

# Lancashire & Cheshire Fauna Society

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Publication No. 111

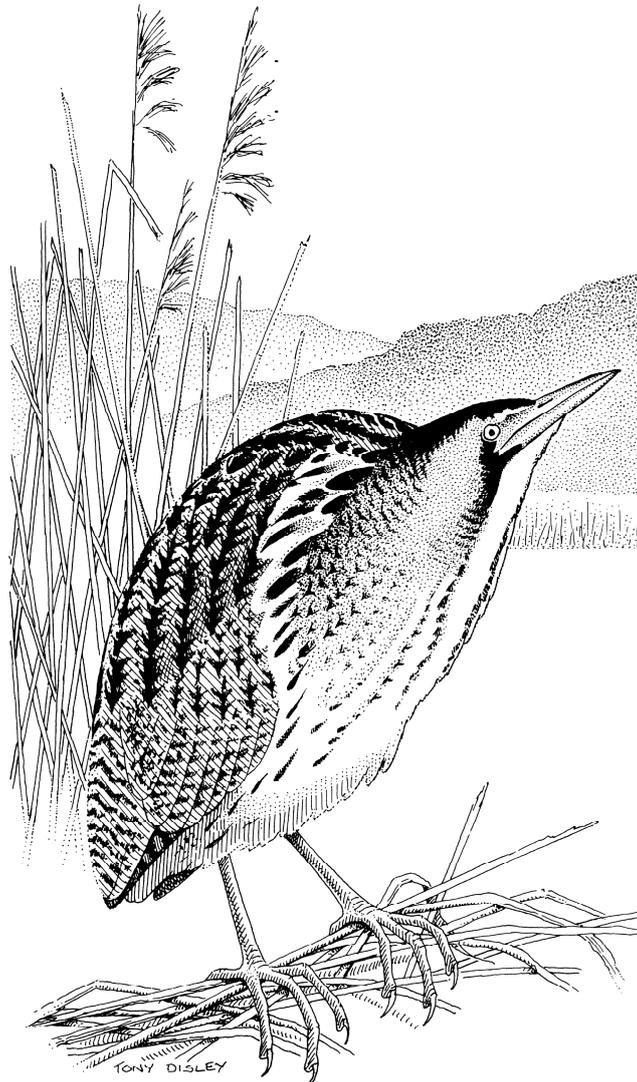
## **Lancashire Bird Report 2007**

The Birds of Lancashire and North Merseyside

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## Introduction

*D.A.Bickerton & S.J.White*

Welcome once again to the annual bird report for Lancashire and North Merseyside. Yet again we have had to summarise a staggering number of records from a very large number of contributors – thanks to all concerned.

We're delighted to welcome Marshside warden, Graham Clarkson to the writing team this year. If anyone else would like to help writing the species accounts or to contribute an article, please get in touch.

### **The Lancashire avifauna**

At the beginning of 2008, we published our landmark book "The Birds of Lancashire and North Merseyside", an update on the status of the avifauna of our region since Oakes's publication back in the 1950s. It has taken some time in preparation from the initial concept over ten years ago but with a thorough review of the partially completed species accounts, the dedication of all the editors and authors, and the not inconsiderable help from the publisher, the project came to fruition. It is certainly a magnificent book and well received in the birding press and by readers alike.

The Society has put considerable resources into getting the book published and is starting to recoup those in preparation for the funding of publication of future projects. Copies are still available from the shops at Leighton Moss, Martin Mere and Mere Sands Wood, or online from Subbuteo Natural History Books [www.wildlifebooks.com](http://www.wildlifebooks.com)

### **Corrections to the avifauna**

Inevitably, a number of mistakes and omissions have come to light since the publication of the avifauna. These are being collated and we intend to publish them in a future edition of the annual bird report – hopefully next year – and on the website so that the historical record is as accurate as we can make it.

Further comments on the text are very welcome and should be sent to Steve White.

### **Atlas surveys of wintering and breeding birds**

In common with at least another 35 counties we are aiming to cover every tetrad in the county for the winter and breeding bird surveys currently being organised nationally by the BTO, with the aim of publishing a 'New Atlas' of Lancashire's birds.

If you haven't signed up to do your bit yet, then please consider doing so – the surveys still have three years to run. If just a fraction of the county's birders did one tetrad each year, we would easily meet our target. But even if you can't manage the formal survey, please keep submitting records to the bird report in as much detail as possible – including those of common species – all records will be incorporated into the atlases.

The results for winter 2007/08 have now been collated. Almost 40% of the county was covered and more than 60,000 records accumulated.

### **Dragonfly survey**

We've been hit by yet another terribly wet summer that hasn't been conducive to recording. However we still continue to collect the data you send us and by the end of next year, should have enough to analyse. 2007's results are summarised in a separate article in this report.

## Reserve developments

The purchase of Brockholes Quarry by the Lancashire Wildlife Trust, thanks in large measure to the generous financial support of birders throughout the county, will secure this important central Lancashire site. The RSPB, meanwhile, has just breached the seawall at Hesketh Out Marsh, creating what will undoubtedly become a major birdwatching site on the south Ribble marshes.

## Photographs and Illustrations

Thanks again to Nicola Breaks and Tony Disley for providing some more illustrations this year and for the submission by another young birder, Zac Hinchcliffe. If you have any line drawings that we could use in our publications, please send them to the secretary.

As more and more people take up the passion for digital photography, we are starting to see more submissions for inclusion. We welcome submissions from anyone – common bird images will need to be of high quality with some particular ornithological interest. For rarities, we accept what we're given! In this issue there are the usual high quality contributions from Steve Young and Mike Malpass as well some excellent images from a host of other contributors. Thank you very much!

## Lancashire & Cheshire Fauna Society: Membership

Membership of the Lancashire and Cheshire Fauna Society is £10 per annum – this includes a copy of the Lancashire Bird Report and any General Reports published. Members taking the Cheshire Bird Report as well pay £17. The Society is a non-profit making charity, run totally by volunteers who give many hours of their time freely. It provides data that are key in many aspects of conservation in the North West – we are regularly asked for our opinion on developments that may have an ecological impact or for information regarding areas of the county that need protection. We work closely in association with the Lancashire Wildlife Trust., RSPB and BTO and many members are active in those organisations. So if you aren't already a member, please consider joining us and supporting the work we do. Details can be obtained from the web site or directly from the Honorary Secretary.

Our website address is [www.lacfs.org.uk](http://www.lacfs.org.uk)

## Elected Officials of the Lancashire and Cheshire Fauna Society

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Next Annual General Meeting, 10am Saturday 7th March 2009 at Mere Sands Wood.

# Review of the Year, 2007

*John Wright*

*(Weather information courtesy of Ted Boden)*

## January

Very mild, except for one colder interlude around the 22nd to 26th. Rainfall above average for the month, despite a fairly dry last week to the month. Widespread strong winds on the 18th.

The year began with a large gathering of 1000 **Woodpigeons** at Roddlesworth Plantations on the 1st with a hefty flock of 750 **Bramblings** roosting in rhododendrons at nearby Belmont. Up to five **Hawfinches** were seen at Woodwell throughout the month. The Silverdale area is now the only place you have a realistic chance to catch up with this species in Lancashire. **Pink-footed Geese** returning from Norfolk brought a white **Lesser Snow Goose** to Downholland Moss from the 26th.

## February

Very mild. A dry and fine start to the month, but then generally unsettled with rainfall well above average for the month. Significant and widespread snow occurred on the 8th and 9th.

The **Glossy Ibis** – one of the birds of 2006 – remained popular throughout 2007. After being relocated on a flood at Ballam, near Lytham on the 15th it spent the whole year around the Ribble to the delight of many observers.

Of the multitude of waders and wildfowl in the county during the winter period a count of 8976 **Curlews** in Morecambe Bay was particularly impressive. The large numbers of Pinkfeet returning from East Anglia continued to attract attention with the arrival of a second **Lesser Snow Goose**, this time an intermediate morph, it was first located at Eagland Hill on the 28th.

The generally mild winter proved very productive for **Blackcaps** with an excellent total of 57 being reported by the end of the month.

## March

Overall, a mild and sunny month with slightly below average rainfall. A cold snap around the 19th brought snow to some areas.

Recent mild winters have also benefited resident species – none more so that the ever popular **Kingfisher**. The population is thriving with records from no fewer than 40 sites in east Lancashire alone. Another popular but tricky species to see in the county is the **Water Pipit**. Warton Marsh remains this species' Lancashire headquarters and in 2007 the peak count of twelve were present over the high tide on the 21st.

Two sightings occurred that might now be expected in September but were highly unusual for March. These were a **Yellow-browed Warbler** at Yarrow Valley Park on the 6th and a **Pectoral Sandpiper** at Marshside on the 26th, which joined a very showy drake **Green-winged Teal**.

## April

April mean temperatures were the warmest on record, with well above average sunshine. Very dry as well with little rainfall.

With east winds blowing the month produced a range of interesting sightings. The rarest was a singing '**Siberian**' **Chiffchaff** at Wick's Lane, Formby from the 1st – becoming the first definite record for the county. Other exciting birds included a **Stone Curlew** around Knott End/Pilling

from the 14th, a **Hoopoe** in a garden at Hutton on the 19th and a **Richard's Pipit** on Lytham Moss on the 24th.

One of the main events of the month was an impressive passage of **Ring Ouzels**. Nine on Darwen Moor and five at Belmont on the 18th were followed by many more sightings, peaking with a remarkable 25 on Pendle Hill on the 20th. **White Wagtails** were also moving in good numbers with 150 on Lytham Moss on the 24th.

An encouraging development at the month's end was a lek of nine male **Ruff** and two attendant reeves at Marshside.

## May

A wet month with some areas setting new rainfall records for the month. Mean temperatures above average, despite sunshine amounts below normal.

Always an exciting and varied month, May 2007 began with a movement of 2102 **Arctic Terns** through Morecambe Bay on the 1st, quickly followed by a **Black Stork** photographed flying over Preston on the 2nd. A county record was then set with a powerful flock of 14 **Pomarine Skuas** seen off Heysham on the 9th.

It was pleasing to note that some summer migrants arrived in excellent numbers with **Grasshopper Warblers** reported from at least 70 sites and **Whitethroats** from well over 100.

The discovery of a male **Black Scoter** on the 16th – a county and English first – by a railway line in Silverdale was a remarkable if somewhat bizarre find. It was picked up and released at Jenny Brown's Point where it managed to evade most observers as it swam out with the tide. This was the start of another run of rarities with a showy **Woodchat Shrike** on the 20th at Marshside, a majestic **Crane** on farmland at Chipping from the 25th and a beautiful red **Common Rosefinch** singing in a Knott End garden on the 30th.

## June

A warm and dry start to the month but becoming increasingly unsettled. A sustained spell of heavy rain occurred on the 24-25th but thankfully we missed the widespread flooding encountered in Yorkshire at this time.

A handsome adult male **Long-tailed Duck** at Halforth from the 3rd and a dainty female **Red-necked Phalarope** at Martin Mere from the 4th got the month off to a flying start. However, these records were somewhat eclipsed on the 10th by the heart-racing discovery of a graceful **White-tailed Plover** on the Eric Morecambe complex. Only the fifth record for Britain and the undoubted highlight of the year for many observers. It quickly moved to Leighton Moss where it could be frustratingly difficult to see. However, patience was rewarded for most and after a brief return to the Eric Morecambe on the 17th the bird flew off and could not be relocated.

Three other excellent June records started with a fine male **Red-backed Shrike** in a garden at Hala, Lancaster on the 14th. Even more exciting was a pair of displaying **Black Guillemots** at Heysham from the 16th. Finally, ringers discovered no fewer than 72 pairs of **Pied Flycatchers** in nest-box schemes in north Lancashire.

## July

Another generally unsettled month with unusually high rainfall.

Another memorable start to a month with the discovery of a **Caspian Tern** on the shore at Knott End on the 2nd.

**Sand Martin** numbers were high with 990 occupied nest holes on the River Lune between Skerton Weir and Kirkby Lonsdale including 457 on the 5km stretch between Leck Beck and

Arkholme. Unfortunately, the colonies suffered severely in the widespread flooding that followed torrential summer rains.

**Barn Owls** are another species which appear to be on the up with an increase and spread of breeding activity in both the north and east of the county. The spread of this native species was very welcome but the successful breeding of a pair of escaped **Eagle Owls** in Bowland proved far more controversial. A summer highlight for many but the presence of a Hen Harrier corpse by the nest was a worrying development.

The county's excellent record for Nearctic waders was further enhanced towards the end of the month. The discovery of a **White-rumped Sandpiper** at Seaforth on the 22nd was quickly followed by a **Lesser Yellowlegs** on the Eric Morecambe complex on the 24th.

## August

Largely settled at first and for the last week, but more unsettled around mid-month. Temperatures were close to average, but still the coldest August since 1993.

One of the highlights of the year was the fledging of young by a pair of **Hobbies** at a site in the east of the county – the first certain breeding record in Lancashire.

Despite the weather, **Reed Warblers** also had a good breeding season at Leighton Moss where survey work resulted in a ringing total of 854 birds (206 adults and 648 juveniles).

The cancelling of the 'glorious' 12th in recent years has highlighted a number of problems facing our **Red Grouse** populations. It was encouraging to note that a Bowland survey found 415 birds in 2007 in an area which held only 311 in 2005.

As the breeding season drew to a close return passage was also in full swing and a count of 4700 **Sanderlings** on the Ribble was the highest autumn total since 1999.

Two stately **Great White Egrets** arrived at the Eric Morecambe complex on the 27th and Marshside on the 30th.

## September

Often fine and dry during the first half of the month. More unsettled during the latter with rain at times and becoming colder for a while.

The traditional seawatching season was quiet this year but persistent observers were rewarded with **Sooty Shearwaters** off Formby Point on the 2nd and 16th. Another sought-after species in the county is the **Wryneck** and a lucky observer had one grace their garden at Treales, east of Kirkham from the 8th.

The rise and rise of the **Little Egret** continued with yet another county record count of 43 coming in to roost at Freckleton Naze Pool on the 6th.

The most popular bird of the month was a **Chough** which showed at Heysham from the 18th. This juvenile male had been ringed on Anglesey and gave county observers another chance to catch up with this charismatic species.

## October

It was a very quiet October with high pressure dominant for much of the month. However, brief spells of unsettled weather brought some locally heavy rain.

The now expected influx of **Yellow-browed Warblers** began with a bird at Crosby on the 1st. Even though these tiny migrants from Siberia are turning up in ever increasing numbers they are always well received and delighted birders at Burnley, Formby, Heysham, Lancaster and Marshside during the month.

October is the month when anything can turn up and observers redouble their efforts. The county's second **Red-necked Phalarope** of the year, a juvenile showing well at Prescott Reservoirs from the 5th, and a juvenile **Sabine's Gull** inland at St. Michael's-on-Wyre on the 15th were great rewards for local patch-workers.

## November

Generally more anticyclonic than a 'normal' November but with a couple of notable unsettled periods either side of mid-month.

One of the best birding spectacles in the county in recent years has been the **Knot** roost on the helipad at Heysham. This year was no exception with the November peak of 22000 birds being an unforgettable sight both in flight and at rest.

The single **Great Northern Diver** which appeared on Clowbridge Reservoir on the 28th was rather less gregarious. However, it was also remarkable in its own way, being the fourth record of this species at this inland site since 1977.

## December

The month divided into three roughly equal parts – an unsettled period for about the first third of the month, followed by a generally anticyclonic spell and further unsettled weather for the remainder of the month.

A **Firecrest** at Cottam, Preston on the 2nd was the twelfth county sighting of the year. This equalled the previous highest annual total of this most popular species. A **Cattle Egret** seen and photographed at Martin Mere on the late afternoon of the 14th was part of a national influx which also brought other individuals to neighbouring counties. A **Great Grey Shrike** which turned up on the 30th at Padiham was in addition to birds already in residence at Stocks Reservoir and Waddington Fell. The presence of three of these charismatic birds in the east of the county provided many observers with an excellent end to a truly memorable year.

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## Key to Status of Birds in the Systematic List

### BREEDING

Based on Breeding Bird Survey 1997-1999  
 Rare: breeding in < 7 tetrads or < 11 pairs  
 Scarce: breeding in < 38 tetrads or < 51 pairs  
 Uncommon: < 251 pairs  
 Fairly common: < 1001 pairs  
 Common: < 5001 pairs  
 Abundant: > 5000 pairs  
 Occasional: less than annual  
 Former: not in last ten years

### PASSAGE/WINTER

Based on records for last 25 years (1981-2005)  
 Vagrant: < 11 records  
 Rare: < 26 records  
 Scarce: < 101 records  
 Uncommon: < 21 annually  
 Fairly common: < 201 annually  
 Common: < 2001 annually  
 Abundant: > 2000 annually

## Systematic List 2007

### MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

**Uncommon breeding resident, common winter visitor.**

International importance: 320. National importance: 320.

#### Monthly Peak Counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	186	93	183	123	42	177	138	20	99	141	64	76
Southport ML*	219	209	148	138	166	175	221	232	203	194	168	195
Ribble WeBS**	131	171	58	97	114	124	153	84	16	46	77	41

\* SML counts do not include cygnets

\*\* Ribble WeBS counts do not include Southport Marine Lake

There were very large numbers in the Jeremy Lane/Glasson area, including 231 on 26 Jan, 280 on 28 May and 257 on 14 Dec but overall Morecambe Bay WeBS counts were low and it may be that these flocks were not included in these totals. The Dockacres complex held 56 in August. There were again few in east Lancashire, emphasised by a peak flock size of nine, but more pairs bred following some dismal years, with at least five successful. Brockholes Quarry had an annual peak of 30 on 17 June and three pairs bred there.

Breeding was reported from at least ten sites in Over Wyre. A total of 13 territorial pairs was on the River Lune between Skerton Weir and Kirkby Lonsdale and there were a further 18 pairs within the Lancaster and District area. A survey of the Lancaster Canal from Glasson to Stainton located 20 pairs on territory, although productivity was only half of the 106 produced in 2006. A pair at Sefton Park, Liverpool, were again successful and at nearby Princes Park a pair hatched seven young but these disappeared within several weeks. In comparison to 2005, when there were 36, few young were produced at Southport Marine Lake, with four cygnets there in June and only two in July.

### BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus columbianus*

**Common but declining winter visitor.**

International importance : 200. National importance: 81.

#### Monthly Peak Counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
Ribble*	8	6	13	0	20	8
Over Wyre	11	5	3	4	4	4
S Fylde	28	60	0	0	38	55

\*Numbers for the Ribble do not include birds at Warton Marsh

The decline seems to be inexorable: the only sites that held reasonable numbers were Warton Marsh and nearby Lytham Moss. Up to 26 were at Warton and 28 at Lytham in January – probably the same individuals – and up to 60 at Warton in February. Five were at Sowerby, near Inskip, on 13 Jan and 13 on Longton Marsh on 9 March, which may have come from the Warton flock. Very few were seen at MMWWT with a first winter peak count of eight on 1 Jan; one there on 21-25 March was the last in the county. Very few wintered north of the Wyre at either end of the year.

The first back were four at Fluke Hall on 20 Oct. They were followed by five at MMWWT on 25 Oct but there were only three there in November and a peak of 13 in December. Almost all the flock of up to 20 that fed at Hesketh Bank in mid-November moved to Lytham. These increased to 38 by 19 Nov and 55 by 26 Dec; they included two ringed as adults at MMWWT in 1991. There were two at Sowerby on 11 Nov. There no reports from east Lancashire.

**WHOOPE SWAN** *Cygnus cygnus***Common and increasing winter visitor.**

International importance: 210. National importance: 57.

## Monthly Peak Counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MMWWT	1530	1450	1160	141	13	476	1300	1400
Ribble	83	126	91	3	5	0	264	225
N Fylde	138	130	22	0	0	125	143	177
S Fylde	160	194	140	1	0	50	62	102

Although slightly higher than last year, numbers in both winter periods were substantially lower than the record counts of January 2005, when 2241 were present in Lancashire. At least 1700 were in the county in January and possibly as many as 1900. A flock 169 was recorded as Bewick's Swans at Longton Marsh and Hesketh Out Marsh on 27 Jan (including 55 juveniles) but these were probably predominantly Whoopers.

It is not known how many of the birds on the Ribble in January (including the 160 on Warton Marsh) roosted at Martin Mere, although at least 40 did so on the River Douglas at Hesketh Bank.

The principal feeding areas on the Ribble in the first winter period were at Warton Marsh, Longton Marsh (where up to 90 fed in March), and at Beconsall, near Hesketh Bank. There were up to 72 feeding at Lytham Moss and nearby Mythop, while in Over Wyre the major feeding sites were at Fluke Hall and Libby Lane, Pilling.

Away from the main sites, two flew north over Seaforth on 15 March, while the only records at Marshside during the first winter period were two on 26 Jan and 1 April. In east Lancashire there were two at Fishmoor Reservoir on 10 March and at least 38 flew north over Langden Castle on 25 March. Two birds flew along the Whitewell Valley on 28 Feb. Belmont Reservoir had four on 4 Feb and 20 flew west over there on 4 March. One was at Freckleton Naze on 6 May.

The last spring records were nine at MMWWT on 7 May but at least six of these were injured or sick.

The first back were five that flew low over Hesketh Bank at 9.30am on 18 Sept with six at MMWWT later the same day. Unusually, few were seen on the south side of the Ribble on the normally favoured autumn feeding areas at Hesketh Bank, Longton or Hundred End until the end of October, but there were four records at Marshside totalling 24 bird-days in October, two there on 12 Nov, four on 24 Dec and 13 on the 30th. There were 125 at Fluke Hall on 14 Oct and good numbers in the Pilling area until the year's end, principally feeding at Fluke Hall, Libby Lane and New Ridge Farm. Fifty roosted at Marton Mere on 25 & 27 Oct, feeding at Ream Hills; 50 were at Freckleton on 18 Oct and a flock of up to 62 fed on Warton Marsh during November. This flock also fed south of the Ribble and from early November until the end of the year up to 250 were feeding at Hesketh Bank and Longton Marsh, occasionally moving to Hesketh Out Marsh. This flock contained many juveniles, with 59 amongst a flock of 248 on 26 Nov (24%). In December a flock of up to 100 fed at Lytham Moss on harvested potato fields, sometimes moving across to Mythop. It is extremely worrying that the fields at Lytham Moss, which are also important for other wintering bird species, including Bewick's Swans, are under threat of development.

Elsewhere in the second winter period, six flew south over Seaforth on 2 Nov, while 21 records were received from east Lancashire, totalling 90 birds in flight. Reports of birds that landed, albeit usually briefly, came from the following reservoirs: two at Whitemoor on 18 Oct, the same birds at Dean Clough and Parsonage on 20-21 Oct, two at Dean Clough on 30 Oct and 9 Nov, two adults and four juveniles at Hurstwood on 30 Oct and four at Alston on 16 Nov, increasing to

eight by the 23rd with four still present until 30 Nov. In Rossendale there were two at Clowbridge Reservoir on 2 Nov. Thirty flew over Brockholes Quarry on 31 Oct. In the Chorley recording area there were eight over Croston Finney (where wind turbines are due to be erected) on 3 Nov, with eight over there on 25 Nov, four at Yarrow Valley on 4 Nov and five over Roddlesworth Reservoir on 4 Nov. Six moved between Belmont, Ward's and Dingle Reservoirs between 2 & 10 Nov and there was one at Belmont on 24 Nov.

### **TAIGA BEAN GOOSE** *Anser fabalis fabalis*

#### **Rare winter visitor**

Two on Pilling Marsh on 2-5 March and one at MMWWT on 13-14 March were the only records.

### **TUNDRA BEAN GOOSE** *Anser fabalis rossicus*

#### **Uncommon winter visitor**

Presumably the same wandering bird was at Rawcliffe Moss on 15 Jan, Pilling Lane Ends on 5 March, Ince Blundell on 6 March and MMWWT on 12-13 March. In the second winter period one was at MMWWT on 30 Sept and then Downholland Moss on 17 & 23-24 Nov.

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

#### **Abundant winter visitor to Fylde, Ribble Estuary and South-West Mosslands.**

International importance 2700. National importance 1900.

#### Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Ribble WeBS	3374	16604	1117	2911	0	0	0	0	1618	4359	5523	637
MBS WeBS	1291	3233	4543	515	12	0	0	0	22	2500	1	42
Pilling	11000	10000	10000	500	11	/	5	/	4500	20000	6000	6300
MMWWT	3000	800	4800	38	5	9	9	6	18000	11000	4600	1000

#### Co-ordinated roost counts

	Jan	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lune	10200	21200	10150	5300
Wyre	2600	1425	4250	2600
Ribble	5200	8760	14820	11640
MMWWT	3300	7305	4800	1120
Alt	2500	2835	2458	3250
Simonswood Moss	1000	4500	2000	4000
Total in Lancashire	<b>24820</b>	<b>46025</b>	<b>38480</b>	<b>27910</b>

The co-ordinated October roost count of 46025 was second highest ever in Lancashire, while the November one was third highest for that month.

During the first winter period up to 11000 were feeding in the Pilling area in late January, with 10000 there on 19 February and 2 March, and 10000 going to roost on Pilling Marsh on 19 Feb, while 5500 fed in the Halsall-Plex Moss-Downholland area during January. An estimated 10000 remained on the Ribble from late January until at least 19 Feb, when 7000 were also at Marshside/Crossens. However, most birds in this area were at Hundred End and Hesketh Out Marsh, hidden in a location where they could be easily overlooked. Birds from the MMWWT roost fed regularly at Low Meadows and in the grounds of Scarisbrick Hall. The Simonswood roost was deserted by the beginning of February. Up to 5000 were at MMWWT, declining to 2000 on 23 March and 300 by the end of the month. Unusually, 21 were at Haydock Park racecourse on 1 Feb.

All but two of the 32 skeins reported in the first winter period in east Lancashire were travelling in a westerly direction, continuing the pattern of previous years. The first were 150 west over Grove Lane Marsh on 6 Jan, the last 200 north-east over Darwen on 18 March. Over-flying skeins were reported on 14 other days in this period, the largest on any one day being five, totalling 535 birds, on 4 Feb. The only birds on the ground were eight at Altham on 20-22 Jan. Singles at Parsonage, Stocks and Stonyhurst were feral birds accompanying Greylags and Canadas. Several flocks of 200 flew north-west over Belmont in late January/early February, presumably returning from Norfolk. Birds were reported as being more frequent than normal over Rossendale in both winter periods with nine sizeable skeins over in the first winter period and 18 in the second.

Late records included 3500 on Banks Marsh on 2 April, 450 at Pilling on 15 April, 100 at Marshside on 2 May, 23 at Cockerham Marsh on 14 May, 14 past Heysham on 19 May and 15 past Blackpool on 16 June (probably the last uninjured wild birds recorded).

Nine were resident at MMWWT throughout the summer and five at Pilling until 17 July were probably feral or injured birds.

The first of autumn were 28 on Banks Marsh and two at Crossens on 30 Aug. The first influx at MMWWT of 150 on 9 Sept rose to 20000 by the 18th, then declined to peaks of 8000 in October, 4800 in November and 1118 in December. Other peak counts in the south-west included 3500 at Blundellsands on 2 Oct, 9600 at Plex Moss on 4 Nov, 8000 on Banks Marsh on 11 Nov, 7000 around Aughton by 30 Nov, 4740 at Altcar on 26 Sept, and 2000 at Marshside throughout September and October with 3000 on the neighbouring saltmarsh during November and December.

Notable records in St. Helens included 3500 along Old Coach Road on 27 Oct with 800 there into December, 2000 at Reed's Moss on 3 Nov, 500 at Dairy Farm Road on 27 Oct and 500 at Catchdale Moss on 29 Sept and 3 Nov. The Simonswood Moss roost held 2000 on 14 Oct and 4500 on 11 Nov.

The first autumn movement in Over Wyre on 13 Sept was followed by a large movement south between 15 & 18 September and a secondary wave from the 25-27th, with smaller numbers reported moving south until 22 Oct. Numbers increased rapidly in October to reach a peak of 20000 on the co-ordinated roost count on the 13th; most were in the Pilling area but there was a distinct movement to the Lune/Glasson area in late December. Up to 12000 fed at Eagland Hill from 29 Sept to at least 6 Oct and 21200 roosted at Pilling on the 14th, 7000 were at Eagland Hill and Cumming Carr on 15 Oct with 2500 west of Todderstaffe on the 16th and 1500 at Staining on 18 Dec. The Pilling roost held 10150 on 11 November and 6000 at the end of the month, with up to 4000 feeding in Pilling towards the end of the year. 15000 were at Cockerham Moss on 21 Dec and the Pilling roost held 10000 on 23 Dec. Unusually, up to 69 fed on Newton Marsh in mid-November.

Notable movements at migration watchpoints included 1446 south over Rossall, 1000 over Marton Mere and 500 over Lytham on 26 Sept, 3000 south over Fairhaven on both 27 & 28 Sept and 3688 over Heysham on 14 Oct.

Unusually, several skeins landed in the Belmont area in October, while in east Lancashire 50 flew over Foulridge Reservoirs on 15 Sept and 1400 on 14 Oct. Flocks were reported on 19 other evenly scattered dates to 31 December. The only birds on the ground in this second winter period were 15 feeding on Champion Moor on 24 November. Two at Parsonage on 11 November, one at Bashall Eaves on 14 November and two at Champion Moor Flood Pool between 2-23 December were presumed to have been feral birds.

**EUROPEAN WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** *Anser albifrons albifrons***Uncommon winter visitor.**

Singles were at Formby and Barton Moss on 6-9 Jan, Aldcliffe on 4-13 Jan, Downholland on 28 Jan, Ince Blundell on 6 March, MMWWT on 7-8 March and Banks Marsh 25 March. Two at Stocks Reservoir on 30 April were unexpected.

One at Halsall Moss on 25 Nov was the only record in the second winter period.

**GREENLAND WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** *Anser albifrons flavirostris***Uncommon winter visitor.**

Two adults and a first-winter were at Fluke Hall on 4 Jan. One was at Ince Blundell on 17 Feb and Haskayne on the 21st with two on Banks Marsh on 28 March.

In the second winter period three first-winter birds were at MMWWT from 27 Oct to 6 Nov, then moved to Marshside saltmarsh intermittently from 10 Nov to the year's end. Two adults were at Marshside on 25 Dec, perhaps the same as two at Plex and Downholland Mosses between 4 Nov and 9 Dec. One was back at MMWWT on 28-29 Dec and a single adult was at Mythop on 22-23 Dec.

**GREYLAG GOOSE** *Anser anser***Scarce feral breeder and uncommon winter visitor. Large feral non-breeding flocks at several sites.**

## Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Ribble WeBS	86	2	38	31	85	136	94	307	66	222	118	191
Southport ML	100	25	73	76	120	265	239	8	9	11	10	10
MMWWT	380	285	/	/	3	/	100	600	300	375	430	/
Leighton Moss	186	170	240	110	95	280	105	52	75	130	210	180
Carnforth	420	395	165	105	148	70	95	52	320	490	335	255
Aldcliffe	288	248	16	23	/	12	240	200	101	91	499	300
MBS	126	282	111	33	28	30	129	33	101	648	504	220

At the main site of Carnforth Marsh the peak of 420 on 28 Jan declined to 395 by 11 Feb and 220 by 9 March. Judging by behaviour most of these later birds were probably genuinely wild Icelandic birds. Aldcliffe Marsh held 288 on 13 Jan and 120 on 16 Feb. Two hundred and sixteen were at Bourbles Pit on 2 Jan and up to 380 feral birds were at MMWWT during January.

A survey of the breeding population centred on Leighton Moss suggested a total of 35 pairs, of which seven were on the Eric Morecambe complex. This was five pairs down on 2006. The moulting population at Leighton Moss numbered 280 on 23 June. Ten territories were mapped on the Lune Waterway Census, two up on 2006; pairs bred successfully at Arkholme and Wenning Foot. Five pairs bred at Marshside with several pairs each at nearby Southport Marine Lake, Scarisbrick Hall and MMWWT. Five pairs at Stocks Reservoir fledged at least 16 young, and a count of 60 adults and 12 juveniles there on 8 June was a site record. For the first time, breeding took place elsewhere in east Lancashire, a pair with three juveniles at Cant Clough Reservoir on 12-28 June. One pair at Sand Villa, Pilling was the only breeding record reported from the Fylde.

Post-moulting flocks in August included 600 at MMWWT, 471 at Bourbles Pit Preesall on the 26th, 250 at Aggleby's Pit on the 17th and 250 at Old Coach Road, Rainford on the 25th. The autumn peak on Carnforth Marsh was 490 on 13 Oct and there were 499 on Aldcliffe Marsh on 11 Nov. There were 115 at Claughton on 18 Nov and 121 at Fluke Hall on 8 Dec. To what extent these wintering populations mix is unknown but a count of 499 at Aldcliffe on 11 Nov (when only five

were counted on Carnforth Marsh) suggests movement between the two sites. In east Lancashire 35 were observed at Stoney Rake in the Grane Valley moving south-east on 17 October.

A pink-billed bird (possibly of eastern descent?) was seen at Out Rawcliffe on 14 Oct.

## **SNOW GOOSE** *Anser caerulescens*

### **Rare winter visitor and escape.**

A white Lesser Snow Goose was at MMWWT on 20 Jan and was feeding with 8000 Pinkfeet in the Downholland Moss and Plex Moss area on the 26-30th.

An intermediate blue phase Lesser was found at Eagland Hill on 28 Feb, relocated in the Pilling area on 2-4 March, at Colloway Marsh on 8 March and last seen back at Pilling on 12 March.

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

### **Common breeding resident.**

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	119	33	13	6	12	17	14	26	198	282	175	225
Leighton/EMC	36	29	34	36	55	26	62	112	105	46	35	1
Aldcliffe Marsh	118	32	10	6	/	/	/	130	300	245	245	224
Ribble WeBS	305	199	170	66	104	235	382	1634	340	740	1430	535
Southport ML	61	66	48	35	28	84	138	20	4	15	29	7
Seaforth	13	67	25	7	34	330	390	81	228	12	15	25
Foulridge Res	1100	315	195	/	/	/	110	160	226	379	/	450
Stocks Res	142	191	92	79	90	447	330	176	207	250	72	280

The enormous count of 1100 at Foulridge on 28 January was double the previous record there.

Counts in the first winter period not in the table included 159 at Brockholes Quarry, 127 at Rishton Reservoir and 108 at Prescott Reservoirs in January, 128 at Whitemoor Reservoir and 115 at Arkholme in February, and in the late year 343 at Rishton in November and 150 at Eccleston Mere and 139 at Whitemoor in December.

Twenty-three pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir, only fledging ten young due to legal control, and eleven pairs bred in the Anglezarke Reservoir catchment area. Breeding occurred up to 375m above sea level in the West Pennine Moors. Successful breeding was reported at twelve sites in the Rossendale recording area. Thirteen pairs bred at Brockholes Quarry, fledging 34 young, seven pairs at Marshside and two at Seaforth. At least eight pairs bred in the Leighton Moss area (the same as in 2006) and seven between Kirkby Lonsdale and Skerton Weir (four down on 2006). On the Fylde breeding was recorded at Bispham Marsh, Fairhaven Lake, Marton Mere and Newton Marsh, and in east Lancashire at Hare Clough (at least seven pairs), Jackhouse Reservoir (four), Stocks Reservoir and Towneley Deer Pond.

Post-moult passage counts were dominated by the count of 1634 on the Ribble in August. Other counts not tabulated included up to 437 on Fairhaven Lake in June and July, and 212 at Whitemoor Reservoir, 135 at Brockholes Quarry, 133 at Rishton Reservoir and 127 on Prescott Reservoirs in August. Later autumn counts included 570 at Freckleton Naze on 9 Sept, and 173 at Myerscough Quarry, 110 at Parsonage Reservoir and 120 on Clowbridge Reservoir in October.

**BARNACLE GOOSE** *Branta leucopsis*

**Uncommon winter visitor and scarce feral breeder.**

**Wild birds**

Up to two were with Pinkfeet at Marshside throughout January, February and March, with seven there on 19 Feb, and six were in the Pilling area on 31 Jan, 9 Feb and 2 March. A small, highly mobile flock was reported from many areas within the Lune Estuary from 15 Jan, with four at Fluke Hall increasing to six by 31 Jan and a peak of seven on 4 March. Four were on Aldcliffe Marsh on 8 March but after this just one remained until the last at Fluke Hall on 28 April.

One at Aldcliffe and Cockersand on 15 Sept was followed by five with Pinkfeet at Fluke Hall and Eagland Hill on 29 Sept and three on the Eric Morecambe complex on 6 Oct. At MMWWT presumed single wild birds were present with large Pinkeet flocks from 20 Sept to 25 Oct, with two on 26 Sept. There were 18 at Meathop on 16 Oct with 39 there on the 18th and five off Jenny Brown's Point on 10 Nov. At Marshside singles were occasionally with Pinkfeet throughout December, with three on the 31st and up to two were on the south-west mosses with Pinkfeet in both winter periods, ranging as far as Rainford.

**Feral birds**

A pair was with Canada Geese at Marshside throughout from March to May, probably attempting to breed, with one there on 20 May and 28 July.

Up to 45 from Blackpool Zoo roosted at Marton Mere in late October to early December. Peaks at Prescott Reservoirs were 46 in March, three in June, eight in July and 50 in August, while peaks at MMWWT (where the Prescott/Knowsley Park birds decamp to in winter) were 36 in January, 24 in February, 47 in November and 43 in December. Fairhaven Lake hosted two on 14 June and 10-23 July, and one was at Cowm Reservoir on 24 March.

Most of the 28 reports from Stocks Reservoir between January and May and in November involved one or two birds associating with Canada Geese. However, on 23 Feb 25 flew briefly over the reservoir before departing north and it is possible that these were wild birds. Other double-figure counts were twelve on 30 July and 1 Aug and 35 on 24-25 Aug – the dates and association with Canadas rule out any possibility of these being wild. In view of the numbers at Stocks it is surprising that there was only one report from elsewhere in east Lancashire, one at Sunnyhurst on 26 Sept.

**DARK -BELLIED BRENT GOOSE** *Branta bernicla bernicla***Scarce winter visitor**

Singles were at Leighton Moss on 22 Jan and Pilling on 16 & 21 Jan and 18 Feb, with four there on 23-24 Feb. Two unaged birds were at Marshside on 7 Feb and four flew north off Formby Point on 5 Feb, with two north-north-east there on 26 April. One was on Banks Marsh on 19 April, and three off Heysham on 10 May.

In the second winter period one was at Birkdale on 14 Nov and two on Downholland Moss on the 25th.

**PALE-BELLIED BRENT GOOSE** *Branta bernicla hrota***Scarce winter visitor**

Singles were off Rossall Pont on 18 Feb and Jenny Brown's Point on 17-18 March, two off Heysham on 26 March and two at Marshside on 7 April.

In autumn, a flurry of records began with one at Marshside on 16 Sept, with two adults there on the 19th and six (two adults and four juveniles) on the 30th with one remaining with

Pinkfeet until 26 Oct. Two at MMWWT on 17-29 Sept and four on the 20th & 23rd probably included the same birds. One was at Knott End on 17 July and one at Teal Bay on 14-15 Sept. One at Morecambe from 11 Oct to 31 Dec had been ringed as a nestling in Arctic Canada (see ringing section). Single(s) were at Pilling Lane Ends on 15 Sept and 23 & 30 Dec and Rossall Point on 6 & 11 Nov.

## **UNIDENTIFIED BRENT GEESE** *Branta bernicla spp*

At Formby Point 22 flew south on 1 Jan and three north on 17 Feb. Four were on Pilling Marsh on 13 May.

## **SHELDUCK** *Tadorna tadorna*

**Common winter visitor at coastal sites, common breeder. Scarce in east.**

International importance 3000. National importance 782.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Ribble WeBS	1096	2108	1319	1012	1445	1665	1709	739	1303	1570	1339	1322
Alt WeBS	115	146	78	65	91	95	20	32	260	202	322	246
MBS WeBS	2778	1690	937	1119	1120	694	498	205	1935	2032	1754	651
EM Complex	52	77	117	96	402	65	24	19	32	34	61	35
MMWWT	1220	1300	668	336	396	126	49	30	2	150	650	950
North Fylde	2095	904	265	449	193	201	81	28	39	167	456	1400

The counts of 2778 in Morecambe Bay in January and 2108 on the Ribble in February were the largest in the first winter period.

A pair in Rossendale from 25 Feb to 30 April apparently did not stay to breed and were later sighted in the Irwell Valley. A total of 35 pairs was located by the Waterways Bird Survey on the Lune between Kirkby Lonsdale and Skerton Weir, three up on 2006; this included 16 pairs in the Leck Beck-Arkholme section, where only two broods were seen. At MMWWT 29 pairs bred, three pairs at Seaforth, one at Grimsargh Reservoir and two at Mythop. The only reported breeding in east Lancashire was a pair with ten juveniles at Wood End Sewage Works on 29 June. Twenty-two juveniles were counted at Skippool on 19 July.

Inland, three females were at Clough Bottoms Reservoir on 8 September.

Counts on the RSPB section of Morecambe Bay showed a marked build-up on return from the moult migration with a peak of 1925 on 30 Aug and 2900 on 28 Sept. Other notable counts around Morecambe Bay included 495 at Cockersand on 23 Sept, 375 at Red Nab on 24 Oct and 1400+ at Pilling Lane Ends on 24 Dec. Despite these good numbers the September to December Morecambe Bay WeBS counts were well down on recent winters.

## **MANDARIN DUCK** *Aix galericulata*

**Uncommon feral resident and escapee.**

Although it is still far from clear whether any self-sustaining population exists in the county, breeding again took place in the Burnley area, where birds were reported in most months at both Towneley Park and the Cliviger Fishponds and less frequently at Rowley Lake and Thompson Park. The peak counts was of three males and five female/immatures at Towneley Park on 29th, where one female was seen with six young on 11 June, reducing to four on the 13-15th.

Elsewhere in the east, a pair was on Croasdale Brook in Tenter Hill Wood, Slaidburn on 28 April and possibly the same birds at Newton on 24 May. A pair was whistling in trees at Marl Hill on 13 May. At Stocks Reservoir a male was seen on 6 May and a female on 30 Sept, 17 & 20

October and 15 Dec. The lone female continued to associate with Mallards at Shawbridge, Clitheroe, with seven reports between late January and mid-November.

Records of singles scattered throughout the year came from Feniscowles, Fairhaven Lake, Pilling, Bolton-le-Sands, MMWWT, Sankey Valley and Longton Brickcroft, while larger counts included three at Bispham Marsh on 13 Jan with two there in August, two at Cottam on 10 Feb, four at Skippool Creek on 14 April, a pair at Mere Sands Wood on 21 May, four at Newton-le-Willows on 4 Oct and two pairs in Moor Park, Preston in December.

## **WIGEON** *Anas penelope*

**International importance 15000. National importance 4060**

Common winter visitor to coastal sites. Smaller numbers at some eastern sites.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Ribble WeBS	32987	17969	4736	476	2	4	47	8	1068	39156	84874	42918
Marshside	16696	5166	2443	122	2	3	3	90	140	5832	10870	17735
MBS WeBS	4469	2144	650	66	8	1	0	3	343	1532	1330	3105
EM Complex	860	880	723	190	8	4	1	80	280	1560	620	818
MMWWT	1100	1150	763	5	7	2	1	4	/	280	1000	1200
North Fylde	2016	179	1	27	0	/	/	/	220	390	770	2000
Foulridge Res	40	65	8	/	/	/	/	/	/	8	/	47
Stocks Res	14	244	46	2	/	/	/	/	9	53	34	20

Other north Lancashire site counts included 320 at Silverdale Moss on 5 Jan, 110 at Arkholme on 4 January, 114 at Red Nab in February and 250 at Over Kellet TV Mast Pool on 15 Feb.

Five thousand were present at Cockersand throughout January, while counts away from the main sites included 130 on 29 Jan at Marton Mere with 212 there on 30 Dec, 250 at Myerscough Quarry in January with 280 there in December, 350 on the Ribble at Penwortham on 21 Jan and 59 at Mythop Flood on 11 March.

About half of the 33000 on the Ribble Estuary in January were at Marshside and Crossens Inner Marsh. Small numbers occasionally passed through east Lancashire but Stocks Reservoir had by far the highest count with 244 on 1 Feb.

The usual small numbers of non-breeding summering birds were recorded with 2-4 regularly throughout May and June with a peak of eight in May on the Eric Morecambe complex and three males summering at Marshside. An injured male was at Newton Marsh in June as was a female at Bank End, Cockerham on 17 June. Single males were at Cockersand on 20 July and Brockholes Quarry in May and June.

The return passage began with 24 at Leighton Moss on 29 June. Small flocks began to reappear on the Ribble in mid-August and by mid-October numbers had risen to nearly 40000, while 2750 were on Lune Estuary on 29 Oct. The count of 84874 on the Ribble in November was the largest in the county since 1994. The Ribble Estuary remains the most important site in Britain for wintering Wigeon.

## **WIGEON x AMERICAN WIGEON HYBRID**

A male, still in partial eclipse, was seen well and photographed at Crossens Inner Marsh on 14 Oct. It had pure white axillaries (an exclusively American Wigeon characteristic) and a thick green 'face' band (a hybrid feature), but otherwise only Wigeon characteristics.

**GADWALL** *Anas strepera*

Fairly common in small flocks western wetland sites. Rare in east of county. Scarce breeder in south-west and far north of county.

International importance 600. National importance 171.

## Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Leighton Moss	35	36	12	16	52	144	95	133	135	226	255	42
EM Complex	98	76	62	36	28	12	18	85	18	38	12	45
MMWWT	4	3	2	16	7	7	10	0	13	16	5	1
Marshside	4	6	26	11	6	10	1	12	0	1	0	4
Brockholes	30	28	10	2	2	/	/	/	11	20	22	50
Marton Mere	14	6	2	2	2	2	/	/	13	18	18	21

High numbers were recorded at Leighton Moss and the Eric Morecambe complex; there are regular movements between these two adjacent sites but co-ordinated counts produced peaks of 118 on 7 Jan, 226 on 28 Oct and 265 on 11 & 22 Nov.

Nucks Wood, Holmeswood recorded 30 on 10 Jan and 21 were on the nearby Leisure Lakes at Mere Brow on 20 Dec. Twelve were on Prescott Reservoirs on 20 Dec and Brockholes Quarry reported a peak of 50 during the same month. One or two were at Alston Wetland during spring and autumn with a peak of five there on 2 Sept, two were at Stocks Reservoir on 28 March and 20 Oct and four on Upper Foulridge Reservoir on 30 Aug. A pair at Belmont Reservoir on 11 Nov was the first record there since 1985, but a female was shot near Belmont on 26 Dec.

An estimated 18 pairs bred at Leighton Moss, seven pairs down on 2006. Seven pairs bred at Marshside, fledging approximately 20 young, two pairs probably bred at both Mere Sands Wood and at Hesketh Out Marsh, and one had five chicks at MMWWT on 16 May. The resident pair was at Seaforth all year and other pairs were observed in suitable breeding habitat in April, May and June at Marton Mere, Mythop Flood and Newton Marsh but breeding was not confirmed at any of these sites.

The main build-up in north Lancashire began in early August with 120 at Leighton Moss on the 11th, most remaining there until a rise in the water level in early December produced a move to the Eric Morecambe Complex.

**TEAL** *Anas crecca*

Common winter visitor to western wetlands, smaller flocks in east. Rare breeding species.

International importance 5000. National importance 1920.

## Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Ribble WeBS	3582	3469	1351	423	7	32	36	660	989	4201	4536	7895
Marshside	3009	1200	774	397	5	7	10	87	560	754	2974	2974
Seaforth	350	86	142	18	0	0	1	13	47	165	124	560
MMWWT	1200	475	170	57	3	34	59	600	1000	1000	1000	1000
MBS WeBS	1928	1157	248	57	3	0	0	20	176	696	351	348
Leighton Moss	480	267	310	124	2	18	65	120	140	310	310	370
EM Complex	565	370	365	170	7	24	42	445	455	480	225	260
North Fylde	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	300	1500	157	200
Stocks Res	310	176	26	70	2	10	6	13	110	353	277	210

Eleven hundred at Barnaby's Sands on 21 January made up a very large proportion of the Morecambe Bay totals that month. Away from the main sites, first winter peaks included 567 at

Mere Sands Wood, 175 on the Ribble at Penwortham, 50 at Newton Lake and 42 at Sankey Valley (both in St. Helens) in January and 50 at Belmont Reservoir in February.

Several pairs summered at Marshside, with one female fledging six young (also successfully bred in 2006 when five young fledged). No breeding was recorded at Belmont this year. There were up to twelve at Leighton Moss and the Eric Morecambe complex during much of May but breeding was not proved.

The post-breeding influx included eleven at Mythop Flood on 18 June and 34 on the Eric Morecambe complex by the 22nd; 52 were on the River Douglas at Hesketh Bank on 12 Aug and 200 at Reams Hill flood on the 28th.

Away from the main sites, second winter peaks included 95 at Belmont Reservoir on 27 Oct, 50 at Prescot Reservoirs on 18 Dec, 176 at Low Meadows, Rufford on the 23rd and 80 at Brockholes Quarry on the 29th. Mere Sands Wood had a maximum of 800 in the late winter period but no date was provided, while 900 at Marton Mere on 17 Dec proved the importance of this site as a hard weather refuge. Other than the sizable flocks at Stocks Reservoir (see table), and regular double figures at Alston Reservoir, small numbers were scattered throughout east Lancashire during both winter periods.

## **GREEN-WINGED TEAL** *Anas carolinensis*

**Rare winter visitor.**

A male was at Marshside on 14-21 January, then daily from 11 March to 28 April; records of two different males were confirmed on 14 March and 10 April. Presumably one these males returned to Marshside on 14 Oct and was seen daily from 27 Oct to the year's end.

Single males were also at MMWWT on 4 Nov and at Stocks Reservoir on 22-23 Dec.

## **MALLARD** *Anas platyrhynchos*

**Common and widespread winter visitor and breeding resident.**

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	687	477	212	279	125	510	175	613	454	332	398	824
Leighton Moss	130	107	95	65	60	165	499	460	360	240	185	130
North Fylde	3343	155	97	49	/	/	/	/	30	65	180	150
Ribble WeBS	685	575	329	284	275	396	231	524	485	968	886	1040
Marshside	500	143	112	89	67	51	69	197	93	398	148	590
Alt WeBS	255	122	15	57	42	93	70	210	535	363	272	454
MMWWT	776	389	632	450	695	727	680	1115	/	1256	2000	/
Stocks Reservoir	272	158	29	40	57	144	56	145	290	344	343	152

Peak counts of more than 200 away from the tabulated sites included 338 on Southport Marine Lake, 253 at Fleetwood Marsh, 217 at Skippool Creek and 210 at Ainsdale Sands Lake in January, 354 on Downholland Moss in September, and 390 at Bank End, 350 on a pond near Belmont, 293 at Skippool Creek and 207 in Sefton Park, Liverpool in December. Many sites held 100 or more at some time during the year.

The largest Rossendale flocks were 69 at Holmes Terrace Lodge on 11 Nov and 67 at Cowm Reservoir on 23 Dec. In east Lancashire, Grindleton Fell had 160+ on 5 Oct and 150+ there on 24 Nov (birds fed by shooting syndicate), Dilworth Reservoir 126 on 11 Nov and Alston Wetland 125 on 26 Dec.

Marshside had 33 breeding pairs with six pairs on Crossens Inner Marsh. Ten pairs nested in the Belmont gull colony. Breeding was recorded at eleven sites in Rossendale with young being recorded between 12 April and the end of July; breeding was widespread in east Lancashire. The

Waterways Bird Survey recorded 171 territorial pairs on the Lune between Skerton Weir and Kirkby Lonsdale, three pairs down on 2006. Near Arkholme, 13 nests were located, of which only three hatched young.

Although Leighton Moss continued to be the most important moulting area in north Lancashire with a peak of 440 in July, this was almost 300 down on 2006 but that had been a very dry year, which probably concentrated the birds, and 2007 by contrast saw high water levels. The large summer counts at MMWWT are augmented by birds moulting within the relative safety of the fox-proofed 'waterfowl gardens'. Other August counts included 106 at Bispham Marsh on the 13th and 117 at Prescott Reservoirs on the 14th; 167 were at Marton Mere on 14 Sept and 118 at Wayoh Reservoir on the 19th.

## **PINTAIL** *Anas acuta*

**Common winter visitor to western wetlands . Very rare breeder.**

International importance 600. National importance 279.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	76	147	14	2	0	0	0	0	433	403	513	563
EM Complex	51	14	12	40	2	0	0	43	440	382	226	120
North Fylde	0	72	0	0	0	0	0	0	220	160	195	250
Ribble WeBS	1094	174	67	2	0	0	0	10	130	452	1622	3609
Marshside	1080	95	67	2	0	0	0	0	3	46	19	1157
MMWWT	580	360	338	6	2	2	1	1	20	150	400	300
Stocks Reservoir	213	177	2	0	0	0	0	0	100	7	9	140

Marshside had the single highest count in January of 1080 with most of the Ribble's birds there on WeBS count day, but relatively few remained on the Ribble in February and March. Morecambe Bay counts were low during the first winter period and the only other sites with significant numbers were MMWWT and Stocks Reservoir, with respective peaks of 580 and 213 in January. Flocks of up to 200 were at Cockersand throughout January and 360 at Warton Marsh on 20 Feb. The last two males were seen at Marshside on 28 April, whilst two were on the Eric Morecambe complex until 3 May.

The first returned to Leighton Moss on 5 July and Marshside on 16 Sept; 245 went past Heysham on 24 Aug. A marked influx occurred from 30 August with 43 on the Eric Morecambe complex, increasing to a peak of 275 on 16 Sept with 205 on the same day at Leighton Moss, making a combined total of 480. Stocks Reservoir held 100 on 21 Sept. As many as 600 were at Pilling by mid-September and 871 flew over Fairhaven on 28 Sept. Numbers continued to be high at both the Eric Morecambe complex and Leighton Moss throughout the autumn with 215 on 29 Nov at the former site and 74 on 22 Nov at the latter. Increases in water levels in early December brought about a complete redistribution with no birds at Leighton but up to 225 on flood water at Warton and 216 on Silverdale Moss on 29 Dec.

November and December site counts included 1157 at Marshside, 250 at Cockersand, 900 at Lytham, 226 at Pilling Marsh and 140 at Stocks Reservoir.

## **GARGANEY** *Anas querquedula*

**Scarce spring and autumn migrant and rare, occasional breeder.**

The first was a pair at Marshside on 27 March, where a male was reported intermittently between 26 April and 22 May.

A strong spring passage followed. A pair on Prescott Reservoirs on 14 April and Eccleston Mere the next day was the only Merseyside record away from Marshside. Two were at Thornton

(Fylde) on 21-22 April and Jameson Road Landfill on 7 May. A male at Mythop on 5-7 May was possibly the same bird at Newton Marsh on the 9th. Males were at Barnacre Reservoir on 3 May and Brockholes on the 5th. A pair was flushed at Middleton Industrial Estate on 24 April and, remarkably, two males were seen 500m offshore at Heysham on 2 May. Another pair was at Aldcliffe on 14-29 April with a male there on 15 May, and a male at Pine Lake on 25 April. On 15 April a pair flew north-west from Yorkshire into the Thursden Valley but could not be relocated. A pair was at Alston Wetland on 30 April, with a single male there on the 10-24 May, and two males and a female were at Wayoh Reservoir on 5 May.

Possible breeding records included a male intermittently at MMWWT between 22 April and 14 June, with a female there from 30 April to 2 May. A pair was at Leighton Moss and Barrow Scout from 13-19 May with this or another pair at Silverdale Moss on 6 & 12 May and 12 June. Up to three juveniles at Leighton Moss between 26 August and 9 September suggested successful breeding somewhere in the locality. A pair was at Marton Mere from 30 April and the male was seen on until 14 June.

Autumn passage was much quieter than spring's, beginning with a male on Hesketh Out Marsh on 17 June and 15 July. Eclipse males included singles at MMWWT on 20 July, east of Marton Mere on 19 July and at Knowsley Safari Park on 23 Aug. Regular records in the Mythop area included three on 11 & 18-22 Aug, two on 14-17 & 23 Aug and singles on 20 & 24-28 Aug. An unaged bird was at Marshside on 13-15 Aug, with two there on the 26th. One was at Middleton Industrial Estate on 8 Sept.

## **SHOVELER** *Anas clypeata*

**Common winter visitor to west and far north. Scarce breeder.**

International importance 400. National importance 148.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Ribble WeBS	532	150	159	83	6	5	0	0	0	113	137	183
Marshside	524	126	149	81	4	8	60	55	9	108	127	173
MMWWT	9	22	30	14	19	5	1	60	19	140	160	110
MBS WeBS	95	137	40	2	8	1	0	8	23	36	41	88
Leighton Moss	30	30	30	18	8	12	22	67	131	135	127	26
EM Complex	141	209	73	56	14	18	12	36	45	130	72	95
Marton Mere	44	55	59	57	7	3	/	17	44	51	50	63
Mythop flood	15	37	50	14	1	2	/	10	18	10	3	3

A higher than usual January WeBS count of 532 on the Ribble included 524 birds at Marshside. During the same period MMWWT held very few. Leighton Moss and the Eric Morecambe complex held combined peaks of 171 in January and 239 in February.

Away from the main sites, peak counts in the first winter period included up to 50 at Mythop, 59 at Marton Mere and 28 at Brockholes Quarry.

There were 23 males on RSPB properties in north Lancashire during spring, a likely indication of the number of breeding pairs. Elsewhere, nine pairs bred at Marshside, fledging approximately 40 young, and three pairs bred at MMWWT. Breeding was not reported from any other sites.

Autumn counts away from the major sites included 15 at Freckleton Naze on 21 Aug, 15 at Fleetwood Marsh on the same date, and 36 at Prescot Reservoirs on 25 Sept, ten at Newton Marsh on 18 Oct with 20 there on the 30th, and nearby 20 at Myerscough Quarry on 26 Oct.

Stanley Park, Blackpool held 73 on 25 Nov and 100 on 25 Dec. Up to 25 were at Brockholes Quarry in December and floods at Warton (north Lancashire) held a peak of 95 on 6 Dec.

**POCHARD** *Aythya ferina***Common winter visitor, scarce breeder.**

National importance 595.

## Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MMWWT	254	310	240	3	8	7	5	5	3	90	95	105
Leighton Moss	125	52	42	31	24	8	18	61	205	270	55	0
Dockacres	44	22	28	3	2	2	0	2	38	255	210	415
Prescot Reservoirs	23	10	4	0	0	0	0	7	39	68	105	118
Marshside	99	60	9	0	0	1	0	1	0	9	54	79
Brockholes	65	/	43	/	3	1	/	/	10	18	15	20
Stocks Reservoir	40	64	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	20	39	40
Seaforth	27	44	6	5	0	1	1	2	2	19	39	48
Marton Mere	42	26	/	8	/	1	14	6	17	18	23	42
Fairhaven Lake	29	28	0	0	/	1	0	0	0	1	5	25

The main sites in the table account for the majority of Pochard seen in the county. Elsewhere in the first winter period, 50 were on Southport Marine Lake on 19 Jan and 14 at Mere Sands Wood in February. Later in the year 22 were at Fleetwood Marsh on 15 Sept and ten at Myerscough Quarry in October and November. A cold weather influx to Southport Marine Lake resulted in a peak count of 120 on 23 Dec, and there were peak counts of 15 at Mere Sands Wood in November and 15 at Reams Hill on 9 Dec.

