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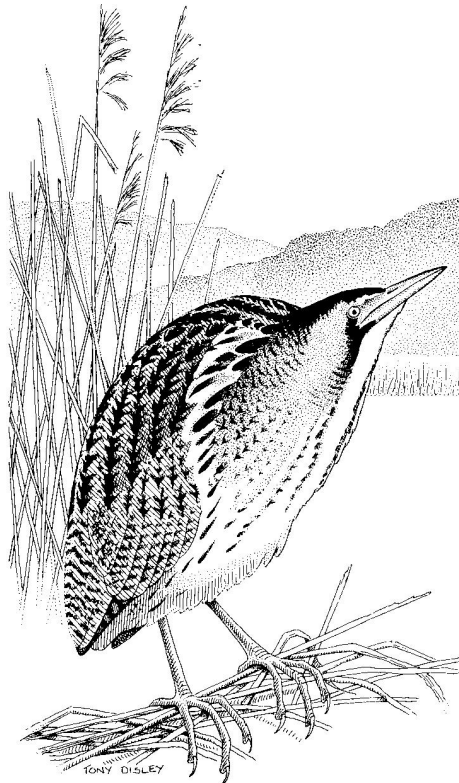
2018

Lancashire Bird Report 2017

The Birds of Lancashire and North Merseyside

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Front cover: Purple Heron, Leighton Moss. (Paul Ellis)

Back cover: Pallid Harrier, Bowland. (Mike Watson)

INTRODUCTION

Dave Bickerton

As I was writing the introduction to the report this time last year, I was pontificating on when we'd see the return of the September gales that had been missing in the past couple of autumns; I didn't have to wait long as we experienced a memorable period of 'weather' bringing all manner of seabirds to our coast and indeed, further inland.

I always find reading the review of the year an enjoyable trip down memory lane, highlighting some of the more memorable moments be that the throngs of Waxwings in January, an early morning walk in May to see the Pallid Harrier in the Bowland Fells, meandering around Leighton Moss, taking in the much admired juvenile Purple Heron, finding a totally unexpected Purple Sandpiper on my local patch or getting sand-blasted on Ainsdale Beach marvelling at the Leach's Petrels, Gannets and Manx Shearwaters struggling along the tide-line. Lancashire has so much to offer all year round and it is this we try to put on record in this annual journal.

The birds above may be some of the highlights of the year but arguably, more important are the records of the more common species that quite often get overlooked. I believe we've been particularly successful in getting the right blend of information and readability in the reports of late, continuing with the full colour format that has made the publication appealing to many people - something that we must continue to do if the format is to survive. Combining the data we receive from individuals, surveys such as WeBS, local bird clubs and national recording schemes is a significant task but one that a committed bunch of volunteers, led by the recorder & editor, Steve White, carry out each year. We are fortunate to have such a dedicated team as other counties are struggling in this regard.

The Lancashire Bird Report is always one of the first major county reports to be published as we follow a tried and trusted plan of action and this year we seem to be ahead of schedule. Recently we've published a whole raft of other publications such as the Vertebrates book last year and two moth books - "Micro-moth Field Tips" and "The Pug Moths of NW England" (which society members received at a discounted rate). The latter two, though based around data from our region, proved to have a much wider appeal with excellent peer-reviews; they have been highly successful in generating income that can be used to subsidise publications with a smaller distribution.

The Bird Report has run at a loss in itself since we went full-colour, subsidised through provision of data to environmental consultancies and wider publications such as the Avifauna. The Society has been run very well financially and is in good shape but it does rely on the continued and, happily, increasing level of support of its membership currently standing at over 150; we would like to get that up to 200 if possible, especially as over-the-counter sales have diminished as the traditional outlets have become more commercialised. If you are not a member and value the annual report, please join up! In recent years, members have received the Dragonfly and Vertebrate booklets for free and next year, there will be the new Butterfly and day-flying Moth Atlas.

So, thank-you to everyone who's contributed to this report in whatever way, and I hope you enjoy reading it whether cover-to-cover or by dipping into certain species accounts. It'll soon be time to submit your records for 2018!



Leach's Petrel, Mersey Narrows, 5 October (Steve Young)

REVIEW OF 2017

John Wright

January

The year started with bright and fairly cold weather with overnight frost. The second week was unsettled and increasingly windy, and there was snow in many places on the 12th to 14th. The second half of the month was mostly dry and settled, and cold at times, but it turned much milder and wetter in the last few days.

It began with six **Bearded Tits** showing well at Fleetwood Marsh on the 1st but they were last seen on the 5th. A **Great Grey Shrike** was present at Whittington on the 5th and another was around Nateby & Eagland Hill on the 14th & 22nd.

The regular adult **Iceland Gull** was seen at Marton Mere on the 2nd was followed by a first-winter at Fishmoor Reservoir, Blackburn on the 3rd. The latter site then produced a first-winter **Caspian Gull** on three evenings between 1st & 8th and a first-winter **Glaucous Gull** on the 17th; **Iceland Gulls** increased to two first-winters on the 18th with an adult on the 20th. This excellent run at Fishmoor continued with a third-winter **Kumlien's Gull** on the 21st & 22nd – a very rare appearance in the county.

This great variety of gulls was matched by the geese on the mosses. A blue **Lesser Snow Goose** (of unknown origin) moved with **Greylag Geese** from Marshside to Nateby on the 5th. This was followed by a stunning adult **Red-breasted Goose** with the **Pink-footed Geese** at Marshside on the 4th; it moved to the Fylde and was relocated at Braides Farm, Pilling on the 8th.

The flock of 10,000 **Pink-footed Geese** it was with remained around Braides Farm for the next two weeks and on the 21st the flock contained the **Red-breasted Goose**, a **Todd's Canada Goose**, a **Taiga Bean Goose**, three **Tundra Bean Geese**, four **Barnacle Geese** and 20 **European White-fronted Geese** – a veritable feast for those on a wild goose chase. By the end of the month there was also a **Pale-bellied Brent Goose** and a **Greenland White-fronted Goose** at Thurnham and a **Dark-Bellied Brent Goose** at Cockerham. The Pinkfeet also contained several leucistic and melanistic individuals.

In the south-west the Pinkfeet were joined by five **Tundra Bean Goose** at Formby on the 5th and **European** and **Greenland White-fronted Geese**, and **Pale-bellied** and **Dark-bellied Brent Geese** were also on show. Sightings of **European White-fronted Geese** also came from the east of the county with one at Alston on the 19th and ten at Stocks Reservoir on the 28th & 29th.

February

February started with mild and wet south-westerlies but between the 5th and 12th easterly winds prevailed and brought snow to many parts on the 11th and 12th. From the 13th onwards it was generally mild and it was relatively quiet until the 20th. The last third of the month was unsettled and often windy.

Winter 2016/17 produced another **Waxwing** invasion with many birds returning to previously-favoured locations. The highest counts were of 120 in Liverpool, 110 in Padiham, 108 in Blackburn, 106 in Barrow and 90 in Preston. Other notable sightings included 62 on Longridge Fell, 40 in Chorley, 51 at Adlington, 54 in Lancaster, 30 in Lytham St Annes, 28 in Silverdale and twelve in Southport. By the end of the winter **Waxwings** had delighted folk in over half the 10km squares in the county.

Two **Long-tailed Ducks** wintering on Pine Lake were unusual as were singles at Brockholes and Clowbridge Reservoir. Other winterers attracting lot of attention included the 80,000 **Starlings** roosting at Leighton Moss and a lovely male **Black Redstart** at St Walbuge's Church in Preston, often to be seen alongside the resident **Peregrine Falcons**.

Bitterns were a particular feature of the month with several at Leighton Moss, two at Marton Mere, two at Brockholes and singles at Middleton, Fleetwood, MMWWT, Mere Sands Wood, Arley NR and Northwood in Kirkby. Later in the spring booming was heard at MMWWT and Lunt



Kumleins Gull, Fishmoor Reservoir
(Bill Aspin)

Meadows with some 'tuning up' heard at Leighton Moss. Whilst there was no successful breeding these were hopeful signs for the future.

Two lovely **Shore Larks** were discovered on the saltmarsh at Bank End on the 27th and delighted many observers during their month-long stay. A **Great Grey Shrike** at Grimsargh Wetlands on the 28th may well have been the one that had arrived at Brockholes in November 2016.

The annual search for **Water Pipits** on high spring tides produced a peak of six birds at The Heads/Burrow's Marsh on the 28th, two on Warton Marsh and one at Fleetwood.

March

March began mild and changeable. South-westerlies persisted until mid-month but there were some quieter interludes. It was unsettled and briefly colder from the 20th to the 22nd with some snow in the north and east. Several days of dry, sunny weather followed, but it turned unsettled again and very mild for the last few days.

Chough has always been a tricky bird to catch up with in the county so one seen on the Stanley School playing fields at Marshside on the 2nd was a great find. It was re-located at Hesketh Out Marsh on the 7th and was then seen flying east over Fleetwood on the 9th. It then settled on the golf course at Blackpool's Stanley Park from the 18th to the 25th and was much admired.

A **Willow Tit** at Wood End Sewage Works near Burnley from the 3rd was notable as was the **Marsh Tit** seen again at Warton Bank on the 7th & 24th.

An internet plea for help with identification of a thrush in Preston on the evening of the 12th was quickly picked up by county birders as something unusual. Further investigation produced a precise location and what happened next will go down in county birding folklore. Two intrepid birders arrived in Fulwood at dawn on the 13th to find the female **Black-throated Thrush** in the exact spot it was seen the previous evening. In view for less than a minute this county first flew off and was never seen again! For the many disappointed observers who arrived too late some compensation came in the form of a first-winter **Caspian Gull** at Preston Dock.

Many of January's geese were still being seen on the Fylde and south-west mosses but two **Tundra Bean Geese** with **Greylag Geese** at Alston Wetlands from the 14th was a rare sighting in the east of the county.

An adult **Ring-billed Gull** was a nice find at MMWWT on the 19th but it was on the move and not seen subsequently. **Whooper Swans** were now heading back north and on the 22nd & 23rd poor weather grounded 550 birds in the east of the county, including 137 at Hurstwood Reservoir.

The only **Lapland Bunting** of the year was a male at Cockersand on the 24th & 25th. The notable influx of **Cattle Egrets** from 2016 resulted in six wintering in Birkdale and roosting at Southport Marine Lake. These birds moved to the north Ribble marshes from the 29th. Numbers here further increased with ten feeding in the Warton and Freckleton area and roosting at the Naze Pool. A separate flock of three was present at Yealand Storr and roosted at Leighton Moss from the 2nd.

April

April began with a mix of sunshine and showers, but it soon became dry, warm and sunny as high pressure built from the south. It was often unseasonably warm until the 9th. The rest of the month was cooler but remained mostly dry and settled. A northerly wind brought widespread wintry showers on the 25th and 26th, and the 30th was wet.

An **Iberian Chiffchaff** singing at Seaforth on the 8th & 9th was only the second record for the county. Another rarity was a **Woodlark** calling over Billinge Hill on the 19th. This was only the third county record but the second at this site after one last year.

In Bowland the **Hen Harrier** breeding season got off to an extremely poor start with just a single immature male displaying in Croasdale. It was with some excitement therefore that a male harrier was seen displaying in Whitendale on the 26th. To the observer's disbelief it was not a Hen Harrier but a stunning adult male **Pallid Harrier**. News was released on the 27th and that evening the first observers made the long walk up the valley. Whilst watching the harrier they could not believe their eyes when an immature **White-Tailed Eagle** also appeared!

The eagle roosted overnight and then disappeared early on the 27th. By the weekend the **Pallid Harrier** had become a major draw and it performed superbly caching food, nest-building and sky-dancing above the heads of its many admirers. This breath-taking display was often so close that the bird's calls rang across the valley.

Late afternoon on the 29th the harrier became agitated and drew observer's attention to the returning **White-tailed Eagle**. In another moment that will go down in county birding folklore the **Pallid Harrier** then chased the eagle out of the valley! The **Pallid Harrier** was the county's second record and the **White-tailed Eagle** our third. The harrier held territory until 14 May and was much admired by observers from far and wide. Also, in Bowland, **Barnacre Reservoir** produced a roost count of 582 **Whimbrel** on the 26th, part of a co-ordinated count that produced a county total of 1620.

A **Black Tern** at Stocks Reservoir on the 27th was the first of a superb spring passage with a massive coastal influx on the 30th. At least 215 flew past Heysham with 71 at Rossall Point, 60 off Crosby, 43 at Cockersand, 26 at Blackpool and 24 at Seaforth. Alongside them were impressive numbers of **Artic Terns** with 621 past Rossall on the 30th.

May

The first third of the month was settled, warm and sunny with mainly easterly winds. The second half was more changeable but mostly warm. There was a notable hot and sunny spell from the 23rd to the 26th, followed by significant thunderstorms across many areas on the 27th.

The tern movement continued with 712 **Artic Terns** past Rossall on the 1st and **Black Terns** delighting observers across the county with flocks all along the coast and at many inland waters. Our summering **Spoonbills** appeared again at Leighton Moss with a flock of six arriving on the 3rd, increasing to seven on the 4th. Three stayed around until the 29th July and with a breeding pair as close as West Yorkshire it cannot be long until another nesting attempt is made in Lancashire.

Puffin is a surprisingly rare bird in the county so singles off Heysham on the 4th and Blackpool and Rossall on the 5th were noteworthy. Also, on the 5th a high count of three were seen at Jenny Browns Point and this was then surpassed by the five off Rossall on the 8th. One was also off Heysham that day and this good run continued with two off Blackpool on 10th and another here on the 17th, when two were seen off Rossall.

The easterly winds also produced a nice run of **Wood Sandpipers** with the highest count of three at Lunt Meadows from the 5th. A **Temminck's Stint** was at MMWWT from the 16th and was the only record this year.

Dotterel sightings on Pendle Hill were again poor despite the favourable winds with three on the 7th, four on the 8th, one on the 9th and one on 11th. In addition, only one was seen on the south-west mosses at Burscough Bridge on the 7th.

June

The first ten days of June were changeable, with mainly westerly winds, but rather warm. After that came a dry, sunny and increasingly hot spell between the 17th and 19th. This period brought the highest temperatures in June since 1976. After a thundery breakdown, it was generally cloudy from the 22nd onwards and turned very wet in many areas in the last few days.

The plight of the **Turtle Dove** was again highlighted by a single record in a garden at Cockden, Burnley on the 1st. This was only the third record in east Lancashire in the 21st century. On a more positive note, **Nightjars** were present in east Lancashire for the third successive summer and two were seen together on the 3rd.

A totally unexpected **Sooty Shearwater** flew west past Knott End then Fleetwood Promenade on the 6th. This was the first record of this county rarity since one off Seaforth in September 2009. Another rare sighting on the 6th was the three young **Black-tailed Godwits** on Newton Marsh. This was just reward for the dedicated team that watch over our small breeding population.

Despite the coastal influx **Cattle Egrets** had not moved inland so east Lancashire's first at Stocks Reservoir on the 12th was a great find. Even better was the discovery of a magnificent adult **Caspian Tern** at Holden Wood Reservoir in Rossendale on the 20th. Remarkably, after leaving the reservoir it was soon relocated at Leighton Moss. To the delight of many observers it lingered here throughout the



Caspian Tern, Leighton Moss
21 June, (David Talbot)

following day giving excellent views from the Causeway Hide. It was the seventh for the county and five of the seven birds have been seen at Leighton Moss.

July

July was a generally unsettled month, but it was often warm until the 20th. It was cooler from the 21st onwards, and there was some heavy and persistent rain at times.

In a productive breeding season for many species the **Mediterranean Gull** colony at Belmont Reservoir grew to an incredible 49 pairs and they fledged 51 juveniles. Elsewhere, three pairs bred at Marshside where two chicks were seen.

The other great success story continued with **Little Egrets** at Southport Marine Lake fledging five juveniles and fourteen pairs nested at the Ashton Hall colony. Sadly, no Hen Harriers bred in Bowland, but it was an exceptionally good year for breeding **Merlin**. Nine pairs fledged 32 young, and this was the best result in Bowland since at least 1991.

Also, in Bowland a bumper vole year was a boost to the **Short-eared Owl** population with nine pairs breeding, eight of which were successful. It was equally beneficial for Bowland **Barn Owls** with 24 pairs fledging an amazing 124 young.

Despite being high summer return wader passage began with four **Wood Sandpipers** at MMWWT on the 6th. **Roseate Terns** were also on the move and three different birds were seen at Seaforth between the 6th and 22nd.

A heavy rain shower at MMWWT on the morning of the 26th brought in a lovely **Gull-billed Tern**. This was yet another major rarity, only the fourth county record and the first for 22 years. Many observers rushed to MMWWT but unfortunately the bird left after only 90 minutes and most were left frustrated.



Gull-billed Tern, MMWWT, 26 July (Andy Bunting)

August

August began unsettled with rain or showers and mainly westerly or south-westerly winds, and this pattern continued until the 18th. It turned warmer from the 19th, and it was often warm and sunny between the 25th and 29th, but the month ended cooler and showery.

Purple Sandpipers winter in small numbers on the Lancashire coast but had never been recorded inland until a juvenile was found at Rishton Reservoir on the 11th & 12th. On the 13th a male **Ferruginous Duck** was a great find at Hesketh Out Marsh and it stayed until the 16th.

This run of good birds continued with an immaculate juvenile **Purple Heron** appearing at Leighton Moss on the 18th. Often elusive, it rewarded patient observers with great views from the Grisedale Hide right through until 27 October. This was the 15th county record of which eleven have been at Leighton Moss.

A juvenile **Black-necked Grebe** was at MMWWT from the 21st to the 23rd. Also, on the 21st an **Ortolan Bunting** was sound-recorded as it flew over Knott End and this was the twelfth county record. More conventionally visible-migration-watchers recorded a good passage of **Tree Pipits** with a peak of 43 over Crown Point on the 17th.

September

September started with a weak ridge of high pressure which brought relatively quiet weather, but the rest of the month was generally unsettled and wet. It was often cool with frequent westerly and north-westerly winds and belts of persistent rain alternating with brighter showery weather, especially around the 10th-13th. It was warmer from the 20th onwards with mainly southerly winds.

The Sefton Coast enjoyed another good autumn for **Sandwich Terns**, notably 2300 feeding off Formby Point on the 1st.

A superb juvenile **Wilson's Phalarope** was a fantastic find at Alston Wetland on the 9th. This lovely bird stayed all day and attracted a large and appreciative audience – it was the eleventh record for the county. A juvenile **Pectoral Sandpiper** on Crossens Out Marsh on the 10th & 11th was the

only record this year

All eyes then moved to the coast with the persistent westerly then north-westerly gales producing the perfect seabird storm. The much-anticipated **Leach's Petrels** appeared all along the coast with the spread on the 11th including 17 at Heysham, 15 at Knott End, 28 off Blackpool and 15 in and around the mouth of the Mersey.

Along with them came beautiful **Sabine's Gulls** firstly blown into Morecambe Bay past Heysham, Cockersand and Knott End then out past Rossall and Blackpool with a total of four individuals between the 11th & 13th. A juvenile was also in the Mersey Mouth on the 11th. Another treat for sand and spray blasted observers was a juvenile **Long-tailed Skua** off Starr Gate on the 13th.

Grey Phalaropes were a particular feature of these storms with singles off Fleetwood, Otter-spool and in the mouth of the Mersey on the 11th. The Mersey was particularly favoured with four reported on the 12th and 13th. Also, on the 13th two were on the tideline at Ainsdale and singles offshore at Formby Point and Blackpool. One was at Heysham on the 14th.

As is often the case in these storms seabirds began to appear in unusual locations with a juvenile **Gannet** at Leighton Moss on the 10th and another at Marton Mere on the 12th. **Manx Shearwaters** followed with one at Preston Dock on the 16th and another in a Wray garden the same day.

Other notable records this month included a fine **Corncrake** photographed by a lucky observer on the Reedbed Walk at MMWWT on the 18th. The county's thirteenth **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** made a brief visit to Banks Marsh on the 23rd followed by an **Arctic Skua** at MMWWT on the 25th and an incredible 1000 **Cormorants** were roosting at Mere Sands Wood. This busy month ended with a juvenile **Slavonian Grebe** frequenting the Alston reservoirs from the 30th.



Slavonian Grebe, Alston Reservoirs (Mike Watson)

October

October began unsettled and south-westerly winds prevailed for most of the month. There were some notably high temperatures at times, especially on the 16th and 23rd-24th. It was often cloudy, but rainfall amounts were generally modest. It turned colder with overnight frost in places during the last few days.

Yellow-browed Warblers appeared on cue but in relatively small numbers so inland records at Great Harwood, Longridge, Foulridge, Skelmersdale and Billinge Hill were particularly notable.

Seabirds were still affected by the persistent wind and rain with a **Grey Phalarope** at Knott End on the 6th and a remarkable flock of nine **Red-throated Divers** at Stocks Reservoir on the 7th.

Diligent searching of the **Golden Plover** flocks at **Crossens Out Marsh** was rewarded with the discovery of a smart adult **American Golden Plover** on the 9th - this was the tenth county record. Amazingly a juvenile **Long-billed Dowitcher** was also found on Crossens Out Marsh that afternoon.

The following day both birds moved across the road to Marshside and showed well to an appreciative crowd who also enjoyed the **Curlew Sandpipers**, **Little Stints** and **Ruff** present with the large flocks of **Golden Plover**, **Lapwing** and **Black-tailed Godwits**.

The finding of a juvenile **Long-billed Dowitcher** at MMWWT on the 13th left observers wondering if it was the same bird until they were found together on the Ribble Marshes on the 18th! Here they stayed until the last sighting on the 5th of November.

Another rarity quickly followed with a **Little Bunting** seen and heard flying over New Laithe Farm, Newton-in-Bowland on the 18th, the first east Lancashire record and only the eighth in the county. Also, in east Lancashire an exhausted **Manx Shearwater** was taken into care from the Leeds-

Liverpool Canal at Rishton on the 19th and was released at Ainsdale the following day.

Velvet Scoters are now occurring regularly with the large **Common Scoter** flocks off our coasts and the four that flew past Formby Point on the 20th was the highest count of the year. A probable **Siberian Lesser Whitethroat** was caught at Heysham on the 23rd and a feather was sent for DNA analysis. The results confirmed the bird was of the Siberian (*blythi*) subspecies and this was the first confirmed record for Lancashire.

Another exciting month ended with a first-winter **Red-breasted Flycatcher** briefly in the Ainsdale Dunes on the morning of the 24th. This was only the 10th county record and the first since 2001.

November

November started off relatively quiet, but most of the month saw weather fronts crossing the county at frequent intervals. There was dry and sunny weather in between and it was briefly very mild from the 20th to 22nd. It turned colder in the last week with widespread frosts.

The only **Great Grey Shrike** in the second half of the year was at Preesall Flashes on the 2nd & 3rd. A juvenile **Long-tailed Duck** was at Seaforth until the 7th and another was off Heysham on the 26th. A **Slavonian Grebe** was recorded on the Morecambe Bay WEBS count on the 9th and two were seen off Heysham on the 15th.

The most remarkable feature of the late autumn was an unprecedented influx of **Hawfinches**. Starting with a single at High Tatham on 16 October these powerful finches were seen all across the county with the largest flock of ten at Kemple End, Longridge on the 30th of October. In November records came from Banks Marsh, Belmont, Billinge, Brockholes, Clitheroe, Crosby, Crossens, Ellel Grange, Farington Moss, Galgate, Hesketh Out Marsh, Leighton Moss, Longton Marsh, MMWWT, Rimrose Valley, Roby Mill, Southport and Walton-le-Dale. Eight in yews at Pleasington Old Hall, Blackburn on the 5th raised hopes of potential breeding at this former site.

A **Siberian Chiffchaff** was trapped and ringed at Billinge Hill on the 17th and was the only record this year. At Little Crosby, a remarkable five **Firecrests** (including a bird ringed on the Isle of Man) were trapped at a private site this month. On the 19th another **Firecrest** was located at Walton-le-Dale Sewage Works and went on to winter here along with several **Chiffchaffs**.

Starlings roosting in the reedbeds at MMWWT built up to a massive 50,000 during the month and their spectacular murmurations were appreciated by crowds of visitors at the North West Bird Fair. **Teal** numbers at MMWWT also built up to an internationally important count of 9787 this month.

The appearance of a dapper male **American Wigeon** with the **Wigeon** flock at Newton Marsh on the 29th was surprisingly the only record of the year.

December

The first week was mild, but between the 8th and 16th it was often cold and frosty. It was mild with westerly or south-westerly winds for most of the second half of the month, but snowfall occurred in some areas after Christmas.

A **Black-necked Grebe** made a brief visit to Pine Lake on the 1st. On the 2nd a **Chough** appeared at Heysham Head where it was seen regularly through into 2018. Along with the bird in March these were Lancashire's ninth and tenth records.

Also, on the 2nd a male **Eider** appeared on Stocks Reservoir; this was a rare inland record but on the coast huge flocks gathered in Morecambe Bay peaking at an impressive 1710 on the 10th.

A juvenile **Great Northern Diver** was well inland on Parsonage Reservoir from the 12th to the 14th before relocating to Dean Clough Reservoir on the 15th.

Delightful **Snow Buntings** appeared in good numbers with a peak of 27 on Pendle Hill on the 12th and a feeding station in Rossendale held 22 on the 22nd. On the coast singles were at Crosby, Rossall Point and Ainsdale Dunes and two were on St Annes Beach.

The year ended as it had begun with the adult **Iceland Gull** at Marton Mere from the 9th and a second-winter roosting at Fishmoor Reservoir on the 9 & 10th. A second-winter **Caspian Gull** and two first winter **Iceland Gulls** roosted at Fishmoor on the 31st, nicely rounding off a fabulous birding year in the county.

SYSTEMATIC LIST

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

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

DARK-BELLIED BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla bernicla*

Scarce winter visitor.

All records related to one or two individuals with no larger groups. One was at Cockerham on 13 Jan and this or another at Downholland Moss on the 17th and Altcar Withins the following day. Spring movement included two at Cockersand on 25 March and Jenny Brown's Point on the 28th, one at Marshside on 9 April, one at Crossens on the 15th, two north at Heysham on 28 April and one ingering with two pale-bellieds at Heysham on 9-16 May.

Very few were seen in the second half of the year. The first at Cockersand and Heysham on 12 Sept was followed by October singles at Cabin Hill on the 2nd, Starr Gate on the 3rd and Marshside, with Pinkfeet, on the 26th. Finally two were on the shore at Cabin Hill on 24 Nov.

PALE-BELLIED BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla hrota*

Scarce winter visitor.

The first was with Pinkfeet at Bradshaw Lane Head on 27 Jan and presumably the same at Thurnham on 5-12 Feb and Cockerham on the 17th. In spring two were at Heysham on 1 April and two more lingered there on 9-16 May, with perhaps just one at Carnforth Outer saltmarsh on the 21st, Jenny Brown's Point the next day and Sunderland Point on the 24th.

One roosted at Cabin Hill with Pinkfeet on 23, 24 & 28 Sept and on 22 Oct. Other October reports were three west at Fleetwood on the 3rd, singles south at Fleetwood and Starr Gate on the 22nd, at Marshside on the 23rd and on Preesall Sands on the 25th. The only November report was of two past Rossall Point on the 13th, whilst in December at least two were among three brents at Heysham on the 17th with two pale-bellieds remaining to the year's end.

BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla*

Most of the unspecified records received were on dates and at locations suggesting that they are reflected in the above two subspecies accounts. The only exception, other than Cumbrian wintering birds seen distantly from Heysham, was one reported on the February Ribble WeBS count.

RED-BREASTED GOOSE *Branta ruficollis*

Vagrant and escapee

The bird which had previously been with Pinkfeet in Norfolk was in the Marshside area on 4 Jan (P Kinsella *et al*). It was relocated in the Fylde at Braides Farm, Pilling on 8 Jan and seen at a number of sites in Over Wyre including Cockerham, Eagland Hill, Nateby, Pilling, Sand Villa and Thurnham until the last report again at Braides on 22 Feb. This record has been accepted by BBRC.



Red-breasted Goose, Pilling Lane Ends, 4 February (Paul Ellis)

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

Common breeding resident.

Monthly peak counts at sites holding 300+ birds

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Clifton/Lea/												
Longton								150	1200		300	400
Bretherton										500		
Croston Moss											350	
Marshside					193	150		350	140	200	200	200
Martin Mere								300	515			
Mere Sands	15	36	40	48	45	34	24	600	700	424	23	20
Lunt Meadows	52							500	210	150		
Seaforth	27	477	32	40	120	500	54	62	32	12	10	10
Stocks Res	306	166	97	76	94	353	333	213	228	105	446	280
Foulridge Res	116			14	198					237	338	291
Rishton Res					4		33	174	30	125		567

WeBS Counts

MBS	31	0	10	12	16	9	33	314	1	86	0	7
Ribble	1334	1036	209	199	195	1140	1120	1484	566	2106	1294	3109
Alt	17	14	15	31	16	301	44	53	43	2	2	20

Despite ongoing control measures numbers increased at Belmont and neighbouring reservoirs; although 65 eggs were pricked and 29 adults shot, eleven pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir. Elsewhere in the West Pennine Moors continuing licenced control by egg-pricking on 25 United Utilities water-bodies indicated an increase in breeding numbers in 2017, with 90 eggs from 17 nests controlled, up from 14 nests totalling 65 eggs in 2016. There were 24 pairs at Marshside, no other significant breeding information was received.

Among many smaller counts of coastal passage birds 105 went north-east at Fleetwood on 1 June. Birds ringed at Windermere in the moulting flock were seen throughout the county during the year.

'TODD'S CANADA GOOSE' *B. c. interior*

The bird previously with Pinkfeet in Norfolk from mid-November 2016 into 2017 was relocated at Cockerham on 20 Jan (M Jones *et al*), being seen between there and Thurnham and at Eagland Hill on and off until 12 Feb – part of an outstanding period of goose-watching in the Fylde. It was next noted on Aldcliffe Marsh on the Lune Estuary on 19-20 Feb and the following month on the Ribble at Crossens Outer Marsh on 4 March, and was then seen there and at Marshside and Banks intermittently to 2 April.

The record is still under consideration by the BBRC.

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*

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

Apparently wild individuals

The largest counts in the first winter period were from the Over Wyre area, with up to five with Pinkfeet in the Sand Villa-Cockerham area in January and four in February. There were three at Marshside in March, and two still with Pinkfeet in early April. Away from more usual haunts one was at Bretherton with Pinkfeet on 28 Jan.

There were more presumed wild individuals in the second winter period, presumably because of some overshooting of normal wintering grounds. The largest counts were again in Over Wyre, with up to six together in the Pilling area in October increasing to twelve in November and 13 in December. Elsewhere, up to five were at Marshside, four at Lytham Moss and three at MMWWT.

There were again records in the Chorley area late in the year: up to three with Pinkfeet at Bretherton Eyes in October, and two with Pinks on Croston Moss on 2 Nov.

Feral populations

The peak count at Knowsley Safari Park was 150 on 16 Aug, while other counts there included 110 on 26 June, 80 on 24 May and 76 on 19 April. Probably these birds were involved in the report of 40 at Burscough Bridge on 18 Feb.

At Stocks Reservoir there were 57 on 1 Jan and these numbers were maintained until 4 Feb, after which counts were of single figures to 16 June. Twenty-eight on 23 June, increased to 46 on 7 Aug with 48 still on 2 Dec, before most apparently departed. As noted in the ELOC report these birds presumably nest outside the recording area.

The population which commutes between Blackpool Zoo and Marton Mere and Staining Nook appeared at least stable during the year, with 49 on 23 Sept. It is not known if there were any nesting attempts within the zoo grounds.

As ever there were a number of other individuals of presumed feral origin around the county. Up to three were at Belmont Reservoir and adjacent waters, two of which were thought to have tried to nest whilst the third was unsuccessfully paired to a Greylag. Two or three on the Fylde included a known escape. Singles were at Brockholes in April and Mere Sands Wood in September.

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 at sites holding 250+ birds

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Aldcliffe							205			630		
EMC/LM	205	275	240	100			120	215	400	530	830	345
Lune Valley					40					200		480
Cockerham								300				
Copthorne		140						169			152	625
Little Singleton									500	335		
Preesall											290	
MMWWT	280	200						260		200	158	300
Stocks Res	284	91	94	25	100	250	158	7	12	106	210	210

WeBS Counts

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS	348	272	205	55	69	28	406	216	78	580	434	82*
Ribble	90	88	68	24	30	60	113	401	128	431	201	117

* Incomplete coverage

The LDBWS January survey recorded 1256, including 513 in SD47, 329 in SD57 and 284 in SD56.

Given the large flocks in the county information on nesting was rather limited. It was a more successful year for breeding at Stocks Reservoir than recently, with eight broods and 28 young. There were seven nests at Anglezarke-Rivington in April and four pairs nested at Marshside and two at Hesketh Out Marsh. There were two pairs at Belmont Reservoir where an unsuccessful bird was paired with a Barnacle Goose, and two pairs nearby at Delph Reservoir. At least three pairs bred at Lunt Meadows, while 38 pairs nested along the Lune between Skerton Weir and Kirby Lonsdale.

Lone birds were noted in Pinkfeet flocks in the south-west and Over Wyre in the second winter period that may have been Icelandic individuals.

TAIGA BEAN GOOSE* *Anser fabalis*

Rare winter visitor. Amber list (small winter population)

One with Pinkfeet a Cockerham Moss and Upper Thurnham from 19 to 21 Jan (I Hartley) was subsequently seen in the Sand Villa area and at nearby sites from 29 Jan to 22 Feb.

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.

Roost counts

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Pilling										38600	18360	
Ribble										23900	16900	18000
Formby Point									33300	26300	10976	
MMWWT									21000	22000	10000	
Lunt Meadows	2500	2500										
Simonswood Moss										11870	12220	

The totals for Lancashire in the co-ordinated national autumn roost counts were 94435 in October and 54596 in November.

WeBS Counts

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS	438	1202	1145	3	4	0	0	0	4	5556	453	17232
Ribble	1601	4906	4567	4423	0	0	1	0	8	20968	4931	4090
Alt	183			1	1	1	1			4251		5000
Mersey (Lancs)										380		

Less comprehensive information was received early in the year as the main roost counts are generally made in autumn. There were 10000 at Braides Farm on 21 Jan and a similar number at Sand Villa on 15 Feb. In terms of return movement from Norfolk peak passage was in mid-January through east Lancashire, with very few in February. There were still 3600 at Marshside on 18 April, with 276 on Crossens Out Marsh on 1 May.

First to return were six at Marshside/Crossens on 1 Sept. Larger feeding aggregations in the second winter period included a flock on Lytham Moss in late October variously estimated at 9000 to 16000. In the Chorley area the peak count of the year was 8000 on Croston Moss on 19 Nov. There was significant movement through east Lancashire in October and November.

As usual, there were a small number of feral and presumably some injured birds summering.

TUNDRA BEAN GOOSE *Anser serrirostris*

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

There was a very good showing in the first winter period, with birds picked out of Pinkfeet flocks on the Fylde and in the south-west regularly. Estimating numbers involved is not straightforward but the peak counts of five at Formby on 5 Jan and Eagland Hill on 4-5 Feb give an indication of the relatively high numbers.

Other than birds with Pinkfeet there was an unusual record associating with Greylags in east Lancashire of two at Alston Wetland on 14-20 March. A late bird was seen at Crossens to 28 April.

In contrast to earlier in the year there were very few reports in the second winter period, and all related to single individuals in Pinkfeet flocks. The first was at Marshside on 20 Oct, with another there on 12 Nov. There were reports of at least two on the Fylde on eight dates in December, mostly in the north but also on Lytham Moss depending on where the Pinkfeet were favouring.

GREENLAND WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons flavirostris*

Uncommon winter visitor.

In a rather difficult year to summarise there were three reports of flocks, but it would appear from date and location that all of these related to misidentified European Whitefronts and these are excluded from the summary below.

In the first winter period birds were seen with Pinkfeet in the south-west and on the Fylde. At least one was in north Fylde in late January and early February, favouring Cockerham and Thurnham; the Fylde dataset was consistent with only one mobile bird though others suggested two individuals were present. The last reports came from Marshside on 3 March and the Fylde on the 13th.

Autumn began with one at Crossens on 14 Oct, and there were two together at MMWWT in early November and one on Downholland Moss on 4 Dec. On the Fylde a juvenile was with Pinkfeet near Marton Mere on 18 Oct, a juvenile was with Pinks at Eagland Hill on 20-12 Dec with an adult at Lytham Moss on 13-14 Dec.



European White-fronted Geese, Pilling Lane Ends, 2 February (Paul Ellis)

EUROPEAN WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons albifrons*

Uncommon winter visitor.

One of the notable features of some exceptional goose-watching in the first winter period was very good numbers of European White-fronts. After small numbers at typical sites (up to four) early in

January there were up to 20 with Pinkfeet at various Over Wyre sites later in the month. The same month nine adults and a juvenile were with Greylags at Stocks Reservoir on the 28th, remaining until the next morning. Also inland one had been on Alston No.2 Reservoir on 19 Jan before it flew off with two Pink-footed Geese which were passing over.

Numbers with Pinkfeet in Over Wyre peaked in early February, the highest count being 24 at Pilling Lane Ends on the 4th. Perhaps surprisingly all the large counts during the month were in north Fylde, with only ones and twos in the south-west and on Lytham Moss. There were still 18 at Scronkey on 14 Feb before birds began to disappear and there does not appear to have been more than one at any Fylde site in March. Elsewhere, two long-staying adults did, however, linger in the Leighton Moss area from January until at least 2 April.

In a contrasting second winter period there were so few records they can all be listed. An adult was on the Fylde at Lytham Moss and Toddestaffe Hall between 24-31 Oct, while in the south-west birds were at Altcar Withins on 12 Nov and Hightown on the 20th, with an immature on Downhol-land Moss on 3 Dec.

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons*

The majority of records not assigned to race appeared to relate to European race birds and fit with the summary above, whilst a number of unseasonable records submitted to Birdtrack are considered to be misidentifications and a couple of others fit with Greenland Whitefront dates and locations.

In the second winter period birds were reported at MMWWT on 13 Oct and 20 Nov, and Pilling on 19 Nov.

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	22	15	25	13	83	52	60	58	79	60	61	44
Ribble WeBS	18	18	49	32	41	29	36	51	62	92	80	69
Brockholes	32	30	17	17	29	53	69	61	67	68	46	45
Cockersand	20	31	31	75	66	/	26	/	/	19	30	28
Southport ML	76	45	53	30	/	/	37	/	/	92	44	26

Away from the main sites the largest gatherings included 38 on 28 May at Glasson, 22 on 7 June at Crosby Coastal Park and 28 on 18 Nov on Fairhaven Lake.

Up to five were with the Whooper Swan flock at Bretherton Eyes, Chorley in January, numbers increasing to 13 in February with eight still there during March. In the east, the largest counts were eleven at Alston Wetland in March, six at Osbaldeston on 6 June and six at Ribchester on 3 Dec.

Widespread breeding included two pairs at Marshside and one on Hesketh Out Marsh. A pair fledged three young at Lunt Meadows from four hatched, while at Seaforth a pair nested in a reedbed, hatched five young, four of which ultimately fledged. Of birds breeding at Princes Park, Liverpool, discarded fishing line still affects the survival of breeding swans, the RSPCA having to make a number of visits to rescue birds there. A pair of Mute Swan at Yarrow Valley Park had seven young by 19 May, soon reducing to six. A pair on the old Rufford canal at Bretherton had seven young by 28 May. Seven pairs nested on the Lune between Skerton Weir and Kirby Lonsdale.

BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus columbianus*

Fairly common but declining winter visitor.

International importance: 200. National importance: 70

Numbers continue to decline; notably there were no sightings this year at MMWWT.

The usual wintering flock south of the Ribble peaked at 19 at Hesketh Out Marsh on 22 Jan with three still on 7 March. A pair of adults with two juveniles at nearby Hundred End on 4 Jan were presumably part of this group, as well as two at Marshside on 1 Feb and four there on 3-5 Feb.

There were no records this year in south Fylde but further north two were at Eagland Hill on 9 Jan. The wintering flock at Cockersand/Thurnham peaked at 18 in January, 20 in February and 18 in

early March. The last seen there were eleven on 7 March.

The first back in autumn was one at Cockersand on 4 Nov, increasing to a peak of eight in December. Two were back at Hesketh Out Marsh on 12 Nov, rising to four on 12 Dec and five on the 16th. Six were at Bradshaw Lane Head, Fylde on 30 Dec.

WHOOPER SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*

Common and increasing winter visitor.

International importance: 210. National importance: 110

Monthly Peak Counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	7	2	37			100	483	319
Cockersand	433	460	538	4	2	64	560	325
Over Wyre	120	21	52			420	1250	1123
South Fylde	61	33	97	20		42	300	67
Ribble WeBS	126	140	93	2		31	66	142
MMWWT		1133	20	5	5	260	1075	1670

On the southern edge of the Ribble Estuary, 250 were on Holmeswood Moss on 2 Jan and 145 at Hundred End two days later. Wintering birds at Hesketh Out Marsh peaked at 737 on 18 Jan. Up to 50 wintered in the Halsall/Scarisbrick area, while the wintering flock at Melling in the Lune Valley contained up to 16 birds in January, 22 in February and 25 in March; the last there was a single bird on 1 April.

Further inland, 36 flew over Grove Lane Marsh on 18 Jan and three were on a flood pool by the River Calder at Altham on the 22nd. A small flock between Bretherton and Sollom numbered 26 on 2 Jan and remained there throughout February and most of March with a peak of 27 on 4 March.

The first signs of spring migration were 18 over Dean Clough Reservoir on 27 Feb, nine over Stocks Reservoir on 4 March, 20 past Rossall on the 7th and 60 over Bashall Eaves on the 11th. Nine flew over Brockholes on 21 March.

Meanwhile, the last 20 remained at MMWWT on 19 March. Movements past Heysham during 18-23 March peaked at 73 on the 23rd; 40 went past Rossall on 23 March. Eight sat on the sea at Southport on 25 March was unusual. The last movement was of two past Rossall on 19 April.

On 22 & 23 March poor weather appears to have been responsible for grounding about 550 birds in the east of the county, including 27 at Clowbridge Reservoir, 137 at Hurstwood Reservoir and 38 at Stocks Reservoir. The last inland report in spring was of five leaving Stocks in the afternoon on 24 March.

Unseasonal birds were one at Brockholes on 5 May and five at Warton Marsh on the 18th. Up to three were at Cockersand throughout May with two still present on 26 June.



Whooper Swans, Bradshaw Lane, Pilling, 19 November (Paul Slade)

Two arrived at MMWWT on 19 Sept to join five that had summered there; two at Cockersand on 30 Sept may have been summering birds. Next to arrive were five at Lunt Meadows on 3 Oct, followed by eight past Fairhaven Lake on the 5th when three were seen at Alston Reservoir.

One hundred and twenty arrived on 9 Oct in fields near MMWWT, where 260 were present by the 23rd. Numbers there increased throughout November and peaked at 1670 on 12 Dec. The proportion of juveniles at MMWWT was 20% in November and 18% in December.

Movement through Brockholes peaked at 38 on 30 Oct when 32 were also at Parsonage Reservoir. A notable record for the St Helens area was two near Eccleston Mere on 3 November. Further movement inland included 20 over Cant Clough Reservoir on 4 Nov and 20 over Altham on the 13th. A juvenile was found dead at Cant Clough Reservoir on 19 November. Three flew over Belmont on 30 Oct and two were at Stocks Reservoir on 3 Dec.

Elsewhere, a party of 14 arrived at Bretherton Eyes, Chorley on 7 Oct, peaking at 28 on the 15th, while 40 on Croston Moss on 27 Oct increased to 105 by the month's end and 148 on 18 Nov; 75 were at Bretherton on 3 Dec before moving to Croston and Mawdesley Mosses with a peak of 100 in the area on the 11th.

The first three returned to winter in the Lune Valley at Melling on 15 Oct and seven were nearby at High Tatham on the 31st. Numbers at Melling peaked at twelve in November but increased to 34 on 23 Dec. Two adults and two juveniles were of note at Hare Tarn, Carnforth on 24 Dec.

Of coastal wintering birds on the Fylde, a notable flock of 1250 gathered on a wet cereal field at Eagland Hill on 4 Nov and on 16 Dec 1123 were on a similar field near Pilling Moss.

SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

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

International importance 3000; National importance 610.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	1778	633	620	467	421	632	123	45	1167	1029	2327	570
Ribble WeBS	1259	1477	2315	1111	701	1134	606	281	2174	2314	3220	2649
MMWWT	770	813	/	/	/	91	48	10	/	352	1376	1895
Alt WeBS	381	302	119	144	69	106	26	101	203	318	256	336

While there is considerable variation from month to month, the annual maximum in both the Ribble Estuary and Morecambe Bay has remained fairly constant over the last seven years. Data from MMWWT have been incomplete over the last few years but the larger flocks recorded in November and December are encouraging.

An unusual record from east Lancashire included a flock of 72 seen flying up the Ribble Valley over Elston on 7 July.

Eight pairs bred at Marshside and another 19 pairs bred at Hesketh Out Marsh. Five broods on the Wyre Estuary, three broods seen from Jenny Brown's Point and one at Glasson were the only confirmation of breeding from Morecambe Bay. Alston Wetland was the only site in east Lancashire where breeding took place. Two large young were seen here in early July. Breeding no doubt took place at many wetlands around the county but went unrecorded.

