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Lancashire Bird Report 2012

The Birds of Lancashire and North Merseyside

S. J. White (Editor)

D. A. Bickerton, M. Breaks, G. Clarkson, S. Dunstan, N. Godden, R. Harris
B. McCarthy, P. J. Marsh, S.J. Martin, T. Vaughan, J. F. Wright.



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Front cover: Lesser Yellowlegs (Steve Young)

Back cover: Little Gull (Steve Young)

Introduction

Dave Bickerton

Once again, it is my pleasure to write an introduction to the Lancashire Bird Report, summarising the wealth of information on the birds of the county that has been provided by members, birders and members of the public with a passing interest in natural history. Over 250 species were recorded in the county during 2012 and all records have been analysed and summarised by one of our band of volunteer writers who've committed hours of their free time to the task. They've done a remarkable job in producing a comprehensive and readable synopsis of each species' fortunes during the year and long may it continue.

2012 was notable for being a rather inclement year, even more than the previous two with a knock-on effect on insect life and subsequent breeding success for many species. As I write this on the eve of the first of the autumn gales in 2013, we hope that the welcome fine summer we've just had will have reversed a few of the negative trends.

Our county is a very varied one with distinct ornithological zones varying from the lowland mosses of the south-west and the Fylde to the heather moorland in the east. Winter populations seem to be doing reasonably well but some upland breeding species are suffering, none more so than one of our flagship species, the Hen Harrier. The records over the years are all well documented in previous reports giving the powers-that-be the objective information needed to contextualise the issues.

There is only so much information you can glean from reports such as this, so occasionally a broader review is needed. The BTO Atlas work was completed in 2011 and here in Lancashire and North Merseyside we have carried out full surveys in both the breeding season and winter. The detailed results of the county surveys have now been published on the Society website and are free to download at (www.lacfs.org.uk). Steve White and Barry McCarthy have been extremely busy collating and analysing the data, producing maps and abundance charts and writing up species accounts. Steve seems to have been busier than ever since he 'retired' and the atlas work and continued role as county recorder and editor of the bird report are testament to his commitment.

As I alluded to last year, the proliferation of on-line sources of information and the ability for many people to contribute records and participate in discussions shows just how important people feel it is that they should put their observations on record. The Society is provided with data from several sources such as Rare Bird Alert, Birdguides, Lancaster and District Birdwatching Society, Fylde Bird Club, Chorley and District Natural History Society and East Lancashire Ornithological Society but your own personal records are of great significance if you can put them in context of your regular birding areas.

And so I come to a significant milestone in the Society's history. The Lancashire and Cheshire Fauna Society was created in 1914 with the first report published a year later. Our centenary is therefore nearly upon us and we'd like to mark the occasion with a bumper edition of the annual report including other faunal groups. If you have anything you'd like to contribute then please get in touch with me or Steve. The 2014 Annual General Meeting will be held at a hostelry in the vicinity of Burscough where, after the meeting, we plan to have a meal. More details will be available nearer the time on the website and notified by e-mail.

Thank you for supporting the work of the Society in either being a member or through the purchase of this report. The cost of producing the report is just about covered by subscriptions, gift aid and sales so if you're not already a member, please consider joining the society (see the membership section towards the end of the report).

Review of the Year, 2012

John Wright

January

The month began with very mild conditions but a succession of active Atlantic depressions produced some stormy weather during the first week with a major winter storm on the 3rd. It was quieter in mid-month, with some low night-time temperatures, then rather more unsettled. A broad swathe of cold air spread in from the east at the month's end.

The year started with a flurry of white-winged gulls with several popular long-stayers: **Iceland Gulls** at Birkdale, Fishmoor, Marton Mere, Pilling and Seaforth were complemented by **Glaucous Gulls** at Birkdale, Heysham, Fishmoor and Southport.

Waders put on a great show with 10183 **Curlews** and 3867 **Bar-tailed Godwits** in Morecambe Bay providing an exhilarating high-tide spectacle.

Goose numbers were also high across the county including 64080 **Pink-footed Geese**. Amongst them **Tundra Bean Geese** continued their influx from 2011 with up to ten at MMWWT and Tarlescough Moss, three on Plex Moss, five on Downholland Moss, one on Lytham Moss, eight at Pilling and up to six at Ream Hills/Mythop.

Also well appreciated were the **European White-fronted Geese** that also arrived in force and could often be found in the same flocks. High counts included a peak of 46 at MMWWT and 40 at Caton and Bull Beck. The east of the county did not miss out with six **European** and a pair of **Greenland White-fronts** joining the **Canada Geese** at Rishton Reservoir.

The male **American Wigeon** seen in December 2011 was seen again on the Ribble on the 7-8th.

Leighton Moss attracted many visitors to admire including wintering **Glossy Ibis**, **Great White Egret**, **Green-winged Teal**, **Marsh Harrier** and the spectacle of 100,000 roosting **Starlings** (not to mention a very obliging Otter family). Remarkably, a second **Glossy Ibis** was seen at Aldcliffe Marsh from the 7th and a **Slavonian Grebe** was at Pine Lake from the 17th.

February

High pressure over Europe resulted in a very cold spell during the first twelve days with some sharp frosts and snowfalls but milder weather had spread to all parts by the 13th. Thereafter, westerly airstreams dominated giving generally mild weather, occasionally very mild in the last ten days.

The regular **Ring-necked Duck** was seen on and off at Thornton ICI Reservoirs and Fleetwood Marsh until 25 March.

The county's second **Penduline Tit**, first ringed in November 2011, was proved to be wintering at Leighton Moss when it was relocated on the 11th. Unfortunately this tiny bird proved hard to track down in the large reedbeds. Despite two further sightings in March and April most observers left frustrated.

The cold spell resulted in large numbers of birds coming to feeding stations. On the Fylde **Corn Buntings** built up to a very impressive 241 at Lousanna Farm on the 11th. The weather also resulted in a displacement of **Cetti's Warblers** with MMWWT and Brockholes both having their first records. In addition at least four birds were wintering at Marton Mere and five at Leighton Moss and breeding was proved at both sites in the summer.



Steve Young

After an influx in autumn 2011 **Short-eared Owls** were recorded at 19 widespread locations in the Fylde and the south-west. Peaks of six were in the Rufford area and up to seven at Lunt Meadows. For many observers regular encounters with these graceful and charismatic birds was a winter highlight.

Despite the cold **Crossbills** had been singing and displaying at Gisburn Forest and a recently-fledged juvenile was seen here on the 29th!

March

Most of the month was influenced by high pressure, although there were short unsettled spells. Much of the month was dry and the final week was remarkably sunny resulting in daytime temperatures rising strongly.

Cold weather had resulted in an arrival of presumed continental **Bitterns** with three at Marton Mere, two at Mere Sands Wood and singles at Aughton, Brockholes, Carr Mill Dam and MMWWT. By the end of March it was thought five were at Leighton Moss with three seen and heard engaging in gull-calling flight over the reserve as they prepared to migrate.

As wintering birds began to move so the first 'summer' migrants began to arrive. **Little Ringed Plovers** were at Alston Wetland on the 14th with three at Brockholes on the 18th where numbers quickly built up and a county record 13 pairs arrived representing 1% of the British breeding population. They bred alongside eight pairs of **Ringed Plovers**, 21 pairs of **Lapwings**, six pairs of **Redshanks** and six pairs of **Oystercatchers**, all of which had high fledging success.

After the cold a pleasing arrival of **Goldcrests** started on the 15th, with Heysham recording at least 50. The following days saw double-figure counts all along the Fylde and smaller numbers along the Sefton Coast.

A wintering adult **Ring-billed Gull** gave birders the run around between Seaforth, Crosby and Netherton but continued to be seen until the end of the month.

April

With low pressure over or near the county for most of the month, the weather was generally unsettled with numerous showery days. There were some wintery showers early in the month and longer spells of rain especially in the last week

Wader passage was very much to the fore this month. The stunning sight and sound of 8000 **Grey Plovers** and 30,000 **Dunlins** at Banks Marsh once again highlighted the global importance of our estuaries.

Two species with shrinking ranges in the county were seen in good numbers. **Marsh Tits** are doing well in their Silverdale stronghold as demonstrated by a record ten pairs on Warton Crag. **Whinchat** had their heaviest spring passage on the coast for several years with 30 birds across the Fylde, hopefully suggesting an upturn in fortunes, but with no evidence yet of this being reflected in numbers breeding in Lancashire.

In contrast, **Black-headed Gulls** continue to expand with a record-breaking 17,000 at Belmont on the 12th; 7,000 pairs settled to breed and amongst them 18 pairs of immaculate **Mediterranean Gulls** were a delight to behold.

A scattering of records of **Garganey** included a pair at Leighton Moss on the 7th which subsequently remained to breed.

Spring always produces a few surprises and the discovery of a pair of delightful **Black-winged Stilts** at Leighton Moss on the 20th caused quite a stir. Unfortunately they soon moved on. Whilst **Little Egrets** are now a familiar sight on the coast an interesting record concerned five passage birds that were tracked passing Ainsdale, Blackpool, Fleetwood and Heysham before continuing north towards Grange-over-Sands on the 30th.

May

The first three weeks were dominated by cool and at times unsettled conditions — continuing the wet theme of much of April. A marked improvement occurred from the 21st with a much warmer and more settled spell. Temperatures rose from the 23rd with prolonged sunshine making it particularly warm.

The spring passage of **Little Gulls** at Seaforth has waned in recent years so a peak of 183 on the 2nd was much appreciated. Up the coast a **Great Grey Shrike** at Marshside on the 4th was a surprising record but followed a good winter in the east of the county for this species.

Waders continued to impress with **Avocets** arriving in force with a peak of 129 at MMWWT on the 1st. Nearby **Ruff** entertained with up to 14 males and two or three females lekking at Marshside. They further raised suspicions of a breeding attempt when mating was observed on the 2nd. Careful searching also revealed an arrival of **Temminck's Stints** with pairs at MMWWT from the 26th, Weeton on the 27th and Marshside on the 28th.

Inland records of **Little Tern** are always scarce so one at Brockholes on the 17th and two at Stocks Reservoir on the 30th delighted their finders. The month ended with a beautiful male **Woodchat Shrike** on the Cheshire Lines at Lydiate on the 30th. This was Lancashire's eighth record but the fourth in the last five years.

June

The weather was dominated by low pressure over or close to the county, with associated weather fronts. These brought rather cool days, some very large rainfall totals and also some strong winds early in the month. There was an almost complete absence of warm, settled spells

A stormy day brought a male **Red-necked Phalarope** to Brockholes on the 9th, another first for the reserve. Unfortunately the continuing poor weather caused problems for some of our breeding birds. Sadly no **Twite** were reported to have bred successfully from a county population that may number only a dozen pairs.

Better news from the uplands was that the melancholy song of the **Ring Ouzel** was heard across seventeen territories in Bowland and a pair bred on the Nick of Pendle for the first time in many years.

Two other species have also bounced back despite a run of poor summers. **Reed Bunting** increased to 89 pairs at MMMWT with 64 pairs at Brockholes and 70 pairs at Leighton Moss. **Whitethroats** are also doing well and, whilst not so concentrated, their joyful song-flights have now been recorded in almost half of the county's tetrads.

One of our rarest breeders, the elusive **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker**, is still clinging on with a pair seen on the Yarrow near Eccleston on the 18th.

June often turns up a rarity or two and a **Little Swift** provided great excitement when it appeared at New Brighton on the 22nd. Observers soon realised it was feeding far out on the Mersey and close to the county boundary. On the 23rd it crossed the river and became the second county record.

Also on the 23rd a gorgeous summer-plumaged **White-winged Black Tern** made a brief appearance at Leighton Moss. It was the first in the county since 2008.

July

The weather was again characterised by low pressure, with associated weather fronts, bringing rather cool, cloudy conditions and some high rainfall totals in the first half of the month. A much warmer, settled week began on the 21st

It's an ill wind that blows nobody good and sea-watchers recorded an impressive count of 1,000 **Manx Shearwaters** off Blackpool on the 14th. More surprising was a **Grey Phalarope** in partial summer plumage at MMWWT on the 17th.

Our breeding harriers are some of the most striking and sought-after birds in the county. **Marsh Harriers** continued their increase and there were seven nests in the Leighton Moss area and two or three pairs at two sites on the south-west mosses. After fledging, birds wandered widely and their distinctive silhouette was a familiar sight at their favoured locations in the county.

In total contrast, **Hen Harriers**, until recently an iconic symbol of the richness of our heather moors, failed to breed. The reasons are hotly debated but the moors certainly felt empty without them.

A remarkable twist came with the arrival of a magnificent male **Montagu's Harrier** on Champion Moor in the heart of Bowland on the 11th. This superb bird had toured the county since 18 May when it was seen at Holmeswood. It delighted and frustrated birders as it then visited MMWWT, Hesketh Out Marsh and Altcar Moss and also made a fleeting visit to Pilling Marsh. Many birders finally caught up with it during its six day stay on Champion Moor and ironically this was the only male harrier seen in Bowland in 2013. July's tale of three harriers was one of the most talked about issues of the year and attracted national media attention.

August

The weather was mainly influenced by low pressure, bringing cloudy conditions and showers or longer periods of rain on many days.

As the breeding season drew to a close the most relieved parents must have been the two pairs of **Reed Warblers** that fledged **Cuckoos** at Mere Sands Wood. A very notable record was a juvenile **Turtle Dove** in a garden at Clifton on the 2nd. Sadly this was the first record in the county since 2009.

Passage began and the distinctive call of the **Tree Pipit** was heard more frequently than in recent years. This was highlighted by an excellent count of 17 at New Laithe Farm, Newton on the 19th. Dispersing **Black-necked Grebes** provided the only records of the year with one at Prescott Reservoirs from the 14th and another at Alston on the 20th.

In the balance of birds doing well one literally stands out. The remarkable change in the fortunes of **Black-tailed Godwit** continued with yet another county record of 8,000 at Marshside this month.

Despite the often wet and windy conditions it was not a vintage year for seabird sightings. Keen sea-watchers got a reward for their persistence, however, when a striking juvenile **Sabine's Gull** flew past Blackpool on the 28th.

A juvenile '**American**' **Black Tern** caused quite a stir when it arrived on Eccleston Mere from the 30th. This was the first record of this race in Lancashire and created a taxonomic debate about its merits as a full species.

September

The first half of the month was fine and reasonably warm, but the month became progressively more unsettled and quite cool. A notably deep depression brought large amounts of rainfall and high winds from the 23rd to the 26th.

Rare waders are often a feature of autumn and careful searching of **Golden Plover** flocks produced an **American Golden Plover** at Cockersand and Glasson on the 5th. This was the seventh record for the county.

An eclipse male **Blue-winged Teal** made a one-day appearance at Marshside on the 16th and becomes the fourth county record.

From year to year different species attract attention through periodic irruptions. This year was the turn of the **Coal Tit**. Starting on the 19th the movement continued into October. A total of 474 was recorded migrating at Heysham, with a peak day count of 164, second only to the numbers recorded in 1985. The movement was also noted elsewhere on the coast with high day-counts of 82 at Fairhaven and 53 at Seaforth.

Equally notable was the influx of **Snipe** with a mass arrival from mid-month; 266 were seen at Marshside, 300+ at Brockholes, 255 on Pilling Moss and 89 on Croston Moss. In addition, early October brought 200+ to Altcar Withins, 149 on the Fairhaven saltmarsh, 82 at Stocks Reservoir and 40+ in the Belmont area.

Two of the most sought-after species in the county also made appearances this month. **Leach's Petrels** only appeared in small numbers but on a couple of occasions they were seen 'walking over the sand' at Formby long after the tide had receded. On Pendle Hill an unseasonal **Dotterel** was found and was welcome after a light spring passage.

October

The month brought a typical autumnal mix of showers and rain for much of the time, but with a couple of short settled spells. It was rather cool overall, with the first few widespread frosts of the season.

Migration was in full swing as was migration-watching. 'Vis Mig' is an increasingly popular part of birding in spring and autumn and provides lots of valuable data. An example this year was the records of **Greenfinch** at coastal watchpoints during October. Peak counts of 157 at Marshside, 125 at Rossall and Fairhaven, 84 at Heysham and 47 at Seaforth indicated a good breeding season and a return to health for the population.

A search for Snow Buntings on Pendle Hill on the 18th produced a confiding **Lapland Bunting**. The bird stayed for three days and was rare delight for observers in the east of the county.

The now expected but no less remarkable arrival of **Yellow-browed Warblers** began on the 4th with records at Marshside and Hesketh Golf Course. This was followed by six more and joining them was an exquisite **Pallas's Warbler** in a Knott End garden from the 15th. This was very

popular bird being only the sixth county record and the first since 2006. For three days of its stay one of the aforementioned **Yellow-browed Warblers** was present nearby at Fluke Hall. This provided the rare opportunity to see two Siberian sprites in the same day.

Another popular rarity was a juvenile **Lesser Yellowlegs** at Aldcliffe Marsh from the 21st, which was often seen in the company of a **Wood Sandpiper** providing a useful comparison.

November

The month opened with a showery and cool regime, and there were frosts in some areas. An exceptionally wet spell from the 19th to 26th was followed by much colder, drier and brighter weather.

In past years the arrival of **Waxwings** was a welcome but very unpredictable affair. That now appears to be changing with favoured rowan trees attracting birds regularly and ringing recoveries identifying returning individuals. Their sight and sound has lost none of its appeal though and this year's arrival was eagerly anticipated.

Throughout November and into December large flocks gathered with up to 300 in the Kirkdale and Bootle areas, 160 or more in central Preston and Ashton-on-Ribble, 80 or so in Formby, Lancaster and Morecambe and 50 in Chorley. Smaller flocks were recorded in east Lancashire, the Fylde and West Lancashire.

Woodpigeons also experienced an influx but on scale that dwarfed the arrival of Waxwings. The floodgates opened on the 11th with a count of 26,000 at MMWWT and this had increased to a massive 50,000 by the 20th. Ten thousand were on Altcar Withins on the 27th and had increased to 30,000 two days later. Large flocks were recorded from other south-west sites and it is likely these concentrations resulted from the widespread flooding and abandonment of arable crops prior to harvest.

Stately **Great White Egrets** were present in the county throughout the year. Three birds could be found this month with two on the Ribble and one at Leighton Moss. In addition one was seen at Pilling Marsh on the 19th. Another impressive species starting to appear with more regularity is the **Common Crane**. All the sightings came from MMWWT this year in April, May and finally on 4 November.

December

The month began generally unsettled with wintry showers over higher ground. A brief change to anti-cyclonic conditions then brought some colder frostier conditions. The second half of the month was mild but again very unsettled. A sequence of Atlantic fronts brought persistent heavy rain in the run-up to Christmas.

The month began on a very unseasonal note. A **Tree Pipit** trapped and ringed on King's Moss, Rainford on the 1st was by far the latest ever in the county. The **Lesser Yellowlegs** remained at Aldcliffe until the 5th as did the **Wood Sandpiper**. Whilst two Lesser Yellowlegs famously wintered at Banks Marsh the sandpiper was by some distance the latest record.

In contrast **Blackcaps** are now familiar in winter with an influx from Eastern Europe as our breeding birds head south. The total number of birds seen this year was 47 with records from gardens across the length and breadth of the county.

More traditional winter fare came with the sightings of wild swans. There is a great contrast in the fortunes of **Bewick's** and **Whooper Swans**. In their traditional stronghold on the south of the Ribble a peak of only 25 **Bewick's** occurred whilst close by MMWWT recorded a whopping 2,480 **Whoopers**.

The year ended with another example of the richness of our coast and estuaries when a flock of 2035 **Cormorants** roosted at Birkdale.

Systematic List

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

Fairly common 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	106	79	71	96	91	113	173	169	148	63	101	150
Ribble WeBS	36	26	67	52	37	22	53	88	46	75	13	48
Marshside	17	12	40	44	66	8	4	57	8	10	5	6
Southport ML	154	131	106	143	155	149	164	189	169	126	94	99
Alt WeBS	2	2	0	8	9	37	19	22	18	7	4	5

The highest counts away from Southport Marine Lake were all on the Fylde, including in the first winter period 70 at Thurnham on 13 Jan with 85 there on 2 Feb, 64 at Sand Villa on 2 Feb and 90 at Cockerham on the 7th. Counts peaked in early spring with 175 at Cockerham on 2 March and 190 at Thurnham the next day. Later in the year 100 were on the Conder Estuary on 23 Aug, 88 at Glasson on 9 Sept, 74 at Marton Mere on 28 Nov with 84 there on 13 Dec, 93 at Sand Villa on 9 Dec and 108 at Cockerham on the 15th.

Peak counts elsewhere included 25 at Crosby Coastal Park on 29 May, 26 at Seaforth in August and 26 at Sefton Park, Liverpool on 3 Nov with 23 there on 26 Dec. The highest count at Brockholes Wetland was 32 on 17 June and on the Eric Morecambe complex 20 on 17 Aug.

Significant counts in the lower Ribble catchment were 16 at Balderstone Hall on 24 April, eleven at Hothersall Hall on 4 May and an unprecedented 19 between Alston Old Hall and Ribchester on 26 May. Rishton Reservoir had locally significant counts of ten on 3 Feb, nine non-breeding adults on 25 June and ten again on 27 Oct.

Breeding records were widespread as usual. The resident pair in Yarrow Valley Park had four young by 9 May but one of the cygnets perished caught in fishing line on 7 Aug. A new pair in Astley Park gave up trying to hatch their eggs, which were presumably infertile as one of the pair was still immature. Two of the three pairs breeding at Arkholme were flooded out. A pair with nine juveniles on the canal at Church on 15 July was the largest brood noted in the county this year.

BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus columbianus*

Fairly common but declining winter visitor.

International importance: 200. National importance: 70

Monthly Peak Counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
South Ribble	0	0	0	0	0	25
Over Wyre	18	21	16	0	2	6
South Fylde	13	13	9	0	2	17

Sadly the decline of this splendid swan continues. A count of 18 on the January WeBS count in Morecambe Bay was the only one there all year. MMWWT only had three on 10 Jan, one on the 17-25th, two in November, two on 1 Dec and four on the 26th. Nine were at Hesketh Out Marsh on 13 Dec, while three at Hundred End on 14 Dec increased to 25 the next day before reducing to five by the month's end.

Most sightings continued to be on the Fylde. The year began with a small flock of five at Fluke Hall, seven at Glasson, up to ten at Warton and 18 at Pilling on 15 Jan; numbers peaked at 21 at Glasson on 19 Feb and the last of spring were 16 there on 17 March.

The first back were two at Cockerham Moss Edge on 24 Nov, followed by two at Lytham Moss on 28 Nov increasing to 15 adults and two juveniles on 8 Dec. Two were east of Queensway at St. Anne's on 9 Dec and six at Stalmine Moss Side were a pleasant treat on Christmas Day.

WHOOPER SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*

Common and increasing winter visitor.

International importance: 210. National importance: 110

Monthly Peak Counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	16	12	14				89	84
Over Wyre	420	90	145		1	230	585	534
Ribble WeBS	77	141	166			45	312	616
South Fylde	101	108	107			161	430	440
MMWWT	1700	1850	1530	13	12	1380	1717	2480

The year began with up to 420 at Fluke Hall, 150 at Pilling, 101 at Warton and 1700 at MMWWT. Locally notable were 26 over Mawdesley Moss on 8 Jan, 30 on Halsall Moss on the 9th and four west over Little Crosby on the 15th. An unusual record was a family of two adults and three juveniles lingering on the sea off Blackpool on 13 Jan.

Although numbers at MMWWT did increase to 1850 on 1 February, elsewhere they were low but widespread, with 108 at Warton and 90 at Cockerham the highest Fylde counts; 32 were by the Ribble Way at Hutton on 12 Feb and five fed at Hornby on the 20th. The last large count of the winter was 1530 at MMWWT on 11 March when numbers at Thurnham increased to 88; 13 over Stocks Reservoir on 4 March were some of the first seen on the move.

The main spring movement included 60 at Blackpool on 21 March, 52 over Low Moor, Clitheroe on the 22nd when one was by the Calder at Altham. The following day four flew over Towneley, three were at Jumbles Reservoir and one arrived at Jackhouse Reservoir (until the 25th); 13 were at Wayoh Reservoir on 24 March, 19 on Alston Reservoir the next day and one at Stocks on the 26th with another there on 9 April. Northbound flocks past Heysham included 19 on 19 March, 38 on the 22nd and five on 27 March (when 18 went past Blackpool). Sixteen lingered on the Eric Morecambe complex on 23-27 March and 18 passed Rossall Point on 1 April

The last were at MMWWT on 13 April but one was at Brockholes on the 26th and five at Stocks Reservoir on the 28th. There was a late movement past Heysham of two on 5 May and four the next day (coinciding with a late passage of Pink-footed Geese). Another late bird was seen on 22 May on the Eric Morecambe complex.

Four remained at MMWWT throughout May to early September and an apparently healthy adult was on the Fylde at Westby on 7 July. Perhaps the same bird was then reported from 21 Aug at a number of Fylde sites including Glasson, Conder Estuary and Knott End.

The first returned to MMWWT on 16 Sept but the only other early birds were two on the 22nd at Fairhaven Lake and a lone adult on the Lune Estuary on 2 Oct.

The next arrived on 6 Oct; they included six at Melling, 80 feeding at Lytham Moss and 23 in fields at Poulton-le-Fylde the next day. Twenty-five were at Singleton on 8 Oct and 68 at Hambleton Moss Side on the 13th when eight were on the Eric Morecambe complex. Numbers at Lytham increased to 120 on 14 October to 161 on the 21st.

In the south-west, a small flock on flooded farmland at Altcar Withins on 10 Oct were unusually far south; presumably the same were on Lunt Meadows and the Withins from 18 Oct to 29 Nov, peaking at 14. Eight went south over Seaforth on 26 Oct.

Further inland one was at Arkholme on 11 Oct, five at Entwistle and Wayoh Reservoirs on 12 Oct, 21 over Croston Moss the next day, four over Brockholes on the 21st and one at Altham on the

23rd. On 26 Oct eleven flew east over Parsonage Reservoir and over Padiham ten minutes later, and as sightings of migrating flocks began to increase, including 22 over Belmont and 17 over Alston on 27 Oct, numbers grew to 1380 at MMWWT on 31 Oct, 1717 on 28 Nov and 2480 on 2 Dec.

Notable counts of feeding birds included 100 at Shirdley Hill on 21 Nov, 507 at Cockerham Moss Edge on 24 Nov and 402 at Lytham the same day, 534 at Bone Hill, Fylde on 30 Nov, 356 at St. Anne's on 9 Dec, 645 at Hesketh Out Marsh on 15-18 Dec and 277 at Stalmine on 18 Dec, increasing to 367 on the 22nd.

TAIGA BEAN GOOSE* *Anser fabalis fabalis*

Rare winter visitor. Amber List (small winter population).

One was reported at MMWWT on 29 Jan but no description was submitted.

TUNDRA BEAN GOOSE *Anser fabalis rossicus*

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

The influx from late 2011 continued with numbers increasing in 2012; up to ten were at MMWWT and Tarlescough Moss in mid-January into February with six on 22 Feb and one on 19 March. Two were on Plex Moss from 16 Jan with three there on the 21st; nearby four were on Downholland Moss on 18 Jan with five there the next day and two on the 22nd and six were at Low Meadows, near Rufford, on 19 Feb, with one there subsequently.

Elsewhere in the south-west, one was in the Pink-footed Goose roost off Formby Point on 26 Feb, one at Marshside 8 March and 8 & 10 April, three at Crossens on 9 April; two at MMWWT on 11 April were the last records of spring.

Fylde records included five on Lytham Moss in the first week of January, eight at Pilling on the 17th, up to six at Reams Hill/Mythop at the end of January into early February and at Cockerham and Pilling on 7 & 8 April.

A more typical showing in the second winter period included three at MMWWT on 18 Oct with one there on the 20th and two at Ince Blundell on 4 Dec.

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.

Coordinated Pink-footed Goose roost counts (courtesy of WWT)

	15/01/12	26/02/12	14/10/12	11/11/12	09/12/12
Ribble Estuary	24554	6206	8801	27774	3457
Alt Estuary	3672	3550	20200	5664	110
Martin Mere	5800	3850	6150	11750	9950
Low Meadows/Mawdesley Moss	/	/	/	37	760
Pilling	16000	5615	29082	10500	20300
Cocker's Dyke	4800	1220	2650	1390	470
Wyre Estuary	7450	2650	7300	4775	3650
Simonswood Moss	1800	1000	3500	5000	1000
Carr Moss	/	/	/	/	5000
Total	64080	24094	77683	62890	44697

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.

Monthly peak Pink-footed Goose counts for Morecambe Bay and MMWWT; derived from all submitted records.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
M'cambe Bay	28250	8000	4417	1300	0	0	0	0	1200	29100	24900	14000
MMWWT	5800	6850	1450	11	6	0	0	0	11700	19000	11600	11600

The coordinated counts suggest the following peaks for the three main areas in January: Fylde 28250, Ribble 24554 and south-west 11272. However, movement between roosts and feeding sites is complicated, for instance the Ribble roost disperses primarily to the south-west but many remain to feed on the Ribble while others move to the Fylde.

Feeding flocks of between 5000 and 10000 were regular in the traditional Fylde sites in January and February, including 12000 at Pilling on 17 Jan and 10000 at Ream Hills on the 30th; 2200 were at Aldcliffe on 2 Feb. South of the Ribble 9000 were at Crossens on 17 Jan, 7700 at Downholland Moss on the 19th, 3000 on Croston Moss in late January and 6700 on Plex Moss on 7 Feb.

Higher numbers than usual were seen migrating over east Lancashire following three years of decline; 15 skeins totalling 2000 flew west over Marl Hill in a 5-hour period on 14 Jan with others heard that evening over New Laithe Farm, most likely birds returning from East Anglia. Four hundred on Rishton Reservoir on 15 Jan was unusual as were four other flocks on the ground in east Lancashire in the first winter period.

As usual large numbers departed in March although 4000 were feeding at Marshside on 12 April. Groups flew past Blackpool and Rossall Point on 2-4 May and 560 past Heysham on the 2nd. Seven hundred were at Crossens on 2 May while eleven at Pilling and six at MMWWT on the 20th were the last of the spring until one flew over Alston Wetland on the 27th.

Injured or feral birds summered at a few sites including three at MMWWT in June to August.

Two at Pilling on 19 Aug with four there on 21 Aug may have been feral/injured birds and the first definitely returning migrants were 90 at Cocker's Dyke and 17 at MMWWT on the 30th, while 700 at Pilling and 200 at MMWWT on 7 Sept were the first large flocks. Numbers grew rapidly at the usual sites and 4300 were on Colloway Marsh on 12 Sept. Up to 20000 were at Eagland Hill on 24 Nov, 6000 fed east of Marton Mere on 21 Oct and large numbers fed on Lytham Moss with a peak of 12000 on 17 Dec. Peaks for the three main areas in October were 39032 in the Fylde, 8801 on the Ribble and 29850 in the south-west.

Large feeding flocks in the south-west included 8000 on Downholland Moss on 29 Dec 7000 at Lydiate on flooded crops on 10 Oct with 16000 at Altcar Withins the same day, 4000 along the Old Coach Road, Rainford on 7 Nov and 5000 at nearby Crank on 5 Nov and 8 Dec. Other Merseyside counts included up to 2000 in the Kirkby Moss and Knowsley Park area in October and November. Large flocks fed in the Burscough area in November and December with a peak on Burscough Moss of 8200 on 3 Dec.

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

On 2 Jan two flew onto Rishton Reservoir with six *albifrons* and many Canadas, staying until 9 Jan with one there until 14 Feb. One was at Ribchester and Brockholes on 15 Jan and at Oswaldtwistle the following day.

Singles were at Fleetwood on 2 Jan, Pilling on the 17th and Hesketh Out Marsh during January. Seven adults with two juveniles were at MMWWT on 8 Feb and singles were at the Eric Morecambe complex in the first week of March, MMWWT on 11 March and Banks Marsh on the 17th, the last records of spring.

Singles at Carr Moss, Ainsdale on 11 Nov and Fleetwood on 7 Dec were the only records in the second winter period.

EUROPEAN WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons albifrons*

Fairly common winter visitor.

The unprecedented influx of 2011 continued into 2012. In the south-west MMWWT recorded a peak of 46 on 2 Jan with two until 19 March, and nearby seven were on Croston Moss on 11 Jan with one there on 6 Feb, eleven at Low Meadows, Rufford on 21 Feb with others there into March. Up to 19 were at Crossens/Marshside and two on Hesketh Out Marsh in January; 38 were on Crossens Out Marsh on 1 March and 41 on the 18th with 32 on Banks Marsh on the 17th and 19 were still at Crossens on 9 April and three at Marshside on the 12th.

Small groups were scattered across several Fylde sites in January with peaks of eleven at Pilling and 15 on Warton Marsh in early February. Ten were at Mythop on 10 Feb and 15 at Eagland Hill the same month and at Pilling in early March; the last were two at Pilling on 14 March.

In north Lancashire up to 40 were at Caton and Bull Beck in January and up to 13 in February, six were at Arkholme on 3 Jan and four on the 12th, up to 16 were around the Lune Estuary throughout January and February, the last being eleven at Aldcliffe on 29 Feb; one was on Silverdale Moss on 20 March.

In the east six were at Rishton Reservoir on 2 Jan and two at Parsonage Reservoir on 11 & 13 Feb.

Numbers were lower in the second winter period with singles on the Fylde in September to November, an adult over Brockholes with Greylags on 7 Nov, one at Arkholme on 29 Nov, an adult on Alston Reservoir on 10 Dec, singles at Aldcliffe/Heaton Marsh in December and MMWWT on 18 Oct to the end of the year. The highest count was seven at Barnaby's Sands on 9 Dec.

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

Uncommon feral breeder and common 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
Stocks Res	50	60	45	45	47	202	133	3	9	39	44	42
Arkholme	221	260	/	/	/	/	18	102	174	150	360	186
L Moss/EMC	455	386	355	85	185	90	48	115	760	290	265	355
Aldcliffe Marsh	143	300		3	34		73	61	300	650	380	400
MBS WeBS	195	172	68	16	132	42	150	106	412	240	565	270
Lune Valley	590	337	240	139	144	36	86	233	300	150	433	270
Copthorne	143	106	125	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	200	170
MMWWT	357	350	/	250	/	25	/	400	460	550	560	/
Ribble WeBS	121	34	63	72	32	41	299	259	121	128	111	76
Southport ML	46	14	103	79	81	61	117	2	1	1	1	4

Greylag Geese are now a common breeder at Stocks Reservoir where there were at least nine broods with a total of 35 young. The main breeding population in north Lancashire, centred on Leighton Moss, had 29 pairs, about eleven down on 2011. Elsewhere, two pairs bred at Arkholme, one at Marton Mere and several at MMWWT, Marshside, Southport Marine Lake and Scarisbrick Hall.

The largest post-breeding counts were of 3000 at Bradshaw Lane and 2000 at Fluke Hall (both Pilling) on 20 Sept; the 760 in September at Leighton Moss seems tiny in comparison! High counts including 650 at Aldcliffe in mid-October, 565 on the Morecambe Bay WeBS count and 560 at MMWWT in November indicate a continued increase in numbers and distribution within the county.

White Greylags that occur within the large feral flocks are often mistakenly identified as Snow Geese and aberrant individuals seen regularly in the south-west are sometimes mistaken for White-fronted Geese; Greylag Goose x Canada Goose hybrids seem to be increasing in frequency, five were at Pilling on 20 Sept and they are seen regularly at MMWWT and Marshside.

(RICHARDSON'S) CACKLING GOOSE* *Branta hutchinsii*

One was with Pinkfeet at MMWWT on 7-21 Oct (J Watson *et al*) and later photographed at Marshside on the 25th (C Bushell).

This species does not yet appear on the official British list as the BOU has still not determined if a wild bird has occurred; one seen on the south-west mosses in November 1976 remains a candidate for the first record for Britain.

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

Common breeding resident and winter visitor.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lune Valley	330	224	299	23	33	2	17	169	450	24	190	391
Arkholme	141	150	/	/	/	/	19	40	450	/	198	200
L Moss/EMC	12	10	12	15	34	16	22	8	30	3	3	14
Aldcliffe	162	90	11	4	2	11	53	175	275	320	170	145
MBS WeBS	84	90	11	2	2	11	57	235	275	350	170	180
Ribble WeBS	1274	1028	243	109	57	113	988	2811	1328	1520	1354	1079
Fairhaven	21	95	44	37	28	286	291	33	37	159	24	50
MMWWT	/	11	30	/	/	40	/	/	200	50	50	50
Southport ML	58	45	36	46	63	99	90	1	14	1	12	14
Belmont Res	23	46	48	46	57	148	148	68	68	21	26	28
Foulridge Res.	500	200	75	/	/	200	100	25	/	90	10	278
Jackhouse Res	71	66	68	33	60	40	41	128	133	125	126	77
Rishton Res	201	324	6	/	/	/	/	6	/	66	/	/
Stocks Res	140	160	80	32	313	237	295	107	143	60	171	81
Eccleston Mere	/	50	/	/	50	/	2	120	150	100	100	200
Seaforth	60	26	24	12	30	218	209	65	106	30	61	19

The spread in distribution and increase in numbers of Canada Geese continues apace and large numbers can be seen at many of the county's wetland sites. The Ribble Estuary is now the favourite post-breeding and wintering site.

Breeding information included 21 pairs at Belmont Reservoir (up from 13 in 2011) with at least six pairs on the nearby moorland plateaux at up to 350m above sea level, two pairs in the Cuerden Valley, 20 pairs at Brockholes and at least seven at Stocks Reservoir where 14 fledged. Breeding was also confirmed at Brookside Lodges, Croasdale, Jackhouse and Low Moor and was probable at Sawley Grange and Twiston Moor. Four pairs bred in the Leighton Moss area and about 15 at Fairhaven. Pairs also nested at MMWWT, Mere Sands Wood, Marshside, Scarisbrick Hall, Southport Marine Lake and Knowsley Safari Park but with no information on numbers.

Birds were seen regularly in the Liverpool parks with the first successful nesting in Sefton Park for over 35 years; pairs also bred in Newsham Park and on the Leeds-Liverpool Canal.

Elsewhere on Merseyside breeding took place on Newton Lake and close by up to 34 goslings were recorded at Eccleston Mere in early summer.

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*

Uncommon wild winter visitor and common feral resident.

Wild Birds

Four were at Pilling Lane Ends in January and up to 18 presumed wild birds were with Pinkfeet and European White-fronts at Crossens/Marshside during January with smaller numbers there until 7 April. One flew past Rossall Point 1 May and two on the 3rd, while four, possibly wild migrants, flew in off the sea at dawn at Marshside 4 May with five there 19 May.

Six were at Pilling on 28 Sept with up to 23 there on 9-17 Oct, two in the Aldcliffe/Colloway Marsh area until 14 Oct and 27 at Aldcliffe on the 23rd. Early October saw one or two in the Pilling area with five on the Eric Morecambe complex on the 5th. Small numbers remained in the Fylde to the year's end, including three east of Marton Mere on 14 & 21 Oct. Two flying south over Seaforth on 26 Oct may have been wild as was one on Downholland Moss on 20 Oct

Feral Birds

Stocks Reservoir remains the main site in east Lancashire, where a flock of 31 remained from late 2011 until 28 Jan. They had gone by the next day, leaving a single lame bird which stayed until 25 Feb. No more were seen until four on 25 May with further influxes of 19 on 18 June and 23 on 1 July, growing to 37 on 17 Aug and remaining at that level until 24 Nov. The origins of these birds is unknown but they presumably came from a population outside the county.

Elsewhere in east Lancashire singles were reported from Jackhouse on 10 June, Cant Clough Reservoir on 25 July, Lower Towneley Scrape on 29 Aug and Long Causeway on 12 Sept, the latter two both with Canada Geese.

Two immatures were at Seaforth on 2-3 June, one was with Canadas on the Ribble at Clifton Marsh on 24 June, three on at Banks Marsh with Canada Geese on 22 Aug into September, ten near Rainford on 18 August and occasional singles at Eccleston Mere with 35 there on 23 Oct. It seems likely that most if not all of these records involved birds from the Knowsley Park/MMWWT population, which peaked at 112 at the latter site on 22 Oct.

The county's other main feral population at Blackpool Zoo held up to 20 free-flying birds with close to that number seen at Marton Mere in March and October.

BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla*

Uncommon winter visitor.

One off Jenny Brown's Point on 29 May was not specified to race.

DARK-BELLIED BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla bernicla*

Uncommon winter visitor.

Singles were on the Hodder at Burholme on 1-5 Jan, at Brockholes on the 29th and Lytham on the 31st. Up to three were in the Pilling area in January and February and these or another three were recorded on the Fylde coast on 20-21 April, with two seen from Rossall and Cockersand on 3 May. One was at Crossens on 7 April.

In the second winter period two were at Hightown on 25 Oct, three at Burrow's Marsh on 4 Nov and one on Lytham Moss on 26 Dec.

PALE-BELLIED BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla hrota*

Uncommon winter visitor.

Up to five at Pilling Lane Ends from 3 Jan to 19 Feb were seen occasionally elsewhere in the area. Two flew past Knott End and Rossall Point on 7 April and two past Heysham on the 18th.

No more were seen until three flew south-west off Heysham on 17 Sept with presumably the same at Rossall 15 minutes later. Further ones and twos were seen off Blackpool on 12 Sept, Formby Point on the 19th and Heysham on the 30th. Two or three were in north Fylde until the end of the year and single(s) were at MMWWT on 22 Oct and 1 Nov, Marshside on 29 Oct and Banks Marsh on 18 Nov.

SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

Abundant winter visitor at coastal sites, fairly 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	2435	1553	1365	1205	639	730	158	187	2174	1154	1610	1627
Ribble WeBS	2308	934	2372	1302	1089	2124	1230	492	1352	1292	1895	1805
MMWWT	1200	824	850	295	45	94	58	90	2	317	560	920
Alt WeBS	234	186	115	84	41	54	14	23	119	131	200	54

The Ribble population continues to decline gradually and has now not met the criteria for international importance for six years. Although the five-year average in Morecambe Bay dropped considerably, it still remains at double the level of the early 90s; numbers at MMWWT appear to be fairly stable.

The largest counts in east Lancashire were of seven at Stocks Reservoir in December and a flock of 32 flying east, presumably on moult migration, over Lowerhouse Lodge on 23 July.

Despite being a fairly common breeder on most estuaries and many inland wetlands relatively few breeding records were received. An estimated 22 pairs were at Hesketh Out Marsh, 16 pairs bred at MMWWT while there were three pairs at Marshside and two at Seaforth. A pair with six young was on the River Douglas at Croston on 6th May.

MANDARIN DUCK *Aix galericulata*

Scarce feral resident and escapee.

Up to three pairs were at Singleton, but there was no suggestion of breeding; these birds may have been responsible for regular reports of ones and twos coming from nearby Fylde locations including Bispham, Todderstaffe Hall and Ashton Gardens.

Breeding was confirmed in the Foulridge area when a female was seen with six young on the Upper Reservoir. Up to nine were at Foulridge and twelve at Slipper Hill in September. Singles were seen occasionally throughout the year at Stocks Reservoir, Southport Hospital, the Belmont area and at Common Bank Lodge, Chorley.

WIGEON *Anas penelope*

Abundant 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
EMC	395	286	164	22	3	1	2	3	115	315	270	280
MMWWT	1040	1520	450	40	0	0	1	1	60	298	453	265
MBS WeBS	2815	6092	1270	99	0	0	0	16	904	2419	4635	9587
Ribble WeBS	34696	39496	4639	357	29	9	2	331	3908	26042	45199	43367
Stocks Res.	113	67	51	15	0	0	2	5	8	27	41	62

This year was the first since 1989 when the year's maximum count did not exceed 50000 on the Ribble. The five-year average dropped to just over 70000, still however well within the range of fluctuation for the last 15-20 years. It was a good year in Morecambe Bay however, with the December WeBS count being the highest on record, and perhaps unsurprisingly the five-year average continued its recent rise to an all-time high of 6084.

During January flocks on the Ribble and at MMWWT were surveyed as part of an attempt to establish how age and sex ratios in Wigeon vary nationally and across Europe. Over 7000 birds were sampled in Lancashire, revealing 56% male and 44% female birds. The number of first-winter birds was 10%; this compared to the national average of 15%. Preliminary results showed the observed sex ratios are fairly typical in Britain, while further south in Europe a larger proportion of females and first-winter birds can be expected.

Summering birds included four at Marshside, two at Newton Marsh and one at Leighton Moss. No breeding was suspected at any of those sites.

AMERICAN WIGEON* *Anas americana*

Vagrant.

The male seen once in December 2011 was with Wigeon on the River Ribble at Longton on 7 Jan. The following day it was relocated at Newton Marsh, but it was not seen subsequently.

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
EM Complex	38	28	22	12	18	24	24	46	90	48	66	56
Leighton Moss	85	80	44	48	85	55	25	65	82	121	194	36
Brockholes	55	37	20	7	4	8	1	11	14	22	40	/
Ribble WeBS	12	9	24	20	28	29	5	13	110	33	19	17
MMWWT	12	34	28	8	3	24	11	10	39	8	10	/

The largest concentration of this species is found at Leighton Moss and the Eric Morecambe complex, where there is considerable movement between the two sites. Co-ordinated counts there produced 107 on 17 Jan, 89 on 10 Aug, 172 on 10 Sept and 224 on 23 Nov. This represented a lower level than recent years in the early winter period but a slight increase at the other end of the year.

Leighton Moss is now firmly re-established as the county stronghold for breeding Gadwall following a gradual decline at Marshside; 23 pairs bred there compared to just seven at Marshside,

where at least 15 young were raised. Three pairs bred at Hesketh Out Marsh while single pairs bred at Brockholes and, unusually, Grimsargh Reservoirs.

The largest count from the Fylde was of 34 at Marton Mere in October. In east Lancashire up to 16 were at Grimsargh Reservoir during October.

TEAL *Anas crecca*

Abundant winter visitor to western wetlands, smaller flocks in east. Scarce 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	1490	1517	561	172	3	0	24	557	1586	3068	3369	3342
Leighton Moss	925	640	470	140	24	14	36	125	294	685	1040	790
Ribble WeBS	3428	3383	1469	362	24	11	30	1139	581	5307	5148	7001
Marton Mere	500	980	29	15	1	1	0	0	30	188	300	1000
MMWWT	2560	3316	700	350	35	90	81	350	1590	5300	3000	1630
Seaforth (Alt)	680	620	42	12	10	0	1	46	160	336	760	3000
Stocks Res.	550	250	115	108	17	8	2	30	150	270	800	700

A site record count of 3000 at Seaforth occurred on 29 Dec surpassing the previous record of 1170. Although well below the five-year average in the early winter period, the late winter peak in Morecambe Bay was in fact the second highest annual maximum on record. The peak count on the Ribble was up on the last couple of years but remained very close to the five-year average.

Large counts away from the major coastal sites included 240 at Silverdale Moss in January, 400 at Arkholme in February, 360 at Singleton in late August, 1000 at Lathwaite in October and 500 at Mere Sands Wood in December.

Away from Stocks Reservoir the largest count in east Lancashire was 62 at Withgill in October whilst in the West Pennine Moors the highest counts were 140 on Lower Rivington Reservoir on 7 Feb and 120 near Belmont Reservoir on 21 Feb.

One or two pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir, with two young seen. Up to fifteen remained at Leighton Moss in May and three males were present at Marshside during the spring although breeding was not confirmed.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL *Anas carolinensis*

Vagrant.

Single males were present during the early winter at MMWWT and Leighton Moss but were seen less regularly than might be expected for such well-watched sites.

The MMWWT individual was present from 1-10 Jan only while the Leighton Moss bird was seen between 6-28 Jan. A late male appeared at Marshside on 20-21 April before it, or perhaps another individual on northward migration, was seen on 3-5 May.

The first returning male was at MMWWT on 31 Oct. It remained, being seen only occasionally, until last seen on 14 Dec. What was perhaps the same individual was then on the Wyre Estuary on 16-18, 22 & 28-29 Dec, with brief excursions to Marshside on the 25th and 30th.

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*

Abundant and widespread winter visitor and common 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	678	480	215	192	137	142	264	340	539	403	610	1076
Leighton Moss	138	155	95	75	95	120	490	470	510	177	162	182
Ribble WeBS	1244	627	529	327	235	221	317	716	637	1220	998	1002
MMWWT	2350	1810	930	890	670	600	770	1180	1600	1730	/	/
Alt WeBS	380	109	55	25	25	41	57	82	183	443	301	636
Stocks Res.	350	130	38	15	42	60	203	270	270	250	380	150

The Alt population shows some signs of increasing albeit not close to the level at the turn of the century when the five-year average sometimes exceeded 900. A similar short-term increase is also evident in Morecambe Bay while there is a very gradual recent increase on the Ribble as well. This is somewhat encouraging when put in the context of a long-term national decline of almost 40%.

Notable counts from the West Pennine Moors included 128 at Belmont Reservoir on 16 Sept, 118 at Delph Reservoir on 3 Feb and 350 on a large private pond near Belmont on 14 Dec, attracted by artificial feeding during hard weather when all other local waterbodies were frozen.

Reports of breeding were many and widespread across the county; only a selection of the larger counts are given here. Leighton Moss had an estimated 64 pairs, there were 38 at Belmont, 28 each at Marshside and Hesketh Out Marsh and twelve pairs at Brockholes.

PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

Common winter visitor to coast and western wetlands. 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	63	524	193	12	0	0	0	0	225	428	311	391
Leighton Moss	30	47	64	5	2	0	0	2	35	15	92	52
Ribble WeBS	709	752	141	6	0	1	0	0	0	46	297	579
MMWWT	269	578	7	5	0	0	0	3	237	64	274	/
Stocks Res	237	81	3	0	0	4	0	1	2	44	52	12

The Ribble figures for both winter periods were well below the five-year average which, at present, exceeds 2000. Encouragingly, 1600 were counted off Lytham in November but were missed by the Ribble WeBS count that month. Little change was noted at MMWWT while the peak count in Morecambe Bay, where numbers have fluctuated wildly over the years, showed a small increase.

The last record of the spring was of two at the Eric Morecambe complex on 3 May.

A very unusual sighting, and a very brief one at that, was the two pairs at Stocks Reservoir for a few minutes on 8 June.

The first returning birds of the autumn were two at Leighton Moss on 16 Aug.

GARGANEY *Anas querquedula*

Uncommon spring and autumn migrant and rare breeder. Rare in winter. Amber List (rare breeder).

A pair at Leighton Moss from 7 April were the first of the year. Up to three males and one female were sighted there regularly throughout the breeding season. Mating was witnessed on 30 April and a female with a juvenile was seen on 2 July suggesting breeding could well have taken place.

A pair were at Marshside from 10-15 April, one male was there on 11 June and two immatures in August. Two males were present at MMWWT on and off from 1 May until the end of the month. It is possible that breeding could have occurred at either of these sites.

Four were at Newton Marsh on 2 May with a single male at Marton Mere on the same date. A male was at Newton Marsh from 10-17 June. Single males were at Brockholes on 14 and 27 May and 2 June.

The first returning bird, an eclipse male, was at MMWWT on 28 June followed by another at Todderstaffe Hall on 7-8 July. Up to five were counted regularly moving between here and nearby Mythop during August, with six at Mythop on 7th. Three juveniles remained there until 2 Sept, presumably the same birds were seen the following day at Marton Mere. Elsewhere on the Fylde single birds were at Fleetwood Marsh on 12 Aug and Lathwaite on 11 Sept and 12-13 Oct.

BLUE-WINGED TEAL *Anas discors*

Vagrant.

An eclipse adult male was found at Marshside on the afternoon of 16 Sept (N Hunt). The record has been accepted by the BBRC and constitutes the fourth county record and the first since one at MMWWT in September 1992.

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	76	2	7	8	6	1	0	2	9	155	15	7
Leighton/EMC	76	46	42	44	44	24	10	34	117	231	104	96
Ribble WeBS	134	141	115	35	12	11	13	37	59	50	245	189
Marshside	180	400	113	25	5	5	9	80	60	260	197	130
Marton Mere	14	35	20	9	0	0	1	10	20	35	43	48
MMWWT	28	17	25	/	22	11	1	45	46	56	40	12

The Leighton Moss and Eric Morecambe complex population was a little smaller than recently. Overall numbers on the Ribble showed a small increase on last year and numbers remain at roughly four times the level of the 1990s, reflecting a smaller national increase.

A decline in breeding pairs has been noted at all three of the county's main breeding localities. An estimated 18 pairs bred at Leighton Moss while the seven pairs at Marshside was the worst ever. Just two pairs bred at MMWWT, while the only other breeding record was of two pairs at Newton Marsh.

