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# Lancashire Bird Report 2011

The Birds of Lancashire and North Merseyside

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## Introduction

*Dave Bickerton*

Perhaps 2011 wasn't as spectacular as 2010 in terms of weather and bird movements but there were certainly some very interesting records, not least the four county firsts including a first for Britain! Another cold winter then a fine spring followed by an awful summer seems to be becoming the norm of late and the effects of these changing weather patterns on our avifauna is captured in this year's bird report. I hope you enjoy reading the detailed accounts written selflessly by a committed band of volunteers.

The area covered by this report is one visited by many birdwatchers from the novice to the experienced ornithologist due to the many and varied habitats and the wealth of birds they support. Yet again we have had an incredible number of records submitted, all of which have been considered for inclusion in the report. Whether you send in just one or two records or you can offer comprehensive data on a regularly-watched site, we welcome all your records. Many of you are entering data on web sites such as the ones for the Fylde Bird Club or East Lancashire Ornithologists Club. These sites are an excellent resource and I implore you to support these local organisations who work closely with the society. There are more and more social networking groups being set up where records and news are disseminated quickly. It's very difficult for us to pick up records from here so it is still important to keep records and submit them!

All submitted records contribute enormously to conservation efforts and we share them with national bodies like the BTO, RSPB, the Rare Breeding Birds Panel, British Birds magazine and Natural England, and the two county biological record centres, the Lancashire Environmental Records Network (LERN) and Merseyside Biobank.

The national atlas surveys both came to an end in 2011 but a small number of Lancashire tetrads needed further attention in 2012 and these additional records will be used for the county atlases. More than 1000 birders have contributed records and at the moment some 100,000 species records (many more than this were received but many duplicated existing information) are being checked by regional organisers. Once that is done we shall finalise the distribution and abundance maps and begin the write-up. It has unfortunately been decided that the cost (and weight!) of printing a book would be prohibitive, so the atlas surveys will be published as a single DVD – hopefully by spring 2013.

Once again thanks must go to the dedicated team of writers who give up many days of their own time to compile their sections of the report and to those on the records committee who sit in deliberation on records of Lancashire rarities. Most of all I must thank the recorder and editor of the report, Steve White, who puts in an incredible amount of effort in collating and disseminating the records, reviewing and editing the texts, co-ordinating the production of the report as well as numerous other activities. If you would like to contribute an article, help in writing the species accounts or take a more active role in any way, then please don't hesitate to get in touch with the editor.

Thank you for supporting the work of the Lancashire and Cheshire Fauna Society in either being a member or purchasing this report. The cost of producing this journal of record is just about covered by membership subscriptions and sales. If you are a regular purchaser of the report, please consider joining the society (see the membership section towards the end of the report).

Front cover: Corn Bunting, Plex Moss, July (Steve Young)

Back cover: Short-eared Owl, Sefton Meadows, February (Steve Young)

## Review of the Year, 2011

*John Wright*

### January

A chilly but relatively quiet start to the New Year in most areas. However, ice and snow continued to be an issue on higher ground.

The year started with a first-winter **Red-necked Grebe** on Fairhaven Lake from the 4th which attracted a lot of admirers. The spectacle of winter waders and wildfowl was a prominent feature with the Alt Estuary hosting huge flocks of 48,301 **Knots** and 12,412 **Bar-tailed Godwits**. **Pink-footed Geese** were also present in large numbers with an impressive roost of 31,600 off Pilling Lane Ends on the 17th. Amongst the Pinkfeet was a first-winter **Red-breasted Goose** which toured a number of other sites on the Fylde during the month. This was a county first with previous records being regarded as escapes.

A total of over 11,000 **Teal** were found at favoured locations and provided a great sight and sound. Diligent searching through the flocks produced male **Green-winged Teals** at Hesketh Out Marsh, Seaforth, Leighton Moss and Glasson.

The presence of a **Shore Lark** on Carnforth Slag Tips from the 22nd and up to 30 **Snow Buntings** on Pendle Hill provided a classic winter combination. Large numbers of wintering birds help support our resident birds of prey; this was demonstrated by a **Tawny Owl** nest-box at Arkholme which included the remains of Teal, Snipe, Stock Dove, Green Woodpecker, Blackbird and Starling!

### February

During the first week, very strong winds and heavy rain caused damage and disruption across the county. The remainder of the month was mostly uneventful, apart from some snow over the hills.

Finding **Waxwings** continued to be real possibility. Birds remained from the record invasion in 2010 and a total in excess of 1000 scoured the county looking for berries. Many a cold day was brightened by these engaging birds and their trilling calls. Other influxes were on a smaller scale but included **Mealy Redpolls** at a number of sites with a peak of four in Rishton. There was also an arrival of **Smews** with the largest count being a male and two redheads on the Ribble close to Brockholes Wetland.

Another hard winter had begun to take its toll and **Stonechat** numbers reflected this with only seven birds recorded in the first winter period. It was not just birds that suffered, with a sheep carcass at Belmont attracting twenty-one **Ravens** The remarkable richness of the county in winter was further demonstrated by the presence of 8089 **Curlews** in Morecambe Bay and 200,000 **Starlings** in the roost at Leighton Moss

### March

The month started with cold and unsettled weather. During the last ten days spring finally arrived, with temperatures climbing above 17°C for the first time since the autumn.

Rare wildfowl were to the fore again this month with the county's fifth **Lesser Scaup**, a first-winter male at Marshside from the 19th and a male Ring-necked Duck at Seaforth from the 24th. The latter may well have been the individual that had wintered on the Fylde. An unseasonal surprise was a **Spotted Crake** photographed in front of the Sandgrounders' Hide at Marshside on the 18th.

Breeding birds began to hold territory and two of most vocal species seemed to be faring well. **Green Woodpeckers'** distinctive yaffling attracted attention and reports came from 76 locations in the east of the county alone. **Redshank** numbers also gave cause for optimism with

our saltmarshes ringing to the calls of 62 pairs on the Morecambe Bay reserve, 40 pairs at Marshside, 47 pairs on Hesketh Out Marsh and 36 pairs on the Lune.

## April

The average temperature was 3.7 °C above normal, meaning it was the warmest April on record since 1910.

Waders on the move this month included a stately pair of **Black-winged Stilts** that graced Martin Mere on the 15th. Also notable was an early flurry of **Wood Sandpipers** at Brockholes Wetland, Fleetwood Marsh, Alston Wetland and New Laithe Farm, Newton. **Dotterels** were also well represented with peaks of eight on Fairsnape Fell, six at Hightown, three on Pendle Hill and nine at Champion Farm. An encounter with this engaging species remains an annual highlight for many observers. As well as these passage birds it was a boost to have displaying **Dunlin** over the moorland at Belmont, where three pairs went onto breed.

Passerines were also on the move with **Lesser Redpolls** prominent at coastal locations. Heysham, for example, recorded a record spring passage of 360 birds with a peak of 152 on the 9th.

A **Short-toed Lark** found at Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park late on 24th was our long-awaited first county record. Thankfully it stayed overnight and delighted many observers by showing well on the 25th.

Equally rare until recently, **Great White Egrets** are now regular in the county. The first this year was seen at Leighton Moss from the 9th. Two or more birds then toured favoured sites until the end of the year.

## May

With areas of low pressure to the north or west of the county for much of the month, the weather was often cloudy, wet and at times windy.

This is the classic month for birds from all directions to reach the county and 2011 was no exception. A female **Kentish Plover** at Plover Scar, Cockersand from the 3rd was a great find and only the second county record this century.

On the same day a male **Iberian Chiffchaff** was found singing at Devonshire Rock Gardens, Blackpool. Its identification proved tricky but its song was recorded and analysis of this clinched the identification and another county first.

A **Grey-headed Wagtail** at Seaforth on the 5th was also noteworthy as there had been only five previous county records of this Scandinavian subspecies. Two **Temminck's Stints** at Newton Marsh from the 8th joined our only breeding **Black-tailed Godwits** and up to six **Ruff**. Twelve **Ruff** were also lekking at Marshside but there was no positive evidence of breeding on the Ribble. Proving breeding for **Garganey** can also be tricky so a brood of young birds seen at Leighton Moss on the 16th was pleasing.

The 'anything can turn up' theme continued to the end of the month with a **Gannet** far inland on Foulridge Reservoirs on the 24th. This was followed by a fine summer-plumaged **Spotted Sandpiper** at Brockholes Wetland on the 30th, enjoyed by an appreciative bank holiday crowd.

## June

The month began on a fine warm note, but the weather gradually became more unsettled with showers and long spells of rain.

**Nightjars** no longer breed in the county so a churring male on Cockerham Moss on the 1st was an exciting find. Unfortunately it soon moved on. Elsewhere, the breeding season was well underway and there were notable successes for both resident and migrant species. **Long-eared**

**Owls** appear to be doing well on moorland edges with eight breeding records from six different sites in the east, two or three pairs at Leck Fell and another pair at Thrushgill. A pair of **Short-eared Owls** successfully reared young on the south-west mosses, where breeding is at best sporadic. **Grasshopper Warblers** also appear to be flourishing, particularly in upland rush-beds with a remarkable 27 singing males in the Belmont area.

Comprehensive coverage of **Sand Martin** colonies on the Lune produced a count of 1316 nests in the Arkholme area alone. In the adjacent woodlands **Pied Flycatchers** also enjoyed a bumper year with 92 pairs, of which 76 successfully reared young and 455 nestlings were ringed!

A first-summer **Crane** which visited Paythorne Moor from the 19th proved popular with observers in the east of the county.

## July

After a generally fine first few days, the weather became unsettled. With low pressure close by, it was rather cool with showers and periods of rain, heavy and prolonged at times.

An immaculate adult male **American Golden Plover** was a great find at Shard Bridge where it showed well for its many admirers from the 3rd.

In Bowland it was pleasing to report a good year for both **Hen Harriers** and **Red Grouse**. For the harriers there were seven nesting attempts, of which four were successful and these produced twelve fledged young. Grouse breeding numbers were high and an average brood size of six resulted in a July density of 149 birds per hectare.

**Black Redstarts** nested in central Preston for the second year running with two juveniles being seen. Another juvenile present at Ainsdale may also have fledged locally.

A further success story from the Lune was the presence of 48 pairs of **Common Sandpipers** with 13 of these at Arkholme. Another sign of a good year for this species was a gathering of 47 around the Douglas/Ribble confluence on the 25th.

**Common Scoters** were noted at a number of inland reservoirs including Stocks, Alston, Brockholes, Rishton, Dean Clough and Fishmoor as they headed overland to join the massive summering flocks of tens of thousands off the Fylde and Merseyside coasts.

## August

The weather was predominantly unsettled and cool with areas of low pressure over or close to the county for most of the month. Showers or more persistent rainfall occurred on many days.

As summer turned to autumn **Swallows** began to gather in communal roosts and this included the spectacle of 6000 at Fleetwood Marsh from the 2nd.

**Crossbills** were also on the move with flocks of 45 at Thrushgill and 36 at Beacon Fell. A flock of 20 was also noted over Towneley Park, Burnley.

**Goldfinches** are thriving and this was illustrated by an impressive 368 feeding in a meadow at Easington, a joy to the ear and the eye. **Linnets** are not faring as well so post-breeding flocks of 200 at Rawcliffe Moss and 200 on Mawdesley Moss were particularly noteworthy.

Pelagic trips from the Fylde are becoming popular and their value was shown when the county's fourth **Balearic Shearwater** was seen from a boat off Rossall Point on the 25th.

Despite breeding regularly in Cheshire **Black-necked Grebes** remain a scarce bird in Lancashire, so a long-staying individual at Alston Reservoirs from the 31st proved popular.

## September

Changeable weather prevailed for most of the month with showers or longer spells of rain. There were also some strong winds at times. The last week saw a fine, very warm spell with some exceptionally high temperatures for the time of year.

An **Ortolan Bunting** was an excellent discovery on rough ground close to Fleetwood Golf Club on the 2nd. It was only the eleventh county record.

The remnants of 'Hurricane Katia' had observers hurrying to the coast mid-month and they were not to be disappointed. First came a delightful adult **Sabine's Gull** at Heysham from the 8th which was joined by another adult on the 13th. The same day six of these beautiful gulls graced the Fylde with others passing Ainsdale and Formby and in the Mersey Mouth off Seaforth. In addition all four species of **skua**, **Leach's Petrels** and **Grey Phalaropes** were seen on the 13th making it a most memorable day for those who braved the wild conditions. As the winds eased two **Grey Phalaropes** remained to delight observers at Fairhaven Lake and on the Ribble in Preston.

Waders were a feature of the month with **Curlew Sandpiper** counts reaching 18 on Banks Marsh, 16 at Knott End, 13 at Cocker's Dyke, ten on Hesketh Out Marsh, nine at Overton, seven on the Eric Morecambe complex and six at Martin Mere. Also discovered were a juvenile **Lesser Yellowlegs** (the county's 14th) at Glasson from the 24th and a **Pectoral Sandpiper** at Martin Mere from the 25th.

## October

The month began with a southerly airstream resulting in some exceptionally high temperatures. The rest of the month saw mostly mild westerly or southerly airstreams. These brought showers or longer spells of rain.

A massive southward surge of **Meadow Pipits** on the 1st brought 3000+ over Marshside-Crossens, 3254 over Rossall Point and 1737 over Seaforth. **Siskins** were also on the move with a peak of 286 over Caton Moor that day.

The following day a check of the goose flocks at Nateby led to the astonishing discovery of the county's first **Solitary Sandpiper**. This juvenile bird stayed faithful to a small pool until the 6th and attracted many admirers from near and far.

Perhaps even more surprising was another North American vagrant, our first record of a **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** on the 12th, found somewhere in south Liverpool and taken into care where it died.

Also causing a stir was the heaviest coastal passage of **Short-eared Owls** for at least two decades. A minimum of 40 individuals including a peak of five at Cabin Hill NNR. Other passage highlights included 51 wild **Barnacle Geese** at Stocks Reservoir on the 7th (with two ringed in Svalbard) and 2248 **Chaffinches** over Fairhaven on the 14th.

**Yellow-browed Warblers** arrived on cue with singles seen at Upper Thurnham and Mount Park, Fleetwood on the 16th and Sunderland Point on the 29th.

The approach of winter was signified by a roost of over 700 **Pied Wagtails** in Preston from the 28th.

## November

Airstreams from a southerly quarter brought many very mild, settled days in the first three weeks. Conditions became much more unsettled in the last week, with a cooler westerly flow and strong winds at times.

Another busy month began with a juvenile **American Golden Plover** being located at Plover Scar, Cockersand from the 4th. The finder had already discovered the Solitary Sandpiper and Lesser Yellowlegs so this was a quite remarkable county hat-trick!

Autumnal movements included 7000 **Woodpigeons** over Billinge Hill on the 6th. This was followed by an unusual inland passage of **Little Gulls** on the 11th; 21 at Brockholes Wetland were followed by 17 in the roost Lower Foulridge Reservoir, where a first-winter male **Eider** had also arrived. This rare inland visitor soon moved on only to be replaced by an adult male **Eider** on Upper Foulridge the following day! Also on the 12th another great inland find was an elusive **Richard's Pipit** at Alston Reservoirs.

One of the features of the month was an unprecedented arrival of **European White-fronted Geese**. There were 32 at Martin Mere with 26 at Marshside, 19 at Pilling, 21 at Cockerham Sands, up to 50 at Hornby and 34 at Aldcliffe.

Another surprise came with the trapping of a **Penduline Tit** at Leighton Moss on the 21st. This second record for the county was no more obliging than the first and eluded other observers despite much searching.

The month closed with a high count of 11,000 **Common Gulls** roosting at Stocks Reservoir on the 30th.

## December

A persistent Atlantic airstream brought changeable, sometimes stormy, weather and generally mild conditions. There was rainfall on many days. Compared with December 2010 it was 6 °C warmer.

In addition to the ongoing influx of Whitefronts an arrival of **Tundra Bean Geese** was also taking place. Birds were reported with Pinkfeet flocks in many locations including Fluke Hall, Barnaby's Sands, Fleetwood Farm, Nateby, Martin Mere and Marshside. Most popular were a well-watched group of five which frequented the Division Lane area of Lytham Moss from the 24th.

Stormy weather brought an array of birds into Heysham harbour including a juvenile **Glaucous Gull** from the 11th. A **Glossy Ibis** flew over Conder Green that day before settling at Leighton Moss until the year's end.

The third and most remarkable discovery on the 11th was a first-winter **Reed Warbler** found freshly dead at Jenny Brown's Point. This was only the second winter record of Reed Warbler in Lancashire so feathers were sent away for genetic analysis. The results suggest it was of the race *fuscus* and if accepted this will be the first record of this sub-species in Britain.

Raptors are a regular feature of winter watching and this now includes **Marsh Harrier**, with birds at Leighton Moss, Crossens and Marshside, Martin Mere and Warton Marsh.

This most memorable year came to a close with a male **American Wigeon** on the River Douglas at Hesketh Out Marsh on the 28th.

## Systematic List

### MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

Breeding resident, common winter visitor.

International importance: 2400. National importance: 740

#### Monthly Peak Counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	89	114	106	110	75	124	59	90	53	104	79	52
Ribble WeBS	33	17	42	44	36	53	15	102	71	20	44	16
Alt WeBS	18	4	4	21	15	36	32	12	5	6	0	3
Marshside	5	5	11	31	4	2	0	0	4	3	0	2

Seven was a high local count at Lower Hodder Bridge in January as were 84 at Thurnham and 197 at Southport Marine Lake during the same month. Twenty-six on the boating lake at Sefton Park, Liverpool was the highest count of the year there. In the Jumbles-Calder Foot-Hodder Foot area a record of six birds was notable on 14 January.

The resident breeding pair had returned to Lower Healey, Chorley on 20 Jan. In February 43 were at Cockerham and 46 on Warton Marsh; 52 were counted at Sand Villa in March and 54 at Cockerham.

Breeding was widespread in low numbers across the county with no significant reports received.

Fifty-nine were at Glasson in June and 66 on the Conder Estuary in July when the peak count of the year for Seaforth was 30; 38 were at Freckleton in August when 47 were at Warton. In September 60 were at Glasson, 48 at Freckleton and a peak of eight at Alston Wetland on 23 Sept. Sixty-one at Warton in October and 152 on Southport Marine Lake in December were the last big counts of the year.

### BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus columbianus*

Common but declining winter visitor.

International importance: 200. National importance: 70

#### Monthly Peak Counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
Over Wyre	36	36	1	0	1	7
South Fylde	44	74	10	2	0	4
South Ribble	0	40	0	0	0	0

At the start of the year numbers built up to peak counts in mid-January of 26 at Pilling, 34 at Eagland Hill and 44 on Lytham Moss; 33 were at Cockerham on 20 Feb and by the end of the month numbers at Lytham had risen to 74. The last large group there was ten on 11 March, and the last of winter was at Cockersand on 14 April.

Away from the Fylde, a pair and a juvenile were on Hesketh Out Marsh on 2 Jan and eight, including two juveniles, at Halsall Moss the next day. Six were at MMWWT on 8 Jan, followed by two on 9-11 Jan and two on 5 Feb; 40 were seen on the south banks of the Ribble in February.

The first back in autumn were two on Lytham Moss on 22 Oct. Numbers were then low with just two remaining at Lytham and two at Glasson; six were at MMWWT on Boxing Day when one was at Weeton

One that stayed for 15 minutes at Lower Foulridge Reservoir on 9 Nov was a notable record for the east.

**WHOOOPER SWAN** *Cygnus cygnus*

Common and increasing winter visitor.

International importance: 210. National importance: 110

**Monthly Peak Counts**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MMWWT	2020	/	1400	49	6	/	790	/	1750
Over Wyre	300	142	91	7	0	5	359	256	450
South Fylde	44	74	10	0	1	0	159	100	178
South Ribble	3	192	141	1	0	1	0	3	183

The record numbers of late 2010 remained at MMWWT at the beginning of the year with 2020 present on 4 Jan, decreasing to 1700 by the month's end; 105 of these were at Halsall on 29 Jan and 520 were feeding Scarisbrick on 15 Feb.

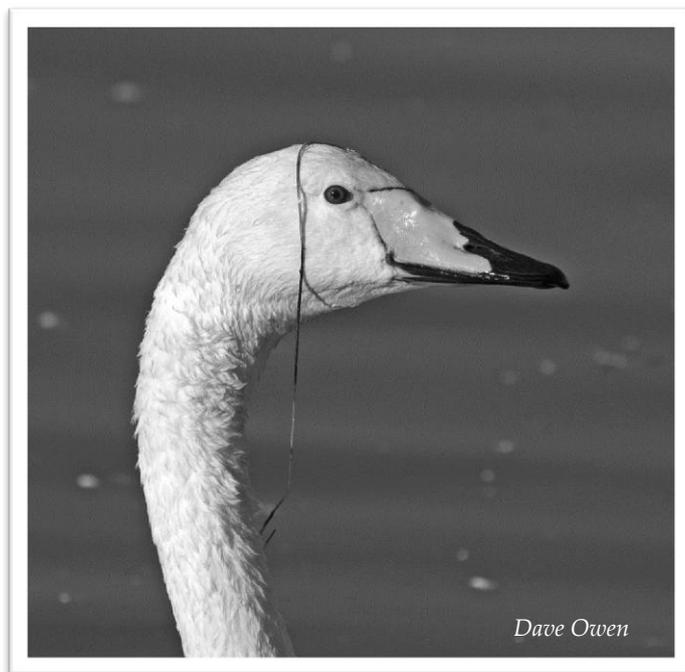
The highest numbers in January on the Fylde, were 140 at Eagland Hill, 299 at Pilling, 282 at Fluke Hall and 300 at Cockerham. Numbers were lower in February with the highest counts being 50 at Sand Villa, 54 on Lytham Moss, 88 at Ream Hills and 110 at Eagland Hill. Numbers peaked again in early March with 91 at Sand Villa on the 1st, 87 at Eagland Hill on the 3rd and 83 at Cockerham on the 6th. At this time 1400 remained at MMWWT, and as the first groups departed from the south-west some were seen heading north past the Fylde, including 22 over Warbreck Hill on 14 March and 17 past Staining Nook on the 23rd.

On the Lune up to 21 were in the Claughton/Melling area during January to March with a peak of 33 on 7 March and the last on 18 April.

Away from the main sites, four flew over Ecclestone, Chorley on 23 Jan and two adults west over Brownsills then Rishton Reservoir on 2 Jan. Two adults were seen at Alston Reservoirs on 22, 30 & 31 Jan and then again on 25 Feb. Later migrants were 22 north over Stocks Reservoir and eleven flying up the Dunsop Valley on 12 March, and four over Altham on the 21st.

The last large group seen at MMWWT was 49 on 3 April, the same day as 24 flew north past Rossall Point – the largest migrant flock recorded. The last migrants to leave were on 9 May at Stocks Reservoir and 15 May at Freckleton. Unusually, no spring movement was noted past Heysham.

Six remained at MMWWT throughout the summer. The first migrants to return were at Cockerham from 18 Sept and Sand Villa from the 26th. MMWWT saw the first significant return on 7 Oct with 49 birds then 790 the next day. Arrivals here were reflected in movements elsewhere including three over Barrowford Reservoir on 8 Oct, one at Leighton Moss on the 9th, one over Euxton on the 13th, followed by a single bird at Parsonage Reservoir on 16 Oct. Four were at Alston Reservoirs on the 19th, ten flew west over Burnley on the 21st and on the same day a family party of two adults and four young were on a flood pool at Grindleton. On 22 Oct eight flew south-west over Barrow Lodges and seven were on Alston Reservoirs. On the Fylde, wintering



groups built up to 159 at Lytham by 24 Oct, 142 at Pilling on the 28th and 220 at Fluke Hall on the 30th. Seven flew over Seaforth on 28 October and 16 on 5 Nov, the same day as five went past Heysham.

Further inland, three adults on a flood pool at Bashall Town on 25 Oct were present until at least 6 Nov. Two flew over Croston Moss on 12 Nov, nine the next day and approx 100 on the 19th. Other groups included four at Stocks Reservoir on 30 Nov, six at Altham on 2 Dec and four at Stocks on 14 Dec. Overflying birds during this period included three over Clitheroe on 30 Oct, 13 south over Grindleton Fell on 5 Nov and five over Dean Clough Reservoir on 17 Nov. The Melling flock built up to twelve in early December. A flock of nine flew over Croston Moss on 16 Dec, three over Oswaldtwistle the following day and three at Cant Clough Reservoir on the 20th.

Peak counts of 200 were noted at Pilling Marsh and Eagland Hill in November, 105 at Mythop was unusual on 13 Dec, 140 were at Stalmine, 178 at Lytham Moss, 200 still at Pilling and a huge increase to 650 at Fluke Hall on 21 Dec with 450 still there on Christmas Eve; 350 were at Sollom near Tarleton on 26 Dec. Three flew south on 1 Dec at Heysham after resting on the mudflats and two headed into a southerly gale there on the 8th.

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

**Uncommon winter visitor. Amber List (small winter population).**

In the first winter period there were two at Cocker's Dyke on 16 Jan and Low Meadows on 2-3 March, and singles at Ince Blundell on 31 Jan, Pilling Marsh on 13-14 March and Crossens on 21 March – possibly involving just two individuals.

Most records later in the year came from the Fylde where at least five individuals were seen at ten or so sites, including five together near Myerscough College on 22 Nov and Lytham Moss on 24-30 Dec. Birds were seen on five sites south of the Ribble from 6 Nov, involving at least two adults and a juvenile.

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

**Abundant winter visitor to Fylde, Ribble Estuary and South-West Mosslands. Amber List (localised winter distribution). International importance (3600); National importance 3600.**

**Monthly peak Pink-footed Goose counts (not coordinated across the three areas) for the three most important sites in Lancashire: Morecambe Bay, MMWWT and the Ribble Estuary; derived from all submitted records.**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
M Bay	31600	12000	10000	1611	350	5	/	/	2500	30800	19085	19100
MMWWT	12500	10000	690	87	12	12	12	12	6500	16000	10000	5200
Ribble Est	11710	1039	12453	8206	570	/	/	/	700	12000	8000	3413

It is clear from the tables that at least 50000 were present at both ends of the year, but numbers in the second winter period were significantly lower than last year.

By far the largest count was the 31600 roosting off Pilling Lane Ends in January when several large flocks were feeding across the Over Wyre mosslands. On 21 Jan 15000 roosted on the Alt Estuary, 12500 at MMWWT and 16500 at Pilling. Large counts of feeding birds in January included 3000 at Low Meadows on the 2nd, 4000 on Warton Marsh on the 3rd, 3500 on Lytham Moss on the 6th, 7000 at Crossens and 4400 at Burscough on the 9th, and 10000 Marshside on the 23rd.

Most had left by early April but several hundred lingered into May. Twelve (presumably injured or sick) wild birds summered at MMWWT and singles at Hightown, Leighton Moss and Barnaby's Sands. One summering at Stanley Park, Blackpool was perhaps of more dubious origins. A small group of free-flying captive birds are present in Banks and these occasionally breed, although not in 2011.

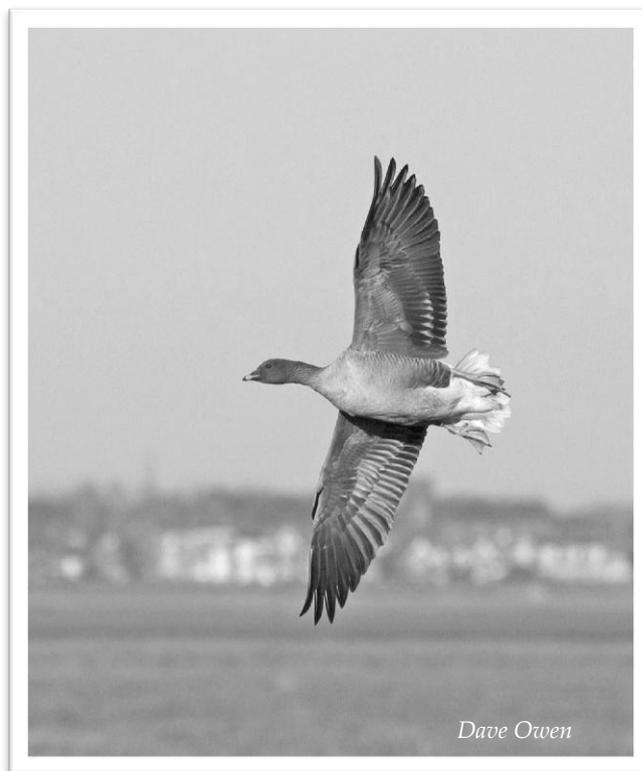
Early migrants were eight over Marshside on 30 Aug and 60 south over Barnoldswick the next day. Numbers at MMWWT grew from 21 on 10 Sept to 5000 on the 15th and peaked at 16000 on 16-23 Oct, while the Pilling roost increased from 2500 on 24 Sept to 30800 on 18 Oct; numbers at both sites declined after October. As usual feeding flocks were seen throughout the Fylde and the south-west, including 12000 at Marshside on 16 Oct, 5000 on Lytham Moss in December, 4500 at Little Crosby on 15 Dec and 3000 in the Rainford area in October.

As usual numerous flocks were recorded migrating over the county, particularly in October and November.

#### Coordinated roost counts 2011 (courtesy of WWT)

	23/01	02/11	06/11	04/12
Ribble Estuary	11710	1153	3936	3413
Alt Estuary	4150	8135	11667	2222
Martin Mere	12200	6750	3700	4300
Lune Estuary	0	0	0	0
Pilling	16500	6100	19085	7800
Cocker's Dyke	/	0	3800	360
Wyre Estuary	4400	670	2250	3425
Simonswood	1000	1000	5000	3500
Birkdale Moss	1000	0	0	0
Total	50900	23808	49438	25020

Note: WWT coordinated counts ensure that all roost sites in the county are counted at the same time and take place on the same day as nationally coordinated counts, thereby enabling county, national and international population estimates to be made. These individual counts are not necessarily indicative of peak counts at individual sites through a whole winter.



## EURASIAN WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons albifrons*

### Uncommon winter visitor.

Eight adults and three first winters were on Warton Marsh on 2 Jan but two were found shot dead there the next day; at least two adults and two first-winters were seen on various sites in Over Wyre until 12 March. South of the Ribble two were at Marshside on 21 Jan and 20-24 March and one on 21 April; two were on Aldcliffe Marsh on 18 March.

Nine over Brockholes, eight at MMWWT and 30 over Leighton Moss on 12 Nov, and 16 east over Marton Mere, six at Pilling and two at Crossens the following day signalled an influx. Numbers at MMWWT rose to 32 on 29-30 Nov and 46 on 21-25 Dec, while Marshside/Crossens held 26 on 27 Nov and 24 on 26 Dec (presumably with some overlap with birds at MMWWT); 50 were reported on the Ribble Marshes NNR at the end of December.

The largest Fylde counts were 32 on Lytham Moss on 9-10 Dec, 24 at Mythop on 29 Dec, 21 at Cockerham on 28 Nov and 19 at Pilling on 20 Nov. North Lancashire peaks were 50 at Hornby on 16 Nov, 34 at Aldcliffe on 20 Nov, 23 at Aldcliffe and twelve at Heaton Marsh on 27 Nov, 43 at Bull Beck in the Lune Valley on 18 Dec and 28 at Melling on 1 Dec and Arkholme on 10 Dec, feeding on maize.

On 12 Dec seven that flew west over Alston Reservoirs were thought to be this race. An adult pair plus four first-winters were at Rishton Reservoir on 27-28 Dec. One of unknown race circled over Stocks Reservoir on 12 Nov before departing east.

## **GREENLAND WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** *Anser albifrons flavirostris*

### **Uncommon winter visitor.**

One ranged between Pilling and Mythop (10 Jan), MMWWT (16 Jan) and various Over Wyre sites, Mythop and Todderstaffe Hall on 27 Jan to 28 Feb; presumably the same bird was at Pilling on 10-14 March. Two at Crossens on 23 March was the only record south of the Ribble in the first winter period.

Singles were at Marshside on 27 Oct and 16 Nov and seven adults at Crossens inner marsh on 27 Nov with a first-winter bird at Marshside the same day. Two at MMWWT on 11 Nov and 15 Dec perhaps involved the same birds.

In the Fylde an adult was at Fluke Hall on 27 Nov and two adults at Pilling on 4 Dec with one or two there on 9-11 Dec, an adult on Lytham Moss on 9-23 Dec and an adult at Fleetwood Farm on 12 Dec with a first-winter there on 30-31 Dec.

White-fronted Geese of any race are rare in east Lancashire so to have two *flavirostris* in the area around Rishton Reservoir from 1-28 Dec was remarkable. Even more so was the sight of these birds joined by the family party of *albifrons* as detailed above.

## **GREYLAG GOOSE** *Anser anser*

**Scarce feral breeder and uncommon winter visitor. Amber List (localised winter distribution).**

**National importance: 1400**

### **Monthly peak counts**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	353	12	40	23	59	39	259	274	729	123	217	65
Arkholme	210	42	/	/	/	/	/	67	48	63	202	272
Leighton/EMC	465	260	190	151	130	137	176	55	584	315	345	255
Aldcliffe	300	/	/	/	/	/	/	274	729	123	1135	65
Ribble WeBS	59	10	46	53	131	108	45	221	516	205	43	32
MMWWT	280	/	128	/	/	/	160	336	530	/	/	680
Stocks Res	74	36	27	36	58	131	124	5	/	37	13	38

Other site counts included 450+ at Bourbles Pit, Preesall on 2 Jan and three-figure totals at Arkholme in January.

The breeding population in north Lancashire continued to be centred on Leighton Moss with an estimate of 40 pairs, about seven pairs up on 2010. Other breeding pairs were reported from the lower Lune, Abbeystead, Wyresdale Fisheries, Sand Villa pool, Pilling, Preesall and Copthorne, where there were 50 adults and 40 young on 16 May. Five pairs attempted to breed at Arkholme, only one pair successfully hatching five young.

Only two pairs bred at Marshside and no breeding data were received from MMWWT, Mere Sands Wood or Southport Marine Lake.

The first goslings were reported at Stocks Reservoir on 29 April and the maximum number of young recorded there was 28 with 103 adults on 5 June. A Canada x Greylag Goose with 5 young was noted on 15 April at Preesall Flashes.

Outside the breeding season the population in north Lancashire was extremely mobile, with the Aldcliffe/Lune area holding the largest numbers with peak counts of 729 in September and 1135 on 20 Nov. The largest count from the Lune Valley was 272 at Arkholme on 15 Dec. Flocks were reported as causing damage to maize fields in the Lune Valley by flying into the crop, knocking it down and eating the ripening corn cobs. Other counts of interest included 310 at Marshside on 31 Aug with 370 there on 1 Sept, 264 at New Lane, Pilling on 10 Sept and 417 at Little Singleton on 16 Sept.

## **CANADA GOOSE** *Branta Canadensis*

### **Common breeding resident.**

#### **Monthly peak counts**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MB WeBS	113	20	10	2	/	1	23	121	134	269	187	75
Leighton/EMC	15	10	14	8	22	18	/	20	24	12	16	5
Arkholme	210	/	/	/	/	/	/	106	87	227	192	83
Aldcliffe	113	20	10	5	/	1	23	121	134	269	187	73
Belmont Res	12	40	48	45	69	104	100	94	120	42	25	20
Alston Res	39	/	/	/	/	/	/	100	/	7	/	19
Brockholes	87	/	/	/	/	138	/	330	52	224	/	95
Dinckley	238	/	/	2	/	/	/	150	/	/	200	/
Foulridge Res	/	300	/	50	/	250	/	135	400	412	600	/
Stocks Res	110	20	82	48	90	276	280	62	8	43	155	101
Ribble WeBS	2207	825	316	199	162	1006	742	2659	2724	3607	3140	2420
Seaforth	22	12	15	23	28	214	290	270	308	36	37	5

The Ribble Estuary produced the largest counts in the county during both winter periods (see table), both of them higher than in recent years. Others of interest included 315 at Mere Sands Wood on 15 Sept, 240 at MMWWT on 30 Sept and 1110 on farmland between Speke and Hale (partly in Cheshire) on 2 Oct.

Thirteen pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir fledging nine young after licensed control measures (55 eggs 'pricked' and 10 adults shot), and 20 territorial pairs were at Brockholes in spring. At least three broods had emerged by 24 May at Stocks Reservoir and at least eleven pairs bred in the Leighton Moss area. Breeding was also confirmed at Marshside, Eccleston Mere, Seaforth, Sefton Park, Myerscough Quarry, Fairhaven Lake and Blackleach. No breeding data were received from MMWWT, Mere Sands Wood or Southport Marine Lake.

An interior race individual (Todd's Canada Goose) was at Barnaby's Sands on 23 Oct and was seen intermittently on both sides of the Wyre Estuary; it was regular at Fleetwood Farm from 14 Nov until the year's end.

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

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

#### **Wild birds**

Up to 23 were at Aldcliffe and Heaton Marsh in mid-January, and eight on the Eric Morecambe complex on 14 Jan, increasing to twelve by the 16th with two there on 8 Feb, while two were near the bypass at Heysham on 17 Feb. Up to six were at Pilling in January with a single bird there and on the Over Wyre mosses up to 15 March.

Up to nine were at MMWWT in mid-January, one at Little Crosby on 19 Jan, six at Marshside on the 21st, 21 on the Ribble NNR on 6 Feb, and up to four on various south Ribble sites until 22 April. Singles at Seaforth on 2-3 May and 14-18 June and Marshside on 15 May, may have been late stragglers or feral.

Singles at Marshside on 31 Aug and Fluke Hall on 19 Sept was followed by a large arrival on 7 Oct with 50 over Cross of Greet, seven at Pilling Lane Ends and eleven at Jenny Brown's Point; these dispersed leaving a peak of 16 at Pilling Lane Ends in October with five there to the end of December, ten at Carnforth on 12 Nov and nine over Heysham and Morecambe the next day. Up to eight were at Marshside/Crossens in October, 16 in November and 20 on 12 Dec.

At Stocks Reservoir an influx of 51 wild birds (including two Svalbard-ringed birds) joined feral birds on 7 October; they were seen later over Cross of Greet and Wray. At Marshside there

was one 31 Aug and 4 Sept, eight on 13 Oct, and then a regular flock of 12-16, peaking at 20 on 12 Dec.

Two were at Lea and Clifton Marshes and on the Ribble at Hutton on 16 Oct with one at Lea on 25 Dec; two were on Mawdesley Moss on 27 Nov.

### **Feral Birds**

Birds were recorded at Stocks Reservoir in all months except April and May; twelve on 22 June were one-day visitors and the first returned on 9 July with numbers peaking at 34 on 30 Sept. Peak counts at Marton Mere were 16 on 23 March and 19 on 23 Nov, but 39 adults and one gosling were at Blackpool Zoo in July with 15 there in November. Single, presumably feral, birds were also reported from Foulridge and Fishmoor Reservoirs, Blackburn Corporation Park on 29 Dec and Brockholes.

Seventy-eight at MMWWT 78 on 2 Nov and 81 on 1 December were considered by some regular observers there to be wild birds, but, unusually, no feral birds were reported there this year. So it is perhaps more likely that these were, at least in part, the feral flock that has moved between Knowsley Park and MMWWT for many years – some weight being given to the latter view by the presence of the regular Knowsley/MMWWT Red-breasted Goose, which associates with feral Barnacles, in October and November. Sixty-seven were in Knowsley Park on 25 Feb, where at least eight pairs bred, with 28 young on 22 May.

### **DARK-BELLIED BRENT GOOSE** *Branta bernicla bernicla*

#### **Scarce winter visitor.**

Two were on the Eric Morecambe scrapes on 14 Jan, a first-winter at Knott End/Fleetwood on 8-28 Jan, an adult at Pilling on 9 Jan to 19 March (seen occasionally at other sites), and two at Pilling on 9-11 Feb.

Spring migrants included singles at Jenny Brown's Point on 29 April, past Blackpool on 30 April and at Bank End on 15 May.

The first to return were two past Heysham on 7 Oct, one at Cockersand on the 13th. A first-winter was in the Cocker's Dyke area from 25 Oct to 6 Nov and an adult at Fluke Hall on 27-30 Oct. Two adults and a first-winter were on Marshside beach on 12-13 Nov with presumably the same two south past Ainsdale on the 13th. Finally an adult was at Red Nab, Heysham on 12-22 Nov and Bolton-le-Sands on the 28th.

### **PALE-BELLIED BRENT GOOSE** *Branta bernicla hrota*

#### **Scarce winter visitor.**

Singles were March in the Pilling area on 9-19 Jan, at Fleetwood Marine Lakes on the 28-29th, Marshside/Crossens on 20-24 March, at Taylor's Lane on 23 March and back at Marshside on 2 April.

An adult in the Pilling/Cockerham/Cockersand area on 16-31 July was most unusual and two north past Cleveleys on 7 Oct, three south past Ainsdale on the 9th and five west across the Mersey from Seaforth on the 11th were the first definite arrivals. Singles were at MMWWT on 19 Oct, Fluke Hall on the 25th and Hightown on 13 Nov, six at Crossens/Marshside on 22-23 Nov. A single first-winter was on Crossens on 26-27 Nov and one at Marshside on 11 Dec; two were at Pilling on 12 Dec and an adult at Fleetwood Farm on the 16th.

Two birds of uncertain race flew past Heysham on 7 Oct and one past Ainsdale on 10 Nov. One was at Stocks Reservoir 23 Dec;

**RED-BREASTED GOOSE** *Branta ruficollis*

Vagrant and escapee.

Last winter's first-winter was seen at various Fylde from 5 to 31 Jan. The usual feral adult was at MMWWT on 23 Jan, 14 & 30 Oct and 1 & 9 Nov but was not reported from Prescot Reservoirs or Knowsley Park this year, although it was seen on nearby Catchdale Moss on 15 Aug.

**SHELDUCK** *Tadorna tadorna*

Common winter visitor at coastal sites, common breeder. Scarce in east. Amber List (localised winter distribution).

International importance 3000; National importance 610.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	1716	1700	1398	698	643	821	275	271	1232	1734	1870	2024
Ribble WeBS	1464	852	1883	1292	910	1226	546	919	1115	3380	1955	1321
Alt WeBS	382	319	188	133	84	36	85	12	116	166	406	122
MMWWT	1012	850	465	/	190	160	58	35	/	30	890	1060

On the Ribble the five-year average remained only just above last year's figure, which was the lowest since 1985/86. The October peak of 3380 was, however, the highest in seven years there. The Ribble no longer qualifies as internationally important for this species but it is encouraging to see that the last two years' maxima have exceeded this threshold.

In Morecambe Bay a substantial decrease from previous years was evident at both ends of the year with a marked decrease between December 2010 and January 2011. The threshold for international importance was not exceeded in any month, although the five-year average remains quite high.

Only six pairs were confirmed breeding at MMWWT compared to 18 in 2010; 17 pairs bred at Hesketh Out Marsh. On the Fylde breeding was confirmed at Myerscough Quarry, Preesall, Glasson, Bank End, Cockersand and Lea Marsh. Elsewhere, Seaforth had at least five pairs and at Mere Sands Wood there was one pair.

In east Lancashire, where counts of this species are always low, the first record came in late February with a small peak of records in April and May. The highest count was just seven recorded at Rishton Reservoir in September and the only confirmed breeding came from Grimsargh Reservoirs.

**MANDARIN DUCK** *Aix galericulata*

Uncommon feral resident and escapee.

At the usual stronghold of Singleton there was just one pair this year; displaying was noted but there were no further signs of breeding. A peak of five were at Lightfoot Green, while in the Chorley area two pairs bred at Arley Nature Reserve with six young seen in August. At Adlington Reservoir there were four on 13 Nov.

In east Lancashire there were far fewer records this year, especially at Burnley and Cliviger – the latter a formerly regular breeding site with no sightings at all this year. Two pairs were on Upper Foulridge Reservoir on 24 Feb only. Other sites with regular sightings of individual birds included Stocks Reservoir, Blackburn Corporation Park and Shawbridge, Clitheroe.

**WIGEON** *Anas penelope*

Common winter visitor to coastal sites. Smaller numbers at some eastern sites. Amber List (localised, internationally important winter distribution).

International importance 15000, National importance 4400.

## Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	4267	4320	300	37	0	2	0	2	224	1584	1519	3651
EMC	260	320	165	24	4	1	/	12	355	520	360	340
MMWWT	1550	1220	670	0	4	0	1	26	4	400	650	800
Ribble WeBS	29135	31016	9870	127	12	1	4	12	8616	46093	21731	64251
Stocks Res.	90	4	4	1	0	0	4	6	7	10	126	244

The Ribble Estuary is far and away the most important site for Wigeon in the UK with more than double the numbers found anywhere else. The five-year average has remained fairly stable over the last decade, considering the large annual variations in annual peak counts – ranging between 68000 and 80000. In more recent years there has been a tendency for numbers to peak in November and December, in contrast to the 1980s when numbers remained fairly constant throughout each winter. This can perhaps be attributed to an exhaustion of the food supply by January due to the roughly five-fold increase over that time.

Large counts away from the main coastal sites included 580 on Warton Flood in north Lancashire on 14 Jan and 180 at Silverdale Moss on 20 Feb. By March most birds had departed. At least nine were at Marshside during May when displaying was observed. This is quite common on wintering grounds and although one bird was seen during June it appears that breeding did not take place. Up to four were at Leighton Moss and the Eric Morecambe Complex during May and June, and six on the Conder Estuary during May with up to three remaining into July, again with no sign of breeding.

The first large arrival of returning birds was 400 at Marshside on 2 Sept. The only three-figure counts from east Lancashire came in November and December when a peak of 244 was recorded at Stocks Reservoir. This is typical of the species here, peaking in early winter and dropping off rapidly, usually recorded only in single figures throughout the rest of the year.

**AMERICAN WIGEON\*** *Anas americana*

Vagrant.

A male on the River Douglas at Hesketh Out Marsh on Dec 28 was the only record of the year (J Aitchison).

**GADWALL** *Anas strepera*

Fairly common in small flocks at western wetland sites. Rare in east of county. Scarce breeder in southwest and far north of county. Amber List (internationally important national wintering population).

International importance 600; National importance 250.

## Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	4	0	2	21	9	0	0	2	8	25	16	26
EMC	29	161	42	40	23	16	5	18	104	115	26	44
Leighton Moss	68	28	36	35	22	65	52	122	105	70	190	59
Brockholes	/	/	/	6	4	4	2	3	8	18	44	50
Marshside	30	26	50	15	10	8	1	8	20	26	18	45
MMWWT	13	12	10	21	/	23	11	15	15	80	18	2

The wintering population at the county stronghold of Leighton Moss and the Eric Morecambe Complex continues to increase. The co-ordinated count on 18 Feb produced a February record count of 182. The 7 Sept co-ordinated count recorded 149 while on 16 & 19 Nov an annual maximum of 206 was counted. This lies slightly below record numbers but was far larger than last year. Again the vast majority of breeding birds were concentrated here – an estimated 27 pairs.

This species is uncommon on the Fylde; the only site to record double-figure counts was Marton Mere with a maximum of 22. Breeding was confirmed here while elsewhere on the Fylde summering birds were recorded at Newton Marsh and Mythop although breeding was not suspected.

Single pairs bred at MMWWT, Marshside and Hesketh Out Marsh; at Mere Sands Wood two pairs bred and at Seaforth one pair raised three young

Gadwall has always been rare in the east of the county so eight at Stocks Reservoir on 1 June represents a good count in what was a better year for the species with records from seven sites. In Chorley four at Croston Moss during October was also notable.

## **TEAL** *Anas crecca*

**Common winter visitor to western wetlands, smaller flocks in east. Rare breeding species. Amber List (internationally important national wintering population).**

**International importance 5000; National importance 2100.**

### Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	2590	892	257	58	0	0	17	441	936	1607	2240	2033
Ribble WeBS	3429	2750	1785	97	1	12	31	419	2500	2486	4275	5431
Leighton Moss	570	260	320	166	6	12	33	361	857	1260	1020	1175
Marton Mere	600	400	52	37	0	1	2	4	106	250	420	580
MMWWT	2370	1560	500	/	/	32	137	600	770	1350	2170	3530
Stocks Res.	222	134	47	51	16	4	6	123	108	198	325	450
Seaforth	830	950	90	25	0	1	4	42	117	139	219	760

Numbers on the Ribble have fallen well away from the exceptional peak of 19567 in October 2004. In the mid-1990s there was a similar decline following a then record count of 10200 in November 1991. The five-year average, however, currently remains high at just under 7000 and substantially more than the 4500 recorded during the 1980s. As usual the peak counts came in November and December which, this year, unusually coincided with prolonged periods of unseasonably warm weather. Although slightly lower this year than in 2010 the Morecambe Bay five-year average figures have roughly trebled this century.

A large inland moult gathering takes place near Nateby where up to 400 were present in September. Other large inland counts included 90 at Downholland Moss on 6 Feb. Aside from the large numbers at Stocks Reservoir, which were higher than in 2010, the largest count in east Lancashire was of 65 at Alston Reservoirs on 23 Dec.

Broods of six and two young were seen at Belmont Reservoir, the first breeding there since 2006. Also in the Chorley area, two pairs at Arley Nature Reserve were thought possibly to have bred. Up to 16 were present at Leighton Moss during late May but breeding was not proven this year. Similarly, six were at Marshside during June but again breeding was not confirmed.

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

### Vagrant.

As usual all records related to males. One was at Hesketh Out Marsh on 6 & 9 Jan, one at Seaforth on the 13th and one at Leighton Moss on the 16th. One was found at Glasson on 17 Jan and was

seen the following day when it had relocated to the Conder Estuary. In February one was at MMWWT on the 10th & 15th. It is impossible to know whether these records relate to one bird or whether several individuals went largely undetected in vast flocks of Teal but it is likely that four were involved, at least some of them likely to have been returning birds.

Later in the year probably only two were seen, both probably returning birds. The first sighting of the autumn came from Hesketh Out Marsh on 27-29 Oct. Presumably the same bird was then at Marshside and Crossens from 21 Oct until 20 Nov. This could also relate to the bird found on 29 Nov at MMWWT, which only remained until the following day. A male at Leighton Moss on 29 Dec remained into 2012.

## **MALLARD** *Anas platyrhynchos*

**Common and widespread winter visitor and breeding resident. Amber List (declining winter population).**

**International importance 20000; national importance 6800.**

### Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	1905	532	196	206	229	330	514	478	637	966	584	1322
Leighton Moss	135	216	98	55	45	85	520	620	276	173	260	120
Ribble WeBS	930	923	500	293	264	363	203	826	1204	928	940	1042
MMWWT	/	1430	756	770	841	800	1160	1175	1700	1650	1689	2320
Alt WeBS	569	302	23	28	21	26	50	96	324	362	497	384
Brockholes	/	/	/	/	/	37	80	123	121	138	176	200
Stocks Res.	300	20	18	25	37	88	68	230	220	250	240	400

The January WeBS count in Morecambe Bay was the highest since 1994. Elsewhere, numbers remained relatively stable at MMWWT and the Ribble and Alt Estuaries. The highest count at Preesall was just 400, less than half that recorded in 2010. Large inland counts included 246 at Downholland Moss on 6 Feb and 200 at Winmarleigh in September,

Breeding was reported from numerous sites across the county. Larger breeding congregations included 54 pairs at Leighton Moss and the Eric Morecambe Complex, 32 at Belmont Reservoir and 24 at Mere Sands Wood.

## **PINTAIL** *Anas acuta*

**Common winter visitor to coast and western wetlands. Very rare breeder. Amber List (internationally important national wintering population).**

**International importance 600; National importance 290.**

### Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	369	215	8	4	0	0	0	0	212	212	322	419
Leighton Moss	12	200	74	45	2	0	0	0	14	15	72	16
Ribble WeBS	2074	668	53	13	1	2	0	0	21	52	673	202
MMWWT	280	390	237	4	0	0	0	4	17	130	125	515
Stocks Res	45	22	2	0	0	0	0	0	4	10	114	111

The largest single site count of 1500 at Fairhaven on 6 Jan contributed significantly that that month's count on the Ribble which was higher than last year's peak. Despite this, the five-year average there has declined by almost 50% during this decade. The December WeBS count was the lowest for that month for twelve years. However, at least 350 were recorded at Marshside during the month although none were reported from Lytham.

There was little change in the annual peaks in Morecambe Bay or at MMWWT, where the species is nationally important. Up to 450 were at Cockersand in January and up to 500 at Pilling

Lane Ends in November, both of which counts were missed by the Morecambe Bay WeBS. At Warton Floods in north Lancashire 120 were present on 29 Jan and 180 on 22 Dec. After the early departure in spring 2010 a large proportion of the MMWWT wintering flock remained into March, as is more typical historically.

### **GARGANEY** *Anas querquedula*

**Scarce spring and autumn migrant and rare, occasional breeder. Amber List (rare breeder).**

The first returning birds consisted of a pair at Leighton Moss from 7 April, some 16 days later than in 2010. A pair was seen here frequently until 10 June, peaking at three on 17 May and a brood of young birds seen there on 16 May constituted the only confirmed breeding in the county.

Three were at Marshside on 21-22 April with a pair remaining until the 30th. Sightings of pairs were recorded during spring at a number of sites including Mythop from 23-27 April and Stocks Reservoir on the 24th. Single males were at Brockholes on 29 April (with a female there on 29 May) and MMWWT on 5-12 May with three there on the 12th. On the Fylde the first of several at Newton Marsh was a male on 19 April followed by others on 6 May, 21-22 May and 24 May-4 June. What may have been the bird seen at Newton was at Fairhaven Lake on 23 May.

The first returning bird of the autumn was one at Brockholes on 9 July. One was then at Leighton Moss on 5 Aug, remaining until the 27th with two there on 17-21 Aug. An adult female was then at Brockholes on 28-29 Aug. A long-staying bird at Newton Marsh from 19 Sept to 2 Nov was joined by a second on 7 Oct. Elsewhere on the Fylde single birds were present at Eagland Hill on 14 Sept and Mythop on 19-30 Sept.

### **SHOVELER** *Anas clypeata*

**Common winter visitor to west and far north. Scarce breeder. Amber List (internationally important national wintering population).**

**International importance 400; National importance 180.**

#### Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	12	2	2	5	0	0	0	0	49	53	106	54
Leighton / EMC	34	32	47	45	60	30	26	72	178	203	196	102
Ribble WeBS	67	103	67	29	10	2	8	9	120	202	111	148
Marshside	66	96	110	30	6	2	/	35	112	188	102	121
MMWWT	0	6	11	29	6	20	12	20	7	75	32	55
Marton Mere	50	15	15	3	1	1	9	9	9	10	29	26

The monthly counts on the Ribble Estuary throughout the year were generally similar to those in 2010 although the peak fell well short of the 346 recorded last year. The trend here is of a tripling in numbers since 1998, before which numbers were stable at fewer than 100. This is consistent with a more gradual national increase of 100% over the last 45 years.

In east Lancashire, where the species is scarce, uncommonly large counts included 19 at Fishmoor Reservoir and seven at Alston Wetland during November.

Twenty pairs bred at Leighton Moss; other breeding records included single pairs at Newton Marsh and Mythop. There were three males at Mere Sands Wood in May and MMWWT, the latter of which compared poorly to the ten last year. No breeding records were received from Marshside.

**POCHARD** *Aythya ferina*

Common winter visitor, scarce breeder. Amber List (declining winter population).

International importance 3500; National importance 380.

## Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dockacres	90	40	10	4	0	0	3	6	25	37	34	91
Leighton Moss	16	69	80	20	14	6	9	32	28	116	84	4
Marton Mere	20	12	2	0	1	2	1	1	1	7	46	30
MMWWT	135	129	/	7	2	5	0	0	15	30	61	107
Seaforth	34	48	20	2	0	1	2	3	7	11	18	12

The wintering population that moves between Leighton Moss and Dockacres fell to just half the level of last year.

Small numbers were present in east Lancashire, only reaching double figures at Foulridge and Stocks Reservoirs. The latter site received the lion's share of birds, especially in November and December when a maximum of 43 were present.

Thirteen pairs were present at Leighton Moss during the spring but breeding was not definitely confirmed. Two pairs bred at MMWWT.

**TUFTED DUCK** *Aythya fuligula*

Common winter visitor, scarce breeder. Amber List (Species of European Conservation Concern).

International importance 1200; National importance 1100.

## Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Leighton Moss	124	112	92	74	18	30	52	24	20	35	56	62
Dockacres	123	95	55	24	20	12	23	71	32	56	59	125
Alston Reservoirs	3	/	6	11	8	29	55	82	68	29	11	12
Brockholes	66	31	43	28	/	/	14	35	49	58	72	88
Glasson	103	34	29	12	/	2	28	25	42	37	93	57
Ribble WeBS	239	114	59	69	11	17	22	29	203	/	39	136
MMWWT	30	22	/	18	20	32	1	3	/	21	150	97
Seaforth	18	17	14	19	9	22	141	130	36	26	32	5

The wintering numbers at Glasson Basin could not match the highs of recent years. This might be expected given the considerably warmer weather experienced during much of both winter periods. On the Ribble, largely on Ainsdale Sands Lake, and at Leighton Moss similar levels to that of previous years were reached. Notable increases were noted at MMWWT and Brockholes.

Breeding included six at MMWWT, four pairs at Marshside, three at both Brockholes and Dockacres, and two at Pilling Lane Ends and Belmont Reservoir. Confirmed breeding of lone pairs came from Maghull, Sand Villa Pool, Alston Reservoir and Black Moss Reservoirs. Seven males were at Mere Sands Wood but breeding was not confirmed. Seaforth is evidently still the main post-breeding moult site in the county where the flock remained at about the same level as last year.

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

Vagrant.

The returning male on the Fylde was relocated at Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park on 27 Jan. Rarely remaining at any one site for more than a couple of days it was also recorded at Thornton ICI Reservoir and Bispham Marsh until 9 March. After a further fortnight it was seen again, this time at Marton Mere on 23 March. It is interesting to consider where it might have been since 28 Dec

2010 when it was last seen at Marton Mere. There were no other reports of this species during that time period in the whole of north-west England. This is in contrast to January 2010 when it was present throughout.

A male presumed to be the same as the one on the Fylde stopped off briefly at Seaforth, being present on 24-25 March (S Young).

