

Shoreham District
Ornithological Society
Annual Report
2008



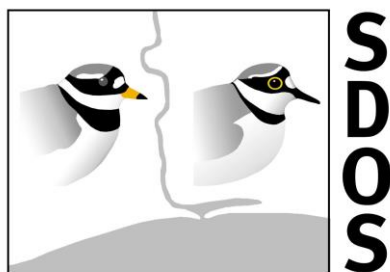
No. 56



Lapwings by Wendy Ball



House Martins by Brianne Reeve



ANNUAL REPORT 2008

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front cover image: Kingfisher by Dorian Mason
inside back cover: SDOS Area Map by Terry Hicks
back cover: Oystercatchers by Wendy Ball

EDITORIAL

This time last year I had no idea I'd be editing the SDOS Annual Report – again. It's somewhat horrifying to discover that the last one I edited was the 1987 issue! When I first took on the editorial role for the 1981 report if my memory serves me well the articles were typewritten and I have a faint recollection that copies were produced using a duplicating machine! How times have moved on! I purchased one of the very early Sinclair computers and particularly recall producing the graphs for the seawatching reports on, for its day, some very good software. Now the report is fully compiled on a computer and is enhanced by superb line drawings and colour photographs. John Crix, into whose shoes I have stepped, has done an excellent job of maintaining the policy of “continuous improvement” in this publication for which we thank him.

In last year's report John Crix highlighted the field outings programme and this time I'd like to focus on the Garden Bird Survey. Martin Ford has compiled the Garden Bird Survey for 2008 but is now stepping down. Martin first summarised the results 1999/2000 winter and has been doing so ever since – much longer than I had appreciated. On behalf of the Society I'd like to thank Martin and say how much his stewardship of the scheme has been appreciated. Val Bentley has now taken on the survey and I would ask those of you who do not yet contribute to join in. Since I signed up about two years ago I've found it really rewarding. The gentle discipline of keeping a note throughout the week of what you see is well rewarded by comparing notes of species seen from week to week and year to year. Not only can you compare your sightings with others in the SDOS Annual report but if you sign up to the British Trust for Ornithology's Garden BirdWatch scheme you can more than double the benefit of your data recording and gain access to a whole wealth of garden bird information, including a very informative magazine. Do give it a try.

Finally I'd like to give a special word of thanks to the photographers for such stunning images, Terry Hick for both maps and to Richard Ives and John Reaney for their superb line drawings.

Brian Clay

WEATHER NOTES AND BIRDING HIGHLIGHTS 2008

January began with a mixture of dry, wet, sunny, cloudy, warm and cold and continued in this vein through the month with rain and wind at the end.

Birds remaining from 2007 included the Long-tailed Duck at Brooklands and Hove Lagoon (until Mar 14th) and the Glaucous Gull at Southwick (until Apr 23rd). Up to ten Bewick's Swans were on Henfield Levels as well as 530 Wigeon, 100 Teal and 47 Pintail.

February was stormy in the first week but became quite sunny with frosty nights. It was unusually dry with just 1.5 inches of rain. The most unusual bird of the month and one of the surprises of the year was a Spotted Crake found and photographed on Shoreham beach on 19th.

March. Mild and quiet to start with but strong winds and rain on 10th. Becoming traditional March weather by mid month. Later it was colder with the odd snow flurry. Four Garganey flew east off Shoreham Fort on 15th with other wildfowl and on 26th there was an Osprey at the Marina, an Avocet on Shoreham beach and a Little Stint in the Harbour.

April. Snow fell on 6th equal to 0.25 in of rain but it didn't last. Showers and sunshine and the odd cold night and south or south-easterly winds late in the month.

Two Goosander were seen off Goring on 10th and two or three Cattle Egrets appeared at Coombes/Applesham on 14th and remained until the beginning of May. Three Pied Flycatchers occurred between 4th and 20th and on 21st a Little Ringed Plover was at Widewater. Six Avocets flew east at the Marina on 24th and next day an early Quail was heard on the downs. See sea-watching report for details of more offshore movements.

May. A good start with higher than normal temperatures through to mid-month. Then the odd showery day with some of them heavy. Reached 80 deg F. Winds were often in the east but tended to be with a small northerly element which may account for the somewhat disappointing seawatches. A change to fresh south-westerlies brought a record 152 Manx Shearwaters flying west at Worthing on 1st. A Serin was at Ladies Mile NR on 8th. Three Balearic Shearwaters flew east together off Worthing beach on 25th.

June had more rain than for a while to begin with and overall recorded 75% of the thirty-year average. It was fairly warm throughout.

Breeding birds had some success with our first Great Crested Grebes raising two young at Patching Pond, 11 each of young Peregrines and Barn Owls fledging and four Ravens doing likewise. For the first time in 32 years no Swallows bred at Coombes. A Storm-petrel off Worthing beach on 29th was the only one of the year.

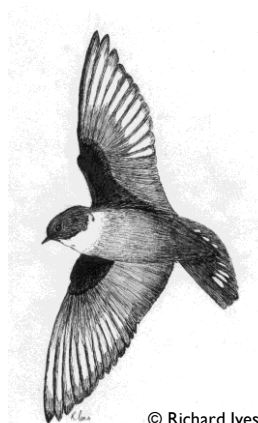
July. A good start until a very slow moving band of low pressure dominated us, resulting in rain daily for 6 days. We then again enjoyed good weather with only intermittent showers. Hot sunny weather followed with the hottest day of the year recorded. Suddenly, on the evening and night of Monday 28th, heavy rain enough to cool the night-time temperature. The month finished sunny but not as hot as the week before.

An early Osprey was at High Salvington on 1st.

A Red-footed Falcon on Steep Down in the evening of 21st was the first accepted record for 29 years.

August. It was a very mixed start to the month. At least the clouds cleared to give us a remarkable view of the partial eclipse of the Sun on the first day of the month. On the evening of the 6th a spectacular electric storm and just over a quarter of an inch of rain fell. August had 175% of the thirty-year average rainfall. There were odd days of sunshine but also days of heavy rain, with the weather remaining very unsettled. To finish the month we had an early morning electric storm. August "enjoyed" the least sunshine since records began in 1929. An Osprey was at Tegdown Hill on 9th but few unusual birds were recorded in the month.

September. The wettest start to a month for a long time. The month was divided into two halves, the second half making up for the damp beginning. It was apparent that the seasons were changing and at the end of the month the leaves on the trees were turning golden and beginning to fall. A Grey Phalarope was in Shoreham Harbour on 6th before moving to Widewater but didn't stay long. Honey-buzzards were over Shoreham and Ferring on 8th and 18th. Four Ospreys were seen in the month. The rarest bird of the year and one new to the SDOS area was a Crag Martin seen by a visiting birder at Truleigh Hill on 21st. A Ruff was unusual at Shoreham on the Adur on 22nd and two Wrynecks were reported. The only Red-backed Shrike was an immature bird at Devil's Dyke on 27th/28th.



© Richard Ives

October was a very up and down month. The daytime temperatures varied between 64.4°F and 41°F, while at night, the temperatures varied between 53.6°F and 30.2°F. Air pressures varied between a high of 30.47 inches of mercury and a low of 29.23 inches of mercury. The rain fall just about reached the thirty-year average for the month of October. On 5th, a Balearic Shearwater was off Worthing beach. There was a Spotted Redshank on the Adur on 10th and a Yellow-browed Warbler was found at Brooklands on 13th. On 28th a Hawfinch was in Wild Park and on 30th a Great Grey Shrike on Chantry Hill.

November. The temperature rose as the month started. The majority of the month had a real mixture, sunny, cold, windy and wet. As predicted, on Sunday 23rd a little bit of snow fell, a most unusual event at this time, then it rained!!! The month finished as it started, "dank". A very approachable Snow Bunting delighted watchers at Goring beach on 15th to 18th. One Pomarine Skua flew west past Worthing beach on 23rd.

December. The month started sunny with below zero temperatures at night. There was heavy rain on the 13th with 1.6 inches of rain falling and the roads all being affected by surface water. The middle of the month was chilly, as was the end, but at least it was sunny. New Year's Eve was not so pleasant, as it was overcast. This month proved to be unusually dry, not even coming up to 75% of the 30 year monthly average.

Waxwing appeared at three sites (over Findon, at Hollingdean and at Durrington). A total of 315 Great Crested Grebes were off Worthing to Ferring late in the month.

A total of just over 40 inches of rain fell during the year which is about 1.4 times the thirty-year average.

The total of species recorded in the area in 2008 was 207.

Clive Hope

SYSTEMATIC LIST 2008

This systematic list of birds in the Shoreham district recording area is based upon records submitted by members of the SDOS together with additional records obtained from the database of the Sussex Ornithological Society (by courtesy of John Newnham). This includes records obtained from the BTO's Birdtrack and Atlas survey (which began in November 2007) as well as the long running WeBs counts.

In a few cases, where records are rather unusual in date or occurrence and the observer(s) are unnamed or unknown they have been omitted from the published report. Records with the observer's initials in parenthesis have been accepted by the SOS Records committee.

References to Worthing in seawatch data include all sites between Lancing and Ferring unless separately identified. Lower Adur generally refers to the river and associated banks and saltings south of the A283 bridge. Wild Park (Brighton) includes the whole of the Local Nature Reserve namely Hollingbury Camp, Woods, Golf Course and Moulsecoomb Wild Park. The University means the University of Sussex and the Marina refers to Brighton Marina. BTO census and survey data for Stanmer Park and Tegdown Hill is included under these site names. Other locations are referenced in the SDOS recording area index and map towards the end of this report.

The following is a list of contributors:

SR Allen, VP Bentley, N Biddulph, RC Bradbury, BR Clay, PJ Clay, J Crix, B Easlea, JA Feest, M Ford, CJ Fox, T Goble, D Green, P Green, DGC Harper, CE Hope, RA Ives, JM Maskell, SP Maskell, DR Mason, B Metcalfe, JA Newnham, R Pawley, B Reeve, SP Simpson, DI Smith, MA Snelling, R Tofts, M Tucker, AB Watson, AJ Wende, R Westwater, PJ Whitcomb, HMV Wilsdon, CH Wright and members of the Sussex Ornithological Society.

I am indebted to the following writers who have assisted with summaries for the systematic list: V.Bentley (finches), B.Clay (warblers), T.Goble (tits, Tree Creeper and Nuthatch), D.Smith (Kittiwake, terns & skuas), M.Snelling (Cuckoo to Skylark, crows), P.Whitcomb (chats, pipits and hirundines), J. Newnham (thrushes), C.Wright (raptors & Raven).

Clive Hope



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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

ad adult, **BBRC** British Birds Rarities Committee, **BBS** Breeding Bird Survey, **BTO** British Trust for Ornithology, **E** East, **f** female, **GC** Golf Course, **imm** immature, **juv** juvenile, **km** kilometres, **LNR** local nature reserve, **m** male, **Marina** Brighton Marina, **mo** many observers, **N** North, **ob** on beach, **os** offshore, **Pier** Brighton (Palace) Pier, **pr** pair, **S** South, **SOS** Sussex Ornithological Society, **s/p** summer plumage, **W** West, **w/p** winter plumage, **yr** year, **WeBs** Wetland Bird Surveys

entries marked ** and printed in italics are still awaiting SOS Records Committee ratification at time of publication

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

Fairly common resident

Monthly peak counts from selected sites were as follows:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Henfield Levels	64	11	14	-	-	-	-	-	31	2	33	28
Steyning Levels	13	24	34	-	10	10	-	-	14	-	12	23
Lower Adur	5	2	5	-	-	-	64	1	7	2	-	-
Shoreham Adur/Airport	15	20	/	36	-	59	39	9	-	-	-	2
Widewater	21	24	27	34	36	33	16	14	39	38	23	12
Portslade/Hove Lagoon	31	31	/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	22

/ means present but no number available.

On Jan 5th a total of 84 were counted between the Upper Adur Levels and Bramber although 44 of these were just outside our recording area. Only three were seen south of Bramber to the A259 at Shoreham on this date. Up to four birds were seen at several scattered sites between Storrington and Southwick not covered by the above table. Five of the birds at Widewater in Apr were re-habilitated from an oil spill at Littlehampton. Pairs bred at Wiston Pond, Brooklands (six young), in Shoreham Harbour (five young) and at Widewater (three with respectively five, three and one young).

BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus columbianus*

Scarce but regular winter visitor in varying numbers

Six were on Henfield Levels on Jan 13th rising to nine by 16th and ten (all adults) from 20th to 24th. One was there on Dec 17th.

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

Introduced resident increasing in area

Henfield Levels held the bulk of the records with 120 in Jan, 45 in Feb and 16 in Mar. Two broods of four and six goslings were seen at Upper Beeding in May. Ten birds were at Wyckham Farm, Steyning on 10th and 19 at Small Dole on 21st. Three family groups were at

Henfield on 27th. Elsewhere recorded from Washington (Tilley's Farm), Ashurst (Calcot Wood) and Coombes. The large assembly on the Levels built up again late in the year with a maximum of 170 on Dec 17th.

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

Introduced increasing resident

As with Greylag Goose, most were counted on Henfield Levels at the two ends of the year. There were 120 in Jan, 45 in Feb and 83 in Dec were the maxima. Fifty on Beeding Brooks on Jan 8th was the only other count exceeding nine. Records came from nine sites (seven of them in the Adur Valley) but the only ones confirming breeding were on Henfield Levels (four goslings) and Rock Common, Washington (three juvs).

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*

Very scarce to rare winter visitor and uncommon feral resident

A single bird was with Greylags on Henfield Levels in Jan.

DARK-BELLIED BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla bernicla*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor in small numbers

Monthly seawatching totals from Worthing were:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
East	24	1250	288	325	43	-	-	-	11	-	66	33
West	8	3	8	1	1	-	-	-	7	106	162	42

The peak movements were on Apr 10th with 435 and in the autumn, 77 on Oct 31st. At Brighton Marina, 452 flew E on three dates in Mar with a maximum of 395 on 26th and 20 did likewise on Apr 17th. The last spring sighting was on May 18th and the first for autumn were seen on Sep 13th. Nine were on Goring beach on Oct 18th and two on the grass beside Brooklands on Dec 7th.

PALE-BELLIED BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla hrota*

Rare passage migrant and erratic winter visitor

One flew W past Worthing Beach on Apr 24th (DIS).

EGYPTIAN GOOSE *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

Very scarce visitor from introduced populations elsewhere in Britain

The bird from 2007 was present at Brooklands until Mar 9th.

COMMON SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor – may breed

Monthly day maxima were as follows:

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
6	2	3	8	8	-	-	-	-	12	6	3

The only inland records were from Henfield Levels/ Stretham Manor with three in Jan and one in Feb. No breeding records received or any sightings between May 26th and Oct 2nd which is very surprising!

MANDARIN DUCK *Aix galericulata***Scarce but increasing introduced resident**

Two females were seen on Washington Common on Aug 3rd.

EURASIAN WIGEON *Anas penelope***Passage migrant and winter visitor**

There were 530 on Henfield Levels on Jan 13th and 226 there on Dec 17th. These are the largest numbers in our area for several years.

Monthly seawatching totals from Worthing were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	/	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
East	-	2	10		-	-	2	-	-	36
West	5	-	-		4	-	5	8	76	13

The Jul sighting (on 14th) was most unusual. Elsewhere seven on the sea off Widewater on Jan 1st, 35 flew E off Shoreham Fort on Mar 15th, two on the Adur at Shoreham on Nov 27th and four there on Dec 30th.

GADWALL *Anas strepera***Uncommon in the area and rare on passage**

In the early months, three in the Lower Adur valley, six on Henfield Levels and three at Small Dole. Six flew E in a wildfowl movement on Mar 15th off Shoreham Fort and there were four E off Worthing on 30th. In Apr, three W on 16th and two E on 17th there followed by two E on May 1st. Singles on Henfield Levels and Small Dole on 5th. Unusually ten flew W off Worthing on Jul 14th with four Wigeon (see above). Up to six were at Henfield Levels and three at Upper Beeding in the last two months.

EURASIAN TEAL *Anas crecca***Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor**

The following sites recorded maxima as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	/	Nov	Dec
Henfield Levels	100	2	11		-	19
Steyning Levels	50	-	-		-	100
Widewater	-	20	-		9	14
Lower Adur	77	39	32		-	-
Shoreham Adur	30	32	-		-	39

At Worthing beach, 11 E in Mar/Apr and 12 E and 70 W between Aug 15th and Dec 20th.

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos***Common resident and winter visitor**

Monthly maxima at the main sites were as follows:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Steyning Levels	41	-	14	-	5	7	-	-	14	-	-	31
Henfield Levels	46	2	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	60
Lower Adur	6	-	3	-	-	-	-	3	-	3	2	2
Brooklands	47	22	25	18	22	44	35	48	18	28	20	17
Widewater	3	6	4	9	11	-	6	15	-	-	-	-

In Jan, 25 on Chantry Pond and ten on the village pond, Storrington, 42 counted around the University and 16 by Shoreham Airport with up to eight at half a dozen other sites. Breeding pairs were found at the University in shrubbery at one site and later at a different site in the area; eight ducklings were at Ladywells in May and 'several' broods on Brooklands. On Jun 6th a female led 13 young towards Falmer Pond with the A27 to negotiate (outcome unknown)! Patching Pond hosted a pair with five nearly fledged young on 17th. Small numbers were logged on seawatches in most months at Worthing and up to 17 noted at various sites (e.g Storrington Pond, Sandgate Park, Old Salt's Farm, Botolphs, Applesham) across the area in the second half of the year.

PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

Uncommon passage migrant and occasional winter visitor

Henfield Levels held 47 on Jan 13th increasing to 80 by Feb 7th. One was at Wyckham Farm, Steyning on May 10th. Seawatching at Worthing Beach produced six W in Jan, two W in Apr, six W in Sep, four E in Nov and three W in Dec.

GARGANEY *Anas querquedula*

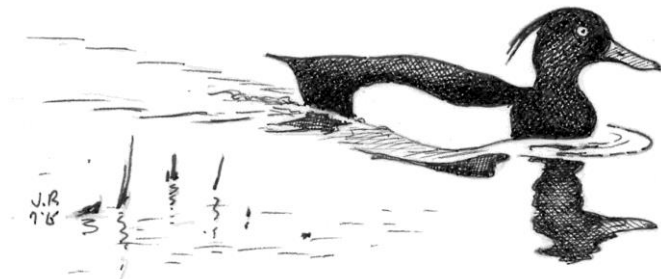
Scarce spring passage migrant

Two males and two females flew E together off Shoreham Fort on Mar 15th (SOS).

SHOVELER *Anas clypeata*

Regular spring passage migrant and winter visitor in low numbers

There were just five on Henfield Levels in Jan and two in Mar. Two were on the sea at Widewater on Mar 13th and in Shoreham Harbour on 17th and possibly the same two on the Adur near the airport on Apr 3rd. Four were seen off Worthing in Mar and 14 flew E there in Apr. In Dec, two in Steyning Levels on 14th, eight on the sea off Shoreham Fort on 31st and two W and four offshore at Worthing in the month.



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COMMON POCHARD *Aythya ferina***Regular winter visitor in small numbers**

Again only recorded from Brooklands with monthly maxima as follows:

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
10	1	1			1						2

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula***Declining winter visitor and occasional breeder**

Irregularly recorded from Brooklands where the monthly maxima were :

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
-	1	-	2			5	1				

One or two at Patching Pond between Jan 16th and Jun 20th and again on Nov 12th but no breeding took place. Five were on Storrington Pond on Apr 21st and three on Wiston Pond May 8th.

GREATER SCAUP *Aythya marila***Scarce winter and passage migrant**

Three flew E at Worthing Beach on Apr 17th.

COMMON EIDER *Somateria molissima***Regular passage migrant and winter visitor**

Reported from Worthing beach as follows:

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
6	5	4	7	-	-	-	-	4	23	19	39

Maxima were 11 on Oct 7th, five on Nov 23rd and seven on Dec 30th. One was at Brighton Marina on Mar 31st and three on the sea at Goring on Nov 28th.

LONG-TAILED DUCK *Clangula hyemalis***Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor**

The bird on Hove Lagoon from 2007 was present until Jan 6th when it moved to Brooklands remaining until 20th after which it returned to Hove to the month's end. It then relocated to Widewater through to Mar 14th with a brief shuttle to Hove on Feb 6th. It or another was on the sea off Worthing from Mar 23rd to 31st and again in Nov on 27th.

COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra***Common spring passage migrant; less common visitor in other months**

Monthly seawatching totals from Worthing Beach were:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
East	12	1	116	584	358	72	23	24	2	51	20	43
West	6	21	2	1	15	-	16	2	22	27	30	15

Maxima were 80 on Mar 30th and 126 on Apr 17th. At the Marina, 23 flew E on Mar 26th. 43 on Apr 26th and 109 on May 3rd/6th. Thirty-seven flew E at Shoreham Fort on Mar 30th and 15 were on the sea there on Nov 5th.

VELVET SCOTER *Melanitta fusca***Scarce passage migrant**

Passage off Worthing Beach was as follows;

	J	F	M	A	M	/	N	D
East	1	-	-	21	20		3	-
West	-	-	1	-	-		4	-

Fourteen on May 5th was the peak day count. One off Shoreham on Mar 30th and three on Apr 26th and six on May 6th off the Marina were the remaining records.

COMMON GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula***Uncommon winter visitor**

A duck was offshore at Worthing on Nov 6th and a drake flew W on 23rd.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator***Common winter visitor and regular passage migrant**

Maximum counts per month on the sea between Worthing and Ferring were:

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
134	48	67	36	-	-	-	-	-	2	112	82

On Southwick Canal up to six and at Widewater up to seven in Jan/Feb with 13 on the sea there. Ten were on Widewater on Mar 13th and five on Southwick Canal on Dec 15th. Easterly passage also noted off Worthing Beach with 12 in Mar, 32 in Apr and five in May.

GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser***Very scarce winter visitor**

Two were reported off Goring Gap on Apr 10th. (SOS)

RUDDY DUCK *Oxyura jamaicensis***Very scarce visitor**

A drake appeared on Brooklands on Jul 6th staying until 29th.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa*

Introduced resident. Status uncertain but numbers augmented by captive bred stock.

Recorded from 29 mainly downland sites through the year. One at Goring Gap on Mar 15th was most unusual. The only counts in double figures were 20 at North Farm, Findon on Feb 3rd, 50 at Harrow Hill, Patching on Sep 27th, ten at Edburton on Dec 6th and 18 at Washington on 28th. The only positive breeding success recorded was at Tilley's Farm, Washington where three juveniles were seen on Jul 7th.

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix***Decreasing resident although some revival evident**

A further increase in records with reports from 25 sites (all but one on the Downs), undoubtedly due to Atlas census work. Eleven on Steyning Round Hill on Sep 10th was the only count exceeding six. One in a Durrington garden on Nov 11th followed an overnight storm.

COMMON QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix***Scarce but fairly regular summer visitor.**

A very early bird on the Downs east of the Adur at an undisclosed site on Apr 25th (DG, PG). Two were near Cissbury from May 19th to 25th with one still on 27th and two were at Steep Down, Lancing on 19th and 20th. In June two at Steyning Round Hill on 25th until Aug 8th. One at Steep Down on Jul 27th and one at Steyning Round Hill on Sep 11th with another at Mill Hill, Shoreham on 28th that was flushed.

COMMON PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus***Common introduced resident - numbers augmented by captive bred stock.**

Very many widespread reports of up to nine birds with double figure counts being 18 and later 50 at Tilley's Farm, Washington, 21 at North Farm, Findon, 16 at No-Man's Land, 12 at Highden

Hill, Washington, 20 at Findon Park, 50 plus at Harrow Hill, Patching, and up to 20 at Ladywells. There were several records of birds in members' gardens.

RED-THROATED DIVER *Gavia stellata***Regular passage migrant and winter visitor**

Monthly totals from Worthing seawatches were as follows:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
East	34	20	8	26	15	-	-	-	-	3	11	76
West	26	31	3	-	1	-	-	-	-	7	35	100

The biggest movement of the year occurred on Dec 14th when 51 flew W and 11 E in three hours. One was in Shoreham Harbour on Jan 7th, two were at the Marina on Dec 24th and one close inshore at Widewater on 28th.

BLACK-THROATED DIVER *Gavia arctica***Fairly scarce passage migrant and winter visitor**

Monthly reported totals from Worthing were:

J	F	M	A	M	/	N	D
2	3	-	3	3		5	2

Singles were seen at the Marina on Apr 26th, May 6th and Dec 31st.

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER *Gavia immer***Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor**

No reports.