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	36	64	1	0	0	0	1	1	28	34	27	40
Leighton Moss	13	26	31	23	19	3	2	5	25	24	16	0
MMWWT	96	171	45	0	4	4	0	6	5	20	41	/
Marton Mere	32	29	2	0	0	0	0	1	3	12	16	8
Stanley Park	38	93	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	16	103
Seaforth	23	43	7	2	0	3	3	4	7	6	14	28

The wintering population that moves regularly between Leighton Moss and the Dockacres complex continues to show a substantial recent decline. A significant fall in numbers is also evident at Marshside. A long-term decline of 50% has been observed nationally and research is investigating whether the 'missing' birds are in fact remaining further north and east in continental Europe, as has been noted in Goldeneye and Tufted Duck.

Other than at the sites listed in the table above, the 54 at Southport Marine Lake on 18 Jan was the largest count in the county.

An estimated nine pairs bred at Leighton Moss, at least three pairs bred at MMWWT and one pair probably bred at Mere Brow Leisure Lakes.

RING-NECKED DUCK* *Aythya collaris*

Vagrant.

For the third successive winter the adult male returned to the Fylde where it was again prone to disappearing for weeks at a time.

It was found at Thornton ICI Reservoirs on 1 Feb where it remained until the 6th. Following a two week absence it was then located at Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park on 21 Feb where it stayed until the 29th. Finally, it reappeared at Thornton ICI Reservoirs on 24 March remaining for the following day only.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

Common winter visitor, uncommon 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	92	86	95	52	34	22	20	12	20	47	123	63
Dockacres	73	130	39	47	11	8	21	3	23	36	52	105
Alston Res	11	30	17	21	14	40	52	93	50	25	30	29
Brockholes	66	60	54	47	17	11	28	23	43	59	50	70
Glasson	86	36	12	6	5	/	6	7	31	41	45	68
Ribble WeBS	73	122	64	35	18	22	3	30	60	28	10	139
MMWWT	90	264	43	10	2	12	1	4	15	10	25	/
Seaforth	11	54	27	12	10	52	82	129	60	42	25	27

There was a slight decline at Glasson which was surpassed as the most productive Fylde site for the species by Stanley Park where there were 107 on 2 Feb. Given the excellent count from MMWWT in February, the late winter period was very disappointing.

The Ribble WeBS counts were well down on last year's; the vast majority of these were at Ainsdale Sands Lake where the annual maxima was 175 in December. Nearby an impressive 277 were on Hesketh Park Lake during November.

As is the case for many duck species, Leighton Moss was the main breeding site with an estimated 23 pairs. Four pairs bred at Brockholes and at Alston Wetland, with five successful pairs at nearby Grimsargh Reservoirs. At least two pairs were at MMWWT, and two pairs were at both Marshside and Lunt Meadows.

SCAUP *Aythya marila*

Fairly common 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	11	11	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3

The flock at Seaforth continues to persist but at just a fraction of its former numbers. Up to five were present at the county's other regular site on the sea at Morecambe. A notable eight were off Blackpool from 7-12 Feb, with six there on 24th. Six were off Formby Point the following day. A female at Fairhaven Lake in early January was joined by a first-winter male on the 8th, with a lone individual there on the 16th. A male was on Conder Pool between 14-22 March and two were at Aldcliffe on 5 April. A late male at Newton Marsh on 21 April remained until 2 May.

The male that usually returns to Seaforth in June was not seen this year; however an eclipse male was at Brockholes from 31 May to 8 June. An early coastal record was the three off Rossall Point on 8 July. Autumn records came from MMWWT on 27 Sept to 3 Oct, Leighton Moss from 13 Oct to 2 Nov and Fleetwood Marine Lake during December. A male was present on and off at Aldcliffe and several sites on the Lune Estuary during November with two at Aldcliffe on 24th. A first-winter was at Myerscough Quarry on 9 Nov.

In east Lancashire a female was at Foulridge Reservoirs on 6-12 April. An immature was at Stocks Reservoir from 22-31 Oct, while on the 23rd a flock of ten there was a fantastic inland record.

AYTHYA HYBRIDS

All reports relate to females thought to be a Pochard x Ferruginous Duck hybrids, perhaps of the same individual. One was at Brockholes through the early winter period until 16 March and again from 7 Nov irregularly to the year's end. Other records came from Alston Reservoirs on 30 Nov. and MMWWT on 2 Dec.

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.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	84	154	193	135	114	97	153	50	69	66	60	65
Rossall Point	60	100	200	20	16	/	/	/	11	57	61	86
Ribble WeBS	1	0	82	71	157	56	23	11	24	0	4	1

Although there was a reduced observer effort, it was thought that the decline against the 2011 figures in Morecambe Bay did represent an actual fall in numbers. The maximum count on the

Lune Estuary was 206 which compares poorly with the 416 counted in 2011. The highest count of the year came from Heysham, where there were 247 in February.

A crèche of 20 young at Scaleshstones Point in June indicates that at least four pairs bred on the marshes around Morecambe Bay. A maximum of just 13 juveniles were seen on the Ribble in July, compared with 40 in 2011.

Two males at Stocks Reservoir on 4 May made it two consecutive years of records from east Lancashire.

LONG-TAILED DUCK *Clangula hyemalis*

Uncommon winter visitor, rare inland.

In the early winter period singles were seen off Blackpool on 10 Jan and 25 Feb while later individuals were seen flying past with scoter flocks on 12 April and 17 May. At Rossall Point, singles flew past on 1 April and 20 May.

The first autumn record came from Rossall Point, a male on 7 Oct. Another was there on 17 Nov. Inland, a female or immature was at Stocks Reservoir from 29 Oct to 25 Nov, possibly the same bird as that at Alston Reservoirs from 2-10 Dec. Another female or immature was at Seaforth from 4-21 Nov. Finally, a first winter female at Fairhaven Lake on 20 Dec remained into 2013.

COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*

Abundant visitor to Liverpool Bay, especially in winter, although main flocks are hardly visible from land. Uncommon 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
Blackpool	5000	5000	10000	650	390	330	1050	6500	4000	2000	500	500

The wide variations in monthly maxima at Blackpool, with the exception of the spring months, are more the product of viewing conditions and observer coverage than genuine fluctuations in the population. As ever, the bulk of the population is found well offshore in Liverpool Bay and is only effectively monitored by aerial surveying.

Spring passage observed at Heysham peaked with 69 on 17 March and 25 on 13 May, the first and last dates that passage was recorded. In addition to the expected mid-summer passage through inland waterbodies, there were several spring records. In east Lancashire, all were of single females: at Stocks Reservoir, Dinkley and Upper Foulridge Reservoir on 31 March then another at Stocks on 11 April. A male at Brockholes on 10 May was unusual in remaining until the 12th.

The first summer record was a flock of eleven at Clowbridge on 19 June. A female was at Preston Dock on 18 July with a male there on 25-27th. At Alston there was one on 20 July, two on 26-27th, one on 4-5 August and five on 2 Sept. At Stocks Reservoir four were present on 1 July followed by one on 4-5th, two on 15th, six on 19th and one on 20th. Further singles were seen there on 19 Aug and 20 Sept. Other singles were recorded at Dean Clough on 18 July and both Parsonage and Lower Foulridge Reservoirs on 2 Aug. Six males were on Belmont Reservoir on 1 Sept.

In the late winter period a long-staying bird was at Alston on 1-17 Nov. This was followed by twelve at Stocks Reservoir on 24 Nov; two remained the following day with one of these still present into 2013.

VELVET SCOTER *Melanitta fusca***Uncommon winter visitor.**

There was a total of 15 records between January and April along the Blackpool coast. The most notable of these was nine on 21 March and a summering male on 27 July. Elsewhere on the Fylde, ones and twos were recorded from Rossall Point on 1 March, 22 Oct, 11 & 19 Nov. One was also off Fleetwood on 27-28 Dec.

Away from the Fylde, three flew past Heysham on 18 April and singles were off Crosby on 14 Sept and Formby Point on 29th.

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	27	34	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	11	60
Leighton Moss	14	14	8	3	0	0	0	0	0	4	8	9
Lune Estuary	143	170	44	2	1	0	0	0	0	2	10	25
Alston Res	53	26	41	14	0	0	0	0	0	10	32	43
Brockholes	15	31	14	8	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	13
Seaforth	35	54	34	30	2	0	0	0	0	14	20	53

Last year reported the first year for many years that the Lune Estuary population did not reach three figures. It appears that was a blip, although late winter numbers were low. Short-stopping as a result of warmer winters on the continent has been widely observed for this species so it will be interesting to see how numbers here fare in the future.

A late female remained at Myerscough Quarry until 6 May. An unusual summer record saw a male at Grimsargh Reservoir on 27 May only.

In east Lancashire numbers at Alston Reservoirs remained at the level of the end of 2011. The late winter period, although not quite at the level of 2010/11 suggests there has indeed been a sustained increase in recent years. However, total numbers in WeBS counts in the Chorley area never reached double figures in either winter period, so perhaps the wintering population there is being lost to Alston and Brockholes.

SMEW *Mergus albellus***Uncommon winter visitor.**

The first record of the year was one at Leighton Moss on 2 Jan. What was almost certainly the same wide-ranging individual, variously identified as a redhead or adult female, was then seen at Marton Mere on 13 Jan, Skippool Creek and Glasson on the 15th. It then took up residence at Leighton Moss from 19 Jan until 1 March with a brief trip back to Glasson on 28 Jan. From 11 March to the 28th it was at Aldcliffe, after which there was no further sign.

On 20 March a bird at Preesall Flashes was seen well enough to be identified as a first-winter, so perhaps there was more than one individual involved. A female at Dean Clough Reservoir on 12 Feb remained until at least 2 March.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator*

Fairly common coastal winter visitor. Rare 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	29	45	43	23	6	12	0	0	7	34	51	44
Stocks Res.	0	3	15	13	7	10	7	1	1	0	2	2

The wintering population in Morecambe Bay which was described in 2006 as "hanging on" appears to have stabilised somewhat over the last few years. The largest single site count was 26 at Rossall Point on 12 March. The highest counts from Liverpool Bay consisted of 13 on 13 Jan and 17 on 20 April off Formby Point.

A minimum of four pairs were present at Stocks Reservoir in spring, where two broods were seen in June and July. Another pair was seen at Slaidburn but there was no proof of breeding. Three on Belmont Reservoir on 29 July were the first there since 1995.

GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser*

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

International importance 2700; National importance 120.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	12	15	5	18	3	13	12	27	37	25	14	13
Dockacres	37	10	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	4	19
River Lune	26	33	45	46	26	8	12	40	25	27	17	30

A female had three young on the Ribble at Dinkley, although as always it is impossible to know exactly where breeding took place. Other broods were seen at Barden Marsh (Burnley) and Stocks Reservoir, the latter consisting of eleven and twelve young in two broods. A female with seven young on the Yarrow at Croston in May was the first known breeding record for that area. Breeding was also suspected on Langden Beck. Results from the atlas survey suggest that the Lancashire breeding population continues to increase with 150 pairs now thought to nest in the county.



Steve Young

In the West Pennine Moors, 46 at Delph Reservoir in February was the largest count there since 2005. There were significantly fewer large roost counts from the reservoirs in the east of the county than in 2011, the largest of these were 25 at Alston in January and 18 at Foulridge in December.

RUDDY DUCK *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Decreasing feral winter visitor and rare breeder.

A female at Knowsley Park on 11 Jan and a male at Fleetwood Marsh on 2 Aug were the only records of the year.

RED GROUSE *Lagopus lagopus*

Abundant but localised breeding resident. Red List (breeding decline).

Systematic counts undertaken by the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust in Bowland indicated that the upward trend in numbers appears to have levelled off after six years of strong growth. The mean spring density on four large shooting estates was 52 pairs/100 ha, the same as in 2011 but nearly three times that recorded in 2005. The July density of 150 birds/100ha was only slightly up on 2011, but was double 2005's, despite 2012 being only an average year for young production with an average brood size of 4.6, undoubtedly due to the very wet breeding season. Whilst few detailed bag records were received, it is known that Bowland, if not elsewhere, enjoyed another productive season.

Casual records were received from 25 sites in Bowland and included 69 on Lyth Fell on 15 Oct, 50 on Great Anne Moss on 18 Oct, 12 at Cross of Greet on 15 May and twelve on Harrisend Fell on 1 Oct.

Records were also received from several of the outlying Bowland fells including twelve on Longridge Fell on 9 Oct and seven on Caton Moor on 22 Sept, plus a notable count of 22 from Pendle on 29 Jan. No counts of note were received from the South Pennine Moors or Rossendale.

In the West Pennine Moors, July counts by gamekeepers prior to the shooting season located five pairs with 25 juveniles in a 100ha sample of Withnell Moor, and seven pairs with 14 juveniles in a 100ha sample of Anglezarke Moor – resulting in 100+ driven over guns there on 30 Aug. Just 19 were seen during a shoot on Belmont Moor on 25 Aug and 19+ were on Hoddlesden Moss on 10 Nov.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa*

Common breeding resident. Population supplemented by regular releases in most areas.

There was a notable decline in both records (down from 245 to 175) and locations (from 147 to 96) between 2011 and 2012, possibly due to increased losses of reared birds pre- or immediately post-release during the atrocious summer weather. The reduction cannot have been due to a poor breeding season as very few pairs breed successfully even in a good summer, and it was therefore unsurprising that no reports of successful breeding were received in 2012 given the inclement weather.

By far the highest count received and the only one representative of the large numbers released in the county, was of 260 on Caton Moor on 8 Sept. Other birds were recorded nearby in north Bowland and the Lune Valley, most notably seven at Leck on 29 Dec. Elsewhere in Bowland and east Lancashire, single-figure counts were received from the Dunsop Valley, Browsholme, Burholme Fell and Chipping. In the West Pennine Moors, two pairs were on territory during the breeding season at Belmont whilst at Brindle near Chorley a pair was reported as being regular in a BBS square.. The Fylde reported 32 records from 24 sites and very large numbers are still known

to be being released in the Pilling area, which were undeniably responsible for the 15 at Fluke Hall on 20 Oct although the 20+, including two white birds, on 2 Jan had clearly survived the 2011 shooting season.

Notable records from other sites on the Fylde included 24 at Preese Hall on 30 Dec, ten on Rawcliffe Moss on 7 Jan and a pair in the dunes at Lytham St. Anne's on 21 April.

The south-west mosses provided their usual widely-distributed selection of reports, with 16+ at Rufford on 16 Jan, 16 at Altcar on 24 Feb, ten on Catchdale Moss on 24 March and eight on Burscough Moss on 9 Jan the most significant. Large-scale releases within Knowsley Park were without doubt responsible for the 27 west of the park wall on 22 Sept, 19 to the east on 9 Oct and eight to the north by the Old Coach Road on 19 Aug.

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix*

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

The wettest summer for a century resulted in the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust describing 2012 as 'an apocalyptic year for Grey Partridge breeding success' and certainly the worst year recorded for young production since the Trust's records began in 1933. Lancashire would appear to have fared better than most counties as the number of reports received was only slightly down from 396 in 2011 to 337 in 2012 with records received from a comparable 141 locations as opposed to 152 the previous year.

In north Lancashire, the presence of this species at Leighton Moss in August was notable whilst the peak count from the main site in the area, at Cockersand/Aldcliffe, was one of seven on 23 Jan.

The number of records from the Fylde was down again from 83 in 2011 to 64 in 2012 and from a reduced number of 24 sites, down from 32 in 2011. The area is still a stronghold for the species, however, with early-year counts of 18 on Lytham Moss and 15 on Cockerham Moss on 2 Jan, twelve at Bradshaw Lane Head on New Year's Day and eight on Clifton Marsh on 8 Jan. A minimum of 13 pairs were reported prior and during the breeding season including three pairs on Freckleton/Newton Marsh, pairs with young at Conder Pool and Clifton Marsh plus a pair that had five eggs predated by a Stoat at Pilling on 13 May. It was highly encouraging to note some large coveys in the second half of the year on the Fylde with double-figure counts of 23 on 22 Sept and 20 on 4 Nov at Bradshaw Lane Head, 16 at Pilling on 5 Oct and twelve at Lytham Moss on 14 Oct.

In central Lancashire small numbers were reported from Goosnargh, Leyland, New Longton and the Croston/Bretherton Mosses near Chorley. In the West Pennine Moors, three pairs were on territory around Belmont during the breeding season but the three coveys totalling 32 birds seen there during November and December were thought to originate from released stock.

There were 22 reports from nine sites in east Lancashire in comparison with 17 from 16 sites in 2011, although twelve of these records were from Sheddin Clough alone with a maximum of four recorded there on 13 Oct. The two pairs at Wycoller on 5 May and a pair seen at Stocks on 29 May were the only other positives to take from a very gloomy picture of a species now in a perilous situation in the pastoral and upland east.

A far healthier picture prevails across the south-west mosses from the Ribble southwards with the RSPB sites on the south side of the Ribble recording a breeding season increase to nine pairs from four pairs in 2011, namely three pairs at Marshside, two on both Marshside saltmarsh and Hesketh Out Marsh and a single pair on Crossens Inner Marsh. A maximum of 13 were at Marshside and nine on Hesketh Out Marsh in the early year.

Pairs were recorded from 18 widely scattered sites on the mosses with three pairs at Lunt Meadows fledging at least seven juveniles. Coveys were equally spread across the mosses from

late summer onwards with peak counts of 21 in Churchtown Moss on 18 Oct, eleven on Burscough Moss on 16 Sept and ten near Maghull on 4 Nov being the double-figures counts received.

The strong population in the area south-east of Liverpool and east to St. Helens had an exceptional showing with over 100 records from in excess of 25 sites compared with 60 from 20 sites in 2011. The highest count in the early year was a covey of twelve at Oglet on 5 Jan with three pairs reported later near Speke in May and pairs at five sites around Oglet in June. Reports later in the year would indicate far better productivity than nationally with 55 in nine coveys at Cronton/Tarbock on 25 Oct, 31 in two coveys near Speke on 4 Nov, 20 in three coveys at Halewood/Tarbock on 13 Oct, 14 on Catchdale Moss on 14 Oct, ten at Eccleston Park on 7 Oct and numerous single-figure counts.

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*

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

In contrast to 2011 when 31 singing males were recorded, 2012 was a very poor year for Quail in Lancashire, with brief records from only five sites resulting in the lowest annual total recorded since three in 2004.

The first record was from near Ormskirk on 20 May with records of further singing males from the south-west mosses coming from MMWWT on 28-29 May, Lydiate on 30 May and Mawdesley Moss on 24-29 June. The last was a calling bird on Rawcliffe Moss on 19 June.

PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus*

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

The number of records received was even fewer than usual and as ever remain largely unrepresentative of the huge numbers released and the widespread naturalised population.

Records from north Lancashire and the Lune Valley included 176 at Caton Moor on 8 Sept, 75 at nearby Claughton on the same day, 65 in Roeburndale on 11 Nov and 60 at Leighton Moss on 12 Nov.

The highlights of the 64 records from 22 sites on the Fylde were 70 at Singleton on 8 Oct, 29 at Marton Mere on 3 Dec and ten at Todderstaffe Hall on 29 Oct, with just three broods reported. Reports from east Lancashire and Bowland included 80 at Moor Piece on 4 Nov, 58 at Marl Hill on 3 Nov, 28 at Dunsop Bridge on 20 Oct with broods seen both at Stocks and Jackhouse Reservoir and a white bird on Oswaldtwistle Moor in the spring.

In the south-west there were again regular counts of up to six in the Speke, Garston and Oglet areas of south Liverpool plus six seen adjacent to Croxteth Park and at Parkside near Newton-le-Willows. Large numbers are known to be released within the private Knowsley Park with records from outside the park wall of 102 on 22 Sept and 17 on the Old Coach Road on 21 Oct. Churchtown Moss recorded 58 on 18 Oct whilst 50 were on Windle Moss on 21 Oct. Three pairs bred on Freshfield Dune Heath and females with broods were seen on Croston Moss and at Withnell near Chorley.

In the West Pennine Moors, several males were noted holding atypical moorland breeding territories, some at the upper end of the 'grouse zone' at up to 430m asl. Over 300 mainly released birds were near Belmont on 14 Oct with the gamekeeper there relating that one particularly distinctive male has been present in the same wood now for eight years.

RED-THROATED DIVER *Gavia stellata*

Common winter visitor and spring passage migrant. Scarce inland.

International importance: 10000. National importance: 170.

Large numbers were present off Formby Point in January with 58 on the 10th, 42 on the 13th and 23 on the 25th, followed by 21 on 25 Feb. Elsewhere in the first winter period eight were off Blackpool on 18 Jan and single(s) off Jenny Brown's Point on 24 Feb and Heysham on the 29th.

Into March and the start of typical spring passage, two were off Jenny Brown's Point on the 8th, 13 at Formby Point on the 12th, six off Blackpool on the 22nd, with increasing counts at Heysham peaking at 25 on the 20th. Numbers were low in April off Formby with a peak of twelve on the 20th, but held up elsewhere with peaks of 87 off Blackpool on the 15th and 21 off Jenny Brown's Point on the 21st; peak counts in May were ten off Blackpool and eight off Heysham.

Ones and twos began to be seen again in September at Heysham, Formby Point and Blackpool but numbers mostly remained in low single figures until the end of the year with the exception of 57 off Blackpool on 1 Dec.

BLACK-THROATED DIVER *Gavia arctica*

Scarce annual winter visitor, mostly on coast.

One was recorded from Formby Point in January and further singles were seen off Ainsdale on 19-21 April, off Starr Gate on the 22nd, off Rossall Point on 2 & 4 May, with possibly the same bird seen distantly at Heysham the same day.

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER *Gavia immer*

Scarce, less than annual, mostly on coast.

Singles off Blackpool on 13 Jan and 12 May and Rossall Point on 13 May were the only records in the early year, and single(s) off Rossall Point on 4 & 11 Nov and Blackpool on the 10th were the only other records.

FULMAR *Fulmarus glacialis*

Uncommon on coasts in late summer and early autumn during onshore winds.

Sightings were in keeping with the small increase seen last year. Most records were of single birds (unless stated otherwise) from three locations, Heysham, the Fylde coast and Formby Point.

The year started with one off Blackpool on 17 March. Reports then followed in April from Formby Point, Marshside, Heysham and Blackpool, with counts of three at the latter on the 17th and on three dates in May, and off Heysham on 11 May.

Very occasional ones and twos continued to be seen into June off Heysham and the Fylde and Sefton coasts before the return passage got underway in July with singles off Blackpool, Formby Point and Cockersand. August produced further singles at Seaforth, Blackpool, Leighton Moss and Heysham, and September at Rossall Point, Blackpool and Heysham. The year ended with a flurry of 'high' counts from Formby Point: eleven on 14 Sept, four on the 18th, eight on the 19th and three on the 29th.

MANX SHEARWATER *Puffinus puffinus*

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

It was a standard start to the year with first sightings in April of 18 off Formby Point on the 20th and 55 off the Blackpool coast the following day. Peak counts during May included 36 off Formby,

six off Rossall Point and five off Heysham; 23 were off Blackpool on 3 May with 245 there on the 29th.

Records during June included 35 off Blackpool, 13 off Formby Point and twelve off Heysham, before birds began to return in significant numbers during July, when the highest counts were of 147 off Blackpool on the 1st with 1000 there on the 14th, and 78 off Formby on the 18th.

Typically, August produced the most regular counts – apart from at Heysham which only recorded two and Rossall nine. Counts of 70+ were recorded off Blackpool on the 27th and 28th, while Formby Point had 53 on the 1st, 90 on the 8th and 42 on the 22nd.

Numbers were in low single figures during September with 22 off Formby on the 14th the only exception, and the last of the year was one off Rossall Point on the 30th.

BALEARIC SHEARWATER* *Puffinus mauretanicus*

Vagrant.

Omitted from 2010 report. One was off Blackpool on 8 Aug (S Dunstan, P Slade). This adds to the one previously reported for 25 Aug. These constitute the fourth and fifth county records.

STORM-PETREL *Hydrobates pelagicus*

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

With one exception all records this year were in June.

The first of the year was one found dead in a field well inland at Forton on 18 June. A number were then seen off the coast on the 23rd with singles reported from Formby Point and Heysham, three at Blackpool and thirteen off Rossall Point. The only other records were singles off Heysham on 24 June and off Crosby on 14 Sept.

LEACH'S PETREL *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

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

It was a poor year with prevailing wind directions not favouring sightings.

September records were received from Heysham (a single on the 16th and three on the 30th) the north Fylde coast (up to three from three locations on the 14th and one at two sites on the 17th), and Formby Point (14 on the 14th, three on the 18th, eleven on the 19th and one the next day).

There were two off Formby on 3 Sept and with three there on the 16th, and one was in the mouth of the Mersey on the 18th with two there on the 29th.

GANNET *Morus bassanus*

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

The first of the year came on 10 March off Blackpool, where numbers rose rapidly in April with counts of 77 on the 2nd, 73 on the 6th, 60 on the 17th and 51 on the 21st, and five counts of 70 or more in May, peaking at 276 on the 12th with 139 a day later.

Good numbers continued to be seen off the Fylde coast into summer with peaks off Blackpool of 122 on 23 June and 200 on 13 July, and 131 off Rossall Point on 15 July. After 200 on 13 Aug counts started to fall below 100 prior to a final flurry of 105 on the 28th.

After the first off Formby Point on 4 April counts rose to 88 on the 20th and peaked at 358 on 11 May. Counts remained low throughout the rest of the month and into June, usually in single figures, before 58 were seen on 17 June. The period 17-19 July produced large numbers with counts

of 184, 210 and 125 respectively. August counts peaked at 95 on the 22nd and September's 26 on the 14th; the last were seen on 3 Oct.

Heysham reported a total of 363 bird-days between 7 March and 28 May with a peak of 106 on 3 May and the last on the 29 June.

Elsewhere, 21 were in the mouth of the Mersey on 6 May, and three were at Carnforth on 19 April with the same number at Marshside on 1 May.

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	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	329	218	268	194	84	81	89	201	553	340	629	326
Heysham	26	16	18	11	6	17	11	23	62	102	57	59
Ribble WeBS	1344	950	1848	663	380	154	593	432	178	1498	1757	3297
Seaforth	155	125	185	190	130	90	70	120	221	285	265	130
Stocks Res	38	49	40	18	11	6	31	51	60	59	50	36
Brockholes	15	10	13	8	11	/	/	24	34	29	21	6

New county records were set on the Ribble with 1750 at Crossens Marsh in February and in successive months in the second winter period, culminating in 2035 at Birkdale as part of a total of 3297 on the December WeBS count. This apparent change of roost site on the Sefton Coast was reflected in very low counts throughout the year at Seaforth. It seems likely that this northwards shift was due to a change of favoured feeding areas within Liverpool Bay, away from the Burbo Bank towards the outer Ribble. The combined December WeBS counts in the English sector of Liverpool Bay on the Ribble and at Formby Point, Seaforth and Hilbre Island totalled 4973, 14% of the British and 4% of the western European populations.

Numbers were also high on the north bank of the Ribble, including 450 at Lytham in September and 1500 at Blackpool in November with 860 there in December. Numbers were low all year at Heysham and 128 in August at Rossall Point was the most notable site count in Morecambe Bay; 48 were at Leighton Moss in September.

Cormorants were present on virtually all inland waters during the year but the only noteworthy counts away from Stocks Reservoir and Brockholes Wetland were 94 at Mere Sands Wood in October and 48 at MMWWT in August.

SHAG *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

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

Gales in the first week of January were responsible for some unusual records, including four at Anchorsholme on 2 Jan, five juveniles and an adult at Seaforth on the 4th, a juvenile at Jumbles Reservoir on the 18th-23rd and one at Hare Tarn, Warton on the 19th.

There were intermittent records of one or two at Southport Marine Lake between January and March, and singles were off the southern Fylde coast until mid-January and offshore at Formby Point on 25 Jan. More typically, eight juveniles were at Heysham on 1 Jan, rising to eleven on the 5-9th, also as a consequence of the midwinter gales; ten remained until 29 Jan, declining to six in February before dropping to a last single on 23 Feb.

At the other end of the year single(s) were reported off the Fylde coast from 31 Aug to December from Blackpool to Rossall Point. The only other records were two off Morecambe in June and a juvenile at Heysham on 30 Aug.

BITTERN *Botaurus stellaris*

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

At least three birds were present at Leighton Moss in the first winter period with reports of up to five, while at the end of March up to three were seen and heard engaging in gull-calling flight over the reserve. A male started booming but stopped abruptly in early April and there was no evidence of breeding, although a ringed female was present and a third bird of unknown sex summered.

There was an influx of presumed continental birds in the hard weather in the first winter period. One was at Mere Sands Wood in late January and up to three were reported at Marton Mere in February, when there were also at least two at Mere Sands Wood, with birds lingering at both sites well into March. On 6 Feb one was seen in north Lancashire at Aughton Woods before flying north-east along the Lune. One was at MMWWT from 7-16 Feb and Brockholes Wetland had its first record on 12 March; finally one was at Carr Mill Dam on 25-27 March.

No information was received from Leighton Moss for the second winter period, and none was seen at the normally reliable wintering site of Marton Mere by the year's end but there were records from four other sites. One stayed at MMWWT from 20 Sept to 16 Oct, one was at Brockholes on 2 Dec, whilst later in the month one was next to the Leeds-Liverpool canal at Scarisbrick on the 18th-19th and up to two were at Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park from at least the 13th to the 29th.

LITTLE EGRET *Egretta garzetta*

Fairly common and increasing visitor, mainly to coastal marshes.

National importance: 50

2011

A significant local record, not previously published, concerned two lingering at Ogden Reservoir, Grane, Rossendale from 26 June to 2 Nov.

2012**Monthly peak counts**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Leighton Moss	32	29	38	15	9	14	55	100	82	117	90	32
Pilling area	9	13	8	16	3	/	/	/	22	10	13	31
North Ribble	20	10	21	12	3	1	5	12	15	33	20	20
Ribble WeBS	17	14	48	12	7	1	17	52	61	89	41	41
Southport	31	33	10	5	2	4	18	34	24	54	53	49

Leighton Moss has become firmly established as the foremost roost site in the county. The two significant roost sites on the Ribble, Freckleton Naze and Southport Marine Lake, are probably counted less often than Leighton, but the latter site continues to support higher numbers than the combined Ribble roosts. As well as the figures in the table there were up to 20 at Hesketh Out Marsh in December.

In the Pilling area birds are now roosting regularly on the island on the larger pool at Pilling Lane Ends Amenity Area, having favoured other sites such as Willowgrove, Preesall in the past. No information was received from the Ashton Hall roost but there were up to seven in this area at Aldcliffe in September and 13 in October.

An indication of continued inland expansion of numbers came with the first ever record of three birds together in east Lancashire, at Stocks Reservoir on 27 & 29 May. Up to three were regularly on the Lune at Arkholme from January to March, with ones and twos in September and a notable five on 11 Dec. In the Chorley area one was at Anglezarke Reservoir on 14 May and nearer the coast records at MMWWT included seven on 28 July.

An interesting record concerned five passage birds that were tracked passing Ainsdale, Blackpool, Fleetwood and Heysham before continuing north towards Grange-over-Sands on 30 April.

GREAT WHITE EGRET* *Egretta alba*

Scarce visitor, though increasing in line with national trends.

Whilst this species remains a scarce visitor, long-staying birds are becoming the norm rather than the exception.

In the first winter period there were two on the Ribble Estuary where they were seen together on Warton Marsh in both January and March. One was also seen at Leighton Moss on many dates in January to March, although birds have been known to move between here and the Ribble in the past.

Away from the usual haunts one was near the Knowsley embankment at Anglezarke Reservoir on 10 Jan (H Gregory) and one was in the dyke of the east fields at Marton Mere on 10 Feb (A Baines *et al*). At least one lingered on the Ribble into April, with the last report at Marshside on the 18th.

One had returned to Warton Marsh by 19 Sept and there were two on the Ribble Estuary on many dates from October to at least early December, being seen together at Banks Marsh and Warton Marsh on several dates. Presumably a third bird was at Leighton Moss on many dates from 12 Oct to 24 Nov. Away from these favoured haunts one was on Pilling Marsh on 19 Nov and one flew over Fleetwood on 3rd Dec.

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

Fairly common breeding resident.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Brockholes	9	7	6	8	8	/	8	9	11	10	7	6
Seaforth	14	7	2	1	2	5	6	8	9	8	7	6

The data from heronries continued to show great variation. The Entwistle colony recovered somewhat to 26 apparently occupied nests (AONs), with 32 showing signs of young later on. Relatively nearby in the Rivington area there were 18 nests at two colonies, including three at the site first used in 2011. Nesting may also have occurred at Delph, where it has been suspected in several recent years.

There were 38 AONs at Stanley Park, Blackpool and at other sites in the Fylde recording area there were 22 nests near Savick Brook, 14 in total at two sites near Cockerham and two at Hackensall, Preesall.

At least four sites were occupied in east Lancashire, not all counts were received but there were estimated to be 22 nests at Winkley Hall. On the negative side, the Claughton heronry dropped further to a meagre nine nests this year and there was no nesting at Cuerden Valley Park.

Away from heronries there were few significant counts not covered in the table, in keeping with recent patterns. Grove Lane Marsh, Padiham held 13 in January, twelve in July and ten in October. Ten were reported from Leighton Moss in June. Fylde site peaks away from heronries were seven to eight in autumn at Wyre Estuary sites (Fleetwood Marsh and Little Singleton) and at Freckleton. In the south-west away from Seaforth there were four on Garston shore in May, five at Cronton Clay Quarry in November and five at Eccleston Mere in December.

There were more migrants noted at Heysham than usual, comprising one in March, three in May and three in September; as might be expected birds were generally heading north in spring and south in autumn.

WHITE STORK *Ciconia ciconia*

Rare passage migrant and increasingly regular free-flying escapee.

There were several reports in April: singles over Ewood Bridge on the 1st, on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal at Whittle on the 14th and presumably the same bird over Samlesbury and Alston the next day. Finally, on 18 June one flew over central St. Helens.

There was no evidence that any of this year's birds were wild, but there was no proof that they were wandering from Harewood House either.

GLOSSY IBIS* *Plegadis falcinellus*

Vagrant.

The first-winter bird from 2011 remained in the Leighton Moss area until 10 May. Initially it usually frequented a field at Crag Foot during the day, before spending more time on the main reserve later in its stay.

There were two further records. An adult was near Aldcliffe Marsh, Lancaster on 7-12 Jan (D Heywood, M Lynch *et al*), and one was seen in flight over Hesketh Out Marsh on 2 Sept (Gavin Thomas).

All the above records have been accepted by the BBRC. From January 2013 Glossy Ibis has been dropped from the list of national rarities and descriptions should be submitted to the Lancashire Records Committee via the county recorder.

SPOONBILL *Platalea leucorodia*

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

There was a typical spread of records from the length of the west of the county, also increasingly typically a long-staying bird was on the Ribble Marshes, where the species has nested relatively recently.

One reported from Marshside on 29 Jan could have been the first-summer bird seen intermittently at several sites on the south banks of the Ribble Estuary from 28 May to the year's end and into 2013; sites visited also included Banks, Crossens and Hesketh Out Marshes and it apparently also wandered to MMWWT on 18 Sept.

One was seen heading north over Seaforth on 28 April and was also picked up heading east over the Alt Estuary before returning south-west back over Seaforth. Two were at Leighton Moss on 1 May with one on the adjoining saltmarsh the next day. Other records of singles followed on the Eric Morecambe Pools from 4-17 June, at least eleven dates in July and 8 & 20 Aug.

Given the gaps in dates for the July Eric Morecambe Pools bird, it may have been responsible for sightings at Sunderland Point on the 20th, the Lune Estuary near Conder Green on the 24-25th and Aldcliffe on the 26th. Other records from the north of the county subsequently came from the Glasson-Cockersand area on and off until 17 September with two on 7th July, and finally one at Glasson Marsh on 6 Oct.

The long-staying bird on the Ribble may have led to some passage birds here in the second half of the year being overlooked. There were three confirmed records, adults at Warton Marsh on 5 July and Marshside on 23 Aug, with two birds on Banks Marsh on 8 Sept.

LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Uncommon but increasing breeding bird. Fairly common in winter.

International importance: 3400. National importance: 160.

Breeding was reported with varying degrees of success from 21 sites compared to 15 last year; usually a single pair at any one site hatching between one to three juveniles. At Sefton Park lake, in

the middle of Liverpool, a pair hatched three young and raised two to fledging – the first successful breeding at the site.

The only other localities with three or more juveniles were Wood End Sewage Works (3) and Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park (4). There were another 35 sites that held at least one pair but any evidence of successful breeding from these sites was unreported. As with Great Crested Grebes none bred at Fairhaven Lake – the worst season for 25 years.

In addition to sites holding birds in the breeding season another 40 or so localities reported birds either without evidence of breeding or at other times of the year. Peak counts included 23 at Leighton Moss in July, 17 at Thornton ICI Reservoir in September and October, and on the Lune floods, 16 at Sefton Park in December, twelve at Fleetwood Nature Park in July and the Conder Pool; counts in high single figures also came from Seaforth, Southport Marine Lake and Aldcliffe Marsh. Birds were also reported from the Rivers Calder, Douglas, Lune and Ribble – usually during the winter months.

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	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	27	25	7	8	10	1	5	21	11	28	20	8
Formby Point	48	4	5	5	3	1	1	6	6	1	/	/
Foulridge Res	4	5	5	4	/	/	9	14	/	21	/	12
Stocks Res	0	2	4	4	4	4	4	7	5	2	/	/
Eccleston Mere	15	12	16	15	12	/	10	/	10	8	11	9
Brockholes	2	5	7	10	7	11	6	6	9	7	1	/

Offshore counts during the first winter period were low and few and far between. The count of 84 from the January Ribble WeBS included 37 off Blackpool; 48 were off Formby Point at the same time. The winter gathering in Morecambe Bay is a shadow of its former self, although 15 off Jenny Brown's Point in December were missed by the WeBS count. The only other count on the sea of any consequence was of 31 at Blackpool on 24 Dec. Winter peaks at the Leighton Moss complex were 21 in February and twelve in the late year.

Breeding was attempted at 41 sites with about a quarter failing because of fluctuating water levels – in some cases with nests washed out. Sixteen sites confirmed the presence of juveniles, including Stanley Park in central Liverpool, but only the pair at Yarrow Valley Park was reported as double-brooded. At Fairhaven Lake no birds were reported all year due to the lack of water, and no records were received from the main county sites at Carr Mill Dam or Mere Sands Wood. Courtship and nest-building were reported from another eight sites with unknown outcome, and the presence of pairs was noted on a further 22 sites.

SLAVONIAN GREBE *Podiceps auritus*

Scarce winter visitor.

Single(s) were seen in flight past Formby Point and on the sea at Anchorsholme (possibly the same bird) on 13 Jan and another was on Pine Lake on the 17-18th.

BLACK-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps nigricollis*

Scarce visitor, mostly in spring and autumn.

International importance: 2800. National importance: 50.

One was at Prescot Reservoirs from 14-21 Aug, and another appeared briefly at Alston Wetland on 20 Aug.

RED KITE *Milvus milvus*

Uncommon passage migrant and scarce winter visitor from successful reintroduction schemes.

There was a large reduction from the 70 reports in 2011 with only around 40 records received and birds particularly thin on the ground in the second half of the year.

It was considered a comparable year to 2010 and 2011 in east Lancashire with around nine individuals in total, highlighting how few there were further west. Close scrutiny showed some that might have been assumed to be the same roaming individual not to be, but the proximity of several dates does still suggest a significant amount of duplication.

In the first winter period one was at Altcar Moss on 2 Jan with perhaps the same bird at Holmeswood on the 7th. February saw one over Seaforth on the 1st and one at Hesketh Out Marsh on the 25th. There were six reports in March, at Lyth Fell on the 6th, Barton, Wrea Green and West Bradford on the 22nd, Fairhaven on the 23rd, Brierfield on the 24th and Leighton Moss on the 28th.

Spring passage was initially sluggish with birds recorded in April at Blacko on the 4th, Langden Valley on the 13th, Leighton Moss on the 23rd, Brierfield on the 25th, a wing-tagged bird seen over several east Lancashire sites on the 25th-26th, an untagged bird at Alston on the 27th – possibly the one at Padiham later that day – and a bird near Belmont on the 30th.

May was the best month, although there may have been duplication. Reports came from Warton Crag on the 12th, Lunt Meadows on the 15th, Leighton Moss and Beacon Fell on the 20th, MMWWT and Nateby on the 22nd and 25th, Brockholes, Cabus and Lytham on the 26th, Freckleton and Longridge on the 27th and Brockholes again on the 28th. June yielded birds at Seaforth on the 11th, perhaps the same bird at Marshaw and Pendle Hill on the 12th, one over MMWWT on the 14th and finally one at Cross of Greet on the 17th.

Just six were seen in the latter half of the year. On the Fylde birds were seen over Great Marton on 28 June and Fleetwood on 22 July. One drifted south over Towneley, Burnley on 23 Aug and one was at Lathom on 5 Sept. The last were at MMWWT on 3 Oct and at Tarleton on the 25th.

The reason for this low number of records is not immediately apparent and it will be interesting to see if the number of sightings rises again in 2013.

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

Fairly common passage migrant, scarce in east. Rare breeder, uncommon but increasing in winter. Amber List (localised breeder).

The small wintering population appeared to consolidate further during the early part of the year. Up to five were regular at MMWWT in January and February, with seven reported on 31 Jan, and two were at Leighton Moss in January with three there in February. The peak count on the Ribble Marshes early in the year was of two, but at least four individuals appear to have been involved, mostly at Marshside but also on occasion at Warton Marsh.

In the second winter period up to three were at Leighton Moss but numbers at MMWWT dwindled to one by late December and there did not appear to be any wintering on the Ribble at this time.

Spring migration got underway typically in March. Records included one over Blackpool Airport on the 22nd and another at Brockholes on the 26th. Clear-cut migrants were not widely

reported over the rest of the season. One went north off Blackpool on 27 April, with Heysham's only record of the year on the 30th. May reports included singles at Rossall on the 1st, Brockholes on the 3rd, 11th & 18th, Cabin Hill on the 19th and Pilling on the 25th.

There were seven nests in the Leighton Moss area. Two males and five females were on the main reserve in the breeding season and five nests produced seven fledged young. Single pairs were at two nearby sites, one successful and one unsuccessful, and there were at least two and possibly three pairs at two sites on the south-west mosses.

As usual peak numbers occurred during post-breeding dispersal with singles widely scattered on the coastal plain. These included ten, probably local breeders, at Altcar Within in late August and early September and up to four were at MMWWT and on the Ribble Marshes at this time.

Birds were seen on the Fylde from 12 July, with a peak of three at Fleetwood on 12 Aug. In east Lancashire an immature was over Bradford Fell on 27 July, with records at Stocks Reservoir on 15 & 29 Aug, 7 & 8 Sept and 8 Oct of females or immatures – or perhaps just one lingering individual. In the Chorley area a female or juvenile was at Mawdesley Moss on 1 & 3 Aug.

A female at Leighton Moss held Moorhen prey underwater but the latter escaped when taken to the bank. The harrier caught it a second time and took it to the bank but again the fortunate Moorhen escaped.

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

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

As has been extensively documented elsewhere there were no breeding pairs in the Forest of Bowland for the first time since 1982; there were also none elsewhere in the county and, indeed, only one in the whole of England. The ELOC report notes that the breeding season weather and poor vole season were a factor, and this does need to be borne in mind. However, ongoing persecution remains a significant factor in the decline, and was highlighted during the year by a 2011 radio-tagged nestling ('Bowland Betty') being found shot dead on a North Yorkshire grouse moor.

There were rather few reports on the estuaries and coastal mosses in the first winter period, including a notable absence on the Ribble Estuary during January to March, though up to three were on the south-west mosses during this time: singles at Maghull on 5 Jan and irregularly at Martin Mere in January and February, with a ringtail on Croston Moss in February and March. Perhaps just the one female was at several sites in the Pilling area from early January to mid-March.

A few apparent spring migrants, mostly ringtails, were recorded as follows – singles at Leighton Moss on 31 March, Warton Marsh on 7 April, MMWWT on the 9th, Rainford on the 15th April, over Marshside on the 26th, at Winmarleigh on the 26th, Croston Moss on 1 May, Inskip on the 6-7th, Leighton Moss on the 9th and 1 June, and 24 May at Altcar Within.

There was only one record in east Lancashire away from Bowland all year, at Twiston Moor on 21 March. A female lingered on the West Pennine Moors for much of May.

One had returned to the south-west mosses by 3 Sept with up to three again at several sites in the area later in the winter and at least were two on the Ribble Estuary in October to December. One was in north Fylde in October with at least two there in November. Elsewhere, reports came from Brockholes on 18 Oct, Skelmersdale on the 23rd and at MMWWT from 24 Nov to the year's end. Inland, there were scattered reports from Bowland including at Stocks Reservoir on 25 Oct and nearby on 21 Dec, and singles on the West Pennine Moors in October. Finally one was at Fleetwood on 2nd Dec.

It is unclear how much immigration occurs in winter from the larger Manx population but the species is also declining there and even if there were extenuating circumstances in 2012 a rapid 'bounce' is necessary if the species is to have a sustainable future in Bowland and the county as a whole.

MONTAGU'S HARRIER* *Circus pygargus*

Very rare passage migrant from Southern Europe.

A wide-ranging adult male was eventually pinned down long enough for many observers to catch up with this very sought-after species, with many of the few other recent county records being very short-stayers.

It was first seen at Holmeswood on 18 May (A Bailey) and was nearby at MMWWT for the following two days, wandering as far as Hesketh Out Marsh on the Ribble Estuary. On the 21st it was seen and photographed flying inland at Pilling Marsh (Phil Slade). That looked like being that but it was relocated on Altcar Moss on 9 June (finder unknown), remaining there until at least the 17th. After presumably lurking unseen somewhere in the recording area it was finally relocated at Champion Moor in east Lancashire on 11 July (R Carter, G Cavaghan), where it stayed until the 16th.

The avifauna noted that some of the older records of this species may have related to Hen Harrier. Some more recent claims that have clearly not been Hen Harriers have not been seen well enough to eliminate Pallid Harrier, which is increasingly regular in the UK to the point where it may be a case of 'when' not 'if' one occurs in Lancashire. The county total for Montagu's Harrier is in the region of 20 birds.

GOSHAWK *Accipiter gentilis*

Scarce feral breeding resident and escapee.

A pair was seen at an established upland site in March and another pair was reported at another site on a single date the same month. Singles were noted in spring at three more sites.

As usual there was a scattering of lowland reports that in some cases may relate to wild birds, in some cases to escaped falconers' birds and in others may reflect identification errors. A female was in the Rimrose Valley on 21 Feb. Interestingly, this or another male was seen at Court Hey Park, Huyton on 25 March and Netherton, Liverpool the next day. A female was at Hesketh Out Marsh on 8 Aug, the same month an unsexed bird flew over Grimsargh Reservoirs on the 14th.

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

Fairly common breeding resident, uncommon passage migrant.

As is often the case breeding data received for this species were rather fragmented, and the atlas results will give a much fuller picture of the status of the species. Four young fledged from a nest in Speke, and a number of other pairs were reported in the Liverpool area including two on or near Aintree racecourse. Two pairs on Freshfield Dune Heath was an increase. There were two pairs at Arkholme and others nearby at Tunstall and Whittington. A pair on Heysham NR fledged two young. Confirmation of breeding was reported from four sites in east Lancashire but there must have been others.

Several perceived migrants were seen flying north-east over Heysham, one on 17 March, three on the 22nd & 23rd, two on the 24th and finally four on 16 April. There was no clear-cut spring passage elsewhere, though resident birds complicated the picture at well-watched sites

including Rossall. Four were reported from Brockholes on 7 April, and these may have included migrants.

More migrants were reported in autumn. Birds were noted on several days in late September at Marshside, including four south-west on the 22nd. Heysham recorded three on 19 Sept and two on the 23rd with singles on 22 Sept and 9 & 13 Oct; three flew south over Rossall School on 22 Sept and Seaforth recorded southbound singles on 7 & 8 Oct.

Peaks at other well-watched sites included four at Myerscough College on 5 March, and three in the Dunsop Valley on 20 March, Marton Mere on 22 April, at Stocks Reservoir on 25 Oct, Mere Sands Wood on 12 Nov and Leighton Moss on 31 Dec. Unusually, four were reported in close association on garden fence posts at Thornton, Fylde on 28 Dec. One at Banks Marsh on 2 Oct was seen to catch a day-flying bat.

BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

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

The resurgence appears to be continuing. In east Lancashire, where there had been a slight dip in 2011, a record number of reports were received and it may now even be more common than Kestrel and Sparrowhawk in the area. Further increases were also noted in the far north of the recording area, a stronghold even when the species was absent from much of the county. At the other extreme Heysham, where the species remains rare, had an above-average year with four birds recorded.

Counts in the first winter period included up to 18 at MMWWT in January and ten in February and March. Up to eleven were seen at Brockholes in February, 15 in March and 13 in April and further east there were nine over Alston on 19 Feb, whilst on Merseyside eight were at Tarbock on 4 March.

Evidence of spring migration was widespread, including 20 flying north over Seaforth between 17 March and 27 May.

Several nests were reported to have been successful in the West Pennine Moors and a minimum of six pairs are believed to have bred elsewhere in the Chorley recording area. Eight pairs were noted in the Lune Valley from Leck Beck to Wenning Foot, whilst there were three at Warton Crag. Only three instances of confirmed breeding were noted in the ELOC area, but presumably this reflects under-recording. There were two pairs in the Rossendale area and at least three pairs around Halewood.

The largest counts in the Fylde came in the autumn, when there were ten at Lightfoot Green and seven at Marton Mere in September, and eight at Carr House Green Common, Inskip in October. Five presumed migrants were noted over Seaforth between 10 Aug and 26 Oct, whilst elsewhere on Merseyside there were no fewer than nine at Tarbock on 27 Oct. Up to ten were at Leighton Moss in September.

Peak numbers again diminished after the autumn passage period. There were eight at Downholland Moss on 6 Dec, but otherwise low single figures was the order of the day.

The remains of a half-grown Fox cub were found in a nest near Belmont in May. Although the Fox may well have succumbed to natural causes the prey species of Buzzards are likely to be in increasingly sharp focus as their numbers continue to increase and bring them into potential conflict with commercial game rearing interests.

ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD* *Buteo lagopus*

Rare winter visitor from northern Europe.

There were no reports during the year but a 2011 record was accepted by the Records Committee – an adult photographed at Shawforth, Rossendale on 12 Oct (D. Greenwood).

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

The first of a busy year flew over Heysham on 21 March, followed by at least another ten in the month, mostly on or near the coast but with singles over Bretherton on the 23rd, Preston on the 25th and at Stocks Reservoir on the 31st.

Large numbers were recorded in April and an estimate of at least 70 reports highlights why it is not possible to document individual records any longer. Although some birds are presumably picked up at more than one site, records at Arkholme on the 3rd were illuminating. Following two migrants straight through early in the day four were seen by the river in the evening, strongly suggesting a minimum of six birds at one Lancashire site in one day.

There were at least a further 20 reports in May but only one at Leighton Moss on the 27th came in the last week. Presumed non-breeders lingered in June, with birds on three days at Brockholes and eight days at Leighton Moss; elsewhere, singles were at Blackpool on the 2nd, Marton Mere on the 10th, Wood End on the 12th, Balderstone on the 19th and Whitendale on the 24th.

There were reports from ten sites in July, including on six dates at Stocks Reservoir, five dates at Leighton Moss and two at Brockholes. Suspicions that these included non-breeding birds potentially checking out future nest sites were confirmed by a ringed bird at Stocks which was ringed as a nestling in Aberdeenshire in 2010 and was at Stocks from at least 3 to 22 July in a season when it was too young to breed.

Apparent return passage commenced on 10 Aug when one was over Sawley. There were again birds on several dates at Leighton Moss and Stocks Reservoir and elsewhere birds were at Burholme, Eccleston, Glasson, Fleetwood, Knowsley and Rufford whilst satellite-tracking showed one moved unseen through Bowland on the 30th.

In September one flew over Hornby on the 2nd, two were at Arkholme on the 6th and further singles were seen at Sheddon Clough on the 9th and Marshside on the 11th. After a fortnight's gap the year was brought to a conclusion with singles over Leighton Moss on 25 Sept and, fittingly, Arkholme on the 26th.

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

On the evidence received overall the decline of this species appears to be continuing, but in both the ELOC and Chorley areas records appeared to be holding up better than elsewhere.

In the Pilling and Preesall area there were 13 monitored pairs which laid a total of 39 eggs of which 31 hatched and all of these fledged. A continuing decline was noted at Arkholme, with just one pair that fledged three young. There were five pairs on United Utilities land in Bowland, of which three were successful. Two pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir. There was no definite evidence of breeding at Heysham this year. Four young were ringed at Rossall School. A pair nested at Freshfield Dune Heath, where not annual. At least three young, possibly five, fledged from a nest box at King's Moss.