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

**Uncommon winter visitor to coast in small numbers, scarce inland. Red List (declining national winter population).**

**International importance 3100; national importance 52.**

#### Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Seaforth	1	2	8	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	3



*Steve Young*

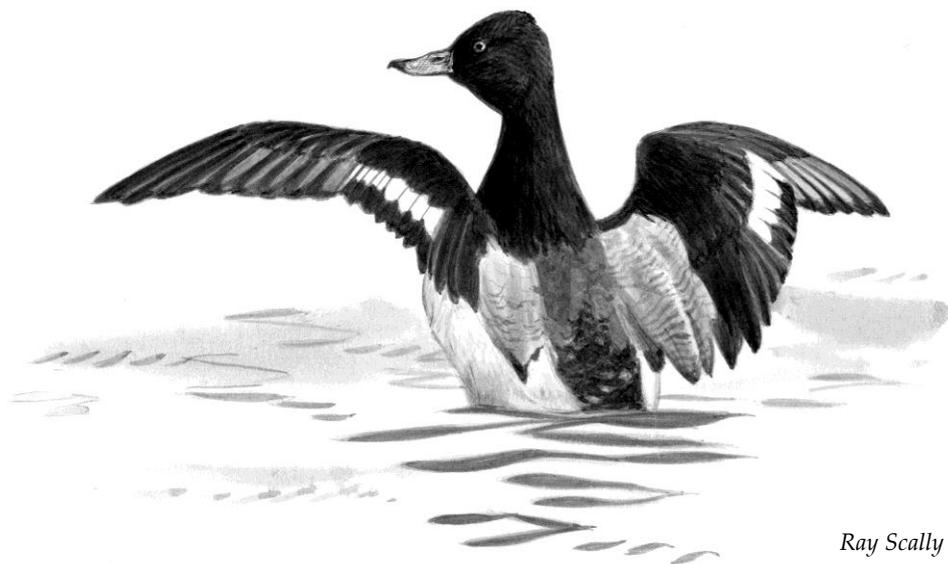
The county stronghold of Seaforth saw another catastrophic year for this species. The early winter peak was just eight whilst the only late winter records were of three from 24 Dec onwards. To put that into perspective, the 2010 peak of 20 was only half that of the previous year.

Elsewhere, eight were on the sea off Ainsdale on 19 March (perhaps the same as at Seaforth) and a late individual stopped off at Brockholes from 26 April to 9 May. The regular male made its annual summer appearance at Seaforth with Tufted Ducks on 17 June only.

Two males were seen regularly off Ainsdale from 16 Sept, increasing to five during November when three were also seen off Formby Point, and up to eight were off Morecambe during October. On 11 Nov – a day when there was a noticeable influx of wildfowl into Stocks Reservoir – a first-winter male and a female were found. Two more were then at Fairhaven Lake on 24-30 Dec. On 28 Dec a male was at Belmont Reservoir.

**LESSER SCAUP** *Aythya affinis***Vagrant.**

A first-winter male was discovered at Marshside on 19 March (P Kinsella). It was a very cooperative individual as it usually associated with Tufted Ducks on Rainford's Lagoon, allowing close study. It remained until 10 April and was then seen again on the 22nd. After a week's disappearance it was then relocated at MMWWT on the 29th where it stayed until 3 May and was seen again on the 10th. The record has been accepted by the BBRC and represents the fifth for the county.



Ray Scally

**AYTHYA HYBRIDS**

A 'Scaup-type' male with Pochard x Tufted Duck parentage, that has occurred on and off for four years, was present at Stocks Reservoir between 12 Feb and 12 March.

**EIDER** *Somateria mollissima*

**Common winter visitor to Fylde coast and Morecambe Bay, scarce elsewhere. Scarce breeder. Amber List (declining winter population).**

**International importance 12850; national importance 550.**

**Historical:** Correction to the avifauna: the record of one male and twelve females over Wood End, Burnley on 24 July 1984 should read 'a male and two females'.

**Monthly peak counts**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	184	81	251	173	76	103	116	52	113	298	174	102
Ribble WeBS	0	0	58	157	150	156	33	85	4	18	0	8
Rossall Point	165	56	250	180	41	/	2	3	53	52	96	52

Peak counts on the Ribble showed a slight decline on the previous year but the April peak of 157 was still the third highest ever. It is amazing to think that just 18 years ago the Ribble recorded its first double-figure count. The annual breeding season peak probably involves a proportion of non-breeding birds and the number of breeding pairs remains unknown. Juveniles were noted as usual at Lytham, with a maximum of 41 on 22 June.

Following the very high counts of last year, the Morecambe Bay population was slightly smaller, but showed an increase in the late winter period. At Heysham, the best totals were quite low – just 168 in March and 70 in April.

This species is very rare inland so a first-winter male discovered on Lower Foulridge Reservoir on 11 Nov was appreciated by a great many east Lancs birders. What wasn't expected was that an adult male would turn up the following day on the Upper Reservoir and stay to the 13th.

## **LONG-TAILED DUCK** *Caligula hymnals*

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

A male in partial summer plumage flew into Morecambe Bay off Heysham on the somewhat late date of 27 April. On 30 April a male flew north past Starr Gate then lingered off Rossall Point until the following day.

A female picked up on the River Wyre at Out Rawcliffe on 18 Dec was then released at Fleetwood Marine Lakes. It offered excellent close views at times when it became apparent that it was in poor health; it died on 23rd. A long -staying individual was present at Prescott Reservoirs from 21 Nov until 28 Dec.

Reports from Ainsdale included a flock of 14 landing on the sea as they flew south on 28 Oct, four on 2 Nov and an 'adult female' south on the 17th.

## **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. Amber List (localised winter distribution).**

**International importance 16000; National importance 1000.**

### Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Ainsdale	/	/	/	/	/	95	318	1120	4320	6562	3240	1123
Blackpool	870	500	1000	309	115	250	5500	10000	1500	8000	1500	1500

Observations from Ainsdale on a nearly daily basis during the second half of the year give a picture of the possible numbers present but as with all seawatching counts it is often difficult to determine numbers accurately. Along the whole coast it is obvious that these birds are highly mobile. The massive day to day variations warn that without the help of aerial surveys it is virtually impossible to estimate actual numbers. Aerial surveys in previous years have shown that the majority of birds are found further offshore in Liverpool Bay.

The occurrence of Common Scoter on inland reservoirs is a feature of local patch watching during late summer in Lancashire. Counts of threes came from Stocks Reservoir on 10 July and Alston Reservoirs on 20 July. Brockholes and Rishton, Dean Clough and Fishmoor Reservoirs also had records between July and mid-August. A male was on Belmont Reservoir on 18 Sept. Late records of one at Alston Reservoirs on 12 Oct, followed by two on the 14th, were unusual.

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

**Uncommon winter visitor.**

On the Fylde all records came offshore in the Blackpool area. Reports involved a male on 1 March, twos on 14 April and 29 Oct, a pair on 9 Nov and one on 10 Nov. An unseasonal individual, no doubt lingering with the non-breeding Common Scoter throughout the spring was seen off Blackpool on 24 July.

Reports from the Sefton Coast included three off Formby Point on 25 Nov and twos off Ainsdale on 29 Oct and 12 Dec.

## **GOLDENEYE** *Bucephala clangula*

**Common winter visitor.**

**International importance 4000; National importance 200.**

### Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	58	34	20	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	39	16
Alston Reservoirs	22	32	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	27	53
Seaforth	61	97	51	20	0	0	0	0	0	8	22	40

In both the early and late winter period numbers on the county's premier site, the Lune Estuary, were much reduced compared to last year. There were no three-figure counts from Glasson or the Conder Estuary for the first time in several years. Elsewhere on the Fylde up to 17 were at Marton Mere where a late-staying bird was present until 27 April.

While numbers on the Lune were lower than previously, many other sites enjoyed sizeable increases. This could perhaps be attributed to the warmer conditions in both winter periods not forcing birds to rivers and estuaries. At Alston numbers in the early winter period were similar to those of previous years but the count of 53 in December was substantially higher than in recent years. Conversely, the increase on 2010 figures seen at Brockholes during the early winter was considerable, representing a return to the numbers seen in the past. The peak of 37 on 13 March compares very favourably with a peak of just 15 last year. Numbers here are always smaller in the late winter period but a peak of seven represents an increase on last year's counts.

High numbers were also recorded at Seaforth where the February peak of 97 exceeded last year's maximum count. Numbers at MMWWT peaked at six in February with just two there in the late winter period.

## **SMEW** *Mergus albellus*

**Uncommon winter visitor.**

During a cold spell in early January a small influx of this species was noted. A redhead on the Ribble at Balderstone on 5 Jan flew downstream, perhaps the same bird that was located on the Ribble at Brockholes on the 8th. On the same day two redheads were seen on the Ribble at Lytham. A male and two redheads were then found at Brockholes on 1 Feb with one remaining until the 6th. A long-staying redhead was at MMWWT from 6 Feb to 19 March.

In November single redheads were at Stocks Reservoir on the 6th and Marton Mere on the 26th. Another redhead arrived at Leighton Moss on 15 Dec and remained to the end of the year

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

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

**International importance 1700; National importance 84.**

### Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	34	30	53	59	5	7	0	0	14	32	36	49

There were fewer reports than in previous years from Formby Point. In the early winter period four on 19 Jan was the maximum, whilst on 15 Nov there were 32. A male at Marton Mere on 10 March was an unusual inland record. At Rossall Point a maximum of 40 were counted on 10 April. Up to 26 were present on Fleetwood Marine Lakes during November and December.

Birds were recorded in every month of the year at Stocks Reservoir. This has become more common in recent years in that, although early birds do return in January, they rarely stay the whole of the late winter period. Up to five pairs were present but the only confirmed breeding was a female with five young on 19 July. Two pairs were on the Hodder at Burlolme in April and another two pairs at Barnacre Reservoir on May 25.

## **GOOSANDER** *Mergus merganser*

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

International importance 2700; National importance 120.

### Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	8	31	13	6	2	2	3	4	16	9	11	18
River Lune	37	27	25	20	36	16	130	94	37	24	33	27
Alston Res	48	51	20	3	3	5	1	1	10	4	17	6
Stocks Reservoir	5	5	8	5	4	6	7	8	20	5	11	4

Several reservoirs in east Lancashire not included in the above table had double-figure roost gatherings during winter. Fishmoor Reservoir held up to 28 and Clowbridge had up to 22, both in January. Up to 30 were at Dockacres in January but there were no more than eight during the remainder of the year. Fylde locations with double-figure counts were Myerscough Quarry with up to 14 in January and the River Wyre at Rawcliffe Hall with 15 in December.

Breeding was confirmed on the Calder, Ribble and Lune, although as usual the exact breeding locations remain unknown. Breeding confirmation comes almost exclusively from sightings of ducklings accompanied by a female as they move downstream to forage. Family groups were noted at six different locations with two particularly large gatherings noted: a female with 17 ducklings at Lower Hodder Bridge and one at Clitheroe with 19 young. This is almost certainly the result of more than one female laying eggs in the same nest.

Thirty-two males were seen in a pre-breeding flock at Greta Foot. The post-breeding counts on the River Lune were far higher than those for recent years. One off Formby Point on 22 Feb was the only record at sea.

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

Decreasing feral winter visitor and scarce breeder.

There were only four records all year, providing further proof that the national cull has had a significant effect on the species even some distance from where culling has taken place.

In east Lancashire one was on the River Ribble on 15 Jan. A female present at Seaforth in 2010 remained until 6 Feb. A female was at Thornton ICI Reservoir on 28 Feb. In Blackpool, a male was at Stanley Park on 11 & 26 July.

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

Common breeding resident. Red List (breeding decline).

### Historical

Four shot on 20 Nov 1883 on Simonswood Moss, then part of the Croxteth Hall Estate, would indicate that the species was sufficiently numerous on this lowland raised bog at the time for driven shooting.

**2011**

The upward trend in numbers and breeding success in Bowland continues as illustrated by the systematic counts undertaken on four shooting estates by the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust:

Year	Spring pairs/100 ha	Mean brood size	July density birds/100 ha
2011	52	5.9	149
2010	43	5.3	111
2009	35	4.6	114
2008	44	-	-
2007	35	3.5	88
2006	21.5	3.5	80
2005	18.5	4.0	75

The subsequent shooting season in Bowland was reported as being one of the best for many years with good bags widely reported, the largest of which was the 1053 shot on one of the Abbeystead beats on 12 Aug.

Casual records were received from 32 sites in Bowland and included 44 on Saddle Fell on 24 Feb and other double-figure counts from Calf Clough Head, Jubilee Tower and Hawthornthwaite Fell. Records were also received, albeit in single figures, from the Bowland outliers of Longridge, Waddington, Easington, Newton and Bradford Fells. Eight at the Nick of Pendle on 21 Nov was the largest count from the Pendle area whilst elsewhere in east Lancashire 22 were at Watersheddles Reservoir on 19 Feb. Single-figure counts were also received from White Moor, Barnoldswick and Oswaldtwistle Moor plus a report of 44 shot above Trawden on 12 Aug.

The West Pennine Moors reported a poor season due mainly to fires in late April over approximately 10km<sup>2</sup> of Anglezarke and Withnell Moors. Counts in the days immediately following the fires located at least nine displaced pairs over the burnt area of Anglezarke Moor with two burnt-out nests found. Counts on the unaffected moors at the same time revealed at least eight pairs on Hoddlesden Moss, 13 pairs in 100ha of Darwen Moor and twelve pairs in 300ha of Belmont Moor. Shooting on Anglezarke and Withnell Moors was cancelled due to the fires and a relatively poor 165+ were driven over guns on Darwen Moor on 22 Sept with 31 shot. Seventy were seen during a shoot on Belmont Moor on 24 Sept and likewise 22+ on Hoddlesden Moss on 1 Oct.

**BLACK GROUSE\*** *Tetrao tetrix*

**Extinct former resident.**

**Historical**

Contrary to the Avifauna that states the species was last seen at Abbeystead in 1985; the species was in fact extant in that area for another decade with at least three still present in 1992 and a female seen into 1995.

**2011**

A female was seen by a gamekeeper, with experience of this species, in a remote part of Bowland in late March/early April. First-year females are known to wander widely and the location lies within the known dispersal range from resident populations outside the county.

There have been rumours of occasional birds seen in Bowland on several occasions since the last confirmed record in 1997 that signalled the end of Lancashire's resident population. The 2011

sighting is likely to be the first county record of a genuine wild bird since, as the bird(s) seen on Pendle on 9 Feb 2008 were thought to have been from released stock.

The Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust is currently considering Bowland as part of the project to restore the distribution of Black Grouse in northern England by translocating males (as they tend not disperse) to suitable former sites within the dispersal range of females from extant populations. The 2011 female sighting would clearly add weight to the suitability of parts of Bowland.

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

**Fairly common resident. Population maintained by regular releases in many areas.**

Comparing the 245 records from 147 locations received to the 396 records from 152 locations for Grey Partridge is misleading, as almost all the Red-legged Partridge reports refer to released birds, in contrast to the records from our native species which are, in the vast majority, of wild origin.

As usual very few records of successful breeding were received (only two in 2010), one of which was a brood of eleven young at Cockersand on 4 July with a covey of 14 there on 27 Sept. Elsewhere in the north of the county pairs were present at five sites in the Lune Valley, large scale releases were reported from Caton and northern parts of Bowland plus records were received from another ten sites. The Fylde reported 80 records from 35 sites with the very large numbers released in the Pilling area responsible for counts of 107 there on 18 Nov, 60 at nearby Fluke Hall on 4 Dec with a brood of one at Pilling on 6 Aug. Rawcliffe Moss recorded 23 on 9 Jan and to the south, a pair was in Preston Docks on 15 April.

Scattered records from across the south-west moors included 30 on Burscough Moss on 2 April, 21 at Great Altcar on 23 Nov, 19 at Rufford on 20 Dec, 17 at Westhead on 10 July and twelve near MMWWT on 20 Dec. Smaller coveys were reported from many sites including a garden in Parbold, the Old Coach Road area plus the Liverpool fringe at Netherley and Croxteth.

The largest counts from the Chorley area were of 20 at Bretherton on 26 Sept and 13 on Croston Moss on 12 Feb with territorial pairs reported from Brindle. In the West Pennine Moors 50 were in the Belmont area in January with a covey of 21 seen on 20 Feb with pairs present at three sites during the breeding season. The only records of note from east Lancashire were ten at Newton on New Year's Day and seven at Marl Hill on 22 Oct.

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

**Common but declining resident in the south and west. Red List (breeding decline).**

The number of reports received was very similar to the record year of 2010 with 396 (404 in 2010) from 152 locations (159 in 2010). This species would appear to have enjoyed a very productive breeding season in 2011, particularly in the cereal growing areas in the west of the county, judging by the size and number of impressive counts received from late summer onwards.

The 14 at Colloway and the twelve at Cockersand in January and November were the highlights from north Lancashire. The Fylde remains a county stronghold although the number of records was notably down from 170 in 2010 to 83 and from a reduced number of 32 sites, down from 40 in 2010. However, breeding was reported from four sites including two broods of twelve young and 50 were reported released at Pilling in August. A good breeding season was clearly evident with 17 double-figure coveys totalling 268 birds reported on the Fylde from September to the year's end, including 40 on Lytham Moss on 8 Dec, 23 on Pilling Moss on 2 Nov, 17 on Clifton Marsh on 18 Sept and 16 at Weeton on 31 Oct. In the Preston area, two pairs were on Farington Moss in the spring with two coveys totalling 14 later, 21 were at Hutton on 11 Dec whilst a single at Brockholes on 24 June was noteworthy.

The majority of Chorley's records came from the mosses near Croston with 30 on Mawdesley Moss on 29 Sept, ten at Bretherton Eyes on 24 Oct and 40 on Croston-Mawdesley Moss on 2 Oct. A better year than of late was reported from the West Pennine Moors with four pairs around Belmont in the breeding season but still well down from the nine pairs in 2007.

The 17 reports from 16 sites in east Lancashire represented a further decline from the 41 records from 25 sites as recently as 2007, with the highlights being ten at Cant Clough and seven at Coal Clough in January and a brood seen at Grindleton on 31 July. Reports from Bowland included small numbers at Thrushgill and at Chipping.

Some good counts came from the south side of the Ribble Marshes including 21 on Hesketh Out Marsh on 3 Nov, 14 at Crossens on 1 Nov, 13 in November and December at Marshside, where two pairs were present in the spring along with eight seen in the old sand plant there on 22 Oct.

In the south-west, 32 were on Burscough Moss on 2 Jan, twelve at Dairy Farm, St. Helens on 7 Nov, ten at Altcar Withins on 21 Nov, seven at Rainford on 26 Sept and seven on King's Moss on New Year's Day. Several other small coveys were reported over a widespread area from the Birkdale and Ravenmeols dunes on the coast through to St. Helens. Further east, 17 records were received from the Parkside area of Newton-le-Willows that included 68 in twelve coveys on 29 Aug and 71 in nine coveys on 21 Oct.

A strong population is present along the east and south-east Liverpool hinterland with over 60 records from some 20 sites in this area. Up to eight pairs were at Oglet on 17 April with 44 there on 28 Dec. Other notable counts included 31 at Tarbock on 29 Oct, 25 near Croxteth Park on 25 Oct, eleven on Oglet shore on 23 Oct, ten at Speke on Boxing Day, ten at Netherley on 28 Nov with several other single-figure coveys recorded.

## **QUAIL** *Coturnix coturnix*

**Scarce summer visitor to west, often in influxes. Occasional evidence of localised escapees. Amber List (Species of European Conservation Concern).**

2011 was by far the best Quail year in Lancashire since 2008 with 31 singing birds reported from 20 sites, over double the numbers recorded in 2010.

The first record, and the only one this year from the eastern uplands, was of a bird flushed at Gisburn on 7 May. In north Lancashire, a bird was flushed at Aldcliffe on 4 June and one was singing at Cockersand from 30 May to 5 June.

On the Fylde, up to five were singing in the Eagland Hill area of Over Wyre between 28 May and 20 July with up to two singing at both Nateby and at Rawcliffe on dates between 17 June and 6 Aug.

The south-west mosses recorded 17 singing birds from twelve sites between 2 June and 17 August with multiple birds heard at Clieves Hill (two in July), Plex Moss (four on 27 July), Ormskirk (two in Aug) and at Little Crosby (two on 17 Aug which were the last recorded birds of 2011). Single singing birds were reported from King's Moss, MMWWT, Newton-le-Willows, Sollom Moss, Burscough, Hesketh Out Marsh, Eccleston and Rufford. Further east, up to three were singing on Mawdesley Moss from 26 June until 6 Aug and one was near Ulnes Walton on 15 July.

## **PHEASANT** *Phasianus colchicus*

**Common resident. Population maintained at a high level in many areas by releases.**

### **Historical**

1444 were shot on 20 Nov 1883 on Kirkby-Simonswood Moss, then part of the Croxteth Hall Estate, out of a day's bag totalling 1812 head of game.

### **2011**

The number of records received, including the 597 records from 150 locations received via Birdtrack, gives a fair impression of the species' distribution in the county but does not reflect the very large numbers being released on some estates.

Records from north Lancashire included 50 at Leighton Moss on 2 Jan, 30 on Silverdale Moss on 14 Jan and four nests found at Arkholme on 14 April; the Lancaster wintering bird survey recorded 231 – up from 191 in 2010. The three birds recorded at Heysham during the year represented a revival in the species' fortunes there. The highlight of the 126 records from the Fylde were 24 at Singleton on 3 Oct and eleven at Marton Mere from January to March.

Records from east Lancashire and Bowland included 18 at Hareden and Dunsop Bridge on 19 May, 15 in Roeburndale on 18 Dec, 14 at Laneshaw Reservoir on 30 Dec with other double-figure counts received from Whitewell and Moor Piece. Nine territories were recorded at Brockholes.

There were regular counts of up to six in the Speke, Garston and Oglet areas of south Liverpool plus 18 between Speke and the county boundary at Hale on 16 Oct. One in the old Garden Festival site on 27 Jan was described as very unusual. There were no notable records from the south-west mosses despite the widespread and locally numerous status of the species there although further east towards Chorley, 50 were on Mawdsley Moss on 8 Jan and 21 at Whittle on 4 Dec.

Gamekeepers reported an excellent breeding season in the West Pennine Moors around Belmont with an estimated 50 wild broods present, whilst releases were responsible for 300+ there on 27 Nov. Forty on the island in Belmont Reservoir on 19 Jan was exceptional.

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

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

**International importance: 10000. National importance: 170.**

Typically, birds were present somewhere in the region in all months of the year except August, with most records coming from the usual sites. Morecambe Bay sightings are becoming scarce other than on spring passage. First winter period peaks were 105 off Formby Point (19 Jan), 42 off Blackpool (19 Jan) and 22 at Heysham (12 March). Other records, of up to eight birds, came from Jenny Brown's Point, Rossall Point, Cleveleys and Bispham.

Double-figure counts continued into April off the Blackpool coast with a peak of 60 on the 16th and seven other dates with counts of up to 20. All other records were in single figures and the last for this period were three off Blackpool on 30 July.

The first returned characteristically in September with singles at Rossall Point and Fleetwood Marine Lake on the 8th and off Formby Point on the 9th, four at Blackpool on the 19th, and 32 at Ainsdale on the 25th. The only October count was of 14 at Ainsdale on the 27th. At Blackpool 75 were present on 8 Nov falling to c.30 on the 9-10th. Fifty-two were off Formby Point on 15 Nov with 57 at Ainsdale on the 23rd. The last of the year were six at Ainsdale and seven at Blackpool on 15 Dec, 15 at Rossall Point on the 22nd and a single at Heysham on the 23rd.

The only confirmed inland records were singles at Belmont Reservoir on 8 Oct (the first site record) and at Rishton Reservoir, possibly the same bird, on 13 Nov. Probables from east Lancashire were one flying west over Rose Grove on 12 Sept and two at Stocks Reservoir on 9 Oct.

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

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

Records for this species are always few and far between and tend to be concentrated in April-May as birds return to their breeding grounds; there were seven sightings last year. This year there were several reports of birds off Ainsdale but the only other record was one off Rossall Point on 30 March, which was possibly the same bird seen again at Anchorsholme on the 15 April.

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

**Scarce, less than annual, mostly on coast.**

On average first records for this species occur towards the end of March/beginning of April, with the occasional report of a bird or two in February. So a juvenile at Fleetwood Dock on 2-23 Jan, one off Heysham Harbour mouth on the 6th and another off Birkdale on the 23rd were unusual. More typically, singles were off Blackpool on 27 March and Ainsdale on 1 May.

At the other end of the year singles were at Ainsdale (25 Sept & 10-11 Nov), Knott End (18 Oct) and Blackpool (8 Nov) with the final bird of the year at Rossall Point on 11 Dec.

### **FULMAR** *Fulmarus glacialis*

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

Annual sightings continue to be poor but there were more reported this year than last. An unseasonal record was a bird on 15 Feb off Heysham, where there also singles on 2 April and 29 May, and two on 16 May. Ones and twos were seen around Knott End and Rossall Point from February through to April and up to three were off Blackpool in May and June with one off Formby Point on 16 May and again on 18 July.

Into September, three were off Heysham on the 8th, while on the 13th perhaps as many as 20 were off Ainsdale, eight off Blackpool, nine at Heysham and two at Formby Point. The following day two were at Heysham, six still present off Ainsdale and one offshore at Seaforth. There were two records in October: singles off Seaforth on the 7th and Jenny Brown's Point on the 10th. The last record for the year was two birds flying out of Heysham Harbour on 14 Dec, one of which was a 'dark/blue' individual.

### **MANX SHEARWATER** *Puffinus puffinus*

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

Most records came from just four sites: Formby Point/Ainsdale, Blackpool, Rossall Point and Heysham.

Spring passage came a little later than last year with the first three reported on 30 April, compared to 14 April last year. In May 40 went past Ainsdale on the 12th, two were off Heysham on the 20th, three off Blackpool on the 22nd & 23rd, and up to 72 passed Rossall Point on the 28th. Counts at Heysham rose to a peak of 30 on the 29th before falling to virtually none in June.

On 10 June 222 were off Ainsdale with 137 at Blackpool the next day and 117 at Formby Point on the 16th. Apart from 162 flying north at Ainsdale on the 7th and 38 on the 13th other July counts there and elsewhere were low and infrequent. Five were in the mouth of the Mersey on the 18th, up to seven were at Blackpool, while Heysham only recorded three on the 17th.

August counts remained low at Heysham (two on the 10th) with counts at Blackpool being considerably more: 42 on the 8th, 38 on the 16th and nine on the 28th. Formby Point/Ainsdale recorded 27 on the 4th, 30 on the 6th and 28 on the 8th. In September up to 30 were off Ainsdale on the 7th with some birds tracking further south into the mouth of the Mersey about this time. Heysham reported low single figures until the 13th but larger numbers were off Blackpool, including 169 on the 10th, 250 on the 11th and 116 on the 17th.

The last of the year were five in the mouth of the Mersey on 6 Oct, one at Knott End on the 18th and two offshore at Formby Point the same day.

### **BALEARIC SHEARWATER\*** *Puffinus mauretanicus*

**Vagrant.**

One was seen and photographed 3.5km offshore from Rossall Point on 25 Aug on one of the Fylde Bird Club's pelagic trips (SG Piner, PG Slade *et al*). This is the fourth county record and the first since 2004.

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

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

Four records prevented this being another blank year. Singles were at Heysham on 17 July, Formby Point and the Mersey Mouth during a gale on the 18th, and Ainsdale on 8 Sept.

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

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

Despite almost ideal seawatching conditions counts this year were low. The first were seen typically in September: three in the mouth of the Mersey on the 7th and one off Heysham on the 7-8th. All other September records were during the period 12-14th with peak counts of eight off Heysham, 20 on the Blackpool coast, 15 at Ainsdale and two off Formby Point.

The next period of activity was from 5-11 Oct with singles at Jenny Brown's Point, Blackpool and Fairhaven, up to seven off Heysham and Formby Point, two off Ainsdale and up to six in the mouth of the Mersey. Five were off Formby on 18 Oct and one at Ainsdale on the 20th. A well-watched bird off Heysham on 14 Dec was the only other record.

### **GANNET** *Morus bassanus*

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

An uninspiring year with reduced counts from most sites except Formby Point/Ainsdale which witnessed an atypically large late passage.

The first at Heysham on 12 March and in the mouth of the Mersey on the 31st were followed by single figures counts at Formby Point on 5 April and 36 off Heysham on the 12th. Good numbers continued at Heysham the following month with 254 recorded in spring and further peaks of 25 and 47 on the 15th and 16th. The only other records for the month came from Blackpool with 48 on the 23rd and 30 the following day, and 100 off Ainsdale on the 12th with 111 there on the 14th.

June saw the possible start of the return passage at Formby Point/Ainsdale including 95 on the 2nd and 116 on the 26th; high numbers continued into July with 145 and 135 on the 30th and 31st respectively. Elsewhere, Blackpool had a peaks of 40 on 25 June, 74 on the 26th, and 140 on 9 July.

Counts remained high at Formby/Ainsdale in August, including 183 on the 4th, 192 on the 7th and 104 on the 21st. Double-figure counts continued into September, with peaks of 49 on the 3rd and 42 on the 13th and two or three in the mouth of the Mersey on the 8th & 14th. Mostly single-figure counts continued at Heysham during the period August to October with a peak of 15 on 14 Sept.

There were two on the Mersey on 10 Oct and several double-figure counts came from the Sefton Coast during November, including 23 on the 10th and 26 on the 25th. The last of the year were two off Cleveleys on 13 Dec and two at Ainsdale on the 20th.

Inland, singles were at Foulridge Reservoirs on 24 May and Pine Lake on 25 May and 7-9 June.

## **CORMORANT** *Phalacrocorax carbo*

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

**International importance: 1200. National importance: 350.**

### Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	92	111	98	35	52	64	73	179	244	231	157	124
Ribble WeBS	268	283	378	207	150	214	249	305	941	844	1197	1109
Seaforth	79	1414	497	300	100	67	77	200	602	650	370	360
Formby/Ainsdale	60	30	/	24	80	80	35	85	150	110	30	260
Heysham	57	42	18	11	6	17	11	23	59	63	109	59
Stocks Res	10	36	37	26	9	10	28	64	60	44	62	26

Counts missed by WeBS included 650 at Starr Gate on 30 Jan and 1000+ on the Ribble at Lytham on 3 Sept. Counts from the Ribble do appear to be increasing year on year during the latter months of the year. The count from Seaforth on 7 Feb (during a force 9 westerly) was a county record.

The following peaks were recorded at inland sites away from Stocks Reservoir: Upper Rivington Reservoir 24 (March) and 14 (Nov), Belmont Reservoir 26 (March, a site record) and ten (Dec), Delph Reservoir 13 (March), Dean Clough Reservoir seven (Feb), Mere Sands Wood 14 (March), Marton Mere 35 (Feb/March), Brockholes 15, Foulridge Reservoir 13 (Aug and Sept), Whitmoor Reservoir twelve and Slipper Hill Reservoir 14 (March) and twelve (Oct). A further six inland sites held single figures for a couple of months of the year. Fifteen were at roost at Hurst Green in March and September with 25 in November, and 16 were at Leighton Moss in November; two or three were on the River Lune at Arkholme throughout most of the year.

## **SHAG** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

**Uncommon but probably increasing on coasts. Most records are of immatures.**

Almost all records were of singles, predominantly juveniles. In the early part of the year one was at Rossall Point on 2 Jan and one was returned from the February Morecambe Bay WeBS.

Records from the latter part of the year included singles at Formby Point on 4 Aug, Heysham on 26 Aug and 7 Oct, and Blackpool on 14 Sept. Four were photographed together at Rossall Point on 13 Sept. All other records were in December, mostly at Heysham: a single on 4 Dec rose to a count of three by the 12-17th, four on the 23-24th, and at least five on the 31st.

A juvenile was rescued in the Liverpool Docks on 13 Dec but died shortly after release at Seaforth; one was found dead at St. Anne's on 24 Dec.

**BITTERN** *Botaurus stellaris*

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

At least four different birds were at Leighton Moss in the first winter period. Only one male was on territory in the spring, it began booming on 28 Feb but never reached full strength and stopped after three weeks. At least one female was also present, but there was no evidence of breeding. There were increasing sightings from late autumn, presumably as migrants arrived for the winter, and counts of six were made in both November and December.

All other records this year came from the Fylde. At the only other regular site of Marton Mere there were two in January with at least one through to 21 March. Return was noted on 19 Sept but the only other reports were on 22 Nov and 4 Dec. More unusually, birds were seen at Preesall Flashes on 4 Jan and in the second winter period at Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park on 28 Nov.

**LITTLE EGRET** *Egretta garzetta*

Uncommon but increasing visitor, mainly to coastal marshes.

National importance: 50

Monthly peak counts at sites with peak >30 birds

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Ashton Hall	1	13	20	/	/	/	/	/	12	17	20	32
Freckleton/Warton	8	8	6	1	2	6	6	25	35	12	11	15
Marshside/SML	/	13	/	/	/	/	/	/	14	26	33	27
Leighton Moss/EMC7	11	20	2	2	5	56	59	92	118	85	57	
MBS WeBS	2	12	9	3	2	2	8	26	24	32	36	34
Ribble WeBS	16	5	18	2	3	2	8	23	26	36	47	25

Numbers roosting at Leighton Moss held up relatively well after the hard weather of the first winter period, the autumn peak of 118 being only slightly down from the 2010 peak of 127. On the other hand, peak counts on the Ribble were well down on some recent years. It will be interesting to see how numbers in 2012 change following a much milder winter.

Return movement was pronounced from early July, as the Leighton Moss roost counts reflect. At sites away from the table there were up to 17 at sites in the Pilling area in autumn but more than one roost was used in this area and this may have impacted on peak counts. In August there were 25 at Hesketh Out Marsh and 13 at Bolton-le-Sands whilst one of the more unusual records of the post-breeding dispersal was eleven north together off Ainsdale on 25 July.

Arkholme had the best run of records of any site away from the coastal plain, with birds seen in eight months and peaks of six in February and eight in August. There were seven at MMWWT on 28 July. Three over Brockholes on 28 July was a record count there and two at Gawthorpe on 27 June was only the second record of more than one bird in the ELOC area; there were also singles at Sawley and Jumbles in July and Alston Wetland in August. One was at Oakenclough, near Garstang on 7 May.

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

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

Whilst a number of long-staying and occasionally wide-ranging birds have led to this species being taken for granted by many county birders it remains a description species and only those that have been substantiated or are known to have been multi-observed are listed below.

There were three reports early in the year: two different birds at Leighton Moss on 9-12 April (J Clift *et al*) and 7-16 May. Also on 7 May one was at Mere Sands Wood.

There were two in north Lancashire in early autumn. One that roosted at Leighton Moss and was thought to feed in Cumbria remained into 2012. The other was mobile and was seen on Cockerham Marsh on 15 Oct (M Farrar), north over Conder Green 16 Oct (I Hartley), on Colloway Marsh on 28 Oct (D Hayward) and Pilling Marsh on 30 Oct (S Dunstan). The Leighton Moss bird was seen in the roost at the time of the sighting on 30 Oct.

One was on the north Ribble marshes from 29 Oct, it was joined by a second bird in the late morning of 30 Oct (A&T Myerscough) which may have been the second north Lancashire bird; both remained on 31 Oct then one lingered to the year's end. It may have been the departing north Ribble bird that was on Crossens and Banks Marshes from 1 Nov to the year's end and presumably roosting at Southport Marine Lake from at least 12 Nov to 30 Dec. Presumably one of the Ribble birds was at Fleetwood on 15 November (I. Forsyth). There were two other documented reports in December: at Brockholes on the 8th (J Fry, S Ambler) and Colloway Marsh the next day (D Hayward).

## **GREY HERON** *Ardea cinerea*

### **Scarce breeding resident.**

#### **Monthly peak counts:**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	30	32	9	18	13	36	27	41	28	53	29	40
Ribble WeBS	7	3	3	6	9	17	6	21	39	34	18	14
Alt Webs	10	11	3	4	2	5	9	14	26	14	16	14
Seaforth	15	11	3	2	4	8	13	19	25	12	16	11

There were five active heronries in the ELOC area: Winckley Hall (25 nests), Tile House (7), Chaigley Manor (6), Park Head Farm (6) and a new site of Water Meetings where there was a single nest. Nest counts at the five LDBWS area heronries within Lancashire comprised 24 at Forton, 20 at Tunstall, 16 at Skerton Weir, eight at Bolton-le-Sands and six at Ashton Hall Lake. In the CDNHS area there were nine occupied nests in the Rivington heronry. The Oakenclough heronry continues to decline, with only 15 active nests. On the Fylde at least 18 birds were in the Stanley Park colony in the spring, and a pair raised young at Hackensall Wood near Preesall. At the Knowsley Park colony there were at least 15 active nests in February but no information was received from other North Merseyside colonies.

Overall the impression was that numbers across the recording area were fairly stable, with some decreases noted and some new sites forming.

Larger counts away from colonies generally occur in autumn, and this year these included eleven at Hest Bank and Skerton Weir in August, twelve at Brockholes, ten at Hambleton Marsh and Hesketh Out Marsh and eleven at Marshside in September, and 15 at Bolton-le-Sands, 14 at Lea Marsh and 13 at Barnaby's Sands in October. In the second winter period seven were near Speke Hall on 28 Dec.

A bird at Upper Foulridge Reservoir on 6 Nov was seen to try and feed by using its wings to form a canopy and tempt fish to the surface. This is a behaviour seen in other heron species but not well known in Grey Herons. A high-flying migrant was reported flying south-south-east at Heysham on 16 Sept; a number were seen to pass offshore off the Fylde but there was no obvious pattern to these movements.

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

### **Vagrant.**

One that flew over Conder Green on 11 Dec (B & S Wood) has been accepted by the BBRC. Presumably the same bird, a first-winter, appeared at Leighton Moss on 17 Dec (finder unknown).

It developed a regular routine into 2012, feeding in roadside fields during the day and roosting with egrets on the reserve.

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

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

There were only three records this year. One was at MMWWT on 24 May, and the next day two birds were seen there - an adult and a first-summer. Perhaps the latter bird was involved in the record of an immature at Marshside on 10 June.

Later in the year an immature was on the Alt Estuary at Hightown on 1-3 Nov.

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

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

**International importance: 3400. National importance: 160.**

#### Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Ribble WeBS	/	/	2	1	1	1	2	4	5	1	1	/
MBS WeBS	9	5	9	9	3	/	5	19	19	28	31	27
Seaforth	2	2	0	0	0	0	3	6	7	6	7	5

Coverage for this species was down this year, perhaps largely reflecting post-atlas fatigue.

The only double-figure count in the first winter period was 13 at Conder Green in January. Late year peaks from October included 21 on Thornton ICI Reservoir, 13 on the Conder Pool and seven at Seaforth in November. One within Heysham Inner Harbour on 11 Dec was unusual.

Successful breeding was reported from Brookside Lodges, MMWWT, Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park, Wood End Sewage Works, Brockholes, Astley Park, Preesall Flashes, Thornton ICI Pools, Stanley Park, Marton Mere, Lightfoot Green, Fairhaven Lake Newton Lake, Mere Sands Wood and Middleton NR. Failed attempts or nest-building with unknown outcome occurred at Ulnes Walton, Worston, Whittle (quarry), Cronton Clay Quarry and Sefton Park, Liverpool. Pairs were present at a further 24 sites and the species was seen at an additional 45 sites.

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

**Uncommon but increasing breeding bird. Common in winter with concentrations in Morecambe Bay.**

**International importance: 4800. National importance: 190.**

#### Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	25	12	8	11	6	2	7	7	23	14	18	17
Formby Point	34	11	14	1	/	3	1	3	1	1	20	/
Foulridge Res	/	3	14	10	/	3	/	2	6	11	12	/
Eccleston Mere	1	/	10	10	15	/	/	15	15	10	5	10

The high count of 128 in December 2010 at Formby Point was not repeated this year and, generally speaking, reports of this species were down across the region.

Peak counts at the beginning of the year included 55 off Blackpool and 52 off Ainsdale in January, with 43 still present at Blackpool in February. Inland, 18 were at Knowsley Park on 25 Feb, 14 at Foulridge Reservoirs in March, 13 at Wyreside Fisheries in February and March, and ten at Stanley Park, Blackpool and Brockholes, eight at Rishton Reservoir and six each at Barrow Lodges and Preesall Flashes, all in March. Also in March twelve were off the coast at Birkdale and counts at Heysham reached a maximum of five.

Few second winter counts were received. Forty were off Blackpool in November, nine at Barrowford Reservoir in December and five at Dean Clough Reservoir in September and October, with the same number at Foulridge in November.

Breeding was reported from over 30 sites, the most successful of which were Eccleston Mere (8 juveniles), Bispham Marsh (7 juveniles), Preesall Flashes (5 juveniles), with four at both Stanley Park and Brockholes. Other successful sites included Anglezarke, Adlington, Stocks, Dean Clough and Rishton Reservoirs, Croston Twin Lakes, Withnell, Yarrow Valley Park, Heapey Lodges, Four Seasons fishing lake (Staining), Longton Brickcroft and Warton Marsh. Five pairs were at Foulridge Reservoirs and Mere Sands Wood and three pairs at Leighton Moss.. One at Jumbles on 25 Sept and 2 Oct was a unusual records so far up the Ribble.

### **RED-NECKED GREBE\*** *Podiceps grisegena*

**Rare winter visitor.**

A first-winter was on Fairhaven Lake from 4-11 Jan and then intermittently until the end of the month. (JF Walsh).

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

**Scarce winter visitor.**

In the early part of the year one was off Heysham North Harbour wall on 22 Feb, while in October one was on Fairhaven Lake on the 7th, Lytham on the 9th and Ream Hills on the 23rd. Two were reported off the coast at Ainsdale on the 28 Oct.

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

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

International importance: 2800. National importance: 50.

It was another poor year with only two records: a long-staying individual at Alston Reservoirs, Longridge from 31 Aug to 12 Oct and one at Prescott Reservoirs on 5-9 Sept.

### **HONEY BUZZARD\*** *Pernis apivorus*

**Rare passage migrant.**

The only completely proven record was an unusual midsummer occurrence over Cross of Greet on 2 July (A Cooper, E Ormand, A Holmes). A probable flew low south over the coast road at Marshside on 30 September and may have roosted overnight in the compound of the former sandwinning plant (J Dempsey *et al*).

A further three reports were published on bird information services but none of these has been supported by a description. These were in April, May, June and September respectively, some may clearly have been genuine though April is extremely early for a Honey Buzzard in the UK.

## **RED KITE** *Milvus milvus*

**Scarce passage migrant and rare winter visitor from successful reintroduction schemes.**

Records of Red Kites in Lancashire in 2011 by month

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
5	4	13	7	9	7	5	6	7	1	6	2

Although seeing Red Kites in Lancashire remains a thrill for those lucky enough to encounter them, the consolidation of the species in neighbouring counties led to over 70 reports in 2011.

There were records in all months, although there two reports in October: one at Altcar of a bird present for several months to the year's end, and one over Brockholes on the 1st. Records were received from throughout the recording area but there were more from the north and east of the area than the south and west, perhaps reflecting availability of suitable habitat or proximity to the Harewood House release sites where many of 'our' birds will originate from.

Spring passage was once again pronounced, with 13 records in March being more than any other month. Also of note were two over Alston Reservoir on 18 Aug, the only record of more than one bird.

## **MARSH HARRIER** *Circus aeruginosus*

**Fairly common passage migrant, scarce in east. Rare breeder, rare in winter. Amber List (localised breeder).**

The species is now well established in the county in small numbers; perhaps the main features of the year were the significant numbers wintering at Leighton Moss and a migrant total in the east of the county in double-figures.

In the first winter period there were at least three on the Ribble Marshes and two at MMWWT, records of a bird with missing primaries at both sites was proof of movement between the two. Birds were seen at MMWWT irregularly into the late spring.

Return at Leighton Moss was on the early date of 24 Feb and five had arrived by the end of March ahead of the main recorded passage at other sites. Migrants were recorded in April at Seaforth on the 19th, Downholland Moss, Heysham and New Laithe Farm on the 29th and on the Fylde at Ellet Grange on the 30th. Several more clear-cut migrants were recorded in early to mid-May at Fleetwood on the 1st, Ainsdale, Croasdale Fell and Heysham on the 2nd, Cockersand on the 3rd, Heysham on the 4th, Stocks Reservoir on the 7th, Ridge Farm (Fylde) on the 8th and Glasson on the 15th.

Four nests fledged young at Leighton Moss, with a fifth at nearby Haweswater. Three or four birds were on the southern mosses with at least one pair known to have bred, occasionally wandering to Marshside and MMWWT.

Return movement or at least clear dispersal appeared to begin with one at Whyndyke, Blackpool on 2 July and one at Cockersand from the 7th for much of the month; in the east of the county birds were in the Thursden Valley on the 25th and over Wray on the 28th.

Typically in autumn the picture of migration became obscured by several long-staying birds. In August there were up to four at MMWWT and three at Hesketh Out Marsh and neighbouring Warton Marsh; in the east birds were seen at Alston Reservoir on the 12th and Stocks on the 23rd. In September up to five were at MMWWT and four at Marshside, migrants in the east were over Langden Castle on the 15th and south over Caton Moor on both the 27th & 29th. In October estimates of the numbers at Marshside went as high as seven and a migrant was over Shedden Clough in the ELOC area on the 17th.

In the second winter period up to four remained at Leighton Moss, as highlighted in the opening comments, and there were up to five in the Crossens and Marshside area, four at

MMWWT and three at Warton Marsh – with no doubt at least some duplication at the latter four sites.

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

**Fairly common visitor to coasts and hills outside breeding season. Rare breeder. Red List (rare breeder).**

There were seven nesting attempts in Bowland, of which four were successful, producing twelve fledged young. These figures were not far off the 20-year averages of 4.8 successful nests and 13.1 fledglings; a number of summering birds did not breed. There was a report from one other site away from Bowland in the 2011 breeding season.

Early in the year up to three were seen together at Hesketh Out Marsh in January. A male and a ringtail were seen at both Marshside and Warton Marsh at this time, though not together at the latter site. Other first winter period reports came from Eagland Hill on 9 Jan, Leighton Moss on 27 Feb, Lytham on 20 March and Chapel Lane, Parbold on several dates in the latter month.

Several birds were back in east Lancashire from early April, and passage birds at this time were also seen at Stronstrey Bank, Chorley on the 15th and a ringtail through Ainsdale LNR on 3 May. An adult female at MMWWT on 5 June was unusual.

Returning birds after the breeding season did not generally appear until October when there were singles at Eccleston, Hesketh Out Marsh, Leighton Moss, Marshside, Marton Mere, Rainford and several Over Wyre sites. In November and December up to two were seen on Plex Moss and there were singles at Altcar Withins, Crossens, Croston, Leighton Moss, Marshside, MMWWT, Out Rawcliffe, Rawcliffe Moss and Sefton Meadows. Small numbers remained inland including one at Stocks Reservoir on 27 Nov.

## **GOSHAWK** *Accipiter gentilis*

**Rare feral breeding resident and escapee.**

There were reports from four upland sites. Up to three birds were seen at one location in spring so breeding was probable but unconfirmed.

There were no confirmed reports from lower ground this year, and it remains unclear how many of the recent records have related to escapes rather than post-breeding dispersal.

## **SPARROWHAWK** *Accipiter nisus*

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

In spring evidence of apparent passage involved four north over Marshside on 27 March, one over Seaforth on 10 April, two over Rossall School on the 15th and four the next day.

No systematic breeding data were received, the results of the atlas surveys will give a better indication of changes in distribution. A pair on Heysham NR raised three young and a pair fledged young in Sefton Park, Liverpool. A pair at Altham hunted the Sand Martin colony in the spring, in the autumn up to three attacked the very large Starling roost at Leighton Moss and three also preyed on a Starling roost at Stocks Reservoir.

Autumn passage was either particularly pronounced or very well recorded. In October three flew high south at Heysham on the 14th followed by a record day-count of seven south on the 15th, when two also went south over Seaforth. Later in the month four flew south over Fairhaven on the 26th, with five over there on the 28th and another migrant over Heysham the same day. Counts at this time of four at Brockholes on 29 Oct and four at Marton Mere on 5 Nov presumably also included some passage birds.

**BUZZARD** *Buteo buteo*

**Uncommon breeding resident, fairly common winter visitor. Uncommon passage migrant.**

The species is clearly now firmly re-established in all areas of the county. In the ELOC area a slight dip in submitted reports was considered a possible indication that the recovering population has reached saturation point. Equally, though, it may be that some observers are not submitting records as the species increases.

Up to eight were seen at Leighton Moss in January, while nine were at Todderstaffe Hall, Fylde on 12 Feb.

Larger counts generally increased between late February and April, suggesting that some passage movement was involved. They included counts of 14 at Rawcliffe Moss, eleven at nearby Moss House Farm and ten at MMWWT in February, twelve at Hesketh Out Marsh in March, ten at Brockholes Quarry in both March and April, nine at Marton Mere in March and nine at Melling on 2 April.

As usual with this species little detailed breeding information was received. Two pairs in the Pilling area laid a total of five eggs, all of which fledged. Several nests were located in the Liverpool area but no information was received on productivity. A monitored pair in the Chorley area successfully raised two young.

In the autumn a remarkable county record of 65 were seen at MMWWT on 22 Aug, an impressive 15 were seen 'kettling' over Greenbank Park, south Liverpool on 15 Sept and twelve were at Mythop on 9 Sept. Late year counts included nine at Great Altcar on 23 Nov and eight at Rawcliffe Moss on 15 Dec.

**OSPREY** *Pandion haliaetus*

**Fairly common passage migrant.**

Arrival began with one over Mellor Brook on 7 March. There were a further 14 records during the month, including no fewer than seven heading north up the Lune Valley at Arkholme with birds seen daily from the 23rd to 26th, two on the 30th and one on the 31st. Two were also seen over Heysham on the 28th. A further 22 were reported in April, including four more at Arkholme and four through Brockholes. Two birds were picked up by satellite-tracking during the month, roosting at Mere Brow and passing over Wycoller, with another in May roosting near Blackpool. The Blackpool bird was one of around nine in May as passage petered out, but this total did include two seen at MMWWT as well as two separate singles through Brockholes.

Midsummer records are annual, and presumably some of these involve failed breeders or immature birds on a more leisurely passage. There were four in June this year, at Dunsop Bridge on the 11th, fishing at Brockholes on the 22nd, and south over Arkholme and at Leighton Moss on the 29th. There were several reports at Leighton in July and it is difficult to be clear how many birds were involved, elsewhere there were just three reports – at Sefton Meadows on the 2nd, Yarrow Valley Park on the 18th and Southport on the 30th.

In the classic return passage period from August there were very few records away from Leighton Moss, where the almost daily sightings presumably included lingering individuals. Elsewhere, movement was noted from the 18th with birds over Aldcliffe, Arkholme, Brockholes, Cockersand, Hesketh Out Marsh, Overton, Rossall Point, and Stocks Reservoir. There were again singles noted at Leighton Moss in September, but movement was otherwise non-existent in the month other than one over Seaforth on the 28th. The year was rounded off by one over Loyne Bridge, near Gressingham on 10 Oct.

**KESTREL** *Falco tinnunculus*

**Fairly common breeding resident and winter visitor. Amber List (Species of European Conservation Concern).**

Perhaps reflecting the decline of this species there were no records of apparent migrants from coastal watchpoints in the spring.

Despite the poor fortunes of this species generally it appeared to be a good breeding season in the well monitored Pilling and Preesall area, where 13 pairs hatched 40 young from 61 eggs and all those that hatched went on to fledge. The species is common and widespread in the Chorley area, and appears to have had a good breeding season. Pairs at Coppull and Whittle each fledged four young, two pairs bred at Belmont, and family groups were seen at several other locations.

There were some reasonable post-breeding gatherings in August, particularly 15 in the Belmont area on the 27th, twelve at Hesketh Out Marsh on the 2nd and nine at Marshside on the 24th.

A small number of apparent migrants were reported in autumn. These included a juvenile over Heysham on 27 Sept and two south over Seaforth on 15 Oct. A notable late year count was ten at Clough Foot (SD93L) on 7 Oct.

**MERLIN** *Falco columbarius*

**Scarce breeding bird in uplands, fairly common winter visitor particularly to coastal marshes and mosses. Amber List (recovering from historic decline).**

In the first winter period up to three were seen on both sides of the Ribble Estuary at Warton Marsh and Marshside, with a peak of four at Hesketh Out Marsh in January and up to two in Morecambe Bay at Pilling Marsh, together with widespread singles on other coastal marshes and mosses and lesser numbers further inland. Birds were back in the uplands by early March and most wintering birds had departed by early April; a presumed migrant was at Fairhaven on 28 April and a definite migrant headed past Formby Point on 1 May.

Four nests were reported in Bowland, a low number but a healthy 17 young were fledged from them. There was one report of possible breeding from one other site in the county. Early post-breeding dispersal included singles south at Formby Point on 7 July and one at Cockerham Marsh on the 16th. Autumn migrants were seen over Heysham on 13 & 16 Sept and a presumed migrant over Seaforth on the 29th. One headed south over the sea at Ainsdale on 11 November.

In the second winter period there were again up to four at various Ribble Estuary sites, with this number seen at Marshside/Crossens in October and November. Up to two were recorded at Pilling Marsh and MMWWT, and there were again widespread reports of singles on the lowlands. There was only one record in winter in east Lancashire, on Boulsworth Hill on 8 Dec.

**HOBBY** *Falco subbuteo*

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

The first migrant was rather surprisingly hunting day-flying Emperor Moths at Belmont on 24 April. The same month one passed over Rossall Point on the 29th. There were reports in May from at least eight sites, with early migrants at Brockholes (where birds were seen on at least eleven dates during the month) on the 3rd, Plex Moss on the 6th and Leighton Moss on the 11th.

In June birds were recorded from at least 16 sites; birds were seen on 14 dates at Brockholes Wetland and Leighton Moss, both regular sites these days. Two together circling near Garstang Marina on the 2nd was a rare record of more than one bird on the Fylde. There were reports from ten locations in July.

Breeding was suspected at a couple of sites, one in the north of the county and one in the south-west, but not proved anywhere (although no information was received from the recently regular breeding site in the east of the county) and at least one site used in the past was unoccupied in 2011. This is likely to underestimate the breeding population significantly, the atlas surveys indicated proven or probable breeding in eight tetrads and possible breeding in around 40 others. As well as the moth-feeding record above, birds were seen to hunt bats at one site, and, more typically, hirundines at several others.



*Ray Scally*

In August there were eight reports, whilst an apparent influx of migrants in September saw an increase in sightings and 14 locations were involved. Clear-cut migrants were noted south over Middleton NR on 22 Aug and over Heysham on 11 Sept. Another southbound migrant was at Seaforth on 30 Sept and a late bird over the Conder Estuary on 4 Oct, but the last of the year was a juvenile at Marshside, which narrowly avoided being hit by a car on 6 Oct, and was seen again the following day.

## **PEREGRINE** *Falco peregrinus*

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

Only four young were fledged from two nests on the United Utilities estate in Bowland, compared with ten young fledging from four nests in 2010. At least two pairs nested elsewhere in the ELOC area, fledging one and two young.

The male from the Liverpool Anglican Cathedral was unfortunately killed in a rescue attempt after flying into a car after it sustained an unknown injury, but it was thought that the female found another mate within a week or so. At three other sites in Liverpool and Sefton three, two and one young respectively were fledged whilst the outcome from a pair in Kirkby was unknown. No information was received about the usual birds in Southport. The St. Helens gasometer site was set alight on 14 April, four agitated Peregrines were seen around the site.

Nesting occurred in Preston and at least one Fylde site. There were two nesting pairs in the Chorley area, at one of these two of the three young 'crash landed' but were rehabilitated and successfully released whilst three young fledged at the other.

Given that the species now nests sparsely almost throughout the recording area it is not surprising that records of more than one bird were widespread if infrequent. There were four reported from Pilling Marsh in August whilst counts of three birds were made from Banks Marsh, Blackpool, Crossens, Longton Marsh, Marshside and MMWWT.

Although it is not unprecedented it is always notable when Peregrines adapt to take seabirds in stormy conditions and one was hunting Leach's Petrels off Bispham on 14 Sept. More typically perhaps, two hunted the Leighton Moss Starling roost with other raptors in November.

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

**Scarce breeder; fairly common winter visitor from central and eastern Europe.**

There was little information outside the breeding season from the stronghold of Leighton Moss, where the peak count was ten on 13 Feb, presumably a significant undercount. A tape-lure census of the Leighton Moss breeding population recorded 138 registrations, an increase on 2010. A similar survey at nearby Silverdale Moss produced 15 registrations. In addition to these sites birds were present in the breeding season at Belmont, Brockholes, Haweswater, Heysham NR and Mythop.

In the first winter period up to six were recorded at Marton Mere with other Fylde singles at Conder Green, Fleetwood, Marton and Preesall. In east Lancashire up to three were at Towneley, with records until mid-March, and singles were at Walverden Reservoir and Clitheroe Tip. Elsewhere, singles were noted at this time at Belmont, Brockholes, Cuerden Valley Park, Eccleston Mere, Marshside, MMWWT and the Sankey Valley. Up to two were at Aldcliffe.

In the second half of the year up to eight were reported from Leighton Moss and elsewhere in the LDBWS area up to six were at Heysham NR and two at Aldcliffe and Middleton NR. After the first arrival in August numbers increased to six in November and December at Marton Mere, and further singles were recorded on the Fylde at Bispham Marsh, Cocker's Dyke, Preesall Flashes and Staining Nook. Up to three were noted at Marshside. In the ELOC area up to two were at Grove Lane Marsh and singles were noted at Lomeshaye Marsh, Lowerhouse Lodges, Towneley and Wood End. Two were at Yarrow Valley Park in the autumn. Elsewhere, singles were reported from Brockholes, Eccleston Mere, Garston, MMWWT and Seaforth.

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

**Rare breeder, scarce migrant.**

One was photographed in front of the Sandgrounders Hide at Marshside on 18 March (S Paul). This species has become more scarce in the recording area in recent years despite nesting in numbers elsewhere in the north of England.

