

Lancashire & Cheshire Fauna Society

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Lancashire Bird Report 2013 The Birds of Lancashire and North Merseyside

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Front cover: Greenish Warbler (John Barlow)

Back cover: Two-barred Crossbill (Steve Young)

Introduction

Dave Bickerton

One hundred years ago, a committed band of naturalists in the North West of England endeavoured to put on record, the sightings and specimens obtained for as many of the faunal groups as possible. The timing inauspiciously coincided with the outbreak of war but this didn't seem to be a hurdle they couldn't overcome. And so the Lancashire and Cheshire Fauna Committee was formed with those very objectives of recording and publishing data on the fauna of the counties. It is interesting to browse through the first reports and how the emphasis on faunal groups has changed with the avifauna hardly getting a mention yet taking up the lion's share of the publication space nowadays. Peter Hornby has written an article that appears later in this report summarising the history of the Society from its formation to the present day. The 2014 Annual General Meeting of the society was held on the first Saturday of March as usual and we celebrated the Centenary with anecdotes from long standing members, lunch and reminiscences afterwards. There was a good turnout including four people who were members 50 years ago – that's what I call commitment!



Members who attended the 2014 Annual General Meeting in Burscough

(Left to right) Tony Cooper, Bob Byefinch, Frank Walsh, Dave Bickerton, Harry Shorrocks, Maurice Jones, Rob Yates, Charlie Liggett, Jenny Walton, Pete Marsh, Jimmy Chubb, Steve White, Stephen Dunstan, Peter Hornby, Alex Whitlock, Alan Creaser, Bob Harris.

I suspect that the recording of other faunal groups is on the verge of making a comeback as more comprehensive and accessible field guides to the species become available, much as they did for birds in the fifties. One only has to go on the Brockholes Facebook page to see the diverse interest people have and the number of people involved. However, these websites can be rather ephemeral and so it is important that we get a written public record. I'm sure there are enthusiasts out there who could and maybe would take on a more supportive role in the naturalist community and provide the record ratification process that's sought by many. In Lancashire we have a panel of birders that meet to discuss submitted records of county rarities. Similarly there is a network based on Vice-counties for Moths and Butterflies; there is a link on our website to the Lancashire Moth Group for example

so if you have a link for other faunal groups or would like to get something on the web under the L&CFS website, then let us know.

The results of the bird atlas work carried out up to 2011 was published in sections in pdf form on the website. I know many of you have managed to have a look through and liked what you saw. We'll soon be in a position to publish an Atlas of the Dragonflies of Lancashire and North Merseyside but this time in paper form, so be on the lookout for that in the coming months.

2013 was a rather splendid year in terms of the birding scene with three firsts for the county; two, rather unusually in the east – Killdeer at Alston Wetland and Two-barred Crossbill in Bowland, and a Baikal Teal at Marshside. Add to that some notable seconds, Greenish Warbler and Semipalmated Sandpiper, and a great supporting cast, it all made for an exceptional year. I hope you enjoy reading all about it in this special full-colour centenary edition. As usual we have adopted the latest changes in the systematic order suggested by the BOU which moves falcons and changes the order of the finches in the main.

Once again I'd like to thank all the authors of the accounts, the members of the records committee and especially Steve White for the hours and days they put into getting this report together - all on a completely voluntary basis. The large number of authors really helps in reducing individual workload so if you would like to help, let Steve know as soon as possible. I would also like to thank Frank Walsh who stood down from the post of Chairman at the AGM for his contributions over his considerable period in post.

Lancashire & Cheshire Fauna Society

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Next Annual General Meeting, 10am Saturday 7th March 2015 – 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, BTO, Butterfly Conservation, etc. 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 website (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.

REVIEW OF THE YEAR, 2013

John Wright

2013 will long be remembered for the rare and scarce birds that visited the county. It was also memorable for a long hot summer which benefitted many resident species and summer visitors. With a mild winter to end the year things looked hopeful for the county's birds going into 2014.

JANUARY

The month began with a generally mild and settled spell, with only modest rainfall amounts and some fog. It turned much colder for a fortnight from the 12th with several significant snowfalls. Toward the end of the month, milder and changeable conditions brought rain and strong winds.

The first sighting of note in what turned out to be the year of the unexpected was a blue-morph **Lesser Snow Goose** which accompanied the **Pink-footed Goose** flocks at various sites in north Fylde from the 13th. **Tundra Bean Geese** were also on the Fylde with singles seen at Pilling, Lytham Moss and Fleetwood. Adding to the variety were a **Greenland White-fronted Goose** at Lytham Moss and **Dark- and Pale-bellied Brent Geese** at Pilling.

A **Slavonian Grebe** was a good find at Lower Rivington Reservoir on the 13th. The first of nine **Black-throated Divers** seen offshore this year was off Blackpool on the 25th – a good return for this tricky species.

In the south-west an immature **Spoonbill** remained on the Ribble Marshes from 2012 and a Common Crane was at MMWWT and surrounding areas from the 7th. **Carrion Crows** now rival **Rooks** and **Jackdaws** for their winter roosts, with an assembly of 400 at the Delph Plantations particularly noteworthy.

FEBRUARY

The first half of the month was generally unsettled, with variable temperatures and periods of rain and snow at times. After a short sunnier spell in mid-month, the weather turned colder and cloudier as high pressure became established.

'White winged' gulls are much sought after and a good showing of **Iceland Gulls** was much appreciated. A second-winter was at Marton Mere and the nearby Sita site, a first-winter roosted at Fishmoor Reservoir on the 12-13th, a second-winter was at Stocks Reservoir on the 17th and a first-winter at Rossall Point between the 22nd and 24th.

Another winter favourite is the **Waxwing** and they were enjoyed by birders, residents and shoppers alike. The highest count was 150 in Crosby, with 65 at Prescott, 100 in central Preston, 62 at Lightfoot Green, 70 in central Blackburn, 67 in Nelson, 59 in Burnley, 53 in Brierfield, 50 at Great Knowley in Chorley, 52 in Lancaster, and up to 40 at St. Anne's and Great Marton.

Much more unseasonal was a **Richard's Pipit** on Hesketh Out Marsh, which perhaps had wintered unseen on the Ribble marshes. Despite the cold, **Ravens** remained in the uplands, highlighted by an impressive gathering of 21 at Stocks Reservoir on the 28th. More unusually a pair of **Ring-necked Parakeets** was observed nest-building at Lytham Crematorium.



Richard's Pipit, Hesketh Out Marsh,
14 February. (Colin Bushell)

MARCH

The month began fine and settled with some frosty nights. After a brief mild spell the rest of the month was bitterly cold with persistent easterly winds. Daytime temperatures struggled to get much above freezing with widespread heavy snow from the 22nd to the 24th.

The thousands of **Common Scoter** wintering off the Lancashire coast often provide only tantalising glimpses from shore; the discovery amongst them of a male **Surf Scoter** off Blackpool on the 2nd was an exciting find and only the fourth county record.

A brief mild spell on the 9th allowed a herald of spring to arrive in the form of a male **Wheatear** at Marshside. Another surprise came on the 13th when a **Little Bunting** was trapped at Rawcliffe Moss. This gem was only the sixth record for the county and it was seen again in April.

Wildfowl were on the move and a flock of **Tufted Ducks** brought a male **Lesser Scaup** to Brockholes on the 15th. However, it still felt very wintry and the 500 **Linnets** at Lunt Meadows on the 30th showed no signs of dispersing.

APRIL

The month began chilly with some wintry showers before turning more unsettled with rain or showers and strong winds between 14th and 18th. Following this, a somewhat drier, warmer and brighter period prevailed before finally turning cooler again with some heavy showers before the end of the month.

The persistent easterly winds increased the number of **Kittiwake** records inland with a peak of eleven at Brockholes on the 4th. Birds were also seen at Fishmoor, Lower Rivington, Stocks and Walverden Reservoirs during this period; they also passed Heysham in good numbers with 334 on the 6th.

The winds eased that evening and, with a clear night, no fewer than eight **Bitterns** took the chance to leave the Leighton Moss reedbeds and head east. On the 7th the flood-gates opened with a movement of 3098 **Meadow Pipits** over Rossall Point and 160 **Red-throated Divers** past Blackpool.

It also resulted in the fantastic discovery of the county's first **Killdeer** at Alston Wetland. Remarkably, the finder had come across one in Ireland nine days earlier, creating speculation that it was the same bird. Unfortunately it soon moved on, frustrating many county listers. Also at Alston a **Little Tern** flew through on the 12th, the first of the year and the earliest ever county record.

The excitement continued with the county's ninth **Alpine Swift** scything over Marton Mere on the 14th. On the same day a female **Lesser Scaup** was an excellent find at Borwick Waters. Thankfully, this bird stayed into May and was much visited. With the Brockholes male these represented the seventh and eighth records for the county.

Migration continued apace with a remarkable 900-1000 **Pied Wagtails** grounded in fields at The Snab by the Lune on the 15th. On the 16th a flock of eight Sandwich Terns was a high inland count at Brockholes. Another great find was a **Serin** calling as it flew south over Seaforth on the 20th – just the fourth Lancashire record.

Passage continued in spectacular fashion with 312 **Black-tailed Godwits** dropping into Stocks Reservoir on the 26th, followed on the 28th by eight **Black Terns** at the same site. The month ended with a **Hoopoe** at Scarisbrick on the 29th.

MAY

May began with a spell of fine weather, but from the 8th it became much more unsettled with heavy rain and strong winds at times. Temperatures remained generally below average with some notably cold days. The last week became drier and brighter, but temperatures still struggled to reach the seasonal average.

The month began with another **Hoopoe** in Hindburndale on the 2nd. On the same day a co-ordinated **Whimbrel** roost-count produced an impressive county total of 971. One of the highlights

of spring is the passage of **Dotterels**; the largest group this year was a trip of nine on Downholland Moss during the afternoon of the 5th.

Lesser Redpolls have taken readily to feeders during spring migration and this was illustrated by counts from Rishton of 50 on the 5th and from New Laithe Farm, Newton-in-Bowland with 70 on the 11th. The Rishton flock also included a **Common Redpoll** – the only one recorded this year.

Unsettled weather brought 15 **Pomarine Skuas** powering past Rossall on the 12th and a stunning adult **Long-tailed Skua** with full tail-streamers off Heysham on the 13th. Also on the 13th a **Turtle Dove**, now unfortunately a very scarce visitor, was seen at Sowerby.

Another exciting discovery was a **Bee-eater** which flashed past observers at Todderstaffe Hall on the 17th. The only **Temminck's Stint** of the year was found at Conder Green on the 27th

After a record showing of nine male **Blue-headed Wagtails** during April and May, including three at MMWWT, a probable male **Black-headed Wagtail** was seen at Newton-le-Willows on the 29th. Unfortunately the bird was not accepted by BBRC as the circumstances of the sighting precluded an exhaustive description.

JUNE

High pressure gave dry and sunny weather during the first ten days of the month, before a change to a more unsettled and particularly windy spell. The latter part of the month was mainly settled once more, with a few brief spells of rain but plenty of fine weather, and becoming warmer on the last day of the month.

One of the most evocative sounds of summer is the trilling of **Wood Warblers** in our mature woodlands. Quite local in occurrence, favoured spots include Rivington where three males were singing on the 8th.

An exciting encounter followed the next day when a **Nightjar** was flushed from a disused railway line at Fleetwood. More unexpected records followed on the 10th – starting with a singing **Common Rosefinch** in Whitendale. That evening a mothing session on Middleton Nature Reserve was interrupted by a **Marsh Warbler**; it went on to give a virtuoso performance mimicking Blackbird, Sardinian Warbler, Serin and Thrush Nightingale before going quiet.

None of these birds stuck around so news of a singing **Greenish Warbler** at Turton Golf Club on the 13th was met with great excitement. Initially thought to be in Greater Manchester it had actually taken up territory a few hundred metres into Lancashire. Only the second county record it went on to be one of the highlights of the year, singing and showing well to its many admirers until the 18th.

As this charismatic bird moved on another exciting find was made at MMWWT on the 19th. A beautiful singing male **White-spotted Bluethroat** was located out on the reserve and special arrangements were made for viewing. Although often elusive, the bird was present until the 21st and delighted those that managed to catch up with it.

Breeding was well underway and there was cause for optimism for some scarcer species. Sixteen pairs of **Ring Ouzels** were located on the United Utilities Bowland estate and young fledged from eleven nests. **Tree Sparrows** also fared well and a monitoring scheme in the Pilling-Preesall area recorded a total of 169 pairs which laid 344 clutches and 1626 eggs, of which 963 hatched and 909 fledged.

Our more familiar species also seemed to be doing well, highlighted by ringing totals of **Dunnocks** at Heysham, where breeding productivity was excellent with a total of 126 ringed, 30 more than any year since 2000.

The end of the month produced more excitement with a smart male **Red-backed Shrike** at the Eric Morecambe complex on the 27th.

JULY

The first three weeks of the month were settled. High pressure was dominant, and sunshine was plentiful, with almost no rain between the 3rd and 22nd. It became increasingly warm and this became the most notable summer heat-wave since July 2006. As the high pressure gradually moved away, the remainder of the month was more unsettled with widespread thundery outbreaks and temperatures returned to more typical levels.

It was an excellent breeding season for **Merlins** on the United Utilities Bowland estate, where six pairs fledged twenty-three young. **Swifts** also enjoyed the warm dry weather with seventy-five pairs in three colonies in Freehold, Lancaster having high productivity.

Tufted Ducks had a good year with 66 pairs nesting at a variety of sites. **Water Rails** also appear to be doing well with survey work in the north of the county revealing 113 pairs at Leighton Moss, 27 pairs at Silverdale Moss and six at Barrow Scout.

Sadly, no **Hawfinches** could be found at Woodwell but a pair did nest at Gait Barrows and an adult was seen feeding a juvenile on the Hermitage Estate at Crook o' Lune on the 11th.

Another significant success was the **Black-headed Gull** colony at Belmont Reservoir. An aerial survey produced a total of 8993 nests, a 33% increase on the 6738 present in 2011. The site is now thought to be amongst the largest colonies in the UK. Amongst them were a remarkable 30 pairs of **Mediterranean Gulls** and both species enjoyed high productivity.

As juvenile gulls fledged, dispersal began and Heysham outfalls attracted high numbers of **Black-headed** and **Mediterranean Gulls**. Careful searching through the flocks was rewarded when a delightful summer-plumaged **Bonaparte's Gull** was found at Red Nab on the 13th. This ninth record for the county stayed into September as it completed its moult into winter plumage.

Seaforth enjoyed an excellent midsummer arrival of **Roseate Terns** in and around the **Common Tern** colony, with pairs and singles seen regularly between the 4th and 25th.

AUGUST

The month opened with a spell of hot weather but after this temperatures did not generally exceed what would be expected for the time of year. For most areas August gave a mix of fine summer weather interspersed with showers, at times heavy and thundery.

Great excitement to start the month with a juvenile **Two-barred Crossbill** discovered coming to feeders at Crow Wood Farm, Browsholme on the 2nd. Access was kindly arranged for this county first and birders flocked to this beautiful location. The bird gave fantastic views until the 6th as it tussled with Chaffinches and Greenfinches for its place on the feeders.

With no breeding colonies in Lancashire, **Little Terns** can be tricky to find so a count of 46 flying past Formby Point on the 9th was particularly noteworthy.

The second stunning **Bee-eater** of the year delighted its finders at Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park on the morning of the 14th. This is a much sought-after bird in the county but once again it quickly moved on; hopefully the next one will find a bee hive!

As the breeding season drew to a close **Grasshopper Warblers** continued to reel at Stocks on the 4th, at Brockholes on the 28th and at Belmont on the 31st when a juvenile was also still present.

SEPTEMBER

The month opened with a few days of summery weather, but it became more unsettled and much cooler during the second week. An active autumn depression brought wind and rain around the 15th, but conditions thereafter became quieter and more typical for the time of year.

Always a busy month, a great variety of species was recorded including an impressive gathering of 380 **Sandwich Terns** at Knott End on the 2nd.

Waders always feature at this time of year and the highlight was a juvenile **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** at Hesketh Out Marsh on the 8th. Staying until the 13th it was often elusive but patience

was rewarded with great views of the bird alongside **Little Stints** and a **Curlew Sandpiper**. This was the twelfth Lancashire record and the first since 1996. There was also a good showing of **Pectoral Sandpipers** with two on the Eric Morecambe complex on the 14th and singles at Banks Marsh on the 20th and MMWWT on the 9th October.

Black-necked Grebes remain scarce in the county despite breeding in Cheshire and we only had three records this year; a juvenile was at Alston Reservoirs from the 13th and another at Carr Mill Dam on the 16th.

A **Puffin** off Rossall Point on the 16th and a juvenile Sabine's Gull that flew north past Formby Point on the 17th were the only records for either species this year. This brief stormy period on the 16th-17th also produced **Leach's Petrels** with two at Heysham, three off Blackpool, three at Knott End, six at Rossall and a peak count of eleven off Formby.

One of the most remarkable arrivals of the year started on the 26th with a **Glossy Ibis** flying over Staining. The following day a superb flock of twelve flew over Leighton Moss. What seems likely to have been the Staining bird was seen at Marton Mere on 28th with another over Seaforth that day. Four were then over Rivington on the 29th with further records of this group at Longton Marsh and three at Marshside into October.

Ainsdale then enjoyed a purple patch with a juvenile **Red-backed Shrike** on the 26th and a **Common Rosefinch** on the 30th. Both moved on quickly but a juvenile **Red-necked Grebe** at Marton Mere, which also arrived on the 30th, stayed until the following day.



Juvenile Red-necked Grebe, Marton Mere,
30 September. (Chris Batty)

OCTOBER

The month overall was unsettled with frequent spells of rain and blustery showers. It was mostly mild, temperatures widely exceeding 20°C in the first few days and reaching the high teens later on. A brief spell of more settled weather in the second week coincided with cooler conditions. A vigorous depression brought stormy weather and widespread disruption on the 28th.

Pink-footed Goose numbers had been relatively low in the first winter period. However they arrived en masse in the autumn with a minimum of 77500 in the county this month. In contrast, **Cetti's Warblers** continue to slowly expand their presence with two birds trapped this year at Fleetwood Nature Park and a male singing there on the 1st.

On the 6th a **Firecrest** following a tit flock at Withgill, Clitheroe was the first in east Lancashire for nearly 20 years. Later in the month another of these delightful sprites showed well at Heysham for three days.

Also on the 6th a **Yellow-browed Warbler** was found at Padiham, it was joined by a second on the 7th – a notable inland multiple occurrence. Even rarer inland was a light-morph adult **Pomarine Skua** seen flying over Alston Reservoirs on the 9th; it lingered in the area for a few hours and was later seen at Brockholes.

Visible migration was to the fore on the 10th with Heysham recording a passage of 5632 **Redwings**. The movement continued on a broad front the following day. Highest counts being a further 4905 over Heysham and 5580 flying north-west at Brockholes

Across the country a rare inland passage of **Great Skuas** was taking place and Lancashire recorded two birds. A juvenile flew west over both Rishton Reservoir and Brockholes on the 15th and an adult

arrived at Stocks Reservoir the same day. It terrorised the roosting gulls consuming at least one juvenile **Lesser Black-backed Gull** before departing on the 17th.

Great Grey Shrikes proved very elusive this year and the only record came from Leighton Moss on the 19th.

NOVEMBER

The month began rather unsettled and wet. High pressure became established from mid-month bringing drier weather, but with some frosty nights. There was rain, particularly in the north, around the 20th before a return to high pressure with settled conditions and some frosty mornings and chilly days.

Another exciting month with rare and scarce birds being found from north, south, east and west.

Regular scanning of the mud flats at Knott End was richly rewarded with the discovery of a juvenile **Semipalmated Sandpiper** on the morning of the 12th; found at low tide feeding with **Ringed Plovers** and **Dunlin** it was only the second county record. As a result it was much visited and it stayed in the area until late afternoon.

The **Glossy Ibis** influx continued with east Lancashire's first downstream of Altham Bridge from the 22nd. The regularly wintering adult **Ring-billed Gull** was seen around Crosby at both ends of the year. In addition, a second-winter **Ring-billed Gull** was seen in Liverpool at the Walton Asda store from the 20th.

Attention then switched to wildfowl with the highest **Eider** count of the year coming from Heysham, where there were 302 on the 23rd. A **Long-tailed Duck** had arrived at Leighton Moss on 31 October and another at Marshside on 15 November, both staying for the winter.

Also at Marshside were many thousands of **Wigeon**, part of total of 60686 counted on the Ribble marshes. Careful searching through them resulted in the remarkable discovery of a male **Baikal Teal** at Crossens Outer Marsh on the 30th. Another first record for Lancashire and the sixth for Britain it caused great excitement. Initially it proved elusive but eventually was seen by thousands of observers from far and wide as it commuted between Marshside and Crossens until 11 December.

DECEMBER

The high pressure and cold, settled weather that characterised most of November continued for the first few days of December, and there was another brief settled spell around 10th. Otherwise there was frequent heavy rain and strong winds. The mainly Atlantic airstream resulted in notably mild conditions and an absence of frosts.

Rock Pipits winter in saltmarsh creeks across the county and as a result are difficult to observe. High tides flush them out and this produced a high count of twenty-one at Pilling Lane Ends on the 3rd. More surprising was a **Black Guillemot** found on a house driveway in Formby after a storm on the 5th. It was later released at Marshside but soon disappeared.

Winter feeding programmes for passerines are a feature of many farmland areas in the county. Some feeding stations have also been established in our uplands, with one in in Rossendale attracting up to four **Lapland Buntings** and 25 **Snow Buntings**.

The second **Red-necked Grebe** of the year was at Stocks Reservoir on the 17th. **Great Northern Divers** were at Knott End on the 6th and Freckleton on the 22nd. A popular juvenile was then found on Southport Marine Lake on the 28th, staying into 2014.

It was a good winter for **Bramblings** in the east of the county with large flocks of 100 at Dean Clough, 80 at Shedden Clough and 125 roosting in rhododendrons at Belmont on the 29th. The year ended with another rarity in the form of a male **Green-winged Teal** at Brockholes on the 31st, the first record for the reserve.

Systematic List

KEY TO STATUS (Based on results of the 2007-2011 atlas surveys)

Breeding	Non-breeding
Rare: breeding in 1-6 tetrads or 1-10 pairs	Vagrant (or very rare passage migrant): 1-10 records in past 25 years
Scarce: breeding in 7-38 tetrads or 11- 50 pairs	Rare: 11-50 records in past 25 years
Uncommon: 51- 250 pairs	Scarce: 51-250 records in past 25 years
Fairly common: 251- 1000 pairs	Uncommon: 11-20 annually
Common: 1001-5000 pairs	Fairly common: 21-200 annually
	Common: 201-1000 annually
	Very common: 1001-5000 annually
Abundant: more than 5000 pairs	Abundant: more than 5000 annually

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

Fairly common breeder, common in winter.

International importance: 2400. National importance: 740.

Monthly Peak Counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	62	28	90	66	62	14	98	40	94	31	118	27
Lune Estuary	140	300	53	103	67	130	30	70	100	67	88	65
Ribble WeBS	32	21	98	93	81	26	64	64	83	70	43	44
Alt WeBS	8	1	8	2	3	11	20	12	10	7	1	1
Marshside	8	26	70	86	72	40	14	3	6	3	2	/
Southport ML	/	70	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	94

Numbers were high in the Fylde in January with 73 on the Conder Estuary, 70 at Cockersand and 140 at Thurnham. Three hundred at Thurnham on 22 Feb was the highest total at any county site all year. Lower counts not included in the table included 22 in January and February at Sefton Park, Liverpool, 14 at MMWWT on 3 Feb and at Rishton Reservoir on 26 Jan.

The only spring count of any note was 103 at Cockersand on 14 April. Three watched flying east across Morecambe Bay from Barrow to Middleton, Heysham on 27 May was an unusual record.

Breeding was widespread but few outcomes were reported. A full survey of the Lancaster Canal from Glasson Dock to Stainton revealed 16 pairs (compared with 14-22 pairs in 2004-2012) and 14 successful pairs had 53 young in September. A pair hatched five and fledged four at Seaforth, while a pair at Sefton Park, Liverpool hatched seven young, four of which fledged successfully. A pair in Astley Park had four young by 29 May but all four succumbed to an unknown infection; a pair at Lower Healey had six young by 24 May, but those at Yarrow Valley Park failed to hatch any of the clutch. A pair successfully raised four young on the Leeds Liverpool Canal at Hapton and one by the canal at Finsley Wharf (Burnley) also raised four young. Defensive behaviour of a pair with young on Middleton boating pond prevented any model boating by enthusiasts.

A count of 130 on 20 June on the Conder Estuary was the highest from any site in summer. Although a widespread species, particular local patch records of note included three south along the beach at Cabin Hill on 9 June, and one at Whalley on 21 July – the observer's first there for over two years.

Notable post-breeding counts included 56 at Brockholes on 15 Dec and 23 with Whooper Swans at Arkholme in late November and early December.

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
Over Wyre	19	15	17	4	16	22
South Fylde	33	40	0	0	0	3

Small numbers across the Fylde at the start of the year included peak counts of 33 on Lytham Moss on 6 Jan with 40 there on 10 Feb; fairly regular sightings of up to 29 at Warton Hall during the same period were presumably part of the same flock. A separate flock was with Whooper Swans in north Fylde, mostly at Cockerham and Glasson, peaking at 19 in January and 15 in February; 13 that remained until 4 March were the last in the Fylde in spring. One on Lytham Moss on 3 Feb had been ringed at MMWWT in 1990.

Bewick's Swans have been scarce at MMWWT for many years but up to four were seen with Whoopers from 4 Jan until 2 April.

The first returned to Over Wyre on 27 Oct, building to 16 at Cockersand on 25 Nov with a dozen or so seen at various sites until the end of the year. Three on Warton Marsh on 1 Dec was the only south Fylde record in the second winter period.

Four were at Hundred End on 24 Dec and six on the 26th, with what were probably the same four at MMMWT on 25 Dec.

WHOOPER SWAN *Cygnus cygnus***Very common winter visitor.****International importance: 210. National importance: 110****Monthly Peak Counts**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Over Wyre	273	290	212	2	0	200	407	380
South Fylde	319	158	50	31	0	140	400	36
MMWWT	1600	1450	955	120	4	301	1500	1227
Ribble WeBS	175	91	273	0	0	14	42	250

The flocks which roosted overnight at MMWWT were recorded over a large area of the south-west mosses during the first winter period, including 150 on Altcar Moss on 16-31 Jan and 238 on Halsall Moss on 25 Feb. On the Ribble, most moved between their Lytham Moss feeding site and the roost on Warton Marsh with the largest count 319 on 6 Jan, while those on the south bank peaked at 253 on 19 Feb at Old Grange Farm, Hutton and 160 on Longton Marsh on 12 March.

The January census at MMWWT found 22% to be juveniles – a higher than usual proportion, while 17% of 232 on Lytham Moss on 15 Jan were also juveniles. Four remained at MMWWT on 17 May, while two at Warton on 22 April were the last of spring elsewhere.

The largely separate population in the Pilling area in northern Fylde peaked at 273 on 4 Jan at Fluke Hall and 290 at Cockersand on 18 Feb with 212 remaining in the area on 2 March. One at Pilling on 16 June was presumably sick or injured.

In the Lune Valley up to 24 were in the Cloughton/Melling area during January to March with the last on 14 March.

Small numbers were seen away from the coastal plain in January and February, including twelve at Stocks Reservoir on 19 Feb, but the number of sightings away from the main wintering grounds increased markedly as birds began to depart in March. Overflying flocks included 19 at Arkholme on 5 March and 29 at Belmont on the 13th, while 13 spent the night at Stocks on the 30th with ten new birds there on 1 April. Coastal migrants included 15 at Heysham on 29 March and 57 at Rossall Point on 2 April.

The first back at MMWWT on 17 Sept were followed by seven over Jackhouse on 7 Oct and eight at Leighton Moss on the 10th, with a substantial arrival across the county next day. Overflying flocks continued to be logged inland and on the coast throughout October and until mid-November as birds began to settle on the wintering grounds. Larger numbers than in the first winter period were in north Fylde, peaking at 407 (13% juveniles) at Eagland Hill on 22 Nov.

Further south, birds were present on Lytham Moss all winter with 400 there on 10 Nov, while south of the Ribble there were 334 at Hesketh Bank and Hundred End on 8 Dec with 375 there on the 21st. One hundred and eleven, including three juveniles, roosting at Lunt Meadows on 17 Oct was the most southerly flock in the county.

The Lune Valley population peaked at 31 on 30 Nov, while up to four at Cant Clough, Dean Clough and Parsonage Reservoirs in November were the last in the east of the county.

TUNDRA BEAN GOOSE *Anser fabalis rossicus*

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

Single(s) were seen at Pilling on 17 Jan, Aldcliffe Marsh on the 19th, Lytham Moss on the following day and at Fleetwood on the 29-30th.

None were reported in the second winter period.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Abundant winter visitor to Fylde, Ribble Estuary and south-west mosslands. Amber List (localised winter distribution). International importance (3600); National importance 3600.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MMWWT	7400	4200	1800	1800	14	0	0	12	24000	29400	8100	4600
Pilling/N Fylde	4000	19560	8500	0	120	0	0	0	4600	18140	13747	16300
S Ribble	2380	2725	11400	5060	1900	2	0	6	3880	16500	8527	583
Marshside	500	2000	4000	10000	0	0	0	0	4300	783	716	174
Alt Estuary	5000	6073	/	/	0	0	0	0	2500	18051	5589	5233
Simonswood	/	800	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	6700	5500	2000

Co-ordinated roost counts 2013

	17 Feb	13 Oct	10 Nov	8 Dec
Morecambe Bay	19560	18140	13747	15770
Wyre Estuary	8400	4450	2750	5800
Ribble Estuary	2725	9287	12173	3020
MMWWT	1230	29400	5300	8100
Low Meadows area	80	0	0	1160
Alt Estuary	6073	18051	5589	5233
Simonswood Moss	800	3000	5500	2000
Rainford mosses	/	100	1491	0
TOTAL	38868	82428	47150	41083

Numbers appear to have remained fairly stable over the winter of 2012/13 with at least 38868 present in February this year following a peak count of 44697 in December 2012. The majority of birds seem to have shifted from north Fylde to the Ribble and south-west mosses between February and March and at least 10000 were still present in early April.

The first were back at MMWWT on 27 Aug and birds flooded in during September, reaching a peak of at least 82428 in October. They appeared to have left the county for Norfolk a little earlier this year, numbers almost halving by 10 Nov but then remaining at a similar level into December.

As usual, records of feeding flocks came from vast areas of the south-west mosses and throughout the Fylde. Notable counts in the Fylde included 3000 on Lytham Moss in January, 9500 on Rawcliffe Moss in December with 6000 there in January, 8300 at Cumming Carr in February, and 5000 at Ea-

gland Hill in February with 4000 there in October.

Fewer reports were received from the south-west where sizeable flocks included 4700 at Altcar Withins in January, 2000 at Lydiate in February with 5000 there in November, 4000 at Shirdley Hill in January, 3500 at Blundellsands in November and 2800 on Halsall Moss in February. The largest flock on the Chorley mosses was 3000 in October.

Peak counts in north Lancashire included 3500 at Aldcliffe on 19 Jan and 4000 at Heysham on the 23rd.

Almost all records from the rest of the county were of overflying flocks, one notable exception being 54 grounded briefly in fog near Turton Golf Course on 6 Jan. During the first winter period 58 flocks containing 5630 birds were reported flying over east Lancashire, with 57 flocks and 4630 at the other end of the year; both totals were significantly lower than last year. Eight-eight over Holden Wood Reservoir on 14 Oct was the only report from Rossendale, while the largest count over Brockholes was 2800 on 6 Jan.

Up to three injured or possibly feral birds were at several sites in east Lancashire with Canada Geese during both winter periods.

GREENLAND WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons flavirostris*

Uncommon winter visitor.

All records were with Pink-footed Geese. An adult was on Lytham Moss on 22-24 Jan with probably the same bird on Hesketh and Crossens Out Marshes on 3-30 March and at Marshside on 30 March to 6 April. Single(s) at MMWWT on 9-10 Jan, Plex Moss on 21 Feb and Tarleton on 12 April may have related to a different bird.

A juvenile on Banks Marsh on 8 Dec was the only record south of the Ribble in the second winter period but it was more productive in the Fylde. Following single(s) at Eagland Hill on 18 October and Fleetwood on the 22nd, a flock of 17 including 13 juveniles was at Cockersand on the 27th. Eight, presumably part of this flock, were at Pilling on 9 Nov and three at Fleetwood on the 12-13th with two there on the 17th.

EUROPEAN WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons albifrons*

Uncommon winter visitor.

One was by the Lune at Claughton on 4 Jan with presumably the same at Arkholme on the 17th. Other singles during the first winter period were recorded at MMWWT on 1 & 8 Jan, with perhaps the same bird on Hesketh Out Marsh between 19 Jan and 7 April and at Marshside on 7 April; three at MMWWT on 20 April were not seen elsewhere. The only Fylde record was one at Warton Bank on 7 Feb.

The first of autumn was an adult at Marshside on 29 Sept, seen again in early October, with perhaps the same bird on 14 & 26 Oct at MMWWT, where there were two on 31 Oct. None was seen in the Fylde in the second half of the year.

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

Uncommon feral breeder and very common winter visitor; definitely wild birds scarce in winter. Amber List (localised winter distribution). National importance: 1400

Without a county-wide co-ordinated count it is impossible to get an accurate picture of the size of the non-breeding population as Greylags undoubtedly wander in significant numbers between sites. However, summing the peak numbers reported in single months suggests this exceeded 3000 in November and approached 2000 at other times of the year.

In addition to the counts summarised in the table there were significant numbers of feral birds in the Fylde throughout the non-breeding season. The largest flocks were on the Wyre at Little Singleton in the second half of the year: 241 in August, 172 in September, 311 in October, 341 in November

and 515 in December. Other sites holding more than or close to 100 were Warton Marsh (108 in February), Barnaby's Sands (105 in September) and Copthorne (96 in February), while 30 or more were also recorded at Nateby, Pilling, Carleton, Stalmine, Staynall, Knott End and Cockersand. Twenty at Rivington in July was the largest flock in the Chorley area.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Leighton/EMC	270	410	380	185	180	206	79	212	290	390	396	190
Aldcliffe	600	496	186	45	12	24	200	376	389	370	1210	416
Lune flood plain	393	496	194	63	14	28	124	447	496	296	606	436
MBS WeBS	221	403	2	77	8	45	84	271	335	171	635	216
MMWWT	400	510	175	88	5	110	140	/	600	250	470	330
Marshside	21	1	2	6	77	70	125	174	83	10	87	40
Stocks Res	116	40	56	32	48	158	219	29	4	5	24	45

Breeding information was limited: 49 pairs on the RSPB's Silverdale reserves, 32 pairs at Marshside and eight at Stocks Reservoir.

SNOW GOOSE *Anser caerulescens*

Vagrant and escape.

A blue morph Lesser Snow Goose accompanied the Pinkfeet flocks at various sites in north Fylde between 13 Jan and 27 Feb. This was the ninth blue morph Lesser Snow Goose recorded in Lancashire, the last was in 2007. Four adult white morph Lesser Snow Geese, likely to have been feral or escaped birds, were on the Eric Morecambe complex on 7 March and one was at Aldcliffe on 1 Oct and 6 Nov.



Snow Goose with Pink-footed Geese, England Hill, 25 February. (Mike Malpass)

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis***Fairly common breeder; very common in winter.****Monthly peak counts**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Leighton/EMC	10	14	12	20	21	18	6	12	17	0	0	0
Aldcliffe	235	539	289	92	6	0	0	550	121	270	670	190
Lune flood plain	237	539	290	93	6		41	143	138	292	190	245
Fairhaven Lake	10	35	35	317	41	305	150	20	32	12	5	/
Brockholes	100	121	126	59	82	120	120	150	198	41	36	36
Foulridge Res.	308	/	/	/	/	/	/	100	119	100	100	/
Jackhouse Res.	58	104	89	40	69	50	48	82	173	251	86	99
Rishton Res.	400	231	/	/	/	13	21	99	2	173	8	/
Stocks Res.	300	51	54	37	49	255	300	170	50	53	40	2
Cowm Res.	140	17	17	20	6	12	/	/	/	/	35	97
Belmont Res.	26	36	30	44	32	76	76	92	47	28	24	6
MMWWT	4	16	42	40	13	42	45	/	320	/	1	/
Marshside	200	121	31	92	138	172	168	473	75	137	379	194
Seaforth	35	45	20	20	48	230	180	42	4	67	15	50

Peak counts of 100 or more were also recorded on seven other sites: Hesketh Out Marsh (350 in September), Lunt Meadows (335 in October), Mere Sands Wood (324 in October), Freckleton (250 in September), Little Singleton (238 in November) Glasson (130 in August) and Anglezarke Reservoir (108 in July).

Birds nested on a large number of sites throughout the county, including 32 pairs at Marshside and twelve at both Fairhaven Lake and Belmont Reservoir. Breeding was reported from at least 14 sites in Rossendale, while on the West Pennine Moors away from Belmont Reservoir continuing licensed control by egg-'pricking' on 25 United Utilities water bodies indicated that breeding numbers have fallen by two-thirds in the last eight years, with just 22 nests totalling 97 eggs located in 2013 compared with 65 nests totalling 344 eggs controlled in 2005.

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis***Wild birds, uncommon winter visitor; scarce feral breeder, fairly common in winter.****Wild Birds**

There were many reports of possibly, probably or definitely wild birds accompanying Pink-footed Geese but, given the mobility of the goose flocks, it was as usual difficult to know how many individuals were involved.

The largest counts in the first winter period were 15 at MMWWT on 10 Jan, three at Cockerham on 17 Jan and Stake Pool on the 20th and two at Crossens on 30 March, with singles also seen at Altcar Moss, Blundellsands, Lytham Moss, Plex Moss, Pilling and Overton.

The first of autumn at MMWWT on 5 Oct was followed by 41 at Pilling on the 9th, rising to 43 on the 13th. This flock then appeared to disperse with just nine remaining at Pilling on the 16th but 13 were on Longton Marsh on the 15th, eleven at MMWWT on the 10th and at Eagland Hill on the 18th, and six near Fleetwood on the 22nd, while seven were on Hesketh Out Marsh on 22 Nov. Ones and twos were also recorded at Banks Marsh, Rawcliffe Moss and Inskip, while two flew south with Pinkfeet at Heysham on 30 Oct.

Feral Birds

Most records came from Stocks Reservoir where there were peaks of 37 on 8 Jan and 42 from 15 Aug on and off to the year's end; 40 at High Field Farm on 14 Dec were probably the same as at Stocks.

Few were seen at MMWWT and no records were received from the county's main breeding site of Knowsley Park and Prescott Reservoirs. The two largest counts from the Fylde population were 20 on

Heron's Reach Golf Course on 19 Jan, 18 at Marton Mere on 17 March and 24 at Blackpool Zoo and Heron's Reach on 1 Dec, suggesting that few if any bred successfully.

DARK-BELLIED BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla bernicla*

Scarce winter visitor.

Early in the year two were seen in flight at Heysham on 5 Jan and one in flight at Formby Point on the 29th, while singles were seen onshore at Marshside on 4 Jan, Teal Bay on the 13th, Pilling on the 24th & 27th, Brockholes on 14-15 Feb, MMWWT on the 25th to 27th and Lunt Meadows on 7 March.

Spring records of birds presumably moving back north were one off Heysham on 13 April, two off Blackpool on the 15th, one at Seaforth on the 21st to 28th and three records of single(s) at Marshside between 6 April and 23 May.

One summered at Cockersand and other sites on the north Fylde coast between 19 May and 11 Sept.

Few were seen in the second winter period: singles at Rossall Point on 1 Nov, Barnaby's Sands on the 3rd, Cockersand on the 13-16th and Pilling during December, while three were at Pilling on 19 Nov and six off Blackpool on 14 Dec.

PALE-BELLIED BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla hrota*

Scarce winter visitor.

One past Formby Point on 28 Jan with perhaps the same at Pilling on the following day were the only records in the first winter period, while spring produced just one record of four past Rossall Point on 2 May.

Two flew past Rossall on 28 Sept and 10 Oct with one there on 5 & 9 Oct and two were on Lytham shore on 11-15 Oct.

BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla*

Scarce winter visitor.

Two birds of unspecified race were at Cant Clough Reservoir on at least 1 April and one flew north at Seaforth on the 13th.

SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

Fairly common breeder, abundant winter visitor. 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	2190	1078	854	1101	629	522	155	142	1199	1509	1471	1784
Ribble WeBS	1722	846	1051	811	792	1365	2331	855	1337	3416	2336	1064
MMWWT	930	1020	660	265	115	206	46	43	/	80	334	760
Alt WeBS	280	180	213	82	68	79	55	20	345	131	359	297

October was the only month when the count on the Ribble exceeded the threshold for international importance. The Ribble Estuary was also the only site where many birds remained in late summer in preference to making the migration to moulting grounds on the Mersey or the Wadden Sea. There was again a slight decline in Morecambe Bay, with all WeBS counts being well down on the falling five-year average; less than a decade ago the annual peak regularly exceeded 8000. Numbers at MMWWT were also slightly lower than last year, except in early summer. These regional declines roughly match the national ones, where WeBS counts indicate a fall of 19% during 2001/2-2010/11.

A small but discernable passage occurred in east Lancashire during April and May when more than half of the year's 48 sightings in the area were recorded. The majority of records there came from Alston Wetland, Stocks Reservoir and Ightenhill Bridge, all records consisting of one to four

birds. The largest counts in the area both occurred in August, when nine were at Rishton Reservoir and seven at Alston.

Breeding occurred at a number of coastal sites and no doubt went unrecorded at many more. An estimated 32 pairs bred at Marshside, 36 pairs at Hesketh Out Marsh and at least ten pairs at MMWWT. Elsewhere, breeding was confirmed on Longton Marsh, Glasson and several sites on both the Lune and Wyre Estuaries. No breeding was confirmed in east Lancashire.

MANDARIN DUCK *Aix galericulata*

Scarce feral resident and escapee.

In the Chorley area two pairs were at Arley Nature Reserve in April and another pair was at Eccleston in April and May. No breeding was proven but up to 15 were at Arley during the second winter period. A male was in the Belmont area between June and October.

Regular reports were received from east Lancashire, especially during the autumn. The peak count there came from Foulridge Reservoirs with a maximum of seven on 5 Oct. Two juveniles were seen there in early August, although it was unclear whether breeding had occurred there or elsewhere. Up to three were at Stocks Reservoir during October. In the north-east, up to twelve free-flying individuals were at Ashley's pond, High Tatham.

Up to four were in the Singleton area in the Fylde, and up to nine in Moor Park, Preston during February. A less expected record was of three briefly on the Conder Pool on 6 Sept. A male was at Leighton Moss on 31 March, while one at MMWWT on 26 April was perhaps the same as at Mere Sands Wood occasionally during the spring – a maximum of three were there on 5 May.

WIGEON *Anas penelope*

Abundant winter visitor. Amber List (localised, internationally important winter distribution).

International importance 15000, National importance 4400.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	2850	3119	951	161	3	0	8	4	661	3610	2883	4119
EM complex	535	300	213	95	1	1	5	29	665	955	596	1015
Ribble WeBS	36475	29686	8120	101	3	3	0	3512	6196	62748	60686	36597
MMWWT	490	1040	910	540	6	3	6	4	310	160	1750	/
Stocks Res.	243	22	7	10	0	0	0	3	26	37	60	57+

The second winter peak on the Ribble showed an improvement on the disappointing counts from the previous winter. The five-year average peak count now stands at 70480, a drop of 10% but only because the average was previously bolstered by the second best count on record; this compares with a national decline of 15% recorded by WeBS during 2001/2-2011/12. This year's figures, however, still remain well within the variation seen in Lancashire over the last 20 years. The five-year average of all monthly counts between September and March has also declined, albeit gradually, from around 40000 in the mid-late 1990s to a little over 31000, indicating perhaps that Wigeon are spending less time in Lancashire. For only the second time since recording began, the year's highest count was made during October.

In Morecambe Bay there was no repeat of last year's record numbers, which was unsurprising given the mild second winter period. However, at 6084, the five-year average has reached an all-time high following a steady increase from just over 2000 birds in the early 1990s.

By March numbers on the Ribble and in Morecambe Bay had dropped dramatically. Given the cold weather in the first winter period and the resulting poor grass growth, it is perhaps surprising that more birds were not forced to remain here longer before building up enough fat reserves to make their return migration.

Stocks Reservoir experienced an impressive but very brief influx of 243 (along with Teal and Pintail) on the afternoon of 5 Jan; just 13 were there the following morning. Away from Stocks the

highest count in east Lancashire was 60+ at Foulridge Reservoirs. In the West Pennine Moors, where Wigeon are never numerous, a count of 28 at Belmont Reservoir on 15 Oct was the biggest since 1991.

A number of individuals remained for the summer without there being any indication of breeding: up to three stayed at Conder Green, two at Newton Marsh, three at MMWWT and one at Leighton Moss. Five birds at Aldcliffe on 3 July signalled the start of the autumn migration.

GADWALL *Anas strepera*

Uncommon breeder, fairly common winter visitor. 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	12	10	8	21	18	26	8	20	56	98	61	35
Leighton Moss	74	143	132	105	38	65	65	95	110	125	79	95
Brockholes	41	23	31	12	7	2	4	5	30	40	41	59
Ribble WeBS	23	12	11	50	7	3	8	10	19	18	15	20
MMWWT	27	8	4	6	16	36	2	20	22	/	3	/
Mere Sands	22	28	20	11	3	0	0	0	3	5	28	204

Co-ordinated counts Leighton Moss and the Eric Morecambe complex produced 153 in mid-February, 125 on 7 Sept and 134 on 9 Oct. The final co-ordinated count of the year, 154 on 18 Dec, was the highest figure of the year but far lower than the 224 recorded in November 2012.

Very small numbers stop off in east Lancashire, mostly on spring or autumn migration. This year the highest count was ten on Grimsargh Reservoirs on 16 March. Twenty at Marton Mere in February was the highest count in the Fylde.

The 27 pairs that bred at Leighton Moss was a slight improvement on last year. There were 13 pairs at Marshside and two at Hesketh Out Marsh. Three pairs bred at MMWWT and one pair at Middleton NR.



Male Baikal Teal, Crossens Out Marsh, 3 December. (Steve Young)

BAIKAL TEAL *Anas formosa***Vagrant.**

An adult male was found amongst the Wigeon flocks on Crossens Out Marsh on 30 Nov (C Bell). It was present there until at least 11 Dec and, having been accepted by the BBRC, becomes the first record for Lancashire and the sixth in Britain. (See separate article). The unusual 'tear-drop' facial pattern initially led some to question this bird's identity but doubts were quickly dispelled when Craig Bell's digitised photographs taken on the day were examined more carefully.

TEAL *Anas crecca*

Rare breeder, abundant winter visitor. 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	2676	1480	434	205	7	8	53	535	1688	2830	3476	2602
Leighton Moss	835	615	592	265	14	13	32	36	310	1230	940	1144
Ribble WeBS	4279	7431	1950	183	4	10	24	1018	3292	5393	2348	4271
Marton Mere	800	400	60	30	10	4	6	8	75	80	340	720
MMWWT	900	3000	870	226	16	60	136	180	1350	1200	2600	/
Mere Sands	467	308	232	65	4	1	1	20	190	252	652	226
Seaforth	2150	1385	80	10	0	1	3	60	92	210	350	350
Stocks Res	680	390	144	76	6	2	8	63	420	780	1530	510+

The relatively high numbers on the Ribble at the end of 2012 were maintained into February as a result of prolonged cold weather. The February WeBS count was actually the highest ever for that month on the estuary. Similarly, large numbers following the last year's record count at Seaforth remained into February. In contrast, the Morecambe Bay population appears to have been fairly stable over the last few years.

The West Pennine Moors' record count of 155 that had stood almost 40 years, was exceeded at Belmont Reservoir almost every week from mid-October onwards, finally peaking at 290 on 29 Dec. Given that inland sites normally see peak counts during brief cold weather influxes, the lack of icy conditions helped numbers remain high and to continue increasing after the normal period for peak counts at Belmont of October and November. With the exception of Stocks Reservoir, the only east Lancashire site to record a three-figure count was Grimsargh Reservoirs, where there were 102 in October.

Breeding again occurred at Belmont Reservoir, where a single pair fledged three young, and a second pair possibly bred at another location in the West Pennine Moors. A pair at Lunt Meadows was unsuccessful. Nine males were at Marshside and fourteen were at Leighton Moss during the breeding season but breeding was not confirmed. Similarly, summering birds that remained at Stocks Reservoir and Alston Wetlands were not thought to have bred successfully.



Teal, Marton Mere, September. (Paul Slade)

GREEN-WINGED TEAL *Anas carolinensis***Rare winter visitor.**

Compared with recent years records were few, involving just two wintering birds and two brief visitors. As usual, all records were of males. One was on the Wyre Estuary at Barnaby's Sands on 1-7 Jan and at Jameson Marsh, Fleetwood on 1 Feb, and one at MMWWT from 4 Jan until 9 Feb. A short-staying bird at Leighton Moss from 29 April to 1 May was no doubt a migrant.

Probably the bird from the first winter period was back at MMWWT on 1 Oct, remaining until the 26th. The year ended with one at Brockholes on 31 Dec.

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos***Common breeding resident, abundant winter visitor. 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	547	357	277	136	86	110	197	514	591	556	635	361
Leighton Moss	213	189	135	98	65	90	425	560	510	420	292	295
Ribble WeBS	857	893	655	244	319	315	1117	1054	1259	977	1196	824
MMWWT	2440	2000	790	465	90	791	/	1537	/	/	2035	2550
Alt WeBS	529	209	42	28	41	53	45	84	400	443	359	368
Stocks Res	530	250	40	22	20	310	300	485	640	714	640	400

A small increase was noted at MMWWT. While peak numbers on the Ribble were similar to last year, it was interesting to note the late summer peak as normally that level is not reached on WeBS counts until September.

Large counts from sites not included in the table included 400 at Alston Reservoirs in October and 301 at Mere Sands Wood in January. The 211 at Belmont Reservoir on 19 Jan was a new site record.

An estimated 70 pairs bred on the RSPB properties in the Silverdale area, 38 pairs at Marshside, 35 pairs on Hesketh Out Marsh, at least 17 pairs at Belmont Reservoir and at least 20 pairs at Fairhaven Lake. Numerous other breeding records were received and it is certain that a great many more went unrecorded.

PINTAIL *Anas acuta***Very common winter visitor. 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	193	82	126	6	2	0	0	0	222	283	524	800
Leighton Moss	47	61	55	12	2	0	0	0	33	176	47	52
Ribble WeBS	290	194	94	5	0	1	0	0	0	680	452	562
MMWWT	340	711	285	14	1	0	0	0	20	60	100	/
Stocks Res	170	6	8	2	0	0	0	0	5	17	51	89

The Ribble WeBS counts were even lower than in 2012, which itself was seen as a poor year. The second winter counts in Morecambe Bay showed an encouraging improvement on the last few years, however. The highest count off Lytham of 873 on Christmas Day, although higher than the month's WeBS count on the Ribble, compared poorly with 1600 last November. The February count at MMWWT was the highest there at any time in the year since 1995.

The last birds of spring were two at MMWWT on 11 May and one at Marshside on the 12th. One at MMWWT during June was perhaps an injured bird. Two at MMWWT on 1 Sept and three on the Eric Morecambe pools on the 4th were the first of the autumn, 16 days later than last year.

The Stocks Reservoir influx of 170 on 5 Jan lasted just one afternoon but was followed by another of 110 on the 13th. After this there were just single-figure counts and no records anywhere else in

east Lancashire during the first winter period. There were six autumn records in east Lancashire, with a maximum of three briefly at Alston Wetland in September and later at Grimsargh Reservoirs in October.

GARGANEY *Anas querquedula*

Rare, occasional breeder; uncommon spring and autumn passage migrant. Amber List (rare breeder).

The first birds of the year were four at Cabin Hill on 10 April. These were soon followed by two at Fleetwood on 12-13 April and one at MMWWT on the 13th. A male was at The Snab on 26 April and a pair at Leighton Moss on the same day, being then seen occasionally throughout the spring. A maximum of three were at Marshside in early May. Single males were at MMWWT on 1 May and Marton Mere on 3 May and two were at Fleetwood on 18 May. The last spring migrants were a male at MMWWT on 4-6 June and a pair at Marton Mere from 17 May, increasing to three on 11 June.



Juvenile Garganey, Seaforth, 23 August. (Steve Young)

One pair bred at Leighton Moss although the outcome was unknown. Another pair possibly bred at Marshside. Up to six birds were at Cabin Hill between April and June including two displaying pairs and up to three juveniles were seen here in June and July, possibly representing two different broods. This represents an excellent year for breeding, especially given that it was quite a dry spring.

Return passage began with one at Fleetwood on 7 July then an eclipse male at MMWWT on 31 July. The main passage occurred in August starting with one at Myerscough Quarry from the 11th until the 23rd. There were also birds at Newton Marsh on the 12th, a juvenile at Seaforth on the 22nd until 8 Sept, and an eclipse male on Warton Marsh on 22 Aug. One at MMWWT on 27 Aug remained until 5 Sept with another there on 15-16 Sept. The only autumn record from Leighton Moss was one on 27 Aug. There was a complete absence from the flood at Mythop this year but a number of different birds passed through Fleetwood during the year, the last of these being two on 23 Sept and one on the 29th. The last bird of the autumn was on the Conder Estuary occasionally between 3 Sept and 1 Oct.

SHOVELER *Anas clypeata*

Scarce breeder, fairly common winter visitor. 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
Leighton/EMC	96	56	68	40	22	20	57	170	212	140	151	94
MBS WeBS	93	44	37	13	6	2	2	43	112	53	117	46
Marton Mere	55	45	54	50	2	1	4	10	40	34	25	18
Ribble WeBS	299	253	103	53	21	5	3	12	18	85	60	191
Marshside	280	249	96	49	21	11	5	40	35	71	50	184
MMWWT	50	19	32	12	14	20	6	20	35	20	21	/

The Ribble recorded its highest ever February WeBS count but this was still much lower than the peak of 400 at Marshside last February. Numbers were relatively stable at the remainder of the key sites around the county.

Shovelers appear to be on the increase in east Lancashire, where historically they have been an occasional visitor in very small numbers. Notable counts at Grimsargh Reservoirs included eight on 31 Aug and twelve on 22 Dec. However, a new record was set for the recording area when 31 were counted there on 6 Oct.

The best breeding site was Marshside, where 20 pairs represented a significant improvement on last year's seven. Twelve pairs also bred at Leighton Moss. Elsewhere, two pairs bred at both MMWWT and Newton Marsh, while a pair at Lunt Meadows was unsuccessful. A pair with four small ducklings at Alston Wetland was the first ever breeding record in east Lancashire.

POCHARD *Aythya ferina*

Rare breeder, fairly common winter visitor. 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	21	44	0	2	0	1	7	0	4	30	24	95
Leighton Moss	4	42	27	27	20	12	15	4	7	30	2	1
Marton Mere	10	5	8	5	1	0	1	0	1	5	17	14
MMWWT	55	73	57	0	0	3	0	0	7	2	8	18
Seaforth	30	14	15	14	0	5	5	3	1	7	15	15

The recently observed decline continues at all the main sites in the county; this was the first year that no count exceeded 100. It must be remembered, however, that the second winter period especially was very mild. Nationally, WeBS data indicate a decline of 43% between 2001/02 and 2011/12.

There was no repeat of last year's large numbers at Stanley Park, Blackpool and it is clear from the table that they did not relocate to Marton Mere. Elsewhere, Stocks Reservoir had 33 in December while on the Fylde there was a peak of 20 at Fairhaven Lake in early February.

It was a better year for breeding at Leighton Moss, where 18 pairs nested. At least four pairs at MMWWT was the only other breeding record.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

Uncommon breeder, common winter visitor. Amber List (Species of European Conservation Concern). International importance 1200; National importance 1100.

Both Brockholes and MMWWT – the site of last year's highest count – fell some way below their 2012 levels. In fact, the best count from MMWWT was just 20 in November. In contrast, Marshside had a good first winter period and Glasson showed an improvement on last year but not close to the record levels of a few years ago. The best records from sites not included in the above table were 65 at Ainsdale Sands Lake in January, 36 at Mere Sands Wood in October and 26 at Wayoh Reservoir

in December.

There were 24 pairs breeding at Leighton Moss, at least seven pairs were successful at Lunt Meadows, four pairs at Fairhaven Lake fledged nine young and two pairs at Belmont Reservoir fledged three young. At least four pairs bred at both MMWWT and Brockholes. Breeding also occurred at Mere Sands Wood, Grimsargh Reservoirs, Sand Villa Lake (all three pairs), and Hesketh Golf Course, Southport and Alston Wetlands (both two pairs). Other sites where breeding took place included Conder Pool, Fleetwood Golf Course, Myerscough Quarry, Herons' Reach (Blackpool), The Snab, Proctor's Farm (Bowland), Dilworth and Stocks Reservoirs. This gives a minimum of 66 pairs nesting in the county.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dockacres	114	90	152	36	7	7	4	9	17	46	68	70
Leighton Moss	64	120	102	85	28	29	27	28	10	12	27	24
Alston Res	16	10	20	125	13	25	65+	65+	6	8	4	1
Brockholes	42	75	76	41	19	10	27	45	37	50	51	48
Glasson	41	41	45	11	1	0	3	1	15	100	96	125
Ribble WeBS	166	171	50	87	21	25	6	14	15	35	22	21
Marshside	133	143	131	52	10	20	10	3	25	/	/	1
Seaforth	51	68	18	33	19	41	105	118	46	41	19	20

LESSER SCAUP *Aythya affinis*

Vagrant.

An adult male was at Brockholes on 15 March (WC Aspin) and a female was at Borwick Waters from 14 April to 6 May (PJ Marsh). These represent the seventh and eighth records for the county; the Borwick record is the first occurrence of a female. Both records have been accepted by the BBRC.

SCAUP *Aythya marila*

Uncommon winter visitor. Red List (declining national winter population).

International importance 3100; national importance 52.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Seaforth	1	3	11	7	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

There was no change at Seaforth, numbers remaining at a very low level. The other recent regular wintering population, off Morecambe, numbered just two. Small numbers were seen occasionally off Rossall Point, peaking at eight on 26 Feb, and six were off Blackpool on 14 March. Up to eleven were off Heysham on 3-6 April.

One was at Glasson on 4 Jan, a male and four females were on Preston Dock on 26 Jan and a male at Fishmoor Reservoir on 16 March. Late records were of three off Rossall Point on 25 April and a female on Conder Pool on 25-30 May.

The first bird of the autumn was an early female at Lower Black Moss Reservoir on 25 Aug, followed by two at Aldcliffe on 3 Sept. A pair was on the sea off Jenny Brown's Point from 17-24 Oct, while one at Leighton Moss on 24 Oct increased to three in early November with one remaining to the end of the year. A first-winter was at Stocks Reservoir on 2 Nov, a male at Glasson on 9 & 16 Nov, and a first-winter male at Fishmoor Reservoir on 24-27 Dec, possibly the same bird was then at Brockholes on 29-30 Dec. Finally, one was on Middleton NR on the afternoon of 31 Dec.

