

Shoreham and District
Ornithological Society
Spring Newsletter
2022



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Editorial

A recent discussion on the User Group about the distant identification of Kittiwakes whilst sea-watching reminded me of a book I purchased long ago. Written by Rob Hume it is called *Birds by Character: the Fieldguide to Jizz Identification* and was first published in 1990. Jizz has been described as the overall impression or appearance of a bird drawn from features such as shape, posture or habitual movement. The word goes back a long way, apparently being first used to describe bird behaviour in the *Country Diary* of the *Manchester Guardian* in 1921.

The Hume book is at once full of insights, but also slightly strange in that, unlike a regular fieldguide, the illustrations are rather minimalist and aim to convey the 'character' of the bird rather than plumage detail. The illustrations in my view are variably successful but taken in combination with the text each species account contributes to an enhanced understanding of the bird. Some descriptions are quite charming: the Bearded Tit (Reedling) is described as 'whirring over reeds like a small pheasant'. The Mistle Thrush is summarised as having an upright stance and long, leaping, powerful hops, and when we see one or more, far from cover, in the middle of a tightly grazed field we know, from experience what this bird is likely to be. Similarly in Mediterranean Europe the dark outline of a thrush standing on a crag or castellation like a solitary sentinel silhouetted against the sky can only be a Blue Rock Thrush – no Blackbird would behave in this way.

Picture a village street in Alsace or the Ardennes. Small houses stand alone in gardens that are partly flowers and partly vegetables. Strolling along the street the target is a small bird and suddenly it pops onto a ridge crest, stands upright and flickers its tail - a distinctive jizz - unmistakably a Black Redstart.

Best wishes to you all.

Roger

A vision for nature recovery within Adur District

Tony Benton

Early in February of this year, Adur District Council (ADC) held a public consultation called 'a call for greenspace'. Once we had decoded the jargon, and got to grips with a most unhelpful consultation document, we set about submitting our ideas from an ornithological perspective. The purpose of the consultation was to inform the content of the Adur Local Plan, Adur & Worthing Green Infrastructure Strategy and the future Local Nature Recovery Strategy for the area. It was our understanding that the existing protected sites were safe, hence not needing to talk about the SSSI along the river itself or the Local Nature Reserve sites such as Widewater and Shoreham Beach. Furthermore, the areas in the South Downs National Park were all excluded from the consultation.

Our submission was very detailed and I'm not going to reproduce it in full here! But what I will attempt to do is summarise some of the key points that we made.

Our starting point was to argue that in the context of nature conservation and nature recovery, the general principle is that seeking to secure bigger areas, improve them for wildlife, and ensuring they are well connected to other existing sites is the direction that local authorities should be heading. The more this approach can be adopted, the more ecologically resilient the outcome is likely to be, and is all the more important in light of the combined nature and climate crisis

We then proposed that within Adur and Worthing there were two distinct areas that were crying out for protection and enhancement: Sompting Gap, and what we have called the Adur Green Gap (the greenspace west of the River Adur extending from the Princes Avenue Woodlands and New Salts Farm through to the Adur and north along the west bank across Shoreham Airfield). See map 1.

In relation to Sompting Gap, we think there is considerable scope to do some big things for nature (for example by creating pools, scrub, meadows and orchards), should the landowners be receptive to it.

Our rationale states that Sompting Gap has the benefit of providing an unbroken green corridor for birds and other wildlife between the coast and the downs. It has the great strength of having Brooklands at its southern end, and the new EPIC Sompting Brooks site just north of Brooklands. For birdlife, the valley forms an important staging post for a variety of small migrant birds – a first landing point on arrival from Africa in spring and an opportunity to pause on the journey south in autumn. Already Brooklands hosts a range of migrants each year, such as Red-listed Willow Warblers, Redstarts and Pied Flycatchers, probably more so than any other site in this consultation. The Sompting Gap corridor also has the potential for a range of wintering and breeding birds of conservation concern (BoCC 2021) including Mistle Thrush, Starling, Greenfinch, Linnet and Yellowhammer.

In relation to the Adur Green Gap we highlighted that what sets it apart is both its size and its habitat potential in wetland terms. The only freshwater wetland of any notable extent (just 3ha) along the entire 20 mile section of coast is Brooklands. With strategic creation of pools in the greenspace west of the Adur, the site could provide the kind of reedbed and shallow pool habitat that would make it unique along this section of coast for everything from passage wading birds to roosting hirundines, to migrant wetland passerines such as Grasshopper Warbler and other marsh warblers. The corridor also has the potential for a range of wintering and breeding birds of conservation concern (BoCC 2021) including Lapwing, Curlew, Yellow Wagtail, Starling, Snipe, Short-eared Owl and Reed Bunting.

So what next? ADC has an important role to play in terms of leading partnerships that safeguard and enhance 'green spaces', although a multitude of landowners have to be persuaded to come on board and play their part too. But ADC is also an important landowner in its own right - think New Salts Farm and Pad Farm, and so they have the opportunity to lead by example. Our

plea to ADC is that when it comes to tackling the nature and climate crisis 'better, bigger and more joined up' is the mantra. Map 2 illustrates just how important these greenspaces are in an increasingly urbanised environment.

Map 1.

Map 2

Shoreham District Ornithological Society (SDOS) response to Adur call for greensites, Feb 2022

Map 2: The strategic importance of the greenspaces in Adur Council area in the wider coastal context



Acknowledgements:

There was a very short turnaround to get something written and sent off to ADC, so SDOS Council are hugely indebted to Adrian Thomas for writing the submission and making such powerful arguments for birds and nature. For most of us, consultations like this are bewildering, so having the expertise of Adrian means that we can participate in these consultations with credibility and demonstrate considerable expertise.

Shoreham birding and other wildlife

Richard Allan

I have always had an interest in nature and have been watching birds since the very early 1980s. In about 2010 I rekindled an interest in nature photography and these days you'll generally find me with both binoculars and camera to hand.

Since 2000, my wife Carrie and I had been living in Crawley. We had however become empty-nesters and after I retired in March 2020 we were looking to downsize, be nearer the coast and somewhere with nice cafes, restaurants, shops and walks. So, in April 2021 we moved to an apartment at the new Waterfront development in Shoreham, just north of the Ropetackle and the railway bridge. We have great views and sunsets across the river, airfield and up to Lancing College, Mill Hill and the Downs.



An April sunset over the Adur

Birdwatching in Crawley was surprisingly good as we had a wooded stream just metres from our front door. Siskins were a very common year-round garden visitor. For perspective I should add that House Sparrows were a garden rarity outnumbered over the years by garden visits from Bramblings and even Waxwings! The nearby Worth Woods were good for birds too including an excellent range of raptors. As the removal van was being loaded up I could hear a Firecrest and Blackcap singing goodbye to us.

I was looking forward to different birding and nature experiences in Shoreham and had some familiarity from trips to the Fort and Widewater. However, it has been significantly better than I expected, and it has been a real pleasure meeting so many SDOS members too. Carrie isn't a birdwatcher but we walk most days with our regular walks including around the river, along to the Fort or Widewater, up the Downs Link and up into the Downs.

From a birdwatching perspective, I love scanning the estuary, finding various waders, occasional geese (Brent and Egyptian) and grebes (Little and Great-crested), Little Egrets, Cormorants, a few ducks (Mallard, Teal and Shoveler) and, so far, seven species of gull (Black-headed, Mediterranean, Common, Herring, Yellow-legged, Lesser and Great Black-backed Gulls). The recent Caspian Gull has evaded me.

Prior to moving to Shoreham I never thought I would be interested in searching through flocks of gulls looking for an 'interesting' one but now I spend time learning how to ID juvenile Yellow-legged Gulls, first winter Caspian Gulls, and the argentatus race of Herring Gull! What has my birding life come to?

I have been pleasantly surprised by the waders and didn't know so many Whimbrel passed through the Adur. It has been great seeing both Black-tailed and Bar-tailed Godwits, including a few in breeding plumage. Common Sandpipers were an almost daily presence from early July to October and a few roosted in the salt marsh by the airfield on many nights. It has been a strange experience hearing birds calling like Whimbrel, Common Sandpiper, Redshanks or Oystercatchers whilst in bed. I really enjoyed having Turnstones around the



Yellow-legged Gull on the sandbars by the Old Toll Bridge



Bar-tailed Godwit on the Adur

river all summer and seeing a few nice ruddy-orange white-headed males. In September I saw a lone Ruff which stopped briefly and three Avocets which flew in. Another Avocet on December 26 was a nice surprise.

Walking in the Downs has been a real pleasure for the exercise, views, the flora and fauna. Corn Buntings, especially around Steep Down, have given me a lot of pleasure knowing how they've declined nationally. Stonechats, Wheatears, Whinchats, and, at times in autumn, Yellow Wagtails seemed to be almost constant companions. Redstarts and Spotted Flycatchers are delightful birds and I saw plenty on passage at Cissbury Ring, Room Bottom and along the Monarch's Way. At Steep Down however, the calling Quail continually evaded me and several times I was told they were calling ten minutes before I arrived or fifteen minutes after I left.

In addition to birds my interest has really grown in wild flowers, especially orchids, dragonflies, butterflies and fungus. It was great seeing the local wildflowers including Bee Orchid and several other orchid species along the Downs Link, Steep Down etc. Anchor Bottom is where I found my first Autumn Lady's Tresses (an orchid species) and Red Star Thistle (thanks to Brianne Reeve for the last one). I'm looking forward to finding Green-winged Orchids there in Spring. I spent a lot of time watching and photographing butterflies locally and was amazed at the thousands of Adonis Blue butterflies in Anchor Bottom this year. I visited Kithurst Meadow, Mill Hill, Steep Down and Lancing Ring regularly for butterflies. A Green Hairstreak butterfly on the Downs Link while looking for Bee Orchids is a nice memory.

Finally, I'll return to birds. Remember how I said House Sparrows were a rarity in my Crawley garden? Well, one of my real Shoreham birding highlights is seeing the many flocks of House Sparrows around the area. So, I'll leave you to decide if we're enjoying our new life in Shoreham-by-Sea or not.



Bee Orchid, Downs Link path north of Shoreham

Conservation update Spring 2022

Tony Benton

Over the past year or two SDOS has been working really hard to influence debates about nature conservation and the protection of birds in and around Shoreham. On paper, there seem to be some exciting opportunities to turn the tide of declining biodiversity, but equally the bewildering number of projects, initiatives and strategies is really hard to keep up with, especially if you don't understand all of the jargon and acronyms! So here is a quick summary of some of the projects that we are working on, and elsewhere in the newsletter I have also written about other conservation projects that we have tried to influence.

New Salts Farm (NSF)

This is a 70-acre piece of land between Lancing and Shoreham that was once earmarked for housing, before being purchased by Adur and Worthing District Councils (AWDC) for conserving and enhancing the natural environment; enhancing biodiversity; and contributing to the Council's ambition of being carbon neutral by 2030. This project requires a large sum of money if wetlands are to be restored and for that reason Heritage Lottery Fund money is being applied for to the tune of a whopping £1.8 million. Unfortunately the process of applying for such a large sum involves endless consultations and feasibility studies and we are probably a year or two away from knowing what the final plan might contain. However, in our view, this site has considerable potential to be vastly improved for the benefit of birds and we are arguing robustly that the balance to be struck between access for the public and giving birds space needs to be tilted towards birds!

Pad Farm

This parcel of land is 45-acres of arable farmland on the western banks of the River Adur north of the A27. The news around this project has been very low key so far and our best understanding is that the recreation of saltmarsh might

be a possibility. How this would be funded has not yet been talked about and thus far there's not been any public consultations over the options. We await clarification of what the thinking might be.