MANDARIN DUCK *Aix galericulata*

Uncommon feral resident and escapee.

The main concentration of reports came from east Lancashire where birds were recorded at 14 sites. Peak counts of five adults came from Slipper Hill Reservoir on 5 Feb and Stocks Reservoir on 15 July. Breeding was confirmed at Slipper Hill Reservoir and Lower Foulridge Reservoir.

The free-flying flock at High Tatham continues to grow with a maximum of 18 seen this year.

All reports from the Fylde came during April. Up to two males and a female, all clipped or pinioned, were seen in the St Michael's-on-Wyre area while a single pair remained at Singleton. Up to three were at Brockholes in January and a male remained into early May. A male was on Belmont Reservoir between April and June.

Pairs with young were seen on the River Yarrow at Duxbury and Eccleston.

GARGANEY *Spatula querquedula*

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

The first record of the spring was a pair on the Rufford Canal near Sollom on 15-16 March. This was followed by two at Leighton Moss on 28 March and there were then one or two there or occasionally at nearby Silverdale Moss and Eric Morecambe complex on and off until 1 June. Unusually there was only one spring record at Marshside, a male on 30 April only.

A pair was at Alston Wetland on 9 April, while a male on 11 May was the only record from Brockholes. A slightly more unusual record was of a male with Mallards on the River Ribble at Ribchester Bridge on 12 May.

Fylde records during the spring came from Newton Marsh on 11-14 April, 2-6 May and 30 May before a late male flew past Starr Gate on the unusual date of 21 June. A pair flew north past Heysham on 17 April and a male was at Lunt Meadows on 9 May.

The first bird of the autumn was at the Eric Morecambe complex on 7 July. A group of four on Barrow Scout fields in late July and early August contained at least two fully fledged young. While there had been no indication of breeding there it is possible they bred unnoticed in the Leighton Moss area. One was at Aldcliffe on 12 Aug. The only Fylde records of the autumn, at Fleetwood and Mythop, were both discovered on 1 Oct, the Mythop bird remaining until the 4th.

SHOVELER *Spatula 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	9	13	23	12	6	/	2	8	26	35	8	21
Leighton / EMC	135	86	28	30	2	1	8	4	32	112	198	113
Marton Mere	25	53	54	18	2	2	5	15	30	55	75	35
Mere Sands Wood	65	50	81	76	2	1	1	15	14	86	110	134
MMWWT	6	22	/	/	/	8	1	30	100	115	205	60
Ribble WeBS	105	64	163	18	14	0	9	6	16	159	186	305

After a quiet start to the year on the Ribble, the December WeBS count exceeded 300 for the first time since 2010. The five-year average there has remained fairly stable in the last 13 years following a substantial increase around the turn of the century.

The largest count on the Fylde away from Marton Mere and Stanley Park was 45 at Newton Marsh on 23 March. Most birds in east Lancashire are found at Alston and Grimsargh Wetlands; the latter site held the largest aggregation with 35 there 15 Jan. The site record count at Alston was broken three times during the year with a peak of 33 on 12 Feb. Nearby Brockholes had a peak of 35 on 12 March.

Across the RSPB Morecambe Bay reserves a total of 17 pairs bred, although only three young fledged. Twelve pairs bred at Marshside and four pairs at both Lunt Meadows and Hesketh Out Marsh. Elsewhere, breeding occurred at Newton Marsh, where at least three broods were seen, and at MMWWT.

GADWALL *Mareca 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
Leighton / EMC	116	89	34	61	34	58	55	72	74	86	248	188
Stanley Pk/M Mere	46	36	20	8	6	15	6	23	24	32	37	66
Brockholes	173	155	69	17	11	5	9	29	44	87	128	129
Ribble WeBS	19	34	59	17	15	13	39	27	12	59	32	16
MMWWT	6	8	5	7	8	31	15	50	50	84	143	53
Mere Sands Wood	64	64	29	10	2	0	0	32	36	52	64	58

Both Leighton Moss and MMWWT saw substantial increases on the peak counts recorded in recent years in the second winter period. Brockholes is clearly emerging as one of the key sites for this species in the county. A gathering of 35 at Anglezarke on 15 Oct was considered exceptional for the site and Chorley area. East Lancashire saw the majority of records come from Alston Wetland and Grimsargh Wetlands where peaks of 22 and 24 were recorded in June and December respectively. Elsewhere in east Lancashire Gadwall remain scarce with brief records of no more than four birds from seven sites throughout the year.

On the RSPB Morecambe Bay reserves a total of 23 pairs reared a minimum of ten young. Twelve pairs bred at Marshside and another seven at Hesketh Out Marsh. Breeding was confirmed on the Fylde at Newton Marsh (two broods) and Lower Ballam (one brood). Nine pairs remained at Lunt Meadows into late April but no broods were seen.

WIGEON *Mareca 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	3723	5495	3026	14	6	0	0	2	114	1864	3645	4377
Leighton / EMC	397	414	296	74	3	0	4	1	80	265	740	520
Ribble WeBS	62219	33917	13647	210	9	0	0	0	932	20797	35513	48243
MMWWT	902	629	100	/	/	4	1	/	12	646	2502	1000
Stocks Res.	101	60	18	1	0	0	2	3	1	16	19	120

After what appeared to be something of a recovery last year on the Ribble Estuary, there was a return to the numbers typical of the last few years. While not reaching the heights of 2012 or 2014, the population in Morecambe Bay remains stable. The majority of these birds were wintering on the north Fylde coast.

A new site record 225 was recorded at Alston Reservoirs and Wetland on 28 Jan. A flock of around 100 was on the floods at Bretherton Eyes on 22 October with smaller numbers at the site until the beginning of December. The largest flock in the West Pennine Moors was 25 on Delph Reservoir on 9 Oct.

Summering birds were noted at Belmont, Leighton Moss, Marshside and MMWWT but as usual there was no suggestion of breeding.

HYBRID WIGEON

A male Eurasian x American Wigeon was at Hesketh Out Marsh on 6 Nov. Another of the same parentage was on the Eric Morecambe complex on 5 Dec. Interestingly, in the same wigeon flock there was also a Eurasian Wigeon x Gadwall hybrid.

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	321	129	117	101	81	88	219	333	520	263	194	154
Leighton Moss	230	88	45	48	120	135	590	180	120	120	138	154
Ribble WeBS	918	755	524	324	263	491	404	413	1046	938	689	1059
MMWWT	/	1365	/	/	/	73	123	200		800	2939	2329
Alt WeBS	133	137	20	31	18	23	37	122	171	208	118	210
Stocks Res.	366	37	13	27	72	208	500	455	583	500	500	700

Encouragingly for this declining species, the November count of 2939 at MMWWT was significantly larger than any counts from the last few years. The Ribble Estuary showed a slight decline.

In the West Pennine Moors, 330 were at a private pond near Belmont in January and October. An omission from the 2016 report was that the 232 at Belmont Reservoir on 27 Nov 2016 was a new

site record count. In addition to Stocks Reservoir which is shown in the above table, five sites in east Lancashire achieved three-figure counts with the best being at Alston Reservoirs and Wetland where there were 345 in November.

A total of 116 pairs bred across the RSPB Morecambe Bay reserves. An estimated 69 pairs bred at Marshside with 38 pairs also breeding at Hesketh Out Marsh. In the Belmont area, 34 broods totalling 207 young were recorded. Eight broods, totalling 40 young were noted at Carr Mill Dam. A minimum of 13 pairs bred at Lunt Meadows but this was thought to be a significant underestimate.

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	152	655	6	12	0	0	0	0	19	344	819	34
Leighton / EMC	96	56	14	8	2	0	0	0	9	23	62	67
Ribble WeBS	600	539	59	6	3	0	0	0	0	218	873	988
MMWWT	236	320	60	4	1	1	/	/	80	101	714	500
Stocks Res	25	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	10	17	46

Morecambe Bay experienced its best counts since the winter of 2009/10. The first major influx of the autumn saw 400 at Pilling Marsh on 23 Sept. The counts in the first winter period on the Ribble Estuary were very poor. In the second winter period there was a big improvement albeit not reaching the levels of the last two years.

A pair remained at Lunt Meadows between 22 April and 3 June but there was no evidence of breeding.

There was no large-scale, cold-weather-related influx to Stocks Reservoir at all this year. Elsewhere in east Lancashire this species was a rare visitor with records of no more than three birds coming from five sites throughout the year.

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	3074	591	624	143	5	4	10	82	286	2287	1889	1062
Leighton Moss	675	405	310	220	52	9	22	105	310	240	520	790
Ribble WeBS	3841	3670	1404	232	3	1	10	105	1337	2527	2660	4638
MMWWT	1863	1595	/	/	/	13	57	220	1200	3277	9787	4742
Marton Mere	200	275	150	40	4	0	8	15	50	100	100	400
Mere Sands Wood	667	443	86	16	2	4	8	2	46	685	2000	1032
Seaforth	320	295	420	16	4	1	3	18	80	113	1028	900
Stocks Res.	300	51	20	36	4	0	5	18	85	48	130	70

The obvious highlight of the year was the 9787 at MMWWT in November. Peak numbers in Morecambe Bay were almost exactly the same as last year; it appears the peak of just 1491 in 2015 was a blip and the longer term trend appears fairly stable. The tendency for most of the birds to have left by February appears to be continuing. The peak count of 2000 at Mere Sands Wood in November was double last year's.

Notable counts from sites not listed in the above table include 600 at Lunt Meadows on 17 Jan, 400 at Mythop Grange on 24 Oct and 2 Dec, and from the West Pennine Moors reservoirs, 270 at Belmont on New Year's Day.

One pair bred at Belmont Reservoir but failed. Pairs were present at three other sites in the West Pennine Moors, suggesting that breeding may have occurred there too. Three pairs bred at Marshside and single pairs at both Hesketh Out Marsh and MMWWT.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL *Anas carolinensis*

Vagrant.

The presumed returning male at MMWWT was elusive again this year. First seen on 2 Jan, it was then only seen on 15 Jan and 17-18 March.

The first record of the autumn was at Marton Mere on 19 Nov and it seems likely that this bird had relocated to Marshside on 21 Nov then MMWWT on the 25-29th. After that male(s) were at Leighton Moss on 2-3 Dec, MMWWT on 5-10 Dec then again at Leighton Moss on 12th. With no overlap in sightings it is tempting to think that these sightings may have involved the same bird.

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	26	28	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	11	27	38
Leighton Moss	1	0	26	19	1	1	2	1	0	0	1	0
MMWWT	30	34	20	3	6	3	2	5	1	16	38	35
Seaforth	8	9	4	1	0	0	0	1	3	7	17	17

Again there was not a single three-figure count from across the whole county. Another dramatic decline since last year was noted at a number of sites including Dockacres where the annual peak was barely half that of last year.

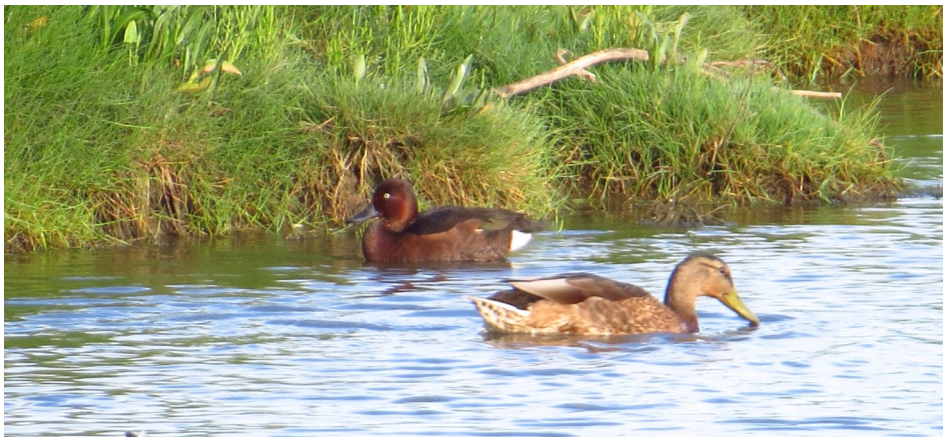
The national decline was also mirrored in east Lancashire where records came from only four sites, the largest count here being 25 at Spade Mill Reservoirs on 10 Dec. Brockholes saw a maximum of 22 during January. On the Fylde maximum counts were 15 at Fairhaven Lake in February and 17 at Myerscough Quarry in December.

An estimated 19 pairs bred on the RSPB Morecambe Bay reserves but only four young fledged successfully.

FERRUGINOUS DUCK *Aythya nyroca*

Vagrant

An adult male at Hesketh Out Marsh from 13-16 Aug has been accepted by the BBRC (CI. Bushell, SJ Darbyshire, M Fanshawe, G Jones *et al.*). This is the first record in the county since 2004 when separate females were at Brockholes and MMWWT.



Ferruginous Duck, Hesketh Out Marsh, 16 August (Stuart Darbyshire)

AYTHYA HYBRID

A male thought have been of Tufted Duck and Pochard parentage was at Stanley Park, Blackpool and Marton Mere from 25 Nov to 26 Dec.



Male Pochard x Tufted Duck, Marton Mere, 25 November (Paul Ellis)

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	118	112	75	24	2	2	2	6	12	44	94	192
Glasson	60	37	34	15	9	9	7	6	47	45	47	33
Brockholes	64	66	74	35	12	12	18	38	33	39	75	86
Ribble WeBS	119	203	155	42	35	35	29	29	47	33	92	154
Stanley Park, B'pool	36	69	51	28	2	4	5	3	32	28	81	112
Fairhaven Lake	60	21	26	29	20	15	9	7	40	136	79	18
Mere Sands Wood	50	57	44	48	20	8	14	11	16	78	94	58
Seaforth	1	20	4	32	6	50	85	88	85	50	32	/

There were no particularly notable counts from any sites. Leighton Moss is not included on the table as the peak this year was just 30 during March while most birds had relocated to Dockacres. Similarly, the days when three-figure flocks could be expected at MMWWT seem to be gone; the maximum count of 53 in November was actually an improvement on the last five years. This is perhaps explained by an increase in the number of birds using Mere Sands Wood.

In east Lancashire numerous sites had small flocks while notable records included 92 at Spade Mill Reservoirs in October and 69 at Alston Reservoirs and Wetland in August. The largest count from the Liverpool area was a flock of 31 at Sefton Park on 22 Feb. A flock of 15 birds on the sea off Cabin Hill on 14 Sept was a notable record.

On the RSPB Morecambe Bay reserves a total of 31 pairs bred. Seven pairs nested at Marshside and at least six broods were seen here in early summer. Three pairs nested at Hesketh Out Marsh. Eight pairs bred at Lunt Meadows and another three pairs at MMWWT. Two pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir but were unsuccessful. In east Lancashire, breeding occurred at Alston Reservoirs and Wetland, Brookside and Grimsargh Wetland. In the Chorley area breeding took place at High Bullough Reservoir where five young were seen in August. Breeding took place for the first time on Sefton Park boating lake.

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.

Despite a tiny increase on last year's singleton, the gathering of just five at Seaforth does nothing to suggest a reversal in the fortunes of what was formerly a nationally-important population; the last birds of the spring remained until 20 April. A female was on Middleton NR on 9 Jan and five were on the sea off Heysham on 3 March.

Aside from a long-staying first-winter female at Clowbridge Reservoir from 1 Jan to 20 March and two females at Alston Reservoir on 19-20 Jan, the other three records from east Lancashire consisted of short-staying individuals. One was present on various waterbodies around the Dockacres complex between 17 Jan and 2 March. A female at Glasson on 8 Jan and 17 Feb was perhaps the same as at Myerscough Quarry from 10 Jan to 4 Feb and then 26 Feb to 2 April. A late individual was seen off Jenny Brown's Point on 22 May.

Autumn records began with a male at Conder Pool on 4-10 August. The next record was three males at Stocks Reservoir on 7 Oct. A male was at Stanley Park, Blackpool on 14 Nov. On 16 Nov a group of four juveniles appeared at Marton Mere but by 18 Nov they had relocated to Stanley Park. They were joined by a fifth juvenile the following day after which they remained until 11 Dec. Singles were recorded off Rossall Point on 21 Nov and 9 Dec.

There were occasional but unpredictable sightings from the Heysham, Morecambe and Jenny Brown's Point area throughout the second winter period with peaks of six off Jenny Brown's Point on 23 Oct and seven off Heysham on 8 Nov. A single bird was at Pine Lake from 5 Nov until the end of the year, briefly joined by a second from 4-10 Dec.



Scaup, Clowbridge Reservoir, 20 March (Mike Jackson)

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	91	133	179	250	132	156	994	103	82	727	1620	167
Heysham	/	/	104	197	278	2	2	/	70	804	1520	1710
Ribble WeBS	19	44	30	78	83	150	46	78	44	1	17	9

Although there have long been huge flocks of Eiders in Morecambe Bay it is only very recently that we have seen more than a couple of hundred birds in the Lancashire section. However, the autumn of 2017 saw truly unprecedented numbers, peaking at 1710 on 10 Dec. This exceeded the previous record, only set in 2015, by more than 900. A clear pattern was followed where the flocks fed over the skeers off Heysham Head at low tide then drifted in with the tide, usually ending up off Hest Bank

and Jenny Brown's Point. The proportion of males in the flocks was estimated at 70-80% on several occasions from Heysham and Stone Jetty, Morecambe.

Continuing the exceptional recent run of inland records was an adult male at Stocks Reservoir on 2 Dec.

At least one pair bred on Carnforth Marsh. There were no reports of young from the Ribble Estuary, although it is unclear whether this is the result of a poor breeding season or reduced observer coverage.

VELVET SCOTER *Melanitta fusca*

Uncommon winter visitor.

There were several records from the large Common Scoter flocks along the Sefton Coast in the first winter period. From Ainsdale there was a male on 9 Feb, three on 1 March and two on the 30th. A pair flew past Formby Point on 15 March.

On the Fylde coast single males flew past Starr Gate on 11 March on 28 April. Two passed Rossall Point on both 1 & 9 April and there was one there on 6 May. The last record of the spring was a single that flew east past Knott End on 15 May.

The first bird of the autumn passed Starr Gate on 13 Sept and was followed by further singles there on 22 Oct, 6 Nov and 15 Dec. An adult male floated in with the tide past Heysham on 17 Oct. This bird spent the rest of the winter with the Eider flock around Morecambe Bay but remained elusive until 31 Dec when it was seen flying south past the Stone Jetty at Morecambe and again on the sea with Eiders off Heysham Head later the same day. Four also flew past Formby Point on 20 Oct and one passed Rossall Point on 23 Oct.

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	2800	3400	2000	220	399	324	1400	890	1665	690	2150	2400
Sefton Coast	11000	143	544	410	410	12	1131	3000	13000	13000	2000	8000

The largest flocks were again recorded off the Sefton Coast, mainly from Formby Point, throughout the year. However, the counts shown above account for only a fraction of the whole Liverpool Bay population, most of which is well offshore over Shell Flat, an area for which we have no recent population estimates. It is now five years since the Blackpool coastline last recorded 10000 or more.

Spring passage past Heysham was generally poor with the exception of on 9 & 14 May when 750 and 1334 were recorded respectively.

As usual, inland passage was more pronounced during the early autumn than the spring. While recorded in nine out of twelve months in east Lancashire, there was a definite peak in July which included maximum counts of eleven at Alston Reservoirs on the 2nd and 20 at Stocks Reservoir on the 16th. Two on Belmont Reservoir on 2 Dec were the only birds seen in the West Pennine Moors. In the Chorley area all records came from Lower Rivington Reservoir with two on 18 Jan, three on 2 July and seven on 3 Dec.

LONG-TAILED DUCK *Clangula hyemalis*

Uncommon winter visitor, rare inland.

The year began with the two birds at Pine Lake from 2016 still present until 12 Feb with one remaining until 31 March. A first-winter female at Brockholes on 25-26 Jan and 9-19 Feb was only the second site record. An inland female was at Clowbridge Reservoir on 27 Feb.

Late spring records involved a male that flew north past Southport on 8 May and a second-calendar-year male on the Lune Estuary at Cockersand on the 15th.

A first-calendar-year bird was at Seaforth from 26 Oct to at least 7 Nov and a female or immature was on the sea off Heysham on 26 Nov.



Long-Tailed Duck, Seaforth, 29 October (Steve Young)

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	22	19	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	6
Leighton Moss	1	1	16	8	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	3
Dockacres	14	21	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	9	31
Lune Estuary	45	55	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	14
Alston Res's	14	20	25	10	1	0	0	0	0	7	11	12
Brockholes	12	23	24	6	0	0	0	0	0	4	6	7
Seaforth	28	29	29	18	1	0	0	0	0	6	15	16
Stocks Reservoir	7	17	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	44

The WeBS counts from the Lune Estuary at Glasson show a continued and worryingly sharp decline. The extremely low numbers in the second winter period can perhaps be explained by the milder weather experienced at that time meaning many birds remained further north and east in Europe.

Alston Reservoirs saw a slight increase and in the first winter period recorded its highest numbers since 2013. A similar increase was noted at Seaforth albeit still well below the level of a few years ago. The last record of the spring came from Alston Reservoirs on 5 May.

The first returning bird was a female at Rishton Reservoir on the very early date of 24 Aug. Generally, there were very few birds across the whole of the county in the second winter period until an influx in mid-December. By far and away the largest count from east Lancashire was at Stocks Reservoir on 12 Dec when a minimum of 44 were seen. Just a few days later the best count from the Dockacres Complex was recorded with 31 on Pine Lake on 15 Dec.

SMEW *Mergus albellus*

Uncommon winter visitor.

A moribund bird was reported on the lake at Cuerden Valley Park on 18 Oct.

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	14	/	18	9	3	9	25	38	39	12	6	14
Dockacres	7	4	5	1	0	0	0	0	1	3	5	21
Delph Res	67	57	37	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	60	56
Mere Sands Wood	16	5	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	18	12

New site records of 67 at Delph Reservoir on 19 Jan and 49 at Yarrow Reservoir on 7 March were set in the West Pennine Moors. Double-figure counts were received from twelve river or reservoir sites in east Lancashire with a maximum of 38 at Barrowford Reservoir on 16 Feb.

The co-ordinated winter bird survey in the LDBWS area recorded a total of 84 individuals in January.

Breeding was reported from Dinkley where three broods were seen in April and early May. Breeding was also confirmed in the Thursden Valley and at Stocks Reservoir. In the Chorley area, females with broods were seen at Eccleston and Hoghton. A crèche of 23 young was with a single female on the River Ribble at Brockholes on 27 June.

Notable counts from the second winter period included 50 at Lower Foulridge Reservoir on 25 Dec and 27 at Barrowford Reservoir on 27th.

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	31	34	12	15	2	0	7	1	0	6	50	25
Stocks Res.	2	2	11	12	11	4	3	1	1	0	1	0

It appears that the wintering population in Morecambe Bay has stabilised over the last few years after a considerable decline since the turn of the century. A minimum of 25 off Formby Point on 15 March was the largest count received from the Sefton Coast.

Display was observed from two pairs at Stocks Reservoir and up to five pairs were there on 16 May. Pairs were also seen in the Langden, Dunsop and Whitendale Valleys. However, there was no further indication of successful breeding.

BLACK GROUSE *Lyrurus tetrix*

Extinct former resident. Now rare vagrant.

Historical: A commissioned report from the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust ('A feasibility study to assess the potential for restoring Black Grouse to the Bowland Fells'. 2013), largely using data from estates and gamekeepers, improves our knowledge of this species supplementary to that stated in 'The Birds of Lancashire' 2008.

The report states that 'Black Grouse were widespread in the Bowland Fells between the 1950s and 1970s' and goes on to tabulate and map some 22 former lek sites (all but one in Lancashire) that were occupied between the early 1970s and 1993. The main leks were at Gisburn Forest (30 cocks late 1970s), Thrushgill Plantation (25 cocks in 1983) and High Grains Plantation, the sole N Yorkshire site (30-40 birds in late 1970s). Other leks included Champion Moor (six males in 1990), Easington Fell (six males in 1989) and Longridge Fell (three males early 1970s) with the last records in the early 1990s from Catlow Fell (four in 1992) and Champion Moor (two in 1993). The report goes on to state that in the past decade there have been occasional sightings of Black Grouse in the north-east Bowland Fells.

Interestingly, following the widespread clear-felling at some of the plantations mentioned above, the sites are now eminently suitable once again for this species.

RED GROUSE *Lagopus lagopus*

Common breeding resident.

The annual systematic counts undertaken by the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust on four shooting estates in Bowland gave a mean spring density of 69.5 birds/100ha, virtually identical to the 69 birds/100ha in 2016. Production was fairly good with a ratio of 2.3 young to one old, with the July density over double that recorded in 2016 (100 birds/100ha) at 207 birds/100ha; very close to the recent peak of 212 birds/100ha in 2014. Given this better-than-average productivity, the shooting season across Bowland was described as 'pretty good, with one or two excellent results' with the largest bag in one day thought to be the 960 shot on just a single beat of the Abbeystead Estate in late August.

The almost unbroken distribution and considerable population across the heather moors of Bowland were illustrated by over 300 casual records received from 44 areas of fell. The most notable were 40 on Hawthornthwaite Fell on 29 Dec, 22 at Birk Bank on 14 Feb, 20 on Brennand Fell in May and June, 20 at Cross of Greet on 24 June and 19 at Clougha on 5 Jan, with several other double-figure counts.

The Lancaster Winter Bird Survey recorded 63 birds. Several reports were received from the outlying Bowland fells, with twelve on Caton Moor on 1 Nov, eight males on Waddington Fell on 8 April, five on Grindleton Fell on 3 Feb, and at least eight on Jeffrey Hill on 17 July, whilst the single on Nicky Nook on 12 May was the first record received from that isolated hill for several years. The maximum count from Pendle hill was 14 on 11 Dec with two on the adjacent Twiston Moor on 24 May.

Away from Bowland, the Lancashire section of the South Pennines is another major area for the species but from which records are rarely received. Four pairs seen with young on Boulsworth Hill on 16 July and 25 near Cant Clough Reservoir on 1 Sept were the only reports of note from this area in 2017.

No records were received from the Rossendale moors. In the West Pennine Moors, counts by gamekeepers in April realised 93 pairs over Darwen/Turton Moors, four young were seen on Winter Hill on 4 Aug and a pair bred next to the A675 just north of Belmont Reservoir for the first time since the large wildfire of 2011. Fifty-four were reported during a shoot on Belmont Moor on 19 Aug with 55 likewise on 14 Oct. Records from the eastern parts of the West Pennine Moors included successful breeding on Haslingden Moor and Scholes Height.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa*

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

The number of records received was up significantly from 303 in 2016 to 532 this year with the number of sites also increasing from 105 in 2016 to 170 this year. Across the UK an estimated 6.3 million were released in 2004, which had increased to 8.9 million just eight years later and has undoubtedly risen further since. In contrast, the native Grey represents less than 3% (numerically 170,000) of the partridges released in the UK.

The rising trend of releases, often in large numbers into totally unsuitable habitats such as moorland or intensive arable land where it is seen purely as a put-and-take gamebird, is highlighted by the mere handful of records of confirmed breeding received: at Withnell Fold in August, MMWWT in September and considered probable at Lunt Meadows, whilst a female with 14 young at Littledale on 4 June and two pairs with young at Arkholme on 26 June were the most noteworthy.

The species is known for turning up in unusual locations, the one at Seaforth on 16 March being almost expected, but one caught in a mist-net at Rossall School on 8 April was more surprising. The largest counts received were 40 at Bretherton Eyes in January, 35 between Rainford and Simonswood Moss in October, 32 at Todderstaffe Hall on the Fylde in December with 32 at nearby Singleton in November, 30 at Hareden in Bowland in October with 25 nearby in Croasdale in December, 21 at Sollom in January along with many other double-figure counts.

The species was reported as being very numerous (and very tame) across the south-west mosses.

Up to three Chukar or Red-legged x Chukar hybrids were at Marton Mere in April to June. The origin of these birds was unknown and was surprising as releasing the species (usually the hybrids) was banned as long ago as 1992.

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix*

Common resident in the west, scarce resident in the east. Long term decline.

The number of records submitted was not dissimilar to 2016, with 201 received in comparison to 209 last year but far lower than the 390 in 2015. The number of locations was 109 in 2017 in comparison with 107 last year and 130 in 2015.

There are signs that the national decline may be bottoming out, possibly due to the widespread uptake of agri-environmental schemes designed to benefit farmland birds. However, the population continues to be limited by poor summer weather suppressing young production, intensive farming practices in many areas and a broad proliferation of generalist predators. Thankfully, the decline in Lancashire has been less dramatic than the 60% fall reported nationally between 1995 and 2015. However, the species is now absent or at a perilously low level across much of the upland east and is only still common in pockets of the arable west despite a more widespread distribution west of the M6. The county population is now undoubtedly less than the 1250 pairs estimated in the Lancashire Bird Atlas, probably below 1000 pairs.

In north Lancashire a better showing than recent years resulted in ten at Cockerham Moss Edge on 23 Jan, nine at Middleton on 10 Sept with one at Leighton Moss on New Year's Eve noteworthy, as were breeding season pairs in Roeburndale, Littledale and central Lancaster. On the Fylde, only 34 records (46 in 2016 and 112 in 2015) were reported from 16 sites (19 in 2016 and 26 in 2015) with the ten at Bryning Hall Lane on 23 Jan and seven at Ridge Farm on 29 Oct the largest counts whilst a scattering of pairs from nine sites in the breeding season gave at least some cause for optimism. A pair was at Preston Dock in September.

Numbers continue to decline in east Lancashire with nine sites supplying 15 records in 2017 in comparison with 19 records from 19 sites in 2016 and the recent maximum of 43 records (albeit only from only twelve sites) in 2013. Pairs were territorial at Swinden Reservoir, Extwistle Hall and the Dunsop Valley in the breeding season.

Records were received from seven sites in Rossendale with the maximum being seven at Stacksteads in August. In the West Pennine Moors, two pairs were territorial on the moorland edge near Belmont in the breeding season, with a covey of 15 at Belmont Reservoir in August and September.

The south-west, from the Ribble through to Liverpool, supplied a good number of records in 2017. The largest counts were of 25 at Ainsdale on 16 Jan, 20 near Sollom on 29 Jan, 14 on Longton Marsh on 16 Nov, 13 on Hesketh Out Marsh on 10 Dec, twelve at Great Altcar on 17 Jan, twelve at Scarisbrick on 7 Jan and at least 19 on Croston, Mawdesley and Bretherton Mosses in October and November. There were a dozen other records in high single figures from the south-west mosses plus five at Aintree in August, eight at Lunt Meadows (where probably two pairs bred), three at Cabin Hill in March and pairs on Hesketh East and West Out Marshes notable, albeit none bred at Marshside. The area south of Liverpool continues to host decent numbers. Twelve were at Liverpool Airport on 12 Jan and birds were calling at four sites in the Tarbock and Cronton areas in June with later three coveys totalling 20 at Oglet and two coveys totalling 17 near Speke in October.

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*

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

The best year for Quail in Lancashire since 2011 with 13 singing birds reported from ten sites in 2017. All were on the lowland mosses of the south-west and the Fylde, particularly Over Wyre.

The first of the year was one singing near Maghull on 12 May. Thereafter, singing birds were recorded from the south-west at Hesketh Out Marsh on 22 May, Crawford on 7 June, Longton Marsh from 17 to 24 May and at least two on Bretherton Moss from 9 July to 2 Aug, the latter date being the county's last record in 2017. The Over Wyre mosses of the Fylde provided six singing birds from four sites, with up to three at Bone Hill between 28 May and 22 June, singles on Stalmine Moss from 21 to 24 June, at Bradshaw Lane Head on 25 June and at St Michaels-on-Wyre on 22 July. Elsewhere on the Fylde, one was singing on Lytham Moss on 24 July.

PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus*

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

Over 4000 records were received, indicating the Pheasant's widespread distribution in the county, but doing little to reflect on the vast numbers of birds released which are far in excess of the numbers

reported below. Nationally, an estimated 35 million were released in 2004 increasing to 43 million just eight years later, with an some 13 million shot annually and the UK population estimated to have increased by a notable 70% between 1970 and 2015 (CBC/BBS data).

Going off these figures above, the largest counts received of 400 at Belmont in the West Pennine Moors in October, 350 at Leighton Moss in September, 300 at Feniscowles Old Hall near Blackburn in July and 130 between Rainford and Simonswood in October are clearly unrepresentative.

Double-figure counts were widespread across the county but some more interesting records included 15 on the island at Belmont Reservoir in February, 80 at Foulscates in Bowland in September, 47 at Singleton on 27 Oct, 15 at Aintree in January and 30 on Caton Moor in November.

Notwithstanding the 350 at Leighton Moss, the maximum counts from reserves included 15 at MMWWT, twelve at Marton Mere, eleven at Mere Sands Wood and nine at Brockholes.

Breeding was only reported from eleven sites. These included six sites in east Lancashire, three pairs at Lunt Meadows, a nest at Belmont containing 16 eggs by 18 April with the gamekeeper there reporting some ten broods of small young later in early June, albeit many perished in the wet weather that followed.



Pheasant taking temporary refuge in a Liverpool garden, March (Steve Young)

RED-THROATED DIVER *Gavia stellata*

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

International importance: 10000. National importance: 170.

The year began with one at Heysham on New Year's Day and three at Rossall Point, followed by nine offshore off Formby on the 28th. Rossall produced a count of two on 5 Feb with 29 and 14 at Blackpool on the 7th and 22nd respectively.

Spring passage began in March and included 60+ at Formby Point on the 15th and a single-day peak of 18 at Heysham on the 24th, the largest flock being a count of seven. Forty-three were off Blackpool on the 26th with 48 the following day when nine were at Rossall.

April sightings included a maximum count of 16 at Rossall on the 23rd, possibly some of the same birds making up the count of 14 at Heysham the same day. Three were off Blackpool on the 6th with 16 there the next day, 25 on the 24th and 21 on the 26th. Formby Point sightings included three on the 11th, eight on the 22nd and five on the 25th. Heysham recorded 38 bird-days and the monthly total from Rossall Point was 24.

Spring passage petered out during in May but one was off Blackpool on 20 June.

Autumn return passage started in September with 22 for the month at Rossall Point (16 on the 16th), 22 at Blackpool on the 17th followed by 59 on the 16th and 20 on the 20th; two were at Formby Point on the 23rd. Later 18 were off the Blackpool coast on 29-30 Sept. October saw singles on three days at Heysham and four at Rossall Point.

Remarkably nine were at Stocks Reservoir for 35 minutes on 7 Oct, with one still present 90 minutes later. One was off Morecambe on the 25th and intermittent ones and twos off Heysham during November and December, with the last of the year on 31 Dec.

BLACK-THROATED DIVER *Gavia arctica*

Uncommon annual winter visitor, mostly on coast.

The only early spring passage record was one off Formby Point on 25 April. At the other end of the year one was in the mouth of the Mersey on 3 Oct, and another off Rossall Point on 27-28 Oct.

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER *Gavia immer*

Scarce, less than annual, mostly on coast.

Singles were reported from Blackpool on 6 Feb, Fairhaven Beach on 12 Feb, and Blackpool on 9 & 28 May.

At the other end of the year a juvenile was on Parsonage Reservoir from 12-14 December, and one at Dean Clough Reservoir (possibly the same bird) on 15 Dec.

LEACH'S PETREL *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

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

An early solitary individual was seen off Formby Point on the 19 Aug.

Blustery weather over the period 10-13 Sept produced sightings up and down the coast from Heysham to Liverpool. Notably on the 11th 17 were at Heysham, 15 at Knott End, 28 off the Blackpool coast and 15 in and around the mouth of the Mersey. The following day a handful of records were all of ones and twos while on the 13th six were back at Heysham, nine were counted south past Ainsdale/Formby and at least 80 were in the Mersey Narrows. A few were still around the Mersey mouth on the 14th and three were at Blackpool on the 20th.

Birds appeared throughout October, typically no more than three at any one time, along the whole of the coast – apart from six off Blackpool on the 4th and a similar number at Heysham on the



Leach's Petrel, Mersey Narrows, 13 September (Steve Young)

17th. The last of the year were singles off Crosby shore on 4 Nov and at Knott End on the 23rd.

FULMAR *Fulmarus glacialis*

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

A typical trickle of sightings between April and September followed one off Blackpool on 21 March. In April singles were off Formby Point (9th), Heysham (12th), Rossall Point (21st), and Blackpool (14-15th & 21st). Two were together at Blackpool on 12 April and at Heysham 14 & 18 May and Blackpool also on the on 18th.

In June two were again at Heysham (7th) and one (15th), at Rossall Point eleven (6th) and six (7th), off Blackpool singles (4th, 11-12th) 27 (6th) and five (7th); one was off Formby Point in the month.

There were no records in July, three in August (singles at Formby Point 19th and Blackpool 12th & 17th) and several in September: two at Knott End on the 10th with five the following day, one off the Blackpool coast intermittently on the 4-10th with up to seven over the next three days. Singles were off Seaforth on 11 Sept and Heysham on the 13th.

MANX SHEARWATER *Puffinus puffinus*

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

Slightly earlier than last year and in larger numbers, the first birds were off Formby Point on 11 April (38) followed by nine (13th), 47 (16th) and seven (25th). Towards the end of the month three were at Heysham (27th), ten at Rossall Point (23rd), while at Blackpool there were 113 (22nd), 100 (24th) and 120 (27th)

In May Blackpool again had large numbers: 107 (8th), 696 (20th) and 160 (21st), eleven were at Formby (20th) and five at Fleetwood (17th) with all other records from Heysham: two on 16 & 20th, nine on 12th and six on the 15th. June records included Fleetwood 86 (6th) 19 (7th) and four (17th), with 70 at Formby (12th) and six at Rossall Point (24th). Blackpool again had large and consistent numbers with peaks of 224 and 176 at the beginning of the month, 157 mid-month and 177 and 246 at the month's end.

July records were all from Blackpool: 40 on the 11th, ten on the 14th & 21st, 21 on the 19th and eight on the 20th. Seven were still present here on the 3 Aug with one at Heysham and six at Formby on the 19th.

The year finished with singles at Cockersand , Heysham and Otterspool between the 12th to 14th, with Blackpool still holding on with a maximum of eight recorded up until the 13th. Ten were off Formby Point on the 13th.

Three inland records were notable: singles at Preston Dock on 16 Sept, in a Wray garden the same day, and one picked up from the edge of the Leeds-Liverpool Canal at Rishton on 19 October, taken into care overnight and released at Ainsdale the following evening.

SOOTY SHEARWATER *Puffinus griseus*

Vagrant

One flew west past Knott End then Fleetwood Promenade on 6 June (CG Batty). This was the first record since one off Seaforth in September 2009.

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	13	14	13	1	8	2	21	21	35	23	11	12

Records were received from all usual sites, the most notable of which was the first ever breeding attempt at Belmont Reservoir; believed to have been successful. Breeding was confirmed at another nine sites including Lunt Meadows (6 juveniles from three pairs), Brookside Lodges (5, three pairs), Leighton Moss (3), Marshside (3, three pairs), Houghter Fall Farm (3) Wood End Sewage Works (3, one pair), Common Bank Lodge (3) with singles at Middleton NR, Conder Green and Lee Green Reservoir. Juveniles were also recorded at Brockholes and Mere Sands Wood but these could have



Juvenile Little Grebe, Sefton Park, Liverpool, 31 October (Steve Young)

resulted from post-breeding dispersal. Attempted unsuccessful breeding occurred at a handful of further sites.

Post-breeding dispersal and winter concentrations produced the highest counts. From the former there were (maxima): 14 at Conder Pool (Sept); 15 at Leighton Moss and Condor Green (Sept); 14 Glasson (Sept); 12, Barrow Scout (Aug); 11 Silverdale Moss (Aug); and nine Aldcliffe (Aug). Most notable winter numbers were: twelve Condor Pool (Oct) and 10 (Jan); 15 Southport Marine Lake (Jan); 14 Sefton Park Liverpool (Feb); twelve Conder (Oct) and nine (Feb); ten Thornton ICI Reservoir (Jan) and eight Lunt Meadows and Mere Sands Wood. In addition smaller numbers were reported from another 45 sites.

Riverine sightings, all during winter months, came from Ribchester on the Ribble, Ightenhill, Altham and Whalley on the Calder, and Feniscowles on the Darwen.

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	7	3	7	4	6	8	6	4	5	2	1	0
Foulridge Res	12	/	14	6	18	11	/	8	12	16	13	22
Brockholes	3	3	7	4	6	8	6	4	5	2	1	0
Carr Mill Dam	28	41	42	38	36	36	/	33	43	31	42	/

Carr Mill Dam produced the greatest number of juveniles (from a minimum of twelve pairs) with three present in May rising to eight in June and 16 in August. Elsewhere, breeding was conclusive at twelve other sites with juveniles present: Leighton Moss, Belmont Reservoir, Brockholes, Clowbridge, Croston Twin Lakes, Foulridge, Preesall Flashes, Barrow Lodge, Heapey Lodges, Yarrow Valley, Anglezarke and MMWWT. Although breeding was attempted it was unsuccessful at Seaforth, Springs Reservoir, Calf Hey, Cuerden Valley Park, and Holden Wood. Of the four pairs at Mere Sands Wood no successful breeding was reported.

The first winter period witnessed 58 from the January Alt WeBS count, 22 off Blackpool the same month and with 13 off Formby Point in Marc). Numbers off Heysham were exceptionally poor with a peak of only three seen, in January. Elsewhere, there were 13 at the Dockacres complex, eight at Dean Clough Reservoir, ten at Pine Lake and six at Rishton Reservoir. Seventeen were offshore at

Southport and 14 off Jenny Brown's Point both in May.

At the other end of the year 15 were present on the Alt (Dec WeBS), nine at Bare (Oct), eight at Pine Lake (Nov), eight at Dean Clough (Dec) and six at both Mere Sands Wood (Nov) and Rishton Reservoir (Dec). Sixteen were at Teal Bay on the 18 Dec.

Throughout the year birds were reported from another 28 sites without details.

SLAVONIAN GREBE *Podiceps auritus*

Scarce winter visitor.

After no records in 2015 and only one individual for half a day in April 2016 at Heysham, this year was noteworthy. A juvenile frequented the Alston and Longridge reservoirs from 30 Sept to 16 Nov, a single was present for the Morecambe Bay South WeBS count on 9 Nov, and two were seen at Heysham on 15 Nov.

BLACK-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps nigricollis*

Scarce visitor, mostly in spring and autumn.

International importance: 2800. National importance: 50.

A juvenile was at MMWWT from on 21-23 Aug and another on Pine Lake on 1 Dec.

SPOONBILL *Platalea leucorodia*

Scarce visitor, has bred.

Birds appeared at two regular sites, the Ribble Marshes and Leighton Moss/Eric Morecambe complex.

The first at Marshside on 16 April was seen regularly until 14 June at various sites south of the Ribble and at Freckleton Naze; two were at MMWWT on 4 & 25 June.

The six that turned up at Leighton Moss on 3 May were joined by another the following day and numbers held at around that level for a week or so before reducing to three for much of the summer with the last on 29 July.

One at Marshside on 16 Sept was the only report in the county later in the year.

BITTERN *Botaurus stellaris*

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

Birds were present in the first winter period at Leighton Moss (2+), Middleton, Brockholes (2), Marton Mere (2), Fleetwood, MMWWT (booming for one week but not staying), Mere Sands Wood, Arley NR and a small site in Northwood, Kirkby. Most appeared to have departed by mid-March but one remained at Marton Mere on 2 April and another at MMWWT on the 19th.

A male was booming half-heartedly at Lunt Meadows from 3 April to 2 May but there was no sign of a female. A 'grunting' bird was heard at Leighton Moss during late March with two birds seen gull-calling and then landing together in the reedbed on 2 April. There were two sightings each at Leighton Moss and Barrow Scout during May but a bird was seen flying east over Yealand at dusk on a date in late May and there were no further records.

The earliest autumn records were singles at Marton Mere from 25 June – with an additional bird there in November and December – at MMWWT on 3 July, with this or another there on 6 & 8 Sept, and Leighton Moss from 5 Sept. One at Brockholes from 27 Oct also remained well into December at least, while one at Lunt Meadows was seen only on 18 & 22 Dec.

CATTLE EGRET* *Bubulcus ibis*

Scarce visitor in increasing numbers.

Up to six remained from 2016 at Birkdale, roosting at Southport Marine Lake, until 25 March. After that it seems likely that these birds moved to the north Ribble marshes from 29 March where they were joined by others, with up to ten reported from Warton, Saltcotes and Freckleton Naze until 27 April. Three at MMWWT on 4 April were also presumably members of this flock.

A separate flock of up to three was present in the north, feeding at Yealand Storrs and roosting at Leighton Moss, between 2 March and 23 May; one flying past Knott End on 11 May (C Batty) may have been one of these birds.

Singles were reported at MMWWT on 14 June and 15-16 July and Conder Green on 20 July. Up to six, including at least one juvenile, were in the Southport area and occasionally north of the Ribble from 21 July until the end of the year. Meanwhile, up to three were again at Yealand Storrs/Leighton Moss from 10 Aug into 2018, two of them being seen on Silverdale Moss on 22-27 Oct; one was at Cockerham on 7 Dec.

The most exciting record of the year, however, was east Lancashire's first at Stocks Reservoir on 12 June (A Jones).