AYTHYA HYBRIDS

A female Pochard x Ferruginous Duck hybrid was at Brockholes throughout the first winter period until 22 March and again from 29 Oct occasionally to the year's end. It is thought that this bird was probably the same returning individual as in recent years.

EIDER *Somateria mollissima***Scarce breeder, common winter visitor. 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	56	154	243	81	89	145	205	38	52	57	45	50
Ribble WeBS	0	0	52	147	139	57	52	0	12	1	8	0
Rossall Point	23	128	75	91	8	8	0	16	26	33	201	42

The highest count of the year again came from Heysham, where there were 302 on 23 Nov, while the peak count on the Ribble was 164 off Lytham on 21 April. No counts of juveniles were received for the Ribble, the only confirmation of breeding was of one nest on Longton Marsh.

There were 60 juveniles on the Lune off Sunderland Point in July. Based on a maximum clutch size of six eggs this suggests that a minimum of ten pairs nested in and around the Lune Estuary. Given that chick mortality is high in their early weeks the actual number of pairs is almost certainly much higher. One nest, flooded by a spring tide, was found on Cockerham Marsh.

LONG-TAILED DUCK *Clangula hyemalis***Scarce winter visitor.**

First-winter male Long-tailed Duck, Marshside, 16 November. (Steve Young)
One of three obliging long-stayers during 2013.

The first-winter female from 2012 remained at Fairhaven Lake until 16 Feb. A female was at Marshside the following day but only stayed until the 18th. The only other records for the early winter period came from the Blackpool coast where there were singles on 15 and 16 Jan before two flew past on 26th.

A first-winter arrived at Leighton Moss on 31 Oct and stayed into 2014. On 15 Nov another first-winter, this one later proving to be a male, was found at Marshside and also remained into 2014. Finally, singles flew past Starr Gate on 24 Nov and Rossall Point on 9 Dec.

COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra***Abundant winter visitor. 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	650	6000	5000	200	685	190	700	10000	900	500	2700	11750
Formby Point	500	250	793	422	600	17	175	200	550	350	2293	2246

Again the largest counts came from Blackpool with smaller numbers seen off the Sefton coast.

The female at Stocks Reservoir from 2012 remained until 17 Jan, while a male was at Alston Reservoirs on 16 Jan only. An unusual record in Morecambe Bay was the 420 off Heysham on 6 Jan.

The best spring passage counts from Heysham were 27 on 14 April, 100 on the 21st and 50 on 19 May. Inland, a male was at Alston Reservoirs on 19 & 25 April, followed by a female on the 28th. A female was at Stocks Reservoir on 20 May.

Summer passage started with 14 males and two females on Wayoh Reservoir on 26 June. Single males were on Entwistle Reservoir and Lower Dean Clough Reservoir on 1 July and ten visited Stocks Reservoir on 4 July, when there was also a female at Preston Dock. Brockholes sightings consisted of single females on 25 July and 5 Aug and a group of three that flew through on 28 July. A male was at Parsonage Reservoir on 29 July and Alston Reservoir hosted lone females on 21 and 27 July, then 7,13,19 & 28 Aug and finally 15 Sept. A male on the River Douglas at Becconsall on 31 Aug was the first record in the local area. Unsurprisingly, all these sightings were single-day records, with the possible exception of some of the Alston records.

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

The only early winter records came from Rossall Point, where there were three on 21 Jan and one on 23 Feb. It was another two months before the next when one was off Heysham on 15 April. Up to two were seen off Rossall Point from 18-26 April.

The first returning bird was one Blackpool on 11 Oct. This was followed by one seen a number of times off Rossall Point between 14-29 Oct. A female was seen off Blackpool on several dates on 10-28 Nov with four there on 28 Dec. The only record from the Sefton Coast was a male off Hightown on 10 Dec.

SURF SCOTER *Melanitta perspicillata***Vagrant.**

A male was seen briefly with Common Scoters on the sea off Starr Gate on 2 March (S Dunstan). This was the fourth record in Lancashire and the first since 2008, although regular presence in the offshore scoter flocks is strongly suspected.

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	79	51	69	11	0	0	2	0	0	4	1	4
Leighton Moss	7	16	11	4	0	0	0	0	0	2	12	9
Lune Estuary	53	122	69	8	1	1	1	1	1	1	58	75
Alston Res	28	24	26	16	0	0	0	0	0	9	13	16
Brockholes	17	21	33	6	0	0	0	0	0	4	10	14
Seaforth	56	46	62	24	5	0	0	0	0	7	11	18

Compared with 2012, there were generally fewer birds at all the main sites except Seaforth. Although an improvement on the low of 2011, the numbers on the Lune were still poor compared with their previous level.

This species is widely distributed on the rivers and reservoirs of east Lancashire, inevitably leading to an underestimate of the total number present. There were plentiful small counts from the Ribble catchment during winter, the largest being 14 on the Ribble at Hurst Green on 9 Feb. In the north of the county eleven were on the River Lune at Arkholme in January and 16 were there in December.

The last of spring was late, a female at Stocks Reservoir on 6 May. Unusually, a first-summer spent the whole summer on the Conder Pool. The first returning bird was at Stocks Reservoir on 12 Oct.

SMEW *Mergus albellus*

Scarce winter visitor.

A redhead was at Aldcliffe from 25 Jan to 1 March and probably the same bird was seen briefly at Fleetwood Nature Park, Conder Estuary and Thornton ICI Reservoir all on 1 Feb and then again at Glasson on 18 Feb.

In the second winter period single redhead(s) in east Lancashire were on the River Ribble at Jumbles on 14 Dec and on Dean Clough Reservoir on 28 Dec.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator*

Rare breeder, fairly common coastal winter visitor.

International importance 1700; National importance 84.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	26	40	29	35	7	0	4	2	11	28	38	53
Stocks Res.	1	1	5	10	7	5	1	1	0	0	0	2



Male Red-breasted Merganser, Seaforth, March. (Steve Young)

There was virtually no change in Morecambe Bay where numbers remain well below the historic levels. The largest counts came, as usual, off Rossall Point, where there were 44 on 23 Feb.

In east Lancashire four pairs were on Stocks Reservoir from mid-April. Single pairs, perhaps the same birds as at Stocks Reservoir, were seen at Easington in May. However, there was no confirmed breeding at any site.

The highest counts from the Sefton Coast were 33 off Hightown on 25 Jan and 24 at Formby Point on 27 Feb. One at Carr Mill Dam on 17 April was the only inland record away from Bowland.

Offshore numbers continued to decline in 2013. This was one of two that spent their days, usually asleep, at Seaforth during March and much of April.

GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser*

Uncommon breeder, fairly common winter visitor.

International importance 2700; National importance 120.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	15	16	22	19	8	0	2	0	8	19	16	14
River Lune	50	80	82	44	33	19	19	44	18	31	35	29
Alston Res	16	33	18	0	0	0	0	0	10	/	/	/
Delph Res	36	33	35	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	26	27
Mere Sands	20	19	13	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	23	23

Very few were at Dockacres in either winter period, the eight in January compared very poorly to the 37 last year. In contrast, there were excellent numbers on the River Lune, almost double those of last year with notable counts at Arkholme of 35 on 14 Feb and 49 on 9 Aug.

Other than those at Delph Reservoir shown in the table, the highest counts in the West Pennine Moors were 37 on Wayoh Reservoir in February and 22 on Yarrow Reservoir in December. East Lancashire's largest counts in the early winter period were 33 at Alston in February and 17 at Sunnyside Hey Reservoir in March. In the second winter period 23 were on Stocks Reservoir in October and 27 at Barrowford Reservoir in late December. Additionally, there were a large number of smaller counts from other reservoirs and rivers in the east of the county.

Breeding was suspected from a number of sites in the Ribble catchment. Broods were recorded at Dinkley (one), Hurst Green (two), Stocks Reservoir (two), Wood End Sewage Works (three) and Altham (one). Following last year's first breeding record for the River Yarrow, a female with nine young was seen on the Yarrow at Eccleston. Five broods were seen on the River Lune at Arkholme.

RUDDY DUCK *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Rare winter visitor, extinct breeder.

The only records were of a single female seen at Marton Mere on 8 Sept and perhaps the same at Bispham Marsh on 23 Dec.

RED GROUSE *Lagopus lagopus*

Abundant breeding resident. Red List (breeding decline).

The systematic counts undertaken annually by the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust on four shooting estates in Bowland indicated that the upward trend in numbers continues unabated. The mean spring density was 55 pairs/100 ha, the highest for a least a decade and three times that recorded in 2005. The mean brood size was a fairly average 4.6 but the July density of 180 birds/100 ha was also the highest recorded in at least a decade and two and a half times the 75 birds/100 ha recorded in 2005. I

It was therefore not surprising that, come August, shooting bags were described as 'substantial' on the larger estates and, although detailed records were not received, it was reported that the Abbeystead Estate shot on the first 29 available days of the season such was the number of birds present. Some smaller moors also reported the best totals for several years such as the 60 shot on Langden/

Hareden Fells at the opening of the season.

Casual records were received from 19 areas of fell in Bowland and included 35 in Croasdale on 13 Sept, 26 at Clougha on 11 Dec, 15 on Grit Fell on 29 Sept, twelve at Cross of Greet on 10 April and eleven at Langden Castle on 14 Jan.

Many broods of up to a dozen young were reported widely across Bowland, including an early brood of six on Greenbank Fell on 7 May and four totalling 23 young in Bleasdale on 13 July. Records were also received from several of the outlying Bowland fells, including six on Caton Moor on 15 Nov and five on Waddington Fell on 10 Nov.

A significant count of 46 was obtained on Pendle Hill on 7 Sept – the largest count there since 1996. No records of note were received from Rossendale and the highest from the South Pennines was twelve at Cant Clough Reservoir on 1 Nov.

In the West Pennine Moors, counts by gamekeepers realised twelve pairs on territory in a 1km² sample of Darwen Moor in April and 43 during a post-breeding season count with dogs over a km² sample of Anglezarke Moor in August. Fifty-nine were seen during a shoot on Belmont Moor on 17 Aug.

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*

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

2013 was another poor year in Lancashire with only four confirmed records of singing birds, representing the lowest annual total since three recorded in 2004.

Singles were reported from four sites in the usual areas of the arable west with singing males on Burscough Moss on 19 May, MMWWT the next day, Rufford on 4 July and finally Pilling on 11 July. The single-day nature of the above records would suggest passage birds moving through, although it is also possible that the three records from the same small area of the south-west mosses could indicate a single mobile unmated male.

An unsubstantiated record was received via Birdtrack of a bird away from traditional haunts at Gisburn in the east of the county on 5 June.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa*

Uncommon feral breeding resident, abundant post-breeding when supplemented by releases in most areas.

The growing number of releases was undoubtedly responsible for the increase in reports in 2013, with the number of locations rising from 96 to 138 and the number of records from 175 to 263, with six reports of successful breeding received.

As in 2012, the highest count received, and one of the few representative of the large numbers released in the county, was from Caton Moor where 300 were recorded on 29 Sept with a further 107 there on four dates between 24 Oct and 4 Nov. Breeding was reported from Arkholme and Cloughton, together with up to 13 reported at Cockerham the only records of note from north Lancashire.

In east Lancashire, 45 records were received from 24 sites, mainly from Bowland, the largest counts being 30 near Newton on 2 Jan and 27 near Dunsop Bridge on 5 Jan with pairs with young seen at three sites.

The Fylde remains a 'stronghold' with 76 reports from 36 locations, although this is largely a reflection of the large numbers released in Over Wyre, which resulted in a count of 244 at Fluke Hall on 6 Oct with 35 nearby at Pilling Lane Ends on 25 Nov. Elsewhere on the Fylde, 20 were at Catforth on 6 May and an adult with six young on Fairhaven Golf Course on 27 May.

The south-west mosses provided their usual widely distributed selection of reports including eleven at Little Crosby on 28 Dec and ten on Plex Moss on 30 Jan, albeit none reflected the significant

numbers – reported to be in the region of 9000 birds – released on the Meols Hall Estate at Churchtown Moss, if not elsewhere. Unusual was a bird calling from the top of the highest dunes at Cabin Hill in March and April while Mere Sands Wood recorded a maximum of four in May and MMWWT three in February. Near Liverpool, substantial releases within Knowsley Park were no doubt responsible for the 60 just outside the park wall on 10 Oct.

Further east, 15 on Croston Moss was the largest count from the Chorley area whilst in the West Pennine Moors, five pairs, originating from released stock, were on territory around Belmont during the breeding season and further releases were responsible for 16 there on 27 Oct and 30 in November.

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix*

Common but declining breeding resident. Red List (breeding decline).

The disastrous breeding season during the ‘wash-out’ summer of 2012 was no doubt responsible for a fall in reports in 2013 with records declining from 337 to 277 and locations from 141 to 113. However, 2013 was clearly a far better year for the production of young with the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust reporting a national 37% increase in autumn numbers following excellent brood-rearing conditions during the heat wave of July, albeit only for late or replacement broods. This successful season was clearly reflected in Lancashire judging by the number and size of coveys in the autumn and second winter period.

In north Lancashire, 20 records were received from six sites including 19 at Cockersand on 27 Sept and eleven at Aldcliffe on 3 Nov. Notable also were records from Plover Scar, Sunderland Point and the Eric Morecambe complex. Following the release of 50 pairs by the gamekeeper at Cloughton in April, broods of eight and five were seen nearby at Arkholme on 4 July.

The stronghold of the Fylde showed a strong recovery from 2012 with the number of records up from 64 to 93 and locations up from 24 to 30. Six double-figure counts were received including 18 on Rawcliffe Moss on 19 Nov, 15 on Lytham Moss on 16 Nov, twelve at Bradshaw Lane Head on 2 Nov and ten on Newton Marsh on 4 Jan. Successful breeding was reported from Clifton Marsh (brood of six), Conder Pool (broods of six and three) whilst on Cockerham Moss on 26 June a pair was seen with 17 young!

In central Lancashire, eight were on Farington Moss on 23 April, eleven at Midge Hall on 15 Oct, while Croston Moss near Chorley recorded ten on 27 Jan, a pair with five young on 20 Aug and a covey of seven on 7 Oct. In the West Pennine Moors, four pairs were on territory around Belmont during the breeding season with one pair fledging two young following on from the three coveys totalling ten birds in the early year.

Following the perilous situation for this species in east Lancashire reported in 2012, it was encouraging to see reported the first increase both in numbers and sites for several years with reports doubling from 22 to 44 and locations up from nine to twelve. Successful breeding was reported from Coldwell, Hurstwood, Swinden Reser-



Grey Partridge, Plex Moss, 6 May. (Andy Pryce)

voir and Wycoller, although the highest count of the year, 24 near Newton on 13 Oct, was thought to originate from released stock.

Records were received from across the south-west mosses from the Ribble southwards mirroring the almost continuous distribution revealed in the Atlas. Pairs bred at Marshside and Crossens Outer saltmarsh, with coveys of between five and ten seen on Burscough Moss, Lunt/Sefton Meadows, Rufford, Pool Hey, Gorse Hill, Inner Crossens Marsh, Higgins Lane, Hesketh Out Marsh and near Burscough in both winter periods.

The strong population in the area south-east of Liverpool again showed well with 36 records from 26 sites including eleven at Halewood on 14 Dec, twelve at Netherley on 19 Feb, 14 at Liverpool Woodlands on 1 Dec, four coveys totalling 41 birds in the Tarbock-Cronton area on 17 Nov, 37 birds in three coveys at Garston-Oglet on Christmas Day and 14 near Speke on Boxing Day. This good showing was tempered somewhat by the news that some abandoned former arable fields near Croxteth Park, with a healthy Grey Partridge population, have been earmarked for future development. Only one record was received, of four on Kings Moss on 24 Feb, from the St. Helens mosses, another stronghold for this species.

PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus*

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

The vast majority of reports received were from three sources; namely 450 records from east Lancashire, 187 from the Fylde and 121 from Birdtrack. This is despite the often abundant nature of this species across large parts of the county, particularly post-release of tens of thousands of reared birds in the autumn.

In the north, 55 were in Roeburndale on 4 Oct, 45 at Whittington on 14 June plus maximum counts of 35 at Leighton Moss and 25 nearby on Silverdale Moss in October and November. In east Lancashire there were just 14 double-figure counts with a maximum of 25 at Langden in Bowland on 22 Oct, and just one report of successful breeding – near Newton in August. However, a minimum of 1000 released juvenile birds were seen in Bleasdale on 13 July.

Records from 42 locations across the Fylde included ten double-figure counts including 26 at Singleton on 24 Nov and 20 on Lytham Moss on 17 Oct. In the West Pennine Moors, at least ten were on the island in Belmont Reservoir on 16 Feb and 100 were gorging on the abundant acorn and beechmast crop in Longworth Clough on 16 Nov.

The species remains regular in the Speke and Oglet areas on the edge of Liverpool with nearby up to 14 recorded from Gillars Green, four from Croxteth Park whilst three were on Garston shore on 25 May. No reports of note were received from the south-west mosses where large numbers are known to be released on several estates.

Maximum counts from reserves across the county included twelve at Mere Sand Wood and Yarrow Valley Park, ten at Brockholes, eight at MMWWT, plus one record for the year from Seaforth.

RED-THROATED DIVER *Gavia stellata*

Fairly common winter visitor and spring passage migrant.

International importance: 10000. National importance: 170.

The largest number of records came from Heysham in the first winter period with up to three on eight days in January and eleven days in February and March, and nine on 2 Feb and 14 March. Elsewhere, up to 25 were off the north Fylde coast on 20 Jan, 72 off Formby Point on 12 Feb and 29 off Rossall Point on the 23rd.

Spring passage produced larger numbers. Double-figure counts were reported from Heysham on six dates, peaking at 27 on 3 April and 49 on the 14th, while 62 were off Rossall on the 6th and 160 off Blackpool on the 7th with 22 there on the 14th. The few that were reported from elsewhere in spring included two flying north-east overland at Marshside on 16 May and nine off Hest Bank on

the 28th.

One was found stranded in a ploughed field at Altcar Withins on 21 May with a rubber band around its bill; it was caught and released and appeared briefly at Lunt Meadows the following morning.



Red-throated Diver in breeding plumage, Altcar Moss, 21 May. (Phil Boardman)

None was reported during June to August and numbers were low in both autumn and the second winter period, with low single figures seen off Formby and Heysham and peaks of ten off Blackpool on 23 Nov with 13 there on 3 Dec, and 23 off Rossall on 14 Dec.

BLACK-THROATED DIVER *Gavia arctica*

Scarce winter visitor.

All records were of singles. In the first winter period there was one off Blackpool on 25 Jan while in spring birds were seen off Jenny Brown's Point, Heysham and Rossall Point in April, and Rossall on 4 May and Formby Point on the 10th.

The next was off Rossall on 11 Oct and singles off Blackpool on 4 Nov and 29 Dec were the only other records.

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER *Gavia immer*

Scarce winter visitor.

None was seen in the first winter period. Spring singles were recorded at Rossall Point on 25 March and 8 & 14 May, Jenny Brown's Point on 7 April, Blackpool on 24 April, and Heysham on 10 May.

One was off Formby Point on three dates in early November and singles at Knott End on 6 Dec and Freckleton on the 22nd. A juvenile was on Southport Marine Lake from 28 Dec into 2014.

FULMAR *Fulmarus glacialis*

Uncommon passage migrant.

In April singles were seen off Blackpool on four dates from the 14th, Heysham on the 23rd and two off Rossall Point the same day. May records were a little more numerous and included four off Rossall on the 13th, and threes off Blackpool on the 4th, Formby Point on the 10th and Heysham on the 13th. The last of 'spring' were three off Rossall on 23 June with singles off Heysham and the Blackpool the same day.

Autumn records were even sparser: singles off Blackpool on 3 & 18 Aug and 16 Sept, Formby on 9 Aug and 10 & 17 Sept, and three off Rossall on 1 Sept with two off Heysham the same day possibly involving the same birds.

One off Blackpool on 22 & 24 Dec was the only winter record.

MANX SHEARWATER *Puffinus puffinus*

Common passage migrant.

After singles at Heysham and Formby Point and 21 at Blackpool on 18 April, numbers rose rapidly with peaks of 179 at Heysham on the 23rd and 140 there the following day, with 20 and ten at Blackpool on the same dates. The passage continued throughout May with birds recorded from all the main seawatching stations. The highest counts were 143 off Blackpool on the 8th with 300 there on the 11th, and 145 off Heysham on the 23rd. Twenty were offshore at Hest Bank on the 11 May.

June counts, presumably of feeding birds or wandering non-breeders, included 53 off Blackpool on the 6th with 149 there on the 23rd, 50 at Formby on the 22nd and 310 at Rossall on the 23rd.

The only substantial counts during early autumn were 200 at Rossall on 19-20 July with 126 there on 17 Aug and few were seen anywhere in September. The last was off Rossall on 3 Nov.

LEACH'S PETREL *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

Fairly common offshore in variable numbers during autumn gales.

It was a lean year with only a very short period of suitable onshore winds in mid-September.



Leach's Petrel, Knott End, 16 September. (Stuart Piner)

Apart from one at Rossall Point on 2 Sept all other records were from the period 16-25 Sept. Two were at Heysham on the 16-17th with three off Blackpool and at Knott End and two off Rossall Point on the 16th, and six at Rossall on the 17th. There were seven sightings between the mouth of the Mersey and Southport, with a peak count of eleven off Formby on the 17th

GANNET *Morus bassanus***Common summer and autumn visitor, rare in winter.**

Singles off the Blackpool coast on 27-28 Jan and at Rossall Point on 28 Dec were the only winter records.

The spring passage began with several records of ones and twos off Blackpool during March, with five there on the 21st and three at Heysham on the 14th. Numbers rose during April and May, including peak counts of 26 off Blackpool on 18 April, 39 off Rossall on the 2nd and 19 off Heysham the next day, followed by 40 off Seaforth on 5 May, 295 off Formby and 300 off Blackpool on the 11th and 190 off Heysham on the 13th.

Sixty-five off Blackpool on 22 May was the last large count of spring but birds continued to be seen sporadically during June, including 40 off Formby on the 22nd. Ten at Cabin Hill and 30 at Blackpool on 20 July may have marked the start of a poor return passage with 47 off Formby on 10 Sept by far the largest of a handful of double-figure counts from the main seawatching sites. The last were at Cabin Hill on 3 November and St. Annes on the 11th.

The only inland records were singles at MMWWT on 13 May and 14 Oct, and Preston Dock on 14-15 May and 14 & 19 Oct.

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo***Very common winter visitor.****International importance: 1200. National importance: 350.****Monthly peak counts**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	470	187	114	141	53	80	73	152	393	604	1018	213
Heysham	26	16	18	11	6	17	11	23	62	102	57	59
Ribble WeBS	1782	494	146	138	181	331	246	278	1545	1153	1532	2586
Seaforth	200	82	45	95	80	53	35	100	270	725	300	284
Mere Sands*	31	19	53	33	5	4	6	130	136	360	10	34
Stocks Res.	33	58	56	28	5	6	32	47	60	58	51	26

*morning counts only. Winter roost counts were not regular but commonly >400 individuals present

Roosts of 750 at Southport on 28 Jan and 750 at Ainsdale 1000 Marshside in December were included in the Ribble WeBS counts, but 1520 at Marshside in February were not. On the Alt Estuary away from Seaforth peak counts included 617 at Cabin Hill on 28 Sept with 644 there on 15 Nov. The trend towards greater use of the more northerly areas of Liverpool Bay and away from the Mersey, which was first noted a few years ago, appears to be becoming firmly established.

Inland sites reporting birds at some time in the year include nearly all the major areas of freshwater. Stocks Reservoir remains the main inland site; the largest count at Foulridge Reservoirs was 33 in November and at MMWWT 51 in February and 40 in October.

SHAG *Phalacrocorax aristotelis***Uncommon winter visitor, most records are of immatures.**

First quarter records, all of singles, came from Heysham on 5, 12, 16-17, & 22 Jan, and Rossall Point on 31 Jan and 5 Feb. There was only one mid-year record – at Rossall Point on 5 Sept.

All others were in the last quarter. Singles were at Heysham on and off between 20- 28 Oct and at Leighton Moss on 15 Nov. In December one was at Blackpool on the 28th to 31st, three briefly at Heysham on the 27th, and one on four dates between the 19th and 31st at Rossall Point.

BITTERN *Botaurus stellaris***Rare breeder, scarce winter visitor.**

A male was booming at Leighton Moss from early March to late June – initially on Barrow Scout before moving to the main reedbed – and a second boomed briefly in early April but not after at least eight were seen ‘gull-calling’ and leaving the area on 6 April. Although a presumed female was seen occasionally during summer there were no signs of breeding. At least four were seen there on 28 Dec.

One or two were at Marton Mere, the other usual wintering site, during the first winter period until at least 7 March but the only record there later in the year was of one on 30 Nov-1 Dec. Elsewhere at the beginning of the year there were singles at Irwell Vale in January, Fleetwood Marsh on 3 Jan, MMWWT on 27 Jan and 8 April,



Bittern plays ‘Roadrunner’, Altcar Moss, 3 October. (Phil Boardman)

Brockholes on 27 Jan, Birkdale dunes on 11-19 Feb and Mere Sands Wood on 20 Feb, while one was booming in a reedbed at Bold Moss, St. Helens on 30 March.

One in a ditch at Altcar Moss on 3 Oct was perhaps on migration, and none was seen during the second winter period away from Leighton Moss and Marton Mere.

LITTLE EGRET *Egretta garzetta***Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant.****National importance: 50****Monthly peak counts**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Leighton Moss	42	41	51	46	10	14	42	80	119	82	15	15
N Ribble marshes	20	38	15	4	1	0	10	3	48	35	8	19
S Ribble/SML	50	40	30	30	11	10	32	39	46	56	65	58
Pilling	32	21	25	/	1	1	0	18	12	44	34	37

2011. Correction:

The Rossendale record published in the 2012 report was actually only present until 9 July.

2013.

Larger counts not in the table included 50 at the Ashton Hall roost in December, nine at Aldcliffe on 22 Sept, 16 at Glasson on 26 July, seven at Mere Sands Wood in August and six at MMWWT on 11 Sept.

Although Little Egrets are now seen throughout the county, they remain relatively scarce away from the Ribble, Fylde and north Lancashire coasts. However, there were a record 20 reports in east Lancashire during the year, one in the first winter period, the rest from July to December, but the only report of two birds together came from the Skirden Beck heronry.

Up to five were at Arkholme in the first winter period and six in early November. In contrast, only two were seen in the Chorley area: singles on Croston Moss on 29 March and Mawdesley Moss on 29 Dec. Brockholes had occasional singles between July and December, while there were seven records at Formby and two at Seaforth.

With so many now wintering in the county it remains somewhat mystifying that breeding has not yet been established.

GREAT WHITE EGRET* *Egretta alba*

Rare winter visitor.

There were five accepted records involving six individuals, although another six reports were not submitted.

One feeding on the marshes on both sides of the Ribble and roosting at Southport Marine Lake from 2012 until 28 April was the only one in the first winter period. One at MMWWT on 8 June was an unusual summer record, while the next arrived on the Ribble marshes on 28 Sept, remaining there until the end of the year and occasionally joined by a second bird. Another was at Leighton Moss on 29-30 Sept and it is possible that this became the second Ribble bird. The final record was of one at Pilling Lane Ends on 8 & 12 Dec (all finders unknown).

It is not clear to what extent these records relate to returning birds but the regular use of a handful of sites suggests that many are likely to be.

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

Uncommon breeding resident.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Leighton/EMC	11	4	4	3	7	6	8	7	12	12	7	10
MBS WeBS	20	18	18	40	22	4	56	26	51	44	12	21
Ribble WeBS	14	2	2	2	12	8	46	19	26	29	29	5
MMWWT	2	6	4	5	3	3	4	10	9	1	3	2
Seaforth	13	2	2	2	1	5	9	6	13	10	12	5

Other counts of non-breeding birds included 18 at Brockholes on 27 Aug, eleven at Wood End Sewage Works on 3 Jan, ten at Glasson on 20 Oct and five on the Mersey at Garston on 5 Oct. Two were eating swan carcasses at MMWWT on 17 Feb.

Breeding was confirmed at four heronries in and near Merseyside but no nest counts were received, while two others went unmonitored and two – at Scarisbrick Hall (which Frank Lowe in his monograph on the species considered to have been at least a century old in 1954) and Formby Hall – were considered extinct. In the West Pennines the two Rivington heronries held 14 pairs between them (four down on 2012), and 36 nests were occupied at Entwistle (the same as in 2012), while breeding was finally confirmed in Delph Plantations with two nests, one of them successfully fledging two young. Further east, the heronry at Warth, Waterfoot had at least ten active nests.

None bred in Cuerden Valley Park. In east Lancashire the Chaigley Manor heronry was reported as abandoned this year but breeding did take place at Skirden Beck and at Winckley Hall Farm, where there were 23 nests. North Lancashire heronries held 24 nests at Tunstall, eleven at Skerton Weir, nine at Centre Farm, Scorton, eight at Claughton, six at Ashton Hall and three at Bolton-le-Sands; and in the Fylde there were 20 nests at Lea, 29 at Stanley Park, Blackpool and one at Bispham Marsh.

Together, these reports provide only a partial picture of the Lancashire population but at best it seems to be stable and is perhaps declining slightly.

GLOSSY IBIS* *Plegadis falcinellus***Rare passage migrant.**

Glossy Ibis over Marton Mere, 28 September. (Paul Ellis)
One of 23 or so recorded in the first year after the species'
downgrading from national rarity status,
this bird probably accounted for several autumn records
in the Fylde.

The BBRC must be mightily relieved that they downgraded Glossy Ibis from national rarity status before this year's flood of records. There were 14 accepted records in Lancashire in 2013, some of them probably involving individuals seen previously elsewhere. The best estimate of the total seen throughout the year was 23, almost double the cumulative tally seen in the county since the first in 1813. One or two other reports were not supported by descriptions.

Leighton Moss (per R Horner) and 13 were on the Kent Estuary in Cumbria that day. What seems likely to have been the Staining bird was seen at Marton Mere on 28 Sept (P Ellis) and probably the same was recorded subsequently at Fleetwood, Fairhaven and Glasson until 6 Oct. Also on 28 Sept one flew over Seaforth (C Gregson, AJ Conway).

None was seen in the first half of the year and one photographed flying over Staining on 26 Sept (observer unknown) opened the account. The following day a remarkable flock of twelve flew over

Four which were present on various sites in Bolton between 27 Sept and 27 Oct put in brief appearances in Lancashire, circling over Rivington on 29 Sept and on Longton Marsh on 11 Oct (C Bushell). Three were at Leighton Moss on 24 Oct (observer unknown) with one remaining until the 27th and perhaps the same three, aged as juveniles, were at Marshside on 29-30 Oct (finder unknown).

No more were seen for almost a month until east Lancashire's first appeared downstream of Altham Bridge on 22 Nov (C Galeski). The final record was one on Warton and Freckleton Marshes on 16-21 Dec (M Saunders).

SPOONBILL *Platalea leucorodia***Scarce annual visitor. Has bred in the recent past.**

Spoonbill records have not increased to anywhere near the degree of our two regular egret species and Glossy Ibis, and 2013 was a poor year.

An immature remained on various parts of the Ribble Marshes from 2012 until 8 April. Presumably the same bird made a one-day appearance at MMWWT on 11 Jan and then took up residence there on 8-18 April. What was presumably a different bird was on the Ribble Marshes on 7-11 May, and two were there on 14-18 Sept.

The only record away from the Ribble area was one at Upper Thurnham on 2 Feb with presumably the same on Colloway Marsh on 10-12 Feb.



Immature Spoonbill, Marshside, 19 March.
(Andy Pryce)

LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis***Uncommon breeding bird, fairly common in winter.****International importance: 3400. National importance: 160.****Monthly peak counts**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	6	8	23	7	2	2	20	36	30	42	20	14

The largest counts came mostly from the Fylde. The Conder Pool and Glasson recorded seasonal peaks of eight in January, eleven in August, ten in September and 16 in October and November. Twelve were on the Thornton ICI Reservoir on 25 Aug with 18 there on 22 Sept and 13 on 20 Oct, ten at Myerscough Quarry on 23 Aug and eleven on the 25th at Fleetwood Marsh. The only other site to register a double-figure count was Sefton Park, Liverpool with peaks of 15 in the first winter period and 19 in the second. Single-figure counts were received from another 20 or so sites outside the breeding season.

Breeding took place on at least 16 sites and possibly occurred at two others. Four pairs that raised 15 young at Wood End Sewage Works were the most successful reported.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus***Uncommon breeding bird, fairly common in winter.****International importance: 4800. National importance: 190.****Monthly peak counts**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	14	17	9	3	9	1	10	3	4	17	16	13
Foulridge Res	5	7	2	23*	8	10	11	6	3	6	3	5
Stocks Res	/	1	3	4	4	4	10	8	3	1	1	/
Brockholes	3	2	6	10	9	6	10	25*	5	3	2	2

* 23 at Foulridge on 1 April and 25 at Brockholes on 9 Aug were considered to be on passage.

Numbers wintering offshore continued to show no sign of recovery despite one three-figure count off Blackpool in November. Peak counts in the early year were 42 off Blackpool on 2 Feb, 28 off Formby Point on 27 Feb, and twelve off Heysham on 13 April; and in the second winter period 124 off Blackpool on 17 Nov with 22 there on 26 Dec, 31 off Jenny Brown's Point on 17 Oct and 21 off Morecambe on 23 Nov.

Early breeding season congregations included 20 at Carr Mill Dam, ten on Eccleston Mere, eight at Mere Sands Wood six on Wayoh Reservoir and five at Stanley Park and Pine Lake. Successful breeding was reported from 21 sites spread throughout the county and attempted breeding from a further 20 or so. None was reported from Withnell Lodges – the first time for many years.

Twenty-three remained on Carr Mill Dam, the county's most important site, on 15 Dec.



Great Crested Grebe family, Sefton Park, June. (Steve Young)

After several nesting attempts this pair successfully fledged one young,

RED-NECKED GREBE* *Podiceps grisegena***Rare winter visitor.**

There were two records this year: a juvenile at Marton Mere on 30 Sept to 1 Oct (A Sharples) and one, probably a first-winter, at Stocks Reservoir on 17 Dec (M & M Breaks, AA Cooper).

SLAVONIAN GREBE *Podiceps auritus***Scarce winter visitor.**

One was at Lower Rivington Reservoir on 13-14 Jan and another was off Rossall Point on 25 April.

BLACK-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps nigricollis***Scarce visitor, mostly in spring and autumn.****International importance: 2800. National importance: 50.**

Juveniles were present at Alston Wetland on 20-21 Aug and 13 Sept to 5 Oct – the third consecutive year that a bird has visited at this time of year.

The only other record was one at Carr Mill Dam on 16 Sept.

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

It is always difficult to get clinching views of flyover Honey-buzzards and the records committee continues to assess records quite strictly; records are accepted in two categories according to the strength of the evidence.

Two were accepted in 2013: a 'proven' record flying over Hesketh Golf Course on 29 May (JK Bannon) and a 'probable' over the Eric Morecambe complex on 19 May (G Waddington).

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

Records continued to proliferate but remained scarce in winter, with one over Slipper Hill Reservoir in east Lancashire on 16 Feb the only record.

The first of spring was one at Warton Crag on 30 March, followed by singles at Brockholes on 2 April, Belmont on the 6th, and Marton Mere and Leighton Moss on the 7th, the latter remaining until the 8th. During May singles were seen at Anglezarke on the 2nd, Seaforth on the 16th, Leighton Moss on the 22nd and 26th, Kirkham on the 25th, Whalley on the 26th, Cockersand on the 27th, Liverpool and Burnley on the 29th and Belmont and Euxton on the 31st.

Only two were seen in June, both in east Lancashire, at Swardean Clough on the 4th and Catlow Fell on the 30th, while July produced a run of records of what were presumably migrants: singles over Longridge, Mellor Brook, Chipping, Alston Wetland, Sabden, Warton, Kirkham, Lytham, Belmont, Leighton Moss and Bolton-le-Sands.

None was seen during August and one over Brockholes on 27 Sept was the next record, followed by singles over Barrowford on 4 Oct, Quernmore and Preston on the 6th, Altcar Within on the 12th and White Coppice on the 16th. The last of the year were seen at MMWWT on 22 Oct, Alston on the 23rd and Warton Crag on the 30th.

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus***Rare breeder, uncommon passage migrant. Amber List (localised breeder).**

Seven females were serviced by just two males in and around Leighton Moss. There were six nests on the main reserve and one on Silverdale Moss, the latter failing along with one at Leighton. The remaining five nests produced a total of 14 fledged young. None was present on Hawes Water this year.

None bred at MMWWT this year after an unsuccessful attempt in 2012 but one, and possibly two, females nested elsewhere on the south-west mosses. At one of these sites a pair was displaying from the third week of April and seen mating on 19 May when they were prospecting three nest sites. The first juveniles from the mosses were seen at Lunt Meadows on 10 Aug and up to six birds were there regularly by the end of the month.

Up to three wintered at Leighton Moss with one or two on the south-west mosses, mostly reported from MMWWT, at both ends of the year. No reports were received from the Ribble Marshes in the early year but at least two were there in December. One over Clitheroe on 3 Dec was the only record in east Lancashire all year.

Because birds were wintering it was impossible to pinpoint the date of the first new arrival at Leighton Moss, but four were present by 29 March and six by 3 April. Early spring migrants elsewhere included singles at Marton Mere on 7 March, Skelmersdale on the 20th and St. Anne's on the 31st. The passage continued throughout April to mid-May with a further 15 or so birds seen.

None was recorded during June away from the breeding areas, while the first returning migrant was at Marton Mere on 22 July. Migration and dispersal within the county continued throughout early autumn with around 50 sightings reported from late July until the end of October. Peak counts during this period were five at MMWWT on 3 Oct, four juveniles at Hesketh Out Marsh on 30 Oct and five singles south over Seaforth between 28 Sept and 11 Oct. The only birds reported during November were those settling down to winter at Leighton Moss and the north Ribble marshes.



Breeding female Marsh Harrier, south-west mosses, April.
(Phil Boardman) After many years when Leighton Moss was the county's only breeding site, Marsh Harriers now appear to be firmly established on farmland in the south-west, nesting in small patches of reed along ditches.

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

Rare breeder, uncommon winter visitor. Red List (rare breeder).

For the second consecutive year none attempted to breed on the United Utilities estate or anywhere else in Bowland, raising the spectre of permanent extinction. A male seen near Belmont from 8-15 April was briefly observed 'sky-dancing' on one occasion.

A male flying north-east over Sheddin Clough (heading towards the killing fields of the Yorkshire grouse moors) on 31 May was the only report all year in east Lancashire away from Bowland, where one or two were seen during both winter periods.

Elsewhere in the first winter period an adult male and a ringtail were seen regularly in the Lunt/ Great Altcar area until at least 28 March. Single adult and second-calendar-year males were seen fairly frequently on the Ribble Marshes on both sides of the river, with perhaps the same birds occasionally at MMWWT from January to March. An adult male on Croston and Mawdesley Mosses from 1 Jan to 31 March was possibly the MMWWT bird, while a second-winter male was seen regularly in the Pilling area from 5 Jan to 20 March.

Possible spring migrants were seen at Aintree on 27 March, Cockerham on the 28th, MMWWT on 7 April, Brockholes on the 9th, Glasson on the 19th and Cockersand on 19 April – although it is likely

that the Fylde records related to the wintering bird.

The first of autumn was a ringtail which arrived at MMWWT on 12 Oct. This was probably the same as one at Marshside the following day; ringtail(s) were then seen at both sites until the end of the year. Other, presumably transitory, autumn birds were recorded on Pendle Hill on 6 Oct, Champion Moor on 3-30 Nov (with two there on the 30th), Leighton Moss on the 5th & 14-15th, and Caton Moor on the 15-20th.

Two ringtails arrived in the Lunt/Great Altcar area in late October and remained until the end of the year, joined for a week or so from mid-November by an adult male, which may have been the bird that roosted at MMWWT from 28 Dec. The only other late winter record was an adult male in the Fleetwood area from 19-29 Dec.

Assuming there was no duplication in the above records, the best estimate is that ten birds wintered in the early year and eight in December.

GOSHAWK *Accipiter gentilis*

Rare feral breeding resident and escapee.

The only report received was of one at a traditional breeding site in Bowland on 30 March.

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

Fairly common breeding resident.

Sparrowhawks were reported from all parts of the county throughout the year, with no-one suggesting any substantial change from the atlas period, when it was estimated that 600 pairs were breeding.

The few reports of nesting received included single pairs at Ravenmeols, Gorse Hill NR, Fairhaven, Heysham NR, Clitheroe, Longridge, Towneley, Cuerden Valley Park, Whittle, Hartwood, Warton Crag, Tunstall, Claughton, Wennington, Wrayton and Arkholme – illustrating the geographical spread if nothing else.

The only records of probable migrants came from Heysham, all of birds flying south: twos on 28 Sept, 6 & 16 Oct and 4 Nov, and one on 7 Nov.

The most unusual report of prey was one that robbed a Peregrine of its Teal kill at MMWWT on 9 Feb.

BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

Fairly common breeding resident.

The recent rapid increase in Buzzard numbers shows no sign of slowing, despite unsubstantiated rumours that they are being persecuted in some areas. Virtually the whole of the county outside of built-up areas is now occupied, leaving infilling of the range the main option for further expansion; how long this can continue before the population stabilises will be interesting to monitor. At the present rate of increase the breeding population, estimated at 450 pairs in 2011, may soon overtake that of Sparrowhawks to become our most common bird of prey.

It is becoming difficult to keep track of developments but the following summary from the ELOC report for 2013 exemplifies what is probably happening throughout the county: "The number of reports has risen steadily from just 13 in 2001 to almost 350 in both 2012 and 2013. Not only has the number of reports increased but also the geographical spread, from mostly in Bowland at the beginning of the millennium to all parts of the club's recording area".

Buzzards are now a common breeder in the central West Pennine Moors with six territories reported in the Belmont area, where the first aerial display was noted on 24 Feb and ten were present during December. Further east, birds were present at more than a dozen sites in Rossendale throughout the year.

In addition to Belmont, there were probably at least another ten breeding territories in the CDNHS area (at Heskin, Mawdesley, Croston, Bretherton, Euxton, Whittle, Withnell, Brindle, Anglezarke, and Anderton).

Reports of five or more birds together are now fairly commonplace, while larger counts included ten at MMWWT on 14 Feb and 12 Sept with twelve there on 6 Aug, eight over Longridge Fell on 2 March and seven over Cross of Greet on 5 March.

The increase in locally breeding birds at Heysham makes identifying migrants more complicated nowadays but spring singles were thought likely on 17 March and 20 April, and ones and twos on four dates in autumn between 11 Sept and 10 Oct. The distinction remains relatively simple to detect at Seaforth where eight migrants were recorded in spring between 27 April and 7 May, including three on 6 May, and 13 in autumn during 24-29 Sept, including five on the 28th and four the next day.

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

Fairly common passage migrant.

Estimated numbers of birds seen in each region in spring and autumn.

	Merseyide					Total
	East	& West Lancs	Fylde	Central	North	
Spring	18	17	16	14	15	80
Autumn	3	4	4	3	1	15

A total of 95 birds was reported, slightly fewer than in 2012. As usual, the majority of these were in spring with autumn passage accounting for only 16% of records. This pattern is of such long-standing that it cannot be accounted for by differential observer effort and confirms that many more Ospreys follow a western route across Britain in spring than in autumn. The table also indicates that remarkably similar numbers are detected right across the county, reinforcing earlier conclusions that the spring passage movement takes place on a broad front rather than always following the obvious south-north 'leading line' of the coast. The lack of records in the West Pennines and Rossendale is, however, not so easily explained.

The first spring migrant over Mowbreck, Fylde on 27 March was quickly followed by records from Eccleston, Chorley on the 28th, the Dunsop Valley and Brockholes on the 29th, Crosby on the 30th and Leighton Moss on the 31st. Arkholme was the top site with singles on 5, 12 & 19 April and 22 May, with three passing over on 29 April. The bulk of the passage took place during April with only four seen in May. There were five June records, presumably of late-migrating sub-adults: at Burnley on the first, Pendle Hill on the 2nd, Skelmersdale on the 16th and Leighton Moss on the 16th & 19th.

The next at Leighton Moss on 11 July and Newton-in-Bowland on the 20th may also have been non- or failed-breeding birds, while singles at Leighton on 2 Aug and Brockholes on the 7th perhaps had better credentials as the first of the autumn passage. No more were seen in August and the remaining 13 autumn records came in September, the last at Seaforth, Marshside and Rossall Point on the 26th perhaps referring to a single bird.

Three sites predominated, Leighton Moss with eight records during the year, Arkholme with seven and Stocks Reservoir with six.

The satellite-tracked female 'Beatrice' left Eaton Hall near Chester on the morning of 5 April but flew only as far as Hurst Green in east Lancashire, where it roosted overnight. It left at 11:00 on the morning of the 6th and was seen over Newton-in-Bowland at 11:15; by evening it had flown some 240km to roost just south of Edinburgh.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus***Scarce resident breeder, common winter visitor from central and eastern Europe.**

The majority of winter records received came from the Fylde, where Marton Mere remained the principal site with regular day-counts of up to five at both ends of the year and a peak of seven on 1 Nov. Six were recorded at Staining Nook on 6 Feb with two there in the second winter period, and four at Fleetwood Marsh on 6 Jan with two there in October and December. Winter records of singles also came from Lytham Moss, Stanley Park, Lawson Road Wetland, Fairhaven, Warton Bank, Jame-son Road landfill, Warbreck, Bispham Marsh, Wesham Marsh, Pilling Lane Ends, Rossall School, Heron's Reach Golf Course and Burglar's Alley.

Records were much patchier in the south-west. There were up to three at MMWWT in the first winter period up until 7 April but singles on 6 Aug and 15 Nov were the only birds reported later in the year – surely an underestimation. Two were seen at nearby Mere Sands Wood in January with occasional singles until April and from October to the end of the year. Singles were reported in Merseyside from Ainsdale Sands Lake, Cabin Hill, Marshside and Wango Lane Wetland, Aintree.

Brockholes reported just one record in January and September and sporadic sightings in November, while singles were recorded in Chorley at Rivington in January, Cuerden Valley in March and Yarrow Valley Park in October and November. Birds were seen at three east Lancashire sites in the first winter period, Altham, Lower Towneley Scrape and Rowley Lake and in the second, Brookside Lodges, Lowerhouse Lodges and Wood End Sewage Works. In a north, there were sporadic records of singletons from Heysham NR and Middleton during the winter months.

The only breeding information came from the RSPB Silverdale reserves, where tape-induced registrations indicated 113 pairs at Leighton Moss, 27 pairs at Silverdale Moss and six at Barrow Scout.

SPOTTED CRAKE* *Porzana porzana***Rare breeder and passage migrant.**

2012. Two were heard at MMWWT on 12 June (T Clare, C Tomlinson) during the national Spotted Crake survey organised by RSPB. There were no previous or subsequent records so it remains uncertain if this was a potential breeding record or whether the birds were just passing through.

None was seen or heard in 2013.

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus***Very common resident breeder.****Monthly peak counts**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MMWWT	240	25	99	/	/	52	/	129	/	/	100	/
Ribble WeBS	28	37	38	48	14	10	31	20	52	51	28	26

The Lancaster January survey recorded 249, compared with 96-161 during 2007-12. The most notable counts in north Lancashire were at Leighton Moss during the January/February cold spell when up to 55 were seen along the reedbed edge, and a peak of 54 at Aldcliffe in December.

Double-figure counts were recorded at 13 sites in the Fylde, the largest being 22 in Stanley Park in February and 15 on Newton Marsh in January, Cleveleys in April and Newton-with-Scales in October. Other large counts were 27 at Sefton Park, south Liverpool in December, 19 at Brockholes in September, twelve at Jackhouse in April and eleven at Easington in October.

Breeding reports were typically sparse, five pairs at both Belmont Reservoir and Marshside being the only 'notable' totals. One attacked a Stoat on the edge of a pond at Belmont on 27 April.

COOT *Fulica atra***Common resident breeder; abundant winter visitor from continental Europe.****National importance: 1800.****Monthly peak counts at sites with maxima over 200**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Leighton Moss	390	366	255	190	65	180	340	241	420	570	265	95
Dockacres comp.	320	222	66	59	10	46	35	87	414	435	645	670
Brockholes	147	102	80	35	31	70	94	135	241	252	228	249
Marton Mere	358	350	160	4	/	/	/	/	105	152	266	265
Ribble WeBS	239	198	200	110	85	74	39	37	58	25	77	60
MMWWT	410	270	58	/	/	78	/	118	/	68	189	/
Southport ML	155	127	43	6	24	84	/	/	/	/	/	162
Seaforth	39	40	40	10	20	45	61	163	54	43	47	28

In north Lancashire, as water levels dropped at Leighton Moss in late autumn many moved to the Dockacres complex. Large counts not in the table included 167 at Stanley Park, Blackpool on 24 Oct, 147 at Lunt Meadows on 12 Sept, 115 at Sefton Park, Liverpool on 4 Dec, 60 at Alston Wetland in July and 40 at Croston Twin Lakes on 20 Aug.

The breeding population at Leighton Moss was estimated at 96 pairs. The few other totals reported included nine pairs at Marshside, seven at Mere Sands Wood and six at Seaforth and Lunt Meadows. Only one pair was found on the survey of the River Lune, compared with a mean of 23 pairs during the 1990s.



Marton Mere, 6 October. (Paul Slade)

COMMON CRANE* *Grus grus***Rare passage migrant.**

One was at MMWWT and surrounding areas on 7-18 Jan with perhaps the same there on 3 March (finders unknown).

AVOCET *Recurvirostra avosetta***Recently established scarce breeding bird, uncommon passage migrant.****National Importance: 75**

The first were at MMWWT on 16 Feb and the Eric Morecambe complex the next day but none was seen in the Fylde until 4 March, at Warton and Lytham. In the meantime, numbers at MMWWT had built to a peak of 86 on 9 March and at Marshside 67 by the 27th. Records of migrants away from the breeding areas included three at Seaforth on 24 March, two at Brockholes on 25 April with one there on 30 May, two at Grimsargh Reservoirs on 21 May and twos at Stocks Reservoir on 2 & 22 May with one there on 2 June.

Thirty pairs nested at the Eric Morecambe complex, resulting in 110 being present on 5 June. Breeding success was poor at MMWWT, where 23 pairs fledged only three young, while 18-20 pairs

on Warton Marsh had twelve young on 10 June. Marshside also supported 23 pairs and eleven pairs were on Hesketh Out Marsh but the outcome from either site was not reported.

After the main departure of breeding birds, there were singles at Glasson on 18 July and 20 Aug. The last at MMWWT was on 29 Sept, and the last anywhere on the Eric Morecambe complex on 9 Nov.

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*

Abundant winter visitor. Common breeding bird.

International importance: 10200. National importance: 3200.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	13423	10177	6615	3231	2227	988	3270	11835	22132	17099	13929	13753
Ribble WeBS	10452	7337	4167	2884	1326	538	2291	3197	6404	11731	7323	6934
Alt WeBS	1347	1947	305	1057	520	545	462	1130	1809	930	1266	1075

After increasing by roughly 10% during the early 2000s the Lancashire wintering population fell by 20% by the end of decade but has shown some signs of recovery in the past few years. This trend is broadly in line with the national situation which indicates a 15% decline during 2001/12-2011/12 (WeBS). However, fortunes have differed markedly on the two main estuaries

with a small increase since 2000 on Morecambe Bay more than cancelled out by a 50% decline on the Ribble. The largest roost of the year was 10000 at Heysham on 3 Dec.

There is some evidence that more may either be wintering inland or returning early from the coast. These included 13 at Smithies Bridge on 5 Jan and seven at Burholme on the 7th. An overwintering flock at Arkholme peaked at 129 in January, 165 in February and 211 in March.

As migration got underway, numbers built up rapidly inland in February with a widespread arrival on the 17th including 41 at Stocks Reservoir and 73 at MMWWT; further counts included 37 at Alston Reservoirs on the 19th, 69 at Burholme by the 25th and 85 at Sawley on the 28th. March counts included 36 in the Belmont area on the 17th and 73 on the 23rd at Brockholes.

Breeding totals included 40 pairs at Arkholme, which hatched only six and fledged only one, 28 pairs on Hesketh Out Marsh, 17 at Marshside, 14 at Leighton Moss and six at Belmont Reservoir.

Inland post-breeding gatherings included 74 on 8 July at Arkholme, 25 at Belmont Reservoir on 25 July with five still there on 11 August 23 at Coldwell Reservoirs on 18 July and ten at Stocks Reservoir on 22 Aug. None was reported in east Lancashire in October and just two singles were seen in November, but there were eleven reports in December..

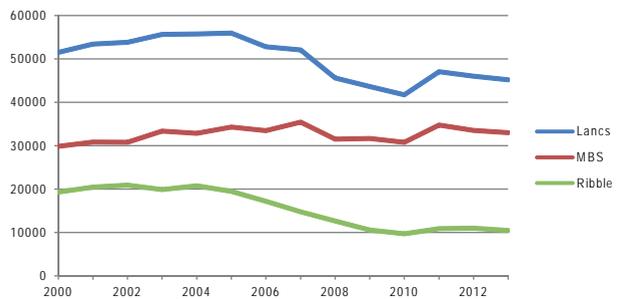
GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

Uncommon breeder, abundant on passage and in winter.

International importance: 8000. National importance: 4000.

Apart from the 4000 at Marshside in January, the largest numbers in the first half of the year were found, typically, on the Fylde, including 1900 at Glasson on 5 Jan, and 2330 there on the 16 Feb, counts which were missed by the MBS WeBS counts.

Peak counts of wintering Oystercatcher
(5-year rolling means, 1996-2000 to 2009-2013)



Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	775	626	1030	340	0	0	3	76	1184	1487	522	1030
Ribble WeBS	1655	1390	711	22	1	0	38	21	1141	1429	1359	426
Marshside	4000	1000	1800	400	200	0	0	12	200	30	980	1500

There was a large departure of coastal birds by the end of February but the Pilling flock peaked at 620 on 2 March. Of the few records in the south-west away from Marshside and the Ribble, 40 were on grassland within a factory unit in Speke on 20 January and 225 were at Lunt Meadows from 20 March to 3 April.

Inland wintering numbers included a peak of ten at Altham on 9 Jan, 32 at Weets Hill on the 11th and 60 on Croston Moss on the 16th.

A flock of 20 over Alston Wetland on 5 Feb may have heralded the start of spring passage. Peak spring passage counts included 46 at Brockholes on 12 March, 150 at Trawden on the 20th, 66 at Jumbles on the 24th and 37 at Champion Moor on 25 April. The Croston flock built to 300 by 31 March, then reduced to 150 by 10 April and 35 by the 21st.

Four were back on moors above Belmont on 17 Feb, increasing to 17 by 2 March and 58, presumably including passage birds, were on Oswaldtwistle Moor on 16 April.

Breeding season records came from Boulsworth Hill, where four pairs were on territory, Cant Clough, Pendle Hill, Twiston Moor and Will Moor, while a record nine pairs were on territory on the West Pennine Moors around Belmont.

Autumn passage included 28 at Coldwell Reservoirs on 21 July, 18 on Pendle Hill on 18 Aug, 38 at MMWWT on 6 Sept; 171 were at Whitemoor Reservoir on 5 Oct and 116 on Champion Moor on the 15th, while in November 44 were at Lower Edge Farm, Clitheroe and 24 at Stocks Reservoir on the 10th.

The first back on coast were at Cockerham on 3 July, but the main return began in September.

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

Abundant, but declining, passage migrant and winter visitor.

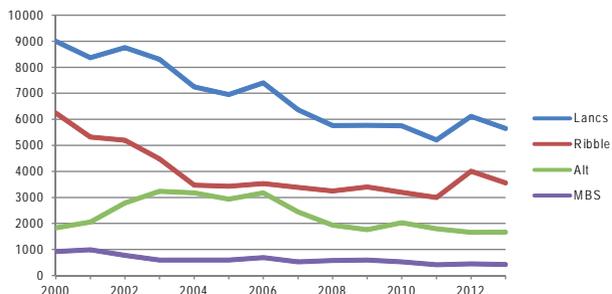
International importance: 2500. National importance: 430.

WeBS counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS	255	358	366	205	131	1	51	207	240	286	297	551
Ribble	277	749	691	675	182	31	118	114	79	1638	518	192
Alt	893	787	297	1280	7	0	18	95	756	419	646	624

Wintering numbers have fallen by a massive 50% or more in Lancashire during the 21st century, a trend that has been more or less consistent for the past 15 years. This decline has been almost entirely accounted for by changes on the Ribble, where average numbers have fallen by 75%, while those on Morecambe Bay and the Alt, which have always been significantly lower, have

**Peak counts of wintering Grey Plover
(5-year rolling means, 1996-2000 to 2009-2013)**



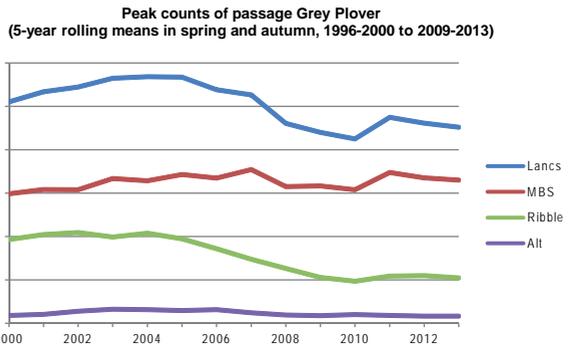
remained roughly stable. These declines appear to be more severe in Lancashire than nationally – the UK wintering population having declined by 21% between 2001/02 and 2011/12 (WeBS).

Passage numbers in both spring and autumn have declined by around a third this century, again largely on the Ribble, although average numbers passing through Morecambe Bay have halved from 1000 to 500. Having increased in the mid-2000s, the Alt passage is currently back where it was in 2000.

The largest counts in Morecambe Bay during the first winter period were 280 at Pilling on 10 March and 250 at Fleetwood on the 17th. Four hundred at Cabin Hill on 3 May with 505 there two days later and 438 on the 11th were missed by the Alt WeBS count.

Following a small return in July, numbers slowly increased on all parts of the coast, peaking in September on the Alt, October on the Ribble and December in Morecambe Bay. Counts missed by WeBS included 300 at Cabin Hill in late August and 400 at Heysham on 15 Sept.

There were just two inland records: singles on the River Calder at Altham from 24-28 Jan and at MMWWT on 18 May.



LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

Abundant breeder and winter visitor.

International importance: 20000. National importance: 6200.