Fifteen males were present in spring on RSPB properties, a likely indication of the number of breeding birds. Three pairs bred at MMWWT, with one duckling still alive in mid-July, and one pair probably bred at nearby Nuck's Wood.

**TUFTED DUCK** *Aythya fuligula***Common winter visitor, scarce breeder.**

## Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Prescot Reservoirs	60	80	50	40	30	53	116	200	200	285	94	0
Dockacres	76	40	71	41	21	16	11	18	56	85	120	140
Alston Reservoirs	0	0	0	0	8	5	10	20	110	0	0	3
Leighton Moss	76	38	52	44	28	22	27	28	85	80	49	38
Seaforth	26	34	32	43	20	44	62	60	83	68	31	35
Marton Mere	38	38	38	20	/	2	25	12	78	14	48	/
Glasson Basin	62	40	35	12	/	3	7	13	27	50	50	52
Brockholes Q.	46	/	39	41	/	/	/	/	20	20	50	20
Fleetwood Marsh	42	14	19	12	6	2	7	/	20	17	21	24
Myerscough Q.	24	34	36	26	14	5	12	5	10	20	18	26
MMWWT	37	22	30	16	17	10	6	10	/	1	5	5
Stocks Reservoir	12	19	4	3	4	2	4	9	8	21	24	22
Fairhaven Lake	3	8	21	30	/	20	15	5	19	8	3	5

As usual, there were consistently large numbers at Sands Lake, Ainsdale with 271 there on 19 Jan and a rather low late peak of 95 on 17 Dec, but this year these were surpassed by a cold weather influx of 267 at Southport Marine Lake on 23 Dec. Numbers peaked at Mere Sands Wood at 161 in January and 80 in December. Other winter counts away from the tabulated sites included 21 at Stanley Park, Blackpool on 14 Jan (where 25 were still present on 8 April) and 13 on the Middleton Industrial Estate on 11 Feb. Spring passage at Marshside peaked at 29 on 11 April, while Alston Reservoirs held up to 110 in September.

There were 24 males in spring on the RSPB north Lancashire reserves and about ten pairs attempted to breed on the Dockacres complex; three pairs bred on the Lune between Leck Beck and Wenning Foot. Eight pairs bred at Brockholes Quarry. In the Fylde, a single male with two females and 18 juveniles on 4 July indicated likely breeding on Fleetwood Golf Course, while a female had five young at Mythop on 2 August and a female was seen with eight young on a pond adjacent to the De Vere Hotel, Blackpool in early July. Nine pairs bred at Fairhaven Lake, all broods failing due to gull predation, three pairs were at the Sand Villa pool, Pilling up to 27 May and at least one pair bred at Myerscough Quarry. Four pairs fledged nine young at Marshside, three pairs bred at MMWWT, two at Formby Hall Golf Course and one at Hesketh Out Marsh. One or two pairs were unsuccessful at Belmont Reservoir and single pairs also bred unsuccessfully at Delph and Spring Reservoirs. One bred at pair Clay Colliery.

### **SCAUP** *Aythya marila*

#### **Uncommon winter visitor to coast in small numbers, scarce inland.**

In the first winter period, Seaforth recorded peaks of 42 in January and 41 in February. The last of spring was there on 25 April and the first back on 14 July; numbers were typically low in the second winter period with a peak of eight in December. Numbers offshore in Morecambe Bay peaked at 13 off Heysham on 20 Jan, 23 off Jenny Brown's Point on the 22nd and 29 off Morecambe on the 26th; the last of spring was seen on 27 March. Ten were off Jenny Brown's Point on 27 Sept, two in Teal Bay on 29 Sept to 9 Nov and eleven at Jenny Brown's on 26 Nov.

Elsewhere, records were in low single figures – with the exception of nine off Formby Point on 20 March with eight there on 25 Nov, and nine off Ainsdale on 28 Oct. Up to three were in the Conder/Glasson area from January to 28 April. A female was at Southport Marine Lake on 19 Jan and up to four in January and February at Marshside, with five there on 3 March and the last on 17 April. A female was on Dean Clough and Parsonage Reservoirs from 4 Jan to 15 April with another there on 9-13 Feb. Two females were at Fairhaven Lake on 23 Feb, a female at Leighton Moss on 1 March and a male on High Bullough Reservoir on 9 March.

Later in the year there were singles at Marshside on 5-6 July, Cowm Reservoir on 5 Sept, Pine Lake on 22-27 Sept, MMWWT on 10-28 Oct, Stocks Reservoir from 16 Oct to the end of the year, Southport Marine Lake on 23-24 Dec and Fairhaven Lake on the 26th. One at Lee Green Reservoir from 13 Nov to at least 30 Dec was joined by another on 21 Nov. Two females were at Mere Sands Wood on 20 Sept and up to three on the Conder Pool from September. Two females were at Parsonage Reservoir on 21-25 Oct but there were no further sightings until a highly unusual five birds there on 21 December.

### **AYTHYA HYBRIDS**

A male Scaup-type Pochard x Tufted Duck hybrid was reported from Stocks Reservoir on several dates from 16 Oct to the year's end. While still in eclipse, this bird was initially reported as a Scaup. This was possibly the same bird seen here and at Wood End Sewage Works in 2006.

A male at Marton Mere on the evening of 1 June was described as vaguely Lesser Scaup-like but with a clearly orange-sheened head, and was most likely a Tufted x Pochard.

**EIDER** *Somateria mollissima*

**Common winter visitor to Fylde and Morecambe Bay, scarce elsewhere. Scarce breeder.**

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	70	212	171	0	58	8	21	1	17	110	17	8
Jenny Brown's Pt.	20	80	125	23	14	/	/	/	12	20	14	9
Keer Estuary	53	126	180	81	3	/	21	1	5	6	22	41
Morecambe	168	318	428	331	3	1	18	2	61	70	47	51
Rossall Point	46	67	40	26	7	/	/	/	13	37	25	32
Ribble WeBS	0	17	8	70	38	11	45	28	47	5	5	0
Blackpool	5	4	12	8	20	2	57	/	/	12	1	2

It is difficult to judge the size of the mobile flocks in Morecambe Bay accurately but the counts in the table indicate continuing high numbers in the first winter period at least.

The only record south of the Ribble in the early year was one off Formby Point on 20 March but there 19 there on 12 Nov, three on the 23rd and two on the 25th. Seawatching records off the Fylde coast included 57 off Starr Gate in July and peaks off Rossall Point of 46 in January, 67 in February and 37 in October.

Up to 18 off Marshside on several dates between 3 March and 18 May were perhaps birds that went on to breed on the estuary. A maximum of eleven males and eleven females were in the Ribble off Lytham in June and three broods of ducklings were seen there on 8 June; 38 females were there on 20 July, two still with young.

Although there were up to 30 in the Cockersand/Sunderland Point area of the Lune Estuary in late April and up to ten in May and June, breeding was not confirmed this year. Four birds were on the Keer Estuary during the summer but breeding was not confirmed.

**LONG-TAILED DUCK** *Clangula hyemalis*

**Uncommon winter maritime visitor, rare inland.**

One past Formby Point on 23 Jan was followed by a first-winter past Starr Gate, Blackpool on 1 Feb and two past Formby Point on the 2nd. A male past Heysham on 24 April was the only spring record, unless you count a female/immature north past Starr Gate on 18 June as still spring.

A summer-plumaged male on Crosby Marine Lake on 30 Sept was the first of the autumn. Two off Rossall Point on 30 Oct and one off Formby Point on 25 Nov were the only other offshore records.

A relatively long-staying inland first-winter female was at Upper Roddlesworth Reservoir, Darwen from 26 Oct to 10 Nov; although on 4 Nov it was entangled in fishing line, it remained apparently healthy.

**COMMON SCOTER** *Melanitta nigra*

**Common visitor to Liverpool Bay, especially in winter, although main flocks are hardly visible from land. Scarce migrant to inland waters.**

International importance 16000. National importance 500.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Formby Point	121	3288	2535	205	56	83	130	235	3660	1850	1500	400
Blackpool	2500	950	1200	50	40	132	400	3200	4000	1000	8000	3000
Heysham	/	/	/	7	80	/		21	2	/	1	/
Rossall Point	7	4	4	97	/	/	10	92	129	18	200	1

Internationally important numbers continue to winter over Shell Flat off the Fylde coast and in southern areas of Liverpool Bay, these flocks being sometimes visible from Blackpool and Formby Point. First winter peaks were 3288 from Formby Point in February and 2500 in January from Blackpool. Birds can be seen in all months from these two important observation points (see table) but few are seen elsewhere on the coast. High tides occasionally brought small flocks into view at Marshside, including 40 on 25 Jan and 45 on 15 July. One off Crosby on 17 Oct was the only record off the Mersey. Apart from those in the table at Heysham, only a handful were seen in the north, including six off Jenny Brown's Point on 19 April and singles off the outer Lune in September and November and off Morecambe in November.

Five on Prescot Reservoirs on 27 Jan with two there and at Carr Mill Dam on 14-16 Dec were relatively unusual winter records inland, where passage birds are seen with some regularity. Spring produced singles at Marton Mere on 9 March, Crook o' Lune on the 17th, Altham on 5 April, the Langden Intake on the 6-8th, Bartle Pools on the 8th, Upper Ball Grove Lodge, Colne on the 8-10th, two at Brockholes Quarry on the 10-11th and three on Wayoh Reservoir on 5 May.

Autumn produced fewer records but more birds: a male at Anglezarke Reservoir on 26 June, four males at Lower Foulridge Reservoir on 4 July and single males at Clowbridge Reservoir on the 7th and Great Hameldon Reservoir on the 16th, six males and seven female/immatures at Stocks Reservoir on the 17th, two at Brockholes on the 25th and finally two males and a female at Clowbridge Reservoir on 9 Oct.

## **BLACK SCOTER** *Melanitta americana*

### **Vagrant**

A male taken into care near the Eric Morecambe complex and released at Jenny Brown's Point on 16 May was the first record in England ( J Beattie, K Kellett, T Wheeler). See separate article.

## **VELVET SCOTER** *Melanitta fusca*

### **Uncommon winter visitor.**

A female was off Marshside on 4 Jan and singles flew past Formby Point on 16, 20 & 25 March. Rossall Point had two going south on 27 March, while Heysham enjoyed a run of records with three offshore on 10 April, two males on 19 April and two sat on the sea on 6 May.

Single male(s) were off Formby Point on 11 Nov and 2 Dec, one was off Blackpool on 24 Oct and Rossall Point had two going south on 12 Nov..

## **GOLDENEYE** *Bucephala clangula*

### **Common winter visitor.**

#### Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	108	115	21	1	0	0	0	0	1	3	19	56
Glasson	120	100	64	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	23	89
Seaforth	27	45	62	37	2	0	0	0	0	7	25	16

Other peak counts during the first winter period included 48 on Southport Marine Lake, 22 at Prescot Reservoirs, 18 at Dean Clough and Foulridge Reservoirs, 17 at Leighton Moss, 13 at Thornton ICI, twelve at Little Singleton and Martholme, eleven at Marton Mere, ten on Fairhaven lake, eight at Clowbridge Reservoir and seven at Mere Sands Wood. Twenty-three offshore at Formby Point was an unusual record there.

Indications of passage were given by the influx of 42 to Brockholes in March and the increase in numbers at Seaforth the same month, and by the presence of up to twelve on the Lune

at Arkholme from late March. Final sightings of spring were at Slipper Hill Reservoir on 21 April, Leighton Moss on the 24th and Seaforth the next day.

A pair was displaying at Seaforth on 31 May but the first returning birds arrived on 29 Sept at Alston Reservoirs, where numbers grew to 35 on 16 Nov and 43 on the 25th.

Other late year counts included 17 at Prescot Reservoirs, 14 on Southport Marine Lake, ten at Mere Sands Wood, eight at Leighton Moss and seven Clowbridge Reservoir.

## **RED-BREASTED MERGANSER** *Mergus serrator*

**Fairly common coastal winter visitor. Scarce breeder inland.**

National importance 98.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	27	22	58	32	4	1	11	0	6	44	35	43

Wintering numbers in Morecambe Bay continued at a low ebb, although the March count was higher than any last year; 35 were seen off Rossall Point on 2 April. The only other offshore records were ten off Formby Point on 2 Feb and four off Blackpool on 13 & 30 March.

A pair wintered at Stocks Reservoir and five were present on 10 March. On 5 April three pairs were displaying in the Hodder inlet and the next day there were five pairs. Successful breeding took place and at least three broods of ducklings were seen, five redheads were present on 8 May, four on 12 June and seven on 28 June. From 27 July only two redheads remained, they were last seen on 16 September.

Records elsewhere were typically sparse. Up to 15 were in Fleetwood Docks and Thornton ICI in January and March, one at Seaforth on 18 Jan with up to three there in March, when three were also on Fairhaven Lake.

The last spring migrants were a pair at Prescot Reservoirs on 14 May and the first of autumn at Clowbridge Reservoir on 7-11 July, the first record there for some years. Five were at sea off Seaforth on 25 Sept and 17 at Carnforth saltmarsh on the 27th.

Late year records included 18 at Pilling Marsh on 11 Nov when one was also at Seaforth, up to 17 at Glasson and Fleetwood in November, one at Arkholme on 20 Dec and three at Fairhaven that month.

## **GOOSANDER** *Mergus merganser*

**Fairly common and increasing winter visitor especially in the east. Scarce breeder.**

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delph Reservoir	32	44	12	7	2	0	0	0	1	2	12	25
Alston Reservoirs	/	/	/	8	/	/	/	/	9	2	26	14
Clowbridge Res.	4	13	2	/	/	/	2	/	11	1	6	7

The large winter concentrations on the Longridge/Alston Reservoirs of the 1990s are long gone, these days the flocks are far more dispersed. In addition to those in the table, there were counts of 15-26 in one or other winter period from the following reservoirs: Dockacres (Jan), Yarrow (Jan), Slipper Hill (Jan-Feb, Dec), Walverden (Feb), Wayoh (March), Entwistle (March), Fishmoor (Nov), Great Hameldon (Nov). Lower, mostly single-figure, counts of wintering birds were received from a further 20 or so sites. Records outside of the main range included four offshore at Marshside on 18 Feb and one at Prescot Reservoirs from January to March. One off Formby Point on 1 May and two on Hesketh Golf Course on 6 May were unusual spring records in the south-west.

The BTO Waterways Bird Survey revealed a total of 17 territorial pairs along the River Lune between Kirkby Lonsdale and Skerton Weir (six pairs down on 2006). In Kevin Briggs' study of Goosanders along the section of river between Leck Beck and Arkholme five females used boxes and two females used natural sites, of these four were successful. There was a peak of six broods in this area on 18 July totalling 36 young.

Breeding was also reported from Conder Green, Langden Beck, Cock Bridge, Lomeshaye, Stocks Reservoir, Pendle Water, Siddows, Wood End and Martholme and was probable at several other riverine sites in the east.

Post-breeding congregations included 16 on the Wyre at Little Singleton on 2 July, 19 on the Ribble at Avenham Park, Preston on 4 Aug, 30 at Rawcliffe Hall on 23 Aug and 16 on the Lune at Skerton Weir on 29 Sept. Elsewhere, one was at Seaforth on 19 Aug, four flew west over Downholland Moss on 17 Sept, two were at bank End, Cockerham on 28 Sept and one was at MMWWT on 28 Oct.

## **RUDDY DUCK** *Oxyura jamaicensis*

**Decreasing winter visitor and now a scarce breeder.**

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Fleetwood Marsh												
Nature Park	1	1	2	6	2	6	7	2	6	2	8	/
Marton Mere	3	7	5	4	5	5	/	/	1	2	4	5
Longton Brickcroft	6	/	7	/	/	/	/	/	2	/	4	/
Marshside	0	0	1	3	2	4	2	7	9	12	6	0

The only winter records received apart from those in the table were singles at Pine Lake and Leighton Moss in January, Seaforth in February and March and Pine Lake in December, and up to eleven at Prescott Reservoirs in December.

Breeding was confirmed at Marshside where two pairs fledged four young, Mere Sands Wood (one pair) and Marton Mere (one or two pairs). Breeding was probable at Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park, at an undisclosed site in the west of the CDHNS recording area and Knowsley Park, and possible at Hesketh Out Marsh, MMWWT and Leighton Moss.

Post-breeding dispersal began with a male at Freckleton Naze on 14 June with three birds there on 21 August. Three males were on Crosby Marine Lake on 15 June with single female/immature(s) there on 1-6 Sept and 1-3 Oct. Two females at Alston No.1 Reservoir on 29-30 Sept was the only report from east Lancashire, while Myerscough Quarry had one on 21-22 & 29 Sept with two on 4 Oct.

## **RED GROUSE** *Lagopus lagopus*

**Common breeding resident**

Systematic counts in Bowland by the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust showed a steady rise in numbers with a mean spring density of 35 birds/100ha, up from 21.5 in 2006 and 18.5 in 2005. The average July density was 88 birds/100ha, up from 80 in 2006. Wet weather in June and July, amplified by sheep tick and louping-ill problems, resulted in a poor mean brood size of only 3.9 chicks/brood. Consequently, shooting was extremely limited throughout Bowland with, for example, only 158 shot on one of the Abbeystead beats on 13 Aug and 47 shot on Hareden Fell on 4 Sept.

On the United Utilities Bowland Estate, a spring survey of 40 1km squares found 415 birds in 2007, up from 311 in 2005, whilst casual records from Bowland included decent numbers on Tarnbrook Fell (30+ on 6 April), in Croasdale (60+ on 20 July) and Bleasdale (31 on 27 July).

Elsewhere in Bowland, up to ten were reported from Langden, The Trough, Marl Hill Moor, Whitendale, Hawthornthwaite Fell, Marshaw, Whins Brow, Burn Fell, Birk Bank, Dunsop Head, Roeburndale, Harrisend Fell, Goodber Common, Caton Moor, Wards Stone, Baines Crag, Jubilee Tower, Cross of Greet and Tatham Fell. Records from the outlying Bowland fells included up to four on Waddington Fell and Leck Fell with 18 on Bradford Fell on 29 Jan.

The largest count from Pendle was five on 24 April, whilst elsewhere in east Lancashire five were on Boulsworth Hill on 27 Aug and birds were recorded from Cant Clough, Coldwell Reservoir and Wycoller.

In the West Pennine Moors, gamekeepers on Darwen Moor estimated the breeding population at 120 pairs but, following a poor breeding season, only approximately 300 were seen during a shoot on 6 Sept. Nearby, six pairs were on territory on Winter Hill-Rivington Moor, ten pairs on Oswaldtwistle-Haslingden Moors and three pairs on Wet Moss-Musden Head Moor. Post breeding season counts included 85+ on Anglezarke Moor on 16 Aug and 45+ on Winter Hill-Belmont Moor on 18 Aug, both during shoots.

Rossendale reported a 'good series of records from seven areas of moorland' with a maximum count of five on Haslingden Moor on 9 Sept. However, the most interesting sighting of the year concerned a single on Great Hameldon Hill on 25 Feb – a location where the species was neither recorded during the 1997-2000 Atlas nor by the observer there in twenty years, whilst Spencer (1977) doubted that it ever historically occurred at that site.

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

**Fairly common breeding resident. Population supplemented by regular releases in most areas.**

Nationally, the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust estimate that numbers released have increased four-fold since 1990 and this trend is undoubtedly repeating itself throughout much of Lancashire judging from reports of releases both received and implied by numbers seen.

Unusually, there were records from the Silverdale area, albeit of just two, both in spring, and again in the second winter period with one at Leighton Moss in September. Elsewhere in the north, releases of birds were reported from Caton and Whittington, four pairs were at Arkholme and pairs were seen with young at Cockersand, Melling and Whittington.

On the Fylde, large numbers continue to be released on the Over Wyre mooses including over 3000 on both Rawcliffe Moss and near Fluke Hall, resulting in counts of 200 on the former on 15 Dec and over 90 at the latter site on 12 Sept, with 55+ at Glasson in January and 25 at Eagland Hill in April probably from similar sources. Other double-figure counts from the Fylde included 14 at Myerscough in September and ten at Lightfoot Green in September.

Over a hundred at Croston Finney on 3 Nov was the maximum reported near Chorley, whilst on the West Pennine Moors releases were again responsible for over 300 on Darwen Moor in September, with 100 at Belmont on 10 Jan the survivors from the 2006 shooting season.

In east Lancashire, 25 were on Pendle summit on 1 Oct and there were 17 records from twelve sites in Bowland with a largest count of twelve at Dunsop Bridge on 27 April, although it is known that large numbers were again released on Easington Fell. The only record from Rossendale concerned six at Crown Point in January.

Few records were received from the south-west 'stronghold', although 151 were reported shot at Meols Hall on 8 Sept, 287 were on Churchtown Moss on 9 Nov, 26 at Mere Sands Wood in December, 15 on Plex Moss in February and two on Birkdale Green Beach in September. Breeding was reported from MMWWT and Stanley School, Marshside – both one pair. One at Oglet in November and up to six at Seaforth (presumably the brood from 2006) in February were the only records from the Liverpool area. The 102 records from the St. Helens area were down from 179 in

2006, although the peak counts of 45 on the Old Coach Road on 4 Aug, 40 at Dairy Farm Road on 6 Sept and 25 on Catchdale Moss on 6 Jan were higher site counts than in 2006.

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

### **Common but declining resident in the south and west**

There was a further increase in records received both in numbers (up to 371 from 280 in 2006) and locations (up to 154 from 118 in 2006), undoubtedly in response to the increasing observer awareness of this species, rather than any growth in population; although it amply highlights the importance of several parts of the county for this red-list species.

In the north, the main sites were concentrated around the Lune Estuary with twelve at Thurnham on 21 Dec, eight at Cockersand in November and smaller coveys seen at Glasson and Aldcliffe. A pair at Arkholme in August and November was the only record received from the main Lune Valley, with a covey of ten nearby in Roeburndale on 31 Jan.

An impressive 142 records from over 25 locations were received from the Fylde, including 17 records of double-figure coveys and eight reports of broods (totalling 35 young). The Over Wyre mosses were clearly the stronghold in this area with ten pairs on Rawcliffe Moss on 31 March and four pairs near Pilling.

In the Chorley area there were good numbers on Croston Moss including 33 on 30 Dec, a site where large numbers have been released in the past, whilst nearby there were eight on Farington Moss on Boxing Day. A pair possibly bred at Brockholes Quarry. In the West Pennine Moors, gamekeepers estimated at least nine pairs around Belmont (at up to 325m above sea level) but, in contrast to 2006, the breeding season was reported as a disaster due to the wet conditions, although six were on Anglezarke Moor on 8 Oct.

The 42 records from 25 sites in east Lancashire was similar to 2006. Bowland fared better than in recent years with three pairs reported from Crimpton near Whitewell, pairs at Harris End and Marl Hill in spring and eight in the very heart of the fells at Langden Intake on 19 Dec. Eight at Jackhouse on 3 Jan, seven at Altham in February and two juveniles at Thursden and twelve young at Wycoller in August completed the highlights from the east.

The species was reported to be holding its own in Rossendale with records from 20 areas, especially the Grane, where successful breeding was reported with a covey of four seen later.

Records from the south-west mosses illustrated the species' healthy status there and included breeding season records of three pairs at Lunt and at Crossens-Marshside, two or three pairs at MMWWT and a pair on Birkdale Green Beach in March. Outside that season, 25 were at Mere Sands Wood in October, 14 were at Lunt in December with coveys of up to twelve reported from Longton, Much Hoole, Hesketh Bank, Plex Moss, Rufford, Bootle Golf Course and Marshside.

Highlights of the 44 records (35 in 2006) from the St. Helens area were two coveys both of 20 at Rainford and Berrington Lane in October, and 15 at Sutton Manor and ten by the Old Coach Road in November. Two broods were seen by the Old Coach Road and one by Berrington Lane. The Oglet-Speke-Garston area in south Liverpool reported good numbers as usual, with 17 calling birds reported in the spring with the largest covey seen later being 14 at Oglet on Christmas Day – presumably in pear trees!

## **QUAIL** *Coturnix coturnix*

### **Scarce summer visitor to lowland areas, occasional influxes.**

The poorest year since 2004 with ten calling birds reported (23 in 2005).

A very early bird was calling on Downholland Moss on 6 April, over six weeks before the next report of a bird singing on 23 May at Bickerstaffe. The only other bird reported from the

south-west mosses was one on Halsall Moss on 2 July. Two were reported calling on Farrington Moss during June and July. Records from the other traditional Lancashire sites on the Over Wyre mosses concerned one on Rawcliffe Moss on 1 July and 7 Aug with one calling at Eagland Hill from 19-28 July with two singing there on 23 July.

Outside the normal range a bird was calling in Roeburndale on 25 May and, for the fifth year running, a bird was reported from the eastern uplands – at Hurstwood Reservoir on 21 June.

Caution should be exercised when considering all records of Quail, not least those outside the normal range and habitat for the species but also extreme dates, due to the likelihood of escapes/releases of *C. japonica* birds or even the possibility of migrating *japonica x coturnix* hybrids.

If wild, the Downholland Moss bird is the third earliest Lancashire record, but considering the doubtful provenance of the two earlier records (both from the eastern uplands) it could well be the earliest ever . . . . . or another escapee.

## **PHEASANT** *Phasianus colchicus*

**Abundant on or near kept estates, fairly common elsewhere**

The usual largely unrepresentative collection of records was received with only the 4249 counted in eight 10km squares in the Lancaster area hinting at the true numbers present (and released) in many parts of the county.

Five pairs on Warton Crag RSPB was typical of the three to nine pairs recorded there between 1989 and 2006, whilst four nests were found at Arkholme.

The maximum counts received from the Fylde were 82 at Singleton on 4 Sept with 25 on both Winmarleigh Moss and Rawcliffe Moss in October and November respectively.

In the West Pennine Moors an estimated 25 males were on territory in approximately 1 km<sup>2</sup> of in-bye and woodland edge near Belmont on 2 April with one nest found containing an exceptional 22 eggs. Later releases were the source of the 200+ near Belmont Reservoir on 17 Nov.

In east Lancashire, over 60 released juveniles were in Whitendale on 26 Aug with wild broods seen at Foulridge, Lowerhouse Lodges, Marl Hill, Moor Piece and Newton. Records were received from all parts of Rossendale although numbers were generally low with a maximum of six at Grane in April.

The highlights of 68 records received from the St. Helens area were 48 on Catchdale Moss on 28 Oct, 30 at Berrington Lane, Rainford in October and 27 at Dairy Farm Road in April. Elsewhere in the south-west, the only records of note received concerned six pairs at Freshfield Dune Heath, three pairs at Lunt and a maximum of 14 at Mere Sands Wood in February whilst one at Seaforth in September and small numbers at Speke Hall and Oglet were reported from near Liverpool.

## **RED-THROATED DIVER** *Gavia stellata*

**Fairly common winter visitor and spring passage migrant. Scarce inland.**

International importance: 10000. National importance: 50

Apart from July and August, all months produced sightings from one of the three major areas of Heysham to Jenny Brown's Point, Blackpool to Rossall Point or Formby Point.

The year started at Formby Point with 19 on 1 Jan. No more were seen until four on the 21st; counts then climbed to 32 on the 23rd and 50+ on the 30th, and continued to rise throughout February with peaks of 170+ on the 2nd and 105 on the 6th. A few double-figure counts were made in March before a second peak of 40 on 26 April, after which numbers dropped rapidly with two seen on 12 May and one on 10 June.

Rossall and Blackpool recorded their first on 12 & 19 Jan respectively, with counts rising to a maximum of 29 on 15 Feb. March peaks were 14 at Rossall on the 31st and eleven off Blackpool on the 13th & 29th, increasing to 21 at Rossall on 1 April and 19 at Blackpool on the 14th before dropping to singles in May with the last on 26 June.

Birds were much scarcer in Morecambe Bay with just odd singles in January and spring peaks of eight on 22 March, 14 on 5 April and 15 on the 19th and the last on 24 May.

The first returning bird off Formby Point on 27 Aug was followed by ones and twos the length of the coast in September and three on the Mersey on the 10th. October produced ones and twos off Blackpool on the 23rd to 25th, singles off Jenny Brown's Point and Heysham and peaks of 29 off Formby Point on the 14th and 18 on the 28th.

A sizeable movement off Blackpool in November included 39 on the 22nd and 90 the next day. Elsewhere that month, one or two were seen in Morecambe Bay on just three dates and one off Marshside on the 24th.

The year finished with three off Formby on 9 Dec, five off Cleveleys on the 23rd and one off Heysham on the 9-29th.

One on Crosby Marine Lake on 15-30 Dec was the only 'inland' record all year.

### **BLACK-THROATED DIVER** *Gavia arctica*

**Uncommon annual winter visitor, mostly on coast.**

Three were seen off Formby Point on 2 Feb, with individuals off Blackpool on the 15th and Formby Point on the 20th. A full breeding-plumage bird off Formby on 26 April was the only spring record.

Autumn brought singles off Rossall Point on 23 Sept and 24 Oct and one amongst eight Red-throated Divers off Blackpool on 26 Nov.

### **GREAT NORTHERN DIVER** *Gavia immer*

**Scarce but increasing winter visitor, mostly on coast.**

Records were all of singles except for two seen off Formby Point on 2 Feb. A juvenile was seen at the same site on 18 Feb and another in breeding plumage flying north on 26 April. Rossall Point seawatches produced singles on 25 & 28 April, and one was off Blackpool on 1 May.

One was off Rossall Point on 6 & 11 Nov and a juvenile off Heysham north harbour wall on 20 Nov – an unusual record there.

Finally, a long-staying adult in winter plumage was at Clowbridge Reservoir from 28 Nov to 10 Dec, the fourth record of this species at this site since 1977.

### **LITTLE GREBE** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

**Uncommon but increasing breeding bird. Fairly common in winter.**

International importance: 3400. National importance: 78.

The highest count of the year was of 18, including locally-fledged juveniles, at MMWWT in August. Other large gatherings included 17 on Southport Marine Lake in December with twelve there in January, 15 on the Fleetwood lagoons in January, 13 at Middleton Industrial Estate in April and July, twelve at Seaforth during September and October and ten at Prescot Reservoirs in September to November. All other site peaks were in single figures, including inland totals of six at Walverden Reservoir in the first winter period and seven at Brockholes Quarry and Lee Green Reservoir in the second.

The overall number of reports was down on last year and this was interpreted by some as indicative of local declines in this species, but records were still received from 268 sites.

Only 24 sites reported successful breeding, the most notable of which was a pair with a brood of five at Astley Park, Chorley and a double-brooded pair at Middleton Industrial Estate. Grimsargh Reservoir reported its first breeding ever with two pairs nesting. All other breeding attempts were of pairs predominantly with just a single chick. Many follow-up reports detailed a heavy loss of young, suggesting a year of poor productivity.

### **GREAT CRESTED GREBE** *Podiceps cristatus*

**Fairly common breeding bird. Common in winter with concentrations in Morecambe Bay. No longer of national importance on the Mersey.**

International importance: 4800. National importance: 159.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	26	29	13	13	5	2	3	2	6	20	18	19
Jenny Brown's Point	8	16	12	18	8	2	2	4	23	6	21	6
Foulridge Res.	10	16	20	20	17	/	24	21	28	22	/	17
Formby Point	10	148	9	29	5	/	3	8	1	38	36	/
Eccleston Mere	19	18	21	17	15	12	12	10	/	/	/	10
Carr Mill Dam	/	32	38	10	28	/	/	/	/	/	/	/

The apparent demise of the offshore population in Morecambe Bay showed no signs of reversing, with peak winter counts significantly lower than the five-year mean of 75. Reports from inland waters continue to increase but the numbers of birds involved is small with some, even well established, sites reporting reduced numbers throughout the year. Overall breeding success was poor.

The highlight of the first winter period was the counts off Formby Point, where there was a peak of 148 on 6 Feb, with 52 on the 17th and 44 on the 20th – these are the largest numbers recorded from this site in recent years. Elsewhere on the coast, eleven were off Blackpool in February, while inland counts included up to 21 on Eccleston Mere, eight on Prescot Reservoirs and six at Brockholes Quarry and Clowbridge Reservoir.

Successful breeding was reported from 22 sites with four juveniles at Eccleston Mere and ones or twos at all other sites. The only record of two broods, both successful, was from a pair on Sefton Park lake, Liverpool. Pairs were reported from 53 other sites, many of which attempted breeding but without success. Most of these held one or two pairs.

As in previous years there was no marked post-breeding build-up. Records from the final winter period were scant – ten birds overwintered on Prescot Reservoirs and six on Clowbridge. Most other winter records were of single pairs.

### **SLAVONIAN GREBE** *Podiceps auritus*

**Scarce winter visitor.**

There were only three records this year, following on from none in 2006. Singles were seen at sea off Formby Point on 20 Feb and 30 Dec, and one was reported from the River Douglas, at Hesketh Bank on 26 Aug.

### **BLACK NECKED GREBE** *Podiceps nigricollis*

**Scarce visitor, mostly in spring and autumn.**

A pair was at Brockholes Quarry on 6 May and singles were on the borrow pits at Aldcliffe on 3-7 Nov, Borwick Waters (Dockacres) on 12 Nov and Marton Mere on 2 Dec.

**FULMAR** *Fulmarus glacialis*

**Fairly common on coasts in late summer and early autumn during onshore winds.**

All observers reported this as a 'bad' year with sightings much reduced and, when birds were seen, their numbers always in single figures. Spring records were almost non-existent.

The first of the year were singles off Heysham and Cleveleys on 11 Jan, followed by another at Heysham on the 20th and five off Formby Point on the 21st. A 'Blue' Fulmar was off Cleveleys on 18 Jan. None was seen in February and only two in March – singles off Formby Point on the 1st and Cockersand on the 18th.

A dismal spring passage consisted of two birds at Formby on 26 April and one at Heysham on the 27th. May produced one bird at Formby on the 5th and seven on the 12th, while Heysham had a total of twelve on seven dates throughout the month with a peak of four on the 10th. One was off Blackpool on 6 June, three at Heysham and five at Formby Point on the 29th. In July birds were seen at all of these three sites but a mere 16 individuals were seen (peak three at Heysham on the 14th). Additionally, two were off the mouth of the Mersey on 7 & 10 July.

From August until the end of the year three were recorded off Formby (one on 12 Aug and two the 20th), one off Seaforth on 12 Aug (believed to be the same individual found dead on the shore a week later), one off Jenny Brown's Point on 20 Sept and five off Heysham on the 24th.

**SOOTY SHEARWATER** *Puffinus griseus*

**Rare autumn visitor.**

Singles were off Formby Point on 2 Sept (J. Dempsey) and 16 Sept (T. Vaughan).

**MANX SHEARWATER** *Puffinus puffinus*

**Common offshore in late summer-autumn, especially during onshore winds.**

The first were four off Blackpool on 16 April with three there on the 30th, while Heysham recorded six on the 19th, two on the 25-27th and seven on the 28th. Three passed Formby Point on 18 April and 32 were feeding there on the 26th, but the biggest numbers of the month were off Rossall Point with 39 on the 26th and 78 on the 28th. May peaks off these sites were ten off Blackpool on the 6th, seven off Heysham on the 11th and 36 off Formby on the 12th.

Numbers continued to build during June; typically most were seen in Liverpool Bay off Blackpool and Formby. Blackpool counts reached double figures on several dates in June with peaks of 395 on the 3rd, 49 on the 6th and 100+ on the 23rd. At Formby Point 63 were recorded on the 12th and 36 on the 13th, increasing to an impressive 1630 on the 29th, during a five and half hour sea-watch, a record county total.

The passage movement continued during the first few days of July with counts of 455 off Blackpool on the 3rd, and 44 and 133 off Heysham and Formby Point respectively on the 4th. Counts at Blackpool and Formby remained high during the month with 70 on the 2nd & 17th and 101 on the 11th off Blackpool, and 244 on the 14th and 192 on the 30th off Formby/Ainsdale.

Numbers were steady at Formby during the month of August with double figures reported most days including 230 on the 8th, 290 on the 13th and 70 on the 17th. Elsewhere, eleven were off Blackpool on 2 Aug with 103 there on the 9th and 687 on the 10th, and 46 off Rossall Point on the 5th.

The last were off Crosby on 24 Sept, Formby Point on the 26th and Heysham on the 29th.

## **EUROPEAN STORM-PETREL** *Hydrobates pelagicus*

**Uncommon offshore in late summer and autumn. Less than annual in occurrence**

One was off Heysham on 18 May but no more were seen until onshore winds produced three off Formby Point on 5 July, with three in the Mersey Narrows and one at Heysham the following day. On the 7th, up to ten were seen between the Mersey Mouth and Crosby Coastguards and six off Formby. Singles were at Formby on the 14th and Jenny Brown's Point on the 28th.

These were followed by one off Formby on 13 Aug, six in the Mersey Narrows on the 16th, with one there the following day, and singles off Blackpool and Heysham on the 31st.

The last of the year was one feeding offshore from Seaforth on 11 Nov.

## **LEACH'S STORM-PETREL** *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

**Fairly common offshore in variable numbers during September and October gales.**

2006: The report of 25+ at Crosby on 7 December was in error, and the count of 190 in the Mersey Narrows was on 9 Dec not the 8th.

2007: Very few were seen this year. Two were off Formby Point on 7 July with another one there on 2 September, three were in the Mersey Narrows on 10 Sept, and singles seen from the Liverpool Bay RSPB cruise on the 17th and on the Mersey on the 25th. One, possibly two, were off Jenny Brown's Point on 8 Nov, four in the Mersey Narrows on the 10th and one off Rossall Point on the 11th.

## **GANNET** *Morus bassanus*

**Common summer and autumn visitor offshore in variable numbers. Scarce in winter.**

One was off Formby Point on 1 Jan and another flew down the Mersey at Cressington Promenade on the following day.

After this the year followed its more recent pattern. Spring passage began in March with low single figures seen off Heysham, Blackpool and Formby Point in mid- to late month.

In April all coastal sites (with the exception of Jenny Brown's Point, which hardly reports any now – believed to be due to the Barrow windfarm diverting birds) reported passing birds, with most counts just reaching double figures; the largest were 24 off Heysham on the 25th, followed by 130 (in three flocks) off Formby Point a day later. Numbers increased at all these sites during May and June with peaks of 21 at Heysham on 6 May, 47 at Rossall Point on the 19th, 170 at Formby on 24th, 110 off Blackpool on 26 June and 720 off Formby on the 29th, equalling the previous highest Lancashire count, which was also recorded at this site in August 1972. June produced the only record from Jenny Brown's Point with two on the 29th.

Formby seawatchers continued to report good passage numbers in July, including 205 on the 14th and 120 on the 30th, while at all other sites numbers started to decline. Small numbers were reported from additional sites, for example Marshside (8), St Anne's Beach(1) and Liverpool Pier Head (2). Day-counts in excess of a 100 continued to pass Formby Point throughout the whole of August, peaking at 357 on the 15th. Blackpool witnessed another small peak of 100 on the 13th and Rossall Point 46 on the 25th, while at Heysham numbers had dwindled to sightings of single birds.

September counts included 17 off Blackpool on the 7th, 27 off Rossall Point on the 8th and 65 off Formby Point on the 16th, while October produced one off Rossall on the 21st, six off Blackpool on the 26th and ten off Formby on the 29th. Two were off Blackpool on 21 Nov with one there on 29 Dec.

The only inland record was of two juveniles flying west over Wood End Sewage Works, near Burnley on 28 Sept.

## **CORMORANT** *Phalacrocorax carbo*

**Common and increasing on coasts and estuaries. Local but increasing inland.**

International importance: 1200. National importance: 230

### Monthly Peak Counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	82	49	92	40	32	15	24	56	112	87	117	53
Ribble WeBS	292	316	98	47	55	24	68	170	163	341	316	397
Alt WeBS*	365	441	327	187	34	96	60	300	547	786	438	359
Seaforth	350	283	284	182	156	80	60	250	569	755	620	843
Stocks Res	31	41	36	28	16	14	25	35	53	70	45	40

\*including Seaforth, Crosby Marine Lake and Formby Point.

Last year's record-breaking roost counts were not repeated and numbers returned to more usual levels, although numbers remained high. Peak counts at Seaforth were 755 on 28 Oct and 843 on 28 Dec. Southport Marine Lake held peaks of 376 in February and 167 on 26 Dec, while 250 were roosting on sandbanks near the Burbo Bank windfarm in August, increasing to over 600 later in the year.

All other coastal counts were much smaller, including 27 at Fairhaven in July, 50 at Freckleton Naze in August and 32 flying downstream on the Mersey in central Liverpool on 22 Oct.

Birds were reported from a large number of inland sites; virtually all Lancashire water bodies hold at least a few at some time during the year.

Stocks Reservoir produced a new site record of 70 in October, as did Delph Reservoir with a count of twelve in the same month. Other peak counts were: Prescott 65 (Feb-Mar), Belmont 13 (Sept), Whitemoor 9 (Mar), Swinden 8 (Nov), Dockacres 8 (Jan and Feb) and Dean Clough and Earnsdale 6+ (Feb and March respectively). Counts were high at Foulridge Reservoir from September to December, reaching a peak of 22 in Oct, although this was probably due to improved fishing because of drainage to the reservoir for engineering works which concentrated the fish into a small area.

Brockholes Quarry recorded a peak count of 21 in April, MMWWT counts were in double figures for the first three months of the year, while birds were present all year at Marshside, reaching 18 in April. Biggest counts on inland rivers came from the Ribble between Lambing Clough Wood and Calder Wood with 26 in March and 19 in November, while up to six were on the Lune between Leck Beck and Arkholme Viaduct for most of the year. The Raid Deep Wood roost held 26 on 17 March, while the roost at Rivington peaked at 36 in the first winter period and 22 in the second.

## **SHAG** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

**Uncommon but probably increasing on coasts. Most records are of immatures, unless stated otherwise.**

One was found dead on the strandline at Oglet on 1 Jan.

The unprecedented numbers at Heysham during autumn 2006 steadily declined from an early January peak of 19 down to the last on 27 July. There was no evidence of any new birds during this period.

Autumn produced scattered records of single juveniles at Heysham on seven dates between 10 Sept and 24 Nov, then one on 7-9 Dec was joined by two others on the 12-17th, after

which they dispersed in calm weather and there were no other records during the remainder of the 2007/8 winter. Elsewhere, an adult was off Formby Point on 20 March and a juvenile was in the same vicinity for several days in June. Single juvenile(s) were present intermittently off Blackpool from June to September. The only other record was an immature bird seen behind the ferry in the Crosby Channel on 19 Aug which may have been the same bird at Seaforth on 30 Sept.

### **BITTERN** *Botaurus stellaris*

**Rare breeding bird Leighton Moss, uncommon winter visitor there and elsewhere.**

There was just one booming male at Leighton Moss. Three females were thought to be nesting at the start of the season but only two active nests were observed, both of which are believed to have fledged young, but it is not known how many. Two ringed birds were present in the autumn, both females fledged from a brood in 2000 and considered to be two of the resident females. There was a small early winter influx to Leighton, with an estimated half a dozen birds including three or four residents. Sightings dropped with the increase in water levels in December.

It was a relatively poor year at the regular wintering site of Marton Mere, Blackpool. There was perhaps just one bird in the first winter period to 13 March; one had returned by early October and two were present from mid-October to the year's end. Sightings elsewhere are always noteworthy: one at Mere Sands Wood on the unusual but not unprecedented date of 10 July with one there on 29 Oct were followed by one the following day in a ditch on Downholland Moss.

### **CATTLE EGRET** *Bubulcus ibis*

**Vagrant.**

One was seen and photographed at MMWWT on the late afternoon of 14 Dec (A Bunting). The record has been accepted by the BBRC and becomes the third for Lancashire, following one in the MMWWT area during January to May 1999 and December 1999 to April 2000, and another at Marshside on one date in July 2000. The 2007 bird was part of a national influx which also brought other individuals to neighbouring counties.

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

**Uncommon but increasing visitor, mainly to coastal marshes.**

Monthly maxima at main sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Ribble <sup>1</sup>	13	18	19	14			11	24	43	30	41	33
EM/LM <sup>2</sup>				3	2	1	17	28	27	14	16	9
Pilling <sup>3</sup>	13	13	3						16	15	14	14
Lune <sup>4</sup>	12	10	8	3	1	1	5	3	8	15	12	12

<sup>1</sup> feeding mainly at Warton Marsh and Marshside and roosting on Freckleton Naze Pool

<sup>2</sup> feeding mainly at the Eric Morecambe Pools and roosting at Leighton Moss

<sup>3</sup> feeding mainly on Pilling Marsh and roosting at Fluke Hall or Willowgrove, Preesall

<sup>4</sup> feeding on the Lune Estuary and roosting at Ashton Hall

This species is now so well established that the summary tables above may miss some of the many published records, but they give a good impression of the further consolidation on our coasts and saltmarshes during 2007. This was reflected in yet another new county record count, 43 coming in to roost at Freckleton Naze Pool on 6 Sept and, as can be seen from the table, unprecedented numbers stayed on the Ribble in the second winter period.

It remains quite striking how few Little Egrets occur any distance inland despite their increasing abundance. There were just four reports in east Lancashire: two at Whitewell on 13 May

and singles at Stocks Reservoir on 25 July, Foulridge Reservoir on 9-11 Aug and Balderstone on 15 Dec. Other records away from the main sites included birds at MMWWT on 16 May, Seaforth on 20 May, MMWWT on 3 Aug, Brockholes Quarry on 17 Aug, MMWWT on 19 Dec and presumably the same at Mere Sands Wood the next day.

There remained no evidence of nesting in the county. Numbers began to increase in July but it was not until late August that the peak influx arrived.

## **GREAT WHITE EGRET\*** *Egretta alba*

**Vagrant, though increasing to rare visitor in line with national trends.**

One was seen briefly on Warton Marsh on 16 Jan (N Patel), the first for the Fylde with all prior county reports from the south-west of the county and Lancaster district. The other records this year were from the favoured RSPB reserves. In August singles arrived at the Eric Morecambe complex on the 27th and Marshside on the 30th, the latter lingering until 16 Sept whilst the former remained until 9 Dec. Perhaps the same bird returned to Marshside on 19 December, being seen on and off into 2008.

Assuming the Marshside records relate to just one individual this takes the county total to eight, all since 2001.

## **GREY HERON** *Ardea Cinerea*

**Scarce breeding resident.**

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Morecambe WeBS	19	28	20	24	9	19	30	11	20	33	24	22
Ribble WeBS	6	16	4	10	23	34	25	37	18	35	17	13
Seaforth	18	11	7	8	11	12	20	22	14	14	16	11
EM complex	2	4	2	9	5	21	19	12	12	7	8	4

The above counts show a typical late autumn peak. Numbers on the Ribble in the first winter period were very low, perhaps because birds had moved inland to feed on flood waters.

Nine at Brockholes Quarry in January and six at Mere Sands Wood in the first winter period were the annual maxima at these well-watched sites. There was some evidence of coastal movement in April, with one north offshore at Starr Gate, Blackpool on the 5th and three past Heysham on the 12th. The largest counts in St. Helens were in late spring, with up to seven at Eccleston Mere and eight in the Sankey Valley.

A lot of breeding information was received, although some established heronries were not reported on. There were three apparently thriving heronries in the Fylde, with occupied nest totals of 43 at Stanley Park, Blackpool, 23 at Centre Wood, Cockerham and 19 at Lea Gate, Savick Brook. The situation in north Lancashire was similarly healthy, with 33 nests at Tunstall, 17 at Ashton Hall Lake and 15 at Skerton Weir and also eight at a new heronry at Bolton-le-Sands. Although the Melling heronry was not in use, numbers in the area were significantly up overall. The Entwistle heronry remained consistent at 41 occupied nests in 2007 despite some trees formerly used having been damaged by winds; success was unprecedented with all nests showing signs of containing young late in the season. There were about 38 pairs at Cloughton, where numbers have dropped in recent years, ten at Waterfoot, Rossendale and nesting was also confirmed at Read and Skirden Beck but with no further details. Four young were fledged from two nests at a newly established heronry at Rivington; by contrast there were no nesting attempts in Cuerden Valley Park this year. No information was received from the heronries in the south-west of the county.

Post-breeding concentrations began to build up on the Wyre Estuary at Skippool in June when up to 17 were present, peaking at 20 in July, but with double-figure counts also through August to October. Visible migration reported in autumn rather mirrored spring, with one over Heysham on 3 Oct and one 'in-off' from the Barrow direction at Starr Gate on 6 Nov. The only late year counts of note not included in the above tables were in Rossendale where there were eight at Ravenshore and seven at Waterfoot in December.

### **BLACK STORK** *Ciconia nigra*

#### **Vagrant.**

One was seen and, remarkably in the circumstances, photographed flying north-east over the M65 at Brindle, near Preston on 2 May (J Clarke). This has been accepted by the BBRC and is the seventh record for the county, following soon after one seen over Marshside and Liverpool in June 2006. As stated in last year's report a lingering bird would be very welcome for county listers.

### **GLOSSY IBIS** *Plegadis falcinellus*

#### **Vagrant.**

Last year's bird (previously seen in Dorset, Derbyshire and Staffordshire) continued its lonely Lancashire exile. As it moulted into first-summer plumage it became more recognisably adult-like, and looked even more the finished article as its sojourn continued into 2008.

Having been last seen at Fluke Hall in mid-December 2006 it was relocated on a flood at Ballam, near Lytham on 15 Feb and remained there until 16 March, save for a brief visit to Crossens on 20 Feb. From 22 March to 12 May it lingered on the Ribble at Warton Bank, with a visit to Marshside on 9 May.

Wanderlust resumed on 20 May when the bird headed north to Marton Mere, where it was briefly present in the early morning. It presumably didn't like what it saw and was back at Marshside the next day. For the remainder of the year all sightings were from the Ribble Estuary or nearby haunts: at Marshside on 21-23 May, Newton Marsh on 26 May to 27 June, Marshside on 10 July to 20 Sept, Fairhaven on 25 Sept, Warton Bank on 26 Sept, Marshside on 30 Sept to 11 Nov, Warton Bank on 11-20 Nov, Marshside on 21 Nov and finally Warton Bank again throughout December and into 2008.

There have been five previous records of six birds.

### **SPOONBILL** *Platalea leucorodia*

#### **Scarce annual visitor, mainly to coastal marshes. Has bred in the past.**

It was a very good year for this species, even after allowing for some inevitable duplication between sites. The majority of sightings came from Leighton Moss and the nearby saltmarsh. Following one from 28 April into early May, two were together throughout May and June, increasing to three in July, with these remaining throughout August until four were seen on the 31st. There were still three present on 1-2 Sept, but then they all seem to have left the area and the county.

Elsewhere, two were briefly at Marshside on 2 May, two were on a pool at Sunderland Point on 2 June and one was on Banks Marsh on 13 June. All of these, and particularly the Sunderland Point birds, could conceivably be amongst those recorded at Leighton.

**HONEY BUZZARD\*** *Pernis apivorus***Rare passage migrant.**

The only fully documented record was of a juvenile north over Sheddon Clough, Burnley on 29 Sept (R Ashworth). This followed easterly winds, possibly suggestive of a Scandinavian origin. A further five birds were reported during the year but not submitted or not adequately described.

**RED KITE** *Milvus milvus***Scarce passage migrant and rare winter visitor from successful reintroduction schemes.**

There were no completely convincing reports in either winter period, and all the fully documented birds seen were in the six month period from March to August. Late winter singles were at Wray on 11 March and Garstang on the 16th.

Passage got underway in April when there were around eight widely scattered reports from Wharles and Peel on the 1st, Whitendale on the 8th & 17th, Hawthornthwaite on the 7-10th, Eccleston (St. Helens) on the 12th, Aintree on the 18-19th and the Langden Valley on the 19th. Further reports in May came from Beacon Fell (tagged bird) on the 1st, Langden Valley and Whitendale on the 2nd, Woodplumpton on the 12th and Darwen on the 31st. Arguably the last spring migrants were reported in early June from Knowsley on the 3rd and Marshside on the 8th.

The only 'unassisted' record in July was one over Leighton Moss on the 19th. However, one which had been taken into care at Leigh, Greater Manchester on the 22nd was released at Samlesbury on the 26th and presumably accounted for several August sightings there and at nearby Hurst Green and Mellor. Otherwise, the last of the year were at Catlow Fell on 3 Aug and in the Altcar and Ince Blundell area from the 12th to the 18th.

**KITE species** *Milvus sp.*

One over Lytham St. Annes on 7 May 2006 was submitted as a Black Kite. The records committee considered it not completely certain, but accepted it as a kite species.

**MARSH HARRIER** *Circus aeruginosus***Fairly common passage migrant, scarce in east. Rare breeder, rare in winter.**

Records in the first winter period came from the favoured sites of MMWWT and the Ribble saltmarshes. At MMWWT there were up to three in January and two through to early March. Occasional singles were noted from both Marshside and Warton Bank, whilst at the latter site two birds were seen together on two dates in February.

Not for the first time breeding birds were back at Leighton Moss before any migrants were recorded; this year on 27 March with two there by the end of the month. There were approximately twelve migrants during April, half of these during the first week; birds were generally at or near the coast though one went over Darwen on the 18th and another was at Brockholes Quarry on the 26th. Seven were seen in May, the most notable of these were over Pendle Hill on the 1st and Blackburn on the 17th. One over Pilling Moss on 3 June was perhaps the last spring passage bird.

There were two nests at Leighton Moss and six juveniles (four and two respectively) were on the wing on 16 July. A pair again bred at nearby Haweswater rearing three young. An immature female summered at Altcar Withins.

Wandering non-breeding birds perhaps accounted for July sightings at Brockholes Quarry on the 6th and at Fleetwood Nature Park and MMWWT on the 19th. Reports from MMWWT (a second bird) on the 27th, Eagland Hill on the 28th and over Seaforth on the 29th may have been the

first post-breeding dispersal. Birds were widely distributed in farmland near the coast in August, with a peak of four at MMWWT and Altcar Withins and numerous other records in the south-west and Fylde. Inland records at this time came from Cross of Greet on 11 Aug, Slaidburn on the 12th, Goodber Common on 14th and two Rossendale sites (Cowm Reservoir and Musbury Tor) on 23rd, although there was presumably some duplication in these records.

Into September up to four were again at MMWWT, three at Altcar Withins and three either side of the Ribble at Hesketh Bank and Warton Bank. Away from north Lancashire, the Fylde and south-west, the only significant record at this time was of a juvenile in St. Helens on the 30th.

Birds were recorded at Leighton Moss until mid-October, and then all winter reports again from came MMWWT and the Ribble marshes, with up to two regularly at MMWWT to the year's end and three at Marshside in mid-October with up to two there and at Warton Bank thereafter.

## **HEN HARRIER** *Circus cyaneus*

**Fairly common visitor to coasts and hills outside breeding season. Rare breeder.**

There was encouraging news from the Bowland breeding grounds, although this did not appear to be reflected in numbers on the coast (with the possible exception of Marshside) and perhaps some dispersed further or even remained on higher ground.

In the first winter period at least one ringtail was regular at Marshside until early March, one at Leighton Moss in January, and another at several sites in or near Pilling from 20 Feb to 2 March. One was Leighton Moss on 21 March. Spring passage may have got underway with a ringtail lingering at Altcar in the first week of April, and during May birds were seen at Freckleton Naze on the 2nd, Leighton Moss on the 3rd and Cogie Hill on the 5th. An unusual record concerned one at Leighton Moss on 17 June.

There were twelve nesting attempts on the United Utilities Bowland estate, nine of which were successful, producing 26 fledged young. The number of nesting attempts and young fledged was up on 2006 figures, representing another highpoint in the population. There were three other nesting attempts in Bowland, one of which was successful, resulting in three young being fledged. In all, Lancashire supported 75% of the English breeding population in 2007. The majority of chicks were ringed and wing-tagged, whilst a proportion were either fitted with radio or a satellite transmitters to increase knowledge of their movements.

A female was seen to take a Moorhen at Belmont Reservoir in July. Dispersal to the west of the county was noted from 26 Aug, when one was again at Pilling. Birds were back at Marshside from 11 Sept, thereafter up to three were seen there on any one date but at least five individuals were recorded to the end of December (two ringtails seen together, one tagged and one untagged female and one adult male). Elsewhere, there were singles at MMWWT in October and November and up to two there in December, up to two at Warton Bank in November and December and singles at Thurnham on 20 Oct and at Leighton Moss and Scarisbrick in December.

## **GOSHAWK** *Accipiter gentilis*

**Rare feral breeding resident.**

This continues to be a difficult species to summarise. Breeding sites are treated with appropriate confidentiality, and because of this it isn't possible to say whether discreetly worded reports received related to two sites or as many as five. What can be said is that there was no evidence of confirmed breeding at any of these locations.

Given this, it is difficult to know whether the continuing records away from probable breeding areas reflect some dispersal or escaped falconers' birds. This year these included intriguing reports of two displaying over Mere Sands Wood on 4-5 April, then a female north-east

over Hesketh Golf Course, Southport on the 6th. On 22 Nov a female flew west at Hollins Hey Farm, St. Helens.

### **SPARROWHAWK** *Accipiter nisus*

**Fairly common breeding resident, uncommon passage migrant.**

The only significant records received for the first part of the year concerned three apparent migrants over Heysham between 6 & 12 April.

Breeding information received included an assessment of a healthy population in the Rossendale area. There were six territories in the Anglezarke-Rivington area. Croxteth Park, Liverpool held three pairs. Different pairs in south Liverpool fledged six and five young respectively, and in east Lancashire a pair at Jackhouse Reservoir fledged four young.

In the autumn five were seen over Delph plantation, Belmont on 8 Sept. Visible migration was most pronounced at Heysham, where seven were noted between September and 4 Nov. Other apparent visible migration was noted in October at Caton Moor on the 1st and Seaforth on the 23rd. In the second winter period three were seen at both Marton Mere and Lytham Moss in December.

### **BUZZARD** *Buteo buteo*

**Fairly common breeding resident and winter visitor. Uncommon passage migrant.**

There appeared to be a further expansion of range during the year and some impressive consolidation in recently colonised areas. The marked change in distribution in recent years was reflected in the highest counts being away from traditional upland haunts, with autumn totals of 23 at Altcar in early September, 18 at Todderstaffe Hall in October, and 17 at MMWWT and south over Seaforth in September. It appears that all of these were record counts for the locations involved.

The regional reports reflected this picture. Consolidation was noted in Rossendale, where there was a marked passage in both April and September. Continued increases in east Lancashire included a clear rise in wintering numbers, particularly in the Dunsop Valley but with records from over 60 locations in total. Range expansion was noted around the edges of Liverpool, including in the suburbs of the city and, as elsewhere, the species was the most regular raptor at some sites.

Few large counts were received early in the year. Those submitted included eight at Birkett Fell in January, eight at Todderstaffe and seven at Prescott Reservoirs in February. Peak numbers increased generally in March, including twelve at Prescott Reservoirs and ten at MMWWT. Passage was noted through both Seaforth and Marshside at this time. A tagged bird seen in the Chorley area in March was not local, it may have been from a Scottish scheme but this was not confirmed.

Little breeding information was received considering how widespread the species has become, or perhaps because of this. There were two pairs in the Belmont area for the first time, a couple of pairs nested in the Sefton Coast pinewoods and one on the United Utilities Bowland estate.

Autumn counts were exemplified by the peaks referred to above, and also included twelve at Reed's Moss, St. Helens and ten at Downholland Moss in September. Peak counts dropped again in the second winter period, but included up to ten in the Todderstaffe/Mythop area, seven at Prescott Reservoirs and six roosting together near Belmont.

**OSPREY** *Pandion haliaetus***Fairly common passage migrant.**

A very early bird moved north over Marshside on 6 March, fully three weeks before the next. All other records that month were of singles at Marshside, Skelmersdale and Warton Crag on the 27th, Darwen on the 28th and Brockholes Quarry on the 30th.