DIVER Species

Totals logged from Worthing in addition to the above were:

	J	F	M	A	M	/	N	D
East	23	8	1	1	1		3	4
West	2	3	1	1	1		1	20

LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis***Winter visitor and breeder in small numbers**

Records were received from the following regular sites (monthly maxima shown):

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Lower Adur	4	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	2
Adur A259-A27	10	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
Brooklands	16	1	4	3	1	2	4	3	9	6	5	6
Widewater	13	15	8	4	-	-	-	-	-	5	4	18

The low figure for Brooklands in Feb was due to the drainage of the lagoon. Additionally, two were in Ferring on Feb 26th, one was on Wiston Pond on Jun 9th, four were on Southwick Canal on Dec 23rd and three were on the Adur at Henfield Levels on 27th.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus***Common, mainly winter, visitor to the coast with recent breeding success**

The event of the year was the first recorded successful breeding of the species in our area. A pair raised two young on Patching Pond although one subsequently disappeared. Maximum numbers recorded offshore between Worthing and Ferring were:

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
50	6	6	6	7	4	1	-	1	9	41	315

The Dec count (on 24th) is the largest yet recorded in the area. Also up to 12 on the sea off Widewater in Jan, two in Shoreham Harbour and three at the Marina in Mar, four on the sea off Lancing and six off Brooklands on Dec 29th.

RED-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps grisegena***Scarce winter visitor**

One reported off Shoreham on Feb 20th. One off Worthing Beach on Nov 27th and a different bird off Goring next day.

SLAVONIAN GREBE *Podiceps auritus***Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor**

Singles off Worthing Beach on Feb 10th and 18th. One there on Apr 17th and in Nov on 15th.

BLACK-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps nigricollis***Scarce mainly spring passage migrant**

No reports.

FULMAR *Fulmaris glacialis***Common passage migrant nesting just outside the area**

Monthly totals of birds logged at Worthing were:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
East	5	-	3	62	81	9	1	5	-	-	-	-
West	2	-	19	109	58	1	11	11	3	-	-	-

At the Marina, ten on Apr 26th and 29th and 13 on May 3rd.

MANX SHEARWATER *Puffinus puffinus***Uncommon passage migrant and summer visitor**

One E on Apr 26th was followed by a new area day record on May 1st when 152 flew W off Worthing with the largest flock of 31. In Jun, two flew W on 4th, in Jul three W on 6th and singles W on Aug 3rd (all Worthing) and Sep 5th (off Brighton).

BALEARIC SHEARWATER *Puffinus mauretanicus***Rare summer visitor**

Three flew E off Worthing beach on May 25th at 0845 (DIS et al). One flew W there on Oct 5th (DIS).

EUROPEAN STORM-PETREL *Hydrobates pelagicus***Very scarce visitor usually in summer**

One was seen off Worthing beach on Jun 29th (DIS).

GANNET *Morus bassanus***Present offshore all year**

Monthly totals of birds logged at Worthing were as follows:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
East	239	3	6	283	353	151	251	52	19	58	86	352
West	108	35	11	152	88	53	606	378	37	768	186	285

Peaks were 111 in Jan on 3rd, 156 in Apr on 29th, 71 in May on 18th, 317 in Jul on 5th, 190 on Aug 3rd, 388 on Oct 19th, 203 on Nov 7th and 224 on Dec 25th. At the Marina 31 were logged on three dates in Apr and 17 on two in May. On May 17th, one hundred followed a fishing boat into Shoreham Harbour and rested on the sea just offshore.

GREAT CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo***Common at coastal and some inland roost sites**

The roost on Steyning Levels held 60 on Jan 1st but only 13 by 13th and apparently dwindled thereafter to one or two until it revived in Aug when 15 seen from Ladywells flying S down the Adur valley on 16th and 17 there on 29th were presumably from this site. Twenty-seven were back at the roost on Sep 16th with 17 on Nov 15th and 18 a month later. Forty-six were counted in the Shoreham Airport and 15 in the Harbour tetrads respectively on Jan 1st and the flock off East Worthing from Dec 2007 of 200 remained until 7th decreasing to 40 in Feb. At Southwick there were 17 on Jan 30th and again in Dec. At the year-end 80 were estimated off Brooklands on Dec 29th. Elsewhere there were from one to ten at numerous sites on the coast and Adur valley as well as odd birds over the Downs.

SHAG *Phalacrocorax aristotelis***Regular winter visitor and scarce passage migrant**

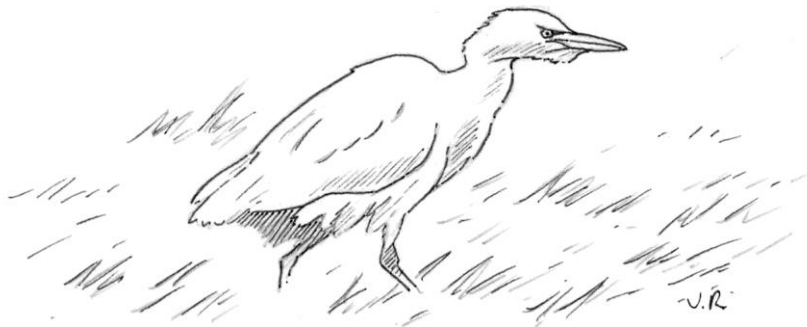
Singles at the Marina and Shoreham Harbour in Jan and Mar and again in Aug and Sep. Three immatures were on the sea off Worthing on Oct 4th and two adults and one juvenile

at the Marina on 6th. Two were offshore at Worthing on Dec 2nd with one from 23rd to 30th. Three were at the Marina on 3rd and two on 9th there.

CATTLE EGRET *Bulbucus ibis*

Rare vagrant

One was reported at Coombes on Mar 2nd then two were present from Apr 14th to May 2nd with three on Apr 24th (SOS, CHW). These are the first for our area since 2000.



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LITTLE EGRET *Egretta garzetta*

Increasingly common resident and passage migrant

Well recorded with maxima at the following sites:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Ferring Rife/Beach	1	3	-	1	-	4	2	-	11	8	-	1
Goring beach	1	-	-	-	-	6	-	4	3	-	1	-
Worthing	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	1	3	1	-
Widewater	5	2	2	2	3	5	3	7	3	4	2	1
Henfield Levels	4	2	3	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Lower Adur (inc Ladywells)	4	1	2	5	2	2	3	2	1	2	2	2
Shoreham Adur	4	1	-	-	5	5	2	4	2	3	1	3
Lancing Old/New Salts Farm	4	-	-	4	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	4

New sites were Patching Pond, a Ferring garden and Hove Lagoon with one bird at each in Nov/Dec. No breeding records received.

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea***Fairly common resident**

Again there were 14 occupied nests at Wyckham Wood near Henfield although breeding success is unknown. Four were at Shoreham on Jan 24th, seven at Coombes on Feb 3rd, four at Sandgate Park, Storrington on May 18th and at Small Dole on 21st. Totals of six flew E and five W at Worthing Beach through the year with up to four on the shore on Sep 16th. There were five on Steyning Levels on Dec 14th and the species was a visitor to one or two member's gardens.

SPOONBILL *Platalea leucorodia***Very scarce visitor**

One flew over Widewater on Feb 11th at 1400 heading E (SOS) and one (the same?) flew W at 0816 on Feb 28th over Worthing beach. (CEH)

HONEY-BUZZARD *Pernis apivorus***Very scarce passage migrant**

One was over Shoreham on Sep 8th (BFF) and one flew out to sea at Ferring on 18th (CEH).

RED KITE *Milvus milvus***Increasing but scarce visitor**

First seen at Shoreham Mill Hill on Feb 9th. One flew over a Lancing garden on Mar 19th and another was seen at Washington Tilley's Farm on 22nd. Two birds were over Henfield Levels on May 9th and a bird in moult was at Cissbury Ring on 12th. The following day singles were reported from Patching Hill and Worthing Beach. On Jun 6th at Wild Park one flew W and later two flew E. Next day at Henfield Levels one was seen in a field where a Barn Owl was hunting. A bird was over Woods Mill on 30th. Later in the year singles were reported from High Salvington on Aug 22nd and Sep 21st with another the previous day at Edburton Hill.

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus***Scarce passage migrant**

A good year for this species. First an adult male was seen at the University on Mar 26th. Then on Apr 22nd a male was recorded at Worthing beach followed by a female an hour later. Another male was at Edburton on May 18th. Late year records started with a female at Findon Park Brow on Aug 16th. A bird was reported from Steyning Round Hill on 18th, another at Wild Park on Sep 1st and a male flew out over Shoreham Harbour on 14th. Another was at Steyning Round Hill on Oct 13th and the final sighting was of an immature flying W at Worthing Beach on the late date of Nov 22nd.

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus***Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor**

More early records than normal with one at the University on Jan 1st while on 8th one was at Stump Bottom and another at Lychpole Hill with one at Beeding Brooks the following day. On 14th one was at Sheepcote Valley and another at Steyning Round Hill on 24th. The bird at Beeding Brooks re-appeared on 30th, Feb 6th and 17th while the Steyning Round Hill

bird was probably the subject of reports from nearby Stump Bottom, Cissbury Ring and Findon Park Brow between 4th and 8th. One at the University on 19th and Mar 19th and an immature at Washington Tilley's Farm on Apr 13th for six days. The only late year record was of a ringtail at Washington Highden Hill on Dec 6th.

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

Fairly common resident

Recorded with increasing frequency throughout the year. Probably bred at Patcham, Stanmer Park and Wild Park, Storrington Sandgate Park, Goring Gap, Ladywells and Washington Common.

COMMON BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

Increasing breeding resident and passage migrant

A large number of records of this species. Six were at Patching Harrow Hill on Feb 6th and a similar number displaying at Steyning Round Hill on 25th while nine were at Washington Tilley's Farm on Apr 3rd. Probably bred at the University, Washington Tilley's Farm, Small Dole, Tegdown Hill, Sandgate Park and near Steyning Round Hill. At this latter site eight birds were seen on Aug 23rd. Migration was indicated by the appearance of nine at Wild Park on Sep 12th and when on the following day 15 gathered at Steyning Round Hill. Furthermore on 20th at least 40 were seen over Brighton mainly flying west. This is a new local day record.

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

Scarce passage migrant

Spring sightings were of one over the Marina on Mar 26th, one at Goring on Apr 13th and another at Brighton College on 15th. An early returning bird was reported from High Salvington on Jul 1st, then from Tegdown Hill Aug 9th, Wild Park on Sep 8th, Washington Tilley's Farm on 13th, Ferring beach on 18th (which caught a large fish but lost it to harassment from gulls) and finally Shoreham Lower Adur on 23rd.

COMMON KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

Fairly common resident

Widely recorded throughout the year. Bred at Wild Park (two pairs), Woodmancote Holmbush Farm, Applesham near Coombes, Steyning Wyckham Farm and Beeding Cement Works. Also probably bred at the University, Findon Long Furlong and Cissbury Ring.

RED-FOOTED FALCON *Falco vespertinus*

Rare vagrant

An adult was seen at Steep Down on Jul 21st (CW Melgar). This is the first record for our area since one at Cissbury in 1979 and has been accepted by the SOSRC.

MERLIN *Falco columbarius***Scarce but regular mainly in autumn and winter**

First reported from Shoreham by the Adur on Jan 17th. A female was hunting at Steyning Round Hill on 24th and a bird was seen at New Erringham Farm near Shoreham on Feb 10th. A pair were hunting over Beeding Brooks on 26th and the last for spring was reported from High Salvington on Apr 22nd. Autumn records began with a probable male at Clapham on Sep 5th with further reports from Lancing New Salts Farm on 11th, Beeding Hill on 14th, Ferring beach on 16th, Woods Mill on 17th and Devil's Dyke on 28th. Oct records were from Goring Gap on 6th, Cissbury Ring on 9th, Patching Harrow Hill on 16th, Cissbury north scarp on 18th and Steyning Round Hill on 19th. A female was at Shoreham Mill Hill on Nov 1st while birds were at Beeding Brooks on 4th and Brighton Westdene on 9th. The final report was from Patching Harrow Hill on Dec 28th.

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo***Regular passage migrant and summer visitor - has bred**

An early bird at the University on Apr 1st was followed by one at Shoreham on 10th. A bird was displaying in Stanmer Park on 24th and next day another was at Sandgate Park while two came in off the sea at Worthing. One was at Ferring on Apr 27th, another at Worthing Beach on 29th with three there next day. A summary of sightings follows:

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
11	11	3	8	10	20

The final reports were from Edburton and Cissbury on Sep 25th completing a very good year for the species with twice the number of 2007 records.

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus***Scarce breeding resident**

A less successful year with sabotage suspected at some sites in the county. However it is likely that 11 young fledged in our area. Birds are now reported regularly throughout the year from various sites away from the known breeding areas. These include Henfield Stretham Manor where two males were noisily tussling on Jan 5th, Lychpole Hill near Cissbury Ring where two birds were reported on Feb 2nd and 4th and Steyning Round Hill with two birds also on 4th. Later in the year two birds were perched on pylons on Steyning Levels on Jul 26th and Aug 28th.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus***Regular winter visitor; may breed.**

Records were received from seven sites. The regular Widewater bird remained from 2007 until Feb 29th and returned on Nov 5th and was still present on Dec 28th. One at Cuckoo Corner, Coombes was seen on Jan 5th and Feb 13th with possibly the same bird at nearby Ladywells on 9th. A calling bird was in Ferring Rife on Jan 8th and one was present there till Apr 8th with two on Mar 8th. A 'nesting' pair were in Sandgate Park, Storrington in Apr though the outcome is unknown. Two were around Ladywells on Dec 15th, one was at Lancing Old Salts Farm on 22nd and one was on Beeding Brooks on 30th.

SPOTTED CRAKE *Porzana porzana***Very rare passage migrant**

An astonishing record of one on Shoreham beach on Feb 19th (S Munday). This record has been accepted by the SOS and is the first in our area since 1951.

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus***Common resident and winter visitor**

The maximum counts from Brooklands were as follows:

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
25	25	19	12	7	2	8	16	26	28	23	30

Other significant counts were from the University with 22 in a tetrad on Jan 1st, Applesham near Coombes with 27 on Feb 3rd, and 22 at Botolphs near Bramber on Dec 21st. Breeding records were of pairs at Badger's Pond (Sandgate Park), Elbourne House (Washington), Rock Common (also Washington), Brooklands and Ladywells. Widely reported with up to seven at several sites and remains a common resident across the area.

COOT *Fulica atra***Common resident and winter visitor**

Peak monthly counts from Brooklands were as follows:

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
101	40	36	22	26	31	38	42	58	57	65	61

Away from there just singles or pairs at fourteen locations and four at Chantry Pond, Storrington on Jan 24th. Breeding occurred at Brooklands, Washington Rock Common, Patching Pond and New Salt's Farm.

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus***Common winter visitor and passage migrant, scarce breeder**

Maximum numbers at Worthing, Goring, the Adur and Shoreham Harbour through the year were:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Worthing	-	-	3	6	-	3	2	6	13	1	4	10
Adur	3	2	2	-	2	2	-	-	-	3	3	1
Goring	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	15*	-	36*	10	2
Shoreham Harbour	9	-	3	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-

* on field roost. No evidence of breeding was received.

AVOCET *Recurvirostra avosetta***Uncommon passage migrant**

One on Shoreham Beach at the eastern end on Mar 26th was unusual. Six flew E at the Marina on Apr 24th and three went E (two on 6th and one on 27th) in May off Worthing Beach. Singles flew W there on Aug 15th and 16th.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius***Scarce breeding summer visitor and passage migrant**

One flew E off Widewater on Apr 21st (SOS).

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula***Common winter visitor and passage migrant, occasional breeder**

Monthly maxima from regular sites were:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Shoreham Adur	25	-	-	-	10	-	-	80	-	41	20	44
Shoreham Harbour/ Beach	11	-	5	-	6	2	-	7	-	-	-	-
Widewater	46	4	2	2	4	-	1	-	2	1	4	2
Worthing	-	4		10	9	3	2	50	20	18	40	7
Goring/Ferring	30	-	-	-	-	-	-	179	126	44	-	-
Marina	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	48	80	-	-	52

A pair bred at East Worthing beach with two young (outcome unknown). There was a pair with two young at Southwick Beach until Jun 27th and then a second in this locality which had three chicks by Aug 6th but two eventually succumbed to strong winds; the third was still present on 18th.

EUROPEAN GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria***Uncommon autumn and winter visitor**

Five flew E at Worthing Beach on Nov 1st and three E on 3rd. One was on Shoreham Airport on 2nd.

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola***Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant**

Monthly maxima at regular sites were:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Shoreham Adur	35	24	9	-	3			-	-	5	6	17
Worthing	-	30	-	27	13			5	9	3	1	5
Goring/Ferring	40	-	-	-	-			-	1	14	73	85

After six flew E on May 14th at Worthing no records received until five appeared on the beach there on Aug 29th.

NORTHERN LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus***Common winter visitor and declining breeder**

Peak counts at the following sites were:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Henfield Levels	450	100	-	-	2	1	2	-	2	-	50	70
Lower Adur	817	580	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	30	100	8
Shoreham Adur	500	80	-	-	-	17	-	-	64	200	190	320
Airport	755	300	-	1000	-	1	-	-	-	-	40	-
Steyning Levels	45	-	-	-	6	5	-	-	-	-	-	1

Also there were 100 near Ferring Rife on Jan 16th. A sitting bird at Edburton in mid May was predated by crows. A pair were near Clapham Woods on May 27th. One at Goring on Aug 31st and three flew N at Worthing on Dec 26th.

RED KNOT *Calidris canutus*

Regular passage migrant and uncommon winter visitor

At Worthing Beach, ten E (on 18th) and eight W in Apr, ten E in May between 3rd and 24th, two W on Jul 29th and ten E there on Aug 31st. One was on the Adur at Shoreham on Sep 6th.

SANDERLING *Calidris alba*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant

Monthly maxima at all sites were:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Widewater	70	70	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	61	80
Worthing	-	70	-	40	31	20	-	20	50	65	55	9
Goring/Ferring	120	30	135	-	24	15	1	12	3	89	127	150

Passage at Worthing consisted of 86 flying E in Apr and 100 E in May. The last spring birds were seen on Jun 15th and the Jul one on 12th (presumably a returning individual).

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*

Scarce passage migrant

One in Shoreham Harbour near the houseboats on Mar 26th (SOS). This is a very unusual date for our area.

PURPLE SANDPIPER *Calidris maritima*

Local winter visitor in small numbers

Peak monthly numbers at Brighton Marina and Shoreham Harbour were:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Marina	1	8	7	7				2	1	-	8	
Shoreham	8	4	4	1				-	-	-	7	

Unusually none were recorded after Apr 9th until Sep 28th (both at the Marina).

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina***Common winter visitor and passage migrant**

Maxima from regular sites were as follows:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	A	S	O	N	D
Shoreham Adur	100	290	-	-	8		10	-	14	210	350
Widewater	-	-	-	-	-			-	16	100W	-
Worthing	-	300	-	6E	10E		9	-	-	80	20
Goring/Ferring	45	-	-	-	-		3	55	1	160	100

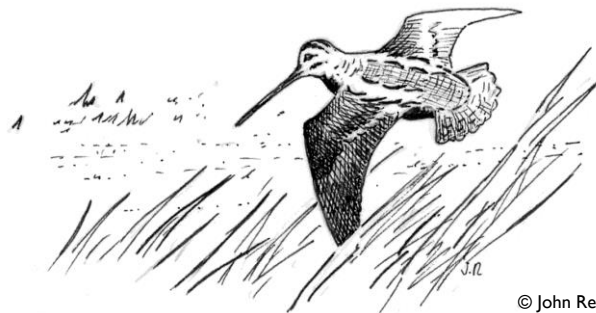
An unusual inland (just!) record of one seen in flight at Queen's Park, Brighton on Aug 5th.

RUFF *Philomachus pugnax***Scarce passage migrant**

A male was near the houseboats at Shoreham on Sep 22nd.

JACK SNIFE *Lymnocyptes minimus***Scarce but regular winter visitor**

One was flushed from a ditch beside the Airport on Feb 8th. Two were on Henfield Levels on Nov 16th.



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COMMON SNIFE *Gallinago gallinago***Common but declining winter visitor**

Maxima from the following sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	J	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lower Adur*	198	141	82		-	-	172	-
Henfield Levels	3	25	8		8	-	17	-
Ferring Rife	5	5	-		-	-	-	6

* This includes the Adur at Shoreham. Also up to four at Beeding Brooks in Jan, Feb and Dec and two at Steyning Wyckham Farm in Feb with six W at Cissbury on Sep 28th and a single at Wild Park on Oct 30th.

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola***Winter visitor and uncommon passage migrant, may breed**

One at Small Dole and one at Wild Park on Feb 9th with three over Mill Hill on 13th. One was at Devil's Dyke Round Hill on Mar 21st. Singles flew in off the sea at Worthing on Nov 5th and 23rd. One at Wolstonbury Hill on 30th and one at Edburton Dec 7th. This is an under-recorded species as shoots in the Fulking/Edburton area note 'good numbers'.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa***Uncommon passage migrant and occasional winter visitor**

A rare inland sighting for our area was one at Stretham Manor, Henfield on Feb 7th. Also unusual were 37 flying E off Worthing on Apr 19th. A summer male (race *limosa*) was on the Adur at Shoreham from Jun 3rd to 5th and four were there on Jul 7th with another (race *islandica*) on 19th. Three flew W off Worthing also on this day and one dropped into Widewater. In Aug, three flew E and six W at Worthing. There were three in Shoreham Harbour on Dec 15th and three flew E off Worthing on 26th.

A good year for this species.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica***Common passage migrant and occasional winter visitor**

Nine flew E at the Marina on Apr 17th and 14 on May 3rd, two on 6th and ten on 7th. Passage was also logged at Worthing in Apr and May with totals of 367 and 72 flying E there. One was on Goring beach on Oct 10th.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus***Common spring passage migrant**

An early bird was on the Adur at Shoreham on Mar 2nd, and one was at Cuckoo Corner on Apr 15th with seven there on 23rd. The following totals were logged at Worthing:

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
E	544	67	-	-	1	-
W	26	4	-	21	2	1

At the Marina, 76 flew E on two dates in Apr and 119 on three dates in May. Eleven flew NE to SW over Shoreham Aug 5th and singles were in the Adur Valley on 6th and 29th.

EURASIAN CURLEW *Numenius arquata***Common late summer passage migrant; uncommon otherwise**

Movements at Worthing were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
E	-	10	-	3	2	-	-	-	-	1	1	-
W	-	-	-	1	-	71	32	2	-	1	4	-

In the Lower Adur Valley and Shoreham, monthly totals were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2	1	5	-	-	-	-	1	2	1	2	-

Singles flew over Wild Park on Apr 21st and Jun 1st.

COMMON REDSHANK *Tringa totanus***Common winter visitor and occasional breeder**

Monthly peak counts from regular sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	/	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lower Adur*	58	140	46	1		3	-	18	90	6
Goring	10	-	10	-		-	-	-	-	1
Widewater	1	3	2	-		-	-	1	3	3

* includes Shoreham Adur for these figures. No breeding data received.

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia***Uncommon but regular passage migrant**

One was at Cuckoo Corner on Aug 12th and one on the Adur at Bramber on Sep 10th.

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus***Scarce passage migrant**

There was one on the Adur at Shoreham near the footbridge on Oct 10th (SRA).

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus***Regular winter visitor in small numbers**

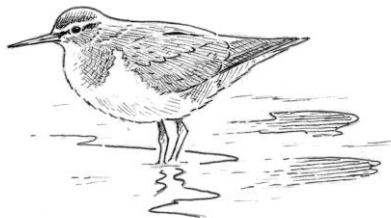
One was on Henfield Levels on Jan 1st and three near Wyckham Wood on 5th. Two flew over the Adur near Ladywells on Aug 16th. In Oct, one again at Henfield Levels on 19th and two on Steyning Levels on 25th. Finally one on Henfield Levels on Nov 16th.

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos***Regular passage migrant and local winter visitor**

Continues to be regularly recorded from the Adur in the vicinity of the Cement Works. Monthly maxima from this area were :

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
4	7	1	9	2	1	9	1	9	4	-	2

Elsewhere in May, one at the Marina on 3rd and three at Patching Pond on 9th. Eight flew out of the Harbour at Shoreham on Jun 29th. One was at Brooklands on Jul 29th and one on Worthing Beach on 25th. In Aug, one at the Marina on 27th and 29th; in Sep, one at Brooklands on 14th and finally one on Steyning Levels on Dec 14th, an unusual site and date.



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TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres***Common passage migrant and winter visitor**

Maximum counts at regular sites were:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Shoreham Adur	97	30	28	-	1	-	-	1	-	3	60	22
Shoreham Harbour/Beach	37	40	-	8	-	1	-	-	34	10	-	-
Widewater	20	1	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	60
Goring/Ferring	18	-	-	-	34	-	-	80	8	39	4	85
Worthing	-	2	-	25	23	6	5	-	1	-	4	9
Marina	-	-	9	10W	6	-	-	14	20	-	-	-

There were 32 near Hove Lagoon on Dec 25th.

