



LANCASHIRE BIRD REPORT 2015

Lancashire Bird Report 2015



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Lancashire Bird Report 2015 The Birds of Lancashire and North Merseyside

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Front cover: Long-tailed Duck, Crosby Marine Park by Steve Young

Back cover: Cuckoo, Cocker's Dyke by Paul Slade

Caspian Gull, Ainsdale by Steve Young

Introduction

Dave Bickerton

Another year and another annual bird report comes off the presses. As you can tell, we've continued with the full colour format and yet kept the price the same for another year. No other annual report can offer such good value for money - full of informative accounts and excellent images, recording the avian comings and goings of 2015.

Many thanks to all those who contribute their records whether it is individually or as part of a group or club. We obviously cannot include every last one; indeed, reams of Wren records, for example, are hardly illuminating, however they do help us put observations in context. Regular patch-workers tend to give us both their records and a species summary which can then be used to give a more accurate representation of the status of species in the area. They're also a pleasant change to spreadsheet lists! This is all the more important where an area isn't covered by a local report so I implore you to try and consider your local area and some of the commoner species, even if it's "no change".

We do get copies of regional reports such as those East Lancashire, Chorley, Lancaster and District and Fylde as well as site reports like Brockholes, Heysham and Seaforth. It is rather surprising that similar reports seem not to exist (to our eyes) for Leighton Moss, Martin Mere, Marshside and other notable locations. We therefore rely a lot on individual observations from regulars at these sites - so keep up the good work!

We also receive a plethora of records from the BTO/Birdtrack database that many of you use. There are some disadvantages with these data in that the records are not peer-reviewed and there is a lot of duplication however, for commoner species, the data can be analysed by grid reference or tetrad to give some view of distribution.

A special thanks again to Steve White for his diligent work in co-ordinating all the submissions and editing the report but also to the other volunteer writers who give up a considerable amount of their time in analysing records and converting them into something well worth reading.

The Lancashire and Cheshire Fauna Society continues to underwrite the publication of this annual review as well as publish newsletters for the Lancashire Moth Group and other reports such as the Dragonfly Atlas last year. A similar book covering the mammals, amphibians, reptiles and freshwater fish of Lancashire and North Merseyside is being prepared at the moment and once that has been published we hope to produce a similar atlas study of butterflies and day-flying moths. We are exploring joint-ventures with bodies such as Butterfly Conservation on other publications in the future.

Review of 2015

John Wright

January

For much of the month, the county was under the influence of Atlantic depressions. A sequence of particularly deep lows between the 9th and 15th brought stormy conditions, as well as plenty of rainfall. The second half of the month was colder. There were some sharp frosts with temperatures lower than at any time earlier in the winter or during the whole of last winter

The year began with a **Snow Goose** amongst **Pinkfeet** at Glasson on the 2nd and then on Colloway Marsh from the 5th to the 20th.

The Fylde coast then stole the show with a handsome **Great Grey Shrike** at Lytham Moss and the confiding **Shore Lark** continuing to draw admirers to Rossall Point. **Purple Sandpipers** roosting on the drained Fleetwood Marine Lake also proved popular as did a juvenile **Glaucous Gull** on the Wyre, which was often to be found looking for an easy meal at Fleetwood Docks.

An immature **Pomarine Skua** which appeared at Preesall on the 10th was attracted to all manner of tideline corpses during its stay between Knott End and Pilling. Unfortunately it was in poor health and was later picked up dead.

Marion Mere had a wintering **Firecrest** as well as **Long-eared Owls**, **Barn Owls**, **Water Rails**, **Cetti's Warblers** and a regular adult **Iceland Gull**. The icing on the cake was the finding of Lanca-

shire's third **Dusky Warbler** there on the 16th; only seen by the finder it disappeared into the reedbed and was not seen again.

Elsewhere, six delightful **Waxwings** trilling around the Whitehall area of Darwen on the 17th was the highest count of the year. Another species which appears in variable numbers is the **Bewick's Swan** and in a reasonable winter, by recent standards, 27 were at Hesketh Out Marsh and 19 at Cockersand.

February

At the start of the month the county was under the influence of cold northerly winds, but from the 5th to 12th high pressure became established bringing largely quiet, dry weather. The second half of February saw typical westerly weather, with fluctuating temperatures and some heavy rain and strong winds.

An upland feeding station in Rossendale attracted the only **Lapland Buntings** of the year with a peak of two on the 3rd. They must have made a lovely sight alongside twelve **Snow Buntings**.

Winterers remaining from 2015 included a **Long-tailed Duck** at Crosby Marine Lake and a **Great Northern Diver** at Rishton Reservoir. Another long-stayer was a drake **Scaup** at Fairhaven Lake which was joined by a **Red-throated Diver** mid-month. This diver appeared to have an injured leg but was otherwise in good health. Both these birds would fly off to feed on the Ribble Estuary but regularly returned and delighted many visitors.

Unusual geese were in short supply amongst the **Pinkfeet** but a family party of five **European White-fronted Geese** joined the **Greylag Geese** on the Eric Morecambe Complex. They soon became quite confiding and could often be found in roadside fields.

Very unusually the first **Gannet** sighting of the year came from the Ribble Valley when an exhausted individual was found at Dinckley and later taken into care.

March

At the start of the month unsettled Atlantic weather brought rain and strong wind at times. This continued with a succession of active depressions from the 5th to 12th, after which pressure built and the weather was more settled. The final week was again rather unsettled with rain or showers and some very strong winds.

Winter was still hanging on with **Snow Buntings** remaining on top of Pendle Hill, peaking at 30 on the 10th, and an impressive 777 **Eider** could be found off Heysham. The longer days did encourage a wintering **Great Grey Shrike** to start singing at Grindleton Fell.

Black-headed Gulls returned to their breeding colonies with massive roosts of 22000 at Belmont Reservoir and 10500 at Stocks Reservoir. **Meadow Pipits** also poured through from mid-month with 9000 birds over Fleetwood with the highest day count of 2053.

Perhaps the most remarkable movement started with the arrival of a male **Ring Ouzel** at Croasdale in Bowland on the 23rd. The numbers of migrant **Ring Ouzels** that followed delighted observers across the county. At least 50 were seen in the south-west, with a peak of twelve at Cabin Hill. In addition at least 60 were widely distributed across east Lancashire with a maximum of 25 on Pendle Hill. Whilst seventeen pairs settled to breed in Bowland the destination of the rest remains a mystery.

Hawfinch records were very scarce again this year so one at a garden feeder in Worsthorne on the 28th was a real surprise.

April

At the start of the month the weather was rather unsettled but within a few days a much more settled pattern became established under the influence of high pressure. This was interrupted



First-winter Laughing Gull, Seaforth, 5 April
(Steve Young)

for a few days towards mid-month, followed by more fine weather with some very warm days and plenty of sunshine across many areas. However, the final six days were unsettled and cold with some sharp frosts.

A varied month with birds from all points on the compass being sighted. A **Laughing Gull** that had been frequenting New Brighton finally crossed the Mersey on the 5th and was seen regularly at SeafORTH for the next two weeks; it was the fourth county record. Further excitement followed with a majestic **Common Crane** seen over the Mersey from SeafORTH on the 8th.

However, **Little Gulls** did not gather at SeafORTH or Crosby with the spring peak of 172 at Formby Point on the 9th. Another impressive sight was 123 **Red-throated Divers** powering north off Formby on the 16th.

A lovely surprise was a **Wryneck** at Cockersand Caravan Park on the 13th with another of these cryptic woodpeckers in a New Longton garden on the 18th.

Spotted Crakes are amongst the most elusive birds in the county but males gave their presence away singing at MMWWT from the 20th and at Leighton Moss from the 25th. An impressive 148 **Water Rail** territories were also located at Leighton Moss.

Surprises kept coming with a colourful **Hoopoe** in Garston Coastal Park on the 23rd. Great excitement followed with the discovery of the county's second **Pied-billed Grebe** at Leighton Moss on the 25th. Looking dapper in summer plumage it proved popular with visitors from far and wide.

Waders were on the move and a **Pectoral Sandpiper** was found amongst **Dunlin** at Marshside on the 30th. A coordinated **Whimbrel** roost count that evening yielded a county total of 1223 birds.

May

At the start of the month the weather was rather unsettled with some heavy rain. This set the scene for the month, with a predominantly north-westerly airflow bringing rather wet and cool conditions. There were only occasional short fine spells and daytime temperatures were particularly suppressed.



White-winged Black Tern, Lunt Meadows, 25 May (John Boase)



Pied-billed Grebe, Leighton Moss, 1 May (Stuart Piner)

Whilst the weather was uninspiring it could not stop a typically varied mix of sightings this month. A **Little Tern** at Brockholes on the 3rd was an unusual inland sighting for this species. Much rarer still was the summer plumaged **Grey Phalarope** seen at Stocks Reservoir on the 10th.

Continuing this displacement theme was a male **Eider** looking very incongruous amongst the **Mallards** on the River Ribble at Brungerley Bridge on the 13th. A singing male **Firecrest** on the Knowlmore Estate near Dunsop Bridge on the 22nd briefly raised hopes of a breeding attempt but it was not seen again.

Temminck's Stints arrived on cue at MMWWT on the 17th (alongside a **Little Stint**) and Hesketh Out Marsh on the 24th. Also on the 24th a superb summer plumaged **White-winged Black Tern** was at MMWWT before moving to Lunt Meadows on the 25th. It was the first tern to be seen on the reserve!

The breeding season was well underway for many species with 241 pairs of **Tree Sparrows** in the Pilling and Preesall area fledging a remarkable 1298 young.

June

An intense low pressure system at the start of June brought rain and unseasonably strong winds. After this, the month was typified by rather quiet weather. Much of June was rather cool in an often westerly or north-westerly airflow, but it became very warm at the end of the month.

Nightjars have been absent as breeding birds in the county for many years. Observers have been monitoring suitable habitat with the hope of a return and remarkably churring males were found at two sites in east Lancashire from the 5th.

Another exciting discovery was a beautiful female **Red-necked Phalarope** at MMWWT on the 6th; what was likely to be the same bird was seen at Newton Marsh on the 7th. Later in the month another was found on the Eric Morecambe complex on the 20th.

The **Curlew** is one of our most iconic species and concern has been raised about the rapid decline in many parts of its range. Thankfully, it appears to be holding its own on Lancashire's uplands where a survey revealed the evocative bubbling of 129 pairs on 29 Bowland farms.

There are a number of other species that appear to be in decline nationally and this is being reflected in the county. A breeding survey of **Wood Warblers** on United Utilities land at Roddlesworth Plantations identified one paired male and an unmated individual. In 2003 there were seven singing males in the same area and there may now be as few as 25 pairs in the county.

Cuckoos are also disappearing from many former haunts so action is being taken to identify the causes. A number of birds have been satellite-tagged and this now includes 'Larry' caught at Stocks Reservoir. His epic migration via eastern Europe to Africa and back to Bowland provides a fascinating insight into this much loved bird.



Wood Warbler, Stanley Park, Blackpool, 23 April
(David Moreton)

July

At the start of July there was a humid southerly air flow from the continent. This gave rise to high temperatures. After this, however, the month was typified by a westerly airflow bringing cool and rather changeable weather, with rain or showers for much of the time. There were only a few dry and warm days.

Our **Hen Harriers** once again became national headline news for all the wrong reasons. Seven breeding attempts led to just four young fledging; three of these died nearby. The disappearance of the adult males was a new low in the annual cycle of persecution and hopes for any progress seem further away than ever.

Another summer-plumaged **White-winged Black Tern** delighted observers at Leighton Moss on the 4th and a **Turtle Dove** was a nice find at Burscough on the 14th.

Caspian Gulls have proven very difficult to catch up with in the county. This changed with the discovery of an immature at Ainsdale on 20th July. This bird frequented the beach between here and Formby through to 2016 and was seen by many observers.

Quail are a scarce breeding birds in the county and there was a typical scatter of singing males with records at Billinge, Eagland Hill, two at Mawdesley Moss and three at Lytham Moss.

Breeding **Garganey** are often suspected but rarely proven so a female seen with two ducklings at Lunt Meadows on the 30th was very welcome news. Our most recent colonist the **Little Egret** had six occupied nests at Ashton Hall Lake and a second colony at Southport Marine Lake resulted in five well-grown young seen begging for food on the north island.

A pair of **Black Redstarts** at Holden Wood Reservoir was suggestive of a breeding attempt in Rossendale. Another exciting Rossendale sighting was a **Bittern** at Holmes Terrace Lodge on the 26th.

August

The weather during August was mostly unsettled and fairly cool, often under the influence of nearby areas of low pressure. Temperatures frequently struggled to reach average levels, although there were some warmer days. However, frontal systems brought heavy rain and thundery downpours, particularly during the second half of the month.

Spoonbills are found in the county each summer and after a single at Leighton Moss in June two appeared at Hesketh Out Marsh on the 1st and another at Conder Green on the 7th.

On the 2nd an immature **Ring-billed Gull** appeared at Preston Dock, often seen alongside a juvenile **Yellow-legged Gull**, it was readily attracted to bread and was seen here and in nearby Haslam Park until the end of the year.

On the 20th another Nearctic visitor appeared near Preston with an adult **Lesser Yellowlegs** at Brockholes. It soon moved on but was relocated on the Conder Estuary on the 23rd where it showed well for four days.

Birds on the move on the 23rd included six **Dotterel** at Hesketh Out Marsh; this was a most unusual autumn record as was the group of five **Sandwich Terns** at Parsonage Reservoir that afternoon.

On the 24th a **Marsh Warbler** was trapped and ringed at Heysham –the seventh Lancashire record. Even rarer was the remarkable discovery of a **Bonelli's Warbler** at Billinge Hill on the 31st. It was only seen *from* the Merseyside side of the boundary between St. Helens and Wigan but only *in* Greater Manchester, thus very narrowly failing to become the first record for Lancashire.



Bonelli's Warbler sp., Billinge Hill, 31 August
(Damian Pendlebury)

September

North-westerly winds brought cool and showery weather at the start of September. After this the weather was dominated by high pressure from the 5th until the 11th and again from the 25th onwards, which mostly brought dry conditions with plenty of sunshine. However, the weather was rather changeable from the 12th to the 24th, and it was a generally cool month.

With migration in full swing the month opened with a fine juvenile **Red-backed Shrike** at Sunderland Point on the 1st, followed on the 3rd by a **Pectoral Sandpiper** at Aldcliffe Marsh.

After a blank spring a few juvenile **Black Terns** arrived with up to five at Seaforth and two feeding at Mythop and roosting at Marton Mere. Also of interest was the third **Caspian Gull** this year with the county's first juvenile at Cocker's Dyke until the 16th.

On the 10th a remarkable find at Fairhaven involved two **Barred Warblers** and a **Wryneck** in the same bush! They stayed all day to delight visiting birders. The Wryneck was the third record of an excellent year for this species. It was the first to stick around and delighted or frustrated would be observers until the 15th. Also at Fairhaven a juvenile **Black-necked Grebe** joined **Little Grebes** on the lake on the 16th and stayed until the end of the month.

The third **White-winged Black Tern** of the year appeared on the Heysham outfalls on the 26th. This moulting adult stayed until the 30th and provided observers with another opportunity to catch up with this now annually occurring species.

October

For much of October the weather was influenced by high pressure bringing periods of dry, settled weather and some good spells of sunshine but with some overnight frost and fog. It was unsettled again for the last third of the month, but generally mild in a mostly westerly airflow.

Glossy Ibises have been regular in the county in recent years but there was only a single record this year. One flew north over Lunt Meadows on the 4th and was seen later that day at MMWWT.

Goldcrest passage was very heavy this autumn illustrated by numbers at two sites in particular. At Billinge Hill 336 were ringed during October and at Heysham 282 were ringed and sightings totalled 435, with peaks of 50 on the 4th and the 29th. The pattern of arrival and the controlled birds

that were processed indicated this arrival was of continental birds. Alongside the **Goldcrests** came a record influx of 40 **Yellow-browed Warblers**. Following huge numbers on the Northern Isles and down the east coast observers eagerly awaited their arrival. Sightings came from all over the county and this charismatic species and its distinctive calls brightened many days during the month.

Another eagerly awaited arrival was the return of the **Pink-footed Geese**. The coordinated count on the 19th saw an impressive total of 65116 throughout the county. The evocative sight and sound of their skeins are beloved by many people and never fail to stir the soul.

Amongst the 30000 **Pinkfeet** at MMWWT diligent searching produced four **Greenland White-fronted Geese** and two **Tundra Bean Geese**. Another **Tundra Bean Goose** joined **Pinkfeet** at Pilling Lane Ends.

November

It was a generally mild month with an often humid south-westerly airflow bringing cloudy conditions. It was dry and exceptionally warm during the first few days, with record-breaking temperatures locally. The rest of the month was unsettled and often windy, and the autumn storms 'Abigail', 'Barney' and 'Clodagh' all caused some disruption. There was a notable absence of frost.

The month began with a **Siberian Chiffchaff** trapped at Heysham on the 1st. This is a tricky subspecies to identify even in the hand but it was also heard giving its distinctive piping call.

Exciting news came that Lancashire had a first British record this month - although it related to a 39 year old sighting! The British Ornithologists Union Records Committee has added **Cackling Goose**, a newly recognised species, to the British list. They reviewed all previous reports and decided that the first acceptable record was on the south-west mosses from the 14th to the 28th November 1976.

One of the highlights of this year was the autumn influx of **Short-eared Owls**. It began at the end of August and by the middle of November there had been 22 records in the south-west with peaks of six at Hesketh Out Marsh and Hightown Dunes. Three birds at Lunt Meadows increased to eight during December. During the same period there were 70 records throughout the Fylde including five at Fleetwood.

After a relatively quiet year for the county's seawatchers the stormy conditions brought a small movement of **Leach's Petrels** on the 13th. This included singles past Crosby, Carnforth, Heysham, Knott End, Morecambe, Rossall and Warton.

December

December was an exceptional and record-breaking month. The county had unseasonably mild conditions and was also exceptionally wet and often windy, with frequent deep depressions and frontal systems – including storms Desmond, Eva and Frank – bringing record-breaking rainfall. Severe flooding affected many areas.

Firecrests were found at MMWWT from the 10th and **Fleetwood** on the 13th; 2015 was a very good year with 13 records of this little gem and hopes raised for future breeding attempts.

Winter roosts of **Pied Wagtails** were now gathering in town centres across the county with a peak of 653 at Bootle New Strand on the 19th.

High storm tides revealed that **Rock Pipits** are numerous on saltmarshes across the county in winter. Sightings at eleven sites in the Fylde was typical with a peak of nine at Pilling Lane Ends. **Water Pipits** are much harder to find although they share broadly similar habitat. The north shore of the Ribble Estuary and the Wyre Estuary have been traditional sites but Crossens saltmarsh was the only coastal location with records in the second winter period. Much rarer was the bird far inland at Belmont on the 29th, the first in the area since 1995.

The second **Siberian Chiffchaff** of the year was calling at Marton Mere on the 25th, a nice Christmas present for the observers. Five **Long-eared Owls** had also returned there for the winter.

The year closed with the **Twite** flocks at Pilling/Knott End peaking at 160 and at Southport Marine Lake at 107. The continued presence of these delightful birds on the county's saltmarshes provides a winter treat for many observers.

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

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

Fairly common breeding resident.

International importance: 2400. National importance: 740

Monthly Peak Counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	65	83	100	48	44	89	110	62	43	39	84	98
Ribble WeBS	33	18	47	81	112	84	56	34	71	50	36	46

The largest numbers were reported from the Fylde with up to 100 during the year at Thurnham and 53 at Sand Villa, Cockerham. Regular counts at Stanley Park, Blackpool peaked at 21 in May, 26 in June, 27 in July and 32 in August. Other peak Fylde counts include 68 at Glasson in August and 26 at Freckleton in October. There were 42 on the Conder Estuary on 16 July and 52 on 1 Oct.

Counts at Arkholme across the year included 20 on 20 Feb and 26 on 19 Oct. Elsewhere in the Lune Valley, 43 were at Melling on 4 April. Other peaks included eleven on 18 July at Middleton NR, ten at Lunt Meadows in September, and 52 on 30 Oct and 74 on 2 Nov at Brockholes.

The highest counts in the east of the county were five on the Leeds-Liverpool Canal between Salterforth and Foulridge on 10 Jan, eight at Rishton Reservoir on 23 Jan and seven (including five immatures) at Grimsargh Wetland on 27 Aug; the sighting of one on Belmont Reservoir on 26 March was notable for the area.

Breeding birds failed at Arkholme due to flooding and a pair lost eggs to trampling by ponies at Lunt Meadows although the replacement clutch was successful. Two Mute Swans were shot dead and one was injured in early September on the canal at Burnley. In the Chorley area the pair in Yarrow Valley Park produced three cygnets but the adult female was later killed by a dog, however, the male managed to raise the three young without any evident problem. The pair in Astley Park had at least four young but they suffered the same fate as last year's brood with two succumbing to infection and the remaining two were removed to a swan sanctuary for treatment.

BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus columbianus*

Fairly common but declining winter visitor.

International importance: 200. National importance: 70

Nineteen at Cocksand in January increased to 23 in February before declining to nine in March with the last three on 23 March. Elsewhere in north Fylde there were four in January at both Bradshaw Lane Head and Pilling Marsh, and three at Cockerham on both 24 Jan and 25 March. In south Fylde eight visited Lytham Moss on 4 Jan then five were seen at Warton in February.

The only records south of the Ribble during the first winter period were a peak of 27 at Hesketh Out Marsh on 18 Jan with the last five there on 14 Feb, up to 14 (probably involving the same birds) at Hundred End in January and 18 on 1 Feb, and five at MMWWT on 24 Jan.

The first of autumn in the Fylde was at Fluke Hall on 27 Oct, two were at Eagland Hill during November and four at Cockerham on 12-14 Dec. To the south one had a short stay at MMWWT on 13-18 Oct, while after the first at Hesketh Out Marsh on 27 Nov numbers peaked at 13 on 1 Dec.

WHOOPEE SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*

Common and increasing winter visitor.

International importance: 210. National importance: 110

Monthly Peak Counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	296	5	13	2	0	2	27	225
Cockersand	189	309	300	135	0	12	9	0
Over Wyre	232	47	0	2	0	56	158	236
South Fylde	40	57	66	1	0	2	24	35
Ribble WeBS	390	55	81	0	0	3	40	8
MMWWT	1220	1420	1640	32	13	361	871	1237

Numbers at the main sites in the table were broadly similar to the last two years and it appears that the fairly recent increase has now flattened out, although the count of 1640 at MMWWT on 4 March was very high for the time of year

Most reports of feeding flocks during both winter periods came from north Fylde; peak counts are presented in the table and included 309 at Thurnham on 10 Feb, 350 at Cockersand on 16 March and 236 at Eagland Hill on 23 Dec. Peaks on the north bank of the Ribble included 57 at Warton Bank/Marsh on 2 Feb with 66 there on 21 March, and 26 on Freckleton Marsh on 13 Dec; only single-figure counts were reported from Lytham Moss.

At Halsall Moss birds are attracted by the carrots and swedes spread on fields for cattle; 200 were there on 21 Jan, 110 on 19 Feb, 290 on 2 March and 169 on 11 March. One hundred and ninety eight were on Hesketh Out Marsh on 1 Feb.

A group of eleven were on Crossens saltmarsh on 2 April, 135 wintering birds remained at Cockersand on 5 April and five remained at MMWWT on 10 May. Four were at Arkholme in the Lune Valley on 24 Jan with seven there on 12 Feb and six on 27 March.

Inland migrants included seven flying over Stocks Reservoir on 20 Jan, 22 at Brockholes on 26 March, 30 north over Strongstry in Rossendale on the 14th, twelve at Belmont Reservoir on the 17th and 47 at Cant Clough Reservoir and Brunshaw, Burnley on the 22nd. The last spring report in the east was of twelve feeding on farmland in the Sablesbury area on 4 April. Coastal migrants included 34 at St Anne's and 15 past Rossall on 19 March and 32 past Heysham on the 22nd.

By 9 Oct 18 were at MMWWT, rising to 137 on the 18th, and five were at Pilling on the 12th, increasing to 26 next day and 49 on the 18th. Inland counts in October included two at Belmont Reservoir on the 16th, three on Stocks Reservoir the following day and 37 on the 27th at Lower Foulridge Reservoir.

Arrivals continued through November; 28 were on Lower Rivington Reservoir briefly on the 1st and 24 at Dean Clough Reservoir on the 2nd. Five were feeding at Bretherton Eyes on 26 Nov. There was a large increase in early December at MMWWT, where typically numbers peaked in December.

TUNDRA BEAN GOOSE *Anser fabalis rossicus*

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

One was on Altcar Moss on 1 Jan and then from the 2nd an adult visited Singleton, Mains Hall, Fleetwood Farm, Thurnham, Sand Villa and Pilling Marsh with Pink-footed Geese until 8 Feb. A first-winter at Mythop on 24-31 Jan relocated to Mains Hall on 12-15 Feb. The only other record in the first winter period was of up to three on the Eric Morecambe complex between 29 Jan and 1 May.

Later in the year two were at MMWWT and other sites south of the Ribble from 5 Oct to 26 Nov, and single(s) were at Pilling Lane Ends on 11 Oct and Fleetwood on 14 Dec.



Tundra Bean Goose, Shard Bridge, 12 February
(Chris Batty)

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
Pilling	21250	14500	200	900	0	0	0	0	230	16020	7870	12585
Wyre Estuary	6650	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	2350	3260	/
Cocker's Dyke	3100	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	560	/	/
MMWWT	5500	4500	1110	/	/	/	/	/	15000	32520	11750	3700
Ribble Estuary	3001	907	5901	2827	30	4	2	4	0	6476	6723	5916
Marshside	/	/	7800	2000	/	/	/	/	12364	20377	/	/
Alt Estuary	8700	5000	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	16710	12656	/
Simonswood	1800	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	3400	/

The coordinated roost count carried out on 18 Jan produced a total of 43923, more than half of which were in the Pilling-Cockerham area. An early evening count over Birkdale on 9 Oct logged 10084, mostly coming from the mosses and heading onto Birkdale Beach.

Significant counts of feeding birds in the early year included 20000 or so in the Pilling-Cockerham area, 8000 on Crossens Outer, 5190 on Altcar Moss, 6000 on Aldcliffe Marsh, 5000 on Plex Moss, 4100 on Scarisbrick Moss, 4000 on Banks Marsh and at Thurnham, 3200 at Mythop, 3000 at Halsall Moss, Little Altcar and Blundellsands, 2500 on Hesketh Out Marsh and at Lydiate, and 1000 on Colloway Marsh and at Crawford.

A few stragglers remained on the Ribble throughout the summer but the first returning birds appeared in the second week of September. Numbers grew rapidly during the month with most being seen south of the Ribble (see above), while a further burst of migration brought larger numbers into north Fylde in October, when the coordinated count on the 19th saw a total of 65116 throughout the county with very similar numbers also present in November.

Rather few records of feeding flocks were received during the second half of the year; they included 15000 in the Lydiate/Homer Green area in early October, 3600 in the Crawford/Holiday Moss area on 8 Oct, 10000 at Lathom on the 13th, 20000 at Eagland Hill on the 15th, 5000 on Lytham Moss on the 18th, 2000 at Mythop on 7 Dec, 1500 at Walmer Bridge on the 27th and 4000 on Hesketh Out Marsh during October and November. In Chorley 3000 were feeding on Mawdesley Moss on 10 Oct with 2000 on Croston Moss on the 12th, while 1000 were on Bretherton Eyes on 8 & 9 Nov.

As usual there was a large number of reports from all parts of the county of overflying birds at both ends of the year.

GREENLAND WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons flavirostris*

Uncommon winter visitor.

None was recorded in the early year but later up to four were seen south of the Ribble, most regularly at MMWWT, between 4 Oct and 5 Dec, and two adults with three juveniles were on Aldcliffe Marsh on 16 Nov.

EUROPEAN WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons albifrons*

Uncommon winter visitor.

Five were on the Eric Morecambe complex between at least 14 Feb and 8 March, six at Arkholme on 24 Jan, and singles at Singleton on 2 Jan, on Aldcliffe Marsh on 19-21 Jan, at Thurnham/Glasson on 11-16 Feb, in the Pilling area on 4-10 Feb and at MMWWT on 8 Feb.

A first-winter on Hutton Marsh on 15 Nov was the only record later in the year.

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

Feral: uncommon breeder and common winter visitor. Wild: scarce winter visitor. Amber List (localised winter distribution). National importance: 1400

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
EMC/LM	420	355	245	45	70	130	205	28	340	132	375	620
Arkholme	323	209	80	60	24	7	297	463	130	248	342	120
Brockholes	14	6	13	29	7	16	0	1	2	6	0	17
Stocks Res.	118	59	70	32	86	234	180	8	9	29	112	119
Ribble WeBS	75	180	30	20	88	71	192	113	184	80	141	122
MMWWT	500	100	100	/	/	2	/	/	500	300	/	120

The Lancaster & District January survey logged a total of 1143 birds. Large counts away from those in the table included 300 on Aldcliffe Marsh on 20 July with 800 there on 27 Nov, 500 at MMWWT in January and September, 290 at Marshside on 23 July, 149 at Alston Reservoirs on 24 Oct, 130 off Sunderland Point on 1 Sept, 100 at Cophthorne on 4 Feb and Hesketh Out Marsh on 1 Dec – and 100 or more at several north Fylde sites, notably 272 at Little Singleton on 14 Sept.

A total of 74 pairs nested on the RSPB's northern reserves: 40 at Leighton Moss, 14 on the Eric Morecambe complex, 16 at Barrow Scout and four on Silverdale Moss. Breeding away from Leighton Moss did not involve large numbers of birds, with four pairs at Marshside/Crossens and three at Stocks and Upper Rivington Reservoirs the most reported. Elsewhere breeding was reported at Caton Moor, Grimsargh Wetland, the Dunsop Valley, Marton Mere and Lunt Meadows.

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

Common breeding resident.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Arkholme	146	176	6	1	1	0	12	114	/	47	147	43
Stocks Res	260	15	66	45	69	325	311	248	111	253	200	26
Jackhouse Res	115	108	61	50	52	61	45	143	179	220	75	133
Parsonage Res	120	95	28	/	/	/	/	120	155	/	/	/
Rishton Res	460	283	27	20	/	/	25	50	2	185	50	125
Belmont Res	20	36	42	42	23	65	65	30	31	36	25	28
Grane Res	/	110	50	82	85	177	189	281	148	29	145	145
Brockholes	66	79	78	78	116	84	134	105	47	22	36	31
Ribble WeBS	951	534	291	154	211	1029	889	881	1042	2397	1423	3062
Seaforth	48	5	15	20	18	240	150	30	403	3	7	26

Other counts of 100 or more included 775 on the Ribble west of Preston Dock on 11 Sept, 570 at MMWWT on 6 Sept, 450 at Freckleton Naze on 2 Feb, 250 on Bretherton Eyes on 7 Sept and Lunt Meadows on 2 Oct, 242 at Little Singleton on 2 Nov, 224 on Barrowford Reservoir on 31 Aug, 207 on Whitemoor Reservoir on 31 Jan, 200 at Altham on 7 Sept and Upper Foulridge Reservoir on 28 June, 150 on Mawdesley Moss on 4 Oct and Aldcliffe Marsh on 27 Nov, 144 at Arkholme on 21 Jan, 130 migrants off Rossall Point on 1 June and 112 on Newton Marsh on 6 Sept. Around 200 were spread over Liverpool's park lakes during both winter periods.

Only eight pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir with none fledged due to the continuing control measures which resulted in 51 eggs 'pricked' and 18 adults shot in 2015. The population at Belmont has been pegged back to the level of the mid-1980s and is now well below the peak of 54 breeding pairs in 2004.

Elsewhere in the West Pennine Moors continuing licenced control by egg 'pricking' on 25 United Utilities reservoirs/water bodies underlined the on-going decline in breeding numbers with just 16 nests totalling 83 eggs located (compared with 65 nests totalling 344 eggs controlled at the same 25 sites in 2005). The nests of birds breeding on the moorland plateaux are surprisingly difficult to detect with at least three pairs located in deep heather at up to 310m asl on Anglezarke/Withnell Moors.

In other parts of the county, 16 pairs bred at Marshside, eight at Rishton Reservoir, six at Blackburn Corporation Park and others at Hesketh Out Marsh, Grimsargh Wetland, Burnley Deer Pond, Stocks Reservoir, Ightenhill Bridge, Clowbridge Reservoir, Brookside, Jackhouse, Carr Mill Dam and King's Moss.

CAKCLING GOOSE *Branta hutchinsii*

Vagrant

The adult seen on the south-west mosses with Pinkfeet on 14-28 November 1976 (JG & PM Hall, M Jones *et al*) has finally been accepted by the BOURC as the first record of this now-recognised species for Britain.

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*

Wild birds, fairly common winter visitor; scarce feral breeder, fairly common in winter.

Wild Birds

Birds seen with Pinkfeet are assumed to be of wild origin. Four were at Crossens on 15 March with one there on 19 April and presumably two of these at Marshside on 14-15 Feb, and one or two were seen at various north Fylde sites between 3 Feb and 7 March and on Aldcliffe and Colloway Marshes on 5 Jan-21 March.

Similar numbers were seen during the second winter period, with up to three at various north Fylde sites from 8 Oct to 12 Nov, three at MMWWT on 17 Nov with one there on 10 Oct and 2 Nov and one at Aldcliffe on 2 Dec.

Feral Birds

Up to 35 from Blackpool Zoo were seen regularly at Marton Mere and surrounding areas.

The largest flocks were at Stocks Reservoir with peaks of 48 in the first winter period and 55 in the second, while peaks at MMWWT were 23 in January and 30 in November. No reports were received from Knowsley Park, where the MMWWT birds traditionally spend the summer.

Elsewhere, four were at Belmont Reservoir from April to June with one present until the end of the year, four at Brockholes in the early year, three on Croston Twin Lakes on 24-27 March, two at Alston Wetland on 2-3 March and singles at Grimsargh Wetland on 25 March, Jackhouse on 30 May and Towneley Golf Course on 10 June.

BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla*

Nine off Heysham on 10 Feb with two there on 7 May were too far out to be identified to subspecies, as were six off Fairhaven on 19 Dec.

DARK-BELLIED BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla bernicla*

Scarce winter visitor.

All records were of singles: in the Cockerham-Pilling area between 8 and 24 Feb, Thurnham on the 11th, Birkdale on the 25th, and Hesketh Out Marsh on 15 March.

An adult at Cocker's Dyke on 12 Sept, one at Cockersand on 3 Oct and two at Pilling on 29 Dec were the only records later in the year.

PALE-BELLIED BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla hrota*

Scarce winter visitor.

During the first winter period one was in the Pilling area from 8 Jan to 7 March with four at Cockersand and Glasson on 9 Jan. Singles on Colloway Marsh on 21-23 March and Aldcliffe Marsh on 17 March, while two at Heysham on 4 Feb were the other records in the north of the county; singles at Marshside on 18 Jan and 6-7 April were the only ones south of the Ribble all year.

Two past Rossall Point on 7 Oct and one to two in the Pilling-Cockerham area from 14 to 16 Nov were the only late year records.

SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

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

International importance 3000; National importance 610.

Monthly Peak Counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	1938	1356	911	732	408	424	31	50	1048	1103	1083	1561
Ribble WeBS	1727	600	909	1705	1346	1355	861	887	1044	5415	2126	1880
Alt WeBS	213	251	148	96	97	159	54	0	355	271	319	445
MMWWT	880	600	400	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	624

The October count on the Ribble Estuary came out of the blue since the annual peak has hovered fairly consistently around the 3000 mark for the last 15 years. It was the estuary's first count of over 5000 since December 1993 and the second highest ever on record. The slight decline noted in Morecambe Bay last year continued in 2015. While nowhere near as numerous as on the Ribble or in Morecambe Bay, a gradual increase continues to take place on the Alt Estuary.

The majority of sightings in east Lancashire again occurred between March and June. The largest counts in the area were 16 at Grimsargh Wetland in February and 23 flying west over Burnley on 8 July. No breeding was suspected. The largest count from the Chorley area was of 53 at Bretherton Eyes on 5 March.

As usual, breeding occurred at a number of coastal sites and more occasionally inland but few records were received. At least four broods were seen at Seaforth and an estimated ten pairs bred at Marshside.

MANDARIN DUCK *Aix galericulata*

Uncommon feral resident and escapee.

Birds were reported from ten locations in east Lancashire with a maximum of five seen at Stocks Reservoir and Wanless Water, while up to three were at Slaidburn. Breeding was confirmed at Lower Foulridge Reservoir where a female was seen with six ducklings.

In the Chorley area birds were at Eccleston, Croston and Arley NR, where there were six in January. Breeding was confirmed at Yarrow Valley Park when a female was seen with five young on 24 June.

In the Liverpool area two were at Sefton Park in late summer with one still there in December. Singles were on the Leeds-Liverpool Canal in Liverpool at Sandhills and at Princes Park in August. At traditional sites on the Fylde three were recorded at Singleton and singles were reported from Skippool Creek, Hollowforth and Myerscough Quarry.

WIGEON *Anas penelope*

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

International importance 15000, National importance 4400.

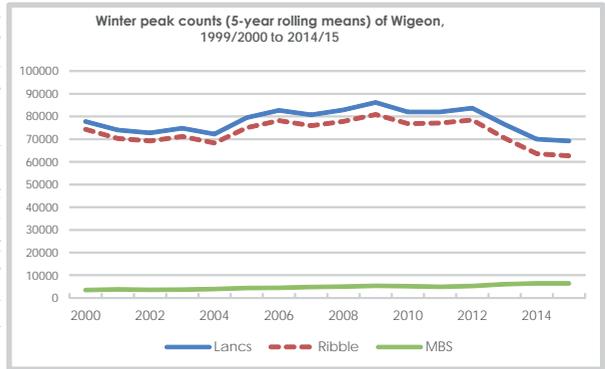
Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	3603	3117	1296	6	0	5	1	1	242	619	2119	4686
L Moss/EMC	1800	380	180	25	1	3	2	4	31	90	160	166
Ribble WeBS	29050	17090	3892	12	13	8	2	2	5855	30363	19618	34367
MMWWT	1500	2000	10000	6	2	2	0	1	10	150	550	1036
Stocks Res.	64	118	34	2	0	0	1	7	4	52	29	22

The annual peak on the Ribble was the lowest since 1987, continuing a huge decline since 2008 that has gone well beyond the usual fluctuations seen every three to four years. By contrast, while not reaching the record levels of 2012 and 2014, numbers in Morecambe Bay were in line with the recent five-year average. The standout figure, however, came from MMWWT in March, where typical annual peaks in recent years have been at around 1500-2000 birds.

Widespread in very small numbers in east Lancashire, the only sites to achieve double figures aside from Stocks Reservoir were Foulridge Reservoirs with 35 on 28 Oct and Alston Wetland with 66 in February.

Despite birds being present at Leighton Moss, MMWWT, Marshside and Newton Marsh during the breeding season, these were thought to be injured or not well enough to migrate rather than breeding birds.



GADWALL *Anas strepera*

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

International importance 600; National importance 250.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L Moss/EMC	144	52	36	32	18	36	24	44	95	105	104	26
Brockholes	75	86	52	17	8	27	14	9	25	73	72	120
Ribble WeBS	1	10	32	24	36	21	37	42	43	10	24	12
MMWWT	10	10	3	8	6	5	2	10	10	56	12	19

Following a couple of poor years there were much better numbers in both winter periods at both Leighton Moss and Brockholes. Very few records were received from MMWWT; in fact the 56 counted on 10 Oct was the only record of more than 20 birds. Relatively few were reported from Marshside, the peak being 50 in December. The 54 at Stanley Park, Blackpool on 14-15 October was a record count for the Fylde.

Breeding numbers at the county's key sites included 18 pairs at Marshside and an impressive 46 pairs across Leighton Moss and the other RSPB Morecambe Bay reserves. Young were also noted at Mythop.

A rather unusual record consisted of five at Belmont Reservoir on 16 June, one of only two sightings in the West Pennine Moors all year. The peak counts from east Lancashire again came from Grimsargh Wetland, with 24 on 3 Sept and 46 on 18 Oct.

TEAL *Anas crecca*

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

International importance 5000; National importance 2100.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	1491	574	459	93	0	3	0	15	714	1233	1309	1446
Leighton Moss	737	174	178	82	0	6	4	141	142	744	252	865
Ribble WeBS	5089	2715	1449	200	2	0	17	235	648	1400	3711	2600
MMWWT	2500	1900	275	54	8	/	20	400	900	1411	400	2500
Marton Mere	200	100	10	15	0	0	0	2	25	15	190	300
Seaforth	471	157	50	31	1	1	1	59	111	350	400	418
Stocks Res.	500	400	60	39	14	2	11	25	225	700	250	400

While a bit better than last year, the Ribble Estuary population continues to decline and is now close to losing its international importance status. Sites with good numbers not mentioned in the above table include a new site record of 330 at Belmont Reservoir on 2 Jan, 450 at Lunt Meadows in Sep-

tember, 280 at Warton Flood on 13 Nov, 700 at Mythop Grange on 6 Dec and 570 at Silverdale Moss on 16 Dec.

One pair nested at Belmont Reservoir but was unsuccessful. Two pairs bred at Marshside with at least one brood of well-grown young seen. Other sites where several birds were seen during the breeding season in apparently suitable habitat included MMWWT, Leighton Moss, Newton Marsh and Mythop but breeding was not confirmed at any of these sites.

Given the number of summering birds across the county it is difficult to pinpoint the first autumn migrants. Aside from at MMWWT, where there were 110 on 3 Aug increasing to 400 on 25th, the first major arrival of passage or wintering birds was seen in the first week of September. At Hesketh Out Marsh 350 on 1 Sept had built to 800 on the 6th. This was followed by other sizeable flocks of 1060 at Leighton Moss on 12 Sept and 590 at Pilling Lane Ends on the 13th.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL *Anas carolinensis*

Vagrant.

Males were at Stocks Reservoir from 12 Feb to 3 April and briefly at Leighton Moss on 28 Feb and 1 March.

Another male was at MMWWT on 11 & 29 Oct before being seen intermittently from 21 Nov into 2016.

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*

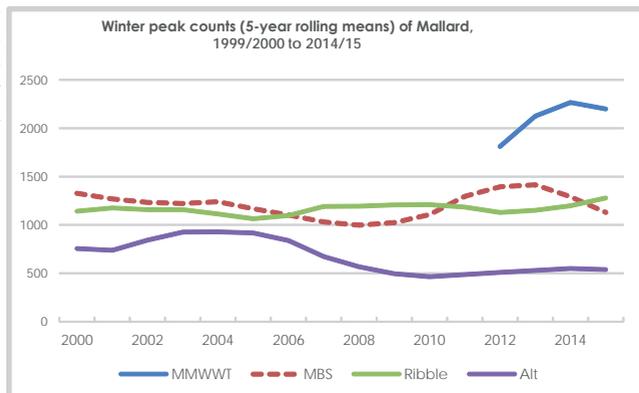
Common and widespread winter visitor and breeding resident. Amber List (declining winter population). International importance 20000; national importance 6800.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	480	334	155	135	119	229	173	206	817	503	298	610
Leighton Moss	72	120	69	37	28	130	397	615	139	205	68	88
Ribble WeBS	984	1025	640	310	436	460	696	417	798	758	1296	871
MMWWT	2000	2000	/	12	/	24	/	/	2100	964	400	2150
Alt WeBS	281	218	41	18	38	31	34	191	117	205	247	265
Stocks Res.	300	441	55	71	32	203	500	235	240	592	328	670

After a poor year in 2014 numbers bounced back at MMWWT, although there were still large gaps in recording as the table shows. Numbers on the Ribble have been very static for five years but in Morecambe Bay are at a lower level than before 2012. Good counts from sites not included in the table above included 170 at Mere Sands Wood in February, 185 at Belmont Reservoir in November and 240 on Savick Brook at Longridge in December.

Breeding was very widespread but selected highlights included an estimated 75 pairs at Leighton Moss, 44 pairs at Marshside and eleven at Hesketh Out Marsh.



PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

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

International importance 600; National importance 290.

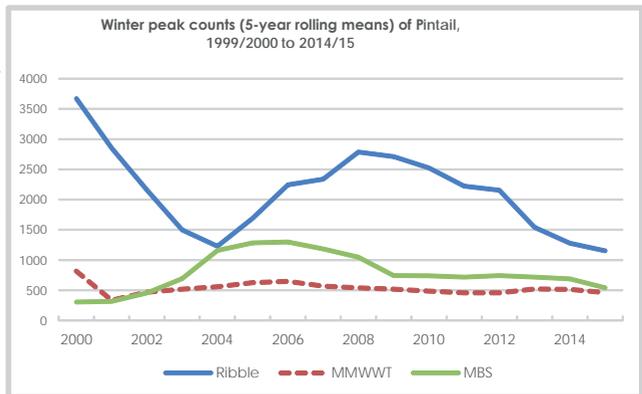
Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	161	167	93	10	0	0	0	0	143	312	230	565
L Moss/EMC	40	100	12	13	4	2	0	0	1	7	6	5
Ribble WeBS	1481	551	125	2	0	0	0	0	0	120	571	598
MMWWT	290	235	6	20	1	0	0	0	2	5	50	40
Stocks Res	152	102	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	24	188

Following three bad years 2015 saw an improvement on the Ribble Estuary, although the January figure was still nowhere near the level of the 1990s. While only incomplete counts were received, numbers at MMWWT were apparently the lowest since 1998.

An early returning bird appeared at Skippool Creek on 20 July. Some early winter passage was noted off Heysham peaking between 9-16 Nov with a maximum of 49 on the 13th.

As usual, a number of short-lived influxes were responsible for the impressive numbers at Stocks Reservoir. Pintails remain scarce elsewhere in east Lancashire, with just three at Alston Wetland on 24 Feb and records of singles seen usually briefly at four other sites. They are similarly scarce in the Chorley area, so five on the December floods at Bretherton Eyes was a good record.

**GARGANEY** *Anas querquedula*

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

The first birds of the spring were a male at Marshside on 9 April and a pair past Rossall Point the next day. On the Fylde, single spring males were at Newton Marsh from 3-7 May and Mythop on 27-28 May. One was at Leighton Moss on 26 April to 5 May. A late male was on a flood at Saltcotes on 11-12 June.

Single males were at Marshside on 3 & 8 May and two new males arrived on the 10th with one remaining until the 17th. Another male there on 4 June was followed by a pair on the 14th but there was no evidence of successful breeding.

Breeding was confirmed at Lunt Meadows; up to three males and a female were present from late May into June and mating was observed on 4 June. A female was seen with two juveniles on 30 July and a group of four on 3 Aug was thought to contain three juveniles. While not conclusive, sightings of up to two birds at Leighton Moss on three dates in July raises the possibility of successful breeding occurring there as well.

Autumn passage started with singles at Myerscough Quarry on 27 July and Aldcliffe on the same day, lingering until 10 Aug. These were followed by up to three at Marton Mere from 20 Aug until 7 Sept. Other sightings consisted of singles at Newton Marsh on 1-6 & 20 Sept and two at Fleetwood on 11-13 & 25 Sept. One or two were seen occasionally at Leighton Moss between 30 Aug and 29 Sept with the last of the year there on 28 Oct.

SHOVELER *Anas clypeata*

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

International importance 400; National importance 180.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	45	0	54	14	9	2	0	6	7	12	5	105
Leighton EMC	73	12	32	26	6	11	4	28	64	159	146	95
Marton Mere	10	8	11	0	0	1	1	23	58	47	22	13
Ribble WeBS	249	196	85	38	13	2	2	4	18	32	123	214
MMWWT	/	20	/	20	6	9	14	25	20	11	40	20

The Ribble Estuary population showed a significant improvement on last year in both winter periods. Similarly, the second winter period saw an increase on 2014 at Leighton Moss, albeit not reaching the levels of previous years.

The increase in both the number of records and the number of birds in east Lancashire seems to be continuing; a total of 100 records were received from all months except June and July, compared to 56 in 2014, the best being 15 at Grimsargh Wetland on 18 Oct. Seven seen on Anglezarke Reservoir on 13 Dec during a WeBS count was unusual for the site.

The best breeding site was Leighton Moss with 19 pairs; twelve pairs bred at Marshside and four pairs at Newton Marsh.



Male Shoveler, Seaforth, 15 January (Steve Young)

POCHARD *Aythya ferina*

Common winter visitor, scarce breeder. Red 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	110	82	26	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	43	59
Leighton Moss	/	55	30	23	23	9	0	3	1	0	0	0
MMWWT	40	22	13	6	1	/	/	5	/	9	6	2
Seaforth	37	47	18	2	1	3	1	1	5	8	18	19
Stocks Res	11	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	11	20

There is no sign of any improvement in the fortunes of this dramatically declining duck. It is no surprise that its UK status has been revised from Amber to Red listed and globally the IUCN have

changed its status from Least Concern to Vulnerable. In contrast to the table above, in 2008 there were six sites that recorded more than 100 birds.

The most recorded on the Fylde were eight at Fleetwood Nature Park on 11 Jan and 8 Feb, and seven at Stanley Park, Blackpool on 1 Jan. The only record from the central West Pennine Moors was a single on Wayoh Reservoir in December.

Leighton Moss was the only site reporting any breeding birds, totalling 22 pairs, although no young were seen.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

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

International importance 1200; National importance 1100.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dockacres	98	170	35	0	0	0	0	0	0	44	85	146
Leighton Moss	10	62	62	46	26	8	8	20	3	0	1	6
Glasson	50	52	18	22	3	7	2	2	8	16	44	25
Brockholes	103	76	84	42	23	18	33	33	38	46	52	54
Ribble WeBS	57	108	69	40	40	48	33	9	25	18	37	124
Stanley P, Bl'pool	53	30	37	11	6	2	3	14	27	49	70	18
MMWWT	40	12	50	10	8	5	/	15	/	5	11	10
Stocks Res	52	41	/	6	2	3	15	24	8	11	40	89

The largely mild winters, especially late in the year, meant that many birds choose to stay further north and east in Europe. Most of the key sites therefore recorded lower numbers than usual. Given that water levels were significantly reduced at Leighton Moss compared to previous years it was no surprise that most birds relocated to Dockacres.

Away from the sites in the table, there were 173 at Southport Marine Lake on 26 Jan and 84 at Seaforth on 29 Aug. Thornton ICI Reservoir had 44 in September and 50 in November; there were 41 at Rishton Reservoir in February and small numbers were recorded at Middleton NR, the peak being 26 on 21 Feb. The largest count from the Chorley area was 20 at Croston Twin Lakes on 2 Jan while the peak West Pennine Moors count was 19 on Wayoh Reservoir on 11 Jan. No records were received from Ainsdale Sands Lake or Hesketh Park in Southport, sites that often produce some of the largest counts in the county during cold weather influxes.

An estimated 15 pairs bred at both Marshside and Leighton Moss, while at least twelve pairs at Lunt Meadows had a minimum of six broods. One pair bred unsuccessfully at Belmont Reservoir while another was successful in fledging young at Delph Reservoir. At least three pairs were present at High Bullough Reservoir during April with a female with six ducklings there in July. In east Lancashire breeding was reported from Brookside, Alston Wetland, Dilworth Reservoir, Grimsargh Wetland and Lee Green Reservoir.

SCAUP *Aythya marila*

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

International importance 3100; national importance 52.

A total of just seven on 11 January was the peak count at Seaforth with three there into late January and one remaining until 24 April. None were seen there during the second winter period. Just one record of four on 10 March was received from the other regular wintering site at Scaleshstones Point.

Fairhaven Lake had a long-staying male from 1 Jan until 2 Sept which, in the first couple of months of its stay, was sometimes also seen on the River Ribble. Scattered reports from across the county throughout the first winter period included singles at Southport Marine Lake on 11 Jan, Glasson from 18-24 Jan, Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park on 30 Jan, Rossall Point on 4 Feb and Marshside on 17 March.

