking out invertebrates”.

MAGPIE *Pica pica*

Shropshire status: Common resident
Conservation status: Green List
BBS: Present in 82% of plots, 159 birds recorded, an average of 3.8 per occupied plot
BBS Index: 0.82, annual change +0.07
Author: MF

Magpies were reported at well over 150 sites in all parts of the County. Only four counts reached double figures, the highest 17 at Trefonen in October, followed by 12 in a thicket near Aston-on-Clun in April, the latter described as ‘unusual here’.

Breeding was confirmed at Bicton (near Clun), Cross Lane Head, Rhos Fiddle and VP, in all cases by observations of recently-fledged young between 8–23 Jun.

A Magpie was seen at the end of April in a Newport garden, plucking and eating a newly-fledged Robin; the next day it returned, possibly for another Robin, but this time flew off with a mouse.

JACKDAW *Coloeus monedula*

Shropshire status: Very common resident
Conservation status: Green List
BBS: Present in 86% of plots, 635 birds recorded, an average of 14.4 per occupied plot
BBS Index: 2.1, annual change -0.40
Author: MF

Eight counts of 200 or more Jackdaws were made, including a flock of an estimated 1,000 going to roost in a conifer plantation at Newport in March, and one of 900 at Chelmarsh in November. Enthusiasm for counting flocks varied: one observer ‘took a photo then used a tally counter’ to gauge a flock of at least 250, while another felt there were ‘too many to make counting worthwhile’. Pre-roost gatherings give the

numerically-inclined a chance to exercise their skills: a gathering of around 170 preparing to roost in the woods at Sweat Mere was ‘still mobile 20 minutes after sunset’.

Breeding evidence was sparse, but the season was sketched in by an observation of a bird ‘carrying nesting material into a chimney’ in late February, and one of a nest with young on 20 May.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

Shropshire status: Very common resident
Conservation status: Green List
BBS: Present in 51% of plots, 685 birds recorded, an average of 26.4 per occupied plot
Shropshire BBS Index: 0.77, annual change -0.20
Author: JJT

The number of records shows remarkable consistency from year to year. The 266 records this year compares with 261 last year and as in previous years the majority (64%), came from the north (SJ) of the County. This was, however, down on last year when 85% of records were from ‘northern’ 10-km squares.

The peak counts, associated with roosting, were in the winter periods January to April and September to December. The peak roost counts were from Crose Mere, of 250 on 15 Mar and 220 on 3 Nov. Counts of 200 came from Wall Farm on 16 Jan and 26 Apr, and Shawbury on 6 Apr. There were seven counts of between 100 and 199 and 17 counts of between 50 and 99, again usually in winter or early spring as late as April (three counts) or even May (once).

The first twig-bearing Rook, a Gilbert White indicator of spring, was seen at the Aston-on-Clun rookery on 13 Feb. At Bromfield church, by 21 Feb, nest building was under way and there were “Adult birds as usual quarrelling over the sticks and plundering one-another’s nests.”

It is planned to resurvey all previously recorded rookeries in 2019/20, dating principally from previous 1975/76 and 2008 surveys, to examine possible changes.

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*

Shropshire status: Very common resident
Conservation status: Green List
BBS: Present in 98% of plots, 658 birds recorded, an average of 13.2 per occupied plot
BBS Index: 0.99, annual change -0.09
Author: MF

The annual volume of records continues to grow, over 1,300 this year, but much more welcome was an increase in records describing breeding activity and habitat use. A pair was at a nest in Newport on 31 Mar; a week later a Crow was on eggs in the Clun valley, with further occupied nests at Llanfair Hill, VP and Bicton near Clun. By 23 May three well-grown young were bursting out of a ‹precarious nest in a spindly alder› at Whitcott Keysett.

Observations of foraging behaviour illustrate the Crow's versatility: groups of up to 35 were seen on a fodder beet field under cultivation, a newly-drilled field, barley stubble that had been treated with slurry, pasture and sheep-feeding troughs. With its ability to exploit every phase of the agricultural cycle, and a generous supply of roadkill, especially Pheasants, and other carcasses, it does very well out of the man-made landscape.

RAVEN *Corvus corax*

Shropshire status: Fairly common resident
Conservation status: Green List
BBS: Present in 39% of plots, 44 birds recorded, an average of 2.2 per occupied plot
Author: GEH

Nearly 400 records were received, a significant increase from last year. They came from 119 widespread locations, a small increase from 2017, shared evenly between the north and south of the County. The records were spread equally through most of the year but with rather more during the period from March to May. Around 70% of the records were of one or two birds.

Unlike last year when there was only one count in double figures, this year there were ten. Several came from the Stiperstones; here, 10 were recorded on 23 Feb, 11 on 20 Apr and 12 on 8 May. Around the Long Mynd counts included 20 on 5 Sep, 25

on 15 Sep and 12 on 7 Oct. At Stowe, 12 were seen on 9 Aug and 20 on 30 Oct, and at Cefn Coch, 12 were recorded on 24 Feb and 28 on 24 Dec which was the highest count of the year.

Maximum counts from elsewhere included six at Whitchurch (14 Feb), six at Shavington Park (5 Mar), five at Ludlow (11 Mar), six at Aston-on-Clun (18 Mar), six at Longford, Market Drayton (6 Jun), seven at Whixall Moss (30 Jun) and seven at Earls Hill (19 Oct).

Although no doubt widespread, breeding was poorly recorded. However, it was confirmed at Llanfair Waterdine, Longford (Market Drayton), Shavington Park, Trefonen and Wart Hill with probable breeding indicated at a few other locations.

COAL TIT *Periparus ater*

Shropshire status: Common resident
Conservation status: Green List
BBS: Present in 35% of plots, 35 birds recorded, an average of 1.9 per occupied plot
Author: GT

Both the increase in the number of birds reported in the BBS surveys and the increase in the number of submitted records (694, an increase of 54% on 2017), suggested either that 2017 had been a good breeding season, or the 2017-18 winter survival was especially high, or both.

Though widespread throughout the County, it is not quite widespread enough, probably in areas of the County where arable crops predominate, to enable a BBS index to be calculated. Nevertheless, it is a species which usually creeps onto the day lists of many birders in the County with records from the higher ground on Brown Clee Hill and the Gliding Club on the Long Mynd, to woodlands of all types in river valleys.

The mild winter helped to move the breeding season along and males were recorded in song in January at Ironbridge and Sheinton. Many records noted singing or displaying birds from 25 Mar (at VP) and throughout April, with one or more records from Earls Hill, Lyth Hill, Shavington Park, Annscroft, Newcastle-on-Clun, Haughmond Hill, the Wyre Forest, i.e. in many woods throughout the County. A male was courtship feeding in a Newport garden on 1 May, while the first eggs of the season were recorded in a nest box at Hall-of-the-Forest on 10 May. A pair at Shakenhurst nested in a gap in brickwork in a house concealed by a cotoneaster. Both

adults of a pair were found busily feeding chicks in a nest site on the Wrekin on 21 May, but it was not until 7 Jun (Aston-on-Clun) that the first fledglings were reported.

Coal Tits, as with many species, form family parties often mixed with other species post-fledging. These parties are important for the survival of newly-fledged birds illustrated by an adult feeding fledged young on 10 Jun at Pentre. Perrins (1979) wrote that 11% of pairs lay second clutches, especially those breeding in conifer stands. It appears we have no Shropshire records of this but our nest box schemes tend to favour deciduous woods and occurrence in these woods is much less frequent.

Only 3% of records involved more than five individuals. 24 birds counted at The Stanyards on 21 Jan was the highest reported count with 15 at Bury Ditches (17 Feb), 12 at Cefn Coch (4 Jul) and 10 at Postensplain in the Wyre on 4 Feb. At Shavington Park over 10 birds were caught for ringing on four separate dates with a peak of 15 on 19 Dec.

Reference

Perrins C.M. (1979) *British Tits*. Collins New Naturalist.

MARSH TIT *Poecile palustris*

Shropshire status: Fairly common resident
Conservation status: UKBAP, Red List
BBS: Present in 10% of plots, eight birds recorded, an average of 1.6 per occupied plot
Author: GT

As with other tit species, 2018 saw a significant increase in the number of records, up 76% on 2017 with 283 reports; a promising year for a species which has declined in the UK. As a strongly resident species, more so even than other tits, many records involved the same locations with five or more records from deciduous woods at 14 sites. Observers at Beambridge (near Aston-on-Clun) and Oakeley Mynd sent in many records and again the greater Wyre Forest, woods along the Wenlock Edge and Whiteliff Wood near Ludlow are obviously key sites for the species in the County.

Where counts were submitted, over 90% involved just one or two individuals. Eight birds were reported at Shavington Park on 19 and 29 Dec, but these were different individuals trapped for ringing on these dates. The highest field count was of six at Beambridge on 18 Nov, with counts of five at Mary Knoll (1 Nov) and the Wyre (10 Jun).

Territorial birds were well into song by mid-February. A bird at Steel Heath responded to playback during a Willow Tit survey on 21st. Pairs or displaying birds were noted too from Beambridge, the Wyre Forest, Haughmond Hill, Pentre, Whitcliffe Wood, Helmeth Wood and Eardington Nature Reserve, whilst birds caught for ringing on 30 Apr and 14 May at Shavington Park both had well-developed incubation patches.

Fledged young were found from 1 Jun (Whitcliffe) and apart from the above sites, breeding was also confirmed at Shakenhurst and at Newcastle-on-Clun where two pairs in nest boxes had mixed fortunes, one pair raising all seven chicks to fledging and another failing at the egg stage.

WILLOW TIT *Poecile montanus*

Shropshire status: Scarce and declining resident
Conservation status: UKBAP, RBBP, Red List
BBS: Present in 2% of plots; one bird recorded
Author: JGG

The Shropshire Willow Tit survey continued into 2018. In total, 24 sites were surveyed with playback and nine of them were successful. I also received three non-survey records during this period. Several sites were re-surveys, but eight new sites were recorded overall. New sites with positive records were as follows: Wem Moss, Oaks Wood (near Earls Hill), Black Rhadley Hill, Stokeswood, Upper Forge woodland (along the Mor Brook near Eardington), Stokesay Court, Baysil Wood (near Colemere), Brook Vessons, Wem Industrial Estate, Merrington Green and Millenheath Bridge.

Birds were recorded from Eardington Nature Reserve but being familiar with the site it would seem unlikely they are breeding there and were probably the same birds recorded from the adjacent Upper Forge woods.

The first record of a singing bird received was on 13 Mar and the latest was 23 Apr.

The only confirmed breeding records in the County came from Whixall Moss, where a nest was located that subsequently fledged young.

Jonathan Groom once again carried out playback surveys and nest searches at Haughmond Hill. After successfully locating nests in the last two years, it was disappointing to not only fail to find nests, but actually fail to locate any birds at all. Marsh Tits were still located at numerous spots throughout the wood.

A full write-up of the survey can be found on the Shropshire Ornithological Society website, and the survey is expected to continue in subsequent years. A national survey is being organised by the RSPB for 2019–2020 and every effort will be made to incorporate existing records and to support this survey locally.

Several records were also submitted through the usual recording methods. Some were winter records from towns or villages with no details attached. Presumably these are from garden feeders. Birds are known to travel some distance in winter to food sources (source: unpublished correspondence with other research projects) away from their usual breeding haunts, but details of the circumstances of observations would help with their interpretation. These records are from Tilstock (probably birds from Whixall Moss), Edgebolton (this is in the Shawbury area where a number of the small woods have been surveyed with success, but not all), Ford (this is interesting as currently there are no other records from the area and there does not appear to be a lot of suitable habitat in the vicinity) and Choulton (this is another new area with potential suitable habitat nearby in Plowden Woods).

Other records were obtained with supporting details to indicate probable breeding sites from Mortimer Forest (Bringewood, Mary Knoll and South of High Vinnals), Burrow, Bury Ditches, Walcot Wood, Whixall Moss, Shavington Pools, Abbey Wood and Pam's Pools. Most of these records are from known sites but it is always good to have fresh sightings.

The Shavington Pool records were from a Shropshire Ringing Group RAS ringing scheme for Marsh Tit. Willow Tit used to be caught along with Marsh Tit but not for some years. Even better, the birds caught in 2018 were thought to be from a 2018 brood which indicates successful breeding at the site.

The record from Pam's Pools is a new area which is not far from the Upper Forge woods near Eardington where records were obtained this year. These sites are connected by the Mor Brook, indicating there could be a population along this waterway and surrounding habitat. These casual records will be incorporated into the Willow Tit survey with the intention of providing a County-wide overview in due course. It is suggested that wherever possible, any sightings of Willow Tit be supported by either a clear photograph or details of calls/song and notes about the site where they were seen.

If anyone would like to participate in the Willow Tit survey or can supply any details about a site where they have recorded them, then please contact Jonathan Groom on bto.shropshire@gmail.com.



Little Auk, Cuan Wildlife Rescue, 5 December 2018 (*Fran Hill*)



Barn Owl, Dudleston,
26 November 2018 (*John Hawkins*)



Short-eared Owl, Venus Pool,
5 March 2018 (*Jim Almond*)



Green Woodpecker, Venus Pool, 31 August 2018 (*Dave Chapman*)



Hobby, Polemere, 21 May 2018 (*Jim Almond*)



Jay, Shrewsbury, 15 March 2018 (*John Fielding*)



Swallow, Polemere, 22 May 2018 (*Jim Almond*)



Blackcap, Broseley, 20 January 2018
(*Terry Arch*)



Spotted Flycatcher, Bridges, 7 June 2018
(*Paul King*)



Wren, Venus Pool, 17 Dec 2018 (*Dave Chapman*)



Redwing, Eaton Constantine, 7 Jan 2018 (*Dawn Micklewright*)



Whinchat, Long Mynd, 7 May 2018
(*Dave Chapman*)



Fieldfare, Shrewsbury, 3 Mar 2018
(*Jim Almond*)



Song Thrush, Dudleston, 29 October 2018 (*John Hawkins*)



Black Redstart, Adderley, 7 April 2018
(*Jim Almond*)



Redstart, Bridges, 3 June 2018
(*Dave Chapman*)



Stonechat, Stiperstones, 11 May 18 (*Dave Chapman*)



Wheatear, Long Mynd, 7 May 2018 (*Dave Chapman*)



Yellow Wagtail, Bagley, 28 May 2018 (*John Hawkins*)



Hawfinch, Fitz, 18 March 2018 (*Paul King*)

BLUE TIT *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Shropshire status: Very common resident
Conservation status: Green List
BBS: Present in 98% of plots, 539 birds recorded, an average of 10.8 per occupied plot
Shropshire BBS index: 1.08, annual change +0.34
Author: GT

More records were reported in the first quarter (503) and fewest in the third quarter (197) out of an annual total of 1,367; a consistent pattern for this species. Observers marked the species simply as 'present' for 30% of the records, which is understandable for such a ubiquitous resident and helped to show its presence throughout.

Some observers did attempt counts in their patch, with counts in the 30s from Rednal/Pen-yr-Estyn in November, the Stanyards in January and VP in February. Counts in the high twenties, too, were from a variety of locations across the County, but the sheer difficulty of estimating numbers was made plain by the highest 'counts' of the year. These were individual Blue Tits caught for ringing purposes. No fewer than 81 individuals were caught at VP on 21 Feb with 65 at Shavington two days later. Feeders were used at both sites. Quite how well this species would fare without our willingness to spend significant sums on sunflowers each year is a moot point, but such numbers are not infrequent at feeders later in the winter when natural food sources are at a minimum.

The successful breeding season in 2017 was reflected in the significant rise in the BBS index this year in the County. Species such as the Blue Tit are well adapted to bounce back after poor breeding success. Nesting was well recorded this year and started with a pair inspecting a nest box at Clunton Coppice on 13 Mar.

Nest-building was underway by 7 Apr (Church Stretton) and 22 Apr (Brockhurst Farm near Wem). Eggs were first noted at Moelydd on 19 Apr and especially from 23 Apr into May at several sites, invariably, of course, of pairs in nest boxes. Evidence of the first chicks hatching may have been from 20 May when an adult was carrying food at Whitcliffe Wood, but chicks were observed from 22 May (Pentre), 31 May (Newcastle-on-Clun) and widely thereafter. The earliest fledglings were from Ruyton-XI-Towns on 2 Jun and Cockshutt on 5th with young birds out of the nest at widespread locations from 10th. A brood at Wall Farm were raised in a gap at the back of the notice board in the bird hide.

Details were provided from three nest box schemes this year and these are summarised in the table below: The figure for 2017 is given in brackets.

Scheme	Blue Tit clutches	No. Eggs	Av. Clutch Size	No. chicks hatching	%age of eggs which hatched	No. Chicks fledging	% hatched chicks which fledged	% nests successful (i.e. at least 1 chick fledged)
Craig Sychtyn	5 (3)	35 (22)	7.0 (7.33)			21 (22)		80% (100%)
Eardington NR	11 (7)	86 (56)	7.8 (8.0)	85 (56)	99% (100%)	74 (53)	87% (95%)	91% (100%)
Newcastle-on-Clun (R. Clun and Folly Brook)	71 (70)	442 (466)	6.23 (6.66)	342 (368)	77% (79%)	304 (302)	89% (82%)	69% (89%)

Data from other schemes would be very welcome in future years.

Young birds learn the ropes quickly. Five fledglings were already on suet balls in a garden at Church Stretton on 8 Jul whilst an observer at Aston-on-Clun lamented on his regular patch in late June that ‘there were too many juveniles to count’.