GREY PHALAROPE *Phalaropus fulicarius***Very scarce autumn and rare winter visitor**

One was seen in Shoreham Harbour and later at Widewater on Sep 6th. This record has been accepted by the SOSRC.

POMARINE SKUA *Stercorarius pomarinus***Regular spring passage migrant**

There were no early winter records this year. The first of the year was on Apr 26th when one flew east past Worthing beach, followed by four east there on 27th, five east on 28th and five east there again on 29th. Thereafter all spring passage continued in an easterly direction. Last of the month were four passing Worthing beach on 30th. The species was more consistently recorded during the first week of May than in the same period in 2007 and all birds passed Worthing beach unless otherwise indicated. There were seven on 4th, eight on 8th, and the last of the spring at Worthing on 31st. At Brighton Marina one passed on May 3rd, three on 6th, and an impressive 19 on 7th. The late April and early May peaks again imply that some Pomarine Skuas are appearing earlier off our coasts than in former years.

The freak numbers seen in autumn 2007 were neither expected nor repeated in autumn 2008. The single record was a juvenile passing west at Worthing beach on Nov 23rd (DIS).

ARCTIC SKUA *Stercorarius parasiticus***Regular spring and autumn passage migrant**

First of the year were singles passing E at Worthing beach on Apr 16th and 17th. Thereafter all records refer to Worthing beach unless otherwise indicated. The species was recorded regularly but in rather small numbers until the end of the month, with peaks of 12 E on 27th and 13 E on 28th. A single flew E at Brighton Palace Pier on 23rd, and five flew E past the Marina on 26th. During May recorded regularly but in very low numbers. The most recorded in any one day was a meagre five E at the Marina on 3rd and four E at Worthing on 7th. The following table of monthly totals reveals the spring to have been unexceptional:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
East	-	-	-	48	24	1	-	-	-	7	-	-
West	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	-	23	1	1

The last of the spring (or perhaps a summering bird) flew E at Worthing on Jun 21st and was probably the same as one logged off Selsey Bill an hour earlier. Singles passed W at Worthing on Jul 27th and Aug 2nd. There were no further records until Oct 4th, the best day of the year when 23 flew W and four flew E at Worthing. Very few were recorded either at Worthing beach or the Marina during the remainder of the month. The final birds of the year were singles passing W at Worthing on Nov 23rd and Dec 12th.

GREAT SKUA *Stercorarius skua*

Regular passage migrant in increasing numbers

First of the year were three flying W at Worthing beach on Jan 11th, presumably wintering birds. March produced two records, one E at Worthing on 29th and one W off Shoreham Harbour on 30th, perhaps early migrants. Two were noted at Worthing beach on Apr 11th, one passing E and the other on the sea. As in 2007 loafing long-stayers offshore seriously complicated compilation of precise passage totals. Up to five could be found off Worthing during the second half of April and two regularly there on any day in May. It is thought that most moved on after a few days, to be replaced by others. This trend is also being observed at Selsey Bill and other Sussex seawatch sites (pers obs). The summary of monthly totals at Worthing beach is as follows:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
East	-	-	1	50	11	-	-	1	-	5	-	-
West	3	-	-	15	2	-	-	-	1	1	2	1
Offshore	-	-	1	14	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

As can be seen from the above table peak spring passage occurred during April with nineteen E and two W on 24th and nine E and three W on 27th. Late singles passed Worthing on May 23rd, 24th and 27th. Autumn was unremarkable indeed with just singles noted in both August and September. The late year records were of singles W at Worthing on Nov 8th, Nov 30th, and the last of the year there, also one W on Dec 2nd.

An adult was found freshly dead on Goring beach on Oct 13th. Cause of death is unknown.

MEDITERRANEAN GULL *Larus melanocephalus*

Increasing regular visitor throughout the year

Jan records were of singles on the Adur near the Tollbridge, Shoreham on 1st and 28th and two at Goring Gap on 30th. In Feb, there was one at each of Shoreham Harbour, near Ladywells, Brooklands, Black Rock and Edburton. Three were on the Adur on Mar 1st and one near the Tollbridge again 11th to 18th with two S there on 29th.

Birds passing Worthing beach were;

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
East	-	3	10	96	9	1	2	-	1	1	1	-
West	-	-	3	18	1	8	5	-	6	6	3	1

Peak days were Apr 23rd, 24th and 26th with 36, 19 and 13 respectively passing E. At the Marina, five on Mar 26th, four E on Apr 24th, 18 E on 26th and seven May 6th/7th.

June records were of two at Goring beach on 7th and two past Shoreham Harbour mouth on 29th and in Jul an adult was on Widewater on 7th with a second winter there on Aug 31st. One over Wild Park on Sep 15th, at the Harbour on Oct 14th and one or two on the Adur in Nov and Dec as well as two in Stanmer Park on Nov 10th and at Ferring Rife on Dec 7th.

LITTLE GULL *Larus minutus***Scarce visitor and passage migrant**

Monthly totals were :

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	O	N	D
2	-	3	44E	2E			4E	3E	-

The two in Jan were flying S over Rye Farm, Henfield Levels on 5th. Peak days were Apr 16th and 24th each with 11 passing E off Worthing.

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus***Abundant passage migrant and winter visitor**

There were numerous three figure counts through the year as follows.

In Jan, 450 at Henfield Levels and 300 at Steyning Levels on 13th; 110 on the empty Hove Lagoon and 250 around Ferring on 25th and 430 on the Adur by the Airport on 28th.

In Feb, 135 at Southwick on 1st, 200 at Findon Canada Bottom and 358 at East Worthing on 2nd with 104 at Sheepcote Valley on 3rd, 251 below Mill Hill on 9th, ten at Waterhall, Brighton and 120 at West Worthing on 10th and 500 on Worthing beach on 13th. On 20th 1200 counted at dusk on Southwick beach. Steyning Bowl had 230 on 21st, 200 were at Widewater next day, 600 at Betley Bridge, Henfield Levels on 25th and 107 were at Ferring on 26th. Twelve hundred were seen at dusk on the Adur at Shoreham on Mar 8th with 204 at Brooklands and 110 at Widewater on 9th. On 26th, 156 were counted at the Marina.

Passage at Worthing beach in Apr totalled 395 E with 317 on 22nd as the peak. In May there, 193 flew E. June totals were low at all sites the maximum being 27 near the Airport on 21st. Sheepcote logged 97 on Jul 11th and 118 were on the Adur at Shoreham on 31st.

Aug counts were all below 80 but in Sep, 300 were at Ferring on 7th and in Oct, 150 to 320 were noted at the Adur Valley regular sites with 500 on Shoreham beach in the evening of 14th. Steyning and Henfield Levels again picked up in Nov with 200 and 1500 respectively on 15th/16th. Preston Park hosted 360 on Nov 4th. Worthing, Lychpole Hill and the Adur at Shoreham each held 200, 220 and 335 in the last week. Finally 220 at Brooklands on Dec 11th rounded off the year.

COMMON GULL *Larus canus***Common winter visitor and passage migrant**

Well reported with many large counts, the most significant of which were 320 at Henfield Levels on Jan 13th, 626 on the Adur mudflats on 28th then 500 at Findon Canada Bottom on Feb 2nd, 480 at Coombes on 3rd, 600 near Mill Hill on 9th, 250 at Washington on 10th and 16th and 1000 at Southwick beach at dusk on 20th. Mar produced the largest counts of the year with 1669 on the Adur at Shoreham on 1st, 350 at Steep Down on 5th and 800 at Southwick beach on 6th with 817 at Patcham on 9th, 750 below Mill Hill on 21st and 2000 on the Adur on 22nd. Into Apr there were still 1000 near Mill Hill on 3rd and 250 at Thundersbarrow Hill on 28th. May saw a fall off to 110 at the Marina on 3rd and the last of the spring was a single at Coombes on Jun 7th. One July bird was at Storrington Sandgate Park on 12th.

Between 100 and 350 were logged at seven localities on the coast and downs in Nov with 500 at Goring Gap on 16th. In Dec, 1500 on the Adur at Shoreham on 20th and 200 at both Ferring and Chantry Hill on 24th.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus***Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor, small numbers breed**

In the first half year, mostly just single figure counts from twenty odd sites but 21 around Shoreham Harbour on May 17th and 18 in East Worthing on Jun 1st. Breeding pairs were at Hollingbury Industrial Estate, East Worthing, Brighton Borough (four, from which at least three young fledged) and probably in Western Road, Hove. Although present, no evidence of breeding at the University. In Dec, 70 on the Adur between the rail and Tollbridges and 33 at Hove Lagoon on 4th and 67 (mostly race *intermedius*) at Goring Gap on 14th.

YELLOW-LEGGED GULL *Larus argentatus michahellis***Uncommon and local late summer and autumn visitor**

One was seen from Palace Pier, Brighton on May 29th and singles on the Adur at Shoreham on Aug 30th, Sep 11th and 16th with two there on 29th and one again on Dec 1st.

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus***Common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor**

As expected, very many reports from all across the area, the most significant counts being as follows. Two hundred at Steyning Bowl on Jan 10th, 250 below Mill Hill on Feb 9th, 300 at both Worthing and Southwick on 17th/20th and 1000 on Southwick beach on 22nd, 260 at Patcham on Mar 30th, 420 at Worthing East and 434 at Worthing West on May 4th/7th, 700 at Worthing beach on Jul 27th with 420 at Goring next day, 260 at Preston Park (following the fair there) on Aug 3rd, 375 on the Adur on Sep 3rd, 300 at Worthing beach on Oct 2nd, 900 Shoreham Harbour on 14th, 1000 Worthing Borough Nov 24th and 600 on the Adur Dec 20th. Breeding was reported from about twenty sites.

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucoideus***Rare winter visitor**

A bird that was either this species or the next but could not be specifically identified was seen from Worthing beach on Apr 23rd. (RAI, DIS)

GLAUCOUS GULL *Larus hyperboreus***Rare winter visitor**

The first winter bird from 2007 was present in the Southwick Canal/ Shoreham Harbour area from Jan 24th to Apr 23rd (P James et al).

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus***Common winter visitor and passage migrant, recent breeding resident**

Double figure counts from eight sites, monthly maxima being:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
28	41	25	15	34	54	-	36	9	78	100	20

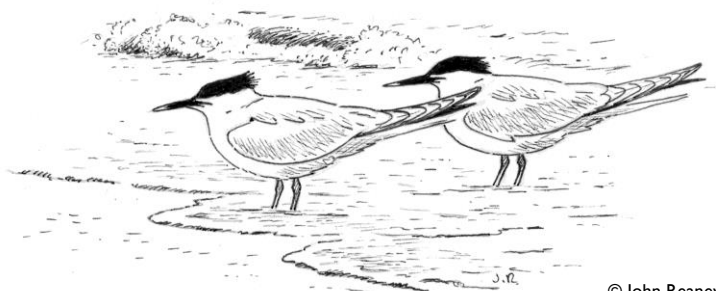
No breeding records received. The lack of July records must surely represent non-reporting rather than absence of the species.

KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla***Common winter visitor and passage migrant**

Generally an unexceptional year in terms of numbers with the highest totals recorded during Jan, Nov, and Dec as the following table of monthly totals from Worthing beach reveals:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
East	66	1	-	7	24	-	4	-	-	15	-	35
West	120	34	-	15	8	2	24	8	-	63	114	414

Peak movements were 70 W on Jan 5th, 94 W on Dec 2nd, 155 W and nine E on Dec 12th and 107 W and five E on Dec 14th. Miscellaneous records included one at Shoreham Harbour on Mar 17th, roosting on lock gates at dusk; 27 at the Marina on May 3rd and four at Brighton Black Rock on Aug 31st. There were no inland records.



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SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis***Common passage migrant**

After no March records in 2007, passage commenced in 2008 on the still rather late date of Mar 23rd with two passing west at Worthing beach, after which very small numbers noted both at Worthing beach and the Marina during the month. Remarkably there are no records for the first two weeks of April (perhaps observer coverage was low?). However, steady passage with at times high double figures, was noted on most days at both of the above sites to the end of April, and included 141 E at Worthing on Apr 20th and 380 E at Brighton Marina on Apr 29th. Mainly low double-figure numbers were noted during the first ten days of May, the exception being 191 E at Worthing on May 4th. Spring passage declined from May 10th. The monthly totals from Worthing beach are shown in the following table:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
E	-	-	18	859	584	40	56	44	31	7	-	-
W	-	-	4	10	15	64	220	298	26	34	-	-

As usual small numbers were reported during the summer months and the peak movement was 61 W at Worthing beach on Jul 20th. Noted regularly in double figures there during August, the peak being 69 W on Aug 3rd. The trend to roost with gulls on the Goring Gap fields (see also Common Tern) continued, with counts of 28 on Aug 20th and 27 on Aug

22nd reducing to 14 on Aug 31st. Passage numbers in September were traditionally low with numbers of seven or less on just six days at Worthing. Twenty flew E there on Oct 4th and the last of the year were 12 W and two E at Worthing on the early date of Oct 7th.

Miscellaneous records included one roosting on the runway at Shoreham Airport on Aug 2nd, six on Southwick beach on both Aug 26th and Aug 28th, four roosting on Shoreham Airport on Sep 13th, and two adults near the house boats on the Lower Adur on Oct 1st.

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

Common passage migrant

First of the year were 56 E at Brighton Marina on Apr 16th, a rather late date and a full seven days later than in 2007. Thereafter few noted until 77 E at Worthing beach on Apr 24th, 68 E there on Apr 27th, 125 E on Apr 30th, and a significant 650 E at Brighton Marina on Apr 29th. Mainly low numbers continued during May to the 18th. Brighton Marina peaks during this month were 220 E on May 3rd and 235 E on May 7th. A total of 257 passed E off Shoreham harbour on May 18th. The Worthing beach month maximum was just 180 E on May 3rd. Month totals from Worthing beach are shown in the following table:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
E	-	-	-	345	226	2	16	-	1	5	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-	-	23	60	2	-	-	-

Mainly single figure numbers were noted during July and August, the exceptions being 25 roosting on the R. Adur opposite Shoreham Airport on Aug 18th, and 29 roosting with Sandwich Terns at Goring Gap on Aug 22nd, an exceptional count for the latter site. Peak autumn movements off Worthing beach were 51 W on Aug 22nd and 25 were noted feeding offshore there on Sep 13th. Numbers dwindled rapidly from mid-September and just six were noted during October, the last for the year being one E off Worthing beach on Oct 19th.

Miscellaneous records included three in Southwick Canal on Jun 2nd and Jun 8th, two flying west over Ferring on Jul 25th and considered to have been one mile from the coast; two at Brooklands on Aug 25th and three on Southwick beach on Aug 22nd. A second inland record was of one at Botolphs, near Bramber on Sep 3rd.

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea*

Uncommon passage migrant

The first specifically identified Arctic Terns of the year were three flying E at Worthing beach on May 3rd, just three days later than in 2007. Numbers not greater than three were noted from Worthing beach and Brighton Marina on just four further dates in spring. Not recorded again until mid-August with one in Shoreham Harbour on Aug 14th. Twenty were reported off Worthing on Aug 25th. Only three flew W past Worthing in that month and only one passed E there in September. Last of the year was a juvenile at the Marina on Sep 16th, an early date considering the late October and early November Shoreham Harbour records of recent years.

COMMIC' TERN

Records of birds not specifically identified as either Common Tern or Arctic Tern comprise this category. Note however that the majority are considered to be Common Terns. As in 2007 all records came from Worthing beach and are summarised in the following table of monthly totals for that site. The figures reveal a very good spring passage:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
East	-	-	-	1644	2655	70	2	113	127	5	-	-
West	-	-	-	-	10	3	22	877	33	3	-	-

Peak movements were 709 E on Apr 29th, 898 E on May 4th, and 323 E on May 9th. An excellent 731 flew west on Aug 3rd and constituted the peak autumn movement. As can be seen from the table numbers reduced significantly from that date onwards. Counts of birds feeding off Worthing beach included 58 on Aug 22nd and 78 on Aug 31st.

LITTLE TERN *Sterna albifrons*

Fairly common but declining spring passage migrant

The first of the year was one flying E at Worthing beach on Apr 15th, just one day earlier than in 2007. Not again noted until one flew E there on Apr 23rd and the Marina recorded five E on Apr 26th. The April month total at Worthing was 48 E and four W, similar to 2007 whilst the May total was 115 E and eight W, considerably above the 2007 May total. Peak movements at Worthing beach were 21 E on Apr 29th, 32 E and five W on May 4th, and 19 E and one W on May 18th. Lesser numbers were reported on a few dates from the Marina and Widewater.

After three flew E past Worthing on Jun 5th, none were noted until four E there on Jul 5th. The remaining records for the year were from Worthing beach with just six W on Jul 20th. Last of the year were two offshore there on Aug 31st.

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger*

Scarce but regular passage migrant

First of the year were two E at Worthing beach on Apr 26th, five days later than in 2007 and was followed by one E on Apr 28th and five E there on Apr 29th. The majority of spring passage birds were recorded between May 3rd and May 8th with a total of 37 E at Worthing beach for this period, and included an impressive 24 E on May 4th. Four passed the Marina on May 7th. There was just one further record for the month, of one flying E at Worthing beach on May 23rd. One E there on Jun 5th was both late and unusual for the date. There were just three autumn records. Six flew W past Worthing beach on Aug 18th, a single flew W there on Sep 11th, and the last of the year was one W, again at Worthing on the late date of Oct 10th (the last date in 2007 was Aug 25th). A better spring, at least than many of late.

COMMON GUILLEMOT *Uria aalge*

Regular winter visitor and passage migrant

One off Widewater on Jan 1st and off Shoreham Harbour on 26th. An oiled bird at Southwick beach on Feb 13th. Worthing beach records were two E and one W in Jan, one Feb 10th, singles E on Apr 23rd, W on May 11th, E on Sep 25th with three in Oct and Dec. At the Marina, one on Apr 26th, two on May 3rd and three on 6th. Singles on Sep 16th, 19th and Oct 13th.

RAZORBILL *Alca torda***Regular winter visitor and passage migrant**

The trend for Razorbills to outnumber Guillemots in our area continues. Worthing records were:

	J	F	M	A	M	/	S	O	N	D
East	26	2	-	4	8		-	2	8	42
West	83	3	-	-	-		1	10	13	14

Maximum was 56 on Jan 5th. Also two or three offshore in May, Nov and Dec. There were two off the Palace Pier, Brighton on Mar 7th and 9th.

AUK species

Worthing seawatches recorded the following totals:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
East	1618	48	-	3	8	2	-	-	-	15	74	287
West	263	11	-	22	7	1	-	-	2	20	87	479

Peak movements were on Jan 5th when 1515 logged and Dec 12th with 178.

FERAL PIGEON *Columba livia***Common resident**

The largest assemblies were of 87 at Providence Place, Brighton on Feb 20th, 165 in Hove on May 4th and 125 on Jun 8th, 72 in central Brighton on May 8th and 116 there on Jul 20th, 75 in Portslade on Jun 27th and 125 there on Dec 31st, 200 at Steep Down on Dec 1st and 240 at Mile Oak on 24th.

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas***Declining resident and passage migrant**

In Jan there were 20 at the University and 16 at Stump Bottom, in Feb 30 at Findon Canada Bottom, 64 at Lychpole Hill, 63 at Coombes and 130 at Edburton and 85 in May there.

Breeding occurred at the University, Annington (where two owl boxes contained two young and two eggs respectively when checked) and Wyckham Farm, Steyning (again two owl boxes each with two eggs).

In Nov, 40 at Steyning Bowl and 47 at the University.

WOODPIGEON *Columba palumbus***Abundant resident and late autumn passage migrant**

Over five hundred reports received. Largest counts were 2000 at Stump Bottom on Jan 5th, 500 at Fulking on 27th, 600 at Applesham on Feb 3rd, 850 at Small Dole on 16th and 200 at Sompting Downs and Abbots on 27th, 2180 at Wild Park on Oct 28th, 2500 moving W early at West Worthing on Oct 30th, 1500 at Pyecombe on Nov 3rd, 2000 at Tegdown Hill on 16th, 500 at Steep Down on Dec 1st, 1460 at Truleigh Hill on 6th, and 590 at Applesham on 11th. A generally rather poor autumn migration!

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto***Common resident**

About three hundred records received of from one to 80 (at Mile Oak on Nov 16th) birds at locations all across the area. Regular visitor to many members' gardens.

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur***Scarce summer visitor, declining**

The first were a pair at Woods Mill on Apr 26th. In May, two were at Edburton on 3rd, a single at High Salvington on 5th, a pair at the Airport next day, one at Steyning Wyckham Farm on the 10th and one at Small Dole on 19th and one at Lower Standean on 30th. June records were of singles at Ladies Mile NR, Steyning and Edburton. No breeding data received.

ROSE-RINGED PARAKEET *Psittacula krameri***Very scarce introduced resident**

Three records received. One was at the University on Mar 25th, one was in Preston Park on May 28th and another was in Hove on Sep 27th.

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus***Declining summer visitor**

There were 30 reports this year during April and May, which is noticeably more than in 2007. The first record was on Apr 14th at Henfield Levels, a typical date. Most reports were of single birds but two birds were noted at Edburton Hill on Apr 19th and Calcot Wood, Ashurst on Apr 28th. During May three birds were recorded at Spithandle Lane, Ashurst on 5th and Wyckham Farm, Steyning on 10th. Two birds were reported from Mill Hill on 11th and Truleigh Hill on 21st. There were four June reports between 1st and 10th. One of these was from Sandgate Park, Storrington where there were five reports of single birds between May 3rd and Jun 1st. The only later report was from Waterhall, Brighton on Jul 7th. There were no reports of juveniles this year.

BARN OWL *Tyto alba***Uncommon breeding resident**

Thirty-three reports were received from over 20 sites this year. Most of these records were of single birds but three birds were seen at Beeding Brooks on Jan 12th and two were seen at Steyning on Feb 22nd. There was one road casualty on Jan 5th, on the A27 near Patching. There were positive breeding reports from six sites and eleven young were seen. There were four records in the autumn and second winter period from Shoreham, Steyning Levels and Henfield Levels. The last report was from Henfield Levels on Dec 25th.

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua***Fairly widespread resident in small numbers**

This species was reported from over 20 sites this year. Most records involved one bird but there were reports of two birds from seven sites. The majority of sightings were in the Jan to Apr period but there were six records in Jun and Jul. One of the Jun sightings reported two young at a barn nest box. The only later reports were from the outskirts of Worthing on Nov 4th where one bird was being harassed by corvids and at Patching on Dec 5th.

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

Fairly common resident

This species was widely reported throughout the year. There were 53 reports, most of which involved single birds. There was only one confirmed breeding report, from Wolstonbury Hill, on Apr 17th. However this species will have bred in many other locations in our area. No road casualties were recorded this year.

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus*

Scarce winter visitor and breeding resident.

Most of this year's records were from the general area of a known downland roost. However this species was also reported from at least two other areas. Unfortunately there was one road casualty at Woodmancote on Feb 1st. In early January there were five birds in the area of the known regular roost. Later there were reports of birds holding territory in two locations and two birds were still being reported from one area on May 12th. The last bird was reported on May 13th and there were no reports in the second winter period.

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

Regular migrant and occasional winter visitor

There were six reports in the period Jan 5th to Feb 23rd. The first bird was seen at Henfield Levels on Jan 5th. Two birds were reported from Beeding Brooks on three dates in Jan and Feb. No other birds were seen until Nov 20th, when one was seen at Shoreham Airport. The final record was on Dec 19th, when one was seen at Beeding Brooks.

EUROPEAN NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Rare summer migrant

There was only one record this year. On Sep 16th a migrant was seen at Sweet Hill, Patcham.

COMMON SWIFT *Apus apus*

Common summer visitor

The first bird was seen on Apr 21st on Worthing beach. There were twelve more Apr records. There were widespread May records from many parts of our area. The largest flocks seen this month were 100 at Cissbury on 21st, 58 at Portslade on 23rd, 45 at Washington on 25th and 60 at Brighton Wild Park on 31st. The largest flocks seen in Jun were 38 at North Farm, Findon on 5th and 130 at Cissbury on 17th. Probable nesting activity was reported from several sites including Findon, School Hill, Storrington, Maybridge, Durrington Lane, Worthing, Southwick, Shoreham and Preston Park, Brighton. During sea watches on Worthing beach 300 Swifts were noted flying east on Jul 5th and 500 on 6th. There were many other flocks reported, the largest being 250 seen at Southwick Hill on 20th. In Aug 500 birds were seen at Truleigh Hill on 2nd. There were several late birds with, surely a record for the date, 100 at Wild Park on Sep 16th and the final bird was seen on Oct 14th at Edburton.