As usual, the pace picked up in April with about 30 birds seen, allowing for obvious duplication. If anything there was a bias towards inland records at this time, including birds on four dates at Stocks Reservoir and three in Rossendale. It was a little quieter in May with ten bird-days recorded, six of these in the first week with a gap to singles at Jenny Brown's Point and Stocks Reservoir on the 17th and a further gap until three dates late in the month in the Dunsop Valley, possibly relating to a lingering non-breeder. Singles at Whitendale on 3 June and in the Dunsop Valley on the 5th may relate to the late May sightings. One over Marshside heading north on 17 June was presumably a very late migrant, and this may also have been the case with birds the next day at Leighton Moss and at Barrow in east Lancashire on the 26th.

July produced singles on several dates at Leighton Moss, and two on the 25th. These may have been failed breeders returning, but it is also possible they were birds too young to nest prospecting a potential site. It is surely only a matter of time before this species does establish in the county, perhaps at Leighton or Stocks Reservoir. The only other July report was an undated one from Stanley Park, Blackpool. August saw singles on a dozen or so dates at Leighton Moss – presumably there were some lingering individuals here – and only half a dozen elsewhere: at Sunnyhurst on the 1st, Colne on the 9th, Melling on the 11th, Jenny Brown's Point and Higher Hollinbank on the 21st and Marshside on the 29th-30th.

Typically, the return passage was much less pronounced with only a further five birds seen in September: on Downholland Moss on the 1st, Forton on the 3rd, Leighton Moss the 3rd & 4th, Starr Gate, Blackpool on the 10th and Skippool on the 17th. Mirroring the spring, there was a nearly three weeks gap before the last, over Crosby on 5 Oct.

**KESTREL** *Falco tinnunculus***Fairly common breeding resident and winter visitor.**

Few records were received for the early part of the year; four at Dairy Farm Road was the highest count of the year from St. Helens. In spring presumed visible migration included singles high over Heysham on 30 March, 13 April and 11 May, and Seaforth on 14 May.

Breeding information from the Pilling-Preesall area reflected a good breeding season, with nine pairs laying 47 eggs from which 45 young fledged. There were approximately ten territories in the Anglezarke-Rivington area and three pairs near Belmont. All traditional sites in Rossendale were reported to be occupied.

There were no large gatherings on the Ribble marshes in autumn this year. The biggest number reported at this time was eight at Grane, Rossendale on 5 Aug. There were six at Mythop, Fylde on 20 Sept and the same number at Whitendale on 17 Oct. The only evidence of visible migration during this period came from Heysham, with singles on 1 & 7 Oct, two on 19 Oct and finally two on 3 Nov. The largest numbers of the year at Marshside were in December when up to four were seen.

**MERLIN** *Falco columbarius*

**Scarce breeding bird in uplands, fairly common winter visitor particularly to coastal marshes and mosses.**

Coastal and inland records all pointed to continued decline or at best no recovery from the low numbers of 2006. Although up to three were at Marshside and Warton Bank in the first winter period, numbers were reported to be generally down on the Ribble Estuary. Elsewhere, there were up to two at MMWWT from January to March, perhaps involving birds from the Ribble. Records in Rossendale and east Lancashire away from Bowland remained low, presumably due to the fall in breeding numbers.

Visible migrants comprised singles north over Seaforth on 12 March, Heysham on 16 March, Starr Gate on 2 April and Heysham again on 13 April. Late spring migrants in April were at MMWWT on the 20th, Marshside on the 23rd and at Ballam, Fylde from the 25th to the 27th.

There were four confirmed nesting attempts on the United Utilities Bowland estate, as in 2006, of which three were successful. Two former nesting sites in the West Pennine Moors were both unoccupied, in one case due to moorland fires.

Birds were back on the coast early, and at least some of these were confirmed juveniles rather than failed breeders. Following one at MMWWT on 13 July others that month were at Marshside on the 24th and Eagland Hill on the 28th.

Visible migrants in autumn comprised two at Heysham on 6 Sept, one there on 7 Oct, and one at Seaforth on 5 Oct. There were up to four at Marshside in the second winter period, with two each at Warton Bank and MMWWT.

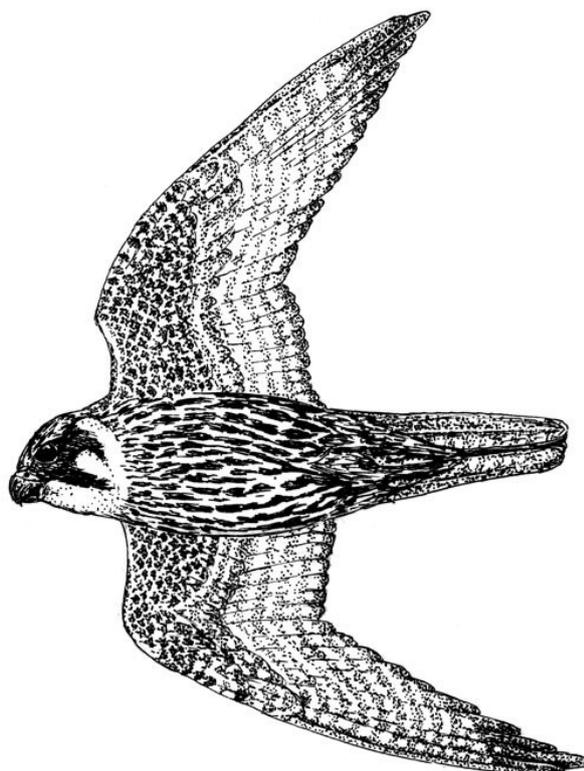
**HOBBY** *Falco subbuteo*

**Rare breeding bird and uncommon passage migrant.**

A very early bird was reported in the Langden Valley on 1 April. Thereafter that month records came predominantly from the east: at Black Moss Reservoir on the 16th, Martholme on the 21st & 29th, Rainford on the 22nd and Brockholes Quarry on the 30th. The bird at Martholme was identified as a first-summer. Birds were more widespread in May, including at MMWWT, where two were seen together on the 25th.

One pair bred at a confidential site in the east of the county, the first certain breeding record in Lancashire. Three chicks were ringed, and it is thought that all fledged successfully. There was strong evidence of breeding at one site in the south-west where an adult was seen feeding a juvenile and nesting was thought possibly to have occurred at three other sites in the south-west. No information was received from favoured areas in the north of the county.

Following the breeding season birds were more widespread again in August, including two together at MMWWT on the 9th and three at Brockholes on the 22nd. Few reports at this time were aged, though a juvenile



was at Pilling Marsh on the 16th. Birds were still present or passing through no fewer than a dozen sites in September, including another juvenile at Rossall on the 7th and fairly late birds at Brockholes Quarry from the 18th to the 20th and at Altcar Withins on the 23rd. The last of the year, however, was one at Belmont on 3 Oct.

### **GYR FALCON** *Falco rusticolus*

#### **Vagrant**

One was seen at rest and in flight on Downholland Moss on 12 Oct (DR Williams). The record has been submitted to the BBRC and if accepted will become the first conclusive record for Lancashire.

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

#### **Scarce breeder, fairly common winter visitor.**

There were some interesting suggestions as to possible changes in wintering distribution. Peregrines were considered less frequent in east Lancashire in January and February, with a marked return in March. It was also noted that birds were less frequent on the Ribble Estuary at this time, although this may have reflected general decline on the coast as there generally appeared to be fewer casual observations of more than one bird. Up to two were regularly at MMWWT and Seaforth, with similar numbers at Marshside and a winter peak there of three on 31 Dec.

Breeding information received was incomplete, with no data from a number of areas where pairs are known to occur. In the stronghold, the United Utilities land in Bowland, seven pairs again nested but productivity was lower than in 2006, with five successful nests producing eight chick compared with 13 the year before. Nesting was also confirmed at a site in the West Pennine Moors not used since 1995. The regular site in Southport was deserted during incubation, while the outcome of the usual Liverpool's breeding pair is not known. There was evidence to suggest a pair may have nested in St. Helens.

### **WATER RAIL** *Rallus aquaticus*

#### **Fairly common winter visitor. Rare breeder.**

A population estimate by tape luring at the county stronghold of Leighton Moss suggested just 35 pairs in 2007, well down on recent years, with maximum winter counts received of twelve on 29 Jan and 25 Feb and eight on 18 Oct. Nearby, birds were present during the breeding season at both Haweswater and Silverdale Moss. Elsewhere in the Lancaster district, apart from eight on Aldcliffe Marsh in frost conditions on 17 Dec, birds were present only in low single figures outside of the breeding season at Heysham, Bolton-le-Sands and Hest Bank.

On the Fylde, birds were present throughout both winter periods at Marton Mere with maximum counts of seven in February and at least eight in November. Additionally, singles were also reported from Myerscough Quarry in March, Fleetwood Marsh and Fairhaven saltmarsh in November and Carr House Green in December, with breeding probable at Warton Bank where birds were calling on 27 April and 17 June with seven birds reported from Warton Marsh on 21 Feb.

An unusual record concerned a road kill on Sir Tom Finney Way, Preston on 16 Dec, whilst further south up to two were present in Yarrow Valley Park from September to December and two were at Ulnes Walton on 17 Nov.

There were no records from Rossendale in 2007, whilst in east Lancashire reports were received of singles at Witton Park in November, Wood End Sewage Works in February, March and October with a garden first from Marl Hill on 14 Oct. Up to two were at Lomeshaye Marsh in

November and December, at Reedley Hollow Marsh in March and at Rowley Lake in February with singles there in March, November and December.

The only multiple count from the St. Helens area concerned two at Ravenhead Greenway on New Year's Day, thereafter only singles were encountered at Eccleston Mere, Berrington Lane, Carr Mill Dam, Bold Moss and the Sankey Valley during the winter months.

Marshside reported singles during the first winter period through to dates suggestive of breeding in June, followed by further singles from August to October increasing to two in November and three in December. Mere Sands Wood held up to three in the first half of the year (one until 7 May) and up to two in the second whilst MMWWT only reported singles in January, February, March, May (again suggestive of breeding) and December. Elsewhere in the south-west singles were at Sands Lake, Ainsdale in March, Altcar Rifle Ranges in February, the first in ten years on Downholland Moss in October with a juvenile in the Rimrose Valley on 6 September. Further south, a single was at Seaforth in September and December, at Oglet in March and December, whilst on Christmas Day four were on the saltmarsh on Garston Shore.

### **SPOTTED CRAKE\*** *Porzana porzana*

**Scarce migrant. Rare breeder.**

Recorded annually in Lancashire since 2004, this year's sole confirmed report concerned a calling bird on Silverdale Moss from 30 June until 3 July (J Wilson *et al*).

### **MOORHEN** *Gallinula chloropus*

**Common winter visitor and breeder.**

International importance: 20000. National importance: 7500

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MMWWT	/	267	181	144	177	97	198	332	483	372	250	/

At MMWWT, where 48 pairs bred, counts were similar to previous years but still notably lower than during the 1990s. At the other main county site, Leighton Moss, a count of 65 on the meres in October was received, whilst elsewhere in the north there were 24 pairs on the Lune between Skerton Weir and Kirkby Lonsdale, including twelve pairs at Arkholme, and at least nine pairs bred at Heysham.

Highlights of 255 records received from the Fylde included 30+ on Marton Mere on 6 Jan, 25 at Bourbles Pit in February, 24 at Fairhaven Lake in November, 23 at Preesall in October and 20+ at Sowerby in August.

Four pairs bred at Brockholes and ten pairs were reported as having bred in the Rivington-Anglezarke area. Elsewhere in the West Pennine Moors, 27 were at Belmont Reservoir on 18 Feb with a record eleven pairs breeding there, including five pairs within the gully, where Moorhens were noted to predate unguarded Black-headed Gull nests.

In east Lancashire, 168 records were received from 43 sites with breeding confirmed at ten sites, the best of eight double-figure counts being 15 at Chatburn on 26 Jan. The largest site count from Rossendale was 20 at Holmes Terrace Lodge on 28 Oct and breeding was recorded on at least 19 sites.

Away from MMWWT, notable records from the south-west included 106 on the December Ribble WeBS count, 38 on Downholland Moss in January, 50 at Marshside in December and a maximum of 24 at Mere Sands Wood in the early part of the year. Twelve pairs were reported breeding on Hesketh Golf Course, ten pairs at nearby Marshside with two on Freshfield Dune Heath. The St. Helens area received 153 records including 37 in Taylor Park on 28 Dec and 20 both

at Eccleston Mere and Newton Lake in January. Seaforth reported a peak count of 17 in October, whilst elsewhere in Liverpool several pairs were breeding on the old Garden Festival site and 82 was an impressive count from Sefton Park on 19 Dec.

## **COOT** *Fulica atra*

### **Abundant winter visitor and common breeder.**

International importance: 17500. National importance: 1730

#### Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dockacres	589	200	128	49	51	59	111	119	283	640	690	673
Leighton Moss	195	130	85	75	95	448	539	552	569	490	445	382
MMWWT	/	178	57	99	64	74	126	180	55	137	218	/
Seaforth	71	90	27	35	42	73	56	57	73	84	89	111
Southport ML	1091	541	20	17	21	87	316	419	772	900	732	1286

The December count at Southport Marine Lake came within a whisker of once again registering a new county record – maximum winter counts there having risen nearly four-fold in a decade. Numbers at Leighton Moss showed another increase whilst counts recovered well in the second winter period at the Dockacres complex (the vast majority of birds on Pine Lake) but were generally lower at Seaforth and MMWWT than in 2006.

In the north, seven or eight pairs bred at Middleton whilst the three pairs on the Lune between Leck Beck and Loyne Bridge was half the 2006 total. Over 380 records were received from the Fylde, including counts of 554 at Marton Mere in September and 489 in October, 155 at Glasson Basin in February and 115 in July, 140+ at Mythop in August, 116 at Myerscough Quarry in January, 44 on Fairhaven Lake in January and a peak count of 25 from Bourbles Pit, Preesall.

The Preston area recorded 21 pairs breeding at Brockholes with 46 on Preston Dock in January, whilst near Chorley two or more pairs bred at Cuerden and Yarrow Valley Parks, 20 were on Lower Healey Lodges in winter whilst two pairs on the Ornamental Reservoir, Belmont were the first breeders there since 2000.

Breeding was confirmed at nine sites in east Lancashire with maximum counts of 29 at Rishton Reservoir on 26 Jan, 26 at Barrow Lodge in July and 15 at Stocks Reservoir also in July. The species was reported to 'struggle to gain a foothold' in Rossendale with only one breeding pair reported from Holmes Terrace Lodge and a largest count of just four from Holden Wood Reservoir.

Marshside reported 20 breeding pairs (with four nearby on Hesketh Golf Course) with 170 there in August a response to high water levels. Elsewhere in the south-west, eight pairs bred on Downholland Moss with 19 there in February, 27 pairs bred at MMWWT, 41 were at Mere Sands Wood in the early part of the year whilst five pairs bred in Sefton Park, Liverpool with 19 there on 19 Dec.

Highlights from the 171 records received from the St. Helens area were 68 at Clay Colliery on 9 Jan, 55 in Taylor Park in November, 31 on Eccleston Mere in July with by far the highest counts emanating from Prescott Reservoirs with peaks of 220 on 2 Oct and 302 on 27 Dec.

## **COMMON CRANE** \* *Grus grus*

### **Rare passage migrant.**

A sub-adult was on farmland at Chipping on 25-28 May (G Thomas *et al*)

**OYSTERCATCHER** *Haematopus ostralegus***Abundant winter visitor. Common breeding bird.**

International importance: 10200. National importance: 3200

WeBS counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS	25241	16175	15090	10577	7602	2198	7030	15010	25769	19310	16147	17179
Ribble	688	10872	874	1364	999	805	2266	3132	2569	2894	3930	6821
Alt	1112	759	518	437	464	360	558	1098	1236	1063	148	666

Of the 36 monthly counts shown above for Morecambe Bay, the Ribble and the Alt, only six demonstrate significantly increased counts on last year – to no pattern (January MBS, February & July Ribble, May, June, September Alt). More worrying are the 15 months that show significantly reduced counts, most clearly with the Morecambe Bay and Ribble counts from August until the end of the year which were down by a third and a half respectively.

Away from the main sites, 124 were on Garston shore on the inner Mersey in February, rising to 634 in March with 77 there in December, and a flock of 200 were regularly at Bourbles Pit, Preesall in February and March,

Inland counts continued to increase. Peaks in early spring saw 87 on Downholland Moss and 57 at Myerscough Quarry in February, and 145 at Burholme Aqueduct, 120 at Dunsop Bridge, 80 at Stocks Reservoir and 45 at Brockholes Quarry in March. An early return was noted on the Lune at Arkholme, where six on 1 Jan increased to a spring peak of 276 on 8 March.

Breeding records were received from 17 sites, the most 145 pairs on the Lune from Skerton Weir to Kirkby Lonsdale with 54 on the Arkholme to Leck Beck section, 29 pairs at Carnforth Slag Tips, and 67 nests on 48 maize fields in the Lune and Keer Valleys. From the 54 pairs at Arkholme to Leck Beck 38 nests hatched 16 young, the best result for a decade. Six pairs bred at Marshside and one on RAF Woodvale, Formby. A pair fledged a single juvenile on the roof of the old Lex building on Pilling Lane, Chorley, holding up the demolition of the building. At Belmont Reservoir four pairs nested, fledging three young, and at Rivington/Anglezarke young were seen at three of five sites. Across the region, however, success was generally poor with only a further handful of sites reporting fledged young.

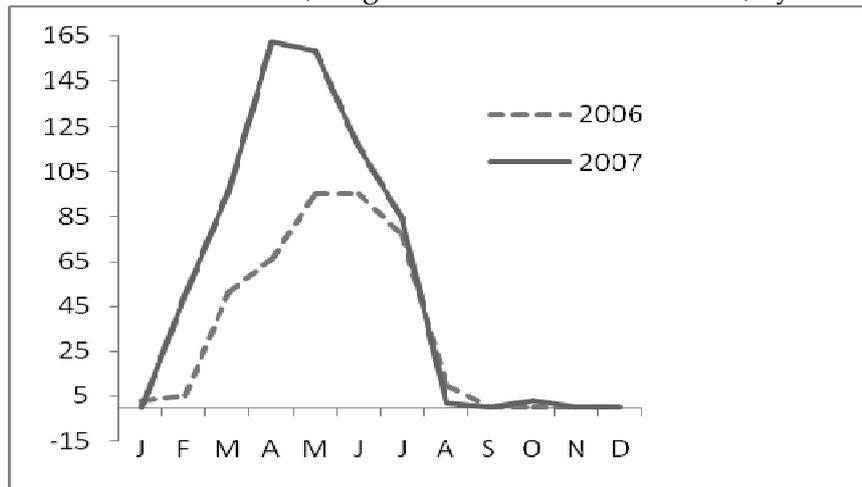
**AVOCET** *Recurvirostra avosetta***Recently established breeding bird, uncommon passage migrant.**

The graph clearly shows the early return and increasing number of birds breeding compared to 2006. Marshside, MMWWT and the Eric Morecambe complex continue to be the three focal areas although, as expected, a few more birds are also being reported from elsewhere.

The first of the year was a lone individual on 15 Feb at Marshside, where numbers rose rapidly to 34 before the month's end, peaking at 76 in April. Based on the number of occupied nests there were 27 breeding pairs there but productivity was low this year with only six young fledged.

Birds also began to appear in February at MMWWT and Leighton Moss, reaching a peak of 58 in June and 38 in April to May at each site respectively. At MMWWT ten pairs were reported incubating in April, increasing to 32 adults with 28 juveniles in May. By June this had increased to 31 juveniles and at the end of the month 19 fledged and seven unfledged young were reported. There was no breeding success at the Eric Morecambe Complex – the first clutches were flooded out on high tides and replacement clutches were predated.

Total numbers of Avocets at Marshside, Leighton Moss and Martin Mere, by month, in 2007



The majority of birds reported from WeBS counts almost certainly related to birds from the three main breeding sites but may have included some additional non-breeding individuals. However, it appears that wanderers have become surprisingly scarce since breeding became established.

Elsewhere, singles were at Belmont Reservoir on 28 Feb, Seaforth on 3 March, heard overflying Blackburn Royal Hospital at 3 a.m. on 14 April, at Cockersand on 26 April and Rosemary Wood Pool, Downholland Moss on 30 May, while three were at Pilling Lane Ends on 5 March.

Sightings on the Lune Estuary were almost certainly all related to attempted breeding on an island on one of the borrow pits. There were regular sightings of up to four in this area in June, including both sides of the Lune Estuary, with a maximum of five on 10 July. Two were seen inland over Darwen on the 15 July. The last bird of the year was one at MMWWT on 9 Oct.

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

**Fairly common on passage. Scarce breeder.**

The first of the year arrived four days earlier than last year when two were at Lightfoot Green Quarry on 20 March, followed by one at MMWWT the following day. Further individuals all arrived about on time: at Withnell Fold Flash on the 25th, Brockholes Quarry on the 26th, Altham on the 27th, Aldcliffe Marshes on the 28th and Arkholme on the 30th. There were 44 records from 25 sites in April, mostly of singles or pairs with highest counts of eight on the Lune at Arkholme on the 6th, five at Anglezarke Reservoir on the 20-26th and four at Lightfoot Green on the 4th.

Breeding was reported from fourteen sites, mainly the results of single pairs. The outcome in most cases was unknown. At Lightfoot Green three pairs were considered to be responsible for four juveniles, three juveniles were seen at Alston Wetland, one at Marshside, and three fledged at Seaforth, while two pairs each had juveniles at Parsonage Reservoir. Four pairs at Brockholes were unsuccessful, while four at Arkholme recorded ten nesting attempts, hatching just six young, four of which were lost within days. Six pairs nested elsewhere on the Lune gravels.

Autumn passage records were few. Three were at Stocks Reservoir on 10 June, five at Anglezarke on the 29th, five at Alston Reservoirs on 8 July and a juvenile at Rufford on the 24th. There were three August records: two juveniles at Ream Hills Lake on the 11th and Conder Pool on the 16th, and one at MMWWT until the 17th. September produced single juveniles at Rishton Reservoir on the 1st and Marshside on the 3rd, and the last of the year was one at Belmont Reservoir on the 8th.

**RINGED PLOVER** *Charadrius hiaticula*

**Common passage migrant in spring, declining as a winter visitor. Scarce breeding bird.**

International importance: 730. National importance: 330 (winter); 300 (passage)

WeBS counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS	86	48	56	63	272	114	21	129	54	88	58	43
Ribble	15	37	16	24	1016	124	46	487	31	13	24	20
Alt	2	0	1	34	205	21	4	277	76	1	1	0

Although there was some recovery of counts for some months compared to last year the overall trend is for a fall in numbers at all sites. Winter counts on the Alt continue to decline – now to virtually none. A count of 129 from Altcar Rifle Ranges on 17 April was missed by WeBS.

The first inland migrants appeared in the first two weeks of February with ones and twos at MMWWT, Darwen Moor and Sunnyhurst Hey Reservoir. More appeared in March, including 14 at MMWWT, and numbers increased from April, including 21 at MMWWT on 10 April, nine at Parsonage Reservoir on the 15th, ten bird-days at Stocks Reservoir during early May and single figures at Alston and Prescott Reservoirs, Catchpole Moss and Clay Colliery.

Two hundred at Marshside on 13 July was an interesting 'between-seasons' count, perhaps early migrants but, as usual, the main coastal passage took place during August. Thirty were on Oglet shore on the inner Mersey on 17 Aug.

Breeding was only reported from six sites – two pairs at Heysham (raising three young), three pairs at Seaforth (all washed out in May, but raising five young from second clutches), Brockholes Quarry (where nesting was attempted without success), and a pair at Arkholme which made two failed attempts (cattle trampling and flooding). Fourteen pairs nested on Carnforth Slag Tips and seven pairs in the Lune Valley, including three in a maize field at Melling. There was no reported breeding in east Lancashire this year.

**DOTTEREL** *Charadrius morinellus*

**Uncommon, but regular spring migrant, scarce in autumn.**

The first two birds appeared a day earlier than last year on 20 April on Pendle Hill; two males and a female were there from 26 April to 1 May and ten on 2 & 6 May. Five on Ward's Stone on 4 May was the only other record..

**STONE CURLEW** *Burhinus oedicanus*

**Vagrant.**

One was in the Knott End/Pilling area on 14-17 April – only the fifth modern record in Lancashire and the first since 2004 (P Taylor, RE Danson *et al*).

**GOLDEN PLOVER** *Pluvialis apricaria*

**Abundant on passage and in winter near coasts. Scarce breeding bird.**

International importance: 8000. National importance: 2500.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	463	2123	1378	1	0	0	193	108	56	1221	3024	1680
Ribble WeBS	1930	2545	884	1154	1	0	0	194	600	2191	3037	4183
Marshside	2200	2200	2000	2000	1	1	13	200	220	700	700	2400

WeBS counts continue to fluctuate, with totals for January, August and September down on last

year while late winter numbers were about the same. Last year significant monthly counts from Marshside were missed, so this year they are included in full given the numbers concerned.

Large flocks in January included 1825 on Banks Marsh, 1800 on the Lune at Glasson and 500 on Downholland Moss.

Inland passage began in February with 96 at Altham, 50 on Pendle Hill and 30 at Great Hameldon, with about the same number on Haslingden Moor and Darwen Moor; there were 165 at Pilling, 59 at Rossall Point and 35 appeared at Seaforth. Twelve were at Trawden on 2 March, building to 90 on the 12th and 180 on 18 April. 150 were on Catchpole Moss, St. Helens on 19 April.

Returning birds started to appear in July with one on Champion Moor on the 17th, 13 at Marshside on the 19th and 20 at Seaforth on the 22nd. Numbers at Marshside rapidly rose to 200 by 6 Aug.

There were numerous sightings of birds over the next three months, the largest of which involved 1000 on Longton Marsh, 240 at Warton Marsh, 106 at Skippool Creek and a flock of 900 around Pilling. The Ling Hill /Champion Moor flock peaked at 92 on 13 Nov.

December again witnessed some sizeable gatherings – 800 were on Thurnham Marsh and 250 on Downholland Moss. On 10 Dec over 250 were counted flying west over Oglet, Liverpool. Birds were reported from eight other sites at this time including Low Meadows (77), Parsonage Reservoir (17), and Ling Hill (27).

There were very few records of breeding, possibly reflecting reduced visits to the hilltops because of bad weather. On 40 1km squares surveyed on the United Utilities Bowland estate there were five pairs (up from three pairs in 2005). Four pairs were reported from the Belmont moors, three from Wet Moss and two from Haslingden/Oswaldtwistle Moor. There were no reports on outcome.

## **GREY PLOVER** *Pluvialis squatarola*

**Abundant, but declining, passage and winter visitor to coast. Uncommon inland.**

International importance: 2500. National importance: 530

WeBS counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS	276	772	297	63	4	0	1	1	210	144	128	44
Ribble	1870	3518	1198	2593	615	52	30	448	1950	1411	1151	1915
Alt	850	463	689	494	1241	1	17	55	976	62	62	741

Apart from the occasional month that showed a higher count than the corresponding one last year, the overall trend for all three sites is one of falling numbers. 2700 feeding on Formby/Freshfield shore on 26 April were missed by that month's WeBS count.

Away from the beaches, a first-summer was at Seaforth from 6-19 May and again from 3-16 June with two juveniles there in the last two weeks of October. None was seen inland.

## **WHITE-TAILED LAPWING** *Vanellus leucura*

**Vagrant.**

One was at the Eric Morecambe complex and Leighton Moss on 10-17 June (J & E McLachlan). The first record for Lancashire (see separate article).

**LAPWING** *Vanellus vanellus***Abundant but decreasing winter visitor, passage migrant and breeder.**

International importance:20000. National importance: 20000

## Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	10956	7933	442	137	110	365	2545	1567	627	8212	5861	11362
Ribble WeBS	7595	13821	729	429	324	993	2331	1742	1974	1525	13446	10986
Alt WeBS	190	240	6	4	6	53	230	350	96	1160	67	320
Foulridge Res.	178	128	/	/	/	/	/	350	847	500	450	477
Stocks Res.	2	29	17	12	14	14	20	7	185	451	146	/
MMWWT	3200	3600	770	/	314	400	1000	1100	1900	2200	2000	/
Marshside	2015	2057	950	207	143	113	143	215	300	1563	1200	3000

WeBS counts from MBS show no significant change since the early 1990s, while the trend on the Ribble appears to be one of stable or increasing counts throughout the year and on the Alt continuing decline due to markedly lower numbers at Seaforth in winter.

Lower monthly peaks were reported from several other sites including Marshside, but these were influenced by the minimum of 9000 nearby on Banks Marsh. Other site peaks in the first winter period included 3000 at Pilling, 2000 at Lytham Moss and Glasson and 1000 at Cockerham.

Breeding was reported from over 42 sites, the most significant of which were 95 pairs on the RSPB Leighton Moss and Morecambe Bay Reserves, 92 pairs at Marshside, 48 pairs on the Lune (BTO Waterways survey), 34 at Belmont Reservoir, 32 on Downholland Moss, 15 at Deeply Vale and 13 at Alston Reservoirs. Where the outcome of breeding was recorded all observers considered it poor.

Post-breeding flocks started to appear in late June with 40 at Mythop Flood on the 27th and 300 at Pilling on the 29th. Counts around Pilling rose to a peak of 820 in July.

Site peaks in the second winter period included 4500 at Hesketh Bank, 2000 at Pilling Lane Ends and Warton Marsh, and 1000 on Lytham Moss. The Burnley rooftops again held up to 750.

**KNOT** *Calidris canutus***Abundant winter visitor and passage migrant to coasts. Uncommon inland.**

International importance: 4500. National importance: 2800.

## WeBS counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS	5063	7099	4417	2324	145	0	40	19	2177	16573	29624	12751
Ribble	20134	23753	26481	13562	6965	5570	4242	12430	3242	8818	17104	23041
Alt	10010	4664	2	754	27	1	707	2995	1892	20	/	4504

## Monthly peak counts

Heysham	/	10000	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	12580	22000	8500
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Numbers bounced back in Morecambe Bay after two poor winters; the November count at Heysham was particularly impressive. The Alt continued its decline in importance with the January count representing the lowest annual peak since 1998, but the Ribble appears to be holding its own but with numbers stabilising at roughly 60% of the level of the early 1990s.

Notable site counts included 10-11000 off Lytham at low water on 25 April, 2200 at Jenny Brown's Point on 28 Sept and 3500 on Preesall Sands on 9 Dec.

The WeBS counts imply that significant numbers of second-calendar-year birds were summering on the Ribble but the only definite report received was of 300 between Freckleton Naze and Warton Marsh and 25 on Carnforth Marsh on 16 July.

There was the usual sprinkling of inland records: one at MMWWT on 5-7 April with two there on 14 Aug, one on 23 Aug and a record 32 on 30 Sept, and singles at Stocks Reservoir on 4 May, Foulridge Reservoirs on 10 July and Prescott Reservoirs on 10 July and 21 Sept.

### **SANDERLING** *Calidris alba*

**Abundant passage migrant and common winter visitor.**

International importance: 1200. National importance: 210 (winter); 300 (passage)

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	76	77	52	11	3	0	16	0	0	0	0	0
Ribble WeBS	3250	1650	3000	1657	4690	14	660	4700	1130	2580	2970	4110
Alt WeBS	867	511	1007	627	2191	132	353	2171	1786	325	/	363

The Ribble continues to be by far the most important British estuary for Sanderling and internationally important numbers were present during both winters and both passage periods. The May count was the highest spring total since 2003 and August's the highest in autumn since 1999. The increasing numbers on the Ribble are to some extent the result of a medium-term shift away from the Alt, where counts in 2007 were around the average of the past few years. The Lancashire sector of Morecambe Bay has never held nationally important numbers in winter but was internationally important during passage periods until the late 1990s, since when numbers have declined dramatically.

The only significant count missed by WeBS was of 700 on Crosby Shore on 10 Feb.

The majority of inland records came during May, with singles at Stocks Reservoir on the 4th, MMWWT on the 4th & 23rd and two on the 29th, three at Prescott Reservoirs on the 24th, and singles at Brockholes Quarry and Parsonage Reservoir on the 10th, Anglezarke on the 23rd and Alston Reservoirs on the 30th. There were three autumn birds, singles at Lightfoot Green on 14 July, MMWWT on 27 July and Foulridge Reservoirs on 16 Aug.

### **LITTLE STINT** *Calidris minuta*

**Fairly common passage migrant. Scarce winter visitor.**

Singles were at Aldcliffe Marsh on 27 Jan to 10 Feb and Marshside on 2-11 Feb with four at the latter on site on 15 Feb. None was seen in the second winter period.

The next were up to four at Marshside from 22 March to the end of the month, seven there on 1 April and up to four during the rest of April. This was early for spring passage and may have mainly involved British wintering birds. Up to three were at Marshside during May with the last on the 29th. Elsewhere, the passage consisted entirely of singles: at MMWWT on 8 May, Newton Marsh on the 11th, Cockersand on the 13th & 22nd, Banks Marsh on the 21st, Alston Reservoirs on the 26-27th and Morecambe on the 29th.

An isolated record of one on 14 June at Marshside was presumably a non-breeding bird as perhaps was one at Hurst Green on 2 July. The next were two at Skipool Creek on 10 Aug and a moderate autumn passage ensued with ones and twos recorded at Marshside, MMWWT, Sunderland Point and the Eric Morecambe complex during August. Birds were rather more numerous during September when most records came from inland sites, including twos at Upper Foulridge on 30 Sept to 7 Oct and Rishton Reservoir on 20 Sept. Other October records were two juveniles on Crosby Marine Lake on the 1st, one at MMWWT on the 4th, 15 juveniles on Banks Marsh on the 6th and one at Marshside on the 20th.

**TEMMINCK'S STINT\*** *Calidris temminckii***Scarce passage migrant.**

One at Alston Reservoirs on 26-27 May in the company of a Little Stint was the only record (G Thomas).

**WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER\*** *Calidris fuscicollis***Vagrant.**

An adult was found on the Saltwater Pool at Seaforth on 22 July (AJ Conway) and was there again on 23-24 July and on Crosby Shore on the 26th. This was Seaforth's second record and the 14th for the county, six of which have occurred this century.

**PECTORAL SANDPIPER** *Calidris melanotos***Rare passage migrant**

2006. The bird at MMWWT from 4 May remained until the 19th, not the 13th as previously published.

2007. The first at Marshside on 26 March (T Westhead *et al*) was our earliest ever. Two adults on the Eric Morecambe complex on 12-19 July and a single adult at Marshside on 22-24 July (J Dempsey *et al*) were the only other records.

**CURLEW SANDPIPER** *Calidris ferruginea***Fairly common passage migrant**

None was seen in either winter period although one at Marshside on 29-30 March may have been wintering in Britain. One at Marshside on 26 April was the only record that month, but small numbers were seen at several coastal sites during May including four different birds at Marshside, five at MMWWT on the 11th and twos at Ainsdale on the 2nd and Banks Marsh on the 21st.

A presumably non-breeding bird was at Seaforth on 24 June and one at Skippool Creek on 18 July may have marked the start of the return passage, although no more were seen until two at Cockersand on 6 Aug. A further 100 or so were reported from 13 sites (all coastal and predominantly on the Lune and Wyre) throughout the autumn with largest counts of eleven juveniles at Glasson and five at Sunderland Point on 11 Sept, four at Conder Green on the 12th, five on Banks Marsh on the 17th, eight on the Eric Morecambe complex on the 23rd and eight at Skippool Creek on 4 Oct. The last was at Glasson on 24 Oct.

**PURPLE SANDPIPER** *Calidris maritima***Scarce winter visitor.**

One was with Turnstones at Jenny Brown's Point on 9 Jan and another at Fleetwood Marine Lake/Rossall Point on 20-21 Jan. One at Morecambe on 5 Feb to 2 April was perhaps the same as one at Heysham on 13-30 April.

No more were seen until singles at Pilling Marsh on 29 Sept and on 3 Nov at Rossall, where numbers peaked at three on 9 Nov and two remained until the end of the year. One at Blackpool on 12 Nov was perhaps one of the Rossall birds. Two arrived back at Heysham on 12 Nov and one at Morecambe on the 14th; numbers grew to three at Heysham from 9 Dec and these stayed until the end of the year.

**DUNLIN** *Calidris alpina***Abundant passage migrant and winter visitor. Scarce breeding bird.**

International importance: 9500 (schinzii); 13300 (alpina). National importance: 5600

## WeBS counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS	7300	7290	2620	2493	2629	28	406	441	3063	1875	8446	7942
Ribble	4785	8415	4192	14181	27645	4453	7069	14663	703	4928	9797	11484
Alt	7676	4235	1296	546	3770	379	614	3336	215	231	/	758

The January count on the Alt was the second highest ever there, exceeded only by 8540 in December 2004. The recent trend towards higher winter numbers on the Alt reflects a slight decline on the Ribble which is in danger of slipping below the threshold for international importance in winter. However, the Ribble passage remains stable, albeit at about 75% of the level of the late 1990s. It was a fairly average year in Morecambe Bay, while the largest count on the Lancashire section of the Mersey Estuary was 370 on Garston Shore on 26 Nov.

Notable site totals captured by WeBS included 7500 in Granny's Bay on 12 May, 600 on Pilling Marsh on 16 May and 3000 at Bank End on 9 Dec.

Coastal spring passage got underway at Seaforth in the last week of April, peaking in mid-May, and was largely complete by the end of the month. Its timing was similar on the north Fylde coast, peaking during 13-18 May and with just a few hundred remaining in the first week of June. A few began to return to Seaforth in the last week of June but numbers peaked at 710 there on 19 July. Autumn passage appears to have begun a little later further north with twelve adults on the Eric Morecambe complex on 7 July but was well underway mid-month.

The only breeding record received was from the moors around Belmont, where at least one pair bred, but occasional singles at Stocks Reservoir during early June were thought possibly to be breeding in the vicinity.

As usual, Dunlin was by far the most common calidrid inland but singles on the Calder at Altham on 21 Jan and MMWWT on 23 Feb were the only records in either winter period. One arrived at Stocks Reservoir on 8 March but the main passage took place from mid-April to mid-May, when records were received from 14 inland sites, including 54 at MMWWT on 10 May with 41 there on the 24th, 25 at Brockholes Quarry on the 10th and Stocks Reservoir on the 19th, and nine at Alston Reservoirs on the 10-12th. Autumn passage was more subdued with records of ones and twos at several sites in east Lancashire between 10 July and 10 Nov. The largest counts were 16 at MMWWT on 16 Aug and 13 at Brockholes Quarry on 3 Nov.

**RUFF** *Philomachus pugnax***Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor. Rare breeder.**

International importance: 10000. National importance: 50.

## Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MMWWT	50	76	83	30	5	3	25	28	40	50	56	/
Marshside	32	21	30	21	14	1	3	20	11	12	2	2
EMC	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	7	5	2	0	0

2006. A female was seen on Crossens Out Marsh with two unfledged young.

2007: The largest concentration in the first winter period away from the two main sites was on the north Fylde coast, where up to five were in the Fluke Hall/Pilling Lane Ends area during January and February with two remaining until 16 March. Singles were also seen on the Wyre in the

Skippool Creek area on 2 Jan, on the Lune at Glasson on the 15th and at Myerscough Quarry on 26 Feb.

Single spring migrants were at Little Singleton on 2 & 23 April, Stocks Reservoir on 15 April, Mythop on 3 May and Alston Reservoirs on 24 May to 1 June

A lek of nine males and two attendant females were at Marshside in late April and early May but there was no evidence of breeding anywhere in the county.

The first back were three at Ream Hills on 15-19 July, followed by singles at Cockersand on 16 July and Little Singleton on the 18th. Singles remained on the Wyre and Lune throughout August and September but there were larger counts in south Fylde, including five at Mythop on 18 Aug with seven there on the 22nd, and three at Sowerby on the 20th. Singles at Seaforth on 3-6 Aug and 22 Sept were the only records in the south-west away from the main sites all year.

Two remained in the Pilling-Cockersand area for the first fortnight of October, while the only late winter records were one at Heysham on 23 Dec and two at Pilling Lane Ends on the 26-27th.

### **JACK SNIFE** *Lymnocyptes minimus*

**Fairly common, though overlooked, passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Single-figure counts were received from a large number of sites throughout the county with the last spring singles at Myerscough Quarry on 10 April, the Eric Morecambe complex on the 19th and Birkdale Green Beach on the 21st. The earliest returning birds were at the Eric Morecambe complex on 29 Sept, Alston Reservoirs on the 30th, Seaforth on 5 Oct and Coal Clough on the 8th.

Birds were recorded on a dozen sites in the south-west with large counts of eight at Cabin Hill on 23 Jan with ten there on 6 March and seven on 31 Dec, five on Birkdale Green Beach on 23 Nov and at Lunt on 19 Dec. One at Crabtree Rough next to the Halewood Jaguar factory was an interesting record on the edge of the Liverpool conurbation.

Singles at Belmont on 23 March and 21 Dec were the only records on the West Pennine Moors but further east in Rossendale there were singles above Moorlands Park on 9 March, at Cowpe Moss on 4 Nov and Haslingden Moor on the 25th, with two on Hameldon Hill on the 24th. Twenty-nine records were received from eleven sites in east Lancashire. All were of singles with the exception twos at Allsprings on 2-6 Feb and 1-16 Dec, and Lower Foulridge Reservoir on 16 Dec.

Five were at Brockholes Quarry on 22 Nov with at least two remaining until the end of the year, and two were at Grimsargh Reservoir on 23-28 Oct. The largest counts in the Fylde were five on the St. Anne's saltmarsh on 26 Oct with four on the Fairhaven saltmarsh the same day and another four at Stanah on 28 Dec. There were ones and twos at a further dozen or so Fylde sites.

Further north, ones and two were seen at six sites in the first winter period five in the second, with just one larger count of four at Aldcliffe on 13 Jan.

### **SNIFE** *Gallinago gallinago*

**Common but declining wintering and breeding bird.**

It was a typical year with birds reported from a vast range of wetlands throughout the county during both winter periods and breeding probable on many moorland and a few lowland sites.

Peak counts in the early year included 76 at Cabin Hill on 6 March, 70 at Alston Reservoirs on 15 Jan with 60 there on 7 March, 51 at Arkholme on 6 March, 45 at Leighton Moss on 4 April, 41 at Grove Lane Marsh on 23 March, 40 on Heysham Moss on 3 Jan, 39 on Preesall Sands on 18 Feb and 30 at MMWWT on 9 Feb. A total of 75 in the Great Hameldon to Nutshaw Hill area of Rossendale were considered to be on passage and numbers had declined to 20 on 11 March.

Five pairs bred around Belmont Reservoir and a further 22 'drummers' were recorded on in-bye and moorland (at up to 440m above sea level on Winter Hill) around Belmont, indicating a healthy breeding population on the West Pennine Moors. Five pairs bred at MMWWT and birds were present during the breeding season at Marshside with one drumming during June. Birds were present at ten sites in Rossendale during the breeding season and several displaying birds were noted, while 24 single-figure counts were made in east Lancashire between 1 April and 8 July. What were presumably breeding birds were reported drumming from Newton Fell, Champion Moor (3 on 14 April) and Wycoller (2 on 14 April). A survey of 40 1km squares on the United Utilities Bowland estate produced eleven birds in 2005 and nine this year. Other reports of breeding came from Hindburndale, and Roeburndale.

Last and first dates at Seaforth on 24 April and 2 Sept respectively give some indication of the limits of the migration periods on the coastal plain; 31 had returned to Mythop on 23 Aug, 80 to Sowerby on the 24th and 50 MMWWT on 18 Sept.

The largest counts in moorland and upland edge areas came during October and November and included 30+ on Cranberry Moss on 6 Oct, 80 on Champion Moor on the 12th, 34 at Edge Cote, Rossendale on the 13th, 48 at Stocks Reservoir on the 27th, 52 on the Hameldon range on 24 Nov and 76 at Alston Wetland on the 30th. There were many counts of 20 or more on lowland wetlands throughout autumn and winter, the largest being 120 at Leighton Moss on 5 Dec, 105 on Grove Lane Marsh on 29 Dec, 95 at Cabin Hill on 31 Dec with 58 at Prescott Reservoirs the same day, and 65 at Ocean Edge, Heysham on 11 Dec. The largest December counts on the Fylde were 33 on Preesall Sands on 9 Dec and 30 on Rawcliffe Moss on the 30th.

## **WOODCOCK** *Scolopax rusticola*

### **Common winter visitor and fairly common breeder.**

2006: An exceptional three broods of one, two and four were encountered near Belmont between 14 and 30 July.

2007: The only large winter counts came from pheasant-beaters in the Belmont area who flushed more than 25 from rhododendrons on 24 Jan and at least 30 from bracken beds on the 27th, twelve at Prescott Reservoirs on 7 Feb, eleven in Roeburndale on 6 March, nine at Moor Piece on 12 Feb and seven at Nutgrove, St. Helens on 17 Dec. Ones and twos were reported from at least 80 sites during the two winters; larger counts included threes at Cuerden Valley Park on 22 Nov and MMWWT on 6 Dec. More unusual winter locations included one flying around by the bowling greens in Calderstones Park, south Liverpool on 25 Jan, one by the Speke housing estate on 26 Feb and one over Crosby Marine Park on 30 Dec.

Breeding reports were, as usual, fairly patchy and undoubtedly substantially underestimated the true population size. Roding birds were seen at eight or more sites in the north of the county, including four at Warton Crag RSPB and three at Leighton Moss and Eaves Wood, while in the east only Stocks Reservoir/Gisburn Forest and Moor Piece produced records. Breeding was confirmed at two sites in the Belmont area with one young bird found on the early date of 26 April and another clutch of three on 26 June; three were roding at Anglezarke Reservoir on 14 April and singles were seen at Lever Park, Rivington and Roddlesworth. No birds were reported during the breeding season in the Fylde and the only probable breeding records in Merseyside came from Reed's Moss and Garswood in St. Helens, and Freshfield Dune Heath.

The first autumn migrants in Avenham Park, Preston and a garden at Marl Hill on 16 Oct were followed by singles at Hambleton on the 20th, on moorland above Belmont on the 26th and several other sites by the first week of November, including the first back in Rossendale on the 3rd.

**BLACK-TAILED GODWIT** *Limosa limosa***Abundant passage migrant and winter visitor. Rare breeder.**

International importance: 470. National importance: 150

## Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	0	928	402	777	0	2	158	101	421	610	753	557
EM complex	560	625	770	870	42	56	143	255	515	620	870	660
Ribble WeBS	4294	1320	218	131	167	207	1744	1404	495	1206	996	2249
Marshside RSPB4000	2700	6000	400	2000	140	700	1000	750	1069	1400	2300	

The 6000 birds at Marshside in March was presumably an estimate but if at all accurate represented a new county record for the second year in succession, surpassing the 5095 on the Ribble WeBS count of December 2007. 'Blackwits' are on the increase throughout the county but Marshside continues to be the best site to see them in such numbers. Some display and mobbing behaviour was seen there in late April and early May without any further evidence of breeding, but hopes for the establishment of a second breeding site on the Ribble continue to be high. The very high numbers of winter 2007/08 appear not to have been repeated at the end of the year, when WeBS and other Ribble counts were back to more normal levels.

In Morecambe Bay, however, numbers held up at both ends of the year with notable counts on the Eric Morecambe complex of 870 in both April and November. The Alt remains of much less significance than our two main estuaries but birds were seen regularly at Seaforth, particularly on autumn passage.

No significant spring passage was picked up on the coast apart from the March count at Marshside and a small increase in numbers on the Eric Morecambe complex in March and April, but there were several large flocks inland on the coastal plain during this period at sites not much frequented during winter. These included 80 at MMWWT on 25 March, 318 on Downholland Moss on 3 April with possibly the same flock of 339 at Scarisbrick the following day and 638 on Plex Moss on the 14th.

One pair nested on Newton Marsh; a crow took two eggs but the other two hatched. Unfortunately, both chicks succumbed to predators, believed to have been a gull and a heron. The summering flock centred on the Eric Morecambe complex was smaller this year with a peak of 143 on 8 July; similar numbers were at MMWWT including 160 on 8 July.

Only single-figure counts were made at MMWWT after the departure of the summering birds and, as usual, very few were seen at any distance from the coast. These included one at Prescott Reservoirs on 27 Feb with two there on 12 July, two at Rishton Reservoir on 15 March with one there on 10 Nov, six over Gressingham on 10 April, five at Belmont Reservoir on 16 April with one there on 30 June and 1 July, and one or two at Stocks Reservoir on 3-4 May.

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

International importance: 1200. National importance: 620

## Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	867	436	67	1	10	0	17	1	5	149	840	148
Ribble WeBS	3022	3865	4500	273	190	221	543	406	155	809	5162	3937
Alt WeBS	3300	3600	688	137	7	0	0	1321	357	93	/	1080

2006: The report of 500 on the Eric Morecambe complex in April was in error – they were Black-tailed Godwits.

2007: Although some of the WeBS counts were incomplete it appears that the decline of the past few years is continuing. Winter numbers were very low on the Alt during both winters – the lowest since the 1970s. The Ribble now seems to be supporting about the same numbers as were regularly seen during the mid-1990s, while the Morecambe Bay WeBS peak count of 867 in January was the first of less than 1000 since at least 1985. Although flocks of 1250 at Cockersand and 1000 at Glasson during December were missed by these counts, it does seem that numbers are falling on the Lune too.

Up to 350 – in non-breeding plumage, presumably first-summers – summered on the Ribble between Freckleton Naze and Warton Marsh and a few did so in Morecambe Bay.

Inland records were few and far between: one at Rishton Reservoir on 30 April, one at Stocks Reservoir on 5-13 May, two at MMWWT on 29 April and singles at Prescot Reservoirs on 15 Sept and 17 Nov.

## **WHIMBREL** *Numenius phaeopus*

### **Common passage migrant, especially in spring.**

International importance: 6100 (islandicus), 2300 (phaeopus). National importance: 50 (passage).

#### Evening Roost Counts

	20/4	24/4	25/4	26/4	28/4	29/4	30/4	1/5	2/5	3/5	7/5	9/5
Brockholes												
Quarry	20	57	82	127	124	134	210	127	187	85	/	2
Barnacre Res.	62	/	/	/	/	260	/	240	/	477	/	250
Formby mosses *	/	/	64	/	132	137	113	136	159	134	142	/

\* includes birds feeding on Downholland & Plex Mosses, North Moss Lane and Cheshire Lines, plus roosts at Formby Tip.

One at Seaforth on 27 March was the first and was followed by one on Downholland Moss on the 31st, but the main passage got underway in mid-April with birds at Formby, Rossall Point and Belmont on the 13th, Marshside and Coat Walls Farm, Fylde on the 14th, Marton Mere the following day, Little Singleton on the 16th and Brockholes Quarry and Heysham on the 17th.

By 20 April small groups were being reported from a wide range of sites throughout the county – but heavily concentrated on the coastal plain. Numbers at the three best monitored sites are shown in the table, suggesting that the peak passage took place between 29 April and 9 May. The peak count of around 700 on 3 May undoubtedly significantly underestimates the total numbers passing through the county in spring, which seem likely to have exceeded 2000 this year. Other large flocks included 62 at Freckleton Naze on 15 May, 55 at Eagland Hill on 9 May with 32 on Rawcliffe Moss the same day, 47 at Todderstaffe Hall on 30 April, 30 at Eccleston, Chorley on 26 April, Newton Marsh on the 30th and Inskip on 5 May, and 29 on Newton Marsh on 1 May. The passage continued until 15 May at Seaforth, the 21st at Jenny Brown's Point, the 25th at Downholland and the 26th at Heysham. Up to four were seen at four sites in the east of the county until 22 May.

Up to three were seen occasionally at various Fylde sites during June but the first definite autumn migrants were eight at Heysham on 4 July and two off Formby Point the following day. Typically the autumn passage was far smaller than in spring with almost all records involving just one or two birds. Exceptions included, eight at Knott End on 24 July, ten at Jenny Brown's Point on the 29th and 14 at Cockersand on 15 Aug. The last were singles at Granny's Bay on 23 Sept and Marshside on 17 & 23 Oct.

**CURLEW** *Numenius arquata***Abundant winter and breeding bird.**

International importance: 8500. National importance: 1500.

## Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	6348	8976	3092	1397	427	96	3247	2551	1790	3216	2398	3017
Ribble WeBS	453	1497	388	241	32	129	1224	944	518	972	1065	1022
Alt WeBS	402	1033	80	7	22	95	102	1106	1257	832	782	874

Morecambe Bay remains of international importance for Curlew; numbers were a little above average there during the first winter period but a little lower in the second. Both the Ribble and Alt Estuaries had fairly typical years; they have fallen below the threshold of national importance recently and seem in danger of doing so in combination (they are treated as a single site in conservation terms). The largest counts on the Lancashire sector of the Mersey Estuary were 62 at Oglet on 1 Jan and 138 there on 25 Dec.

In east Lancashire one was at Whittle Hall on 29 Jan but birds at Jumbles on 3 Feb and Alston Wetland the next day may have been the first signs of the spring movement back to the uplands; one at Clowbridge on 24 Feb was Rossendale's first. Roosts at Belmont Reservoir grew from 52 on 25 Feb to 132 on 6 March. Other inland peak counts in March included 240 at Altham on 2 March, 438 at Whitemoor Reservoir on the 4th, a massive 2020 on the 6th at Arkholme, 360 at Pasture House Farm, Pilling on the 19th and 263 at Formby Tip on the 23rd.

No breeding information was received from east Lancashire but the Rossendale report described the situation thus: "There appears to be the same widespread distribution as last year with most upland sites tenanted by mid-April." The spring survey of the United Utilities Bowland estate recorded 171 birds in 40 1km squares in 2005 but only 115 this spring, while the BTO Waterbirds Survey total of 22 territorial pairs along the River Lune between Kirkby Lonsdale and Skerton Weir was five up on 2006. The Arkholme to Leck Beck section held the most with 13 pairs; of five nests located four were successful. On the West Pennine Moors two pairs bred on in-by at Belmont Reservoir and at least six nested on Hoddlesden/Aushaw Mosses and on Haslingden/Oswaldtwistle Moors.

Post-breeding flocks inland included 40 at Arkholme on 29 June, 15 over Rawtenstall on 3 July, while the last sightings in the east were at Champion Moor on 4 Nov and Stony Rake, Rossendale on the 16th.

**COMMON SANDPIPER** *Actitis hypoleucos***Common passage migrant, fairly common breeding bird. Scarce in winter.**

The bird on the River Calder at Altham at the end of 2006 was seen until 8 March and again from 18 Dec to the end of the year; it was presumably the same one that had wintered there during the winter of 2005/06. The only other wintering record was one on the Wyre at Little Singleton on 8 Jan, although late birds at Medlar on 18-19 Nov and on the Ribble at Preston on the 27th may also have lingered.

The earliest migrants were all inland, one at Withnell Fold on 4 April, two at Altham on the 5th and one at Wards Reservoir on the 7th. There were widespread arrivals on the breeding grounds and the coast from a week or so later, including at Brockholes Quarry on 11 April, Myerscough Quarry on the 10th and Newton-le-Willows on the 12th, and most breeding areas were occupied by the end of the month. Notable spring totals included seven at Stocks Reservoir on 19 April, five at Heysham on the 20th, 20 or more at Belmont on the 26th and 16 at Arkholme on 1 May. The coastal passage lasted until 7 May at Seaforth and the 12th at Heysham.

The most comprehensive information on breeding came from the West Pennine Moors reservoirs where six pairs bred at Belmont, four or five at Delph, two at Springs, one at Wards and six at Rivington. In east Lancashire up to four pairs nested on the Calder at Altham-Martholme, at least twelve pairs were on the Hodder between Doeford Bridge and Hodder Foot and single pairs at Langden Brook, Hurstwood and Cant Clough Reservoirs and the Calder at Pendle Hall. Breeding was strongly suspected at six reservoirs in Rossendale, where one bird was still incubating at Ogden Reservoir on 3 June. Elsewhere, one pair bred at Brockholes Quarry and 33 pairs were found between Kirkby Lonsdale and Skerton Weir on the Lune, with 14 of these between Leck Beck and Arkholme and 15 between Arkholme and Wenning Foot.

The first coastal migrants of autumn were on the Ribble at Asland Foot on 11 June, Seaforth on the 18th and the Eric Morecambe complex on the 24th. Numbers grew rapidly towards the end of June and remained high during most of July, with notable counts of ten at Prescott Reservoirs on 8 July, 26 at Freckleton Naze on the 9th, 29 in the Skippool Creek area on the 10th, 21 at Little Singleton and 15 on Warton Marsh on the 15th, 16 on the Conder Estuary on the 16th and 39 at Arkholme on the 18th. Late autumn records included singles at Marton Mere on 1 Oct and Myerscough College on the 17th.

### **GREEN SANDPIPER** *Tringa ochropus*

**Fairly common on passage, especially autumn. Scarce winter visitor.**

Single birds on Banks Marsh on 27 Jan to 26 March, Aldcliffe Marsh on 17-20 Feb and at Mythop on 25 Feb, with perhaps the same on 15 March, were the only definite records in the first winter period. The late year was more productive with singles at Carr House Green Quarry on 2 Dec, Downholland Moss on the 9th, Lightfoot Green on the 15th, Brockholes Quarry on the 29-30th, Myerscough Quarry on the 30th, Mere Sands Wood in early December and an exceptional five at Mythop during the month.

As usual there were a couple of records during early March which may have been dispersing wintering birds or early migrants: ones or twos at Arkholme on the 6-8th and MMWWT on the 13th. Two at Lightfoot Green on 24 March to early April and singles at Bartle Pools on the 28th, Arkholme on 30 March & 1 April and Freckleton Naze on 5-6 April were perhaps more likely to have been migrants. The main passage, however, got underway from 14 April and a further six were seen on as many sites by the end of the month.

None was seen after 1 May until two at MMWWT in the first week of June, which marked the start of a strong autumn passage during which more than 100 were seen at more than 30 sites, mostly on the coastal plan. Larger totals included seven at MMWWT on 30 June with six there on 30 July, three at Lightfoot Green on 7 July, four on Pilling Marsh on 3 Aug, eight at Mythop on 11 & 19 Aug, four or five at Hesketh Bank during August, five at Carr House Green Common on 28 Aug and five at Arkholme on 11 Nov.

### **SPOTTED REDSHANK** *Tringa erythropus*

**Fairly common passage migrant.**

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
EM Complex	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	2	8	5	5	2
Conder Est. & Glasson	2	3	3	2	1	1	1	3	4	3	2	2

There was just two wintering birds in addition to those on the Conder Estuary and Eric Morecambe complex: at Morecambe from 10 Jan to 16 March and Aldcliffe Marsh on 21 Jan. Three

at Morecambe from 12 Oct until the end of the year were the only other records in the second winter period.

Spring records away from the main sites were equally sparse: singles at Bartle Pools and Blackleach, Preston from 25 March to 7 April, on Banks Marsh from 26 March and 5 April, Marshside on 14 April, Aldcliffe and Newton Marshes on 29 April, Blackleach on 2 May, Seaforth on 3 May and the last at MMWWT on the 12th.