GREAT TIT *Parus major*

Shropshire status: Very common resident
 BBS: Present in 96% of plots, 272 birds recorded at 5.6 birds per occupied plot
 Shropshire BBS Index: 1.12, annual change +0.22
 Conservation status: Green List
 Author: GT

The 1,254 records this year represents an increase of 36% on 2017, and, together with an increase in the BBS index, suggest the Great Tit had a good breeding season in 2017 and a good wintering season in 2017-18.

The breeding season got underway as usual in April with nest building in the Wyre Forest observed from 18th and at Mary Knoll Valley on higher ground from 30th. Females were caught for ringing at Shavington with developing incubation patches on 23rd and 30th suggesting egg-laying was imminent. Birds at Cockshutt were on the nest on 6 May and nest boxes with eggs were reported at Hawkstone Park on 8th and Hall of the Forest and Duffryn near Newcastle-on-Clun over the next few days.

Adults carrying food suggested young were in the nest at Eardington as early as 12 May and at Beambridge on 24th, whilst on 30 May many nesting pairs at Hawkstone Park now had young. The first fledged birds were reported at Uppington on 9 Jun with many reports in the few days following including from The Cliffe near Ruyton-XI-Towns, Cross Lane Head, Wall Farm, Whitcliffe Wood and the Wyre Forest. Other confirmed breeding was from Harmer Hill, Crose Mere, the Montgomery Canal, Pentre, Annscroft and Shavington Park.

The table below shows the nest record results from three nest box schemes in the County. As in 2017 all schemes recorded apparently good breeding success with high chick survival from hatching to fledging. The increase in the number of breeding pairs at the Eardington and Newcastle schemes perhaps reflect the high population indicated by the BBS index.

Scheme	Great Tit clutches	No. Eggs	Av. Clutch Size	No. chicks hatching	%age of eggs which hatched	No. Chicks fledging	% hatched chicks which fledged	% nests successful (i.e. at least 1 chick fledged)
Craig Sychtyn	5 (4)	31 (24)	6.20 (6.00)			26 (21)		100% (75%)
Eardington NR	6 (3)	42 (23)	7.0 (7.7)	39 (22)	93% (96%)	32 (19)	82% (86%)	100% (100%)
Newcastle-on-Clun (R. Clun and Folly Brook)	47 (39)	272 (228)	5.78 (5.85)	201 (166)	74% (73%)	173 (152)	86% (92%)	70% (79%)

As usual, ringers reported the highest day counts of birds caught with 55 at VP on 21 Feb the stand-out total. Other double figure counts were 18 at The Stanyards and 19 at Cole Mere in January, 23 at Whittington Castle in February; in March 15 in the Wyre and 14 at The Stanyards and later in the year 37 at Shavington Park and 11 at VP in October, and 15 at Aston Locks in December.

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

Shropshire status: Common resident
 Conservation status: Red List
 BBS: Present in 73% of plots, 165 birds recorded, an average of 4.5 per occupied plot
 Shropshire BBS index: 1.10, annual change +0.24
 Author: GB

A total of 32 records was received, down on 68 in 2017, and birds were recorded in every month of the year.

Flock occurrences and numbers in the first winter period appeared to be up on 2017. The first large flock comprised 18 in stubble at Buildwas on 7 Jan, followed by eight at Fenn's/Whixall Moss on 3 Feb, 33 at Rednal on 12 Feb and 26 at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 2 Mar. Twenty flying south-east at Shakenhurst on 4 Mar suggests movement of wintering Skylark, but birds were still feeding at sites including 20 in organic arable fields and sheep grazing at Kemberton on 10 Mar, nine at Buildwas on 13 Mar, 10 at Shawbury on 15 Mar and the final flock of 30 at Wall Farm 22 Mar.

Territorial song was first noted as early as 29 Jan with one singing male at Chelmarsh Reservoir. Six males were subsequently in song at Little Wenlock on 20 Feb, one male at Buildwas 25 Feb with four in song there over stubble and autumn-sown cereal on 13 Mar. Several Skylark were displaying at Quabbs East UC Wetland on 13 Mar, and 15 at Titterstone Clee on 25 Mar must have included territorial males in song. Fifteen at Kemberton on 24 Mar included singing males, and song was increasingly noted into April. Fifteen were recorded on the Stiperstones on 5 Apr with 38 there on 20 Apr and several counts of 20+ were reported from here into May. Twenty at Sleep Airfield on 6 Apr and 12 in song at Knockin on 3 May suggested at least some local breeding attempts. Ten singing males were mainly in beans with some in wheat at Beckbury on 29 May.

Evidence of confirmed breeding was limited to only three sites and was first recorded at Childs Ercall Airfield on 2 Jun when 11 birds were noted with 15 there on 10 Jun. Breeding was also confirmed at Rhos Fiddle 22 Jun and Old Oswestry 6 Jul. Song was last recorded at Prees Heath on 4 Jul. One Skylark was recorded at Whitcott Keysett on 25 Aug with the note that "used to breed here but not for some years".

Records of Skylark typically declined in late summer with only 10 records in July, three in August and four in September. Autumn passage was not particularly evident from the records, but the build-up of wintering flocks began with 12 in a carrot field at Childs Ercall on 22 Jul. Twenty-four were noted at Rednal on 17 Sep; 25 were in young oil-seed rape at Annscroft on 4 Oct with 30 there on 25 Oct. Fifty-two were in a loose flock at Tibberton West on 7 Oct, with 23 at Nagington Grange, The Hooks on 7 Oct and 19 at Whixall Moss on 15 Oct. Eighteen flying overhead at Tibberton on 21 Oct may have been moving between feeding grounds or indicative of autumn passage, while snatches of song were heard on the Long Mynd on 24 Oct. Subsequent flocks included 20 at Wolverley on 28 Oct, 21 at Cantlop on 2 Nov, 100 at Hollywaste on 4 Nov, 24 at Rednal on 5 Nov and 80 in stubble at Buildwas on 12 Nov. The highest count of 110 over stubble at Crose Mere was on 10 Dec, with

other December flocks of 20 in stubble at Ellerton on 10th and the final large flock of 40 at Condoover on 11th.

Red-listed, Skylark's decline in the UK is largely attributable to agricultural intensification and changing farm practices. Management options to help them are now incorporated in agri-environment schemes but any increase in the breeding population is probably dependent on a high level of take-up across a wide geographical spread. Options to promote their conservation at a local level are limited but recorders could aim to identify and regularly monitor sites that support dense breeding populations and work to ensure that they are protected and enhanced. More records of autumn passage would be of interest.

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

Shropshire status: Common summer visitor and passage migrant
Conservation status: Green List
BBS: Present in one plot, two birds recorded
Author: TW

The first sighting was of two on 12 Mar at VP, a little earlier than the average 30-year first-sighting date of 16 Mar. Two were there again on 16 Mar on which date two were at Priorslee Lake and five at Edgebolton, but it was not until 27 Mar that the next record was forthcoming, and it was only from 6 Apr onwards that records became virtually daily.

The few records of breeding came from the Severn at Leighton, Hampton Loade and Mountfields, Shrewsbury, and near the Clun by Beckjay Lane where, as last year, 25 occupied nests were estimated. In the absence of counts from the biggest colonies this was the highest nest-count of the year.

The only records of 50 or more birds came from The Mere at Ellesmere, where there were 50 on 7 Apr, and VP, where 60 were counted on 8 Apr and 50 on 27th. Finally, 200 were seen at Beambridge, by the Clun on 10 Aug.

At the end of the season, the last records were of two on 18 Aug at Crickmery, followed, more than a month later, by the final record of 50 at Ludlow on 21 Sep. This is a typical date (the average over the last 30 years is 17 Sep) but last sightings are usually of much smaller numbers.

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

Shropshire status: Common summer visitor and passage migrant
Conservation status: Green List
BBS: Present in 86% of plots, 328 birds recorded, an average of 7.5
per occupied plot
Shropshire BBS Index: 0.90, annual change +0.05
Author: TW

The first sightings were of singles on 5 Apr, at Kempton and Little Stretton. This is a late date for a first sighting, as the average for the last 30 years is 26 Mar and in all but seven of those years the earliest sightings have been in March, indeed there has been only one later date, 10 Apr in 2013. But following on from these first reports, sightings were recorded daily.

Three counts of 50 were the highest of the spring; they were made at VP on 8 Apr and 25 May, and at The Mere, Ellesmere, on the latter date. The only breeding record of note came from Trefonen where a second brood fledged on 1 Sep compared with a second brood fledging-date of 27 Jul in 2017, though no conclusion can be drawn from this isolated record.

Two hundred at Annscroft on 30 Jul was the first of the few counts in excess of 100 made towards the end of the season, the others being 120, again at Annscroft, on 3 Aug, 200 at Stoke Heath on 19 Aug, 200 at Annscroft on 21 Sep and 800 the next day at Crose Mere. There were no reports of roost gatherings.

Daily records continued up until 29 Sep, then up to three birds were reported on 5,10,11 and 12 Oct before the last record, of a single bird at VP on 13th, a date which compares with the current 30-year average of 19 Oct.

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbicum*

Shropshire status: Common summer visitor and passage migrant
Conservation status: Amber List
BBS: Present in 53% of plots, 221 birds recorded, an average of 8.2
per occupied plot
Shropshire BBS Index: 1.29, annual change +0.38.
Author: TW

Six at Priorslee Pool on 6 Apr were the first of the year, followed by two at both Ruyton XI Towns and VP on 8 Apr; from 12 Apr records were made virtually daily.

The average 30-year first-sighting date is 1 Apr.

Thirty-eight at Ruyton XI Towns on 28 May, 36 at Uppington on 9 Jun and 32 at Tibberton on 31 Jul were the highest counts to that point, but as more young fledged, larger counts were to follow. In the meantime, good numbers of nests were reported at Wall Farm (14), a dwelling at the Twicken (26, with a further two nests taken over by House Sparrows) and the Buckatree Hotel (at least 50).

One hundred were at Beambridge (Aston-on-Clun) on 10 Aug but this was exceeded only by 160 at Cross Lane Head on 11 Sep and 150 at Crose Mere on 22 Sep. By this time records were becoming discontinuous but were made on most dates up until 1 Oct when five, the last of the year, were seen at Wall Farm. This compares with an average 30-year last-sighting date of 14 Oct.

RED-RUMPED SWALLOW *Cecropis daurica*

Shropshire status: Vagrant
Author: GT

One was found at Church Stretton on 1 Sep (*D Pinner*), just the second County record, the last in 2003. Though undoubtedly becoming more frequent in the UK and not now assessed by BBRC, the species remains a great find in our County but one which should be expected to become more regular.

CETTI'S WARBLER *Cettia cetti*

Shropshire status: Very rare vagrant
Conservation Status: Green list
Author: RJH

Although increasing nationally, its expansion in Shropshire is constrained by lack of suitable habitat.

Its first appearance in the County was at Fenemere in 1975, followed by one at Chelmarsh in September 1992. The next record was not until 14 years later with a bird at VP for a couple of hours on 3 Jan 2006. The following year an individual appeared at Monkmoor Pool at the end of October and remained until July 2008. During this time a single bird was at Shrewsbury Sewage Farm on 30 Mar.

A juvenile was caught and ringed at Chelmarsh on 30 Oct 2009 with this, or at

least one other bird present until beginning of December. There were no reports for 2010 and only one record for 2011 - of a singing bird at VP from 14-26 September. A second bird was trapped and ringed in 2014, at Attingham Park (9 Sep), while another bird was present at Priorslee Lake from 3-20 Dec; and another there October-December 2015.

In 2016, at least six birds were reported from five sites. At Priorslee bird(s) were recorded on three separate dates, March–May, with one-day birds at The Mere at Ellesmere, Mar, and Newport canal, May – all potential breeders. Later in the year a bird was at Shifnal, 5 Jul, and a virtual resident at Chelmarsh in November; which was still present in February 2017.

This year, individuals were reported from Norbroom Marsh on two dates in early May (*MG Grant, KD Hall*) and Chelmarsh Reservoir 7 Jul (*FC Clark*). Given that there is a known breeding-population at Aqualate Mere, the records from Norbroom Marsh in May suggest a population expanding into Shropshire.

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*

Shropshire status: Common resident
BBS: Present in 47% of plots, 54 birds recorded an average of 2.3 birds per occupied plot
Shropshire BBS index 0.55, annual change +0.05
Conservation status: Green List
Author: GT

A favourite of many observers with 622 records received and plenty of notes on breeding and flocking behaviour. A fascinating species, Long-tailed Tits are known to be cooperative breeders but the benefit to the helpers in the arrangement has always provoked lots of speculation. A study in South Yorkshire (*Hatchwell et al 1999*) found that only 17% of nesting attempts were successful, with the most successful nests tending to be lower down in brambles or gorse. Failed breeders often then ‘helped’ nearby pairs (the speculation being that nearby pairs were more likely to be related), and the study remarkably found that helpers then tended to nest in subsequent years in ‘lower’ sites. The study concluded that helpers benefited by getting knowledge of the criteria for successful breeding, e.g. building nests lower down in vegetation.

So, an observation at Trefonen on 19 Apr where three nests were built in an extensive area of gorse, with two of the nests subsequently used, might have been ‘related’ birds nesting in relatively close proximity. Nests were also found at Haughmond

Hill (19 Apr) and at Aston Locks (20 Apr). The latter nest had young on 9 May with another nest with young found at Old Oswestry on 10th.

Fledglings with blood red eye-rings were noted first at Beambridge on 17 May, with others over the next few weeks at Tibberton, VP, Ruyton-XI-Towns, Shavington Park, the Wyre Forest, Annscroft, Granville Country Park and Pam's Pools.

Flocking behaviour outside the breeding season is amply illustrated by the fact that when counts were made, 38% of 'counts' were of five birds or more, much higher than for many species. Pre-breeding flocks were noticeably smaller than post-breeding with 15 at The Stanyards on 4 Mar and 10 at Much Wenlock on 30 Mar the highest in early spring.

After breeding, counts of 20 were made at VP on 24 Sep (in two parties) and Trefonen on 9 Oct, with 21 at Rednal on 5 Nov. The highest count was of 26 at Whixall Moss on 7 Oct.

Reference

Hatchwell, B.J., Russell, A.F., Fowlie, M.K. & Ross, D.J. (1999) Reproductive success and nest-site selection in a cooperative breeder: effect of experience and a direct benefit of helping. *Auk*, 116, 355–363.

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Shropshire status: Common summer visitor

Conservation status: Amber List

BBS: Present in 45% of plots, 56 birds recorded, an average of 2.4 per occupied plot

Shropshire BBS Index: 0.32, annual change -0.12

Author: GT

A slightly later arrival this year than usual, though well-synchronised across the County with birds reported from many sites in the few days after the first at VP on 5 Apr. Next day, a single was reported from Priorslee Pool and on 7th singles were at Moelydd and Adderley, with three birds at Whixall Moss and six at VP by 8th. Daily thereafter with reports on most days until the end of June. As usual reports declined in July and August, with an apparent rapid departure in the latter month. There were ten records from 1–11 Aug and then no reports for a fortnight. Singles were at Shavington Park, Stokesay Castle, Cleobury Mortimer and Whitcliffe between 24–30 Aug. In September, one at Netherton on 4th, at Stanbatch on 5th and Wall

Farm on 12th, with two at VP on 8th. Three at Stoke Heath on 18th were the last report of the year.

The BTO Atlas (2008–11) demonstrated that the Willow Warbler population in the UK was moving northwards, with significant declines in England related to poor productivity, and conversely increases in Scotland. In Shropshire it is noticeable that our records are predominantly from the higher ground with counts in excess of ten singing males at Bury Ditches on 21 May and the Stiperstones on 30 May and a number of records from Brown Clee Hill, Ashes Hollow, Caer Caradoc, the Wrekin summit, Minton Batch, Bridges and the Lawley. The Wyre Forest and Whixall Moss also obviously hold significant populations with double-figure counts at the former on 11 Jun (15) and 30 Jun (12) and on several dates at the latter from 28 Apr. Regular counts of singing birds at Old Oswestry and Granville Country Park suggest that these sites, too, are important for the species in a County context. Five nests were found at Old Oswestry in the course of the season with pairs on eggs on 10 May and 6 Jul. Breeding was also proven in the Wyre Forest, at Masons Bank, Cefn Coch and Pam’s Pools.

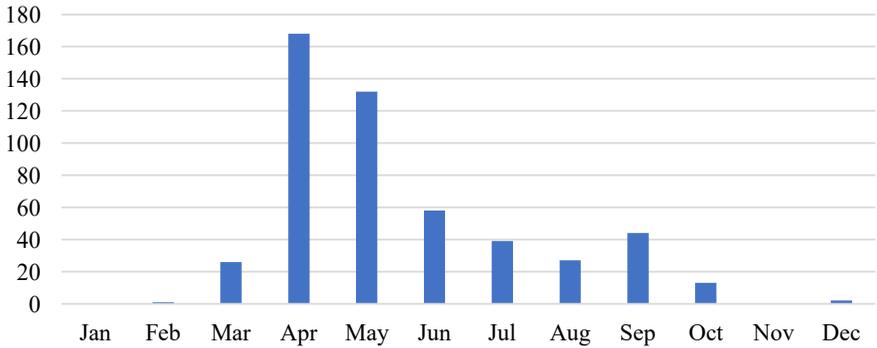
CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*

- Shropshire status: Very common summer visitor and passage migrant, scarce winter visitor
- Conservation status: Green List
- BBS: Present in 88% of plots, 215 birds recorded, an average of 4.8 per occupied plot
- Shropshire BBS Index: 1.88, annual change -0.72
- Author: GT

Chiffchaffs have increased in abundance since the County BBS index was started, but annual variations can be significant. There has certainly been a large change this year with the annual index identifying a drop of a third in the breeding population since 2017.