Shepherds Mead

This site in the Findon Valley has recently been ecologically assessed by Surrey Wildlife Trust (acting as consultants for the local authority) and we eagerly await sight of the findings and proposals for rewilding.

The Adur Estuary SSSI

Our work on this grinds on ... slowly. We all know that the number of waders using the estuary has collapsed and that urgent action is required to try and turn around the condition of the SSSI. There are a number of organisations with responsibilities for the SSSI, but no one has overall or lead responsibility and that is the problem. The result is nothing moves very quickly (if at all) and SDOS are left alone to work with people enjoying the water for recreation (for example, we work with paddlers to raise awareness of how to avoid disturbing and distressing feeding and roosting birds). It is all very frustrating.

Taking stock - some reflections

There is no doubt that SDOS has established credibility with AWDC and organisations like RSPB, Natural England and Sussex Wildlife Trust and that we do have some influence. But so we should, because a small band of us have spent literally hundreds of hours talking, debating, surveying and hitting our heads against some very hard brick walls! There is also no doubt that if New Salts Farm, Pad Farm, the Adur SSSI and numerous other corridors of 'greenspace' could be joined up strategically (and protected and enhanced) then that would be good for birds and nature, good for people and good for the planet. So with those lofty goals in mind we will keep trying. And if you feel that you would like to get involved in anyway - for example by helping with campaigns, bird surveys, work with paddlers, galvanising support through social

media, or enthusing people about birds and conservation, then please don't be shy - get in touch with me at chair@sdos.org

Acknowledgements

The following members have collectively contributed so much to our work on the conservation front and I thank Jess Aidley, Tim and Jenny Holter, Adrian Thomas and Richard Allan for all their hard work and support.

The Fulmars from Ovingdean to Saltdean; 2021

Sim Elliott

In January 2021, our world changed in response to the Covid regulations which required us to stay within our local authority area. I had to visit Rottingdean three times a week to see my mother. I cycled to avoid infection on public transport, as I don't drive. This journey gave me the opportunity to regularly observe the bird life of the chalk cliffs. I saw Herring Gulls, Black-headed Gulls, Great Black-Backed Gulls, Jackdaws, and Feral Pigeons in flight along the cliffs. Once I saw a Peregrine Falcon perched atop the cliff. Birds foraging on the beach at low tide included Gulls, Oystercatchers, Carrion Crows, Jackdaws, and occasionally Turnstones, Little Egrets, Grey Herons, and once a Curlew. Rock Pipits foraged widely across a range of habitats. The cliffs provided nesting sites for Starlings, Jackdaws, Rock Pipits, Feral Pigeons and Fulmars.

The Fulmars captured my attention through their squawking and fascinating flight behaviour. I decided that on my regular trips along the coast I would focus on the Fulmars and I observed them for the rest of the year. They occurred mostly as singletons and in pairs, but sometimes in threes and fours, often showing pair-bonding behaviour (cackling and wagging their bills around each other's heads rhythmically). They were frequently seen in flight.

Northern Fulmars, *Fulmarus glacialis*, are part of Petrel and Shearwater family; and are related to albatrosses. The alternative name of the family, 'tubenoses',



reflects the fact that they have tubes on the bills for the excretion of salt from seawater. Fulmars vomit up a sticky, bad-smelling oil to fend off predators; which accounts for their name (ful = foul; mar = gull in old Norse). They nest on open ledges and crevices on cliffs and cannot easily walk on land. Fulmars are pelagic except when breeding. They are found in the UK at seabird colonies, most abundantly in Scotland and the Northern Isles, and less commonly on the coasts of England. They are rare on the south coast.

The last Fulmar I observed was on the 13th of August, after which they presumably returned to sea. They reappeared at the end of December. Fulmars mostly live along the cliffs between Ovingdean and Saltdean, but I observed outlier pairs between the Marina and Ovingdean at times. From January to August 2021 I made 21 observations between Ovingdean and Rottingdean. The maximum count on a single observation was 15 birds, the minimum 0 and the median was 5. I made 9 observations between Rottingdean-Saltdean with a maximum of 40 birds. I made 7 observations of the entire colony (from

Ovingdean- to Saltdean) with a maximum 40 birds, a minimum of 2, with the median being 6 birds.

I saw the birds either on nest sites, or in flight. Birds flew off the cliffs frequently making short circular flights, not landing on most returns; I wondered if they made repeated attempts at landing because landing is difficult and is only successful sporadically. In the literature, Fulmars are reported as making long flights to forage during their breeding period, sometimes making journeys of 100s or low 1000s of miles to forage in the Atlantic. This may explain why the number of Fulmars that I saw varied widely and, perhaps, why on some occasions, there were none. When I saw them flying the Fulmars seemed only to go a short distance, and I saw no Fulmar forage for food in the nearby sea.

Fulmars start breeding at 6-7 years of age and will lay a single white egg on bare rock lined with plant material. In some colonies, before laying, the entire population disappears for 4-5 days probably to build up fat reserves. Eggs are incubated for 49-53 days after which the young hatch, usually in early July. They take 50+ days to fledge. They are long lived birds with records of individuals beyond the age of 50. During incubation foraging trips of 16 -18 days have been recorded for Fulmars.

Peter James observed in 1996 in *The Birds of Sussex* that Fulmars are “well-established on the chalk cliffs between Brighton and Beachy Head ... Birds were seen on the chalk cliffs as early as 1946 (C M. James pers. comm.) but despite a considerable increase in numbers since five pairs were first located at Beachy Head in 1965, breeding was not proved until 1976. Neither type of cliff formation provides ledges of any size or permanence and it is significant, perhaps, that breeding was first proved at Newhaven where some pairs occupy holes in the cliff-face, rather than ledges”. My observations were that the Ovingdean to Fulmar nesting sites were in fairly deep crevices in the cliffs, not the ledges that are used in other nesting sites in the UK.

Whilst I observed pairs of birds mating in early May, I was unable to establish definitively whether the Fulmars produced young, as they mostly occupied quite deep crevices which significantly reduced the possibility of observing eggs or chicks. I noted, however, birds flying that may have been juveniles (smaller with fresh plumage) on the 13th August. This would be a typical time for juvenile birds. On the 29th June I saw a bird that may have been feeding or tending to a chick at the back of the crevice. On 19th July I again saw a single adult bird in a nest cavity, possibly rearing a chick, although I could only see the adult bird.

Having had my interest piqued by the initial necessity to stay local, and my need to travel to Rottingdean regularly by bike, I intend to continue my observations of the Fulmars, but perhaps not with the intensity I managed from January to August 2021.

A Domesticated Tale

John Maskell

In late October 2021 there was much discussion amongst members of the SDOS email User Group after several members saw the westward passage of a large flock of Barnacle Geese along our local coastline with 34 birds eventually spending time at Pagham Harbour. Later, in December, some 324 were noted at Pagham.

Barnacle Geese breed mainly on Arctic islands in the North Atlantic. There are three main populations; those from Greenland and Svalbard winter in Scotland whilst those that occasionally turn up in the South East during severe weather are assumed to originate from the Russian breeding population. Although I personally did not see these recent local birds, they are a species of which I am very fond as they inadvertently changed the course of my life.

As long-standing members will know, from various postings in the past, I was born and brought up on the Isle of Wight. Until their passing last year my Mother and Uncle both resided in Ryde and in their twilight years Shena and I found ourselves making regular Solent crossings to support them. It wasn't all

drudgery, however, and we continued to pursue our birding interests accompanied by our appreciative charges.

In 2018 I wrote an article about some of the Island's birding hot-spots and this was published in the Spring 2019 SDOS Newsletter. In the article I referred to one of our favourite locations, Hersey Nature Reserve at Seaview. On visits here Shena and I had often admired the adjacent 14 modern beach huts and we contemplated how useful one would be as a summer base from which to give more attention to our relatives. So in a passing remark as she set off to co-lead a birding trip to Morocco in April 2019 Shena quipped, "When you go to stay with your Mum if you visit the Hersey Reserve keep your eyes open for any 'For Sale' boards." That dream was promptly filed in my subconscious!



On 14th April 2019 Mum and I were enjoying a picnic at Seaview when I nearly choked on my sandwich as a flock of 60+ Barnacle Geese came flying in from the Solent and on into the Reserve. What migratory movement was this? I was

so excited that we returned the next day to try and obtain some better photographs... but the geese failed to appear. However, now in a calmer state, I did notice a 'For Sale' board attached to one of the beach huts! Without further ado I contacted the estate agent and in an unbelievably roller-coaster month we took possession in late May!

But back to the Barnacles! Upon further investigation I discovered that these birds were a non-migratory / feral population. Indeed, if I had bothered to thoroughly read the relevant section in my copies of the annual IoW Bird Report I would have known that up to 200 Barnacles frequent this area in the north-east of the IoW. They are a remnant and descendants of birds that once resided in the former 'Flamingo Park' at Seaview which closed in 2015 after 44 years as a popular tourist destination.

The location of our little hut is perfect and we are able to stay there during the summer months. To the north we have the panorama of the Solent whilst to the rear is the Hersey Nature Reserve. As "Friends of Hersey" we do some maintenance work and regular wildlife monitoring. We have also become site managers of the beach hut grounds and have, with the support of our fellow "hutters", created a plan to develop wildlife areas within our own site. Unfortunately, there are rabbits who happily munch through any new plants that we introduce!

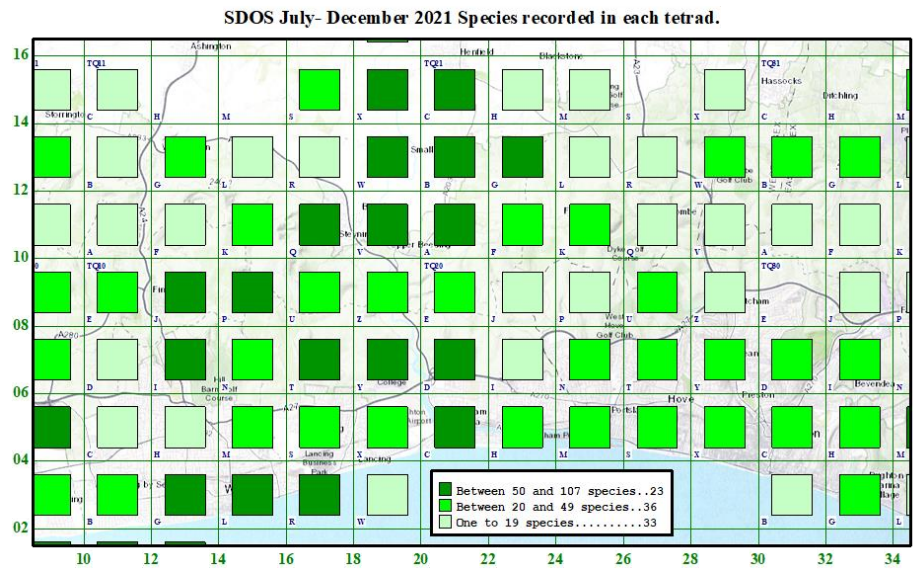
In the past three years, whilst the local flock of Barnacle Geese have been regularly recorded, we have had many other birding highlights from our seasonal residence which could form the basis of another article. We count ourselves as very fortunate and will be for ever grateful to the Barnacle Geese that unknowingly changed the direction of our lives.