COMMON KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

Uncommon resident and winter visitor

There were a good number of sightings this year, mainly from the coast or river valleys. Most were of single birds but there were ten records involving two birds. In the first

winter period there were 16 sightings from 13 locations. Three separate birds were ringed at Ladywells, including one young male. From the end of Jul to the end of the year there were 44 more sightings. One of these involved a bird ringed at Strivens Reedbed, Steyning on Oct 18th. The last sightings were at Beeding Brooks and the River Adur, Shoreham on Dec 30th.

WRYNECK *Jynx torquilla*

Rare passage migrant

Two were seen in our area this year. There were single birds at both Wild Park and Sheepcote Valley on both Sep 13th and 14th.

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

Common resident

There were regular, widespread sightings of these birds throughout the period. The only sightings involving breeding or juveniles, came from Wild Park, where four pairs bred, Findon Valley, Edburton, Oreham Common, Storrington and Washington Common, although breeding will have occurred in very many other areas. During ringing sessions at Strivens Reedbed (Steyning), Ladywells and Cissbury a total of 13 birds were caught.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major*

Common resident

These birds were very well reported throughout the year. It is an increasing species and was recorded from widespread locations in our area. One bird was drumming at Ladywells on Jan 12th and there were many other reports of drumming, including one in the second winter period, which was drumming again on Dec 11th. Specific breeding reports came from Wild Park (two pairs), Sandgate Park, Storrington, Preston Park and Woods Mill, although these birds will have bred in very many other locations. Ringing reports from Ladywells, Strivens Reedbed, Steyning and Cissbury indicate that 20 birds were handled during the year.

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos minor*

Scarce and declining resident

There was only one record of this appealing bird in our area this year. One was seen in Hampers Lane, Storrington on Feb 7th.

WOODLARK *Lullula arborea*

Rare passage migrant

The only record for this species was from Wild Park on Oct 14th, where a migrant flew over, calling.

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

Common resident

There were regular and widespread reports of this species throughout the year. In Jan the largest flocks reported were 72 at No Man's Land, Findon on 2nd and 48 at Steyning on 3rd. Larger flocks were seen in February. There were 200 in the Lychpole Hill area on 2nd, 70 at Steyning Round Hill on 4th and 90 near Findon on 20th. In the next two months the largest counts were 40 birds seen at Steep Down on Mar 5th and 57 birds were counted at

Thunders Barrow Hill on Apr 26th. Singing birds were reported from very many locations during the summer and 19 pairs were confirmed to have bred in Wild Park. Larger flocks were again reported later in the year, with 40 at Steep Down on Oct 12th, 119 at Wild Park on 28th, 45 seen at Wick Farm, Westmeston on Nov 7th and 57 at Chantry Hill on 16th. The largest Dec counts were 45 at Highden Hill, Washington on 6th and 50 at Patcham, Brighton on 27th.

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

Summer visitor and passage migrant

Three were passing through New Salts Farm on Mar 18th and three arrived at the only known nesting site in our area of Sandgate Park on 27th. Very few were seen elsewhere - just singles by seawatchers at Worthing beach in April and May. Twenty were noted burrowing nest holes on May 7th at Sandgate Park but no further reports were received. Some early returning birds were at Worthing beach on Jun 29th and at High Salvington on Jul 16th. Return passage was poor; typical were only 57 during Jul and seven in Sep from Worthing beach. Small flocks were recorded from Henfield Levels and Wild Park, the highest by far just 50 at Botolphs on Sep 3rd. The last were at Worthing beach on Sep 25th.

CRAG MARTIN *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*

Very rare vagrant

An adult was seen at Truleigh Hill on Sep 21st (P Clement). This is the first record for the area and only the second for Sussex. It has been accepted by the BBRC.

BARN SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

Common summer visitor

First was a single bird at Ladies Mile, Brighton on Mar 15th and one in off the sea at Marina on 31st. Noted thereafter in very small numbers from scattered localities into mid Apr. Twenty at Patching Pond on Apr 18th, 70N at Worthing Beach on 23rd and 26 at Patching on May 13th were the highest spring counts. Dozens of Tetrad Atlas records during May did not indicate breeding and there were just eight tetrads where breeding was confirmed. There was little significant movement in Jul, building up as expected in Aug with 300 E at Goring Gap on Aug 31st. Higher numbers were 3,000 at Tilley's Farm, Washington on Sep 12th; 1,200 at Wild Park on 15th and 1,500E mid morning at Goring Gap on 18th, but generally the autumn passage was considerably lower than usual. In Oct there were 75E at Worthing on 6th, 20 at Ladywells on 11th and the last was a single at Broadwater on the late date of Nov 26th.

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbicum*

Common but declining summer visitor

First bird of the spring was at Cissbury Ring on Apr 8th but in spite of dozens of BTO and Tetrad records the numbers reported were abysmally low, with only three sites recording double figures. Slightly more encouraging were a number of confirmed breeding records from Upper Beeding,, Woodmancote and Worthing and numerous sightings across the area during the breeding season. However, it is difficult to be positive and it would seem appropriate that the low numbers concur with the BTO's concern which makes it important for members to seek out nest sites and report to the recorder. Autumn passage rarely reached 20-30 until 300 at Goring Gap on Aug 27th, 400 at Cissbury and 890 at Washington on Sep 13th and peak 1,300 at Wild Park on 15th. Then 600 at Goring Gap and

500 at both Cissbury and Ladywells continuing the low peak counts during Sep. In Oct there were 40 at Cissbury on 9th, one at Ladywells on 16th and five W at Worthing being the last on 18th.

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

Decreasing, formerly fairly common passage migrant

Rather infrequent in spring, this year was no exception with two over midday near the University on Apr 15th being the only record. First of the autumn were three at Wild Park on Aug 15th followed by ones and twos at Cissbury, High Salvington and Worthing beach. A total of 37 at Wild Park included a peak of nine on Sep 13th. Other records were six at Sheepcote on 14th, four at Cissbury the next day and then almost daily there until 28th. The last was one W at Worthing beach on Oct 3rd.

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

Locally common resident and common passage migrant

Well represented from all over the area during the first two months, the majority being up to half a dozen or so. Larger flocks from downland included 30 from Lower Standean, 40 at Wild Park, 40 in stubble at Harrow Hill, 40 at Truleigh Hill and just one from a river valley with 50 at Coombes. March is the month for overhead passage with 15 in off sea at Marina on 18th and peak 50 there on 31st. The only passage counts at this time were 44 at the University and 22 at Sheepcote. Two pairs nested at Upper Beeding and Worthing GC and single pairs at Clayton windmills, University and Westmeston. Likely to have bred at other sites where noted during May/Jun, but hardly recorded at all during Jun/Jul. Autumn passage commenced with 230 W at Sheepcote and 68 over Wildpark on Sep 14th. Eighty flew N on 18th at Goring Gap and similar numbers E at Worthing the same day. Other movements included 80 at Cissbury on 25th and 55 on Oct 9th from Wild Park. It was remarked by two observers that overhead passage at well watched sites was much lower than usual. Feeding flocks at this time were noted from Cissbury and Steep Down. Passage had fizzled out by end Oct and thereafter wintering flocks were seen from downland north of Brighton & Hove, from Broadwater, Lychpole Hill and by far the largest flock was 50 at Cissbury on Dec 28th.

ROCK PIPIT *Anthus petrosus*

Regular winter visitor, occasionally breeds

Resident winter flocks were concentrated on the beach areas from Hove to Shoreham, with max four at the Fort on Jan 28th. Also noted from Shoreham Adur and Southwick Canal. It was not until Mar 21st that birds were seen at Worthing beach and later still at Marina on Apr 17th, where it was doubtful they nested this year. None were recorded during the summer months until a single on Sep 20th at Black Rock by the Marina. Ones and twos were seen during the last two months from Adur, Marina, Shoreham beach and Widewater.

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*

Rather uncommon spring and decreasing autumn passage migrant

Three in the Ridge field at the University on Apr 2nd were the first and preceded the next by nearly two weeks. These were another three at the same site and one at Wild Park. The only other spring birds were singles E at Worthing beach on 30th and May 31st.

August birds appeared at both Sompting and Goring beach with three on 23rd, Henfield Levels two on 26th, Wild Park two on 30th and Worthing beach four E and one W on 30th/31st.

A much-admired flock was present at Botolphs near Bramber from Sep 1st (100 birds rising to 110 on 3rd), when a Black-headed individual of the race *feldegg* was found (CHW, BFF - record on circ with BBRC), until 4th (50 birds). Ten were on Henfield Levels on 6th, eight at Sheepcote Valley and 17 at Brooklands on 14th, four at Michelgrove (Patching) on 15th and three at Hove on 18th when the maximum of 12 out of a total of 30 (seen between Aug 28th and Sep 18th) were at or over Wild Park. Goring Gap held two or three on 18th and 26th and the last of the autumn was a single over High Salvington on Oct 7th.

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

Local resident and winter visitor; passage migrant

Monthly totals were as follows:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
No of birds	7	9	2	-	3	1	-	1	17	11	14	18
No of sites	6	7	2	-	2	1	-	1	8	10	11	17

The only indication of breeding was of a pair in Storrington on May 6th/7th and a bird carrying food in central Brighton on May 15th. Three were in Preston Park in Nov.

PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba*

Common resident

Winter roosts were of 200 at Sussex House at the University in Feb and 50 in central Worthing in Nov. The previously used Montague Street tree appears to have been abandoned. Other notable gatherings or counts were of 36 at Applesham on Feb 3rd and up to 50 at Ladywells in Oct. Breeding occurred at Findon Valley, Ferring, the University, Washington, Lower Standean, Coombes, Poynings Badger's Wood, Patching and Shoreham.

WAXWING *Bombicilla garrulus*

Rare winter visitor

One was heard calling in Hove as it flew over on Dec 14th (SOS). Five were in the Hollingdean area of Brighton from 22nd to 23rd (PJW). Twelve were reported from Durrington, Worthing on 28th (SOS).

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Very common resident

As can be gathered with over 400 records received for this species, Wrens remain an abundant resident in the SDOS area. There were about fifty double figure counts at a wide range of sites, the maximum being at Poynings Badger's Wood with 33 in June. Ninety-five pairs bred at Wild Park. Ringing totals from Ladywells were 31 (28 new birds of which 12 were young and 16 adults); from Steyning 43 (36 new with 24 young and 12 adults) and Cissbury 26 all of which were new and contained 22 young and only four adults.

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis***Very common resident**

With 370 records the Dunnock scores high on the most recorded species list. By far and away the highest count though was in a tetrad at Patcham with 42 on Feb 10th. The 44 pairs breeding in Wild Park is a fall of two from 2007 and of 15 from 2003. Other pairs known to have reared young were two at the University. Ringing totals were as follows: Ladywells – 44 (31 new birds) of which 21 were young and 23 adults, Steyning – 42 (24 new birds) of which 18 were young and 22 adults and Cissbury – 35 (23 new birds) of which 18 were young and 17 adults.

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula***Very common resident**

The title of 'Most recorded species in the SDOS area' again fell to the Robin with well over 500 records. There were many counts of over 20 in defined tetrads examples being 34 at Coldean on Jan 27th, 33 at Patcham on Feb 10th, 30 at Washington Common on 11th, 37 at Clapham on 13th, 46 at Mill Hill on Sep 28th, 25 at Broadwater on Nov 4th, 31 at Hangleton on 12th and 41 at Hangleton on 16th. One hundred and thirty-seven pairs bred in Wild Park. Ringers at Ladywells, Steyning and Cissbury handled 48 (39 new), 51 (45 new) and 65 (56 new) birds of which 25, 38 and 43 were young and 22, 12 and 16 adults respectively.

COMMON NIGHTINGALE *Luscinia megarhynchos***Breeding summer visitor and scarce passage migrant**

Reported from Apr 27th at Wild Park where a bird remained until May 14th. Two were in Calcot Wood, Ashurst on 28th and one on Oreham Common on 30th. Singles were at Edburton, Woods Mill, Coldean, and Durrington from May 4th to 7th increasing to two and three respectively at the first two sites and to two at Oreham Common all on 14th. One at Small Dole on 19th and at Findon on 23rd. These were all singing males but no further evidence of breeding reported.

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros***Regular spring and autumn migrant, winter visitor, has bred**

Regularly one or two seen on both sides of Shoreham Harbour entrance in Jan and one at Hollingbury on Jan 25th. During Feb seen again around Shoreham Fort area also from Widewater, and inland a female at Beeding Brooks frequenting stables and a dung heap. Presumably the latter was also seen at the end of Feb at Golding Barn. Migrants were noted near Clayton windmills on Mar 26th, another at the University on Apr 10th, in a Shoreham garden on Apr 16th and lastly one at Portslade on May 23rd. Old Salts Farm and Waterhall recorded the first autumn birds from Sep 16th. One visited the rooftops near the RSPB office in Brighton from Oct 21st - 23rd. One at Marina boatyard on Oct 31st increased to two on Nov 5th. Other late year birds were at Shoreham, Southwick Beach and Widewater.



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COMMON REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Fairly common passage migrant, especially in autumn

First of the spring was a singing male at Ladies Mile NR on Apr 4th, closely followed the next day with singles at Edburton Hill and Shoreham Harbour. A good number in spring is unusual, and other singles were seen during Apr at Cissbury, Ferring, Findon and the University. Autumn passage commenced with an early bird at Steyning Round Hill on Jul 19th and a fine male at New Erringham Farm on Aug 7th. Reported from a good few areas in Sep with peaks at Cissbury of 12 on 8th and 12th; three at Steyning Round Hill on 13th; and three at Chanctonbury on 14th. Sheepcote and Wild Park could only

manage a maximum of two. The last bird was at Devil's Dyke on Sep 28th.

WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*

Fairly common autumn passage migrant; scarce in spring

Ladies Mile NR recorded the only birds of the spring with males on Apr 20th and 27th. Returning birds were noted from end of Aug and included six at Clayton windmills on 23rd. Not unusually, most were seen during Sep with peak six at Wild Park from an autumn total of 44, six at Sheepcote on 14th and smaller numbers from Botolphs, Cissbury, Devil's Dyke and Truleigh Hill. Late birds were singles at Brighton Black Rock on Sep 28th, Wild Park on Oct 8th and finally at Steyning Round Hill on Oct 11th.

STONECHAT *Saxicola torquata*

Regular winter visitor and local breeding resident

The usual scattering of ones and twos in Jan/Feb were mainly from lowland areas such as Henfield Levels, Shoreham Airport and beach, Southwick and Widewater. Records from the downs at this time came from Devil's Dyke, Findon, Lychpole Hill, Truleigh Hill and Whitehawk Hill. Max early year counts were six at Steep Down and ten at Steyning Bowl. Different sites were noted during Mar, probably passage birds, from Ladies Mile, Sheepcote and Wild Park. Confirmed breeding were two pairs at Cissbury and single pairs at Thundersbarrow Hill, Steep Down, Steyning Bowl and Worthing GC. Also seen during the breeding season at Beeding Hill, Findon valley and Henfield Levels. Numbers started to increase at end Sep with seven at Truleigh Hill, then eight at Cissbury, but a staggering 28 at Steyning Round Hill on Oct 11th was by far the largest count this year (this is the second highest ever count for the area). Rather low autumn figures were reported from well-watched sites with only max two at Whitehawk and Wild Park, and three from Sheepcote. In Dec four were at Mile Oak and Old Salts Farm, and smaller numbers from the Adur valley, Beeding Brooks, Lancing beach and Widewater.

NORTHERN WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Common passage migrant

First arrivals were males at Patcham on Mar 9th followed by others at Bevendean, Goring and Wild Park during the next week. On Mar 30th a flurry of records with eight at Sheepcote, ten at Goring Gap and 14 at Worthing beach. Through Apr most of the records came from downland, the last of the spring was a male at Ladies Mile on May 1st fitting the description of the Greenland subspecies. Returning birds are not unusual in Jul

with singles at Southwick Hill and Truleigh Hill at the month end. Steadily reported from downland from many areas during Aug but there were no high counts until 21 at Clayton windmills on 29th. At Wild Park the peak was 14 from an autumn total of 86. Aug total from Worthing beach was only 15, and 22 in Sep, giving some indication of a fall in numbers this year. The only other reasonable counts in Sep were ten at Cissbury, 12 at Clayton windmills, eight at Goring Gap and six from Widewater. There were half a dozen records from Oct, then the last at Brooklands lagoon on Nov 2nd.

RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus*

Regular passage migrant in varying numbers

Six birds were seen during the spring; singles were at Sheepcote Valley (Brighton) on Mar 30th and Apr 18th, one at Wild Park on Apr 4th with a pair on the hill-fort at the same location on the 16th and one near Cissbury on Apr 25th.

Autumn records, possibly involving eight or ten birds, ranged between Sep 14th and Nov 2nd. Singles were seen at Chanctonbury Ring on Sep 14th, at Sheepcote Valley on Sep 15th and Nov 1st, at Wild Park on Sep 18th, at High Salvington (Worthing) on Oct 2nd and at Truleigh Hill on Nov 2nd. Two at Cissbury Ring on Sep 25th and 28th were the only records involving more than single birds.

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

Very common resident

This species was well recorded with records coming from 84 of the 94 tetrads containing land in the society's recording area. Many of these records came from the national and county atlas survey in which timed encounters with the species ranged from 0 to 31 birds per hour during the winter (Jan/Feb and Nov/Dec) and 0 to 27 birds during the breeding season (Apr/July). As expected Blackbirds were recorded in all 11 Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) squares with the highest count for the two x 1km transects being 27 in Portslade on May 17th. A total of 121 bred in Wild Park but no other breeding season surveys were conducted. High winter counts included 58 at Washington on Feb 16th, 92 feeding on haws between Lychpole Hill and Cissbury on Nov 26th, 58 at Wild Park on Dec 13th and 50 at Hove on the following day. Ringing at the three regular sites produced totals of 30 (Cissbury), 40 (Ladywells) and 72 (Mumbles) different birds of which 10, 13 and 34 respectively were young.

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

Common winter visitor

During the first winter period approximately 800 were noted from 28 different locations. The highest counts were 100 and 60 near Findon on Feb 6th and 20th, 90 at Myrtle Grove Farm (Patching) on Jan 27th, 66 at Coombes on Feb 3rd and 60 at Chantry Hill on Feb 6th. The only April records were from the University where there were ten on the 7th and seven flew north on the 14th.

Five were at Wild Park on Oct 18th; most of the other October records were from this location and involved west flying birds on 27th (18), 29th (122), 30th (12) and 31st (102). More widespread records occurred after mid November but numbers were generally small apart from 239 at Stanmer Park on Dec 17th, 37 at Storrington on Dec 18th and 25 at Beeding Brooks on the 19th. The flock at Stanmer Park was regularly being harassed by a female Sparrowhawk.

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

Fairly common resident

This species was also well recorded with sightings coming from 75 of the 94 tetrads containing land in the society's recording area. Like most common and widespread species most of these records came from the national and county atlas survey in which timed encounters with the species ranged from 0 to 10 birds per hour during both the winter (Jan/Feb and Nov/Dec) and the breeding season (Apr/July) counts. Song Thrushes were recorded in eight of the area's 11 Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) squares but in low numbers with the highest count for the two x 1km transects being 6 at Patcham on May 2nd. The only local breeding season survey was at Wild Park where 18 pairs were found. All the counts over 20 birds occurred in the autumn when 130 were at Cissbury on Sep 25th, 40 there on Sep 28th and 76, mostly flying west, at Wild Park on Oct 18th. Ringing total from the three local sites were 27 (Cissbury), 14 (Ladywells) and 26 (Mumbles) different birds of which 14, 22 and 4 respectively were young.

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

Common winter visitor

Although recorded from over 40 sites during the first winter period the numbers involved were fairly small and probably involved about 1000 birds. There was no clear peak in numbers but the highest counts were 60 at Upper Beeding on Jan 1st, 70 at Washington on Jan 2nd, 123 at Wiston on Feb 2nd and 85 at the University on Feb 29th. The number of records declined through March and the species was only seen on three April dates with three at Ladies Mile Reserve on 12th being the last of the spring.

One, flying E over Goring at dawn, on Sep 22nd was the first of the autumn but there were no further sightings until five at High Salvington (Worthing) on Oct 7th. After mid month, observations were more widespread and involved records from about 40 sites on 40 different days amounting to about 1500 birds. The three figure counts were 115 and 125, mainly flying W, at Wild Park on Oct 30th and 31st, 200 at Henfield Levels on Nov 15th and 142 and 200 at Lychpole Hill on Nov 26th and Dec 4th.

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*

Fairly common resident

Although considered to be of the same status as the related Song Thrush this species was recorded in lower numbers and less widespread with records from 47 (about 50%) of the area's tetrads. Breeding was confirmed from just 12 locations and only involved one or two pairs. Of the 158 records only six involved more than four birds with double figure counts of 12 at Saddlescombe on Feb 16th, 21 flying north west over Ladies Mile Reserve on Sep 17th and 14 at Cissbury Ring on Sep 20th.

CETTI'S WARBLER *Cettia cetti*

Scarce resident

Favoured sites continue to be the Shoreham Airport/New Salts Farm area and Beeding Brooks with a maximum of two and one respectively during the breeding season. Present at both sites in January. A single was along the Coastal Link path below Mill Hill from April 7th through to Jun 19th. One was at Beeding between Oct 7th and Nov 16th and again on Dec 31st.



GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia***Scarce passage migrant**

There was just one spring and one autumn record. On Apr 17th one was reeling near the University and on Sep 28th another was at nearby Hollingdean.

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus***Declining summer visitor and passage migrant**

First arrival was appropriately at Shoreham Airport on Apr 15th with another two days later in a Goring garden. One “singing in the rain” at a University car park on Apr 21st was apparently not the first such occurrence prompting the observer to suggest these birds may have been fooled by a shiny wet surface during the previous night. Potential breeding birds were present throughout the Adur Valley from May to July at five or six sites. However there were no more than two at any one location. During August ringers operating at Ladywells and Steyning ringed just three young birds in all and a single bird was seen in a Steyning garden. The last of the year were at Brighton in September; one in the Royal Pavilion gardens on Sep 8th and two in Sheepcote Valley on Sep 14th.

EURASIAN REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus***Fairly common summer visitor**

Shoreham Airport shared the honours with Woods Mill for the first sightings of the year on April 15th. Tetrad Atlas work added new breeding season locations of Truleigh Sands, Small Dole and Rock Common, Washington but most other records came from the Adur Valley, although at Beeding Brooks, which did well last year, they were either absent or went unrecorded. Two at Ferring Rife and one at Preston Park were the only other locations. The best count was at Ladywells where 8-9 pairs were thought to be in the valley with around 20 there, including fledged young, on Jul 26th. Ringing at Ladywells revealed 14 adult birds and 16 young for the year whilst at Steyning the outcome was 23 adult birds and 42 young processed. At Cissbury just four autumn passage birds were ringed. Away from the ringing sites only scattered reports of return passage were submitted involving no more than two birds together. Regular observations at Ladywells produced the final three for the year on Sep 20th.

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla***Common summer visitor, regular in winter**

Present in gardens from the beginning of the year, this species was often observed feeding on winter berries such as ivy, holly and privet. Sub-song was heard at Offington on Feb 7th and by the 24th one was intermittently singing at Patcham and another was in full song at West Tarring the following day. Singing and berry eating in the more urban locations was widely reported throughout March. Towards the end of March and in early April it is hard to determine if birds are arriving or departing but records from downland locations such as Cissbury on Apr 10th are almost certainly arrivals. By mid April records are well distributed as breeding territories are established. Double figure counts in May and June resulting from Tetrad Atlas work were 13 in Clapham Woods, 12 at Mill Hill, 11 at Truleigh Sands, Small Dole and ten at the University. In Wild Park it was estimated that 19 pairs bred. In the latter part of July and early August the only observations away from ringing sites were at Washington and Wild Park. The best of the autumn movement was 12 at Mill Hill on Aug

23rd followed by regular double figure counts at Cissbury during September with a peak of 30 on the 25th although many other locations provided single figure counts. At Mill Hill 17 were present on the 28th. Peak autumn catches from the ringing sites were 39 at Cissbury on Sep 13th with 35 at Steyning the same day and seven at Ladywells on the 20th. No more than two were reported from any one site in October or November and by mid December wintering birds were back in gardens. Last for the year was a female at Durrington on Dec 31st.

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

Fairly common summer visitor

First recorded on Apr 9th in song at the University, a fairly early date, other spring sightings were at Patcham, Worthing Golf Course and St Anne's Well gardens. Tetrad Atlas work increased both the number and location of breeding season records with the addition of sites such as Durrington, Calcot Wood at Ashurst and Tilley's Farm and Highden Hill near Washington. The highest count was of four on the Downs at No Man's Land near Findon. Ringing at the Mumbles produced the highest annual and daily totals. Six ringed on Aug 2nd formed part of a total of 18 birds whereas the other totals were just one at Ladywells and eight at Cissbury. The Ladywells bird, caught on Jul 26th, was the first clear indication of autumn passage. One was in a Steyning garden on Aug 22nd and thereafter there was just a trickle of records, mostly from Sompting, until the last was at Wild Park on Sep 23rd.