Five were reported along the Ribble in the Preston Dock area on 6 Feb. Spring counts included five at Foulridge on 11 April and Bradford Fell on the 30th, with up to four at a number of widespread sites but particularly in the east of the county.

The late autumn gatherings on the Ribble Estuary saltmarshes may be a thing of the past, the peak totals were from WeBS counts with six in each of January, October and November. Six at

Champion Moor, Euxton and Pilling in July were the highest single-site counts received, but these were all considered to be family parties.

Clear-cut autumn migration included two south at Heysham on 26 Sept with singles on 8 & 13 Oct. Three juveniles were seen at Seaforth in autumn, where otherwise there was just one regular bird.

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*

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

Only two out of five pairs were successful on the United Utilities Bowland Estate, fledging six young compared with 17 in 2011. The ELOC report suggested this poor result was unsurprising given the wet weather throughout the season, although numbers have been falling in east Lancashire following a peak in the period 2004-6. Nesting may have occurred at two or more other sites in the county but locations were kept confidential.

The apparent decline in the moorland breeding population was reflected in coastal reports outside the breeding season. Although three were reported at Marshside in August and four in October, numbers were generally lower than in recent winters on the coastal saltmarshes. In the first winter period there appeared to be only scattered singles on the coast, though consolidated WeBS counts on the Ribble produced three in January and March.

Spring passage continued very late with birds seen on 1 & 4 May at Rossall Point, Cockersand on the 4th, Reeds Moss, St. Helens on the 8th and different birds at Marshside on the 11th & 12th. There were no records all year from Heysham, which appears to be the first time this has occurred.

Unusually, the first evidence of post-breeding dispersal related to a bird coming in off the sea at Formby on 9 July. In the same month birds were seen at Leighton Moss on the 14th & 29th and at Cockerham on the 21st. Inland dispersal was first noted with a juvenile at Champion Moor on 27 Aug. The only autumn report at Seaforth was of one south on 19 Oct.

There were no counts of more than two on the Ribble Marshes, the foremost wintering area, in November or December but two were seen together on the Wyre at Barnaby's Sands. There was also a dearth of records from MMWWT and the south-west mosses. Inland, there were at least two around Belmont early in the second winter period.

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

Scarce breeding bird and passage migrant.

Records received suggested nesting may have occurred at around four sites widely spread across the county, and it was confirmed at one location in east Lancashire. Two of three young were stolen from one nest in the east of the county.

The first were at Brockholes on 21 April and Churchtown and MMWWT on the 30th. Not all reports received were dated but there were sightings from at least nine locations in May, including clear-cut migrants at Rossall on the 9th and Blackpool Airport on the 28th. June records at seven sites included birds on nine days at Brockholes, whilst there were two together at Belmont on the 29th.

Birds were seen on at least 14 sites in July, including on twelve dates at Brockholes involving at least two individuals. Leighton Moss had nine records in July and August, including two on 13 Aug. Also in August up to three were attacking hirundines at Arkholme.

Most September records from five sites were fly-throughs but with eight records at Brockholes including two on the 14th. Finally, there were three reports in October, at Belmont on the 3rd, St. Helens on the 4th and the last of the year at Royal Birkdale Golf Course on the 9th.

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus*

Scarce breeder, uncommon winter visitor.

Breeding information was incomplete, but overall appeared to point to a less than vintage season with wet weather at crucial times appearing to be a factor. In Bowland there were six pairs on United Utilities land, of which only four nested and with two pairs successfully fledging a total of three young. Persecution remains a problem, with three young killed at one site in Bowland. Elsewhere in the east there were two pairs in the Rossendale area, one was successful whereas the other was washed out. At least one pair nested in the West Pennine Moors.

There were at least three pairs in the Liverpool area but success is not known. A pair raised one chick elsewhere in the south-west and two pairs were successful in the lowlands around Chorley, one of which relocated after initially failing due to the weather. No breeding information was received from a number of areas where nesting is known to occur, and the two nests reported in the Fylde recording area (one definitely successful) probably understates the number that actually bred.

Given the number of birds at coastal locations in spring and autumn clear-cut migrants can be difficult to separate from local movements. At Seaforth northbound birds were noted on 12 & 13 April, with no fewer than four on the 14th. On 15 Aug one was seen to come in off the sea at Blackpool in the company of a Sparrowhawk.

Birds were recorded widely outside the breeding season, including 13 reports from east Lancashire in the first winter period, but more than normal appeared to stay in the second winter period when there were 24 reports. Up to three were noted at MMWWT in October.

On 30 Sept at Mawdesley Moss a juvenile that had taken a Mallard had to defend its kill from the attentions of a Kestrel, a Grey Heron and a Carrion Crow.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

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

There was no comprehensive survey this year at Leighton Moss, the most significant breeding site. Only casual records were received from there, so the largest submitted count of 15 birds was a large underestimate. Birds were heard in the summer at Birkdale Green Beach and there were June reports at Seaforth and MMWWT. There was no evidence of breeding at Heysham, and no information was received from sites on the north Ribble marshes.

Birds were thinly but widely distributed in the first winter period. Up to seven were at Marton Mere and three at MMWWT, with twos at Marshside, Fleetwood Nature Park, Warton Marsh and in the Chorley area at Arley. Reports of at least singles came from Birkdale Green Beach, Bispham Marsh, Blackpool Woodland Gardens, Cuerden Valley Park, Eccleston Mere, Heysham NR, Middleton, Pilling, Preesall Flashes, Silverdale Moss, and in east Lancashire at Lee Green Reservoir, Rowley Lake and Towneley. Reports at both Heysham and Marton Mere continued into early April with one at Preesall Flashes on the 21st.

One at Seaforth on 4 Aug and another at Marshside that month may have been the first post-breeding dispersal. At other well-watched sites return was noted from 18 Sept at MMWWT and the 26th at Marton Mere. Away from Leighton the largest counts in the second winter period were six at Marton Mere, four at Cabin Hill and three at Lunt Meadows on 21 Oct. There were thought to be two at Towneley in October and two were at St Annes beach marsh in November. Other sites

recording at least one included Aldcliffe, Altcar Withins, Bretherton, Burglar's Alley, Brookside, Lomeshaye Marsh, Mere Sands Wood and Yarrow Valley Park.

More records appear to be coming from coastal saltmarshes in winter than in previous years. It is unclear if this is a reflection of changing habitat usage, or increasing observer coverage, e.g. to count Jack Snipes on high tides.

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

Common resident breeder.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Leighton Moss	40	45	20	20	25	15	15	25	25	15	15	24
MMWWT	311	/	320	/	120	120	113	/	29	165	/	/
Ribble WeBS	21	56	29	30	16	8	14	24	17	51	44	24

There were 18 pairs at MMWWT and nine at Marshside but there was no information on success at these sites and no breeding total was reported from Leighton Moss. Brockholes held six pairs and Belmont Reservoir five. Five pairs were located on the Leeds-Liverpool Canal in Merseyside between Melling and the M57 bridge and four pairs on the Lune at Arkholme. Pairs were reported on 'every available stretch of water' in Cuerden Valley Park. At Heysham and Middleton apparently poor breeding success was noted.

Away from the sites in the table the largest counts were 38 at Aldcliffe and 30 at Eccleston Mere, both in October. On The Fylde peak counts comprised 24 at Stanley Park in February, 16 on floods at Cleveleys in September, 24 at Freckleton Marsh and 20 at Newton Marsh in October and 17 on Stanley Park golf course outside of the park grounds in December. In the south-west peaks included 17 at Marshside in March and 14 in November, 13 at Sefton Park in November, up to twelve on a flooded field on Downholland Moss in December and up to ten at Seaforth all year.

The only double-figure counts in east Lancashire came from Lee Green Reservoir, where there were up to twelve in January and ten in February but there were also nine at Stocks Reservoir in August and eight at Brookside Lodges in March and Blackburn Corporation Park in October. The largest numbers in the east were perhaps unsurprisingly at the favoured nesting site of Belmont Reservoir, where there were up to 15 in August and September and ten in October and November.

COOT *Fulica atra*

Fairly 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
Southport ML	690	850	126	39	20	150	354	383	750	474	126	126
MMWWT	332		170	/	40	30	41	/	60	362	/	840
Leighton Moss	490	445	310	110	75	124	280	435	520	530	616	246
Marshside	50	83	101	64	59	32	229	150	105	143	99	34
Marton Mere	80	150	67	/	/	/	/	50	194	70	120	384
Pine Lake	/	430	/	/	/	/	/	/	330	315	496	402
Stanley Park	159	150	/	/	/	/	/	194	165	100	175	260

Lower than usual numbers were recorded at a number of sites. The Southport Marine Lake totals compare with peaks of over 1000 in 2011. Seaforth recorded its lowest numbers ever, with a peak of only 49 in August which was a shade lower than the 52 noted in Waterloo Dock in September.

Up to 150 were at Taylor Park, St. Helens late in the year and up to 71 on Liverpool's Sefton Park in January.

Far and away the largest numbers in east Lancashire were at Alston Wetlands in the autumn, where a locally-unprecedented influx exploiting an abundance of weed saw peaks of 104 in September and 200 in October with around a quarter of this number staying to winter. At Stocks Reservoir there were up to 22 in the autumn and single figures in other month;, there were 32 at Rishton Reservoir in February.

Thirty-nine pairs bred at Brockholes, 18 more than in 2007. In the south-west there were 23 pairs at MMWWT and 17 at Marshside, whilst eleven pairs in Liverpool's Sefton Park had low success with Lesser Black-backed Gull predation reported to be a factor. Nesting was noted at six sites in the Chorley area with one or two pairs involved in all cases. The breeding population at Heysham was apparently stable but success was reported to be very low. Breeding was noted at eleven sites in east Lancashire, the most favoured site being Brookside with five pairs but these were all unsuccessful.

COMMON CRANE* *Grus grus*

Rare passage migrant.

There were three accepted records this year, all from MMWWT. Birds were multi-observed there on 22-26 April, 19-20th May and 4 Nov (finders unknown). It is tempting to link the reports, particularly the two in spring, but with reintroductions elsewhere in the country records are likely to become rather more frequent.

BLACK-WINGED STILT *Himantopus himantopus*

Vagrant.

Two were in front of the Griesdale Hide at Leighton Moss on 20 April (finder unknown). They were thought to be the same two birds that had been seen 120 miles away at Clayhanger Marsh in the West Midlands the previous day.

The record has been accepted by the BBRC and becomes the tenth for Lancashire and the fourth for Leighton Moss.

AVOCET *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Recently established scarce breeding bird.

National Importance: 75

Four early birds arrived on 21 Feb at MMWWT; seven were on the Eric Morecambe complex on 26 Feb and the first arrived at Marshside the next day. An impressive 101 were at MMWWT by 2 March when the first two appeared on the Fylde at Cockerham Sands. Thirteen at Marshside on 3 March increased to 55 by the 23rd when the first was at Warton Bank. Numbers on the Eric Morecambe complex grew to 35 in late March increasing to 37 in April when numbers at MMWWT increased further to 118, peaking at 129 on 1 May.

Spring migrants included one at Mere Sands Wood on 4 March, two at Prescot Reservoirs the next day, three at Much Hoole on 16 April and two at Weeton on 7 May.

Breeding success was mixed. Protection from predators with electric fencing helped to produce a record 48 fledged from 19 nesting attempts on the Eric Morecambe complex (the previous record there was eleven in 2005), and 85 were there on 17 June.

Eighteen pairs nested around Marshside but young hatching there in late May were killed by rain in early June. Elsewhere on the Ribble seven pairs nested on Hesketh Out Marsh and 25 birds

were at Warton Marsh in June with eight adults and one chick there on 2 July; 43 pairs bred at MMWWT.

Post-breeding dispersal left only 39 at MMWWT by the end of July, the last at Marshside on 25 July and only nine remained on the Eric Morecambe complex on 18 Aug with none after the 20th. One on 30 July at Altcar and two south over Lunt Meadows on 29 Sept were the only autumn reports away from breeding areas. One late bird was seen at Marshside on 12 Oct and two on 28 Oct to 8 Nov on the Eric Morecambe complex.

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	13830	10382	9078	6856	3085	2034	5486	16840	19536	23364	17382	13549
Ribble	10204	9123	9832	2948	4887	1621	3974	9183	10706	6082	4241	6386
Alt	2179	1419	1285	780	546	194	720	991	1407	510	814	795

The January count on the Alt Estuary was the largest there in winter since 2003 but numbers continued to fall in Morecambe Bay which registered its lowest annual peak since 1996; numbers have been relatively stable on the Ribble Estuary for the past five years after suffering a large decline in the late 1990s.

Large site counts in the first winter period included 4000 at Birkdale and at Heysham heliport in January, and 5100 at Lytham in February. On 5 April an unusual record was of a bird sitting on the grassed central reservation of a very busy major road in Aigburth, Liverpool.

Inland, there were up to 26 at Burholme in January and twelve at Dilworth Reservoir on 30 Jan. Birds began to return in February with three at Belmont Reservoir from the 3rd and peaks of 28 at Altham on the 18th and 19 at Alston the next day; numbers at Burholme peaked at 180 on 24 Feb and 92 were at Stocks Reservoir on the 29th.

The few breeding records received included 29 pairs on Hesketh Out Marsh, 24 pairs at Marshside, 19 pairs on the RSPB Morecambe Bay reserve and five pairs at Belmont Reservoir, where only two broods fledged successfully. At Arkholme, one of the county's major breeding sites, 43 nesting pairs was the lowest total for 37 years and only one of these hatched chicks, which then perished. The post-breeding flock there peaked at 102 adults on 10 July and all departed by 15 July.

A roost of 888 at Barnaby's Sands on 20 June were presumably non- or failed-breeding birds but the main return to the coast began in July. Large post-breeding counts included 3000 at Arm Hill and 5000 at Fairhaven on 19 Aug, and 5650 at Heysham on the 29th with 5500 there on 16 Oct.

Autumn counts in the east of the county included 43 at Stocks Reservoir on 15 July and 26 at Alston Reservoirs on the 26th, but most had left soon after with five at Burholme on 27 Dec and singles at Alston on 15 Oct and Belmont Reservoir on 23 Dec considered locally notable. Arkholme was one exception where birds returned from 17 Nov and up to 76 were present during December.

AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER* *Pluvialis dominica*

Vagrant.

A second-calendar-year bird at Cockersand on 5 Sept (SG Piner *et al*) also visited Glasson at high tide. This was part of an exceptional arrival of the species across the country at the time and was the seventh record for the county.

GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria***Abundant on passage and in winter near coasts. Uncommon 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	322	657	1394	310	/	32	286	269	709	538	654	570
Ribble WeBS	2286	2504	1370	1142	52	0	/	271	597	1496	2262	3512
Marshside	400	850	2500	1000	335	0	/	34	370	1000	600	1772

Counts of 1100 at Glasson on 7 Jan with 800 there on 17 Feb, 600 at Cockersand on 27 Jan and 1750 at Cockerham on 12 March appear to have been largely missed by the Morecambe Bay WeBS, as were 1600 on the Ribble at Crossens on 17 March. Other high site counts included 400 in the Skippool Creek area on 16 Feb and 500 at Sand Villa on the 28th.

There was a noticeable departure along the coast in the first week of April although 777 were still at Marshside on the 12th; 333 immaculate northern birds headed high north from Marshside at dusk on 22 April.

Away from the coast six were on Pendle Hill on 8 Jan and eight were back on moors above Belmont on 15 Jan with 20 there on the 25th. Cold weather produced some unusual records early in the year: 80 with Lapwings on Downholland Moss on 2 Feb, at Brockholes Wetland on 1-12 Feb, peaking at 79 on the 6th, and a flock at Croston Finney in the first two weeks of February peaking at 200 on the 4th. Also noteworthy were 43 on Cowpe Moss, Rossendale on 25 Feb and ten at Newton-le-Willows on the 26th. Nine were at Grimsargh Reservoirs on 9 Feb increasing to 21 on the 11th and 60+ were at Threap Green on the western edge of Champion Moor on 19 Feb.

Inland, spring passage included counts of 50 at Bretherton on 2 March, 36 on 5 March on Wycoller Lane, Trawden, 45 on 6 March at MMWWT, 38 on 10 March at Weets Hill and 48 on 21 March at Champion Moor with 100 there on 13 April.

A bird was displaying over the moor near Upper Coldwell Reservoir on 10 March. In late April and May birds were seen on breeding territory at Cant Clough, Coldwell, Pendle Hill and Shedden Clough and in June five territorial pairs were located on Boulsworth Hill. A transect over Boulsworth, from Lad Law to Saucer Stones on 2 July, found at least thirty adult birds with many giving alarm calls. Five pairs were located on territory on the West Pennine Moors around Belmont during the breeding season and one pair bred on Scout Moor.

Post-breeding groups reappeared in small numbers from late June, including six at Bank End on the 24th and increasing to 52 at Cocker's Dyke on 19 July and 138 at Cockersand on the 22nd. A slow build-up continued in August and September with the largest counts 605 on 26 Aug at Glasson and 362 at Crossens on the 28th. Similar numbers were seen throughout September, followed by 800 at Glasson on 5 Oct and 700 at Freckleton on the 14th. Inland movements included 50 on 21 Oct at Champion Moor and 100 on 19 Oct on Pendle Hill; 1650 on Colloway Marsh on 16 Nov and 850 at Pilling on 15 Dec were the last large flocks of the year.

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

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

International importance: 2500. National importance: 430.

WeBS counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS	386	331	269	100	/	/	/	194	187	393	307	492
Ribble	259	582	3378	5319	3379	182	233	7647	1589	1021	508	1676
Alt	406	300	500	/	503	13	72	545	314	16	108	1092

Numbers were well below average on the Alt throughout the year, although the critical April count was missed and May's was incomplete, while the annual peak on Morecambe Bay was the lowest since 2003. Although winter counts on the Ribble were similarly unspectacular, the April count was the highest there in spring since 2004 and August's a county record for autumn, surpassing the previous 5106 in August 1995.

The only site counts in excess of WeBS were 475 at Heysham in January and 650 at Cabin Hill on 11 March, but others that were caught by WeBS included 3000 at Banks Marsh on 8 April and 1400 at Birkdale on 6 May.

Small numbers began to return in early July but August saw the bulk of the passage, on the Ribble at least.

The species remains rare inland. Small numbers at Brockholes from January to March peaked at seven on 14 Feb; one at Arkholme between 14 Feb and 10 April was unusual as was a juvenile on Plex Moss on 23 & 30 Sept.

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	6591	4324	193	121	75	428	1483	4068	3412	2535	7275	4368
Ribble WeBS	7147	3070	673	305	145	254	1278	2816	1160	3514	12965	8056
Marshside	1000	600	64	53	54	153	68	250	300	1200	2000	3186
MMWWT	4350	4000	500	700	/	500	250	300	500	500	2000	1000

High site counts on the coast early in the year included 2000 at Hesketh Out Marsh on 2 Jan, 4174 on the Eric Morecambe complex on the 12th, 2000 at Glasson on the 13th, 3000 on Newton Marsh on the 21st and 3000 on Banks Marsh on 10 Feb.

Inland, there were notable counts of 300 at Barnacre Reservoir on 15 Jan, 200 on Croston Moss on the 29th, 438 at Brockholes on 5 Feb, 300 at Fishmoor Reservoir on the 13th, 165 at Belmont Reservoir on the 17th, when 302 were also at Alston Reservoir, and 200 at Bashall Town near Clitheroe on the 21st.

Reports of breeding were typically widespread. Thirty-three pairs bred along the River Lune including seven at Arkholme which were all on eggs by 10 April. At least ten pairs bred at Alston Reservoirs, where the first chicks were seen on 18 April, and at least eight at New Laithe Farm, Newton. Six of seven nesting pairs at Lunt Meadows successfully fledged young while 21 pairs at Brockholes fledged at least 17. On the Ribble 50 pairs at Marshside fledged at least 15 young, ten pairs nested on Crossens Inner Marsh and five at Hesketh Out Marsh. On the north bank 51 pairs nested on Newton Marsh, (30% more than in 2011) with 65% of this year's nests surviving to hatch, and at least 37 fledging. The majority of nests on Carnforth Marsh were washed away by high tides.

The species suffered a disastrous breeding season around Belmont in 2012 due to initial drought conditions with many females reluctant to 'go down', followed by persistent heavy rain that flooded out many nests with further relentless wet weather reducing chick survival to almost nil with the result that the 25 pairs at Belmont Reservoir fledged just three young. A resurvey of the former 25km² Belmont Study Area located 70 territories compared with a mean of 107 during 1990-1994, indicating the extent of the decline in the central West Pennine Moors

Monitoring took place at Rivington Farm where twelve were back by 12 Jan, building to peaks of 50 on 5 March and 48 on 3 May; 24 territories were occupied during summer, and the first juveniles were seen on 19 May, but breeding success was affected by the wet season and vehicle trespass at the site at night.

Small flocks of abandoned breeders formed as early as May and the first post-breeding flock of any note was 90 at Cockerham on 23 June; a flock of 55 at Belmont Reservoir on 1 July contained only five juveniles. A hundred were back on roofs in Burnley by 19 Aug. High autumn counts in the Fylde included 500 at Glasson on 2 Aug, 850 in the Skippool Creek area on the 10th, 510 at Lathwaite on the 29th, 1000 at Glasson on 2 Sept and 920 at Freckleton on the 14th. Inland there were 500 at Brockholes on 8 Sept, 265 at Eccleston Park, St. Helens in October and 600 at Bashall Town on 31 Oct.

Late year counts included 694 at Stocks Reservoir on 24 Nov, 5000 at Glasson on the 28th, 500 at Brockholes on 9 Dec, 779 at Eddisford, Clitheroe on the 21st and 1050 at Leighton Moss on the 25th.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*

Uncommon breeder and on passage.

The first at Alston Wetland on 14 March were followed by three at Brockholes on the 18th, when singles were also at Altham and Myerscough Quarry with four at the latter site on the 28th; other March birds were at Arkholme on the 26th and Stocks Reservoir on the 28th.

Widespread arrivals during April included seven at Myerscough on the 22nd and low water levels and lots of exposed mud at Stocks Reservoir encouraged numbers to increase to eight by the 15th; a migrant flock of seven dropped in at Alston Reservoirs on 10 April and one at Barnacre Reservoir on the 22nd was the first there for ten years. At least six individuals were seen at MMWWT during May.

The atlas survey suggested that around 100 pairs now breed in Lancashire but most are not reported annually. Breeding data received this year included twelve pairs on the Lune survey, seven of which were at Arkholme (only one of which fledged young) and three at Belmont (all washed out by rising water levels); one pair bred at MMWWT and breeding was probably also attempted at Myerscough Quarry, where eight were present on 4 May, and at Seaforth. Two were in a flooded field at Charnock Richard from 25 April into July and must presumably have attempted to nest. A Lancashire record 13 pairs bred at Brockholes Wetland, many of them successfully; this represented 1% of the British breeding population, showing the importance of the site for this species.

The last were at Myerscough on 4 June, Belmont on the 10th, Stocks Reservoir on the 21st and Brockholes on 19 Aug. Autumn migrants included eight at Alston on 9 July and singles at Mawdesley on 1-4 Aug, Marton Mere on the 2nd, Gillibrands, Chorley on the 26th and Newton Marsh on the 27th. One at Lunt Meadows on 30 Aug was the final record in the county.

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

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

International importance: 730. National importance: 340

WeBS counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS	41	55	26	62	335	5	27	200	195	93	71	92
Ribble	/	3	12	54	6239	33	16	974	87	2	/	/
Alt	50	15	2	32	/	2	/	222	52	2	8	20

The May count of northern European migrants on the Ribble was the second highest ever recorded in the county, marginally lower than the equivalent count in 2011. Counts were patchy on the Alt, missing the crucial one in May. Autumn peaks were nothing special but winter numbers continued their steady decline on all estuaries.

Monthly peaks that were missed by WeBS included 65 at Fleetwood (MBS) on 11 Jan, 139 at Granny's Bay (Ribble) on 7 April, 70 at Birkdale (Ribble) on 8 April, 60 at Rossall Point (MBS) on 31 July, 1600 at Birkdale (Ribble) on 4 Aug and 580 at Cabin Hill (Alt) on 23 Aug. Other notable site counts included 2100 at Birkdale on 6 May, 276 at Pilling on the 20th when 95 were also at Skippool Creek and 50+ at Jenny Brown's Point on the 17th. Most unusually a bird was present inland at Alston on 29 Feb.

Spring passage through Alston Reservoirs involved perhaps 17 different birds between 31 March and 17 May, while at Stocks Reservoir the dry spring led to low water levels and a strong passage, starting with two on 27 April and lasting until 19 June, with peak counts of seven on 8 May, nine on the 31st, 14 on 2 June and 20 on the 3rd. One in a landfill quarry at Adlington, near Chorley on 17 April was notable.

Breeding numbers remained in decline. The first of the year at MMWWT was on 17 Feb, increasing to eleven by 10 March and 27 on 22 May; many of these were migrants but five pairs went on to breed there. There were eight pairs at Brockholes, four at Carnforth Slag Tips (one young fledged) and two at Heysham; none nested at Seaforth but there were at least three pairs elsewhere in the Liverpool Docks. The first were back at Arkholme on 26 March but both pairs there failed due to flooding and all had left by 18 June. Five additional pairs bred along the River Lune, including one nesting in a maize field and foraging 1000 metres away on the river.

The first birds appeared back on the coast from mid-July but the main arrival came at the end of the month and continued during August.

Inland, heavy rainfall leading to rising water levels covering all the mud at Stocks Reservoir meant there were no autumn passage birds there. At Alston there was some suitable habitat and singles were recorded on three dates between 15 Aug and 8 Sept. Nine on Plex Moss on flooded farmland on 30 Sept and twelve on 3 Oct were unusual. MMWWT had three on 10 Sept and two on 26 Oct.

DOTTEREL *Charadrius morinellus*

Uncommon, but regular spring migrant, scarce in autumn.

One on 5 April on Rooley Moor north of Ding Quarry, 2.5 miles south-west of Bacup, flew over Top of Leach and appeared to land.

The next were two on Pendle Hill on 30 April, increasing to five there on 2 May. These birds then moved on and the next was one on 6 May with two on 7 May and a male on 18-21 May.

A juvenile on Pendle Hill on 23 & 27-28 Sept was the only autumn record.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus***Common passage migrant, especially in spring.****International importance: 6100 (*islandicus*), 2300 (*phaeopus*).****Evening Roost Counts**

	13/4	16/4	19/4	22/4	23/4	27/4	28/4	29/4	1/5	4/5	5/5
Brockholes Wetland					12	153	160	110	147	147	128
Barnacre Reservoir				47	57		357				
Longton Marsh*	50	67	20								

*Counted from Much Hoole

There were too few coordinated counts this year at the main sites shown in the table above, especially in the first week of May, to judge how good a year it was, but numbers were low at Brockholes in comparison with recent years and the only definite combined total of 517 was certainly nothing exceptional.

The first was one heard flying north-east over Worsthorne on 27 March, followed by birds at Little Singleton on 13 April, Brockholes Wetland on the 15th and Croston on the 17th; a steady passage continued across the county through to early June but with most seen in the last week of April and the first week of May.

The largest counts away from the main sites included 80 on two feeding areas in Eccleston, Chorley on 27 April, 30 at Hoghton on 3 May, 53 on the Ribble WeBS count in May and ten at Grimsargh Reservoirs on 8 May. The largest counts in the Fylde were 14 past Rossall Point on 28 April with 25 there on the 30th and 37 on 1 May, 58 at Bradshaw Lane Head, 52 on Freckleton Marsh and 21 on Winmarleigh Moss all on 6 May, and 47 at Freckleton Naze on the 12th.

Elsewhere, 13 were seen at Morecambe on 26 April, 25 near Mere Brow on 28 April and 23 on Plex Moss on the 30th – but very few reports were received from the south-west mosses this year.

Four were at Brockholes on 24 June but the, as always much smaller, return passage didn't really get underway until after mid-July. Autumn birds were also recorded in single figures, mostly flying over and mostly in July, at Barnacre Reservoir, Champion Moor, Grimsargh Reservoirs, Burnley town centre, Worsthorne, Shedden Clough, Lytham, Blackpool, several sites in north Fylde, Heysham, Morecambe and Jenny Brown's Point. The last were one flying south off Heysham on 17 Sept and late records at Seaforth on 21 Oct and past Rossall Point on the 24th.

CURLEW *Numenius arquata***Abundant winter visitor and common 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	10183	2146	5308	1962	372	695	3082	6481	5941	3452	3485	1439
Ribble WeBS	1695	835	719	469	98	39	624	1648	704	1044	590	671
Alt Est WeBS	977	823	702	/	42	227	1227	1477	967	438	454	246

The January count on Morecambe Bay was the highest since 12646 in February 2000, which remains a record for the Lancashire section of the estuary; winter numbers there are at least stable and perhaps increasing. The BTO has issued an amber WeBS alert for Curlews in the Morecambe Bay SPA, citing a 39% decline between 2000/01 and 2009/10, but average numbers in the Lancashire sector appear to have fallen only 20% during that period.

Although numbers on the Ribble were unexceptional, they have been roughly stable since around 2003 after declining significantly at the turn of the century. Counts on the Alt were only half of last year's in the early winter period and exceptionally low in the second but numbers have stabilised in the past few years after declining at the turn of the century.

The largest counts received from the Liverpool stretch of the Mersey Estuary were 132 in the Garston area on 7 Jan and 105 there on 25 Dec.

Movement from the coast back to the uplands typically began in mid-February. The first at Belmont Reservoir was on 15 Feb and the roost there grew to 119 by the end of the month and peaked at 171 on 7 March, but most had dispersed after mid-March. The spring peaks in east Lancashire were 100+ at Altham on 26 Feb with 95 there on 5 March, and 150 at Whitemoor Reservoir on 17 March. The first migrants were seen at Arkholme on the Lune on 14 Feb with numbers increasing to 200 on the 19th and 540 on the 24th.

An estimated six pairs had territories on Chipping Moss during April and May. Breeding densities in the central West Pennine Moors were remarkably consistent, averaging 2.5 to 3 pairs/km² on sample areas of Belmont Moor (5 pairs in 2km²), Winter Hill (3 pairs in 1km²) and Withnell Moor (5 pairs in 2km²); one pair was on fields at Belmont Reservoir and four pairs were on territory on Hoddlesden Moss on 27 May. Four pairs bred at Arkholme.

Most birds had left the breeding areas by mid-July; only 18 reports were received in east Lancashire during August and just five in September, and the last was seen on 21 Sept before a final record of one over Stocks Reservoir on 21 Oct. Belmont's last was on 2 Aug.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

Abundant passage migrant and winter visitor. Rare breeder.

International importance: 470. National importance: 430.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	1140	598	801	2124	1	63	217	165	894	524	164	234
EM Complex	650	180	1740	2100	750	90	345	640	872	560	111	47
Ribble WeBS	3205	365	1824	1363	137	51	620	827	1870	2133	3681	3834
Marshside	7000	3000	2000	780	415	320	550	8000	2500	4500	3500	3594
Seaforth (Alt)	260	95	128	132	4	15	35	145	221	136	1	10

Numbers have increased tenfold in Morecambe Bay since the turn of the century but they still have some way to go to catch up with Marshside on the Ribble, where county record counts were recorded in both January and August; Ribble WeBS peaks have roughly doubled since 2000. Morecambe Bay's birds are found mainly on the Eric Morecambe complex but high counts elsewhere included 530 at Glasson on 2 Feb, with similar numbers at Preesall on the 9th and Barnaby's Sands on the 12th, and 1000 at Thurnham on the 15th.

A male was displaying to migrating Icelandic females on Newton Marsh from 18 April to early May but failed to find a mate and had left the site by the beginning of June. It seems that the days of this rarest of Lancashire's breeding birds may be numbered.

Away from the coast Brockholes Wetland reported singles on 24 Feb and 13 March, followed by regular sightings between 3 April and 4 May, peaking at 41 on 17 April, and from 24 June to 11 Sept with a peak of 50 on 29 Aug.

However, the most impressive inland record was a flock of 427 which stopped briefly at Greta Foot on the Lune before continuing west. Other inland records were singles at Alston Wetland on 16-18 March, Stocks Reservoir on 10-15 May, ten over Rose Hill, Burnley on 29 May, and in autumn three at Alston on 3 July with singles there on 9 July and 3 Aug, and one at Foulridge Reservoirs on 28 July. Records in the south-west included 115 at MMWWT on 10 July and 15 over Mawdesley Moss on 4 Aug.

Three on the beach with Bar-tailed Godwits at Cabin Hill on 9 July and singles at Heysham on 13 July and 3 Sept were unusual shoreline records.

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	3867	2981	614	242	9	0	12	206	644	550	502	952
Ribble WeBS	227	867	15	355	1251	185	182	276	725	237	2028	2369
Alt Est WeBS	4435	791	3718	/	380	1436	941	1217	2620	[1500]	659	6490

The January Morecambe Bay count was the highest there in winter since 2000 but numbers were low at the other end of the year; average peak counts continued their recent rise and, although they are 20% lower than at their historic highest in the early years of this century, there is little evidence that the BTO's WeBS Alert of a 75% decline in the past 25 years on the SPA as a whole holds good for the Lancashire section. The Heysham area remains predominant, with peak counts there of 3735 in February on a non-WeBS day and 2100-2300 late in the year, again missed by WeBS as were 3500 on Cockerham Sands on 16 Nov.

On the other hand, there is evidence of a continuing long-term decline on the Ribble where average winter peaks have fallen nearly fourfold since 2005, although, as on Morecambe Bay some significant roosts were missed by WeBS, e.g. 1600 at Birkdale on 11 Feb with 1200 there on 10 March and 1700 on 14 Oct. Furthermore, there has always been some interchange between the Ribble and Alt roosts and average numbers at the latter have been rising for several years and are now only 1000 or so below their peak in 2002. Six hundred at Lytham on 13 Sept was the highest count in south Fylde.

Birds are increasingly feeding and roosting during winter at Seaforth where previously they were only numerous in summer. The first signs of summering first-years came on 13 June and numbers peaked at 576 on the 30th, not a huge total but the June Alt WeBS count suggested that there were perhaps another 900 or so of these non-breeding birds elsewhere on the estuary.

Always rare inland, there were just three records this year: singles at Brockholes Wetland on 25 March and MMWWT on 7-9 Feb and 15 Sept.

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	189	518	563	559	22	0	56	141	658	663	661	503
Fleetwood	150	250	265	245	5	0	/	/	225	275	320	170
Ribble WeBS	116	55	64	120	44	0	0	174	162	129	138	90
Alt WeBS	9	1	1	5	5	3	16	0	2	0	0	11

WeBS counts on Morecambe Bay were broadly similar to recent years but the five-year average indicates numbers there continue to rise, albeit slowly. The November count on the Ribble was the highest in winter since 1994 but the five-year average indicates a slow, steady decline. Counts not picked up by WeBS included 95 at Cabin Hill (Alt) on 11 March and 118 at Lytham (Ribble) on 9 May with 600 there on 23 Aug. The only counts received from the Liverpool section of the Mersey Estuary were 17 at Otterspool on 7 Feb and five at Dingle on 5 Sept.

At Fleetwood Marine Lakes, a major roost site within Morecambe Bay, many Turnstones were caught and fitted with leg flags this year. Peak counts on the nearby shore at Rossall Point included 200 on 15 Jan and 250 on 1 Oct; other large site counts received included 180 at Cleveleys on 11 Aug with 300 there on the 23rd.

There were three records inland: singles at Arkholme and Stocks Reservoir on 10 May and MMWWT on 13 Aug.

KNOT *Calidris canutus*

Abundant winter visitor and passage migrant to coasts. Scarce inland.

International importance: 4500. National importance: 3200.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	11902	4477	11934	1543	3	0	4	16	4748	5567	9220	6160
Ribble WeBS	4325	1414	18982	33635	7735	6767	960	7700	18710	4401	3915	4233
Alt Est WeBS	20220	535	8983	2030	2022	4242	4752	2921	7070	[3160]	692	22960

An Amber WeBS Alert, indicating a 32% decline in the ten years to 2009 Oct, has been issued by the BTO for Morecambe Bay; the five-year average peaks for the Lancashire section have more or less halved since the beginning of this century but there are signs that this decline has now stabilised and may be going into reverse.

Both winter and passage numbers on the Ribble continued a decline that began in the late 1990s but the situation is less clear on the Alt, where, although this year's highest total was very much lower than the 48000 counted in January 2011, numbers have fluctuated for at least 30 years and it is difficult to discern any clear trend.

Large counts missed by WeBS included 10000 at Cabin Hill (Alt) on 11 March with 20000 there on 4 May, 12000 on 30 July and 6000 on 1 Aug. As usual, the largest counts in Morecambe Bay were at Heysham/Middleton, on the Ribble at Birkdale and on the Alt at Formby Point/Cabin Hill.

The first first-summer birds arrived on 4 June at Seaforth where numbers grew to 3000+ by the 24th. Almost 11000 were on the Alt and Ribble during June, the highest summer total since 2009, coinciding neatly with the three-year Arctic small mammal cycle and suggesting that Knots probably had a good breeding season in 2011.

Brockholes recorded one or two regularly between 7 Feb and 31 March, and there were further singles inland at Belmont Reservoir on 12 Feb, MMWWT on 19 May, 2 June, and 25 July, and Stocks Reservoir on 3 June.

RUFF *Calidris 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
MBS WeBS	2	0	2	1	0	0	0	5	1	0	0	0
Marshside	36	12	67	81	49	0	2	10	6	38	/	80
MMWWT	70	114	134	50	14	1	8	41	97	20	86	97

Numbers were higher at both ends of the year at MMWWT and Marshside than in 2011, the combined March counts being particularly impressive; both sites remain of national importance.

Most of the records on the north Fylde coast and Lune Estuary at the start of the year appeared to have been included in the Morecambe WeBS counts but several later records were missed, including four at Braides on 5 April and one near Skippool Creek from 11 July with two there in September. Autumn brought some good counts to other sites in the Fylde, including four at Todderstaffe Hall on 19 Aug with eight there on the 25th, eleven on the 30th and 13 on 2 Sept, and peaks of ten at Out Rawcliffe on 29 Aug and eight at Lathwaite on 13 Oct.

Occasional single figures appeared at several other sites – mostly in spring and particularly autumn – including the Eric Morecambe complex, Aldcliffe Marsh, Plex Moss, Downholland Moss and Seaforth. Four briefly at Alston Wetland on 31 March was the only record in east Lancashire, while Brockholes Wetland had singles on 21 Feb and 29 March.

It is highly probable that Ruffs bred somewhere on the south Ribble marshes. Up to 14 males and two or three females were lekking at Marshside in the last week of April and the dominant black male was seen mating with two females on 2 May. One male remained throughout the summer and one was seen with two very small juveniles on 11 Aug.

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea*

Fairly common passage migrant.

The first singles at MMWWT on 27 April and Lytham the next day were followed by a reasonable spring passage; singles were at Rossall Point on 9 & 29 May but most records came from Marshside with a peak of five on the 20th, and MMWWT where one or two were seen regularly throughout May.

No more were seen until a moulting adult at Seaforth on 26 July and singles at Marshside and Banks Marsh between 12 & 31 Aug. Records then followed during September and October on at least a dozen sites on the north Fylde coast with peaks of four at Braides on 19-20 Sept and five at Cockersand on 1 Oct. In the north of the county singles were on the Eric Morecambe complex on 12-15, 23 & 27 Sept, Sunderland Point on 13-14 Sept, Jenny Brown's Point on the 27th and Heysham on 11 Oct. Further south, singles were seen at Hesketh Out Marsh, Banks Marsh, Plex Moss and Formby Point during September and at Banks Marsh on 6 Oct.

What was all in all a lacklustre autumn ended with singles at Cocker's Dyke on 20 Oct and Nateby on the 22nd.

TEMMINCK'S STINT* *Calidris temminckii*

Scarce passage migrant.

All three records were of two together: at MMWWT on 26-27 May with one remaining until the 29th (finder unknown), at Weeton on the 27th (F Bird) and at Marshside on the 28th (B McCarthy, J Dempsey).

SANDERLING *Calidris alba*

Abundant passage migrant and 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	/	57	41	43	230	/	42	66	126	159	340	161
Ribble WeBS	620	235	26	1330	750	59	2600	1706	4582	225	263	426
Alt Est WeBS	789	713	1035	/	650	10	173	712	722	[300]	335	441

Although numbers in Morecambe Bay were lower than last year it appears that the steady increase first detected in 2008 is continuing, although nowhere near close to matching the 2-4000 seen there until the dramatic crash in the late 1990s. A number of larger counts missed by WeBS included 50 at Knott End in January with 100 there in February, 50 at Fleetwood in March with 100 there in April, 151 in June, 161 in July, 124 in August, 640 in November and 250 in December. Very few were seen further north with a peak count at Heysham of 14 in September.

The situation on our other two major estuaries was similarly unclear. The September count on the Ribble was the highest ever there in autumn but numbers were nothing special for the rest

of the year; average wintering numbers continue to rise after a decline at the turn of the century and are now 50% higher than their 1990s' level, but both spring and autumn passages have declined to a similar degree in the past ten years or so. As usual most birds were seen at Ainsdale/Birkdale and Lytham/Blackpool; a count of 3500 at Birkdale on 20 Aug was missed by WeBS.

The spring peak on the Alt was the lowest since 1993 but numbers remained at around their average level since the 1980s, although far lower than the record years of 2003 and 2004. Records not covered in the WeBS counts included 1500 at Cabin Hill on 11 March with 200 there on 4 April and 1000 on 6 Aug.

Inland records were predictably scarce. One at Alston Reservoirs on 25 April was followed by singles at Stocks Reservoir on 8 & 14 May, five on 3 & 8 June with three remaining on the 9th. Singles were at Brockholes Wetland on 25 April and 17 May, at MMWWT on 13, 19 & 31 May, and three at Barnacre Reservoirs on 3 June.

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	9087	6056	2105	195	1248	22	263	616	305	2675	3372	3642
Alt Est WeBS	5327	1792	1570	/	610	64	799	946	938	/	237	1631
Ribble WeBS	12811	18211	17666	62080	20772	573	12463	12038	4622	3385	4329	13238

Although the January total in Morecambe Bay was the best winter count since November 2008, the BTO have issued an Amber Alert citing a 45% decline over the past 25 years; numbers have stabilised over the past few winters but at a far lower level compared to their high point in the late 1990s. The largest site counts included 3102 at Middleton and 1800 at Fluke Hall on 15 Jan, 1300 at Cockerham Marsh on 15 Jan, 1000 off Jack Scout on 1 Feb and 1271 on the Eric Morecambe complex on 29 Nov.

In contrast, winter counts were typical of recent years on the Ribble where average peak counts have returned to the levels of the early 2000s, although still far below those of the mid-1990s. The April total was the highest ever passage count on the Ribble, surpassing the 52551 seen in May 2008; it included 30000 on Banks Marsh alone; 8500 were at Birkdale on 4 Aug.

Winter numbers remained quite high on the Alt although the January count was only half of last year's highest. Both spring and autumn passage numbers appeared to be relatively low but some counts were missed at Formby Point in both seasons.

No records suggested breeding anywhere in east Lancashire, including for the fourth consecutive year at the traditional Boulsworth Hill site. Indeed, the only probable breeding records received were of trilling at a regular breeding site above Belmont on 24 May and another on Wet Moss, Holcombe Moor, Rossendale on 18 June.

Autumn passage was first recorded in east Lancashire on 2 July and on the coast at Seaforth the following week. The last definite birds were seen in the east at the end of July but there were three 'probables' at Stocks Reservoir on 3 Sept.

Although small numbers were seen at several inland sites in winter and on passage, the only double-figure counts received were 20 at Brockholes Wetland on 31 Jan with ten there on 19 March, twelve on 10-11 May and 17 on 25 July, and 20 at MMWWT on 31 Jan.

PURPLE SANDPIPER *Calidris maritime*

Uncommon winter visitor.

In the first winter period one was at Blackpool until 10 March and two at Heysham with one remaining until 14 April.

At the end of the year up to two were seen at Blackpool from 5 Nov and one at Fleetwood from 23 Nov until at least 20 Dec, while one at Heysham on 6 Nov was joined by another on 28 Nov but this was the last sighting of the year.

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*

Fairly common passage migrant. Scarce winter visitor.

There were no winter records at either end of the year.

Spring passage began with one at Marshside on 15-16 April with a different bird there on the 20th to 22nd the only other record anywhere in the county that month. Movement accelerated during May with records at Weeton, Marshside, MMWWT and Brockholes Wetland, with around a dozen individuals seen and a peak of three at Marshside. Later migrants were at Brockholes on 5 June, Rossall Point on the 6th and Marshside on the 13th & 15th.

No more were seen until singles on Banks Marsh on 15-31 Aug and the Eric Morecambe complex on the 31st, followed by September records at Hightown, Birkdale, MMWWT and the Eric Morecambe complex, and at Banks Marsh on 4 Oct, Cockersand on the 8th and Hesketh Out Marsh on the 19th. As in spring the largest count was three, this time at Banks Marsh on 4 Oct.

PECTORAL SANDPIPER* *Calidris melanotos*

Scarce passage migrant.

There were just two records this year: what was described as a worn adult at Marshside on 10-16 Aug (G Clarkson) and one at Lathwaite, Winmarleigh on the 29th (B Dyson).



Ray Scally

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE* *Phalaropus lobatus*

Rare passage migrant.

A male was at Brockholes Wetland on 9 June (C Partington).

GREY PHALAROPE *Phalaropus fulicarius*

Scarce passage migrant.

An adult in partial summer plumage was at MMWWT on 17 July.

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos*

Fairly common passage migrant, uncommon breeding bird. Scarce in winter.

There were two or three records in the first winter period: singles on the Conder Estuary from 1 Jan to 22 March (and possibly into April), at various sites on the Ribble west of Preston from at least 8 Jan to 3 Feb, with possibly the same at Lea/Clifton Marsh on 14-15 Jan. At the other end of the year what was presumably a returning bird was near the Ribble Link confluence with the Ribble on at least 4 Nov to 23 Dec and, very unusually, one was at Belmont Reservoir on 26 Dec.

The first definite spring migrant at Arkholme on 26 March was followed by singles at Altham on 2 April and Anglezarke Reservoir on the 6th. Passage birds then flooded through during April and May, recorded at more than 50 sites; counts were mostly of ones or twos with seven at Stanley Park, Blackpool on 2 May the exception. Migrants continued to trickle through during early June but, due to the heavy rain and consequent flooding that undoubtedly severely limited success, it was impossible to distinguish them from returning failed breeders by the end of the month; eleven in the Skippool Creek area on the 24th presumably fell into the latter category.

Two pairs were at Anglezarke Reservoir on 16 April and at least 16 birds were at Belmont Reservoir by the 27th. Successful breeding was reported nowhere in east Lancashire due to rising water levels, with the exception of Black Moss Reservoir in Barley, although territorial pairs were reported from 20 or so sites. In the West Pennine Moors five or six pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir, four at Delph Reservoir, one at Springs Reservoir and one unsuccessfully at Wards Reservoir and possibly at the Ornamental Reservoir, Belmont. Four pairs bred at Brockholes Wetland and 14 pairs on the Lune at Arkholme, the latter suffering poor productivity.

Most birds seem to have left the breeding areas in late June or early July; the last in the West Pennine Moors was at Wards Reservoir on 5 Aug, and in east Lancashire at Altham on 4 Sept; later records at Rishton Reservoir on 4 Sept and Alston Reservoirs on the 9th were presumably migrants.

The return migration on the coast was heavily concentrated in July but many continued to be seen throughout August and into September with final records at Seaforth on 22 Sept and the Conder Estuary on 6 Oct. The largest autumn counts in the Fylde were 20 in the Skippool Creek area on 3 July, growing to 34 on the 6th, eleven on the Conder Estuary on the 23rd and 15 at Little Singleton on 31 Aug. As usual, peaks in other areas were lower: five on the Eric Morecambe complex on 18 July and eight at Hightown on 5 July.

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

Fairly common on passage, especially autumn. Uncommon winter visitor.

Remarkably, more records were received for the two winter periods than the rest of the year put together – although far fewer individuals were involved.

In the early year two were at Mythop/Ream Hills from New Year's Day until 9 April, and elsewhere in the Fylde singles were at Little Singleton from at least 12 Jan to 26 Feb and Rawcliffe Moss from 15 Jan to 10 Feb. At least one was at Arkholme throughout January and February, and singles at Belmont Reservoir from 10 Jan to 3 Feb, Mere Sands Wood on 22 Jan and 2 Feb, on the Ribble at Brockholes on 29 Jan and at Arley Nature Reserve on 15 Feb.

At the end of the year singles were at Little Singleton from 1 Dec into 2013, Brockholes/Red Scar Wood throughout December, the Ribble Link on 18 Dec and Altham on the 30th; one at Arley on 26 Oct was perhaps a returning bird.

One at Pilling on 15 March may have been a fairly local movement, but one on Aldcliffe Marsh on 20 March perhaps marked the beginning of spring passage. It was followed by two or more (possibly overwintering birds) on the Ribble at Brockholes/Red Scar Wood between 15 March and 1 April, two at Altham from 27 March to 2 April, singles at Croston on the 27th & 31st and the Conder Estuary on the 31st, and a remarkable seven at Arkholme on 28 March. Singles at Balderstone on 6 April, MMWWT on the 18th & 23rd, Knowsley Park on 5 May and Delph Reservoir on the 8th completed the early movement.

No more were seen until singles on the Eric Morecambe complex and two on Silverdale Moss on 3 June, followed by one at MMWWT on the 7th with two or probably more there on the 15-30th, one at Mythop on the 23rd and two on Newton Lake, Newton-le-Willows on the 30th – all these early returning birds perhaps being failed breeders.

Most autumn records were of ones or twos but up to three were seen daily at MMWWT throughout July and up to four most days in August. Others were recorded at 20 or sites throughout the county, mainly in August but with a few stragglers through to late October. The last were on the Eric Morecambe complex and Aldcliffe Marsh on 17 Nov, Arkholme on the 21st and Brockholes and Little Singleton (three) on the 29th, some of which may have been wintering birds.

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*

Fairly common passage migrant and scarce winter visitor.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	1	/	4	4	0	1	3	3	2	6	7	/
EM Complex	2	3	3	4	3	0	2	2	3	3	6	2
Conder/Glasson	3	2	4	4	0	1	3	3	3	2	2	2

Away from the main sites above there were winter records of singles in the Skippool Creek area on 15 Jan, at Pilling on 2 March and Warton Marsh on 9 March and 15 Dec.

The only definite spring record away from these sites was one at Marshside on 2-4 May and no more were seen until singles at Seaforth on 5 July and Skippool Creek on the 14th. A further 20 or so records followed at coastal sites and MMWWT through to the end of October, mostly of ones or twos but with three at Skippool Creek on 25 Aug. One flying over Alston Reservoirs on 12 Aug was the only record in the east of the county.

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

Fairly common on passage, especially in autumn. Rare in winter.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
EM Complex	1	1	2	1	0	1	10	19	13	4	6	2
North Fylde*	0	2	2	3	5	0	25	47	50	7	1	1

*Conder Estuary, Glasson, Pilling, Skippool Creek, Little Singleton & other sites on the Wyre

The only definite winter record away from the Eric Morecambe complex and the north Fylde sites was one at Seaforth on 12 Jan.

As usual it was difficult to detect the onset of the spring passage on wintering sites but one in the Skippool Creek area on 15 April and an additional bird on the Conder Estuary on the 30th probably fitted the bill. There were another five or so records in the Fylde during May, with two at

Little Singleton on the 6-7th and one at Fleetwood Marsh on the 20th involving additional sites. Elsewhere, singles at MMWWT on 27 March and Brockholes Wetland on 31 March and 3 April were the first migrants, while the largest spring count at any site was three at Arkholme on 5 May. The only other records were singles at Alston Wetland on 11 April and 26 May, Stocks Reservoir on 30 May and 2 June, Brockholes on 2 & 19 May, Marshside on 9 May and MMWWT on 12 & 20 April.

Singles at Seaforth on 20 June and Brockholes on the 24th were perhaps the first returning birds and the next was at Heysham on 4 July. Singles at MMWWT on 6-8 July were followed by two further singles before two to three were seen daily from 30 July to 12 Aug, with numbers declining to one or two occasionally during September and the last on 10 Oct. Marshside recorded up to three on at least ten dates up to 23 Oct and seven flew over on 8 Sept; peaks on Hesketh Out Marsh included eight on 21 July and twelve on 5 Aug, and ones and twos were also recorded at Brockholes, Cabin Hill, Mawdesley and Middleton.

However, the overwhelming majority of autumn records were in north Lancashire and north Fylde. It seems likely that at least 30 passed through the Eric Morecambe complex and surrounding areas and perhaps as many as 80 through the various Fylde sites, where there were peak counts of seven at Little Singleton on 30 July, with six there on 11 Aug, eight on the 28th and five on 14 Sept, and four in the Skippool Creek area on 27 July with five on 7 Aug and three on 13 Sept.