John Maskell

Birds recorded in the SDOS area between July and December 2021

Clive Hope

Around 170 observers submitted c.23000 records of 194 species in the second half-year. Some of these have yet to be approved by the SOS Recorder or Records Committee. Data from which the following list has been compiled, has been provided (courtesy of John Newnham) from Birdtrack, e-Bird and iRecord. The recording area was well covered and the following map shows the number of different species recorded in each tetrad (2km x 2km grid square) during this review period.



This is a list of all recorded species with brief notes against most of them. Due to the volume of records involved that is all that this article (and writer) is able to cover. Those in **BOLD** are scarce either in the area or at this time of year.

Brent Goose	Records from Sep 12 th to end of year with a max. of 637 passing Worthing beach on Oct 7 th . On Nov 22 nd , seven were briefly on Goring Greensward close to the road!
Canada Goose	450 on Henfield Levels on Dec 31 st was the peak count.
Barnacle Goose	A remarkable influx between Oct 21 st and Dec 12 th with 152 seen off Widewater on the latter date.
Greylag Goose	There were 330 on Henfield Levels on Oct 8 th .
White-fronted Goose	One was on the Adur saltings at Shoreham on Dec 20 th /21 st .
Mute Swan	In the Lower Adur Valley 36 were counted on Jul 21 st .
Egyptian Goose	Four at Rye Farm Henfield on Dec 28 th .
Common Shelduck	Small numbers seen passing offshore throughout the period but 24 on the sea off Ferring on Nov 22 nd was unusual.
Mandarin Duck	One at Steyning on Nov 28 th was the only record.
Shoveler	Records from Oct 30 th at Henfield Levels with 56 on Nov 13 th .
Gadwall	Nine at Henfield Levels on Nov 1 st .
Eurasian Wigeon	Records from Sep 19 th with 204 on Henfield Levels on Nov 15 th .
Mallard	Eighty-nine on Henfield Levels on Nov 13 th was the maximum.
Pintail	Small numbers passing W offshore from Oct 7 th and a max. of 24 at Rye Farm Henfield on Dec 31 st .
Eurasian Teal	At Rye Farm Henfield, 201 on Dec 26 th .
Tufted Duck	Just three records. Two flew W off Worthing/Goring on Nov 5 th and one was in Queen's Park, Brighton on Dec 20 th .

Common Eider	Four flew W off Goring on Nov 22 nd and a female lingered off East Worthing from 30 th to Dec 6 th .
Velvet Scoter	Nine flew W off Worthing/Goring between Oct 7 th and Nov 30 th . One was present off Widewater from Nov 28 th to Dec 11 th .
Common Scoter	Records at the coast from Jul 11 th to the year end with 21 on Oct 14 th the max.
Long-tailed Duck	Two flew E off Worthing/Goring on Nov 19 th and one in Southwick Canal from 23 rd to the end of the year.
Goldeneye	One flew E off Worthing Beach on Nov 22 nd .
Goosander	Five records between Nov 23 rd (at Brighton Marina), and Dec 9 th , which included one at Patching Pond from 1 st to 3 rd .
Red-breasted Merganser	First returning bird to the coast was on Sep 19 th . The maximum count off Worthing / Goring was of 57 on Dec 20 th .
Grey Partridge	Reported from eight down-land sites with 31 at Kithurst Hill, Storrington on Oct 23 rd .
Common Pheasant	Widespread with 100 counted between the Adur and A24 on Sep 16 th .
Quail	From one to three recorded from four closely related sites (Steyning, Steep Down, Sompting Abbots, Lancing College Farm) between Jul 15 th and Aug 12 th .
Red-legged Partridge	Records from 21 sites with 50 on Ditchling Beacon on Oct 16 th .
Common Swift	A pair of late breeding birds were still in the vicinity of their nest at St Anne's Wells Hove on Sep 7 th . The largest gathering was of 115 at Devil's Dyke on Aug 1 st and the last record for the year was at High Salvington on Sep 26 th .
Common Cuckoo	Only record was of one at Beeding Brooks on Jul 2 nd .
Feral Pigeon	There were a hundred at Cissbury on Jul 31 st .

Stock Dove
Woodpigeon

220 at Steyning Round Hill on Nov 18th.
As in the first half-year, the second most reported species with 865 records. 6500 passed over Brighton on Nov 2nd and 2460 over Goring Gap the next day.

Turtle Dove

Two on the Adur Levels at West Mill Farm on Jul 16th was the sole record.

Collared Dove

Records from 48 sites with 27 at Ditchling Beacon on Nov 1st.

Water Rail

Singles from seven sites between Nov 1st and Dec 29th.



Moorhen

Widespread. 18 at Brooklands on Dec 9th the most noted.

Coot

As with the last species, the max. count was at Brooklands with 35 on Dec 9th.

Little Grebe

Records from eight sites with nine on Widewater on Dec 5th.

Great Crested Grebe	One back on the sea off Worthing on Sep 7 th preceded the next by three weeks. Numbers built up to 76 on Nov 20 th off Goring / Ferring and the peak of 85 on Dec 24 th .
Slavonian Grebe	Three records. One off West Worthing on Nov 27 th , one East Worthing Dec 7 th and one off Widewater on 24 th .
Oystercatcher	Present throughout the period across 16 coastal and Adur sites. Thirty on Dec 6 th at Goring Gap was the maximum count.
Avocet	Three on the Adur at Shoreham on Sep 24 th and one on Dec 26 th .
Lapwing	The maximum was a low 251 on Dec 31 st at Rye Farm Henfield.
Golden Plover	Three at Steyning Round Hill on Sep 29 th , four over Cissbury on Oct 16 th and nine at Perching Hill Fulking on Dec 20 th .
Grey Plover	Singles on the Adur at Shoreham on Aug 25 th and Sep 28 th . In Nov, two there and up to 15 at Goring Gap increasing to 21 in Dec.
Ringed Plover	Two at Shoreham Harbour on Jul 20 th . By the end of Aug there were 47 in the Lower Adur and 49 at Goring Gap. Peak at the former area was 70 on Sep 15 th and at the beach at Widewater, 55 on Nov 18 th .
Little Ringed Plover	One flew over High Salvington during the night on Aug 17 th .
Eurasian Whimbrel	Up to nine birds on the Adur at Shoreham between Jul 12 th and Sep 14 th . Circa eight birds flew W off Goring in this period.
Curlew	Returning birds noted from Jul 9 th with eight W off Goring. From 18 th to the year-end up to three on the Adur saltings. The only other records were from Brighton Marina where four flew E on Nov 2 nd and one on 23 rd .
Bar-tailed Godwit	One to four noted on the Adur at Shoreham between Jul 13 th and Oct 8 th . Twelve at Goring Gap on Sep 15 th .

Black-tailed Godwit	One W at Worthing beach Jul 13 th , one or two Lower Adur 26 th to Sep 10 th and one on Henfield Levels Nov 11 th and Dec 11 th .
Turnstone	Recorded at 24 sites from Jul 2 nd . Peak numbers were 66 at Shoreham on Aug 1 st , 86 at Goring Gap on Sep 6 th and 70 on Worthing beach Sep 30 th .
Knot	Four on the Adur on Aug 13 th and one at Goring Gap on 18 th .
Ruff	Three flew over Cissbury on Aug 24 th , one was at Goring Gap on 30 th and one on Adur at Shoreham on Sep 15 th .
Curlew Sandpiper	One at Shoreham on the Adur on Nov 20 th .
Sanderling	Recorded from Aug 4 th . Max. count of 90 at Goring Gap on Nov 4 th .
Dunlin	Records from Jul 19 th . Max. count of 202 at Goring Gap on Dec 9 th .
Purple Sandpiper	Three were back at Shoreham Harbour mouth on Oct 28 th and four at Brighton Marina on Nov 2 nd rising to seven by 23 rd . At the year-end two remained at Shoreham and six at Brighton.
Woodcock	Singles at five sites between Nov 6 th at Wappingthorn, Steyning and Dec 23 rd at Ladywell..
Common Snipe	Records from eight sites from Sep 5 th . The Adur Saltings held 15 on Oct 6 th and Henfield Levels 16 on Nov 7 th .
Common Sandpiper	Noted from 14 sites from Jul 6 th . As usual, most records were from the Adur between Shoreham and Beeding where the max. count was six on Jul 26 th . Two there on Dec 21 st were last for the year.
Green Sandpiper	One on Sompting Brooks on Jul 1 st was followed by four more at as many sites before two at Wyckham Farm, Steyning on Dec 10 th and two on Henfield Levels on 20 th .

Common Redshank	Apart from singles at Goring Gap and up to five at Widewater, all records were from the Lower Adur and Shoreham. The peak count was of 60 on Nov 5 th .
Spotted Redshank	One reported at Small Dole on Nov 13 th
Greenshank	Only reported from the Adur Saltings/Lower Adur where just single birds other than three on Jul 26 th and two on three dates in Aug.
Kittiwake	Recorded from Aug 6 th to the end of the year often well offshore. In Oct, 49 moved W and in Dec 172 W, with 167 on 6 th as the largest day count.
Black-headed Gull	A count of 520 in the Lower Adur Valley on Sep 22 nd and 1000 there on Nov 16 th . A massive 3900 were counted flying W off Worthing on Oct 12 th with c.500 offshore. Also, 500 at Rye Farm, Henfield on Dec 23 rd .
Little Gull	One was offshore at Goring on Sep 26 th .
Mediterranean Gull	Recorded almost daily. Forty flew W off Worthing on Jul 11 th , c.50 were fly-catching above West Worthing on Aug 23 rd , 27 flew W off Worthing on Sep 26 th and there were 26 at Goring Gap on Dec 10 th .
Common Gull	Three single birds in Jul but no three-figure counts till Nov 23 rd when 120 at No-Man's Land, Findon. In Dec, 400 in the Lower Adur on 1 st increasing to 700 by 15 th .
Great Black-backed Gull	Largest counts were of 68 between the Toll Bridge and Cement works on the Adur on Nov 11 th and 73 between the A259 and A27 on 15 th that included two Norwegian ringed birds. In Dec, 69 on 27 th .
Herring Gull	944 records from 102 sites. In the Lower Adur Valley, 600 on Jul 29 th . A huge 4700, mostly juveniles, moving W off Goring beach on Sep 12 th . On 18 th , 700 in fields near Cissbury and on 26 th , 1000 at Goring Gap. Off

	West Worthing, 800 on Oct 24 th contained some <i>argentatus</i> race birds.
Caspian Gull	Two records of birds on Dec 24 th at Goring and Shoreham.
Yellow-legged Gull	Records of single birds at six sites between Jul 6 th and Dec 24 th and three on Oct 19 th in the Lower Adur.
Lesser Black-backed Gull	A pair bred at St Anne's Wells, Hove raising two chicks and newly fledged birds were in Shoreham Harbour. Largest count was of 22 in the Lower Adur on Dec 23 rd .
Sandwich Tern	Low totals through the period on sea-watches. Most were 27 W on Jul 5 th , 24 W on Sep 8 th and 36 offshore on Oct 14 th . Last was one on Nov 10 th at Goring Gap.
Common Tern	Just seven birds over four dates, the last was one at Goring Gap on Oct 18 th .
Arctic Tern	One flew W at Worthing beach on Oct 17 th .
Commic Tern	One flew W on Sep 29 th at Worthing.
Black Tern	One flew W off Lancing on Sep 28 th .
Great Skua	Five (all single birds) seen off the coast between Jul 27 th and Oct 7 th
Arctic Skua	Fifteen recorded along the coast between Aug 1 st and Nov 28 th including three off Goring on Sep 26 th and three off Worthing on Oct 2 nd .
Long-tailed Skua	One reported off Widewater on Oct 29 th .
Common Guillemot	Records from Oct 12 th mostly of one to five birds but 10 W and 25 E on Nov 30 th at Worthing beach and 11 off Widewater on Dec 5 th .
Razorbill	As per the first half-year, twice as many reports received as the previous species with records from Sep 30 th . Maximum was 168 W off Worthing on Dec 6 th and 33 were offshore there on 20 th .
Auk species	On Dec 6 th , 351 flew W off Worthing and Lancing.