Cattle Egrets, Birkdale, 14 February (Steve Young)

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

Scarce breeding resident.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Ribble WeBS	3	5	8	7	5	10	50	43	27	22	24	20
MBS WeBS	21	4	13	10	15	13	30	37	26	31	5	17

Number of active nests at monitored Heronries

North Lancashire		Fylde	
Ashton Hall Lake	6	Hackensall Wood	6
Skerton Weir	11	Stanley Park	7+
Centre Farm, Forton	6	Lea Gate	7+
Rough Hey Wood, Cloughton	25	Chorley	
Churchfield House	34	Cuerden VP	2
East Lancashire		West Pennine Moors	
Winckley Hall	40 (individuals)	Rivington	27
Skirden Beck	18 (individuals)	Delph Plantations	8
Water Meetings, Blacko	Present	Entwistle Plantations	33
Stocks Reservoir	4	Rossendale	
Jackhouse	Present	Warth, Waterfoot	12
		Merseyside	
		Cabin Hill	1

Other double-figure counts away from breeding sites included 16 at MMWWT in August, 15 at Baldernstone in February and Burholme in August, 14 at Brockholes in the early year (presumably birds from the Bezza Wood colony), twelve at Lytham Jetty in July and August, eleven at Seaforth in August and ten on Hesketh Out Marsh in November.



Juvenile Grey Heron, Victoria Park, Nelson, 2 August (Mike Jackson)

PURPLE HERON *Ardea purpurea*
Vagrant.



Purple Heron, Leighton Moss, 26 August (Paul Ellis)

A well-watched juvenile was at Leighton Moss from 18 Aug to 27 Oct, when seen to fly off high to the south just prior to dusk (K Kelly). This was the fifteenth county record but only the third this century, the last being at MMWWT and Mere Sands Wood in September 2010; perhaps unsurprisingly eleven of these have been at Leighton Moss.

GREAT WHITE EGRET *Ardea alba*

Scarce but increasing , mostly in winter.

Monthly totals

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Leighton Moss	1	2	6	4	3	1	0	1	2	1	4	3
Ribble Marshes	2	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	4	5	3	3

The table gives a fair representation of the minimum number present in the county each month although Great White Egrets are known to wander and most records from other sites in the vicinity of the two main areas are probably not different birds. Almost all records on the Ribble were at Marshside or Warton Bank and Freckleton with other south Fylde records probably involving the same birds.

However, one that was present at Glasson/Conder Green from January to March was almost certainly an additional bird, as were those seen away from the coastal sites.

Birds were back on the Ribble by 24 Sept and up to five were present on both sides of the river until the end of the year.

In Chorley there were singles at Anglezarke Reservoir on 1 Sept, Yarrow Valley Park and Bretherton Eyes from 21 Oct until mid-December, making occasional visits to Mawdesley and Croston Mosses on 24 Nov; two were near Sollom on 27 Nov.

One was at Brockholes on 10 Oct and singles were reported from Clowbridge Reservoir on 6 April, Primrose Lodge, Clitheroe on 8 May, Mitton Bridge on 8 & 9 May, Hurstwood Reservoir on 18 Oct and Brownsills (Great Harwood) on 11 Nov. Probably just one was seen in Rossendale, at Townsendfold on 15 Dec and Calf Hey Reservoir on the 17th.

LITTLE EGRET *Egretta garzetta*

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

National importance: 50

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	27	14	59	48	22	22	101	92	98	142	58	33
LM/EMC	42	49	55	48	6	7	79	132	156	92	77	12
Ribble WeBS	23	38	82	36	22	26	83	70	134	121	75	84
Warton/Freckleton	/	/	62	/	/	/	/	/	74	/	/	/
Southport sites	72	16	23	10	20	10	/	/	30	43	/	11
Fairhaven Lake	1	3	3	1	2	1	43	4	31	44	1	/
Conder/Glasson	3	4	3	4	6	10	20	22	40	15	8	2

Little Egrets are now recorded throughout the county, although most are still seen near the coast at the main sites in the table above, which suggests a peak population in early autumn of 300 or so with around 120 wintering.

The majority of records in east Lancashire were of one or two birds but there were counts of six at Sawley on 3 March and Stocks Reservoir on 8 May, nine at Lower Foulridge Reservoir on 29 July and ten at Sawley on 28 Dec. Ones and twos were seen in Chorley at a dozen or sites throughout the year, while one roosted with herons in the West Pennine Moors in September; the only Rossendale records were singles at Clowbridge Reservoir on 2 July and Townsendfold on 15 Aug. In the far north-east one was on the Lune at Arkholme on 15 April.

The Southport Marine Lake colony fledged five juveniles and 14 pairs nested at Ashton Hall, where 173 were present on 27 Aug and 115 on 7 Dec.

GANNET *Morus bassanus*

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

Spring passage at Heysham produced 302 bird-days on 25 dates between 17 March and 28 May with peaks of 100 on 27 April and 81 on 14 May. At Formby Point counts reached a maximum of 133 on 11 April, falling to 25 on the 25th and then 15 on 20 May. Off the Blackpool coast peaks of three were seen in March, 75 in April and 151 in May. The only other record was one at Cockersand on 21 May.

Between June and September Heysham had a peak count of eleven on four dates in June with only two birds seen in July. Twelve were off Formby Point on 7 June with two there on 19 Aug. Off Blackpool 151 were present in May (21st), 240 in June (6th) and 130 (24th), with counts of 60+ on the 7 & 17 Aug and ten in September. A flurry of birds around Knott End and Rossall Point culminated with 164 on 7 June and ten in July-September. A juvenile was at Leighton Moss on 10 Sept, with one at Marton Mere on the 12th (only the second record for this site) and four at Cockersand on the 13th.

Gales in October produced 36 at Rossall Point with twelve at Heysham on the 2nd and then seven on the 4th.



Gannet, Pilling Lane, 26 August (Paul Ellis)

SHAG *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

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

Apart from individuals at Blackpool in March, including three on the 26th, Rossall Point and Blackpool in May and Cockersand in October, most sightings were from Heysham: a first-winter on the wooden jetty from 30 Jan to 2 Feb and a juvenile on 11 Sept, 22 & 28 Oct and then six dates between 24 Nov and 24 Dec.

One was at Dockacres in January.

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

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

International importance: 1200. National importance: 350.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	186	199	231	108	35	27	173	186	134	266	164	119
Ribble WeBS	343	523	327	205	180	74	144	412	258	937	606	1140
Alt WeBS	250	147	171	322	311	234	275	664	558	867	296	242
Brockholes	18	21	28	24	4	10	9	21	50	57	40	/
Stocks Res	/	60	/	14	3	12	36	74	74	70	63	19
Rivington Res	54	111*	104	7	/	/	/	/	/	36	40	53
Mere Sands	20	37	29	12	2	7	36	135	1000	450	12	8
Seaforth	140	100	180	126	120	90	280	280	621	432	160	145

*A new record count for West Pennine Moors

The largest counts were reported from predominantly winter roosts at coastal sites (see table), the exception once again being the very large nocturnal autumn roosts at Mere Sands Wood.

Other double-figure counts included 45 at Jenny Brown's Point in March, 82 at Rossall Point and 80 at Leighton Moss (both in October), and 33 at Holden Wood Reservoir in November. Another 200 or more sites returned counts of less than 50 sometime in the year with even more sites witnessing presence of even smaller numbers fewer than ten at some point.

All previous large counts at Seaforth have involved daytime roosts and, although Cormorants were known also to roost there overnight, no nocturnal assemblies had been properly counted prior to 15 Sept, when 621 were watched leaving the reserve.

Twenty-five freshwater sites reported mainly single-figure counts except for winter roosts. Notable amongst these were Clowbridge Reservoir (30), Slipper Hill Reservoirs (56 in February and 42 in November), Foulridge Reservoir (35 in February), Holden Wood Reservoir (at least 43 throughout the winter) and Delph Reservoir (18 in October). Freckleton Naze had counts of over 50 during the winter, 58 were at MMWWT in January and at the other end of the scale one at Victoria Park, Burnley from September to the year's end was the first record for this site.

Several reports of continental *sinensis* were received from Hesketh Out Marsh in September and one at Preston Dock on 3 Nov.

A breeding colony has been thriving just over the Cheshire border at Hale Duck Decoy on the Mersey for several years but we await the first breeding records in Lancashire.

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

Fairly common passage migrant.

The first were single(s) at Heysham, Knott End and Fleetwood on 24 March and 21 had been seen by the end of the month. At least 43 followed during April and 35 during May, bringing the spring passage to 100.

There was a handful of records in east Lancashire during June and early July that may have related to a single bird, perhaps a non-breeding sub-adult.

Throughout the summer birds (mostly the male) from Foulshaw Moss in Cumbria, where they have nested for five years, made regular fishing trips to Leighton Moss. One on the Grane reservoirs in Rossendale from 23 May to 2 June was fishing successfully throughout.

The first new July bird flew over Lunt Meadows on the 2nd but three flew south over Arkholme on the 13th. The passage movement gained strength in the first week of August and continued until 12 Oct, and involved around 30 birds, a relatively high total for autumn. The most remarkable record was three at Lower Foulridge Reservoir on 22 Aug.

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

Fairly common breeding resident.

As usual there is little new to be said about a species which is present throughout the county and whose breeding population is thought to be more or less stable. The Lancaster & District January survey, for example, located 16 birds, a typical total.

The only definite breeding information received was of a successful pair at Hesketh Golf Course, two pairs at Heysham, two pairs around Haslingden Grane, one in Wheelton Plantation and three or four pairs in east Lancashire – hardly a representative sample!

Away from nest sites Sparrowhawks are almost always seen singly but there were a few records of three or four together, presumably family groups, in south Fylde and at Brockholes and Moor Piece.



Sparrowhawk, Savick Park, Preston, 14 November (Geoff Gradwell)

A high-flying northbound migrant was seen at Heysham on 26 March with three there the following day. Autumn migrants there comprised singles on 15 Sept, 28 Sept, 8 Oct, 27 Oct and twos on 26 Sept, 19 Oct and 6 Nov. As usual Seaforth logged the only other probable migrants with three south on 29 Oct.

GOSHAWK *Accipiter gentilis*

Rare feral breeding resident and escapee.

We usually have very little to say about the small and elusive Lancashire population so this year was a pleasant surprise.

A male was in a West Pennine Moors plantation on 4 Jan with a further brief sighting at the same site on 21 Feb considered probable, and another male was seen over a different plantation in the central West Pennine Moors on 15 April. There were no further sightings at either site despite checks but that was not surprising.

The only report received from east Lancashire was of a pair at Low Moor, Clitheroe on 13 April. For the second consecutive year there were no reports from the traditional Bowland site. In Rossendale a male was at Calf Hey Reservoir on 4 March and one flew over Crawshawbooth, mobbed by three Buzzards, on 10 Aug.

A large hawk flying west over Yarrow Valley Way in Chorley on 18 June was probably a Goshawk in the opinion of the observer, while one of unknown origin was reported at Adlington on 5 Nov and again in early December.

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

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

The Lancaster & District January survey located five birds, presumably all in the Leighton Moss area where three were seen regularly during the first winter period. A minimum of two juveniles wintered on the Ribble Marshes, reported mainly from Warton Bank and Hesketh Out Marsh, while one or two were seen on the south-west mosses.

There were a few more at the other end of the year with at least four on the south Ribble Marshes and three – probably with some overlap – on the north bank of the river. Up to nine were seen fairly regularly at MMWWT in late November and December, but surprisingly there were no other second winter reports on the south-west mosses.

At Leighton Moss two males and two females fledged four and three young. A pair again nested at the same site on the south-west mosses, raising at least one young which was seen in August at Lunt Meadows, where the breeding birds were last seen on 22 Oct; an immature male seen there on 5 May was perhaps one of the previous year's offspring. One at Lytham Marsh on 14 & 18 June was also probably a non-breeding bird.

There were several records of migrants away from the breeding sites in spring, including singles at Bretherton Eyes on 21 & 31 March, Heysham-Middleton on 22 April and 8 & 12 May, Stocks Reservoir on 28 March, Marl Hill on 1 April, Stocks Reservoir on 30 April, Cabin Hill on 8 May, Plex Moss on 19 May and MMWWT on 18 March, 18-19 April and 1 May.

Autumn migrants were a little more numerous and were recorded in ones and twos at 20 sites in the Fylde; at least two female/immatures on three dates at Belmont in September and October; in Chorley at Bretherton Eyes on 25 & 29 Oct and Croston Moss on 30 Nov; in east Lancashire at Stocks Reservoir on 31 July and Yellowhills, Blackburn on 30 Aug; at Brockholes on 14 & 19 Sept and 28 Oct, and in Roeburndale on 20 Aug. One at Cabin Hill on 24 Sept was the only coastal migrant in the south-west but up to five were at MMWWT during September, building to nine in late November.

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

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

The news does not get any better. For the second consecutive year no Hen Harriers nested in Bowland. Very few birds were seen there during the breeding season but a single immature male held territory in Croasdale from 11 April until 20 May; it displayed and built nests but did not succeed in attracting a mate. There were intermittent sightings of others, including two ringtails that joined the territory-holding bird in Croasdale on 7 May but were not seen subsequently.

Unlike in 2016 when the Field Vole population was at very low ebb, there was no shortage of food this year as demonstrated by the very successful season for Short-eared Owls. So the lack of any breeding attempt was doubly disappointing. The British breeding population is in serious trouble and only three pairs nested in England this year – in Northumberland. There is no doubt that persecution is the major cause, highlighted by birds found dead in 2017 with lead shot in them in Cumbria and Northumberland.

At least two ringtails, probably more, wintered on the Ribble Marshes in the early year, seen on both sides of the river, one identified as an adult female the other as a juvenile or immature male. Another ringtail that had been present in 2016 was seen regularly at Lunt Meadows until at least 1 Feb, but one at MMWWT on 31 March was the only other record elsewhere on the south-west mosses all year. At least one overwintered in Bowland but the only record anywhere else was seen at Haslingden on 2 Feb. Singles at Leighton Moss on 28 March and 16 May, and Banks Marsh on 6 May were presumably migrants.

The only clear-cut autumn migrants ringtails at Yellowhills, Blackburn on 19 Sept and Hog Lowe Pike, Haslingden Grane on the 28th.

Birds were at similar sites and in similar numbers during the second winter period, with a male and a ringtail in Bowland, and adult and a first-winter female on the Ribble Marshes and one at Lunt Meadows on 22 Oct. Elsewhere, ringtails were seen at Bretherton Eyes on 28 Oct and Rivington on 11 Dec, while in the Belmont area there was a ringtail on 27 Dec and an adult male from 29 Nov to at least 10 Dec – on the latter date it was observed hunting Snipe, in company with a female Merlin, during a snowstorm at Belmont Reservoir.

PALLID HARRIER *Circus macrourus*

Vagrant.

Following a report of a 'pale male harrier' seen briefly by Mick Demain and others over the previous few days, an adult male was first fully identified on 26 April in Whitendale (J Bray, Mark Breaks). It may have been present prior to this but mistaken for a male Hen Harrier. It held territory much as the Hen Harrier in Croasdale did, caching food, nest-building and sky-dancing above the heads of large numbers of birders who visited Bowland to watch it. The last sighting was on 14 May.

This was the second county record following a first-summer at Brockholes on 7 May 2016. The record has been accepted by the BBRC. Nationally, Pallid Harrier records have ballooned from an average of less than one a year in the 1990s, to two in the noughties and eleven since 2010 – its days as a national rarity are probably numbered.



**Male Pallid Harrier, Whitendale,
1 May (Paul Ellis)**

RED KITE *Milvus milvus*

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

Reports received continue to increase slowly but still without any hint of a breeding attempt.

In east Lancashire singles were seen at Grove Lane, Padiham on 4 & 7 March, Wood End Sewage Works on the 16th, Brungerley (Clitheroe) on the 24th, Alston on the 25th, Langden Castle on 3 April, Dunsop Bridge on the 5th, Nick of Pendle on the 30th, Champion Moor on 13 May, Higher Stoney Clough on 19 May, Whitendale on 18 June and Bashall Eaves on 23 July. It is impossible to judge how many individuals were involved but it may have been just one or two.

Similar numbers were seen in the south-west, including two records at MMWWT in May and five between 29 Sept and 26 Nov; one in the Homer Green/Altcar Withins area for several days at the end of November was likely to have been the latter bird. Others were seen at Bretherton on 26 Feb,

Ormskirk on 13 March, Mere Sands Wood two days later and Croston on the 21st – presumably just one bird.

Elsewhere, singles were at Belmont on 23 March, Oakenclough on 1 Dec and Brockholes on 7 & 24 March, 4 & 23 April and 28 May.

WHITE-TAILED EAGLE *Haliaeetus albicilla*

Vagrant.

An immature – possibly 3CY – bird was seen at Whitendale on 27-29 April at the same time as the Pallid Harrier (Mark Breaks, P Morris, T Parnell). This is the third record in Lancashire in the modern era, the previous ones were also in early spring: a 2CY bird over Stocks Reservoir on 12 March 2003 and a sub-adult over Seaforth on 15 April 2009

BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

Fairly common breeding resident.

Buzzards are now our most numerous raptor, almost ubiquitous in the lowlands but a little less common in the uplands, but as usual we received relatively few confirmed breeding records.

The Lancaster & District January survey located 52 birds.

In suitable weather conditions sizeable concentrations can be seen over open country; gatherings of five or more are fairly commonplace but larger groups this year included 21 at Brockholes on 4 March with 17 there on 2 April and eleven on 5 Dec, up to 20 at MMWWT in April and September to November, twelve at Leighton Moss on 2 April, eleven at Little Crosby in September and October, ten at Marton Mere in April and Myerscough Quarry in October, eight at Glasson in April and August, at Lunt Meadows throughout the year, Dunsop Bridge in May and Alston Wetland in August. The largest counts in Rossendale were five at Holden Wood Reservoir in February and Jamestone Quarry in August.

Migrating birds were again recorded at both Heysham and Seaforth. Counts at the latter site were lower this year due to reduced coverage but included seven flying north during April. Three northbound singles were seen at Heysham between 24 March and 17 April, while in autumn twos were seen on 19 & 26 Sept and singles on 27 Sept and 2 Nov. A flock of nine flew over Marshside on 17 Sept.

One observer described Buzzards as widespread in east Lancashire but only in ones and twos, with significantly fewer seen in the May to September breeding season. A pair in the Burnley area was known to have been persecuted and this is now thought to be extensive – a walk in south Bowland including the Hareden and Langden Valleys on 28 April recorded just one.

One spent much time digging for earthworms in molehills at Marshside in April and May, while another was seen to predate a Kestrel at Belmont on 5 Oct.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

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

No breeding census was carried out this year at Leighton Moss, the county's main breeding site. Breeding records from elsewhere were few and far between. In the south-west none was seen at MMWWT or Marshside, while breeding by one pair was thought possible at Lunt Meadows. Breeding was, however, proven in the Fylde when a brood of newly-hatched young were seen at Preesall Flashes on 17 May, and was probable at Marton Mere where there was a handful of records during summer. At least two were at Brockholes until at least 19 May so may have nested. The most remarkable record, though, was a skull found in a fresh Barn Owl pellet near Belmont on 30 June, suggesting the presence of the species locally in the breeding season.

As usual birds were much more numerous in winter, when Water Rails were reported from 55 localities – itself probably an underestimate. Almost all records were of single birds but this is an elusive species and it is very difficult to assess real numbers. Multiple records included nine on the Eric Morecambe complex, six at Marton Mere, five at Lunt Meadows, four at Brockholes, and three at Middleton NR, MMWWT and Marshside.

One was grounded on Billinge Hill on 30 Oct and one found dead next to a duck pen at Cowpe allotments in Rossendale on 3 Nov was presumably a casualty on migration.

CORNCRAKE* *Crex crex***Vagrant.**

One appeared briefly on the Reedbed Walk path at MMWWT on 18 Sept (C Richens). This was only our third record in the 21st century, the previous ones being a corpse found at Liverpool Pier Head in September 2002 and one at Grove Lane Marsh, Padiham on 17 May 2016.

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus***Very common resident breeder.**

Apart from the monthly peaks below, other large totals outside of the breeding season included 127 found during the Lancaster & District January survey, 86 at MMWWT, 36 at Marton Mere, 29 at Haslam Park, 25 on Eccleston Mere and at Taylor Park (both St Helens), 23 on Heron's Reach Golf Course, 21 on Fairhaven Lake and Carr Mill Dam, and 20 at Leighton Moss.

Breeding was as usual very widespread in most of the county but few detailed reports were received. Thirteen pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir where they benefitted from high water levels, twelve pairs at Marshside/Hesketh Golf Course, eleven at Leighton Moss and the Eric Morecambe complex, eight along the study section of the Leeds-Liverpool Canal at Aintree and at Lunt Meadows, where productivity was poor, and two on Hesketh Out Marsh.

Monthly peak counts

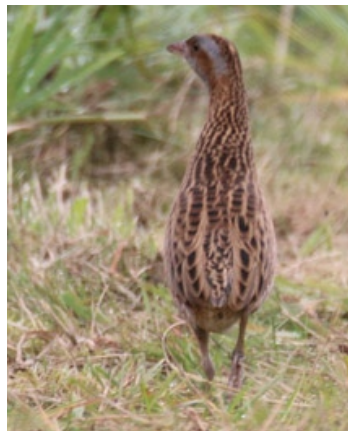
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	18	6	22	6	4	3	15	14	23	18	13	18
Ribble WeBS	58	26	51	29	11	8	21	24	22	22	48	18
Brockholes	11	10	5	6	5	12	20	13	12	16	19	17

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	78	61	64	28	19	/	39	115	110	66	88	67
Leighton Moss	140	148	35	38	30	20	80	96	85	110	/	/
Dockacres comp.	330	235	58	44	18	12	67	78	84	105	102	165
Brockholes	310	243	96	36	41	67	145	152	222	350	398	405
Marton Mere	285	142	140	22	/	20	110	137	170	330	/	260
Ribble WeBS	75	84	132	42	36	86	87	130	101	134	124	73
Southport ML	145	125	/	/	/	/	/	/	138	276	/	/
MMWWT	106	90	/	/	/	35	58	42	70	100	290	431

The Lancaster & District January survey recorded 537, mainly at Pine Lake and Leighton Moss. Other large counts included 300 on Eccleston Mere in January, 160 at Stanley Park, Blackpool in August, 147 at Alston Wetland/Reservoirs in January, 112 on Fairhaven Lake in October and 105 on Silverdale Moss in December.

Breeding records included 47 pairs at Marshside, 36 at Leighton Moss-Eric Morecambe complex, twelve at Lunt Meadows, eight at Brookside and six on the canal study area at Aintree.



Corncrake, Marton Mere, 18 September
(Chris Richens)

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	12899	12968	7440	6318	3449	1792	11178	13825	17237	21076	21997	13923
Ribble	13898	5938	3836	1116	860	970	2479	5385	5517	9311	7053	6714
Alt	4818	5445	2140	1879	2204	3756	4462	4456	6887	5382	4065	4517

Numbers using Seaforth as a roost site continued to rise with a record 3600 on 16 Jan followed by 4200 on 14 Feb and 4000+ on 1 March. A striking, leucistic bird with a white crown, face and nape was seen at St Anne's on 12 Feb.

Early movements inland in January included one at Dunsop Bridge on the 5th and nine on the 21st at Spade Mill Reservoirs. Six were at Alston Wetland on 22 Jan and the first arrived back at Belmont Reservoir the same day. More typically, birds arrived at Withnell Fold on 4 Feb. Larger early counts included 112 at Burholme on 13 Feb with 159 there on 3 March, 201 at Langden Bridge on 24 Feb and 159 at Stocks Reservoir on 15 March with 103 still present there on 10 April; 66 at Brockholes on 25 Feb was the highest count of the year there.

Widespread breeding included 89 pairs alongside the Lune between Skerton Weir and Kirby Lonsdale, six pairs at Crossens Inner/Outer Marsh, 16 at Marshside, 20 at Hesketh Out Marsh and 26 on the Eric Morecambe complex. Two pairs bred at Lunt Meadows and five at Belmont Reservoir but these only fledged two young due to gull predation. Several pairs bred in the Brennand Valley, while RSPB monitoring found 80 pairs breeding over 33 Bowland farms. Away from Belmont Reservoir, at least 13 other pairs were territorial in the West Pennine Moors including at least seven pairs that mostly just summered on farmland. Of the more intriguing breeding locations, a pair bred at the Wrea Green solar farm on the Fylde, while a pair on the roof of Poundstretcher in central Burnley fledged two juveniles. Sailing club members at Delph Reservoir again successfully protected a pair that fledged two young in the middle of the car park.

One of the largest inland post-breeding flocks was 40 on three dates in early-mid July at Stocks Reservoir where 38 remained on 4 Aug, while 14 were still in the Belmont area on 27 July with the last there on 20 Aug. Other counts of note were 20 at Alston Wetland on 19 July and 15 at Parsonage Reservoir on 20 July

AVOCET *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Recently established scarce breeding bird, uncommon passage migrant.

National Importance: 75

The first to return were two at Marshside and five at MMWWT on 19 Feb, followed by two at the Eric Morecambe complex on the 23rd; by 6 March ten were at Hesketh Out Marsh and ten at Warton Marsh on the 11th were he first back in the Fylde. Two at Belmont Reservoir on 12 March was locally notable, the birds roosting there overnight.

Numbers at the main sites built up quickly, with the highest counts in March, with 100 at MMWWT on the 19th and 105 at Marshside on the 24th. Four at Lytham Jetty on 23 March were unexpected, as was one by Ocean Edge saltmarsh, Heysham on the 27th and three at Alexandra Dock, Liverpool on 3 April. Singles were at Brockholes and Preston Dock on 22 May and three at Seaforth on 21 May with a juvenile there on 15-16 July.

Breeding information was incomplete. There were 36 pairs at Marshside, a further ten pairs at Crossens Marsh and 29 at Hesketh Out Marsh. Breeding on the Fylde included four pairs at Warton Marsh, while at Conder Green, three pairs had nine young on 18 June. At the Eric Morecambe complex, of 22 breeding pairs, all first broods were predated at the egg or young stage by Carrion Crows and Black-headed Gulls. Four pairs relaid, which produced just one fledged youngster.

Numbers reduced noticeably at breeding sites by late June. Even so, 60 were still at MMWWT on 6 July and two remained at Conder Green on the 27th. In August up to four were at the Eric Morecambe complex, eleven at MMWWT and 20 at Hesketh Out Marsh before a further departure by the last week of the month. The last were at the Eric Morecambe complex on 14 Oct, Marshside on the 27th, MMWWT on the 29th and late birds at Crossens on 6 Nov.

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	8165	4965	314	44	71	153	2722	1720	2793	6838	5702	3230
Ribble WeBS	6598	5807	409	100	186	209	268	1090	1470	6427	6202	5642
MMWWT	1410	2500	/	/	/	/	284	400	1000	1264	1583	1380
Marshside	800	2000	/	/	40	/	/	/	616	4500	1000	3000

A wintering flock of up to 400 was recorded on fields between Brindle and Withnell Fold on 4 Jan, increasing to over 600 by 17 Feb. Up to 200 were at Fishmoor Reservoir on 19 Jan and 200 were at Bretherton Eyes throughout January and early February. A large increase in the early part of the year at Brockholes peaked at 921 on 1 Feb, while 510 were at Alston Wetland on the 8th, 450 at Ightenhill on the 24th and 400 at Burholme on the 26th; 470 at Belmont Reservoir on 16 Feb was the highest count there since 1982.

In early spring flock sizes started to reduce but there were still 110 at Withnell Fold on 11 March. Displaying birds were noted at Slaidburn from 2 April. Four pairs nesting at Aintree were ploughed out on 30 April but then re-laid successfully. Five pairs bred at Stocks Reservoir, six pairs at Brockholes, at least six at Chipping Lawn, nine at New Laithe Farm, Newton, and at least ten at Lunt Meadows, laying at least 16 clutches but with only low single figures fledging. At the Eric Morecambe complex 22 pairs bred, 31 alongside the Lune between Skerton Weir and Kirby Lonsdale, 30 were on territory in the Brindle/Withnell Fold area, 59 bred at Marshside and a further 35 at Crossens Marsh and 15 at Hesketh Out Marsh. Survey work revealed 268 pairs over 1530.3ha on 33 Bowland Farms.

The first young fledged on 29 April in the Belmont area, where 22 broods involving 33 young in early June was considered exceptional; this was attributed to the mowing of areas of rush on pasture land, the withdrawal of cattle prior to laying and a determined effort to remove crows and foxes. A further 107 territories were recorded across 35 sites on the West Pennine Moors, including eleven territories on fire-breaks at Belmont Moor. Observers there reported high numbers of juveniles in subsequent post-breeding flocks.

The first post-breeding birds returned to Seaforth in the last week May. Inland, the July build-up included 110 at Grimsargh Wetlands on the 3rd, 137 at Lower Rivington Reservoir on the 8th and 60 at Withnell Fold on the 30th. In the West Pennine Moors there were 150 at Springs Reservoir on 3 Aug and 210 at Delph Reservoir on 9 Sept. Passage at Brockholes peaked at 564 on 28 July and 450 on 4 Nov. There were some larger inland gatherings in August, including 476 at Whitemoor Reservoir on the 5th and 485 at Foulridge Reservoirs the same day, 284 at Stocks Reservoir on 7 Aug, 360 at Burnley Unity College Lake on the 8th and 170 at Alston Wetland on 27 Aug.

Totals of 450 were at Lower Towneley Scrape on 1 Sept and 440 at Parsonage Reservoir on 26 Sept. A leucistic bird on 4 Sept at Seaforth had been seen previously at Lunt Meadows. A flock of 550 was at Lunt Meadows in September and 400 at Foulridge Upper Reservoir on 8 Oct. Other notable flocks were 435 were on fields in Rainford on 13 Oct and 110 at Rishton Reservoir on 19 Oct.

Daytime rooftop roosting continues in central Burnley but numbers are much reduced, partly due to wires introduced to deter the birds. The highest count there was 50 on 8 Nov. In December 168 were at Ribchester on the 10th, 140 at Bashall Town and 100 Ightenhill Bridge on the 15th and 218 Alston Wetland on the 31st.

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	2700	434	144	0	0	0	9	195	271	214	1170	106
Ribble WeBS	2240	996	2533	10	5	0	0	1033	315	922	1678	1713
Marshside	/	2440	2886	1808	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	1200

The impressive spring gathering at Marshside began with a large arrival on 20 Feb and was noted until 1 April, after which birds moved on rapidly with the last on 27th; a count of 100 on Newton Marsh on 6 April was presumably linked to this same movement. Elsewhere on the Fylde the last wintering flock at Cockersand of 200 birds on 21 April departed quickly afterwards. A single migrant was noted at Fleetwood on 1 May.

Inland, the year started with 60 at Champion Moor on 1 Jan and 55 at Newton-in-Bowland on the 3rd. A flock of 20 was with Lapwings at Bretherton Eyes on 28 Jan and two were back on moors above Belmont on 15 Feb; 448 were at Champion Moor on 28 Feb with 450 there on 23 March, and 50 were at Trawden on 4 March. One was displaying at Leck Fell on 30 March, 80 were at Black Moss Reservoir on 26 March and 13 were at Oswaldtwistle the same day, at least 100 on Pendle Hill on 3 April and 400 flew south over Stocks Reservoir on the 7th.

Survey work located some 22 territories across the West Pennine Moors during the breeding season. Given the slow rise in breeding numbers across the West Pennine Moors over the last 30 years, the total of 15 pairs for the West Pennine Moors SSSI is considered an underestimate. Probable breeding was reported from Boulsworth Hill and Pendle Hill but there were no reports of juveniles.

The first to return to the coast was one at Skippool Creek on 22 June. Birds returning to Cockersand totalled 69 on 3 July and 100 were at Glasson on the 9th. Subsequent Fylde counts of note, not captured in the WeBS surveys, included 350 Conder Green on 15 Sept and 1055 at Glasson on the 15th; 1920 at Cockersand on 22 Oct a notable 2,800 were there on 26 Nov.

The first autumn inland gathering was 40 on Champion Moor on 19 Sept; notable counts included 200 on Pendle Hill on 27 Oct and 75 at Champion Moor on 30 Nov. Eight were at Alston Wetland on 12 Oct. Late birds were on moors above Belmont on 15 Nov and at Foulridge Reservoirs on 22 Nov; a flock of 13 was at Bretherton Eyes on 6 December.



Golden Plover, Pendle Hill, 3 May (Mike Jackson)

AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis dominica*

Vagrant

An adult was on 9-10 Oct at Crossens Outer Marsh (M Nightingale *et al*). This was the tenth county record, the last being at Cockersand and Glasson in September and October 2016 respectively.



American Golden Plover with Golden Plovers, Crossens, 10 October (Mark Nightingale)

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	428	512	175	217	3	0	10	0	532	1715	264	431
Ribble	241	760	1322	458	265	642	116	67	1215	2279	556	697
Alt	122	354	325	842	830	164	620	576	213	320	193	334

Two at Clowbridge Reservoir on 30 April to 1 May were the first in the east of the county for three years and the only inland record anywhere in the county this year.

Spring passage on the coast was unremarkable, including low numbers in Morecambe Bay. Ten were seen on 7 May at Cockersand, while a flock of 250 on 18 May heading high north at Warton Marsh was one of the most obvious coastal movements. Typically few summered on the Alt between 11 June and mid-July. Numbers along the Fylde coast dropped to four at Cockersand on 12 June then increased to 28 on 3 July; summer counts included 31 at Cocker's Dyke on 22 July and 93 on 22 Aug. An impressive 500 on 26 Aug at Marshside were new and missed by the WeBS count.

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	153	98	54	138	1096	2	3	318	358	382	52	118
Ribble	12	21	27	358	1384	1	27	904	92	54	75	82
Alt	0	0	6	64	31	91	83	143	0	0	0	0

Apart from the WeBS counts, the highest winter group was 35 at Starr Hills, Blackpool on 3 Jan.

A party of six was at Bretherton Eyes on 12 April, while other early spring movements inland included three at Alston Wetland, four at Clowbridge Reservoir, four at Parsonage Reservoir and nine at Stocks Reservoir on 30 April. Five were at Alston Wetland on 3 May and other peak counts included ten at Clowbridge Reservoir on 6 May, 14 at Heysham the next day, 13 at Lunt Meadows on 10 May and ten at Stocks Reservoir on the 12th.

The much-awaited spring passage was poor at the Alt this year although 221 were noted in the Liverpool section of the Mersey Estuary in May.

Breeding information was typically limited with the exception of the nine pairs that nested on the upper Lune gravels. A territorial pair at Belmont Reservoir from 9 May was noted displaying and making a nest scrape but, following heavy rain on 6 June, rising water levels covered the nest and

the birds departed. One pair at Marshside produced two young, another bred at Brockholes and one pair made a breeding attempt at the Eric Morecambe complex. An adult and young were at Rossall on 22 July and three migrant juveniles were seen at Church Scar on 20 July.

The first autumn passage bird in the east was one at Rishton Reservoir on 7-9 Aug with a peak of four there on 12 Aug, while Alston Wetland recorded five singles between 19 Aug and 17 Sept. Passage on the coast included 137 on the Liverpool section of the Mersey Estuary in August. On 22 Aug, 40% of the 80 present at Warton Marsh were juveniles.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*

Fairly common on passage. Scarce breeder.

The first birds arrived at Altham and at Aldcliffe Marsh on 21 March then Holden Wood Reservoir on the 23rd. Further arrivals in the following week included birds at Myerscough Quarry, Lunt Meadows, Cuerden Hall and Brockholes. As arrivals continued peak counts were four on 21 April at Rishton Reservoir and five at Brockholes the next day.

Three pairs were on territory in early May at Springs Reservoir in the West Pennine Moors, with one pair subsequently raising three young, another pair probably bred at nearby Delph Reservoir and up to five were at Belmont Reservoir from April to June with at least one pair breeding until the nest was covered by rising water levels in early June.

In Rossendale three pairs bred at Jamestone Quarry, Haslingden and three pairs at Holden Wood Reservoir, where two were predated but relaid successfully. At Clowbridge Reservoir, four pairs nested and a count of eight there on 30 July was the highest number in the county this year.

In east Lancashire breeding was confirmed at Foulridge Reservoirs, where three juveniles fledged successfully, and one pair nested at Alston Wetland; a pair was at Burnley Bridge from 6 April to 23 June but there was no definite evidence of breeding. Two pairs in Buckshaw Village, Chorley were predated at egg and chick stage.

On the Fylde, a pair at Warton was displaying in a new housing development at Warton in early June, while a pair was with three juveniles at Nateby on 6 July but there was no certainty that they had bred at the site; just one juvenile was reported from the two pairs at Myerscough Quarry.

After the first at Brockholes on 31 March and two on 16 April, numbers peaked at five by 22 April but there was no evidence of breeding, considered to be due to nesting habitat changes. The last adult was seen there on 14 July and a migrant juvenile there on 19 July.

One lingered during May at the Eric Morecambe complex but did not breed, while 13 pairs nested on the upper Lune gravels.

In the south-west, single pairs bred at Marshside, fledging one, on Hesketh Out Marsh and unsuccessfully at MMWWT due to predation by a Jackdaw. At Lunt Meadows a pair seen during April to mid-June was not absolutely confirmed to breed although an adult and juvenile were seen in early July. Up to three were present at Seaforth, from 8 April into July, one pair fledging one on 29 July.

One flying along the shore at Cabin Hill calling on 18 July was unusual. The last on the Fylde were one at Conder Green on 8 Aug and a migrant east over Marton Mere on the 11th. In the east, two were at Anglezarke Reservoir on 30 Aug and one at Rishton Reservoir on 8 Sept. One was at Banks Marsh on 25 Sept, while a juvenile lingering at Alston Wetland on 24-28 Sept was the last of the year.

DOTTEREL *Charadrius morinellus*

Uncommon, but regular spring migrant, scarce in autumn.

One male and three females arrived on Pendle Hill on 22 April, but passage there was again poor with four birds on 23 April, three on 7 May, four on the 8th, one on the 9th and finally one on 11 May.

Extensive searching of the south-west mosslands produced just one, off Marsh Moss Lane, Burscough Bridge on 7 May.

One at Alston Wetland briefly on 24 Sept before flying off south was a splendid autumn find.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

Common passage migrant, especially in spring.

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

Coordinated evening Roost counts

	26 April	2 May		26 April	2 May
Barnacre Res.	582	531	Clifton Marsh	65	247
Longton Marsh	332	89	Alston Wetland	25	6
Wyre Est.	309	75	Wenning Foot	4	5
Barns Fold Res.	110	0	Alt Est.	0	11
Grimsargh Wetland	105	111	Chipping Moss	0	0
Brockholes	88	39	TOTAL	1620	1114

The first were at Alston Wetland on 9 April and Brockholes the following day. Numbers increased quickly with 204 at Barnacre by the 19th and 135 at Brockholes on the 23rd, but as usual the passage was largely spent by the second week of May.

The first of the coordinated counts produced a slightly higher total than the equivalent in 2016 but the second was 300 lower, perhaps suggesting an earlier arrival or more rapid throughput this year. The largest count not listed above was 667 at Barnacre Reservoir on 1 May; other double-figure counts included 133 at Out Rawcliffe on 30 April, 40 at Beacon Fell CP on 21 April, 29 over Seaforth on the 18th and at Hest Bank on the 24th, 25 at Doeford Bridge on the 29th, 18 at Chipping on 1 May and 95 at Fleetwood the following day.

As ever, far fewer were seen in autumn with reports of single figures from Seaforth, Heysham, Alston Wetland and Rishton Reservoir, and from 25 sites in the Fylde.

A returning wintering bird was on the Wyre Estuary at Barnaby's Sands until 9 April and back again on 8 Oct.

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	3045	4603	2513	1615	68	51	3435	1376	2908	5258	1101	1448
Ribble WeBS	658	450	754	377	8	9	346	706	736	729	460	428
Alt WeBS	946	1089	102	300	20	27	1385	1390	1125	1347	224	708
Mersey WeBS*	73	115	61	61	3	1	85	17	68	238	86	37

* Liverpool sector only

It was a mixed picture on the estuaries: the peak count on the Ribble was the lowest since at least 1986, while both the Morecambe Bay and Alt figures were around the 5-year average. The only records of inland wintering birds came from Birkdale where there were up to 30 in the first winter period and 60 in the second.

Curlews began to leave their wintering areas to head towards the breeding grounds in January when the first inland report came from Alston Wetland on the 21st. Large pre-breeding assemblages included 117 at Brockholes on 23 Feb, 100 at Bashall Town on the 24th, 150 at Alston on 5 March, 120 at Belmont Reservoir on the 6th, and 145 at Grimsargh Wetland on the 19th, all overshadowed by 741 at Arkholme on 24 Feb with 760 there on 2 March. The general impression was that the size of many of these pre-breeding gatherings has fallen in recent years, presumably linked to the catastrophic decline in the national and regional breeding population.

No county-wide surveys have been undertaken since the 2008-2011 Lancashire Atlas, which estimated the county breeding population at 3000 pairs; this may have been optimistic at the time but there is little doubt that numbers have fallen in recent years.

Survey work in the western and central West Pennine Moors recorded a minimum of 88 territories over a sample of 38 areas of moorland and in-bye. These included seven pairs in 1.5km² of Darwen Moor, seven in 2km² of Anglezarke Moor and ten pairs in 3km² of Withnell Moor. The 88

territories recorded fits well with the estimate of 100 pairs estimated for the West Pennine Moors SSSI. It was noted that some areas of in-bye were visited by a constant succession of birds that were commuting from their breeding territories on the main areas of moorland to feed. Breeding success appeared good with twelve broods seen between 18 June and 20 Aug.

RSPB's survey of in-bye land, covering 1530ha, on 33 farms in Bowland located 159 breeding pairs, eight more than in 2016 when 32 farms were surveyed. The population in Bowland seems to be holding fairly steady against the national trend. Six pairs bred alongside the Lune between Skerton Weir and Kirby Lonsdale, while four pairs were with young at Whitmoor in Roeburndale on 15 June.

Further east, at least 27 pairs were reported in Rossendale, while in east Lancashire proven or probable breeding records came from Alston Reservoirs and Wetlands, Barnoldswick, St Mary-Le-Ghyll, Boulsworth Hill, Croasdale Fell, Dunsop Valley, Gisburn, Grindleton Forest SE, Higher Beatrix, Loud Mytham Farm, Monubent Head, Pendle Hall, Pendle Hill, Twiston Moor, Whalley Potter Ford, Brennand Fell, New Laithe Farm and Whitendale.

The first post-breeding groups were noted heading west over Belmont from 26 June with 16 roosting at Belmont Reservoir on 27 June but, as can be seen from the WeBS counts, large numbers had returned to the coast by mid-July. The last record inland was at Alston Wetland on 11 Nov.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*

Abundant passage migrant and winter visitor

International importance: 1200. National importance: 380.

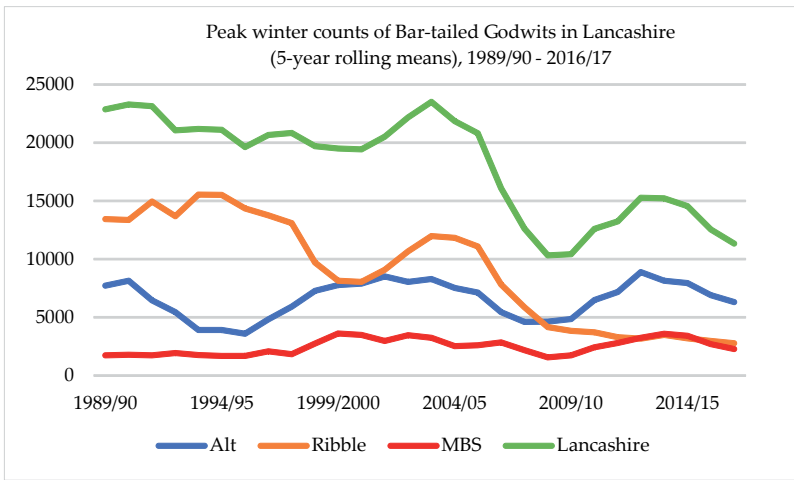
Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	1328	1034	285	288	0	0	7	2	43	352	2221	1933
Ribble WeBS	64	88	90	55	8	2	623	56	527	104	1956	1365
Alt WeBS	2103	2334	3300	900	724	1592	713	1200	830	590	2329	2709

The annual peak on the Alt, now our main site, was the lowest since 1997, while those on the other two estuaries were close to the recent average. However, after a small and brief revival in the early 2010s, the county total continues in freefall with numbers having declined by 50% since 1990. This compares with a decline of just 11% over the same period nationally with the implication that west coast birds may be shifting their wintering grounds eastward.

Large counts missed by the Morecambe Bay WeBS included 1250 on Preesall Sands in February and 1800 at Glasson in October, and on the Ribble 1276 at Marshside in September and 742 at Lytham in October.

There were two records inland, one with Whimbrel at Brockholes on 2-25 April and one at Belmont Reservoir on 10 Sept.



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	2131	1224	1542	3115	259	132	770	496	134	1526	984	536
EMC	278	536	2050	3250	355	360	520	720	1270	1750	1150	350
Ribble WeBS	903	3666	3213	123	76	230	746	943	1416	2890	3346	3698
Marshside	220	103	3250	892	175	165	120	300	2600	2880	560	5400
MMWWT	40	35	200	9	100	212	500	1400	25	20	100	150
Mersey WeBS*	0	0	0	0	550	32	5	0	6	7	1	0

* Liverpool sector only

Counts missed by Morecambe Bay WeBS included 1880 at Glasson in March and 1900 at Cockersand in November.