## **MOORHEN** *Gallinula chloropus*

**Common resident breeder.**

**Monthly peak counts**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MMWWT	172	/	107	/	49	/	113	108	/	/	/	300

Up to 35 were noted along the edge of the reedbed at Leighton Moss during the January cold spell, and 15 were at nearby Silverdale Moss in April. Maxima at sites on the south Ribble Marshes were 14 at Marshside in March, and twelve at Southport Marine Lake in July and Hesketh Park in September respectively, while Fylde peaks included 32 at Little Thornton, 21 at Lytham

Crematorium and 15 at Preesall Flashes and Marton Mere in January, with 19 at Carleton in December.

Peak counts in the ELOC area were 14 at Wood End Sewage Works in November and twelve at Alston Wetland in August, with ten at Blackburn Corporation Park in January, Stocks Reservoir in September and Lee Green Reservoir in November. In St. Helens 20 were at Eccleston Mere on 29 Sept and twelve at Newton Lake in January.

There were 30 probable pairs at MMWWT. Four pairs nested at Arkholme, this contrasted with a total of 20 there in 1980. Only five pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir due to reduced water levels. Breeding success was reported to be poor at Sefton Park, Liverpool with only three broods noted despite a lot of adults being present; late year broods were more successful here. The population was considered to be broadly stable in the Heysham area.

## **COOT** *Fulica atra*

**Common resident breeder; abundant winter visitor from continental Europe.**

**National importance: 1800.**

Monthly peak counts at sites with maxima over 200

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Leighton Moss	290	270	186	110	65	310	428	410	380	460	520	480
Pine Lake	720	610	62	40	71	115	235	330	400	419	464	490
Brockholes	/	/	/	/	/	127	212	227	159	140	226	243
Stanley Park	200	/	/	/	/	/	155	66	110	/	50	50
MMWWT	218	/	68	/	49	/	41	116	28	75	/	460
Southport ML	500	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	400	300	520

Annual peak counts away from the sites in the table included 180 at Marton Mere, 128 at Ream Hills Lake, Weeton, 94 at Preesall Flashes, 93 at Glasson, 78 at Seaforth, 71 at Preston Dock, 63 at Sefton Park and 60 at Marshside. Most of these counts were made in the winter months or when numbers were bolstered by juveniles in the early autumn. Different sites were sometimes favoured in the harsh first winter period compared with the milder second winter period, as the tabulated figures for Leighton Moss and Pine Lake illustrate.

There were 26 nesting pairs at Brockholes and 20+ pairs at MMWWT. At least eight pairs nested at Sefton Park, Liverpool and there were seven pairs at Mere Sands Wood. Six pairs nested at Seaforth with little success and breeding occurred at eleven sites in the ELOC area. At least six pairs were on territory at Middleton NR.

A large project of colour-ringing has revealed a large amount of data about the local and not so local movements of this species, more details appear in the ringing report. A pair at Withnell cricket field lodge in July were seen to drown a Black-headed Gull.

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

**Rare passage migrant.**

A first-summer was at White Moss, Tosside near the Yorkshire border on 7 June (finder unknown). Presumably the same first-summer bird was at Paythorne Moor, a site that straddles the county boundary, on 19-20 June (R. Dewhurst).

**OYSTERCATCHER** *Haematopus ostralegus*

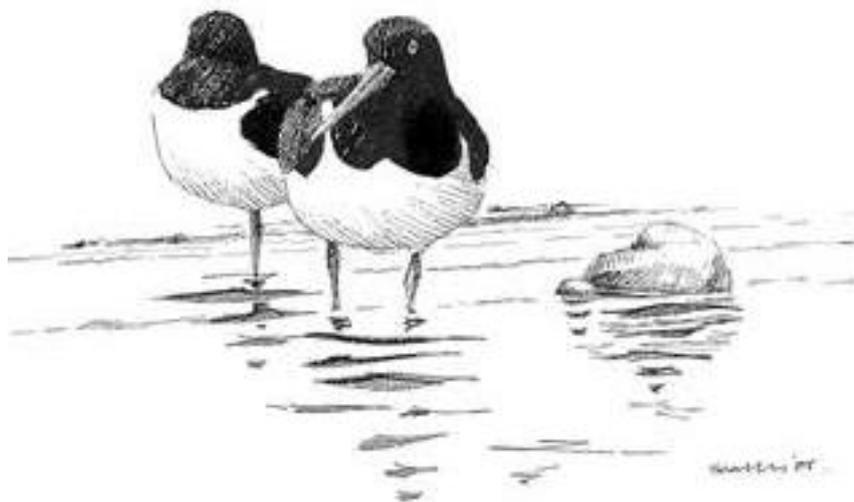
Abundant winter visitor. Common breeding bird.

International importance: 10200. National importance: 3200.

## WeBS counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS	22381	20242	9930	3529	3575	2549	4068	20427	29822	24764	11447	15425
Ribble	10772	12217	9567	6805	3686	4958	3653	8288	3743	8346	11262	9497
Alt	1590	948	1700	2633	1623	1455	1637	1053	519	1330	781	1524

Numbers wintering on Morecambe Bay, where there has been a long-term upward trend across all months, were slightly higher than 2010 at both ends of the year, while both passage movements were slightly lower. In contrast, numbers have been in decline throughout this century on the Ribble but wintering birds showed a marked upturn this year.



Ray Scally

Wintering birds on the Fylde included 2880 at Fluke Hall and 3000 at Knott End in January, 2000 were at Starr Gate and 2437 at Pilling in February and 3749 at Fairhaven in March. Notable counts at other sites included 1600 at Formby Point on 17 Jan and 2500 Seaforth in April. The overwhelming majority of Morecambe Bay birds are found between Morecambe and the Cumbrian border and Ribble birds between Ainsdale and Southport.

Inland, one was at Alston Reservoirs and two at Rishton Reservoir on 17 Jan and the first larger count was of six at Smithies Bridge on the 21st. The first was back at Belmont Reservoir on 10 Feb. As the passage continued 64 was a high count at MMWWT on 11 Feb and twelve were at Altham on the 12th. On this same day there were four at Burholme, a favourite gathering ground, where numbers rapidly built up to 149 by 26 Feb. Other stopover sites included Alston Reservoirs with peak counts of 31 on 23 Feb and 25 on 2 March, Altham (Peaks 24 on 20 Feb and 32 on 3 March) and Stocks Reservoir (peaks 103 on 27 Feb and 102 on 6 March).

From mid-April onwards birds dispersed rapidly from the coast where counts were low except for 1415 at Fairhaven on 16 April. Breeding was reported widely including in south Liverpool/Knowsley, where throughout the spring and summer birds constantly flew back and forth over east Speke, especially at night. Four pairs bred at MMWWT, nine pairs at Marshside, 24 pairs at Hesketh Out Marsh and five pairs at Belmont Reservoir.

During early summer, the highest coastal counts were at Barnaby's Sands with 700 in May, 345 in June and 1040 in July, and Seaforth with 1600 in July; Bank End and Fairhaven Dunes also

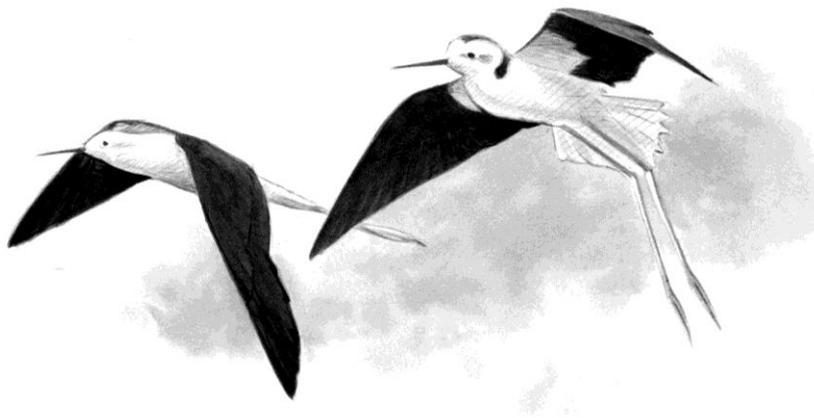
held good numbers during this period.. WeBS totals indicate many higher counts than these, particularly on the Ribble, during this period, e.g. a county total of c.9000 summering in June.

Departure from inland sites began in mid-July and the last at Belmont was on 16 August. The coastal increase included 3760 at Fairhaven in August, 4500 at Barnaby's Sands and 4765 at Fluke Hall in September. The Morecambe Bay WeBS count of 29822 for September was the highest of the year. In October numbers peaked with 6400 Fairhaven with 5000 there in November and 4880 in December. More localised peak counts included 86 along Garston Shore, Liverpool on 1 Nov, 15 at Grindleton on 17 Dec, and six at Burholme on 27 Dec.

## **BLACK-WINGED STILT** *Himantopus himantopus*

### **Vagrant.**

Two, presumably a pair, on 15 April at MMWWT were present all day in front of the Ron Barker hide (C Tomlinson *et al*). The record has been accepted by the BBRC and becomes the sixth record for the county, the last being the breeding pair at MMWWT in 2006.



*Ray Scally*

## **AVOCET** *Recurvirostra avosetta*

**Recently established scarce breeding bird, uncommon passage migrant.**

**National Importance: 75**

The first of the year were 15 at MMWWT on 15 Feb and one at Marshside the next day; numbers increased to 29 at MMWWT on 24 Feb. The earliest back on the Fylde was one at Glasson on 28 March by which time 74 were at MMWWT, and the first on the Eric Morecambe Complex on 3 March, where numbers reached a peak of 32 in mid-April.

Inland, a single bird was at Grimsargh Reservoirs on 5 April. The April WeBS count noted 44 on the Ribble whilst 68 were at MMWWT; 50 were at Hesketh Out Marsh in May.

Breeding information received this year came from MMWWT (26 pairs), Warton Marsh (two pairs), Marshside (ten pairs) and Hesketh Out Marsh (25 pairs). Sixteen pairs attempted to nest at the Eric Morecambe complex but suffered predation but, with the protection of the Allen Pool from fox predation with electric fences, eleven pairs eventually reared nine young, the best success rate since 2005. Two pairs nested unsuccessfully in the Sunderland Point area.

The last were seen at MMWWT on 5 Aug and on the Fylde at Glasson on 29 Aug; the last of the year were singles at Hesketh Out Marsh on 1 Oct and 9 Nov.

**LITTLE RINGED PLOVER** *Charadrius dubius*

Fairly common on passage. Scarce breeder.

The first of the year at Alston Wetland on 15 March was followed by two there on the 22nd. The next arrivals were at Altham and Stocks Reservoir on 23 & 24 March respectively. One arrived at Seaforth on 25 March and a pair was displaying there the next day, when the first arrived on the Fylde at Lytham Moss. Two were at Myerscough College on 27 March. Unusual coastal records included one at Cabin Hill on 11 April and two on 5 May at Marshside.

Preliminary atlas results indicate a county breeding population of almost 100 pairs, 50% more than in 2000.

Breeding was reported from several sites including MMWWT (2 pairs), Alston (3 pairs), Belmont Reservoir (4 pairs), Brockholes (12 pairs). Low water levels meant that the species did well at Stocks Reservoir; by 18 May a minimum of twelve adults were present and at least two pairs bred successfully with five juveniles present on 2 Aug. All nests at Belmont Reservoir were washed out due to rising water levels in mid-May. Thereafter, only two pairs remained on territory and only one brood was seen in mid-July. Pairs/birds were also present at Springs and Delph Reservoirs in April/May but breeding was not thought to have taken place, again due to rising water levels. At Seaforth birds were present throughout but with no indication of breeding until two juveniles appeared on 28 July, one of which remained until 4 Aug.

The last of the year were a juvenile at Alston on 24 Aug, singles at Stocks and Anglezarke Reservoirs on 30 Aug and one at Newton Marsh on 11 Sept.

**RINGED PLOVER** *Charadrius hiaticula*

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

International importance: 730. National importance: 340

**Monthly peak counts**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	63	34	34	106	395	18	12	255	408	105	53	71
Ribble WeBS	0	11	7	1163	6270	36	9	4734	32	1	0	12
Alt WeBS	14	37	/	298	658	0	16	97	48	/	3	0

Numbers continued their gradual decline on Morecambe Bay, where passage counts are barely a third of those of the early 1990s. In contrast, the May count on the Ribble was the highest ever recorded anywhere in the county; it seems likely that more than 8000 passed through the county this spring.

At MMWWT one was present during January then up to twelve were regular in February. Just four were seen at Seaforth in February and one in March; 25 arrived at Cabin Hill on 26 March and the first in the east of the county at Alston Wetland on the 29th, 49 were at Rossall Point on 3 April and 280 at Cabin Hill on 4 April. A conspicuous arrival on 16 April included 400 at Cabin Hill, 147 at Fairhaven and 100 at St. Anne's, and the first inland sighting of the spring at Stocks Reservoir with another there on 21 April.

Three hundred were at Cockersand and 208 at Rossall Point on 15 May. Subsequently the biggest flocks of the year were an impressive 1000 birds at Cabin Hill on 16 May and 400 at Glasson the next day. Marshside had up to 50 birds during May and up to 16 were noted at MMWWT; 105 were along Oglet Shore, Liverpool on 30 May. Inland, singles were at Walverden Reservoir on 12 May, Foulridge Reservoir on 18 May, Rishton Reservoir on 24 May, Stocks Reservoir on 5 June and two tundrae adults were at Alston on 20 June.

Breeding reports included two pairs at Rossall Point and at Cleveleys, three pairs at Brockholes and six at MMWWT. In contrast to Little Ringed Plover, numbers of breeding Ringed

Plovers continue to decline inexorably: preliminary atlas results indicate a county breeding population of around 50 pairs, almost 50% down on the 2000 figures.

Early returning migrants were at Upper Foulridge Reservoir on 2 July and subsequent individuals at Alston, Rishton and Stocks Reservoirs. The first influx along the coast included 30 at Rossall on 2 Aug and 50 the following day at Hightown; 50 at Formby Point on 7 Aug increased to 306 on the 12th when 82 were at Knott End. Birds were at several sites during this time including 200 at Rossall Point on 15 Aug and 150 Cockersand on the 21st. Following peaks of 150 at Formby Point and 147 at Knott End on 11 Sept, and 70 at Cockersand on 19 Sept, numbers rarely rose above 30 at any site for the rest of the year.

### **KENTISH PLOVER\*** *Charadrius alexandrinus*

**Vagrant.**

A female was at Plover Scar, Cockersand on 3-5 May (P Woodruff *et al*). This was only the second record this century, the last being at Marshside in June 2004.

### **DOTTEREL** *Charadrius morinellus*

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

It was a good year with a minimum of 27 birds recorded at five sites, including the south-west, in spring.

The first were three on Fairsnape Fell birds on 17 April, increasing to five on the 25-29th, four on the 30th and 1 May, three on the 8th and two on the 15th. Two were on Pendle Hill on 22-24 April and again on 1- 6 May with a male and two females on 7-9 May. Seven at Champion Farm on 29 April, found during atlas work, were the first record at this site; numbers increased to nine the next day.

In north Lancashire a female was at Whit Moor, Wray on 11 May, while in the south-west six, including four females, were on farmland at Hightown on 19 April.

### **AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER\*** *Pluvialis dominica*

**Vagrant.**

An adult male was at Shard Bridge in the Skippool Creek area of the Wyre on 3-4 July (P Slade) and a juvenile at Plover Scar, Cockersand on 4-5 Nov (SG Piner).

These become the 7th and 8th Lancashire records, four of which have occurred in the 21st century; the Skippool Creek bird was our earliest ever, all others occurring during September to November.

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

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

**International importance: 8000. National importance: 4000.**

**Monthly peak counts**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	230	605	554	18	0	9	11	264	809	1816	3016	1145
Ribble WeBS	120	113	740	97	0	0	12	110	428	3420	3120	3062
Marshside	500	220	1800	560	0	0	1	45	450	850	1280	1600

Counts of 705 on Crossens Inner Marsh on 28 Feb and 750 on Hesketh Out Marsh in September were not reflected in the WeBS counts. The highest count all year on the Alt Estuary was a mere 29 birds. A hundred on Formby Moss on 29 Jan were unusual there.

The biggest numbers were typically found along the north Fylde coast and on the Ribble Marshes: 495 were at Glasson in January and 800 at Cockerham in February. After a peak of 1000 at Cockersand in March, up to three remained at this site in May and nine were there in June.

Return passage in early July included up to 250 Skippool Creek and 450 at Cockersand then 850 at Glasson in August. Numbers at Glasson increased to 2500 in October and 2380 in November. On 13 November 4380 were on the Lune Estuary.

Inland during the first winter period, a flock of eight were on Pendle Hill on 28 Jan. One was back on moors above Belmont on 14 Feb with three there on 6 March. One was on Oswaldtwistle Moor on 13 March, then four at New Laithe Farm (Newton) and eight at Salterforth, both on 15 March. The first passage flock was 16 between Clowbridge Reservoir and Crown Point on 17 March. Bigger flocks were 190+ at Wycoller Road, Trawden, on 31 March, 25 on Pendle Hill on 8 April with 70 there on the 10th, 150 on Champion Moor on the 9th and 10th, with 24 there on the 29th. A small flock of six was on Darwen Moor on 16 April. On Oswaldtwistle Moor two on 7 April were followed by five on the 24th and a one-legged bird on the 29th.

Five pairs were located on territory on the West Pennine Moors around Belmont including one pair that had its nest burnt out by a moor fire on 29 April and a pair on Winter Hill for the first time since 2005 that had young in mid-May. In May-June singles and pairs were also seen on the following suitable territories: Coldwell, Cross of Greet Bridge, Downham Moor, Oswaldtwistle Moor, Pendle Hill, Twiston Moor and Boulsworth Hill, where five territorial pairs were counted for the second consecutive year.

The first autumn passage report was one at Alston Wetland on 23 Aug, followed by one on 6 Oct. A single bird was on Winter Hill on 2nd Oct, four were near Great Hanging Bridge on 8 Oct and four on Croston Moss on 16 Oct. Flocks were seen on several dates on Champion Moor between 22 Oct and 10 Nov (maximum 92 on 7 Nov), with 29 on Pendle Hill and 75 at adjacent Downham Moor on 24 Nov.

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

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

**International importance: 2500. National importance: 430.**

### Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	452	481	173	4	51	0	2	36	535	455	560	408
Ribble WeBS	1072	17	620	1272	807	110	0	703	649	803	127	523
Alt WeBS	1335	2250	/	1562	1007	179	0	75	1651	/	1268	720

The February count on the Alt was the highest there in winter since 2003. In contrast, spring and winter totals on the Ribble were the lowest ever recorded. Other peak counts in the early part of the year were 236 at Fluke Hall in February and 225 at Fairhaven.

Passage numbers increased to more than 1500 at Formby Point in 16 April and 563 flew north there in 1 May. The last spring bird at Cockersand was on 2 June and the first returned there on 11 July; 22 were back at Formby Point by 22 July with 192 there on 12 Aug.

Inland this remains a good find. A first-summer was at Brockholes on 16 May with singles there on 11 & 16 Aug, with further autumn singles at MMWWT, Parsonage Reservoir, Alston Wetland and Lower Foulridge Reservoir.

**LAPWING** *Vanellus vanellus*

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

**International importance: 20000. National importance: 6200.**

**Monthly peak counts**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	7918	5595	140	164	81	643	1042	3941	10456	10289	13529	13141
Ribble WeBS	1849	7385	1152	371	154	232	354	1643	6391	8912	8806	12412
Marshside	2000	1700	152	6	66	55	78	150	457	1972	2000	3200
MMWWT	340	800	200	100	107	400	300	600	600	400	1200	1700

Birds were recorded across the county with 3500 at Glasson and 1000 at Warton Marsh in January and 1000 Greenberfield on 20 February among the highest counts at the start of the year. Birds were reported on urban roofs in Burnley and Foulridge; the last were seen on 2 March.

Birds were back on territory and displaying as early as 22 Feb at Alston, the 24th at New Laund Hill, Whitewell and preparing scrapes at New Laithe Farm, Newton by the 27th.

Widespread breeding was as usual best monitored on nature reserves. Breeding totals included twelve pairs pairs at Brockholes, 86 pairs at MMWWT ,20 pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir – with at least five broods noted later, despite several nests being washed out by rising water levels in mid-May, 50 pairs at Marshside, twelve on Hesketh Out Marsh and 35 on Newton Marsh.

Moorland pairs bred at up to 425m asl above Belmont and six pairs were noted to have settled on the recently burnt Anglezarke Moor on 8 May. At Alston Wetland there were 22 confirmed nests and the first broods hatched on 17 April; fledging success was good but it was not possible to count the chicks as they became mobile and elusive in the long grass. At New Laithe Farm (Newton) at least nine birds were sitting on 6 April and chicks were seen on the 22nd; five pairs had relaid by 9 May.

The post-breeding return began at Seaforth on 6 June. Elsewhere, 300 were at Glasson in June and 500 at Little Singleton in July when 150 at Belmont and 130 at Grimsargh Res were notable. The build-up at Foulridge Reservoirs began rather later with 150+ on 6 August and 500 the next day; the last report from here was of c.120 on 11 Sept. By 18 Sept the first birds were reported resting on Burnley rooftops. The largest autumn counts were at Glasson with 5650 there in September and 4700 in November. High wintering numbers on the Fylde in December included 1400 in the Skippool Creek area, 2000 at Pilling and 2000 at Barnaby's Sands. An unseasonal flock of 90 was at Belmont Reservoir on 13 Nov with 55 still there on 23 Dec. Notable flocks in the east included 174 at Alston Wetland on 16 Oct, 120 on the Burnley Tesco roof on 16 Oct, increasing to 300 on 1 Nov.

**KNOT** *Calidris canutus*

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

**International importance: 4500. National importance: 3200.**

**Monthly peak counts**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	22159	39416	17692	81	2	11	3	290	10520	9607	15982	11546
Ribble WeBS	/	10101	12630	16626	3668	2970	1801	11713	3024	8522	11045	3533
Alt WeBS	48301	43651	/	19102	2641	420	1080	6170	3295	/	26350	12900

The January count on the Alt was a record and the first of more than 40000 since February 2002; it came after several years of steady decline in wintering numbers but was probably largely a result of a switch of roost site from the Ribble – which had its lowest winter counts since 1983. Winter 2010/11 numbers on Morecambe Bay were somewhat lower than last year but otherwise the

highest since 2003. The county total in February of more than 90000 equates to roughly 20% of the East Atlantic flyway population.

Large counts missed by WeBS included 10000 on 22 Jan at Ainsdale (Ribble), 4200 at Rossall Point on 3 April with 210 there in May, and 350 at Glasson on 31 July (all Morecambe Bay). Other significant site totals included 20000 at Hightown on 6 Feb, 11000 on Pilling Marsh on 18 Feb and 8500 at Birkdale on 17 April. Numbers at Heysham were low because of disturbance but counts at Ocean Edge included 18000 on 7 March and 27030 on 14 Nov (both also missed by WeBS). The only count on the Lancashire section of the Mersey Estuary was four at Dingle on 27 Jan.

First-summer birds began to arrive at Seaforth on 21 June and numbers peaked at 5000 on 30 July. More than 1000 there on 10 Aug included the first juveniles and returning adults, while 1800 on 12 Nov was a record winter count for the site.

There was a typically meagre scattering of records inland: two at Brockholes on 16-18 May with one on the 24th, singles at MMWWT on 24 May and 25 July with one or two there on 9-19 Sept, and singles at Stocks Reservoir on 15 Aug and Rishton Reservoir on 14 Sept.

## **SANDERLING** *Calidris alba*

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

**International importance: 1200. National importance: 160.**

### Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	45	55	108	56	580	0	48	166	98	663	69	124
Ribble WeBS	6	212	1870	1370	1895	871	1559	2771	1826	2160	0	1786
Alt WeBS	1714	1204	/	700	1767	0	0	608	1072	/	866	550

A significant number of counts were missed by WeBS: 207 on Crosby Shore on 25 Oct (Alt), 400 at Cleveleys on 25 Oct with 300 there on 10 Feb, 130 at Knott End on 31 March with 200 there on 1 June (MBS), 300 at Rossall Point on 5 Jan with 962 there on 9 Feb, 304 on 6 April, 840 on 15 May, 30 on 12 June and 247 on 30 Nov (MBS), c.3000 at Birkdale on 21 May (Ribble) and 386 at Blackpool on 24 Feb. Other large counts included 950 at St. Anne's on 11 & 24 Dec, 1500 at Formby Point on 22 Jan with 830 there on 1 May, and 1000 at Cabin Hill on 16 May.

The January WeBS count on the Alt was a winter record but passage numbers were distinctly on the low side; passage numbers on the Ribble continued their 21st century decline, while Morecambe Bay registered its highest autumn count since 1992 and highest spring count since 1998.

Inland, singles were Stocks Reservoir on 7, 22 & 24 May, three at MMWWT on 19 May with singles there on 21 & 24 May, and one or two on five dates at Brockholes between 16 May and 1 June.

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

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

None was seen in either winter period and the first spring migrants were at Heysham on 16 April and Marshside on the 17th, where ones or twos were seen regularly until 31 May. A similar passage began at MMWWT on 21 April with at least seven seen also to 31 May. The only other spring records were singles at Rossall Point on 29 April, Fluke Hall on 19 May, Brockholes on the 20th & 23rd and Cockersand on the 29-30th.

June birds, presumably first-summerers, were at MMWWT on the 1st, the Eric Morecambe complex on the 5-7th, where one on 10 July was also probably a non-breeder, and Seaforth on the 8th.

No more were seen until singles at Marshside on 2 Aug, Hesketh Out Marsh on 13 Aug to 2 Sept and Banks Marsh on 31 Aug & 3 Sept. September brought further records, mainly juveniles, to MMWWT, Marshside, Crossens, Banks Marsh, Hesketh Out Marsh, Seaforth, Glasson, Cockersand, Cockerham, Knott End, Heysham – all records were of ones or twos with the exception of four on Hesketh Out Marsh on the 30th. Late records were ones or twos at Crossens on 3 Oct, Cockersand on the 4th, Heysham on the 7th, Banks Marsh on the 8th & 17th, Crossens again on 8 Nov and Marshside on the 20th.

### **TEMMINCK'S STINT\*** *Calidris temminckii*

Scarce passage migrant.

Two were on Newton Marsh on 8-9 May (M Jones).

### **PECTORAL SANDPIPER\*** *Calidris melanotos*

Rare passage migrant.

Unaged singles were at MMWWT from 25 July to 1 Aug and 25-30 Sept (finders unknown).

### **CURLEW SANDPIPER** *Calidris ferruginea*

Fairly common passage migrant.

The overwhelming majority of spring records were on or near the Ribble beginning with singles at Marshside on 21 April, Banks Marsh the next day and MMWWT on the 26th & 30th. Birds were seen almost daily at Marshside during May with a peak of three on the 14-15th and the last on the 28th. Singles were at Newton Marsh on 7-10 May and Cockersand on the 2nd and 29th.

One at MMWWT was presumably a first-summer while the first returning adults were on the Eric Morecambe complex on 16 & 19 July, at Marshside on the 27th, Seaforth on the 30th and Aldcliffe Marsh on 11 Aug. Small numbers were reported regularly from coastal sites throughout the county from 28 Aug but as usual the main passage of juveniles took place during September, with peak counts of 18 on Banks Marsh on the 25th, 16 at Knott End on the 12th, 13 at Cocker's Dyke on the 4th, ten on Hesketh Out Marsh on the 2nd, nine at both Overton and Glasson on the 4th, seven on the Eric Morecambe complex on the 2nd and six at MMWWT on the 13th.

Brockholes had the only autumn record any distance inland with a juvenile on 3 Sept. The last were at Banks Marsh on 22 Oct, Marshside on the 25th

### **PURPLE SANDPIPER** *Calidris maritime*

Rare winter visitor.

Two were seen regularly on the Heysham wooden jetty until 26 April with three there on 22 Feb, and one on the Morecambe Stone Jetty during January and on 3 March. Up to two were at Cleveleys, Fleetwood Marine Lakes and Rossall Point until 5 April, and singles were at Seaforth on 22 Feb and 3 April – the first there since 2002.

The first was back at Heysham on 17 Nov with up to three there to the end of the year; one on Blackpool North Shore on 19 Nov to the year's end was the only other record.

**DUNLIN** *Calidris alpina*

**Abundant passage migrant and winter visitor. Scarce breeding bird.**

**International importance: 9500 (*schinzii*); 13300 (*alpina*). National importance: 3500.**

**Monthly peak counts**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	4612	7371	1268	95	2140	23	170	1293	1586	7029	6513	3773
Ribble WeBS	903	2230	14930	7499	36575	989	2738	14081	2143	22520	17301	6420
Alt WeBS	11047	12440	/	3166	9963	10	153	1538	431	/	942	1223

Counts missed by WeBS on Morecambe Bay included 564 at Rossall on 27 April, and 3500 at Glasson on 17 May and 600 on 28 July. Nonetheless, numbers there were fairly typical throughout the year although autumn numbers were the highest since 2004.

High counts were registered on the Alt in January and February but were typically low in the second winter period, while those on the Ribble were about average most of the year but low in the first winter as birds presumably shifted to roosts on the Alt. The largest count on the Lancashire section of the Mersey Estuary was 1150 at Garston on 30 May.

Large site counts on the Fylde included 1000 at Knott End on 4 Jan with 1200 there on 11 Aug and 2000 on 10 Dec, 3000 on Pilling Marsh on 18 Feb, 1060 at Fluke Hall on 21 Feb with 1100 there on 11 Nov, 1850 at Lytham on 13 March with 1300 there on 3 May, 2000 at Cockersand and 1404 at Rossall Point on 15 May, and 1190 on Cockerham Marsh on 13 Nov. Heysham had 4978 on 6 Nov, while almost all records on the Alt were at Formby Point.

Spring migration at Seaforth, where few are seen in winter, began in earnest on 16 April and continued to mid-May, with the first returning birds arriving in mid-July and the first juvenile on 20 July.

The timing of the passage movements through east Lancashire were similar with small numbers recorded at Stocks, Alston, Foulridge, Rishton and Parsonage Reservoirs with late birds at Barrowford Reservoir on 8-9 Oct; very unusually one was flushed near the summit of Boulsworth Hill on 8 Dec. Two at Belmont Reservoir on 1 March was an unseasonal record. Small numbers were seen regularly at Brockholes throughout the year with peaks of 20 on 1 Feb (presumably weather-induced like the Belmont record), 16 on 16 May and 20 on the 19th.

The only reports of breeding came from the West Pennine Moors where birds were present at three sites around Belmont during the breeding season, including one displaying in late April at a moorland site not used for many years, a displaying bird at another site in May and breeding confirmed at a third site on 18 June when two pairs, both with young, were located within close proximity.

**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
EMC	0	0	1	3	0	0	/	/	11	10	/	5
Ribble WeBS	2	0	1	51	0	0	2	0	22	16	4	2
Marshside	10	10	20	47	15	0	3	4	20	58	20	5
MMWWT	46	40	37	30	12	4	8	34	49	55	73	80

Additional records in the first winter period included up to three on the north Fylde coast at Cocker's Dyke, Cockersand, Fluke Hall and Pilling until mid-March, and one on Newton Marsh in January and Lea and Clifton Marshes in March. Early spring migrants were recorded on the Eric

Morecambe complex on 23 March and at Seaforth on the 30th and a small passage continued until the first week of May.

Twelve males were lekking at Marshside during May and there up to six birds on Newton Marsh from late April into May but there was no positive evidence of breeding on the Ribble.

Two on Newton Marsh on 17 July may have been summering birds but definite migrants arrived at Seaforth and Glasson on the 25th and Cockersand on the 27th. The pace quickened in August and September with notable counts on the coast and coastal plain of 16 at Cockerham on 25 Aug, 15 at Cockersand on the 27th, eight on Eagland Hill on 14 Sept, 49 at Cockerham on the 17th with 46 there the following day, 20 on Newton Marsh on 18th and 25 still at Cockerham on 24th. Ones and twos at Glasson and Pilling in October and November were perhaps returning to wintering sites.

Further inland, Brockholes recorded one or two on four dates between 26 Aug and 2 Sept, while there three records in east Lancashire: two at Hesketh Lane on 19 Aug with three over Alston Wetland the same day and one on Rishton Reservoir on 9 Sept.

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

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

For the third year in succession the number of records decreased sharply. Jack Snipe were reported from just 18 sites during the first winter period and 14 in the second – down 40% and 50% respectively from 2010.

None was seen on the West Pennine Moors or at Seaforth all year; the only records anywhere in Merseyside were singles at Cabin Hill in January and March and Birkdale Green Beach until 14 April. One was at MMWWT on 22 March. Chorley's only records were at Eccleston in November and December. In the north ones or twos were seen at Leighton Moss, Heysham and Middleton NR up to 24 March, and at Greta Foot, Leighton, Heysham and Teal Bay during the second winter period. Things were a little better in the Fylde with singles at Fairhaven and St. Anne's in January and Lytham, Warton Marsh and Marton Mere in March, and up to three at Myerscough College in February and in March. The only later records were at Fairhaven with a peak of six in Granny's Bay on 24 Nov, and three on St. Anne's beach on 24-25 Nov.

Further east up to three were at Brockholes from 25 Sept to 30 Nov, while in east Lancashire ones or twos were seen at Great Harwood to 4 March and Oswaldtwistle Moor on the 23rd, followed by seven at Alston Wetland on 19 Oct and singles at Dean Clough and Swinden Reservoirs and Great Harwood, and up to four at Stocks Reservoir and Bull Moss.

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

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

Yet another poor year. Counts of 20 or more were received from just four sites during the first winter period (13 in 2010) with peaks of 46 on 22 Feb at Grove Lane Marsh, 30 at Brockholes on 13 Feb, 26 at Alston Wetland on 19-20 Jan and 22 on 17 Jan at Cabin Hill. Lower numbers were reported a number of other sites, including 19 in the Fylde compared with 22 last year. The first record at Seaforth, where 50 or so regularly used to winter, were three migrants on 29 March. The last spring migrant was at Rossall Point on 1 May while singles on Newton Marsh on 20 May and 18 June and MMWWT on the 29th were possibly breeding.

The first report of 'chipping' calls in east Lancashire came on 10 April from Oswaldtwistle Moor, where further calls and drumming were heard later in the month. Drumming was reported on Hyles Moor on 11 April where one was also heard 'chipping' on 16 June; 'chipping' was also heard from suitable breeding habitat on Boulsworth Hill on 12 June. This compares poorly with

reports of drumming and/or chipping from six east Lancashire sites in 2010 and twelve in 2009. Although reports of birds were received from eleven other sites in the April-June period none of them had any evidence of breeding.

The breeding population in the central West Pennine Moors remained healthy with 6+ 'pairs' on territory around Belmont Reservoir and a minimum of a further 13 'drummers' recorded on in-bye fields/moorland elsewhere in the Belmont area; three were displaying on Aushaw Moss on 31 May. Two 'pairs' bred at MMWWT and birds were also breeding on Boulsworth Hill.

Autumn passage began with singles at Parsonage Reservoir on 7 July and Mythop on the 14th but only low numbers were seen until September. Peak autumn counts included 30 on 13 Oct at Leighton Moss, 90 on the Eric Morecambe complex on 14 Oct, 86 on 19 Oct at Alston Wetland, 37 on Chipping Moss on 9 Sept, 48 at Parsonage Reservoir on 16 Oct, 45 at MMWWT on 2 Oct, 30 on Croston Moss on 16 Oct, 25 on Hoddlesden Moss on 1 Oct, 45 at Marshside on 20 Oct, 50 on Rawcliffe Moss on 20 Sept and 35 on the Conder Pool on 14 Oct.

However, it seems that relatively few stayed after the middle of November when counts of 20 or more were made at only seven sites: 149 at Grove Lane on 16 Dec, 41 at Roby Mill on 10 Dec, 40 on Black Moss on 27 Nov, 34 at Parsonage Reservoir on 1 & 18 Nov, 33 on Warton Marsh on 11 Dec, 30 at Stocks Reservoir on 16 Nov and 29 on Bull Moss on 2 Dec.

## **WOODCOCK** *Scolopax rusticola*

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

As last year birds were reported from more than 100 sites in the two winter periods. Virtually all records were of ones and twos with the only counts received from organised pheasant-shoots this year coming from Belmont, where there were 20+ on 26 & 29 Jan, five on 30 Nov and eight on 28 Dec, and Hackensall Hall with eight on 23 Jan. Threes were at Marton Mere during January, Staining Nook on 3 Jan and Pilling Moss on the 16th. Almost all were seen in or near woodlands with the exception of one wanderer on Marine Drive, Marshside on 29 March. Three seen at Stocks Reservoir on 25 March were reported as having been flushed by a Tawny Owl; they quickly disappeared into the trees again. A leucistic bird was shot at Belmont on 26 Jan.

There was a reduction in roding registrations at Eaves Wood, Silverdale with only two, the lowest in the nine years of the survey, but results at Leighton Moss and Warton Crag RSPB suggested similar numbers of roding birds to 2010. Six reported at Whittington on 9 June were presumably also breeding birds. One was roding at Stocks Reservoir on 23 June, four in the Hodder Valley between Sandal Holme and Lower Hodder Bridge from late April to early June and one in the Ribble Valley downstream of Gisburn on 4 May; birds reported in June in the Moor Piece, Cow Ark. Longsight Road and Green Pike tetrads in late May and June were also probably breeding. A minimum of five roding males were recorded around Belmont, the first on 12 March, three at Black Coppice on 13 June, two over Spring Wood Duxbury on 1 June and two at White Coppice on 10 June. A bird flushed by the roadside at Green Pike on 13 June was thought to be a possible juvenile.

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

**Abundant passage migrant and winter visitor. Rare breeder.**

**International importance: 470. National importance: 430.**

There was still no sign of any slowing of the increase in the number of Icelandic birds.

A record count was registered in April on Morecambe Bay, where the largest flock was mainly based on the Eric Morecambe complex. At times all or part of the population moved to Leighton Moss, the coast between Hest Bank and Silverdale or the Warton floods. The Lune

Estuary flock was rather difficult to find and varied in numbers with a peak of 274 on 27 March. Large flocks in north Fylde included 226 at Barnaby's Sands on 23 Jan, 220 at Glasson on 22 Feb and 200 at Cockersand and 281 at Skippool Creek on 17 April.

#### Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	320	39	560	3214	256	301	621	33	540	1727	2059	755
EMC	790	760	1850	2550	110	291	426	390	670	950	2000	661
Ribble WeBS	/	1585	747	837	75	39	481	234	1283	1314	3658	5915
M'side/Crossens	850	2700	1200	340	60	96	97	250	1500	1314	2181	5800
Alt (Seaforth)	41	162	192	180	6	22	159	225	156	44	4	4

There was also record count on the Ribble in December, where most birds are found at Marshside/Crossens; the highest count on the north side of the river was 360 on Newton Marsh on 17 July. Alt birds are all found at Seaforth. The biggest flock reported on the Lancashire section of the Mersey Estuary was 423 along Garston Shore on 17 April.

Birds rarely stray inland, usually during passage periods. MMWWT is always the most favoured site; peak counts there were 100 on 21 Feb and 20 May and 168 during June. Further away from the coast a flock of 35 flew east over Croston Moss on 2 June, and single figures were fairly regular at Brockholes between 6 April and on 29 May with a peak of 29 on 11 April, 25 on 22 July, eleven on 8 Aug and one on 5 Sept. In east Lancashire one was at Stocks Reservoir on 2 April, followed by one at Alston Wetland on 24-26 June, three at Parsonage Reservoir on 30 June and then a definite autumn passage bird at Alston on 22 Aug.

Three continental race birds were displaying on Newton Marsh from 11 April and at least one was still present on 9 May but it is uncertain whether nesting was attempted.

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

**Abundant passage migrant and winter visitor**

**International importance: 1200. National importance: 380.**

#### Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	1105	2368	497	353	5	185	6	12	442	677	1815	2236
Ribble WeBS	/	35	88	252	13	265	232	146	58	2525	20	221
Alt WeBS	12412	9921	/	714	1063	227	135	2597	5952	/	7040	3371

Counts missed by WeBS on Morecambe Bay included 350 at Cockersand on 28 May, 234 on the Conder Estuary on 9 June and 150 on 18 July, 300 at Glasson on 26 July and 100 on 3 Aug and 1700 at Heysham on 2 Sept, and on the Ribble 1500 at Birkdale on 4 March.

Numbers on Morecambe Bay were fairly typical but there was a change in distribution both at low and high water with many fewer on the inner Lune Estuary but large numbers off Middleton. The January count was a record for the Alt but was probably accounted for by birds shifting from the Ribble, where numbers were very low except in October.

First-summer birds began to arrive at Seaforth on 15 June and peaked at 258 on 4 July; most recorded during June and July on the Ribble and Morecambe Bay were also likely to have been non-breeding birds. 1020 at Seaforth on 26 Nov was a record count for the reserve.

Inland, one was at MMWWT on 2-9 May and one or two at Brockholes on five dates between 9 March and 29 May. Further east, one was at Stocks Reservoir on 18 April with two the next day and on 7 May. Finally, one was at Rishton Reservoir on 18 July.

**WHIMBREL** *Numenius phaeopus*

Common passage migrant, especially in spring.

International importance: 6100 (*islandicus*), 2300 (*phaeopus*).

**Evening Roost Counts**

	19/4	20/4	23/4	25/4	26/4	27/4	28/4	30/4	1/5	2/5	7/5	9/5	11/5	20/5
Brockholes Wetland	14	45	73	114	119	124	149	121	113	79	22	20	15	/
Barnacre Reservoir	9	/	/	159	/	/	/	/	/	209	/	59	/	/
Longton Marsh	39	40	212	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	180

Reports from the main roost sites were a little patchy this year with all three counted simultaneously only on the early date of 19 April and few records were received from the Formby mosses this year. Nonetheless, there was a suggestion that overall numbers in the county were lower this year – peak counts at both Barnacre and Brockholes were both down significantly. It is likely that this may simply due to ‘normal’ fluctuations rather than any change in the county’s importance as a spring stopover area.

The first over Seaforth on 9 April was followed by birds at Newton Marsh on the 13th, Brockholes on the 16th, Alston Reservoirs and Heysham on the 17th and MMWWT the next day. As usual numbers peaked in the last week of April and the first week of May but the passage continued into early June.

Spring counts away from the roost sites included 125 bird-days past Heysham from 17 April to 29 May including 18 on 18 May; 26 flew past Rossall Point on 19 & 29 April and 15 past Cockersand on 5 May and over Seaforth on 23 April. Feeding groups included 150 at Freckleton Marsh on 23 April, 100 at Staynall with 60 at Newton Marsh on the 28th, 35 at Hornby on 28 April, 33 at Bannister Lane, Chorley on 9 May, 30 on Stalmine Moss on 24 April with 25 there the next day, 20 on Downholland Moss on 10 May, 18 at Little Singleton on 20 April, 13 at Croston on 28 April with 18 there on 2 May. The largest counts in east Lancashire were seven at Alston Reservoirs on 21 April and nine at Stocks on 4 May with low single figures at four other sites.

As ever the return passage was far more subdued. The first were at Heysham on 28 June and Seaforth on 8 July and the last at Heysham on 14 Sept, Cockersand on the 18th and Skippool Creek on 1 Oct with a very late straggler on Warton Bank on 2 Nov.

**CURLEW** *Numenius arquata*

Abundant winter and breeding bird.

International importance: 8500. National importance: 1400.

**Monthly peak counts**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	4954	8089	4337	1809	87	980	2312	4246	4614	4528	3552	2180
Ribble WeBS	1261	477	1101	298	9	109	460	1077	1628	1137	996	911
Alt WeBS	270	545	508	140	38	12	22	268	294	720	577	662

Numbers on both the Ribble and Morecambe Bay were fairly typical throughout the year but winter numbers on the Alt were the lowest since 1994. Large counts on the north Fylde coast included 1568 at Fluke Hall, 1530 at Bank End and 1260 on Cockerham Marsh on 20 Feb, 1000 on Pilling Marsh on 3 Aug and 1050 at Bank End on 12 Sept.

Typically few were seen any distance inland in either winter period: singles at Alston Reservoirs on 3 Jan and Jackhouse on the 13th, three at Croston on 3 Jan, ten at Arkholme on 20 Jan with six there on 20 Dec and singles at Foulridge on 7 Nov and Altham on 18 Dec.

Movement back to the moors got underway in February with numbers building to a low peak of 300 at Arkholme on the 22nd; 450 were at Gressingham on 29 March. Other peak counts during this passage period included 95 at Burholme and 116 at Chipping Moss on 24 Feb and 134 at Martholme on 3 March in east Lancashire, and 129 at Belmont Reservoir on 27 Feb with 144 there on 10 March. The passage was more or less spent by the first week of April.

Breeding records were as usual only partial. They included six pairs at Arkholme and on Boulsworth Hill, four pairs on Kelbrook Moor and nine alarm-calling on Aushaw Moss on 31 May. Breeding was also proven or probable at Newton-in-Bowland, Green Pike, Altham, Foulridge, Hyles Moor and possible at a further 22 sites in east Lancashire. Many pairs had their nests burnt out on Anglezarke and Withnell Moors in the fires of late April and early May with counts in the days immediately following the fires locating only two remaining pairs on the burnt area of Anglezarke Moor with an estimated ten pairs on territory over 4km<sup>2</sup> of adjacent unburnt moorland. Two were still on their breeding territory in the Yarrow Reservoir area on 25 July.

Post-breeding dispersal began in June, including a flock of 52 on Hyles Moor on the 16th, and flocks continued to be seen in the east throughout July and into early August, when numbers on the coast began to rise, with a few seen in September and October.

Efforts to scare Curlews off Liverpool Airport proved largely ineffective, resulting in almost constant daily disturbance there.

## **COMMON SANDPIPER** *Actitis hypoleucos*

**Common passage migrant, fairly common breeding bird. Scarce in winter.**

There was just one wintering record, a single on the Conder Pool from 2010 until at least 8 April with presumably the same back there from 1 Dec to the year's end.

The first probable migrants were at Wenning Foot on 18 March and the Ribble at Jumbles on the 30th, followed by singles at Stocks Reservoir on 3 April and Altham on the 7th; other first dates inland were at Belmont and Delph Reservoirs on 11 April, MMWWT on the 13th, Cronton on the 16th and Alston on the 17th. Widespread coastal passage began in the third week of April with arrivals at Marshside, Seaforth, Newton Marsh, Freckleton Naze, the ICI tanks, Pilling Marsh, Little Singleton and Marton Mere, and continued until roughly mid-May.

Twelve or more were at Stocks Reservoir on 2 May but it is not known how many went on the breed. Forty-eight pairs bred on the Lune with 13 of these at Arkholme, five pairs at both Belmont and Delph Reservoirs, four at Brockholes and Altham, and single pairs at Upper Coldwell, Clowbridge, Parsonage, Alston, Yarrow, Springs, Anglezarke and Lower Rivington Reservoirs and on the Ribble near Pendle Hall. Many more, particularly in the Ribble and Hodder catchments, must have gone unreported.

Twenty-three at Delph Reservoir on 9 July and 17 at Stocks Reservoir on the 16th were the only significant post-breeding assembly on the breeding grounds, where the last was seen at Clowbridge on 18 Oct.

The first migrants returning to the coast were at Seaforth on 17 June, followed two days later on the Conder Pool. The largest autumn counts included 47 around the Douglas/Ribble confluence on 25 July, 29 in the Skippool Creek area of the Wyre on 4 July, 22 at Seaforth on the 10th and 20 on the Conder Pool on 14th and 20th. Birds on Sefton Park Lake in central Liverpool on 30 June and 4-6 Aug were the only urban records. The last migrants were at MMWWT on 4 Oct and the Conder Pool and Fairhaven Lake on the 7th.

**SPOTTED SANDPIPER** *Actitis macularius***Vagrant.**

A summer-plumaged adult was at Brockholes on 30 May (WC Aspin). The record has been accepted by the BBRC and becomes the fifth record for the county, although there must be a chance that it was the same bird that was seen at Stocks Reservoir in May 2010, although the birds showed different spot patterns.

**GREEN SANDPIPER** *Tringa ochropus***Fairly common on passage, especially autumn. Scarce winter visitor.**

Wintering birds were on the Ribble by Red Scar Wood/Brockholes on 3 Jan and from 28 Oct to the year's end, at Hurst Green on 5 Jan, at Altham on 21 Jan to 13 April, on the Lune at Arkholme on 20 Jan, probably until 29 March, with two there on 8 Feb, Ewood Bridge Sewage Works on 3 Feb and Arley NR on several dates. The only definite wintering bird later in the year were the usual bird at Altham from 17 Nov until at least 18 Dec, one at Arkholme on 20 Dec and one at Mythop from 24 Dec, but singles at Freckleton Naze on 6 Nov and Cartford Bridge on the 20th, and two at Pilling Lane Ends on the 22nd may have wintered in the county.

The earliest probable migrant was on the Ribble at Brockholes on 18 April but the only definite spring records came from Jameson Road Landfill on 17 April, Alston Reservoirs on the 21st to 23rd, Parsonage Reservoir on the 22nd, Winmarleigh on 26 April and 2 May, Belmont Reservoir on 1 May and Slaidburn on 11 May.

The first returning birds were seen at Eccleston on 24 June and Altham on the 26th. The pace quickened during July and August and into September, with reports from around 40 sites and largest counts of five at Arkholme on 2 Aug, up to three at MMWWT during July and four during August, and three on Hesketh Out Marsh on 11 Aug; three were at Lightfoot Green on 15 Sept and four at Stake Pool (Fylde) on 1 Oct. Other October birds were at Longton Marsh on the 1st, Glasson on the 2nd, Humblescough Farm, Nateby on the 4th (together with the Solitary Sandpiper), Leighton Moss on the 4th & 10th, Marton Mere on the 11th, Eccleston on the 12th, Pilling Marsh on the 21st & 30th and Ridge Farm (Fylde) on the 26th.

**SOLITARY SANDPIPER** *Tringa solitaria***Vagrant.**

A juvenile was at Humblescough Farm, Nateby on 2-6 Oct (SG Piner). The record has been accepted by the BBRC and becomes the first record for the county. (See separate article).

**SPOTTED REDSHANK** *Tringa erythropus***Fairly common passage migrant.****Monthly peak counts**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
EMC	1	1	1	3	4	2	2	2	4	5	2	1
Conder/Glasson	3	2	2	2	1	1	2	1	4	5	3	1
Wyre Estuary	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	4	5	1	1	2

The only definite wintering bird not mentioned above was one at Arkholme on 22 Feb.

Spring passage records of singles came from Seaforth on 10 April, Starr Gate on 30 April, Marshside on 10-17 May and MMWWT on 5 & 13 May.



Dave Owen

The first returned to the Eric Morecambe complex on 19 June and there were autumn records away from the main sites, all of singles, at MMWWT 18 Aug, 10 Sept and 13-19 Nov, on Crossens on 2 Sept, Pilling Lane Ends on 13 Sept, Marshside on 5 Nov and Cocker's Dyke on 30 Nov.

### **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
LM/EMC	1	1	1	6	4	1	14	30	24	14	12	1
Conder/Glasson	2	2	2	1	2	5	11	8	5	3	1	1
R. Wyre	0	0	0	1	0	0	10	11	9	4	0	0
Hesketh OM	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	22	15	8	0	0

Singles at Heysham on 29 Jan, Seaforth on 4 & 7 Feb and Arkholme on the 22 Feb and 22 March were the only other winter records.

The first migrants were at Brockholes on 9 April and Seaforth and Cockersand the next day, while one at Stocks Reservoir on the 23rd was the only spring record in east Lancashire. Birds were seen at Seaforth on a further seven dates in April and early May with a peak of four on 1 May. There were six at MMWWT on 30 April and another six individuals in May, plus a further four records at Brockholes, and singles at Heysham, Starr Gate and Freckleton Naze until the last of spring at Arkholme on 14 May.

One or two presumably non-breeding birds were at MMWWT during June and singles at Brockholes on 3-5 June and Whalley on the 6th. Four on the Conder Estuary on 19 June perhaps marked the start of the return; as usual the earliest were adults. A steady passage, mainly at coastal sites, then ensued with the last at Freckleton Naze on 6 Nov and Brockholes on the 9th. Notable counts included 30 at Leighton Moss on 21 Aug, and eleven on the Conder on 19 July and on Newton Marsh on 14 Aug with ten at the latter site on 18 Sept. Further inland singles were at Belmont Reservoir on 27 Aug and Grimsargh Reservoirs on 4 July, with three juveniles at Alston Reservoirs on 18 Aug and three over Mellor on the 23rd.

**LESSER YELLOWLEGS** *Tringa flavipes***Vagrant.**

A juvenile was at Glasson from 24 Sept to 4 Oct, when it moved to the Conder Pool before disappearing the next day (SG Piner). The record has been accepted by the BBRC and becomes the 13th record for Lancashire (14 individuals) and the first since one on the Eric Morecambe complex in July 2007.



Redshank and Lesser Yellowlegs  
Ray Scally

**WOOD SANDPIPER** *Tringa glareola***Uncommon passage migrant.**

There was a flurry of six records in April, unusually mostly in the east: singles at Brockholes on the 22nd with another there on the 29th, Fleetwood Marsh on the 22nd, Alston Wetland the following day and New Laithe Farm, Newton and Easington on the 25th. May records came from Belmont Reservoir (one on the 1st), MMWWT (two on the 2nd to 6th and one on the 16th), Mythop (one on the 3rd to 5th), Cockersand (one on the 5th), the Eric Morecambe complex (one to two on the 6-7th), Upper Foulridge (one on the 15th) and Brockholes (singles on the 15-17th & 20th).

It is always difficult to interpret June records for this species: are they late or early migrants or non-breeding birds? Singles were at MMWWT on the 3rd & 16th and Alston Reservoirs on the 24-26th. The only definite autumn migrants were singles at MMWWT on 26 July and 26-27 Aug and Hesketh Out Marsh on 4 Aug.

**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	3730	3883	2982	1734	35	120	961	3669	3585	6302	3910	2813
Ribble WeBS	453	294	1204	1430	79	191	289	4303	3943	3222	624	809
Alt WeBS	448	1450	447	220	1	1	849	660	1271	426	535	529

The February count on the Alt, 1050 of which were at Seaforth, was the highest winter count there this century but numbers remain substantially lower than in the 1990s. Numbers on the Ribble were unexceptional although autumn passage was above average, while Morecambe Bay counts were fairly typical throughout the year. The highest count on the Lancashire section of the Mersey Estuary was 295 at Garston on 28 Dec.

One wintered at Altham on the Calder and two were at Arkholme on the Lune on 20 Jan but birds began to move inland at the end of February with arrivals, for example, at Alston Wetland on 23 Feb, Stocks Reservoir on 1 March and Altham on the 3rd.

The most comprehensive information came from nature reserves, producing a quite optimistic picture, no doubt reflecting the considerable conservation efforts over the past decade or so. Sixty-two pairs bred on the RSPB's Morecambe Bay properties, an increase of twelve over 2010, while 40 pairs at Marshside and 47 on Hesketh Out Marsh compared with five year averages of 28 and 15 respectively. Thirty-six pairs bred on the Lune, 18 of them at Arkholme, eight pairs at MMWWT, three at Brockholes and two at both Alston Wetland and Altham. Proven or possible breeding records elsewhere in east Lancashire came from Hodderfoot, New Laithe Farm, Whitewell, Kenibus, Grimsargh Reservoirs, Black Moss Reservoirs, Burholme, Calder Foot, Champion Moor and Foulridge Reservoirs.

The first post-breeding birds arrived at Seaforth on 10 June and the first juvenile on the 24th. Records became scarce in east Lancashire during August with the last on the 28th; wintering birds were at Altham and Barrowford Reservoir during December.

## **TURNSTONE** *Arenaria interpres*

**Common passage migrant and winter visitor**

**International importance: 1500. National importance: 480**

### Monthly Peak Counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	504	473	571	53	91	1	13	249	590	699	616	310
Ribble WeBS	8	6	94	125	30	2	0	86	36	86	16	55
Alt WeBS	5	187	/	5	0	7	19	2	2	8	13	7

Numbers on Morecambe Bay were fairly typical all year while those on the Ribble continued their slow decline of recent years.

Larger site counts included 165 at Fleetwood on 23 Jan with 300 there on 30 Dec, 180 at Seaforth on 7 Feb, 400 at Rossall on 12 March with 496 there on 5 April and 300 on 2 Nov, 220 at Blackpool on 17 Feb with 150 there on 1 May, 122 at Heysham on 20 Feb with 250 there on 25 April, 125 at Lytham on 16 April with 200 there on 3 Sept, and 106 at Barnaby's Sands on 16 Oct. Twenty-six at Dingle on 9 Oct was the highest count on the Mersey Estuary.

Inland, one was at MMWWT on 6 May, two at Brockholes on 15 May, 15 the following day and with another three singles during the month, and singles at Stocks Reservoir on 26 May and Foulridge Reservoirs on the 29th.

## **GREY PHALAROPE** *Phalaropus fulicarius*

**Scarce passage migrant.**

There was a brief flurry of records in mid-September after strong onshore winds: singles off Heysham on the 13th, on Fairhaven Lake from 13-15th and on the Ribble in Preston on the 15th to 21st.

Further singles were at Cockersand on 22 Oct, Seaforth on 17 Nov and MMWWT on 1-16 Dec.

**POMARINE SKUA** *Stercorarius pomarinus*

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

Apart from one off Ainsdale on 2 May, all spring records came from Heysham: threes on 12 April, 13 & 22 May, and one on 23 May. All were light morph adults heading into Morecambe Bay.

The first confirmed autumn records coincided with a period of onshore gales and comprised a light morph adult lingering off Seaforth on 7-8 Sept, adult(s) tracked past Fylde sites on 13-14 Sept and adults off Ainsdale on 14 and 25 Sept. Another period of onshore winds in mid-October produced another small cluster with the same light morph adult off Cleveleys and on Fleetwood Golf Course on 12 Oct, juveniles off Knott End and Formby Point on 18 Oct and a light morph adult and a juvenile off Seaforth on 19 Oct.

Juvenile(s) were seen off Formby Point on 15 Nov and Ainsdale on 18 Nov. Following either a juvenile Pomarine or Arctic Skua off Blackpool on 9 Dec, a juvenile was off Rossall Point on the 13th and perhaps the same off Ainsdale on 17 Dec.