LESSER YELLOWLEGS *Tringa flavipes*

Vagrant.

A juvenile was on Aldcliffe Marsh from 21 Oct to 5 Dec (P Crooks). The record has been accepted by the BBRC and becomes the thirteenth record in Lancashire, following one at Glasson in September and early October in 2011.



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

The first at MMWWT on 5 May were followed by two there on the 26-27th when singles also arrived at Seaforth, Weeton and Claughton, after an earlier bird at Saltcotes on the 20th. The last of spring were singles at Marshside on 4 June and Brockholes Wetland on the 6th, and two at MMWWT on 27 June.

The first definite autumn migrant was at Seaforth on 11 Aug, followed by two at MMWWT on the 18-19th and singles at Out Rawcliffe on the 28-30th, Poulton-le-Fylde on the 28th and Fleetwood on the 30th; two were at Hesketh Out Marsh during August.

Finally, one was on Aldcliffe Marsh alongside the Lesser Yellowlegs from 21 Oct to 5 Dec, by far the latest ever in the county.

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	3026	2377	3347	2484	57	138	1122	2907	4556	3372	4106	2950
Fl'twood Marsh	500	540	500	430	/	/	135	500	800	600	630	375
E M complex	500	413	727	639	12	15	340	1300	800	461	913	306
Ribble WeBS	1227	1569	2035	1134	407	151	173	1154	2270	1000	1658	195
Marshside	5	9	580	42	16	20	83	64	650	200	3	128
Alt Est WeBS	684	513	500	115	10	35	366	435	1025	649	446	1343
Seaforth	450	600	480	170	0	42	218	241	790	650	360	1140

Although the annual winter peak in Morecambe Bay was lower than last year's, the five-year average continued the upward trend which has been maintained continuously since at least the mid-1980s. Large counts away from Fleetwood included 546 at Cockerham on 15 Jan with 540 there on 12 Feb and 690 on 18 Nov, 800 in the Skippool Creek area on 26 July, 459 at Barnaby's Sands on 19 Aug, and 600 at Glasson on 7 Sept. The highest numbers at Heysham were in autumn with a peak of 480 on 29 Aug.

The long-term trend is also one of increase on the Ribble; although numbers peaked at a very high level in 1999-2000 before falling sharply, they are now rising again. The largest count of the year on the north bank of the river was 1200 at Lytham on 23 Aug.

There was another high winter count in December on the Alt where numbers have been roughly stable for the past ten or so years after a large decline in the mid-1990s; as shown in the table most Redshanks are found at Seaforth, feeding there and on North Wirral Shore. The highest count on the Lancashire section the Mersey Estuary was 60+ at Garston on 25 Dec.

As usual, birds were very scarce in winter away from the coast with only two reports received, singles at Arkholme in January and Altham on 4 Feb. A late return was noted at Arkholme from 6 March after the first had been seen at Stocks Reservoir on the 1st and MMWWT on the 2nd. Numbers began to increase in east Lancashire in the second week of March as birds began heading back to upland breeding areas and many birds were on territory during April. The only reports of successful breeding in the east were of single pairs at Grimsargh Reservoirs, Alston Wetland and New Laithe Farm but that was certainly a considerable underestimate.

In north Lancashire 42 pairs nested on Carnforth Outer Marsh and the Eric Morecambe complex (62 pairs in 2011) and 35 pairs on the Lune, including 13 pairs at Arkholme. Six pairs bred at Brockholes and three at Belmont Reservoir, one up on last year, but the largest numbers were in the south-west. On the Ribble Marshes there were 13 pairs on Newton Marsh, 35 pairs on Hesketh

Out Marsh, 49 pairs on Marshside Inner with a further six pairs on Crossens Inner and 34 pairs on the saltmarsh, and seven pairs at MMWWT.

Little or no information was received regarding breeding success on lowland wetlands but numbers fell dramatically in east Lancashire after June, suggesting that the wet conditions had led to widespread failure. The only late-year records there were of singles at Altham on 19 Nov and 14 & 31 Dec, and Barrowford Reservoir on 16 Dec.

JACK SNIFE *Lymnocyptes minimus*

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

Significantly more reports were received for the first winter period than last year; birds were recorded on at least 32 sites (18 in 2011), nine each in the north, east and south-west of the county but just five elsewhere – at Belmont Reservoir, Turton Heights, Bretherton, Eccleston and Brockholes. Thirty-six sites (14 in 2011) were involved in the second winter period, most of them the same as earlier in the year and with a similar geographical spread. Although these totals were twice those of last year, they nonetheless undoubtedly paint a hugely conservative picture of the true situation; Jack Snipe were recorded in 133 tetrads – and probably at more than 200 sites – during the recent atlas survey.

The last of spring was at Swinden Reservoir on 20 April and the first back at Fairhaven on 27 Sept.

Almost all records were of singles and occasionally twos but larger counts included 18 flushed by the spring tide from the Fairhaven saltmarsh on 15 Oct with 16 there on 14 Nov and six on 13 Dec, 15 on flooded fields at Altcar Withins on 8 Oct, four at Leighton Moss on 1 April, Grove Lane Marsh on 21 Dec and Mere Brow on the 26th, and three at Eccleston, Chorley on 2 Jan, Turton Heights on 26 Feb and at Allsprings on 5-10 Dec.

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

Common winter visitor and uncommon breeder.

As for the last two years records were received from more than 100 sites, spread right across the county, during the two winter periods but this compares with records in 389 tetrads during the atlas survey.

As usual, most were just ones or twos but larger counts included a staggering 40-50 flushed by beaters at Moor Piece on 19 Dec, 20 near Entwistle on 1 Dec, seven flushed by a shoot at Belmont on 30 Jan with five there on 7 Nov, six flushed by hounds in the Dunsop Valley on 11 March, and three at Stocks Reservoir on 30, Rawcliffe Hall on 11 Dec.

Unusual sightings included presumed migrants flushed from moorland plateaux in the West Pennine Moors at up to 370m asl on 17 March and 21 Dec, one on top of Pendle Hill on 28 Nov and one in a Rishton garden on 8 Feb.

Roding was reported from Heald Brow (3 contacts) and Eaves Wood (5 contacts) in April and June respectively, at Belmont from 14 March, at Roddlesworth Plantations and White Coppice, Longridge Fell, Moor Piece, Stocks Reservoir and Leighton Moss – again a trivial proportion of the 146 tetrads in which breeding was recorded during the atlas survey. Unusually, none was roding at either Arkholme or Claughton in the Lune Valley.

SNIFE *Gallinago gallinago***Abundant but declining wintering bird, fairly common breeder.**

Numbers were again low during the early year with counts of 20 or more reported from just two sites in the Fylde, seven in east Lancashire, one in the south-west and at Brockholes; this was only a marginally better showing than the same period in 2011. The peak count of 98 on 13 Jan at what has become the county's most important wintering site, Grove Lane Marsh, was, however, almost twice that of last year. Other large counts included 55 on Glasson Marsh on 26 Jan, 45 on Chipping Moss on 23 March, 33 at Dean Clough Reservoir on 17 Feb and 26 at Alston Wetland on 14 March.

Numbers began to thin out in late March and most sites reported their last birds during April but there were several late records in south Fylde with the last anywhere in the county at St. Anne's on 6 May.

The second winter period – more precisely late autumn – couldn't have been more different to the first with counts of 20 or more recorded on at least 32 sites and double-figures at very many more. The first arrived at Leighton Moss on 20 July and there were 37 on Lytham Moss on 27th and ten at MMWWT on the 28th. August brought widespread arrivals and some very large counts, including 76 at Bank End on the 18th, 130 at Todderstaffe Hall on the 28th, 100+ at MMWWT from the 19th and 57 at Lunt Meadows on the 29th. The very wet late summer/early autumn conditions no doubt played a large part in this.

The early days of September saw a steady build-up throughout the country but there was a mass arrival from mid-month. After 207 at Marshside on the 8th and 76 at Brockholes Wetland on the 9th, 266 were seen in the open at Marshside on the 16th and it was thought that considerably more must have been present; on the same day 128 were at Cocker's Dyke and 34 at Grimsargh Reservoirs. Numbers grew to 300+ at Brockholes on the 25th when 255 were also on Pilling Moss, and other large counts included 89 on Croston Moss on the 29th with 130 were still present at Brockholes on the 30th.

Some new sites produced large counts during October, including 200+ on flooded arable farmland on Altcar Withins on the 11th, 149 on the Fairhaven saltmarsh on the 15th, 82 at Stocks Reservoir on the 25th and 40+ in the Belmont area on the 28th.

Numbers steadily declined at many of the sites that had featured in September, for example only 50-60 at Marshside and Brockholes in October, but grew to 194 at Fairhaven on 13 Nov with 90 still there on 13 Dec, and 141 were at Grove Lane Marsh on 13 Nov with 50 there on 8 Dec.

There was a noticeable southern and western bias to most of these large counts and numbers were relatively low in the north, with 50 on Aldcliffe Marsh on 26 Oct and 35 at Leighton Moss on 17 Nov the largest.

Six 'pairs' were on territory around Belmont Reservoir with a minimum of a further eleven 'drummers' recorded on in-bye fields and moorland in the Belmont area, and elsewhere on the West Pennine Moors three were drumming over Aushaw Moss on 31 May. The first report of drumming in east Lancashire was from New Laithe Farm on 22 March but during April to June further displays of either drumming or chipping calls were recorded at Champion Moor, Upper Coldwell Reservoir, Croasdale, Crown Point and Deerstone Moor, while birds were present at six other sites in this period. Elsewhere, birds were heard drumming at Marshside in April and near the Lancaster canal east of Bonds (SD5044) on 31 March. One was also on Newton Marsh on the suggestive dates of 10-12 June.

POMARINE SKUA *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Uncommon double passage migrant, rare in winter

There was further evidence that when conditions are right – fresh south-westerlies with occasional showers - significant numbers may pass through Morecambe Bay on spring passage. In addition, small numbers may also pass in other conditions, notably light easterlies prompting tern passage.

By far the highest definite count was of eleven heading north off Rossall Point on 11 May, but note the 'skua sp.' section below where the observer thought that the distant flocks off Heysham on 11 May were probably this species. Additional Fylde coast spring records comprised singles on 12 & 26 May with two on the 13th. Heysham records comprised one on 24 April, two on 2 May, singles on 3, 13 & 20 May, two on the 11th and four on the 21st.

It was a very poor autumn with three reported off the Fylde on 10 Aug and a singleton there on 28 Aug the only known reports.

ARCTIC SKUA *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Fairly common passage migrant with rapid transit in spring and many lingering during a prolonged autumn passage. Rare in winter.

Morecambe Bay

Spring passage was similar to last year's with 50 northbound birds observed off Heysham and Jenny Brown's Point between 17 April and 23 June. For the second year running very few (5/50) light morph birds were seen.

The only definite autumn record was a juvenile off Heysham on 11 Sept.

Liverpool Bay

Off the Fylde coast, northbound, rapid-transit spring records comprised 14 in April (from the 6th), 41 in May and six on four dates in June up until the 17th. Many of these were from early morning seawatching at Rossall and clearly also included many of those subsequently seen at Heysham; the peak count was 14 on 2 May. Elsewhere, one was at Marshside on 24 April, three were seen from Formby Point on 11 May and a singleton was off Formby on 17 June.

Reasonable numbers were seen off the Fylde and Formby in late summer but autumn passage proper was very poor, especially in September. It was difficult to differentiate between transient birds and those lingering so it is best to quantify the passage in bird-days. Off the Fylde, there were 35 bird-days in July, 28 in August and just six in September with the last on 5 Oct; the daily maximum was eight on 18 July. Records were more sporadic at Formby and comprised seven on 18 July, four the next day, five on 6 Aug, three on the 8th, five on the 18th and singles on 1 & 14 Sept.

There was just one record on the Mersey, a single on 14 Sept.

GREAT SKUA *Stercorarius skua*

Erratic spring migrant, irregular during autumn gales, occasional winter lingerers

Perhaps the same lingering overwintering bird was seen off Heysham on 7 Jan, Rossall Point on the 12th, Fleetwood on the 21st and Marshside on the 23rd.

Heysham spring records comprised northbound singletons on 19, 20, 22 & 26 April and 7 May with two on 28 April, while off the Fylde coast there were two on 18 March, singles on 21, 22 & 30 April and 9 & 11 May, two on 13 May, three on the 14th and two on 23 June. One was off Cokersand on 17 June and singles off Formby Point on 17 & 23 June

It was a poor autumn in Morecambe Bay, with just two off Jenny Brown's Point on 1 Sept and one off Heysham on the 28th, but rather above average off the Fylde and Formby, including presumed lingering birds off Formby in mid-July.

There were 17 records involving 28 bird-days off the Fylde coast between 1 July and 6 Oct with daily maxima of four on 28 Aug and five on 14 Sept. Off Formby, with more intermittent coverage, there were eight records involving 26 bird-days with maxima of five on 18 & 23 July and three on 6 Aug and 14 Sept. None was reported from the Mersey.

SKUA sp.

One on 4 May and flocks of 23 and 14 on the 11th off Heysham were very distant and remained unidentified, but were thought to be light morph Pomarines.

BLACK GUILLEMOT *Cephus grylle*

Scarce passage migrant; rare winter visitor. Amber List (Species of European Conservation Concern).

Singles off Rossall Point on 2 May, Blackpool on 22 July and Rossall Point on 15 Aug were the only records.

RAZORBILL *Alca torda*

Common passage migrant; uncommon winter visitor.

The only records in the early year were one off Formby Point on 10 Jan with two there on the 25th, and one at Blackpool on 14 Jan.

As usual most spring records came from the Fylde coast. The first were three off Blackpool on 28 April with records on a further eight dates in April, including 30 on the 12th and large movements of 280 on the 15th and 100 on the 17th. They continued to be seen there regularly until the end of May but, with the exception of 19 on 7 May, all records involved only single figures.

The pattern of records at Rossall Point was essentially similar with most seen during April. The largest counts there were 32 on 1 April and 531 on the 15th.

Autumn was much quieter at both sites; after one off Blackpool on 23 June with two there and one off Rossall on 1 July, no more were seen until September and occasional single-figure records continued until the end of November with twelve off both Blackpool and Rossall on 11 Nov the only larger count.

Ten on 20 April was the only spring record off Formby Point, followed by five on 17 June, six on 18 Sept, three on the 19th, two on the 29th and on 3 Oct.

Heysham enjoyed a 'good year' with spring records of one on 6 April, four on the 17th, ten the next day, eight on the 19th, one on the 20th, nine on the 30th, twelve on 13 May and seven on the 28th. In autumn four were seen there on 12 Oct, ten on the 16th and two on the 28th.

GUILLEMOT *Uria aalge*

Common passage migrant; uncommon winter visitor.

Two off Formby Point on 10 Jan and single(s) off Blackpool and Rossall on the 11-19th were the only winter records in Liverpool Bay.

However, a gale-blown influx into Heysham harbour peaked at 13 on 5 Jan with nine remaining to the 21st, six to the 25th and three to the 30th, with one staying until 25 Feb. Late December saw an influx of single figures offshore there, involving at least five individuals from 27 Dec into 2013.

Passage began with small numbers off the Fylde coast from 1 April, followed by eight off Heysham and four off Blackpool on the 18th and single figures seen regularly at both sites later that month and into early May. However, some larger movements took place, notably 57 past Rossall on 15 April and 135 past Blackpool on 12 May. Two off Formby on the 20 April was the only spring record off the Sefton Coast.

Although there were five off Blackpool on 4 June, autumn records were scarce everywhere with the one exception of 250 at Blackpool on 20 July. Up to six were recorded on 24 dates at Blackpool and Rossall until the last on 24 Nov.

Singles were seen off Formby Point on 17 July and four dates in September with the last two on the 19th, one on the Mersey at Seaforth on 14 Sept and singles off Heysham on 18 Sept and 1 Oct.

UNIDENTIFIED LARGE AUKS

Typically, there were large numbers of auks to which no name could safely be put.

The largest counts included 68 off Rossall Point on 14 April with around 200 there the next day and 45 on 11 Nov; 83 off Heysham on 18 April with 41 there on 13 May; and 38 off Blackpool on 16 April with 50 there on 29 May.

LITTLE TERN *Sternula albifrons*

Uncommon passage migrant on coasts, rare inland.

There were four April records, all off the Sefton Coast: one at Cabin Hill on the 19th, one at Formby on the 21st with two there on the 28th, and one at Crosby on the 25th. The first Fylde bird flew north off Rossall School on 5 May and was followed by two off Blackpool on the 8th with one there on the 13th.

Singles at Seaforth on 10 & 24 June were perhaps non-breeders but three off Formby Point on 17 July with two there on the 22nd marked the start of the return passage. August brought only a further four records, four off Formby on the 1st with two there on the 18th, and four off Blackpool on the 28th with six there the following day.

There were two records inland, one at Brockholes on 17 May and two at Stocks Reservoir on the 30th.

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger*

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

An unexceptional year began with one at Alston Reservoirs on 26-27 April and one offshore at Cabin Hill the next day, with a wider arrival on the 30th, when four were seen with migrating Arctic Terns off Heysham, three were in the Mersey Mouth and one was at MMWWT. May produced a further seven records: one at Seaforth on the 1st & 2nd with four there on the 27th, three at Leighton Moss on the 2nd, seven at MMWWT on the 7th, three at Marshside on the 26th, a spectacular 53 flying east off Rossall Pont on the 27th and two off Heysham on the 28th.

A late adult was at Seaforth on 9-12 June but no more were seen until mid-August. A very brief autumn passage began with juvenile(s) at Marton Mere on 13, 16 & 19 Aug and ended with one at Eccleston Mere on 30 Aug to 5 Sept (also seen on Prescot Reservoirs on the 4th) and another juvenile on the Heysham outfalls from 30 Sept to 6 Oct. The only other autumn records were singles at Seaforth on 14-15 & 18-19 Aug, on the Lune at Arkholme on the 20th-23rd and off Blackpool on the 27th & 29th.

AMERICAN BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger surinamensis***Vagrant.**

A juvenile was on Eccleston Mere from 30 Aug to 4 September (C Davies, R Banks). Throughout its stay it shared the site with a more conventional Black Tern, allowing close comparisons of the two sub-species. The record has been accepted by the BBRC and becomes the first record of this race in Lancashire.

WHITE-WINGED BLACK TERN *Chlidonias leucopterus***Vagrant.**

An adult was at Leighton Moss on 23 June (D Lund, N Fieldhouse). It was the first in the county since 2008.



Ray Scally

SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis*

Common spring and autumn migrant on coasts, rare inland.

Morecambe Bay

There were record spring numbers at Heysham but it was uncertain how much duplication of lingering birds there was. Counts comprised 1832 bird-days on 34 dates between 31 March and 25 May, but with only twelve after 7 May. The highest daily counts were 325 on 24 April and 400 on the 26th. North Fylde coast records were 60 at Knott End on 17 April and three at Cockersand on 3 May. The only other spring records were two at Morecambe on 18 April and ten off Jenny Brown's Point on the 24th, with two there on 3 May and five on the 5th.

Autumn records at Heysham included ten on 25 July and a further 15 on just nine dates between 28 July and 10 Sept – below par compared to recent autumns. Birds were seen regularly at Knott End between 17 July and 30 Aug with peaks of 39 on 26 July, 83 on 15 Aug and 34 the following day.

Liverpool Bay

The first were singles past Rossall Point on 24 March, Blackpool on the 27th and Norbreck on the 31st, and on the Sefton Coast one at Seaforth and six off Cabin Hill on 6 April. In contrast to Morecambe Bay spring passage was no larger than average. Double-figure counts were made daily

at the Seaforth roost throughout April and into early May, peaking at 223 on 20 April and 252 on 7 May. Peak counts off the Fylde coast included 61 at Blackpool on 2 April with 161 there on the 13th, and 120 at Rossall Point on 15 April with 148 there on 2 May and 242 on the 4th.

Small numbers were present on both the Sefton and Fylde coast throughout the summer.

The first juveniles were seen at Seaforth on 16 July but the largest autumn counts were made elsewhere on the Sefton Coast and the Fylde. Peaks included 318 on Birkdale Green Beach on 22 July with 230 there on 4 Aug 100 on the 28th and 144 on 16 Sept, 320 on St. Anne's (Fairhaven) beach on 26 July, 275 at Cabin Hill on 23 Aug, 224 at Rossall Point on 15 Aug, 100 at Formby Point on 16 Aug and 50 at Blackpool on 11 & 19 Aug.

Numbers reduced considerably during September and the last were seen off Formby Point on 3 Oct.

Inland

One at Stocks Reservoir on 25 March was the second to arrive anywhere in the county. Others followed in spring at Brockholes Wetland on 1 & 9 April, and in autumn at Brockholes on 16 & 29 July and 11 Aug, with just one other at MMWWT on 25 July.

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

Abundant spring and autumn migrant. Scarce breeder. Regular cross-Pennine migrant.

Morecambe Bay

The only spring record was one off Heysham on 25 May – the worst on record there. However, autumn provided reasonable numbers there by recent standards with records of one to three, several lingering for a few days, on 20 or so dates between 22 June and 6 Oct, the last date anywhere in the county.

Liverpool Bay

Monthly peak counts at Seaforth

Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
20	900	820	850	450	15

As usual most records came from Seaforth and other sites on the Sefton Coast. The first arrived at Seaforth on 13 April but there was a late build-up with 86 on 2 May the first influx of any size. Around 200 pairs nested there but productivity was extremely low due to a combination of Magpie-predation, high winds and constant downpours, which no doubt contributed to an early departure with the last seen on 19 Sept.

The site within the Liverpool Docks where the birds that deserted the Shotton colony nested for the past two years was no longer available and it is unclear where they ended up; the July peak count at Seaforth of 850 compared with 1700 in 2010 and 2200 last year suggests that most left the area. The south Ribble colonies on Banks and Longton Marshes were not monitored this year.

The largest spring counts elsewhere in the bay were 29 off Blackpool on 2 May with 18 there on the 17th, ten at Cabin Hill on 29 April and 50 on 19 May, but autumn records were higher and more widespread. The largest numbers roosted at Cabin Hill, 270 on 9 July and 257 on 1 Aug – the presence of just two juveniles amongst the latter indicating just how poor a breeding season it had been – and 171 on 23 Aug. Fairhaven beach held a roost of 51 on 25 July with 40 there on 16 Aug, while sea-watching off Formby Point produced peaks of 98 on 17 July and 45 on the 19th and the last of the year on 29 Sept.

Inland

A hundred were reported at Preston Dock in early July and although the breeding colony was not fully monitored it is thought that at least 30 pairs nested. Single pairs nested at Jumbles Reservoir,

Mere Sands Wood and Yarrow Valley Park (where another pair was prospecting), while a bird held territory at Delph Reservoir but did not breed.

Ones and twos were seen at another seven sites in Chorley and at Wayoh Reservoir in the West Pennine Moors. In east Lancashire the first at Alston Reservoir on 25 April was followed by single(s) at Foulridge Reservoirs on 2-5 May, five at Stocks Reservoir on 6 June, one at Rishton Reservoir on 7 July and two at Lowerhouse Lodge on the 12th, seven at Alston Reservoir on 17 Aug, one the following day at Stocks Reservoir, five at Lower Foulridge Reservoir on the 26th with two there on 2 Sept and the last of the year a juvenile on 28 Sept to 2 Oct.

Brockholes Wetland had birds on 28 days between 25 April and 24 Sept, including eleven on 21 June and six on 1 Aug, while MMWWT recorded up to three during May to July. Few records were received from St. Helens, just occasional ones and twos at Eccleston Mere in May, June and June, and one at Carr Mill Dam on 11 April – the earliest anywhere in the county in 2012.

ROSEATE TERN* *Sterna dougallii*

Scarce summer visitor.

What was thought to have been the female that bred with a Common Tern in the Liverpool Docks in 2010 and 2011 was seen irregularly at Seaforth from 17 to 28 May (AJ Conway *et al*). A different, 'Roseate-ringed', bird was there on 26-27 May (AJ Conway, Ga. Thomas).

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea*

Common on spring passage, especially in Morecambe Bay; less numerous in autumn. Rare breeder.

Morecambe Bay

What was described as a reasonable spring passage at Heysham began on an average date of 18 April. A total of 2167 northbound birds were counted up until 28 May, with daily maxima of 440 on 26 April, 263 the next day, 154 on 2 May, 183 on the 4th, 419 on the 5th, 216 on the 6th and the final 31 on the 28th.

The absence of birds lingering on the Heysham outfalls created a gap of a month between the final spring records and the next on 23 June, followed by a not very good autumn when, unusually, Arctics were outnumbered by Common Terns. Juveniles were especially notable by their absence with just a single record on 18 Sept; one or two adults were seen on 29 June, 1, 4 & 19 July, 14 Sept and 19-25 Sept.

Elsewhere, nine were off Jenny Brown's Point on 21 May with six there on the 25th and twelve the following day.

Liverpool Bay

As with Morecambe Bay, large numbers are only ever seen in spring and mostly off the Fylde coast.

One was at Seaforth on 17 April, a day earlier than the first at Heysham, but few were recorded there or anywhere else on the Sefton Coast after that, with the exception of 170 off Crosby on 26 April and a flock of 51 flying north off Marshside on 1 May.

The largest spring counts from the Fylde coast included 153 off Blackpool on 4 May with 162 there on the 12th, and 189 off Rossall Point on 3 May with 402 there on the 27th.

Up to six were present on Longton Marsh during the breeding season and up to four on Hesketh Out Marsh but it is uncertain how many actually bred on either Longton or Banks Marshes.

As usual, few were seen in autumn. Peaks off Blackpool were twelve on 17 June, 13 on the 23rd and eleven on 15 Aug. One group of experienced observers reported sightings from Formby

Point on seven dates between 17 July and 18 Sept, including 55 on 18 July, while another regular sea-watcher at nearby Cabin Hill reported just one sub-adult on 9 July.

Inland

There was a large influx on 25 April, when one was seen at Pine Lake, two at Jumbles Reservoir, two at Brockholes Wetland, nine at Alston Reservoir, two at Lower Foulridge Reservoir and a remarkable 92 at Stocks Reservoir.

Only three remained the following day at Stocks where further ones and twos were recorded on 4, 10 & 19 May and 10 Aug.

The only other records were two at MMWWT on 9 May and Brockholes on 7 Aug, and singles at Wood End Sewage Works on 11 July and Foulridge on 28 Sept; one or two at Preston Dock during July and nine at the mouth of the River Douglas on 12 May were perhaps birds from the probable Ribble Marshes colonies.

SABINE'S GULL* *Xema sabini*

Uncommon passage migrant.

There was only one accepted record this year when a juvenile was seen flying past Blackpool on 28 Aug (M Jones, F Bird).

KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*

Common passage migrant on coasts, uncommon in winter. Scarce inland. Rare breeder.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Heysham	55	32	114	530	75	1	1	1	/	1	/	7
Rossall Point	3	/	66	30	73	1	/	3	3	3	25	6
Blackpool	30	/	5	30	80	/	/	20	1	22	/	/
Formby Point	3	/	/	27	9	30	4	10	48	6	/	/

Onshore gales during January resulted in more than usual sightings with peaks of 55 at Heysham and 30 off Blackpool; small numbers were seen at Rossall Point, Knott End, Pilling, Cleveleys, Marton Mere and Leighton Moss during the month.

Spring migration started in March with 66 north past Rossall Point on the 4th and 114 past Heysham on the 8th but peaked in April with 530 at Heysham on the 6th, while regular counts of 20 or more came from Knott End, Blackpool and Rossall Point through to the month's end, when 72 passed Blackpool on the 30th. A wave of late birds was seen off Blackpool in late May with a maximum count of 80 on the 29th.

Inland records in the early year comprised one at MMWWT on 14 Feb, seven at Leighton Moss on 4 March, adults at Brockholes on 2 April and Stocks Reservoir on the 22nd and three at Leighton Moss on the 23rd.

A late breeding count of 180 pairs has been received for the Morecambe Bay Gas platforms back in 2009. The colony in the Liverpool Docks was occupied but not monitored this year.

Small numbers were seen in summer at Heysham, Formby Point and Blackpool. Larger counts later in the year included 60 at Blackpool on 11 Aug, 48 at Formby Point on 14 Sept, 28 at Blackpool on 30 Oct, 35 at Knott End on 2 Nov, 25 at Rossall Point on 11 Nov and 22 at Blackpool on 23 Dec with 31 at the same location on the 31st.

The only autumn record inland was an adult at Brockholes on 11-12 Sept.

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Scarce but locally abundant breeding bird. Abundant winter visitor and passage migrant.
International importance: 20000. National importance: 20000.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	3114	2139	2508	765	323	991	5233	9789	2508	1675	3043	1830
Alt WeBS	3592	1628	820	/	12	64	462	961	873	468	780	707
Seaforth	6000	600	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	450	2500

Large winter counts included 2500 at Cocker's Dyke, Pilling on 16 Jan, 1300 at Brockholes on the 29th and 2000 at Rivington Reservoir on 2 Feb. Birds soon started moving inland in larger numbers with 1500 on 19 Feb at Stocks Reservoir where numbers increased to 9000 by 1 March. Elsewhere in the county 4000 were seen at Pilling on 3 March and 9300 at MMWWT on the 6th.

The breeding colony continues to grow at Belmont Reservoir; numbers reached 7000 by 10 March before rising to a record-breaking 17000 on 12 April. No aerial survey was carried out this year but land-based observations suggested that a minimum of 7000 pairs nested. At least 1000 pairs bred at Stocks Reservoir and 356 pairs at Marshside, a massive increase from 53 pairs in 2011. Breeding was confirmed on Banks Marsh and at Leighton Moss but neither site was monitored.

Post-breeding flocks started building up in July with 2400 at Skippool Creek on the 21st, while late August saw counts of 2828 at Leighton Moss, 2000 at Cocker's Dyke, Pilling and 1700 at MMWWT. In September 3400 were at MMWWT on the 11th and 3000 at Cockerham on the 28th. 2000 were at Bashall Town, Clitheroe on 13 Oct with no remaining counts for the year exceeding this except for 2500 at Stocks Reservoir on the 5 Nov, although as usual large numbers were present on the coast.

LITTLE GULL *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

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

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Seaforth	/	/	2	150	183	3	2	2	2	/	/	1

Continued gales from 2011 meant the first-winter at Pine Lake remained until 4 Jan whilst at Heysham four first-winters and an adult lingered until the 22nd before dropping to one by the 25th. Elsewhere, counts of multiple birds were six off Blackpool and four at Seaforth on the 3rd, three off Rossall Point on the 7th, three off Cleveleys on the 21st and finally seven off Blackpool on the 29th. Scattered throughout the month singles were seen at Southport, Marton Mere, Knott End, Pilling Lane and Freckleton Marsh. The first-winter remained at Heysham until 26 Feb and one was off Blackpool on the 24th.

Spring passage started with one at Heysham on 13 March and two at Seaforth on the 24th. Seaforth enjoyed its best spring passage in April and May since 2006 with a minimum of 299 individuals passing through. From mid-April numbers rapidly increased to 145 on the 25th before peaking at 183 on the 2 May, declining to 90 on the 4th but down to twelve a week later. Single figures were present until 9 June with one on the 27-30th. Heysham had a peak count of five on 24 April.

April movement at Blackpool involved five records with a maximum of eleven on the 2nd, Formby Point eight records peaking at 20 on the 28th, and Rossall Point had three on the 8th and ten on the 30th. Inland records were a first-winter at Brockholes on the 9-10th, one at MMWWT on the 25th with three at Stocks Reservoir the same day.

During May small numbers continued to pass Formby Point and at Rossall Point counts peaked at 23 on the 7th. Leighton Moss enjoyed a good passage with two on 3 May, four on the 6th, one between the 11th and 21st then two from 22 May to 9 June with two extras on the 5th and a single lingering to the 24th. Inland May sightings were one at Brockholes on 19th and two at MMWWT on the 21st.

Returning birds were seen in small numbers at Formby Point, Seaforth, Fairhaven Lake, Preston Dock, Freckleton Marsh, Lytham, Ainsdale, Heysham, Marshside, Fleetwood and Pilling Marsh. One was at MMWWT on the 19 Aug and an adult was at Brockholes on the 21st.

Sightings dropped off from late autumn until 13 at Rossall Point on 2 Nov with 24 at Leighton Moss on the 4th. The largest winter count was 78 at Rossall Point on 28 Dec with 48 there the following day.

MEDITERRANEAN GULL *Larus melanocephalus*

Common all year. Most numerous on southern coasts but increasing inland. Recently established rare breeder.

Minimum number of individuals

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Seaforth	9	14	15	1	0	4	10	16	12	4	2	2
Heysham	4	3	2	1	1	4	16	24	21	12	4	4
Wyre Estuary	0	1	7	0	0	0	11	6	9	3	/	/

The increasingly regular occurrences on some of the main coastal sites are summarised in the table above; they undoubtedly represent a significant underestimate of the total numbers present in Morecambe Bay and on the Fylde and Sefton coasts. Large day-counts included nine at Seaforth on 19 Jan, seven at St. Michael's-on-Wyre on 10 March, 15 at Heysham on 8 July, eight at Glasson on 26 Aug and at Seaforth on 1 Sept, twelve at Fleetwood on 5 Sept and nine in the Skipool Creek area on 12 Sept.

Inland records also continued to increase; they included single-figure sightings at Brockholes in most months, and singles at Alston Wetland, Fishmoor Reservoir, Rishton Reservoir, MMWWT and Myerscough Quarry in the early year, and at MMWWT and Bashall Town, near Clitheroe in October.

The first returned to breeding sites at Stocks Reservoir on 24 Feb and Belmont Reservoir on the 29th. Numbers peaked at Stocks at twelve on 25 March but for unknown reasons all abandoned the colony, leaving just one by 7 April. Belmont Reservoir, however, enjoyed a very successful breeding season with 15 confirmed breeding pairs out of 18 pairs present and a minimum of 15 young fledged. A second-summer held territory with a first-summer at Marshside in April.

Post-breeding birds began to appear in early July with the first juvenile away from Belmont Reservoir at Brockholes on 20 July; the largest count of juveniles was 13 at Heysham on 16 Aug.

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
Seaforth	4000	3500	/	/	/	152	/	/	/	/	120	500
Stocks Res	5000	2500	4000	100	16	2	80	700	3000	5500	11000	3000

A mild start to the year meant that the regular inland wintering sites remained free from ice with large roosts as seen in the table above; 1900 were at Arkholme on 19 Jan. A big influx of 3500

occurred at Seaforth on 23 Feb, whilst at Stocks Reservoir passage birds boosted dwindling winter numbers to 4000 on the 22 March. From the end of April sightings became more sporadic with only low numbers of second- or third-calendar-year birds staying to summer in the county.

Numbers started to build again from late July with 140 at Birkdale on the 22nd. The roost at Stocks Reservoir increased from 980 on 10 Sept to 3000 by the 27th and numbers steadily increased to a peak of 11000 on 5 Nov.

RING-BILLED GULL* *Larus delawarensis*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant, mainly in spring.

The only records involved the regularly returning adult that frequents both Seaforth and Netherton, from the start of the year until 1 April.

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	74	132	194	273	216	232	597	448	416	237	178	102
Stocks Reservoir	7	410	1600	100	60	70	600	3000	2050	950	28	0
Alt WeBS	412	327	80	/	5	111	277	537	889	87	142	140

Relatively few were seen throughout January but they began returning in numbers in February; the Stocks Reservoir roost grew from single figures to 350 by the 24th and peaked at 1600 in late March. Other high counts included 500 at Kirkham on 14 March and 500 near St. Helens on the 23rd.

Monitoring of nests in the Bowland Fells at Langden Head and Tarnbrook/Abbeystead produced totals of 2228 and 1046 respectively, but the method used this year counted only nests with eggs rather than all used nests as previously, so the counts are underestimates of the total colony sizes. Culling continued in 2012 away from the United Utilities estate but Natural England is now reviewing the licence to do so; the Bowland colony has been reduced from 18000 pairs since 2001.

The present size of the county's main colony on Banks Marsh is uncertain but, following a cull of 400 birds in 2011, BAE Systems has now been granted permission by Defra to kill another 552 pairs in 2013, a slaughter which is likely to continue in future years. This colony was first recorded in 1969 and grew steadily to an estimated 5000 pairs during the 2008-2011 atlas survey – although a systematic survey in 2012 estimated 8267 nests there. There is every possibility that this number may be reduced by at least 50% over the coming years.

One pair failed at Belmont Reservoir and 59 pairs bred between Heysham Harbour and Middleton Industrial Estate. In Liverpool increasing numbers of roof-nesting birds were confirmed to be breeding but there was no count.

Good numbers remained in the county before falling away in October. The only east Lancashire record during December was two at Grimsargh Reservoirs on the 4th.

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

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

Monthly WeBS counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS	281	302	359	451	240	350	364	199	629	352	752	637
Alt	2093	3097	394	/	283	347	1433	3007	2593	1375	600	879

Herring Gulls were, as always, more numerous during winter than Lesser Black-backs, including counts of 2000 at Southport on 21 Jan and 2000 at Fishmoor Reservoir on 13 Feb.

As with Lesser Black-backs, the current size of the Banks Marsh colony is unclear but one thing is certain – it will not be there for much longer. Following a public inquiry, BAE Systems has been granted permission by Defra effectively to exterminate the whole population – initially they will kill 475 pairs in 2013 but this will continue in future.

Single pairs bred at Stocks Reservoir and Fleetwood, a pair held territory at Belmont Reservoir and 14 pairs between Heysham Harbour and Middleton Industrial Estate. There were 20 pairs in the Langden Head colony and roof-nesting continued to spread throughout Liverpool. A late report from the Morecambe Bay Gas platform revealed six pairs in 2009.

Coastal counts varied throughout the autumn and winter with the highest being 3650 at Birkdale on 30 Dec.

YELLOW-LEGGED GULL *Larus michahelis*

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

Minimum number of individuals

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

The table above shows that Seaforth remains the most regular site in our area for this species, almost certainly more because of the relative ease of scrutinising gulls there than their more numerous occurrence. The only other record in the first winter period was one at Stocks Reservoir on 1 March.

Summer sightings started at Skippool Creek with an adult on 21 July and an adult was at Glasson on the Lune Estuary between 26 July and 26 Sept. An adult was at Stocks Reservoir on 8 Oct with a third-winter at Glasson on the 18 Nov and then an adult on Ainsdale Beach on 8 Dec.

CASPIAN GULL * *Larus cachinnans*

Vagrant.

2010. A first-winter was on Preesall Sands on 5-6 Jan (C Batty). The county records committee was undecided about the record in so far as some members felt that the bird showed some hybrid features, but that it was a very strong candidate was never in doubt.

The records committee hopes to agree identification criteria and to reassess all past records in time for the 2013 report.

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucoides*

Uncommon visitor, mostly winter.

The first-winter bird that was seen in late 2011 at Marton Mere stayed until 13 April. It was followed by a second-winter at Birkdale from 10 Jan, a second-winter in the Pilling area from 15 Jan to 5 Feb and an immature flying over Seaforth on 21 Jan. In east Lancashire a first-winter

roosted at Fishmoor Reservoir on 1 Jan with a second-winter there on the 29th. The final spring record in the early year came from Fairhaven Lake with an immature on 17 March.

All sightings in the second winter period came from Marton Mere during December, with a second-winter on the 16th and an adult on the 28th & 31st.

GLAUCOUS GULL *Larus hyperboreus*

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

Following on from 2011 the first-winter continued to frequent the harbour area at Heysham through to 14 Jan. A first-winter that spent all winter on the beach in the Southport-Birkdale area stayed until 11 March and was joined by a second-winter between 19-31 Jan; during the same period a second first-winter was reported on the 24th.

Away from the coast there was just one record, an adult that roosted at Fishmoor Reservoir on 5 Jan.

No records were received for the second winter period.

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
MBS WeBS	63	57	93	93	122	106	86	109	123	117	224	168
Barnaby's Sands	38	2	8	2	103	23	25	74	/	/	/	7
Alt WeBS	175	192	64	/	0	14	85	150	195	82	155	120
Seaforth	105	31	39	40	19	18	22	19	/	57	56	40

This traditionally coastal species is gradually becoming slightly more numerous inland, wintering birds are concentrated around the Blackburn area, feeding mainly on landfill sites with a maximum count of 35 at Rishton Reservoir on the 13 Feb.

Breeding was confirmed at Leighton Moss with four young fledging from three nests and at Heysham with two young fledged from one nest. A pair was seen mating on several occasions at Stocks Reservoir before moving to the surrounding area.

Leighton Moss saw large numbers present throughout the year with a peak of 79 on 17 Sept. During the second winter period Fleetwood Tip lagoon recorded 85 on 18 Nov, whilst an impressive 268 were on Birkdale Sands on 30 Dec and Martholme produced the highest east Lancashire count of 46 the same day.

FERAL PIGEON *Columba livia*

Abundant and widely-distributed breeding resident.

The success of this often-disregarded species, fully documented in the results of the recent atlas surveys, was reflected in several high counts this year from the coastal west.

In the Fylde there were 400 at Marton Mere in January and 350 there in April; 260 were on Blackpool North Shore in February and 200 in nearby Stanley Park in August. In Liverpool 105 were at Wavertree in March and 165+ in Sefton Park in July; in Southport 180 Feral Pigeons were counted around the Marine Lake and 115 along Lord Street on dates in October. The species is described as common at both MMWWT and around the harbour and nature reserve at Heysham.

Inland, 61 on Roe Greave Road, Oswaldtwistle on 7 Nov was the highest of 13 counts reported in east Lancashire; the species remains numerous in Chorley town centre.

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*

Common breeding resident; local flocks in winter. Amber List (important breeding population).

The highest count in the first winter period was of 100 on Croston Moss, Chorley on 3 Feb; 15 widespread double-figure flocks were reported, including 30 on Cockerham Moss on 23 Feb, 80 at Bradshaw Lane, Pilling on 2 March and 32 at Wharles, also in the Fylde, on the 14th. Inland there were 20+ at Belmont on 20 Jan, 23 at Martholme in east Lancashire on 18 Feb and 19 on Caton Moor on 17 March. The Lancaster & District BWS January survey recorded 34 Stock Doves across six inland 10km squares, a continuing improvement on the totals of recent years.

Breeding was confirmed at four sites in east Lancashire, including three pairs at Laneshaw Reservoir and one at Altham, all in barns, and considered probable at seven other locations. At Arkholme in the Lune Valley ten pairs bred in nest-boxes, the same as in 2011.

Many territories were located across south Liverpool/Knowsley including at least five pairs in Sefton Park; at least 23 pairs nested at MMWWT and singles at Seaforth, Lytham Hall Wood, Freshfield Dune Heath and near Hesketh Out Marsh. Substantial counts in many parts of the county during the breeding season, including 19 on Farington Moss on 12 April, 20 at Lytham on 6 May and 50 at Old Coach Road, St. Helens on the 21st suggest that these confirmed breeding data are but a tiny snapshot of the species' true population.

Post-breeding and early autumn flocks included 19 at Crossdale House in east Lancashire on 21 July, 160 at MMWWT on 7 Sept and 42 at Bradshaw Lane on the 20th. No migratory movements were recorded in 2012. Peak counts in the late year included 25 at Pilling on 25 Oct, 25+ in a roost at Upper Rivington Reservoir on 18 Nov, 30 at Great Altcar on 5 Dec, 48 at Holmeswood on the 18th and 50 at Belmont on the 23rd.

WOODPIGEON *Columba palumbus*

Abundant breeding resident; widespread winter flocks.

Spectacular flocks and movements in 2012 greatly exceeded even last year's exceptionally high counts; the first winter period was rather quiet, however, with a roost of 800+ at Upper Rivington Reservoir on 8 Jan by far the largest gathering reported. All the other significant counts were in the coastal west, including in the Fylde 300 at Ridge Farm, Pilling on 28 Jan, 300+ at Todderstaffe Hall on 1 Feb and 400 at Mythop on 2 March; there were 570 at Halewood, south Liverpool on 10 March. The Lancaster January survey located 480 Woodpigeons across all nine 10km squares, a decrease on the totals of recent years.

Fifteen northbound migrants passed over Heysham on 17 March and ten on the 25th, when 65 were also recorded at Rossall School. Flocks later in the spring such as 131 at Jackhouse on 13 April and 100 at Garswood, St. Helens on the 18th, 65 north at Marshside on 4 May and 700 at Cabin Hill on the 19th may also have involved birds on passage.

Sixty-two nests were monitored in Sefton Park, Liverpool, with a 75% success-rate; a bird was incubating two eggs in Pall Mall in the city centre on 12 Aug. About 18 pairs nested on EDF Energy properties at Heysham.

Post-breeding and early autumn counts included 166 at Seaforth on 5 Aug, 206+ at Mitton and 56 at Martholme in east Lancashire on 14 and 19 Aug, respectively, 900 at Belle Vale, south Liverpool on 4 Sept and 350 at Aintree on the 8th.

A series of high counts began in early October although neither the main coastal watchpoints nor the upland regions recorded exceptional movements. A thousand Woodpigeons were at Eagland Hill, Pilling on 5 Oct, 830 on Windle Moss on the 9th and 750 on Kirkby Moss on the 14th, when 200 birds per hour also flew south over Belmont. Several relatively quiet weeks followed before the floodgates opened on 11 Nov with a count of 26000 at MMWWT which had increased to

50000 by the 20th; 2815 were on Rawcliffe Moss on 18 Nov and 2480 on the 24th. Ten thousand on Altcar Withins on 27 Nov had increased to 30000 two days later.

Spectacular counts continued throughout December: about 5000 were at Cogie Hill, Pilling on 11 Dec, 9000 on Lytham Moss on the 17th and 4295 on Rawcliffe Moss on 19 Dec; a count of 3000+ on Mawdesley Moss on the 24th was followed by 10000 at Eagland Hill on Christmas Day. On 29 Dec 20000 were at MMWWT and 12800 went to roost on nearby Tarleton Moss. What attracted these particularly huge gatherings, in the south-west at least, was undoubtedly the widespread flooding and abandonment of arable crops prior to harvest over many of the mosslands.

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

Abundant breeding resident, more local in the east; some coastal passage.

About 50 at Withgill in east Lancashire on 20 Jan was the largest gathering reported in the first winter period; in the same region 23 were at Barnoldswick on the 18th. Elsewhere in inland areas flocks of 17 were at Arkholme on 8 Jan and at Belmont on the 15th. In the lowlands there were 30 at Mere Sands Wood on 1 Jan, 18 on Burscough Moss on the 29th and 20 at Pilling on 2 March. A total of 232 was recorded across all nine squares in the Lancaster & District 10km January survey, very similar to those of recent years.

A single bird flew north at Heysham on 26 March and four on 11 April, when small spring movements also began at Cabin Hill NNR, Formby.

Confirmed or probable breeding was reported from ten sites in east Lancashire including at least four pairs in a 100m stretch of conifers at Higherford; during the year Collared Doves were recorded at 51 locations in the region, compared with 61 in 2011. In the north a single pair bred at Heysham and nine pairs in Croftlands Estate in Warton, six fewer than last year. In Chorley NHS region a pair with two young were at Eccleston on 18 March.

Twenty near Lydiate on 7 July and 31 at Todderstaffe Hall, Fylde on 23 Aug were the only double-figure counts received from the post-breeding period.

Autumn passage records were concentrated into a brief six days in early October: three flew south-west at Marshside on 4 Oct, one south at Heysham on the 8th and 26 at Seaforth on the 9th, when 30 were also present on Catchdale Moss, St Helens. Peak counts later in the year included 17 in a Belmont garden on 10 Nov, 22 at Cronton, south Knowsley next day, 53 in a roost at Southport Marine Lake on 12 Dec and 20 at Clitheroe on the 18th.

TURTLE DOVE* *Streptopelia turtur*

Very rare passage migrant. Extinct breeder. Red List (breeding decline).

A multi-observed juvenile in a garden at Clifton, Fylde on 2 Aug had been seen for several days previously by the householder. This was our first record since singles at Marshside and Crosby in 2009.

RING-NECKED PARAKEET *Psittacula krameri*

Rare feral breeder; fairly frequent escape.

Although proof of breeding was not received there seems no reason to worry about the viability of the colony of these raucous aliens at Lytham Crematorium; birds were recorded in all months except August and September, with peaks of seven in January, six in June and five in February, March and November. Records elsewhere in the Fylde in August and September, at Highfurlong, Poulton-le-Fylde and in the Bisham area may be attributable to wanderers from the Lytham coven; a bird was in Stanley Park, Blackpool on dates in October and November.

In the species' other county stronghold, Liverpool, up to five were present in Sefton Park throughout the year and up to two pairs in nearby Greenbank Park and Allotments in spring and in August. There were records of a single bird in Speke, about 8km to the south-east, on dates in February, July and August.

Elsewhere in the county records at Padiham and Upper Foulridge Reservoir on 24 & 27 Jan respectively may well refer to the same individual; singles were recorded in Preston in January and at Brockholes Wetland in March and there were two in a Southport garden on 26 June.

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*

Fairly common breeding bird and double passage migrant, more numerous in spring. Red List (breeding decline).

All the first arrivals in a fairly average spring passage by the standards of recent years were at inland locations, the first at Worsthorpe on 8 April the earliest recorded in the ELOC region by three days. The next record was at Ewood on 20 April, followed by a bird at White Coppice, Chorley next day. One at Weeton on the 22nd was the first coastal migrant, followed by three more April birds in the Fylde; one on Banks Marsh on the 26th began the passage in the south-west.

May highlights included seven at Marshside between 2-17 May including three on the 10th; and nine were recorded at widespread Fylde sites during the month. Inland, there were calling males at seven locations around Belmont between 22 May and 1 June and one or two fairly continuously at Stocks Reservoir during 4-31 May.

Arrivals appear to have continued right through June this year, including up to three at Tower Lodge on the 1st and two at Healey Nab, Chorley on the 4th and in the Dunsop Valley on the 12th; singles were on Winmarleigh Moss, Fylde on 26 June and on Midge Hall Moss on the 29th, where it is worth noting that a juvenile was present on 19 Aug.

The only confirmed breeding record was of two fledged by Reed Warbler hosts at Mere Sands Wood, with one juvenile present until 6 Aug. There was no indication of breeding in the Belmont area despite the flurry of records in May, but males were calling at eleven sites in the north during the breeding season.

Autumn movements included juveniles at Dairy Farm Road, St Helens in late July and at Brockholes Wetland in late August. There were records of five more birds in the lowlands and two in east Lancashire during July and August, whilst a juvenile at Ightenhill Wood, Padiham on 3 Sept was the last Cuckoo of 2012.

BARN OWL *Tyto alba*

Fairly common breeding resident, most numerous in the south-west and in the Fylde. Amber List (species of European conservation concern).

ELOC received 43 reports of Barn Owls during the year, most from the Bowland area, but all breeding sites were kept confidential. A rather gory saga played itself out at a site near Pendle, where the female acquired a new mate which proceeded to eat all five of her young; the requisite happy ending was provided when the pair subsequently fledged another five chicks.

Three pairs were confirmed around Belmont with some juveniles not fledged until October, and breeding was considered probable in two other locations; there were widespread sightings during the breeding season in the Chorley region and pairs with young were at two, possibly three, sites. Up to seven Barn Owls were hunting by day in hard weather on the West Pennine Moors in late November-early December, including three together at Belmont on 8 Dec.

In the north a pair probably bred at Leighton Moss but birds at three locations in the Lune Valley failed to breed and had abandoned the sites by the beginning of May; in central Lancashire one pair nested at Brockholes Wetland, as in 2011.

In the Fylde 29 pairs laid 116 eggs in the Hambleton-Pilling-Preesall-Stalmine and Out Rawcliffe areas in Over Wyre, and fledged 55 young, 1.9 per pair; another seven boxes were occupied but the birds did not breed. There were numerous sight records from throughout the region, in all months.

A widespread scatter of breeding data from the south-west included two confirmed pairs at MMWWT and one on King's Moss, St Helens; a pair on Royal Birkdale Golf Course fledged at least one young. Probable nesting was reported from Hesketh Bank, from Kew on the eastern edge of Southport, Lunt Meadows and Tarbock, Knowsley.

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

Fairly common and widespread breeding resident.

ELOC received only 29 records of Little Owl in 2012, compared with 90 in 2011; breeding by one pair was confirmed on Champion Moor but several nests at the base of dry-stone walls in the Blacko area were washed out by heavy rain.

In the north breeding pairs were located at Arkholme, Newton, Docker, Wennington and Gressingham. Widespread sightings were reported in Chorley region; a single pair bred successfully in the Belmont area and family parties with up to four young were recorded at Heskin and on Croston Moss in July.

In the Fylde 14 pairs in the Pilling-Preesall area, Over Wyre laid 42 eggs and fledged 27 young, 1.9 per pair, all in nest-boxes. Pairs also bred on Cockerham Moss and at Marton Mere.

The only reports of successful breeding in the south-west was by pairs at Wyke House Farm on Churchtown Moss and at Lunt; a pair nested at Seaforth, but both juveniles died.