Red-throated Diver	First returning birds were two off Worthing on Sep 28 th . Generally low numbers until Dec when 184 flew W (90 on 16 th) and 46 E. Fifteen on the sea on 19 th .
Black-throated Diver	Two on the sea off Goring Gap on Oct 15 th . From Nov 14 th to Dec 22 nd , c.13 reported between Brighton Marina and Goring.
Great Northern Diver	Eight birds recorded between Widewater and Goring from Sep 30 th to Dec 26 th .
Diver sp	Fourteen unassigned between Nov 14 th and Dec 31 st .
Fulmar	One W off Worthing on Aug 7 th , six off Widewater on Oct 29 th followed by singles there on Dec 5 th and 27 th .
Sooty Shearwater	One appeared off Goring Gap on Aug 12 th .
Manx Shearwater	One flew E on Aug 6 th at Goring, one W on 8 th at Worthing beach, eight present there on Sep 28 th , five W there on Oct 2 nd and three off Goring on 29 th .
Balearic Shearwater	Fourteen W off Widewater on Sep 28 th and one on Oct 31 st .
White Stork	On Aug 14 th , a party of twelve flew over Shoreham!
Gannet	Recorded almost daily at the coast from Jul 4 th to the year-end. In Sep, 312 flew W and 29 E. In Oct 1465 W and 77E, In Nov 358 W and 13 E and in Dec 90 W and 13 E. Peak day was Oct 2 nd when 800 moved W. A feeding frenzy described off East Worthing/Lancing of 100 birds on Oct 24 th .
Cormorant	Offshore at Worthing, there were 51 on Sep 20 th . and off Brighton 50 on Oct 27 th . Seventy counted in the Lower Adur Valley on Nov 24 th and 50 around Shoreham Harbour on Dec 31 st .
Shag	About eight single birds noted from five sites between Aug 7 th and Dec 30 th .

Cattle Egret	One was around the Steyning King's Barn WTW on Sep 28 th /29 th .
Grey Heron	Records from 42 sites in the area. In the Lower Adur Valley there were 11 on Dec 30 th .
Great White Egret	One was seen heading W towards Brighton Wild Park on Oct 10 th and one was seen off Worthing and Ferring moving W well offshore on Nov 22 nd .
Little Egret	Matching Grey Heron with records from 41 sites. Largest gathering was of 27 at Goring Gap on Sep 13 th .
Osprey	One flew E along the coast at Ferring on Aug 5 th and one flew S over High Salvington on Sep 17 th .
Honey-buzzard	One flew over central Brighton on Sep 6 th and one was over Cissbury on Oct 3 rd .
Sparrowhawk	Noted from 60 sites. Four around New Erringham Farm Shoreham on Aug 27 th .
Marsh Harrier	One was offshore from Worthing beach on Aug 1 st , one was in No-Man's Land, Findon and one was seen from Goring beach both on 28 th . One was at Kithurst Hill, Storrington on Sep 18 th .
Hen Harrier	Reports from eight downland sites with dates ranging from Oct 22 nd to Dec 18 th were all of single birds other than two near Steyning on Nov 23 rd .
Red Kite	Another 86 records from 47 sites for this increasingly familiar raptor. Eight at Kithurst Hill, Storrington and five at Harrow Hill, Patching on Sep 18 th then six at Cissbury on Nov 1 st followed by six at Michelgrove, Patching were the max. counts.
Common Buzzard	Nearly 400 reports from 100 sites made this the most numerous bird of prey in our area. Beeding Hill was again the top spot with 13 on Aug 25 th .

Barn Owl	A pair bred in Storrington. Single birds at about ten sites with Beeding Brooks the most favoured.
Tawny Owl	Four at Cissbury on Oct 17 th was the best count. Elsewhere, singles or pairs at twelve other sites across the area.
Little Owl	This owl has become very scarce in our area with just three sites – in Shoreham, Steep Down and Applesham nr Coombes where three birds were heard on Dec 23 rd .
Short-eared Owl	One on the Downs nr Steyning on Nov 23 rd , one at Goring Gap on Dec 6 th and one at Upper Beeding on 22 nd .
Hoopoe	One in Brighton on Oct 24 th .
Kingfisher	Records from 18 sites, mainly single birds. First was one at Ladywell on Jul 26 th with three there on Aug 11 th . Two, both in Ferring Rife on Oct 17 th and on Steyning Levels on 23 rd . Two on the Adur at Shoreham on Dec 4 th .
Wryneck	Four records this year. In Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on Aug 29 th and Sep 5 th , Findon Valley Sep 8 th and Lancing on 19 th .
Great Spotted Woodpecker	Continues to do well with 231 records from 59 sites. Parties of four (two juveniles) at High Salvington on Jul 28 th , at Patching Michelgrove on Nov 3 rd , at Ladywell on Nov 20 th and at Brighton Wild Park on Dec 11 th .
Green Woodpecker	Tracking the previous species with 214 records from 60 sites. Max. at one of these were six at Edburton Perching Sands Farm on Jul 26 th , a breeding site.
Kestrel	Just behind the Buzzard in abundance with Beeding Hill also favoured for the largest count – eight on Sep 24 th .
Merlin	Reports from six sites, five on the Downs and one on the coast between Sep 10 th and Dec 4 th .

Hobby

Birds were seen at 21 sites across the area between Jul 7th and the last on Oct 12th at Wolstonbury Hill.

Peregrine

Bred at Washington Rock Common raising two young. No other breeding reports received although pairs regularly seen at Cissbury and Beeding. Single birds at over 30 sites.

Ring-necked Parakeet

Appeared at six sites. The first was at West Worthing on Jul 1st and was followed by one at Small Dole on 6th, at Brighton Marina on 12th, at Michelgrove, Patching on Sep 18th, in Worthing on Oct 18th and a long-staying bird in the Shoreham area from 21st until Dec 24th.

Jay

Eleven at Cissbury on Oct 14th and 12 (inc one flock of eight) over Sheepcote Valley Brighton on 22nd.



Magpie

Forty at Cissbury on Oct 19th.

Jackdaw	Six hundred counted at Rye Farm Henfield on Dec 31 st .
Rook	Five hundred at Beeding Hill on Aug 25 th .
Carrion Crow	Two hundred and seventy at Goring Gap on Nov 15 th .
Raven	Records from 44 sites with six at Cissbury on Nov 14 th .
Coal Tit	Singles or pairs at 17 sites including successful breeding at West Tarring. Three at Wood's Mill on Aug 13 th .
Marsh Tit	Only reported from five sites: Steyning Round Hill, the Steyning Downland Scheme, Chanctonbury Ring, Ashurst Spithandle Lane and Patching Hill.
Blue Tit	Remains abundant with a max. count of 55 at Sheepcote Valley Brighton on Oct 22 nd .
Great Tit	Common and widespread. Ten in West Worthing on Aug 19 th was a typical post breeding gathering.
Skylark	Similar numbers to last year with a maximum count of 120 at No-Man's Land Findon on Nov 8 th .
Sand Martin	Parties of less than ten until Aug 26 th when 15 at Brighton Marina and 76 at Worthing beach. The last were two at Steyning Round Hill on Sep 24 th .
Barn Swallow	Migration got under way in Aug but the main movements were in Sep when 450 flew E at Ferring on 6 th , 400 Goring Gap on 12 th , 480 Beeding Hill on 17 th , 200 Lower Adur Valley on 22 nd . In Oct, 220 at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on 8 th and in Nov, just two at Worthing beach on 4 th were the last.
House Martin	Bred in Upper Beeding and Saddlescombe, Poynings. In Sep, 500 Goring Gap on 12 th then 265 Mill Hill and 200 Sheepcote Valley on 13 th . In Oct, 100 over Henfield Levels on 5 th . The last were at Cissbury on 23 rd .

Cetti's Warbler	Records of single birds from 16 sites throughout the period, mostly detected purely by song.
Long-tailed Tit	With 172 records from 52 sites, it remains a common bird in the area. Largest flock was of 20 at Cissbury on Aug 24 th .
Willow Warbler	The ringing sites accounted for the bulk of the records in a generally poor autumn for the species. In Aug, 15 were trapped at Cissbury on 10 th and 79 at Ladywell on 11 th . Max. elsewhere were nine at Sheepcote Valley, Brighton on Sep 6 th . Last was one at Three Corner Copse, Hove on Oct 10 th .
Chiffchaff	A common bird across the area with 364 records from 74 sites. Over 30 trapped on several days in Sep at Ladywell, 50 at Cissbury on 29 th . In Oct, 47 at Ladywell on 10 th and 15 at Cissbury on 17 th , the last double figure count of the autumn.
Sedge Warbler	One or two at river valley sites in Jul and Aug with six at Beeding Brooks on Sep 4 th and the last at Mill Hill on 8 th .
Reed Warbler	Records from 18 sites. Birds trapped at Ladywell included recently fledged young. Twenty at Beeding Brooks on Aug 10 th . After Sep, there was just one on Oct 10 th at Ladywell.
Grasshopper Warbler	One at Cowbottom (near Lancing Clump) on Aug 3 rd and two at Steep Down on 28 th .
Blackcap	Second most numerous warbler with 288 records from 50 sites. Ladywell 43 were trapped on Sep 9 th and 66 on 17 th . There were 83 likewise at Cissbury on 12 th and 50 on 29 th . In Oct, 28 were in Sheepcote Valley on 8 th and 15 at Cissbury on 17 th . From one to three appeared in gardens from this time onwards.

Garden Warbler	Records from Aug 3 rd to the last at Highdown on Sep 18 th . A total of 17 ringed at Ladywell.
Lesser Whitethroat	Mostly ones and twos at the twenty or so sites reported but five at Mill Hill on Sep 4 th and four next day at Sheepcote Valley. The last for the year was at Foredown, Portslade on 25 th .
Common Whitethroat	With 230 records from 50 sites, this species is doing well. Fledged young were seen at Ferring Rife, Henfield levels, Ladywell and Cissbury. Numerous double-figure counts but Sheepcote Valley was the hot-spot with a max. of 60 on Sep 6 th . The last bird was at Cissbury on 29 th .
Dartford Warbler	One was at Cissbury from Oct 16 th to Nov 17 th and one at Steep Down on Nov 16 th .
Firecrest	Records from nine sites. Three trapped at Cissbury on Oct 17 th and again on 22 nd . Three at Three Corner Copse , Hove on Dec 21 st .
Goldcrest	Fledged young seen at Ferring Rife and Brooklands. Ten at the latter on Sep 1 st was the max. count.
Wren	There were 482 records from 80 sites for this very common bird.
Nuthatch	Three on Jul 14 th in Chantry Lane, Storrington included fledglings. The only site (out of 17) south of the A27 was St Anne's Well, Hove.
Eurasian Treecreeper	Records from 15 sites of single birds other than four on Henfield Levels on Nov 7 th and Dec 28 th .
Common Starling	Maximum monthly counts were: in Jul, 300 at Brooklands; in Aug, 750 at Devil's Dyke; in Sep, 1000 at New Salts Farm; in Nov 700 at Mill Hill; in Dec 3000 at both New Salt's Farm and Widewater (presumably the same birds) and the largest congregation, 3400 at Palace Pier, Brighton on Dec 11 th .
Ring Ouzel	Recorded from three sites – Cissbury, Beeding Hill/Cement Works and Sheepcote