The August peak at MMWWT was exceptional and indicative of increasing numbers inland, as were 890 on Lytham Moss on 23 Dec. Regional highlights further from the coast were 47 at Arkholme on 2 Feb, 18 at Bretherton Eyes on 17 Feb, 56 at Alston Wetland on one day in March, 37 at Clowbridge Reservoir on 29 April, 35 at Brockholes on 17 May and 26 at Belmont Reservoir on 27 April.

Three adult males were on Newton Marsh on 13 April and a female on the 24th, with three again on 14 May. Three young were seen on 6 June and then two juveniles on 9 July.

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor

International importance: 1500. National importance: 480

Monthly Peak Counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS WeBS	413	367	340	189	98	0	39	241	432	262	506	363
Ribble WeBS	62	90	103	72	0	0	35	118	215	165	143	121
Fleetwood	204	190	158	101	0	0	/	200	242	200	175	155
Alt WeBS	29	1	60	77	134	2	1	22	0	0	15	9

Fleetwood Marine Lake remains the county's most reliable site for Turnstones but other reasonable counts included 100 at Blackpool on 31 Jan, 135 at Cockersand on 17 March, 150 at Heysham on 9 April with 124 there on 9 Aug, 100 at Anchorsholme on 29 April, 176 at Lytham on 17 Aug with 242 there on 10 Sept,

After one at Stocks Reservoir on 30 April, most inland records came in May: three at Clowbridge Reservoir on the 5th, another at Stocks on the 5-6th, one at Abbeystead on the 7th and Barnacre Reservoir on the 20th. One flying over Alston Wetland on 27 Aug was the only inland autumn record.

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	5941	7365	2806	6762	0	0	25	0	132	6336	8521	4237
Ribble WeBS	4585	8008	16336	2417	2025	2391	2621	5145	25670	12347	9938	7122
Alt WeBS	23010	10782	12280	19370	19000	3837	5000	3708	8519	2910	21102	11000

September produced the year's outstanding count on the Ribble, the best autumn total there since 2006. The annual peak on Morecambe Bay on the other hand was the lowest ever recorded there, while numbers on the Alt were typical of recent years. The slow decline in wintering Knots therefore continued but all our estuaries remain internationally important.

Ringers at Formby Point on 22 Sept caught a bird that was identified as showing characteristics of the nominate race *canutus* on the basis of various biometrics; separation of this subspecies from *C.*

c. islandica is difficult but it seems that this was a strong candidate for our first proven record (per R de Feu).

Inland, singles were at Stocks Reservoir on 30-31 May, Foulridge Upper Reservoir on 8 June and Alston Reservoir and Wetlands on 4-5 Nov, and two were at Clowbridge Reservoir on 23 July.

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
Marshside	3	7	20	64	10	/	7	12	33	105	60	10
MMWWT	70	100	65	14	5	0	16	30	75	98	182	130

Double-figure counts were recorded at a dozen or so sites in the Fylde throughout the year, the largest of which was 27 at Wardley’s Creek on 24 Sept; winter counts there were few and far between and mostly of ones and twos, notable exceptions being ten at Lea Marsh on 16 Dec, 18 at Out Rawcliffe on the 23rd and 16 at Stalmine on the 24th.

There were no significant wintering numbers elsewhere in the county away from the two main sites, and as usual Ruff were scarce throughout the year in north Lancashire.

A small spring passage began in early March and lasted into mid-May. There were three spring records in east Lancashire but none in either Chorley or north Lancashire.

Lekking was first observed at Marshside on 29 April and at least seven fully plumaged males took part until they all disappeared by mid-May.

One was at Rishton Reservoir on the 6 July and another at Seaforth on the 18th but there was no other sign of autumn passage until early August, after which birds were recorded at around 25 sites in the Fylde, including double-figures at Myerscough Quarry, Skitham, the Skippool Creek area, Glasson, Pilling and Cockersand. Ruff were seen at four east Lancashire sites in autumn with the last on 12 Oct, and half a dozen in Chorley where good numbers were recorded in November and early December, notably 50 on Croston Moss on 11 Nov, 20 on Mawdesley Moss on the 18th and 65 at Bretherton Eyes on 3 Dec. Elsewhere, autumn birds were at Seaforth on seven dates to 26 Oct, at Heysham on 20 Sept and 2 Oct, Brockholes on 28 Sept, while numbers at Lunt Meadows peaked at eleven on 2 Sept.



Ruff, Hambleton, 17 September (Paul Ellis)

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea*

Fairly common passage migrant.

One on Crossens Inner Marsh on 21 Nov and later in December was the only wintering bird.

A sparse spring passage began with one on Banks Marsh on 3 May and continued with singles at Burrow's Marsh, Cockersand, the Eric Morecambe complex and Hesketh Out Marsh, with four at Hightown, until mid-May.

Autumn was far more productive as usual. Where specified almost all records were of juveniles; the passage extended from the last days of July through to mid-November but most records were in September and October. The best estimate of the number passing through the county was around 200 birds, 100 or so less than in 2016. No large numbers were recorded anywhere, peak counts including twelve at Marshside on 1 Oct, nine at Cocker's Dyke on 24 Sept and seven on Crossens Inner Marsh on 14 Oct.



Curlew Sandpipers, Marshside, 12 October (Steve Young)

TEMMINCK'S STINT* *Calidris temminckii*

Scarce passage migrant.

One at MMWWT on 16-17 May was the only record.

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	174	165	115	/	702	/	/	68	166	135	160	140
Ribble WeBS	57	552	1165	1586	1107	25	5790	3011	1147	1359	914	403
Alt WeBS	461	1251	670	650	624	97	1821	2747	1430	890	2100	811

The May total on Morecambe Bay was the highest spring passage count there since 1998 but autumn numbers were nothing special. Similarly, October's 5790 on the Ribble was the highest ever there in July; 5404 of these were at Ainsdale-Birkdale. Taking the July figure for the Alt into account it appears that there was a slightly earlier return than usual this year. The December count on the Alt was the highest ever there in winter, confirming the southwards shift from the Ribble in recent years.

All inland records came from east Lancashire: two at Stocks Reservoir on 13 May, three at Clowbridge Reservoir on 16 May, and singles at Stocks Reservoir on 20 & 29 May, again at Clowbridge on 21 & 29 May and at Stocks on 12 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	5593	2511	2004	1841	4127		713	905	697	2074	6422	5337
Ribble WeBS	6406	13412	10148	9604	8777	688	21322	18884	3737	7993	13399	11853
Alt WeBS	620	1512	1615	1250	907	105	2249	2299	132	173	2203	4419
Mersey WeBS*	0	230	1	3	288	0	0	208	0	35	276	82

* Liverpool sector only

Wintering numbers continued their steady slide on all three estuaries as did passage totals on the Alt and Ribble, although the Morecambe Bay peak was a little above average. The Ribble remains by far our most important site for Dunlins and the only one that is of international importance.

One was seen twice in the breeding season on the track in Croasdale; whilst not that close to breeding habitat, it was an intriguing record.

The only definite breeding information came from the West Pennine Moors. Up to eight were present daily at Belmont Reservoir from 3-16 May with display and copulation noted, thought to be linked to birds breeding on adjacent moorland. One was singing high above Belmont Village at night on 21 May and two pairs, probably one with young, were territorial on the western section of the West Pennine Moors in June, with five territories, including three pairs probably with young, on the eastern sections in June.

Up to four were at MMWWT in January and February and two in December, while one singing at New Laithe Farm on 28 Jan and one at Clowbridge Reservoir on 14 Feb were the only other winter records inland.

The spring passage away from the coast extended from early March to the middle of May. During this period birds were seen on a number of wetland sites throughout most of the county, mostly in single figures, but larger flocks included 14 at Clowbridge Reservoir on 30 April when 15 were also at Stocks Reservoir with the same number on 13 May, and 13 at New Laithe Farm on 5 May.

The return was underway by mid-July but was only reported from MMWWT, where numbers peaked at twelve on 5 Aug, and four sites in east Lancashire with a peak count of five at Rishton Reservoir on 24 Oct.

PURPLE SANDPIPER *Calidris maritima*

Rare winter visitor.

Up to three were at Fleetwood Marine Lake until at least 15 Jan, then up to two on Blackpool North Shore from 5 Jan until 29 March; birds were never reported from these two on the same day so there



Juvenile Purple Sandpiper, Rishton Reservoir, 12 August (Tony Disley)

may have been some overlap. Five at Rossall Point on 25 Aug were the first to return to the Fylde coast and were seen regularly to the end of the year, while up four were at Blackpool during the same period.

One at Cockersand on 19 Nov and three at Morecambe on 15 Jan were the only other coastal records – unusually none was seen at Heysham.

However, the outstanding record of the year was a juvenile at Rishton Reservoir on 11-12 Aug – the county's first inland record that can be recalled.

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*

Fairly common passage migrant. Scarce winter visitor.

At least four of the autumn influx remained to the end of the year on the Ribble Marshes; the only other winter record was one at Glasson from at least 10 Jan until 19 March.

Singles on the Eric Morecambe complex on 9-10 May and at MMWWT on the 13th were the first of a typically scanty spring passage. Another was at MMWWT on 29 May, two at Marshside on the 28-29th with possibly the same birds on 3 June and one at Lunt Meadows on 1 June.

Autumn passage began with singles at MMWWT on 4 July and Wardley's Creek on the 20th, built steadily during August, peaked in September and continued to the first week of November by which time a minimum of 60 had passed through the county. The largest count by far was 14 on Banks Marsh on 26 Sept to 7 Oct.

At least six were recorded at MMWWT in autumn but the only other inland records were singles at Lunt Meadows on 2 & 26 Sept.

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER* *Calidris subruficollis*

Vagrant

A juvenile was at Old Hollow Farm on 23 Sept (S Darbyshire). This was the thirteenth county record and the first since another juvenile on Hesketh Out Marsh in September 2013.

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER *Limnodromus scolopaceus*

Vagrant.

A juvenile was first found on Crossens Out Marsh on 9 Oct (S Darbyshire *et al*) and was seen subsequently there and at Marshside and Banks Marsh until 5 Nov. Another juvenile appeared at MMWWT on 13 Oct (P Johnson *et al*) and remained there until the 17th, joining the first bird on the



Long-Billed Dowitcher, Crossens Out Marsh, 10 October (Mark Nightingale)

Ribble Marshes the following day. The two birds were then seen together until 5 Nov.

These were the county's 21st and 22nd records; the last was also at Marshside in March 2010. Both records have been accepted by BBRC.

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

Common winter visitor and fairly common breeder.

Woodcock were reported from more than 60 wintering sites at both ends of the year. Almost all records were of ones or twos, exceptions being 35 flushed during shoots at Belmont on 28 & 30 Jan with eleven in the same area on 12 Nov, eight at Moor Piece on 13 Feb, four at Ellet on 1 March and three at Roby Mill and New Laithe Farm during the first winter period.

As many as five males may have been present on Warton Crag during the breeding season and two were roding at Wheelton Plantations. Other probable breeders were recorded at Belmont, Moor Piece, Lee Green Reservoir, Gisburn Forest, Stocks Boardhouse and Stocks Reservoir – undoubtedly giving a grossly underestimated impression of the size of the breeding population.

JACK SNIFE *Lymnocyptes minimus*

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

Jack Snipe were recorded at 51 sites in the first winter period and around 45 in the second – probably at around 65 sites during the whole year. Most records were of singles or occasionally two together but larger counts included nine at Edgecote (Rossendale) on 19 Feb, on the shore at Heysham on 18 Nov and at Fairhaven on 27 Feb, five at Cabin Hill on 23 Dec, and four on Birkdale Green Beach on 19 March and at Chipping Moss and Alston Wetland in the second winter period.

The last of spring were at Belmont on 17 April and on Pendle Hill on the 22nd, and the first returning bird at Clitheroe Tip on 25 Sept.

SNIFE *Gallinago gallinago*

Common but declining wintering and breeding bird.

Wintering Snipe were seen on pretty much every wetland site in the county; the suspicion remains that numbers continue to decline but it is impossible to quantify this.

Counts of 50 or more non-breeding birds were made at 24 sites during the year, including 270 on Belmont Moor on 17/10, 250 at MMWWT on 25 Sept, 230 at Singleton on 24 Dec, 155 at Glasson on 26 Sept, 150 on Hesketh Out Marsh on 4 Nov, 126 at Brockholes on 21 March, 120 at Burglar's Alley on 6 Nov, 100 at Lunt Meadows on 12 Dec and 98 at Heysham on 12 Jan; other large moorland counts included 90 at Edge Cote in Rossendale on 6 March and 68 on Cranberry Moss on 3 Dec.

Three possible/probable 'pairs' at MMWWT and singles displaying at Marshside and Hesketh Out Marsh during the summer were the only breeding season reports from the lowlands. RSPB's survey of in-bye fields in 33 farms in Bowland located 53 'pairs', compared with 47 in 2016, so the breeding population there appears to be holding up. ELOC reported at least possible breeding on 20 or more sites.

A more comprehensive survey of the West Pennine Moors recorded 49 'drummers', nine of them around Belmont Reservoir and the remainder across a further 23 sites. The breeding population of the West Pennine Moors SSSI is estimated at 60 'pairs', so it appears that here too it is at least stable. Further east in Rossendale breeding was reported from ten or more moorland sites.

WILSON'S PHALAROPE *Phalaropus tricolor***Vagrant**

A juvenile was at Alston Reservoirs and Wetland on 9 Sept (Gavin Thomas). The record has been accepted by the BBRC and becomes the eleventh record for Lancashire; the last was at Seaforth in May 2010.



Wilson's Phalarope, Alston Wetland, 9 September (Paul Ellis)

GREY PHALAROPE *Phalaropus fulicarius***Scarce passage migrant**

A small gale-driven influx began with singles off Fleetwood, on the inner Mersey at Otterspool and in the mouth of the Mersey on 11 Sept, with two at the latter site on the 12th. On the following day two were on the tideline at Ainsdale and singles offshore at Formby Point and Blackpool. One was at Heysham on 14 Sept, four in the Mersey Narrows on the 15th with two at Otterspool possibly the same birds. There was then a large gap until the final record of the year, a first-winter at Knott End on 6 Oct.

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

Singles were seen at Clowbridge Reservoir, Alston Wetland, Conder Green and Myerscough Quarry in January and February, and at Clowbridge and Myerscough in December when two were at both Clifton Marsh and Conder Green.

Almost all March records came from wintering sites or nearby and it is not possible to determine whether any were new arrivals. There was little indication of any substantial movement until early April, after which Common Sandpipers began arriving throughout the county and continuing to do so until mid-May. There was a handful of records of five or more during spring but the only really significant count was of at least 14 at Belmont Reservoir on 28 April.

Breeding was widespread through the east of the county but underreported as usual; the largest concentrations were 40 pairs on the Lune between Skerton Weir and Kirby Lonsdale, six pairs in the Langden Valley, five at Delph Reservoir and four or five at Belmont Reservoir.

A few records in early June were ambiguous but the return movement was certainly underway after the middle of the month. It gained momentum during July and August before slowing until the last record (excluding those that went on to overwinter) on 27 Oct at Little Singleton. The largest autumn congregations were 21 at Little Singleton on 20 July, 19 at Conder Green on 10 July, 17 at Shard Bridge on 9 July and 14 at Skippool Creek on 5 July.

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

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

Ten or more were present during the first winter period, at Conder Green-Glasson, Thurnham, Eccleston (Chorley), Brockholes, Mythop, Hesketh Out Marsh, Curlew Lane and Long Meadows near MMWWT, and various sites on the Wyre, while in December similar numbers were at Croston, Conder Green, St. Michael's-on-Wyre (two), Brockholes, Longton Marsh, MMWWT, Curlew Lane and Spade Mill and Dilworth Reservoirs (two).

Several of the early-year birds hung on into March. As with Common Sandpipers, it was difficult to separate those in March that may have appeared on new sites but close to wintering grounds from more distant migrants. Five or so were recorded in April and one in May, while singles at MMWWT on 18 June and Lunt Meadows were probably the first returning birds.

A minimum of 130 passed through in autumn with the last arriving in mid-November, some of which went on to overwinter. Most records were of ones and twos but larger counts included seven at Alston Wetland on 24 Aug, six at MMWWT on 16 July, and four on the Eric Morecambe complex on 17 Aug and at Singleton on 29 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	2286	3034	3637	2620	25	11	1734	2615	3783	3508	2786	1830
Ribble WeBS	275	608	1337	605	81	158	252	646	1426	1300	1299	1365
Alt WeBS	655	277	849	470	0	0	254	447	398	452	350	485
Mersey WeBS*	283	387	137	148	0	0	149	130	60	57	276	94

* Liverpool sector only

The five-year mean for wintering birds on Morecambe Bay dipped again this year but numbers on the Ribble and Alt remained at roughly the same level, albeit some 40% lower than during the early years of this century.

Typically few were seen away from the coast in January or February, just singles at Rishton and Coldwell Reservoirs and Alston Wetland in east Lancashire. Birds began moving back towards their breeding areas in early March with the first back at Belmont Reservoir on the 4th. There were no large pre-breeding congregations, the largest reported being eleven at Alston Wetland and Burholme on 25 March.

In-by-land on the 33 monitored in Bowland by RSPB held a total of 20 pairs, one down on 2016. Twenty-two pairs nested alongside the Lune between Skerton Weir and Kirby Lonsdale, 38 on the Eric Morecambe complex suffered extremely low productivity of around 0.1 per pair, while 69 pairs bred at Marshside, 44 on Hesketh Out Marsh and 29 on Newton Marsh. Apart from the Bowland survey the only breeding records received from east Lancashire were of four juveniles at Alston Wetland, an adult and two juveniles at Hyles Moor and two pairs at Dunsop Head.

Elsewhere, four pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir where two broods were present in June and breeding territories were occupied in other areas of the West Pennine Moors, four pairs were at Brockholes and two at MMWWT – a dramatic fall from 18 pairs in 2016 that must set alarm bells ringing for the lowland population.

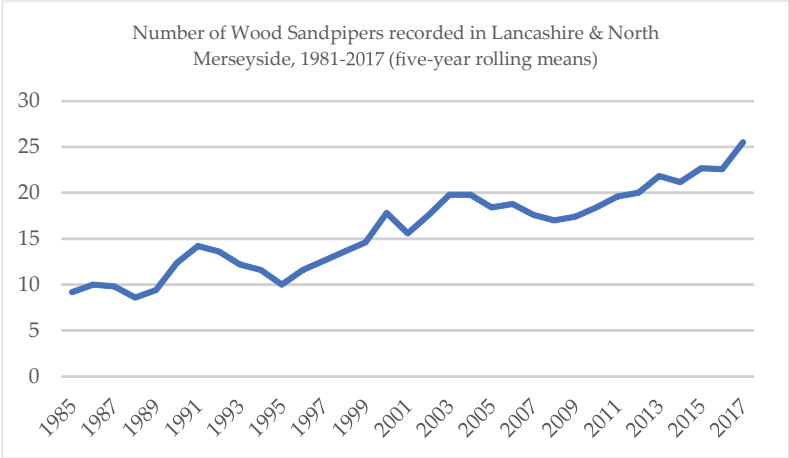
WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*

Uncommon passage migrant.

Four were seen in April, at Stocks Reservoir on the 25th, Lunt Meadows on the 26th & 29th, and Hightown on the 29th. Thirteen arrived in May, including three together at Lunt Meadows on the 5-8th.

Three in the last week of June were probably returning birds; four were at MMWWT on 6 July with singles later in the month at Banks Marsh and Leighton Moss, followed by six in August and two in September with one on Crossens Out Marsh the only October record on the 9-12th.

The days are long gone since Wood Sandpiper was a Lancashire ‘description species’; as the graph below shows, the number recorded annually since the 1980s has increased from around ten to around 25. This is no doubt in part down to an increased number of skilled observers but perhaps is more a result of the amount of suitable wetland habitat that has been created by the conservation organisations.



Wood Sandpiper, Lunt Meadows, 6 May (Steve Young)

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*

Fairly common passage migrant.

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
EMC/L Moss	0	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	1	1	/	/
Conder/Glasson	1	1	3	3	2	0	1	1	1	1	/	/

Away from the traditional sites in the table there were early year wintering records at Thurnham, Cockerham and Hesketh Out and Banks Marshes (3 birds), while in December the only other record

was of up to four on Hesketh Out Marsh.

One at Preston Dock on 6 March was the first to be seen away from the wintering areas and spring singles followed in April and May at Warton Marsh, Seaforth and Marshside.

Spotted Redshanks began to reappear at the end of June and a prolonged passage movement continued through to early November, involving around 20 birds at twelve sites, including five on Hesketh Out Marsh on 11 Nov and three at Burrow's Marsh on 8 Oct.

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

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

Monthly peak counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Eric Morecambe c.	1	1	1	/	2	0	5	14	18	11	3	1
Conder/Glasson	1	0	0	5	3	0	2	2	6	7	1	1

Wintering birds were reported from several sites in the Fylde away from Conder Green during January and February – on the Wyre and Ribble and the north coast; some were likely to have been wandering but the best guess is that at least three and perhaps four were involved. There were also singles at Aldcliffe and Hesketh Out Marsh.

Most April and May records came from a similar range of sites with the addition of a handful of records at Brockholes and Lunt Meadows.

The return passage began in the last days of June and birds were reported on passage, mainly from July to early October, throughout the county but overwhelmingly in the Fylde, although as usual the Eric Morecambe complex produced the highest numbers. Other large counts included nine at Wardley's Creek on 5 Aug and six at Ramper Pot on 26 July.

Inland, there were several autumn records at MMWWT and Lunt Meadows in autumn, on three dates in August at Brockholes and, further afield, singles at Ightenhill Bridge, on three dates at Alston Wetland, Withnell Fold, Upper Rivington Reservoir and Bretherton Eyes.

Singles at Hesketh Out Marsh, the Eric Morecambe complex, Conder Green and The Snab were the only December records.

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
Heysham	1	/	155	116	188	/	/	/	12	35	6	33
Rossall Point	41	7	9	165	39	3	1	12	83	48	100	23

A poor start to the year with just a single bird off Heysham on 3 Jan, up to five seen off Blackpool between the 13-15th and 41 off Rossall Point as shown in the table. The next sightings were in late February off Blackpool with one on the 21st, 66 on the 24th and three on the 27th. Spring passage involved 588 birds past Heysham with peak day-counts shown in the table between March to May. Elsewhere, birds were sighted off Blackpool, Rossall Point, Knott End, Formby Point and Cockersand though numbers were low with notable counts of 165 off Rossall Point on 27 April and 38 on the 12th with 27 off Blackpool on the 27th.

Throughout May daily sightings off Blackpool saw numbers build to 215 on the 17th and 157 on the 23rd whilst 39 were off Fleetwood at the month's start on the 7th. Blackpool continued to dominate records throughout June with a peak of 82 on the 6th but July saw just two records from the same site with ten on the 2nd and three on the 21st. The very few summer sightings included 20 off Blackpool on 18 Aug.

Autumn passage started in early September with a pulse of birds moving down the coast during the first two weeks with a notable peak of 122 off Blackpool on the 11th. Into October frequent sightings included 31 off Knott End on the 22nd. November saw seven records with a 100 off Rossall Point on the 23rd and five records in December, finishing with 31 off Morecambe on the 31st.

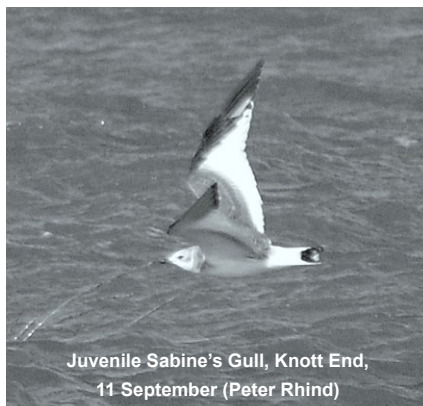
Inland, a bird roosted at Fishmoor Reservoir, Blackburn on 23 Feb, there were no further records until two birds ahead of Storm Ophelia at Belmont Reservoir on 16 Oct, followed by two records from Brockholes with an adult over on 8 Nov and a 2CY bird on the 12th.

SABINE'S GULL* *Xema sabini*

Uncommon passage migrant.

Strong onshore winds produced records of juveniles moving south past the majority of seawatching sites along the county's coast from Heysham and Cokersand to Starr Gate, Blackpool between 6 & 11-14 Sept with a total of four individuals accepted for the 11-13th.

A juvenile was in the Mersey Mouth on 11 Sept.



Juvenile Sabine's Gull, Knott End,
11 September (Peter Rhind)



Black-headed Gull, Fairhaven,
26 October (Michael Cuff)

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

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

International importance: 20000. National importance: 20000.

WeBS

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS	1450	1016	1262	200	1339	1277	3170	3044	2572	1775	612	1092
Ribble	1177	1775	1514	1373	2406	1399	627	305	387	1169	756	712
Alt	1045	452	234	60	71	75	778	793	926	482	504	388

The year began with notable winter gatherings at Seaforth (5000), Preston Docks (2300), Rishton (1800) and Marshside (1200). As breeding birds moved into the area numbers built especially along the coast between Knott End and Pilling Lane with 5000 recorded during March.

Gatherings at breeding colonies built up rapidly from late February, especially at Belmont Reservoir with 5500 by 4 March and a peak of 20000 on the 19th. The breeding season at Belmont was extremely productive (at 1.8 young per successful pair) from the 10484 nests counted during aerial surveys. Breeding numbers from some other Lancashire sites include an estimated 500 pairs at Stocks Reservoir which continued the recent decline. Marshside held 736 pairs, the Waddington Fell Quarry colony more than doubled from last year to 250 pairs, Leighton Moss held 230 pairs (191 nests on Allen Pool and 29 nests on Silverdale Moss), c.50 pairs nested at Pine Lake and 40-50 pairs attempted to breed at Ainsdale NNR before the site dried out.

Notable post-breeding gatherings included 2770 at Preston Docks, 2500 at Starr Gate, Blackpool, 2450 at Lytham and 2000 at Shard Bridge, all during September. In October 4469 were counted off Morecambe and 4000 at Thurnham. Winter counts remained low with peak numbers of 2500 at Ribchester, 2000 at Preesall, 1500 at Pilling Lane, 1365 at Morecambe and 1000 at Brockholes.

LITTLE GULL *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

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

Between 10-15 Jan up to 32 birds were off Rossall Point and Blackpool with one at Heysham on the 11th. There were no large gatherings off Blackpool during February this year with just three on the 7th and 27th as well as three at Crosby on the 23rd, followed by one on the 25th. March saw single birds off Fleetwood on the 14th, Heysham on the 24th and Ainsdale on the 30th.

The spring passage kicked off from 8 April with a scattering along the coast, of which 35 off Formby on the 9th and 22 at Crosby on the 19th being the most significant totals, with records also from Rossall Point, Heysham and Marshside. Single birds remained during May until the last one at Heysham on the 26th.

Summer records involved an adult at Marshside on 14 June, a first-summer at Seaforth on the 18 & 30th and Heysham on the 27th. Birds congregating off Formby appeared in July with numbers increasing to 18 by the 23rd. At Heysham the assumed regularly-returning moulting adult was present throughout August to October.

Autumn passage started on 9 Sept with one off Blackpool and frequent sightings continued between here, Knott End and Heysham, though numbers remained low with five at Heysham on 13 Sept, four at Marshside on 22 Oct and six off Rossall Point on 9 Nov, after which the only winter records involved three at Heysham on 23 Nov, followed by one on the 30th, and then finally one at Crosby on 25 Dec.

Away from the coast the first early spring sighting was an adult at Marton Mere on 20 March and a first-winter at Pine Lake on the 31st. April saw an adult at Marton Mere between 11-12th, one at Leighton Moss on the 18th and a first-summer at Stocks Reservoir on the 30th. A first-winter bird frequented MMWWT between 24 May and 15 June and again on the 30th. One was at MMWWT between 22-28 Sept and with two there on 8 Oct.

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	3	/	3	7	16	30	61	52	11	1	2

Wintering birds were scattered throughout the coastal areas with no large gatherings as peak counts were of three birds at Knott End and Heysham during February. During March and April the county is invaded as birds move through wetland sites on their way to Belmont Reservoir or elsewhere with peak day-counts at Marshside (ten), MMWWT (ten), Brockholes (eight), Stocks Reservoir (six) and Fishmoor Reservoir (six). Belmont Reservoir saw birds arriving in late February with numbers rapidly increasing to 70 on 8 April and to an estimated 120 by the month's end.

At Belmont Reservoir the colony continues to grow with surveys revealing 49 confirmed nests, an increase from 39 estimated nests in 2016. Sample counts in July of successful 'family groups' realised 51 juveniles with 31 distinct adults. Elsewhere, three pairs bred at Marshside where two chicks were noted.

Post-breeding gatherings at Heysham built from late June through to September with record numbers as a minimum 70 individuals moved through. Peak individual age-group counts comprised 24 adults on 29 Aug, four 3CY birds, 23 2CY birds on 29 Aug and 14 juveniles on 18 Aug. Fifty-seven birds at Heysham on 29 Aug was a record daily county count away from Belmont Reservoir. Elsewhere, peak counts from other coastal sites included Skippool Creek (13), Sunderland Point (twelve), Glasson (ten) and Aldcliffe Marsh (nine). Single wintering birds were recorded from 13 scattered coastal sites, MMWWT and Alston Reservoirs, including the returning (since 2003) Czech Republic veteran at Heysham.

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	222	47	44	2	11	11	90	67	151	104	29	181
Ribble WeBS	51	30	33	0	0	1	21	3	36	31	649	17
Alt WeBS	510	283	276	157	130	4	381	366	448	226	128	173
Stocks Reservoir	500	4000	250	200	/	/	8	400	1900	4000	6000	5000

The Stocks Reservoir winter roost remains a prominent feature as the table shows. Counts elsewhere in the county remained sparse but included 700 at Thurnham in March.

Bird numbers fell away during the summer months with 60 2CY birds at Heysham on 26 May. Post-breeding birds started returning from July with 100 at Ainsdale and 80 at Crosby.

The second winter period saw peak counts not included in the table of 520 at Pilling, 450 at Thurnham and 450 at Cockersand.

RING-BILLED GULL* *Larus delawarensis*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant, mainly in spring

An adult was at MMWWT on 19 March (T Clare).

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*

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

International importance: 4800. National importance: 760.

WeBS

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MBS	151	97	58	48	42	43	80	127	114	126	70	38
Alt	108	47	79	32	46	26	140	166	220	168	105	123

A largely coastal species with counts dominated by the WeBS survey results in the table.

Notable site counts during the first winter period were 90 at Knott End, 70 at Fleetwood Marsh, 70 at Altham (east Lancashire peak count) and 51 at Glasson. Post-breeding gatherings in late summer saw 150 off Cabin Hill, 67 at Glasson and 45 at Carnforth. Wintering counts of interest involved 56 at Seaforth, 50 birds at both Rishton and Fishmoor Reservoirs, Blackburn during December.

At Heysham two pairs held territories on a harbour building, one pair on power station non-operational land and the other on the ex-Centrica building. Three pairs bred at Leighton Moss, a pair nested successfully in Blackpool with three chicks, however, the pair at Stocks Reservoir held territory but did not attempt to breed.

No survey counts were carried out for this species at the Bowland Fells or Ribble Estuary gull colonies (two pairs nested on Banks Marsh), where low single-figure counts are normally expected. Data received for 2015 and 2016 indicate that as many as nine pairs were present in the Ribble Estuary colony.

GLAUCOUS GULL *Larus hyperboreus*

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

January sightings from coastal sites involved a near-adult at Fleetwood Marsh throughout and a first-winter at Lytham on the 17th. The month finished with a first-winter that was present at Cocker's Dyke, Pilling Lane between 24 Jan and 5 Feb.

A first-winter and near-adult, probably the same birds as above, frequented the Fleetwood and Knott End area between 1 Feb to 12 March, with the first-winter remaining to 5 April. A first-winter was reported off Crosby on 11 Feb and another of the same age moved around the St Helens, Haydock, Newton-le-Willows areas between 14-17 Feb.

Other inland records comprised a first-winter around Fishmoor Reservoir, Blackburn daily between 17 Jan and 21 March, when a second bird was present on the final day. A first-winter bird was at Preston Dock on 29-30 April and 3 May.

The second winter period saw an adult bird on the River Ribble at Hutton on 18 Nov and a first-winter at Crosby on 24 Dec.

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucoides*

Uncommon visitor, mostly winter.

The rare subspecies, Kumlien's Gull, was encountered in the roost at Fishmoor, Blackburn on 21 Jan, this third-winter bird was then relocated the following day at Whinney Hill Tip, Accrington before being seen again at Fishmoor Reservoir in the pre-roost gathering.

The returning adult wintering around Marton Mere appeared on 2 Jan and remained until 19 March. A second-winter bird set up residence in the harbour at Heysham from 25 Feb to 22 March.

Elsewhere, records of single first-winters were received from Seaforth on 26 Feb, Pilling Lane on 2 March, different individuals at Heysham on 4 & 20 April, and Fleetwood occasionally throughout March until 3 April. A second-winter was at Marshside on 4 March.

It was a good year for inland records with a first-winter encountered regularly between feeding on Whinney Hill Tip and roosting at Fishmoor Reservoir between 3 Jan and 19 March; two first-winters were present on 18 Jan and 15 March whilst an adult bird was present on 20-22 Jan and 7-8 & 14-15 March. Elsewhere, at Newton-le-Willows there was an adult on 15 Feb, with first-winters at Haydock on 22 Feb, an individual tracked from Aughton to Caton (Lune Valley) on 7 March and one at Altham on the 13th.

The second winter period saw the regularly-returning adult bird appear in December at Marton Mere from the 9th with a second-winter roosting at Fishmoor Reservoir on the 9 & 10th and two first-winters at the same location on the 31st.

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

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

International importance: 13000. National importance: 7300.

WeBS counts found 2418 birds in January on the Alt, with a much reduced post-breeding gathering of 3498 down from 9164 in 2016 at the same location; additionally a low peak of 1520 was recorded on the MBS WeBS counts.

Elsewhere, counts of 1500 at Knott End during January and February and 1200 at Seaforth were received though no counts came from the main gull roosts in the county. During the spring period 2500 predominantly immature birds were present off Heysham on 12 May.

See information for the Langden Head, Tarnbrook and Ribble Estuary colonies noted under Lesser Black-backed Gull for counts, where Herring Gulls are estimated to represent a small percentage of the counts.

Around Heysham breeding numbers were down with 28 nests on the buildings around the harbour, eight pairs on non-operational land, two nests at Ocean Edge and ten pairs on Middleton Industrial Estate. One pair successfully bred on the island at Stocks Reservoir. Urban rooftop nesters continue to be recorded throughout Liverpool, Southport, Blackpool, Fleetwood, Knott End, Lancaster, Morecambe and Carnforth.

Post-breeding saw 1000 birds at Barnaby's Sands on 23 Sept. The second winter counts included 3500 at Fishmoor Reservoir and 3000 at Rishton Reservoir during December.

CASPIAN GULL * *Larus cachinnans*

Vagrant.

Three records were accepted during the year. A first-winter was present in the roost at Fishmoor Reservoir on 1, 4 & 8 Jan (Mk Breaks, WC Aspin). Another first-winter which had been previously sighted at Audenshaw Reservoirs, Greater Manchester during January and February, was at Preston Dock on 13 March (C Batty), and a second-winter bird in the roost at Fishmoor Reservoir on 30 & 31 Dec (J Wright).



First-winter Caspian Gull, Fishmoor Reservoir, 1st January (Bill Aspin)

YELLOW-LEGGED GULL *Larus michahelis*

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

Seaforth and Crosby Coastal Park produced sightings of adults on 1 March, 4 May, 24 June, 29 July, 5 & 20 Aug and 6 Sept. Elsewhere, an adult was at Fleetwood Marsh from 2-20 Jan, with a near-adult there on 2 Feb, a third-summer at Pilling Lane on 2 March, a juvenile at Glasson on 16 Aug, a first-summer at Preston Dock on 18 Aug, an adult at Lunt Meadows on 31 Aug, an adult at Hightown on 24 Sept and first-winter at Preston Dock on 4 Oct.

East Lancashire records started with a second-winter at Altham on 1 Jan, followed by sightings from Fishmoor Reservoir comprising an adult on the 21st, two adults on the 22nd and an adult on the 29th. An adult was at Alston Reservoirs on 7 March and Stocks Reservoir saw a 4CY bird on 2 April and a 3CY bird on 23 May. There was a single record in the second winter period of an adult at Fishmoor Reservoir on 10 Dec.



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
Stocks Reservoir	7	70	850	500	200	122	300	1750	1400	600	150	16

The table above shows Stocks Reservoir continues to hold large numbers of roosting birds both before and after the breeding season, with a maximum count of 1750 on 24 Aug. The WeBS counts produced the highest wintering bird counts with 140 on the Alt and 103 on Morecambe Bay during December.

Away from the breeding colonies the most noteworthy flocks during spring and summer were at Whitworth (550), Hurst Green (500) and Glasson (450).

The Bowland Fells census showed an increase in both colonies with 4407 (2016) increasing to 4712 (2017) occupied nests at Langden Head, and 4838 (2016) increasing to 5787 (2017) occupied nests at Tarnbrook; no separate counts of Herring Gulls were made but they are thought to contribute around 2%.

No counts were carried at the Ribble Estuary and the Ribble WeBS counts produced very few birds in May this year, with the only notable report being 2000 at Banks Marsh on the 11th. Data received for 2016 indicated 7802 pairs of large gulls, and 9507 pairs in 2015, were present in the Ribble Estuary colony of which 10-16 percent were considered to be Herring Gulls.

Breeding numbers around Heysham were slightly down again on last year with nine nests on non-operational land, 20 on Middleton Industrial Estate, 59 on the buildings around the harbour and five at Ocean Edge. Urban rooftop-nesters were recorded throughout Liverpool, Blackpool, Lancaster, Carnforth and Morecambe. In the Belmont Reservoir colony three pairs held territory and one pair was confirmed breeding. A single adult hybrid Lesser Black-backed x Herring Gull held territory at Stocks Reservoir, paired with a Herring Gull for a second year but did not breed.

Regularly-returning adult hybrid Lesser Black-backed x Herring Gull birds were often seen throughout the year in the area around Pilling, Skippool Creek, Warton Marsh and Fishmoor Reservoir.

GULL-BILLED TERN *Gelochelidon nilotica*

Vagrant

One arrived during a heavy shower at MMWWT and stayed for an hour and a half on the morning of 26 July (A Bunting). The record has been accepted by the BBRC and becomes the fourth county record, the last being one at Seaforth on 30 July 1995.



Gull-billed Tern, Martin Mere,
26 July (Andy Bunting)

CASPIAN TERN *Hydroprogne caspia*

Vagrant

An adult was briefly at Holden Wood Reservoir, Rossendale on 20 June before flying off west (S Hayat). That evening the same bird arrived at Leighton Moss (finder unknown) where it lingered until the following day.

The records have been accepted by the BBRC and become the seventh for the county, the last being one at Formby Point on 4 Aug 2008. Remarkably, five of the seven birds have been at Leighton Moss.



Caspian Tern, Holden Wood Reservoir,
20 June (Craig Bell)

SANDWICH TERN *Thalasseus sandvicensis*

Common spring and autumn migrant on coasts, rare inland.

Monthly peak counts

	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct
MBS WeBS	0	0	0	4	47	337	0
Ribble WeBS	0	0	3	322	264	169	0
Alt WeBS	24	25	15	340	692	37	4

Morecambe Bay

The Heysham passage was rather late to get going with the first on 8 April. In total in spring there were 274 records on 29 dates between 8 April and 28 May with a peak of 73 on 26 April but no other day count exceeding 25. Ones and twos in summer were followed by 230 bird-days on 13 dates from 19 Aug, including 156 on 5 Sept; the last was on 6 Oct.

Elsewhere, mostly very low numbers were reported from Cockersand and Sunderland Point in spring, but autumn was more productive, including 1993 at Knott End on 4 Sept.

Liverpool Bay

The first were seen off Fleetwood on 27 March and Blackpool on the 31st. Spring peaks included 31 at Formby Point on 18 April, 29 at Seaforth on the 24th and 108 past Blackpool on the 7th with 118 there on 22 May and 182 on 19 June.

The Sefton Coast enjoyed another good autumn, notably 2300 feeding off Formby Point on 1 Sept and 692 there on 13 Aug. Roosts at Ainsdale were smaller than last year but included 198 on 23 July, 337 on 8 Aug, 450 on the 14th and 1200 on the 25th. Good numbers were also seen on the south Fylde coast, including 590 at Blackpool on 9 Aug with 1000+ on the 28th, and 545 on St Anne's beach on 17 Aug.

The last of the year were at Formby Point on 13 Oct and Fleetwood on the 17th.

LITTLE TERN *Sternula albifrons*

Fairly common passage migrant on coasts, rare inland.

All early spring records came from the Fylde coast, beginning with two at Blackpool on 30 April, with one at Rossall Point the same day, then up to three at Blackpool on 4-6 May with two at Rossall on the 6-8th. Singles were also seen at Blackpool on 18-21 May with two there on the 19th.

Movement continued throughout June with singles at Rossall on the 19th and Seaforth on the 22nd, and twos at Blackpool on the 19th and Rossall on the 24th. As usual which way these were heading is open to question but autumn passage perhaps began with singles at Seaforth on 1-2 July and Formby on the 18th.

Ones and twos were recorded at Rossall, St Anne's, Blackpool and Seaforth during August, with larger counts of three juveniles and an adult at Formby Point on the 5-7th, possibly the same birds at Ainsdale on the 7th, and two adults with two juveniles at Formby on the 22nd. The last on the coast were at Seaforth and Heysham on 12 Sept and Rossall Point the following day.

ROSEATE TERN* *Sterna dougallii*

Scarce summer visitor.

There were reports on the south Fylde coast in May and July but none was documented.

The first was at Seaforth on 23 June and at least three different individuals, distinguished by the number of rings, were seen there between 6 & 22 July (AJ Conway *et al*). What was presumably one of the Seaforth birds was roosting and feeding at Formby on 16 July (T Vaughan).

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

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

Morecambe Bay

Apart from one at Skippool Creek on 9 July and two at Knott End in June, July and September, the only records came from Heysham, where there were singles on the outfalls on 26 May and five dates between 23 June and 28 July. Autumn was no more productive with one or two on 2-5, 22 & 26 Oct with one remaining to the 29th.

Liverpool Bay

Monthly Peak Counts

	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct
Alt WeBS	3	153	355	1002	1977	8	0

Birds began arriving on 12 April, presumably the majority heading for the breeding colonies at Seaforth and Preston Dock, but not in any significant numbers until the first week of May when 100+

were at Seaforth. There were also several small counts off the Fylde coast in spring and peaks of 130 at Freckleton Naze on 7 May and 48 off Blackpool on the 18th.

Seaforth had a fairly successful year with 139 fledging from 176 pairs (0.79 per pair) but this year's post-breeding gathering was unspectacular, peaking at 700+ on 24 July and 760 on 9 Aug with the final large roosts during the third week of August and the last bird on 18 Sept.

A consultant surveyor was mobbed by a pair carrying food on what remains of the Central Liverpool docks north of the Pier Head but there was no confirmation of breeding. Perhaps they had wandered from the recently-established colony of around 30 pairs on the other side of the Mersey in the Birkenhead Docks. However, we also received late notification of the presence of a small colony on the Canada Dock on our side of the river sometime recently, so it is possible that a remnant of the Langton Dock birds still remain on our side of the river..

As usual birds were more dispersed in autumn but the only large counts away from Seaforth were at Formby Point, building from 126 on 13 July to 650 on 13 Aug.

Inland

The peak number of simultaneously active nests at Preston Dock was 129 but there were at least 185 nesting attempts including relays. The minimum number of chicks fledged was a mere ten, however, due in part to egg-predation by Coots, chick predation by what appeared to be a single Lesser Black-backed Gull and, to add to the misery, some terns grabbing chicks and dropping them in the water.

A pair was once again on the Conder Pool and fledged three young.

Wandering birds were seen occasionally at sites in the Fylde but as usual the favoured inland site was MMWWT where 15 were seen on 30 April and single figures appeared on nine dates between 1 May and 8 Aug. It is believed that birds nested at nearby Mere Sands Wood but no information was received.

The first in Chorley was at Croston Twin Lakes on 19 April; three birds appeared at Yarrow Valley Park but did not breed, possibly because both rafts were occupied by Moorhens. Singles were at Lower Rivington Reservoir on 8 July and on the Douglas near Croston on 13 Aug. There was a territorial pair on a raft at Brockholes but they did not nest; nine were there on 16 July.

In east Lancashire two on Foulridge Reservoirs on 22 April were followed on the 30th by one at Alston Reservoirs with singles there on 1 May and 4 June. One was observed overhead at Clowbridge Reservoir on 1 May but no further records were received until three were reported moving north over Rishton Reservoir on 18 July. A single was reported from Lower Foulridge Reservoir on 4 Aug and the last of the year was at Alston Reservoirs on 9 Sept.

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea*

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

Morecambe Bay

Although coverage was not complete throughout the spring at Heysham, decent numbers were nonetheless recorded with 1502 north-east-bound birds on 14 dates between 23 April and 13 May, including peaks of 569 on 30 April, 301 on 1 May, 168 on 6 May and 124 on 7 May.

The only double-figure counts elsewhere in spring were 28 at Cockersand on 30 April and 100 at Jenny Brown's Point on 2 May with 27 there on the 4th.