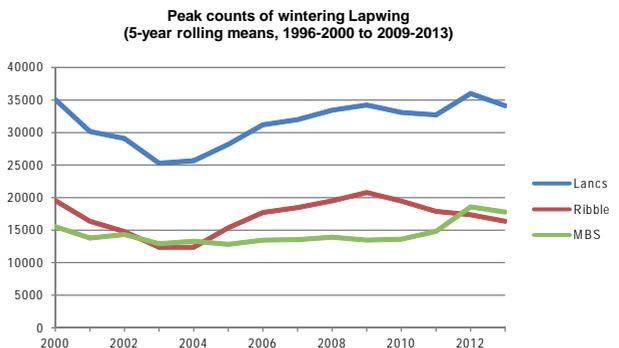
Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	6639	5962	241	76	46	91	854	1451	4810	8946	4165	11209
Glasson	3200	2000	20	1	3	40	250	1100	1550	2200	2150	4150
Ribble WeBS	6464	3820	809	169	114	181	541	2325	4302	7800	9271	13309
Marshside	2000	290	714	87	67	79	134	300	163	700	3000	2584
MMWWT	900	800	400	200	150	55	500	300	600	700	2000	2040

Having taken a quite severe dive in the early years of the 21st century, coastal wintering Lapwing numbers have regained their position from the turn of the century. However, the Lancashire totals mask significant differences between the two main estuaries. On Morecambe Bay numbers flatlined until exhibiting a sharp upturn in the past few years, while on the Ribble a 33% increase at the end of the last decade has been reversed in this one.

The largest inland count at the start of the year was 1000 at Brockholes on 25 Jan. Smaller counts of note included 690 at Arkholme on 14 Feb, 384 at Altham on 27 Jan, 300 at Bashall Town on 30 Jan, 465 at Burholme on 17 Feb, 200 on Croston Moss on 1 Feb and 250 at Brindle on 3 March.

Breeding was widespread but little reported. Around the Ribble, there were 52 pairs at



Marshside, eleven pairs at Crossens, 16 pairs on Hesketh Out Marsh, 45 pairs on Newton Marsh, and four pairs on Freckleton Marsh. Thirty pairs nested on maize stubble at Melling in the Lune Valley, and all but one of the 28 pairs found on the Lune survey nested in maize. Other records included ten pairs at Lunt Meadows, 22 pairs at Leighton Moss, 27 pairs at Brockholes.

Twenty-eight pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir, producing at least ten broods and good numbers of fledged juveniles from 22 June onwards. Mown firebreaks on the moors above Belmont are attractive to this species with at least six pairs on territory in this habitat. At Aintree, early nests in a potato field were thought to have been destroyed by harrowing on 29 April, but a minimum of three pairs relaid and some young hatched. Breeding was also confirmed by the presence of chicks at Alston Wetland, Bashall Town, Champion Moor Flood Pool, Chipping Moss, Hall Hill, Lees House, Ling Hill Farm, Mill Brook Bridge, New Laithe Farm, Shay House and Wycoller.

A count of 156 at Belmont Res on 3 December and 116 still present on the 31st were unprecedented winter counts – Lapwing were, until the last decade, largely absent from this area during midwinter. At the end of the year, the largest inland flocks were 1000 at Lunt Meadows and 2040 at MMWWT in December.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*

Uncommon breeder, fairly common on passage.

The first of spring was at Aldcliffe on 17 March. Other arrivals followed at Alston Wetland on 19 March, Brockholes on the 20th and the Conder Estuary on the 29th; a wider arrival on 30 March included birds at Lunt Meadows, Lightfoot Green and Belmont. A scattering of new birds followed, including singles at Bretherton and Rishton on 3 April, Cabin Hill on 8-9 April and Anglezarke Reservoir on the 10th, and two at Charnock Richard on the 16th. The first arrived at Seaforth and MMWWT on 20 April and one was Farington Moss, Leyland on the 23rd.

Large counts included eight at The Snab on 15 April, eleven at Sowerby Hall Flood on the 16th, 13 at Inskip the same day, and 21 at Brockholes on the 21st; Alston Wetland had a peak of five on 26 April. Passage through Stocks Reservoir included seven on 11 April, rising to ten on the 14 April, numbers dropping to five by 20 April and increasing again to at least nine on 10 May; despite these numbers the only indication of possible breeding there was a bird displaying on 31 May.

Twelve pairs bred at Brockholes with birds present until 16 Aug. Up to nine were present at Belmont Reservoir in the breeding season but only two pairs definitely bred, with one pair fledging two young. Thirteen pairs were found in the Lune survey, five of them at Arkholme. Juveniles were noted at a number of other inland sites in July including Lower Foulridge Reservoir, Grimsargh Reservoirs, Hapton, Ightenhill Bridge, Lower Towneley Scrape and Skirden Beck. One pair fledged two young at Lunt Meadows. A territorial pair was on the Calder at Altham from at least 11 April to 4 May and one pair was displaying at Anglezarke Reservoir in early May. Birds were also reported from Brookside, Calder Foot and Cant Clough, Coldwell and Hurstwood Reservoirs during the breeding season.

Few autumn birds were reported. Three were at Lower Foulridge Reservoir on 4 Aug with one still there on the 24th and two at Lower Towneley Scrape on 17 Aug. Singles were at Aldcliffe on 26 Aug and Belmont Reservoir on the 28th. There were juveniles at Newton Marsh and Skippool on 5 Sept, five were on the Eric Morecambe complex on 9 Sept and a late bird was at MMWWT on the 23rd. An adult and two juveniles at Parsonage Reservoir on 25 Sept were the last of the year on a record late date for the east of the county.

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

Uncommon breeding bird, abundant passage migrant uncommon in winter.

International importance: 730. National importance: 340

WeBS counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS	106	81	42	196	475	5	10	438	113	83	28	67
Ribble	0	0	37	1385	2690	23	40	583	195	70	1	0
Alt	22	3	18	107	153	0	29	287	134	16	35	28

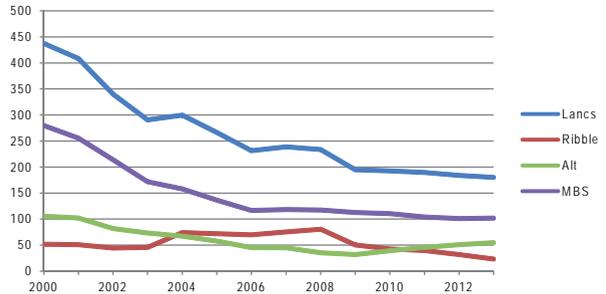
The Ribble Estuary has always supported the overwhelming majority of Lancashire's passage Ringed Plovers, numbers on both Morecambe Bay and the Alt being trivial by comparison. After undergoing a 50% decline on the Ribble in the early 2000s, passage numbers more than doubled from the last years of the decade; during this period of upsurge Lancashire supported some 7% of the international population. However, the 2013 peak on the Ribble was the lowest for five years, levelling out the five-year average, and it is possible that this marked the beginning of a downward phase of a longer term cycle.

Counts missed by WeBS included 400 at Cocksand on 19 April and 600 there on 19 May (MBS), and 300 at Cabin Hill on 16 April with 84 there on 3 June (Alt). Autumn counts surpassing the monthly WeBS totals included 450 at Cocksand on 14 Aug with 250 there on 10 Sept, and 400 at Cabin Hill on 20-21 Aug.

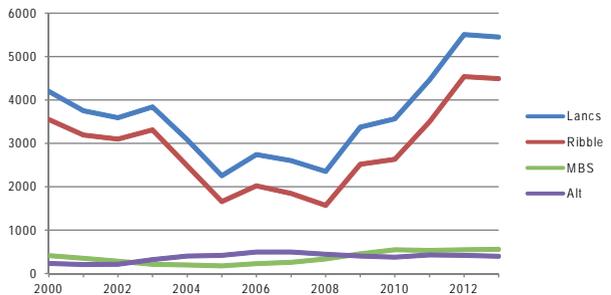
Inland, one was at Stocks Reservoir on 9 April, increasing to three on the 11th and there were a further 16 reports from this site, peaking at seven on 10 May and with the last on 28 May. Movement through Alston Wetland started on 14 April and peaked at six on 25-26 April. Other spring passage reports included twelve at Rishton Reservoir on 18 April, with only five remaining the next day and a further two there on 16 May, two at Champion Moor on 11 May and two at Calder Foot on the 12th. One heard calling near the summit of Pendle Hill on 6 May was most unexpected. The peak count of the year at MMWWT was 18 in May.

Breeding included four pairs with 16 young in the Liverpool Central Docks in July, eleven pairs at Brockholes, two pairs at Marshside, only two pairs at Leighton Moss due to disturbance, and single pairs at Hightown and MMWWT. A pair was territorial at Belmont Reservoir but for unknown reasons abandoned the site. Eight pairs were found on the Lune survey, two of them breeding unsuccessfully at Arkholme. There were two confirmed breeding attempts at Heysham, one of which appeared to be successful, the other failing at a late egg stage.

Peak counts of wintering Ringed Plover
(5-year rolling means, 1996-2000 to 2009-2013)



Peak counts of passage Ringed Plover
(5-year rolling means in spring and autumn, 1996-2000 to 2009-2013)



A few inland migrants were noted in autumn between 21 Aug and 8 October, the largest numbers being three at Alston Wetland and four at Lower Foulridge Reservoir on 24 Aug.

KILLDEER *Charadrius vociferus*

Vagrant.

One was at Alston Wetland on 7 April (G Thomas), a first for Lancashire. It flew off at 11.50 hrs. The record has been accepted by the BBRC. (See separate article).



Lancashire's first Killdeer, Alston Wetland, 7 April. (Gavin Thomas)

DOTTEREL *Charadrius morinellus*

Uncommon, but regular spring migrant, scarce in autumn.

The first arrival was a male on 13 April on Pendle Hill. Reports followed there on most days until a final two females on 17 May, with a peak count of five (minimum of three females) on 12 & 13 May. Birds were also seen on the rocky plateau at Fairsnape Fell, with a pair there on 19 & 21 April and two females on 17 May, the same last date as on Pendle.

One was in a coastal field with Golden Plovers on 16 April at Cockersand and nine on Downholand Moss during the afternoon of 5 May, which left before evening.

There were no reports of autumn passage birds this year.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

Common passage migrant, especially in spring.

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

Evening Roost Counts

	19/4	20/4	21/4	23/4	24/4	25/4	27/4	28/4	29/4	30/4	2/5	3/5	4/5	7/5
Brockholes Wetland	13	20	35		110	77	133	201	263	248	230	160		32
Barnacre Reservoir							383				377			
Longton Marsh	48	86	112	145						180	222		287	

The earliest were in the Fylde, at Fleetwood Marsh and Fluke Hall on 14 April, and Cockersand on the 15th. Brockholes Wetland had its first on 16 April and Whimbrels were seen throughout the county in the following week. Typically, numbers peaked in the final days of April and the first week of May but occasional double-figure counts continued to be made until mid-May.

The coordinated count of evening roosts carried out on 2 May logged a total of 971 birds; in addition to those at the three main sites in the table there were 36 at Alston Wetland, 40 at Windy Harbour and 66 at Grimsargh Reservoirs. Larger counts elsewhere included 360 in two flocks at The Snab on 26 April, 57 at Arkholme on the 29th, 50 at Heskin, 48 at Alston Wetland and 44 at Inskip on the 30th, 40 at Little Singleton on 2 May and 35 at Withnell Fold on the 4th.

The Chorley records relate to an annual event in which flocks of up to 50 spend up to two weeks at around four regular feeding sites (Heskin, Croston, Euxton, Withnell Fold). It is not known if these birds go to roost at Brockholes, but if they do, they return to the feeding sites the next day.

Without knowing the turnover rate it is impossible to know precisely how many pass through the county in spring but, excluding flyovers, 1500 would seem to be a fairly reasonable minimum estimate.

There were four records of up to three in June, all in the Fylde, but the return passage proper began in early July, gathered pace in August and dwindled rapidly during September, with just a single October record on the 3rd at Cockersand. As usual, it was just a pale shadow of spring, with peak counts of 15 at Cockersand on 19 July with 19 there on 9 Aug, and 15 south-west over Rossall Point on 18 Aug.

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*

Common breeder, abundant in winter.

International importance: 8500. National importance: 1400.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	3134	1863	1400	788	102	591	2443	4769	3601	2783	4022	3431
Ribble WeBS	1215	657	448	261	73	101	1104	914	1253	616	655	752
Alt WeBS	1018	750	104	13	31	205	924	1398	1700	807	469	542
Mersey WeBS*	14	29	125	28	3	0	/	4	7	8	139	41

* Liverpool section only

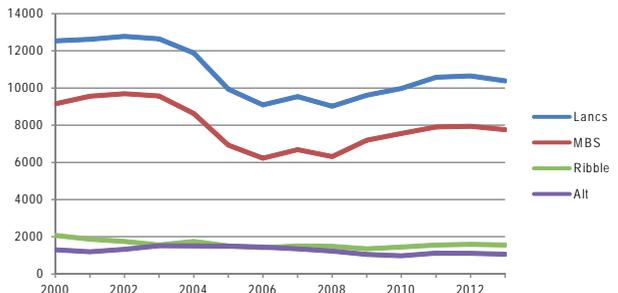
The September count on the Alt was the highest there since 2002; winter numbers have remained stable for several years after a brief period of increase between 1999 and 2006. Both the winter and passage peaks were on the low side on the Ribble but average numbers in either season have changed little during this century. Morecambe Bay remains

the county's main site and, while the highest winter counts came nowhere close to matching the 10000 recorded in January 2012, mean counts there have also been roughly stable in winter and on passage in the 21st century, albeit with annual fluctuations.

The only count definitely missed by WeBS on any of the estuaries was 430 at Cabin Hill (Alt) on 29 March, although 3000 at Cockersand on 3 Jan made up a substantial part of that month's WeBS total on Morecambe Bay.

Typically, after a few earlier records, which included 60 at Arkholme on 2 Feb, the main dispersal to inland breeding areas got underway in late February. Counts included 30 at Alston Wetland on the 19th, 35 on Chipping Moss and on the 21st and 31 at Delph Reservoir on the 30th, but these were completely outshone by 156 on the Lune at Arkholme on the 21st, rising to 294 on the 28th. The largest March counts at the main stopover sites were 538 at Arkholme on the 21st increasing to 890 on

Peak counts of wintering Curlew
(5-year rolling means, 1996-2000 to 2009-2013)



the 28th, 262 at Brockholes on the 24th, 159 on the 17th at Belmont Reservoir, where 150 remained snowbound until the 27th, 154 at Alston Wetland on the 23rd and at other east Lancashire sites 100 at Copy Hill, Greenberfield on the 10th and 90 at Braddup Clough and Colthurst on the 31st.

The only systematic breeding information came from the central West Pennine Moors, where densities on sample plots varied between 2 and 3.5 pairs/km², including seven pairs in 2km² of south Darwen Moor, seven pairs in 3km² of Belmont Moor down to Belmont Reservoir and six pairs in 3km² of Withnell Moor. Breeding was massively under-reported in the rest of the county but was recorded at several sites in east Lancashire: New Laithe Farm, Marl Hill, Moss Barn Farm, Moor Piece and Ightenhill Bridge, Boulsworth Hill and Pendle Hall. Fifteen pairs bred alongside the Lune between Leck Beck and Wenning Foot.

The last record at Belmont was on 25 Aug and in east Lancashire over Longridge on 10 Nov.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

Rare breeder, very common passage migrant and winter visitor.

International importance: 470. National importance: 430.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
L Moss/EMC	/	150	200	1850	385	205	160	503	1010	580	550	155
N Fylde coast	182	650	850	350	50	13	60	68	155	66	450	450
Ribble WeBS	76	832	446	628	420	182	358	1404	278	871	168	1763
Marshside	3200	700	800	650	326	317	600	2500	500	722	2400	1712
MMWWT	2	90	34	160	72	55	160	48	44	4	30	1
Seaforth/Alt	16	154	150	229	50	15	41	150	140	60	1	5
Mersey WeBS*	0	20	27	47	0	0	/	0	9	42	2	2

* Liverpool section only

Numbers were fairly typical at all coastal locations during both winter and passage periods with Marshside, as usual, the county's main site. One at Red Nab on 9 March was surprisingly the only record at Heysham.

None has nested successfully on Newton Marsh for several years and in 2013 the only spring records of the continental subspecies there was of one on 7 & 9 May. On the latter date the bird was displaying but there was no evidence of a female being present.



Breeding-plumaged Icelandic Black-tailed Godwit, Seaforth, July. (Steve Young)

The only records in either winter period at any distance from the coast were 20 at Brockholes on 20 Feb; Black-tailed Godwits remain scarce inland. However, there was a remarkable record at Stocks Reservoir on 26 April, when spring passage started in spectacular fashion when an unprecedented 312 in two separate flocks dropped in at Stocks Reservoir and roosted overnight. Other inland records in the east included one or two at Alston Wetland on 23 March to 4 April and 30 April to 6 May, one at Mawdesley on 24 March, three at Grimsargh Reservoirs on 3 July, 18 at Foulridge Reservoirs on the 21st, 13 at Alston on 3 Aug and seven at Grimsargh on the 30th. Passage counts at Brockholes were 48 on 28 April and 17 on 28 July, while two were at Belmont Reservoir on 4 Aug.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*

Abundant winter visitor.

International importance: 1200. National importance: 380.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	1881	2972	/	/	263	1	42	67	868	1304	/	2892
Ribble WeBS	4530	2474	2576	165	80	1	746	197	1867	2481	2184	671
Alt WeBS	6004	11560	2619	1177	22	151	796	857	885	3800	1930	4453
SNR	1000	1	1	60	0	150	300	417	140	570	120	1

The only major count apparently missed by WeBS was 1500 on the Alt at Cabin Hill during September.

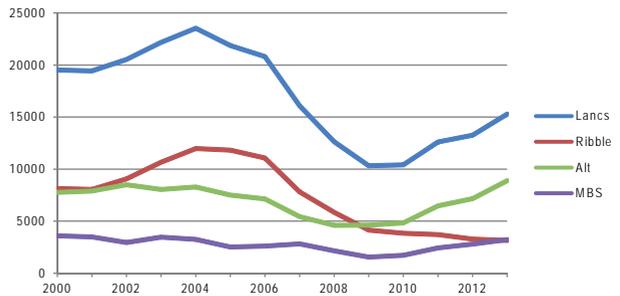
Morecambe Bay, where most are seen on the Lune Estuary, contributes a relatively small number to the Lancashire wintering population and numbers there have remained more or less stable for the past 15 or so years. However, there has been a dramatic

50% fall in numbers using the Ribble from a peak in the early years of the century. More recently this has begun to be compensated for by increasing numbers on the Alt which is currently the most important of our estuaries, supporting two-thirds of the county's wintering population. However, the main roost sites on the Alt at Formby Point/Hightown and the Ribble at Ainsdale/Birkdale are only a few miles apart and, as the figure below shows, there have been regular shifts in the proportion of birds using the two sites. Nonetheless, the overall Lancashire population has fallen by 25% or more since the turn of the century, apparently significantly more than in the UK as a whole which experienced a 10% fall during 2001/02 to 2011/12 (WeBS).

Summering second-calendar-year birds were few and far between this year with peak June counts of only 150 on the Alt at Seaforth and 54 on the Lune at Glasson on the 16th comparing with an average of almost 600 – mostly on the Alt and Ribble – since 2000. These numbers vary hugely between years, largely in response to the population cycles of small mammals and their predators. Russian tundra rodent populations are believed to have been high in 2011 which is likely to have led to large numbers of predators surviving to prey on wader chicks in 2012.

There were only three inland records: four at Brockholes on 16 April with one there on 11 Nov, and one at Rishton Reservoir on 12 Sept.

**Peak counts of wintering Bar-tailed Godwit
(5-year rolling means, 1996-2000 to 2009-2013)**



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	404	472	480	497	172	7	49	248	686	665	364	524
Fleetwood	107	200	260	200	68	6	22	185	228	250	287	280
Ribble WeBS	130	27	152	140	5	31	63	134	161	70	102	61
Lytham	150	/	140	140	100	61	63	250	278	/	87	55
Alt WeBS	120	35	96	10	5	4	10	2	65	0	12	17

Other significant coastal counts included 300 at Heysham on 15 Feb, 150 at Cockersand on 28 March and 40 at Glasson on 10 Feb and Sunderland Point on 1 Sept. Peak counts at Blackpool were 60 on 12 Jan & 2 Feb, and 55 on 13 April and 30 Oct. The largest count on the Lancashire section of the Mersey was 21 at Dingle on 6 Aug.

All inland records were in May: singles at Brockholes on the 8th, 12th & 15th; six at Stocks Reservoir on the 10th with five there on the 15th and two on the 18th; one at MMWWT on the 13th and one at Alston Wetland on the 15-16th.

KNOT *Calidris canutus*

Abundant winter visitor.

International importance: 4500. National importance: 3200.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	13229	16130	4119	847	80	/	10	127	299	3432	1868	14166
Ribble WeBS	10043	13806	16516	1334	3709	980	2500	2202	3854	5566	4590	1742
Alt WeBS	30248	34100	1905	8520	52	54	1185	3131	6018	11760	3100	21000
SNR	230	1000	10	4	1	220	1100	900	550	550	300	0

Over recent years there has been a gradual convergence in numbers seen on the Alt and Morecambe Bay (see below) and a shift away from the Ribble to the Alt. Once again the roost at Formby Point/High-town was the largest in the county.

Total numbers seen in Lancashire have fallen on average by around 20000 during the present century, most dramatically in Morecambe Bay, where most continue to roost at Heysham but with numbers reduced to 10000 or so from the regular 50000 at the turn of the century.

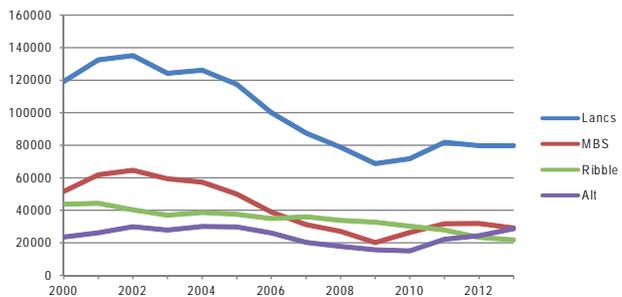
Although the national population has also declined by 7% between 2001/02 and 2011/12, it is apparent that, as with some other wader species, Lancashire has been disproportionately affected.

Counts of 7800 at Sunderland Point on 10 March were missed by the Morecambe Bay WeBS counts, as probably were 2000 on the Ribble at St. Anne's on 20 Aug.

First-summerers began to arrive at Seaforth in mid-June, building to 220 on the 29th, although most, if not all, of the 1100 or so there in early July were also of this age class.

There were three records inland: six at Brockholes on 16 April with another there on the 23rd, and 14 at MMWWT on 18 May.

Peak counts of wintering Knot
(5-year rolling means, 1996-2000 to 2009-2013)



RUFF *Calidris pugnax***Rare breeder, fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor.****International importance: 10000. National importance: 50.****Monthly peak counts**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
L Moss/EMC	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	9	9	7	8	4
MMWWT	146	103	136	52	4	2	14	40	78	80	91	115
M'side/Crossens	11	19	23	43	25	2	5	22	13	25		18

Twenty-seven at Low Meadows on 6 Jan and eight there on 17 April were presumably part of the MMWWT wintering population. Few were reported elsewhere away from the main sites in the table during the first winter period, all of them in the Fylde: singles at Cockersand in January, Fluke Hall in February and Glasson in March, and two at Mythop on 14 Jan. Single(s) at Sowerby on 23 April and 8 May may have been migrants but, if so, they offered the only signs of spring passage.

No lekking was observed at MMWWT. Twenty males were gathered together at Marshside at dawn on 3 May with three females present but all had apparently left by the 10th. There was no further evidence of breeding on the Ribble Marshes, although the presence of one on Freckleton Marsh on 1 July and three moulting males at Marshside on the 13th was possibly suggestive. However, a female was at Seaforth on 2-11 July so it was perhaps more likely that all these July birds were early migrants.

There was, however, a gap of three weeks before the next were seen at Glasson on 6 Aug and Brockholes on the 13th, where there were four on the 25th. Records followed from a further seven sites during August, including three at Cockersand on the 28-30th. However, the main passage ensued in September and October as numbers built up at the main sites and with reports of up to three from Glasson, Cockersand, Skippool Creek, Cockerham, Newton Marsh, Freckleton Naze, Alston Wetland, Brockholes, Hesketh Out Marsh, Lunt Meadows and Seaforth.

There were few new arrivals in November and December records were restricted to the main sites plus singles at Glasson Pilling Marsh and Hesketh Out Marsh.

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

The first were two at MMWWT on 26 April with two new birds the next day, one or two were seen fairly regularly until 27 May with the last of spring on 6 June. One or two were also present on a regular basis at Marshside between 16 May and 12 June with four there on 9 June. The only other spring records were singles on the Eric Morecambe complex on 27 April and 3-6 May, at Fleetwood on 29 April and Rossall Point on 13-14 June.

No more were seen until an adult at Skippool Creek on 22 July and 30 July-6 Aug, two adults at Seaforth on 28 July, increasing to three on 3 Aug with one remaining on the 7th, and one at Conder Green on 30 July. An estimated 70-80 were seen during August at various coastal sites with peak counts of 35 on the Eric Morecambe complex on the 30th, four at Sunderland Point and three at Cockersand, the first juveniles appearing in the last week of the month. The majority of a large passage movement during September were presumably juveniles. A total of around 100 birds were reported from MMWWT (peak count of six) and a large number of coastal sites, most notably the Eric Morecambe complex where 27 were seen on 3 Sept when twelve were also present at Sunderland Point, and Banks Marsh with 25 on the 1st and ten on the 29th.

Passage slowed during October when fewer than 20 were reported. Three at Fluke Hall on the 13th and one there on the 30th, and one on the Eric Morecambe complex on 6 Dec the last records.

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

Although singles were reported from both MMWWT and Marshside in spring, the only record supported by a description was one at Conder Green on 27-28 May (S Piner).

SANDERLING *Calidris alba***Abundant passage migrant and common winter visitor.**

International importance: 1200. National importance: 160.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	115	57	277	58	240	8	38	76	230	260	250	230
Ribble WeBS	463	1	603	3235	2953	2155	365	2287	497	660	432	149
Alt WeBS	368	1604	597	499	673	0	240	910	1072	960	532	644

A number of counts were made that exceeded those from the monthly WeBS survey: on the Alt 800 at Cabin Hill on 21 July with 1500 there on 21 Aug, on the Ribble 280 at Birkdale on 8 Dec, and in Morecambe Bay 200 at Knott End on 18 Jan with 400 there on 2 June, and 790 at Rossall Point on 29 May with 280 there on 19 Oct and 300 on 30 Nov and 13 Dec. Large counts captured by the Ribble WeBS included 1300 at Ainsdale on 28 April and 1020 at St. Anne's on 21 Aug.

The May count on Morecambe Bay was the highest there at any time of year since 1998, continuing an upward trend there first detected in 2008. Average passage numbers have been falling on the Ribble since the late 1980s but the estuary still supports 3% of the east Atlantic flyway population. The February count on the Alt was a record winter total there but passage numbers were unexceptional.

There were eight records inland. A colour-ringed bird was at Alston Wetland on 25 April and one at Brockholes on 31 July, but most were seen at Stocks Reservoir: two on 6 May, singles on the 10-11th, 15th & 28th and 1 June.

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

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

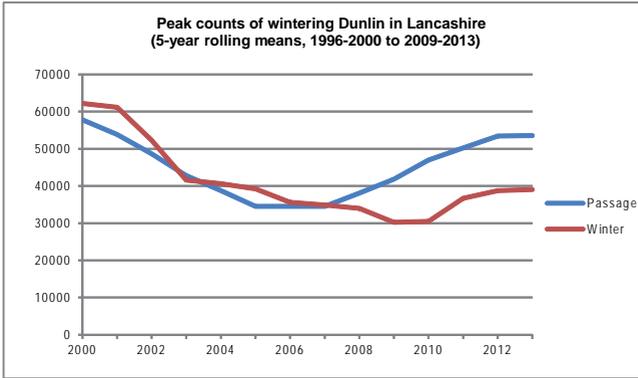
Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	5838	7953	2440	1063	1815	4	504	1058	1312	2774	1902	4027
Ribble WeBS	7102	12888	6998	18332	7419	163	5246	3823	4118	7592	6643	7255
Alt WeBS	1318	4027	495	501	88	0	2336	1036	584	1135	1574	3614
SNR	138	50	44	40	50	4	1100	2300	29	29	10	22
Mersey WeBS*	200	125	310	3	28	0	/	0	0	25	260	0
MMWWT	1	2	5	80	15	3	1	4	14	20	1	1
Brockholes	1	6	5	38	33	0	6	3	1	1	11	10

* Liverpool section only

The only significant counts missed by WeBS came during passage periods when turnover is high: on the Alt 1400 at Cabin Hill on 11 May, and in Morecambe Bay 1500 at Glasson on 9 Aug. Typically, peak counts on the Ribble accounted for more than three-quarters of the Lancashire total. The Ribble remains internationally important and the Alt and Morecambe Bay nationally important.

The figure below illustrates the almost 50% reduction in Dunlin numbers that took place in the county in the early years of this century throughout the year. However, this trend appears to have been largely reversed more recently during passage periods with five-year average peak counts currently only 4000 or so below their 2000 level. Winter numbers too have made some recovery but are still 33% below the 2000 level; this is broadly in line with the national decline of 23% between 2001/02 and 2011/12 (WeBS).



Birds wintering inland are always rare and 2013 produced just four records of singles in east Lancashire in the first three months, and 15 on Croston Moss on 28 Feb; none was reported at the end of the year.

Spring passage inland, presumably mainly involving British breeders, is reported more frequently as birds make brief stopovers on various wetlands. Stocks Reservoir

registered 161 bird-days between 12 April and 1 June, mostly in early May when numbers peaked at 41 on the 10th. Passage at Alston Wetland covered a similar period, with 41 bird-days from 14 April to 27 May and a peak of eight on 25 April. Other east Lancashire records came from Altham, Champion Moor, Calder Foot and Grimsargh Reservoirs. Three were at Belmont Reservoir on 10 April, one on the 28th and five on 11 May, and in Rossendale one was at Holden Wood Reservoir on 12 May. In the south-west, numbers peaked at 80 at MMWWT and 15 at Lunt Meadows on 25 April.

The only report of breeding this year came from the West Pennine Moors at Belmont where birds were on territory at four traditional breeding sites.

Return passage at any distance inland was typically sparse, with records of up to three at seven sites in east Lancashire between 23 June and 7 Oct, and singles at Withnell Fold on 28 July and Whitworth Quarry the only other reports.



Purple Sandpiper, Fleetwood, November. (Paul Ellis)

PURPLE SANDPIPER *Calidris maritime*

Scarce winter visitor.

Once again, none was seen away from the 'traditional' sites.

Two were at Blackpool from 2012 until 19 March and again from 30 Oct to 4 Nov, after which one remained until the end of the year. Fleetwood also had two until 2 April with one until the 22nd, two from 1 Nov and three from 22 Nov to the end of the year with four on 27 Dec.

At Heysham, singles were seen regularly during January then sporadically until 13 April, with a later sighting during the Turnstone passage on 29 April. One was reported on 18 Sept but the only subsequent record was one on 30 Oct and 3 Nov. Stormy conditions during December made recording difficult and the Turnstone roost fragmented as additional sections of the wooden jetty roost site disappeared.

Fleetwood is one of just three sites in the county where Purple Sandpipers can be found with any certainty – typically wintering with Turnstones.

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*

Fairly common passage migrant..

A thin spring passage comprised five singles at Marshside in May from the 9th and two on 8 June, and one at MMWWT on 13 May.

There were seven records during August, beginning with two at Stanah on the 18th, all of them in north Fylde except for single(s) on the Eric Morecambe complex on the 23rd and 26th. The main coastal passage took place throughout September and continued into mid-October, with around 50 reported; all that were aged were reported as juveniles. Most records again came from north Fylde, where ones or twos were seen at several sites. The largest numbers, however, were on the Eric Morecambe complex, peaking at five on 9 & 13 Sept. Other records came from Sunderland Point, Marton Mere, Lytham, Longton Marsh, Hesketh Out Marsh, Banks Marsh, Marshside and Seaforth. The last was at Cockersand on 20 Oct.

Inland, there were regular singles at MMWWT from 8 Sept to 7 Oct with two on 13-14 Sept, and one at Lower Foulridge Reservoir on 6-8 Oct.



Juvenile Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Hesketh Out Marsh, 9 September. (Steve Young)

A welcome return after a seven year absence for this species.

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER* *Calidris subruficollis***Vagrant.**

A juvenile was on Hesketh Out Marsh on 8-13 Sept (P & M Culkin, J & P Hall). This was the twelfth Lancashire record and the first since one at Seaforth on 8 Oct 1996.

PECTORAL SANDPIPER* *Calidris melanotos***Scarce passage migrant.**

Four records were accepted this year.

A juvenile was on the Eric Morecambe complex on 9-14 Sept with another juvenile there on the 14th (finders unknown), an adult on Banks Marsh on 20 Sept (J Wright) and one at MMWWT on 9 Oct (finder unknown).

SEMPALMATED SANDPIPER *Calidris pusilla***Vagrant.**

A juvenile was at Knott End on 12 Nov (C Batty). The record has been accepted by the BBRC and becomes the second Lancashire record. The previous one was an adult at Brockholes on 25 July 2004.



Juvenile Semipalmated Sandpiper, Knott End, 12 November. (Stuart Piner)

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

The only winter records were one at Conder Green from 2012 until 12 April with presumably the same bird there from 4 Oct to the end of the year.

The earliest migrants were on the Calder at Mitton Bridge on 11 April, at Arkholme, Calder Foot and Brockholes on the 12th, Altham, Fairhaven and MMWWT on the 13th, Belmont on the 14th, and Heysham and Seaforth on the 17th. An uneventful spring passage ensued with the largest counts eight at Brockholes Wetland on the 17th with 25 there on the 25th, six at Alston Wetland on 26 April, five at Stanley Park, Blackpool on the 25th, four at Glasson and Myerscough Quarry on the 19th, and three at Anglezarke Reservoir on the 21st and Avenham Park, Preston on the 28th. The movement was largely spent by mid-May but one or two, presumably first-summers, arrived in June.

In the West Pennines six or seven pairs bred on or around Belmont Reservoir, four pairs at Delph Reservoir and one or two at Springs Reservoir. In east Lancashire there were four territorial pairs on the Ribble between Hurst Green and Hodder Foot at the end of April, at least six pairs bred by the

Hodder between Cow Ark and Lower Hodder Bridge, and there were territorial pairs at a number of other sites. The only breeding report received from north Lancashire was of 13 pairs at Arkholme which fledged seven young.

Birds had begun to return to the coast at the end of June; the passage picked up pace during July and August but was mostly over by mid-September. Large counts included ten on the Conder Estuary on several dates from early July to 1 Aug with 17 there on the 22 July and twelve on the 24th, 14 in the Skippool Creek area on 7 July with 19 there on the 14th, eight at Warton (north Lancashire) on 7 Aug and six at Little Singleton on 29 July.

The last records were all in the east: singles at Martholme on 4 Oct, Altham on the 8th and Parsonage Reservoir on the 6-9th.

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

Fairly common passage migrant, scarce winter visitor.

In the first winter period singles were on the Calder between Altham and Martholme between 2 & 25 Jan with two birds present on the 14th, on the Lune at Arkholme from 9 Jan to at least 8 April, on the Ribble in the Brockholes area from 2012 to 7 April, on the Wyre at Little Singleton from 2012 to 31 March. One was at MMWWT on 15 Feb

Similar numbers were reported at the other end of the year. One at Altham on 16 Nov was likely to be wintering at this traditional site, as were November singles in the Fylde at Mythop, Mowbreck Hall, and Weeton. More certainly wintering were three at Arkholme and singles at Rawcliffe Moss from 23 Nov to the end of the year, Ewood Bridge Sewage Works on 8 Dec, Eccleston (Fylde) from 25 Nov to 17 Dec, Pilling from 2 Nov to 16 Dec, Mawdesley Moss and Syd Brook, Eccleston (Chorley) on 26 Dec and Arley Nature Reserve on the 31st. The situation at Brockholes was more confusing with up to four birds present regularly from late October, declining to three in November and two throughout December.

March records at Dockber in east Lancashire on the 27th, on the Eric Morecambe complex and Hambleton on the 1st, Out Rawcliffe and Skitham on the 24th, Eccleston (Chorley) on the 19th and



Juvenile Green Sandpiper, Seaforth, 2 August. (Chris Gregson)

Ewood Bridge Sewage Works on 31st may have been wintering birds or early migrants.

Definite spring passage birds were thin on the ground. The wintering bird at Arkholme was joined by two others on 12-13 April, while singles were at Brockholes on 16-17 & 21-23 April, MMWWT on 23 April and Belmont Reservoir on 7 May.

There was one at MMWWT from 8 June but the main return began at Stocks Reservoir on 6 July and the Conder Estuary on the 11th. Fifteen or so additional birds were reported from throughout the county in July, at least 50 in August, roughly 15 in September and ten in October; one at Aldcliffe on 8 Nov was perhaps the last coastal migrant. Large counts included nine at Arkholme on 9 Aug, four on Lower Towneley scrape, Burnley on 14 Aug, and threes on the Eric Morecambe complex on the 19th, regularly at MMWWT during autumn, Brockholes on 3 Aug and 19 Oct, Rawcliffe Hall on 2 Sept and Aldcliffe on the 22nd.

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*

Fairly common passage migrant, scarce in winter.

Monthly peak counts

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

The only winter records away from the main sites in the table were singles at Sunderland Point on 14-19 Jan, at Greta Foot on 21-28 Feb and 17-20 Dec, and on Banks Marsh on 11 Dec.

Similarly, few were seen elsewhere in spring. One on Hesketh Out Marsh on 27 March and three at Cockersand on 16 April may have been either wintering birds or passage migrants, singles at Pilling on 6 April, Marshside on 30 May to 6 June and MMWWT on 12 June being the only other likely candidates. It was equally difficult to determine whether singles at Barnaby's Sands on 23 June, Fleetwood on the 29th (and also on 14 & 16 July) and Marshside on 30 June to 4 July were early returners.

The next was one at Hambleton on 25 Aug. Singles continued to be seen regularly in north Fylde – mainly in the Skippool Creek area but also at Fleetwood, Cockerham, Cockersand, Knott End and Barnaby's Sands until 26 Oct. Elsewhere in Morecambe Bay singles were at Sunderland Point on 30 Aug and Heysham on 6 & 15 Sept. As usual, birds were scarce in other parts of the county. Singles at Marshside and Banks Marsh on 8 Sept, with one at the latter site on 13 Oct, and Hesketh Out Marsh on 21 Sept were the only records in the south-west.

Inland, two flew east over Alston Wetland on 5 Sept and a juvenile was at Brockholes on the 6-7th.

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

Fairly common passage migrant, scarce in winter.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
EMC/Leighton	3	1	1	2	1	0	16	19	12	9	2	1
Glasson/C Green	1	1	2	2	2	1	6	4	4	1	2	1

One was at Arkholme on 10 Jan with two there on the 28th, four on 13 Dec and two until the turn of the year. All other winter records were in the Fylde: at Freckleton on 13 Jan, Cockersand on 14 March and Cockerham on 16 Dec.

Spring passage began with singles at Arkholme on 4 April and Brockholes on the 11th. A further 17 were reported during April in all parts of the county, albeit again with a bias towards the Fylde, and four in May with the last at Marshside on the 27th.

Singles at Clowbridge Reservoir on 26 June and Grimsargh Reservoirs on 1 July marked the start of the return. No more were seen in east Lancashire until August but there were further July records

of ones and twos at Seaforth, Brockholes, the Skippool Creek area and Pilling, with up to four at Little Singleton throughout the month. An estimated county total of 60 birds was seen in August with peaks of eight at Little Singleton, six at Arkholme and four at MMWWT, and similar numbers in September with peaks of eight on Hesketh Out Marsh, six at Marshside and Little Singleton and four at Skippool Creek. Ones and twos were recorded during October at Marshside, MMWWT, Cockersand, Little Singleton, Skippool Creek and Fairhaven. Three were still at Little Singleton on 5 Nov, while the last of four singles that month was at Brockholes on the 12th.

The autumn passage of six birds through east Lancashire contrasted with none seen in 2012. In contrast none was seen in north Lancashire apart from those at the Eric Morecambe complex and Leighton Moss.

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*

Uncommon passage migrant.

The year began with singles at Catforth on 27 April and Sowerby on the 28-30th. All subsequent records in both spring and autumn were also of singles. There were eight records in May, at Newton Marsh, Mowbreck, Cabin Hill, Seaforth, MMWWT (two), Brockholes and Leighton Moss, with the last spring migrant on the 21st.

As usual, autumn was slightly more productive with 17 reported between 9 July and 10 Sept, including seven individuals at MMWWT, four at the Eric Morecambe complex and Leighton Moss and two at Aldcliffe. Surprisingly, none was seen in autumn in the Fylde, while east Lancashire's only record of the year was at Grimsargh Reservoirs on 24-26 July.

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*

Fairly common breeding bird, very common passage migrant and winter visitor.

International importance: 2800. National importance: 1200.

Monthly Peak Counts

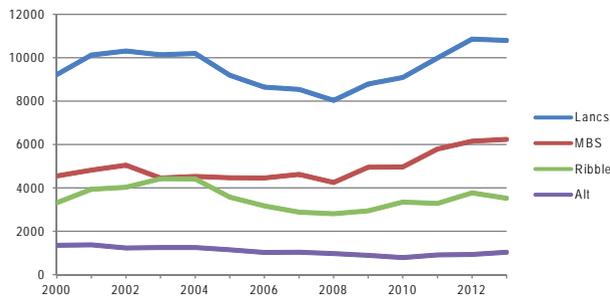
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	3085	2139	2130	1754	84	135	835	2059	3685	3480	3380	1823
EMC	/	/	/	297	/	/	220	225	160	494	200	120
Ribble WeBS	648	1205	1435	492	172	126	330	919	729	606	1664	973
Marshside	450	870	20	67	20	21	82	15	10	70	80	123
Alt WeBS	431	1210	570	172	6	13	206	440	420	649	432	466
Seaforth	370	950	600	130	7	33	250	110	190	320	300	190
Mersey WeBS*	408	112	160	239	0	0	/	97	17	85	108	317

* Liverpool section only

After experiencing a 20% fall in the mid-2000s Lancashire's wintering population appears now to be in healthy condition, the county supporting close to 10% of the national population. As the graph illustrates, the decline was largely due to decreasing numbers on the Ribble, which has shown some signs of recovery more recently, and in part to the decline on the Alt at Seaforth. In contrast,

Morecambe Bay supports almost 50% more birds than it did at the turn of the century. This broadly optimistic picture contrasts with the national situation which indicates a 26% decline between

Peak counts of wintering Redshank
(5-year rolling means, 1996-2000 to 2009-2013)



2001/12 and 2011/12 (WeBS)

Large site counts on Morecambe Bay, where most are seen on the north Fylde coast, included 590 at Cockerham in January with 722 there in November, 524 at Fleetwood Marsh in February with 650 there in October and 1000 at Glasson and 674 at Barnaby's Sands in August. On the Ribble 1000 were at Birkdale in February, 759 at Lytham in August with 540 there in September.

The first sign of movement towards the breeding areas were seven very early birds at Arkholme on 23 Jan. Elsewhere, the passage began with one at Altham on 2 March with other March arrivals in east Lancashire at Alston Wetland, Stocks Reservoir and six other sites. The first was at Belmont Reservoir on 30 March. It seems likely that most breeding sites were occupied by the end of April.

Display was first noted on 8 April at MMWWT, where eight pairs went on to breed (seven pairs in 2012). Forty pairs were located during the survey of the Lune between Leck Beck and Wenning Foot, including eleven at Arkholme. Other breeding totals from regularly-monitored sites were 39 pairs on Marshside/Crossens Inners (55 in 2012) and 35 on the outer marshes (34 in 2012), 45 on Hesketh Out Marsh (35 in 2012), 39 pairs on Carnforth Marsh (42 in 2012), seven on Newton Marsh (13 in 2012), two on Freckleton Marsh and another two on nearby Grange Farm, eight at MMWWT (seven in 2012), seven at Brockholes (six in 2012), four around Belmont Reservoir (three in 2012) and at least three pairs at Alston Wetland. These figures suggest a picture of a continuing gradual decline even on sites that are specifically managed for the species.

Other proven breeding records came from New Laithe Farm, Chipping Moss, Bashall Town and Grimsargh Reservoirs in east Lancashire, and Farleton Flood near Caton and Deep Clough Farm, Roeburndale in the north.

JACK SNIPE *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor.

Birds were reported from 51 sites during the first winter period, compared with 32 in 2012: 15 locations in the Fylde, 16 in east Lancashire, eight on Merseyside, four in Rossendale, three in north Lancashire, two in the Chorley district and three elsewhere. Comparable figures for the second winter period were: total 40 (36 in 2012), Fylde twelve, east eleven, Merseyside six, Rossendale three, north three, Chorley three and two elsewhere.

On the face of it, it might appear that numbers are increasing. However, this species is grossly under-recorded – the atlas estimated presence in 133 tetrads, which would have involved rather more sites. All that can safely be concluded, then, is that the reporting rate for Jack Snipe seems to be increasing.

Nineteen were found on the January Ribble WeBS with 17 there in February. Other counts included 14 on Birkdale Green Beach on 18 March, five at Fairhaven in January to March and in December, four at Jameson Road Landfill on 10 Feb. Three were recorded at Fluke Hall on 13 Jan, Belmont Reservoir on 16 Feb, Cabin Hill on 17 Dec, and at other times at Edge Cote in Rossendale, and in the east at Grove Lane Marsh, Jackhouse, Round Wood, Siddows, Swinden Reservoir, Grove Lane Marsh and Wood End Sewage Works.

The last of spring was at Belmont Reservoir on 5 May and the first returning bird at Birkdale on 5 Sept.

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

Uncommon breeder, very common winter visitor.

Birds were reported from more than 80 sites during the two winter periods, most records being of ones or twos. The atlas estimated that in excess of 5000 were present in Lancashire at some point during winter, giving an indication of the enormous likely scale of under-reporting for the annual reports.

Typically, many of the largest counts were flushed by shooters: 20 near Entwistle on 5 Jan, a total of 67 on four dates in the Belmont area in late January and twelve there on 14 Dec, nine at a small plantation on Hoddlesden Moss on 28 March and eight at Bartle Hall on Boxing Day. Other winter counts included seven at Moor Piece on 26 Feb, six at Marton Mere on 28 Feb with five there on 5 March, and four at Carr House Green Common on 12 Jan, Thurnham Hall on 27 Jan, Treales on 14 Feb, Winmarleigh Moss on 27 Nov and Newton-with-Scales on 1 Dec.

One unusual record was of one just below the summit of Pendle Hill on 6 April. The first roding male was at Belmont on 16 March and the few other breeding season reports received included five at Stocks Reservoir on 26 April, two on Longridge Fell on 25 May and one at Moor Piece on 4 June. Two or three were roding at a regular site at Anglezarke/Black Coppice during April. Records of ten on Warton Crag, 17 on 2 May and 16 on 16 May were presumably the result of a systematic survey.

SNIPE *Gallinago gallinago*

Fairly common breeding bird, abundant winter visitor.

As with the two previous species it is not easy monitoring wintering Snipe numbers. Records were received from more than 80 sites during the two winter periods with counts of 20 or more made at 45 of these.

Grove Lane Marsh was, as usual, the top wintering site with 85 on 30 Jan and 103 on 11 Dec, although 130 were on passage at Lunt Meadows on 12 Sept. The Fairhaven saltmarsh, however, ran it close this year when up to 97 were seen in December. Other large counts included 75 at Pilling Lane Ends on 3 Dec, 70 on Chipping Moss on 11 Dec, 60 at Jameson Road Landfill on 13 Jan and on the Eric Morecambe complex on 3 Nov, 55 at Parsonage Reservoir on 19 Sept and Cockersand on 6 Oct,



Snipe, Marton Mere, 6 October. (Paul Slade)

52 at Belmont Reservoir in late October, 50 at MMWWT on 7 Aug and Marton Mere on 17 Feb, 47 at Heysham on 17 Dec, 41 at Birkdale on 7 Feb, and 40 at Glasson on 10 March, Brockholes on 11 Sept, Marshside in October and Edge Cote, Rossendale on 8 Dec.

The only breeding records received were of eight 'pairs' at Belmont Reservoir plus at least another twelve in nearby in-bye fields, one behaving territorially at Croston Twin Lakes on 2 May, and single chipping or drumming birds at Landgate Quarry, Whitworth on 30 March, Holden Wood Reservoir on 14 April, New Laithe Farm on the 19th, and at Alston Wetland, Champion Moor, Heath Farm (Gisburn Forest) and Marl Hill between April and June. A pair was at Coldwell Reservoirs with two juveniles on 28 July.

POMARINE SKUA *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Uncommon passage migrant.

Morecambe Bay

Spring passage was poorly recorded off Heysham while Jenny Brown's Point remained virtually unrecorded in the challenging weather. Heysham records comprised singletons on 18 & 24 April, the latter also seen off Morecambe, and 14 May, two on 10, 11 & 12 May and three on the 13th. One seen off Knott End on 11 May was probably a different bird.

Liverpool Bay

Spring passage was well recorded, mainly during the early morning incoming tide off Rossall Point in mid-May. Morecambe Bay failed to reciprocate, due to lack of early morning seawatching, and therefore little duplication was detected between the two regions this year.

Fylde records came from three Blackpool sites and Rossall Point and same-date records may have involved some duplication. Two were off Rossall on 18 April, one off Blackpool on 4 May, three at Rossall on the 10th, two at Blackpool and one at Rossall on the 11th, and 15 off Rossall on 12 May with five on the 13th & 14th and singles on the 16th & 24th.

Autumn Fylde records comprised singles on 2 Sept and probably the same juvenile on 29 & 31 Oct. A juvenile was seen off Ainsdale on 9 Oct.

Inland

Although the initial stages overland of skua migration have been observed many times in spring, at Heysham and Jenny Brown's Point in particular, birds gain height very rapidly in favourable conditions and are soon out of sight. When the conditions are not favourable, and a lower flight height is required, they do not appear to attempt overland migration.

In autumn, any overland movement out of the Irish Sea in our region would be contrary to the optimum migration route and unlikely to be undertaken by such powerful species. More likely would be movement by birds cross country from the North Sea,

Inland records are therefore at a premium, and the 2013 sightings of three skua species were all the more astonishing as they did not fit the category of "inexperienced juveniles during gales", yet all (bar one indirect report) were well-documented by reliable observers.

The one record of a Pomarine Skua was a light-morph adult for ten minutes at Alston Reservoirs and two and a half hours later over Brockholes Wetland on 9 Oct.

ARCTIC SKUA *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Fairly common passage migrant.

Morecambe Bay

A total of 44 off Heysham between 5 April and 27 May was below par and partly due to reduced seawatching compared to recent years; peak counts were eleven on 13 May and five on 12 & 19 May. Twenty-seven of these were dark morphs – a higher ratio than usual. A movement on 11 May was missed at Heysham but produced at least six off Jenny Brown's Point, with the only other inner bay records comprising singletons on 16 April (Keer Estuary) and 5 May (Jenny Brown's Point).

In the absence of feeding terns or persistent strong onshore winds, the only late summer/autumn records were singles at Fluke Hall on 25 Aug and 1 Sept, and two on 29 Sept off Heysham.

Liverpool Bay

One was seen off Rossall Point on 31 Jan.

Spring passage off the Fylde coast saw 131 sightings between 8 April and 23 May with peaks of twelve on 10 May and ten on the 13th. Formby Point sightings were limited to twos on 30 April and 14 May.

Summer records from the Fylde coast comprised single(s) on 19, 24 & 30 June and 1 July, and five scattered sighting(s) on 23 June.

In autumn birds were recorded fairly regularly off the Fylde coast between 28 July and 5 Oct, totalling 56 bird-days with no major peaks. A late singleton was recorded on 19 Oct. Seawatching logistics were awkward from 'our' side of the Mersey Mouth and there were no reports other than the following from further to the north: five off Formby on 1 Sept, one off Formby on 10 Sept, four off Ainsdale on 17 Sept and a single there on 18 Sept.

Inland

A group of four (one a light morph and at least one juvenile) went SSW over Belmont Reservoir on 5 Oct – astonishing given the clear conditions and light winds prevailing. One was reported over Rose Hill (east Lancashire) on 25 Nov.

LONG-TAILED SKUA* *Stercorarius longicaudus*

Scarce autumn migrant; rare in spring.

An adult with full streamers flew into Morecambe Bay as seen from Heysham north harbour wall on 13 May, the best day for skua passage (P Cook).

GREAT SKUA (BONXIE) *Stercorarius skua*

Fairly common passage migrant.

Morecambe Bay

Spring passage saw seven records of singles off Heysham between 18 April and 13 May with the possibility of a different bird from Jenny Brown's Point on 24 April. Two were off Knott End on 11 May and one off Pilling Marsh on 12 May.

The only reports during the remainder of the year were singles off Heysham on 18 Sept and 3 Nov.

Liverpool Bay

The first winter period saw one off Ainsdale on 3-4 Feb.

Spring passage brought 23 sightings from 18 April to 25 May off the south Fylde coast, mainly singletons. One was off Formby on 11 May and one off Ainsdale on 22 May.

Summer records from the Fylde comprised singles on 2 June & 24 June with at least two on 23 June.

There were eleven records of singles on autumn passage from the south Fylde coast between 17 Aug and 3 Nov, involving a likely maximum of seven individuals, and just one report from further south – a single off Formby on 18 Aug.

The second winter period saw one off Rossall 28-29 Dec.

Inland

A juvenile was sat on Rishton Reservoir on 15 Oct before flying off over the centre of Blackburn in the direction of Brockholes where it was seen flying over 20 minutes later. An adult remained at Stocks Reservoir on 15-17 Oct, consuming at least one juvenile Lesser Black-backed Gull.

SKUA *sp.***Morecambe Bay**

More than usual! All were recorded off Heysham. A flock of five distant light-morph birds on 10 May were probably Pomarine, as was a juvenile off Heysham on 28 Oct. A probable Pomarine was seen off Formby on 11 May.

One on 10 May, two on 13 May, the only 'summer skua' on 15 June and two on 18 Sept were probably distant Arctic.

A flock of five skuas seen off Jenny Brown's Point on 23 May were identified as Long-tailed in the Leighton Moss sightings book, but we have received no details nor indeed the observers' identities.

PUFFIN* *Fratercula arctica***Rare passage migrant.**

The only record was one off Rossall Point on 16 Sept (I Gardner) which was presumably the one found dead on the 24th.

BLACK GUILLEMOT *Cephus grylle***Scarce passage migrant; rare winter visitor. Amber List (Species of European Conservation Concern).**

One was found on a house driveway in Formby after a storm on 5 Dec and was later released at Marshside.

RAZORBILL *Alca torda***Common passage migrant; uncommon winter visitor.**

With the exception of two of Formby Point and seven there on the 27th, all records in the first winter period were off the Fylde coast where up to three were seen fairly regularly from Blackpool and Rossall Point until late March. Similar numbers were off Blackpool and Rossall during the second winter period, when the only others were a first-winter in Heysham Harbour on two days in late December and three off Formby on 17 Nov.

Spring passage began with 22 off Rossall on 1 April, followed by 115 there on the 3rd and 106 on the 23rd. Peak counts off Blackpool were 25 on 6 April and 33 on 5 May but smaller numbers were recorded frequently off the Fylde until 19 May. Heysham reported 36 bird-days between 12 April and 11 May with a peak of 18 on 23 April, while all that the Sefton Coast could muster were one off Formby on 8 April, two there on 10 May and five on the 14th.

Four were off Blackpool on 2 June and three off Formby on the 23rd. One was found dead at Knott End on 6 July. The passage movement began at Blackpool on 24 July and continued until early November, with peak counts of 27 off Rossall on 5 Oct with 17 there on the 14th, and 24 off Heysham on 3 Nov.

LITTLE AUK* *Alle alle***Rare passage migrant.**

The partly-eaten remains of one were collected from the foot of St. Thomas's church tower in St. Anne's on 1 Jan 2014. It had presumably been killed in late December 2013 by one of the wintering Peregrines.

GUILLEMOT *Uria aalge***Common passage migrant; uncommon winter visitor.**

It has been a mystery for many years as to why Razorbills have significantly outnumbered Guillemots off the Lancashire coast, so the increased numbers of the latter seen in 2013 came as a surprise. The Heysham report even spoke of 'a return of how things used to be', but whether this marked the

start of a trend remains to be seen.

Up to six were at Heysham during January and until 19 Feb and up to four off Blackpool and Rossall Point until early March. One off Formby Point on 12 Feb with three there on 10 March were, however, the only Sefton Coast winter records.

At the other end of the year two were regular at Heysham with up to 15 seen during December storms. There were fairly regular records of singles off the Fylde Coast at Blackpool, Rossall and Knott End from late October to the end of December with a peak count of ten off Rossall on 28 Nov.

The spring passage probably began with two off Rossall on 31 March and five there the next day, but didn't really get underway until 106 passed there on 20 April. Regular single figures continued off Rossall and Blackpool until 2 June with the largest subsequent count 15 off Blackpool and twelve off Rossall on 23 April. Spring passage at Heysham saw 81 bird-days on 14 dates from 18 April to 12 May with peaks of 24 on 23 April and 25 on 2 May. Five off Formby on 30 April and 10 May with four there on 5 May and singles on the 11th and 14th were the only birds seen further south.

No more were seen until 14 Sept and a moderate passage ensued, peaking at 16 off Rossall on 14 Oct with ten there the following day. Four were off Formby on 10 Sept.

UNIDENTIFIED LARGE AUKS

We have become used to assuming that the majority of distant, unidentifiable large auks were Razorbills in line with the perceived relative abundance of the two species. However, in the light of 2013's records this assumption may now be somewhat shaky.

Almost 700 birds fell into this 'unidentifiable' category throughout the year, almost all of them off the Fylde coast including a large movement of 300 on 3 April off Rossall Point. Other Fylde counts included 35 off Rossall on 23 April with 25 there on 5 May, 45 on 15 Oct and 60 on the 17th, and 18 off Blackpool on 5 May with 19 there on 2 June. At Heysham 56 bird-days were registered during spring passage between 9 April and 29 April, while 31 on 3 Nov were thought to be almost certainly Razorbills. Single figures were seen on four dates off Formby Point, the largest count being seven on 5 May.

LITTLE TERN *Sternula albifrons*

Fairly common passage migrant.

One that flew over Alston Wetland on 12 April was the first of the year and our earliest ever – a very unusual inland record. Surprisingly, none was seen on the Sefton Coast in spring, while two at Heysham with Arctic Terns on 14 May was the only record all year in the north of the county. The remainder of spring records came from Rossall Point, where 16 bird-days were recorded between 22 April and 17 May, peaking at four on 26 April and 17 May.

The next was a probably non-breeding bird at Seaforth on 4 June. The autumn return began on 11 July when five were seen at Rossall with perhaps the same birds off Blackpool the same day. A further 23 bird-days followed at Rossall and Blackpool with the last on 2 Sept and peaks of six at Rossall on 3 Aug with four there on the 18th and 21st.