The first returning birds on the Eric Morecambe complex on 17 June and the Conder Estuary on the 22nd were followed by singles at Heysham on 14 July and Barnaby's Sands and Pilling Marsh the next day. A moderate passage then ensued with birds recorded at a dozen or so locations away from the main sites, all on the coastal plain and all singles with the exception of four at Marshside on 28 Aug and four on Banks Marsh on 17 Sept with three there on 12 Oct,

## **GREENSHANK** *Tringa nebularia*

**Fairly common on passage, especially in autumn. Scarce in winter.**

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
EM Complex	1	1	1	3	0	3	22	28	18	10	3	1
Conder Est. & Glasson	2	2	3	2	0	1	3	9	10	4	3	2

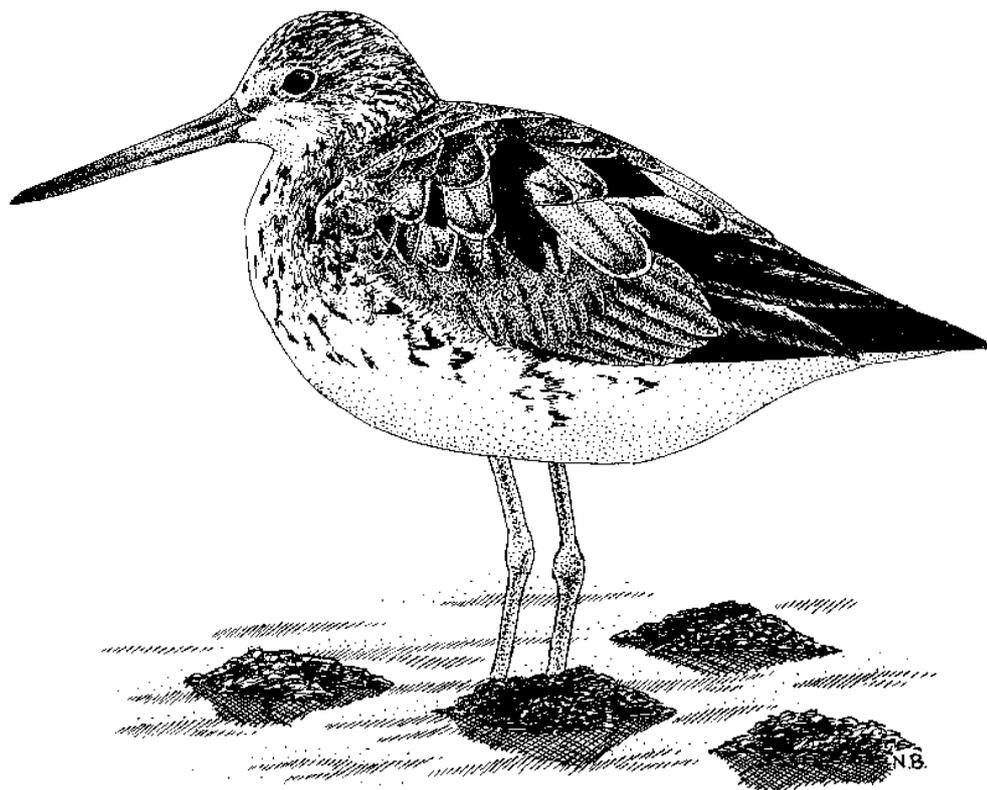
As usual, records from the Morecambe Bay sites in the table predominated throughout the year.

The only other records in the first winter period were two at Banks Marsh on 16 Feb, one of which may have been the bird at Marshside on 2 Feb, and one at Arkholme on the 18th.

One at Myerscough Quarry on 8 April probably marked the start of the spring passage, consisting – apart from threes on the Eric Morecambe complex and at Marshside in April and Little Singleton on 1 May – of singles and occasional twos at Aldcliffe Marsh, Anglezarke, Stocks and Foulridge Reservoirs, Seaforth, Formby, Mythop, Rossall Point, Warton Marsh, Barnaby's Sands, Rawcliffe Hall, Fairhaven and Stanah.

Autumn passage began with singles at Waterside Farm, Fylde on 10 June and the Eric Morecambe complex the next day but the largest numbers passed through between mid-July and the end of August. At least 150 birds were reported during autumn from a very wide range of sites predominantly on or near the coast – singles at Sunnyhurst Hey Reservoir on 15 Oct, Upper Foulridge Reservoir on 29 Oct, Belmont Reservoir on 15 Sept and Brockholes Quarry on 19 & 23 July were the exceptions. Large day-totals included 24 on the Eric Morecambe complex in August, ten in the Skippool Creek area on 21 July and 16 Oct and on the Conder Estuary on 10 Sept, nine at Freckleton Naze on 21 Aug and eight at Marshside on 16 Sept.

A handful lingered into November but birds only definitely wintered on the Conder Estuary and the Eric Morecambe complex, with perhaps the same bird at Jenny Brown's Point on 9 Dec



### **LESSER YELLOWLEGS** *Tringa flavipes*

**Vagrant.**

An adult was on the Eric Morecambe complex on 24-27 July (J Fenton *et al*) and was seen at Leighton Moss and Jenny Brown's Point during this period. This was Lancashire's tenth record and the third on the Eric Morecambe complex.

### **WOOD SANDPIPER** *Tringa glareola*

**Uncommon passage migrant.**

Spring records were singles at Marshside and Mythop on 1 May (the latter remaining until the 5th), Stocks Reservoir on the 2nd, Brockholes Quarry on the 8th, Mythop again on the 19th and MMWWT on the 25-26th.

Similar number were seen in autumn, beginning with one at MMWWT on 25 July and followed by singles on Banks Marsh on 6 Aug, at Mythop on the 11-18th, Conder Green on the 26th, MMWWT on 28 Aug to 2 Sept and finally at Marshside on 6-8 Sept and Aldcliffe Marsh on the 15th.

**REDSHANK** *Tringa totanus***Abundant passage and winter visitor. Fairly common breeding bird.**

International importance: 2800. National importance: 1200

## Monthly Peak Counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	2458	2897	1450	2986	60	172	1083	2155	2945	2516	3087	2956
EM complex	370	161	184	243	24	26	140	565	1110	410	140	68
Ribble WeBS	498	1491	1262	931	132	236	692	1649	1149	3559	2477	2659
Marshside	300	400	728	192	52	33	58	270	230	195	14	81
Alt WeBS	1155	654	661	212	4	12	608	486	518	435	406	592
Seaforth	650	360	358	200	4	80	770	330	180	1112	300	350

The peak counts in Morecambe Bay were fairly typical for recent years in all seasons, while those on the Ribble were generally a bit below par except during the second winter. The roost of 1112 at Seaforth on 28 Oct was the largest there since April 2004 but numbers remained depressed throughout most of the year. Other site counts captured in the WeBS totals included 1600 at Cockersand on 17 Sept, 1000 at Glasson on 13 Aug, 947 at Skippool Creek on 12 Aug, 856 on Barnaby's Sands on 15 Sept, 612 on Preesall Sands on 15 April, 600 at Fleetwood Marsh on 21 Jan, 550 at Lytham on 27 July and 284 at Heysham in October. The largest count on the Lancashire section of the Mersey Estuary was of least 200 at Garston on 26 Nov.

Small numbers remained in the uplands during the first winter period, at Altham, Stocks Reservoir, Burholme and Foulridge, but none was reported from the West Pennine Moors until one at Belmont Reservoir on 2 March while the first significant return at Arkholme came on the 16th.

Breeding information was patchy but included three pairs at Alston Wetland, one or more at Altham, Martholme, Hodderfoot-Hurst Green, Pendle Hall, Stocks Reservoir, Billington and Champion Moor, six pairs at Belmont Reservoir with another four on adjacent in-bye and moorland, single pairs at two sites at Rivington/Anglezarke, one or more in Irwell Vale, 30 pairs at Marshside and Crossens inner, eleven at MMWWT, 39 pairs on the Morecambe Bay RSPB reserves and 64 on the Lune between Kirkby Lonsdale and Skerton Weir, including 22 in the Arkholme to Leck Beck section.

The second winter period in the uplands was similar to the first; none was seen at Belmont after 26 Sept and the largest count in the east of the county was of four at Foulridge on 1 Dec. An interesting record was eight visiting a roadside verge in the middle the Speke estate in south Liverpool after dark on 27 Dec.

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

International importance: 1500. National importance: 500

## Monthly Peak Counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	604	63	261	353	59	0	6	127	206	161	387	358
Ribble WeBS	137	4	15	121	12	0	32	143	191	178	36	57
Alt WeBS	38	39	105	76	0	4	1	37	69	57	/	41
Fleetwood	430	227	180	258	2	0	4	105	226	236	415	335

WeBS totals were about average in Morecambe Bay and a little lower than usual on the Ribble, while the Alt recorded its lowest peak count since 1991. A count of 123 at Heysham during February was missed by that month's WeBS count as were 128 at Seaforth on 5 Aug. The highest

total on the Lancashire stretch of the Mersey Estuary was 27 at Dingle on 2 May and the same number at Cressington on 18 Dec.

Other noteworthy site counts included 132 at Morecambe on 19 March, 260 at Lytham on 11 Aug and 415 at Fleetwood Marine Lakes on 9 Nov with 335 there on 9 Dec.

Inland records were three by the Public Hide at Leighton Moss on 10 May when one was also at Brockholes Quarry, two at Prescott Reservoirs on the 12th with singles there on 18 May and 28 July, and one at MMWWT on 18 May.

### **RED-NECKED PHALAROPE\*** *Phalaropus lobatus*

**Rare passage migrant.**

A female was at MMWWT on 4-7 June and a juvenile at Prescott Reservoirs on 5-6 Oct (W. Harrison *et al*).

### **SKUA SPECIES**

A general comment applying to all skuas concerns the lack of autumnal gales other than a pale imitation on 24 Sept which did produce a few records throughout the county. This was reflected in the dearth of records from the Mersey with the vast majority of sightings in that sector being from or near Formby Point. It was also reflected in the lack of mid to late autumn records, with the only October skua in the whole county being a juvenile Pomarine.

Another feature of 2007 was the complete lack, as far as can be ascertained, of any juvenile Arctic Skuas. This may be a result of a disastrous breeding season for the British Isles population, e.g. none fledged on Fair Isle, leading to a lack of early autumn birds accompanying the off-passage and later passage birds off Formby and the Fylde.

Just two skuas was relegated to 'spp', a perhaps worrying statistic! One of these was in a field on the Lancashire/Yorkshire border in SD6666 (NE Tatham) 'for a few days' during late September/early October, the other was off Formby Point on 1 Sept.

### **POMARINE SKUA** *Stercorarius pomarinus*

**Uncommon double passage migrant. Rare in winter.**

Take away a county record flock of 14 seen off Heysham on 9 May and it was not a particularly good spring passage. This flock of light morph birds was initially reported to RBA as 'probable' – this was erroneous as the observer was fully confident of the identification (RM Hobbs). The only other spring passage records received were two off Formby on 12 May, singles off coastal Fylde on 12 & 14 May and further singles from Heysham on 8 & 18 May, two on 10 May and two late birds during strong winds on 16 June.

A series of early autumn adults was a little unexpected and comprised one off Formby on 15 Aug, singles off the Fylde coast on 31 July and 17 Aug and two there on 16 Aug. As already mentioned, the only October record of a coastal skua in the whole recording area involved a juvenile off Crosby Marine Park on 17 Oct.

### **ARCTIC SKUA** *Stercorarius parasiticus*

**Fairly common passage migrant, more numerous in autumn. Rare in winter.**

#### **Morecambe Bay**

There was a good passage through Morecambe Bay in spring, although a higher percentage was seen from Heysham as opposed to the inner bay. This led to a perception that skuas (and Arctic Terns) were heading inland between Heysham and Hest Bank or via the Keer (as opposed to the

Kent) flightline, compared to several previous years. A total of 92 northbound birds was seen at regular intervals between 9 April and 19 May, with one on 25 May and two during strong winds on 16 June, and a peak of at least twelve on 8 May.

Autumn was predictably dreadful with singles on 13 Aug and 24 Sept.

### **Liverpool Bay**

The Fylde coast recorded 28 spring passage birds between 20 April and 18 May with a peak of seven on 10 May. Behaviour suggested individuals recorded from 18 June were in 'autumnal/off-passage' mode and there were 31 bird-days between 18 June and 23 July. Then there was a gap until a small number of presumed passage birds: one on 2 Aug, two on 9 Aug, one on 14 Aug, two on 16 Aug and five on 25 Aug. No further records!

There were predictably fewer spring passage birds off the Sefton coast between Formby Point and Seaforth in the migratory 'shadow' of Wales – just eleven birds between 26 April and 29 May with a peak of four on 12 May. Late summer/early autumn records are probably best treated as an unknown mixture of 'bird-days' comprising off-passage skuas chasing terns and single-date passage birds. The later in the period, the more chance of them being the latter. There were 97 bird-days recorded between 19 June and 24 Sept with the data suggesting at least seven individuals regularly present from 28 July to at least 16 Aug and perhaps the whole month. Maximum day-count of nine on 30 July.

### **Unseasonable and inland records**

Singles off Cleveleys on 2 Jan, on the Mersey in Liverpool on the 4th and off Starr Gate, Blackpool on the 5th perhaps all related to the same bird. A dark morph was inland at Sheddon Clough on 26 Sept [note the correlation with the Tatham skua] and arguably inland records came from Marshside on 3 July (2) and 15 July.

## **LONG-TAILED SKUA *Stercorarius longicaudus***

**Uncommon autumn migrant; rare in spring.**

Only one record was submitted: a pale juvenile off Seaforth on 25 Sept (T. Vaughan).

## **GREAT SKUA (BONXIE) *Stercorarius skua***

**Fairly common on passage, mostly in autumn gales. Rare in winter.**

### **Morecambe Bay**

An early passage bird flew north at Heysham on 12 March with further singles on 4, 15, 17 & 18 May. The only other records were singles on 14 July (probably one of those later seen on the Fylde) and 24 Sept.

### **Liverpool Bay**

The only spring record off the Fylde coast comprised four on 8 May. Similarly, the only midsummer record was three on 14 July, while autumn produced singles on 15 Aug and 10 Sept.

The picture was much the same off the Sefton coast where there was just one spring single on 12 May, late summer/autumn passage singles on 6 & 28 July, 3 & 30 Aug, and 1, 3, 10 & 24 Sept.

### **Winter records**

Individuals remaining from the December 2006 gales comprised singles off Formby Point on 1-2 Jan, two at Jenny Brown's Point on 1 Jan and probably one of these off Heysham on the 4th.

**SABINE'S GULL** \* *Xema sabini***Uncommon passage migrant.**

A fairly standard set of records this year.

A juvenile flew south past Formby Point on 10 Sept (B McCarthy). Another juvenile was found, rather unusually, inland at St. Michael's-on-Wyre on 15 Oct (S Piner). This was probably the same bird seen at Rossall Point the following day (I Gardner).

**KITTIWAKE** *Rissa tridactyla***Common passage migrant on coasts, fairly common in winter. Scarce inland.**

## Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Formby Point	17	2	32	5	30	42	47	14	6	43	3	/
Starr Gate	11	/	4	15	1	16	90	1	/	/	1	/
Rossall Point	172	25	2	27	/	/	4	/	/	1	65	/
Heysham	105	60	201	90	33	19	/	/	6	16	3	24

No more than five were present at any time of the year at Seaforth but about a mile upriver at least 100 birds appeared to be sitting on the seawall colony in the West Alexandra Dock during late June; unfortunately it seems that all the nests were washed away by the near-gale of 5 July.

Regular seawatching spots frequently turned up this species but generally not in any significant numbers. The main peaks were during spring and summer and between the Fylde coast and Heysham: 201 off Heysham on 18 March, 172 off Rossall Point on 1 Jan, 105 at Heysham on 11 Jan, 90 at Heysham on 4 April, 90 off Blackpool on 2 July and 72 from Jenny Brown's Point on 24 April were the largest counts. Up to 60 were seen regularly around Heysham in the first winter period, especially following the Isle of Man ferry.

There were very few inland records. Singles were recorded at Pine Lake on 10 March and MMWWT on 10 Nov and an adult was at Carr Mill Dam on 4 April. There were four reports from the Darwen area: singles on 18 Jan and 29 March, 5 on 30 March and 2 on 6 April. An exhausted bird was found in a garden at Barrow on 1 Sept and taken to the nearby lodge where it was found dead the following day.

**BLACK-HEADED GULL** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus***Locally abundant breeding bird. Abundant winter visitor and passage migrant.**

International importance: 20000. National importance: 19000

## Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Seaforth	10500	3000	2500	250	/	160	/	250	3500	800	1000	6000
Brockholes	500	/	890	/	/	32	/	/	/	530	450	250
Delph Res	1200	1100	200	/	/	/	/	650	550	700	1200	900
Marshside	227	562	602	181	186	74	182	124	420	470	750	124
Formby Point	640	640	293	15	47	263	815	280	114	422	/	390

This species is widespread throughout the county at all times of the year. Notable concentrations in the first winter period included peak counts of over 10000 at Seaforth in January and at Myerscough Quarry on 27 Feb, 5000 at Burrow's Marsh on 27 Feb, 6500 at the Lower Rivington Reservoir roost on 4 Feb, 2300 at MMWWT in February and March, over 2000 around the Lune and up to 1500 in east Lancashire roosts at Fishmoor, Foulridge and Clowbridge Reservoirs. Numbers fell away quickly in February as birds started to head towards their breeding colonies.

Around 1000 had returned to the Belmont Reservoir colony by 18 Feb with numbers rising to 2200 on the 25th, 5000 by 10 March and to over 7000 by 4 April. The census of the gullery indicated 3540 breeding pairs on the main island, making it probably the largest inland colony in Britain with 2.8% of the British population. A pair also bred on the small islet for the first time since 1980. Two recovered dead adults from within the colony had been ringed as pulli at colonies in North Yorkshire and Cumbria in the late 1990s. Over 5000 juveniles fledged with the first young seen on the early date of 26 April. The majority of birds had left the colony by the end of July.

At Stocks Reservoir about 1000 were on the island in early March. Numbers grew to 5000 by 27 March but by 8 April only 2500 were present, of which about 1000 pairs eventually settled down to breed. The first chicks were seen on 10 May and by 27 July very few birds were left.

The colonies at Leighton Moss and the Eric Morecambe complex were not counted but thought not to be radically different to recent years. The tiny colony on the island at Borwick Waters appeared to manage to rear at least eight young from ten to twelve nesting attempts. No information was received about the Ribble colonies and at Marshside there were just a few putative nesting attempts. One pair nested at Barnacre Reservoir.

As the birds left their breeding sites, numbers started to build up on the very wet flood plains of the Lune and Wyre, for example 2000 at Heysham by 20 July and 4000 at Stalmine Moss on the 30th.

In the second winter period there were the usual scattered large flocks of up to 2000 birds in Over Wyre whilst numbers at inland sites increased again. The Lower Rivington Roost peaked at 3000 on 18 Dec and Fishmoor Reservoir at 2500 on the 15th. Both roosts were predominantly this species as the changes in landfill result in fewer large gulls present inland.

### **LITTLE GULL** *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

**Fairly common gale-blown winter visitor. Common on spring passage, concentrated at Seaforth and Crosby Marine Park. Small numbers of first-years in summer.**

Strong onshore winds during January were responsible for large numbers of birds being seen at Seaforth, Rossall and Heysham. The largest count was 191 at Rossall on 8 Jan whilst numbers peaked at Heysham and Seaforth on 18-19 Jan with 70 and 30 respectively. It was during this period of strong winds that a few birds appeared at Marshside, Conder Pool and Aldcliffe.

The rest of the first winter period was relatively quiet with birds seen regularly from Rossall Point and Blackpool. Up to four were present on a flooded field near Preesall during March and more gales brought 160 into Seaforth on 18 March.

The April passage period at Seaforth and Crosby Marine Lake wasn't as exceptional as last year but there were still some large counts. Numbers rose rapidly at Crosby Marine Lake at the beginning of the month to 162 by the 6th. These birds remained for a week before feeding switched to the Freshwater Pool at Seaforth. Numbers declined to 56 by the 16th and similar numbers were still around on the 22nd. The last adult left on 11 May whilst two first-summerers remained into July.

Apart from 107 at Formby Point on 13 April, no other large numbers were reported from anywhere else in the county during the spring. Up to three first-summerers were recorded at Leighton Moss/Dockacres complex from early May through to the end of July. Inland, singles were reported from MMWWT on 17 March and 24 April, Brockholes Quarry from 25 April to 1 May and 6 June, and at Yarrow Valley Park on 4 April. Two were at Carr Mill Dam on 18 March and an adult was at Eccleston Mere on the 29th.

Few were seen during the second half of the year. Single adults were at Seaforth on 10 July and several dates in August, and a juvenile was seen in Liverpool Bay on 17 Sept and an adult on the River Mersey on 9 Nov. Several birds congregated around the Alt Estuary in midsummer,

peaking at 38 on 1 Aug. Only six bird-days were recorded off the Fylde coast, peaking with ten off Starr Gate on 30 Oct and twelve at Cleveleys on 12 Nov. There were just three records in the Lancaster area with a juvenile on the Eric Morecambe complex on 16 Sept being the last, while the only records all year in east Lancashire were singles at Towneley Park, Burnley on 5 Sept and 12 Dec.

### **MEDITERRANEAN GULL** *Larus melanocephalus*

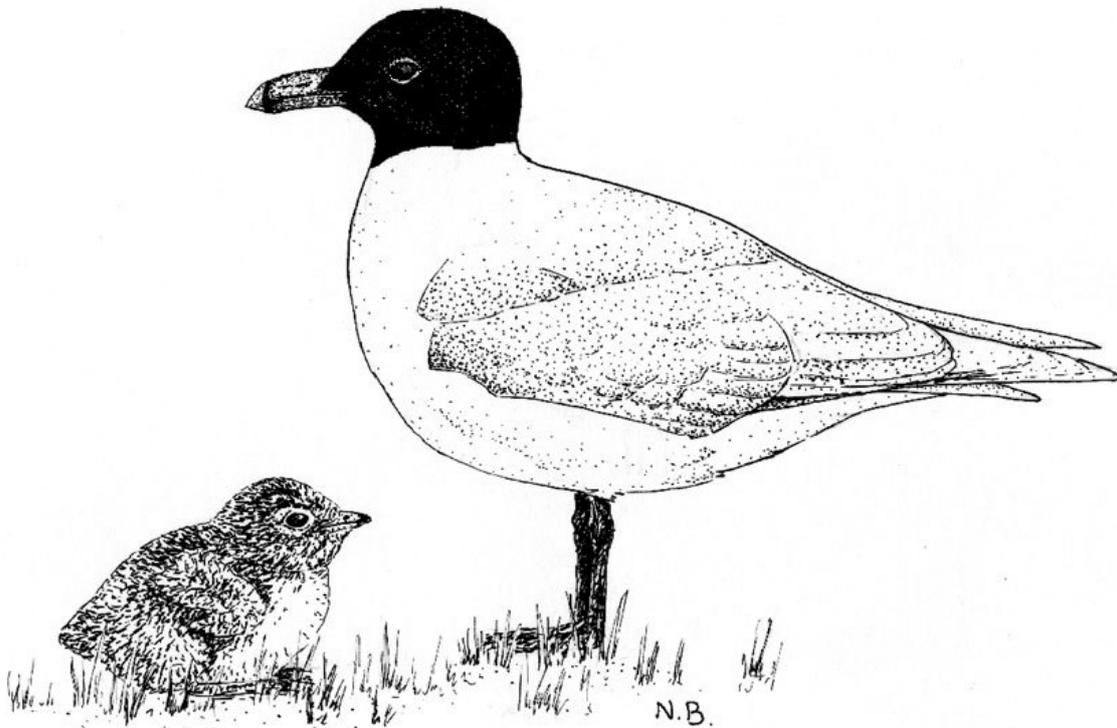
Fairly common all year. Most numerous on southern coasts but increasing inland.

Recently established rare breeder.

Minimum number of individuals

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Seaforth	3	4	2	0	3	1	6	6	8	6	2	2
Lancaster area	6	6	7	5	1	8	14	19	20	11	7	6
Fylde	9	32	28	24	2	5	35	28	19	17	11	12

Summarising the records submitted for this species is getting ever more difficult as the plethora of records continues. An example of this is the Fylde where the species was recorded from 57 sites in 51 tetrads over the year with some significant numbers on occasion. The data in the table above are based on peak tetrad counts and may be slightly overestimated due to birds wandering the area. Several over-wintering birds (mainly adults) were reported from all corners of the county with the six in the Lancaster area each being quite faithful to their own particular area. Up to three visited the Fishmoor Reservoir gull roost and two were at Prescott Reservoirs during January.



Larger numbers were seen on the Fylde in spring, with peaks of seven at Burrow's Marsh and Mythop, and at least 14 different birds at Weeton in mid-April. Elsewhere, there was a passage of one or two birds but nothing out of the ordinary.

An adult was back at the Belmont colony on 25 Feb and at least six were there by 18 March. A record eight pairs were confirmed to be nesting, resulting in seven broods totalling 14 young. Five of the young were colour-ringed and two of colour-ringed 2006 young were recorded in Spain and the Azores (see ringing report).

The first returned to Stocks Reservoir on 3 March and by the end of the month 14 were present. A minimum of three pairs nested as well as an unsuccessful hybrid pairing with a female Black-headed Gull. At least six young were fledged (the first being seen on 22 May) and all of these were seen together on 24 June.

Again there was no evidence of breeding on the Ribble marshes and the number of records from Marshside continues to be surprisingly low (just six all year). An adult was at Leighton Moss from 30 March and a displaying pair from 13-30 April but there was no evidence of a breeding attempt. Up to two were seen regularly around MMWWT during the spring and summer.

The usual build-up of numbers occurred in July and August but was a little slow to start. Unlike the winter period, most were sub-adult and juvenile birds with the majority around the south of Morecambe Bay from the Wyre Estuary (at least eight different birds at Knott End in July and seven at Stalmine Moss) to Heysham (at least five juveniles, four first-summerers and seven adults in August).

Numbers steadily declined after September to leave the over-wintering population of mostly adults again, including the six 'regulars' in the Lancaster area. Inland, single adults were noted at Prescot Reservoirs, Lower Rivington Reservoir, Alston Reservoir, Whinney Hill Tip, Accrington and Fishmoor Reservoir during November and December.

## **COMMON GULL** *Larus canus*

### **Abundant winter visitor and passage migrant.**

International importance: 16000. National importance: 9000

#### Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Seaforth	3500	1200	3000	150	73	30	13	30	250	/	3000	3000
Formby Point	160	300	130	4	17	67	160	207	102	244	42	140

There were few large concentrations away from Merseyside during the first winter period. The largest by far were at Thurnham/Glasson with over 1000 on 20 Jan and 1000 around Myerscough on 25 Feb. Inland peaks included 259 at Stocks Reservoir on 14 Jan, 150 at both Prescot Reservoirs and Lower Rivington on 4 Feb, and 150 at Foulridge on 1 March. Marshside's peak count was 473 on 21 Jan. At many places, both coastal and inland, numbers built up in March, peaking around the third week before dissipating quickly. For example, peaks at Stocks Reservoir of around 500 on 20 March, 250 on St Anne's beach on the 21st and 200 on Catchdale Moss on the 24th. The late-spring build-up at Heysham outfalls was low this year with a maximum of 71 on 1 May.

Apart from the few summering birds, the first returned from 15 July and the first juveniles were seen on the 22nd. There were 300 at Rainford on 15 Sept and 500 on fields at Maghull on the 21st but it wasn't until the end of November/December that there were any very large congregations, when numbers built back up to around 3000 at Seaforth, about 1000 were at Cockerham Moss on 3 Dec and 500 were at Cocker's Dyke, Preesall on the 30th.

Inland, over 1200 were feeding on a field spread with slurry at Bashall near Clitheroe on 9 Nov with approximately 700 in the area two weeks later. The Fishmoor Reservoir roost contained approximately 300 on 15 Dec and 250 were in the Lower Rivington roost on 22 Nov.

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

**Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant, mainly in spring.**

The over-wintering second-winter bird was seen regularly at Seaforth, Crosby Marine Park and the adjacent shoreline from the beginning of the year until 16 May.

An adult was found at St Michael's on Wyre on 22 Jan and was seen again at Myerscough Quarry on 28-29 March (S Piner). The same observer also found a second-summer bird on the Lune at Glasson on 27 April.

Finally, an adult was at Prescot Reservoirs on 10 Oct (S Tomlinson).

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

**Abundant breeder especially in Bowland and on the Ribble. Abundant spring and autumn migrant. Smaller winter population.**

International importance: 4500. National importance: 500

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Seaforth	400	220	500	450	/	350	/	120	150	/	450	60
Formby Point	190	77	73	29	134	112	561	1063	65	413	60	133

The winter population is concentrated around Liverpool and Morecambe Bays with relatively few large flocks seen elsewhere; 300 at the Somerfield depot in St Helens on 18 Feb was a notable exception. Marshside had a peak of 43 on 21 Jan and only 15 were in the winter gull roosts at Fishmoor Reservoir on 2 Jan and Lower Rivington Reservoir on 4 Feb, while 50 were at Prescot Reservoirs on 4 Feb.

Spring passage saw regular small flocks flying over many areas from early March to early May and also brought several large flocks further inland, including over 1000 at Stocks Reservoir on 16 March, 400 at Brockholes Quarry on 19 April and 800 near Eagland Hill on 5 May.

The survey of the main colonies on the Bowland fells between Abbeystead and Whitendale indicated a further reduction to 5471 breeding pairs of large gulls (overwhelmingly Lesser Black-backed Gulls but some Herring Gulls as well). Once again, the numbers were kept down through the use of falconry and managed nest destruction (over 6000 nests were destroyed in the main colony). A significant satellite colony has developed to the south of the main area, where, although some control measures are being undertaken, numbers are rising year on year. Ringing evidence suggests that birds from this colony are contributing to the growth in urban colonies.

At least 25 pairs nested on Middleton Industrial Estate buildings and birds were recorded nesting at the Jaguar factory at Halewood. Suspected breeders were in the Dingle and Speke areas as well as central Liverpool. Elsewhere, two pairs attempted to breed at Belmont Reservoir.

Around 20 July, just when the first juveniles were being reported away from the nesting areas, there were at least 900 in the vicinity of the Wyre Estuary and 100 at Prescot Reservoirs on the 25th. There were over 500 at Stocks Reservoir on 22 Aug and still 325 on 6 Sept. Thereafter, numbers dropped off dramatically with no more than 30 at any one site and mostly in single figures. Exceptions were 84 over Belmont on 1 Oct and the large numbers at Seaforth during November.

**HERRING GULL** *Larus argentatus*

**Abundant winter visitor and passage migrant. Common breeding bird, mainly on the Ribble.**

International importance: 13000. National importance: 4500

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Seaforth	3000	2000	1500	850	/	200	/	400	450	/	1600	2000
Formby Point	550	750	385	102	184	155	1079	1151	60	608	/	360
Wyre Estuary	4000	3000	200	78	7	61	53	203	95	800	2500	1000
MBS WeBS	1340	653	373	356	322	101	31	575	701	801	2991	300

As expected, the largest numbers in the first-winter period came from coastal sites in January. The maxima of 3000 at Seaforth, 4000 at the mouth of the Wyre and 800 at Marshside were much larger than the previous year. Out of 3000 at Seaforth on 20 Jan, 65 were nominate *argentatus* and on 25 March, 14 out of 1500. There has been a massive reduction in numbers in the Lancaster area following the closure of the tip, with numbers now in the hundreds, and perhaps the increases further down the coast are partly due to the relocation of this population.

Inland, there were 2000 at Prescot Reservoirs on 17 Jan and over 400 at Fishmoor Reservoir on the 2nd. Numbers at Lower Rivington Reservoir were typically no more than 30.

Numbers quickly fell as birds started to move back to their breeding areas, although 325 at Heysham on 25 Feb, 500 at Southport on 10 March, 636 at Marshside on 20 May and 300 off Blackpool on 4 June were notable.

An immature pair built a nest at Marshside in April but this was abandoned after a week. There were no breeding attempts at Belmont or Stocks Reservoirs. Birds were present in central Liverpool throughout the summer. The first juvenile appeared at Seaforth on 21 July.

In the second winter period, numbers were again high at Seaforth, with peaks of 1600 in November (including nine *argentatus*) and 2000 in December. Also, 2500 were counted at Barnaby's Sands on the WeBS count of 11 Nov, 900 were at Prescot Reservoirs on the 17th and 500 were on the mosses at Bradshaw Lane, Pilling on 13 Oct. Inland, there were regular large numbers at Fishmoor Reservoir with 800 counted coming to roost on 15 Dec, 450 were at Rishton Reservoir on the 28th and 150 at Lower Rivington Reservoir on the 18th.

**YELLOW-LEGGED GULL** *Larus michahelis*

**Uncommon but increasing all year. Most numerous in late summer and on southern coasts.**

Minimum number of individuals

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Seaforth	4	3	4	4	2	2	0	5	4	1	2	0

As usual, Seaforth was the place to be to see Yellow-legged Gulls, but they are almost certainly overlooked elsewhere. In the first winter period an adult put in a brief appearance at Fishmoor Reservoir on 7 Jan and an adult was at Marshside on the 9th. A first-winter was seen at Lea Green Tip, St. Helens on 14 Feb and an adult was at Fleetwood Docks on the 18th.

For its sixteenth year in a row, an adult returned to the outer Lune Estuary opposite Glasson Dock in midsummer from 11 July to 17 Sept at least. Two adults were there on 12 Aug and one was seen in the same area on 19-20 Nov.

A juvenile was reported at Preesall Sands on 18 July and single adults from Marshside on 1 Sept and Teal Bay on 10 Dec. Four were at Prescot Reservoirs on 17 Nov.

**ICELAND GULL** *Larus glaucoides*

**Uncommon winter visitor and spring passage migrant, mainly January to April.**

A second-winter bird was at Prescot Reservoirs on three dates between 11 & 24 Jan and possibly the same bird again on the late date of 6 May. A third-winter was at Fishmoor Reservoir on 31 Jan with a first-winter at Feniscowles, Blackburn on 16 March. An adult was at Knott End and Fleetwood between 26 Jan and 3 Feb and at Seaforth there was a first-winter 'Kumlien's'-type on 25 March and a second-summer on 3 June.

There was just one record in the second winter period, a single at Fishmoor Reservoir on 1 Dec.

**GLAUCOUS GULL** *Larus hyperboreus*

**Uncommon visitor, mostly winter.**

A first-winter was present at various sites near the mouth of the Wyre (Fleetwood Docks to Burrow's Marsh) from 23-29 April. A first-winter was first seen at Fishmoor Reservoir on 27 Nov and then from 3 -15 Dec at Whinney Hill Tip, Withnell Landfill site and in the roost at Fishmoor.

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

**Common winter visitor and passage migrant on coasts. Rare breeder.**

International importance: 4800. National importance: 400

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Seaforth	95	56	52	34	35	30	/	30	45	/	45	86
Wyre Estuary	150	4	8	13	16	60	44	26	86	120	270	35
Formby Point	50	36	21	30	80	45	94	117	21	125	/	26
MBS WeBS	280	28	62	36	48	431	112	80	157	117	229	83

This species is present all year round, especially along the coast, and the overall population seems to be fairly constant. Numbers in the north of the county have decreased due to the closure of Lancaster Tip but there are still some larger congregations elsewhere. There were good numbers around the mouth of the Wyre in January with a peak of over 150 on the 26th. Marshside generally recorded single-figure counts throughout the year so a flock of 150 on the foreshore on 6 Feb was notable. There were 165 on Birkdale beach on 29 Oct, but the highest numbers of the second winter period were again around the Wyre, including 270 at Barnaby's Sands on 29 Nov.

Sightings of ones and twos were quite regular at inland sites, together with double-figure counts of 90 at Fishmoor Reservoir on 2 Jan, 15 on Delph Reservoir on 20 Jan, 20 at Prescot Reservoirs on 10 Feb, 20 at Fishmoor Reservoir in November and December, ten at Lower Rivington Reservoir on 18 Dec and 30 at Rishton Reservoir on the 28th.

Lancashire's only pair bred at Leighton Moss, again fledging at least two young. Immature birds were present at the gullery at Belmont throughout the breeding season, predated the Black-headed Gull colony.

**LITTLE TERN** *Sternula albifrons*

Fairly common passage migrant on coasts, rare inland.

As usual, the overwhelming majority of records came the Sefton Coast, particularly off Formby Point.

The earliest, however, were all further north: one off Rossall Point on 23 April and two off Morecambe on 2 May. One off Blackpool on 8 May was the only other record all year outside of Merseyside.

An above-average total of 43 bird-days was recorded from Formby between 5 May and 1 Sept, with large counts of 13 on 5 May, twelve on 1 Aug and seven on the 12th. Seaforth recorded two on the reserve on 19 May and singles on 23 May and 29 June, while singles were seen offshore there on 9 & 22 Aug. One was on the shore at Marshside on 16 June.

**CASPIAN TERN** *Hydroprogne caspia*

Vagrant.

An adult or near-adult was on the shore at Knott End on 2 July (CG Batty), having probably been seen earlier in the day off Rossall Point – the record has been accepted by the BBRC. What was presumably the same bird was on Fairhaven Lake on 5 July (C Bushell).

This was the fifth county record and the first away from Leighton Moss and the Eric Morecambe complex.

**BLACK TERN** *Chlidonias niger*

Uncommon spring and autumn migrant. Usually more numerous and more coastal in autumn. Most northern records in spring.

It was a desperately poor year throughout the county.

The first were singles off Rossall Point on 1 & 2 May and Heysham on 1 May, where two were seen the following day. The only other spring record was one on Prescot Reservoirs on 2 May.

One at Seaforth on 16 June was probably a non-breeding bird. The autumn passage began with two juveniles at Knott End on 23 July with one there on the 25th, followed by singles at Seaforth on the 27th, Formby on 1 Aug, Leighton Moss on the 24th, Heysham on 20 Sept, Arkholme on the 26th and, finally, west over Downholland Moss on 7 Oct.

**SANDWICH TERN** *Sterna sandvicensis*

Common spring and autumn migrant on coasts, rare inland.

Morecambe Bay

Virtually all spring sightings came from Heysham, where passage got off to a relatively late start with two on 13 April and continued through to 13 May with peak counts of 175 on 244 and 35 on 3 May.

Three were at Heysham on 24 June but few were seen before mid-July. In contrast to spring, most autumn records came from the north Fylde coast. On 12 Aug 148 were seen at Barnaby's Sands and 112 on Pilling Marsh, but all other large counts were at Knott End, including 175 on 25 July and 219 on 10 Aug. The last were two at Knott End on 25 Sept and one at Heysham on the 28th.

## Liverpool Bay

The first were two off Rossall Point on 30 March but no more were reported until 11 April off Blackpool and 26 April off Formby Point. The largest April counts were 35 off Formby on the 26th and 34 off Rossall on the 29th. May was fairly quiet off both the Sefton and south Fylde coasts, with 115 off Formby on the 5th and 18 off Blackpool on the 3rd the largest counts.

Up to 16 were at Blackpool during June, when up to 24 also regularly joined the Common Tern roost at Seaforth and large counts of 75 were at Bispham on the 24th and 68 at Formby on the 29th. Numbers began to increase from early July with notable counts of 117 off Formby Point on the 18th and 189 on the 30th, and 110 on St. Anne's beach on the 6th and 135 on the 28th. August counts at Formby Point included 230 on the 1st, 348 on the 12th and 304 south on the 15th, while 102 off Rossall Point on the 25th was the only three-figure count in the Fylde. Passage continued with 253 off Formby on 1 Sept and 148 there on the 15th, but was soon over, the last being 41 off Rossall on 22 Sept and three off Formby on the 26th.

## Inland

Four at MMWWT on 25 Aug and two at Prescot Reservoirs on 25 Sept were the only records.

## **COMMON TERN** *Sterna hirundo*

**Abundant spring and autumn migrant. Scarce breeder on Ribble, Lune and at Seaforth.**

**Regular cross-Pennine migrant.**

### Morecambe Bay

Common Terns remained scarce throughout the north of the county and particularly so in the Heysham area where numbers were described as having reached 'rock bottom'.

The first on the Eric Morecambe complex on 22 April was followed by a mere 25 bird-days at Heysham to the end of May, while up to four at Glasson and Cockerham was the 'highlight' of spring on the north Fylde coast. None apparently bred on the Lune marshes.

Autumn was little better with a miserable 18 bird-days in the Lancaster recording area between 18 July and 7 Oct and a peak of up to 26 at Knott End on 24-26 July.

### Liverpool Bay

The first arrivals were late – on 20 April at Seaforth and Rossall Point on the 28th. There was little sign of spring passage away from the breeding colonies at Seaforth and the Ribble marshes, with 43 off Formby Point on 12 May and 15 off Blackpool on the 15th the largest counts.

Numbers at Seaforth had grown to 60 by 1 May and 250 by the third week of the month, after which an estimated 181 pairs nested. Strong winds in early July damaged several of the rafts and destroyed many clutches and broods and it was not possible to ring most of the young, but it is thought that roughly 100 fledged successfully.

The colony on Banks Marsh was not censused but at least one pair nested on Longton Marsh.

The post-breeding assembly at Seaforth was a little disappointing, perhaps as a result of a mixed breeding season elsewhere, and numbers peaked at 750 on 17 July, reducing to 650 in the first week of August with 500 still present on the 28th; 150 were offshore on 9 Sept with 90 there on the 25th and a final record on 13 Oct.

Most records at Formby Point during early to mid-June were probably associated with the Seaforth colony, and the first sign of the usual autumn gathering was 110 on 29 June. Autumn passage gained momentum in late July with 450 close inshore or roosting on the 18th and 416 on the 30th, further increasing in August with 880 on the 1st and 724 on the 12th. It seems likely that

the combined roost total at Seaforth and Formby Point at this time was around 2000. About 150 were still present at Formby towards the end of August and the last was seen on 14 Oct.

Unusually these days, at least 23 were seen well up the Mersey off the Garden Festival site on 19 Aug. Autumn reports from the Fylde coast rarely amounted to more than low single figures, exceptions being 15 off Blackpool on 18 June and 25 July.

### **Inland**

Records were received from 25 inland reservoirs and other water bodies throughout the season.

Two pairs bred successfully at Delph Reservoir, fledging four young; they were seen feeding on nearby reservoirs at Belmont and Wayoh. The largest count at Delph was of twelve adults on 23 June, perhaps including prospecting birds. Birds were regularly seen carrying food from the area of Wrightington Fishponds towards newly excavated fishing ponds near Mossy Lea, where it is possible they were nesting. Regular visitors during summer to the Yarrow Valley Park were also likely to have been breeding fairly locally in Lancashire or Greater Manchester.

Sites in St. Helens, especially Prescott Reservoirs, Carr Mill Dam and Eccleston Mere, remain the most important inland sites in the county. Birds were regular there between 27 April and 14 Aug, with peak counts of five at Carr Mill Dam on 7 May, four on Eccleston Mere on 15 May, and 14 on Prescott Reservoirs on 13 July.

Elsewhere, singles were at Brockholes Quarry on 22 April and 13 May, two at Myerscough Quarry during April and May, two at Anglezarke Reservoir on 5 May, four at MMWWT on 16 May and 21 July, two at Clowbridge Reservoir on 6 June, and singles at Foulridge Reservoir on 12 Aug and 30 Sept and Pine Lake on 31 Aug and 24 Sept to 7 Oct.

### **ROSEATE TERN\* *Sterna dougallii***

#### **Scarce summer visitor.**

All records were on the Sefton Coast, where Roseate Terns have become annual visitors, associating with the Common Tern colony at Seaforth – and perhaps Banks Marsh – and the autumn assemblage in Liverpool Bay.

All birds were in breeding plumage, although ringing recoveries in recent years suggest the majority are likely to be second- or third-summerers. One was at Seaforth on 15-16 June (MA Small), three there on 1 July (JE Taylor *et al*), with two remaining the following day, and one on 1 Aug (AJ Conway).

Two were seen offshore at Formby Point on 30 July (B McCarthy).

### **ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea***

#### **Common on spring passage, especially in Morecambe Bay; less numerous in autumn.**

#### **Rare breeder.**

#### **Morecambe Bay**

The spring passage did not disappoint. After the first on 20 April, a total of 4848 bird-days was recorded at Heysham – and somewhat lower numbers from Jenny Brown's Point – until 2 June, dominated by movements of 2102 on 1 May and 1426 on the 2nd. Unlike the autumn passage of Common Terns in Liverpool Bay, virtually all these birds are 'straight-through' migrants and the real total may be significantly in excess of the numbers recorded. On the two big days, many flew low over the North Harbour wall, an experience described as 'like being on the Farnes after a non-aggression pact'. As usual, several flocks were seen heading inland from Jenny Brown's Point. Only occasional singles were seen from the north Fylde coast.

Few were seen in summer or autumn and it is thought that none nested on the Lune marshes. The last was at Heysham on 20 July.

### **Liverpool Bay**

The first were seen off Rossall Point and Formby Point on 26 April.

The very large movement across Morecambe Bay of 1 May (see above) was also recorded past the south Fylde coast, with 1907 off Blackpool (mostly flying south-east) and 602 off Rossall Point. Numbers were much reduced the following day with 50 and 280 at these two sites respectively and 50 at Freckleton – but it is not known whether this disparity was due to differing migration routes between the two days or less observation effort on the second.

Although birds continued to be seen until mid-May, the only other large counts were of 214 off Rossall and 55 off Formby on the 5th, and 21 past Blackpool on the 11th. Very unusually, a pair was displaying and scrape-making at Seaforth on 23 June but this came to nothing.

Only low single figures were reported from the Fylde coast during autumn but seawatching from Formby Point was more productive, with peak counts of 35 on 29 June, 110 on 28 July, 555 on 30 July, 78 on 13 Aug and 139 on the 17th. Up to three juveniles lingered at Seaforth to 5 Sept and the last were on the Mersey on the 25th.

### **Inland**

There were spring singles at Foulridge Reservoir on 1 May, Prescot Reservoirs on the 4th, MMWWT on the 8th and Stocks Reservoir on the 10th, two at Brockholes Quarry on 6-7 May and Downholland Moss on the 17th, and five at Stocks on the 18th.

Autumn began with eight on Prescot Reservoirs on 7 Aug with singles there on a further eight days until 26 Sept. Elsewhere, one was at MMWWT on 15 Sept, two on Pine Lake on 24-27 Sept and at Foulridge Reservoir on the 27th, single juveniles at Rishton Reservoir on 28 Sept and at Foulridge on 30 Sept, and very late singles – the latest in the county this year – at Barrowford Reservoir on 9 Oct and Downholland Moss on the 12th.

## **GUILLEMOT *Uria aalge***

**Common passage migrant; uncommon winter visitor.**

Both winter periods were typically unproductive. Probably just one or two birds were seen in the Heysham/Morecambe area and off the north Fylde coast during January and February, with twelve off Formby Point on 23 Jan the only sizeable count anywhere.

The first signs of spring passage were singles off Rossall Point on 20 April and Heysham on the 27th, and low numbers continued to be seen off the Sefton and Fylde coasts and in Morecambe Bay throughout the spring and summer.

With the exception of 59 off Rossall on 21 Oct and ten there on the 24th, autumn passage consisted of sporadic sightings of six or fewer from all the main seawatching stations, tailing off in late October to leave just ones and twos.

Five were found dead on Crosby Shore on 15 Sept with another eight there on the 30th, and singles at Jenny Brown's Point on 22 Jan, Cotestones on 4 Feb, Seaforth in August and Otterspool on 10 Nov.

## **RAZORBILL *Alca torda***

**Common passage migrant; uncommon winter visitor.**

It was a fairly typical year with hardly more than a handful of sightings in either winter period but a marked autumn passage.

Up to three were seen fairly regularly off Formby and Heysham/Morecambe during January and February and two off the Fylde coast; unusually, two were on Crosby Marine Lake on 21 Jan and one on the wildfowlers' pool on Aldcliffe Marsh the same day. Two was the largest count anywhere in the second winter period.

Spring peaks were four off Formby Point on 16 March, twelve off Blackpool on 16 April and 20 off Rossall Point on the 27th, but only singles were seen in Morecambe Bay.

Very occasional singles were then seen until the passage got underway in mid-October. The largest counts off the Sefton Coast were 49 on 14 Oct and 31 on the 28th and a mere two in Morecambe Bay, but much larger numbers were seen off the Fylde coast. These included 743 off Blackpool on 23 Oct with 500 off Rossall the same day, 805 off Blackpool on the 24th and 117 on the 26th, with a final large count of 31 there on 6 Nov.

At least eleven were found dead at various sites in Morecambe Bay after gales in January.

## **UNIDENTIFIED LARGE AUKS**

One reported on Wayoh Reservoir on 3 Jan was an unusual inland record. The largest winter count was of 23 off Formby Point on 1 Jan, at a time when most specifically identified auks were Guillemots, while ten were seen off Rossall Point on 2 Feb.

Low single figures were reported from several sites at other times in the year but the largest counts came in autumn – and were thus probably mostly Razorbills – with 100 off Blackpool on 25 Oct, 38 there on 23 Nov and 86 off Formby on 14 Oct.

## **BLACK GUILLEMOT** *Cephus grylle*

**Scarce passage migrant; rare winter visitor.**

The highlight of the year was a pair displaying at Heysham throughout the summer. Last year's male reappeared on 10 May and was joined by a first-summer female on 16 June. The pair were investigating a hole on the wooden jetty – which collapsed during 2007-08 – but showed no signs of nesting. The female was last definitely seen on 13 Aug, after which the male resumed last year's behaviour of displaying to Feral Pigeons before disappearing at the end of the month. It returned in winter plumage on 6 Oct and was seen on and off until 20 Dec.

A typical year elsewhere began with one off Blackpool on 18 April and continued with single adults off Cleveleys on 4 May and Blackpool on 1 June, and three first-summer off Blackpool on 1 Aug.

## **LITTLE AUK\*** *Alle alle*

**Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.**

The only accepted records were both found dead: singles between Silverdale and Arnsdale – just possibly in Cumbria – on 13 Jan, and Crosby Marine Lake on 14 Nov (now at Liverpool Museum).

However, a convincing report was received from two anglers of one at Heysham on 31 Jan, while one was watched from Seaforth on the 'wrong' side of the river on 11-12 Nov.

## **PUFFIN\*** *Fratercula arctica*

**Scarce passage migrant.**

One was found dead at St. Anne's on 10 Jan and singles were seen off Formby Point on 28 July (B McCarthy), 1 Aug (S Cross) and 14 Oct (S Cross), and Blackpool on 9 June (S Dunstan).

**FERAL PIGEON** *Columba livia***Abundant and widely-distributed breeding resident**

High counts in the early part of the year included 200-300 at Dairy Farm Road, St. Helens in January with 70 there in February and 60 in April, and 210 at Blackpool South Shore on 23 April. One hundred and thirty at South Road, Waterloo on 8 March was the highest count in the Liverpool area, and 58+ at Clitheroe Cement Works on the 27th the largest flock in east Lancashire; in Rossendale there were 75 in Rawtenstall on 6 April.

Breeding records included up to 15 pairs in the Heysham Harbour area; three nests contained chicks at Rawtenstall on the late (or early) date of 30 Dec. The occasional gem that may be gleaned from observing even this most mundane species is illustrated by the record of a male copulating with a dead road casualty in a 'submissive' posture on Whitegate Drive, Blackpool on 26 April.

There were some very high counts in the late year, including 423 at Singleton, Fylde on 28 Sept, 90 in Rawtenstall on the 30th, 320 by Southport Marine Lake during a Winter Atlas TTV on 26 Nov, 271 in Sefton Park, Liverpool on 19 Dec, and up to 400 at Dairy Farm Road during the month.

**STOCK DOVE** *Columba oenas***Fairly common breeding resident; local flocks in winter**

Late winter counts in the coastal west were on the low side in 2007; there were 46 on Downholland Moss on 2 Jan and 50 at MMWWT on 13 Feb, while counts at Eagland Hill, Fylde peaked at 28 on 7 Jan and 22 on 6 March. Twenty-eight fed on cereal stubbles at Oglet, south Liverpool on 12 March while only 16 birds were recorded in the Lancaster & District January survey, in six mainly inland squares. The highest counts came from much further inland, record flocks of about 60 Stock Doves feeding with Pheasants at Belmont in January.

Records of breeding activity were very widespread. In the Pilling-Preesall area of the Fylde 45 pairs laid 207 eggs and fledged 118 young; birds held territory at 13 locations across south Liverpool, with seven pairs in Sefton Park, and four pairs bred around Belmont Reservoir, producing ten broods and a total of 17 young. Nesting by smaller numbers was reported from MMWWT, Freshfield Dune Heath, Wycoller and Altham in east Lancashire and Eccleston Mere, St. Helens, while a family group of four was at Seaforth on 27 Aug. In Rossendale breeding pairs were present at Harden Moor, Deeply Vale, Musbury, Dunnockshaw and in most of the quarries in the area.

Thirty-one at Out Rawcliffe, Fylde on 2 Sept was the only significant gathering recorded in early autumn, but there were 110+ at Bradshaw Lane Head, Eagland Hill on 12 Oct and 190 at Copthorne, Pilling, on 18 Nov. A flock of 31 was on Churchtown Moss on 17 Dec and 26 were on an autumn-sown cereal field at Speke, south Liverpool on the 26th. The highest inland counts were of 27 around Pheasant release-pens on Grindleton Fell and 17 at Harwood Bar, both in the ELOC region, on 5 Oct and 11 Dec respectively, and flocks of up to 60 again at Belmont Pheasant pens in December. Southbound autumn migrants at Seaforth included five on 1 Oct and two on the 6th, but none was recorded at Heysham all year.

**WOODPIGEON** *Columba palumbus***Abundant breeding resident; widespread winter flocks**

Exceptionally large gatherings in the first winter period included 1000+ at Roddlesworth Plantations on 1 Jan and 1100 on Downholland Moss on 24 Feb; three-figure flocks were very widespread, with nine reported in east Lancashire during January and February, 500 between

Croston and Eccleston, Chorley on 14 Jan, when 400 also flew over Haslingden, another 500 at MMWWT on 3 March, 175 at Singleton, Fylde on 23 Feb and 205 at Halewood, south Liverpool on 17 March. Flocks of 1200 on Reed's Moss, St. Helens on 7 April and 500 there next day may have involved spring passage; five migrants flew over Heysham NR on 12 April.

The very few reports of breeding received included 38 pairs in and around Rimrose Valley, 19 pairs at Witton Country Park, Blackburn, 16 on Freshfield Dune Heath and six on British Energy property at Heysham. There was a post-breeding flock of 700 at Marshside on 16 June, while up to 45 fed on whinberries on Winter Hill on 23 June and 7 July.

Autumn movements got underway on a small scale in late August, with 60 at Seaforth on 20 Aug and 200+ at Walverden Reservoir, Nelson on the 22nd; three flocks in the low to mid-hundreds were reported from the Fylde during September.

Subsequent movements were mainly concentrated into two relatively brief periods, in late October and mid-November. On 21 Oct 656 passed over Rimrose Valley and 169 over the old Garden Festival site in south Liverpool; there were a thousand birds at Dairy Farm Road, St. Helens next day and 133 at Whalley Nab on the 23rd. Ninety flew south at Seaforth on 24 Oct and there were 1000+ over Roddlesworth Plantations on the 26th, when 500 per hour passed at nearby Belmont; 146 passed over the Stoney Rake migration watch-point, Rossendale on 29 Oct and 145 on the 30th. A total of 1763 Woodpigeons was recorded at Heysham NR between 22 Sept and 16 Nov, including northerly movements of 480 on 14 Nov and 730 on the following day; 3000 also flew over Torrisholme, Lancaster and 385 over Sowerby, Fylde on the 14th. A very large movement was recorded over Stoney Rake on 16 Nov, with over 1100 birds passing in two hours.

Numbers in the coastal west were above average at the year's end, with counts of a thousand or more at Warton Marsh on 18 Dec, at Oglet on the 25th and at Burscough Airfield on the 28th, but no reports of significant flocks were received from inland regions.

## **COLLARED DOVE** *Streptopelia decaocto*

### **Common breeding resident, more local in the east; some coastal passage**

Counts in the first winter period were low at both inland and coastal sites, with an east Lancashire peak of 15 at Rishton on 1 Jan, 13 on Bispham Marsh, Fylde on 7 Jan, 32 in a Belmont garden on the 14th, and 28 at Rainhill, St. Helens on 16 Feb. A total of 153 birds was recorded across nine 10km squares during the Lancaster & District BWS January survey, very similar to the 2006 figure. A total of 29 at Gaghills on 1 Jan was the largest gathering in Rossendale. A single north over Heysham NR on 28 April was the only spring migrant reported.

Twenty-three pairs bred in and around Rimrose Valley, three pairs in Witton Country Park, Blackburn and single pairs at Freshfield Dune Heath and Heysham NR. Elsewhere in east Lancashire a pair with four young was at Lower Darwen on 14 June and breeding was also confirmed at Whalley. In Rossendale breeding was proven at Whitworth, where a flock of eleven including four juveniles was seen on 1 June. A bird with nesting material was in an Eccleston, Chorley garden on 3 Feb and a recently-fledged juvenile was at Belmont in late December.

Light but widespread passage movements were reported, mainly in the first half of October. Thirty-five flew south at Heysham NR on 13 days between late September and the end of October, with a peak of ten on 2 Oct. Twenty-one passed over Fairhaven Lake and eight over Seaforth on 1 Oct, with 13 and eleven at each site, respectively, next day; there were 15 over Seaforth on 6 Oct, 22 over the old Garden Festival site in south Liverpool on the 7th, and ten over Fairhaven on the 18th.

A flock of 116 was feeding on Downholland Moss on 16 Oct, there were 83 at Clock Face Country Park, St. Helens on the 27th and 52 on Hoscar Moss on 23 Dec, but most of the high counts in the late year came from the Fylde, including up to 60 birds at New Ridge Farm, Pilling

on various dates in November and December, 56 at Catforth on 6 Nov and 45 at Medlar on the 18th.

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

### **Scarce passage migrant**

There were three records of this declining summer visitor in 2007, two in spring and one in autumn. One was on roadside wires at Haskayne (the species' most recent confirmed breeding site in the county) on 10 May, but it was not seen subsequently, and one was at Marshside on 13 June. The autumn bird was seen briefly at Cockersand on 27 Sept before flying off to the north.

## **CUCKOO** *Cuculus canorus*

### **Uncommon breeding bird and double passage migrant, more numerous in spring**

A bird calling at Clowbridge, Rossendale on 16 April was followed by single males at Whitehall, Darwen and on Churchtown Moss on the 18th and a widespread influx from the 22nd. As usual, reports were concentrated in the period early May to early June, with the majority from upland sites and involving apparently transient calling males. Confirmed breeding was reported only from MMWWT; in east Lancashire up to three males were in the Stocks Reservoir area on many dates from 22 April to 5 June, but there were only 25 Bowland records outside Stocks and only 15 reports from other parts of east Lancashire. Calling males were seen or heard at seven sites on the West Pennine Moors around Belmont, but the presence of a female was confirmed at only one of these. In the north, males were reported from twelve, mainly upland, locations, but there was no confirmation of breeding. Elsewhere apparently long-staying males were on Downholland Moss to at least 24 June, and at Prescott Reservoirs, St. Helens in May and June.

The last bird on the West Pennine Moors was recorded on 30 July and at MMWWT on 3 Aug. One was at the old Garden Festival site in south Liverpool on 28 July and a juvenile was at Prescott Reservoirs from 6 to 14 Aug, with the last record in east Lancashire also on the latter date. Finally, a very late bird (the latest ever recorded in the county) was seen at close range at Little Hoole, south of Preston, on 9 Oct.