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

Fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant

Commencing on Apr 20th at Wild Park and Whitehawk, Brighton, the last ten days of April produced a flurry of arrivals across the area. In May and June the best counts came from the Cissbury and Lychpole areas with five on 3rd May and three on both 5th and 11th May. Along the Coastal Link near Shoreham, up to three birds were seen or heard between May 1st and June 19th. All other breeding season records came from or near downland sites apart from birds at the Steyning ringing site, Wyckham Farm near Steyning and Woods Mill. Ringers caught 13 individuals at Cissbury, six at Steyning and three at Ladywells. Of the Cissbury birds, seven out of eight adults were caught before Jul 26th with just 5 juveniles and the remaining adult caught after this date, suggesting a poor breeding season. The only sighting in July was of a single bird at Highdown on the 8th. Thereafter up to three were seen on downland, predominantly Cissbury and Wild Park, with the last for the year at Cissbury on Sep 28th.

COMMON WHITETHROAT *Sylvia Communis*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant

After a first arrival at Mile Oak on Apr 11th, closely followed by birds at Small Dole and the University, distribution was widespread by Apr 20th. Tetrad Atlas fieldworkers produced some high breeding season counts. Counts into double figures were Thundersbarrow Hill 28, Canada Bottom near Cissbury 17, Highden Hill near Washington ten, Wild Park 22, Waterhall near Brighton ten, Applesham near Coombes 16, Wyckham Farm, near Steyning 15, Steep Down 13, Mill Hill 30, Lychpole Hill 15, Devils Dyke 13 and Sheepcote Valley 30. But for the Atlas work it is unlikely records would have come from places like Shoreham Harbour, Cockroost Hill at Mile Oak, Clayton Windmills and Badgers Wood Farm at

Cormorant by David Wood

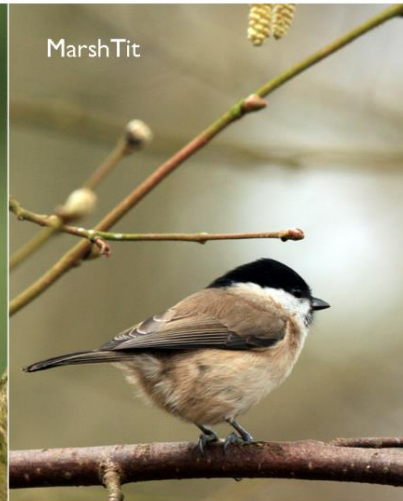




Glaucous Gull and Herring Gull by Dorian Mason



Coal Tit



Marsh Tit

**Woodland
Quartet by
Wendy Ball**



Goldcrest



Nuthatch

Poynings. Non-atlas records for May and June were widespread with six at Ferring Rife considered by the observer to be an excellent showing for this site. At Cissbury ringers processed 31 different birds of which six were adult and 25 were young. At Steyning it was one adult and seven young ringed while at Ladywells three young birds were in the nets. The Ladywells birds were trapped in August when birds were on the move. In August and early September counts of up to 20 were made at both Cissbury and Wild Park. After seven at Sheepcote Valley on Sep 14th just ones and twos were seen until the last on Oct 6th at Wild Park.

DARTFORD WARBLER *Sylvia undata*

Scarce autumn migrant, rare winter visitor

Two were present in Sheepcote Valley on Sep 15th.

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Rare autumn vagrant

One was found at Brooklands on Oct 13th (JAN).

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*

Common summer visitor, with regular wintering population

Present right from the very beginning of the year, one was at Brighton University on Jan 1st. During January and February further records were received, particularly from the Brighton area, but with no more than four at any one site. From early March migrants were reported with the monthly maximum of five at both Ladies Mile LNR and the University of Sussex. In the breeding season almost 200 records were received from 80 distinct sites showing this species to be widespread and abundant within our area. Highest counts of between eight and twelve individuals came from Clapham Wood, No Man's Land, Small Dole, Upper Beeding, Steyning, Applesham, and Whitehawk with 20 pairs estimated to be breeding in Wild Park. At the Ladywells ringing site 23 individual birds were processed of which six could be identified as adult birds and 16 as young. Comparable figures for Steyning were 116 birds of which 19 were adults and 92 were young whilst ringers at Cissbury managed 82 birds of which just four were adults and 74 were young. The Cissbury figures reflect the large numbers of autumn migrants passing through the site, indeed 40 were seen there on Sep 8th increasing to 50 by the 12th. Counts of between 30 and 40 continued to be made here until the end of the month. Elsewhere in September smaller but significant numbers were recorded at Ladywells, Wild Park and Mill Hill. Into October and eight were at Whitehawk on Oct 9th and eight also at Mile Oak two days later. In late autumn Brooklands proves an attractive site for this species and 2008 was no exception with ten on Oct 13th and eight on the 15th. Thereafter numbers dwindled until the last for the year were two at Ladywells on Dec 19th and one at Upper Beeding on 28th.

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Declining summer visitor and passage migrant

Initial sightings came from coastal locations with the first at West Tarring on Mar 30th closely followed by one at Ferring the following day. By Apr 3rd the reports were more widespread and included potential breeding locations such as Cissbury. However ten at Brooklands on Apr 13th had no doubt recently arrived. Tetrad Atlas and Breeding Bird

Survey field work provided the majority of records for the breeding season. Ignoring potential migrants and overlapping counts at some sites it would seem that a total of around 35 individuals were present in potential breeding sites throughout our area. No fieldworker recorded more than three in any one location in a timed visit although a casual observer counted six at Lychpole Hill on May 3rd. The other best sites with two or three birds were Chanctonbury, Mill Hill and Washington and Fulking with just a single bird at another 15 locations. First evidence of return passage was a bird back in the Ladywells valley on Jul 26th with 12 at Cissbury on the 31st. Cissbury again provided the peak autumn count with 45 on Aug 14th whilst on Aug 29th 30 were at Cissbury and 25 at Wild Park. Just a few were still present in September with the last two at Washington on Sep 17th.

A bird with song alternating between Willow Warbler and Chiffchaff was at Woods Mill on May 14th where a bird with a similar call had been heard the previous year. A bird beginning with Chiffchaff song and ending with Willow Warbler was present in Anchor Bottom from Apr 20th through to Jun 17th. At the ringing sites Ladywells processed nine individuals during the year whilst the figures for the Mumbles and Cissbury were 23 and 30 respectively.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor

Mainly ones and twos from over 30 sites in Jan and Feb but four or five at the University, No-Man's Land and Lower Standean and nine counted at Washington. Display noted at Wiston and West Tarring and established pairs were at Ladies Mile LNR, Durrington, Washington and Wild Park (two). The trend for low numbers at many sites continued until Sep when five at both Cissbury and Wild Park and increased in Oct with eight at Whitehawk (Brighton) on 8th, 20 at Brooklands on 13th, 16 at Wild Park on 17th and 30 at Cissbury on 25th. Eight were in roadside trees in West Worthing on Nov 4th, 17 at Offington (Worthing) on 7th, 15 at Ladywells on 13th, 11 at Church Hill, Findon on 15th, 12 at Wild Park on 19th (considered high count for time of year at this site) and ten again at Ladywells on Dec 2nd.

Ringing totals were 50 (47 young birds) at Cissbury with a maximum of 15 on both Oct 2nd and 11th; 17 at Steyning (16 young) and 33 at Ladywells (32 young).

FIRECREST *Regulus ignicapilla*

Regular passage migrant in small numbers, occasionally breeds and winters

A welcome increase in records this year. Wintering birds were at High Salvington, Findon Valley, central Brighton, Preston Park, Small Dole and the University. In Mar there were one at each of Patcham, Ladywells, Hollingbury Camp, the University, Preston Park, a Goring garden, Washington, Ferring, Wild Park and Ladies Mile Reserve. More migrants in Apr were at St Anne's Well gardens, Michelgrove (where a pair were present in a suitable breeding habitat), Adur recreation ground, Shoreham Airport, Sheepcote Valley and Brighton. The last spring sighting was at Washington Highden Hill on May 3rd. One in Clapham Wood on Jul 2nd was a likely breeding candidate. Two were ringed at Ladywells and one at Steyning on Oct 4th the first autumn record. There were Nov records from Brooklands, Homefield Park (Worthing), Whitehawk and Brighton Cemetery and in Dec from Findon, Wild Park, Ladywells, Hove and High Salvington.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*

Declining passage migrant and summer visitor

First recorded at Poynings Badger's Wood on May 4th followed by three at Edburton on 16th and singles at Sandgate Park, Storrington on 18th and St Anne's Well on 25th. A pair remained at Edburton into June and breeding occurred at Highden Hill, Washington. August records came from eight sites with six at Cissbury on 29th as the maximum. Ten localities held birds in September with Cissbury again the main one with up to eight present (22nd). Wild Park noted a total of 12 between Aug 28th and Sep 27th, the latter the last of an unremarkable autumn.

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Uncommon but regular passage migrant

Three spring records this year. One in Brunswick Place Gardens, Hove on Apr 4th, an early date, was followed by one at Wild Park on 15th and one at Findon Valley on 20th. A male was at Cissbury on Aug 7th and one was in St Anne's Well gardens on 9th. Three showed up in Brighton (Borough, Hollingdean and Sheepcote Valley) and two at St Anne's Well in Sep (to 27th) and one was at Cissbury on 20th/21st.

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*

Common resident

Eleven were recorded on New Year's Day on the Sussex University campus. The largest recorded winter flock was of 20 birds at Tilley's Farm in Washington seen on Jan 2nd, but flocks were recorded at several sites regularly throughout the first half of January. In the second half of Jan and throughout Feb the size of the flocks decreased, with only a few double figure flocks seen at three locations. Towards the end of Feb more pairs were being reported and by early Mar nest behaviour had been observed, with a pair seen carrying pigeon feathers on the 6th March. On Apr 19th the first fledged birds were recorded, which appears to be unusually early. More typically early Jun saw a rise in the number of juveniles reported with 12 localities reporting them. Throughout the summer family groups were reported at many different sites and towards the latter part of summer and autumn larger flocks up to 30 birds were reported.

BLUE TIT *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Abundant resident

Winter counts of up to 48 birds were recorded from a wide variety of locations, reflecting the ubiquitous nature of this species. Records of singing behaviour increased at the end of February and the first report of nesting was on Mar 30th, whilst the earliest report of fledged youngsters was on May 20th. Nest building or occupancy was noted at 14 sites and fledged young reported from 32. A further seven recorded adults carrying food for young. Small parties continued to be reported throughout the year.

GREAT TIT *Parus major*

Very common resident

There were regular reports of this species from all areas of the SDOS region throughout the year. Reports of birds singing were received at the end of Feb from the Storrington area and from the same area there was a report of nesting on Apr 6th. The earliest report

of fledglings was again from Storrington on May 13th. Nest sites being used totalled just five reports but fledged young were noted from 24 locations. Small numbers were regularly reported throughout the year, although a count of 28 in two hours at Badger's Wood was notable.

COAL TIT *Periparus ater*

Fairly common but local resident

There were regular recordings of small numbers and single birds throughout the year, although seven were reported in Washington on Feb 16th. During Mar and early Apr there were several observations of singing males. On May 26th a family party was reported in Worthing containing newly fledged birds and more were found at Washington Rock Common and at Patching.

MARSH TIT *Poecile palustris*

Fairly uncommon resident

Most of the records received concerned single sightings, however seven birds were sighted at Chanctonbury Ring in Sep and four in Washington in Nov. No reports of nesting behaviour or breeding were received other than two young birds ringed (one each at Cissbury and Steyning), which may reflect under reporting rather than actual breeding success.

WILLOW TIT *Poecile montanus*

Rare and declining resident

No records were received in relation to this bird. The Willow Tit population is cause of national concern, due to the speed of its decline.

NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

Uncommon resident; shuns the coast

Mostly single records or of small numbers were received, however eight birds were recorded at Small Dole and Washington on Feb 9th and 16th respectively. Breeding occurred at Ashington and Washington Tilley's Farm and three new birds were ringed at Ladywells in September.

EURASIAN TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

Uncommon resident

There were regular reports of single birds or in small numbers throughout the winter and early spring. On Apr 1st a bird was observed carrying nesting material at the University. In early June there were reports of a nest with young at Preston Park and of fledgling birds at Wild Park and the University and a family party was seen in Henfield on Jul 27th. Small numbers continued to be reported steadily for the rest of the year.

RED-BACKED SHRIKE *Lanius collurio*

Very scarce passage migrant

A juvenile was seen and photographed near Devil's Dyke on Sep 27th and 28th. (JM, SOS)

GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor***Very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant**

One bird was seen in our area this year. An observer saw one perched on a hawthorn bush at Chantry Hill on October 30th (SOS).

JAY *Garrulus glandarius***Fairly common resident and winter visitor**

There were very many reports of these birds throughout the year from many locations. Most of these reports involved a small number of birds – usually one or two. The highest numbers of birds seen were eight at Small Dole on Feb 9th, ten at Hangleton on Oct 10th and seven seen at Cissbury on Oct 9th. The only confirmed successful breeding reports were from Wild Park, where two pairs bred, and from Sompting where fledged birds were seen on Jun 27th. Three birds were ringed at Ladywells during the year and two were ringed at Steyning.

MAGPIE *Pica pica***Very common resident**

As with Jay, very many sightings were reported during the year from many different locations. Frequently flocks were seen and there were 14 reports where in excess of 30 birds were reported. The largest flocks seen were 43 at Coldean, Brighton on Jan 27th and Brighton Wild Park on Dec 13th. Forty pairs bred at Wild Park and fledged young were reported from 15 locations. One bird was ringed during the year at Ladywells.

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula***Common resident**

Many reports received during the year from widespread locations. Often small numbers of birds were seen but there were many sightings of larger flocks. Some of the larger gatherings were in the early part of the year when there were six reports of flocks of over 100 birds. The largest of these flocks were 155 at Wiston Estate, Steyning on Feb 2nd and 224 at Washington on Apr 3rd. At Ladywells on Jun 28th 100 birds were reported. On Chantry Hill there were 134 on Nov 16th. However the larger flocks were seen in December when 220 birds were seen at Botolphs, near Bramber on Dec 21st and the same number were noted at Washington on Dec 28th. These numbers were dwarfed on Dec 19th, when at least 1200 birds were seen flying to roost at Beeding Brooks. Nesting activity was reported from 13 locations and fledged young were seen at eight sites.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus***Common resident**

Many more rookeries were reported this year involving over 400 nests in over 20 locations. The largest numbers reported were 78 nests at Myrtle Grove Farm, Clapham and 77 nests at six colonies in Findon Valley. There were also 78 nests at three sites at Patching. Most of the flocks reported were relatively small and there were only six flocks of 100 or more. The largest of these were 296 at Mill Hill on Feb 9th, 157 at Southwick Hill on May 20th and 204 at Chantry Hill on Nov 16th.

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*

Very common resident

There were six sightings of flocks of 100 or more. The largest of these was 190 on Sep 17th seen on Goring Beach, where flocks of 132 and 122 had been seen earlier in the year on Jan 23rd and Feb 13th respectively. A flock of 100 birds was seen at Goring Gap on Jan 16th, a gathering of 147 was at Botolphs, near Bramber on Dec 21st and 106 were noted at Lancing beach on Dec 22nd. Eighteen pairs bred in Wild Park and there were reports of breeding activity in many other locations, including reports of fledged young from 17 other sites.

RAVEN *Corvus corax*

Scarce breeding resident

Another good year with four young fledged. Sightings away from the breeding area were from the Marina on Mar 31st, the University with two birds on Jun 6th, Wild Park with two on Sep 8th and Ditchling Beacon on Sep 24th.

COMMON STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

Common resident and abundant winter visitor

In Jan 3100 at Steep Down on 5th was the largest gathering away from the West and Palace Piers where the roosts held 5500 and 37300 on 19th. By Feb the latter total had fallen to 22400 and no other location held more than 315 (Mill Hill). Nest building was observed from Mar 5th in Patcham but a feeding flock of 200 was present at Widewater on 9th. In Apr, there were further reports of nesting at other sites in Patcham, the University campus and Ladies Mile NR. Birds were noted feeding young or fledged young were visible at 16 sites in May and 23 in June/July. With no Atlas data being collected there were very few reports in Aug and Sep with 70 at Wild Park the largest of the counts submitted. In Oct, 2900 were on Shoreham Airport on 7th and the Palace Pier roost held 17500 on 31st. One thousand were on Steep down on Dec 1st and 23000 on the Pier on 6th with 3300 in Hove on 8th and 2000 at Tegdown Hill on 11th. The two piers held 24500 on 20th.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

Very common resident

On Jan 1st 20 were seen at Shoreham Hbr, on 9th there were 30 at Tilley's Farm, Washington; a larger group of 56 was reported from Patcham on Feb 10th and 25 were on Worthing beach on 13th. The winter Atlas tetrad 2-hour survey counts rarely exceeded 15, though a total of 15 were near Wyckham Farm on Feb 16th, all seen in the first hour. Breeding season records were of 20 in an hour during an Atlas count at Ferring on Apr 27th and 44 in a BBS survey at Portslade. In June the second BBS count maximum was of 55 at Old Salts Farm, while in a similar area a second Atlas walk around Shoreham Airport gave a total of 68 birds. Later in the year there were 52 counted during an Atlas preliminary walk round Hangleton on Oct 10th and 55 at Mile Oak on 11th. In a subsequent walk in the same area there were 115 individuals. From Nov 4th large numbers came into roost at the Holmbush complex at Shoreham. Over 300 were counted through to Nov and Dec.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*

Very scarce former resident and passage migrant

A group of three were seen near Stonepit Lane, Henfield on Feb 28th, and there were two further sightings from the same area in the subsequent week. Three were also seen at Patcham on Dec 27th.

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

Very common resident

An Atlas surveyor at No Man's Land counted 151 on Jan 2nd, of which 150 were found in the first hour. Other flocks of 50 or more were 54 on Feb 9th at Storrington and 50 at Henfield on 11th. The Feb maximum at the University was 37 on 28th. Seven females and three males on Mar 9th was a record garden count for a member at West Tarring. Wild Park held 46 breeding pairs, just one more than in 2007. Twenty birds were found in an Atlas breeding season walk around Wyckham Farm, Steyning, and fledged youngsters were reported from the University on Jun 4th. Numbers ringed at Ladywells and Steyning were 45 and 39 respectively, with over 60% being adult birds. Just five were trapped at Cissbury, where there is no winter ringing or feeding station operating. A winter tetrad count at Myrtle Grove Farm, Patching recorded 43 in Nov. The only flock of more than a hundred was at Chantry Hill on Dec 27th, when 120 were seen flying between the ground, a large dung heap and bushes.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

Regular passage migrant and uncommon winter visitor

Reports from early Jan were of four at the University on 1st and 15 at No Man's Land on 2nd, both during Atlas timed tetrad visits. A group of 12 was also seen at the latter site on Feb 6th. Two single birds were in different areas of Ferring on Jan 26th, there were four with Chaffinches near Findon Church on 27th and three at Kithurst Hill on 29th. In Mar a female was with five Chaffinches on a feeder at the University on 12th and another female at St Anne's Well Gardens, Hove on 15th. Two birds were seen in Shoreham on Apr 4th and a male was at Chantry Hill on 15th. Oct records were of two at Wild Park on 18th and a male at St Anne's Well Gardens on 28th. One was heard in Park Crescent, Brighton on Nov 4th, a single bird was at Edburton on Dec 19th and finally two were seen at Chantry Hill on 27th.

SERIN *Serinus serinus*

Rare passage migrant

There was one in the Ladies Mile NR on May 8th (DH). Our first record since 2004.

GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris*

Very common resident

Fourteen were seen in the first hour of an Atlas survey at the University on Jan 1st, and similarly 22 at Steyning on 3rd. There were 14 at Stanmer Park on 16th. The maximum for the month at the University was 23 on 30th. None were recorded in February at Ladies Mile LNR, Wild Park during 24 visits in February, though in March 12 were seen on 17th and by Apr 1st at least four males were song-flighting. A brood with four chicks was noted at the University on Apr 22nd. Twenty-five were counted in a West Worthing BBS square on Apr 27th and in an East Worthing Atlas survey 40 were found. Twenty-eight pairs bred at Wild Park this year, three more than in 2007. On Aug 9th 44 were found in the

Tegdown Hill area. At Ladywells 15 different birds were trapped during the year of which 11 were adults, and at Steyning 88 were handled, including 66 adults, with a maximum of 20 on Dec 21st, though the 2008 total was 41 less than at the same site the previous year. A group of 30 at Lychpole Hill on Nov 26th, a single flock of 150 at Shoreham Harbour and another of 100 in the same area on Dec 30th were the only larger numbers reported.

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

Fairly common resident and passage migrant

Thirty were seen at Ditchling Beacon on Jan 6th, 26 at Durrington Sports Centre on 11th. In Feb 20 were at Lychpole Hill on 4th, 16 at Washington on 6th and ten in Worthing Town Centre on 18th. Otherwise numbers in the first three months of the year were generally in single figures apart from a few Atlas tetrad counts. Two pairs were confirmed as having bred at Wild Park and two pairs were seen with young at Patcham on Jun 4th. In Aug the maximum seen at Ladywells was 20, and at Wild Park 40. A flock of 80 was near the River Adur at Henfield on Sep 13th, and on 24th there were 50 at Cissbury Ring; on 29th 65 flew E at Worthing beach in less than an hour, the same day as the monthly maximum of 58 was recorded at Wild Park. In Oct there were 120 at Whitehawk on 9th, 30 at Tilley's Farm, Washington on 21st and 50 flew E in 1.5 hours at Worthing beach on 13th. On Nov 3rd 127 flew E at the same site and at Chantry Hill 76 were counted on 16th. During the year at Ladywells 30 different birds were trapped, while at Steyning the year total was 141, with a maximum of 37 on Dec 21st, the same day as 20 Greenfinches were also caught.

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*

Fairly common passage migrant and local winter visitor

The first report came from Sandgate Park, where ten were seen on Jan 26th, followed by three at High Salvington on 31st, when a single bird also appeared on a feeder at Woods Mill. Ten were at Warren Hill, Washington on Mar 25th, five at Wild Park and three at the University on Apr 15th, the last of the spring records. Good numbers were noted in September, with 79 at Wild Park on 13th, 90 on 15th and 72 on 29th. At Cissbury Ring 95 were seen on 13th, while at Sheepcote Valley 108 flew E on 14th, 120 on 15th and 115 on 20th. Observers at Worthing/Ferring beaches counted 160 E on Sep 16th, 195 E on 17th and 149 E on 19th; on Oct 6th 177 flew E in 2.2 hours, but no more were recorded in a further 28 hours during the month. Two males were ringed at the Mumbles on Oct 11th, five were seen at Cissbury on 18th and four on 28th; 20 were at Sandgate Park on both 25th and 28th. In Nov there were ten recorded at Wild Park on 4th, two on 13th and a maximum of two at Ladywells on 19th. There was just one report in December, of a single bird at Ladywells on 2nd.

LINNET *Carduelis cannabina*

Locally common resident and passage migrant

On Jan 2nd there were 70 in the first hour of an Atlas walk at No Man's Land; similarly 80 in the Lower Standean area on 30th. A flock of 80 was at Lychpole Hill on Feb 2nd and another of 160 at Steyning Round Hill on 25th. On Apr 20th 68 flew E in 4.5 hrs at Worthing beach. Ladies Mile Reserve, Wild Park, held 14 breeding pairs, the same number as the previous year. In the first hour of a late summer Atlas survey 32 were recorded at Canada Bottom, Findon on Jul 1st, while on Aug 9th 130 were counted in a walk of just under two hours at Tegdown Hill. In October larger numbers were seen; 150 in the Lower Adur Valley on 1st and 16th, 500 at Steyning Round Hill on 11th, and 60 at Cuckoo Corner

on 22nd. But in Nov and Dec respectively flocks of 50 at Tegdown Hill and 80 at Edburton were the largest reported.

LESSER REDPOLL *Carduelis cabaret*

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor

There was just one spring report this year, of two at Sheepcote Valley on Mar 15th. It was Sep before another was seen, a single at Wild Park on 26th. This was the only site where numbers exceeded single figures, and there was an October maximum there of 58 on 8th. Two trapped at the Mumbles on Oct 4th were an adult and a first year bird. Four were noted at Whitehawk on Oct 9th, eight at Cissbury Ring on 25th, and five flew E at Worthing beach on Nov 1st. The final record was of two at Ladywells on Nov 19th.

COMMON CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*

Scarce visitor, more common in irruption years

After two blank years as far as sightings are concerned, there were several reports in 2008. Three circled over Cissbury Ring on May 13th, then flew W, and another three flew W at Hollingbury Camp on Jun 6th. Six were at Wild Park on Jul 2nd, and three, including one female, flew W calling at Southwick Hill on 20th. The maximum number seen in Aug at Wild Park was ten on 21st, on 27th nine were seen flying NW at Goring, and 11 were over Brighton the following day. In Sep there were three at Whitehawk on 15th, a single at Wild Park on 7th and four at Cissbury Ring on 28th. The last report was of a single bird heading NW over Brighton Cemetery on Nov 7th.