**ARCTIC SKUA** *Stercorarius parasiticus*

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

**Morecambe Bay**

It was a better spring passage than 2010 (or better coverage) with 55 observed off Heysham and Jenny Brown's Point between 2 April and 29 May compared to 21 in 2010. Only 7% (4 birds) were light morphs and the maximum per day was nine off Jenny Brown's Point on 29 April. In addition, two were off Cockersand on 1 May.

There was an unexpected absence from Morecambe Bay in the September gales (see, for example, the records on 13 Sept for the nearby Fylde coast detailed in the next section) with just one unidentified skua, presumed to be this species, off Heysham on 14 Sept. The only other autumn record was two off Knott End on 14 Oct.

**Liverpool Bay**

Predictably, spring records were in the north of the bay, with some of these undoubtedly duplicated in Morecambe Bay. Other than one off Cabin Hill on 30 April and two off Formby on 16 May, all were off the Fylde coast between Starr Gate and Rossall Point with at least 35 unduplicated individuals between 3 April and 22 May, mainly dark morphs.

'Midsummer'/early autumn records suggested birds moving through rather than lingering and comprised two off Formby on 2 June with three there on the 16th, singles off Blackpool 10 & 23 July and Ainsdale on the 25th, two off Rossall on 25 July, three off Ainsdale on 28 July, one off Formby on 4 Aug and two off Ainsdale on 8 Aug.

From 5 Sept onshore gales produced a regular but not exceptional series of records, with the SW/WSW direction of the strongest winds on 11-13 Sept not conducive to producing an 'accumulation' in the Mersey. Records in the Mersey Mouth comprised singles on 5 Sept and 14 Sept, two on 7 Sept and five on 8 Sept. Ainsdale/Formby saw three on 11 & 12 Sept and single(s) on the 13th & 14th. The Fylde sites produced an absolute minimum of one on 5 Sept, three on the 7th & 12th, 7-10 on 13 Sept and one the next day.

Further onshore winds in October produced singles off Rossall on 4, 6 & 18 Oct, four off Seaforth on 6 Oct and two off Cleveleys on 7 Oct. Late records saw singles off Formby and Rossall on 18 Oct and a report from Ainsdale on 5 Nov.

The most unusual record of the autumn was a light morph adult providing the long overdue first record for Seaforth Nature Reserve itself as it remained off-passage from 31 Aug to 7 Sept.

**LONG-TAILED SKUA\*** *Stercorarius longicaudus*

Scarce autumn migrant; rare in spring.

Two separate sightings of single adults were seen heading towards the Keer Channel from Jenny Brown's Point on 29 May. Record numbers were passing through the Irish Sea on that day and, given the time gap between the two sightings, it is a possibility/probability that they represented different birds (A Riden). The 'Hurricane Katia' gales saw at least one juvenile off Rossall Point, Cleveleys and Blackpool North Shore on 13 Sept (I Gardner, S P Eaves, C G Batty).

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

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

**Morecambe Bay**

One was on the sea off Pilling Lane Ends devouring a gull on 7 Feb. An above average spring passage began with northbound singletons on 31 March, 2 April, 4 April, 4 May, 16 May then three on 24 May (one from Jenny Brown's Point and two from Heysham).

The first of autumn off Knott End on 8 Aug was followed by singles on 7 & 12 Sept from Heysham, 13 Sept and 6 Oct from Cockersand, 13 Sept from Pilling Lane Ends and 11 Oct from Jenny Brown's Point.

**Liverpool Bay**

The only spring record was from Rossall Point on 16 April.

Midsummer records comprised singletons off Starr Gate on 9 June and 26 July, Rossall on 9 July and Formby on the 18th. Pre-'hurricane season' autumnal records were limited to singletons off Rossall on 28 & 30 Aug.

When the strong onshore winds arrived in early September, the lion's share of the records was from the Fylde coast with a number of locations being covered simultaneously. Minimum counts comprised singles on 7, 8, 12 Sept, six on 13 Sept and two on 14 Sept, but this assumes that all sightings were duplicated at the different watch-points as suggested by the contiguous nature of the sites.

In the absence of a north-westerly component to the gales, the only records during this period from further south were one off Seaforth on 5 Sept, two there on the 8th and singles off Formby on 11 & 17 Sept. A further period of strong winds saw singles off Birkdale and Blackpool on 6 Oct and off Seaforth on the 7th, and one lingering at Marton Mere on 9-10 Oct. Later records comprised singles off Ainsdale on 25 Oct, Starr Gate on the 26th, Marshside on the 27th and Ainsdale on 22 Nov, and two off Formby on 26 Nov.

**SKUA sp.**

A number of other skuas, either Arctics or Pomarines, were seen in ones and twos, amounting to nine in total, from Jenny Brown's Point between 2 and 23 May but they were too distant to be identified properly.

**SABINE'S GULL\*** *Xema sabini*

Uncommon passage migrant.

September witnessed a large invasion of this species off the Irish and British coasts in the wake of Hurricane Katia. A small proportion filtered down into the Irish Sea and were seen off our coast. The first sighting involved an adult off the North Harbour Wall at Heysham on 8 Sept, this bird had an injured foot and frequented the harbour until the 14th and was joined on the 13th-14th by a

second adult and a juvenile on the 14th, pulled in by ferries (finders unknown); one of these adults was also seen off Morecambe on the 13th (J Butcher).

There was a major movement on the 13th with at least six individuals (four juveniles) seen off the Fylde coast at Bispham, Cleveleys, Fairhaven Lake, Rossall and Blackpool (R Stinger, JF Walsh, B Dwire, P Ellis, I Gardner *et al*). Sightings that day also came from Formby Point where there was an adult and juvenile (B McCarthy), whilst two juveniles flew past Ainsdale (J Dempsey). (A juvenile and an adult were in the Mersey Mouth on the 13-14th (P Kinsella *et al*).

On the 14th an adult and juvenile were tracked south past Bispham, Norbreck and Blackpool (L Blacow *et al*) and one was reported off Ainsdale.

No more were seen until a juvenile on the Keer Estuary near Carnforth Slag Tips on 28 Sept (finder unknown). The last were single juveniles on 6 Oct in the Mersey Mouth (P Kinsella *et al*) and off Heysham (PJ Marsh, J Roberts).

A week into October and a small wave of birds occurred beginning with one on the River Mersey and a juvenile at Skippool Creek on the 6th, the latter probably seen off Rossall Point the following day, when another juvenile was off Heysham and two in the Mersey Mouth.

## **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	1	0	0	0	2	47	0	4	127	38	25	0
Rossall Point	0	0	0	3	22	0	3	4	121	44	50	30
Blackpool	10	20	0	4	100	27	5	1	8	0	2	20
Heysham	1	43	1028	35	34	2	0	6	30	30	27	100

Although birds were seen the length of the coast in all months of the year, numbers for the most part continued to be low. Records from the main seawatching sites are summarised in the table.

Elsewhere in the first winter period the largest count was 137 off Knott End on 7 Feb. The stand-out record during spring passage was the 1028 off Heysham on 9 March with 218 seen there the following day. Surprisingly, the only other record received from anywhere in the county during March was of one at Preston Dock on the 31st.

April and May were disappointing with just single-figure counts coming from Heysham, Blackpool, Rossall Point and Seaforth but 100 were off Blackpool on 11 May. June continued with low and infrequent numbers from the south of the county. The breeding colony in the Liverpool Docks contained about 30 pairs but their breeding success is not known..

During July the majority of sightings came from Blackpool and Seaforth. Single juveniles were present at Blackpool and Stanley Park on 16 Aug and at Glasson on the 19th. September began with onshore gales resulting in 30 birds taking up



*Nesting Kittiwakes, Liverpool Docks*  
Steve Young

residence at Heysham from the 6-14th, consisting mainly of first-year birds. The reporting rate along the coast increased but there were few noteworthy counts: 121 past Rossall Point on 13 Sept and 127 at Formby Point.

The year ended unsettled with prolonged December gales and as a result birds accumulated in the relative shelter of Heysham Harbour from the 12th with up to 40 present, increasing to 55 on the 22nd and approximately 100 on the 28th. Elsewhere, it was still hard to find any number of birds with the exception of up to 35 on the Fylde coast off Cleveleys, Blackpool and Rossall.

The two inland records this year were one at MMWWT on 2 Dec and on the same day one that was taken into care near Fence and successfully released the following day.

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

**Locally abundant breeding bird. Abundant winter visitor and passage migrant.**

**International importance: 20000. National importance: 20000.**

### Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	3296	3222	641	723	487	1167	3819	5813	3417	3754	1546	2390
Ribble WeBS	16195	16119	1286	822	343	150	415	1314	633	440	1425	1508
Alt WeBS	911	4361	/	101	129	37	4151	258	1147	1227	341	499
Marshside	4317	12465	720	500	260	125	30	156	6	287	443	464
Seaforth	/	2500	600	200	60	350	400	350	800	300	650	1000

Notable site counts in January included 1000 at Brockholes Wetland on the 1st and Blackpool on the 7th, 3000 at Thurnham on the 16th, 1000 at Knott End on the 20th and 2000 at Formby Point on 22nd. Pre-breeding numbers started increasing early at Lower Rivington Reservoir with 5000 on 7 Feb, as numbers at Knott End steadily grew to 2500 on the 10th and up to 7000 were at Ballam, Lytham on the 19th. Once into March numbers at MMWWT far surpassed last year's pre-breeding gathering with 5800 on the 4th.

Numbers breeding at Belmont Reservoir keep on increasing from year to year with 6738 pairs nesting; the first birds returned in late February and rapidly increased to 3000 on 5 March and then to 12000 by the 29th. Unfortunately the colony lost 350 nests in May due to rising water levels but overall it enjoyed a successful year with an estimated 10000 juveniles fledging. Birds returned to the colony at Stocks Reservoir a little earlier with 3000 on the 27 Feb and numbers increased to 7000 by 13 March. It remains impossible to count this colony accurately but it was estimated at 1500-2000 pairs. Marshside saw a big increase from three pairs in 2010 to 53 pairs this year on Suttons Marsh, and MMWWT added this species to its breeding list for the first time with two pairs nesting successfully. The Ribble Marshes colony was not surveyed this year and no information was received from Leighton Moss.

An amazing sight of 2000 birds was seen feeding on flying ants over central Liverpool on 27 July. No major post-breeding flocks were noted in late summer with 1100 at Bolton-le-Sands on the 20 Aug and 1500 near Pilling on 26 Aug being by far the best counts. By 27 Sept numbers at Glasson had reached 2500 whilst down the coast at Skippool Creek a maximum count of 3000 was noted on 6 Oct. In November a surprising count of 6000 came from near Clitheroe on the 5th where a mild start to the winter was allowing more birds to stay inland. Other good counts in the remainder of the year were 2300 at Freckleton Naze on 20 Nov, 1500 at Out Rawcliffe on 18 Dec and 2000 at Preston Dock on 21 Dec.

**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.

## Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Seaforth	0	0	3	15	4	0	3	2	3	0	0	1

One or two were on the Heysham outfalls during January and February and there was a flurry of records off the Blackpool coast peaking at 30 on the 19 Jan. Possible passage birds were first noted in early March with two at Blackpool on the 7th and two on Pine Lake on 31 March & 1 April, but the biggest count by far was 110 off Rossall Point on 3 April.

Seaforth suffered its worst ever spring passage. Although very large numbers were offshore, including 651 off Hilbre Island on 31 March and 100 off Formby Point on 17 April, very few ventured onto the reserve where peak counts were just eight on 31 March and 15 on 19 April. The reasons for this were far from obvious as there appeared to be no lack of Chironomid midges hatching; perhaps there was a particularly abundant food resource offshore or perhaps weather conditions were such that passage birds moved straight through without stopping over. All a bit worrying in the year that Seaforth became the first site in Britain to be proposed as a Special Protection Area for passage Little Gulls. There were only six bird-days in May with the last being a first-summer on 15th.

East Lancashire only managed one bird at Stocks Reservoir on 7 April but other terrestrial sites started to produce in May with three at Leighton Moss on the 5th and one on the 13th, one at MMWWT on the 7-8th & 15th, up to four at Marshside from 17-23rd, and first-summer at Brockholes Wetland on the 23-24 May and 1 June.

Five records in June comprised of a first-summer at MMWWT on the 4th, two at Brockholes Wetland the same day, eleven at Leighton Moss on the 7th, one first-summer at Heysham on the 18th and finally an adult at Blackpool on the 26th. July only saw sightings from Seaforth, peaking at six on 17th, and Heysham where two birds remained to moult until 16 Oct and 5 Nov.

Autumn passage started with four at Formby Point on 12 Aug, a juvenile at Seaforth on the 14th, and singles at Eccleston Mere on the 21st and Knowsley Safari Park on the 22nd. Occasional birds were seen off Rossall Point and Blackpool and singles on Fairhaven Lake on 14 Sept and Marshside on the 22nd. The largest count of the autumn came on the 13 Oct with 46 off Rossall Point.

Inland records began with a second-winter at Alston Reservoirs on 12 Sept, followed by a first-winter at Rishton Reservoir on the 13th and a first-winter at Brockholes Wetland on 22 Oct with two there the next day. In poor weather on 11 Nov 17 dropped in at Lower Foulridge Reservoir with one at Fishmoor Reservoir and 16 at Brockholes Wetland; the following day three remained at Brockholes and a first-winter was at Stocks Reservoir.

December gales produced a first-winter at Pine Lake from the 1st into 2012. Heysham enjoyed birds all month with three remaining from the 10th. Elsewhere, one was at Leighton Moss on the 13th, two at Knott End on the 14th with one on the 26th and finally a first-winter on Fleetwood Marine Lakes on the 29th.

## 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
Heysham	2	1	1	2	1	2	4	14	17	2	3	5
Skippool	1	1	2	/	/	/	3	13	12	7	/	/
Seaforth	4	10	6	1	0	7	15	15	17	20	8	5

Numbers continued to increase and this species is now easily the best-recorded gull in our area.

Inland sites still get fewer birds than along the coast; January records included one roosting regularly at Fishmoor Reservoir, a first-winter at Alston Reservoirs on the 3rd and one at Brockholes Wetland on the 16th & 31st. February produced two at Brockholes on the 2nd, a second-winter at Preston Dock on the 9th & 20th, and singles at Stocks Reservoir on the 16 & 27th, Alston Reservoirs on the 17 & 24th and Fishmoor Reservoir on the 25th.

The largest coastal count of seven at Birkdale 23 Jan may have marked the start of the spring passage on the Merseyside coast, where at least ten were seen at Seaforth in February. Birds began to return to the inland breeding sites during March with numbers peaking at six at Fishmoor Reservoir on the 16th.

News from the two well-established breeding sites was much more positive than last year. At Belmont Reservoir at least nine pairs set up territories of which four were confirmed breeding. Human disturbance was kept to an absolute minimum this year, so monitoring was difficult but four fledged young were noted. Across at Stocks Reservoir monitoring is always difficult but it is thought that six pairs bred with at least five young fledging. A single bird held territory at Barnacre Reservoir and a second-summer also held territory at Leighton Moss.

A first-summer was at MMWWT on 19 May but the first returning birds appeared at Heysham and Seaforth in June. The first juveniles arrived on 8 July at Heysham where numbers steadily increased through August and into September when gales produced a record site count of juveniles with 13 present on the 8th. During this same period there were also a minimum of ten adults including ringed birds from France, Germany and the regular Czech Republic bird back for yet another winter. Autumn numbers on the Wyre and at Seaforth were very similar (see table).

Inland, a juvenile was with an adult at Parsonage Reservoir on 20 July, whilst sightings in the second winter period included two at Fishmoor Reservoir on 15 Oct, one at Alston Reservoirs on the 16th and three at MMWWT on the 29th. In November a first-winter was at Stocks Reservoir on the 1st, an adult at Fishmoor Reservoir on the 3rd, two near Clitheroe on the 5th, one at MMWWT on the 21st and one at Alston Reservoirs on the 23 & 12 Dec.

## COMMON GULL *Larus canus*

Abundant winter visitor and passage migrant.

International importance: 16000. National importance: 7000.

### Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	311	384	140	36	20	47	18	61	126	424	100	220
Ribble WeBS	1530	260	10	5	1	0	2	139	452	196	369	712
Alt WeBS	810	1683	/	199	180	39	30	183	285	565	155	224
Seaforth	/	3000	600	250	200	206	40	50	70	150	60	500
Stocks Res	/	1300	1000	60	1	1	32	400	640	3000	11000	6000

The year got off to a slow start with no large gatherings reported. In February 400 were at Lower Rivington Reservoir on the 7th, 600 at Knott End on the 9th, whilst the biggest count came from Seaforth with 3000. In early April Heysham enjoyed a better than normal gathering with a record

count of 565 on the 18th, the majority of which were second-calendar-year birds that remained until early June.

In July numbers start to increase once again with the first notable count being 350 at Claughton in the Lune Valley on 13 Aug.

During the second winter period Stocks Reservoir dominated with large numbers, by the end of October there were in the region of 3000 birds and by 4 Nov the roosting flock had increased to 6000 and to 11000 by the 30th; numbers then settled to a wintering flock of 6000. Elsewhere, the only report of any size was 500 at Out Rawcliffe on 18 Dec.

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

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

This was the worst year since 1986 for this species with just a single adult seen briefly at Seaforth on 31 Dec that was probably the regular bird that winters nearby at Netherton and which was present throughout both winter periods and into 2012. This compares with an average of four records a year during 2000-2010.

There was also a possible hybrid x Common Gull at Seaforth in early June.

### **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: 1200.**

#### Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	127	89	280	266	392	631	304	626	567	294	110	62
Ribble WeBS	273	127	5	42	25	21	27	256	94	204	2220	366
Alt WeBS	404	604	/	263	274	202	654	252	413	115	212	260
Seaforth	/	450	300	220	150	400	380	400	200	600	60	50
Stocks Res	3	315	900	750	350	60	140	3300	2200	1100	300	2

Wintering numbers continue to increase but are poorly monitored by WeBS. Counts away from the main sites included 200 at Bartle Pools on 25 Feb and 130 at Catforth on 6 March with passage counts of 400 at Preesall on 1 April and 300 at Alston Reservoirs on the 16th.

Langden Head remains the main colony in the Bowland Fells with a slight increase on last year to 3937 nests, from which an estimated 5000 young fledged. The Tarnbrook colony crashed in number to just 1571, under half of last year's total, this is a direct result of a continued cull by the Abbeystead Estate. A small percentage (at most 5%) of nests from these two colonies are Herring Gulls. A preliminary analysis of atlas results indicates that more than 500 pairs nest in the Liverpool conurbation. The current population on the Ribble Marshes is estimated at c.4000 pairs but a public inquiry was held this year to decide whether BAe Systems' proposed cull of about 40% of these can take place, the outcome of which is not yet known.

At Heysham there were 69 visible nests in the harbour/power station area, whilst around at Middleton there were at least a further 17 nests. Two pairs were on territory at Belmont Reservoir but only one bred.

141 were at Skippool Creek on the 17 July. Notable counts in August included 200 at Formby Point on the 7th, 250 at Alston Reservoirs on the 12th, 400 at Claughton on the 13th whilst an impressive 8000 were at MMWWT on the 12th. Good numbers remained through to October with 300 at Skippool Creek on the 6th before declining to wintering numbers.

**HERRING GULL** *Larus argentatus*

Abundant winter visitor and passage migrant. Common breeding bird, mainly on the Ribble.  
International importance: 13000. National importance: 7300.

## Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	1531	1008	732	123	259	624	296	665	1327	1198	588	1096
Ribble WeBS	14956	4350	36	268	259	3	312	544	1169	892	3438	18893
Alt WeBS	1359	4535	/	1057	783	992	271	818	1340	1661	2707	868
Seaforth	/	2300	600	200	300	300	250	650	900	1800	2050	700

Numbers wintering inland are much lower than on the coast and are concentrated around Blackburn landfill sites where 1000 were seen on 1 Feb.

The nominate Scandinavian sub-species occurs frequently in winter but is probably largely overlooked; the largest count received this year was of 20 at Birkdale on 23 Jan.

Preliminary atlas results indicate that around 150 pairs breed on roofs in the Liverpool conurbation. The current population on the Ribble Marshes is estimated at c.750 pairs but a public inquiry was held this year to decide whether BAe Systems' proposed cull of about 75% of these can take place, the outcome of which is not yet known.

Both Bowland Lesser Black-backed Gull colonies hold a small number of this species estimated at 50-150 pairs. At Heysham there were 34 nests around the harbour and power station whilst there were just four at Middleton. The Black-headed Gull colony at Stocks Reservoir held one pair that reared a single chick.

Notable counts in the second half of the year included 800 at Fleetwood on 13 Sept, 1638 at Freckleton Naze on 20 Nov, 300 at Rishton Reservoir on 31 Dec and 1500 at Knott End the same day.

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

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

A first-winter was at Formby Point on 17 Jan and Birkdale on the 23rd, and an adult at Fleetwood Marsh on 23 Jan with presumably the same adult at Knott End on the 26th and Fleetwood Marsh on the 29th. The next reports were one at MMWWT on 13 Feb, a second-winter at Skippool Creek on the 20th and two adults at Seaforth on 2 March.

Over a month later an adult was at Seaforth on 23 April, Skippool Creek held a third-calendar-year bird on 15 May and a day later one of the same age was at Cabin Hill. Two spring east Lancashire records came from Alston Reservoirs and Stocks Reservoir on 22 May and 3 June respectively.

During the first half of July there were regular sightings around the Skippool Creek area of a third-calendar-year and an adult, a juvenile was seen at sea over Shell Flat off Cleveleys on the 11th whilst at Glasson there were regular sightings of an adult between 5 July and 8 Oct with two birds present on 14 Aug. A second-calendar-year roosted on Fishmoor Reservoir on the 30 Aug and an adult was at Ainsdale on 14 Sept, whilst a second-winter was at Skippool Creek on 2 & 6 Oct; the final report came from Birkdale on 28 Dec.

Birds were reported at Seaforth throughout the year but no records were received from Prescott Reservoirs.

**ICELAND GULL** *Larus glaucooides*

**Uncommon visitor, mostly winter.**

It was a good start to the year with the first-winter at Preston Dock remaining from 2010 until 16 April.

Fishmoor Reservoir also did well for sightings of first-winter birds with one on 4-10, 16 & 28 Jan into February, when a second bird was also present from the 1st to the 3rd, with one remaining on 4 & 28 Feb and 14-16 March. Sightings of probably the same birds also came from Whinney Hill landfill, Accrington and Rishton Reservoir during these periods.

A first-winter bird was at Blea Tarn Reservoir on 21 Jan and another first-winter at Fleetwood Marsh on the 23rd; a second-winter was at Seaforth on 26-27 Feb. A bird seen flying over upper Hindburndale on 3 April was probably this species but a leucistic Herring Gull could not be ruled out. Finally, a first-winter was at Brockholes Wetland on the 12 April.

The second winter period was much quieter with none seen until late December when a first-winter frequented Marton Mere from the 20th, remaining into 2012 after first being seen flying over the mere on the 11th.

**GLAUCOUS GULL** *Larus hyperboreus*

**Uncommon visitor, mostly winter. Usually more numerous and more coastal than Iceland Gull.**

The only record in the first winter period was a first-winter at Fleetwood Marine Lakes on 9 Feb.

During the second winter period a juvenile was at Heysham, where it frequented the harbour and wooden jetty, from 11 Dec into 2012. Another juvenile was seen flying south past Marshside on the 20th, presumably the same bird then turned up on Christmas Day in the Southport-Birkdale area, where it frequented the beach into 2012.

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

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

**International importance: 4800. National importance: 760.**

**Monthly peak counts**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Ribble WeBS	223	36	10	10	39	6	13	66	111	121	113	215
Alt WeBS	232	168	/	69	99	26	78	105	134	58	190	186
MBS WeBS	118	129	90	92	61	119	109	175	177	247	157	238
Seaforth	53	62	26	10	17	15	24	25	18	161	131	113
Barnaby's Sands	13	14	8	11	15	8	50	74	29	69	/	33

As the table above demonstrates this is a coast-loving species and these counts far exceed any other records submitted.

Heysham held a pair on territory on Fisher's building roof but the outcome was unknown. A pair bred successfully at Marshside on Suttons Marsh.

During the late summer 80 were counted at Fleetwood on 13 Sept and in winter there were 100 at Birkdale Beach on 14 Nov.

Inland records are a lot fewer but the species is recorded every month at a number of sites. During the winter months many frequent the landfill sites around Blackburn with a maximum count of 72 on Rishton Reservoir on 31 Dec. Over at Stocks Reservoir the semi-resident birds which usually number up to five increased to 21 during December.

## **LITTLE TERN** *Sternula albifrons*

**Fairly common passage migrant on coasts, rare inland.**

A fairly typical year began with three off Rossall Point on 29 April, and three off Blackpool and one off Heysham the following day. Six off Rossall, seven off Ainsdale and eight off Blackpool on 1 May may have included some of the same birds. Further offshore spring passage records were singles at Heysham on 3 & 4 May, two at Blackpool on 3 May with another on the 5th, and singles on 8 & 14 May from Rossall.

The first at Seaforth on 3 May was followed by three on the 4-5th with two remaining until the 8th, the latter a displaying pair.

June birds on five dates at Seaforth were followed by further singles on 2 & 8 July; the only other 'summer' record was one off Blackpool on 8 June.

The autumn return began with five off Ainsdale on 28 July, followed by one from Formby Point the next day, four off Blackpool and one off Ainsdale on the 30th. August saw a flock of 24 briefly over the pools at Seaforth on the 1st, two on the shore at Cabin Hill on the 12th and three at Ainsdale on the 7th & 21st. One off Blackpool on 7 Sept was the last of the year.

## **BLACK TERN** *Chlidonias niger*

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

Spring passage was a much livelier affair than last year especially on the coast. It began with one or two at Alston, Parsonage and Stocks Reservoirs and Heysham on 22 April with one at Seaforth following day. The Seaforth bird was with Arctic Terns as were most of the daily sightings off Heysham and on the outfalls during the first week of May, which included 50 on the 3rd and eight on the eighth. Single figures were also seen at several other sites up to 8 May with peaks of twelve at Hightown, eight at Ainsdale, Rossall Point and Leighton Moss, five at Seaforth, three at Jenny Brown's Point and two off Blackpool and Cleveleys. Inland, three were at Stocks Reservoir on 3 May and singles at Foulridge Reservoirs on the 1st and Pine Lake on the 5th & 8th.

The passage was spent by 8 May but one was at Leighton Moss on the 22nd and a sub-adult at Seaforth on the 8-12th with singles there on 3 June and 30 June.

One in winter plumage at Seaforth on 18-24 July was probably also a non-breeding bird. One was at Ainsdale on 28 July with four there on 16 Aug; the first juvenile reported was at Seaforth on 28 Aug but a modest return movement did not fully get underway until September. Peak coastal counts included four seen at Pilling, Cleveleys and Rossall Point on 12 Sept and five at Ainsdale on the 18th.

Autumn records inland were a little more frequent than usual with birds recorded at Brockholes Wetland, Pine Lake, Alston and Prescot Reservoirs, Leighton Moss, Fairhaven Lake and Stanley Park, Blackpool during the first three weeks of September; ten, including nine juveniles, at Alston Reservoirs on 17 Sept was a notable count.

Things went very quiet after that until two juveniles arrived at Brockholes on 21-23 Oct with another there on the 30th & 31st.

## **SANDWICH TERN** *Sterna sandvicensis*

**Common spring and autumn migrant on coasts, rare inland.**

### **Morecambe Bay**

The first was seen off Heysham on 28 March where a modest passage ensued with just 244 bird-days recorded until 22 May and a low peak count of 39 on 28 April.

Remarkably, the only other spring records were five at Cockersand on 17 April with four there on the 28th, and 45 off the Wyre Light on the 25th.

Two at Cockersand on 19 June was the only midsummer record and no more were seen until one at Heysham on 5 July and twos at Arm Hill and Cocker's Dyke on the 17th. Birds were seen regularly at Heysham, mostly feeding on the outfalls, from 27 July to 14 Sept, peaking at 21 on 26 Aug.

Sixty were at sea in the Lune Deep on 25 July but the most regular counts were made at Knott End, including 230 on 29 July, 50 on 1 Aug, 80 on 12 Aug, 51 on 18 Aug and 67 on 31 Aug; 30 were at sea north of King Scar on 25 Aug. The last was at Knott End on 11 Oct.

### **Liverpool Bay**

Early birds were seen off Blackpool on 27 March and at Seaforth on the 31st and daily sightings came from all the main seawatching spots during the first week of April. Numbers peaked from mid-month, including 73 off Rossall Point on the 13th, 110 off Blackpool on the 15th and 76 at Seaforth and 30 at Formby Point on 1 May.

Only low single figures were regular at Seaforth during June but 31 were off Formby Point on the 2nd. Sightings became more regular in July and the passage gained momentum from mid-July. Large counts in July included 61 at Blackpool on the 15th, 83 at Cabin Hill on the 22nd and 247 roosting at Ainsdale on the 28th with more offshore. The southward movement continued into August with counts of 275 at Formby on the 1st and 180 on the 4th, 200 at Ainsdale on the 19th, 60 at Blackpool on the 27th and 108 off Rossall Point on the 31st. September peaks included 160 at Ainsdale on the 4th and 113 on the 25th, and 42 at Rossall on the 13th; the last was at Ainsdale on 4 Oct.

### **Inland**

There were just four records, all in July: singles at Brockholes on the 9th & 19th and at Prescot Reservoirs on the 21st, and four over Alston Reservoirs on the 20th.

## **COMMON TERN** *Sterna hirundo*

**Abundant spring and autumn migrant. Scarce breeder on Ribble and at Seaforth. Regular cross-Pennine migrant.**

### **Morecambe Bay**

After several years of near-rarity status it was a better year at Heysham with 50 bird-days recorded in spring between 18 April and 1 June and, following an adult on 16 Aug, a small gathering on the outfalls during/after gales from 7 Sept-22 Sept.

None was reported elsewhere in spring and few in autumn – just occasional low single figures at Cockersand, the Wyre Estuary and Knott End and 20 in the Lune Deep on the 'boundary' with Liverpool Bay on 25 July.

### **Liverpool Bay**

The first arrived at Seaforth on 15 April and numbers there climbed to 235 by the end of the month; the only other April report was of twelve on Warton Marsh on the 27th. Records in May and June away from the breeding colonies, including one at Cabin Hill on 17 April, 52 at Formby Point on 2 June and 80 on Freckleton marsh during the month, probably related mostly to birds from Seaforth and the Ribble.

Banks Marsh was not surveyed this year but an estimated 40 pairs nested on the satellite colony on Longton Marsh, apparently with some degree of success.

The situation at Seaforth was chaotic as birds from the large colony on the Welsh Dee at Shotton Steelworks again decided they preferred the Mersey. Numbers grew to a massive 1500 on the reserve on 22 May before reducing to 500-700 in June when many relocated to last year's site in

the Liverpool Docks. Competition for limited space on the rafts meant that many early clutches were lost but worse was to come when, after 20 years without problems, a single Magpie pair learned to predate eggs, probably taking every one that was laid. Fortunately, for reasons that defy easy explanation the predation stopped once the Magpie young had fledged and many pairs relaid. A conservative estimate of numbers attempting to breed was 192 pairs on the rafts and 20 or so on land, but the majority were unsuccessful and probably only 30 or so juveniles were fledged.

The first eggs on the dock colony on 3 June and more than 300 nests were apparently occupied by the middle of the month but the whole colony disappeared by the last weekend of July, probably as a result of fox predation, although human interference was not ruled out completely.

A count of 2200 on the reserve on 17 July, which equalled the previous highest Seaforth count of September 1993, was almost certainly composed in the main of birds from the two Mersey colonies. More than 1000 remained in August and there was an influx of 366 apparent migrants on 12 Sept with the last on the 25th.

Elsewhere, 220 were at Formby Point on 4 & 7 Aug with very low numbers seen on the south Fylde coast. The last was at Ainsdale on 19 Oct.

### Inland

Birds returned to the Preston Dock colony from at least 26 April and numbers increased to 37 on 11 May. At least ten pairs nested and they appeared to have had good breeding success.

A single pair again nested – unsuccessfully – on a raft in the Yarrow Valley Park, but only one bird held territory at Delph Reservoir.

The earliest was one at Stocks Reservoir on 24 April, the only spring record in east Lancs although two were at Alston Reservoirs on 26 June. Ones and two were seen on three dates in spring at MMWWT with up to three occasionally in July. Brockholes had singles on 10-13 May, 12 & 15 June and up to three on three dates in July with the last on 25 Sept. Other autumn records of up to three came from Rishton and Foulridge Reservoirs, Withnell Fold, Wayoh Reservoir, Myerscough Quarry, Cuerden Valley Park, Eccleston Mere and the Mersey in central Liverpool.

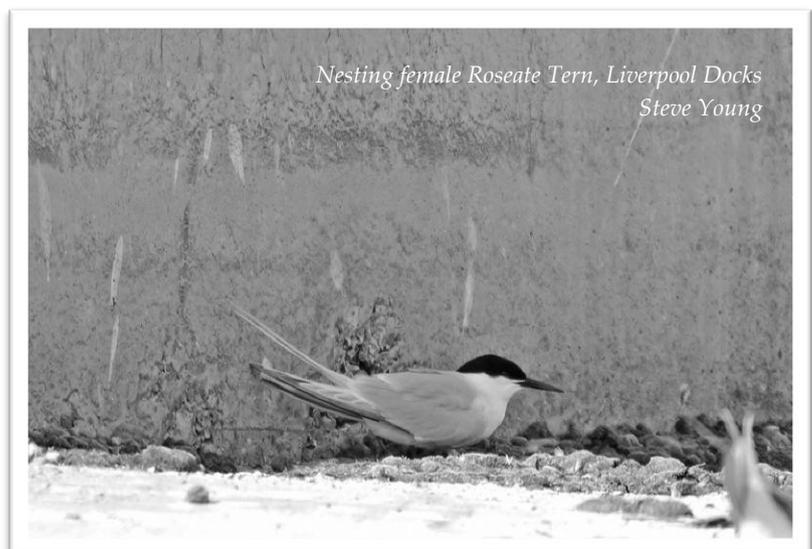
## ROSEATE TERN\* *Sterna dougallii*

### Scarce summer visitor.

With the exception of one roosting at Formby Point on 12 July all records came as usual from Seaforth where twelve were recorded.

Last year's breeding female returned on 1 June and was seen regularly making brief visits to the reserve until 11 Aug but once again nested with its Common Tern mate within the colony inside the Liverpool Docks. It was seen on the nest on 11 June but it is unclear if any eggs were laid as not long afterwards the whole colony was lost to predation or possibly human interference. The female was seen 'in cop' with its mate on the reserve on 16 July but the next day it was displaying with another Roseate although pairing did not seem to materialise.

Subsequent individuals were as usual differentiated by whether ringed or not, by plumage and bare



*Nesting female Roseate Tern, Liverpool Docks*  
Steve Young

part colouration and primary moult.

The first was a mating pair on 12-13 June, followed by new pairs on the 24th and 1 July, with a lone bird present on the latter date. Further new singles were present on 6 July and 30 Aug with two on 17 July, one of which was displaying with the breeding bird.

## **ARCTIC TERN** *Sterna paradisaea*

**Common on spring passage, especially in Morecambe Bay; less numerous in autumn. Rare breeder.**

### **Morecambe Bay**

The spring passage past Heysham was described as 'phenomenal' – possibly an understatement. The movement began on 18 April and continued until 8 May and the statistics were staggering: a total of 14157 birds counted with daily peaks during easterly winds of 543 on 29 April, 3133 on 30 April, 536 on 1 May, 500 on 2 May, 8153 on 3 May and 662 the next day. Fifteen were on the outfalls on 9 May with single figures there until 9 June.

Single adults were on the outfalls on 23 June, 17 July, 10 Aug with up to 15 juveniles and five adults there during September. Further onshore winds in October produced up five between 6 Oct and 18 Oct and a juvenile remained on the outfalls during from 28 Oct to 5 Nov.

In spring 267 were off Knott End on 30 April with 54 there on 1 May, and 32 off Jenny Brown's Point on 29 April with 144 there on 2 May, while autumn produced single-figure counts at Knott End, Glasson and Cockersand and five at Leighton Moss on 3 Oct.

### **Liverpool Bay**

As usual, spring numbers paled into insignificance compared with Morecambe Bay but nonetheless movements of 527 on 29 April and 1171 the next day off Rossall Point, when 991 were also seen off Blackpool, were notable.

Fifty at Seaforth on 22 April with 30 there and 73 off Southport on the 30th, 30 off Formby Point on 1 May, and 41 off Ainsdale on the 3rd were also good local counts.

A handful summered at Seaforth and 20 or more were seen fairly regularly at Freckleton Naze during June, so it seems likely than at least one or two pairs nested on the south Ribble marshes. The first juveniles were seen at Seaforth on 10 Aug. Small numbers were seen off Formby from July to September. The last was at Rossall on 18 Nov.

### **Inland**

Two were at Brockholes on 29 April with one remaining the following day and ones and twos there on four dates in May. Singles at Whitemoor Reservoir on 30 April, four on the Foulridge Reservoirs on 6 May with one there on the 20th, one on Pine Lake on 2-3 May and two at Stocks on the 8th were the other spring records, although presumably non-breeding birds were at MMWWT on 5 June and Rivington Reservoir on the 16th.

Autumn produced twos at Brockholes on 12 Sept and Pine Lake on the 13th, and further September singles at Alston, Foulridge and Prescot Reservoirs on the 7-8th, the 9-10th and 14th respectively.

## **GUILLEMOT** *Uria aalge*

**Common passage migrant; uncommon winter visitor.**

Rather more records were received this year although most were low single-figure counts.

Very few were seen in either winter period. None was seen off the Sefton Coast – although an oiled bird was at Ainsdale on 21 Dec and two were found dead on the inner Mersey at Oglet on the 25th – and only three or so off the Fylde coast in both winters. Heysham, however, had

something of an influx during the December gales with the first on the 3rd, eleven on the 14th and nine on the 24th and 28th.

An exceptionally poor spring passage was reported from Heysham with singles on 22 March, 16 & 17 April the only records. Things were a little brighter further south with a steady movement beginning at the end of March and peak counts off Ainsdale of 31 on 12 May, 32 off Formby Point on the 16th and 17 at sea off Blackpool and Rossall Point on 25 April. Birds continued to move through to early June including eleven off Formby on the 2nd and five or so lingering during summer off the Fylde coast and a couple off Formby.

Fifteen at sea in the Lune Deep on 25 July were perhaps early migrants and other autumn counts off the Fylde coast included up to twelve off Rossall and Blackpool on 13 Sept and 15 off Blackpool on 9 Nov. Fourteen were at Ainsdale on 1 & 22 Nov with 18 there on the 10th but only low single figures were seen off Formby between 1 Aug and 16 Nov. Heysham recorded ones and twos between 10 Sept and 7 Nov and one was off Jenny Brown's Point on 10-11 Nov. Eleven were found dead on Crosby Shore on 14 Oct.

One on the Ribble in the centre of Preston on 15 Sept was the only 'inland' record.

## **RAZORBILL** *Alca torda*

**Common passage migrant; uncommon winter visitor.**

Up to five were seen regularly off Blackpool and two off Rossall Point during January, when 18 were off Formby Point on the 18th with two there on 22 Feb. Two at Heysham and one off Jenny Brown's Point were the only December records.

One off Rossall on 12 March was perhaps the start of a spring passage movement which peaked with ten on 29 March and five on 14 May off Blackpool, and six off Rossall on the latter date. There were ones or twos at Heysham between 18 March and 22 May, but one at Ainsdale on 12 May was the only spring report from the Sefton Coast.

One over Shell Flat on 11 July was presumably summering but a few began to be seen off the Fylde coast by the end of the month with single-figure counts continuing there through to late November and a peak of ten at Blackpool on 26 Oct. Autumn counts were also unspectacular on the Sefton Coast with peaks between 11 Sept and 25 Nov of 43 at Ainsdale on 27 Sept with 15 there on 1 Nov, and 17 off Formby on 15 Nov with 13 there on the 25th.

## **UNIDENTIFIED LARGE AUKS**

This was by far the most common category of auk with 20 off Blackpool and four off Rossall Point in January and many other records between April and November.

The largest counts were 500 off Rossall on 12 April, 60 off Blackpool on 14 May, 165 off Ainsdale on 1 Nov and 54 off Heysham on 12 April.

It is generally thought that the majority of these birds in Lancashire are Razorbills.

## **BLACK GUILLEMOT** *Cephus grylle*

**Scarce passage migrant; rare winter visitor. Amber List (Species of European Conservation Concern).**

One was off Formby Point on 19 Jan, and one was seen in the harbour mouth at Heysham during the morning of 16 April – this was a very similar pattern to 2010 and may have represented a single-date reappearance by the formerly territorial male, as suggested by location and behaviour.

**FERAL PIGEON** *Columba livia*

**Abundant and widely-distributed breeding resident.**

A good volume of reports this year suggests that the Feral Pigeon continues to thrive in urban and adjacent locations throughout the county. Early-year counts in south Liverpool included 160 on Garston Docks on 8 Jan and 166 in Princes Park on 25 May; there were 120 on Morecambe Seafront on 5 Jan and 50 in the Salwick area, Fylde on 14 Feb.

Inland, up to 57 were regular in Blackburn Corporation Park throughout the year; late-year peaks in east Lancashire included 52 at Brookside, Oswaldtwistle on 16 Nov and 120+ over Barnoldswick Centre on the 24th. There were 228 in Sefton Park, Liverpool on 1 Sept and 275 there on 1 Nov; 90 were counted in Southport's Hesketh Park on 18 Sept. Two hundred and twenty were at Singleton on 3 Oct and c.500 at Marton Mere on 10 & 25 December.

**STOCK DOVE** *Columba oenas*

**Fairly common breeding resident; local flocks in winter. Amber List (important breeding population).**

Over a dozen reports of double-figure flocks were received in the early year, including 47 on Rawcliffe Moss, Fylde on 24 Feb, 27 at Bashall Town in east Lancashire on 2 March, 25+ near Belmont on the 6th and 60 on Hesketh Out Marsh on 30 April. The Lancaster & District January survey recorded 22 in six inland 10km squares, compared with eight in two squares in 2010. Eleven birds south over Seaforth on 22 March was the only apparent passage movement in spring.

Reports of the Stock Dove's breeding status in 2011 were consistent with the broad pattern of recent years. In Chorley region 18 were around breeding sites by Belmont Reservoir on 24 April and pairs were at regular nesting sites in quarries at White Coppice, Whittle and Withnell. In the Fylde 22 pairs laid 86 eggs in 41 monitored nests in the Pilling-Preesall-Out Rawcliffe area; 58 young fledged, 1.4 per nest; apart from three pairs in tree-holes all used nest-boxes.

In south Liverpool territorial birds were recorded at 14 locations, with at least six pairs in Princes Park; elsewhere in the south-west there were twelve confirmed pairs at MMWWT and two juveniles fledged at Seaforth in the second week of June.

Ten pairs nested in boxes at Arkholme in the Lune Valley; six of the females were predated by Tawny Owls but were subsequently replaced and 18 nesting attempts followed, including three clutches of four eggs, with 20 young fledged. In east Lancashire Stock Doves were reported from 81 locations during the year.

Post-breeding and early autumn flocks included 37 on Hesketh Out Marsh on 11 July, 25+ at Belmont on 17 Aug and 20 on Sollom Moss on 16 Sept. In October there were 110 at MMWWT and 70 on Rawcliffe Moss on the 4th; 35 passed over Caton Moor on 1 Oct, another migrant flew south at Heysham on the 15th and nine flew over Tarbock Green, Knowsley on the 29th. Apart from 60 on Croston Moss on 17 Dec only small numbers were reported later in the year, with 17 at Bradshaw Lane, Pilling on 17 Nov, 22 at Todderstaffe Hall on 24 Dec and 20+ on Clifton Marsh next day, all in the Fylde, the only other double-figure counts received.

**WOODPIGEON** *Columba palumbus*

**Abundant resident; widespread winter flocks.**

Some exceptionally large flocks and movements were reported in 2011. In the first winter period January peaks included 3000 in woodland on Halsall Moss on the 3rd, 1000 at Marton Mere on the 5th and at nearby Singleton on the 7th, 500 on Mawdesley Moss, Chorley next day and c.1000 at Greenhalgh, Fylde on the 12th. The Lancaster & District January survey recorded 600

Woodpigeons across all squares, a continuing increase on the totals of recent years. In east Lancashire 77 flew over Grove Lane Marsh, Padiham on 17 Jan. In February there were 1000 at Marton Mere on the 5th and 900 at Singleton on the 8th; 300 were at Speke Millwoods, south Liverpool on 5 March and another 1000 at Singleton on the 7th.

Spring movements included two north at Heysham North Harbour Wall on 24 March and a most exceptional passage of 1200 north at Marshside on 9 April, with another 750 there on the following day.

Breeding data were, as usual, very sparse. In Liverpool 92 nests were monitored in Sefton Park with fledging success comparable with that of recent years; 20 nests were located in the Liverpool University precinct in early July and 18 in Princes Park later in the month. Further north the species was described as a common breeder in Cuerden Valley Park, four pairs each nested at Brockholes Wetland and Fairhaven Lake and c.17 pairs at Heysham. Post-breeding flocks included 200+ at Speke Millwoods in July and 600 at Altcar Withins and 1000+ on Croston Moss, Chorley in August.

Autumn movements in 2011 were unusually heavy, but also quite concentrated, occurring mainly in the south-west in the period between mid-October and early November. Four hundred and ninety flew south over Seaforth on 12 Oct and 160 on the 15th; also on the latter date 2570 flew south over Billinge Hill, St. Helens and there were 450+ over nearby Newton-le-Willows. In south Liverpool 1770 flew south-east over Speke early on 20 Oct and 2368 in an hour on the 23rd; another 1400 passed at Billinge Hill on the 25th and 948 at Brockholes Wetland on the 28th. In early November 800+ were over Kemple End, west of Clitheroe on the 5th and 7000 passed at Billinge Hill next day; Caton Moor recorded its autumn peak of 140 Woodpigeons on the 7th.

A relatively quiet spell ensued until late December: 400 were on Rawcliffe Moss on 22 Dec, 650 flew west over Rossall Point and 500 over nearby Fleetwood Marsh on the 27th, and there were 500+ on Mawdesley Moss on the 31st.

## **COLLARED DOVE** *Streptopelia decaocto*

**Common breeding resident, more local in the east; some coastal passage.**

Appreciable flocks/counts were few and far between this year but there seems no reason to suspect any significant changes in the species' population or range. The Lancaster & District January survey recorded 214 across all nine 10km squares, compared with 242 in 2010.

Collared Doves remain widespread in east Lancashire, reported from 61 locations by ELOC. The only double-figure reports in early year were of 20 at Carr Mill Dam, St. Helens on 1 Jan, 17 at Todderstaffe Hall on 6 Feb and 15 in the Stanah area, Fylde on the 16th. Two birds north at Heysham on 30 March were the only spring migrants reported.

Very few breeding data were received. In north Lancashire there were five pairs in Millhead, Carnforth compared with four in 2010, and 15 pairs on the Croftlands Estate in Warton (14 last year); a single pair nested at Heysham. The only other breeding reports were of optimistic pairs building in (presumably very temporary) municipal Christmas trees on Chorley Market on 6 Jan and in Clitheroe Centre on 24 Dec.

A slight autumn passage was noted along the coast, mainly in September: 16 flew south at Heysham between 4 Sept and 1 Nov with a peak of four on 10 Sept; twelve passed at Seaforth on 29 Sept and five on the following day.

There was a total of six double-figure counts in the coastal west in the late year with peaks of 35 at Belvedere Farm, Billinge Hill on 4 Nov and 50+ at Preesall, Over Wyre on the 11th. Twenty-six were on Cockerham Sands on 2 Dec and 23 near Burscough on the 13th; twelve in Burnley Centre on 12 Oct and 23 in a Belmont garden on 12 Nov & 4 Dec were the only noteworthy counts from inland regions.

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

**Rare feral breeder; fairly frequent escapee.**

This robust alien appears slowly but steadily to be expanding its foothold in the county with two core colonies, at Lytham and in Liverpool. Three pairs nested at Lytham Crematorium with birds present in all months, peaking at eight in January and nine in December; up to seven were recorded in nearby Fairhaven on dates in January and October. In Liverpool a pair fledged three young in Sefton Park and up to four birds were present on many dates between April and December; single birds were recorded in Halewood in January, Childwall in April and Princes Park in November and two were in Waterloo in October.

Elsewhere, there were five at Roby Mill in December, two on garden feeders in Formby in September and a pair in Padiham Memorial Park in east Lancashire on 11 Aug, with singles in West Bradford and Nelson in November. Single birds were also at Burscough in January, in an Ainsdale garden in June and in Crosby and Southport in November; perhaps the year's most intriguing record was of one that flew south at Heysham on 28 October.

**CUCKOO** *Cuculus canorus*

**Uncommon breeding bird and double passage migrant, more numerous in spring; Red List (breeding decline).**

2010: A juvenile at Langden Beck in east Lancashire on 3 September was the last record of the year.

2011: Calling males in Sniggery Wood, Blundellsands and at Kenibus and Stocks Reservoir in east Lancashire on 15 April were the first to arrive, followed by birds at MMWWT next day, at Heskin, Chorley on the 17th and Bare, Morecambe on the 18th. There were a further 16 April records in Bowland, five in the south-west and one in north Lancashire; the Fylde's first Cuckoo of 2011 was at Knott End on 5 May.

Arrivals and movements were widespread in May and early June in both coastal and upland regions; one at Heysham on 21 May was that site's first Cuckoo of the 21st Century. Five were recorded on the south-west mosslands and coast during May and six more Cuckoos reached the Fylde up to 15 June. Up to four males were in the Anglezarke-Brinscall area in May and there were May-early June records at five sites in east Lancashire, away from Bowland.

With many birds constantly moving about breeding is difficult to confirm for this species, but birds were present at nine sites on the United Utilities Bowland Estate and two juveniles were seen, one fed by a Meadow Pipit. Meadow Pipits were also feeding a juvenile at Wycoller on 30 June and a juvenile was on Ainsdale LNR on several dates in late June. In north Lancashire there was prolonged breeding-season presence in Hindburndale, Roeburndale, Birk Bank and on Harrisend Fell; two females at Belmont during June were indicative of breeding in the area.

Autumn movements in coastal regions began in late July and were more conspicuous than usual, with three birds in the south-west in August, three in north Lancashire between 28 July and 9 Aug, and two juveniles on Rawcliffe Moss, Fylde during 6-20 Aug. One at Wood End Sewage Works, Burnley on 19 Aug was the last in east Lancashire and a juvenile at Belmont Reservoir on 4 Sept was the final county record of 2011.

**YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO** *Coccyzus americanus*

**Vagrant**

A juvenile found injured in a Liverpool garden on 12 Oct was taken into care but did not survive. This is the first record of this transatlantic vagrant in north-west England (finder unknown). The record has been accepted by the BBRC. See separate article.

**BARN OWL** *Tyto alba*

**Uncommon breeding resident, most numerous in the south-west and in the Fylde. Amber List (Species of European Conservation Concern).**

Over Wyre, 28 nesting pairs were monitored in the Pilling-Preesall-Stalmine-Hambleton and Out Rawcliffe areas: 125 eggs were laid of which 80 hatched, 66 young fledged, 2.4 per pair. Two of these pairs were in roof-spaces, the rest in nest-boxes. In addition three other pairs fledged young and two pairs occupied nest-boxes but without result, giving a minimum total of 33 pairs for the region. In Fylde south of the Wyre a survey located another 24 breeding pairs.

Data from the south-west were much less thorough but at least seven territorial pairs were recorded, with young fledged at MMWWT, Sefton Meadows, King's Moss and at a regular site in Tarbock, Knowsley. In central Lancashire a pair nested at Brockholes Wetland.

Upland Barn Owls appear to have come through the two harsh winters of 2010 very well on the whole. Breeding sites were kept confidential by the ELOC but the majority of pairs were in the Hodder catchment; two pairs raised five young apiece and there were widespread sight records outside the breeding season. In Chorley region successful nesting was confirmed at Withnell, Croston Village and Belmont (two pairs, one of which fledged a late second brood in mid-October); breeding was considered probable at another location, but a formerly-regular nesting site was unoccupied this year.

In north Lancashire two pairs nested in the Lune Valley, one at Arkholme fledging three young; there were sightings in the early year at eight locations, in the late year at nine.

**LITTLE OWL** *Athene noctua*

**Fairly common and widespread breeding resident.**

The ELOC recorded 90 reports from 43 widespread sites, in all months; breeding was confirmed at Altham and on Champion Moor, where a pair fledged two young. In the north single pairs were successful at Gressingham and Arkholme in the Lune Valley, with breeding-season reports from 14 other sites. Chorley DNHS reported sight records throughout the year from ten widespread locations; breeding was confirmed at Whittle and Belmont and by two pairs in the Croston area.

In the Fylde 18 pairs were monitored in the Pilling-Preesall area, Over Wyre: of 58 eggs laid 43 hatched and 35 young fledged, 2.0 per pair; a survey in south Fylde located six breeding pairs. In the south-west, whilst Little Owls were reported from eleven widespread locations during the year there was no confirmation of breeding at any site.

**TAWNY OWL** *Strix aluco*

**Common and widespread breeding resident.**

Winter prey found in a nest-box at Arkholme included the remains of Teal, Snipe, Stock Dove, Green Woodpecker, Blackbird and Starling. Pairs nested late at this site with young still in boxes in June; elsewhere in the north pairs in the Silverdale area nested at the usual time with normal clutches and broods.

One hundred and sixty-three reports were received from 80 locations in the ELOC region (112 from 55 in 2010); there was proof of breeding at only one site, at Jackhouse, but ten territories were located in the Stocks Reservoir area and five in the vicinity of New Laithe Farm, Newton. Tawny Owls were recorded at ten sites in Chorley region with confirmed breeding at Eccleston and in Cuerden Valley Park.

Over Wyre twelve pairs were monitored in the Pilling-Preesall area: 20 young hatched from 30 eggs and 19 fledged, 1.6 per pair; one pair nested in a tree, the rest in boxes, and two pairs failed

to raise young. Two more pairs fledged at least five young at Out Rawcliffe and Stalmine; in south Fylde a survey recorded five breeding pairs. One pair bred at Brockholes Wetland whilst in the south-west five territorial pairs were located, including three in the vicinity of Parbold Village.

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

**Scarce breeding resident; uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.**

The ELOC reported eight breeding records from six different confidential sites: three pairs produced three young each and there was probable success at a fourth location; all territories were on moorland edge. In the north two pairs bred successfully on Leck Fell, with a probable third nearby; another pair was successful at Thrushgill whilst a pair was near Whittington in June. A pair in the west of Chorley region made an unsuccessful breeding attempt and a bird was found dead on a road at Belmont on 23 July.

Only two breeding reports were received from the south-west, a pair with young near Lathom, Burscough and another pair at Ainsdale NNR in June.

A bird at Heysham on 20 Nov was the only passage migrant reported. The traditional winter roost at Marton Mere peaked at nine in January, eight in February and four in March; the last bird was recorded on 21 March. One on 23 Oct was the first to return in autumn and there were peaks of two each in November and December.

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

**Scarce upland breeding bird; uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.**

After a very quiet end to 2010 birds were widely but thinly distributed in the first winter period. Lowland peaks included up to five on Warton Marsh in January and three on Lytham Moss in March; singles were recorded at Clayton-le-Moors in January and at Pilling in February. In the uplands there were three near Brennand on 22 Feb.

Only four spring migrants were recorded along the coast, single birds at Seaforth, Hesketh Out Marsh and Fleetwood Marsh in April and one on Pilling Moss on 5 June.

Three confirmed breeding pairs were located on the United Utilities Bowland Estate, with territorial birds present at five other sites. Two pairs held territory on the West Pennine Moors around Belmont; one pair relocated locally after a moorland fire on 29 April and the last juvenile was seen on 20 August. A single pair bred successfully on the south-west moorlands. Post-breeding visitors were reported from MMWWT in early July and early August.

This autumn saw the heaviest coastal passage of Short-eared Owls for at least two decades. Many birds were on the move so a degree of double-counting is likely, but a minimum of 40 individuals must have been involved in a passage that began in early October and continued until the end of November; at least ten widespread birds were recorded on 15 Oct alone. Highlights of the autumn included five birds at Cabin Hill NNR from 15 Oct to the end of the month, four hunting Garston Shore, south Liverpool on 1 Nov, three on Crossens saltmarsh during November, two at Leighton Moss in late October and at MMWWT and Sefton Meadows in November. Reports of singles came from throughout the Fylde, the north coast and the south-west.

Most of this influx seems to have moved on by the beginning of December, as end-of-year reports were no more numerous than normal. Six were at Sefton Meadows during the month, four were at Cabin Hill on 20 Dec and two at Marshside-Crossens from 11 Dec to year end; two singles were in Over Wyre and one on the south-west moorlands in late December. Inland, two were on Winter Hill and one on Champion Moor on 27 Dec.

**NIGHTJAR\*** *Caprimulgus europaeus*

**Rare passage migrant and summer visitor, probably extinct as a breeding bird.**

A male was churring on Cockerham Moss for up to an hour before midnight on 1 June, though not seen (T Dallimore, G Jones, S Palmer, S Ryder). Our most recent records were of two single birds in Silverdale and at Leighton Moss in September 2009.

**SWIFT** *Apus apus*

**Common summer visitor and abundant passage migrant. Amber List (breeding decline).**

The first Swift of spring at Glasson on 15 April was followed by singles at Seaforth the next day and three at Silverdale and one at Brockholes Wetland on the 19th. Nine were recorded in the Fylde and four more in the south-west before the end of April; east Lancashire's first was over Nelson on 20 April and the first in Chorley over Gillibrand on the 24th.

Spring movements were fairly average with peaks of 80 at Seaforth and 100 over Alston Reservoirs on 9 May, 190 at Burscough on the 19th, c.500 over Leighton Moss on the 24th and c.300 over Stanley Park, Blackpool on the 31st. Some Swifts may still have been on the move in the first half of June but 100 over Seaforth on the 5th & 12th and 195 over the Netherley-Tarbock area of Liverpool on the 11th are more likely to have been feeding aggregations.