A juvenile arrived at Stocks Reservoir on 29 Aug and remained to 11 Sept. Brockholes hosted a first-winter female from 25 Oct to the end of the year, joined by an adult male on 28 Oct and then

another first-winter female on and off from 21 Nov to 27 Dec. A female was at Lunt Meadows 14 Dec to at least the 23rd. On 27 Dec there was also a first-winter female at Stocks Reservoir.

There were reports of one or two occasionally off Jenny Brown's Point in October and Stone Jetty, Morecambe, in November and four reports of single birds at Fleetwood and Rossall Point.

AYTHYA HYBRIDS

The returning female Pochard x Ferruginous Duck, seen at Brockholes since 2007, was there occasionally between 4 Jan and 21 March.

EIDER *Somateria mollissima*

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

International importance 12850; national importance 550.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	94	147	174	275	130	142	152	90	172	371	44	40
Heysham	180	320	777	238	120	/	/	/	/	/	47	/
Rossall Point	55	62	137	28	11	0	8	0	4	12	40	37
Ribble WeBS	6	0	141	167	221	271	97	15	25	22	82	0

Very good numbers were seen off Heysham, no doubt birds that in previous years have been on the Cumbrian side of Morecambe Bay, but there were relatively few off Rossall Point compared to previous years.

There were also fewer breeding records than in recent years with just two broods seen on the Ribble Estuary, although the May WeBS count suggested that there were certainly many more nesting pairs on the remote marshes. Breeding was confirmed at Hesketh Out Marsh. Elsewhere, three broods were seen on the Lune at both Cockersand and Glasson and at least two broods were at Jenny Brown's Point.

While not unprecedented, a male on the River Ribble at Brungerley Bridge near Clitheroe on 13 May was a rare inland sighting.



First-winter Long-tailed Duck, Crosby Marine Lake, 18 March (Steve Young)

LONG-TAILED DUCK *Clangula hyemalis*

Uncommon winter visitor, rare inland.

A long-staying first-winter bird remained from 2014 at Crosby Marine Lake and occasionally Seaforth, remaining until 16 April.

A female or immature was seen off Blackpool North Pier on 16 Oct and another flew south past Rossall School on the 31st, followed by one at Rossall Point on 23 Nov.

The only record from the Sefton Coast was a female south past Cabin Hill on 14 Nov.

COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*

Common visitor to Liverpool Bay, especially in winter, although main flocks are hardly visible from land. Scarce migrant to inland waters. Red 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	12265	4000	1000	118	58	41	150	5000	1000	3000	5000	3200
Formby Point	295	3000	6000	46	31	41	400	350	6000	15000	2000	8200

As usual, numbers off the Blackpool and Sefton coastlines were highly variable but included some very large counts. Numbers in spring and early summer were a bit lower than in recent years but these figures have little real value as the vast majority of the Liverpool Bay wintering flock are found out of sight of the shore.

Continuing on from 2014 there was a notable lack of sightings from Heysham; normally recorded commonly on spring passage, sometimes in hundreds, this species was recorded on just six days in spring with a maximum of nine on 14 April.

There was one inland winter record of a pair at Clowbridge Reservoir on 13 Feb. Spring passage then began with one at Carr Mill Dam on 19 March. Whilst poor compared to recent years, passage continued with birds recorded at Alston Reservoirs, Coldwell Reservoir, Crook o' Lune, Marton Mere, Parsonage Reservoir and Brockholes before finishing with seven males at Stocks Reservoir on 22 May and a male at Aldcliffe on 3 June.

Return passage was again prolonged, starting with six at Stocks Reservoir on 17 June. The following sites had passage birds: Alston Wetland, Belmont Reservoir, Brockholes including 22 that flew west on 15 Aug, and Calf Hey, Clowbridge, Parsonage and Stocks Reservoirs. The last inland sighting of the year was a female or immature at Brockholes on 25-28 Oct.

VELVET SCOTER *Melanitta fusca*

Uncommon winter visitor.

A male was seen off Formby Point on 6 Feb. Early spring brought a number of sightings from Rossall Point and Blackpool: one was on the sea off Rossall Point on 14 March, two flew past there on the 27th and 29th and two flew past Starr Gate on 1 & 3 April. Finally, four flew past Rossall Point on 14 April.

Following on from the summer sighting in 2014, a female flew past Starr Gate on 23 Aug. All the remaining records came from Rossall Point, two on 23 Oct, one on 23 Nov and two on both 9 & 13 Dec.

GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*

Common winter visitor.

International importance 4000; National importance 200.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	28	75	7	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	14
Lune Estuary	70	52	35	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	13
Alston Res.	18	14	5	6	0	0	0	0	0	14	15	12
Brockholes	21	20	24	10	0	0	0	0	0	3	8	14
Seaforth	20	29	35	18	0	0	2	2	2	6	18	22

There was virtually no change in peak numbers from 2014 at any of the key sites, although the best site in the county, the Lune Estuary around Glasson, has seen a reduction in numbers in the last few years.

The highest count from Leighton Moss was eight in February, while the Dockacres complex held up to twelve, also in February. The last of spring were at Seaforth on 23 April. The male that summered on the River Lune in 2014 again spent the summer here, usually between Crook o' Lune and Forge Weir.

The first returning birds of the autumn arrived at Seaforth on 22 July. The mild weather that dominated almost all the second winter period was no doubt responsible for the low numbers reported from all the key sites. Total numbers in the Chorley area probably never reached double figures.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator*

Fairly common coastal winter visitor. Scarce breeder inland.

International importance 1700; National importance 84.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	18	19	22	14	2	0	0	1	2	31	24	60
Stocks Res.	2	2	6	6	10	5	4	3	2	3	0	0

With the exception of the December count, numbers in Morecambe Bay were poor. The largest number seen off the Sefton Coast was 51 on the April WeBS count and 15 off Formby Point on 6 Feb. The only inland records away from the upper Hodder and Ribble catchments consisted of two females or immatures at Belmont Reservoir 20 Sept.

The first birds back in the uplands were a pair at Stocks Reservoir on 18 Jan. Three pairs were present here throughout early spring and breeding was confirmed when two young were seen on 23 June.

GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser*

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

International importance 2700; National importance 120.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	20	22	23	11	4	7	11	8	16	20	7	12
River Lune	38	8	21	22	18	4	12	9	32	17	5	18
Alston Res.	18	17	27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	25
Delph Res	57	54	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	16	51
Mere Sands Wood	45	12	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19

The largest numbers in the north of the county away from the sites in the table were recorded at Dockacres with 15 in February. The 57 at Delph Reservoir was a new site record and the consistently high numbers in February and December reinforced its place as the most important winter roost site in the county. Elsewhere in the West Pennine Moors up to 18 were recorded at Yarrow Reservoir, peaking in November. In the Chorley area there were 18 at Common Bank Lodge in February and March with 19 there in November.

A survey of the lower River Lune revealed eight territorial pairs compared to 2014's eleven. Unlike in recent years, breeding was not confirmed on any of the rivers of the West Pennine Moors. A territorial pair on the Yarrow in the Croston and Eccleston area in April was later seen with six young. Breeding was also confirmed in the Ribble catchment with juveniles seen at Dinkley, Hodderfoot and Brungerley Bridge. A female with young was also seen on the Calder at Altham Bridge and on 21 July 26 juveniles were on the Calder between Altham and Martholme. A pair also bred at Ewood Bridge in Rossendale.

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*

Scarce summer visitor to west, often in influxes. Occasional evidence of localised escapees.

2015 was a fairly average year with seven singing birds on just four sites, the protracted stay of some of these calling males suggesting that territories had been established.

The year's first at Billinge on 16 June stayed for just one more day before presumably moving on. Near Chorley, up to two birds were in song on Mawdesley Moss from 29 June until 25 July. On the Fylde, the Eagland Hill area of Over Wyre held a single singing bird from 23 July until 7 Aug and up to three were singing in the Lytham Moss area between 22 July (3 singing) and 10 Aug (2 singing), the latter date being the county's final record in 2015.

The lack of records from the south-west mosses is surprising given the good showing on the Fylde.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa*

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

Only two instances of successful breeding were reported in 2015, despite some 390 records from 213 locations being received. This amply highlights the artificial nature of the population with reports of large-scale releases coming from as far afield as Knowsley Park, Altcar Moss, Croston Moss, Oswaldtwistle Moor, Hoddlesden Moss, Easington and Pilling with undoubtedly many more elsewhere.

Thirty-four were recorded in the Lancaster Winter Survey with the two at Middleton described as 'arguably the rarest birds of the year' there! On the Fylde, breeding was confirmed at Pilling with eight young seen on 8 July and there were counts of 129 and 100 at Fluke Hall in September and November respectively, 70 at Ridge Farm on 20 Oct and 30 at Cockerham on 27 Sept.

Sightings were widespread in Bowland with 31 at Newton and 25 at Crimpton in January, 22 on Caton Moor in February and other double-figure counts from Whitendale, Tatham, Roeburndale and Marl Hill. The species is perhaps at its scarcest in east Lancashire where the highest count was just eight at Jackhouse in February. In the West Pennine Moors, 22 were on Hoddlesden Moss on 3 Feb, eight on Oswaldtwistle Moor in April with three pairs on territory at Belmont and one pair at Grane in the breeding season.

The highest counts near Chorley were 70 at Bretherton Eyes in December and 20 on Mawdesley Moss in August. One pair bred successfully at Lunt Meadows while elsewhere in the south-west only 75 on Plex Moss in September, 15 on Altcar Moss in January and 22 near Knowsley Park were of note.

RED GROUSE *Lagopus lagopus*

Common breeding resident.

Noteworthy in 2015 were records that indicated the extreme range of altitude occupied by this species in Lancashire. Three birds were on the 'county top' at Green Hill, Gragareth at 628m (2060ft) asl on 9 July with conversely several males on territory along the moor edge at Rigg Lane, Birk Bank at a mere 120m (under 400ft) asl on 16 April. The latter is below the lower height stated for this species in the 2007-11 Lancashire Atlas.

The systematic counts undertaken annually by the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust on four shooting estates in Bowland showed another further increase in the mean spring density to 86 birds/100 ha (up from 72 in 2014); the highest level since at least the mid-1990s. However, the poor weather in May and early June affected chick survival with the mean young/adult down to 1.6 from the 2.2 in 2014. This in turn significantly reduced the mean July density from the 212 in 2014 to 143 birds/100 ha in 2015. Reports indicated that shooting bags in the subsequent season in Bowland were well down on last year with the Abbeystead Estate reporting that they only expected to shoot grouse on half as many days as the 29 shooting days they undertook the previous season, while 35 birds were shot on Hareden Fell on 12 Aug compared with 80 on the opening day in 2015.

The widespread distribution across Bowland was illustrated by over 200 casual records received from over 60 areas of fell. Notable among which were 100 in Croasdale on 24 July, 56 in the Lancaster Winter Survey, 40 on Catshaw Fell on 24 April, 30 on White Hill on 24 July, 28 on Hawthornthwaite Fell on 3 Feb, 20 in Whitendale on 2 March and a very high density (estimated at 50 males/km) at

Clougha Pike on 16 April. No counts in double figures were received from the outlying Bowland fells but an impressive 55 were seen in snow on Pendle on 18 Jan.

In the West Pennine Moors, five territories were recorded in 50 ha of Belmont Moor and 22 territories in 100 ha of Darwen Moor in April. Young production was poor there as well with gamekeeper counts with dogs realising 90 birds/100 ha in a post-breeding season sample count on Darwen Moor in July. Later, just 21 were seen during a shoot on Belmont Moor on 15 Aug and 34 shot during a driven shoot on Darwen Moor on 19 Aug. At least nine were on Hoddlesden Moss on 11 Oct, seven on Haslingden Moor on 11 Sept and three on Musden Head Moor on 25 September.

No records of note were received from Rossendale or the Lancashire section of the Pennines.

BLACK GROUSE *Tetrao tetrix*

Extinct former resident. Now rare vagrant.

Recorded for the second successive year with a female on Grindleton Fell on 4 Jan (W Honeywell) and notably a pair on the edge of Gisburn Forest on 26 Jan (M Mackrill).

According to The Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust's Senior Scientist on Black Grouse research, Phil Warren, these sightings are significant as they confirm that Bowland is within the dispersal range of birds from the Yorkshire Dales population which is only some 12km distant. Range expansion is limited by the low dispersal capacity of males which move on average only 0.8km compared to 9.3km by juvenile females. Therefore, the (re)colonisation of suitable areas beyond the edge of the current range is being checked due to the absence of males despite the presence of females: Bird Study (2015) 1-6.

The Trust are currently looking into the feasibility of stimulating the species' range expansion into Bowland through extending their programme of wild translocation of males that has been successful in the Dales. It is particularly encouraging to the project that birds are already moving into Lancashire and thus any further work wouldn't create an 'isolated' Bowland population but one which is connected to the English range.

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix*

Common resident in the west, scarce resident in the east. Long term decline. Small scale releases in some areas.

2015 was a poor year for Grey Partridge productivity due largely to the wet weather at the peak hatching time in mid-June. However the number of records received increased to 390 from 340 last year, albeit the number of locations fell from 154 to 130. Reports of breeding pairs were received from some 70 areas, spread throughout the county, although only ten pairs were seen with young. Many more pairs must have been successful given the size and number of coveys in the second winter period with, in contrast to Red-legged Partridge, only relatively low numbers being released in the county.

In north Lancashire, the maximum was six at Aldcliffe on 13 Jan and pairs were reported from six sites including three areas of the Lune Valley. The Fylde stronghold again had a good showing with 112 records from 26 sites with at least 20 pairs reported in the spring and eleven double-figure counts including 33 at Fluke Hall in January, 26 on Lytham Moss and 13 at Mowbreck in October.

Sixteen at Hic Bibi and twelve at Croston Finney were the best counts near Chorley. On the West Pennine Moors, four pairs were on territory at



Grey Partridge, Cockerham, 15 March (Paul Slade)

Belmont and two at Grane in the spring with 16 later at Belmont Reservoir on 23 July. East Lancashire had a good season with 51 records from 18 sites (33 records from 11 sites in 2014) including twelve at Samlesbury in April and 31 in four coveys at Wycoller in September, while a pair at Parsonage Reservoir in January were the first birds there for many years. Three at altitude at Cross of Greet on 17 April was a notable Bowland record. The species is scarce in Rossendale so pairs seen at Clough Bottom and Hurdles Quarry plus a covey of six at Cowpe in December were notable.

In addition to the scatter of records across the arable south-west mosses, birds were encountered in diverse habitats along the coastal hinterland including pairs in the Ainsdale dunes, on Freshfield Dune Heath, Birkdale Cop, Cabin Hill and two pairs on Hesketh Out Marsh. Following a count of twelve in January, at least three pairs bred at Lunt Meadows with 21 young seen later. Nearby there were 16 at Clieves Hill and 13 at Rainford in October with ten at Up Holland in December. The area south of Liverpool holds a good population with records from 14 sites including eight pairs in the Oglet, Garston, Tarbock area with later nine on Garston Shore on 27 Dec, nine at Netherley on 17 Nov and seven at Liverpool Airport on 17 Dec.

PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus*

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

Despite the seemingly large naturalised population propped up by widespread releases (often on an industrial scale) only a handful of records of successful breeding were received. Consequently, truly 'wild' Pheasants are in reality a very scarce bird in the county.

In the north, 85 were at Leighton Moss in October, 55 near Yealand Storrs in April, 45 on Silverdale Moss in February while the species was described as 'everywhere' in the Lune Valley. The Lancaster Winter Bird survey recorded 389 birds while the seven at Middleton in February was considered a good count.

From the 318 records on the Fylde, only Singleton recorded double-figure counts with a maximum of 21 in September. East Lancashire fared better with 16 double-figure counts from over 700 records received including 82 at Hareden in April, 50 near Easington in November and 35 at the Langden Intake in April. Twenty-three at Ulnes Walton was the largest count near Chorley while on the West Pennine Moors a UU breeding bird survey at Roddlesworth Plantations realised ten calling males (all on the woodland edge) and 200+ were near Belmont Reservoir in September and October.

A scatter of largely unrepresentative records from the south-west included 54 at Windle and 43 by the Old Coach Road in October, 25 on Formby Moss in December, 20 at Appley Bridge in October while green-keepers at Hesketh Golf Course, Marshside reported two broods successfully fledging. On the southern hinterland of Liverpool, sightings of up to five were regular in the Speke, Oglet, Garston, Tarbock and Halewood areas throughout the year.

RED-THROATED DIVER *Gavia stellata*

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

International importance: 10000. National importance: 170.

The first birds of the year, and the highest spring passage count, were off Formby Point with 41 on 22 Jan, and 67 on 6 Feb, none were recorded in March but April produced the highest regional count of 123 on the 16th. Five were off Birkdale in May.

Elsewhere, predominantly ones and twos were present at Heysham during January to May including peaks of six in February and three in March. Rossall Point recorded maxima of seven, 13 and five in March, April and May respectively, while two were on Southport Marine Lake in January, 18 off Blackpool in January with four there in May, and a maximum of three off Jenny Brown's Point between February and April. A long-staying adult was on Fairhaven Lake from mid-February until early May.

Returning birds appeared in July with two during the Ribble WeBS count. Most birds were then seen off Formby Point from August until the end of the year, with October (50) and December (25) providing the only double-figure counts. Heysham reported a single in September, four in November and one in December, with Rossall Point returning four, two, seven and one for in September to December.



Red-throated Diver, Fairhaven, 21 February (Steve Young)

BLACK-THROATED DIVER *Gavia arctica*

Uncommon annual winter visitor, mostly on coast.

Singles were off Formby Point on 16 & 21 April, 19 May and 14 Dec, and off Fleetwood on 25 March, 18 April and 25 Sept, with two there on 19-20 Oct.

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER *Gavia immer*

Scarce, less than annual, mostly on coast.

One on both Dean Clough and Rishton Reservoirs on 1 Jan spent two periods on nearby Parsonage Reservoir before being last seen at Rishton on 26 April.

Another was recorded from the Blackpool coast in January, one off Formby Point on 21 April, a juvenile briefly at Heysham North Harbour on 9 Nov, and one at Formby Point on 14 Nov – possibly the same bird that was off Blundellsands on the 16th.

Singles were off Rossall Point on three dates each in January, May and November.

FULMAR *Fulmarus glacialis*

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

A handful of records were received from the usual four sites.

Heysham recorded singles on four dates: 28 April, 4 & 31 May and 20 Nov – with two birds seen on 17 May. Singles were at Rossall Point on 10 Jan and 31 March, with fives on 11 & 28 April and 11 May, and two each on two further dates in May, finishing with one on 28 Aug and another on 18 Nov. At Blackpool singles were reported on 4-5 May, with two seen on the 12th & 16th and a further single on 2 June. Three were present on 23 Aug and one on the 26th. Further south singles were seen off Formby Point on 4 March, 14 April and 20 May.

Blue morph bird(s) were reported off both Formby and Rossall on 4 March.

MANX SHEARWATER *Puffinus puffinus*

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

Smaller numbers were reported this year with a change of emphasis from Formby to the Fylde coast.

The first of the year were 18 at Rossall Point on 28 April. In May singles were off Formby Point on the 17-20th after reaching a maximum of 16 on the 16th; at Rossall Point 28 were present on the 5th, 51 on the 12th and 207 on the 23rd. Six were at Birkdale on the 18 May, 17 at Heysham on the 27th with three there on the 31st, and 227 at Blackpool on the 27th.

Heysham continued with several single figures in June, with two on the 2nd and seven on the 1st & 6th, while counts at Blackpool increased to 172 on the 3rd, 31 on the 6th, 112 on 18th, and 58 on the 19th. Six were off Formby on the 2nd and 19 at Rossall Point on the 7th.

On 17 July 175 were off Rossall Point, 40 off Blackpool and 15 off Formby Point. Later three were at Blackpool (24th), and 84 Rossall Point (28th). A single bird was at Formby on 4 Aug with twelve at Blackpool the same day. Ten were at Rossall on the 11th with 17 on the 17th. At the end of the month Blackpool reported 37 on the 28th and ten on the 30th.

The last birds of the year were four at Blackpool and two at Rossall Point on 24 Sept.

LEACH'S PETREL *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

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

It was a very poor year. On 13 Nov, a handful of birds were off Heysham, Carnforth, Morecambe, Knott End, Fleetwood and Crosby. Another was at Heysham on the 15th & 16th with singles seen at Fleetwood on the 16th and 19th.

GANNET *Morus bassanus*

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

The first of the year at Rossall Point on 17 Jan was followed by an 'exhausted' individual on the Ribble at Dinckley on 28 Feb which was later taken into care.

The next, more typically, were on spring passage, including 31 at Rossall Point in March. April produced birds at Heysham (max 3), Rossall Point (127) and Blackpool (5). Numbers rose in May at all sites – Heysham's peaked at 70 on the 17th, Rossall Point 109 and Blackpool at 165 on the 12th, Formby Point 97 on the 19th, Birkdale ten on the 18th.

Numbers fell slightly in June with peaks of 47 off Rossall, 45 off Blackpool and 13 off Formby, before rising again in July, notably 39 at Rossall, 100 at Blackpool and 55 at Formby.

In August counts of over 50 were recorded at Rossall Point and over 100 at Blackpool, Formby Point had a yearly maximum of 140 on the 4th, with two at Heysham on the 26th and one on the 28th. September reports were a single at Ainsdale (9th), two at Blackpool (10th), four at Formby Point and twelve at Rossall Point. Towards the end of year 25 were at Blackpool (22 Oct) and three were returned from the Ribble WeBS the same month.

The year finished with individuals at Cleveleys (13 Nov) Blundellsands (16 Nov) Heysham (19 Nov) and Rossall Point (20 Nov & 23 Dec).

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

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

International importance: 1200. National importance: 350.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	169	144	171	137	37	41	99	323	252	343	149	117
Ribble WeBS	1022	538	309	746	44	113	25	295	552	575	1248	737
Alt WeBS	155	164	245	156	498	252	377	293	744	1676	397	872
Seaforth	210	220	300	161	54	55	60	135	245	462	500	325
Brockholes	23	22	16	23	11	19	6	18	16	27	12	16
Stocks Res	36	49	33	19	7	5	31	44	60	65	26	30

The October count on the Alt, which was made up of 1447 at Formby Point and 229 at Seaforth, easily exceeded the threshold of national and international importance, as did the one on the Ribble in November; at least 2827 were present in coastal Lancashire during October. A remarkable gathering of 864 flew south past Blackpool on 20 Jan.

These figures emphasise the national and international importance of Lancashire for this species, and in particular that of Liverpool Bay. Yet, in the face of overwhelming evidence, Natural England

and the JNCC continue to deny this, maintaining throughout discussions on which species should be added to the Liverpool Bay Special Protection Area designation that Cormorants are of only national significance. The incongruity of their position – based largely on the odd assertion that birds that roost on our shores must feed somewhere other than in Liverpool Bay – becomes even clearer when Cheshire numbers are taken into account. Peak roost counts in the English sector of Liverpool Bay between 2010/11 and 2014/15 averaged 4182. Included in these figures was a national record count of 3884 flying out of the Dee past Hilbre Island from a newly-discovered night-time roost on Burton Marsh, Cheshire on 20 Jan 2015. However, the undoubtedly significant numbers wintering in Welsh waters in the bay are not included in this total.

In comparison, inland numbers are usually relatively insignificant – but 2015 proved an exception. Although it is known that a few coastal-roosting birds fly inland to feed, our assumption has been that the majority of those seen inland are permanently present there. So, it came as a surprise when large numbers of Cormorants began to form a night-time roost at Mere Sands Wood in mid-October; 1400 appeared on 13 Oct and 1000 or more were seen nightly until at least the 30th. Then, just as suddenly, they disappeared with only two or three present on 12 Nov. Around 10% flew in from the west or south-west, the remainder from the north-west – in groups of 20-230 – suggesting that they were coming from pre-roost assemblies on the Sefton Coast and the Ribble Estuary. It seems likely that this dramatic shift in roosting behaviour was caused by some change in conditions on the coast – but no plausible contenders are known.

No great changes were reported at other inland sites, although 83 roosting on Upper Rivington Reservoir on 1 March surpassed the previous West Pennine Moors record count of 66 there in 2013. Twenty-one seen there on 4 April including several showing potential breeding behaviour when observed breaking branches off trees. Elsewhere in this area numbers were low with peak counts of seven at both Belmont and Delph Reservoirs.

It was a mixed picture in east Lancashire with fairly typical numbers at Stocks Reservoir (see table) but low numbers at Foulridge Reservoirs where the peak count was eight. The roost site at Raid Deep Wood on the Ribble at Hurst Green had a count of 24 on 7 Feb and 25 on 16 Nov. Other double-figure counts in the east were 24 on Rishton Reservoir in February, 15 flying downstream over the River Calder at Altham on 9 Sept, 15 at Dinckley on 5 Feb and 19 at Parsonage Reservoir on 13 July. The largest count in Rossendale was 19 at Holden Wood Reservoir on 14 April, and on the Liverpool section of the Mersey Estuary 48 at Garston Docks on 29 Dec.

SHAG *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

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

All records bar four came in the winter months of January, November and December. Most January records were at Heysham Harbour with one seen here most days. An immature was seen off Blackpool and Rossall Point.

At the other end of the year a maximum of two juveniles were reported from Heysham in November and December, one was at Formby Point on 14 Nov and a long-staying bird was at Southport Marine Lake from 18 Nov until the year's end. Two juveniles were at Pine Lake after the storms of the 15 Nov with at least one present until the 24th. An adult was found dead on the River Alt at Lunt on 24 Nov. Six juveniles were at Fairhaven Lake on the 17 Nov decreasing to three on the 19 Dec and one on the 22nd - at least two of these birds died. One was seen flying west off Rossall Point on 6 Dec.

One additional record was of a juvenile in the Ribble Channel in September.

Two ringing recoveries were received this year (see Ringing Report). Both birds were ringed as nestlings on Puffin Island, Anglesey, and were subsequently found dead, one at Cleveleys and one at Crosby, within their first year of life.

BITTERN *Botaurus stellaris*

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

The highlight of a fairly uneventful year was a rare occurrence in Rossendale when one put in a one-day appearance at Holmes Terrace Lodge in Rawtenstall on 26 July. Another first site record was one at Lunt Meadows on 24-27 Nov.

Leighton Moss witnessed several marginally suitable departure nights during the last two weeks of March and this led to a trickle of evening departures high to the south-east but in ones and twos

involving about nine individuals up until 24 March. At least one of unknown status remained after this date, but if any were present over the summer months they were certainly not being logged between reports on 19 April and 18 Aug and there was no evidence of breeding. The next was seen on 19 Oct with at least two again present during the second winter period.

MMWWT recorded singles on 26-29 July and 21 Nov with perhaps the same bird seen again on 15 Dec. None was seen at Marton Mere in the early year but single(s) were recorded there between 30 Aug and 4 Nov. The only other record was one at Fleetwood on 22 Jan to 1 Feb.

LITTLE EGRET *Egretta garzetta*

Fairly common and increasing visitor, mainly to coastal marshes. First bred in 2014.

National importance: 50

Monthly peak roost counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	22	29	23	34	18	34	41	63	61	50	40	47
EMC/LM	6	35	26	14	4	22	21	56	179	150	65	7
Pilling LE	24	12	11	4	5	8	8	/	25	24	38	42
Conder/Glasson	3	/	2	5	5	10	13	26	19	14	/	6
Hesketh Out Marsh	5	8	10	8	1	10	16	41	34	25	10	8
Ribble WeBS	48	23	28	12	23	29	0	49	100	40	30	35
Marshside/SML	12	31	18	6	4	4	5	20	14	125	22	51
Hesketh OM	2	4	10	8	1	10	16	41	34	12	6	8

Little Egrets continue to spread throughout the county but without any dramatic increase in numbers. Six nests were occupied at Ashton Hall Lake, which until now has been the county's only breeding site. However, this now appears to have been joined by Southport Marine Lake where five well-grown young were seen begging for food on the north island on 5 Aug.

The number of records in east Lancashire was broadly similar to 2014, while in Rossendale there were singles in the Irwell Valley on 25 Feb and Clowbridge Reservoir on 1 Aug with two at Holden Wood Reservoir on 3-4 Aug. In the Chorley area one was at Croston during February with another seen on 13 Nov and another was at Upper Rivington Reservoir on 27-28 Sept.

Largish site totals presumably captured in the WeBS counts included 23 on Warton Marsh on 21 Feb with 20 there on 22 March, 16 at Sunderland Point on 5 Sept and 40 at Aldcliffe on 29 Oct. Up to nine were present on the upper Lune in January and eight during the second winter period.

GREAT WHITE EGRET *Egretta alba*

Scarce but increasing, mostly in winter.

One or two from 2014 were seen regularly at Leighton Moss and the Eric Morecambe complex during the first winter period until 7 March; the first returned on 8 June and two – intermittently three – were present from 1 Aug until the end of the year, occasionally wandering to nearby sites.

It was a similar picture on the Ribble marshes with regular sightings of one or two at Marshside and in the roost at Southport Marine Lake – and less frequently elsewhere – from the New Year until 18 March. None was seen subsequently until one on Banks Marsh on 2 Aug and most sightings came from there or Hesketh Out Marsh until another arrived in late October, these two then being reported mostly from Marshside and Southport Marine Lake but also on Warton Marsh and at Lytham until the end of the year.

One at Brockholes on 8 Feb was the only record elsewhere in the county in the early year; there were further singles there on 28 Sept to 6 Oct and 27 Oct. Singles flew over Seaforth on 27 Sept and up the Irwell Valley on the 29th, while in east Lancashire there were single 'fly-bys' over Alston Wetland on 6 Oct and Stocks Reservoir on 20 Nov. Another was found initially on 3 Sept at Anglezarke Reservoir, remaining there until at least the 8th when it was relocated at Upper Rivington Reservoir; it then alternated between the two sites and remained in the area until 4 Oct.

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

Scarce breeding resident.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	40	26	20	28	18	36	36	34	46	39	20	31
Seaforth	6	2	1	4	6	7	7	11	8	11	6	5

The only other double-figure counts received were 14 at Stocks Reservoir in July, up to 18 on Hesketh Out Marsh in July and October, and ten at MMWWT in June, Longton Marsh in August and Fairhaven Lake in September.

One was caught in a gin trap but flew off only to get caught in overhead wires and die at Clowbridge on 20 April.



Grey Heron, Clowbridge, 20 April (Craig Bell)

Number of active nests [peak count of individuals]	
North Lancashire	
Ashton Hall Lake	6
Skerton Weir	8
Centre Farm, Forton	16
Rough Hey Wood, Claughton	18
Churchfield House (SD67C)	30
Fylde	
Stanley Park, Blackpool	[11]
Hackensall Wood, Preesall	4+
Bispham Marsh	3
Lea Gate	10
East Lancashire	
Winckley Hall Farm	[40]
Skirden Beck	[4]
Huntroyde Hall	4
Jackhouse	1
Dean/Bezza Lane, Samlesbury	12
Stocks Reservoir	4

Rossendale	
Warth, Waterfoot	13
Ewood Bridge Sewage Works	3

West Pennine Moors	
Delph Plantations	5
Entwistle	40
Rivington	24

Chorley & central Lancashire	
Ribble Link	[5]
Cuerden Valley Park	2

North Merseyside	
Sefton Park, Liverpool	1
Little Crosby	3

GLOSSY IBIS* *Plegadis falcinellus*

Only one was seen this year. It flew north over Lunt Meadows on 4 Oct and was seen later that day at MMWWT (finders unknown).

SPOONBILL *Platalea leucorodia*

Single(s) on Banks Marsh on 14 June and Hesketh Out Marsh on 9 July were followed by two on the south Ribble marshes from 1 Aug to 5 Oct with presumably the same birds on Warton Marsh on 8 Sept.

Elsewhere, singles were at the Eric Morecambe complex on 14 June and Conder Green/Glasson from 7-30 Aug.

PIED-BILLED GREBE

Podilymbus podiceps

Vagrant.

One was at Leighton Moss and seen daily for ten days from 25 April to 4 May (K Kelly). The same individual was seen on the Severn Estuary on 24 April. The record has been accepted by the BBRC and becomes the second record for the county of this rare vagrant (just 44 have been recorded in Britain), our first being on the Dockacres complex in May 1997.



Pied-billed Grebe, Leighton Moss, 25 April (Kevin Kelly?)

LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Uncommon but increasing 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	18	13	10	7	7	/	17	26	42	26	13	13

Records were received from over 70 sites throughout the year. Notable numbers among these were: 18 on Southport Marine Lake in January, 20 at Conder Green in October, 17 in Sefton Park, Liverpool in January, 14 at Lunt Meadows in October, and twelve at Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park in July and at Aldcliffe in August.

Successful breeding was reported from at least 16 sites with three pairs breeding successfully at both Sefton Park and Lunt Meadows. However, most reports indicated that very few juveniles actually fledged.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus*

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

International importance: 4800. National importance: 190.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	5	16	5	27	5	14	115	16	29	24	2	27
Brockholes	4	4	10	11	12	10	20	16	18	4	3	2
Carr Mill Dam	63	16	55	24	30	37	41	34	18	23	27	30

It was a typical year for this species with records received from all the usual waters. In addition to the sites in the table, birds were present all year at Foulridge Reservoir peaking at twelve in April, Rishton Reservoir peaked at 13 in January and February with eleven in October, and Stocks Reservoir had peaks of 17 in July and ten in August.

Winter offshore counts included 28 and 22 at Formby Point in January and February respectively, and nine at Heysham in January with singles present through to April. Eleven were off Jenny Brown's Point in February. At the other end of the year Heysham returned the largest counts with 19 in November and 17 in December.

Birds were reported from more than 60 sites throughout the year with only about half recording attempted breeding and even fewer being successful. Notable among these were the three failed attempts by a pair in the Yarrow Valley, the 15 juveniles at Carr Mill Dam (July) and eleven juveniles at Brockholes (July), and the first confirmed breeding at Barrow Lodges. In central Liverpool the pair on Sefton Park Lake were double-brooded this year with one and then two chicks fledging successfully.

BLACK-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps nigricollis*

Scarce visitor, mostly in spring and autumn.

International importance: 2800. National importance: 50.

A juvenile was present on Fairhaven Lake from 16-30 Sept.

RED KITE *Milvus milvus*

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

The number of records has been quite similar over the last six years, ranging from 34-42, apart from the unprecedented 70 records in 2011; there were 38 records this year. As usual, these very probably involve many fewer individual birds, as some range over large areas, while others spend longer periods in the same area, being recorded on more than one occasion. For example, one first seen on 1 Aug remained for three weeks between the Beardwood area and Samesbury in east Lancashire.

The fourfold increase in records compared to a decade or so ago no doubt reflects the fact the recent release programmes in Yorkshire and Cumbria. However, it is thought that most, if not all, birds from the south Cumbria reintroductions have 'disappeared', with at least some evidence of persecution. There have still been no signs of any nesting attempts anywhere in Lancashire.

The monthly breakdown of 2015 seems to show an increase in records during the first winter period but not during the second. The nine records in April no doubt include passage birds.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
3	3	3	9	3	6	0	6	2	1	1	1

About 18 records were detailed in the ELOC Report, compared with nine and twelve in the previous two years. Four records came from each of the Preston and Chorley areas, three from north Lancashire and just one or two from other regions. This preponderance of records from the east of the county strongly suggests that many originate from the release programme in West Yorkshire.

Rather than detailing all 38 records, a breakdown by season and region is perhaps more informative.

	East/Rossendale	North Lancs	Fylde/Preston	Chorley/WPM	S/SW
Winter	(J,F,D)	5	1	1	0
Spring	(M,A,M)	7	4	1	1
Summer	(J,J,A)	5	0	3	2
Autumn	(S,O,N)	3	0	0	1

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

Rare breeder, uncommon passage migrant. Amber List (localised breeder).

Despite the hundreds of records throughout the year, (728 on BirdTrack alone), there are still only two known nesting areas.

On the south-west mosses, there were two breeding sites, the first the same as in the previous two seasons. The female disappeared but the single chick continued to be fed by the male and was ringed on 26 June. The same male was feeding a second female during June at a site some distance from the first; the final outcome of both these nests is unknown.

At Leighton Moss there were two males and three females on three nests. One nest failed but the female relocated to Barrow Scout where the nest failed again; the other two nests fledged three young each. There were no nesting attempts at MMWWT.

The table below shows breeding data for the last four years at the two main sites.. Success has been up and down with no clear pattern but there is no evidence for a population increase in recent years.

	Males	Females	Nests	Successful	Fledged Young
2015 Leighton	2	3	3	2	6
2014 Leighton	2	4	4	3	≥ 4
2013 Leighton	2	7	7	5	14
2012 Leighton	≥2	7	7	6	8+
2015 SW Mosses	1	2	2	≥1	0-1+
2014 SW Mosses	1	2	1-2	1	2
2013 SW Mosses	1-2	1-2	1-2	1-2	≥ 1
2012 SW Mosses	2-3	2-3	2-3	?	?

There continues to be a small but significant wintering population in the county. During the first three months of the year up to five were seen regularly at Leighton Moss, there were regular sightings of one or two birds at various locations in the Fylde and in the south-west, particularly at MMWWT and Marshside. Curiously, the only March record away from these core wintering areas, was of an immature bird over Haslingden in Rossendale on the 21st.

The same areas, and only these areas, held birds during the last three months of the year but there were generally fewer records. The exception being MMWWT which held five or six in October and November, down to a maximum of four in December.

Most records involve birds at breeding sites but there is also a bias of records from the west, although we do not know where passage birds originate. With so many wintering birds it is becoming impossible to put firm dates on the first spring migrants and the first and last dates of returning birds in autumn. ELOC reported only five singles during the year, compared to ten in 2014 but only one in 2013.

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

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

At least twelve different birds were identified on the United Utilities Bowland Estate. There were seven breeding attempts but four of these failed after the males disappeared in unexplained circumstances over a three week period. The police and RSPB appealed for information and a £10,000 reward was offered for a successful conviction.

At one of these nests, a young male arrived almost immediately after the disappearance of the breeding male and managed to secure the safety of the eggs. The other nests were not so lucky, as the females were forced to feed for themselves, resulting in nest failure. One pair failed due to natural predation and another failed as an inexperienced male could not successfully provision two nests. Just one pair was successful, fledging four young but three died close to the nest soon afterwards!

Bowland is presently the main site in England where Hen Harriers breed and so their plight is becoming truly lamentable. The 20-year means for successful nests and young fledged at this site, are approximately five and 13 respectively. But the situation during the last five years is much worse, as shown in the data below, which highlight the sorry state of the English Hen Harrier population and the urgent need for action to stop any criminal activities.

	Nests/Attempts	Successful Nests	Fledged
2015	7	1	4 (1 survived)
2014	?	2	9
2013	0	0	0
2012	0	0	0
2011	7	4	12

There was a roost involving three ringtails from January through to March at one location on the south-west mosses; they were often accompanied by an adult male which roosted elsewhere; the first recorded at MMWWT on 16 Feb was presumably one of the above.

A ringtail was at Warton Bank throughout January and at least one was recorded occasionally in January and February in east Lancashire in the area of Spire Farm and Stocks Reservoir. There were single records from Birkdale and Lancaster in January but the next in the north were in Bowland on 3 Feb and Jenny Brown's Point on the 5th.

Few were seen away from the breeding grounds in April with just one at Leighton Moss in the north, and one at Roby Mill near Skelmersdale in the south, on the 26th and 27th. The only May record was a juvenile past Formby Point on the 10th and none was seen in June or July.

In autumn one was at various sites on the Ribble from 16 Aug to 3 Sept. Thereafter, as usual, records increased as wintering birds arrived. In the south-west a ringtail first appeared at Lunt Meadows on 24 Oct and remained to the year's end. At least one ringtail was very regular from mid-November and throughout December in the Ribble area, including at Warton Bank, Hesketh Out Marsh and Marshside.

Apart from these 'regulars', there were odd records from Pilling on 13 Oct, Belmont in on 6 Nov and 17 Dec and from one or two sites in the east, including Stocks Reservoir.

GOSHAWK *Accipiter gentilis*

Rare feral breeding resident and escapee.

There was no firm evidence of breeding in Bowland or anywhere else in the county. However several records from Bowland – two singles in February a male and female on 2 April and a male at Dunsop Bridge on 19 July – strongly suggested that the small breeding population persists there.

There were several other reports of birds of unknown provenance from a number of locations. One was reported at Eccleston, near Chorley on 28 Sept and another was reported by an experienced birder at Heath Charnock, between Adlington and Chorley, in December.

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

Fairly common breeding resident.

The number of breeding pairs of Sparrowhawks in the county remained very low right into the 1970s and 1980s following severe declines due to organochlorine pesticides. Since then a steady increase has led to an estimated current population of more than 750 pairs.

Breeding data were received from a number of individual nests, but as these were from just a very small proportion of the breeding population there is little value in reporting the details here. One example, however, is illustrative: in the Pilling area where three nests were monitored three pairs laid 13 eggs which all hatched and which produced 13 fledged young – nine males and four females. A breeding bird survey of the Roddlesworth Plantations identified four territories.

Although a less conspicuous species than some other raptors, a considerable number of records were received. For example, BirdTrack listed 782 records (777 in 2014), the Fylde Bird Report summarised 629 (700 in 2014) and the ELOC Report detailed 332, ranging from 19-37 per month, considerably up from 184 in 2014.

Unlike with Buzzards, Kestrels and some other raptors, it is quite unusual to see decent-sized groups of birds together. The vast majority of records received were of one or two and there were just 17 records of three together at 13 sites and five records of four birds from four sites. This suggests that records of family parties are rather scarce; the largest gathering was of five circling together at Carleton on 8 April.

Spring migrants were seen at Heysham on 17 & 20 April and at Seaforth on 8 May. The first autumn migrant passed over Heysham on 9 Oct.

Eleven birds were ringed during the autumn at Billinge Hill with two or three present daily during the main period of thrush passage in October. An observer in Liverpool noted Brown Rat as a prey item – only his third mammal record, the other species being Field Vole and Pipistrelle Bat.

BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

Fairly common breeding resident.

The Buzzard population in the county was very small throughout most of the last century, due to a combination of persecution, myxomatosis depressing rabbit numbers, and the effects of pesticide residues. From the 1990s, the population rose steadily at first, and then latterly, more dramatically, so that the estimated county population is thought to be about 500 pairs.

However, breeding density varies considerably within the county and there may still be relatively few in east Lancashire. Despite there being 574 records from this region, the most ever reported to ELOC, and despite most birders from the region being convinced that there are some nesting birds, there was still no definite proof of breeding. However, there were three pairs in the Roddlesworth Plantations in the West Pennine Moors and, as in 2015, about 15 pairs bred in the whole of the Chorley DNHS recording area.

Buzzards are conspicuous birds and, despite there being similar numbers of breeding Buzzards and Sparrowhawks, there were over two-and-a-half times more BirdTrack records for Buzzards (2022 compared to 782). The Fylde Bird Report alone summarised 980 records.

There were over 70 records of groups of five or more birds seen together. The biggest count was on 4 April, when 20 birds were counted from a Ribble viewpoint near Brockholes. However, there were several other double-figure counts, including 13 at MMWWT on 8 April and twelve at Mowbreck Hall, Fylde on 2 April. Groups of ten were seen from Lunt Meadows at the start and end of the year, at Cant Clough Reservoir on 20 April and at Billinge Hill on 8 Sept and nine were feeding on worms at Todderstaffe Hall on 23 Nov.

With such a large resident population it is easy to overlook the fact that this species is also migratory. At Heysham birders still regard this area as the only part of north Lancashire where Buzzards remain quite rare and where birds, particularly at height, are most likely to be migrants. There were two obvious spring records, on 22 March and 20 April and three records of singles on their way south in September. The monthly tally of migrants at Seaforth is probably the best indicator of the timing and size of the passage movements in spring and autumn (see table)

Monthly totals of migrant Buzzards at Seaforth in 2015

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	1	4	7	0	0	0	21	16	0	0



Pale Buzzard, Saltcoates, 3 February (Paul Slade)

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

Fairly common passage migrant.

There continues to be no hint of breeding anywhere in the county. The total number of records was very similar to the 120 in 2014.

The first arrived on 19 March, probably involving three birds: at Heysham/Middleton, Torrisholme, Bretherton and Croston. The next was in the east at Towneley Park, Burnley on the 23rd and the first in the Fylde on the 25th at Fleetwood was followed by another at Brock and Bilsborrow on the 29th.

Records came thick and fast in April, peaking between the 4th to the 11th. There were 57 April records, including nine from east Lancashire. (BirdTrack logged 83 records, but many of these were duplicates). This burst of passage migration was witnessed throughout the county with at least a few records from all areas. Records became less frequent through the second half of April but one stayed for at least four days fishing on Upper Coldwell Reservoir in east Lancashire from the 24-27th.

May, June and July were relatively quiet months with seven, six and five records respectively, before numbers picked up again in August with the returning, southerly passage. May and June records were from a widespread range of locations but, four of the five records in July involved the breeding male from the nearby Foulshaw Moss in Cumbria visiting Leighton Moss to feed; the other was at Brockholes.

One on 1 Aug at Upper Rivington Reservoir was probably the first returning bird of autumn. However, there were only another two records in the first half of the month, at Marshside and Leighton Moss. Most of the return passage occurred in the second half of August, although with only 20 records, this was, as usual, much lighter than in spring. There were nine records in September,

ranging from Leighton Moss in the north to south-east Liverpool, and from Fleetwood in the west to Coldwell Reservoirs in the east. The latter, on 27 Sept, was the last for east Lancashire but it was not the last record of the year, which was one over Cockersand on 1 Oct.

Monthly totals in 2015

Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Total
6	57	7	6	5	23	9	1	c. 114

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

Scarce resident breeder, common winter visitor from central and eastern Europe.

Birds were reported from 40+ sites during the first winter period, involving a minimum of 60 birds. Records of two or more came from Leighton Moss (including 15 on 6 April), Lunt Meadows, Middleton NR, Pilling Lane Ends, Fairhaven, Warton Bank, Marton Mere (up to five), MMWWT and Ainsdale Sands Lake. The final spring sighting away from known breeding areas was at Marshside on 4 April.

Rather fewer sites reported birds during the second winter period – 25 and 40+ respectively – but this species is undoubtedly significantly under-recorded. The largest counts/estimates were six at Leighton Moss, five at Middleton NR, eight at Marton Mere and three at Brockholes and the Bretherton E-shaped pond. Three unusual records were singles on Billinge Hill, St. Helens on 5 Nov, at Garston on 25 Dec and flying over Knott End on 11 Oct.

One hundred and forty eight pairs bred at Leighton Moss, five at Silverdale Moss and three at Barrow Scout. Little breeding information was received from elsewhere but it certainly occurred at Middleton NR, Marton Mere, MMWWT and Lunt Meadows, and possibly at Tagg's Island, Birkdale.

SPOTTED CRAKE* *Porzana porzana*

Rare breeder and passage migrant.

Single males at Leighton Moss from 25 April to 5 May and MMWWT from 20 April to 23 May were at least probably breeding.

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

Very common resident breeder.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	33	26	29	16	10	3	20	26	27	12	6	8
Leighton Moss	25	/	23	18	11	12	18	/	/	35	/	/
Ribble WeBS	54	57	56	26	20	18	21	5	20	39	27	16
MMWWT	20	22	37	22	12	8	15	11	50	30	10	40

Breeding data for this very widespread species are always extremely incomplete. They included eleven pairs at Belmont Reservoir and on the lower Lune, six or seven on a 2km stretch of the Leeds-Liverpool Canal in Aintree, six at Lunt Meadows and five at Marshside.

In addition to those in the table counts of ten or more came from Belmont Reservoir, Liverpool's Stanley, Walton Hall, Princes and Sefton Parks, Martholme, Wood End Sewage Works, Brungerley Bridge and Brookside in east Lancashire, Middleton NR, Brockholes, Hesketh Out Marsh, Marshside, Aggleby's Pit, Barnaby's Sands, Newton Marsh, Lathwaite, Lytham Moss, Marton Mere, Mythop, Singleton, Stanley Park Blackpool, Haslam Park and Yarrow Valley Park. The largest of these were 45 at Sefton Park on 8 Jan and 25 at Marton Mere on 3 Jan and in the Yarrow Valley on 4 Feb.

On 3 July one was sitting on a nest (an old Woodpigeon nest structure forming the base), about seven metres up in a Holly tree alongside the boating lake in Sefton Park.

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
MBS WeBS	56	51	57	28	22	3	82	83	115	86	60	58
Dockacres	685	620	135	30	23	22	72	155	222	248	510	435
Leighton Moss	30	95	105	45	40	80	135	145	105	184	180	26
Brockholes	100	/	107	/	/	30	/	30	30	/	/	/
Fairhaven Lake	20	9	3	/	1	4	23	48	80	100	98	99
Marton Mere	300	292	180	40	6	20	/	3	80	/	150	175
Stanley P. B'pool	190	80	27	25	20	43	124	145	315	377	40	80
Ribble WeBS	83	87	156	113	169	122	45	61	65	60	104	184
Lunt Meadows	6	16	23	30	/	/	147	211	250	45	8	/

Other sites holding 50 or more at some time during the year were: Spade Mill Reservoirs (58), Brookside (51), Rishton Reservoir (58), Fleetwood Marsh NP (80), Preesall Flashes (55), Preston Dock (55), Eccleston Mere (65), Southport Marine Lake (75) and Sefton Park, Liverpool (92).

Breeding information received was predictably sparse. Most notable was successful breeding for the second year running in Rossendale – where the species is particularly scarce - at Holden Wood Reservoir.

Elsewhere, 16 pairs bred at Lunt Meadows, six at Marshside and twelve on a 2km stretch of the Leeds-Liverpool Canal in Aintree; one pair at the Snab was the only one found during the Lune breeding survey.

COMMON CRANE* *Grus grus*

Rare passage migrant.

One that flew north on 8 April over Seaforth was probably seen earlier that day over Burton Mere in Cheshire (AJ Conway).

AVOCET *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Recently established scarce breeding bird, uncommon passage migrant.

National Importance: 75

The first of the year were two on the Eric Morecambe complex on 22 Feb, building to eight within a week, 54 on 15 March and peaking at 83 on 12 April. A count of 73 on 1 March at MMWWT was the peak count of the year there. Two were seen on 8 March on Warton Marsh, increasing to 18 on the 22nd, and 58 were at Marshside on 12 March increasing to 92 by the 24th. A single migrant was at Rossall Point on 18 March and two at Mere Sands Wood on 6 April and Brockholes on 5 & 14 April.

Breeding included 17 pairs at MMWWT, 18 pairs on Hesketh Out Marsh and 22 pairs at Marshside. The 38 pairs at Leighton Moss suffered from heavy predation by Black-headed and Mediterranean Gulls. Twenty six birds were on Warton Marsh 4 June, at least seven of which were on nests with eggs; a peak of six young were seen there on 25 June. None nested at Brockholes this year.

There was a large departure from MMWWT during the last two weeks of June with only twelve remaining on the 28th, but one bird remained until 15 Aug. However, 20 were still at Banks Marsh on 31 July and 17 on Hesketh Out Marsh on 12 Aug.

A pair flew into Grimsargh Wetland on the evening of 9 June and departed at dawn the next morning, and late singles visited Skippool Creek on 28 Sept and Fleetwood Marsh on 4 Oct. The last of the year were four that visited MMWWT on 9 Oct.

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*

Abundant winter visitor. Common breeding bird.

International importance: 10200. National importance: 3200.

WeBS counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS	15263	10424	6817	4669	2961	3619	3493	13499	17150	20236	18026	16545
Ribble	3641	5079	4876	1412	923	1263	1447	2976	4463	7603	6316	16493
Alt	2157	704	457	1844	2323	1665	380	954	681	662	1037	704

The December count on the Ribble was the highest there in any month since 2004 but most other monthly totals were on the low side. Morecambe Bay and Alt Estuary totals, however, were typical of recent years.