Steve Young

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

Common and widespread breeding resident.

Reports of calling birds in and out of the breeding season were received from all regions of the county, but the general tone of several regional reports and individual observers' records was exceptionally negative in 2012.

In the north only one pair nested in the Silverdale area where there are usually four, and that attempt was unsuccessful. Four pairs in the Arkholme area fledged eight young and there were three pairs at Claughton. Fifty-one reports were received by ELOC during the year, compared with 168 in 2011; five breeding pairs were located, including two in the New Laithe Farm area near Newton. In Chorley region two pairs were successful in Dean Wood, Rivington and one each at Heskin and Eccleston; two pairs nested in Cuerden Valley Park, one in a new owl-box.

Nearer the coast twelve pairs bred in the Pilling-Preesall area and pairs were seen with young in Stanley Park, Blackpool and in Fulwood. A pair on Birkdale LNR was the only report of proven breeding received from the south-west; there were no records of Tawny Owls all year in south Liverpool/Knowsley, for the first time in the observer's 30-years' experience.

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus*

Uncommon breeding resident; uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.

A quiet year as far as breeding data were concerned. No reports were received from the north and only two from Chorley region, while birds were present at two sites on the West Pennine Moors in the breeding season and a bird was at Old Russia Lodge, Edgworth on 31 Jan.

Six records were received by ELOC, all from Bowland with nesting confirmed at one site, but nothing was reported from formerly-regular locations in the Burnley area; a bird was at Stocks Reservoir on 2-3 Aug. The only report of breeding from the south-west was of a pair on Royal Birkdale Golf Course which fledged two or three young on 28 June; a bird was at Skelmersdale on 22 March.

There were no records of Long-eared Owls on passage in 2012. The regular winter roost at Marton Mere held up to four birds in January and February with the last report on 19 Feb; two had returned by 28 Nov and remained throughout December. Two were at Staynall by the Wyre Estuary on 2 Dec.

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

Uncommon upland breeding bird; uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.

After last year's exceptionally heavy autumn movements substantial numbers were present in the coastal west in the early year. Birds were recorded at 14 widespread locations in the Fylde, some until early April, with two birds at seven of these. In the south-west at least six were in the Rufford area on dates up to 28 March, with some birds wandering as far as Mawdesley Moss. There were up to seven on Lunt Meadows in January and February and one remained until 3 May. Three each were at Low Meadows, Burscough and at Cabin Hill until early April and there were two at Marshside-Crossens on many dates in January and February. Inland there were singles on Turton Golf Course in January and at Rivington on 11 March.

With so many late-staying winterers about it is difficult to decide when spring movements commenced, but if we take early April as a reasonable cut-off there were five coastal migrants in the Fylde between 27 April and 24 May and six in the south-west between 24 April and 30 May. In the uplands two were on Turton Golf Course in early April and one in the Earby area of east Lancashire during 1-7 May.

No reports of proven breeding were received from any region in 2012. In east Lancashire, where there were records from 15 sites throughout the year birds were reported from moorland in the Burnley, Pendle and Bowland areas during the breeding season. Three or four pairs held territory on the West Pennine Moors with birds present from 28 March to 25 August; no breeding reports were received from north Lancashire or the south-west mooses.

Early movements were reported from coastal and adjacent areas from the end of June with singles at The Heads on the Wyre Estuary on 26 June, MMWWT on 6-7 July and Pilling on the 19th, but widespread passage did not begin until September. Highlights included many records throughout the Fylde with peaks of four in the Pilling area from mid-October and three apiece at Out Rawcliffe in November and at Warton Marsh and Fleetwood at dates in early December. Numbers in the south-west during the autumn were much lower: apart from three at Marshside in October all other reports, from Cabin Hill in early September and Lunt Meadows and Altcar Withins in early October, were of single birds. One at Leighton Moss on 2 Nov was the only bird reported from the north coast and no passage records were received from inland regions.

There were widespread reports of singles in the lowlands in late December; three at Cabin Hill and two on Rawcliffe Moss were the only multiple counts received.

SWIFT *Apus apus*

Common summer visitor and abundant passage migrant. Amber List (breeding decline).

Three single birds at Longridge, nearby Alston Reservoirs and Burnley, all in east Lancashire on 25 April were the first spring arrivals, ten days later than last year; they were followed immediately by a widespread coastal influx at Leighton Moss, Rossall Point, Seaforth, Marshside, Southport and Brockholes Wetland next day. There were seven more April records in the Fylde, including ten at Fairhaven Lake on the 28th, when the first Swifts also reached Chorley at Eccleston and St Helens at Eccleston Mere.



The main spring passage was heavier, or more visible, than normal, including 2000 over Brockholes Wetland on 13 May, 750 at Marshside on the 15th, 220 at Low Meadows, Burscough next day and 510 at Granny's Bay, Fylde and 500 over Seaforth on the 31st. Numbers over inland sites were lower, with peaks of 80+ over Wenning Foot on the Lune on 4 May and 200 at Eccleston Mere on the 19th. Substantial movements continued until at least mid-June: 200+ passed at Marshside and 100 at Leighton Moss on the 4th, 300 at Seaforth and 60 at Clowbridge Reservoir next day and 350 again at Seaforth on the 15th.

Among the very few breeding reports received one stands out as an indicator of this species' population decline over recent decades: three pairs nested in Millhead, Warton, where 28 pairs bred in 1977. The breeding season in the north in general was described as poor; in east Lancashire

nesting was confirmed at eleven locations and considered probable at another ten. In Chorley region birds were feeding young at sites in Clayton and Eccleston until mid-August and pairs nested in three houses along High Street, Belmont.

Several site and regional reports cited small southbound movements from mid-June as the beginnings of return migration but flocks of 175 at Leighton Moss on 24 June, 55 over Freehold, Lancaster on the 29th and 300 at Seaforth and 2000 at MMWWT next day are probably impossible to describe with confidence either as passage movements or feeding aggregations. After an unrelentingly wet early summer we can probably be more certain that the 50 over Champion Moor on 14 July, 150 at Brockholes on the 16th and 150+ at Marshside and 200 at MMWWT on the following day were on the move.

Counts after mid-July were much smaller, as is the norm, with peaks of 30 over Blackpool South Shore on 20 July, 77 at Heysham on 3 Aug and 40 at MMWWT on the 25th.

Twelve south at Seaforth on 29 Aug were the last Swifts of 2012 in the south-west, one at Coppull on 31 Aug was Chorley's last, quickly followed by the last record in the Fylde at Todderstaffe Hall on 1 Sept, the north's on the following day and east Lancashire's at Longridge on the 7th. Three weeks later a very late straggler over Brockholes Wetland on 27 Sept closed out the year.

LITTLE SWIFT *Apus affinis*

Vagrant

One was seen regularly at New Brighton on 22-29 June. It strayed into Lancashire waters on at least one occasion when it was seen, from Wirral, feeding over the river beneath the seawall of the Langton Dock close to the Kittiwake colony on the 23rd.

It becomes the second record for the county, following an equally transient bird at Seaforth on 22 May 1984.

KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

Fairly common and widely-distributed breeding bird, mainly in the east; post-breeding dispersal westwards. Amber List (species of European conservation concern).

Reports of Kingfishers from coastal and near-coastal areas in the first winter period, though still fewer than before the double winter freeze of 2010, showed signs of population recovery; this trend was even more obvious after the breeding season on all coasts, north, Fylde and south-west. The Lancaster & District January survey located four individuals in three 10km squares, as in 2011 and 2010.

Breeding data from the north included ten pairs along the River Lune (eight in 2011) including three in the Arkholme area; birds were also present in the breeding season at Wyresdale Fisheries. In east Lancashire birds were widely reported from suitable waters; breeding was confirmed at one site at Colne Water with possible nesting on the Calder at Gawthorpe. The Chorley NHS region reported many sight records throughout the year, most from western areas in the Yarrow and Douglas Valleys, but also from the Belmont Reservoir area where one pair bred. A pair at Heath Charnock relaid after a rival male killed the five young in May and fledged six in July.

On the western edges of the main range birds were present in the breeding season at regular locations in east Fylde, on the Rivers Brock and Wyre and also on the Conder at Galgate, but without confirmation of nesting. In the south-west up to four were present in late summer at MMWWT without proof of breeding but a pair nested successfully at Tarbock Hall Farm, Knowsley. In central Lancashire breeding was considered probable by a pair at Red Scar, Preston.



Steve Young

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

Fairly common though local breeding bird, mainly in the north and east. Amber List (species of European conservation concern).

All three regional reports from the stronghold areas, north and east Lancashire and Chorley, noted widespread records; although reports of confirmed breeding were few there seems no reason to suspect any significant deterioration in the species' range or populations which have been increasing in recent years.

In the north presence was recorded in the Silverdale area and throughout the valley of the Lune and its main tributaries; three pairs were located on the Lune between Leck Beck and Hornby and pairs were also present at Warton, Newton, Docker, Claughton and Wennington. There were records of a single bird at Heysham during January-March and in November.

ELOC received reports from all parts of the region and in all months; breeding was confirmed at one location and judged possible at three others.

Green Woodpeckers were also widespread in Chorley and the West Pennine Moors in all seasons with one or two pairs on territory at Belmont and another at Rivington; dispersing birds were on Anglezarke Moor in August. Outside the main breeding areas a single bird was reported in the Fylde, at Winmarleigh on 28 Oct. A bird at Speke Hall on 3 March may have been the one present in the area in the previous December.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major*

Common and widespread breeding resident.

This adaptable species continues to thrive throughout the county.

The Lancaster January survey recorded 46 (48 in 2011) and there were territorial pairs for the first time in both the Croftlands and Millhead estates in Warton. Two pairs nested on Warton Crag; in the Lune Valley there were four pairs in the Claughton area and five between Leck Beck and Wenning Foot.

In Chorley 14 territories were located in the Rivington-Anglezarke woodlands and three pairs bred in Cuerden Valley Park; nesting was also confirmed in Roddlesworth Woods and at Eccleston, Euxton, Chorley, Chisnall and Belmont.

ELOC reported records from 55 locations (85 in 2011) with breeding confirmed at 22 but birds were present in most other suitable woodlands during the breeding season. In the lowlands the Fylde Bird Club website recorded presence throughout the region in all months; nine confirmed pairs were reported from across the south-west including two each at Aintree Racecourse and in Otterspool Park, south Liverpool.

Autumn movements past coastal watchpoints were heavier and more prolonged than usual this year from the first single at Seaforth on 25 Aug to the last two at Fairhaven Lake on 4 Nov. Fourteen were recorded at Fairhaven from 4 Oct with a peak of four on the 7th, when three were also recorded at Marshside, just across the estuary; eleven migrants passed through the latter site from 4 Sept to 21 Oct. Elsewhere six passed at Seaforth to 18 Oct and four more along the Fylde coast between 22 Sept and 2 Oct; one was over Birkdale shore on 14 Oct and a juvenile was at Heysham on the 21st.

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER* *Dendrocopos minor*

Rare breeding resident. Red List (breeding decline).

An encouraging burst of records this year came from what is probably the species' last outpost in the county, in Chorley region. A bird was calling in Burgh Wood, Yarrow Country Park on four dates between 17 Jan and 4 March; another was calling in nearby Duxbury Woods on 19 Feb. One was at Withnell Fold Cricket Ground on 19 May and a pair was on the Yarrow near Eccleston on 18 June. The last record of the year was of a bird on the Yarrow at Parker's Wood on the western outskirts of Chorley in October.

Observers are reminded that this is a description species outside the regular breeding area in Chorley, and all reports ought to be accompanied by details of the bird and the circumstances.

GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

Four were seen in the first winter period including an interesting set of records from Bowland in the early part of the year that may feasibly have related to just one individual but more likely to at least two birds.

The first at Marl Hill on 12-13 Jan was followed by one at Stocks Reservoir on the 14th, the latter remaining in the area around the Hodder Inlet to 2 March. Also on 2 March one turned up near Easington and remained in the area until the 11th. Remarkably, with a sense of *déjà vu*, less than an hour after the bird was last reported at Easington, one was found 15km away on Longridge Fell. This remained faithful to a clear-felled area up to 20 April and was appreciated by many visiting birders.

One was at Dean Clough Reservoir on 30 April and the only record away from east Lancashire was one at Marshside on 4 May.

There were no records in the second winter period.

WOODCHAT SHRIKE* *Lanius senator***Vagrant.**

So typical of this species in spring, a male on the Cheshire Lines at Lydiate stayed for just one day on 30 May (M Taylor). This was Lancashire's eighth record but interestingly the fourth in the last five years.

MAGPIE *Pica pica***Abundant resident.**

Early in the year there were several reports of congregations of 20 or more birds; over 50 at Warbreck Hill on 6 Jan was the highest count followed by 44 at Low Meadows, Burscough on 28 Jan and 43 on a ploughed field near Speke on 15 March. Other high counts included 33 at Princes Park, Liverpool on 14 Feb, 25 at Bispham Marsh on 8 Jan, 21 at Jackhouse, Oswaldtwistle on 4 Jan, 20 at Old Coach Road, St Helens on 1 Jan and 20 at Brockholes Wetland on 4 March. Up to 25 were reported around Seaforth throughout the year. The January count in the Lancaster district resulted in broadly similar results to previous years with 303 recorded, mostly from the more coastal and less-kept areas.

Breeding was widespread as usual. At least seven pairs on EDF Properties at Heysham was an average showing whilst in the higher reaches of the Lune Valley there were only two pairs. In east Lancashire, breeding behaviour was under-reported with confirmation from only 16 locations. Six pairs nested on Freshfield Dune Heath. The atlas surveys have shown conclusively that numbers of both breeding and wintering Magpies are heavily concentrated in and around urban areas, notably in the Merseyside conurbation.

Up to 40 were recorded at Eccleston Mere around 18 Oct but a roost of 25 at Belmont in the same period was unusual, perhaps indicating some movement into the area. Large roosts in the West Pennine Moors consisted of 180 at Egerton on 22 Dec and 50 near Wayoh Reservoir on the 23rd. Gamekeepers at Belmont reported shooting or trapping 57 Magpies in 2012.

JAY *Garrulus glandarius***Common resident. Occasional irruptions, some winter dispersal.**

Jays can generally be found in small numbers anywhere in the county where there is suitable woodland and parkland habitats though they can be surprisingly inconspicuous at times. However, during the late summer and autumn they can become very noticeable as they start hoarding acorns but also show some irruptive movements. This certainly happened this year with a wealth of records of autumn migrants from all parts of the county.

High counts during October included 17 at Thrushgill on the 5th, 15 at Leighton Moss on the 14th, ten at Marshside on the 6th and at Ulnes Walton on the 8th. Migrants were noted at Heysham, Marshside, Ravenmeols and Seaforth. Many sites across the Fylde reported birds passing through, with peaks of five at Fairhaven on three occasions in October and ten over Fluke Hall on 16 Nov.

There were 107 reports around the Chorley area during October whilst in east Lancashire there were eight at Moor Piece on 5 Nov and ten at Mellor on the 11th.

At least one pair bred at Heysham NR and two pairs at Freshfield Dune Heath. Recently-fledged young were recorded at two sites in south Liverpool and birds were present at another five sites throughout the year. The breeding atlas survey indicated that Jays have increased their breeding range within the county by around 25% during the first ten years of this century.



Steve Young

Three separate correspondents noted the increased regularity of garden feeder visits and not just picking up the discarded remnants on the ground but successfully alighting on the feeders as well.

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*

Abundant breeding resident, some autumn movement.

This species continues to thrive as exemplified by the large counts from various sites across the county in the early part of the year, the largest of which were from lowland areas. Two thousand were at Sharrock's Hill, Formby Point on 8 Jan and 22 March, and the same number was estimated going to roost at Cuerden Valley Park in February. On the Fylde there were 500-800 at Skitham/Rawcliffe Moss during January and February, 1000 at Peel on 7 Feb and 350 at Fluke Hall on 1 Jan. The January survey of the Lancaster district recorded 3152 – well above the average figure of previous years – with large roosts at Nether Kellet, Bolton-le-Sands and Storrs Hall, Arkholme. There were 330 on Burscough Moss on 9 Jan whilst further east, the Upper Rivington roost numbered 1000 birds on the 8th. Numbers at Stocks Reservoir grew from 220 in January to 400 during March.

There was little breeding information but the number of pairs in built-up areas around Carnforth were well down on last year with 14 at both Warton and Millhead. At least 30 pairs nested at Withnell Quarry which is still worked. Post-breeding flocks included 500 at Withnell Fold on 27 July, 300 at New Laithe Farm, Newton on 14 Sept and 700 at Edisford, Clitheroe on the 18th.

The autumn migration period peaked as usual in the second half of October and though it was described as poor at Heysham (peaks of 54 on 7 Oct and 41 on the 27th), other areas fared much better. At Seaforth 2553 went south between 7-26 October with a peak of 691 on the 21st. Fairhaven regularly recorded numbers in three figures with a peak of 700 on 19 Oct. Between 300 and 400 flew over Eccleston on the 18th and lots of smaller flocks were noted on the 21st such as 148 in five flocks through Stanley Park and 113 in four flocks west over Rishton Reservoir. Also on the 21st, 180 were over Aintree racecourse and 180 at Windle Moss, St Helens.

In the second winter period there were 500 at the Upper Rivington roost on 18 Nov and regular counts of up to 150 at Eccleston.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus***Abundant resident.**

The largest congregations in the early year were 300 on Lytham Moss on 2 Jan, 350 at the Upper Rivington roost on the 8th, 175 on Burscough Moss and 130 roosting at Stocks Reservoir on the 9th, 150 at Kirkham on 18 Jan and 400 at Peel on 7 Feb. The Lancaster January survey recorded a higher than average 1627 birds but the rookery survey carried out later in the year recorded 312 nests in 20 rookeries, the lowest number since the survey started in 1992. Other rookery counts have been tabulated below.

Chorley Area		Other Areas	
Rookery	Nests	Rookery	Nests
A49 Euxton	45	Green Drive, Lytham	20
Howard Arms, Whittle Springs	38	Hay Houses, Lytham	93
Rawlinson La, Heath Charnock	1	Mythop	60
Railway Road, Adlington	35	Bowgreave, Garstang	48
Prospect House, Wheelton	10	Bank Brow, Roby Mill	60
Lower Wheelton	11	Turton/Edgworth (2 rookeries)	57
Red Cat, Wheelton	2	Jubilee Wood, Maghull	20
St Chad's Wheelton	5	Higham (2 rookeries)	25
Croston	81	Bolton-by-Bowland (2 rookeries)	24
Town House Farm, Brindle	27		
Brindle Village	8		
Buckshaw Village	11		

A few northbound birds were noted along the coast in spring at Heysham and Marshside from late March to May.

In July there were 150 at Towneley Park, Burnley and during August there were flocks of 100 at Scorton and 145 at Maghull. On 28 Sept 150 were feeding at Cockersand and numbers at Singleton reached a peak of 180 on 8 Oct. A few southbound birds were noted at Heysham including nine on 14 Oct.

Second-winter period peaks were 150 at Delph Plantations on 17 Nov (a record count for the roost there), 250 at Upper Rivington on the 18th, 150 at Entwistle Plantations roost on 9 Dec, 200 at Burscough on 20 Dec, 240 at Lytham Moss on the 26th and 150 at Preese Hall on the 30th.

This species is becoming a more regular visitor to the urban environment as noted around Burnley and has been recorded visiting garden feeding stations. A bird with a long decurved bill was noted at Preesall Sands on 28 Feb.

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone***Abundant breeding bird. Some southward movement in October.**

This species remains common throughout the county with double-figure counts of up to 50 submitted from many areas in virtually every month. The largest concentrations in the first winter period were of 100 on Old Coach Road, St Helens on 1 Jan, 140 at Stocks Reservoir on the 9th, 96 at Sefton Park, Liverpool on the 12th, 100 at Upper Rivington roost on the 8th and up to 350 at the Delph Plantations roost throughout January and February. There were 115 at Plex Moss on 7 Feb

A total of 34 northbound birds recorded in March and April over Heysham represented a good spring passage but the autumn passage of 89 in total was poor in comparison with previous years.

A total of 21 nests were counted along the River Lune from Leck Beck to Wenning Foot. A single pair nested on EDF properties at Heysham, three on Warton Crag and two at Freshfield Dune Heath.

During the second winter period there were two enormous counts: a flock of approximately 900 birds was at Wycollar on 28 Oct and numbers at the Delph Plantations roost built up from 120 at the beginning of October to 450 in November. The only other three-figure count was of 250 at the Entwistle Plantations roost on 9 Dec.

Gamekeepers reported shooting or trapping 132 Carrion Crows around Belmont in 2012. There was a leucistic bird at Anglezarke on 3 April.

HOODED CROW *Corvus cornix*

Scarce winter visitor or early spring passage migrant; has bred with Carrion Crow.

One remained in the Singleton area from 2011 to 16 March. Other singles were reported during spring at Cabin Hill on 23 April, Plex Moss from 7-10 May, Marshside and Southport on the 3rd & 13th and Leighton Moss on 6 June. It is worth noting that some records may have been hybrids.

RAVEN *Corvus corax*

Uncommon resident.

Ravens are a regular feature of the county's avifauna these days with a 150% increase in range since 2000 and they continue to do well. The Lancaster survey recorded an above-average 35 in January and the Silverdale area hosted at least four breeding pairs. It is also becoming a regular suburban visitor in Lancaster and Morecambe.

A cursory glance at the records submitted reveals that you can bump into one or two birds wherever you are in the county at any time of the year though the most regular sightings come from the north and east of the county. The largest counts received were of twelve on Pendle Hill on 4 Nov, ten over Colne on 6 May and nine at Stocks Reservoir on 31 Dec. There were also a few reports of migratory activity but nowhere near the scale of that reported in 2011.

Breeding was confirmed in Bowland and West Pennine Moors and at quarry sites around Chorley.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*

Common breeding bird, especially in the east. Abundant double passage migrant and winter visitor in variable numbers.

The number of records submitted in the first two months of the year was again extremely low. The January survey of the Lancaster area revealed a slight increase on the last couple of years with 31 counted but still well down on what used to be considered normal.

So an excellent spring passage at most coastal sites was something of a surprise but nevertheless welcome. A few trickled through in the first two weeks of March but there was a sharp increase in records from the 13th to the end of the month, after which the passage finished as quickly as it had begun. There was a large arrival on 15 March with Heysham recording at least 50 (of which 36 were trapped and ringed) and Fairhaven recording at least 13. The following days saw double-figure counts all along the Fylde coast (19 at Fairhaven and 20 at Fluke Hall on the 16th, 20 at Knott End Golf Course on the 17th and twelve at Ridge Farm on the 18th) and smaller numbers along the Sefton Coast. Heysham finished the spring with 174 birds ringed; as usual, males predominated in the early part of the movement.

Few were seen in the east of the county until April when birds took up territory. Many breeding attempts were reported in the area with confirmed success at Gisburn Forest, Jackhouse

Reservoir, Spout Farm (Longridge) and Cross of Greet. By the evidence of a count of 70 in a large mixed tit flock around Stocks Reservoir on 27 August, it was a successful season in spite of the drenching. There were double-figure post-breeding counts at Moor Piece.

Elsewhere, singing birds were recorded at eighteen sites around south Liverpool but only seven on the Fylde and four around Chorley.

Autumn passage was quite protracted, generally starting in the second week of September and continuing into early November. The peak counts in September were 15 at Heysham on the 19th, ten at Belmont on the 23rd, 13 at Formby Point and at least ten at Turton Golf Course on the 28th. Excellent numbers passed through the county during October with site peaks of 17 at Heysham on the 1st, 20 at Formby Pinewoods on the 3rd, 20 at Moor Piece on the 4th, ten at Stanley Park, Blackpool on the 8th, twelve at Fluke Hall on the 10th, 15 at Marshside on the 11th, 21 at Cockersand on the 13th, ten at Eccleston Mere on the 20th, 13 at Belmont on the 21st, 20 at Stocks Reservoir on the 22nd and 20 at Aldcliffe on the 25th. Smaller numbers were reported from several other locations during this period.

There was a scattering of records in the second winter period of mainly ones and twos, often associated with roving tit flocks with the larger counts coming from east Lancashire.

FIRECREST *Regulus ignicapilla*

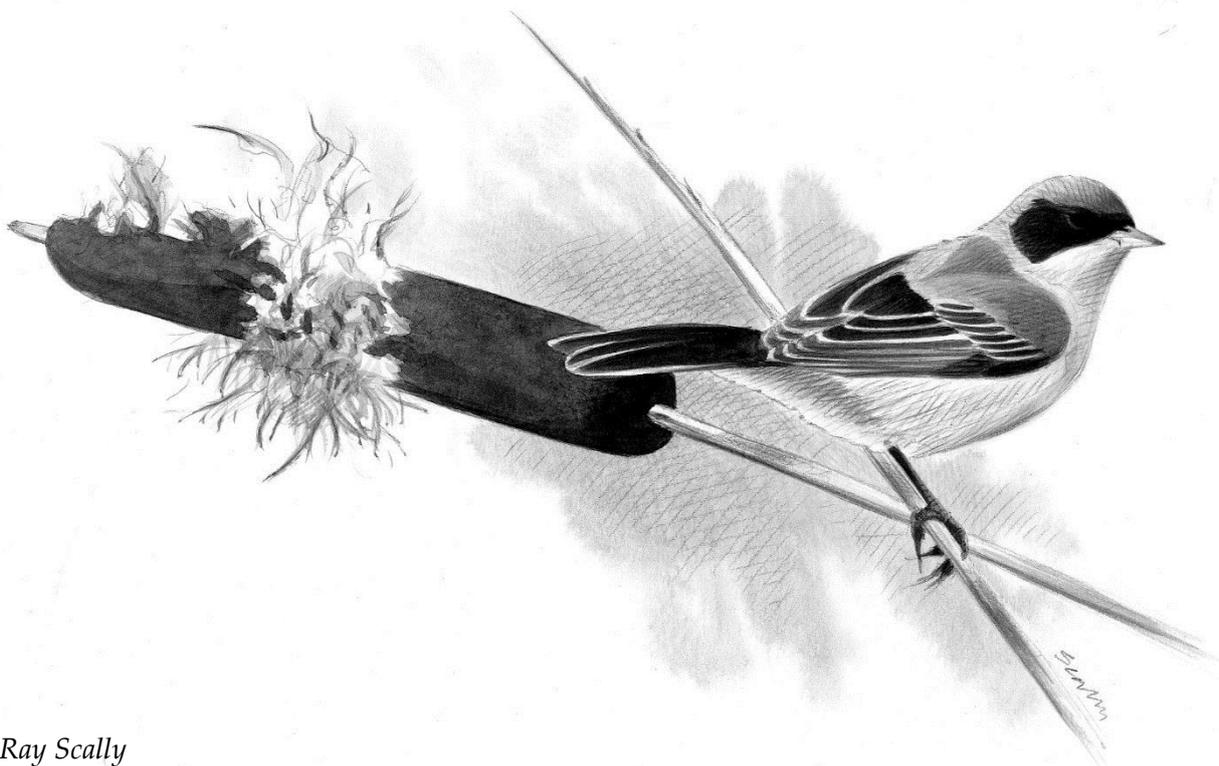
Scarce passage migrant, rare in winter.

Singles were recorded at Aldcliffe on 23 April, MMWWT from 27 Oct to 25 Nov and Fleetwood on 30 Oct. One was found dead in a garden bordering Cuerden Valley Park early in December.

PENDULINE TIT *Remiz pendulinus*

Vagrant.

The bird that was ringed in November 2011 was seen again at Leighton Moss on 11 Feb, 17 March and 3 April. The records have been accepted by the BBRC.



Ray Scally

BLUE TIT *Cyanistes caeruleus***Abundant breeding bird. Marked autumn passage.**

Though this species is a very common breeding bird in the county, it is apparent from nest-box records that the breeding season was a very poor one, not helped by the incessant precipitation over the fledging period.

Four studies in the Lancaster district indicated an average take-up of boxes but poor productivity; at Claughton 39 nesting attempts resulted in an average of 3.4 young fledged but at Trowbarrow only nine young fledged from six nesting attempts. This was emphasised at Heysham, where they usually expect to get a dispersal of local young but only eleven out of the 135 ringed were juveniles. At Leighton Moss only 215 were ringed compared to an average of 357 in the previous decade.

Regularly-monitored sites provided the following data. Eight pairs nested at Brockholes Wetland, six pairs at Freshfield Dune Heath and there were eight occupied boxes at Bowland Wild Boar Park; five nest-boxes were used around Turton Golf Course. Breeding presence was woefully under-reported elsewhere with, for example, ELOC confirming only seven sites and CDNHS five; the atlas survey located breeding Blue Tits in 94% of the county's tetrads.

Some autumn passage was noted, especially with the large Coal Tit movement, but the numbers were very low. Heysham had a peak of just eight and Fairhaven 15 on 7 Oct whilst Seaforth reported a peak of twelve on the 9th. Numbers around Eccleston Mere showed an increase later in the month with 20 by the 18th. Similarly at Brockholes and Aldcliffe with peaks of 21 and 30 respectively. In east Lancashire, the highest single count post-breeding was a paltry twelve at Whalley Nab on 6 Oct. Numbers trapped at garden ringing sites at Newton and Rishton were also very poor.

GREAT TIT *Parus major***Abundant breeding bird, less common on autumn passage than Blue Tit.**

Great Tits were also affected by the poor summer weather but probably not as greatly as Blue Tits. The overall numbers using nest boxes at regularly-monitored sites is now on a par with Blue Tits in many places and exceed them in some. The atlas survey estimated that the ratio of breeding Blue Tits to Great Tits in the county was 1.7 to 1 with the latter only slightly less widespread – breeding in 89% of the county's tetrads.

Eight pairs were recorded at Brockholes, five at Freshfield Dune Heath, six at Bowland Wild Boar Park and two at Turton Golf Course. At Heysham, ten boxes were occupied (as opposed to three for Blue Tit) with 57 young fledged. In the Lancaster district nest-box schemes there was a population of 61 pairs compared to an average of 65 and low productivity, for example three fledged young per nest at Claughton.

In east Lancashire, the first reported singing was on 8 Jan at Towneley Park, Burnley but at the end of the year, a male was in song at Hurst Green on 16 Dec.

There was scant autumn passage. The only double-figure count was of ten on 8 Oct over Seaforth, where there were also six on the 19th.

COAL TIT *Periparus ater***Abundant breeding bird. Some irruptive movements in autumn.**

As with Blue and Great Tits, this species is generally under-reported as it is regularly present across the county although in smaller numbers than its more demonstrative cousins. However one aspect of its year is the significant autumnal movement that can occasionally be irruptive in nature.

2012 was certainly one of those years as the vast majority of records pertain to the late September to early November period.

With strongholds in the plantations of the east, it is hardly surprising that the majority of high counts come from there. Regular monitoring of Moor Piece recorded up to 29 in a half-hour session, whilst at Stocks Reservoir the feeding stations attract large numbers with 30 recorded in January and a minimum of 50 in Gisburn Forest on 16 Feb. In the Lancaster January survey, numbers were slightly up on average with 251 recorded.

Birds were reported singing at nine sites on the Fylde. Birds were present in parks and gardens across south Liverpool during the breeding season and breeding pairs were noted at Aintree, Maghull and Newton-le-Willows. A massive flock of at least 150 moving through trees behind the hide at Stocks Reservoir on 27 Aug was a precursor of events to come.

Between 19 Sept and 29 Oct, a total of 474 were recorded on vis mig at Heysham with 206 trapped, second only to the numbers recorded in 1985. Numbers peaked with 164 on 9 Oct and 46 on the 18th. At Fairhaven, there were counts of 82 on 8 Oct and 69 on the 9th. 26 were recorded in one flock at Heron's Reach, Blackpool on the 9th; Seaforth numbers peaked the same day at 53 with twelve on the 13th. Double-figure counts also came from Leighton Moss, Silverdale Moss, Fluke Hall, Aldcliffe and St. Anne's in this period, along with many reports of smaller numbers from coastal sites. Twenty at Belmont on 23 Sept was the highest inland count away from Stocks Reservoir and Moor Piece.

Birds were still noticeable throughout November and December with Moor Piece recording a peak count of 44 in the last two weeks of the year.

WILLOW TIT* *Poecile montana*

Scarce breeder in the wet woodlands of the south-west. Very rare elsewhere.

It has been suggested recently that 25% of the country's Willow Tits reside in the North West of England. If that is so, then the species is certainly in serious trouble as there has been a marked decline here too but perhaps not as severely as in other areas. The county's population is estimated at 50 pairs with larger numbers occurring just over the Greater Manchester border around Wigan.

Records for this species are entirely confined to an area extending from Chorley southwards through West Lancashire and into Merseyside.

It says a lot when most correspondents' only record of Willow Tit was the one at MMWWT that stayed from the beginning of the year to 23 April when it was singing. Nearby, a male was in song at Mere Brow in mid-April. South from here, birds were recorded at Rufford, Low Meadows and Gorse Hill NR. Birds were also present throughout the St Helens area with records in the breeding season from Sankey Valley, King's Moss, Holiday Moss, Old Coach Road, Eccleston Mere, Carr Mill Dam, Dairy Farm Road, Bickerstaffe and Billinge Hill.

Around Chorley birds were reported from Coppull, Arley NR, Worthington Lakes and Croston Moss with a family party seen on Mawdesley Moss on 4 Aug.

Away from the 'stronghold' areas there were a few interesting records. A bird visited feeders in Huyton in the early winter period, one was near Haydock Park racecourse in February and one was singing at a former breeding site near Belmont on 23 March. In the second winter period there was again one at MMWWT during October, one at Wayoh Reservoir on 19 Nov and one at King's Moss on two occasions in December.

A bird reported to be of this species at Tower Lodge, Marshaw on 1 June would more likely be Marsh Tit though either would be notable there.

MARSH TIT* *Poecile palustris*

Uncommon breeder in the north of the county. Virtually absent south of the Ribble and in the Fylde.

The vast majority of reports for this species come from the Leighton Moss/Silverdale area where it seems to have a healthy and possibly increasing population. A record ten pairs were recorded on the Warton Crag RSPB census compared to an average of four over the previous 22 years.

There were very few records away from this area, but it is present in a few of the woods along the Lune up to Whittington.

After a blank year in east Lancashire in 2011, there were a few winter period reports of Marsh Tits from Moor Piece on 28 Jan, 17 Nov and 1 Dec. Other past locations were checked but there were no sightings so it seems possible that this species has ceased to breed in the area.

BEARDED TIT *Panurus biarmicus*

Resident at Leighton Moss. Rare elsewhere.

The long term colour-ringing programme of this species continued at Leighton Moss. There was an increase of six to an estimated 18 pairs breeding. The ringing study identified 15 adult males and 16 adult females but only 17 young were ringed.

Irruptive behaviour was recorded on three days in late October but there were no records away from Leighton Moss.

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

Abundant breeding bird and passage migrant. Red List (breeding decline).

As in 2011 most reports of significant flocks in coastal areas in the early year came from the Fylde, with peaks of 120 at Eagland Hill, Pilling on 22 Jan, 150 at Peel on 6 Feb and 89 on Rawcliffe Moss next day; there were 100+ at Cabin Hill, Formby on 23 Feb.

In contrast, the January survey by the Lancaster & District BWS counted just 17 in the coastal strip of SD45 (77 last year).

Further inland in Chorley region c.100 were on Croston Moss on 3 Feb and five were singing at Great Knowley on 18 Feb. An early influx into east Lancashire on 17 Feb brought birds to six locations, with the first reports of singing.

There was very little evidence of spring passage anywhere although 100 on Cockerham Moss on 2 March may well have been migrants given the date; twelve moved over Heysham between 24 Feb and 28 March.

Whatever the problems of the Skylark's breeding population elsewhere in the county or nationally, the situation on the south-west coast and mosslands remains excellent, within nature reserves at least. A total of 72 pairs at Marshside-Crossens included 29 territories on the new saltmarsh south of the old Sand Plant compound on 22 May; 66 pairs nested at MMWWT, 63 on Hesketh Out Marsh and 20 on Lunt Meadows and reports of up to ten breeding pairs were received from five other locations.

In the Chorley region the species appears to have been lost from the Brindle area; one territory was located in a 1km BTO/BBS square on Darwen Moor in May, two in June. In east Lancashire there were 13 singing males on Twiston Moor on 7 May and reports of smaller numbers from a further 14 locations. Nine singing males were located along the River Lune between Leck Beck and Wenning Foot (twelve in 2011).

Small southbound movements at Seaforth and Marshside on 22 Sept began a fairly average autumn passage in coastal regions. Peaks in the south-west included 327 south at Marshside on 6 Oct and 645 on the 27th; 54 were at Cabin Hill on 4 Oct. A total of 415 was recorded at Seaforth

between 13-21 Oct. Further north a total of 84 passed at Heysham with a peak of 17 on 14 Oct; there were 28 at Rossall Point on the 22nd and 100+ at Cockersand on 18 Nov. Only two double-figure counts were received from inland areas, 21 at Pendle Hill on 1 Oct and 20 at Eccleston Mere, St Helens on the 19th; movements everywhere appear to have ceased by mid-November.

Ten birds at Jackhouse on 10 Nov were the last recorded in east Lancashire; late-year counts on the coast included 42 at Cabin Hill on 8 Dec, 140 on Lytham Moss on the 11th and 52 on Pilling Moss on the following day.

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

Common but local breeding bird, mainly in the east; common double passage migrant. Amber List (species of European conservation concern).

Spring arrivals began on 12 March with four birds at Marton Mere and singles at Brockholes Wetland and at Arkholme in the Lune Valley. There were 13 more records in the Fylde in March, 100 were already at Leighton Moss on the 17th and nine at Altham next day were the first to arrive in east Lancashire. There were three March records at Seaforth from the 24th, when Chorley's first Sand Martin was at Eccleston.

Subsequent passage on or near the coast was exceedingly light with peaks of 120 at Brockholes on 6 April, 99 at Marshside on 1 May and 35 there on the 17th; Seaforth recorded its spring maximum of 43 on 14 April and a total of only 23 passed at Heysham to the last on 27 May. Things were a little livelier inland: 350+ were at Alston Reservoirs on 18 April, c.100 at Foulridge Reservoirs on 11 May and c.150 at Rishton Reservoir on the 18th.

This year's was a very wet summer and this presumably contributed to a significant decline in breeding success after 2011's bumper season. The Lune Waterways Survey located a total of 1546 pairs, around half of last year's record number; there were 598 at Arkholme but many nests were flooded out. In east Lancashire no young were fledged from two colonies on the Ribble between Sawley and Paythorne with all nests abandoned by mid-June. Elsewhere in the region there were 122 occupied nest-holes on the River Calder between Altham and Martholme on 13 May; breeding was confirmed at nine other locations including 16 nests at Stocks Reservoir and a small colony in Burnley town centre. One pair in Yarrow Valley Park was the only breeding report from Chorley region.

Nearer to the coast there were 240 active nest-holes at Lightfoot Green on 17 June, with 360 there as late as 5 Aug, and 40 pairs nested at Brockholes Wetland; two pairs bred at Myerscough College and a small colony was established on Freckleton Marsh. There were no reports of breeding from the south-west.

Numbers recorded on autumn passage were unusually low. No visible migration was recorded at Heysham and Seaforth and the Fylde watchpoints reported very light movements. 300 at MMWWT on 8 July was the first significant count, followed by 73 at Lowerhouse Lodges in east Lancashire on the 23rd and 150 on Silverdale Moss on the 29th; 21 south at Seaforth on 4 Aug, up to 20 per night in a Swallow roost on Middleton Industrial Estate at Heysham in late month and two counts of ten apiece on the Fylde coast were the only double-figure records during August. Sixty on the Altham-Martholme stretch of the Calder on 4 Sept, 100 at Brockholes on the 12th and 180 at Arkholme next day were the last substantial counts of the autumn.

There were six September records in the Fylde with the last three birds past Rossall Point on the 9th; Marshside recorded its last two Sand Martins on 20 Sept and singles at Marl Hill and Seaforth on the 22nd ended the year in east Lancashire and the south-west respectively. Four birds lingering at Arkholme on 4 Oct were the last in the north, and the county, in 2102.

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

Abundant breeding bird and double passage migrant. Amber List (species of European conservation concern).

A bird at Brockholes Wetland on 22 March was the first of a surge of arrivals with one at Worsthorne next day ELOC region's first and singles at Belmont, Chorley and Freckleton, Fylde on the 24th. Five more were recorded in east Lancashire and two in the Fylde before the end of the month; the first arrived in north Lancashire on the 31st.

As in 2011 movements in the first half of April were very light; 1000 along the River Lune at Arkholme and 350 at Alston Reservoirs on the 18th began a major surge of migration that continued on-and-off until the middle of May. The four-day period 30 April to 3 May saw the highest counts in coastal regions with 344 at Rossall Point and 160 north over Birkdale Shore on 30 April, 1048 north at Marshside, 427 over Rossall Point and 105 at Seaforth on 1 May, and 1444 at Cabin Hill and 396 at Rossall School on the 3rd. A total passage of 1093 at Heysham peaked during 1-7 May; 250 over Marshside on 17 May was the last significant movement reported. Inland counts, meanwhile, included 600 at Arkholme on 26 April, 350 at Foulridge Lower Reservoir on 5 May and 200 at Stocks Reservoir on the 11th.

Sixteen monitored nests in the Pilling-Preesall area produced 74 eggs; 61 hatched and 41 young fledged. Elsewhere in the lowlands 33 pairs nested in stables beside Freshfield Dune Heath and three young were still in the nest there on 11 Oct; several pairs bred under Southport Pier by the Marine Drive. Inland records included seven pairs at Lower Broomfield Farm, Arkholme; in Chorley 16 birds were still around Wilcock's Farm, Rivington on 9 Sept.



Steve Young

No significant roosts or southbound movements of Swallows were reported this year before the very end of July with 1551 roosting at Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park on the 31st; there were 2074 there on 5 Aug and 664 next day. Seven hundred were at Leighton Moss on 10 Aug, 244 moved south at Seaforth next day, there were 500 over Carnforth Inner Marsh on the 14th and 200 at Stocks Reservoir on the 19th; 200 moved at MMWWT and 120 at Belmont on the 22nd. Widespread heavy movements continued through the first three weeks of September: 'hundreds' moved over Withnell Fold and Ulnes Walton, Chorley on 1-2 Sept, there were 2000 over Lunt Meadows on 3 Sept, 1752 over Rossall School on the 9th and 250 at Dairy Farm Road, St Helens on

the 17th. A final surge of heavy migration on a broad front on 22 Sept brought 750 over Whalley Nab, 1000+ over Lightfoot Green and 287 to Rossall Point.

Movements in early October were heavier even than 2011's strong showing, with peaks of 100 at Cockersand and 20 at Eccleston, Chorley on 4 Oct and 61 over Fairhaven Lake on the 7th; there were three more October records in Chorley region and that site's last two birds of 2012 passed Seaforth on the 26th. Eight November records were received: a single at Eccleston on 2 Nov was the last of the year in Chorley, three at Leighton Moss on the 5th the last in the north and one at Marshside on the 21st the final record in the south-west. The Fylde recorded four single birds and one at Marton Mere on 29 Nov was the county's last Swallow of 2012.

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbicum*

Common and widespread breeding bird and passage migrant. Amber List (breeding decline).

Spring passage began with two at Leighton Moss on 1 April, ten days later than last year, followed by three singles in east Lancashire and the Fylde's first over Newton Marsh on the 6th; one at Eccleston on the 13th was the first to arrive in Chorley region when Heysham also recorded its first two House Martins, followed by Seaforth next day.

The subsequent passage was quite prolonged though intermittent, and very light until the end of April when 44 moved over Rossall Point and 40 over Cockersand on the 30th. A surge of arrivals on 1 May brought 188 to Marshside and 87 to Rossall Point; highlights later in the month included 120 at Marshside on 15 May and another 60 there and 80 at Fairhaven on the 17th. Quite heavy movements continued through the first half of June including 100 at Seaforth and 40 at Stocks Reservoir on the 3rd and 50+ at Marshside next day; 80 at Seaforth on 9 June and 100 over Gait Barrows on the 10th were the last noteworthy movements reported.

Among the widespread breeding records received eleven active nests were located in Belmont Village, two fewer than in 2011; elsewhere in the Chorley region pairs bred in Cuerden Valley Park, Coppull and Croston. In east Lancashire seven nesting reports included six pairs in Barley; in the north there were 16 pairs in Tunstall, six in Wrayton, eleven in Warton Village and eight and 20+ respectively in the Millhead and Croftlands estates there. In Liverpool eleven active nests were located along Pomfret Road, Toxteth and four at King's Dock in the city centre.

Significant southward movements began in the last week of July with 60 at White Coppice, Chorley and 20 over Lytham Moss on the 26th; 65 passed at Marshside on the 31st. A generally light passage during August included 28 south at Seaforth on 12 Aug, 100 at Cabin Hill, Formby on the 13th and 85 at Marshside on the 23rd. Widespread movements late in the month brought a season's peak of 70 birds over Heysham and 50 at Plover Scar, some 5km to the south, on the 26th and 80 at Eccleston Mere and 30 at Seaforth on the 27th. Numbers on the move increased during September: 300 were at Todderstaffe Hall, Fylde on 1 Sept, there were 100 at Martholme and 250+ in Towneley Park in east Lancashire on 4 Sept when 150 also passed over Belmont Reservoir. There were 230 at Arkholme on the 13th and 240 moved south at Seaforth on the 21st.

Thirteen October records included five in east Lancashire with the last there, and in the county, at Jackhouse on the 19th; there were four reports in the Fylde with the last two birds at Carleton on 12 Oct. Twelve at Eccleston on 3 Oct and three at Rufford on the 7th were the last House Martins in Chorley and the south-west respectively.

CETTI'S WARBLER* *Cettia cetti*

Recently-established rare breeder; some winter dispersal.

Two pairs nested at Leighton Moss, the first proven breeding there although it has been strongly suspected previously. One pair was seen feeding young in mid-June and two fledged young were ringed in another area in mid-July; four, possibly five males were singing in autumn.

At least four birds were present at Marton Mere from January to March and breeding was proven once again although it is uncertain by how many pairs; two or three were later heard from July until the end of the year.

Two birds were seen away from the breeding sites: singles at MMWWT on 25 Jan and 6 Feb and Brockholes on 11 Feb to 28 March – no doubt both these sites will soon be colonised.

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*

Abundant breeding resident. Some irruptive movement in autumn.

Hundreds of records were received from all parts of the county and it is now clear that the species is breeding pretty much everywhere that suitable habitat exists; the atlas surveys found breeding-season Long-tailed Tits in nearly 80% of the county's tetrads, indicating that they have extended their range by more than 20% since 1997-2000.

It seems that the past two hard winters, especially 2010/11, have had no lasting impact: flocks of 15 or more were reported from more than 50 sites this year compared with 30 in 2011, while the Lancaster January survey counted 319 birds compared with an average of 207 during 2007-2011 – the largest total since the survey started.

Several sites reported flocks of 20 or more but the largest were 30 at Jackhouse on 23 Aug, 30 at Rose Hill Burnley on 4 Oct, 31 at Brockholes on the 7th, 30 at Eccleston Mere on the 18th, 39 at Moor Piece and 30 at Marton Mere on the 27th, 41 in the Dunsop Valley on 5 Nov and 25 near Belmont on the 25th.

Little detailed breeding information was received but ringing studies at Leighton Moss suggested that breeding productivity was about average while at Heysham it was thought to be on the low side.

Twelve on the Cabin Hill dunes on 2 March were thought to be migrants. Definite autumn passage birds recorded were at Belmont where six groups totalling 78 birds came in over the moors from the north on 21 Oct, and Seaforth where 14 flew south on 10 Oct, twelve on the 15th, six on the 17th & 18th and 22 on the 21st. In addition, flocks grounded at Heysham but described as 'acting irruptively' comprised eleven on 9 Oct, 14 on the 18th and then the next day.

PALLAS'S WARBLER* *Phylloscopus proregulus*

Vagrant.

One was in a garden at Knott End on 15-20 Oct (C Batty). It was the sixth Lancashire record and the first since one on the Hightown Dunes in December 2006.

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER* *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Scarce autumn passage migrant.

There were seven records of singles this year, a better than average showing.

The first were at Marshside and Hesketh Golf Course on 4-6 Oct (finder unknown) and Leighton Moss on the 6th only (finder unknown). It was another eight days before the next at Fluke Hall on 14-17 Oct (SG Piner *et al*), followed on 17 Oct at Heysham (PJ Marsh), Mount Park,

Fleetwood on the 18-19th (I Gardner), Pollard Moor on the 19th (P Hornby) and finally Birkdale on the 20th to 21st (finder unknown).

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Scarce breeder in east and central areas; uncommon passage migrant, mostly in spring.

There were four spring records of single singing males in the Fylde, at Blackpool Pleasure Beach on 2 May, at Stanley Park on the 2nd & 3rd, Rossall School on the 3rd and another in Stanley Park on the 10th. The only other coastal migrants were at Hesketh Golf Course on 3 May and Leighton Moss on the 11th.

Records came from five sites in the east of the county. The first was a male singing in the Roddlesworth Plantations, a traditional breeding site, on 8 May but no further reports were received from there. The next was on 12 May at Stocks Reservoir where a pair was on eggs on 6 June but the nest failed and the last was seen on 26 June. Two were at Dunnockshaw on 20 May including a singing male, and one was reported there on 4 June; another male was singing at Whitehough near Barley on 20 May and was reported until 5 June, while a second site in the Gisburn Forest had a singing male on 17 June – all these records being suggestive of breeding.

Chorley had fewer records than in the east but it has to be reckoned a good year after a complete blank in 2011. The first was one back in the traditional breeding site of Heather Lea Woods, Brinscall on 5 May with probably the same bird there on the 9th, although there was no definite evidence of attempted breeding. Two were in Nab Wood on 29 May and one was singing at another old breeding site at Gilsbrook, Rivington on the 31st. Although there was no evidence of breeding at these three sites it would seem likely that all were at least prospecting.

None was seen or heard in the former north Lancashire breeding sites in the Hindburndale, Roeburndale or Lune Valley woodlands.

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*

Common breeder and passage migrant. Uncommon but increasing in winter.

Wintering records were up a little on last year. Most of those in the first winter period up until the end of February came from the Fylde: singles at Carleton, Eagland Hill, Todderstaffe Hall, Knott End and Thistleton, with one other at Preston Dock. The Fylde dominated as well at the other end of the year from 24 Nov (a fairly arbitrary cut-off date) onwards, with singles at Stanley Park, Woodland Gardens, Carr House Green Common, Pilling and Fairhaven Lake, but other areas chipped in with singles at High Bentham and Heysham in the north, Buckshaw Village in Chorley, and Netherton and Walton on Merseyside.

The first days of March saw early arrivals (or possibly remaining winterers) at Knott End, Blackpool and Mere Sands Wood. The passage movement accelerated sharply in mid-March and by the end of the month birds had been seen throughout the county; as usual, migrants continued to arrive throughout April and into early May, by which time it was difficult to distinguish them from settled breeding birds.

Most records typically involved just ones and twos but larger regional counts in the Fylde included nine at Marton Mere on 23 March, with eight there on 12 April, and eight at Carr House Green Common on 24 April; in north Lancashire 20 at Heysham NR on 23-24 March and twelve at Leighton Moss and at Warton Crag on 15 April; in east Lancashire six at Gawthorpe on 28 March and seven at Moor Piece on 21 April; and on Merseyside nine at Marshside on 24 March and eight at Fazakerley Reedbed on 14 April.

The little breeding information received painted a mixed picture with apparently good numbers of pairs but poor breeding success if the ringing studies at Heysham and Leighton Moss

were representative of the rest of the county. Site totals included ten pairs at Freshfield Dune Heath, eight on Warton Crag, seven at Birkdale, six at Heysham NR, four on the Leck Beck to Wenning stretch of the Lune, three on Hesketh Golf Course and in Cuerden Valley Park, but just two around Belmont and a single pair at Brockholes. Probable breeding occurred on at least 20 sites in south Liverpool and south Knowsley.

The return passage got underway from the first week of July and, although migrants were widespread, numbers were on the low side, with autumn peaks of five in east Lancashire at Shedden Clough and Jackhouse, ten at Heysham and Leighton Moss, and six at Carr House Green Common. The movement continued into November but, as usual, it was difficult if not impossible to distinguish late migrants from early winterers.

SIBERIAN CHIFFCHAFF* *Phylloscopus collybita tristis*

Vagrant.

A probable was at Brockholes on 8-23 Feb (N Patel *et al*) but has not yet been assessed by the county records committee.

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Abundant breeding bird and double passage migrant.

Continuing the recent trend of earlier arrivals, there were March records at Bispham on the 23rd, Seaforth on the 24th, Hesketh Lane in east Lancashire on the 27th, Cabin Hill and Longridge Fell on the 29th, and Leighton Moss the following day. There was something of a hiatus in the first week of April but by the middle of the month widespread arrivals were being reported from all parts of the county, both at coastal migration and breeding sites with many birds on territory before the end of the month.