As usual there were few reports of nesting activity: two colonies in Freehold, Lancaster held 39 and 31 pairs, respectively; 30+ pairs bred in Burnley General Hospital and nine in a school in Clayton Green, Chorley. Nests were still being visited in Lancaster and Morecambe as late as 24 August.

It is often difficult to distinguish midsummer feeding flocks from the beginning of autumn passage, and 400 Swifts south-west over Crawley's Cross Farm, Fylde on 19 June could well have been either. Birds may well have been on the move by the last week of June, with 70+ over Forge Bank, Halton on the 25th and 50 at Leighton Moss and 300+ over Winmarleigh Moss on the 30th. A small number of noteworthy flocks was reported in July, including 270 over Newton-le-Willows on 3 July and 200+ over Great Altcar on the 30th; August peaks included many counts of 40+ throughout the Fylde, 40 over Carnforth Inner Marsh on 4 Aug, 200 over Queen's Park, St. Helens and 50+ at Leighton Moss on the 13th and 45 at Seaforth on the 25th.

More September stragglers than usual were recorded this year: the Fylde's last was at Fairhaven on 10 Sept, the last at Seaforth and in Chorley region next day, east Lancashire's at Dinckley on the 12th and the final records in the north, and the county, at Warton, Aldcliffe and Leighton Moss on 18 Sept.

**ALPINE SWIFT\*** *Tachymarptis melba*

**Vagrant**

One over the Formby By-pass at RAF Woodvale at midday on 4 May was the seventh county record (EE Jackson). This was our third year in a row to briefly host this southern overshoot in spring.

**KINGFISHER** *Alcedo atthis*

**Uncommon but widely-distributed breeding bird, mainly in the east; post-breeding dispersal westwards. Amber List (species of European conservation concern).**

The effects of the December 2010 freeze on this vulnerable species appear to have been uneven, with severe impacts on breeding numbers in some regions but little evidence of any decline in others. Reports of coastal wintering birds during January-March were markedly down on totals of

recent years: only five were recorded in the Fylde and none in the south-west, and the Lancaster & District January survey recorded four Kingfishers in three squares, as in 2010 (eight in 2009, 14 in 2008).

In east Lancashire there were only 76 reports in 2011, compared with 151 in 2010; the only breeding records were of two pairs on c.10 km of the River Hodder from Sandal Holme down to Hodder Foot, with one pair fledging two young. The situation in north Lancashire, however, looked more rosy: eight territorial pairs were recorded on the River Lune, and two pairs at Arkholme each had three breeding attempts or broods; breeding season presence was reported from Scorton and Wennington. In Chorley region there were reports from Cuerden and Yarrow Valley Parks in the breeding season and one pair nested in the Belmont area; post-breeding reports were received from ten locations.

On the western edges of the Kingfisher's breeding range one pair bred at Mizzy Lake on the Knowsley Hall Estate; although birds were present at MMWWT and Eccleston Mere breeding was not confirmed anywhere else in the south-west. In the Fylde there were breeding season reports from St Michaels-on-Wyre and Avenham Park, Preston. One or two were also regular at Brockholes Wetland from April onwards, but again without proof of nesting.

Many more records were received from coastal regions from July onwards than during the first winter period with concentrations on the Wyre Estuary, in the Heysham area and at Leighton Moss, and on the Ribble upstream of Preston.

### **GREEN WOODPECKER** *Picus viridis*

**Fairly common though local breeding bird, mainly in the north and east; Amber List (species of European conservation concern).**

Populations in all three stronghold regions, north and east Lancashire and the Chorley area, appear to be doing well. In the north Green Woodpeckers were particularly numerous around Silverdale and in parts of the Lune Valley: three pairs nested on Warton Crag and one each at Leighton Moss, Jack Scout and Haweswater. In the Lune Valley a pair at Arkholme raised two young and two pairs bred at Cloughton; further up the valley birds were present in Upper Roeburndale and at Wray and Whittington. Single birds were recorded at Heysham NR on eight occasions from late July.

In east Lancashire the ELOC received 99 reports from 76 locations compared with 83 from 64 in 2010, with breeding season presence concentrated in the Stocks Reservoir area and in the Ribble, Hodder and Dunsop Valleys. In Chorley region one, possibly two, pairs bred in the Belmont area and birds were calling at six locations in March-April.

Only three reports were received from the south-west, singles on Freshfield Dune Heath on 16 Feb, at Cabin Hill NNR on 7 April and in Stockton's Wood, Speke on 25 Dec. There were no Fylde records in 2011.

### **GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER** *Dendrocopos major*

**Common and widespread breeding resident.**

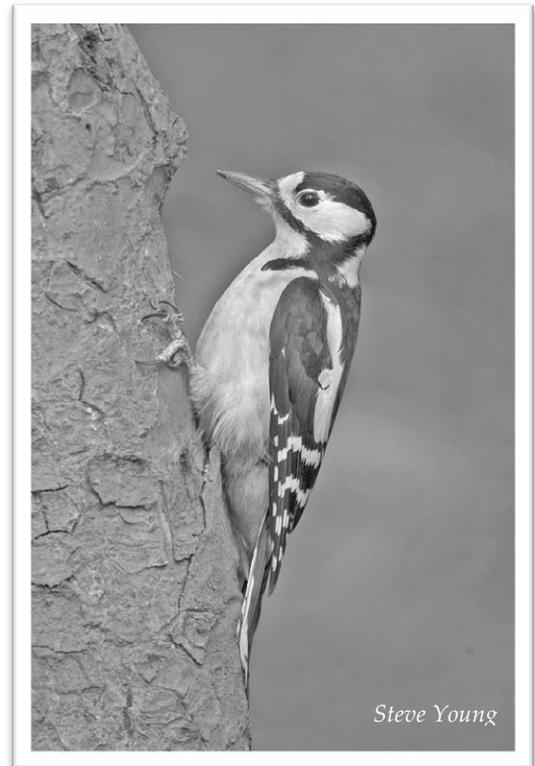
This successful species survived the harsh winter conditions of 2010 quite well in east Lancashire with reports from 85 sites (80 in 2010); drumming was recorded at nine locations with juveniles seen at four. In Chorley region four pairs bred in Cuerden Valley Park and there was breeding-season presence at Anglezarke, Leyland and on Mawdesley Moss.

In north Lancashire 48 were recorded during the Lancaster & District January survey, compared with 62 in 2010. Birds were present throughout the year in the Silverdale area; in the

Lune Valley four pairs bred at Claughton and three along the river between Leck Beck and Wenning Foot. Many drumming and breeding records were reported from all parts of the Fylde.

In the south-west six occupied nest-holes were located in tetrad SJ49L in Knowsley Hall Estate; the observer estimated a minimum total of 24 pairs for the estate as a whole. Territorial presence was reported from across south Liverpool and Knowsley, with young in nests at Princes Park, Tarbock and Speke; two pairs nested at MMWWT.

A moderate passage was recorded from mid-September to late October. A total of six passed over Seaforth, including two on 30 Sept, six flew south at Cabin Hill on 24 Sept and five flew over Heysham between 16 Sept and 22 Oct. One passed over Caton Moor and three over Fairhaven Lake on 26 Sept and five more migrants were recorded on the Fylde coast up to 15 October.



### **LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER\***

*Dendrocopos minor*

**Scarce and local breeding resident. Red List (breeding decline).**

In Chorley birds were calling in Duxbury Woods on 6 March and Burgh Wood, Yarrow Valley Country Park on the 7th; one was reported from White Coppice on 25 Sept.

Observers are reminded that this declining species has been placed on the county rarities list; anyone fortunate enough to encounter a Lesser Spotted Woodpecker should send a full description and other relevant details to the County Recorder.

### **GREAT GREY SHRIKE** *Lanius excubitor*

**Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.**

After a bumper year in 2010, the number of records plummeted. The only record from the first winter period was that of the long-staying individual on Waddington Fell that was last seen on 1 Jan.

Two gamekeepers at Belmont reported seeing a bird on several occasions between 28 Sept and 2 Oct. Though not confirmed by others, the same observers had reported one in 2008 that was independently authenticated.

### **MAGPIE** *Pica pica*

**Abundant resident.**

Numbers of this familiar remain stable although generally it is scarcer in kept areas where control measures are taken. Around Belmont, for instance, gamekeepers shot or trapped 56 individuals during the year. Similarly, control measures were in evidence up the Lune Valley but still six pairs nested successfully.

By far the largest concentrations noted in the first winter period were up to 80 at Warbreck Hill, Blackpool during January and February and up to 72 at nearby Bispham Marsh in early

March. The January count of the Lancaster district produced sightings of 283 birds, very similar to previous years. Elsewhere in the county, peak numbers were 22 at Warper's Moss, Burscough on 2 Jan, 20 at Whalley on 8 Feb and 26 in Princes Park, Liverpool on 3 Jan.

Successful nesting was widely reported with the earliest nest-building noted on 26 Feb in Burnley and Nelson. One BBS square at Whalley recorded five broods. Unusually, a nest on an external column of a warehouse in Speke was un-domed and the adults could be seen feeding the chicks in the nest.

Later on in the year 57 were seen leaving the roost at Foxhill Bank, Oswaldtwistle on 6 Nov and at least 24 were in the area in December. There were 55 on a recently flailed area of grassland in Speke on 8 Nov. The large corvid roost at Egerton held 210 birds on 22 Dec whilst a smaller roost at Wayoh Reservoir had at least 55 on the 29th.

### **JAY** *Garrulus glandarius*

#### **Common resident. Occasional irruptions, some winter dispersal.**

Numbers of this regularly encountered species may not quite have reached the peaks of last year but records were received from all parts of the county, predominantly from the more wooded areas but increasingly in towns and gardens. On the Fylde, mainly ones and twos were reported from a total of 46 tetrads throughout the year. The January survey of the Lancaster area recorded 32, well down on last year's numbers.

Jays are thinly distributed around the Southport area so a successfully breeding pair on the edge of Birkdale LNR was worth noting.

Peak counts in the east of the county were seven at Whin Scar Clough on 16 April and eight gathering acorns on Whalley Nab on 2 Oct. October also brought peak counts from Knowsley with eight at Stockbridge Village on the 25th and a host of other records from the area. Very small numbers of southbound migrants were observed at Heysham, Seaforth and Cabin Hill during late September and October with a peak of five at Cabin Hill on 24 Sept. Six were at Roby Mill on 16 Oct.

### **JACKDAW** *Corvus monedula*

#### **Common breeding resident, some autumn movement.**

Jackdaws continue to thrive in many parts of the county and large winter flocks are a regular feature of the lowland arable areas. In January flocks of 600 were recorded on the Fylde at Little Singleton, Fluke Hall Lane, Rawcliffe Moss and Winmarleigh Moss whilst 887 were on Downholland Moss on the 27th. 2511 were counted in the Lancaster January survey and large roosts were reported at Nether Kellet, Bolton-le-Sands and Arkholme whilst up to 260 were seen flying to roost at Crook o' Lune in late February and early March. In February numbers around Eagland Hill peaked at over 1000 at North Woods Hill Farm on the 13th. Two-hundred and fifty were at the Upper Rivington roost on 9 Jan and there were three-figure counts in east Lancashire from Whalley on 8 Feb and 13 March and Wood End Sewage Works on 13 Feb. One-hundred and ninety were counted going to roost at Stocks Reservoir on 19 March. The peak count from the St. Helens Area was of 100 on the Old Coach Road on 14 Jan.

No spring passage was noted. Breeding in suburban areas in north Lancashire around Warton indicated a healthy population with 24 at Millhead and 22 at Croftlands Estate. Similarly, the species had significant breeding success in Burnley and south Liverpool. However, numbers further up the Lune Valley were down on previous years.

Autumn passage was generally rather quiet although there were some notable records. The "stand-out" records were of 1000 at Singleton on 3 Oct and 800 flying south-east over Champion

Moor on 2 Nov. Otherwise, numbers were much lower with maxima of 100 over Speke on 20 Oct, 260 flying south-west there on the 23rd and 211 over Seaforth on 15 Oct.

Second winter period counts were significant with 2000 at Fluke Hall on 25 Nov being the largest. There were 500 at Rawcliffe Moss and 350 at Marton Mere in December; 825 were counted going to roost at Buckshaw on 28 Oct, 400 were at the Upper Rivington roost on 13 Nov, 400 were noted feeding in a field at Croston on 2 Dec and flocks of 250 were seen at Stocks Reservoir in late November and December. A feeding flock of 600 local birds was at Cabin Hill on 29 Nov, 300 were at Newton-le-Willows on 10 Dec and at Cuerden Valley Park more than 600 went to roost in December.

Jackdaws were noted at the large Magpie roost at Egerton for the first time with 35 present on 22 Dec. Unusually plumaged birds in east Lancashire included a Scandinavian-type at Altham on 1 Feb and at Dunkirk Farm on 8 Dec, and a leucistic bird was at Clitheroe Tip on 21 March.

## **ROOK** *Corvus frugilegus*

### **Abundant resident.**

Rookery	Nests	Rookery	Nests
Chorley Area		East Lancashire	
A49 Euxton	45	Towneley Hall	43
Howard Arms, Whittle Springs	24	Mitton	10
Rawlinson La, Heath Charnock	7	Whalley Abbey	19
Railway Road, Adlington	36	St Andrew's, Slaidburn (new)	4
Prospect House, Wheelton	29	Bowling Green, Slaidburn	13
Lower Wheelton	9	Langcliffe Cross, Slaidburn	40
Red Cat, Wheelton	6	Simonstone	c. 20
St Chad's Wheelton	11	Padiham Memorial Park	4
Croston	76	Waddington Road, Clitheroe	7
Town House Farm, Brindle	35	Brungerley Bridge, Clitheroe	9
Brindle Village	8	Calderstones	20 – 30
Buckshaw Village	18	Sawley	17 +
Turton/Edgworth	54	Barrow	c. 50
		Talbot Inn, Chipping	14
West Lancashire & Merseyside		Skelshaw	14
Scarisbrick (new)	8	Lune Valley	
Newton Lake, Newton-le-Willows	10 +	Wrayton	17
Bank Brow, Roby Mill	50 - 52	Gressingham Bridge	17
		Arkholme	14
		Storrs Hall, Arkholme	12

The rookery at Langcliff Cross near Slaidburn had about 40 nests, well down from a peak of 103 in 2005. This wood is in an exposed position and, though it is only conjecture, the increasing prevalence of high winds in spring and summer may be forcing these birds to move to new sites in Slaidburn village. However, the overall numbers in our rookeries are continuing to decline in most areas. In the Lancaster area, the annual nest count along the River Kent and into Cumbria resulted in 337, up on last year but still 20% down on the last decade's average.

First winter period peaks were 400 at the Upper Rivington corvid roost on 9 Jan, 350 at Arkholme the same day, 450 on Burscough Moss on the 8th and 300 at Singleton and 176 at Myerscough during February.

Some interesting post-breeding flocks were noted in the summer months: 113 above Parsonage Reservoir on 5 July was most unusual here and a flock of 450 on Lytham Moss on 29 August was a very high count for the time of year.

Four small flocks were noted over Heysham and two over Seaforth on autumn passage, mostly in mid-October. There were no records at all from St. Helens apart from Newton-le-Willows and very few in south Liverpool. Two small north Liverpool rookeries in Fazakerley are still in existence but were not counted.

November roost counts included 152 at Stocks Reservoir on the 30th, 130 at Upper Rivington on the 13th, 100 at Entwistle Plantations on the 6th and 80 on the 12th at Delph Plantations where the species presence is only a recent phenomenon.

## **CARRION CROW** *Corvus corone*

**Abundant breeding bird. Some southward movement in October.**

Numbers were perhaps down this year as control measures continue to peg back the species' numbers although the increase in the Buzzard population could also be having an impact. The January survey of the Lancaster area produced a count of 392 compared with over 500 in previous years. There were 400 at the Delph Plantations roost throughout January and 350 in February, and 150 at Upper Rivington in early January. Other three-figure counts included 130 on Halsall Moss on 29 Jan and 100 at Fluke Hall on 28 Feb.

Flocks of 30-50 were noted at several sites around the county but larger ones included 60 at Sefton Park, Liverpool on 13 Jan, 74 at Altham on 20 Feb, 70 at Cabin Hill on 26 March and 74 at Rishton Reservoir for several days around the end of April when birds should have been on territory. One hundred and fifty on Cockerham Moss on 6 May was also an unusually high number for the time of year.

Three pairs in the Warton Crag census area was a regular showing as was one at Heysham NR.

Autumn passage was minimal at Heysham with just 63 probable southbound migrants between 31 Aug and 24 Oct, with a peak of 40 on 15 Oct.

Over 250 roosted in Delph Plantations on 18 Oct with numbers rising to over 400 by the end of the year. There were also 250 at the Entwistle Plantations roost on 6 Nov, 200 at Upper Rivington on the 13th, 180 at Stocks Reservoir roost on the 30th and 200 at the Roddlesworth Plantations roost on 2 Dec. Gamekeepers at Belmont reported shooting or trapping 140 Carrion Crows during 2011.

An all-white bird was reported on several occasions during the year to the north of Clitheroe. It was present in a large corvid flock at Waddington on 14 Jan, on a lamp post at Pimlico on 10 Aug and at Little Mearley Hall on 7 Nov.

## **HOODED CROW** *Corvus cornix*

**Scarce winter visitor or early spring passage migrant; has bred with Carrion Crow.**

During the spring, singles were reported over Seaforth on 10 April and 3 May, at Rossall Point on 17 April and Marton Mere on the 19th. One was between Singleton and Todderstaffe Hall from 3 Oct until the end of the year.

It is likely that some of these birds were hybrids.

**RAVEN** *Corvus corax***Scarce resident.**

This species is now relatively common throughout the central West Pennine Moors with at least four pairs breeding; a pair returned to the Whittle site by 24 Feb. A recent development in this area is for additional pairs to hold territory and display but not appear to breed. Twenty-one were feeding on a dead sheep at Belmont on 10 Feb and 14 were there on 21 Dec.

Birds were reported regularly from all areas of east Lancashire but mostly ones or two in Bowland, most often flying over calling; the only confirmed breeding was at White Greet although family parties were seen up the Langden Valley and two pairs were over Stocks Reservoir in February.

Numbers were stable in the Lancaster area with at least four pairs breeding in the Silverdale area and two in the Lune Valley. On the Fylde the species was recorded sporadically in 26 tetrads. The same can be said for the south-west mosslands and Liverpool area with ones and twos (and occasionally up to five) widely reported but the only confirmed breeding was at Round O Quarry, near Skelmersdale. Two fed on a dead sheep on Crosby shoreline during October and these birds were then seen daily at Seaforth through to the end of the year.

One interesting feature of this species' rise to prominence is the number of passage records now being logged. Heysham recorded two south-westerly bound flocks of twelve and ten on 18 Sept as well as 13 probable migrants on four days in October. There were nine over Rossall Scholl on 18 Sept, 14 over Caton Moor on 7 Oct, twelve over Newton-le-Willows on the 2nd and several reports of high-flying birds from other sites around the county during the same period.

**GOLDCREST** *Regulus regulus***Common breeding bird, especially in the east. Common double passage migrant and winter visitor in variable numbers.**

Considering its size, it always seems amazing how Goldcrests can survive the recent bad winters and, although numbers declined significantly due to another winter with a long spell of very cold weather, this year was a slight improvement on 2010. Numbers were still low in the first winter period with just twelve recorded in the January survey of the Lancaster area. Numbers were down in east Lancashire again although there were 14 at Stocks Reservoir on 1 Jan and ten in the Delph Plantations on the 22nd.

Spring passage at Heysham consisted of one to three on many days from 1 March to the 29th with a peak of at least eight on the 22nd. Two were at Formby Point in the early part of the year with six along Fisherman's Path, Freshfield on 27 Feb. First of the spring at Cabin Hill came on 17 March whilst Seaforth had three on the 25th. Twenty were counted around Stanley Park, Blackpool on 22 March.

Singing was noted at twelve regular breeding sites around south Liverpool/Knowsley during the spring, beginning with one at Princes Park on 10 Feb. Only three singing males were located along the Lune between Leck Beck to Wenning Foot and only five males were in song at Knowsley Park on 27 May. One pair bred at Mere Sands Wood and two in conifers at Hesketh Golf Course, a first breeding record for Marshside. Breeding was also confirmed at White Greet and Beacon Fell. There were at least 15 at Moor Piece on 1 Aug and over 20 in the Delph Plantations on the 28th.

Autumn passage was steady with good numbers at Heysham from 4 Sept to 14 Nov with peaks of at least ten on four days and 47 birds ringed. At least 43 individuals were counted at Cabin Hill between 11 Sept and 30 Nov. On the Fylde, Goldcrests were recorded at 36 sites during October (with a peak of 15 at Stanley Park) compared to three to six in the non-migration periods.

Sixteen were at New Laithe Farm, Newton on 15 Sept and there were many reports of smaller numbers in the east during October, after which sightings declined dramatically.

### **FIRECREST** *Regulus ignicapilla*

**Uncommon passage migrant, scarce in winter.**

It was a disappointing year with just single spring and autumn records. One was at Stanley Park, Blackpool on 22 March during an influx of Goldcrests.

In the autumn, what was probably a male passed through the bushes just to the north of the Heysham NR office on 12 Nov before disappearing into cover.

### **PENDULINE TIT** *Remiz pendulinus*

**Vagrant.**

One was trapped and ringed at Leighton Moss on 21 Nov (J Wilson, RA Cadman) and what was almost certainly this ringed bird was seen in 2012 during February and photographed in March. This has been accepted by the BBRC and is only Lancashire's second record, the first, unsurprisingly, also being at Leighton Moss on 11 Nov 2004 and similarly elusive.

### **BLUE TIT** *Cyanistes caeruleus*

**Abundant breeding bird. Marked autumn passage.**

There were several double-figure counts in the first winter period, the highest being 30 at Whalley on 8 Feb and the Stocks Reservoir feeding station on 12 Feb; 16 were sheltering in one bush at Marl Hill in Bowland, on 31 March. There was no spring passage to speak of.

Most nest-box schemes recorded similar levels of occupation to last year with reasonable productivity although there were exceptions. At Claughton, 22 pairs raised just 78 young and numbers around Warton Village were slightly down. There was very good productivity in Hindburndale. Numbers ringed at Heysham and Leighton Moss were slightly down on previous years (204 and 326 respectively). Blue Tits used 47 boxes at Moor Piece but only 26 were known to have been successful. At Mere Sands Wood 65 boxes were used and Seaforth had its first ever breeding record with fledged young on 29 May (destroying the alarm system in the nature reserve buildings in the process!).

Breeding was confirmed at 30 sites around east Lancashire and at one, two females were found incubating 19 eggs together. From these, 15 hatched and fledged with both females and a single male feeding the young.

Autumn passage was also quiet, possibly due to high juvenile mortality in another poor summer or possibly because birds didn't disperse – as was the case in Hindburndale and Roeburndale. However, Seaforth recorded small numbers daily from 18 Sept to 26 Oct with a peak of 14 on 28 Sept. A flock of over 20 was seen at Marshside on 13 Oct. The feeders at Stocks Reservoir continued to attract large numbers at the end of the year.

### **GREAT TIT** *Parus major*

**Abundant breeding bird, less common on autumn passage than Blue Tit.**

It was another good year for Great Tits with high success rates reported from around the county. There were 13 pairs at Claughton with a mean fledging rate of 5.5. There were 69 pairs in five nest-box study areas elsewhere in the area and at Heysham record numbers bred on EDF property, with 70 young fledged including a brood in a metal gate post. A total of 57 were trapped at Leighton Moss – an above-average showing.

Breeding was confirmed at 19 sites in east Lancashire with 26 known to be successful from 50 occupied boxes at Moor Piece. Nineteen boxes were occupied at Mere Sands Wood. During the year Great Tits were reported from 58 tetrads on the Fylde compared to 71 for Blue Tit. There was a high uptake of nest-boxes at Tarbock Hall Farm in Knowsley.

There was nothing remarkable about autumn passage with a peak of 16 counted at Cabin Hill on 19 Sept.

In December, a bird was singing at Lowerhouse Lodges on the 17th and a pair was seen inspecting a nest box in Oswaldtwistle on the 2nd.

### **COAL TIT** *Periparus ater*

**Common breeding bird. Some irruptive movements in autumn.**

2010 was a good year for this species but records fell back a touch during 2011. Still widely distributed, it was recorded in 62 tetrads on the Fylde (but never more than single-figure counts) and 213 were counted on the Lancaster January survey.

Breeding was confirmed at 14 sites in east Lancashire. In the north only two pairs were recorded between Leck Beck and Wenning Foot but there were four pairs around Warton and two pairs at Faithwaite Wood (Claughton) fledged 20 young. In contrast, there were 15 males in song at Knowsley Park on 25 Feb with an estimated minimum of 60 pairs throughout the estate. With the high numbers seen at Moor Piece and Gisburn Forest throughout the year, similar large breeding numbers must occur there, and also in the West Pennine Moors at places such as Delph Plantations where over 60 were seen in two flocks on 9 July.

Autumn passage was above average at Heysham with notable counts of 29 on 29 Sept and 33 the following day. Fifteen were at Cabin Hill on 1 Oct

### **WILLOW TIT\*** *Poecile montana*

**Scarce breeder in the birch copses of the south-west. Very rare elsewhere.**

The adult bird at Cottam Brickworks remained from 2010 to 28 April 2011 but was not seen later in the year.

All other records came from wet woodlands to the south and west of Chorley with the largest concentration in St. Helens. There were several records from the area to the south of Burscough in the early part of the year as well as Eccleston Mere and Gorse Hill NR. At least two pairs were present on both the Knowsley Estate and at Arley NR on the border with Greater Manchester and others were noted at Mere Brow and Rufford.

Post-breeding records came from Eccleston Mere, Billinge Hill, Gorse Hill NR and MMWWT, where one was in residence from mid-August to the end of the year and appreciated by many who rarely see this species in Lancashire. A bird was trapped and ringed at Fir Tree Farm, King's Moss on 16 Oct.

There was an increase in the number of records from the Chorley area later in the year with singles at Euxton on 17 Oct, Croston Moss on the 30th and 1 Nov and at Chisnall near Coppull on 10 Nov. Two were seen at Chisnall on 12 Dec, one was on Croston Moss on the 16th and two were in a Croston garden on the 31st.

This species remains hugely under-reported; it was recorded in more than 40 tetrads during atlas surveys.

**MARSH TIT\*** *Poecile palustris*

Fairly common breeder in the north of the county. Virtually absent south of the Ribble and in the Fylde.

Virtually all records came from north Lancashire and overwhelmingly from the Silverdale area with a smaller concentration of sightings in the lower Hindburndale and Roeburndale wooded valleys around Wray. There were just three records away from these two concentrations: at Halton on 20 March, Botton Mill during the breeding season and one completely out of range at Warton Bank on 26 Oct. None was reported in east Lancashire despite searching.

The Lancaster survey recorded 20 birds in total with 60% of them in SD47. However, they are doing well in that area as there were three pairs at Trowbarrow and nine pairs on Warton Crag, where the previous peak had been seven in the last twenty years or so. The birds of the area are regularly reported visiting the feeders at Leighton Moss and in gardens in Silverdale.

The contentious Marsh/Willow Tit was present at Pex Hill Quarry in Knowsley on the county boundary with Cheshire during the early part of the year. The evidence is contradictory and so the record will remain as one or the other until conclusive proof is obtained.

**BEARDED TIT** *Panurus biarmicus*

Resident at Leighton Moss. Rare elsewhere.

The long-term colour ringing programme of this elusive species continued at Leighton Moss where just twelve pairs were estimated to have bred (20 pairs down on 2010). There seems to be little doubt as to the cause of the decline; severe winter weather always has a severe impact on this species but the devastation of the reedbed by roosting Starlings could also have been a factor. The ringing study identified twelve adult males and nine adult females, and 32 fledged young were ringed. No irruptive behaviour was recorded.

**SHORT-TOED LARK\*** *Calandrella brachydactyla*

Vagrant.

One at Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park on 24-25 April was our long-awaited first county record (I Gardner). See separate article.

**SKYLARK** *Alauda arvensis*

Abundant breeding bird and passage migrant. Red List (breeding decline).

In contrast to last year relatively few were present on the Marshside-Crossens saltmarshes or anywhere else in the south-west in the first winter period; all the significant coastal flocks were in the Fylde with peak counts of 370 at New Lane, Pilling on 24 Jan and 300+ there on the 28th, c.200 at nearby Eagland Hill on 9 Jan with 200 there and 169 on Rawcliffe Moss on 18 Feb. The Lancaster & District January survey recorded 77 Skylarks, all in the coastal strip of SD45 (total 70 in 2010). Inland, two had returned to Belmont by 1 Jan with first song on 6 March; in east Lancashire the first three had returned to Altham by 8 Feb and the first males were in song at Jackhouse on the 16th.

Spring movements were apparently on a very small scale this year: 60 on Hesketh Out Marsh on 12 March was the highest count received and four over Heysham on the 25th were the only passage birds recorded there.

Breeding populations on the south-west coast and mosslands remained robust with 77 pairs at MMWWT, 44 at Marshside RSPB and 64 on Hesketh Out Marsh; 'good numbers' of singing

males were reported from Birkdale Green Beach while many were singing over fields throughout south Liverpool and Knowsley between March and June.

Inland, twelve singing males were located on the Leck Beck-Wenning Foot stretch of the River Lune, as in 2010, and four pairs bred at Arkholme. In east Lancashire there were 13 territorial males on Easington Fell on 24 April compared with two five years ago; eleven were singing over Marl Hill Moor on 7 June. In Chorley region five pairs bred in the Belmont area but Skylarks seem to have disappeared from a BBS square in the Brindle area and from Lower Burgh Meadow, whilst they are barely hanging on in Buckshaw Village, where housing development on greenfield sites was cited as the primary cause of decline.

No significant flocks or movements were reported from coastal regions before late September. One hundred and twelve flew over Seaforth on 25 Sept and 131 on the 30th; there were 100 at Marshside on 26 Sept and 199 passed over Fairhaven Lake on the following day. Passage continued intermittently during October with a surge around mid-month: 278 moved over Seaforth on 13 Oct and 170 on the 15th, Heysham recorded its autumn peak of 52 on 14 Oct and there were 100+ at Marshside and 45 on wheat stubble between Speke and Hale, south Liverpool, on the 20th.

Movements dwindled very quickly in November; apart from a heavy passage of 350 at Marshside on the 13th, about 100 at Billinge Hill, St. Helens on 1 Nov and on Hesketh Out Marsh on the 12th were the only other noteworthy counts reported.

Flocks in the second winter period were modest everywhere with 100 on Hesketh Out Marsh on 7 Dec, 140 on Rawcliffe Moss on the 10th and 150 at New Lane, Pilling on the 17th the only three-figure reports received.

### **SHORE LARK\*** *Eremophila alpestris*

**Scarce and irregular winter visitor and passage migrant.**

Our first Shore Lark since December 2009 was on Carnforth Slag Tips from 22 Jan to 3 April (R Hobbs).

### **SAND MARTIN** *Riparia riparia*

**Common but local breeding bird, mainly in the east; common double passage migrant. Amber List (species of European conservation concern).**

The first two Sand Martins of 2011 were at Brockholes Wetland on 11 March, followed by a bird at MMWWT next day and a widespread influx into north and east Lancashire and the Fylde on the 13th. Passage got into gear very quickly: by 26 March 45 were at Skerton Weir, Lancaster and a roost at Leighton Moss reached 2500 by the 28th; the first to arrive in Chorley region were at Belmont Reservoir and Eccleston on 25 March. Substantial flocks were widespread in the first half of April including 5000 at Leighton Moss on 2 April, 300 at Preesall Flashes, Fylde on the 7th, c.200 at Brockholes on the 4th, at Stocks Reservoir on the 9th and at Alston Reservoirs on the 12th, and 300 at Altham on the 13th. Passage numbers declined very quickly from mid-April and 72 at Crag Bank, Carnforth on 2 May was the last significant movement recorded.

This year appears to have been an outstanding success for our breeding Sand Martins; too many small colonies were reported from all regions except the south-west to give full details here. A total of 3026 nests on the River Lune between Skerton Weir and Kirkby Lonsdale was the highest since recording began in 1977; there were 1316 nests in the Arkholme area alone. Elsewhere in the north almost exactly 100 pairs bred on Crossdale Beck, a tributary of the River Hindburn. In east Lancashire 362 occupied nest-holes were counted on the Altham-Martholme section of the River Calder with another 143 on the river below Ightenhill Bridge; at Alston

Wetland there were 350 occupied nest-burrows by 4 June. In the Fylde there were 410 occupied holes at Lightfoot Green on 24 April and several nests were still being visited there on 28 Aug. Breeding highlights elsewhere in the county included 60 pairs each at Brockholes Wetland (where a pair was still attending a nest on 11 Sept) and on Simonswood Moss, and 26+ pairs in the regular colony on the River Yarrow at Eccleston.

About 300 over Lowerhouse Lodges, Padiham on 25 June were probably feeding birds from the Calder colonies, but the first clearly southbound Sand Martins were at Seaforth on 2 July and at Heysham on the 5th. Movements in July were fairly sparse with 170 at Leighton Moss on 7 July, 300 at MMWWT next day and 75 on Hesketh Out Marsh on the 16th the only significant counts. August peaks included counts of up to 300 at Alston Reservoirs, most presumably from the nearby colony, and 120 at Leighton Moss and 50 at Caton in the Lune Valley on 13 Aug. Small-scale movements were very widespread in September including 55 at Leighton Moss on 13 Sept, 20 at Alston Reservoirs on the 17th and ten at Heapey, Chorley next day. Seven birds per hour moved south at Belmont Reservoir on 10 Sept, there were seven records in the Fylde during the month, and the last Sand Martin in north Lancashire was at Blea Tarn Reservoir on 25 Sept. There were two October records, the last in the Fylde over Rossall Point on 1 Oct and two at Stephen Park in Gisburn Forest on the 13th.

## **SWALLOW** *Hirundo rustica*

**Abundant breeding bird and double passage migrant. Amber List (species of European conservation concern).**

The first to arrive was at Rishton Reservoir on 17 March but widespread passage did not begin until the last week of the month, with singles at Marshside on 23 March and at Leighton Moss and Fluke Hall, Pilling on the 24th. Fourteen more Swallows were recorded in the Fylde, nine in east Lancashire and four in the south-west before the end of March; one at Yarrow Reservoir on 29 March was the first record in Chorley region.

Movements in April were slow to gain momentum with very few double-figure counts before mid-month: 134 passed over Rossall Point on 19 April with 145 there on the 27th and 164 were recorded at Crag Bank, Carnforth on the 30th. The main passage took place in the first half of May with 300 at Seaforth on 7 May and 500+ there daily during 9-11th, 261 at Crag Bank and 153 over Rossall Point on 2 May, and the spring peak of 211 in 35 minutes at Heysham on the 5th. No appreciable movements were reported after mid-May.

Thirty-four nests were monitored in the Pilling-Preesall area, Over Wyre; 149 eggs were laid of which 134 hatched and 117 young fledged. Forty pairs bred in stables beside Freshfield Dune Heath, up to 15 pairs nested in the Belmont Reservoir area, seven at Lower Broomfield Farm, Arkholme, and six at MMWWT; in Chorley region Swallows nested at three locations in Cuerden Valley Park and at several farms in the Brindle area.

The first southbound migrant was recorded at Seaforth on 2 July and 1000 roosted at Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park on the 10th. At the end of the month 200 were on Hesketh Out Marsh on 28 July, next day 250 flew south over New Laithe Farm, Newton in a single flock and there were 200 at Cockersand; there was a pre-roost gathering of 5000 on Rawcliffe Moss, Fylde on the 31st.

Substantial movements continued on-and-off throughout August including 6000 on Fleetwood Marsh on 2-3 Aug, 500 at Marton Mere also on the 2nd, 150 at MMWWT on the 18th, 150 at Seaforth and 300 at Alston Reservoirs on the 26th and 1140 at Marshside and 795 at Hesketh Out Marsh on the 30th. The pace of migration scarcely slackened in the first three weeks of September: on the 1st 1500 were at Leighton Moss and 1000 by Skippool Creek, Fylde, and 825 passed at Heysham; 820 were over Crossens next day and c.500 at Alston Reservoirs on the 5th,

400 at Marshside on the 6th and at Pilling Lane Ends on the 10th. Next day 894 passed over Caton Moor and 305 were at Seaforth on the 15th; later in the month 400 were on Rawcliffe Moss on 23 Sept and 326 flew south-east over Rossall Point on the 25th.

October records were exceptionally plentiful and widespread this year including 38 birds at Brockholes on the 11th, eight at Newton-le-Willows on the 13th and 14 at Seaforth on the 15th. The Fylde reported 40 October sightings, there were eleven in south Liverpool and eight in east Lancashire, with the last three birds over Burnley on the 26th; two at Great Knowley on 15 Oct were the last Swallows in Chorley region. Five singles were reported in November with three in the Fylde, the last at Knott End on 24 Nov; one was at MMWWT on the 27th and the last of the year at Leighton Moss on the 30th.

## **HOUSE MARTIN** *Delichon urbicum*

**Common and widespread breeding bird; abundant passage migrant. Amber List (breeding decline).**

2011 was an odd year for this normally predictable summer visitor. House Martins began to arrive unusually early; the first three were over Sunderland Point on 21 March, there were two at Marshside on the 23rd and singles over Jumbles on the River Ribble on the 30th and at the Eric Morecambe Pools on the 31st. Numbers recorded in April, however, were extremely low everywhere. Two at Stalmine on 5 April and one at Mawdesley on the 9th were the first in the Fylde and Chorley, respectively; ten at Marton Mere on the 10th and 16 at Blacko in east Lancashire on the 30th were the only double-figure counts received.

Movements in May were only slightly more lively: 15-20 were seen daily at Seaforth during the first week and there were 50 there on the 11th; 50 were at Marton Mere and 20 at Marshside on the 5th and 40 were over Sefton Park, Liverpool on the 15th. There were no reports of significant movements after mid-May; a total of 19 passed at Heysham NR between 22 April and 21 May with a meagre maximum of six on 6 May.

Sparse and scattered breeding records included 13 active nests in Belmont Village, one up on 2009-10; elsewhere in Chorley region House Martins bred at two locations in Cuerden Valley Park and birds were still attending nests in Coppull on 7 Sept. In east Lancashire birds were active at a nest in Jackhouse as late as 12 Sept. In the north 14 pairs nested in Tunstall, six in Wrayton, one in Croftlands, Warton (three pairs in 2010) and five in Millhead (seven in 2010). In Liverpool small colonies were reported from Toxteth, near the Albert Dock and in Aigburth while up to 60 birds over Marshside during June-July were assumed to be from an established colony in a nearby estate.

Autumn movements by this species normally begin in early-to-mid July, but not this year. The first of 189 migrants passed Heysham on 22 July and there were no reports from other sites until August. In the first half of August 40 flew over Seaforth on 6-7th and there were 30+ in Sefton Park on the 11th; a slight quickening of pace later in the month brought 40 to Low Moor, Burscough on 18 Aug, c.50 to Wycoller next day, 60 per day to Seaforth during 24-26th and c.100 to Lower Foulridge Reservoir, Colne on the 28th.

The main passage, although still unimpressive, took place in September: Heysham recorded its peak count of 53 on 1 Sept, there were 90 at Seaforth and 60 at Staining, Fylde on the 3rd and 50 in Stanley Park, Blackpool on the 5th and over Billinge Hill, St. Helens on the 10th. Forty-seven passed at Caton Moor and 50+ over Belmont on the 15th, and there were 70 at Altham and 50+ at Glasson on the 25th.

Only five reports were received in October, three in east Lancashire with the last two birds over Lowerhouse Lodges, Padiham on the 15th; one at Eccleston on 7 Oct was Chorley's last House Martin and one at Warton Bank, Fylde on the 16th closed out the year.

**CETTI'S WARBLER\*** *Cettia cetti*

**Recently established breeder; some winter dispersal.**

Up to six were seen or heard singing at Marton Mere from January to April and up to four until the end of the year (M Jones *et al*). There was no definite confirmation of breeding but it seems almost certain that at least two pairs nested.

Breeding also looked likely at Leighton Moss where two males were singing until 5 March but there no further records until four were trapped between 27 Sept and 25 Oct; three were new juveniles the other was an adult originally ringed in October 2010. An unringed bird was also seen during this period and one was present until the year's end (J Wilson *et al*).

Unexpectedly, a juvenile was trapped by the Heysham NR office on 15 Oct – a first for the reserve (PJ Marsh *et al*).

**LONG-TAILED TIT** *Aegithalos caudatus*

**Common breeding resident. Some irruptive movement in autumn.**

Although there was some suggestion of slightly reduced numbers in some areas after the hard winter of 2010/11, this remains a very widespread species. The annual Lancaster January survey located 159 birds in eight 10km squares, the lowest total since 2006 but comparing reasonably with last year's 243.

Winter flocks of 15 or more were reported from more than 30 sites with very many more reporting smaller ones.

Breeding was also widespread with the first nest-building reported in early March. No site reported more than a handful of pairs nesting but breeding success appears to have been at least average: totals of 54 trapped at Leighton Moss and 83 at Heysham/Middleton compared favourably with the last five years.

The only records of perceived 'passage' flocks were at Heysham: eleven on 29 Sept, six on 5 Nov and 15 on 16 Nov.

**YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER\*** *Phylloscopus inornatus*

**Scarce autumn passage migrant.**

Singles were seen at Upper Thurnham (P Ellis *et al*), Mount Park, Fleetwood on (L G Blacow *et al*) on 16 Oct and Sunderland Point on the 29th (D Haywood, SG Piner).

**WOOD WARBLER** *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

**Uncommon breeder in east and central areas; uncommon passage migrant, mostly in spring.**

It was another deeply depressing year with few records of migrants and further evidence of a reduction in the breeding range; Wood Warblers appear to be heading inexorably towards extinction in Lancashire.

Migrants were at Fluke Hall on 21 April, Stanley Park, Blackpool on 20-23 April with singles at Watson Road Park, Blackpool and Crosby also on the 20th, Freemans Wood, Aldcliffe on 2 May, Heysham the next day, Birkdale on the 4th and Ormskirk on the 20th.

There were no records all year in Chorley, previously something of a stronghold. In north Lancashire singing males were reported in breeding habitat in Littledale and Upper Roeburndale, while birds were reported from just four sites in east Lancashire with no proof of breeding. The first, singing at Stocks Reservoir on 28 April, was followed by a singing male at Spring Wood, Whalley, on 3 May. A male was at Shedden Clough on 4 June and was still there singing the next

day and remained until early morning on the 6th. The final bird of the year in the east was one singing at New Laithe Farm (Newton) on 22 June.

One at Leighton Moss on 29 Aug was the only autumn record.

### **CHIFFCHAFF** *Phylloscopus collybita*

**Common breeder and passage migrant. Uncommon but increasing in winter.**

There were only three definite records in the first winter period, at Sunderland Point on 24 Jan, Ellel Grange on the 26th and Leyland on the 29th, although one in Euxton on 6 March was also considered likely to have wintered. It was a similar story at the other end of the year when singles were seen at Caton on 3 Dec, Newsham Park, Liverpool on the 30th and in a Rishton garden throughout the month. It seems that the recent hard winters have been taking their toll.

The first was singing at Marton Mere on 28 Feb but no more were reported until 14 March when birds were heard across the county at Brookside (Oswaldtwistle), Fluke Hall, Lancaster University, Croston, Withnell Fold and Catforth. The main arrival followed a week later and by the end of the month migrants were commonplace. The main passage continued until mid-April with one or two stragglers in early May. Larger spring counts included 19 in the Sankey Valley, ten at Heron's Reach (Blackpool), nine at Claughton Hall, eight at Cottam Brickworks and Marton Mere, and six at Salwick, Lightfoot Green, Moor Piece, Tarbock Hall and Fazakerley.

Breeding birds appear to have been plentiful, especially in the west; totals included a record ten pairs on Warton Crag RSPB, six or seven pairs at Heysham (another record), six pairs on the Lune between Leck Beck and Wenning Foot and at least 20 pairs on the Knowsley Hall estate. Breeding was proven or probable on at least 25 sites in south Liverpool and south Knowsley and at very many others in Merseyside, on the Fylde and in central Lancashire. Although still relatively scarce in east Lancashire, ELOC reported a continuing increase in breeding.

Productivity, as measured by ringing totals at Heysham and Leighton Moss, appeared to be at least average.

The first autumn migrant was at Seaforth on 19 Aug but the main passage took place during September and October with peak counts in east Lancashire of seven at New Laithe Farm (Newton) on 18 Sept, six at Shedden Clough on the 19th and five at Lowerhouse Lodges to Pollard Moor on the 21st; up to 15 at Heysham on 30 Sept and 1 Oct ; and on the Fylde five at Cottam Brickworks on 25 Sept and 16 ringed on Rawcliffe Moss during September.

In contrast to last year only three migrants at Heysham were thought to be eastern abietinus. One at Lowerhouse Lodges on 3 Nov was described as very pale, especially the undersides, an abietinus-type, but it did not call. Late migrants included singles at Freckleton Naze on 5 Nov, Carleton on the 6th, Fluke Hall on the 13th, Whalley and Pilling Lane End on the 20th, Heysham on the 22nd and finally Knott End on the 24th.

### **IBERIAN CHIFFCHAFF** *Phylloscopus ibericus*

**Vagrant.**

A male was at Devonshire Rock Gardens, Blackpool on 3-5 May (D McGrath *et al*). Its song was recorded and analysis of this clinched the identification. The record has been accepted by the BBRC and becomes the first for Lancashire. See separate article.

**WILLOW WARBLER** *Phylloscopus trochilus***Abundant breeding bird and double passage migrant.**

After the first at Hornby on 19 March, our equal earliest, there were a further eleven arrivals throughout the county during the month and very many more in the first fortnight of April. Spring passage at Seaforth, where the species does not breed continued until 7 May; eleven migrants were at Cabin Hill on 20 April.

Some of the largest counts of singing males in April came from east Lancashire: 29 at Jackhouse, 21 at Brookside and 20 at Lee Green Reservoir, at least 30 at Stocks Reservoir, a minimum of 20 at Lower Foulridge Reservoir, at least 25 in the Langden Valley, 42 at Bottoms Beck, 28 at Lowerhouse Lodges to Pollard Moor, 20 in the Dunsop Valley on and 37 at Green Pike. Thirty were in song around Belmont on 9 April but the only double-figure counts in the Fylde and the south-west were 13 at Fleetwood Cemetery on 15 April, twelve at Mere Brow Leisure Lakes on the 9th, Birkdale on the 2nd and on Rawcliffe Moss on the 21st, and eleven in Trap Wood on the Knowsley Hall estate on 6 April.

Many of these will have gone on to nest and there was no indication of any consistent change in breeding numbers anywhere in the county. Survey totals included a slightly below average 32 at Warton Crag RSPB, 72 between Leck Beck and Wenning Foot on the Lune, 25 or so on the Birkdale Hills LNR and eleven on Freshfield Dune Heath (50% down since 2004). A Breeding Bird Survey in a 1km square at Braddup Farm on 3 May recorded 34 singing males.

Productivity was described as excellent at Leighton Moss with 372 birds trapped between June and September (compared with totals of 138-518 during 2000-2010). Breeding success was also good at Heysham, with a total of 24 juveniles, presumed to be of local origin, trapped between late May and late July.

The first juveniles were reported on 2 June at Birkdale and the first definite migrant at Seaforth on 8 July. A fairly typical passage ensued, including six at Seaforth on 3 Aug, 15 at Middleton NR on 18 Aug and eight at Sheddon Wood on 1 Sept. The last were at both Belmont and Leighton Moss on 18 Sept and Sheddon Clough on the 27th.

**BLACKCAP** *Sylvia atricapilla***Common breeding bird and passage migrant; fairly common winter visitor at coastal locations.**

Winter (January, February & December) numbers continued to hold steady: 43 were recorded in the early year (34 in 2010, 36 in 2009) from 27 locations with, as usual, the largest number – seven in January – on the Birkdale Sandhills, where they feed largely on Sea Buckthorn berries. Seventeen individuals were on Merseyside, eleven on the Fylde, seven in north Lancashire, five in the Chorley/Preston area and three in east Lancashire. Birkdale was not fully surveyed during the second winter period but at least one was back there in late October. Elsewhere, a further 19 were seen, plus three at Heysham between 16 and 22 Nov which were thought likely to be heading for British wintering sites.

It is impossible to distinguish the first spring arrivals as some wintering birds sing before leaving for central Europe, sometimes as early as February. But several singing males at the end of March and during the first week of April were thought to be fresh migrants.

Breeding was very widespread and Blackcaps appear to be thriving. Large counts of males, thought to be at least establishing breeding territories, included 30 on the Knowsley Hall estate in April and May, 28 along the Lune between Arkholme and Wenning Foot, a record 22 on Warton Crag RSPB, 17 at Marton Mere 16 at Brockholes, 15 on the Birkdale Sandhills, at Fazakerley Reedbed and in the Belmont area, 13 at Moor Piece, and ten along the Ribble and Hodder between Salisbury Hall and Winckley and at Tarbock Hall Farm, south Knowsley.

The first autumn migrant at Seaforth, where the species does not breed, appeared on 21 July but the main passage took place in September and October when low single figures were seen at many coastal sites and several inland. There were several November migrants on the coastal plain with the last at Pilling Lane on 21 Nov and MMWWT the following day; two records in east Lancashire that month, at Jackhouse on the 5th and New Laithe Farm on the 20th, may have been late migrants or wintering birds.

## **GARDEN WARBLER** *Sylvia borin*

### **Common breeding bird and double passage migrant.**

Something seems to be happening with the timing of Garden Warbler migration; for the second year running the first arrival surpassed the previous earliest, this year on 6 April when one was singing in Whalley – five days earlier than last year's at Skerton Weir.

Others followed quickly: at Lee Green Reservoir on 9 April, Leighton Moss on the 13th, Moor Piece on the 16th, Barley on the 19th and Warton Crag on the 20th – all earlier than the 25-year average first arrival date.

Spring migrants included singles on the Fylde at Fleetwood on 22 April, Cottam Brickworks on the 23rd, Fluke Hall on 3 May and Blackpool between the 2nd and 7th. The breeding areas of north and east Lancashire all seem to have been occupied by the end of the first week of May. Notable counts in the east included five singing males at Braddup Farm and eight males at Bottoms Beck on 3 May, and six males in the island viewpoint area of Stocks Reservoir on the 7th. Eight pairs bred on the Lune between Leck Beck and Wenning Foot, five pairs at Brockholes, four in the Belmont area and three or four at Jack Scout; two singing at Fir Tree Farm, King's Moss on 28 June was the only probable breeding report on Merseyside. Thirteen pairs bred on the best monitored site, Warton Crag RSPB, one up on 2010 and compared with 9-26 pairs or a mean of 17.4 pairs during 1989-2010.

Only three were seen in east Lancashire after 26 June with the last at Brookside on 1 Aug. There was another very poor autumn passage at Heysham and Middleton NR with only five ringed; Leighton Moss numbers were also down with just ten ringed (compared with 3-34 during 2000-2010). The last in the north was at Heysham on 19 Oct. Four were ringed on Rawcliffe Moss during August and one was at Rossall School on 18 Sept, while the Merseyside coast, where the species is always scarce, held migrants on 23-25 Aug, with two on the 24th, and 9 Sept at Seaforth and one at Formby Point on 21 Sept.

One was wintering in the Birkdale Dunes during December.

## **LESSER WHITETHROAT** *Sylvia curruca*

### **Fairly common breeding bird and double passage migrant.**

Another *Sylvia* arriving early this year: one at Bretherton Brickpits on 8 April, three days earlier than the previous in 2008.

Singles at Great Knowley, Alston Reservoirs, Barnaby's Sands and Marton Mere on 17 April and Heysham and Eccleston, Chorley on the 19th were the next to appear, followed by a relative 'flood' of arrivals at the end of April and in early May. Coastal migrants were at Cabin Hill on 20 & 27 April, Bispham on the 21st, Seaforth on 22-24 April and 1 May, Sunderland Point and Rossall on the 24th, Blackpool on several dates from 28 April, and Oglet, south Liverpool on the 29th.

Probable breeding birds were reported from ten sites in east Lancashire and were widespread in north Lancashire, including 7 or 8 pairs at Heysham/Middleton, three pairs at Arkholme and Borwick, and two at Leighton Moss, the Eric Morecambe complex and Heald Brow. An Israeli (Eilat)-ringed bird accompanied by recently-fledged young was trapped at Middleton.

Breeding was probably fairly widespread on the Fylde. A pair at Hic Bibi was the only proven breeding report from Chorley and none was reported from Merseyside, although males were singing at Cabin Hill and Halewood on the unusual dates of 14 & 19 June respectively.

Ringed captures at Heysham and Middleton (63 between late May and early September, the second best year on record) suggested good productivity.

Late migrants included singles at Billinge Hill, St. Helens on 4 Sept, Alston Wetland on the 18th and Heysham on the 30th.

## **WHITETHROAT** *Sylvia communis*

**Common breeder, mostly in the west. Common double passage migrant.**

The first at Heysham NR on 9 April was yet another early-arriving *Sylvia*, the second earliest ever (equalling one in 1995 but falling short of one on 6 April 1965). Others followed at Brockholes on 11 April, at Brookside Lodges and Lawson Road Wetland on 12 April, at MMWWT and Billinge Hill, St. Helens the next day, and Fazakerley Reedbed, Blundellsands, Eccleston (Chorley), Eccleston Mere and Beacon Country Park, Skelmersdale on the 15th. Most breeding sites were occupied by the end of the month.

Large counts of singing males in early spring included 25 on the Birkdale dunes in May, 24 on the Blundellsands-Hightown Dunes and 15 in Knowsley Park on 24 April, 13 at Lawson Road on 20 April, twelve at Oglet, south Liverpool on 17 April and Cabin Hill on 8 May, ten at Gorse Hill, Lydiate on 14 May; eight at Brookside on the 10th was the highest count in east Lancashire.

Proven breeding totals included eleven pairs on EDF properties at Heysham with six at nearby Middleton NR, eight pairs at Brockholes, six at Marshside and four at recently colonised sites at Seaforth and Hesketh Out Marsh; seven pairs at Freshfield Dune Heath represented a 70% decline since 2004 as a result of changes in management regime. Two or three pairs at Belmont represented a recent range expansion, while a pair at 340m asl at Green Pike was at an unusually high altitude.

At Heysham and Middleton NRs, a total of 148 were caught between late June and 19 Sept (compared with 14-100 during autumn 2002-2010) with most of these on Middleton NR, suggesting excellent productivity; 65 were ringed on Rawcliffe Moss during August.

Late migrants were at Jackhouse on 17 Sept, New Laithe Farm (Newton) on the 18th and Heysham on the 29th.

## **GRASSHOPPER WARBLER** *Locustella naevia*

**Uncommon breeding bird and passage migrant. Scarce on autumn passage.**

And just to show that it wasn't just *Sylvia* warblers that were arriving early the first 'Groppers' were at Cabin Hill NNR and Cottam Brickworks on 7 April; the previous earliest was on 9 April 1975. The next was at Middleton NR on 9 April but it was another week to ten days before any widespread arrival. The first record in east Lancashire was on Oswaldtwistle Moor on 17 April, on the West Pennine Moors on Anglezarke Moor on the 10th and in south Liverpool at Oglet on the 17th.

The species also seems to be getting more widespread and possibly more numerous each year. Large counts of singing males in breeding habitat included 27 in the Belmont area's *Juncus* beds including six around Belmont Reservoir, seven at Birkdale and Blundellsands, six at Middleton and Sefton Meadows, five at Oswaldtwistle, Marton Mere and Silverdale Moss, four on the Birkdale dunes, three at Brockholes, Heysham Moss, Lawson Road Wetland, Pollard Moor, Darwen Moor, Fleetwood Marsh and Knowsley Park.

As usual breeding was confirmed at only a small handful of sites but productivity was excellent at Middleton with 54 birds ringed (twelve adults and 32 juveniles), compared to 0-25 in the period 2005-2010.

Birds were still reeling at Fleetwood Marsh on 22 July, at Belmont and Clowbridge Reservoir on the 27th and Jameson Road Landfill on 3 Aug. No definite autumn migrants were seen although an unringed bird at Heysham on 18 Aug probably was one. The last were seen at Jackhouse on 14 Aug, Belmont on the 28th, Leighton Moss on 4 Sept and Rawcliffe Moss on the 20th.

## **SEDGE WARBLER** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

**Common breeding bird in the west and double passage migrant.**

It's almost always a toss-up between Leighton Moss and Marton Mere as to which gets the first Acros – but this year it was Marshside and MMWWT on 8 April with Leighton Moss and Marton Mere hot on their heels on the 9th and 10th respectively, followed by twos at Heysham and Middleton NR on the 11th. The first reported in Chorley was at Croston Reedbed on 17 April, and in east Lancashire at Brookside Lodges on the 20th. A very late arrival was reported at Arkholme on 14 May.

As usual with this species there was little or no evidence of any spring migrants other than those arriving at breeding sites, possible exceptions being singles at Alston Reservoirs on 22 April and on the harbour wall at Heysham on 6 May. One at Barnoldswick on 1 May was the only record received from Rossendale.

The breeding population was not surveyed at Leighton Moss, although 40 (presumably mainly males) were reported on 27 April; in May ten birds at Carr House Green Common, nine at Wood End Sewage Works and five at Marton Mere were presumably also breeding. Breeding totals on surveyed sites included 46 pairs at Brockholes, 34 at MMWWT, 28 on the Lune between Leck Beck and Wenning Foot, twelve at Middleton NR, nine at Marshside, eight on the Blundellsands to Hightown Dunes and seven at Brookside. Smaller numbers nested at six or so sites in south Liverpool/Knowsley, Seaforth, Birkdale, Hesketh Out Marsh Croston, Ulnes Walton, Yarrow Valley Park, Heysham, Champion Moor, Grimsargh Reservoir and several sites in the Fylde. One pair nested successfully in atypical moorland habitat at over 270m asl near Belmont.

Breeding productivity was thought to have been at least average at Leighton Moss and Middleton/Heysham where 325 and 233 were ringed respectively.

The only autumn migrants reported away from breeding sites were one on Pollard Moor on 26 Aug and four on Longridge Fell on 18 Sept; the last was at Heysham on 20 Sept.