Birds wintering away from the coast included 24 on 2 Jan at Arkholme, increasing to 81 on the 31st and 185 on 26 March. The first were back at Crook o' Lune and Belmont Reservoir in mid-February, when records suggested an increased number returning to the east of the county at this time compared to 2014. Notable early spring gatherings included peak counts of 76 at Dunsop Bridge on 12 Feb, 80 at Sawley on the 15th, 28 at Altham on 1 March, 24 on Croston Moss and 144 at Stocks Reservoir on the 3rd, and 38 at Alston on the 7th.

Breeding remains thinly scattered throughout coastal areas and included 27 pairs at Marshside and 31 pairs at Leighton Moss/Eric Morecambe complex. Further inland, five pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir where it is thought that few fledged successfully. One pair bred at Springs Reservoir, fledging two young, while one of two pairs at Delph Reservoir successfully fledged a youngster; pairs were on territory at a minimum of eight sites elsewhere in the Chorley recording area. Careful monitoring of 29 farms in Bowland revealed similar numbers to last year with 72 breeding pairs. Other breeding in the east included Grimsargh Wetland, where the presence of six chicks confirmed breeding. Nesting around the Lune Valley included 16 pairs in maize fields fledging 21 young and eight pairs on pasture fledging seven chicks. However, a total of 27 pairs nesting on gravel there did not fare well; they built 40 nests but 23 were predated, nine were flooded and five trampled with only one chick fledging from 115 eggs.

As birds quickly returned to the coast in August, the only inland post-breeding gatherings reported of any note were 43 at Stocks Reservoir on 11 July and 17 on Chipping Moss on the 14th. The last seen in the east was at Stocks Reservoir on 29 Aug.

GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

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

International importance: 8000. National importance: 4000.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	423	902	1021	2	0	0	6	65	461	1050	1237	1703
Ribble WeBS	1524	645	1710	0	476	1	0	1	4	1102	1851	2353
Marshside	772	2000	2444	140	0	0	0	100	100	1000	5800	2000

By far the largest count of the year was the 5800 at Marshside in November. Another large count of 2100 at Glasson on 25 Jan was also not captured in the WeBS count; nor were 1500 (possibly involving the same birds) at Cockersand on 30 Jan. In the south-west 129 on fields off Birkdale Cop Road, Southport during a cold snap on 19 Jan was locally noteworthy as was a flock of 53 on Croston Moss on the 20th. In the east, a scattering of wintering birds included six at Chipping on 6 Jan while the first large flock was 200 at White Greet on 25 Feb.

Dedicated counts of migrant Icelandic birds roosting at Marshside suggested a regular throughput in spring. Numbers varied widely, including peaks of 2264 on 14 March, 1630 on the 19th and 1370 on the 28th. These movements were reflected in counts of 980 near Lunt Meadows on 16 March with 700 there on the 23rd. The arrival of 1250 at Marshside on 31 March coincided with a large departure of wintering birds from the Fylde.

Passage through Marshside continued throughout the first half of April with flocks often dropping in after dawn and departing NW before dusk; 277 late birds were counted there on 6 April and 330 on the 9th. Meanwhile, wintering numbers on the Fylde dropped further to just 400 at Cock-

ersand by 10 April. Further migrant flocks at Marshside included 449 on 13 April, 558 on 15 April and 878 on 17 April with the last count there 44 on the 28th.

Inland, four were already back on moors above Belmont on 15 Feb, 25 at Burn Fell on 10 March and 46 on Champion Moor 14 March with 70 there on the 19th. There were 60 at Pendle Hill on 20 March, and in Rossendale 17 were on moors above Grane Reservoir on the 22nd. On 10 April 20 flew NE over Alston Wetland.

Territorial pairs were reported from Boulsworth Hill, Mearley Moor, Pendle Hill and at Coal Clough wind farm, where a pair was seen with two juveniles on 24 May. Seven or more pairs were located on territory in the central West Pennine Moors during the breeding season (although not all regular sites were checked), including a nest found on 23 May that later had young nearby on 9 June.

The first autumn group back at the Fylde were 20 at Cockersand on 2 July, increasing to 100 by the 14th and 250 by the 23rd. Forty two at Red Nab, Heysham on 9 Sept was unprecedented there.

Inland, the first autumn gathering reported was 23 at Whitemoor Reservoir on 22 Aug, while Stocks Reservoir had 24 on 4 Oct rising to 151 on 1 Nov. Seventy flew over Champion Moor on 9 Oct and 25 were at Haslingden Moor on the 30th. One birder's walk over Pendle on 18 Dec produced 45 between Mearley Clough and the summit plateau and a similar number over the rest of the summit area towards Pendleside Farm. On the Fylde 1350 were at Glasson on 25 Oct with 1000 there on 15 Dec.

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

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

International importance: 2500. National importance: 430.

WeBS counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS	498	42	431	22	80	1	21	353	42	116	399	350
Ribble	622	137	627	664	619	41	31	612	1446	454	268	130
Alt	547	209	437	3391	316	9	0	24	260	306	290	630

Peak counts during winter 2014/15 were low on all three estuaries; since the beginning of the century the five-year average has fallen by 50% on Morecambe Bay and by almost 66% on the Ribble. These losses have to a small extent been offset on the Alt where the decline has been roughly 20% during the same period; however a count of 3300 at Formby Point on 29 Dec – the largest on the Alt since 2003 – was missed by WeBS and will go some way to compensate in 2015/16.

Similar or larger declines have been registered in passage numbers since 2000: 80% on the Ribble, 40% on Morecambe Bay and 30% on the Alt. None of our estuaries currently supports internationally-important numbers: the Alt last did so in 2005 while the Ribble slipped marginally below the threshold during 2015.

Typically, few were seen between mid-May and early August; seven at Fairhaven on 5 June and one at Bank End on 14 June were exceptions. An early autumn group of 13 were on the Alt Estuary on 16 July.

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

Abundant but decreasing winter visitor, passage migrant and breeder.

International importance: 20000. National importance: 6200.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	10241	8653	1993	397	549	305	486	2957	3674	4036	8232	10588
Ribble WeBS	7530	8098	432	188	229	205	471	1224	1456	1471	8477	4900
MMWWT	1500	1900	400	40	/	100	400	800	800	1000	3200	2000
Marshside	2644	2480	200	/	/	/	60	410	42	3000	3500	9000
Lunt Meadows	320	1000	46	13	20	22	42	350	700	800	2000	1500

Two sizeable counts were reported in east Lancashire in January, 180 at Barrowford Reservoir on the 4th and the same number at Grimsargh Wetland on the 25th, suggesting a slightly earlier move away from the coast than usual. Other large inland assemblies quickly followed, including 300 at Upper

Foulridge Reservoir and 200 at Grove Lane Marsh on 9 Feb, 840 at Arkholme on the 12th, and 300 at White Greet on the 25th.

Later in the year 394 were at Withgill on 14 Dec and immediately afterwards 400 at the adjacent Bashall Town Flood Pool. A count of 390 at Belmont Reservoir on 8 Nov was the largest site and West Pennine Moors count since 1982. A flock of 300 was at Bretherton Eyes on 24 December.

Daytime rooftop roosting was again noted in central Burnley from September onwards with up to 175 birds involved. They return from the fields at about 7 o'clock in the morning and depart again at twilight.

Coastal breeding included 54 pairs at Marshside and 42 pairs in the Leighton Moss area.

Breeding success appears to have been quite poor in most areas. Examples included one monitored area of the lower Lune Valley where 30 pairs nested in maize and ley fields compared with 29 pairs in 2014. In the same general area 61 pairs nesting on maize fields and grass leys lost all first clutches to cultivation but 60% re-laid; 43 nests in maize fields were monitored, 19 of which were destroyed by cultivation, twelve were predated and twelve reached the hatching stage.

Eleven pairs nested at Alston Wetland but all failed at the egg stage. A monitored farm at Rivington had 18 pairs by 20 March but all nests failed there. A record 45 territories were around Belmont Reservoir at the start of the breeding season (including 34 on just two fields totalling 24 ha). This followed extensive mowing of rush-infested pastures backed up with the withdrawal of cattle immediately prior to laying, plus the active removal of foxes and crows. However, in the wet weather from late April breeding success was limited. Elsewhere, there were 263 pairs across 29 monitored farms in Bowland (slightly fewer than 2014), eleven pairs at Lunt Meadows which fledged only two or three young and nine pairs at Grimsargh Wetland

Late May produced the first post-breeding movements but the largest gatherings away from the coast occurred in July, including 610 at Brockholes on the 26th with 882 there on 8 Aug, 967 at Arkholme on 31 July.

The largest flock in east of the county in autumn/winter was 428 at Stocks Reservoir on 4 Oct; other notable counts included 350 at Alston Wetland on 11 Oct,



Lapwing, Seaforth, 6 October (Steve Young)

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*

Fairly common on passage. Scarce breeder.

The earliest were at Aldcliffe Marsh 19-21 March, Myerscough Quarry on the 25th (peaking at five there on 12 April), Arkholme on the 27th and Fleetwood the following day. Birds were late back to a number of sites including Brockholes on 4 April, the same day as the first to return to Alston

Wetland; Rossendale's first was at Holden Wood Reservoir the next day. Following widespread arrivals there was an impressive peak count of 20 at Arkholme on 10 April, when eight were also at Aldcliffe Marsh. Nine were in a newly ploughed field by the River Calder between Altham and Martholme on 26 April.

Nine pairs nested on the Lune gravels at Arkholme compared with eleven in 2014, six successfully, while in the lower Lune Valley there were 18 pairs, four of them nesting in maize fields. The last was at Arkholme on 17 Aug.

Two pairs nested at Alston Wetland but both failed at the egg stage, one very determined pair laying three clutches. Three adults and two juveniles were at Lower Towneley Scrape on 29 June, but the young were fully grown so may have fledged elsewhere. High water levels at Grimsargh Wetland prevented breeding. One pair at Belmont Reservoir fledged at least one youngster; a pair successfully hatched five chicks at Middleton NR; and at Seaforth a pair hatched three young on 18 July which then fledged in the first week of August.

Migrant juveniles at Lunt Meadows on 16 July were followed by one at Marshside the next day. The last were at Stocks Reservoir on 18 July, Alston Wetland on the 23rd, Belmont Reservoir on the 27th, Aldcliffe on 28th, Brockholes on 4 Aug and Upper Foulridge Reservoir on the 9th. One adult and two juveniles were still at Freckleton Naze on 2 August, Marshside had a juvenile on 23 Aug and two on the 25th, while on 28 Aug singles were at the Eric Morecambe complex and Skipool Creek and two at Marton Mere.

Late birds were one at Lunt Meadows until 4 Sept with three at Marshside the same day, and at Holden Wood Reservoir on 6 Sept. September records have been becoming more frequent in recent years and the trend towards later departures is now statistically significant.

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

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

International importance: 730. National importance: 340

WeBS counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS	79	68	75	154	324	0	39	248	232	112	102	76
Ribble	0	40	452	1409	1567	33	6	448	157	0	0	0
Alt	18	0	37	120	142	2	2	182	16	55	0	0

Winter numbers have long been inconsequential but passage movements in both spring and autumn have always been significant in both the national and international context. Passage numbers do, however, fluctuate and 2015's were nothing special, although the five-year averages have remained steady on all three estuaries for ten years or more. Large site counts on the Ribble included 400+ at Birkdale on 15 May and 435 at Lytham on the 17th, and on Morecambe Bay 400 at Cockersand on 19 May. Some of the last spring flocks were 52 at Cockersand on 3 June and 60 at Sunderland Point the next day.

The first inland migrant of the year at Stocks Reservoir on 12 March was followed by singles at Alston Wetland the next day and Lunt Meadows on the 23rd, the same day as a peak movement of 22 through Brockholes.

Spring peaks inland included three at Altham on 9 May, four at Alston on 17, 21 & 22 May and three at Stocks Reservoir on the 29th.

Little breeding information was received this year. Nine pairs nested on the Lune – up from six in 2014 – four of them on the Arkholme gravels, all failing. Three pairs bred at Warton slag tips and one at Sunderland Point. A late pair at Marshside fledged a single youngster in the old sand plant compound at the end of August.

The first autumn flocks included an early group of 15 on 16 July at Formby Point, while 14 on 31 July at Cockersand quickly increased to 65 on 3 Aug. Inland movement included singles at Stocks Reservoir on 11 July, Lower Foulridge Reservoir on 1, 5 & 26 Aug and at Stocks again on 9 Sept. Lunt Meadows had a single bird on 1 Sept.

DOTTEREL *Charadrius morinellus*

Uncommon, but regular spring migrant, scarce in autumn.

The first was one at Pendle Hill on 19 April. Passage there this year was poor and lasted only a few days with up to four birds present on 26, 27 & 28 April and a final report on 7 May.



Dotterel, Cockersand, 9 May (Stuart Piner)

A male and four females were at Cockersand on 8-9 May with a female remaining on the 10th, while in the south-west one landed briefly on Downholland Moss on 4 May before flying off north.

The exciting appearance of six (five adults and a juvenile) at Hesketh Out Marsh on 23 Aug was most unusual.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

Common passage migrant, especially in spring.

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

Evening Roost Counts

	16/4	21/4	23/4	25/4	27/4	28/4	29/4	30/4	1/5	6/5	7/5
Brockholes	25	48	91	108	158	182	205	174	160	160	
Barnacre Res	50			335		469	376	524	432	170	175
Longton Marsh								240			
Windy Harbour								165			
Grimsargh								75		106	
Barns Fold Res								38			
Alston						16		7	3	1	

The coordinated roost count on the evening of 30 April yielded a total of 1223 birds; as far as the data allow it seems that this was the peak count in the county in 2015.

The first spring birds at Mythop and Ramper Pot on 14 April, Brockholes and Alston Wetlands on 15 April were followed by a rapid build-up in the following week with birds seen in most parts of the county. The largest counts away from sites in the table were 75 at Out Rawcliffe on 4 May, 68 on

Freckleton & Newton Marshes on 19 April, 48 in Teal Bay on 5 May, 47 on Stalmine Moss on 1 May, 42 off Heysham on 8 May, 37 feeding at Greenlands Farm, Leagram on 7 May, 25 at Little Hoole on 6 May and 22 at Quernmore on 27 April. Spring passage in the Chorley area was lighter than in recent years but extended from 18 April until 12 May. Brockholes' last spring bird was on 14 May.

Typically, autumn was much quieter with just five records reported after the first at Knott End on 17 July and Lower Foulridge Reservoir on the 19th: 19 at Brockholes on 22 July with singles there on the 28th and 1 Aug, one at Euxton on 2 Aug and eight past Formby Point on the 4th. Singles were at Knott End on 14 Oct and Barnaby's Sands on 13Dec.

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*

Abundant winter and breeding bird.

International importance: 8500. National importance: 1400.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	3831	2610	989	2890	39	341	1492	5067	2477	2970	2513	3933
Ribble WeBS	1161	595	515	242	17	64	218	1390	968	593	815	704
Alt WeBS	619	182	684	160	10	182	672	809	897	756	255	720
Mersey WeBS *	110	119	67	1	0	4	0	2	47	94	176	140

* Liverpool only

Sizeable site counts captured by the Morecambe Bay WeBS data in the table included 300 at Sand Villa on 24 Jan, 1550 on Pilling Marsh on 29 Dec, 1200 at Sunderland Point on 27 Oct, 300 at Cockersand on 12 Nov and 1110 at Bolton-le-Sands on 25 Nov.

As usual very low numbers overwintered at any distance inland.. One at Arkholme at the start of January grew to 22 on the 31st, 171 on 20 Feb, 200 on the 26th and 760 on 6 March, before falling to 60 on 27 March. There were also only single records in January in Chorley and east Lancashire, where the spring movement occurred at much the same time as in the north, with birds reported back on the breeding grounds during March on Chorley lowland farmland (where small numbers still nest) and moors, and peak counts of 176 at Alston on 2 March with 282 there on the 7th, 154 at Sawley on the 3rd and 150 on Chipping Moss on the 5th. Numbers peaked during the same period at Brockholes (199 on 26 Feb, 184 on 14 March) and Belmont Reservoir (152 on 10 March).

The only systematic breeding data came from Bowland and the central West Pennine Moors. One hundred and twenty nine pairs were found on 29 Bowland farms (showing no significant change from the 133 pairs in 2014), while six survey areas of between one and four km² in the West Pennines located between 2.5 and six pairs per km². Further east in Rossendale around ten pairs were estimated in the Grane and Musbury area. The only breeding reports received from east Lancashire were four pairs on Boulsworth Hill on 7 June and 13 occupied nests on Hyles Moor on 16 June.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

Abundant passage migrant and winter visitor. Rare breeder.

International importance: 470. National importance: 430.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	2224	290	929	1828	8	191	12	9	2027	46	123	16
LM/EMC	/	380	1320	1780	310	210	180	820	1260	2048	530	/
Glasson/Conder	450	400	500	375	2	0	27	8	20	250	120	500
Ribble WeBS	3184	1404	1373	80	202	101	1061	1268	8	262	4103	6188
Marshside	35	120	430	808	200	225	420	57		1100	3900	6680
Alt WeBS (SNR)	50	66	90	97	45	3	258	140	91	30	41	1
Mersey WeBS *	1	35	21	2	0	7	0	5	9	11	1	0

* Liverpool only

Black-tailed Godwits are increasing steadily on the Mersey Estuary – counts at Oglet of 146 in April and 56 in May were missed by WeBS – but, as the figures in the table show, they are hugely outnumbered by those on Morecambe Bay and the Ribble.

Other sites supporting 200 or more at some point in the year included Jenny Brown's Point, Cockersand, Pilling, Fleetwood Marsh, Stanah, Staynall, Freckleton/Newton Marsh, Warton Flood and Lytham.

Birds remain scarce at any distance inland. They were seen at six sites in east Lancashire between 10 April and 11 Aug, mostly singles but including seven at Alston on 12 June. Regular spring and autumn records at Brockholes included a notable 31 on 16 March, while there were only three records in Chorley – at Croston and Bretherton Eyes between 28 March and 30 Nov. Rossendale recorded three over Clowbridge Reservoir on 18 July with singles there and at Holden Wood Reservoir the following day.

Nominate race birds were again present on Newton Marsh with up to four birds displaying on 4-27 May but there was no confirmation of breeding.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*

Abundant passage migrant and winter visitor

International importance: 1200. National importance: 380.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	787	665	3	51	42	14		12	3	146	29	794
Ribble WeBS	521	1021	1684	228	382	403	391	815	783	1698	889	828
Alt WeBS	2920	2016	3200	457	108	379	210	1200	2000	831	2381	5020

The WeBS counts on Morecambe Bay suggest a huge decline there, the cumulative total for the year being significantly lower than the five-year mean peak up to 2014.

The first first-summer bird arrived at Seaforth on 2 July with subsequent counts of 150 on 15 July and 58 on the 22nd.

There were no records inland.



Juvenile Bar-tailed Godwit, Ainsdale, 18 August (Steve Young)

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor

International importance: 1500. National importance: 480

A single at Stocks Reservoir on 28 April was followed by a minimum of ten there on 9 May; one was at Brockholes on 16 May with three there on the 28th, eight at MMWWT on 18 May and one at Arkholme on 10-24 July.

Monthly Peak Counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	362	472	364	379	47	0	21	215	238	292	306	417
Heysham	13	58	80	171	321	0	9	72	200	/	23	/
Cockersand	75	80	38	80	5	5	10	38	8	205	150	220
Fleetwood	200	180	185	185	100	0	9	165	130	130	200	243
Ribble WeBS	26	53	53	11	53	0	0	170	135	180	127	102
Lytham	50	52	52	/	155	30	102	175	208	190	126	102
Alt WeBS	16	16	6	0	7	0	5	5	4	0	11	27
Mersey WeBS *	0	36	0	0	0	0	0	0	55	44	27	0

* Liverpool only

KNOT *Calidris canutus*

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

International importance: 4500. National importance: 3200.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	2017	1433	1964	1316	19	34	18	53	138	965	9131	10050
Heysham	1950	800	3500	/	1750	/	/	/	93	/	/	4000
Ribble WeBS	2747	2046	8794	7839	5696	2584	2940	6593	9000	3965	3415	2788
Alt WeBS	23001	5100	17203	15000	320	751	2000	3001	9009	10500	9022	30000
Seaforth	27	3	2	5	0	0	2000	500	550	3000	24	0

Two very large counts on the Ribble in April were missed by WeBS, although they may have involved the same birds as on the Alt: 18000 at Weld Road, Southport on the 17th and 14000 at Marshside on the 27th.

First-summer birds began to arrive at Seaforth at the start of July with 1000 there from the 2nd and 2000 on the 21st to 27th.

Four at Alston Wetland on 25 March and singles at Stocks Reservoir on the 30th and at Alston again on 15 April were the only inland records.

RUFF *Calidris pugnax*

Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor. Rare breeder.

International importance: 10000. National importance: 50.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
LM/EMC	0	4	6	10	7	1	1	6	7	3	3	1
Hesketh OM	/	/	4	2	0	0	9	8	22	1	1	1
Marshside	8	6	20	40	25	0	18	/	17	6	8	6
MMWWT	60	73	59	26	3	3	10	21	10	40	60	71

During the first winter period up to four were on the Dockacres complex until 14 Feb and one at Glasson until 8 March, while twos on the north Fylde coast on 8-16 March and at Sunderland Point on 24 March and Carnforth Slag Tips on 9 April may have been early migrants.

Few other spring records were received, all at inland sites. Two were at Brockholes from 2 March to 2 May with an additional bird there on 25-29 April, while 34 bird-days were recorded at Alston Wetland between 20 April and 10 May with peaks of three on 20 April and five on 4 May.

No lekking behaviour was reported this year but birds began to return in mid-July, the overwhelming majority of them juveniles.

Away from the county's main wintering sites the largest numbers were seven at Lunt Meadows from 12 July increasing to 16 on 26 Aug with two remaining until 2 Nov, five on the Keer Estuary on 5 Sept, four at Foulridge Reservoirs on 31 Aug and three at Brockholes on 13-30 Aug. Further August to October records of ones or twos came Stocks and Whitemoor Reservoirs, Aldcliffe Marsh, Carnforth Slag Tips, Jeremy Lane, Conder Green, Lytham, Newton Marsh, Howick Cross and Seaforth.

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea*

Fairly common passage migrant.

The first birds at Cockersand and Marshside on 19 April were followed by a steady passage into mid-May, during which time birds – usually singles – were reported from a handful of coastal sites between Hightown and the Eric Morecambe complex. The largest counts were seven on Banks Marsh on 25 May, threes at Marshside on 17 May and Hesketh Out Marsh on the 31st and two at Cockersand on 19 April.

Twos were at MMWWT and Marshside during June but the first definitely returning birds were at Seaforth on 10 Aug. An unexceptional autumn passage was recorded on the coast with the majority occurring between mid-August and mid-September; one at Glasson on 4-14 Oct was the only one seen that month. Numbers were low, with four at Stanah on 26 Aug and Hesketh Out Marsh on 12 Sept, and three at Fluke Hall on 16 Aug the largest counts.

TEMMINCK'S STINT* *Calidris temminckii*

Scarce passage migrant.

Singles were at MMWWT on 17 & 21-28 May (finder unknown) and Hesketh Out Marsh on 24-25 May (G Jones, C Bushell).

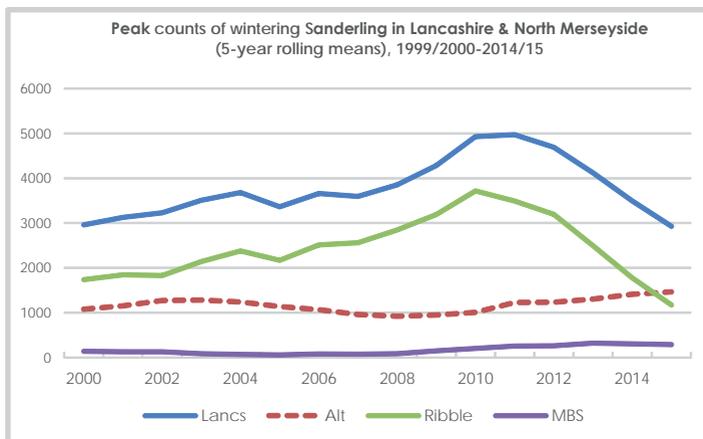
SANDERLING *Calidris alba*

Abundant passage migrant and common winter visitor.

International importance: 1200. National importance: 160.

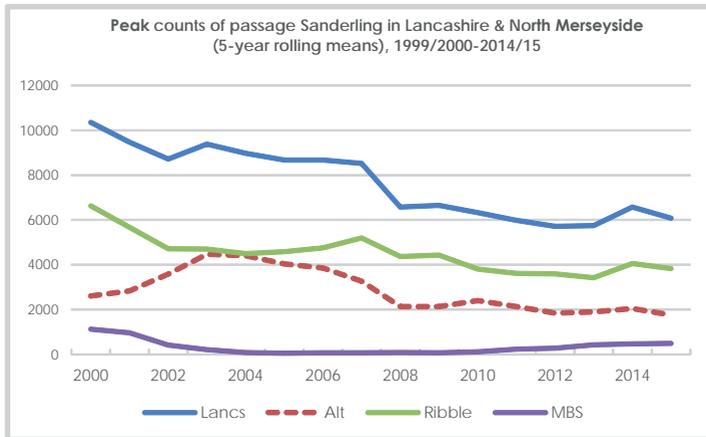
Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	130	165	88	72	475	0	121	220	175	115	180	225
Ribble WeBS	417	389	1109	4	377	1	423	565	562	110	671	522
Rossall Point	31	/	100	180	/	0	60	/	230	19	191	329
Alt WeBS	1376	782	1383	1840	2142	0	0	2097	1861	547	640	722



There has been a massive decline of around 40% over the past five winters which is almost entirely accounted for by huge losses on the Ribble that have been only partially compensated for on the Alt. Over the same period passage peaks in both spring and autumn have remained relatively stable,

having also fallen by around 40% between 2000 and 2010. Morecambe Bay supports relatively few Sanderlings but numbers have increased noticeably there at all times of the year.



In 2015 as in recent years, the Alt Estuary – where birds roost at Formby Point – predominated in winter and on autumn passage, but there were two notable counts on the Ribble: 800+ at Ainsdale on 21 March and 900 at St. Anne’s on 27 Aug.

Inland records came from Stocks Reservoir with one on 4 May and two on 31 May to 1 June, two at Brockholes on 15 May with four there on 29 May and five on 1 June, and twos at MMWWT on 24 May and 12-13 June.

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*

Abundant passage migrant and winter visitor. Scarce breeding bird.

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

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	3118	4356	2174	1780	1686	1	504	1447	300	2178	2782	4100
Ribble WeBS	5897	5371	12379	8991	16866	1406	7053	13214	8825	4904	6957	14988
Alt WeBS	3468	1528	1545	3273	828	20	169	2280	2021	1440	723	751
Mersey WeBS *	0	157	0	0	0	0	0	5	20	0	0	34

* Liverpool sections only

Numbers in May in Morecambe Bay appear to have been underestimated by WeBS since 1000 were reported at Cockersand on the 3rd and 2500 at Heysham on the 6th.

Typically few wintered inland. Early March produced one or two occasionally at Brockholes and singles at Alston Wetland, and there were further singles at Clowbridge Reservoir on 1 March and Stocks Reservoir on the 13th. At the other end of the year two were on Pendle Moor on 4 Dec and Lunt Meadows on the 8th.

Neither passage period saw any significant movements inland, the only double-figure counts being nine at Stocks Reservoir on 4 May, 14 at Alston the following day and 14 at Brockholes on 18 Nov.

Breeding information was limited to three sites in the West Pennine Moors, two pairs on Boulsworth Hill and possible breeding on Pendle Hill.

PURPLE SANDPIPER *Calidris maritima*

Rare winter visitor.

One and occasionally two were at Heysham until 3 May with a third bird present on 2 May but none appeared there in the second half of the year.

Four were at Rossall Point/Fleetwood Marine Lakes on 3 Jan with up to four there until at least 27 April and again four from 7 Oct until the end of the year. As usual – apart from one at Fairhaven on 22 March – the only other birds were at Blackpool where up to four were seen until 6 March and up to five from 12 Nov into 2016.

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*

Fairly common passage migrant. Scarce winter visitor.

None was seen during either winter period.

A very moderate spring passage got underway with one at Cocksand on 14 May, followed by singles at Banks Marsh the next day, MMWWT on the 16th and Hesketh Out Marsh on the 17th. Another at MMWWT on the 21st to 24th completed the May records, while June produced further singles at MMWWT on the 7th and Marshside on the 9-10th, 12th & 16th.

The first to return was at Lytham on 14 Aug and a further 25 or so were seen during August and similar numbers in September. Birds were recorded on 15 or so sites, mostly north of the Ribble, during this period with four on Hesketh Out Marsh on 23 Aug the largest count. Late singles were at Seaforth on 6 & 9 Oct, Marshside on the 15th and 22nd, and Hightown on the 25th.

PECTORAL SANDPIPER* *Calidris melanotos*

Rare passage migrant.

A long-stayer in spring at Marshside from 30 April until at least 10 May (B McCarthy *et al*) was followed by one on Aldcliffe Marsh on 3-5 Sept (J Carter).

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE* *Phalaropus lobatus*

Rare passage migrant.

Four records in June made for an exceptional year. The first, a male at Alston Wetland on the 3rd (D Lambert), was quickly followed by one at MMWWT on the 6th (finder unknown) and a female on Newton Marsh the next day (I Walker). After a brief lull one put in a one-hour appearance on the Eric Morecambe complex on the 20th (finder unknown).

GREY PHALAROPE *Phalaropus fulicarius*

Scarce passage migrant.

One in summer plumage at Stocks Reservoir on the morning of 10 May, one on Hesketh Out Marsh on 5 Oct and one past Rossall Point on 21 Nov were the only records.

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos*

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

One at Conder Green from 2014 possibly stayed as late as 10 April and this or another was at the same site from late autumn until the end of the year. Other winter records were singles at Tarbock Green in Knowsley on 25 Jan, Lea Marsh on 25 Nov, Little Singleton on 8 Dec and Myerscough Quarry on the 10th.

One at Marshside on 17 March was perhaps likely to have wintered in the country rather than being a long-distance migrant.

The first of spring arrived at Altham on 7 April. Birds trickled through during the following week with singles at Yarrow Valley Park and MMWWT on the 9th and Stocks Reservoir the following day, but the pace of migration quickened markedly in the second half of the month and new arrivals came to a peak in the last two weeks of April and the first week of May, continuing into early June.

Widespread breeding reports were received. The West Pennine reservoirs supported four breeding pairs at Belmont, four or five at Delph, singles at Springs, Wards and Roddlesworth and possibly Anglezarke and breeding was probable at Clough Bottom and Holden Wood Reservoirs in Rossendale, while birds were recorded on a large number of likely breeding sites in east Lancashire. The Lune survey located 35 breeding pairs, compared with 46 in 2014, seven of which were at Arkholme including two pairs nesting in a maize crop.

Return passage was well underway at the end of June and peaked from mid-July to early August with the last recorded at Belmont Reservoir on 16 Sept, Stocks Reservoir on the 17th, Alston on the

21st and Skippool Creek on the 26th. The largest counts were all in the Fylde during July: 22 at Little Singleton on the 22nd, 19 on Freckleton Marsh on the 19th 15 at Conder Green on the 14th, and twelve at Skippool Creek on the 22nd. The last at Little Singleton on 25 Oct was perhaps a wintering bird.

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

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

Two wintered at Brockholes at either end of the year and one at Syd Brook, Eccleston until at least 22 March with other Chorley bird(s) near Croston Twin Lakes and on the Douglas at Croston during February. Two were on the Lune at Arkholme during the first winter period with up to four there between November and the end of the year; elsewhere in north Lancashire at least one was at Aldcliffe in February and March and two at Lancaster University on 20 Jan. Singles were on the Fylde at Rawcliffe Moss until 22 Feb, Little Singleton until 14 Feb and Mythop flood on 25 Feb to 29 March. One on the outer saltmarsh at the Eric Morecambe complex on 8 March also seems likely to have been a wintering bird.

Spring migration was reported from only five sites: in the north at Middleton and Newton, Cant Clough Reservoir in the east, Belmont Reservoir on the West Pennine Moors and Lunt Meadows on Merseyside; the latest was at Lunt on 29 April.

The earliest autumn migrant was also at Lunt Meadows – on 29 June with the next at Grim-sargh Wetland on 5 July and Aldcliffe Marsh on the 7th. Birds appeared on another six sites in east Lancashire during July and five elsewhere, but the main influx occurred in August with records throughout the county; the largest counts were eight at Arkholme on the 17th, six at Aldcliffe on the 11th and three at Fluke Hall on the 28th and on the Eric Morecambe complex on the 31st. Singles at Holden Wood Reservoir on 4 Aug and Cowm Reservoir the next day were the only records received from Rossendale all year. Migration continued throughout September into early October with the last passage bird at Mere Sands Wood on the 14th.

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*

Fairly common passage migrant.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
LM/EMC/JBP	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	3	3	3	2	/
Glasson/Conder	1	1	1	2	1	0	1	1	2	2	1	1
Hesketh OM	2	2	2	1	/	2	1	4	2	1	/	/

The only other winter record was one at Bare in January which was probably the same bird seen on the Eric Morecambe complex.

Singles at Warton Marsh on 16-19 March, MMWWT on the 18th and Barnaby's Sands on the 22nd may also have been wintering fairly locally, so there were only two definite records of spring migrants: at Alston Wetland on 14 April and Seaforth on the 22nd.

No more seen away from the main sites until singles at Skippool Creek on 15 July and Freckleton on 1-2 Aug, with further August singles recorded at Alston, MMWWT, Marshside, Marton Mere, Shard Bridge and Stanah. Birds arriving in the Morecambe area in September and October may have remained to winter there, but two at Cockersand on 4 Sept and singles at Aldcliffe, Heysham, Hambleton and Lytham in September and Warton Bank on 28 Oct were more likely passing through.

LESSER YELLOWLEGS *Tringa melanoleuca*

Vagrant.

An adult was at Brockholes briefly on 20 Aug (T Darbyshire, WC Aspin) and what was presumably the same bird was on the Conder Estuary on 23-26 Aug (I Hartley). Both records have been accepted by the BBRC and become the 14th for the county, the last being a juvenile on Aldcliffe Marsh from 21 Oct to 5 Dec 2012.



Adult Lesser Yellowlegs, Conder Estuary, 26 August (Stuart Piner)

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

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

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
EMC	2	1	1	1	1	2	16	16	16	10	7	1
Hesketh OM	1	2	3	2	0	0	4	14	15	5	3	/
Glasson/Conder	0	0	0	2	3	0	2	6	4	3	0	0

Other early winter records were ones or twos at Aldcliffe Marsh, Little Singleton, Wardley's Creek, Stanah and Warton Bank – and, exceptionally, three at Arkholme in January rising to eight on 20 Feb with one remaining until 17 April. Later in the year one was at Wardley's Creek until 13 Dec and another at Aldcliffe on 14 Dec.

Singles at Fleetwood on 13 April, Marshside the following day and Warton Marsh on the 15th were the first definitely new arrivals. Other April records came from Belmont Reservoir, the Eric Morecambe complex, MMWWT, Brockholes and Jackhouse, but only three were reported in May: at Seaforth, Whalley and the last on Longton Marsh on the 7th.

The return passage began with one at Delph Reservoir on 27 June and 175 or so passed through the county between July and October. Notable counts away from the Eric Morecambe complex and Hesketh Out Marsh included eleven on Freckleton Marsh on 19 July, ten at Little Singleton on 9 Aug and Wardley's Creek on the 23rd, four at Marshside on 13 Sept and threes at some time during autumn at Holden Wood and Calf Hey Reservoirs, Belmont, Arkholme, Brockholes and Lunt Meadows.

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*

Uncommon passage migrant.

Singles on the Eric Morecambe complex and at Alston Wetland on 2 May were followed by others at Fleetwood on the 6th and Alston on 15-17 May.

The next was at Grimsargh Wetland on 10 June but the main return did not get underway until the 29th when one arrived at MMWWT. The passage movement accelerated during July but peaked in August with the only September record one at Marshside on the 13th. Wood Sandpipers were reported from eight sites during the autumn and all records were of singles with the exception of two at Lunt Meadows on 5 July and Marshside on 31 Aug.

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*

Abundant passage and winter visitor. Fairly common breeding bird.

International importance: 2800. National importance: 1200.

Monthly Peak Counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	3989	2800	1811	1311	41	68	658	1841	2675	3369	2776	3203
EMC	18	65	180	420	7	44	285	425	584	620	/	215
Ribble WeBS	371	768	497	627	116	154	291	558	369	922	194	312
Alt WeBS	430	439	369	115	1	11	341	470	415	701	666	711
Seaforth	130	251	450	480	0	70	250	300	550	550	456	500
Mersey WeBS *	257	627	312	74	0	0	4	29	187	291	60	310

* Liverpool only

Few Redshanks spend the winter inland; in the first winter period they included ten at Brockholes, four at MMWWT, three at Lunt Meadows and singles in east Lancashire at Barrowford Reservoir, Osbaldeston Hall and Burholme, and at Arkholme on the Lune. The only reports at the end of the year were singles at Arkholme and Barrowford Reservoir in December.

Inland passage got underway during March with, for example, the first at Belmont Reservoir on 21 March, building to 13 on 6 April, and a slow increase to 22 on 22 March at Arkholme.

The now annual survey of breeding waders on 29 farms in Bowland monitored 24 breeding pairs (compared with 23 on 28 farms in 2014). Also in the east two pairs at Grimsargh Wetland fledged an exceptional seven chicks but, while four or five pairs tried to breed at Alston Wetland, none got beyond the egg stage; breeding was also proved on Champion Moor and Chipping Moss where one and three chicks respectively were seen on 16 June.

Elsewhere, 46 pairs bred on Hesketh Out Marsh, 36 on Marshside saltmarsh with 35 on the fresh-marsh and five on Crossens Inner, eight pairs at Arkholme, and four pairs around Belmont Reservoir with another four on moorland and in-bye in the West Pennines.

JACK SNIPE *Lymnocyptes minimus*

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

Reports were received of Jack Snipe from more than 60 sites from all areas of the county throughout the year – as usual, undoubtedly a significant under-representation of their true distribution.

Most records were typically ones or occasionally twos but larger counts included six on Fairhaven beach on 22 Jan with ten there on 18 Feb, seven on the FAUNA reserve in Lancaster on 2 Feb with six there on 2 March, six on Birkdale Green Beach on 30 Dec with five there on 3 Jan, four at Swinden Reservoir on 4 Oct and three on Burrow's Marsh on 22 March.

The last of spring were at Middleton on 15 April, Fairhaven beach and Belmont on the 19th, Whitworth Quarry on the 26th and Marshside the following day.

One at Knott End was the first to return on 7 Sept, while singles on Chipping Moss on 19 Oct and Haslingden Moor on the 30th were two of a mere handful recorded before November.

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

Common winter visitor and fairly common breeder.

It appears to have been an unexceptional year with, as usual, most records consisting of low single figures accidentally flushed on woodland walks or seen at dusk. During the first winter period larger counts came from Belmont when ten or more flighted out of rhododendrons at dusk on 16 Jan and 18 or more were flushed by pheasant-beaters on the 31st; seven were seen at Lancaster's FAUNA reserve on 5 Jan and Cragg Wood in east Lancashire on the 15th, five at Cabin Hill on 7 March, and four at Carr House Green Common on 28 Feb.

The first roding male was seen at Belmont on 16 March while the UU breeding bird survey located four or five in the Roddlesworth Plantations, compared with ten in 2003. At least six were roding on Warton Crag on 9 April and other north Lancashire breeding records came from Leighton Moss, Claughton, Roeburndale, Eaves Wood, Trowbarrow, Wennington and Wray. ELOC reported probable breeding at Blackhill Wood, Moor Piece and Stocks Reservoir, while the only breeding season report from Chorley was of three roding birds in the White Coppice area in April and May

and one flushed in Heatherlea Woods on 16 Aug. In the south-west roding was reported from Freshfield Dune Heath, Altcar Moss, Scarisbrick Hall and Tawd Vale.

The earliest returning migrants were at Hic Bibi on 13 Oct, Jackhouse on the 23rd and Belmont on the 28th. Fewer multiple counts were received in the second winter period; these included six at Belmont on 1 Nov & 28 Dec and at the E-shaped Pond, Bretherton on 29 Dec, four at Moor Piece on 7 Dec and three at Roby Mill and Carr House Green Common during December.

SNIPE *Gallinago gallinago*

Common but declining wintering and breeding bird.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	43	32	62	4	0	0	0	3	12	17	73	68

Virtually every area reported a continuing decline, highlighted by just three sites reporting any counts in excess of 100 this year.

Grove Lane Marsh has been the top county site for many years and in 2015 logged 141 on 11 Feb and 92 on 18 Nov; unfortunately, despite vigorous objections, Burnley Football Club have been granted planning permission for extensive works to expand its training facilities which will effectively drain the marsh. One more sorry tale for conservation in Lancashire. The other century scores were 120 at Glasson on 1 Nov and 119 on Lancaster's FAUNA reserve on 2 Feb.

Other respectable counts – by today's standards at least – included 70 at Barnaby's Sands on 20 March, 66 at Carr House Green Common on 18 Jan, 60 at Glasson on 3 Nov, 50 at Cockersand on 13 Nov, on Croston Moss on 28 Nov, 48 on Clifton Mash on 11 Oct, 39 on Birkdale Green Beach on 3 Jan, 35 at Belmont on 9 Nov, 33 at Cottam Brickworks on 13 Dec, and 30 at Fairhaven on 23 Jan, Wray on 29 March, Chipping Moss on 19 Oct and Leighton Moss on 4 Nov.

Somewhat by contrast, breeding season reports were quite optimistic. The strong breeding population in the central West Pennine Moors was maintained in 2015. Ten 'pairs' were again recorded on territory around Belmont Reservoir – the same number as in 2014 – with successful breeding again confirmed when a brood was seen on 18 June. A further 22 'drummers' were recorded on in-bye fields/moorland elsewhere in the central West Pennine Moors at altitudes between 190m and 430m asl.

A remarkable 49 'pairs' were monitored on 29 Bowland farms, compared with eight in 2014. Elsewhere in east Lancashire breeding was probable on at least 22 sites, while Caton Moor and Thirteen Stone Hill were the only breeding sites reported in north Lancashire and Rossendale respectively.

POMARINE SKUA *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Uncommon passage migrant.

Morecambe Bay

An injured 2CY was at Knott End then on the saltmarshes west of Fluke Hall from 10 Jan until it probably died on the 29th with the corpse found on 14 Feb. There was just one spring passage record off Heysham of a light morph on 6 May.

During a period of late autumnal gales, a light morph adult rested on the saltmarsh at Pilling Lane Ends 15-16 Nov.

Liverpool Bay

Rossall Point was covered more conscientiously than Heysham during the spring passage



Juvenile Pomarine Skua, Knott End, 25 January (Dave Bickerton)

period, especially in the early morning; there were singles there heading NE on 7 May, 22 May and 1 June, three similarly on each of 9 May, 10 May and 12 May. Some of these were already gaining height as they entered Morecambe Bay.

In autumn a juvenile was seen from Rossall Point on 16 Nov and juvenile(s) were in the Mersey Mouth as seen from New Brighton on 20 & 29 Nov.

ARCTIC SKUA *Stercorarius parasiticus*

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

Morecambe Bay

Spring passage

As usual, many of the birds seen at better-recorded Rossall Point were watched entering Morecambe Bay and there is no doubt that some, possibly the vast majority, of these records had been seen and recorded a few minutes earlier in Liverpool Bay. This applies to all spring passage skuas. Coverage was poor at Heysham compared with recent years and there was no known coverage elsewhere in the inner bay: 15 were seen north-east-bound between 2 and 31 May and one flying out on 21 June. Just three were light morphs, all later birds – a typical pattern.

Autumn passage

An adult light morph was seen flying out of the Lune Estuary on 13 Nov, then probably the same was multi-observed at Pilling Lane Ends briefly at the same time as the Pomarine Skua on 15 Nov.

Liverpool Bay

Spring passage

Off the Fylde coast there were 51 unduplicated birds flying north or north-east between 11 April and 17 June, with a peak of seven on 7 May; possibly as many as 61 if all sightings from the various locations were different.

Late summer/autumn passage

The vast majority were off the Fylde coast, especially Starr Gate and Rossall: 69 bird-days between 25 June and 18 Nov with a notable concentration of up to six per day between 21 Aug and 2 Sept, which undoubtedly included at least some lingering birds. Subsequently there were just singletons: on 12 & 24 Sept, 12, 13, 16 & 18 Nov – that November cluster during the only strong onshore winds in the period.

A combination of unhelpful weather conditions and awkward seawatching logistics led to a very poor autumn south of the Fylde coast with just singles off Formby, Ainsdale and Crosby on 4, 15, 19 & 29 Aug and 3 & Sept, and three off Ainsdale on 16 Aug.

GREAT SKUA (BONXIE) *Stercorarius skua*

Fairly common passage migrant.

Morecambe Bay

Spring passage

See Arctic Skua comment: singles on 29 April, 12 & 31 May.

Autumn passage

It seems possible that three to five highly mobile birds were circulating around the outer bay during the November gales. On the other hand, they may all have been different late passage birds as there were no beached long-stayers and plenty of well-recorded 'blanks' between sightings at all locations. At Heysham there were two on 13 Nov and singles on 6 & 22 Dec. In addition, one flew west over the Heysham Nature Reserve office on 16 Nov. Three were moving west between Cockersand and Knott End on 13 Nov and three were at Cockersand on 29 Nov. Singles were at Leighton Moss on 18 Nov and Jenny Brown's Point on 30 Nov.

Liverpool Bay

Spring passage

Singles headed NE off Rossall on 31 March, 28 April, 5, 6 & 30 May and 3 June, with two on 9 May.

Late summer/autumn passage

One was off the Fylde coast on 26 June, two on 10 Aug, and then single(s) on five dates during 21-29 Aug, followed by one on 23 Sept, two on 7 Oct, then three at Rossall on 13 Nov and one there on the 16th (see Morecambe Bay for likely duplication). Elsewhere, singles were off Crosby on 13 Nov and Formby the following day.

SKUA sp.

A couple of distant late individuals were seen off Heysham: one (which was not a Bonxie) on 16 Nov and what was probably a juvenile Pomarine headed west towards South Walney on 6 Dec.

RAZORBILL *Alca torda*

Common passage migrant; uncommon winter visitor.

Winter records came from Blackpool where one or two were seen occasionally during January and February and Formby Point where there were two on 22 Jan and eight on 5 Feb. None was reported anywhere after mid-November.

The first sign of spring passage was three on 10 April off Blackpool, where a few continued to be seen until early June, peaking at ten on 12 May. Similar numbers were seen during this period off Rossall Point with 17 on 28 April the highest count. One off Heysham on 31 May was the only spring report further north.

One lingered off the south Fylde coast during June but there was no apparent movement until late September and most were seen during October, when the only substantial counts were 82 off Formby Point on the monthly WeBS count and 155 off Blackpool in the first fortnight.

GUILLEMOT *Uria aalge*

Common passage migrant; uncommon winter visitor.

One or two were off the Fylde coast at both ends of the year and off Formby Point in January and February. Spring passage got underway from early May and extended into mid-June, with the only double-figure counts 38 off Blackpool on the 16th and ten there the following day.

Autumn was even less inspiring with the 'highlight' being five off Blackpool on 9 Oct but otherwise just ones and twos offshore between Formby Point and Morecambe until mid-November.

UNIDENTIFIED LARGE AUKS

Recent experience suggests that most of these are likely to be Razorbills. Low single figures were reported during most months but the only significant numbers were 23 off Rossall Point on 28 April and twelve off Blackpool on 17 May with 14 there on the 27th and 13 on 2 June.

LITTLE TERN *Sternula albifrons*

Fairly common passage migrant on coasts, rare inland.

One that spent five minutes at Brockholes on 3 May was an unusual inland record.

Small numbers were seen along the coast between Seaforth and Rossall Point in spring between 14 April and 5 June and in autumn from 17 July to 25 Aug. The largest counts were nine on 15 Aug at Fairhaven where three remained on the 17th, and five at Formby Point during the April WeBS count; Other records of ones or twos came from Seaforth, Ainsdale, Rossall Point and Blackpool

WHITE-WINGED BLACK TERN* *Chlidonias leucopterus*

Vagrant

A summer-plumaged bird was at MMWWT on 24 May (A Bunting) and the same bird was at Lunt Meadows the following day (J Boase) – surprisingly this was the first record of any tern species there.

Another summer-plumaged bird was at Leighton Moss on 4-5 July (finder unknown) and finally a moulting adult was giving close views on the Heysham outfalls on 26-30 Sept (PJ Marsh).



White-winged Black Tern, Heysham, 29 September (Janet Packham)

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger*

Uncommon spring and autumn migrant.

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

None was seen in spring but late August produced a brief flurry of records.

The first was off Formby Point on 24 Aug. A juvenile at Seaforth on 26 Aug was joined by another four juveniles from the 28th with one lingering until 4 Sept. Another juvenile put in a one-day appearance on 15 Sept.

Two(s) at Marton Mere and Mythop from 30 Aug to 5 Sept were followed by singles at Heysham on 19 Sept and Fleetwood on the 25th.

SANDWICH TERN

Sterna sandvicensis

Common spring and autumn migrant on coasts, rare inland.

Morecambe Bay

Eight were off Heysham on 21 March then no more were seen until 4 & 13 April, after which there were regular sightings totalling 215 bird-days until 10 May with peaks of 34 on 1 May and 28 on 27 April. The next were two on 13 June with another seven until the last on 2 Sept.

Seventeen at Knott End was the only other spring record received but, in stark contrast to Heysham, there was a good autumn passage off the north Fylde coast, mostly seen from Knott End, between 27 July and 2 Sept. Almost all were in August with peaks at Knott End of 167 on the 8th, 269 on the 14th and 205 on the 23rd.

Liverpool Bay

The first was later than in Morecambe Bay – at Seaforth on 9 April – but the spring passage was far heavier. Numbers peaked at Seaforth at 24 on 25 April, 60+ on 6 May and 76 on 24 May, at Rossall



Juvenile Black Tern, Seaforth, 29 August (Steve Young)

Point at 57 on 21 April, 70 on 28 April and 1 May, and 83 on the 4th, and at Blackpool at 18 on 13 April and 25 on 5 May.

These numbers were dwarfed by those of the autumn passage which began in late July and peaked during August. Roosts at Ainsdale included 515 on 5 Aug, 400 on the 20th and 250 on 4 Sept, while 309 were at Blackpool on 13 Aug and 360 on the 22nd. Peaks at St. Anne's were 390 on 6 Aug and 470 on the 17th, and at Rossall Point 64 on 16 Aug. The last were at Seaforth on 27 Sept and Ainsdale on 2 Oct.

Inland

Five at Parsonage Reservoir on 23 Aug was the only report.

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

Abundant spring and autumn migrant. Scarce breeder on Ribble at Seaforth and inland. Regular cross-Pennine migrant.

Morecambe Bay

Common Terns remain very scarce anywhere north of the Ribble. There were just two records at Heysham, on 4 May and 21 June, one to two on three dates at Leighton Moss between 20 June and 24 July and at Aldcliffe on 6 & 28 July. Cockersand had two records including six birds on 26 July.

However, this gloomy picture was brightened by the first breeding in the area since the demise of the colony on Colloway Marsh, when a pair fledged three young at the Conder Pool.

Liverpool Bay

Monthly Peak Counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alt WeBS	0	0	0	20	308	354	480	1334	328	0	0	0
Seaforth	0	0	0	8	350	400	670	1200	650	0	0	0

The earliest arrivals were at Seaforth on 12 April. Spring passage off the south Fylde coast was uneventful with six off Blackpool on 6 & 31 May and eleven off Rossall Point on 5 May with 15 there on the 30th the highlights.

Numbers at Seaforth grew to 300 or more by 4 May and 177 pairs went on the breed, fledging 158 young – at 0.89 young per pair the best productivity there since 1994. The post-breeding flock reached 680+ on 3 Aug and grew to at least 1200 by the 17th, holding that number until the 28th. Large numbers of juveniles (many of them unringed, so not from Seaforth) were present amongst these so it appears that some other British colonies also had a good breeding season.