A very large fall of 70 at Aldcliffe on 30 April was not nearly equalled elsewhere but other large counts of migrants included 50 at Heysham NR on 30 April and Fleetwood Cemetery on 2 May, 30 at Seaforth and at Preston Dock on 2 May, 22 on 30 April at Marshside and 20 at Cockersand on 30 April – all very significantly higher than the peak counts of spring migrants in 2011.

Breeding information received was very patchy. In east Lancashire 58 were at Bottom's Beck on 5 May and 35 in the Gisburn Forest on the 12th. Elsewhere, there were 48 males on territory on the Lune between Leck Beck and Wenning Foot – compared with 72 in 2011 – and a slightly below par 29 pairs on Warton Crag, 13 pairs on Freshfield Dune Heath, at least twelve pairs at Birkdale LNR, and five at Brockholes (7 in 2011) and at Belmont Reservoir.

The first returned to Seaforth, where none breed, on 2 Aug and to MMWWT on the 8th, but it was clear that birds had begun to leave the breeding grounds some time before that, for example the last record at Brockholes was on 20 July.

The bulk of the passage movement took place during August, with numbers falling rapidly in east Lancashire and coastal totals reaching their peak by the end of the month. Notable counts included 30-50 daily at Heysham NR on 10, 15 & 18-9 Aug, 30 at Lytham St. Anne's NR on the 18th with 15 there the next day (coinciding with the big numbers at Heysham) and 26 at Marshside on the 14th. Eight migrants were in moorland bracken beds above Belmont on 5 Aug.

Numbers declined sharply during September and the last coastal birds were at Seaforth on the 16th, Heysham on the 23rd and Blackpool on the 27th. A late bird was at Belmont on 4 Oct and, although there were only ten records in east Lancashire after the end of August, a very late one was at Stocks Reservoir from 21 Oct to 4 Nov.

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*

Abundant breeding bird and common passage migrant; fairly common winter visitor at coastal locations.

The total number of birds seen during winter, unusually this year mostly in December, was slightly up on last year – 47 compared with 43 in 2011. Typically, most were in the west of the county with 16 individuals in the Fylde, twelve in Merseyside and nine in north Lancashire, but there were also six in east Lancashire and four in the Chorley and Preston areas. Where identified, the records were more or less evenly divided between the sexes.

March records are always ambiguous but probably the first returning migrants were males in song at Whin Scar Clough on the 22nd, Princes Park (Liverpool) and Hesketh Golf Course on the 24th, and Leighton Moss on the 26th. Migrants had been recorded at many coastal sites and birds were back on territory in breeding areas by the middle of April although some passage continued into early May.

Breeding is now more or less ubiquitous throughout the lowlands and much of the uplands; Blackcaps were recorded as at least possibly breeding in 80% of tetrads in the county during the recent atlas survey, an increase in breeding range of 12% in the first decade of this century.

Understandably, reports of breeding numbers nowadays tend to come only from nature reserves and other well-monitored sites. This year's included a record 27 pairs on Warton Crag RSPB, 30 on the Lune between Leck Beck and Wenning Foot, five at Heysham, 20 at Brockholes, eleven at Ribchester, nine at Bottoms Beck and Jackhouse, and a dozen or more at Birkdale. Ringing at both Leighton Moss and Heysham pointed to poor productivity this year. Singing males were recorded at more than 50 sites in the Fylde and a minimum of 40 in south Liverpool/Knowsley during summer; the largest counts in these two recording areas were 15 at Marton Mere on 21 April, 20 at Preston Dock on the 23rd and ten at Tarbock Hall Farm, Knowsley on 19 May.

One at Seaforth on 12 June was presumably a non-breeder and there was little evidence of any return migration much before August with most being seen in September. There were only four October records in east Lancashire and the last presumed migrants were at Belmont on 4 Oct, Seaforth on the 23rd, Marton Mere on the 27th and Heysham on the 29th.

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

Common breeding bird and double passage migrant.

None was seen at the traditional wintering site in the Birkdale dunes at either end of the year.

The first of the year was in Towneley Park, Burnley on the typical date of 18 April and there were just six further records that month: at Birkdale, Croston, Heysham, Whin Scar Clough, Barrow and Warton Crag. Presumed migrants during May were seen at seven sites in the Fylde and three in Merseyside, and singing males in a number of breeding areas, including at least ten sites in east Lancashire and six in Chorley.

Breeding totals were reported from only a handful of sites: 13 pairs on Warton Crag RSPB, five on the Lune between Leck Beck and Wenning Foot and two at Brockholes, but notable counts of males in east Lancashire included eleven in Gisburn Forest and ten at Bottoms Beck.

There were only four records in east Lancashire after the end of June: at Easington on 1 July, Stocks Reservoir on 2 Aug, Moor Piece on 10 Aug and Gisburn Forest on 14 Aug, so it appears that migration got underway in July but few migrants were detected on the coast. There were singles at Fleetwood Marsh on 14 July, Heysham NR on 2 Aug, Seaforth on 4-5 Aug and Middleton NR on the 31st. No more were reported until the last at Cockersand on 13-14 Oct.

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

Common breeding bird and double passage migrant.

In what seems to have been a poor spring throughout the county, after the first at Heysham on 15 April there were just a further six or seven records that month – at Marton Mere, Brindle, Marshside, Middleton and Preston Dock. Things picked up in May but only by a little with migrants on the Merseyside coast, where the species is far from common, at Freshfield Dune Heath, Cabin Hill, Birkdale and Marshside, at more than 30 sites in the Fylde, and inland at MMWWT, Bretherton and Brockholes.

Birds had reached their breeding areas by the end of May when five territories were established at Heysham with other pairs in north Lancashire at Middleton NR, Aldcliffe, Arkholme, Jenny Brown's Point, Wrayton, Melling, Warton Crag RSPB (3 pairs), the Eric Morecambe complex, Heald Brow and Leighton Moss. Breeding was probable in east Lancashire at Longridge, Todber, Gisburn, Balderstone and Lee Green Reservoir, and proven at Alston Reservoirs. Elsewhere, a pair was at Hic Bibi on 6 May and a singing male at Halewood on the 20th.

Only five juveniles were ringed at Heysham compared with 36 in 2011, so there at least it was a poor breeding season, a conclusion reinforced by the scarcity of autumn migrants. Although there were records at ten sites in the Fylde during June and early July it is unclear how many, if any, might have been migrants; elsewhere the only records of early autumn migrants were singles at Seaforth on 26 Aug and Cabin Hill on 10 Aug and 1 Sept before the last anywhere in the county at Sunderland Point on 20 Oct.

WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

Common breeder, mostly in the west. Common double passage migrant.

The first was at Cabin Hill on 14 April but it was nearly a week before the next arrived at Avenham Park in Preston on the 19th and at Middleton the following day. A trickle of migrants then followed throughout April but with most arriving in the first ten days of May. Larger counts included seven at Stanah on 2 May, eight at Marton Mere on the 3rd, twelve at Carr House Green Common on the 8th, eight at Seaforth on the 9th, twelve at Marshside on the 13th, ten at Rawcliffe Moss on the 16th, 15 at Middleton on the 22nd and 17+ at Garston on the 24th.

Breeding totals included 20 pairs on Croston Moss and Birkdale LNR, 18 at Brockholes (6 in 2011), nine at Heysham and Marshside/Crossens, seven at Freshfield Dune Heath (19 in 2011) and MMWWT (3 in 2011), three in the Belmont area and two on Warton Crag RSPB – painting a rather mixed picture. Breeding was, however, far more extensive than this; the breeding atlas survey identified Whitethroats in almost half of the county's tetrads. Ringing at Middleton and Heysham suggested that productivity was about average this year.

With breeding so widespread it is very difficult to detect the onset of autumn passage but many were certainly on the move from July onwards – although a note of caution was struck at Heysham when two were trapped on 2 Aug which had been ringed 2km away at Middleton on 5 July.

Sample last dates were at Seaforth and Dean Clough Reservoir on 15 Sept, Belmont on the 16th, Heysham on the 21st and finally Fairhaven on the 23rd.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia*

Fairly common breeding bird and passage migrant. Scarce on autumn passage.

The first, on an early date for the second year in succession, on 8 April at Belmont Reservoir was followed on the 12th at Leighton Moss, the 15th at Marshside, the 16th on the Blundellsands-

Hightown Dunes and the 18th on Oswaldtwistle Moor. Birds were heard reeling on at least another eight sites during April and most breeding areas were occupied by early May.

Probable breeding was reported from six sites in north Lancashire, including four males at Middleton NR, three on Silverdale Moss and the Eric Morecambe complex and two on Heysham Moss, and in Chorley at Croston Finney, Rivington and Black Coppice, while on the West Pennine Moors four were at Belmont Reservoir with a further eleven in the surrounding moorland, and one at Turton Golf Course. It was less clear how many sites were occupied in east Lancashire but 48 reports were received during the year; five sites in the Fylde recorded birds during summer. Five pairs held territory at Birkdale, at least three were heard on Sefton/Lunt Meadows, two or more in the Speke/Garston area and at King's Moss, but the main Merseyside site on the Blundellsands-Hightown dunes, where at least seven pairs bred in 2011, was not monitored. Other breeding records included one at Brockholes and two at Roby Mill.

Productivity at Middleton was poor with just 14 birds ringed (5 adults and 5 juveniles) compared with 44 last year and 25 in 2010.

The last was at Middleton on 10 Aug and in the Fylde at Lytham St. Anne's NR on the 18th, but one was still in song at Belmont on 15 Aug. Birds were also on Newton Fell and Darwen Moor during August and one at Jackhouse on 12 Sept, but the last was a juvenile at Cabin Hill on 4 Oct, equally the previous latest in 1981.

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Common breeding bird in the west and double passage migrant.

The first was at Halton, Lancaster on 14 April but rather surprisingly the next was seen well inland on the Ribble at Brungerley on the 16th, although no more were reported anywhere in east Lancashire until two at Brookside Lodges on the 28th. In the meantime, birds arrived at the Preesall Flashes on the 17th, Leighton Moss on the 18th, Seaforth, Brockholes and Fleetwood Marsh on the 19th, Heysham on the 20th and Marton Mere and Marshside on the 21st.

The main movement occurred during May and all the usual breeding sites appeared to have been occupied by the end of the month. Peak spring counts included 25 at Leighton Moss, twelve at Marshside, ten at Fleetwood Marsh, nine on the Preesall Flashes and seven at Brookside Lodges.

Population size was not monitored at either Leighton Moss or Marton Mere this year, but 39 pairs bred at Brockholes (12 in 2011), 19 at MMWWT (34 in 2011), 16 on the Lune between Leck Beck and Wenning Foot (28 in 2011) and seven at Marshside/Crossens.

Overall, then, it appears that the number of breeding pairs – with the exception of Brockholes where the increase was probably due to the maturing habitat – may have been significantly down on last year. This conclusion was supported by the ringing studies at Heysham and Middleton, where just nine local juveniles were ringed and only 68 were caught in autumn, compared with 233 in 2011 and 140 in 2010.

Few definite migrants were seen anywhere and the last were recorded at Brockholes on 20 July, in east Lancashire at Brookside on the 31st, Seaforth on 14 Aug, Cocker's Dyke on the 18th, Heysham on 22 Sept and Leighton Moss on the 27th.

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.

The first arrival was at Leighton Moss on the typical date of 17 April, followed the next day on the Preesall Flashes, at Marton Mere on the 19th and Brockholes on the 20th. Four other sites had been

occupied by the end of April – Middleton, Birkdale, Fleetwood Marsh and Croston Reedbed – and numbers increased to ten at Leighton on the 25th and 20 on the 30th.

There were no records of spring migrants away from potential breeding sites. Reports were received from more than 30 breeding sites, including eight in north Lancashire, possibly three in east Lancashire, six in the Fylde, two in Chorley, and eight in Merseyside.

Breeding totals were reported from most of the major sites; the population at Leighton Moss was estimated at 300-400 pairs (the same as in 2011), and 46 pairs bred at MMWWT (41 in 2011), 42 pairs at Brockholes (18 in 2011), 15 pairs at both Haweswater and Silverdale Moss, six at Middleton NR and Oglet, five at Barrow Scout and Birkdale, and four at Marshside. No detailed information on breeding numbers was received from any Fylde site but peak counts, presumably mostly singing males, included six at Marton Mere (surely a huge underestimate), eleven at Myerscough Quarry and five at Fleetwood Marsh.

As in spring, no definite autumn migrants were reported, although one singing at Gisburn in east Lancashire on 2 Aug might possibly have been.

The last records were at on Brockholes on 20 July, Seaforth on 9 Aug, Middleton on the 28th, Yarrow Valley Park on 8 Sept, Marton Mere on the 22nd and Leighton Moss on 4 Oct.

WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulus*

Common but irregular winter visitor.

Two were reported at Stonyhurst College on 26 Feb despite none been seen anywhere else in the county during winter 2011/12 – so perhaps this report needs to be treated with a degree of caution.

The second winter period was a completely different matter. Beginning with 18 flying over Coal Clough Windfarm on 18 Oct and six in Crosby on 1 Nov, a massive invasion took place across all regions from 5 Nov. Records were received from at least 80 broadly-defined sites by the end of the year and no doubt many more went undetected or unreported. Almost two-thirds of the more than 200 records received were in November with numbers apparently tailing off as December progressed, probably indicating that birds were moving on as food resources were depleted.

As usual the overwhelming majority of flocks were in urban areas within which the birds were highly mobile, moving between often fairly small clumps of berry-bearing trees. Reports were shared fairly evenly between east Lancashire, the Fylde and Merseyside, which together accounted for two-thirds of all records – no doubt largely reflecting the degree of urbanisation of these regions – but this distribution did not always reflect the number of birds involved.

Median flock size was twelve but there were a number of much larger flocks, including up to 300 in the Kirkdale and Bootle areas in north Liverpool, 160 or more in central Preston and Ashton-on-Ribble, 80 or so in Formby, Lancaster and Morecambe and 50 in Chorley. The largest flocks were smaller in east Lancashire, the Fylde and West Lancashire, with peak counts of 24 at Barrow on 9 Nov and 40 in Burnley on 10 Dec, 35 at Fairhaven on 18 Nov, and 33 on 4 Dec in Burscough in these respective regions. One in Belmont village on 6 Nov was the only record in the West Pennine Moors and none was reported from Rossendale.

NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

Common and increasing breeding resident.

This species is still on the rise (the atlas surveys indicated a 110% increase in range since 2000) but is regularly reported as it is not yet seen to be a common species in many parts of the county.

It is, however, found in virtually all woodlands in the north and east of the county with new breeding sites confirmed at Foxhill Bank, Oswaldtwistle and Cut Wood, Rishton. At Stonyhurst College there were eight on 15 April and at Red Scar Wood, Preston there were six on the 6th. Up

to six were recorded regularly at Moor Piece. Around Anglezarke a total of 30 pairs used both artificial and natural nest-cavities though just over the hill at Belmont, there are a few suitable areas of woodland that have not yet been colonised. The January survey of the Lancaster district resulted in a count of 75 well-distributed birds. Three pairs in Trowbarrow fledged 19 young.

The species is common in south Liverpool with juveniles noted at Liverpool Hope University, Childwall, Sefton Park, Otterspool Park, Hopyard Wood (Halewood), Stockton's Wood (Speke) Croxteth Park and Princes Park. Young birds were also noted at Newton-le-Willows, Parbold and Eccleston. Two pairs bred at both Turton Golf Course and Cuerden Valley Park.

Birds were reported from 33 sites during the year in the Fylde: Nuthatches were regularly reported from Stanley Park, Blackpool and Thurnham Hall and Woodland Gardens (Blackpool). At Lytham Hall, birds were seen inspecting a nest hole. Young birds were seen in Poulton-le-Fylde and Salwick.

Around Formby there were a few more records with two near Freshfield railway station in the early part of the year and a pair in Formby pinewoods. Extralimital birds were noted at Cabin Hill on 25 July and 4 Oct and in the sand-plant compound at Marshside on 22 Sept.

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

Common breeding resident.

Very little of note was reported for this species but it seems to have survived the recent spate of cold winters and, although numbers were slightly down in the January Lancaster survey, it was reported from many areas during the year. Three pairs were located at both Trowbarrow and Claughton.

On the Fylde Treecreepers were recorded at 36 widely distributed sites during the year. In the east, they were seen regularly at Moor Piece with a peak of six in March and there were three singing males at New Laithe Farm, Newton on 23 Feb. Breeding was confirmed from eight other sites in east Lancashire. Two pairs bred in Cuerden Valley Park and birds were reported from the regular sites at Anglezarke and Rivington.

In south Liverpool, the species seems to be doing well in all the available parkland and copses. There were very few records though from elsewhere in Merseyside with one at Fisherman's Path, Freshfield on 19 April the only one reported for the whole Sefton coast.

At Heysham, there were few migrants apart from three trapped on 26 Sept, of which one certainly stayed in the area as it was retrapped later in October.

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Abundant breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

It is amazing how quickly this species can bounce back following a run of bad winters and poor summers. Evidence from the north and east of the county showed a resurgence in its fortunes although the breeding season was still a bit of a wash-out.

A bird was in full song on 8 Jan at Lower Foulridge Reservoir and following a dearth of records in previous years ELOC received over 300 records spread throughout its recording area and across all months. There were peak counts of 17 at Moor Piece on 28 July, 16 at Jackhouse on 13 June and 15 at Todber (near Gisburn) on 4 May.

The Lancaster January survey also recorded a recovery with numbers up 40% on 2011. There were 55 singing males located along the Lune between Leck Beck and Wenning Foot. At Warton Crag RSPB a record 20 pairs were mapped compared with a mean of 11.7 pairs from 1989-2011. However, the number of pairs at Millhead and Croftlands (Warton) were well down on the last count in 2010. A total of 25 singing males were located on EDF Energy land at Heysham, five up

on 2011. Three pairs nested at Marshside and no significant population changes were noticed at Birkdale.

The Leighton Moss and Heysham ringing totals suggested below-average productivity. There was also a hint of longer-distance autumn passage at Heysham and coastal sites on the Fylde during October. A bird was recorded near the top of Lyth Fell (400 meters) on 15 Nov.

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
Blackpool												
North Pier	20000	/	28000	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	25000	35000
L'ton Moss	100000	100000	100000	/	/	/	/	/	/	10000	45000	30000

The Leighton Moss roost was estimated to hold 100000 birds in the early part of the year which had the result of leaving sections of the reedbeds in a bad way. The other major roost site was that of North and Central Piers in Blackpool which held 20000.

The Lancaster January survey found Starlings to be the most abundant passerine but a total of 5213 (presumably excluding the Leighton Moss roost) was half of what it was in 2010, though similar to 2009. These wildly fluctuating numbers probably reflect the nomadic nature of the species reacting to local circumstances rather than a decline in the area. Certainly breeding numbers in the area seem to be on the increase with 21 pairs at Millhead nearly double the average of the last five years and 56 pairs at Croftlands (Warton) also an increase.

Some larger first winter period flocks elsewhere in the county included 2000 at Singleton on 2 Jan, 2090 on Rawcliffe Moss on the 3rd, 3000 at Marshside on the 23rd, 1000 at Burholme in January and February, 2000 at Eagland Hill on 17 Feb and 3000 at Trashy Hill on the 28th.

There was a good flow of breeding data from east Lancashire with the first juveniles appearing on 20 May in Clitheroe. Second broods were reported at Pendleton and Littlemoor (Clitheroe) in late June. At Belmont, the first juveniles were seen on the very early date of 20 May.

The post-breeding roost at Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park numbered 3000 on 4 June and 14 July increasing to 4000 by 11 August. A similar roost at Stocks Reservoir held 8000 on 10 July whilst feeding flocks numbering a couple of hundred and smaller roosts were reported from all over the county.

Autumn passage was a quiet affair with counts of 723 at Heysham, 382 over Caton Moor and 1276 over Marshside though 1134 of the latter went over in two hours on 29 Sept.

Numbers built up at Marton Mere in October reaching 5000 by 23 Oct, 7300 on the 27th and a peak of 21500 on the 29th. The roost remained around the 20000 mark into early November before the main roosts on the Blackpool piers and Leighton Moss were once again occupied. At Stocks Reservoir, there were still around 5000 at the roost on 30 Oct but numbers dropped to 1000 in November.

The largest December feeding flocks were 1000 along Wilding Lane, St Annes on the 4th, 700 at Bashall Town on the 9th, 1500 on Cockerham Moss on the 15th, 860 on Curlew Lane, Burscough on the 16th, 500 at Edisford Bridge, Clitheroe on the 21st and 500 at Hambleton on the 25th.

DIPPER *Cinclus cinclus*

Fairly common breeder, mainly in the east.

Breeding was confirmed or considered likely at 15 widespread locations in east Lancashire; ELOC received reports from eleven sites in December, compared with only two in December 2011,

suggesting that birds had largely abandoned the region late last year after 2010's two harsh winters.

Five pairs located by the Lune Waterways Survey was the only report received from north Lancashire in 2012; in Chorley region three pairs were observed with fledged young, at Yarrow Valley Park (two broods), White Coppice and Cuerden Valley Park; pairs were on territory on the Rivers Goit and Lostock and three pairs were located on 2.5km of the Belmont Brook.

In east Fylde birds were present along the River Brock at Myerscough College and Light Ash between January and August, with nest-building observed in March; there were reports from the River Calder at Churchtown in June and from Galgate on the River Conder in late year.

For the seventh successive year no reports were received from the south-west.

RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus*

Scarce local breeding bird on the hills; uncommon double passage migrant. Red List (breeding decline).

The first spring migrant was at Great Plumpton, Fylde on 20 March, followed by one in the Brennand Valley on the 23rd. Five or six more were recorded in the Fylde and two more in east Lancashire before the end of the month. Singles were at Heysham on 26 March and on Winter Hill and at Marshside and Banks Marsh on the 28th.

A very light coastal and near-coastal passage involved four single birds in April, at Cabin Hill on 13 & 28-30 April, Hoscar Moss on the 14th and Billinge Hill, St Helens on the 20th; singles at Fleetwood and Marton Mere on 1 May were the last recorded.

In the uplands there was an exceptional passage at White Coppice: 16 birds in April included eight on the 26th and singles were recorded to 6 May; four were at Georges Lane, Rivington on 5 May. In Bowland at least five were in the Langden Valley on 13 April with eight there on the 24th. In Rossendale an extraordinary 15 were in the Musbury Tor area, Haslingden on 22 April.

Seventeen territories were located on the United Utilities Bowland Estate, a great improvement on 2011's ten and 2009's seven; further south confirmed breeding by a pair on Nick of Pendle was the first there for many years.

Autumn movements appear to have been very slight in 2012. In the uplands at least seven remained in the Langden Valley on 2 Sept, singles at Belmont on 6 & 14 Oct and two at Clowbridge Reservoir on the 13th. A very brief pulse of migration along the coast in late October brought one to Cabin Hill on 23 Oct and singles to Fleetwood, Fairhaven and Hightown on the 25th. A late bird was at Netherley in Knowsley on 30 November.

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

Abundant breeding resident and winter visitor; common double passage migrant, more evident in autumn.

The Lancaster & District January survey recorded 826 Blackbirds, a considerable reduction on the 2006-11 mean of 1013. Very few noteworthy counts were reported during the first winter period, none at all from inland regions; in the Fylde there were 30+ in Blackpool's Stanley Park on 13 Jan, 17 at Bourbles Pit, Preesall next day and around 20 at Singleton on 30 Jan & 16 Feb; 40 were at Leighton Moss on 16 Jan. An influx of 22 at Heysham on 22 Feb were considered to be possible migrants.

As the Atlas survey results show, this super-abundant resident nests in just about every corner of the county. Local counts received included, in the north 45 singing males along the Arkholme-Wenning Foot stretch of the River Lune (55 in 2011); 30 pairs bred on Warton Crag RSPB (mean 23 during 1989-2011) and 17 territories on EDF Energy property at Heysham, but

productivity there was judged to be very poor. Sixty-one singing males were located in a survey of two suburban areas of Warton (37 in Croftlands, 24 in Millhead).

On the West Pennine Moors there were one or two territories in heather at 390m altitude on Darwen Moor in May and June. Nearer to the coast eight pairs apiece nested in Jubilee Wood, Maghull and on Freshfield Dune Heath and six pairs bred at Brockholes Wetland.

No reports of flocks or movements of any significance were received in early autumn; 15 on moorland edge above Belmont on 1 Oct was the first sign of passage and there were 12+ in a garden there on the 27th. Other October counts included 20+ at Bispham, Fylde on 20 Oct, 50 at Eccleston Mere, St Helens on the 26th and a fall of 160-180 at Heysham on the 30th; Seaforth recorded migrants in low single figures daily during the middle of the month.

Roosts and movements in inland regions during November included 20+ in Clitheroe on 1 Nov, 24 at Jackhouse on the 17th and 20+ in a roost at Upper Rivington Reservoir on the following day. On the coast there were 20 at Cabin Hill on 4 Nov, 39 at Marshside on the 10th and 23 at Singleton on the 28th.

At the year's end up to 35 were in two adjacent gardens at Belmont during hard weather in December. Twenty-three were at Brockholes on 2 Dec and c.75 at Bispham and 25 at Burglar's Alley, Fylde on the 15th.

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

Common to abundant winter visitor and passage migrant.

Only four triple-figure flocks were reported during January, a maximum count of 180 in east Lancashire, 260 on Sollom Moss on 8 Jan, 200 on Croston Moss on the 16th and 440 at Arkholme on the 31st; the Lancaster survey counted 666 birds (247 in 2011). February was exceptionally quiet with peak counts of 110 in east Lancashire, 100 on Croston Moss on the 4th and 90 at Cogie Hill, Pilling on the 20th. A hundred Fieldfares were still on Croston Moss on 5 March, there were 180+ at Halewood on the 10th and 135 on Rawcliffe Moss on the 22nd.

April records were unusually numerous this year, the most notable of 33 reports in east Lancashire a count of 500 moving east at Stocks Reservoir with 100 over nearby Merrybent Hill on the 5th. In the south-west 88 were at Bescar on 6 April and two flew north over Speke on the 20th; 42 in Hindburndale on 21 April were the last spring birds in the north. Five May reports were received including 18 at Todber in east Lancashire on the 4th when the last Fieldfare in the south-west was at Cabin Hill; one at Marton Mere on 3 May was the last in the Fylde and one at Rivington on the 12th was Chorley's and the county's final early-year record.

A single at Stocks Reservoir on 28 Sept was the first Fieldfare of autumn but numbers were very low during most of October, with one over Caton Moor on the 7th the first in the north, a small flock at Great Knowley on the 10th the first in Chorley, and the Fylde's first arrival one on Pilling Moss on the 14th.

As so often with this species the pace of migration increased exponentially over a period of a few days, however. A major influx on 25 Oct saw 3478 flew towards the coast over Lunt Meadows and there were 450 at Lytham Crematorium and smaller flocks throughout the Fylde, 254 at Cabin Hill and 120 at Marshside. Next day 2000 moved over the Conder Estuary and 1000 over nearby Bradshaw Lane, Pilling; Cabin Hill recorded 502, there were 500 at Leighton Moss and 350 at Arley in Chorley region and 250 on Turton Golf Course. Heavy movements continued on 27 Oct with 920 moving north at Heysham, 1300+ at Bradshaw Lane and 500 over nearby Stalmine Moss, but dwindled away very quickly thereafter; only two counts in low triple figures were received during the remainder of October.

November peaks were on a modest scale. Three hundred at New Laithe Farm, Newton on the 1st was east Lancashire's highest count of the month and 280 at Belmont on the 18th the peak

in Chorley region. In the Fylde 470 moved over Fairhaven Lake on 4 Nov and there were 250 at Out Rawcliffe on the 15th; 85 passed at Heysham on the 11th. Some substantial flocks remained in the county in December, the highest count 450 at Hundred End on the 9th whilst 300 at Skitham Lane on 28 Dec was the largest of three fair-sized gatherings in the Fylde. Further inland 200 Fieldfares were on Croston Moss on 16 Dec and there were 220 in Roeburndale on the 21st.

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelus*

Abundant breeding resident. Red List (breeding decline).

Only two counts of more than five were reported in the first winter period, eleven at Brockholes Wetland on 26 Feb and eight at Jackhouse on the 28th. The Lancaster & District January survey recorded 45, compared with 34 in 2011. One at Heysham on 17 March was the only spring migrant reported.

The breeding population in the Rivington area is described as thriving, with singing males at all regular sites; two pairs nested in Cuerden Valley Park. In east Lancashire three males were in song at Stocks Reservoir on 24 March. On the Lune 16 territorial males were recorded between Leck Beck and Wenning Foot, a big improvement on the six located in 2011. Nearer the coast eleven pairs nested on Warton Crag RSPB (mean 8.4 pairs during 1989-2011) and seven on EDF Energy property at Heysham, but with poor productivity. Further south, three pairs bred at Brockholes Wetland, four on Freshfield Dune Heath and five in Jubilee Wood, Maghull. In the Liverpool area there were three singing males apiece at Croxteth Park, Speke Hall and Cronton Colliery.

A reasonably lively autumn passage began with five at Marshside on 22 Sept and eight at Heysham on the 26th, peaking in the three weeks between 8 and 20 Oct. Sixty-five flew south-west at Heysham between 8 Oct and 15 Nov with 25 on 18 Oct; up to 50 birds were grounded there on 30 Oct. A total of nine was recorded at Fairhaven Lake between 8 and 19 Oct with six on the latter date, when twelve were also at Seaforth. Twelve were at Marshside on 14 Oct with ten there on the 18th; on the north coast there were ten at Aldcliffe on the 25th.

Six Song Thrushes on Pilling Moss was the largest gathering reported in the second winter period; birds were in song at Speke Hall and Princes Park in south Liverpool and at Colne in east Lancashire in the last week of the year.

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

Abundant double passage migrant and winter visitor.

Redwings were scarce in coastal areas in January; about 25 in Princes Park, south Liverpool on several dates and 30 at Salwick, Fylde on the 14th were the highest counts reported. Fifty-one were recorded in the Lancaster January survey, compared with 659 in 2011. Numbers were much higher in inland regions, however, with a maximum count of 200 in east Lancashire, 300+ at Sheephouse Lane, Rivington on 19 Jan and 78 at Arkholme on the 31st.

After uniformly low numbers in February, the highest c.50 at Singleton on the 14th, March was a little more lively as flocks moved back towards the breeding-grounds. In the Chorley region 90 were at Belmont on 11 March with 50 there on the 17th whilst 300 at Makinson's Farm, Rivington on 13 March was the highest count of the month; on the coast there were 200 at Torrisholme, Morecambe on the 19th. The early year tailed off quickly after that: three at Todderstaffe Hall on 26 March were the last Redwings in the Fylde and singles at Heysham on 2 April and over Speke on the 8th, two at Jackhouse on the 9th and 20 at Croston on the 12th ended the spring in the other regions.

One over Barrow in east Lancashire on the 27th was the only September record; four in Stanley Park, Blackpool on 1 Oct and two in Cuerden Valley Park next day were the first to arrive in the Fylde and Chorley respectively.

There was a clear surge of arrivals and movements in mid-October, including 325 over Heysham on the 13th and 281 there on the 14th, 250 at Stocks Reservoir on the 13th and 120 over Belmont next day. A second influx later in the month, in company with Fieldfares in many cases, brought 183 over Fairhaven Lake, 100 to Aldcliffe and 80 to Turton Golf Course on 25 Oct; next day 450 were at Carleton and 115 over Blackpool North Shore, Fylde, 350 at Leighton Moss, 123 at Cabin Hill and 110 at Newton-le-Willows. Apart from 350 at Leighton Moss on 2 Nov and a peak count of 100 in east Lancashire numbers quickly declined into double figures during November.

The highest coastal counts in December were in the Fylde, peaking at 200+ at Warton Bank on 12 Dec and 150 at Out Rawcliffe on the 28th; inland there were 81 at Waddington on 1 Dec and a roost of 60 at Upper Rivington Reservoir on the 27th.

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*

Common breeding resident; some autumn dispersal/passage.

Six on Greenbank Lane Playing Fields, Liverpool on 12 Jan was the highest count reported in the first winter period; the Lancaster & District January survey found a total of 53 birds (67 in 2011). In east Lancashire birds were in song at New Laithe Farm, Newton and in the Foulridge area in early January.

Very sparse breeding reports included confirmed nesting at three sites in east Lancashire; on the West Pennine Moors single pairs bred in a garden at Belmont and on Turton Golf Course. In north Lancashire three pairs bred along the Lune between Leck Beck and Wenning Foot and three pairs at Claughton but the species was absent from both Millhead and Croftlands in Warton, where one pair apiece nested last year. A single pair on EDF properties at Heysham probably failed. Further south breeding was widespread in the Fylde, two pairs nested at Cabin Hill and one on Aintree Racecourse.

The only sizeable post-breeding assemblies reported in July were 18 at Croston Finney on 8 July, twelve at Blackmoss Lane, Halsall on the 25th and twelve at Withnell Fold on the 27th; 19 in Sefton Park, south Liverpool on the 18th and 16 at Mythop Grange next day were the only double-figure gatherings recorded in August.

September flocks and movements were much more numerous and substantial, including 15 at Brockholes Wetland on the 2nd with 22 there on the 16th, whilst 26 flew south-east at Cabin Hill on 6 Sept; further inland 16 were at Turton Golf Course on the 14th and 19 at Dairy Farm Road, Rainford on the 28th. A total of 39 Mistle Thrushes flew over Heysham between 26 Sept and 24 Oct.

In October high counts included 40 near Belmont on the 5th, a Heysham peak of 16 and 20 in St Helens on the 7th, 16 at Seaforth on the 20-21st and 28 south at Cabin Hill on the 25th. Forty-four over Fairhaven Lake on 4 Nov was the only significant count reported in that month; at the year's end there were 21 on a school field at Aigburth, south Liverpool on 18 Dec and a bird was in song at Jackhouse in east Lancashire on the 28th.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*

Fairly common but declining breeding bird and double passage migrant. Red List (breeding decline).

Spring passage along the coast began late with four at Marshside, two in Stanley Park, Blackpool and one at Stanah on 10 May, but was much heavier than last year's. There were five more May

records in the Fylde with two in Mount Park, Fleetwood on the 26th, and five more at Marshside, including two on the 19th. Heysham and Seaforth each recorded two in May; there were two late individuals, at MMWWT on 18 June and Catforth, Fylde on the 27th.

Inland, the first to arrive in east Lancashire, and in the county, was at Waddow Hall on 6 May. The main arrival came in the second half of May and there had been 35 records from 26 locations by the end of the month (22 from 16 sites in 2011). In Chorley the first to arrive were at White Coppice and Withnell Fold on 12 May and in the north one at Abbeystead on the 28th.

Pairs in breeding habitat in north Lancashire were reported from Melling, Caton, Arkholme, Tower Lodge, Wennington and Roeburndale but nesting failure appears to have been widespread. In Chorley birds were at regular breeding locations at Heather Lea Woods, Anglezarke, Belmont and Rivington in late May; a pair nested at Withnell Fold and three or four birds were still present there on 4 Aug. ELOC received 42 records from 18 sites during June-July (44 reports from 28 locations in 2011); two pairs each bred at Shedden Clough and at New Laithe Farm and birds were present at twelve sites on the Slaidburn-Newton postal round, with breeding confirmed at three of these. In the Fylde up to two were present at a former breeding site in Salwick in late May-early June but without proof of nesting; the only breeding-season record from the south-west was of a male on territory to late June on Knowsley Park estate.

A light return passage on the coast and in the lowlands began with two at Brockholes on 23 July with another there on 6 Aug. Three August records in the Fylde began with one at Ellel Grange on the 3rd; one was at Cabin Hill on the 14th. Seven reports in September included two birds on the Eric Morecambe complex on the 8th; one at Bispham on 26 Sept was the last coastal bird of 2012.

Movements in inland regions began slowly; apart from the family party at Withnell Fold singles on Mawdesley Moss on 4 Aug and at Georges Lane, Rivington on the 10th were the only records in Chorley region in that month. There were 15 September records in east Lancashire, one was at Belmont on 9 Sept and there were three in the St Helens area on the 27-28th. The last in the north was at Thrushgill on 29 Sept and one at Pollard Moor in east Lancashire on 1 Oct ended the year.

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

Abundant breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

There was a high total of ten double-figure counts during the first winter period, 15 birds at Arkholme on 8 Jan and 18 at Leighton Moss on 25-28 Feb the highest in inland and coastal areas respectively. The Lancaster & District 10km square survey recorded 399 Robins across all squares (305 in 2011, 369 in 2010). Heysham reported the best spring passage to date in terms of numbers ringed, 20 during March.

In east Lancashire one was on the nest at Jackhouse on 12 March and a bird carrying food was at Foxhill Bank on the 21st; in the north 24 singing males were located along the Leck Beck-Wenning Foot section of the River Lune, 14 up on 2011's total. Nearer to the coast there were 27 pairs on Warton Crag (mean 21.8 during 1989-2011); at least 20 pairs nested on EDF Energy land at Heysham, seven up on last year. In Chorley an adult was observed with a juvenile in Euxton on the early date of 27 March. Nine pairs nested at Brockholes and in the south-west there were 15 pairs on Freshfield Dune Heath and 13 in Jubilee Wood, Maghull.

Autumn movements began with influxes of 34 at Marshside and 14 at Seaforth on 8 Sept; another ten were recorded at the latter site on 15 Sept and 25 during the 22-26th; there were 26 at Jackhouse on the 27th. Forty-four Robins were ringed at Heysham between late August and late October, peaking at eleven during 17-23 Sept. Movements in October included 20 at Low Moor,

Burscough on 5 Oct, 25 at Seaforth and 18 in Stanley Park, Blackpool next day, 25 at Aldcliffe on the 10th, 22 at Marshside on the 14th and 18 at Brockholes on the 28th.

Seventeen at Marshside on 10 Nov and 20 there on the 18th were the only noteworthy counts during November; at the year's end there were 15 at Brockholes on 2 Dec and nocturnal feeding was observed in a Belmont garden on the 20th.

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Uncommon breeding bird and passage migrant.

As is usually the case, the breeding areas had begun to be occupied before any migrants were detected on the coast or elsewhere. The first were at Anglezarke on 14 April, Moor Piece on the 15th, Kenibus on the 17th and New Laithe Farm, Newton on the 18th.

Single migrants were at Bispham on 30 April, Seaforth on 1 May, Watson Road Park, Blackpool on the 2nd, on Hesketh Golf Course on the 10th and at Southport Crematorium on the 12th.

A total of 87 nest-boxes in the Lune Valley woodlands were occupied, very slightly down on last year's record 92; successful broods were raised in 76 of these and 418 nestlings were ringed. The sites involved were Roeburndale (39 pairs), Hindburndale (28 pairs), woodlands alongside the Lune (17 pairs) and Littledale (3 pairs).

In east Lancashire eight boxes were occupied in Bowland Wild Boar Park, where 28 young were ringed; breeding was also confirmed at Moor Piece, New Laithe Farm, Crag Wood, Windyates and the United Utilities estate, but no information was received regarding numbers or success. There were only two records away from Moor Piece and the Hodder Valley, at Twiston on 22 April and Spring Wood, Whalley on 5 May.

Two were singing in the Upper Brock Valley on 28 April and one at Tower Lodge on 4 June. One was back at the regular Belmont breeding site from 28 April onwards and several males were singing in the Anglezarke-Rivington area during summer, including two at Lead Mines Clough on 28 May.

The only autumn migrant recorded away from breeding areas was at Fleetwood on 14 Aug, and the final records inland were on Pollard Moor on 4 Aug and Arley NR on 16 Sept.

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Rare breeding bird; uncommon double passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber List (breeding decline).

Including one bird definitely and another probably present since 2011 a reasonable total of 19 Black Redstarts was recorded in 2012.

There were four on the coast north of the Ribble in the first winter period, one at Knott End from 2011 until 23 March, another probable long-stayer at Heysham Harbour on dates in late January and early February, and singles at Clifton on 3 Feb and at Cockersand-Bank End during 5-11 Feb. Singles were inland at Tatton Recreation Ground, Chorley on 14 Jan and at Whinney Hill Tip, Accrington on 10 Feb.

Seven spring migrants were recorded: singles on Pendle Hill on 24 March and Winter Hill on the 28-29th; on the coast one was at Aldcliffe on 15 March, a male was at Seaforth during the 17-20th and singles were on Warton Bank on 18 March and Ainsdale Beach on the 27th. A late female was at Heysham on 9 May.

There were no reports of confirmed or probable breeding this year, although a bird was in potential breeding habitat on Winter Hill on 21 July.

There were four autumn migrants in inland regions, a female/immature on Winter Hill on 2-3 Sept, a male there on 23 Sept and 4 Oct, a female at Belmont Reservoir on 23 Sept and a female/immature on Pendle on 14 Oct. The last Black Redstart of 2012 arrived at Fleetwood on 25 Oct and remained to the end of the year.

REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Fairly common breeding bird and double passage migrant. Amber List (species of European conservation concern).

Coastal movements in spring began with one on Hesketh Golf Course on 13 April and were on a much larger scale than last year. Singles at Heysham on 20 April and Marton Mere on the 24th were the first migrants on the north coast and the Fylde respectively; there were three more Redstarts in the south-west, two in the Fylde and one in the north during April.

Fifteen were recorded in the Fylde in early May including five at Starr Gate on the 2nd; a clear influx on that date also brought four to Seaforth and three to Cabin Hill. Six more were reported on the Sefton Coast in the first week of May and two in the north; apart from a very late bird at MMWWT on 18 June passage was effectively over by 7 May.

The first arrival in the uplands was a male at The Snab in the Lune Valley on the equal earliest date ever of 28 March. One at New Laithe Farm, Newton on 7 April began the spring in east Lancashire and Chorley's first was at Anglezarke on the 19th; elsewhere in the region there were singles at Belmont and Black Coppice on 21 April and one in Astley Park near Chorley town centre on 5 May.

ELOC described breeding numbers as good in the Ribble and Hodder Valleys; among the highlights ten males at Slaidburn on 3 May, nine males and four females at Bottoms Beck near Stocks Reservoir on the 5th, at least nine birds at New Laithe Farm next day and eleven between Slaidburn and Croasdale on the 9th. Breeding was confirmed at New Laithe Farm, Marl Hill and Stocks; there were singing males at seven other locations in the region.

In north Lancashire seven singing males were located in the Lune Valley between Leck Beck and Wenning Foot; many territorial males were present in both Hindburndale and Roeburndale and birds were recorded in suitable habitat at eight other locations. In Chorley there were four singing males between Black Coppice and Heather Lea Woods and two at Lead Mines Clough; three or four pairs were on territory at Belmont, two pairs were successful at Anglezarke and one at Rivington.

A bird at Mere Sands Wood on 5 July was presumably a very early migrant; one at Cabin Hill on the 21st certainly was, but subsequent coastal passage was very slight. There were four records in the south-west between 1 Sept and the last there on Banks Marsh on 9 Oct including two at Seaforth on 23 Sept, plus two on the north coast and three in the Fylde, including the last county record at Fluke Hall, Pilling on 19 Oct. Inland movements were on an even smaller scale: there were four records of singles in east Lancashire from 25 Aug to the last at Shedden Clough on 18 Sept; in Chorley three September records included four birds at Rivington on the 8th.

WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*

Scarce and declining breeder on eastern hills; uncommon double passage migrant. Amber List (breeding decline).

The heaviest spring passage on the coast for several years began with a male at Marshside on 26 April. A widespread influx during 30 April to 1 May brought some 30 birds to the Fylde coast, including twelve in the Fleetwood and five in the Stalmine areas, and about twelve to the Sefton

Coast with a peak of five at Marshside; five birds in the north included three at Heysham on 30 April.

Movements continued at a high level through the first week of May, mainly in the south-west, with seven bird-days at Seaforth and six at Cabin Hill during 2-5th; arrivals on 6 May included ten males by the River Douglas at Hesketh Bank and four birds on Birkdale shore. Passage on the coast and in the lowlands ended quite quickly, however; the last in the north was at Leighton Moss on 16 May, in the Fylde at Blackpool Airport next day and in the south-west at Old Coach Road, St Helens on the 21st.

No Whinchats were reported from upland regions until early May, the first in east Lancashire three singles at Langden Castle, Langden Valley and Lythe Fell Road on 5 May, and one at Belmont Reservoir on the 7th the first on the West Pennine Moors.

The only breeding data this year came from east Lancashire and the United Utilities Bowland estate, where up to 20 territorial pairs were located, 15 in the Croasdale area and five at Bloe Greet; away from Bowland nesting was considered likely at Shedden Clough.

In contrast to spring, autumn movements in coastal and adjacent areas were very light, totalling just nine birds between the first at Fleetwood and Brockholes Wetland on 30 Aug and the last on Banks Marsh on 6 Oct. Inland there were nine September records in east Lancashire, all singles apart from three at Shedden Clough on the 9th and two at Pendleside Farm on the 17th; the last Whinchat in the region was at Parsonage Reservoir on 19 Sept. In Chorley singles were at Belmont on 9 Sept, Lower Burgh Meadow on the 16th and the last in the region and the county at Rivington on 7 Oct.

STONECHAT *Saxicola torquata*

Fairly common, increasing breeding bird, mainly in upland areas; fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor.

The slow recovery in the Stonechat's fortunes after the 2010 crash is exemplified by an increase in reports to ELOC during the year from 91 in 2011 to 111 this year. Wintering birds were reported from only two sites in the Fylde and three in the south-west during January; further inland a pair was at Brockholes and there were three widespread records in Chorley region and two in east Lancashire.

Nine reports of spring migrants in the Fylde between 24 Feb and 18 March involved eleven individuals; singles were recorded at Heysham on 2 & 12 March and there were five records in the south-west during 1-18 March including pairs at Cabin Hill and Marshside. In Chorley one was at White Coppice in early March and a pair was on Winter Hill on the 28th.

Although no breeding data were received from north Lancashire the populations in the east and in Chorley region appear to be recovering. Stonechats were reported as nesting in all the main valleys on the United Utilities Bowland estate, including two pairs in the Langden Valley; three pairs were located on Grindleton Fell on 20 May and two pairs bred in the Pendle area. Six pairs were on territory on the West Pennine Moors around Belmont (five pairs in 2011) and at least three fledged young. After the total wipe-out of the coastal breeding population recorded in 2011 this year saw a recovery to three successful pairs, at Blackpool Airport where two juveniles were fledged, Blundellsands-Hightown Dunes and Cabin Hill.

Autumn movements on the coast were even slighter than last year's. In the Fylde five singles were reported between 4 Oct and 4 Nov, in the north birds were at Leighton Moss on 27 Sept and at Heysham on 13 Oct, and there were two on the Sefton Coast, at Marshside on 10 Oct and Cabin Hill on 18 Nov. There were 26 autumn records in east Lancashire; in Chorley two were at Rivington on 8 Sept and there were at least 13 birds around Belmont in early October.

At the year's end two were recorded in the Fylde on 4 & 15 Dec and pairs were at Cabin Hill and Brockholes into the New Year; there were four December records in east Lancashire and two or three wintering birds in Chorley region.

WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Fairly common though local breeding bird; common double passage migrant. Amber List (species of European conservation concern).

The first arrival of an exceptionally heavy but concentrated spring passage was at Marshside on 14 March; there were singles at Fairhaven Lake and Fleetwood next day and at Heysham on the 16th, when the first three Wheatears also reached east Lancashire at Pendleside Farm. Two at Withnell Fold and three at Belmont on 24 March opened the season in Chorley and the West Pennine Moors respectively. There were widespread though light movements during the rest of March, including eleven at Seaforth and eight at three sites in east Lancashire during the 17-18th; seven birds passed through Belmont, and six at Rossall Point on 24 March was the highest count reported.

Arrivals and movements on the coast were very slight until the end of April; inland there were 23 on Oswaldtwistle Moor on 14 April and 26 there on the following day, when 18 also passed at Belmont. A very intensive coastal passage began on 28 April and lasted until 7 May. Highlights included 60 at Heysham and 30 at Hightown on 28 April, 70+ at Blackpool Airport, 63 at Marshside, 37 at Seaforth on the 30th and 53+ at Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park on 1 May. The second day of May saw a site record 90 Wheatears at Seaforth, 40 at Blackpool Airport, 30 at Marshside and 23 at Cabin Hill; the surge ended with 39 at Seaforth on 5 May and 39 on Plex Moss and 31 at Hesketh Out Marsh on the 7th.

Further inland 30 were at Georges Lane, Rivington and 22 at Belmont on 6 May. It is almost certain that the great majority of the birds in this early May influx were 'Greenland' birds *en route* to Iceland.

Breeding data were extremely thin in 2012. In the north the usual two pairs nested on Carnforth Slag Tips but no reports were received from upland sites. Breeding was confirmed on Pendle Hill and at New Laithe Farm in east Lancashire whilst one possible pair was reported from the West Pennine Moors on 6 June.

Autumn movements along the coast commenced pretty well on schedule in late July with single birds at Cockersand, MMWWT and Cabin Hill. Twenty-eight passed through Heysham between 10 Aug and 26 Sept and there were 19 August bird-days at Seaforth from the 14th; peak counts during the month were of eight on Fleetwood Golf Course on 26 Aug and 23 at Cabin Hill on the 31st. In the uplands seven were at White Coppice on 24 Aug and an impressive 60+ on Pendle Hill on the 31st. Passage in September was fairly quiet in all regions, with low single figures at Seaforth on most days and coastal peaks of ten at Rossall School on 11 Sept and twelve on Pilling Moss on the 18th; in north Lancashire there were 33 records at twelve localities during the month.

October Wheatears were more widespread than usual, although in small numbers as one would expect. On the coast the last at Seaforth were three on 4 Oct and a series of four records at Marshside ended with a single on the 14th; there were ten records in the Fylde to the last at Rossall Point on 15 Oct. The last of nine October birds in the north was at Heysham on the 16th, three Chorley records culminated in a bird at Great Knowley on 13 Oct and ten October records in east Lancashire ended with the last in the county, on Pendle Hill on the 19th.

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*

Abundant breeding resident and uncommon double passage migrant. Amber List (breeding decline).

As ever, the Lancaster January survey provided the only systematic information: 92 were counted this year across all 10km squares, compared with 96 in 2011 and 128 in 2010, so it appears that the population is holding more or less steady.

Breeding information came from several regularly-monitored sites: nine pairs bred at Brockholes (4 in 2011), ten at Freshfield Dune Heath (7 in 2011), nine on Warton Crag RSPB (7 in 2011), nine at Heysham (15 in 2011), nine at Millhead, Warton (10 in 2011) and three on Croftlands (8 in 2011) – providing no clear picture of what sort of year it had been. Two territories in the breeding season in moorland bracken beds above Belmont up to 310m asl were unusual. Ringing recoveries at Heysham and Leighton Moss pointed to below par productivity.

Visible migration in autumn was recorded at both Heysham and Seaforth between 22 Sept and 23 Oct, including three over Seaforth on 22 Sept and ten on several dates during 13-23 Oct, and three over Heysham on 23 Sept, one on the 26th, four on 4 Oct and two on the 9th.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

Abundant but decreasing resident. Red List (breeding decline).

Once again the only systematic monitoring was done in north Lancashire. The January survey recorded 1419 compared with an average of 1277 between 2005 and 2011. Kevin Briggs's breeding census of Millhead recorded 50 pairs compared to an average of 32.5 over the previous five years; he also mapped 56 pairs on the Croftlands Estate in Warton (51 in 2011). Both studies seem to indicate that House Sparrows are at least holding their own in the north.

The atlas surveys confirmed that this is the case throughout the county with neither the breeding range nor population size (estimated at 35000 pairs) showing any significant change in the past ten years.

Reports of flocks of 20 or more were received from 50 or so sites – no doubt a considerable underestimate – with the largest 45 at Arkholme in January, 40 at Red House Farm in east Lancashire in the early months, 50 at Marshside in May, 60 in Blackpool and 55 at Glasson in August, 98 in school playing fields at Marshside and 45 at Todderstaffe Hall in September and 40 in Much Hoole in November.

The only possible migrants, or more likely dispersing birds, were one at Cabin Hill on 24 Aug and two flying south at Heysham on 6 Oct.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*

Common breeding bird. Flocks in winter also decreasing. Red List (breeding decline).

Gatherings at the north Fylde feeding stations in the first winter period included peaks of 266 at Rawcliffe Moss, 74 at New Lane (Ridge Farm), Pilling, 63 at Eagland Hill and 45 at Bradshaw Lane Head, but 150 at Rawcliffe Moss was the most significant count at the other end of the year. Smaller numbers were seen throughout the year on at least another 50 sites in the Fylde, almost all in the north of the area.