	Valley. First was at Cissbury on Oct 21 st where a max. of four on 25 th . Last was at Upper Beeding on Nov 19 th .
Blackbird	Sheepcote Valley held 60 on Nov 5 th . Counts of 20 or more at Steyning Downland, Mill Hill, Beeding Brooks and Toad's Hall Valley, Hove.
Fieldfare	The first were 70 at Southwick on Nov 4 th . At Wood's Mill there were 250 on 24 th .
Redwing	First were at High Salvington and over West Tarring on Oct 12 th . Largest counts in each month were: in Oct, 100 at Chantry Hill and Cissbury on 13 th /14 th , in Nov, 100 in Hove and 150 at Cissbury on 14 th and in Dec, 49 Toad's Hall Valley, Hove on 21 st .
Song Thrush	Thirty in Sheepcote Valley on Nov 5 th . Only other double-figure count was of 10 at Cuckoo Corner on Sep 21 st .
Mistle Thrush	Thirty at Ditchling Beacon on Aug 6 th . Eight at Cissbury on Nov 17 th
Spotted Flycatcher	Bred in Keymer at Burnthouse Bostal. Eight in Stanmer Park, Brighton on Aug 28 th and seven at Cissbury on Sep 5 th were the largest counts. The last was one in the Lower Adur Valley on 29 th .
Robin	Nearly 700 records from over 100 sites received. Max. count was of 30 at Cissbury on Oct 23 rd .
Common Nightingale	Three at West Mill Farm on the Adur levels in Jul. Singles at Cissbury (ringed) on Aug 16 th and in Sheepcote Valley on 20 th and 29 th .
Pied Flycatcher	With 31 records from 16 sites, this was a good autumn for this species. First was in Findon Valley on Jul 27 th . Up to three in a West Tarring garden Aug 23 rd to 27 th . The last were two at Three Corner Copse, Hove on Sep 24 th .
Black Redstart	One in Brighton on Oct 26 th followed by birds at Beeding Hill and Widewater on Nov 2 nd .

	One at Sompting on 20 th and one at Shoreham Harbour on 30 th . Dec records were another in Brighton on 4 th and the Widewater bird remaining until the 22 nd .
Common Redstart	Birds appeared from Aug 3 rd at Cissbury (five there on 10 th) then from one to three at several sites with six at Findon Gallops on Sep 4 th and eight at Beeding Hill on 7 th . The last was one at Cissbury on 29 th .
Whinchat	First was at Cissbury on Aug 3 rd then records from 28 mostly downland sites until the last at Sheepcote Valley on Oct 15 th . Max. counts were 19 on the downs around New Erringham Farm, Shoreham on Aug 27 th , 12 at Beeding Hill on Sep 3 rd and seven at Steep Down on 7 th .
Eurasian Stonechat	There were 221 records at 41 sites with a max. of ten at Goring Gap on Oct 11 th . Fledged young noted at five sites
Northern Wheatear	Returning birds from Jul 27 th at Steyning Levels. 26 on Beeding Hill on Aug 11 th , 29 New Erringham Farm on 27 th then 38 Beeding Hill on Sep 3 rd . In Oct, 15 at Truleigh Hill on 3 rd . The last two were at Ferring on 21 st and Newtimber Place, Poynings on 22 nd .
House Sparrow	One hundred and twenty at Ferring Rife on Aug 25 th was the largest count.
Duncock	Seventeen in Sheepcote Valley on Oct 8 th .
Yellow Wagtail	First was one at Cissbury on Jul 31 st in a good autumn migration for the species. Largest counts were 46 at New Erringham Farm on Aug 27 th , 22 in the Lower Adur Valley on 30 th , 20 at Findon Gallops on Sep 4 th and at Foredown, Portslade on 13 th there were still six on Oct 3 rd . The last was one at Cissbury on 25 th .
Grey Wagtail	Mostly single birds reported at 32 sites but a family of four at Shoreham Harbour on Aug

Pied Wagtail	<p>10th and four at Goring Gap on Sep 13th. Five over Sheepcote Valley on 21st.</p> <p>In the Lower Adur Valley, 24 on Sep 21st, 25 Hove on Oct 9th and 28 passing Worthing beach on 10th. Fifty at Goring Gap on Nov 15th and 65 there on Dec 1st. Sixty at Steyning King's Barn WTW on 29th.</p>
White Wagtail	One at Goring Gap on Nov 14 th .
Meadow Pipit	<p>Passage got underway in mid Sep and on 21st there were 170 at Beeding Hill followed by 140 at Foredown Portslade on 26th. In Dec, the most were on Steyning Levels with 20 on 26th.</p>
Water Pipit	One on Henfield Levels on Nov 20 th .
Tree Pipit	<p>Recorded at nine sites with a total of 18 birds, the most being five at Cissbury and West Worthing on Aug 22nd and 26th respectively. The last was one at Cissbury on Sep 26th.</p>
Rock Pipit	<p>Confined to the coast mainly at Brighton Marina (where a max. of four on Nov 2nd) and Shoreham Harbour other than one at Goring Gap on Nov 3rd.</p>
Chaffinch	<p>Reported from 60 sites but still much scarcer at the coast than formerly. Forty at Chanctonbury Ring on Aug 17th and a similar number at Sheepcote Valley on Oct 22nd. At Perching Sands Farm, Edburton there were 98 on Nov 28th, the largest gathering reported.</p>
Brambling	Records of one to three at nine sites with three at Patching Hill on Nov 3 rd and over Brighton on 26 th .
Bullfinch	One in Hove and one at Mill Hill and Ladywell in the Adur Valley were the only sites south of the Downs to report this bird.
Greenfinch	<p>Reports from 61 sites. Fourteen at Ferring Rife on Jul 27th, 15 at Cissbury on Aug 10th, 38 in Sheepcote valley on Sep 7th, five at Edburton on 26th, 20 at Cissbury on Oct 25th, 30</p>

	Shoreham Harbour on Nov 4 th and 38 Edburton Nov 28 th .
Linnet	Recorded at 68 sites. Three-figure counts were 200 on Aug 14 th at Cissbury, 150 at Patching Hill on 20 th , 300 at Perching Sands Farm on Oct 26 th .
Lesser Redpoll	Recorded at Cissbury from Aug 15 th with 20 there on Oct 22 nd and 14 on Nov 6 th . Michelgrove, Patching and Ladywell were only other sites with two and one bird respectively.
Common Crossbill	One over Beeding Hill on Aug 18 th .
Goldfinch	The fourth most recorded bird with over 660 reports at 102 sites.
Siskin	An early returning bird at Cissbury on Jul 18 th . Then from Sep 24 th to Nov 26 th , small flocks of up to 22 passed over there. Other sites included Goring Gap with 13 on Oct 22 nd and Michelgrove, Patching with four on Nov 3 rd .
Snow Bunting	One flew over calling at Goring Gap on Nov 14 th . On 23 rd one appeared on the beach at West Worthing and was a popular attraction until 29 th . Another passed over Goring on Dec 12 th .
Corn Bunting	Reported from 32, mostly downland, sites with several flocks of 20 or more, the largest at Steep Down of 50 on Nov 16 th .
Yellowhammer	Low numbers at most of the 47 sites reporting this bird. There were 11 at Patching Hill on Aug 16 th , 12 at Perching Sands Farm on 31 st and 17 on Dec 18 th at Foredown, Portslade.
Reed Bunting	The 27 sites reporting this species were scattered across the Levels and Downs and coastal plain with ten in the Lower Adur Valley on Jul 9 th the biggest count.



Escapes

Black Swan

One on Henfield Levels on Oct 30th and Nov 1st. One on the sea off Goring and Worthing on 23rd.

Laurel Pigeon

One in Brighton on Dec 28th

African Spoonbill

One over Sheepcote Valley on Oct 25th.

Derbyan Parakeet

One in Shoreham from Oct 20th to Dec 28th.

Ringling at Cissbury 2021

Val Bentley

After a busy year in 2020, 2021 proved to be rather a disappointment as far as numbers were concerned. Covid-19 restrictions were back in place at the end of 2020 and continued into 2021, so the first session of the year did not take place until early May, but from then until the end of the year we carried out 27 visits, only two fewer than in 2020, but the total of 1003 captures was 44% lower than the 1782 of the previous year, and the number of birds ringed down by 47%. We had to say goodbye to Finch, who returned to Ireland, but during the year Peter Denyer gained his C permit to join David Campbell on that level. Trainee Mya Bambrick joined us when her studies permitted, and from the end of June Toby Stapleton came along on several occasions, first as an observer, then helping and learning how to handle, ring and process the birds. We were also assisted on occasions by members of the Ladywell team, Sue Walsh, Clare Buckle, Chrissi Twitchen and Becky Parangi.

Firecrests: brighter male on left, duller plumaged female on right (17 Oct)



Captures were lower in both number and variety. The total of 28 different species ringed during the year was six fewer than in 2020, with no Marsh Tits or Grasshopper Warblers appearing nor, for the second year in a row, Treecreepers, though they were heard on the site. We also failed fairly miserably in a bid to attract hirundines, with only one Swallow being ringed. However, I cannot say that we regret the lack of Woodpigeons, they do leave a lot of feathers round the ringing table! On the plus side, the single Linnet was the first since 2015 and only the sixth this century, and two young Sparrowhawks on the same day, an hour apart, but in different nets, were the eighth and ninth since 2000. Table I shows the results of the efforts during the year.

Species	2017 New	2018 New	2019 New	2020 New	2021 New (New for Year)	2021 Total Captures (inc. retraps)
Blackbird	14	18	20	19	18 (22)	27
Blackcap	335	294	527	741	319 (328)	343
Blue Tit	18	21	39	14	35 (41)	48
Bullfinch	19	12	14	27	14 (18)	22
Chaffinch	5	10	4	9	6	6
Chiffchaff	198	97	142	244	148 (151)	155
<i>Coal Tit</i>	-	-	1	-	-	-
Dunnock	22	16	35	30	26 (37)	49
Firecrest	7	4	9	3	5	10
Garden Warbler	9	13	10	10	3	3
Goldcrest	104	36	92	24	11 (12)	16
Goldfinch	5	2	3	13	8	8
<i>Grasshopper Warbler</i>	-	-	1	2	-	-
Great Tit	11	27	27	9	10 (11)	14
Greenfinch	2	4	1	9	4	4
<i>House Martin</i>	-	-	-	6	-	-
<i>Kestrel</i>	-	-	1	1	-	-
Lesser Redpoll	19	-	-	63	22	22
Lesser Whitethroat	1	4	3	5	2	2

Linnet	-	-	-	-	1	1
Long-tailed Tit	23	25	61	16	18 (21)	27
<i>Magpie</i>	-	-	1	1	-	-
<i>Marsh Tit</i>	1	-	2	4	-	-
Nightingale	-	-	-	2	1	1
<i>Redstart</i>	3	-	1	1	-	-
Redwing	7	2	19	13	22	22
Reed Warbler	11	11	5	5	6	6
Robin	25	43	47	62	47 (54)	81
<i>Sedge Warbler</i>	1	-	2	-	-	-
Siskin	-	-	-	19	-	-
Song Thrush	10	17	17	22	22 (23)	25
Sparrowhawk	-	-	1	-	2	3
Spotted Flycatcher	1	1	2	4	2	2
<i>Stonechat</i>	1	-	-	-	-	-
Swallow	21	-	-	-	1	1
Tree Pipit	-	-	-	3	-	-
<i>Treecreeper</i>	2	3	3	-	-	-
Whitethroat	59	47	45	53	15 (17)	21
Willow Warbler	124	115	118	135	46 (48)	48
Wood Pigeon	-	1	2	1	--	-
Wren	15	22	20	23	27 (28)	36
<i>Yellowhammer</i>	3	-	-	-	-	-
Total	1076	845	1275	1593	841 (896)	1003

Table 1: Captures at Cissbury

The final column is the figure for the total captures (including retraps and controls), the penultimate column shows new birds ringed and *in brackets the number of different individuals of the species where this is different, i.e. including retraps ringed in previous years and controls.