## **BARN OWL** *Tyto alba*

### **Uncommon breeding resident, most numerous in the south-west and the Fylde**

Although several observers mentioned an apparent scarcity of sightings in the south-west in 2007, an intensive survey, focused mainly in the southern part of the region confirmed breeding by 22 pairs with probable nesting by another 43. The Fylde also had a good year, with 20 pairs nesting in boxes in south Fylde, while 19 pairs in Over Wyre laid c.105 eggs, hatched 56 and fledged 46 young, 2.1 per pair; all but one pair were in nest-boxes.

Perhaps more noteworthy this year was an apparent increase and spread of breeding activity in other regions of the county. In east Lancashire, although only two pairs were confirmed on the middle and upper Hodder, fledging three and four young respectively, very widespread sight records suggest the possibility of significant range expansion. There was a marked increase in breeding numbers in the north, with up to five pairs in the Lune Valley, at Claughton, Docker, Arkholme, Hornby, and, possibly, Melling; there were widespread sightings at other sites throughout the year and five birds were found roosting in Goosander nest-boxes at Arkholme on 24 Oct.

In the Chorley NHS region a pair at Ulnes Walton raised two broods of two and three offspring; one young from a third brood was taken into care in the second week of November. It responded well, and was re-released at the nest site; this is the first known third brood by Barn

Owls in Lancashire. One of two pairs at Belmont raised two broods, while two pairs bred at Croston and another at Mawdesley. In Rossendale successful breeding by a single pair took place at the same site as in 2006, with at least one juvenile fledged.

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

#### **Fairly common and widespread breeding resident**

The ELOC reported 95 records, from all parts of east Lancashire and in all months, with widespread presence of pairs in the breeding season; juveniles were recorded at Foulscapes near Newton, Hesketh Lane near Chipping, and Parsonage Reservoir. The Fylde Bird Club website listed 91 widespread records; 20 pairs bred in Over Wyre, laying 64 eggs of which 43 hatched, and fledged 28 young, 1.8 per pair, all in nest-boxes. There were breeding-season records at 15 sites in north Lancashire and widespread sight records in Chorley region, where single pairs bred at Cuerden Valley Park, Belmont Reservoir and Whittle, although a previously regular breeding site at Anglezarke was unoccupied. In Rossendale records were received from numerous sites in the course of the year; breeding was not confirmed, but was considered probable at several locations.

Reports from the south-west were rather fragmentary, but three pairs nested on Downholland Moss while one pair at Marshside fledged two young, the first breeding record for the site. There were records from only two locations in St. Helens, and no evidence of breeding.

### **TAWNY OWL** *Strix aluco*

#### **Common and widespread breeding resident**

Birds were reported from all parts of the Fylde, and in the Pilling-Preesall area nine pairs bred in nest-boxes, laying 23 eggs and fledging eight young, 0.9 per pair. In Chorley NHS region at least four pairs nested around Belmont Reservoir and single pairs in Cuerden and Yarrow Valley Parks; there was breeding season presence in all suitable woodlands in the Rivington-Anglezarke area, with young birds seen at six sites. The ELOC reported 116 records from 46 locations, including some urban sites, with confirmed breeding at seven, including eight pairs in Witton Country Park, Blackburn. Records were received from 16 locations in Rossendale and nesting was confirmed in at least seven, including several pairs in the Strongstry area and two at Waterfoot.

In the north, successful pairs were recorded at Arkholme, Claughton, Leighton Moss and at Trowbarrow Quarry and Eaves Wood, Silverdale. Very few reports were received from the south-west, but these included successful nesting by single pairs at MMWWT, Mere Sands Wood and at Priory Wood, south Liverpool; birds were reported from 15 sites in St. Helens.

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

#### **Scarce breeding resident; uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor**

A survey of the south-west mosslands located five breeding pairs, two of which fledged a total of five young, while the other three pairs were also considered very likely to have been successful; another observer reported a pair with three young at a site further to the north. In east Lancashire the now-regular pair near Accrington raised four young while pairs near Burnley and at Pendle Hill fledged two and three respectively; a bird was near Barrow on 30 Dec. In the north two pairs at Leck Fell fledged at least four young between them and breeding season presence was also reported from Whittington in the Lune Valley. In the Chorley region a pair nested successfully near Belmont, with four young ringed on 6 June. Successful breeding was reported from three sites in Rossendale, with four young probably fledged from each of two nests and two from the third; overwintering occurred in at least one of these locations.

No passage birds were reported this year, but the regular winter roost at Marton Mere, Blackpool peaked at five in January, two in February and one in March, with the last record on the 13th; one was again present from 10 Oct, with two in November and four in December.

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

#### **Scarce upland breeding bird; uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor**

Early-year counts at coastal wintering sites were much lower than in 2006, with up to four birds on Warton Marsh and three at Marshside during January-March; singles were at Cockersand on 26 Jan, on Garston Shore, south Liverpool on 11 Feb and at Hesketh Bank on 18 March. In the uplands there was a maximum count of five on Champion Moor on 24 Feb; up to two birds were at Belmont from 9 Jan, and two were at Clowbridge Reservoir, Rossendale on 15 Feb. A bird flying north-east at Marton Mere on 29 April and one on Downholland Moss on 20 May were the only spring migrants reported.

Six occupied territories were located on the United Utilities Bowland estate, an increase on the four pairs in 2006; one pair was present at the proposed wind-farm site at Deerstones Moor, Trawden. A pair near Belmont probably bred again after their first nest was destroyed in a moorland fire in early May as a juvenile was seen in the area in August. In the north there were breeding-season records from Leck Fell, Hindburndale and Burn Moor.

Autumn migrants were unusually evident this year in coastal areas. One was at Fluke Hall, Pilling on 30 Sept and there were singles at Crosby on 3 Oct, at Cockersand and Banks Marsh on the 6th, at Formby Point on the 11th and Mythop, Fylde on the 18th. On 27 Oct a bird flew over Rossall Point and another was at Woolton, south Liverpool. Apart from four at Bone Hill Farm, Pilling on 20 Dec and up to three at Marshside during the month there were no multiple sightings at coastal locations in late year, and no reports at all from upland areas.

### **SWIFT** *Apus apus*

#### **Common summer visitor and abundant passage migrant**

Once again Seaforth recorded the first spring migrant, two days earlier than in 2006, on 14 April. Birds arrived in north Lancashire from 17 April, in Rossendale next day, in Chorley region from the 20th and in east Lancashire and the Fylde from the 21st. Passage movements in May and early June were generally light, with 140 over Mythop, Fylde on 12 May, 300 at Seaforth and 150 at Ewood Bridge Sewage Works, Rossendale on the 28th and 400 at Eccleston Mere, St. Helens on the 30th. A wholly exceptional movement was recorded over Brockholes Quarry on the afternoon of 13 May, when several thousand Swifts were concentrated by a heavy downpour. The only breeding data received were from Freehold, Lancaster with four colonies and a peak count of 145 birds over the area in early July.

On 23 June two separate observers recorded what was almost certainly the same flock of about 600 Swifts over the Douglas-Ribble confluence and Freckleton Naze, just across the estuary; over 1000 were over Crosby Marine Lake on the evening of 4 July, with 700 there on the 11th. Three hundred and fifty flew east-south-east over Fairhaven Beach on 16 July and 460 passed over the old Garden Festival site in south Liverpool on the 22nd. Inland movements in July included flocks of 200 over Clowbridge Reservoir on 10 July and over Towneley Park, Burnley on the 26th, and 100+ over Clough Bottom Reservoir, Rossendale on the 24th.

As usual, numbers declined very rapidly in August, with 60 over Lower Burgh Meadow, Chorley and 150 over Seaforth on 4 Aug, and 100 over Prescott Reservoirs, St. Helens on the 14th the highest counts reported; Rossendale and the Belmont area recorded their last Swifts before the end of the month. Twelve September reports were received, most in the first week; one at Euxton

on 3 Sept and two at Jackhouse Reservoir on the 10th were the last in Chorley and ELOC regions, respectively. There were only two October sightings, single birds at Prescott Reservoirs on 5 Oct and at Cocker's Dyke, Pilling on the 13th.

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

**Uncommon but widely-distributed breeding bird, mainly in the east; post-breeding dispersal westwards**

This species appears to be going from strength to strength. All the core breeding areas in the east and north report thriving populations; presumably as a consequence of this the number of reports from coastal and other lowland sites in early and late year reached unprecedented levels in 2007. There is hardly a corner of Lancashire outside the highest fell country where Kingfishers may not be encountered at some time of the year. In Rossendale the species breeds plentifully, both on the Irwell River system and on many still waters throughout the region. In the north, twelve pairs were located along the River Lune, although not all sections of the river were surveyed; away from the Lune pairs were present in the breeding season at six other locations. Kingfishers were reported from 40 sites in east Lancashire and from 13 in the Chorley NHS region.

These booming populations notwithstanding, there was no evidence of the breeding range extending further to the west in 2007. Single pairs bred in Haslam Park, Preston, on the Ribble near Brockholes Quarry and on the main drain near MMWWT; birds were present for at least part of the breeding season at several other sites on the south-west mosslands, but without proof of nesting.

Westward dispersals were underway by the end of June; ones or twos were reported from dozens of lowland sites by the end of the year, although as usual the density of records was highest in the north Fylde and on the shores of Morecambe Bay and the Lune Estuary.

### **HOOPOE\*** *Upupa epops*

**Rare passage migrant**

One was seen and photographed in a garden at Hutton, on the southern outskirts of Preston, on 19 April (B Hargreaves). Since 2000 this species has been virtually an annual visitor to the county.

### **WRYNECK\*** *Jynx torquilla*

**Rare passage migrant, usually in autumn after easterly winds**

One was in a garden at Treales, east of Kirkham, on the very typical dates of 8-9 Sept (R Bedford).

### **GREEN WOODPECKER** *Picus viridis*

**Fairly common though local breeding bird, mainly in the north and east**

Our population appears to remain in a very healthy state. There were reports from all parts of east Lancashire, in all months, with confirmed breeding by single pairs at Stocks Reservoir and Wood End Sewage Works. Birds were recorded in many locations in Rossendale, again in all months, with nesting confirmed at several sites; birds were yaffling in spring at seven locations, and a juvenile was present at Higher Hollinbank during August. In north Lancashire there were two confirmed breeding pairs at Cloughton and single pairs at Arkholme, Trowbarrow near Silverdale and Warton Crag RSPB; elsewhere breeding-season presence was reported from Birk Bank, Quernmore, Littledale and Roeburndale. Green Woodpeckers were recorded at 13 sites in the Chorley region, with nesting confirmed at two, at Belmont and between White Coppice and Anglezarke, and considered probable at several other locations. In the south-west there were many

records throughout the year in St. Helens, from Prescot Reservoirs, Sherdley and Taylor Parks, Rainhill, Paddock Dam and Clock Face Country Park; nesting was confirmed in Sherdley Park.

Outlying records were few; a bird was at Mere Sands Wood on 10 Jan and there were two juveniles, or perhaps the same individual, at Heysham NR on 26 Sept and 14 Oct.

## **GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER** *Dendrocopos major*

### **Common and widespread breeding resident**

Observers in all regions report continuing high, and even increasing numbers; records of confirmed breeding undoubtedly represent only a small sample of the true population. In east Lancashire breeding was proven at twelve sites, while 70% of the 80 or so records for the period January to early April refer to drumming birds. Nesting was recorded at four sites in Rossendale with drumming reported from four others; in the north, nine pairs were located in the Lune Valley. In the Chorley NHS region at least 22 territories were identified in the Rivington-Anglezarke woodlands and five in Cuerden Valley Park. Observers in both the Fylde and the south-west reported numerous territorial pairs; two pairs bred at MMWWT, the first record for the site.

Autumn passage movements were unusually conspicuous and widespread this year, extending from early September to late October, without any marked peaks. Seaforth recorded 22 migrants between 13 Sept and 22 Oct, with maxima of five on 22 Sept and 5 Oct; six passed at Heysham NR between 10 and 19 Oct. In the Fylde a total of 13 were recorded at Fairhaven Lake between 15 Sept and 20 Oct; two flew over Rossall School on 1 Oct and five over Carleton next day. At Marshside five passed between 3 Sept and 12 Oct. Inland records included one over Caton Moor on 6 Sept and two birds high over Belmont on 6 Oct.

## **LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER** *Dendrocopos minor*

### **Scarce and local breeding resident**

Although there were no reports of confirmed breeding this year, a handful of widely-scattered records of single birds, some from former breeding outposts, offer the hope that viable populations may still be present. In the early part of the year one was in alders by the River Yarrow near Eccleston on 11 Jan and another was at Grane, Rossendale on the 29th; a bird was at Burgh Hall Wood, Chorley on 14 Feb, a male was at Carr Mill Dam, St. Helens on the 20th and there was a bird at MMWWT on the 23rd. One was in Boilton Wood beside Brockholes Quarry on 30 March and 17 April, and there was a bird in Astley Park, Chorley on 31 March.

Later in the year single birds were at Mere Sands Wood on 22 July and at Woodwell, Silverdale on 19 Aug, and there were two September reports from St. Helens, at Prescot Reservoirs on the 19th and Old Coach Road on the 30th. Finally, there was a second report of a bird at Grane on 23 Sept.

## **SKYLARK** *Alauda arvensis*

### **Abundant breeding bird and passage migrant**

Early-year flocks included up to 200 on Marshside-Crossens saltings during January, 25 at Hest Bank on 1 Jan and 120 on Croston Moss, Chorley on 4 Feb. All other significant counts were in the Fylde: 72 at Light Ash, Myerscough on 9 Jan and 110 there on 18 Feb, 180 at Eagland Hill, Pilling on 6 Feb and 164 on Rawcliffe Moss next day. Further inland there were 40+ at Wenning Foot in the Lune Valley on 18 Feb. Skylarks began to return to upland sites from mid-January and singing males were reported from Cowpe Moss, Rossendale on 4 Feb and from Belmont and Darwen Moor on the 12th. Five over Heysham NR in March were the only spring migrants reported.

Widespread breeding reports provide a complicated picture of the species' fortunes, in lowland areas in particular. The population at MMWWT increased spectacularly from 43 pairs in 2006 to 108, and a healthy 43 pairs nested at Marshside RSPB with another 19 pairs on adjacent Crossens Inner Marsh. In St. Helens there were 30 singing males on Reed's Moss and 20 at Dairy Farm Road in April. However, only three pairs apiece nested in Rimrose Valley and Freshfield Dune Heath, and two each at Brockholes Quarry and Middleton Industrial Estate, Heysham. The population of the Lune Valley continues at a very low level, with only three singing males along the 5km stretch of the River between Leck Beck and Arkholme.



In the uplands high counts included 20+ singing males on Pendle Hill on 16 April and 25 pairs on Haslingden Moor and 20 in Deeply Vale, Rossendale in late April and early May; there were eight territorial males in April on a 1km BTO BBS square on Darwen Moor, as in 2006, and five pairs bred at Belmont.

Autumn movements, mainly in coastal areas, began in early September and continued at a steady if unspectacular pace until late October, with a marked peak in the first week of that month. September counts included 50+ on Birkdale Shore on 22 Sept, 97 over Fairhaven Lake on the 27th and 135 on Rawcliffe Moss, Fylde on the 30th; inland, twelve flew south over Laund Hey, Rossendale on 25 Sept. A surge in movements in early October saw 600 over Downholland Moss and 41 at Prescott Reservoirs, St. Helens on 2 Oct and 246 over Rawcliffe Moss with 364 over Seaforth on the 5th. Significant later flocks included 114 over Formby Point on 14 Oct, 300 over Marshside saltmarsh on the 19th and 53 at Seaforth on the following day. Fifty birds on Croston Moss on 3 Nov was the last noteworthy movement reported.

Late year counts were dominated by a massive 1800 on Marshside-Crossens saltmarsh on 25 Dec; other gatherings were of 70 at New Ridge Farm, Pilling on 24 Nov & 20 Dec, about 300 on Longton Marsh during December and 257 on Churchtown Moss on the 17th. The last bird of the

year in Rossendale was at Grane on 4 Nov, but a late straggler was at Altham in east Lancashire on 20 Dec.

## **SAND MARTIN** *Riparia riparia*

### **Common but local breeding bird, mainly in the east; common double passage migrant**

An early spring passage began with singles at Leighton Moss on 4 March and at Marshside on the 7th. The first Fylde record was at Marton Mere on 11 March and birds reached St. Helens at Prescott Reservoirs on the 17th. Inland, two at Calder Foot on 10 March were the first arrivals in east Lancashire, while one at Yarrow Valley Park on the 18th was the first record in the Chorley NHS area. Some moderate flocks had been reported by the end of March, including 100 at Leighton Moss on 26 March, 60 at Brockholes Quarry on the 29th and a spring peak count of 20 at Marshside on the 31st. The first Sand Martin did not reach Rossendale, at Stubbins, until 10 April; by 19 April 600 were roosting at Leighton Moss, and widespread arrivals on the 22nd brought 200 to the River Calder between Altham and Martholme, 30 to Eccleston Mere, St. Helens and 40 to Mere Sands Wood. Very few significant movements were recorded in May; there were 60 at Stocks Reservoir on 7 May and a very light spring passage at Seaforth ended on the 28th.

Lancashire's Sand Martin colonies suffered severely in the widespread flooding that followed torrential summer rains. The BTO Waterways Bird Survey located 990 occupied nest holes on the River Lune between Skerton Weir and Kirkby Lonsdale, with 457 on the 5km stretch between Leck Beck and Arkholme. Casualties were heavy as the river flooded, with several colonies virtually eliminated and the one at Gressingham completely abandoned; the colony at Nether Kellet established in 2005 was deserted this year. In east Lancashire there were counts of 23, 26 and 46 occupied holes in three colonies on the Altham-Martholme section of the River Calder on 20 May, but subsequent floods destroyed all but a handful of nests; two juveniles were still in a nest there on 26 Aug. At Brockholes Quarry 40 pairs attempted to breed but all nests were lost in a landslide precipitated by heavy rain; fortunately the birds relocated successfully to the nearby bank of the Ribble. At Lightfoot Green Quarry, Preston 100 nest holes were active by 20 April and 300+ by 8 June, with the last birds seen on 8 Sept.

Smaller breeding concentrations in east Lancashire included a colony in drainpipes at Burnley and 15 active nests between Hareden and Langden Intake in the Trough of Bowland. In Chorley region there were only six active nests in the River Yarrow colony at Eccleston and a few in the declining colony in Cuerden Valley Park; in Rossendale there were 14 occupied holes at Townsendfold by 7 June and birds were still present on 26 Aug. The only breeding records from the south-west were of a colony of 15 nests in a sand-mound at Dalton, near Skelmersdale on 22 June and a remarkable instance of a male Sand Martin paired with a female Swallow that fledged a hybrid chick from a nest beneath the main hide at Marshside RSPB; Turner & Rose (1989) refer to instances of hybridisation by Swallows, but none with Sand Martins.

Autumn movements were negligible at most coastal watchpoints, from Heysham to Seaforth; the Leighton Moss roost peaked at 1750+ on 11 Aug, and 200 were on the shore at Jenny Brown's Point on the 22nd. The regular roosts in maize fields between Gressingham and Melling in the Lune Valley held only small numbers this year; the last three birds were trapped there on 21 Sept. Two birds at Eccleston Mere on 10 Sept were the last record for St. Helens, while two at Anglezarke on the 17th ended the autumn in the Chorley region. Both Fylde and Rossendale recorded their last Sand Martins on 22 Sept; eight at Jackhouse Reservoir, Oswaldtwistle on the 26th were the last in east Lancashire, and the county, in 2007.

**SWALLOW** *Hirundo rustica***Abundant breeding bird and double passage migrant**

A bird at Mereclough, south-east of Burnley on 11 March was the earliest ever in the ELOC region, and only a day later than the county's earliest, in 1997. Marshside recorded its first Swallow on 23 March, the Fylde next day, and birds reached Leighton Moss and Brockholes Quarry on the 28th. Movements in April were slow to get going, with first arrivals in St. Helens and Chorley on 2 April and in Rossendale on the 8th, when 300+ were roosting at Leighton Moss. The first widespread surge of migrants was on 22 April, with 150 at Ewood Bridge Sewage Works, Rossendale, 100 at Marshside and 70 at Seaforth. One hundred and six flew over Heysham NR on 24 April and 73 passed at Rossall Point on the 28th. Passage continued at moderate levels through the first half of May: there were 226 at Heysham on 1 May and 291 on the 16th, 200 each at Upper Foulridge Reservoir, Colne and Ewood Bridge on 4 May, and a passage of 50 per hour over Belmont on the 12th. Thirty at Seaforth on 29 May was the last significant spring movement reported.

Regional reports mention very widespread breeding, but with few details. In the Pilling-Preesall area of the Fylde 44 monitored nests contained 208 eggs of which 150 hatched and 136 young were fledged; twenty pairs bred in stables at Freshfield Dune Heath and 16 at Lower Broomfield Farm, Arkholme. In Chorley NHS region seven pairs nested on a farm at Roddlesworth and six on a farm at Belmont, while a pair bred in the TV transmitter building on Winter Hill at 440m above sea level.

Widespread post-breeding and migrating flocks were on the move quite early this year; a thousand were over Pilling Moss on 15 July, there were 100 at Dairy Farm Road, St. Helens next day and 50 at Cowm Reservoir, Rossendale and 120 at Old Coach Road, St. Helens on the 29th. Some substantial roosts and movements during August included 2000+ roosting in maize at Catterall Farm, Fylde between 23-26 Aug and 1200 moving west over Marshside in 1.5 hours on the 30th. In the Lune Valley up to 3000 Swallows were roosting in maize at Melling and another 2000+ between Over Kellet and Borwick early in September; heavy movements later in the month included 340 at Moss House Farm, Fylde on 21 Sept, 1000 at Seaforth next day, up to 300 per hour over Belmont on the 23rd and 250 over Rishton Reservoir on the 25th.

Passage continued, though at much reduced levels, well into October. There were 25 Fylde records, including 100+ over Thurnham on 2 Oct and ten at Pilling Lane, Preesall on the 10th; 20 flew south at Laund Hey on 1 Oct, with ten there on the 10th the last Rossendale record. Twenty Swallows were at Cliviger, Burnley and at MMWWT on 5 Oct, 14 flew south at Belmont next day, and the ELOC region's last three birds were over Feniscowles, Blackburn on the 20th. Heysham and Leighton Moss saw their last birds on 23-24 Oct. One November Swallow was reported, over Delph Reservoir, Chorley on the 4th, and there were two very late records of single birds (possibly the same individual, on the reported timing) on 7 December, over Fluke Hall and Seaforth.

**HOUSE MARTIN** *Delichon urbica***Common and widespread breeding bird; abundant passage migrant**

For the first time since 2002 there were no March records this year; two north over Harrisend Fell in north Lancashire on 2 April were the first to arrive, followed by Chorley's first, at Heapey on the 6th. House Martins reached east Lancashire at Sunnyside Hey Reservoir, and the Fylde at Ingol, on 8 April, Rossendale at Ewood Bridge Sewage Works on the following day, and St. Helens at Eccleston Mere and Prescott Reservoirs on the 16th. Spring passage movements were very light everywhere: there were 30 at Heysham NR on 13 April and 40 there on the 27th; 42 on 22 April was the only significant count at Seaforth and there were 150+ at Marton Mere on 25 April, 70 at MMWWT on 27 May and 30 in Whitendale on the 29th.

Breeding reports were, as usual, fragmentary. Birds bred at 'many sites' in east Lancashire, including at least seven nests at Knott Farm, Longridge; there were 17 nests in Belmont Village, a welcome improvement on the 2006 total of eleven. In north Lancashire eight nests were counted at Wrayton, six at Gressingham and 24 in a new colony at Tunstall. Several small colonies were located in Garston and Aigburth, south Liverpool, and there were up to five nests in June in Hoyle Street, Whitworth in the ROC region, with young being fed in the nest there until the end of August.

Autumn passage counts were fairly low in 2007. Movements began in early July, with 80 at Mythop, Fylde on 4 July, 200 at Ewood Bridge on the 6th and 90 over the Lune at Arkholme on the 18th. The main passage began in the third week of August and continued until late September. There were only eight counts in low three-figures, including 100 over Sunnyhurst Hey Reservoir, Darwen on 22 Aug, 100+ at Withnell Fold, Chorley on 1 Sept, 180 at Seaforth on the 8th and 160 there on the 22nd, when Heysham NR also recorded its autumn peak count of 110, and 300 over Lench Valley, Rossendale on 15 Sept. Movements petered out very quickly in October. There were seven Fylde records, with three birds at Garstang on 6 Oct the latest; east Lancashire and Rossendale reported their last House Martins on 1 & 7 Oct, respectively. Two flew south-west over Garston Shore, south Liverpool on 13 Oct, five at Eccleston on the 14th were the last birds in Chorley region, and seven at Heysham on the 15th were the county's latest in 2007.

### **RICHARD'S PIPIT\* *Anthus richardi***

#### **Rare passage migrant, mostly in autumn**

A first-summer bird seen and photographed on Lytham Moss on 24 April was our first spring record since 1989 (F Bird *et al*).

### **TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis***

#### **Uncommon local breeding bird in the north and east, and double passage migrant**

A brisk spring passage in the Fylde began with a bird over Rossall Point on 7 April; a total of 41 were recorded over Rossall Point-Rossall School up to 1 May, with a peak of ten on 26 April. Two flew over Fluke Hall, Pilling on 13 April and over Starr Hills, Blackpool on the 21st. Elsewhere coastal movements were sparse. Heysham NR recorded its only spring migrant on 13 April, there were five at Marshside between 12 & 20 April and two passed at Seaforth on the 14-15th, with single birds also on Downholland Moss and at Aldcliffe on the latter date. Single birds at Formby Moss on 26 April, Sutton Manor, St. Helens on the 28th and over Woolton, south Liverpool on 14 May were the only other coastal migrants reported.

The first Tree Pipits reached Chorley region at Withnell Moor on 15 April and Belmont on the 30th, east Lancashire at Ightenhill Bridge on 21 April and Stocks Reservoir from the 24th, and Wray in north Lancashire on the 27th. Subsequent reports from breeding areas lacked any confirmation of nesting, but were suggestive nonetheless. In north Lancashire singing males were present at Birk Bank, Clougha (four), Caton Moor (two), Langden Valley, and Roeburndale. In Chorley four birds were singing at White Coppice on 1 June; a male was in song at Bottoms Beck by Stocks Reservoir in mid-May, and elsewhere in east Lancashire birds were present on Longridge Fell in late May. In Rossendale there were two birds in the Grane Valley on 9 July.

Birds were on the move in inland areas from 10 August, at Altham; also in east Lancashire up to two Tree Pipits were at Allsprings, Great Harwood and at Lowerhouse Lodges, Padiham in late August-early September. One on Pendle Hill summit on 9 Sept was the latest report from the region, while one over Stoney Rake, Grane on 28 Sept was Rossendale's only autumn record. A fairly average coastal passage extended from 9 Aug to 13 Oct, with five singles over sites in south

Liverpool, three birds each in the Fylde and at Seaforth, and singles at Heysham on 9 Aug, Thatto Heath, St. Helens on 3 Sept and Aldcliffe on the 8th. One over Crosby Marine Park on 13 Oct was the last of the year.

### **MEADOW PIPIT** *Anthus pratensis*

**Abundant breeding bird, especially in the east, and double passage migrant; scarcer in winter.**

The recent tendency for small numbers of Meadow Pipits to overwinter at upland sites was evident again this year, with five on Haslingden Moor on 12 Jan and twelve at Lee Quarry, Rossendale on 3 Feb. Early year flocks in lowland areas were uniformly small, with up to 46 at Seaforth, 30 at Myerscough Quarry on 23 Jan and 60 on Croston Moss on 4 Feb the highest counts reported.

Spring passage began in mid-March and was heavier than usual this year. Heysham NR recorded 5009 migrants between 23 March and 27 April, with peaks of 936 on 30 March and 1167 on 2 April. Numbers also peaked in late March-early April at several other watchpoints: 160 passed at Arkholme, in the Lune Valley on 22 March and there were 409 over Rossall Point on the 25th and 951 on the 30th; 210 were grounded at Seaforth on 28 March. Another 1400+ passed over Rossall Point on 1-2 April; on the latter date 450 were at Cockersand and 170 flew north-west over Laund Hey, Rossendale. On 7 April there were 890 at Rossall Point and another 139 at Laund Hey; 119 at Fleetwood Golf Course on 26 April was the last noteworthy count reported.

Breeding reports were mainly confined to upland areas, reflecting the relative abundance of the species there. A survey of 35 1km transects on the United Utilities estate in Bowland located 258 pairs, compared with 233 in the most recent survey, in 2005. There were 19 territorial males in April and 22 in May in a 1km BTO BBS square on Darwen Moor; elsewhere in the east there were 34 territorial males on Oswaldtwistle Moor on 10 April and 32 at Marl Hill on the 18th. In Rossendale breeding was reported from Calf Hey, Clowbridge and Helmshore; in Chorley NHS region about 15 pairs nested at Belmont Reservoir. On the coast seven pairs nested at Marshside RSPB and another one on Crossens Inner Marsh, but the population of the adjacent saltmarsh, which has increased over recent years, was not surveyed. Breeding was not recorded at MMWWT, however, and the decline at Heysham continued; breeding was not recorded on the reserve and only two pairs nested on Middleton Industrial Estate.

Intermittent movements began at inland sites in early August, with 50 on Pendle summit on the 2nd; these gained momentum in early September, when there were 100 at Clowbridge Reservoir, Rossendale on 3 Sept and 170 at Belmont Reservoir on the 9th. County-wide movements commenced in mid-September with a marked surge on the 22nd, when 1500 passed over Seaforth and 1000 at Caton Moor, and there were 150 at Sowerby, Fylde and at Laund Hey, Rossendale. On 30 Sept there were 600 at Seaforth and 200 at Brockholes Quarry, 594 passed over Rossall Point and 50 birds per hour moved over Belmont. Migration continued at a high level in early October: 313 flew south over Laund Hey on 2 Oct and 409 next day, there were 2000 at Seaforth on the 5th, and 1500 there, with 213 over Rossall Point and 80 per hour at Belmont on the 6th; 500 flew south at Seaforth and 122 at Fairhaven Lake on the 7th. Later movements were on a much smaller scale, and 50 birds per hour over Belmont on 20 Oct, with 300 at Seaforth on the following day, were the last significant counts reported.

There were numerous reports of moderately-sized flocks in coastal areas at the end of the year, including 50+ on Lytham Moss on 5 Dec, 90 at Singleton on the 11th and 42 at Barnaby's Sands on the 24th. Outside the Fylde there were 30 on Middleton Industrial Estate, Heysham on 9 Dec, 81 at Holmes, near Tarleton on the 18th and 157 on Croston Moss on the 30th. Inland, 40 were

at Fishmoor Reservoir, Blackburn on 31 Dec and there were up to six birds at many sites in Rossendale to the end of the year.

### **ROCK PIPIT** *Anthus petrosus*

**Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant, mainly in autumn**

As has recently become the norm, the great majority of records at both ends of the year came from the shores of Morecambe Bay and the Wyre Estuary. It is impossible to be sure how many birds spend the winter here, as counts from many sites are tide-dependent, and vary a good deal from one visit to the next; however, the highest early year counts came from Aldcliffe, where up to 20 were present over the high tide at Aldcliffe Lane on 20 Feb; five were counted there in late March. There were three January records from the Fylde, including four at Barnaby's Sands on 21 Jan; six birds were on Fleetwood Marsh on 11 Feb and at Barnaby's Sands on the 18th, and at least five at The Heads, Stalmine on 20 March. Ten birds on Warton Marsh on 20 Feb and one there on 20 March were the county's most southerly records in the first winter period. The present consensus is that all of our saltmarsh and estuarine winterers are of the Scandinavian race *littoralis*; however, a dark bird at Heysham on the very late dates of 28-30 May was judged likely to be of the *petrosus*/*kleinschmidti*' form that breeds in northern Scotland and the Western Isles.

One over Rossall Point on 15 Sept was the first autumn migrant reported; three more passed there in late September and another five in the first three weeks of October, while ones or twos were recorded at Heysham NR and Morecambe Stone Jetty in late September. In the south, single birds flew over Seaforth on five dates in mid- to late October, with two there on the 21st; Marshside's only record in 2007 was at the lagoons on 4 Nov.



All the high counts in the second winter period came from the Wyre, with peaks of at least nine on Burglar's Alley Marsh on 25 Oct, eight there on 29 Nov, and six at Fleetwood Marsh on 18 Dec; there were up to three birds at each of eight sites in north Lancashire at the year's end.

Further south there were single birds on Blackpool North Shore on 1 Dec and at Garston Docks, south Liverpool, on the 30th, the latter on a rocky shore, perhaps suggesting it was *petrosus*.

## **WATER PIPIT** *Anthus spinoletta*

### **Uncommon winter visitor and scarce passage migrant**

Warton Marsh remains this species' Lancashire headquarters. In 2007 there were peak counts of two in January and seven in February, while ten were present over the high tide on 20 March with twelve there next day; at least five were seen on 31 March and 1 & 5 April. Elsewhere in the Fylde there was one at Ballam, inland of Lytham St. Anne's on 19 Feb, and two were at The Heads, Stalmine on 20 March with at least eight there on the 22nd. In north Lancashire an elusive individual at Leighton Moss was seen on only five dates between 24 February and 1 April. A bird at Altham in east Lancashire, also on 1 April, was the only spring migrant reported.

In late year there were three at Warton Marsh on 27 Oct and one at Altham, perhaps the same individual as in spring, on 11 Nov; two were seen at Leighton Moss on numerous dates from 16 Nov to the end of the year.

## **YELLOW WAGTAIL** *Motacilla flava flavissima*

### **Scarce and declining summer visitor; fairly common passage migrant**

The optimism expressed in last year's report was indeed premature; 2007 plumbed new depths for this popular but seriously-threatened species. One at Sunnyhurst, Darwen on 13 April was the first spring arrival; subsequent passage, though widespread, was very light everywhere, with no more than five birds at any site on any date and the great majority of records of single, transient birds. Six were recorded at Marshside between 20 April and 20 May, there were four, all males, at Seaforth during 21-25 April and three at Brockholes Quarry between 18 and 25 April; five passed over Rossall Point during 21 April-1 May and there were three on Reed's Moss, St. Helens on 20 April. Migration had ceased by the third week in May, although a single bird at Cuerden Valley Park on 22 June was the only record in the Chorley NHS region all year.

Although there were repeated sightings at several traditional breeding sites, there was no confirmation of nesting anywhere in 2007. In St. Helens, which had a very successful season in 2006, birds were present at four locations and juveniles were seen at Dairy Farm Road and on Catchdale Moss in late July. In north Lancashire a pair probably nested in a maize field at Melling; four birds were roosting there on 25 Aug. In the south-west there were five birds on Banks Marsh in late July, and up to two were present at the formerly-regular nesting site at Curlew Lane, Rufford in late April and early May, though not subsequently. A pair may have bred in oilseed rape at Oglet, south Liverpool, with birds present on 25 July and 17 Aug; nesting was also considered possible at MMWWT, where several birds were seen regularly between the beginning of May and early June. Finally, in north Fylde two juveniles were at Bank End near Cockerham on 12 & 19 Aug.

Again in contrast to 2006, autumn movements were very sparse, beginning with single birds at Seaforth on 16 July and Marshside on the 23rd. Highlights, if that is the appropriate term, included three at Marshside on 5 Aug and four there on the 7th, and four at Gressingham in the Lune Valley on 26 Aug. In east Lancashire single birds were on Darwen Moor edge and near Great Harwood on 6 Sept, birds flew south at Clowbridge Reservoir, Rossendale on 12 and 13 Sept, and a bird at Seaforth on the 27th, judged to be of eastern origin on call, was the last migrant reported.

**BLUE-HEADED WAGTAIL** *Motacilla flava flava***Scarce passage migrant, mainly in spring**

A very quiet year after the surge of occurrences in 2006. Both records were in north Fylde, and only three days apart: single males on Fleetwood Golf Course on 20 May and on Pilling Marsh on the 23rd.

**GREY WAGTAIL** *Motacilla cinerea***Fairly common breeding bird, mainly on upland streams in the east; common passage migrant, especially in autumn. Widespread in small numbers in winter.**

Although several regions provided only partial information this year, all available data indicate continuing high numbers in both breeding and wintering areas. The Lancaster & District January survey counted 23 widely-distributed birds; one to four were reported from 26 locations in the Fylde in January-February. Wintering birds were also present on the south-west mosslands, at Prescott Reservoirs, St. Helens, and in central Liverpool and Southport; inland, there were four on the Hodder at Mitton Bridge on 18 Feb. Spring movements were, as usual, light, and virtually confined to the second half of March; peaks included three over Rossall Point on 13 March, seven in Sankey Valley, St. Helens on the 15th, and four at Brockholes Quarry next day. Fifteen moved north at Heysham NR during 19-25 March.

Pairs bred in at least twelve locations in the ELOC region, including some urban sites; there were at least seven pairs on the Hodder between Doeford Bridge and Hodder Foot, and other pairs at Whitewell, Slaidburn and Dunsop Bridge. Seventeen pairs nested on the Lune between Skerton Weir and Kirkby Lonsdale, including four pairs at Arkholme; the 3km stretch between Aughton and Wenning Foot was not surveyed. Nine pairs bred in the Belmont area; elsewhere in the Chorley region there were eight pairs at Rivington-Anglezarke, two in Cuerden Valley Park, and one on the Yarrow at Eccleston.

Along the western edge of the main breeding area pairs were present in the breeding season at Staining, Broughton and Marton Mere in the Fylde, at Lightfoot Green, Preston, in Brock Valley and in the vicinity of Seaforth; nesting by single pairs was confirmed near Great Altcar and in Sefton Park, Liverpool.

Autumn passage was poor, overall; movements began at the end of August and continued on-and-off until early November. Records at Heysham NR extended from 29 Aug to 4 Nov, with peaks of twelve on 4 & 22 Sept; a total of 34 were colour- ringed between 4 Sept and 8 Oct. In the Fylde 46 passed over Rossall Point-Rossall School between 4 Sept and 19 Oct with a peak of eight on 2 Oct; at Fairhaven Lake 34 were recorded between 3 Sept and 26 Oct. Other high counts included eight over Starr Gate, Blackpool on 18 Sept and seven on Rawcliffe Moss on the 30th. In the south-west no autumn movements were recorded at Marshside, but ten flew over Seaforth on 15 Sept, 14 on the 22nd, 16 on 1 Oct and six on the 13th. There were eleven at Prescott Reservoirs and five in Sefton Park, south Liverpool on 18 Sept, and seven flew over the old Garden Festival site on 10 Oct. Inland, 18 flew downstream at Arkholme on 3 Sept and three passed over Caton Moor on the 20th; in east Lancashire there were six at Whalley on 26 Oct and seven on the Altham-Martholme stretch of the River Calder on 4 Nov.

Ones and twos were again very widespread in the second winter period, including 23 locations in the Fylde; one was present at Mere Sands Wood and two on Downholland Moss at the end of the year.

**PIED WAGTAIL** *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

**Common and widespread breeding bird and winter visitor; abundant double passage migrant**

Substantial roosts in the first winter period included 278 in trees at Old Parker Street in central Liverpool on 9 Jan with 122 there on 21 Feb, up to 150 at Helmshore, Rossendale during January, 150 on the roof of Burnley Market Hall on 12 Jan and 120 at Nelson Library on 1 March. One hundred and eighty were recorded in the Lancaster & District January survey, almost all in coastal squares.

Light spring movements were underway from late February. Passage over Rossall Point included eight on 13 March, 14 on 1 April and 16 on the 7th; there were 90+ at Fluke Hall, Pilling and 40 at Brockholes Quarry on 11 March. Heysham NR recorded 26 migrants during 23-27 March, with twelve on the 24th. Movements on the Lune at Arkholme increased from 21 per hour on 6 March to a peak of 116 on the 22nd, and had declined to 65 per hour by 4 April.

The BTO Waterways Bird Survey located 60 breeding pairs on the Lune between Skerton Weir and Kirkby Lonsdale (53 pairs in 2006, 58 in 2005, 48 in 2004); the Arkholme-Leck Beck section contained 26 territories. Widespread reports of breeding elsewhere included four pairs on Downholland Moss, three at Belmont Reservoir, two each in the docks by Seaforth and at Brockholes Quarry, and one at Marshside.

Widespread post-breeding flocks and movements were well in evidence by late July: 37 were on Downholland Moss on 13 July, 108 birds per hour passed at Arkholme on the 18th with 138 per hour there on the 28th, and there were 30 at Cowm Reservoir, Rossendale and at Dairy Farm Road, St. Helens on the 29th. A lull in early August was followed by a series of movements later in the month, including 50 at Jenny Brown's Point and 23 at Prescott Reservoirs, St. Helens on 19 Aug, 20 at Clowbridge Reservoir, Rossendale and 30 at Belmont Reservoir on the 28th; 16 were ringed at the Belmont roost on the 29th. The pace of migration quickened in September, with 70 at Seaforth on 5 Sept and 58 at Sowerby, Fylde on the 22nd; 19 passed at Rossall Point on 4 Sept with 28 there on the 30th, while movements at Heysham NR began on 3 Sept and peaked at 26 on the 22nd. Early October saw the highest counts of the autumn, including 76 on Stalmine Moss, Fylde and a similar number over Laund Hey, Rossendale on the 2nd, and 78 over Heysham next day with 71 there on the 10th; movements had dwindled away by mid-month.

Roosts in the late year included 200 in Preston, up to 80 at Ewood Bridge Sewage Works, Rossendale on 11 Nov, 200+ at Whitebirk Marsh, Blackburn on the 15th and 130 at Parbold Sewage Works on the 20th. Up to 20 were at Seaforth at the end of the year.

**WHITE WAGTAIL** *Motacilla alba alba*

**Spring migrant in variable numbers, mainly coastal; much scarcer in autumn**

One at Seaforth on 13 March was the first to arrive, followed by three on the adjacent Crosby Marine Park on the 15th; there were three further records of single birds in March, at Marshside, Roby Mill and Cowm Reservoir, Rossendale. Singles over Rossall Point on 1 April and on the Keer Estuary on the 4th were the first recorded in the Fylde and north Lancashire, respectively, and two at Stocks Reservoir on the 10th were the first in east Lancashire. The main coastal movement was heavily concentrated in the second half of April, with the highest counts by far on Lytham Moss, Fylde: 23 on 22 April increased to 150+ next day; there were 138+ on 24 April and 70 on the 25th. In the south-west counts at Marshside peaked at 19 on 15 April, and at Seaforth at 30 per day during 14-18 April and 75 on the 22nd; 24 birds were recorded in St. Helens between 15 April and 7 May.

Inland, birds were present at Stocks Reservoir up to 12 May with a peak of four on 6 May, and at three other sites in east Lancashire during 11-21 April; in Rossendale there were single birds

at Ewood Bridge Sewage Works on 22 April and at Clowbridge Reservoir on the 29th. One was at Cuerden Valley Park, Chorley on 21 April. The last spring migrant was recorded at Seaforth on 17 May.

Recent research evidence suggests that White Wagtails may be more numerous in autumn than previously thought, and it is worth noting that an absolute minimum of 30 birds in a series of catches totalling 115 at a maize field roost at Gressingham in the Lune Valley during September were identified as Whites, using recently-published criteria for identifying this race in the hand. That aside, one roosting with Pied Wagtails at Belmont on 28 Aug was the first autumn migrant of 2007; there were eight at Mythop, Fylde on 9 Sept and five at Seaforth on the 22nd; in the north single birds were on Carnforth Marsh on 2 & 27 Sept. In east Lancashire singles were at Billington, Whalley on 18 Sept and at Rishton Reservoir on the 25th; all four October records were in the ELOC region, single birds at Billington on 2 & 4 Oct, at Squires Farm, Great Harwood on the 9th and on Darwen Moor edge on the 14th.

### **WAXWING** *Bombycilla garrulus*

#### **Fairly common, irregular winter visitor**

This was an even quieter year than 2006. A first winter bird on Stocks Road, Ashton-on-Ribble, Preston between 21 and 26 Feb was the only record in the first winter period.

In the late year singles were in the Jackhouse area, Oswaldtwistle on 25-26 Oct and at Leighton Moss on 1-3 Nov; a bird on Stocks Road, Ashton-on-Ribble on 12 & 14 Dec may just possibly have been the returning bird from earlier in the year.

### **DIPPER** *Cinclus cinclus*

#### **Uncommon breeder, mainly in the east**

Dippers were recorded in all months in the ELOC region; breeding data included a pair with two broods at Jackhouse, Oswaldtwistle, four pairs on Pendle Water between Barley and Higherford, five pairs on the River Hodder between Burholme Bridge and Hodder Foot and two pairs on the Ribble between Gisburn and the North Yorkshire boundary at Nappa. Nesting was also confirmed at Dunsop Bridge, Slaidburn, Whalley and Langden Valley. In Rossendale successful nesting was reported from many locations, with juveniles seen at Strongstry, Warth, Townsendfold and Irwell Vale. In north Lancashire there were two territorial pairs on the Lune between Skerton Weir and Kirkby Lonsdale, as in 2006 and 2005; breeding season presence was recorded at eleven other sites. Four pairs nested in the Belmont area and one at White Coppice, and breeding was considered likely at five other locations in the Chorley region. Birds were in song in Rossendale from late September, from mid-November in east Lancashire and on the River Yarrow, Chorley in December.

There were no reports from St. Helens this year, and only a few sight records from the River Brock at Myerscough College and St Michaels in April, May, July and December.

### **WREN** *Troglodytes troglodytes*

#### **Abundant breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor**

All regions of the county continue to support thriving populations; three birds ringed at Heysham NR on 27 March were the only spring migrants reported.

Quite detailed breeding data were provided this year. In east Lancashire a survey of 40 1km transects on the United Utilities Bowland estate recorded 271 birds, compared with 245 in 2005; there were 52 at Moor Piece on 11 April and 50 in Gisburn Forest on 20 May, and 71 pairs bred in Witton Country Park, Blackburn. In the north, 13 pairs nested on Warton Crag RSPB (a

mean of 10 pairs during 1989-2006), 33 on British Energy land at Heysham, and 21 along the River Lune between Leck Beck and Arkholme Viaduct. In the south-west 92 pairs bred in and around Rimrose Valley, 20 pairs on Freshfield Dune Heath, 28 pairs at Mere Sands Wood and eleven on the edges of Marshside-Crossens fresh marshes; there were six singing males at Old Coach Road, St. Helens on 13 May.

The first Wren returned to Seaforth on 2 Aug and eight on 10 Oct was the highest autumn count there. A bird that flew in off the sea at Rossall Point on 26 Sept attempted to alight on the observer; Heysham NR had a quiet autumn, with 27 birds ringed between mid-August and mid-November. There were eight at Turf Moor, Rossendale on 15 Sept and ten at Strongstry on 6 Oct, and 15 were on Rawcliffe Moss, Fylde on 17 Nov.

## **DUNNOCK** *Prunella modularis*

### **Abundant breeding resident and uncommon double passage migrant**

Eighteen at Whalley Nab on 18 Feb, 15 at Mere Sands Wood and ten at Jackhouse, Oswaldtwistle during the month were the highest early-year counts reported. Four spring migrants were ringed at Heysham NR between mid-March and late April; ten at Eccleston Mere, St. Helens on 24 March may have included some passage birds.

Breeding numbers continue to increase at several regularly-monitored sites. In the north, 13 pairs nested on Warton Crag RSPB (a mean of 6.4 during 1989-2006) and ten singing males were located between Arkholme Viaduct and Leck Beck; there were twelve territories on British Energy property at Heysham, with reasonable productivity, and 30 birds were ringed at Leighton Moss during the year. In Rossendale seven males were singing in Irwell Vale on 25 March and juveniles were seen at four locations during April-June; in east Lancashire twelve pairs bred at Witton Country Park, Blackburn and four at Lomeshaye Marsh, Nelson. In the south-west 58 pairs nested in and around Rimrose Valley (an increase of 16 on 2006), fifteen pairs at Mere Sands Wood, eleven on Freshfield Dune Heath and four at Seaforth.

Nineteen Dunnocks were ringed at Heysham NR between late August and late October and 15 high-flying migrants moved south there between 9 Sept and 18 Oct; 20 birds south at Seaforth on 21 Oct was the only other migratory movement reported. There were no significant late year counts.

## **ROBIN** *Erithacus rubecula*

### **Abundant breeding resident, autumn passage migrant and winter visitor**

Counts in the first winter period included a peak of 50 at Mere Sands Wood, 15 at Eccleston Mere, St. Helens on 7 Jan, 20 at Marton Mere on 5 Feb, 38 at Whalley Nab on the 18th and ten at Carr Mill Dam, St. Helens on the 20th; up to eight were present at Seaforth until the spring. Eight migrants were ringed at Heysham NR between late March and the end of April.

Breeding populations remain very healthy according to comments in the regional reports, and may even be increasing in some areas. In east Lancashire breeding was confirmed at twelve locations, including 41 pairs in Witton Country Park; there were 56 at Moor Piece on 11 April, 35 in Gisburn Forest on 20 May and 35 at Winckley Hall, Clitheroe on the 26th. In Rossendale up to 16 pairs were located around Strongstry Village. Twenty-four pairs nested on Warton Crag RSPB (a mean of 21.1 during 1989-2006) while the population on the Arkholme-Leck Beck stretch of the River Lune increased from ten pairs in 2006 to 19; all five nests found were successful, with mean brood size of 4.4. The ringing total at Leighton Moss over the year was an above-average 50 birds. In the south-west 80 pairs bred in Rimrose Valley (an increase of 26 on last year's total), there were

26 singing males at Mere Sands Wood and twelve at Old Coach Road, St. Helens; 19 pairs nested on Freshfield Dune Heath.

Forty-four Robins were ringed at Heysham NR between early August and mid-November; the first significant influx of migrants was on 28 Aug, with other good movements on 5 & 7 Oct. A typically grey, orange-breasted north European bird was trapped on 5 Oct. The first returning Robin was at Seaforth on 21 Aug; autumn movements there peaked at 14 on 5 Sept, 25 in the third week of the month and 30+ in the second week of October. In the Fylde there were 14 in Fleetwood Cemetery on 29 Sept and 13 at Singleton on 5 Oct. The peak end-of-year count at Mere Sands Wood was 26; there were 15 in Moor Park, Preston on 10 Dec.

## **BLACK REDSTART** *Phoenicurus ochruros*

### **Rare breeding bird; uncommon double passage migrant and winter visitor**

A lively year, though without any indication of breeding activity. A bird found in Fleetwood Docks on 30 Jan remained until 19 Feb, and one was on Fairhaven Dunes on 5 Feb. There were three spring records, one at the Alt Estuary, Hightown on 29 April, a summer male at Seat Naze, Rossendale on 5 May and a female at Lancaster University on 1 June.

A female-type at Sunnyhurst, Darwen on 30 Sept was the first of autumn, soon followed by a male at Coal Clough Wind Farm, Burnley on 7 Oct. A female/immature arrived at Heysham NR on 15 Oct, there was a bird at Rossall Point-Rossall School on the 19th, and an adult male turned up at Heysham North Harbour Wall on 4 Nov, remaining until the 6th, at least. A bird at Blackpool on 22 Nov was followed by the last of the year, a female/immature on Ainsdale Beach on 11-16 Dec.

## **REDSTART** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

### **Fairly common breeding bird and double passage migrant**

One in Fleetwood Cemetery on 14 April was the first spring arrival; there were 18 further records in the Fylde to 12 May, seven of these in the Fleetwood area. At Heysham NR there were two males on 15 April and another next day; two males were ringed there on the 20th. South of the Ribble, six coastal migrants were recorded between 15 April and 31 May. The first inland record was on Darwen Moor on 16 April; the first bird reached Chorley region at Lead Mines Clough on the 24th. Three males were on territory in the Upper Brock Valley as early as 30 April.

In north Lancashire territorial males were present in suitable breeding habitat in twelve locations, including four each at Cloughton and Roeburndale. In the Chorley NHS region the breeding population of the Rivington-Anglezarke area continues to dwindle, and only one successful nest was located, at Lead Mines Clough. In east Lancashire, however, the outlook appears to be much brighter: seven males were singing on the Lower Hodder between Agden Clough and Sandal Holme on 2 May, there were nine by Bottoms Beck at Stocks Reservoir on the 20th and seven along Croasdale Brook above Slaidburn on the following day. Sixteen pairs nested in boxes on the United Utilities Bowland estate on the west and north-west side of Stocks Reservoir, as in 2006; mean clutch size was 6.6 and 66 chicks were fledged, an average of 4.1 per nest. Breeding was confirmed at four other sites in the region.

Single birds were on the move in the uplands from early July, including Rossendale's only record all year, at Clowbridge Reservoir on 24 Aug. A very light coastal passage began with singles at MMWWT on 21 July and Oglet, south Liverpool, on the 25th; one was at Prescott Reservoirs, St. Helens on 21 Aug and two were at Morecambe and one at Leighton Moss on 6 Sept. A bird at MMWWT on 17 Oct was the last of autumn.

**WHINCHAT** *Saxicola rubetra***Uncommon breeding bird on eastern hills; common double passage migrant**

The pattern of decline, in both passage and breeding numbers, appears to be continuing. The first three spring migrants were at Sunderland Point, Middleton Industrial Estate and Marton Mere on 22 April, followed by one at Marshside next day; there were five at Aldcliffe and four on Middleton Industrial Estate on the 24th. The Fylde recorded 25 more migrants to 31 May, including four at Fleetwood on 25 April. A widespread but fairly light coastal passage elsewhere continued into May; there were four at Marshside and three at Seaforth in late April and two at Brockholes Quarry and at MMWWT in early May. One at Crosby Coastguard Station on 10 June was the last coastal migrant reported.

The first Whinchat was back in Chorley region at Withnell Moor on 2 May, but there was no confirmation of nesting this year. In east Lancashire there were six at Whitebirk Marsh, Blackburn on 25 April and two pairs at Croasdale next day; 14 pairs bred on the United Utilities Bowland estate (15 in 2006). Nesting was also confirmed at Parsonage Reservoir and Shedden Clough, and considered probable at Cross of Greet and Marshaw. In the north singing males were present on Harrisend Fell.

Extensive autumn movements began in east Lancashire on 20 Aug, with 26 records until the last three birds at Shedden Clough on 11 Sept. In Rossendale 18 sightings were reported from 3 Aug, including twelve records at Clowbridge Reservoir between 12 Aug and 11 Sept, with five there on 25 Aug. Also on that date 13 were present on Bleasdale Moor; elsewhere in the north three were on Harrisend Fell on 3 Sept. In Chorley region a total of three juveniles were at Belmont on 26 Aug and 9 Sept.

A moderate coastal passage began with a bird on Fairhaven Dunes on 13 July and continued intermittently to the last on Sunderland Point on 13 Oct; highlights included ten at Myerscough Quarry, Fylde between 7 Aug and 22 Sept and five on Carnforth Outer Marsh on 15 Aug. Finally, two birds at Top O' Leach, Rossendale on 15 Nov were the latest ever recorded in the county, by three days.

**STONECHAT** *Saxicola torquata***Uncommon and local breeding bird; uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor**

The recent increases in breeding and wintering populations appear to be continuing. January records in east Lancashire increased from nine to 22, and February records from 22 to 29; a minimum of 18 wintered on the United Utilities Bowland estate. Many birds wintered in Rossendale and also in north Lancashire, where there were seven on Birk Bank and five on Harrisend Fell in January. In the lowlands ones and twos were widespread across the south-west mosslands; birds were reported from eight sites in the Fylde in January and 17 in February. In St. Helens birds were present at Dairy Farm Road, Sankey Valley, Sutton Manor and Prescott Reservoirs.

With so many Stonechats now overwintering it has become increasingly difficult to pinpoint the beginning of spring migration. This year movements appear to have got underway in mid-February, with eight at MMWWT on 11 Feb, twelve at Marshside next day, and six at Cockersand on the 18th; there were six on Fairhaven Dunes on 12 March and three at Middleton Industrial Estate on the following day.

The breeding population in the uplands continues to thrive. Sixty-six pairs nested on the United Utilities Bowland estate; 52 pairs bred there in 2006, and only ten as recently as 1999. Elsewhere in the ELOC region breeding was too widespread to detail. Nesting records were also numerous in Rossendale, including three pairs at Clowbridge and two each at Ogden and Calf

Hey Reservoirs. There were many nesting records in Chorley region, with five or six pairs around Belmont and three pairs on Withnell Moor. In the north eight pairs nested at Birk Bank, three on Harrisend Fell, two in Roeburndale and one pair on Caton Moor, but productivity seems to have been poor in the very wet summer weather.

In the lowlands no data were received regarding the small relict population on the Sefton Coast. Three pairs nested in the Fylde, at Fairhaven Dunes, Lytham St Anne's LNR and near Weeton; a pair on Silverdale Moss fledged two broods.

Heavy post-breeding movements at inland sites from late August included counts of 15 in Langden Valley on 30 Aug and at Cross of Greet Bridge on 6 Sept, eleven at Clough Bottom Reservoir, Rossendale in 11 Sept and 16 at Belmont Reservoir on 7 Oct. On the coast there were two early birds at Marshside on 9 July; movements were widespread from mid-September, including six at Leighton Moss and Seaforth on 10 Oct, six on Altcar Withins on the 19th, six on Birkdale Dunes on 3 Nov and ten at MMWWT on the 22nd. Birds were reported from many locations, both coastal and upland, at the end of the year.

## **WHEATEAR** *Oenanthe oenanthe*

### **Fairly common though local breeding bird; common double passage migrant**

There was a widespread arrival on 12 March, with singles at Birkdale, Preesall, Sunnyhurst Hey Reservoir and four at Fluke Hall. Movements during the rest of March were very light: one was on Birk Bank on 21 March and the first birds reached Rossendale, at Hurdles Quarry, and Chorley, at Belmont, on the 24th. Seaforth and the St. Helens area saw their first Wheatears on the 27th. In April there was a moderate influx during 11-13th, with up to 20 birds each at three sites in east Lancashire, 16 at Fluke Hall on 13 April and 18 at Sunderland Point and twelve at Grane, Rossendale on the 15th. The heaviest passage for several years was widely reported between 20-25 April: highlights included 86 at Fleetwood on 20 April and 170 there on the 25th, and there were counts of over 20 birds at Lytham Moss, Seaforth, Carnforth Marsh, Limy Valley and Clowbridge, Rossendale, Oswaldtwistle Moor and Pendle Hill in east Lancashire and Withnell Moor, Chorley. Moderate movements continued through the first half of May, including 50 on Pendle Hill on 3 May, 19 at Heysham NR on the 14th and eleven on Pilling Marsh on the 17th; twenty-nine birds passed at Belmont during the month. Seaforth recorded its last migrant on 26 May and Heysham on the 30th; one was on Downholland Moss on 1 June.

Twenty-two territories were located on the United Utilities Bowland estate (19 in 2006); elsewhere in east Lancashire nesting was confirmed at Hurstwood and Cant Clough Reservoirs and on Croasdale Fell. In north Lancashire breeding pairs were present at Birk Bank, Abbeystead and Clougha; on the coast, two pairs nested on Carnforth Slag Tips. One pair bred at Lead Mines Clough, Chorley, and possible nesting was reported from White Coppice and Withnell Moor.

Autumn movements were unspectacular. Several singles were present at Marshside in July and there were juveniles at Lytham St Anne's LNR and MMWWT on the 23rd. Heysham and Seaforth NRs reported their first Wheatears on 7 Aug and Heysham recorded its autumn peak of 14 on the 21st. Eleven birds passed at Belmont during the month, and there were 20 at Musbury Heights, Rossendale on the 11th. Light movements in September included 99 birds at 14 locations in north Lancashire, with ten at Heysham NR on the 13th, and there were ten at Seaforth on the 26th; four were recorded at Belmont during the month, and one at Prescott Reservoirs on the 25th was the last record in St. Helens.