The pattern of annual records in 2018 is not unexpected, with the largest number in April and May when male Chiffchaffs are singing apparently incessantly and the species is very noticeable. This is followed by a mid-summer decline, with the autumn peak in September perhaps reflecting passage of birds through the County, although again Chiffchaffs are more noticeable at this time with autumn song a surprising but typical behaviour at this time.

Chiffchaff Records by month 2018 (n=510)



Still very scarce though in winter months. The pattern of records suggests truly wintering birds can occur in January and February and again in December. Only one record in the early winter period was a single at Berrington Top Pool on 1 Feb (JE Clarke) with no further records until 16 Mar when spring arrival started. After a gap in November, singles in Shrewsbury on 16 Dec (GJ Walker) and Maesbury on 31 Dec (AP Dawes) were also wintering individuals, perhaps from breeding grounds elsewhere. The UK hotspot for wintering Chiffchaffs in the south-west in Devon and Cornwall but wintering in Shropshire remains infrequent.

The first in spring was at Priorslee Lake on 16 Mar, with two, possibly three here on 21st. After this date records were received daily with four at Aston Locks on 22nd the highest count in March. Most records were at lower elevations with the first on higher ground at Newcastle-on-Clun on 27th.

Most records were in April as observers tuned into their first records of the year and birds were widely reported. Early season birds have the challenge of overnight survival often in sub-zero temperatures at this time of year, and they may seek out high-energy foods. Birds were associating with willows at Bringewood on 3 Apr and may have been feeding on catkin pollen.

Higher counts included six or more birds at Preston Montford on 3 Apr and at Lyth Hill, Rednal, Whitcliffe Wood, Shavington Park, in the Wyre, at Earl's Hill, Priorslee

Lake and Moelydd before the month's end, but all were dwarfed by a count of 19 at Haughmond Hill on 14th.

Nest building was reported from Trefonen on 21 Apr and distraction display at Wall Farm a few days later, but these were unusually early and most breeding evidence was gathered in May and June. A nest with eggs was found at Old Oswestry on 10 May and the first with young were at Shrewsbury on 19th. An observer at Old Oswestry reported three successful nests from a total of five found. Fledged young were on the wing at Shavington Park on 23 Jun, whilst a large count of 20 birds in Wyre Forest on 30 Jun must have included birds of the year. Singing declines in frequency by the end of June, although male birds still do sing from time to time, perhaps between broods or if their nesting attempt fails, and this must be the cause of the drop-off in reports in June.

Reporting frequency declined further in July and August but picked up again in September, perhaps as breeding birds from further north moved through on migration. Higher counts at this time included 12 birds at Whixall Moss on 9th and six at VP on 24th. Records were received daily till 18 Sep and on five further dates before the end of the month will a noticeable drop in reports and numbers at this time. In October, one to three were reported on 11 dates from across the County with the last at Stapeley Hill on 28th.

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Shropshire status: Scarce summer visitor
Conservation status: Red List
BBS: Present in 4% of plots, four birds recorded
Author: GT

Forty-seven records for the year, with all records in the south of the County except for a handful around The Wrekin and The Ercall. No records from the Oswestry uplands.

The Wyre Forest remains the County stronghold for this species with several records too from the Whitcliffe Wood area and a small number from Clun/Clunton/Cefn Einion.

The first report was from Whitcliffe Common on 15 Apr, a typical date. Other April records were from Dowles Brook in the Wyre on 18th and Llanfair Waterdine on 20th, with the first report from The Wrekin on 5 May. Most reports involved singing male birds.

An observer at Whitcliffe included some interesting and comprehensive notes in her

reports of the behaviour of territorial birds. This included nest-building behaviour from Mary Knoll on 9 May and a green caterpillar taken into the nest here on 31st. At Whitcliffe, three territorial males were noted, whilst a count of singing birds around Dowles Brook on 10 May estimated six territorial males. A count of 12+ in the Wyre on 12th must have been predominantly male birds, so the population here seems to be relatively strong.

At the Wrekin and Ercall, a maximum of one bird was reported at each site between 5–7 May with no reports thereafter.

In the Clun area, a pair at Llanfair Waterdine UC Turbary was found on 20 Apr with regular reports from here into June. The only report from Sowdley Wood was of three here on 14 May. Two birds were found at Knuck Wood, Cefn Einion on 22 May with a single singing bird at Hall-of-the-Forest on 7 Jun.

At Whitcliffe Wood, the final report was of a singing bird on 10 Jun, whilst there were five reports from the Wyre this month and the last of the year was here on 9 Jul.

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Shropshire status: Very rare vagrant
Author: GT

The fifth County record was a first-year bird caught for ringing at Candy Woods, Tyn-y-coed (*PD Jones*). Of the five records, three have been birds caught by ringers and the species has occurred in each of the last four years, following the first County record in 2008.

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Shropshire status: Fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant
Conservation Status: Green List
BBS: Present in two plots
Author: RJH

As a bird with fairly conservative habitat requirements - virtually any damp scrubby habitat - it is a wonder that this species is not recorded at a greater frequency than it is. Thirty-one records from 16 sites cannot represent species presence in Shropshire? - but present and past data within the new Avifauna appears to suggest that this sub-Saharan migrant species is declining.

The first record of the year was a typical date of 17 Apr, from VP. The next site for records was Whixall Moss almost two weeks later. In May, records were received from Dodecote, Aston Locks, Shrewsbury, Buildwas, Walford, Tibberton, Bicton and Bridgnorth. Further records in June arose from Wall Farm, Whitcott Keysett, Montgomery Canal, Crose Mere, Chelmarsh and Baggy Moor but here, as well as all other sites, numbers were only ones or twos.

Breeding was only confirmed at two sites – Aston Locks and Chelmarsh (with Chelmarsh producing the highest single count for the year of five, 7 Jul). The last record was from Baggy Moor on 17 Aug.

REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Shropshire status: Fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant
Conservation Status: Green List
Author: RJH

National trends, through most BTO surveys, indicate that population increases starting in the 1970s appear to be levelling off. Although restricted to areas of reedbed for nest building and breeding, it can be found in any dry, bushy vegetation when feeding.

Typically, the first returning birds appear mid-April at any one of its favoured sites, e.g. Chelmarsh Reservoir, Priorslee Pool, VP and Wood Lane although, from the latter, the frequency of reporting appears to be falling. This year, early returning birds were also noted at Noneley and Aston Locks. Into May and birds at Norbroom Marsh (four birds), Craven Arms (two), Sambrook Mill Pond (six), Wall Farm (one), Colemere (three) and Isombridge (four) added these sites to the list.

Into June/July confirmed breeding was established as Aston Locks, Chelmarsh Reservoir and Trench Pool. The maximum count was eleven at Chelmarsh on 7 Jul. The last bird of the year was at Shavington Park on the 24 Aug.

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*

Shropshire status: Common summer visitor and passage migrant, scarce in winter

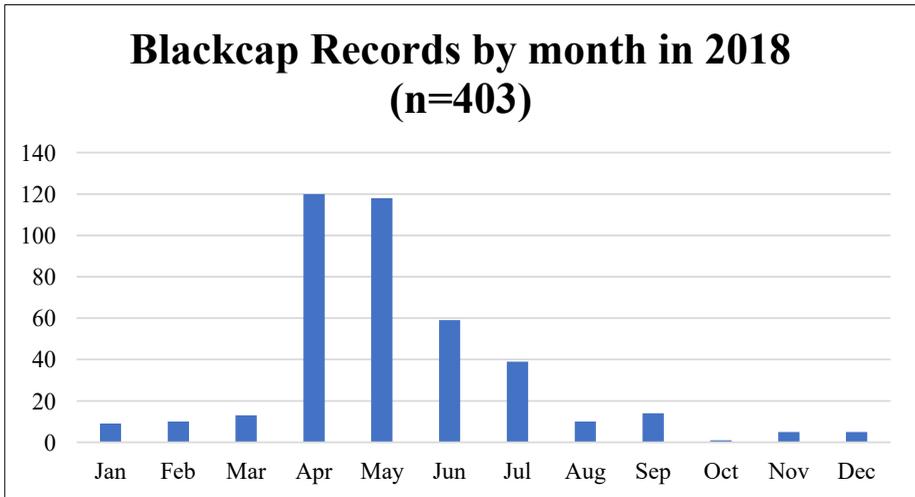
Conservation status: Green List

BBS: Present in 87% of plots, 154 bird/s recorded, an average of 3.5 per occupied plot

Shropshire BBS Index: 1.99, annual change +0.26

Author: GT

Ringling has clearly shown that Blackcaps wintering in the UK breed in central Europe particularly Germany and Poland, and this habit has become more frequent, though in our County numbers of birds remain relatively low at this time of year.



Nine records in January included singles at Ellesmere, Newport, Whitchurch, Wrockwardine, Bayston Hill, Randlay and Edmond with two birds on feeders in Bridgnorth. Ten records in February added Pontesbury Hill, Oswestry, Muxton, Wellington and Belle Vue to the sites list. March records could conceivably be either departing winter visitors or arriving summer visitors. After four birds between 1 and 7 Mar there was a gap before the next birds on 18 Mar, though the nine records in the second half of the month were again predominantly birds at feeders in built-up areas. The sex of birds was recorded in ten records and these were split evenly with five males and five females, although all except one of the females were in March.

From 5 Apr definite summer arrivals were noted at VP, Stevenshill, Shavington Park, Beambridge Aston-on-Clun and Whitcott Keysett with counts of eight at the Wrekin on 9th and 10 at Haughmond Hill by 14th. Thereafter, widespread and abundant. The highest counts were 18 at Haughmond Hill on 2 Jun, 17 at Shavington Park on 8 May and 15 at the Wyre Forest on 12 May with other double-figure counts from Bury Ditches.

A nest with eggs was found at Belle Vue on 19 May and the first fledgling reported from the Wyre on 12 Jun. Breeding was also proven by virtue of recently-fledged juveniles (slightly darker brown caps than adult females) being observed at Priors Halton, Market Drayton and Shavington Park.

Just ten records in August with 17 at Pam's Pools on 10th by far the largest count. An increase in records in September perhaps reflected passage birds through the County though apart from nine at Pam's Pools on 2nd, all records were of one or two birds. Just a single record in October at Cross Lane Head on 25th may have been an arriving winter visitor as may one at Bicton (Shrewsbury) on 4 Nov. Nine records from 22 Nov to the end of the year were undoubtedly wintering birds; all singles except for two at Cross Lane Head and in Shrewsbury. Birds at feeders came both to sunflower hearts and fat balls. One at Ruyton-XI-Towns was observed feeding on ripe apples still hanging on the tree.

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

Shropshire status: Common summer visitor

Conservation Status: Green List

BBS: Present in 37% of plots, 32 birds recorded, an average of 1.7 per occupied plot

Author: GT

Ninety-four records for the year from across the County. Absent only on the higher ground, it is present in deciduous woods, especially where there is good shrub growth in clearings, although in south Shropshire typically inhabits thickets in river valleys. Despite the wide spread of records, it seems to be under-recorded and familiarity with the song is key as field observations can be difficult.

Most records were in May and June, typically of singing male birds, with just three records in July and two in August. The first of the year were at Dowles Brook (Wyre Forest) and Haughmond Hill on 18 Apr. Then singles at Preston Montford on 23rd, Aston Locks on 26th and VP on 28th with two at Shavington Park on 24th and Brockhurst Farm, Wem on 30th. Records on most days in May included four at

Whixall Moss on 5th/6th, three at the Wrekin, also on 6th and at Granville Country Park next day. Peak counts, though, were in the Wyre Forest with eight on 11 May.

In June, records were received on 19 dates, predominantly singles but including counts of up to five from the greater Wyre and Shavington Park, with three at Newcastle-on-Clun.

Breeding records were almost all 'probable' records of birds on territory. The only confirmation was from Shavington Park where a recently fledged juvenile was caught for ringing on 23 Jun.

Two in the Wyre on 2 Jul preceded a gap of 28 days until the next records, of singles at Cross Lane Head on 30th and Ludlow on 31st. A single at Aston Locks and two at Pam's Pools on 10 Aug proved to be the last records for the year.

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

Shropshire status: Uncommon summer visitor

Conservation Status: Green List

BBS: Present in 18% of plots, 12 birds recorded, an average of 1.3 per occupied plot

Author: GT

Forty-nine records this year, an average showing. Never common in Shropshire, most records are of singing males in April and May. A synchronised arrival with several widespread records over a few days from the first on 18 Apr when two were at Cae Howel and one at Choulton. Next day, two birds were at Moelydd, Dudleston Heath, Trefonen and VP with one at Beambridge, Aston-on-Clun. Other April records were received from Spoonley, Ightfield, Annscroft, Uppington, Aston-on-Clun, Earls Hill, and Priorslee Lake. A strange gap in records between 26 Apr and 4 May was broken on the latter date and again there were several records from across the County, north and south, east and west involving usually one, occasionally two birds, throughout May. Though there is no doubt breeding was at least attempted at many of these sites, the only proven breeding was at Pam's Pools where a recent fledgling was reported on 10 Aug.

The only other August record was a bird at Condoover on 23rd. The last of the year was one at VP on 8 Sep.

WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

Shropshire status: Common summer visitor
Conservation status: Amber List
BBS: Present in 63% of plots, 74 birds recorded, an average of 2.3
per occupied plot
Shropshire BBS Index: 1.11, annual change -0.19
Author: GT

An early bird at Preston Montford on 9–12 Apr preceded an arrival of this species from 18–23 Apr. The first, on 18th, was at Old Oswestry with birds over the next few days at the Stiperstones, Shifnal, Wall Farm, Priorslee Pool, and Granville Country Park and three birds at Uppington on 21st. Four birds at Whixall Moss on 28 Apr were the first of another arrival of birds, with other sites involved being VP, Condover, Titterstone Clee, Dodecote and Cefn Gunthly. Whitethroats do occur at higher elevations than other *Sylvia* species, and birds were found in song on the Long Mynd at Motts Road on 4 May, at Minton Batch on 7th and on the Stiperstones on several dates in May. Five at a lowland site at Noneley on 8 May was the highest count.

This species is more often found in small loose groups than other warblers and many of the counts were of more than two birds. Fourteen adults were counted at Old Oswestry on 25 Jun with birds feeding young. No nests were found this year but birds feeding young is often the best way to confirm nesting for this species. Such behaviour was found in June at Noneley on 6th, at Aston Locks on 10th and Cefn Einion on 14th as well as Old Oswestry. Adults with fledged young were found at Whitcott Keysett on 28 Jun and in July at Halford, Craven Arms, Llanfair Waterdine and VP.

Whitethroats seem to be relatively catholic in their habitat choices. They are birds of hedgerows and open spaces but were found in hedgerow and kale at VP; on heather moor on the Long Mynd and in felled areas in woodland at Evens, near Ludlow.

Sightings were common from May to 26 Jul. A fortnight's gap in records followed and the five August records were at Starvecrow on 8th, Baggy Moor on 9th, Pam's Pools on 10th, Camp Farm (Flashbrook) on 26th and Cleobury Mortimer on 27th. One at Priors Halton on 4 Sep was the last of the year.

FIRECREST *Regulus ignicapilla*

Shropshire status: Rare passage migrant and winter visitor, very rare breeding species
Conservation status: Schedule 1, Green List, RBBP
Author: TW

Is the southern half of SO 38 particularly sought out by summering Firecrests? Or are they more widely spread but overlooked (or ‘underheard’) elsewhere? They bred there, in Kempton, in 2012 (the first County breeding record), there was a singing bird in Hoar Wood in 2016, and this year another was heard (by a passing cyclist) at Hopesay on 19 May (*TH Wall*), and subsequently observed there up to the 25th; less than 8km separates the three records. During this period there has been only one other summer record, a pair in the Wyre Forest in May 2017. However, the peak months for the 60 individuals recorded over the years 1971–2017 remain March and November, so one caught and ringed at Whixall Moss on 10 Nov (*CD Gunnell, RJ Harris, EJ Halliwell, EE Holmes, G Thomas, AJ Wilson*) fitted the long-term pattern.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*

Shropshire status: Common resident and winter visitor
Conservation status: Green List
BBS: Present in 33% of plots, 30 birds recorded, an average of 1.8 per occupied plot
Author: AJA

With 232 records (down by about a quarter from 2017), Goldcrest nevertheless seems to be maintaining a healthy population in the County. As in 2017, April and May produced the largest number of records (about 30) and August and September the smallest (6). Records were sparsely but broadly distributed geographically, with very few 10-km squares having none. The Wyre Forest area included many specific sites with large numbers of records.

Sixty percent of all records that included counts were of singletons with only 20 reporting five or more birds. The largest counts were at Whixall Moss (15 on 29 Sep), Market Drayton (12 on 25 Oct and nine on 25 Nov), Earls Hill (eight on 19 Oct) and Cockshutt (eight on 5 Jun). Very few observations of breeding activity were submitted. Singing males in suitable habitat were observed from 17 Feb until 10 Jul (with one singing report from Market Drayton on 25 Nov). However, confirmed breeding was confined to two reports of recently fledged birds at Annscroft (25 Jun) and the Wyre Forest (9 Jul).

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Shropshire status: Very common resident
Conservation status: Green List
BBS: Present in 100% of plots, 471 birds recorded, an average of 9.2 per occupied plot
Shropshire BBS Index: 1.63, annual change -0.42
Author: JJT

The 1,057 records may include some duplicates, but the total is significantly more, up by 22%, than the previous year which had 865, perhaps a reflection of a relatively mild preceding winter, although a decline in the BBS index is rather odd when mild winters precede the breeding season.