As usual, Arctic Terns were scarce in autumn with just eleven bird-days at Heysham on 10-15 Sept and a juvenile on the outfalls on 26-29 Oct.

Liverpool Bay

Unusually, recorded spring passage was heavier than in Morecambe Bay this year, extending from at least 10 April to mid-May. Peak counts included 581 past Blackpool on 28 April with 712 there on 1 May and 137 on the 7th, and 261 at Rossall Point on 29 April with 621 there the next day, 361 on 6 May and 334 on the 7th.

Fewer were seen further south, mostly occasional single-figure counts being recorded off the Sefton Coast in either migration season, with the exception of 100 past Crosby Coastguards on 30 April.

Four pairs bred on Hesketh Out Marsh while one pair, probably second-summers, was nest-building at Seaforth on 3-8 June; at least one pair bred on both Longton Marsh and Warton Marsh.

Inland

At least four pairs nested at Preston Dock but with no success.

Spring migrants were seen at Stocks Reservoir (four) on 1 May with another on the 4th, Brockholes (three) on the 12th and MMWWT (three) on the 28th. Autumn records were similarly sparse: singles at Alston Reservoirs on 4 Aug, Foulridge Reservoirs on 2 Oct and Brockholes on the 22nd.

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger*

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

One at Stocks Reservoir on 27 April was the forerunner of what proved to be an excellent spring which began with a massive influx on the coast on the 30th. That day birds moved through fairly rapidly and there was undoubtedly a significant overlap of records. At least 215, perhaps 300+, flew north-east at Heysham; the largest counts elsewhere were 71 at Rossall Point, 60 off Crosby, 43 at Cokersand, 26 at Blackpool, 24 at Seaforth and 15 at Stocks Reservoir. The following day 48 went past Heysham, 39 were at Seaforth and 33 at Blackpool.

This movement petered out after 1 May although counts of ten or fewer continued at Heysham, Seaforth, Rossall and Blackpool to the 4th; ten at Freckleton Naze on the 7th. This period also produced additional single-figure counts along the coast at Knott End, Preston Dock, Leighton Moss and Jenny Brown's Point, and inland at MMWWT, Brockholes, Barnsfold Waters (near Beacon Fell CP) and Alston and Foulridge Reservoirs.

Singles were seen amongst the Common Tern colonies at Seaforth and Preston Dock during June but autumn passage proved to be a non-event. One or two juveniles were at Heysham on 3, 4 & 7 Sept, three or possibly five flew past Formby Point on 16 Sept, and singles were at Birkdale on 4 Sept, Otterspool on 11 Sept, Glasson Basin on 2 Oct, Alston Reservoir the following day Fairhaven Lake on the 8th and finally off Crosby on the 21st.



Black Terns, Seaforth, 1 May (Steve Young)

POMARINE SKUA *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Uncommon passage migrant

Morecambe Bay

Spring passage was below par with all records coming from Heysham. A very close light-morph adult flew north-east on 27 April and three light-morph adults flew north-east, landing briefly, on 1 May.

The only autumn record was a juvenile north-east past Heysham on 17 Oct.

Liverpool Bay

Spring passage also below par. A light-morph flew north off Ainsdale on 10 May, and another light-morph adult went past Rossall on 23 April, with four there on 7 May and a single past Starr Gate, Blackpool on the following day.

In the second half year a light-morph adult was off Starr Gate on 23 July, another light-morph off Rossall on 2 Sept and two light-morph adults off Rossall/Fleetwood on 17 Oct.

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

A poor spring passage began with two heading north-east at Knott End on the early date of 30 March, then just thirteen on eleven dates seen heading north-east from Heysham between 27 April and 24 May. Finally, one was off Knott End on 6 June.

All autumn records were from Knott End with an adult and immature on 18 Aug, probably the same light-morph adult on 10-11 Sept and one unaged on 13 Sept.

Liverpool Bay

Spring passage saw singles off the Sefton Coast on 11 April, 25 April and 20 May. Thirty-one were seen heading into Morecambe Bay from Rossall between 13 April and 29 May. Off Starr Gate, just under half this number (14) were recorded on overlapping dates, not necessarily all duplicates, and an additional singleton on 22 May and four on 28 May. June sightings, presumably at least including some late breeding adults, saw eight records from the Fylde coast between 1 June and 23 June and one off Ainsdale on 6 June.

In the second half of the year, a majority of the submitted records were from the Fylde coast. There were 17 records from 3 July to 30 July and 53 during August, probably including some off-passage duplication, with the highest count being eight off Starr Gate on 11 Aug. A lot of sea-watching from various vantage points in September saw a minimum of 59, including ten off Starr Gate on 6 Sept and what was assumed to be eight of these off Rossall. The grand total from all sites, including at least some obvious duplication, was 81.

Later records comprised three off Rossall on 17 Oct, one at Starr Gate on 22 Oct and two there on the 25th. One observer suggested the number of juveniles in relation to adults was lower than expected.

Records off the Sefton Coast were rather patchy: singles on 29 July, 15, 18 & 19 Aug and four adults (one light morph) on 24 Aug, and fours off Ainsdale on 24 Aug and Southport on 13 Sept. Thereafter a 'handful' were reported in October. Further south there were two at Otterspool on 14 Sept and one at Garston on 2 Oct.

Inland

A light morph was seen at MMWWT on 25 Sept.

GREAT SKUA *Stercorarius skua*

Fairly common passage migrant

Morecambe Bay

Birds heading north-east past Heysham comprised one on 24 April and three on the 27th. Off Knott End probably one of the above was seen on 27 April and one on 6 June.

Singles were seen from Heysham on 7 & 13 Sept.

Liverpool Bay

Spring passage was confined to the Fylde coast with singles off Rossall on 21 and 24 April with two on the 27th. Singles were off Starr Gate on 6 & 24 June and Blackpool North Shore on 11 June.

Autumn passage on the Fylde coast saw a minimum of 19 (22 if same-day sightings were not duplicated) between 6 Aug and 25 Oct, all singletons apart from two off Starr Gate on 4 Oct and three off Rossall on 17 Oct. Singles were off the Sefton Coast on 19 Aug, 10 & 13 Sept, and 2 & 8 Oct. Two were on the Mersey Estuary at Otterspool on 14 Sept and one in the Mersey Mouth on 2 Oct.

LONG-TAILED SKUA *Stercorarius longicaudus*

Very rare spring and rare autumn passage migrant

A juvenile flew south, then u-turned off Starr Gate at 08.55hrs on 13 Sept (L G Blacow, M Breaks).

GUILLEMOT *Uria aalge*

Common passage migrant; uncommon winter visitor.

The only records in the first winter period were single(s) off the south Fylde coast in February.

Birds off Formby Point, Blackpool and Rossall Point from mid-March were likely to have been the first migrants. Passage also got underway at this time at Heysham, where 44 were recorded on ten dates between 24 March and 23 May, including 14 on 18 May. There were a few larger counts in Liverpool Bay, including 56 off Blackpool on 30 April with 41 there on 17 May and 37 on the 23rd, and 51 at Formby on 20 May; 14 off Blackpool on 12 June was the last double-figure count of 'spring'.

Ones and twos began to reappear from late June and an extremely light passage continued into November with the highest counts seven off Blackpool on 11 Sept, four off Rossall on the 13th and five at Otterspool, unusually far up the Mersey, the next day.

The only records in the second winter period were up to three at Blackpool during December.



Guillemot, Cocker's Dyke, 6 October

RAZORBILL *Alca torda*

Common passage migrant; uncommon winter visitor.

Two off Blackpool was the only record in either winter period.

The first of the year were 46 off Rossall Point on 12 April; 16 off Blackpool on 30 April was the peak of a passage there which extended from 15 April to 23 May. One at Heysham on 23 May was the only other spring record.

One was again at Blackpool on 24 July but there were no more seen until 24 Aug, after which small numbers were off the Fylde coast until 12 Nov, with peaks of eleven off Blackpool on 11 Sept and eight there on the 23rd. Elsewhere one was on the Mersey at Otterspool on 14 Sept and two off Heysham on 7 Oct.

UNIDENTIFIED LARGE AUKS

At Heysham there were 64 on ten dates between 23 March and 24 May with a maximum of 22 on 18 May; the vast majority were thought to be Guillemots. The only other reports came from Rossall Point where 67 bird-days were logged in April with smaller numbers in March, May, September, October and December.

BLACK GUILLEMOT *Cephus grylle*

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

An adult in full summer-plumage was in the low tide channel by Heysham Skeer on 17 July and another adult was close inshore near the Heysham outfalls on 11 Sept. Three singles were seen off Rossall Point on 5 & 23 April and 15 Sept, while the only other record was one off Formby Point on 3 Nov.

PUFFIN* *Fratercula arctica*

Scarce passage migrant.

Puffins are normally rare birds in Lancashire waters but the numbers seen this year probably qualify as our first proper, albeit small, spring passage.

It is quite likely that there was some considerable duplication of records between sites, but this in itself is highly unusual as Puffins rarely linger off our coast. The first were singles off Heysham and Blackpool on 4 & 5 May and off Rossall Point on the 5th, with singles at both Blackpool and Rossall the next day, when three were seen at Jenny Brown's Point (WJ Webb). Numbers at Rossall grew to five on the 8th, the largest total anywhere in the county since 1981; one was also at Heysham that day. Two were (still) at Blackpool on 10 May and one on the 17th, when two were seen at Rossall (LG Blacow, S Dunstan, PJ Marsh *et al*).

FERAL PIGEON *Columba livia*

Abundant breeding resident

A total of 1473 was recorded by the Lancaster & District January Survey, 1396 of these in urban/coastal SD46, many around Heysham Battery Groyne car-park. Other early-year counts included c.200 in central Blackpool on 23 Jan, 120+ on a derelict factory building in Crossens on the 29th and 60 at MMWWT on 2 March. Twenty-five at Clitheroe Low Moor on 4 April was the highest of only 30 reports to ELOC during the year.

Actual breeding records were virtually absent this year, but representative spring and summer counts of 60 by Southport Marine Lake on 9 April, 74 in Stanley Park, Blackpool on 19 May and 60 in Liverpool's Newsham Park on 8 June are indicative of widespread robust populations; further inland the species remains common in Chorley town and there were 50+ in the centre of Rawtenstall, Rossendale on 29 July.

Substantial gatherings were noted in both urban and rural locations later in the year, including 150+ at Marton Mere on 5 Aug, 200 in central Liverpool on 13 Sept and 268 on Downholland Moss on 4 Dec.

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*

Common breeding resident. Amber List (important breeding population)

Peak counts in most regions were considerably lower than in 2016. Sixty-six at Little Plumpton, Fylde on 15 Jan was the largest gathering in the first winter period; other double-figure counts included 25 on Clifton Marsh on 3 Jan, 30 at Aintree on the 22nd and 34 at Cabin Hill, Formby on 16 Feb. A single bird flying northeast over Rossall Point on 23 March was the only spring migrant recorded.

Reports of breeding activity were, once again, plentiful and widespread. In east Lancashire nesting was confirmed at New Laithe Farm, Newton, Altham, Calder Foot and Coldwell, whilst a count of 51 birds at Extwistle Hall on 22 July is surely an indicator of substantial breeding nearby.

Further south in Chorley region Stock Doves nested in the usual farm and quarry sites at Anglezarke, Rivington, White Coppice and Whittle; nearby on the West Pennine Moors there were ten birds around breeding sites at Belmont Reservoir on 4 June, and in north Lancashire there was breeding season presence at Warton Crag, Trowbarrow Quarry, Eaves Wood and Wennington. Twenty-nine at Brockholes Wetland on 29 May must also be presumed to involve breeding in the vicinity.

Nearer the coast Stock Doves were recorded throughout the Fylde during the breeding season with nesting confirmed at Castle Hill Wood, Staynall, Todderstaffe Hall, Crookhey Hall, Stalmine and Warton Bank; a flock of 25 was on Lytham Moss on 9 May. North of the Wyre 23+ pairs in nest-boxes could not be fully monitored due to an Avian Flu alert. Breeding season presence in 22 locations south of the Ribble included territorial birds at 14 sites in south Liverpool/Knowsley and pairs at Seaforth, Freshfield Dune Heath and Roby Mill.

Two birds flying south at Heysham on 2 Sept were the only autumn migrants recorded in 2017. One hundred and twenty at MMWWT on 11 Oct was the only three-figure count reported all year; other significant gatherings in coastal regions in autumn and winter included 59 at Bradshaw Lane Head, Pilling on 24 Sept, 20 on Downholland Moss on 30 Nov and 27 at Sunderland Point on 30 Dec. Further inland there were counts of 23 on wheat stubble at Arkholme on 28 July, 25 at Eccleston, Chorley on 23 Oct and at Feniscowles Old Hall, Blackburn on 13 Nov.

WOODPIGEON *Columba palumbus*

Abundant breeding resident

Numbers of Woodpigeons were generally low during the first winter period; 1100 at Lower Ballam, Fylde on 18 Feb was by far the largest gathering reported. The Lancaster & District Survey recorded

591 birds in SD46 and 365 in SD56 in January; there were 220 on Altcar Withins on 25 Jan and 300+ at Marton Mere on 27 Feb. Two hundred at Eccleston, Chorley on 25 Jan was the highest count in inland regions and 67 at Jackhouse on 6 March was the maximum recorded by ELOC. A light spring passage was recorded from mid-March to mid-April at several Fylde coastal sites, peaking at 134 over Fleetwood Marsh NR on 23 March and 74 there on 3 April.

Fairly scanty reports of breeding undoubtedly hugely under-represent the population of this ubiquitous resident. Fifty-eight nests were monitored in Liverpool's Sefton Park and 38 in Everton Park with success-rates of 64% and 69%, respectively, but other breeding season counts elsewhere in south Liverpool/Knowsley of 538 birds near Croxteth Park on 16 June and 920+ at Tarbock on the 23rd, give an even more impressive picture of the species' abundance. Nesting was reported to be widespread in Rossendale, c.23 pairs bred on EDF property at Heysham and there were nine pairs on Freshfield Dune Heath.

Post-breeding flocks and movements, as well as those later in autumn, were both numerous and widespread but producing little in the way of a pattern, either in timing or location; some major gatherings were reported although none attained the massive numbers recorded earlier in the decade. Post-breeding assemblies included 200+ feeding on clover near Belmont on 25 June, 500+ at Todderstaffe Hall, Fylde on 28 July, 200 at Crosby Coastal Park on 9 Aug and 150+ at Brownsills in east Lancashire on the 11th; September was relatively quiet apart from a movement of 2250 over Crosby on the 18th and 300 near Ormskirk on the 24th.

Substantial flocks and movements were reported from both coastal and inland regions from the second week of October. There were 800+ at Marton Mere on 9 Oct, 930 at Cabin Hill and 300 at Eccleston on the 12th and 369 over Jackhouse on the 19th; a total of over 3300 moved south or south-west over Brockholes Wetland on five dates from the 18th peaking at 1298 on 30 Oct, 1921 moved south over Belmont in the first hour on the 25th and 696 moved south over Billinge Hill, St Helens on the 28th. There were fewer significant counts in November: 1370 were over Crosby Marine Park on 6 Nov, 750+ roosted at Singleton, Fylde on the 13th, there were 220 at Arkholme in the Lune Valley on the 18th and 1980 at Singleton on the following day.

Four thousand Woodpigeons were at Skitham, Out Rawcliffe on 9 Dec, 2000 were at Eagland Hill on 14 & 15 Dec and over a thousand frequented Croston Moss and Bretherton Eyes, Chorley during the month. The highest of six three-figure counts were on the south-west mosslands, c.200 at MMWWT on 9 Dec and at Downholland on the 27th; 55 at Moor Piece on Christmas Day was the highest count in east Lancashire.

TURTLE DOVE* *Streptopelia turtur*

Scarce passage migrant

One was seen in a garden at Cockden, Burnley on 1 June and its identity confirmed later from a photograph taken by the householder (Dave Mason). This was only the third record in east Lancashire in the present century.

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common breeding resident

The Lancaster & District January Survey recorded 39 Collared Doves in SD45 and 33 in SD65; the species was present in nine of eleven squares. Four of the five double-figure counts in coastal areas were in the Fylde, the highest 33 at Bradshaw Lane Head, Pilling on 7 Jan and 40 at nearby Eagland Hill on the 18th; in the south-west 20 were at Heaton's Bridge near Burscough on 1 Feb. There were two double-figure gatherings in east Lancashire, 24 at Newton on 3 Jan and 28 at Brookside Lodges on 5 Feb. Six birds moving south-east over Cabin Hill on 12 March was the only sign of spring passage.

Specific reports of breeding were even fewer than usual this year, although nesting was reported to be widespread in Rossendale and the Speke area of south Liverpool and singing birds were recorded throughout the Fylde in late winter and spring. In east Lancashire nesting was confirmed at Loud Mytham Farm and in a Burnley garden and considered probable in two other locations; a bird was on a newly-constructed nest in Brunshaw, Burnley on 28 Dec. In the north a pair nested on EDF property at Heysham; in Warton there were 19 pairs on Croftlands, as in 2016, and eight on Millhead, one up on last year. Five pairs bred in a 34ha study area at Aintree, as in 2016.

Apart from 40 on Reed's Moss, Rainford on 5 Oct and an exceptional 86 at nearby Mossborough Hall on the 18th, all 18 double-figure records in the lowlands later in the year came from the Fylde or north coast; peak counts were of 44 at the Keer Estuary on 24 Sept and 45 at Cockersand on 12 Nov. Inland, at least 21 were in a Belmont garden on 13 Oct and there were 23 at Ribchester on 3 Dec.

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*

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

The first Cuckoo of 2017 was at White Coppice, Chorley on 15 April, followed by a male on the West Pennine Moors and a female prospecting Meadow Pipit nests at Marshside on the 20th. The Fylde's first was at Marton Mere next day; on the 22nd the first of 14 April records in the higher reaches of Bowland was at Waddington Fell and Rossendale's first Cuckoo was calling at Calf Hey Reservoir. After a brief lull birds reached Yealand Redmayne and Thrushgill in north Lancashire on 27 April.

Subsequent coastal passage was light. There were four May records of singles in the Fylde, two males on the north coast in May and eight birds in the south-west from 26 April, including three at Marshside. As usual most of the activity was in upland regions, a total of 100 records for the year in east Lancashire, all but three in Bowland; there were males at eleven sites in the West Pennine Moors up to 13 June, birds at White Coppice and at four other sites in Chorley during May and at eight inland locations in the north and four in Rossendale up to early June. 'Larry' the much travelled satellite-tagged bird returned again and was recorded twice in Bowland, on 5 May and 1 June.

There was more evidence of breeding behaviour than usual this year, including 16 reports of possible or probable breeding in east Lancashire, all from Bowland, and males apparently on territory at three sites in the West Pennine Moors including Wheelton Plantations, and near Oakenclough; further inland there were up to four calling males in Upper Hindburndale-Thrushgill during May. In the lowlands breeding was judged probable in the reedbed at MMWWT.

Birds were on the move from late June with singles at Leighton Moss on the 25th and at Fluke Hall next day. There were six records in coastal regions in July-August, five involving juvenile birds: three were in the Fylde in July, one at Lunt Meadows from 28 July to 4 Aug, one at Brockholes Wetland from 28 July to 7 Aug and one at Heysham on 13 Aug, the last migrant of 2017. Further inland the last Cuckoo in Rossendale was at Haslingden on 3 July, the last in the north was at Birk Bank on 22 July and the last of two birds in east Lancashire was at New Laithe Farm, Newton on 5 August.



Juvenile Cuckoo, Lunt Meadows, 4 August (Steve Young)

BARN OWL *Tyto alba*

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

ELOC received 72 records, well distributed across the region. In a season of plentiful vole populations breeding in Bowland experienced a welcome boom, with 24 pairs fledging 124 young; three pairs raised two broods and four pairs bred on one farm; in the east of the region four pairs fledged at least 16 young.

In the Chorley region there were widespread records across all seasons and pairs bred successfully at Hoghton and Anglezarke with nesting considered probable at several other sites; a family group of eight was at Rivington on 8 Aug. Two pairs bred successfully at Belmont Reservoir and another seven territories were occupied elsewhere in the West Pennine Moors with young fledged in at least three locations; at least seven birds were out hunting around Belmont in mid-afternoon during hard weather in mid-December.

In north Lancashire a pair in Roeburndale fledged five young, a pair in Hindburndale was double-brooded in the same nest-box and Barn Owls bred successfully at four other sites.

The Fylde database received 187 records across all months and from all parts of the region. Breeding was confirmed at Nateby, Singleton (in six nest-boxes), Kirkham and Eaves. In the Pilling-Preesall area north of the Wyre 46 monitored nests saw 218 eggs laid and 121 of 141 young fledged, with seven pairs having second broods; the total of at least 37 successful pairs fledged a mean of 2.6 young apiece. In the south-west there were some 45 widespread reports of Barn Owls during the year and breeding was confirmed at Lunt Meadows, King's Moss, Rainford and Roby Mill; a little further inland a pair nested at Brockholes Wetland.

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

Common breeding resident

Our commonest owl was recorded in all months in east Lancashire including a report of 14 (two pairs with ten juveniles from nests 250m apart) on the moors above Burnley; breeding was also confirmed at four sites in Bowland and another two in the east. There were reports from eleven locations in Chorley, over eight months, with successful nesting at Eccleston and by two pairs in Cuerden Valley Park; on the West Pennine Moors there were three territories in Wheelton Plantations. Tawny Owls were present at 13 locations in Rossendale and pairs bred successfully at Healey Dell, Musbury, Lower Plunge and Calf Hey Reservoir.

Birds were recorded in five 10km squares during the Lancaster & District Winter Survey, including eight in coastal SD46. Breeding season presence was recorded in the Silverdale area at Leighton Moss, Barrow Scout, Warton Crag and Challan Hall; in the Lune Valley a pair fledged two young at Hornby Castle and breeding was also recorded at Claughton, Arkholme and Wennington.

The Fylde database received 51 widespread reports in all months except September; a pair fledged two young at Mowbreck Hall and nine monitored pairs north of the Wyre laid a total of 23 eggs, although the outcome is not known. There were reports from 14 locations south of the Ribble; the only breeding records were of a pair in Kirkdale Cemetery, Aintree and two in a 152 ha study area at Roby Mill.

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

Fairly common breeding resident

There were 35 records in the Fylde during 2017, from all parts of the region; pairs with young were reported at Kirkham and Medlar and seven monitored pairs in nest-boxes north of the Wyre laid 21 eggs and fledged 17 young, 2.4 per pair. Further south Little Owls were present at 17 locations in the south-west with confirmed breeding by single pairs at Lunt, Banks and Churchtown Moss.

ELOC received 128 records, double the usual number, but half of these came from only five well-watched sites, three in the east and two in the Ribble Valley; breeding was confirmed at three locations in the east and two in the Ribble Valley. Little Owls were recorded at ten sites in Rossendale and a pair nested successfully at Clowbridge Reservoir.

In Chorley there were records from four sites over eight months, with successful breeding by a pair on Croston Moss that fledged at least one youngster. There were two territorial pairs on the West Pennine Moors; one that fledged at least four young at Belmont Reservoir was the first breeding record there since 2013. On the downside, however, at least five sites in north-east Lancashire are

reported to have lost breeding pairs in the last five years with no sign of any compensatory increase nearby.

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus*

Uncommon breeding resident

There was some improvement on last year's exceptionally low score. Ten records were received by ELOC, seven from moorland edges in the east of the region and three from Bowland. Breeding was confirmed at a site in Bowland and at two in the east where a total of five young fledged; the outcome is unknown from a third nest with eggs. In Rossendale there were breeding pairs in the Grane area and at Clowbridge Reservoir, although outcomes are unknown; a bird was reported hunting over Stronstrey Bank, Chorley in late November.

No reports were received from the south-west or the north, although the fell-side conifer plantations of SD66/67 in the latter region were not surveyed thoroughly in 2017. In the Fylde there was an interesting record of two juveniles photographed and sound-recorded in summer over a three week period on a farm at Ballam, and a migrant was recorded at Fleetwood Marsh NR on 7 Nov. The traditional winter roost at Marton Mere seems to have dwindled this year, with reports of a single bird from 1 Jan to 1 Feb and no records at all at year end.

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

Scarce breeding bird, uncommon winter visitor

Records from the south-west mosslands and coast predominated in the first winter period, with up to four birds each at Lunt Meadows from early January to mid-April and at Speke-Garston Coastal Park in mid-January; there were also singles at Hesketh Out Marsh, MMWWT and Cabin Hill, Formby on dates in January. The only other lowland winterers were up to two birds on Wesham Marsh, Fylde on many dates from 1 Jan to 25 March.

Further inland there were reports from Bowland during January-March, but without details.

Spring movements in coastal regions began in late March and were at a lower level than usual; three birds each were reported in the Fylde and the south-west and one on the north coast up to the end of May. Inland one at Alston Reservoirs during 28 April-1 May was the only record in east Lancashire, two were recorded in Rossendale, at Bentley Moss on 19 April and Musbury on 21 May, and there were three or four birds at three sites in Chorley between 20 March and 18 May; one was at Belmont Reservoir on 16 April.

The surge in vole numbers that boosted the Barn Owl breeding population in the uplands had an equally beneficial effect on our Short-eared Owls. Nine pairs bred in Bowland, eight of which were successful, one fledging four juveniles; there were five territorial pairs on the West Pennine Moors and two of these fledged young, whilst in north Lancashire there were two successful territories on Whit Moor, Roeburndale. Presumably unrelated to vole numbers a pair was present in late spring and early summer at Hesketh Out Marsh, though without proof of nesting.

Autumn movements on the coast began in mid-August and were nearly as heavy as last year's exceptional passage. There were eight records at five sites in the south-west from 15 Aug to 15 Nov, all of single birds except for eight at Lunt Meadows on 30 Oct, and two records of single birds in both the Fylde and the north coast between 25 Sept and 15 Nov. Inland there were three in Chorley, on Rivington Moor on 13 Aug and at Adlington and Bretherton Eyes in mid-November; one was on Haslingden Moor on 25 Sept.

With the exception of a bird at Bradshaw Lane Head, Pilling on 27-28 Dec all our coastal Short-eared Owls at year's end were in the south-west, where up to seven were at Lunt Meadows on many dates from 24 Nov to 31 Dec; one was on Crosby Shore on 21 Dec. Apart from a bird that remained around Belmont into November there were no reports from upland regions.

NIGHTJAR* *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Extinct breeder, rare passage migrant

For the third successive summer birds were present at a confidential site in east Lancashire, singles on 28 May, 9 June and 16 July and two on 3 June; a bird was calling on 16 July.

SWIFT *Apus apus*

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

The first Swift to arrive over Leighton Moss on 17 April was immediately followed by the first in the south-west, singles at Marshside and Lunt Meadows next day. Two were at Alston Wetland in east Lancashire and singles at Haslingden in Rossendale, at Brockholes Wetland and Fleetwood Marsh, Fylde, all on 23 April, and there was a total of eight more widespread records of one or a few birds during April. Subsequent passage in May and early June was light for the second year in a row, with a modest but widespread surge during 5-13 May. Coastal peaks included 91 at Starr Gate on 6 May and 200 at Marshside next day; 100-200 passed over Lunt on several dates during the 5-12th. The highest count in east Lancashire was c.40 at Clowbridge on 6 May; there were 200 over Brockholes on the same day and 80 there on the 13th.

Breeding data may have reached an all-time low this year. Confirmed or probable nesting occurred at 13 widespread locations in east Lancashire and breeding activity was reported from Rawtenstall in Rossendale and Birkdale and east Speke in the south-west, but without details.

Apart from 100+ at Clough Bottom Reservoir, Rossendale on 3 July there were no reports of significant movements until the middle of the month: 20 were at Eccleston, Chorley, 40 at Marshside, 60 at Seaforth and 70 at Brockholes on 16 July and there were 40 over Lancaster next day. The pace of departure quickened appreciably at the end of July and in early August: there were c.70 at Clitheroe on 25 July and at Longridge next day and 100+ at Seaforth and 80+ at Braides, Fylde on the 27th; early August saw counts of 120 at MMWWT and 130 at Seaforth on the 8th and c150 at Newton-le-Willows on the 10th.

As is the norm, numbers dwindled very quickly after mid-August; the last Swift of 2017 in Rossendale was at Holden Wood Reservoir on the 21st. The usual scattering of September records included 24 over Seaforth on the 10th; all other reports were in low single figures. The last Swift in Chorley was at Coppull on the 12th, in the south-west at Crossens on the 18th and in the Fylde at Lightfoot Green next day; one at Warton on 22 Sept closed the year in north Lancashire and there was one late straggler in east Lancashire, over Salthill Quarry, Clitheroe on 17 Oct.

KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

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

One or occasionally two Kingfishers were reported from six coastal or adjacent sites in the north, eleven in the Fylde and 13 in the south-west during January-March, and from eight, 22 and eleven in the same regions during July-December. In the uplands the species was also well represented in the winter months, for example at seven sites in Chorley and five in Rossendale in January and six and



As Kingfishers gradually recolonise the lowlands they appear more regularly in unlikely habitat.

Lee Park Golf Club, south Liverpool, 2 May (Steve Young)

nine respectively in December. ELOC reported a high total of 236 reports across the entire area and in all months, including 44 records of two or more birds.

A high volume of breeding data from all regions of the county indicated a thriving population. There were 14 reports of probable pairs in east Lancashire and fledged juveniles were recorded at Deer Pond, Lee Green Reservoir, Towneley Park and Altham. Breeding was not confirmed in Chorley but post-breeding reports were numerous and widespread, including birds at nine sites in September. Kingfishers were present at the usual reservoir and riparian locations on the West Pennine Moors and breeding season presence at traditional sites was recorded across Rossendale, including Rawtenstall and the Ewood Bridge-Stubbins stretch of the River Irwell, although a pollution incident on that waterway may have had negative consequences. In the Lune Valley nesting was confirmed at five locations from Skerton Weir up to Arkholme; elsewhere in the north there were pairs at Quernmore and Abbeystead.

Nearer to the coast regular sites were occupied on the eastern edge of the Fylde, at Galgate, on the Brock at Barton Grange and the Wyre at St Michaels; there were signs of range expansion with breeding season presence at Little Crimbles on the River Cocker and at Preesall Flashes. In the south-west nesting was confirmed at Carr Mill Dam, St Helens, on the River Alt at Aintree and on Knowsley Brook by Croxteth Park and was considered possible or likely in five other locations.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major*

Common and widespread breeding resident

There is scarcely a corner of the county with reasonable tree-cover that has not now been colonised by this highly-successful and popular species. The Fylde database received 365 reports, in all months and from all parts of the region with territorial drumming widespread from 21 Jan; confirmed nesting at four locations is presumably only a fraction of the total population.

A similar situation no doubt obtains in east Lancashire, where drumming began on 7 Jan and 117 records during the year included 15 reports of probable or possible breeding; juvenile birds were seen at three sites. Birds were present at numerous locations in Chorley region with three breeding pairs in Cuerden Valley Park and a juvenile recorded at Great Knowley on 14 June; on the West Pennine Moors three territorial pairs were located in Wheelton Plantations. Great Spotted Woodpeckers were present throughout Rossendale with numerous reports of breeding and at many sites in north Lancashire, particularly the well-watched Silverdale area, although seven pairs along 10km of the Upper Lune between Leck Beck and Hornby was a decrease on the totals of recent years.

The species' abundance in the south-west is well illustrated by territorial presence at eleven locations in south Liverpool/Knowsley, four pairs at Carr Mill Dam, St Helens, and three at Mere Sands Wood.

Although none was recorded at Heysham this year there were widespread reports of migrant birds from early September to the end of October, with a very early individual over Seaforth on 30 July. A total of 16 passage birds was recorded at four sites on the Sefton Coast from 4 Sept to 29 Oct, including three along the Marine Drive at Marshside-Crossens on 19 Oct; four were seen over Fairhaven Dunes during 18-30 Oct and singles flew over Belmont in the West Pennine Moors on 6 & 29th.

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

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

There was an increase in reports in east Lancashire from 28 last year to 64 from 39 locations in 2017, but with a continuing bias toward the south of the region; breeding was confirmed at Extwistle Hall and Swinden Reservoir. There was no confirmation of nesting in Chorley where birds were present at four sites during the year; a similar situation obtained in the West Pennine Moors with one or more birds present at a site near Belmont throughout the year but without proof of breeding. The picture in Rossendale seems brighter, however: Green Woodpeckers were reported from 22 sites and breeding was confirmed at Grane, Musbury, Warth, Strongstry and in the Irwell Valley between Ewood Bridge and Stubbins.

Although the species was judged to be less common than in the past in the Arkholme area, north Lancashire continues to constitute the Green Woodpecker's county stronghold, with breeding season presence at ten sites around Silverdale, including at least three pairs at Challan Hall and two

on Warton Crag; nesting was recorded in at least twelve locations along the length of the Lune Valley and its tributaries as far upstream as Whittington. Pairs also bred at Quernmore and Docker and a wide-ranging bird visited Heysham & Middleton NRs and Heysham Moss on several dates during August-December.

Intiguing, apparently random visits to lowland and coastal sites were recorded again in 2017. In the Fylde single birds were at Glasson on 27 March and Singleton on 26 September, one was in Boilton Wood at Brockholes on 1 Sept and the elusive, some say mythical, population at Freshfield-Formby Point emerged again with a report of three birds on 6 Oct.

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

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

Rather more records were received this year – could Kestrels be having something of a revival?

The Lancaster & District January survey found 25, compared with 16 Sparrowhawks and 52 Buzzards, while ELOC gathered 497 sightings, 100 more than in 2106.

Breeding reports also gave rise to a certain degree of optimism. The eleven pairs that were monitored in the Pilling-Preesall area laid 52 eggs and fledged at least 33 young; the total may have been higher but avian flu restrictions in January and February meant that squirrel nests could not be removed from nestboxes, which may have reduced the occupancy rate.

Six pairs were monitored on in-bye land in Bowland, all successful, with two of them each fledging six chicks; one of these shared a barn with a successful Barn Owl pair.

Elsewhere, pairs near Lunt Meadows and at King's Moss were the only breeding reports in Merseyside, but three pairs were reported from Chorley, one at Belmont, 13 at additional sites in east Lancashire and at least four in Rossendale. Although still widespread in the Lune Valley, breeding numbers are in decline, for example just a single pair nested at Arkholme compared with the usual two or three.

Large post-breeding groups in late summer included a remarkable 38 on Hesketh Out Marsh on 28 Sept, up to 18 at Crossens/Banks Marshes, twelve at Marshside, and up to ten from a number of other sites; at least 40 were seen in the central West Pennine Moors in September and early October.

One flying south at Seaforth on 25 Aug and two on 29 Oct were the only probable migrants reported.

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*

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

This was an exceptionally good year for breeding Merlins in Bowland. Nine pairs, the most since 1998, all successfully fledged young, a total of 32 which compared with 14 in 2016 and was the best result since at least 1991. No breeding was reported from elsewhere in the county.

Away from Bowland, birds were recorded throughout the winter months from a minimum of 33 sites in the Fylde recording area, a dozen or more in north Lancashire and the south-west, five in the CDNHS area, including a female around Belmont during the first winter period and a male and female throughout the second winter period, with perhaps a similar number in east Lancashire.

However, the number of individuals involved was presumably rather lower than this implies. At least three were on the Ribble Marshes during the first winter period and at least four in the second, with two or more on the south-west mosses and in north Fylde and the Lune Estuary; at least one was at Brockholes in autumn and in Rossendale at either end of the year. Most had left the wintering grounds by the end of March but there were a few records during April and the last was seen on 3 May.

One at Pilling on 26 July was an early returner but no more were seen until the end of August, after which records became more regular on the coastal plain up until the year's end.

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

Rare breeding bird and uncommon passage migrant.

Hobbies are now seen relatively frequently in the county and the breeding population must surely be larger than the half dozen or so pairs previously estimated – but if so, we have no direct evidence of it.

No nesting was reported this year but a pair almost certainly did so in the same area as 2016 to the east of Brockholes. The first was seen on the reserve on 23 April and a pair was there the following day with five on the 29th, after which two adults and two first-summers were hunting there throughout the summer. Five on 26 Sept included two juveniles and the last was seen on 5 Oct. A pair was also seen elsewhere in the east on 29 July with subsequent sightings on three dates in July but there was no definite evidence of breeding.

Other suggestions of the presence of breeding birds included a pair displaying over the Meols Hall estate in Southport on 8 May and two subsequent dates in summer, while birds were also seen regularly at MMWWT, Hesketh Out Marsh and Rufford and Mawdesley Mosses. A pair has nested not far away from Lunt Meadows for a few years but judging by the paucity of records there did not do so this year.

Singles at Marshside on the 28th and Great Marton Moss on the 30th were the only other April records but records proliferated during May and June when Hobbies were reported from a further 25 or more sites in all parts of the county.

The first dispersing adults and a few juveniles began to appear from mid-July with regular sightings until mid-September and the last at Fairhaven Dunes on 6 Oct and Harden Moor, Rossendale on the 8th.

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus*

Scarce breeder, uncommon winter visitor.

The fortunes of breeding Peregrines continued to vary hugely between different parts of the county.

Only three pairs attempted to breed in Bowland in 2017; two of these were successful, fledging five chicks between them, an improvement on 2016 when not a single chick fledged from the whole of the Forest of Bowland. This is the first time since 2012 that two pairs have successfully bred, and the most to have fledged since 2010. However, two pairs are still far below the number that bred there before the population started to crash in 2010.

In Rossendale, however, nesting was attempted by four pairs with two fledging young. And another failing after hatching. Three pairs bred in Chorley, at Hoghton and Whittle and at a site in the town centre where three young fledged. Three sites were occupied in the West Pennine Moors, one of which was successful, one occupied by a male bird only and the outcome unknown at the third site.

The only breeding information received from north Lancashire came from the long-established site on Warton Crag, where the young failed to fledge, and Trowbarrow Quarry where three were displaying on 23 May.

Only four of the usual Merseyside sites were reported on, with nothing heard from the Southport, Knowsley or St Helens pairs. In Liverpool, however, the Tobacco Warehouse pair, having failed on the first attempt, successfully raised at least two young despite extensive works being carried out on the building; an additional bird was present throughout the season, presumed to have been one of last year's fledged males acting as a 'helper'. At least one fledged in the Seaforth Docks and the Aintree pair was seen carrying food to the nest, while birds were present on the Anglican Cathedral during the breeding season.

RING-NECKED PARAKEET *Psittacula krameri*

Rare feral breeder, fairly frequent escape

The expansion of this species' breeding range, tentatively predicted in last year's report, may now be underway. There were 23 reports in east Lancashire, most from the Barrowford area including parties of five birds on two occasions; other sightings came from the Clitheroe area and Chipping, and reports of three juveniles together are strongly suggestive of nearby breeding.

There were numerous reports in Chorley region, from several parts of Chorley town and five other locations; parties of four at Hartwood, Chorley in June and eight at Whittle in August indicate breeding in the vicinity. A pair was present regularly in Preston's Savick Park and there were several sightings of up to three birds in Fulwood; one was at Brockholes Wetland on 3 Nov.

In the Fylde up to five were present at Lytham Crematorium on many dates up to June; later in the year most records, of up to three birds, were at Blackpool's Stanley Park and occasional reports

of singles came from several other sites in south Fylde.

There were far too many reports from south Liverpool to give in detail, mainly from Princes and Sefton Parks south to Garston; over ten birds were in Sefton Park on several dates and there was an ominous count of 29 on 14 Sept. There were reports of up to six Ring-necked Parakeets in the Southport area with claims of breeding activity and ones or twos were at five other sites in the south-west during the year.

An interesting illustration of the ability of individuals of this species to provide duplicate records is a bird that flew north-east over Lancaster University at 0845 on 1 Nov; what was almost certainly the same was over Caton in the Lune Valley, c.8 km away, at 0930!

GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

In the first winter period there were three records in the county. A bird that had been in the Whittington area at the end of 2016 was seen on 5 Jan during the LDBWS January survey. The next was in the Nateby-Eagland Hill area on 14 & 22 Jan when it was seen chasing Reed Buntings along the hedgerows, and finally one was at Grimsargh Wetlands on 28 Feb.

The only record in the second half of the year came from Preesall Flashes where one was present on 2-3 Nov.



Great Grey Shrike, Preesall Flashes, 2 November (Paul Ellis)

JAY *Garrulus glandarius*

Common resident. Occasional irruptions, some winter dispersal.

The Jay continues to do well in the woodlands of Lancashire, being commonest east of the M6 Corridor, in the parklands around Preston and Chorley and the rich woodland of the Silverdale area. Overall, reports were received from 90% of the 10km squares that cover the region with the vast majority being of four birds or fewer. In the Lancaster January survey 39 birds were counted with 19 of these being in the Lancaster area.

Ten were seen around Avenham Park, Preston during March and counts of six at Formby Point on 25 March and seven at Burscough on 5 April were notable for those areas. Indeed, the numbers seen on the Sefton Coast do seem to be on the increase with a pair successfully breeding at Hesketh GC, Southport again this year and many sightings around Cabin Hill NNR.

In a survey of the Wheelton Plantations, four territories were noted and two pairs were present around Aintree. The species remains scarcer on the Fylde but there were regular sightings of one or two birds at Hackensall Wood, Preesall up to mid-April and again later in the year. In Liverpool, birds were present in Newsham and Calderstones Parks in April.

The largest count in east Lancashire was of six birds at Grove Lane, Padiham on 9 April. Breeding was confirmed at Jackhouse and thought probable at Cockden, Siddows and Stocks Reservoir, though many other instances must have gone unreported.

A small amount of movement was reported during the autumn months: Heysham recorded three south on 28 Sept and two on 19 Oct. Similarly, there was a total of six migrants over Cabin Hill during September. This period also brought high counts from Brockholes where there were ten on 15 Sept and fourteen on 5 Oct. Ten were at Lunt Meadows on 26 Sept, all of which were carrying acorns and Jays were noted in four different parkland locations in south Liverpool during this period.

There were a few reports of Jays at feeders and fat-balls in suburban gardens.

MAGPIE *Pica pica*

Abundant resident.

Reports of this abundant and conspicuous species were received from every 10km square in the region. There were around 200 reports with double-figure counts.

Magpies were the sixth most frequently recorded species in the CDNHS winter survey and the LDBWS January count recorded 394 with the majority around the Lancaster area. Ninety-eight were counted at a pre-roost gathering at Aintree on 11 Feb and 55 were at Formby Point on 30 Jan. A roost near the railway at Hightown numbered 57 on 2 Jan and 65 on the 22nd, while a roost of 33 was recorded at Longton Brickcroft in early March.

Breeding was widespread and generally in line with previous years: nine pairs at Heysham, four at Freshfield Dune Heath, three pairs at Brockholes and 15 territories around Aintree. A pair nested only five feet up in a Gorse bush near Belmont where gamekeepers reported shooting or trapping 71 birds during the year.

Little autumn passage was reported. The roost site at Egerton was estimated to contain between 430 and 480 Magpies on 21 Dec, two-thirds of the unprecedented numbers in December 2016. Marton Mere recorded a maximum of 52 on 29 Dec. Significant second winter period counts in east Lancashire were a roost of 57 at Lowerhouse Lodges on 16 Nov and 32 at Greenspace (Burnley) on 2 Nov.

CHOUGH* *Pyrhocorax pyrrhocorax*

Vagrant

What a great year it was for seeing Chough in our county. All records probably relate to the same individual as it made its way up and down the coastal strip, starting in March when it was seen on Stanley School playing fields at Marshside on the 2nd (finder unknown). It was relocated at Hesketh Out Marsh on the 7th and then was seen flying east over Fleetwood on the 9th. If that wasn't enough excitement, it appeared on the golf course at Blackpool's Stanley Park on 18-25 March (S Dunstan *et al*), after which, play resumed and it disappeared. However, it appeared again briefly on 15 April before being seen over Rossall Point on the 22nd.



Chough, Stanley Park, Blackpool, 21 March (Craig Bell)

So where had it been in the intervening periods? Well, the debate then continued when a bird appeared at Heysham Head on 2 Dec (H Warkworth *et al*) where it was seen regularly, despite routine public disturbance, through into 2018. It often fed at the base of the cliffs, out of view and away from disturbance for long periods but at other times would noisily range across the area over the short-cropped grassland and animal paddocks.

These were Lancashire's ninth and tenth records with the last being in April 2008.

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*

Common breeding resident, some autumn movement.

A widespread species, but in localised colonies, Jackdaws were recorded in all 10km squares during the year. With a preference for rural and suburban areas, it is only scarcer in the heavily urbanised areas. The Lancaster January survey recorded 2313 which were fairly evenly distributed over the nine 10km squares.

In the early part of the year "thousands" were seen going to roost in Ravenmeols Woods, Formby whilst in the West Pennine Moors, the species was absent or in very low numbers at the large corvid roost sites. Other large counts included 350 on Lytham Moss on 21 Jan, 304 at Great Altcar on the 30th, up to 570 at Stocks Reservoir during February (with approximately 500 still there on 4 Mar), 200 at Bank End, Cockerham on 26 Feb and up to 450 at Warton Crag on 20 March. On 7 April approximately 2000 came into roost in Riley's Wood, Dunnockshaw with the majority coming from the Burnley direction. The roost at Egerton had 350 birds in April.

Breeding numbers seemed to be on the rise in the Chorley region though numbers at Withnell Quarry took a surprising downturn with fewer than five pairs rather than the more usual 25+. In the Over Wyre area 17 pairs laid 79 eggs but pre-season Avian-flu restrictions meant that the clearance of squirrel dreys from boxes was hampered, reducing box occupancy rates. Approximately 40 were in residence around Hornby Castle throughout the year and chimney-pot/eaves nests were reported from Belmont, Whalley and Rishton. Around 15 pairs nested in Lunt Village and at the Jaguar factory in Halewood a pair nested under a cluster of lamps mounted on a pole, about 13 metres above ground level.