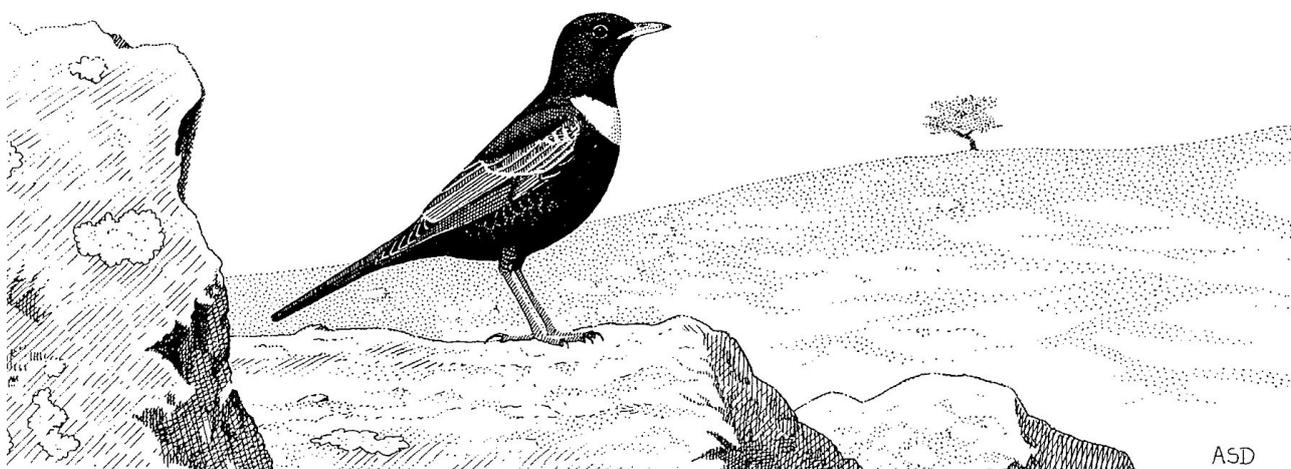
There were widespread reports of singles or small groups in October, including nine on Pendle Hill on 5 Oct, 47 birds in the Fylde with the last at Rossall School on the 28th, and ten at Heysham with the last bird there on the 13th. Chorley and Rossendale reported their last

Wheatears on 7 Oct, Seaforth on the 14th and Marshside on the 26th. Two November stragglers were recorded, on Pendle Hill on 3 Nov and at Melling in the Lune Valley on the 6th.

### **RING OUZEL** *Turdus torquatus*

#### **Scarce and local breeding bird in the hills; uncommon double passage migrant**

A quite exceptional volume of migration was reported from coastal and inland regions in both spring and autumn. The year began in noteworthy fashion with a male feeding with Fieldfares at Belmont on 10 Jan; it is possible that this was the bird seen in the same area on 9 November 2006. There were only two reports of March migrants, a male at Marshside on 12 March and two north over Earnsdale Reservoir, Darwen on the 26th. The first of about 20 April migrants on the coast was at Formby on 3 April, followed by eight more in the south-west, six in the Fylde, three in the north and two in St. Helens.



The main events, however, took place at inland sites. On Pendle Hill four birds on 12 April were followed by nine on the 16th, 15 on the 18th, 25 on the 20th and 17 on the 22nd; on Darwen Moor edge one on 12 April was followed by nine on the 18th.

In Rossendale seven birds were recorded in April, four of these at Clowbridge Reservoir during 25-27th; in the Chorley region five passed at Belmont on 18 April, four on the 22nd and one on the 26th. Inland movements continued into May, with five on Pendle Hill on 2 May and one in Rossendale on the 5th; two late males at Alden, Rossendale on 7 June ended an eventful spring.

Unfortunately, the profusion of spring migrants was not followed by any improvement in our breeding population. Nine territories were located on the United Utilities Bowland estate (ten in 2006, twelve in 2005, 14 in 2004), and no other breeding attempts were reported.

Substantial movements at inland locations were recorded from late August; peak counts included ten feeding on yew berries in a Burnley garden on 19 Sept, three over Darwen Moor edge on 27 Sept with six there on 11 Oct, and two in the Trough of Bowland on 3 Oct. One was at Turn, Rossendale on 4 Oct and three passed at Belmont during the month. On the coast an early mover at Formby Point on 4 Aug was followed by a single bird at Heysham NR on 27 Sept and five October records, including three south over Rimrose Valley on the 21st; one at Cockersand on 15 Nov was the last of the year.

**BLACKBIRD** *Turdus merula*

**Abundant breeding resident and winter visitor; common double passage migrant, more evident in autumn**

The abundance of this species in winter, with birds dispersed across almost all habitat types, is well illustrated by two reports in 2007: a total of 747 was recorded in all nine 10km squares during the Lancaster & District January survey, while on the south-west mosslands 629 Blackbirds were counted in 17 tetrads in SD 31 and SD41 between 15 Nov and the end of the year. Significant winter gatherings included 30 at Rainford, St. Helens on 6 Jan, 50 at Marton Mere on 11 Feb and 34 at Todderstaffe Hall, Fylde and 23 at Strongstry, Rossendale on 16 Dec.

There were few reports of spring passage; 50 between Shortclough and Folly Clough, Rossendale on 6 Feb were thought likely to be on the move, and twelve migrants were recorded at Heysham NR between mid-March and mid-April. There were 28 in Fleetwood Cemetery on 20 April.

Most breeding data indicate stable or still-increasing numbers: 25 pairs nested on Warton Crag RSPB (mean 22.5 pairs, 1989-2006) and 119 pairs in and around Rimrose Valley (26 up on the 2006 total). As in 2006 nineteen pairs nested along the River Lune between Leck Beck and Arkholme Viaduct; however, of eight monitored nests only two fledged a total of seven young. A similar picture of poor productivity was reported from Heysham NR, where 17 pairs nested on British Energy land. Elsewhere, eleven nests were monitored in the Pilling-Preesall area of the Fylde; 42 eggs were laid and all 19 young that hatched were fledged. Breeding was confirmed at eleven locations in east Lancashire, including 31 pairs in Witton Country Park, Blackburn and three at Lomeshaye Marsh. Eighteen pairs nested at Freshfield Dune Heath and four pairs at Seaforth, Brockholes Quarry and the edges of Marshside-Crossens fresh marsh.

There were no reports of significant movements in autumn until the middle of October; subsequent passage was essentially confined to the period between late October and mid-November. Heysham recorded 881 birds between 10 and 31 Oct with peaks of 75 on 20 Oct and 150 next day; also on the 21st an unprecedented hundred Blackbirds flew south at Seaforth. There were 26 at Prescott Road, St. Helens on 26 Oct, 32 at Fluke Hall Lane, Pilling on the 27th and 73 at Heysham next day. Movements continued into November, with 58 at Poulton-le-Fylde and 25 on Downholland Moss on 3 Nov and 40 at Rawcliffe Moss, Fylde next day; 81 at Whalley Nab on 12 Nov and 86 grounded at Heysham on the 17-18th were the last noteworthy counts of the autumn.

**FIELDFARE** *Turdus pilaris*

**Common to abundant winter visitor and passage migrant**

Three-figure flocks were very widespread in the first winter period. In January there were 120 at Warth, Rossendale on 1 Jan and 150 at Higher Hollinbank on the 24th. A thousand at Cumming Carr on the 28th was the largest flock reported; also in the Fylde there were 370 at Rawcliffe Moss on the 16th and 380 at Black Hill Farm, Pilling on the 30th. In the south-west there were 300 at Old Coach Road, St. Helens on 6 Jan and 320 on Downholland Moss on the 19th; 200+ on Heysham Moss on 3 Jan and 100 at Rivington on the 6th were the highest counts in the north and Chorley, respectively. The largest February gatherings were mainly in the Fylde, with 800 at Eagland Hill, Pilling on the 2nd and 450 at nearby Black Hill Farm on the 13th; 250 were at Musbury, Rossendale on 2 Feb, there were 150 at Docker in the Lune Valley on the 7th and 150 at Rainford, St. Helens on the 24th. Flocks and movements continued at a high level during March, with peaks of 500 flying east at Arkholme on the 6th, 300 at Belmont on the 16th and 450 in the Trough of Bowland on the 27th.

Sixteen April sightings were reported, mostly in the first week, including 400 at Hollins Hey Farm, St. Helens on 1 April, 170 at Alston Reservoir, Longridge on the 4th and 100 at Myerscough Quarry on the 9th; 350 were still roosting at Thrushgill in the north-east on 13 April and 45 north over Hindburndale on the 17th were the last stragglers in that region. There were two birds at Belmont on 14 April and at Formby Point on the 16th; one at Stocks Reservoir on 2 May was the last spring migrant reported.

Ones or twos at Heysham NR and Darwen on 27 Sept were the first autumn arrivals, followed by four more birds by the end of the month. Numbers in the first two weeks of October were exceptionally low, with only a handful of single- and double-figure counts reported. Heavy influxes began with 1553 west over Laund Hey, Rossendale on 18 Oct and 3385 there next day; also on 19 Oct there were 177 at Prescott Reservoirs, St. Helens, 160 over Caton Moor and 325 on Rawcliffe Moss, Fylde. Reports of large movements proliferated during 20-21 Oct with 1500+ over Withnell Fold, Chorley, 1200 over Lee Green Reservoir in east Lancashire and 414 on Rawcliffe Moss on the 20th; next day 1128 moved south over Rimrose Valley, 610 over the old Garden Festival site in south Liverpool and 600 over Seaforth, and there were 450 at Sowerby, Fylde. Significant passage continued, although more sporadically, during the first half of November, including 1000 at Higherford in east Lancashire on 3 Nov, 200 at Warton Bank and on Rawcliffe Moss next day, and 140 at Higher Hollinbank, Rossendale on the 16th.

Several moderate-sized flocks were still present at the end of the year, including 500+ feeding in hedgerows on Longton Marsh during December, 120 at Old Coach Road on the 9th, 150 at Gait Barrows, Silverdale on the 11th, 59 in Sefton Park, Liverpool on the 19th and 50+ at Cuddy Hill, Fylde on the 30th.

## **SONG THRUSH** *Turdus philomelos*

### **Common breeding resident**

Eighty-five were recorded across all nine 10km squares during the Lancaster & District January survey. Other early year counts included ten at Grove Lane Marsh, Padiham on 26 Jan and at Cockersand on 15 Feb, and eight at MMWWT on 2 Feb; two remained at Seaforth throughout the first winter period. As usual there were very few signs of spring passage: four moved over Heysham NR between 22 & 28 March and one over Rossall Point on 3 April; seven on Downholland Moss on 27 March may have included migrating birds.

Widespread breeding was reported across south Liverpool and nesting was confirmed at six sites in the ELOC region, including 15 pairs in Witton Country Park, Blackburn; in Rossendale seven males were singing in Deeply Vale on 18 Feb and six in Grane Valley on 1 April. Eight pairs nested on British Energy property at Heysham, although productivity was poor; elsewhere in the north twelve pairs bred on Warton Crag (mean 8.5 pairs during 1989-2006). In the south-west there were 16 singing males in Sankey Valley, St. Helens on 21 Feb, 28 pairs nested in and around Rimrose Valley (ten higher than the 2006 total), 16 pairs at Mere Sands Wood and two pairs on Freshfield Dune Heath.

A total of 230 migrants passed at Heysham NR between 22 Sept and 27 Oct, with peaks of 28 on 27 Sept, 21 on 2 Oct and 30 on 16 Oct; continental birds were seen there as early as 27 Sept. At Seaforth ten birds were recorded on 2 Oct, five on the 6th and three on the 8th; two flew over Belmont on 6 Oct. Twenty-two moved over Fairhaven Lake between 22 Sept and 23 Oct.

A total of 27 along Garston Shore and Oglet on 25 Dec was the only significant count reported at the year's end, but males were in song at Waterfoot and Bacup, Rossendale and at Woodwell, Silverdale in late November and in Burnley in mid-December.

**REDWING** *Turdus iliacus***Abundant double passage migrant and winter visitor**

With the exception of 150 at Martholme in east Lancashire on 6 Jan, 60 at Warth, Rossendale next day and at Gressingham in the Lune Valley on the 14th, all significant gatherings during January were in the west, with peak counts of 250 at Euxton, Chorley on 23 Jan and 200 at nearby Ulnes Walton on the 28th. A total of 928 was recorded across all nine 10km squares during the Lancaster & District January survey. February counts included 200 at Torrisholme, Morecambe on 6 Feb, 110 at Arkholme on the following day, 273 at Winckley Hall, Clitheroe on the 10th and 150 at Ellel Grange on the 12th. Four hundred and fifty at Arkholme on 6 March was the last significant flock reported, but smaller numbers were widely recorded during the first week of April, including 20 at Cowm Reservoir, Rossendale on 1 April and 150 at Sunnyhurst Hey Reservoir, Darwen and 50 at Heysham on the 5th; one at Wenning Foot in the Lune Valley on 10 April was the last bird reported in the early year.

Six over Brierfield, Nelson on 22 Sept were the first autumn arrivals. Major movements began over a wide front on 27 Sept, with 350 west over Cow Ark and 130 over Longridge Fell in east Lancashire, 160 west over Laund Hey, Rossendale and ten over Belmont; further west there were four flocks of 50+ in the Fylde, 158 at Heysham NR and numerous smaller flocks in north Lancashire. Apart from 32 on Rawcliffe Moss, Fylde on 30 Sept and 107 at Eccleston Mere, St. Helens on 3 Oct a lull in movements followed, until a second, heavier pulse of migration during 18-21 October. Observers at Stoney Rake, Rossendale logged 353 moving west on 18 Oct and another 979 next day; also on 19 Oct there were 205 at Prescot Reservoirs, St. Helens and 50 passed over Caton Moor. On 20 Oct 120 birds per hour flew over Belmont and there were 200 on Rawcliffe Moss; on the 21st 600 flew south-east over the old Garden Festival site in south Liverpool, while nearby 307 passed over Rimrose Valley and 50 over Seaforth; there were 78 at Heysham NR.

A total of 415 flew west over Stoney Rake on 3 Nov and there were 64 on Rawcliffe Moss next day, but numbers declined very substantially thereafter; there were only four reports of three-figure flocks during the remainder of the year, 109 at Thatto Heath, St. Helens on 15 Nov, 200 at Ulnes Walton on the 17th, 100 at Rivington on 13 Dec and 120 there on the 26th.

**MISTLE THRUSH** *Turdus viscivorus***Common breeding resident; some autumn dispersal/passage**

Ninety-one were counted during the Lancaster & District January survey, mainly in coastal squares; ten at Dairy Farm Road, St. Helens on 31 March was the only double-figure count reported in the first winter period.

Breeding data were reasonably plentiful this year. In the Lune Valley six pairs bred at Tunstall, four at Cloughton and three in Arkholme Village; elsewhere in the north there were four pairs in the Warton area, three at Carnforth and one at Heysham. Breeding was reported from seven locations in east Lancashire, including three pairs in Witton Country Park; in Chorley region at least five pairs nested around Belmont and two in Cuerden Valley Park. In the south-west widespread breeding was reported across south Liverpool while in the city centre a fully-fledged juvenile was being fed at Crown Street on 12 Feb. Elsewhere in the region there were at least six pairs in and around Rimrose Valley but breeding did not take place on Hesketh Golf Course, Marshside this year, for the first time in over two decades.

Twenty birds at Sheephouse Lane, Rivington in late June was the first post-breeding gathering reported. There were many double-figure flocks in July, including 17 at Grane, Rossendale on the 8th, 30 in Cuerden Valley Park and 43 in Sefton Park, south Liverpool on the 15th, and 30 at Bashall Eaves in east Lancashire on the 24th.

Peak counts in August included 23 at Higher Hollinbank, Rossendale on 3 Aug, 42 near Liverpool University on the 20th and 47 moving north at Marl Hill on the 29th. There were 60 on Downholland Moss on 9 Sept and 30 at Belmont early in the month; 37 flew south at Heysham NR on the 30th, peak count of a total passage of 166 there between 22 Sept and 4 Nov.

Movements in October included 35 over Fairhaven Lake, with ten there on the 18th; a total of 36 passed at Seaforth, including 20 on the 6th. There were 17 at Heysham on 17 Oct and 15 next day; eleven there on 4 Nov was the last noteworthy movement of 2007. Ten birds at Old Coach Road, St. Helens on 1 Dec was the only double-figure count at the end of the year; birds were in song at four sites in Rossendale and in Whalley and Burnley in east Lancashire in December.

### **CETTI'S WARBLER\* *Cettia cetti***

#### **Vagrant.**

The bird from 2006 remained at Marton Mere until at least 13 April and presumably the same was seen again on 4-18 Nov (M McGough *et al*).

One was trapped at Leighton Moss on 3 Oct and was seen again on the 7th and 14th, and briefly on 4 Nov (J. Wilson *et al*).

### **GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia***

#### **Uncommon breeding bird and passage migrant. Scarce on autumn passage.**

As usual, the overwhelming majority of records were of reeling males. The first was at Eccleston Mere on 12 April and a further seven sites were occupied over the next three days, including three in Rossendale.

In all, 'Groppers' were reported from at least 70 sites in spring, distributed widely throughout the county. Most records were of just single males but more were seen or heard at a few locations, including Clowbridge Reservoir (3), Coal Clough windfarm (3), Belmont Reservoir (3), moorland around Belmont (9), White Coppice (2), Marton Mere (5), Fleetwood Marsh (2), Middleton Industrial Estate (7), Leighton Moss (2), Sefton Meadows (3), Hightown Dunes (4) and Eccleston Mere (5).

Breeding was suspected at most of these spring sites but was typically difficult to confirm, although birds were seen carrying food at Strongsty. At least three pairs bred successfully on Middleton Industrial Estate where twelve were trapped, including eight juveniles.

Males were reeling during June and July – probably indicative of breeding – at Marshside, Rimrose Valley, Speke (4 sites), Prescot Reservoirs, Rivington, Belmont Reservoir, Hare Clough, Clifton Marsh, Lytham St. Anne's NR, Warton Bank, Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park, Carr House Green Common, Pilling Lane Ends, Bacup, Townsendfold, Clowbridge Reservoir, Grane and Clough Bottom. The presence of breeding season birds at 15 sites in Rossendale, where this species is a recent coloniser, was especially notable.

The last were at Belmont Reservoir on 1 Sept and Higher Wenshead in east Lancashire on the 3rd.

### **SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus***

#### **Common breeding bird in the west and double passage migrant.**

The first were at Marton Mere on 13 April, Marshside on the 15th, Mere Sands Wood on the 18th and MMWWT on the 20th. By the first week of May most western lowland sites, and a handful further east, were occupied.

Breeding was reported from MMWWT (42 pairs), Marshside (9 pairs), Seaforth (1 pair), Rimrose Valley (8-15 pairs), Sefton Meadows (3+ pairs), Speke, Garston, Prescot Reservoirs, Sutton

Manor in St. Helens, Sankey Valley, Brockholes (12 pairs), Grove Lane Marsh (2 pairs), Wood End Sewage Works (3 pairs), Witton Country Park, Rowley Lake, Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park, Galgate, Yarrow Valley Park, Middleton Industrial Estate (10 pairs), Heysham (4 pairs) and the Lune WBS section (38 pairs). One pair bred at Strongstry but the only other Rossendale record was a single at Cowm Reservoir on 7 July.

No census was carried out at Leighton Moss but 285 were trapped there, a small improvement on 2006. No breeding information was received from the Fylde but birds were reported from 15 or so sites, including 15 at Marton Mere on 28 April, 6 on Rawcliffe Moss on 1 June and nine at Fleetwood Marsh on 8 July.

It is difficult to assess passage movements of Sedge Warblers as most are seen at regular breeding sites and the only definite migrant reported was one at Seaforth on 3 Aug. However, 96 were trapped at Heysham during autumn, compared with 64 in 2006 – and many of these must have been migrants.

The last were singles at Lowerhouse Lodges on 9 Sept, Jackhouse on the 10th, Seaforth and Heysham on the 13th, Belmont on the 23rd and Leighton Moss on the 30th.

### **REED WARBLER** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

**Fairly common breeder in suitable habitat in the west, most numerous at Leighton Moss and Marton Mere. Uncommon passage migrant elsewhere.**

It's always a toss-up between Leighton Moss and Marton Mere as to which will get the first migrant: this year it was Leighton's turn with one on 16 April. The next arrivals were at Marton Mere on 19 April, Hesketh Golf Course on the 20th and Bretherton on the 22nd, and about another dozen sites were reached by the end of the month.

No definite spring passage migrants were reported and most breeding sites were occupied by mid-May, although those that went on to breed at both Middleton Industrial Estate did not arrive until early May.

The breeding population at Leighton Moss was estimated at around 350 pairs, slightly down on 2006 but the trapping total of 854 (206 adults and 648 juveniles) was quite high. No information on breeding was received from the other main county site, Marton Mere, but the peak count there of six on 24 April must surely have drastically under-estimated the population. Elsewhere, 42 pairs bred at MMWWT, up to eight at Mere Sands Wood, five at Marshside, three at Birkdale, two at Seaforth (after a very late arrival on 2 June), seven in the Rimrose Valley, two at Fazakerley, seven at Sutton Manor and eleven in the Sankey Valley in St. Helens, two on Downholland Moss, up to eight at Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park, 18 at Brockholes Quarry, up to ten at Haweswater, five at Conder Green, two at Middleton Industrial Estate and at Heysham and six at Sand Villa. Other probable or possible breeding sites included Parbold, Croston Marsh, Ulnes Walton, Witton Country Park, Barnoldswick and Wood End Sewage Works.

Late records included singles at Seaforth, Crosby Marine Park and Prescott Reservoirs (all known to have been migrants) on 15 Sept and at Heysham on 19 Oct.

### **BLACKCAP** *Sylvia atricapilla*

**Common breeding bird and passage migrant; fairly common winter visitor at coastal locations.**

A total of 57 was reported during January and February; of those that were sexed 19 were females and 27 males. Sightings were overwhelmingly in gardens and from all parts of the county except Rossendale, but north Lancashire, where 24 were seen, predominated with a spectacular six in one garden in Silverdale.

Typically, fewer were seen in the second winter period – a total of 19, eight of which were in north Lancashire, four in Merseyside and three in east Lancashire.

Birds were first heard singing in south Liverpool on 15 March, St. Helens on the 16th, Little Singleton on the 19th, Ainsdale on the 21st, Marton, Earnsdale Reservoir and Whalley on the 27th, Myerscough College on the 29th and Yarrow Valley Park, Rawcliffe Moss and Fulwood on the 31st. In north Lancashire the first was in song on 1 April but one trapped at Heysham on 28 March was probably a migrant.

There seems little doubt that the breeding population continues to expand. Probable breeding was reported from 25 sites in south Liverpool, twelve in St. Helens and 34 in east Lancashire. No comparable information was available from other parts of the county but breeding was widespread throughout. Significant site totals of breeding pairs included up to 20 in the Rimrose Valley and at Moor Piece, 14 on Warton Crag RSPB, twelve in Witton Country Park and ten at Mere Sands Wood and the Irwell between Rawtenstall and Ewood Bridge. Ringing totals during summer of 14 at Heysham and a record 78 at Leighton Moss suggested good productivity.

No large autumn passage seems to have occurred anywhere, with five trapped at Heysham on 4 Sept the largest day total. The late September to early November passage, accompanying winter thrushes, was noticeably absent at Heysham and elsewhere. Late birds thought to have been on passage included singles at Whalley Nab on 20 Oct, Heysham on the 21st, Formby Point on the 23rd, Marton Mere on 18 Nov and Seaforth on the 22nd.

## **GARDEN WARBLER** *Sylvia borin*

### **Common breeding bird and double passage migrant.**

The first were at Hesketh Golf Course and Sunnyhurst on the typical date of 22 April and there were arrivals at likely breeding sites at Yarrow Valley Park, Brockholes Quarry, Stocks Reservoir, Brock Bottom, Scorton and other north Lancashire sites before the end of the month. Birds at two sites in Formby and at Fleetwood were almost certainly on passage.

There were more widespread arrivals on the breeding grounds of east and north Lancashire and the West Pennines during early May. Fourteen pairs bred on Warton Crag RSPB (the same as 2006 but an equal lowest total since 1989) and one or two pairs at Myerscough College, Brockholes Quarry and Cuerden Valley Park. Twelve males were singing in the Bottoms Beck area of Gisburn Forest on 20 May and up to four near the car park until 15 July. A possible decline in numbers was reported in the Rivington/Anglezarke area. Breeding was proven or thought likely at three sites in Rossendale. Three singing in the Rimrose Valley in early May were outside the normal breeding range but there was no confirmation of breeding there; the Knowsley Park/Prescot Reservoirs area remains the only regular site in Merseyside.

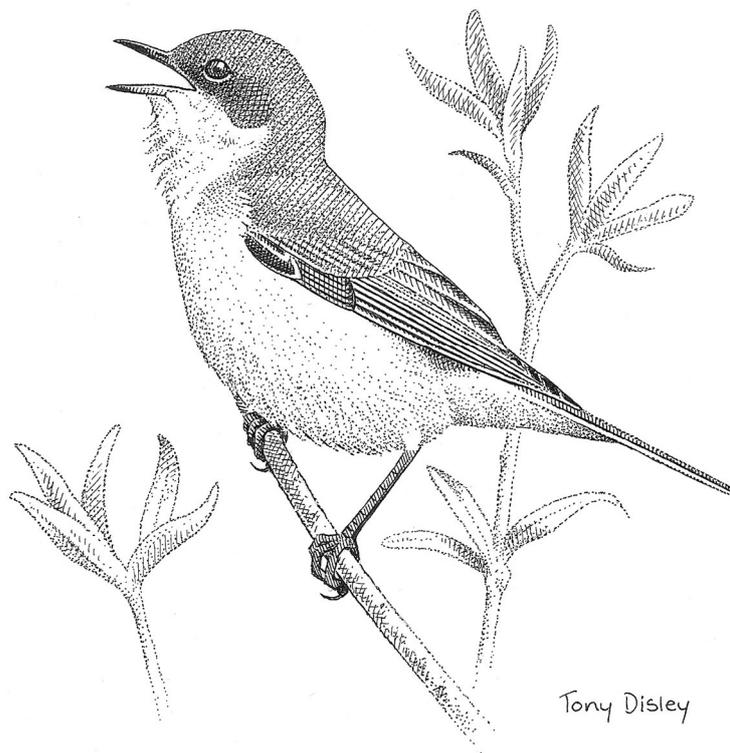
Autumn passage was virtually non-existent with just three records of singles away from breeding sites: at Heysham on 7 & 24 Aug and 7 Oct and Fleetwood Cemetery on 2 Oct.

## **LESSER WHITETHROAT** *Sylvia curruca*

### **Fairly common breeding bird and double passage migrant.**

One at Fleetwood on 13 April equalled our earliest ever record (in 2005). One was at Aldcliffe and one or more at Heysham the following day, with further early arrivals at eleven sites in the Fylde and several in north Lancashire by 21 April, when one at Altham was the first in east Lancashire. There was a mass arrival in these same areas in the last week of April with a large movement on the 28th, when a remarkable 20 were at Aldcliffe. All other spring records were of ones and twos with just two records of three. Three males at Birkdale on 15 April and singles at Formby on the 25th and Eccleston on the 26th were the only April records in Merseyside.

A pair at Martholme on 10 May, one at Dilworth Reservoir until 10 June and two males on territory at Billington were the only likely breeding records in the east. It was a different story in the north where territorial males were present on at least a dozen sites and where two pairs were confirmed as breeding at Warton Crag, Middleton Industrial Estate, Sunderland Point, Heald Brow and the Eric Morecambe complex, and five pairs at Heysham. No information about breeding was received from the Fylde but birds were recorded at a dozen or so sites from late May to the end of June. Two pairs bred at Freshfield Dune Heath but one at Prescott Reservoirs to the end of May and one carrying food at Berrington's Lane, St. Helens on 15 July were the only other likely breeding records in Merseyside. Breeding was probable at three sites in Chorley.



A total of 25 were ringed at Heysham and Middleton between mid-June and early September but it is likely that most of these related to the breeding population. Definite autumn migrants were few and far between: they included singles on Crosby Marine Park on 7 & 18 Sept, Aldcliffe on the 8th, Wick's Lake, Formby on 14 Oct, Heysham on the 18th and two at Marshside on the 19th – the last of the year.

### **WHITETHROAT** *Sylvia communis*

**Common breeder, mostly in the west. Common double passage migrant.**

One at Marton Mere on 10 April was an extremely early arrival but no more were seen until singles at Eccleston Mere, MMWWT and Hesketh Golf Course on the 20th and Otterspool, south Liverpool the next day. There was then a widespread arrival from the 22nd and most regular breeding sites had been reached by the first week of May. Notable early spring counts included at least 15 at Marshside on 27 April, and 15 at Marton Mere, ten at both Aldcliffe and Heysham and eight at Sutton Manor, St. Helens on the 28th.

Fifty or more males were reported from ten sites in St. Helens and breeding totals at major Merseyside sites included 23 pairs at Marshside (29 in 2006), 14 at Freshfield Dune Heath (20 in

2006), 15 pairs in the Rimrose Valley with a peak count of 24 males (40 males in 2006) – all of which pointed to a significant decline in the breeding population.

It is unclear whether this was repeated elsewhere in the county but there was no sign of any contraction in the breeding range and one to three singing males were reported from well over 100 sites. Larger concentrations included MMWWT (9 pairs), Cottam Brickworks (3), Cuerden Valley Park, (4), Brockholes Quarry (6), Anglezarke (5+), Sefton Meadows (12+), Speke Hall (6), Brookside in east Lancashire (5), Jackhouse (4), Heysham (11), and Middleton Industrial Estate (7). No breeding information was received from the Fylde but, from counts of individuals, it seems likely that significant numbers bred at Marton Mere, Rawcliffe Moss and Winmarleigh Moss at least. At least ten probably bred in Rossendale and one singing at Bacup Recreation Ground at 300m altitude on 20 May was an unusual record.

Passage birds were at Belmont Reservoir on 1 & 9 Aug and one was in heather on Croasdale Fell on the 12th. A high total of 65 was ringed at Heysham/Middleton from late June and 12 Sept. There were three September records in east Lancashire with the last at Allsprings on the 20th; other late records included singles at Aldcliffe and MMWWT on the 13th, Stanah on the 16th, Marshside and Rawcliffe Moss on the 22nd, Rossall on 2 Oct and different birds at Seaforth on 8-9 & 10 Oct.

## **YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER** *Phylloscopus inornatus*

### **Scarce autumn passage migrant.**

The county's third winter record was found in the Yarrow Valley Park on 6 March (N & T West). It was not seen subsequently and was perhaps an early 'passage' bird'.

Autumn produced six documented records, beginning with singles at Crosby Marine Park (E McCann) and Fleetwood Cemetery (S Eaves) on 1 Oct. The following day one was with a flock of Long-tailed Tits at Lifeboat Road, Formby (T Vaughan), and east Lancashire's fourth ever record was on Ebor Street, Burnley on 3 Oct (R Carter). A few days later, one was trapped at Heysham on 7 Oct (AJ Draper *et al*). This brought Heysham's tally to a remarkable 17 records and this or another was (still) present the following day. Finally, another was trapped in a garden at Scotforth, Lancaster on 9 Oct (P Cammack).

## **WOOD WARBLER** *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

### **Uncommon breeder in east and central areas; uncommon passage migrant, mostly in spring.**

The number of spring migrants reported was low compared with last year but there was a pleasing increase in the number of singing males at likely breeding sites in both east and north Lancashire. Whether this represented a genuine halt to the seemingly inexorable slide of recent years remains to be seen.

The first migrant at Marshside on 22 April was followed by two singing males just down the coast on the Birkdale Hills on the 28th. Singles at Heysham and Southport Crematorium on 13 May were the only other coastal migrants.

Moor Piece, a site which used to be a regular breeding haunt but where nesting has been uncertain in recent years, recorded its first on the early date of 21 April. A male and female were seen in close contact there on 4 May and it is assumed that at least one pair bred; the last sighting was on 16 June. Elsewhere in the east, two males were singing in the Bottoms Beck area of Gisburn Forest on 20 May; one was seen in the same area on 18-20 July, so breeding seems probable. Two males singing on the Woodnook Nature Trail, Accrington on 13 May were not seen subsequently; other males were in the Langden Valley on 2 June and at Dunsop Bridge on the 5th.

In Rossendale, singles were seen in Staghills Woods on 29 April and heard in Fairy Glen, Grane on 5 May. The Grane bird was still singing on 30 May but there was no evidence of successful breeding.

It seems likely that at least four pairs bred in the Chorley recording area with single males at Black Coppice from 13 May to 3 June, White Coppice on 1-15 June and two in the Rivington Terraced Gardens during May and June.

One was singing at Barnacre on 12 May but there were no subsequent reports and it is not clear whether this former breeding site is still occupied. Careful observation suggested breeding was unlikely at Tower Lodge, Marshaw, where a male was in song from at least 22 May to 13 June. Two males were in a private wood in the Lune Valley that has not been surveyed recently on 12 May and five were in Roeburndale during the breeding season.

One reported in Cuerden Valley Park on 23 July was the only autumn record apart from one at Staghills Woods on 5 Oct, the latest ever recorded in Lancashire by ten days.

### **CHIFFCHAFF** *Phylloscopus collybita*

**Common breeder and passage migrant. Uncommon but increasing in winter.**

Birds were seen at 15 sites during January and February – six in both Merseyside and the Fylde and three in north Lancashire.

The spring arrival appears to have come a little late this year. The first presumed migrants were, unusually, in east Lancashire – singles at Pleasington on 2 March and Ewood, Blackburn on the 8th. There was, however, a widespread influx throughout the county from the middle of March, including at Cloughfold in Rossendale on the 11th, Oglet on the 12th, Lowerhouse Lodges on the 13th and Yarrow Valley Park, MMWWT and Leighton Moss on the 14th. Multiple counts of singing males in early spring included ten at Greyfriars (Fylde) on 2 April, seven at Cronton Colliery on 31 March and Bottom's Beck on 12 April, and six at Leighton Moss on 20 March and Prescott Reservoirs on the 27th.

The breeding range is at least stable and the total population probably increasing slightly. Site totals included 17 singing males in the Rimrose Valley in April, a minimum of 15 pairs at Rivington, nine at Witton Country Park, eight at Mere Sands Wood, six at Heysham and Freshfield Dune Heath, and five at Warton Crag RSPB and Cuerden Valley Park. Ringing totals during the breeding season at Heysham and Leighton Moss reflected increased breeding numbers and suggested a productive season.

One or two at Seaforth in the first fortnight of July were perhaps dispersing juveniles and there was no sign of any concerted passage movement until September. The largest autumn totals included ten at Crosby Marine Park on 29 Sept, seven at Heysham on 3 & 8 Oct and three at several east Lancashire sites. Late birds were in Crosby Marine Park on 21 Oct, Heysham on the 25th, Langden Valley on the 26th, Silverdale on the 27th, Marton Mere on 12-15 Nov and Heysham (*abietinus*) on 18 Nov.

Wintering birds were somewhat scarcer in the late year. All were singles: at Lomeshaye Marsh on 4 Nov to 30 Dec, Seaforth on 26 Nov to at least 9 Dec, Bispham on 2 Dec, Carleton on 2 & 18 Dec, Brockholes Quarry on 3 Dec, Hesketh Golf Course on the 22nd, Oglet on the 25th and Leighton Moss on the 31st.

The identification characteristics of the Siberian race *tristis* are finally being unravelled, critically that 'grey Chiffchaffs' are unlikely to be *tristis*, and it seems clear that most, if not all, birds identified as such in Lancashire previously are likely to have been Scandinavian *abietinus*. Very detailed descriptions of plumage and song/calls are required before a claim of a Siberian bird can be accepted. So, a singing male at Wick's Lane, Formby on 1-10 April (P Rhodes, T Vaughan *et*

al), which was seen by many and caused a great deal of discussion, becomes the first definite record for the county.

## **WILLOW WARBLER** *Phylloscopus trochilus*

### **Abundant breeding bird and double passage migrant.**

The first arrived on the typical date of 31 March but unusually the earliest were all to the east of the county – the first at Belmont was followed by singles in Darwen on 2 April, Foulridge Reservoir on the 4th and five other east Lancashire sites on the 8th, including four at Dilworth Reservoir, with singles at Lowerhouse Lodges and nearby Pollard Moor and Ewood Bridge the following day. First records in the lowlands were at least a week late: singles at Rawcliffe Moss on the 6th, Cabin Hill on the 7th, Marton Mere on the 8th, Prescott Reservoirs, Leighton Moss, Aldcliffe and Crook of Lune on the 9th, Brockholes Quarry on the 11th and Marshside and MMWWT on the 12th.

Notable spring gatherings – presumably mostly singing males – included 28 at Bottoms Beck on the 12th, 19 at Foulridge Reservoir on the 21st, 25 in the Jackhouse area on the 22nd, 20 singing in one area at Stocks Reservoir on the 27th and 35 on the Lune between Arkholme and Wenning Foot on 9 May. More spectacular were 120 in the Fleetwood area on 20 April, a very large ‘fall’ by the standards of recent years. In contrast, Heysham logged only a moderate ringing total of 50 between early April and mid-May.

Breeding was reported from all parts of the county and it is clear that this remains our commonest warbler. However, population size is probably diminishing. Results from regularly monitored sites present a mixed picture: two pairs bred at Hesketh Golf Course (2 in 2006), four in Cuerden Valley Park (7 in 2006), ten on Freshfield Dune Heath (15 in 2006), 35 on Warton Crag RSPB (28 in 2006), five at Heysham (2 in 2006). Other breeding totals included five pairs in the Rimrose Valley and Sunnyhurst Wood, seven at Brockholes Quarry, eleven at Tarbock Hall Farm (Knowsley), twelve at Brookside (east Lancs), 19 in the Jackhouse area and 81 males on a 7km walk at Bottoms Beck on 20 May. An above-average total of 407 was ringed at Leighton Moss between June and September, perhaps indicating a good local breeding season.

Autumn passage was unspectacular. At least ten were in a moorland bracken bed above Belmont on 1 Aug, 15 on the Middleton Industrial Estate on the 9th and Heysham on the 15th. Records were typically sparse after mid-September and the last were singles at MMWWT on 5 Oct, Stocks Reservoir on the 13th and Leighton Moss on the 26th.

## **GOLDCREST** *Regulus regulus*

### **Common breeding bird, especially in the east. Common double passage migrant and winter visitor in variable numbers.**

Reports of wintering birds were received from almost 100 sites at both ends of the year. Most were of ones or twos but larger counts included eight in Taylor Park, St. Helens on 8 Dec, six at Eccleston Mere on 7 Jan, the Old Coach Road, Rainford on 4 Nov and Mill Wood, Speke on 26 Dec, five in the Sankey Valley on 19 Feb and at Moor Piece on 3 Feb, and four at Whalley Nab on 18 Feb, Churchtown (Fylde) on 2 Feb, Woodwell on 4 Feb and MMWWT during January. The north Lancashire January survey located 56 birds in nine 10km squares.

The spring passage typically got underway in mid-March with singles at Marshside on the 13th and Bradshaw Lane (Pilling) and Fluke Hall on the 15th the first definite migrants. The spring ringing total of 69 at Heysham was about average. Up to 50 at Heysham on 27-28 March, twelve at Marton Mere on 21 March and ten at Darwen Moor edge on 5 April were the largest spring totals reported.

Breeding was widespread but, as usual, massively under-reported. It took place on at least a dozen sites in St. Helens, 13 in south Liverpool and eight in Rivington. MMWWT and Heysham NR had their first breeding records, with one and three pairs respectively, while Witton Country Park and Sunnyhurst Wood had nine and six pairs respectively and six males were singing on the Lune between Arkholme and Leck Beck.

Autumn passage began at Heysham on 4 Sept and Crosby Marine Park on the 7th and proved to be quite unspectacular. The Heysham ringing total of 38 was disappointing, given the good numbers in spring, and perhaps reflected a poor breeding season and/or low numbers of Scandinavian migrants. However, Leighton Moss's 64 were typical of the last three years. Double-figure counts included 20 at Heysham on 5 Oct, 30 on the 8th and 14 on the 24th, 21 in Gisburn Forest on 7 Oct, 15 at Wesham (Fylde) on 11-12 Nov, eleven at Moor Lane, Billington on 8 Oct and ten at Shedden Clough on 2 Oct. Fifteen were counted in one small section of the Ainsdale NNR on 14 Nov and it was estimated that at least 200 were present in the Sefton Coast pinewoods at this time, although numbers appeared to fall significantly by the end of the year.

### **FIRECREST** *Regulus ignicapillus*

#### **Uncommon passage migrant, scarce in winter.**

At least twelve were recorded, equalling the highest ever total in the county (in 2003) and in stark contrast to last year's miserly four.

All were singles and, with the exception of one in a garden at Catforth (Fylde) on 7-15 Jan, all came in the second half of the year. The earliest was on Crosby Marine Park on 8 Sept with another there on the 30th and almost certainly a different bird on 12 Nov. Other autumn migrants were at Knowsley Park on 12 Oct with probably a different bird there on 12 Nov, Heysham on 18 Oct, Freckleton on the 24th, in a garden at Sutton Leach, St. Helens on the 29th, Aldcliffe on 14 Nov and Parbold on the 25th. Three or more sightings were reported at Ainsdale NNR during autumn but no dates were provided.

The last was at Cottam, Preston on 2 Dec.

### **SPOTTED FLYCATCHER** *Muscicapa striata*

#### **Fairly common breeding bird and double passage migrant.**

Rather more records were received in 2007 than in recent years, but whether this reflects a small resurgence or simply increased observer effort remains to be seen.

The first were seen in Lancaster and at Leighton Moss on 26 April and were followed by singles at Anglezarke and Hurst Green on 29 April, in a St. Anne's garden on 2 May and two at Downham the next day. Little passage movement was reported and singles at Eccleston Mere on 24 May and Hesketh Golf Course and Prescot Reservoirs on 1 June were the only 'spring' migrants in Merseyside.

Single pairs in Great Altcar, Thurnham Hall and Kirkham, and Rainford were the only breeding records in West Lancashire, the Fylde and Merseyside respectively.

In the Chorley area breeding was proven or probable at Belmont (2 pairs), Anglezarke (2 pairs), White Coppice, Dean Wood and Hall Wood, Rivington, while one pair at Haslam Park was the only breeding in the Preston area.

Things were a little better in the species' core breeding areas in the north and east of the county.

In the Lancaster recording area likely breeding pairs were found at Crook O'Lune, Arkholme village (2 pairs), the railway embankment between Arkholme and Melling (3 pairs), Tunstall, Melling, Gressingham, Leighton Moss, Newton, Silverdale, Birk Bank, Aldcliffe,

Abbeystead (in a hanging basket), Tower Lodge Marshaw, Yealand Redmayne, Freehold, Bolton-le-Sands and Roeburndale.

East Lancashire reported a widespread arrival from mid-May with records from 14 sites in May and 18 in June. Breeding was likely at many sites, including Gisburn Forest, Gawthorpe Woods, Dunsop Bridge, Whitemoor, Marl Hill, Wycoller, Barley and Slaidburn (including another in a hanging basket). In addition, family parties were seen at Cliviger Fishponds on 3 Aug, Foulridge Reservoir on the 13th and Shedden Clough on the 23rd.

In Rossendale, a pair was at Clough Bottom Reservoir on 20 May, increasing to two pairs the day after, with a family party there on 14 July. Others were seen at five or more sites during the breeding season.

One at Middleton Industrial Estate on 9 Aug was exceptionally early but the main passage began later that month. The few migrants seen included singles on six dates at Prescott Reservoirs between 19 Aug and 22 Sept with three there on 15 Sept, three at Lightfoot Green on 22 Aug, four in the Jackhouse area on 14 Sept, singles on Turf Moor on the 15th, at Marshside on the 22nd, Rawcliffe Moss on the 25th and the last at Jackhouse Reservoir on the 28th.

### **PIED FLYCATCHER** *Ficedula hypoleuca*

#### **Uncommon breeding bird and passage migrant.**

Early arrivals were at Hindburndale on 12 April (equalling our earliest record in 1994), Moor Piece on the 14th, Claughton on the 21st, Sunnyhurst on the 22nd, Anglezarke on the 23rd, Langden Beck on the 25th, Grisedale Valley on the 28th and Waddecar on the 30th. Singles at Hesketh Golf Course on 20 April and Formby Point on 3 May were the only coastal migrants.

The species continued its rapid decline in Rivington and Anglezarke with only one nest-box occupied and no other singing birds noted; one pair had six young at Belmont. The reason for this local decline is not understood – elsewhere in the county Pied Flycatchers appear to be doing well.

Nine boxes were occupied in Bowland Wild Boar Park, where 50 young hatched, and there were seven nests with eggs at Moor Piece on 18 May. Nest-box occupation on the United Utilities estate, all but three on the western and north-western sides of Stocks Reservoir, increased again to 26 pairs from just four in 2002; 73 chicks fledged there. One singing at Paper Mill Wood on 2 May was the only report of a possible breeder in east Lancashire away from the nest box areas. Rossendale produced just two sightings, singles at Irwell Vale on 23 April and Clough Bottom Reservoir on 13 May.

Ringers extended the nest-box schemes in north Lancashire this year and a total of 72 pairs were recorded in Roeburndale (37 pairs), Hindburndale (15 pairs), Littledale (9 pairs) and the Lune Valley (11 pairs); 56 pairs successfully raised young.

Autumn passage was virtually non-existent. All records were in the Fylde: singles at Fleetwood Cemetery on 3 Oct, Knott End on the 8th and Bispham Marsh on the 23rd.

### **BEARDED TIT** *Panurus biarmicus*

#### **Resident at Leighton Moss. Rare elsewhere.**

A rather poor breeding season for Leighton Moss's Bearded Tits was exemplified by having just 13 free-flying young from an estimated 25 pairs, compared to 86 from 35 last year. The ringing study identified 25 adult males and 21 adult females. The cold spring followed by abnormally high water levels in June was the probable cause.

There were no records away from Leighton Moss.

## **LONG-TAILED TIT** *Aegithalos caudatus*

**Common breeding resident. Some irruptive movement in autumn.**

The fine weather in April and early May helped this relatively early nesting species maintain its relative abundance with good numbers reported throughout the county. The Lancaster winter survey counted 219 in nine 10km squares in January - an increase on 2006. In the Fylde, records were received from 60 sites, St Helens from 32 and south Liverpool from twelve.

There were widespread reports in the first winter period with several flocks in double figures. The highest counts were 20 at Eccleston Mere and Dairy Farm Road, St Helens during January, 26 at Mere Sands Wood, 30 at Higher Towneley Playing Fields on 30 Jan, 30 at Brockholes on 5 Feb and a flock of 40 in Chorley on 4 Jan. A few correspondents reported increased use of nut-feeders by this species.

The breeding season was a good one with productivity high, as shown in the ringing totals from Leighton Moss (99) and Heysham (53). A fully constructed nest was noted at Rivington on 16 March, two young were in a small flock at Freckleton Naze on 9 May and a family party including at least seven young was noted at Eccleston on 13 May. Family parties were everywhere in late May and early June (e.g. 20 birds at Marton Mere, 35 at Todderstaffe Hall, 22 in Otterspool Park).

Other confirmed breeding records came from Rimrose Valley (six pairs, an increase of two on last year), Freshfield Dune Heath (four pairs), Warton Crag (two pairs), Heysham (two pairs) and Mere Sands Wood (five pairs).

Migrating flocks were again encountered at several sites. At Heysham, the largest October movement since 2000 took place; a flock of 35 passed through on 2 Oct and three flocks totalling 51 birds on the 5th. Forty were on the Middleton Industrial Estate on 24 Nov. During this period, large flocks were also recorded from Cottam Brickworks (35 on 19 Oct), Downholland Moss (30 on the 6th), Marton, Blackpool (25 also on the 19th), Ravenmeols (24 on the 28th), Marshside (20 on the 15th), Rimrose Valley (22 on the 13th), south Liverpool (18 on the 10th) and Whalley (20 on the 26th).

Numbers remained high into the second winter period with 40 at Mere Sands Wood and 30 at Cottam being the highest counts. Flocks of up to 15 were not uncommon across the county.

## **BLUE TIT** *Cyanistes caeruleus*

**Abundant breeding bird. Marked autumn passage.**

It was a bit of a mixed breeding season for our resident Blue Tits in a year where the national picture was terrible due to the incessant rain of June and July. In most areas their fortunes were down on previous years but not disastrously, and there was some good news from the United Utilities Bowland estate, where there was a 40% increase in nesting attempts with an average clutch size of 8.8 and brood size of 5.9. At Rimrose Valley there was a similar increase in breeding pairs - up by six to 14. Moor Piece near Clitheroe had at least 23 nest boxes in use on 18 May (compared to six on 25 May 2006).

In the Pilling-Preesall area, 59 pairs were monitored, laying 483 eggs of which 237 hatched and 199 young fledged. (Average per pair = 8.2 eggs, 4.0 young and 3.4 young fledged). Data from the nest box studies in Lancaster monitored in both years (Leck Beck to Arkholme Viaduct, Warton Crag, Leighton Moss and Teddy Heights) recorded a decline from 40 pairs in 2006 to 32. The nest box schemes all reported good productivity this year (for example, 6.6 fledged young per pair from 19 boxes in Claughton, 5.3 from seven at Arkholme and 7.6 from five in Silverdale) but the ringing returns (99 at Heysham NR and 310 at Leighton Moss) suggested a low survival after fledging.

Elsewhere, four pairs bred at Brockholes Quarry, 29 at Witton Park, Blackburn, 13 at Sunnyhurst Woods, Darwen, four at Freshfield Dune Heath and nine at Bowland Wild Boar Park (fledging 44 young). Fifty-nine boxes were occupied at Mere Sands Wood and at Belmont, one pair nested in the base of an old Carrion Crow nest.

There was some evidence of autumn migration this year with peaks of 36 at Heysham on 26 Sept and 15 at Seaforth in late September and into early October with 19 on the 7th. There were 21 at Billington, Whalley on 23 Sept.

## **GREAT TIT** *Parus major*

**Abundant breeding bird, less common on autumn passage than Blue Tit.**

2007 was a reasonably good year for this species with minor gains and losses in breeding success reported from various sites across the county. At least 37 pairs bred in and around Rimrose Valley, an increase of four on 2006. Five pairs bred at Brockholes Quarry, 25 in Witton Park, Blackburn, twelve in Sunnyhurst Woods, Darwen and three at Freshfield Dune Heath. Twenty-three nest boxes were used at Mere Sands Wood and 22 at Moor Piece (a significant increase on last year).

In the Pilling-Preesall area, 43 pairs were monitored, laying 319 eggs of which 208 hatched and 165 young fledged. (Average being 7.1 eggs, 4.6 young and 3.7 young fledged.) In the Lancaster district, the regular study areas along the Lune Valley recorded a small decline from 73 last year to 69 in 2007. At Claughton, productivity per pair was 4.7 fledged young per pair from 14 nest boxes and at Arkholme, 4.2 from ten pairs. The Warton Crag census recorded 21 pairs again and seven pairs bred in boxes at Heysham raising 39 young.

On the United Utilities estate near Stocks Reservoir, the upland population declined slightly to 27 occupied nest boxes and, whilst there was a decline in both clutch and brood size (8.2 and 5.1), it was less marked than with the later nesting Redstarts and Pied Flycatchers. At Bowland Wild Boar Park, six boxes were occupied and 43 young hatched.

A very good total of 87 (55 full-grown and 32 pulli) were ringed at Heysham NR and Leighton Moss reported a total of 53 trapped (43 new and ten re-traps) – both confirming the good breeding season.

There was little evidence of movement in the autumn save for 40 passing south over Belmont on the morning of 6 Oct. The largest counts at Seaforth were six on 16 & 22 Sept and ten on 7 Oct. The peak count at Fairhaven was of seven on 7 Oct and Heysham recorded eleven on 26 Sept.

A very keen male (bird and watcher) was singing in the very early hours of the morning on three occasions in January along the brightly lit Princes Avenue, Toxteth.

## **COAL TIT** *Periparus ater*

**Common breeding bird. Some irruptive movements in autumn.**

Coal Tits remained common and widespread this year with regular sightings of up to four coming from all over the county (for example, 32 sites in the Fylde and 16 in St Helens). The January survey around Lancaster showed an increase to 272 birds in the nine 10km squares surveyed. Large site counts in this period included 35 at Moor Piece on 11 March and 24 at Gisburn Forest on the 20th.

Breeding records included twelve pairs at Witton Park, Blackburn, four at Sunnyhurst Woods, Darwen, single pairs at Freshfield Dune Heath, Mere Sands Wood, Avenham Park, Preston, Heysham and Warton Crag, and eight territorial males at Claughton. There were at least four probable nesting pairs in Rossendale. There were five territories in Sefton Park, Liverpool and birds were probably breeding in at least three other sites in south Liverpool.

There was a sustained autumn passage of small numbers of birds from mid-September through to the middle and end of October. 59 birds passed through Heysham during this time (with a peak of 19 on 29 Sept), eleven through Fairhaven and eight through Seaforth. A flock of over 20 was noted in the Delph plantations on 23 Sept and several birds were present at Otterspool on 8 Oct.

In the second winter period, it was estimated that there were at least 150 in the Sefton Coast pinewoods, whilst numbers at Moor Piece and Gisburn Forest remained high with 30-40 being the maximum counts.

### **WILLOW TIT** *Poecile montana*

**Scarce breeder in the birch copses of the south-west. Very rare elsewhere.**

Records of mainly single birds were received from eight sites in the St. Helens area, principally in the first winter period up to April. It is hard to say whether this represented a reduction in numbers after the intensive effort of last year, but it certainly indicates the poor state of health of the Lancashire population. Birds were seen visiting bird feeders at Eccleston Mere and Rainford later in the year.

One slight crumb of comfort was the sighting of one at a traditional site in Yarrow Valley Country Park on 9 March, and a pair seen together there in the following days. A single was at MMWWT on 1 April.

Extralimital records received were of singles at Belmont on 6 Oct, Greyfriars (Preston) on 21 March and Cottam Brickworks up to 28 Jan. The latter refers to a regular wintering individual present since 2004, but it did not return later in 2007.

### **MARSH TIT** *Poecile palustris*

**Fairly common breeder in the north of the county. Virtually absent south of the Ribble and in the Fylde.**

The January survey of the Lancaster area continued to show the localised nature of this species away from SD47 with threes in SD46 & SD57, two SD66 and one in SD67. Other winter records in the area came from Freehold, Halton, Hindburndale and Docker. The Warton Crag RSPB census recorded five pairs whilst nearby Potts Wood held four pairs. The species continues to be recorded commonly elsewhere in the Silverdale area. Other breeding season records came from Crook o' Lune and Roeburndale.

In Bowland six were recorded at Tower Lodge, Marshaw on 14 Nov but, worryingly, all the records in east Lancashire were of singles outside the breeding season: at Doeford Bridge on 16 Jan, Loud Mythom Bridge on 20 Feb, Clitheroe Tip on the 24th, Lees House on 21 March, Moor Piece on the 28th, Stocks Reservoir on 6 Nov, and Stopper Lane on 11 Nov.

Away from north and east Lancashire, singles were recorded at Jackson's Banks Wood, Samlesbury on 23 Jan and Rawcliffe Hall on the Fylde on 31 March.

### **NUTHATCH** *Sitta europaea*

**Fairly common and increasing breeding resident.**

This species is recorded in many of the county's woodlands but remains stubbornly absent from a lot of West Lancashire, the Fylde and Heysham, apart from a few isolated records. None were reported in the Blackpool-Thornton area this year, the nearest records being singles at Lytham Crematorium and Preesall. Similarly, there are very few records in the Crosby to Southport area, with one in the Botanic Gardens, Churchtown in the second winter period and one in Southport Crematorium, although up to four were seen elsewhere in Scarisbrick and the species is now

regular at Mere Sands Wood. There were single records from Formby, Downholland Moss, MMWWT (second record) and Tarleton.

The species is certainly commoner in the parkland of Preston north of the Ribble, where reports included confirmed breeding at Avenham Park. The species rarely receives any special mention in the Lancaster district and the January survey found birds in all the 10km squares. The spread of the species in the Rivington and Anglezarke area has been quite remarkable with breeding birds occupying both nest-boxes and natural sites. Judging by the number of very vocal singing birds in April, occupied territories must be approaching 35 and by the end of May, family groups were being reported. Over the hill, at least two pairs bred near Belmont, but the area remains relatively uncolonised. Eight breeding pairs were noted in Witton Park, Blackburn, three in Sunnyhurst Woods, Darwen and singles at Cuerden Valley Park, Mere Sands Wood and Bowland Wild Boar Park. It remains common in most of east Lancashire where it is starting to visit gardens more regularly.

Birds were present in twelve locations in the St. Helens area (heard singing at three of them) and from three locations around Upholland. In south Liverpool there were at least six territories in Sefton Park and evidence of breeding was also obtained from Woolton Woods, Otterspool Park, Aigburth, Childwall and Speke. Birds were also present in the Mossley Hill and Croxteth areas.

### **TREECREEPER** *Certhia familiaris*

#### **Common breeding resident.**

The population of this sedentary species still seems to be stable across the county. In the Lancaster January survey, 46 birds were recorded and were only absent from one 10km square that is mainly agricultural. Three pairs bred at Arkholme and four at Claughton.

Sixteen pairs were recorded at Witton Park, Blackburn, four at Sunnyhurst Woods, Darwen and two at Mere Sands Wood. Breeding was confirmed at a further seven sites in the rest of east Lancashire. At least ten territories were occupied in the Rivington and Anglezarke area.

The species was recorded at nine sites around St. Helens, twelve around south Liverpool and 24 in the Fylde.

### **RED-BACKED SHRIKE\*** *Lanius collurio*

#### **Vagrant**

An adult male was seen in a garden and neighbouring playground on the evening of 14 June at Hala, Lancaster (P Cammack). It was seen on three occasions in ten minutes and then flew off in a southerly direction. This is only the 14th Lancashire record in the modern era.

### **GREAT GREY SHRIKE** *Lanius excubitor*

#### **Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.**

After a drawing a blank in the winter of 2006/7, the second winter period came up trumps with a few birds being seen by many people. The first one was briefly at Rossall Point on 30 Sept, quickly followed by one from the public hide at Leighton Moss later that day. The latter was seen the following day and there were intermittent reports of it up to 9 Nov at least.

One was seen on Oswaldtwistle Moor on 2 Oct, another turned up at MMWWT from 11 to 15 Oct and a bird was reported from the Wray area during the same period.

A very elusive first-winter was seen at Stocks Reservoir on 28 Oct and intermittently to 30 Dec. This was followed by a second first-winter bird in east Lancashire in a very exposed location on Waddington and Newton Fells from 16 Nov through to 31 Dec. Amazingly, a third east

Lancashire first-winter bird turned up on 30 Dec between Ightenhill Bridge and Grove Lane Marsh, Padiham. The last stayed well into 2008 and proved a very popular draw.

### **WOODCHAT SHRIKE\*** *Lanius senator*

#### **Vagrant**

An adult female was found on the morning of 20 May at Marshside (G Clarkson), close to the junction of Marshside Road and Marine Drive. It fed there during most of the day before moving to the sea wall adjacent to Marshside Primary school where it was last seen at 7.30 p.m. This was Lancashire's fifth record.