## **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.**

After one at Leighton Moss on 8 April came singles at singles at Marton Mere and Marshside on the 10th, Fleetwood Marsh on the 12th and Downholland Moss the next day, but no more were reported until the first arrivals at Brockholes, MMWWT, Birkdale, and Garston on the 17th.

The only spring passage migrants were singles at Seaforth (where none bred this year) on 7 May and New Laithe Farm on the 19th; one at Barnoldswick on 30 June was the only other record in east Lancashire.

Breeding totals included 300-400 pairs at Leighton Moss (where 1059 were trapped), 42 at Brockholes, 41 at MMWWT, 15 at Haweswater, twelve or more at Marton Mere, Fleetwood Marsh, Ulnes Walton and Barrow Scout, eleven in the Sankey Valley, nine at Marshside, Downholland

Moss irrigation lakes and on the canal at Haskayne, seven at Croston and five or so at Fazakerley Reedbed, Tagg's Island, Birkdale, Barrow Scout and Middleton. One intriguing record was a male in song on a developing reedbed at Princes Park in central Liverpool.

Two or three – perhaps locally dispersing birds – were at Seaforth between 13 & 23 Aug but no definite migrants were reported. The last were at Marton Mere on 29 Sept, Heysham on the 20th and Leighton Moss on the 30th, although one at Heysham on 13 Oct was thought to be this species.

### **'CASPIAN' REED WARBLER** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus fuscus*

A first-winter was found freshly dead at Jenny Brown's Point on 11 December by B & D Finnegan, who kept the corpse and brought it to Seaforth where it was frozen. The date was clearly interesting, this being only the second winter record of Reed Warbler in Lancashire – or anywhere else in Britain for that matter – the first having been trapped at Marshside on 16 Dec 1984.

Apart, however, from white spots on the tail tips (a good but not definitive pointer towards *fuscus*) there was nothing to distinguish it from a 'normal' Reed Warbler. Biometric details were taken which were a little ambiguous and far from conclusive. So Martin Collinson was asked to do a genetic analysis and his conclusion was that it was definitely *fuscus*.

If accepted by the BBRC and BOURC this will be the first record of this sub-species in Britain.

### **WAXWING** *Bombycilla garrulus*

**Fairly common but irregular winter visitor.**

Birds remained from last winter's record invasion and were seen throughout the county. A huge number of records were received but it proved impossible accurately to judge either the numbers involved – although perhaps as many as 1000 – or whether new birds were moving into our area. None was seen in the second winter period.

All records will ultimately be mapped and described when the atlas is produced; for now all that is possible is the briefest of summaries.

Peak counts on Merseyside involved flocks of up to 110 in Scotland Road and other areas close to Liverpool city centre as late as 15 April, 80 in Bootle during January, 30 or so in the south Liverpool parks to 9 April, and 100 or more in St. Helens town mostly in January with smaller flocks in both Billinge and Newton-le-Willows; oddly, four in Cronton on 16 Jan was the only record received from Knowsley. The mobility of these flocks was illustrated by one that was colour-ringed in Aberdeen on 19 Nov 2010, seen in Bootle on 20 Jan and photographed at Prescott Reservoirs 15km away the following day.

Far fewer were seen in West Lancashire, just 14 at Banks on 1 Jan and then a flock of up to 42 in the Burscough/Rufford area until 7 Jan and singles in Skelmersdale and Roby Mill the same month. The Chorley area fared much better. Thirty were seen at Belmont during January but relatively few elsewhere, but they began 'returning' in late February with 30 in Adlington on the 15th and up to 100 in Chorley town during March and April with the last on 2 May. Seventy were in Over Darwen on 4 Jan and 36 in Buckshaw village on 30 March. Several flocks remained in central Preston, peaking at 91 on 27 Feb, with 30 in Fulwood on 4 March and Bamber Bridge on 8 March.

Good numbers continued to be seen in east Lancashire with notable counts of 65 in the centre of Burnley on 12 Jan with the last there on 17 April, 150 in Darwen on 5 Jan with 50 still present on 9 March, 30 over Oswaldtwistle on 15 Feb, 42 at Longridge and 20 at New Laithe Farm on 18 March, 13 at Martholme on the 19th and 24 at Clayton-le-Moors on the 20th. Ten at Rawtenstall on 3 March was the only record received from Rossendale.

As in 2010 relatively few were seen in the Fylde. Birds were reported from 15 sites but most were single-figure flocks, exceptions being eleven at Wesham on 12 Jan, twelve in Fleetwood on 12 Feb, 16 at Staining on 10 March and 15 at Hambleton on 1 April. Waxwings were present in north Lancashire until 28 March and were reported from 32 localities (including some in Cumbria) with peak counts of 42 in Lancaster on 12 March and 20 in Morecambe on 20 Jan.

## **NUTHATCH** *Sitta europaea*

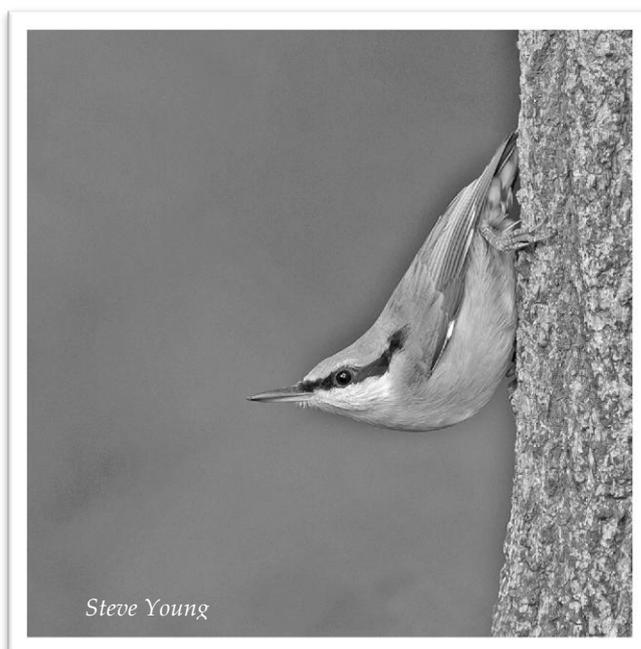
**Fairly common and increasing breeding resident.**

The success of this species has been very noticeable in recent years and records for this year confirm that it is becoming a common resident in all rural and urban broadleaved woodlands in the county, with evidence of some gaps in the distribution being filled in such as in Rishton where the species was first recorded in March and is now a regular sight at Cut Wood. The Lancaster survey counted 53 in January.

Successful breeding was noted at 17 sites across east Lancashire with four boxes occupied at Moor Piece. There were three pairs at Arkholme and four at Claughton. In the Chorley area, at least five territories were noted in the Roddlesworth Plantations in late February and six pairs bred in nest-boxes in the west of the area. Three pairs were on territory near Belmont with at least two successfully fledging young.

Birds were very noticeable in south Liverpool, reported from many of the parks in the area. Out on the Fylde, the species is still rather scarce and reported from 26 tetrads during the year, most of which were towards the east of the region though there were records from Stanley Park, Blackpool in ten months of the year.

The south-western mosslands is another area where records are rather sparse. There were three territories at Mere Sands Wood and birds were located in tetrads around Skelmersdale and Roby Mill. Odd ones were reported from seven localities between St. Helens and Ormskirk during the year. There were only two reports of Nuthatch from the Southport area: two in the Botanic Gardens on 27 March and two at Hesketh Park on 18 Sept – both localities could easily support this species and are probably under-recorded. There were a few sightings from Victoria Road, Freshfield throughout the year and a pair bred at Formby Point.



## **TREECREEPER** *Certhia familiaris*

**Common breeding resident.**

Nineteen territorial birds were noted from sites around south Liverpool/Knowsley in the early part of the year – a fairly typical showing for this resident species that seems to have a stable population across the county and has survived the recent cold winters quite well. The January survey of the Lancaster area resulted in a count of 21, very similar to the previous year's.

Around the Fylde, the species was reported from 39 tetrads with a maximum of at least six in Stanley Park on 9 April. Five singing birds were located in Knowsley Park on 25 March, well down

on reported numbers last year. Along the Lune, there were three pairs at Arkholme, four at Claughton and three at Trowbarrow.

Migrants were noted at Cabin Hill on 26 March and a few dispersing birds started to appear at Heysham in early July with other potential migrants appearing later in the autumn.

## **WREN** *Troglodytes troglodytes*

**Abundant breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.**

It was quite an interesting year for Wren records. It was to be expected that the species would suffer following the prolonged cold spell of weather in December 2010 and indeed most areas reported a lack of birds in the first few months of the year but then what followed seemed to be evidence of a pronounced influx during April resulting in near normal breeding populations. For example, an observer carrying out survey work at Knowsley Park noted only two singing in February/March but by 27 May there were 29 singing males. Similar anecdotes have been reported from other parts of the county, possible evidence of increased winter movements due to the severe winter weather.

The Lancaster January survey recorded 106 individuals, lower than previous years, but the breeding population in the area was fair: twelve pairs on Warton Crag, 20 singing males on EDF properties at Heysham and 29 singing males along a ten-mile stretch of the Lune. Numbers on the Fylde were similarly affected with larger counts being eleven at Devonshire Rock Gardens on 8 April and 18 in the Stanah area by the end of the month. There were 13 territories at Mere Sands Wood and it seems amazing but Seaforth had its first ever breeding record with three broods raised in a shipping container between May and September. Ringing records in the north of the county also suggest good productivity, restocking the niche that has been vacated recently.

It was a similar story in east Lancashire with a noticeable influx of birds during April. However, there also seems to have been a desertion of upland areas later on in the year. By far the largest number reported in the second winter period was at least 50 around Marton Mere on 23 November.

## **STARLING** *Sturnus vulgaris*

**Abundant breeding bird, double passage migrant and winter visitor. Red List (breeding decline).**

### Monthly Peak Counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Fylde	20000	3000	7500	45	150	2000	4000	/	500	160000	160000	5000
Marshside	500	/	350	120	/	650	300	300	550	5000	2500	3100
SNR	700	900	500	200	150	500	900	700	650	500	6000	5000
Stocks Reservoir	/	/	/	/	/	/	2000	/	/	20000	25000	10000

The roost at Leighton Moss was estimated to contain over 200000 birds in the early part of the year and their presence had a severely detrimental effect on the state of the reedbeds. The roost at Blackpool's North Pier contained 20000 individuals on 2 Jan reducing to around 5000 by 1 March. As is usual, there were plenty of large feeding flocks noted, especially in the more arable areas with several flocks in four figures.

In the east, flock sizes were more modest with 1000 reported at Withgill on 5 Jan and Greenberfield on 20 Feb. For the first time birds roosted within Belmont Village with over 350 in evergreens nightly from 10 Feb to the month's end. Apart from Seaforth there were no large concentrations reported in the south of the county in the early part of the year.

Plenty of breeding evidence was submitted but overall numbers seemed to be down on previous years as reported from Cuerden Valley Park and the Lune Valley for instance.

Autumn passage was generally low in comparison to recent years with 2805 reported over Heysham (maximum of 1304 on 24 Oct) and 714 over Caton Moor. A flock at Marshside built up to around 5000 in the late autumn and pre-roost group of 3000 was noted at Ince Blundell on 20 Nov; MMWWT had a peak of 10000 birds on 16 Oct.

Numbers reached 15000 at Leighton Moss by early October, increasing to 100000 by late November with a decline in December. Stocks Reservoir was the major night-time site in the east of the county with up to 20000 coming into roost in late October; numbers peaked at about 25000 on 12 Nov then decreased although there were still flocks of some 10000 birds on 30 Nov and again on 17 Dec. The largest roost counts of the second winter period came from Marton Mere with 160000 in October and November. Approximately 50000 birds roosted on Blackpool North Pier on 12 Nov. One of the sources for these large roosts was a flock of 18000 at Eagland Hill on 12 Nov; 16000 were on Rawcliffe Moss on 20 Nov.

## **DIPPER** *Cinclus cinclus*

**Uncommon breeder, mainly in the east.**

Provisional atlas results in north Lancashire recorded five pairs each in SD55 and SD56 (10km squares wholly within the county) and nine pairs in SD66, eight in SD67 and one in SD47 (squares that straddle the county boundary). A pair at Halton-on-Lune fledged two young. In east Lancashire the number of reports received by ELOC fell from 183 in 2010 to 125, the decline particularly noticeable in the final quarter of the year. Breeding was recorded at 14 sites including Altham, Sabden Brook and central Burnley; four pairs were located on c.10 km of the River Hodder from Sandal Holme down to Hodderfoot. A Dipper on the River Calder at Gawthorpe on 17 Nov had been ringed as a fledgling at Sedbergh, Cumbria earlier in the year.

In Rossendale birds were present on the River Irwell and its tributaries at Rawtenstall, Reedsholme and Newhallhey, and at Ewood Bridge Sewage Works. In Chorley region there were three or four territories in the Belmont Reservoir area and single pairs in Yarrow Valley Park and at White Coppice; a pair in Cuerden Valley Park fledged two young.

Dippers were recorded at five locations in the Fylde Bird Club area: an adult with two juveniles was on the Wyre at Scorton on 10 June; birds were further downstream at Churchtown in February-March, on the Brock at Myerscough College and Light Ash in early year, and in the Thurnham-Galgate area in January, February and July. Much further west one was at Preesall Flashes on 6 May. For the sixth successive year no reports were received from anywhere in the south-west.

## **RING OUZEL** *Turdus torquatus*

**Scarce and local breeding bird on the hills; uncommon double passage migrant. Red List (breeding decline).**

The first spring migrant was in Fleetwood Cemetery on 25 March, closely followed by birds on Darwen Moor on the 29-31st and on Pendle Hill on the 30th. The first arrival in the south-west, on Catchdale Moss, St. Helens on 6 April was followed by ten more, including twos on Billinge Hill, St. Helens on the 9th and Ainsdale NNR on the 19th, to the last, a female at Seaforth on 1 May. One at Heysham on 22 April was the only other coastal migrant reported. Inland, Pendle Hill was the focus of spring passage in east Lancashire with up to 13 birds present here on several dates during April; there were nine in the Langden Valley on the 19th.

The only breeding data came from the United Utilities Bowland Estate with ten confirmed pairs, three up on 2010's total, and another four possible territories. Ones or twos were seen on

Pendle Hill on several dates in July and August, so it is possible that nesting also occurred in that area.

A very slight autumn passage on and near the coast began quite early with a bird on Billinge Hill on 1 Sept; this was followed by singles at Knott End on the 11th, Plex Moss on 11 Oct and at Heysham on the 15th. Inland, singles were on Marl Hill on 4 Sept and at Belmont on 6 & 13 Oct; the last Ring Ouzel of 2011 was at Turton Golf Club on 21 Oct.

## **BLACKBIRD** *Turdus merula*

**Abundant breeding resident and winter visitor; common double passage migrant, more evident in autumn.**

A total of 1127 Blackbirds was recorded by the Lancaster & District January survey (1370 in 2010). Significant gatherings in the early year included c.100 at Marton Mere and 45 at Burglar's Alley on 2 Jan; elsewhere in the Fylde there were 32 in the Churchtown area on 29 Jan and 34 at Nateby on 12 Feb. Forty were at Leighton Moss on 2 & 5 Jan; the highest inland count was of 15+ in a Belmont garden on the 9th. No evidence of spring movements was reported.

Widespread breeding records included c.18 pairs at Heysham with above-average productivity indicated by ringing totals. Elsewhere in the north 38 pairs bred in Croftlands, Warton, compared with 33 in 2010, and 28 pairs nested on Warton Crag (mean 23 pairs, 1989-2010). Fifty-five singing males were recorded along the Lune between Leck Beck and Wenning Foot compared with 44 last year. The ELOC recorded breeding at 19 locations; in the south-west Blackbirds bred commonly across south Liverpool/Knowsley and five pairs nested in Mere Sands Wood.

Thirty-five birds at MMWWT on 10 Sept was the only appreciable early autumn count, but a moderate passage began in mid-October and continued intermittently until mid-November. October highlights included 15 each at Seaforth and Heysham on 15 Oct, 48 at the latter site next day and 50 on the 24 & 27th; eleven were ringed at Moss House Farm, Fylde during the month. Twenty at Rishton Reservoir on 20 Oct was the only double-figure count from inland regions. Forty-two passed at Heysham on 5 Nov and there were 50+ at Marton Mere on the 12th and 30 there on the 15th. A noticeable influx into central Liverpool in the second week of November was estimated to comprise at least 80% male birds.

In contrast to last year mild weather in December saw relatively few noteworthy gatherings of Blackbirds. Fifty were at Marton Mere on 11 Dec, 65 on Silverdale Moss on the 16th and 17 at Brockholes Wetland on the 18th; at least twelve in a Belmont garden on 17 Dec was the highest inland count received. A nestling found dead at Rose Hill, Burnley on 30 Dec was evidence of an extremely early breeding attempt.

## **FIELDFARE** *Turdus pilaris*

**Common to abundant winter visitor and passage migrant.**

Nine widespread triple-figure flocks were reported in January, the largest 400 at Nateby, Fylde on the 23rd and 320 at Wray in the Lune Valley on the 27th; the Lancaster & District survey recorded 247 Fieldfares, compared with 1745 in 2010. Three hundred remained in the Nateby area in early February and 245 on Downholland Moss on the 21st was the next-highest count that month. The highest March reports came towards the end of the month with 200 near Eccleston, Chorley on 25 March, 210 near Burscough on the 27th and 400 at Rivington next day. Twelve reports of singles and small parties were received in April, most from eastern regions; two at Eccleston on 2 May were the last of spring.

The first Fieldfares of autumn were 14 at Saddle End, near Chipping on 24 Sept; the next birds arrived in force, 200 at Arkholme and 140 at Great Eccleston, Fylde on 8 Oct, and the year's peak counts and movements were recorded within a week or so of that date. Six hundred and twenty-three passed over Caton Moor on 13 Oct; next day 1200 flew over Billinge Hill, St. Helens, 985 moved over Heysham, 932 over Fairhaven Lake and 560 over Belmont. On 15 Oct 963 were counted at Seaforth, 620 at Fairhaven, 500+ at MMWWT and 435 at Billinge Hill; there were 1500 at Arkholme on the 17th. A second, much lighter surge of migration late in the month brought 300 to Eccleston on 23 Oct and 220 to Leighton Moss on the 25th; 220 flew over New Laithe Farm, Newton on the 29th.

Numbers appear to have dwindled dramatically in November. There were 250 on Warton Bank on 2 Nov, 200 at Fluke Hall, Pilling on the 11th and 190 at Arkholme on the 16th; thereafter to the year's end only a handful of double-figure counts was reported, peaking at 90 at St Michael's, Fylde on 6 Dec, 60 at Preesall Flashes on the 26th and 40 near Belmont on the 30th.

## **SONG THRUSH** *Turdus philomelus*

**Common breeding resident. Red List (breeding decline).**

The Lancaster & District January survey located 34 Song Thrushes, mainly in three coastal 10km squares, compared with 61 in 2010. There were no reports of more than six birds anywhere during the first winter period; one was in song in Clitheroe on 19 Jan. There was no evidence of any passage movements in spring.

Breeding was confirmed at four sites in east Lancashire where there were 104 reports during the year, compared with 122 last year. In the north eleven pairs nested on Warton Crag (mean 9.2 pairs, 1989-2010); two pairs bred in Croftlands, Warton (five in 2010) and five in Millhead (none last year). Six singing males were recorded on the River Lune between Leck Beck and Wenning Foot, a big decline from the 13 pairs in 2010; there were eight territorial males at Heysham. In the south-west three pairs bred at MMWWT and in Hopyard Wood, Halewood, south Liverpool, and two pairs in Ruff Wood, Ormskirk; in Chorley region two pairs bred at Cuerden Valley Park.

The only reports of appreciable coastal movements in autumn came from Heysham where the first four Song Thrushes were recorded on 18 Sept; peak counts were of 20 on 30 Sept and 25 on 16 Oct, but only six more were recorded during the rest of that month. There were eight in Gisburn Forest on 28 Oct and six on Rawcliffe Moss, Fylde on the 30th. At the year's end nine were at Brockholes Wetland on 18 Dec; two were singing at Lomeshaye Marsh, Nelson on the 27th.

## **REDWING** *Turdus iliacus*

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

Six hundred and fifty-nine Redwings were recorded by the Lancaster & District January survey, compared with 473 last year. Four three-figure counts were reported in January, all in coastal areas, peaking at 130+ in Princes Park, south Liverpool on the 26th. A hundred on Formby Moss on 3 Feb and at Eccleston, Chorley on the 27th were the largest flocks recorded in February; 40 at Bolton Fold, Longridge on 28 Feb was the highest count in inland regions. On 1 March several birds in a flock of 55+ in Princes Park were singing and males in song were reported from five other locations during March; 170 at Belmont on the 18th was by far the largest gathering recorded. Five birds remained in the Belmont area until 14 April; seven at Withnell Fold and two over Jackhouse on the 3rd were the only other April records.

The autumn return began quite early this year with four at MMWWT on 14 Sept followed by one over Billinge Hill, St. Helens on the 24th. As with the Fieldfare the main passage was concentrated into a few days in mid-October, but for this species was mainly confined to lowland

areas. Over five hundred flew over Cuerden Valley Park on 13 Oct; next day 2200 flew south-south-west over Billinge Hill, 452 passed at Seaforth and 303 at Heysham. On 15 Oct 1955 flew over Fairhaven Lake, 670 passed at Seaforth, 295 at Heysham and 269 at Billinge Hill. Again as with Fieldfare a second, much lighter passage in late October brought 247 to Heysham on the 22nd, 250+ over Billinge Hill next day and 270 to Queen's Park, St Helens and 116 to Seaforth on the 24th. Numbers fell away rapidly in November, and 280+ at Caton-on Lune on 5 Nov with 380+ there on the 9th were the only three-figure counts reported for the rest of the year.

The ELOC reported ten records during December, with most flocks fewer than 40; 40+ were in Stockton's Wood, Speke on 25 Dec, and on the 30th there were 80 near Whitewell in the Hodder Valley and 30+ near Belmont.

## **MISTLE THRUSH** *Turdus viscivorus*

**Common breeding resident; some autumn dispersal/passage.**

Gatherings in the first winter period included eight apiece in Princes Park, south Liverpool and at Cabin Hill in January and 14 on Jericho Lane Playing Fields, Otterspool on 3 Feb. The Lancaster & District January recorded 67 Mistle Thrushes, compared with 106 in 2010.

Breeding data were, as usual, very sparse and presumably very unrepresentative. Territorial birds were present at six sites in south Liverpool/Knowsley; elsewhere in the south-west two pairs bred at Mere Sands Wood and at least one pair at MMWWT. In the north at least one pair nested at Heysham, two pairs at Cloughton-on-Lune and one each at Arkholme and Millhead. A pair in Yarrow Valley Park, Chorley was feeding four young on 9 April.

A few small post-breeding assemblies were reported in June-July, including nine at Whitewell on the Hodder on 9 June and 14 at Speke Hall, south Liverpool on the 14th; in Chorley there were 13 at Croston on 11 July and 20 on Mawdesley Moss on the 16th. Many double-figure flocks were reported during August from all regions of the county, including 51 in Princes Park on 12 Aug, 30 over Shuttleworth Mead in east Lancashire on the 14th and 50 at Lee Park Golf Course, south Liverpool on the 17th. In September there were 29 at Brockholes Wetland on 4 Sept, 28 over Houghwood Golf Course, St. Helens on the 16th and 18 at Seaforth on the 29th. After a flock of 33 at Formby Point on 1 Oct numbers dwindled rapidly, and 13 over Fairhaven Lake on 26 Oct and 15 near Belmont on 5 Nov were the only double-figure counts reported during the rest of the year. Birds were singing at two sites in east Lancashire in late December.

## **SPOTTED FLYCATCHER** *Muscicapa striata*

**Fairly common breeding bird and double passage migrant. Red List (breeding decline).**

Our earliest ever at Lytham Hall on 20 April began a very light coastal passage; four more were recorded in the Fylde during May and one was at Preesall on 3 June. Two each at Marshside during May and at Longton Brickcroft on the 22nd were the only spring records in the south-west; there were singles at Heysham on 13 & 21 May.

Inland, the first to arrive in Chorley region was at Limbrick on 1 May and Belmont recorded its first Spotted Flycatcher on the 21st. The first bird in east Lancashire was at Dean Clough Reservoir, Great Harwood on 5 May followed by one at Marl Hill on the 7th; by the end of May the ELOC had received 22 reports from 16 sites (20 from 18 sites in 2010). North Lancashire's first was at Cowan Bridge in the far north-east on 8 May.

Detailed breeding data were received from all inland regions. In Chorley pairs bred at regular sites at White Coppice and Anglezarke; a pair at Withnell Fold fledged at least two young and one pair nested at Belmont Reservoir. ELOC received 44 reports in June-July from 28 different locations, compared with 40 from 33 locations last year; at least five pairs bred on the 'Slaidburn

postal round route'. Three pairs nested at Wycoller and single pairs at Newton, Cross of Greet Bridge and Chatburn.

In north Lancashire pairs were present in breeding habitat at Caton, Wennington, Roeburndale, Hala and Tower Lodge; a late pair was nest-building at Arkholme on 3 June, but the attempt failed. A male was singing in Boilton Wood next to Brockholes on 3 June and 4 July.

The only two pairs recorded in the Fylde, at Salwick and Kirkham, both arrived on site very late, on 17 and 18 June respectively, but they got down to business extremely quickly and each had fledged two young by mid-July. No breeding reports were received from the south-west.

Preliminary analysis of atlas data indicates a 25% contraction in the Spotted Flycatcher's breeding range since 2000; population losses are likely to be significantly higher.

Seven coastal migrants were recorded in August, single birds at St Michael's-on-Wyre on 17 Aug, Billinge Hill, St. Helens on the 22nd and Leighton Moss on the 31st; four were at Seaforth on 23 Aug. In September there were five single birds in the south-west, the last in the region, and the county, at Seaforth on 30 Sept. One at Marton Mere on 10 Sept was the last in the Fylde and one at Leighton Moss on the 17-18th was the latest of three in the north. Inland eight, including three juveniles, were at New Laithe Farm, Newton on 1 Sept and the last three birds were there on the 18th; one at Marl Hill on the 23rd was the last Spotted Flycatcher of 2011 in east Lancashire and one in a Chorley garden on the 25th was the last in Chorley region.

## **ROBIN** *Erithacus rubecula*

**Abundant breeding resident, autumn passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Three double-figure counts were reported during the first winter period, up to twelve at Leighton Moss in January-February, 16 at Nateby, Fylde on 12 Feb and ten at Eccleston, Chorley on the 16th. The LDBWS 10km square survey in January recorded 305 Robins across all squares (369 in 2010, 494 in 2009). An enterprising individual frequented the aisles in a Tesco store in Chorley during January. No reports of spring migrants were received; passage was described as 'non-existent' at Heysham.

About 13 males held territory at Heysham but brood productivity seems to have been poor. Elsewhere in the north there were ten singing males in May on the Leck Beck-Wenning Foot section of the River Lune, a decrease of five on last year's total; four pairs nested in Croftlands, Warton and two in Millhead, Carnforth (seven pairs last year). The total on Warton Crag increased by four to 26 pairs, compared with a mean of 21.7 during 1989-2010; 20 Robins were ringed at Leighton Moss during the year (mean 34 during 2004-2010).

In east Lancashire breeding was confirmed at 18 widely-distributed localities, but the peak count of 15 at Jackhouse on 22 March was far below last year's 36, at Moor Piece in April. In the south-west a single pair bred at Seaforth and eleven pairs at Mere Sands Wood.

There was an early influx at Heysham on 17 Aug but most movements throughout the county were in September-October, with 14+ at Heysham on 18 Sept, 18 there on the 20th and 25 on the 22nd. The first migrant at Seaforth was on 15 Sept and their autumn peak of 21 was recorded on 14 Oct. Six passed over Caton Moor on 24 Sept, and there were at least 20 in Devonshire Road Rock Gardens, Blackpool on the 26th; twelve were at Singleton, Fylde on 13 Oct.

Fifteen at Leighton Moss on 16 Nov was the only noteworthy count that month; at the year's end there were twelve at Leighton Moss on 1 Dec and ten at Brockholes Wetland on the 11th.

**BLACK REDSTART** *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Rare breeding bird; uncommon double passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber List (breeding decline).

Following a blank second-winter period in 2010 there were no reports of Black Redstarts in the early months of 2011. A slight spring passage involved at the most four individuals, a female/immature on Pendle Hill on 17-22 April, another at Seaforth on the 27th, a first-summer male at Ansdell, Fylde on 30 May and probably the same at nearby St. Anne's on 9 June.

For the second successive year a pair nested in central Preston; adults and up to two juveniles were seen on several dates in July with the last record on the 31st. A very young juvenile was present at Ainsdale during 17-22 July; given the very early date (juveniles in Preston were still around the natal site during this period) it seems likely that the Ainsdale bird was fledged not too far away.

An average autumn passage began with one at Pendleside Farm on 5 Aug and a probable second-calendar-year male at Heysham North Harbour Wall on 25-26th. A lengthy lull ensued before a female/immature on Winter Hill on 20 Oct and a surge in November involving at least six birds: a female/immature was at Heysham Ocean Edge on 4 Nov and possibly the same bird was at the North Harbour Wall on the 12-15th; one on Pendle Hill on 6 Nov was followed by a bird at Hightown on the 13th. Singles were at Aldcliffe-Stodday on 21 Nov, Blackpool Airport on the 23rd and Morecambe Promenade on the 29-30th; the Winter Hill bird was seen again on 30 Nov.

One at Knott End from 3 Dec to the year's end was the final record of 2011.

**REDSTART** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Fairly common breeding bird and double passage migrant. Amber List (species of European conservation concern).

Males at Heysham and at Anchorsholme and Rossall Point in the Fylde on 9 April were the first coastal migrants to arrive, closely followed by singles at Marshside on the 10th and at Formby next day. Subsequent coastal movements were very light, with only one more record each in the Fylde and at Heysham and four more in the south-west to the last, a female at Seaforth on 10 May.

The first Redstart recorded inland, in Hindburndale on 7 April, preceded the coastal movements by two days; the first three in east Lancashire were at New Laithe Farm, Newton on the 8th and the first in Chorley region was at Belmont on the 10th. Significant upland gatherings included up to ten in the New Laithe Farm area on dates in late April, five at Moor Piece on the 23rd and two at Abbeystead on the 24th.

Both the LDBWS and ELOC reported a very successful breeding season in their respective regions. Redstarts were described as common in the north with many family groups along the River Lune in late June, including three each at Tunstall and Melling, and in both Roeburndale and Hindburndale. In east Lancashire five pairs nested in boxes at Moor Piece, two of them successfully, and breeding was confirmed at seven other locations including seven active nests at New Laithe Farm on 7 June and a pair with young at Cross of Greet Bridge on the 9th. In Chorley region there were two probable pairs each at Belmont and Roddlesworth with territorial males also at Black Coppice, Lead Mines Clough and Wheelton Plantations.

A male at St. Helens on 11 July is difficult to attribute, but a total of eleven coastal migrants was recorded between the first in Blundellsands Key Park on 15 Aug and the autumn's last bird at Heysham on 19 Oct (which was nearly two weeks later than the county's mean latest autumn record): there were six in the south-west, three in the Fylde and two on the north coast. A very light passage in inland regions included five in east Lancashire between 31 Aug and 29 Sept.

**WHINCHAT** *Saxicola rubetra*

**Scarce and declining breeder on eastern hills; uncommon double passage migrant. Amber List (breeding decline).**

The first of a light passage in spring was a male at Preston Dock on 15 April; singles were at Cabin Hill on the 19th and at Seaforth on the following day. Subsequent highlights included four in Crosby Marine Park on 6 May and at Rossall Point on the 9th, three at Cabin Hill on 2 May and four singles on Downholland Moss in the first half of the month. A total of five was recorded in the Fylde in April and there were 15 May records there. One at Cross of Greet Bridge on 19 April was the first record in east Lancashire and a male in Hindburndale on the 25th was the first in north Lancashire.

Breeding data were rather thin this year and none were received from Chorley region. In the north pairs were present in suitable habitat in Hindburndale and at Birk Bank, whilst ELOC reported confirmed nesting at Shedden Clough, Bloe Greet and Cross of Greet Bridge with territorial males at two other locations.

Autumn movements began with an early bird at Brockholes Wetland on 9 July and were the heaviest since 2007. There were ten August records in the Fylde, including three birds on Pilling Moss on the 27th, and 13 in September with the last in the region on Lytham Moss on the 27th. In the south-west one on Hesketh Out Marsh on 31 July was the first of eight migrants up to the last in the region and the county at MMWWT on 15-16 Oct.

Inland there were widespread records in September; in east Lancashire 15 records included four each at New Laithe Farm, Newton on the 4th and at Clowbridge Reservoir on the 9th and the last was at Dean Clough Reservoir, Great Harwood on 1 Oct. Three records in Chorley region included two at Belmont on 11 Sept and the last Whinchat in the north was at Thrushgill on 25 Sept.

**STONECHAT** *Saxicola torquata*

**Fairly common, increasing breeding bird, mainly in upland areas; fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor.**

The dramatic effects of the early 2010 freeze on Lancashire's Stonechats, summarized in last year's report, were made even worse by the year's second severe cold snap in December. Only six birds were reported on the coastal plain in the first winter period of 2011, including two at Brockholes Wetland on 14-16 Jan; one on Waddington Fell during January-February was the only bird recorded in the uplands. Spring movements on the coast were virtually confined to the month of March and were extremely slight, a maximum total of 18 birds in the Fylde and seven in the south-west, including four at Cabin Hill NNR on 13 March; one at Heysham on the 14th was the only migrant on the north coast. Four at Rossall Point on 9 May were exceptionally late. Inland, two at Dean Clough Reservoir, Great Harwood on 16 March and four on Harrisend Fell on the 24th were the only multiple sightings reported.

Whilst the ELOC reported a slight recovery from a total of 78 reports during 2010 to 91 in 2011 the Stonechat's breeding situation in that region still looks fairly grim, although it should be noted that the United Utilities Bowland Estate was not surveyed this year. Two pairs with young were in the Langden Valley in late May and single pairs were successful at Brown Nab, Cross of Greet Bridge and Cant Clough Reservoir, south-east of Burnley. In the north breeding surveys of Birk Bank-Clougha and Harrisend Fell drew a blank, and only one successful pair was located, on Hawthornthwaite Fell. Two of five pairs on the West Pennine Moors around Belmont were successful; elsewhere in Chorley region a pair at White Coppice fledged at least two young. No

breeding attempts were reported from the south-west coast or mosslands, the Fylde or the north coast.

Autumn movements on the coast were very thin. In the south-west three at Cabin Hill on the early date of 3 Aug were followed, at some distance, by a single bird at MMWWT and three on the Hightown Dunes in October; one on Clifton Marsh on 29 Sept was the first of some six Stonechats in the Fylde to the middle of November. Brockholes Wetland recorded a total of four migrants between late October and mid-November. Inland, two at Dean Clough Reservoir on 1 Oct and four on Waddington Fell on 6 Nov were the only records received of more than a single bird.

At the year's end a pair at Cabin Hill and one at Brockholes during December and one on Birkdale Green Beach late in the month were the only wintering birds reported from coastal areas; inland, singles were on Croston Moss and at Dean Clough in December and two pairs were present in the Belmont area early in the month.

### **WHEATEAR** *Oenanthe oenanthe*

**Fairly common though local breeding bird; common double passage migrant. Amber List (species of European conservation concern).**

The first spring arrivals made landfall across a broad front on 13 March with coastal birds at Seaforth, Formby Point, MMWWT and Jameson Road Landfill, Fleetwood, and in east Lancashire at Dean Clough Reservoir, Great Harwood and on Champion Moor. The first in the north was at Heysham Ocean Edge next day and passage in Chorley region began with a bird at Anglezarke on the 18th. Subsequent passage, both coastal and inland, was steady rather than spectacular. March peaks included 14 at Heysham and seven at Southport Marine Lake on the 29th and twelve on Farington Moss, Leyland on the 30th.

In April 126 passed through Belmont with a peak of 25 on the 16th, when 45 were also on Darwen Moor; coastal peaks included 20 at Seaforth on 22 April and 30 on Carnforth Outer Saltmarsh on the 25th. Seaforth's first Greenland Wheatear was early, on 2 April; all eight birds ringed during the month were of that race. Significant movements ended very early this year; only 21 passed at Belmont during May and Seaforth recorded its last bird on the 17th.



There were no reports from our only regular coastal breeding site, at Carnforth Slag Tips. Elsewhere in the north provisional breeding atlas results found Wheatears in eight tetrads each in SD55 & 56, which lie entirely within the county, and in 14 tetrads in SD66, ten in SD67 and three in SD57, which straddle the county boundary. In east Lancashire pairs with young were at White Greet and New Laithe Farm, Newton in early June, and a territorial male was present on Kelbrook Moor. In Rossendale two pairs with young were on Holbrook Moor on 21 June; in Chorley region five pairs nested in the Belmont area, at least three successfully.

Post-breeding movements commenced with a very early juvenile on Mawdesley Moss, Chorley on 7 July; coastal passage began with one at Heysham on 4 Aug and two at Seaforth on the 6th. Forty-seven were at the former site during August, ten were at Ridge Farm, Pilling on the 30th and 13 at nearby Fluke Hall next day, when at least ten were also in the uplands at Belmont. A fairly modest coastal passage peaked in September with 24 at Bispham Cliffs, Fylde on the 3rd, 14 at Seaforth on the 16th and 22 at Heysham on the 19th. Inland, 14 passed at Belmont during the month and there were six at New Laithe Farm on the 27th.

Fourteen were at Blackpool Airport on 3 Oct; two at Ecclestone on the same day were 2011's last Wheatears in Chorley region and nine passed at Seaforth during the month. November stragglers were much more numerous and widespread than usual this year: on the coast Seaforth's last Wheatear was on 3 Nov and Heysham's on the 5th; the last in the county was in fields near MMWWT on 27 Nov. In the Fylde singles were at Starr Gate on 5 Nov and at Blackpool Airport on the 7-8th. Inland, the last migrant in east Lancashire was at Ogden Clough, Pendle on 6 Nov and in the north at Jubilee Tower on the 11th.

### **PIED FLYCATCHER** *Ficedula hypoleuca*

**Uncommon breeding bird and passage migrant.**

A migrant at Mere Brow Leisure Lakes on 7 April and the first on the breeding grounds at New Laithe Farm and Moor Piece on the 8th and 9th respectively were all early arrivals, the previous earliest being on 10 April 2009. Singles at Bispham Marsh on 25 April and Hesketh Golf Course on 9 May were the only other spring passage migrants.

One pair bred at a regular site near Belmont and another raised four or five young in the Rivington area; presumably breeding birds were present in the Brock Valley, Tower Lodge and Abbeystead but numbers are not known.

The main populations in the Lune and Hodder Valleys and at Moor Piece, all of which are dependent on nest-boxes, were, however, well monitored. In east Lancashire Pied Flycatchers at Moor Piece used 15 nest-boxes, six of which were successful, five failed and the outcome of four was unknown. There were six territories at Kenibus, three active nests at Crag Wood, two active nests at Windyates and four active nests at New Laithe Farm. Ten sites were monitored in the Lune Valley woodlands and 92 pairs were recorded using boxes compared to 63 in 2010 and 54 in 2009. The occupied boxes were distributed as follows: 46 in Roeburndale, 21 in woods along the Lune, 19 at Hindburndale and six in Littledale. Of these 76 successfully reared young and 455 nestlings were ringed: the best year since the study started.

One at Shedden Clough on 1 Aug was the only autumn migrant.

### **DUNNOCK** *Prunella modularis*

**Abundant breeding resident and uncommon double passage migrant. Amber List (breeding decline).**

It is always difficult to find much to write about this widespread and common species and as usual most detailed information came from the north of the county, where 98 were counted in the Lancaster January survey, compared with 128 in 2010 – perhaps indicating some overwinter losses. However, this was not reflected in the numbers of breeding pairs on monitored sites, for example 15 pairs at Heysham compared with 14 in 2010, ten pairs at Millhead, Warton compared with eight in 2010, and seven on Warton Crag RSPB, an average total during 1989-2010. The highest count of, presumably resident, birds in east Lancashire was twelve at Jackhouse in late March, and the same number were at Stanah in the Fylde on 16 Feb.

Ringling returns at Heysham suggested reasonable productivity with 85 ringed post-breeding, compared to 19-96 during 2000-2010. The Leighton Moss ringling total of 17, however, suggested poor productivity compared with 9-33 during 2000-2010.

Overflying migrants were recorded at Heysham on eight dates between 4 Sept and 15 Oct with a peak of four on 18 Sept; no other migration was reported, although 21 out of 36 trapped at Rossall School during the year were caught during September and seem likely to have included some passage birds.

## **HOUSE SPARROW** *Passer domesticus*

### **Abundant but decreasing resident. Red List (breeding decline).**

The January survey of north Lancashire suggested a small decline after a continued increase each year since the study started. The count was 1679 compared with 1850 in 2010, 1255 in 2009, 1040 in 2008 and 564 in 2007. Other first winter period counts included 60 at Low Meadows, 55 on Warper's Moss, Burscough, 45 in Red Cat Lane, Burscough, 43 at Trunnah (Fylde) and 40 at Clowbridge Reservoir.

Kevin Briggs's breeding census of Millhead, Warton recorded 25 pairs compared to 27 in 2010, 46 in 2009, 38 in 2008 and 26 in 2007; he also mapped 53 pairs on the Croftlands Estate in Warton. Numbers in gardens in Belmont Village remained much reduced with a max of only 20 or so; 120 were at Stanah on 25 May.

Post-breeding gatherings included 60 at Cockersand on 22 July, 45 at Alston Reservoirs on 31 July and 40 at Allsprings on 16 Aug. A total of 18 visible 'migrants' were recorded at Heysham between 25 July and 15 Oct.

## **TREE SPARROW** *Passer montanus*

### **Fairly common but declining breeding bird. Flocks in winter also decreasing. Red List (breeding decline).**

Tree Sparrows appear to be continuing to do well throughout the county. In east Lancashire, for example, where the species appeared to be on the verge of disappearing a decade or so ago, birds were reported from 21 sites compared with 15 last year and just nine in 2007; at least three pairs nested in pipe clamp holes at the traditional Brownsills site. Eleven were visiting millet feeders at Mellor on 30 Nov.

The vast majority of the 31 sightings in the January LDBWS survey were in north Fylde but there are signs that Tree Sparrows are making something of a come-back in other parts of the north, and it is hoped to undertake a survey in 2012. There were some reports of small numbers at feeders, including 17 in a Silverdale garden in November/December.

However, the species' stronghold remains the arable mosslands of the Fylde and the south-west, where peak counts included more than 100 at MMWWT and surrounding areas at both ends of the year. The largest gatherings on the Fylde included 280 at Moss House Farm, Rawcliffe Moss in February with 240 there in December, 120 at Cockersand on 26 July, 60 at The Heads on 3 Sept, 45 at Cockerham on 27 Aug and 42 at Bradshaw Lane Head on 9 Jan. In St. Helens 100 were on Berrington's Lane, Rainford on 20 Aug and 80 on 15 Sept near Billinge Hill, where the species was reported to have made a major return in the past couple of years, while in the Chorley region 30 were at feeding stations in Eccleston on 24 Jan and Croston Moss during December.

Breeding totals included 83 pairs at MMWWT, 27 at Todderstaffe Hall and eight at Brockholes, Mere Sands Wood and Mawdesley Moss.

Visible migration was noted at Heysham between 14 July and 15 Oct with a total of 31 birds and a peak count of 20 on 15 Oct, when eight also flew south over Seaforth following one on 25 Sept and four on 1 Oct. One in a Belmont garden on 8 Oct was the first locally since 2008.

### **YELLOW WAGTAIL** *Motacilla flava flavissima*

**Scarce and declining summer visitor; fairly common passage migrant. Red List (breeding decline).**

Although the breeding population does not seem to have increased significantly during this period, numbers of Yellow Wagtails on passage have improved markedly since about 2007. Singles at Brockholes Wetland on 9 & 11 April were the first to arrive, followed by birds at MMWWT on the 13th, Little Crosby on the 15th, Heysham the next day and at Arm Hill, Fylde, Seaforth and Hornby in the Lune Valley on the 17th. The first in east Lancashire was at Altham on 22 April and one was on Mawdesley Moss, Chorley on the 24th.

Migrants were widespread in coastal regions until early May, including four on Churchtown Moss on 20 April, three at Heysham on the 22nd, five at Cockersand on 3 May, ten at Seaforth on the 5th and 15 there on the 6th. During the same period two more were recorded in east Lancashire and two in the Lune Valley.

As usual most of the breeding data came from the south-west, which almost certainly reflects the residual breeding range of this species. In the St. Helens area at least two pairs bred in Rainford and up to three pairs at Newton-le-Willows where up to eight juveniles present on 20 July. At least one pair nested at both MMWWT and Curlew Lane, Rufford and another on Hoscarr Moss. In south Liverpool/Knowsley birds were present in the breeding season at Oglet and Halewood but without proof of nesting. Inland, a pair nested on Farington Moss, Leyland; adults with food were seen there on 18 June, but no fledged juveniles were recorded. In north Lancashire two pairs bred successfully in the Lune Valley; a male 'Channel' Wagtail, possibly the bird seen in 2010, paired with a 'normal' female but the young may have been predated.

The second heavy autumn passage in succession on the coast began with singles on Newton Marsh, Fylde on 31 July and Heysham on 3 Aug. August peaks included eleven on Hesketh Out Marsh on 13 Aug, 17 at Seaforth on 23rd and 23 with on the 26th, and seven on Banks Marsh on the 31st. Movements in east Lancashire were less but still noteworthy, including singles at Cow Ark, Huncoat and Foulridge Reservoirs and up to six at Alston Wetlands on dates in late August.

Widespread movements continued on the coast throughout most of September: there were six at MMWWT on 3 Sept, 26 at Seaforth next day, ten at Hesketh Out Marsh on the 11th and three at Fairhaven on the 16th. The last in Chorley was on Mawdesley Moss on 10 Sept, east Lancashire's last was at New Laithe Farm, Newton on the 18th, and Heysham's on the 29th. Three Yellow Wagtails were recorded in October, singles at Seaforth on 1 & 2 Oct and a late straggler over Rossall Point on the 22nd.

### **BLUE-HEADED WAGTAIL** *Motacilla flava flava*

**Scarce passage migrant, mainly in spring.**

A good year, with two or three males in spring at Seaforth on 5-7 May and probably a single bird at Ridge Farm, Pilling and Fleetwood Golf Course on the 8th. A female/first-summer male was reported at Brockholes Wetland on 15-16 May.

**GREY-HEADED WAGTAIL\*** *Motacilla flava thunbergi***Vagrant.**

A male was at Seaforth on 5-6 May (J Taylor, P Kinsella). The most recent of five previous records of this Scandinavian subspecies was at the Eric Morecambe Pools on 14 May 1992; all the earlier reports, back to April 1984, had been at Seaforth.

**CITRINE WAGTAIL** *Motacilla citreola***Vagrant.**

Our second and third records of this eastern European and Asian species, both first-winter birds, were at Seaforth on 28 Aug (G Thomas *et al*) and 2 Sept (P Kinsella *et al*). Both records have been accepted by the BBRC. They were preceded by another first-winter bird on 26 Aug which may have been a hybrid Citrine x Yellow Wagtail and has not yet been adjudicated by the BBRC. The only previous record was of a bird on Newton Marsh, Fylde during 4-7 May 1997.

**GREY WAGTAIL** *Motacilla cinerea*

**Fairly common breeding bird, mainly on upland streams in the east; common passage migrant, more evident in autumn.**

The two severe winter freeze-ups in 2010 do not seem to have affected this species as badly as had been feared; the ELOC recorded 210 reports in 2011, compared with 158 in 2010. The Lancaster & District January survey located ten well-scattered Grey Wagtails (15 in 2010, 18 in 2009). Spring movements were, as usual, very slight: five were recorded at Heysham between 4 and 30 March, three were at Rossall School on 5 March and three at Halton-on-Lune and one at MMWWT on the 13th.

In north Lancashire six pairs bred on the River Lune and one at Abbeystead; Chorley region recorded five territories at Belmont but two formerly-regular sites were unoccupied there in 2011; two pairs nested in Yarrow Valley Park. In east Lancashire successful breeding was confirmed at only four locations, but there were seven territories along the River Hodder from Sandal Holme down to Hodderfoot. On the coast the only confirmation of nesting was by a pair on a pub on Smithdown Road in Liverpool; a pair may have nested near Seaforth, with juveniles seen there on 27 June and 19 Aug, and birds were present in the breeding season in Sankey Valley, St. Helens.

A protracted but light autumn passage on the coast began in mid-August, peaked in mid- to late September and continued at a low level until early November. One hundred and twenty-seven were recorded at Heysham between 18 Aug and 28 Oct with a peak of 17 on 18 Sept; at Seaforth ten flew south on 15 Sept with 13 there on the 28th, twelve on the 30th and 14 on 1 Oct. In the Fylde six flew over Rossall School on 18 Sept and five on 1 Oct; eight were at Fairhaven Lake on 14 Oct and ten there next day. Inland, eight were recorded over Caton Moor between 26 Sept and 17 Oct with a peak of three on 26 Sept. The last noteworthy movements were four at Fairhaven on 26 Oct and three at Blackpool North Pier on 5 Nov.

Single birds were widespread in both coastal and inland regions in the second winter period, a high proportion in urban environments, but no more than two birds were recorded at any site.

**PIED WAGTAIL** *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

**Common and widespread breeding bird and winter visitor; abundant double passage migrant.**

The only three-figure roost reported in the first winter period was of 120 at Fazakerley on 2 Jan; 35 were at Preston Dock on the 4th and 50 nearby on the Ribble at Hutton on 19 Feb. Sixty were recorded by the Lancaster & District January survey, the lowest total since its inception in 2006.

Fairly modest spring movements were reported from coastal regions, mostly in March. Two hundred and fifty-four were recorded at Heysham between 5 March and 4 May with a maximum count of 28 on 25 March; there were 45 at Fluke Hall, Pilling on 26 March, 40+ at Seaforth on 31 March and 6 April, and 40 on Birkdale Green Beach on 12 April.

The scattered breeding reports received indicated both declines and increases in local populations. Thirty-three pairs held territory along the River Lune, where up to 46 pairs bred in the 1970s; nine pairs nested at Arkholme. In Chorley region six pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir, a slight improvement on 2009-10. Successful nesting was confirmed at six locations in east Lancashire. In the Fylde pairs were present at eleven sites in the Pilling and Stalmine areas. In the south-west two pairs bred at MMWWT and two in the Liverpool Docks adjacent to Seaforth NR.

Twenty-five on Hesketh Out Marsh on 19 July was the first sizeable post-breeding flock reported; subsequent peaks included 57 in Knowsley Safari Park on 27 July, 82 at Arkholme and 25 on Hesketh Out Marsh on 2 Aug and 75+ on Lower Towneley Playing Fields, Burnley next day. There were 57 at Bank End, Fylde on the 19th and 110 at Seaforth on the 26th. Movements continued right through September with 57 at Seaforth on 2 Sept, 60 at Fairhaven Lake next day and 107 over New Laithe Farm, Newton on the 9th; 86 were on Cockerham Moss on 17 Sept and 55 at Arkholme on the 20th. Caton Moor recorded 359 migrants during the month with a peak of 50 on 26 Sept; Heysham reported its autumn peak of 181 on the 30th.

In October 398 moved over Caton Moor including 153 on the 1st, when 102 also flew over Rossall Point; there were counts of 60 on Rawcliffe Moss and over Fairhaven Lake on 13 Oct, with 77 at Fairhaven next day. A roost of over 700 was present in Preston on 28-29 Oct. No significant movements or flocks were reported in November; December roosts in the Aldi Car Park in Preston reached 490 on the 11th and 33 were on Crossens saltmarsh on the 22nd; the central Liverpool roost was not monitored this year.

## **WHITE WAGTAIL** *Motacilla alba alba*

**Spring migrant in variable numbers, mainly coastal; much scarcer in autumn.**

The first of spring was at Seaforth on 13 March, followed by four on Churchtown Moss on the 16th. A two-week lull then ensued before widespread arrivals along the coast in the first week of April with 20-30 daily at Seaforth from 2 April and 50+ there on the 7th, and 30 on Ainsdale Beach on 2 April with 70 there on the 6th; Heysham recorded its first two migrants on the 7th. Inland, singles were at Stocks Reservoir and Belmont on 2 April; a total of 17 was recorded on spring passage by the ELOC, with peaks of nine at Alston Reservoirs on 16 April and six at Stocks next day.

Meanwhile on the coast an average passage was underway with 110 on Carnforth Outer Marsh on 12 April, 60 at Seaforth on the 16th, 49+ at Arm Hill, Pilling on the 17th, 22 on Hesketh Out Marsh on the 23rd and 23 at Marshside-Crossens on the 29th. There was a higher volume of movements in the first half of May than is the norm: birds passed through Seaforth until 16 May, including 30 on the 1st and 15 on the 6th & 7th; there were 70+ at Ridge Farm, Pilling on 7-8 May with 33 still there on the 9th, and 15 on Aldcliffe Marsh on the 15th.



*Dave Owen*

A typically sparse autumn passage on the coast began with 15 at Crossens and three at Seaforth on 2 Sept; there were three more birds in the south-west up to 24 Sept. In the Fylde singles were at Bispham Cliffs on 3 Sept and at Fairhaven Lake on the 8th; a bird at Bispham Cliffs on 1 Oct was the last White Wagtail on the coast, whilst the only inland record of the autumn, at Rishton Reservoir on 15 Oct, closed out the year.

### **RICHARD'S PIPIT\*** *Anthus richardi*

**Rare passage migrant, mostly in autumn.**

One at Alston Reservoirs on the morning of 12 November was the first record since a bird at Coldwell Reservoir, Nelson in October 2008 (Gavin Thomas).

### **TREE PIPIT** *Anthus trivialis*

**Uncommon and local breeding bird in the north and east, and double passage migrant. Red List (breeding decline).**

A very lively coastal passage, almost entirely of 'flyovers', began with a bird in Knowsley Safari Park on 6 April, quickly followed by two at MMWWT on the 8th, singles at Rossall School and Heysham next day and two at Marshside on the 10th. At least 75 spring migrants were recorded in the Fylde, over 40 of these at Rossall Point-Rossall School with a peak of ten there on 15 April.

This was Heysham's best year for the species since the 1980s and a total of 38 passed through up to 4 May, with a peak of 14 on 22 April. Other coastal hot-spots included Seaforth, with 17 migrants between 18 April and 6 May and a peak of nine on the latter date; twelve passed at Marshside during April and seven at Cabin Hill between 19 April and 2 May. Inland, the first Tree Pipits in east Lancashire were at Bottoms Beck in the Gisburn Forest on 16 & 20 April; a pair held territory at White Coppice, Chorley from 18 April.

As in 2010 the Stocks Reservoir-Gisburn Forest area was the core of east Lancashire's breeding population with up to six territorial pairs; other singing males were at Beacon Fell (two) and Shedden Clough. In the north four males were on territory at Marshaw and singles at Warton Crag and on Leck and Thrushgill Fells. Preliminary analysis of atlas data indicates a 40% contraction in the breeding range of Tree Pipits since 2000; population losses are likely to be significantly higher.

There were widespread autumn movements in east Lancashire including up to five birds at New Laithe Farm, Newton on dates from late July to 1 Sept and eight August records in the Jackhouse-Oswaldtwistle Moor area where the last Tree Pipit in the ELOC area was recorded on 4 Sept. The last in north Lancashire was a bird on Thrushgill Fell on 14 Aug; one was at Belmont Reservoir, Chorley on the 27th.

A good coastal passage began with one at Heysham on 3 August; another 21 flew south-east there up to 4 Sept with a maximum of seven on 24 Aug. Seaforth recorded seven migrants between 14 Aug and 4 Sept and a total of ten passed at Billinge Hill, St. Helens during 23-26 Aug. In the Fylde six on Rawcliffe Moss on 18 Aug were the first of autumn and another ten passed there up to 31 Aug; single birds at Prescot Reservoirs on 14 Sept and at Rossall School next day were the last Tree Pipits recorded in 2011.

**MEADOW PIPIT** *Anthus pratensis*

**Abundant breeding bird, especially in the east, and double passage migrant; scarcer in winter. Amber List (breeding decline).**

Only a few small flocks were reported during the first winter period, including twelve at Brockholes Wetland on 4 Feb and 20+ on Warton Marsh on the 19th; eight at Alston Reservoirs on 8 Jan was the highest count in inland regions. The Lancaster & District January survey recorded only 14 Meadow Pipits compared with 52 in 2010.

Spring movements commenced on a small scale in the second week of March but these increased massively from the 26th, when 370 passed over Seaforth, 279 at Heysham and 170 at Marshside; there were 240 at Rossall School next day, and on the 29th 2000 moved over Rossall Point and there were 800 at nearby Knott End. Meanwhile, 56 at Melling in the Lune Valley on 28 March was the largest inland movement recorded. Substantial passage continued intermittently until mid-April with 592 over Rossall Point on 2 April, 372 there next day and 586 on the 15th; 520 flew north in an hour at Seaforth on the 7th. In east Lancashire 40 were at Alston Wetland on 3 April and 100+ in the Langden Valley on the 15th; 300+ at Fluke Hall, Pilling on the 22nd was the last appreciable spring movement reported.

With some local exceptions breeding populations in the uplands appear to be holding their own. In east Lancashire there were 63 on Merrybent Hill on 22 April and 45 on Twiston Moor on 11 May; atlas TTVs on Saddle Fell on 27 May and Harrop Fell on 2 June recorded 56 and 53 Meadow Pipits, respectively, and there were 25 birds in April and 21 in June in a 1km BTO/BBS square on Darwen Moor. In Chorley region c.15 pairs bred in the Belmont area. On the Lune, however, only eight territories were located on the Leck Beck-Wenning Foot stretch, ten fewer than last year's total. Relatively few breeding data were reported from the coast, where three pairs nested on Middleton Industrial Estate, Heysham and one at Seaforth; MMWWT did not provide breeding data this year, but 14 pairs nested on Marshside RSPB and five pairs on Hesketh Out Marsh.