One pair nested on Marshside inner but there were none on Hesketh Out Marsh; no information was received from either Banks or Longton Marshes.

Other autumn counts included 98 at Blackpool on 4-5 Aug, 208 at Formby Point on the 15th and 170 at St. Anne's on the 17th. The last was at Seaforth on 26 Sept.

Inland

At least 140 pairs nested at Preston Dock but many nests suffered from egg-predation by Coots. The regular breeding pair was back at Yarrow Valley Park by 2 May and went on to fledge at least one. Eleven birds were present at Mere Sands Wood in late June but it is unclear how many pairs nested although some juveniles definitely fledged.

Many records elsewhere, for example at MMWWT and in Chorley, probably involved some birds wandering from these colonies but others were more clear-cut migrants. Birds were seen on 35 dates at Brockholes between 29 May and 26 Aug with a peak of five on 17 July, while there were reports from Carr Mill Dam from 1 May to 15 July including twelve on the last date. Up to five were also seen fairly regularly at Myerscough Quarry in May and June, while east Lancashire recorded up to three at Rishton and Dean Clough Reservoirs, Alston Wetland, the River Ribble between Gawthorpe and Ightenhill and Lowerhouse Lodges – mostly in spring but with a final sighting on 14 Aug.

ROSEATE x COMMON TERN

Last year's hybrid was seen again at Seaforth on 27 May and 12 June.

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea*

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

Morecambe Bay

After the first on 27 April, 2015 witnessed by far the poorest spring passage since it was first detected in the late 1980s. Heysham recorded an insignificant total of 74 bird-days up to 17 May. This total was actually lower than the size of the average passage flock in recent years. Elsewhere in the north the only spring records were 41 at Cockersand on 3 May and two at Knott End on the 5th.

None was seen at Heysham in autumn with two at Ramper Pot on the Wyre Estuary on 6 Aug the only record.

Liverpool Bay

Arctic Terns are usually much scarcer in Liverpool Bay but this was a fairly typical year.

Beginning with 89 on 21 April most were seen off Rossall Point, where a minimum of 175 bird-days were registered up to 12 May.

Elsewhere, birds were seen off Blackpool on three dates including 13 on 4 May. A few were at Seaforth regularly until late July, almost all of them second-summer birds including several in winter plumage. Two off Formby Point on 20 May and one on 2 June were the only other migrants.

Three pairs are thought to have nested on Hesketh Out Marsh but it is not known how many did so elsewhere on the south Ribble Marshes, although 14 were seen on Longton Marsh on 30 May.

All autumn records were in August: eight at Formby on the 4th, singles off Blackpool on the 13th, and St. Anne's on the 21st and one at Fleetwood on the 23rd.

Inland

Seven pairs were present at Preston Dock but only four nests were occupied, none of which was successful.

In east Lancashire one was at Ightenhill Bridge on 25 April, four at Stocks Reservoir on 3 May with two there the following day and singles on 9 & 22 May. Between these dates singles were reported from Lower Foulridge Reservoir on 10 & 17 May and at Alston Reservoirs on 17 May. The next were two at Stocks on 10 July and finally five at Dean Clough Reservoir on 23 Aug. Presumably two of these were also reported from Parsonage Reservoir on the same day.

Other records were singles at MMWWT on 28 April and Brockholes on 21 May.

KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*

Common passage migrant on coasts, fairly common in winter. Scarce inland.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rossall Point	39	/	21	25	33	2	/	4	/	/	5	14
Heysham	4	7	59	25	10	1	/	/	/	1	57	24

The year started with a single bird off Heysham on 1 Jan, 14 were seen off Rossall Point the following day and a single off Blackpool on the 5th, but by far the highest winter count involved 50 over the sea at high tide from the Eric Morecambe hide on the 10th. Next was a single at Cocker's Dyke on the 13th while occasional small counts continued through the month at Heysham and Rossall, where a peak of 39 was sighted on the 10th. February was a quiet month with only seven at Heysham on the 17th and one off Blackpool on the 21st.

Spring passage began in early March and continued through to June but numbers were low with the most notable counts off Heysham 25 on 24 March, 59 on the 30th, 24 on 1 April and 25 on the 28th. Regular sightings from Rossall included 21 on 31 March, 25 on 28 April, 19 on 4 May and 33 on the 17th. Other passage peaks included 17 at Blackpool, nine at Formby Point, three off Knott End and one at Skipool Creek.

There were no sightings in July but August brought impressive counts off Blackpool with 24 (13th), 39 (23rd), 151 (26th), 26 (27th) and twelve (28th), while elsewhere there was one at Formby on the 28th and four from Rossall on the 29th. Autumn started off slowly with ten reported from the Keer Estuary, Carnforth on 5 Sept followed by one at Heysham and six at Blackpool on 22 Oct.

Sightings increased in November from the 10th when 30 were off Jenny Brown's Point, good counts followed with 58 between Bolton-le-Sands and Heysham and 36 at Knott End on the 13th, followed by 31 at Heysham on the 20th and 20 at Cocksand on the 29th. Sightings continued into December with the majority at Heysham including 24 on the 24th, single sightings of two at Blackpool on the 10th and 14 at Rossall Point on the 23rd.

Brockholes had the first inland record of the year with two on 15 March, followed by one on the 22nd; just further north one was at Alston Wetland on the 29th. Over a month later two at Stocks Reservoir on 17 May were followed by one at MMWWT on the 28th. None was seen inland in autumn but a very unusually late record came from Brockholes on the 27 Dec being found dead the following day.

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

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

International importance: 20000. National importance: 20000.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	1300	2656	1175	1436	752	1242	2849	2567	4786	1340	1151	1100
Ribble WeBS	2834	1716	1867	835	943	606	1629	1519	859	860	1905	618
Alt WeBS	2940	1903	691	522	56	444	262	1792	921	675	1510	629

The year began with notable gatherings at Arkholme (2200), Cockerham (2000), Cocker's Dyke (1750), Brockholes (1210) and Knott End (1200). February saw numbers building up at Brockholes (1650), Stocks Reservoir (1500) and Belmont Reservoir (1300).

Numbers in the breeding colonies increased rapidly throughout March to a total of 22000 by the month's end at Belmont Reservoir and 10500 at Stocks Reservoir; elsewhere 2500 were at MMWWT on the 7th. The Belmont colony peaked with a roost of 24000 on 2 April and breeding numbers were estimated to have increased to 11000 pairs, around 8% of the UK breeding population. Breeding numbers from other Lancashire sites included 1200 pairs at Stocks Reservoir, 294 pairs at Marshside, 144 pairs at Leighton Moss and 403 on the Eric Morecambe complex.

Post-breeding gatherings seemed lower than average with 1570 at Heysham on the 8 July, 1700 at Skipool Creek on the 24 Sept and 1600 at Delph Reservoir on 1 Oct being the most notable counts. During the winter, peak numbers comprised 8000 at Cockerham Moss, 4000 at Cocker's Dyke, 3000 at Knott End and Rivington, 2500 at Lytham and 1000 on floods at Bretherton Eyes.

LITTLE GULL *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Fairly common gale-blown winter visitor on coasts. Common on spring passage and small numbers of first-years in summer.

Despite onshore windy and wet weather, few were seen in the first winter period with singles at Morecambe, Heysham, Crosby, Leighton Moss and two at Rossall Point during January. Two off Rossall Point on 26 Feb was the only record that month, but 85 were there on 4 March. Later that month 23 were off Fleetwood on the 25th and six were at both Seaforth and Heysham on the 31st.

Seaforth suffered another poor spring with birds favouring coastal waters off Formby Point, where numbers peaked at 172 on 9 April, 76 off Rossall Point on the 17th and 37 the next day. One was at Marshside from 8 April to 5 May with single(s) at Leighton Moss on 23 & 27 April. Eleven were at Cocksand on 3 May, and singles at Leighton Moss on the 18th and Marshside on the 25-27th.

The first inland spring sighting was a first-winter at MMWWT on 6 April, followed by an adult at Rishton Reservoir on the 24th. MMWWT had up to two 2CY birds on 28 April, 10-21 May and 30 May to 7 June. A second-summer was at Alston Wetlands on 25 May and a first-summer on 3 June, which was later seen at Grimsargh Wetland.

During the summer months and early autumn Heysham had a long-staying adult that remained until the end of September along with a brief visiting first- and second-summer birds in late June. Odd sightings were made at Formby Point and Seaforth. October produced singles at Warton Marsh on the 18th and Heysham on the 21st-22nd, and three at Fleetwood on the 22nd. Strong onshore winds during November resulted in larger counts with a peak of 105 off Rossall between the 12 and

19th and small numbers from Heysham, Knott End and Cockersand. In December Rossall Point had counts of three on the 6th & 29th with a single at Heysham on the 11th & 23rd.

The Joint Nature Conservation Committee has recently for the first time published figures for the population wintering in Liverpool Bay. Based on surveys carried out in 2004/05, 2005/06 and 2010/11 they estimate an average population of 333, almost all which were found off Blackpool and the Ribble Estuary. Little Gull will now be added as a 'feature' of the Liverpool Bay Special Protection Area.

LAUGHING GULL *Larus atricilla*

Vagrant.

The long-staying first-winter bird which had been present at New Brighton in Wirral during the early year was seen daily from 5-16 April at Seaforth where it frequented both the saltwater and freshwater pools. (AJ Conway).

The record has been accepted by the BBRC and becomes the fourth record for the county after singles at Brockholes in 1999 and Marton Mere in 2006 and 2009.



First-winter Laughing Gull, Seaforth, 4 April (Steve Young)

MEDITERRANEAN GULL *Larus melanocephalus*

Fairly common all year. Most numerous on the coast but increasing inland. Recently established rare breeder.

Minimum number of individuals

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Heysham	2	1	2	/	2	12	22	11	19	9	2	3
Seaforth	1	/	/	/	/	2	8	10	10	3	/	/

Wintering birds were scattered throughout the coastal areas with a peak count of three at Pilling. From early March numbers started to increase as birds moved inland with peak day counts at MMWWT (six), Alston Reservoirs (nine), Brockholes (nine) and Stocks Reservoir (15), with many more individuals recorded moving through.

At Belmont Reservoir a simultaneous count of 42 were present on 25 April with land-based counts this year estimating a minimum of 33 breeding pairs; 30 fledged young were seen during July along with 26 distinct attendant adults. Breeding was also confirmed at Stocks Reservoir where one pair was seen with young, while elsewhere a pair was at Marshside and two birds lingered in the gull colony at Leighton Moss.

Post-breeding numbers started to build at Heysham from early June with peak counts of eight adults, five 3CY and 13 2CY birds but a very poor arrival of just three juveniles compared to recent years. In August numbers built at Glasson to a peak of eleven on the 23rd and 15 were at Skipool Creek on the 31st. Wintering birds were scattered in low numbers mainly along the coast with a peak count of six adults at Knott End on 30 Dec.

COMMON GULL *Larus canus*

Abundant winter visitor and passage migrant.

International importance: 16000. National importance: 7000.

Monthly Peak Counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	74	98	37	38	27	33	43	21	146	148	80	55
Ribble WeBS	668	807	1347	8	30	60	128	4	11	161	177	24
Alt WeBS	422	221	442	110	0	6	29	766	483	552	363	576
Stocks Reservoir	/	5000	5500	170	3	11	62	23	2800	4800	/	8000

Birds in the east Lancashire uplands dominated the counts with most roosting at Stocks Reservoir as seen in the table. Noteworthy counts elsewhere were sparse but included 1510 at Arkholme on 24 Jan, 448 at Heysham on 18 April and 1320 at Lytham Moss on 28 Dec. During the summer months numbers in the county are low with birds concentrated at a few coastal sites with Heysham holding up to 235 second-calendar-year birds during June.

RING-BILLED GULL*

Larus delawarensis

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant, mainly in spring.

A 2CY bird set up residence in Preston Dock from 2 Aug until 6 Oct (P Ellis, P Slade) before the same individual was seen occasionally at Haslam Park, Preston between 2 Nov and 29 Dec (N Patel).



Second-winter Ring-billed Gull, Haslam Park,
23 November (Stuart Piner)

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*

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

International importance: 4500. National importance: 1200.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	103	74	230	405	185	601	571	749	577	582	202	134
Ribble WeBS	211	99	133	138	30	113	347	386	601	119	604	95
Alt WeBS	318	91	223	198	125	90	40	844	205	769	341	283
Stocks Reservoir	3	14	1150	80	40	63	500	80	120	33	3	5

Wintering numbers continue to increase year on year. Breeding birds started arriving in the county as early as February with pre-breeding gatherings peaking on Stocks Reservoir at 1150 on 8 March. No noteworthy post-breeding flocks were recorded this year with a peak of 430 at Skippool Creek on 26 Sept. Low numbers stayed to winter around the county. At least ten hybrid Lesser Black-backed x Herring Gulls were seen regularly throughout the year on the Fylde coast at Blackpool, Fleetwood, Skippool Creek and Knott End.

No counts were made at the Ribble Estuary or Tarnbrook colonies but an estimated 5500 apparently occupied territories were identified in the Langden Head colony. Numbers increased at Heysham where there were 97 nests on buildings around the harbour, 13 on power station non-operational land, ten on Ocean Edge and 42 on the Middleton Industrial Estate. Two pairs held territories in the Belmont Reservoir colony and were observed nest-building but did not breed. Rooftop nesters were recorded throughout Liverpool and Blackpool. At least 84 chicks were counted on Halewood Jaguar Factory roofs during early July with twelve nests still being incubated.

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

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

International importance: 13000. National importance: 7300.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	1621	516	185	1583	164	1212	186	774	1936	1496	283	424
Ribble WeBS	860	1109	1757	174	148	228	470	575	917	596	1206	170
Alt WeBS	7268	408	1657	1996	550	274	179	3953	1231	3791	1394	1149

Apart from the WeBS counts in the table the year was dominated by counts in the Fleetwood and Knott End area where numbers peaked at 5000 in the first winter period and towards the end of the second winter period.

Elsewhere, 500 were at Lytham in August, 600 at Marshside during November and 1000 at Blackpool in December. East Lancashire peak counts were 315 at Altham on 11 Jan and 300 at Fishmoor Reservoir, Blackburn on 18 Dec.

A survey at Langden Head found 45 occupied territories but no counts were carried out at the Tarnbrook colony or the Ribble Estuary. At Heysham there were 46 nests on buildings around the harbour, one on Ocean Edge and 17 pairs on Middleton Industrial Estate. One pair held territory on the island at Stocks Reservoir. Rooftop nesters were recorded throughout Fleetwood, Blackpool and Liverpool with a minimum of 16 adults on the Jaguar Factory, Halewood. One pair was observed nest building at Belmont Reservoir but did not stay to breed.



First-winter Yellow-legged Gull (foreground) 10 September (Colin Bushell)

The identification of first-year Yellow-legged Gull can be difficult due to variability within Lesser Black-backed Gull, but this individual was typical in all respects, showing advanced post-juvenile scapular moult and abraded coverts and tertials in early September, large size, white ground colour from the head through the belly to the vent, heavy bill with a hooked tip, long and strikingly pale pink legs, white tail with a neat black terminal band, slight pale window on the inner primaries, and a strong contrast between heavily barred inner and more solidly dark outer greater coverts. (Chris Batty)

YELLOW-LEGGED GULL *Larus michahelis*

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

Numbers of sightings were low throughout the county this year with Seaforth and Crosby Marine Lake being particularly poor with the only birds including a second-summer on 1 April and adults on 21 July and 9-10 & 16 Sept.

Elsewhere, a first-winter was at Birkdale on 7 Feb, one at Ainsdale on the 17th and an adult at Stocks Reservoir on 8 & 11 March. Birds reported at Formby were an adult on 22 March and a 2CY on

18 April. During the summer months Glasson continued to attract an adult from 21 June to 20 Sept. A first-winter frequented Preston Dock on 1-3 Sept and a near adult was at the same location on 25 Nov.

CASPIAN GULL* *Larus cachinnans*

Vagrant.

A 2CY bird was present off Knott End on 11 Feb (CG Batty) and another of the same age frequented Formby Point and Ainsdale beach from 20 July into 2016 (P Kinsella *et al*). A juvenile visited Cocker's Dyke between 23 Aug and 16 Sept.

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucooides*

Uncommon visitor, mostly winter.

It was a good start to the year in the first winter period but there were no sightings after May. The returning adult wintering around Marton Mere remained from 2014 until 7 April. Elsewhere north of the Ribble, first-winters were at Fleetwood on 2-3 Feb and 18 & 24-25 April, Heysham on 1 & 24 April and Fishmoor Reservoir on 15 April, and an adult at Hambleton on 8 March.

In the south a first-winter was at Seaforth on 21 & 31 March and Crosby Coastal Park on 2-3 April, Marshside had a first-winter on 6 April and a different 2CY was at Seaforth between 10 April and 28 May.

GLAUCOUS GULL *Larus hyperboreus*

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

A long-staying first-winter was at Fleetwood visiting Jameson Road Landfill Site, Fleetwood Docks, Fleetwood Marsh and Knott End between 1 Jan and 10 Feb; there were no sightings there during March but a bird was present again 8-10 April and a second-winter on the 18-28th.

Elsewhere, first-winter(s) were recorded between Seaforth and Formby on 12-19 April.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*

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

International importance: 4800. National importance: 760.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	188	28	56	91	24	76	106	94	196	168	146	203
Barnaby's Sands	40	30	15	66	3	34	30	62	40	48	41	58
Ribble WeBS	39	29	19	17	18	52	20	19	40	17	42	18
Alt WeBS	190	82	135	98	52	64	54	309	180	400	173	165

Throughout the first winter period up to 100 were regularly seen at Seaforth and between Knott End and Jameson Road Landfill Site, Fleetwood. The majority of east Lancashire records came from four sites with a peak count of 76 at Altham on 11 Jan.

Notable counts in the second half of the year came from Carnforth, Fleetwood and Glasson but two significant counts came in December from Knott End (120) and Hightown (200).

A survey of the Langden Head gullery found two apparently occupied territories but no count was carried out at the Tarnbrook colony or Ribble Estuary. At Heysham two pairs held territories on a harbour building and one pair on power station non-operational land. The pair at Stocks Reservoir



Second-calendar-year Caspian Gull
Ainsdale, 18 August (Steve Young)

bred for a second year but unsuccessfully as were the three pairs that bred between Lillian's, Lower and Public Pool at Leighton Moss.

FERAL PIGEON *Columba livia*

Abundant breeding resident

One hundred and twenty on Blackpool South Shore on 1 Jan and 90 in Newsham Park, Liverpool on 7 March were the highest counts reported from the coastal west in the early year; the Lancaster & District January survey recorded 909 across seven 10 km squares, 844 of these in coastal SD46. Inland c.100 were displaced by building work at the former Finsley Mill in Burnley; five other counts of 20+ were reported to ELOC during the year and 73% of the 111 reports it received came from just seven locations, five of these in the Ribble Valley.

As in 2014 a pair of Feral Pigeons nested at a moorland farm at c.300m asl above Belmont; counts of 102 in Calderstones Park, Liverpool on 15 April, 100 at Picton Clock Tower, Wavertree on 16 June and 132 in Stanley Park, Blackpool on the 22nd give an indication of breeding densities in the urban coastal strongholds.

As usual many counts later in the year were a good deal higher. In the Fylde there were 500 at Singleton on 16 Sept and 400 there on the 28th, 300 on Fleetwood Docks on 3 Oct and 250 in Central Blackpool on the 9th. Further north 128 were counted at Carnforth Station on 18 Sept and there were 265 in the Garston Docks, Liverpool on 29 Dec.

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*

Common breeding resident. Amber List (important breeding population)

One hundred and twenty well inland on Caton Moor on 15 Feb was by far the highest count reported in the first winter period; nearer the coast there were 80 on Croston Moss, Chorley on 2 Jan, 34 at Todderstaffe Hall, Fylde on the 17th and 36 on Rawcliffe Moss on 6 March. Further south 30 were on Lunt Meadows on 26 Jan. The Lancaster & District January survey located a total of 50 Stock Doves in seven 10 km squares (33 in 2014).

As usual, breeding reports were few and scattered, with confirmed records from four locations in Rossendale and from Rivington, Silverdale, King's Moss, St Helens, Roby Mill, Seaforth and Fishwick Bottoms LNR, Preston.

Ten pairs nested in boxes at Arkholme (20 in 2014) and 50 monitored pairs in Over Wyre fledged 112 young from 196 eggs laid in 100 nests, 1.1 per nest, all in boxes; there were territorial pairs at a minimum of 13 sites in south Liverpool/Knowsley. That breeding is clearly on a much wider scale is evidenced by some of the local flock counts during high season, such as 26 on Plex Moss on 26 May, 33 at Belmont Reservoir on 29 June, 15 in the Langden Valley on 2 July and 25 at Hesketh Out Marsh on the 24th.

Counts later in the year were exceptionally low everywhere: 15 at Jackhouse, Oswaldtwistle on 10 Aug and 23 at Winckley Hall on 16 Nov were the highest in east Lancashire and 23 at Clifton on 4 Aug the peak in the Fylde; 23 on Churchtown Moss on 12 Oct was the largest gathering reported in the south-west.

WOODPIGEON *Columba palumbus*

Abundant breeding resident

Most movements and flocks this year were on a much more modest scale than those of 2013 and 2014. Early-year peaks in inland regions included 130 at Lench, Rossendale on 1 Jan, 150 on Bretherton Moss, Chorley on the 23rd, 350 at Haydock on 28 Feb and 195 at Arkholme on 20 March. Nearer the coast there were 300 at Lunt Meadows on 3 Jan, 500 at Great Plumpton, Fylde on the 26th and 300 at Singleton on 17 March. The Lancaster & District January survey recorded a total of 1193 Wood-pigeons, 495 of these in coastal SD46 (total 1297 in 2014). Large flocks in the Fylde in April, 1200 at Coat Walls Farm, Preesall on 24 April and 500 on Lytham Moss on the 26th, may have included birds on passage; 34 flew north over Rossall School on 8 April and there were 14 migrants at Heysham on the 17th.

Reports of successful breeding were more numerous and widespread than usual this year. In north Lancashire 20+ pairs nested on EDF land at Heysham, there were twelve pairs on Warton Crag, six in Croftlands, Warton and three on the Hermitage Estate, Crook o' Lune. Breeding was recorded

throughout the Fylde and in the south-west 17 pairs nested in a 148 ha 'patch' at Roby Mill, 13 on Freshfield Dune Heath and five in a 34 ha study area at Aintree; in Liverpool 82 pairs were monitored in Sefton Park with 66.2% fledging success and 27 in Everton Park (64.6% success).

Post-breeding and early autumn counts included 200+ feeding on bilberries above Belmont on 9 July, 240 at Mill Wood, Speke on the 12th and 136 at Arkholme on the 31st; in August there were 700 at Lunt on the 6th, 900 at Speke Hall on the 8th and 227 at Eagland Hill on the 11th. September flocks peaked at 240 on the Eric Morecambe complex on 12 Sept and 200 at Marton Mere on the 14th & 18th; in October there were 1200 in Top Plantation, Pilling on the 11th, 220 on Camforth Marsh next day and 170 on Lytham Moss on the 13th.

Autumn passage movements at Heysham reached maxima of 55 on 19 Oct and 35 on 12 Nov; inland 145 per hour moved south over Belmont on 25 Oct and 197 on 12 Nov. Peak counts toward the end of the year were of 800 at Singleton on 10 Nov, 322 at Jackhouse on the 12th and 300 at the Eric Morecambe complex on the 25th; in December 490 were at Formby Point on 3 Dec, 140 at Moor Piece next day and 475+ at Oglet, south Liverpool on the 13th.



Woodpigeons, Liverpool, 8 March. (Steve Young)

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common breeding resident

Only four low double-figure counts were reported in the first winter period, 13 at Newton in east Lancashire on 4 Jan, 20 at Hambleton, Fylde on the 15th, twelve at Mere Sands Wood on the 26th and 16 at Marton Mere on 18 Feb; a total of 225 was recorded by the Lancaster & District January survey (229 last year). Very light passage movements were seen along the coast in April, including one north at Rossall Point on 5 April with six there on the 8th and a single bird at Heysham on the 20th.

Very few reports of breeding season activity were received. In the uplands about eight pairs bred at Belmont on the West Pennine Moors and one at Marl Hill in east Lancashire where counts of 15 in Painter Wood, Whalley on 4 May and twelve on 3 June must also have involved breeding birds. In north Lancashire seven pairs nested in Millhead, Warton and 15 in nearby Croftlands, where twelve pairs bred in 2014. In the south-west five pairs were located in a 34 ha study area at Aintree.

Autumn movements on the coast were much lighter than last year's, totalling four birds at Heysham between 30 Sept and 2 Nov and 13 south at Seaforth on 10 Oct. Flocks and counts in the late year were about average, peaking at 67 at Cocker's Dyke, Fylde on 19 Oct; elsewhere in the region there were 25 at Todderstaffe Hall on 4 Oct and at Pilling Lane on 4 Nov, and 34 at Eagland Hill on 22 Dec. Counts of 30 Collared Doves near Ormskirk on 12 Aug and at Burscough Bridge on

6 Dec were the maxima in the south-west; there were up to 15 in a Belmont garden on dates on November and December.

TURTLE DOVE* *Streptopelia turtur*

Scarce passage migrant.

One at Burscough on 14 July was the only record, the second Turtle Dove in the south-west in successive years. (N Evans)

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*

Uncommon breeding bird and passage migrant. Red List (breeding decline)

Apart from a single bird at Crook o' Lune on 26 April all of that month's records came from upland regions. The first to arrive were at Clougha Pike in the northern fells on 16 April and at Cross of Greet, Bowland on the following day, with Chorley's first at White Coppice on the 22nd and one at Belmont on the West Pennine Moors on the 27th. Further arrivals during the remainder of April included 13 birds in east Lancashire, six in the north and two at Anglezarke and Rivington, Chorley on the 24th.

More widespread passage began on 1 May with singles at Billinge Hill in the south-west and Clowbridge, Rossendale; one was at nearby Crown Point on the 2nd and the first in the Fylde at Freckleton on the following day. There were eleven more records from seven locations in the Fylde during May and three in June from three sites; in the south-west another six were reported in May from four sites and three in June, also at three locations.

Meanwhile, in the uplands Cuckoos were present at three more locations in Rossendale and four in the Chorley region during May with three at White Coppice on the 30th; in north Lancashire there were 14 records from seven inland and two coastal sites in May and June, the last of the year on Leck Fell on the early date of 26 June. In east Lancashire males were calling at Stocks Reservoir, Hareden,



Turtle Dove, Burscough, 14 July (Nick Evans)



Cuckoo, Cocker's Dyke, 29 August (Paul Slade)

Langden Valley, Gisburn Forest, Rose Grove, Middle Knoll, Croasdale and Dunsop Valley on dates in May and June; breeding was judged likely at three locations in Bowland and a male was caught and fitted with a satellite tracking device at Stocks – ‘Larry’ as he was named subsequently wintered in northern Angola, the furthest south of any British-tagged Cuckoo to date. (See separate article) Calling males were at eight sites in the West Pennine Moors between 9 May and 13 June; breeding was recorded at three locations in the central moors area and also on the moorland edge beside Roddlesworth Plantations with Meadow Pipits as hosts.

Unusually heavy autumn movements in coastal regions began with birds at Lunt Meadows on 1 & 31 July and at MMWWT on the 3rd, 29th and 31st; in the Fylde singles were at Lathwaite on 7 July and Fluke Hall on the 30th. The volume and geographical spread of records during August, mostly of juvenile birds, was quite exceptional by the standards of the last decade. In the Fylde three singles were recorded at Treales, New Ridge Farm and Cocker’s Dyke in the latter half of the month; a total of 14 was recorded in the south-west with multiple reports from Lunt, MMWWT and Marshside, and one was at Brockholes Wetland on 26 Aug. In the uplands four were recorded in the Chorley region between 1 and 18 July with the last of the year at Rivington on 2 Aug, while in east Lancashire a juvenile was on Champion Moor on 13 Aug. The juvenile at Cocker’s Dyke from 26 Aug to 1 Sept was the last Cuckoo of 2015.

BARN OWL *Tyto alba*

Uncommon breeding resident. Amber List (species of European conservation concern)

This species, exceptionally susceptible to inclement weather both in winter and in the breeding season, appears to have improved its status or at least held its ground across the county in 2015. The Fylde Bird Club dataset listed 241 records in all months and from all parts of the region; in south Fylde breeding was confirmed at Inskip, Marton Mere, Carr House Green Common and Humblecough Farm, while 22 monitored nests in the Pilling-Preesall-Out Rawcliffe area produced 18 fledged young from 88 eggs laid, 0.8 per nest. All but one of these nests were in boxes and 14 other boxes contained one or two birds at various visits throughout the season. Data from the south-west mosslands were, as usual, much more sketchy but Barn Owls were reported from 26 widespread locations with records of three on Altcar Moss in January and four at MMWWT in May; breeding was confirmed at King’s Moss, St Helens, Lunt Meadows and Kew immediately inland of Southport. In the Ribble Valley above Preston a pair bred at Brockholes Wetland.

The Barn Owl’s situation in upland regions continues to look a healthy one. In east Lancashire ELOC received 155 reports, most from Bowland and the Ribble Valley, but 14 records came from the moorland edge in the east of the region. There were nine confirmed breeding records, five in the Ribble Valley-Bowland and four in the Burnley and Pendle areas; five of the nests fledged a total of 15 young.

There were five occupied territories on the West Pennine Moors near Belmont and two pairs bred successfully fledging a total of five youngsters; at least four were hunting by day in the Belmont area in November and December, probably due to a shortage of voles. There were widespread sightings across the Chorley region throughout the year in at least nine locations. Barn Owls were recorded in at least ten sites in north Lancashire, almost all on or near the coast, but two pairs bred successfully further inland at Littledale and Arkholme, and produced a total of five young.

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

Fairly common breeding resident

A mixed picture from upland regions this year. The recent improvement in the species’ status in east Lancashire seems to be continuing with 71 records received by ELOC from 30 locations (67 from 20 in 2014); breeding by four pairs was considered probable to the east and south of Burnley. Birds were recorded at five sites in Rossendale with nesting confirmed at Spring Mill Reservoir and Lee Quarry. A recent decline on the West Pennine Moors seems to have continued, however; once again no breeding was recorded at Belmont Reservoir where up to three pairs nested until 2013. Little Owls were recorded at seven locations in Chorley throughout the year with repeated sightings at White Coppice, where a pair held territory in early May, Heath Charnock and Croston Moss. Four birds were recorded by the Lancaster & District January survey in three 10 km squares and a pair

attempted nesting at Docker, but the species was reported to have been absent from several formerly regular breeding sites in the north of the county.

Nearer the coast there were 47 widespread records in the Fylde during 2015; a healthy improvement in breeding numbers and performance was noted in Over Wyre, where 16 monitored pairs in nest-boxes fledged 36 young from 61 eggs laid, 2.5 per pair (seven pairs, 14 fledged young in 2014). In the south-west Little Owls were reported from eleven locations with breeding confirmed at Lunt, Seaforth, Churchtown Moss and Banks.

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

Common breeding resident

Birds were recorded at eleven sites in north Lancashire during the year; the Lancaster & District survey in January located a total of six Tawny Owls in three 10 km squares, a substantial reduction on the 15 recorded in 2014.

Two pairs bred successfully around Crook o' Lune but poor nest-box occupancy and productivity was reported from Arkholme, Claughton, Warton Crag and Trowbarrow near Silverdale. ELOC received 132 records, 20 of these in or close to urban gardens; birds were regular at seven traditional breeding sites and nesting was confirmed or judged probable on the United Utilities Bowland estate (at up to 300m asl), Burnley and Gawthorpe. Birds were reported from nine locations in Rossendale; further south there were nine territories in the Roddlesworth Plantations and the species was recorded at 17 locations in the Chorley region with confirmed breeding at Rivington, Heskin, Euxton and by two pairs in Cuerden Valley Park. In the Preston area breeding season presence was reported from four sites, with nesting confirmed at Fishwick Bottoms.

Tawny Owls were recorded at 23 locations across the south-west with breeding confirmed at Billinge Hill, Roby Mill (two pairs each), MMWWT, Kirkdale Cemetery and Sefton Park in Liverpool, and at Much Hoole. The Fylde Bird Club dataset listed 74 records across all months; in south Fylde breeding was confirmed at Ribby Hall, Lytham Moss, Poulton-le-Fylde and Mowbreck Hall. Seventeen monitored pairs in the Pilling-Preesall area fledged 30 young from 50 eggs laid, 1.8 per pair; one nest was in a tree, all the rest were in nest-boxes.

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus*

Uncommon breeding resident

After two barren years in east Lancashire three pairs fledged young in two locations east of Burnley, but these were the only records of successful breeding anywhere in the county in 2015. A pair nested near Belmont, but unsuccessfully, and calls heard on 21 May was the only evidence of breeding season presence on Royal Birkdale Golf Course. Records of single birds in Rossendale on 30 April and at Pendle Hill summit on 28 June may have involved breeding in the vicinity.

Three probable migrants were reported in autumn, one at Fleetwood on 29 Oct and two on Hightown Dunes on the 30th, one of which remained to 4 Nov. The traditional winter roost at Marton Mere held up to four birds in January and February and one in March with the last recorded on 6 April; there were reports of breeding nearby. Five had returned by 15 Dec and up to three were present on various dates to the end of the year. A roost at Belmont contained at least two in January and February and one was at Brockholes Wetland on 3 Dec.



Long-eared Owl, Marton Mere,
20 December (Paul Ellis)

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus***Scarce breeding bird, uncommon winter visitor**

Single birds were reported from six locations in the Fylde during January-March while in the south-west up to four were seen regularly at Lunt Meadows with the last on 7 April. In the uplands two were present at Belmont from 6 Jan and singles were at Stocks Reservoir on 1 Feb, at Cow Ark on the 11th and Musden Head Moor, Rossendale on the 16th.

Six migrants were recorded along the coast between 17 April and 25 May; inland there were singles in the Anglezarke-Rivington area of Chorley in late March and mid-April and on Caton Moor and Roeburndale in the north in late April and late May.

This year saw excellent breeding performance in the uplands. In the West Pennine Moors four and possibly up to six pairs nested, including one at Belmont Reservoir for the first time since 2007; on the United Utilities estate in Bowland Short-eared Owls held eight territories, six of these fledging young, but there were no reports from the moors to the east of Burnley.

One was at Lunt Meadows from 30 July to 1 Aug, but a passage of unprecedented volume and geographical extent began at the end of August. By the middle of November there had been 22 records in the south-west with peaks of seven birds at Lunt on 25 Oct and six apiece at Hesketh Out Marsh on 1 Nov and at Hightown Dunes on the 4th. During the same period there were 70+ records throughout the Fylde including five at Fleetwood on 21 Oct and nine records of singles at six sites on the north coast. Further inland the last record at Belmont was on 16 Oct and there were singles at Brockholes on 30 Oct and at Clowbridge Reservoir on 14 Nov.

The flood of records continued into the late year, with 75+ records in the Fylde to the end of December including up to four birds on Lytham Moss and two at Rossall on various dates, and at least eight on Lunt Meadows in December with singles at five other sites in the south-west. Inland, there were five records during December on the moors east of Burnley including two at Shedden Clough on the 25th.

NIGHTJAR* *Caprimulgus europaeus***Extinct breeder, rare passage migrant**

Two birds were reported from sites in east Lancashire about 15 km apart, the first a calling record on 5 June only, the second present nightly from 12-20 June with a final report on 4 July; this bird was both seen and sound-recorded and is our first confirmed record since June 2013 (M Breaks).

SWIFT *Apus apus***Common summer visitor and passage migrant. Amber List (breeding decline)**

The first to arrive over Lancaster on 15 April was quickly followed by the first in the Fylde at Marton Mere on the 17th and in the south-west at MMWWT on the 19th; five more singles were recorded in the Fylde and one in the south-west before the end of the month. On 24 April one was at Brockholes Wetland while three at Siddows was the first ELOC record; Chorley's first Swift was over Croston Sewage Works on the 25th.

A fairly average spring passage was underway by 5 May and continued intermittently until mid-June, with peak counts in May in coastal areas of 400+ in two hours at Marshside on 7 May and 800+ there in three hours on the 14th, when about a thousand were over Lunt Meadows; a hundred plus passed over Seaforth on most days from 10 May to the end of the month. Further inland ELOC received 112 records in May with a peak of 60 over Alston Reservoirs on 10 May; there were 242 at Brockholes Wetland on the 14th. Highlights in June included 250 at Seaforth on 3 June, 200 at Leighton Moss on the 5th and 165+ over the moors at Belmont on the 9th.

Breeding reports were very sparse and certainly unrepresentative of the species' status in any region, but birds were still feeding young at Belmont on 1 Sept.

Modest southbound movements began in mid-July: 108 at Brockholes on 14 July, 120 at Leighton Moss on the 17th and 100+ at Marshside on the 19th, Brockholes on the 26th and over Ogden Reservoir on the 31st were the highest counts reported. August began with 200 over Clowbridge Reservoir on the 1st; an unusually heavy surge brought 750 to Lunt Meadows on 6 Aug, 150 over Lytham Moss next day and 380 over Speke Hall, south Liverpool and 104 south at Heysham on the 8th. Movements at a much lower level were widespread for the rest of the month, including the last Swifts at Seaforth, Lunt and in Rossendale during 28-29 Aug.

A few fair-sized flocks were still on the move until mid-September, the most noteworthy 20 at Haskayne Cutting on 5 Sept and 60 over Warton Slag Tips on the 11th; there were six September records in the Fylde, the last at Fairhaven on the 14th. The last Swift in the Chorley region was at White Coppice on 2 Sept and in the West Pennine Moors at Belmont on the 6th; singles at Wood End Sewage Works and at Warton on 17 Sept were the last migrants in east and north Lancashire, respectively, and a party of five over Ormskirk on the 22nd closed out the year.

HOOPOE * *Upupa epops*

Vagrant

For the third year in succession a single overshoot was recorded in spring, at Speke-Garston Coastal Park on 23 April (B Hedley).

KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

Uncommon breeding resident. Amber List (species of European conservation concern)

Single Kingfishers were present by twelve waters in the Fylde in January-February and at 29 from the beginning of July; birds were present at a total of 23 sites in the south-west in the early and late year. In north Lancashire there were records from five coastal sites in the early year and from ten locations after 10 July; the Lancaster & District January survey located a total of eight in four 10km squares.

ELOC received 165 reports during 2015 (154 last year); 45 of these came from c.15 km of the River Ribble between Siddows and Sawley and 16 from Lee Green Reservoir throughout the year. Breeding was confirmed at Jackhouse and judged probable downstream from Lee Green and on Thursden Brook. Kingfishers were regular visitors to most of the reservoirs in the West Pennine` Moors, including Belmont, Ward's and Springs as well as the usual riparian sites, and there were records throughout the Chorley region at 17 widespread locations; two pairs nested in Cuerden Valley Park. There were reports from twelve locations in Rossendale throughout the year. In the north there were twelve pairs on 32 km of the River Lune from Kirkby Lonsdale down to Skerton Weir, including five pairs in the Arkholme area where two nested within 40 metres of each other but on opposite sides of the river.

Closer to the coast breeding was recorded on the Upper Brock near Brock Bottom, at Barton on the eastern edge of the Fylde and on Savick Brook in Preston's Haslam Park; in the south-west there were breeding season reports from Longton Brickcroft, MMWWT, Mere Sands Wood and Tarbock Green, Knowsley, but no confirmation of nesting in any location.

WRYNECK * *Jynx torquilla*

Rare passage migrant, usually in autumn after easterly winds

A very early, and unusual, spring 'influx' brought singles to Cockerham Sands on 13 April (P Woodruff) and to a New Longton garden on the 18th (M Corless). The third Wryneck of an exceptional year was watched at Fairhaven Lake by appreciative gatherings of birders on the more conventional dates of 10-15 Sept (finder unknown).

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

Fairly common breeding resident. Amber list (species of European conservation concern)

This species seems to be doing particularly well in the north of the county in both coastal and inland woodlands. Pairs nested in at least six locations in the Silverdale-Warton area, there were three pairs along the Lune between Leck Beck and Wenning Foot and at least three further down the River at Claughton, Melling and Crook o' Lune; singles visited Heysham NR on three occasions in early year. Further to the south 54 reports were received by ELOC during 2015 (64 last year), all but five of these involving a single bird; very few came from the Ribble Valley away from the Stocks Reservoir area but there were 24 from east of Burnley and the Pennine Valleys. Nesting was considered probable at Swinden Reservoir but not confirmed at any site.

A bird was on a moorland wall at 340m asl above Belmont on 18 April; there were two breeding pairs in the Belmont area and another in Roddlesworth Plantations. Green Woodpeckers were present at Anglezarke, Rivington and White Coppice in Chorley although the species is thought to be in decline in the region; further west a bird was in a Croston garden in October. There were reports from ten locations in Rossendale with probable nesting at Spring Mill Reservoir, and a pair

nested in a conifer at Beacon Fell Country Park; nearby there were nine records of single birds from the Upper Brock Valley over a six-month period and a pair probably bred at Oakenclough.

In the lowlands none was reported in the Fylde this year but a flurry of records of single birds came from the south-west: one was present at Billinge Hill, St Helens on ten dates between August and September and there were singles at Tarbock Green, Knowsley on 1 Feb and at Rufford on 9 July. On the coast there were records at Hightown Dunes on 5 June, Blundellsands on 28 Aug (a juvenile) and Thornton on 13 October.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major*

Common and widespread breeding resident

Four hundred and thirty-nine records were received by ELOC, a major increase on the 123 in 2014 although this is less dramatic than it might appear as 194 reports were produced by intensive coverage of a single location, Jackhouse in Oswaldtwistle. Drumming was heard from 22 Jan at Jackhouse and from 2 Feb at three other sites; breeding was confirmed at Jackhouse where two juveniles were seen in June, and considered likely at nine other locations.



Great Spotted Woodpecker, Liverpool, 2 June (Steve Young)

The Lancaster & District January survey recorded 51 birds across nine 10 km squares, a similar total to last year's; four pairs bred on the Leck-Wenning stretch of the River Lune (six in 2014) and a total of 13 pairs nested at Claughton, Melling, Wennington, Arkholme, Trowbarrow and Warton Crag. On the Lune birds were observed preying on other species' nest-boxes in June thought to have been due to a scarcity of caterpillars; in one wood at Claughton 15 boxes were raided in a five day period.

On the West Pennine Moors there were 17 territories in Roddlesworth Plantations, one up on the total in 2003; birds were recorded in all months throughout the Chorley region and at least 14 territories were located, several with confirmed nesting. In Rossendale drumming was recorded from 23 Jan and breeding was confirmed in Staghills and Lea Bank Woods and at Calf Hey Reservoir. Drumming was reported in the south-west from 22 Jan and breeding was confirmed at Roby Mill (four pairs in a 148 ha 'patch') and seven other widespread locations; in the Fylde first drumming was heard at Staining on 4 Jan and breeding was confirmed at five sites.

Although none was recorded at Heysham this year, five coastal migrants were recorded during September-October, three at Fairhaven Lake and two at Seaforth; one flew south over Belmont on 11 Oct.

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER* *Dendrocopos minor***Rare breeding resident**

No reports, whether supported by descriptions or not, were received this year. Although this has happened before, in 2009, birders who have yet to add this charismatic species to their Lancashire lists must surely face a near-superhuman task by now.

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

The Kestrel is our most widespread bird of prey and up until the 1997-2000 Atlas was also the most numerous with an estimated 750 pairs. Since then, evidence suggests that there has been a decline to c. 600 pairs (2008-11 Atlas), making Sparrowhawk, or perhaps Buzzard, now the most numerous raptor.

Having said this, there were 1846 records on the BirdTrack database compared to 1420 in 2014, 770 in east Lancashire and a whopping 954 from the Fylde. Although rather subjective, one recorder felt that "there had definitely been an increase" in the Preston/Blackburn area.

Most records involved one or two birds but 16 involved four, twelve five or six and one of seven together – at Cant Clough Reservoir on 1 Aug. There were reports of up to ten at Croasdale on 24 July and over the Crossens/Marshside area between 23-25 Aug and 4 Sept. Ten on 25 Aug at Warton Marsh, across the Ribble, is likely to have involved the same birds. However, the largest group involved 15 at Belmont in mid-July. These large groups were seen late- or post-breeding season, no doubt involving family parties, but records of four together came from every month of the year and from a wide range of locations.



Kestrel, Liverpool, 20 November (Steve Young)

With so many breeding pairs there is little value in giving details of the odd pair reported upon, but one long-term study is of note: Bob Danson has monitored a number of Kestrels using nest-boxes in the Pilling/Preesall/Stalmine area for a number of years. From 2009-2014, 11-13 pairs have nested each year, with a mean fledging success of 3.01 young/pair during this 6-year period. In 2015 24 pairs were monitored: from a total of 112 eggs laid, 78 hatched and 66 young fledged, giving a fledging success of 2.75.

With so many resident birds, it is easy to forget that this is also a migratory species; the only evidence of this in 2015 were high-flying birds over Heysham on 14 March and 19 Oct.

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*

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

Most raptor species on the United Utilities Bowland estate are faring badly but this has not been the case for Merlin in recent years. This season brought mixed fortunes: there were seven occupied territories, higher than the recent average, but only five pairs laid eggs. One territory was occupied by a female only, while another was occupied by a pair but only for a short period early in the season. One nest failed at the egg stage and another at the chick stage. Between them, the three successful nests fledged 14 young. Considering all five nests, this gives a productivity of 2.8 young fledged per nest. Over the last six years, productivity has ranged from 1.2 to 4.3, so this was an average year. The number of nests has ranged from 4-6 and the number of young fledged from 6-23.

Away from Bowland, there were very few records in May, June or July and breeding was not suspected at any other eastern location. However, in the West Pennine Moors, a territory-holding pair moved on after a moorland fire swept through their territory in early April. A pair displaying elsewhere in the West Pennine Moors in mid-April was possibly this displaced pair and while the birds were not seen subsequently at this site, a male seen occasionally in the wider area thereafter was suggestive.

There were regular sightings throughout the first three months of the year from the both banks of the Ribble; these included some of the 24 records from the Fylde during this period. Sightings usually involved singles but there were two birds on occasion and it is possible that the same birds frequented the area throughout the whole first winter period. One was at MMWWT in early January but then on only one other occasion in each of February and March. The only records from the south-west were on 18 Jan at Lunt Meadows and Scarisbrick, which may have involved the same bird. Away from the Ribble, the only Fylde records were from Eagland Hill on 25 Jan and Marton Mere on 21 Feb and 23 March, and on three occasions at Cockersand. The first record from the north was on 18 Feb from the Carnforth/Leighton Moss area, and just one from the east during the first winter period, at Billington on 31 Jan.

There was a slight increase of records in April, perhaps reflecting some spring passage, with records from coastal sites including Seaforth, Lytham and Fleetwood, although there were also several records in east Lancashire.

Away from Bowland, records were very scarce in May (2), June (1) and July (2) before numbers picked up from mid-August as return migration began. Hesketh Out Marsh on the Ribble proved to be the most reliable location to see the species, from late August (up to four birds) through to the end of the year (one or two birds). Records from Marshside were also regular, possibly involving the same birds. In the Fylde, there were records from 26 sites during this late winter period.

Apart from these sites, there was a scatter of records during the second winter period: from Lunt and Halsall in the south-west, Brockholes and Heysham and Morecambe Bay further north.

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

Rare breeding bird and uncommon passage migrant.

A recent paper in the journal *British Birds* estimated that the expanding British Hobby population is likely to stand at 3000 pairs, perhaps even as high as 5000 pairs. The British Atlas 2007-11 showed that Hobby had increased its range by 295% since the first national atlas in 1968-72 and by 64% since the second atlas in 1988-91. The species is spreading north, east and west from its heartland in central southern England, where in some counties, it is now thought to be at carrying capacity.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the Lancashire population is also thought to be increasing. When all records are considered, it seems obvious that there are several pairs breeding in the county but it is notoriously difficult to gather proof of breeding for this secretive species. Having said this, a pair definitely nested in south Knowsley, but the nest was taken over by Buzzards. At least one pair definitely bred on the south-west mooses and it was the opinion of one observer that the total for south-west Lancashire might be closer to ten pairs.

A female was seen carrying food on several occasions in July on the United Utilities Bowland estate and, although this suggests that there were chicks being fed, no nest was found nor young seen. The 36 records from east Lancashire, as well as being the highest number for 15 years, also showed a good spread but no proof of breeding, even from a site which has been occupied regularly

for several years. Regular sightings also suggested that there might have been one or more pairs in the regions of Chorley, Fylde and in the area close to Leighton Moss.

There were a couple of reports in April but all records in that month require confirmation. The first definite records were in east Lancashire on 4 May at Hurst Green and Skirden Beck, with the next over Fazakerley on the 9th. There were other May records: from Lunt Meadows and Martin Mere, Leighton Moss, the Yarrow Valley, Fleetwood and Preston.

There was a good number of records from quite a wide range of sites throughout the summer: June (12 sites), July (11), August (16) and September (11). The last record from the north of the county was on 2 Oct at the Eric Morecambe complex and from Fylde on the 3rd, with one at Bank End. The last records of the year came from north Merseyside with one at Billinge Hill on 8 Oct and finally a juvenile at Seaforth on the 9th.



Hobby, Lunt Meadows, 29 June (Dave Finnegan)

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus*

Scarce breeder, uncommon winter visitor.

Up until the 1980s, due to persecution and the effects of organochlorines, hardly any pairs bred in the county. A steady increase has seen the population rise to perhaps 50 pairs. Due to the lack of high crags and cliffs, Lancashire's Peregrines have increasingly made use of man-made artefacts on which to nest.

In 2015 pairs continued to nest at two well-established sites in Liverpool on the Tobacco Warehouse and the Anglican Cathedral. The continuing extensive building work on the Royal Hospital failed to deter the female from laying eggs last year but this year there were no signs of nesting. Some other regular sites in Liverpool were not monitored but a pair nested again on a church in Kirkby and another used an old Raven's nest at Pilkington's in St Helens.

There was a territorial pair on the Heysham Power Station and four young fledged on Morrison's chimney in Chorley; a second pair in Chorley fledged one young and there were another two probable sites. As well as on buildings, birds also nest on 'semi-natural cliffs' in quarries but eggs and chicks were known to have been robbed from at least three quarries in the south-east of the county.

For the fifth year running, Peregrines had a very disappointing season on the United Utilities Bowland estate, where four territories were occupied early on and two pairs laid eggs, one of which failed. The birds disappeared in April from the other two sites after having made scrapes. Two young fledged from the only successful nest. During the period 2002-2010, the averages for successful nests and young fledged were 4.8 and 9.5 respectively.

The east Lancashire report stated that breeding took place at six locations across the area. At three locations, seven juveniles were ringed and at two other locations, three were too small and

three too big to ring. As persecution continues to bedevil this species, particularly in Bowland, details of sites have not been given, however it can be reported that a site robbed in 2011 has not been used since. The report went on to say that despite ongoing concerns about the persecution, the number of reports received this has almost doubled, while the number of sites has increased to 47, almost back to the 2011 level.

Two territories were occupied in the West Pennine Moors and birds often hunted at the Belmont Reservoir gully.

Despite there being only an estimated 50 breeding pairs in the county, records were numerous in every month and from all over the county. For example, there were 434 records on BirdTrack, while the Fylde Bird Report listed 260 records. 'Hot spots' in the county, due to a combination of good numbers of both birds and birders included MMWWT with 94 records, the Ribble marshes with over 80 records, Bowland with 69, Leighton Moss with 34 and Warton Crag with 24. Away from the breeding grounds, most records involved one or two birds but there were several records of three birds together and one record of four at Seaforth on 8 Dec.

RING-NECKED PARAKEET *Psittacula krameri*

Rare feral breeder, fairly frequent escape

This robust and assertive interloper appears still to be increasing in both numbers and range. Peak counts at the colony in Sefton and Greenbank Parks in Liverpool reached 16 in February and 21 in September; there were eight birds in Blundellsands, c.16 km away as the parrot flies, on 14 Oct. At Lytham Crematorium in the Fylde birds were attending a nest-hole in January and up to six were recorded on dates up to August.