Large counts elsewhere included 250 or more at MMWWT in the second half of the year, 65 at Howick Cross Lane, Penwortham in January, 63 at Hundred End in November, 45 at Mere Sands Wood, 30 at Croston Moss in March and Brockholes in November and 26 on garden feeders in Aughton (near Ormskirk) in November.

The January survey of the Lancaster district produced just seven birds away from north Fylde, while birds were reported from 19 sites in east Lancashire (21 in 2011), 20+ in south

Liverpool/Knowsley and around ten in St. Helens during the year. One at Oakenclough, well away from the breeding range, in September and October was unusual.

Counts of breeding pairs included 75 at MMWWT and eight at Brockholes (one in 2011), while breeding was reported from at least five sites in east Lancashire with Brownsills remaining the largest colony. A request for information in the Lancaster district brought breeding records from eight sites outside of north Fylde.

The only records of coastal migrants were five at Cabin Hill on 24 Aug with twelve there on the 31st, and singles flying north at Heysham on 4 & 23 March, with one going south there on 23 Sept, five on 14 Oct and four on the 19th.

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava flavissima*

Scarce and declining summer visitor; fairly common passage migrant. Red List (breeding decline).

The recent improvement in numbers of Yellow Wagtails on spring passage was maintained, and even bettered, in 2012. Records at inland locations were particularly evident: the first arrival in the county was at Altham in east Lancashire on the late date of 18 April and there were nine more records in the region to the last at Bashall Barn on 27 May, with two birds at Jumbles on 2 May.

Two were at Claughton and Farleton in the Lune Valley on 20 April, when the first four of a respectable coastal passage were recorded at Burscough. Subsequent highlights included three records in the Fylde in April and 14 in May, peaking at five at Rossall Point on 7 May when singles were also recorded at Heysham and Silverdale. Twelve were recorded at Marshside including four on 26 April, five or six at MMWWT to 26 May and six more on the Sefton Coast to the 28th. A few late stragglers included three in the Fylde in early June.

Up to three Yellow Wagtails were seen intermittently during late spring and summer at MMWWT and one, possibly two pairs may have bred; at the traditional site on Curlew Lane, Rufford nesting by at least one pair was confirmed with up to three juveniles present in late July. Elsewhere in the south-west, the species' last significant breeding outpost in the county, one or two pairs bred successfully near Rainford and a territorial male was on Churchtown Moss during June; in south Liverpool a territorial male was present between Speke and Hale from 7 May through June, and three birds were in the area in early September. On the Ribble north shore at Freckleton Marsh a male with two juveniles was present in late June.

Only one breeding report was received from inland regions; three territorial males were in the Melling-Wenning Foot area of the Lune Valley in early May and one pair, including a 'Channel'-type male, bred and probably raised two broods.

Autumn movements in coastal regions were markedly lighter than in 2010 or 2011, but still reasonably lively. Three birds south over Lunt Meadows on 10 July followed by one at Fleetwood on the 16th were the first of six July birds in the south-west and five in the Fylde; four were recorded in August, singles at the Eric Morecambe complex and at Cabin Hill on 18 Aug and two at Seaforth on the 23rd.

Fifteen widespread Yellow Wagtails were recorded in September including four apiece at Seaforth and in the Fylde; the last coastal migrant was at Bank End on 30 Sept. Meanwhile, two birds on Towneley Playing Fields and Golf Course, Burnley during 5-13 September was the only record in east Lancashire; a very late individual on Croston Moss, Chorley on 4 Nov was the last Yellow Wagtail of 2012.

BLUE-HEADED WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava flava*

Rare passage migrant, mainly in spring.

A male at Hesketh Bank on 8 July was the only record in 2012.

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

Fairly common breeding bird, mainly on upland streams in the east; common passage migrant, more evident in autumn.

As usual ones or twos were widespread in coastal and lowland areas during the first winter period, many in urban and suburban habitats. Ten widespread individuals were located by the Lancaster & District January survey, as in 2011. Inland, only two records were received by ELOC in the month of January.

Spring movements were a little more conspicuous than usual: ten were at Pilling Lane Ends on 10 March and twelve at Sand Villa next day, nine or ten were recorded at Marshside between 6 March and 15 April with two late birds there in early May, and twelve were recorded at Heysham between 29 Feb and 25 March with a late straggler on 30 April.

Breeding data from the Grey Wagtail's upland strongholds indicate that the population is thriving. In north Lancashire twelve pairs were located by the Lune Waterways Survey, where six were recorded in 2011. In east Lancashire a pair was nest-building in Burnley town centre on 14 March; breeding was confirmed at two sites on the River Hodder and at Ightenhill Bridge on the Calder; a pair at Langho fledged two broods. In the western, lowland parts of Chorley region birds were on territory in March on the Yarrow at Birkacre and Bretherton and on the Douglas at Croston and two pairs bred in Cuerden Valley Park; further to the east pairs bred at White Coppice and Anglezarke Reservoir and three were successful in the Belmont area on the West Pennine Moors.

This was a good year for Grey Wagtails attempting to infiltrate the coastal west. In the Fylde a pair in Blackpool town centre fledged at least two young and a pair at Dam Side, Pilling raised three; further east a pair bred on the River Brock. In the south-west one, possibly two pairs nested on the River Alt near Aintree and a pair bred in Southport centre, with an adult feeding two young by ornamental ponds along Lord Street on 18 June.

The first southbound coastal migrant passed Heysham on 2 Aug; a month's lull then ensued until the first significant movement, also at Heysham, of eleven on 3 Sept. What must be described, for this species, as a major surge of migration on 9 Sept brought some 45 to the Fylde coast, including 16 each at Blackpool North Shore and Fairhaven Lake; 22 were recorded at Heysham, 30 at Cabin Hill and ten at Marshside-Crossens; a second influx later in the month saw 16 move over Seaforth and 15 over Fairhaven Lake on the 22-23rd. A total of 110 Grey Wagtails was recorded at Heysham to 25 Oct; peaks in that month included 14 at Cockersand, six in Mount Park, Fleetwood and five at Marshside on the 4th and a total of 27 south at Seaforth between the 13-21st. Apart from five in Preston on 11 Nov the coastal passage had ended by late October.

Meanwhile, few reports of significant movements or gatherings were received from inland regions: in Chorley there were five at Knowles Wood, Eccleston on 11 Sept; peak counts in east Lancashire were of seven at Altham on 19 Aug, six at Jackhouse on 1 Oct and seven at Brookside on the 15th. Ones and twos were widespread in the Fylde and the south-west at the year's end.

PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

Common and widespread breeding bird, winter visitor and double passage migrant.

Two three-figure gatherings were reported in the early year, a roost of c.100 in Burnley town centre on 17 Jan and 120 on Plex Moss on the 24th; c.50 were at Whalley Sewage Works on 12 Jan, 16 at Humblescough Farm, Fylde on 3 Feb and 30+ at Eccleston, Chorley on the 10th. Seventy-six were recorded by the Lancaster January survey, most in coastal squares (60 in 2011).

Moderate spring movements in coastal regions began in early March and peaked late in the month and in early April. Highest counts included 49 at Rossall School on 18 March, a seasonal peak of 42 at Heysham on the 22nd, 42 at Preesall on the 30th and 40+ at Cabin Hill in early April; a late flock of 20 was on Lytham Moss on 4 May. About 20 Pied Wagtails at Withgill Flood Pools in east Lancashire on 14 March and 35 at Arkholme on 26 April were the highest counts received from inland areas.

The very scanty breeding reports received may suggest a slight improvement in numbers, at least in inland regions. In the West Pennine Moors six pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir, as in 2011, whilst in the north a total of 42 pairs was located by the Lune Waterways Survey, nine up on last year's; eleven pairs bred at Arkholme, an increase of four. Nearer the coast three pairs nested at Brockholes Wetland and single pairs at Freshfield Dune Heath, Heysham EDF properties and Belle Vale Shopping Centre in Liverpool.

Fifty-plus at Bank End, Fylde on 31 July and 80 at Arkholme on 10 Aug were the first sizeable post-breeding assemblies reported; movements gathered pace in the last week of August and there were 165 at Arkholme on the 23rd, 50 at Seaforth on the 26th and 110 at Lathwaite, Fylde on the 29th. Passage continued intermittently right through September but had petered out in most regions by the second week of October. Counts in coastal areas in September included 55 on Banks Marsh on 3 Sept and 59 at Bank End on the 9th; up to 50 birds a day moved through Seaforth during the month. Inland, 90 Pied Wagtails were at Stocks Reservoir on 16 Sept and up to 30 roosted at Belmont Reservoir early in the month; there were 50 at Old Coach Road, Rainford on the 28th.

Fifty were at Alston Reservoirs on 2 Oct and 42 at Eccleston on the 5th and a season's peak of 63 passed over Caton Moor on the 8th; there were 35 at Bank End on the 12th. A hundred birds at Old Coach Road on 5 Nov was the last noteworthy movement reported.

Several small roosts formed in various urban and industrial locations during December but only two three-figure assemblies were reported, about 150 apiece in St James's Street, Burnley on 11 Dec and at Bootle New Strand on the 21st.

WHITE WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba alba*

Spring migrant in variable numbers, mainly coastal; much scarcer in autumn.

A very early arrival was at Marshside on 3 March and the next three were on Churchtown Moss on the 17th. Nine more were recorded before the end of the month, all on the Sefton Coast apart from singles at Brockholes on the 23rd and at Leighton Moss on the 26th.

Subsequent passage was relatively quiet, with none of the large movements recorded in recent springs. The first in the Fylde were three at Fairhaven Lake on 4 April with eleven at Granny's Bay on the 7th the highest count there. The largest movements in the south-west in April were 25 at Seaforth, 19 on Banks Marsh and ten at Cabin Hill, all on the 13th; 30+ moved through Seaforth daily between the 21st and 27th. On the northern coast there were six on Carnforth Outer Marsh on 17 April. Apart from 22 at Marshside on 7 May the few records in that month were all in single figures; movements at Seaforth had ceased by the end of the second week, and the last White Wagtails of the spring were at Brockholes and on Fleetwood Promenade on 17 May.

White Wagtails were widespread in inland regions during April and early May. ELOC received 20 records between 4 April and 14 May, twelve at Stocks Reservoir with a peak of seven on 11 April and five at Alston Wetlands with peaks of six birds on three dates. Two were at Belmont Reservoir on 21 April, five at Rainford on the 28th and one at Loyn Bridge on the River Lune on the 30th.

The first two autumn migrants were at Seaforth on 26 Aug followed by Cabin Hill on the 31st. All but one of the subsequent records were in September and all were of ones or twos apart

from four on Banks Marsh on 1 Sept, five at Eagland Hill, Pilling on the 4th and nine at Cabin Hill on the 9th. Two birds on Darwen Moor on 22 Sept was the only report from inland regions; one at Cabin Hill on 4 Oct was the last White Wagtail of 2012.

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

Scarce breeding bird in the north and east, and double passage migrant. Red List (breeding decline).

The first two Tree Pipits arrived on Longridge Fell in east Lancashire on the early date of 2 April. The first in the Chorley region was at Black Coppice on the 17th, followed by one at Heather Lea Woods on the 24th; singles at Rivington on 20 May and at Entwistle Reservoir on the 24th were the only other spring records there.

Spring movements on the coast were substantial though not as heavy as last year's, beginning with singles at Heysham and Rossall School on 12 April. There were twelve more April records in the Fylde including 17 east at Rossall School on the 30th, and 15 in May with a peak of eleven over Rossall Point on the 2nd. Thirty-five passed over Marshside between 22 April and 9 May with a peak of twelve on 3 May; 18 were recorded at Heysham up to 9 May, including four on the 7th. Two birds at Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park on 22 May were the last coastal migrants reported.

Breeding data were very sparse this year. In east Lancashire presence was recorded at Longridge Fell, Gannow Fell and at Bottoms Beck near Stocks Reservoir. In the north singing males were reported from Marshaw (four), Leck Fell, Thrushgill and Botton Mill; in Chorley a pair held territory at White Coppice and breeding was considered probable at Roddlesworth. Tree Pipits are clearly in deep trouble in Lancashire, the atlas survey found that their breeding range shrank by almost 50% in the first decade of this century and estimated the current breeding population at just 60 pairs.

Autumn passage was recorded at New Laithe Farm, Newton from 21 July to 3 Sept with a peak of 17+ on 19 Aug; elsewhere in east Lancashire there were migrants at Chipping Moss, Jackhouse, Dean Clough, Grindleton Fell and Loud Mytham Bridge, and there were six on Turton Golf Course on 24 Aug. Light movements on the coast began with two at Fleetwood Marsh on 5 Aug; six more records in the Fylde during the month included eight on Rawcliffe Moss on the 19th. Heysham recorded nine Tree Pipits between 15 Aug and 9 Sept; there were two in the south-west in August and three in September, the last at Cabin Hill on the 9th. Three birds were in the Fylde in September, the last at Fleetwood and Mythop on the 9th; one at Brockholes Wetland on 11 Sept was the penultimate Tree Pipit of 2012.

A bird trapped and ringed on King's Moss, Rainford on 1 Dec was by far the latest ever in the county; the previous latest migrant was at Formby Point on 18 Oct 1967.

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

Abundant breeding bird, especially in the east, and double passage migrant; scarcer in winter. Amber List (breeding decline).

Only three double-figure flocks were reported during the first winter period, about 60 on the Altham-Martholme stretch of the River Calder on 11 Jan, 15 at Dam Side, Pilling on the 20th and c.30 on Warton Marsh on 11 Feb. Thirteen were recorded by the Lancaster January survey, the lowest total since the project's inception in 2006 (14 in 2011).

As in 2011 spring movements began in the second week of March. Passage peaked around the 20-25th and continued intermittently at a lower level through April and into the first week of May. Although spring was very poor at Seaforth, with a peak of only 30 on 22 March, other coastal

watchpoints recorded some heavy movements, mainly in late March. A total of 3233 Meadow Pipits passed Heysham between 11 March and 2 May with 1088 on 22 March, 448 next day, 351 on the 24th and 288 on the 25th, when 356 also moved over Rossall Point. April peaks on the coast included 150 at Cabin Hill on 11 April, 346 over Rossall School on the 15th and 507 there on the 21st. Inland, there were 118 at Arkholme in the Lune Valley on 3 April. One hundred and fifty-three birds at Ridge Farm, Pilling on 4 May was the last significant spring movement of 2012.

Very little in the way of breeding data was made available this year. In the uplands nesting was confirmed at Higham, New Laithe Farm, Waddington Fell and Champion Moor in east Lancashire; 33 were present in May and June in a 1km BTO-BBS square on Darwen Moor (25 & 31 in April and June 2011). Apart from a single pair on Middleton Industrial Estate, all the coastal reports came from the south shore of the Ribble: a total of 67 territories was located at Marshside-Crossens, 15 on the RSPB reserve, five on Crossens Inner and 18 and 29 respectively on the saltmarshes north and south of the old Sand Plant compound; 17 pairs nested on Hesketh Out Marsh.

Autumn migration began quite late this year, in the last week of August; there were 60+ on the moors above Belmont on 25 Aug and the first five birds passed Heysham next day. A brief influx in early September brought 40 to Brockholes Wetland on the 8th and 160+ to Belmont Reservoir, 90 to Seaforth and 116 to Rossall Point next day, but apart from 170 at Belmont on the 13th a two-week lull then ensued until a major surge of migration in the last third of September. Of 3342 autumn migrants at Heysham 721 passed on 21 Sept, 350 next day and 349 on the 26th; 700 flew south at Rossall School, 652 at Marshside and 210 at Seaforth on 22 Sept, and there were c.100 at Barley in east Lancashire on the 23rd. An impressive total of 5993 Meadow Pipits was recorded over Caton Moor in autumn, but no details of dates or peak counts were received.

After a few days' relative inactivity significant passage resumed at a slightly lower level during the first ten days of October. Highlights included 250 on Carnforth Outer Marsh on 1 Oct, 300 each at Cockersand and Freshfield Dune Heath and 350 at Seaforth on the 4th and 216 over Fairhaven Lake and 90+ over Belmont Reservoir on the 7th. Movements had dwindled away by mid-October; apart from 128 at Rossall School on 21 Oct only a few double-figure flocks were reported, including 70 over Fairhaven Lake on 4 Nov and 40 at Gawthorpe on the 13th.

As is the norm only small groups of Meadow Pipits were reported in December; there were 14 at Brockholes on 4 Dec and 30 each on Cocklet Hill in east Lancashire and Light Ash, Fylde on 10 Dec, while 'small numbers' were in the Belmont area at the end of the month.

ROCK PIPIT *Anthus petrosus*

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant, mainly in autumn.

Wintering Rock Pipits were present at all the regular coastal and estuarine sites between Blackpool and Heysham in the early year; counts in January included four at Barnaby's Sands on the Wyre Estuary on 15 Jan and three at Glasson on the 26th; two birds were at Aldcliffe on several dates and one bird wintered in Heysham Harbour. Numbers on Barnaby's Sands increased to eight on 12 Feb; three were again on the Conder Estuary on the 10th and two on Blackpool North Shore on the 4th. Numbers peaked in March with 15 at Barnaby's Sands and twelve at The Heads, further up the Wyre, on the 11th; two apiece at Arm Hill, Barnaby's Sands and on the Conder Estuary on 8 April may have been lingering winterers or birds on passage. One at Marshside on 15 Jan was the only early-year record south of the Ribble.

A very light spring passage involved five at Heysham on 1 March with a late bird there on 2 May; one was at Seaforth on 28 March and a bird over Alston Reservoirs on the 23rd was the only inland record in 2012.

A typical pattern of autumn movements and arrivals began with birds at Cockersand and Heysham on 4 Oct. Thirteen each passed through Seaforth and Heysham during October, with a peak of four at the former site on the 17th and three at the latter on the 21st. There were three at Cockersand on 14 Oct and two over Aldcliffe on the 26th. November records included three at Knott End on 1 Nov, two over Fairhaven Lake on the 4th, six at Stanah on the 16th and ten on Fleetwood Marsh next day; a single at Seaforth and two over Marshside on 10 Nov were the only late reports from the Sefton Coast.

At the year's end six Rock Pipits remained on Fleetwood Marsh on 15 Dec and there were four at Arm Hill on the 16th; a single bird again wintered in Heysham Harbour. Up to 20 were reported to be present at Aldcliffe, but without details. One on Garston Shore, south Liverpool on 15 Dec was the only end-of-year record in the south.

WATER PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta*

Uncommon winter visitor and scarce passage migrant. Amber List (rare winterer).

For the second successive year numbers of wintering birds were on the low side. None was reported in January and the first of the year was on Warton Bank on 10 Feb; numbers there had risen to four on 9 March. Further north on the Wyre Estuary one was at Barnaby's Sands on 10 March and three were in The Heads-Stalmine area on the 12th; one was at Leighton Moss on the 27th.

Up to three apiece were in the Aldcliffe and Conder Pool areas during the first half of April; whether these were previously undiscovered winterers or spring migrants is debatable. One at Warton Bank on 10 April was most likely a late-staying winter bird.

Two autumn migrants were recorded this year, a very early bird at Barnaby's Sands on 22 July and one at Seaforth during 14-18 Oct. Two singles in the Fylde in November-December, at Fleetwood Marsh and Warton Bank were the last Water Pipits of 2012.

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

Abundant breeding bird, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Once again there were no really large concentrations of this our commonest finch other than at some feeding stations on the Fylde: 215 at Rawcliffe Moss in January and 90 at Bradshaw Lane Head in early February. There were, however, plenty of sizeable double-figure counts elsewhere, including 40 at Brockholes on 1 Jan, 60 at St Michael's-on-Wyre and 40 in Penwortham on the 7th, 61 at Stalmine on the 10th, 62 at Moor Piece on the 26th and into March, and over 50 at Belmont on 10 March. The Lancaster January survey counted 758 which was a little below average.

A small spring passage was noted at Heysham. The first singing males were recorded at Kew, Southport on 17 Feb and 19 Feb at Newton. The census on Warton Crag RSPB recorded an above-average 31 pairs whilst 52 singing males were recorded between Leck Beck and Wenning Foot but numbers at Millhead and Croftlands (Warton) were slightly down on 2010. There were just eleven pairs at Heysham, 19 at Brockholes and an increase to eleven pairs at Freshfield Dune Heath.

Autumn passage started earlier and was much lighter than normal, probably indicative of a poor breeding season. A total of 6471 was recorded at three vis mig sites around Lancaster compared to 15454 in 2011. Heysham notched up 2378 of these with only one big day of 338 on 14 Oct. At Seaforth 66 flew south on 8 Oct, 65 the following day and a total of 622 between 17-21 Oct. At Fairhaven Lake a total of 2512 was counted between 22 Sept and 5 Nov with two significant peaks of 447 on 19 Oct and 769 on 4 Nov. Cabin Hill also noted this late burst of activity with 110 on 4 Nov.

There were 264 on Rawcliffe Moss on 1 & 6 Nov and 74 at Moor Piece on the 21st. The largest flocks in December were 420 at Rawcliffe Moss on the 12th, 100 at New Lane, Eagland Hill on the 5th, 200 at Wood's Lane, Eagland Hill on the 9th and 310 at Woodlands Farm, Stalmine on the 22nd. No large flocks were noted anywhere in the south of the county; 30 at Eccleston Mere and 50 on Catchdale Moss were the only ones of significance.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

Winters in variable numbers. Fairly common double passage migrant, mostly in autumn.

The first winter period was generally devoid of Bramblings. There were singles at seven locations in east Lancashire, three in the Lancaster district and three in the Fylde. One was regular at MMWWT in the early part of March but by far the largest numbers came from a garden in Chorley, where up to five were present during January and into February, followed by twelve at a Belmont garden on 10 Feb, where birds remained in dwindling numbers until 13 April. Up to three visited feeders at Marl Hill in Bowland between 26 April and 6 May, beating the previous latest spring record in the ELOC area by three days.

Autumn passage was better than 2011 but still relatively poor. The first was recorded at Stocks Reservoir on 6 Sept, also beating the earliest ELOC record by a full two weeks! One was at Fairhaven Lake on 23 Sept but it was mid-October before larger numbers were recorded. Heysham had 42 in total between 13-29 Oct with a peak of 14 on the 25th. Fairhaven vis mig recorded a total of 51 with sharp peaks of 14 on 21 Oct and 26 on 4 Nov with a large movement of Chaffinches. There was a good scatter of sightings across the county in late October/early November but very few remained for the winter.

The first was back at Belmont on 12 Oct and numbers increased there to 15 on the 25th then up to ten for the remainder of the year. Thirteen were at Lowerhouse Lodges on 7 Dec but by far the largest count was approximately 50 in a mixed finch flock at Croston Finney in mid-December. Up to four were seen regularly at Galgate in December whilst up to five were at Moor Piece and six at Mowbreck Hall. There were several reports of birds in gardens to the end of the year.

GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris*

Abundant breeding bird. Some autumn movement, flocks in winter.

It seems that Greenfinches are bouncing back in numbers after the depredations of disease, as many correspondents affirm. Roost counts in the first weeks of January revealed 100 at Claughton and up to 110 at Princes Park, Liverpool. There was a regular flock of up to 35 at Cockersand and 70 on Burscough Moss on the 29th. The January survey around the Lancaster district recorded only 104 compared to an average of 169 in the previous years. Around 100 were at MMWWT on 9 Feb and 51 were on Warton Crag on 6 March.

Some northward migration was noted at Marshside with a total of 137 counted, mostly in May.

A bird was in display flight on 13 Feb at Stanley Park, Blackpool and nest-building was observed on 23 March at Clitheroe. There were eight singing males at Heysham, eight at Millhead and seven at Croftlands (Warton). At least three pairs bred at Aintree. A post-breeding flock of 165 was counted at Clifton Marsh on 20 Aug and 100 were there in early October.

There was a steady passage of birds in autumn with some good numbers, indicative of a good breeding season: Fairhaven recorded 701 between 4 Oct and 4 Nov with a peak of 125 on 21 Oct, Rossall had 364 birds peaking at 125 on 9 Oct, Marshside recorded 246 with a peak of 157 on 14 Oct whilst Seaforth recorded a peak of 47 on the 19th. A well above average 474 were ringed at Heysham during the year with the majority in the latter half; the vis mig peak at Heysham was 84

on 13 Oct. A large influx was noted at Belmont with over 30 on 20 Oct increasing to 40 on the 28th, the largest flock in the area since 2006.

The few large flocks in the second winter period included 60 at Croston Finney in early November, 50 on Downholland Moss on the 10th, 30 on Fairhaven Beach on the 14th, 30 at Cabin Hill on the 15th, 24 at Marl Hill on the 22nd and up to 35 on Carnforth Marsh from the 24th.

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

Abundant breeding resident and passage migrant. Flocks in winter.

In the early part of the year Goldfinches were perhaps less in evidence in comparison to recent years but nevertheless widespread. The January Lancaster survey counted 225 compared to an average of 251 and few large flocks were noted. There were 56 at Hackensall Hall on 6 Jan, up to 32 on Rawcliffe Moss in early January and 80 at Burscough Moss on the 29th. The largest count was of 160 at a roost in Stanley Park, Blackpool on 12 Feb while a roost at Belmont had 50 birds on 15 Jan. Birds were present in small numbers in the east of the county with a maximum of 20 at Lower Wheathead on 26 Jan.

There was a good spring passage at coastal sites: 1912 were recorded at Marshside between 25 April and 18 May with 707 in three hours from dawn on 1st May, a movement which apparently went on for most of the day though unrecorded. Rossall Point recorded 2227 with peaks of 639 on 30 April and 466 the following day, while at Heysham there was a total of 363 high-flying northbound migrants between 22 March and 22 May with a peak of 60 on 30 April.

Goldfinches were singing in the centre of Burnley on 5 Jan and regularly breed around the town centre. There were ten pairs at Heysham, 23 at Millhead and eight at Croftlands – an average showing.

Flocks of post-breeding birds assembled at places such as Mythop where there were 180 on 15 Aug and Hesketh Out Marsh with 72 on the 8th. A flock at Brockholes contained 40 birds on 26 Aug and increased to 70 in early September and 250 by the 21st. This is a feature of autumn passage for this species, large flocks pull in migrating birds and tend to grow through September, making it very difficult to ascertain the turnover of birds in these situations. Similarly, 120 at MMWWT in the last week of August increased to over 150 by the third week of September. Some other peak counts were 150 at Newton Marsh on 9 Sept, 150 on Dairy Farm Road, Rainford on the 18th, 200 on Hesketh Out Marsh on the 22nd, 100 at Conder Green on the 30th and 150 at Seaforth during September and October.

Obvious vis mig counts included 739 at Heysham between 8 Sept and 10 Nov with a maximum of 62 on 8 Oct. Other sites further south recorded fewer, Fairhaven totalled 275 with a peak of 76 on 21 Oct. One hundred and fourteen were caught and ringed in a small Over Kellet garden between August and December with only two retraps, suggesting a steady passage through the area. At Belmont, four flocks totalling 185 birds were present on thistles on 8 Sept.

October flocks included 110 at Lunt Meadows on the 20th and up to 100 at Eccleston Mere on the 4th & 21st, the latter retaining up to 60 birds to the end of the year. Flooding at Arkholme washed out a regular thistle crop and there were very few Goldfinches compared to previous years. A garden in Coppull attracted 50 by 29 Oct and Jackhouse had 63 on 1 Oct. There were two large roost counts in December: 55 at Belmont on the 2nd and 70 at Shedden Clough on the 11th.

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*

Fairly common breeder. Common double passage migrant and winter visitor.

Siskins were rather sparsely distributed in the early part of the year with most records coming from upland areas. New Laithe Farm, Moor Piece and Stocks Reservoir recorded the species in

every month of the year though peak numbers rarely exceeded 20. Elsewhere, there were very few reported at garden feeders or from lowland areas. There were some larger flocks, though, including 30 at Billington on 29 Jan, 30 at Moor Piece on 8 Feb and 50 in Gisburn Forest on the 16th. There were 15 at MSW on 2 Feb and up to ten at Leighton Moss and Belmont.

Early March brought some interesting records; as a few birds started to be seen at coastal migration watchpoints there were some large movements up and down Dunsop Valley with 210 flying south in small groups throughout the day on the 2nd, 50 south on the 10th and 200 north on the 11th. Around 100 were feeding on larch cones along the valley on 20 March. On the coast at Rossall Point there were 72 in March with peaks of 20 on the 11th and 39 on the 25th. Heysham recorded 148 northbound birds between 14 March and 7 May with a peak of 50 on 22 March. There was another flurry of activity in early May: at Marshside 212 were counted between 25 April and 18 May with notable peaks of 81 on 1 May and 92 on the 3rd. Thirty-two flew ENE at Ridge Farm, Pilling on 4 May.

Very early newly-fledged juveniles were seen at Stocks Reservoir on 28 April and a pair with four recently-fledged young was at New Laithe Farm on 4 June. A pair bringing young to feeders at Higherford on 25 June suggested breeding nearby. A pair bred at Ogden Clough, Pendle and at least three pairs bred at Belmont with juveniles seen in May and June. Six birds including juveniles were seen at Oakenclough in late June.

It is not unusual to get a few birds away from traditional breeding areas during the summer months as a flurry of records of ones and twos from south Liverpool, MMWWT, Fylde and Heysham indicated. Ten were at Dairy Farm Road, Rainford on 7 August.

Autumn passage was steady and unremarkable: 116 through Heysham with a maximum of 25 on 19 Oct, 78 through Fairhaven with a maximum of 32 on 7 Oct and 50 over Seaforth with a peak of 18 on 9 Oct. Small numbers were recorded at Rossall and Marshside. At least 33 were at a garden feeding station in Rishton on 8 Sept, 75 were at Towneley Playing Fields, Burnley on 17 Oct and 70 at Stocks Reservoir on 2 Nov. A flock of 30 was seen at Leighton Moss from the 13th increasing to 60 by the end of October then declining steadily to 20 by the end of the year. Eccleston Mere also had a flock of up to 60 birds by the end of the year.

A flock of 50 was at Belmont in mid-December and Stocks Reservoir had 130 on 7 Dec; up to 24 were present 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).

This species is almost entirely absent from the upland areas during the winter months, so most records for the first part of the year came from the lowlands.

Counts in the first two weeks of January included 205 at Sollom, 65 on Burscough Moss and 80 at Hesketh Out Marsh on the 8th, 120 at Marton Mere from on the 8-12th, 80 on Rawcliffe Moss and 100 at Mythop on the 1st and 90 at Bradshaw Lane, Eagland Hill on the 14th. There were two flocks totalling 200 birds near Parbold on 15 Jan and 80 at MMWWT on the 31st. A massive flock of over 500 was seen regularly on Croston Finney from 14 Jan to the end of the month with 200 in the area at the end of February, reducing to 100 by 12 March. There was a flock of 150 at Great Altcar on 24 Feb and 100 at Todderstaffe Hall on the 18th.

The first signs of migration came around the second week of March. At Rossall School 399 were counted between 11 March and 5 May with a peak of 80 on 15 March. Around 290 were recorded at Heysham from 19 March, 264 from Marshside between 25 April and 18 May and up to 100 on a freshly sown field at Cockersand on 30 March. The first birds recorded in east Lancashire were at Calder Foot on 21 March and at Altham on the 28th.

Singing males were back on territory around Southport by the end of March/beginning of April with an estimate of at least eight breeding pairs in the Birkdale dunes. There were nine pairs at Freshfield Dune Heath, ten on the saltmarsh at Marshside and nine at Hesketh Out Marsh. At least three pairs bred at Heysham but only three were in the gorse around Arkholme. Breeding pairs were present at several sites in east Lancashire and at least five pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir with a flock of 30 there on 30 May. Two or three pairs bred around White Coppice, but the species is now scarcer in the Rivington area, only being recorded at two sites, one of which had eight pairs on 20 May. A recently fledged bird was being fed near Princes Dock, Liverpool on 5 Sept and birds were present at several sites around Halewood and Speke throughout the summer.

Post-breeding flocks began to assemble from mid-June, including 100 at Westby on the 17th and 180 at Hesketh Out Marsh on 21 July. Approximately 100 were at Easington on 18 August, a large flock by east Lancashire standards. On 29 Aug 250 were at Lunt Meadows with over 200 there throughout October and early November.

During September, there were three-figure flocks at Newton Marsh, Burrow's Marsh and Roby Mill; numbers built up to 120 at Marton Mere by 7 Oct.

Autumn passage was poor; 338 were counted through Fairhaven between 23 Sept and 25 Oct with peaks of 93 on 23 Sept and 50 on 22 Oct, 482 were recorded over Marshside with a maximum of 88 on 14 Oct and 101 flew south over Cabin Hill on 22 Sept. There were only two October records in east Lancashire, the last being at Jackhouse on the 24th. Flocks of 71 and 80 were recorded at Kirkby Moss and Tarbock during October

Fewer large flocks were reported during the second winter period; 400 were at Croston Finney in December but the only other three-figure flocks were 200 at Singleton on 27 Dec, 130 at Altcar on 5 Dec and 100 at Light Ash, Myerscough on 10 Dec.

TWITE *Carduelis flavirostris*

Rare and declining breeder. Winter visitor on coasts. Red List (breeding decline).

Winter numbers were relatively low in the early year with most on the shore between Marshside and Birkdale where up to 120 were recorded in January; the pattern of records suggests that the flock started off at Marshside and slowly made its way south to Birkdale. Numbers fluctuated considerably but 80 were still there on 3 March and 60 on the 11th.

Several small flocks were present in north Fylde with up to 50 between Knott End and Fluke Hall in January, 65 at Ridge Farm on 24 Feb and 46 at Preesall on 25 March. Smaller numbers were reported on and off from St. Anne's and 34 were at Bank End on 5 Feb.

Numbers at the feeding station at Heysham were low with peak counts of 22 in January, 42 in February and six in March.

In east Lancashire, the only records were from the feeding area at Cant Clough with just seven records during the year: six on 15 Jan, 14 on 28 March, eight on 27 April, 16 on 12 May, 15 on 26 Aug, about 20 on 4 Oct and three on the 8th.

Spring migrants were noted at Jameson Road, Fleetwood on 6 April and around 20 at Hutton Marsh on the 8th. One was reported at White Coppice on the 22nd.

No breeding information was received but the atlas survey suggests the Lancashire population may now only number a dozen or so pairs and appears to be heading for extinction.

The first returned at Rivington Pike on 7 Oct and Heysham and Aldcliffe on the 10th. Fifteen were on Ainsdale Beach on the 16th and 14 at Knott End on 3 Nov, increasing to 70 by the 21st. Numbers at Southport did not exceed 50 and small flocks appeared at Banks Marsh, Sunderland Point and Bank End, whilst three were recorded at Arley NR on 26 Oct. Peak counts at Heysham in the second winter period were 42 in October, 125 in November and 63 in December. Ringing efforts here produced 82 new birds, 50 retraps from previous years and four controls.

LESSER REDPOLL *Carduelis cabaret*

Fairly common breeding bird. Common double passage migrant and winter visitor. Red List (breeding decline).

There were even fewer records in the first two months than last year with records from just twelve sites. The largest counts were at Rishton with 16 on 1 Jan and 21 on the 22nd, nine at Strongstry on the 15th and at least 50 at Gisburn Forest on 16 Feb.

Early March saw the start of the prolonged spring migration period which seems to be getting earlier each year. Passage came in two distinct periods separated by a month when very few were reported. There was a scattering of singles in the first week of March (at Tarbock, Pilling, Newton and Moor Piece, for example) and numbers began to pick up by the third week with a widespread movement from the 22nd.

The largest spring flock of approximately 100 was in the Thrushgill plantations on 24 March and Marshside also had its first birds on the 24th with 313 counted during the passage and a peak of 75 on 1 May. A minimum of 119 were counted over Cabin Hill with peaks of twelve on 23 March and 33 on 3 May; Heysham recorded 361 altogether with peaks of 42 on 26 March and 38 on 7 May, while 140 flew over Rossall School in spring with peaks of 34 on 25 March and 59 on the 27th and 92 over Knott End peaking at 34 on the 26th. There were 32 at White Coppice on 17 April and 70 at Ridge Farm in the second wave of migrants on 4 May, followed by a rather protracted period of passage with small numbers turning up briefly at many sites.

Birds were displaying at Darwen Golf Course and Stocks Reservoir during April, Eccleston Mere at the end of May and Turton Golf Course and Knowsley Safari Park during June, but breeding information received from elsewhere was very limited. At least two pairs nested in close proximity at Shedden Clough with probably another four in a colony close by; breeding was successful at New Laithe Farm, Newton and undoubtedly at a large number of other east Lancashire and other sites.

Counts during the late summer months included at least 15 in a Belmont garden on 20 July, 20 at Stocks Reservoir on 10 Aug and 27 at New Laithe Farm on the 19th.

Autumn passage was generally poor apart from at Heysham where there was an above-average total of 60. Other coastal watchpoints recorded very few with the only double-figure counts being 14 at Rossall Point on 7 Oct, 14 at Aldcliffe on the 10th and 15 at Leighton Moss on the 29th. By far the most significant record was of 160 in two flocks feeding with Siskins on Alders at Stocks Reservoir on 22 Oct.

Second winter period records were also thin on the ground though a flock of up to 30 was present at Eccleston Mere during December. There were also 30 at Whin Scar Clough on 10 Dec, twelve at Rishton on the 9th and 14 at Brockholes on the 23rd.

MEALY (COMMON) REDPOLL* *Carduelis flammea*

Scarce winter visitor.

No descriptions were received this year.

COMMON CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*

Scarce breeding bird. Occasional irruptive movements.

It was another good year for Crossbill records. The influx in 2011 meant that there were a lot of birds in the county and the year started with some large flocks in Bowland. Notable counts included 20 at Moor Piece on 8 Jan and a minimum of 45 at Gisburn Forest on 16 Feb with smaller numbers at Thrushgill, Longridge Fell, Newton and Dunsop Bridge. This early-breeding species was singing and displaying at Gisburn Forest and Moor Piece in the middle of January and Marl

Hill on the 29th, whilst a recently fledged juvenile was seen at Gisburn Forest on 29 Feb. Breeding was also strongly suspected at the aforementioned sites and at Merrybent. At Thrusgill there were peak counts of 19 in March and 23 in June, and 20 were seen in Gisburn Forest on 12 May.

Crossbills began to be seen away from Bowland from May onwards. One flew over Marshside on 1 May, eight were at Hightown on 4 June and up to 14 in Knowsley Park from the 5th, followed by ten over Royal Birkdale Golf Course on 28 June, 23 at Claughton on 2 July, 20 in the Belmont Plantations on 11-14 July and then a host of small numbers reported from several locations from August through to early November. A flock of 28 flew over Winter Hill on 25 Oct and on 4 Nov there were records of small numbers from at least eight disparate locations.

However, few were reported at the end of the year: eight at Ainsdale on 27 Nov, seven at Oakenclough on 2 Dec and eight at Cowm Reservoir on the 27th.

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Common breeding resident. Amber list (breeding decline).

This species continues to expand in the county, the recent atlas work showing a 50% increase in range over the past ten years, and no more so than in the Silverdale area where it is reported most frequently and in the highest numbers.

Breeding numbers remained high at Warton Crag RSPB where 18 pairs were located and relatively high counts were recorded at Leighton Moss in all months of the year, with a peak of twelve during spring. There were also regular reports from other widespread locations such as Moor Piece (maximum of ten in February), Strongstry (maximum of nine in January), Cottam Brickworks (maximum of nine in January), Savick Park in Preston, Birkdale LNR, Tarbock, Halewood and Speke, Mere Sands Wood, Brockholes, Rivington, Anglezarke, Turton Golf Course, Rishton and Whittington.

The species is now seen regularly at feeders in many parts of the county accounting for a plethora of reports of small numbers from many observers.

Two pairs nested at Croftlands, Warton and one at Millhead. In east Lancashire breeding occurred at many sites and two pairs bred in the Yarrow Valley Park, in Chorley. On Merseyside birds were frequent around Halewood, one or two pairs nested at Aintree racecourse, four pairs at Sefton Meadows and one pair at Freshfield Dune Heath. The species remains, however, stubbornly resistant to colonising the western parts of the Fylde, the only records from there being at Marton Mere late in the year.

An interesting movement was noted in late autumn during which time Seaforth recorded its first ever on 21 Oct and this or another was at Crosby Coastal Park on the 26th. A number of high-flying, south-bound birds were noted over Heysham between 4 Oct and 11 Nov, totalling 68 with a peak of 17 on 13 Oct.

HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Rare and localised breeding resident. Red list (breeding decline).

All reports of Hawfinch this year were of single birds. There was only one report from Woodwell, Silverdale in the early part of the year and a couple in late autumn. One was seen on the causeway at Leighton Moss on 23 March and there were also three extralimital reports early in the year: one at Duxbury Woods on 15 Feb (the first record in the Chorley area for several years) and one at Ansdell (Lytham) on 4 April.

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis***Uncommon winter visitor to summits and coasts.**

Few were present in the first winter period, with a flock of up to six around the television masts on Winter Hill during January and February the largest count. Elsewhere, singles were on Belmont Moor on 1 Feb and Fair Snape Fell on the 11th, up to three remained around Carnforth Slag Tips to 2 Feb and one was at Fairhaven in mid-January.

In spring singles were at Rossall Point on 17-18 March, Cockersand on the 25th and on 15 April at Starr Gate, Blackpool and Rossall Point (probably the same bird).

The first of autumn was at Fleetwood on 14 Oct with one to two reported regularly near the Marine Lake from 1 Nov to 21 Dec. Other Fylde birds in the latter part of the year consisted of singles at Ridge Farm on 20 Oct, Fairhaven on 11 Nov, Starr Gate on the 21st and Warton Bank on 15 Dec; one was on Hesketh Out Marsh on the 23 Oct,

Pendle Hill was the place to be to have any chance of seeing a large flock of Snow Buntings. The first arrived in the area around Scout Cairn on 18 Oct then none was seen until 13 Nov when a flock of ten was noted; a single was seen on three dates in late November, and early December before a flock of up to 30 was seen at the 'Big End' from 10-18 Dec. In between these records there was a rather extraordinary record of a pair near Grove Lane Marsh, Padiham.

LAPLAND BUNTING* *Calcarius lapponicus***Scarce autumn passage migrant and winter visitor to coasts.**

There were two accepted records of Lapland Bunting this year. The first of the autumn was one flying south over Heysham on 26 Sept (P Marsh), and the second was associating with Meadow Pipits on the north side of Pendle Hill overlooking Downham on 18-20 Oct (S Grimshaw, M Naylor).

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citrinella***Fairly common but decreasing resident, mostly in the south. Scarce autumn passage migrant. Red list (breeding decline).****Monthly Peak Counts at feeding sites**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rawcliffe Moss	13	17	22	/	/	/	1	2	/	/	11	15
Bradshaw Lane	3	15	/	1	1	3	4	/	2	/	/	/

Early year counts in the Fylde included 22 at Rawcliffe Moss up to 18 at Lousanna Farm, Pilling Moss in late February and early March with a scattering of ones and twos seen at ten other locations.

In Chorley at least 20 were on Croston Moss on 8 Jan and 25 at Arley on 16 March, in West Lancashire 20 at Low Meadows, Burscough in the first two months and at Holland's Farm, Ormskirk on 20 March. Merseyside flocks included 20 on Billinge Hill and along Old Coach Road in March, whilst in Knowsley there were 24 across several sites in the Halewood area.

Two migrants were at Rossall School on 25 March and three singles were at Marshside between 30 April and 5 May, while at Cabin Hill, where the bird was once regular, there were singles on 28 March and 28 April.

Up to at least three pairs bred at King's Moss and up to four males were singing at Gorse Hill NR near Ormskirk during the summer. In Merseyside eight males were singing around Cronton, six around Newton-le-Willows, 19 in the Halewood area, seven at Tarbock and others at Netherley, Billinge Hill, Old Coach Road and Dairy Farm Road. Males were also singing noted at

Haskayne Cutting,, Bretherton, Leyland and New Longton. On the Fylde singing males were reported at Eagland Hill, Elswick, Treales, Inskip, Myerscough and Rawcliffe Moss.

Autumn passage birds were noted at Heysham on 13 & 26 Oct, Seaforth on the 17th and Cabin Hill on 10 Aug. Though no precise count was submitted, the species was "well represented" in a large mixed finch and bunting flock at Croston Finney in October.

Few were reported in the second winter period with 21 at Low Meadows and up to 15 at Rawcliffe Moss the only double-figure counts.

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Common breeding bird and winter visitor. Double passage migrant. Red list (breeding decline).

This species remains a widespread and common breeding bird throughout the county though winter records have tended to be lower of late. That certainly wasn't the case at Rawcliffe Moss where there were up to 37 in the first winter period. In the Lancaster January survey, however, only nine were recorded. In east Lancashire there was an extraordinary record of approximately 80, mostly males, at Hurstwood on 19 Feb. Numbers at Brockholes Wetland were consistently good in the first half of the year but other localities such as Cuerden Valley Park had no records all year. Over 20 were on Mawdesley Moss on 11 Jan.

The first singing males were recorded at Eccleston Mere on 3 March and Alston Wetland and Allsprings, Great Harwood on the 6th. Breeding censuses were carried out at many locations, especially wetlands, resulting in the following numbers being reported. At MMWWT there was an increase to an impressive 89 pairs. Brockholes Wetland also recorded an increase with 64 pairs whilst Leighton Moss hosted 70 pairs. There were six territories at Middleton NR, eight pairs at both Silverdale Moss and Barrow Scout and nine pairs at Arkholme. Ringing data at Heysham and Leighton Moss suggests that productivity was very poor.

There were eight to ten singing males at Green Beach, Birkdale, five at Cabin Hill NNR, three pairs at Seaforth NR and 20 pairs at Lunt Meadows, mostly nesting in Oilseed Rape. Eight pairs were reported near Jubilee Wood, Maghull and a minimum of four at Aintree Race-course. There were six pairs at Hesketh Out Marsh and four pairs were located on the new saltmarsh to the south of the sand plant at Marshside. Nine singing males were on Lower Burgh Meadow, Chorley. At least six territories were located at the former Parkside Colliery site at Newton-le-Willows and six were also on the old Cronton Colliery site. There were eleven pairs at various sites across Halewood, three territories at Speke, six at Tarbock and two at Woolton.

Further east, there was an increase in the number of breeding pairs at Belmont to twelve, there were four pairs on Chipping Moss, two at Grove Lane Marsh and Wood End Sewage Works. Single breeding pairs were also reported at a host of other sites across the county.

Autumn passage was poor with Heysham recording just 35 birds between 21 Sept and 18 Oct. Twenty passed through Marshside on 14 Oct and Seaforth recorded at least 59 with a peak of 26 on 19 Oct. Fairhaven recorded 63 between 22 Sept and 4 Nov with a peak of 27 on 25 Oct.

In the second winter period, the largest counts came from the Fylde with 40 on Rawcliffe and Lytham Mosses during December. The peak count in the east of the county was 18 in rhododendrons at Shedden Clough on 16 Nov and 8 Dec whilst at least 20 were at Belmont Reservoir throughout October and November.

CORN BUNTING *Emberiza calandra*

Fairly common breeding bird in the south-west and Fylde.

Monthly Peak Counts at Fylde sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Eagland Hill	44	100	110	/	1	1	2	/	/	/	/	/
Pilling Moss	120	241	140	34	1	72	1	/	/	/	6	36
Rawcliffe Moss	40	10	2	/	17	16	/	/	/	/	11	20

Early in the year some very large numbers were recorded in the Pilling Moss area of the Fylde. Scattered flocks of up to 87 were reported from Eagland Hill in January and then a count of 120 at Lousanna Farm on the 31st. Numbers at the latter site increased to 241 on 11 Feb (the second highest count on the Fylde so far this century) reducing to 150 by the 19th but still 130 on the 28th and 140 on 6 March. Up to 110 were at Eagland Hill in March but these could relate to part of the above-mentioned flock. There were other reports on the Fylde, notably 62 at Peel on 7 Feb and 20 at Cockerham Moss Edge on 2 March. In West Lancashire there was a flock of 14 at Mawdesley Moss on 25 Feb and there were peaks of 40 at Crabtree Lane, Burscough, 35 Plex Moss on 12 Feb, 17 at Great Altcar on the 24th and 21 at Curlew Lane, Rufford on the 26th (where a bird was singing on 17 Feb). However, these were overshadowed by a flock estimated to be of 100 birds at Croston Moss on 12 March.

During March, males were singing at Skitham on the 3rd and Old Coach Road, St Helens on the 12th. In south Liverpool one bird singing throughout the spring at Halewood was the only record. Further north, there were singing males at Crank, Catchdale Moss, Rainford, Dairy Farm Road (St Helens), Downholland, Ormskirk (3) and many sites around Burscough and on the mosses between there and Southport. There were five pairs at Hesketh Out Marsh as well as three singing males at Old Grange Farm, Hutton and singles at Penwortham and Midge Hall. Cabin Hill NNR had one pair, Lunt Meadows had two pairs and a male was singing at Little Crosby.

On the Fylde, singing males were reported at Eagland Hill, St Michael's-on-Wyre, Lytham Moss, Braides, Rawcliffe Moss (10), Fluke Hall Lane, Westby, Bone Hill, Stalmine, Black Lane Head (2), Inskip, Pilling (3) and Churchtown. Rather out of season, there was a flock of 72 Corn Buntings at Bradshaw Lane Head on 13 June with 38 there a few days later.

Reports of Corn Buntings all but disappeared in August and September. There was a flock of 21 on Croston Moss on 13 Oct and peak numbers on the Fylde reached just 36 on Pilling Moss on 27 Dec, 20 at Moss House Farm, Rawcliffe Moss on the 23rd, 20 at Lousanna Farm on the 12th and 13 at Bradshaw Lane Head on the 31st.

ESCAPES

TRUMPETER SWAN *Cygnus buccinator*

The bird that has been around on the Ribble since 2007 was again reported at Ribchester on 6 April and 20 June and was probably present all year.

BLACK SWAN *Cygnus atratus*

Fast becoming Lancashire's most widespread escaped species. Birds were seen pretty much all year on at least 25 sites in all parts of the county except the West Pennine Moors and Rossendale.

Most records were of singles but there were two at Marshside in February and Sowerby in November and December, and three on the Ribble at Jumbles in January, near Alston Wetland on 25 Feb and Warton Marsh in February. The longest stayer appears to have alternated between Seaforth and Liverpool's Central Docks between at least March and September.

With several birds known to have wandered fairly widely it is difficult to be sure how many individuals were involved but there were at least six.

CHINESE (SWAN) GOOSE *Anser cygnoides*

One was on the Ribble to the west of Preston in at least April, May and December. There were several reports of the regular bird at Stanley Park Blackpool in February and March, and one was on Lea Marsh on 21 May and 23 Dec. A hybrid with Canada Goose was seen at Marton Mere on 22 Sept.

BAR-HEADED GOOSE *Anser indicus*

Singles were recorded at Altham in January, Blackburn in January, March, October and December, Leighton Moss and the Eric Morecambe complex between 8 March and 13 June, Marshside in May, with three at Marshside in June. Two(s) were on the Ribble at Clifton Marsh in January and the Ribble Link in November, Sawley in March (originating from a local collection), and Fluke Hall in September and October.

SNOW GOOSE *Anser caerulescens*

The three from late 2011 were on the Eric Morecambe complex until 17 Jan before moving to Aldcliffe Marsh until 15 Feb and to the Eric Morecambe until 26 Feb, where they were reduced to two from 1-3 March and finally on 6 May.

GREYLAG x BAR-HEADED GOOSE

One was at Copthorne on 2-3 March and 12 Dec.

EGYPTIAN GOOSE *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

One that had been first seen in November 2011 was seen at various sites in the Blackburn area until 13 March and again from 28 Oct to 16 Dec. Other singles were at Brockholes Wetland from 13-31 Jan, 28 May and 5 Oct, Adlington Reservoir on 25 Jan and Preston on the Ribble on 7 April, and two were at Leighton Moss on 31 May.

There is still not the slightest indication that the species is about to establish itself as a feral breeder in the county, nor is there any evidence one way or the other as to whether the few that are seen in Lancashire originate from established feral populations elsewhere or are simply more local escapes.

RUDDY SHELDUCK *Tadorna ferruginea*

Two, probably both females, were photographed off the Ocean Edge saltmarsh, Heysham on 2 July and a pair was on Lower Foulridge Reservoir on 18 Aug. A male arrived at Stocks Reservoir on 4 July and stayed to moult; it was last reported on 10 Sept and finally one was at Fleetwood on 23-24 Sept.

CAPE SHELDUCK *Tadorna cana*

One was on the Eric Morecambe complex and Leighton Moss for a week but the exact dates are unknown.

MUSCOVY DUCK *Cairina moschata*

A nest with a clutch of 13 eggs was found near Belmont on 8 April and nine young were seen on 12 May, with seven surviving until 14 Oct.

WOOD DUCK *Aix sponsa*

A pair was on Rowley Lake, Burnley on 18 Nov.

WHITE-CHEEKED PINTAIL *Anas bahamensis*

Single(s) were at Carleton Crematorium on 13 & 29 May and Stanley Park, Blackpool on 1-2 Dec.