There were counts of 9, 12 and 19 birds on 2km BBS survey walks from three localities, the highest being at Longford, Market Drayton on 7 May. Counts of 30, 25 and 20 were recorded in the Wyre Forest in June and July but without context.

A correspondent in south Shropshire reports that in May, Wrens were feeding young in a nest within a House Martin nest box from which they fledged successfully. The nest was minimalist, with a base and thin walls (both effectively linings to the box) but no roof, the latter provided by the box itself. Further, in September a Wren was killed in a 'break-back' Rat trap. The poor Wren was living up to its troglodytic name and had gone into a wooden tunnel beside our compost heap within which the trap was set. The tunnel was on a rat-run and the trap was baited with 'beef jerky' (recommended by an American website), but it never caught a rat!

NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

Shropshire status: Common resident
Conservation status: Green List
BBS: Present in 43% of plots, 38 birds recorded, an average of 1.7 birds per occupied plot
Author: GT

A noisy and vociferous bird, at least when not incubating eggs, the Nuthatch is a popularly reported bird with 740 records this year. It is gradually spreading northwards in the UK and now occupies central Scottish woods.

Nest boxes are used readily but need to be checked very carefully early in the season and disturbance should be avoided if Nuthatches have taken residence, at least until well into the incubation period.

Birds are territorial through the year, but territorial behaviour picks up in early spring. Eleven territories were counted at The Wrekin woods on 23 Apr with one male bird watched feeding a female. Mudding- up of holes to make the appropriate size are typical behaviour and this was noticed this year from Whitcliffe at the end of March, with nest construction continuing into April at Lyth Hill and at Beckjay.

Chicks were being fed in the nest in a riverside alder at Pentre on 14 May with fledglings from 10 Jun in the Wyre and from Shavington Park, whilst breeding was also confirmed at Trench Pool.

Where recorded counts were predominantly of one or two individuals (88%), the eleven territorial males at The Wrekin in April was the highest count at a single location. Counts of five to eight birds were made at Sheinton and Attingham Park in January, Beambridge in March, Hawkstone Park in May and Whitcliffe in September, whilst several counts of these numbers were made through the year at various locations in the Wyre Forest and at Shavington Park.

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

Shropshire status: Fairly common resident
BBS: Present in 22% of plots, 16 birds recorded, an average of 1.5 per occupied plot
Conservation status: Green List
Author: GT

Yet again, an increase in the number of records this year. Fifty-six reports were solely of 'Present'. Of the 195 where a count was entered, 66% were of a single bird and 23% of two together, typical for this species. Larger counts were either early in spring and presumably covered enough ground to locate several territorial birds, e.g. seven at Shavington Park on 12 Feb and six in the Wyre Forest on 16 Mar, or immediately post-breeding when family parties can be located. The latter included five in the Wyre on 25 Jun and at Lee Brockhurst on 25 Aug.

Records were widespread from wooded habitats as to be expected, from Whixall Moss in the north down to Whitcliffe in the south, with a distinct tendency to avoid towns. Just three records were received from locations in Shrewsbury; at Mere Pool on 19 Jan, Castle Walk on 22 Mar and Longden Road on 21 Apr. Four in Bridgnorth Cemetery and a single on several dates at the cemetery in Newport perhaps reflect the occurrence of constant tree cover.

Several reports recorded breeding behaviour. A pair was courtship chasing in

riverside trees at Bicton, near Clun on 4 May. An adult carrying food on 2 May at Coalbrookdale may have either been a male feeding the female on the nest or perhaps an adult feeding young. Fledglings were reported from 12 Jun at Beambridge and were also reported from Shavington Park, Whitcott Keysett and the Wyre Forest.

ROSE-COLOURED STARLING *Pastor roseus*

Shropshire status: Vagrant
Author: GT

A juvenile, found in a Shrewsbury garden on 28 Oct, stayed for several weeks and was last seen on 11 Nov (*R Furlong*). An irruptive species, large numbers were reported in eastern Europe in May, reaching the UK by the end of the month. Widespread reports in the UK through the remainder of the spring and summer. The first here since October 2005.

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

Shropshire status: Very common winter visitor; common resident
Conservation status: Red List
BBS: Present in 39% of plots, 167 birds recorded, an average of 8.4 per occupied plot
BBS Index: 0.36, annual change +0.12
Author: MF

This year was notable for the scarcity of large winter flocks. Only three gatherings of 1,000 or more were recorded, at Edgmond Marsh, Moreton Say and Wall Farm, where a roost of ‘several thousand’ occupied a biofuel crop of *Miscanthus* in January.

On the other hand, more data was collected on breeding and habitat use. Nests with young were found at Polemere, Shrewsbury and Tibberton, adults collecting food at Newport, and fledglings at Cross Lane Head and Ludlow. At the beginning of June there was a flock of 130, including juveniles, at Polemere, then a lull during the rest of June, July and August when Starlings are in moult and less visible.

Three of the sites where breeding was confirmed were urban: nests were spotted under the eaves of houses or bungalows, and fledglings were seen being fed by adults alongside older, self-feeding juveniles in a Ludlow garden. Two observers made notes on the relationship between Starlings and House Sparrows: in Ludlow Starlings were seen persistently removing fresh material from sparrow nest attempts, and at

Tibberton they occupied a nest site previously used annually by several pairs of sparrows.

All references to foraging mentioned pasture, in several cases with cattle or sheep on it at the time.

A leucistic Starling was recorded in a group of four at Wrockwardine in January.

RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus*

Shropshire status: Scarce passage migrant, formerly bred
Conservation status: UKBAP, LBAP, Red List
Author: GEH

Twelve records were received from six locations. Most were of birds on spring passage but two in the autumn were more unusual.

The first of the year were singles at the rather unexpected locations of Meretown, Newport on 4 Apr and Telford on 5 Apr. The next to arrive were at Titterstone Clee which is the favoured site for this species and three were reported on 8 Apr, nine on the 9th, at least one on the 10th and five on the 14th. The final spring records were of five at the Stiperstones on 20-21 Apr.

The two autumn records were both from the Long Mynd where at least one was reported as present on 29 Sep and a female was seen on 7 Oct.

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

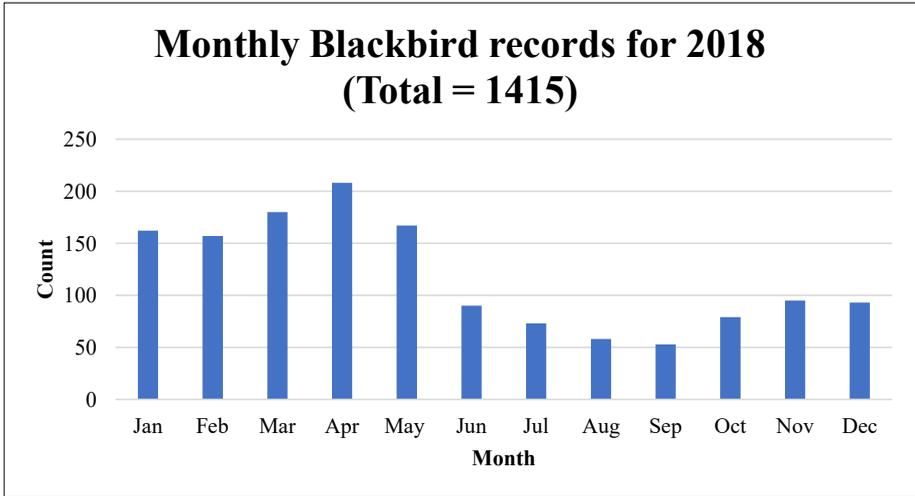
Shropshire status: Very common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor
Conservation status: Green list
BBS: Present in 98% of plots, 772 birds recorded, an average of 15.4 birds per occupied plot
Shropshire BBS index: 1.53, annual change -0.13
Author: RR

With 1,592 records submitted, Blackbird was, perhaps unsurprisingly, the most commonly reported bird in the County in 2018. A small decrease in the County index suggests a small decrease in numbers overall. The peak month for records was April with 208 reports, dropping off then through the summer until October when numbers began to increase again, presumably with the arrival of winter migrants. The highest

single count was 34 at Ruyton XI Towns on 22 Apr, while between mid-June and 22 Oct there were only two counts that made double figures.

The earliest confirmed record of breeding was on 14 Apr, at Ironbridge, while fledglings were observed at Beambridge (Aston-on-Clun) on 12 Aug. The cold weather in February and March as well as the long, dry summer probably resulted in a late start to the breeding season but allowed it to continue well into summer.

After a quiet period from July to September, 26 records in double figures were submitted for the last quarter of the year, the highest count being 25 at Oerley Reservoir on 21 Dec.

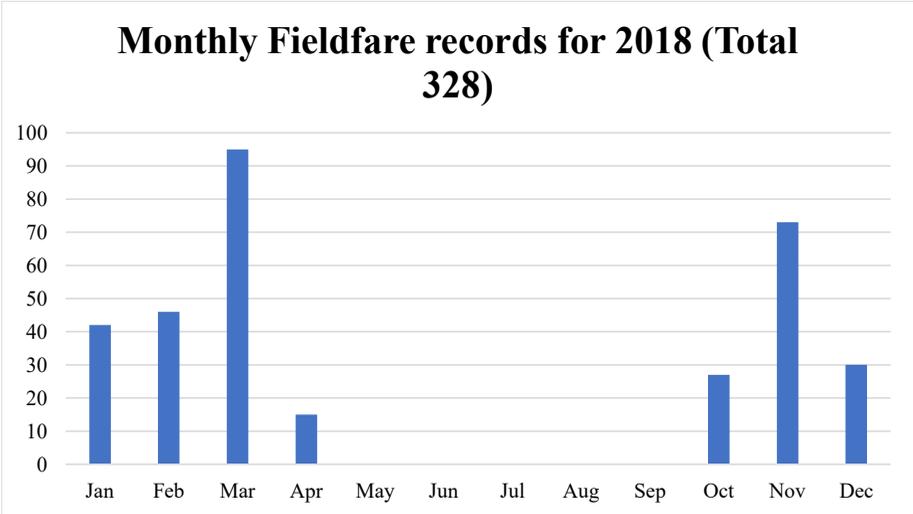


FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

Shropshire status: Common winter visitor, passage migrant
 Conservation status: Schedule 1, RBBP, Red list
 BBS: Present in 2% of plots, 76 birds recorded
 Author: RR

In total, 382 records of observations of Fieldfare from 156 sites were submitted in 2018. The last departure date of the overwintering birds was 17 Apr, the first of the returning birds was observed on October 3. 58% of records were from SO tetrads, the remaining 42% from SJ. However, as only 44% of Shropshire’s tetrads are in the SO region, there must have been a significantly greater population of Fieldfare in the southern half of the County.

The greatest number of observations were made in March, with 15 records of more than 100 birds submitted. The largest single record for the year was of 420 birds from Dodecote (SJ62) on 6 Nov. Later the same month (9th) 350 were seen at Choulton and on 12 Nov 400 were observed at Kynnersley. The largest group in the spring period was of 350 birds at Condover on 5 March. They were frequently observed in mixed flocks with Redwing.



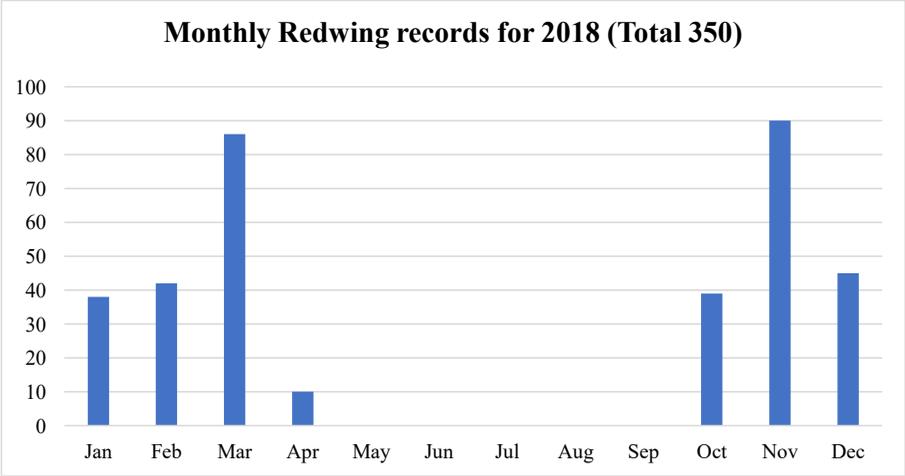
REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

Shropshire status: Common winter visitor and passage migrant
 Conservation status: Schedule 1, RBBP, Red list
 Author: RR

A total of 416 records of Redwing sightings were submitted in 2018, a substantial increase on 2017 (251). In the early part of the year, more sightings were recorded in March than any other month: 150 at the Grove, Condover on the 5th, 100 at Shakenhurst on the 11th and 160 at Shavington Park, Calverhall on the following day. There were a further 21 reports of sightings in double figures made during the month. Only 10 reports were submitted in April and only one of these was in double figures. The last reported sighting for the 2017-18 winter period, a single bird, was on 10 Apr at Beambridge (Aston-on-Clun).

The first arrivals of the second winter period (10) were recorded at Whixall Moss on

7 Oct and the following day a group of 40 were seen at Attingham Park. Numbers increased through October with a group of 130 observed at The Grove, Conover on the 28th. The largest group of the year overall was recorded at Choulton where 300 were seen on 3 Nov and four further reports in excess of 100 were made through that month. In many cases they were in mixed feeding groups with Fieldfare.



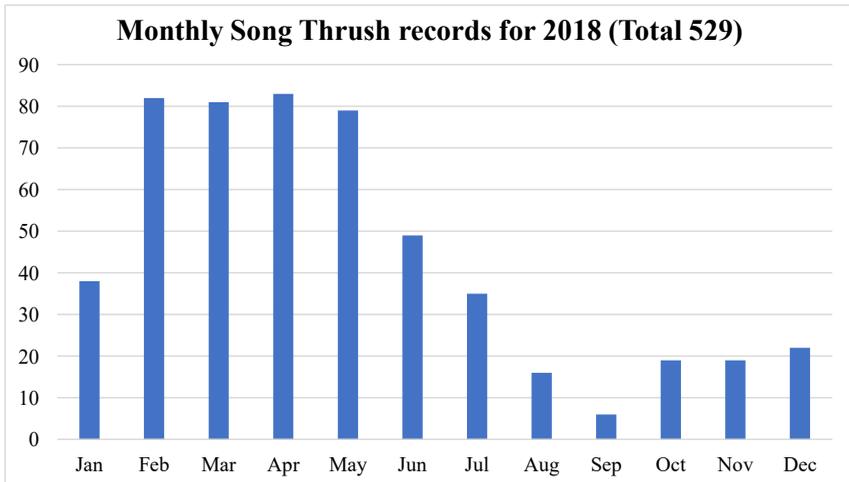
SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

Shropshire status: British subspecies *clarkei* a very common but declining resident
 Conservation status: UKBAP, LBAP, Red list
 BBS: Present in 80% of plots, a total of 127 birds recorded, an average of 3.1 per occupied plot
 Shropshire BBS index: 1.43, annual change -0.98
 Author: RR

Six hundred and twenty-nine reports submitted during 2018, representing an increase of over 30% compared with 2017, although a significant reduction in the Shropshire index this year illustrates the species is prone to major population fluctuations. Over 60% of the reports were made in February-May, the height of the breeding season when, presumably, singing males gave evidence of their presence. The lowest monthly count was in September, when only six sightings were recorded. The first report of a singing male was submitted on 23 Jan, heard at Tibberton Moor, the second report was on 1 Feb from Tibberton West, so possibly the same male. The

cold spring may have delayed breeding because the first report of confirmed breeding evidence was made on 14 May, when adults were seen carrying worms at Mary Knoll, south-west of Ludlow. A similar report was made the following day from Cefn Coch. The latest confirmed breeding evidence was submitted on 13 Aug from Ellesmere, where again adults were observed carrying worms.

Most reports were of single birds or of pairs, with notable exceptions of 10 birds seen together at The Stanyards on 26 February and a further eight at Bringewood the following day. Territorial singing began in November, with a report from Beambridge (Aston-on-Clun) on the 4th, Ironbridge on the 11th and Whitcliffe on the 23rd.