### **JAY** *Garrulus glandarius*

#### **Common resident. Occasional irruptions, some winter dispersal.**

This species remains common and widespread and, due to its at times elusive nature, is often reported when seen. In the Fylde recording area, birds were recorded at 54 sites with a peak of at least 15 at Greyfriars, Preston on 2 April. Mere Sands Wood recorded a peak of ten in the first winter period and 15 in the second. In south Liverpool, records of up to eight birds came from twelve sites, whilst in St. Helens birds were recorded at 17 sites with a peak of ten at Sankey Valley on 1 April.

At least three pairs bred in Rimrose Valley, eleven in Sunnyhurst Woods, Darwen and several in the Rivington/Anglezarke area. Recently fledged birds were seen from late June onwards at White Coppice, Jackhouse Reservoir, Barley and Otterspool and a single pair bred at Heysham.

There was some significant movement during the autumn after a poor acorn crop. At Heysham, a total of 54 birds was recorded moving south between 22 Sept and 30 Oct with the peak being 27 (which included a flock of twelve) on 27 Sept. During the same period, Fairhaven recorded 20 birds with a peak of eight on 22 Sept and 27 were recorded at Seaforth, including nine south on the 15th and six on 22 Sept and 7 Oct. Large numbers were noted at Belmont and elsewhere in the Chorley area during October, including 20 burying acorns in a Belmont wood on the 20th.

### **MAGPIE** *Pica pica*

#### **Abundant resident**

There were some significant counts in the first winter period in south Liverpool; during January at least 83 were roosting in the Liverpool University precinct and at least 60 in pine trees at Sefton Park. Sixty birds were counted going to roost near Lancashire College, Chorley on 2 March and similar numbers were seen at Mere Sands Wood. Numbers at Eccleston Mere peaked at 40 on 13 Jan and at Bispham Marsh, 39 on 10 Jan. Several other sites across the county recorded lower double-figure counts up to early April, when birds started to disperse to breeding sites.

In Rimrose Valley, 21 breeding pairs were located, two at Seaforth and four nested at Freshfield Dune Heath. Six pairs nested at Marshside, seven around the power station complex at Heysham, four at Warton Crag RSPB but just single pairs at four sites in the rural areas of the Lune Valley due to control measures. Gamekeepers shot 108 birds around the Belmont estates during the year.

At least 70 were seen on the sprinkler bed at Woolton WWTW on 27 Oct. The largest roost in the second winter period was of 180 birds at Egerton on 16 Dec. Numbers at Bispham Marsh reached 87 on 8 Nov and the roost at Cottam Brickworks peaked at 60 on 14 Dec. At least 55 birds were roosting at Otterspool by the end of the year.

**CHOUGH\*** *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax***Vagrant**

Lancashire's seventh record was of a juvenile male that had been ringed on Anglesey, present on British Energy land at Heysham from 18-25 Sept (R Neville). This followed hot on the heels of the one seen at various sites in the Morecambe Bay/Fylde area in 2005 and was itself followed by another bird in the vicinity of Warton Crag from February 2008. An amazing run of records.

**JACKDAW** *Corvus monedula***Common breeding resident, some autumn movement.**

An interesting year for this species that seems to be increasing. During the first winter period the Lancaster area survey notched up 2480, making it one of the most common birds of the area. Up to 1000 roosted at Upper Rivington Reservoir on 13 Jan, 550 at Cuerden Valley Park on the 16th and at least 350 at Rimrose Valley later in the month. In east Lancashire, peak counts were 200 at Stocks Reservoir on 16 March, over 160 at Jumbles Reservoir on 10 Feb and 120 at Crosshill Quarry on 27 March.

Thirteen nests were monitored in the Pilling-Preesall area: 59 eggs were laid from which 28 hatched and 20 young fledged. At Arkholme, of the eight pairs nesting in boxes, six were successful, rearing 18 young in total. The abundance in the Lune Valley was further exemplified by a count of 850 on 18 July at Arkholme. Around 80 adults and recently fledged young were counted at a colony at Withnell Quarry; 469 were feeding on Downholland Moss on 25 July.

There was a very noticeable passage of birds during October and November that must surely have comprised a significant number of Scandinavian birds as noted in other parts of the country. Four hundred and fifty were recorded over Heysham, including 141 on 18 Oct, 191 on the 20th and 78 on the 21st. Numbers noted on the Fylde were even higher with estimates of 400 over Marton Mere on 17 Oct and 1000 over St. Annes on the 18th and 21st. Peak counts at Seaforth were 147 on 6 Oct, 170 the following day, 636 on the 18th, 210 on the 20th, 800 on the 21st and a record 1160 on the 24th. Other movements included 200 at Moss House Farm on 13 Oct, 60 north over Anchorholme on the 14th, 140 at MMWWT on the 20th and 180 south over Rossall Point on the 21st.

There was an interesting set of records of birds seemingly coming and going over south Liverpool, circling high and moving off in different directions contrary to the mainly south-westerly movement seen elsewhere. For example, on the peak day of 21 Oct, a flock of 30 arrived above the old Garden Festival site from the north-west during the morning. These started circling the site, going higher, before flying back, in the direction from which they came. A short while later, a flock of 80 fast-flying, noisy Jackdaws arrived from the south-east, and continued north-west whilst at the same time, a flock of 50 were flying east over Dingle. A smaller group of 16 circled high over the site, before drifting off north and later 19 were seen flying north-east. A further 46 circled the site before moving to the west, 18 flew south-east and then 80 west.

During the second winter period there were several large counts of Jackdaws including several "Nordic" type (white collared) birds. Four hundred roosted at Upper Rivington on 28 Oct, 250 were at Parsonage Reservoir on the 18th, 216 on Champion Moor on 3 Nov and 500 at Cuerden Valley Park on 28 Dec. Large feeding flocks included 500 at Catchdale Moss on the 25 Oct, 400 at Eagland Hill on the 24th and up to 800 at Lytham Moss during December.

**ROOK** *Corvus frugilegus***Abundant resident.**

The annual census of rookeries in the Lancaster area revealed no change from last year. In the Arkholme area there were 109 nests in five rookeries.

Counts of nests at Fylde rookeries were as follows: Queensway, St. Annes 272, Melling's Lane Wood 20, Watch Wood, Lytham 164, Warton Hall 5, Warton Hall copse 73, West End Lane, Warton 36, The Hill, Peel 131, Bradkirk Hall 110, Kirkham Station 23, Bartle Hall 81, Poulton Church 5, Poulton Cemetery 19, Ellet Grange entrance 87, Centre Farm, Forton 19 and 59 at Baldwin's Wood, Pilling.

In the Chorley region, the regular census of rookeries revealed that most had stable populations: Euxton 49, Whittle Springs 28, Heath Charnock 19, Adlington 26, Wheelton 12 and Buckshaw Village 28. However, there were significant reductions at the two main rookeries of Prospect House, Lower Wheelton (43) and Croston (89). There were 50 nests in the Turton – Edgworth area, 77 at Bank Brow, Roby Mill and at least 24 at Rosemary Wood, Downholland Moss.

East Lancashire rookery nest counts were as follows: Higher Hodder Bridge 22 on 14 March, Gisburn 14 on 24 March, Read 22 on 28 March, Brungerley Bridge nine on 6 April, Calderstones c.20 on 15 April, Townley Hall 55 on 17 April and at Slaidburn a total count of 96 in three colonies on 20 April.

Numbers in the south-west were very low with just the one, long-established Rimrose Valley rookery being reported on. Only single figure counts were received from south Liverpool. On Churchtown Moss there was a regular flock of up to 60 birds in the early part of the year and it seems only a matter of time before a colony is set up.

There was a small October movement of birds along with other corvids, including 34 south at Seaforth on the 18th with 30 on the 21st and 77 on the 24th. At Heysham there were 57 on the 20th and twelve on the 21st.

Larger winter roost numbers included 400 at Upper Rivington Reservoir on 13 Jan and 250 at Roddlesworth Reservoirs on the 18th. Winter flocks included 250 in Euxton on 3 Oct, 300 along Dairy Farm Road, St Helens on 14 Jan, 300 on Catchdale Moss on 25 Nov and approximately 500 at Gypsy Hole Wood, Blackpool on 18 Nov.

**CARRION CROW** *Corvus corone***Abundant breeding bird. Some southward movement in October.**

Numbers at the West Pennine Moors roost sites were much the same despite the reported killing of 171 by gamekeepers during the year. Numbers seem to have shifted to the Delph plantations where there were over 350 by the end of the year. 300 roosted at Upper Rivington on 13 Jan and 300 were counted at Roddlesworth Plantations on the 18th.

In the Lune Valley between Leck Beck and Arkholme, eight nests were located but most were shot out. There were two pairs on the Warton Crag census area. There were four pairs around Jackhouse Reservoir and two at Lomeshaye Marsh. Single pairs were reported widely.

There was some spring movement noted at Rossall and Heysham as well as the more usual southward movement in late autumn (101 through Heysham and 25 over Fairhaven).

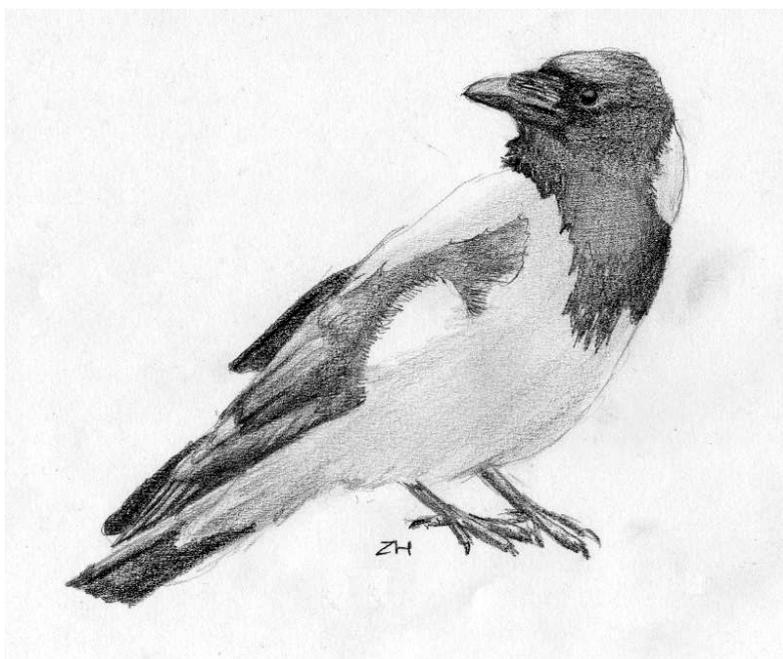
Larger counts of this species consisted of 78 at Fleetwood on 15 June, over 100 at Lightfoot Green four days later and up to 80 along Old Coach Road, St Helens during September.

Leucistic birds were reported from Clitheroe, Altham and Salmesbury all year. This could have related to the same wandering individual but could just as easily involve three separate birds. A brown leucistic bird was also reported from Winckley Hall on 11 March.

**HOODED CROW** *Corvus cornix*  
**Scarce winter visitor or early spring  
 passage migrant; has bred with  
 Carrion Crow.**

One was first seen on the beach at Knott End on 30 Dec where it remained well into 2008.

Three hybrid Hooded x Carrion Crows were reported from Wood House Gate, Slaidburn on 1 July and nearby Stocks Fishery on the 8th. Two were seen at Bashall Town on 18 Sept.



**RAVEN** *Corvus corax*  
**Scarce breeding bird.**

This species continues to be reported widely from all parts of the county, mainly in ones and twos but occasionally more. In the Lancaster area the January survey recorded 27 and there was a sighting of seven over Torrisholme on 24 March.

At least seven pairs nested in Bowland, four pairs in the Silverdale/Arnsdale (Lancashire/Cumbria) area and two in the Lune Valley. A pair raised one young at the regular site on pylons at National Grid, Penwortham. At least two pairs nested in the West Pennine Moors, one producing three young. A family party of seven was seen at White Coppice on 28 June and up to six were in the surrounding area into July. A family of four were in Cliviger Gorge on 13 May. Sixteen passed over Caton Moor on 28 August.

Ravens are getting so commonplace that they are also starting to congregate in larger groups in the winter months. There was a peak count of nine at Leighton Moss on 15 Dec, 14 in the Whitendale Valley on 1 Oct (two parties of six and eight) and at Belmont 18 were together on 5 Nov (a Lancashire record).

**STARLING** *Sturnus vulgaris*  
**Abundant breeding bird, double passage migrant and winter visitor.**

The winter population seems to have increased and there are now some very large roosts being reported, especially in reed beds during the second half of the year. In the first half of the year the only sizable reports were of 10000 at MMWWT during January and, on the evening of 25 March, 13500 flying west over Stocks Reservoir to roost.

The one roost with regular counts during October and November was at Marton Mere where regular observers noted an increase from 25000 on 16 Oct to 125000 by the 24th through to early November. Numbers plateaued and then started to dwindle to 80000 by 10 Nov, 25000 by the 16th and 9000 by the 21st. There was an unattributed report of there being over 200000 birds in the roost on 6 Nov. The number of birds estimated is supported by estimates of the size of feeding flocks on the Fylde which presumably contribute birds to the roost. Over 25000 were on Rawcliffe Moss in early November, 12000 at Eagland Hill, 6000 on Warton Marsh and 5000 at Marshside all in late October. 6491 were counted flying north across Morecambe Bay towards Barrow, Cumbria from Rossall Point on the morning of 3 Nov.

The roost at Leighton Moss showed a similar pattern with numbers building to a peak of 15-25000 by late October and then a drop as birds moved to nearby Haweswater. However, the birds were back at Leighton Moss by the end of the year. Numbers roosting in the Docks at Seaforth were estimated to be 5000 in both winter periods and the roost on the wooden jetty at Heysham numbered no more than 2000.

Breeding reports were widespread. In the Pilling-Preesall area, 29 pairs laid 143 eggs of which 120 hatched and 116 young fledged. At Witton Park, Blackburn there were three pairs and at Sunnyhurst Wood, Darwen, two. One pair bred in an old woodpecker hole in a telegraph pole at Belmont. Four pairs bred at Lower Broomfield Farm Arkholme and two in old woodpecker holes at Newton. Fledgling juveniles were first noted from 12 May but the main emergence was around the 18th to 20th.

Autumn migration counts produced 4625 over Heysham with peaks of 488 on 15 Oct and 736 on 3 Nov whilst 1287 were recorded flying east over Fairhaven Lake with a peak of 502 on 15 Oct.

## **HOUSE SPARROW** *Passer domesticus*

### **Abundant but decreasing resident.**

In the first winter period, the largest flocks reported were of 50 at Inglenook Farm, Rainford on 13 Jan, at least 30 in a Belmont garden on 6 Jan, 25 in the Jackhouse Reservoir area and at Lee Green Reservoir during January and 33 at Burglar's Alley on 24 Feb. The Lancaster January survey revealed that the species is still widely distributed in winter with 564 counted (slightly down on last year) and many isolated farms reporting good populations.

The breeding population at Lower Broomfield Farm, Arkholme remained static at seven pairs and in the Pilling-Preesall area, 21 pairs monitored laid 54 clutches, laying 247 eggs, from which 129 hatched and 117 young fledged. A few records were received from Bowland, where small isolated colonies still exist in places such as Dunsop Bridge, Newton, Slaidburn and Tarnbrook. However another dip in fortunes was reported from the Rivington area where the species is in serious decline.

In the spring and summer months, up to 30 birds put in an appearance at Seaforth, where the species is absent for the rest of the year. Marshside had a post-breeding peak of 45 on 9 Aug and 46 were on Winmarleigh Moss on the 20th. There were at least 50 birds in a roost at Oswaldtwistle throughout July and August. However the largest flocks were of over 100 at Sunnyside, Preesall on 24 Aug and 60 at Green Gate Farm, Stalmine on 5 Sept.

By far the largest second winter period count was 133 at Hyfly Hatcheries, Preesall. An unusual report was of a regular roost of House Sparrows amongst the trolleys at a supermarket in Walton, Liverpool. Clearly they provide a good imitation of a privet hedge!

**TREE SPARROW** *Passer montanus*

**Fairly common but declining breeding bird. Flocks in winter also decreasing.**

Monthly maxima at sites on the Fylde

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bradshaw Lane	10	1	1	/	/	/	/	3	/	12	65	100
Cockersands	/	/	6	8	2	/	60	71	60	12	/	10
Eagland Hill	12	20	21	/	/	/	1	1	/	40	25	40
Fluke Hall	6	/	20	/	/	/	/	26	8	100	3	1
Fluke Hall Lane	30	/	2	/	/	/	/	70	/	/	30	/
New Ridge Farm	40	30	23	/	/	/	/	47	75	100	52	49
Moss House Farm, Rawcliffe Moss	130	123	95	23	/	/	/	/	60	185	185	138
Todderstaffe Hall	45	/	/	2	21	14	/	30	40	25	20	25

It seems that Tree Sparrows are continuing to thrive in areas where they're being supported through nest box schemes and winter feeding. The table above shows the maxima recorded at sites on the Fylde with the feeding station at Rawcliffe Moss attracting the largest numbers.

At MMWWT, peak counts of the resident flocks were in the region of 150-200 and 42 pairs bred. In the Pilling-Preesall area, 200 pairs had 414 clutches, in which 2004 eggs were laid, 1237 hatched and 1094 young fledged. A nest box scheme at Hundred End had 22 pairs compared with 25 in 2006. Five pairs nested at Lower Broomfield Farm, Arkholme, five at New Longton, two at Mere Sands Wood and a single pair at Brockholes Quarry. There were other widespread reports of breeding from other the lowland areas of the county extending up the river valleys of the Lune and Ribble.

In east Lancashire, records were received from nine sites with the majority in the Great Harwood – Whalley area. At Harwood Bar Caravan Park, there were around 15 all year with a peak count of 18 on 11 Dec. Two pairs bred successfully at Brownsills, Great Harwood. There was what could be deemed an extralimital record of a single Tree Sparrow at Marl Hill, Bowland on 19 Feb.

Post-breeding flocks away from the Fylde stronghold included 46 by Adlington Park on 2 July and a flock of 30 was at Croston Finney on 5th August.

There was some evidence of autumnal movements from several sites. At Heysham, the species is now more regular than House Sparrow with 14 birds in three flocks heading south (four on 19 July, seven on 27 Sept and three on 18 Oct). On the last date, five also headed east over Fairhaven Lake. Six were at Marshside on 28 Aug and 14 birds were recorded at Seaforth in the first week of October. In the east of the county, there were two at Wycollar on 4 Oct and four over Champion Moor on the 13th.

Birds were regularly seen on the mosses around St. Helens with a peak of 48 on 4 Nov at Reed's Moss. Reasonable numbers are still present in the Tarbock area with a peak of 25 in one flock on 20 Nov.

On 11 Dec, a bird was nest building at Fluke Hall, Pilling.

**CHAFFINCH** *Fringilla coelebs*

**Abundant breeding bird, passage migrant and winter visitor.**

The most remarkable concentration for this species was a roost in a conifer plantation near Belmont that contained at least 1000 finches, mostly Chaffinches, on 3 March, reducing to 350 by the 10th and 50 on the 17th. At a second roost site at Belmont, 100 were present in January, increasing to 150 by the end of February then dropping to 80 by mid-March. Numbers at Whalley

Nab peaked at over 160 on 14 Jan whilst elsewhere in east Lancashire there were 60 at Standen Hall on 6 Feb, 50 at Stocks Reservoir on the 14th and over 75 at Ewood, Blackburn on the 22nd.

A total of 160 were noted at Ellel Grange during January and winter survey figures indicated increased numbers in the Lancaster area – though widely distributed. On the Fylde, numbers were highest at Moss House Farm feeding station where there were peaks of 86 in January and 95 in February. St. Helens reported several flocks in the region of 100 birds but the peak count was of 200 along Dairy Farm Road on 17 Feb.

Spring passage went largely unnoticed. Numbers of breeding birds were good and included six at Brockholes, 27 at Witton Park, Blackburn and eleven in Sunnyhurst Woods, Darwen. A total of 38 singing males were located along a 5km stretch of the River Lune between Leck Beck to Arkholme viaduct on 5 May (compared with 29 in 2006), while Warton Crag RSPB held 25 pairs. There were 13 pairs on the British Energy properties at Heysham. At least 27 pairs were breeding in and around Rimrose Valley and at least 25 males were singing on the mosses north of St. Helens in early May. Six pairs nested on Hesketh Golf Course, Marshside.

Autumn passage was quite good with totals from visible migration watch-points of 541 at Caton Moor (peak 140 on 7 Oct), 2829 at Heysham (peaks of 245 on 10 Oct, 399 on the 14th, 366 on the 15th and 198 on the 19th) and 3159 at Fairhaven (peaks of 343 on 30 Sept, 356 on 7 Oct, 436 on the 15th and 219 on the 20th). Total numbers were slightly higher at Seaforth, with some earlier large counts such as 750 on 22 Sept and, during the peak passage time in the middle two weeks of October, peak counts of 1000 on the 5th, 200 on the 7th, 500 on the 15th and 212 on the 18th. 215 passed over Otterspool in two and a half hours on the 15th and later on birds were noted roosting at the old Garden Festival site. Passage inland was noted at Belmont with 60 per hour passing over on 6 Oct and 100 per hour on the 20th.

In the second winter period, the flocks returned to the St. Helens mosses but no more than 100 were in any one place. At Moss House Farm, Rawcliffe Moss, numbers peaked at 262 in December. There were 50 at Cockersand during November, 125 at Churchtown on the 14th,

55 at Belmont Reservoir on the 17th and at least 40 at Abbeystead on the 14th. Numbers were generally lower in east Lancashire with peaks of 80 during the October migration period but low numbers thereafter.

## **BRAMBLING** *Fringilla montifringilla*

**Winters in variable numbers. Fairly common double passage migrant, mostly in autumn.**

In general, Bramblings were scarce in the first winter period, except for some sites in the West Pennine Moors and east Lancashire. The large roost in rhododendrons at Belmont held at least 750 birds on 1 Jan, dropping to fewer than 50 in February and then rising again to 150 on 11 March. Smaller numbers (approximately 20) roosted in conifers with a large roost of Chaffinches. Approximately 100 were in Roddlesworth Woods on 16 Feb and numbers at Higher Bullough Reservoir, Anglezarke peaked at 50 on 22 March.

In east Lancashire up to 120 were present in the Whalley Nab/Billington area from January to March, 60 at Sheddon Clough on 6 Feb and 50 at Cliviger Fishponds on the 20th. Ten were present at Marl Hill, 15 at Whitendale Farm, Dunsop Bridge and 20 were at Stonyhurst College on 14 March. At least 14 were at upper Hindburndale on 14 April but otherwise the species was very scarce in the north of the county. In the lowlands, there were hardly any records at all; just single records from the Fylde, MMWWT, Cuerden Valley Park, St. Helens, Allerton and Speke. The only exception to this was six at Mere Sands Wood in January.

A reasonable autumn passage preceded a marginally better winter for this bird in the lowland areas but numbers were down in central and eastern areas. Approximately 110 per hour

over Belmont on 20 Oct was by far the largest movement recorded; 74 passed over Heysham, eleven over Caton Moor and 14 over Fairhaven Lake. Seaforth recorded only one but regular watches at the old Garden Festival site at Otterspool recorded 20 individuals with a peak of at least eleven on 15 Oct.

During the second winter period, the roost at Belmont reformed with 40 on 11 Nov and a peak of 170 on the 25th but then dropping to 15 by 23 Dec. A flock of 100 was in Roddlesworth Woods on 17 Nov and small numbers were present at Rivington. Fifteen were at Marl Hill on 11 Nov and up to 25 were at Oakenclough up to the end of the year. Up to 40 were feeding on beech mast at Abbeystead on 26 Oct to 14 Nov and 16 were at Tower Lodge on the 9th. Flocks of 40 were at both Sheddon Clough and Cliviger Fishponds on 9 Nov.

In Childwall, five were feeding on beech mast on 21 Dec. There were a few more records from the Fylde with at least six different birds visiting New Lane feeding station and singles at Moss House Farm feeding station on five dates. However, sightings were still sparse with no more than three at any site.

### **GREENFINCH** *Carduelis chloris*

#### **Abundant breeding bird. Some autumn movement, flocks in winter.**

There were again few records of large flocks in the first winter period. Only three places on the Fylde recorded double-figure counts and five in St. Helens, none above 25. Seaforth held around 30 in the first part of the year and spring migration was a complete non-event. The only flocks of note in east Lancashire were of 80 at Sheddon Clough on 2 Jan with 60 still there in mid-February when there were also 37 at Lee Green Reservoir and 25 at Jackhouse Reservoir.

It was probably a better than average breeding season with regards to the numbers of pairs nesting. There were 14 territories on British Energy properties at Heysham and six at Warton Crag RSPB. At Rimrose Valley there were 23 territories, a rise of 50% but at Freshfield Dune Heath there was a drop to six pairs. Four pairs bred around Roby Mill, while Witton Park, Blackburn had three and two were recorded at Sunnyhurst Woods, Darwen. At least three post-breeding flocks of 40-50 were on the St. Helens mosses during July and August, while during August there were 80 on Downholland Moss on the 26th, at least 40 feeding on Oil Seed Rape at Oglet and over 40 left a roost in rhododendrons in Sefton Park. There were 57 at Higherford on 14 Sept.

Autumn passage was again quite good. A total of 1213 passed over Heysham in a steady stream between 22 Sept and 4 Nov with peaks of 75 on 30 Sept, 77 on 5 Oct, 83 on the 11th, 109 on the 14th, 89 on the 18th and 64 on the 25th. 134 flew over Caton Moor with a peak of 99 on 22 Sept and there was a significant passage of approximately 50 per hour over Belmont on 6 Oct. 2200 were recorded over Fairhaven with peaks of 186 on 1 Oct, 604 on the 6th, 265 on the 18th and 255 on the 20th. The largest counts at Seaforth were 92 on 18 Oct and 200 on the 21st

During this period there were a couple of large flocks on the Fylde with over 300 at New Lane, Pilling on 21 Sept, 300 at Ridge Farm on 18 Oct and 200 at Mythop the following day. Just one large flock was reported on Catchdale Moss numbering 100 birds on 24 Oct. At Marshside there were maxima of 200 feeding on Sea Radish seeds during October and November.

The second winter period was perhaps even quieter than the first. With flocks of 150 at Sheddon Clough on 26 Dec and 85 at Churchtown being by far the largest. Even garden feeders were missing out, although a count of 16 in Rishton was the highest there for some time.

## **GOLDFINCH** *Carduelis carduelis*

**Common breeding resident and passage migrant. Flocks in winter.**

This species was again very widespread throughout the first winter period though with very few large flocks. This could well be due to the lack of movement away from higher ground (as shown by a flock of up to 42 birds at Cant Clough throughout January and February and 40 at Slaidburn on 16 Feb) and the ever more frequent visiting of garden feeders across the county. A flock of 60 was at Ribchester on 27 Feb, 40 were at Eccleston St. Mary's Church on 8 Feb and a flock of 50 was at Heapey on 18 March. Only 64 were recorded during the Lancaster January survey.

Spring passage was far more noticeable than for the larger finches. A total of 113 was counted at Heysham with a peak of 45 on 12 April and 242 were recorded at Rossall Point between late March and mid-April with peaks of 43 on 31 March and 53 on the following day.

Breeding numbers were generally reported as good; five at Heysham NR, six at Lunt, eleven in Rimrose Valley and two each at Marshside and Sunnyhurst Woods, Darwen. Breeding was widespread across Liverpool and Southport and right into the central areas. The first juveniles were seen around 3 June.

A good number of post-breeding flocks started building up in number from mid to late July peaking in September with large numbers of juveniles indicating a fairly good breeding season. There were up to 120 at Marshside in August and 140 in September, 60 at MMWWT on 31 July, 210 on Downholland Moss on 26 Aug, over 200 at Cuerden Valley Park on 14 Aug (and later in October), 150 at Belmont throughout August, 150 at Middleton Industrial Estate and separate flocks of up to 50 at two mossland locations north of St. Helens in this period. Several flocks of up to 30 were seen on the Fylde but the largest were 70 at Normoss on 8 Aug and 90 at sites in Pilling on the 26 Aug and 8 Sept. At least 120 were at Oglet on 17 Aug, 130 at Garston on 10 Sept and 120 feeding on thistles (and later evening primrose) at Seaforth from late August and into October. There were post-breeding flocks of 60 at Sheddon Clough on 5 Aug, 65 at Wycollar on 27 Aug and over 50 in the Brookside area on 1 Sept.

There was a reasonable and steady passage of birds from the last week of September through to the end of October. Heysham recorded a total of 749 with peaks of 72 on 10 Oct and 90 on the 14th, Caton Moor a peak of 32 on 1 Oct in its total of 101, while Fairhaven's 312 included 183 on the 6th. Several large flocks were seen in east Lancashire during this period with the largest being 52 in the Jackhouse Reservoir area on 20 Sept, 85 at Champion Moor on 21 Sept, 59 at Gisburn Forest on 29 Oct and 50 at Townley Park on the 31st.

During the second winter period the large flocks fragmented and overall numbers dropped. The only numbers of note were 57 at Stalmine on 26 Dec, 40 at Mere Sands Wood and 49 at Garston on 25 Dec.

## **SISKIN** *Carduelis spinus*

**Uncommon recent breeding colonist. Common double passage migrant and winter visitor.**

This species was quite scarce in the first winter period but much commoner later in the year. To start with birds were generally reported in the low single figures apart from 40 at Leighton Moss on 22 Jan and two counts of 30 at Grainings Wood, Darwen and Spring Wood, Whalley, but there was a noticeable movement in early February. There were 40 at Eccleston Mere on the 4th (and two flocks totalling 70 on the 11th), 25 at Delph Plantations on 4th, 121 over Marton Mere and twelve north over Formby Point on the 5th and 60 at Wayoh Reservoir on the 8th. Feeding flocks in March included 40 at Cuerden Valley Park, 50 at Belmont on the 10th and 100 in the Dunsop Valley on the

10th. There was a much less noticeable spring movement involving numbers barely into double figures.

The only confirmed breeding records were single pairs at Belmont, Thrushgill and Hala, Lancaster although small numbers were seen in the summer months at Marl Hill, Moor Piece, Langden Valley, Sunnyhurst Woods, Gisburn Forest (where there were eight on 20 May), Rivington, Garston and Sefton Park, Liverpool.

Autumn passage was fairly strong with 542 south over Heysham between 8 Sept and 28 Oct peaking at 94 on 10 Oct and 93 on the 13th, 104 over Caton Moor, and 233 over Fairhaven with a peak of 119 on the 6th. The 6th was a good day at several sites at the coast and inland with, for example, 60 over Belmont and 40 at Clough Bottom Reservoir that day. Good numbers passed over Seaforth with peaks of 46 on the 13th and 226 on 15 Oct, and birds were regularly recorded over south Liverpool in flocks of up to 20 during the period. Fifty flew south over Cabin Hill, Formby on 27 Oct.

Far more were seen in the second winter period than in the first but they were still not particularly common. Up to 98 were present in alders in the Cottam/Ingol area at the end of December, 50 at Eccleston Mere on the 29th and 20 at Stanley Park on the 25th. There had hardly been any records at Brockholes all year but a flock of 100 on 9 Dec increased to around 200 by the 29th. There were four flocks of up to 20 birds in the Chorley area and 30 at both Leighton Moss and Haweswater on 29 Nov. In east Lancashire there were several reasonably sized flocks with the largest being 50 at Dean Clough on 25 Nov, 100 at Jackhouse Reservoir on 21 Dec, 70 at Lowerhouse Lodges on the 29th and Lomeshaye Marsh on the 30th and 50 at Rowley Lake on the 30th.

## **LINNET** *Carduelis cannabina*

**Common breeding resident. Double passage migrant, common winter flocks in the west.**

2007 was quite a good year for Linnets as increases in numbers were reported from most regions. There were several good counts in the north of the county with 60 at Halforth and up to 40 at both Aldcliffe and Cockersands in the first winter period. There were no records at all from the east of the county until 7 March.

There were several flocks numbering 20-35 on the Fylde at Warton Marsh, Myerscough, Cottam and Singleton but the largest were 62 at Eagland Hill on 10 Feb and 111 at Rawcliffe Moss on the 7th. Forty were at Marshside on 11 Feb, around 50 on Birkdale Green Beach on 14 Jan, 116 on Downholland Moss on 24 Jan, 70 at Wrightington on 7 Feb and 50 at Mere Sands Wood during January.

There were some good counts on the St. Helens mosses with peaks of 300 on Clare's Moss on 6 Jan, three flocks totalling 150 birds on Old Coach Road on the 13th and 150 on Dairy Farm Road on the 24th.

Spring migration was quite strong with 143 recorded at Heysham NR between 6 March and 8 May and 63 east over Crag Bank during a similar period. Over Rossall Point, 514 were recorded between 23 March and 28 April with a peak of 132 on the 1st. Inland peaks included 30 at Calderfoot on 1 April and 19 at Sunnyhurst Reservoir on the 7th.

Up to three pairs bred around Belmont, five in the Oswaldtwistle area, six at Lunt, four at MMWWT, nine at Marshside, four in Rimrose Valley, 20 at Freshfield Dune Heath, probably six pairs at Heysham NR and one or two pairs on Champion Moor, where fledglings were seen on 12 June.

Post-breeding flocks were much in evidence during August with 40 at Parsonage Reservoir on the 22nd, 50 or so at both Carnforth Slag Tips and Pilling, 80 at Lafford Lane, Up-Holland, 100

at Rainford, over 120 at Oglet and 200 at Singleton. In some places numbers increased further in September before the main autumn passage period, the most notable of these being 160 at Swinden Reservoir on the 16th and 170 at Marton Mere on the 23rd.

Autumn visible migration watches produced 182 south over Heysham NR between 22 Sept and 27 Oct, with a peak of 44 on 1 Oct, 158 over Caton Moor between 17 July and 19 Oct with a peak of 24 on 5 Oct and 435 over Fairhaven with a peak of 167 on 6 Oct. During this period feeding flocks included 60 at Conder Green and 27 Sept and 89 at Rossall Point on 2 Oct.

Numbers dropped off quickly in the east of the county and the last record of the year was on 13 Nov. Meanwhile, winter flocks started to build at Windle Hall, St. Helens (200 by 25 Dec), New Lane, Pilling (121 on 22 Nov), Bank End (150 on 9 Dec), Plex Moss (135 on 23 Nov) and Hoscar Moss (135 on 23 Dec). There were also flocks of 80-100 at Croston Finney, New Lane, Crossens, and Garston shore.

### **TWITE** *Carduelis flavirostris*

**Scarce and decreasing breeder. Winters on some coasts.**

Generally very low numbers were seen in the first winter period. The peak at the winter feeding station at Cant Clough was only 15 on 23 Jan, whilst at the well-watched Heysham feeding station there were only five birds (two ringed in winter 2003/4, one in winter 2004/5 and one in autumn 2005). Up to five were seen above Belmont at the end of January.

A flock on the haul road of Marshside's saltmarsh reached 40 on 4 Feb and 30 on stubble on Longton Marsh during February were noted as unusual for the site. Other winter flocks of note were 60 at New Ridge Farm, Pilling on 22 Feb, 60 at Fluke Hall on 16 March, 50 at Aldcliffe, 25 at both Sunderland Point and Fishcalding Point and 30 at Preesall on 17 March.

There were very few records during the breeding season. A maximum of two were seen at Cant Clough in May and June and up to three were seen on six dates on Darwen Moor – Sunnyhurst Reservoir.

Birds reappeared at Cant Clough during August, when numbers reached 33 on the 19th and increased to about 60 by 27 Sept, after which they settled to around 40 for the rest of the year. A pair was seen on Haslingden Moor on 26 Aug and two birds were at Upper Coldwell Reservoir on 18 Sept.

Near the coast, the first birds were seen in early October with 19 at Cocker's Dyke, Preesall on the 14th being the first significant number. There were 35 on Crossens Out Marsh on 30 Oct and 40 came in off the sea at Starr Gate on the 25th. Numbers built up to 80 at Cocker's Dyke by the end of December when there were up to 70 at Knott End and 50 at Pilling. There was an influx of at least 34 unringed first-winter birds as well as five ringed adults at Heysham. One final interesting record was a flock of over 40 including six West Yorkshire-ringed birds at the Deer Pond, Burnley on 12 Nov.

### **LESSER REDPOLL** *Carduelis cabaret*

**Fairly common but decreasing breeding bird. Common double passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Most correspondents record this species as declining both in winter and as a breeding bird. During the first winter period there were few large flocks, the exceptions being 43 at Moor Piece on 12 Jan, 20-30 at Eccleston Mere from January to 3 March, 30 at Bold Moss on 24 Jan and 24 at Anglezarke on the 21st. There were only about ten other flocks of around 10-15 with hardly any birds on the Fylde.

Spring passage was extremely quiet with just 30 over Rossall Point during April, 18 over Marshside on 6 April and 14 over Heysham; 35 were on Hesketh Golf Course on 7 April. Further inland during March, there were flocks of up to 20 birds at five sites in east Lancashire and five in the Lancaster area.

Redpolls are quite easy to spot in the breeding season as they proclaim their territory with high-flying song flight. Singing males were recorded at Tarbock, St. Helens (five), Anglezarke (six), Rivington (three), White Coppice, Beacon Fell (three), Grisedale Valley (two), Scorton (two), Moor Piece, Birk Bank, Marshaw, Tower Lodge, Cross of Greet and the Langden Valley. Breeding was confirmed at Whalley Nab, Sunnyhurst Woods, Belmont (at least four pairs) and Glasson Dock.

A post-breeding flock at Moor Piece reached 54 by 29 Sept and 31 were in the Jackhouse Reservoir area on the 7th. However, by far the largest flocks were recorded in October when there were approximately 200 at Stocks Reservoir on the 13th and 150 at Beacon Fell on the 24th.

Autumn visible migration was stronger than in spring, including a total of 83 over Heysham NR between mid-September and late October with a peak of 30 on 10 Oct, just 16 over Fairhaven and five over Caton Moor. Seaforth recorded single-figure counts on eleven days up to mid-October and then 182 on 15 Oct and 17 on the 24th. Elsewhere in the county, counts were rarely more than four. There was little indication that there were any significant numbers of Common Redpolls in amongst the migrating flocks.

Second winter numbers were very poor, the largest being in the north and east with 36 at Thrushgill in November and 30 at Stocks Reservoir throughout.

## **MEALY (COMMON) REDPOLL** *Carduelis flammea*

### **Scarce winter visitor**

Very few records this year. Two were at Black Coppice, Chorley on 7 April and one was at Seaforth on 22 Oct.

## **CROSSBILL** *Loxia curvirostra*

### **Rare breeding bird. Occasional irruptive movements.**

The start of the year was very quiet with the only records being one at Stocks Reservoir on 1 Jan and a female at Thrushgill on 6 April. An adult female was trapped out of the blue at Heysham NR on 15 April.

In the immediate post-breeding period of May to July there was a smattering of records; four were in Dunsop Valley on 30 May, five in Gisburn Forest on 9-11 June, two at Stocks Reservoir on 22 July and 'small flocks' on several occasions in the Belmont Plantations. In August there four were at Thrushgill on the 5th and singles over Brockholes Quarry on the 16th and 26th. The largest count during September was 30 at Longridge Fell on the 30th.

There was some significant numbers around in October: a single over Caton Moor on the 2nd, six at Thrushgill on the 3rd, nine high over Heysham NR on the 5th and two over on the 18th, 20 at Slipper Lowe, Roddlesworth on the 5th and 6th, two at Prescot Reservoirs on the 15th, 18 at Gisburn Forest on the 29th and 30 at Longridge Fell on the 10th.

Thirty were feeding in moorland plantations at Anglezarke on 4 Nov, 14 at Beacon Fell on the 1st (with lower numbers into December) while numbers at Thrushgill reached 29 on the 2nd. Two to three were seen regularly at Stocks Reservoir to the end of the year and over 11 were in plantations at Belmont on 30 Dec; three were at Champion Moor on 17 Dec and two at Barley on the 26th. A single bird flew north over Lifeboat Road, Formby on 11 Dec.

**COMMON ROSEFINCH\*** *Carpodacus erythrinus***Vagrant**

A singing first-summer male was an unexpected visitor to a garden feeder at Pilling Lane on 30 May (P Rhind *et al*). This was the fourth Lancashire record following on from two first-winter birds in the autumn of 1992 and a singing adult male in June 1999.

**BULLFINCH** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula***Common breeding resident.**

Bullfinches have been relatively uncommon in the past and so tend to be recorded when they are encountered. The species seems to be becoming more frequent in virtually all areas of the county but with at least 95% of the records involving no more than three individuals from any particular site. Over the year, the species was seen at ten sites in south Liverpool, ten in St. Helens and nine across the Fylde (where it is still most prevalent along the A6 corridor). In none of these areas were more than four recorded.

Larger counts during the first winter period were six at Alkincotes Park, Colne on 14 Jan, six at Stocks Reservoir on the 21st, nine at Lower Darwen on the 28th, seven in Burnley on 15 March and six at Bottoms Beck on 20 March. Ten remained in Gisburn Forest on 20 May.

There were at least ten breeding territories in the Rivington – Anglezarke area, five in the Belmont area, two at Witton Park, Blackburn, Longton Brickcroft and several sites in east Lancashire. There were 17 pairs on Warton Crag RSPB (close to the all time high), three at Heysham NR, three at Arkholme, two at Gressingham and one at Wrayton.

There was a significant autumn movement of birds over Heysham, where 50 flew south during October peaking at 20 on the 14th. A male at Marshside on 18 Sept was unusual for that site and three were in the Rimrose Valley on 6 Oct. Nine were at Jackhouse Reservoir on 19 Aug and 13 were in Gisburn Forest on 24 Oct, while up to six fed on heather seed at Belmont in late December.

**HAWFINCH** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes***Rare and localised breeding resident.**

2006 One was seen near Pleasington, Blackburn on 22 Dec.

2007 The Silverdale area is still really the only place you have a chance to catch up with this species in Lancashire. Up to five birds were seen in Woodwell (January to April and then again from October) and two in Bottom's Wood on 26 April.

A single bird was seen flying south-east from Bashall Moor Wood towards Braddup Wood at Moor Piece on 28 Aug.

**SNOW BUNTING** *Plectrophenax nivalis***Fairly common winter visitor to summits and coasts.**

Few were seen during the first winter period: one was on the county boundary at Bowland Knotts above Stocks Reservoir on 1 Jan and a male was on Pendle Hill on five dates between 5 Jan and 24 Feb.

In autumn, there were fly-over records from Fairhaven on 6 Oct (two) and Rossall Point on 24 & 27 Oct.

In the second winter period two birds were at Birkdale Green Beach on 3 Nov and probably the same two at Ainsdale on 9 Nov. They were joined by another three birds on the 12th and yet another on the 15th to 18th and up to three were still present up to 2 Dec.

Four birds were on Pendle Hill on 12 Nov. A female turned up at the Ringstone Lane area of Tatham Fells on 16 Nov and stayed until 15 Dec, briefly joined on the 9th by two others.

A male was trapped at Heysham on 21 Nov and another male was at Fluke Hall, Pilling from 29 Nov to 2 Dec.

## **YELLOWHAMMER** *Emberiza citrinella*

**Fairly common but decreasing resident, mostly in the south. Scarce autumn passage migrant.**

Monthly maxima at sites on the Fylde

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bradshaw												
Lane Head	11	18	31	9	/	1	1	1	/	2	9	11
Eagland Hill	11	14	22	3	1	/	1	3	/	/	2	30
Moss House Farm,												
Rawcliffe Moss	10	8	10	5	2	1	5	1	4	11	1	15

There is still a reducing trend in the numbers of Yellowhammers reported on the Fylde as the table above indicates, and where only eleven sites reported singing males. In the Lancaster district there were no singing birds on the Lancashire side of the border and further reductions on the Cumbrian side, but a male was still present a little further south at Barnacre Reservoir between February and August.

Things seem to be a little better south of the Ribble. At least 14 males were singing at five sites to the south-east of Liverpool with the highest concentration around Tarbock in Knowsley, while in St. Helens there were up to seven singing males along Berrington's Lane, Rainford, four on Old Coach Road and a further 15 at another eight sites. Up to three birds were in the Billinge area and territories were held in Lydiate and Aughton.

Pairs bred at Rufford and Much Hoole, where there were five singing males. Two singing males were at Roby Mill and several were on Croston Moss as well as at five other sites in the Bretherton-Leyland-Chorley area. For the first time, no birds were seen at all on the dunes between Formby and Freshfield. Also, there were no records at all from east Lancashire.

Outside the breeding season and away from the well documented Fylde sites there were flocks of 21 along Station Road, Plex Moss on 6 Jan, five at Hic Bibi on 15 Feb, at least ten at Ulnes Walton on 26 Oct and 18 at Croston Moss on 30 Dec. Numbers at Rainford peaked at 33 on 27 Oct whilst there were flocks up to 30 on Dairy Farm Road in both winter periods and 37 in Sankey Valley on 26 Feb. In the north of the county, records of roving or passage birds comprised singles at Brookhouse on 10 Feb, Heysham on 27 Sept, Lancaster on 13 Oct and Bolton-le-Sands on 2 Nov.

## **REED BUNTING** *Emberiza schoeniclus*

**Common breeding bird and winter visitor. Double passage migrant.**

Numbers remained relatively low in the first winter period although widespread single figures were reported. Up to 100 were counted at the Mere Sands Wood roost early in the year. There were between 21 and 49 at Brownsills, Great Harwood throughout January and February, 39 at Eagland Hill on 21 Feb and flocks of 30 at New Lane, Pilling on 6 Feb, Downholland Moss on 24 Feb, Barnaby's Sands on 21 Jan and Dairy Farm Road, St. Helens from 13 Jan to 10 Feb. Early singing males were noted at Eccleston Mere on 11 Feb and Brownsills on the 18th.

Many breeding records were received from every corner of the county. There were at least 13 territories to the south of Liverpool, three pairs bred at Seaforth, 13 in the Rimrose Valley, five

at Lunt, eight at Marshside, two on Crossens Marsh and at Mere Sands Wood and 67 at MMWWT. Six singing males were at Prescot Reservoir from 26 Feb and four at Ecclestone Mere.

There were 23 breeding territories at Brockholes Quarry, nine pairs around Belmont Reservoir, three in plantations near Belmont, four on Oswaldtwistle Moor and one to two at nine other east Lancashire sites. The breeding population on the United Utilities Bowland Estate increased from 15 territories in 2006 to 17 in 2007.

There were eleven territories on the Leck Beck to Arkholme Viaduct section of the Lune, the same as in 2006 with 14 on the Arkholme to Wenning Foot section. On the Middleton Industrial Estate there were good numbers and two pairs were at Heysham NR. At least 50 pairs were reported from over twenty Fylde sites, including eight pairs at Marton Mere.

Several largish flocks formed during the autumn passage period, including 25 at Clowbridge Reservoir and 28 at Moss House Farm on 30 Sept, 15 at Belmont on 21 Oct and 17 at Champion Moor on 24 Oct. Visible migration counts at Heysham totalled a rather paltry 42 with a peak of seven on 7 Oct, whilst just 23 were recorded over Caton Moor. Fairhaven fared better with 175 (101 on 6 Oct and 24 on the 7th). At Leighton Moss, 179 of the 194 birds ringed during 2007 were trapped in this period.

Numbers in the second winter period were even lower than earlier in the year with the maximum counts being 35 at Sheddon Clough on 16 Nov, 20 at Marl Hill on 9 Dec, 30 at Belmont Reservoir from 11 Nov, 25 on Garston Shore on 25 Dec and 20 on Dairy Farm Road on 15 Dec. Far fewer birds were recorded on the Fylde with only two counts scraping into double-figures.

## **CORN BUNTING** *Emberiza calandra*

### **Common breeding bird in the south-west and Fylde.**

Monthly maxima at sites on the Fylde

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bradshaw												
Lane Head	18	46	60	41	/	/	1	1	/	2	19	35
Clifton Marsh	40	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	25	/
Eagland Hill	/	200	146	30	19	2	/	5	/	/	17	17
Newton Marsh	/	/	/	45	6	/	/	/	/	36	40	6
Moss House Farm, Rawcliffe Moss	15	12	60	39	7	4	1			15	15	4

There weren't so many large flocks around this year with the bulk of first winter period sightings on the Fylde coming from the Eagland Hill feeding stations as can be seen from the table above. Seventy were perched on cables at Peel on 8 Jan. Numbers along Dairy Farm Road, St. Helens increased from single figures in January to ten on 8 March, 32 on 7 April and 60 on 8 May. A count of 102 in January was the peak on Downholland Moss, while 73 were perched in one dead tree along Back Lane, Thornton on 24 April and ten were on Curlew Lane, Rufford on 15 Feb. On the coast, a single bird was at Marshside on 12 Feb and two were at Crosby Marine Park dunes.

Singing males were recorded at eleven sites in St. Helens during the spring and summer but only at Speke south of Liverpool. Males were singing at Much Hoole (two), Midge Hall (two), Longton Marsh (four), Curlew Lane (four), Croston (two), Ecclestone, MMWWT and at least 20 across the Fylde.

An unusually large late summer flock of 126 was on Downholland Moss on 18 Sept. Otherwise, birds remained scattered until they started to congregate at the feeding stations and other sites such as 85 on Hoscar Moss on 31 Dec and 110 on Curlew Lane on the 17th. Four birds reappeared on the dunes at Crosby Marine Park in the second winter period.

## ESCAPES

### **TRUMPETER SWAN** *Cygnus buccinator*

An adult was on the Ribble near the Hodder confluence at Great Mitton on at least 23-29 April.

### **BLACK SWAN** *Cygnus atratus*

Two were on Southport Marine Lake throughout the year. Singles elsewhere may have related to just one bird: at Fairhaven on 6 March, Warton Marsh on 7 & 20 March and MMWWT on 21 March.

### **BAR-HEADED GOOSE** *Anser indicus*

Single(s) were with Greylags at Scarisbrick on 6 & 10 Jan, MMWWT during the second week of January, Hesketh Bank on 22-24 Jan, Leighton Moss on 9-28 May and Brockholes Quarry on 17 June.

### **LESSER WHITE-FRONTED x GREYLAG GOOSE**

One was at Barnaby's Sands and Aggleby's Pit in north Fylde on 14 & 20 Oct.

### **ROSS'S x PINK-FOOTED GOOSE**

One was with Pinkfeet at Eagland Hill on 9-10 Oct, Cumming Carr on the 15th and MMWWT on the 18th.

### **ROSS'S GOOSE** *Anser rossi*

A white adult was with Pinkfeet at MMWWT on 18 Oct and Plex Moss on 11 Nov.

### **LESSER CANADA GOOSE** *Branta hutchinsii*

One, thought to be minima, was on Fairhaven Lake on 11 June to 20 July, at Freckleton Naze on 21 Aug and Banks Marsh on the 26th.

### **RED-BREASTED GOOSE** *Branta ruficollis*

The usual bird was seen irregularly at MMWWT until at least 18 Feb and returned there on 3 Nov, being seen occasionally to the year's end. The same bird was at Knowsley Park/Prescot Reservoirs from at least 3 March to 25 Sept, indulging in a short excursion to Eccleston Mere on 21 Aug.

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

Single(s) were at Mere Sands Wood on 27 Jan, with feral Greylags at Hesketh Bank during January and February and Leighton Moss between 29 March and 28 Aug.

### **SHELDUCK HYBRIDS**

A Shelduck x Cape Shelduck was at Mythop on 7 April and Stanley Park, Blackpool the following day; and a Shelduck x Ruddy Shelduck was at MMWWT in the third week of October.

### **MUSCOVY DUCK** *Cairina moschata*

One was in the Jackhouse area on 21 Jan.

**WOOD DUCK** *Aix sponsa*

A female was seen at Mere Sands Wood on 6 April, an adult and a juvenile on 12 May and a pair on 25 Oct.

**RINGED TEAL** *Callonetta leucophrys*

The usual male was at Stanley Park, Fairhaven Lake and other south Fylde sites for at least the first nine months of the year.

**CHILOE WIGEON** *Anas sibilatrix*

A male was at Stanley Park and Mythop during February to April.

**RED-CRESTED POCHARD** *Netta rufina*

A female was at Brockholes Quarry on 5-15 May with presumably the same bird at Leighton Moss on the 15th.

**FERRUGINOUS DUCK** *Aythya nyroca*

A colour-ringed male was at Leighton Moss on 11-15 Jan and 7 Feb.

Female Ferruginous x Pochard hybrids were at MMWWT on 27 Oct, Brockholes Quarry on 19 Nov and Pine Lake on 30 Nov.

**GOLDEN PHEASANT** *Chrysolophus pictus*

The orange-ringed male was again seen frequently with chickens at Woods Brow, Samlesbury, a female was at Delph Reservoir from January to June and up to nine released birds were near Belmont from autumn onwards.

**TURKEY** *Meleagris gallipavo*

A male and three females from 2006 were associating with Pheasants in Belmont Plantations with four nests found by gamekeepers between June to September, one of which contained 28 eggs. One successfully raised nine young and at least ten birds were present until the end of the year.

**HELMETED GUINEAFOWL** *Numida meleagris*

Two or more were seen intermittently at Delph Reservoir throughout the year.

**SAKER** *Falco cherrug*

One, aged as a juvenile, was eating a Red-legged Partridge on Churchtown Moss, Southport on 9 November. A 'probable' was seen in flight in St. Helens on 18 Dec.

**HARRIS'S HAWK** *Parabuteo unicinctus*

One wearing a bell and jesses was at Croston on 4 January. Further singles were in St. Helens town centre and at Prescot Reservoir during January to May, August and December, Crossens on 26 March, a garden in Ainsdale in mid-May and Banks Marsh on 27-29 Aug.

**BLUE AND GOLD MACAW** *Ara ararauna*

One was at Belmont Reservoir on 29 August.

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

As with Mandarin, despite increasing numbers, there is still no evidence that a self-sustaining population exists in the county.

The two largest flocks were up to five at garden feeders in Skelmersdale throughout the year and up to eight at Lytham Crematorium during the last three months. Elsewhere, singles were at Lathom House, near Burscough on 4 Feb and 25 March, MMWWT on 8 June, on garden feeders at Astley, Chorley on 23 June to 6 July, Croston on 19 July, Jackhouse on 20 Aug, central Liverpool on 11 Sept and Fluke Hall on 30 Sept.

**EASTERN ROSELLA** *Platycercus eximius*

One was found during the atlas survey in SD53G on 17 Dec.

**COCKATIEL** *Nyphicus hollandicus*

One was in Woolton, south Liverpool during November.

**EAGLE OWL** *Bubo bubo*

The successful breeding of a pair in Whitendale produced much excitement in some circles – and not a little controversy. The origin of the birds is unknown but it seems likely that they were the same pair that had nested unsuccessfully in 2006, the female of which was believed to have escaped from Garth Prison and present in Bowland since 2005. Three young fledged and were present until mid-July at least. Inspection of the nest site after the birds had left revealed the corpse of a female Hen Harrier as well as other prey (mostly rabbits). Rumours circulating amongst twitchers that further pairs were nesting in Bowland and elsewhere in north Lancashire were without foundation.

Elsewhere, singles were seen in Layton, Fylde on 26 March and gardens in Maghull on 9 April, Preston (sometime in April) and Ainsdale on 10 May.

**ZEBRA FINCH** *Poephilla or Taeniopygia guttata*

One was at Waterside Farm, Fylde on 26 May.

## Lancashire Ringing Report 2007 – 08

*P.J.Marsh*

As usual, this report straddles two half-years with all recoveries reported up until 10 August 2008 included. It contains some fascinating recoveries, many of them due to the efforts of ring-readers. This is a dedicated task (it took me an hour to read the middle number on a metal-ringed Canada Goose the other day – no bread with me!) and we are really grateful to John Wood, Bill Aspin, Tony Disley, Jon Carter, Stephen Dunstan, Derek Forshaw, Stuart Piner, Mark Prestwood, Chris Batty, Richard du Feu, Ian Hartley, John Wilson and the Seaforth birders. Thanks also to the ringing groups for their recovery lists – it does seem as though the weather in 2007 (and presumably also this year, e.g. a complete blank on Sand Martins on the Lune) mitigated against extensive mist-netting and this is reflected in few passerine recoveries/controls other than from the sheltered reedbed/scrub at Leighton Moss

Please note that digital photographs of metal or distant darvic-ringed birds can often be blown up and deciphered. Please try and take as many photographs of ringed birds as possible so that hopefully all the numbers can be assembled. This particularly applies to scarce species where they may be traceable from an address and the first or last two or three numbers. In this respect, it may be very helpful on a partly-read bird to note the age as this can obviously narrow down the ring number possibilities. Thanks in anticipation of some success.

Please also alert us to any ringing recoveries where you have obtained the details yourself – otherwise we may never hear about them. Tide line seabirds especially come to mind – important in a Lancs. context but routine as regards the national picture. Thanks once again.

Please forward records to Pete Marsh, Leck View Cottage, Ashley's Farm, High Tatham, Lancaster LA2 8PH or text 07989866487 or e-mail [pbmarsh@btopenworld.com](mailto:pbmarsh@btopenworld.com)

### Abbreviations

3J = juvenile

3 = 1st winter (to 31/12)

5 = 2nd calendar year

4 = adult (to 31/12), not aged (after 31/12)

2 = not aged (prior to 31/12)

M = male

F = female

### **Pale-bellied Brent Goose**

Colour rings	De la Beche Bay, Bathurst Island, CANADA	3M	08.08.07
Read in field	mainly north Heysham foreshore		4.11.07-9.04.08
Colour rings	De La Beche Bay, Bathurst Island, CANADA	3F	08.08.07
Read in field	Hightown		15.02.08

The first ringing records involving PBB. The ringing site is in the high Arctic. There is now a large flock of Pale-bellied Brents wintering in the Walney Island area and future winter residency in Lancashire is a real possibility. The first bird was probably present from mid-October.

**Cormorant**

CFA	Abberton Reservoir		25.02.07
Read in field	Seaforth Nature Reserve		04.08.07
5235831	Puffin Island, Anglesey	Pullus	24.06.06
Found dead	Seaforth Nature Reserve		February 2007
CEN	Puffin Island, Anglesey	Pullus	23.06.07
Read in field	Seaforth Nature Reserve		13.10.07
CCE	Puffin Island, Anglesey	Pullus	24.06.06
Read in field	Freckleton Naze		02.08.08

**Gannet**

Unknown	Scar Rocks, Dumfries and Galloway	Pullus	14.06.87
Found dead	Formby	163km	15.08.07

**Bittern**

1291702 & 03	Leighton Moss	Pulli	08.05.00
Read in field	Leighton Moss		27.09.07 & 01.10.07

At least one of these was still present in early August 2008.

**Grey Heron**

1287227	Keckwick, Runcorn, Cheshire	Pullus	25.04.99
Found dead	Lytham		08.02.07

**Osprey**

13379 13/6A	Dunkeld, Perthshire	Pullus	14.07.01
Breeding	Aberfoyle, central Scotland		2005-2007
Read in field	Brockholes Quarry		06.04.08
CR HW	Fortrose, Black Isle (Highlands)	1M	5.07.06
Sighted	Leighton Moss		13.08.08

**Oystercatcher**

FP19545	Heysham Heliport	8	01.02.06
Controlled	Arkholme		20.03.08

This bird was cannon-netted as part of a pre-breeding season assembly on the Lune floodplain and therefore presumably a local breeding bird.

**Little Ringed Plover**

Colour rings	Nosterfield Quarry, Masham, North Yorkshire	5	29.05.03
Read in field	Myerscough Quarry,		25.06.07

## Ringed Plover

NW23526 Snettisham, Norfolk Pullus 16.07.04  
 Read in field Cockersand 251km 30.09.07

On the way to or already at the prospective wintering site within the British Isles?