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Fairly common resident

The late winter counts for the Atlas averaged 1.2 per tetrad where the species was recorded, except at Small Dole where the two tetrads surveyed produced four and six birds apiece. At Wild Park a pair were seen feeding on blackthorn buds and flowers on Apr 4th, and on Jun 6th a pair with two very recently fledged young were also seen there. Another family of four was seen at Storrington on May 31st. Reports came from across the whole recording area, albeit in fairly small numbers, though at Cissbury between May and Oct 26 different birds were trapped, of which 11 were adults and 15 young birds, slightly lower figures than in 2007.

HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Rare passage migrant

The first sighting since 2005 was of a single bird at Wild Park on Oct 28th. Another, or maybe the same bird, was at Woods Mill from Nov 14th to 22nd.

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

One on Goring beach often in the close vicinity of the beach huts to the east of the Sea Lane Café from Nov 15th to 18th.

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citrinella*

Locally common resident possibly increasing after decline

There were some good counts in the early months with 28 at Devil's Dyke Farm on Jan 1st, 25 at Steyning on 3rd, an exceptional 60 in the Stump Bottom/Lychpole Hill area on 8th, 30 at Bevendean on 12th, and 25 at Lower Standean on 30th. Twenty-three were at Findon Canada Bottom on Feb 6th and 21 at the University on 28th. Numbers fell away after this to between one and ten at all the downland sites. Eight pairs bred in Wild Park and breeding was also confirmed at Highdown Hill and Patching. Pairs or singing males were noted at over 30 localities, an encouraging improvement in the fortunes of this threatened species. Three birds were ringed at Cissbury, one of which was a young bird. Late year flocks were of 40 at Westmeston Wick Farm, 25 at Steep Down, 20 at Ditchling Beacon and 30 at Patcham.

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Locally resident in small numbers

The only locality holding more than six birds was No-Man's Land where ten were present on Feb 20th. Breeding probably occurred at Steyning Wyckham Farm, Ferring Rife, on Henfield Levels and at Coombes by the Adur.

CORN BUNTING *Emberiza calandra*

Fairly common but local resident

As with Yellowhammer, this species seems to be doing fairly well in our area.

There were 22 on Southwick Hill on Feb 1st, 30 at Lychpole on 2nd, 25 at Steyning Round Hill on 4th, 50 at Beeding Hill and 25 above Storrington on 9th and 40 at Steyning on 25th. In Mar, 45 at Steep Down on 5th and the same number at Truleigh Hill on Apr 11th. Probable breeding occurred at this latter site as well as at Cissbury, Beeding Hill and Steyning Round Hill. Flocks of 25 and 16 at Cissbury and Steep Down in Sep and Dec were the only notable ones in the second half-year.

ESCAPES AND FERAL BIRDS 2008

Cockatiel

One was at the University on Mar 27th.

Helmeted Guineafowl

Two were at the University on Apr 2nd.

Black Swan

One was on the Adur at Shoreham on May 17th and 18th.

Harris's Hawk

One was around Tilley's Farm, Washington on Jun 1st, 6th and Dec 28th.

Red Bishop

One at Shoreham beach on Jun 8th.

Muscovy Duck

One near Shoreham Airport on Jun 21st.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE OF SUMMER MIGRANTS 2008

Species	Arrival		Departure	
	Date	Location	Date	Location
Garganey	Mar 15 th	Off Shoreham Fort	-	-
Osprey	Mar 26 th	Brighton Marina	Sep 23 rd	
Marsh Harrier	Mar 26 th	University of Sussex	Nov 22 nd	Worthing beach
Hobby	Apr 1 st	University of Sussex	Sep 25 th	Edburton
Little Ringed Plover	Apr 21 st	Widewater	-	-
Whimbrel	Mar 2 nd	Shoreham Adur	Sep 3 rd	Worthing beach
Arctic Skua	Apr 16 th	Worthing beach	Dec 12 th	Worthing beach
Pomarine Skua	Apr 26 th	Worthing beach	Nov 23 rd	Worthing beach
Sandwich Tern	Mar 23 rd	Worthing beach	Oct 7 th	Worthing beach
Common Tern	Apr 16 th	Brighton Marina	Oct 19 th	Worthing beach
Arctic Tern	May 3 rd	Worthing beach	Sep 16 th	Brighton Marina
Little Tern	Apr 15 th	Worthing beach	Aug 31 st	Worthing beach
Black Tern	Apr 26 th	Worthing beach	Oct 10 th	Worthing beach
Turtle Dove	Apr 26 th	Woods Mill	Jun 29 th	Edburton
Cuckoo	Apr 14 th	Henfield Levels	Jul 7 th	Waterhall
Swift	Apr 21 st	Worthing beach	Oct 14 th	Edburton
Sand Martin	Mar 18 th	New Salts Farm	Sep 25 th	Worthing beach
Barn Swallow	Mar 15 th	Ladies Mile NR	Nov 26 th	Broadwater
House Martin	Apr 8 th	Cissbury	Oct 18 th	Worthing
Tree Pipit	Apr 15 th	University of Sussex	Oct 3 rd	Worthing beach
Yellow Wagtail	Apr 2 nd	University of Sussex	Oct 7 th	High Salvington
Nightingale	Apr 27 th	Wild Park	-	-
Redstart	Apr 4 th	Ladies Mile NR	Sep 28 th	Devil's Dyke
Whinchat	Apr 20 th	Ladies Mile NR	Oct 11 th	Steyning R. Hill
Wheatear	Mar 9 th	Patcham	Nov 2 nd	Brooklands
Ring Ouzel	Mar 30 th	Sheepcote valley	Nov 2 nd	Truleigh Hill
Grasshopper Warbler	Apr 17 th	University of Sussex	Sep 28 th	Hollingdean
Sedge Warbler	Apr 15 th	Shoreham Airport	Sep 14 th	Sheepcote Valley
Reed Warbler	Apr 15 th	Woods Mill/ Shoreham Airport	Sep 20 th	Ladywells
Lesser Whitethroat	Apr 20 th	Wild Park / Whitehawk	Sep 28 th	Cissbury
Whitethroat	Apr 11 th	Mile Oak	Oct 6 th	Wild Park
Garden Warbler	Apr 9 th	University of Sussex	Sep 23 rd	Wild Park
Willow Warbler	Mar 30 th	West Tarring	Sep 17 th	Washington
Spotted Flycatcher	May 4 th	Badger's Wood, Poynings	Sep 27 th	Wild Park
Pied Flycatcher	Apr 4 th	Hove	Sep 27 th	St Anne's Well Gdns, Hove

RINGING REPORT FOR 2008.

During the year 2557 birds were ringed in the area. This is another reduction of about 12% on the total for 2007 and ranks the year 29th, about midway, for annual local ringing totals since 1953. As usual most were trapped in mist nets and ringed as fledged birds. The small portion (4.7% or 121) of these were ringed as nestlings comprised a significant proportion of the larger birds ringed.

In keeping with recent years the Steyning Ringing Group (SRG), comprising Phil and Brian Clay, Val Bentley, Ralph Hartfree, Matt Aeberhard, Tim Senington and Tom Flower, contributed the largest portion with, as in 2007, ca 72% of the area total of birds ringed. Mist-netting at Phil Clay's Mumbles reserve was the most productive with a total of 1208 which included good numbers of warblers and finches. Trapping on the northern slope of Cissbury was not quite as fruitful as usual with 625 birds ringed. Here again a large number of warblers were trapped and the area's only Redstarts were ringed. At Ladywells the team, comprising John Newnham, Pam Mears, John Crix and Janet Derricott ringed 600 birds. Barrie Watson's group, including John Holt ringing in Hove, the "Barn Owl team" and a researcher from Sussex University working on Herring Gulls, ringed a total of 119 birds but between them contributed to 75% of the area's ringed nestlings. The grand total was reached by 5 birds being ringed in the author's West Worthing garden.

Table A shows the numbers of each of the species ringed in the area during 2008. During the year no new species were added to the area's ringing list but a record number of Stock Doves and Green Woodpeckers were ringed, the total of Sparrowhawks equals the previous best and that for Long-tailed Tits was only two short of the area's best annual total.

Table A - List of Species ringed in 2008

Sparrowhawk	5	Song Thrush	61	Great Tit	182
Kestrel	8	Redwing	2	Nuthatch	3
Herring Gull	18	Sedge Warbler	3	Treecreeper	8
Stock Dove	6	Reed Warbler	93	Jay	4
Woodpigeon	5	Lesser Whitethroat	19	Magpie	1
Barn Owl	8	Whitethroat	42	Chaffinch	80
Little Owl	2	Garden Warbler	26	Greenfinch	102
Kingfisher	3	Blackcap	349	Goldfinch	163
Green Woodpecker	12	Chiffchaff	217	Siskin	8
Great Spotted Woodpecker	6	Willow Warbler	59	Redpoll	2
House Martin	2	Goldcrest	99	Bullfinch	27
Wren	88	Firecrest	3	Yellowhammer	3
Dunnock	83	Long-tailed Tit	91	Reed Bunting	57
Robin	158	Marsh Tit	2		
Redstart	2	Coal Tit	1		
Blackbird	103	Blue Tit	341	Total	2557

Recoveries and Controls

The total of 25 recoveries or controls reported during 2008 was an improvement on 2007 but still fewer than the 40 received during 2006. For the first year since the gull cannon-netting programme ended there were no recoveries reported from this study. However, the colour-ringing of **Herring Gulls** in Falmer generated sightings at Dungeness (4), Beddington Rubbish Tip, Surrey (4), Gloucester Rubbish Tip (1) and Pas de Calais (2). Additionally there were three local road casualties. Also falling foul of road traffic was a **Sparrowhawk** which was ringed as a young male at the Shoreham sanctuary on December 17th 2006 and was found freshly dead by the road between Shoreham and Lancing on April 24th 2008.

Barn Owls ringed within the society's recording area were found dead at Wiston, Sompington and in Brighton; the last being killed by a train. An owl ringed as a chick in 2005 was found roosting in a nest-box near Partridge Green and a 2007 chick was similarly roosting in a Storrington nest-box. Additionally a **Barn Owl** ringed near Partridge Green was found dead on the ground at Steyning.

Although warblers have a very low recovery rate they are ringed in high numbers and tend to be caught again by ringers at other sites (controlled is the official term used). Many of those reported in 2008 were generally fairly short distance movements between sites which have regularly featured in these reports. A young **Lesser Whitethroat** ringed on autumn passage at Icklesham on August 7th 2007 was controlled at Cissbury on May 3rd 2008. Likewise a young male **Blackcap**, ringed at Icklesham on September 8th 2008, was controlled at Cissbury (74 km W) just five days later on the 13th. At the same time a young male **Blackcap** ringed at Cissbury on September 9th 2008 was controlled also five days later but at Litlington (39 km ESE). An even faster movement was demonstrated by a young **Chiffchaff** ringed at Cissbury on October 2nd 2008 and caught the following morning at Icklesham. The warblers also provided the more distant recoveries with a juvenile male **Blackcap** ringed at the Sanctuary on June 13th 2004 and reported on December 4th 2008 as taken intentionally and killed in Cordoba, Spain (1451 km SSE) and a young male **Blackcap** ringed at Cissbury on September 8th 2007 was controlled at East Bedfont, Greater London (63 km N) on September 28th 2008. A **Chiffchaff**, ringed at Cissbury on September 19th 2006, was found long dead near Faro, Algarve, Portugal (1640km SSW) on October 27th 2008. The only other recovery of note during the year also involved a **Chiffchaff**; a juvenile ringed at Steyning on July 5th 2008 and controlled at Cissbury on July 26th 2008.

John Newnham

LADYWELLS RINGING 2008

Reading through the reports issued by the Ladywells team after each ringing session it is hard to escape the conclusion that 2008 was rather a nasty year for weather. The reports are littered with references to downpours barely escaped and blustery conditions with mist nets billowing out like spinnakers. A check of the Met. Office's seasonal summaries for the year confirms this, with the summer months in particular flagged as unusually wet. The overriding impression from re-reading the Ladywells reports is of a continuing struggle to shoe-horn sessions into brief gaps in the generally foul weather.

Against this background it is pleasing to report that the team had a good year in 2008 and have come to regard Ladywells as a successful operation. The bald statistics for this first full year in Ladywells are 29 sessions with 600 new birds and 537 retraps - an average of 39 birds a session. Of the 29 sessions, only two yielded less than 20 birds. The statistics for the nine months of operation in 2007 were 22 sessions with 474 new birds and 251 retraps - an average of 33 birds a session. Six of the 22 sessions in 2007 yielded less than 20 birds.

Towards the end of October the nets on the college side of the valley - roughly half the overall number of nets normally rigged - were spaced further along and at right angles rather than parallel to the run of the valley. Monitoring of net productivity indicated that this change, which involved a fair bit of scrub clearing and ride cutting, improved catches and therefore contributed to the overall improvement in 2008 over 2007. This is a good example of the ringing team learning, with time, how best to operate the site.

Thirty-three different species were caught in 2008, with Kestrel, House Martin, Sedge Warbler, Firecrest, Nuthatch, Magpie and Bullfinch new species for the site. Blue Tits top the volume table although the most memorable day in terms of volumes was 13th November when several parties (or perhaps just one very large party scattered over the valley) of Long-tailed Tits made their bid for this top position, with almost forty of the creatures leaping into various nets.

Earlier in the year, in March/April, the appearance of Cattle Egrets on the Applesham Farm side of the valley provided what was perhaps the most exciting new species for the site. Fortunately none of these visitors was likely to flap into a mist net - the nets used at Ladywells are really only suitable for much smaller birds - but the Cattle Egrets were nevertheless observed by the ringing team and logged via the BTO's online Birdtrack system. The discipline of completing a Birdtrack log for each ringing session (and also many of the additional seed-feeder filling visits to the site) provides additional depth and breadth to the information gathered via the team's ringing activities. In 2008 a total of 78 different species was recorded via Birdtrack. The increasing number of nest boxes installed and monitored in the valley - three successful Blue Tit broods in 2008 - is a further indication of the team's commitment to study the site's birdlife on as broad a front as possible.

In addition to increasing success - e.g. improved catch volumes - on the site operation side of the enterprise, the ringing team also achieved a number of human successes in 2008.

Thanks to John Newnham's patient training over several years, Pam Mears and John Crix achieved their C ringing permits, allowing them to operate without John Newnham's direct onsite supervision. And, despite managing to retire from his day job towards the end of 2008, John Newnham found that his career as a trainer of ringers was by no means over when he was inveigled into taking on Janet Derricott as a Trainee.

Barrie Watson was able to bring one of his own trainees to a number of Ladywells sessions. There were also miscellaneous visits from individuals wishing to find out whether ringing was something they wanted to do, and ringers new to the area wanting to find out what was going on in our part of West Sussex. In a small way, Ladywells is starting to become a resource within the wider context of the UK's ringing scheme.

In conclusion the Ladywells ringing team would like to thank Derek Cleaver, Christopher and Hugh Passmore for allowing us to mist-net on their farms and for their enthusiastic interest and support throughout the year - they make the Ladywells ringing operation possible.

John Crix

RINGING AT CISSBURY 2008

Rather sadly, the first report of the year on 8th March was of a deceased Dunnock, just the leg and ring found in an old nest in a bush. However, he had been around for a while, having been first caught as a juvenile in 2002 and seen subsequently in both 2003 and 2007.

The first ringing session was on 26th April, when Matt Aeberhard and Phil Clay found just 15 birds, of which four were Song Thrushes and five were Blackcaps, including four returning individuals. One had been first trapped as a second year male on 22nd June 2002, and so was entering his eighth summer. Another had been ringed as a juvenile in 2005 and returned in 2009 as well. The next session in May was somewhat busier with 32 birds. Of the two Lesser Whitethroats that day which already bore rings, one had been ringed as a returning migrant at Cissbury in May 2006 and the second at Icklesham on 7 August 2007.

In July a juvenile Chiffchaff, ringed by Phil at the Mumbles at Steyning on 5th, decided to call in at Cissbury on 26th on its way to wherever! Another of our Chiffchaffs which we ringed on 2nd October had flown 74 km to Icklesham by the following day.

Blackcaps as always were the predominant species in the ringing totals, comprising 187 of the 621 new birds, i.e. 30%. The maximum daily catch was 35 out of 54 new birds on 13th September. One of our birds found its way from Cissbury on 9th Sept to Litlington on 14th, where it was retrapped by the Cuckmere Ringing Group. Going in the opposite direction was an Icklesham bird, ringed there on 8th which ended up in our nets on 13th, while one we had ringed on 8 September 2007 was controlled at East Bedfont by the Runnymede Ringing Group on 28 September 2008.

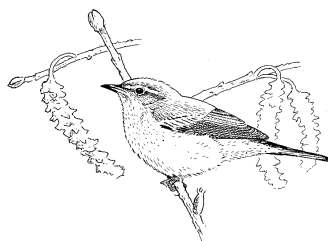
Our local speciality, Bullfinch, was caught in reasonable numbers, with 20 new birds ringed at the site. Five adult females and six adult males were found at the beginning of the season and 15 young birds were also ringed. The oldest known of the retraps had been ringed as a second year female in April 2006.

We made 22 visits to the site between April and October, only 5 less than in 2007, but our overall totals were significantly down at 625 new birds of 25 species, just 52% of the 2007 total of 1202 of 31 species. The number of Willow Warblers was markedly lower, with only 27 new birds, compared with 62 the previous year, but we ringed 56 new Robins, including 16 on 27th September. Two of the retraps, both identified as males during the breeding season, had been ringed as first year birds at the end of 2004.

Despite finishing the season on 21st October, slightly earlier than the previous year when we had run into early November, Goldcrest numbers were higher than those from the years 2005-2007, at 50. One caught on 9th August was still in very juvenile plumage, and must have been born locally. Another August capture, on 30th, came from the same net as the earlier bird. The remainder arrived in late September/mid October, as usual, but Firecrest failed to materialise this year. In fact the only two species to turn up which do not breed at the site were Reed Warbler, with four between 26th July and 27th September, and Redstart with single first year birds on 13th and 27th September.

We finished as we had started with a casualty, but rather an interesting one. A Chiffchaff we ringed on 19 September 2006 was found dead 1640 km away in the Algarve, Portugal, on 27 October 2008.

Ringers operating at the site this year were Val Bentley and Ralph Hartfree who did the bulk of the sessions, Phil Clay, Brian Clay and Tim Senington with visits at the start of the season from Matt Aeberhard and later on from John Newnham. Though we had some interesting controls and recoveries, 2008 was a rather disappointing year from both totals and species perspectives, and we hope 2009 will bring some improvement



• © John Reaney

Val Bentley

WORTHING SEA-WATCHING REPORT FOR 2008

Introduction.

The sea at Worthing was watched on 263 days amassing a total of 437 hours. Although the records come from 30 fewer days there were about 30 more hours recorded in the local log. Figure 1 shows that the spring months were, as usual, the best covered but fairly steady observations continued throughout the rest of the year. Figure 2 shows, like for 2007, the watching in all months except the spring (March – May) was equal or greater than the average for the years 1978 – 2007. The following table showing the number of days with some watching and shows January to March, and June were the least covered months.

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Total
Days Watched	15	18	16	28	30	16	23	22	22	22	24	27	263

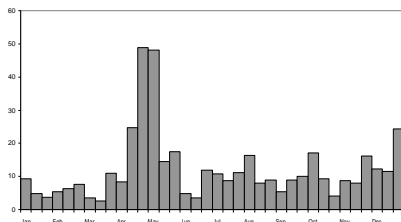


Figure 1:- The number of hours sea-watching at Worthing in 10-day periods during 2008.

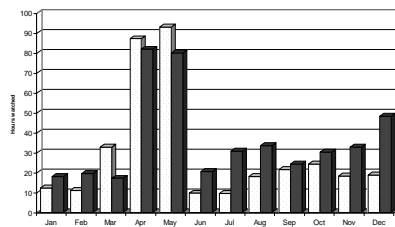


Figure 2:- The monthly watching effort for 2008 (black) compared with the average for 1978 –2007 (white).

Figure 3 shows that there has been a steady rise in hours spent watching the sea over the past decade but still considerably less effort than during the 1980s.

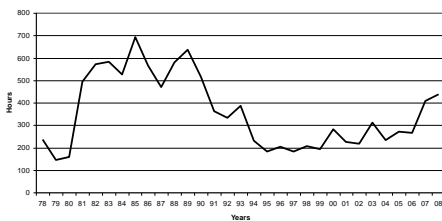


Figure 3:- The number of hours sea-watching at Worthing in each year since 1978.

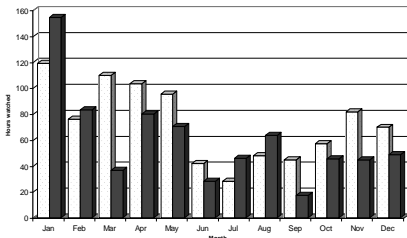


Figure 4 The monthly rates of passage of all non-passerines at Worthing in birds/hour watched, 1978–2007 average (white) & 2008 (dark).

Once again the numbers of birds recorded in the spring months was lower than expected and this can clearly be seen in Figure 4. Indeed only four months, January/February and July/August, during 2008 fared better than the long term average.

Although the watching effort increased further during 2008 the total number of birds recorded decreased thus the rates of passage showed a clear decline. The following table, coupled with Figure 4, shows another mediocre spring with January being the most productive month in terms of numbers of birds.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Hours watched	18	19	17	82	80	20	31	33	24	30	33	48	437
Total birds	2767	1613	627	6557	5631	573	1415	2117	415	1378	1467	2353	26913
Birds/hour	155	83	37	80	70	28	46	63	17	45	45	49	62

As usual, most observations took place from the shelter opposite Marine Gardens, West Worthing. The report, however, includes more sightings from other sections of Worthing's foreshore in particular from Goring and Ferring beaches where Dave Smith and Clive Hope regularly watched. As before occasional records were gleaned from the society's Yahoo group e-mails but often these lacked details of times, flight directions and only recorded some of the more interesting species. In spring several watchers were present but particular thanks go to the following observers who have contributed records which form the basis of this report:- J.A.Feast, C.E.Hope, R.A.Ives, J.M.Maskell, S.P.Maskell, J.A.Newnham, D.I.Smith, R.Tofts, M.Tucker and R.Westwater.

CHRONOLOGICAL ACCOUNT and DISCUSSION

After a poor start to 2007 there was a return to more productive watches with improved numbers of divers, Gannets, Kittiwakes and auks being recorded offshore. The largest movement was noted on January 3rd when 1515 auks and 111 Gannets were seen in just over 2 hours watching. A single Velvet Scoter also on the 3rd and three Bonxies flying west on the 11th were more unusual January birds. In recent years the return passage of Brent Geese has started in February and this year followed this pattern with a month total of 1253 birds and a peak of 435 in just over an hour on February 10th. Figure 5, which plots the rates of passage of Brent Geese in each 10 day period in two roughly equal periods, shows an increase in February observation in the more recent time frame. The same plot also shows an increase in mid-late March when the main spring passage of this species occurs, a recent decrease in January and December encounters presumably relate to the lack of cold weather movements and a reduction in the numbers seen in autumn but with early November remaining the peak period.

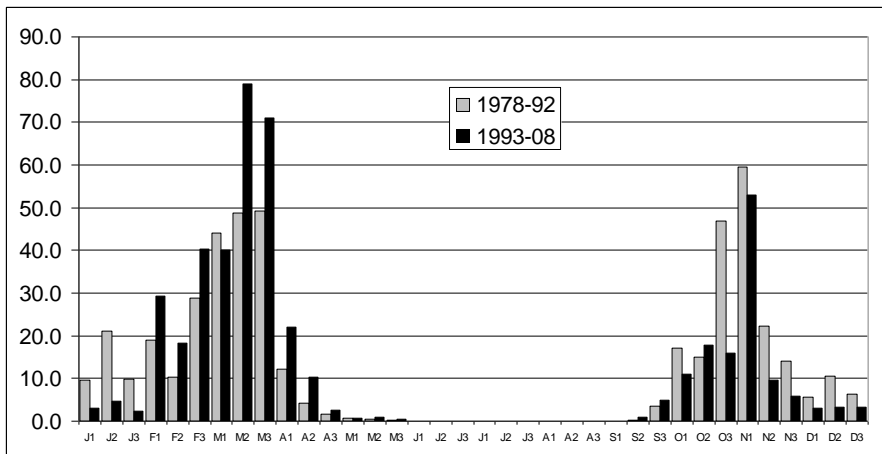


Figure 5:- The rates of passage of Brent Geese in ten-day periods for the years 1978-92 and 1993-2008.