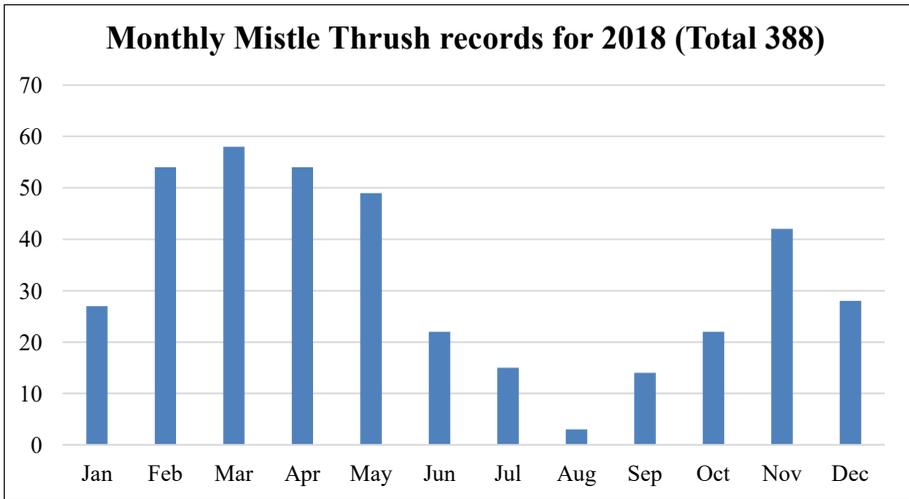
MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*

Shropshire status: Fairly common resident
 Conservation status: Red list
 BBS: Present in 43% of plots, 44 birds recorded an average of 2 birds per occupied plot
 Shropshire BBS index: 1.38, annual change +0.36
 Author: RR

In total, 469 records for Mistle Thrush were submitted in 2018, up from 321 for 2017. An increase in the Shropshire index suggests an overall increase in numbers across the County during the year. The table illustrates that reporting followed the expected pattern of the peak period being February to May with a big dip in August. Apart from

one report of a flock of 10 birds on 15 Jun at Tibberton Moor, all other reports were in single figures until 13 Jul when a loose flock of 14 were observed at the Stiperstones. On 23 Jul a flock of 16 were seen to be roosting together in a small plantation but the largest group of the year, 40, were seen together at Adbaston on 9 Sep. After that date, all reports reverted to single figures, the increasing number of reports in October and November perhaps coinciding with the availability of autumn berries.

Although several pairs had been observed in suitable breeding territory early in the year and a pair had been observed nest building at Beambridge (Aston-on-Clun) on 26 Mar, no confirmed evidence of breeding was reported until 3 May when adult birds were recorded feeding young on a nest at Duffryn. A fledged individual was found dead at Tibberton East on 6 Jun – a result of a window strike – but otherwise there were no further reports confirming breeding anywhere. A singing male was heard at Market Drayton on 21 Nov and a further bird in song at Whitcliffe on 17 Dec.



SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*

Shropshire status: Uncommon summer visitor
 Conservation status: UKBAP, Red List
 BBS: Present in 6% of plots, three birds recorded
 Author: RJH

The first bird of the year was at Dowles Brook on the 18 Apr – which was later than the first bird date of 3 Apr last year but still 16 days earlier than in 2016. More birds

started to appear in May, all in the south of the County – Aston, Bridges, Sallow Coppice, Shakenhurst, and Stiperstones. All these sites had ones and twos, with four in the Wyre Forest on the 19th. Into June, birds started to appear in the north of the County. The first was at Longford, Market Drayton on the 6th with the next at Adeney, 24th. Many of the counts recorded were just of single birds.

Evidence of breeding was first confirmed from Pentre on 2 Jun with sitting birds in a nest under eaves, and from Montgomery Canal where fledged young were found on 26 Jun. Further breeding was established from Attingham Park, Bicton (Clun), Clungunford, Prees Heath, Wall Farm, Whitcliffe, Whitcott Keysett and Wyre Forest. Even with the presence of juveniles, the maximum count of birds at any one time was only five (Lilleshall in August). Most records were still only of ones and twos with the occasional three or four – Woolston (near Wistanstow), Tibberton Moor and Whitcott Keysett.

The last birds of the year were two at Shifnal on the 12 Sep, and one at Shakenhurst on 19 Sep.

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

Shropshire status: Very common resident

Conservation status: Green List

BBS: Present in 100% of plots, 389 birds recorded, an average of 7.6 per occupied plot

Shropshire BBS Index: 1.59, annual change -0.29

Author: JJT

1,350 records were received, a few of which recorded breeding.

An evaluation of numbers is possible in the ten instances in which the number of birds and the time in the field are both recorded, some of which may have been standard 2km BBS survey routes. Birds per hour were greatest, 21.0, at Maesbury while in two other instances birds per hour were above ten, being 17.1 at Trefonen and 12.0 at Moelydd.

Nesting behaviour in a Newport garden was well documented. A pair nested in a teapot with young being fed on 15 Apr. By 30 Apr this brood had fledged and while one adult was busy feeding the fledglings, the second was already nest-building for the next clutch. One fledgling was taken by a Magpie. Adult Robins certainly have a long breeding season as evidenced by a recent fledgling found dead on a track at Whitcott Keysett on 10 Sep.

At Ironbridge in October, a bird defended garden feeders from other species, chasing off both Coal Tits and Dunnocks.

NIGHTINGALE *Luscinia megarhynchos*

Shropshire status: Very rare summer visitor, has bred
Conservation status: Red List
Author: GT

A fantastic find at Badger on 2 Jul (*P Smith*) and the first in the County since the turn of the millennium when a bird was at Wood Lane in May 2000. Nightingales used to breed in the woodlands along the Severn Valley and certainly Shropshire is at the very north-west edge of the species range. It is a bird in general decline which is surprising considering a warming climate.

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Shropshire status: Uncommon summer visitor
Conservation Status: Red List
BBS: Present in 2% of plots, five birds recorded
Author: RJH

Craig Sychtyn again provided the first County record of the year with two birds present on the typical date of 14 Apr. Throughout the rest of the month birds appeared at Dowles Brook, Wrekin and Wyre Forest (18th), Bridges (19th), Lurkenhope Wood (20th), Folly Brook (25th), Whitcott Keysett (26th) and Moelydd (30th). The largest numbers were at Wyre Forest, with six, and Wrekin, five.

Into May, birds were reported from c30 sites with over a third being from the nest box schemes around Clun and Newcastle – which also returned the largest counts (26 at Folly Brook and 17 at Newcastle). Elsewhere, double figure counts were returned from Wrekin and Wyre Forest. Successful breeding was reported from Bridges, Cefn Einion, Craig Sychtyn, Evens/Mary Knoll, Newcastle-on-Clun, Pentre and Stanbatch/Pole Cottage. The last birds of the year, three, were on the early date of 7 Jul at Anchor (SO18).

Using nest box data from the four sites from which records were returned; Hawkstone Park had a slightly poorer year than 2017 with one less nest and egg/fledging numbers falling from 91.1% to 85.7% - 46 chicks fledged in 2017 compared with 35 this year. Craig Sychtyn continued to show a steady increase on its

unfortunate years of 2015 and 2016: from ten nests and 58 eggs the end egg/fledging conversion rate was 72.4% (71.6% in 2017).

Across the large site around Newcastle-on-Clun there were 65 nesting attempts compared with the 70 of last year. However, when one considers the egg/fledging conversion values it was a much better year increasing from 19% in 2017 to 35%. Interestingly, at all sites, first eggs dates were between three and six days later than last year.

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Shropshire status: Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant
Conservation status: Red List, RBBP
Author: RJH

Two accepted records this year, compared with eight in 2017. A male photographed at Adderley on 7 Apr (*JA Almond, TC Lowe, H Lloyd*) was the only accepted spring sighting. A male bird was seen feeding on insects in Ticklerton (SO49) on 17 Oct (*DM Hardgrave*).

REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Shropshire status: Fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant
Conservation status: Amber List
BBS: Present in 27% of plots, 38 birds recorded, an average of 2.7 per occupied plot
Author: RJH

Sightings started in April and were from 14 different sites. The largest count at this time was of six birds at Moelydd, with four at Molverley. At all other sites, counts were of one or two. Birds were present at 37 sites in May, with six at the Hall of the Forest, five at Titterstone Clee and the Wyre Forest, four at Hawkstone Park and Ragleth, and three at Aston and Wrekin, all the others being ones or twos.

Indications of breeding were received from only four sites, Newcastle-on-Clun, Pentre, Stiperstones and Wyre Forest, with the first fledged young at Wyre Forest on 9 Jul. Sightings fell off quickly into August, only five records, with the last individual of the year seen at Mardu on 7 Sep.

WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*

Shropshire status: Scarce summer visitor
Conservation status: Red List
BBS: Present in 2% of plots, four birds recorded
Author: GEH

Only 14 records were received.

The Long Mynd is the main site for this species and the first report was of three on 6 May followed by four singing males at Town Brook Hollow on the 8th and subsequently it was reported as present on 10 dates from 14 May until 1 Aug. The only confirmed breeding was a record of six at Town Brook Hollow on 25 Jul when an adult with food in its beak was seen with begging fledged young, and at least two families were present.

The only records elsewhere were two at Whixall Moss on 10 Aug and one in oil-seed rape stubble at Camp Farm, near Puleston on 28 Aug, all almost certainly on return passage.

STONECHAT *Saxicola rubicola*

Shropshire status: Uncommon resident
Conservation status: Green List
BBS: Present in 4% of plots, three birds recorded
Author: RJH

This year we were back again to receiving records from all months of the year. Clearly the mild winters are favourable for this species.

Early records into March were all single males except for Masons Bank UC Wetland which also hosted some females. Lower Short Ditch, Wall Farm and Whixall Moss featured heavily during this period. Five were at Titterstone Clee on 9 Apr. More sites were reported with birds into May, with the first young on the wing being seen at Rhos Fiddle in mid-June. Although lots of sites reported continued presence during May-July there was little record of breeding. The only other confirmed sites were Breakneck Bank (SO77), Church Stretton and the Long Mynd at Black Knoll.

For the last quarter of the year there were a handful of sightings each month with birds around Long Mynd, Church Stretton, Cefn Coch, Wall Farm and Whixall Moss, more a record of observer activity than overall bird presence. The last birds of the

year were back where the year started, all at Wall Farm.

Birds on Clee Hill (Chelmarsh Ringing Group RAS study) were at lower levels compared with 2017 (63 pairs) and 2016 (57 pairs) with only 45 pairs. Seventy adults were retrapped or resighted and 173 pulli ringed.

WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Shropshire status: Uncommon passage migrant, scarce summer visitor
Conservation status: Green List
BBS: Present in 10% of plots, nine birds recorded
Author: RJH

Individuals appeared at Edgmond, 28 Feb, and Llanfair Hill, 30 Mar, before greater numbers started to arrive in April. At the beginning of the month there were four at Titterstone Clee and two at Callow Hill and Sleaf airfield before 12 were counted at Llanfair Waterdine (20th) and 16 at All Stretton (21st). Elsewhere in late April and early May, there were six at Bicton Hill, five at Stiperstones, four at Cefn Gunthly, and two at both Weston Lullingfields and Wall Farm. A count of 10 at Titterstone Clee on 1 May could easily have been 20, given the movement of the flock.

Confirmed breeding was only reported from Titterstone Clee with the presence of two juveniles. Another juvenile at Church Stretton on 25 Jul could have been the result of post-breeding dispersal. The last birds of the autumn were two at Rhos Fiddle (6 Sep) and one at Masons Bank (24 Sep).

DIPPER *Cinclus cinclus*

Shropshire status: Uncommon resident
Conservation status: LBAP, Amber List
BBS: Present in 2% of plots, one bird recorded
Author: GEH

The number of records went up by around 30% to 223 but were dominated by a few regularly watched locations. The number of sites was 32 this year which is the same as in 2017. Records came from all months of the year and were spread evenly though the year.

As expected, most came from the streams and small rivers in the south, in particular, the River Clun and the River Teme. Most records were of one or two birds and the

few counts of three or four appear to be either family parties or two pairs along a stretch of river.

Breeding was not well documented in the casual records but was confirmed at Aston-on-Clun, Bicton (near Clun), Bridges, Llanfair Waterdine, Newcastle-on-Clun, Pentre (near Chapel Lawn), Whitcliffe and the Wyre Forest. It was also confirmed in Carding Mill Valley (Long Mynd) the first confirmed breeding record there for many years. However, breeding Dippers are still absent from the upper River Tern.

Fifty-four previously occupied sites within the County, and another 21 sites on rivers that form the County boundary, were checked, and clutches were found at 31 of the former, where 89 chicks in 16 broods were ringed. At the latter, seven clutches were found, and 20 chicks in six broods were ringed.

In the north of the County, there were records from Bicton (near Shrewsbury), Cound Stank (VP), Ironbridge, Jackfield and Oswestry.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

Shropshire status: Very common resident
Conservation status: Red List
BBS: Present in 76% of plots, 491 birds recorded, an average of 12.6 per occupied plot
Shropshire BBS Index: 1.31, annual change +0.02
Author: JJT

A total of 761 records which is considerably up, by 51%, on last year. However, the data are skewed somewhat by 210 records contributed by one observer recording them on most of their regular 'All species recorded' Birdtrack walks and a second observer likewise providing 83 records; between them almost 40% of the total. This observer bias, and others, created within the total County record by modern birding habits and reporting technology is being examined in detail for an article for this journal (Arnfield & Tucker in prep.).

There were meaningful and rather high counts from two measured 2km BBS survey routes, both close to Market Drayton. They were of 19 near Longford on 7 May and of 16 there on 6 Jun, while near Ridgwardine there was a count of 18 on 13 May; both routes include traditionally sparrow-congenial farmsteads.

The highest count was from Whitcott Keysett on 18 Aug, of 100 undoubtedly swollen by young of the year, as would the count of 75 from Bicton (west of Shrewsbury) on

30 Jun and the 70 from Choulton on 4 Oct. Likewise, large flocks of 50 were reported from Bicton (near Clun) on 18 Aug and Cross Lane Head on 21st. There were four reports of 40 birds from Trefonen and Whixall Canal, both on 22 Oct, near Priors Halton on 4 Sep and Market Drayton on 23 Feb. Otherwise, there were 19 records of flocks in the 30s, 35 in the 20s and 75 records of 10–19 birds.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*

Shropshire status: Fairly common resident
Conservation status: Red List
BBS: Present in 8% of plots, 15 birds recorded, an average of 3.8
per occupied plot
Author: MF

Sightings of Tree Sparrow rose from just 20 last year to 118, an apparent six-fold increase; however, as 83 came from the same observer at the same site, the real improvement is much more modest. The number of sites where it was found, 22, is a return to something like the level in 2014, after a very sparse few years. The figures may be boosted by some observers taking a particular interest in the species, but a Tree Sparrow at Whixall described as ‘the first one seen for seven years at this location’ hints at a possible general improvement. On the other hand, its return to VP in 2017 has not been repeated this year.

There were counts of 10 or more at eight sites, the highest 60 at Upton Cressett in August; that and the 31 in mid-July at Bicton Hill in the Clun Forest strongly suggest breeding in those areas.

Breeding was confirmed at a regular site in the Clun valley where a combination of mixed arable and pastoral farming, mature trees with holes and well-maintained hedges sustains a loose colony. In late May young were being fed in a nest-hole high in a mature ash; a small flock began to form in June, feeding on a barley field and roosting in dense hedges, which also offered daytime refuge from the local Sparrowhawks. Adults were feeding a second brood in early July, and by mid-August foraging parties included recent fledglings.

In previous years late-summer flocks of 40–50 have gathered on arable fields in this area; this year the barley field the sparrows were using was harvested on 12 Aug, mucked on the 18th and had been ploughed by the 22nd. No Tree Sparrows were recorded at the site after that. In fact, there were only six sightings, at least four of them associated with feeding stations, anywhere in the County in the last four months of the year.

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*

Shropshire status: Very common resident
Conservation status: UKBAP, Amber List
BBS: Present in 94% of plots, 223 birds recorded, an average of 4.7 per occupied plot
Shropshire BBS index: 1.38, annual change -0.03
Author: GB

A common and widespread species with a total of 1,034 records, a substantial increase on 745 in 2017, and recorded in all months.

Usually recorded as singles and twos in the first winter period with some threes and many counts of four to six Dunnocks. Twenty were recorded at VP on 1 Jan and five were noted at garden feeders at Ironbridge on 3 Jan and on 15 Jan where individuals were “keeping a respectful distance” from each other. Other counts included six at Hengoed Cemetery on 5 Jan, six at VP on 13 Jan, 12 at The Stanyards on 21 Jan and five at Preston Montford on 26 Jan. Other counts of five were from Whittington Castle on 4 Feb, Oakeley Mynd on 13 Feb and Market Drayton on 15 Feb, with eight at Beambridge on 20 Feb, seven VP 21 Feb and 22, the highest count, at Market Drayton on 4 Mar.

Onset of breeding activity was first recorded with territorial song from two adjacent males at Ironbridge on 5 Jan. This was followed by a male in song at Cross Lane Head on 11 Feb and three males issuing territorial song at Ironbridge on 20 Feb and several dates thereafter to 3 Mar. A substantial population of 22 male Dunnocks were in song between Ironbridge and Coalport on 6 Mar. Eight at VP and seven at Beambridge 10 Mar must have included territorial song. A pair was noted at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 9 Mar and three were displaying at Wall Farm on 13 Mar. Song was frequently recorded from a range of sites as March progressed with “lots noisily singing” at Priors Halton on 13 Mar. Nest building was noted at Newport Cemetery 20 Mar and a pair was engaged in courtship and display at Ironbridge on 22 Mar with a pair noted mating there on 26 Mar. Twelve at VP on 8 Apr must have included breeding birds and nest building was in fact noted there on 28 Apr, a pair was recorded at Eardington Nature Reserve on 14 Apr, an adult was carrying nest material at Ironbridge on 22 Apr and nest building was in progress at Cross Lane Head by 6 May.

Confirmed breeding was well documented and comprised Sutton Lane 3 Apr, Haughmond Hill 18 Apr, Coalbrookdale 22 May, Beambridge 22 May, Ironbridge 5 Jun, Cross Lane Head 5 Jun and 17 Jul, Newport 13 Jun, Rhos Fiddle 22 Jun, VP

4 Jul, Peel Wyke 8 Jul and finally at Trench Pool 23 Jul. One male was still singing in oil-seed rape at Ferneyhall Dingle 21 Jul, with song last recorded from one male at Ironbridge on 24 Jul. An adult at Ironbridge on 27 Jul was showing signs of moult, indicating the cessation of breeding activity. Unusually, a male gave several bursts of song on a mild, sunny day at Ironbridge on 30 Sep, and again on 1 Oct and 2 Oct.