Formby Point made up for a blank spring with large numbers in autumn. Two adults fed close in-shore on 20 July and one was there on the 28th. Unusually large numbers – up to 16 – were reported on the beach from at least 2 Aug, and 46 flew past on 9 Aug, 20% of which were juveniles. Eighteen were on the beach on 18 Aug, and finally there were three on the 19th, two on the 20th & 21st and two on the 22nd

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger*

Uncommon passage migrant.

It was a rather poor year overall with more seen in spring than autumn.

The first were on the Lune at Aughton on 15 April and at Brockholes on the 25th, followed by eight at Stocks Reservoir on the 28th. The next were three at Heysham on 6 May with further May records of singles off Rossall Point on the 8th, Adlington Reservoir on the 17th and Seaforth on the 29-30th.

Most autumn records were of singles: at Seaforth on 12-13 July, Blackpool on 2 Aug, Rossall on 5 & 17 Aug and 17 Sept, Eccleston Mere on 10 Sept, Brockholes on the 11-12th, 15-17th & 19th (with two there on the 16th), Formby Point on the 14th and Heysham on the 15th.

SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis*

Common passage migrant.

Morecambe Bay

Spring passage was described as unremarkable at Heysham, where 647 bird-days were recorded between 29 March and 28 May. Peak numbers comprised 102 on 6 May, 60 on 13 May, 45 on 25 April, 40 on 13 April and five daily counts in the 30s. There were no further reports until mid-July after which up to four were seen sporadically until 27 Sept.

Few were seen off the Fylde coast in spring but many more were there in autumn than further north. The first – and highest count – of just four spring records were eight at Knott End on 14 April and the last were there on 10 May.

Return passage began on 15 July but the largest numbers were seen in August and early September when 16 three-figure counts were made at Knott End. These included 235 on 4 Aug, 298 on the 17th, 218 on the 20th, 380 on 2 Sept, and 154 on the 4th. The last was at Knott End on 24 Sept.

Liverpool Bay

The first off Blackpool on 25 March, the earliest anywhere in the county, was followed by three off Rossall Point on the 30th. Drips and drabs continued to be recorded on the Fylde coast in early April with double-figure counts becoming the norm from mid-month and a highest tally of 60 on the 21st at St. Anne's until 291 off Blackpool on 5 May and 148 off Rossall the next day. Things quietened down after that but low single figures continued to be recorded until late June.

Numbers seen on the Sefton Coast in spring were broadly similar with the passage lasting from 30 March into June and peak roosts of 96 at Formby Point on 23 April, 137 at Seaforth on the 28th with 260 there on 6-8 May, and 218 at Formby on the 5th.

Small numbers were seen at both ends of the bay in early July but the return passage gathered strength after that with the first three-figure count of 172 roosting at Formby on the 21st. Sixteen autumn counts of over 100 were made on the Fylde coast at Rossall, St. Anne's and Blackpool with peaks of 175 at Blackpool and 141 at St. Anne's on 8 Aug, 240 at Rossall on 8 Sept and 135 at Blackpool on 22 Sept. The last were at Rossall on 17 Oct.

The first juveniles were reported from Formby on 20 July and Seaforth on the 22nd. The largest Sefton Coast counts were 172 at Formby on 21 July with 240 there on 25 Aug, and 490 on Ainsdale beach on 12 Aug with 220 there on 19 Sept.

Inland

Eight were at Brockholes on 16 April with singles there on 7 & 19 May. One was in the Common Tern colony at Preston Dock on 17 May.

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

Scarce breeder, very common passage migrant.

Morecambe Bay

Common Terns remain very scarce in the north of the county. There was just a handful of spring records at Heysham between 17 April and 11 June but 18 on 25 May was described as 'the best spring day-count for several years!' Autumn was no better there with six on 20 July and a juvenile on 1 Sept the only reports.

None was seen on the north Fylde coast in spring, but birds were a little more numerous there than further north in autumn. The first were at Cockersand on 11 July and the last at Knott End on 17 Sept. Peak counts were 64 at Knott End on 17 Aug and 16 there on the 21st.

Liverpool Bay

The first were at Rossall Pont on 8 April and Seaforth on the 13th but numbers were slow to build up with only five present at Seaforth by the end of the month and the first three-figure count there on 6 May. The largest spring counts elsewhere were 21 off Blackpool on 8 May with ten there on the 25th and 20 on 18 June.

The Seaforth colony numbered 450 at the end of June, the nesting birds augmented with non-breeding second- and third-summers. An estimated 165 pairs laid 191 clutches but, although Magpie predation was much less severe this year, fledged only 56 young.

The colonies on Banks and Longton Marshes were not monitored this year.

Post-breeding birds began to arrive in numbers at Seaforth in the second week of July, peaking at 900 on the 22nd. Large autumn totals elsewhere in the bay included 113 at Blackpool and 218 at St. Anne's on 7 Aug with 300 at the two sites the following day, and 90 at Rossall on 18 Aug. A roost of 229 at Formby Point on 24 July contained just one juvenile while 15 were present amongst c.400 there on 22-20 Aug – suggesting a generally poor breeding season. The last were seen at both Seaforth and Formby on 22 Sept.

Inland

Breeding is now firmly established at Preston Dock, where birds began to return on 29 April and numbers peaked at 168 on 21 May and 218 on 11 July. It is thought that at least 80 pairs nested. The last were there on 8 Sept.

Breeding also took place on rafts at Mere Sands Wood where 13 fledged, and Yarrow Valley Park where one pair fledged one chick.



Common Terns, Preston Dock, June (Paul Ellis)

After typically small beginnings Preston Dock is now established as one of the county's three main tern colonies.

The earliest inland record was one on the Lune at Hornby on 15 April. One or two were at MMW-WT on eight dates between 25 May and 9 July, followed by four on 15-16 July and the last on the 24th. The first was at Brockholes on 25 April and one or two followed on twelve days until 24 Aug. Four were at Myerscough Quarry on 5 May with two on 11 & 16 May, followed by one or two on seven dates between 5 and 15 July.

In east Lancashire two were seen regularly at Lowerhouse Lodge from 12 May to 29 June, two were at Gawthorpe on 23 May and Ighthenhill Bridge the following day with another there on 20 June, and one was at Stocks Reservoir on 28 May. July produced two at Rishton Reservoir on the 19th, three at Fishmoor Reservoir on the 22nd and one at Parsonage Reservoir on the 29th; juveniles were at Lower Foulridge Reservoir on 5 Aug and at Alston Reservoir on the 24th. Finally, an adult and a juvenile were at Lower Foulridge Reservoir on 12 Sept.

One at Croston on 2 May may have come from the Yarrow Valley, while in the West Pennines singles were at Turton Golf Course on 6 & 13 June and Wayoh Reservoir on 28 July.

ROSEATE TERN* *Sterna dougallii*

Scarce summer visitor.

At least eight and possibly as many as ten passed through Seaforth in summer. Two appeared on 4 July and were seen again on the 8-9th, with two additional birds there on the latter date. At least one new bird was with two others on the 11th & 13th and two further 'pairs' on the 18th & 19th, one of them definitely new; the last appeared on 25 July (AJ Conway, C Gregson, M Garner, S Young et al).

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea*

Rare breeder, very common spring passage migrant.

Morecambe Bay

Monitoring the spring passage at Heysham this year was complicated by an unknown number of birds believed to have lingered in the area when strong winds delayed onward passage. The passage began on 11 April and lasted until 28 May during which time 2167 bird-days were notched up, all but 103 of them in April. Peak counts came a week earlier than usual and included 141 on 19 April, 133 on the 20th, 263 the next day, 224 on the 22nd, 305 on the 24th and 165 on the 29th.

During the same period there were fairly regular sightings at Leighton Moss (peak 15), the Dockacres complex (peak 34) and Sunderland Point (peak 40).

Spring passage off the north Fylde coast began on 18 April and small numbers were seen until the 23rd, including 17 at Pilling on the 18th, 30 at Glasson the next day and 40 at Cockersand on the 20th.

Autumn records were typically scarce with singles on 5 Aug and 14-15 Oct at Heysham and one or two at Glasson and Knott End on 21 July and 2 & 17 Aug, and a final record on 13 Oct.

Liverpool Bay

As usual, the Fylde coast caught the edge of the spring movement through Morecambe Bay, while records were far scarcer on the Sefton Coast. The first were seen a day earlier than further north – off Formby Point on 10 April – and the passage continued until 24 May with just a single June record at Blackpool on the 18th. Peak site counts were 198 off Rossall Point on 23 April with 52 there on 7 May, 80 at St. Anne's on 21 April, 70 at Blackpool on 22 May, 13 off Formby on 24 May and five at Seaforth on 21 April. Two were watched heading north-east inland over Marsh Farm, Formby on 17 April.

Up to four were seen in June on Warton Marsh, where a nest was reported, but neither Banks nor Longton Marsh was monitored this year. However, four on Hesketh Out Marsh on 20 May and 18 on the Ribble and Douglas in the Longton Marsh area on 12 June clearly indicated that nesting did take place on the south Ribble Marshes.

Up to three non-breeding sub-adults were at Seaforth and Formby during July and a thin return passage began in the third week of the month. The largest counts were eleven off Rossall on 18 and 21 Aug, ten off Blackpool on the 31st and 28 off Formby Point on 10 Sept, with the last at Blackpool on 17 Sept.

Inland

A pair nested unsuccessfully at Preston Dock

The first of the year in east Lancashire were singles at Upper Foulridge Reservoir on 18 April and Alston Reservoir on the 25th. Ones and twos were seen during May at Rishton, Stocks and Lower Foulridge Reservoirs, including five on the 12th and 18th at Stocks. Autumn records were two at Stocks on 12 Aug, seven at Rishton on the 17th and one at Stocks on 19 Oct, the latest ever in east Lancashire.



Arctic Terns, Preston Dock, July. (Paul Ellis)

This pair nested unsuccessfully at Preston Dock; the dark bill of the bird at the back suggests it may have been a young adult.

Brockholes produced records on nine dates between 17 April and 11 May, including seven on 18 April, six on the 22nd & 24th, eight on the 25th and five on the 27th – presumably part of a cross-country passage movement following the Ribble. Two were at Eccleston Mere on 16 April with possibly the same there on the 19-20th. Elsewhere, there were two on Wayoh Reservoir on 21-26 April and one at MMWWT on 23 April.

SABINE'S GULL* *Xema sabini*

Uncommon passage migrant.

The only record this year was a juvenile that flew north past Formby Point on 17 Sept (B McCarthy, P Thomason).

KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla***Rare breeder, common passage migrant.****Monthly peak counts**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Heysham	50	37	61	334	415	2	2	/	1	1	16	22
Rossall Point	23	2	6	42	70	2	/	6	102	1	177	39

January saw regular sightings at Heysham with high counts of 32 on the 1st and 50 on the 27th, the latter flock seen moving into Morecambe Bay and also seen off Jenny Brown's Point. Elsewhere, 85 were seen at Cockersand and six off Rossall Point on the 27th, 14 off Blackpool the following day, 27 off Cleveleys on the 30th and 23 off Rossall Point on the 31st. In February Heysham sightings continued until the 15th with a peak of 37 on the 6th but Blackpool registered the largest count of 203 on the 14th.

Spring passage started on 10 March and continued until the end of May. Most were seen off Heysham which had a total passage of 2031 bird-days; major movements involved 334 on 6 April, 322 on the 18th and 415 on the 13 May, while 105 were off Knott End on 10 May. The Sefton Coast had a very poor year with the highest count being just nine on the 10 May.

Small numbers were seen throughout the summer at Heysham and Blackpool, leading into a slow autumn passage with most the most notable counts off Rossall Point, including 70 on 16 Sept followed by 102 two days later. October saw only a handful of records and November just two, notably 177 off Rossall Point on the 3rd. There was a flurry of sightings in December with 39 off Rossall Point on the 14th and 47 on the 28th, 50 off Heysham on the 22nd and 13 off Blackpool on the 29th.

A good spring passage inland during March saw Stocks Reservoir pulling in three on the 9th, one on the 15th and two on the 16th. One was at Lower Rivington Reservoir on the 16th and four at Walverden Reservoir, Nelson on the 24th. April started with one at Fishmoor Reservoir on the 4th, and concluded with eleven at Brockholes Wetland on the 4th. One at Rishton Reservoir on 13 Oct was the only autumn record inland.

The colony in the Liverpool Docks was still present but not monitored and no information was received from the Morecambe Bay gas rigs this year.

BONAPARTE'S GULL *Chroicocephalus philadelphia***Vagrant.**

A summer-plumaged adult was discovered at Red Nab, Heysham on 13 July where it was seen regularly until 25 Sept (I Walker). During its stay the bird went through a complete moult.

The record has been accepted by the BBRC and becomes the ninth in Lancashire and the first since singles in 2008 at Marton Mere and Stocks Reservoir.

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Chroicocephalus ridibundus***Abundant breeding bird and winter visitor.****International importance: 20000. National importance: 20000.****Monthly peak counts**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	3798	1963	3322	343	776	1303	4352	2650	3431	1743	1452	3215
Ribble WeBS	1452	12903	1051	1011	684	264	1262	1360	660	389	1194	3097
Alt WeBS	1009	1123	572	116	69	125	1060	458	594	758	904	1059

January counts in excess of 1000 birds came from Brockholes, Cocker's Dyke, Preston Dock and Rawcliffe Moss, but unusually for winter the highest of 2000 was inland at Stocks Reservoir. February followed with 3000 at Stocks Reservoir and 2750 at MMWWT. However, this species is known to be significantly under-recorded, particularly on the coast.

During March birds started flooding into the breeding colonies with 11500 at Stocks Reservoir on the 17th, while pre-breeding numbers peaked at Belmont Reservoir a month later with a minimum of 15000 on 15 April.

An aerial survey of Belmont Reservoir detected a total of 8993 nests, a 33% increase on the 6738 present in 2011, and the site is now thought to be possibly the largest colony in the UK. There were approximately 1200 nests at Stocks Reservoir, 539 at Marshside and 294 on four colonies at Leighton Moss, the latter suffering significant predation from Marsh Harriers and Coots. The Ribble Marshes NNR was not monitored this year.

Post-breeding gatherings included 2342 at Hest Bank in July and 2000 at Cocker's Dyke in September. Winter counts at Preston Dock during December reached 3000.



Adult Bonaparte's Gull, Heysham, 20 July. (Mike Watson)

LITTLE GULL *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor.

Coastal sites enjoyed several small influxes and lingering birds in the early part of the year; 61 off Rossall Point on 27 Jan and 51 at Cleveleys on the 30th were the peak counts but there were also records at Seaforth, Blackpool, Heysham, Cockersand and Fleetwood. Fewer were seen in February although 32 were at Heysham on the 5th.

The offshore spring passage started in April with 25 off Cockersand on the 1st and 18 at Blackpool on the 6th. A week later numbers started to build off Rossall Point in strong onshore winds with 120 on the 14th, 200 on the 18th and 105 on the 19th, followed by 255 on the 22nd before numbers dwindled away. During this spell Heysham also enjoyed their best passage, peaking at 140 on 18th. As a result, sites close to Morecambe Bay collected a few birds with one on Dockacres on 17 April, six at Leighton Moss and eight at Pine Lake on the 18th, followed by one on Borwick Water on the 22nd; birds lingered at Leighton Moss until 18 May.

It was another poor spring at Seaforth. The first 3 March but only single figures were seen in the first fortnight of April; 42 adults appeared on 22 April but only a handful of birds remained into May and only a solitary second-calendar-year bird summered. Up to three frequented Marshside between 6 May and 16 June.

One at Heysham on 2 July and two adults at Seaforth on the 7-8th probably marked the start of the return passage. The month ended with a flurry of birds off Formby, peaking at 24 on 19th and one settled in at Heysham, remaining to moult through until mid-October, and joined by a second bird in late August. One was on Hesketh Out Marsh on 10 Sept.

In late October and early November sightings of passage birds came from Rossall Point and Blackpool with a peak count of 74 past Rossall Point on 28 Oct. December saw a good run of sightings from Heysham, Knott End and Glasson, with an impressive 235 flying west past Rossall Point on the 20th.

It was a quiet year for inland sites with the exception of Brockholes Wetland which had an adult on 18-19 April, an adult and second-year on the 24-25th, and adults on 19-20 May and 27 July. Elsewhere one was at MMWWT on 26 March, two on Rishton Reservoir on 11 May, a first-summer at MMWWT on 23 May with one at the same site on 6 Aug, and two on Fishmoor Reservoir on 2 Dec.

MEDITERRANEAN GULL *Larus melanocephalus*

Rare breeder, common passage migrant, fairly common in winter.

Minimum number of individuals

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Heysham	4	4	3	1	2	3	27	38	24	7	3	5
Seaforth	4	9	10	0	1	1	24	23	8	6	2	1
Fylde*	4	4	9	6	0	0	20	20	15	10	3	6

* approximations

Wintering numbers continue to increase but are still hugely outnumbered by passage totals. Away from Heysham the highest site-counts reported in January were four at Birkdale and two on Lytham Moss on the 1st, together with two at Cocker's Dyke on the 17th; and in the second winter period two at Knott End on 8 Dec and Glasson on the 16th.

As usual, spring passage got underway on the southern coast in February when most records came from Seaforth. Other areas reported more migrants in March, when the focus of attention be-



Adult Mediterranean Gull, Otterspool, 22 March. (Steve Young)

Surely, few birds are more handsome than a breeding-plumaged Med?

The early spring snow sets this one off perfectly.

gan to shift inland. Peak day-counts that month included seven at Brockholes on the 20th and four at Alston Wetland on the 15th, and in April six at Brockholes on the 8th and four at Marton Mere on the 3rd.

Breeding only definitely occurred at Belmont Reservoir, where the first returning birds were seen on 27 Feb, increasing to 38 on 5 May. Winter management allowed for better viewing into the colony and 26 breeding pairs were confirmed (45% up on 2012) out of 30 territorial pairs. Twenty-one nest sites were monitored with at least 30 chicks fledging and just two nests failed completely. Elsewhere, an adult and a second-summer male held territories at Stocks Reservoir and a second-summer at Marshside.

Post-breeding gatherings continue to be concentrated at Heysham and Seaforth. A minimum of 46 individuals passed through Heysham from July to mid-September, including at least 16 juveniles, twelve second-winters, four third-winters and 14 adults; a completely unprecedented 25 were seen there on 21 July. The peak autumn count at Seaforth was nine on 19 July and elsewhere included six in the Skippool Creek area on 8 October.

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
Stocks Res	6500	2000	4000	500	4	4	2	1600	3000	7000	7000	7000
MBS WeBS	254	64	328	13	97	4	36	25	94	59	48	73
Ribble WeBS	269	5892	92	3	0	15	147	189	864	192	649	7261
Alt WeBS	430	1106	415	56	40	42	262	270	739	316	582	526

Numbers recorded roosting at Stocks Reservoir throughout the year were bettered only by the Ribble WeBS counts for February and December. However, it needs to be borne in mind that coastal birds are poorly monitored apart from on the WeBS counts which usually take place at midday when most Common Gulls are probably feeding inland.

Numbers reported elsewhere included monthly peaks of 530 at Glasson in January, 820 at Arkholme in February and then 550 in March. Numbers fell away in the summer but at this time Heysham saw an influx of first-summer birds that numbered 210 between May and June.

Numbers slowly increased as winter approached but it was not until November that Birkdale saw a count of 595 followed by 7000 on 8 Dec and the second highest count of 650 came from Pine Lake.

RING-BILLED GULL * *Larus delawarensis*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

The regular returning adult that moves between Crosby Coastal Park, Seaforth and Netherton was seen during February and March on five occasions. Presumably the same returning adult was back at Crosby on 27 Dec.

In November a second-winter was seen in Liverpool at the Walton Asda store on the 20th, 23rd and 24th (finder unknown).

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus***Abundant breeder and passage migrant, common in winter.****International importance: 4500. National importance: 1200.****Monthly peak counts**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	24	103	213	347	362	275	660	298	272	360	117	82
Ribble WeBS	29	1186	136	12	1012	7	89	508	569	641	110	688
Alt WeBS	198	317	32	2322	204	310	360	417	581	327	258	378
Stocks Res	1	12	750	300	100	45	110	1000	600	230	400	7

Birds were recorded in small numbers throughout the county in January but the vast majority were found on the coast; even the urban areas were largely deserted.

Birds started to return in numbers at the end of February both inland and on the coast, increasing noticeably in March with large counts of 1300 on the Ribble on the 16th and Stocks Reservoir on the 17th.

Breeding occurred on Banks Marsh but the site was not properly monitored. No full survey was carried out on the Bowland Fells colonies but it was estimated that 4500 pairs nested at Langden Head. Two pairs bred successfully in the Belmont Reservoir Black-headed Gull colony.

The urban populations continue to expand. The only information from the Fylde was 20 breeding pairs in Blackpool, but 147 nests were counted at Heysham. Roof-nesting birds in the Liverpool conurbation are now so widespread that getting any accurate count is impossible, but the population is now almost certainly higher than the 500 pairs estimated two years ago in the atlas.

The Skippool Creek area held a large post-breeding flock of 1100 on 28 Aug before birds dropped away to low wintering numbers.

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus***Common breeding bird, abundant winter visitor and passage migrant.****International importance: 13000. National importance: 7300.****Monthly peak counts**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	610	792	431	673	1478	512	1429	776	1197	412	320	710
Ribble WeBS	806	7532	1348	253	2077	21	522	699	1137	95	696	14229
Alt WeBS	2181	3501	1500	571	668	1184	1493	926	3588	2265	1303	1620

Numbers reported this year were low with the WeBS figures above providing the best counts throughout the year. The largest counts were all on the Sefton Coast: 1700 at Forrby Point on 13 Jan with 3280 there on 10 Feb and 3475 on 22 Sept, while the vast majority of the large Ribble WeBS totals were found between Ainsdale and Marshside, predominantly at Birkdale. Three thousand at Rishton Reservoir on 7 Dec was an exceptional inland count.

During March 800 were noted at Fishmoor Reservoir, while a notable influx of 1250 immature birds occurred at Heysham on 10 May.

The Banks Marsh colony was not monitored but BAE's cull was carried out with 950 adults being shot.

No full survey was carried out of the Bowland Fells colonies but it was estimated that 30 pairs were present at Langden Head. One pair nested at Stocks Reservoir. Thirty-seven pairs nested in the Heysham area, at least 22 pairs in Blackpool and an unknown number in Fleetwood. The Liverpool colony continued to expand but remains vastly outnumbered by Lesser Black-backed Gulls.

YELLOW-LEGGED GULL *Larus michahelis***Uncommon all year.**

One or two were seen in all months of the year at Seaforth, mostly adults but including a first-winter in April and two juveniles in August and September.

Elsewhere, an adult was at Birkdale on the 26 Jan and one was reported at Marshside in April. One was at Formby during August and September and an adult at Bank End on 4 Oct. November saw a third-winter at Formby on the 1st and two adults at Birkdale on the 17th. The final record of the year was on Hesketh Out Marsh on 28 Dec.

Inland records were an adult at Stocks Reservoir on 9 March, followed by a third-winter there on the 17th, while third-summer roosted at Fishmoor Reservoir on 22 July.

CASPIAN GULL* *Larus cachinnans*

Vagrant.

A 'probable' first-winter was seen leaving the roost at Fishmoor Reservoir, Blackburn on the morning of 3 Nov (J Wright). (See separate article for discussion of treatment of Caspian Gull records).

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucooides*

Scarce winter visitor.

The second-winter bird remained at Marton Mere, Blackpool from 2012 and was last sighted on 25 Feb and one was on Pine Lake on 30 Jan. In February a first-winter roosted at Fishmoor Reservoir on the 12 & 13th, a second-winter was briefly at Stocks Reservoir on the 17th and a first-winter was at Rossall Point between the 22nd and 24th. A second-winter was at Glasson on 11 March before a first-winter was seen at Fleetwood on the 29th; another first-winter was at Fleetwood on 28 April.

During the second winter period Heysham enjoyed a first-winter from 1 Dec which relocated to Middleton Nature Reserve on the 6-11th; a first-winter was then seen at Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park on the 15th and 16th.



First-winter Iceland Gull, Middleton Nature Reserve, 10 December. (Mike Malpass)

Although Iceland Gulls continue to appear annually in Lancashire, almost all records are now first-winters. The days of birds returning regularly as adults are long gone, presumably because climate change has allowed them to winter further north.

GLAUCOUS GULL *Larus hyperboreus***Scarce winter visitor.**

It was a very quiet year with just two records, both first-winters: one at Fleetwood on 14 March and another that roosted at Fishmoor Reservoir on 12 Dec.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus***Rare breeder, common winter visitor.****International importance: 4800. National importance: 760.****Monthly peak counts**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	93	134	67	68	63	69	129	69	193	153	112	175
Ribble WeBS	30	90	54	10	34	7	10	75	169	112	87	245
Alt WeBS	93	163	48	47	52	57	90	74	214	144	207	142

Large site counts included in the Morecambe Bay WeBS totals included 62 at Barnaby's Sands on 22 Sept, 97 at Hest Bank on 18 Oct and 75 at Glasson on 23 Nov, and on the Ribble 186 at Birkdale in December. The largest counts on the Alt Estuary were 120 at Formby Point on 10 Feb and 107 there on 8 Dec.

Numbers continue to increase at inland sites with wintering birds frequenting the landfill sites; 130 roosting at Altham on 3 Jan and 80 at Rishton Reservoir on 8 Dec were the most notable counts.

Breeding was confirmed at Leighton Moss with two pairs fledging two young and one pair bred on Silverdale Moss. At Heysham one pair nested on a harbour building and one pair in the power station's non-operational land.

FERAL PIGEON *Columba livia***Abundant breeding resident.**

As usual, most of the high counts came from the coastal west. In the Fylde 200 were on Lytham Moss on 12 Jan and 170 in Central Blackpool on the 21st with 180 there on 8 Feb and 8 March; 86 were in Calderstones Park, Liverpool on 24 March and 124 at Belle Vale on 4 May. Later in the year there were 109 in Sefton Park on 26 June and 168 in St. Helens town centre on 27 Aug.

ELOC received 64 records of Feral Pigeons during the year, 46 more than in 2012; 150 at Daisyfield Signal Box on 13 Oct was the highest count. Back on the coast 100+ were at Marton Mere and MMWWT and 167 in Sefton Park on dates in September; there were 130 around Southport Marine Lake on 11 Nov and 280 at England Hill, Pilling on 6 Dec with 320 there on the 22nd.

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas***Common breeding resident. Amber List (important breeding population).**

The three highest counts in the first winter period were in the Fylde, 49 at Myerscough on 1 Feb, 48 on Rawcliffe Moss on the 12th and a season's peak of 90 at Roseacre on 27 March. Meanwhile, in east Lancashire there were flocks of 28 at Sykes Farm near the Trough of Bowland on 6 Jan and at Bashall Eaves on 6 March; 15 were at Upper Rivington Reservoir, Chorley on 20 Jan and 26 at Arkholme in the Lune Valley on the 31st. Two birds flying north at Heysham on 11 March was the only passage movement reported.

Eleven pairs nested in boxes at Arkholme, five pairs on the West Pennine Moors in an unoccupied building at Belmont and a pair bred in a Goosander nest-box at Delph Reservoir; further west in the Chorley region breeding season presence was reported from Rivington and White Coppice, while a flock of 22 on Farington Moss on 23 April must surely have included locally-breeding birds. In the Out Rawcliffe-Pilling-Preesall area, Over Wyre, 45 monitored pairs laid 191 eggs of which 128 hatched and 123 young were fledged. In the south-west at least ten pairs nested at MMWWT, a single pair bred at Seaforth and breeding was recorded at ten locations in south Liverpool/Knowsley, while

a flock of 30 at Cabin Hill on 20 April presumably consisted of birds breeding in the locality.

Ten widespread double-figure counts were received later in the year, the highest 96 at Mossborough Hall Farm, St. Helens on 13 Oct and 70+ at MMWWT on three dates in August and September; other autumn flocks included 60 at Cockersand on 27-30 Oct, 16 at Thrushgill in the Upper Lune Valley on 20 Oct and 46 at Cabin Hill and 30 at Withnell Fold, Chorley on 16 Nov. The only sizeable gathering reported at the year's end was 66 at Bradshaw Lane Head, Pilling on 30 Dec.

WOODPIGEON *Columba palumbus*

Abundant breeding resident.

Some very large flocks of Wood pigeons roamed the lowland regions of the county at both ends of the year, the largest by far 20000 over MMWWT on the morning of 26 Jan. Impressive early-year gatherings in the Fylde included 2450 on Rawcliffe Moss and a thousand apiece on Lytham Moss and at Todderstaffe Hall in early January and 500 at Staining on 24 Feb. There were 2500 at Great Altcar on 16 Jan and 1200 at Oglet, south Liverpool on 19 Feb while several thousand were present on Croston Moss, Chorley during January and February. The Lancaster & District 10km square survey in January tallied 1073 Wood pigeons across all squares, well up on the average of the previous years' counts. Further inland numbers were very much lower: 217 east over Grove Lane Plantation, Padiham on 5 Jan was the highest early-year count in east Lancashire.

Spring movements on the coast included 225 north-east over Rossall Point on 7 April and 108 westbound there on the 15th; 37 flew north at Heysham on 13 April and eleven on the 20th, when 308 also passed over Marshside. A large flock of 1300 at Cabin Hill on 8 April must have included migrant birds.

Only two breeding reports were received: seventeen pairs nested on EDF property at Heysham while 60 nests were monitored in Sefton Park, south Liverpool; over 90% of chicks at the latter site fledged with three nests still containing young on 8 Oct.

Post-breeding and early autumn gatherings included over 250 at Marton Mere on dates in early August and up to 800 on farmland in the Belle Vale area of south Liverpool later in the month. One hundred and fifty at Cockersand on 24 Sept and c.1000 at Barnaby's Sands on the Wyre Estuary on 8 Oct were the only other significant counts received before heavy and widespread movements began in the third week of October, which continued on-and-off for the remainder of the year. One hundred and fifteen Wood pigeons per hour flew south over Belmont on 20 Oct on the same day that Catton Moor recorded its peak count of 350; about 900 flew over Otterspool Promenade, south Liverpool in two hours on the 24th. Movements intensified in early November with 1150 south over Belmont in the 15 minutes after dawn on the 1st; 2750 passed over in half an hour next morning, there were 450+ at Singleton, Fylde on the 6th, an autumn peak of 134 moved east over Fairhaven Lake on the 10th and there were 150 at Brockholes Wetland on 18 Nov and 300 at Singleton on the 26th.

A comparative lull ensued for over two weeks before heavy movements resumed in mid-December: on the 15th 3100 flew over Copster Green in east Lancashire and there were up to 700 in the Brockholes area; 1500 moved over Towneley Golf Course, Burnley on the 19th. The year ended on a hectic note with 900 at Singleton on 25 Dec and 1400 south over Belmont and a thousand over Moor Isles Clough, east Lancashire on 28 Dec; another 3600 moved south over Belmont in half an hour on the 30th.

An interesting footnote from the Belmont area: over 25% of the Wood pigeons shot at winter roosts there in 2013 had crops full of 'bird-food', including peanuts, a significant increase over a very few years.

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common breeding resident.

Only five significant gatherings were reported during the first winter period. There were counts of 21 at Mere Sands Wood and in Belmont Village in January, 30 were at Preesall, Fylde on 10 Feb and 22 at Burscough on 7 March and at Jackhouse in east Lancashire on the 9th. Two hundred and eighty-nine Collared Doves were recorded by the Lancaster & District January survey, the highest total to date. Reports of what seems to have been a very slight spring passage involved a single bird north over Heysham on 13 April and four east over Fairhaven Lake on 7 May.

Nesting was considered probable at two locations in east Lancashire but perhaps a more representative picture of the species' breeding population, at least in suburban areas nearer the coast, is the total of 24 territorial pairs located along 4km of residential roads in the Norwood area of Southport during April; an observer in Liverpool described the species as 'almost ubiquitous' there. In north Lancashire twelve pairs nested at Croftlands and six at Millhead.

No double-figure post breeding flocks were reported until September when there were 15 in Lunt Village on the 7th. Six birds south over Cabin Hill on 28 Sept and four flying south at Heysham on 4 Nov were the only autumn migrants reported.

October counts in the Fylde included 30 on Rawcliffe Moss on the 1st, 50 at Cockersand on the 4th and 45 at Pilling Lane on the 15th; there were 70 on Croston Moss, Chorley on the 20th. Thirty at Chaigley in east Lancashire on the 5th was the only significant November count and there were 18 at Padiham on 9 Dec. Thirty-nine were at Greenhalgh Lane, near Weeton in the Fylde on 2 Dec and 36 at Burscough on the 15th.

TURTLE DOVE* *Streptopelia turtur*

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

This dramatically declining species was placed on the county's description list in 2010.

One was reported, but without details, from Shedden Clough in east Lancashire on 14 June. The only accepted record in 2013 was of a single bird at Sowerby on 13 May (M Wilby), the second occurrence in the Fylde in successive years.



Turtle Dove, Sowerby, 13 May. (Paul Slade)

In the space of 20 years or so the Lancashire status of Turtle Dove has changed from fairly widespread breeder to 'twitchable' rarity.

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

Fairly common breeding resident. Amber List (Species of European Conservation Concern).

As with other common birds of prey (assuming we are still allowed to call falcons that rather than parrots!) it is extremely difficult to build a coherent picture of the status of Kestrels in Lancashire. Numerous reports were received from all parts of the county throughout the year.

Counts of four or more after the breeding season – presumably mostly family parties – came from Talbot Bridge, Hesbert Hall, Cant Clough, Stocks, Dean Clough and Foulridge, Roggerham and Croasdale Fell in east Lancashire; Great Hill, Roddlesworth, Belmont and Rivington in the West Pennines; and Staining Nook and Rossall in the Fylde. Eight at Lunt Meadows – where one pair had fledged two young nearby – in the second winter period presumably included at least two broods.

The only systematic breeding information came, as usual, from the Pilling-Preesall area, where eleven pairs laid 50 eggs, of which 24 hatched, and 20 young fledged. Incidental breeding records came from Whalley Nab, Wood End, Cabin Hill, Belmont Reservoir, Roddlesworth, Cuerden Valley Park, Halewood and Staining.

No clear-cut migrants were seen at Heysham but two flew high north at Seaforth on 1 May.

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*

Scarce breeding bird, fairly common winter visitor. Amber List (recovering from historic decline).

It was an excellent breeding season on the United Utilities Bowland estate, where six pairs fledged 23 young, in stark contrast to the six young raised by five pairs in 2012. There were sightings from three additional sites in suitable habitat in east Lancashire during the breeding season. A female was territorial in the West Pennine Moors from March to May, but no male was ever seen and the bird was not seen after mid-May.

Four records of singles were reported in the uplands of east Lancashire in the first winter period, and odd birds were seen in the West Pennine Moors throughout both winter periods, but very many more were reported from the coastal lowlands at both ends of the year. It is impossible to get an accurate picture of the size of the lowland wintering population of a species which often wanders over large areas but a regional breakdown gives some idea.

At least three were on the Ribble Marshes during January and February, twice seen flying from the south side towards Warton and Lytham. The last was at Marshside on 12 April and the first back in autumn on 7 Sept, after which three were seen together on a couple of occasions. Perhaps a minimum of four were on the Ribble in November and December. Reports from elsewhere in the south-west were more patchy; at least one male and a female/immature were recorded at MMWWT up until 25 April with singles there on the early date of 11 July and then from 5 Oct to the end of the year. The only other reports were singles on Croston Moss on 3 Jan & 5 March and at Lunt Meadows on 30 Dec.

Singles were seen fairly regularly on the Eric Morecambe complex until 17 March and from 30 Aug to the end of the year. The only other records received from north Lancashire were one at Heysham on 15 Jan with an 'in-off' migrant there on 14 April, and singles at Arkholme on 28 March and Litledale on 13 Oct.

Forty-nine records of singles were received from the Fylde away from the Ribble in the first part of the year with the last at Rawcliffe Moss on 30 April, and 31 records later in the year, beginning with a male at Stanah on 2 July. It is difficult to estimate the number of individuals involved accurately but perhaps there was a minimum of six or seven in both the first winter and spring and in autumn and the late winter.

Singles at Brockholes on 11 & 13 Aug and 18 Oct, and Cabin Hill on 13 & 15 April and 12 & 31 Oct were all presumably migrants.

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

Rare breeding bird and uncommon passage migrant.

There were six records in April beginning with singles at Birkdale on the 22nd and Marshside on the 27th. By early May small numbers had been seen throughout most of the county with about 20 individuals during the month.

No information about breeding was received except for one returning pair in east Lancashire whose eggs were stolen in May and which subsequently left the area. There were, however, reports from six possible breeding areas during late May, June and July, including almost daily sightings at Brockholes from 28 April to 22 Sept. These included two on 31 May and on several dates in August and September and three on two days in August, and strongly suggested that one or perhaps two pairs were breeding in that part of the Ribble Valley. There were also regular sightings at Leighton Moss between 22 May and 21 Sept with two seen on two dates in June; one was hunting House Martins at Wrayton on 23 June, suggesting possible breeding somewhere in the Lune Valley. Two were by the Mersey at Speke on 5 June indicating breeding somewhere close to the very south-west corner of the county.

Records came from 30 sites throughout the county in the post-breeding period. These included five October records, the last at Blackpool Airport on the 13th.

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus*

Scarce breeder, uncommon winter visitor.

As usual, information was received from only a small proportion of regular breeding sites. It was a third consecutive poor breeding season on the United Utilities Bowland estate where just three pairs nested, only one of which was successful – in comparison with six pairs in 2012. Nothing was reported from the rest of Bowland. In other upland areas two pairs bred on the West Pennine Moors, although one was just across the Bolton boundary, probably three pairs at least in Rossendale and one in north Lancashire outside of Bowland. Prey items under one West Pennines nest site revealed that 95% were Feral or racing Pigeons but included Black-headed Gull, Carrion Crow, Jackdaw and a Great-spotted Woodpecker. Three pairs bred in the Chorley area with one fledging three young, another fledging two, while the outcome was unknown for the third.

Records were more forthcoming from urban areas. Breeding definitely took place at three of the Liverpool sites – the fourth was not monitored this year – although the outcome was only known for the one that has been used continuously since the mid-1980s where three young fledged. Nothing was heard from the other two Merseyside sites in St. Helens and Southport, although with up to three seen regularly at MMWWT throughout the year it would seem that the latter is still occupied. The Preston pair were also successful, while the Chorley pair did not breed this year. A pair on Heysham Power Station reared two young.

A picture is emerging of better productivity and continued spread of the urban population and contrasting ongoing problems throughout the uplands.

Locally-fledged juveniles were practising (with little apparent success) on recently-fledged Black-headed Gull juveniles at Belmont and Delph Reservoirs in mid-July.

Non-breeding birds were seen in all parts of the county throughout the year but it is difficult to produce a meaningful summary of them; 327 records were logged in the Fylde and 126 in east Lancashire, so the total number of county sightings must run into thousands.

Two were seen regularly in autumn on St. Thomas church tower, St. Anne's, where a Little Auk kill was collected at the end of the year. Other more unusual records included singles on the summit of Pendle Hill on 24 Oct and 30 Nov.

RING-NECKED PARAKEET *Psittacula krameri*

Rare feral breeder, fairly frequent escape.

Both of the county's breeding nuclei, in the Fylde and south Liverpool, continued to thrive in 2013. Birds were recorded in the grounds of Lytham Crematorium in all months except March and September, with peaks of six in February and August, nine in October and eight in December; nest-building was observed in late February. Occasional sightings nearby, at Fairhaven Lake (nine birds in December), Ansdell and perhaps at Marton Mere were presumably wandering Lytham birds but regular records in the Stanley Park area of Blackpool may signal an imminent extension of the breeding range.

In south Liverpool birds were present in Sefton Park and nearby Greenbank Park and allotments in all months, with peaks of ten-plus at the former site in December and six in September at the latter.

There were several reports from other parts of the county. In east Lancashire one was at Padiham on 6-7 Oct (one was also there in January 2012, and a pair in August 2011) and one flew over Barrowford Reservoir on 9 November; single birds in flight over Whittle and Euxton in Chorley on 15 Nov may have involved the same individual. Further singles were at Leighton Moss on 7 Jan and in Southport Botanic Gardens on 7 April.

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*

Uncommon breeding bird and passage migrant. Red List (breeding decline).

Presumably delayed by exceptionally cold early spring weather, the first coastal Cuckoos of 2013 arrived fairly late, the first at Aldcliffe on 16 April followed by singles on Heysham Moss and at Hardhorn and Ridge Farm in the Fylde on the 20th. There were five more in the Fylde before the end of the month and the first at Marshside was on the 30th. One at Brinscall, Chorley on 27 April was the first inland record, followed by east Lancashire's first at Stocks Reservoir next day.

Passage in the coastal west during May appears to have been about the average of recent years. Four were recorded at Marshside up to 21 May and nine singles were seen or heard elsewhere in the south-west, including four at MMWWT; there were six birds in the Fylde during the month with the last there on 6 June.

Inland, three were at Belmont on 1 May with birds present at seven sites in the area during the month, the last recorded on 2 June but there was no proof of breeding. Elsewhere in the Chorley region there were five records in the Rivington-Anglezarke area in the second half of May and two or three Cuckoos were between Brinscall and Healey Nab during the month; birds were at six locations in June up to the 20th, including three at White Coppice on the 9th.

Males were calling in at least ten locations in north Lancashire, including three each at Thrushgill and in the Leck Valley and two in Roeburndale. ELOC received 62 reports of Cuckoos from 26 locations (77 from 26 in 2012) Most sites were in Bowland but birds were also present on moorland edge around Darwen and east of Burnley and on Longridge Fell; the last Cuckoo in the region was recorded on the exceptionally early date of 21 June.

Despite the overwhelming predominance of reports from upland regions, as is the norm, the only confirmed breeding record in the county in 2013 was at Mere Sands Wood where four young were fledged from Reed Warbler nests.

As far as most of the county is concerned the remainder of the year was a non-event. No Cuckoos were recorded after the end of June in the north, east Lancashire, Chorley or in the Fylde. There were, however, four records in the south-west: one at Ainsdale NNR on 8 July (where breeding has occurred regularly in the very recent past, parasitising Meadow Pipits), a juvenile at Cabin Hill on the 29-30th, one at MMWWT on 10 Aug and the last, a very late bird, at Cabin Hill during 10-21 Sept.

BARN OWL *Tyto alba*

Uncommon breeding resident. Amber List (species of European conservation concern).

Although the recent east- and northward range expansion of this species has been one of the highlights of the county avifauna the overall impression from this year's records is of stability at best, with more than a suggestion of setbacks in several regions.

ELOC received 103 records, an increase of twelve on 2012, all but two from Bowland or the Ribble Valley, but no breeding data were provided. On the West Pennine Moors three birds were found moribund in a Belmont barn in March's hard weather; two pairs nested in the Belmont area, down from five in 2012, and one fledged three young. In Chorley a pair nested at Roddlesworth but breeding did not take place at a site in Ulnes Walton for the first time in many years. In the north two pairs bred in the Lune Valley, one rearing three young, and three pairs nested elsewhere in the region. In north Lancashire the Arkholme pair did not breed and the one at Claughton failed.

In the south-west, of three pairs at MMWWT only one was successful; despite widespread sightings of ones or twos in the autumn and winter months, with up to three on Sefton/Lunt Meadows during both winter periods, the only other breeding-season report on the near-coastal strip was of a pair at Tarbock Hall Farm in south Liverpool. Further to the east a pair fledged three young at King's Moss, Rainford. The Fylde dataset recorded early and late year sightings from all over the region, with three or four at several sites and five in the Pilling area on dates in January and February. Over Wyre, in the Hambleton-Out Rawcliffe-Pilling-Preesall-Stalmine areas 18 pairs laid only 24 eggs between them, hatched nine and fledged four young; elsewhere successful breeding was reported from Mythop and Marton Mere.

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

Fairly common breeding resident.

As usual, there were sight reports throughout the year from all parts of the Fylde; in Over Wyre 13 pairs at Pilling-Preesall laid 29 eggs in boxes, of which 14 hatched and eleven young fledged. Other successful pairs were reported from Mythop Grange and Staining Nook. In the south-west three breeding records were received: a pair at Seaforth fledged two young in the second week of



Little Owl fledgling, Seaforth, August. (Steve Young)

August, a pair raised at least one youngster on Lunt Village and a third bred successfully at a farm on Churchtown Moss.

Forty-nine reports of Little Owls were received from 13 locations in east Lancashire, three in Bowland and ten elsewhere in the region, the lowest total for at least six years (there were 62 reports in 2012). On the West Pennine Moors two pairs were present in the breeding season in the Belmont area, and in Chorley there were reports from Croston Moss in both winter periods and occasionally from Cuerden Valley Park. In north Lancashire breeding-season records were received from seven widespread locations.

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

Common breeding resident.

The recent breeding and winter atlases confirmed the Tawny Owl's status as our commonest and most widespread owl, but it remains a severely under-reported species in many regional and local reports. In east Lancashire ELOC received 157 records from 51 widespread locations; breeding was only confirmed at a site in Bowland with two juveniles seen on 18 July, and considered probable in two other locations.

Only one breeding record was received from north Lancashire, a pair that fledged three young at Halton-on-Lune; none was successful at either Claughton or Arkholme and at Heysham reports of the species appear to have been confined to the Head this year. There were records from six locations in the Chorley region during January-March but regular reports were received from only two sites in the Rivington-Anglezarke woodlands; two pairs nested in Cuerden Valley Park and another at Ecclestone. One observer recorded Tawny Owls at seven locations in Rossendale.

In the lowlands six breeding-season territories were reported from the south-west, three in Croxteth Park, Liverpool and one each in Aintree, in Stockton's Wood, Speke and at Mere Sands Wood. In the Pilling-Preesall area of north Fylde five monitored pairs laid eight eggs and hatched six of them; five young were fledged.

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus*

Uncommon breeding resident.

Across great swathes of the county Long-eared Owls appear to have been both mute and invisible in 2013. There were no reports from either east Lancashire or the West Pennine Moors; in the north, although birds were calling on Leck Fell early in the season there was no evidence of successful breeding. The only information received from the south-west was negative: no sign of presence on Royal Birkdale Golf Course where a pair nested in 2012.

No migrant birds were reported this year. At the long-established winter roost at Marton Mere there were peak counts of two in January, three in February and two in March; the last bird was recorded on 14 April. First to return in late year was a single bird on 14 Dec; two were present on the 29th and three on the 31st.

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

Scarce breeding bird, uncommon winter visitor.

Birds were both numerous and widespread in the Fylde early in the year with several reports of twos and threes together, peak counts of seven at Pilling on 5 Jan and at Warton Bank on the 14th, and five in the Pilling-Out Rawcliffe area in early February.

In contrast there were few south of the Ribble: none was reported from Marshside-Crossens, there were singles at MMWWT on 2 Feb and at Cabin Hill on the 22nd and three at the latter site on the 28th, when a single was also present on Sefton/Lunt Meadows. Inland the only reports were of single birds on Croston Moss on 1 & 22 Feb and on Champion Moor on 7 March.

Spring movements in the south-west were moderately heavy and prolonged, however, probably beginning with a bird at Cabin Hill on 26 March; at least four more were recorded there between 16 April and 8 May. Singles were at nearby Formby Point and on Sefton/Lunt Meadows on 30 March and again at the former site on 5 April; the last spring migrant in the region was at Hightown on 19 May. Slightly further inland one was at MMWWT on 10 April. In the north a bird was at Middleton NR on 3 April; in the Fylde one was on Rawcliffe Moss on 30 April and four were recorded during May, including singles over Rossall Point on the 7th, 8th & 12th. The only migrant reported from inland regions was at Brockholes Wetland on 18-19 May.

2013 was a dismal year for Short-eared Owls in the uplands. There were only four records in the ELOC region confined to two locations, Champion Moor and Croasdale Fell (23 records in 2012, twelve in 2011, 40 in 2010). A single pair attempted, unsuccessfully, to breed on the United Utilities Bowland Estate in what seems to have been a very poor vole year. One or two were present during the breeding season on the central West Pennine Moors but no definite territories were located for the first time since 1983; the last sighting of the year was a bird near Belmont on 29 Sept. The only breeding-season record in lowland regions was a single bird, possibly summering, on Lunt Meadows on 14 July.

No post-breeding or late year records were received from north Lancashire. There were only two clear-cut reports of autumn migrants along the coast, both on 20 Oct, one at Fleetwood and two birds on Birkdale Shore. A small number of winterers seem to have become installed in the south-west from early November, with up to three in the Altcar Withins-Lunt Meadows area from 5 Nov and up to six on Lunt Meadows in December; two at Cabin Hill on 4 Nov and one at MMWWT on the 13th were the only other late year records in the region. It was a very quiet end to the year in the Fylde with only two singles reported, at Barnaby's Sands-The Heads on 3 Dec and on Lytham Moss on the 26th.

NIGHTJAR* *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Extinct breeder, rare passage migrant.

One was flushed from a disused railway line at Fleetwood on the afternoon of 9 June but could not be relocated (M Farrar); our most recent record was of a bird at Cockerham in June 2011.

SWIFT *Apus apus*

Common and passage migrant. Amber List (breeding decline).

The first Swift of 2012 over Leighton Moss on 15 April was followed by singles at Marton Mere and Seaforth on the 20th. Two at Hapton and one at Cliviger in east Lancashire on the following day were the first inland arrivals, while the first in Chorley was over Croston on 23 April. Numbers built up quite quickly with a hundred over Brockholes Wetland on 28 April and 20+ at Mythop on the 30th.

Moderate movements were widespread throughout the month of May. Five hundred and fifty flew over Marshside on 5 May; an influx on a broad front on the 12th brought 150 to Leighton Moss, 104 to Seaforth, 100 apiece to Calder Foot in east Lancashire and MMWWT and 50+ to Marton Mere. Three hundred moved over MMWWT on 14 May and another surge late in the month saw 100 over Seaforth on the 27th and 300 over Brockholes and 200 at Leighton Moss next day. Two hundred over Seaforth on 2 June was the last significant spring movement reported.

Breeding was confirmed at 14 locations in east Lancashire and considered likely at five others; in the Chorley region Swifts bred in Coppull, Euxton, Eccleston, Whittle and Chorley town. Seventy-five pairs nested in three colonies in Freehold, Lancaster, with high productivity in the warm, dry summer; all had departed by 19 Aug. Elsewhere in north Lancashire there were 14 nest sites in Warton Village and four in Millhead.

Flocks of Swifts in late June are usually unattributable as to cause – feeding aggregations or early passage movements? Whichever is the case there were 150 over Brockholes on 22 & 23 June when

60 were also present at Alston Reservoirs; 200 were feeding at Lunt Meadows next day and 100 moved over MMWWT on the 30th. July counts were on the low side until near the end of the month: 480 were at Cabin Hill on the 21st and 130 at MMWWT and 150 at Brockholes on the 31st; 60 over Longridge was the highest count of the month in east Lancashire.

As usual our Swifts seemed to slip away largely unnoticed during August with only four three-figure counts reported early in the month, 190+ at Speke and a similar number over Myerscough Quarry, Fylde on 1 Aug, 300 at MMWWT on the 10th and 100 at Seaforth on the following day. Numbers dwindled very quickly after mid-month with only three double-figure counts received; the last Swift in Chorley was at Eccleston on 17 Aug, in the south-west at Seaforth on the 28th and in the Fylde at Preesall next day. Two autumn stragglers were recorded in 2013, one at Longridge on 20 Sept and a very late bird over Leighton Moss on 23 October.

ALPINE SWIFT* *Tachymarpis melba*

Vagrant.

One flew over Marton Mere for over an hour on 14 April (D McGrath, M McGough); this was the ninth record for the county, the most recent a bird over Woodvale, Formby in May 2011.

KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

Uncommon breeding resident. Amber List (species of European conservation concern).

If coastal wintering numbers are any guide our Kingfisher population seems to have recovered fully from the effects of 2010's two hard winters.

Birds were widespread on the north coast, on the lower Lune and on the Lancaster Canal in the first winter period; the Lancaster & District January survey located eight in five 10km squares (four last year and in 2011). There were reports from 15 widespread sites in the Fylde during January-February; in the south-west birds were at Hesketh Golf Course, Mere Sands Wood and Hesketh Out Marsh in January. Further inland, birds were present at five locations in the Chorley region in January and three in February.

ELOC received 142 reports during 2013, a return to the kind of totals recorded before the freeze; there was breeding-season presence at Wycoller, Jackhouse, Pendle Water and Barrowford with nesting confirmed at the first two. Although Kingfishers were regularly seen at several locations in Chorley breeding was not proven at any site; in Rossendale a pair nested at Ewood Bridge Sewage Works. In the north, three pairs bred at Arkholme.

In the lowlands a pair fledged at least two young on 21 Aug at Hollowforth near Barton on the eastern edge of the Fylde; birds were present nearby at Brockholes and Red Scar on the Ribble on many dates throughout the year and a pair fledged two or three young on Bezza Brook on 14 Aug. Further south, pairs bred at Mere Brow and for the first time on Hesketh Golf Course, fledging three and two youngsters respectively.

Post-breeding dispersal resulted in widespread reports of singles at coastal and near-coastal sites from the Lune Estuary south to the Alt during July-October; there were 27 records from twelve locations throughout the Fylde and reports of single Kingfishers from six sites in the south-west in November and December.

BEE-EATER* *Merops apiaster*

Vagrant.

Two were recorded in the Fylde in 2013, birds in flight at Todderstaffe Hall on 17 May (P Ellis, P Slade) and at Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park on 14 Aug (I Gardner). There have been six previous records, the most recent at Ainsdale NNR in May 2001.

HOOPOE* *Upupa epops***Vagrant.**

There were two spring records of single birds in quick succession, at Scarisbrick to the east of Southport on 29-30 April (I Fryer) and in Hindburndale on 2 May (PJ Marsh). Our most recent occurrences were both in 2010, at Heysham in April and Burscough in September.

Hoopoe, Scarisbrick, 29 April.
(Ian Fryer)

**GREEN WOODPECKER** *Picus viridis***Fairly common breeding resident. Amber List (species of European conservation concern).**

There were 113 reports to ELOC during the year, an improvement on the 98 in 2012. A third of these came from the Stocks Reservoir-Gisburn Forest area but the others were widely distributed across the region. In Chorley Green Woodpeckers were reported from the Rivington area between early February and late May and at Healey Nab in March and Cuerden Valley Park in April; one, possibly two pairs held territory near Belmont but the species may have disappeared from the White Coppice area, a former breeding location. Further east single birds were on Turton Golf Course in January and June.

Birds were widely reported in small numbers throughout the year in north Lancashire and there were five records of singles at Heysham NR between May and December. Breeding pairs were recorded at Trowbarrow, Arkholme, Newton, Warton, Claughton and Warton Crag. An observer in Rossendale reported sight or call records from 13 locations, in all months except summer.

In an improvement on a usually sparse, or non-existent, showing there were five records of Green Woodpeckers from western locations in 2013. In the Fylde one was at Lytham Hall on 10 Feb and a bird was calling at Thurnham on 22 Aug, while in the south-west one flew across a road at Much Hoole on 7 April, a bird was heard at MMWWT on 3 May and one was in Beacon Country Park, Skelmersdale on the 20th.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major***Common and widespread breeding resident.**

Birds were widely reported from woodland and garden sites throughout north Lancashire, although the 39 recorded by the Lancaster & District January survey was the lowest total for four years; two pairs nested in the Hermitage Estate in Crook o' Lune.

There were reports from 74 locations in east Lancashire (55 in 2012). In the Chorley region at least eight pairs held territory in the Belmont area but the species was thought possibly to be less numerous than in the recent past in the Rivington-Anglezarke woodlands, being absent from two previously-frequented sites; four pairs nested in Cuerden Valley Park (three in 2012). Five pairs bred at Claughton, four at Trowbarrow and three at Middlewood in Roeburndale.

Great Spotted Woodpeckers were recorded in all parts of the Fylde, many at garden feeders, with numerous and widespread reports of birds drumming between January and May; breeding was confirmed at Thurnham Hall, Blackpool's Stanley Park, Salwick, Little Singleton, Catforth and Trashy

Hill. In the south-west drumming was recorded at eight locations in south Liverpool/Knowsley during January-April and nests with young were located at three sites. Elsewhere in the region, breeding by single pairs was reported from MMWWT, a 30ha survey area at Aintree and in Southport Botanic Gardens at Churchtown.

The only reports of coastal migrants in 2013 came from Fairhaven Lake, where three flew east on 6 & 24 Oct and one on 4 Nov.

Great Spotted Woodpeckers at nest, Sefton Park, Liverpool, June.
(Steve Young)



LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER* *Dendrocopos minor*

Rare breeding resident. Red List (breeding decline).

The last days of this by now almost mythical species can surely not be far off. There were two call records from the presumably tiny remnant pockets in Chorley region, at White Coppice in March and in Yarrow Valley Country Park in December. In east Lancashire one was reported but without supporting details at Dewhurst House Farm by Ribchester Bridge on 6 Aug.

RED-BACKED SHRIKE* *Lanius collurio*

Vagrant.

After a couple of blank years it was nice to get two records this year. In the spring a male was seen by many observers at the Eric Morecambe complex on 27 June (finder unknown), and in autumn a juvenile was in the Ainsdale dunes on 26 Sept (A Spottiswood). These were the 19th and 20th records of modern times (post-WWII) for this now almost-annual vagrant to the county.

GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

A bird at Leighton Moss on 19 Oct was the only record this year.

MAGPIE *Pica pica*

Abundant breeding resident.

This species is most abundant in urban areas but still common in more rural areas, especially away from kept areas; gamekeepers at Belmont shot or trapped 70 birds during the year, for example.

Peak counts in the early part of the year were 61 at Aintree on 17 March, 60 at Fazakerley on 15 Jan, 55 at the old Garden Festival site, Liverpool on the 20th, 42 at Marton Mere on the 4th and 43 at Stanley Park, Blackpool on 4 Feb. Though not specifically recorded as such, these peaks were probably roosting congregations – 24 were in one tree at dawn at Stanley Park on 24 March and a flock of 15 flew south from Cabin Hill on the 18th, for example. Another 25 sites around the county provided double-figure counts in this period. The Lancaster January survey turned up 380 birds (20% up on previous years) with the bulk around Lancaster and Morecambe.

At least eight breeding pairs were at Heysham but only two along the upper reaches of the Lune between Wenning Foot and Leck Beck.

There was not much evidence of dispersal behaviour. A group of twelve flew south-east over the moors at Belmont on 22 Sept and 20 were at Fairhaven Lake on the 29th.

In the second winter period, the stand-out counts were 105 at roost at Salisbury Woodland, Blackpool on 1 Dec and a record 300 at the Egerton roost on the 23rd. Other large roost counts included 64 at Halewood on 14 Dec and 30 at Whalley on 10 Nov.

JAY Garrulus glandarius

Common breeding resident, occasional passage irruptions.