In the Chorley region an explosion of reports came from eleven locations between April and December, including parties of four or five, around Chorley town on a number of dates; it seems likely that one or two mobile groups were responsible for most of these sightings, and there are no breeding records as yet. Elsewhere in the county there were nine reports of a single bird in east Lancashire up to 12 Oct, all from Towneley Hall or the adjacent park and woods; singles were at Heysham on 13 April and at Helmshore in Rossendale from 18 April into May.

RED-BACKED SHRIKE* *Lanius collurio*

Vagrant.

The only record for the year was a juvenile along hedgerows near Sunderland Brows Farm on 1 Sept (D Haywood).

GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

The winters of 2012/13 and 2013/14 produced no records but a couple of birds first seen in November 2014 remained through to February/March in 2015. These were a well-documented individual in the Lytham Moss/Queensway area up to 4 Feb and a slightly more elusive bird on Grindleton Fell up until 18 March. The latter was singing in mid-February.

There was a smattering of other records in the spring: singles at Gisburn Forest on 28 Feb and one at Upper Coldwell Reservoir on 27 April.

There were no records in the second winter period.



Juvenile Red-backed Shrike, Sunderland Brows Farm, 1 September (Dan Haywood)

MAGPIE *Pica pica*

Abundant resident.

This species is both abundant and easily recognisable and so it is not surprising that it should be recorded in good numbers throughout the county although there are some notable gaps where the population is aggressively controlled. The absence of birds between Kirkby and Rainford was particularly noticeable.

However, notwithstanding this, numbers at roost sites in the West Pennine Moors increased over and above the record counts of recent years. Over 400 were seen entering a roost in willows at Egerton by a single observer in December so a coordinated assessment of the roost was organised on 29 Dec, resulting in an estimate of 600-675. This was against a backdrop of 58 birds killed on the Belmont estate and just three breeding pairs in the Roddlesworth Plantations.

Other large roosts included 86 in Princes Park, Liverpool on 4 Jan and 77 at Wango Lane, Aintree on 14 Feb. There were 41 at Lunt Meadows on 21 June and 44 at Speke Alder Woods on 27 Sept. At Brockholes, a maximum of 27 were recorded in March and October but nowhere else recorded more than 20 apart from passage birds.

There was a general increase in the number of pairs reported breeding at several regularly-watched sites: Freshfield Dune Heath recorded eight pairs, there were ten pairs on EDF land at Heysham, a minimum of eleven at Aintree and five around Roby Mill.

Some passage was also noted at Fairhaven with 22 over on 26 Sept and 36 the following day, 30 were recorded at Crosby on 6 Oct.

JAY *Garrulus glandarius*

Common resident. Occasional irruptions, some winter dispersal.

Jays seem to become more prevalent each year with birds recorded in virtually every 10km square in the county. They are still relatively scarce in the Southport area with only sparse records from Birkdale, Ainsdale and Kew. They are also largely absent from the Fylde coastal region except during passage periods. The greatest concentrations seem to be around the Silverdale/Leighton Moss area and the Preston/Leyland/Chorley area. Birds are regularly visible on the tree-lined verges of the M65/M61 between Blackburn and Chorley.

There was a minimum of 15 breeding pairs in the Roddlesworth Plantations, four around Roby Mill, two at Aintree and one at Kirkdale Cemetery. Birds were present in small numbers in many of the parkland areas of south Liverpool in the spring. Two pairs bred at Heysham, which also recorded a noticeable autumn passage with a maximum of ten on 30 Sept. Brockholes recorded a peak of eight on 27 Sept and there were a few isolated records during this period from places such as Fleetwood Cemetery and Longton Marsh.

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*

Common breeding resident, some autumn movement.

As with most corvids, Jackdaws are most conspicuous in the winter months when large feeding flocks aggregate with other corvids, most notably in the west of the county. Flocks of 'hundreds' are regularly reported from these areas. These birds normally congregate at certain roost sites during this period. At Cuerden Valley Park, there were over 600 on 8 Jan whilst there were counts of 400 at Roughley's Wood, Lunt on the 12th, Fluke Hall on the 25th and Stocks Reservoir on the 24th. The roost at Belmont peaked at 300 on 1 March and 300 were at Moss House Farm, Pilling on 16 Feb. Birds are ever-present around the town of Whalley, regularly reaching three figures.

Five pairs nested in the steeple of St Peter's, Belmont and nearby up to 50 were regularly feeding within the gullery on the island at Belmont Reservoir. The island gullery is also a favoured spot at Stocks Reservoir where there were 470 on 4 July. There were approximately 50 at Withnell Quarry in early June and up to 240 at Warton Crag Quarry in the spring. Several pairs bred in the chimneys of the main house at the Hermitage Estate, Crook o' Lune and in the Over Wyre area there was good productivity; 29 nests were monitored, 126 eggs laid, from which 93 eggs hatched and 87 young fledged.

Large post-breeding flocks included 470 at Stocks Reservoir on 4 July, 320 at Warton on the 16th, 220 at Netherley on the 16th and 500 at Newton Fell on 3 Aug.

Passage birds were observed at several locations from late September to the end of October. By far the largest numbers were recorded at Fairhaven with 1000 estimated on 15 Oct. Rossall School had peaks of 53 on 29 Sept, 249 on 19 Oct and 100 on the 31st, while 41 were at Seaforth on 9 Oct, 179 on the 10th and 98 on the 19th.

Late winter roosts included 150 at Upper Rivington on 1 Nov, 400 at Egerton in late December and at least 2000 heading to roost over Whittle-le-Woods on 2 Nov. Up to 350 were regularly recorded on the Eric Morecambe complex in the latter part of the year.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

Abundant resident.

It was pleasing to receive news of another increase in the number of nests in the regularly-monitored rookeries around Chorley but these were still well down on the peaks recorded around 15 years ago. The rookeries around Turton and Edgworth have doubled in size over the past few years.

Chorley region	Nest count	Fylde (a selection of those submitted)	Nest count
Astley Park	3	Top Plantation, Pilling	32
A49 Euxton	41	Elm Wood, Nateby	9
Howard Arms, Whittle Springs	28	Station Wood, Nateby	9
Rawlinson La, Heath Charnock	0	Nickytom Wood, Nateby	20
Railway Road, Adlington	41	Parrox Hall, Preesall	32
Prospect House, Wheelton	56	Queensway, Lytham Moss	271
Lower Wheelton	6	Bartle Hall	87
Red Cat, Wheelton	1	Singleton	105
St Chad's Wheelton	8	Knott End Library	19
Croston Bowling Green	86	Hall Lane, St Michael's on Wyre	62
Croston Town Road	7	Churchtown	170
Croston Westhead Road	5	Stake Pool	49
Town House Farm, Brindle	32	Myerscough College	91
Brindle Village	0	Ellel Grange	59
Buckshaw Village	1	Barton	22
East Lancashire/West Pennine Moors		South-west	
Turton/Edgworth (two rookeries)	116	Haydock Racecourse	22
Brungerley Bridge	12	Bank Brow, Roby Mill	56
Whalley	17	Scarisbrick (two rookeries)	26
Towneley Park	43	Kirkdale Cemetery	12
Langcliffe Cross, Slaidburn	28	Netherton	0
Slaidburn Church	3		
Victoria Park, Nelson	30		
Acre, Rising Bridge	6		
Farmer's Glory, Rising Bridge	10		

In the first winter period, there were 300 at Medlar on 12 Jan, over 100 at the Upper Rivington roost on 12 Feb, 176 at Tunstall in February and 100 at Lancaster University in January. Regular counts

throughout the year on Lytham Moss ranged from 120 to 220 although there were peaks of 350 on 31 May, 550 on 23 Oct and 300 on 25 Dec. The largest count of the year in the county was 870 on stubble at Newton (Fylde) on 24 July.

Two birds at Cabin Hill on 21 March were an unusual sight for that area. Some passage was noted at Heysham with 30 flying north on 29 Sept the highest count. October brought a flurry of small numbers recorded over Liverpool. Peak numbers at West Pennine Moors roosts were 150 at Delph Plantations in October and 100 at Upper Rivington on 7 Nov.

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*

Abundant breeding bird. Some southward movement in October.

The regularly-watched roost sites in the West Pennine Moors contained 400 on 6 Feb at Roddlesworth Plantations, 200 on 12 Feb at Upper Rivington and a maximum of 300 throughout January and February at Delph Plantations. Other notable concentrations in the first winter period included 300 at Windle Fields, St Helens on 2 Jan and 200 at Plex Moss on 18 Feb.

In spring there were several counts in high double figures of feeding flocks in some unlikely locations such as 55 at Queen's Park, Blackburn on 16 May and 97 at Dean Lane, Samlesbury on 4 April. Peak numbers at Brockholes remained consistent in the region of 40 throughout the year. Some spring passage was recorded at Heysham and Rossall.

Breeding reports were widespread, including six pairs at Roddlesworth Plantations, three at Freshfield Dune Heath, four around Roby Mill and 16 along the Lune from Wenning Foot to Leck Beck (down from 26 pairs in 2014). A pair nested on a roundabout in the centre of Burnley. Ten nests were monitored in the Pilling-Preesall area where 38 eggs were laid, 22 hatched and 16 young fledged.

Autumn passage was scant with just small movements noted.

Numbers at the West Pennine Moors roost sites typically started to build up from October to 300 at Delph and Roddlesworth Plantations in December; 250 were on fields at Latham in December.

Gamekeepers at Belmont reported shooting/trapping 133 Carrion Crows in 2015.

HOODED CROW *Corvus cornix*

Scarce winter visitor or early spring passage migrant; has bred with Carrion Crow.

A bird seen at Heysham on 17 Feb was considered to be a hybrid. Examples of what were considered 'pure' Hooded Crows were noted on Plex Moss on 16 April and Fleetwood on the 26th, followed by possibly the same bird at Knott End on 1 May and Singleton on the 8-10th.

One flew high over Heysham on 10 Oct and one was seen around the Eric Morecambe complex/Warton area on 25 Nov.

RAVEN *Corvus corax*

Scarce resident.

There are some indications that this species has perhaps reached its peak and may be declining in some areas after several very good years. This is certainly the case around Rivington and Anglezarke although birds still bred nearby with two pairs in the West Pennine Moors. However, we still received records from 42 of the county's 54 10km squares, the vast majority detailing just one or two birds.

The majority of sightings came as usual from Bowland and Warton Crag. The only double-figure counts came from Champion Moor (up to 11 in the first winter period) and Catlow Fell in May. A pair raised four young at Warton Crag. Two adults and four young were noted at Gorpel Track above Burnley at the end of May. On the Fylde, pairs nested on pylons or masts at Nateby, Out Rawcliffe and Preston.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*

Common breeding bird, especially in the east. Common double passage migrant and winter visitor in variable numbers.

There was little to suggest at the start of the year that this would be one of the best autumn passages ever for this species. The usual small numbers were reported from all corners of the county during January and February with peak counts of 30 in the Roddlesworth Plantations on 14 Feb and ten at

Brockholes on 7 Jan. The Lancaster January survey counted 33, fewer than half those recorded in 2014.

Spring passage was relatively typical; at Marshside a total of 58 were recorded from 5 March to 10 April with peaks of twelve on 19 March and 14 on 6 April; Fleetwood recorded 241 between 15 March and 15 April with peaks of 30 on 18 March and 46 on 5 April, and Heysham 83 with a peak of 15 on 18 March and 15 on 8 April. There were at least 20 birds at Cabin Hill also on 5 April.

Fourteen singing males were noted around the parks of south Liverpool in spring with recently-fledged young at two sites in Mossley Hill in August. A patch of 148ha around Roby Mill had 14 singing males in spring, three pairs were at Aintree and one at Hesketh Golf Course.



Goldcrest, Liverpool, 13 March (Steve Young)

Breeding was confirmed at a number of sites in the Chorley and ELOC areas while the breeding survey of United Utilities land at Roddlesworth gave an estimate of at least 30 pairs. Over 20 singing males were recorded in the Delph plantations during June and 6-10 pairs at the Hermitage Estate, Crook o' Lune.

The first juveniles were trapped at Billinge Hill in July and small numbers of presumably local origin were recorded throughout August. However, passage really got underway in September with 'a continual passage of birds' of which 258 were ringed including 34 on 17th and 30 on the 28th. This continued into October when another 336 were ringed, followed by 75 in November. Heysham also recorded fantastic numbers with ringing figures totalling 282 and sightings totalling 435 – probably an understated figure – with peaks of 50 on 4 & 29 Oct. The pattern of arrival and the controlled birds that were processed (generally a couple of days after peaks on the east coast) indicated this arrival was of continental origin.

Away from these two closely-monitored locations, there were also double-figure counts of migrant Goldcrests during September and October from Hesketh GC, Roby Mill, Stocks Reservoir, Newton Fell, Downham, Billington, Jackhouse (Oswaldtwistle), Belmont, Clitheroe, Fairhaven Lake, Leighton Moss and Challan Hall.

Most of these birds moved quickly through and in winter we were left with the usual scattering of records with a peak of ten at MMWWT in December.

FIRECREST *Regulus ignicapilla*

Uncommon passage migrant, scarce in winter.

2015 was a very good year with 13 records of this much sought-after bird, probably reflecting an increased occurrence in the rest of the country.

Singles were at MMWWT from 4 Jan to 18 March, Leighton Moss on 22 Jan and another at Gorse Hill NR on 25 Feb.

A male was trapped at Heysham on 13 April and a singing male on private land on the Knowlmore Estate near Dunsop Bridge on 22 May got hopes up of a summering bird but it was seen again.

Autumn brought several more records; one at Hesketh Golf Course on 10 Sept and a female trapped at Heysham on the 14th were considered very early autumn records. The latter was later found on 1 Jan 2016 in a car radiator grille in Elgin so was probably a northerly dispersing bird rather than a continental migrant.

A first-year male was trapped on Billinge Hill on 26 Sept and a single was at Heysham Head on the 30th. In October there were records of singles from Bamber Bridge on the 4th, Fluke Hall on the 19-20th and Shedden Wood on the 25th.

In December one was again at MMWWT from the 10-20th and a bird was trapped at Fleetwood on the 13th.

BEARDED TIT *Panurus biarmicus*

Resident at Leighton Moss. Rare elsewhere.

At Leighton Moss there were 18 breeding pairs with ten males and ten females re-trapped and 24 young ringed; towards the end of the year regular double-figure counts included a peak of 30 during September. There were no records elsewhere.

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

Abundant breeding bird and passage migrant. Red List (breeding decline)

Apart from 150 at Marshside and 120 at Lunt Meadows on 4 Jan all the highest counts near the coast in the first winter period came from the Fylde, with 250 at Peel on 28 Jan, 220 at Eagland Hill on 3 Feb and 150 at nearby Bradshaw Lane on the 26th. Further inland there were significant gatherings in the west of the Chorley region, including 150 at Bretherton Eyes on 4 Jan and 100 on Croston Moss on 2 Feb; there were 120 on nearby Farington Moss on 18 Jan. With the exception of Arkholme, where up to 50 were feeding on slurry spread on maize stubble in February, numbers in the uplands were very much lower, although birds were singing above Belmont and at Cowpe Reservoir, Rossendale from 15 Feb; returning birds were recorded at four locations in east Lancashire during 12-16 Feb.

A very slight coastal passage brought five birds to Heysham in March; there were 30 on Cock-erham Moss on the 15th and 14 at Warton Slag Tips on the 31st. Inland movements included 20 at Coal Clough Wind Farm, Burnley on 16 March and 40 at Arkholme and 35 at Whitworth Quarry, Rossendale, both on 4 April.

Breeding records received from the uplands are assumed to be only a tiny sample of the significant populations there: in the West Pennine Moors there were four singing males in April and five in May in a 1 km BTO-BBS square on Darwen Moor and about six pairs nested around Belmont Reservoir; there were 15 territories on Musden Head Moor, Rossendale and 14 pairs on 6 km of the Lune from Leck Beck to Wenning Foot (16 in 2014).

As usual more extensive data were received from coastal regions: territories were widespread throughout the Fylde; in the south-west there were 50 singing males on Formby Dunes in April and twelve pairs bred on Birkdale Green Beach, while 55 pairs nested at Marshside-Crossens, 56 at Hesketh Out Marsh, ten at Lunt Meadows and four on the edge of Woodvale Airfield adjacent to Freshfield Dune Heath.

Small-scale movements in inland regions began with 20+ at Belmont on 15 Aug; there was heavier passage on the coast from late September with 121 at Seaforth and 115 on Fairhaven Dunes on 26 Sept and 372 at Marshside next day. Numbers later in the autumn were on the low side, with peaks of 139 at Seaforth on 6 Oct, 130 near Rainford on the 15th, 250 at Hesketh Out Marsh next day and 150 at Warton Bank on the 28th. The last Skylark in east Lancashire was on Pendle Hill on 12 Nov and movements everywhere had ended by mid-month. Peak counts at the year's end were also well below average: 120 were at Marshside and 50 at Hesketh Out Marsh on 1 Dec; in the Fylde there were 30 at Fluke Hall, Pilling on 14 Dec and 72 on Warton Bank on the 20th.

SHORE LARK *Eremophila alpestris*

Rare winter visitor

The bird present at Rossall Point from December 2014 remained until 31 March.



Shore Lark, Rossall Point, 23 February (David Moreton)

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

Common breeding bird and passage migrant. Amber List (species of European conservation concern)

The first spring migrant over the Ribble at Ribchester on 8 March was immediately followed by one at Leighton Moss and two at Brockholes Wetland on the following day; one at MMWWT on 12 March and three at Adlington Reservoir on the 14th marked the beginning of passage in the south-west and Chorley, respectively. There were eleven March records in the Fylde, four more in the north including 30 at Dockacres on the 28th, four more in east Lancashire and one in the south-west.

Some substantial movements were reported in April at both coastal and inland wetlands: 400 were at Brockholes on 11 & 15 April, 250 at Leighton Moss, also on the 11th, with 500 there on the 25th, and 100 over Wesham Marsh, Fylde, on the 14th; the peak spring count of 1000 was at Brockholes on the 21st. Further inland there were up to 300 at Arkholme on 21 April and 200 at Foulridge Reservoir, Colne on the 29th. A few noteworthy counts were recorded up to the middle of May, including 340 at Leighton Moss in 1 May, 300 at Foulridge on the 5th, 200+ at Marshside on the 10th and 340+ at Alston Reservoir next day.

A total of 1803 pairs nested along 32 km of the Lune from Kirkby Lonsdale down to Skerton Weir, 906 of these at Arkholme; in east Lancashire the two colonies on the Altham-Martholme stretch of the River Calder showed a healthy increase over 70 pairs last year to a total of 104. At Alston Wetlands many of the 192 nest chambers were occupied and 56 pulli were ringed from 14 broods; breeding was also recorded on the Ribble at West Bradford but there were only 15 active nest-holes on the Hodder above Stocks Reservoir (53 in 2014). At Lightfoot Green in the Fylde there were 200+ occupied nest-holes on 24 July; 190 birds were at the colony in Cockerham Quarry on 12 June. There were small colonies in Rossendale at Strongstry and Townsendfold, and 18 active nest-holes at Hesketh Out Marsh, the only nesting site in the south-west; no breeding reports were received from either Chorley or Brockholes.

Apart from 2000 roosting at Leighton Moss on 20 Aug autumn movements, which began around 15 July, were very slight in 2015. There were 100 at Brockholes on 9 Sept; 30 at Bank End on the 14th was the season's peak count in the Fylde while 15 at Lunt Meadows on the 26th was the only double-figure count of the autumn in the south-west. The last migrants in the north and south-west respectively were two at Aldcliffe on 16 Sept and three at Roby Mill on the 30th. Only one Sand Martin was recorded in October, at Padiham in east Lancashire on the 9th, and the year ended with a very late straggler at Knott End, Fylde on 12 Nov.

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

Abundant breeding bird and passage migrant. Amber List (species of European conservation concern)

One at Dockacres on the 28th was the only March arrival. Singles at Fleetwood and at Turf Moor, Burnley on 2 April signalled the beginning of spring in the Fylde and east Lancashire, while birds at MMWWT, Croston Moss and Holden Wood Reservoir on the 5th began the passage in the south-west, Chorley and Rossendale, respectively. The West Pennine Moors had to wait a few days for their first Swallows, five at three Belmont farms on the 9th.

Movements were exceptionally light everywhere until the middle of April; 100+ at Myerscough Quarry, Fylde on the 12th was the first three-figure count reported. Subsequent peaks included 162 at Carnforth on 16 April, 200 at Marshside on the 24th, 300 at Ewood Bridge Sewage Works, Rossendale next day and 150 at Foulridge Reservoirs on the 29th.

Passage numbers were a good deal higher during the first three weeks of May with maxima of 500 at Foulridge and 230 moving in half an hour at Heysham on 5 May, 820 over Rossall Point on the 7th with 322 there on the following day, 400 over Marshside in 1.5 hours on the 10th and 500 over Lytham Moss on the 13th. Movements faded away very quickly after that and 100+ at Marshside on 25 May was the last three-figure count reported; Heysham's last migrant passed over on 8 June.

Scattered breeding reports included 24 pairs in stables beside Freshfield Dune Heath (23 in 2014); c.31 pairs in 53 nests were monitored in the Pilling-Preesall area, Over Wyre, and 150 young fledged from the 241 eggs laid. Further inland breeding was confirmed at five locations in east Lancashire, up to 15 pairs bred in the Belmont area, including a pair that fledged young from a Wagtail nest-box, and 14 pairs nested at Arkholme (12 in 2014).

Two substantial flocks or movements of Swallows were reported in July, 150+ at Marshside on the 19th and 400 at Fleetwood Tip on the 30th, but migration across the county did not gain momentum until the second week of August with small parties on the move in the Chorley region and east Lancashire, while the Fleetwood Tip roost reached 1500 on the 8th and peaked at 2000 on the 20th. There were 200 at Hesketh Out Marsh on 13 Aug and 90+ at Belmont Reservoir on the 16th; 150 roosted at Heysham on the 22nd and 600+ moved over Marshside in 1.5 hours on the following day. A massive broad-front surge of migration on 31 Aug brought 2200 to Crossens, 800 to Hesketh Out Marsh, 300 to Bank End, Fylde and 250 to Heysham; inland there were 200 Swallows at Stocks and 120 at Rishton Reservoirs.

Less dramatic but still noteworthy movements continued on-and-off throughout September; coastal peaks included 260 at Warton Slag Tips on 2 Sept, 300 at Cockersand next day, 570 at Seaforth on the 11th, 220 at Barnaby's Sands on the Wyre Estuary on the 14th and 146 over Rossall Point on the 27th. Inland there were 200 near Belmont on 5 Sept, a passage considered to be in the 'thousands' over Whittle-le-Woods, Chorley on the following day, 250 at Alston Wetlands on the 15th and 300 at Brockholes on the 29th.

There were no three-figure reports in October; in the Fylde 19 were at Marton Mere on 8 Oct and the last of 30 records during the month was of two birds over Fairhaven Dunes on the 26th, when Heysham also recorded its last Swallow of 2015. Eighteen were at Seaforth on 8 Oct and the south-west region's last was at MMWWT on the 11th; five over Great Knowley on 8 Oct and 14 south at Belmont on the 11th ended the year in Chorley and the West Pennine Moors. A single bird at Blacko and seven at Towneley Park on 28 Oct completed the passage in east Lancashire and a late bird over Leighton Moss on 29 November was the last of 2015.

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbicum*

Common breeding bird and passage migrant. Amber List (breeding decline)

There were two March records, the first in east Lancashire over the River Calder at Altham on the 27th and one at Leighton Moss on the following day. Six two-or three-figure counts were reported during April, a major improvement on last year's sparse showing, with birds at Preesall Floods and Elswick on the 5th the first to arrive in the Fylde, Chorley's first at Cuerden Valley Park on the 11th and movements in the south-west beginning with a single bird at Seaforth and up to ten at Mere Sands Wood on the 15th. The highest counts during April were of 250 at Marshside on the 24th and 150 at Ewood Bridge Sewage Works, Rossendale next day.

Movements continued at a similar level throughout May and into the first week of June, with peaks of 150+ at Marshside on 7 May and 100+ there on the 24th, 100 at Ewood Bridge on the 17th and 135 at Saltcotes, Fylde on the 31st; 50+ at Heysham on 6 June was the last significant spring count reported.

Breeding was reported from 14 locations in the Fylde with birds still visiting a nest at Newton-with-Scales on 3 Oct; further south on the coast House Martins bred successfully in St Michaels, Liverpool and at Birkdale and on the Marshside estate in Southport. Many breeding reports were received from inland regions this year: ELOC reported confirmed nesting at 13 locations including 27 nests at Footholme and 13 at Clitheroe Roman Way; juveniles were still in the nest at Clitheroe on

5 Oct. A full survey of Belmont Village located 13 active nests, as in 2014, with the last brood fledging on 9 Sept; elsewhere in the West Pennine Moors there were at least twelve nests on a row of terraced houses in Abbey Village and about ten on a farmhouse near Delph Reservoir. In Chorley three young fledged from a nest at Heapey on 4 Oct. House Martins bred at two locations in Waterfoot, Rossendale and in the Lune Valley there were small colonies in Melling and Wrayton and 18 nests in Wennington; nearer the coast eleven pairs bred in a colony at Warton and a pair was still feeding young in a nest at Lancaster on 19 Sept.

Autumn movements began at the end of July with a flock of 70+ over Fairhaven Lake on the 28th; passage in August was very light and peak counts included 80 at Padiham on the 9th, 102 at Belmont on the 12th and 120+ at Marshside on the 16th. Movements increased in volume and extent during September and were particularly conspicuous in inland regions with maxima of 400+ at Belmont on 5 Sept, 200 at White Coppice, Chorley on 8 Sept and 150 over Champion Moor in east Lancashire on the following day. Later in the month there were 100 at Calf Hey Reservoir in Rossendale on 13 Sept and 170 at Lower Whitehead in east Lancashire on the 18th. Meanwhile on the coast passage in the Fylde was on a more modest scale with peaks of 75 at Eagland Hill on 4 Sept and 100+ at Catforth on the 14th. In the south-west there were up to 50 at Crosby Coastal Park on four dates in early and mid-September and at Hesketh Out Marsh on the 3rd; 86 at Lunt Meadows on 16 Sept was the highest count in the region.

Late-moving House Martins were more numerous and widespread than usual in 2015, being recorded at eight coastal or near-coastal locations in October including ten over Everton Park, Liverpool on the 1st, eleven south over Billinge Hill, St Helens on the 9th and five at Leighton Moss on the 24th. There were nine records from eight inland sites during the month including 60 south at Arkholme on 1 Oct and 40 over Bank End Wood, Blacko on the 18th. Five at Waterfoot on 1 Oct were Rossendale's last House Martins, one at Belmont on the 9th was the last migrant in the West Pennine Moors and one over Great Knowley on the 17th ended the year in Chorley. Two birds at Towneley Park on 28 Oct were east Lancashire's last and there were two November records in the Fylde, singles at Knott End on the 7th and over Blackpool North Shore on the 21st.

BLUE TIT *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Abundant breeding bird. Marked autumn passage.

The breeding season was a disastrous one at many sites for our local Blue Tits, especially in the north of the county. Monitoring of 129 pairs in nest-boxes in nine woods around the Lune Valley revealed that of the 954 eggs laid only 173 young fledged. The cold, wet weather and the dearth of caterpillars



Blue Tit, Liverpool, April (Steve Young)

was certainly one reason but there was also a high degree of predation of a lot of nest-box species by Great Spotted Woodpeckers and Weasels. On the Hermitage Estate at Crook o' Lune there are normally at least six pairs but only two young fledged.

Things were not quite as bad at Moor Piece where 33 nests resulted in 143 fledglings and in Over Wyre 102 nests produced 844 eggs from which only 527 hatched and 382 fledged. Four nest-boxes in Rishton saw reduced clutch sizes of 4-6 from the outset, suggesting that birds were in generally poor breeding condition but from which all young fledged. Eight boxes were used at Bowland Wild Boar Park and there were an estimated 30 pairs on the 148ha Roby Mill patch, 13 at Aintree, 15 at Carr Mill Dam and eight at Kirkdale Cemetery. Replacement of nest-boxes at Warton Crag resulted in a doubling to twelve pairs.

Very little movement was noted at Heysham and the birds that were trapped were mostly adults, reflecting the atrocious breeding season.

GREAT TIT *Parus major*

Abundant breeding bird, less common on autumn passage than Blue Tit.

It was much the same story as Blue Tit with regards the breeding success of this species in 2015, although Great Tits remain abundant in all areas.

The population in the nine woods around the Lune Valley was 101 pairs laying 563 eggs and fledging a measly 122 young. Moor Piece had 41 nest-boxes in use but fledged only 93 and in Over Wyre, 60 nests produced 395 eggs from which 277 hatched and 223 fledged. Five boxes were occupied at Bowland Wild Boar Park and no young were raised from the six or so pairs on the Hermitage Estate at Crook o' Lune. Twelve nest-boxes were occupied at Heysham with 72 eggs laid but only 51 fledged.

There were 25 singing males around Roby Mill in spring, eleven territories at Aintree, six at Carr Mill Dam, four at Kirkdale Cemetery and five at Jubilee Wood, Maghull. It will be interesting to see how the population recovers in 2016.



Great Tit (Darren Doody)

COAL TIT *Periparus ater*

Common breeding bird. Some irruptive movements in autumn.

The early part of the year did not produce any particularly high counts in contrast to recent years. In fact there were extremely few double-figure counts at all. The species came 11th in the Winter Garden Bird Survey of the CDNHS, being recorded in 20 of the 23 gardens.

Coal Tits were similarly affected by the spring weather and lack of caterpillars but possibly less so than Blue and Great Tits. The breeding bird survey of the UU Roddlesworth Plantations estimated a population of at least 50 pairs. Regular ringing activities in Bowland recorded very few young birds although populations around Browsholme Hall remained high. Twelve young fledged from three boxes at Moor Piece. At least 10 pairs bred at the the Hermitage Estate, Crook o' Lune and there were three pairs at both Warton Crag and Croftlands.

Roby Mill recorded pairs at 17 locations whilst there were four at Aintree and two at Jubilee Wood, Maghull. The species is still widespread around south Liverpool where conifers are present although in small numbers.

There was a noticeable irruption during the autumn with peak counts at Heysham of 44 on 29 Sept, 45 on 1 Oct and one flock of 14 on the 2nd. Similarly, at Fairhaven, good numbers were recorded with 46 on 30 Sept and 41 the following day. There were 30 at Cabin Hill on 30 Sept and counts at Challan Hall, Silverdale also increased at this time with a peak of 40. Small numbers were also noted at Fleetwood and Seaforth.

WILLOW TIT* *Poecile montana*

Scarce breeder in the birch copses of the south-west. Very rare elsewhere.

It is good to see some active conservation work going on to maintain and improve suitable habitat for this species across the south-west of the county. Courses run by the LWT have been taken up by volunteers and so hopefully we should reap the rewards in a few years' time with an increasing population.

In the Chorley region there were singles at Croston Moss on 2 Jan and again in February. One was also in a garden at Hartwood during February. One was noted in a Great Knowley garden on 27th July, and again on several dates in August and later in December. There were also records from Lower Burgh Meadow and Arley NR.

One pair was confirmed as breeding at Roby Mill as were pairs at Carr Mill Dam and Abbey Lakes, Upholland. Eight juveniles were ringed at Billinge Hill between 17 July and 2 Oct and birds were present at Crawford, Rainford and Rufford.

A bird was present in Boilton Wood, Brockholes from 4 Jan to 4 April. A juvenile was trapped and ringed at Brockholes on 25 July and thereafter, single birds were seen here on 19 Oct and 17 Nov. At nearby Fishwick Bottoms, there were up to two from 13 Jan to 4 May. Further east, there was one at Wood End Sewage Works, Burnley on 14 Aug and 20 Sept. there was also a bird at Lee Green Reservoir from 7 – 13 Sept

An extralimital bird was seen on garden feeders in Banks from 1-25 July and again in October.

MARSH TIT* *Poecile palustris*

Fairly common breeder in the north of the county. Virtually absent south of the Ribble and in the Fylde.

Virtually all sightings of this species come from SD47 (Warton Crag/Leighton Moss/Silverdale) with a few from surrounding 10km squares. The largest counts reported were eight at Challan Hall in January and March, seven at Leighton Moss and six at Woodwell both in January. The Lancaster January survey picked up a total of just 28. There were three pairs on Warton Crag and six pairs at Trowbarrow. There were no reports from further up the Lune Valley or north Bowland.

There were a couple of sightings in east Lancashire; a single bird heard and then observed at Wycoller on 10 Jan and one at Braddup Farm near Waddington on 1 June.

CETTI'S WARBLER *Cettia cetti*

Scarce breeding resident.

Increased numbers of sites with records and good totals at stronghold sites both pointed towards further colonisation.

Up to ten birds were reported at Marton Mere and a nest and eggs were seen while birds were recorded at fringe localities including Staining Nook and Lawson Road wetlands. Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park has been another site with regular sightings and this year there were at least two singing birds and five were ringed excluding retraps. Two new sites were reported in the Blackpool area, Blackpool Industrial Estate at Peel and Stockydale pits at Marton Moss.

At the other main site, at least five were at Leighton Moss, two at Barrow Scout and two at the Eric Morecambe complex. It appears to be only a matter of time before Heysham is colonised, there were birds in February-March at the nature reserve and March-April at Middleton NR, with at least five others in the second half of the year including two on 31 Dec. One was at Aldcliffe on 25 Oct.

Elsewhere, in east Lancashire the 2014 bird at Lee Green Reservoir was recorded on and off to 19 Feb with another at Brookside on 28-30 July. One remained at Brockholes from 2014 until 17 April. In the south-west singles at Marshside on 13 March to 23 April and Lunt Meadows in late November and December were first site records, while MMWWT had single(s) were on 16 Jan, 17 Feb, 26 April and 14 & 25 Oct.

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*

Very common breeding resident.

Larger counts of this species need to be interpreted with caution as it is not always clear whether a single flock is being referred to or several groups in an area. In the case of the highest total this year, 50 at Belmont at the end of December, this related to four flocks. In east Lancashire there were 30 at Clowbridge Reservoir in October, 28 at Jackhouse in November, 27 at Moor Piece in June and several

other counts of 25 birds. Elsewhere, there were up to 30 at Stanley Park, Blackpool in January, 29 at Brockholes in July and 27 at Conder Green in August.

At least 20 pairs were found during a survey of Roddlesworth Plantations, in line with the numbers found there in a similar study in 2003. There were eight pairs in a 148ha study area at Roby Mill and five pairs bred on EDF Energy land at Heysham.

Autumn passage at Heysham was generally quiet but irruptive southbound flocks of 15 on 3 Oct and 18 on the 12th were noted. The only record of the year at Seaforth was three on 27 Sept.



Long-tailed Tit, Lee Park Golf Course, Liverpool, April (Steve Young)

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Scarce but increasing autumn passage migrant.

It was a record year for this once highly prized but now expected autumn visitor. Over 40 records were submitted and Yellow-browed Warbler has now been removed from the species requiring a description with effect from 2015, though submissions for older records are still welcome.

For the first time records of this species were received from retrospective analysis of sound recordings, at Knott End on 20 Sept and 3 Oct.

Unusually, the first sight record was inland, at Towneley Woods, Burnley on 21 Sept. The next was at Heysham on 22 Sept and a week later one was trapped at the same site on the 29th and one was at Blundellsands, while the following day one was at Heysham Head and another was at Fleetwood.

The majority of reports came throughout October. Most were around Morecambe Bay, particularly the Heysham area. On the 1st singles were at Sunderland Point and nearby Sunderland Brows Farm; one evaded the nets at Heysham the same day and another was in Fleetwood Cemetery, while further south was in Hightown Dunes. There were two at Fleetwood on the 2nd.

One was trapped on 3 Oct at Middleton NR, while another bird seen in the field later by the same observers was probably a different individual and another was at Sunderland Point. On the 4th one was at Fluke Hall, another was at Heysham NR and inland one was trapped and ringed at Billinge Hill. There was then a brief gap in less favourable weather conditions before one was seen in a Galgate garden on the 8th, with two different birds at Heysham NR on the 9th, the second of which was trapped, and another at Crosby Coastal Park.

Birds were seen on 10 Oct at Leighton Moss and Glasson, while one trapped in a different area of Leighton Moss the next day may have been a different individual. Also on the 11th there were two at Heysham and one in Fleetwood Cemetery.

Another inland record was at Fishwick Bottoms on the 13th. Something of an influx on the 14th produced one in a north Heysham garden, one at Middleton NR and at least one at Heysham NR. Birds were seen in the next few days at Fluke Hall on the 15th, Leighton Moss on the 16th and Heysham NR on the 17th. Another was ringed at Leighton Moss on the 19th.

There was a handful of relatively late reports: singles at Stodday sewage works on 29 Oct, Formby Point and Fluke Hall on the 30th, Fleetwood on the 31st and the last of a prolonged and unprecedented passage at Marshside on 3 Nov.

An additional report from a St Annes garden was undated. With regard to the 2014 report the record on 20 Oct at Brockholes should have been attributed to J Beattie.

DUSKY WARBLER *Phylloscopus fuscatus*

Vagrant

One was seen and heard at Marton Mere on 16 Jan (D McGrath, G Nuttall). Although the observation was brief, photographs were obtained and these enabled the record to be accepted by the Lancashire Records Committee.

This is the third Lancashire record, following birds on 4 Nov 1994 at Heysham and 23-24 Oct 2003 at Fairhaven. Although this species is not unknown in winter in Britain these days, a January Lancashire record was still completely unexpected.



Dusky Warbler, Marton Mere, 16 January (D McGrath)

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Scare breeder and passage migrant

The first inland at Anglezarke on 20 April, was followed by birds in east Lancashire at Seed Park, Samlesbury on 22 April and Cut Wood on the 24th, and one in Chorley at Heatherlea Woods on the 26th. With regard to coastal spring migrants the first was singing at Hesketh Golf Course on 22 April, with another in Stanley Park, Blackpool on the 23rd. Coincidentally one was in Stanley Park, Liverpool on 1-2 May, while on the latter date one was at Marton Mere. Finally, one was at Fleetwood on 5 May.

A breeding survey of the United Utilities land at Roddlesworth Plantations identified one paired male and an unmated individual; in 2003 there were seven singing males in the same area. Two males were singing at Middlewood, Roeburndale on 7-14 May and near Barley on the 25th. There were two or three singing males in the Anglezarke area, including at Lead Mines Clough. Elsewhere, there were reports of one to two birds from Crook o' Lune, Darwen, Earby, Gawthorpe, Heatherlea Woods (Brinscall), Hornby, Lumb Vale (Rossendale), Newton-in-Bowland, Padiham, Rishton, Rivington, Stocks Reservoir, Towneley and the Upper Brock Valley. Some of these birds are likely to have been transient, and one experienced observer suggests the county breeding population is probably no higher than 25 pairs.

Verified autumn records are always notable. This year there were two, both from Leighton Moss on 25 July and 22 Aug that were both trapped and ringed.

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*

Common breeder and passage migrant, uncommon in winter

Sewage works are often good sites for wintering records, and there were at least three birds in January and no fewer than five in February at Croston SW. Two were at both Middleton NR and



Chiffchaff, Liverpool, 26 March (Steve Young)

MMWWT in February, while there were reports of single birds at a dozen or so widely scattered sites in the first winter period.

Arrival dates were unclear due to the number of wintering birds, but the first appear to have come in on 11 & 12 March, including arrivals at Heysham and Marshside. Spring passage was less striking than the autumn, but included twelve in the Fleetwood area on 8 April, nine there the next day and eight on the 7th. Up to fifteen were singing at Marton Mere in mid-April.

The species continues to increase in the Chorley area with birds present in the breeding season at a dozen sites. There were 29 pairs in the Roby Mill study area, up three on 2014. The 17 pairs recorded at Freshfield Dune Heath was an increase of six, and the highest total in a dozen years of surveys. There were 15 pairs at Warton Crag, an increase of two on 2014, while ten on the Lune from Leck to Wenning Foot was up from seven. A total of 14 were singing across the Fazakerley Ecology Park in late March. Twelve in the Aintree study area was an increase of two. The breeding bird survey of Roddlesworth Plantations yielded eight singing males. Eight pairs in the Birkdale NR area was unchanged. There were seven or eight territories on the EDF land at Heysham, but local productivity was considered poor. Five pairs nested on Hesketh Golf Course as in 2014.

A strong autumn passage was detected at well-covered ringing sites. At Billinge Hill 267 were ringed between mid-July and mid-November, including 125 in September. There were a number of small falls at Heysham from the second week of September to the third week of October, including at least twelve on 2 Oct. Other notable records elsewhere included 27 in the Roby Mill area on 23 Sept and ten at Marton Mere on 18 Sept.

At least three were in the Heysham area during the second winter period with small numbers of singles throughout the county in November and December after the last migrants had moved through.

SIBERIAN CHIFFCHAFF* *Phylloscopus collybita tristis* Vagrant

There were two documented records this year, several other claims were not supported by descriptions. One which was trapped at Heysham on 1 Nov gave the characteristic calls of



Siberian Chiffchaff, Heysham,
1 November

tristis (PJ Marsh *et al*). The second was observed in the field at Marton Mere on 25 Dec and was heard to give the typical call (P Ellis, K Beaver).

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Abundant breeding bird and passage migrant

The first at MMWWT on the 23 March was followed by one at Tarbock on the 29th. At well-watched sites the first were not at Marshside until 6 April and Seaforth and Fleetwood on the 7th while the first at Heysham were three on the 8th. At Belmont, where birds did not arrive until the 9th, there were at least 57 singing males by mid-month. Coastal migrant totals included 80 in the Fleetwood area and 40 at Heysham on 15 April, with 32 at the latter site on 1 May.

There were 58 singing males on the Lune from Leck to Wenning, compared with 55 in 2014. In the Birkdale area the species is considered to be doing well, with eighteen males in a partial count of the nature reserve area and up to 35 singing males in the wider vicinity. The largest total reported in east Lancashire was 33 at Bottoms Beck on 16 June. The breeding survey of Roddlesworth Plantations yielded 28 singing males, the same total was noted at Winmarleigh Moss in late May. There were 39 males recorded in the 148ha Roby Mill study area, while the Brockholes population was estimated at 28 males. Although declines have been reported in many areas in recent years 14 pairs at Freshfield Dune Heath was an increase of five, similarly a single pair on Hesketh Golf Course was a return after an absence of two years.

Over 150 were ringed at Billinge Hill in August. At Heysham there were no significant falls in the autumn, but birds were recorded through to the fourth week of September. Late migrants included White Coppice on 26 Sept, Leighton Moss on the 28th, Downham on the 30th, Leighton Moss again on 1 Oct, Belmont on the 2nd and finally Brockholes on the 6th. As ever, departure dates need to be interpreted with some caution as some misidentifications of Chiffchaffs undoubtedly occur.

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*

Very common breeding bird and passage migrant, fairly common winter visitor

Birds present in the first winter period included up to two at Aintree and Birkdale and in Chorley, Lower Darwen, Torrisholme and Waterloo gardens, while there were a dozen or so records of single individuals elsewhere.

A subdued initial arrival got underway in early April with arrivals at Brockholes from the 4th and Billinge and Heysham on the 8th. Coastal migrant counts included 15 in the Fleetwood area on 15 April.

A total of 31 singing males were counted in the 148ha patch monitored at Roby Mill, 29 territories on the Lune from Leck to Wenning Foot, compared with 24 in 2014, and 22 males in the Roddlesworth Plantations compared with twelve in 2003. Twelve territories at Warton Crag was an increase of two, 15 singing males were at Birkdale LNR and twelve at Oglet, where it was considered abandoned farmland returning to scrub had helped this population increase. In east Lancashire 20 males were at Bottoms Beck on 1 June, while in St Helens there were eight territories at both Carr Mill Dam and Kings Moss, and in Sefton eight pairs at Sefton Meadows and seven in the Aintree area. Four were singing at Calf Hey Reservoir, Rossendale on 6 June.

Birds were widespread on autumn passage to the first half of October. At Heysham it was considered that a change from east/south-easterly to north-easterly winds significantly reduced movement. Small numbers of late migrants were then seen again in early November.

There appeared to be fewer in late November and December than there had been at the start of the year, although two were again at Birkdale NR, with singles visiting half a dozen widely scattered gardens elsewhere.

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

Fairly common breeding bird and passage migrant

Arrival was noted from 18 April at Yarrow Valley Park then 20 April at Gait Barrows and the 22nd at Calderstones, Whalley, with others at Hornby and Marshside on the 23rd. On the Fylde, where the species is predominantly a passage migrant, at least nine were in the Fleetwood area in May, with others at Lytham St Annes NR on 1 May and Lytham Hall on the 21st.

Birds were reported widely in summer in east Lancashire, with peak counts of five at Bottoms Beck on 13 May and four singing at Braddup Farm on 1 June. Four singing males in the Roddlesworth Plantations was a reduction of three since the last survey there in 2003. Up to six singing males were at Brockholes in May, while in the Chorley area at least three were singing along the Anglezarke woodland trail on 13 May with birds there to at least mid-July. In north Lancashire there were four pairs from Leck to Wenning Foot (up two), and also four at Warton Crag (unchanged). There were six singing males in the 148ha study area at Roby Mill.

Migrants were very thin on the ground after the beginning of September, when birds were at a number of coastal sites in the first couple of days. In the ELOC area the last was at Lee Green Res on 17 September. One was at Cabin Hill on 20 September, while the last of five migrants in the Fleetwood area during the month was trapped on the 29th. Comfortably the last of the year was one trapped at Heysham on 12 Oct.

There was again no evidence of any wintering birds.

BARRED WARBLER *Sylvia nisoria*

Vagrant

At least one first-winter was frequenting the same area as a Wryneck around Fairhaven pumping station on 10 Sept (M Jones, F Bird, L G Blacow *et al*). Some observers considered that two individuals were present, one ringed and one not.



Barred Warbler, Fairhaven, 10 October
(Craig Bell)

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

Uncommon breeding bird and passage migrant

The first of the year was at Heysham on 17 April; other early arrivals included singles at Carleton and Thornton (Fylde) on the 20th, Aldcliffe and Inskip on the 21st and Fleetwood, Eccleston, Chorley and the Eric Morecambe complex on the 22nd. During May three males were at Burglars Alley, Fleetwood on the 4th and also between Pilling Lane Ends and Fluke Hall on the 15th.

There were four territories on EDF property at Heysham but productivity was considered to be very poor. Three singing males were at Marton Mere but none was recorded at Warton Crag, where there were three in 2012. Over half of the sightings in east Lancashire came from Alston Wetland, so breeding was probable there.

Autumn passage through Heysham included three on 2 & 4 Aug, while in September seven were at Marton Mere on the 1st, four at Aldcliffe on the 8th and three there on the 14th. Other late birds were at Mellor on the 15th and one at Heysham on the 19th. A series of records from Marton Mere and nearby Staining Nook included two to 14 Sept, one on the 19th and the last of the year in the county on 6 Oct.

WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

Very common breeder and passage migrant

Arrival began with one at Hic Bibi on 13 April. Thereafter, early reports came from Roby Mill and Staining Nook on the 15th, Marshside and Todderstaffe next day, and several sites including Ainsdale, the Alt Estuary, Fleetwood, Lunt Meadows and MMWWT on the 17th. Influxes in spring included 20+ at Heysham on 1 May.

Twenty eight pairs nested between Hesketh GC and Crossens WWTW, and there were 25 territories at Birkdale LNR, similar to 2014. Fourteen pairs were recorded at Lunt Meadows, eleven at Freshfield Dune Heath and 39 in the 148ha Roby Mill study area; on 4 May 25 were singing at Oglet. There were twelve territories on the EDF land at Heysham and seven males in the Belmont area, although some were considered to be transient. ELOC records included up to six at Jackhouse with confirmed nesting at four other sites. A decline was reported in Rossendale, and seven territories at Aintree was at the bottom end of recent numbers.

As with several other warbler species a presumed poor breeding season led to low numbers on autumn passage at Heysham, where the last was present on 27 Sept. The last were singles on Lytham Moss on 30 Sept, Jackhouse and Cabin Hill on 1 Oct, and at Aldcliffe on 4-5 Oct.



Whitethroat, Lunt Meadows, 4 June (Dave Finnegan)

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia*

Fairly common breeding bird and passage migrant

The first was at Middleton NR on 13 April with other early migrants at Shedden Wood (east Lancashire) and Cabin Hill the next day, Rossall Point and Fleetwood Cemetery on the 15th, Rivington Moor on the 16th and Ainsdale and Hightown on the 17th.

Seventeen were reeling in the Belmont area, the highest number for four years. There were nine territories at Birkdale including birds, five at Middleton NR, but none on EDF land; seven on the Blundellsands-Hightown dunes in late April may have included some migrants. Other sites where more than one reeling male was reported included Cabin Hill, Calf Hey and Holden Wood Reservoirs, the Eric Morecambe complex, Leighton Moss, Silverdale Moss, Lunt Meadows, MMWWT, Marton Mere, Rivington, Roby Mill, Roddlesworth Plantations, Rossall School and Warton slag tips.

The last in the east of the county was on 16 Aug at Newton, while in Chorley a late bird was reeling at Hic Bibi on 13 Sept when there was also a bird at Belmont. On the coast one was ringed at Middleton on 8 Sept with another trapped there on the 14th, while at MMWWT there were birds on the 1st & 15th and one was at Fleetwood on the 12th. An extremely late bird at Cocksand on 1 Oct was photographed and rarer confusion species ruled out.

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Common breeding bird and passage migrant

The first arrivals at Leighton Moss and Marshside on 9 April were followed by one at Fleetwood on the 10th. There was a short delay before birds filtered inland with the first in the Chorley area at Bretherton on the 18th, Brockholes on the 19th and the first in east Lancashire at Oswaldtwistle on the 20th.

Thirty two pairs nested at Leighton Moss with a further eight on the Eric Morecambe complex and four on Silverdale Moss. The Marshside breeding population was estimated at 13 to 17 pairs, 20 were at MMWWT on 27 April, ten pairs nested at Lunt Meadows, seven in the Birkdale and Tagg's Island area, four on Hesketh Out Marsh and three at Oglet.

The species has become increasingly scarce in the Lune Valley, for example the six pairs between Kirkby Lonsdale and Skerton compares with no fewer than 22 in 2014. Up to eleven males were singing at Brockholes and nine at Carr House Green Common, Inskip.

In east Lancashire two pairs nested at Wood End Sewage Works and one at Grove Lane Marsh. There were singing birds at several Chorley sites, and at Holden Wood Reservoir in Rossendale.

Heysham ringing totals in early autumn suggested productivity in the local area had been poor; a flurry of birds from late August, including six on the 31st, were thought to be birds of north British origin. Very few autumn migrants were recorded after early September, the last in the east was at Dilworth Reservoir on the 7th and the only ones away from Leighton Moss after this were at Cockersand on the 17th and Marton Mere on the 27th. There were still five at Leighton on 6 Sept and a few singles were seen there until the last on 3 Oct.



Sedge Warbler, Lunt Meadows, 26 May (Dave Finnegan)

MARSH WARBLER *Acrocephalus palustris*

Vagrant

A first-winter was trapped and ringed at Heysham NR on 24 Aug (A Draper *et al*). The bird had measurements in the intermediate zone between Marsh and Reed Warbler but other structural and plumage features were consistent with Marsh and the record was accepted by the records committee.

This was the seventh Lancashire record. The majority of these (four) have been in the Heysham area, most recently one singing on 10 June 2013.

REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Fairly common breeder, uncommon passage migrant

The first was at Marton Mere on 10 April; others arrived at Leighton Moss and White Coppice on the 13th, and Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park, Marshside and MMWWT on the 16th.

No systematic breeding data were received from either Leighton Moss or MMWWT. The largest casual count at Marton Mere was eleven singing males while ten to twelve pairs bred at Marshside and nine at Lunt Meadows. Up to seven sang at Brockholes, where a total of 36 birds were ringed; 80 were ringed at Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park.