Dunnock was recorded mainly as ones or twos in the second winter period but six were noted at Trefonen 9 Oct and at VP on 18 Oct. Seven were at Beambridge on 28 Oct, with six at Moelydd on 2 Nov, 10 VP on 5 Nov and at Wall Farm on 20 Nov. Further counts were of seven at Woodseaves on 25 Nov, six at Grove Farm near Bicton on 1 Dec and seven at Ridgwardine on 17 Dec during the BTO's Farmland Bird Count project. Two male Dunnocks were engaged in territorial song on 25 Nov at Ironbridge and again on 10 Dec and 11 Dec and three were wing-flicking there in that characteristic way on 26 Nov.

The Dunnock has a complex social system and records of singing males will not necessarily reflect the true breeding population. Mature, overgrown hedgerows with outgrowths of bramble, nettle and dog rose are favoured habitat so the retention of hedgerows and scrub corners, encouraged through DEFRA's agri-environment schemes, should aid conservation. In addition, the creation of low-level scrub through coppicing along woodland edge and rides should prove beneficial in woodland habitat.

FLAVA WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava flavissima*

Shropshire status: Uncommon summer visitor
Conservation status: UKBAP, LBAP, Red List
BBS: Present in 4% of plots, eight birds recorded
Author: GB

In total, 56 records were received (up on 42 in 2017). The Yellow Wagtail's breeding distribution in Shropshire has a marked affinity to the North Shropshire Plain and the Eastern Sandstone Plain and just 12% were from sites in the south of the County (SO grid references).

The first record of this attractive African summer migrant was of one bird on 7 Apr on a pond at Chirbury. This was followed by one "flying north, calling" at Tibberton on 8 Apr, one at Dodecote on 10 Apr, two at Sandford on 20 Apr and two including a male in song at Polemere on 21 Apr. Other arrivals were two at Uppington on

21 Apr, three at Noneley on 27 Apr, two, a male and a female, at VP on 27 Apr and one at Annscroft on 4 May. There appeared to be fewer records from typical passage wetland site such as VP with birds quickly occupying farmland breeding habitat.

Breeding activity was noted at Bicton 11 May with displaying observed amongst the three birds present and a pair was suspected breeding in an arable crop at Lythwood Farm 3 Jun. Breeding was confirmed only at a few sites, comprising Hordley and Colehurst on 11 Jun, Montgomery Canal on 26 Jun, VP on 2 Jul, Prees Heath on 4 Jul and Childs Ercall on 22 Jul where two adults and two immatures were present in a carrot field. Breeding activity appeared to cease by mid-July.

A significant count of 15 Yellow Wagtail at Condover on 23 Aug rose to a notable 29 adults and immatures feeding amongst cattle on 28 Aug. Five were recorded at Camp Farm on 26 Aug in oil-seed rape stubble. Final records comprised singles at Beambridge on 30 Aug, at Dodecote on 4 Sep and Tibberton on 6 Sep with two at Condover on 8 Sep constituting the final record of the year.

The Yellow Wagtail is one of several long-distance African summer migrants in severe decline, but, because of the large landscape issues, involved targeted conservation measures are probably limited. SOS members can record and highlight the problems faced by the Yellow Wagtail on farmland and promote agri-environment schemes at every opportunity. These include the creation of water features, fallow plots, invertebrate rich headlands, 'Skylark plots' and beetle banks in autumn-sown cereals. More records of breeding and habitat are required. The low number of records from the southern half of Shropshire is probably attributable to the fact that its favoured habitat is located on northern lowland farmland but suitable habitat in South Shropshire, particularly potato and bean fields, is worth checking for new breeding sites.

Blue-headed Wagtail *Motacilla flava flava*

One was recorded at Polemere on 26 May, and a female, paired with a Yellow Wagtail, was noted there on 2 Jun.

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

Shropshire status: Fairly common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor
Conservation Status: Red List
BBS: Present in 2% of plots, two birds recorded
Author: GB

In total, 185 records were received (up on 176 in 2017 and 158 in 2016) in all months, from a range of wetland habitats including rivers, streams, brooks, lakes, pools, reservoirs, ponds, canals, sewage treatment works and from farmland and built-up areas. Grey Wagtail has a strong affinity with the upland watercourses of South Shropshire with seventy percent of records from sites in the southern half (SO grid reference) of the County. Records were mainly of single birds and twos throughout January and February but four were recorded at Wyre Forest 17 Feb.

Breeding activity was first noted on 23 Feb at Dinham Bridge where a possible pair was noted. Pairs were subsequently recorded at Eardington NR on 19 Mar, on the River Teme at Whitcliffe on 26 Mar, Beambridge on 5 Apr and in the Wyre Forest on 18 Apr. A male was singing at Newcastle-on-Clun on 17 Apr and a nest was noted in the guttering of a farm building there on 10 May. Breeding was confirmed at six sites – Pentre 12 May, where two pairs were located, Duffryn 14 May, Wyre Forest 19 May, Whitcliffe 25 May, Newcastle-on-Clun 4 Jun, Ironbridge 2 July with two successful pairs noted there on 3 Jul and at Granville Country Park on 15 Jul. No Grey Wagtails on the River Severn between Ironbridge and Coalport on 13 May was “worrying”.

Grey Wagtail was recorded mainly as singles and twos in the autumn and second winter period and only one was recorded along a 3km stretch of the River Severn between Ironbridge and Buildwas Bridge on 10 Sep. High counts comprised 15 feeding on the filter beds and associated areas at Shifnal Sewage Treatment Works on 12 Sep. The 2018 West Midland Ringing Group report for this site notes a count of 54 Grey Wagtail for the year. Eight on the River Teme in the late afternoon of 13 Nov at Whitcliffe Nov were thought to be roosting in an evergreen.

Severe winters can cause declines in Grey Wagtail populations and more evidence of winter movements, breeding activity and habitats would be of conservation interest given its Red-List status.

ALBA WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba*

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

Shropshire status: Common resident
Conservation status: Amber List
BBS: Present in 43% of plots, 39 birds recorded, an average of 1.8 per occupied plot
Shropshire BBS index: 1.17, annual change -0.10
Author: GB

A total of 302 records were received, down on 324 in 2017, from all months and in a variety of habitats including lakes, pools, meres, rivers, reservoirs, canals, reedbeds, sewerage treatment works, farmland, hills, moorland, heathland, mosses, grassland and built-up areas. Larger counts in the first winter period comprised 11 at Annscroft and eight at Shawbury 12 Jan, eight at Molverley 29 Jan and 36 feeding amongst sheep in a muddy beet field at Trefonen on 15 Mar.

Commencement of breeding activity was first noted on 19 Mar with a pair at Eardington NR. Pairs were subsequently noted at Uppington on 21 Apr and Nedge Hill on 1 May, with territorial activity recorded at Brockenhurst Farm on 30 Apr. Breeding was confirmed at Whixall Moss on 2 Jun, Coalport on 5 Jun, Leighton on 19 Jun, Wall Farm on 26 Jun, Annscroft on 6 Jun and unusually late at Wall Farm again on 20 Aug.

Flocks began forming in September with arable fields providing good feeding opportunities. Thirty-eight fed behind a tractor at Micklewood on 7 Sep and a large flock of 106 foraged behind a plough at Condover on 8 Sep. Fifteen were recorded on a newly-harrowed field at Moreton Say on 25 Sep with 70 feeding in a recently cultivated field at Annscroft 1 Oct, and 33 in a freshly tilled field at Condover on 5 Oct increased to 72 by 7 Oct. 15 were at Cockshutt on 11 Oct with 30 still at Annscroft on 12 Oct increasing to 40 on 16 Oct. Twenty were at Wolverley on 28 Oct and also at Whitcliffe 30 Oct, with 17 at Crosemere on 3 Nov and 19 at Ridgwardine on 17 Dec. A male chasing another male at Leighton on 12 Nov indicates some probable defence of food resources in the winter period.

Given the number of records submitted Pied Wagtail is a popular and ubiquitous bird in Shropshire but more evidence of breeding, passage movements, winter flocks and roosting sites would be of interest.

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

Shropshire status: Fairly common resident, common passage migrant, scarcer in winter
Conservation status: Amber List
BBS: Present in 4% of plots, 45 birds recorded, an average of 22.5 per occupied plot
Author: GEH

One hundred and eighty-two records were received, a 20% increase on 2017. Records were from all months of the year but with obvious increases during the months of March to April and September to November, when birds are moving to and from

breeding grounds. Interestingly only one record was received during August. They were shared evenly between sites in the north and sites in the south.

During the first quarter, maximum site counts included 23 feeding in stubble at Buildwas (14 Jan), 21 at Chelmarsh Reservoir (2 Mar), 12 Beambridge to Aston-on-Clun (13 Mar), 10 at Shawbury (15 Mar), 15 at Maddock's Hill (25 Mar) and 50 at Kemberton (24 Mar),

Spring and summer counts included 39 at the Stiperstones on 19 Apr with 35 there on 9 May, 20 were at Shawbury (6 Apr) and 10 at the Long Mynd (28 Apr). The solitary August record was of two at Beambridge on the 9th. Although many of the records came from areas with suitable breeding habitat, which is becoming much less common, evidence of breeding was very poorly reported and was confirmed only at Llanfair Waterdine, Mason's Bank, the Long Mynd and Whixall Moss.

The autumn/winter period produced maximum site counts of 30 at Mason's Bank (1 Sep), 25 at the Long Mynd (22 Sep), 57 at Cantlop (24 Sep), 15 at Earls Hill (19 Oct), 30 at Annscroft (13 Dec), 20 at Cole Mere (26 Nov) and 10 at Stapeley Hill (2 Dec).

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

Shropshire status: Fairly common summer visitor
Conservation status: UKBAP, Red List
BBS: Present in 4% of plots, three birds recorded
Author: GEH

Seventy-one records were received, a small increase from last year but they came from 18 locations, a reduction from last year when they were recorded at 25 sites. Most were from upland sites in the south of the County with only Cefn Coch, The Wrekin and Whixall Moss in the north.

The first arrivals were two near the summit of the Wrekin (9 Apr) when they were also reported as present at Caer Caradoc. The next sightings were on 14 Apr when records came from Clunton Coppice, Cefn Gunthly and the Wyre Forest. Most records were of one or two birds, but higher counts included several from three to a maximum of nine at the Wyre Forest between 14 Apr and 9 Jul. Elsewhere, four were at Cefn Gunthly (14 Apr), three were at Whixall Moss (28 Apr), three at the Wrekin (6 May), three at Bury Ditches (21 May), and six at Cefn Coch (4 Jul).

Breeding was poorly documented and was only confirmed at Cefn Coch and the

Wyre Forest. However, many records were of singing/displaying males or pairs in suitable habitat supporting possible or probable breeding. Indeed, it seems likely that most records relate to breeding birds which arrive direct to the breeding grounds and, in Shropshire, are rarely recorded on passage.

The last records of the year were two at Cefn Coch (3 Aug) and two at Ragleth Hill (29 Aug), later than last year when there were no reports after 25 Jul.

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

Shropshire status: Abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor
Conservation status: Green List
BBS: Present in 100% of plots, 365 birds recorded, an average of 7.2 birds per occupied plot
Shropshire BBS index: 0.54, annual change +0.01
Author: APD

At Wall Farm, 100 on 6 Jan was the highest count during this period but they had reduced to 55 by 23 Jan. Fifty were at VP on 1 Jan, with a maximum of 40 present in February and 30 in March. Fifty at Wood Lane on 4 Jan and 45 at Bridgnorth Cemetery on 19 Jan were largest numbers elsewhere and the average count was 10.

Song was first heard at Cross Lane Head on 27 Feb. An occupied nest found at Whixall Moss on 6 May and recently-fledged young at Church Stretton on 13 Jun were the only confirmed breeding reports.

Autumn flocks were slow to build, 63 were at Cantlopgrove on 21 Oct, and 102 there on 2 Nov was the highest count of the year. Fifty were at Wolverley on 28 Oct, 60 at Willaston on 19 Nov, 80 at Wall Farm the next day and 64 at VP on 24 Nov; the average count at this time was just seven birds.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

Shropshire status: Fairly common, occasionally irruptive winter visitor and passage migrant
Conservation status: Schedule 1, Green List
Author: APD

Despite 128 reports at the start of the year from 48 locations suggesting a good year, 2018 continued as 2017 had ended, with quite low numbers. Only three sites

managed to reach double figures; VP 15 on 1 Jan, Shakenhurst 12 on 27 Feb and 4 Mar, and Tetchill Moor with 60 on 4 Mar. The maximum elsewhere was six and 97 reports were of one or two individuals. They were still widespread into April with 21 reports during the month, the last of which came from Alveley where a single was present on 25th.

The first to return was a female at Earnstrey, near Abdon on 15 Oct, this was followed by reports from seven sites the following weekend, ranging from Market Drayton in the north to Colstey Wood in the south. These were all of singles or pairs, apart from nine on the Long Mynd on 20th. There were 20 further records including 20 at Ratlinghope on 29 Oct and 14 at Gorstybank on 14 Nov. In December two large flocks were found; 100 at Brown Clee on 2nd and 200 at Linley on 23rd. The maximum elsewhere was three.

HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Shropshire status: Rare, occasionally irruptive, winter visitor, has bred
Conservation status: UKBAP, Red List, RBBP
Author: APD

Records of this species are normally subject to assessment by the Rarities Committee. However, due to the number of records, 154 from 30 locations, the difficulty of obtaining descriptions and a widely publicised national influx, it was decided to include all reports from the 2017-18 winter period. This was thought likely to provide a more accurate picture of the influx than omitting those records without descriptions.

The bulk of the reports and the highest counts came from the Ludlow and Whitcliffe area which apart from a gap in the mid-2000s has long been a traditional site for this species. First reported here in November 2017, 17 were present on New Year's Day and reports continued until 8 Apr. The highest counts occurred during January; 60 on 18th and 50 on 22nd and 23rd. Thirty-five were present on 18 Feb, 40 on 18 Mar and 10 on 4 Apr after which singles on the 6th, 7th and 8th were the last reports from this site.

Yew trees in church yards and cemeteries provided a good food source, many records and some of the larger flocks away from Whitcliffe came from these sites; 31 at Clun Church on 31 Jan, 12 at Lydbury North Church on 16 Feb, 10 at Newport Cemetery on 5 Mar and 25 at Fitz Church on 24 Mar. Single figures were noted at churches at Meole Brace, Whittington, Monkhoppton, Bishops Castle and Bucknell and other reports from villages may well have included church records, but details were not provided.

Ten at Priors Halton on 26 Feb and 24 at Adderley on 7 Apr were the highest numbers elsewhere and a single at the latter site on 10 Apr was the last of the season.

Two reports from the Condoover area on 21 Oct; a single and two migrating south-west were the only records (*TC Lowe*) following the influx. These have been accepted by the Rarities Committee.

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Shropshire status: Common resident
Conservation status: UKBAP, LBAP (Farmland Birds), Amber List
BBS: Present in 29% of plots, 25 birds recorded, an average of 1.7 per occupied plot
Author: APD

Bullfinch were reported from 109 locations in 93 different tetrads. Of the 433 reports that included a count, 318 (73%) were of singles or pairs and 398 (92%) were of five or fewer. Twenty of the 35 higher totals were submitted by a single observer from a regular walk in the Aston-on-Clun area. These included five totals of between 10 and 14 birds, including 10 feeding on a bird table at Beambridge on 18 Jan and 13 near a feeder there on 28 Feb. The only other double-figure count was of 12 at Bridgnorth Cemetery on 19 Jan.

Not a prolific or loud singer, song was reported on four occasions, including four out of six males found at Ironbridge on 6 Mar. Display was noted at Ruyton-XI-Towns on 22 Apr, and agitated behaviour near Clungunford on 3 May and Masons Bank on 19 Jul. A hawthorn bush had a nest with eggs at Old Oswestry on 10 May and a juvenile was with an adult at Church Stretton on 1 Jun; due to the sedentary nature of this species it would have bred nearby.

A female caught for ringing at Market Drayton on 5 Mar was released without a ring because the feet had signs of Papilloma virus.

GREENFINCH *Chloris chloris*

Shropshire status: Common resident
Conservation status: Green List
BBS: Present in 51% of plots, 70 birds recorded, an average of 2.7 per occupied plot
Shropshire BBS index: 0.60, annual change +0.01
Author: APD

No diseased birds were reported but numbers remain low so it may indicate a lack of reporting rather than disease. However, they remain widespread being present at 106 locations. Double figures were only found at seven sites in the first winter period, with 21 at Newport Cemetery on 5 Mar the maximum. Even VP could only manage 10 on 14 Jan.

Song was first heard at Bridgnorth on 18 Feb and later in the season fledged young were noted at Church Stretton, Aston-on-Clun and Cross Lane Head.

The average count during the final part of the year was just three and the maximum was 11 at Cross Lane Head on 18 Oct.

LINNET *Linaria cannabina*

Shropshire status: Common resident
Conservation status: UKBAP, LBAP (Farmland Birds), Red List
BBS: Present in 33% of plots, 152 birds recorded, an average of 8.9 per occupied plot
Author: APD

Some very large flocks were present during January. At Wall Farm, 150 were feeding in set-aside on 6th and 12th, 240 in stubble at Little Bolas on 9th, 400 on weedy banks surrounding the new workings at Wood Lane on 12th, and 100 were in a partially flooded field at Noneley on 19th. Flock size then diminished considerably with 55 at Tibberton on a seed mix with Artemisia on 24 Feb, 70 still at Wall Farm on 13 Mar and 60 at Kemberton on 24 Mar.