Single Slavonian Grebes offshore on two dates were the only slightly unusual birds for the month of February.

March is eagerly awaited as the start of the spring but it is often a month which turns out to be disappointing. Having just demonstrated (in Figure 5) that March is the main month for the passage Brent Geese in 2008 it was very lean indeed with only 296 recorded. Likewise only 120 Common Scoters were seen and few other ducks. A Long-tailed Duck offshore on the 23rd and 24th was the most interesting bird of the month. The arrival of summer migrants is pleasing to note and the first of 22 Sandwich Terns occurred on the 23rd but Wheatears were not recorded on this part of the beach until 14 were seen arriving from the sea on March 30th.

As usual the hours spent watching the sea increased through April and May with April being not only the best covered month in 2008 but also the month when most birds were seen. The figures for May were comparable and a considerable

	April Total	May Total	Apr/May max
Divers all	31 (62)	21 (40)	4 on 26 th Apr
Brent Goose	326 (535)	44 (56)	115 on 23 rd Apr
Common Scoter	585 (1278)	373 (763)	126 on 17 th Apr
Velvet Scoter	21 (19)	20 (8)	14 on 4 th May
Sanderling	170 (88)	124 (309)	40 on 20 th Apr
Dunlin	23 (101)	28 (172)	10 on 18 th May
Bar-tailed Godwit	368 (1346)	72 (857)	237 on 20 th Apr
Whimbrel	570 (257)	71 (225)	217 on 17 th Apr
Pomarine Skua	13 (6)	15 (31)	8 on 8 th May
Arctic Skua	49(31)	24(37)	13 on 29 th Apr
Great Skua	79 (8)	23 (4)	21 on 24 th Apr
Little Gull	36 (42)	2 (33)	11 on 16 th and 24 th Apr
Sandwich Tern	869 (1443)	600 (919)	191 on 4 th May
Commic Tern	1644 (1153)	2767 (2688)	898 on 4 th May
Little Tern	52 (88)	126 (254)	37 on 4 th May
Black Tern	8 (5)	38 (36)	24 on 4 th May

improvement on those for May 2007. The table above shows the totals seen for the two

main spring months (with the average 1978-2007 in brackets) and the peak count for these months. Those above the long-term average are shown in bold.

The table shows that April was good for Whimbrels and skuas but many species, particularly in May, were recorded in numbers below the long term average. Perhaps the April total of Great Skuas (Bonxies) is the most remarkable and on the 24th the observer (DIS), after seeing 21, commented “another great day for Bonxies”. Indeed Great Skuas have been recorded more regularly in spring in recent years as shown in Figure 7. Another species which has expanded dramatically and is now seen regularly during spring sea-watches is the Mediterranean Gull and this rise is clearly shown in Figure 6. Indeed the 36 eastbound Mediterranean Gulls seen on April 22nd was the highest day total recorded from Worthing sea-watching.

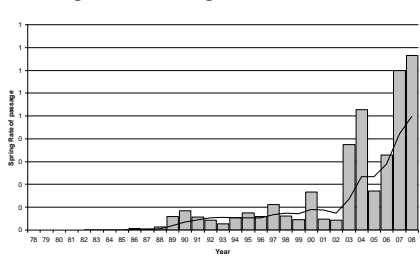


Figure 6:- The spring (April/May) rate of passage of Mediterranean Gulls at Worthing 1978-2008.

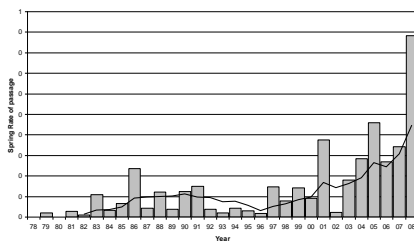


Figure 7:- The spring (April/May) rate of passage of Great Skuas at Worthing 1978-2008.

These two spring months always produce something special; other records which stand out in April 2008 were 3 Scaup on the 17th, 37 Black-tailed Godwits on the 19th, two Marsh Harriers on the 22nd and a total of three Hobbys arriving from the sea.

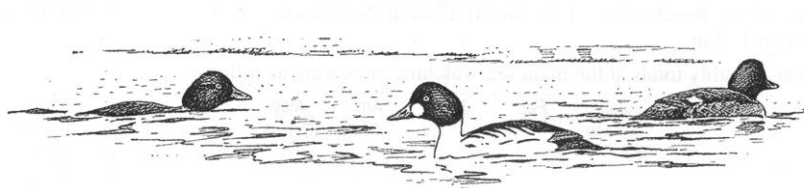
On May 1st 152 Manx Shearwaters were seen flying westward in 5½ hours, these were passing steadily throughout the morning; mostly distant and the largest flock was 31 birds. Pomarine Skuas always lure watchers to the beach; clearly 2008 was not a memorable spring for this species with seven on May 4th completing the total shown in the above table. Avocets on May 6th and 27th were the best of the wading species seen.

Figures 2 and 4 show that the number of hours watched and birds seen falls dramatically in June and remains fairly low throughout the summer months. Regular records of Gannets, terns, waders and Mediterranean Gulls occurred through the summer. Return wader passage started, as usual in June when 71 Curlews were seen with a peak of 23 on June 29th. Peak numbers of Gannets occurred on July 5th (317), July 19th (213) and August 3rd (190) whilst the largest passage of terns was 732 flying westward on August 3rd. Throughout the summer a large collection of Herring Gulls could be seen and on June 17 a party forced a juvenile Grey Heron down onto sea where it floated, Gannet-like, before managing to resume its flight westward. Small numbers of shearwaters were recorded, 500 Swifts on July 6th, three Black-tailed Godwits on July 19th and Avocets on August 15 and 16th.

Very few seabirds were seen in September and the most interesting records were of land birds. A Common Redstart was seen on the 14th, a Merlin flew west on the 16th, a Hobby flew east on the 17th and an Osprey was over the beach on the following day. A notable movement of Siskins was recorded with a month total of 663 and a peak of 195 on September 17th. Hirundines were also noted but not in large numbers with the month total for Barn Swallows and House Martins being 729 and 391 respectively and a total of 237 Meadow Pipits and 22 Wheatears were recorded. During October the recorded passerine movements were very low but on a few days some interesting sea-birds were seen with the pick of these being 27 Arctic Skuas and three Shags on the 4th and 388 Gannets on the 19th.

Figure 4 shows the rate of passage in November was considerably less than usual mainly due to very few returning Brent Geese being recorded and no remarkable sea-bird movements. However, there were some notable and unusual birds seen. Golden Plovers are usually only recorded on sea-watches at the onset of extreme cold weather so it was surprising to see five on November 1st and three on the 3rd. Goldeneyes were seen on the 6th and 23rd, a Slavonian Grebe on the 15th, a Pomarine Skua on the 19th, and both Long-tailed Duck and Red-necked Grebe on the 27th. Perhaps more unexpected was a Marsh Harrier flying west on November 2nd and a Woodcock arriving from the sea the following day. By December it was the usual winter species being recorded with the peak of Kittiwakes and auks occurring on the 12th when 164 of the former and 178 auks recorded. Christmas Day was the best day for Gannets when 224 were logged but there were no large diver movements with eight being the highest day total. A huge count of 315 Great Crested Grebes was made on 24th but only 60 Red-breasted Mergansers were recorded in December (also the 24th) with the highest winter count of 112 occurring on November 21st. Shags were recorded offshore on four December dates with a maximum of two on the 2nd. The most unusual winter record was of three Black-tailed Godwits which flew east on Boxing Day.

John Newnham



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GARDEN BIRD SURVEY 2008

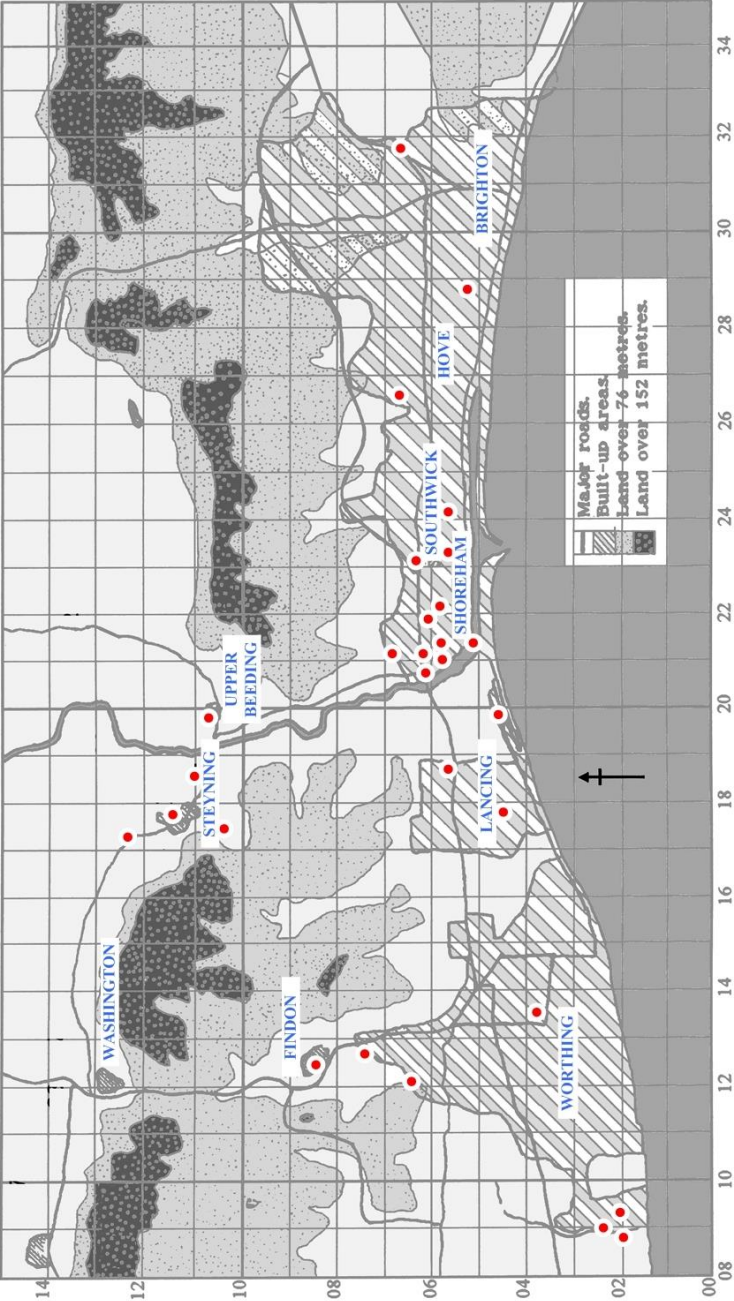
Records for birds seen in the gardens of 33 members were submitted for the year. A total of 58 species was recorded with records for the whole year being submitted in quarterly returns. The highest number of species recorded in a quarter was 31 in John Cooper's garden in Steyning (28/09/08 – 27/12/08).

The following are the main highlights.

- Once again the only species to be recorded in every garden in each quarter was Blackbird.
- Over the whole year Goldfinch (27 gardens), Wren (27) and Song Thrush (26) were well recorded along with Long-tailed Tit (23) and Coal Tit (12). There were 18 records for Goldcrest, more than twice the number for 2007, and a single record for Firecrest in Ferring.
- Sparrowhawk was recorded in 17 gardens, while three gardens noted Kestrel and there was just one record for Tawny Owl.
- Redwing was recorded in 9 gardens but there was just one record for Fieldfare. Siskin was recorded in three gardens, with two gardens recording Brambling and just one recording Mistle Thrush.
- Of the summer migrants there were records for Chiffchaff (18 gardens), Willow Warbler (11), Common Whitethroat (1), Garden Warbler (3) and Sedge Warbler (1). Blackcap was recorded in 19 gardens and these included probable over wintering birds noted between November and February.
- Three species of gull were recorded with Herring Gull in 16 gardens, Black-headed Gull (6), and Common Gull (1).
- Five gardens were fortunate to record Grey Wagtail while Pied Wagtail was noted in eight gardens. Greater Spotted Woodpecker (13 gardens) and Green Woodpecker (12) both maintained a good presence but there were no records this year for Nuthatch.
- Magpie was widely recorded (30 gardens) with Crow (22), Jackdaw (13), Rook (5) and Jay (12) generally maintaining numbers of previous years.
- Again there was a single record for Little Egret this time in Ferring. Other birds recorded included Reed Bunting (4 gardens), Black Redstart (2) and Grey Heron (1).

The tables on pages 68 and 69 below show the recording details for the common garden birds.

Garden Bird Survey – Locations of Participating Members



Top Birds	% of gardens used	Maximum numbers used	Average of maximum numbers
Blackbird	100	7	3.4
Blue Tit	97.0	10	3.3
Robin	90.9	3	1.6
Woodpigeon	87.9	50	5.3
Great Tit	84.8	5	2.0
Collared Dove	84.8	8	2.5
Magpie	84.8	6	1.7
Dunnock	81.8	4	1.6
Chaffinch	78.8	10	3.1
Greenfinch	78.8	20	5.8

Winter 2008 (30/12/07 to 29/03/08) 33 gardens recording 45 species

Top Birds	% of gardens used	Maximum number	Average of maximum numbers
Blackbird	100	7	3.3
Blue Tit	100	8	3.5
Robin	93.5	5	1.9
Starling	93.5	50	9.9
Collared Dove	93.5	8	2.5
House Sparrow	90.3	14	3.7
Great Tit	87.1	6	2.2
Greenfinch	87.1	8	3.4
Woodpigeon	87.1	8	3.0
Dunnock	83.9	4	2.0

Spring 2008 (30/03/08 – 28/06/08) 31 gardens recording 43 species



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Top Birds	% of gardens used	Maximum Number	Average of maximum numbers
Blackbird	100	6	3.3
Blue Tit	96.3	14	4.4
Greenfinch	92.6	15	5.0
Robin	88.9	3	1.4
Great Tit	88.9	5	2.3
Collared Dove	88.9	7	2.5
House Sparrow	85.2	20	6.0
Dunnock	81.5	4	1.8
Woodpigeon	81.5	10	2.6
Magpie	81.5	6	1.7

Summer 2008 (29/06/08 to 27/09/08) 27 gardens recording 43 species

Top Birds	% of gardens used	Maximum number	Average of maximum numbers
Blackbird	100	7	3.6
Robin	100	2	1.5
Blue Tit	96.7	10	4.2
Chaffinch	93.3	8	2.9
Dunnock	86.7	3	1.6
Great Tit	86.7	4	2.2
Collared Dove	86.7	6	2.1
Woodpigeon	86.7	12	4.3
Magpie	82.8	6	1.8
Starling	79.3	27	6.3

Autumn 2008 (28/09/08 to 27/12/08) 30 gardens recording 47species

Participants were: S. Allen, N. Biddulph, R. Bradbury, J. Carder, E. Chadwell, B. Clay, Jay Cooper, John Cooper, J. Ford, M. & P. Ford, V. Hancock, C. & P. Hope, H. Jackson, L. Keen, C. & M. Leeves, S. Marshall, J. & S. Maskell, B. Metcalfe, C. Nichols, A. Robinson, E. Robinson, R. Sandison, J. & J. Simpson, J. & J. Steedman, M. Taylor, G. & V. Tickler, R. Titcomb, D. Tomalin, H. Ward, R. Westwater, P. Whitcomb, C. Wingate & A. Wisdom.

Martin Ford

FIELD OUTINGS 2008

Henfield

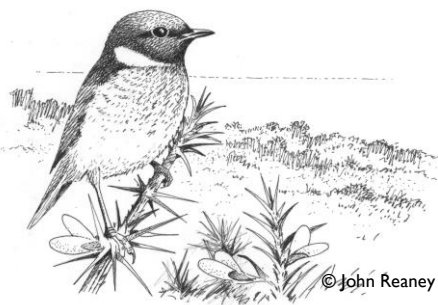
The first meeting of the year on January 6th was led by Val Bentley when 15 members turned up for a stroll along the Downslink footpath. In the fields of maize stubble there were good flocks of mainly Chaffinches, but with Greenfinch and Goldfinch mixed in. Some Snipe were eventually seen by all in the same field.

In Stonepit Lane, over 100 Lapwing were seen in a field on the far side of the river, and a chattering flock of over 100 Linnets filled the tops of two trees by Great Betley Farm. Back onto the Downslink, we crossed Betley Bridge, and on towards Partridge Green, where a large wet area to the east of the path held several hundred Teal, Wigeon, and Lapwing. A raptor in the distance at Betley was unidentified, possibly a Peregrine. We had views of two Kestrels, mute swans and an obliging male Stonechat perched on a teasel by the fork of the river. A total of 37 species were recorded.

Ferring

On the 24th February, 18 members gathered at the Ferring beach car-park in mild and bright weather, to watch the shore and sea for a very productive hour. We then walked up the west side of the Rife to the footbridge and made a circuit left past the orchard and paddocks in East Kingston before returning past the Rife down to the car park.

A total of 45 species were logged. They included Brent Geese, Red-breasted Mergansers, and Great Crested Grebes on or over the sea. On the shore there were several species of wader and gull including an obliging adult Mediterranean Gull in summer plumage.



By the Rife and meadows were Little Egrets, Green and Great Spotted Woodpeckers, a Kestrel and a selection of common birds. A Snipe was flushed and a pair of Stonechats was in brambles at the north end. Fieldfares and Redwings were seen in or near the Paddocks as well as a single Yellowhammer. Frogs were on show in one of the small ponds with copious amount of spawn. A most enjoyable morning was spent by all. Clive Hope was our guide.

East Head

Paul Stevens was joined by seven people on the 8th March on what was forecast to be a dreadful day. In fact it turned out that the best of the weather was in the morning. The group set off on the eastern side of the head where immediately the Brent geese were seen everywhere, in the air, on the water, and on the ground. Birds along the way included Curlew, Merganser, Dunlin, Knot, Redshank and Ringed Plover. On the beach there were Skylarks and Meadow Pipits. The rising tide brought large numbers of Dunlin and Grey and Ringed Plovers flying close by, to their high tide roost and a flock of over 200 Golden

Plovers gave a terrific display before they settled on the marsh. An unexpected bird was a white headed cormorant (continental?). Gulls were scarce, only a few Black Headed, a Common and one or two Herring Gulls. Moving round the head to the western side a flock of over 25 Sanderling gave great views running backwards and forwards in the tide foam.

After an early lunch Snipe, Black Tailed Godwit, Greenshank, Little Egret, Teal, Wigeon and Dunlin were seen on the Marsh. Then the weather closed in and the rain started so it was decided to call it a day. Two members had not been to this area before so it was particularly pleasing to have had such an enjoyable and rewarding morning.

Marine Gardens Seawatch

The annual sea-watch took place on April 20th at Marine Gardens. About 15 people joined John Newnham soon after 0800hrs to watch a fairly steady movement of species typically seen in east to north east winds. By 9.45 only five remained as the others had been lured away by news of a Hoopoe and a Lesser Yellowlegs, in the west! The watch ended at 11.30am.

The following table summarises the totals for the whole watch:-

Gannet 13E/7W	Fulmar 2W	Little Egret 1E
Red-throated Diver 2E	Great Crested Grebe 6+	Brent Goose 61E
Common Scoter 58E	Mallard 2	Teal 6 & 2E
Red-breasted Merganser 14E	Whimbrel 164E	Grey Plover 3E
Bar-tailed Godwit 237E	Sanderling 40 on beach	Dunlin 6E
Arctic Skua 1E	Commic Tern 122E	Sandwich Tern 141E
Mediterranean Gull 2 ad E	Black-headed Gull 51E	Little Gull 5 ad E
Common Gull 3E	Lesser Black-backed Gull 1E	Linnet 68E
Yellow Wagtail 1E	Goldfinch 6E	

A few Swallows and a single House Martin were seen arriving and one Wheatear was on the beach. Also seen or heard were Oystercatcher, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Cormorant, Starling, Wood Pigeon, Carrion Crow, Pied Wagtail, House Sparrow, Dunnock and Wren - a grand total of 40 species seen from the promenade shelter.

Burton Mill

Despite the weather forecast, 11 members joined Paul Stevens on April 27th for a leisurely stroll round the pond, on a very mild and surprisingly dry and wind free morning. There was nothing of great interest on the pond itself but on entering the wood, it soon became evident that the migrant warblers had arrived, with many singing Chiffchaff, Blackcap and Willow Warblers. Great Spotted Woodpeckers were heard but sadly no Lesser. A distant Cuckoo was heard by some, and Song thrush continually by all.

The birds were not moving around and so had to be identified by their calls. It was an excellent day for listening to calls and song, due to the calm conditions. By the great Chestnuts a Garden Warbler could be heard but did not show, the story, as you can gather, of much of the day. Reed and Sedge were heard around the water margins and endless Goldcrests amongst the firs. Not one raptor was seen in 4 hours!

Nothing really outstanding, but it was enjoyable getting re-acquainted with the sounds of this year's migration, always a high point in the birding year. The rain held off until the last couple of hundred yards. A satisfying walk, on a lovely spring morning.

Greatham Bridge - Dawn Chorus

On May 3rd, Brianne Reeve met 10 members at Greatham Bridge. Some members had seen a Barn Owl on the way, near Parham. A Cuckoo greeted us as we prepared to leave the car park and then the reeling of the Grasshopper Warbler could be heard clearly. A Song Thrush, Whitethroat and Chiffchaff were also heard. Crossing the road, we walked into the sheltered woodland and heard a Whimbrel call its seven whistles as it flew overhead. A Great Spotted Woodpecker was drumming and a Green called several times. Blackcaps seemed to be everywhere and a delightful Willow Warbler sang from the top of a tree. Lapwings were calling on the flooded fields. Redshanks were flustering around trying to divert Crows way from the water's edge. The repetitive dull call of a Reed Bunting alerted us to the opposite side of the path and then the weak call of a Treecreeper, as it moved swiftly through the trees.

Pied Wagtails were out on the grass, with Canada Geese, Shelduck, Mallard and Coot on the water. Near the end of the path we heard a snatch of Nightingale in the scrubby undergrowth. There were very few hirundines about; we saw two Swifts and a Swallow. Sedge and Reed Warblers were heard but only at a distance and not out on the main brooks whilst we were there. On our way back along the path we were hearing Chiffchaffs, Wrens, more Willow Warblers, Great, Blue and Long-tailed Tits and then a Garden Warbler which we were able to identify by sight, as we watched it sing. These are never easy; the song compared with the Blackcap, is longer, less liquid and has some scratchy notes.

It was nearly 9 o'clock when we reached the car park and the 'Gropper' was still reeling! Just before we left we added a Goldcrest and a couple of Goldfinches to the list. The tally for the morning was 45 species, so tired but well-satisfied we returned home.

Anchor Bottom

At 7.30pm, on Friday May 23rd Chris Wright met 14 members at Beeding Hill car park. It was a surprisingly sunny evening and Rex Ingram showed several members a pristine Red Admiral he had found basking on some nettles. A male Yellowhammer showed off its superb colouring on a bush close-by.

Near the boundary with the Cement Works we encountered some of the breeding birds of the area including Corn Bunting, Linnet, Meadow Pipit, Skylark, Whitethroat, Dunnock, Wren, Jackdaw, Stonechat, Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler. We had just heard the latter when we picked up the distinctive call of 'Chiff/Willow' and luckily the bird in question was perched on a wire between pylons giving prolonged telescope views. This bird has been present for almost six weeks and a similar bird has been recorded in the area every year since 2001. The song starts with two or three Chiffchaff notes but then does a Willow Warbler song. In appearance it seems to be more Chiffchaff than Willow Warbler.

From a vantage point overlooking the Cement Works four juvenile Ravens were observed as they selected their roosting places for the night whilst one adult was close by and calling. Two Common Buzzards flew low to the south of the quarry. A Grey Heron and a Little Egret flew overhead. The evening ended with distant views of a male Peregrine perched at the eastern end of the quarry.

On our way through the valley there was a lot of discussion about the large variety of wild flowers, some specific to chalk down land. Perhaps the most interesting was the Red Star Thistle which has done so well yet again this year.

Blackdown Hill.

Just seven members met Dave Smith on a superb day as is usual for this site at this time of the year. We walked a circuit from the NT lower car park to the most southerly point, the 'Temple of the winds', then back across less wooded areas.

Treecreepers ever-present in the car park, also Nuthatch, Coal Tits and one Marsh Tit and one singing Firecrest was glimpsed. Unusually there was only one other during the morning but frequent singing Goldcrests. Regular singing Blackcaps and Willow Warblers (but only two Chiffchaffs). On the way out fine views of a calling Cuckoo and a Bullfinch heard from the first watchpoint. A total of four singing Tree Pipits for the walk, two well seen. A pair of Spotted Flycatchers called frequently from the canopy but remained unseen.

Then, for most of us, the bird of the day. A snatch of Wood Warbler song took us off the track and down the hillside, the song growing stronger, then found it in dense beech forest. Luckily everyone managed to see it and we spent 45 minutes listening to the by now loud song and at times had excellent views of the bird as it moved high and low amongst the trees.