Other breeding totals included six in the area at Tagg's Island, Birkdale, five at Middleton NR, while Heysham NR and Hesketh Out Marsh both held three pairs. Other sites with confirmed or suspected pairs included Aintree, Aldcliffe, Bretherton Eyes, Burgh Hall (Chorley), Conder Green, Grimsargh Wetland, Seaforth and Yarrow Valley Park.

In autumn three juveniles were ringed at Billinge Hill, two on 31 July and one on 30 Aug. An unprecedented number of September birds were ringed at Heysham, where late birds included two on the 22nd and one on the 28th. There were two October records, both at Leighton Moss, on the 10th and finally the 16th.

WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulus*

Winter visitor in highly variable numbers

It was not an irruption year and there were just five reports. Up to six were in the Whitehall area of Darwen on 17 Jan, two in Fleetwood on 3 Feb and five were reported in Lancaster on 18 February.

In the second winter period there were just two birds in Liverpool, at Childwall on 24 Nov and Broadgreen on 28 Dec.

NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

Fairly common and increasing breeding resident.

The seemingly inexorable westwards march of this species and increasing populations in the eastern woodlands was illustrated beautifully in a survey of the Roddlesworth Plantations, where the species was first seen in 1983 with a slow growth to two pairs in 1989 increasing to 13 in 2003. The 2015 survey recorded an amazing 39 occupied territories, probably the most the site could support. The surrounding areas are all seeing good numbers as they have moved westwards. Nuthatches are now present and common throughout the whole of the Chorley recording area including western outposts such as Eccleston and Croston; eight pairs bred at Cuerden Valley Park.

Numbers are starting to burgeon at coastal locations now with four territories in a kilometre between Freshfield station and the Formby Point National Trust reserve entrance, while there were three territories in Southport Botanic Gardens with two pairs feeding young in early May. Birds were present in all the parkland of south Liverpool and out towards Otterspool and Speke. There were five pairs at Roby Mill and birds were present at Haydock Park, Dalton and Newton-le-Willows.

Back in the east, the species continues to colonise previous voids of sub-prime habitat such as Salterforth; 20 young fledged from nest-boxes at Moor Piece.

In north Lancashire there were six pairs at Hermitage Estate, Crook o' Lune, two pairs on Warton Crag, four in Trowbarrow Woods and seven in nest-boxes in Silverdale (laying 47 eggs but fledging 28 young with two being predated).

Small numbers were recorded at several sites in the Fylde, mainly from the Lytham area but also from Kirkham, Singleton and Poulton-le-Fylde up to Fluke Hall but they remain largely absent from Blackpool and Fleetwood, although they are regular in Stanley Park.

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

Common breeding resident.

Treecreepers continue to be seen in good numbers throughout the year in all their regular woodland and suburban haunts. Reports came from 42 10 km squares with the majority from the central belt and Bowland areas. They are present in all the parks of south Liverpool where they can be encountered in any reasonable stand of trees or mature hedgerows.

Twenty five territories were estimated at Roddlesworth Plantations but the number of records was down at Cuerden Valley Park. Ten singing males were counted in a 148ha 'patch' at Roby Mill. All woods visited in Lune Valley contained pairs of Treecreepers.

In a similar vein to Nuthatch, numbers on the Fylde are low. They are regular at Stanley Park, Blackpool but a single bird at Marton Mere in the winter months could be classed as a local rarity. There were very few reports from the Southport area or the Sefton Coast, although a pair did nest successfully in the Botanic Gardens, Churchtown.

A juvenile was ringed at Heysham on 22 July but no more were seen until September when there were singles on the 17th, and four dates in October. Up to two were in residence on Heysham Head throughout late autumn.

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Abundant breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

There seems to be no discernible change in the population of one of our commonest birds. The ELOC database alone had 1200 records with some notably high counts exceeding 30 of presumably less shy young birds in early summer walks around Whalley and Calderstones. Counts at Carr House Green Common and Brockholes were regularly in the 20s throughout the year.

The winter survey in the Lancaster area recorded 178, slightly down on last year's high and the species was recorded in 90% of the gardens surveyed by the CDNHS.

Several sites provided data on the number of occupied territories. Numbers fell to eleven pairs from 18 at Warton Crag but along the Lune from Leck Beck to Wenning Foot there were 53 singing males in comparison to 41 the previous year. Freshfield Dune Heath had its equal highest total of 27 pairs and 51 territorial males were counted around a 148ha site at Roby Mill. There were, 13 territories at Aintree, 21 at Carr Mill Dam, four at Kirkdale Cemetery and nine at Jubilee Wood, Maghull.

Two territories were noted in tall heather on open moorland on Darwen Moor in May. Twelve males were singing in Cut Wood, Rishton at the end of April. The lack of captures in the summer

months at Heysham indicated a poor breeding season but there was a small influx of dispersing birds in the autumn.

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	70		700				350	750	1250	300	30000	15000
Fleetwood Tip	200	400					2500	5800	2000			
Marton Mere	500	400	41	13			750	4000	5000	9450	1500	50
Brockholes	1000	3000	80				112	98	20	1000	60	20
MMWWT							600		6000	15000	6	500

Winter roost numbers were again fairly low with the only really large counts coming from Leighton Moss and MMWWT towards the end of the year and 20000 at Carleton in February; peak numbers reported in the Blackpool area were also well down on those of previous years.

The Lancaster January Survey figures totalled 5383 which is fairly standard over the years. On the Fylde, there were flocks of 5000 at Bilsborrow and 2000 at Hambleton in January, 3000 on Pilling Moss during February and March, and 2000 roosting on Blackpool Central Pier. A little farther east, there were up to 5000 at Longridge/Alston Reservoirs during January and up to 10000 at Stocks Reservoir on 24 March. As usual, there were widespread reports of winter flocks numbering a few hundred to a thousand or so from all over the county.

The 19 nests monitored in the Pilling-Preesall area had reasonable productivity with 95 eggs laid, 81 eggs hatched and 81 young fledged. Only two pairs were recorded on a 148ha area of Roby Mill indicating just how scarce the bird is as a breeding resident in comparison with several years ago. Four pairs bred in Croftlands and ten pairs at Millhead (Carnforth) but there were no large flocks noted along the Lune Valley at all through the year.

There was widespread breeding in Speke, although not in any great numbers, with the first fledged young seen on 22 May and up to 120 were seen regularly on verges in the area throughout the summer.

Post-breeding flocks were very much in evidence at Fleetwood Tip and the nearby Nature Park from late July onwards building up to 5800 by 24 Aug. In the east, the peak counts were of 600 at Easington and Stocks Reservoir in June/July. At Lunt Meadows, there were approximately 300 at the end of August but passage birds augmented that figure to 600 by early October and 3000 from the 14th to the end of the month, before dropping off. Similar patterns were observed at MMWWT, Lytham Moss, Brockholes, Hesketh Out Marsh and Crosby.

Marshside had its peak of the year in November with just 2500 on the 28th, otherwise there were just low three-figure counts there. Inland, there were some increases during December with 1250 at Adlington on the 5th, over 1000 at Jackhouse Reservoir on the 12th and 1450 at Bashall Town on the 14th; there were 550 at Belmont Reservoir on the 20th.

DIPPER *Cinclus cinclus*

Uncommon breeding resident

For the second successive year detailed data were provided from all breeding areas, indicating very healthy populations. In east Lancashire birds were singing from 20-21 Jan at Gawthorpe and Chatburn; breeding was confirmed at Bonstone Wood, Cow Lane, Burnley, Hareden, Jackhouse, Langden Valley, Sabden Brook, Towneley Park, Waddington, West Bradford and Whitewell. In Rossendale five pairs were located on c.7 km of the River Irwell from Ewood Bridge down to Stubbins on 22 March; there were two pairs with young at Strongstry on 18 May and nesting was also confirmed at Hareholme, Fallbarn, Plunge, Waterfoot, Townsendfold, Holden Wood and Ogden Reservoirs and Lower Cloughfold.

In the West Pennine Moors Dippers were common residents along Belmont Brook and pairs nested at Belmont Reservoir and upstream of Delph Reservoir, although a regular site at Roddlesworth was unoccupied. In Chorley a bird in the west of the region at Syd Brook, Eccleston on 18 Jan

was unusual; breeding was confirmed in Yarrow Valley and Cuerden Valley Parks (two pairs apiece) and at Astley Park, Duxbury, Euxton and White Coppice.

In north Lancashire 20 widespread individuals were recorded by the Lancaster & District January survey (one more than last year's total); one pair bred at Marshaw, one on the Wenning at Wennington and three in Roeburndale; on the Lune itself there were breeding pairs at Caton, Cloughton, Hornby and Wrayton.

Nearer the coast there was a pair on the upper Brock at Higher Brock Mill. A total of six pairs were located on the eastern fringes of the Fylde Bird Club's recording area at Galgate, on the Wyre at Churchtown, Catterall and St Michaels and at Myerscough Quarry and Barton Grange on its tributary the Brock. In Preston pairs nested on Sharoe Brook in Haslam Park and near Tulketh Mill; for the tenth year in succession there were no records in the south-west.

RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus*

Scarce breeding bird and passage migrant

A male at Croasdale, Bowland on 23 March began the spring passage; numbers in both coastal and upland regions during April were so extraordinarily high that only summary coverage and references to peak counts are possible.

Seven were recorded in the Fylde during 5-19 April including two at Fleetwood on the 9th and there were singles at Heysham on the 13th and 20th. The main influx came in the south-west where at least 45 Ring Ouzels were recorded during 5-20 April with peaks of twelve at Cabin Hill on the 10th, four there on the 14th and six at Penwortham on the 19th. The climax of the surge was on 10 April when a total of 26 Ring Ouzels was recorded in eleven locations, the great majority in the south-west but with outliers in the Fylde and in Chorley; the excitement ended quite abruptly after 20 April and there were no further spring records in the lowlands in 2015.

Heavy and extensive movements in inland regions began on 6 April and continued into early May; at least 60 migrants were widely distributed across east Lancashire, Rossendale, Chorley and the West Pennine Moors with maxima of 14 on Pendle Hill on 14 April and 25 there on the 18-19th when four were also at Holden Wood Reservoir, Rossendale; three were at George's Lane, Rivington on the 16th, six at Cross of Greet next day and seven at New Laithe Farm, Newton on the 19th. The passage petered out in early May with singles in Rossendale at Musbury on 1 May and at Lee Quarry on the 3rd.

The only breeding reports in east Lancashire came from the United Utilities estate in Bowland where a good total of 17 pairs was located, one with a second brood; the survey was not comprehensive this year so further pairs are likely to have been missed.

After the hectic spring, autumn movements were on a more normal scale. One was at White Greet on 11 Aug but all subsequent records were in late September and October; inland peaks were eleven in the Langden Valley on 25 Sept and four on Winter Hill on 12 & 17 Oct. Two were at Belmont on 3 Oct and there were singles at Bleadale, Bowland on the 4th, at High Tatham in the north on the 16th and at Cribden, Rossendale next day. Four coastal migrants were reported, singles at Heysham on 7, 14 & 18 Oct and one at Fleetwood on the 17th.

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

Abundant breeding resident and winter visitor

More double-figure counts than usual were reported in the first winter period including seven in the Fylde with the highest 33 at Newton-with-Scales on 4 Jan; 20 were at Leighton Moss on the 27th and the Lancaster & District January survey recorded 1193 Blackbirds, well above the average of recent years. In east Lancashire there were 36 at Siddows, Clitheroe on 1 Jan and 30 at Brungerley Bridge on the 23rd; in the Lune Valley 44 were at Docker on 19 Jan and 33 at Arkholme on the 21st. There were 30 at Brockholes Wetland on 3 Jan and 15+ in a Belmont garden on 12 & 21 Feb. Ten at Heysham on 19 March were the only spring migrants reported.

Breeding reports were plentiful this year. In the north 18 pairs nested on Warton Crag (17 in 2014), 41 in Croftlands, Warton (47) and 23 in nearby Millhead (22); there were eleven territories on EDF land at Heysham. In the Lune Valley 45 territories were located on the Leck-Wenning stretch, two fewer than last year. In the West Pennine Moors an estimated 45 pairs bred in the Roddlesworth Plantations; in Chorley 27 and 17 territories were recorded in two BBS squares in the Brindle area.

Ten nests were monitored in the Pilling-Preesall area, in which 95 eggs were laid and 81 young fledged; in the south-west there were 15 pairs on Freshfield Dune Heath (nine in 2014) and 17 territories in a 34 ha study area at Aintree (20 last year). Further inland 48 territorial males were recorded in a 148 ha study area at Roby Mill.

An average volume of autumn movements commenced on schedule at the end of September and continued intermittently until late November. Passage at Heysham extended from 28 Sept to 4 Nov with peak counts of 40 on 25 Oct, 48 on 2 Nov and 50 on the 4th; there were 20 at Gait Barrows on 18 Oct (when 30 Blackbirds also moved through Heysham), at least ten at Cabin Hill on 3 Nov and 40 at Marton Mere on the 22nd. Further inland 23 were at Brockholes Wetland on 19 Oct and 30 at Siddows, Clitheroe next day; there was a movement of 40 birds at Belmont Reservoir on 22 Nov and 15 were in the Memorial Gardens, Haslingden on the 25th. Two hundred and thirty-two were sound-recorded on nocturnal passage over Knott End, Fylde between 17 Sept and 8 Nov, including 60 on 19 Oct and 46 on 1 Nov. Counts were on the low side at the year's end: 29 were at Torrisholme, Morecambe and 28 at Brockholes on 13 Dec, there were 20 at Heysham next day and 30 at Marton Mere on the 27th.

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

Abundant winter visitor and passage migrant

Fifteen three-figure flocks were recorded in inland regions and five along the coast during January, with maxima of 530 at Arkholme on 2 Jan, 359 at Brockholes on the 16th, 350 at MMWWT next day and 300 at Coppull, Chorley on the 20th and on Cockerham Moss on the 21st. The Lancaster & District January survey recorded 2292 Fieldfares, a very similar total to last year's. Ten three-figure gatherings in February included counts of 250 at Brockholes on 2 Feb, Longridge on the 11th and Eagland Hill on the 19th with 200 at Withnell Fold on the 27th; March counts peaked at 400 at Grove Lane Marsh in east Lancashire on 2 March, 215 at Arkholme on the 12th and 480 at Lower Ballam, Fylde on the 28th.

Two hundred were still at Alston Wetland on 2 April but that was the last significant spring gathering; eight at Eccleston on the 5th were the last migrants in Chorley, the last in the Fylde and West Pennine Moors were recorded on the 19th and one at Seaforth on the 25th ended movements in the south-west. A very late straggler was at Lee Green Reservoir, Burnley on 11 May.

Two early singles in east Lancashire, at Allsprings on 15 Sept and New Laithe Farm, Newton on the 19th began the autumn arrival. One over Speke on 9 Oct was the next record but the main influx began in upland areas on 11 Oct and on the coast from the 15th.

Movements in October included 1382 over Rossall Point and 450 at Anchorholme, Fylde on the 17th; 263 flew south over Belmont in the first hour on the 19th, when 340 also moved over Seaforth. There was a distinct quickening in the rate of arrivals in upland regions at the end of the month: 650 south over Belmont during 29-31 Oct, there were 600 at Tower Lodge on the 29th, a similar number flew south over Lee Green Reservoir on the 31st; on the same day there were 300 at New Laithe Farm and 250 at Lead Mines Clough, Chorley.

Coastal movements remained at a low level during November, the largest flock being 230 at Lower Ballam on 22 Nov, but numbers continued higher at inland locations where ten three-figure counts were recorded with peaks of 550 at Gisburn Cotes on 4 Nov and 500 at Paythorne on the 8th; 420 flew south at Billinge Hill, St Helens on the 17th. December showed a reversal of this pattern, however, with very few Fieldfares in the uplands, the highest count of 70 at Abbeystead on 29 Dec, and an increase in coastal numbers, particularly in the Fylde, including 360 at Lower Ballam on 1 Dec and 362 on Rawcliffe Moss on the 29th.

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

Common breeding resident. Red List (breeding decline)

Two of the three double-figure counts in the early year came from east Lancashire, twelve at Siddows on 15 Feb and 13 at Jackhouse on the 20th; birds were singing on 8 Jan at Longridge and in Whalley on the 24th. Ten Song Thrushes were at Myerscough College on 24 Feb; the Lancaster & District January survey recorded 55 in nine 10 km squares (total 64 in 2014). Twelve spring migrants were recorded at Heysham on four dates during 9-22 March.

Breeding records in inland regions included 40 territories in the Roddlesworth Plantations in the West Pennine Moors, a clear improvement on the 26 located in 2003, 25 territories in a 148 ha study area at Roby Mill, nine on the Leck-Wenning stretch of the River Lune (14 in 2014) and about six further downriver at Crook o' Lune. Nearer to the coast there were five territories on EDF land at Heysham (seven in 2014), eight pairs bred on Warton Crag RSPB (13 last year), three in Croftlands Estate, Warton (five), four in a 34 ha patch at Aintree and two on Freshfield Dune Heath, both as in 2014.

Passage at Heysham began in early September but only five singles were recorded there during the month; there was a total of 124 in October with 22 on 12 Oct and 19 on the 19th. There were ten on Fairhaven Dunes on the 14th and 70 were ringed at Billinge Hill, St Helens in October with the main passage during the 12-15th, when over 50 were recorded. Four hundred and twenty-nine Song Thrushes were sound-recorded on nocturnal passage over Knott End during 7 Sept-8 Nov with peaks of 45 on 14 Oct and 57 on the 19th. Movements continued at a lower level in November with ten at Heysham in the first five days, three at Cabin Hill on the 4th and six at Seaforth on the 22nd. No significant counts were reported at the end of the year.

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

Abundant winter visitor and passage migrant

Two three-figure flocks were recorded in the Fylde in January, the largest 170 at Rawcliffe Hall on the 26th, and six in inland regions including 971 at Cold Park Wood, Wray on 5 Jan and 150 at Brockholes on the 18th. The Lancaster & District January survey recorded 1826 Redwings in nine 10 km squares, a record total which presumably included the birds at Wray. Five hundred at Ribby Hall on 28 Feb was the highest of three three-figure counts in the Fylde that month; there were no noteworthy gatherings in the south-west, and 250 at Longridge on 11 Feb and 200+ at Sheephouse Lane, Rivington on the 20th were the largest inland flocks.

About 160 at Waddington on 7 March and 400 at Thornton, Merseyside on the 15th were by far the highest March counts and numbers dwindled very quickly in April, as is the norm: one at Syd Brook, Eccleston on 5 April was the last spring Redwing in Chorley, two over Billinge Hill, St Helens on the 10th were the last records in the south-west followed next day by the last single in the north in Hindburndale. Seven April records in the Fylde culminated in one at Fleetwood on the 14th and spring passage ended with a bird at New Laithe Farm, Newton on the 19th.

One over Knott End on 26 Sept and three more there on the following day, three singles in east Lancashire between 27-30 Sept and two over Billinge Hill on the 29th began the autumn influx, which was much heavier than for Fieldfares this year. The main surge began in mid-October in both inland and coastal regions: 5000 passed over Billinge Hill and 2580 over nearby Roby Mill on 14 Oct, 1331 moved south over Belmont in the first hour on 15 Oct and another 5000+ at Billinge Hill on the 17th. There were 14 three-figure counts at inland locations during the month including 350 at Brockholes on the 14th and at Cribden, Rossendale on the 17th, 400 at New Laithe Farm next day and 500 over Clayton-le-Woods, Chorley on the 24th. Nearer the coast 2330 went over Heysham in October including 380 on the 16th and 570 next day; there were 472 over Fairhaven Dunes on 14 Oct, 340+ at New Ridge Farm, Fylde on the 17th and 681 south over Seaforth on the 19th. A total of 2382 was sound-recorded on nocturnal passage over Knott End between 26 Sept and 18 Nov, including 253 on 17 Oct and 316 on the 19th.

The influx was largely spent by the end of October although four widespread three-figure counts were reported in November, the highest 500+ at Paythorne on the 8th and 300+ over Billinge Hill on the 17th. With the exception of 160 at Arkholme on the 13th December flocks were in low-to-middle double figures in all regions.

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*

Common breeding resident

Only two double-figure counts were reported in the first winter period, eleven apiece at Sunnyhurst Woods, Darwen on 11 Jan and at Gorse Hill, Ormskirk on 18 Feb, while the Lancaster & District January survey located an above-average total of 97 Mistle Thrushes; a bird was singing at Altham on 4 Feb.

Breeding reports were more widespread and detailed than usual this year. Up to ten pairs bred in the Roddlesworth Plantations in the West Pennine Moors, there was territorial presence at six locations in both ELOC and Chorley regions and pairs at Newton, Wrayton, Arkholme and Claughton in the Lune Valley; one pair bred on EDF land at Heysham, but no territories were located in Millhead or Croftlands estates in Warton, or on Warton Crag, and an observer describes the species as 'much decreased' in the north. In the south-west four pairs nested in a 148 ha study area at Roby Mill, and one pair at Lunt Meadows.

The usual pattern of post-breeding movements and gatherings was much in evidence in July and August. Three double-figure counts in coastal areas peaked at 19 at Glasson on 30 Aug; there were eleven widespread inland flocks including 14 at Calf Hey Reservoir, Rossendale on 31 July, 25 in Grindleton Forest on 2 Aug, 19 at Rivington on the 12th and 28 at Longridge on the 18th. The largest of five double-figure gatherings on the coast during September-October were of 14 at Preston Dock on 9 Oct and 15 at Freckleton Sewage Works on the 11th; passage at Heysham began on 18 Sept and totalled 67 up to 12 Nov. Nine flocks at inland locations included 32 on Grindleton Fell on 10 Sept, 24 at Rivington on the 12th and 33 at Belmont on 10 Oct; twelve at Seat Naze, Rossendale on 1 Nov and 15 in Towneley Park on the 23rd were the last flocks recorded in 2015.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*

Uncommon breeding bird and passage migrant. Red List (breeding decline)

There were two April singles in east Lancashire, at Dean Clough Reservoir on the 14th, our earliest ever, and Brookside on the 24th. The first coastal migrant was at Leighton Moss on 6 May and there were two more on the north coast during the month; the first of six records in the south-west was at Marshside on the 8th and the first of eleven in the Fylde was in Blackpool's Stanley Park on the 10th. Multiple occurrences were widespread, including five in Stanley Park on 12-13 May and three at Staining Nook on the 13th and at Hightown Dunes next day. There were two singles in the Fylde in early June and the last near-coastal migrant was in Preston's Haslam Park on the 15th.

Meanwhile, birds were arriving in the uplands at an about-average rate, the first in north Lancashire at Arkholme on 9 May, in Chorley at White Coppice on the following day and at Roddlesworth in the West Pennine Moors on the 16th; there were three at Waterfoot, Rossendale on 23 May. Spotted Flycatchers were at 18 sites in east Lancashire in May (twelve in 2014) and at 20 in June (19 last year); there were two confirmed breeding records, at Lee Green Reservoir and Lower Whitehead.

In north Lancashire widespread territorial males included several in Roeburndale and pairs at Tower Lodge, Marshaw, Abbeystead and Crook o' Lune; there were three or four territories in the Roddlesworth Plantations and one apiece at Anglezarke and Heatherlea Woods, Chorley during June. Successful nesting was recorded at Strongstry and at Calf Hey and Holden Wood Reservoirs in Rossendale and at Barnacre Reservoir in central Lancashire. Finally, for the first time in several years successful breeding was confirmed at a lowland site when a pair fledged two young at Castle Hill Wood, Out Rawcliffe in early August.

Autumn movements began in mid-August; birds were present at 14 locations in east Lancashire during the month, there were four at Cross o' Greet on 11 Aug and singles at Alderbottom, Rossendale on the 23rd and at Billinge Hill, St Helens on the 27th; there were only two migrants on the coast, at Leighton Moss on 13 & 19 Aug. Movements in September were heavier and more widespread: birds were at nine sites in east Lancashire including seven at Lower Wheathead on 4 Sept and on Grindleton Fell on the 10th; the region's last Spotted Flycatcher was at Lee Green on the 27th.



Spotted Flycatcher, Stanley Park, Blackpool,
12 May (David Moreton)

Eleven September records in the lowlands included three on the Hightown dunes on the 10th and singles at Tarbock Green, Knowsley on 6, 20 and 27 Sept and at Billinge Hill on the 9th and 28th. There were three records in early October, single birds in Everton Park, Liverpool on the 1st and at Heysham on 2nd and 3rd.

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

Abundant breeding resident

Nine widespread double-figure counts were reported during the first winter period, including 20 at Docker on 19 Jan, 25 at Leighton Moss on the 30th and 27 at Jackhouse on 7 Feb; 469 Robins were recorded by the Lancaster & District January survey across all eleven 10km squares, a slight increase on last year's total. A total of eleven migrants was recorded at Heysham between 18 March and 13 April.

Breeding totals at several regularly monitored sites in the lowlands included twelve nests in the Pilling-Preesall area which fledged 33 young from the 56 eggs laid; there were 21 pairs in the 34 ha Aintree study area and 17 at Warton Crag (as in 2014), eight pairs in Millhead, Warton (five in 2014) and 44 territories in a 148 ha patch at Roby Mill. Further inland there were 15 and 31 Robins in two BBS squares in the Brindle area of Chorley and 24 singing males on the Leck-Wenning stretch of the River Lune.

There was an average volume of autumn migration in both coastal and inland regions from early September. There were 20 at Cockersand on 7 Sept and an influx of 15 at Seaforth next day; 17 were at Eagland Hill on the 10th. Later in the month there were peak counts of 17 at Waterfoot, Rossendale on 17 Sept, 20 at Brockholes on the 27th, 21 at Whalley Nab next day and 24 at Cockersand on the 29th. Movements continued through October with 24 at Cockersand on 2 & 12 Oct, 20 at Crosby Coastal Park on 3rd & 4th, 33 at Brockholes on the 6th with 40 there on the 20th; there were 30 at Siddows on the 15th and 23 at Brockholes on the 29th.

Passage dwindled very quickly in November with seven migrants through Heysham up to the 6th; only three double-figure counts were reported in the late year, 13 at Carr House Green Common, Fylde on 22 Nov, 14 at Brockholes on 4 Dec and twelve in Stanley Park on the 20th.

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Uncommon breeding bird and passage migrant

The first Pied Flycatcher of spring was back at New Laithe Farm, Newton on 13 April; four had arrived there by the 17th and there were birds at five other locations in east Lancashire by the end of the month. In the West Pennine Moors two were back at Belmont on 18 April and one in Hindburndale next day was the first in the north, with four more records there during the month; one at Rivington on the 22nd began the spring in Chorley and there were two more records there during May.

Eight coastal migrants were recorded, seven in the Fylde from the first at Bispham on 17 April to 5 May, and one at Heysham on 2 May.

Breeding was widely recorded in east Lancashire. Fourteen nest-boxes at Moor Piece fledged 77 young (64 from nine boxes in 2014) and 33 juveniles fledged from seven boxes at Bowland Wild Boar Park; elsewhere in the region pairs nested at Ashnott Wood, Crag Wood, Birkett Wood and New Laithe Farm. A pair bred successfully at Hareden and a family party there on 21 June was the last ELOC record of the year; further to the west one or two pairs bred in the Upper Brock Valley. In north Lancashire 85 pairs of Pied Flycatchers were monitored in 13 woodlands and 50 broods were successful; seven pairs in nest-boxes in Roeburndale fledged only 21 young from the 51 eggs laid, as four nests and females were predated by Weasels. In the West Pennine Moors breeding was confirmed at Belmont and in the Roddlesworth Plantations but there was no proof of nesting elsewhere in the Chorley region.

Autumn movements, both coastal and inland, were very light. There were singles in Quernmore on 26 July, at George's Lane, Rivington on 13 Aug and at Billinge Hill, St Helens on the 31st; on the coast one was at Fleetwood on 28 Aug and at Heysham on 14 Sept and a bird at Tarbock Green on the 20th was the last migrant of 2015.

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Rare breeding bird, uncommon passage migrant and scarce winter visitor. Amber List (breeding decline)

The aggregate number recorded in 2015 was well up to last year's high total. At least eight were present in the first winter period: on the north coast one was at Cotestones Farm, Carnforth from 19 Jan to 4 April and there were two there on 2 & 14 Feb; one was at Leighton Moss on 7 Feb and a male was at Fleetwood on the same date, with perhaps the same bird there on 17 March. All the other winterers were in the south, single(s) in the Collingwood Dock, Liverpool during January and in nearby Bootle from 1 Jan to 26 Feb and a female at Thornton on 8 Feb; an immature male in Newton-le-Willows from 8 Feb to 20 March was the only inland record.

Four spring migrants were recorded, a female at Marshside on 8 April and birds in Chorley at White Coppice on 18 April and on Winter Hill on the 21st; one was at Stocks Reservoir on 13 May.

There were two interesting breeding-season records this year, but no actual proof of nesting: a male was singing in Clarence Dock, Liverpool – in the same area as the wintering bird and a site where breeding has taken place in recent years – on 22 June, and a pair was at Holden Wood Reservoir in Rossendale on 21 July.

The first autumn passage bird on Winter Hill on 7 Sept was followed by another there on the 20th; one or two more were present at the site on 10-15 and 31 Oct. Five or six Black Redstarts were at six coastal sites in October and November, beginning with a female/immature at Heysham on 30 Oct; singles were at Carnforth Slag Tips and at Sunderland Point on 5 Nov. Further south one was on Longton Marsh on 1 Nov and possibly the same at Hundred End on the 4th, and another on Ainsdale Shore during the 10-24th. The last Black Redstart of the year was at Brockholes Wetland from 27 to 30 Nov, when it was taken by a Sparrowhawk.

REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Fairly common breeding bird and passage migrant. Amber List (species of European conservation concern)

Spring arrivals began with single males at three sites in the Fylde and two at New Laithe Farm, Newton on 10 April. Subsequent movements on the coast were at an average level: another nine records in the Fylde in April included two birds at Fleetwood on the 19th, the first in the south-west at Burscough on 14 April was followed by ten more records during the month including three birds at Hightown on the 21st and there were five records on the north coast from 13 April with four birds at Aldcliffe on the 14th. Meanwhile, in the uplands Redstarts were present at 17 locations in east Lancashire during April and the first to arrive in Chorley was at White Coppice on the 19th and in the West Pennine Moors at Belmont on the 24th.

There were six records in the Fylde during May, two in the south-west with two at Hightown on the 14th and two on the north coast; in east Lancashire eight were at New Laithe Farm on 4 May and birds were singing in May and June at Bottoms Beck, Chipping Moss, Moor Piece and Slaidburn. In Chorley there were territorial males at Anglezarke, Duxbury Woods and Lead Mines Clough.

In east Lancashire breeding was confirmed at Moor Piece, where nine young were fledged from three nest-boxes, Shay House and Chipping Moss and considered possible at Ightenhill Bridge; further west one or two pairs nested in the Upper Brock Valley. In north Lancashire a pair bred at Abbeystead but nest-boxes at Claughton, Arkholme and in Roeburndale were heavily predated. There were two territories near Belmont and three in the Roddlesworth Plantations in the West Pennine Moors.

A bird at Dockacres on 19 July began a very light coastal passage. There was one August record, a single on the Conder Estuary on the 25th, and eight in September, two apiece in the north and the Fylde and four in the south-west including two at Cabin Hill on 1 Sept; a late bird at Ribbleton, Preston on 24 Oct was the county's last Redstart of 2015.

A heavier inland passage began with up to three birds at Brockholes Wetland during 27-29 July and up to two were present there on several dates up to 1 Sept with three on 31 Aug. There were two singles at Belmont in August, three at White Coppice on the 21st and two at Billinge Hill in late August and early September; one at Wood End Sewage Works, Burnley on 20 Sept was the year's last inland Redstart.

WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*

Scarce breeder and passage migrant. Amber List (breeding decline)

Spring movements began with single males on Lytham Moss and at Clowbridge Reservoir on 16 April. Coastal passage was fairly light in April with the first three of five birds in the north at Aldcliffe on 25 April, another 22 birds in the Fylde and twelve on the south coast after the first at Cabin Hill on the 17th. ELOC received another 13 reports from eight locations during the month and there were three in Chorley with the first at Eccleston on the 24th.

Coastal movements were exceptionally heavy in the first two weeks of May. There were at least 18 birds on the north coast and a strong passage in the Fylde, including seven at Fleetwood on the 3rd and six at Pilling Lane Ends on the 7th; about 25 moved through Marshside in the first half of the month with a remarkable peak of eleven on 1 May, and there was a total of up to twelve birds at other locations in the south-west. Further inland there were ten May records in east Lancashire, two in Chorley including three birds on Croston Moss on the 1st and three singles in Rossendale during the 1st to 3rd.

Two successful pairs in the West Pennine Moors near Belmont, fledging a total of five young, and four territorial males at Croasdale in Bowland from 25 May into July were the only breeding reports received this year.

Passage movements in both upland and coastal regions in 2015 were the heaviest for several years. An outstanding total of 32 passed through Belmont from 16 Aug to 27 Sept, ELOC recorded juveniles at three sites from 7 Aug and received ten September records from eight locations with the last three birds at Bloe Greet on 20 Sept, and there were two each in Chorley and Rossendale in September. A total of eight Whinchats passed through Brockholes Wetland between 27 July and 15 Sept.

Coastal movements were also quite heavy and prolonged, extending from mid-August to the first week of October. Ten were recorded in the Fylde during August with three at Fleetwood on the 23rd and eight in September with the last at Fleetwood on 20 Sept; there were nine on the north coast between 13 Aug and 16 September. A total of about 32 autumn migrants was recorded at nine locations in the south-west including eight in Crosby Coastal Park on 15 Sept and four singles each at Seaforth, Marshside and Cabin Hill; one at Cabin Hill on 1 Oct and three in the Rimrose Valley on the 8th were the last of 2015.



Whinchat, Cocksand, 9 May (Stuart Piner)

STONECHAT *Saxicola torquata*

Uncommon breeding resident

In the relatively mild weather Stonechats were to be found in numbers in all regions of the county during the first winter period. There were ten reports from seven sites in east Lancashire in January and 14 from eight sites in February, with pairs in Langden Valley, at Cant Clough Reservoir and at Weets Hill, Barnoldswick. Birds were present at five locations in Chorley including four at Croston Finney throughout and three at Great Hill in January, and singles or pairs were on Hawthornthwaite Fell in north Lancashire and at Holden Wood Reservoir in Rossendale. Stonechats were numerous in coastal areas, at nine locations in the Fylde including four birds on Lytham Moss on several dates and at eight sites in the south-west including five at MMWWT and three at Lunt Meadows in January.

A substantial passage was underway by the beginning of March. There were birds at 17 locations in the Fylde during the month with counts of nine at Cocksand and five at Jeremy Lane on the 10th

and five on Lytham Moss on the 15th; 18 birds on the north coast included seven at Heysham on 8 March. At least 22 migrants were recorded at Marshside with a peak of six on 7 March; coastal movements had largely ceased by the middle of April. Further inland there were two March migrants at Brockholes in March and one at Billinge Hill, St Helens. In the uplands ELOC received 19 reports from 15 locations in March and 32 from 13 in April; during the same period there were records at four sites in Chorley and five were at Clougha in north Lancashire on 25 March.

The small breeding population on the Sefton coast maintained its recovery in 2015 with at least four and probably five pairs successful between Blundellsands and Birkdale, although as in 2014 there were no records of nesting in the Fylde or on the north coast. Five pairs were located on the northern fells, at least nine pairs nested in the West Pennine Moors around Belmont and breeding was recorded at four locations in Rossendale and at White Coppice and Rivington in the Chorley region. In east Lancashire widespread breeding was confirmed at eight sites.

A very early bird at Cockersand on 9 July began the autumn passage in coastal regions but movements did not get underway in earnest until early September. Numbers were low overall with only two recorded at Heysham, the last on 13 Oct; there were two at Rossall Point in September and records at six sites in the Fylde during October and at six locations in November. In the south-west a pair was at Speke in late September, five were at Lunt Meadows on 8 Oct and two at Cabin Hill at the end of the month.

Much heavier passage in inland regions included twelve reports to ELOC in August from six sites and 17 in September from eleven; at least 15 dispersing birds passed through Belmont in August and September and Stonechats were at four sites in Chorley during September, at two in October and two in November. There were 15 reports to ELOC in October from nine locations and four November records at two sites; up to a dozen moved through Brockholes during the autumn.

Numbers in coastal regions were reasonably high at the end of the year. Birds were at ten locations in the Fylde during December with up to nine on Lytham Moss and were reported from eight sites in the south-west including at least six at Cabin Hill and up to three at Lunt Meadows on several dates; there were two at Leighton Moss during 8-11 Dec. Overwintering birds were at Ogden and Holden Wood Reservoirs in Rossendale, around Belmont including one at altitude on Belmont Moor, at Brockholes Wetland and at three sites in east Lancashire at the end of the year.

WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Uncommon breeding bird and common passage migrant. Amber List (species of European conservation concern)

The first migrant was five days earlier than the mean arrival date, at Dean Clough Reservoir in east Lancashire on 5 March, and there were 15 more records from twelve sites in that region during the month; the first of fourteen March Wheatears was at Belmont on the 15th, Chorley's first two were on Withnell Moor on the 19th and Rossendale's at Brow Edge Quarry on the 22nd. Coastal movements began with single birds at Marshside on 11 March and Blackpool next day; the first on the north coast were at Heysham and the Keer Estuary on the 14th. Fifteen more Wheatears reached the north coast during the rest of the month and there were peak counts in the Fylde of nine at Fleetwood on 23 March and eight on the 27th.

There were quite heavy intermittent movements along the coast during April and the first half of May with noticeable surges on 14-15 April and 5-12 May. Peak counts included 37 at Fleetwood on 14 April and 105 there, 50 at Mythop and 35 at Heysham next day; 41 were on Lytham Moss on 24 April, 30 at Aldcliffe on 5 May, 26 at Heysham on the 8th, 18 at Seaforth on the 11th and 24 at Fleetwood on the following day.

Inland counts included 27 at Gorpel Track in east Lancashire on 20 April, 17 at Belmont next day and 22 at Musbury, Rossendale on the 22nd; Wheatears were recorded at seven locations in Chorley in April and at four in May.

The volume of passage dwindled very quickly after mid-May and the last migrants in the south-west were at Seaforth on 2-3 June and in the Fylde at Cocker's Dyke on the 15th.

At least three pairs nested on the West Pennine Moors around Belmont and a pair was confirmed at Cant Clough Reservoir in east Lancashire; pairs were present during the breeding season in at least ten other locations in the region. In Rossendale pairs nested in Fletcher Bank, Lee and Whitworth Quarries and at Spring Mill Reservoir.

Juveniles at Cockersand on 14 & 30 July began a prolonged autumn passage on the coast; one at Seaforth on 18 Aug was the first migrant in the south-west. Subsequent counts included six birds at Cocker's Dyke on 31 Aug, 14 at Warton Slag Tips on 2 Sept and ten at Seaforth on the 15th; many October records in the Fylde included 13 at Cockersand on the 6th, the last Wheatear in the south-west was at Seaforth on the 19th and in the north at Heysham on the 31st. There were three November records in the Fylde and the last coastal migrant was at Glasson on the 3rd.

Inland movements in August included a total of 21 birds through Belmont and two at George's Lane, Rivington on the 13th; 24 were recorded at Belmont during September and there were six on Winter Hill on the 27th. October records included the last at Belmont and in Rossendale at Great Height Quarry on the 17th; four were on Gorple Track on 2 Oct and the last two in east Lancashire were at Wolfhole Crag on the 19th. Three on Withnell Moor, Chorley on 4 Nov were the last Wheatears of 2015.

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*

Abundant breeding resident. Amber list (breeding decline).

A number of double-figure counts were reported via BirdTrack from across the county and throughout the year and presumably involved observers counting across a wide area.

A spring influx at Seaforth included up to ten daily from early April to early May. Above-average numbers of unringed, presumed passage birds were also noted at Heysham during spring.

There were 14-15 singing males on EDF land at Heysham but productivity was very poor. Monitoring at the north Lancashire sites of Croftland (15 pairs) and Millhead (11 pairs) suggested a small decline. In an Aintree study area breeding pairs increased from eleven to twelve, while eight pairs at Freshfield Dune Heath was unchanged from 2014. A pair on territory at 350m above sea level on Darwen Moor was notable.

The autumn influx at Seaforth included eight on 28 Sept, the same day eight apparent migrants were noted at Cockersand, while there were a number of unringed apparent migrants through Heysham around this time. There appeared to be another influx at Cockersand in mid-October, with eighteen on the 13th.

The Winter Garden Bird Survey in the Chorley area saw Dunnock the third most widely distributed species, its highest ever position.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

Abundant breeding resident. Red list (breeding decline).

Twenty monitored pairs in the Pilling-Preesall area made 34 nesting attempts, 150 eggs were laid of which 86 hatched and 83 of these fledged. In contrast, six pairs at Warton in north Lancashire laid twelve clutches of 37 eggs but fledged only eight young with most chicks starving. Elsewhere in the north of the county 76 pairs at Croftlands was an increase of two on last year, and 43 pairs at Millwood was a decrease of two.

The largest flock reported was 110 at Marshside in April and there were 100 in the Crosby-Waterloo area in late August. Other larger assemblies included up to 75 at Aintree, 70 at Boundary Road, St Helens in October, 64 at Pilling in January, 62 at Preesall in February, 59 at Whalley in June, 55 at Arkholme in January, 52 at Docker in January and counts of 40 from Conder Pool, Rossall School, Ormskirk and Scalestone Point.

House Sparrows are generally sedentary and movements are very limited in nature. A flock of eight south at Heysham on 30 Aug was unusual, although there is a population of up to 20 at nearby Ocean Edge. One at MMWWT on 21 March was apparently unusual. In the Chorley Winter Garden Bird Survey it was the eighth most widespread species, although in terms of numbers it vied with Starling for first place.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*

Common breeding resident. Red List (breeding decline).

In the Pilling and Preesall area a remarkable 501 nesting attempts were monitored, from about 241 pairs. Of the 2311 eggs laid, 1387 went on to hatch and 1298 young were fledged; an average of 2.6 young fledged per nest.

As usual the highest numbers were in the vicinity of the main Fylde feeding stations. At Moss House Farm, Out Rawcliffe the peak count was 144 in January, while at Eagland Hill up to 105 visited the New Lane feeding station and up to were at Bradshaw Lane. At all of these sites the vast majority of larger counts were recorded in January, presumably due to hard weather. Elsewhere on the Fylde the peak at Cockersand was 60 in September.

In the south up to 55 were on Croston Moss, 50 on Hesketh Out Marsh up to 40 at MMWWT and 30 at Mawdesley Moss. The Lancaster wintering bird survey found just shy of 70 birds in total, with the highest numbers 19 in SD45 and to the east 15 in SD66. The peak count in St Helens area was 19 at the Old Coach Road, Rainford in October, at Brockholes twelve in February, while in east Lancashire it was six on the Ribble at Calderfoot in September.

As this species enjoys something of a resurgence this is reflected in increasing numbers being seen on autumn visible migration counts. The largest total was 21 at Fairhaven on 27 Sept; there were eight over Rossall School on 29 Sept and eight the next day at Heysham while the only record at Seaforth was three briefly on 19 Oct.

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava flavissima*

Scarce breeding bird, fairly common passage migrant. Red List (breeding decline)

Spring passage began with an early arrival at Gisburn in east Lancashire on 8 April and movements at inland sites were a little more lively than last year's with five more singles widespread in that region between one at Higher Towneley on 17 April and the last at Cant Clough Reservoir on 9-10 June; there were two spring migrants at Brockholes Wetland and two very late birds on Farington Moss on 28 June.

The first migrants on or near the coast were at Fleetwood and Curlew Lane, Rufford on 15 April; there were twelve more April records in the Fylde, including three birds at Starr Gate on the 22nd, and eleven in May. At least 25 Yellow Wagtails in the south-west included up to four on several dates in April and May at Curlew Lane with five present on 24 May, and three at Hesketh Out Marsh on 18 April; one at Warton Slag Tips on 22 April was the only spring record in north Lancashire.

Up to four birds were recorded at Hesketh Out Marsh on many dates from 5 June through the summer with six there on 26 July, but there was no confirmation of breeding there or anywhere else in the county in 2015.

The first autumn migrant on the coast was at Fairhaven Lake on 31 July; there were 16 records in the Fylde during August including nine at Bank End on the 21st and seven there on the 24th. Two were at MMWWT on 17 Aug and on Longton Marsh on the 31st and there were five at Hesketh Out Marsh on the 27th. Movements increased in volume during September: there were 22 records in the Fylde with a peak of five birds at Bank End on the 11th; other noteworthy counts were up to eight at Crosby Coastal Park on 2-3 Sept, three at Warton Slag Tips on the 11th and seven at Hesketh Out Marsh next day. Two birds were in the Fylde in October including the last in the county at Rossall School on the 19th. Eight singles in upland regions from 5 July comprised seven records in east Lancashire and one at Belmont Reservoir on 20 Sept; the last inland migrant of 2015 was at Burnley on 18 Oct.

BLUE-HEADED WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava flava*

Scarce passage migrant

There was one spring record in the Fylde, two males at Fleetwood on 7 May; a *flava* x *thunbergi* intergrade was at Mythop on 28 May and a *flava* x *flavissima* ('Channel Wagtail') was at Hesketh Out Marsh on several dates in June.

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

Fairly common breeding bird, common passage migrant

Ones and twos were widespread throughout the lowlands in both urban and rural habitats at both ends of the year; 16 were recorded by the Lancaster & District January survey in seven 10km squares (19 in 2013 and 2014). ELOC received 98 records in January to February, seven of two birds; there were three at Jackhouse and pairs at four other sites during March.

A typically light spring movement on the coast included seven over Heysham between 9 March and 4 April; passage was recorded in the Fylde from mid-March to early April peaking at 15 at Fleet-

wood on 16 March and eleven there on the 18th. One on 14 March was the first of a very light passage at Cabin Hill.

Breeding reports received suggest thriving populations in all inland areas as well as small-scale but steadily increasing penetration of coastal regions. In east Lancashire nesting was confirmed at four locations including two pairs in central Burnley and judged probable at three other sites; at least six pairs bred around Belmont in the West Pennine Moors and there were four territories at Roddlesworth Reservoirs. Grey Wagtails nested in at least six widespread locations in Rossendale with two pairs at Waterfoot; the Chorley region reported a very productive breeding season with young birds recorded at eight sites between May and July. Eleven pairs were located along 32 km of the River Lune from Kirkby Lonsdale down to Skerton Weir and three pairs bred in Roeburndale.

Nearer to the coast Grey Wagtails nested in the Fylde at Galgate, in central Blackpool and on the Lower Brock; there was a successful pair on the River Ribble by Brockholes Wetland and eleven pairs were located across the south-west from Roby Mill and Carr Mill Dam west to Liverpool, the lower River Alt, Aintree and Southport Marine Lake.

Passage on the north, Fylde and Sefton coasts began in the last days of August and peaked during September. Heysham recorded nine birds in August, 151 in September, 25 in October and four in November with highest counts of 17 on 19 & 22 Sept. Peaks in the Fylde included eleven at Knott End on 10 Sept and twelve on the Fairhaven dunes next day; there were 15 at Fairhaven on 1 Oct and passage continued there at lower levels to the last three in early November. In the south-west 75 moved through Seaforth between 8 Sept and 19 Oct with a peak count of twelve on 26 Sept. Inland movements were, as usual, less intensive: 13 were counted on the Altham-Martholme stretch of the River Calder on two occasions during August-September, there were four at Brockholes on 9 Sept and a total of 36 passed over Billinge Hill between 18 Aug and 22 Sept.

PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

Common breeding bird, very common passage migrant

Roost and flock counts in the first winter period were much lower than usual with maxima of 62 at Lytham on 22 Jan and 150 at Hesketh Out Marsh on 14 Feb; 121 were recorded by the Lancaster & District January survey in ten 10km squares (108 in 2014). ELOC recorded peak counts of 15 at three locations in January and there were 24 at Arkholme in the Lune Valley on 8 Jan.

Three hundred and one migrants were recorded at Heysham from 9 March to 23 April including 24 on 12 March, 60 on the 21st and 71 on 4 April; 200 at Fluke Hall on 15 March was by far the largest flock anywhere in the county. ELOC recorded counts of 15 at two locations during March, there were 32 at Ewood Bridge Sewage Works, Rossendale on 15 March and 17 on the 27th at Arkholme.

A small number of breeding reports was received. Nine pairs nested at Belmont Reservoir (eight in 2014) and four pairs at Roddlesworth Reservoir; ten pairs bred on the Lune at Arkholme as in 2014 (but 47 nested there in 1977) and a total of 36 pairs on the lower Lune (47 in 2014). In the Fylde four nests were monitored in the Pilling-Preesall area and 18 eggs were laid from which eight young fledged.

Post-breeding flocking and movements were observed at Arkholme from late July; there were 279 there on 24 July, 134 on the 31st and 110 on 26 Aug, and 50+ were at Barrowford Reservoir on 30 Aug. Passage at Heysham began in late August; in north Fylde there were 250+ at Bank End on 18 Aug and 120 there on 22nd & 27th. September movements inland included 150 at Ewood Bridge on the 13th, 150+ at Alston Reservoir-Wetlands on 18th and 404 south at Arkholme on the 17th; on the coast counts at Bank End peaked at 236 on 20



Pied Wagtail (Darren Doody)

Sept and 72 passed over Heysham on the 29th. Counts dwindled quickly in October and movements had ceased altogether by the first week of November; there were 150 at a roost at the Harris Museum in Preston on 5 Oct, 100+ on nearby Ringway on the 26th and 106 at the Old Coach Road, Rainford on the 25th.

Only two three-figure roosts were reported in December: one at Bootle New Strand reached 653 on 19 Dec and 200 at Hesketh Out Marsh on the 23rd; six double-figure counts included 47 at New Ridge Farm, Fylde on 8 Dec and 26 at Grove Lane Marsh, Padiham on the 16th.

WHITE WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba alba*

Common passage migrant

The first two spring migrants were at Cant Clough Reservoir in east Lancashire and at Mythop Grange, Fylde on 22 March. Passage took some time to get going; there were four more March singles in the Fylde and two in east Lancashire; singles at Hornby on the 27th and at Seaforth on the 30th were the first White Wagtails in the north and the south-west, respectively.

Subsequent coastal movements were at an above-average level. April peaks in the south-west were of 348 on Banks Marsh on the 16th and 155 at Hesketh Out Marsh on the 19th; seven double-figure counts there included 30 at Gorse Lane, Hightown on 21 April and 50+ at Seaforth on the 24th. Seven double-figure flocks in the Fylde peaked at 45 at Mythop on the 16th and 31 at Aggleby's Pit on the 19th; six April records on the north coast included seven birds at Heysham on the 14th. There were 13 reports of ones or twos in east Lancashire during the month and three singles in the Lune Valley, at Crook o' Lune and Hornby.

Coastal movements continued into the middle of May with counts of 50 at Rossall Point, New Ridge Farm and Seaforth on 1 May; there were eight records in the north including six at Heysham on the 6th and nine were at Marshside on the 10th. Further inland one was at Rishton Reservoir on 11 May, four on Croston Moss on the 14th, two at Alston Wetlands next day and the last migrant of spring at Brockholes on the 22nd.

Autumn passage, although widespread, was at a lower volume than last year's. Twelve White Wagtails at Warton Slag Tips on 2 Sept was the highest of four counts in the north and one at Lancaster on 13 Oct was the last migrant of 2015. There was a total of four birds at Seaforth and Crosby Coastal Park between 1 and 11 Sept and five Fylde records totalling 13 between 27 Aug and 8 Oct. There were five birds at two sites in east Lancashire on 5 & 25 Sept and the last two inland birds were on Croston Moss on 4 Oct.