As the recent atlas survey showed, Jays are doing well in Lancashire woodlands. Though normally seen in ones and twos or in small groups, there were larger counts of eight at Moor Piece in January, Mere Sands Wood in April, Billington in September and Leighton Moss in October. The Lancaster January survey recorded 28, an average number.

Three presumed migrants were on open moorland at Belmont on 13 April. Few breeding data were received – one pair was at Heysham.

There was very little evidence of autumn dispersal. At Cabin Hill, there were five on 28 Aug, six on 28 Sept and three on 3 Oct. Seven were at Brockholes Wetland on 17 Aug. Singles were seen over Seaforth on 11 & 26 Oct, Warton on the 13th and Lytham on the 15th.

JACKDAW Corvus monedula

Abundant breeding resident.

Large flocks were present in the Fylde in the early part of the year as usual, with peak counts of 800 at Rawcliffe Moss and Pilling in January and 1000 at Eagland Hill in February. However, the largest numbers were in the Cuerden Valley where over 2000 were counted going to roost during January. In the Lancaster survey, large roosts were reported at Nether Kellet, Bolton-le-Sands and Storrs Hall, Arkholme. 436 were counted at Arkholme on 17 Jan, 400 at Preese Hall on the 19th and up to 250 at Marton Mere in the first winter period. Over 300 were on Holmeswood Moss on 1 Jan and 205 at Cabin Hill on the 25th.

In the east of the county, there were peaks of 150 at Wood End on 27 Jan and 220 at Stocks Reservoir on the island roost on 31 March; 200 were in the Upper Rivington roost on 20 Jan.

Breeding was widespread. Twelve nests were counted at Bartle Hall and 27 around St. Michael's-on-Wyre. Fourteen pairs were counted on Croftlands Estate, Warton and also at Millhead. Numbers at Warton Crag peaked at 150 in April and at least 50 birds were around the breeding cliffs at Withnell Quarry in May. During the summer months in the east of the county a minimum of 200 were at Ightenhill Bridge on 15 July and 251 roosting birds were observed moving back to Whalley Abbey on the 27th. The loose chimney-nesting colony in urban Formby continued to thrive.

A few migrants were noted in the autumn at Heysham in October and early November with a peak of 24 on the 7th. At Seaforth there were peaks of 158 south on 7 Oct, 172 on the 24th and 51 south on the 30th.

The roost at Upper Rivington held 250 birds on 17 Nov and on the same day 750 were counted on Rawcliffe Moss. A flock at Wiswell Eaves that contained 820 birds in November rose to around 1200

in December and on 22 Dec a flock of 300 was seen heading towards Burnley. Daily roost flights into Ravenmeols peaked at 3200 on 24 Dec and 320 were counted at Southport Marine Lake on the 29th.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

Abundant breeding resident.

Site	Nests	Site	Nests
Chorley region		Fylde	
A49 Euxton	48	Little Plumpton	55
Howard Arms, Whittle Springs	28	St Annes	265
Rawlinson La, Heath Charnock	0	Lytham	74
Railway Road, Adlington	37	Warton Hall	70
Prospect House, Wheelton	31	Singleton	72
Lower Wheelton	11	Bartle Hall	82
Red Cat, Wheelton	1	Wrea Green	17
St Chad's Wheelton	6	Poulton-le-Fyde	10
Croston Bowling Green	80	Little Singleton	16
Croston Town Road	3	Stake Pool	50
Croston Westhead Road	5	St Michael's on Wyre	46
Town House Farm, Brindle	29	Churchtown	76
Brindle Village	7	Garstang	20
Buckshaw Village	8	Forton	20
East Lancashire		Ellel Grange	34
Stewart's Wood	30	Barton	51
Slaidburn Bowling Green	16	Wesham	26
Langcliffe Cross, Slaidburn	39	Mythop	42
Longridge Golf Course	45	Plmpton Hall Farm	26
Fober Farm, Newton	52	Clifton	20
Higherford Mill	17	Pilling	33
Towneley Park, Burnley	53	Nateby	23
Higham	11	Eagland Hill	22
Turton/Edgworth	62	Winmarleigh	4
Elsewhere		Myerscough	27
Parkside Colliery, Newton-le-Willows	5		
BankBrow, Roby Mill	79		
Scarisbrick	12		

The January survey around Lancaster recorded an above-average 1615 birds – up to 280 were seen at Arkholme and at Docker in this period. Peak counts on the Fylde came from St. Anne's (250), Preese Hall (200) and Newton Marsh (100) during January and 200 were at both Hesketh Out Marsh and the Rivington Reservoir roost. The peak count in the east of the county was of 182 at Newton.

The annual sample count of rookeries in the coastal area from the River Kent to Bolton-le-Sands and inland to Over Kellet and Milnthorpe (Cumbria) revealed 268 nests in 19 rookeries, 45 down on 2012 and the lowest number since the study started in 1992. The survey of the Chorley area indicated

a slight increase after many years of decline. Rookery counts received are summarised below in order to provide an annual comparison for previous/future years.

Rooks tend to not venture too far from their breeding areas. The species is relatively scarce in West Lancashire, MMWWT, for example, recording only one all year on 24 May. However a small rookery of twelve nests was established in 2013 not too far away at Scarisbrick. Three at Belmont Reservoir on 14 Sept were the first there for eight years.

Singles were seen at Cabin Hill on six dates throughout the year and at Heysham 29 flew south on 18 Oct.

Seventy-seven on Oswaldtwistle Moor was a notable count for that area. The Delph Plantations and Upper Rivington roosts each held around 100 birds at the end of the year and 200 were feeding at Rivington on 22 Dec.

Smaller numbers were noted throughout the year in the Merseyside area with peaks of 200 at Lunt Meadows and 48 at Knowsley in October.

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*

Abundant breeding resident.

The largest assemblies in the first winter period were in the Delph Plantations roost where numbers reached 400 during January, 350 in February and 200 in March. The Upper Rivington roost held 200 on 20 Jan and the Roddlesworth Plantations roost over 200 on 17 Feb; 100 were at Marton Mere on the 11th. Ninety were counted at Winkley Hall Farm on 26 Jan, 86 were at Sefton Park, Liverpool on the 1st, 65 at Lunt Meadows on the 2nd, 65 at Cabin Hill on 4 Feb and 61 at MMWWT on the 18th.

In the Lancaster area January survey 889 were counted compared to an average of 580 between 2007 and 2012 – the largest number yet recorded.

Several locations reported counts well into double figures during the year. Forty were feeding on the beach at Cabin Hill in April. The removal of the eyes of 'cast' (but alive) sheep by pairs of Carrion Crows was witnessed twice during April near Belmont, where gamekeepers reported shooting or trapping 124 during the year. A small spring passage was noted at Heysham.

A total of 21 nests along the Lune between Leck Beck and Wenning Foot was the only breeding report of note.

A below-average southward autumn movement of Carrion Crows was recorded at both Heysham and Seaforth, with peaks of 40 at Heysham on 15 Oct and 28 at Seaforth on the 7th with 22 there on both the 15th and 24th. A large post-breeding flock of 90 was at Brungerley Bridge during July with 200 there in December.

In the second winter period 300 roosted in the Delph Plantations in October and November, decreasing to 250 in December, and 150 at Upper Rivington on 17 Nov and in the Entwistle Plantations on 18 Dec. There were records of more than 60 at Hest Bank and Sefton Park, Liverpool in November and December.

Leucistic birds were seen in east Lancashire at Braddup Clough on 15 April, Clitheroe Pimlico on 22 July and West Bradford on 14 Dec. A white bird was at White Coppice on 5 May and there were several reports of birds with white wing flashes.

HOODED CROW *Corvus cornix*

Rare winter visitor and passage migrant; has bred with Carrion Crow.

The usual caveats apply to this species in that hybrid birds can rarely be ruled out. Two were at Cabin Hill on 25-26 April and 7 May, and one at Rossall Point on 27 & 30 April and 16 May.

Singles were near Blackpool Airport on 24 June and at Ravenmeols, Formby on 27 Sept. Two were reported at Leighton Moss on 28 Nov.

RAVEN *Corvus corax***Uncommon breeding resident.**

The recent rise of this species may be beginning to slow as it establishes itself as a regular breeder in many parts of the county. It can be encountered virtually anywhere throughout the year though most frequently in Bowland and around Silverdale. The number of records from the coastal plain seemed to be down on recent years and only odd singles were noted around Liverpool where it has previously bred.

The highest count of the year came from Stocks Reservoir where 21 were seen at dusk on 28 Feb. Ten were at Jackhouse, Oswaldtwistle on 30 Jan. Thirty-one were recorded in the Lancaster January survey, compared with 23-35 in 2006-2012.

Pairs bred successfully at three sites in the West Pennine Moors with seven juveniles fledged. Nesting was also noted at Thieveley Scout, Whitendale, Lea Marsh (on a pylon) and Scarisbrick. At least four pairs bred successfully in the Silverdale area.

A minimum of 20 were counted on a sheep carcass on Champion Moor on 4 Nov and other notable counts included twelve on Croasdale Fell on 13 Sept, eleven on Pendle summit on the 14th and eight at Lower Edge Farm in Bowland on 26 Dec.



Breeding Raven defending its territory against a Buzzard, Lea Marsh, 31 March. (Gary Woodburn)

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus***Common breeding resident and passage migrant.**

Numbers were generally low in the first winter period, although ten were counted on Turton Golf Course during January and the Lancaster survey recorded a well above average 48.

Spring passage normally peaks in mid-March at Heysham but this year it came a month later with peaks of 15 on 8 April and 30 on the 13th. This movement was also noted at other locations across the county: Cabin Hill recorded 65 birds with a peak of twelve on 8 April. There were plenty of records of singing birds from April through to July; some of the earlier ones could be of passage birds but subsequent records indicated that the species was well distributed.

There were reports of singing males from eight sites in south Liverpool and four sites around Blackpool. At the Hermitage Estate, Crook o' Lune an estimated 6-10 pairs were on territory. Two pairs were at Jubilee Wood, Maghull and at Aintree.

Autumn passage was generally poor with a peak of around 20 at Heysham in late October and only 33% trapped there compared to the average, and 50% at Leighton Moss. A good fall of migrants was noted at Roby Mill on 3 Oct that included at least 30 Goldcrests, followed by another two weeks later when around 20 were present. Cabin Hill recorded a peak of 16 on 31 Oct. In east Lancashire there were ten at Moor Piece and Stocks Reservoir on 11 Oct, 17 at Stocks Reservoir on 12 Oct, twelve at Brookside on 21 Nov and a flock of 20 was in the Entwistle plantations on 10 Nov.

The species was rather scarce in the second winter period though still recorded from 17 sites around Preston, the Fylde and Lancaster areas during December. Conversely, Mere Sands Wood had its largest count of the year with ten in December.

FIRECREST *Regulus ignicapilla***Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.**

The only record in the first half of the year was of one at Lytham Hall on 22 Feb and 17 March.

On 6 Oct, a bird was observed following a tit flock at Withgill, Clitheroe and was the first in east Lancashire for nearly 20 years. One was reported at Mere Sands Wood on 20 Oct. A male was at Heysham West Quay on 27-29 Oct and that was followed by one at Leighton Moss from 12 Nov and then regularly into 2014.



Male Firecrest, Heysham, 28 October. (Stan Parrott)

BLUE TIT *Cyanistes caeruleus***Abundant breeding resident.**

Despite the run of poor summers, this species remains very common and 2013 was a good year in comparison. Two were at a nest-box at Savick Park, Preston from 18 Feb and in the east the first recorded nesting activity was in Burnley on 3 April.

Data from five nest-box studies in the Lancaster area recorded a population of 46 pairs compared with an average of 51 during the previous six years. At the Hermitage Estate, Crook o' Lune there were six pairs in nest-boxes and a further six in natural sites. In Pilling and Preesall 60 pairs laid 510 eggs, of which 325 hatched and 282 young fledged. Eighteen boxes were in use at Moor Piece and large brood sizes were reported at Crag Wood. Eight breeding pairs were located around Aintree and four at Cabin Hill.

Post-breeding ringing totals at Heysham and Leighton Moss suggested a below-average productivity with 160 ringed at Heysham and Middleton (compared with an average of 188) and 237 at Leighton Moss (compared to an average of 357 during the period 2000-2012).

There was very little autumn passage although over 25 at Marshside/Crossens on 22 Sept was a noteworthy total.

GREAT TIT *Parus major*

Abundant breeding resident.

The Great Tit story is very similar to that of Blue Tit. The five nest-box studies in the Lancaster area (Whittington, Roeburndale, Warton Crag, Leighton Moss and Teddy Heights (Cumbria)) recorded a population of 55 pairs, compared with an average of 64 pairs between 2007 and 2012. With the exception of early broods, most of the nest-box schemes recorded good productivity. Seven pairs used nest-boxes at Heysham and one pair nested in the car-park gate-post. At Crook o' Lune, two pairs used nest-boxes with another four using natural sites.

A minimum of twelve pairs nested around Aintree and up to 25 birds were reported from Brockholes throughout the year. In Pilling and Preesall, 37 pairs laid 224 eggs of which 172 hatched and 145 young fledged. Above-average post-breeding ringing totals at Heysham and Leighton Moss suggested good productivity.

Hardly any autumn movement was noted.

COAL TIT *Periparus ater*

Common breeding resident.

The Coal Tit population seems to be relatively stable throughout the county as exemplified by the Lancaster January survey which recorded a near-average 252. The species is most common in the coniferous woodlands of the east with peak counts of 54 at Moor Piece and 50 at Stocks Reservoir in the first winter period.

There was evidence of a small spring passage, including twelve at Pilling Lane on 12 April.

The species was widespread in the parks and suburban areas of south Liverpool but only two pairs were noted on a 30ha 'patch' at Aintree, where there were plenty of conifers. The species is a common breeder in the Sefton Coast pinewoods. At least ten pairs were at Crook o' Lune and a pair nested in a dry stone wall at Turton Golf Course.



Coal Tit, Crosby, April. (Steve Young)

Autumn passage was very sparse and nothing like the bumper year of 2012. For example, one at Fairhaven on 6 Oct was the only record and together with the lack of other tits represented the worst year ever for passage at that site. Heysham's peak was a paltry 20 on 28 Sept and Cabin Hill recorded ten on the 29th and Seaforth just one on the 27th.

WILLOW TIT* *Poecile montana*

Scarce breeding resident.

2012 Correction: the record of one in Court Hey Park, Huyton (SJ49A) in 2012 that made its way into the winter atlas has since been found to have been erroneous.

2013. The number of reports for this species in its south-west 'stronghold' seem to decrease every year. There were several reports from old haunts in the east of the county but none was supported with a description.

A ringed bird last reported in April 2011 was seen again at Cottam Brickworks from 6 Feb to 21 March.

In the Chorley region nothing was reported until July when one was seen at Great Knowley. This was followed by further reports to the end of the year at Croston Moss, Arley NR (2), Euxton, Hic-Bibi, Lower Healy and Common Bank Lodge.

One was at Mere Sands Wood during late February and again in April and December. There were also reports from Gorse Hill NR, King's Moss, Carr Mill Dam, Sankey Valley and Haskayne Cutting.

MARSH TIT* *Poecile palustris*

Uncommon breeding resident.

The only area where one has any reasonable chance of seeing Marsh Tit is in Silverdale. The Warton Crag RSPB census recorded a well above average ten pairs. There are birds elsewhere in the north but they tend to be rather elusive, such as the isolated pair in Summersgill and regular records from Botton Mill, Wray and Millhouses. The species is known to be a regular 'breakfast' visitor to the moth trap at the latter site!

There was a ray of hope for east Lancashire with six reports from three locations: Rain Gill Wood, where a pair was observed feeding three juveniles on 7 June, Chipping, where there were up to two on a feeder in March and Loud Mytham Bridge on 5 Jan.

BEARDED TIT *Panurus biarmicus*

Rare breeding resident.

The only records came as usual from Leighton Moss, where there were about 18 pairs, similar to last year and still very low compared to 2010 and earlier years. However, much improved productivity was reported, so with a mild winter, 2014 will hopefully be a better year.

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

Abundant breeding bird and passage migrant. Red List (breeding decline).

Significant coastal counts and flocks in the first winter period included 200 each at Marshside and MMWWT in mid-January, 250 on Lytham Moss on the 21st and 200 at Eagland Hill, Pilling on 23 Feb; further inland there were 100 on Croston Moss, Chorley on 16 Jan. The Lancaster January survey tallied an unprecedented 130 Skylarks; all but five of these, however, were in a single stubble field on the coast.

Up to three on the Altham-Martholme stretch of the River Calder on 21-22 Jan were the first returning birds in east Lancashire with the first singing males there on Heald Moor on 28 Feb; meanwhile there were 20+, many in song, above Belmont on 17 Feb. No reports of spring passage were received.

In the species' lowland breeding stronghold of the south-west 51 pairs bred at Marshside-Crosens, 36 on Hesketh Out Marsh and 37 at MMWWT, but all these totals are well down on 2012's figures. About 15 pairs nested on Birkdale Green Beach; small numbers were singing at many sites in south Liverpool/Knowsley although continuing development and disturbance have combined to reduce the estimated population there from c.75 pairs in 2003 to fewer than 20.

Territorial males were widespread in the Fylde: 33 were at Singleton on 2 June and 20 on Rawcliffe Moss on the 7th; ten pairs apiece nested on Newton and Freckleton Marshes. In the uplands ELOC received breeding reports from ten locations with 20 pairs on Twiston Moor on 4 June.

Skylarks were described as a common and widespread breeding species on the West Pennine Moors with the total number of pairs probably in the hundreds, so about ten pairs on part of Darwen Moor on 6 May and five in the Belmont area are merely representative counts. Twelve pairs held territory alongside the Lune at Wenning Foot and ten pairs at Melling.

Widespread autumn movements began on a small scale on 20 Sept with about 25 at Cockersand and 21 at Champion Moor Flood Pool; 89 flew over Seaforth on the 24th. The volume of passage increased dramatically within a few days, however: there were 259 at Seaforth on 29 Sept, 250+ at Cockersand on 2 Oct and 641 flew south at Marshside in two hours on the 6th; inland 130 flew over Caton Moor in the north on 5 Oct and there were 100 on Croston Moss on the 8th.

A brief and more localised surge in late October brought 277 to Seaforth and 263 over Fairhaven Lake on the 24th. A few substantial movements were reported from coastal regions in early November, including 120+ at Cabin Hill on 7 Nov and 610 at Marshside and 45 on Cockerham Moss on the 10th, but passage had effectively finished by mid-month.

Peak counts at the end of the year were generally low, the highest 100 on Croston Moss on 26 Dec; 47 at Pilling Lane Ends on 3 Dec and 21 at Cabin Hill on the 4th were the peaks in the Fylde and the south-west, respectively. In the uplands a single bird lingered at Dean Clough Reservoir, Darwen during 14-17 Dec.

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

Common breeding bird and passage migrant. Amber List (species of European conservation concern).

In the icy March winds singles at Dockacres on the 10th and at Brockholes Wetland on the 14th, four at Arkholme in the Lune Valley on the 21st and Chorley's first at Roddlesworth on the 31st were well ahead of the main arrival, which did not get underway until the second week of April.

The first Sand Martin in the Fylde was at Preesall Flashes on 6 April, in the south-west at MMW-WT next day and in east Lancashire at Alston Wetland on the 8th. Once passage began in earnest it hit high gear very quickly: there were 100+ at Preesall Flashes on 15 April, 250 at Leighton Moss on the 16th and 300+ at Borwick Pools on the 18th; 150 were at Lightfoot Green, Fylde on the following day with at least 70 nest-holes already occupied or being excavated.

Passage seems to have concluded very early, with 125 at Leighton Moss on 25 April and 200 at Blackburn Sewage Works on 4 May the last three-figure counts received.

The Lune survey located 1309 occupied nests, while at Lightfoot Green there were 278 occupied nest-holes at three locations on 4 Aug; the only other colony in the lowlands, at Hesketh Out Marsh, held 13 pairs.

In east Lancashire Sand Martins bred in ten widespread locations including a total of 45 occupied nest-holes in three colonies on the Altham-Martholme stretch of the River Calder, a considerable decrease in numbers there possibly due to erosion. Around twenty pairs apiece nested in three other colonies, at Wood End and Whalley Sewage Works and Stocks Reservoir; smaller numbers bred at six other sites, including the centre of Burnley. In Chorley a colony near Adlington contained 80 nests.

A very light autumn passage began at Seaforth on 14 July; numbers were on the low side everywhere with only five three-figure counts reported, by far the highest 600 at Brockholes on 31 July; 80 at Siddows on 27 July was the autumn peak in east Lancashire. August counts included 150 at Brockholes on the 8th, 150 at the Eric Morecambe complex and 120 at Lunt Meadows on the 22nd and another 150 at Carnforth on the 26th.

There were ten September records in the Fylde including twelve birds at Marton Mere on the 6th; ten were at Ightenhill Bridge near Padiham on 1 Sept. The last two Sand Martins in the south-west were at Aintree Race Course on 19 Sept, four at Fairhaven Lake on the 28th closed out the year in the Fylde and the last three in the north were at Leighton Moss on the following day.

Two October records were received in 2013; east Lancashire's last was at Ightenhill Bridge on the 1st while ten at Anglezarke Reservoir ended the year in Chorley, and the county, on the 6th.

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

Abundant breeding bird and passage migrant. Amber List (species of European conservation concern).

In exceptionally cold conditions there were only two March Swallows in 2013: singles at MMWWT on 20 March and at Oswaldtwistle in east Lancashire on the 24th. The next to arrive was at Croston on 8 April, followed by a widespread influx of single birds and small parties on the 10-11th at nine locations in the Fylde and three in east Lancashire, and at Seaforth, Marshside, Brockholes Wetland, Heysham and Leighton Moss.

Having begun late spring passage was quite prolonged this year, from mid-April through all of May and into early June. April peaks included 300 at Foulridge Upper Reservoir, Colne on 18 April and 180 at Seaforth with 200 each at Stocks Reservoir, Brockholes and Myerscough Quarry on the 28th. Successive heavy influxes during May brought peak counts of 533 in two hours over Marshside and 280 to Heysham on the 6th, 300 to Stocks Reservoir on the 11th and 18th and 500 to Ewood Bridge Sewage Works, Rossendale on the 12th and Stanley Park, Blackpool next day. Intermittent northward passage over Rossall Point included 194 on 16 May and 470 on the 30th. Small groups continued to move at Marshside and Rossall in early June; the last noteworthy count was 70+ over Fairhaven Lake on the 11th.

As usual very few breeding data were received. In the Pilling-Preesall area, Over Wyre, 45 monitored pairs laid 264 eggs and hatched 234 with 228 young fledged. In Chorley all farms in the Brindle area were reported to have several pairs; c.15 pairs nested in the Belmont area and nine in Cuerden Valley Park. At least 21 pairs nested in stables next to Freshfield Dune Heath and seven pairs at Arkholme.

Substantial roosts had begun to assemble in the Fylde by mid-July including 500+ at Myerscough Quarry on the 14th; a thousand roosted at Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park on 21 July and 2025 on the 24th. The Fleetwood roost continued to build during August, peaking at 8000 on the 22nd; meanwhile in the south-west 6000+ moved south at Seaforth and 200 at MMWWT on 6 Aug and there were 400 at Lydiate on the 8th. There were counts of 250 at Lunt Meadows on 22 Aug and the Eric Morecambe complex on the 26th.

Moderate, occasionally heavy, movements continued both inland and along the coast throughout September. Three and a half thousand Swallows roosted at Gressingham in the Lune Valley on 5 Sept and there were 200 at Mythop Grange, Fylde and 120 at Rishton Reservoir in east Lancashire next day; five widespread counts of 100-200 were reported during 10-20 Sept. Heavy movements were reported county-wide between 21 Sept and the month's end, including 500 at Brockholes and 200 south-east over Parsonage Reservoir, Blackburn on 21 Sept, 200 south at Stocks Reservoir and 164 at Jackhouse next day, 265 south at Seaforth on the 24th and 337 south



This very unusual rufous-breasted bird was at Marshside on 19 May. (Ron Jackson)

over Rossall Point on the 26th; 250+ at Leighton Moss and c.100 per minute flying east-south-east at Cockersand on 28 Sept were the last significant movements of the autumn.

All counts during October were in single figures, including 21 records in the Fylde and five in the Chorley region. One at MMWWT on 20 Oct was the south-west's last Swallow of 2013, east Lancashire's last two were at Towneley Hall on the 23rd and a bird at Charnock Richard on the 25th ended the year in Chorley. There was only one November record this year, a bird at Garstang on the 12th.

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbicum*

Common breeding bird and passage migrant. Amber List (breeding decline).

The first definite arrival was at Winmarleigh on 12 April. A modest influx next day brought a total of twelve to three sites in east Lancashire and singles to Marshside and Croston; one was at Ewood Bridge, Rossendale on the 14th. Numbers remained very low until near the end of April, when 230 were at Leighton Moss on the 25th; there were 100+ at Marton Mere on the 27th and 50+ at Calder Foot in the Ribble Valley next day. Movements continued intermittently throughout May with peak counts of 154 moving north in two hours at Marshside on 6 May, 150 at Brockholes Wetland on the 28th and 145 north-east over Rossall Point on the 30th.

A breeding survey in north Lancashire produced a total of 119 nests across nine localities including 24 in Warton, 21 in Tunstall and 19 in Halton, but there were negative returns from parts of Morecambe and Heysham. In east Lancashire breeding was confirmed at nine locations; it was judged to have been a successful season, with late summer activity at a number of sites and young still in the nest at Slaidburn on 7 Sept and in central Burnley on the 10th. In the Chorley area there were nine active nests in Belmont Village, the lowest total to date; breeding also took place in Cuerden Valley Park and Coppull and pairs were still feeding young at Heath Charnock on 21 Sept. Nesting was recorded at many widespread sites in the Fylde, including at least six active nests on a house at Granny's Bay; four young fledged from a nest at Carleton on 11 Sept.

Three early migrants flew south at Heysham on 9 July; the first substantial movement was of 30+ at Marton Mere on the 27th and the main autumn passage got underway in early August. Peak counts during the month included 50 at Leighton Moss on 9 Aug, about 80 at Ewood Bridge next day, 40 south at Seaforth on the 12th, 60 on the 20th at MMWWT and 80 at Waterfoot, Rossendale on the 29th.

As usual, numbers on the move increased during September: 250 were at Leighton Moss on 7 Sept with 200 there on the 19th; there were 80 at Cabin Hill on the 9th, 150 at Crook o' Lune on the 15th and 60 at Waterfoot on the 26th. The Fylde at Fairhaven Lake and the south-west at Seaforth recorded the last House Martins of 2013 in their respective regions on 29 Sept.

Further inland, however, small-scale movements continued well into October. There were four records in east Lancashire including 40 at Whalley on 1 Oct; the last five birds were at Low Moor on the 11th. Two were at Brockholes on 13 Oct and the last migrants in Chorley were five at White Coppice on the 21st. The county's last House Martin of 2013 was at Leighton Moss, a single bird on 4 Nov.

CETTI'S WARBLER* *Cettia cetti*

Rare breeding resident.

Reports suggested a further increase in the population at Leighton Moss and neighbouring reserves. Three singing males were present during the breeding season at Leighton Moss, with two more at Barrow Scout. Two broods were discovered. Birds were also seen at times at the Eric Morecambe complex and Jenny Brown's Point.

Birds were resident at Marton Mere and up to six were seen in May. Breeding was not confirmed, but it is almost certain that it occurred. Up to four were present at the end of the year.

Two were trapped and ringed on 30 April and 16 Nov at Fleetwood Nature Park and a male was singing on 30 Sept and 1 Oct. Away from these regular sites one was noted at Brockholes on 22 Dec (Z Hinchcliffe). A couple of other reports of singing males were not supported by descriptions, which are still required away from regular sites, but were at potentially suitable wetland sites on the coastal plain and may well have been genuine.

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*

Very common breeding resident.

It was noted in the 2012 report that the species breeds in around 80% of the county's tetrads, representing a significant increase that has apparently not been checked by recent hard winters – possibly due to adapting to use of garden feeding stations. Records received this year suggested that the population continues to thrive.

The largest flocks noted in east Lancashire in summer were 32 at Lowerhouse Lodges on 29 June whilst autumn flocks included 45 at Calderstones and 30 at Whalley in October

Up to 40 were around Belmont in early December. In the Lancaster area there were at least 30 at the Eric Morecambe complex on 27 June, and 25 at nearby Leighton Moss on 9 Oct, while 22 were noted at Heysham on 25 Sept and Aldcliffe on 22 Nov. Fylde flocks included peaks of 26 at Carr House Green Common and 22 at Bradshaw Lane Head, both on 13 Oct, and 22 at Knott End on 23 Nov.

Up to ten pairs bred at a 30ha patch at Aintree. Evidence of a relatively poor breeding season included 20 trapped at Leighton Moss and 56 at Heysham and Middleton NRs, compared with respective peaks in the 2000-2012 period of 107 and 104. In this context it was perhaps not surprising that there was little clear-cut evidence of irruptive movements of the species in the autumn,

GREENISH WARBLER*

Phylloscopus trochiloides

Vagrant.

One of the highlights of the year was a singing male at Turton Golf Club from 13 to 18 June (A Wainwright). The finder discovered it during green-keeping duties at the club, and it generally performed well for the many observers during its prolonged stay. This was the second county record. (See separate article).



**Greenish Warbler, Turton Golf Course,
17 June. (John Barlow)**

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER* *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Scarce autumn passage migrant.

The continuing increase in autumn migrants means that, although it is a highlight of any day in the field, not all records are documented despite it still being a county description bird. The list of accepted records therefore needs to be seen in the context of a similar number of undocumented reports. Descriptions are still welcome for birds not listed below.

The first was at Heysham NR on 29 Sept and at least three others were seen in the Heysham area, including two on 1 Oct that stayed until the 2nd and 5th respectively, and the last of the year in the county on 18 Oct (P Marsh *et al*).



Away from Heysham there were two on the Fylde, two in east Lancashire and one in the south-west. The Fylde records came from St. Anne's on 30 Sept (A Baines) and Cocksand on 2 Oct (S Piner). One was at MMWWT on 2 Oct (G Clarkson) and another lingered at Padiham on 6-9 Oct, joined by a second on the 7th – a notable multiple occurrence inland (J Metcalf).

Yellow-browed Warbler, Cocksand, 2 October. (Stuart Piner)

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Scarcer breeder and passage migrant.

Spring migrants appeared early and favourable conditions led to a number of birds being seen on and near the coast. Following one at Marton Mere on 21 April others were recorded that month on the Fylde from near Blackpool Zoo on the 22nd, Fairhaven Lake on the 26th, Fleetwood on the 27th and near Stanley Park on the 29th; while in May singles were at Fleetwood on the 7th and Stanley Park and Cottam, Preston on the 20th. Other spring migrants were seen at Euxton on 28 April and in May at Heysham on the 1st and 8th, Silverdale on the 3rd and Halton on the 6th.

Despite the strong passage showing, records from breeding locations were less encouraging. In east Lancashire there were reports from just three sites, fewer than in all years from 2007 to 2012: singles were at Colne Water on 16 May, Roddlesworth Woods on 4 June and Crow Wood Farm, Browsholme on 4 Aug.

In the Chorley area birds were in breeding habitat at Anglezarke and Lead Mines Clough in early May and White Coppice mid-month. One persistent bird was singing at High Bulbough from 6 May to 15th June, while on 8 June birds were at three sites in the Rivington area, all near previously regular nesting sites.

The only reports from north Lancashire that may have related to breeding attempts were singing males in Burton Wood, Crook o' Lune on 30 May and at Quernmore on 8 June. One was also recorded on 7 July at Holme Wood, Grizedale.

Typically there were no reports of autumn migrants.



Wood Warbler, Blackpool, 29 April. (Paul Slade)

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita***Common breeder and passage migrant, uncommon in winter.**

Wintering birds appear to have been thin on the ground early in the year. In January there were reports from Birkdale, Carleton and Marton Mere, while the only February reports from Cockersand, Glasson and Overton may even have involved one mobile bird.

The low wintering numbers suggest that the first arrivals were those reported in mid-March, beginning with singles at Fazakerley on the 14th, Leighton Moss on the 15th, Seaforth the next day and Myerscough Quarry on the 20th, before birds began to turn up further inland from the 23rd.

A number of recorders noted that the cold and late spring had impacted on the pace of arrival. In east Lancashire there were just four reports in March, compared with 35 last year, and the first arrival at Alston Wetland, was not until the 24th, eight days later than in 2012.

As conditions improved April counts included 19 at Leighton Moss on the 25th and 13 at Marshside on the 13th. In May 14 were at Beacon Country Park, Skelmersdale on the 20th and eleven were singing in the Roby Mill area on the 13th. Breeding information received included eleven pairs on Freshfield Dune Heath, eight at Birkdale LNR/Royal Birkdale Golf Course and on a 30ha patch at Aintree, and six males singing around Kew, Southport.

A pronounced autumn passage was noted at several sites, in contrast with several other migrant warbler species. This was particularly prominent in late September and early October and was most notable at Heysham, where there were counts of 20 on 30 Sept, 15 on 2 Oct and ten the following day. At the same time there were seven at Seaforth on the 2nd and an excellent inland count of 14 on the 3rd at Roby Mill, where an influx of Goldcrests was noted at the same time. The highest count in east Lancashire was of seven at Jackhouse on 2 Oct.

Given the good autumn totals it was perhaps not surprising that more wintering birds were noted subsequently. Around 14 were seen in November and nine in December. The November reports included birds in east Lancashire at Moor Isles Clough and Wood End Sewage Works, while all of December's were on or near the coast.

SIBERIAN CHIFFCHAFF* *Phylloscopus collybita tristis***Vagrant.**

For birds to be published as definite *tristis* they need to be described in detail or photographed well and to show no anomalous features, and to have been heard singing or calling consistently. Records of probable *tristis* where not all these features can be proved will continue to be published, but with these caveats.

All of the records published below were photographed and showed characteristics of *tristis* but unfortunately none was heard sufficiently for certain acceptance. One was in a Knott End garden on 5 Jan (C Batty), one at Fleetwood on 15 Nov was trapped the next day (I Gardner) and finally one was at Cabin Hall, Formby on 22 Nov (T Vaughan).

The record published in 2012 was considered by the records committee and the same conclusion reached as with the 2013 records. This also applied to a record not published in that year's report, at Stanley Park on 25 Nov (C Batty).

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus***Abundant breeding bird and passage migrant.**

Although there were second-hand reports of March birds, the earliest substantiated record was fairly late, at Low Moor on 8 April. Further records came more widely from Anglezarke, Arley, Cabin Hill, Carr House Green Common, Poulton, Preesall, Seaforth and Warton (Fylde) on the 12th. Birds were noted from 18 other sites on the 13th. Counts in the month included 15 at Seaforth on the 22nd and 30 at Marshside on the 27th, with in east Lancashire up to 16 at Grove Lane Marsh, 20 in the Wycoller valley, 31 at Bottoms Beck, 30 in the Langden Valley and 20 in the Jackhouse area. On the Fylde

maxima were 25 at Preesall Flashes, 22 at Stanley Park and 20 at Marton Mere. The largest count came from Heysham, however, with 80 on the 25th. One at Brockholes at the end of the month was giving mixed song including Chiffchaff notes.

Counts of singing males in May included 16 at Tarbock Hall Farm on the 4th and 19 in the Roby Mill area on the 16th. In east Lancashire there were 67 at Bottoms Beck and 50 at Stocks Reservoir on 6th May. There were thirteen singing in a 1km square at Belmont on 4 June. At White Coppice birds were singing no more than 50 metres apart in favoured areas along the golf course between Anglezarke and Brinscall.

At Heysham reasonable numbers were trapped after the breeding season, suggesting some success locally, but the main autumn passage was assessed as 'dreadful'.

Late coastal birds in September were at Leighton Moss on the 25th, Blackpool North Shore and Fairhaven on the 26th, Jenny Brown's Point on the 27th and near Blackpool Pleasure Beach on the 28th. There were three October records in east Lancashire, at Burnley on the 4th, Wood End Sewage Works on the 6th and the last of the year at Dean Clough on the 10th.

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*

Very common breeding bird and passage migrant, fairly common winter visitor at.

Four, an average number, wintered at Birkdale. January records came from another nine widely scattered sites, including two together in a Blackpool North Shore garden. Birds were seen at another 14 sites in February, with at least two different birds visiting a Chorley garden. Few new birds were noted during March, but the month did produce the first singing bird in Chorley on the 31st. However, five trapped in a garden at Thornton, Merseyside in May were also considered to be migratory wintering birds due to their weight.

Arrival of the first incoming migrants in April can, therefore, be difficult to pick out. Birds at Mere Sands Wood on the 7th and Belmont on the 8th may have been in this category. The first appeared in the Fylde on 10 April and birds were widespread from the 12-13th. Counts during the month included eight at Siddows on the 21st, and 18 at Leighton Moss and ten at Aldcliffe on the 25th. May totals included 17 at Beacon Country Park, Skelmersdale on the 20th and up to 15 at both Birkdale and Warton Crag.

Breeding information included an assessment that the population in the Rivington area is thriving. By contrast it was considered a very poor year at Heysham in all respects, this was thought possibly to be due to the inclement weather during the spring migration.

Autumn migration was also reported to be light at Heysham. This was reflected at other coastal locations, the best series of autumn records actually came from inland at Jackhouse with birds recorded on 21 days in September and peaks of up to five. As numbers of migrants diminished in October it became clear that there were fewer birds wintering than earlier in the year; six reports in November included a heavy presumed off-passage migrant at Heysham on the 2nd. Birds were noted at six sites in December, including two in one garden at Croston.

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

Fairly common breeding bird and passage migrant.

The first was in the Yarrow Valley on 23 April, an average date. Other April arrivals followed at Aldcliffe on the 25th, Fairhaven on the 27th and Crook o' Lune and Low Moor on the 29th. Only six spring migrants were recorded in the Fylde, including two together at Stanley Park on 18 May, while there were just two in the Heysham area, at Middleton on 2 May and Heysham on the 19th.

Singing birds were reported from many locations in east Lancashire, with a peak of seven males at Bottoms Beck on 10 June. Suitable habitat can attract several birds, and four males were singing in an area of birch scrub within 200 metres of one another along Cross Lane, Braddup on 16 May. Elsewhere, peak counts included nine on Warton Crag on 17 May, six at Nesbert Hall on 10 June and

five in the Gisburn Forest on 9 June. In the Chorley area several birds were noted at traditional sites along the Anglezarke woodland trail. Other reports of singles in potential breeding habitat came from Brockholes, Halton, Longridge Fell, Roby Mill, Trashy Hill (Over Wyre) and Thurnham.

Few autumn migrants were seen at Heysham, where three were ringed in August. This was also reflected elsewhere, with one on 26 Aug at Marton Mere the only report received. A relatively late bird was at Brungerley Bridge, east Lancashire on 27 Sept. Two were recorded in October, one feeding on Sea-buckthorn at Heysham on the 2nd, and finally one at Siddows, east Lancashire, feeding on elderberries with Blackcaps on the 3rd. No migrants were recorded in the south of the county and none wintered at the 'traditional' site at Birkdale.

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

Uncommon breeding bird and passage migrant.

The first arrived on 20 April, in north Lancashire at Aldcliffe, Heysham and Middleton, and on the Fylde at Marton Mere. Three were at Warton Crag on 5 May and Alston Wetland the next day, while five were at Beacon Country Park, Skelmersdale on the 20th.

Breeding information received was generally rather scant. There were five pairs on EDF Energy property at Heysham, and a further four on Middleton NR. There were twelve records at Alston Wetland through to late August so nesting nearby seemed probable. In the Chorley area at least two were singing at Bretherton during May. Negative breeding news concerned a lack of birds at Birkdale, where a decline has been noted since the mid-1990s.

Ringing totals at Heysham suggested that productivity was mediocre. This may well have been the same elsewhere, as here and elsewhere autumn migrants were decidedly thin on the ground. Only one September report was received from inland, at Jackhouse on the 3rd. A few were, however, seen after this at coastal and near-coastal sites, including Cockersand on the 4th, Galgate on the 5th, Marton Mere on the 8th and 9th, Heysham on the 22nd and finally Marton Mere on the 25th.

WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

Very common breeder and passage migrant.

Returning migrants arrived in numbers after the first on 18 April at Marton Mere and, less typically, in isolated bushes in Liverpool city centre. The following day there were reports from across most of the recording area including Carleton, the Eric Morecambe complex, MMWWT, Mythop, Poulton, Yarrow Valley and Rossall. The first in east Lancashire was at Brookside on the 22 April.

Long-standing observers in the Fylde considered the numbers breeding to be average by recent standards. In east Lancashire birds were widespread and were reported as perhaps the commonest breeding species on the Chorley mosslands.

Twenty-six were singing at Roby Mill on 16 May, a peak of 25 at Birkdale and in the nearby Kew area there were 20 on 14 May. It was a good year at Heysham with twelve pairs on the EDF Energy land and eleven at Middleton NR, and numbers of juveniles ringed suggesting good productivity locally. There were at least 16 pairs on Sefton Meadows, while peak Fylde counts included 18 at Carr House Green Common, and 15 at Marton Mere and Conder Green. Brockholes and Marsside both reported peaks of



Whitethroat, Todderstaffe Hall, Fylde, May. (Paul Slade)

15 birds, with eight pairs thought to have nested at the latter. A total of 67 were ringed at Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park, including 23 on 20th July.

There was no obvious autumn peak at Heysham and the limited information received from other coastal sites seemed to tie in with this. There were reports in September from at least 25 sites inland as well as on the coast. Towards the end of the month singles were at Cockersand and Seaforth on the 29th, and Heysham on the 30th. The last of the year was at Cockersand on 2 Oct.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia*

Fairly breeding bird and passage migrant.

As in 2012, after an early arrival at Marton Mere on 9 April, there was a week's wait before the main passage began with migrants at Carnforth, Warton and Heysham on the 16-17th. Many other sites were quickly occupied with five at Fleetwood Golf Course on 26 April the highest count of passage birds.

Fourteen territories were identified in the Belmont area, an increase of three from 2012 but there had been 27 in 2011. In east Lancashire the 31 reports were the lowest total in eight years, with no proven breeding although up to three males were reeling at Stocks Reservoir in May. Up to six were singing in the Birkdale area. Away from the main haunts three were singing at Roby Mill in late April, two were at Pollard Moor in May, two were reeling at Garston shore, Marton Mere and MMWWT in June, two were at Turton Golf Course in May, two were heard at sites in the Rivington area and on the south-eastern fringes of the recording area songsters were at Spring Mill Reservoir on 5 May and in Egerton from 26 May to 6 June.

Two of the five pairs at Leighton Moss and the neighbouring RSPB properties went on to reel for potential second broods. Typically, though, the most detailed information came from the Heysham area, where the season was summarised as 'head-scratching'; in June five were singing at Middleton and two at Heysham NR but many of these were either not paired or there was high nest failure as they appeared all to have left by the end of July. A further five were noted reeling at Heysham Moss in late June, but the outcome is not known.

The only report in east Lancashire after July was one still reeling at Stocks on 4 Aug. One was still singing at Brockholes on 28 Aug. At Belmont a bird was still reeling on 31 Aug when a juvenile was also still present.

Autumn migrants in the Fleetwood area were recorded on 28 Aug at Rossall School, 8 Sept at Rossall Point and 5 Oct on Fleetwood Golf Course. The latter record becomes the latest county record, surpassing birds on 4 Oct in both 1981 and 2012.

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Common breeding bird and passage migrant.

The first arrival was reported from the Eric Morecambe complex and Marton Mere on 17 April. Subsequently, other early birds were seen at Preesall Flashes on the 19th, Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park, Heysham and Warton (Lancaster) on the 20th, and Bretherton and Marshside on the 21st, with birds at several other sites across the county by the end of the month.

A total of 27 pairs were at MMWWT (8 in 2012, 34 in 2011). There were 25 singing males at Marshside between Hesketh Golf Course and Crossens sewage works on 16 May, but only five pairs were reported to have gone on to bred on the reserve. No census information was received from the other main breeding sites of Leighton Moss, where 25 were reported in mid-July –presumably an undercount – or from Brockholes. Fylde peak counts included 20 at Carr House Green Common, 18 at Marton Mere, ten at Myerscough Quarry and nine at Preesall Flashes, whilst 45 were ringed at Fleetwood Nature Park..

At least twelve pairs were on or near Middleton NR, where productivity was reported to be very good. Seven pairs were at Sefton/Lunt Meadows and there were six on Hesketh Out Marsh. Smaller

counts included four singing at Garston shore, Birkdale and Cabin Hill, two pairs at Mere Sands Wood and two singing at Roby Mill. Two pairs were feeding young at Brockholes in mid-June, and 20 were ringed there. In east Lancashire breeding was confirmed at Brookside (where seven were present on 2 July), Gawthorpe, Grove Lane Marsh and Wood End Sewage Works. In Chorley one or two pairs were reported at Lower Burgh Meadows and Withnell Fold.

No significant migratory influxes were noted at Heysham in the autumn, where the last was seen on 14 Sept. The last report from Rossall was also on the 14th. There were still four at Leighton Moss on the 20th, while late singles were at Seaforth on the 23rd & 28th.

MARSH WARBLER* *Acrocephalus palustris*

Vagrant.

One was heard singing at 22.20 hours on 10 June at Middleton Nature Reserve (PJ Marsh, J Patton). The species is a renowned mimic, and phrases similar to Blackbird, Sardinian Warbler, Serin and Thrush Nightingale were heard. The bird went quiet after an hour and may have departed.

This is the sixth record for Lancashire and North Merseyside and the Heysham area has now contributed half the total with others in October 1985 and May 1990.

REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Fairly common breeder, uncommon passage migrant.

The first arrived on the typical dates of 14 April at Marshside, Leighton Moss on the 16th, MMWWT on the 19th and Croston on the 21st.

No breeding information was received from the main sites of Leighton Moss, where 300-400 pairs have been present in recent years, or from Brockholes. There was a further increase in the population at MMWWT, the 58 pairs being a dozen more than in 2012. Marshside/Crossens Inner held nine pairs, and six were in Phragmites on the Mersey shore at Garston, at Mere Sands Wood and Tagg's Island, Birkdale. Four pairs were noted in a 1km stretch of the Leeds-Liverpool canal by the M57 in Aintree and a male was singing at Cabin Hill, Formby from late May to mid-July, a new record for this site.

No specific breeding data were received from the Fylde, but counts at main sites included up to 18 at Marton Mere and 16 at Myerscough Quarry.

Ringling totals included 84 at Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park and 58 at Brockholes. Ringling totals at Middleton Nature Reserve suggested an average breeding season.

Several were seen in September, including singles at Rossall Scholl on the 23rd, Seaforth on the 24th and Blackpool North Shore and a migrant at Heysham on the 25th. The last, however, were at Leighton Moss, where there were still two on 5 Oct.

CASPIAN REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus fuscus*

Assessment of the first-winter that was found freshly dead at Jenny Brown's Point on 11 December 2011 has been kept on hold by the BBRC. This was in part because only a tiny DNA database for *fuscus* is available; the Lancashire specimen did not match any one sample but the extent of variation within *fuscus* is not known.

Adam Rowlands commented: "The DNA results have proved inconclusive for an identification to sub-specific level at present. We may be able to reconsider the evidence as our understanding of Reed Warbler sub-specific genetics evolves, but at present this is best recorded as a Reed Warbler of unconfirmed sub-species. We will hold the record on file pending further development of genetic studies".

A more recent record from Shetland has also been put on hold.

WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulus*

Winter visitor in highly variable numbers.

As detailed in the 2012 report there was a substantial national influx in the winter of 2012/13. The assertion in last year's report that most birds had moved on by the year's end needs to be qualified, although there were certainly no gatherings on the scale of the 300 in north Liverpool in late 2012 and the peak counts appeared to result from a new arrival of birds in February.

Summarising a Waxwing influx in a good year is a fairly thankless task. Finders of flocks generally consider it a highlight of their birding year, but as noted in last year's report, birds are highly mobile and all records cannot be detailed. What follows is a summary of the larger groups seen and the details of all late records.

The largest numbers were again in north Liverpool, with mobile flocks in Crosby and neighbouring areas, including up to 150 birds in January and still as many as 132 in late March. Elsewhere in the south west, up to 65 were at Prescot in February, 50 in Kirkby and Southport in March, 43 at St. Helens in mid-April and 37 at Skelmersdale in early March.

The second-largest flocks were at various sites in central Preston, with a peak of up to 100 in early February. Other counts in the vicinity of Preston included 70 at Leyland in March, 62 at Lightfoot Green in mid-February and 48 at Penwortham in early March.

The peak count in east Lancashire was 70 in central Blackburn in early March, with 67 in Nelson in early February, when up to 59 were also in Burnley and 53 in Brierfield, while up to 55 were at Rishton and 54 at Longridge in March. The largest count in Chorley was 50 at Great Knowley in February, with similar numbers in Chorley town centre in mid-March.

The largest counts in north Lancashire were in Lancaster, with up to 52 in February and 55 in March. The Fylde generally attracts fewer birds than other areas but fared rather better than in most invasions, with perhaps the same groups of up to 40 at St. Anne's and Great Marton in the first half of February.

There was a handful of April records in Chorley, Longridge, Middleton, Liverpool and Whitworth, and the last were in Burnley on the 30th.

The only record received in the second winter period was of an unspecified number of birds in Lower Burgh Way, Chorley on 1 Dec. Whilst this was a second-hand report it ties in with reports of small numbers subsequently in Blackburn and the Chorley area in early 2014.



Penny Lane, south Liverpool, January. (Steve Young)

NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea***Common breeding resident.**

The Lancaster January survey produced a total of 137 birds, higher than in the previous three years when totals had been between 92 and 128.

Colonisation of the county continues unabated. This was illustrated at Shedden Clough when one appeared in June (possibly only the second or third record there for this regular observer) and juveniles were present by 5 July. Similarly at Belmont, where all suitable habitat had not been colonised last year, now all woodlands have at least one pair – seven pairs in total.

Reports of breeding came from all parts of the county and included twelve pairs on EDF Energy land at Heysham (two up on 2012), eleven pairs on a 30ha patch at Aintree, an average total of seven pairs on Warton Crag RSPB, six pairs on the Hermitage estate, Crook o' Lune and five pairs on Sefton Meadows. In Sefton Park, Liverpool a pair mudded-up a hole in a concrete lamp-post and was seen feeding young.

Upland records in east Lancashire included one singing on heather in the Langden Valley on 6 April, and confirmed nesting at Marl Hill. The peak count in east Lancashire was 19 at Jackhouse on 14 March.

Ringling totals at Heysham suggested breeding productivity was excellent, with the total of 126 birds ringed 30 more than in any year in the period 2000-2012.

The only significant autumn movement recorded were at least 18 fidgety, vocal and flighty individuals, several of which eventually headed high to the south, at Heysham between 9 Sept and 16 Oct.

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris***Common breeding resident.**

Treecreepers remain an under-recorded species, one that is accepted to be present in all suitable woodlands across the county but never seen in any large numbers. A total of 18 was recorded from eight 10km squares in the Lancaster January survey, compared with an average of 22 in previous years. In Rivington and Anglezarke, there were territories at ten sites.

Nest-building activity was first observed at Rawcliffe Hall on 16 April and at Moor Piece on the 19th. Pairs were noted at ten sites in east Lancashire.

One wandering away from the Sefton Coast pinewoods at Birkdale LNR on 2 March had local significance. At Heysham a couple of passage birds were trapped on 4 Oct and 2 Nov.

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes***Abundant breeding resident.**

This ubiquitous species fared well despite the poor winters of previous years.

Forty-one pairs were located on the survey of the Lune between Leck Beck and Wenning Foot, ten on Warton Crag LNR, 15 in Croftlands (13 in 2012) and twelve in Millhead (ten in 2012). There were 23 singing males on EDF Energy property at Heysham and normal populations were reported from Middleton and Birkdale Dunes. However, it was noted that productivity seemed to be very poor at Heysham. Twenty-three pairs on Freshfield Dune Heath matched the average of the past ten years.

Family parties were noted elsewhere in the county but as with Treecreeper and other common, resident birds, they remain grossly under-recorded. As the recently published Atlas show, this species remains abundant almost everywhere.

There was a small movement in autumn but nothing of note.

Several double-figure counts came from observers surveying their local patches, mostly in the breeding season, topped by up to 34 at Carr House Green Common in November and December when there were also three singing. Twenty-two were counted at Brockholes on 17 Nov. The sight of one feeding high in the canopy at Stanah on 25 Nov was considered unusual.

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
Leighton Moss	75000	75000	75000	/	/	60	45	550	550	10000	50000	15000
Marton Mere	350	3000	750	/	/	/	/	1000	1500	1500	1100	2000
Marshside	26	250	320	48	10	250	250	500	200	100	3200	2000

At the end of 2012, numbers at Leighton Moss and Blackpool's North Pier were each in the region of 30-40,000; seemingly by January most had moved to Leighton Moss, where they stayed until March, having a seriously detrimental effect on the reedbeds. The peak count from the North Pier was of 10000 in March. Away from Leighton Moss, the Lancaster January survey counted 5769, similar to last year but continuing the trend of a decline in numbers over recent years.

Some good counts were made in the east of the county, including 1500 feeding on pasture at Burholme Farm on 7 Jan to 2 Feb. A flock of at least 3000 was at Bashall Town on 30 Jan but in February a huge flock of 50000 was present in the Saddle End Farm area above Chipping from the 19th to the 25th.

Congregations in and around south Liverpool generally numbered less than 100 but there were more on several occasions on football fields in Speke throughout the year and 145 at Sefton Park in August. The largest count in the area was a particularly accurate 596 along Lower Road, Halewood on 19 Oct. It remains a widespread nester in buildings in the area.

The first juveniles put in an appearance on 18 May at Belmont and the 21st in Burnley. A census of Millhead recorded 21 pairs compared to an average of 13 over the previous five years. A similar survey of Croftlands, Carnforth recorded 56 pairs. Numbers seemed to be down again in the Cuerden Valley.

Visible autumn passage was unremarkable. Seaforth registered peaks of 590 on 24 Oct and 450 on the 26th and 30th, Cabin Hill recorded up to 300 on a few dates in late October and early November and Caton Moor 1383 while Heysham had a total of just 408. During late October, a flock of 450 developed on Oswaldtwistle Moor and 15000 were roosting in the reedbed at Martin Mere. A count of 2750 was made at Rossall on 20 Oct and approximately 100 were at Eagland Hill at the end of the month.

The Leighton Moss roost started to develop at this time but, after peaking at 50000 in November, all had left by mid-December. A smaller roost developed on the island reedbed at Marton Mere and remained to the end of the year. There were also 1000 roosting in the reeds at Brockholes in November. Smaller roosts were noted in buildings at Heysham (600) and the former Holy Trinity Church, Burnley (1100).

In the second winter period there were some significant flocks in the east of the county with the largest again in the Chipping area with at least 20000 on 23 Nov. There were also flocks of 5000 at the Moorcock Inn on 19 Nov, a minimum of 3000 at Dean Clough Reservoir on 30 Nov, 3000 flying down the river at Slaidburn at dusk on 11 Dec and 6000 feeding in fields at Higher Stony Bank Farm on 14 Dec. In the West Pennines 1000 were at Belmont Reservoir on 29 Dec and 1100 at Delph Reservoir on the 31st.

DIPPER *Cinclus cinclus*

Uncommon breeding resident.

The general tenor of reports received this year is of a species doing well in its core breeding areas.

In east Lancashire there were five on 3km of the River Hodder between Dunsop Bridge and Burholme Bridge on 7 Jan and six on a similar length of the Calder between Towneley and Cliviger Gorge on 6 Feb; birds were seen regularly in the centre of Burnley. The ringed bird from Sedbergh,

Cumbria since late 2011 remained in the area, singing at Gawthorpe on 12 Jan. Breeding was confirmed at seven sites and judged probable at another. Further to the north pairs in the Trough of Bowland and Langden Valley each produced young. Only one definite pair was located on the Lune survey.

In Chorley pairs in Yarrow Valley Park and at White Coppice were both probably double-brooded; two pairs nested in Cuerden Valley Park, fledging three young between them, and Dippers were regularly present at Lead Mines Clough and along Belmont Brook.

An observer in Rossendale recorded the species in many localities both in the Irwell-Whitewell Valleys and at reservoirs, with breeding confirmed at Ewood Bridge, Rawtenstall centre, Hareholme, Ravenshore and Fallbarn.

On the eastern edge of the Fylde there were pairs on the Wyre at Churchtown and to the south on its tributary the Brock in early February; birds were also recorded along the latter stream at Myerscough College in May, September and October. A pair bred at Galgate with an adult feeding fledged young there on 4 June. Only one definite pair was found on the survey of the River Lune.

A bird at Fulwood, north Preston on 27 April was some distance outside the normal range, but for the eighth year in succession no reports were received from the south-west.

RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus*

Scarce breeding bird and passage migrant. Red List (breeding decline).

The first Ring Ouzel of 2013 was in a garden in Nelson on 22 March, apparently injured or unwell; it may have remained in the area for some days.

A male at Marshside on 31 March began the heaviest coastal passage for many years. Exact numbers are difficult to arrive at but there were at least ten in the Formby Point-Cabin Hill-Hightown coastal strip between 14 and 21 April; two were at Marshside on the 12th and singles at Birkdale LNR on the 21st and on Royal Birkdale Golf Course on the 26th. Further inland in the south-west, one was at Billinge Hill, Rainford on 17 April.



Ring Ouzel, Poulton-le-Fylde, 12 April. (Mike Malpass)

2013 produced one of the heaviest spring passages of recent year and, reassuringly, it appears that they may be holding their own as a breeding species in the uplands.

There was a total of eleven widespread Ring Ouzels in the Fylde between 10 and 25 April with six of them in the Rossall-Fleetwood area; two were inland at Poulton-le-Fylde on 12 April. On the north coast there were singles at Leighton Moss on 22 April and at Heysham on the 25th.

Meanwhile, the first to arrive in the uplands was in the Langden Valley on 6 April; numbers there peaked at eight on 13 April and ten by the 20th, with two males in song. Birds were on Pendle Hill from 13 April to 17 May with a peak of seven males and a single female on 22 April. Four migrants were on Hameldon Scout near Accrington on 15 April, while further north there were two on Caton Moor on 12 April and one on Thrushgill Fell on 5 May.

In the Chorley region the first to arrive were one at White Coppice and three at Belmont on 13 April; passage continued at the former site until 27 April with three birds on the 21st. Further to the east on the West Pennine Moors three passed over Turton Moor on 19 April.

The only breeding data this year came from the United Utilities Bowland Estate, where an excellent total of 16 pairs was located; young were fledged from eleven nests.

In sharp contrast to the spring, autumn passage was very quiet, particularly on the coast where only two birds were recorded, at Marshside on 13 Oct and Middleton NR on the following day. Inland, the last in east Lancashire was on Fairsnape Fell on 8 Oct; one was on Turton Golf Course on 7 Oct, six on Winter Hill on the 11th and the last inland record of 2013 was at Littledale in north Lancashire on 13 Oct.

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

Abundant breeding resident and winter visitor.