For comparison, also shown are totals for new birds ringed during each of the previous four years. Species in *italics* were ringed in at least one of the previous four years, but not in 2021, while the species in **bold**, only one(!) was ringed in 2021 but not any of the previous four years.

Winners and Losers

Unfortunately, there were few winners in 2021. On the plus side, 22 new Redwings represent the highest annual total, and over twice the number of Blue Tits were ringed than in the previous year.

Totals for several species regularly trapped at Cissbury showed significant declines from the previous two years, and the overall number was just slightly below the poor figures of 2018, when “the beast from the east” wrought havoc in late winter/early spring. The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) has produced preliminary results of the 2021 breeding season from the Nest Record Scheme (NRS) and Constant Effort Sites ringing (CES), and said “2021 proved to be a disastrous breeding season, with 18 of the 24 species recorded through CES displaying significant declines in productivity compared to the five-year mean, and none exhibiting significant increases. Six species recorded their lowest breeding success since CES monitoring began”. These six included Willow Warbler, of which we ringed only 46, among our lowest ever totals for the species. Even the ubiquitous Blackcaps were over 400 fewer than the exceptional year of 2020, and 15 new Whitethroats is the lowest number since ringing at the site started in 1984. Three Garden Warblers is the second lowest and a far cry from the 1990s when the annual average was 34, with 65 in 1990 being the record.

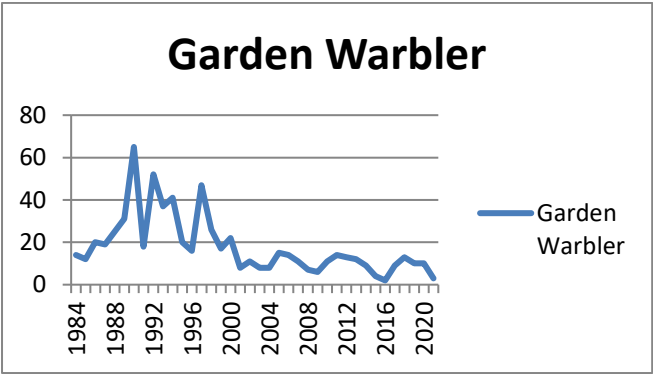


Table 2: Number of Garden Warblers ringed 1984-2021

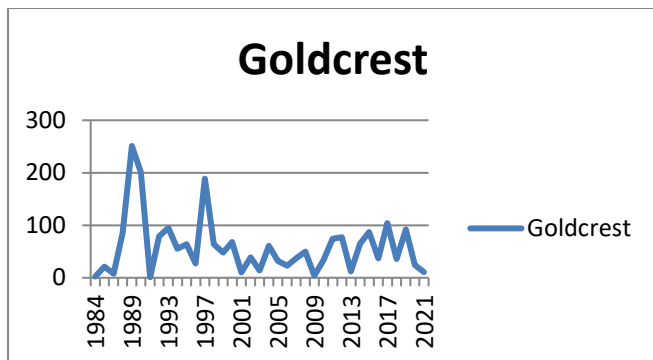


Table 3 Number of Goldcrests ringed 1984-2021

The low number of Goldcrests ringed in 2020 was probably due to the lack of visits in November and December. No such excuse in 2021 when there were five sessions between late October and the end of the year, but only 11 new birds were captured during that period. Note that the two highest totals (251 in 1989, 201 in 1990) were followed by the lowest (1) in 1991 after an exceptionally cold and prolonged winter. Even the 2018 “beast from the east” did not have such a dramatic effect.

Spring to Early Summer

Becky and Sue from Ladywell joined Mya and myself for the first session on 2 May, when Government guidelines allowed more than two people to meet again outdoors. There were two returning Whitethroats, ringed in 2019 and 2020, and no fewer than 10 Dunnocks, only one of which was new. Brood patches were evident on Dunnocks, Robins and a Chiffchaff. The three Bullfinches caught included a smart 2nd year male. The following two sessions were very quiet indeed, with eight and nine captures respectively. On 19 Jun we trapped one of only two 2021 Lesser Whitethroats, but it was a female with a brood patch, and the following week a juvenile kept us entertained by flitting around near the ringing table all morning. A pair of Blue Tits had brought off a brood somewhere and turned up in the nets with five youngsters. More notable was that we heard a Quail calling several times from the field near the barn, then David heard - and Mya saw briefly – a female Golden Oriole on site!

By the end of June our total of birds caught stood at just 88, due mainly to the four months of inaction from January to the end of April.

Mid-Summer to early Autumn

A surprise on 18 Jul was a first year Reed Warbler that had already left its natal site, one of only 13 (out of 412 ringed since 1984) found moving through Cissbury in July, but not quite the earliest, which was 15 Jul 1989. On 29 Jul the first passage Willow Warbler arrived – a shame it was not followed by that many more, though we weren't able to visit between 31 Jul and 16 Aug, so may have missed the main passage.

The highlight of that first August session was a Nightingale, then on the 22nd we ringed an adult Spotted Flycatcher, the only three Garden Warblers of 2021 and a first year male Linnet. The most unusual event that day was the discovery of a freshly dead thrush by the ringing table, which very surprisingly turned out to be a Redwing. What on earth was it doing at Cissbury at this time of year? The Birds of Sussex (2014 ed Adrian Thomas) notes that the species did nest in Kent in the 1980s, and the earliest “autumn” bird recorded in Sussex was trapped at Beachy Head on 6/8/2011, so we can't claim the record!

The only opportunity for a 100-bird day, on 12 Sep, was scuppered by running out of size A rings, so we stopped short at 98 – of which 73 were Blackcaps. On the 22nd a bit of excitement ensued when we trapped a Robin bearing a French ring.

2020 Cissbury May to 26/9 (20 sessions, average 71.1 birds per session, total 1243)	2021 Cissbury May to 26/9 (16 sessions, average 40.4 birds per session, total 647)
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During an idle moment I compared the numbers trapped and average catch per session from May to 26 September in 2020 and 2021 and came up with the data above.

Late Autumn and Winter

The arrival of October was accompanied by an influx of Song Thrushes, plus species such as Lesser Redpoll and Redwing. We ringed 22 of both of these, which in the case of Redwing was our highest annual total. Of six Goldcrests trapped on 6 Nov one had been ringed in September 2019, only the second to have reappeared more than two years since its ringing date. We were frequently greeted during November and December visits by calling Tawny Owls and occasionally had a Woodcock fly up from the ground while we were setting nets – but they are not only exceptionally good at avoiding them, but equally adept at bouncing straight back out if they don't! On the final round of the final session on 19 December the overall total of captures just crept over the thousand.

Year/s	Blackcap	Chiffchaff	White-throat	Willow Warbler
2000-2004	25.5	13.7	6.9	6.8
2005-2009	30.6	15.9	5.0	5.8
2010-2014	30.5	18.4	5.5	6.6
2015	38.3	14.2	5.0	4.6
2016	34.4	21.2	2.7	6.6
2017	31.1	18.4	5.5	11.5
2018	34.7	11.5	5.6	13.6
2019	41.3	11.1	3.5	9.3
2020	49.7	15.0	3.3	8.5
2021	37.9	17.6	1.8	5.5

Table 4: Totals of Four Passage Species (as percentages of total number of all birds ringed)

Year	Blackcap	Chiffchaff	White-throat	Willow Warbler
2017	335	198	59	124
2018	294	97	47	115
2019	527	142	45	118
2020	791	244	53	135
2021	319	148	15	46

Table 5: Totals of Four Passage Species (actual numbers of birds ringed)

Comparison of Main Passage Species

Table 4 above shows the percentage of the four main passage species ringed compared with the overall total. Actual numbers were lower for all species, and there were proportionally fewer Blackcaps and Willow Warblers, a higher percentage for Chiffchaffs, but a depressingly low number of Whitethroats (see Table 5).

Residents

The BTO Preliminary CES and NRS Results, mentioned previously, indicate that Wren, Blackbird and Dunnock were among six species that “recorded their lowest breeding success since CES monitoring began”, while Great Tits and Blue Tits “produced lower than average numbers of fledglings per breeding attempt”. From our very small sample of juveniles and first year birds ringed until the end of September, Blue Tits appeared in greater numbers at the site than in 2020. Of the other five species noted below Wren, Robin, Dunnock and Blackbird had a fairly average year, while young Great Tits were lower in number.

Table 6: Productivity of six resident species

Note: Only juveniles and first year birds trapped until the end of September are included; these are most likely to have been hatched on or near the site.

Species	Number of juveniles and first year birds (to 30/9)						
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Blackbird	12	5	2	6	8	11	8
Blue Tit	12	5	8	8	20	10	19
Dunnock	19	11	13	10	22	20	17
Great Tit	14	9	4	15	15	7	5
Robin	28	24	12	27	27	44	33
Wren	22	13	6	14	12	20	15

Our Song Thrush juveniles (to 30/9) numbered only eight, half the 2020 figure for 2020 but the same as 2019. We trapped eight adult Bullfinches during the year, four of each sex, and 12 juvenile or young birds. Two more, hatched in 2021, were trapped in early 2022.

Survivors and Movers

Species	Ringed	Age/Sex	Retrapped	Notes
Dunnock	2/9/15	First year	6/6/21	5 th recapture, 6 th calendar year
Blackbird	11/3/17	Second year male	22/8/21	5 th recapture, 5 th calendar year
Blackcap	21/7/18	Adult female	28/5/21	Retrapped each year, 4 th calendar year
Long-tailed Tit	4/11/18	Age unknown	19/12/21	Into at least its 3 rd calendar year

Table 7: Selection of Retraps 2021

Having a known date of ringing gives an indication of the age of an individual if it is retrapped. For example if a bird is a known adult when it is ringed it is at least into its second calendar year, so if it is recaptured the following year it will be into its third year of life. Table 7 shows examples of older individuals recaptured in 2021, with estimated age.

Finding a bird in the net with unfamiliar ring number always brings a certain frisson of excitement! There were five such moments in 2021. Two first year Willow Warblers in August had been ringed just a few days earlier, one at Stanford Reservoir (near Leicester) and the other at Hollesley Heath (Suffolk). A first year Chiffchaff on 3 Oct was ringed just over the county border near Leith Hill (Surrey) on 24 Sep, and an adult female Blackcap on 26 Sep was ringed at the Isle of Grain Power Station in Kent on 12 Aug. Rather more exciting was our first continental Robin, ringed in the Dunes de Fort Vert (near Calais) in its first year on 18 Sep 2019, which arrived at Cissbury on 22 Sep.

One of the 63 Lesser Redpolls we trapped in the autumn of 2020 found its way to Scotland, where it was controlled by ringers at Lockerbie (320 miles away) on 5 May. A first year female Blackcap we ringed on 2 Sep 2019 was controlled near Great Malvern on 2 Aug this year. Finally, a juvenile Chiffchaff we ringed on 31 Jul had flown along the Downs to Ladywell by 11 Aug.