On 6 Apr song was heard at Lyth Hill and three had returned to a regular breeding site at Trefonen on 8 Apr, but a few late flocks persisted well into the month. One hundred and twenty were feeding in a grassy stubble field at Buildwas on 14th, 70 in a weedy field where carrots had been grown at Ercall Heath on 20th and 53 in an area of clear-fell at Cefn Coch on 22nd. A nest with eggs at Old Oswestry on 10 May was the first of 11 recorded at this site, but numbers were down on previous years. A successful nest was found in gorse at Trefonen and fledged young at Masons Bank and Rhos Fiddle.

Following the breeding season, no more than 12 were reported until 31 Aug when 47 were at Annscroft. By 21 Sep this flock had increased to 80, moving between a pre-harvest potato field and freshly cultivated cereal fields. Sixty at VP on 20 Oct, 71 at Pitchford on 1 Nov, 75 near Kemberton on 24 Nov and 80 at VP on 4 Dec were the largest gatherings later in the year.

LESSER REDPOLL *Acanthis cabaret*

Shropshire status: Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant,
uncommon resident
Conservation status: UKBAP, Red List
BBS: Present in 2% of plots, one bird recorded
Author: APD

From January to the end of April, 93 reports were received, with an average count of only four birds, but several observers commented on the difficulty of counting this species in treetops and that many counts were under-estimates. The larger flocks were 25 at Market Drayton on 7 Feb, 35 at Tibberton the following day, 24 at Cefn Coch on 22 Apr and 20 at Mary Knoll on 30 Apr. Between one and three regularly visited feeders in a Newport garden, one was also seen at a feeder at Wrockwardine on 19 Jan and a male visited a Trefonen garden during snowy conditions on 2 Apr.

Despite the two large flocks in late April noted above, there were just nine reports from four sites between May and August, from Cefn Coch (four), Stiperstones (three), Masons Bank and Anchor, these are upland areas with conifers and contain suitable breeding habitat.

A single September record of seven at Whixall Moss on 29th marked the start of autumn passage at this site. The ringing project here reported 70 (68 caught) on 7 Oct, 47 (14 caught) on 15 Oct, 80 (69 caught) on 22 Oct and 20 (9 caught) on 10 Nov. There were 23 reports from 11 further sites and in December numbers were higher than those earlier in the year, with 50 at Brown Clee on 2nd, 100 at Wyre Forest on 22nd and 30 at VP on several dates.

COMMON CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*

Shropshire status: Uncommon resident, irruptive scarce winter visitor
Conservation status: Schedule 1, Green List
BBS: Present in 2% of plots, one bird recorded
Author: APD

Crossbills were reported from seven locations during the early part of the year, mainly from typical upland forestry habitats, the exception being 26 at Bridgnorth Cemetery on 19 Jan. Maximum numbers at the traditional sites were 28 at Bury Ditches on 10 Jan, 15 at High Vinnals on 13 Jan, two at Lower Short Ditch on 22 Feb and 19 Apr – the latter noted as a breeding pair– and one at Clunton Coppice on

25 Mar. Four in the Wyre Forest on 14 Apr included two juveniles. The only records in the north were from Cefn Coch where six on 20 Mar was the highest count, and were four there on 22 Apr was the final record of this period.

Nine reports from June to September were all in single figures and included a single flying north at Longford, Market Drayton and two at Whixall, the others came mostly from the previously-mentioned sites. October saw an increase of reports and flock sizes. On 21 Oct three flew south-west over Cantlop and it seems highly likely that they were the three seen nearby at Conover and Pitchford on the same day. Double-figure counts came from Stowe Hill 10 on 30 Oct, Black Hill 12 on 2 Nov, Brown Clee 60 on 2 Dec and Shelve Hill 20 on 24 Dec, again the only northern site was Cefn Coch with 16 on 14 Dec.

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

Shropshire status: Very common resident
Conservation status: Green List
BBS: Present in 75% of plots, 236 birds recorded, an average of 6.2 per plot
Shropshire BBS index: 2.64, annual change +0.01
Author: APD

The 882 reports came from 147 tetrads spread across the County, the few gaps reflecting lack of observers rather than birds. Flock size was generally small in the early year, averaging just six. A mixed finch flock on set-aside at Wall Farm on 10 Jan contained 100 Goldfinch, 40 were at Crose Mere on 14 Jan and 30 at Annscroft and VP, also in early in Jan.

Goldfinch have a long breeding season and although song was heard at Cross Lane Head on 27 Feb, the first nest containing young was found in a dense bush in a Ludlow garden on 13 May. Breeding was confirmed at 10 further sites.

As the breeding season ended, numbers at VP rose quickly from 50 on 20 Aug to 250 on 8 Sep. Only 30 could be found on 24 Sep and up to 20 remained to the end of the year. Monthly maxima away from VP were Cefn Coch 35 on 3 Aug, Whitcott Keysett 30 on 9 Sep, Dodecote 35 on 16 Oct, and Newport 40 on 22 Nov and 12 Dec.

In addition to feeding on alder, dandelion and thistles, they were observed feeding on lilac seed heads in a Newport garden in December.

SISKIN *Spinus spinus*

Shropshire status: Fairly common winter visitor, uncommon resident
Conservation status: Green List
Author: APD

On 6 Jan 150 were moving in waves along a brook at Mardu, 100 were in alders at Whitcott Keysett on 24 Jan and 51 at Aston Locks on 14 Jan. In contrast, 25 at Aston-on-Clun on 4 Feb was the largest count that month. Large numbers feeding in larch were making a tremendous noise at Cefn Coch on 20 Mar when about 40 were counted when flushed by a Sparrowhawk. Forty-four were taking sunflower hearts in a Market Drayton garden on 4 Mar and 40 were still in alders at Whitcott Keysett on 5 Mar. Thirty at Mary Knoll on 9 Apr and 10 at Pentre on 14 Apr were the only double-figure counts of the month.

Reports from May to August more than doubled from 23 in 2017 to 48. Thirty-one of these came from just four sites: Cefn Coch, Oakeley Mynd, Pentre and the Wyre Forest. Singing and display was observed in several places at Bury Ditches on 21 May, fledged young were reported from the Wyre Forest on 25 Jun and at least two fledged young were being fed in a conifer at Cefn Coch on 29 Jun.

There were just two September reports involving three individuals, they became more widespread in October but 60 at Aston-on-Clun on 29 Oct was the only count to exceed 10. They continued to be reported from Aston-on-Clun with maxima of 40 on 7 Nov and 90 on 13 Dec. Elsewhere, 15 at Whixall Moss on 8 Nov was the highest count until December when 30 were at Whitcott Keysett on 19th, 70 at Morton on 23rd, 42 at Newcastle on Clun on 30th and 53 at Aston Locks on 31st.

CORN BUNTING *Emberiza calandra*

Shropshire status: Scarce and declining resident
Conservation status: UKBAP, LBAP (Farmland Birds), Red List
BBS: Present in 10 % of plots, 11 birds recorded, an average of 2.2 per occupied plot
Author: APD

Although there were 63 reports in 2017, over half (37) were from VP, so the 54 this year with just three from VP is a much better return. However, the comment made last year about declining numbers still applies with only four totals above seven. Thirty at Isombridge on 31 Jan was a good start and 14 were on an organic farm at Kemberton on 10 Mar.

Early song was heard at High Ercall on 22 Jan, but it began in earnest on 24 Mar with most of the 33 reports up to 3 Jul indicating song or territories. The maximum count was 10 singing males at Childs Ercall on 15 Jun, with three or four at Beckbury, Knockin and Northwood. Fifteen were flushed from the edge of a cereal field near Knockin on 11 Jul and two more could be heard singing nearby. A pair at Crose Mere on 17 Jul returned to the same spot in a barley crop several times, fluttering over it and making alarm calls indicating an active nest. Once the observer moved-on the male began singing.

Between 21 Aug and 24 Nov there were just six further reports totalling 17 birds, including seven on wires over maize stubble at Tibberton on 5 Nov.

An unusual report indicating presence at Stokesay Castle on 26 Aug was well-away from the normal range. Are birds breeding in this area? There were no reports from the south-east quarter during the year, with March records from Kemberton being the most south-easterly report. Is this contracting population still extant? Observations from birders living in or visiting these areas, whether positive or negative would be welcomed.

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citrinella*

Shropshire status: Common resident
Conservation status: UKBAP, LBAP (Farmland Birds), Red List
BBS: Present in 47% of plots, 96 birds recorded, an average of 4.0 per occupied plot
Shropshire BBS index: 0.59, annual change +0.04
Author: APD

The previous year ended with very low numbers and this continued into 2018. As usual, VP was the most productive site with 20 in January and 30 in February. Up to 12 were on an organic farm at Kemberton in March. Further reports from 24 locations at this time numbered between one and six.

Fourteen near Beckjay, Clungunford in the afternoon of 10 Apr included a record of nest-building which was also observed at Bicton on 11 May. Adults were carrying food at Whitcott Keysett on 20 Jun and fledged young were at Aston-on-Clun on 16 Jul. Yellowhammers were more widespread in the breeding season than in both winter periods with records from 54 sites at this time. Apart from Beckjay, numbers were mainly between one and three with a maximum of eight.

There were 38 reports from 22 sites to the end of the year with 10 in stubble at Starvecrow on 22 Nov and 50 in weedy stubble near Prees on 26 Dec.

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Shropshire status: Common resident
Conservation status: UKBAP, LBAP (Farmland Birds), Amber List
BBS: Present in 10% of plots, six birds recorded, an average of 1.2 per occupied plot
Author: APD

The value of bird crops, particularly for finches and buntings is particularly evident in this account, with the highest counts coming from Wall Farm, with 60 in January and 25 in March, and from VP, with 30 in January, 40 in February and 20 in March. Twenty other sites produced a maximum of just eight at this time.

Habitat restricts the breeding range of this species, rivers, canals, marshes and the main wetland reserves dominate the 21 reports from the north and the upland areas of Clun Forest, The Long Mynd, Clee Hills and Chelmarsh the 11 reports from the south. Twelve were at Whixall Moss on 28 Apr, and 20 on 2 Jun included adults feeding young. The observer commented 'abundant on the Moss, mostly males seen'. The only other site with confirmed breeding was VP, eight were present on 24 May and young were being fed on 3 Jun and 26 Jul.

The year ended with 33 reports from 16 locations. All were in single figures except for 12 at VP on 5 Nov, and Shifnal Sewage Treatment Works where exceptional roost counts of 400 and 350 (98 ringed) were present on 16 and 22 Dec respectively.

Feral Species/Escapes

These are species conforming to Category E in the BOU classification system, i.e. species recorded as introductions, transportees or escapees from captivity, or whose populations are not thought to be self-sustaining. Individuals reported here are thought to be escapes or birds not obviously cared-for.

These are included as a record, if self-sustaining populations become established in the future. Waterfowl and gamebirds are overwhelmingly the main species groups in this section, the former still being popular with bird keepers.

Several non-native waterfowl are a permanent fixture of the 'promenade' at The Mere, Ellesmere, and reports of feral species here are excluded unless noted by observers as free flying.

Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens*

Good views were had of a singleton with Canada Geese at Baggly Moor on 8 Nov.

Muscovy Duck *Cairina moschata*

One on the Severn at Shrewsbury on 28 Nov.

Wood Duck *Aix sponsa*

Just two records from Shrewsbury this year with single birds reported on 24 Feb and 28 Nov. Additionally, there was an unusual record of three birds at Pontesford Hill on 25 Oct.

Wild Turkey *Meleagris gallopavo*

Six females were seen on the road from Bromfield to Leintwardine near Stead Vallets on 16 Jan presumably wanderers from the nearby Downton Castle Estate in Herefordshire where the observer (*W Marler*) reports them having been present since 2005. The birds are imports from Canada and have bred ferally on the Downton Estate.

Chukar *Alectoris chukar*

Four birds near Lady Halton on 27 Feb. Two more together on the northern edge of Titterstone Clee on 1 May.

Golden Pheasant *Chrysolophus pictus*

Continuing observations west of Clun with a single at Mason Bank wetland on 15 May and a pair at Cefn Einion on 14 Jun. No evidence of actual breeding attempts.

Lady Amherst's Pheasant *Chrysolophus amherstiae*

One reported from Edgebolton on 25 Mar.

Reeve's Pheasant *Syrnaticus reevesii*

At Priors Halton a single bird on 27 Feb and four on 30 Oct were with Common Pheasants and assumed to have been captive bred. Two males at Tibberton on 9 Apr.

Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus*

Recorded in January and September from the canal-side at Ellesmere.

African Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus*

A single bird reported from Melverley Green on 31 Oct. This species is now classed as invasive in Europe after escapees from collections became established as breeding species in France and Spain.

Shropshire County Checklist

At a meeting of the report editors and compilers in March 2019, it was felt that the inclusion of an up-to-date checklist of Shropshire birds with summary details of whether or not the species is a national or a County rarity would be of great benefit both to readers of the Annual Report and to recorders. Such a list has been available on the Society's web page for many years and is a useful reference for bird recorders in the County.

The column labelled 'Rarity Reporting' in the table below shows BBRC (British Birds Rarities Committee) or County Rarity for national and County rarities respectively. Observers recording such species should always inform the County Bird Recorder initially; the description and evidence will be forwarded to BBRC if this is required. Any species not currently on the county list will require submission of a County rarity description for acceptance and may also require a BBRC submission.

The template for county rarity reporting can be found at: <http://www.shropshirebirds.com/index/recording-the-birds-of-shropshire/>.

The latest BBRC assessment list can be found at www.bbrc.org.uk/main-information/species-taxa.

With the publication of the County Avifauna, the opportunity has been taken to update and align the status of each species in the County (please see Introduction to the Systematic List) for further details.

Species	Scientific Name	Shropshire Status	Rarity Reporting	Last Occurrence
Brent Goose	<i>Branta bernicla</i>	Very rare winter visitor	County Rarity	2018
Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	Uncommon naturalised resident		2018
Barnacle Goose	<i>Branta leucopsis</i>	Rare naturalised resident, has bred, possible vagrant		2018
Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	Uncommon naturalised resident		2018
Pink-footed Goose	<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>	Scarce winter visitor		2018
Tundra Bean Goose	<i>Anser serrirostris</i>	Very rare winter visitor	County Rarity	2017
White-fronted Goose	<i>Anser albifrons</i>	Rare winter visitor	County Rarity	2018
Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	Uncommon resident		2018
Bewick's Swan	<i>Cygnus columbianus</i>	Rare winter visitor	County Rarity	2018
Whooper Swan	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>	Scarce winter visitor	County Rarity	2018
Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>	Rare naturalised visitor, very rare breeding species		2018

Species	Scientific Name	Shropshire Status	Rarity Reporting	Last Occurrence
Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	Scarce summer and winter visitor		2018
Mandarin Duck	<i>Aix galericulata</i>	Scarce naturalised resident		2018
Garganey	<i>Spatula querquedula</i>	Rare passage migrant, very rare summer visitor	County Rarity (except for males in breeding plumage)	2018
Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>	Uncommon winter visitor, very rare breeding species		2018
Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>	Scarce winter visitor, rare summer visitor		2018
Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>	Uncommon winter visitor		2018
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Fairly common resident; population supplemented by annual releases		2018
Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	Scarce winter visitor		2018
Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	Fairly common winter visitor, rare breeding species		2018
Green-winged Teal	<i>Anas carolinensis</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	2018
Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>	Very rare naturalised visitor	County Rarity	2012
Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	Scarce winter visitor, has bred		2018
Ferruginous Duck	<i>Aythya nyroca</i>	Vagrant	BBRC	2002
Ring-necked Duck	<i>Aythya collaris</i>	Very rare passage migrant and winter visitor	County Rarity	2015
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	Uncommon resident		2018
Scaup	<i>Aythya marila</i>	Rare winter visitor	County Rarity	2018
Lesser Scaup	<i>Aythya affinis</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	2005
Eider	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	1993
Velvet Scoter	<i>Melanitta fusca</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	2016
Common Scoter	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>	Rare passage migrant and winter visitor		2018
Long-tailed Duck	<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>	Very rare winter visitor	County Rarity	2017
Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>	Scarce winter visitor		2018
Smew	<i>Mergellus albellus</i>	Very rare winter visitor	County Rarity	2016
Goosander	<i>Mergus merganser</i>	Scarce resident, uncommon winter visitor		2018
Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>	Very rare winter visitor	County Rarity	2013
Ruddy Duck	<i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i>	Naturalised resident now eradicated		2017
Black Grouse	<i>Lyrurus tetrix</i>	Rare visitor, has bred	County Rarity	2017
Red Grouse	<i>Lagopus lagopus</i>	Scarce resident		2018
Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>	Uncommon naturalised resident; population supplemented by annual releases		2018