## Knot

XR48815 Heysham heliport 5 14.02.98  
 Controlled Alert Ellesmere Island CANADA 82 30N 62 30W 3769km  
 on nest 04.06.07

7697969 & CR Schleswig-Holstein GERMANY 54 22N 8 27E 6 26.07.03  
 Read in field Heysham heliport 751km 20/01/07

Z023518 Simonszand, Groningen,  
 NETHERLANDS 53 30N 6 22E 6 29.10.03

Sighted Heysham heliport 613km 18.02.08

Y7YYWR De Richel, NETHERLANDS 53 16N 5.08W 4 25.07.01

Sighted Indre Billefjord, NORWAY 70 21N 25 03E 25.05.04

Sighted Heysham heliport 637km 31.03.08

R8RWWW De Richel, NETHERLANDS 4 05.10.05

Sighted Texel, NETHERLANDS 53 09N 04.53E 22.7 - 13.8.06

Sighted Tromso, NORWAY 69 41N 18 54 E 2006

Sighted Wad Zuiden van Griend, NETHERLANDS 53 14N 5 16E 08.10.07

Sighted Heysham Heliport 23.02.08

R8RWYB De Richel 4 05.10.05

Sighted Wad Zuiden van Griend, NETHERLANDS 53 14N 5 16E 28.10.05

Sighted Wad Zuiden 09.10.07

Sighted Heysham 17.02.08

R2RWRV De Richel 4 29.07.03

Sighted Terschelling NETHERLANDS 53 21N 05.13E 5 & 9.10.03

Sighted Rond het eiland Griend, NETHERLANDS 09.07.04

Sighted Terschelling 21 & 22 09.05

Sighted Terschelling 31.7-3.9 07

Sighted Heysham (Ocean Edge) 26.03.08

G5RWRW De Richel 4 10.10.07

Sighted Heysham heliport 21.03.08

R3RBBB De Richel 4 01.08.03

Sighted Heysham heliport 23.03.08

R7RRYR Simonszand, NETHERLANDS 53 29N 6 24E 4 02.09.05

Sighted Kollafjordur, ICELAND 64 12N 21 43W 14.05.07

Sighted Heysham 15.03.08

G7RYYW Simonszand 4 24.08.06

Sighted Heysham Heliport 24.2-23.3.08

R7BBRR	Simonszand	4	05.09.05
Sighted	Heysham		19.03.08
G6GRRY	Schelswig Holstein, GERMANY 54 23N 8 39W	4	18.05.07
Sighted	Heysham heliport		21.03.08

Every so often we publish a species in detail. These colour-ringed/flagged birds reveal that Canadian/Greenland Knot move via Iceland and the Norwegian coast to moult in the Waddensee area before heading north-west to British estuaries for the winter. The Tromso sighting also indicates that some spring movements also involve the Norwegian Arctic coast and this bird is not thought to be from the Siberian population! There is no evidence of any Knot from the Siberian population passing through and certainly not wintering in Morecambe Bay, although a Great Knot sighting on the Wyre suggests that a few passage birds may occur.

### Black-tailed Godwit

About 20 colour-ringed birds of the Icelandic race were reported during the year. Here are some of the more interesting ones for this highly nomadic species:

WW-RX	Alftafjörður, E Iceland	4F	03.05.03
Seen	Pilling		26.02.04
Seen	Marshside		28.12.04
Seen	Mersey Estuary		04.02.05
Seen	Dee Estuary		15.10-23.11.05
Seen	Newton Marsh, Preston		24.04.06
Seen	Humber Estuary		July.06
Seen	Dee Estuary		03.11.06
Seen	Welney, Ouse Washes		06.04.07
Seen	Killingholme, Humber Estuary		12.08-5.10.07
Seen	Hest Bank		23.12.07

Note that this Icelandic-ringed bird was seen at two of the very few British breeding sites for the nominate form in spring 2006/7!

WY-GO	Langhús, Fljót, N ICELAND		16.06.02
Seen	Leidschendam, Zuid Holland, W NETHERLANDS		2.3-3.4.03
Seen	Langhús, Fljót, N ICELAND		29.06.03
Seen	Breydon Water, Norfolk		31.12.03 - 23.2.04
Seen	Soulaire-et-Bourg, Maine-et-Loire, NW FRANCE		24.2-1.3.05
Seen	R. Ijssel, Overijssel, C NETHERLANDS		9.3.05
Seen	Workumer Buitewaard, Friesland, N NETHERLANDS		28.3-30.3.05
Seen	R. Ijssel, Overijssel, C NETHERLANDS		10.4.05
Seen	Belvide Reservoir, Staffordshire		27.7.06
Seen	Leidschendam, Zuid Holland, W NETHERLANDS		18.4.07
Seen	Seaforth Nature Reserve, Liverpool		10.8-15.8.07
WN-RR	Bolungarvik, ICELAND	Pullus	5.7-8.8.05
Sighted	Caerlaverock, Dumfries & Galloway		28.08.05

Sighted	Leighton Moss area		24.11.05
Sighted	Cork Harbour, IRELAND		18.12.05
Sighted	Leighton Moss area		30.09.06
Sighted	Wirral, Cheshire		17.11.06 - 11.2.07
Sighted	Onundarfjorour, ICELAND		4.5-9.5.07
Sighted	Dee Estuary		24.10.07
Sighted	Marshside, Ribble Estuary		25.01.08
Sighted	Morecambe		04.03.08
Sighted	Leighton Moss area		14.3-26.03.08
Sighted	Holmere Tarn, Yealand		21.03.08 & 10.04.08
Sighted	Leighton Moss area		19.04.08
LN-0R	Gillastadir, ICELAND	4F	30.06.05
Sighted	Nr Badajoz, Estremadura, SPAIN		19.01.06
Sighted	Inner Marsh Farm, Dee Estuary		28.05.06
Sighted	Marshside		24 & 25.1.08
Sighted	Heswall, Dee Estuary		18 & 20.2.08
Sighted	Claughton, Lune Valley		13.04.08
Sighted	Leighton Moss area		19.04.08

### Bar-tailed Godwit

DN14904	Ribble Marshes NNR, Lancashire	5F	22.05.85
Found dead	Granny's Bay, Lytham St. Annes (21 yrs 303 days)		21.03.07

This was quite a youngster – the oldest on the BTO list was 32 years 18 days!

### Redshank

DD11337	Levington Lagoon, Suffolk (TM2338)	4	10.02.08
Read in field	River Orwell (various sites)		to 04.04.08
Read in field	Leighton Moss		25.06.08
SE025727	Bolton Abbey, North Yorkshire	Pullus	25.05.02
Controlled	Conder Green		25.10.07
DR96467	Taff Estuary, Glamorgan	4	21.10.94
Read in field	Eric Morecambe Pools		28.06.99
Sighted	Eric Morecambe Pools		26.07.07

The first was presumably breeding somewhere near Leighton.

### Greenshank

Colour-rings	Tarty, Aberdeen	3	6.9.07
Read in field	Various sites, Ythan estuary area		8.9.07 - 6.10.07
Read in field	Mullanasole, Inner Donegal Bay, IRELAND		12.11.07 & 14.02.08
Read in field	Inch Geck, Ythan Estuary		5.4.08
Read in field	Leighton Moss & area		21.6.08 to, at least, 10.8.08

This bird obviously wintered in Donegal Bay in 2007/8 and moulted at Leighton Moss during early autumn 2008. Will it return to Donegal in winter 2008-9 and will this be via a mid/late autumn on the Ythan – the latter surely ‘illogical’?

## Turnstone

ISR756635	Hafurbjarnarstastadir, Midnes, ICELAND	4	22.05.03
Long dead	Crosby	1619km	03.02.07

## Mediterranean Gull

Arnhem

3651898	De Kreupel, NETHERLANDS 52 48N 51 4E	Pullus	07.07.07
Read in field	Heysham outfalls		1-2.09.07

Czech Republic

EX78711	Chomoutov, Olomoucky, CZECH REPUBLIC	Pullus	3.6.03
Read in field	Heysham Harbour and area		24.8.03-26.3.04
	Heysham harbour and area		22.7.04-9.3.05
	Heysham Harbour and area		20.7.05-6.3.06
	Heysham harbour and area		8.7.06-6.3.07
	Heysham harbour and area		4.8.07 to 9.3.08
	Heysham harbour and area		from 12.07.08

In addition, the Belmont Reservoir-ringed EL51799/2A33, which wintered on Sao Miguel, Azores from 12.11.06 to 29.03.07, returned there on 30.11.07. No further details available on this bird. Distance from Belmont = 2,508km SW

## Black-headed Gull

AA3837/NTX	Hellerup Havn, Gentofte, DENMARK 55.44N 12.35E		Ad 18.03.05
Read in field	Teal Bay, Morecambe		30.09.07 & 14.10.07
6H0328/RZP	Copenhagen DENMARK 55 43N 12 35E	Ad	10.03.06
Read in field	Teal Bay, Morecambe		14.10.07

Presumably involving changes from natal to breeding site were adults found dead at Belmont Reservoir which had been ringed as pulli at Fisher Tarn (Kendal) in 1996 and Upper Barden Reservoir (North Yorkshire) in 1997

## Common Gull

5154417/J275	Tussan, Nordland, NORWAY 68 09N 13 33E	Ad	31.07.05
Read in field	Fishmoor Reservoir, Blackburn		12.01.08

## Herring Gull

GF31314	Stoke Orchard landfill site, Gloucestershire	27.02.06	
Read in field	Hempsted landfill site, Gloucestershire		02.03.06
Read in field	Hempsted landfill site, Gloucestershire		15.06.06
Read in field	Teal Bay, Morecambe		08.09.07
Read in field	Hempsted landfill site, Gloucestershire		27.03.08
Read in field	Teal Bay, Morecambe		07.08.08

## Kittiwake

6212012	Karoy (Rost) NORWAY 67 30N 12 05 E	Pullus	07.07.06
Found dead	Heysham harbour wall		30.09.07

## Common Tern

Colour rings	Doffcocker Lodge, Bolton	Pullus	13.6.07
Read in field	Seaforth		11.7.07

## Guillemot

R70642	Castle Craig, North Sutor, Highland	Pullus	24.06.06
Found dead	Ainsdale		19.11.06

## Barn Owl

GN22706	Tarlsough, Lancashire	Pullus	04.07.00
Long dead	Rainford, Merseyside	14 km	03.07.07
GN44093	Homer Green, Merseyside	Pullus	16.06.05
Alive	Garstang	45km	02/03/07

## Pied Wagtail

KP91597	Slapton Ley Devon	3	04.10.05
Read in field	Hillam, Bank End, N Fylde	F	08.04.07
Definitely Pied			

N704986	Melling, Lune Valley	1	15.05.07
Controlled	Melling maize field roost		12.10.07

This bird remained locally for a considerable period, despite many passage birds, including White of presumed Icelandic origin, using this roost. Very few, however, winter in the Lune Valley

## Swallow

V252432	Melling maize field roost	3	29.08.06
Controlled	Hazel Grove, Greater Manchester		08.06.07
Presumably the breeding site.			

**Sand Martin**

T695817	Applegarthtown, Dumfries & Galloway	1	26.05.06
Controlled	Whittington, Lune Valley		08.07.07
T807362	Arkholme, Lune Valley	4F	15.06.06
Controlled	Icklesham		30.08.07
V107203	Icklesham	3	05.08.06
Controlled	Arkholme		24.06.07
T807350	Arkholme	3J	18.06.06
Controlled	Estanca Escoron (Zaragoza) SPAIN 42 2N 1 12W 1349km		25.08.06
CC1607	Las Minas (Madrid)		
	SPAIN 40 14N 3 33W	3	17.09.03
Controlled	Whittington	1552km	08.06.04
CU9438	Las Minas, SPAIN	3	11.09.04
Controlled	Whittington	1552km	08.07.05
CU7065	Las Minas SPAIN	3	21.09.04
Controlled	Arkholme	1546km	10.06.05

**Reed Warbler**

TV251457	Leighton Moss	3	10.08.06
Controlled	Icklesham	432km	08.08.07
V471168	Leighton Moss	3	28.06.07 & 15.07.07
Controlled	Icklesham	432km	30.07.07
R391999	Leighton Moss	3J	09.07.03
Controlled	Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park		29.04.06, 28.06.06 & 15.07.07
	Presumably also breeding at Fleetwood in 2004/5?		
P922964	Mere Sands Wood	3	06.07.03
Controlled	Scotman's Flash, Wigan		26.05.07
4843614	Chenac-Saint-Seurin-d'Uzet,		
	FRANCE 45 31N 0 49W	3	13.10.03
Controlled	Leighton Moss	972km	17.06.07
V471377	Leighton Moss	3J	15.07.07
Controlled	Villeton, Lot-et-Garonne, FRANCE 44 21N 0.16E		
	1113km		22.08.07
R014990	Leighton Moss	3J	28.07.02
Controlled	Marsworth, Tring	300km	28.08.07
P503385	Leighton Moss	3	23.08.01, 30.06.02, 27.06.05 & 03.07.05
Controlled	Woolston Eyes, Cheshire		25.04.07

T369355	Leighton Moss	3	19.08.05
Controlled	Rostherne Mere, Cheshire		28.04.07

Presumably these two represent passage birds en route to a well established breeding location. A nice series showing passage timing and at least one change from natal to breeding site.

### Sedge Warbler

V394958	Heysham Obs (Middleton IE)	3	23.07.07
Controlled	Icklesham		07.08.07
V778889	Leighton Moss	3	04.09.07
Controlled	Icklesham		13.09.07

Presumably the timing suggests the second bird was from a more northern population than the first, as suggested by previous recoveries on the breeding grounds.

9200325	Lapscheure (West-Vlaanderen) BELGIUM 51 17 N 3 20E	3	09.08.05
Controlled	Leighton Moss	523km	28.05.07
T806817	Heysham Observatory	3	07.09.07
Controlled	Biganos, Gironde, FRANCE 44 38N 0 58W	1054km	01.05.08
V778236	Leighton Moss	4	30.07.07
Controlled	Saint-Vigor-d'Ymonville, FRANCE 49 29N 0 21E	564km	11.08.07
V778371	Leighton Moss	3	05.08.07
Controlled	Reserve Naturelle Yvelines, FRANCE 48 46 2 0E	686km	29.08.07
V778672	Leighton	3	22.08.07
Controlled	Trunvel, Finistere FRANCE 47 53N 4 21W	707km	05.09.07

### Blackcap

V471406	Leighton Moss	3J	01.07.07
Controlled	Icklesham		05.09.07
T931707	Leighton Moss	3M	23.09.06
Controlled	Portland Bill, Dorset	407km	05.05.07
N458153	Casares, Malaga, SPAIN 36 26N 5 15W	3M	13.10.06
Controlled	Leighton Moss	1980km	10.07.07

This is the first series of long-distance recoveries for this species and indicates two local Leighton birds and one which was presumably from a more northerly population, especially given the spring passage date for a male.

### Chiffchaff

ESI AM9888	Burguillos, Bailen-Jaen, Jaen, SPAIN	2	25.12.05
Controlled	Freshfield Dune Heath	Male	28.04, 25.05 & 30.06.06
	1721km		05.04, 04.05 & 29.06.07

A nice unambiguous recovery. Christmas Day is pretty indicative of a wintering bird and the other dates indicate Freshfield as the breeding site.

BDT321	Formby	3J	24.08.06
Controlled	Crossness Sewage Works, Thamesmead, London		08.10.06
Controlled	Formby	Male	08.06 & 08.07.07

### Goldcrest

BAD505	Heysham Observatory	6M	24.04.06
Dead not fresh,	near Oban, Strathclyde	316km	18.03.08
This probably died of old age (note ringed as adult)!			

### Bearded Tit

T931927	Leighton Moss	3JM	02.07.06
Seen	Leighton grit trays		30.10.07
Hit window	Morecambe Market		27.03.08

### Blue Tit

The upland oak woods in the Lune valley are fairly devoid of Blue Tits during the winter months with many of the nesting birds and offspring concentrated around lowland feeders. Two of the more lengthy movements of these nest box birds involved 18km to Storth, Cumbria (26/12) and 27km to Heysham Observatory (15/10) – the last bird may have not finished its movement. A small amount of irruptive movement through Heysham in late September correlates with the following recovery. This species is not renowned for crossing the sea – did it go the ‘long way round’ = 90-100km?

V779520	Heysham Obs	3	28.09.07
Controlled	South Walney	19km	13.10.07

### Chough

ED80133	Anglesey	1M	29.05.07
Read in field	Heysham Power Station & area		18.09-25.09.07

See species text for a full account. There is no evidence that it was taken by trained gull-scaring hybrid falcons/Harris’s Hawk on 25 Sept, contrary to rumour, but it was probably scared off by them.

### Pied Flycatcher

T169194	Grizedale Forest, Cumbria	4F	16.05.06
Controlled	Outhwaite Wood, Roeburndale	39km	19.05.07
T753527	Jockey Shield, Castle Carrock, Cumbria)	5F	08.06.07
Controlled	Winder Wood, Roeburndale	91km	19.5 & 3.6.08

This species is not always loyal to previous breeding sites, especially females

## Siskin

V469435	Over Kellet, N Lancs	6F	19.03.07
Controlled	Lagganbeg, Oban, Strathclyde	301km	26.06.07
V470620	Scotforth, Lancaster	5M	12.01.08
Controlled	Drummond, Inverness	392km	30.03.08

## Twite

The Pennine information will be summarised at a later date as further research is on-going. The following two recoveries involving the coastal wintering Hebridean birds were received. In addition, a Sanda (off Mull of Kintyre)-ringed bird was controlled on the Ribble in early 2007 and two birds ringed in the 2003/4 winter at Heysham were still at large there in autumn 2007 (but did not remain for the winter).

Colour rings	Ribble Estuary	late winter 2007
Read in field	Bowness-on-Solway, Cumbria	27.10.07
Site colour ring only at Heysham north harbour wall		2003/4 to autumn 2006
Read in field	Machrihanish Seabird Observatory Kintyre, Argyll	02.10.07

This may have been the bird reported from Machrihanish the previous autumn (9.9.06).

## Greenfinch

VF55278	Over Kellet, N Lancs	4F	08.08.05
Dead	Bishop Auckland, Durham	91km	04.08.07
TK52500	Scotforth	3J	29.06.07
Dead	Thornaby, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland	114km	10.11.07
TH43261	Heysham Observatory	3M	29.09.07
Controlled	Kinloch, Highland	392km	20.10.07
TE04872	Heysham Observatory	3M	13.10.06
Dead	Langwathby, Penrith, Cumbria	74km	04.06.08

So you think you know your Greenfinch! These are arguably the most mystifying recoveries in the whole report, going against the vis mig data and all previous trends of N or NE to S or SW recoveries. The first could possibly be an unprecedented early long-distance autumn migrant when ringed but the second two are same autumn movements with no ambiguity, other than an assumption the ring numbers have been correctly read! The final recovery of this sequence is what would be expected from a bird captured during the NE to SW 'vis mig' movements.

TK14185	Woolston Eyes, Warrington	3F	03.11.06
Dead	Worston, nr Clitheroe	55km	23.04.07
TC50120	Mere Sands Wood	3F	18.12.05
Dead	Barnoldswick	52km	24.10.06
VF43349	Scotforth, Lancaster	3F	21.10.06
Controlled	Mere Sands Wood	43km	06.01.07

TK52515	Scotforth	3J	06.07.07
Killed by cat	Great Harwood	37km	16.10.07
TH22655	Heysham Observatory	3M	05.11.06
Dead	Duddon Valley, Cumbria	39km	08.07.07

Unusual source of Heysham passage birds, assuming this is the breeding and natal area

## Goldfinch

V309254	Clifton Wood, Nottinghamshire	3	09.10.06
Killed by cat	Over Kellet	169km	24.10.07
V394819	Heysham Observatory (Middleton IE)	3	21.08.07
Dead	Freshwater, Isle of Wight	356km	03.12.07

This are only the second and third long distance recoveries involving the north of the county.

## Reed Bunting

There were some good examples of local dispersal prior to autumn migration proper during the late summer/early-mid autumn. These involved movements between Melling (Lune Valley) maize field, Middleton and Leighton, and the following which moved north, then south:

V394995	Middleton Industrial Estate	3	31.07.07
Controlled	Leighton Moss	3M	10.10.07
Controlled	Heysham Nature Reserve		22.10.07
T152317	Mere Sands Wood	3M	22.12.05
Controlled	Helton Tarn, Witherslack, Cumbria 69km	2.5.06 & 4.6.06 & 14.5.07	
T752246	Helton Tarn	3J	26.07.06
Controlled	Mere Sands Wood	69km	14.03.08
V336157	Mere Sands Wood	5M	07.02.07
Controlled	Watchtree NR, Black Brow, Cumbria	138km	24.03.07

The third shows the early spring migration of this species to what might have been the breeding site.

## Firsts for Lancashire in 2007

Steve White

After a blank year in 2006, 2007 produced two county firsts, both of them major national rarities and both of them in the north of the county.

### **BLACK SCOTER** *Melanitta americana*.

#### **Eric Morecambe complex and Jenny Brown's Point, 16 May 2007.**

In some respects a Black Scoter was not unexpected. Given the huge flocks of Common Scoter that winter in offshore waters on the Fylde and Merseyside coasts, the chance that one of their Nearctic cousins might join them has long been suspected, a prospect heightened by the regularly returning male off the North Wales coast in recent years. But the likelihood of ever spotting one seemed negligible, since Lancashire's Common Scoter flocks are almost always very distant from shore and virtually all sea-watching records of any more than a handful are at the limits of 'scope-views' and most often of birds in flight – not circumstances conducive to picking out a large yellow bill.

So, finding one was always going to be a major challenge and, to put it mildly, the circumstances of this year's record could hardly have been predicted.

On 16 May 2007 a black duck was found exhausted by railway employees on an embankment behind the Eric Morecambe pools and taken in to the Leighton Moss visitor centre. There it was initially identified as a Common Scoter and concern about its welfare ensured it was taken to a local vet before being returned to Leighton Moss.

As there were no apparent injuries it was then decided to release the bird at Jenny Brown's Point on the ebb tide at 13.24. It was then examined more closely and photographs were taken and the bird was re-identified as an adult male Black Scoter. Those involved in its re-identification were Keith Kellett, Tom Wheeler and Jim Beattie.

After release the bird seemed to be in good condition as it was preening, diving and flapping its wings before drifting out on the tide. It was last seen at 15.40 heading towards Morecambe. News of the bird was phoned to Rare Bird Alert at 14.50 but only those involved with its release managed to see it well. It failed to float out of the Bay past the Morecambe Stone Jetty as expected, so its subsequent movements after release following increasingly distant views from Jenny Brown's Point were a mystery

### **Brief description**

The bird was about the size of a Gadwall. The feathers were uniformly black with the exception of the flight feathers which appeared paler. There was a swollen orange/yellow area on the bill which extended from the base to about two thirds towards the tip. The tip of the bill ended in a slight downward hook.

This was the eight record of Black Scoter for Britain and the first in England.

**WHITE-TAILED LAPWING** *Vanellus leucura***Eric Morecambe complex and Leighton Moss, 10-17 June, 2007.**

Britain's 'mega rarity' of the year had been found on 6 June at Caerlaverock on the Scottish Solway, where it remained until the 8th. During this time most of the county's twitchers must surely have added it to their lists. No-one would have dreamed that it would decamp to Lancashire.

Ironic, then, that it should have been re-found in Lancashire by two visiting Scottish birders, Jim and Euan McLachlin two days later.

The bird was found in the late afternoon of 10 June and was viewable distantly from the hides on the Eric Morecambe complex. A few people managed to see it that evening but it flew off north at 18.30 although it was thought that it might still be in the area. However, it was the 13th before it was seen again, in flight near the public hide at Leighton Moss. After another two day disappearance it was re-found on the 16th along the main dyke and viewable from the causeway beyond the public hide. It was seen distantly by many that day and on the 17th when it moved back to the Eric Morecambe Pool before moving to the saltmarsh, providing final viewing distant opportunities before disappearing the following day.

This was the fifth British record and the first since 1984.

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**Dragonflies in Lancashire  
and North Merseyside in 2007**

*Steve White*

2007 was not an auspicious year to begin our three year atlas survey. As an almost mirror image of 2006 it began with perfect weather conditions in early spring, but a generally dismal summer produced one of the least productive years for most species for many years. Early autumn relieved the gloom somewhat and produced some notable late-flying insects.

Numbers of most species were on the low (or very low) side but the unusual weather pattern produced some very early and late emergences. No fewer than eleven species were recorded on their earliest ever dates in the 'county' and nine provided latest ever sightings.

The year began with Lancashire's earliest ever damselfly emergence by two days – a Large Red Damselfly *Pyrrhosoma nymphula* at Heysham Nature Reserve on 14 April, followed the next day by males at Hurst Grange Park, Preston. The next 'record-breakers' to emerge were Azure Damselfly *Coenagrion puella* at Mere Sands Wood on 25 April (five days before our previous earliest), Four-spotted Chaser *Libellula quadrimaculata* at Birkdale on 28 April (our first April record), Common Blue Damselfly *Enallagma cyathigerum* at Ainsdale on 1 May (eight days earlier than previous), Emperor *Anax imperator* at Blackpool on 14 May (twelve days earlier) and Common Darter *Sympetrum striolatum* at Formby on 25 May (our first May record and nine days early).

Despite the mostly wet and overcast conditions of summer, all our regular species put in an appearance and the series of early emergences continued with Red-veined Darter *Sympetrum fonscolombi* at Middleton Industrial Estate on 4 June (a week early), Southern Hawker *Aeshna cyanea* at Lytham on 8 June (five days early), Common Hawker *Aeshna juncea* at Dunsop Bridge on 11 June (two days early), Black Darter *Sympetrum danae* at Birkdale on 23 June (almost a fortnight

early and presumably a migrant catching one of the summer's rare southerly winds) and finally Migrant Hawker *Aeshna mixta* at Slaidburn on 14 July (six days early).

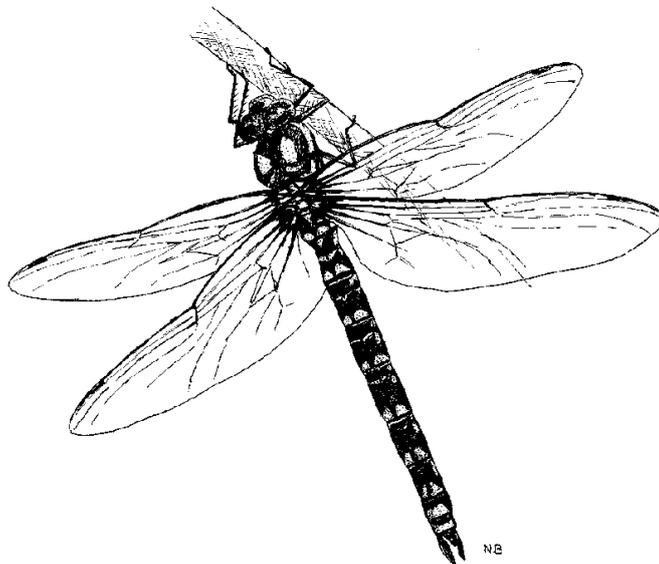
One could be misled into thinking from this list that 2007 was a 'good' dragonfly year. With the exception of early spring it was not. Very brief breaks in the weather during summer meant that numbers of our common dragonflies failed to build up and they were often in flight for just a couple days at a time.

More worrying, perhaps, was the possible impact on our two scarcest breeding species. The Middleton Red-veined Darters were seen on and off for four weeks but numbers were low, with a peak count of five males and just one female and two or three teneral seen, raising concerns as to whether breeding took place this year. Ruddy Darters *Sympetrum sanguineum* were reported from nine sites but all sightings were of one or two males with the exception of six males at Heysham Nature Reserve and four males at Ainsdale National Nature Reserve.

Lesser Emperors *Anax parthenope* have become expected in recent years and 2007 didn't disappoint, with singles at Brockholes Quarry on 29 July and 5-9 August, and Seaforth on 5 August. All were males and we await our first female and possible colonisation.

Records continued to tumble in autumn with Black-tailed Skimmer *Orthetrum cancellatum* on 1 September at Mere Sands Wood (three days later than previous), Large Red Damselfly at Cowpe Reservoir on 6 September (two days later), an extremely late Banded Demoiselle *Calopteryx splendens* at Brockholes Quarry on 10 September (almost a month later), Emerald Damselfly *Lestes sponsa* at Cowm Reservoir on 7 October (nine days later), Southern Hawker at Lord's Lot Bog in the Lune Valley on 23 October (eight days later), Brown Hawker *Aeshna grandis* at Rowley Lake, Burnley on 3 November (three weeks later), Migrant Hawker at Mere Sands Wood on 6 November (three days later), Common Hawker at Hurstwood on 14 November (19 days later) and Common Darter at Mere Sands Wood on 15 November (a mere one day later!). It is notable that many of these late-flyers were seen in the eastern uplands, perhaps indicative of a delayed emergence there.

The unfavourable weather unfortunately sapped the enthusiasm of some of our newly-recruited surveyors but nevertheless an impressive 2300 records were received from more than 100 observers. Our survey continues until at least 2009 and all records would be gratefully received at [stephen.white@tesco.net](mailto:stephen.white@tesco.net) or on the internet at <http://www.dragonflies.org.uk/>



Southern Hawker  
(Nicola Breaks)

## The Breeding Bird Survey (BBS): Trends In Population Size Of Commoner Lancashire Species, 1994-2006

*Steve White*

The BTO/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey got underway in 1994, gradually replacing the previous Common Bird Census as the main means of monitoring population changes in Britain's commoner species.

Its methods are relatively simple: count all adult birds seen or heard on a transect across randomly selected 1km squares on three visits during April to June, noting the distance of each from the transect line.

The number of squares covered in Lancashire and North Merseyside increased from 43 in 1994 to 66 in 2000, 78 in 2004 and 109 in 2006. A summary of the data (the number of squares each species was recorded in and the total number of each species birds seen) has now been published by the BTO for each county, making it possible for the first time to analyse county trends.

A summary of these results for our commonest species is presented below. Ideally, we would like to have access to every record for each species to carry out statistical analysis but the method adopted for assessing the 1994-2006 trends (linear regression on the mean number of birds seen per surveyed tetrad) is probably reasonably accurate. The percentage population change was estimated by comparing the average figures for the period 1994-2000 with those for 2002-2006. All data for 2001, the year of Foot and Mouth Disease, were estimated as the average of 2000 and 2002.

All this needs to be treated with some caution, firstly because the sample size in the early years is small but also it is not known how representative the surveyed squares are of the county's regions and habitats.

### 'Winners' and 'Losers'

A total of 13 species has shown statistically significant increases. Five are species primarily associated with woodland (Great Spotted Woodpecker, Blackcap, Chiffchaff, Coal Tit and Chaffinch), one farmland (Lapwing) and seven with other or mixed habitats (Wren, Dunnock, Blackbird, Song Thrush, Long-tailed Tit, Jackdaw and Goldfinch).

Set against these, seven species have declined significantly: one farmland species (Grey Partridge), two woodland (Willow Warbler and Blue Tit) and four others (Feral Pigeon, Cuckoo, Starling and House Sparrow).

For the most part these changes in Lancashire populations are broadly in line with national and North-West England trends. But there is one notable exception, the apparently large increase in Lapwing numbers, a species for which Lancashire remains a national stronghold.

Perhaps most worrying is the (probably accelerating) decline of the Cuckoo throughout its Lancashire range.

Key to following table:

Species where statistically significant changes have occurred are highlighted in bold.

***	Statistically significant $p < 0.001$
**	Statistically significant $p < 0.01$
*	Statistically significant $p < 0.05$

	<b>Trend (1994-2006)</b>	<b>Population change</b>	<b>Current situation (2000-2006)</b>	<b>Mean per BBS square (1994-2006)</b>
<b>Grey Partridge</b>	Decline *	-45%	No change	0.6
<b>Lapwing</b>	Increase *	+35%	Continuing increase	6.3
<b>Feral Pigeon</b>	Decline ***	-40%	Continuing decline	7.9
Stock Dove	Increase	+90%	No change	0.5
Woodpigeon	No change		Increase	11.2
Collared Dove	No change		No change	3.2
<b>Cuckoo</b>	Decline ***	-55%	Continuing decline	0.3
<b>Great Spotted Woodpecker</b>	Increase ***	+70%	Continuing increase	0.4
S Skylark	No change		No change	4.7
Meadow Pipit	No change		No change	5.5
Pied Wagtail	No change		Increase	1
<b>Wren</b>	Increase *	+20%	No change	5.8
<b>Dunnock</b>	Increase **	+15%	Increase	2.5
Robin	Increase	+10%	No change	4.4
<b>Blackbird</b>	Increase *	+10%	No change	9.6
<b>Song Thrush</b>	Increase *	+10%	Continuing increase	1.8
Mistle Thrush	No change		No change	1.2
<b>Blackcap</b>	Increase *	+33%	No change	1
Whitethroat	No change		No change	1.3
<b>Chiffchaff</b>	Increase **	+65%	Continuing increase	0.4
<b>Willow Warbler</b>	Decline *	-30%	Decline slowing	3.2
<b>Long-tailed Tit</b>	Increase *	+40%	Continuing increase	0.8
<b>Blue Tit</b>	Decline *	-10%	No change	6.6
Great Tit	Increase	+5%	No change	3
<b>Coal Tit</b>	Increase **	+30%	Continuing increase	0.4
Jay	Increase	+15%	Continuing increase	0.3
Magpie	Decline	-15%	No change	4.2
<b>Jackdaw</b>	Increase ***	+60%	Continuing increase	4.4
Carrion Crow	Increase	+5%	No change	7.9
<b>Starling</b>	Decline ***	-20%	Continuing decline	25.6
<b>House Sparrow</b>	Decline ***	-30%	Continuing decline	8.7
Tree Sparrow	Increase	+20%	No change	0.3
<b>Chaffinch</b>	Increase *	+10%	No change	6.9
Greenfinch	Increase	+25%	No change	3.6
<b>Goldfinch</b>	Increase **	+25%	Continuing increase	2.7
Linnet	Decline	-10%	No change	2.2
Yellowhammer	Decline	-15%	No change	0.4
Reed Bunting	No change		No change	0.6
Corn Bunting	Decline	-25%	No change	0.6

## Earliest and Latest Migrant Dates

	Spring				Autumn			
	2007	Earliest	Median	Trend	2007	Latest	Median	Trend
Garganey	27/3	24.2.95	29/3	ns	8/9			
Osprey	6/3	4.3.05	5/4	E	5/10	7.11.05	4/10	ns
LRP	20/3	12.3.95+00	26/3	E	8/9	15.10.79	16/9	ns
Dotterel	20/4	29.3.89	24/4	ns				
Whimbrel	27/3	11.3.78	11/4	ns	23/10	6.11.88	1/10	ns
Wood Sandpiper	1/5	14.4.83	3/5	ns	15/9	28.10.78	17/9	ns
Common Sandpiper	4/4	21.3.66	7/4	ns	17/10	29.10.77	15/10	ns
Sandwich Tern	30/3	13.3.90	28/3	ns	28/9	2.12.94	11/10	ns
Common Tern	20/4	30.3.07	12/4	ns	14/10	17.11.77	22/10	E
Arctic Tern	20/4	1.4.94	16/4	ns	12/10	12.11.05	12/10	ns
Little Tern	23/4	13.4.91	24/4	ns	22/8	23.10.03	17/9	ns
Black Tern	1/5	11.4.80	29/4	ns	7/10	12.11.00	8/10	ns
Turtle Dove	10/5	13.4.80	4/5	ns	27/9	18.10.92		
Cuckoo	16/4	23.3.00	18/4	ns	9/10	9.10.08	30/8	E
Swift	14/4	1.4.04	20/4	ns	13/10	4.12.63	10/10	ns
Sand Martin	4/3	24.2.90	12/3	E	26/9	29.10.72	3/10	ns
Swallow	11/3	10.3.97	26/3	E	7/12	31.12.86	14/11	ns
House Martin	2/4	17.3.63	3/4	E	15/10	31.12.81	29/10	E
Tree Pipit	7/4	17.3.57	5/4	E	13/10	18.10.67	7/10	ns
Yellow Wagtail	13/4	24.3.96	9/4	ns	27/10	11.11.95	4/10	ns
Redstart	14/4	28.3.68	11/4	ns	17/10	10.11.82	8/10	E
Whinchat	22/4	20.3.76	20/4	L	13/10	12.11.79	18/10	E
Wheatear	12/3	26.2.03	11/3	ns	6/11	20.11.98 & 01	2/11	ns
Ring Ouzel	12/3	11.3.99	24/3	E	15/11	11.12.00	31/10	ns
Grasshopper Warbler	12/4	9.4.75	17/4	ns	3/9	4.10.81	22/9	ns
Sedge Warbler	13/4	27.3.03	14/4	E	30/9	14.11.96	30/9	ns
Reed Warbler	16/4	7.4.02+05	18/4	E	19/10	14.11.93	8/10	ns
Garden Warbler	22/4	14.4.93	21/4	E	2/10	13.11.95	22/10	ns
Lesser Whitethroat	13/4	13.4.05+08	23/4	E	19/10	23.11.99	19/9	L
Whitethroat	10/4	6.4.65	19/4	E	10/10	23.10.90	29/9	ns
Wood Warbler	22/4	14.4.79	22/4	ns	5/10	26.9.67		
Willow Warbler	31/3	19.3.90	31/3	ns	26/10	18.11.89	12/10	ns
Spotted Flycatcher	26/4	20.4.85	1/5	ns	28/9	15.11.79	3/10	ns
Pied Flycatcher	12/4	12.4.94+08	17/4	ns	23/10	3.11.01	25/9	ns

The table of first and last dates is a regular feature of the bird report giving an 'at a glance' view of actual and expected first arrival and last departure dates. The table summarises the following information:

The earliest spring arrival and latest autumn records in 2007.

The earliest recorded spring and latest recorded autumn records.

The average (median) earliest arrival and latest departure dates.

The trends for Earlier or Later arrival or departure where these are statistically significant between 1971 and 2007. (ns = no significant trend).

Records of presumed over-wintering and sickly birds have been omitted.

### **Abbreviations used in the text**

1S - first-summer, 1W - first-winter, and so on.

GC	Golf Course
GP	Gravel Pit
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
NR	Nature Reserve
NNR	National Nature Reserve
ML	Marine Lake
Q or Qry	Quarry
SW	Sewage Works
Res	Reservoir
EMP/C	Eric Morecambe Pools complex
MBR	Morecambe Bay Reserve (RSPB)
MB(ay)S	Morecambe Bay South (Lancashire section of Morecambe Bay WeBS)
MMWWT	Martin Mere Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust Reserve
MSW	Mere Sands Wood (LWT)
SNR	Seaforth Nature Reserve (LWT)
BBRC	British Birds Rarities Committee
BOURC	British Ornithologists Union Records Committee
BTO	British Trust for Ornithology
CBC	Common Bird Census (BTO)
BBS	Breeding Bird Survey (BTO)
WeBS	Wetland Bird Survey
CDNHS	Chorley & District Natural History Society
ELOC	East Lancs Ornithologists Club
FBC	Fylde Bird Club
LDBWS	Lancaster and District Birdwatching Society
LWT	Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside Wildlife Trust
ROC	Rosendale Ornithologists Club
SWLRG	South-West Lancashire Ringing Group

## Submission of Records

The task of compiling the report is becoming ever more daunting with the increasing number of records coming into us. With the authorship of the report split between nine people and the growing number of people using bird recording software or word-processing, the preferred method of submission, and indeed the one now favoured one by the majority, is via email, though posting a disc or written records are still perfectly acceptable. Please can you ensure that records are submitted in systematic order rather than chronological order. Files sent by email or on disc should be in Word or simple text format and can be zipped up to save downloading time if necessary. Paper records should preferably be on one side of A4. In order to keep to our very strict deadlines so that the report can be published during September, all records from individuals should reach us by the end of February and reserve or area reports by the end of March. All records in whatever format you wish to use should be sent to the County Recorder

## British Birds Rarities

Descriptions of nationally rare species (for the list, see British Birds Rarities Reports or their website) should be submitted to the British Birds Rarities Committee via the County Recorder at the address above. From 1 January 2007 the BBRC has no longer been accepting paper records. Paper submissions, including sketches, should therefore preferably be electronically scanned and sent by email to the County Recorder as low resolution jpegs. Photographs should also be sent as low resolution jpegs. Digital copies of the BBRC submission form are available from the County Recorder. We are aware, however, that a small number of birders do not have access to the necessary equipment; if this is the case please continue to send paper records to the County Recorder who will process them before sending them to the BBRC.

The following records have been accepted by the BBRC since the publication of our last report:

- Black Scoter, Jenny Brown's Point, 16 May 2007
- Black Stork, over M65 near Preston, 2 May 2007
- White-tailed Lapwing, Leighton Moss, 10-17 June 2007
- Lesser Yellowlegs, Eric Morecambe complex & Leighton Moss, 24-27 July 2007
- Caspian Tern, Knott End, 2 July 2007

The following records are still under consideration by the BBRC:

- Lesser Canada Goose, south-west mosses, November 1976
- Bufflehead, Ulnes Walton, 23 February 2008
- Cattle Egret, Marton Mere, 14 December 2007
- Cattle Egret, Eccleston, St. Helens, 5 April 2008
- Gyr Falcon. Downholland Moss, 12 October 2007.
- Alpine Swift, Whalley, 10-11 July 1964
- Bonaparte's Gull, Marton Mere, 3 May 2008
- Ross's Gull, Marton Mere, Lytham Moss & Fairhaven, 31 March to 14 May 2008
- Caspian Tern, Formby Point, 4 August 2008
- Black-winged Stilt, Salmesbury, 21 June 2006
- Wilson's Phalarope, Seaforth, 3-4 June 2008
- White-throated Sparrow, Heysham, 6 May 2008

As far as is known, the following records have not yet been submitted to the BBRC:

Cattle Egret, Martin Mere, 23 February 2008

Cattle Egret, Brandreth Barn, Burscough, 11 May 2008

Bonaparte's Gull, Stocks Reservoir, 10 May 2008

## County Description Species

Descriptions of species considered to be county rarities (see list below) should be sent to the County Recorder, preferably as soon after the sighting as possible. Most descriptions now come in by the preferred email route, some with digital images attached, but paper records are perfectly acceptable. The increase in digital submissions has meant that the county records committee has been able to circulate records and make decisions promptly. Consequently, there has been a significant increase in time spent in assessment of each and every record submitted with problematical records left to the annual meeting held in May. Current members of the committee are Steve White (Chair), Bill Aspin, Chris Batty, Maurice Jones, Barry McCarthy, Pete Marsh, Gavin Thomas and John Wright.

The job of the committee is to assess every record of a species that requires a description and they have an obligation to apply the rules even-handedly. On odd occasions this means that a perfectly good record will be fail to be accepted (normally through lack of detail). It is very rare that a record is thought to be incorrect, just that it is not 100% proven or there is some doubt.

Many county rarities get to be seen by many observers and an increasing proportion are now photographed, and the committee generally accepts such records on the nod – but it is still important that someone writes the record up so that all records can be reviewed by future generations.

All records of scarce migrants and rare breeding birds are submitted each year for publication in British Birds. This makes it vital that we are confident about the accuracy of all records. In the past we have had two categories of 'description species' but have decided to drop the 'basic details only' one so that only major county rarities require descriptions. These need to be as full as possible - if anyone needs any guidance, please contact the recorder.

## 'Flyover' and 'Heard-only' Records

The records committee has had particular difficulty in making decisions on bird records that have been identified from calls or song only. These fall into two main categories :

those in which the bird was only heard

those where the call has been used to identify a bird seen only in silhouette

A third category, that of birds only heard singing, accounts for only a tiny percentage of the records received.

The purpose of this short note is to give guidance to observers on the type of information required by the committee to help us assess these records correctly.

**Heard-only records.** With the increase in the number of birders involved in observing visible migration the number of flyover records is increasing. The following criteria have been devised, based on advice from the British Birds Rarities Committee. We would be grateful if observers could provide the following detail:

- the number of times the call was heard

- the previous experience the observer has had with the species and all possible confusion species
- a full description of the call to include a literal description of the call notes (including length)
- if the bird is seen, a description of the 'jizz' of the bird e.g. size, shape, mode of flight

Certain species will not be considered on call alone, e.g. Bee-eater as it can't be separated on call from Blue-cheeked Bee-eater

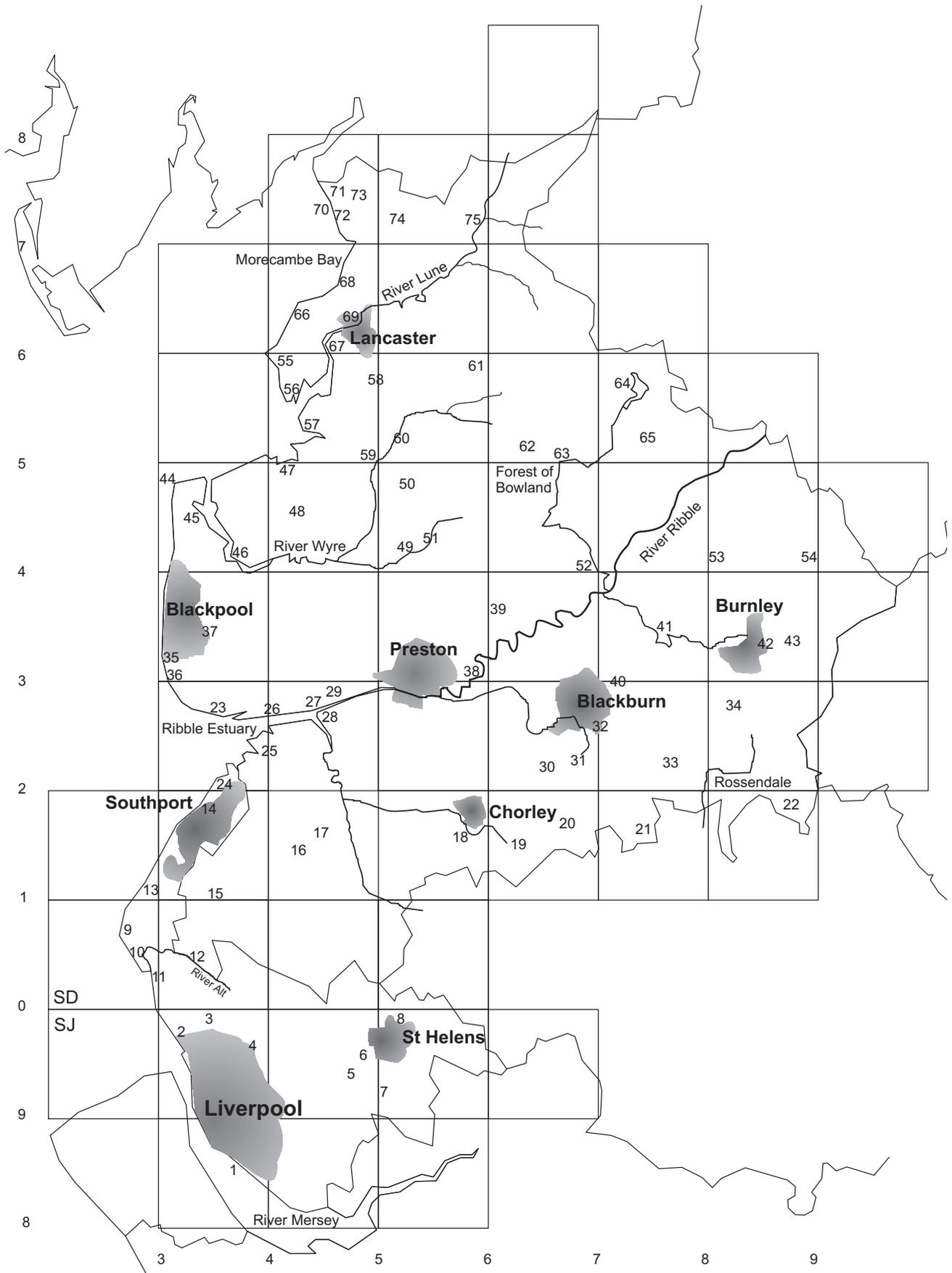
**Singing.** The same criteria would apply to song as to the calls described above. The committee is aware of the increase in the use of digital video cameras which present the opportunity to record the sound of unusual species. The committee would be happy to consider sound recordings either on CD as .wav (or similar) files or on tape.

## Species and Subspecies Requiring Full Descriptions

*These are all marked with an asterisk in the systematic list.*

Black Brant	Temminck's Stint	Aquatic Warbler
American Wigeon	White-rumped Sandpiper	Marsh Warbler
Ring-necked Duck	Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Icterine Warbler
Ferruginous Duck	Red-necked Phalarope	Melodious Warbler
Surf Scoter	Long-tailed Skua	Barred Warbler
Black Grouse	Sabine's Gull	Subalpine Warbler
Red-necked Grebe	Ring-billed Gull	Dartford Warbler
Great Shearwater	Caspian Gull	Greenish Warbler
Sooty Shearwater	White-winged Black Tern	Pallas's Warbler
Cory's Shearwater	Roseate Tern	Radde's Warbler
Balearic Shearwater	Little Auk	Dusky Warbler
Wilson's Storm-petrel	Puffin	Red-breasted Flycatcher
Night Heron	Nightjar	Golden Oriole
Purple Heron	Alpine Swift	Red-backed Shrike
Great White Egret	Bee-eater	Woodchat Shrike
Honey Buzzard	Hoopoe	Chough
Black Kite	Wryneck	Rose-coloured Starling
Montagu's Harrier	Woodlark	Serin
White-tailed Eagle	Short-toed Lark	Arctic Redpoll
Golden Eagle	Shore Lark	Common Rosefinch
Rough-legged Buzzard	Red-rumped Swallow	Lapland Bunting
Red-footed Falcon	Richard's Pipit	Ortolan Bunting
Spotted Crake	Tawny Pipit	Rustic Bunting
Corncrake	Red-throated Pipit	Little Bunting
Common Crane	Grey-headed Wagtail	Cirl Bunting
Stone Curlew	Nightingale	
Kentish Plover	Bluethroat	
American Golden Plover	Cetti's Warbler	

# A Guide to Birdwatching Sites in Lancashire and North Merseyside



## Site, Location Number on Map and Grid Reference

Ainsdale Dunes NNR	13	SD290100	Leighton Moss (RSPB)	73	SD480750
Aldcliffe Marsh	67	SD460600	Longridge Res.	39	SD605360
Eric Morecambe complex	72	SD475730	Longton Marsh	28	SD450265
Altcar Withins	12	SD325050	Lytham St Annes NR	36	SD310305
Arkholme	75	SD590720	Marshside (RSPB)	24	SD355205
Banks Marsh/Old Hollows Farm	25	SD390230	Martholme/Altham	41	SD760330
Barnacre Res.	50	SD525478	Martin Mere (WWT)	16	SD425145
Belmont Res.	20	SD670170	Marton Mere	37	SD345353
Birkacre	18	SD572150	Mere Sands Wood (LWT)	17	SD448160
Blea Tarn Res.	58	SD495585	Morecambe Stone Jetty	66	SD425635
Brock Bottoms	51	SD550430	Newton/Clifton Marsh	29	SD455290
Brockholes Quarry	38	SD585305	Ogden/Calf Hey/Holden Wood Res.	33	SD765225
Cabin Hill NNR	10	SD280050	Otterspool	1	SJ370860
Carr Mill Dam	8	SJ525980	Pendle Hill	53	SD805415
Champion Moor	65	SD745525	Pilling Lane Ends	47	SD415495
Claughton Hall Heronry	49	SD525425	Pilling Moss/Eagland Hill	48	SD425450
Cleveley Mere	59	SD500500	Pine Lake/Dockacres	74	SD515725
Clowbridge Res.	34	SD830280	Plex Moss	15	SD340105
Cockersands/Bank End	57	SD430530	Prescot Res.	5	SJ470940
Cowm Res.	22	SD880190	Rimrose Valley	3	SJ335995
Dunsop Valley	63	SD655500	Rishton Res.	40	SD715300
Eccleston Mere	6	SJ482950	Rivington/Anglezarke Res.	19	SD620155
Fairhaven Lake	23	SD340273	Roddlesworth Res.	30	SD650220
Fazakerley	4	SJ390965	Rossall Point	44	SD310475
Fishmoor Res.	32	SD700260	Rowley Lake	42	SD860330
Fleetwood ICI Pools	45	SD335455	Seaforth NR/Crosby Marine Lake	2	SJ315975
Formby Point	9	SD270065	Skerton Weir	69	SD480630
Foulridge Res.	54	SD890415	Southport Marine Lake	14	SD335180
Freckleton Naze	27	SD435275	Squires Gate	35	SD303320
Hambleton Marsh	46	SD365415	Stocks Res.	64	SD730560
Hest Bank	68	SD470670	Sunderland Point	56	SD420550
Heysham NR & Harbour	55	SD405595	Sunnyhurst Woods/Darwen Moor	31	SD680230
Higher Hodder Bridge	52	SD695412	Ward's stone	61	SD590590
Hightown	11	SD295030	Warton Bank & Marshes	26	SD400270
Jenny Brown's Point	70	SD460735	Wayoh/Jumbles Res.	21	SD735160
Langden Valley	62	SD630510	Woodwell	71	SD463743
Lea Green Flash and Tip	7	SJ503920	Wyreside Fisheries/Street Bridge GP	60	SD515520
Lee Green Res.	43	SD880335			

The sites shown on the map have been determined according to the frequency that they have appeared in the systematic list over the past few years. Full grid references have been included to help you pinpoint any site.

## Contributors

Once again, thank you for all those who've contributed records over the year. Apologies if we've missed anyone!

I Abram	KB Briggs	AJ Draper	M Higgin	J Malpass
K Abram	B Brown	A Dunn	G Higgins	M Malpass
N Abram	M Brown	S Dunstan	Z Hinchcliffe	PJ Marsh
MJ Ainscough	A Bunting	SP Eaves	DJ Hindle	K Marshall
D Allen	J Burgoine	R Ekins	A Holmes	T Marshall
R Allen	CI Bushell	P Ellis	B Holroyd	DS Martin
JA Almond	J Butcher	R Else	PJ Hornby	SJ Martin
D Anderson	M Cadman	A Farrar	R Horner	PR Massey
R Ashworth	RA Cadman	A Fenton	J Howarth	E McCann
WC Aspin	J Calder	J Fenton	D Howorth	B McCarthy
S Astley	R Calder	A Ferguson	RE Hoyle	M McGough
K Atherton	I Cameron	M Fishwick	G Hulme	P McGough
R Atherton	PJ Cammack	JD Fletcher	P I'Anson	T Meehan
N & A Baker	J Carter	WD Forshaw	A Imm	M Memory
R Baker	R Carter	KG Foster	S Imm	S Menzie
T Baker	L Caton	J Frankland	R Ives	R Meredith
D Balding	A Cheney	C Galvin	B James	D Messenger
I Ball	GR Clarkson	I Gardner	A Johnson	J Metcalfe
R Banks	A Clements	M Garner	C Johnson	H Mitchell
JK Bannon	WJ Clift	G Gavaghan	A Jones	N Mitchell
JW Bateman	AJ Conway	D Gifford	C Jones	DA Moreton
CG Batty	DL Cook	A Gouldstone	M Jones	J Moreton
Mr Baxter	AA Cooper	AJ Gramauskas	S Jones	G Morgan
D Beattie	C Coupe	M Greaves	K Kellet	DC Morley
J Beattie	P Crooks	P Green	RJ Kennedy	S Morris
D Beevers	P Cross	ME Greenhalgh	P Kinsella	T Morton
P Belcher	S Cross	W Gregory	P Kirk	S Murphy
M Bell	RE Danson	C Gregson	L Knowles	M Myerscough
W Berry	T Darbyshire	S Grimshaw	P Krischkiw	D Nadin
DA Bickerton	J Davie	S.A. Halsey	E Kwater	MJ Naylor
W Bitters	T Davie	D Hardaker	S Leadsom	D Nuttall
LG Blacow	C Davies	H Hargreaves	N Leeming	S O'Hara
J Bolton	J Dempsey	IM Harper	C Liggett	J Oliver
S Booth	B Derbyshire	B Harrison	G Lilley	PJ Olson
DJ Bowker	CT Derri	I Hartley	P Loydall	E Ormand
I Brady	AS Disley	S Hawtin	M Lucas	J Ormerod
B Breaks	J Donnelly	S Hayet	D Macadam	D Ousey
Ma Breaks	D Downing	J Hewitt	D Macdonald	D Owen
Mk Breaks	J Dransfield	R Hewitt	B Makinson	D Pack

R Parks	D Riley	J Smalley	C Thistlethwaite	T Westhead
L Parnell	J Riley	C Smith	A Thomas	C Whale
G Patefield	N Riley	EJ Smith	Ga Thomas	TE Wheeler
N Patel	P Rishton	I Smith	Gr Thomas	SJ White
SG Piner	J Roberts	MB Smith	PC Thomason	A Wilkinson
A Plackett	N Roberts	PH Smith	D Thompson	DR Williams
J Plackett	P Ross	S Smith	CG Tomlinson	K Williams
D Player	J Rostron	NT Southworth	S Tomlinson	J Wilson
J Player	S Rush	D Sowter	C Tynan	P Wilson
A Powell	D Savage	KG Spencer	T Vaughan	C Winder
J Powell	P Sharples	R Spencer	G Waddington	D Windle
R Pyefinch	CJ Sharratt	AJ Spottiswood	H Walker	K Woan
C Rae	K Sharrock	T Stevens	JF Walsh	P Woodruff
P Rhodes	K Singleton	C Stracey	M Watson	I Worsley
RW Rhodes	P Slade	H Sumner	WJ Webb	JF Wright
VG Rhodes	PG Slade	MA Sumner	P Webster	B Yorke
CJ Richardson	P Slater	J Taylor	N West	S Young
DJ Rigby	MA Small	JE Taylor	T West	

## Regional Reports and Other Contributors

Alt WeBS	Heysham NR & Observatory Report
Arnside Natural History Society	<a href="http://heyshamobservatory.blogspot.com">heyshamobservatory.blogspot.com</a>
Birdguides	LDBWS Report
Blackburn & District Bird Club Report	<a href="http://www.lancasterbirdwatching.org.uk">www.lancasterbirdwatching.org.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.blackburnbirdclub.co.uk">www.blackburnbirdclub.co.uk</a>	Marshside Report
BTO/RSPB Birdtrack	MMWWT Logs
Chorley & District Natural History Report	Morecambe Bay WeBS
<a href="http://www.chorleynats.org.uk">www.chorleynats.org.uk</a>	Rare Bird Alert
Cuerden Valley Park Report	Ribble WeBS
ELOC Report	Seaforth Bird Report
<a href="http://www.eastlancsornithologists.org.uk">www.eastlancsornithologists.org.uk</a>	St. Helens Bird Report
Fylde Bird Club Database	<a href="http://www.sthelenswildlife.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk">www.sthelenswildlife.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.fyldebirdclub.org">www.fyldebirdclub.org</a>	United Utilities

## WeBS

Data presented in this report have been collected by volunteer counters for the purposes of the Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS), but have not yet been fully validated by the WeBS partners. If you wish to make use of official WeBS data for any purposes, please contact the WeBS Office at the British Trust for Ornithology (email [webs@bto.org](mailto:webs@bto.org) or phone 01842-750050). WeBS is a partnership between the British Trust for Ornithology, the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (the latter on behalf of Natural England, Scottish Natural Heritage, the Countryside Council for Wales and the Environment and Heritage Service for Northern Ireland).

Notes