Autumn passage was rather quiet at Heysham with 248 south between 26 Sept and 9 Nov. Numbers were higher at Seaforth where during October there were counts of 350 on the 15th, 234 on the 29th and 187 on the 30th. However, on 18 Oct a large movement was noted across the county; Heysham had its largest daily count of 70 but elsewhere there were 350 at Warbreck Hill, Blackpool, 400 over Fairhaven, 856 in five hours west over Brockholes and 1200 south over Crosby. Other large congregations of Jackdaws in October included 600 at Hest Bank on the 3rd, 480 at Cabin Hill on the 12th and 300 at Rawtenstall on the 20th.

In the second winter period, roost counts were low with 350 at Cuerden Valley Park in November and 300 at Egerton in December. In east Lancashire, the peaks were of 120 at Ightenhill on 30 Oct and 100 at Stocks Reservoir on 10 Nov.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

Abundant resident

Though reported in 88% of 10km squares, Rooks were only seen regularly in half of those, where the main concentrations of this largely sedentary species occur. As can be seen from the table below there are some significantly sized rookeries around the county with a good numbers in Rossendale, Chorley and on the Fylde. No counts of sites along the Lune were received though the Lancaster January survey recorded 2557, concentrated along the Lune Valley.

Early in the year, large flocks were encountered on the Fylde, including 170 at Lytham Moss on 21 Jan, 100 at Cockerham on the 22nd and 220 at Cockerham Moss on 2 Feb. Birds started to return to rookeries in Rossendale in early February.

A few were noted on spring passage at Rossall Point during March and April and there were singles over Stanley Park, Blackpool on 5 March and at Marshside on the 12th. Three flew over Seaforth on 9 April.

As a breeding species, Rooks are largely absent from south-west Lancashire and North Merseyside though the rookeries at Knowsley and Kirkdale provide a toe-hold in the area as do three allied rookeries at Scarisbrick where total numbers increased again to over 55 nests.

Some southward passage was recorded during the autumn: Heysham had four and eight on 26 & 28 Sept, Seaforth had four on the 23rd and six on 30 Oct, six flew west past Rossall on 15 Oct and 40 flew south over Crosby on the 18th.

The second winter period had peak counts of 150 at Netherley on 5 Nov, the Delph Plantations roost during November and Pilling on 1 Dec.

Number of nests in monitored Rookeries

Chorley/West Pennine Moors	Nests
Astley Park	0
A49 Euxton	35
Howard Arms, Whittle Springs	23
Rawlinson La, Heath Charnock	0
Railway Road, Adlington	40
Prospect House, Wheelton	69
Lower Wheelton	4
Red Cat, Wheelton	8
St Chad's Wheelton	8
Croston Bowling Green	58
Croston Town Road	2
Croston Westhead Road	8
Wild Bottoms Wood, Hoghton	Present
Town House Farm, Brindle	26
Brindle Village	0
Buckshaw Village	21
Turton/Edgworth (2 sites)	108
Rossendale	
Broadclough	44
Water	18
Peersclough Road	16
Acre,	14
Rook Hill	37
Crawshawbooth (St John's Church)	38
Rawtenstall centre	6
Farmer's Glory, Rising Bridge	21
Goodshaw Chapel	3

East Lancashire	Nests
Brungerley Bridge	11
Victoria Park, Nelson	12
Simonstone	10
Slaidburn (3 sites)	18
Langcliffe Cross	39
Nelson	16
Towneley Park	30
Sawley	17
Whalley	1
Fylde	
Castle Hill Wood, Out Rawcliffe	18
Poulton-le-Fylde (4 sites)	17
Little Poulton Lane	52
Singleton	60
Kirkham	40
Bradkirk Hall, Wesham	52
Stake Pool	50
Cockerham	40
Forton	5
Ellel Grange (2 sites)	52
Nateby Lodge	10
Bradkirk Hall, Wesham	93
Others	
Bank Brow, Roby Mill	56
Hornby Castle	26
Kirkdale Cemetery	7 all failed
School Lane,	12
Knowsley Industrial Park	

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*

Abundant breeding bird. Some southward movement in October.

Gamekeepers at Belmont reported shooting or trapping 130 Carrion Crows in 2017 and wintering numbers in the West Pennine Moors have declined noticeably in recent years; the five main roosts (Delph, Entwistle, Roddlesworth, Upper Rivington and Calf Hey) which would regularly have a total of around 2000 birds in mid-winter during the period 2000-2008, now struggle to reach half that number. Peak counts in the early part of the year were of 250 roosting in Roddlesworth Plantations on 29 Jan and 120 at Upper Rivington on 7 Feb. In Delph Plantations, where the favoured area had been clear-felled, first-winter-period numbers were 300 in January, 200 in February and 250 in March.

Carrion Crows remain widespread, being recorded in every 10km square. The LDBWS January survey recorded a total of 555 with large numbers especially south of Lancaster and in the Silverdale area. Many double-figure counts were received – counts around Brockholes were regularly above 50, peaking at 73 on 23 March, the same day that 51 passed over Rossall Point. A hundred flew north over Clowbridge and Crown Point, Burnley on 1 April.

Breeding numbers were fairly typical – there were four territories at Withnell Plantations, one pair at Freshfield Dune Heath, two pairs at Heysham and Brockholes, for example.

Post-breeding peaks included 60 at Deeply Vale on 18 June, 60 at Brockholes on 17 July and 64 at Sefton Park, Liverpool on the 27th; at least 92 roosted at the latter site on 14 Sept. Some autumn passage was noted: Heysham recorded 161 with a peak of 46 on 19 Oct and Rossall Point had 53 on the 15th. On 12 Oct 110 were feeding with a large flock of Jackdaws in an unharvested potato field at Cabin Hill and up to 62 were on the seafront at Morecambe in late October and into November.

Second winter period roosts in the West Pennine Moors included 100 at Upper Rivington on 14 Nov, 200 at Roddlesworth Plantations on the 27th and 159 at Entwistle Plantations on 3 Dec. The Delph Plantation roost held 300 in October, 200 in November and 250 in December.

A leucistic bird was regular around Roddlesworth in the first part of the year and a partially leucistic bird was seen at Aintree.

HOODED CROW *Corvus cornix*

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

There were a good number of records of Hooded Crow this year, starting with a hybrid seen at Aintree on 25 Jan where a full adult had been seen in 2015. March brought records from Rossall Point on the 7th, Barnaby's Sands on the 10th and Cabin Hill on the 28th. During April a bird on Twiston Moor on the 10th was followed by singles at Aldcliffe Marshes and Formby Point on the 16th.

One was again at Fleetwood on 19 April and was recorded on-and-off through to the 22 May. Similarly, one was found at Southport Marine Lake on the 20th and ranged from there to Marshside up until the 25th. There was another record from Formby on 29 April and again at Southport on 25 May.

On 25 Sept one was in a large corvid flock near Haydock, remaining until 14 Oct.

RAVEN *Corvus corax*

Scarce but increasing resident.

The rate of reporting for Ravens has possibly plateaued, limited by the number of breeding sites and the fact that it is now seen regularly in every part of the county, with records this year coming from 90% of the 10km squares. The LDBWS January survey results exemplify this with a total of 33 seen over nine 10km squares.

Still, the bird is most frequently encountered in numbers in the Bowland area where numbers are booming – 50 were on Champion Moor on 24 Jan and 17 at Bowland Knotts on 4 Feb. Another favoured area is the West Pennine Moors though the congregations are never as large. Similarly, in the Silverdale area with the birds regularly reported from Warton Crag area.

Breeding was confirmed at a couple of sites in the south of Bowland but there was evidence of several pairs in the fells around Dunsop Bridge. The species successfully bred at three quarry sites in the Chorley region (Hoghton, Whittle and Withnell), Whitworth Quarry, Warton Crag, Seaforth Docks and on electricity pylons at both Great Harwood and Pilling. Several family parties were noted from late spring onwards and some notable congregations included 17 at Croasdale on 1 May and 30 going to roost in Gisburn Forest on the 31st, increasing to 40 by July.

Thereafter, smaller numbers were reported widely with the only counts over five being six at Lancaster Cathedral on 20 July, ten at Belmont on 5 Aug with 15 there on 16 Oct, seven at Poulton-le-Fylde on 20 Aug, ten at Alston Wetland on 9 Sept, six at Marshside on 15 Oct and twelve at Champion Moor on 4 Nov.

WAXWING *Bombus garrulus*

Winter visitor in highly variable numbers

As promised in last year's report, the story of the winter 2016/17 Waxwing invasion continues. Those not nursing hangovers were out year-listing this species on 1 Jan at no less than twelve locations across the county. Barrow, near Clitheroe, was the location of choice for many on New Year's Day where there were 106 stripping the berries from cotoneaster trees. Numbers here dropped soon after to the region of 20-35 until the last records on 20 Feb.

Meanwhile, in Blackburn town centre there were 30 at Weir Street Car Park on 1 Jan, rising to 108 by the 5th, dropping to 40 on the 10th but remaining in the area until 19 March. A flock at Padiham

formed on 12 Jan, remaining in the area until 12 April with a peak of over 110 on 18 Jan. Other sites in east Lancashire had good numbers of Waxwings in this period: Burnley had up to 40 from 1 Jan to 9 March, Worsthorne up to 50 for a week at the end of January, Wycoller 40 on 26 Feb, Colne 20 in March and a good flock of 62 dropped in on Longridge Fell on 7 April.

Preston contributed a large number of records from Stocks Road/Leighton Street area of Ashton with a peak of 90 on 4 Jan. These dispersed to other locations in the town centre up to the 22nd. There was a gap until a flock of up to 40 spent 10-16 March at Ribbleson. In the CD NHS area there were 40 in Chorley town centre on 1 Jan, a similar number in Coppull on the 18th and up to 51 at Adlington on 1-24 Jan. The last birds were seen in the area on 4 April. In Rossendale flocks of up to 35 birds were seen at Haslingden and Rawtenstall up to 31 March.

Lancaster started the year with 23 just north of the city centre rising to 54 on 29 Jan and still in the area on 3 Feb. Further up the Lune at Hornby Castle, twelve took up residence from 13 Jan to 20 Feb. At Silverdale, eight birds appeared on 8 March, rose to 28 on the 15th and finally twelve on the 21st.

Merseyside wasn't to miss out on this bonanza with a few scattered flocks from Aigburth to Croxteth to Kirkdale up to the end of January. The last district took the record count this year with 120 on Stanley Road on 16 Jan. There were 34 at Blundellsands on 2 Jan and twelve in Southport on 8 & 22 Jan.

On the Fylde, there was a scattering of small flocks around Blackpool and Fleetwood but the main numbers came from Lytham St Annes in the first week of January when up to 30 were present.

When the final birds had departed, over half the 10km squares in the county had recorded Waxwings but just to accentuate the fact that this was an irruptive event, none was recorded in the latter winter period.

COAL TIT *Periparus ater*

Common breeding bird. Some irruptive movements in autumn.

This widespread resident was regularly reported throughout the year. Once again it was the eighth most regularly encountered species in the CD NHS winter survey and the Lancaster survey produced 194 evenly spread across their area. At Challan Hall, Silverdale 30 were recorded whilst ringing on 2 Jan.

In the Withnell Plantations survey the population, conservatively estimated at 25 pairs, was most commonly found in the coniferous sections but also occurred in broadleaved woodland. This is a pattern that is repeated across the county with the largest concentrations, both in the winter and during the breeding season, in the coniferous stands of upland and coastal plantations. A flock of over 30 in Delph Plantation on 30 Dec illustrated that point. Good mixed woodland is also productive.

The species also occurs away from conifers: pairs bred at Heysham, Stanley Park (Blackpool), Mere Sands Wood, Brockholes and Aintree (two), while at least nine suburban sites in east Lancashire recorded probable breeding. Birds were very vocal in the parks and gardens of south Liverpool during spring.

Autumn movements included at least 80 deemed to be migrants at Heysham with peaks of 41 on 26 Sept and 20 on 8 Oct, 138 over Belmont with a peak of 25 on 6 Oct when there were 14 through the dunes at Fairhaven (the only count of note there).

MARSH TIT* *Poecile palustris*

Fairly common breeder in the north of the county. Virtually absent south of the Ribble and in the Fylde.

The vast majority of records (456 out of 477 submitted to Birdtrack for example) came from the Silverdale area (SD47) where the species is common and approachable. Twelve at Challan Hall on 8 Nov was the largest aggregate count. The Lune Valley also holds this species but in a much lower density; records of single birds were received from Hornby Castle, Arkholme, Melling and Claughton. A bird was intermittently present near to Heysham NR office feeders from 8 July to 19 Sept at least – the first here since 1998.

A single was at Street Bridge on 11 & 18 Feb (S Dunstan) and one was recorded on 7 & 24 March at Warton Bank where one had been present in December 2016.

WILLOW TIT* *Poecile montana*

Scarce breeder in the birch copses of the south-west. Very rare elsewhere.

The divide between Marsh and Willow Tit records was certainly emphasised this year with no geographical overlap. Very few records were received and most of those referred to the only bird north of the Ribble at Savick Park, Preston from 24 Sept to 31 Oct.

Records were more frequent in the Chorley area with a maximum of three at Hic Bibi on 4 Feb and records throughout the year from Great Knowley, Hartwood, Croston, Euxton and the Yarrow Valley Park. Two birds were recorded on four dates in spring from Cuerden Valley Park and two were recorded at Walton-le-Dale from 22-28 July. A bird was noted at Ashton-on-Ribble on 25 Sept.

In the south-west, scattered reports were received from Rainford, Sutton Manor Country Park, Knowsley Safari Park, Parbold (maximum of three), Carr Mill Dam and MMWWT. At Mere Sands Wood, there was one regularly throughout the year though three were seen during October.

In east Lancashire, a single bird was multi-observed at Wood End Sewage Works from 3-8 March.



Willow Tit, Savick Park, 30 September (Geoff Gradwell)

BLUE TIT *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Abundant breeding bird. Marked autumn passage.

Blue Tits were the second most frequently recorded species in the CDNHS Winter Garden Bird Survey this year, a vast improvement over the numbers a couple of years ago. The Lancaster January Survey recorded 1126 in total – around three times more than Great Tits. The largest regular counts came from Brockholes and Challan Hall, the latter being a regular ringing site next to prime woodland in Silverdale where there were regularly daily counts of up to 30 throughout the year.

The regular nest-box scheme in the Over Wyre area was hampered by Avian Flu restrictions in the early part of the year and again in late spring so only 61 nests were monitored with 432 eggs laid. Brockholes recorded an increase to 13 pairs, 33 pairs used nest boxes at Moor Piece and seven boxes were occupied at Bowland Wild Boar Park. The numbers at Freshfield Dune Heath continued to be subdued with only two pairs but at Aintree, a regular study area had an above-average 14 pairs. Ten territories were recorded at Carr Mill Dam, just one pair was successful at Heysham NR and a breeding survey at Wheelton Plantations, Brinscall estimated 40 pairs.

159 birds were trapped and ringed in Rishton with notable increases of unringed birds in July (post-breeding dispersal), during October (dispersal from further afield) and again in December (cold-weather movements). At Heysham, the species was conspicuous in its absence in any large numbers and once again there was little evidence of any irruptive behaviour with just two on 2 Nov.

GREAT TIT *Parus major*

Abundant breeding bird, less common on autumn passage than Blue Tit.

In the CDNHS Winter Garden Survey, Great Tits came seventh in frequency and in the Lancaster district 421 were counted during the January Survey. In the early part of the year there were several large counts at Brockholes, reaching 29 in February.

Occupation of nest boxes was higher than Blue Tit in a lot of places: 42 Pairs at Moor Piece, 15 pairs at Brockholes, three pairs at Freshfield Dune Heath, eight pairs at Heysham NR and 45 pairs at Wheelton Plantations were examples. Avian Flu restrictions affected the data from Over Wyre with only 45 nests monitored with 304 eggs laid. Twenty-eight young fledged from seven nests at Todderstaffe Hall. Some examples of where box occupancy was lower than Blue Tits came from Bowland Wild Boar Park with five pairs, Moor Piece with 42 and Aintree with 10-12 pairs. The earliest confirmed breeding record came from Loud Mytham Farm in Bowland on 31 March.

Over 30 birds recorded around Alderbottom, Rossendale on 4 Sept was the outstanding count of the autumn closely followed by 25 over Belmont on 25 Oct. A trickle of migrants was noted at Heysham but no flocks were in evidence.

BEARDED TIT *Panurus biarmicus*

Resident at Leighton Moss. Rare elsewhere.

The breeding population at Leighton Moss numbered 26 pairs in 2017, very similar to 2016 but included the first breeding record in the new reedbeds of Barrow Scout. The grit trays along the causeway continued to be a popular place to observe this species at close quarters from September onwards with a peak count of 30 on 18 Oct.

Away from Leighton, six birds from 2016 remained at Fleetwood Marsh on 1 Jan but were last seen on the 5th.



Bearded Tit, Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park, 5 January (Len Poxon)

WOODLARK* *Lullula arborea*

Vagrant

For the second year in succession a calling bird flew over Billinge Hill, St Helens, on 19 April, the third fully documented county record (P J Alker); last year's record was in November.

SKYLARK *Alda arvensis*

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

The largest coastal flocks in the early year were in the south-west; 250 were on Burscough Moss on 4 Jan and 150+ on the saltings at Marshside-Crossens on 1 Feb. About 90 at New Lane, Pilling on 2 Jan was the highest count in the Fylde and 150 at Bretherton Eyes, Chorley on 21 Jan was the largest gathering in inland regions. The first returning Skylark in east Lancashire was at Alston Reservoir and Wetland on 19 Jan; birds were in song at Belmont on 15 Feb and at Edge Cote in Rossendale on the 19th.

A total of 56 Skylarks was recorded over Knott End, Fylde between 15 March and 12 May with a peak count of 17 on 21 Feb; two birds at Heysham NR on 4 March and a flock of 20 near Belmont on the 19th were the only other reports of spring passage received.

Territorial birds were reported from nine locations in east Lancashire and the species was described as very widespread in the breeding season on the Rossendale moors; there were six singing males in April and nine in May in a 1km BTO/BBS square on Darwen Moor where four and seven, respectively, were recorded in 2016.

In coastal regions singing males were reported throughout the Fylde; at Leighton Moss 94 pairs were located on Carnforth saltmarsh. South of the Ribble there were 136 pairs on salt- and fresh-marshes combined at Marshside-Crossens, 49 pairs on Hesketh Out Marsh and 27 pairs at MMWWT. Numerous territories were reported from the Speke-Halewood area of south Liverpool/Knowsley, at least ten pairs nested on Birkdale Green Beach and smaller numbers were reported from four other locations on the south-west coast and mosslands.

There were no reports of autumn flocks or movements until the middle of September; 24 birds at Singleton, Fylde on 18 Sept was the first double-figure count recorded. Virtually all subsequent passage appears to have been confined to coastal or near-coastal regions; a total of 306 was recorded over Knott End between 15 Sept and 19 Nov and there was a total of 200 at Heysham NR on 22 dates between 15 Sept and 2 Nov. The first substantial surge came in late September with 300 south at Lunt Meadows, 95 at Singleton and 54 over Fairhaven Dunes on the 26th; 662 moved over Crosby Coastal Park on the 28th.

Movements continued intermittently throughout October and the first week of November; noteworthy counts included 167 on Lytham Moss on 3 Oct, 100+ at MMWWT next day, 548 over Crosby on the 14th and 450 there on the 18th; 114 moved over Brockholes Wetland on the 27th. Thirty-two Skylarks at Preesall Flashes on 5 Nov and 60 on Longton Marsh on the following day effectively brought coastal movements to an end; the last in east Lancashire was on Chipping Moss on the 17th. Numbers at the year's end were similar to those in the first winter period, with peaks of 140 at Marshside on 2 Dec, 150 at Eagland Hill, Fylde on the 27th and up to 100 on Croston Moss, Chorley during the month.

SHORE LARK* *Eremophila alpestris*

Rare winter visitor

Two were on the saltmarsh at Bank End, Fylde from 27 Feb to 25 March (A Cornall).

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

Common breeding bird and passage migrant. Amber List (species of European conservation concern)

The first Sand Martin of 2017 at Leighton Moss on the fairly early date of 5 March, was followed by the first in the south-west at Crosby Coastal Park next day; east Lancashire's first was at Alston Reservoir and Wetland on the 7th, and there were birds at Fleetwood and Marton Mere in the Fylde on the 11th, at Holden Wood Reservoir, Rossendale and Brockholes Wetland next day, and at Croston Twin Lakes, Chorley on the 14th. Arrivals were in full swing by the end of March: 117 were at Brockholes and 50 at Alston on the 29th and there were 2000 at Leighton Moss and 250+ at Arkholme on the 30th.

Substantial movements were recorded at both coastal and inland locations throughout April. There were 1500 at Leighton Moss on 1 April and 1250 there on the 5th when 250+ were also recorded at The Snab in the Lune Valley; the highest count in east Lancashire was of c.350 at Alston on the 19th and there were 120 at Marton Mere on the 21st and 350 at Brockholes on the 29th. Next day 289 moved north-east at Fleetwood Marsh NR and 120+ at Heysham Red Nab. Fifty-one north-east at

Fleetwood on 1 May was the last significant movement reported.

There were 240+ active nest-holes at Arkholme Viaduct in the Lune Valley as early as 8 April and the Lune survey located 2579 nests between Skerton Weir and Arkholme. In east Lancashire colonies along the River Calder between Altham and Martholme recovered somewhat from last year's virtual collapse to a total of 63 nests; there were 194 nests on the Calder at Pendle Hall, 97 at Calder Foot and 33 at Stocks Reservoir, and smaller numbers at three other colonies.

In Chorley region c.150 nest-holes were counted at Adlington; there were small colonies in Rossendale at Strongstry, Grane, Holden Wood Reservoir, Buckhurst and Jamestone Quarry. Nearer the coast a small colony at Hoghton Bottoms held eight nests whilst birds bred in nest-boxes at Brockholes, though numbers involved are not known. In the Fylde there were 254 active nest-holes at Lightfoot Green on 14 May and c.150 nests were counted at Hillam Lane Quarry, Thurnham. Finally, the only colony in the south-west at Hesketh Out Marsh expanded slightly from 15 to 23 nest-holes in 2017.

The first southbound Sand Martin was at Heysham on 26 June and there were 65 at Leighton Moss on 6 July, but significant movements did not get underway until the beginning of August with 140 at the Conder Estuary on the 2nd and 150 at Leighton Moss on the 7-8th. There were 400 at Brockholes on 16 Aug and 100+ migrants at Strongstry on the 23rd. Overall, the volume of migration was very slight for the third successive year; 223 at Leighton Moss on 24 Sept was the only three-figure count in that month and Chorley, Fylde and Rossendale had all seen their last Sand Martins by mid-September. The last in the south-west was at Marshside on 21 Sept and the last in east Lancashire at Foulridge Reservoir on 2 Oct; the year ended where it had begun, with a single bird at Leighton Moss on 6 Oct.

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

Abundant breeding bird and passage migrant. Amber List (species of European conservation concern)

A single bird at Leighton Moss on 13 March began the spring arrival followed by the first in east Lancashire, at Foulridge Reservoir on the 17th; a bird at Marshside on the 19th was the first in the south-west and two at Cockersand on the 23rd began a series of eight March records in the Fylde. One at Euxton on 30 March was the first Swallow in Chorley region, followed next day by two birds at Stacksteads, Rossendale.

With the exception of a movement of 1514 over Fleetwood Marsh and 500+ at Heysham on 30 April subsequent passage was fairly light everywhere; a total of 1257 Swallows was recorded at the latter site between 23 March and 26 May. Further inland there were 120 at Stocks Reservoir on 13 April, c.150 at Ewood Bridge Sewage Works on the 16th, another 300+ there on the 20th and a similar number at Arkholme on the 22nd. May peaks included 608 at Fleetwood on 1 May and 656 on the 8th; counts were uniformly low at inland sites.

Breeding data consistently underrepresent the true population of this abundant summer visitor, and this year was no exception. There were six reports of confirmed nesting in east Lancashire and 16 of possible or probable breeding; most farms around Brindle, Chorley hosted nesting Swallows and up to 15 pairs bred around Belmont Reservoir. On the coast a pair nested on EDF property at Heysham whilst in the Pilling-Preesall area of the Fylde 104 eggs were laid in 24 monitored nests and 83 juveniles fledged. Eight pairs at Arkholme was four fewer than last year's total.

Over 40 at Bank End, Fylde on 5 July was the earliest southward movement reported, but substantial gatherings in coastal regions were not observed until the last week of the month; a roost at Middleton NR, Heysham began to form from the 24th, there were 120+ at Marshside next day and a similar number at Conder Green on the 27th. Apart from counts of 120+ at the Middleton roost on 10 Aug and at Marshside on the following day there were no more heavy or widespread movements until 22 Aug when a noteworthy surge brought 444 over Fleetwood Promenade, 350+ to Marton Mere and 356 to Crosby Coastal Park. With the exception of 4294 Swallows over Billinge Hill, St Helens, 257 south in two hours at Marshside, 200+ at Lunt Meadows and 230+ feeding over Belmont Reservoir, all on 26 Sept, the autumn passage continued steady rather than spectacular until the beginning of October.

Coastal peaks included 120 over Seaforth on 5 Sept and 200 there on the 10th; in east Lancashire there were c.500 at Alston Reservoirs and Wetland on 13 Sept and the last three-figure count of the autumn, c.100 at Great Harwood on 8 Oct.

The usual scatter of singles and small parties was reported until the third week of October; there were only three double-figure counts, the largest 50 at Brockholes Wetland on the 3rd. The last Swallow in Chorley was at Eccleston on 9 Oct, the last in the West Pennine Moors at Belmont on the 13th and in the Fylde at Rossall School on the 18th; one at Great Harwood on 23 Oct ended the year in east Lancashire and Rossendale's last was over Haslingden on the following day. Only one November straggler was reported this year, over the Keer Estuary on 17 Nov.

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbicum*

Common breeding bird and passage migrant. Amber List (breeding decline)

The only March report, of a single bird at Mere Sands Wood on the 19th, was only two days later than the county's earliest in 1963. Arrivals were widespread from the first days of April with the first House Martin to reach east Lancashire at Mellor on 1 April; next day there were three at Leighton Moss, one was at Cuerden Valley Park, Chorley on the 3rd and there were three at Marton Mere, Fylde on the 5th. The south-west, Rossendale and the West Pennine Moors, respectively, were the last regions to see House Martins, at Marshside on 12 April, Ewood Bridge Sewage Works on the 15th and Belmont on the 24th.

Numbers of migrants built up very slowly; there were only seven double-figure reports during April, three at coastal sites and four inland. In a replay of last year movements in May, though widespread, were at a very low level; the only three-figure count received was of 100+ at Marshside on the 20th and the next-highest 96 over Fleetwood Marsh on 8 May and 70 at Hoghton Bottoms, Chorley on the 15th. There were no reports of significant passage in June.

Reports of breeding, though few, at least had the virtue of wide geographical distribution. There were nine confirmed breeding records and five of possible or probable nesting in east Lancashire; breeding was observed at several locations in Chorley town and at four villages in the region. House Martins nested at Whitworth and Whitewell in Rossendale and there were 25 active nests in Belmont Village, the highest total since 2004; elsewhere in the West Pennine Moors there were 37 active nests on a single farmhouse near Belmont on 27 June. In coastal regions nesting House Martins were recorded at six locations in the Fylde and four in the south-west; there were eight nests in a re-established colony at Wrayton in the Upper Lune Valley.

Substantial post-breeding and migratory movements began on a broad front in the last week of July with 120+ south at Marshside on the 25th, c.300 over Ewood Bridge on the 26 & 28th and 100 over Hoghton Bottoms on the 30th. An intermittent but above-average passage continued at both coastal and inland locations throughout August and the first three weeks of September; peak counts in August included c.600 at Ewood Bridge on the 6th, 500+ at Marshside on the 11th, 700 at Cabin Hill on the 22nd and 100+ at Jackhouse Reservoir next day. A heavy surge on 16 Sept brought at least a thousand birds over the Sefton Coast from Formby Point-Cabin Hill to Crosby; other noteworthy counts during the month included 220 at Lunt Meadows on 3 Sept, 200 at Seaforth on the 10th, c.150 at Alston Reservoirs on the 13th, 300 over Hoghton Bottoms on the 21st and 124 south over Billinge Hill, St Helens on the 26th.

As is the norm numbers dwindled very quickly from late September. The last House Martins in Rossendale were over Clowbridge Reservoir on 24 Sept and the last in the Fylde was at Glasson on the 30th. One at Great Harwood on 7 Oct ended the year in east Lancashire and the last in the south-west was at Seaforth on the 15th; two birds over Heysham on 20 Oct and one over Hoghton Bottoms on the 22nd were the county's last House Martins of 2017.

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*

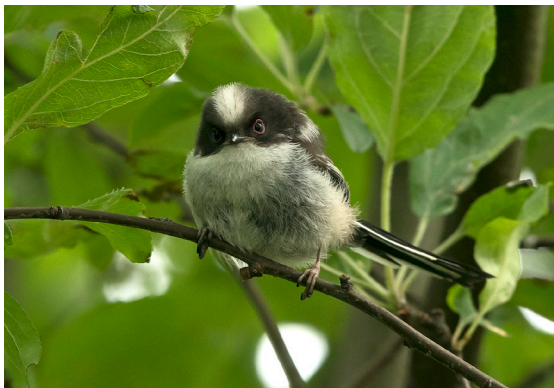
Very common breeding resident.

The usual caveats apply to large counts, with some referring to individual flocks and others to several smaller flocks in an area. Good numbers included 45 at Whalley in December, 39 at Hoghton Bottoms in July and Brockholes in November, 35 at Knowsley in June, 34 at Altcar and Cabin Hill in January, 32 at Glasson in December and 30 at Mere Sands Wood in March, Leighton Moss in October and Lancaster in December. The January Lancaster survey recorded a total of 327, including 92 in SD46 and 59 in SD45; 50 were seen in three flocks at Belmont on 21 Jan.

There were eight territories in the Aintree study area, where the five-year mean was seven, and the same observer reported a constant population of five to seven territories at Carr Mill Dam. Around

seven pairs nested on EDF Energy land at Heysham, eight at Wheelton Plantation, five at Freshfield Dune Heath and three at Brockholes. After several years absence on Hesketh GC no fewer than three pairs nested this year.

At Seaforth, where the species is not common, eight were present on 22-24 Aug and 28 Sept pointing to post-breeding dispersal. Autumn movement at Heysham peaked at 35 in three flocks on 8 Oct, with 25 in two flocks on 6 Nov and 14 on 8 Nov. Totals in watches at Belmont in the first hour after sunrise included 31 south on 12 Oct and 23 on the 19th.



Juvenile Long-tailed Tit, Roby, 8 June (Steve Young)

CETTI'S WARBLER *Cettia cetti*

Scarce but increasing breeding resident.

The recent modest expansion continued during the year, with numbers holding up at existing strongholds and birds found at new locations.

On the Fylde the peak count of singing birds at Marton Mere was eight, with up to two at Fleetwood Marsh, where nine were ringed including two juveniles on 18 June; a juvenile was seen at the Mere in July. Other than sites neighbouring Marton Mere the only other records came from Preesall Flashes on 7 March and Fylde Farm, Blackpool on 3 May.

In north Lancashire there were five pairs at Leighton Moss, with another three at Barrow Scout. Up to three sang at Middleton, where three recently fledged young were caught; two further juveniles were trapped here in late autumn but could have been from further afield. Single birds were noted at Silverdale Moss and Warton Mires.

There were three or four males in song at Marshside in April, though breeding was not confirmed. Elsewhere in the south-west there was one at either end of the year at Lunt Meadows, with a male singing nearby in June. Up to two were at MMWWT between August and December, and one was at Hightown in April and May.

There were no records from east Lancashire this year but one was seen intermittently at Brockholes from late September to the year's end.

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Abundant breeding bird and passage migrant

The first were at Marshside on the late date of 22 April, Gorse Hills, Ormskirk on the 25th, Seaforth on the 26th and Leighton Moss and Marton Mere on the 28th with a widespread arrival from the 31st. Counts of migrants included 35 in the Fleetwood area on 2 May, but spring passage at Heysham was generally unremarkable.

Overall breeding information suggested a population on the up. Estimated breeding pairs included 42 at Stocks Reservoir, 65 at nearby Bottoms Beck, 42 at Grindleton Forest, 31 at White Coppice, 35 in the Birkdale Dunes recording area, 28 pairs at Warton Crag RSPB and four on the LNR, and 24 at Moor Piece. There were 21 singing in a BBS 1km square near Belmont on 18 April, reducing to 15 apparently territorial birds in early June; in the same area the population at Belmont Reservoir rose to eleven territories due to increasing scrub levels. The survey of Wheelton Plantations realised 20 territories and the same number were singing at Jackhouse on 22 April. Fourteen pairs at Freshfield Dune Heath was an increase of three; twelve territories in the Aintree study area was above the mean there of seven. Rossendale peak counts were 20 singing in the Grane area in April and c.30 at Deeply Vale on 18 June.

A count of 40 at Leighton Moss on 8 Aug will certainly have included some passage birds, while 22 migrants were seen on moorland edge at Belmont on the 6th. A number of birds were reported in late September this year, including at Rossall on the 26th and Leighton Moss and Seaforth on the

28th. Three were three October reports: at Hic Bibi on the 1st, one trapped and ringed at Middleton NR on the 8th and finally one at Dilworth Reservoir, Longridge on the 9th.

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*

Common breeder and passage migrant, uncommon in winter

In the first winter period Chiffchaffs were present at eight Fylde locations and at least four in the Lancaster recording area and, although numbers were typically lower inland, wintering birds were noted in the CDNHS, ELOC and ROC recording area.

Arrival dates are, of course, open to debate given the wintering population. In the Lancaster area birds probably began to appear from 4 March when one was at Leighton Moss, with another at Caton the next day. The first records of presumed migrants in east Lancashire were on 9 March at three sites, and on the 11th in the Chorley area.

Estimated breeding pairs included 26 at Brockholes, 20 at Warton Crag RSPB, 23 in the Aintree study area – compared with a recent mean of twelve – 18 on Warton Crag LNR, 14 at Freshfield Dune Heath and 13 at Mere Sands Wood. A survey of UU land at Wheelton Plantations realised ten territories, while the well-monitored Hesketh GC population increased by one to six. Eleven birds were noted singing across the Oglet area of south Liverpool. Other records received included 14 at Fishwick Bottoms and nine at Lowerhouse Lodges in April, at least eight singing males in Birkdale Dunes and seven territories in Cuerden Valley Park.

Some large totals were noted on autumn passage. Peak counts at Heysham, for example, were 44 on 25 Sept, 35 the next day and 30 on the 30th. In the same period there were 30 at Marshside on the 26th.

Good numbers persisted into late autumn, many of which presumably did not stay to winter. For example, birds were at six Fylde sites in November but only two in December. Similarly, six were seen at Walton-le-Dale WwTW on 30 Nov but the peak was only three in December. Birds were still moving through Heysham in small numbers to mid-November. There were again small numbers wintering well inland with birds more numerous nearer the coast.

SIBERIAN CHIFFCHAFF* *Phylloscopus collybita tristis*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

One that was trapped and ringed at Billinge Hill, St Helens on 17 Nov (and subsequently confirmed through DNA analysis) was the only accepted record (P Alker).

Several reports were again unsupported by descriptions. Please provide biometrics for trapped birds and field notes for other claims of this species, including details of any calls heard and sound-recordings if applicable.



Siberian Chiffchaff, Billinge Hill, 17 November
(Peter Alker)



Siberian Chiffchaff, Seaforth, 9 April (Tony Conway)

IBERIAN CHIFFCHAFF* *Phylloscopus ibericus***Vagrant**

A male singing briefly at Seaforth on 8 April was heard and seen well on the 9th (AJ Conway, G Thomas *et al*). The record has been accepted by the BBRC and becomes the second record for the county, following one in Blackpool in May 2011.

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix***Scare and declining breeder and passage migrant**

Although birds may have reached breeding territories first, the earliest coastal migrant was at Hesketh GC on 29 April. There was a reasonable showing on coastal passage by recent standards. In May there were birds at Marton Mere on the 1st, Blundellsands on the 2nd, two singing at Fleetwood on both the 2nd and the 7th, Stanley Park, Liverpool on the 4th, two at Hesketh GC on the 7th, Stanley Park, Blackpool on the 12-14th and Fleetwood on the 12th.

At Wheelton Plantations males were recorded at five locations between 27 April and early June and it was subsequently considered that four territories were established and at least two pairs bred. Elsewhere in the Chorley area birds were recorded in May at White Coppice on the 2nd, Anglezarke on the 5th, Roddlesworth on the 6th and Withnell Quarry on the 10th.

In east Lancashire there were reports from only three sites, down from ten in 2015. Birds were noted at Moor Piece from 2 May to 17 June, and it was thought probable that there was breeding there. The only other records were at Simonstone and Feniscowles during May.

The only record received from the traditional breeding grounds in the Lune Valley was a singing male at Middlewood, Roeburndale on 11 May and 1 June.

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER *Phylloscopus inornatus***Scarce but increasing autumn passage migrant.**

After 2016, with its exceptional period of easterly winds in the autumn, there was no repeat this year and this was reflected in the relatively modest number of Yellow-broweds that reached us. A brief window in September produced one at Blackpool North Shore on the 25th and birds at Fleetwood, Knott End and Hightown on the 26th.

One lingered at Egg Syke Brook, Great Harwood 3-7 Oct. Also well inland were birds at Longridge on the 6th, Foulridge on the 8th and 16th and Billinge Hill on the 19th. Other than one at



Yellow-browed Warbler, Longridge, 6 October (Gavin Thomas)

Skelmersdale on the 15th all remaining records came from the north Lancashire. These were reported at Leighton Moss on the 3rd and 8th and at Morecambe on the 6th, Middleton NR on the 12th and Crook O' Lune on the 14th, with finally one grounded at Heysham NR during Storm Brian from the 20th to the 22nd.

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Common breeding bird and passage migrant

The first was at Lunt Meadows on 3 April. Other early birds were at Leighton Moss and Seaforth on 8 April and Brockholes on the 12th. The first in the Chorley area was at Croston on the 14th, on the Fylde at Marton Mere on the 15th and in east Lancashire on the 21st at Clitheroe. Counts of singing males in spring included twelve at Jeremy Lane on 6 May, and eighteen at Carr House Green Common and 16 at Fleetwood on the 7th.

There were 41 pairs at Lunt Meadows, 20 at Brockholes and 18 between Hesketh GC and Crossens treatment plant, a return to usual numbers there after a surge in 2016. On the RSPB Morecambe Bay properties there were five pairs each at Carnforth Marsh and Barrow Scout and seven pairs on Silverdale Moss. Four pairs on the Lune was down from six in 2016.

Other breeding estimates included seven pairs at Hesketh Out Marsh, five at Tagg's Island, Birkdale and 14 in a WBBS square at Maghull. Birds were reported from at least 17 sites in east Lancashire and seven in Rossendale, though breeding was only suspected at a fraction of these.

Outward passage dried up very quickly, for example there were none on the Fylde at all after 1 Sept. Birds were seen on the coast at Cabin Hill and inland at Clowbridge on 4 Sept. Passage at Heysham peaked in late July, and there were only two in September with the last on the 19th, but there were still two at Leighton Moss on 28 Sept, with one remaining there until 9 Oct.

REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Fairly common breeder, uncommon passage migrant

The first arrival at Marton Mere on 2 April was our earliest ever, with other early birds at the Leisure Lakes, Mere Brow on the 4th and Leighton Moss on the 10th.

There was no systematic breeding survey this year at Leighton Moss, the county's major site, nor of the main Fylde sites, Marton Mere and Fleetwood Marsh NP, though 53 ringed at the latter gives an indication of the population. At other Fylde sites the peak count was eight singing at Preesall Flashes in mid-May.

In Chorley 14 were singing on the Rufford Canal between Bretherton and Sollom on 4 June, and two or three in Yarrow Valley Park, while in the south-west seven pairs bred at Lunt Meadows, nine at Marshside, seven at MMWWT and five at Mere Sands Wood; in the Liverpool area there was one pair at Seaforth and one singing in Phragmites at Garston Shore on 25 June.

Productivity was considered to be rather poor at Middleton, and there was probably just one pair on the nearby EDF land at Heysham; at least three pairs bred at Bowie's Pool, near Sunderland Point. Eight pairs bred at Brockholes while in the east there was evidence of potential breeding at Salterforth, with the only other records from Barnoldswick and Brookside.

In terms of departure there was one on the canal between Sollom and Bretherton on 11 Sept, the last on the Fylde were two at Marton Mere on 18 Sept. There were a couple of migrants through Heysham in the second half of the month, but not unusually the last were at Leighton Moss, where there were still three on 6 Oct and two to the 8th.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia*

Fairly common breeding bird and passage migrant

Birds began arriving in early April, with the first reports from Lower Burgh Meadow in the Yarrow Valley on the 6th, Marton Mere on the 8th, Ainsdale, Hightown and Marshside on the 9th and Fleetwood on the 10th. Spring counts which may have reflected passage included six at Marton Mere on 29 April and four at Marshside on the 19th and at Fleetwood on 1 May.

Twenty-four territories were identified in the West Pennine Moors, an increase of three on 2016 but with the Belmont Reservoir population unchanged at seven pairs. Seven singing males were noted at Roby Mill, unchanged from 2016 but up on prior years. There were at least five reeling on the Birkdale dunes, access was restricted on the golf course and a total population of seven or eight

pairs was considered likely. On the RSPB Silverdale properties there were four pairs at Leighton Moss and one each at Barrow Scout and the Eric Morecambe complex. There were four or five territories on Middleton NR, but none on EDF land at Heysham this year. Rossendale had records during summer at seven sites, the Fylde at six sites and at five in both east Lancashire and Chorley. Up to three territories were recorded at Lunt Meadows and there were a couple of birds singing at sites in south Liverpool in June and one at Brockholes. One singing for three weeks at Marshside was the first evidence of probable breeding there.

Autumn passage was typically difficult to detect. On the Fylde there were singles at Marton Mere on 3 Aug and Fleetwood on the 26th. A somewhat disappointing passage at Heysham included only three in August, the last on the 16th. One was at Belmont on 25 Sept, whilst the latest ever in the ELOC recording area was at Egg Syke Brook, Great Harwood on 5 Oct.

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*

Very common breeding bird and passage migrant, fairly common winter visitor

Among the reports of wintering birds early in the year were up to three in a St Anne's garden and two in Maghull and Ormskirk gardens. A scattering of reports of singles included inland individuals at Barrow, Brookhouse, Duxbury, Eccleston and Wilpshire.

Spring passage was reported as unremarkable at Heysham and it appeared to have been a similar picture elsewhere. Arrivals got underway in earnest from the third week of March, but the picture was unclear given the difficulty in distinguishing significant migrant counts from lingering wintering birds.

Breeding totals included 31 pairs between Leck Beck and Hornby, 24 at Brockholes, 22 at Warton Crag RSPB, 20 at Bottoms Beck, 13 on Warton Crag LNR, twelve in the Aintree study area – considered to be a genuine increase – and at Wheelton Plantations, eleven at Mere Sands Wood, eight at Freshfield Dune Heath and six on Hesketh GC. In Rossendale eight were singing between Rawten-stall and Ewood Bridge in June. Seven pairs bred on the EDF property at Heysham and similar numbers were singing in summer at Hornby Castle and Jackhouse. In south Liverpool up to six were singing at Mill Wood, Speke Millwood.

Autumn passage at Heysham was considered atypical with good initial numbers of birds of presumably British origin followed by an absence for much of October then a small late flurry into November.

Wintering birds were apparently thin on the ground later in the year, this being noted even at regular sites including Birkdale dunes. There were no reports of more than one bird at any site in December.



Blackcap, Roby, 31 March (Steve Young)

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

Fairly common breeding bird and passage migrant

There was no evidence of any wintering this year. The first migrant at Cuerden Valley Park on 7 April was our second earliest ever, with others in the Chorley area at Cross Hall on the 11th, Lower Healey on the 15th and Yarrow Valley Park on the 16th. Other arrival dates included 20 April at Brungerley, the 21st at Lowerhouse Lodges, the 23rd at Warton Crag, the 24th at Roby Mill, the 29th at the Eric Morecambe complex and the 30th at Fleetwood. Fifteen migrants passed through through Fleetwood to 12 May, including four on the 7th.

Breeding totals included 16 pairs at Brockholes and ten pairs at Warton Crag RSPB with three on the LNR; five were noted at Littleddale on 11 May. Eight singing males in a study area at Roby Mill was up on recent years, while there were seven territories in the central West Pennine Moors, including one at Belmont Reservoir. There was no confirmed breeding in east Lancashire, but it was thought probable at twelve sites.

At Heysham the autumn passage totals were unclear as there may have been local breeding, but there were no late birds suggesting continental origin with the last on 4 Sept. Migrants were noted at Marton Mere on 2 and 8 Sept; one was at Crossens on 26 Sept, whilst the last was one of only two reports in the year at Hornby Castle on the 28th.