Autumn movements began early at Heysham, on 27 July, and the first migrant was at Seaforth on 12 Aug. There were 145 at Marshside on 30 Aug but most of the large gatherings in that month were in inland areas, including 60 at New Laithe Farm, Newton on 7 Aug, 100+ near Belmont on the 20th, 120 at Belmont Reservoir on the 27th and 200+ on Pendle Big End on the 31st.

After a few weeks' relative quiet the last week of September saw some exceptionally heavy movements of Meadow Pipits at both coastal and inland watchpoints. A total of 7676 passed over Caton Moor during the month with peaks of 1634 on 25 Sept and 1378 next day; also on the 25th 1500 flew over Seaforth, there were 220 at Marshside and 120 at Belmont Reservoir. Eight hundred and thirty-three were recorded at Rossall Point on 30 Sept. The pace of migration increased even further in early October with a massive southward surge on 1 Oct that brought 3000+ to Marshside-Crossens in three hours, 3254 over Rossall Point and 1737 to Seaforth; in the uplands 280 Meadow Pipits an hour flew south at Belmont. A total of 4788 passed over Caton Moor during October, the vast majority in the first week with a peak of 2135 on the 4th. The passage faded away very quickly from mid-October and 250 on Rawcliffe Moss, Fylde on 13 Oct and 200 at Seaforth on the 15th were the last three-figure counts on the coast; in the Lune Valley there were 150 at Newton on 6 Nov and 110 there on the 16th.

Numbers in December were extremely low everywhere and 22 at Myerscough Quarry, Fylde on 22 Dec was the largest coastal gathering reported; in east Lancashire twelve were at Cant Clough Reservoir, Burnley on 1 Dec and eleven at Altham on the 26th.

**ROCK PIPIT** *Anthus petrosus*

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant, mainly in autumn.

Rock Pipits were present in typical numbers in the early year on the saltmarshes between the Wyre and Keer Estuaries, with peaks of 15 at Barnaby's Sands and four at Fluke Hall, Pilling on 20 Feb and five at Cockersand on the 22nd; single birds were reported in January-February from Knott End, Pilling Lane Ends, Sunderland Point, Conder Green and Aldcliffe. Further north at least one bird overwintered in Heysham Harbour. In south Fylde eleven were on Warton Bank on 19-20 Feb but there were only two records from south of the Ribble, singles at Marshside on 11 Jan and on Hesketh Out Marsh on 19 Feb.

Spring movements were more than usually evident this year: in the north there were single birds at Heysham on 5, 15, 23 & 25 March and two at Bank End on the 19th; Seaforth recorded two singles during 4-10 and 20-25 March. No Rock Pipits were recorded in inland regions in the early year.

Widespread autumn arrivals and movements began with a bird at Seaforth during 2-7 Oct; twenty more were recorded there to 20 Nov with a peak of eleven, mostly flying over, on 14 Oct. Up to four were present regularly, mainly over high tides, around the old Sand Plant compound at Marshside from 23 Oct to 13 Nov and one was on Garston Shore, south Liverpool on 15 Oct. North of the Ribble peaks in the Fylde included three at Fairhaven on 14 Oct, six at Cockersand on the 27th and three on Pilling Marsh next day and on Burrow's Marsh, Wyre on 27 Nov. Further north three were at Sunderland Point on 9 Nov; singles at Heysham on 19 & 26 Oct were followed by several records of two or three grounded birds in late October and November. Up to 20 were reported from Aldcliffe Marsh in late year, but without details of dates.

Four autumn migrants were recorded in east Lancashire: one at Ightenhill Bridge, Padiham and two at Parsonage Reservoir, Blackburn on 16 Oct and one at Altham from 28 to 31 Oct.

Very few reports were received after the beginning of December. At least one again wintered in Heysham Harbour; in the Fylde there were up to three at Knott End in late December and five at Stanah on the 28th.

**WATER PIPIT** *Anthus spinoletta*

Uncommon winter visitor and scarce passage migrant. Amber List (rare winterer).

Peak counts of wintering birds were markedly lower in 2011 than the average of the past five years, but as sightings of this species are peculiarly affected by tidal factors it is probably best to await data from the next few years before passing judgement on any change of status.

On the Wyre Estuary in the early year two each were at Barnaby's Sands on 23 Jan and nearby at The Heads and at Staynall on 22 March; further north one was at Conder Green on 26 March and 4 April. In south Fylde three were on Warton Bank on 19 Feb with four there next day; three were again present on 20 March and four on the 21st. No reports of spring migrants were received.

In the late year one had returned to Warton Bank on 30-31 Oct and there were two there on 26 Nov; three on Banks Marsh next day were the only Water Pipits south of the Ribble all year.

**CHAFFINCH** *Fringilla coelebs*

Abundant breeding bird, passage migrant and winter visitor.

During the first winter period there were no huge counts but there were plenty of small flocks dotted around the county. The largest of these were 200 on Wood Moss Lane, Scarisbrick on 15 Feb, 100 on Gulf Lane, Cockerham Moss on 7 Jan, 50 at Moor Piece feeding station on 1 Jan and 50

at Halton on 21 Feb. Tetrad counts around Skelmersdale resulted in over 80 birds per tetrad and the January survey of the Lancaster district reported 1079 similar to peaks in 2007/8. Over 50 roosted in the Belmont plantations on 23 Jan.

The first song was reported at New Laithe Farm (Newton) on 14 Feb. A total of 46 singing males along the River Lune from Leck Beck to Wenning Foot was well down on 2010 but breeding numbers around Warton were similar to the previous year. Twenty-seven pairs on Warton Crag RSPB and 17 at Heysham were fairly typical of recent years. Twenty males were in song at Knowsley Park and 16 pairs bred at Brockholes Wetland.

Spring passage was sparse but autumn passage was excellent with large numbers counted at many sites. Heysham had a site record of 4745 between 22 Aug and 20 Nov with a maximum of 496 on 15 Oct. Good numbers of migrants were attracted down to the feeders here, contributing to a good ringing total of 213 which peaked in the last week of September and first week of October. Vis mig observations at Caton Moor produced a very good total of 4002 birds in the same period with a peak of 647 on 1 Oct.

Numbers moving over Fairhaven Lake were quite staggering with 10873 from late September and October and four-figure peaks of 1605 on 13 Oct, 2248 on the 14th and 1055 on the 23rd. Rossall Point didn't figure early in the autumn but 544 on 22 Oct was the high point there. At Seaforth 600 headed south on 1 Oct but the peak there coincided with Heysham's with 900 on 15 Oct. At Cabin Hill there were 130 on 1 Oct and 100 on the 25th.

Ringing at Moss House Farm, Pilling resulted in 399 trapped during the autumn period and 355 in December. During November a flock of 250-300 was feeding in maize stubble at Newton, Lancaster on the 16th and an early singing male was at Leighton Moss on the 12th.

No large numbers were reported at the end of the year; peak counts were of over 40 roosting in rhododendrons at Belmont at the end of November and up to 63 at Moor Piece.

## **BRAMBLING** *Fringilla montifringilla*

**Winters in variable numbers. Fairly common double passage migrant, mostly in autumn.**

The pattern for this species was similar in all parts of the county; numerous sightings during the early part of the year but a poor autumn passage followed by low numbers in the second winter period – the complete reverse of 2010. The Lancaster survey recorded 31 birds compared to three in 2010.

This seems to be another species that has finally realised there's lots of food in gardens though is still rather reluctant to be in the vanguard. Some gardens managed to attract rather large numbers with one in Ainsdale reaching 15 on 5 April, 15 at Higherford on 5 Feb, 14 in a Longridge garden between 31 March and 5 April, eleven at Clarkes Gardens, Liverpool on 19 March and smaller numbers from many other places right across the county.

The largest concentrations were at Thrusgill where there were 20 in February building up to 150 by the end of March when many were in song. There was a flock of 26 at Cuerden Valley Park feeding station in early February but that had dissipated



Steve Young

by the 20th. MMWWT held up to 22 in January increasing to 25 in February and a flock of 25 was at Whittle during February. Records came from 14 tetrads on the Fylde with the largest numbers being 14 at Eagland Hill in January and 15 at Fairhaven Dunes on 15 March. The last birds of the first winter period were recorded at Ridge Farm, Pilling, Longridge and Belmont on 17 April.

Autumn passage was very poor, especially when you contrast this to Chaffinch, with just four over Caton Moor for example and 36 through Heysham. Ones and twos were recorded from a few sites but the most productive by far was at Fairhaven with 22 on 16 Oct and 26 on the 26th.

Winter records were well down with peaks of just 10 roosting in rhododendrons at Belmont on 27 Nov and 20 at Mitton Bridge on 16 Dec. Elsewhere, there were records of singletons from just ten or so sites.

## **GREENFINCH** *Carduelis chloris*

**Abundant breeding bird. Some autumn movement, flocks in winter.**

The recovery after disease of this once very common finch appeared to continue and it seems that they had a good breeding season.

Early in the year there were flocks exceeding 30 at Ashton Gardens, Blackpool (30 on 12 Jan), Warton Airfield (33 on 22 Jan rising to 74 by 7 Feb), Cook o' Lune (up to 62 during February) and at the old Garden Festival site at Otterspool (65 on 27 Jan). The Lancaster January survey recorded 153 compared to 118 in 2010, an improvement but still low in comparison to a few years ago.

There were widespread successful breeding reports with many juveniles showing up across the county from June onwards. First singing was reported at Fairhaven Lake on 19 Feb but was far more prevalent from early April. Ten pairs at Heysham was an average showing but breeding pairs around Warton numbered just eight, about half of what they were a couple of years ago. Post-breeding flocks included 33 at Cockersand in late August and around 100 at Easington on 21 July.

It was another good autumn passage, especially at Heysham where they had their second record-breaking year in a row in ringing terms – 556 in the year of which 530 were ringed between July and December. The pattern of ringing records suggest a buoyant local population being recorded in August and early September followed a month later by a peak of more obvious migrants. At Rossall, ringing numbers peaked at 117 trapped during October.

Passage at Fairhaven was good with 149 recorded in September and 836 during October. Seaforth had steady numbers through during late September and October with a peak of 60 on 15 Oct. There was a flock of over 100 on Croston Moss on 8 Oct and on the 30th, there was a flock of at least 250 birds around the old sandwinning plant at Marshside.

There were no large concentrations later in the year but 40 were still at Cockersand in December and 35 at a roost in Princes Park, Liverpool on 22 Dec. Other roost counts included 36 at Crook o' Lune on 5 Nov. There were very few reports of birds suffering from *trichomonosis*.

## **GOLDFINCH** *Carduelis carduelis*

**Common breeding resident and passage migrant. Flocks in winter.**

The Goldfinch easily retains its position as the second most common finch in our area and continues to thrive although there may have been a slight decrease in numbers on 2010. The Lancaster January Survey had 300 in comparison to last year's 414. Peak numbers on the Fylde early in the year never got to more than 50 at any one site but it was recorded at 125 sites in 75 tetrads. The largest roost count was at Belmont where there were 140 on 16 Jan and there were 40 at Towneley Hall on the 19th.

Spring visible migration started and finished earlier than usual at Heysham with 304 between 18 March and 23 April. At Rossall Point 377 were recorded during spring with a peak of 54 on 6 April.

A record 16 pairs bred at Heysham whilst 15 pairs between Leck Beck and Wenning Foot, 13 pairs at Croftlands, Warton and 25 pairs at Millhead, Warton were all increases on previous years. At least ten pairs bred at MMWWT. There was a suggestion of late breeding at a few sites as juveniles appeared in numbers during August.

Large post-breeding flocks of Goldfinches started to accumulate during July as usual. Three-figure counts were made at Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park (125 on 23 July), Rawcliffe Moss (300 on 31 July), Brockholes Wetland (130 on 8 Aug), Arkholme (138 on 31 Aug), MMWWT (100 on 12 Aug), Seaforth (100 on 23-26 Aug, of which 25% were juveniles, rising to 120 in early September) and Belmont (120 on 27 Aug). Further east, peak numbers were 80 at Dean Clough on 29 July rising to 100 on 8 Aug. However, the largest flocks were of 368 feeding in a meadow at Easington on 26 Aug (courtesy of a digital image) and 160 on Champion Moor the same day. Some large flocks remained into late September, including 160 at Hesketh Out Marsh on the 4th and 150 at Glasson on the 27th

A steady autumn passage was reported from many sites: 795 over Caton Moor with a peak of 106 on 13 Oct, 740 over Heysham with a peak of 47 on 29 Sept and 267 from Fairhaven Lake peaking at 130 on 13 Oct. At Seaforth, there were several days with totals of more than 35 with a peak of 60 on 14 Oct. Around 100 were at Altham on 14 Oct and visible migration was noted at several inland sites on this date. Ringing sites recorded a steady passage of birds with good numbers ringed and few retraps including one small garden in Over Kellet where 153 were caught with only five retraps.

Numbers dropped away sharply in November although there were still 130 at Brockholes Wetland on the 7th and 150 at Eccleston Mere on the 27th. Forty were at Aldcliffe Marsh on 27 Nov and also at Bispham at the end of November and into December whilst over 60 roosted at Belmont on 27 Dec. Singing males were recorded at Lowerhouse Lodges on 21 Dec and Rowley Lake, Burnley on the 28th.

## **SISKIN** *Carduelis spinus*

**Uncommon recent breeding colonist. Common double passage migrant and winter visitor.**

There was a general dearth of records during January with birds being seen in only six places on the Fylde and only 67 recorded during the January survey around Lancaster. There were, however, some notable exceptions with flocks of 80 at Rowley Lake on the 6th, 63 at Hurst Green on the 14th, 50 at Eccleston on the 23rd, 40 at Cuerden Valley Park on the 24th, 50 at Skerton Weir and 70 at Leighton Moss.

Most places had their first of the year in February as birds started to disperse and visit garden feeding stations – the influx was commented upon by many observers from Chorley to Lancaster. Up to 150 visited a garden in Clayton during March of which 87 were caught and ringed. Similarly at Over Kellet, 89 were ringed between 22 Feb and 1 April and 180 were ringed at Thrushgill. Numbers at New Laithe Farm, Newton were also regularly in the region of 25-30 throughout March as birds passed through the region.

Breeding was recorded in eight tetrads in the Lancaster area including four pairs at Claughton whilst two pairs bred at Belmont and several pairs were around Stocks Reservoir. Young were being fed at Bottom's Beck, Gisburn Forest on 3 May and at feeders at Marl Hill on the 6th. More interestingly was a record of adults feeding noisy young at Southport Botanic Gardens on 23 June, indicating local breeding success there. Pairs were also noted in Knowsley Park and single calling birds were noted over Sefton Park, Liverpool in early summer. Thirty-seven were at

Moor Piece on 1 Aug. There were 44 ringed or controlled at Thrushgill during July of which 20 were juveniles.

Autumn passage was another fairly steady affair at some sites, similar to last year with totals of 223 over Heysham, 125 at Fairhaven. At Caton Moor, however, a total of 1182 were counted with a peak of 286 on 1 Oct; this peak was also noted at Seaforth with 200 over that day and 356 in total. Brockholes had a total of 106 with a peak of 37 on 4 Sept and visible migration was recorded in small numbers at other sites across the county such as at Billinge Hill, St. Helens with a modest 27 in total and Jackhouse Reservoir which had 33 on 9th and 18 Sept.

Second winter period records were rather few and far between. There was a smattering of records for November including 30 at Stocks Reservoir on the 4th, but during December none was reported in the Fylde or Lancaster district and just small numbers were seen in Bowland. The only records of note were of up to 50 at Eccleston Mere and 24 at Cuerden Valley Park in December.

### **LINNET** *Carduelis cannabina*

**Common breeding resident. Double passage migrant, common winter flocks in the west. Red List (breeding decline).**

The overall picture seems to be similar to last year with winter flocks in the hundreds reported from several lowland sites but none in the eastern part of the county. There were 100 at Lytham Green on 4 Jan, up to 200 at Marton Mere throughout January and February, 150 at Aldcliffe Marsh on 31 Jan and 100 at Cockersand on 8 Feb. There were up to 80 at both Hesketh Out Marsh and Low Meadows, Burscough in this period and 124 near Skelmersdale on 16 Jan. There were 160 at Medlar on 5 March and numbers remained around 175 at Marton Mere. The Lancaster January survey recorded a high total of 110 birds, well above the norm.

The first to be seen in east Lancashire were at Slaidburn on 12 March then Champion Moor a week later. Brockholes Wetland recorded its first on 15 March with a peak of 16 on 19 April. Spring migration came early with 242 at Heysham between 22 March and 29 April, 249 over Rossall Point in the same period and 150 at Ridge Farm, Pilling on 15 April, there were 95 on Farington Moss on 8 April.

Five to seven pairs bred on EDF Properties at Heysham, twelve pairs at Marshside with another 25 at Hesketh Out Marsh, at least six pairs on Birkdale LNR, four pairs at Belmont Reservoir and two pairs on territory at White Coppice. In the east of the county, there were five pairs on White Moor above Barnoldswick and one or two pairs at eleven other sites with a pair feeding young at Parsonage Reservoir on 20 July. Birds were recorded in 22 tetrads on the Fylde during the breeding season. Only three pairs bred in a gorse thicket at Arkholme where there once used to be over 20 but this might be because the gorse is too 'leggy' now. Good numbers were reported to the south of Liverpool including several pairs around Oglet.

Post-breeding flocks were seen from the end of June; a flock at Fluke Hall Lane numbered over 55 from 8 July onwards, over were 120 at Middleton and 50 at Carnforth Slag Tips during August, but the largest reported counts were 200 at Rawcliffe Moss on 31 Aug and 200 on Mawdesley Moss during August. There were no really big numbers in the east: 50 at Upper Foulridge on 27 Aug was by far the largest count.

Autumn passage was steady but not particularly notable with just 150 over Heysham during the period. Watchpoints on the Fylde fared little better with 164 over Rossall School and 161 over Fairhaven; 50 were at Hesketh Out Marsh. The Sefton Coast, however, proved to be a little better with peak counts around the 50 mark at Marshside and 100 at Cabin Hill on 11 Sept, and a much more noticeable passage Seaforth with peaks of 107 on 27 Sept, 350 on 1 Oct, 120 the following day and 90 on the 13th. Some birds don't pass through immediately but form feeding flocks in the area, numbers around Barrow Lane, Newton-le-Willows, for instance, built up to 199

in several flocks by 13 October. The latest records in the east of the county were of 20 at Altham on 27 Oct and then one at Alston Wetland on 12 Nov.

Winter flocks included over 100 at Croston Finney from 1 October and into November, up to 150 on the saltmarsh at Granny's Bay, Fairhaven in November, 130 at Marton Mere on 10 Dec 110 at Hesketh Out Marsh on 30 Dec.

## **TWITE** *Carduelis flavirostris*

**Rare and decreasing breeder. Winter visitor on coasts. Red List (breeding decline).**

### Monthly Peak Counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cant Clough	14	14	14	10	/	/	34	30	50	40	20	17
Heysham	103	51	75	13	0	0	0	0	0	42	125	25
Knott End	70	75	32	0	0	0	0	0	0	35	30	21
Weld Road	60	/	/	0	0	0	0	0	0	55	70	60

The table above summarises the peak counts at the county's main wintering sites for this species.

Seed is put out all year at Cant Clough in an effort to encourage a local breeding population that has crashed over the last couple of decades. It is certainly the only reason why these birds remain in the area over winter rather than join the majority of their kin on coastal saltmarshes. The only other records from east Lancashire came from Shedden Clough and Hurstwood, both in the vicinity of Cant Clough. A recent survey of Twite on the moors above Burnley showed that there were 7-11 pairs in 2008, 10-13 in 2009 and 12-17 in 2010. The survey wasn't carried out in 2011 unfortunately but it looks as if the schemes in place up there are starting to pay small dividends. Conversely, there were no records at all from the Belmont area.

Most birders catch up with Twite at the regular coastal sites. The long-standing feeding site on the North Harbour Wall and the saltmarsh at Ocean Edge, Heysham is almost exclusively comprised of birds from Scottish breeding sites and produced three-figure counts at both ends of the year (103 on 27 Jan and 125 on 14 Nov). Ringing at the North Harbour Wall produced a total of 160 birds of which 65 were retraps or controls.

Elsewhere in the first winter period there were regular records from the area of saltmarsh developing at the end of Weld Road, Southport but occasionally birds were seen further south such as 78 at the south end of Ainsdale beach on 27 Jan and 35 there on the 31st. There were regular records from the Lune Estuary and Wyre saltmarshes, especially from Knott End to Pilling Lane with 140 counted in two separate flocks on 17 Jan. There were 90 at Glasson on 29 Jan and other records from Sunderland Point and Conder Green.

The first returning birds (away from east Lancashire) were eight at Heysham on 9 Oct. October brought records from other areas of the county with five over Seaforth on the 22nd, four at Marshside on the 28th and two over Brockholes Wetland on the 26th. Brockholes scored again with two on 3 November and another was recorded at Seaforth on the 12th.

Numbers wintering in the second winter period on the Fylde coast were certainly not as good as earlier in the year though there were 87 at Cocker's Dyke on 6 Nov and 13 at St. Anne's on the 28th. On 1 Dec over 32 were feeding on an Oil-seed Rape crop with Linnets at New Ridge Farm, Pilling. Small flocks were recorded at Glasson and Sunderland Point but not with any great regularity and the Weld Road flock built up to its now-regular 50-70 birds.

**LESSER REDPOLL** *Carduelis cabaret*

Fairly common but decreasing breeding bird. Common double passage migrant and winter visitor. Red List (breeding decline).

It's been an interesting year for redpolls, both Lesser and Common. It's only a few years ago when it seemed that large winter feeding flocks of Lessers were commonplace but nowadays this is a much less regular occurrence. In the first winter period there was a dearth of records as the winter tightened its grip, apart from in east Lancashire (where there more records in comparison to previous years) and the only regular sightings came from sites with feeding stations and ringing activities. In east Lancashire, the only regular records were of up to 20 birds from Low Moor, Clitheroe and eight birds from Rishton but the peak count was of 50 at Towneley Pool, Burnley on the 6th. The January survey in the Lancaster district resulted in just four birds and there were records from just two sites on the Fylde and none in the south of the county. February was particularly poor for records.

However, a very good passage was recorded at a number of sites during March and April. At Thrusgill 255 were caught between 22 Feb and 14 April, 502 were counted over Rossall School (of which 111 were ringed) and 172 over Knott End in the same period. Heysham enjoyed a record spring passage with a total of 360, the vast majority on 9 & 10 April (152 and 70 respectively) – although a few Common Redpolls could have been involved in the movement. At Marshside, 176 were recorded in this period with a peak of 70 on 7 April. Numbers in the east of the county peaked with a minimum of 25 at Rishton on 4 April and 56 were ringed in an Over Kellet garden.

Breeding information was limited. Birds were present throughout the breeding season around Tarbock and Cronton Colliery in south Liverpool whilst Knowsley Park had 2-3 displaying males. Tetrad visits picked up four pairs between Skelmersdale and Newburgh. At least five pairs bred in plantations above Belmont and several pairs were on territory around White Coppice. Displaying males were seen at Stocks Reservoir throughout April and fledged young were seen at nearby Green Pike. Breeding was confirmed at Rishton where juveniles were being fed on 28 May; a female with a brood patch was retrapped the same day and a male was gathering nest material, suggesting a second pair. Breeding was also confirmed on Newton Fell. Odd singletons were noted at Middleton, Weeton Camp and Winmarleigh Moss during June.

Post-breeding peaks included 53 at Moor Piece on 29 Aug, 21 at New Laithe Farm, Newton in late August, 30 at Belmont on 17 Sept and a minimum of 150 at Stocks Reservoir on the 16th. During a below-par autumn migration, Heysham had 42 and Seaforth recorded 70 with a peak of 46 on 1 Oct. There were hardly any records on the Fylde apart from 40 and 70 over Rawcliffe Moss on 20th & 27 Sept respectively and 35 on 28 Oct. Birds were also seen on passage over south Liverpool and Billinge Hill but in very low numbers.

Winter records were extremely thin on the ground. At Stocks Reservoir a small flock built up to 36 by 9 Nov but then dissipated. Brockholes recorded singletons on 4 Nov and 18 Dec. Garden feeders started to attract a few birds in during December but the peak count was just a miserly six in Rishton.

A bird with white head patches seen at Clitheroe Tip on 23 Jan and Low Moor early in the year was seen again at Stocks Reservoir on 12 Nov.

**MEALY (COMMON) REDPOLL\*** *Carduelis flammaea*

Scarce winter visitor.

Disappointingly, the influx of Common Redpolls into eastern Britain at the end of 2010 had not resulted in any Lancashire records that year but all that was to change in the early part of 2011 with a flurry of captures at feeding and migration sites.

Two birds were regularly present on feeders at Low Moor, Clitheroe between 23 Jan and 16 March (L Briggs, J Fenton) and although photographed, avoided mist-netting. Ringing activities finally confirmed the presence two first-winter males in Rishton on 31 Jan (D Bickerton, Mark Breaks). These were joined by a third on 4 Feb and another on the 5th. The birds were seen intermittently between 17 Feb and 18 March and another came through on 31 March (the latter with an influx of Lesser Redpolls).

The trapping of large numbers of Lesser Redpolls at Thrushgill revealed single Common Redpolls on 3, 13, 16, 21 & 22 March and 1-4 April (P J Marsh). A first-winter was on feeders at New Laithe Farm on 12 & 13 March (Margaret Breaks) and a first-winter bird that had been ringed in Cambridgeshire on 13 March was seen at New Laithe Farm on several occasions between 30 March and 2 April (Mark & Margaret Breaks).

A first-winter male was trapped at Knott End on 23 March (C Batty) and another first-winter male was ringed at Rossall School on 9 April (S Eaves, I Gardner). Also on 9 April, a first-winter male was trapped at Heysham during a large movement of Lesser Redpolls and another on the 16th (PJ Marsh).

### **Historical.**

A heavily streaked adult female, trapped and ringed at Alder Wood on Hillside Golf Course, Southport, on 15 Dec 1972, had a wing length of 77.5mm, bill length 10.5mm (bill 7.5mm deep at feathering) and weighed 14.5 grams (SK Thomas per R Kennedy). The biometrics fit with either the Greenland sub-species *rostrata* or the Icelandic sub-species *islandica*, for either of which this would constitute the only record in Lancashire.

### **REDPOLL sp. *Carduelis* sp.**

A possible Coues' Arctic Redpoll (ssp. *exilipes*) was seen at Thrushgill on 20 March but the adjudication process highlighted the problem with redpoll taxonomy and the need for various forms of evidence in order to clinch identification. Recent articles have done little to clarify this so ideally we require photographs of the salient identification features of rump and under-tail.

### **COMMON CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra***

**Rare breeding bird. Occasional irruptive movements.**

2011 was a bumper year for Crossbills with a widely reported summer influx into the region. In east Lancashire, for instance, 123 records were submitted compared to 26 the previous year and 17 in 2009.

In the early part of the year, the only regular records came from Thrushgill where there were peaks of eight in January, 16 in February and 18 in March. Three to four pairs were considered to have bred there resulting in a flock of 24 in June. There was a flock of twelve at Gisburn Forest on 31 May. There were nine other records in east Lancashire and singles at Cabin Hill on 8 Feb and 8 March and Childwall on the 13th.

There were eight at Tower Lodge on 6 June, seven over Boulsworth Hill on the 12th, four over Holcombe Moor on the 14th and two over Alston Wetland on the 28th. A few birds were seen regularly around Stocks Reservoir and Newton Fells during July and 20 were still present around Thrushgill. Brockholes recorded three on 8 July. Small parties were noted in Cuerden Valley Park on the 7th, Belmont on the 9th, Healey Nab on the 27th, Poulton-le-Fylde on the 9th and Rossall School on the 23rd. Small number were also recorded around Knowsley from early June.

August brought larger numbers as the flock at Thrushgill built up to 45 and a flock at Beacon Fell reached 36 on the 26th. A flock of over 20 flew southwest over Towneley Park, Burnley on the 5th. Thrushgill hit its peak in September with 75 whilst Caton Moor recorded visible migration

totals of 82 (peak of 29 on 14 Oct). Heysham, Cabin Hill and Seaforth all recorded 17 during the autumn. On 28 Oct, four flocks totalling 35 birds were seen over Gisburn Forest. Birds were reported from four sites in South Liverpool during the autumn.

October brought the bulk of records for other areas. There were 22 birds recorded on the Fylde with a peak of eight over Knott End on the 20th and a total of 46 were counted over Billinge Hill in the month with a peak of 15 also on the 20th. Birds continued to move around the county into November with up to 50 at Longridge Fell, 40 at Kemple End, 26 at Stock Reservoir and smaller flocks at Moor Piece and Oakenclough but numbers then dropped off significantly in December with the only birds reported being at Stocks Reservoir and Moor Piece.

## **BULLFINCH** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

**Common breeding resident. Amber list (breeding decline).**

Another good year for this increasing but still fairly localised resident it seems. It is interesting to note comments from Heysham regarding the occurrence of the species resulting from ringing records: twelve 'new' adults (that weren't members of the local breeding population of four or so pairs) were trapped throughout the year alongside the more usual retraps and flurry of juveniles in late summer. This may have some relationship to the large numbers recorded around Rishton in the last couple of years in that there seems to be an as yet unknown pattern of movements of unringed adults during the year not purely associated with migration seasons. At Rishton a total of ten new birds, mostly adults, were trapped in the early part of the year along with 14 retraps. The large population at the latter site is mirrored in surrounding areas of Oswaldtwistle and Jackhouse resulting in a localised hot spot for the species.

The Lancaster January survey recorded 124 birds but the majority were located in the Silverdale area. Breeding numbers on Warton Crag RSPB reached a new high of 19 pairs whilst at Arkholme there were three pairs, two pairs were at Millhead, Warton and four on the Croftlands Estate, Warton.

Around the Preston area there were regular reports of this species from Cottam Brickworks (maximum of seven on 27 Jan), Penwortham, Cuerden Valley Park and Mere Sands Wood (maximum of six on 26 March). The species is also locally common around Tarbock, Speke and Halewood but also occurs regularly around Croxteth Park, Childwall Woods and Clarke Gardens, Liverpool.

Small numbers were reported from Eccleston Mere, Newton-le-Willows, Roby Mill and Billinge through the year. There were several reports from the north of Skelmersdale, including eleven on a tetrad visit on 12 Feb, and around Burscough. Two pairs bred in Belmont (recently fledged young seen on the late date of 23 Sept) and also at Jackhouse (juveniles seen on 16 June). Also in east Lancashire, breeding was confirmed from Worston and Paythorne as well as probable at Green Pike and Lane Ends. The species remains an elusive resident at Birkdale LNR and is virtually absent from the Fylde except for some autumn dispersal noted at Fairhaven, Rawcliffe Moss and Warton Bank during October.

Autumn movements of high-flying birds were also noted at Billinge Hill and Speke whilst at Brockholes Wetland there were up to three in November. Dispersing birds were also noted on four dates from Longridge/Alston Reservoirs.

## **HAWFINCH** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

**Rare and localised breeding resident. Red list (breeding decline).**

The only confirmed reports of this elusive species came from Woodwell and Haweswater but with only one record from each site. Woodwell has long been the go-to place for Hawfinch but the

emergence of the easier-to-see flock at Sizergh Castle over the border in Cumbria may be drawing birders away from the traditional areas, perhaps explaining the lack of records. Or is it that they really have deserted the area?

A 'probable' was seen in Gisburn Forest on 29 Oct.

## **SNOW BUNTING** *Plectrophenax nivalis*

**Fairly common winter visitor to summits and coasts.**

The large numbers on Pendle Hill at the end of 2010 remained into 2011 with 25 on 1 Jan, 30 on the 8th, 18 on the 21st but down to twelve by the 28th. A first-winter male at Cockersand from 27 Jan to 22 Feb, one at Three Bank End on 28 Jan and a summer-plumaged male at Heysham on 2 & 3 April were the only other records from the early part of the year.

Later in the year there was a good series of records starting with one at MMWWT on 9 Oct followed by birds over Fairhaven on the 14th and 15th. One was at Prescott Reservoirs from 18-24 Oct and one at Cant Clough on the 23rd. Other October records came from Heysham, Fleetwood Marine Lake and Rossall Point.

During November, singles were reported from Fairsnape Fell, Cross of Greet (2 on the 26th), Cockersand, Rossall Point, Granny's Bay, Warton, Marshside, Lane Ends and St. Anne's; three were at Starr Hills, Blackpool on the 15th, up to three at Sunderland Point on the 12th & 13th and another south over Ocean Edge on the 6th. Two were on Crosby Shore on 20 Nov and one was seen at Formby Point on the 30th.

Two appeared on Pendle Hill on 3 Nov, rising to seven by 1 Dec which was the last report of the year there. One was on Winter Hill on 3 Dec with two there on the 18th. Five were at Belmont Reservoir on 15 Dec and up to four were at Carnforth Slag Tips from 30 Nov to 25 Dec.

## **LAPLAND BUNTING\*** *Calcarius lapponicus*

**Rare autumn passage migrant and winter visitor to coasts.**

The latter part of 2010 was excellent for this species and so it wasn't too surprising that some birds might have remained in the county. One such was at Hesketh Out Marsh from 9-30 Jan (C Bushell, G Clarkson) and one was at Seaforth on 2-3 April (C Gregson, S Tomlinson *et al*).

The only substantiated record in the autumn was of a flock of four calling overhead at Marshside before they dropped onto the Crossens saltmarsh on 10 Nov (B McCarthy, P Johnson).

## **YELLOWHAMMER** *Emberiza citrinella*

**Fairly common but decreasing resident, mostly in the south. Scarce autumn passage migrant. Red list (breeding decline).**

The Yellowhammer's stronghold remains in the southern part of the county as numbers decline further elsewhere. Though not all of the area was surveyed during the breeding season, 30 territories were located around Tarbock with another eleven at Halewood; south Knowsley is by far the most populous area in the county. Singing males were also recorded at a couple of sites to the south of Ormskirk, Sankey Valley (three males on 19 May), Dairy Farm Road and Gorse Hill NR (up to two males throughout the year but eight on 14 May). To the north of Burscough there were several territorial birds at Warper's Moss, Crabtree Lane and Low Meadows and there were 16 territories to the south of Burscough towards Ormskirk. Singing males were noted near Newton-le-Willows, Skelmersdale, Roby Mill (three males) and at King's Moss, (two males). Good numbers held territories during the breeding season on Croston and Mawdesley Moss.

**Monthly Peak Counts on the Fylde**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bradshaw Ln Hd	9	6	10	3	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	3
New Lane, Eagland Hill	4	2	8	2	2	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rawcliffe Moss	12	8	5	1	-	-	7	-	3	4	-	56

The table above shows the peak counts at regular feeding sites on the Fylde where in previous years you could get significant numbers in the winter periods. Even though food is being provided, the numbers of birds are well down or completely absent. The species was recorded in only 20 tetrads on the Fylde and only seven singing males were reported.

In the early part of the year, peak counts of flocks in the area were ten at Carr Mill Dam on 1 Jan, 40 at Eccleston on the 6th, up to 29 at Red Cat Lane, Burscough throughout the month and 15 on Halsall Moss on 10 Feb. Due to their scarcity, notable records from the north of the county included seven at Over Kellet in January and one at Millhouses on 5 Feb. A female that was present in a garden at Belmont late in 2010 remained until 19 Jan and the only record from east Lancashire was of a male in Sabden gardens on 6 Feb.

Large post-breeding flock built up around Billinge Hill, St. Helens during August and reached a peak of 40 on 10 Sept, with 30 through September and October. The autumn also brought birds to migration watchpoints, with singles over Seaforth on 25 Sept and 13 Oct, Heysham on 15 & 26 Oct, Thrushgill and Caton Moor. Two birds at Brockholes on 4 Nov was a good record for the site. Numbers in the second winter period were well down once more with the flock of 56 on 15 Dec at Rawcliffe Moss on the Fylde being the only double-figure count submitted.

**ORTOLAN BUNTING\*** *Emberiza hortulana***Vagrant.**

A first-winter bird on rough ground inland of the seawall 100 yards north of the Chatsworth Avenue entrance of Fleetwood Golf Club on 2 Sept was another excellent find for the observer in this area and the Fylde's second in three years (I Gardner). It was only Lancashire's 11th record.

**REED BUNTING** *Emberiza schoeniclus***Common breeding bird and winter visitor. Double passage migrant. Red list (breeding decline).**

Though this species is Red-listed, it is still a common and very widespread one with records from all parts of the county. As the winters were milder this year, there were fewer large concentrations but a more widespread distribution. The Lancaster survey recorded 26 although many were along the coastal strip as usual, whilst in the Fylde there were records from 44 tetrads in the first three months of the year with a peak of 20 at Warton Marsh in February. At least 24 were at Haskayne on 8 Jan and numbers at Mere Sands Wood built up to 18 by March.

Small numbers were present at upland sites and birds intermittently visited garden feeders in the east of the county but the largest numbers were 16 in a Belmont garden on 16 Jan with 18 there on 17 March and 25 at Belmont Reservoir on 5 Feb.

Two early singing males were recorded at Brookside, Oswaldtwistle on 18 Feb as birds started to return to their breeding sites. Due to its status, this species is thoroughly recorded at Lancashire's nature reserves and breeding pairs were estimated to be 81 at MMWWT, 53 at Brockholes Wetland and 18 at Marshside. At least eight pairs nested on Birkdale Green Beach – a real success story for the site. Eight pairs bred around Belmont Reservoir and many more bred on the West Pennine Moors in Juncus and bracken beds. Conversely, only seven sites in east Lancashire reported successful breeding but this must surely be under-recorded. Ringing of 92 birds at Leighton Moss suggested poor productivity but at Middleton NR the productivity of six

pairs was better than previous years. There were nine pairs at Arkholme and another 25 along the Lune. Three pairs bred at Seaforth and at least 16 territories were noted around south Liverpool. At least 20 birds were along Barrow Lane, Newton-le-Willows in late July. The peak count of singing males on the Fylde was just three at Marton Mere.

A steady passage of birds was noted in autumn. Heysham recorded 70 with a peak of 14 on 1 Oct, while Seaforth fared better with peaks of 40 on 1 Oct and 43 on the 13th. Smaller numbers were noted at Fylde watchpoints with a peak of 33 at Fairhaven on 15 Oct.

A roost developed at Billinge Hill during late October, reaching around 30 birds by the 29th. The peak count in east Lancashire was of 40 on grass moorland at Clowbridge Reservoir on 6 Nov and on the Fylde, there were regularly 20-30 on Rawcliffe Moss with 38 there by 31 Dec. A garden in Silverdale played host to a number of birds in the latter part of the year (several ringed with at least one from Leighton Moss) but nowhere near the estimated 14 individuals that visited in the early part of the year. At least twelve were along the shore at Garston on 28 Dec.

## **CORN BUNTING** *Emberiza calandra*

### **Common breeding bird in the south-west and Fylde.**

#### **Monthly Peak Counts on the Fylde**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bradshaw Lane/ SD44C	50	91	73	2	13	1	/	/	/	/	0	7
New Lane, Eagland Hill	51	23	88	1	0	0	/	/	/	/	0	0
Rawcliffe Moss	22	30	13	26	/	/	/	/	10	26	/	22

There were hardly any reports away from the Fylde and south-western mosslands this year. Numbers at the feeding sites on the Fylde were very variable suggesting that they were finding food and shelter elsewhere. Totals were similar to 2010 with peaks of 100 at Pilling Moss on 18 Jan (just west of the Bradshaw Lane feeding site), 91 on wires there on 13 Feb, 101 on wires near Longwood, Pilling Moss on the 24th, and 73 at Bradshaw Lane on 20 March. The other area where Corn Buntings were prevalent was Rawcliffe Moss.

From early May to July, birds were singing at Rawcliffe Moss, Pilling, Bradshaw Lane, Todderstaffe Hall, Cockerham Marsh, Sand Villa, Stalmine Moss, Ridge Farm, Eagland Hill, Copthorne, Salwick, and St. Michael's-on-Wyre, Lytham Moss, Winmarleigh Moss and Newton Marsh.

There followed a dearth of records until mid-October with 25 on Rawcliffe Moss on the 13th and 73 at St. Michael's-on-Wyre on the 30th. Thereafter, numbers were particularly low with just a few double-figure counts from the Fylde. South of the Ribble there were early winter peaks of 95 on Downholland Moss on 25 Jan with 73 still there on 12 March and 62 on Plex Moss on 23 Feb, including one flock of 32 in which many were singing. Approximately 40 were at Fir Tree Farm, King's Moss on 13 April. Counts along Crabtree Lane, Burscough included 49 on 3 Jan, 57 on the 18th and 37 on 3 April and 56 were on Burscough Moss on 3 April. There were 70 at MMWWT on 1 Feb and 63 at Scarisbrick on 20 March.

Sixty-seven were counted on Crabtree Lane, Burscough on 15 May with many on territory. Five were on territory a Hesketh Out Marsh and males were on territory at a variety of sites including Cabin Hill, Farington Moss, Midge Hall, Hutton, Sollom, Rufford, King's Moss, Altcar Moss, Scarisbrick Moss, New Longton, Shirdley Hill and Low Meadows, Burscough. Two were at Crosby Marine Park until the first week of May.

There were no reports from south Liverpool but birds were singing in St. Helens at Rainford and Newton-le-Willows with eleven at the latter site on 25 July. After this period, numbers reported were low, as on the Fylde, with a peak of 20 at Altcar Moss on 17 Nov.

## ESCAPES AND CATEGORY D

### TRUMPETER SWAN *Cygnus buccinator*

The bird that has been present on the Ribble since 2007 remained in the Ribchester area, possibly throughout the year but with definite sightings only on 24 June and 4 July.

### BLACK SWAN *Cygnus atratus*

Records continue to proliferate but once again there was no evidence of even attempted breeding within the county.

One was seen at a number of sites on the outer Lune and in north Fylde and one or two together on either side of the Ribble, mostly on Warton and Banks Marshes, in every month of the year.

Records elsewhere include singles on the Ribble at Ribchester (with the Trumpeter Swan) on 24 June and 4 July, at Myerscough Quarry on 9 April, Seaforth during April to July, at Alston Wetland on 21 Aug, 5 Sept and 4 Dec, Croston Moss (with Whoopers) on 19 Nov and Brockholes on 2-15 Aug and 14-16 Nov.

### CHINESE (SWAN) GOOSE *Anser cygnoides*

The regular bird was again reported at Stanley Park, Blackpool on 6 Sept but was presumably there more often, and two hybrid Greylag crosses were at Nateby on 12-13 Feb with one there on 30 May. Another was on the Lune at Arkholme on 20 Jan.

### BAR-HEADED GOOSE *Anser indicus*

Singles were on the Ribble at Sawley-Grindleton on 10-15 March, at Fairhaven Lake on 14-15 June, Seaforth on 12 June to 22 July, Marshside in late August and early September and Willowgrove on 7 Oct.

Three were on Clifton Marsh in June and two at Leighton Moss on 2 April, Cocker's Dyke on 9 Sept and Lea Marsh on 26 Dec. One by the Ribble at Sawley and Grindleton Sewage Works on 10 & 15 March was almost certainly an escape from a nearby collection.

### SNOW GOOSE *Anser caerulescens*

Three birds from last year moved between the Cloughton/Melling area, Aldcliffe, Leighton Moss and the Eric Morecambe complex with Greylags from 30 Nov to the end of the year.

### GREYLAG x CANADA GOOSE

In the Fylde one was at Copthorne on 25 Feb, two on the Preesall Flashes on 22 March with seven there on 15 May, and three at Stanley Park, Blackpool on 6 Sept with one on Clifton Marsh the same day.

### RED-BREASTED GOOSE *Branta ruficollis*

The usual adult was reported at MMWWT on 23 Jan and from 14 Oct to at least 9 Nov; it was not reported from Knowsley Park/Prescot Reservoirs this year but one at nearby Catchdale Moss on 15 Aug suggests that it continues to summer there amongst the goose menagerie.

### LESSER CANADA GOOSE *Branta hutchinsii*

One was present in the St. Helens area in the second half of the year, being seen on Eccleston Mere on 13 Aug and Carr Mill Dam on 26-28 Sept and 14 Nov.

### EGYPTIAN GOOSE *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

Singles were at Sand Villa on 23 April, Brockholes on 25 Sept and 19 Oct, Fishmoor Reservoir on 12 Nov and Corporation Park, Blackburn on 29 Dec.

**RUDDY SHELDUCK** *Tadorna ferruginea*

Two were at Chipping on 29 May.

**CAPE SHELDUCK x SHELDUCK**

One was on Marton Mere and nearby Stanley Park lake from January until mid-April.

**MUSCOVY DUCK** *Cairina moschata*

A pair was seen with fledged young at Hesketh Park, Southport on 18 Sept, three were on the Preesall Flashes on 31 March, twos at Heasandford Lodge, Burnley in June and at Cliviger Fishponds in July, and one at Cocker's Dyke on 13 Dec.

**WOOD DUCK** *Aix sponsa*

A female on the Barrow Lodges on 28-29 March was pinioned and had presumably been dumped there, while one at Barrowford on 26 Feb appeared to be paired with a Mallard.

**MARbled DUCK** *Marmaronetta angustirostris*

One was at Freckleton Naze on 4 Sept. The identification has been accepted by the BBRC and the record placed in Category D. The bird was also later reported at Hesketh Out Marsh and MMWWT but neither record has been submitted to the BBRC.

**CINNAMON TEAL** *Anas cyanoptera*

A male was at Cabus in the Fylde on 15 May and 2 June.

**WHITE-CHEEKED PINTAIL** *Anas bahamensis*

Two were on Bispham Marsh on 8 July.

**RED-CRESTED POCHARD** *Netta rufina*

One was at Marshside and Southport Marine Lake during January and March, and a pair at Brockholes on 14 Aug.

**PINTAIL x RED-CRESTED POCHARD**

One was at Stanley Park, Blackpool on 6 Feb and Marton Mere on 31 Dec.

**POCHARD x TUFTED DUCK**

Singles were at Myerscough Quarry on 6-8 Feb and Brockholes on 19 April.

**POCHARD x FERRUGINOUS DUCK**

A female was at Brockholes on 6-10 Feb, 9-12 March and from 8 Nov to the end of the year.

**GOLDEN PHEASANT** *Chrysolophus pictus*

One or two were seen at Lytham Hall in late March to early May and one at Shear Bank Close, Blackburn on 22 May.

**REEVES'S PHEASANT** *Syrnaticus reevesii*

Singles were at Hambleton on 9 Jan, Winmarleigh Moss, Stalmine on 3 April and near Heysham Power Station from at least 6 May to the end of the year.

**WILD TURKEY** *Meleagris gallipavo*

Large numbers are still at loose and breeding in the Belmont Plantations with 20 seen on 19 March and two incubating females on nests on 22 May. They are fed by gamekeepers and associate with Pheasants.

Elsewhere, one was in the Pilling area during March.

**INDIAN PEAFOWL** *Pavo cristatus*

The birds at Clitheroe Household Waste Disposal Centre continue to thrive. On 10 Oct there was a male with seven females with two half-grown young. Singles were at Sabden Fold on 20 Jan and Chipping Moss on 24 June and heard in the grounds of Gisburne Park Hospital.

**WHITE STORK** *Ciconia ciconia*

One originating from the collection at Harewood House in West Yorkshire was seen at Pilling on 26 March and Halton on the Lune the following day. One at Lytham Moss and Thornton, Fylde on 18 April was also confirmed as being a ringed escapee, presumably the same bird. Another unringed bird of unknown origin was seen at various Fylde sites on 21-22 April before setting off on a nationwide tour.

**HARRIS'S HAWK** *Parabuteo unicinctus*

A second-hand report was received of a pair breeding in the Litherland/Sefton Village area in 2010 & 2011.

Elsewhere, singles were seen at Gawthorpe on 18 March, Ellerbeck on 26 June, Greenbank Park, Liverpool on 6 Sept, Skitham on 14 Sept and Hambleton on 13 Nov.

**SAKER x GYR FALCON**

One was seen on several sites on the south-west mosses during November.

**GOLDEN EAGLE** *Aquila chrysaetos*

One flew over Stalmine Moss and Leighton Moss on 2 May and was reported again at Leighton on the 8th. But see below.

**EAGLE sp.**

An unidentified eagle was seen over White Coppice on 21 April. Apparently a Steppe Eagle had escaped from Cuerden a couple of days earlier, so it may have been this bird.

**LARGE FALCON**

One identified as a Lanner was seen at Cockerham on 17 Aug and another, identified as a Lanner x Peregrine hybrid at Warton Marsh on 31 Oct to 2 Nov.

**SENEGAL PARROT** *Poicephalus senegalus*

One was seen in Sefton Park, south Liverpool in July and August; it had been seen previously in 2010 but not identified at the time.

**AFRICAN GREY PARROT** *Psittacus erithacus*

One was at Seaforth on 10 July.

**BUDGERIGAR** *Melopsittacus undulatus*

One was at Seaforth on 5 Aug.

**COCKATIEL** *Nymphicus hollandicus*

One was near Southport Hospital on 21 Jan.

**EAGLE OWL** *Bubo bubo*

No reports were received from RSPB about breeding birds in Bowland but it is thought that two pairs nested.

More recent escapees were seen on Downholland Moss during February, around Belmont from late April to late September (preying mainly on Pheasants) and at Thornton (Fylde) on 4 June.

**CANARY** *Serinus canaria*

One was seen in Hunts Cross, south Liverpool on 31 July.

# Lancashire Ringing Report 2011

*Pete Marsh*

As in 2010 there has been a wealth of information available from metal-ringing, colour-marking and indeed satellite data which has meant that this report has had to be quite selective. We have opted for comprehensive detail on a number of species instead of trying to cover everything in the space available and having to resort to general summaries. Apologies if a species you are particularly interested in has been given reduced treatment – please do not hesitate to contact me should you want to see the full range of ringing recoveries for any given species. Please also do not see absence from this report as an indication that ‘we are not interested in that species any more’.

The easiest way to portray the recoveries is on a ‘received between July and July’ basis. Therefore some of the more interesting recoveries relating to 2011 were published last year, notably an Eilat-ringed Lesser Whitethroat and a male Cetti’s Warbler, almost certainly a 1CY when ringed at Leighton Moss in March 2010, which was caught at Farlington Marsh (Hants) in April 2011 and was presumably there and not trapped in summer 2010

Other than Reed Warblers at Leighton Moss and Sand Martins on the Lune, the most prolific series of recoveries came from the two small finches, Lesser Redpoll and Siskin, mainly visiting garden feeders. It is interesting to note the lack of Lesser Redpoll recoveries from Scotland compared to Siskin and this is apparently because they ‘do not visit’ feeders north of the border! The value of darvic rings has been shown with respect to information received from ring-readers in the Coot and Black-headed Gull studies. I can vouch for this, having spent many hours and loaves of bread over the years trying to read worn metal rings from the Communist era on the likes of Latvian and Lithuanian Black-headed Gulls. To repeat the comment made last year, the Coot study will be greatly helped by readers searching obscure ponds and quiet corners of lakes which comprise many of the breeding sites of those remaining in the local area and, secondly, documenting individuals on and around large water bodies during the winter. As is also the case with Lesser Black-backed Gulls, please do not assume that your sighting is of little interest as it was “only ringed up the road”, they may have an interesting history of multiple sightings. Known breeding sites are *always* valuable information in this kind of study and your winter sighting might have been the bird which visited Cornwall!

Thanks to everyone who helped make this ringing report so comprehensive and a tricky selection process. I am sorry I was not able to publish every sighting sent in by members of the public, but please do keep them coming. Special thanks to Stephen Grimshaw, Tony Disley, Bill Aspin, Mike Baron, Mario Chin, Rosie Briggs, Pete Kinsella, Tim Vaughan, John Dempsey, Steve Tomlinson as well as all the ringers and ringing groups: Ian Hartley, North Lancs Ringing Group, Merseyside Ringing Group, South-west Lancs Ringing Group, Chris Batty/Stuart Piner, Fylde Ringing Group, Bob Danson, Kane Brides/Steve Christmas, Dave Sowter, Mark Beaman and Roy Rhodes. Apologies to anyone omitted.

If you find/observe a bird with colour markings and contact the ringers directly, please could you let me have the details at [PMrsh123@aol.com](mailto:PMrsh123@aol.com) as they might not have found their way on the IPMR system and therefore into the BTO summary reports

## BEWICK'S SWAN

AA1197/476

Ringed	Hunovey River, Zavorot Peninsula, RUSSIA	1CY female	08/08/2004
Seen	various DUTCH sites		20/02-13/03/05
Seen	Meggerkoog area, GERMANY		29/02-15/03/08
Seen	Lauwersmeer, NETHERLANDS		09/11-10/11/08
Seen	Suderhoft, GERMANY		02/03/2009
Seen	Noordoostpolder, NETHERLANDS		11/02/2010

Seen	Emsland, then Rendsburg, GERMANY		03/03-16/03/10
Seen	various GERMAN sites		12/02-5/03/11
Seen	Upper Thurnham		04/03/2012
AA1572/BJA			
Ringed	Lovetskiy, RUSSIA	adult female	16/08/2008
Seen	Euximoor Fen, Cambridgeshire		11/01/2009
Seen	Feltwell, Norfolk		14/01/2009
Seen	Bomerkoog, GERMANY		22/02/2009
Seen	Southery Fen, Welney, Norfolk		12/01/2010
Seen	Tenmile Bank, Welney, Norfolk		23/01/2011
Seen	Targele, LATVIA		29/03/2011
Seen	Pampali, LATVIA		05/11/2011
Seen	Upper Thurnham		04/03/2012

## WHOOPER SWAN

The small isolated herd in the Lune Valley held one returning ringed bird (S53) and a new darvic-ringed bird during winter 2011-12 which was eventually read on 04/03/12.

ACT/A8744

Ringed	Isholsvatn, Bardardalur, ICELAND	adult male	24/08/2010
Seen	Derryhowlag Lough, Fermanagh, Northern Ireland		12/01/2011
Seen	Melling area, Lune Valley	at least Dec 2011-Mar 2012	

The most interesting from elsewhere was:

ZZ9116

Ringed	Martin Mere WWT	adult male	15/02/2007
Seen	ICELAND 64 17N 15 14W		03/04/2009
Dead	Pellworm, GERMANY 54 31N 8 38 E		05/12/2011

## PINK-FOOTED GOOSE

A well-travelled bird ringed in Iceland in 2000 was again seen in our region during both winter periods.

Two more recently ringed birds show one which included Norfolk in the repertoire and another which seemed to be mainly based in Scotland with occasional forays into Lancashire:

1428106 & collar

Ringed	Loch of Skene, Aberdeen	adult female	16/02/08
Seen	Martin Mere WWT		16/10/09
Seen	Thurnham, Fylde		14/02/10
Seen	MMWWT		15/02/10
Seen	MMWWT		27/10/11
Seen	Warham, Norfolk		16/12/11
Seen	Downholland Moss		08/02/12

1408052 & collar

Ringed	Loch of Lintrathen, Angus		16/12/07
Seen	Loch of Strathbeg, Aberdeen		20/02/08
Seen	Elgin area, Moray		29-30/03/08
Seen	Loch of Strathbeg		26/09/10
Seen	Pilling		30/01/11
Seen	Southernness, Dumfries & Galloway		12-13/03/11
Seen	Little Crosby, Merseyside		21/01/12
Seen	Downholland Moss		8/02/12

**GREYLAG GOOSE**

The neck-collared bird ringed on Tiree was seen again at Agglesby's Pit, Fylde on 18/11/11, lending some support to the hypothesis that it was a feral Fylde bird which moulted in Scotland on at least one occasion.

**BARNACLE GOOSE**

Two marked birds from a flock of c.40 displaced to Stocks Reservoir on 7/10/11. They later reorientated NW over Cross of Greet and Wray.

## Orange AH

Ringed	Nordenskoldkyster, SVALBARD	nestling male	31/07/2007
Seen	Caerlaverock WWT, Dumfries & Galloway		13-14/04/2010
Seen	Stocks Reservoir		07/10/2011

## Green TPX

Ringed	Ny Aalesund, SVALBARD	adult	18/07/2004
Seen	Caerlaverock WWT, Dumfries & Galloway		28/12/2004
Seen	North Plains Farm RSPB, Cumbria		17/02/2005
Seen	Anthorn Marsh		23/01/2005
Seen	Caerlaverock		04/01/2008
Seen	Caerlaverock		24/01/2011
Seen	Stocks Reservoir		07/10/2011

**SHELDUCK**

## GF35321

Ringed	Martin Mere WWT	adult male	02/12/1997
Dead	Friesland, NETHERLANDS 53 12 N 5 26E		10/12/2011

**WIGEON**

## FH12720

Ringed	Seaton Marsh, Devon	adult female	24/01/2010
Shot	Hornby, Lune Valley		22/10/2011

## 5426297

Ringed	Bakkerswaal, NETHERLANDS 51 53N 4 39E	adult male	16/01/2010
Shot	Warton Marsh, Lytham		02/02/2011

**POCHARD**

## GN11962

Ringed	Slimbridge, Gloucestershire	2CY male	08/02/1999
Caught	Martin Mere		10/02/2011

## GF35500

Ringed	Martin Mere	1CY male	23/11/1999
Caught	Welney, Norfolk		25/11/2008
Shot	Somme, FRANCE 49 59N 1 58E		07/01/2011

**TUFTED DUCK**

Ringed	Sefton Park, Liverpool	2CY male	12/01/2010
Dead	Pelym, Ivdelsky, RUSSIA	3977km ENE	April 2012

Just goes to show that not all bread-eating ducks sit on the same pond all their lives!

**MANX SHEARWATER**

EX61908

Ringed	Copeland Bird Observatory, Northern Ireland	Pullus	06/09/2011
Dead	Cockersand Abbey, Fylde		16/09/2011

The first of a few seabirds coming to grief in gales in September or December 2011/January 2012.

**GANNET**

Birds ringed as nestlings on Ailsa Craig (1992) and Great Saltee (1981) were found dead on Ainsdale beach on 25/9/11 and 9/12/11 respectively.