Species	Scientific Name	Shropshire Status	Rarity Reporting	Last Occurrence
Grey Partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>	Uncommon resident; population supplemented by annual releases		2018
Quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	Rare summer visitor		2018
Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	Very common naturalised resident; population supplemented by annual releases		2018
Red-throated Diver	<i>Gavia stellata</i>	Very rare winter visitor	County Rarity	2012
Black-throated Diver	<i>Gavia arctica</i>	Very rare winter visitor	County Rarity	2005
Great Northern Diver	<i>Gavia immer</i>	Very rare winter visitor	County Rarity	2018
Storm Petrel	<i>Hydrobates pelagicus</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	
Leach's Petrel	<i>Oceanodroma leucorhoa</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	2006
Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	
Manx Shearwater	<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	2011
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	Uncommon resident		2018
Red-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps grisegena</i>	Very rare winter visitor	County Rarity	2012
Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	Uncommon resident		2018
Slavonian Grebe	<i>Podiceps auritus</i>	Very rare winter visitor	County Rarity	1998
Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	Rare passage migrant, has bred	County Rarity	2018
Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>	Vagrant	BBRC	2014
White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	2012
Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	Very rare visitor	County Rarity	2016
Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	Very rare passage migrant	County Rarity	2016
Bittern	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	Very rare winter visitor	County Rarity	2011
Little Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>	Vagrant?	BBRC	2018
Night-heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	1988
Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	No modern records	BBRC	
Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	Very rare visitor	County Rarity	2018
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Uncommon resident		2018
Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	2015
Great White Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	Rare visitor	County Rarity	2018
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor		2018
Magnificent Frigatebird	<i>Fregata magnificens</i>	Vagrant	BBRC	2005
Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	2012
Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	1993
Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	Uncommon winter visitor, scarce non-breeding resident		2018
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	Rare passage migrant	County Rarity	2018
Honey-buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>	Very rare passage migrant, has bred	County Rarity	2018
Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	Uncommon resident		2018
Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	Scarce resident		2018

Species	Scientific Name	Shropshire Status	Rarity Reporting	Last Occurrence
Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	Rare passage migrant, has bred	County Rarity	2018
Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	Rare winter visitor and passage migrant.	County Rarity (May to September records only)	2018
Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>	Very rare passage migrant	County Rarity	2017
Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	Scarce resident		2018
White-tailed Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	2005
Rough-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo lagopus</i>	Very rare winter visitor	County Rarity	2016
Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	Fairly common resident		2018
Little Bustard	<i>Tetrax tetrax</i>	No modern records	BBRC	
Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>	Rare resident, scarce winter visitor		2018
Corncrake	<i>Crex crex</i>	Very rare passage migrant, has bred	County Rarity	2016
Little Crane	<i>Porzana parva</i>	No modern records	BBRC	
Spotted Crane	<i>Porzana porzana</i>	Very rare passage migrant	County Rarity	2014
Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	Common resident		2018
Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	Fairly common winter visitor, uncommon resident		2018
Crane	<i>Grus grus</i>	Rare visitor	County Rarity	2016
Stone-curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicnemus</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	2012
Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	Scarce summer visitor		2018
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	
Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	Very rare passage migrant	County Rarity	2018
Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Common winter visitor, uncommon breeding species		2018
White-tailed Plover	<i>Vanellus leucurus</i>	Vagrant	BBRC	1975
Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	Uncommon winter visitor, has bred		2018
Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	Very rare passage migrant	County Rarity	2014
Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	Scarce passage migrant		2018
Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	Scarce summer visitor		2018
Dotterel	<i>Charadrius morinellus</i>	Rare passage migrant	County Rarity	2017
Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	Scarce passage migrant		2018
Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	Uncommon summer visitor, scarce winter visitor		2018
Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	Very rare passage migrant	County Rarity	2016
Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	Scarce passage migrant, very rare winter visitor		2018
Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	Rare passage migrant	County Rarity	2016
Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>	Rare passage migrant	County Rarity	2013
Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>	Scarce passage migrant, very rare winter visitor		2018
Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	Very rare passage migrant	County Rarity	2011
Temminck's Stint	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>	Very rare passage migrant	County Rarity	2011
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	Rare passage migrant	County Rarity	2016

Species	Scientific Name	Shropshire Status	Rarity Reporting	Last Occurrence
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	Uncommon passage migrant, rare winter visitor		2018
Purple Sandpiper	<i>Calidris maritima</i>	Very rare passage migrant	County Rarity	2002
Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	Very rare passage migrant	County Rarity	2010
White-rumped Sandpiper	<i>Calidris fuscicollis</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	<i>Calidris subruficollis</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	
Pectoral Sandpiper	<i>Calidris melanotos</i>	Very rare passage migrant	County Rarity	2017
Woodcock	<i>Scolopax rusticola</i>	Common winter visitor, scarce resident		2018
Jack Snipe	<i>Lymnocyrtus minimus</i>	Scarce winter visitor		2018
Great Snipe	<i>Gallinago media</i>	No modern records	BBRC	
Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	Fairly common winter visitor, rare breeding species		2018
Red-necked Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>	Very rare passage migrant	County Rarity	1996
Grey Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus fulicarius</i>	Very rare passage migrant	County Rarity	2011
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	Uncommon passage migrant, rare summer visitor; very rare winter visitor		2018
Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	Uncommon passage migrant, scarce winter visitor.		2018
Lesser Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa flavipes</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	1995
Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	Scarce passage migrant, rare winter visitor; has bred		2018
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	Rare passage migrant	County Rarity	2018
Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>	Very rare passage migrant	County Rarity	2013
Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	Scarce passage migrant		2018
Kittiwake	<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>	Rare passage migrant	County Rarity	2018
Sabine's Gull	<i>Xema sabini</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	2011
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	Common winter visitor, uncommon breeding species		2018
Little Gull	<i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>	Rare passage migrant	County Rarity	2017
Mediterranean Gull	<i>Ichthyaeetus melanocephalus</i>	Rare passage migrant, very rare breeding species		2018
Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>	Uncommon winter visitor, has bred		2018
Ring-billed Gull	<i>Larus delawarensis</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	2018
Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>	Scarce winter visitor		2018
Glaucous Gull	<i>Larus hyperboreus</i>	Rare winter visitor	County Rarity	2018
Iceland Gull	<i>Larus glaucoides</i>	Rare winter visitor	County Rarity	2018
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	Uncommon winter visitor		2018
Caspian Gull	<i>Larus cachinnans</i>	Rare winter visitor	County Rarity	2018
Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>	Scarce winter visitor		2018

Species	Scientific Name	Shropshire Status	Rarity Reporting	Last Occurrence
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	Fairly common winter visitor, rare breeding species		2018
Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>	Vagrant	BBRC	2003
Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>	Very rare passage migrant	County Rarity	2017
Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>	Very rare passage migrant	County Rarity	2016
Roseate Tern	<i>Sterna dougallii</i>	No modern records	County Rarity	
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	Scarce passage migrant, very rare breeding species.		2018
Arctic Tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	Rare passage migrant		2017
Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>	Vagrant	BBRC	2010
White-winged Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	2015
Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>	Rare passage migrant	County Rarity (Birds in non-breeding plumage only)	2018
Great Skua	<i>Stercorarius skua</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	
Pomarine Skua	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	
Arctic Skua	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	2011
Long-tailed Skua	<i>Stercorarius longicaudus</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	1999
Little Auk	<i>Alle alle</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	2018
Common Guillemot	<i>Uria aalge</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	1993
Razorbill	<i>Alca torda</i>	No modern records	County Rarity	
Puffin	<i>Fratercula arctica</i>	No modern records	County Rarity	
Pallas's Sandgrouse	<i>Syrhaptes paradoxus</i>	No modern records	BBRC	
Rock Dove/Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	Fairly common resident		2018
Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>	Common resident		2018
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Very common resident		2018
Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	Rare summer visitor		2018
Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	Common resident		2018
Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	Scarce summer visitor		2018
Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	Uncommon resident		2018
Tawny Owl	<i>Strix aluco</i>	Uncommon resident		2018
Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>	Uncommon naturalised resident		2018
Tengmalm's Owl	<i>Aegolius funereus</i>	No modern records	BBRC	
Long-eared Owl	<i>Asio otus</i>	Rare resident	County Rarity	2016
Short-eared Owl	<i>Asio flammeus</i>	Rare winter visitor, rare passage migrant.	County Rarity (except for observations at Whixall Moss and the Long Mynd)	2018
Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>	Rare summer visitor	County Rarity	2018

Species	Scientific Name	Shropshire Status	Rarity Reporting	Last Occurrence
Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	Fairly common summer visitor		2018
Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	Uncommon resident		2018
Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	2013
Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	Rare passage migrant	County Rarity	2015
Wryneck	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>	Very rare passage migrant	County Rarity	2016
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates minor</i>	Scarce resident		2018
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	Common resident		2018
Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>	Uncommon resident		2018
Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	Uncommon resident		2018
Red-footed Falcon	<i>Falco vespertinus</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	
Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>	Rare resident, scarce winter visitor		2018
Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	Scarce summer visitor		2018
Gyr Falcon	<i>Falco rusticolus</i>	No modern records	BBRC	
Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	Scarce resident and winter visitor		2018
Ring-necked Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	Rare naturalised visitor or escapee	County Rarity	2018
Red-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius collurio</i>	Very rare passage migrant, has bred	County Rarity	2018
Great Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>	Rare winter visitor	County Rarity	2018
Steppe Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius pallidirostris</i>	Vagrant	BBRC	2011
Woodchat Shrike	<i>Lanius senator</i>	Vagrant	BBRC	2007
Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	Very rare passage migrant, has bred	County Rarity	2000
Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	Fairly common resident		2018
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	Common resident		2018
Nutcracker	<i>Nucifraga caryocatactes</i>	Very rare irruptive winter visitor	BBRC	
Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>	No modern records	County Rarity	
Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	Very common resident		2018
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	Very common resident		2018
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	Very common resident		2018
Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus cornix</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	2010
Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	Uncommon resident		2018
Waxwing	<i>Bombycilla garrulus</i>	Rare irruptive winter visitor	County Rarity	2017
Coal Tit	<i>Pariparus ater</i>	Common resident		2018
Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>	Fairly common resident		2018
Willow Tit	<i>Poecile montanus</i>	Scarce resident		2018
Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	Very common resident		2018
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	Very common resident		2018
Bearded Tit	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>	Very rare irruptive visitor	County Rarity	2016
Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>	Very rare winter visitor, has bred	County Rarity	2014
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Common resident		2018
Shore Lark	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	2017

Species	Scientific Name	Shropshire Status	Rarity Reporting	Last Occurrence
Short-toed Lark	<i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>	No modern records	County Rarity	
Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	Fairly common summer visitor		2018
Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Common summer visitor		2018
House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	Common summer visitor		2018
Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	2018
Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	Rare, non-breeding, resident	County Rarity (except for observations along the Newport Canal, Norbroom Marsh and Chelmarsh Reservoir)	2018
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	Common resident		2018
Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	Common summer visitor		2018
Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	Very common summer visitor, scarce winter visitor		2018
Iberian Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus ibericus</i>	Vagrant	BBRC	2017
Wood Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>	Scarce summer visitor		2018
Pallas's Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus proregulus</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	
Yellow-browed Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus inornatus</i>	Very rare passage migrant	County Rarity	2018
Great Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	No modern records	BBRC	
Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	Uncommon summer visitor		2018
Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	Uncommon summer visitor		2018
Marsh Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus palustris</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	2015
Icterine Warbler	<i>Hippolais icterina</i>	No modern records	County Rarity	
Grasshopper Warbler	<i>Locustella naevia</i>	Scarce summer visitor		2017
Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	Very common summer visitor, uncommon winter visitor		2018
Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>	Common summer visitor		2018
Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>	Uncommon summer visitor		2018
Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>	Common summer visitor		2018
Dartford Warbler	<i>Sylvia undata</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	2000
Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>	Rare passage migrant and winter visitor; very rare breeding species	County Rarity	2018
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	Common resident		2018
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Very common resident		2018
Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>	Common resident		2018

Species	Scientific Name	Shropshire Status	Rarity Reporting	Last Occurrence
Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>	Fairly common resident		2018
Rose-coloured Starling	<i>Pastor roseus</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	2018
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Very common winter visitor, common resident		2018
White's Thrush	<i>Zoothera aurea</i>	No modern records	BBRC	
Ring Ouzel	<i>Turdus torquatus</i>	Scarce passage migrant, has bred		2018
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	Very common resident		2018
Black-throated Thrush	<i>Turdus atrogularis</i>	Vagrant	BBRC	2007
Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	Common winter visitor		2018
Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Common winter visitor		2018
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Very common resident		2018
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	Fairly common resident		2018
American Robin	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>	No modern records	BBRC	
Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	Uncommon summer visitor		2018
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	Very common resident		2018
Bluethroat	<i>Luscinia svecica</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	2004
Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>	Very rare summer visitor, has bred	County Rarity	2000
Pied Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>	Uncommon summer visitor		2018
Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	Rare passage migrant and winter visitor, has bred	County Rarity	2018
Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	Fairly common summer visitor		2018
Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	Scarce summer visitor		2018
Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>	Uncommon resident		2018
Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	Uncommon passage migrant, scarce summer visitor		2018
Desert Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe deserti</i>	Vagrant	BBRC	2011
Dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>	Uncommon resident		2018
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Very common resident		2018
Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	Fairly common resident		2018
Alpine Accentor	<i>Prunella collaris</i>	No modern records	BBRC	
Duncock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Very common resident		2018
Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	Uncommon summer visitor		2018
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	Uncommon resident		2018
Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	Common resident		2018
Richard's Pipit	<i>Anthus richardi</i>	No modern records	County Rarity	
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Fairly common resident		2018
Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	Uncommon summer visitor		2018
Water Pipit	<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>	Very rare passage migrant and winter visitor	County Rarity	2016
Rock Pipit	<i>Anthus petrosus</i>	Very rare passage migrant	County Rarity	2011
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	Very common resident		2018
Brambling	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>	Fairly common, occasionally irruptive, winter visitor		2018

Species	Scientific Name	Shropshire Status	Rarity Reporting	Last Occurrence
Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>	Rare, occasionally irruptive, winter visitor, has bred	County Rarity	2018
Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	Common resident		2018
Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	Very common resident		2018
Twite	<i>Linaria flavirostris</i>	Very rare winter visitor	County Rarity	2004
Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	Common resident		2018
Common Redpoll	<i>Acanthis flammea</i>	Rare winter visitor	County Rarity	2013
Lesser Redpoll	<i>Acanthis cabaret</i>	Fairly common winter visitor, uncommon resident		2018
Arctic Redpoll	<i>Acanthis hornemanni</i>	Vagrant	County Rarity	2013
Parrot Crossbill	<i>Loxia pytyopsittacus</i>	Very rare irruptive winter visitor	County Rarity	2014
Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>	Uncommon resident, irruptive scarce winter visitor		2018
Two-barred Crossbill	<i>Loxia leucoptera</i>	Very rare irruptive winter visitor	BBRC	2014
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	Very common resident		2018
Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>	Fairly common winter visitor, uncommon resident		2018
Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>	Uncommon resident		2018
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	Common resident		2018
Pine Bunting	<i>Emberiza leucocephalos</i>	Vagrant	BBRC	2017
Cirl Bunting	<i>Emberiza cirlus</i>	No modern records	County Rarity	
Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	Uncommon resident		2018
Lapland Bunting	<i>Calcarius lapponicus</i>	Very rare passage migrant	County Rarity	
Snow Bunting	<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>	Very rare passage migrant and winter visitor	County Rarity	2017

List of Contributors

The following contributed records to the Society in 2018. Grateful thanks to all below who have taken the time to send in their records and therefore make the bird report what it is. Every effort has been made to make this list as comprehensive as possible, but the complexity of gathering and logging records from the various systems and communications means that omissions and mistakes are inevitable. If your contribution has not been acknowledged, please accept my sincere apologies, but also contact me via email and an addendum will be included in next year's report.

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County Bird Report Editor

Appendix

A1. Scientific names of species mentioned in the text

Alder	<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>
Artemisia	Genus of flowering plants in the family <i>Asteraceae</i> (wormwoods etc.)
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>
Barley	<i>Hordeum vulgare</i>
Black Poplar	<i>Populus nigra</i>
Common Laurel	<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>
Cotoneaster	<i>Cotoneaster</i> species
Eel	<i>Anguilla anguilla</i>
Field Vole	<i>Microtus agrestis</i>
Larch	<i>Larix</i> species
Miscanthus	<i>Miscanthus</i> species, the sterile hybrid <i>Miscanthus x giganteus</i> being extensively grown as a biofuel crop
Oak	<i>Quercus</i> species
Oil Seed Rape	<i>Brassica napus</i>
Papillomavirus	DNA virus in the family <i>Papillomaviridae</i>
Scots Pine	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>
Spruce	<i>Picea</i> species
Sunflower	<i>Helianthus annuus</i>
Willow	<i>Salix</i> species
Wood Mouse	<i>Apodemus sylvaticus</i>
Yew	<i>Taxus baccata</i>

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“Buzzard” Editor	Tim Devanney
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Website Manager:	John Arnfield
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Indoor Meetings and Field Trips 2018

Indoor Meetings

3 January	Long Mynd: Birds, Wildlife & Landscape	Andrew Fusek Peters
7 February	Sri Lanka: The Teardrop Island	Keith Offord
7 March	Birdlife through 40 Pennine Years	Gordon Yates
4 April	AGM, followed by: Shropshire Birds - a Diverse Picture	Alan Heath
3 October	Wildlife Down Under	Chris Ward
7 November	Create Your Own Springwatch	Kate MacRae
5 December	British Wildlife in Macro	Nigel Spencer

Field Trips

7 January	Colemere	Sue Brealey
18 February	Rutland Water (by coach)	Sue Brealey
25 March	Moore Nature Reserve	Sue Brealey
8 April	Bury Ditches	Dave Pearce
20 May	RSPB Ynys Hir	Sue Brealey
10 June	Queen's Head Canal	Allan Dawes
30 September	Brandon Marsh	Sue Brealey
18 to 21 October	Weekend in Norfolk	Sue Brealey
4 November	Pennington Flash	Estelle Hughes
9 December	WWT Slimbridge (by coach)	Sue Brealey

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The Shropshire Bird Report 2018

Shropshire Ornithological Society



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- Keep the sites of rare breeding birds confidential. If you feel protection is necessary inform the Society. We have close co-operation with the RSPB Regional Office.
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