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

Uncommon breeding bird and passage migrant

Unusually, arrivals were reported from inland before the coast, with birds at Eccleston, Chorley on 10 April and Wymott on the 12th. On the coast the first was at Fleetwood on the 18th, with others at Marton Mere and Warton slag tips on the 19th; none was seen in east Lancashire until the 24th.

The elusive nature of this species is well known, and little significant breeding information was received. There were seven pairs in the Silverdale area, including three at Warton Crag, six pairs bred on EDF property at Heysham, where productivity was considered to be good. In contrast, none was noted in the Roby Mill study area, where there had been five territories as recently as 2014.

A number of migrants were still moving through in late September, including at Sunderland Point on the 20th, Carr House Green Common on the 24th and Carleton on the 26th.

SIBERIAN LESSER WHITETHROAT* *Sylvia curruca blythi*

Vagrant, identification difficulties may mask true status

There were two records of 'brown Lesser Whitethroats' at Heysham in late October. The first of these was caught in the Heysham NR office nets on 23 Oct (I Hartley, PJ Marsh, J Roberts). A feather was



'Siberian Lesser Whitethroat', Heysham, 23 October (Ian Hartley)

sent to Martin Collinson at the University of Aberdeen for DNA sampling and the resulting analysis confirmed the bird to be of the blythi subspecies which breeds in Siberia. This is the first confirmed record in Lancashire.

The second individual was seen in the scrub by the Half Moon Bay cafe on 29 Oct; record shots were obtained which suggested the bird showed characteristics of one of the eastern forms, but without DNA this cannot be proved.

WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

Very common breeder and passage migrant

First arrival dates in April included at Lower Healey on the 11th, Rossall and Todderstaffe on the 15th, Brockholes on the 16th, Dilworth Reservoir on the 17th and Lunt Meadows on the 18th. Counts during passage at Fleetwood included 20 on 1 May and 15 on the 10th, while at Heysham movement was not readily discernible from breeding bird arrivals.

Around 30 territorial males were recorded on Birkdale dunes, whilst 18 were noted on a BBS square in the area and 19 on a WBBS square along the River Alt at Maghull. Breeding totals included 29 pairs at Lunt Meadows, 23 at Brockholes and between Hesketh GC and Crossens WTW, 16 at Cabin Hill and twelve on Heysham EDF land or adjacent to it. Eleven territories in the Aintree study area was above the recent mean.

The largest Fylde counts in the breeding season were ten at Jeremy Lane and nine at Carr House Green Common and The Heads, Stalmine. Breeding was confirmed at six sites in east Lancashire. In south Liverpool there were six singing on abandoned farmland at Oglet, and another 13 across nearby farmed areas. There were only five pairs at Freshfield Dune Heath, a reduction of ten on 2016 and compared with 29 in 2005.

Ringling totals at Heysham in early autumn suggested good productivity, with a peak of 14 on 26 Aug but none after the first half of September. Late birds in September included one at Seaforth on the 17th, two at Blackpool Gyn Gardens on the 19th and one at Marton Mere on the 28th which remained to 1 Oct.

FIRECREST *Regulus ignicapilla*

Uncommon passage migrant, scarce in winter.

There were no records in the early part of the year. The first of the autumn was one trapped and ringed at Billinge Hill on 19 Oct followed by a female at Middleton NR on the 26th. Another was at Fleetwood on 7 Nov whilst at Little Crosby, five (including a bird ringed on the Isle of Man) were trapped at a private site during the month.

Finally a bird was located at Walton-le-Dale Sewage Works just south of Preston on 19 Nov where it continued to be reported regularly, though elusively, into 2018.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*

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

Perhaps not as ubiquitous as in 2016 but Goldcrests were reported from all corners of the county in the early part of the year, becoming increasingly recorded through February and March. Seven birds at Broadwater Wood, Fleetwood on 2 Jan was notable and 'several' were present in the Aigburth area of Liverpool in the early part of the month. The earliest reports of singing were at Galgate on 1 Feb and Haslingden on the 4th.

There was an increase in reports from late February as a trickle of migrants passed through. In March 116 birds passed through Fleetwood with a peak of 15 on the 16th, the same day as at least seven were in one flock at Stanley Park, Blackpool. Heysham numbers peaked at just eleven on 15 March. Sixteen were counted around Leighton Moss on 18 March whilst nine were at Hackensall Wood, Preesall.

During the spring in south Liverpool/Knowsley, there were at least 28 singing males from over 20 sites including one in the city centre near St George's Hall. Breeding pairs at Hesketh GC increased from three to four pairs. At least 30 singing males were recorded in Rossendale and at least ten sites in east Lancashire had confirmed or probable breeding records. A survey of the Wheelton Plantations estimated 20 pairs present. On the Fylde, at least 18 singing males were recorded in early

summer.

Autumn passage was more pronounced but still a rather quiet affair with the first noticeable influx at Heysham occurring on 14 Sept with ten and 15 the following day; peak numbers were recorded on 26 Sept (35), the 30th (90) and 6 Oct (50) with a late flourish of 30 on 25 Oct. Ringing activities at Billinge Hill processed an exceptional total of 643 birds during the autumn. Most other sites had lower numbers and recorded their peak numbers during October: Fifty-one were ringed at Crown Point, Burnley during autumn passage with peaks of 13 on 22 Sept and twelve on 6 Oct. Twelve were at Cabin Hill on 9 Oct and eight at Marshside on the 15th. Twenty were near Rawtenstall on 22 Oct and 13 around Whalley on 2 Nov.

Birds were still widespread in the second winter period with records from 60% of the county's 10km squares.

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Abundant breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

By all accounts, there was a good number of pairs of Wrens at many sites across Lancashire. Two BBS squares around Brindle recorded 33 singing birds and ten were at Roby Mill. The Wheelton Plantations had a population in the region of 90 breeding pairs whilst nearby, a nest was found in a moorland gully at 360m above sea level on Belmont Moor and singing territorial birds were recorded up to 375m above sea level on Winter Hill. In east Lancashire, numbers were good with some large counts from Jackhouse (28 on 22 June) and Low Moor, Clitheroe (40 on 16 March).

At Heysham, 30 territories on EDF properties was the highest ever recorded but evidence from ringing activities nearby suggested that productivity wasn't good. At Brockholes, 50 pairs bred and 18 pairs were mapped at Mere Sands Wood. Up to 20 were recorded singing at Carr House Green Common, Inskip in every month of the year.

There was some evidence of a slight autumn passage such as 14 at Hesketh Bank on 27 Oct.

NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

Common and increasing breeding resident.

The rise in Nuthatch numbers appears unabated with records from all the 10km squares in the county. It is most commonly reported from Silverdale, east Lancashire, Chorley, Rossendale and the Liverpool parks but the increase in records on the Fylde and Sefton coastal area continues. In Over Wyre five nest boxes had 37 eggs laid in them and birds were regularly recorded at Preesall and seen on peanut feeders at Pilling and Out Rawcliffe in the winter months. The species was the sixteenth most commonly recorded in the Chorley Winter Garden Survey. Three pairs bred at Cuerden Valley Park.

In east Lancashire, five were noted in the Thursden Valley on 11 May (270m above sea level) and five were recorded in the Whitendale Valley the same day. Three pairs around Rishton constituted another increase and at Hornby Castle numbers were also on the rise with many seen on feeders later in the year. Five pairs were breeding on the Wheelton Plantations and a similar number were mapped at Mere Sands Wood. Brockholes had one pair as did Kirkdale Cemetery whilst four territories were registered at Carr Mill Dam.

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

Common breeding resident.

The population of Treecreepers appears to be stable and the species was reported as common in all its regular abodes. We received records from 94% of 10km squares. There were eight pairs in Wheelton Plantations, two at Mere Sands Wood and two at Carr Mill Dam. In south Liverpool, there were two pairs at Sefton Park and birds were present in Newsham Park, Clarke's Gardens, Priory Wood, Calderstones Park, Princes Park, Croxteth Park, Greenbank Park, Halewood and Mill Wood, Speke.

It remains scarce on the Fylde with few records in January and singing birds noted at Stanley Park, Blackpool and St. Michael's on the Wyre. It is also scarce on the Sefton Coast so one in a tit flock at Cabin Hill on 21 Aug and 9 Oct was a rare sight there. Similarly, records at Heysham NR are rather sporadic with four birds trapped in the autumn period.

Peak counts of Treecreepers came from Leighton Moss with seven in May and twelve in November, and from New Laithe Farm, Newton-in-Bowland where there were six on 16 Sept.

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

Abundant breeding bird, double passage migrant and winter visitor. Red List (breeding decline).

How times have changed. Thirty years ago, Starlings were seen as a pest in many areas, especially when they congregated in large winter roost sites in urban areas or in plantations, whereas nowadays the sight of a murmuring flock is something to behold. The rather noticeable drop in Starling numbers over the past decades has caused people to reappraise their thoughts on the subject and excellent PR has completely turned opinion.

Monthly Peak Counts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Leighton Moss	550	8000	7000	71	35	650	600	3000	5500	10000	16000	40000
Cockerham/ Glasson	3000	5000	1500	25	50	60	800	500	3000	2000	2000	1500
Brockholes	600	2000	150	26	13	23	24	32	2	500	2000	84
MMWWT	500	100	200	6	25	20	100	300	100	280	50000	10000

The well-publicised flock on Blackpool North Pier held 10000 birds in January but that soon fell away and those numbers weren't to be seen later in the year as the flock turned their attentions to new sites. Regular four-figure counts came from the Cockerham-Glasson area during both winter periods and up to 11000 were in the New Lane, Eagland Hill area during December.

The two large reedbed reserves of Leighton Moss and MMWWT held a large proportion of the wintering birds. The Leighton Moss figures above show up to 80000 birds during February and 40000 in December whereas the flocks at MMWWT only really appeared at the end of the year with peak numbers estimated to be in the region of 50000 birds. These were not the only sites to host large numbers as 10000 were estimated at Bretherton Eyes on 17 Nov and flocks totalling 7000 birds were at Marshside on 8 Nov.

In the east, there were rather surprisingly only six records of numbers in four figures, the largest being 6000 at New Laithe Farm, Newton-in-Bowland on 11 Nov and 5000 in Slaidburn on 16 Dec. Around 1000 were in Burnley town centre on 30 Dec and approximately 2500 were at Abbey Village in mid-December.

Breeding numbers still seem to be rather low and mainly reported from suburban areas but in the Over Wyre area, of the 17 nests monitored, 83 eggs were laid from which 74 hatched and 67 fledged. Second broods were noted at Burnley and Rishton. Post-breeding flocks soon assembled through June and July and a roost at Fleetwood Marsh held 3000 on 8 July, rising to 8000 by 6 Aug and then mushrooming to 15000 by the 27th. In late August, over 1000 were feeding at Lunt Meadows and up to 950 were congregating at Seaforth NR though neither feeding nor roosting at the latter.

No large numbers were noted in south Liverpool with 270 at Oglet in October being the largest site count. October passage also brought in the region of 10000 to Marton Mere late in the month and a regular westerly passage of birds was noted over Brockholes. During September and October, 4126 were counted on vis mig at Crosby but Heysham recorded just 425 in the same period.

RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus*

Scarce breeding bird and passage migrant

Historical

The statement in The Birds of Lancashire (2008) that the last breeding record for the West Pennine Moors was in 2000 can be revised on the evidence of a pair observed throughout the 2004 breeding season on Darwen Moor. Additionally, breeding was thought possible at another former site in the east of the region in 2007.

2017

The first Ring Ouzel of 2017 was at Langho in east Lancashire on 22 March and the first singing male was at Croasdale on the 26th; the species was recorded at 22 sites in the ELOC region, six more than last year. There were two March singletons on the coast, at Marshside on the 25th and Fleetwood

Marsh NR on the 28th.

Passage in April was light by the standards of the previous two years. In the uplands singles were at Belmont on 2 & 16 April, there were birds at White Coppice, Chorley on several dates during the 7-26th and five on Pendle Hill on 2 April with four there on the 24th. There were three records in Rossendale, three or four birds at Musbury on 17 April and singles at Lee Quarry on the 29th and Clowbridge Reservoir next day. Eleven were recorded on the coast during April, two in the north, three in the Fylde and six in the south-west. None was seen on the coast in May but inland six were on Pendle Hill on the 7th and there was a total of five to eight birds at three sites in Rossendale, including up to six in Jamestone Quarry on the 1st.

Breeding was confirmed at six locations on the United Utilities Estate in Bowland, considered probable at another five and possible at six sites, the same number of potential territories as in 2016; a flock of ten Ring Ouzels was at Croasdale Quarry on 28 July. Nesting was also confirmed or thought likely at other sites in east Lancashire.

Autumn passage in the uplands was recorded from early September to the end of October. There were three September records in east Lancashire and singles were on Pendle Hill on 27 & 30 Oct. Eight Ring Ouzels passed through Belmont between 16 Sept and 29 Oct including twos on 8 & 29 Oct and there were four at three sites in Rossendale between 30 Sept and 23 Oct with two birds at Clowbridge on the former date. Two autumn migrants were recorded on the coast, over Knott End on 18 Oct and at Middleton NR next day.

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

Abundant breeding resident and winter visitor

There were double-figure counts at ten locations in east Lancashire in the early year, including 33 at Newton on 3 Jan and 24 at Clitheroe Low Moor on 16 & 24 March. In the Fylde 17 double-figure counts in January-February peaked at 23 at Marton Mere on 29 Jan and 40 at Carleton on 6 Feb. One thousand and seventy-seven Blackbirds were recorded by the Lancaster & District Winter Survey, 212 in coastal/urban SD46. Thirteen other double-figure gatherings were reported from both coastal and inland regions, including 40 in the Wheelton Plantations on the West Pennine Moors and at Deeply Vale in Rossendale in January. With parties of resident and wintering Blackbirds almost ubiquitous in the county there was no clear evidence of any spring movements other than a single bird over Knott End on 13 March.

Breeding numbers at several regularly-monitored sites showed increases in 2017: there were 31 territories at Brockholes Wetland, 20+ on EDF property at Heysham and 23 on Freshfield Dune Heath. Noteworthy totals in both coastal and inland regions included 20-25 pairs in a 34ha study area at Aintree, twelve at Carr Mill Dam, St Helens and 25 in Wheelton Plantations. Nesting was confirmed at 14 sites in east Lancashire, there were 27 Blackbirds in two BTO/BBS squares at Brindle, Chorley and territories were located throughout south Liverpool/Knowsley. In the Lune Valley there were 43 territorial males between Leck Beck and Hornby, an increase of one on 2016's total; nearer the coast 46 pairs nested in Croftlands, Warton and 17 on Warton Crag LNR, an overall decline of three pairs.

Autumn movements and arrivals began on schedule in the second week of October and continued on-and-off until the third week of November. A total of 147 was recorded over Knott End between 8 Oct and 26 Dec, peaking at 30 on 8 Nov; highlights at Heysham NR included 48 grounded birds on 19 Oct, 90 on the 30th and 59 on 6 Nov. Counts of up to 25 Blackbirds were very widespread; among the highest totals were 30 at Grane, Rossendale on 23 Oct, 23 at the Keer Estuary on the 30th, 30 on Preesall Moss, Fylde on 3 Nov and 37 at Clitheroe Low Moor on the 13th; as usual, for reasons unknown numbers were much lower at sites in the south-west.

The normal wide distribution of double-figure gatherings was present at the end of the year: there were 30+ at Marton Mere on 9 Dec and at a feeding-station at Strongstry, Rossendale on the 13th; 20 at Hesketh Out Marsh on 2 Dec and 25 at Leighton Moss were the highest counts in the south-west and the north, respectively.

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

Abundant winter visitor and passage migrant

Five three-figure flocks were recorded in inland regions in January, the largest 320 at Arkholme in the Lune Valley on the 5th; six in coastal regions included four in the Fylde with a peak of 300 on Cockerham Moss on the 14th. An increase in numbers in February brought eleven three-figure flocks to the Fylde where 320 Fieldfares were at Lower Ballam on the 18th; there were 140 at Lunt Meadows on 14 Feb, 620 at Arkholme on the 17th and 150 at Leighton Moss on the 26th.

Two hundred at Tosside on 6 April was the higher of two three-figure counts in east Lancashire; 100 Fieldfares were at Brockholes Wetland on 26-27th.

Two hundred and seventy Fieldfares over New Lane, Eagland Hill on 15 March and c.250 at Deeply Vale, Rossendale on the 12th were the highest of eight three-figure flocks during that month; the last winterers in the West Pennine Moors were nine at Belmont on 25 March whilst eight at Marton Mere on the 31st were the last migrants in the Fylde. Twenty-five at Brockholes on 3rd & 5th were the highest of a handful of double-figure counts in April; 13 at Holmeswood on the 14th were the last Fieldfares in the south-west, five at Greenfold on the 23rd ended spring movements in Rossendale and the last bird in east Lancashire was at Alston on the 30th. The county's final early-year Fieldfare was at White Coppice, Chorley on 1 May.

The autumn influx was at a similar level to last year's with numerous counts in low three figures but no thousand-strong flocks or movements. A single bird at Mellor in east Lancashire on 1 Oct began the season; ELOC received 33 reports during the month, the highest count 220 at Clowbridge Reservoir on 29 Oct, part of a county-wide surge. The first Fieldfare in the Fylde flew over Knott End on 8 Oct; five three-figure flocks were recorded in the region during the month with a peak of 330 at Carleton on the 30th. The first arrivals in Chorley and the West Pennine Moors were on 6 Oct, the first in the south-west were at Crossens on the 10th and Rossendale's first Fieldfares were at Plunge on the 15th.

The main feature of October (and of the entire autumn) was a substantial influx and passage on 29-30 Oct. In addition to the east Lancashire and Fylde peaks noted above 14 widespread three-figure movements were reported, including 860 at the Keer Estuary and 327 at Brockholes on the 29th and 243 south-west at Heysham, 350+ at Grane, 200 at Marshside and 101 over Knott End on the 30th.

Lighter but still appreciable counts were reported up to the end of November, 15 of these in three figures including 244 over Crosby Coastal Park and 150 at Brockholes on 1 Nov, c.200 at Preesall Flashes next day, 320 at Cockersand on the 11th and 150 at Bretherton Eyes, Chorley on the 26th. As is usually the case most of our arrivals had moved on by the end of the year; the only three-figure flocks in December were 200 at Hesketh Out Marsh early in the month, 300 at nearby Hutton on the 16th and 100 at Belmont Reservoir on the 28th.

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

Common breeding resident. Red List (breeding decline)

Only two double-figure gatherings were reported in the first winter period, counts of eleven at Brockholes Wetland and Singleton, Fylde, both on 21 Feb. Nine sites in east Lancashire had males in song in February, compared with five in 2016. Three birds grounded above Belmont on 24 March and five singles over Knott End during 12-28th were the only reports of spring passage received.

Territorial pairs were recorded throughout the Fylde and Rossendale and singing males were widespread in south Liverpool/Knowsley. Nesting was confirmed at four locations in east Lancashire and judged likely or possible at 17 others; there were four Song Thrushes in two BTO/BBS squares at Brindle, Chorley in April and 16 territories were located in Wheelton Plantation in the West Pennine Moors. There were 17 territories along the 10km stretch of the Lune Valley between Leck Beck and Hornby where 19 were located last year. Nearer to the coast there were eight pairs on Warton Crag, five territories on EDF property at Heysham, six in a 34ha study area at Aintree and three at Freshfield Dune Heath, all similar to last year's figures, but eight pairs at Brockholes Wetland was double the total in 2016.

A typically light passage was observed from mid-September; the first autumn migrant was at Heysham NR on the 18th, there were five at Cabin Hill, Formby during 24-30th and four were at Holden Wood Reservoir in Rossendale on the 27th. A total of 199 Song Thrushes was sound-recorded

at night over Knott End between 25 Sept and 18 Dec with a peak of 36 on 15 Oct. Eleven other double-figure counts were reported during October-November: passage at Heysham was steady rather than spectacular with peaks of 10+ on five dates between 9 Oct and 6 Nov; there were 20 at Crook-o-Lune on 6 Oct, when four per hour also moved south over Belmont in the first hour after dawn. Fifteen were at Brockholes on 13 & 23 Oct, ten in the Grane area of Rossendale also on 23 Oct, ten at Ribchester in east Lancashire on 4 Nov and 13 at Galgate next day. A flurry of passage during 27-30 October brought seven over Fairhaven Dunes, three over Cabin Hill and two over Billinge Hill, St Helens. No significant numbers were reported during December.

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

Abundant winter visitor and passage migrant

Although numbers of Redwings were above average throughout the county in December 2016 birds were thin on the ground in January; only five three-figure counts were reported, all in inland regions, the highest 150 at Leyland Sewage Works on 1 Jan and 200 at Arkholme on the 5th. A total of 1467 was recorded by the Lancaster & District January survey with a peak of 428 in inland SD66. Three substantial gatherings were reported in February with maxima of 190 at Whalley and 145 in Sefton Park, Liverpool, both on the 22nd.

Apart from a flock of up to 280 on Carnforth Saltmarsh on the 4-5th all flocks and movements in March were on the low side: 60 at Jackhouse on the 8th and at Brockholes Wetland next day were the highest inland counts and 87 at Lytham on the 14th the largest flock in the Fylde; the last three birds in the West Pennine Moors were over Belmont on the 19th. A few stragglers remained into the first week of April with the last in the south-west, the north and Chorley all on 1 April and east Lancashire's last spring migrants at Jackhouse on the 3rd.

Finally, long after the bulk of our winter Redwing population had reached its north European breeding grounds a single bird was on Warton Marsh, Fylde on 18 May.

Five at Hic Bibi, Chorley and singles at High Tatham on the Upper Lune and at Belmont on 24 Sept began a moderate autumn passage with many flocks and movements in the low-to-middle three figures but only one thousand-plus count. Two over Knott End on 26 Sept and one at Gorse Hill, Ormskirk on the 30th began the autumn in the Fylde and the south-west, respectively, and four at Crawshawbooth on 6 Oct were the first Redwings to arrive in Rossendale. A total of 1945 was recorded over Knott End between 26 Sept and 26 Dec with peaks of 246 on 18 Oct and 321 on 15 Nov.

Apart from flocks of 436 at Brockholes Wetland, 242 at Jackhouse and 200+ over Crosby Coastal Park, all on the 9th, the first two weeks of October were quiet, but the major influx of the autumn took place on a broad front during the 19-21st; interestingly, very few Fieldfares seem to have been included in these movements. At least 16 three-figure counts were received: on 19 Oct a season's peak of 705 moved over Heysham, 505 flew south and east over Fairhaven Dunes, 423 moved over Belmont in the first daylight hour and there were 311 at Jackhouse. Next day there were 200+ at Brockholes followed by 1838 on the 21st, when 207 also moved over Belmont. A second, less widespread and slightly lighter surge, this time with contingents of Fieldfares in tow, was recorded during 28-31 Oct with peaks of 800 at Brockholes on the 28th and 540 on the 30th; there were 200 at Houghton Bottoms on 28 Oct and 320 at Kemple End in east Lancashire on the 31st.

An apparently-random pattern of movements continued until the middle of November; noteworthy gatherings included 149 at Crosby and 200 at Brockholes on 1 Nov, 200 on Longridge Fell on the 4th and 500 at Brockholes on the 15th, when 110 also moved north-west over Belmont. Numbers had dwindled dramatically by the beginning of December; there were nine double-figure counts during the month, the highest in coastal regions 80 at Potter's Brook, Fylde on the 31st and inland 60 at Eccleston, Chorley on the 28th.

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*

Common breeding resident

The Lancaster & District January Survey recorded 76 Mistle Thrushes with a peak of 16 in SD57. No other early- or late- winter counts were received but singing birds were reported at Speke in south Liverpool and Holden Wood Reservoir, Rossendale on 15 Jan and at Burholme in east Lancashire on the 30th. No reports of spring migration were received.

Breeding was reported to be widespread in the Fylde, Rossendale and south Liverpool/Knowsley; nesting was confirmed at eight locations in east Lancashire and judged possible or probable at two others. Elsewhere in the uplands one territory was located in Wheelton Plantations in the West Pennine Moors and there were two more nearby. Nearer the coast two pairs nested at Brockholes Wetland and at least one at EDF property at Heysham and Lunt Meadows.

Post-breeding gatherings were recorded from mid-June and there were ten at Syd Brook, Eccleston on 23 June, 18 at Winckley in east Lancashire on the 26th and 14 on Formby Moss next day. Eleven double-figure July counts peaked at 26 birds on Mawdesley Moss, Chorley on 3 July; in east Lancashire 20 were at Marl Hill on the 16th and Rishton Reservoir on the 18th. As usual the number of flocks and movements increased in August and September; twelve double-figure counts in coastal regions included 18 at Cockerham on 8 Aug, 19 on Formby Moss on the 31st and 15 at Halewood, Knowsley on 10 Sept. Inland there were ten double-figure gatherings, peaking at 13 at Eccleston on 4 Aug and 25 at Brockholes on the 17th.

A total of 14 Mistle Thrushes moved over Knott End between 6 Oct and 19 Nov; four flew south over Belmont in the first daylight hour on 6 Oct, two moved south at Rossall Point on the 15th and there were 14 migrants over Fairhaven Dunes on the 27th. Thirty-one were at Arkholme on 22 Sept and 28 on 26 Oct; parties of ten were at Brockholes on 15 Oct and Leighton Moss on the 18th. No significant reports were received in November or at year end.

BLACK-THROATED THRUSH *Turdus atrogularis*

Vagrant

After a minor influx of this Central Asian species to Britain in autumn 2016 a first-winter female was found at Fulwood, Preston on 12 March and was present again briefly on the following morning (S. Baxter, C. G. Batty, Z. Hinchcliffe). The record has been accepted by the BBRC and is the first for Lancashire. See separate article.



Black-throated Thrush, Fulwood, 13 March (Chris Batty)

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*

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

A bird in Fleetwood Cemetery on 7 May began a reasonable spring passage on the coast. This was the first of 18 records in the Fylde up to 21 May; arrivals there peaked on the 12th with 20 birds at Fleetwood and nine in Watson Road Park, Blackpool, part of a widespread influx that day that also brought six birds to Marshside, three to Heysham Head and one to Aldcliffe. Two more on the north coast and one at Birkdale LNR during 16-20 May completed the coastal passage.

Meanwhile Spotted Flycatchers were arriving on breeding territories inland, the first in east Lancashire at New Laithe Farm and the Dunsop Valley on 11 May; ELOC received records from a

total of 54 sites, 20 more than in 2016. One was at Brockholes Wetland on 13 May and the first in Chorley region was a pair at Anglezarke on the 20th; in the north there was one at Abbeystead on the 26th.

Although nesting was not recorded in the Fylde or the south-west this year breeding numbers further inland appear to have been around normal. In east Lancashire nesting was confirmed at Crosshill Quarry, Hare Clough, Moor Piece, New Laithe Farm and around Stocks Reservoir and was considered possible at Dunsop Bridge; a pair nested successfully at White Coppice, Chorley and in Wheelton Plantations in the West Pennine Moors. In the north breeding was confirmed at Marshaw and Tower Lodge, at Abbeystead, in Roeburndale and by three pairs at Hornby Castle; in Rossendale there were pairs at Hareholme, Horncliffe Woods and Clough Fold. A pair on territory at Boilton Wood at Brockholes Wetland was the nearest breeding activity to the coast reported in 2017.

Movements in the uplands began in late July and appear to have been very light; birds were recorded at Crosshill Quarry, at Arkholme in the Lune Valley and at three sites in Rossendale during 3-17 Aug. A significant passage was observed at Brockholes from 11 Aug with nine records involving at least a dozen birds up to the 24th. The first of a minuscule passage of Spotted Flycatchers on the coast was at Warton Bank, Fylde on 8 Aug, followed by singles at Fairhaven, Carleton and Staining Nook on the 30th; further south singles were at Freshfield Dune Heath on 20 Aug and Cabin Hill on 20th & 23rd.

The last inland migrants of 2017 were at Egg Syke Brook, Jackhouse and Grindleton Forest in east Lancashire on 14 Sept; on the coast there were singles on Silverdale Moss on 3 Sept, at the Keer Estuary on the 5th and Lunt Meadows on the 9th; one at Hollowforth, Fylde on 26 Sept ended the year.

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

Abundant breeding resident

Double-figure counts of Robins were recorded at about 25 sites, coastal and inland, during the first winter period with peaks of 29 at Clitheroe Low Moor in east Lancashire on 18 Feb, up to 24 birds at Brockholes Wetland on several dates in January and February, 14 at Carr House Green Common, Fylde on 20 Jan and 13 at MMWWT on the 16th. Five hundred and sixty-one Robins were recorded by the Lancaster & District January survey with a peak of 106 in SD57. Eight birds through Heysham NR during March were the only spring migrants reported.

This abundant species was recorded during the breeding season throughout the Fylde, east Lancashire and Rossendale; there were c.80 pairs in Wheelton Plantation, 36 birds in two BTO/BBS squares in Brindle, Chorley in April and 33 pairs at Brockholes Wetland. Nearer to the coast there were 13 territories at Carr House Green Common, 28 on EDF property at Heysham, 20 on Warton Crag, 17 at Mere Sands Wood and 16 at Freshfield Dune Heath.

Reports of autumn movements were received from late August; there were 14 at Brockholes on 28 Aug and an influx of ten at Middleton NR on 1 Sept. Broad-front migration was underway from mid-September. Sixty-five autumn Robins were recorded at Heysham with an influx of 25+ on 20 Sept, when 27 were also recorded at Wayoh Reservoir and c.30 at Seaforth. Twenty-four migrants were at Jumbles Reservoir on 10 Sept, there were 31 at Brockholes on the 18th and 37 at Jackhouse on the 26th. Movements continued intermittently until early November with a clear surge in the last week of October when there were counts of 24 at Wayoh, 17 at Stagbills Wood and 14 at Warth, Rossendale, 26 at Brockholes and 27 at Hesketh Bank. The last double-figure migrant counts were of 20+ in the Grane area of Rossendale on 3 Nov and 20 at Leighton Moss on the 8th. A total of eight widespread double-figure gatherings was reported during December.

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Uncommon breeding bird and passage migrant

Two early arrivals were at Moor Piece on 9 April and the first Pied Flycatcher to reach the north was in Hindburndale on the 12th; the first male was at a regular Belmont site on 19 April on the same day that the first coastal migrant was recorded at Marshside. Birds had reached Rossendale at Plunge on 29 April and the first in Chorley region was at Roddlesworth on 5 May, when three males and two females were also present at Belmont.

Another five singles were reported from coastal sites, at Longton Brickcroft on 20 April, Barrow Scout and Leighton Moss on the 27th and at Heysham and Fleetwood on 2 May.

In east Lancashire 17 pairs of Pied Flycatchers used nest-boxes at Moor Piece and there were ten territories in the woods around Stocks Reservoir, eight of them successful, fledging 37 young. Eleven pairs fledged 61 young from nest-boxes in Bowland Wild Boar Park and breeding was also confirmed at New Laithe Farm (15 pairs), Hare Clough (four) and Birkett Woods (three). In north Lancashire nesting was recorded at Tower Lodge and Marshaw and a total of 100 pairs bred in 17 woods along the Lune Valley, the great majority in nest-boxes; an abundance of caterpillars on the oaks no doubt facilitated the total of 83 successful broods. Two pairs probably bred at Belmont.

The first autumn migrant, and the only one near the coast, was at MMWWT on 30 July; single birds at Great Harwood and New Laithe Farm on 5 Aug were the only reports from inland regions.

RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER* *Ficedula parva*

Vagrant

A first-winter bird was present briefly in Ainsdale Dunes on the morning of 24 Oct (A Spottiswood, J Dempsey). There have been nine previous county records, the most recent a first-winter at Blackpool in October 2001.

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Rare breeding bird, uncommon passage migrant and scarce winter visitor.

Amber List (breeding decline)

For the second year in a row, records of this popular little chat were well below the average of the last decade. A first-winter male present since December 2016 remained at Knott End, Fylde until 13 March. A bird in a garden in Deepdale, Preston on 2 Jan may well be the same first-winter male present around nearby St Warburg's Church from 4 Jan to 9 March; there was one other early-year record, a single bird at Lancaster on 29 Jan.

Four spring migrants were recorded, at Knott End on 24 March, on Morecambe Promenade on the 31st and at Fairhaven Lake and Langden Castle in Bowland, both on 8 April; no reports of possible breeding activity were received this year.

Two migrants were present in autumn at inland locations, at Higher Hollinbank, Rossendale from 7 Sept to 6 Oct and at Winter Hill, a regular stopping-point for the species, on 26 Sept. The three or four coastal Black Redstarts were all in the Fylde, at least one female or first-winter male at Knott End during 27 Oct-26 Nov and birds at Fleetwood on 31 Oct and in Stanley Park, Blackpool on 14-15 Nov. None was recorded in the county at year's end.



**Black Redstart, Knott End,
21 January (Craig Bell)**

REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Fairly common breeding bird and passage migrant. Amber List (species of European conservation concern)

The first Redstart of 2017 was at Stocks Reservoir on 2 April and birds were recorded at eleven other sites in east Lancashire during the month, including eight at New Laithe Farm, Newton on the 22nd. Birds had returned to Roeburndale in the Lune Valley by 15 April, the first of three April records in Rossendale was at Holden Wood Reservoir on the 19th and there were arrivals at Belmont in the West Pennine Moors on the 21st and in Chorley at Anglezarke next day.

A very light coastal passage began with a male in a Speke garden on 14 April; there were three birds in the Fylde on 18 & 30 April, one at Heysham on the 25th and four more April birds in the

south-west, three at Marshside during 17-28th and one at Hesketh Out Marsh on the 21st. Two birds in the Fylde and one each on the north and south-west coasts during 1-8 May ended the spring passage.

Very little breeding detail was received this year. In east Lancashire nesting was confirmed in the woods around Stocks Reservoir, where six pairs fledged 26 young, and at ten other locations. At least one pair bred at Anglezarke, Chorley and two on the West Pennine Moors, at Belmont and Roddlesworth Plantations, whilst in the north breeding was reported from a total of 17 locations, from Warton Crag on the coast to Roeburndale on the Upper Lune and Tower Lodge and Marshaw in north Bowland.

A bird at Leighton Moss on 1 July began a modest coastal passage involving several long-staying juveniles, two in the Fylde, at Pilling Lane during 10-22 July and St Annes from 13 July to 9 Aug; there were two late August records in the Fylde and singles at Seaforth on 5 & 14th. A little further inland Brockholes Wetland recorded two Redstarts in July and six in August, with the last on the 30th. In the uplands single birds were at Clowbridge and Haslingden in Rossendale on 17-18 Aug and there were two records in east Lancashire in late August and early September, at Great Harwood and New Laithe Farm, with the last in the region at Tinkler's Lane on 18 Sept. The last Redstart in Rossendale was at Rawtenstall on 4 Sept and there were two later coastal records, singles at Seaforth on 15 Sept and our last migrant of 2017 at Leighton Moss on the 19th.

WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*

Scarce breeder and passage migrant. Amber list (breeding decline)

The spring arrival began more or less on schedule at both coastal and inland sites around 19-21 April with the first two males at Marshside on the former date. Subsequent coastal movements were substantial and not far short of 2015's exceptional showing. April highlights included eleven birds on Fleetwood Marsh and five at Cockersand on the 30th and a total of nine birds at Marshside; in all around 40 Whinchats were recorded at three sites on the north coast, seven in the Fylde and five in the south-west during the month.

Arrivals were even more widespread in May and at least 55 birds in all were recorded at four north-coast locations, ten in the Fylde and seven in the south-west with totals of nine birds at Aldcliffe and Marshside; the last Whinchat of spring was at Ballam, Fylde on 27 May.

Meanwhile, reports from inland regions were much more plentiful than last year. The first Whinchat in east Lancashire was at Oswaldtwistle Moor Edge on 21 April and there were birds at five other sites in April and at five in May. The first in Chorley was at Bretherton Eyes on 26 April and there were records in May at White Coppice and Eccleston; five were recorded at Belmont during 8-13 May and the first of four spring migrants in Rossendale was at Holden Wood Reservoir on 8 May. Nearer to the coast Brockholes Wetland recorded four Whinchats between 26 April and 14 May.

All this migration activity notwithstanding, however, the breeding situation remains precarious and may even have deteriorated further; no reports were received from the north or from Rossendale. Three pairs nested on the United Utilities Estate in Bowland, two in the Croasdale Valley and the other at Cross of Greet Bridge; the only other report received was of a female and very young juvenile at Belmont on 6 Aug which were probably close to the nesting site.

Autumn movements both inland and on the coast were much lighter than in 2016. There were three August reports to ELOC and five in September with the last bird at Rishton Reservoir on the 17th; four birds passed through Belmont in August and six more up to 17 Sept. In Rossendale one Whinchat was recorded in late August and four at three sites during 4-7 Sept; the last bird there, and in the county, was at Harden Moor on 8 Oct. Two migrants were recorded on the north coast in late August and two in September; there were single birds at MMWWT on 14 Sept and at Cockersand, Fylde on the 19th and the last coastal Whinchat was at Aldcliffe on 1 Oct.

STONECHAT *Saxicola torquata*

Uncommon breeding resident

Wintering Stonechats were widespread at the beginning of the year. Birds were present at eight locations in the Fylde in January and seven in February with two or three at several sites and a peak count of six on Lytham Moss on 21 Jan; there were birds at six coastal and mossland sites in the south-west including two at Marshside, and one was on Silverdale Moss during February. Inland

Stonechats were at eight locations in east Lancashire in January and five in February, at two sites each in Chorley and on the northern fells (including ten birds at Clougha on 5 Jan) and up to two birds were at four locations in Rossendale.

Spring movements began in early March. ELOC reported birds at 16 locations during the month and migrants were present at six sites in Rossendale and at four in Chorley, where four pairs were at White Coppice on 25 March. Coastal movements were particularly evident in the Fylde where Stonechats were recorded at 18 sites in March; there were twelve at Fleetwood Marsh during the 4-6th and six at Jeremy Lane on the latter date. Migrants were at five coastal sites in the north including ten through Heysham between 4 & 25 March and at six locations in the south-west with a peak of five birds at Cabin Hill on the 5th; very few were reported on the coast during April and the last migrant was at Marshside on the 20th.

The Stonechat's upland breeding populations, virtually extirpated by the double winter freeze of 2010, appear to have fully recovered. In east Lancashire the United Utilities Bowland Estate had a productive season with pairs at 15 sites and young fledged at five of these; elsewhere in the region breeding was confirmed at twelve widespread locations including for the first time on Chipping Moss. Twenty-two pairs were located in the West Pennine Moors in a sample of 19 sites including eleven around Belmont Reservoir; over 30 adults and juveniles were in that area until mid-September. A similar situation obtained in Rossendale where successful nesting was recorded at seven locations with six pairs in the Grane area and three at Musbury; up to 20 birds were around Ogden Reservoir in late July. In north Lancashire, although detailed data are lacking there were territorial pairs on Hawthornthwaite and Harrisend Fells and at Birk Bank.

On the coast a pair again fledged young at Lytham St Annes NR while six pairs were confirmed on the Sefton Coast between Blundellsands and Birkdale, as in 2016; in an interesting extension inland two pairs also bred at Lunt Meadows. More significantly, a pair at Barrow Scout was the first on the north coast since the 2010 collapse.

Passage on the coastal plain began very early this year, at the beginning of August, with single birds at Crosby Coastal Park on 5 Aug and at Wesham Marsh in the Fylde next day; there were six at Crosby on the 16th and three at Seaforth on the 18th; eight more Stonechats were recorded along the coast during the month. Inland, where it is more difficult to distinguish migrants from lingering breeders and their offspring small-scale movements were also underway from early August; birds were present at seven sites in east Lancashire and three in Chorley during the month.

Movements both coastal and inland continued throughout September and October without any marked peaks; birds were recorded from a total of eleven sites in the Fylde, three on the north coast and seven in the south-west. There were many multiple occurrences, including six birds at Marshside on dates in late October and five at Crosby on 2 Sept and at Heysham on four occasions between 27 Sept and 9 Oct.

In the uplands there were birds at seven sites in east Lancashire in September-October and at six locations in Rossendale where ten or more birds were recorded at three sites on dates from early September to mid-October. Continuing movements in early November included birds at ten sites in the Fylde, five in east Lancashire and four in Chorley; in the south-west there were counts of four birds at Lunt, Crosby and Garston Shore in the first half of the month.

Stonechats appear to have settled into winter quarters by mid-November and were at least as numerous and widespread at the end of the year as at the beginning. Pairs were present at several of the 13 sites occupied in the Fylde during December and there were up to four birds in the Leighton Moss-Silverdale area; birds overwintered at seven locations in the south-west, at four in east Lancashire and two in Chorley and one was still on Belmont Moor at 320m on 31 Dec.

WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Uncommon breeding bird and common passage migrant. Amber List (species of European conservation concern)

Two birds on Warton Slag Tips on 5 March were the first spring arrivals, followed by one on Fleetwood Golf Course on the 10th and the first in the south-west at Seaforth next day. There were 47 more March records in the Fylde, peaking at twelve at Fleetwood on the 24th and 30th; low single figures were reported from other coastal regions. The first inland Wheatear was at Ogden Reservoir, Rossendale on 12 March and there were seven more records in the region during the month. There

were March birds at 13 sites in east Lancashire after the first at Marl Hill on the 16th; migrants arrived in Chorley at Bretherton Eyes on 16 March and at Belmont in the West Pennine Moors on the 24th.

Coastal movements during April were at an average level with a gradual build-up to the last ten days of the month; counts in the Fylde peaked at 34 on Lytham Moss on 22 April and 58 at Fleetwood Marsh on the 30th. In the south-west there were 20+ on Plex Moss and at Seaforth on the 20th and an April peak of 13 was at Heysham on the 30th. Movements inland showed a similar pattern: Wheatears were at 26 sites in east Lancashire with 30 at Alston on 23 April and 32 at Oswaldtwistle Moor Edge on the 28th the highest counts. Eighty birds moved through Belmont during April with a peak of 38 on the 22nd; there were 24 on Croston Moss, Chorley on the 24th. Passage dwindled very quickly in May; birds were present at 15 sites in east Lancashire and a total of 45 passed through Belmont during the month. The only double-figure counts in the Fylde and Rossendale were on 1 May and a trickle of single-figure movements continued throughout the county until mid-month.

Breeding was confirmed at seven locations in east Lancashire and was considered possible or probable at six others; there was confirmed nesting or territorial presence at two quarries and two reservoir locations in Rossendale and at two sites in the West Pennine Moors. Birds were present at Warton Slag Tips in mid-May but there was no further evidence of breeding at the county's only regular coastal site; further inland in the north there were three pairs in Littledale and one in Roeburndale.

A trickle of juveniles was on the move at coastal and mossland sites from the first week of July but appreciable passage, as usual, did not begin until mid-August. There were 46 records during the month in the Fylde with a count of ten at Cockersand on the 21st; one on 5 Aug was the first migrant at Seaforth, a light passage at Heysham began on the 20th and there was a county peak of 23 at the Keer Estuary on the 15th.

In the uplands there were Wheatears at eight sites in east Lancashire in August and four records in Chorley region; ten passed through Belmont during the month. The normal light and intermittent passage continued in all regions during September. There were 72 records in the Fylde with peaks of eleven at Fairhaven on 1 Sept and twelve at Blackpool Airport on the 29th; ten moved through Heysham on the 9th. Birds were at eight locations in the south-west, at six in east Lancashire and at two in Chorley and 27 passed through Belmont during the month.

The usual stragglers were widespread in October with 22 records of ones and twos in the Fylde to the last at Pilling Lane on the 25th; one at Sunderland Point on the 20th was the last Wheatear in the north and a bird at Marshside on the 25th was the last of eight October records in the south-west. There were two records at Belmont, the last on the 27th; the last Wheatear of 2017 in east Lancashire, and in the county, was at Clowbridge Reservoir on 28 Oct.



Wheatear with Common Lizard, Rossall School, 2 September (Jackie Moreton)

DIPPER *Cinclus cinclus***Uncommon breeding resident**

Numerous reports of confirmed breeding or presence at traditional nesting sites were received from all the upland strongholds. Dippers were present on rivers and streams throughout east Lancashire, with singing birds reported from 1 Jan and breeding confirmed at five widespread locations, including a second brood in Bonstone Wood, Newton. Pairs were present at regular sites in Chorley region and nesting was reported at three of these; a bird on the Lower Yarrow at Eccleston was out of the usual range. Although a pair at Belmont Reservoir was unsuccessful nine territories were located in the central and western parts of the West Pennine Moors.

In Rossendale there was breeding season presence in at least nine locations, including the Limy-Irwell confluence in Rawtenstall centre and five pairs on the Ewood Bridge-Stubbins stretch of the Irwell, although a pollution incident on that river from Ewood Bridge south into Greater Manchester may have caused some pairs to desert.

There were breeding Dippers in at least three sites along the River Lune, and a minimum of four territories on its tributary the Hindburn from Wray up to Botton Mill; nesting was also recorded at Scorton and Dolphinholme on the Wyre. Further to the west Dippers were again present on the edge of the Fylde, at Galgate, on the Brock by the A6 bridge and at Myerscough College, and on the Lower Wyre at Churchtown. Finally, a bird on the River Tawd near Skelmersdale on 21 May was the first record of the species in the south-west since 2005.



Dipper, River Conder, Galgate, April (Paul Ellis)

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus***Abundant breeding resident. Red list (breeding decline).**

Due to avian flu-related restrictions the information from the normally comprehensive Pilling area was incomplete. In terms of first clutches only eleven nests had 51 eggs, 35 hatched and 31 young fledged. The only significant breeding information received. Came from Camforth, where 50 pairs bred at Millhead (up three from 2016) and 85 pairs at Croftlands (up five).