PINTAIL x RED-CRESTED POCHARD

One was at Marton Mere on 3 Feb and 28 Sept and Stanley Park on 4 May.

RED-CRESTED POCHARD *Netta rufina*

One moved between Southport Marine Lake, Marshside and MMWWT between at least 14 Jan and 27 May and again from 15 July to 7 Nov. What appeared to be a hybrid Red-Crested Pochard x Mallard was with it on Southport Marine Lake on 14 Jan.

The only other record was a male at Alston Wetland from 26 to 29 May.

GOLDEN PHEASANT *Chrysolophus pictus*

A male and a female were seen occasionally in Lytham Hall between 25 Feb and 10 April, and a male at Fairhaven Lake also on 10 April.

REEVE'S PHEASANT *Syrnaticus reevesii*

Last year's male at Heysham was last seen on 7 Jan, single males were at St. Michael's-on-Wyre on 17 Jan and Hackensall Hall on 17 April.

NORTH AMERICAN TURKEY *Meleagris gallipavo*

The artificially maintained population in the Belmont Plantations continues with a count of 12+ on 25 March and eleven present on 14 Oct.

INDIAN PEAFOWL *Pavo cristatus*

Seven were at Clitheroe waste disposal centre all year, fed by staff there, and a pair were at Sabden Fold on 9 May.

NORTHERN BOBWHITE *Colinus virginianus*

One was in a garden in Belmont on 22 May.

HELMETED GUINEAFOWL *Numida meleagris*

Eight were just north of Standen Hall, Clitheroe on 8 April and two at Clerk Hill, Whalley on 23 Aug.

WHITE STORK *Ciconia ciconia*

A bird ringed with a 'captive-origin' ring was seen at Pilling on 26 May and then flying over Halton weir on the 27th.

HYBRID FALCON

A 'Saker cross' wandered widely over the Lancaster area in April, being reported from Aldcliffe in early April, Leighton Moss at the end of April and Freehold on the 26th.

COCKATIEL *Nymphicus hollandicus*

One was in an Euxton garden on 31 May.

AFRICAN GREY PARROT *Psittacus erithacus*

One flew over Middleton NR on 21 May.

EAGLE OWL *Bubo bubo*

A pair raised two young at a new site but there was no other sign of activity elsewhere in Bowland.

LAUGHING KOOKABURRA *Dacelo novaeguineae*

One was seen at Heron's Reach on 21 March after escaping from Blackpool Zoo – a first for the Lancashire escapes list!

ZEBRA FINCH *Taeniopygia guttata*

One was on the beach at Fleetwood on 3 Sept.

CANARY *Serinus canaria*

One flew over Fleetwood Docks on 20 June.

LANCASHIRE RINGING REPORT 2012

Masses of information was sent in this year and I must start with an apology. There is a possibility/probability that a seriously good colour-ring sighting has gone awol due to computer problems and data loss. If you do not see a recovery tabulated here and think it should have been, apologies and please contact PMrsh123@aol.com

Once again selectivity has been the order of the day with a concentration of detail on a limited number of species (e.g. Mediterranean Gull in this report). To repeat last year's introduction, please make contact if you wish to see the full recovery list for species which have been given rather sparse/non-existent treatment this year (e.g. Black-tailed Godwit).

Perhaps the most noticeable feature of the twelve months under review (July 2012-July 2013) has been the huge number of Lesser Redpolls and Siskins being ringed at niger seed feeders and this has also included catching a large number of birds bearing rings from elsewhere, including a Lesser Redpoll with a cagebird ring from Chelmsford!

Please continue to read colour rings. They are very gratefully received by the scheme organisers but we may not hear about them for publication in this report unless you pass them on to me or Steve White. Thanks.

As regards ringing projects in the county, it would be really good if Mediterranean Gull nestling ringing could be carried on/started at other sites. Have a look at the Belmont bird which wintered on the Azores and now appears to be nesting in Poland! Fascinating. Another recovery which caught my eye was a Buzzard ringed as a nestling in Derbyshire which had dispersed to south Fylde, perhaps indicating that the recent colonisation of the Fylde has not just been from 'nearby'. Techniques for catching Woodcock during the winter months have been recently introduced to North Lancs ringers – this could be a worthwhile project for other ringers/groups?

Thanks to everyone for sending in their ringing records – please keep them coming. Special thanks to Stephen Grimshaw, Tony Disley, Bill Aspin, Mike Baron, Mario Chin, Rosie Briggs, Tony Conway, Pete Kinsella, Tim Vaughan, John Dempsey, Steve Tomlinson, Mark Prestwood, Ian Walker, Gavin Thomas, Janet Packham as well as the ringers/ringing groups comprising 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, Roy Rhodes, Mark Beaman, Hugh Jones. Apologies if anyone has been omitted.

GREYLAG GOOSE

5258557	Loch an Eilean, Tiree, Strathclyde	3CY Male	04/07/2009
Seen	Lady Bridge Farm, N Yorks 422km SE		21/07/2010
Seen	Agglebys Pit, Stalmine 380km SE		08/02/2011
Seen	Agglebys Pit		18/11/2011
Seen	Pilling Lane Ends 381km SE		23/10/2012

SHELDUCK

GC24833	Martin Mere	Adult Male	30/10/2007
Caught	Downham, near Ely, Cambridgeshire 246km ESE		16/01/2012
GN63293	Martin Mere	Full-grown Male	22/11/2005
Caught	Wheldrake Ings, N Yorks 132km ENE		10/01/2012

WIGEON

FP95110	Dunham, Retford, Notts	2CY	07/02/2006
Shot	near Martin Mere 145km WNW		21/01/2012

FH51159	North Duffield, Selby, N Yorks	Adult Male	14/02/2012
Shot	Lytham St Anne's 134km W		11/10/2012
FP54624	Lockerbie, Dumfries & Galloway	Adult Male	07/02/2005
Shot	Glasson 132km SSE		(13/01/2012)

TEAL

CRs	Taipal Marsh, Figuera da Foz, PORTUGAL	Female	05/01/2012
Seen	Stocks Reservoir, Bowland		02/04/2012
EW41440	Seaton Marshes, Devon	1CY Male	04/12/2010
Shot	Blackleach, near Preston 344km N		31/01/2012
EL45677	Mahee Island, Strangford Lough, Down	1CY	09/09/2004
Shot	Longton Marsh 203km ESE		29/11/2012
EX75554	River Derwent, Wheldrake, N Yorks	1CY Female	09/09/2012
Shot	Lytham Moss 136km W		30/11/2012
EX35485	River Derwent, Wheldrake, N Yorks	Adult Male	01/01/2012
Shot	Scarisbrick 136km WSW		16/12/2012

PINTAIL

FH19817	Slimbridge, Gloucestershire	2CY Male	03/01/2010
Dead	Goosnargh, Preston 233km N		29/04/2012
FA43371	Martin Mere	Adult Female	14/11/2006
Shot	Komi Assr RUSSIA 66°17'N 56°28'E 3,546km ENE		15/09/2012

MANX SHEARWATER

EG63349	Copeland Bird Observatory, Co. Down	Nestling	07/09/2002
Dead	Thornton-Cleveleys 185km ESE		29/07/2012

GANNET

1392829	Scares, Luce Bay, Dumfries & Galloway	Nestling	15/07/2007
Dead	Rossall, Fleetwood 139km SE		22/09/2012

CORMORANT

The longest movements in 2012 all involved nestlings ringed at Stack Mooar, Isle of Man or Puffin Island, Anglesey. Two from Stack Mooar were read at Seaforth, one each from Stack Mooar and Anglesey were shot at Whitemoor Reservoir, one from Anglesey was similarly disposed of at Arkholme and one from Stack Mooar was read in the field at Brockholes.

SHAG

1201551	Puffin Island, Anglesey	Nestling	16/06/1991
Freshly dead	Little Bispham, Cleveleys 90km NE		09/01/2012

Twenty years might seem a fair age but the longevity record for this species is 29 years, 10 months, 25 days!

LITTLE EGRET

GR47609	Penrhyn Castle, Bangor	Nestling	05/06/2012
Seen	Aldcliffe Marsh, Lancs 124km NE		26/10/2012

An example of an established theme; origin from a Welsh colony, usually this one.

SPOONBILL

8050229	Kwelderpad: 53°29'N 6°15'E NETHERLANDS	Nestling	31/05/2009
Seen	NETHERLANDS		29/07 & 19/08/09
Seen	NETHERLANDS		19/05 & 15/06/11
Seen	Leighton Moss 599km W		01/05/2012
Seen	Holkham, Norfolk 367km W		19/05/2012
Seen	Redwell Marsh, Norfolk 385km W		15/09/2012

BUZZARD

GR38840	Long Clough, Derbyshire	Nestling	14/06/2012
Dead	near Lytham St Anne's 75km WNW		11/09/2012

A most unusual example of juvenile dispersal to an area only recently colonised by Common Buzzard – where it hit a train.

OSPREY

1428330	near Monymusk, Grampian Region	Nestling	22/07/2010
Seen	Stocks Reservoir 364km S		03/07/2012
1417412	Eliebank Forest, Innerleithen, Borders Region	Nestling	25/07/2010
Seen	Leighton Moss 160km S		07/05/2012

KESTREL

EX47356	near Head Dyke Lane, Pilling	Nestling	04/06/2012
Dead	Bank House Farm, Aislaby, N Yorks 158km ENE		01/11/2012

PEREGRINE

GR21366	Haslingden	Nestling Male	20/05/2011
Dead	Bell Busk, Hellifiel, N Yorks 36km NNE		25/01/2012

COOT

GR25454	Marine Lake, Southport	1CY	20/12/2010
seen	Killingworth Lake, Tyne & Wear 180km NNE		14/06/2011
seen	Burradon, Tyne & Wear 180km NNE		12/02/2012
GR25051	Marine Lake, Southport	Adult	30/11/2010
seen	Herrington Country Park, Penshaw, Tyne & Wear 169km NE		05/01/2012
GR25108	Marine Lake, Southport	1CY	02/12/2010
seen	Saltholme Pool, Teesmouth, Cleveland 158km NE		08/09/2012
GR25018	Marine Lake, Southport	Adult	30/11/2010
Seen	Erewash Meadows, Ripley, Notts 130km ESE		27/04/2011
Seen	Erewash Meadows		29/07/2011
Seen	Stanley Park, Blackpool 19km N		17/11/2011
Seen	Erewash Meadows		12/05/2012
GR51039	Marine Lake, Southport	2CY	10/02/2012
Seen	Thrybergh CP, Rotherham, S Yorks 116km ESE		04/12/2012

AVOCET

ET07212	Site Confidential (Norfolk)	Nestling	13/06/1997
seen	Tamar Estuary, Devon 409km SW		27/11/1997
seen	Brownsea Island, Dorset 304km SW		28/09/1999
seen	Lauwersmeer NETHERLANDS 53°22'N 6°12'E 376km E		28/06/2010

seen Marshside, Southport 254km WNW 02/06/2012

OYSTERCATCHER

FH23183	Heysham	Adult	12/12/2008
dead	Quendale, Shetland 659km N		26/04/2012
FV95097	Glenshero, Highland Region	Nestling	09/07/2011
dead	Lytham St Annes 376km SSE		11/04/2012
FH23890	Heysham	Adult	01/02/2010
sick	Glen Clova, Tayside 312km N		17/06/2012
FA88484	Middlehill, Glen Clova, Tayside	Nestling	05/06/2012
long dead	Middleton Sands, Heysham 304km S		19/08/2012

RINGED PLOVER

NV68844	Broomfield Farm, near Arkholme	Adult Male	14/05/1996
seen	Melling 0km		13/06/2012
NV84035	Broomfield Farm, near Arkholme	Adult Female	25/05/2000
Seen	Aughton 5km		23/06/2012

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT

Flag	Kaldaoarnes, Arnessysla, SOUTH ICELAND	Nestling	22/06/2012
Seen	Cockersand Abbey		14/04/2013
Flag	Munadstunga, Kroksfjorder, NW ICELAND	Nestling	01/07/2012
Seen	Ythan Estuary, Aberdeen, N Scotland		01/09/2012
Seen	Thurstaston Shore, Dee Estuary, Cheshire		17/01/2013
Seen	Cockersand Abbey		14/04/2013
Flag	Ytri Lambadalur, Dyrafjordur, NW ICELAND	Nestling	06/07/2012
Seen	Cockersand Abbey		14/04/2013

These three were in a flock of 225 and this long-legged species is arguably the most rewarding wader to scrutinise for colour-ring sightings with this being a typical ratio with respect to the Icelandic population. Do give it a try!

TURNSTONE

771703	Eyrarbakki, Arnes: 63°51'N 21°9'W ICELAND	Adult	11/08/2009
Caught	Fleetwood Marine Lakes 1,511km SE		23/01/2012

SANDERLING

NB39209	Seafield Harbour, Co. Clare	Full-grown	21/02/2011
Seen	Quilty, Clare 4km		21/01/2012
Seen	Rossall Point 447km ENE		20/05/2012
8224653	Hochstetter Forland: 75°9'N 19°46'W GREENLAND	Adult	03/07/2011
Seen	Rossall Point 2,477km SSE		15/12/2011
8211629	Zackenbug: 74°28'N 20°34'W GREENLAND	Adult Male	05/07/2010
Seen	Rossall Point 2,421km SSE		21/10/2010
Seen	Rossall Point		07/02/2012
872213	Sandgerdi, Gullbringu: 64°3'N 22°42'W ICELAND	Adult	18/05/2007
Seen	Rossall Point 1,586km SE		25/08/2011
H321690	near Iwik: 19°52'N 16°18'W MAURITANIA	1CY	23/11/2008
Seen	Rossall Point 3,952km NNE		01/06/2012

H324033	near Iwik: 19°52'N 16°18'W MAURITANIA	Adult	02/12/2008
Seen	Berrow, Somerset 3,678km NNE		06/08/2009
Seen	North Berwick, Lothian Region 4,182km NNE		05/06/2010
Seen	Rossall Point 3,952km NNE		03/06/2012

WOODCOCK

EG99008	Trips Farm, Sherborne, Dorset	Full-grown	04/11/2007
Shot	Knowlmore Estate, near Clitheroe 334km N		20/01/2012

SANDWICH TERN

DE35889	Ythan Estuary, Aberdeen	Adult	17/08/2010
Seen	Calvados, Normandy, FRANCE		27/09/2010
Seen	Ythan Estuary, Aberdeen		24/08/2011
Seen	Seaforth		26/07/2013

COMMON TERN

99Z29430	Heist: 51°21'N 3°14'E (West-Vlaanderen) BELGIUM	Nestling	18/06/2008
Seen	Seaforth 485km WNW		13-24/06/2012
4H51052	La Simone: 14°29'N 17°5'W SENEGAL	Full-grown	11/04/2010
Seen	Seaforth 4,507km NNE		03/09/2010

KITTIWAKE

FX21949	Pointe du Raz, Plogoff: 48°2'N 4°39'W FRANCE	Nestling	10/07/2010
Long dead	Heysham Power Station 676km N		07/09/2010
ER80588	Puffin Island, Anglesey	Nestling	14/07/1996
Long dead	Blackpool 83km NE		24/04/2012
H32	Waterford, Ireland	Nestling	1989
Seen	Seaforth		28/05 & 11/06/91
Seen	Seaforth		16/08/1998
Seen	Seaforth		23/08/2008
Seen	Heysham Harbour		5/02 & 11/02/13

This bird has gone 'missing from the files' and has also been the subject of scepticism re-the darvic ring lasting so long without becoming brittle and falling off. It was photographed at Seaforth on 23/8/08 and Heysham on several occasions and the number is definitely H32! We'll see if the metal ring number can be located again as it obviously was in 1989. The condition at Heysham suggested it was 'on its last legs'

BLACK-HEADED GULL

EW67370	Lough Mask: 53°38'N 9°19'W (Mayo)	Nestling	13/06/2009
seen	Brockholes 440km E		07/02/2012
EX57341	Ythan Estuary, Newburgh, Aberdeen	1CY	03/08/2011
seen	Barrow, Lancashire 388km S		07/02/2012
EY02464	Preston Dock	1CY	20/12/2011
seen	Mistley (Essex) 333km SE		17/10/2012
EX10748	Cokes Pit, Somerford Keynes, Gloucestershire	Nestling	28/05/2010
seen	Cirencester, Gloucestershire 6km N		29/05/2011
seen	St Dogmael's Quay, Dyfed 193km WNW		11/07/2011
seen	Garstang 256km NNW		24/02/2012

EW83325 caught	North Esk Reservoir, Lothian Region Preston Dock 231km S	Nestling	12/06/2010 17/12/2012
FN91194 seen	Radyczyny, Przykona: 52°0'N 18°39'E POLAND Ainsdale 1,469km W	Adult	29/05/2011 16/11/2011
EX54184 seen	Preston Dock Pumpuri, Jurmala: 56°58'N 23°43'E LATVIA 1,709km ENE	Adult	21/12/2010 28/06/2012
EX68906 seen seen seen seen	Preston Dock Utenos Reg Savart, Utena: 55°29'N 25°39'E LITHUANIA 1,837km E Preston Dock Utena-Dauniskio Ez, Utena: 55°30'N 25°36'E LITHUANIA 1,834km E Utenos Reg Savart, Utena: 55°29'N 25°39'E LITHUANIA 1,837km E	Adult	08/03/2011 05/04/2011 11/12/2011 26/03/2012 17/06/2012
HA13171 seen seen seen	Klaipeda-Siaure: 55°43'N 21°8'E LITHUANIA Preesall Sands, Knott-End-on-Sea 1,557km W Seaforth Nature Reserve 1,575km W New Brighton, Cheshire 1,577km W	Adult Male	31/03/2010 10/02/2011 08/09/2011 05/12/2012
6T28740 seen	Mont St Guibert: 50°38'N 4°36'E (Brabant) BELGIUM Marton Mere, Blackpool 626km NW	1CY	23/11/2008 25/10/2009

MEDITERRANEAN GULL

5352010 AHTJ Seen Seen Seen Seen	Pionierinsel luhe, Niedersachsen, GERMANY Knott End Heysham outfalls area Heysham outfalls area Frampton, Lincolnshire Heysham outfalls area	Nestling	23/05/2009 06/12/08/09 30/08 to 12/9/09 14/08/2011 04/07/2013 21/07/2013
5409038 AKRS	Pionierinsel luhe, Niedersachsen, GERMANY Heysham outfalls area	Nestling	16/06/2012 8-21/07/13
5409009 AKUR	Pionierinsel luhe, Niedersachsen, GERMANY Heysham outfalls area	Nestling	16/06/2012 17-21/07/13
5409036 AKZH	Pionierinsel luhe, Niedersachsen, GERMANY Heysham outfalls area	Nestling	16/06/2012 21/07/2013
FN74278 PNE7	Otmuchow, POLAND 50 27N 17 14E Heysham outfalls area 1420km NW	Nestling	10/06/2011 17/07/2013
FS71953 R13E Seen Seen Seen Seen Seen	Oye Plage, Pas de Calais, FRANCE 50 59N 2 03E Le Portel, FRANCE 50 42N 1 34E Piriac sur Mer, Loire Atlantique FRANCE 47 23N 2 33W Polder de Sebastopol, Vendee FRANCE 46 56N 2 09W Polder de Sebastopol, Vendee FRANCE 46 56N 2 09W Heysham Harbour area Heysham outfalls area	Nestling	15/06/2009 20/09/2009 7-18/02/10 21/04/2010 27/04/2011 03/08/2011 21/22/7/13
3725732 E738 Seen Seen	De Kreupel, Isjeelmeer, NETHERLANDS 52 48N 5 14E Nevern Est, Newport, Dyfed Leighton Moss Heysham outfalls area	Nestling	21/06/2012 16/10/2012 11/05/2013 25/05/2013
3693897 LCG	De Kreupel, Isjeelmeer, NETHERLANDS 52 48N 5 14E Malaga Harbour, SPAIN 36 43N 4 25W	Nestling	24/06/2010 20/02/2011

Seen	Heysham outfalls area		11/08/2013
E929291	Total, Antwerp, BELGIUM 51 15N 4 19E	Nestling	17/05/2011
2P96	Heysham harbour area		8/9/11/19/2/12
Seen	Heysham harbour area (darvic added after caught on fishing line)		2/10/12/9/4/13
Seen	Heysham harbour area		from 15/7/13
E929362	Total, Antwerp, Belgium 51 15N 4 19E	Nestling	17/05/2011
Seen	Heysham outfalls area		21/22/7/13
EL51799	Belmont Reservoir	Nestling	08/06/2006
Seen	Ponta Delgada, Sao Miguel: 37°44'N 25°40'W AZORES 2,508km SW		12/11/2006
Seen	Ponta Delgada, Sao Miguel: AZORES		29/03/2007
Seen	Ponta Delgada, Sao Miguel: AZORES		30/11/2007
Seen	Zwirownia Pilce, Ozary, Kamieniec Zabkowicki, Donoshlaskie: 50°18'N 16°29'E (Walbrzych) POLAND 1,351km ESE		30/05/2012
EW31760	Belmont Reservoir	Nestling	29/05/2007
Seen	Nare Point, Cornwall 433km SSW		24/11/2011
BLB	Zandvliet: 51°22'N 4°18'E (Antwerpen) BELGIUM	Nestling	09/06/2002
E905810	Heysham Harbour 569km WNW		11/08/2002
Seen	Broadway, Morecambe 568km WNW		wintering to 29/8/2012
CZP	Chomoutov: 49°38'N 17°14'E CZECH REPUBLIC	Nestling	03/06/2003
EX78711	Heysham Harbour, 1,466km WNW		12/07/2008
Seen	Heysham Harbour		wintering to March 2013
DEW	Stade: 53°35'N 9°36'E Schleswig-Holstein GERMANY	Nestling	14/06/2008
5350336	Skippool, Poulton Le Fylde 827km W		24/08/2009
Seen	Titchfield Haven, Hampshire 800km WSW		05/04/2010
Seen	Titchfield Haven		12/03/2011
Seen	Calshot, Hampshire 805km WSW		03/07/2011
Seen	Titchfield Haven		15/03/2012
PLG	Mietkow: 50°57'N 16°36'E Wroclaw POLAND	Nestling	04/06/2012
FN10193	Brockholes Wetland 1,342km WNW		02/08/2012
FS72676	Conchille Temple, Pas de Calais, FRANCE 50 22N 1 4E	Nestling	11/06/2010
Seen	Seaforth Nature reserve		02/10/2010
Seen	Seaforth Nature reserve	Alive	8/9/7/13
FN16070	Pomorskie, POLAND 53 59N 17 23E	Nestling	05/06/2009
PKE7	Seaforth Nature Reserve 1338km NW		26/02/2011
EG61728	Old Moor, Barnsley, South Yorks	Nestling	09/07/2010
2E26	Seaforth Nature Reserve		23/08 to 13/10/11
Seen	Seaforth Nature Reserve		13/01 & 24/02/13
3693876	De Kreupel, Isselmeer, NETHERLANDS 52 48N 5 14E	Nestling	24/06/2010
Seen	Seaforth, Merseyside		13/08/2010
Seen	Seaforth, Merseyside		26/08/2011
Seen	Lisbon, PORTUGAL 38 43N 9 08W		19/12/2011
Seen	Seaforth, Merseyside		29/07/2013
3616769	De Braakman, NETHERLANDS 51 19N 3 44E	Nestling	20/06/2011
Seen	Dungarvan, Waterford		26/08/2011
Seen	Limekilns, Cardigan Bay		26/07/2012

Seen	Aberystwyth	13/07/2013
Seen	Seaforth	29/07/2013

A decent selection with the German rooftop colony featuring prominently.

COMMON GULL

IA114559	Insel Poel: 54°2'N 11°30'E Schleswig-Holstein GERMANY	Nestling	24/06/2011
Seen	Fishmoor Reservoir, Blackburn 915km W		07/02/2012

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL

GA18102	Tarnbrook Fell	Nestling	10/07/1998
Seen	Puerto de Espasante: 43°23'N 8°25'W (Coruna) SPAIN 1,256km SSW		22/10/2001
Seen	Matozinhos: 41°11'N 8°42'W (Douro Litoral) PORTUGAL 1,497km SSW		13/09/2007
Seen	Esmelle, Ferrol: 43°32'N 8°17'W (Coruna) SPAIN 1,237km SSW		02/09/2009
Seen	Stoke Orchard: 51°57'N 2°7'W (Gloucestershire) 232km S		01/03/2010
Seen	Aveiro: 40°39'N 8°36'W (Beira Litoral) PORTUGAL 1,552km SSW		29/10/2012
GA42230	Banks Marsh, Ribble Estuary	Nestling	06/07/2002
Seen	Talavera de la Reina: 39°58'N 4°37'W (Toledo) SPAIN 1,532km S		05/01/2006
Seen	Pinto Landfill, Madrid: 40°16'N 3°38'W (Madrid) SPAIN 1,494km S		28/01/2007
Seen	Pinto Landfill: 40°16'N 3°38'W (Madrid) SPAIN 1,494km S		16/12/2007
Seen	Colmenar Viejo Landfill: 40°39'N 3°46'W (Madrid) SPAIN 1,452km S		07/02/2009
Seen	Stocks Reservoir 45km NE		17/07/2010
Seen	Duncannon Beach, Wexford 316km WSW		06/12/2012
GA18157	Tarnbrook Fell	Nestling	10/07/1998
Seen	near Salt Ayre, Lancaster 16km W		31/05/2000
Seen	Uad El Caabiat: 20°4'N 15°34'W MAURITANIA 3,933km SSW		08/02/2012
Seen	Marismas Del Odiel: 37°11'N 6°56'W (Huelva) SPAIN 1,900km SSW		21/08/2013

A typical selection - always worth sending in sightings of this species in order to find out their winter wanderings.

HERRING GULL

GF57120	near Blackborough End, King's Lynn, Norfolk	2CY	19/03/2011
Seen	Richmond Bank, Cheshire 223km WNW		09/03/2012
Seen	Freckleton Sewage Works, near Preston 249km WNW		11/03/2012

BARN OWL

GR43404	Gift Hall Farm, Winmarleigh	Nestling	18/06/2011
Car death	New Edlington, South Yorkshire 118km ESE		08/03/2012

GOLDCREST

DTY456	Heysham Obs	1CY Male	01/10/2012
Caught	Embley Wood, Hampshire 354km SSE		13/10/2012

COAL TIT

T947379	Barrow Bridge, Greater Manchester	Adult	21/03/2010
Seen	Gisburn Forest, Slaidburn 45km N		09/01/2013

Disappointingly, no returns as yet from the large irruption in autumn 2012.

BLUE TIT

Y470538	Heysham Obs	First year	23/02/2012
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Caught Brookhouse, Lune valley 15km ENE 25/02/2012
 Rapid movement along the 'usual route' for early spring movement from the coast to the Lune valleys.

SAND MARTIN

Y765589	River Lune, Whittington	Juvenile	09/08/2012
Caught	Sandwich Bay Estate, Kent 421km SE		08/09/2012
Y765539	Alston Reservoir	Adult Female	26/07/2012
Caught	Pett Level, Sussex 392km SE		26/08/2012
L334109	Whittington, Lune valley	Juvenile	08/07/2010
Caught	Salburua, Alava, SPAIN 42 51N 2 38W 1260kmS		20/08/2010
Y704223	Whittington, Lune valley	Adult female	11/06/2012
Caught	Charante Maritime, FRANCE 45 51N 1 4W 932km S		
Escaping the awful 2012 summer and river flooding on quite an early date.			
Y551211	Appletowngarth, Dumfries & Galloway	Nestling	27/06/2012
Caught	Middleton Nature Reserve 128km SSE		26/08/2012
This was ringed at an artificial colony where this is a safe procedure.			

SWALLOW

Y471042	Heysham Obs	1CY	10/08/2012
Caught	Gressingham roost, Lune valley 17km ENE		10/08/2012
Caught whilst tootling around the NR office in the late afternoon, then the numbers seemed oddly familiar when the same ringer attended the roost netting a few hours later!			

HOUSE MARTIN

X755260	Pett Level, Sussex	1CY	23/09/2009
Caught	Fazakerley, Liverpool 375km NW		07/06/2012
X411307	West Down Plantation, Tilshead, Wiltshire	1CY	20/09/2008
Caught	Fazakerley, Liverpool 256km NNW		11/05/2012

CETTI'S WARBLER

X945739	Leighton Moss	Full-grown Male	13/03/2010
Caught	Farlington Marsh, Portsmouth, Hampshire 390km SSE		25/04/2011
Caught	Farlington Marsh		03/10/2011
Caught	Farlington Marsh		14/01/2012

LONG TAILED TIT

DEE776	Knott End-on-Sea	Full-grown	27/10/2011
Dead	Whitwick, Leicestershire 170km SE		20/03/2012
This is one of the ringing sites, like Heysham, which records significant numbers of this species on autumn migration, often behaving irruptively.			

CHIFFCHAFF

DJV360	Woolston Eyes, Cheshire	Adult	31/03/2012
Caught	Heysham Obs 76km NNW (not necessarily breeding, only caught once)		10/06/2012
ABP495	Eskmeals, Cumbria	1CY	21/07/2012
Caught	Clow Bridge 100km SE		22/09/2012

DTY812	Leighton Moss	1CY	08/09/2012
Caught	Beja: 37°35'N 8°44'W (Baixo Alentejo) PORTUGAL 1,898km SSW		21/10/2012
DLH341	Hightown	1CY	23/09/2012
Caught	Nanjizal, Land's End, Cornwall 426km SSW		21/10/2012

LESSER WHITETHROAT

X947154	Middleton Nature Reserve, Lancs	1CY	27/07/2011
Caught	Pett Level, Sussex 422km SE - caught several times, presumed breeding		05/06/12+
	Migration was not easy in spring 2012, so did this 'give up' and nest over 400km to the south of the presumed natal area?		

WHITETHROAT

Y461617	Moss House Farm, Out Rawcliffe	Adult Female	23/05/2012
Caught	Villeton: 44°21'N 0°16'E (Lot-et-Garonne) FRANCE 1,082km SSE		15/09/2012

SEDGE WARBLER

AT14015	Zandvoort: 52°20'N 4°31'E (Noord-Holland) NETHERLANDS	2CY	30/07/2011
Caught	Leighton Moss 528km WNW		30/07/2012

REED WARBLER

Y045044	Pett Level, Sussex	Adult	31/07/2011
Caught	Fulwood Marsh 381km NW		04/06/2012
Y556872	Brookvale LNR, Rimrose Valley	1CY	21/07/2012
Caught	Pett Level, Sussex 380km SE		12/08/2012
Y643945	Woolhampton gravel pits, Berkshire	1CY	09/08/2012
Caught	Middleton Nature Reserve 315km		25/05/2013
L444886	Leighton Moss	1CY	08/08/2010
Caught	Rutland Water 218km SE		26/04/2013
V240390	Fleetwood	1CY	03/08/2012
Caught	Tidmoor, The Fleet, Dorset 369km S		23/08/2012
Y332150	Leighton Moss	1CY	26/08/2011
Caught	Braud Et Saint Louis: 45°16'N 0°41'W (Gironde) FRANCE 1,001km S		09/08/2012
Y151507	Leighton Moss	Adult Female	04/07/2011
Caught	Beja: 37°35'N 8°44'W (Baixo Alentejo) PORTUGAL 1,898km SSW		04/04/2012
6583584	Ile Nouvelle, Blaye: 45°7'N 0°39'W (Gironde) FRANCE	Adult Female	25/08/2011
Caught	Leighton Moss 1,018km N		19/06/2012

STARLING

H262258	Parnumaa, Audru-Alevik: 58°24'N 24°21'E ESTONIA	Nestling	16/05/2010
Dead (cat)	Poulton-Le-Fylde 1,766km WSW		08/02/2012

BLACKBIRD

LA49465	Orfordness, Suffolk	1CY Male	06/11/2011
Dead	Greenbank Park, Liverpool 336km WNW		14/01/2012
RK56296	Coppull Moor	Adult	02/09/2000
Caught	Billingham Beck Valley CP, Cleveland 141km NE		09/01/2012

LE82509	Kilnsea Clays, Humberside	Adult Female	30/10/2012
Dead (cat)	Heysham 205km WNW		30/12/2012
LB66532	Lytham St Annes	Adult Male	04/12/2009
Dead	Cleehill, Shropshire 157km S		08/01/2012

ROBIN

Y333133	Heysham Obs	1CY	14/10/2011
Dead	Parton, Dumfries & Galloway, 132km WNW		15/03/2013

PIED FLYCATCHER

L927171	Pengelli, Dyfed	Nestling Female	04/06/2011
Nestbox	Burton Wood, Brookhouse, Lancaster 267km NNE		15/06/2012
X932417	Llewesog Hall, Prion, Clwyd	Nestling Female	04/06/2010
Nestbox	Lees, near Chipping, 102km NE		19/05/2012

WHEATEAR

Y539953	Calf of Man, IOM	1CY	30/07/2012
Caught	Seaforth, 135km ESE		12/04/2013

GREY WAGTAIL

V901624	Middleton Nature Reserve	1CY	18/09/2009
Seen	Coven, Staffordshire 159km SSE		12/10/2012

MEADOW PIPIT

L959401	Clowbridge	1CY	15/10/2011
Caught	East Shefford Stw, near Great Shefford, Berkshire 260km SSE		14/10/2012

CHAFFINCH

Y476792	Walney Island, Cumbria	1CY male	17/03/2012
Caught	Brookhouse, Lune valley 33km E		23/03/2012

A simplistic explanation for this would be a continental bird migrating east at the 'correct' time of year – but taking its time.

GREENFINCH

TP20086	Lytham St Annes	Adult Male	25/12/2010
Dead (cat)	Reeds Farm Estate, Malmesbury, Wiltshire 249km SSE		13/10/2012

Depends how far it was carried by the cat, but this is further south than the usual movement by a small proportion of birds to the 'Midlands' - see next recovery.

TS17420	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth, Shropshire	1CY Male	14/10/2011
Dead	Silverdale 182km N		20/09/2012

TS69040	Over Kellet, Carnforth	2CY Male	23/01/2012
Caught	Ponteland, Northumberland 120km NNE		30/04/2012

GOLDFINCH

Y484068	Lajjanbeg, Kilninver, Oban, Strathclyde	Juvenile	21/08/2012
Caught	Heysham north harbour wall 302km SSE		05/11/2012

With Twite from a very similar origin.

D057099	Port e Vullen, Isle of Man	Adult female	16/10/2012
Caught	Heysham Obs 98km ESE		19/10/2012

This was not caught at Heysham until the afternoon of 19/10 and could have "vis migged" from the Isle of Man that day

Y509582	Terriers, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire	1CY Male	01/11/2011
Caught	Longton, near Preston 270km NNW		05/04/2012
X923503	Dalton, Lancashire	Adult Male	08/11/2011
Dead	Chatellerault: 46°49'N 0°32'E (Vienne) FRANCE 786km SSE		27/02/2012
L959289	Clow Bridge	1CY	01/10/2011
Dead (cat)	Epeigne-Les-Bois: 47°16'N 1°6'E (Indre-et-Loire) FRANCE 759km SSE		28/03/2012

SISKIN

L771922	Thrushgill, Lancs	Juvenile	20/06/2011
Dead	Quebriac Ill-et-Vilaine, FRANCE 48 20N 1 49W 638km S		10/03/2013

This bird was almost certainly from the significant breeding population at Thrushgill in 2011.

D139202	Newton in Bowland	2CY male	10/04/2013
Caught	Tongue, Highland 517km NW		18/05/2013

The longest movement within the British Isles.

X388228	Knaresborough, N Yorks	2CY male	04/04/2009
Caught	Over Kellet		02/04/2013

Not included in the summary below as presumably at the same stage of migration at a similar latitude, but using a different route. In contrast to Lesser Redpoll, birds found on the wintering grounds were more geographically spread towards the west e.g. Wiltshire and Somerset. Also in contrast, the majority of Siskin were caught at feeders in Scotland, including those in the Highlands apparently avoided by Lesser Redpolls!

Siskin: winter period locations of birds caught on spring passage in Lancashire

Wiltshire: Deverill; Longbridge
 Somerset: Minehead
 Norfolk: Thetford x 2
 Lincolnshire: Bourne Wood
 Suffolk: Culford
 Staffordshire: Brewood

Siskin: breeding season or passage locations to the north of birds caught in Lancashire

Dumfries and Galloway: Lockerbie x 2, Wigtown, Torwood Lodge x 2
 Highland: Drummond, Inverness x 2, Golspie, Shebster, Tongue
 Borders: Peebles
 Moray: Keith
 North Lanarkshire: Bellshill
 Strathclyde: Carluke
 Durham: Belmont

LINNET

Y376420	Point of Ayre, Isle of Man	1CY Female	22/10/2011
Caught	Moss House Farm, Out Rawcliffe 115km ESE		14/03/2012

TWITE

D137972	Heysham north harbour wall feeding station	2CY female	05/03/2013
Caught	Clachtoll, nr Lochinver, Highland 485km NNW		16/05/2013

The second record from Heysham to this site. Most of the birds ringed here winter on the east coast, including Orkney.

L999067	Machrihanish Seabird Observatory, Argyll and Bute 1CY	02/09/2011
Caught	Heysham north harbour wall 239km SE	28/10/11 to 16/03/12
Caught	Heysham north harbour wall	15/11/12 to 05/03/13

The most regularly-captured of the wintering Twite at Heysham north wall!

LESSER REDPOLL

12231826	Sinaai: 51°10'N 4°2'E (Oost-Vlaanderen) BELGIUM	2CY Female
Caught	Moss House Farm, Out Rawcliffe 555km WNW	20/10/2012
6343163	La Neuville: 50°29'N 3°2'E (Nord) FRANCE	1CY Male
Caught	Heysham Obs 565km NW	24/03/2012

Large numbers of Lesser Redpoll were ringed on spring passage attending niger feeders and/or tape-lured, with the lion's share from New Laithe Farm, Newton, Bowland. Other key sites: Rishton, Over Kellet, Heysham, Out Rawcliffe, Fleetwood and Knott End. As has previously been apparent with smaller samples, there is a striking bias towards the south-east of England, especially midwinter birds. Note the imbalance between birds ringed on the wintering areas or passage to the south of here compared to on the breeding grounds to the north. Ray Collier (in litt) has suggested that Lesser Redpolls do not use feeders in the Highlands. In addition, a bird bearing a cagebird ring was traced to Chelmsford, Essex, in the middle of the core wintering range. Another cagebird ring was from "somewhere in France". Both these cagebirds were migrating with flocks of presumed wild origin!

Lesser Redpoll: winter period locations of birds caught on spring passage in Lancashire

Kent: King's Wood, Sandwich Bay
 Sussex: East Grinstead, Pett Level
 Surrey: Wisley, Dukes Warren, Cobham
 Warwickshire: Cubbington
 Worcestershire: Grimley x 2
 Greater Manchester: Walkden
 Norfolk: Thetford x 3, Eccles
 Suffolk: Thorndon, Boyton, Languard, Culford
 Lincolnshire, Bourne Wood
 Derbyshire, Ramsley, Holme Wood
 South Yorkshire, Hatfield Moor

Lesser Redpoll: breeding season or passage locations to the north of birds caught in Lancashire

Dumfries and Galloway: Sanquahar, Lockerbie
 Lanarkshire: Bellshill
 Cumbria: Greystoke
 West Lothian: Blackburn
 Northumberland: Ebchester

REED BUNTING

L445384	Middleton Nature Reserve LWT	1CY Female	18/08/2011
Caught	Cardiff Wetland Reserve, Cardiff, Glamorgan 286km S		06/05/2012
Y519037	Corsham Lake, Wiltshire	Full-grown Male	13/01/2012
Caught	Knott End 282km N		23/02/2012
L445448	Middleton Nature Reserve LWT	1CY male	01/10/2011
Caught	Ripon Parks, N Yorks 91km E		01/02/2012

The first of these is rather unexpected and may simply have remained in the wintering area to breed.

Earliest and 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. The table summarises the following information:

The earliest spring arrival and latest autumn records in 2012.

The earliest recorded spring and latest recorded autumn records.

The average (mean) first arrival and last departure dates.

The trends for Earlier or Later arrival or departure where these are statistically significant between 1978 and 2012. (/ = no significant trend).

Records of presumed overwintering and sickly birds have been omitted.

	Spring				Autumn			
	2011	Earliest	Mean	Trend	2011	Latest	Mean	Trend
Garganey	7/4	24/2/95	30/3	/				
Osprey	21/3	4/3/05	1/4	E	26/9	7/11/05	11/10	/
LRP	14/3	8/3/10	25/3	E	30/8	19/10/76	10/9	/
Dotterel	5/4	29/3/89	25/4	/				
Whimbrel	27/3	11/3/78	8/4	/	24/10	6/11/88	3/10	/
Common Sandpiper	26/3	18/3/11	5/4	E	6/10	29/10/77	13/10	/
Wood Sandpiper	5/5	14/4/83	3/5	/	5/12	5/12/12	17/9	/
Little Tern	19/4	13/4/91	25/4	/	29/8	3/10/03	15/9	/
Black Tern	26/4	11/4/80	30/4	/	6/10	12/11/00	11/10	/
Sandwich Tern	24/3	13/3/90	27/3	/	3/10	2/12/94	16/10	/
Common Tern	11/4	30/3/07	12/4	/	2/10	17/11/77	20/10	E
Arctic Tern	17/4	1/4/94	17/4	/	26/9	18/11/11	11/10	/
Cuckoo	8/4	23/3/00	16/4	/	3/9	18/10/09	1/9	/
Swift	25/4	1/4/04	17/4	E	27/9	4/12/63	11/10	/
Sand Martin	12/3	24/2/90	11/3	/	4/10	13/10/72	4/10	/
Swallow	22/3	10/3/97	25/3	E	29/11	31/12/86	20/11	L
House Martin	1/4	17/3/63	2/4	E	12/10	31/12/81	1/11	E
Wood Warbler	2/5	14/4/79	23/4	/	/	26/9/67		
Willow Warbler	23/3	19/3/90 & 11	1/4	/	4/11	18/11/89	12/10	/
Garden Warbler	18/4	6/4/11	21/4	E	14/10	13/11/95	16/10	/
Lesser Whitethroat	15/4	8/4/11	22/4	E	20/10	23/11/99	27/9	/
Whitethroat	14/4	6/4/65	17/4	E	23/9	23/10/90	29/9	/
Grasshopper Warbler	8/4	7/4/11	17/4	/	4/10	4/10/81 & 12	17/9	/
Sedge Warbler	14/4	27/3/03	13/4	E	27/9	14/11/96	1/10	/
Reed Warbler	17/4	5/4/11	16/4	E	4/10	14/11/93	13/10	/
Spotted Flycatcher	6/5	20/4/85 & 11	30/4	/	1/10	15/11/79	5/10	/
Pied Flycatcher	14/4	7/4/11	18/4	/	16/9	3/11/01	23/9	/
Ring Ouzel	20/3	11/3/99	22/3	E	30/11	11/12/00	3/11	/
Redstart	28/3	28/3/68 & 12	10/4	/	19/10	10/11/82	8/10	E
Whinchat	26/4	20/3/76	18/4	L	7/10	12/11/79	15/10	E
Wheatear	14/3	26/2/03	12/3	/	19/10	27/11/11	1/11	/
Yellow Wagtail	18/4	24/3/96	9/4	/	4/11	11/11/95	9/10	/
Tree Pipit	2/4	17/3/57	6/4	/	1/12	1/12/12	30/9	/

Lancashire & Cheshire Fauna Society

Elected Officials of the Lancashire and Cheshire Fauna Society

Chairman: Dr Frank Walsh, 80 Arundel Road, Lytham St. Annes, Lancs, FY8 1BN

Tel: 01253 737765

e-mail: frank@walsh.me.uk

Secretary: Dave Bickerton, 64 Petre Crescent, Rishton, Lancs, BB1 4RB

Tel: 01254 886257

e-mail: bickertond@aol.com

Treasurer: Alex Whitlock, 9 Sykefield, Brierfield, Lancs. BB9 5NB

e-mail: moil@btinternet.com

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

Next Annual General Meeting, 10am Saturday 1st March 2014 – see website for details of location which will be announced nearer the date.

Membership of the Lancashire and Cheshire Fauna Society is still just £10 per annum – this includes a copy of the Lancashire Bird Report posted to your home address and any General Reports published. 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) or directly from the Honorary Secretary.

We regularly have a stand at the North-west Bird Fair held at Martin Mere in November and look forward to meeting many members there.

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 or pdfs. 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:

- Red-breasted Goose (escaped), Martin Mere, 28 September 2003 to 7 December 2010
- Blue-winged Teal, Marshside, 16 September 2012
- Glossy Ibis, Leighton Moss & Silverdale Moss, 2011 to 22 April 2012
- Glossy Ibis, Aldcliffe Marsh, 7-12 January 2012
- Glossy Ibis, Hesketh Out Marsh, 2 September 2012
- Black-winged Stilt (2), Leighton Moss, 20 April 2012
- Lesser Yellowlegs, Aldcliffe Marsh, 21 October to 5 December, 2012
- American Black Tern, Eccleston Mere, 30 August to 4 September 2012
- Little Swift, River Mersey, Liverpool Docks, 23 June 2012
- Penduline Tit, Leighton Moss, 11 February, 17 March & 7 April 2012

The following records are still under consideration by the BBRC:

- Cackling Goose, south-west mosses, November 1976
- American Herring Gull, Seaforth, 20 February 2011
- Siberian Common Tern, Seaforth, 30 May 2010
- Citrine Wagtail, Seaforth, 26 August 2011
- 'Caspian' Reed Warbler, Jack Scout, 11 December 2011

Records not accepted by BBRC:

- Pallid Harrier, Marshside, 8 October 2012
- Blyth's Reed Warbler, Fleetwood Marsh, 28 September 2012

County Description Species

Descriptions of species considered to be county rarities (listed below 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

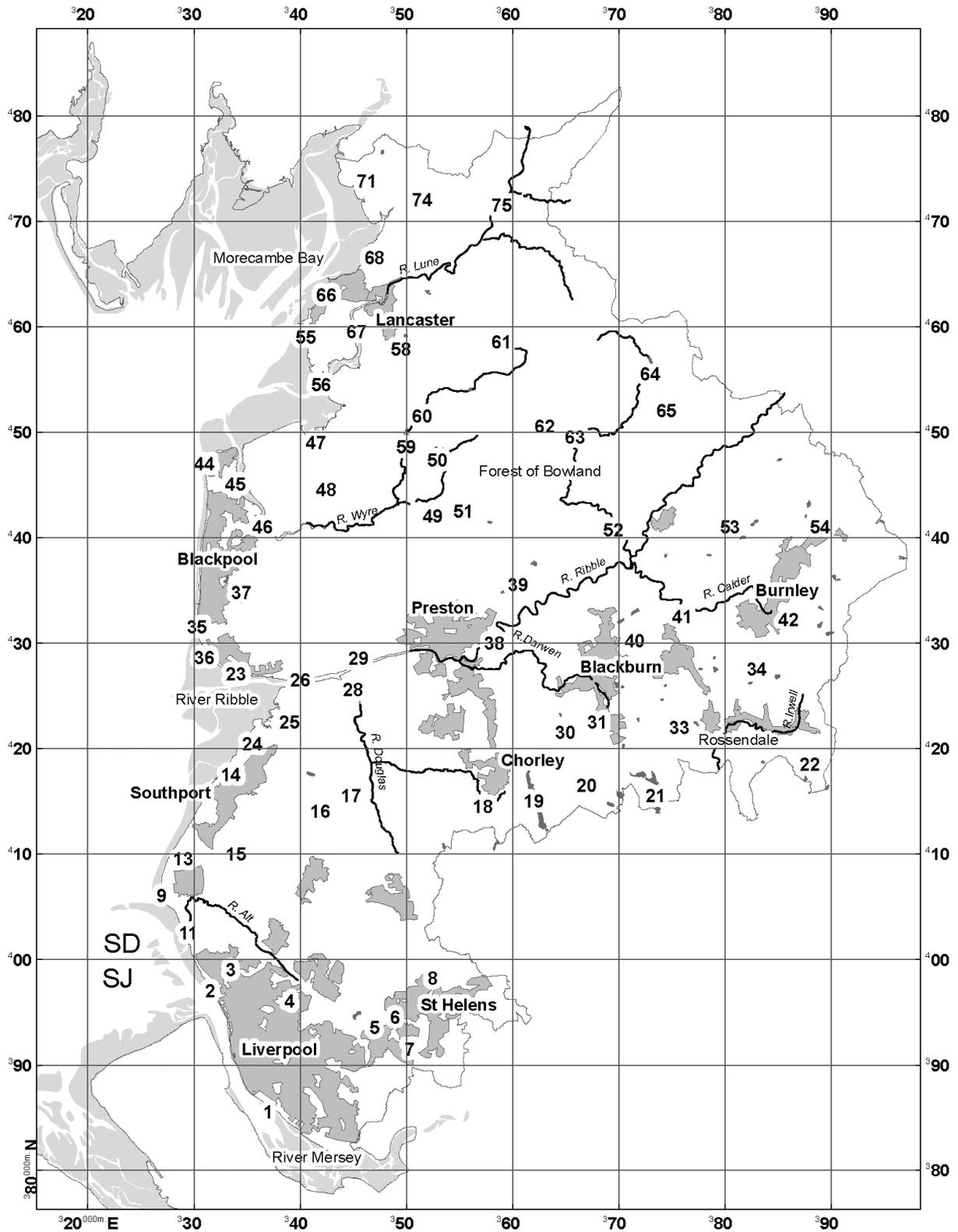
Please note that both Lesser Spotted Woodpecker and Turtle Dove are now so rare in the county that they are now 'description species', and that records of both Willow and Marsh Tit outside of their known ranges also need to be supported by descriptions. Glossy Ibis was dropped as a national rarity at the beginning of 2013

Species and Subspecies Requiring Full Descriptions

These are all marked with an asterisk in the systematic list

Taiga Bean Goose	American Golden Plover	Red-rumped Swallow
(Richardson's) Cackling Goose	Temminck's Stint	Cetti's Warbler
Black Brant	White-rumped Sandpiper	Dartford Warbler
American Wigeon	Pectoral Sandpiper	Aquatic Warbler
Ring-necked Duck	Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Marsh Warbler
Ferruginous Duck	Red-necked Phalarope	Icterine Warbler
Surf Scoter	Long-tailed Skua	Melodious Warbler
Black Grouse	Sabine's Gull	Barred Warbler
Great Shearwater	Ring-billed Gull	Western Subalpine Warbler
Sooty Shearwater	Caspian Gull	Greenish Warbler
Cory's Shearwater	White-winged Black Tern	Yellow-browed Warbler
Balearic Shearwater	Roseate Tern	Pallas's Warbler
Wilson's Petrel	Little Auk	Radde's Warbler
Night Heron	Puffin	Dusky Warbler
Purple Heron	Turtle Dove	Siberian Chiffchaff
Cattle Egret	Nightjar	Rose-coloured Starling
Great White Egret	Alpine Swift	Red-breasted Flycatcher
Glossy Ibis	Bee-eater	Nightingale
Red-necked Grebe	Hoopoe	Bluethroat
Honey Buzzard	Wryneck	Richard's Pipit
Black Kite	Golden Oriole	Tawny Pipit
Montagu's Harrier	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	Red-throated Pipit
White-tailed Eagle	(away from Chorley woods)	Serin
Golden Eagle	Red-backed Shrike	Common (Mealy) Redpoll
Rough-legged Buzzard	Woodchat Shrike	Coues's Arctic Redpoll
Red-footed Falcon	Chough	Common Rosefinch
Spotted Crake	Marsh and Willow Tit	Lapland Bunting
Corncrake	(out of normal range)	Ortolan Bunting
Common Crane	Woodlark	Little Bunting
Stone Curlew	Short-toed Lark	Cirl Bunting

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 Reservoirs & Alston Wetland	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
Cloughton 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

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

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 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).

Photographs and Illustrations

Thanks are once again due to Steve Young, Phil Boardman and Mike Malpass for supplying the bulk of the images for the report. We would be delighted to receive further submissions from the growing number of Lancashire birders with high quality photographic equipment. We will be producing the 2013 report in full colour, allowing us to the use of colour photographs throughout the text.

We are also grateful to Ray Scally for providing several excellent line drawings.

Regional and group contributors

Alt WeBS	Arnside & District Natural History report
Birdguides	BTO/RSPB Birdtrack
Chorley & District Natural History report	Cuerden Valley Park report
ELOC Report	Fylde Bird Club database
Gorse Hill NR report	Heysham NR & Observatory Report
LDBWS report	MMWWT logs
Morecambe Bay WeBS	Rare Bird Alert
Ribble WeBS	Seaforth Bird Report
St. Helens Bird Recorders	United Utilities

Individual contributors

Thank-you to everyone who has contributed their records to the Society for inclusion in this year's report. Sincere apologies if we've missed anyone!

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