The Lancaster & District BWS located 839 Blackbirds in their January survey (mean 972 during 2006-12); sixteen were at Skerton Weir on 25 Jan. In the Fylde there were 14 at Singleton on 7 Jan and 20 at Burglar's Alley on the 20th. Inland counts included 18 in Staghills Wood, Rossendale on 9 Jan, 20 in a Belmont garden on the 19th and an ELOC peak of 20 at Jackhouse on 15 Feb. There were no reports of spring passage this year.

A pair at Marl Hill in east Lancashire fledged three broods – on 11 May, 12 June and 23 July. In north Lancashire 27 pairs bred on Warton Crag RSPB (mean 23.4 1989-2012) plus eleven pairs on the LNR. Forty-one males were singing on the Lune between Leck Beck and Wenning Foot, and 25 pairs nested at Millhead (24 in 2012). There were 20 territories on EDF property at Heysham (range 12-32 pairs during 1999-2012).

In the Fylde 13 monitored pairs in the Pilling-Preesall area laid 44 eggs, hatched 37 and fledged 35 young. In the south-west 15 pairs bred in a 30ha survey area at Aintree and at least seven in Jubilee Wood, Maghull.

Autumn movements began at the beginning of October and appear to have continued right through November. Heysham recorded 20 on 11 Oct and 30 on the 17th, 40 on 9 Nov and 20 on the 23rd. Also on the north coast there were 20 at Sunderland Point on 6 Oct with 30 there on the 13th; 30 were at Aldcliffe on 28 Nov. In the Fylde there were 20+ Blackbirds at Bank End on 11 Oct, 88 at Marton Mere on 24 Nov and 30 at Singleton on the 26th; on the Sefton Coast 13 were at Cabin Hill on 11 Nov. Inland counts included 20 at Siddows on 3 Oct and 21 at Jackhouse on 21 Nov; there were 22 at Roby Mill on 4 Oct and 15 at Brockholes on 17 Nov.

At the year's end 23 were counted at Marton Mere on 11 Dec; in east Lancashire there were 27 at Whalley on 6 Dec and 34 at Worsthorne on the 17th. Twenty-one were at Brockholes on 1 Dec and 23 in Staghills Wood, Rossendale on the 26th.

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

Abundant winter visitor and passage migrant.

The largest January flocks were in the Fylde and inland regions, 200 at Mereclough in east Lancashire on 11 Jan, 155 at Poulton-le-Fylde on the 15th and 300 at Arkholme on the 31st; the only three-figure

count south of the Ribble was 113 on Sollom Moss, Tarleton on 7 Jan. The Lancaster January survey counted 398, only a third of the 2006-12 mean. Forty at Seaforth on 20 Jan and 13 south at Heysham next day seem to have been cold-weather movements. The Arkholme flock had increased to 550 by 14 Feb; the only other substantial counts that month were in the Fylde, 400+ at Elswick on 11 Feb and 220+ at Thurnham on the 24th.

March and early April saw a return to winter conditions, and perhaps as a consequence more Fieldfares than usual delayed their return to northern Europe. Two hundred and ten at Belmont Reservoir on 5 March and 250 at Thurnham on the 20th were that month's peak counts. April flocks were plentiful, including 107 at Ightenhill in east Lancashire on the 5th, 120 at Preesall next day, 159 at Singleton on the 10th and 100 on Croston Moss on the 11th. Singles at Bretherton on 21 April, Lightfoot Green on the 24th and Bushburn Bridge, Whalley on the 28th were the last spring Fieldfares reported.

A bird at Talbot Bridge near Waddington on 2 Oct was the first to return in autumn, followed by four at Oswaldtwistle on the 4th and small flocks over Spring Mill Reservoir, Rossendale on the 10th. There were widespread arrivals on the following day including 220+ over Knott End and 130 each at Fluke Hall and Mythop, Chorley's first autumn Fieldfares over Eccleston and Great Knowley, 140 at Brockholes Wetland and 40 at Marshside. The main influx began on 20 Oct with 1720 over Heysham, 428 south over Belmont and 150 at the Conder Estuary; 430 flew over Belmont at dawn next day and there were 545 at Heysham. Movements continued intermittently at a fairly high level into early November, with peaks of 583 south over Champion Moor, 417 over Caton Moor, 400 over Otterspool, south Liverpool and 183 at Seaforth all on 24 Oct, and 595 south at Belmont in 30 minutes on 2 Nov.

Many Fieldfares seem to have remained in the county to the year's end. There were eight widespread three-figure flocks in November, the largest 658 at Arkholme on 28/11, 350 at Leighton Moss on 18 Nov and 300 at Thurnham on the 30th, and eleven in December including 250+ at Myerscough Quarry on 1 Dec and 400+ on Newton Marsh on the 9th. Most of the activity during the last days of 2013 was in the uplands: up to 400 were at Lower Edge Farm near Slaidburn between 22 and 26 Dec, there were 400 on Champion Moor on the 22nd and 300 at Belmont Reservoir on the 29th.

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

Common breeding resident. Red List (breeding decline).

The Lancaster & District January survey provided that month's only count of 67 birds, mainly in the three coastal squares; there was a total of 45 in 2012. In east Lancashire birds were singing at Lome-shaye on 6 Jan and Longridge on the 7th.

The only spring migrant reported was at Heysham on 10 April, although a count of 15 at Siddows in east Lancashire on 17 March may well have included some birds on passage.

Breeding reports from coastal regions included 13 pairs on Warton Crag RSPB (mean 9.36 1989-2012) plus six on the LNR, and eight territories on EDF property at Heysham (range 7-12 pairs during 1999-2012). Breeding-season records came from all parts of the Fylde, including at least four territories at Lytham Hall on 17 March; in the south-west six pairs bred at Aintree and two in Jubilee Wood, Maghull; there were territories in both Sefton and Princes Parks, south Liverpool and seven singing males at Tarbock Hall Farm. Inland, in Chorley two pairs bred in Cuerden Valley Park and in north Lancashire there were 14 males along the Lune between Leck Beck and Wenning Foot, six pairs on the Hermitage Estate, Crook o' Lune, three of them successful, and six pairs on Warton Crag LNR.

The only clear-cut reports of autumn passage were over two days in early October, 15 at Heysham on 3 Oct and eleven there on the 4th, when an influx of 30 was also recorded well inland at Roby Mill, east of Skelmersdale. A count of eleven at Singleton, Fylde on 19 Nov may have included migrant birds. Only one double-figure count was reported at the end of the year, ten at Leighton Moss on 3 Dec.

REDWING *Turdus iliacus***Abundant winter visitor and passage migrant.**

The Lancaster & District January survey located 489 Redwings, fewer than the 2006-12 mean but a big increase on the 51 recorded last year. Only three three-figure counts were received in January, 125 at Lunt Meadows on 2 Jan, 450 at Braddup Clough in east Lancashire on the 9th and 120 at Docker in the Lune Valley next day, and five in February, the highest 180 at Arkholme on 14 Feb and 170 at Singleton, Fylde on the 20th.

As with Fieldfares the return of winter weather during March and early April seems to have induced many more Redwings than usual to linger. ELOC's March peak count was 300; there were 100 at Rivington, Chorley on 1 March, 370 at Ellet Grange, Fylde on the 17th and 100 at Thurnham on the 20th. Numbers actually seem to have increased during April: ELOC received 54 reports, including 300 at Braddup Clough on 9 April and 200 at Ing Barn on the 14th. In the Fylde the highest count among 42 April records was of 78 at Lytham Crematorium on the 8th. Other noteworthy counts included 75 at Cabin Hill on 5 April, 162 migrants at Heysham on the 13th and 60 at Belmont next day.

Birds departed very swiftly after mid-April, however; the last report in the north was on 15 April, in both east Lancashire and Chorley on the 16th and in the Fylde and the south-west on the following day.

One in Mount Park, Fleetwood on 25 Sept and a small group at Halton-on-Lune next day were the forerunners of a massive influx during 10-12 Oct, with Redwings greatly outnumbering their Fieldfare fellow-travellers at many sites. The north coast and inland regions were the main recipients of this surge; numbers in the Fylde and south-west were very much lower. Heysham recorded 5632 Redwings on 10 Oct, when 800 flew west at Brockholes and 300 south over Belmont. Next day there were 4905 over Heysham and 5580 flew north-west at Brockholes while the peak count in the Fylde was 200 at Poulton and in the south-west 150 at Marshside. On the 12th in the Chorley region 3000 moved over Arley NR in 90 minutes, 1000 in an hour over Dean Wood and 800+ south over Belmont, and there were 1000 at Brockholes.

The force of the invasion had been largely spent by 13 Oct with peak counts of 800 at Brockholes and 500 at Stocks Reservoir.

Flocks and movements for the remainder of the year were on a much more modest scale. Seaforth recorded a seasonal peak of 240 on 15 Oct and Caton Moor's highest count of the autumn was 81 on the 24th; top counts in November were 170 at Leighton Moss on the 18th and 200 in east Lancashire. Thirty-five at Hollowforth on the 19th was the November peak in the Fylde; there were 60 around Belmont during the month and 60+ at Parbold on the 23rd. In December the peak count in east Lancashire was 350 at Withgill on the 17th; 100 were at Leighton Moss on 3 Dec, 200+ in Cuerden Valley Park on the 10th and 200 near Liverpool University during the 25th-31st.

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus***Common breeding resident.**

The Lancaster January survey recorded 86 Mistle Thrushes, about the average of recent years. Birds were singing at Galgate on 3 Jan and at three sites in east Lancashire during the 1-7th; in the Belmont area of the West Pennine Moors 14 territories were located in mid-March. On the coast there were one or two pairs on EDF property at Heysham and two pairs nested at MMWWT.

Post-breeding movements were slow to begin in 2013; the only July report in double figures was of eleven in Blackpool's Stanley Park on the 30th. In August there were ten at Cabin Hill on 19 Aug and 30 at Shedden Clough in east Lancashire on the 23rd; 25 moved south at Marl Hill on the 26th. September, as usual, was somewhat more lively with seven double-figure counts received, the highest 26 at Liverpool University on 12 Sept, 28 at Braddup Clough on the 20th and 13 apiece at Whalley Nab and at Holden Wood Reservoir, Rossendale on the 21st.

Heysham recorded its autumn peak of 14 on 11 Oct; other counts that month included 18 at Billinge Hill, Rainford on 2 Oct, 15 at Foulridge Reservoirs, Colne on the 5th, 26 south at Seaforth and nine over Fairhaven Lake on the 24th and another 22 at the former site on the 30th. Ten at Shard Bridge, Fylde on 13 Nov was the only double-figure count received for the remainder of the year.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*

Uncommon breeding bird and passage migrant. Red List (breeding decline).

The first arrived at Marshside on 27 April; passage along the coast was the heaviest for several years, including twelve at Marshside to 5 June. There were 14 May records in the Fylde with a fall of 13 at Fleetwood and three at Thurnham on the 19th, when another ten were recorded at Heysham. In the south-west there were singles at Seaforth on 8 May, at Kew, Southport on 15 May and 4 June and in Mill Wood, Speke on 1 June. Five Spotted Flycatchers were recorded in the Fylde in June, the last on the 17th.

Arrivals at inland locations began quite late, the first at Lead Mines Clough, Chorley on 4 May; the first in the north was at Crook o' Lune on 17 May and in east Lancashire two at Shedden Clough and one at Windyates on the 19th. Presumably due to this late start there were only 15 records at eleven sites in the ELOC region during May, compared with 35 at 26 sites in 2012.

Breeding was confirmed at nine locations in east Lancashire with two pairs each at Moor Piece and Shedden Clough; birds were present at 15 locations on the Slaidburn-Newton postal round in the Upper Hodder Valley. There were 76 reports to ELOC from 33 locations in June-July (42 from 18 in 2012).

In north Lancashire there was breeding season presence at seven locations on the fells and in the Lune Valley; three pairs bred at Crook o' Lune, one fledging two broods. Birds were on territory at Anglezarke and Withnell Fold in June and a male was on territory on 9 June at Strongstry, Rossendale. No breeding season reports were received from either the Fylde or the south-west.

One at Leighton Moss on 5 July may have been the first autumn migrant. There were very few August records, at Speke on 9 Aug, Red Scar on the 16th and Billinge Hill, Rainford on the 27th; one was at Eccleston, Chorley on 16 Aug and a family group was at White Coppice on the 25th.

A fairly lively passage ensued in coastal areas during September: there were two singles on the north coast, at Aldcliffe and Sunderland Point, and six records in the south-west including two at Cabin Hill on the 28th, but the Fylde produced the highest score, five records including two at Fleetwood on 24 Sept and at least five at Staining Nook on the 27th. There were two October birds on the coast, singles at Cabin Hill on 1 Oct and at Bank End, Fylde next day.

Of twelve September records in east Lancashire, eight were at Jackhouse; four were at New Laithe Farm, Newton on 8 Sept and the last two at Jackhouse on the 12th. The last Spotted Flycatcher at Belmont was on 14 Sept and the last in the north, and in the county, was at Jack Scout on 3 Oct.



Spotted Flycatcher, Staining Nook, 27 September.
(Frank Bird)

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

Abundant breeding resident.

January counts included 20 at Jackhouse in east Lancashire on 6 Jan and 30 in Staghills Wood, Rossendale on the 9th. The Lancaster January survey logged 488 Robins across all 10km squares, the

highest total for several years, while at least twelve were at Warbreck, Fylde on 14 Feb.

In the north 24 pairs nested on Warton Crag RSPB (mean 22 pairs 1989-2012) with 16 pairs on Warton Crag LNR (12 in 2012), and 19 on EDF property at Heysham, one down on last year's total; ringing returns there suggested average productivity. There were up to six pairs in the Hermitage Estate in Crook o' Lune, and 14 males were located on the Lune survey between Leck and Wenning Foot.

In the south-west at least five pairs nested at Cabin Hill and in Jubilee Wood, Maghull and 17 in a 30ha survey area at Aintree.

Twenty-five at Aldcliffe on 13 Sept were the first autumn migrants reported. Movements picked up significantly in the last week of the month, with 15 at Brockholes Wetland on 22 Sept and an influx of 25+ there next day; nine were at Heysham on the 24th and twelve on the 25th. Nineteen October migrants were recorded at Heysham but the highest count was 30+ in Devonshire Road Rock Gardens, Blackpool on 2 Oct; there were 17 at Cockersand on 17 Oct, 35 at Leighton Moss on the 24th and ten at Cabin Hill on the 26th. Inland, 28 were at Jackhouse on 5 Oct. Movements continued intermittently during November: there were 20 at Leighton Moss and five at Cabin Hill on 15 Nov; 18 were at Brockholes on the 17th when 20+ were also recorded in Standen Community Woodland, Clitheroe. Twenty-nine in Staghills Wood, Rossendale on 26 Dec was the only noteworthy count received at the year's end.

BLUETHROAT* *Luscinia svecica*

Vagrant.

A singing male of the white-spotted race *cyaneacula* was at MMWWT during 19-21 June (C Tomlinson, T Clare, AS Disley). This is our thirteenth record of the species; the most recent previous occurrences were both in 2008, on Aldcliffe Marsh in April and at Rossall School in May.

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Uncommon breeding bird and passage migrant.

A typically sparse spring passage in coastal and lowland regions began with an early male in Taylor Park, St. Helens on 16 April; a minor influx in the last week of the month brought single birds to Heysham on 24 April and Rossall Point next day, two to Marton Mere on the 26th and one to Lytham Hall on the 30th. Only two coastal migrants were recorded in May, at Rossall Point on the 8th and on Hesketh Golf Course, Marshside on 16-17th.

In the meantime, arrivals in the breeding areas had begun with a single bird in Bowland Wild Boar Park on 15 April; elsewhere in east Lancashire one was at Woodnook Nature Trail on 18 April and three had returned to Moor Piece by the 19th. In the Chorley region a male was at Anglezarke on 20 April where it remained until at least 22 May, although without any sign of breeding. The first in the north was in Roeburndale on 27 April and by 2 May at least nine males were in song there; four were at Whittington on 7 May. On the West Pennine Moors at Belmont a male had returned to a regular site by 28 April; two males were in song there, at least one paired, during May.

As usual, most of our breeding data were received from nest-box projects in east and north Lancashire. In the ELOC region nest-building had commenced at Moor Piece by 24 April and ten nests with eggs were underway there by 23 May; elsewhere in east Lancashire three pairs bred in Bonstone Wood and two in Crag Wood. In the Lune Valley boxes were monitored at ten locations and 59 pairs were located, compared with a total of 87 in 2012; the decrease was mainly attributed to the desertion by Pied Flycatchers of two woods where breeding had occurred last year.

Autumn movements were exceedingly sparse both inland and on the coast this year. Only three were recorded in east Lancashire after the end of June, at Stocks Reservoir on 21 July, Shedden Wood on 10 Aug and Shedden Clough on the 23rd. On the coast single birds were at Middleton NR on 26 Aug and at Fleetwood on 25 Sept.

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Rare breeding bird, uncommon passage migrant, scarce winter visitor. Amber List (breeding decline).

The bird present at Fleetwood since October 2012 remained until New Year's Day. Including this individual a total of 20 Black Redstarts was recorded in 2013, one up on last year's and with a very marked bias towards the north and north Fylde coasts.

Birds on Carnforth Slag Tips from 10 Feb to 19 March, at Lancaster on 17 March and at Garston, south Liverpool on the 30th might be classified either as previously-overlooked winterers or early spring migrants, but there was little ambiguity about the bird at Sykes Farm in the Langden Valley and the female at Heysham North Harbour Wall, both on 12 April, the males at Seaforth on 20 April and at Heysham Power Station on 21 May, or the bird in Longton on 11 May.

No reports of breeding activity were received this year. Two Black Redstarts were recorded in September, at Winter Hill on the 22nd and a female/immature at Heysham Red Nab on the 30th. Two were at Knott End on 19 Oct and another from the 25 Oct to 1 Nov; a female/immature was on Heysham South Harbour Wall on 27-28 Oct. There were two November records, singles at Fleetwood on 10 Nov and on Winter Hill on the 30th.

The three December records were all at Heysham, a male on the North Harbour Wall during 9-15th, a female/immature at Red Nab on 14-17th and an adult male there during the 28th-31st.

REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Fairly common breeding bird and passage migrant. Amber List (species of European conservation concern).

The first spring arrivals were singles at Fleetwood and Heysham on 13 April. The Fylde website reported another 25 records during April, including two birds at Fleetwood on the 25th, and five more in May to the last at Fleetwood on the 19th. Four more Redstarts were recorded on the north coast, two of them at Heysham, up to 25 May. The jewel in this spring's crown, however, was at Kew on the eastern edge of Southport where ten males and one female were recorded between 19 and 27 April with four males on the 19th. There were eleven more records in the south-west region between 16 April and 16 May including three birds at Formby Point-Cabin Hill and two at Marshside.

The first to arrive in breeding areas were three birds at New Laithe Farm and Slaidburn in east Lancashire on 17 April; an influx on the 20th brought a total of 18 singing males to New Laithe Farm, Bottoms Beck and Talbot Bridge. The first in the Chorley region was at Anglezarke on the same date, with three at Belmont on the following day.

In north Lancashire there were many territorial males in Hindburndale and Roeburndale in the Upper Lune Valley and five at Tower Lodge; six males were found on the Lune survey between Leck and Wenning Foot. In east Lancashire breeding was confirmed at Marl Hill, Braddup Farm, New Laithe Farm (eight pairs) and Moor Piece (three); juveniles were recorded in July outside the main range in the Ribble-Hodder Valleys, at Shedden Clough and Coldwell Reservoirs. There was one confirmed breeding pair at Rivington and nesting was considered probable at Anglezarke; there were three territories at Belmont and two or three at White Coppice.

Post-breeding movements inland were on a very small scale: in east Lancashire there were birds at New Laithe Farm in late August and at Rodger Hey Bridge on 6 Sept; the last in the region were at Shedden Clough and Jackhouse on 13 Sept. The last bird at Belmont was on 5 Aug, while nearer to the coast there were singles at Red Scar on 22 Aug and at Eccleston, Chorley on the 27th.

On the coast a very early migrant was at Heysham on 7 July; there were four August records, single birds at Leighton Moss, Carnforth Inner Marsh, Formby Point and Hightown. A flurry of records in the first half of September totalled three birds on the north coast, two in the Fylde and two at Formby Point-Cabin Hill. The last coastal migrant of 2013 was at Blackpool on 2 Oct while a very late bird in Coppull, Chorley during 26 Oct-1 Nov was the last Redstart in the county.

WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra***Scarce breeder and passage migrant. Amber List (breeding decline).**

For the second year in a row 2013 saw an above-average coastal passage in spring, beginning with a bird at Mythop on 18 April; there were 18 more April records in the Fylde with a peak of eight at Rossall Point and three on Fleetwood Golf Course on the 25th.

Twelve were recorded in the south-west between 21 & 30 April, including four on Birkdale Green Beach; there were five in the north during the 19-25th. Movements continued throughout May; there were 18 Fylde records including three at Mythop on the 19th; the last was at Ridge Farm on 31 May. A total of 16 Whinchats was at seven sites in the south-west with two apiece at Kew, Southport on 1 May and at Marshside on the 3rd; three were recorded at Heysham in May and the last coastal migrant was at Sunderland Point on 1 June.

Meanwhile, arrivals in the uplands had begun with one at New Laithe Farm, Newton on 20 April; two were at Alston Reservoirs and Croasdale on the 25th. Nearer to the coast Chorley's first Whinchat was along the Yarrow between Croston and Eccleston on 23 April and five passed through Brockholes Wetland during 25-28th. Singles at Brockholes on the 8th and on Croston Moss on the 19th were the only inland records during May.

The breeding season on the United Utilities Bowland Estate appears to have been a good one, with pairs located at six sites; four nests at Croasdale and one in the Langden Valley all produced young and there were territorial pairs at Bloe Greet, Hareden and Costy Clough. To the south two adults and a juvenile at Shedden Clough on 10 Aug are suggestive of breeding there, while in north Lancashire a pair nested in the Leck Valley. Three were by the Lune at Melling on 22 April and a pair was seen there on 3 May but not thereafter.

A reasonably brisk coastal passage by the standards of recent years began with one at Rossall Point on 15 Aug followed by three more August records in the Fylde; there were three at Heysham on the 26th. One on Billinge Hill, Rainford on the 29th was the only August record in the south-west.

Nine Whinchats were recorded in the Fylde during September including two at Fleetwood on the 9th, which also recorded the last on the 25th. There were eleven September records in the south-west including two on Banks Marsh on the 7th; the last coastal migrant was at Seaforth on 30 Sept.

Post-breeding movements in the uplands began in mid-August and there were 20 records in east Lancashire up to 30 Sept, including three on Pendle Hill on 25 Aug, when one was also at Ogden Reservoir, Rossendale. A female and a juvenile were at Belmont on 31 Aug with two there on 8 Sept. Two were on Croston Moss on the 19th, four at Upper Ogden Clough on 14 Sept, and the last in east Lancashire were singles at Alston and Parsonage Reservoirs on the 30th. A juvenile at Windy Bank, Rossendale on 8 Oct was the county's last Whinchat of 2013.

STONECHAT *Saxicola torquata***Uncommon breeding resident.**

Stonechats were present in three locations in the Fylde in January-early February, with two apiece at Rossall School and Cockersand and up to six on the Sefton Coast between Hightown and Birkdale in the same period, including a pair at Cabin Hill. None was reported from the fells but nearer to the coast there were singles at Euxton and Croston Moss, Chorley and a pair at Brockholes Wetland on dates in January.

Moderate spring movements in the Fylde began in the last week of February and continued through March, with three April and two May records; there were no more than two birds at any site. Migrants were much fewer on other coasts: there were two at Seaforth, on 24 March and 10 April, and no more than five records of single birds between Hightown and Marshside, the last at Cabin Hill on 1 May; there were two March records at Heysham.

Inland, at least seven Stonechats passed through Brockholes between mid-February and late March, there were singles on Turton Golf Course on 1 March, at Belmont Reservoir on the 12th and

on Croston Moss on the 29th.

Although the population on the coast continued to falter, with no breeding reported from the Fylde or the north and only one confirmed pair in the south-west, at Cabin Hill, the recovery in the uplands appears to have progressed steadily in 2013. ELOC received 113 reports in 2013 (111 last year) and pairs bred in all the main valleys and in many side-valleys on the United Utilities Bowland Estate, with many young produced. One pair nested at Shedden Clough, breeding was considered probable at Hareclough and Pendle and two family parties at Sunnyhurst Hey Reservoir, Darwen on 12 July were suggestive of breeding there or nearby.

It was also a better year in north Lancashire with probable nesting at nine upland locations but only a single pair at Birk Bank-Clougha, where 43 birds were counted in 2005. A total of at least 20 pairs was estimated for the West Pennine Moors; six pairs bred around Belmont, as in 2012, at least three of them successfully, and a pair nested on Anglezarke Moor. In Rossendale a pair probably bred at Spring Mill Reservoir.



Juvenile Stonechat, Clifton Marsh, 1 October.
(Geoff Gradwell)

Post-breeding movements in the uplands were widespread from late July, including family parties at Shedden Clough on 26 July, at Rivington on 18 Aug and at Calf Hey Reservoir, Rossendale on 21 Sept; there were at least 16 birds in the Belmont area in early September. On the coast a bird at Stanah, Fylde on 17 June may have been a very early returner, but the next record there was at Carleton on 26 Sept; three were recorded at Heysham in September and there were five at Cabin Hill on the 14th and three on the 24th. There were six October and six November records in the Fylde, with a maximum of two birds; the last at Heysham was on 13 Oct.

Wintering birds, including some pairs, were installed from mid-October at a number of sites on and near the coast, including Cabin Hill, Lunt Meadows, Brockholes and Croston Moss. There were at least six on Blundellsands-Hightown Dunes in December, one was on Birkdale Green Beach and two in the Fylde, on Lytham Moss and Fleetwood Golf Course; the last record in the uplands was a pair at Spring Mill Reservoir, Rossendale up to 1 Dec.

WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Uncommon breeding bird, common passage migrant. Amber List (species of European conservation concern).

An early male at Marshside on 9 March was well ahead of the next arrivals at Rossall School and Birkdale Green Beach on the 18th. The first in the north was at Carnforth Slag Tips on the 21st and there were twelve more records of ones or twos in the Fylde and three in the south-west during the remainder of March; one was at Heysham on the 25th.

The first in east Lancashire was at Calder Foot on 24 March; two more were recorded during the month, and the first Wheatears on the West Pennine Moors were on Anglezarke Moor and at a snow-covered Belmont on the 30th.

Passage moved into high gear across the county on 12 April with 24 on Fleetwood Golf Course, 15 on Birkdale Shore, 14 at Marshside and eleven on Oswaldtwistle Moor. Intermittent heavy movements during the rest of the month included 84 in the Mythop-Weeton area of the Fylde, 20 at Cant Clough Reservoir, 37 on Farington Moss and 28 at Seaforth on the 19th. Next day 58 were at Mythop, 52 at Belmont and 45 on Billinge Hill, Rainford. Fifty or so were on a ploughed field on Croston Moss

on 21 April, there were 27 on Longton Marsh on the 29th and 40 at Peel, Fylde on the 30th. Forty-three moved through Belmont during May; that month's peak counts in the lowlands included 22 at Hesketh Out Marsh on 2 May, 30 on Plex Moss next day, 17 at the Heads, Fylde on the 7th and 22 at Seaforth on the 17th. The last migrant at Heysham was on 24 May and at Seaforth on the 31st; a late male on Fleetwood Golf Course on 15 June ended the spring passage.

In east Lancashire two pairs with young were located on Newton Fell on 2 June and there was breeding season presence on Waddington and Standridge Fells and at Cross of Greet; one or two pairs nested on the West Pennine Moors above Belmont and at least one juvenile was fledged.

A bird at Cockersand on 25 June was probably the first southbound migrant, followed by singles at Pilling Lane on 3 July and again at Cockersand on the 27th; the first juveniles in the Fylde were two at Mowbreck on 7 Aug and the month's peak count of Wheatears there was eight on Fleetwood Golf Course on the 26th. The first migrant in the south-west was at Seaforth on 28 July, followed by one on 14 Aug and five on the 25th; the first at Heysham was on 19 Aug. Inland, three passed through Belmont during August and one was on Withnell Moor on the 25th.

Movements on the coast increased perceptibly during September. There were many reports in the Fylde including 22 at Rossall Point on 9 Sept and 20 at Cockersand on the following day; five were at Marshside on the 29th. Inland, seven moved through Belmont during the month and five were on Anglezarke Moor on the 24th.

October Wheatears were even more plentiful than in 2012: there were records from 14 sites in the Fylde with a peak of five at Rossall Point on the 15th and the last on Blackpool North Shore on the 21st. Seven were reported from the south-west, including three at Cabin Hill on the 5th and the last at Marshside on the 14th. In the north the last at Heysham was on 15 Oct and the final coastal migrant of 2013 was at Plover Scar on the 20th. In the Chorley region there were birds at White Coppice, Arley NR and Belmont during 5-16 Oct, while nine October records in east Lancashire included two on Oswaldtwistle Moor on the 13th with the last, and joint last in the county, there on the 20th.

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*

Abundant breeding resident. Amber List (breeding decline).

The Lancaster district 10km square wintering survey produced a total of 137 birds, higher than in the previous three years when totals varied between 92 and 128.

Ringling totals at Heysham suggested breeding productivity was excellent, with the total of 126 birds ringed 30 more than any year in the period 2000-2012. The twelve pairs on EDF Energy land there was three up on 2012. There were seven pairs on Warton Crag RSPB land, an average total. Other breeding information received included eleven pairs on a 30ha patch at Aintree and five pairs nested at Sefton Meadows. Up to 30 were at Marton Mere and eight at Mere Sands Wood in April. An estimated six pairs nested on the Hermitage estate, Crook o' Lune.

Information from east Lancashire included upland records of one singing on heather in the Langden Valley on 6 April and confirmed nesting at Marl Hill. The peak count in the ELOC area was 19 at Jackhouse on 14 March.

The only reports of migrants were at least 18 fidgety, vocal and flighty individuals, several of which eventually headed high to the south, at Heysham between 9 Sept and 16 Oct.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

Abundant breeding resident. Red List (breeding decline).

The Lancaster wintering survey provided the main comparative information. The total count this year was 1608 birds, compared with 1419 in 2012 and an average for the period 2005-12 of 1294. This gives further evidence that the species is at least holding its own in this part of the county, and probably increasing.

On the Fylde a good indication of breeding productivity was provided by the nestbox recording in the Pilling and Preesall area. This showed that 19 monitored pairs laid 154 eggs, from which 99 hatched and 97 of these went on to fledge successfully.

All other information received related to larger counts and single birds in unusual locations. The former included 80 on a 1km stretch of the Leeds-Liverpool Canal at Aintree on 1 June, 60 at Thornton (Fylde) on 24 Jan and 5 May, 60 at Head Dyke Lane (Over Wyre) on 3 Sept, 50 at Fluke Hall Lane on 5 Sept, Bashall Town on 8 Dec and Arkholme on 6 Jan, and 45 in a Belmont garden on 21 Sept, 40 at Calderstones, Whalley on 3 Dec, 40 Eagland Hill and nearby Stalmine Moss on 2 Sept and Shirdley Hill, Ormskirk on 28 Oct.

Unusual records of this sedentary species included singles at feeders in Aigburth, Liverpool on 30 Jan in an area where the species had disappeared and at Belmont Reservoir on 30 June which was the first there since they abandoned the adjacent farms in the 1990s. The only record at Mere Sands Wood was in September, the only ones at Heysham NR were singles on 2 & 23 Nov.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*

Common breeding resident. Red List (breeding decline).

The largest site counts received were from the feeding station at Moss House Farm, Out Rawcliffe where there were 200 in January and 143 in February, with a peak of 237 in December.

The monitoring scheme in the Pilling/Preesall area recorded a total of 169 pairs which laid 344 clutches and 1626 eggs, of which 963 hatched and 909 fledged. Elsewhere in the Fylde there were 130 at Ridge Farm on 6 Aug and 90 at Bradshaw Lane Head in December. Eleven pairs bred at Todderstaffe, producing 18 broods of 83 eggs of which 56 fledged. There was less success in the Warton area, where four pairs had five broods but none of the eight young ringed went on to fledge. Casual counts included 102 at Lytham Moss in January and 90 at Cockersand in August.

MMWWT remains the stronghold in the south-west but only 35 pairs were estimated this year compared with up to 80 in recent years. Up to 24 were at Mere Sands Wood in the first winter period and eighteen late in the year; other counts included 63 at Burscough in March and 50 on Billinge Hill in August. A small colony at Alder Lane, Cronton was not reported in the most recent atlas.

The species was considered to be holding its own in east Lancashire after a period of increasing population. Peak counts were 20 at Dunkirk Farm, River Calder and 13 at Brownsills in February and twelve at Altham in August. In Chorley there were up to 30 at a feeding station on Croston Moss and several pairs nested in boxes on Mawdesley Moss, further emphasis of the importance of a helping hand in the recent upturn in fortunes locally. Up to 25 were at Brockholes in January and 27 in December.

Although only ten were seen in the LDBWS January survey there were breeding records at least ten sites. The peak count of birds visiting feeders in the area was 36 at a Warton garden in November, with 34 noted at nearby Carnforth the same month.

There were several reports of presumed migrants. The most clear-cut were one south at Cabin Hill on 28 Sept with three the next day; three ringed at Heysham on 15 Oct with another three over on the 22nd, and seven over Fairhaven on the 24th.

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava flavissima*

Scarce breeding bird, fairly common passage migrant. Red List (breeding decline).

The first at Fleetwood on 12 April was quickly followed by birds at Alston Reservoirs on the 14th and Cabin Hill the next day. A fairly strong passage followed in coastal areas: birds were recorded at 15 sites in the Fylde during April with peaks of three at Sowerby on the 16th and Mythop on the 18th. There were at least 25 in the south-west during the month including three at Marshside on the 20th and five at MMWWT on the 27th. It was also a busy April in inland areas: four singles were recorded at Brockholes Wetland between 16 and 25 April, while in east Lancashire there were eight in the Al-

tham-Martholme area of the River Calder, a breeding location in the not-so-distant past, during the 19-25th, and birds were also recorded at Stocks Reservoir, Alston Reservoirs and Ribchester. There were two at Croston Sewage Works on 21 April and birds were present at the site until the 28th with five on the 25th.

Passage continued on a reduced scale at eight locations in the Fylde up to the 25th, with four at Rossall Point on the 6th. In the south-west at least twelve were recorded in May, including three on Hesketh Out Marsh on the 2nd; the last migrant in the region was at Seaforth on the 25th. In the north, singles were at Heysham on 8 May and at Leighton Moss on the 10th. Inland, one was at Hornby in the Lune Valley on 8 May; upstream at Wenning Foot two males on the 26th included a 'Channel' type, possibly the bird present there last year. A bird at Stocks on 11 May was the last spring migrant in east Lancashire and one was at Ewood Bridge Sewage Works, Rossendale on the following day.

For the first time since 2005 breeding by a single pair was confirmed in east Lancashire, at Hollins Marsh near Ightenhill Bridge, where two juveniles fledged. Only two reports were received from the Yellow Wagtail's last significant breeding outpost on the south-west mosslands, single pairs at MMWWT and nearby at Curlew Lane, Rufford. No singing males were recorded on the Lune survey.

Autumn movements extended from mid-July to early October. Four were recorded in July, three in the Fylde and one at Otterspool, south Liverpool. One was in the Lune Valley at Melling on 24 Aug; there were fifteen birds in east Lancashire between 20 Aug and 7 Sept, including four at Lower Towneley Scrape on 22 Aug. One at Billinge Hill, Rainford on 27 Aug was followed by two there on 10 Sept.

All other reports were from coastal regions. There were seven August records in the Fylde and five in the south-west; two were at Heysham on 24 Aug. Eleven September records in the Fylde included three birds at Bank End on the 7th; the last was at Rossall Point on the 28th. There were four singles in the south-west, the last at Seaforth on 26 Sept, and two at Heysham, on 25 Sept with the last in the county there on 3 Oct.

BLUE-HEADED WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava flava*

Scarce passage migrant.

Nine records of males in spring, all in the coastal west, made 2013 by far the best year to date for this overshoot from the European mainland. In chronological order there were singles at MMWWT on 16 April, Cabin Hill on the 20th, Marshside and Seaforth on 1 May, Upper Thurnham and MMWWT on 5 May, Rossall Point on the 8th, Seaforth again on the 17th and the third occurrence at MMWWT on the 22nd.

BLACK-HEADED WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava feldegg*

Vagrant.

A male at Newton-le-Willows on 29 May was highly likely to have been of this subspecies which breeds in south-eastern Europe. The record was, however, found to be not proven by the BBRC as an atypical Grey-headed Wagtail *M. f. thunbergi* could not be eliminated; the distinctive call of Black-headed was not heard and the circumstances of the sighting precluded an exhaustive description of the bird.



Possible male Black-headed Wagtail, Newton-le-Willows, 29 May. (Jonathan Platt)

So close to becoming our first accepted record!

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

Fairly common breeding bird, common passage migrant.

ELOC received 22 January records, all but one involving a single bird, while the Lancaster & District January survey recorded 16, near the mean for 2006-12.

There were five spring migrants at Heysham, the first very early on 8 Feb; four flew north at Rossall School on 20 March and there were three at Marshside on the 24th.

Breeding was confirmed at four sites in east Lancashire, including on the River Calder in the centre of Burnley; there were two pairs at Foxhill Bank. In Chorley at least seven pairs were on territory on brooks and reservoirs in the Belmont area and seven territories were located at Rivington/Anglezarke; two pairs nested in Cuerden Valley Park. In Rossendale breeding was judged probable at Waterfoot and Lower Cloughfold while in the north ten pairs nested on the Lune between Leck and Wenning Foot, including three at Crook o' Lune.

Confirmed breeding was reported from eight lowland sites. A pair nested at Carr Mill Dam, St Helens; elsewhere in the south-west there were pairs in Sefton and Princes Parks and on the Leeds-Liverpool Canal in Liverpool and one nested under the railway bridge over the River Alt at Formby. In the Fylde breeding was recorded in Stanley Park, Blackpool, at Galgate and under the A6 bridge over the River Brock; a pair nested on the Ribble above Red Scar Weir at Brockholes Wetland.

Autumn movements commenced quite late, in the third week of August, and did not get into full swing until early September. Two hundred and forty-seven Grey Wagtails were recorded at Heysham between 3 Sept and 18 Oct, 60+ passed over Cabin Hill between 28 Aug and 26 Oct, while inland 51 moved over Caton Moor from 19 Aug to 22 Nov. Two main pulses of migration can be identified, the first in early September when there were 23 at Heysham on the 4th and 26 next day, and season's peak counts of 19 at Cabin Hill and five at Caton Moor on the 8th. There was a second surge at the end of the month: twelve flew south at Seaforth on 26 & 27 Sept and Heysham recorded its autumn peak count of 45 on the 28th, when 18 also moved over Fairhaven Lake. Intermittent small-scale movements in October included twelve apiece over Seaforth on the 3rd and Fairhaven on the 6th; ten at the former site on the 24 Oct was the last double-figure report received.

As usual singles and occasional twos were widespread at both coastal and upland sites in the second winter period; four or five roosted with Pied Wagtails in Southport Botanic Gardens, Churchtown on 22 Dec.

PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

Common breeding bird, very common passage migrant.

Two three-figure counts were reported during the first winter period, 200 on Hesketh Out Marsh on 1 Jan and 100 at Cockersand on the 16th. One hundred and fifty-four were recorded during the Lancaster January survey, the second-highest total since the project's inception in 2006, with 80 in the coastal strip of SD45. Unusually, up to six were at Arkholme in January. The peak count in east Lancashire was 26 at Colne Sewage Works on 3 Feb.

Fairly heavy movements in both coastal and inland regions began in the first week of March and continued intermittently until the middle of April. Peak counts in March included 100 at Cockersand on the 5th and 34 at Rossall School on the 24th; a surge of migrants at the end of the month brought 184 to Arkholme on the 28th, 50 to Thurnham on the 30th and 200 to Ewood Bridge Sewage Works, Rossendale on the 31st, when Heysham recorded its spring maximum of 42. Sixty-six moved over Rossall Point on 3 April and 49 on the 7th; there were 125 at Arkholme on the 4th and 40 at Ewood Bridge on the 6th. A remarkable 900-1000 were grounded in fields at The Snab (Afton) by the Lune on 15 April. Forty at Heysham and 30 at Ewood Bridge on 13 April were the last significant movements reported.

Pied Wagtails are common breeders in all regions but very little detailed information was received. Forty pairs nested along the Lune between Leck and Wenning Foot, eleven of them at Arkholme,

while at least five pairs at Belmont Reservoir enjoyed good success with 15 juveniles present on 7 July.

Twenty-one Pied Wagtails at Fairhaven on 31 July began a prolonged autumn passage that continued on and off until the middle of November. August peaks included 84 moving south at New Laithe Farm, Newton on the 4th, 300 at Carnforth Slag Tips and a roost of 85 at Melling on the 25th and 96 at Hesketh Bank on the following day. With exception of 150 at Arkholme on the 4th, most of September was quiet until a heavy pulse of migration in the last week: there were 59 at Seaforth on 23 Sept, 160 at Heysham on the 26th, and a seasonal peak of 86 flew over Caton Moor on the 27th. Very widespread movements on the 28th included an autumn maximum of 201 at Heysham, 109 over Fairhaven Lake, 59 at Rossall Point and 50+ at Lower Towneley Scrape in east Lancashire. Eighty-three were at Heysham on 1 Oct, 80 roosted in Chorley town on the 9th and there were 20 at Rossall School on the 20th and at Seaforth on the 30th. Counts of 50+ at Ewood Bridge on 3 Nov and 36 at Euxton, Chorley on the 18th were the last noteworthy movements reported.

Two major urban roosts were reported in December, 380 in Lancaster on the 18th and 425 in plane trees at Bootle New Strand on the 20th; smaller gatherings in east Lancashire included 50+ in Accrington on 21 Dec, 65 at Barrowford Reservoir on the 27th and 80+ at Dean Clough Reservoir on the 31st; about 60 were at Ewood Bridge on 8 & 13 Dec.

WHITE WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba alba*

Common passage migrant.

After last year's low numbers 2013 saw a return to fairly heavy and widespread spring movements with inland as well as coastal regions recording noteworthy totals. The first to arrive was well inland, at Ightenhill Bridge in east Lancashire on 14 March; only five more were reported during the month including the first in the south-west at Marshside on the 18th, in the Fylde at Bank End on the 29th and in the north at Aldcliffe next day. It was mid-April before any appreciable arrivals were recorded; Seaforth's first White Wagtail did not arrive until 13 April and Stocks Reservoir's peak of 13 was recorded on the following day.

County-wide movements began on 17-19 April with 40 at Glasson on the 17th and 18 at Keer Bridge in the Lune Valley on the 18th; counts on 19 April included 46 on Ainsdale Beach, 30 at MMWWT, 40 at Borwick Pools, 20 at Brockholes and 23 on Newton Marsh, Fylde. Up to twenty double-figure counts during the remainder of the month included thirteen at Croston Sewage Works on 21 April, 42 at Aldcliffe and 30 at Cabin Hill on the 25th, 30 at Seaforth on the 26th, 25 at Brockholes and 20 at Curlew Lane, Rufford on the 27th and 40+ at Fairhaven Lake on the 28th.

There were 21 at Fairhaven Lake and 18 at Marshside on 1 May but movements dwindled quickly after that and the last of some 260 spring migrants at Marshside was recorded on the 7th; eleven at Seaforth on 16 May was the last double-figure count reported. One at Belmont on 4 May was the last inland White Wagtail; three at Fleetwood on the 19th and one at Seaforth on the 25th ended the coastal passage.

The only significant series of autumn records was at Cabin Hill, where about 14 moved through between 8 and 28 Sept with a peak of at least nine on the latter date; there were two September records in north Lancashire, singles at Jenny Brown's Point on 8 Sept and at Heysham on the 28th. Singles were inland at Brockholes and Belmont Reservoir on 22 Sept and there were two at Lower Towneley Scrape in east Lancashire on the 28th; two very late birds at Teal Bay, Heysham on 24 Oct were the last White Wagtails of 2013.

RICHARD'S PIPIT* *Anthus richardi*

Vagrant.

One was on Hesketh Out Marsh on 14 February (C Bushell, G Jones). Although the great majority of our 30 records of this species have been in autumn, including the most recent at Alston Reservoirs in

November 2011, there have been two previous occurrences in late winter, presumably of birds that had arrived in Britain during the autumn.

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

Scarce breeding bird and passage migrant. Red List (breeding decline).

Spring passage both on the coast and inland was at a similar level to last year's; the first to arrive were singles at Marshside and Fleetwood on 11 April. There were 21 records in the Fylde during the month with maximum counts of eight at Rossall School on the 20th and six at Rossall Point next day; a total of 13 moved through Marshside up to 12 May and there were 19 at Heysham between 12 April and 8 May. Eight more Tree Pipits were reported from five other sites in the south-west before the end of April. There were 17 Fylde records during May with 17 over Rossall Point on the 6th; nine were at Heysham on the 1st and there were two more birds in the south-west, at Kew, Southport and Tarbock, south Liverpool in the first week of May. One at Rossall Point on 9 June was the last coastal migrant.

Inland, the first to arrive in east Lancashire was at Alston Reservoirs on 14 April followed by one at Moor Piece on the 19th; the first in Chorley was at White Coppice on 27 April and there were three singles at Brockholes Wetland during 20-24th. One was at Roddlesworth on 6 May but there were no records from Rivington for the first time in living memory.

Breeding data were extremely sparse this year; nesting was not confirmed anywhere in east Lancashire, although birds were present in suitable habitat at Moor Piece (three) Bottoms Beck and Longridge Fell. In the north there were territorial males at Leck Fell (two or three) Thrushgill (two) and Roeburndale.

A very early migrant was at Fleetwood on 9 July but passage proper did not begin until early in August. Birds were on the move at New Laithe Farm, Newton from 3 Aug to 8 Sept, with three there on the latter date; elsewhere in east Lancashire four were at Jackhouse on 26 Aug on the same day that Caton Moor recorded its only migrant of 2013. One was at Belmont Reservoir on 25 Aug and three singles were recorded at Brockholes between the 14th and 25th. On the coast, 25 moved through Heysham beginning on 23 Aug and there were five August records in the Fylde. There seems to have been something of a surge of migrants during 25-27 Aug; as well as the inland records mentioned above Heysham recorded a peak of twelve on the 26th when one of only two August Tree Pipits in the south-west flew over Speke, and there were five at Rossall School on the following day.

Three singles were recorded in the Fylde in September and there were three in the south-west during the 3rd-5th, at Billinge Hill, Sefton Park and Speke; the last coastal migrant was at Fleetwood on 28 Sept. Inland one or two were at Brockholes on the 12-13th, one was at Rishton Reservoir on the 14th and the last in east Lancashire, and the county, was at Alston Reservoirs on the 30th.

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

Abundant breeding bird and passage migrant. Amber List (breeding decline).

An exceptional four three-figure counts were reported during the late winter: in the Fylde 172 at Cocksand on 13 Jan and 150 at Glasson on the 26th, and in east Lancashire 100 each in the Calder Valley on 19 Jan and on Stephen Moor on 3 Feb; 50 on Hesketh Out Marsh on 1 Jan and 30 in a snow-fall at Seaforth on the 23rd were the largest gatherings reported in the south-west. The Lancaster & District January survey located a record total of 147 Meadow Pipits, 125 of them in the coastal strip of SD45 (total 13 birds in 2012).

Spring movements began in the first week of March but only gained momentum after the 20th. Coastal highlights in March included 80+ at Fluke Hall on the 20th, 275 at Arkholme and 116 at Crossens on the 28th, and 172 at Rossall School on the 30th, when 480 also moved over Heysham. Inland, there were 120+ at Alston Wetland and 275 at Arkholme in the Lune Valley on the 28th.

The volume of passage increased massively during the first week of April. On the coast a total of 1500 flew over Rossall School/Point on 6 April; next day 3098 flew over Rossall Point and 700, the peak count of that site's spring total of 5595, passed over Heysham with another 435 there next day, when 500 were seen at the Eric Morecambe complex.

Movements south of the Ribble were very much smaller and 70 at Seaforth on the 7th was the highest count received; 210 at Arkholme on 4 April was the largest inland movement during this period.

Another coastal surge on 13 April brought 898 to Rossall Point and 640 to Heysham; further south there were 200 at Cabin Hill and 150 at Marshside. The spring's outstanding count, though, came the following day when 1500 were grounded at The Snab. Movements fell away quickly after mid-April and 49 over Rossall Point on the 30th was the last significant report on the Fylde coast; Heysham's last migrant was recorded on 7 May.

Very few data on breeding numbers were received this year, but in east Lancashire 50 apiece were counted in the Langden Valley on 22 May and at Cross of Greet on 7 June; breeding was confirmed in the former and at Marl Hill. On the West Pennine Moors there were 20 in May and 28 in June in a 1km BBS square on Darwen Moor and about 15 pairs nested in the Belmont Reservoir area. Thirteen pairs were located on the survey of the Lune.

In the lowlands no breeding information came from MMWWT; 20 pairs were located at Marshside-Crossens and six on Hesketh Out Marsh, in both cases massive reductions on the totals recorded in 2012. Five pairs nested on Newton Marsh but there was no evidence of breeding on Middleton NR at Heysham.

Small-scale autumn movements commenced on schedule in early August and remained at a fairly low level until the last week of September. August counts included 50+ at Belmont on the 10th & 25th; there were 120 at New Laithe Farm, Newton on the former date and 100 there on the 16th, 60 flew over Caton Moor on the 26th and there were 100+ on Pendle Summit on the 31st. Seventy-five at the Keer Estuary on 15 Aug was the month's highest coastal count.

Movements in September, apart from 193 over Caton Moor on the 5th, 500 on Hesketh Out Marsh on 14 Sept and 350 on Carnforth Outer Marsh on the 18th were low everywhere until a massive and sustained county-wide passage began on 23 Sept with a movement of 687 over Caton Moor. Peak counts on the following day were of 350 at Carnforth, 850 south at Seaforth, 100 on Fleetwood Golf Course and 260 at Shedden Clough Reservoir in east Lancashire; on the 26th 1663 moved over Rossall Point, there were 546

at Carleton and 460 at Heysham. The surge peaked on 28 Sept with counts of 1392 at Rossall Point, 953 at Heysham, 350 at Carnforth, 1500 at Cabin Hill and 850 at Seaforth; next day there were 320 at Fairhaven Lake and c.120 per hour flew south over Belmont.

Smaller but still substantial movements continued intermittently through the first week of October, most conspicuously on the 4th when



Meadow Pipit, Seaforth, 1 October. (Chris Gregson)

400 moved south in two hours at Shedden Clough and 330 were recorded at Heysham and 243 at Rossall Point; there were 300 at Brockholes and 191 at Rossall Point next day and 217 flew south in two hours at Marshside on the 6th. Apart from occasional spurts, such as the 296 over Seaforth and the 60 over Fairhaven Lake on 24 Oct, significant migration had ceased by mid-month; only three double-figure counts were received in November.

Although not as large as in the first winter period numbers in both coastal and inland regions during December were substantial. There were 55+ by Longridge Savick Brook on 3 Dec and 63 at Peersclough in Rossendale on the 10th; 40 were on Croston Moss and 21 at Brockholes on the 10th and small numbers remained at altitude above Belmont during the month. On the coast there were three double-figure flocks in the Fylde, the largest 27 at Fluke Hall on the 16th; 48 were at Aldcliffe and 60 on Hesketh Out Marsh on the 28th.

ROCK PIPIT *Anthus petrosus*

Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor.

All the regular wintering sites along the Wyre Estuary and the north Fylde coasts held Rock Pipits in the early year. On 13 Jan there were ten at Fluke Hall, nine at Barnaby's Sands and five at Cocker-sand; five were at Burrow's Marsh on 30 Jan. Four were on Barnaby's Sands on 10 Feb; there were at least eight at The Heads on 28 March, while five there on the 31st was the last early-year record in the Fylde.

Birds were present at six locations in the north, including four at Heysham Ocean Edge and singles at Morecambe and Sunderland Point; five were at Aldcliffe on 30 March. There were only two records south of the Ribble, two at Marshside on 28 Feb and one at Hightown on 14 March; inland one was at Stocks Reservoir on 17 March.

Although any Rock Pipits in March may possibly be on passage rather than overwintering birds, only two clear-cut spring migrants were recorded this year, singles at Heysham on 14 April and at Jackhouse in east Lancashire on the 27th.

A fairly typical autumn passage began with one over Rossall Point on 14 Sept; there were five more September migrants, two at Heysham and singles at Fairhaven Lake, Seaforth and Hightown, all in the final week of the month. Three were recorded at Heysham in October including two on the 15th; three October records in the Fylde included six on Pilling Marsh on the 13th and two at Fairhaven on the 18th. Seaforth recorded three singles between 18 and 30 Oct and there was one at Cabin Hill on the 20th. In early November eight were on Cockerham Sands on 6 Nov and two singles at Cabin Hill on the 1st and 7th.

After mid-November it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish late migrants from birds already installed in winter quarters. All our late-year records were received from thirteen locations on the coast, east- and northward from Fleetwood; peak counts included five at Conder Green, four each at Glasson and Ocean Edge, three at Aldcliffe and an exceptional 21 at Pilling Lane Ends on 3 Dec.

WATER PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta*

Scarce winter visitor. Amber List (rare winterer).

For the first time in many years no definite Water Pipits were recorded on the north Ribble shore in 2013; a count of 18+ at the species' traditional winter resort on Warton Bank on 5 Dec was listed in the Fylde Report as indeterminate Water/Rock Pipits.

There were, however, numerous records of the species in north Fylde. Ones or twos were at Fleetwood, Barnaby's Sands and Burrow's Marsh in January, and at Fleetwood on three dates in February. Numbers increased in late March, no doubt comprising both long-staying wintering individuals and spring migrants: on the Wyre Estuary six were at Stalmine and five at The Heads on 28 March and three on Burrow's Marsh on the 30th. Further north, two were at the Conder Estuary on 30 March with single birds there and at Glasson on 12-13 April. One at Leighton Moss on 23 Jan was the

only other early-year Water Pipit reported.

The first of autumn was at Leighton Moss on 19 Oct. Three were recorded in north Fylde in November, at Barnaby's Sands on 3 Nov, the Conder Estuary on the 6th and Fleetwood on 10 & 17 Nov, with two at Fleetwood on 1 Dec and one on the 8th. There were no coastal records south of the Ribble or in inland regions during 2013.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

Common winter visitor.

Small numbers were scattered throughout the county in the first winter period but there were few double-figure counts. Up to twelve were seen regularly from January to late March on feeders at Mowbreck Hall and ten were at Marton Mere in February. Sightings came from seven locations in the Chorley area with a maximum of ten at Belmont on 11 April and one still present on 1 May. Small numbers were reported regularly from Leighton Moss, Mere Sands Wood and Martin Mere.

The only double-figure counts in east Lancashire came during the spring passage period, up to 17 on 12-17 April at feeders in a Longridge garden. Ten were at Greenhalgh on 14 April.

The first of autumn on 3 Oct at Shedden Clough was followed by singles at Heysham and a few sites in east Lancashire during the following days. Three flocks totalling 15 birds flew south over Belmont on the 5th. A more widespread arrival was noted from 11 Oct, building to a small peak towards the end of the month. Coastal sites had relatively few birds: Fairhaven recorded 25 on five days between 24 Oct and 4 Nov, Heysham had just 46 with peaks of eleven on 31 Oct and 13 on 2 Nov, while Seaforth recorded 23 with a peak of eleven on 30 Oct.

More were seen further inland. Twenty-two were counted over Caton Moor on 30 Oct, 20 at Tower Lodge on the 31st and at Marl Hill a flock of at least 40 was attracted to a beechmast crop. Two flocks totalling 35 birds flew south over Belmont on 2 Nov with a flock of 70 seen later in Beech trees.

The species was rather scarce in the west of the county in the second winter period but there were some good flocks further east, including peak 50 at Dean

Clough Reservoir on 9 Nov, rising to over 100 by the end of the year. A minimum of 80 were at Shedden Clough on 24 Nov to 4 Dec and 25 at West Bradford on 20 Dec. Up to 30 were at Turton Golf Course during December, over 50 roosted in conifers at Delph Plantations on 12 Dec and 20 were roosting in rhododendrons at Belmont on 1 Dec, increasing to 125 by the 29th.



Brambling, Scorton, February. (Paul Slade)

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

Abundant breeding bird, passage migrant and winter visitor.

By far the largest flocks of the first winter period were in the Croston area with 200 at Bretherton Eyes on 10 Jan, 200 at Holmes Moss on the 12th and 100 at Croston Moss on the 20th. There was also a flock of 200 at Plex Moss on 10 Jan and 90 at Curlew Lane, Rufford on the 1st, while in the Fylde the maxima were 70 at Cockerham on the 6th and 64 at Rawcliffe Moss on the 11th. At the end of February, there were 150 at Bradshaw Lane Head and there were several reports of flocks numbering in

the 50s from most parts of the county.

Minimal spring passage was recorded at Heysham with just 24 between 20 March and 13 April.

The first singing males were recorded at Lytham on 6 Feb and Nelson on the 12th. Heysham recorded 15 territories, an average showing, while seven were singing around Fairhaven. Eight pairs were located on a regular patch walk around Aintree and five singing males were at Cabin Hill in May. Regular numbers were reported around Southport and BBS surveys of two squares in the Brindle area recorded 19 and 26 birds respectively.

Autumn passage was steady but prolonged well into November. Indeed, Heysham reported the largest ever counts for November. There were 1485 over Caton Moor with a peak of 241 on 24 Oct. Fairhaven recorded a total of 2745 with maxima of 595 on 28 Sept, 311 on 24 Oct, 239 on the 30th and 295 on 2 Nov. The Heysham total was 4804 with peaks of 308 on 6 Oct, 374 on the 21st, 356 on the 30th. Cabin Hill recorded a maximum of 72 on 28 Sept and at Seaforth the maxima were 116 on 18 Oct, 254 on the 24th and 413 on the 30th. Visible migration over Shedden Clough on 4 Oct was estimated at a minimum of 200 in two hours and 50 per hour flew over Belmont on the 5th.

Wintering numbers were really poor with the maximum flock size reported as 50 at Elswick and 44 at Brockholes.

HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Rare breeding resident. Red list (breeding decline).

There were no reports from Woodwell this year though a pair did nest at Gait Barrows. A single bird was seen at the Hermitage Estate at Crook o' Lune on 1 June and an adult was seen feeding a juvenile there on 11 July; other singles were seen at this site on 17 & 18 July, 9 Aug and 25 Sept. The understandably delighted observer noted that there are several mature Hornbeams and Yews on the estate.

Away from north Lancashire, one flew south over Cabin Hill on 28 Sep, the second record for this site, and two were at Warth, Waterfoot in Rossendale on 20 Oct.

COMMON ROSEFINCH* *Erythrina erythrina*

Vagrant.