Superb! Just one Nuthatch and a Great-spotted Woodpecker for company. The 'Temple' was largely disappointing, misty, no raptors or the 'resident' Garden Warbler, just a few hirundines overhead. Next up though were two Woodlarks, one singing and displaying, one carrying food. Nearby we heard a small group of calling Siskins and a splendid singing male Dartford Warbler.

This site usually produces a good raptor list, not so today, a single Buzzard and three Kestrels were a poor tally. As an extra we moved on after lunch to Shopham Bridge to see the male Red-backed Shrike found on May 29th whilst Dave was looking for dragonflies! It was still there and provided great satisfaction at the end of an exciting bird list

Lavington Common

Nine members ignored the dreadful forecast for the evening of June 20th and were met by Brianne Reeve in the car park on the north side of the Common. By the time everyone had arrived it was quite pleasantly warm, though rather grey and overcast.

While listening to Goldcrest and Blue Tit in the car park, a Hobby was spotted as it disappeared overhead. On the open ground on the south side of the Common a male Great Spotted Woodpecker was seen by all. Moving back across the road to the north side

two Tree Pipits were heard and there was an excellent view of one singing and display parachuting. Surprisingly three Curlew flew southwards overhead.

Earlier than expected we had a fly-past of a single Woodcock. This was the first of a number of very good views of this attractive bird and there were several times when three were in the air together flying just above tree height, turning and re-turning, dropping out of sight and then back in view again. There was little else to see here, an odd corvid, Tawny Owl calling, Jay, Blackbirds, Green Woodpecker and some Wood Pigeons.

Back on the south side of the Common, a distant Nightjar was heard at about 9.45pm. Fortunately another began churring much closer and eventually our patience was rewarded with close views of a male on a bare branch and then it flew across us and began churring again from another nearby tree. With the record showing up to six Woodcock, three churring Nightjars and two Tree Pipits we were well-satisfied with our evening.

Cissbury

The Storrington Rise car park proved to be a good choice for the 16 members who were met by Chris Wright, on July 12th. The conditions were not ideal, with a north-west wind and cloud.

Soon a female Peregrine and the first of ten Common Buzzards were spotted. The climb towards the Ring was accompanied by singing Skylarks and the first of several Yellowhammers was seen by all. Mistle Thrush was heard and then six of these birds flew past. Many Swifts passed us flying quite low, they out-numbered the few Swallows. Whitethroats were fairly plentiful and near the Ring a Kestrel was hanging over the north scarp. Small parties of Linnets were seen and heard. Approaching the south side the soft call of a Stock Dove was picked up, Green Woodpecker was heard, then seen and Chiffchaff, Goldfinch and Wren were also heard. It took some time to find a Stonechat but eventually brief views were had of a young bird.

Fourteen species of butterfly and two moths were found, the most interesting and colourful being the Forester, an extraordinary bright turquoise-blue. Finally, over sixty different plants were recorded, including ten Frog Orchids, so there was much for us all to enjoy.

Birling Gap

Owing to very wet weather, only two members joined Brianne Reeve on Sunday 31st August. The outing commenced with a Curlew over the sea, two Swallows and a few Jackdaws over the car park and a Great Spotted Woodpecker on a telegraph pole. At the cliff edge two Whitethroats, several Willow Warblers, a Sparrowhawk and two Fulmars were seen. The gronking call of a Raven was heard as it flew overhead. A Kestrel hovered over the cliff edge as a Lesser Black-back Gull dropped out of our sight. In the low bushes there were Linnets, Goldfinches and Swallows swooping low over the vegetation.

At the Belle Tout we were treated to a mass of Wheatears feeding on the ground, up to eight were in view at one time and a probable total of twenty. Dropping down to the lower path to walk back towards the Horseshoe Plantation there were birds everywhere. This was a day of visible migration so we sat down to enjoy the spectacle! A family of

Stonechats appeared with a late brood and several Willow Warblers. There was at least one Chiffchaff which helped by calling with its cheerful contact note. Blue and Great Tits joined in the mix and there were at least four Robins singing their distinctive autumn song. Then straight ahead of us, possibly the bird of the day, a pristine Lesser Whitethroat was seen.

Apart from birds we found a male Adonis, Common and Chalkhill Blue butterflies, one Small Copper, several Large Whites, a number of Meadow Browns and later a lot of Small Heaths. The butterflies were there because of the rich flora, some specific to this area. So in spite of the weather we did see a large number of birds at close quarters. The overall impression was that all the birds looked in fine health, well fed and ready for the huge mileage they were about to undertake.

Pagham.

It was a warm, sunny day with a southerly wind on September 21st when 20 members met at the Sidlesham Visitor Centre with Dave Smith as leader. The walk down to Church Norton is never the easiest to do when a large group is strung out along a narrow footpath trying to see all the birds that are being found at the front of the queue. There were many Robins in the bushes and a few Chiffchaffs were both seen and heard. There were good views of Pintail, Teal and Wigeon both in flight and out in the marsh areas. Kestrel, Sparrowhawk and Buzzard were in evidence on several occasions and ten Little Egrets were a pleasing sight. A Cetti's Warbler announced its presence without showing itself.

By the time we were nearing the harbour amongst the list of more common birds were two Jays, noisy and colourful, and two Wheatears looking in prime condition for their migration. Two Kingfishers were spotted along the dyke to our right and settled long enough to allow full appreciation of their stunning colours.

Lunch was taken looking out across the harbour where there was plenty of activity as Avocet, Curlew, Greenshank, Grey and Golden Plovers, Turnstones and Common Terns were recorded. A Hobby gave a fine display of controlled flight and a couple of Mediterranean Gulls were studied closely with Black-headed Gulls as a useful comparison. A Curlew Sandpiper was a new bird to some in the group and not that easy to pick out from the surrounding waders but an interesting addition to the list.

A Spotted Flycatcher was found not far from the car park on our return. This is not as regular a sighting as it used to be and it attracted quite an audience as it darted out to catch insects.

Earlier in the month the SOS had done the same outing and had almost a record list of birds, ours was 49 and we were well-satisfied with what had been seen.

Cissbury area and Stump Bottom.

Thirteen members joined Bernie Forbes at the Beggars Bush car park north of Sompting for a walk over the downs on October 19th. The dark clouds looked ominous to the west although we only encountered a light shower. The strong west wind on the exposed slopes kept a few of the passerines down but we managed to find a few quality birds during our walk. Plenty of Skylarks up and singing and small numbers of Meadow Pipit in the stubble. We found three Corn Buntings feeding in kale and several small parties of Linnets and

Goldfinches. In the boundary hedgerows small groups of Stonechats were frequently seen, a total of at least a dozen during the walk. Near Steyning Round Hill a female Merlin dashed over the stubble fields chasing small birds as it flew out of view. Good views of four Common Buzzard during the morning and a Raven was heard gronking.

In the valleys to the north of No Mans Land the ever present Wood Pigeons appeared to be on constant alert, even though we were unable to find any hunting raptors that may have caused this prolonged panic. We took lunch in the lee of a hillside and during this time we had better views of the Merlin as it made a hunting foray close by.

The afternoon warmed up with blue skies as we walked back via the north side of Cissbury Ring. We had cracking views of a few Yellowhammers and a Siskin was heard briefly calling. On the chalk track a very docile Slow Worm was helped on to a sunny grassy bank. It was around 14.30 hrs. when we returned to the car park, having walked approximately 7 kms.

Shellness

On November 27th a white-out with dreadful conditions on the way to Shellness forced Paul Stevens to abandon the visit.

Arun Valley

Bernie Forbes met eight members in Burpham village car park on November 30th. Leaden heavy skies and light rain were no deterrent for this hardy band of keen birders. In the car park we found a few Redwings, Mistle Thrush and a mixed flock of tits which included a fleeting glimpse of a Marsh Tit.

On the way down to the river there were views of Bewick's Swans grazing in the water meadows. There were around 24 Bewick's, a lone Mute swan, about 50 Redwing, a few Song Thrushes and one or two Fieldfares. Teal and Mallard were in the oxbow of the river and a Water Rail was glimpsed amongst the thick reeds (at least 3 birds were squealing). A calling Kingfisher was seen by all as it dashed past at high speed and a Grey Wagtail was heard.

Along the track by the dried out oxbow Goldcrest, Nuthatch, Treecreeper and Long-tailed Tit were all seen well. We returned to Burpham via Pepperering Farm and had cracking views of two Great Spotted Woodpeckers several Yellowhammers and a couple of Common Buzzard. Out on the brooks a flock of Canada Geese had flown in.

We relocated to the Downs above North Stoke and after lunch we walked the circuit around The Burgh. Passerines were well down on last year, although there were plenty of Chaffinch, Goldfinch and a few Greenfinch and Linnet. Close views were had of covey of Grey Partridge. A ring tail Hen Harrier hunted over one of the game strips. On our return journey Corn Bunting, Common Buzzard and a singing Skylark were seen.

West Dean

Perhaps due to the treacherous road conditions only seven members joined Dave Smith on Sunday 7th December but it turned out to be a sunny and windless day. The morning walk started from the SWT car park and took in the base of Colworth Down and about 1 mile

into Venus Wood. The further into the woodlands the fewer were the birds and most had to be identified by call, they included Marsh and Coal Tits, several Goldcrests and Nuthatches, frequent Treecreepers, just two Buzzards, a Kestrel, a Sparrowhawk, a Great Spotted Woodpecker and Jays. A Hawfinch was seen briefly as it flew in to join Chaffinches high in an oak tree. Adjacent fields held about 150 Skylarks and a few Red-legged Partridges. No Red Kite, despite five being there ten days ago. Back to the car park for lunch where single Bullfinches called from either side.

In the afternoon, the walk moved to Staple Ash corner and the Monkton track to look for Hawfinch. Several were spotted briefly but in the end everyone had very good views of a bird that perched on top of a nearby conifer for around 40 minutes. The light was so good; all features could be clearly seen. Other birds recorded, were; a single Siskin and Yellowhammer, Mistle and Song Thrushes, two posing Jays, 2 Buzzards, Sparrowhawk, Kestrel, one each of Great Spotted and Green Woodpeckers and the ubiquitous Treecreeper called behind us. Finally on our return, a small mixed group of Redwings and Fieldfares, were seen. 47 species is an average to good total and where else can Hawfinch be almost guaranteed?

Seasonal Gathering – Forthaven and Widewater

For our final outing of 2008 twenty-three members met on a cold bright morning at Shoreham Harbour on the 28th December. Gannets were seen in fair numbers out to sea and a flock of Greenfinches were feeding on the beach. At the western harbour arm three Purple Sandpipers were found with Turnstones and everyone had a good view of them. Various seabirds were spotted; many Gannets, a Razorbill, a Brent Goose and a Red-breasted Merganser. Two Peregrines posed on the Power Station chimney, easily seen in the perfect light.

Moving on to Widewater we found seven Little Grebes at the eastern end. There were plenty of gulls about, amongst which we recorded Great Black-backed and Common, also Ringed Plover and a small group of Sanderlings were seen on the beach and a Red-throated Diver and a Great-crested Grebe on the sea. The Water Rail was spotted by Reg Bradbury on the opposite side of Widewater and not in its usual haunt by the Tamarisk bushes. For ten minutes everyone enjoyed watching the Rail walking, swimming and flying.

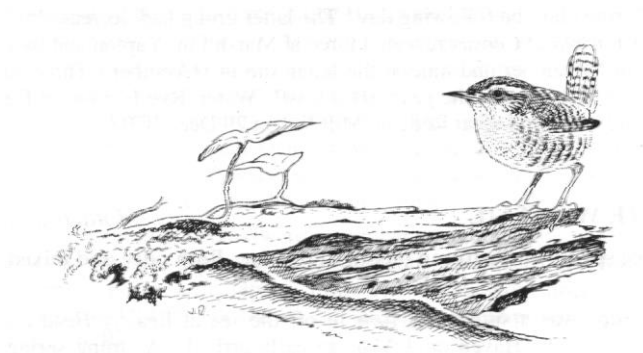
The western end of Widewater produced some stunning Teal, a Ringed Plover, Redshank, two Stonechats, a further seven Little Grebes and one Little Egret. A magnificent Kingfisher was discovered by Paul Stevens and Dave Smith found the Black Redstart. What a finish to the day and a worthy end to the year. 28 species, all seen in excellent light conditions. Thanks are due to all those who have led outings during the year, shared their telescopes and most of all to the members who have come and supported SDOS at both meetings and outings. We look forward to more good birding in 2009

Noranne Biddulph and Brianne Reeve.

INDOOR MEETINGS 2008

The following indoor meetings were held during 2008.

- January 8th** **Beech Mast and Birds**
by David Harper
- February 12th** **Wild West Birding**
by Gerry Griffiths
- March 11th** **Update on Allsorts at
Pulborough Brooks**
by Peter Hughes
- April 8th** **AGM followed by India and Sri Lanka**
by Jim Weston
- October 14th** **Magazines and the Art of Bird
Photography**
by David Cromack
- November 11th** **The Meaning and Mystery of
Bird Song**
by Richard Ranft
- December 9th** **Little Brown Jobs —
How to Identify Them!**
by Jeff Baker



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A GUIDE TO RECORDING BIRDS IN THE SDOS AREA

Clive Hope, SDOS Recorder

Please consider sending in some records at the end of the year, even if in the past you have not done so. You can submit your records by one of the following methods:

- i. Use recording forms for the SDOS area which are simple and self explanatory and which I am able to supply by post or by e-mail - see box at foot of this page.
- ii. Send electronic records to the Sussex Ornithological Society (SOS) - see <http://www.sos.org.uk/records/index.php>
- iii. Send records on-line via one of the national surveys organised by the British Trust for Ornithology, in particular Birdtrack or the current Atlas - see <http://www.bto.org.uk/> .

Those species for which the SDOS particularly requires more information are as follows: all breeding records are useful - nest box successes; Swallows in your garage etc. Little Grebe - all records away from Brooklands and Widewater; Great Crested Grebe - any inland sightings; Grey Partridge - all records; Oystercatcher in the summer months (June to August); Snipe, especially from April to October; all records for Woodcock; Turtle Dove; Cuckoo; all Owl species; Nightjar; Lesser Spotted Woodpecker; Mistle Thrush; Bullfinch; breeding records of Swallow; House and Sand Martins; counts of Swifts; Pied Wagtail roosts in the autumn and winter; Song Thrush breeding records; breeding season records of Reed Bunting.

It's most important that all national rarities should be submitted to the SOS with a full description. Forms are available from Christian Melgar, The Penthouse, 19, Broadway Court, Brighthelm Road, Lancing, West Sussex, BN15 8JT. But please also let me, as SDOS Recorder, know that the record is under consideration. The record will be confirmed the following year if necessary.

Remember, if in doubt, send it in! The society will not mention the location of a breeding site or owl roost and confidentiality will be honoured.

SDOS recording forms are available from:

Clive Hope 22 Upper West Drive, Ferring, W Sussex, BN12 5RG
Tel: 01903 700498 email: clivehope@btinternet.com

Please enclose an A4 sae with your request if you need paper forms.

The boundaries of the SDOS recording area are shown on the map on the inside back cover of this report.

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT - YEAR ENDED 31/12/2008

	2008	2007
	£	£
RECEIPTS		
Balance brought forward	3,972.33	3,998.43
Subscriptions and visitors entry fee	2,049.00	1,672.00
Sale of books, reports, cards, video hire and stickers	71.50	60.00
Net refreshment receipts	68.74	} 137.39
Net raffle receipts	94.00	}
Bank interest	38.24	55.28
Bank error	21.00	83.12
Donations	120.30	-
	<u>6,435.11</u>	<u>6,006.22</u>
PAYMENTS		
Printing and art work	764.48	800.58
Postage and stationery	144.27	236.10
Hire of hall	210.00	175.00
Speakers fees	425.00	427.00
Insurance	99.79	173.59
BTCV Membership	35.00	35.00
Gifts	37.50	64.50
Travel expenses	103.00	39.00
Bank error	-	83.12
Balance carried forward	4,616.07	3,972.33
	<u>6,435.11</u>	<u>6,006.22</u>

John M Maskell (Hon. Treasurer)

Dated: 16 January 2009

ACCOUNTANTS REPORT

In accordance with instructions given to us, we have prepared without carrying out an audit, the above receipts and payments account from the accounting records of Shoreham District Ornithological Society and from information and explanations supplied to us.

David Green & Carole Tucker

Dated: 31 January 2009

GOLDEN JUBILEE ACCOUNT

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT - YEAR ENDED 31/12/2008

	2008	2007
RECEIPTS	£	£
Balance brought forward	2,028.29	2,490.49
Sale of pens	-	2.00
Bank interest	33.56	41.97
Sale of Jubilee book	15.00	32.50
	<u>2,076.85</u>	<u>2,566.96</u>
PAYMENTS		
SDOS Bench	-	513.67
John Stafford Prize	100.00	-
John Stafford Prize Printing & Art Work	137.50	-
Donation	-	25.00
Balance carried forward	1,839.35	2,028.29
	<u>2,076.85</u>	<u>2,566.96</u>

John M Maskell (Hon. Treasurer)

Dated: 16 January 2009

ACCOUNTANTS REPORT

In accordance with instructions given to us, we have prepared without carrying out an audit, the above receipts and payments account from the accounting records of Shoreham District Ornithological Society and from information and explanations supplied to us.

David Green & Carole Tucker

Dated: 31 January 2009

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USEFUL ADDRESSES, TELEPHONE NUMBERS, WEBSITES

The SDOS website is at: www.sdos.org

Booth Museum of Natural History 194 Dyke Road, Brighton, E Sussex,
BN1 5AA Tel: 01273 292777 www.booth.virtualmuseum.info/

Brent Lodge Wildlife Hospital Cow Lane, Sidlesham, Chichester,
W Sussex, PO20 7LN Tel: 01243 641672 www.brentlodge.org

British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) The Nunnery, Thetford, Norfolk,
IP24 2PU Tel: 01842 750050 www.bto.org

Chichester Harbour Conservancy The Harbour Office, Itchenor, Chichester,
W Sussex, PO20 7AW Tel: 01243 512301 www.conservancy.co.uk

Natural England Natural England (Sussex), Phoenix House, 32-33 North Street, Lewes, E
Sussex, BN7 2PH Tel: 01273 476595 www.naturalengland.org.uk

Pagham Harbour Local Nature Reserve Visitor Centre, Selsey Road, Sidlesham,
Chichester, W Sussex PO20 7NE Tel: 01243 641508
<http://www.sussexwt.org.uk/reserves/page00024.htm>

Police Wildlife Officer Police advice is initially to ring 0845 60 70 999 (the main non-emergency police contact number) to ensure appropriate routing of the call.

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) Head Office The Lodge, Sandy,
Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL Tel: 01767 680551 www.rspb.org.uk
Regional Office 2nd Floor, 42 Frederick Place, Brighton, E Sussex, BN1 4EA
01273 775333

Pulborough Brooks Reserve Upperton's Barn, Wiggonholt, Pulborough, W Sussex, RH20
2EL Tel: 01798 875851 www.rspb.org.uk/reserves/guide/p/pulboroughbrooks

Rye Harbour Nature Reserve Rye Harbour Rd, Rye, E Sussex, TN31 7TT
Tel: 01797 227784 www.wildrye.info

Sussex Ornithological Society (SOS) Secretary: Nigel Bowie, 55 Rochester Street,
Brighton, E. Sussex BN2 0EJ 01273 571266 www.sos.org.uk

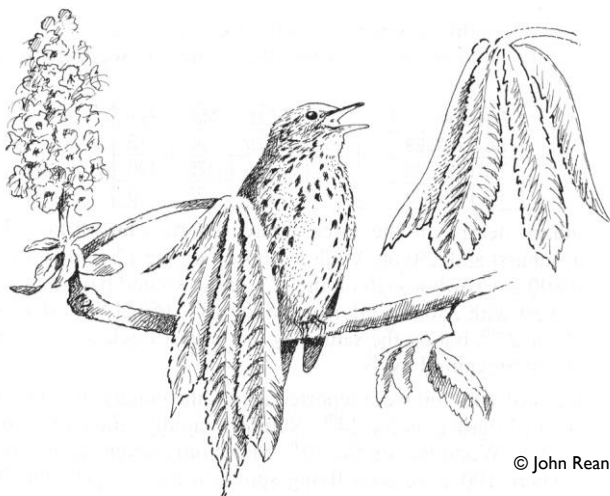
Sussex Wildlife Trust Woods Mill, Shoreham Road, Henfield, W Sussex, BN5 9SD
Tel: 01273 492630 www.sussexwt.org.uk

Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) Head Office Slimbridge, Gloucestershire,
GL2 7BT Tel: 01453 890333 www.wwt.org.uk
Arundel Wetland Centre Mill Road, Arundel, W Sussex, BN18 9PB Tel: 01903 883355
<http://www.wwt.org.uk/centre/116/arundel.html>

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ABOUT THE SDOS / MEMBERSHIP FORM

The Shoreham District Ornithological Society (SDOS), based in Shoreham-by-Sea, West Sussex, was founded in 1953 and is the oldest birdwatching society in Sussex. As well as covering Shoreham itself, the SDOS recording area extends to Brighton, Worthing, Steyning and Storrington, and our membership also includes a number of people who live outside the recording area.

We hold monthly indoor meetings from October to April at St Peter's Church Hall in Shoreham, on a Tuesday evening. Non-members are welcome to attend on payment of a small fee. We also arrange a programme of field outings throughout the year to birdwatching sites around the south-east. Members receive three newsletters a year as well as this annual report. Some previous issues of this report are also still available from the Hon Secretary for purchase by members or non-members. A members-only email discussion group has also been set up to keep all who wish to enrol informed of latest wildlife sightings in the area and other matters that may be of interest.

New members are very welcome. If you would like to join, please photocopy, complete and return the form below.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

I/we apply to join the Shoreham District Ornithological Society and enclose my/our annual subscription of (please tick appropriate box):

Single £12 ☐

Couple/Family £18 ☐

Junior £5 ☐

Life membership terms on application to the Membership Secretary

Cheques should be made payable to SDOS

Title	Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms
Name/s	
Address	
Postcode	
Telephone	
Email	

Please send to Mrs Shena Maskell, SDOS Membership Secretary, 41 St. Lawrence Avenue, Worthing, West Sussex, BN14 7JJ.



Raven by Dorian Mason



Great-crested Grebe with juvenile on Patching Pond by Clive Hope

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1	Applesham Farm	TQ1907	67	Spithandle Lane	TQ1514
2	Beeding Brooks	TQ1911	68	St Anne's Well Gdns.	TQ2904
3	Beeding Cement Works	TQ1908	69	St Botolphs	TQ1909
4	Benfield Valley	TQ2608	70	Stanmer Park	TQ3309
5	Bineham Bridge	TQ1915	71	Steep Down	TQ1607
6	Blackpatch Hill	TQ0909	72	Steyning Mill Pond	TQ1711
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9	Broadmere Common	TQ2115	75	Stretham Manor	TQ2013
10	Brooklands	TQ1703	76	Stump Bottom	TQ1509
11	Buckingham Park	TQ2206	77	Sullington Warren	TQ0914
12	Castle Goring	TQ1005	78	Sweet Hill	TQ2809
13	Chanctonbury	TQ1312	79	Tegdown Hill	TQ3110
14	Chantry Hill	TQ0812	80	Truleigh Hill	TQ2210
15	Chantry Mill Pond	TQ0913	81	Upper Adur Levels	TQ1914
16	Cissbury Ring	TQ1408	82	Wappingthorne	TQ1713
17	Clapham Woods	TQ1007	83	Warren Hill	TQ1113
18	Clayton Hill	TQ3013	84	Washington Bostal	TQ1212
19	Cockroost Hill	TQ2408	85	Washington Sandpits	TQ1213
20	Coombes	TQ1908	86	Waterhall	TQ2808
21	Cuckoo Corner	TQ2006	87	Widewater	TQ2004
22	Devil's Dyke	TQ2511	88	Wild Park	TQ3207
23	Ditchling Beacon	TQ3313	89	Wiston Pond	TQ1612
24	Ferring Rife	TQ0901	90	Withdean Park	TQ3007
25	Flood Arch	TQ2004	91	Wolstonbury Hill	TQ2813
26	Glebe Farm	TQ1811	92	Woods Mill	TQ2113
27	Golding Barn	TQ2110	93	Woodvale Cemetery	TQ3205
28	Goring Gap	TQ1001	94	Worthing Crem.	TQ1109
29	Halewick Tip	TQ1706	95	Wyckham Farm	TQ1913
30	Harrow Hill	TQ0809			
31	Highdown Hill	TQ0904			
32	Hollingbury Camp	TQ3207			
33	Holt Farm	TQ1005			

*index numbers (left-hand numbers)
are marked on the Recording Area
map*