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

Scarce breeding bird and passage migrant. Red List (breeding decline)

Coastal movements at an average level began with one over Seaforth on 7 April, quickly followed by two at Fleetwood and one at Cabin Hill on the 9th. Twenty-one more April records in the Fylde peaked at eleven birds at Fleetwood on the 27th and sixes over Rossall Point on several dates. The first on the north coast was at Aldcliffe on 16 April and three singles moved over Heysham from the 18th. A total of 13 coastal records in May included fourteen birds in the Fylde and five at Cabin Hill.

A heavy and widespread passage in inland regions commenced with one at Clough Bottom Reservoir, Rossendale on 9 April. In east Lancashire three April records began with one on Longridge Fell on the 24th; there were records, mainly of singles, from various parts of the region from 2 May. Two at Belmont on 20 April were the first Tree Pipits in the West Pennine Moors; a group of eleven was in the Roddlesworth Plantations on 1 May. The first of three migrants was at Brockholes Wetland on 11 April and the first to arrive in the Chorley region was at White Coppice on the 23rd. Ten birds moved over Billinge Hill, St Helens between 12 April and 7 May.

Two pairs, one confirmed, held territory in the Roddlesworth Plantations where the last survey in 2003 had located 14 singing males, a salutary indicator of the species' long-term decline; at least one male was on territory at White Coppice throughout May and June. In east Lancashire birds were on territory in May and June at Gannow Fell, Bottoms Beck and Longridge Fell although the outcome was not confirmed at any site.

One at Fairhaven Lake on 30 July began a light passage on the coast; three August and three September records of ones or twos in the Fylde ended with one at Fleetwood on 12 Sept. Thirteen

birds on the north coast between 13 Aug and 8 Sept included nine over Heysham on three dates from 31 Aug; only three were recorded in the south-west, at Hesketh Out Marsh, Cabin Hill and the last coastal migrant at Hightown Dunes on 28 Sept.

There were much heavier movements at inland sites, the highlight, as in 2014, at Billinge Hill where 127+ were recorded between 7 Aug and 26 Sept with peaks of 20+ on 17 Aug and 15+ on 13 & 25th; 56 birds were ringed. That this may not be an isolated migration stream is strongly suggested by the 21 Tree Pipits trapped at Crown Point in Rossendale on 16 Aug. ELOC received 27 reports from 7 Aug to 6 Sept and the last two in the county were at Gorple Track on 1 Oct; nine Tree Pipits moved over Brockholes Wetland between 13 Aug and 16 Sept with three on 15 Sept. In the West Pennine Moors four singles were at Belmont from 30 Aug to 27 Sept and there were two single birds in the north, at Docker Moor on 13 Aug and Caton Moor on 14 Sept.

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

Abundant breeding bird and passage migrant

Numbers in the first winter period were low everywhere without a single three-figure count; 24 at Holden Wood Reservoir, Rossendale on 18 Jan and 40 at Belmont Reservoir on the 25th were the largest inland gatherings while the Lancaster & District January survey located 53 Meadow Pipits, less than half of 2014's total. The highest counts in the lowlands, including 42 at Rossall Point on 14 Feb and 28 at the Eric Morecambe complex and 25+ at Marshside on the following day may all have involved early spring migrants.

Coastal movements were in full swing by the middle of March and were well up to the totals of last year's heavy spring passage. Heysham recorded a total of 2643 migrants from 9 March to 7 May with a peak of 500 on 7 April, there were 300 at Starr Gate on 5 April and 120+ at Marshside on the 8th; up to 100 birds moved north daily at Seaforth during 2-10 April. Massive movements were recorded at Fleetwood between 15 March and 8 April, an aggregate of some 9000 birds with peaks of 2053 on 2 April and 1554 next day; there were six more three-figure movements there up to the end of April and passage had ended by 11 May. A much more modest inland passage included 200 at Coal Clough Wind Farm, Burnley on 16 March and 150 north at Brockholes on 7 April.

Reports from upland regions indicate stable and high breeding populations. There were 53 Meadow Pipits in April and 33 in May in a 1km BTO/BBS square on Darwen Moor (53 and 46 in 2014), c.30 pairs bred around Belmont Reservoir, double last year's total, and 38 territorial birds were on Clougha and 23 on Harrisend Fell in the north and 50+ at Musbury in Rossendale in June. There were also many territories on the moors in both Chorley and ELOC regions, with eleven counts of 20 or more birds in the latter from May to the end of August.

As in 2014, however, the breeding situation in coastal regions looks a lot less clear-cut. Although singing males were recorded throughout the Fylde, Heysham NR, Lunt Meadows, MMWWT and Freshfield Dune Heath all reported zero breeding Meadow Pipits and the 13 pairs at Marshside-Crossens was a significant reduction on the 25 in 2014; the small populations at Hesketh Out Marsh and Birkdale Green Beach appear to be stable.

Small-scale autumn movements were reported on a broad front from the middle of August. The first migrant was at Seaforth on 10 Aug, there were 20+ at Bank End, Fylde on the 19th, 70+ at Belmont Reservoir on the 23rd and 48 at Arkholme on the 26th. A much lighter passage than last year's got into gear in the uplands in the first week of September and about two weeks later along the coast. September peaks inland included 150 at Belmont Reservoir on the 13th and 195+ there on the 27th, 100 south at Musbury on the 25th and 300 at Clowbridge Reservoir on the 28th. A seasonal peak of 202 was recorded at Heysham on 22 Sept; in the Fylde and south-west a clear surge in movements during the last week of the month, in concert with the peak inland counts, brought 250 to Seaforth on 25 Sept, 312 to Fairhaven Dunes and 466 to Marshside on the 27th and 437 to Rossall School on the 30th.

Substantial counts were reported during the first week of October but movements died away quite quickly after that. There were 260 at Fairhaven Dunes, 255 nearby at Marton Mere and 193 in two hours over Roby Mill on 1 Oct, but the last three-figure count was on 11 Oct and all subsequent reports were in low-to-middle double figures until migration finally petered out in early November. End-of-year flocks were again very small; 50 at Jackhouse Reservoir on 29 Dec was the highest inland

gathering and there were 70 at Hesketh Out Marsh on 1 Dec and 35 at New Ridge Farm, Fylde on the 8th.

ROCK PIPIT *Anthus petrosus*

Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor

No Rock Pipits were recorded beyond the coastal fringe this year. The usual good numbers were present on saltmarshes and by tidal creeks from the Wyre northwards during January and February. Peak January counts from nine locations in the Fylde were of seven at Pilling Lane Ends on the 23rd and six at Barnaby's Sands on the 26th, and February peaks from six locations were of 18 birds at Burrow's Marsh on the 23rd and ten at Cockersand on the 21st; on the north Ribble shore five were at Warton Bank over the tide on 21 Feb. The only records on the north coast were of up to six birds at Aldcliffe Marsh during February; south of the Ribble singles were at Birkdale Green Beach and Hesketh Out Marsh on dates in January and three at Marshside on 21-23 Feb.

It is always difficult to distinguish spring migrants from late winterers at regular sites but there appears to have been a normal volume of passage in 2015. Four moved at Heysham between 16 March and 4 April, two were at the Conder Estuary and one flew over Seaforth on 4 April and one was at Starr Gate on 16-17th.

The first autumn birds were one at Fairhaven and three at Knott End on 28 Sept and there were three at Heysham on 2 Oct; fifteen more were recorded at the latter site up to 9 Nov. Substantial movements at seven sites from the Wyre northwards included three birds at Aldcliffe on 29 Oct, eight at Knott End next day and threes at Burglar's Alley on 17 Nov and at Pilling Lane Ends on the 27th. South of the Ribble a high total of c.16 Rock Pipits was recorded at Seaforth, Hesketh Out Marsh, Marshside, Lunt Meadows and Longton Marsh between 12 Oct and 10 Nov. Overwintering birds were at eleven sites in the Fylde in December including three at Knott End on the 18th and nine at Pilling Lane Ends on the 25th; singles were at Hesketh Out Marsh and at Marshside on several dates at the end of the year.

WATER PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta*

Scarce winter visitor. Amber List (rare winterer)

A good showing this year from an unusually wide range of locations. The bird at Fleetwood from December 2014 remained until 6 April and there were singles at The Heads-Burrows Marsh and at Pilling Lane Ends on 23 Feb; singles were at Marshside and Hesketh Out Marsh on 21 Feb and up to three were at Warton Bank on 20 Feb and 21 March. The only spring migrant reported was a popular but elusive individual on Crossens saltmarsh on various dates between 27 March and 5 April.

Autumn arrivals were at Fleetwood on 8 Nov and Leighton Moss on the 12th, two singles were at The Heads-Burrow's Marsh and Barnaby's Sands on the 15th and there was one, possibly the returning spring bird, at the same location on Crossens saltmarsh on 17 & 22 Nov and 27 Dec. Finally, a bird far inland at Belmont on 29 Dec was the first in that region since 1995.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

Winters in variable numbers. Fairly common double passage migrant, mostly in autumn.

By far the largest numbers in the first winter period were reported from Belmont where 205 roosted in rhododendrons on 3 Jan. In a nearby garden there were up to 30 in February and March, three on 11 April and then one until 7 May. Fifty were at Stoneyhurst College on 26 Jan but other sites paled into insignificance with counts of eight at Tosside and Whitendale and five from Dunsop Bridge, Clitheroe Castle and Tower Lodge. Small numbers were reported from around 30 sites across the county, mostly away from lowland locations but there were singles at places such as Eccleston, Knott End, MMWWT, Warton and Penwortham. Eight passage birds at Singleton on 10 April was notable.

Birds reappeared in the middle of October with the first at Leighton Moss on the 8th followed by three over Belmont and one at New Laithe Farm, Newton on the 10th, Knott End on the 11th, Whalley and Billinge Hill on the 12th and Clayton-le-Woods on the 13th.

Passage was small with mostly ones or occasionally twos reported from around 30 locations but there were some slightly larger numbers in this period with four at Longton and six over Billinge Hill on the 23rd, 16 at New Laithe Farm on the 25th, eight at Jenny Brown's Point on 1 Nov and ten at

Sunderland Point on the 2nd. On 5 Nov there were four at Lytham and five at Heysham but after that very few reports apart from one extraordinary count of 67 (including one flock of 50) over Belmont on 12 Nov.

Bramblings were extremely thin on the ground throughout December with reports from no more than ten locations and a maximum of three at Belmont to the end of the year.

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

Abundant breeding bird, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Brockholes recorded the highest numbers of Chaffinches in the early part of the year with 80 on 7 Jan. Other peak counts included 64 at Newton-in-Bowland, 40 nearby at New Laithe Farm and up to 45 at Belmont. There were several counts in the 25-40 region but not even the Fylde winter feeding sites could muster any more than 40 at any one time.

Regularly-surveyed areas indicated a steady breeding population on the whole. There were twelve pairs at Freshfield Dune Heath (a more normal figure compared to the dramatic drop last year), six at Aintree and three at Jubilee Wood, Maghull. There were seven singing males across Newsham Park, Liverpool in June and 27 on a 148 ha area at Roby Mill. Numbers were down at Warton Crag with only twelve pairs located and a similar story was indicated along the Lune between Leck and Wenning Foot where there were 49 singing males compared to 62 last year. Productivity was poor at Heysham where there were at least 13 territories.

Autumn passage was very quiet with just 1049 counted through Heysham and just 30 ringed, and peak daily counts of 86 on 19 Oct and 79 on the 26th. Similarly at Billinge Hill, 33 were ringed on 3 Oct with a peak of 40 on the 16th. A total of 217 south from 23 Sept to 12 Oct at Seaforth was the lowest ever recorded autumn total there. Peak counts from Rossall were 48 on 31 Oct and 78 on 8 Nov, while at Fairhaven a total of 1258 were seen from 13 Sept to 12 Nov with peaks of 277 on 29 Sept, 124 on 1 Oct, 172 on the 10th and 95 on the 18th. At Crosby 100 on 27 Oct were followed by 120 on the 31st. There was a flurry of activity on 12 Nov with several places recording a peak in numbers, the most being Knott End with 165. Away from the coastal watchpoints, a total of 567 were recorded at Belmont during 13 one-hour early morning counts, with a peak of 103 on 10 Oct. There were 70 birds at Clowbridge Reservoir on 4 Oct.

The second winter period was very quiet with the largest concentrations generally being on the Fylde at Eagland Hill, Rawcliffe Moss and Singleton. However, there was a large flock of 100 at Croston Moss on 28 Nov.

An albino was seen along the River Yarrow near Croston for a second year.

HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Rare and localised breeding resident. Red list (breeding decline).

Again, there were no reports from Woodwell or anywhere else in the Silverdale area this year. At least two birds were again at a private site north-east of Lancaster from 30 April until 9 June with some evidence of carrying nest-material or food but not after that.

The only other records were of singles at a garden feeder in Worsthorpe on 28 March and Heath-erlea Woods, Brinscall on 5 June.

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Common breeding resident. Amber list (breeding decline).

Bullfinches are now widely distributed throughout Lancashire with reports coming from at least 95% of the county's 10km squares. The largest concentrations were found in the Warton Crag/Silverdale area where there were counts of up to 15 on several dates throughout the spring and later in the year; a total of seven pairs nested on Warton Crag. Another hot-spot was Savick Park, Preston with double-figure counts in virtually all months of the year.

In the east of the county up to nine were at Higherford and Jackhouse while 29 were ringed in Rishton during the year, including ten in February. A survey of the Roddlesworth Plantations revealed five pairs and regular reports came from seven other locations in the Chorley area; the species was recorded in 60% of gardens in the CDNHS winter survey.

Good numbers were regularly reported from the Tarbock area and small numbers were noted at several locations across south Liverpool/Knowsley with up to four at places such as Mill Wood, Speke and Garston Docks. Similar numbers were present at Rainford and Newton-le-Willows.

Two pairs nested at Aintree and six at Roby Mill. Thirty-four juveniles were ringed at Billinge Hill in the autumn suggesting a good local breeding season. Two pairs were regular at Crook o' Lune and there were up to four pairs on Birkdale LNR.

At Heysham there were probably four territories and passage birds were recorded not only in the autumn (approximately 20 in total, mainly in October) but also a few in early spring which was unexpected.

GREENFINCH *Chloris chloris*

Abundant breeding bird. Some autumn movement, flocks in winter.

It was a bit of a mixed year for Greenfinches with some increases but further decreases in many places. In the CDNHS winter survey, it dropped to 17th place and is largely absent now from the countryside around Rivington and Anglezarke; only one pair bred in the Roddlesworth Plantations. There were regular sightings in Cuerden Valley Park after a couple of virtually blank years.

There were four pairs at both Aintree (fairly normal by recent standards) and Roby Mill while six pairs at Freshfield Dune Heath represents quite a concentration! Indeed it seems the coastal area is best for this species with reasonable numbers reported around Birkdale, Southport and Kew. Six pairs nested at Heysham NR, five pairs at Croftlands, Carnforth and seven pairs on Warton Crag.

In the first winter period there were roosts at Fleetwood WWTW with 157 on 4 Jan and 150 on the 24th and up to 35 at Princes Park in Liverpool. The largest flocks reported apart from these were of 26 at Cockersand, 30 at MMWWT and 40 at Fairhaven Lake in February. There was little mention of spring passage but 26 were at Marshside on 10 May.

Few reports of post-breeding flocks were received, the only one of any size being 40 at Cocker's Dyke on 5 Aug. Autumn passage was also rather quiet, certainly in comparison to 2014. There was a steady passage south over Rossall with a peak of 51 plus 18 ringed on 18 Oct, 206 were at Leighton Moss on 19 Oct and flocks in double figures were reported from Marshside and Hesketh Out Marsh during that month. There were 86 at Fluke Hall on 27 Oct and 100 at Warton Marsh on the 30th.

The second winter period was again quiet with a flock of 50 at Brungerley Bridge on 18 Dec the most notable sighting.

A Greenfinch x Linnet hybrid was trapped and ringed at Billinge Hill on 16 Aug.

LINNET *Linaria cannabina*

Common breeding resident. Double passage migrant, common winter flocks in the west. Red List (breeding decline).

Good numbers were recorded in many areas of the county throughout the year and there was a general increase in breeding pairs reported.

The early part of the year saw some large flocks in lowland areas: up to 370 were at Birk's Farm and Northwood's Farm in Eagland Hill from January, decreasing to 170 by the end of February. There were also flocks of around 300 at Churchtown in Southport and Croston Moss at this time while between 100 and 200 were regular at Lunt Meadows, and 220-250 were reported from Altcar and Lytham Mosses. Other three-figure counts were received from Hesketh Out Marsh, Fairhaven Lake and Aldcliffe and of more than 50 from many coastal locations including Heysham, Lytham and Marshside. Birds are rather scarce further inland in the winter months so regular counts of up to 50 on maize stubble at Arkholme was notable. There were only two records in east Lancashire up to early March (Jackhouse and Dean Clough Reservoir) after which birds started to return to their breeding areas. Twenty at Belmont Reservoir on 21 Feb was rather early.

April saw a reasonable passage of Linnets with several locations having three-figure counts, including Cuerden Valley Park, Marton Mere and Cockersand. At Rossall 201 were counted between 20 March and 26 April and similar number were recorded over Heysham.

Twenty-four pairs were at Freshfield Dune Heath during the breeding season, the most in the last twelve years of regular recording there; nine pairs were at Lunt Meadows, three at Aintree, four at Roby Mill and birds were seen regularly throughout April and May within the Speke housing estate. There were three territories at Belmont Reservoir and at least seven on former Twite habitat

on Darwen Moor. Marshside had 13 pairs with eleven on the saltmarsh and 22 at were on Hesketh Out Marsh; eight pairs were at Birkdale, seven at Heysham NR and six at Arkholme. Small numbers nested in the eastern hills with pairs reported from Champion Moor, Cant Clough, Newton Fell and Jackhouse Reservoir to name a few.

The largest post-breeding gatherings were recorded at Lunt Meadows (300 on 7 Aug and 200 in October), Cockersand (120 during August), Haydock (80 on 25 Aug) and Champion Moor (65 on 9 Sept), with 90 in rape stubble at Billinge Hill in late September.

Visible passage was rather light but, as usual, flocks at various sites started to build up in numbers with peaks in early October. One such flock at Crosby Marine Park had up to 150 in September rising to 400 by 6 Oct. Similarly, at Singleton the peak count was of 300 on 9 Oct and at Cockersand 150 on the 6th; 180 were at Ormskirk on 22 Sept and a flock at Croston Moss reached 200 by 4 Oct.

The last sighting in the east of the county came from Champion Moor on the late date of 26 Nov. Flock sizes were generally smaller towards the end of the year with highs of 120 at Bolton-le-Sands in November and 155 at Pilling Lane Ends in December. During December significant flocks were also encountered at Roby Mill, Mawdesley Moss, Hesketh Out Marsh, Pilling, Lytham Moss, Fairhaven Lake and Rawcliffe Moss and up to 50 were in the Heysham area at the end of the year.

TWITE *Linaria flavirostris*

Rare and decreasing breeder. Winter visitor on coasts. Red List (breeding decline).

Monthly Peak Counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Heysham	4	15	20	1						1	1	0
Knott End/PLE	120	65	40	11						50	124	160
Rossall Point	17	12	17	35						2	/	11
Southport area	95	100	66	20						/	20	107

The Twite flocks on the Lancashire coast were a popular draw for birders in the early part of the year, but it was rather difficult to assess how many birds were actually involved due to their propensity to roam a fair distance. The two main areas were between Knott End and Fluke Hall and between Birkdale and Southport Marine Lake, each (if one flock at each site were assumed) numbering well over 100 birds. The former favoured feeding site at Heysham held relatively few and was virtually abandoned later in the year in favour of Linnets.

Smaller numbers (up to 30) were present at Fleetwood and Rossall as well as Bank End, Cockersand and Carnforth Marsh. There were no reports from upland areas in the winter.

Birds re-appeared at Cant Clough on 2 April and were present until late October with flocks of over 30 reported in autumn but, no breeding information was received. There were two pairs at Swinden Reservoir on 23 April and a pair at Belmont on 22 March. Birds were also noted in the summer months at Hareden and Croasdale in Bowland and one was on Pendle Hill in early April – all former breeding sites.

There were some exceptionally early returning birds with two at Middleton on 16 Aug and two at Belmont Reservoir on 27 Sept. One was at Fleetwood on 11 Oct but it was the 26th before the first were back at Pilling with up to 50. Birds were again reported from all along the north coast of the Fylde and also in the fields just inland, with peak counts of over 180 at Ridge Farm in December and over 70 at Wrampool.

South of the Ribble, there were 15 at Hightown on 27 Nov and a peak count of 107 at Southport Marine Lake on 30 Dec.

LESSER REDPOLL *Acanthis cabaret*

Fairly common but decreasing breeding bird. Common double passage migrant and winter visitor. Red List (breeding decline).

There were more reports of Lesser Redpolls this year but not in any great numbers. Whereas in the past few years birds have been concentrated around certain regular sites, small numbers were reported from 25 10km squares in the first winter period. The most regular locations were at Leighton Moss (up to 15) and at a few sites in east Lancashire. There were regular double-figure counts at a garden feeding site at New Laithe Farm, Newton, peaking with 40 around 21 Feb. Good numbers

were also seen at Stocks Reservoir with 50 on 3 Jan. Other than 13 at Great Knowley on 4 Jan and 11 at Rowley Lake on 13 Feb, there were no double-figure counts from anywhere else.

March brought passage birds to many areas even though the numbers involved were not all that great; 20 at Crow Wood Farm was the highest count apart from the regular 30 or so at New Laithe Farm. Coastal watchpoints noted a small and steady passage: Heysham vis mig recorded 169 between 9 March and 1 May while numbers at Fleetwood peaked at 27 on 8 April.

During the summer months virtually all reports came from Bowland and the West Pennine Moors. Up to 20 were still regular at New Laithe Farm and ringing activities there processed many juvenile birds from 23 May onwards, but numbers dropped off significantly after August. Birds were also seen at Stocks Reservoir/Gisburn Forest, Hareden, Langden, Moor Piece and Chipping Moss. A survey of the Roddlesworth Plantations found seven territories, half of that in 2003. A pair was present at White Coppice while odd birds were recorded at Clowbridge, Rishton and St Helens.

Numbers passing through Billinge Hill in the autumn were very good and 289 were ringed (including 158 in September and 82 in October). There were 43 at Jackhouse Reservoir on 29 Sept, while a flock of at least 15 feeding on Meadowsweet along the Leeds-Liverpool Canal at Rishton at the end of September increased to 30 by 4 October. There was also a flock of 36 at Lowerhouse Lodges on 12 Oct. At Leighton Moss up to 35 were recorded from late September and throughout October with 25 ringed on the 10th. Coastal locations recorded relatively few birds with just 79 at Heysham between 7 Sept and 5 Nov. However, at the peak of the passage in mid-October there were reports of overflying birds from Rainford, Croxteth Park, Speke, Seaforth and Crook o' Lune amongst others.

The second winter period was especially quiet with a flock up to 17 at Gorse Hill NR and ten at Belmont by far the largest counts. There were regular reports of up to eight at Brockholes but otherwise numbers were in low single figures.

MEALY (COMMON) REDPOLL * *Acanthis flammea*

Scarce winter visitor.

No substantiated records were received this year. Nationwide there was a great paucity of this species so it is assumed likely that all overflying birds were Lessers.

COMMON CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*

Rare breeding bird. Occasional irruptive movements.

Crossbills were virtually absent in the early part of the year with the only records being singles at Dunsop/Whitendale on 25 Feb and 10 March.

June and July brought a flurry of records from disparate locations. The first at Formby on 1 June was followed by six at Docker Moor on the 5th, four at Aigburth, Liverpool on the 5th, eleven at Belmont on the 7th and five at Roddlesworth Plantations. Four flew north over Childwall, Liverpool on the 22nd and there were 25 at Spire Farm, Cow Ark and eleven over Billinge Hill on the 25th. July brought a further 19 birds on six separate days over Billinge Hill, eleven at Crawshawbooth on the 2nd, twelve at Warton Crag on the 5th, eleven over Alston Reservoirs also on the 5th and several sightings at Brockholes into August. At Roby Mill a total of 22 bird-days was recorded between June and October.

There was another lull in activity until late September when a further tranche of records was received, including five over Jubilee Wood, Maghull on the 22nd. Up to 40 were in the plantations on Anglezarke Moor on 10-11 Oct with ten at Lead Mines Clough on the 25th. Flocks of at least ten were recorded on 4 Oct and 5 Nov at Jackhouse, Grindleton Forest on 19 Oct and Stocks Reservoir on 30 Oct. Approximately 50 more birds were counted over Billinge Hill between 29 Sept and 4 Nov with a peak of eleven on 8 Oct. Similarly, at Belmont, 65 flew over on seven dates between 3 Oct and 22 Nov (peak of 23 on 9 Oct) with a couple of small flocks in the Delph plantations on 25 Oct. In comparison Heysham had just eight and ten were at Cabin Hill on 1 Oct. Coastal migrants included at least twelve flying over Knott End and Rossall Point between 3 and 13 Oct.

There were just two reports in December: of 14 at Beacon Fell on the 14th and twelve at Stocks Reservoir on the 18th.

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

Common breeding resident and passage migrant. Flocks in winter.

No matter which month of the year you are in, Goldfinches are now ubiquitous across the whole of the county: from central Liverpool to Bowland villages, summer and winter, they are one of the most noted species. Their adoption of garden feeding stations is probably the largest reason for the dramatic change in winter distribution over the years and combined with ever more frequent mild winters, it is no surprise that flocks can be found anywhere.

At New Laithe Farm 50-60 regularly attended feeders throughout January and February while at least 30 were regular in a Belmont garden. Up to 25 fed on the seed at the North Harbour Wall, Heysham while 60 was the largest 'natural' flock feeding on the saltmarsh at Conder Green. Other first winter period counts included 50 at Knott End, Clowbridge Reservoir and Billinge Hill.

March brought an increase in numbers as birds started to move. A roost at Shedden Clough held over 60 on 22 March and there were 60 at New Laithe Farm on the 29th. At Fleetwood Observatory 562 were recorded between 16 March and 19 April with a peak of 112 on 17 April.

Breeding numbers at regularly-monitored sites were generally up on 2014. There were six pairs at Freshfield Dune Heath, eight at Aintree, five at Roby Mill, three in the Roddlesworth Plantations and 19 on EDF properties at Heysham; 15 pairs were at Millhead and three on Warton Crag.

Throughout August and September post-breeding flocks were augmented by passage birds and it is quite often difficult to distinguish passage birds. A flock quickly built up to 250 at Lunt Meadows during September, while at Carr House Green Common 120 in August increased to 250 during September. The Sefton Coast played host to two large congregations with up to 600 at Crosby Marine Park and 560 at Marshside in October. Three-figure counts were also received from MMWWT, Glasson, Pilling Lane, Fairhaven Lake, Ormskirk, Hesketh Out Marsh, Rivington, Croston Moss and Arkholme. There were at least 620 in twelve flocks around Belmont in this period and a flock at Dean Clough Reservoir had up to 300 in it by the end of September. Other three-figure counts in the east of the county came from Lower Towneley, Ightenhill, Grindleton and Stocks Reservoir.

Passage birds at the usual coastal locations peaked in the third week of September but numbers dropped off quite quickly before October was out.

The only three-figure counts at the end of the year were at Stocks Reservoir on 3 Nov and a roost of at least 120 in laurels at Oakenclough throughout December. Twelve other locations recorded flocks in excess of 50 birds, including at one Heysham feeding site which, as shown through ringing efforts, had a large turnover.

SISKIN *Spinus spinus*

Uncommon recent breeding colonist. Common double passage migrant and winter visitor.

Following on from a rather quiet year for this species in 2014, low numbers were reported in the first winter period but from a wide range of locations, mainly in the east of the county. The largest numbers were 50 at Belmont, ten at Leighton Moss and twelve at Towneley Hall in January, then 20 at Stocks Reservoir, 17 at Hesketh Out Marsh and 14 at Aldcliffe in mid-February when this generally early migrant starts its spring passage.

A steady trickle of new birds were ringed at New Laithe Farm between January and March. Perhaps it was not too surprising that spring passage was minimal; there was a complete lack of records in March and April from anywhere except the West Pennine Moors, Bowland and the odd ones and twos flying over coastal locations.

What followed therefore was rather unexpected. The first juvenile was recorded on feeders at New Laithe Farm on 9 May, clearly from local stock. Up to four pairs bred around Belmont with juveniles seen towards the end of June both here and at Anglezarke. Surprisingly, none were recorded in the Roddlesworth Plantations but birds probably bred at Crawshawbooth.

Numbers started to grow quite significantly in July with 32 at Hapton on the 17th and up to 30 at New Laithe Farm increasing to around 80 in Aug. Nearly 300 new birds were ringed at the latter site with 150 more controls between July and September. Elsewhere, birds were being recorded at Heysham, Marshside, Speke, Mossley Hill, Duxbury, Roby Mill and Billinge Hill. There was then a slight lull followed by a reasonable autumn passage period. Over 220 were counted south over Billinge Hill with a peak of 100 on 7 Sept. Brockholes recorded 214 during September with a peak of 82 on the 9th. There were 30 at White Coppice on 8 Sept and several over Sefton Park, Liverpool on

the 27th. Heysham recorded smaller peak counts of 18 on the 7th and 30 the following day; 119 flew over Fairhaven in September with a further 65 in October, peaking on the 1st. A total of 69 Siskins was noted over Belmont on nine dates between 13 Sept and 22 Nov with a peak of 20 on 6 Oct. Birds were very much in evidence across the county with a number of flocks reported from the Chorley region including 60 at Eccleston on the 17th, 30 at Lower Burgh Meadow on the 5th and 20 at Yarrow Valley Park on the 18th. There was a flock of 80 at Lower Towneley Park on the 28th and 60 at Crosby on the 6th.

Although fewer in number, there was still a good spread of birds in the second winter period with Brockholes recording up to 20 throughout November and flocks of 50 at Leighton Moss, 21 at Tarbock and 20 at Rishton during the month. December was certainly quieter with few in the east but several small flocks reported in the central belt from Scorton, to Cottam, Preston, Longton and several sites around Chorley.

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Fairly common winter visitor to summits and coasts.

By far the largest number of birds for several years was on Pendle Hill for two weeks in March with 25 present on the 6th rising to 30 by the 10th and the last sighting of 13 on the 19th. A male was at a feeding site in Rossendale on 21 Jan, twelve on 3 Feb and seven on the 5th. Singles were reported from Crosby/Hightown on several dates from 14 Jan to 7 March and one was at Fleetwood on 11 March.

Singles were on the beach at Lytham from 30 Sept to 14 Oct and between Rossall and Fleetwood from 10 Oct to 23 Nov. Singletons were also recorded at Morecambe on 16 Nov and Hightown on 3 & 27 Dec.

Three birds flew over Winter Hill on 21 Nov and a flock re-established on Pendle Hill from 23 Nov to 20 Dec with a peak of eleven on the 13th.

LAPLAND BUNTING* *Calcarius lapponicus*

Rare autumn passage migrant and winter visitor to coasts.

The only accepted records in the first part of the year were from a moorland feeding station in Rossendale where one from 2014 into 2015 was joined by second on 3 Feb (C Bell).

An enterprising study of calls of migrants over-flying a Knott End garden during peak passage recorded two separate individuals on 19 Sept and 11 October (C Batty). The technique involved an audio recorder running overnight and then examining the results, homing in on key points in the files using techniques borne out of experience. Many calls were recorded, including Little Grebe and Water Rail as well as the Lapland Buntings. The resultant mp3 files were submitted and the records accepted.



Lapland Bunting with Snow Bunting, Rossendale, 5 February (Craig Bell)

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citrinella*

Fairly common but decreasing resident, mostly in the south. Scarce autumn passage migrant. Red list (breeding decline).

The numbers of this iconic bird of farmland hedgerows continue to decrease across the county. Birds were reported from 20 tetrads but only regularly from Over Wyre and a broad band west of the M6 south from Chorley to Haydock and then south-west to the outskirts of Liverpool.

In the early part of the year by far the largest count was of a flock at Billinge Hill with 58 on stubble on 27 Jan decreasing to fewer than ten by 16 Feb. Ten were recorded on Croston Moss on 18 Jan, while the feeding station at New Lane, Eagland Hill had single-figure counts in January which increased in February with 36 the peak on the 26th; up to 16 remained into the first two weeks of March. An exceptional record was of a male seen in Burnley town centre on 6 March. Single birds were seen at Cabin Hill in March and April.

At least six pairs bred at Billinge Hill but productivity was low with only seven juveniles ringed. At Roby Mill there were 3-6 pairs and at least eight males were singing around Maghull on 27 July. Birds were also recorded singing at five sites around Tarbock, two at Newton-le-Willows, eight

around Halewood, three at Great Altcar and others at Gorse Hill NR, Bretherton, Haskayne and Haydock. Summer records were received from eighteen locations on the Fylde, mainly in SD44.

There were a few autumn passage records away from the regular areas, including singles at Cabin Hill on 26 Sept, at Belmont on 8 Oct, New Laithe Farm on the 25th and Heysham Harbour on 5 Nov. The only flocks of note in the latter part of the year were 38 at Downholland on 29 Oct, twelve at Eagland Hill the following day and ten on Croston Moss in November. Otherwise, birds were scarce throughout the county. However a bird in a Clitheroe garden for a week around 1 Dec (for the third year in succession) made for a rather exceptional year in the east of the county for this species which has been absent as a breeder for decades.

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Common breeding bird and winter visitor. Double passage migrant. Red list (breeding decline).

It was a common theme running through reports from many sites in 2015 that there were reasonable numbers at the start of the year and an average number of breeding pairs but following very poor productivity (as with Yellowhammer), there was a general paucity of records later in the year.

Numbers at Brockholes were between 15 and 20 during the first half of the year with birds frequenting the feeders in the winter months then appearing on territory. However, from August onwards, no more than six were reported. In the region around Belmont, five wintering flocks totalling over 95 birds including a very impressive count of 41 in a garden there on 20 Jan. The area around the reservoir played host to 14 pairs during the summer months and peak counts later in the year were in the order of 20-30.

First winter period flocks of 30 or more were to be found at Whitestake and Lytham Moss on the Fylde and at Coal Clough Wind Farm on 16 March. Leighton Moss and MMWWT regularly had double-figure counts early in the year.

At Lunt Meadows there were 31 males singing on 7 April with an estimate of 20-25 pairs settling to breed but the productivity was poor with low single-figure counts from September onwards. Marshside recorded just six pairs with another three on the saltmarsh and two at Hesketh Out Marsh. There were two pairs at Freshfield Dune Heath, three at Aintree, six at Ainsdale NNR, three at Billinge Hill and five at Roby Mill. Just a single male sang along a stretch of the Leeds-Liverpool Canal between Rishton and Blackburn where there had been at least four in previous years. Three pairs bred at Oglet and the first fledglings at Seaforth appeared on 4 June. Good numbers were reported from Birkdale with eight singing males on the dune fringe and three nearer the golf courses. Twenty-four pairs were recorded along the lower Lune Valley compared with 26 in 2014.

There was a trickle of autumn passage at many locations with, for example, only 17 recorded at Heysham from September to early November. Occasional higher counts included a flock of 25 at Formby Point on 30 Sept, 13 migrants at Knott End on 19th, 30 at Crosby on the 6th, ten at Rainford on the 15th and nine at Rossall on the 27th.

Numbers in the second winter period were low with double-figure counts coming only from Belmont, Lytham Moss and Leighton Moss.

CORN BUNTING *Emberiza calandra*

Common breeding bird in the south-west and Fylde.

The Fylde and the south-west mosses are the main areas for this species in Lancashire. The winter feeding programme at Eagland Hill continued to attract up to 40 at two sites until the middle of March. In addition to these there were some good counts of flocks in the Pilling area including 100 on a weedy field at New Lane and up to 72 on stubble at Pilling Moss throughout February, and 83 at Birk's Farm on 17 March. There were 100 on Skitham Lane on 19 Feb with 44 there in March. A flock of 49 was at Peel/Lytham Moss on 14 March and still 27 on 21 April.

South of the Ribble, peak first winter period counts came from Tarleton Moss with 50 in January and Croston Moss with 30 on the 25th, and double-figure counts from Halsall, Scarisbrick and MMWWT. Small numbers frequented Crawford in January but 31 in one flock on 3 Feb was by far the largest count; two singing males were present in the vicinity during February.

Singing males were observed at 16 locations in the Fylde from April onwards. Most involved singles but there were six at Eagland Hill on 29 June and two at Lytham Moss. South of the Ribble there were ten pairs at Hesketh Out Marsh, twelve singing males on Mawdesley Moss on 25 July

and four singing males along Curlew Lane, Rufford on the 30th. There were three territorial males on Black Moss Lane, Scarisbrick as well as reports from Little Crosby and Plex Moss.

From August onwards there was a dearth of reports. A few were regularly reported from Lytham Moss and up to 15 were on Longton Marsh. Two flew south over Marshside on 8 Sept and a couple of birds turned up near Rainford in October and at Downholland, there were 21 on the 29th.

November brought a few more records but not in any great numbers. There were up to twelve at Longton Marsh on the 1st and 14 at Clifton Marsh on the 2nd. Numbers at Peel built from twelve on 17 Nov to 21 by 16 Dec. The feeding sites at Eagland Hill had no Corn Buntings in the second winter period but there were 31 at Birk's Farm on 8 Dec. Croston Moss had twelve on 7 Nov and in December, the peak counts were 30 at Lunt Meadows on the 10th, 16 at Crawford on the 18th and 30 at Mawdesley Moss on the 29th. There was a single bird at Crosby Marine Park on 29 Dec.

Escapes

TRUMPETER SWAN *Cygnus buccinator*

The long-staying individual was seen on the Ribble at Ribchester and Dinckley throughout the year.

BLACK SWAN *Cygnus atratus*

One of our commonest escapes, Black Swans were reported from a dozen or more sites throughout the year, all north of the Ribble. All were single birds with the exception of three at Aldcliffe Marsh during July.



Black Swan, Cockersand, 6 March (Stuart Piner)

RUDDY SHELDUCK *Tadorna ferruginea*

Three were at Aldcliffe Marsh on 17-28 July and Leighton Moss on 22 July.

EGYPTIAN GOOSE *Alopochen aegyptiacus*

Two were at Arkholme on 16-27 July and another two flew north over Billinge Hill on 22 Sept.

ROSS'S GOOSE *Chen rossii*

One was at MMWWT and Marshside from January to March and October to December.

SWAN (CHINESE) GOOSE *Anser cygnoides*

Single(s) were at Alston Reservoirs on 17 Jan, Brockholes on 6-15 April and 20-24 Dec, Hesketh Out Marsh on 19 April, Howick Cross on 30 April, Grimsargh Wetland on 13 June and 3 Sept, and Longton Marsh and Tarleton on 5-6 Oct.

BAR-HEADED GOOSE *Anser indicus*

Six were counted on the June Ribble WeBS, three of which were at Hesketh Out Marsh and Banks Marsh during May and June, two at Leighton Moss in March to April, and singles at Marshside on 12 Aug and Arkholme on 17 Sept to 9 Oct.

SNOW GOOSE *Anser caerulescens*

Singles were at Glasson on 2 Jan and Colloway Marsh on the 5-20th, and at Barrowford Reservoir with Canada Geese on 30-31 was presumably a feral bird.

MUSCOVY DUCK *Cairina moschata*

Four were at Padiham on 13 Jan, two at Taylor Park, St. Helens on 2 April and singles on the canal in Burnley and at Cleveleys, Preesall and Burscough at other times of the year. A pair nested at the Ornamental Reservoir, Belmont but failed at the egg stage.

WOOD DUCK *Aix sponsa*

One was on Clowbridge Reservoir on 1 Aug.

RED-CRESTED POCHARD *Netta rufina*

One was in Walton Hall Park, Liverpool throughout the year.

REEVES'S PHEASANT *Syrnaticus reevesi*

One was at Barnacre Reservoir on 8 June and two in Medlar Woods on 22 Nov.

LADY AMHERST'S PHEASANT *Chrysolophus amherstiae*

Singles were in garden in Lytham on 18 April and Ansdell on 11 Oct.

GREY JUNGLEFOWL *Gallus sonnerati*

One was at Cocker's Dyke on 14 April.

INDIAN PEAFOWL *Pavo cristatus*

Up to three were present in January and February at the Household Waste Disposal Centre at Siddows, Clitheroe, and one or two were reported through to November. A male was displaying on 17 March but there was no female in sight.

Elsewhere, one was in the Marton Mere area in May and June, and nine at Stalmine Moss on 5 July.

HELMETED GUINEAFOWL *Numida meleagris*

About five were seen at the front of Standen Hall, Clitheroe on 15 Sept.

HARRIS'S HAWK *Parabuteo unicinctus*

Surprisingly, only one was reported this year – at Tarbock Green, Knowsley on 26 April.

AMERICAN KESTREL *Falco sparverius*

One escaped at Hambleton on 21 Aug and presumably the same bird was at Thornton, Fylde on 25 Sept.

EAGLE OWL *Bubo bubo*

A single record was received from the Bowland area where birds were said to have been heard calling on several occasions during March. No other information was available for this species.

BLUE-AND-YELLOW MACAW *Ara ararauna*

One was in Belmont Village on 1 Sept.

BUDGERIGAR *Melopsittacus undulatus*

One was at Belmont Reservoir on 13 Sept.

CANARY *Serinus canaria*

One was at Warbreck Hall, Blackpool on 19 July and another appeared on this writer's window ledge in central Liverpool on 18 Nov.

A hybrid Goldfinch x Canary was singing in a Belmont garden from 11-23 April.

LANCASHIRE RINGING REPORT 2015

(including recoveries received since the last annual report)

Pete Marsh

This was a mixed bag of a year, in many ways rescued by a late autumn characterised by looking at the threadbare Leach's Petrel numbers and then at, for example, the number of Chiffchaff and Goldcrest recoveries in this report. For Peter Alker at Billinge and at least one of the Heysham team it was morning after morning of pre-dawn starts in September/October, encouraged, from late September, by the almost unreal Lancashire experience of 'expecting' to catch a Yellow-browed Warbler or two. For the second year running, it was not a westerly autumn, although this was made up for with a vengeance after the first week of November and ringing activity was conspicuously absent in the last seven weeks of the year!

However, the Goldcrest and Chiffchaff passage, reinforced by huge numbers of continental birds drifting across to the west was accompanied by strangely silent skies overhead, especially in September before the vis mig finches 'got going'. The breeding season had been awful for some species and overhead autumn Meadow Pipit passage, especially presumed British birds away from the coast, was almost inconceivably poor and predictably preceded by few of the usual pre-migratory moorland gatherings. So the Meadow Pipit ringers saw very poor returns for their efforts. On the other hand, other species at lower altitudes did pretty well with a decent Grey Wagtail autumn passage and, especially at Billinge, impressive numbers of Tree Pipits.

There also seemed, putting it very simplistically, to be a bit of a dearth of food in upland conifers and this prompted a pretty decent late autumn passage of Lesser Redpolls and Siskins (although some Siskins were on the move from late summer onwards). This was presumably allied to an above-average passage of Coal Tits contrasting sharply with the low numbers and absence of any irruptive movements of Blue Tits.

Many of the nest-box schemes reported weather/food-related poor Blue/Great Tit success, exacerbated by a high level of predation. These same conditions also affected Pied Flycatchers which arrived in very good numbers after a successful 2014 breeding season, but many were soon off again with their tails between their legs with very few second attempts after nest failure.

As has become the norm these days, many of the returns relate to telescope-related reports of darvic rings, flags and neck collars. See separate article on Cuckoos and the use of satellite transmitters. The colour-marked sightings include a few examples of why it is of interest to request information subsequent to the report(s) in Lancashire. For example, the Somerset wintering Marsh Harrier and Med Gull LCG. Some outstanding colour-marked sightings include only our second fully-documented Scandinavian Rock Pipit, a Sanderling including the Canary Isles in its travels and the travels of Avocet RWO/RL. Obviously we have been very selective with species where there is a huge annual database of sightings, notably Icelandic Black-tailed Godwits, and a piece on the significant numbers of neck-collared Greylags and Canada Geese from efforts at Lake Windermere will be in next year's report

There are some quite odd recoveries which defy the usual migratory conventions. Reverse migration is not uncommon, so the likes of Chiffchaff HDK249 are an annual phenomenon, but far less expected were a presumed Scandinavian Goldcrest heading north-west in autumn from Gibraltar Point and especially the Firecrest in Elgin! Conversely, the huge number of Goldfinch, Lesser Redpoll and Siskin recoveries all seemed to be 'migration as expected' except perhaps Siskin N626881 in Denmark 9 days after ringing in mid-March.

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MUTE SWAN

W36411	First-year Female	25/09/2013	Glasson Dock, Lancaster
	Read in field	17/12/2015	Westport Lake, Stoke-on-Trent 114km SSE

The longest movement of the year

WHOOPEE SWAN

Z88368	Adult Female	25/01/2000	Martin Mere
	Hit wires	25/05/2015	Upper Dounreay, Highland 553km N
ZZ7883	Adult Male	12/12/2006	Martin Mere
	Caught by ringer	11/02/2011	Caerlaverock, Dumfries and Galloway 155km NNW
	Hit wires	10/04/2015	Uig, Isle of Coll, Argyll and Bute 407km NW
ZY2525	Adult Female	14/02/2013	Caerlaverock
	Caught by ringer	05/03/2014	Martin Mere 155km SSE
W38859	First-year Female	21/02/2015	near Garreg, Porthmadoc, Gwynedd
	Read in field	17/10/2015	Martin Mere 109km NE
W38856	Adult Male	21/02/2015	near Garreg, Porthmadoc
	Read in field	25/11/2015	Martin Mere 109km NE

The usual movements to and from Iceland received, but the above show some movements within the British Isles

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE

ISR	Adult Male	25/07/1997	Modrudalur, Fjoll, Nordur-Mula: 65°22'N 15°52'W (Miðhálandi) ICELAND
116873	Freshly dead (shot)	02/01/2015	Halsall, near Ormskirk 1,495km SSE
136954 / ULC	Adult female	18/07/2013	Halslon, Karahnjukar, Midhalendi, Miðhálandi, ICELAND
	Read in field	03/02/2015	Dam Side, Fylde

The longest movements during the period under review

SHELDUCK

GR60540	Adult Male	19/01/2015	Slimbridge
	Alive (ring read in field)	07/12/2015	Martin Mere 212km N
GN63293	Full-grown Male	22/11/2005	Martin Mere
	Caught by ringer	10/01/2012	Wheldrake Ings, Yorks 132km ENE
	Seen	10/10/2013	Cocker's Dyke, Preesall Sands 36km N
	Caught by ringer	10/02/2015	North Duffield, Selby, North Yorks 130km E
BLB	Adult Male	17/02/2013	Rieme: 51°10'N 3°46'E (Oost-Vlaanderen) BELGIUM
H167331	Seen	24/11/2015	Martin Mere 527km WNW

WIGEON

FA93768	First-year Male	16/03/2014	near Littleborough, near Retford, Nottinghamshire
	Dead	29/12/2015	Banks Marsh, Ribble Estuary 155km WNW

TEAL

EG38256	First-year Male	26/10/2014	Wheldrake Ings, East Cottingworth, Yorks
	Freshly dead (shot)	09/09/2015	Salwick 124km W

SVS	First-year Male	06/10/2013	Andfanget, Norrvik, Ottenby: 56°13'N 16°27'E (Öland) SWEDEN
6432434	Freshly dead	10/01/2015	Wesham 1,261km WSW

PINTAIL

FH38928	Adult Male	25/12/2010	Slimbridge
	Freshly dead (shot)	03/01/2015	Hoscar Moss 210km N
FH00003	First-year Male	10/02/2010	Martin Mere
	Freshly dead	04/04/2015	Poltevo: 55°42'N 38°7'E (Moscow Oblast) RUSSIA 2646km E

POCHARD

GC38257	First-year Male	06/02/2008	Martin Mere
	Unknown (ring only)	10/05/2015	Surgut: 61°13'N 73°25'E (Khanty-Mansi A.O.) RUSSIA 4,623km E

MANX SHEARWATER

EX97906	Adult	22/07/2014	Copeland Bird Observatory, Co Down
	Freshly dead	30/05/2015	Rossall Point, Fleetwood 183km ESE

SHAG

1470806	Nestling	03/07/2015	Puffin Island: c. 53°19'N 4°1'W (Isle of Anglesey)
	Freshly dead	30/11/2015	Hall Road, Crosby 67km ENE
1412819	Nestling	17/06/2006	Midland Island, Pembroke
	Dead on tideline	26/08/2007	Cotestones Carnforth 314 km NNE

The last one has only just 'surfaced' - the first from south Wales sources

LITTLE EGRET

GC98850	Nestling	15/06/2013	Besthorpe Gravel Pits, Newark, Nottinghamshire
	Seen	03/05/2015	Conder Green 163km NW

RED KITE

GR29061	Nestling	15/06/2011	Site Confidential (Dumfries and Galloway)
	Seen	16/01/2012	Leighton Moss, near Silverdale 116km SE
	Seen	02/02/2013	Rushton, Northamptonshire 350km SE

No further reports unfortunately

MARSH HARRIER

GF65270	Nestling Female	18/06/2014	Brandon Fen, Lakenheath Fen, Suffolk
	Seen	27/09/2014	near Burscough 262km WNW
	Seen	03/12/2014	near Stoke St. Gregory, Somerset 284km WSW
	Seen	20/12/2014	near Catcott, Somerset 272km WSW
	Seen	26/12/2014	near Stockland Bristol, Somerset 284km WSW
	Seen	20/01-28/02/2015	near Westhay, Somerset 271km WSW

SPARROWHAWK

EZ26044	Nestling Female	27/07/2015	Pilling Hall, Pilling
	Dead (hit by car)	(07/12/2015)	Crosby, Cumbria 97km NNW

BUZZARD

GR89512	Nestling	27/06/2014	Raby, Cheshire
	Seen	05/01/2015	Greenbank Park, Liverpool 12km NE
	Seen	28/10/2015	Rixton, Warrington 39km ENE

OSPREY

Darvic MU	Nestling	22/07/2010	Monymusk, Aberdeenshire
	Seen	3/7- 21/07/2012	Stocks Reservoir
	Seen	13/04/2016	Stocks Reservoir

Wonder if it passed through Stocks as a rapid-transit breeding adult in springs 2013-2015. The breeding male at Foulshaw (Cumbria) visited Leighton Moss at least twice during the 2016 breeding season (originally ringed at Bassenthwaite)

KESTREL

EZ26034	Nestling	26/06/2015	Parrox Hall, Preesall
	Freshly dead (injury)	19/09/2015	Lunt, near Maghull 47km S

PEREGRINE

GR21352	Nestling	17/05/2011	Chorley
	Seen	24/02/2013	Lytham St Anne's 29km WNW
	Seen	21/09/2013	Lytham St Anne's 29km WNW
	Seen	30/01/2014	Lytham St Anne's 29km WNW
	Seen	03/10/2015	Lytham St Anne's 29km WNW
GR66524	Nestling	06/06/2014	Site Confidential, near Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent
	Dead (wires)	10/04/2015	near Halsall 79km NW
GV11685	Nestling Male	04/06/2015	Confidential Site: c. 53°49'N 2°22'W (Lancashire)
	Freshly dead	16/08/2015	near Long Ridging Farm, Oxenhope, West Yorks 28km E
GV25827	First-year Female	14/07/2015	near Newhey, Milnrow
	Freshly dead (injury)	24/12/2015	St Helens 46km WSW

COOT

GR34822	First-year	17/11/2012	Killingworth, Tyne and Wear
	Seen	13/12/2015	Southport Marine Lake 178km SSW
GR25047	First-year	30/11/2010	Marine Lake, Southport
	Seen	05/04/2014	Sharpley Gc, Seaham, Durham 168km NE
	Seen	19/10/2015	Herrington Country Park, Tyne and Wear 169km NE

The longest movements during the period under review

AVOCET

FS52364 & RWX/OY	Nestling	06/06/2006	Saint-Armel, Lasné 47.56N 2.72W FRANCE 56
	Seen	17/12/2006	St Osyth, Colne Point, Essex
	Seen	20/03/2007	Alresford, Colne estuary
	Seen	02/05/2007	Guerande, Grand Salvaret 47.29 N 2.46 W FRANCE 44
	Seen	16/05- 06/06/2007	Sene, Réserve Naturelle de Séné 47.62 N 2.71 W FRANCE 56
	Seen	26/04- 01/05/2008	Frodsham, Cheshire

	Seen	15/06/2008	Aldborough, Lincolnshire
	Seen	07/03- 14/03/2009	Martion Mere
	Seen	28/12/2009	Colne Point, Essex
	Seen	20/03/2010	Martin Mere
	Seen	21/10/2010	Muzillac, Banc de Strado 47.50 N 2.45 W FRANCE 56
	Seen	10/03/2011	Martin Mere
	Seen	20/11/2011	Colne Point, Essex
	Seen	08/04/2012	Freckleton, Ribble
	Seen	17/05/2012	Mesquer, Traict de Rostu 47.41 N 2.43 W FRANCE 44
	Seen	24/03/2013	Freckleton, Ribble
	Seen	31/03/2013	Hesketh Out Marsh, Ribble
	Seen	15/06/2016	Hesketh Out Marsh, Ribble
FS77275 & RWO/RL	Nestling	20/06/2008	Saint-Molf, Bas Boulais 47.40 N 2.43 W FRANCE 44
	Seen	30/6- 08/07/2008	Mesquer, Le Bergaud 47.40 N 2.43 W FRANCE44
	Seen	22/07/2008	Mesquer, Saline de Ré 47.41 N 2.44 W FRANCE 44
	Seen	18/9- 16/11/2008	Muzillac, Banc de Strado 47.50 N 2.45 W FRANCE 56
	Seen	02/12/2008	Camoel, Barrage d'Arzal 47.49 N 2.39 W FRANCE 56
	Seen	02/04/2009	Sene, Réserve Naturelle de Séné 47.62 N 2.71 W FRANCE56
	Seen	04/07- 07/07/2009	Mesquer, Saline au Duc 47.40 N 2.47 W FRANCE 44
	Seen	23/08/2009	Sene, Réserve Naturelle de Séné 47.62 N 2.71 W FRANCE 56
	Seen	3/10- 16/03/2010	Muzillac, Banc de Strado 47.50 N 2.45 W FRANCE56
	Seen	01/04- 06/04/2010	Guerande, Saline Verte 47.31 N 2.45 W FRANCE44
	Seen	16/04/2010	Turballe (La), Saline au Beau 47.33 N 2.49 W FRANCE44
	Seen	27/04- 07/05/2010	Mesquer, La Saline Neuve 47.39 N 2.47 W FRANCE 44
	Seen	18/05/2010	Mesquer, Saline de Ré 47.41 N 2.44 W FRANCE 44
	Seen	25/05- 31/05/2010	Mesquer, La Saline Neuve 47.39 N 2.47 W FRANCE44
	Seen	06/07/2010	Turballe (La) Saline au Beau 47.33 N 2.49 W FRANCE44
	Seen	07/09- 10/11/2010	Muzillac, Banc de Strado 47.50 N 2.45 W FRANCE56
	Seen	22/11/2010	Mesquer, Traict de Rostu 47.41 N 2.43 W FRANCE 44
	Seen	22/12/10- 04/01/2011	Muzillac, Banc de Strado 47.50 N 2.45 W FRANCE 56
	Seen	24/03- 11/04/2011	Mesquer, Saline de Ker Bernard 47.41 N 2.46 W FRANCE 44

Seen	03/05/2011	Mesquer, Les Gahins 47.40 N 2.44 W FRANCE44
Seen	06/05/2011	Asserac, Le Grand Frostidié 47.41 N 2.43 W FRANCE 44
Seen	09/05- 15/07/2011	Mesquer, Les Gahins 47.40 N 2.44 W FRANCE44
Seen	18/07/2011	Mesquer, Saline de Ker Bernard 47.41 N 2.46 W FRANCE44
Seen	02/09/11- 25/02/2012	Muzillac, Banc de Strado 47.50 N 2.45 W FRANCE 56
Seen	23/03- 17/04/2012	Leighton Moss
Seen	28/09- 01/11/2012	Muzillac, Banc de Strado 47.50 N 2.45 W FRANCE 56
Seen	30/12/12- 01/01/2013	Mesquer, Traict de Rostu 47.41 N 2.43 W FRANCE 44
Seen	10/01/2013	Muzillac, Banc de Strado 47.50 N 2.45 W FRANCE56
Seen	28/03- 25/04/2013	Leighton Moss
Seen	11/07- 14/07/2013	Mesquer, FRANCE 47.39N 2.48W
Seen	07/10- 18/11/2013	Muzillac, Banc de Strado 47.50 N 2.45 W FRANCE 56
Seen	22/03- 29/04/2014	Leighton Moss
Seen	31/07/2014	Aldborough Flats, Lincolnshire
Seen	03/02/2015	Mesquer, Traict de Rostu 47.41 N 2.43 W FRANCE 44
Seen	18/03/2015	Groffliers, Baie d'Authie nord 50.37 N 1.60 W FRANCE 62
Seen	11/04- 18/04/2015	Leighton Moss
Seen	20/04- 28/05/2015	Batz-sur-Mer, Saline Petit Cibéron 47.28 N 2.46 W FRANCE44
Seen	29/06/2015	Mesquer, Saline de Ker Bernard 47.41 N 2.46 W FRANCE 44
Seen	26/09/2015	Camoel, Vieille Roche 47.50 N 2.38 W FRANCE56
Seen	15/10- 12/11/2015	Muzillac, Banc de Strado 47.50 N 2.45 W FRANCE 56
Seen	26/01- 05/02/2016	Mesquer, Traict de Rostu 47.41 N 2.43 W FRANCE44
Seen	03/04/2016	Leighton Moss
Seen	16/04/2016	Hesketh Out Marsh, Ribble

Fascinating movements. What made the second bird head north after four years in spring 2012?