There were two records this year: a singing first-summer male in Whitendale on at least 10 June (R Foster) and a juvenile in the Ainsdale dunes on 30 Sept (K Kelly).

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Common breeding resident. Amber list (breeding decline).

Bullfinches continue to do well in the county with the main concentrations in the north. Peak counts were 18 at Leighton Moss and eight at Myers Allotment on 3 Jan, and ten at Silverdale Moss on the 7th.

Thirteen were in a garden at Clayton-le-Woods on 17 Jan and ten visited feeders at Higherford on 21 Jan. Up to six were reported regularly throughout the year from Savick Park, Preston and Rishton, while 21 were at Mere Sands Wood in January. A migrant at Cabin Hill on 3 May was the first record for the site.

Four pairs were located around Aintree and birds were present in the breeding season at six sites around south Liverpool as well as Birkdale LNR.

There were six territories at Rivington, at least three pairs at Heysham, one at Middleton and two at Crook o' Lune. Successful breeding was also confirmed at Jackhouse Reservoir, Rishton, Clitheroe Tip, Penwortham and Longridge. Twelve were on Warton Crag in June.

There were some strong autumn movements with Heysham recording a total of 54 flying high south between 9 Sept and 13 Nov and a grounded flock of seven at Middleton NR on 15 Nov. Seaforth had one on 16 Oct and a party of ten were at Clitheroe Tip on 30 Sept.

During December there were nine at Savick Park, at least six at feeders in Rishton, six at Brockholes and five at Stocks Reservoir.

GREENFINCH *Chloris chloris*

Abundant breeding resident.

Greenfinches seem to be gradually on the increase again although no especially large flocks were reported. In the early part of the year a flock of over 70 at Princes Park, Liverpool was by far the highest count. The next were up to 35 roosting in Stanley Park, Blackpool, 35 at Cabin Hill and 20 at Cockersand. In the east, the peak count was 18 at Jackhouse on 6 & 11 Jan. One was song-fighting at Hurstwood on 30 March.

No specific breeding information was received apart from five pairs around Aintree. Birds were present in around 50 tetrads on the Fylde in the breeding season. No large post-breeding congregations were reported.

Autumn passage was good and ringing totals at Heysham were high. There was a total of 451 fly-over birds at Heysham with a peak of 120 on 7 Nov but the birds at feeders could well have been migrants too. At Marshside, 76 flew south on 6 Oct and Cabin Hill had maxima of 15 on 24 Sept and up to 20 on 16-17 Nov. Seaforth reported 80 on 16 Oct, 60 on the 18th and 50 on the 26th, while Fairhaven had 401 on eleven days between 25 Sept and 30 Oct with a peak of 114 on 28 Sept.

In the second winter period there were 83 at a roost at Fairhaven on 10 Nov and 65 at Marshside the same day. Other counts included 40 at New Hay Farm, Newton-le-Willows on 24 Nov, up to 30 at Cockersand throughout, 30 at Nateby on 8 Dec, 40 at Marshside on the 12th and 25 at Princes Park, Liverpool on the 31st.

LINNET *Linaria cannabina*

Common breeding resident. Red List (breeding decline).

Large flocks of Linnets in the first winter period included peak counts of 300 on Croston Moss, 230 at Lunt Meadows, 65 at Marton Mere and 60 at Lytham in January, and 203 at Hesketh Moss, 198 at Warton and 100 at Marton Mere in February.

However, it was not until March that many areas began recording their first birds of the year as they started to disperse throughout the county; there were 140 at Great Altcar and 170 at Singleton on the 28th and over 500 – the largest count of the year – at Lunt Meadows on the 30th.

A total of 290 at Rossall on 26-27 April was the only significant spring passage movement reported.

The first returning bird in the east of the county was unusually at a garden feeder in Burnley on 20 March although the main arrival began on 12 April, peaking at 35 at West Bradford Bridge on 29 April. Breeding was confirmed or suspected at eight sites in east Lancashire.

In lowland areas, birds were on territory from late March. At least eight pairs were at Birkdale and the species was common on farmland in south Liverpool and Knowsley. There was an increase from nine to thirteen pairs at Freshfield Dune Heath but this is still below figures of ten years ago. MMWWT had just two pairs but there were 21 pairs at Hesketh Out Marsh.

Six pairs bred in one bracken bed above Belmont and at least three pairs were at Belmont Reservoir. However, there was only one pair at Rivington, where it was once very common. At least five pairs bred at Heysham.

Post-breeding flocks included 79 at Marton Mere in July, and 150 at Lunt Meadows and 100 at Carnforth Slag Tips in August.

There was a small autumn passage at coastal watchpoints, including a total of 42 at Heysham, 88 at Caton Moor and 39 at Fairhaven, but plenty of small flocks were located at several sites across the county, especially in October. Some of the largest of these were 85 at Marshside on 10 Oct, 95 at Halewood on the 19th, 187 at Rawcliffe Moss on 22 Nov, 140 at Fluke Hall on the 30th and 70 at New

Hay Farm, Newton-le-Willows on 24th. Further inland, there were 35 at Belmont Reservoir in the last week of September and 40 at Lower Edge Farm (Bowland) on the 19th. The last record in the east was of six at Hurstwood on 6 Nov.

In December, there was again a flock of 200 on Croston Moss on the 15th as well as 104 at England Hill on the 22nd, 100 at Marton Mere on the 25th, 150 on Mawdesley Moss on the 26th, 80 at Hightown on the 28th and 70 at Middleton NR on the 31st.

TWITE *Linaria flavirostris*

Rare breeder, fairly common winter visitor. Red List (breeding decline).

Monthly Peak Counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Birkdale	60	90	68	1	/	/	/	/	/	/	50	107
Knott End/PLE	60	55	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	24	112	60
Heysham	108	105	106	97	/	/	/	/	/	5	16	40
Cant Clough	0	0	0	4	0	5	10	30	15	20	5	1

In the first winter period there were regularly over 100 at the North Harbour Wall feeding station at Heysham but ringing results indicated a significant turnover in birds – but from where? There were regular sightings of up to 60 at Potts Corner, Rossall Point, Knott End, Cocker's Dyke and Pilling Lane Ends, although it is unclear whether these related to separate flocks or the roving of one or two. Similarly, there was a regular flock of up to 90 at Weld Road, Birkdale but reports of 25 in January and February from Ainsdale and up to 40 at Hesketh Road could have been separate flocks. There were 22 at Glasson on 1 Feb, 42 at Crossens Out Marsh on the 14th and 40 at Garston Shore on 22 Jan.

Many remained in the area well into April but then dropped off steadily as birds put in an appearance at upland sites. There were seven at Briercliffe on 12 Feb then a pair at Cant Clough Reservoir on 5 April and two above Pendleside Farm on the 23rd. One was seen at a former breeding site in the West Pennine Moors in early May. Juveniles were seen at Cant Clough in June and July.

Post-breeding flocks were noteworthy with up to 30 at Cant Clough in August, 23 at Swinden Reservoir on 10 July and 37 at Hurstwood Reservoir on 18 Aug. The last such flock was of 20 at Gorpel Track on 20 Sept, after which birds remained at Cant Clough until 4 Dec.

Birds started to return to their coastal haunts in October but numbers at Heysham were well down. It seemed that whenever there was a temporary lack of artificial food at Heysham, the flock would readily depart to saltmarshes further afield. This may have been due to the lack of older birds in the flock that knew the routine. Along the Fylde coast numbers regained their strength with a peak of 112 at Cocker's Dyke on 12 Nov, as they also did at Southport/Birkdale with a peak of 107 on 8 Dec. Smaller flocks of Twite could be encountered anywhere between Rossall Point at Heysham.

LESSER REDPOLL *Acanthis cabaret*

Fairly common breeding bird, common passage migrant and winter visitor. Red List (breeding decline).

It seems ages since we have had a winter with large flocks of redpolls hanging from birch and alder scattered across the county and once again there were generally very few about. The species was reported from just 14 sites in all of January and February. There were only two sites that could be relied upon to yield redpolls, Leighton Moss (maximum of 20) and a garden feeding site in Rishton (maximum of 30 at any one time but a total of 59 new birds were ringed up to the end of March). The only other large count came from Whin Scar Clough, Burnley with 50 on 18 Jan. A few more appeared in March but it was not until the spring passage got underway in April that birds were seen more widely with a steady stream of small numbers at many sites.

Cabin Hill recorded a total of 108 between 10 April and 20 May with peaks of 22 on 25 April and 30 on 1 May. At Marshside 133 were counted with a peak of 28 on 1 May and at Rossall there were

169 between 6 April and 25 May with a peak of 109 on 2 May. Heysham also recorded a strong passage with 322 (85 were trapped and ringed) with a peak of 100 on 1 May. Part of this movement included a ringed cage-bird migrating with presumably wild birds!

Good numbers were seen elsewhere. The Rishton feeding site had a maximum of at least 50 on 5 May (with 37 ringed that day alone) but then numbers dropped off dramatically. At New Laithe Farm, Newton-in-Bowland, birds were seen from 10 April and continued to build with a maximum of 70 on 11 May and up to 20 until

the end of the month. There were flocks of 22 at Tarbock Hall Farm on 4 May, 30 at Darwen Moor on 30 April and up to 25 at Longridge throughout April and early May.

Numbers dropped off dramatically everywhere in June apart from at New Laithe Farm where birds were regular at feeders into September. There was very little breeding evidence apart from the juveniles ringed at New Laithe Farm but males were recorded singing at Belmont Reservoir (3), White Coppice, Middleton NR, Moor Piece, Shedden Heys, Upper Coldwell Reservoir, Langden Intake, Crook o' Lune, Turton Golf Course and Rishton during the early summer months.

Autumn passage was hardly discernable with just 27 recorded at Fairhaven, 19 at Caton Moor and 14 at Heysham. The largest count of the autumn by far was of 40 at Stocks Reservoir in early October.

The second winter period was almost devoid of Redpolls although birds started to turn up on feeders again at Rishton (20) and Newton (11) from 7 December and a flock of 20 was at Arley NR on the 8th. A few birds were recorded around Speke, Halewood, Longridge, Higherford and Leighton Moss in late December but that seemed to be the sum total.

COMMON (MEALY) REDPOLL* *Acanthis flammea*

Scarce winter visitor.

There was just one accepted record this year, that of an adult female trapped at Rishton on 5 May. (D A Bickerton, Mark Breaks)

**Common Redpoll, Rishton 5 May.
(Mark Breaks)**

Almost all accepted records of 'Mealies' in recent years have been trapped – an indication of the difficulties in identifying them with certainty in the field.



Lesser Redpoll, Staining, May. (Paul Slade)



TWO-BARRED CROSSBILL *Loxia leucoptera*

Vagrant.

One of the finds of the year was a juvenile Two-barred Crossbill coming to feeders at Crow Wood Farm, Browsholme on 2 Aug where it remained until at least the 6th (B Tyrer, G Thomas). There had been an influx across the country and this record, accepted by BBRC, constituted Lancashire's first ever – see separate article.



Juvenile Two-barred Crossbill, Crow Wood Farm, Browsholme, 6 August. (Steve Young)

COMMON CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*

Rare breeding bird, occasional irruptive movements.

In stark contrast to 2012, there were very few reports of Crossbills in the first part of the year. Two at Heysham on 24 Jan were totally unexpected as was a single over Cabin Hill on the 7th. The only sizable flock reported was of 12 birds that frequented the pines between Royal Birkdale GC and Hillside from 19 Feb; Numbers grew sharply to 25 on 1 April and then to 34 by the 11th but all save one had departed by the 23rd. A flock of four was on Longridge Fell on 14 March and 30 were at Ainsdale on 7 April.

Single birds were reported at Fleetwood/Rossall on 3 March and 4 April. These were followed by a flurry of reports throughout April and May as birds dispersed from their breeding sites. A flock of seven was at MMWWT on 12-15 April, 18 were at Lytham Crematorium on 28 April, eight in the Formby pinewoods on 14 May and over 25 at Cabin Hill on the 17th.

The number of observations of this species increases from July onwards and this year was no exception; there were reports of small parties from Entwistle Reservoir, Coppull, Anglezarke and Belmont in the West Pennine Moors, along with Sudley Hall, Liverpool, Shard Bridge, Stocks Reservoir, Grindleton Fell, Coldwell Reservoirs and Towneley GC to name but a few. Double-figure flocks were at Tower Lodge on 21 July (30), Ainsdale on the 23rd (17) and Crow Wood Farm, Browsholme on 4 Aug (30 while waiting for the Two-barred).

There was a smattering of records in September and October with a peak of just four at Heysham on 14 Oct and at New Laithe Farm, Newton on the 26th. Six were in Thrushgill Plantations on 17 November and at least 20 at Wayoh Reservoir on 25 Dec was the only record in that month.

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

Abundant breeding resident

The strap line for Goldfinch used to state “flocks in winter”. Well, they used to and they may again but the evidence of the past few years is that this is becoming less of the norm. This is probably a reflection of the mild winter and widespread adoption of garden feeders as this becomes one of the commonest finches at bird-tables.

The peak counts in the first winter period were 40 at a roost in Burnley town centre on 6 Jan, 45 at Carr House Green Common on the 12th, 40 at Fazakerley on the 15th, 60 at Fir Tree Farm, King’s Moss on 24 Feb and 38 at Tarbock Hall Farm on the 9th. There were many smaller counts all over the county and well into the east, including 30 at a garden feeder in Higherford on 7 Jan.

Spring passage was strong with 976 north over Rossall Point between 30 March and 25 May, peaking at 239 on 19 April. At Marshside, 285 were counted on passage and there was a minimum of 170 at Heysham but the real number could have been much higher as it is difficult to distinguish true migrants from local birds.

There were at least 17 territories on EDF Energy properties at Heysham – the highest ever there. The first juveniles were reported at the end of May but there were some late broods as indicated by birds still in juvenile plumage well into October in places.

A post-breeding flock of at least 50, mainly juveniles, was at Dean Clough Upper Reservoir on 14 July. During August there were 100 at Preston Dock on the 24th, 90 at Caton on the 26th, a minimum of 60 on thistles at Lords Delph Quarry on the 23rd, 75 on Silverdale Moss on the 31st and 50 at Wrea Green on the 30th.

It’s difficult to tell when any autumn passage begins as post-breeding flocks just seem to grow into September and October. There were 80 at Aldcliffe on 4 Sept and Skippool Creek on the 5th, 70 at Brockholes on 6 Sept, 100 at Hesketh Out Marsh on the 8th and 100 at Newton Marsh on the 9th, rising to 200 by the 21st. At Seaforth up to 120 fed on thistles from August to October. The largest count of the year was 325 at Lunt Meadows on 12 Sept but there were at least 250 with Linnets at Lower Edge Farm in Bowland on 19 Sept and 100 at Gorpel Track on the 21st.

Counts from visible migration watchpoints indicated a protracted passage: Heysham recorded 1157 with peaks of 97 on 6 Nov and 115 on the 7th, Caton Moor recorded 441 with a peak of 60 on 25 Sept and Fairhaven had 353 with a peak of 182 on 28 Sept. There were 70 at Longridge on 11 Oct and 70 at Stephen Moor on the 13th.

Several double-figure flocks stayed around into December though generally no more than 40. Over 60, however, roosted in rhododendrons at Belmont on 29 Dec.

SERIN *Serinus serinus*

Vagrant.

A male flew south, calling, over Seaforth on 20 April (AJ Conway). This is just the fourth Lancashire record of a species that may be increasing in frequency in the south of the country but remains a very rare bird here. The previous record was in May 1994 at Ainsdale and most records have involved flying, calling birds with only the first one perching up.

SISKIN *Spinus spinus*

Fairly common breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor.

There were good numbers of Siskins at several places in the first winter period but mostly east of the M6. One hundred and fifty at Scorton Picnic Site on 6 Jan was the pick of these, although there were also 80 near Fence on 19 Jan, 60 at Wood End Sewage Works on the 26th, 60 at Leighton Moss on the 9th and flocks of 30 or so were seen at Cabin Hill, Mere Sands Wood, Stocks Reservoir, Moor Piece, Billington and Turton Golf Course. The species was present and heard overhead quite regularly in Sefton Park and several other sites in south Liverpool but there were very few on the Fylde apart

from 30 at Lytham Hall in February. There were at least 40 at Delph Plantations on 17 Feb and 30 at a roost in Belmont Plantations on 9 March.

Ninety were at Longridge on 10 Feb and a flock in a Belmont garden from January increased to 55 by 24 Feb and up to 60 during April. Similarly, at New Laithe Farm numbers built up to 50 on 21 April and remained high throughout the summer; 148 were trapped and ringed in a garden at Clayton-le-Woods during February.

Spring passage was poor with 146 at Marshside, just 82 recorded at Rossall and 46 at Heysham.

At least four pairs bred at Belmont with twelve juveniles seen in June/July, and a pair bred at the Leisure Lakes, Mere Brow. Birds were present throughout the year at the Hermitage Estate, Crook o' Lune and probably bred nearby. Otherwise, the only summer records came from New Laithe Farm, where up to 20 birds were present at any one time and a steady stream of juveniles from local breeding populations were trapped and ringed.

Autumn passage was just as poor as spring's with a paltry 99 through Heysham (maximum of 30 on 24 Oct), 88 at Fairhaven (maximum 39 on 29 Sept), twelve over Seaforth and six through Cabin Hill. In contrast, Caton Moor recorded 264 with a peak of 76 on 24 Oct while approximately 30 per hour were counted over Belmont on 5 Oct with 35 at Brockholes the same day.

Siskins became very scarce in the second winter period with only Leighton Moss having any regular double-figures sightings. There was a minimum of 30 at Rowley Lake on 26 Nov but that was the only exception.

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Uncommon winter visitor.

Apart from two on Ainsdale Beach in the early part of January, all the first winter period records on the coast involved singletons and perhaps no more than three individuals were recorded at Blackpool North Shore, Cleveleys, Fleetwood, Lytham and Cockersand up to 19 Feb. One was at Morecambe from 10-13 March and further singles were reported from Marshside, Cleveleys, Rossall Point, Heysham and Pendle Hill in the month. One at Brockholes on 12 April was an unexpected find.

A moorland feeding station in north Rossendale attracted at least 35 birds in late spring and 25 in the second winter period.

The first returning migrants were noted at Fleetwood on 10 Oct, Heysham on the 15th and Morecambe on the 16th. The first appeared on Pendle Hill on 1 Nov and the flock built to a peak of 14 on the 30th with four still there on 15 Dec and one on the 24th. One was at Clowbridge Reservoir on 12 Nov, one over Caton Moor on the 17th and one on Winter Hill on 1 Dec.

Back on the coast, there were November singles at Rossall Point, Hest Bank and Heysham while two put in an appearance at Carnforth on the 6th. A flock of five was located at Starr Gate, Blackpool on 23 Nov and this flock remained in the area, increasing to nine by 9 Dec and still seven on the 21st. There was also one at Fairhaven from 12-14 Dec.

LAPLAND BUNTING* *Calcarius lapponicus*

Rare winter visitor and passage migrant.

There was a good showing this year with five accepted records, all in the second winter period.

The first was on Ainsdale Beach from 14-17 Sept (PH Smith). That was followed by one on Champion



Lapland Bunting, Ainsdale, 14 September.
(Phil Smith)

Moor flood pool on 20 Sept that was associating with Meadow Pipits before flying off high to the west (Mark Breaks).

In October there were three at Cockersand on the 18th with at least one there the following day (S Piner *et al*).

One was on Pendle Hill on 22 Nov (A Micklethwaite) and three or four were at the moorland feeding station in Rossendale in the second winter period (C Bell).

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citrinella*

Fairly common breeding resident. Red list (breeding decline).

Monthly Peak Counts at feeding sites

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rawcliffe Moss	40	21	2	1	3	/	/	/	/	/	16	15
Bradshaw Lane	1	5	6	/	/	/	/	/	/	3	2	1

Apart from the good numbers at Rawcliffe Moss on 6 Jan and 12 Feb there was little of note on the Fylde – a sad indictment of the current status there. During spring and summer there were records of singing males from just seven sites: Rawcliffe Moss, Sowerby, Lousanna Farm, Newton-with-Scales, Treales, Skitham and Eagland Hill.

The species was reported in good numbers on the south-west mosslands, especially around Bretherton, Croston, Mawdesley, Eccleston and Coppull Moor. A flock of 20 was on Croston Moss on 20 Jan and up to 40 were along Higgins Lane, Burscough during April. Birds were seen regularly along the River Yarrow and were present at Newton-le-Willows, Billinge Hill (Rainford), Gillar's Green, Lydiate, Windle Moss and Kirkby Moss.

Four males were singing around Roby Mill on 21 May. Several birds were singing in the area south of Liverpool at five sites in Tarbock, five sites at Cronton and two at Blundell's Hill, and also at Finch Lane, Springfield Farm, Lower Road and Tray Ashes Lane around Halewood.

Away from the main strongholds, there were several good and interesting records. Heysham recorded a few migrants with three on 29 March, two on 14 Oct and one on 7 Nov. Singles at Cabin Hill on three dates in March and April were followed by a singing male at Balling's Wharf on 4 June; there were also three singles there during the autumn and one over Seaforth on 24 Oct.

A male was visiting feeders several times a day in a Clitheroe garden from 3 Dec to the end of the year.

LITTLE BUNTING* *Emberiza pusilla*

Vagrant.

A Little Bunting was trapped and ringed at Rawcliffe Moss on 13 March and seen again on 30 April (Phil Slade). This is Lancashire's sixth record, the previous ones being in 1957, 1993/4 (2), 2008 and 2009.



Little Bunting, Rawcliffe Moss, 13 March.
(Phil Slade)

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Common breeding resident. Red list (breeding decline).

This species is thinly distributed in the east of the county during the winter months so to have a whopping 130 at Hurstwood Reservoir on 23 Jan was rather incredible. Lowland areas produced some sizable counts, including 50 at Cockersand on 13 Jan, 50 at Lytham Moss on the 21st and 27 by the River Alt on 6 March. Brockholes had up to 23 in the first winter period and at least 20 were at

Belmont on 5 Jan.

The first singing males were at Oswaldtwistle Moor on 3 March and Tarbock on the 5th. Around the farmland of Knowsley and south Liverpool there were singing birds at Cronton (2), Halewood (6), Garston (6), Oglet (5) and Tarbock (7). There were 8-10 singing males on Birkdale Green Beach with two more at Kew. There were six pairs at Hesketh Out Marsh, Mere Sands Wood recorded two pairs while at nearby MMWWT, the premier site for this species in the county, there were 84 pairs. Three pairs were found around Aintree and 17 at Lunt Meadows.

There was a further increase to 14 pairs at Belmont Reservoir with another six males near the village. Several pairs were at Lower Burgh Meadow and breeding was confirmed or probable at several sites around the West Pennine Moors – wherever there are rushes, there are good densities of breeding pairs. In east Lancashire no great numbers were reported apart from four at Clitheroe Tip. One was on territory at Heysham and seven at nearby Middleton.

Autumn passage was sparse at Heysham and Caton Moor with just 23 and 37 respectively, but Fairhaven recorded 204 with a peak of 52 on 28 Sept and 50 on 24 Oct. Seaforth's peak count was 20 on 24 Oct while Cabin Hill recorded a small passage with a peak of 15 on 28 Sept.

In the second winter period there were few double-figure flocks although there were 25 at Cant Clough Reservoir on 13 Oct, 30 at Shedden Clough on 28 Nov and 26 at Alder Plantation, Speke on 26 Dec.

CORN BUNTING *Emberiza calandra*

Fairly common breeding resident.

Monthly Peak Counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bradshaw Lane	20	56	1		1	1	1				14	2
Rawcliffe Moss	25	69	41	10		13					29	6

There were some good sized counts in the first winter period on the Fylde feeding areas at Bradshaw Lane and Moss House Farm on Rawcliffe Moss, with peaks of 56 at the former on 7 Feb and 69 at the latter on the 1st. Twenty-four were at Peel on 13 Feb, 28 on Pilling Moss on the 25th with many other small counts in that general area.

The largest flock in the early part of the year was 150 at Croston Moss on 20 Jan with 100 still there on 7 Feb. There were also flocks of 50 near the Dolphin Inn, Longton on 3 Jan and 42 on Churchtown Moss on the 9th. Thirty-seven were recorded along Drummersdale Lane, Scarisbrick on 27 Jan, 29 at Holmes Moss on the 12th, 42 at Mere Lane, Burscough on 3 Feb and 72 at Burscough Moss on 29 March.

Several singing birds were noted on Mawdesley Moss during the breeding season. Singing males were also recorded around Shirdley Hill and Birkdale Cop (after an absence of several years), as well as regular sites at Curlew Lane, Rufford and Plex Moss. Eight pairs were at Hesketh Out Marsh and two singing males at Hutton/Longton Marsh and three were near Bickerstaffe in April.

Records were scarce in Merseyside; two were singing at Newton-le-Willows and singles at two sites in Halewood. At least three males were singing at Lunt Meadows in June, with others breeding across the River Alt in Lydiate.

On the Fylde, singing birds were recorded at Braides Farm, Sand Villa, Eagland Hill (3), Lousanna Farm, Rawcliffe Moss (10), Lytham Moss (3), Bradshaw Lane Head, Newton Marsh, Myerscough and Skitham.

Few were reported in the second winter period; numbers at Rawcliffe Moss reached 29 on 1 Nov and there were 49 at Scronkey on 1 Dec and 50 at Peel on the 13th.

ESCAPES & CATEGORY D

TRUMPETER SWAN *Cygnus buccinator*

The long-staying bird was reported on the Ribble at Ribchester on four occasions between 20 March and 30 Sept. It seems likely that it was again present all year.

BLACK SWAN *Cygnus atratus*

Now firmly established as the most frequently seen escape in Lancashire, it seems just a matter of time before breeding is confirmed.

Black Swans do, however, have a tendency to wander, often in pairs, so it is difficult to know what the size of the population is. They were reported from all parts of the county except the West Pennine Moors and Rossendale, but the bulk of records were in the central area.

Birds were present at Brockholes on at least 19 dates between 28 Feb and 6 Oct, and one or two at MMWWT on 6 & 19 Jan and occasionally from 11 Sept to 10 Nov, with presumably the same bird at Mere Sands Wood on 17-21 March. One was Old Grange Farm, Hutton on 9 March, while in the Fylde there was one on Warton Marsh on 6-17 Jan, two at Sowerby on 7 March, and singles at Hambleton on 9 April, Windy Harbour on 2 May, Knott End on 17 May, Little Singleton between 25 May and 4 June and Jeremy Lane on 29 Dec.

In east Lancashire one was on Rishton Reservoir from 3 Feb to 3 May and again from 27 Aug to 12 Sept, with probably the same on nearby Parsonage Reservoir on the 14th, and singles were seen on Lower Foulridge Reservoir on 25 Sept and Grimsargh Reservoirs on 17 Nov and 22 Dec. The only record in north Lancashire was one at Whittington on 28 Nov to 13 December.

CHINESE (SWAN) GOOSE *Anser cygnoides*

One was again on the Ribble at Hutton on 18 Aug at least, with one at Staynall on 21 March and 2 Nov.

BAR-HEADED GOOSE *Anser indicus*

Twelve on the Eric Morecambe complex on 7 March reduced to nine the next day and up to four moved between there and Leighton Moss until 28 May. Singles were at Brockholes on 14 May and Marshside on the 30th, while in east Lancashire singles were at Stocks Reservoir on 15 June and at Barrowford Reservoir on 29 Dec. One had a good fly-around over the Ribble at Sawley on 21 Sept before dropping back into the local wildfowl collection. One was at Little Singleton on 8-11 Aug.

ROSS'S GOOSE *Anser rossii*

Single(s) were at Brockholes on 16-20 April and Marshside from 11 Nov into 2014.

RED-BREASTED GOOSE

Branta ruficollis

A ringed adult was on Pilling Marsh on 2 Nov to 30 Dec.

RUDDY SHELDUCK *Tadorna ferruginea*

Two juveniles were at Glasson on 18-25 July with perhaps one



First-winter Ross's Goose, Marshside, 25 November. (Andy Pryce)

of them on Longton Marsh on 11 Sept. The only other record was one on the Mersey at Oglet on 30 Aug.

MUSCOVY DUCK *Cairina moschata*

Up to three were at Belmont Reservoir and surrounding areas between 13 Jan & 16 June. And four were at Hesketh Park, Southport on 10 April. Twos were recorded at Cleveleys on 10 Jan, on the canal in Burnley on 2 June, Cockerham Marsh on 23 Sept, Low Moor on 30 Sept and Pilling on 9 Dec, and one at Siddows on 30 Sept. A small population was reported to have been breeding next to the River Calder at Padiham for some time.

WOOD DUCK *Aix sponsa*

A pair, first seen there on 18 Nov 2012, were present all year at Rowley Lake. A single male was also at Towneley, with Mallards, on 14 April.

Another pair was present all year and nested at Mere Sands Wood.

WHITE-CHEEKED PINTAIL *Anas bahamensis*

A male was again at Stanley Park, Blackpool and, Marton Mere between 10 Jan and 6 March and at Carleton Crematorium on 7 Feb.

PINTAIL x RED-CRESTED POCHARD

A female was again at Stanley Park, Blackpool on 24 Jan and 6 March.

CHESTNUT TEAL

Anas castanea

A male was at Skippool Creek on 11 Aug-2 Nov.

RED-CRESTED

POCHARD *Netta rufina*

One remained on Southport Marine Lake until 24 March and was seen at MMWWT on 6 March, and others were at Bolton-le-Sands on 21 July and Glasson on 23-28 Nov.



Male Chestnut Teal, Skippool Creek, September. (Paul Slade)

GOLDEN PHEASANT

Chrysolophus pictus

One was in a garden in Colne on 21 Jan. Two males were at Lytham Hall until at least May and a singing male was seen at Fluke Hall on 16 April and 19 May.

REEVES'S PHEASANT *Symaticus reevesii*

A male was on Fairhaven Golf Course on 11 Dec

SILVER PHEASANT *Lophura nycthemera*

A female was at Staining on 12-13 Oct.

NORTH AMERICAN TURKEY *Meleagris gallipavo*

On the instructions of the landowner, the population of around 20 birds that have been resident and breeding in Belmont Plantations since 2006 were all live-trapped and removed in spring by the gamekeeper.

While this population appeared to be self-sustaining, it is very doubtful that without the gamekeeper supplying daily feed and controlling Foxes that the successful breeding and over-wintering necessary to sustain the population would have been possible year on year.

INDIAN PEAFOWL *Pavo cristatus*

Up to seven were reported on numerous occasions from the Household Waste Disposal Centre at Siddows in east Lancashire but there was no indication of breeding this year. A male and a female were at Lytham Crematorium on 25 April.

SACRED IBIS *Threskiornis aethiopicus*

One was Aldcliffe Marsh on 20 Sept.

WHITE STORK *Ciconia ciconia*

One wandered around the Silverdale area between 24 March and 8 April and one flew west over the M6 at Bamber Bridge on 13 Nov – as usual their provenance was unconfirmed.

HARRIS'S HAWK *Parabuteo unicinctus*

Single(s) were in the Fylde at Out Rawcliffe on 12 Jan, Stalmine on 13 Jan and Bartle on 6 Oct and in Liverpool one was at Princes Park on 14 March and Cressington on the 16th.

EAGLE OWL *Bubo bubo*

There were two pairs in Bowland but no successful breeding. A possible was reported near Stocks Reservoir away from the usual breeding area on 5 March. One, possibly the bird from 2011, was seen around Belmont in the latter half of the year and into 2014.

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus*

One bearing jesses was at Warton Marsh on 3 April and 24 July.

COCKATIEL *Nymphicus hollandicus*

One was at Fleetwood Golf Course on 14 Oct.

SULPHUR-FACED COCKATOO *Cacatua galerita*

One was at Otterspool in south Liverpool on 25 July.

CANARY *Serinus canaria*

One was at Stanley Park, Blackpool on 28 July.

LANCASHIRE RINGING REPORT 2013

Pete Marsh

Once again selectivity has been the order of the day with a concentration of detail on a limited number of species. To repeat last year's introduction, please make contact (pmrsh123@aol.com) if you wish to see the full recovery list for species which have been given rather sparse treatment this year (e.g. Black-tailed Godwit).

The most outstanding recoveries relate to long-distance movements by Barn Owl and it would be interesting to receive some feedback on these as regards some form of explanation. Also standing out is a sequence of Sandwich Tern 'read in field' from Knott End. Lesser Redpoll and Siskin continued their high profile and were joined in the recovery quality stakes this year by Goldfinch.

As regards outstanding individual recoveries, these were perhaps led by a Greenfinch from Abbotsbury Swannery, the longest distance I can find in a Lancashire context to the south/south-west whilst a Reed Warbler from Ceuta was more quirky than being notable in distance/direction. A Lesser Black-backed Gull recovery was a little tricky to interpret – it appeared to have deserted an apparently regular breeding site at Zeebrugge and eventually ended up at Stocks Reservoir!

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. If a bird is multi-colour-ringed, please try and obtain a photograph to lessen the likelihood of the wrong bird of two similar colour shades being flagged up. This appears to have happened this year when the life-history of sightings showed our interpretation of the bird to be in Lancashire at the same time as Texel (with previous recent history also in Holland)!

Thanks to everyone for sending in their ringing records – please keep them coming. Special thanks to Stephen Grimshaw, Tony Disley, Bill Aspin, Tony Conway, Pete Kinsella, Tim Vaughan, John Dempsey, 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, Roy Rhodes, Mark Beaman, Hugh Jones. Apologies if anyone has been omitted.

Finally the selected ringing recoveries have been sourced from various outlets and there is a great deal of variability as to how the ringing/finding locations are tabulated e.g. whether distance is included. This accounts for the variability of documentation in the following list.

MUTE SWAN

X2606	First-year Male	07/10/1998	Woodplumpton
	Unknown (ring only)	27/01/2013	Saltney, Clwyd 70km SSW

WHOOPEE SWAN

Z88109	First-year Female	28/11/1996	Martin Mere
	Alive (ring read in field)	01/01/2013	Martin Mere
W00053	First-year Female	30/01/2001	Martin Mere
	Alive (colour marks seen)	28/05/2002	Myrar, Austur-Skaftafells: 64°21'N 15°24'W ICELAND 1,388km NNW
	Dead	07/04/2013	Austurfjorur, Austur-Skaftafel: 64°14'N 14°58'W ICELAND 1,365km NNW

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE

DKC	Adult Male	26/03/2003	Vest Stadil Fjord, Ringkobing: 56°10'N 8°8'E (Jylland) DENMARK
2K0440	Alive (neck collar seen)	10/10/2010	Bradshaw Lane Head, Pilling 747km WSW
	Freshly dead (shot)	02/11/2013	Banks Marsh 758km WSW

GREYLAG GOOSE

5258557	Second-year Male	04/07/2009	Loch An Eilean, Tiree, Ayr
	Alive (neck collar seen)	21/07/2010	Lady Bridge Farm, North Yorkshire 422k SE
	Alive (neck collar seen)	08/02/2011	Agglebys Pits, Stalmine 380km SE
	Alive (neck collar seen)	18/11/2011	Agglebys Pits, Stalmine
	Alive (neck collar seen)	23/10/2012	Pilling Lane End 381km SE
	Alive (neck collar seen)	27/11/2013	Staynall 382km SE

CANADA GOOSE

5262191	Adult	28/06/2011	Chew Valley Lake, Avon
	Freshly dead (shot)	29/09/2013	Heaton Hall Marsh, Lancashire 301km N

Moult migration.

SHELDUCK

GF65646	Adult Male	29/01/2007	Banks Marsh
	Freshly dead	22/10/2013	Zeedijk, Het Bildt, Friesland 53°18'N 5°35'E THE NETHERLANDS 564km E
GC62128	First-year Female	28/01/2009	Martin Mere
	Freshly dead (hit by car)	19/04/2013	Vijfhuizen, Noord-Holland: 52°22'N 4°41'E THE NETHERLANDS 525km ESE

TEAL

EX35792	First-year Female	27/01/2013	Slimbridge, Gloucestershire
	Freshly dead	26/12/2013	Mere Brow 216km N
EW65656	Adult Male	08/02/2011	Borough Fen Decoy, Peterborough
	Freshly dead (shot)	13/09/2013	Longton Marsh, Ribble Estuary 212km NW
EL99690	First-year Male	08/10/2013	Wheldrake Ings, North Yorkshire
	Freshly dead (shot)	08/12/2013	Tunstall (Lancashire) 114km WNW

PINTAIL

FP70871	Adult Female	10/02/2010	Martin Mere
	Freshly dead (shot)	29/04/2013	Timushbor, Komi Assr, 63°3'N 55°54'E RUSSIA 3,562km ENE

TUFTED DUCK

EC101805	First winter female	28/11/2013	Saint Philbert, Loire Atlantique 47 05N 1.39W FRANCE
	Seen (nasal tag)	04/04/2014	Brockholes Wetland

MANX SHEARWATER

FB10346	Nestling	11/09/2002	Bardsey Island, Gwynedd 52°45'N 4°48'W
	Freshly dead	02/05/2013	Ainsdale 150km NE

CORMORANT

	Nestling	22/06/1993	St Patrick's Island, Skerries, Dublin, IRELAND
	Dead	27/03/2014	Stanley Park, Blackpool

LITTLE EGRET

GK49660	Nestling	08/06/2008	Terrington St Clement, Norfolk
	Alive (colour rings seen)	10/12/2013	Banks Marsh 238km WNW

The more usual source of ringed birds is north Wales

GREY HERON

NOS	Nestling	30/05/1986	Alendalsvatnet, Vindafjord, Rogaland 59°31'N 5°31'E NORWAY
230960	Dead	05/03/1987	Fleetwood 811km SW

Only just received/located by BTO

KESTREL

EX63527	Nestling	07/06/2012	Rossall School
	Freshly dead (in building)	17/03/2013	Felton, Avon 281km S
EW31795	Nestling	14/06/2009	New Barn Farm, Lancashire
	Sick	02/05/2013	Skipsea, North Yorkshire 154km ENE
EX11052	Nestling	15/06/2013	Rossall School
	Caught by ringer	28/11/2013	Heysham
EW94606	Nestling	13/06/2012	Formby
	Freshly dead (hit by car)	10/01/2013	South Heighton Farm, Newhaven, Sussex 373km SE
EX51158	Nestling	04/06/2012	Halewood
	Freshly dead (in building)	01/02/2013	Kinsham, Hereford & Worcester 157km SSE

COOT

GR25331	Adult	11/12/2010	Southport Marine Lake
	Alive (colour rings seen)	10/03/2013	Kirkcaldy, Fife 273km N
	Alive (colour rings seen)	09/08/2013	Kirkcaldy, Fife
	Alive (colour rings seen)	18/11/2013	Kirkcaldy, Fife
GR25051	Adult	30/11/2010	Southport Marine Lake
	Alive (colour rings seen)	05/01/2012	Herrington CP, Tyne & Wear 169km NE
	Alive (colour rings seen)	03/07/2013	Herrington CP
	Alive (colour rings seen)	01/10/2013	Herrington CP
GR51039	First-year	10/02/2012	Southport Marine Lake
	Alive (colour rings seen)	04/12/2012	Thrybergh CP, Rotherham, South Yorks 116km ESE
	Alive (colour rings seen)	10/11/2013	Carsington Water, Derbyshire 113km SE
GR25107	Adult	02/12/2010	Southport Marine Lake
	Alive (colour rings seen)	24/01/2013	Martin Mere
	Alive (colour rings seen)	27/08/2013	Worsbrough Res, South Yorkshire 103km E
GC8705	adult	23/12/2008	Southport Marine Lake
	caught	03/12/2010	Southport
	read in field	28/12/2010	Southport
	read in field	10/02/2012	Southport
	read in field	28/08/2013	Leighton Moss 57km NNE

AVOCET

colour-ring	Nestling	summer 2006	Saint-Armel, Brittany, FRANCE
	read in field	summer 2009	Martin Mere
	read in field	summer 2010	Martin Mere
	read in field	summer 2011	Martin Mere
	read in field	03-10/04/2012	Freckleton Naze Pool
	read in field	17/05/2012	Ile de Rostu, Mesquer, FRANCE
	read in field	24/03/2013	Freckleton Naze Pool
FS94664	Nestling	05-06/08/2010	Saline du Grand Leniferhan, Guerande, FRANCE
	read in field	12/12/2010	Saline Dhierhin, Batz-sur-Mer, FRANCE
	read in field	17-24/01/2011	Les Bolles, Batz-sur-Mer, FRANCE
	read in field	05/04/2011	Le Grand Frostidié, Asserac, FRANCE
	read in field	12/07/2011	Saline de la Paroisse, Guerande, FRANCE

read in field	20/10/2011	Les Bolles, Batz-sur-Mer, FRANCE
read in field	22-24/12/2011	Gonoresse, Guerande, FRANCE
read in field	25/12/2011	Vasière du Yoro, Guerande, FRANCE
read in field	08/01/2012	Gonoresse, Guerande, FRANCE
read in field	03/05/2012	Grand Salvaret, Guerande, FRANCE
read in field	24/05/2012	Saline Cul Froid, Guerande, FRANCE
read in field	18-28/09/2012	Banc de Strado, Muzillac, FRANCE
read in field	09/11/2012	Müllembourg, Noirmoutier-en-L'Île, FRANCE
read in field	06/12/2012	Saline Dhierhin, Batz-sur-Mer, FRANCE
read in field	21/12/2012	Les Bolles, Batz-sur-Mer, FRANCE
read in field	22/04-21/5/2013	Saline le Grand Clos Cario, Pouliguen, FRANCE
read in field	05/06/2013	Saline Gonan, Guerande, FRANCE
read in field	05/06/2013	Saline Cul Froid, Guerande, FRANCE
read in field	07/06/2013	Grande Bégassière, Guerande, FRANCE
read in field	08/06/2013	Siebrèves, Batz-sur-Mer, FRANCE
read in field	10/06/2013	Le Gourvinais, Mesquer, FRANCE
read in field	10/06/2013	Les Gahins, Mesquer, FRANCE
read in field	13/06/2013	Le Grand Lesvalan, Batz-sur-Mer, FRANCE
read in field	07/08/2013	Lagune de Bouin, Bouin, FRANCE
read in field	22/11/2013	Les Bolles, Batz-sur-Mer, FRANCE
read in field	01/12/2013	Pen en Toul, Larmor-baden, FRANCE
read in field	22/12/2013	Pont de yoro, Batz-sur-Mer, FRANCE
read in field	16/03/2014	Traict de Rostu, Mesquer, FRANCE
read in field	14/04/2014	Balgzandpolder, Den-helder, Noord-Holland, THE NETHERLANDS
read in field	20/04/2014	Cockersand, Lune Estuary
read in field	20/04/2014	Texel, Holland 53 01N 4 75E
read in field	13/7-16/7/14	Lagune de Bouin, Bouin, France
read in field	29/07/2014	Titchwell, Norfolk
EL81854 Nestling	02/07/2008	Dunkirk, Little Downham, Cambridgeshire
Alive (colour rings seen)	30/08/2008	Snettisham, Norfolk 49km NNE
Alive (colour rings seen)	14/04/2009	Martin Mere 245km WNW
Alive (colour rings seen)	19/04/2009	Marshside 255km WNW
Alive (colour rings seen)	13/04/2010	Marshside
Alive (colour marks seen)	23/10/2010	Topsham, Devon 324km SW
Alive (colour rings seen)	23/06/2012	Titchfield Haven, Hampshire 208km SSW
Alive (colour rings seen)	02/03/2013	Titchfield Haven
Alive (colour rings seen)	04/05/2013	Titchfield Haven

OYSTERCATCHER

FR58286 Nestling	16/06/1984	Arkholme, River Lune
Dead	05/10/2013	Cockerham
FH23358 Adult	2/12/2008	Heysham
Freshly dead	17/07/2013	Whalsay, Shetland 714km N
FH23481 Adult	01/02/2010	Heysham
Freshly dead	04/05/2013	Ladyflat, Borders 193km N
FH23076 Adult	12/12/2008	Heysham
Freshly dead	29/07/2013	Shotton Colliery, Durham 127km NE
FH23911 Adult	01/02/2010	Heysham
Freshly dead	29/06/2013	Trollanes, Faeroerne 62°21'N 6°47'W FAEROES 952km NNW

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER

NS62957	Nestling Female	07/06/2005	Low Melwood, near Epworth, Lincolnshire
	Alive (ring read in field)	28/04/2013	Myerscough Quarry 135km WNW
	read in field	16/05/2013	Myerscough Quarry

CURLEW

CT169908	Juvenile	07/07/2012	Kerala, Siikaltva, FINLAND 64 27N 25 42 E
& CJ6	read in field	20/04/2013	Brockholes Wetland
	read in field	01/04/2014	Brockholes Wetland

EUROPEAN BLACK-TAILED GODWIT

F550849	adult	26/02/2009	Moeze, Charante-Maritime, FRANCE
& CRs	Read in field	06/06/2009	Durgerdam, THE NETHERLANDS 52 38N 5 0E
	Read in field	08/03/2011	Lemmer, THE NETHERLANDS 52 84N 5 71E
	Read in field	22/2-26/2/12	Porto Alto, Tagus, PORTUGAL 38 96N 8.9W
	Read in field	25/11/2012	Port des Barques, Charente, FRANCE 45 95N 1 07W
	Read in field	15/03/2013	Uitgeest, THE NETHERLANDS 52 52N 4.74E
	Read in field	04/02/2014	Isla Mayor, Guadalquivir Estuary, SPAIN 36 96N 6 23W
	Read in field	26/07/2014	Eric Morecambe Pool, Leighton Moss

ICELANDIC BLACK-TAILED GODWIT

GW-YX	Adult male	18/04/2003	Vogalækur, Mýrar, W ICELAND
	Read in field	22/04/2003	Hofsstaðir, Mýrar, W ICELAND
	Read in field	24/04-28/4/03	Vogalækur, Mýrar, W ICELAND
	Read in field	29/9-3/10/03	Langstone Harbour, Hampshire
	Read in field	05/10/2003	Portsmouth Harbour
	Read in field	07/12/2003	Baie du Mont St Michel, Manche, N FRANCE
	Read in field	07/10/2005	Portsmouth Harbour, Hampshire
	Read in field	02/02/2006	Alcochete, Tagus Estuary, W PORTUGAL
	Read in field	7/9-8/10/06	Colne Estuary, Essex
	Read in field	08/10/2006	Fobbing Marsh, Essex
	Read in field	20/12/2006	Mont-Saint-Michel, Manche, Ille et Vilaine, N FRANCE
	Read in field	05/02/2007	Avon Valley, Hampshire
	Read in field	30/07/2007	Medway Estuary and Marshes, Kent
	Read in field	3/8-19/8/07	Farlington Marshes, Hampshire
	Read in field	3/9-30/10/07	Portsmouth Harbour, Hampshire
	Read in field	12/02/2008	Cley, Norfolk
	Read in field	17/07/2008	Killingholme, Humber Estuary, Lincolnshire
	Read in field	13/10/2008	Fareham Creek, Portsmouth Harbour, Hampshire
	Read in field	17/10/2008	Farlington Marshes, Hampshire
	Read in field	28/03/2009	Hazelwood Marshes, River Alde, Suffolk
	Read in field	14/09/2009	Deben Estuary, Suffolk
	Read in field	24/08/2010	Mistley, Stour Estuary, Essex
	Read in field	16/09/2010	Alresford Creek, Colne Estuary, Essex, E England
	Read in field	26/03/2011	Maldon, Blackwater Estuary, Essex
	Read in field	19/04/2011	Flói, Árnessýsla, S ICELAND
	Read in field	20/04/2011	Vogalækur, Mýrarsýsla, W ICELAND
	Read in field	14-23/11/2011	Ardevon, Normandy, NW FRANCE
	Read in field	04/12/2011	Keyhaven Harbour, Hampshire
	Read in field	15/02/2013	Otterham Creek, Motney Hill, Kent

	Read in field	07/11/2013	R�serve naturelle de Beauguillot, Sainte Marie du mont, Manche, N FRANCE
	Read in field	28/03/2014	Maldon, Blackwater Est, Essex,
	Read in field	13/04/2014	Leighton Moss
YN-RX	Adult male	11/07/2009	Siglufjordur, N ICELAND
	Read in field	20-28/9/09	Gilroy Nature Park, West Kirby, Wirral
	Read in field	05/10/2009	Leighton Moss
	Read in field	08/10/2009	Gilroy Nature Park, Wirral
	Read in field	11/10/2009	Leighton Moss
	Read in field	10/1-31/1/11	Thurstaston Shore, Dee Estuary, Cheshire
	Read in field	06/03/2011	Leighton Moss
	Read in field	20/04/2011	Landeyjar, Rang�rallas�sla, S ICELAND
	Read in field	21/06/2011	Langh�s, Flj�t, Skagafir�i, N ICELAND
	Read in field	4-11/10/11	Leighton Moss
	Read in field	31/3-6/4/12	Leighton Moss
	Read in field	08/08/2012	Burton Mere Wetlands, Cheshire
	Read in field	07/02/2013	Warren Farm, Talacre, Flintshire
	Read in field	23/4/13	Leighton Moss
	Read in field	2-22/8/13	Parkgate/Inner Marsh Farm, Dee Estuary
	Read in field	25-26/8/13	Gilroy Nature Park, West Kirby
	Read in field	27/8-30/8/13	Caldy Shore, Dee Estuary
	Read in field	23/9-25/9/13	Thurstaston Shore, Dee Estuary
	Read in field	12-13/4/14	Leighton Moss

A contrast between a well-travelled bird which presumably only passes through our area in rapid transit and an individual firmly based in NW England/N Wales during the non-breeding season. Note the commuting between the Dee and Leighton Moss in (at least) 2009

KNOT

CE86733	Adult	14/02/1998	Heysham,
	Alive (ring read in field)	17/08/2013	Las Galletas, Tenerife: 28�0'N 16�39'W CANARY ISLANDS 3,104km SSW

SANDERLING

DKC	Adult Male	05/07/2010	Zackenbug: 74�28'N 20�34'W GREENLAND
8211629	Alive (colour rings seen)	21/10/2010	Rossall Point 2,421km SSE
	Alive (colour rings seen)	07/02/2012	Rossall Point
	Alive (colour rings seen)	15/12/2012	Rossall Point
	Alive (colour rings seen)	23/10/2013	Rossall Point
	Alive (colour rings seen)	03/11/2013	Rossall Point
D38484	adult	21/02/2012	Seizal, PORTUGAL
	read in field	12/11/2012	Seizal, PORTUGAL
	read in field	21/12/2012	Seizal, PORTUGAL
	read in field	12/05/2013	Rossall Point

GREENSHANK

DE05560	adult	04/06/2014	Tongue, Sutherland
	read in field	28/6-2/7/2014	Eric Morecambe Pool, Leighton Moss

This bird definitely moved on from the Eric Morecambe Pool on 2 July 2014.

REDSHANK

Colour ring juvenile	07/10/2010	Levington Lagoon, Orwell Estuary, Suffolk
read in field	29/07/2013	Skippool Creek
ISR Nestling	14/07/2012	Beinargerdi, Vollum, Sudur Mula
624389		65°11'N 14°28'W ICELAND
Dead (leg only)	17/10/2012	Marshside 1,432km SSE
DE01294 Adult	19/07/2012	Levington Creek, River Orwell, Suffolk
		52°0'N 1°15'E
Alive (colour rings seen)	04/04/2013	Stocks Reservoir 331km NW

GREAT SKUA

3033460 / KZ Nestling	03/08/2013	Goksoyrmyra, Runde, NORWAY
read in field	14/06/2014	Preston Dock
taken into care	15/06/2014	Preston Dock

GUILLEMOT

Y08900 Nestling	06/07/2013	Puffin Island, Anglesey
Freshly dead	17/11/2013	Marshside 80km ENE

RAZORBILL

K20699 Adult	07-06-2008	Puffin Island., Anglesey
Long dead	11-05-2013	Formby Point 66km ENE
M85543 Adult	29/07/1994	Lunga, Treshnish Isles, Mull, Argyll
Dead	15/02/2014	Starr Gate, Blackpool

SANDWICH TERN

DD36627/EHD Nestling	26/05/2005	Coquet Island, Northumberland
Caught by ringer	08/08/2009	Seal Sands, Cleveland 83km SSE
Caught by ringer	29/07/2011	Ythan Estuary, NE Scotland 223km N
read in field	30/06/2012	Port Seton, Firth of Forth, Lothian
Alive (colour rings seen)	19/08/2013	Knott End 183km SSW
DD36627 / EHD Nestling	26/06/2005	Coquet Island, Northumberland
caught by ringer	08/08/2009	Seal Sands, Cleveland
caught by ringer	29/07/2011	Ythan Estuary, Aberdeenshire, Scotland
read in field	19/08/2013	Preesall Sands, Knott End
Colour-ring Nestling	June 2008	Sands of Forvie, Ythan Estuary, NE Scotland
read in field	19/08/2013	Knott End, Fylde
DE10623 Nestling	09/06/2009	Sands of Forvie, Ythan Estuary, NE Scotland
read in field	19/08/2013	Preesall Sands, Knott End
DE35674 Adult	20/07/2011	Ythan Estuary, NE Scotland
read in field	18/08/2013	Preesall Sands, Knott End
read in field	05/09/2013	Preesall Sands, Knott End
DE35674 / EVS Adult	20/07/2011	Ythan Estuary, NE Scotland
read in field	15/06/2012	Sands of Forvie, Ythan Estuary, NE Scotland
read in field	19/07/2013	Ythan Estuary, NE Scotland
read in field	18/08/2013	Preesall Sands, Knott End, Fylde
read in field	05/09/2013	Preesall Sands, Knott End, Fylde
read in field	16/10/2013	Le Portel, Pas-de-Calais, FRANCE
DE52233 / EHN Adult	20/07/2013	Ythan Estuary, NE Scotland
read in field	19/08/2013	Preesall Sands, Knott End,

A nice sequence. As asked before, do these fly overland from the North Sea and, if so, how? They are very rare inland.

COMMON TERN

4H58786 Adult	29/03/2011	Mile 4 Saltworks, Swakopmund, Walvis Bay, NAMIBIA
read in field	28/06/2014	Preston Dock
read in field	23/07/2014	Preston Dock

Nesting at Preston Dock, but presumably not there in 2011-13. This is only the second recorded movement between Lancashire and southern Africa, and only one of 30 or so between southern Africa and the UK. British breeders winter almost exclusively in West Africa, while Scandinavian birds winter in South Africa.

In addition, more than 20 rings were read in the field of birds probably breeding at Preston Dock in 2013 & 2014 that originated from the Shotton colony on the Welsh Dee, which was abandoned for several years prior to being re-established in 2014.

KITTIWAKE

FX21949 Nestling	10/07/2010	Pointe du Raz, Plogoff, Finistere 48°2'N 4°39'W FRANCE
Long dead	07/09/2010	Heysham 676km N

Belated information.

BLACK-HEADED GULL

EY02736 First-year	17/12/2012	Preston Dock
Alive (colour rings seen)	12/01/2013	Roath Park Lake, Cardiff 252km S
EY02735 Adult	02/12/2012	Preston Dock
Alive (colour rings seen)	02/02/2013	Stranraer, Dumfries & Galloway 196km NW
FN89137 Nestling	20/06/2010	J Rybno, Kiszkowo, Konin, POLAND
read in field	27/08/2011	Poulton-le-Fylde
read in field	20/08/2012	Poulton-le-Fylde
read in field	18/08/2013	Skippool Creek, Wyre Estuary
EY02607 Adult	10/02/2012	Southport Marine Lake
Alive (colour rings seen)	21/05/2012	Houton, Orphir, Orkney 584km N
Alive (colour rings seen)	30/04/2013	Houton, Orphir, Orkney
EY02604 Adult	10/02/2012	Southport Marine Lake
Alive (colour rings seen)	02/04/2013	Kolobrzeg, Koszalin 54°11'N 15°35'E POLAND 1,219km E
FRP Nestling	17/06/2006	Ardres, Pas-de-Calais 50°52'N 1°58'E FRANCE
FS57580 Alive (colour rings seen)	01/03/2011	Liverpool 440km NW

The first two indicate a significant change of wintering area.

MEDITERRANEAN GULL

PLU7 Nestling	07/06/2013	Ryn, Poland
	17/04/2014	Old Moor RSPB, Barnsley, South Yorkshire 1497km
	23/05/2014	Leighton Moss 1578km
E905038 Second summer	14/06/2004	Berendrecht, Antwerpen, Belgium 51,2N 4,19E
3N92 read in field	24/06/2006	Zandvlietsluis, Antwerpen, Belgium 51,2N 4,17E
read in field	06-15/3/2005	Stanley Park, Blackpool
read in field	13/06/2005	Seaforth
read in field	02/04/2006	Le Platier d'Oye Plage, Pas-de-Calais, 51N 2,02E FRANCE
read in field	21/04/2008	Oostburg, Sophiapolder, Zeeland, THE NETHERLANDS 51,19N 3,28E
read in field	01/2-02/02/2009	Stanley Park, Blackpool

read in field	11/04/2009	Cley, Norfolk
read in field	19/01/2010	Sefton Park,, Liverpool
read in field	24/03/2010	Minsmere, Suffolk
read in field	22/-25/02/2011	Marton Mere & Stanley Park, Blackpool
read in field	09/3-10/4/2011	Titchfield Haven, Hampshire
read in field	29/01/2012	Bardsey Island, Gwynedd
read in field	18/03/2012	Rye Harbour, Sussex
read in field	20/01/2013	Liverpool
read in field	02/1-01/2/2014	Stanley Park, Blackpool
read in field	02/02/2014	Crosby Beach
read in field	18/02/2014	Stanley Park, Blackpool,
read in field	01/07/2014	Seaforth

Seems a disproportionate number of reports in relation to many other birds. Does it like bread? Lots of recoveries were published in last year's report relating to 2013 sightings. Surprisingly few ringed birds in 2014, especially at Heysham during the post-breeding season.

COMMON GULL

EL70934	Adult	19/12/2010	Knott End
	Freshly dead	03/07/2013	Verdalsora, Nord-Trondelag: 63°47'N 11°29'E NORWAY 1,372km NE
5343777	Nestling	13/07/2007	Oiltanking, Hohe Schaar, Hamburg: 53°29'N 9°57'E GERMANY
	read in field	02/05/2010	Billwerder Bucht, Hamburg, GERMANY
	read in field	20/05/2010	Holthusen kai, Hamburg, GERMANY
	Alive (ring read in field)	22/01/2013	Cocker's Dyke, Preesall Sands 851km W
517052*	Nestling	21/06/2012	Store Revlingen, Rygge, Ostfold: 59°23'N 10°38'E NORWAY
	Alive (ring read in field)	14/07/2013	Heysham 1,017km SW
5170921	Adult Male	19/07/2012	Teglvegen, Ski, Akershus 59°42'N 10°51'E NORWAY
	Alive (colour rings seen)	10/10/2013	Cocker's Dyke, Preesall Sands 1,055km SW

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL

CIJ	Adult Male	26/05/2012	Chouet Landfill, Guernsey 49°30'N 2°32'W
D6912	Alive (colour rings seen)	11/08/2012	Seaforth 442km N
GG63214/KLAS	Nestling male	02/07/1989	Orfordness, Suffolk
	read in field	27/05/2002	Zeebrugge, BELGIUM
	read in field	3/6/08-19/8/08	Zeebrugge, BELGIUM
	read in field	12/5/09-9/6/09	Zeebrugge, BELGIUM
	read in field	1/4/10-10/5/10	Zeebrugge, BELGIUM
	read in field	30/3-24/5/11	Zeebrugge, BELGIUM
	read in field	25/04/2013	Gibraltar Point, Lincolnshire
	read in field	02/06/2013	Orfordness, Suffolk
	read in field	30/06/2013	Havergate Island, Orford, Suffolk
	read in field	27/04/2014	Stocks Reservoir

What prompted the occurrence pattern of the second bird? Did it include a bird-scaring programme at Zeebrugge?