The More Unusual

A poor breeding year throughout the country meant fewer birds passing through on migration, but summer visitors which do not breed on the site were represented by singles of Nightingale and Swallow, two Spotted Flycatchers and six Reed Warblers. The only raptors were the two Sparrowhawks, while autumn visitors were Lesser Redpoll and Redwing.

Summary

We were able to carry out 27 ringing sessions during the year, one fewer than in 2020, but with a late start because of Covid-19 restrictions. This also meant that the annual visit from the Worthing Conservation Volunteers did not take

place, and was much missed. Thanks are due to our Group Secretary, Brian Clay who oversees the return of data to the BTO; to David, Peter, Mya, Toby and the Ladywell ringers for their involvement with the ringing operations during the year; to my husband Roger for carrying out tree and scrub clearance with me in winter and ride clearance in summer; to the National Trust for their permission to ring at the site; and to the owners of the track for allowing access.

Ringing in Ladywell 2021

John Newnham

This was the fifteenth year of ringing and study of birds using the Ladywell valley. A total of 35 mist-netting sessions were undertaken which is just two above the average for the previous fourteen years.

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
No sessions	22	29	33	34	39	31	37	25	38	37	39	40	35	23	35
Birds ringed	472	600	764	1202	1602	711	1069	654	2120	2057	2941	2252	2381	2373	1343

Table 1:- The numbers of ringing sessions and birds ringed in Ladywell in each year (2007-2021).

Like most recent years the ringing effort was not spread evenly across the year with no sessions in the early months and a concentration of effort during the productive early autumn season. These features are clearly shown in Table 2.

The combination of poor weather, flooding in the valley, team availability and Covid-19 concerns conspired to prevent any ringing until April. Table 2 shows that April was the only month when the catches exceeded the average for the

previous 14 years. Thereafter notably fewer birds were trapped with the year recording some of the lowest numbers. The preliminary results reported in the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) newsletter derived from the Constant

	Ja n	Fe b	Ma r	Ap r	Ma y	Ju n	Ju l	Au g	Se p	Oc t	No v	De c
2007-20 sessions	18	12	20	38	34	34	44	62	73	60	39	28
Average catch (2007-20)	50	43	32	33	41	34	46	64	94	77	57	57
2021 sessions	0	0	0	2	3	4	3	6	8	4	3	2
Average catch (2021)	0	0	0	45	29	14	31	52	60	51	41	21

Table 2:- The number of ringing sessions in each month and the average monthly catch (2007-20 and 2021).

Effort Sites (CES) and Nest Record Scheme (NRS) showed many migrants returned in good numbers but got off to a late start and productivity was below average, with residents displaying a similar drop. Once again the autumn, August to October, were the best months but only on two days, 11th August (139 including 79 Willow Warblers) and 17th September (113 including 66 Blackcaps), were more than 100 birds trapped. During eight ringing sessions 30 or fewer birds were trapped with 20 on 19th and 26th June being the poorest the catches. On the upside, despite the lower numbers, a total of 39 different species were ringed during the year, four more than in 2020 and an average of 12 species trapped in each ringing session with a range between seven (13th and 19th June and 23rd September) and 19 (29th August).

Table 3 shows the totals of each species ringed in Ladywell for the years 2007 to 2021 and shows that 1343 birds were ringed in the valley during 2021; over a thousand fewer than 2020 although better than six of the previous years. Two new species, a Moorhen and Snipe, were ringed during the year and Table 3 shows, in yellow highlight, the exceptional points. Three species,

Woodpigeon, Garden Warbler and Reed Bunting, were ringed in record high numbers, whilst the 17 ringed Wrens was the lowest annual total for the valley.

Species	2021	Total	Species	2021	Total
Sparrowhawk	2	18	Whitethroat	28	272
Kestrel	2	10	Garden Warbler	17	100
Moorhen	2	2	Blackcap	297	4109
Water Rail		1	Yellow-browed Warbler		2
Snipe	1	1	Wood Warbler		2
Stock Dove	1	7	Chiffchaff	254	5355
Woodpigeon	12	80	Willow Warbler	156	2011
Tawny Owl		3	Goldcrest	10	907
Kingfisher	3	81	Firecrest	1	75
Green Woodpecker	2	46	Spotted Flycatcher	2	22
Great Spotted Wdpecker	6	92	Long-tailed Tit	19	507
Swallow		19	Marsh Tit		1
House Martin		144	Coal Tit		4
Tree Pipit		3	Blue Tit	120	2006
Meadow Pipit		4	Great Tit	54	1044
Grey Wagtail		10	Nuthatch		25
Wren	17	617	Treecreeper	2	96
Duncock	42	596	Jay		27
Robin	56	763	Magpie	1	11
Nightingale		2	Jackdaw	2	43
Redstart	2	12	Rook		1
Stonechat		1	Carrion Crow		1
Blackbird	46	784	House Sparrow		1
Song Thrush	38	439	Chaffinch	16	503
Redwing	10	77	Greenfinch	9	183
Mistle Thrush		6	Goldfinch	43	324
Cetti's Warbler	1	40	Siskin		4
Grasshopper Warbler		8	Lesser Redpoll		33
Sedge Warbler	4	45	Bullfinch	2	25
Reed Warbler	52	864	Reed Bunting	7	30
Lesser Whitethroat	4	42			

Table 3:- The 2021 annual and grand totals for each species ringed in Ladywell.

The red type shows the species on the red list of high conservation concern (BoCC5) and amount to just 11 individuals in 2021.

Table 4 shows the species for which over a thousand captures have been recorded; for several of the resident species retraps numbers are higher than ringing figures. The activity during 2021 brought no change in order to that at the end of 2020.

Species	New	Retrap	Total
Chiffchaff	5355	279	5634
Blue Tit	2006	2671	4677
Blackcap	4109	365	4474
Great Tit	1044	1613	2657
Willow Warbler	2011	14	2025
Robin	763	748	1511
Dunnock	596	845	1441
Blackbird	784	551	1335
Reed Warbler	864	384	1248
Long-tailed Tit	507	670	1177
Wren	617	524	1141
Goldcrest	907	189	1096

Table 4:- The total number of handlings (new birds and retraps) for species with greater than 1000 handlings in Ladywell (2007-2021).

Perhaps the most exciting aspects of ringing come from hearing birds ringed in the valley have been found elsewhere (a recovery) or trapping a bird carrying a ring placed elsewhere (a control). With fewer birds caught in the year fewer

movements were recorded to and from Ladywell with six birds trapped which had been ringed elsewhere (control) and five ringed in Ladywell and recovered or controlled later in the year. The details of these movements are shown in the following two tables.

Ring No.	Species	Date Ladywell	Ring date	Age/Sex	Ring site	Distance	Interval
ALD6925	Reed Warbler	01/05/2021	31/08/2018	3	St Nicholas-at-Wade, Kent	124km WSW	974 days
AHF3195	Reed Warbler	05/06/2021	07/08/2020	3	Conyer, Kent	96km SW	302 days
LVK480	Chiffchaff	11/08/2021	31/07/2021	3J	Cissbury, West Sussex	6km ESE	11 days
AFT2657	Blackcap	23/09/2021	19/09/2021	3m	Knepp Estate, West Sussex	14km SSE	4 days
LLC540	Chiffchaff	23/09/2021	16/09/2021	4	Upper Tankersley, Yorkshire	304km SSE	7 days
AFJ8510	Blackcap	26/09/2021	26/08/2019	3f	Knepp Estate, West Sussex	14km SSE	762 days

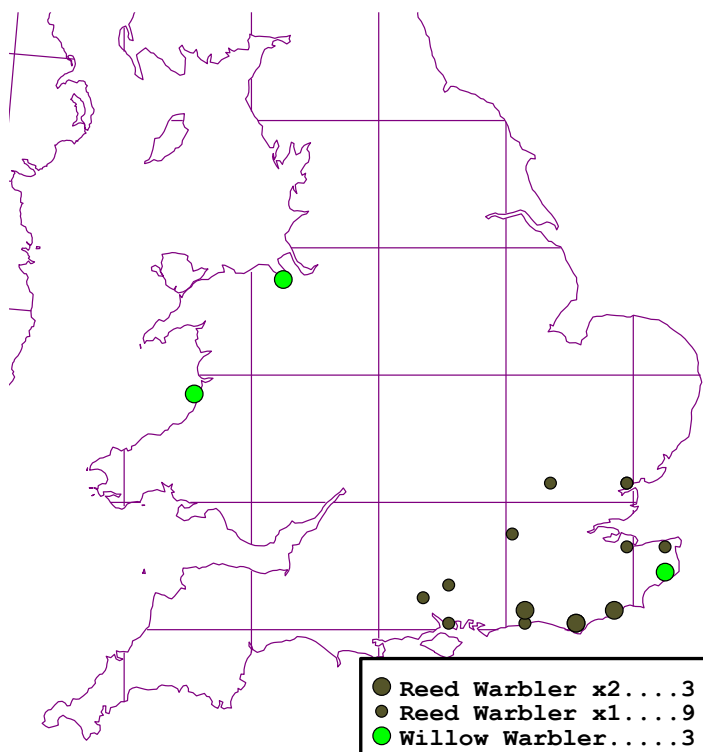
Table 5: The details of birds caught in Ladywell during 2021 and ringed elsewhere (2=age unknown; 3= hatched in calendar year; additional J signifies in juvenile plumage; 4=hatched before current calendar year; 5=hatched last calendar year).

Ring No	Species	Ring date	Age/ Sex	Recovery date	Recovery site	Distance	Interval
AFK6796	Whitethroat	11/08/2020	3	14/06/2021	Wraysbury, Windsor	69km NNW	307 days
AFK6747	Reed Warbler	03/08/2020	3	02/08/2021	Litlington, East Sussex	34km ESE	364 days

ALP9238	Reed Warbler	11/08/2021	3	04/09/2021	Romsey, Hampshire	86km WNW	24 days
ALP9350	Blackcap	05/09/2021	3m	25/09/2021	Knepp Estate, West Sussex	16km WNW	20 days
NHL786	Chiffchaff	12/12/2020	2	20/11/2021	Warsash, Hampshire	70 W	343 days
LTK314	Willow Warbler	03/08/2020	3	18/08/2021	Yves, Charente, France	538 km S	380 days

Table 6: Details of birds ringed in Ladywell and recovered (all controlled).

In the report for 2020 the locations where Blackcaps and Chiffchaffs passing through Ladywell had either been ringed or recovered were plotted. This year I have plotted the other two commonly trapped warblers. The 15 movements



involving Reed Warblers are limited to south-eastern England with two movements between Ladywell and Steyning, Litlington and Icklesham. The three Willow Warbler movements are more scattered and from further afield.

As mentioned in previous reports, although recoveries and controls are exciting the number reported is relatively small thus few conclusions can be drawn from those movements generated from ringing at a single site. However, when combined with the information across the country, and indeed other country's ringing/banding schemes a comprehensive picture can be drawn as shown in the BTO's The Migration Atlas.

	Sanctuary	Ladywell
Blackbird	5	1
Blue Tit	3	3
Dunnock	0	4
Great Tit	2	2
Robin	6	1

Table 7. *The number of local recoveries of five resident species from Ladywell and the Sanctuary (1991-2021)*

For some years I had felt that fewer resident birds ringed in Ladywell were being recovered and reported locally than from the ringing in the Sanctuary (about 1km east of Ladywell). Table 7 shows the figures for Ladywell and the most recent 15 years from the Sanctuary. The figures are rather too small to draw meaningful conclusions. Handling birds and ringing provides considerably more information about population size and structure, species longevity and other aspects of avian biology than just their movements. Retrapping individuals provide some interesting insights into individual's behaviour.