OYSTERCATCHER

FH23690	Adult	01/02/2010	Heysham
	Predated	19/05/2015	Innan Glyvur: 62°7'N 6°45'W (Eysturoya) FAROE ISLANDS 928km NNW

FH43196	Adult	22/01/2011	Heysham
	Freshly dead	20/02/2015	Floro Lufthavn, Flora: 61°34'N 5°1'E (Sogn og Fjordane) NORWAY 961km NNE

CURLEW

CT169908 & CJ6	Nestling	07/07/2012	Siikalatva, Oulu, FINLAND 64 27N 25 42E
	Seen	21/04/2013	Brockholes Wetland, Lancashire. 1979kmSSW
	Seen	01/04/2014	Brockholes
	Seen	02/03/2015	Brockholes
	Seen	01/03/2016	Brockholes

Note the earlier passage when a presumed breeding adult. Would be interesting to get a sighting at the wintering location(s)

ICELANDIC BLACK-TAILED GODWIT

There were many other similar sightings to R8-WO, although many not quite as well-documented. Note the Cley/Wash moult area

R8-WO	Adult	15/07/2010	Siglufjordur, N ICELAND
	Seen	21/12/10-03/02/11	Thurstaston Shore, Dee Estuary, Cheshire,
	Seen	30/11/2011	Marshside RSPB
	Seen	17/01/2012	Thurstaston Shore, Dee Estuary, Cheshire,
	Seen	31/03-01/04/2012	Leighton Moss
	Seen	18/06/2012	Siglufjordur, N ICELAND
	Seen	25/06/2012	Minsmere, Suffolk
	Seen	01/07-21/08/2012	Cley, Norfolk
	Seen	02/02/2013	Thurstaston Shore, Dee Estuary, Cheshire,
	Seen	19/04-30/04/2013	Caldy Wildfowl Collection, Caldby, Merseyside,
	Seen	20/05/2013	Siglufjordur, N ICELAND
	Seen	16/06/2013	Siglufjordur, N ICELAND
	Seen	03/10/2013	Frampton Marsh, Lincolnshire
	Seen	31/03/2014	Gilroy Nature Park, West Kirby, Merseyside,
	Seen	29/04/2014	Siglufjordur, N ICELAND
	Seen	25/06/2014	Islay, Argyll
	Seen	06/07-08/09/2014	Frampton Marsh, Lincolnshire
	Seen	06/11-06/12/2014	Thurstaston Shore, Dee Estuary, Cheshire,
	Seen	21/12/2014	Marshside RSPB
	Seen	21/03-29/03/2015	Leighton Moss
	Seen	30/04-02/05/2015	Álftafjörður, S-Múlasýsla, E ICELAND
	Seen	08-09/05/2015	Siglufjordur, N ICELAND
	Seen	12/07-19/07/2015	Frampton Marsh, Lincolnshire
	Seen	07/04/2016	Holmere, nr Yealand
	Seen	09/04-29/04/2016	Leighton Moss
	Seen	03/05/2016	Siglufjordur, N ICELAND

The numbers of Black-tailed Godwit using Morecambe Bay has increased over the last 15 years with peak numbers being reached in mid to late April. Colour ring sightings of these birds show that many spend the winter in the estuaries between the Dee and Morecambe Bay however others winter further south in the UK and spend a few weeks in the fields near Leighton Moss. Observations of colour marked birds also show that individuals on spring passage are site faithful. Autumn visitors are less common with many that winter in the North-West moulting on the Wash before heading West in September/October. All colour ring sightings are useful to help understand the complex habitat needs of this species

SANDERLING

NT91837	Adult	08/09/2013	Thorney Island, Hants
	Seen	winter 2013/14	Thorney Island, Hants
ISR8108190	Seen	16/04/2014	Formby, North Merseyside
	Seen	Winter 2014/15	Thorney Island, Hants
	Seen	Winter 2015/16	Thorney Island, Hants
	Seen	08/05/2016	Cabin Hill, Formby
	Adult	31/05/2013	Sangeroi, ICELAND
	Seen	10/03/2014	Las Palmas, CANARY ISLANDS
	Seen	23/04/2016	Cabin Hill, Formby

REDSHANK

DD21793	First-year	09/11/2014	Welwick Pond, East Riding of Yorks
	Seen	19/07/2015	Conder Green 191km WNW
DD51379 &crs	Full grown	16/09/2013	Farlington Marshes LNR, Langstone Harbour, Portsmouth, Hampshire
	Seen	18/10/2013	Bembridge Harbour, Isle of Wight
	Seen	11-13/05/2014	Brockholes Wetland
DD51013	Seen	08/04/2015	Alston Wetland, Longridge
	Adult	28/09/2008	Thorney Island, Chichester Harbour, West Sussex
	Seen	13/09/2014	Thorney Island, Chichester Harbour, West Sussex
	Seen	09/12/2015	Thorney Island, Chichester Harbour, West Sussex
	On territory	18/05/2016	Marl House Farm, Abbeystead

WOODCOCK

EX42262	First-year	06/01/2013	Brondre Fach, Powys
	Freshly dead (shot)	03/01/2015	Billinge 133km NNE

SNIPE

CT32927	First-year	01/11/2003	Lower Lane, near Barley
	Dead (bird of prey)	14/11/2015	Alton Towers, Staffordshire 98km SSE

KITTIWAKE

EX52302	Nestling	23/07/2014	Rockabill, Dublin
	Freshly dead	01/04/2015	Halton, Lancaster 220km ENE

An inland record but not far from the upper tidal reaches of the Lune

BLACK-HEADED GULL

EY45487	Adult	22/02/2014	Rainham Tip, Greater London
	Seen	11/09/2015	Preston Dock 321km NW

EY42251	Nestling	12/06/2014	Rye Meads, Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire
	Seen	14/02/2015	Otterspool Promenade, Liverpool 268km NW
K04501 / J01E	Adult	16/03/2015	Hvervenbukta, Oslo, NORWAY
	Seen	24/09/2015	Skippool Creek, Wyre Estuary, Fylde
K01854 / J5LH	adult male	06/06/2012	Ankerbroa, Oslo, NORWAY
	Seen	15/07/2012	Ankerbroa, Oslo, NORWAY
	Seen	27/10/2012	Preston Dock, Ribble Estuary, Fylde
	Seen	11/12/2012	Penwortham Bridge, River Ribble, Preston, Fylde
	Seen	09/02/2013	Preston Dock, Ribble Estuary, Fylde
	Seen	07/03/2013	Preston Dock, Ribble Estuary, Fylde
	Seen	26/04/2013	Middelalderparken, Oslo, NORWAY
	Seen	01-05/05/2013	Vaterland, Oslo, NORWAY
	Seen	13/06/2013	Tuskjær, Ås, NORWAY
	Seen	15/06/2013	Vaterland, Oslo, NORWAY
	Seen	16/07/2013	Middelalderparken, Oslo, NORWAY
	Seen	10/11/2013	Preston Dock, Ribble Estuary, Fylde
	Seen	21/03/2014	Tollbukaia, Oslo, NORWAY
	Seen	06/04/2014	Hovindammen, Oslo, NORWAY
	Seen	20/04/2014	Vaterland, Oslo, NORWAY
	Seen	30/05/2014	Hovindammen, Oslo, NORWAY
	Seen	08/06/2014	Galteskjær, Oslo, NORWAY
	Seen	14/07/2014	Vaterland, Oslo, NORWAY
	Seen	21/02/2015	Broadgate, Preston, Fylde
EY37355	First year	21/10/2013	Lough Neagh, Co Antrim side
	Seen	winter 2014/15	Lough Neagh, Co Antrim side
	Seen	winter 2015/16	Lough Neagh, Co Antrim side
	Seen	20/04/2016	Allen Pool, Leighton Moss (but not subsequently at this colony)

MEDITERRANEAN GULL

5346538 / ANCE	Nestling	18/06/2005	Pionierinsel Lühe, Landkreis Stade, Niedersachsen, GERMANY
	Seen	12/07/2005	Grünendeich, Niedersachsen, GERMANY
	Seen	12/05/2007	Pionierinsel, Niedersachsen, GERMANY
	Seen	21/05/2014	Hamburg, GERMANY
	Seen	29/12/2014	Cocker's Dyke, Fylde
	Seen	09/02/2015	Cocker's Dyke, Fylde
3693897 / LCG	Nestling	24/06/2010	De Kreupel, IJsselmeer, Enkhuizen, NETHERLANDS
	Seen	19/08/2010	Knott End, Fylde
	Seen	20/08/2010	Cocker's Dyke, Fylde
	Seen	20/02/2011	Malaga, SPAIN
	Seen	11/08/2013	Heysham
	Seen	09/01/2015	Olhao Salines, Algarve, PORTUGAL
PNE7	Nestling	10/06/2011	Wojcice, Otmuchow, POLAND
	Seen	14/09/2011	Skippool Creek, Wyre Estuary, Fylde
	Seen	03/12/2011	Hayle Estuary, Cornwall
	Seen	17/07/2013	Heysham

	Seen	20/07/2013	Heysham
	Seen	05/04/2014	Beauport, Cotes d' Armor, FRANCE
	Seen	08/09- 28/09/2014	Skippool Creek, Wyre Estuary, Fylde
	Seen	27/09- 02/10/2015	Skippool Creek, Wyre Estuary, Fylde
R13E	Nestling	15/06/2009	Oye Plage, Pas de Calais FRANCE 50 59N 2 03E
	Read in field	20/09/2009	Le Portal FRANCE 50 42N 1 34E
	Read in field	07-18/02/2010	Piriac sur Mer, Loire Atlantique, FRANCE 47 23N 2 33W
	Read in field	21-27/04/2011	Polder de Sebastopol, Vendee FRANCE 46 56N 2 09W
	Read in field	03/08/2011	Heysham Power Station outfalls
	Read in field	21-22/07/2013	Heysham Power Station outfalls
	Read in field	31/12/2014	Noyalo, étang, Pont Grandic, Morbihan, FRANCE 47,37N 2,41W
	Read in field	05/07/2015	Heysham Power Station outfalls
5412107 ALLK	Breeding adult	24/05/2014	Pionierinsel, Luhe, GERMANY 53 35N 9.36E
	Seen	23/01/2016	Formby Point

Other than perhaps the German colony at Pionierinsel, there seems to have been a downturn in the number of ringed birds in the last three years i.e. very few in age classes 1CY, 2CY and 3CY seem to be bearing darvic rings.

COMMON GULL

5180207 / J0JP	juvenile	05/09/2012	Hovindammen, Akershus, NORWAY
	Read in field	04/01/2015	Cocker's Dyke, Preesall Sands, Fylde
	Read in field	22/01/2015	Cocker's Dyke, Preesall Sands, Fylde
5188531 / J8EX	male	17/09/2013	Tveitevannet, Bergen, Hordaland, NORWAY
	Read in field	20/09- 22/09/2013	Tveitevannet, Bergen, Hordaland, NORWAY
	Read in field	22/01/2015	Cocker's Dyke, Preesall Sands, Fylde

HERRING GULL

GR71990	Adult Male	01/05/2014	Rosemount, Aberdeen
	Seen	28/11/2015	Marine Lake, Southport 393km S
GC60752	First-year	16/02/2008	near Wingmore Farm, Stoke Orchard, Gloucester- shire
	Seen	24/10/2008	near Hempsted, Gloucester 16km SW
	Seen	19/10/2009	near Hempsted, Gloucester 16km SW
	Seen	11/01/2011	near Hempsted, Gloucester 16km SW
	Seen	17/11/2015	Ainsdale Sands 195km NNW
GR48864	Nestling	04/07/2012	Point of Ayre, Isle of Man
	Seen	28/11/2012	Peel Bay, Peel, Isle of Man 30km SW
	Seen	28/02/2014	Richmond Bank, River Mersey 161km SE
	Seen	28/03/2014	Peel Bay, Peel, Isle of Man 30km SW
	Seen	31/12/2015	Haydock 154km SE
GR48967	Adult	13/06/2012	Peel Bay, Isle of Man
	Seen	08/01/2015	Crosby Beach 137km SE

A nice selection with the Aberdeen bird notable

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL

GA18872 & T2FU	Nestling	11/07/1998	Tarnbrook Fell, Bowland
	Seen	25/04/2001	Les Sables d'Olonne (39) FRANCE
	Seen	05/11/2004	Le Louroux Beconnais (48) FRANCE
	Seen	21/03/2009	Stocks Reservoir
	Seen	12/01/2013	Coto Donana, SPAIN
	Seen	08/07/2016	Stocks Reservoir

An ancient bird travelling the usual seasonal routes selected from many recoveries received

SANDWICH TERN

DE81121	Adult	15/07/2014	Ythan Estuary, Newburgh, Aberdeen
	Seen	21/08/2015	North Hollow, St Annes 402km S
DE02247	Nestling	23/06/2015	Lady's Island Lake, Co Wexford, Ireland
	Seen	09/08/2015	Knott End on Sea 296km NE
DE02046	Nestling	17/06/2015	Lady's Island Lake, Co Wexford, Ireland
	Seen	21/08/2015	North Hollow, St Annes 281km NE
DE02017	Nestling	05/06/2015	Lady's Island Lake, Co Wexford, Ireland
	Seen	21/08/2015	North Hollow, St Annes 281km NE
DD92425	Nestling	17/07/2013	Inner Farne, Northumberland
	Seen	29/06/2014	Mile 4 Salt Works: 22°36'S 14°31'E (Namibia) NAMIBIA 8,827km S
	Seen	01/09/2015	Ainsdale Beach 240km SSW

Please do check through any gatherings of Sandwich Terns on beaches, the proportion of ringed birds is quite high

COMMON TERN

ST09525	Nestling	10/07/2012	Seal Sands, Teesmouth
	Seen	20/07/2014	Preston Dock 140km SW
	Seen	04/07/2015	Preston Dock 140km SW
SX84952	chick	Jun-97	Orkney Isles, Scotland
	Seen	21/06/2015	Preston Dock, Ribble Estuary, Fylde
FPP	Full grown	29/03/2011	Mile 4 Saltworks, Swakopmund: 22°34'S 14°31'E NAMIBIA
4H58786	Seen	28/06/2014	Preston Dock 8,646km N
	Seen	21/05/2015	Preston Dock 8,646km N
	Seen	18/06/2015	Preston Dock 8,646km N
Darvic 2.18	Nestling	10/07/2012	Greatham Creek, Cleveland
	Seen	22/08/2015	Seaforth
ST09512 + darvic	Nestling	10/07/2012	Saltholme RSPB, Cleveland
	Seen	13/06/2015	Seal Sands, Cleveland
	Seen	30/08/2015	Formby Point

The Namibian bird repeated from last year's report. Birds originally ringed as nestlings at Shotton (16), Preston dock (2), Banks Marsh, Doffcocker Lodge, Seaforth and (see above) Seal Sands were recorded at the Preston Dock colony, many of these also present in 2014.

BARN OWL

GV05063	Nestling	12/09/2014	Malham, North Yorks
	Found dead	18/03/2015	Todderstaffe Hall, Fylde

LONG-EARED OWL

GR82818	Nestling	03/05/2014	Site Confidential, near Denshaw Greater Manchester
	Long dead	21/08/2015	Burnley 26km NNW

SHORT-EARED OWL

GN78670	Nestling	29/05/2015	Black Clough Head, Lancashire
	Dead (vehicle)	30/07/2015	Holtby, York 107km E

GOLDCREST

HPV313	Full-grown Female	18/09/2014	Billinge Hill
	Caught by ringer	07/04/2015	near East Lamington, Morangie Forest, Highland 483km N
HJP061	First-year Female	25/10/2014	Embley Wood, Hampshire
	Caught by ringer	16/09/2015	Heysham NR 354km NNW
CXK886	First-year Male	27/01/2015	Langport Sewage Works Somerset
	Caught by ringer	04/10/2015	Heysham NR 334km NNW
HDN315	First-year Male	09/09/2015	Barnacre Reservoir
	Caught by ringer	20/10/2015	Court Road, Rollesby, Norfolk 319km ESE
EPR198	First-year Female	09/10/2013	Wenden Lofts, Essex
	Caught by ringer	08/04/2015	Heysham NR 303km NW
EPT845	First year female	04/04/2015	Heysham Nature Reserve
	Caught by ringer	09/10/2015	Kilnsea, East Yorks 206km ESE
HPY579	First year female	11/10/2015	Gibraltar Point, Lincs
	Caught by ringer	01/11/2015	Middleton NR 236km WNW
HVB825	First year male	16/10/2015	Skelton Castle, Redcar, Cleveland
	Caught by ringer	28/10/2015	Billinge Hill 163km SW
HKD161	Adult male	05/04/2015	Bardsey Island, Gwynedd, Wales
	Caught by ringer	25/09/2015	Billinge Hill 162km ENE
JBX684	First year male	13/09/2015	Billinge Hill
	Caught by ringer	19/10/2015	Long Itchington, Warwicks 164km SSE
HJV774	First year female	14/10/2015	Souter Lighthouse, Tyne and Wear
	Caught by ringer	20/10/2015	Billinge Hill 184km SSW
DVK684	First year male	12/10/2015	Black Nab, Whitby, N Yorks
	Caught by ringer	23/10/2015	Leighton Moss 147km WSW.

See comments in the introduction

FIRECREST

EPT969	First year female	14/09/2015	Heysham Nature Reserve
	Found freshly dead	07/01/2016	Elgin, Moray 401 km N

Found in a car radiator grille. The photograph of the corpse reveals a freshly dead unsoiled bird which equates with this bird being the one the driver thought he hit on the outskirts of Elgin, a few minutes before reaching home. The journey undertaken that day was from Wick, further to the north, and theoretically the bird could have impacted the car anywhere en route, but would it have been in such "good" condition? See species text.

BLUE TIT

Z212801	Juvenile	19/09/2015	Woolston Eyes, Warrington, Cheshire
	Caught by ringer	12/10/2015	Freshfield Dune Heath 40km WNW

The longest movement in the review period

GREAT TIT

Z586116	Adult female	31/10/2015	Hazelslack, nr Storth, Cumbria
	Nesting	10/05/2016	nr Millhouses, Wray 18km SE
Z984702	Full grown female	25/02/2016	Overend, Derbyshire
	Caught by ringer	08/04/2016	Heysham NR 134km NW

The second one of these passed the misread test with flying colours

COAL TIT

Z537145	Juvenile	15/06/2015	Helton Tarn, Witherslack, Cumbria
	Caught by ringer	29/09/2015	Knott End, Fylde

On nearby Heysham data, a reasonable but not outstanding irruptive passage in autumn 2015

SAND MARTIN

Z419458	Nestling	31/07/2015	Applegarthtown, Lockerbie, Dumfries and Galloway
	Caught by ringer	14/09/2015	Middleton Nature Reserve 129km SSE
PP5455	First year (female)	27/09/2014	Tancat de Milia Valencia SPAIN 39 18N 0 21W
	Caught by ringer	15/06/2015	Gressingham 1656 km N

SWALLOW

D657586	Adult	24/09/2013	near Gressingham
	Caught by ringer	05/08/2014	Glebe Farm, Salsburgh, North Lanarkshire 205km NNW
	Caught by ringer	14/07/2015	Glebe Farm
ESA	Adult	10/05/2014	Gautegiz Arteaga: 43°21'N 2°39'W (Vizcaya) SPAIN
1Y20998	Caught by ringer	24/06/2015	Woodvale Airfield, near Formby 1,136km N

CETTIS WARBLER

Z664803	Full-grown Male	02/09/2015	Wood Walton Fen, Cambridgeshire
	Caught by ringer	10/10/2015	Leighton Moss 259km NW
Z296371	Full grown	04/11/2014	Leighton Moss
	Caught by ringer	17/04/2015	Woolston Eyes, Warrington, Cheshire 89km S
	Caught by ringer	08/04/2016	Woolston Eyes, Warrington, Cheshire

Would have been interesting to know the wintering location in 2015/6

CHIFFCHAFF

ALY195	First-year	06/10/2013	Dungeness, Kent
	Dead (hit glass)	28/04/2015	Penwortham, near Preston 400km NW
HCY375	First-year	30/09/2014	Old Stores Meadow Nature Reserve, Capel, Surrey
	Dead (hit glass)	(22-05-2015)	Aigburth 302km NW
HDK249	First year female	30/08/2015	Runcorn, Cheshire
	Caught by ringer	13/09/2015	Heysham Nature Reserve 77km N
JBP224	First year	27/09/2015	Leighton Moss
	Caught by ringer	04/10/2015	Middleton Nature Reserve 18km SSW
HVR169	First year	07/08/2015	Helton Tarn, Witherslack, Cumbria
	Caught by ringer	19/09/2015	Billinge Hill 83km S
	Caught by ringer	03/10/2015	Billinge Hill
EKX574	First year	20/09/2015	Hornby Castle
	Caught by ringer	23/09/2015	Billinge Hill 67km S

JDH878	First year	03/10/2015	Billinge Hill
	Caught by ringer	30/03/2016	Essex Farm, Alderney, CHANNEL ISLANDS 423km S
HEV625	First year	13/09/2014	Brookvale, Merseyside
	Caught by ringer	02/10/2014	Beachy Head, East Sussex 376km SE
See comment in introduction			

WILLOW WARBLER

HLA034	First year	09/07/2015	Leighton Moss
	Caught by ringer	07/08/2015	Billinge 73km S

BLACKCAP

D134113	First-year Female	20/10/2012	Queen Mary Reservoir, Surrey
	Freshly dead	19/04/2015	Ormskirk 289km NNW
	(cat)		
D570831	First-year Male	07/09/2014	Clow Bridge
	Sick (hit glass)	16/06/2015	Portobello, Edinburgh 251km NNW
D677369	First-year Male	11/09/2014	Ty Isaf Farm, Bedwas, Caerphilly
	Caught by ringer	11/09/2015	Woodvale Airfield, near Formby 219km N

GARDEN WARBLER

Z366364	First-year	28/08/2015	Stanford Reservoir, Northamptonshire
	Dead (hit glass)	18/09/2015	Tanterton 187km NW

SEDGE WARBLER

Z312798	Juvenile	16/07/2015	Fleetwood
	Caught by ringer	10/08/2015	Woumen: 51°0'N 2°52'E (West-Vlaanderen) BELGIUM 513km SE
Z132663	Juvenile	07/08/2015	Middleton Nature Reserve
	Caught by ringer	08/09/2015	Tour aux Moutons (Loire Atlantique) FRANCE 47 19N 2 4 W 747 km S
Z585572	First year	16/08/2015	Leighton Moss
	Caught by ringer	29/08/2015	Slapton Ley, Devon 436 km S
Z131497	First year female	06/09/2014	Leighton Moss
	Caught by ringer	18/08/2015	Westdown Plantation (Wilts) 331 km S

REED WARBLER

Z152165	First year	02/08/2015	East Chevington, Northumberland
	Caught by ringer	18/09/2015	Middleton Nature Reserve 163km SSW
Z131368	First-year Female	02/09/2014	Leighton Moss
	Caught by ringer	21/06/2015	Petten/Callantsoog: 52°48'N 4°40'E (Noord- Holland) NETHERLANDS 518km ESE
7491276	First year male	01/09/2014	Braud-et-Saint Louis (Gironde) FRANCE 45 17N 0 41W
	Caught by ringer	02 & 07/07/2015	Leighton Moss 999 km N

BLACKBIRD

7464071	First-year Male	21/09/2014	Ytre Arsnes, Lillesand: 58°7'N 8°13'E (Aust-Agder) NORWAY
	Freshly dead	06/03/2015	Lytham St Anne's 852km SW
LC42140	Adult female	03/04/2013	Thornton, Merseyside

Dead (hit glass) 16/06/2015 Slateveien, Skomrak, **NORWAY** 58 06N 07 03E
811km NE

The ringing date is quite late for a returning continental migrant (very large female with 137mm wing!)

SONG THRUSH

RL87302 First year 12/10/2015 Billinge Hill
Hunted 07/01/2016 Cuba, Alentejo, Beja, **PORTUGAL** 1749km SSW

REDWING

9X55219 First-year 26/10/2012 Merksplas: 51°22'N 4°52'E (Antwerpen)
BELGIUM
Caught by ringer 16/10/2015 Clow Bridge 550km WNW

WHINCHAT

D570768 Nestling 16/06/2014 Cant Clough Reservoir
Freshly dead 23/06/2015 Padiham, Burnley 11km WNW

GREY WAGTAIL

Z297587 First year 06/09/2015 Heysham Nature Reserve
Read in field 26/10/2015 Etherow Country Park, Gt Manchester 90km SE
Z835237 First year 16/09/2015 Middleton Nature reserve
Read in field 28/09/2015 Blacon, Chester 91km S
Z297326 Nestling 21/05/2015 Upper Roeburndale '5 gate road' ford (Lancs)
Caught by ringer 09/09/2015 Heysham Nature Reserve 19km SSW
Y333371 First year 18/09/2015 Middleton Nature Reserve
Read in field 11/12/2015 Lunt Meadows (Merseyside) 56 km S
Z131850 First year 19/09/2014 Heysham Nature Reserve
Read in field 10/02/2016 Madeley, Staffs 121 km SSE
D833889 First year female 09/09/2013 Heysham Nature Reserve
Nesting May/June 2016 Botton Mill, upper Hindburndale SD646637 25km
ENE

Note the unexpected Roeburndale and Hindburndale link. Another thing to tweak the article in 2014 Lancs Bird Report was the capture of three adults during autumn 2015 - these were 'obvious' and have not been overlooked before. On the other hand, the longer-distance sightings tabulated above could have been computer predictions!

TREE PIPIT

Z524037 Nestling 07/06/2015 Fasnakyle, Cannich, Highland
Caught by ringer 03/09/2015 Clowbridge 426km SSE

SCANDINAVIAN ROCK PIPIT

8E28835 & Adult female 22/08/2013 Makkevika Møre & Romsdal, **NORWAY**. 62 30'N
HJP 06 02'E
read in field 13/01/2016 Pilling Marsh, Fylde, Lancashire 1084km SSW
read in field to 13/03/2016 Pilling Marsh

Seen at least 6 times after 13/01 with the latter sightings revealing noticeable *littoralis* summer plumage along with at least two unringed birds

GOLDFINCH

L787315 First-year Male 29/01/2011 Crosby Hall
Caught by ringer 16/05/2013 Drumla, North Ayrshire 254km NNW
Caught by ringer 29/03/2015 Drumla

D679616	Adult Female	03/05/2014	Aros Moss, Argyll and Bute
	Freshly dead	16/04/2015	Morecambe 236km SE
D308986	First-year Female	22/02/2015	Lone Lane, Penallt, Monmouthshire
	Caught by ringer	21/04/2015	Crawford, near Up Holland 193km N
	Freshly dead	14/10/2015	Dalton: c. 53°34'N 2°46'W 199km N
SO11569	First-year Female	23/11/2015	Hardham, West Sussex
	Caught by ringer	29/04/2016	New Laithe Farm, Newton-in-Bowland 357km NNW
D922475	First-year Female	24/03/2015	Brandon, Suffolk
	Caught by ringer	29/05/2016	New Laithe Farm, Newton-in-Bowland 263km NNW
FRP.6757756	First year female	01/03/2014	La Baillee, Blandouet, Mayenne, FRANCE
	Caught by ringer	29/04/2016	New Laithe Farm, Newton 672 km NNW

All movements at or over 199km documented

SISKIN

Z298875	First-year Male	22/09/2015	New Laithe Farm, Newton
	Caught by ringer	31/10/2015	Fish Lake Meadows, Romsey Hampshire 335km S
N626881	Adult Male	17/03/2013	Kemple End
	Caught by ringer	26/03/2015	Tved, Thisted: 57°3'N 8°40'E (Viborg) DENMARK 787km ENE
Z707172	First-year Male	02/04/2016	Rishton
	Caught by ringer	12/04/2016	Leswalt (Galloway) 218 km N W
Z707030	First year female	16/01/2016	Rishton
	Caught by ringer	09 & 11/04/2016	Machrihanish (Argyll) 284 km NW
Z707232	First-year Male	16/04/2016	Rishton
	Caught by ringer	08/05/2016	Selkirk, Borders 201km N
Z707259	First-year Male	16/04/2016	Rishton
	Caught by ringer	01/05/2016	Aboyne, Aberdeen 372km N
Z709440	First-year Male	31/03/2016	New Laithe Farm, Newton
	Caught by ringer	13/05/2016	Clochan, Moray 413km N
Z298568	Juvenile male	06/08/2015	New Laithe Farm
	Caught by ringer	21/05/2016	Kildary, 436km NNW

All over 200km documented

LESSER REDPOLL

Y435516	First-year Male	19/10/2011	Pett Level, East Sussex
	Caught by ringer	19/04/2015	Knott End-on-Sea 417km NW
D847506	Adult Female	01/02/2014	Redlands Chalet, South Holmwood, Surrey
	Caught by ringer	07/08/2015	New Laithe Farm, Newton 338km NNW
Z268874	First-year	28/09/2015	Loch of Leys, Banchory, Aberdeenshire
	Caught by ringer	15/10/2015	Leighton Moss 323km S
Z296376	First-year	04/11/2014	Leighton Moss
	Caught by ringer	15/01/2015	University of East Anglia, Norfolk 317km ESE
Y335976	First-year Male	08/12/2012	Chobham Common, Surrey
	Caught by ringer	11/05/2013	New Laithe Farm, Newton 312km NNW
	Caught by ringer	09/05/2015	New Laithe Farm, Newton 312km NNW
L733536	First-year Male	07/04/2013	Rossall School, Fleetwood
	Caught by ringer	25/05/2014	Grantown-on-Spey, Highland 382km N
	Caught by ringer	22/06/2015	Fair Isle 632km N

D139727	First year male	06/05/2013	Heysham Nature Reserve
	Caught by ringer	24/05/2015	Dhoon, Isle of Man 99km WNW
	Caught by ringer	07/07/2015	Dhoon
Z075719	First year	01/10/2015	Calf of Man
	Caught by ringer	16/01/2016	Rishton 161 km
Z835903	First year	10/10/2015	Leighton Moss
	Caught by ringer	24/01/2016	Great Livermore, Suffolk 315 km SE
Z854373	First year male	23/09/2015	Billinge Hill
	Caught by ringer	04/05/2016	Buttercombe, Devon 279km SSW
Z876173	First year male	18/12/2015	Brimpton, West Berkshire
	Caught by ringer	16/04/2016	New Laithe Farm, Newton-in-Bowland 297 km NNW
D782458	First year male	28/03/2014	Worplesdon, Surrey
	Caught by ringer	23/03/2016	New Laithe Farm, Newton-in-Bowland 324km NNW

All over 200km or involving a sea crossing documented

TWITE

CRS	Unknown	Jan-Mar 2015	Heysham north harbour wall
	Read in field	28/4 & 02/05/2015	Oronsay, Argyll and Bute, Inner Hebrides 307km NW

The third sighting from this locality strongly suggesting a local breeding bird

R8-WO	Adult	15/07/2010	Siglufjordur, N ICELAND
	Seen	21/12/10- 03/02/11	Thurstaston Shore, Dee Estuary, Cheshire,
	Seen	30/11/2011	Marshside
	Seen	17/01/2012	Thurstaston Shore, Dee Estuary, Cheshire,
	Seen	31/03- 01/04/2012	Leighton Moss
	Seen	18/06/2012	Siglufjordur, N ICELAND
	Seen	25/06/2012	Minsmere, Suffolk
	Seen	01/07- 21/08/2012	Cley, Norfolk
	Seen	02/02/2013	Thurstaston Shore, Dee Estuary, Cheshire,
	Seen	19/04- 30/04/2013	Caldy Wildfowl Collection, Caldby, Merseyside,
	Seen	20/05/2013	Siglufjordur, N ICELAND
	Seen	16/06/2013	Siglufjordur, N ICELAND
	Seen	03/10/2013	Frampton Marsh, Lincolnshire
	Seen	31/03/2014	Gilroy Nature Park, West Kirby, Merseyside,
	Seen	29/04/2014	Siglufjordur, N ICELAND
	Seen	25/06/2014	Islay, Argyll
	Seen	06/07- 08/09/2014	Frampton Marsh, Lincolnshire
	Seen	06/11- 06/12/2014	Thurstaston Shore, Dee Estuary, Cheshire,
	Seen	21/12/2014	Marshside RSPB
	Seen	21/03- 29/03/2015	Leighton Moss
	Seen	30/04 - 02/05/2015	Álftafjörður, S-Múlasýsla, E ICELAND

Seen	08 09/05/2015	- Siglufjordur, N ICELAND
Seen	12/07- 19/07/2015	Frampton Marsh, Lincolnshire
Seen	07/04/2016	Holmere, nr Yealand
Seen	09/04- 29/04/2016	Leighton Moss
Seen	03/05/2016	Siglufjordur, N ICELAND

SATELLITE-TRACKING OF CUCKOOS

Pete Marsh

This BTO project has been given a lot of national publicity and 2015 saw two Lancashire adults fitted with the requisite tracking devices. The project has dramatically added to our perception of "summer visitors migrating to a wintering site in Africa then coming back again to breed here". It has been shown that Cuckoos roam about in central and west Africa during the winter months, covering distances at least equal to the mileage to and from Britain. "Our" Larry from Stocks Reservoir is no exception as can be seen below.

Unfortunately, the second individual, ringed at Winder Wood in upper Roeburndale, only made it as far as Biella at the northern edge of the Po Valley, northern Italy where a static and fading satellite transmitter indicated it had met its end sometime after the end of June 2015.

Larry's timeline

This has been modified from the blog entries on the excellent BTO Cuckoo site (bto.org/cuckoo).

2015

Ringed and tagged on 3 June at Stocks Reservoir as an adult male.

Left Stocks Reservoir on 23 June on a non-stop journey to near Narai, Hungary, 1526km SE, where he was recorded on 24 June.

Larry is currently the most easterly Cuckoo, located 1,583km southeast of the ringing site, still in Hungary, southeast of Taplanszentkereszt.

A signal received during the early hours of the 6 July showed that Larry had left Hungary and was on the Croatian coast, just west of Vodice, 387km from his previous location.

Just prior to 21 July, Larry left Croatia and joined several other Cuckoos in Italy. However, he was much further south, near Matera in southern Italy. He had covered 370km from his last location.

By the early hours of the 8 August, Larry was in Chad, having made it to Africa. He was just south of the Tibesti Mountain area and raised concerns until we realised that the area had received rain and was probably a strategic stop rather than an indication anything was wrong.

12 August. After a few days, Larry continued south and left the Tibesti Mountain area. He was now close to Lake Chad and safely across the desert.

13 Oct. Since the last update, Larry had flown almost 600 miles south from his last location in the south of Chad to the south-western corner of the Central African Republic. He was probably now in or at the edge of the Congolian lowland forests.

A location received from Larry on 3 November showed that he was settled in the rainforest close to Lake Mai, in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Having reported on 5 November that Larry was 'settled' in DRC he promptly moved overnight. During the early hours of 6 November we received several locations from him that showed he had moved 682km south-west into Angola. He didn't stay there very long, and by 11 November had moved another 308km west just 46km from the South Atlantic coast.

A location received from Larry on the 16 December showed that he was still settled in Angola.

2016

20 Jan. Having spent the last two months in Angola, Larry was now back in DRC, moving 639km north-east. He was currently 80km (50 miles) east of the border with Congo.

24 Feb. A couple of poor quality locations received for Larry on 15 February showed that he was still in DRC, close to the Congo border. Hopefully, he will move north and west soon.

Larry is on his way! During the afternoon of the 5 March we received several locations from him that showed he was in Cameroon, 802km north and west of his last location on the southern edge of the Congo rainforest. On 7 March he was 54km west of the border with Central African Republic.

A series of good locations received from Larry's tag on 22 March showed that he was still in Cameroon. However, he had moved 51km (31 miles) north, and closer to the border with Central African Republic. On 24 March he was in an area of riverine forest 6km (4 miles) from the border.

Locations received from Larry on 26 March showed that he had left Cameroon and headed west into Nigeria. More locations from the early morning of 5 April showed that he was still in the area of Nigeria he arrived in ten days earlier. He was currently just south of Old Oyo National Park and just over 100km from the border with Benin.

It looked like Larry began his desert crossing on 10 April from Nigeria, crossing the Sahara at its widest point, around 2,600km. A poor location received during the morning of 15 April put him in the Grand Erg Oriental Desert in northern Algeria. Several good quality locations received during the evening of 17 April showed that he had made it across the desert and was on Sardinia, northeast of Paulilatino.

Larry arrived back in England during the evening of 2 May, when a signal received from his tag placed him in the dunes at Burnham Overy Staithe, Norfolk.

Larry only stayed in Norfolk for a very brief visit before setting off again and by the early hours of 4 May, Larry was back in the Forest of Bowland. He left there on 26 June last year so we expect him to stay in this area for the next six to eight weeks.

Since arriving here on 4 May, Larry has remained in the area just north of Stocks Reservoir, very close to the location at which he was tagged on 3 June 2015

On the evening of 21 June, Larry was still in Lancashire close to his tagging site but when we next heard from his tag during the early hours of 24 June, not only had he left Lancashire but he had departed the UK and crossed a large part of Europe. In just over 30 hours he had travelled 1,526km. He is currently in Hungary just south of Narai and close to the border with Austria.

Larry spent a week in Hungary before heading south and west into Croatia. During his southerly migration in 2015 he stopped off in the same area, close to the town of Bogatic. This part of Croatia was currently experiencing a heatwave, with the daytime temperature forecast to get close to 40 degrees C during the next few days. It might be that Larry spends more time in the shade, so we might see a lull in the locations received from his tag as the solar panel on the tag gets less sunlight to charge the batteries. Only time will tell.

12 July. Larry has left the heatwave in Croatia and has crossed the Adriatic to southern Italy. The temperature here is a somewhat cooler - 30 degrees centigrade. Larry took the same route last year. From here we expect him to cross the Mediterranean to Libya and head across the desert towards Lake Chad.

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).

Migrant Dates 2015

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 2015.
- 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 2015.

Records of overwintering and and sickly birds have been omitted.

	SPRING				AUTUMN			
	2015	Earliest	Mean	Trend	2015	Latest	Mean	Trend
Garganey	9/4	24/2/95	29/3					
Osprey	19/3	4/3/05	22/3	E	1/10	15/11/14	11/10	
LRP	19/3	8/3/10	19/3		6/9	19/10/76	16/9	E
Dotterel	19/4	29/3/89	21/4					
Whimbrel	14/4	11/3/78	8/4		19/9	6/11/88	5/10	
Common Sandpiper	7/4	18/3/11	5/4	E	25/10	29/10/77	13/10	
Wood Sandpiper	2/5	14/4/83	2/5		13/9	5/12/12	17/9	
Little Tern	14/4	12/4/13	23/4		25/8	3/10/03	13/9	
Black Tern	*	11/4/80	29/4		23/11	23/11/14	10/10	
Sandwich Tern	21/3	13/3/90	25/3		2/10	2/12/94	16/10	
Common Tern	12/4	30/3/07	12/4		26/9	17/11/77	13/10	E
Arctic Tern	21/4	1/4/94	16/4		23/8	18/11/11	11/10	
Cuckoo	16/4	23/3/00	16/4	E	1/9	18/10/09	31/8	
Swift	15/4	1/4/04	16/4		22/9	4/12/63	7/10	
Sand Martin	8/3	24/2/90	10/3		12/11	13/10/72	4/10	
Swallow	28/3	5/3/14	21/3		29/11	31/12/86	23/11	L
House Martin	27/3	17/3/63	1/4	E	21/11	31/12/81	26/10	
Wood Warbler	20/4	14/4/79	23/4			26/9/67		
Willow Warbler	23/3	19/3/90 & 11	29/3		6/10	18/11/89	10/10	
Garden Warbler	18/4	6/4/11	19/4	E	12/10	13/11/95	14/10	
Lesser Whitethroat	17/4	3/4/14	19/4	E	6/10	23/11/99	4/10	
Whitethroat	13/4	2/4/14	15/4	E	5/10	23/10/90	1/10	
Grasshopper Warbler	13/4	3/4/14	15/4	E	1/10	5/10/14	19/9	
Sedge Warbler	9/4	27/3/03	11/4		3/10	14/11/96	29/9	
Reed Warbler	10/4	5/4/11	14/4	E	16/10	14/11/93	13/10	
Spotted Flycatcher	14/4	14/4/15	29/4		3/10	15/11/79	3/10	
Pied Flycatcher	13/4	7/4/11	16/4		20/9	3/11/01	22/9	
Ring Ouzel	23/3	11/3/99	21/3		17/10	11/12/00	6/11	
Redstart	10/4	28/3/68 & 12	9/4	E	20/9	10/11/82	2/10	
Whinchat	16/4	20/3/76	20/4		8/10	12/11/79	10/10	
Wheatear	5/3	26/2/03	10/3		4/11	27/11/11	31/10	
Yellow Wagtail	8/4	24/3/96	10/4		19/10	11/11/95	10/10	
Tree Pipit	7/4	17/3/57	5/4		28/9	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:

- Cackling Goose, south-west mosses, 14-28 November 1976
- Laughing Gull, Seaforth, 5-16 April, 2015
- Pied-billed Grebe, Leighton Moss, 25 April to 4 May, 2015
- Lesser Yellowlegs, Brockholes, 20 August 2015
- Lesser Yellowlegs, Conder Estuary, 23-26 August 2015 same as Brockholes

The following records are under consideration by the BBRC:

- Ross's Goose, various north Fylde sites, 4 February to 17 March 2003
- 'North American Night Heron', Mere Sands Wood, 12 February to 21 April 2008
- 'Caspian Reed Warbler', Jenny Brown's Point, 11 December 2011
- 'Cackling Goose, Marshside, 25 October 2012
- 'Todd's Canada Goose', two, various Fylde sites, 16-31 December 2014
- 'Arctic Peregrine Falcon', Ribble Estuary, 23 November 2015
- Broad-billed Sandpiper, Marshside, 8 May 2016

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, many 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, 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. Descriptions 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 'description species', and that records of both Willow, Marsh and Bearded Tits 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 and Lesser Scaup, Penduline Tit, Blyth's Reed Warbler and Citrine Wagtail from 2015, while Aquatic Warbler, Tawny and Red-throated Pipits, and Rustic Bunting are now treated as national rarities and assessed by the BBRC. Yellow-browed Warblers are now so frequent that records no longer need submission.

Species and Subspecies Requiring Full Descriptions

These are all marked with an asterisk in the systematic list

Taiga Bean Goose	White-rumped Sandpiper	Pallas's Warbler
Black Brant	Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Radde's Warbler
American Wigeon	Pectoral Sandpiper	Dusky Warbler
Ring-necked Duck	Red-necked Phalarope	Siberian Chiffchaff
Ferruginous Duck	Long-tailed Skua	Barred Warbler
Lesser Scaup	Puffin	Dartford Warbler
Surf Scoter	Little Auk	Subalpine Warbler*
Black Grouse	White-winged Black Tern	Icterine Warbler
White-billed Diver	Roseate Tern	Melodious Warbler
Cory's Shearwater	Sabine's Gull	Blyth's Reed Warbler
Great Shearwater	Ring-billed Gull	Marsh Warbler
Sooty Shearwater	Caspian Gull	Rose-coloured Starling
Balearic Shearwater	Turtle Dove	Nightingale
Wilson's Petrel	Nightjar	Bluethroat
Night Heron	Alpine Swift	Red-breasted Flycatcher
Cattle Egret	Hoopoe	Citrine Wagtail
Purple Heron	Bee-eater	Richard's Pipit
Glossy Ibis	Wryneck	Olive-backed Pipit
Red-necked Grebe	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	Common Rosefinch
Honey Buzzard	Red-footed Falcon	Common (Mealy) Redpoll
Black Kite	Golden Oriole	Arctic Redpoll*
White-tailed Eagle	Red-backed Shrike	Serin
Montagu's Harrier	Woodchat Shrike	Lapland Bunting
Rough-legged Buzzard	Chough	Cirl Bunting
Golden Eagle	Woodlark	Ortolan Bunting
Spotted Crake	Shore Lark	Little Bunting
Corncrake	Short-toed Lark	
Common Crane	Red-rumped Swallow	
Stone Curlew	Penduline Tit	
American Golden Plover	Marsh and Willow Tit	
Kentish Plover	(out of normal range)	
Temminck's Stint	Greenish Warbler	

* All records of both Subalpine Warblers and Arctic Redpolls which have been identified to subspecies level should now be sent to the BBRC. But records of unraced individuals of both species will continue to be assessed locally.

Contributors

Thank-you to everyone who has sent in their records this year and sincere apologies if we've missed anyone out!

Abram, K	Chew, D	Gifford, DL	Marsh, PJ	Sharples, P
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Alker, PJ	Clarkson, G	Goodwill, B	Martin, SJ	Sharratt, CJ
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Brookes, CM	Evans, N	Jones, H	Poxon, L	West, T
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Calder, R&J	Foster, P	Leeming, A	Riley, D	Wood, B
Cameron, AJ	Fry, J	Liggett, C	Rimmer, M	Woodruff, P
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Carter, R	Garbutt, M	Lumb, D	Rothwell, D	Yates, R
Chalk, D	Gardner, I	Lynas, I	Ryding, A	Young, S
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Chard, A	Gavaghan, G	Malpass, M	Scragg, J	

Alt WeBS
 BTO/RSPB Birdtrack
 Chorley & District Natural History report
 Cuerden Valley Park report
 ELOC Report
 Fylde Bird Club database
 Heysham NR & Observatory Report
 LDBWS report

Mersey WeBS
 MMWWT logs
 Morecambe Bay WeBS
 Rare Bird Alert
 Ribble WeBS
 Seaforth Bird Report
 United Utilities

Photographs and Illustrations

We've continued to produce the report in full colour this year allowing us to use lots of 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. I'm glad to say we've managed to include a couple of drawings too this year.

Lancashire & Cheshire Fauna Society

Elected Officials of the Lancashire and Cheshire Fauna Society

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Next Annual General Meeting will be held on 10am Saturday 4th March 2017 – 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 (this included the 'Dragonfly Atlas' in 2015). 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.

Abbreviations used in the text

1S - first-summer, 1W - first-winter, and so on.

GC Golf Course

GP Gravel Pit

LNR Local Nature Reserve

ML Marine Lake

NR Nature Reserve

NNR National Nature Reserve

Qry Quarry

Res Reservoir

SW Sewage Works

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

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