HERRING GULL

GR48894	First-year	30/11/2012	Peel, Isle of Man 54°13'N 4°42'W
	Alive (colour rings seen)	23/08/2013	Blackpool 117km ESE
	Alive (colour rings seen)	04/11/2013	New Brighton, Wirral 139km SE
GC86435	Adult Male	24/05/2012	Wellington Park, Montrose, Tayside

56°43'N 2°27'W

Alive (colour rings seen) 17/01/2013 Moore NR, Cheshire 373km S
 Alive (colour rings seen) 16/11/2013 Crosby Beach 362km S

WOODPIGEON

FH57160 Nestling 31/08/2012 Sefton Park, Liverpool
 Freshly dead (hit by car) 17/04/2013 Rotherham, South Yorkshire 107km E
 FP41687 Nestling 08/05/2009 Childwall, Liverpool
 Freshly dead (shot) 30/01/2013 Plouay, Morbihan 47°54'N 3°20'W
 FRANCE 612km S

BARN OWL

GR43485 Nestling 16/06/2012 Gift Hall Farm, Winmarleigh
 dead 29/01/2013 Southwaite, Cumbria
 GN70275 Nestling 11/07/2004 Bridekirk Cumbria
 Dead 08/03/2013 Glasson 84km SSE
 GR43431 Nestling 02/07/2011 Staynall, Stalmine
 Sick (disease) 05/03/2013 Patching, near Worthing, Sussex 378km SSE
 GR68455 Nestling 21/08/2012 Lanborough Farm, Buckinghamshire
 Freshly dead (hit by car) 11/03/2013 Aughton, Ormskirk 219km NW

An amazing series of movements, although north Cumbria to our area has a few precedents.

JAY

DA77834 First-year 21/08/2010 Barlows Farm, Greater Manchester
 Dead 28/01/2013 Bolton-by-Bowland 49km NNE

The ringing date suggests a local origin, in which case this is a significant movement.

BLUE TIT

Y332547 First-year 19/09/2011 Leighton Moss
 Dead 11/11/2013 Austwick, North Yorkshire 31km ESE

SAND MARTIN

D335265 Juvenile 19/06/2013 Whittington, Lune Valley
 Caught by ringer 28/07/2013 Viana, Las Canas, Navarra 42°29'N 2°24'W
 SPAIN 1,300km S
 FRP 6795658 First-year 26/07/2012 Hiers Brouage, Charente-Maritime
 45°51'N 1°4'W FRANCE
 Freshly dead 21/04/2013 River Ribble, near Preston 886km N
 FRP 7014597 First-year Female 01/08/2012 Hiers Brouage Charente-Maritime
 45°51'N 1°4'W FRANCE
 Caught by ringer 25/06/2013 Nether Burrow, Lancashire 931km N
 FRP Adult 14/08/2012 Hiers Brouage Charente-Maritime
 45°51'N 1°4'W FRANCE
 7015247 Caught by ringer 07/07/2013 Whittington 933km N

SWALLOW

Y782898 Nestling 08/06/2013 near Manchester Airport, Greater Manchester
 caught by ringer 18/07/2013 Fleetwood Marsh
 D252517 Nestling 16/06/2013 Soursike Farm, Hornby, Northallerton,
 North Yorkshire
 caught by ringer 06/08/2013 Fleetwood Marsh
 D466408 Nestling 29/06/2013 Hightown
 caught by ringer 29/07/2013 Fleetwood Marsh

D076606	First-year Male	16-09-2012	Castle Stuart, Newton, near Balloch, Highland
	Caught by ringer	18-05-2013	Fazakerley, Liverpool 458km S

Three where we know the origin and the longest movement reported this year.

CHIFFCHAFF

EEE427	First-year	28/09/2013	Heysham
	Caught by ringer	06/10/2013	Orfordness, Suffolk 370km SE

A fairly quick movement of a bird of unknown origin, possibly northern Europe.

WILLOW WARBLER

EAB492	Full-grown	06/08/2013	Watchtree NR, Black Brow, Cumbria
	Caught by ringer	07/08/2013	Leighton Moss

From one excellent reserve to another!

BLACKCAP

Y555383	Full-grown Female	11/04/2012	Clayton Brook, Lancashire
	Caught by ringer	21/10/2012	Zaframagon, Coripe, Sevilla: 36°59'N 5°24'W SPAIN 1,872km S
ESI 3N07096	Adult Female	17/03/2011	Yasmina, Merzouga 31°12'N 3°59'W MOROCCO
	Caught by ringer	08/07/2012	Fleetwood 2,524km N
D560132	First-year Male	06/10/2013	Brookvale LNR, Sefton
	Caught by ringer	27/10/2013	Villeton, Lot-et-Garonne: 44°22'N 0°16'E FRANCE 1,039km SSE

GARDEN WARBLER

D550554	Juvenile	24/07/2013	Leighton Moss
	Freshly dead (hit glass)	02/08/2013	Kirkby Thore, Cumbria 53km NNE

WHITETHROAT

D551224	First-year	27/08/2013	Middleton NR
	Caught by ringer	22/09/2013	Wharf Lane, Portishead, Avon 282km S

SEDGE WARBLER

D090661	First-year	19/08/2013	Squire's Down, Dorset
	Caught by ringer	22/08/2013	Fleetwood 329km N
D550867	First-year	08/08/2013	Leighton Moss
	Caught by ringer	13/08/2013	Litlington, Sussex 426km SSE
6885626	First year	09/08/2012	Treogat, Finistere) FRANCE 47 53N 4 21 W
	caught by ringer	2/5 & 3/6/13	Middleton NR 689km N as breeding male
D139813	Adult	16/05/2013	Middleton NR
	retrapped	6/7 & 16/7/13	Middleton NR as breeding female
	caught by ringer	17/08/2013	Squires Down, Dorset 341 km S

REED WARBLER

Y643945	First year	09/08/2012	Woolhampton Gravel Pits, Berkshire
	Caught	25/05/2013	Middleton NR 315km
L501799	First-year	26/09/2010	Leighton Moss
	Caught by ringer	01/04/2012	Arroyo Calamocarro, Ceuta, MOROCCO 35°53'N 5°19'W 2,041km S
X579155	Juvenile	03/08/2009	Leighton Moss
	Caught by ringer	09/04/2012	Coimbra, Beira Litoral, PORTUGAL 40°15'N 8°41'W 1,608km SSW

T232951	Adult	03/07/2008	Brockholes Quarry: 53°46'N 2°38'W (Lancashire)
	Caught by ringer	10/04/2011	La Quintanilla, la Puebla Del Rio, Sevilla 37°6'N 6°9'W SPAIN 1,872km S

The first Lancashire ringing return I can find for any species in Ceuta, the Spanish enclave in Morocco.

WAXWING

NW50579	First-year Male	04/11/2012	Finstown, Orkney
	Caught by ringer	03/03/2013	Clockface Colliery, St. Helens 621km S
NV64368	First-year Female	17/11/2012	Fearnan, Loch Tay, Tayside
	Caught by ringer	03/03/2013	Clockface Colliery, St. Helens 361km SSE
NW66122	Adult Female	06/12/2012	Newtown, Powys
	Alive (colour rings seen)	16/12/2012	Seaforth Station, Sefton 110km NNE

NUTHATCH

TL19834	Full-grown Female	10/11/2010	Dobcross, Uppermill, Greater Manchester
	Caught by ringer	24/11/2012	Brockholes Wetland 47km WNW

An unprecedented movement in a Lancashire context.

STARLING

RE51558	Adult female	30/07/1993	Bispham, Fylde
	Dead	13/08/2013	Shevington, Greater Manchester

BLACKBIRD

LC12172	First-year Female	16/01/2011	Lytham St Annes
	Freshly dead	10/05/2013	Hartlepool 158km NE
LC51709	Adult Male	02/03/2012	Grey Close, Brock Side, Lancashire
	Freshly dead (cat)	15/11/2013	Wearhead, Bishop Auckland, Co. Durham: 105km NNE
NOS	First-year Male	12/10/2013	Randaberg, Rogaland 59°0'N 5°34'E NORWAY
7560213	Freshly dead (hit glass)	20/11/2013	Thornton (Fylde) 776km SW
LA26873	Full-grown Female	14/01/2012	Thornton (Merseyside)
	Freshly dead (cat)	10/04/2013	Bording, Ikast, Jylland 56°9'N 9°13'E DENMARK 837km ENE

The first one is odd as it suggests it might have been a Hartlepool breeding bird rather than very late Scandinavian departee.

PIED FLYCATCHER

V469634	Adult Female	15/05/2008	Faithwaite Wood, Claughton:
	Caught by ringer	14/05/2011	Borrow Beck, Tebay, Cumbria 36km N
	Caught by ringer	28/06/2013	Borrow Beck, Tebay
L220803	Nestling female	07/06/2011	Lyme Park, Disley, Cheshire
	Caught by ringer	21/05/2013	Botton Mill, Wray, Lancashire 87 km NNW
	Caught by ringer	11/05/2014	Winder Wood, Wray, Lancashire 90 km NNW
L989066	Nestling female	04/06/2011	Baringham, Durham
	Caught by ringer	09/06/2012	R Lune, Whittington, Lancashire 56 km
	Caught by ringer	14/06/2013	Whittington
	Caught by ringer	22/05/2014	Whittington
Y494547	Nestling female	12/06/2012	Baringham, Durham
	Caught by ringer	26/05/2013	Hills Kirk Wood, Wray 64 km SW
	Caught by ringer	20/05/2014	Hills Kirk Wood, Wray

Note the age of the first bird. All caught as breeding females. Long-distance changes between breeding and natal sites more unusual in males.

GREY WAGTAIL

D657190	First-year	04/10/2013	Heysham
	Alive (colour rings seen)	14/10/2013	Skokholm, Pembroke 304km SSW
D657065	First-year	21/09/2013	Heysham
	Alive (colour rings seen)	11-15/10/13	Seaforth 64km S
D657048	First year	20/09/2013	Heysham
	Alive (colour rings seen)	15-21/02/2014	Torver, Coniston, Cumbria 36km NNW
D333889	First year	09/09/2013	Heysham
& CRs	Caught	08/10/2013	Heysham
D657123	First year	25/09/2013	Heysham
& CRs	Seen	24/11/2013	Conder Green
D657082	First year	23/09/2013	Heysham
& CRs	Photo	21/12/2013	Freeman's Pools, Aldcliffe, Lancaster

In addition, a different Heysham bird was seen to go to roost in central Lancaster in winter 2013/14. As all of these were caught on visible migration at Heysham, for four to then cease migration and 'remain local' was very unexpected. It suggests that some of the vis mig might simply involve flying across Morecambe Bay (perceived movement north-west to south-east)! Note the early return to the presumed breeding area for the Torver bird (not there prior to 15/2)

PIED WAGTAIL

D235044	Juvenile	08/09/2013	East Kilbride, Strathclyde
	Caught by ringer	22/11/2013	Fleetwood 223km SSE

MEADOW PIPIT

Y279058	First-year	20/09/2011	Moss House Farm, Out Rawcliffe:
	Caught by ringer	05/10/2013	Hasfield Ham, Gloucestershire 219km S

CHAFFINCH

Y596030	Second-year Female	17/05/2012	Fleetwood
	Caught by ringer	28/05/2013	Calf of Man 119km W
NOS 7E19008	Adult Male	26/09/2010	Vikeland, Vennesla, Vest-Agder 58°15'N 7°56'E NORWAY
	Long dead (hit by car)	27/01/2013	Colne 795km SW
Y269920	First-year Female	22/10/2011	Brook Vale LNR, Sefton
	Freshly dead (disease)	16/10/2013	Low Row, Carlisle, Cumbria 167km N

The dates of the first bird raise unusual possibilities re breeding status.

BRAMBLING

Y461678	First-year Female	13/12/2012	Moss House Farm, Out Rawcliffe
	Caught by ringer	04/05/2013	Grasbakken, Ringsaker: 61°3'N 10°39'E (Hedmark) NORWAY 1,134km NE
NOS ED78766	First-year Male	11/10/2011	Bomyra, Randaberg, Rogaland 59°0'N 5°34'E NORWAY
	Caught by ringer	02/03/2013	Moss House Farm, Out Rawcliffe 770km SW
D247151	First year male	08/02/2013	West Tofts, Norfolk
	Caught by ringer	02/03/2014	New Laithe Farm, Newton-in-Bowland 226km NW

GREENFINCH

TS38268	First-year Female	13/01/2013	Abbotsbury Swannery, Dorset
	Caught by ringer	06/11/2013	Heysham 377km N
TP69715	First-year Male	11/10/2012	Saltholme, Cleveland:
	Freshly dead (disease)	18/07/2013	Grimsargh Reservoirs 127km SW
TS13971	First-year Female	26/02/2013	New Laithe Farm, Newton-in-Bowland:
	Caught by ringer	19/08/2013	Normanby, Cleveland: 109km NE

The first was checked very carefully for misread possibilities of a locally-ringed bird and three characters would need to have been read incorrectly, therefore it appears to be a genuinely exceptional movement

GOLDFINCH

Y470359	First-year Male	15/10/2012	Over Kellet, Carnforth
	Caught by ringer	03/03/2013	Nursery Lane, Ascot, Berkshire 330km SSE
Y764474	First-year Male	23/02/2013	New Laithe Farm, Newton-in-Bowland)
	Caught by ringer	30/04/2013	Bellshill, Strathclyde 231km NNW
L141677	First-winter female	04/10/2010	Rossall School,
	Caught by ringer	10/04/2013	Dhoon, Isle of Man
L952869	First winter female	05/01/2013	Great Warford, Cheshire
	Caught by ringer	12/04/2013	Heysham 92 km NNW
Y966655	First winter female	07/10/2012	Heysham
	Caught by ringer	15/12/2013	Great Warford, Cheshire 92km SSE
Y671426	First-year	10/02/2013	Bidston, Wirral
	Caught by ringer	18/12/2013	Kerrow, Cannich, Highland 450km NNW
L787315	First-year Male	20/01/2011	Crosby Hall
	Caught by ringer	16/05/2013	Drumla, Strathclyde 254km NNW
Y565862	Second-year Male	02/05/2012	Kilnsea, East Yorkshire
	Alive (ring read in field)	17/07/2013	West Derby, Liverpool 202km W
Y556483	Adult Male	03/07/2012	Thornton, Sefton
	Freshly dead (cat)	09/04/2013	Rennes, Ile-et-Vilaine 48°6'N 1°40'W () FRANCE 606km S
D657311	juvenile	10/11/2013	Heysham
	Caught as female	25/03/2014	Leswait, Galloway 172km NW
Y610417	First year male	10/01/2013	Hams Hall, Warwick
	Caught	10/01/2014	Over Kellet, Carnforth 191km NW
Y967032	First year male	09/02/2013	Scottforth, Lancaster
	Caught	25/05/2013	Bettyhill, Highland 508km N

SISKIN

L274584	Adult Female	07/05/2012	Fair Isle
	Caught by ringer	20/04/2013	Dalton, Skelmersdale 667km S
D199878	Full-grown Male	27/03/2013	Clayton Brook
	Caught by ringer	05/04/2013	Queenamidda, Rendall, Orkney 596km N
Y868400	First-year Male	06/02/2013	Clayton Brook
	Caught by ringer	13/04/2013	Shebster, Highland 541km N
D199969	Full-grown Male	12/04/2013	Clayton Brook
	Freshly dead	10/05/2013	Barrock House, near Wick, Highland 537km N
D448508	Adult Female	06/04/2013	Kemple End, Clitheroe
	Caught by ringer	05/05/2013	Shebster, Highland 528km N
D139377	First year male	27/04/2012	New Laithe Farm, Newton-in-Bowland
	Caught	28/03/2014	Drummond, Inverness 407km NW
X967033	First year male	09/02/2013	Scottforth, Lancaster
	Caught	26/03/2014	Kildary, Highland 423km N

D334377 Juvenile 10/08/2013 New Laithe Farm, Newton-in-Bowland
02/02/2014 Llanfynydd, Carmarthen 250km SSW

An excellent series - note the rapid movement to Orkney

TWITE

L974510 Juvenile 04/07/2012 Sanda Island, Mull of Kintyre, Argyll
Caught 21/01-31/3/13 Heysham north harbour wall
10/11/2013 Heysham north harbour wall
CRs Not known Oct-Dec 2010 Heysham north harbour wall
Seen 06/11/2013 Connah's Quay, Flintshire
V879489 First year 06/10/2012 Machrihanish, Mull of Kintyre, Argyll
Caught 10/11/2013 Heysham north harbour wall 239km SE
CRs Not known Sept-Oct 2013 Machrihanish, Mull of Kintyre, Argyll
Seen 07/11/2013 Heysham north harbour wall 239km SE

Connah's Quay is where the Welsh breeding population of Twite mainly winters. Three other Machrihanish birds from previous years were also retrapped at Heysham in winter 2013/4 - the two above are 'new' birds.

LESSER REDPOLL

L418289 Adult Male 30/04/2013 Knott End-on-Sea
Caught by ringer 22/05/2013 Reiff, near Achiltibuie, Highland 486km NNW
Y461768 First-year Male 27/04/2013 Street House, Claughton
Caught by ringer 08/11/2013 Pett Level, Sussex 403km SE
Y055943 First-year Female 20/10/2011 Pett Level, Sussex
Caught by ringer 05/05/2013 New Laithe Farm, Newton-in-Bowland
399km NNW
D145395 First-year 06/11/2012 King's Wood, Kent
Caught by ringer 26/05/2013 New Laithe Farm, Newton-in-Bowland
378km NW
Y867286 First year 09/04/2013 Thornton, Sefton
controlled 10/04/2013 Knott End
D145397 Adult male 06/10/2012 King's Wood, Kent
caught 30/01/2014 New Laithe Farm, 378km NW
D334062 First year 18/05/2013 New Laithe Farm, Newton-in-Bowland
caught 18-22/03/14 Romsey, Hampshire 334km S
D139013 First year 24/02/2012 Rishton, Blackburn
caught 24/02/2014 Dukes Warren, Surrey 319km SSE
caught again 04/03/2014 Gomshall, Surrey 312km SE
D334066 First year 18/05/2013 New Laithe Farm, Newton-in-Bowland
caught as adult female 16/11/2013 Sandwich Bay, Kent 394km SE

The Reiff bird represents the first from the far north-west of Scotland.

REED BUNTING

Y596164 Juvenile Female 14/07/2012 Fleetwood
Caught by ringer 02/03/2013 Kenfig Pool, Glamorgan 270km SSW
X634448 Full-grown Male 22/02/2010 Newport, Shropshire
Caught by ringer 14/04/2013 Brockholes Wetland 113km N
Caught by ringer 01/11/2013 Brockholes Wetland
D333200 First-year Female 06/07/2013 Leighton Moss
Caught by ringer 05/10/2013 Winterset Reservoir, Wakefield 109km SE

Three Firsts for Lancashire...

Killdeer, Alston Wetland, 7 April 2013.

Gavin Thomas

The morning of Sunday 7 April was a pleasant calm and sunny one at Alston Wetland. With nothing of note migrant-wise I began to scan to the south over the Ribble Valley in the hope of connecting with an Osprey that had just been seen flying up the river a few miles away at Brockholes. With no Osprey in sight a distant 'kleeeee' call immediately grabbed my attention. I'd heard that very same call several days earlier, coming from a Killdeer I'd found at Killybegs in County Donegal!

Worried I was losing the plot, I listened in disbelief as the call continued, getting louder all the time until it sounded right overhead, but I just couldn't see the bird. Frantically scanning over the wetland, finally there it was, a stunning Killdeer slowly dropping in to my little local patch!

Thankfully I was not alone on site and I rang Ian Walker who was nearby and said 'there's a strange wader flying round calling over the wetland, try and get on it'. I simply couldn't bring myself to tell him it was a Killdeer, such was the disbelief! Legging it down to join Ian and his wife Michelle at the central viewing screen, a frantic scan quickly revealed that familiar pair of black breast bands in full view on the edge of one of the scrapes. Simply unbelievable!

The bird performed well, feeding along the scrape edges and short grassland and for the most part managing to keep a low enough profile to avoid the attentions of the site's highly territorial breeding waders. At one point, though, it took flight and disappeared high to the east but returned within ten minutes calling again – much to the relief of local birders who had arrived just as it had flown off.

Later arrivals were to be disappointed, though, as at 11:50 it was seen to fly off again and not return for the rest of the day. A brief sighting on the following day by one lucky local birder who'd also seen it on the Sunday, failed to cheer those trying again for the bird that day, as it was not seen subsequently.

As well as the distinctive call which was fresh in my mind, the plumage features clinched the ID - rakish structure in flight with long wings and tail, distinctive warm orangey rump, white wing-bars and black-tipped white-sided tail. On the ground it was probably a third bigger than the Little Ringed Plovers also on site, was a darker brown on the upperparts with the twin black breast-bands, all-dark bill and orange orbital ring all diagnostic.

Due to the rarity of the species on this side of the Atlantic, it seems likely that the bird was the same as the Killybegs individual but views of the bird and photos were not quite good enough to confirm this.

Two-barred Crossbill, Crow Wood Farm, Browsholme Estate, 2-6 August 2013.

Gavin Thomas.

After much of the day in the field on 2 August I returned to my desk in the RSPB's Lancaster office to find an email with 'Is this a juv crossbill?' in the subject box. Aware of an influx of Two-barred Crossbills in the Northern Isles I opened the attached photograph with dreamy optimism and was presented with a full-frame shot of a stonking juvenile Two-barred Crossbill, tucking in to sunflower seeds on a garden bird feeder – in Bowland!

The email was from Barrie Tyrer, a wildlife enthusiast and website designer whom I know from working with local farmers and rural businesses. Within seconds I was on the phone to him and was delighted to be hearing that he'd only photographed it that morning in his garden and that he was 'watching it now through his window'. Once I'd informed him that it wasn't a Crossbill (Barrie

sounded quite disappointed – at first) but something much rarer, I set off across to the other side of Bowland and within the hour was sat looking out from his window.

We sat for about ten minutes, Barrie reassuring me it would come back as it had been flying off into a nearby wood at times. Sure enough it flew in, straight back to its favoured seed tray and resumed feeding. Superb! It was unconcerned by our presence and we were able to walk past it within a few feet to leave the garden. I suspect we were the first ever people the bird had encountered, assuming it was fresh in from the remote boreal conifer forests!

With photos secured and the rarity of the bird explained to its host, I began to explain to Barrie that people – quite a lot of them – would want to come and see it. The garden is isolated and not viewable from any footpaths. Barrie only rents his house from the Browsholme Estate and there was also the local farmer to consider. After pushing the positives to him, I left Barrie to consult the estate owners and the farmer that evening and crossed my fingers. At their request, I met with the estate owners the following morning and access was negotiated, but with a wedding on the estate that day there was to be no access until 5pm. It didn't take long for the first birders to arrive once news was released and many saw the bird well that evening. It was absent for much of the following morning but the persistent were rewarded as it had returned by early afternoon and performed well for the rest of the day. Over the next couple of days the bird's appearances became more and more sporadic, it became increasingly mobile and vocal and was last seen by Barrie on 6 August.

The identity and ageing were straightforward. It displayed the fresh plumaged, heavily streaked plumage of a juvenile with no green or red feathering and the classic Two-barred pattern of crisp, broad white wing bars and tertial tips. Although it was not in the company of any other crossbills, it struck me as quite long and slim compared to Common Crossbill with a longer bill and not much bigger than a Greenfinch. A number of crossbill-like 'gyp, gyp' calls were uttered when the bird took flight and flew from the garden up into the Larch trees that it favoured. But best of all was an almost comical toy trumpet-like nasal, buzzy call which took me right back to listening to Northern Bullfinches in Finland!

Thanks are due to the Parkers who own the estate but especially to Barrie for being so quick in emailing me about the bird and also the warm, friendly and hospitable manner in which he and his partner Louise welcomed birders to their garden. Barrie's wait to add Common Crossbill to his garden feeder list goes on!

Baikal Teal, Crossens Out Marsh, 30 November - 11 December 2013

Craig Bell

A rather dreary morning in east Lancashire had me wondering "where should I go today?" With there being very little to see in the Pennines at this time of year, a trip to the coast for some waders, ducks and most of all a few raptors over the saltmarshes, and in particular Peregrine, Merlin and wing-tagged Hen Harriers.

A simple choice then, Marshside is a site I visit regularly during the winter months and easily Lancashire's premium coastal site. So, off on a short 30 minute drive down the M65.

The first stop on arriving at the Banks end of Marine Drive had me stopping in the small gateway overlooking the first floodpools and channel on Crossens Out Marsh. Lots of ducks were there so scope and tripod out and a scan through them. Starting on the right hand end of the birds it went something like . . . Wigeon, Wigeon, Teal, Wigeon, Wigeon then "errmm" that's a strange one. American Wigeon was a first thought, NO!

It took several good looks to see it properly as it was swimming around on the pool, turning regularly and being obscured by the other ducks. Smaller than a Wigeon but bigger than a Teal??? "A

drake Baikal Teal . . cant be . . it is". After a couple of minutes it climbed out onto the saltmarsh and had a good preen –with superb light giving excellent views.

The plumage was perfect except for the black 'tear-stain' stripe on the face. It must be an escape?? With me being a BTO ringer I have a habit of checking everything I look at for rings and I could clearly see no 'jewellery' on either leg. It flapped its wings, revealing full wing-feathering as well. Whilst muttering to myself with excitement I thought "where is another birder to show them", but in a place that's usually buzzing with birdwatchers, there was no-one to be seen. Next thought, "Got to get a record shot with my phone and scope". Five or six pics taken, not great but good enough to see good details. A couple of photo text messages to two friends asking "what's that?". Both came back with the message "male Baikal Teal, mega rarity, good find and where are you?" I now needed someone else to see it.

Then all birds' heads were raised on outstretched necks and "whoosh" the whole flock took flight at once. A fisherman with a dog had just appeared from in the channel 50 yards behind the birds and flushed the lot! Three-quarters of the birds headed over the road onto the inner marsh, whilst the others flew out towards the outer marsh. I had lost it.

Help was needed to refind it so I drove to the RSPB hide to report it. No warden was present so I wrote the sighting and details in the record book and also put the bird sighting out on the rare bird news alert services. I returned to have another look for the bird but after several hours of scanning it was not to be found. I also could not believe no other local birders were turning up to look for it, but it later came out that bad info had been put out and lots of other birders were looking for it on the pools nearer to Southport. At last light car loads of birders arrived where I was looking but to no avail. Was I to be the only person who was going to see it??

I returned the following morning at first light to find dozens of birders searching for it and it was not long before it was found and showed well for the massed gathering, further out on Crossens Channel, around 200 yards from my initial finding place yesterday.

The bird was seen every day for the next twelve days or so, allowing hundreds of birders the pleasure of seeing it before it disappeared when the first of the winter storms and big tides hit us.

A dreary November Saturday turned into a superb weekend's birdwatching producing a first for Lancashire, a sixth accepted record for Britain and a lifer for me!

and a Significant Second . . .

Greenish Warbler, Turton Golf Course, 13-19 June, 2013

Antony Wainwright

As a greenkeeper at Turton Golf Club I was blessed with being able to watch birds as I went about my job and had recorded 98 species in the seven years I was there. With only two species to go to reach the magical one hundred I was not far away but time was at a premium as I only had two more weeks before I was to leave the club for pastures new. Garden Warbler had been the most recent addition.

On a morning of grey and showery weather on 13 June I arrived for work at 6am. Remaining vigilant to the possibility of adding to my bird list I often remove my ear defenders and turn my machine off at opportune moments to listen for any fresh activity on the golf course. At 7.30am during one of these brief stops I heard a song that I did not recognise, emanating from the canopy of a swathe of mature beech woodland that cuts through the golf course known as Hazelhurst Clough. The phrase was short, beginning with three or four notes transcribed as 'chee chee chee', followed by a short flourish that put me in mind of a trilling Wren or Wood Warbler. In fact, the song sounded to me

like the Wood Warbler's trilling song, only to be cut short before it had really got started. This short phrase, perhaps two to three seconds long, was repeated incessantly from the canopy.

My next thought was that it was a Redstart before checking a recording on my phone. I had to get back to work and had no binoculars with me but returned with them and it looked like a *Phylloscopus* warbler. I quickly listened to recordings of all likely species and reached a perfect match with Greenish Warbler. Attracted by the recording, the bird flew towards me, alighting in a small pine metres away.

My brief field notes mentioned greenish upperparts set against almost white underparts, a yellow-orange base to the lower mandible maybe slightly on upper, pale wing-bar and a clearly defined supercilium, especially behind its eye. It also shook its wings similar to a young begging bird but I put this down to it probably shaking water off itself due to the rain.

The news was put out and other birders began to arrive. With prolonged 'scope views I was able to add to the account details such as the characteristic dark eye-stripe that culminated in a dark loreal-spot, a broken white eye-ring and that lovely splayed creamy supercilium giving it a capped appearance. The pale wing-bar bordering the greater coverts was clearly evident and some photographs also suggested the merest hint of a second wing-bar. Also, the gape was noted as bright yellow when it was singing which for me brightened the whole bird up and possibly accounted for my earlier thinking it had yellow at the base of the upper-mandible. The dark brownish legs and even the yellow bare-parts at the base of each foot were also evident on some photographs as was a missing middle tertial on its left wing.

Arriving at first light the following morning the Greenish Warbler was still present on its favoured song-post, delivering its song every few seconds. In much better light than previously it looked much greener and it shone in the morning sun for the few who arrived early to see it. I digress, but it was then when a Cuckoo was heard calling several times from somewhere nearby on the course, my 100th species here. The Greenish Warbler continued to put on a show for all that visited throughout the rest of the day and followed the same pattern of moving to the lower branches during late afternoon and foraging there in between bouts of singing.

It remained for a week, showing well and singing incessantly for a procession of birders. Remaining until the early morning of the 19th it was last reported suddenly stopping singing by local birder John Barlow not long after first light at around the time a Sparrowhawk had been seen.

It would be wrong of me not to thank the directors of Turton Golf Club who were quickly informed of the implications of a rare bird appearing in the middle their course. They moved swiftly to avoid any issues that may have arisen and agreed a strategy to allow birders to visit by providing directional signs to a safe viewpoint overlooking the bird's favoured spot. They also moved the position of the 3rd tee to limit the risk of anyone being injured by a stray golf ball. Thanks too to all the birders who adhered to the golf club's recommendations whose presence (and the warbler's) raised quite a sensation amongst members of the club who rather enjoyed being part of the whole birding culture.

Whatever the reason for its departure, the whole experience was the best leaving present I could have ever wished for and it will long remain in my memory as one of the most special birding moments in my life. It also now seems quite strange to me that of all the birds that could have turned up, a bird named Greenish Warbler should arrive on a golf course where I was a greenkeeper, where the golf greens are the main subject of my job and the main asset of the club and whilst I was out cutting the greens!

Since we received this article for publication we have heard the sad news that Antony Wainwright died in August 2014. His contributions to the Lancashire Bird Report will be greatly missed. Many Lancashire birders will have met Antony during the Greenish Warbler twitch and have been impressed by his welcoming manner and his enormous pride in finding the bird at his place of work. (Eds)

The History of Pied Flycatchers in the Lune Valley

John Wilson

The past status of Pied Flycatchers in the Lune Valley is difficult to assess. Both Mitchell and Oakes gave a nest in 1895 as the only record. Did early naturalists not visit the upland woods and so miss them? They certainly recorded Wood Warblers and Oakes mentioned one of the main wooded valleys, Roeburndale, as having a scattered population of this species which has similar habitat requirements.

I first visited Roeburndale in 1965 and found several Wood Warblers but no Pied Flycatchers. From this I think it is reasonable to conclude that few if any nested within the Lune Valley woodlands at this time, shortage of nest holes and competition for the limited number of holes with the earlier nesting tits possibly restricting the population.

In early 1966 we installed seven nest boxes in a steep-sided Sessile Oak wood, blocking the entrance holes of three of them until late April. Imagine our delight at finding two pairs, tempered to some extent when both nests failed. Over the next two winters Lancaster & District BWS members installed further nest boxes, making a total of 71 in four woods in Roeburndale and Littledale, and the Pied Flycatcher population increased to six.

Numbers built up slowly to reach nine pairs in 1970 and 14 the next year. They continued at this level until further boxes were installed early in the 1980s when the population responded, reaching 50 by 1989 and 61 the next year. Numbers of nest boxes were slowly increased but the population remained around the 50-60 mark until the mid-2000s when nest box schemes were started in nearby



Male Pied Flycatcher (Steve Young)

Hindburndale and two other woods, and the total population increased to reach a peak of 87 pairs in 2011 and 2014.

Productivity has usually been excellent with very few nests lost to predation, in 2014, for example, 76 of the 87 pairs successfully produced young.

There have been some interesting changes in distribution over the past few years. Three lower altitude woods have lost their populations, one was always marginal but the other two held up to 15 pairs in the 1990s. The higher altitude woods in Roeburndale and Hindburndale have had a corresponding increase, so the total population has remained high. Have birds been attracted away by nest box provision in the higher and possibly more attractive woods or are there some fundamental ecological changes taking place, making the lower woods less attractive? It was interesting this year that males sang in the two vacated woods but failed to attract females. One higher altitude wood has declined from six pairs in 2007 to just one this year. Over the same period Holly has become the dominant shrub layer; the Sessile Oak woods with the largest populations have little or no understorey and have a floor usually dominated by Bluebells or Ransoms.

Since the inception of the nest box scheme 9085 Pied Flycatchers have been ringed by the North Lancashire Ringing Group, mainly as nestlings but recently about half of the adults have also been caught.

Once established as breeders, adults generally return to breed in the same wood, often in the same nest box, only 15% have moved to other woods in the Lune Valley. A few females have moved outside the Lune Valley but very few do move further afield. One female ringed while nesting in Galway moved to our area to breed the next year, then north again to Cumbria the following year.

Ringing over the years has shown that just 3.9% of nestlings are recorded again. Of those that return to breed 34% do so to their natal wood, 50% move to other woods within the Lune Valley and 16% move further afield. Most of these are found in northern England with smaller numbers in Wales and south-west Scotland.

Birds ringed as nestlings elsewhere have been found breeding in the Lune Valley, mainly ringed just outside our area in Cumbria, North Yorkshire and Lancashire, but birds from Wales (2), Durham (3), Derbyshire, Cheshire, Staffordshire and Northumberland have also been found in our nest boxes.

Even more intriguing are some foreign recoveries. Pride of place must go to the only British-ringed Pied Flycatcher to be found in Italy, which was found dead on 15 May in central Italy, probably on spring migration. Birds recovered in Portugal and Morocco were certainly on autumn migration to the wintering grounds in Africa, while one of our nestlings was found breeding in a nest box in western Germany, and another was caught on spring passage on 4 May in The Netherlands and then 33 days later in a nest box in Denmark.

Continued monitoring will be needed to reveal if the trend to desert the lower woods continues. Nationally the species has been in decline, especially in Wales and south-west England but the total Lune Valley population has remained reasonably stable. The ringing group has been studying the caterpillar populations of some of the woods and hopes to extend this work into other aspects of woodland ecology to help understand the reasons behind the observed change in distribution.

So, from small beginnings this project blossomed and established this delightful summer visitor as a regular breeding bird within our area. There is little doubt that without the dedicated early work of especially Chester Mockett and Keith Woods this would not have happened. Their work has now been expanded by eight members of the ringing group. Many of the woods have a marked scarcity of natural holes and, of course, besides Pied Flycatchers, Redstarts, Nuthatches and tits, including Marsh Tits, have also used the nest boxes, helping to boost the populations of all these woodland birds.

Review of Caspian Gull Records in Lancashire

Chris Batty and Chris Kehoe

A review of all previously accepted records of Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans* in Lancashire has been undertaken by the Lancashire Records Committee, led by Chris Batty and Chris Kehoe. Until 31 December 1999 records were considered by the British Birds Rarities Committee, after which date this species, which was earlier considered to be a subspecies of Herring Gull *L. argentatus*, ceased to be considered a national rarity. Between 2001 and 2010 thirteen records of Caspian Gull were submitted, accepted and published in the Lancashire Bird Report, with a further record outstanding from 2013. All of these records are included in this review.

Since 1995 the identification criteria of Caspian Gull have been developed significantly, initially through the publication of original work by Detlef Gruber and Ronald Klein, with these ideas then popularised and refined by Martin Garner and Lars Jonsson. Chris Gibbins went on to systematise the characteristics of the species, in particular in respect of distinguishing Caspian Gull from hybrid Herring Gull x Caspian Gull, and ultimately produced a principal component analysis (PCA) through study of ringed birds of known origin (Gibbins 2011).

PROCESS

It was intended to use Gibbins's PCA to evaluate all records but to do so requires high resolution photographs and, although the fourteen records in this review included photographs, all were of low resolution: Caspian Gulls in Lancashire have simply not been seen well enough to rely solely on the PCA. In addition, these criteria are applicable only to adult or first-winter birds in winter, yet two of the Lancashire records were of other age classes (a juvenile and a second-winter), while one first-winter was recorded during May.

Therefore, the PCA alone was not considered satisfactory for this review and additional criteria from Gibbins (2010) were also taken into consideration.

In 2009 it was decided to publish accepted records of Caspian Gull in Lancashire in two categories: 1) fully accepted 2) accepted with a caveat, and this approach has been retained in this review. For the sake of clarity, and in accordance with the treatment of Honey-buzzard, these records will be published as 'proven' or 'probable' respectively.



**First-winter Caspian Gull, Whinney Hill Landfill,
23 December 2008 (Bill Aspin)**

ACCEPTED RECORDS

Category 1 (fully accepted)

- Fishmoor Reservoir, first-winter, 26- 27 February 2005
- Fishmoor Reservoir, first-winter, 17 January 2008
- Withnell Landfill & Fishmoor Reservoir, adult, 25 February 2008
- Whinney Hill Landfill & Fishmoor Reservoir, first-winter, 22-30 December 2008

Category 2 (accepted but the quality of photographs or the appearance of the bird do not allow elimination of hybrid Caspian Gull x Herring Gull)

- Seaforth & Crosby Shore, adult, 6-20 October 2001
- Fishmoor Reservoir, adult, 2 January 2009
- Preesall Sands, first-winter, 5-6 January 2010
- Skippool Creek, juvenile, 11 August 2010
- Fishmoor Reservoir, second-winter, 5 September 2010

Fishmoor Reservoir, first-winter, 3 November 2013

Previously accepted records that were found unacceptable on review

Seaforth, first-winter, 13 May 2008

Seaforth, first-winter, 29 March 2009

Seaforth, adult, 6 January 2010

Seaforth, adult, 1-8 December 2010

DISCUSSION

Of the Category 1 records, the first and last were acceptable as Caspian Gull according to the PCA.

The range of photographs of the remaining first-winter showed nothing to suggest hybridisation, whilst an essentially white underwing – considered by Gibbins (2010) as the single most important feature of Caspian Gull of this age class but not included in the PCA – and very dark inner primaries, considered unlikely in a hybrid Herring Gull (Ruud Altenburg in litt.), supported the identification.

The sequence of photographs of the adult included the correct long-call display, considered the single most important identification criterion of Caspian Gull by Gibbins (2010), but not included in the PCA.

The Category 2 records comprised two adults that looked convincing candidates but for which documentation of key features was lacking, a first-winter (Preesall Sands) that some members felt showed characters suggestive of a hybrid Herring Gull x Caspian Gull, a juvenile and second-winter that could not be scored against the PCA, and a first-winter (Fishmoor Reservoir 2013) for which the photographs were not of sufficient quality for it be considered a Category 1 record.

Of the four records that are no longer considered acceptable as Caspian Gull, photographs of the first show a very worn first-winter with a tertial pattern seemingly incompatible with first-winter Caspian Gull, while the remaining three records had incomplete PCA scores and an appearance that that did not allow the elimination of Herring Gull.

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**Adult Caspian Gull with Lesser Black-backed Gulls,
Withnell Landfill, 25 February 2008 (Bill Aspin)**

Earliest & Latest Migrant Dates

The table of first and last dates is a regular feature of the bird report giving an at a glance view of actual and expected first arrival and last departure dates. The table summarises the following information:

- ⦿ The earliest spring arrival and latest autumn records in 2013.
- ⦿ 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 1990 and 2013 (Note: previous analyses began with 1978).

Records of overwintering and sickly birds have been omitted.

	SPRING				AUTUMN			
	2013	Earliest	Mean	Trend	2013	Latest	Mean	Trend
Garganey	10/4	24/2/95	29/3					
Osprey	22/3	4/3/05	1/4	E	26/9	7/11/05	9/10	
LRP	17/3	8/3/10	18/3	E	25/9	19/10/76	16/9	L
Dotterel	13/4	29/3/89	22/4					
Whimbrel	14/4	11/3/78	8/4		3/10	6/11/88	6/10	
Common Sandpiper	11/4	18/3/11	5/4	E	9/10	29/10/77	12/10	
Wood Sandpiper	27/4	14/4/83	2/5		13/9	5/12/12	17/9	
Little Tern	12/4	12/4/13	24/4		22/8	3/10/03	14/9	
Black Tern	15/4	11/4/80	29/4		19/9	12/11/00	9/10	
Sandwich Tern	25/3	13/3/90	26/3		17/10	2/12/94	17/10	
Common Tern	8/4	30/3/07	12/4		22/9	17/11/77	14/10	E
Arctic Tern	10/4	1/4/94	15/4		13/10	18/11/11	11/10	
Cuckoo	16/4	23/3/00	16/4	E	21/9	18/10/09	31/8	
Swift	15/4	1/4/04	16/4		23/10	4/12/63	7/10	
Sand Martin	10/3	24/2/90	10/3		6/10	13/10/72	4/10	
Swallow	20/3	10/3/97	21/3		12/11	31/12/86	23/11	L
House Martin	12/4	17/3/63	1/4	E	4/11	31/12/81	25/10	E
Wood Warbler	21/4	14/4/79	23/4			26/9/67		
Willow Warbler	8/4	19/3/90 & 11	29/3		10/10	18/11/89	12/10	
Garden Warbler	23/4	6/4/11	19/4		3/10	13/11/95	13/10	E
Lesser Whitethroat	20/4	8/4/11	19/4	E	25/10	23/11/99	3/10	
Whitethroat	18/4	6/4/65	16/4	E	2/10	23/10/90	1/10	
Grasshopper Warbler	9/4	7/4/11	16/4	E	5/10	5/10/14	18/9	
Sedge Warbler	17/4	27/3/03	11/4		28/9	14/11/96	30/9	
Reed Warbler	14/4	5/4/11	14/4	E	5/10	14/11/93	13/10	
Spotted Flycatcher	27/4	20/4/85 & 11	30/4		3/10	15/11/79	3/10	
Pied Flycatcher	16/4	7/4/11	16/4		25/9	3/11/01	22/9	
Ring Ouzel	22/3	11/3/99	21/3		14/10	11/12/00	6/11	
Redstart	13/4	28/3/68 & 12	9/4	E	1/11	10/11/82	3/10	
Whinchat	18/4	20/3/76	20/4		8/10	12/11/79	11/10	
Wheatear	9/3	26/2/03	11/3		20/10	27/11/11	31/10	
Yellow Wagtail	12/4	24/3/96	10/4		3/10	11/11/95	10/10	
Tree Pipit	11/4	17/3/57	4/4		30/9	1/12/12	4/10	

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 below. Since 2007 the BBRC has no longer been accepting paper records. Paper submissions, including sketches, should therefore 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:

Lesser Scaup, Brockholes Wetland, 15 March 2013
 Killdeer, Alston Wetland, 7 April 2013
 Lesser Scaup, Borwick Waters, 11 April to 6 May 2013
 Bonaparte's Gull, Red Nab, 13 July to 25 September 2013
 Two-barred Crossbill, Browsholme, 2 to 6 August, 2013
 Semipalmated Sandpiper, Knott End, 12 November 2013
 Baikal Teal, Crossens Out Marsh, 30 November to 11 December 2013
 Ross's Gull, Leighton Moss, 9 February 2014

The following records were found to be not proven by the BBRC:

American Herring Gull, Seaforth, 20 to 22 February 2011
 Citrine Wagtail, Seaforth 26 August 2011
 Black-headed Wagtail, Newton-le-Willows, 29 May 2013
 Siberian Stonechat, Hightown, 7 to 9 November 2013

The following record is under consideration by the BOURC:

Cackling Goose, south-west mosses, November 1976

The following records have been held on file by the BBRC:

Cackling Goose, Marshside, 25 October 2012
 Siberian Common Tern, Seaforth, 30 May to 21 June 2010
 Siberian Common Tern, Seaforth, 14 July 2012
 Caspian Reed Warbler, Jenny Brown's Point, 11 December 2011

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 and Olive-backed Pipit were dropped as national rarities 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	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	Olive-backed Pipit
White-tailed Eagle	(away from Chorley woods)	Red-throated Pipit
Golden Eagle	Red-backed Shrike	Serin
Rough-legged Buzzard	Woodchat Shrike	Common (Mealy) Redpoll
Red-footed Falcon	Chough	Coues’s Arctic Redpoll
Spotted Crane	Marsh and Willow Tit	Common Rosefinch
Corncrake	(out of normal range)	Lapland Bunting
Common Crane	Woodlark	Ortolan Bunting
Stone Curlew	Short-toed Lark	Little Bunting
Kentish Plover	Shore Lark	Cirl Bunting
American Golden Plover	Red-rumped Swallow	

A Hundred Years of the Lancashire and Cheshire Fauna Society 1914 - 2014

Peter Hornby

Describing and recording natural science developed significantly during the 18th century, exemplified by Gilbert White's classic *Natural History and Antiquities of Selbourne* published in 1789, and was further developed and refined during the 19th, culminating in the major works of Darwin. By the beginning of the 20th century the study of flora and fauna had become a popular pursuit, leading to a proliferation of local natural history societies in Lancashire and Cheshire, many of which are still active today, including the Nelson Naturalists Society formed in 1908.

With a thriving network of societies and field clubs covering much of Lancashire and Cheshire now established, a meeting of museum curators was held in Warrington in October 1913 at which Walter Tattersall, keeper of Manchester Museum, presented the idea of carrying out a faunal survey of the two counties. At a public meeting at the museum on 14 March 1914 the Lancashire and Cheshire Fauna Committee was founded, with SJ Hickson of Manchester University elected as president, Tattersall as honorary secretary and treasurer and a 20-member executive committee which included such luminaries as AW Boyd, TA Coward, AR Jackson, W Mansbridge and HW Robinson.

In 1907 WH Western of Darwen, founder of the Blackburn Field Club, began publishing *The Lancashire Naturalist*, a monthly journal of natural history and microscopy edited by Tattersall. It became *The Lancashire and Cheshire Naturalist* in 1914, partly in order to begin publishing all the Fauna Committee's papers and reports. It later became *The Northern and Western Naturalist* in 1926 until its closure in 1955.

The new Lancashire and Cheshire Fauna Committee's *First annual report and report of the recorders for 1914* appeared in the 1915 May and June editions of *The Lancashire and Cheshire Naturalist*, this journal in effect becoming the official organ of the committee, helping considerably to further its aims and objectives.

This first annual report referred to distribution of 3500 copies of a circular giving details of the proposed faunal survey of the two counties being distributed to natural history societies, field clubs, museums and town corporations. This resulted in subscriptions and promises of support from 14 societies (some still in existence), ten corporations, 35 individuals and sixteen museums, the latter offering to act as local receivers of material collected for the survey. No fewer than 23 recorders had been enlisted to deal with this material and they published 15 pamphlets giving instructions for the collection and preservation of the various groups of animals.

The first report noted considerable progress during the first year, resulting in "substantial additions to our knowledge of the fauna of the two counties". For example, a report on mites and ticks by JE Hull contained "114 species of mites of which three were new to science and an additional three new to the British fauna" and that his work "opens up an entirely new page in our knowledge".

Other reports were by JW Jackson on molluscs, R Standen on woodlice and chelifers, W Mansbridge on Lepidoptera, WJ Lucas on dragonflies and WM Tattersall on crustaceans and sponges. Reports in progress and promised were by TA Coward on the birds of Cheshire, H Bury on the two counties' Diptera, AW Rymer Roberts on their aphids, O Whittaker on additions to his 1907-08 lists of Hemiptera (true bugs) and JF Dutton on Coleoptera (beetles).

This outlines the wide range of faunal groups considered by the committee from the outset. The 23 experts recruited as referees in their specialist branches of zoology had begun confirming identification for 33 faunal orders/families and undertook to compile lists and reports on them. The first referees included TA Coward, AW Boyd and HW Robinson, many others came from universities and museums, notably from Manchester.

The first two Annual General Meetings at Manchester Museum attracted attendances of 50 and 60. A decision was taken to compile a bibliography of all publications on the two counties' fauna "showing what has already been done and what localities require special attention" and to bring information on all faunal groups up to date.

It was recognised from the start that some faunal groups were "classified as obscure or neglected" and that the field work would need to be undertaken by the referees themselves with small dedicated groups of observers and collectors.

The first ten AGMs were held at Manchester University, chaired by the President, SJ Hickson. Enthusiasm for their specialisms shined through the early referees' reports, one summing this up saying "useful work remains to be done and new discoveries made, a worker, even though his leisure time be very limited can achieve a great deal". Subsequent AGMs were held at a variety of locations with the attraction of examining the specimens at the museum or university and those brought in by members. Latterly, these meetings have been held at Martin Mere WWT and Mere Sands Wood LNR.

Two summer field meetings were introduced in 1918, commencing with a walk along the canal from Bardsley to Hollinwood, and expanded to six in 1919, held at the Peak Forest Canal near Marple, Norden near Rochdale, Whalley district visiting Sabden Valley, Hacking Wood and Billington, Burnley district visiting Heasandford, Extwistle and Cockden, and Cuerdley Marsh and the St. Helens Canal in Warrington. The Burnley meeting was attended by over 80 and a report and photograph in the Burnley Express and Advertiser shows women and men in equal numbers, all in very formal clothes. Only one field trip was held in 1920 "due to the high cost of railway fares prohibiting the holding of field meetings", and the 1921 report stated it would be better for members to "engage actively in the field work of their local societies and to further the aims of the Committee in this way". No more field meetings were ever held.

Manchester University Press took over the printing of the sixth report. Membership had

increased steadily since 1914 and in 1920 totalled 245 comprising 209 individuals, 27 societies and clubs and nine corporations, but subscriptions still only just covered the costs of expanded report publication. Membership peaked at 280 in 1938 and remained at 256 in 1961 before a slow, long-term decline set in.

Authentication of records has always been a source of contention as explained by Tom Coward's assertion about Barbastelle Bats in 1919, "The mere statement that it is rare by Forbes is reprehensible; either he knew of its occurrence and, if so should have given particulars, or he covered his ignorance by a statement without foundation."!

In the early years the number of species new to the two counties averaged 100 a year. In 1920, for example, the 132 new species comprised six Lepidoptera, 29 Diptera, 39 Hymenoptera, 17 fleas, 28 Hydrachnids and one Isopod. These new discoveries included a few species new to the UK and very occasionally new to science, including four beetles not known to the British Museum in 1922.

1930 was a milestone year when the *Check List of the Fauna of Lancashire and Cheshire: Part 1* was published. Edited by AK Lawson and dedicated to the late Linnaeus Greening who had conceived the idea, its 115 pages comprised check lists with notes on the frequency of occurrence for 22 faunal groups, compiled by TA Coward for vertebrates, and H St.J K Donisthorpe, H Britten, WJ Lucas, W Falconer, JE Hull, WM Tattersall, JW Jackson and H Friend for a wide range of invertebrates. It was noted that the checklist marked "the realisation of one of the main objectives which the Committee set out to achieve, an authoritative list of the fauna of Lancashire and Cheshire the majority of county faunas reveal a fairly complete knowledge of the birds, butterflies, moths, beetles and molluscs, but the remaining groups of animals are represented by casually acquired, scattered and isolated records or are omitted altogether. The 'Check List' shows a marked advance, the fauna of Lancashire and Cheshire has been more systematically investigated and is more completely known than that of any other two counties in the whole of the British

Isles, which must be a source of pride to the Committee."

The 1933 AGM reported that young entomologists were taking an interest in neglected orders and that the outlook for insect fauna determination was never so bright. Significant numbers of new species continued to be recorded, 147 in 1933. In 1936 it was agreed to take on the collection and publication of records of marine fauna out to the three-mile limit.

An interesting anecdote that exemplifies the difference in attitudes to wildlife over the period comes from the 1939-41 Zoological Report describing that, "... in January a Bittern was shot in the Lune Estuary, was eaten and proved excellent."

Annual reports had included occasional bird reports, a separate one for each county until AW Boyd compiled the first combined one for the two counties covering the period 1943-49. The two counties were then again detached in 1959 when Clifford Oakes compiled the first Lancashire Bird Report to be published separately, covering 1950-56. The next, for 1957, was compiled by Ken Spencer and reports have been published annually ever since.

Following the death of AW Boyd in 1959 the intended 1950-56 Cheshire Bird Report was never published but one covering 1957-60 was compiled by Lance P Samuels and Thomas Hedley Bell. Annual reports were published within the general report until 1968 when they began to be published by the Cheshire Bird Recording Committee, the forerunner of the present Cheshire and Wirral Ornithological Society, and the two counties' bird reports have been produced independently ever since.

NJ Ellison produced an updated check list of mammals, reptiles and amphibians in 1956, and revised check lists for other groups then appeared from time to time in the annual reports.

The Committee reached its 50th anniversary in 1964 and that year's report paid tribute to all those who had contributed as officers, referees and compilers of reports and check lists, written by JW Jackson, the only surviving founder member. The following year it was decided to change the name from 'Committee' to 'Society'

and the 'Executive' was renamed the 'Council' and slimmed down from 20 to ten members.

A general report continued to be published until the end of the 1970s but due to a lack of material has only been published three times since – in 1987, 1996 and 2004; this reflected the growth of specialist societies dealing with particular faunal groups, such as Butterfly Conservation and the Mammal Society, and the completion of the transfer of most other invertebrate recording to the Lancashire and Cheshire Entomological Society which had been founded in 1877.

The Society adopted the political boundary changes of 1974. These completely transformed the map of Lancashire with the loss of Greater Manchester, South Lakeland, the Furness Peninsular, a small area of north-east Lancashire, Warrington and Widnes, with only small areas of Yorkshire in eastern Bowland gained. These alterations meant that the political boundaries no longer matched those of the established vice-counties, the latter being abandoned for bird-recording purposes in favour of an invented new 'county', Lancashire and North Merseyside. Recording of most other faunal groups, however, continued to adhere to vice-counties. Although 'Cheshire' has been retained in the Society's title, in practice it now concerns itself almost entirely with Lancashire and North Merseyside. These periods of change resulted in a significant drop in the membership of the Society and the running of it was left to a committed few.

Production of the annual Lancashire Bird Reports has been the mainstay of the Society's activities for many years. Ken Spencer, having joined in 1947, acted as both report editor and county bird recorder from 1957 to 1977. Both roles were taken on by Maurice Jones in 1978 and he edited the bird report until 1995 and remained county recorder until 2001, with Steve White taking over these roles to the present day.

In the last decade of the 20th century, the Society was in a parlous position yet there was a desire from the Lancashire birding community to work towards a comprehensive atlas of breeding birds and an up-to-date avifauna. The Society was in need of some new blood, Frank Walsh

took over as Chairman and Dave Bickerton took over as Secretary immediately setting about the task of increasing the membership, creating a website and updating the look and feel of the annual Bird Report. These changes allowed the Society to produce three major ornithological works during this century: the *Atlas of Breeding Birds of Lancashire and North Merseyside 1997-2000* edited by Bob Pyefinch and Peter Golborn published in 2001, a comprehensive avifauna, *The Birds of Lancashire and North Lancashire*, edited by Steve White, Barry McCarthy and Maurice Jones and published in 2008, and the first survey of wintering birds and updated survey of breeding birds *The State of Lancashire's Birds: an Atlas Survey of the Breeding Birds of Lancashire and North Merseyside, 2007-2011*, edited by Steve White.

From its nadir in membership in 1997 (less than 70), the current membership stands at 140 though the recent economic climate has resulted in all but the National Libraries of England, Scotland and Wales dropping their long standing subscriptions.

The Annual General Meeting of 2014 was an occasion to celebrate the achievements of the society and a chance to catch up with long-standing members and former officers of the Society who were only too glad to share some of their reminiscences.

Ken Spencer considered Arnold Boyd the personification of the Society whilst Maurice

Jones and Harry Shorrock remember him as a commanding figure. Norman Ellison, being B.B.C. radio's 'Nomad', was the nearest thing the Society had to a celebrity. Alan Creaser recalls how lucky he felt to be in the company of so many well-known naturalists, several of whom contributed to the Manchester Guardian and Jimmy Chubb acknowledged the role of Arthur Lawson, the long-standing Secretary & Treasurer from 1924 to 1960. It's not unknown for the news of a good bird near to the venue of the AGM to provide the impetus to move proceedings along; in 1947 it was two Waxwings near Altrincham and a 'first' for Boyd.

The past 100 years have witnessed a huge increase in the number of people actively involved in wildlife recording, for some faunal groups at least, many of which now have their own dedicated organisations. The Society's role in covering every group is long past. Recent technological advances have allowed instant access to bird records and the days when the annual report provided the only county-wide information are similarly long gone. Nonetheless, LCFS continues to play much the same role as it did in 1914, acting as conduit for the collection, validation and publication of records and co-ordinating county-wide surveys in partnership with national and local organisations. Long may it continue and thrive.

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).

Regional & Group Contributors

Alt WeBS	Gorse Hill NR report	Morecambe Bay WeBS
Birdguides	Heysham NR & Observatory	Rare Bird Alert
BTO/RSPB Birdtrack	Report	Ribble WeBS
Chorley & District Natural	LDBWS report	Seaforth Bird Report
History report	Mersey WeBS,	United Utilities
Cuerden Valley Park report	Merseyside Naturalists	
ELOC Report	Association,	
Fylde Bird Club database	MMWWT logs	

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		
LDBWS	Lancaster and District Birdwatching Society		
LWT	Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside Wildlife Trust		
SWLRG	South-West Lancashire Ringing Group		

Photographs and Illustrations

As promised, the 2013 report is full of colour images. Thanks to everyone for letting us use them. We would be delighted to receive further submissions from the growing number of Lancashire birders with high quality photographic equipment.



Common Sandpiper, Seaforth Nature Reserve, July (Steve Young)

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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