**CORMORANT**

5164661

Ringed	Castle Craig, North Sutor, Highland	Nestling	12/06/1992
Dead	Seaforth		18/05/2011

Orange CNS

Ringed	Abberton Reservoir, Essex	Nestling	14/5/11
Seen	Seaforth		20-21/8/2011

White Z76

Ringed	Stack Mooar, Isle of Man	Nestling	2011
Seen	Seaforth		4/10/2011

White ZZN

Ringed	Stack Mooar, Isle of Man	Nestling	2011
Seen	Seaforth		29-30/9/2011

Ten birds colour-ringed as nestlings on Puffin Island, Anglesey were seen at Seaforth during 2011. Birds ringed as nestlings on the Isle of Man and Puffin Island were found during the autumn/winter 2011/12 at Carnforth and Arkholme respectively.

**SHAG**

The significant storm-blown influx during December 2011/January 2012 also produced casualties bearing Puffin Island, Anglesey rings at Lytham, Ainsdale and, more unusually, inland at Nether Burrow, Lune Valley. Only one of the Heysham Harbour birds was ringed and that was also from Puffin Island.

**BITTERN**

One ringed as a nestling female at Leighton Moss on 08/05/2000 was still there 10 years and 221 days after ringing on 15/12/10. It was not reported at all in 2011 but was photographed in late spring 2012!

**LITTLE EGRET**

Further evidence of the Welsh colonies being the main source of ringed individuals in the county, specifically Bangor and Newport. A Newport-ringed bird returned to Leighton Moss as an adult, having previously been recorded as a dispersing juvenile in 2009. However, a majority of the birds are not ringed.

**GREAT WHITE EGRET**

## Colour rings

Ringed	Lac de Grand-Lieu, FRANCE	nestling	26/05/2009
Seen	Leighton Moss		08/05/2011

This one-dayer would have been passed off as the unringed bird present at the same time but for the rings!

**SPOONBILL**

8050229

Ringed	Schiermonnikoog, NETHERLANDS	nestling	31/05/2009
Sighted	NETHERLANDS		29/7 & 19/8/09
Sighted	NETHERLANDS		19/5 & 15/6/11
Sighted	Leighton Moss		01/05/2012
Sighted	Holkham, Norfolk		19/05/2012

Presumably not one of the nesting birds at Holkham in 2012.

**RED KITE**

GR29061 &amp; tags

Ringed	Fleet Valley, Galloway	nestling	21/06/2011
Seen	Leighton Moss		16/01/2012

**SPARROWHAWK**

EN77948

Ringed	Crosby, Merseyside	1CY female	13/10/2001
Dead	Llanrwst, Gwynedd		11/04/2011

**OSPREY**

1378113

Ringed	Bassenthwaite, Cumbria	nestling	09/07/2008
Seen	Leighton Moss		19/06/2011

Apparently associated with activities at nearby Foulshaw (Cumbria). Two satellite-tracked birds passed through the area in 2011. *Rothiemurchus* passed through Lancashire on 31/5 (first northbound migration). It spent the summer roaming around Scotland and Northern England, possibly including north Lancashire on 11/6, before migrating south through Lancs on 7/9. *Nimrod* roosted overnight in a copse next to an onion field at Mere Brow on 15-16/4. Full details of these and other movements can be found on Roy Dennis's Highland Foundation for Wildlife site.

**PEREGRINE**

GC05788

Ringed	Thieveley Pike, Lancs	nestling F	30/05/2006
Caught	near Hartside, Borders		01/05/2009
Located	near Hartside, Borders		17/04/2011
Dead	Dun Law Wind Farm, Borders		25/08/2011

GC73395

Ringed	Kielder Forest, Northumberland	nestling F	09/06/2010
Hit by car	Inglewhite, Preston		30/01/2011

**COOT**

GR25454

Ringed	Southport Marine Lake	1CY	20/12/2010
Seen	Killingworth Lake, Tyne and Wear		14/6 & 10/8/11

Long-distance movements to Wiltshire, Cornwall and Nottinghamshire were published last year. For more detail see Kane Brides's blogsite

**OYSTERCATCHER**

2011 recoveries from winter cannon-net catches on Heysham heliport (12/12/08 & 1/2/10) included the following:

FH23152	Upper Sanday, Orkney		08/06/2011
FH23494	Siglufjordur, ICELAND		25/04/2011
FH23506	Oravik, FAEROES		21/05/2011
FH23528	Namsos, NORWAY		29/06/2011

**AVOCET**

A colour-ringed bird which had previously spent all parts of the year in French Departments 44 (Loire-Atlantique) and 56 (Morbihan), following ringing at Bas Boulais in 2008, was present at Leighton Moss from 26/3/12 and apparently nested there .

**RUFF**

DB88484

Ringed	North Duffield, Selby Yorks	ad male	08/02/2008
Seen	Pilling, Lancs		5/12/10 & 7/1/11

This species is scarce in winter north of the Wyre.

**ICELANDIC BLACK-TAILED GODWIT**

Colour rings

Ringed	Langhus, Fljot, ICELAND	age unknown	04/07/2004
Seen	Dee Estuary		04/05/2005
Seen	Leighton Moss		2-4/6/06
Seen	Holbeach, The Wash		12/08/2006
Seen	Leighton Moss		22/12/2006
Seen	Hodbarrow, Millom		28/12/2006
Seen	Leighton Moss		20-21/3/07
Seen	Marshside		24-25/1/08
Seen	Leighton Moss		14/3-22/4/08
Seen	Thurstaston, Dee Estuary		31/1-6/3/09
Seen	Leighton Moss		20/3-25/4/09
Seen	Healing, Grimsby, Lincs		05/12/2009
Seen	Cley, Norfolk		28/03/2010
Seen	Teal Bay, Morecambe		13/10/2011

Colour rings

Ringed	Langhus, Fljot, ICELAND	breeding male	21/06/2011
Seen	Rainham Creek, Kent		13/08/2011
Seen	Leighton Moss		31/03/2012

Colour rings

Ringed	Miklaholtssel, ICELAND	pullus	06/07/2006
Seen	Waterford, Ireland		11/12/2006

Seen	Myrarsysla, ICELAND		25/04/2011
Seen	Leighton Moss		31/03/2012

In addition, many movements between the Dee, Merseyside, Morecambe Bay and Iceland. Some involving France and Portugal were published in the 2010 report

## BLACK-HEADED GULL

Darvic-ringed birds from Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Poland were seen at one or more of the regular ring-reading sites at Fairhaven, Preston Docks, Seaforth and Prescot Reservoirs.

The most distant recoveries both involved Lithuania:

EX68906 & darvic

Ringed	Preston Docks	adult	08/03/2011
Seen	Utena, LITHUANIA		5/4 & 6/5/11
Seen	Preston Docks		11/12/2011

Kaunas HA13171 & darvic

Ringed	Klaipeda-Siaure, LITHUANIA	breeding male	31/03/2010
Seen	Klaipeda-Siaure, LITHUANIA		28/04/2010
Seen	Preesall Sands		10/02/2011
Seen	Klaipeda-Siaure, LITHUANIA	nesting	12/4-25/5/11
Seen	Seaforth		08/09/2011
Seen	Klaipeda-Siaure, LITHUANIA		back at colony in 2012

EY02607 & darvic

Ringed	Southport	adult	10/02/2012
Seen	Orphir, Orkney		21/05/2012

Presumably the breeding location and the most unusual movement recorded.

## MEDITERRANEAN GULL

5352140 Helgoland & darvic

Ringed	Hamburg, GERMANY	nestling	01/07/2011
Seen	Dublin coastal sites		2/3-22/5/12
Seen	Seaforth		09/06/2012

FN16022 & darvic

Ringed	Skoki-Duze, Wroclawek, POLAND	adult	20/05/2003
Seen	Porth Neigwl, Gwynedd		09/09/2006
Seen	Aberdaron, Gwynedd		11/10/2006
Seen	Old Moor, Barnsley, Yorks		01/07/2008
Seen	Cley, Norfolk		06/04/2010
Seen	Prescot Reservoirs		07/03/2011
Seen	Titchwell, Norfolk		02/04/2011

Note that the second bird's wintering area is unknown. Other sightings included birds ringed in France, Holland and Poland (at Seaforth) and France, Germany, Czech Republic (at Heysham)

## COMMON GULL

Helgoland 5347116 & darvic

Ringed	Weissenhauser Strand, GERMANY	adult	06/04/2006
Seen	Crosby		18/11/2011

## LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL

6135519 & darvic

Ringed	Gomecello, Salamanca, SPAIN	adult	08/12/2010
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Seen	Zamora, Spain		14/12/2010
Seen	Madrid, Spain		15/01/2011
Seen	Seaforth		31/07/2011

Plenty of British-ringed ones heading to and from Iberia but this is the first ringed there to be seen locally

FP77906 & Darvic

Ringed	Stoke Orchard landfill, Gloucester	adult	26/03/2005
Seen	Stoke Orchard landfill, Gloucester		10/11/2005
Seen	Cadiz, SPAIN		29/11/2005
Seen	Stoke Orchard landfill, Gloucester		30/10/2006
Seen	Cadiz, SPAIN		26/11-10/12/07
Seen	Stoke Orchard landfill, Gloucester		26/10-4/11/09
Seen	Parsonage Reservoir, east Lincs		18/08/2011

An adult with a well-established pattern. Bowland breeding bird?

## HERRING GULL

GF57108

Ringed	King's Lynn, Norfolk	2CY	19/03/2011
Seen	Seaforth		03/04/2011

GR06139

Ringed	Gloucester landfill site	2CY	22/05/2010
Seen	Gloucester landfill site		1/11 & 2/12/10
Seen	Seaforth		03/08/2011

The most distant movements in 2011.

## KITTIWAKE

Paris FX22666 + CR

Ringed	Pointe du Raz, Finistere, FRANCE	nestling	15/07/2011
Seen	Cabin Hill NNR		06/08/2012

## SANDWICH TERN

The origin/other ringing details of three read at Seaforth on 23/4/11 were as follows:

DB19186	Lady's Island Lake, Wexford, Ireland	nestling	15/06/2000
DK35026	Lady's Island's Lake, Wexford, Ireland	nestling	16/06/1990
DK39116	Ogilby, Down, Northern Ireland	nestling	10/06/1988
also caught	Rue Point, Isle of Man	adult	08/08/1994

DE10499 + CR

Ringed	Sands of Forvie NNR, Aberdeenshire	nestling	15/06/2010
Seen	Cabin Hill NNR		06/08/2012

## COMMON TERN

Colour rings

Ringed	Little Marlow Gravel Pits, Bucks	nestling	2007
Seen	Seaforth		18/07/2011

SV43533 + CR

Ringed	Doffcocker Lodge, Bolton	nestling	12/06/2009
Seen	Seaforth		23/06/2011

One ringed by the Menai bridge, Anglesey in 1991 and seen regularly at Seaforth regularly since 1995 was present there on 5/6/11.

## **GUILLEMOT**

Birds ringed as nestlings on Puffin Island, Anglesey on 18/06/11 were found long dead at Ainsdale on 9/10/11 (72km ENE) and similarly at Hest Bank on 25/08/11 (119km NE)

## **BARN OWL**

GF90480

Ringed	Arkholme, Lune Valley	nestling	27/06/2011
Dead	Penrith, Cumbria		20/10/2011

## **LONG-EARED OWL**

AJ58519

Ringed	Farnley Lake, N Yorks	nestling	18/05/2008
Long dead	Gillmoss (Fazakerley), Liverpool		20/02/2011

Possibly the most unexpected recovery in this report with British Long-eared Owls regarded as being quite sedentary

## **GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER**

LB13751

Ringed	Rishton, near Blackburn	1CY	18/06/2011
Leg only	Malpass, Cheshire		21/05/2012

Difficult to completely rule out 'artificial' transportation here (see Treecreeper!)

## **GOLDCREST**

DKN020

Ringed	Calf of Man	1CY male	05/09/2011
Hit glass	Penwortham, Preston		21/09/2011

A bird ringed at Heysham on 12/10/10 as part of an influx of presumed continental migrants, which was subsequently caught at Doncaster on 20/11/10, was retrapped there on 22/01/11, therefore obviously wintering.

## **COAL TIT**

L333947

Ringed	Heysham	1CY	23/09/2010
Caught	Topthorn Barn, Cumbria		28/01/2012

Y555028

Ringed	Thornton, Merseyside	1CY	15/12/2011
Caught	South Lancaster		04/03/2012

L771889

Ringed	Higher Thrushgill plantation	juvenile	16/06/2012
Caught	Higher Greenfield, N Yorks		15/01/2012

In contrast to the unremarkable under 20km movements by Blue and Great Tit. The last shows a dispersal of a young bird from its upland natal site to presumed wintering site. The direction may seem odd but does follow the woodland habitat corridor which is not available to the south or south-west from Thrushgill.

**SAND MARTIN**

6452590			
Ringed	Lentilles, FRANCE	1CY	17/08/2010
Caught	Alston Reservoir		26/07/2011
HA6899			
Ringed	Zaragoza, SPAIN	1CY male	21/09/2008
Caught	Nether Burrow, Lune Valley		20/06/2011
L597913			
Ringed	Winterset Reservoir, Wakefield, Yorks	Juvenile	24/06/2011
Caught	Whittington, River Lune		29/06/2011
L501651			
Ringed	Leighton Moss	1CY	05/09/2010
Caught	Langa Quarry, Argyll and Bute		28/06/2011

Also plenty of routine recoveries to and from France and the English south coast, especially Icklesham, Sussex. The selected recoveries show an example from the successful artificial Sand Martin bank at Alston, the longest movement in the period, a very fast "reverse dispersal" and a typical origin for a late (for this species) autumn passage bird.

**SWALLOW**

V971589			
Ringed	Moss House Farm, Out Rawcliffe	Juv female	08/08/2009
Caught	Verbania, ITALY 45 56N 8 30E		27/04/2010

In addition, the only Swallow caught at Heysham had been ringed at Icklesham and one ringed as a nestling near Garstang was also caught at this major south coast ringing station.

**HOUSE MARTIN**

L072510			
Ringed	Sandwich Bay Estate	1CY	16/09/2010
Caught	Fazakerley, Liverpool		05/06/2011
L568965			
Ringed	Icklesham, Sussex	1CY	25/09/2010
Caught	Fazakerley, Liverpool		15/05/2011

**BLACKCAP**

L161114			
Ringed	Heysham	Juv M	16/08/2010
Caught	Catterick Garrison, North Yorks		03/04/2011
L405255			
Ringed	Runcorn, Cheshire	1CY M	05/09/2010
Caught	Weeton Camp, Fylde		11/06/2011

As suggested by the recovery location, the first may be an example of early migration of a bird still in juvenile plumage when caught at Heysham.

**SEDGE WARBLER**

Birds ringed at Leighton Moss were caught on passage in autumn 2011 in Belgium, France (2), Icklesham (Sussex), Orfordness (Suffolk) and Titchfield Haven (Hants)

Y223110

Ringed	Belvide Reservoir, Staffs	1CY	23/07/2011
Caught	Middleton NR, Heysham		18/08/2011

'Reverse migration' by juveniles is not a regular feature of this species.

6039331

Ringed	Donges, Loire-Atlantique, FRANCE	1CY male	03/08/2009
Caught	Fleetwood Marsh		30/07/2011

L789762

Ringed	Fulwood Marsh, Rimrose Valley, Merseyside	juv	19/07/2011
Caught	Gunwalloe, Cornwall		14/08/2011

**REED WARBLER**

Birds involving the following places were caught during the normal passage periods to and from Leighton Moss: Portugal (2), Dorset, France (3), Belgium, Icklesham (Sussex) (2).

The south of the region produced:

V926006

Ringed	Arreton, Isle of Wight	1CY	22/08/2008
Caught	Rimrose Valley, Merseyside		22/07/2011

L912509

Ringed	Thatcham Marsh, Berkshire	adult	14/05/2011
Caught	Brookvale LNR, Rimrose Valley, Merseyside		10/07/2011

L789800

Ringed	Fulwood Marsh, Rimrose Valley, Merseyside	1CY	23/07/2011
Caught	Uskmouth, Newport, Gwent		21/08/2011

X499683

Ringed	Marston Sewage Farm, Lincs	1CY male	16/08/2009
Caught	Brookvale LNR, Rimrose Valley, Merseyside		12/07/2011

6275984

Ringed	Charente Maritime, FRANCE 45 56N 0 56W	ad female	15/08/2010
Caught	Myerscough, Lancs		28/6 & 1/7/11

**TREECREEPER**

DED435

Ringed	Heysham	unaged	13/10/2011
Dead	High Bentham, North Yorks		09/03/2012

This species is a rather scarce autumnal dispersive species at Heysham, so this sort of movement might be reasonable. However, it was found in a radiator grille! Nevertheless, the work schedule of the van at the time took it no nearer to Heysham than Kirkby Lonsdale (c20km)!

**STARLING**

KV76449

Ringed	Ventes Ragas, LITHUANIA	juv	16/07/2010
Dead	Leighton Moss		01/01/2011

LA89723			
Ringed	Knott End	Full grown	18/02/2008
Dead (cat)	Pagarodna, BELARUS		25/07/2011

**BLACKBIRD**

LA26829			
Ringed	Thornton, Merseyside	adult female	14/03/2011
Fresh dead	Findhorn, Grampian		20/12/2011
CT07139			
Ringed	Rossall School, Fleetwood	2CY male	16/03/2010
Caught	Calf of Man		07/11/2011

**REDWING**

RT99003			
Ringed	Middleton NR, Heysham	1CY	12/10/2010
Shot	Alto Alentejo, PORTUGAL 38 48N 7 27 W		09/01/2011

**PIED FLYCATCHER**

V979308			
Ringed	Ladybower Reservoir, Derbyshire	nestling	12/06/2009
Caught	Outhwaite Wood, Roeburndale		18/05/2011

The longest movement reported in 2011.

**GREY WAGTAIL**

Y153813 & CRs			
Ringed	Heysham	1CY	31/08/2011
Caught	Calne sewage works, Wiltshire		10/12/2011

**MEADOW PIPIT**

L742790			
Ringed	Sowley Pond, Hants	1CY	15/10/2011
Caught	Heysham		24/03/2012

**CHAFFINCH**

First-calendar-year females ringed at Street House, Claughton, Garstang on 30/12/10 and 4/9/11 were caught again on the Calf of Man on 11/10/11 and 23/10/11 respectively. The first was obviously wintering in Lancs in 2010/11, but was it heading for Ireland in 2011/12? Where was their natal area (4/9 a little early for a continental bird?)?

**GREENFINCH**

TP09214			
Ringed	Over Kellet, Lancs	2CY male	06/01/2011
Drowned	Wigton, Cumbria		22/07/2011

Recoveries in NW Cumbria are unusual.

**GOLDFINCH**

L215158			
Ringed	Calf of Man	2CY female	17/05/2011
Caught	Over Kellet		10/11/2011

**SISKIN**

Most of the recoveries traced for this period involved movements to and from breeding season presence in Scotland. Over Kellet (north Lancs) saw birds to/from Lairg (445km), Achrae (350km), D & G (138km) and Peebles (173km). Birds ringed at Clayton Brook in March 2011 and Garstang in February 2011 were both caught together at Tarbet, Loch Lomond on 22/6/11.

X700463

Ringed	Brandon, Suffolk	2CY male	19/03/2011
Caught	Higher Thrushgill plantation		09/07/2011

Almost certainly breeding at Thrushgill (but see next recovery for a slight doubt)

L818963

Ringed	Lockerbie, Dumfries & Galloway	2CY male	04/04/2011
Caught	Higher Thrushgill plantation		22/07/2011

This appeared during a very early influx of presumed migrants evident from mid-month. We can surely expect more breeding season recoveries.

**LINNET**

Ringed	Point of Ayre, Isle of Man	1CY male	25/09/2010
Caught	Rossall School, Fleetwood		15/04/2011

**TWITE**

There were seven movements between the Mull of Kintyre and Heysham as a result of the ringing station at Machrihanish. Other recoveries following the established connection with western Scottish sites were from Sanda Island and Iona. Some recoveries from Heysham did not, however, follow the usual pattern:

Ringed	Heysham north harbour wall	unknown	early 2011
Seen	Musselburgh, Edinburgh		14/11/2011
Seen	Long Nanny, Beadnell, Northumberland	03/12/2011	

This was accompanying at least one bird ringed at Clachtoll, north of Lochinver. Most of the Clachtoll birds appear to winter on the east coast or even Orkney, but at least one has been wintering at Heysham (see 2010 report). The leg injury was definitely not acquired during the ringing operation at Heysham

V240499

Ringed	Heysham	1CY female	07/11/2010
Caught	Nant Francon, Bethesda, North Wales		16/04/2011

This is the feeding station for the small North Wales breeding population, but there is no definite evidence that this bird was nesting there.

Ringed	Heysham	not known	autumn 2010
Seen	Swales Moor, West Yorkshire		28/2-2/3/11

A lone bird accompanying Linnets.

**LESSER REDPOLL**

Another flood of recoveries and the following are limited to movements over 100km.

L583835

Ringed	Rossall School, Fleetwood	2CY male	10/04/2011
Caught	Pett Level, Sussex		19/10/2011

L713671

Ringed	Low Moor, Clitheroe	2CY	11/02/2011
Seen	Isle of Mull		29/04/2011

L458922			
Ringed	Sandwich Bay, Kent	1CY	15/10/2011
Caught	Heysham		02/05/2012
L765213			
Ringed	Birches Valley Forestry, Staffs	2CY	13/03/2011
Caught	Over Kellet		02/04/2011
L771690			
Ringed	Newton-in-Bowland, Lancs	2CY	06/08/2011
Caught	Dukes Warren, Surrey		09/01/2012
L770572			
Ringed	Newton-in-Bowland, Lancs	2CY	11/04/2011
Caught	Culford School, Suffolk		25/02/2012

## REED BUNTING

L445006			
Ringed	Middleton NR, Heysham	1CY	08/09/2010
Caught	Oxmoor Wood, Cheshire		13/10/2011
Y332553			
Ringed	Leighton Moss	1CY male	19/09/2011
Caught	Betley Mere, Staffs		10/01/2012

## YELLOWHAMMER

V971972			
Ringed	Moss House farm, Out Rawcliffe	2CY female	23/01/2010
Long dead	Stribers, nr Cark, Cumbria		20/04/2011

Fits in with the occasional vis mig bird over the likes of Heysham, the emphasis these days being on 'occasional'.

## Abbreviations used in the text

1S - first-summer, 1W - first-winter, and so on.

GC	Golf Course	ML	Marine Lake
GP	Gravel Pit	Qry	Quarry
LNR	Local Nature Reserve	SW	Sewage Works
NR	Nature Reserve	Res	Reservoir
NNR	National Nature Reserve		

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

## FIRSTS FOR LANCASHIRE

### **SOLITARY SANDPIPER, HUMBLESCOUGH FARM, NATEBY 2 to 6 OCTOBER 2011**

*Stuart Piner*

I had arrived at a vantage point overlooking a flood at Humblescough Farm, Nateby to conduct a dawn Pink-footed Goose count when in the half-light I noticed a lone wader on the muddy edges of the flood, which I could not immediately identify due to the poor light and viewing distance of approximately 370m.

The bird's posture reminded me of Pectoral Sandpiper but as soon as I could make out detail on the wader's breast, this was eliminated. Common Sandpiper crossed my mind until the bird flapped its wings, revealing Green Sandpiper-like upper and underwings, and a dark line down the rump and tail. I realised that this combination of features could only be shown by one species, Solitary Sandpiper, so I immediately telephoned Chris Batty and asked him to join me as soon as possible.

While I was confident that my eyes were not deceiving me, without the option of getting closer to the bird and due to the fact that the light seemed to be taking forever to improve, I realised that my options for confirming the finer plumage details that separate Solitary and Green Sandpiper were limited.

As soon as Chris had videoed the bird's rump and tail pattern we released the news of Lancashire's first Solitary Sandpiper. Humblescough Farm owner Robert Cornthwaite kindly agreed to convert a field into a temporary car park and he allowed birders to view the Solitary Sandpiper from his land, which significantly reduced the viewing distance.

The closer views allowed a number of subtle plumage and structural details to be noted which help to separate the species from Green Sandpiper. These included:

- longer primary projection beyond the tertials creating a more attenuated rear end (shorter in Green).
- obvious eye-ring (less distinct in Green, contrasting less with a more obvious supercilium).
- dark barring on vent and rear flank sides (absent in Green).
- outer tail feather barred (unbarred in Green).
- underside of tail barred (unbarred in Green).
- narrower wings than Green Sandpiper.
- longer-legged than Green Sandpiper.
- barred upper flanks (usually absent in Green).

The brown tones and neat, subtle spotting on the upperparts aged the bird as a juvenile.

The Solitary Sandpiper was last seen on the flood at Humblescough Farm on 6 October. During its five day stay it was enjoyed by hundreds of birders and all money raised will be used to fund conservation projects on the farm.

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### **YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO, LIVERPOOL, 12 OCTOBER 2011**

*Steve White*

I was more than a little surprised to receive an email marked 'Yellow-billed Cuckoo' from Joe Harris, a name I didn't recognise but who turned out to work for RSPB in Oxfordshire. He explained that a friend of a friend, Claire Shepherd, worked for the Peoples Dispensary for Sick Animals in Huyton and that someone had brought in a bird that they couldn't identify.

It had suffered head injuries and was in a poor condition although still alive, but the vets decided that it would be best to euthanize it. This was done and the corpse was incinerated. That could well have been the end of the story but Claire took some pictures and sent them by phone to Joe, knowing that he worked for RSPB. He then identified the bird as a Yellow-billed Cuckoo but was unable to download the photographs from his phone.

After a frustrating day's wait Joe managed to email me the pictures and any remaining scepticism was quickly dispelled. Judging by the rather brown upperpart colouration and the indistinct pattern on the undertail, it was reasonably confidently identified as a juvenile.

It was not possible to trace the finder and all we know is that it was found in a garden somewhere in south Liverpool or Knowsley. Judging by the head injuries it seems possible that it had collided with a window; it was described by vets as being in an extremely emaciated state. Quite how it arrived on Merseyside so far from the coast – whether under its own power (somehow avoiding Ireland) or with ship-assistance – can only be guessed at. The record has been accepted by the BBRC and is the first of this species in North-West England, although there is a record in Wirral of the even rarer Black-billed Cuckoo.

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## **IBERIAN CHIFFCHAFF, DEVONSHIRE ROAD ROCK GARDENS, BLACKPOOL, 3 to 4 MAY 2011**

*David McGrath*

Whilst walking my dog on my regular route through Regency Gardens housing estate and into Devonshire Road Rock Gardens, Bispham, Blackpool on 3 May 2011 I heard an unfamiliar song which started out like a Chiffchaff that had forgotten the 'chaff' and ended with a faster flurry of similar notes. I don't normally carry optics at this time of the morning but I do take a notebook and record the morning's highlights for my blog. My entry for that day shows Blackcaps, Lesser Whitethroat and a bird only recorded as song, written as 'chiff chiff chiff chiff chiff chiffer chiffer chiffer'.

Uncertain what the bird was, I listened to recordings of Iberian Chiffchaff song and found them to be very similar to what I had heard.

The following morning I was able to get a few recordings on my camera, and with my suspicions further aroused I was able to email one of my shorter video recordings to Chris Batty to see what he thought; he confirmed my suspicions and within an hour we were both stood listening to the bird singing as it flitted around the bushes at head height but not really showing well. An hour before we were joined by Maurice Jones and Stewart Meredith and both agreed that the bird they could hear was Iberian Chiffchaff.

A little 'pishing' from CB encouraged the bird to make a low down-slurred, somewhat Bullfinch-like 'heeu' call a couple of times.

Eventually it was seen well by many birders. Its most salient feature was its Wood Warbler-like 'face', with pronounced pale lemony supercilium and dark eye-stripe. The bill had a pale lower mandible which in some views was very obvious. The legs were much paler than a collybita Chiffchaff's being mid- to dark brown rather than almost black. The yellow hues on the upper breast were variably seen depending on how the feathers were held and the angle of the light. During a display song flight I saw a good contrast between the greener, plumped up, rump and the plain khaki-brown of the back and wings. From below the paleness of the lower breast and belly was noted as being more contrasty than other Chiffchaffs.

The record has been accepted by the BBRC.

## **'CASPIAN' REED WARBLER, JENNY BROWN'S POINT**

**11 DECEMBER, 2011**

The circumstances in which the bird found by Betty and Dave Finnegan are described in the systematic list, but sub-specific identification was dependent upon the genetic analysis carried out by Martin Collinson, a summary of which follows. The record has been submitted to the BBRC.

"DNA was extracted from contour feathers of this unidentified *Acrocephalus* warbler. The cytochrome-b gene was amplified and sequenced using the H16065 and L14993 PCR primers as described in Helbig and Seibold (1999). 1080 bp were sequenced, forward and reverse, and verified manually by visual inspection of the sequence files using FinchTV (<http://www.geospiza.com/Products/finchtv.shtml>).

BLAST search using this sequence showed that the individual was a Eurasian/African Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* – the sequence was 96.0-99.3% similar to 17 individuals in the database from all subspecies of *A. scirpaceus* (further detail below), 92% similar to Marsh Warbler *A. palustris*, 91% similar to Clamorous Reed Warbler *A. stentoreus*, 90% similar to Blyth's Reed Warbler *A. dumetorum*, Great Reed Warbler *A. arundinaceus*, Blunt-winged Warbler *A. concinens*, Large-billed Reed Warbler *A. orinus*, Oriental Reed Warbler *A. orientalis*, Manchurian Reed Warbler *A. tangorum* and Black-browed Reed Warbler *A. bistrigiceps*. Taxonomy follows that explained in Parkin et al. (2004).

In the Genbank and EMBL databases there are currently 21 deposited cytb sequences for *A. scirpaceus*, of all four subspecies: nominate (6 individuals), *fuscus* (6 individuals), *avicenniae* (3 individuals), *baeticatus* (5 individuals) and 1 individual from Israel of unstated subspecies). The Jenny Brown's Point bird was not identical to any of these birds, which probably shows that Eurasian Reed Warbler has been poorly sampled genetically and that other haplotypes remain to be discovered. The bird was most similar to two *A. s. fuscus* sequenced by Helbig and Seibold (1999) that had been sampled in Israel (March 1994) and on migration (November) at Ngulia, Kenya: accession numbers AJ004771 ('haplotype 1') and AJ004772 ('haplotype 2'). The Jenny Brown's Point bird was 99.3% identical to haplotype 1 (1018/1025 identical base pairs) and 99.2% identical to haplotype 2 (1017/1025 identical base pairs). Haplotypes 1 and 2 themselves differ by 1.5%, making the Jenny Brown's Point bird genetically intermediate between those 2 *fuscus* and clearly placing it within this *fuscus* clade.

The Jenny Brown's Point bird was 96.6-98.8% identical to the nominate birds, 97.3-98.6% identical to *avicenniae* and 95.9-98.0% identical to *baeticatus*. These are high similarities, but represent at least an extra 4-15 bp change compared to the comparisons of the Jenny Brown's Point birds with *fuscus* haplotypes 1 and 2.

The other four *fuscus* sequences in the EMBL database were sampled in Kenya (1) or on breeding grounds in Kazakhstan (3) and are described in Leisler et al. (1997). They are much more divergent from the Jenny Brown's Point bird (96.9-97.5% identical) and the *fuscus* haplotypes 1 and 2. Leisler et al (1997) found *fuscus* to be an outgroup to the other subspecies in *A. scirpaceus*. The discrepancy between the data in Leisler et al. (1997) and Helbig and Seibold (1999) has never been resolved, but it seems most likely that there is considerable genetic variation within *fuscus*, consistent with a degree of isolation between populations with its fragmented range. For example, further sampling across the breeding range may reveal that Turkish, Middle East/Arabian and Asian populations of *fuscus* are genetically divergent.

Because no voucher specimens were kept, the identity of the *fuscus* sequenced by Helbig and Seibold cannot be verified, but it is unlikely that two mistakes were made, and neither *fuscus* haplotype 1 nor haplotype 2 is assignable to nominate *scirpaceus* in any case.

More genetic study of *A. scirpaceus* would be valuable and we cannot discount the possibility of further surprises that would change our understanding of the genetics of Eurasian Reed

Warbler subspecies and their relationships with each other. However, on current knowledge, the Jenny Brown's Point bird can be identified genetically as a 'Caspian' Reed Warbler *A. s. fuscus*, which would be new to Britain."

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## **SHORT-TOED LARK, FLEETWOOD MARSH NATURE PARK, 24 to 25 APRIL 2011**

Fleetwood birder Ian Gardner discovered a Short-toed Lark on the model airstrip at Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park in the early evening of 24. The bird remained on show throughout the evening and the following day, but was not seen subsequently.

The identification was straightforward; the pale, sandy plumage tones instantly drew attention to the bird, whilst the weakly marked breast with just a fine black 'bar' on the upper breast (lacking bold streaking), very short primary projection beyond the tertials and chunky bill eliminated Skylark and Lesser Short-toed Lark.

Britain experienced an exceptional heat wave in late April 2011; the month was dominated by high pressure with a maximum temperature of 24°C and mean temperature of 17°C recorded in Blackpool between 17 - 23 April. Light easterly and south-easterly winds prevailed throughout 21st and 22nd April, before swinging to the west and north-west on 23rd.

24 April produced a fine selection of southern and eastern rarities and scarcities in Britain in addition to the Short-toed Lark in Fleetwood, including a Citrine Wagtail in Norfolk, Collared Pratincole in East Yorkshire, Savi's Warbler in Devon, Black Stork in Derbyshire, Black Kite in Kent, and Subalpine Warblers in Devon, Dorset and the Shetland Isles. Earlier in the month Short-toed Larks had been discovered in Cornwall and Dorset.

Following the first in 1841, there were over 400 British records of Short-toed Lark by 1993, when it was removed from the British Birds Rarities Committee List. Although records have been widespread, the species remains rare in the north-west, but with several spring records on the North Wales coast in Wirral on several occasions its occurrence in Lancashire has long been predicted.

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## **ARTICLE**

### **AERIAL SURVEY: A NEW METHOD FOR MONITORING THE BLACK-HEADED GULL COLONY AT BELMONT RESERVOIR**

*SJ Martin*

The Black-headed Gull colony on the 2.3ha island at Belmont Reservoir has been monitored annually for more than a decade. It has grown rapidly in recent years, becoming the largest inland colony in Britain in 2009 and holding an estimated 5500 pairs in 2010.

Land-based counts at distance by telescope of the colony have been undertaken annually since 1995. However, due to the unprecedented growth and spread of the gullery in recent years, coupled with increasing vegetation height, it has been considered that since 2008 the counts were becoming less accurate as some areas of the colony are not now wholly visible.

Land-based sample quadrat surveys of the colony were considered but discounted as it was considered that the time needed to survey the number of quadrats required would inflict an excessive amount of disturbance on the gullery.

Consultation with JNCC's Seabird Monitoring Team suggested that an aerial photographic survey of a type that had been successfully carried out on gannetries and a Black-headed gullery in Scotland could prove successful.

The average date for the land-based survey over the last four years has been 10 May, driven by the need to have as unimpaired vision of the colony as possible as vegetation growth severely restricts viewing by mid-May. With the peak laying time at Belmont usually around the third week in April and peak hatching time in mid-May, the 10 May date is considered ideal.

In 2011 the colony was accessed by boat on 3 May (the day before the aerial survey) when it was assessed that some 90-95% of nests contained eggs, with only one nest located containing young. As it was clear that the vegetation height was well in advance for the date and potentially was already restricting vision in some areas, it was decided that the aerial survey should be undertaken as soon as practicable despite the date being nearly a week earlier than favoured.

The light aircraft used for the survey was a 4-seat Cessna 172 from Barton Aerodrome on the outskirts of Manchester, and photographs were taken through the perspex side windows of the aircraft using 50mm and 16-35mm lenses.

Four photographs gave the necessary coverage of the gullery and these were examined, with individual white 'marks', taken as indicating AON's (apparently occupied nests).

It was thought that count accuracy could be compromised by the numbers of flying, standing and loafing birds within the colony. However, flying birds were easily visible on the images and birds in known loafing/club areas were also discounted from the counts. Some areas that were visible from land were checked against the aerial survey, with the numbers of birds counted found to be highly consistent between the two methods.

The resulting count of 6738 apparently occupied nests in 2011 is therefore a far more accurate assessment of the colony size than those obtained from land in 2009 and 2010.

The 2011 figures represent more than 5% of the UK Black-headed Gull population, perhaps rather more as several large colonies are known to be in decline. Belmont is now among the largest, both coastal and inland, Black-headed Gull colonies in the UK along with that at Poole Harbour (6,532 pairs in 2008) and possibly Bemersyde (c.6,000 pairs in 2004, but no more recent update available).

Whilst the population total obtained by this survey would indicate a substantial increase on the 5500 pairs estimated in 2010, in reality this increase is highly unlikely to have been of this magnitude and is merely a function of the differing survey methods employed.

It is hoped that repeat aerial surveys can be commissioned in future years with the possibility of using a camera that is external to the aircraft needing to be investigated to obtain the maximum possible detail on the images. A future objective could be to obtain images that are of sufficient detail to allow for the recognition of Mediterranean Gulls; although this will probably not be achievable without the use of additional photographs taken with long lenses of those parts of the colony favoured by the species.

## **Acknowledgements**

Thanks to the following for the assistance and advice with the survey and report:-

Ian Harper (United Utilities), David Price, Eric Isaac, Steve Matthews, Roy Rhodes, Tim Melling (RSPB), Roddy Mavor (JNCC Seabird Monitoring Team), Matt Parsons (JNCC Seabird Monitoring Team) and United Utilities plc who commissioned this survey.

## **Reference**

Martin, S J (2007) The fall and rise of the Belmont gullery: A tale of past persecution, a recent population explosion and a conservation dilemma. Lancashire Bird Report 2006.

## EARLIEST & LATEST MIGRANT DATES

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. Records of presumed over-wintering and sickly birds have been omitted.

The table summarises the following information: earliest spring arrival and latest autumn records in 2010, earliest recorded spring and latest recorded autumn records, average (mean) earliest arrival and latest departure dates and trends for Earlier or Later arrival or departure where these are statistically significant between 1978 and 2011. (/ = no significant trend).

	Spring				Autumn			
	2011	Earliest	Mean	Trend	2011	Latest	Mean	Trend
Garganey	7/4	24/2/95	30/3	/	7/10			
Osprey	7/3	4/3/05	1/4	E	10/10	7/11/05	11/10	/
LRP	15/3	8/3/10	25/3	E	11/9	19/10/76	10/9	/
Dotterel	17/4	29/3/89	25/4	/				
Whimbrel	9/4	11/3/78	8/4	/	2/11	6/11/88	3/10	/
Common Sandpiper	18/3	18/3/11	5/4	E	7/10	29/10/77	13/10	/
Wood Sandpiper	22/4	14/4/83	3/5	/	27/8	28/10/78	17/9	/
Little Tern	29/4	13/4/91	25/4	/	7/9	3/10/03	15/9	/
Black Tern	22/4	11/4/80	30/4	/	31/10	12/11/00	11/10	/
Sandwich Tern	27/3	13/3/90	27/3	/	11/10	2/12/94	16/10	/
Common Tern	15/4	30/3/07	12/4	/	24/9	17/11/77	20/10	E
Arctic Tern	18/4	1/4/94	17/4	/	18/11	18/11/11	11/10	/
Cuckoo	15/4	23/3/00	16/4	/	4/9	18/10/09	1/9	/
Swift	15/4	1/4/04	17/4	E	18/9	4/12/63	11/10	/
Sand Martin	11/3	24/2/90	11/3	/	29/9	13/10/72	4/10	/
Swallow	17/3	10/3/97	25/3	E	30/11	31/12/86	20/11	L
House Martin	21/3	17/3/63	2/4	E	16/10	31/12/81	1/11	E
Ring Ouzel	25/3	11/3/99	22/3	E	21/10	11/12/00	3/11	/
Redstart	9/4	28/3/68	10/4	/	19/10	10/11/82	8/10	E
Whinchat	15/4	20/3/76	18/4	L	16/10	12/11/79	15/10	E
Wheatear	13/3	26/2/03	12/3	/	27/11	27/11/11	1/11	/
Yellow Wagtail	9/4	24/3/96	9/4	/	22/10	11/11/95	9/10	/
Tree Pipit	6/4	17/3/57	6/4	/	15/9	18/10/67	30/9	/
Wood Warbler	21/4	14/4/79	23/4	/	29/8	26/9/67		
Willow Warbler	19/3	19/3/90 & 11	1/4	/	27/9	18/11/89	12/10	/
Garden Warbler	6/4	6/4/11	21/4	E	21/9	13/11/95	16/10	/
Lesser Whitethroat	8/4	8/4/11	22/4	E	30/9	23/11/99	27/9	/
Whitethroat	9/4	6/4/65	17/4	E	29/9	23/10/90	29/9	/
Grasshopper Warbler	7/4	7/4/11	17/4	/	20/9	4/10/81	17/9	/
Sedge Warbler	8/4	27/3/03	13/4	E	20/9	14/11/96	1/10	/
Reed Warbler	8/4	5/4/11	16/4	E	13/10	14/11/93	13/10	/
Spotted Flycatcher	20/4	20/4/85 & 11	30/4	/	25/9	15/11/79	5/10	/
Pied Flycatcher	17/4	7/4/11	18/4	/	1/8	3/11/01	23/9	/

## **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. Since 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 jpegs. Digital copies of the BBRC submission form are available from the County Recorder. If descriptions are submitted directly via the BBRC website could copies of these also be sent to the County Recorder to be added to the Lancashire archive. We are aware, however, that a diminishing 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:**

- Lesser Scaup, Marshside, 19 March to 22 April 2011; MMWWT, 29 April to 10 May 2011
- Marbled Duck (Cat D), Freckleton, 4 September 2011
- Glossy Ibis, Glasson, 11 December 2011, Leighton Moss, 13 December 2011 to 18 March 2012
- Black-winged Stilt (2), MMWWT, 15 April 2011
- Solitary Sandpiper, Nateby, 2-6 October 2011
- Lesser Yellowlegs, Glasson & Conder Pool, 24 September to 4 October 2011
- Spotted Sandpiper, Brockholes Wetland, 30 May 2011
- Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Liverpool, 12 October 2011
- Penduline Tit, Leighton Moss, 21 November 2011 and 11 February 2012
- Iberian Chiffchaff, Warbreck, 3-5 May 2011
- Citrine Wagtail, Seaforth, 28 August 2011
- Citrine Wagtail, Seaforth, 2 September 2011

### **The following records are still under consideration by the BBRC:**

- Lesser Canada Goose, south-west mosses, November 1976
- Red-breasted Goose, MMWWT, 1 October to 30 November 2004
- Ross's Goose (Cat D), various sites, 2008
- North American Night Heron, Mere Sands Wood, 12 February to 21 April 2008
- American Herring Gull, Seaforth, 20 February 2011
- Siberian Common Tern, Seaforth, 30 May 2010
- Citrine Wagtail, Seaforth, 26 August 2011

### **As far we know, the following reports have not yet been submitted to the BBRC:**

- Franklin's Gull, Ainsdale, 22 January 2011
- Laughing Gull, MMWWT, 17 May 2011
- Marbled Duck (Cat D), Hesketh Out Marsh, 30 October 2011
- Marbled Duck (Cat D), MMWWT, 7 November 2011

## Species and Subspecies Requiring Full Descriptions

*These are all marked with an asterisk in the systematic list*

Taiga Bean Goose	Temminck's Stint	Aquatic Warbler
Black Brant	White-rumped Sandpiper	Marsh Warbler
American Wigeon	Pectoral Sandpiper	Icterine Warbler
Ring-necked Duck	Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Melodious Warbler
Ferruginous Duck	Red-necked Phalarope	Barred Warbler
Surf Scoter	Long-tailed Skua	Subalpine Warbler
Black Grouse	Sabine's Gull	Dartford Warbler
Great Shearwater	Ring-billed Gull	Greenish Warbler
Sooty Shearwater	Caspian Gull	Yellow-browed Warbler
Cory's Shearwater	White-winged Black Tern	Pallas's Warbler
Balearic Shearwater	Roseate Tern	Radde's Warbler
Wilson's Petrel	Little Auk	Dusky Warbler
Night Heron	Puffin	Siberian Chiffchaff
Purple Heron	Turtle Dove	Rose-coloured Starling
Cattle Egret	Nightjar	Red-breasted Flycatcher
Great White Egret	Alpine Swift	Nightingale
Red-necked Grebe	Bee-eater	Bluethroat
Honey Buzzard	Hoopoe	Grey-headed Wagtail
Black Kite	Wryneck	Richard's Pipit
Montagu's Harrier	Golden Oriole	Tawny Pipit
White-tailed Eagle	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	Red-throated Pipit
Golden Eagle	Red-backed Shrike	Serin
Rough-legged Buzzard	Woodchat Shrike	Common (Mealy) Redpoll
Red-footed Falcon	Chough	Coues's Arctic Redpoll
Spotted Crake	Marsh and Willow Tit (out of normal range)	Common Rosefinch
Corncrake	Woodlark	Lapland Bunting
Common Crane	Short-toed Lark	Ortolan Bunting
Stone Curlew	Shore Lark	Rustic Bunting
Kentish Plover	Red-rumped Swallow	Little Bunting
American Golden Plover	Cetti's Warbler	Cirl Bunting

## County Description Species

Descriptions of species considered to be county rarities (listed above and marked with an asterisk in the text) 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), Chris Batty, Mark Breaks, Maurice Jones, Barry McCarthy, Chris Kehoe, 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 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 county recorder: Steve White, 102 Minster Court, Crown Street, Liverpool L7 3QD. E-mail: [stevewhite102@btinternet.com](mailto:stevewhite102@btinternet.com)

Please note that both Lesser Spotted Woodpecker and Turtle Dove are now so rare in the county that they are now ‘description species’, and that records of both Willow and Marsh Tit outside of their known ranges also need to be supported by descriptions.

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## Lancashire & Cheshire Fauna Society

Elected Officials of the Lancashire and Cheshire Fauna Society

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Tel: 01253 737765  
e-mail: [frank@walsh.me.uk](mailto:frank@walsh.me.uk)

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**Treasurer:** Alex Whitlock, 9 Sykefield, Brierfield, Lancs. BB9 5NB  
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### Report Editor and Lancashire Bird Recorder:

Steve White, 102 Minster Court, Crown Street, Liverpool, L7 3QD  
Tel: 0151-707 2744  
e-mail: [stevewhite102@btinternet.com](mailto:stevewhite102@btinternet.com)

Next Annual General Meeting, 10am Saturday 2nd March 2013 at Mere Sands Wood.

Membership of the Lancashire and Cheshire Fauna Society is still just £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 Lancashire – 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 ([www.lacfs.org.uk](http://www.lacfs.org.uk)) or directly from the Honorary Secretary.

## Photographs and Illustrations

Thanks are once again due to Steve Young and Mike Malpass for supplying photographs for the report. This year we have also published photographs by Andy Pryce, Dave Owen and Bill Aspin. We would be delighted to receive further submissions from the growing number of Lancashire birders with high quality photographic equipment. We are investigating the possibility of producing the 2012 report in full colour, which will allow the use of colour photographs throughout the text.

This year we are also grateful to Ray Scally for providing several line drawings, including three that were specially commissioned.

## Regional and group contributors

Alt WeBS

Birdguides

[www.birdguides.com](http://www.birdguides.com)

Birdline Northwest

BTO/RSPB Birdtrack

[www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/birdtrack](http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/birdtrack)

Chorley & District Natural History report

[www.chorleynats.org.uk](http://www.chorleynats.org.uk)

Cuerden Valley Park report

ELOC Report

[www.eastlancsornithologists.org.uk](http://www.eastlancsornithologists.org.uk)

Fylde Bird Club database

[www.fyldebirdclub.org](http://www.fyldebirdclub.org)

Heysham NR & Observatory Report

LDBWS report

[www.lancasterbirdwatching.org.uk](http://www.lancasterbirdwatching.org.uk)

MMWWT logs

Morecambe Bay WeBS

Rare Bird Alert

Ribble WeBS

Seaforth Bird Report

St. Helens Bird Recorders

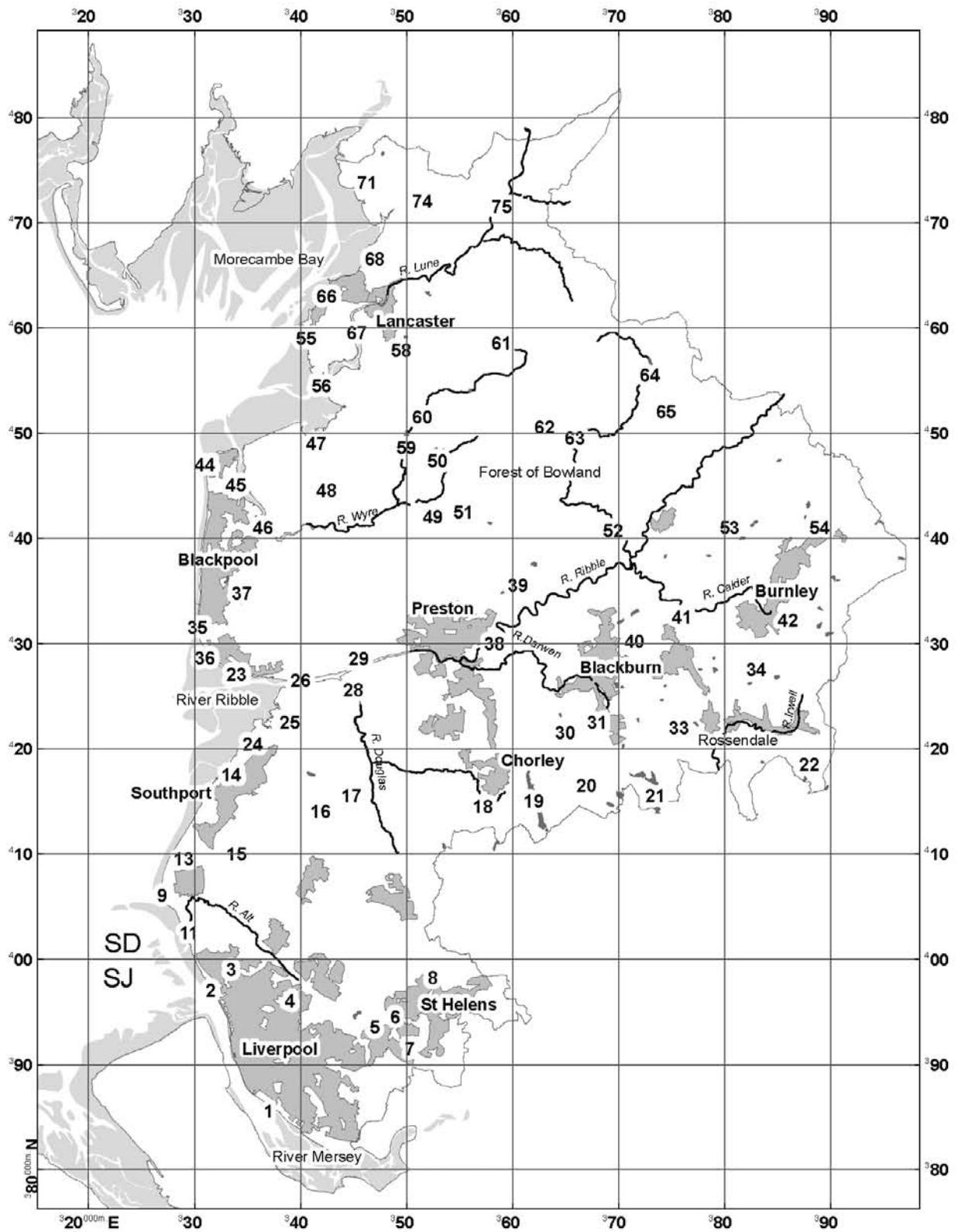
[www.sthelenswildlife.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk](http://www.sthelenswildlife.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk)

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).

# A Guide to Bird-watching Sites in Lancashire and North Merseyside



Mapping courtesy of Nik Bruce

**Site, Location Number on Map and Grid Reference**

Ainsdale Dunes NNR	13	SD290100	Lee Green Res.	43	SD880335
Aldcliffe Marsh	67	SD460600	Leighton Moss (RSPB)	73	SD480750
Eric Morecambe complex	72	SD475730	Longridge Res.	39	SD605360
Altcar Withins	12	SD325050	Longton Marsh	28	SD450265
Arkholme	75	SD590720	Lytham St Annes NR	36	SD310305
Banks Marsh	25	SD390230	Marshside (RSPB)	24	SD355205
Barnacre Res.	50	SD525478	Martholme/Altham	41	SD760330
Belmont Res.	20	SD670170	Martin Mere (WWT)	16	SD425145
Birkacre	18	SD572150	Marton Mere	37	SD345353
Blea Tarn Res.	58	SD495585	Mere Sands Wood (LWT)	17	SD448160
Brock Bottoms	51	SD550430	Morecambe Stone Jetty	66	SD425635
Brockholes Wetland	38	SD585305	Newton/Clifton Marsh	29	SD455290
Cabin Hill NNR	10	SD280050	Ogden/ Calf Hey/ Holden Wood Res.	33	SD765225
Carr Mill Dam	8	SJ525980	Otterspool	1	SJ370860
Champion Moor	65	SD745525	Pendle Hill	53	SD805415
Claughton Hall Heronry	49	SD525425	Pilling Lane Ends	47	SD415495
Cleveley Mere	59	SD500500	Pilling Moss/Eagland Hill	48	SD425450
Clowbridge Res.	34	SD830280	Pine Lake/Dockacres	74	SD515725
Cockersands/Bank End	57	SD430530	Plex Moss	15	SD340105
Cowm Res.	22	SD880190	Prescot Res.	5	SJ470940
Dunsop Valley	63	SD655500	Rimrose Valley	3	SJ335995
Eccleston Mere	6	SJ482950	Rishton Res.	40	SD715300
Fairhaven Lake	23	SD340273	Rivington/Anglezarke Res.	19	SD620155
Fazakerley	4	SJ390965	Roddlesworth Res.	30	SD650220
Fishmoor Res.	32	SD700260	Rossall Point	44	SD310475
Fleetwood ICI Pools	45	SD335455	Rowley Lake	42	SD860330
Formby Point	9	SD270065	Seaforth NR/ Crosby Marine Lake	2	SJ315975
Foulridge Res.	54	SD890415	Skerton Weir	69	SD480630
Freckleton Naze	27	SD435275	Southport Marine Lake	14	SD335180
Hambleton Marsh	46	SD365415	Squires Gate	35	SD303320
Hesketh Out Marsh	25	SD427254	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

## Contributors

Thank-you to everyone who has contributed their records to the society for inclusion in this year's report. Apologies if we've missed anyone!

A Ashworth	D Beattie	IM Harper	M Malpass	R Bedford
A Baines	D Chew	J Barker	M McGough	R Carter
A Bunting	D Edwards	J Beattie	M Memory	R Hewitt
A Cheney	D Hardaker	J Butcher	M Myerscough	R Ives
A Clements	D Haywood	J Calder	M Rimmer	R Kendall
A Cornall	D Lumb	J Dempsey	M Ward	R Lambert
A Drape	D Nadin	J Donnelly	M Watson	R Pyefinch
A Fenton	D Owen	J Fenton	M Welch	R Shenton
A Gouldstone	D Riley	J Fry	Ma Breaks	R Spencer
A Holmes	D Satterthwaite	J Houseman	MA Small	R Stinger
A Leach	D Sowter	J Howarth	ME Greenhalgh	RA Cadman
A Myerscough	D Wearden	J Malpass	MJ Naylor	RE Danson
A Pigott	D Williams	J Metcalf	Mk Breaks	RW Rhodes
A Rhodes	D Windle	J Moreton	N Godden	S Ashton
A Riden	D & GB Burke	J Plackett	N Green	S Cross
A Sharples	DA Bickerton	J Roberts	N Mitchell	S Darbyshire
A Walker	DA Moreton	J Scragg	N West	S Dunstan
A Waterhouse	DF Wadsworth	J Scragg	NT Southworth	S Flynn
A Watson	DJ Bowker	J Sheldon	P Abram	S Grimshaw
A Wilkinson	DJ McGrath	J Spottiswood	P Bainbridge	S Hayatt
A & C Johnson	DJ Pitman	J Taylor	P Boardman	S Leadsom
AA Cooper	DL Cook	J Wilson	P Brady	S Mair
AJ Cameron	DL Gifford	JA Stinger	P Cammack	S Tomlinson
AJ Conway	DR Williams	JD Fletcher	P Cook	S Wende
AJ Hinchliffe	DS Martin	JE Taylor	P Crooks	S Young
AJ Spottiswood	E Bramall	JF Walsh	P Cross	SG Piner
AS Disley	E McCann	JF Wright	P Davies	SJ Martin
B Brown	E Ormand	JK Bannon	P Ellis	SJ White
B Calder	E Pemberton	JW Bateman	P Fearon	SM Meredith
B Darbyshire	E & E Princ	K Abram	P Green	SP Eaves
B Dyson	ET Stevens	K Smithurst	P Guy	T Baker
B Gregory	F Bird	KB Briggs	P Holt	T Clare
B McCarthy	F Crowcroft	KG Spencer	P Kinsella	T Darbyshire
C Coupe	G Gavaghan	L Briggs	P Rhind	T Myerscough
C Darbyshire	G Hodgkinson	L Burston	P Ross	T Vaughan
C Davies	G Hulme	L Harrison	P Sharples	T Walkington
C Flynn	G Jones	LG Blacow	P Slade	VM Mottram
C Galeski	G Lilley	LJ Ryan	P Slater	W Berry
C Gregson	G Morgan	M Baron	P Webster	W Crooks
C Partington	G Patefield	M Boardman	P Whittaker	W Harrison
C Piner	G Turner	M Brown	P Woodruff	W Lavery
C Raby	G Waddington	M Fanshawe	PG Slade	WC Aspin
C Richards	G Wilby	M Farrar	PH Smith	WD Forshaw
CG Batty	Ga Thomas	M Foley	PJ Hornby	WG Gradwell
CG Tomlinson	GR Clarkson	M Garner	PJ Marsh	WJ Clift
CI Bushell	Gr Thomas	M Higgin	PJ Olson	WJ Webb
CJ Sharratt	H Jones	M Jarrett	PL Loydall	Z Hinchcliffe
CM Brookes	I Gardner	M Jepson	R Ashworth	
CT Derri	I Walker	M Jones	R Baker	
D Balding	I Wolfenden	M Lucas	R Banks	