During the year 344 different birds of 22 species were retrapped, most, as shown in Table 8 were birds ringed earlier in the year with numbers decreasing rapidly for birds ringed in earlier years. Each session report throughout the year included the detailed histories of the more interesting retraps.

Year of ringing	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Number	1	6	11	24	38	77	187

Table 8: The number of individuals from each year re-trapped in 2021.

Ring No.	Species	Cap	Date	Age Code	Sex	Subsite	Interval
LH59616	Blackbird	N	12/08/2015	3J	M	K	
		R	22/10/2015	3	M	LI	0y 071d
		R	01/05/2021	6	M	LI	5y 264d
		R	12/12/2021	4	M	LI	6y 124d
LH59671	Blackbird	N	01/05/2016	5	M	P3	
		R	20/05/2016	5	M	PI	0y 019d
		R	08/06/2016	5	M	PI	0y 038d
		R	05/07/2016	5	M	PI	0y 065d
		R	13/07/2016	5	M	PI	0y 073d
		R	09/04/2017	6	M	PI	0y 343d
		R	29/04/2017	6	M	PI	0y 363d
		R	18/04/2018	6	M	P2	1y 352d
		R	20/05/2018	6	M	P2	2y 019d
		R	07/07/2018	6	M	P2	2y 067d
		R	12/05/2019	6	M	P2	3y 011d

Z883452	Robin	R	21/09/2019	4		P2	3y 143d
		R	04/04/2021	6	M	P3	4y 339d
		R	17/07/2021	6	M	P2	5y 078d
		R	10/10/2021	4	M	P2	5y 163d
		N	08/06/2016	3J		PI	
		R	14/09/2016	3		K2	0y 098d
		R	24/09/2016	3		PI	0y 108d
		R	13/11/2016	3		PI	0y 158d
		R	23/11/2016	2		PI	0y 168d
		R	12/10/2017	4		PI	1y 126d
		R	19/11/2017	4		K	1y 164d
		R	04/06/2018	4		K2	1y 361d
		R	01/05/2019	4		PI	2y 327d
		R	12/05/2019	4		PI	2y 338d
		R	21/09/2019	4		PI	3y 105d
		R	28/10/2019	4		P2	3y 142d
		R	31/08/2020	4		P2	4y 085d
		R	02/09/2020	4		K	4y 087d
		R	18/04/2021	4		K2	4y 315d

Table 9: Details of birds retrapped in 2021 with the greatest intervals between ringing and recapture and the most captures since being ringed.

The six birds retrapped in 2021 and ringed in 2016 were singles of Dunnock, Robin, Blackbird, Reed Warbler, Blackcap and Long-tailed Tit. Table 9 gives the details of the Blackbird (LH59616) retrapped in 2021 with the greatest interval since ringing and the details of the two birds retrapped in 2021 with the greatest number of previous captures.

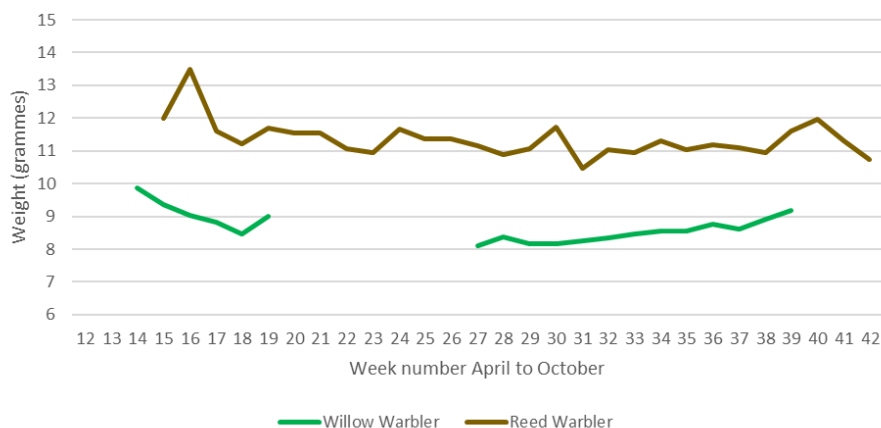
Since ringing commenced in Ladywell a Chaffinch, a Blue Tit and three Blackbirds have a seven year interval between ringing and recapture and eight resident individuals a six year interval. In the past one Blue Tit has been captured on 37 occasions, a Great Tit on 25 occasions and a Dunnock on 20 occasions so the 15 handlings of the two listed 2021 individuals are well below these individuals.

Throughout the migratory season past session reports have detailed changes in fat deposits and weights of migrants. In the report for 2020 the average weight in each week of Blackcaps and Chiffchaffs showed a weight loss during the breeding season followed by a gradual gain in weight in preparation for emigration. For Blackcap this seems to start a few weeks earlier than Chiffchaff; for both species approximately a 25% weight change was recorded.

The graph (next page) plots the same information for the other two commonly caught warblers and neither of these show the same pattern with very little variation in weight of Reed Warbler (brown line) throughout the season and perhaps a very slight rise in Willow Warbler (green) weight as the autumn progresses.

After an absence of nest box work in 2020 the collection of tit-type boxes in the valley was visited on several occasions during the late spring and the detailed findings logged on the BTO's Nest Record Scheme. A summary and comparison with previous years is shown in table 10.

Mean weight in each week of Ladywell Reed and Willow Warblers



Year (2008-21)	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Number of boxes	11	11	23	23	24	29	32	32	21	37	34	39	40	41
Blue Tit	3	3	8	13	11	10	9	9	10	12	15	14	-	15
Great Tit			3	5	2	4	7	6	6	6	6	10	-	8
Nuthatch					1	1							-	
Total occupied boxes	3	3	11	18	14	15	16	15	16	18	21	24	-	23
Occupancy %	27	27	48	78	58	52	50	47	76	49	62	62	-	56
Total eggs laid	19	28	89	149	107	103	126	114	95	120	137	139	-	160
Total pulli	19	25	78	130	83	44	88	69	67	95	86	99	-	76
Total young fledged	19	23	75	102	56	42	55	25	47	57	79	99	-	67
% survival egg -> fledging	100	82	84	68	52	41	44	22	49	48	58	71	-	42

Table 10:- Summary of Ladywell nest box scheme results 2008-2021

As previously noted our Health and Safety policy requires at least two permit holding ringers to be present at each session; the average number of ringers present for the 35 sessions was between three and four with one session when six were present but seven sessions when just two were available. During the year the number of outings each team member attended was John Newnham (34), Sue Walsh (32), Chrissi Twitchen (20), Emily Mustafa (15), Becky Parangi (13) and Clare Buckle (12). Nick Bond and Kim Roll-Baldwin joined us for taster sessions to consider embarking on training and we were visited by Val Bentley, Martin Rann and Paul Perrins from other ringing teams. Furthermore, several members of the team ringed at other sites and with other ringing groups helping to advance their knowledge and experience. Towards the end of the year Emily moved to Yorkshire whilst taking up a position as a professional ornithologist; our good wishes go with her.

Table 3 above shows the dearth of farmland, seed eating species ringed in the valley. During the late summer, with the permission from Hugh Passmore, three afternoons were spent mist-netting around the nearby dewpond at Valley Barn on Applesham Farm. Although large flocks of finches and buntings can be seen at this location it was not altogether a successful project with only 11 birds ringed comprising Meadow Pipit (1), House Sparrow (1) Goldfinch (2) and Linnet (7). Three of these species, however, were not ringed in Ladywell during the year.

On each visit, including some short visits for stocking feeders or maintenance work, a list of species recorded was logged onto the British Trust for Ornithology's Birdtrack recording system. A total of 45 day-lists were created and 73 species were seen during the year. No new species was recorded so the total remains at 121. Just Woodpigeon, Jackdaw, and Blackbird were recorded on all occasions whilst ten species were recorded only once. The details of all bird species recorded in the valley and those noted in 2021 are given in Appendix I. Whenever possible a note was made of other taxa, a task made much easier as during the year alterations in Birdtrack facilitated the recording of mammals, amphibians, reptiles, orchids and butterflies as well as dragonflies and birds.



Throughout the year, but particularly in the summer, considerable ‘gardening’ was needed to maintain the net rides in operable conditions; this year the brush-cutting, raking and pollarding of willows was done by Sue and myself. I would like to extend our continued gratitude and thanks to the college authorities and staff, particularly Jon Hutcheon the farm manager, and to Hugh and Christopher Passmore of Applesham Farm for their on-going interest, help and support with the ringing in Ladywell. Sometimes the landowners visit us during a ringing session and we are always pleased to see them.

During 2021 the team continued inputting all the ringing data into the BTO’s on-line recording software (DeMon) and I thank the team members who take turns keying the data into DeMon. My thanks also to Sue who has done much of the organisation of ringing sessions this year. The session reports for 2021 to feed back to landowners, interested college staff, local birders and ringers who have followed the work done in Ladywell have all been completed by me but I thank team members for their photographs some of which are included in this summary. The session reports, like those from local ringing at Cissbury and Steyning, are copied to the e-users group of the Shoreham District Ornithological Society. Finally I thank Sue and Clare for correcting this review.



Image Gallery



Photograph acknowledgments

The source of photographs is often clear from the context or other attribution and those are not listed here. Note also that some of the bird photographs are illustrative; they may not be of the actual bird referred to in the account.

Front cover: Long - tailed Duck – Dorian Mason

Page 24: Water Rail - Dorian Mason

Page 32: Eurasian Jay - Dorian Mason

Page 40: Snow Bunting - Dorian Mason

Page 41: Firecrest – Peter Denyer

Page 63: Cetti's Warbler – Sue Walsh

Page 64: Ladywell at Dawn – Sue Walsh

Page 65: House Sparrow – Richard Allan

Page 65: Yellow- legged Gull – Richard Allan

Back cover: Black – tailed Godwit – Cyndy Downie

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Honorary President	Brianne Reeve	president@sdos.org
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Chair	Tony Benton	chair@sdos.org
Treasurer	Tim Holter	treasurer@sdos.org
Secretary	Sue Miles	secretary@sdos.org
Membership Secretary	Sue Miles	memsec@sdos.org
Minutes Secretary	Jenny Holter	minutes@sdos.org
Field Meetings Coordinator	Richard Nowak	field.events@sdos.org
Newsletter Editor	Roger Smith	newsletter@sdos.org
IT Coordinator	Peter Wyld	itsupport@sdos.org
Council Member	Clive Hope	clive.hope@sdos.org
Council Member	Richard Allan	richard.allan@sdos.org
OTHER CONTACTS	~~~~~	~~~~~
Garden Bird Recorder	Simeon Elliott	gardenbirdsurvey@sdos.org
ADMIN TEAMS	~~~~~	~~~~~
GENERAL ENQUIRIES (‘Contact Us’ on website)	Tony Benton Tim Holter Sue Miles Peter Wyld	contact@sdos.org
MEMBER ADMIN (www.membermojo.co.uk)	Sue Miles Tim Holter Peter Wyld	admin@sdos.org
USER GROUP (www.groups.io)	Peter Wyld Sue Miles Time Holter	admin@sdos.org
WEBSITE (www.sdos.org)	Peter Wyld Jerry Campbell Roger Smith	webmaster@sdos.org
SOCIAL MEDIA (Public)	~~~~~	~~~~~
Facebook Group - ‘Shoreham Birders’	Tony Benton Jenny Holter	

23/3/2022

If you use an email address but are not a member of the User Group then please consider joining (<https://groups.io/g/sdos/join>) to make sure you receive up-to-date information about SDOS activities.