The largest count reported this year was 85 at Windmill Farm, Burscough. In north Lancashire area there were 60 at Cockersand and 50 at Hornby in August, and large Fylde counts of 40 at both Blackpool South Shore and Fleetwood in January, Marton Mere and Scronkey in August and Preston Dock in September. In east Lancashire there were 72 at Newton-by-Bowland in January, while other totals included 50 at Cut Lane, Rishton in September, 45 at Marshside in January, 40 in Ormskirk in February and at Rawtenstall in July. Records in areas not covered by bird club recording areas included 50 at Garswood in September, 35 at Belmont in January and 28 in Aigburth in December.

The LDBWS winter survey in January produced 1721 birds in total, with peaks of 473 in SD45, 390 in SD46, 297 in SD66 and 204 in SD56. In the Aintree study area aggregate totals included 100 in February and 120 in December.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus***Common breeding resident. Red List (breeding decline).**

As with House Sparrows nest monitoring in the Pilling area was curtailed by avian flu restrictions. Initial visits were made to 155 nests and 783 eggs were noted, but no further checks were made so hatching and survival rates are unknown.

Unsurprisingly many of the larger counts received were from this heartland, including 110 at Ridge Farm in October, 100 at Eagland Hill in August and feeding station maxima of 80 at New Lane and 67 at Bradshaw Lane. There were also some good counts elsewhere in the Fylde, including 100 at Wesham Marsh in September and 60 at Lytham Moss in December.

The Lancaster area January survey included 36 birds in SD66 and nine in SD55. The largest counts in the area were in the southern overlap with the Fylde, with up to 60 at Cockerham Sands in several months. A flock of five by the Lune at Newton was unusual for the area; one pair nested in a garden nestbox in Carnforth.

In the south-west there were 52 at Rainford in November, up to 50 at Hesketh Out Marsh in December and 45 on Burscough Moss in January and 40 at MMWWT in September. Numbers inland were generally lower, the peak in east Lancashire was 18 at Commonsides, Whalley in January whilst breeding was confirmed at Brownsills (Great Harwood). In the Chorley area the peak count was ten at Croston SW in August and Mawdesley Moss in November; up to 18 were seen at Brockholes and one was in a Belmont garden on 4 Oct. The only Rossendale record was one over Clowbridge Reservoir on 1 May.

Visible migration results were mixed. Very few were seen in spring, and at Heysham the only confirmed record in autumn was seven on 9 Oct. By contrast some good movements were noted over Fairhaven, peaking at 79 on 18 Oct.



Tree Sparrow, Pilling Sands, 8 November (Howard Phillips)

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*

Abundant breeding resident. Amber list (breeding decline).

The usual caveat about large counts applies, in that they normally reflect observer effort rather than high concentrations or gatherings of migrants. Twenty-two were on Silverdale Moss on 19 Feb, 20 at Chapel Hill, Rossendale on 19 Nov, 15 at Jackhouse on 12 March, 15 at Preston Dock on 15 Oct and 14 at Brockholes in October. On the LDBWS winter survey the total of 159 included 49 in SD45 and 32 in SD46.

There were 16 singing males on the EDF land at Heysham, 18 pairs on the Croftlands estate in Carnforth, twelve territories in the Aintree study area, seven pairs on Warton Crag LNR, six at Freshfield Dune Heath, ten at Brockholes, four at Mere Sands Wood and at least three at Wheelton Plantations.

Monitoring of migrants at Heysham pointed to a handful of unringed birds in spring and a further small arrival in late August through to mid-September, associated with 'fidgety behaviour' calling from tops of bushes and undertaking medium-distance flights. This is not reflected in the dates of peak counts at other sites, suggesting that migration was generally very difficult to discern accurately.

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava flavissima*

Scarce breeding bird, fairly common passage migrant. Red List (breeding decline)

The first Yellow Wagtail of spring was at Bank End, Fylde on the late date of 16 April but subsequent passage on the coast was on a par with last year's lively performance.

There were ten April and about 25 May records in the Fylde with significant movements at Fleetwood Marsh NR where six birds were present on 30 April and 10 May; in addition 14 were recorded over Knott End from 2 to 19 May with a peak of seven on the 10th. Migrants were at six sites in the south-west in April and nine in May with notable clusters of records at Hesketh Out Marsh and Curlew Lane, Rufford: there were reports from the former site on several dates from 21 April to mid-June, including six birds on 19 May; at the latter up to three Yellow Wagtails were regularly reported from 2 May into June.

As usual, Yellow Wagtails were much thinner on the ground away from the coast. There were five records of singles in east Lancashire, the first at Foulridge Reservoir on 24 April; one was at High Tatham in the Upper Lune Valley on 1 May and four single birds passed through Brockholes Wetland between 1 & 9 May. A very late, or early, migrant flew over Gannow Fell on 30 June.

Breeding by a single pair was confirmed on a potato field adjacent to Lunt Meadows where at least two young were fledged. Given prolonged presence at Curlew Lane and Hesketh Out Marsh, (where at least ten Yellow Wagtails were recorded on 18 June) it seems highly likely that nesting by one or more pairs also occurred at or near those locations.

A typically light autumn passage in upland regions totalled seven individuals in east and north Lancashire, Chorley, the West Pennine Moors and Rossendale between the first at The Snab in the Lune Valley on 2 Aug and the last at Belmont Reservoir on 10 Sept.

In contrast to last year there were only two July records in coastal regions, both in the Fylde at Barnaby's Sands on 22nd and Bank End on the 27th, but another lively passage in August-September brought birds to six sites in the Fylde, one on the north coast and eight in the south-west. Most reports were of one or two birds but six were present at Bank End on 27 Aug and there were up to five there on several dates in September. The last autumn birds in the south-west were at Southport Marine Lake and MMWWT on 12 Oct and a juvenile at Bank End during 12-14th was our last Yellow Wagtail of 2017.

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

Fairly common breeding bird, common passage migrant

As indicated by ringing at Heysham Observatory many juvenile Grey Wagtails evacuate upland natal areas and winter at lowland coastal and urban locations; a proportion of presumed breeding adults remain in the uplands, often around small sewage works and farmyard manure-heaps.

The species was recorded at 96 sites in east Lancashire, and in all months, whilst the Lancaster & District January Survey located 23 birds, distributed across nine of the eleven 10km squares. In the Fylde there were birds at 33 sites in January and 19 in February, and at 44 in November and 26 in December; ones and twos were reported from regular wintering sites throughout the south-west. Eighteen Grey Wagtails were in a roost in Lancaster on 10 Jan and 31 on 1 Nov, and eight roosted at Walton-le-Dale Sewage Works on 30 Nov.

Small-scale spring movements began in coastal regions in the middle of February, peaked in the first half of March and had largely petered out by the beginning of April. Seventy-four were recorded over Knott End from 15 Feb to 9 April including 14 on 11 March; other peak counts in the Fylde included ten at Fleetwood Marsh on 4 & 10 March and 14 on the 11th. Single birds moved over Heysham on 15 & 16 March.

ELOC received eight reports of confirmed and six of possible or probable breeding, and Grey Wagtails nested in at least ten riverine and reservoir locations in Rossendale although success on the River Irwell may have been compromised by a pollution incident there. Breeding was confirmed at four sites in Chorley region and there were at least nine territories in the west and central West Pennine Moors; in the north pairs bred at Marshaw, Tower Lodge and Hornby Castle and 14 pairs along the Lune between Skerton Weir and Kirby Lonsdale. Nearer to the coast pairs were located at three coastal and one inland locations in the Fylde, at Avenham Park in Preston and nearby on the Ribble at Red Scar/Brockholes. In the south-west two or three pairs nested at Carr Mill Dam, St Helens and one apiece at Maghull and in Liverpool's Newsham Park; breeding was considered

possible at Cabin Hill, Formby.

An average volume of autumn passage in coastal regions commenced in the first week of August, peaked in the last days of the month and early September and had largely concluded by mid-October. One hundred and eighty-six were recorded at Heysham between 8 Aug and 19 Oct including 13 on 1 Sept and 15 on the 22nd, while 135 moved over Knott End from 21 Aug to 13 Nov with a peak of 31 on 2 Sept. Noteworthy counts included 40 over Fairhaven Dunes on 27 Aug and 22 there on 3 Sept, when 13 also moved over Cabin Hill; 11 at Heysham on 6 Oct was the last double-figure report received. Low-level inland movements began a little later, towards the end of August and included six birds at Crown Point, Rossendale on 24 Aug, eight on the River Calder at Altham on 27 Sept and three over Clowbridge Reservoir on the 30th.

PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

Common breeding bird, very common passage migrant

For the third successive year roost and flock counts in the first winter period were unusually low; only one three-figure gathering was reported, 150 at Bretherton Eyes, Chorley on 22 Feb. Peak counts in the Fylde were of 64 at Mereside on 14 Jan and 48 at Cockersand on 3 Feb, there were 40 at the Keer Estuary on 24 Jan and a similar number in a tree-roost in Liverpool's Hanover Street on 9 Feb. Further inland, 20 at Colne Sewage Works on 22 Feb and 2 March were the highest counts reported in east Lancashire.

Widespread coastal passage began in the first week of March, peaked in the third week of the month and continued intermittently until late April. A hundred were recorded at Heysham NR from 15 March to 30 April with a peak of 38 on 24 March, and a spring total of 446 over Knott End peaked at 47 on 15 March. There were two three-figure movements, 162 at Fluke Hall, Pilling on 11 March and 101 at Fleetwood Marsh on 3 April; other noteworthy counts were of 55 at Marshside on 5 March and 60 at Barrow Scout on the 12th.

Movements inland were, as usual, at a lower level although a roost of 150 at Charnock Richard Services on 15 March stood out; 24 at Grove Lane, Padiham in east Lancashire on 7 March, 30 at Heapey Lodges, Chorley on 15 April and 20+ at Holden Wood Reservoir, Rossendale were the only double-figure counts received.

Reports of breeding and territorial behavior were widespread in the Fylde and Rossendale, nesting was confirmed at eight locations in east Lancashire and there were nine territories around Belmont Reservoir. Three pairs nested at Hornby Castle in the Lune Valley and 35 pairs along the Lune between Skerton Weir and Kirby Lonsdale. Elsewhere, there were two territories apiece on EDF property at Heysham and at Lunt Meadows.

Post-breeding flocks and movements were widespread from mid-July, including 97 birds at Arkholme on 13 July and 103 at Bank End, Fylde and 60 at Hesketh Out Marsh on the 24th; there were counts of 150+ at Alston Reservoirs and Wetland on 7 Aug and at Bank End on the 13th, c.70 were at Stocks Reservoir on the 24th and there were 89 at Arkholme on the 30th. A below-average passage continued intermittently until early November; only two more three-figure counts were received, 113 at Leighton Moss on 12 Oct and 150 on nearby Silverdale Moss on the 22nd. A total of 484 Pied Wagtails was recorded over Knott End between 1 Aug and 19 Nov with a maximum of 37 on 26 Sept; 481 passed through Heysham from 9 Sept to 30 Oct peaking at 77, also on 26 Sept. Widespread double-figure flocks and movements in inland regions included 60 at Stocks on 16 Sept and 40+ at Holden Wood Reservoir, Rossendale on the 25th; a roost at Belmont peaked at 45+ during the month and there were 50 at Alston on 7 Oct.

A roost of 150+ at Fleetwood Marsh on 11 Nov was the highest count reported at the year's end, followed by 133 at Mereside on 30 Dec. In the south-west there was a roost of 35+ Pied Wagtails in a tree on Lord Street, Liverpool on 5 Dec and 22 fed on a ploughed field at Haskayne on the 23rd; inland c.20 were at Alston Reservoirs on the 20th.

WHITE WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba alba*

Common passage migrant

Spring movements, which began with a very early individual at Crosby Coastal Park on 4 March, were unusually widespread across the county in 2017. Three at Cockersand on the 24th was the first of nine March records in the Fylde and four at Aldcliffe on the 25th were the first White Wagtails on

the north coast. Further inland, four were at Old Coach Road, Rainford on 13 March and there were singles at Bretherton Eyes, Chorley next day, at Arkholme on the 15th and at Belmont Reservoir on the 25th. The first of 22 spring records in east Lancashire was at Ightenhill Bridge on 1 April; singles were recorded during the month at two sites in Chorley, there were at least six at Clowbridge Reservoir, Rossendale during the 16-30th and ones or twos at Belmont Reservoir, at Arkholme and Wenning Foot in the Lune Valley and at Brockholes Wetland on dates in April and early May.

Meanwhile, a heavier than usual and very widespread passage was underway in coastal regions. There were 48 records across the Fylde in April, peaking at 70 birds at Bank End on the 18th; there were two three-figure counts in the south-west, 100+ at Seaforth on 14 April and 162 at Crossens on the 26th, and 13 double-figure counts at eight widespread sites across the region, including 27 at Hesketh Out Marsh on 17 April and 53 at Sandy Lane, Hightown on the 23rd.

Fifty-three White Wagtails at Marshside on the 1st was the only double-figure count in May and the last of seven records in the Fylde were at Glasson and Fleetwood on 14 May, on the same date as the last migrants in the north and south-west.

A light autumn passage began with seven on Banks Marsh on 15 Aug; there were 15 at Marshside on the 20th and three at Bank End on the 22nd, one or two remaining until the 24th. There were nine widespread coastal records in September, three in the Fylde with the last of two birds in Stanley Park, Blackpool on the 9th, four in the south-west to the last at Cabin Hill on the 23rd and two in the north with the last two on Silverdale Moss on the 25th. There were only two autumn records in the uplands, both in Rossendale, one at Cowm Reservoir and 10+ at Holden Wood, both on 4 Sept; the county's last White Wagtail of 2017 was at Marshside on 2 Oct.

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

Abundant breeding bird and passage migrant

Eighty-eight Meadow Pipits were recorded by the Lancaster & District January Survey, 44 of these in coastal SD45. All the double-figure counts on the coast in January-February were in the Fylde, the highest 80 at Thurnham on 2 Feb; there were five counts of 20+ birds in east Lancashire including 60 at Jackhouse on 21 Jan and 33 were at Eccleston, Chorley on the 18th.

An average volume of spring movements on the coast began on schedule in the last week of February and were unusually prolonged, although the major counts were virtually confined to the north and the Fylde. There were too many three-figure flocks and movements to give in detail but 1614 Meadow Pipits moved over Fleetwood Marsh on 23 March, 806 next day and 1219 on 2 April; a total of 3561 was recorded over Knott End between 24 Feb and 26 May with a peak of 500 on 23 March, when the highest count of a total 1127 spring migrants was also recorded at Heysham, 334 birds. Substantial movements continued on-and-off into late April: 514 moved over Fleetwood and 260 over Knott End on the 23rd. Meanwhile the highest count received from the south-west was of 70 at Marshside on 28 March and 100+ on Musbury Moor, Rossendale on 7 April was the only three-figure movement in upland regions; 50 on Towneley Golf Course on 21 March was the highest count in east Lancashire.

Breeding Meadow Pipits were described as numerous on the moors in Rossendale while on the West Pennine Moors there were 46 birds in April and 54 in May in a 1km BTO/BBS square on Darwen Moor (55 and 29 respectively in 2016). In east Lancashire possible or probable nesting was recorded at eleven locations and confirmed at six. On the coast territories were numerous in the Fylde though mainly on the coastal fringe; there were 26 pairs on the saltmarsh at Leighton Moss. In the south-west 103 pairs were located at Marshside-Crossens and nine at Hesketh Out Marsh; up to twelve pairs bred on Birkdale Green Beach and there were seven at MMWWT.

Autumn movements in the uplands were underway from early August; there were 60+ at Belmont Reservoir on 6 Aug and a similar number in the north at Littledale on the 9th, and the first small flocks were recorded in the Fylde and the south-west in mid-month. The subsequent passage was the heaviest for several years in both coastal and inland regions, with a clear peak in the last week of September. A total of 1195 Meadow Pipits was recorded over Knott End between 13 Aug and 24 Nov, with a peak of 157 on 26 Sept. Movements everywhere were modest during most of September with typical counts of 250 on Carnforth Saltmarsh on the 15th, 120 on Stalmine Moss on the 17th and 100+ on Pendle Hill on the 19th. A surge of migration on a broad front began on 23 Sept and reached a climax on the 26th, when 832 Meadow Pipits flew south over Billings Hill, St Helens, there were

534 at Heysham, 478 at Fleetwood Marsh and 400 at Marshside; 251 flew south at Belmont Reservoir in the first daylight hour on the 27th. Significant movements continued for several days, including 382 at Jackhouse on the 27th, 262 over Crosby Coastal Park next day and 300 at Crown Point on the 30th and Brockholes Wetland on 1 Oct.

Passage faded away very quickly in October and 259 at Heysham on the 6th was the highest of only seven three-figure counts received during the month; 120 at Bank End, Fylde on the 12th was the largest gathering reported in November. Numbers were low as usual at the year's end: counts of 60 at Thurnham and 30 at Hesketh Out Marsh were the December peaks in coastal regions and there were 30 at Eccleston, Chorley and 22 at Deeply Vale in Rossendale, both on the 28th.

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

Scarce breeding bird and passage migrant

The first Tree Pipits of 2017 were at Fleetwood Marsh on 3 April and over Knott End and Hightown on the 8th. Subsequent coastal passage was unusually prolonged with widespread records well into May; as usual the great majority of reports were in the Fylde, where 205 moved over Knott End up to 27 May with peak counts of 20 on 19 April and 30 on 10 May; 21 flew north-east at Rossall Point on 30 April, when three also flew over Heysham NR. There were totals of six records in the south-west and three on the north coast.

One at Jackhouse on 21 April was the first of four April and ten May records in east Lancashire; four birds were in Whitendale on 29 April. Singles over Cuerden Valley Park on 22 April and Plunge on the 29th were the first Tree Pipits in Chorley and Rossendale, respectively, and one was in song at Belmont in the West Pennine Moors on 5 May.

There was breeding season presence at Moor Piece, Halsteads, Longridge Fell and Bottoms Beck in east Lancashire and at Docker Moor, Thrushgill, Tower Lodge and Birk Bank in the north. There were at least six territories, two confirmed successful, on the West Pennine Moors.

Substantial autumn passage was reported from both coastal and inland regions from mid-August. There were 28 records in east Lancashire in August, at eight locations, including nine records of ten or more birds over Crown Point with a peak of at least 43 on 17 Aug; 82 birds were ringed. Forty-four birds were ringed at Billinge Hill with over 30 on 21 August the highest passage count there. Sixteen Tree Pipits passed through Brockholes Wetland between 14 Aug and 2 Sept, including eight on 21 Aug; two were at Holden Wood Reservoir, Rossendale on 10 Aug. There were five September records in east Lancashire at four locations and the last bird was over Jackhouse on the 7th.

The first coastal migrant was at the Keer Estuary on 15 Aug, quickly followed by birds over Knott End next day and Heysham on the 17th. Five more Tree Pipits were recorded at Knott End up to 2 Sept, singles were at Fairhaven Dunes, Galgate, Conder Green and Heysham on 27 Aug and there were four more records in the Fylde on 1-2 Sept; birds at MMWWT on 17 Sept and Crosby Coastal Park on the 28th were the last of 2017.

ROCK PIPIT *Anthus petrosus*

Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor

Apart from singles at Marshside and Lunt Meadows, one or two on the Lune Estuary saltmarshes and two at Hesketh Out Marsh on dates in January-February all the Rock Pipits in the first winter period were in the Fylde, and the great majority of those north of the Wyre.

There were peak counts of six at Barnaby's Sands and five at Pilling Lane Ends in January and eleven at the latter site on 27 Feb; two at Fairhaven on 27 Feb were the only records on the north Ribble shore. Birds were at eight Fylde sites in March, three of these on the Ribble where four birds at Warton Bank on the 31st may well have been on passage. Two birds north over Fairhaven Beach on 9 April and a summer-plumaged bird on Heysham Ocean Edge Saltmarsh on the 24th were clearly passage migrants.

As in 2016 autumn movements on the coast, which began with a very early bird on Banks Marsh on 10 Sept, were both heavier than normal and exceptionally widespread. Rock Pipits were recorded at 13 sites in the Fylde up to late November, at four locations on the north coast and eight in the south-west. Most reports were of single birds but there were five at Pilling Lane Ends and four at Knott End on several dates, four at Heysham on 2 & 8 Nov and twos at Marshside in late September and at Seaforth in late October. One at Coldwell Reservoir in east Lancashire on 21 Oct was the only

inland Rock Pipit of 2017.

The year's end was comparatively quiet; one or two were at five Fylde sites in December, all north of the Wyre, and there were singles at Marshside on 3 Dec, at Morecambe on the 10th and at Heysham on several dates; at least one, probably of the nominate race, overwintered in the rocky habitat around Heysham Harbour mouth.

WATER PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta*

Scarce winter visitor. Amber List (rare winterer)

Water Pipits were at three locations in the Fylde in the first winter period, at The Heads-Burrow's Marsh on four dates from 15 Jan to 29 March with a peak of six birds on 28 Feb, at Warton Marsh where two were present on 31 March and a singleton at Fleetwood from 1 Jan to 26 March.

South of the Ribble up to four were regularly present on Crossens Marsh from 19 Feb to 21 March, one or two remaining until 6 April. A bird at Rishton Reservoir on 18 April was the only clear-cut spring migrant and the only inland Water Pipit of 2017.

The first returning bird was at Crossens on 18 Oct where it was seen on at least seven dates to 27 Dec; one, possibly the Crossens individual, was at nearby Banks Marsh on 8 Nov. Three singletons were recorded at the year's end, one by the Wyre Estuary at Fleetwood on several dates from 19 Nov to 24 Dec and birds at Leighton Moss on 9 Dec and near Burscough on the 28th.

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

Abundant breeding bird, passage migrant and winter visitor.

There were very few large counts of Chaffinches in the first winter period. The species came tenth in the Chorley Winter Garden Bird Survey and the Lancaster January Survey recorded a total of 500, fairly evenly spread across the region. The only three-figure count was of 110 at Nateby on 17 Jan whilst at least 68 were counted on a weedy sunflower field at New Lane, Eagland Hill on 2 Jan.

Spring passage hardly registered anywhere, for example, a total of 29 on 16 days from Rossall Point though 390 were counted using audible migration recording over Knott End between 21 Feb and 25 May including 62 on 15 March.

Breeding reports were widespread and broadly average from data supplied regarding numbers of breeding pairs at regularly-monitored sites. Brockholes had eleven pairs as did Freshfield Dune Heath, Mere Sands Wood eight, Aintree six, Carr Mill Dam nine and Kirkdale Cemetery three. Twelve pairs were recorded on EDF property at Heysham and an estimated 50 pairs at Wheelton Plantations.

The autumn passage period was rather more pronounced: 2249 flew over Knott End between 21 Aug and 19 Nov, including 284 on 27 Oct and 348 on the 30th, 1358 were counted over twelve days at Fairhaven Dunes with peaks of 295 on 26 Sept, 407 on 15 Oct and 307 on the 18th and Heysham recorded 646 with lower peaks of 65 on 19 Oct and 94 on 2 Nov. Regular counts at Belmont recorded a maximum of 120 on 27 Sept and Crosby recorded 975 with peaks of 215 on 15 Oct and 270 on 6 Nov. Other peak counts included 61 at Brockholes on 2 Nov and 90 at Carnforth Inner Marsh on the 9th.

Some good-sized flocks were present in the second winter period with over 200 on Croston Moss throughout, up to 550 on stubble at Eagland Hill during December and 250 on a wild bird seed crop at Nateby on the 12th. Up to 80 were at Hoghton Bottoms from mid-November to early December and 72 were counted going to roost at Kemple End on 4 Nov. Eighty-five roosted in Delph Plantations at the end of the year with 30 at a roost at Belmont.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

Winters in variable numbers. Fairly common double passage migrant, mostly in autumn.

By far the largest count of the year was of 70 continuing to roost in rhododendrons at Belmont on 2 Jan with counts of up to 20 in a Belmont garden in the following months and the last two on 22 April. A flock of 50 was at Grove Lane Plantation, Padiham in early February and six more locations in east Lancashire provided double-figure counts. Twelve were at a feeding station at Lower Burgh Meadow, Chorley in the first two months of the year and 15 at Hornby on 8 Jan. Otherwise there were just a few records of ones and twos (such as at MMWWT, the New Lane feeding station at Eagland Hill and Marton Mere), mainly in the east. One was singing at Folly Tip, Rossendale on 13 April and a late bird flew over Fleetwood on 27 May.

The first of the autumn was logged at Brockholes on 9 Oct, followed by three at Belmont on the 12th and then a more widespread arrival on the 15th with singles at Speke, Crosby, Glasson and Banks, 22 at Heysham and 14 at Fairhaven Dunes. Recordings at Knott End registered 86 from 18 Oct to 15 Nov including 28 on 30 Oct. Heysham's autumn total was just 31 and Fairhaven recorded 51. Eight were recorded at New Laithe Farm, Newton on 18 Oct and 18 was the count at both Mellor and Belmont the following day, which also saw six at Aldcliffe and two at Oglet.

Another flurry of activity occurred on 30 Oct with 15 at Marshside, twelve over Fairhaven Dunes, nine at Knott End and four at New Laithe Farm. Ones and twos were reported from a wide selection of sites in November with peaks of ten at Fleetwood and five at Longton Marsh on the 6th. Fifty-five roosted in the Belmont rhododendrons on 16 Nov.

There were few reports in December save for nine at Folly Clough, Crawshawbooth on the 12th and 14 at Belmont on the 28th.

HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Rare and localised breeding resident. Red list (breeding decline).

Autumn 2017 saw an unprecedented arrival of Hawfinches across the southern part of the country in the main, with large flocks and movements noted across central and southern England. Our area was on the fringes of this invasion in the initial stages but soon birds started to appear all over the county from the middle of October onwards.

The start of the year was extremely quiet with extremely few reports: one at Gait Barrows on 5 Feb was the only winter report. A couple of birds visited feeders in the north of the county in late spring: one at Leighton Moss on 15 & 16 May and then another at Melling on 22-24 June. No breeding reports were received.

There had already been a number of reports of Hawfinches south of a line between the Wash and the Severn in early October so it was only a matter of time before the first appeared in Lancashire, that being one at High Tatham on the 16th. This was followed by singletons at Brockholes and Knott End on the 18th, Billinge and Crosby on the 19th, Rishton on the 20th and Marton Mere on the 24th. Two at Wray on the 25th were the precursors of greater numbers with records of up to two from Crosby, Cabin Hill NNR, Marshside, Duxbury, Cockersand/Sunderland Point, Knott End and Burnley from the 27th. Nine flew over Marshside on the 29th and vis mig watches at Brockholes produced more birds, including six on the 30th. Also on the 30th, ten dropped into a garden briefly at Kemple End, Longridge and two were at Heysham.

Further records of overflying birds were received in the first week of November from Crossens and Longton Marshes, Hesketh Out Marsh, Farington Moss, Billinge, Rimrose Valley, Walton-le-Dale, Belmont, Galgate, Clitheroe and Southport. Brockholes continued to report birds regularly at this time and a count of at least eight in yews at Pleasington Old Hall, Blackburn on 5 Nov (and intermittently thereafter through the winter) raised hopes of potential breeding at this former site in 2018. On 8 Nov there were counts of nine from Crosby and six over Longton Brickcroft.

Records then started to drop off with two at Ellel Grange on 11 Nov and one on the 15th, three at Roby Mill on the 17th and singles at MMWWT and Banks Marsh on the 18th and Leighton Moss on the 20th. The last was of one at Whalley on 10 Dec.

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Common breeding resident. Amber list (breeding decline).

Bullfinches seem to be doing reasonably well in Lancashire with records from most parts of the county, even in moorland areas where they have a particular liking for heather. They are scarcest in the coastal strip though five pairs at Heysham, four at Birkdale and a pair at Cabin Hill bucked that particular trend. They are thinly scattered around south Liverpool with birds present around Speke, Oglet, Princes Park and Clarke's Gardens and breeding was confirmed at Sefton Park with recently fledged young seen on 20 Aug. There were three territories at Aintree and a pair at Freshfield Dune Heath.

In east Lancashire, records came from 77 different locations with good numbers appearing regularly at Low Moor, Clitheroe with a peak of eleven on 10 Sept, Jackhouse Reservoir (ten on 6 Aug) and Rishton where a total of 43 birds were processed during ringing activities through the year – 22 new birds (mostly in spring) and 21 retraps from previous years, indicating a substantial

resident population. Two territories were held at Withnell Plantations and juveniles were recorded at Waterfoot and around the Grane Reservoirs in Rossendale during July.

Brockholes had regular reports of Bullfinches, including a family party in August, and Savick Park, Preston was also a good spot for this species with an estimated four pairs and juveniles seen from 7 June. However, the best numbers came from the Silverdale area where the Lancaster January Survey recorded 48 out of a total of 76 birds. Juveniles were noted on 9 June at Leighton Moss. At least three pairs nested around Hornby.

There was a modicum of autumn passage at Heysham with 17, of which seven were at Middleton NR on 20 Sept and five at Heysham on 26 Oct. Sixteen were noted over Belmont during October and eight flocks with a significant total of 38 were seen around the village towards the end of December. The species was especially infrequent in the Blackpool area with most records coming from Marton Mere with up to three later in the year.



Male Bullfinch, Savick Park,
7 June (Geoff Gradwell)

GREENFINCH *Chloris chloris*

Abundant breeding bird. Some autumn movement, flocks in winter.

In the first winter period, the largest counts came from the Fylde with up to 53 in poplars at Marton Mere in early January and 50 going to roost at Warbreck Hill in February. In south Liverpool up to 30 roosted in Princes Park during January. Numbers remained generally low everywhere with just 56 counted in the Lancaster January Survey.

Counts of breeding pairs were generally rather poor: just one at Freshfield Dune Heath (an average of nearly five over the past twelve years), three at Heysham NR and only seven reports of juveniles from sites in east Lancashire. Singing males were recorded at 21 sites across the Fylde and just five in Rossendale. However, there were five territories at Aintree which was par for the course in recent years. It is still a fairly common breeding resident across Birkdale, Kew and elsewhere around Southport.

Autumn passage was generally poor at vis mig sites – only 18 at Heysham, 155 over Crosby with a peaks of 40 on 14 & 18 Oct, peaks of 19 and 46 at Seaforth NR on 15 & 30 Oct and 70 over Belmont during the period. Mid-October saw the only records from Fairhaven Dunes with 12 on the 15th and 25 on the 18th. Similarly, there were 64 past Rossall Point on the 15th. Other flocks included 52 in one tree at Leighton Moss on 27 Sept and at least 20 coming to feeders in Rishton from 7 to 20 Oct.

Numbers in the second winter period were again depressed, though up to 55 were recorded at the Eric Morecambe complex from mid-November to the end of the year. Set-aside and seed crops attracted 35 at Thurnham on 9 Nov and 30 at Treales on the 30th. Ten at garden feeders at Marl Hill in Bowland on 22 Nov and 17 Dec were the highest winter counts in the east of the county.

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
Southport	250	2	30	/	/	/	/	/	/	70	150	100
Cockersand	90	120	80	80	/	/	/	/	/	33	59	19
Knott End	20	40	30	/	/	/	/	/	/	40	43	55

In the first winter period the largest numbers were along the Southport coastline, ranging from north of the pier to Marshside, normally in a couple of smaller flocks but occasionally merging at high tide. The former wintering area around Weld Road at Birkdale seems to have been completely forsaken in favour of the area just north of the pier. From the peak of 250 in the first week of January numbers fell to around 50 by the end of the month and then very few records after that. The flock

around Cockersand that numbered ten at the beginning of the year rose to around 90, possibly being augmented by Southport birds, remaining around that level into April with the last birds reported around the 22nd.

It is difficult to distinguish some large ranging flocks but there were regularly around 40 in the Knott End/Cocker's Dyke area. Other records included 44 at Hest Bank at the end of February, 20 at Fleetwood Marsh on 2 Jan and two at Fairhaven Beach during January and February. There was only one record at Heysham.

There was an increase in reports in east Lancashire this year though from just two main sites with records in all months bar June and December. The peak count was of 32 at Cant Clough on 6 Feb but no breeding records were received. A pair was at Belmont on 18 April.

In Rossendale at least twelve were present at Whitworth Quarry by mid-April, including four colour-ringed birds. A pair bred there and a family party was seen on 26 Aug. Birds were also noted above Helmshore, Haslingden and Lee Quarry.

In the second winter period, birds seemed to be faithful to the sites occupied earlier with up to 150 at Southport. The first were back at Cockersand on 9 Oct. October brought flocks to Sunderland Point (35 on the 26th) and Preesall Sands (15 on the 23rd). Four over Cabin Hill NNR on 18 Nov and two at Garston shore on 19 Nov and 3 Dec were unexpected records.

LINNET *Linaria cannabina*

Common breeding resident. Double passage migrant, common winter flocks in the west. Red List (breeding decline).

As is usual, reports of this species in January and February were confined to the western part of the county in the mosslands and along the coastline. The largest January count was 300 at Wrampool, Cockerham on the 22nd. There were also sizeable flocks at Lytham Jetty (110), Aggleby's Pit (110), Marton Mere (69) and Eagland Hill (140) in the month. February saw 200 still at Wrampool on the 12th, 180 to Warton Marsh on the 10th and 140 at Thurnham on the 9th. South of the Ribble the highest counts were of 90 on Croston Moss on 21 Jan, reducing to 40 by 13 April, 80 near Shirdley Hill area on 30 Jan and 120 at Aintree on 23 March.

The protracted spring passage at Rossall Point totalled 540 with a peak of 165 on 2 April. Alston Reservoirs recorded their first Linnets on 25 March, followed by six at Jackhouse on the 27th and Brockholes on the 30th. A flock of 300 feeding in maize stubble at Calder Foot on 14 April was a very good record for the area. In Rossendale, the first birds were recorded on 7 April at Ogden Reservoir and at least 30 were present at Whitworth quarries on the 15th.

The breeding population seems to be holding steady: Birkdale Dunes had eight pairs, there were 25 pairs at Marshside, 17 at Hesketh Out Marsh, 16 at Freshfield Dune Heath and three at Lunt Meadows. There were four pairs on a regularly-watched patch at Roby Mill and loose colonies of around five pairs were noted along the moorland edge at both Belmont Moor in bracken and Darwen Moor in deep heather. Birds were present at several sites around Speke and Croxteth Park throughout the spring and summer, but were fewer on the Fylde with singing reported from only five sites.

No really large flocks were reported in the late summer, the largest was unusually in the east of the county with over 100 feeding on the west bank of Rishton Reservoir between 25 August and 8 Sept and birds still present up to the relatively late date of 10 Oct. Over 50 were at Croston Moss on 28 Aug; this figure rose to 100 by 24 Sept and 200 by 30 Nov. A hundred were at Cockersand on 23 Aug and on the saltmarsh at Heysham on 17 Sept. A flock of at least 65 was seen at Alder Wood, Speke on 5 Aug and similar counts were made at Lunt Meadows in both July and November; 55 were on Reed's Moss, Rainford during early October.

Autumn passage was unremarkable. At Crosby 610 were counted over 29 days with a peak of 74 on 15 Sept, while nearby Cabin Hill recorded 99 migrants on 30 Sept with 260 there on 12 Oct and 175 in mid-November.

The second winter period brought large flocks back to the area between Wrampool, Cockerham and Glasson with reports of 325 from the former and 360 at Glasson Marsh in December. One hundred and sixty were on Lytham Moss on 26 Oct and Fairhaven Beach had a flock of 120 in November.

MEALY (COMMON) REDPOLL* *Acanthis flammea*

Scarce winter visitor.

The only accepted record was of one at New Laithe Farm, Newton-in-Bowland and present from 10 March to 8 April (Mark Breaks).

LESSER REDPOLL *Acanthis cabaret*

Fairly common but decreasing breeding bird. Common double passage migrant and winter visitor. Red List (breeding decline).

Regular feeding sites at Rishton and New Laithe Farm, Newton-in-Bowland continued to provide the majority of records for this species, with birds present throughout the year and a pronounced passage peaking in April. At Rishton 168 were processed, of which 89 were new and several retraps of birds that seemed to pass through at spring; numbers peaked on 17 April with at least 35 present. Flocks of over 30 were recorded at New Laithe Farm several times with 40 on 2 April the largest count. Other double-figure counts in the early part of the year included 45 near Belmont on 22 Jan, 25 at Stocks Reservoir on 13 Feb, 20 at Clowbridge on 7 March and 25 at Heasandford on the 23rd. Birds were regularly reported from Fisherman's Path, Freshfield and Leighton Moss.

Rossall Point recorded a reasonable passage of 394 over 29 days with peaks counts of 119 north on 8 April and 58 on 5 May. The peak count at Marshside was just ten on 9 April, while at Heysham spring passage consisted of 51 with a peak of twelve also on the 9th. The value of sound recordings over Knott End was exemplified with 452 over between 15 March and 3 June including 59 on 8 April, 55 on the 9th and 36 on 8 May.

Breeding started early in some quarters – a juvenile was on feeders at Rishton on the very early date of 13 May with more juveniles seen on 13 June and then more normally later in the year on 15 Sept. There was a lot of activity around Clowbridge Reservoir in early March and also at the Grane Reservoirs, where displaying birds were noted throughout April. Displaying males were also recorded from Dunsop Valley, Moor Piece, Bleasdale and Pendleton. One or two pairs were present at White Coppice and on the West Pennine Moors, where areas of clear-fell with birch regeneration had 31 pairs including five at Withnell Plantations. Local breeding was considered likely around the Birkdale Dunes.

Autumn passage started early inland with double figures moving through Clowbridge Reservoir from 5 Aug and a total of at least 129 birds and a good proportion ringed. Twenty-seven were at



Lesser Redpoll, Lee Park Golf Course, Liverpool, 5 January (Steve Young)

Jackhouse Reservoir on 29 Aug. Numbers were low on the coast but perhaps the early passage had been missed. Heysham recorded 40 between 25 Sept and 2 Nov, only 20 passed over Fairhaven Dunes with eight on the 26th, whilst Cabin Hill had just three birds in late October and Seaforth five on the 29th. There were 20 at Hoghton Bottoms on 28 Oct.

In the second winter period there were again few large counts though up to 30 were seen at both Stocks Reservoir and New Laithe Farm and up to 25 were at Leighton Moss. Thirteen were at Jackhouse on 11 Dec and nine were at Holden Wood Reservoir on the 25th, otherwise records were few and far between.

COMMON CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*

Rare breeding bird. Occasional irruptive movements.

2017 was a poor year for Crossbills with only five 10km squares having more than one record. The area around Stocks Reservoir was the most productive as a pair successfully bred and were feeding chicks on 9th March. Another pair were feeding a recently-fledged juvenile there on 9 May. A singing male was recorded at Longridge Fell and up to three were around Lead Mines Clough in spring. Spring records were received from Freshfield Dune Heath (ten on 7 April), Beacon Fell (twelve on 22 April), Tower Lodge (five on 14 May), Moor Piece, Cabin Hill and Knott End (two on 21 Feb, three on 28 March and one on 9 May).

In the summer months a few were reported from Stocks Reservoir, Clowbridge Reservoir, Wray and Docker Moor and at least two flew over Knott End on 19 June. There were regular sightings around Entwistle Reservoir and nearby plantations with a peak of 23 on 28 July.

Birds were recorded on nine occasions over Billinge Hill from mid July with a peak of eight on 18 Sept. Otherwise, very few were seen later in the year, the only ones of note being one over Knott End on 12 Oct with two more passing over there on 15 Nov, and 16 on 4 Nov at both Stocks Reservoir and Longridge Fell. Other records were received from Belmont (four), Fairhaven (2 east on 15 Oct) Lead Mines Clough (two on 29 Oct), Cabin Hill (five SE on 30 Oct), Ellet Grange (one on 15 Nov) and Rossall Point (three on 19 Nov).

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

Common breeding resident and passage migrant. Flocks in winter.

Goldfinches may be common birds but unlike some other regular species we receive lots of records for them, reflecting their popularity. Their year-round presence in gardens across the county brings delight to many and the increase in recent years is exemplified through the Winter Garden Survey in Chorley where it was the ninth most common species compared to 17th 20 years ago when the survey started. The Lancaster January survey placed it just behind Chaffinch in the commonest finch stakes. A roost at Belmont had 125 birds on 2 Jan and counts in a nearby garden peaked at 37. Similarly, at New Laithe Farm, a minimum of 30 were present in January building to over 60 in April. There were large counts at Leighton Moss (100 on 6 Jan), Fleetwood (95 on the 28th) and Clough Head Quarry (150 on 2 Feb).

Spring passage observations at Rossall Point logged 1020 birds with a peak passage of 161 on 2 April, and several other sites also noted increases in Goldfinches around this time.

The number of breeding pairs around an Aintree study area has steadily increased to ten pairs in 2017. There were also five pairs at Kirkdale Cemetery, three at Lunt Meadows, five at Freshfield Dune Heath, six at Brockholes and 20 at Heysham.

Significant post-breeding flocks started to build up in August, most of which were feeding on stands of thistles: 200 at Silverdale Moss on the 2nd, 100 at Knowsley Safari Park on the 16th and Hesketh Out Marsh on the 17th, 150 at Rishton Reservoir on the 18th, 180 at Crosby on the 20th and 150 at Middleton on the 30th. A flock at Seaforth was over 320 strong from 25 Aug to 4 Sept and then steadily declined over the following weeks. Similarly, at Lunt Meadows, there was a flock of 300 on 15 Aug, 400 on the 22nd and then a decline in September to 155 with over 100 still present in early October. As passage birds joined the throng in September, the largest counts were recorded mainly around the Ribble Estuary: 360 at Marshside on the 9th, 300 at Lytham Jetty on the 24th and at least 550 at Hesketh Out Marsh on the 23rd. Three-figure counts were also recorded at Brockholes, Rivington, Croston Moss, MMWWT, Knott End, Skippool Creek, Stocks Reservoir, Warton Crag and Silverdale Moss.

Visible passage during the autumn was more noticeable than in spring but with few numbers of note. Passage peaks consisted of 244 south over Marshside on 24 Sept, 115 at Heysham on 1 Oct and 97 over Belmont on the 19th. In the east of the county, a minimum of 50 passage birds were at Rishton on 6 & 7 Oct and 60 at Swinden Reservoir on the 9th.

Peak counts in the second winter period were 64 at Hesketh Bank on 16 Nov, 65 at Knott End on the 9th and 62 at Glasson on the 25th. Over 100 roosted at Oakenclough throughout the period and up to 50 were at a Belmont roost site.

SISKIN *Spinus spinus*

Uncommon recent breeding colonist. Common double passage migrant and winter visitor.

Siskins were recorded in every 10km square in 2017 though in the main involving just of one or two birds with very few sizable flocks reported. It was at Leighton Moss, both in January and in October where the only three-figure counts were made, both of 200 birds. In the first winter period, double-figure counts were received from 16 sites in east Lancashire with 30 at Burnley on 18 Jan and a similar number at New Laithe Farm, Newton-in-Bowland on the 24th. Counts of 30 were also received from Brockholes, Hornby, Belmont, Scorton and Over Kellet.

Spring passage at Rossall Point consisted of 167 birds over between 2 March and 27 May with a peak of 32 on 24 March. Over Knott End, 439 were recorded from 21 Feb to 3 Jun including 41 on 15 March and 39 on the 26th. A flock of 20 was noted moving north at Cabin Hill on 12 March but everywhere else reported a light passage. Up to 80 were on or around feeders at New Laithe Farm in early March, 40 along Fisherman's Path, Freshfield on the 11th and 50 at Longridge on 12 March increasing to at least 60 a week later.

During the summer months, birds were present at several sites in Bowland with breeding confirmed at Collyholme Wood and regular reports from around Gisburn Forest, Tower Lodge and the Dunsop Bridge area. Four pairs bred around Belmont with the first juveniles seen on 16 May. Birds were present near the Grane reservoirs, Haslingden and around Birkdale Dunes LNR. Records away from where one may expect them at this time of year included a couple of sightings at Kew, Southport and at Brockholes in June-July and a recently-fledged juvenile was being fed at Roby Mill on 10 July.

Dispersing birds were noted at a few sites in August but it was September when a more concerted passage took place though still relatively light. Heysham recorded just 36 with a very late peak of seven on 2 Nov. Seventy-four were recorded over Fairhaven with a peak of 42 on 15 Oct and Seaforth had 63 with a peak of 23 on 29 Oct. One hundred and forty-five flew over Knott End during the autumn including 66 on 18 Oct. The peak count over Belmont was of 93 on 21 Oct whilst Brockholes' vis mig recorded 209 with a maximum of 41 on 18 Oct. Forty birds were present near Beacon Fell on 14 Sept and 20 were at Rivington on 29 Oct.

Small flocks were noted in the second winter period at several sites, including 15 at Wayoh Reservoir, ten at Cleveley Bridge and up to twenty at Hoghton Bottoms. A flock at Ribchester peaked at 43 on 4 Nov, the same day as 40 were present at Kemple End, Longridge. Sixty were at Stocks Reservoir on 7 Nov and 43 were on feeders at New Laithe Farm in December. Other records were very thinly scattered.

CORN BUNTING *Emberiza calandra*

Common but declining breeding bird in the south-west and Fylde.

All records were, as usual, confined to the lowlands in the west with the most easterly records from Farington Moss in May. South of the Ribble there were winter flocks of 20 on Croston Moss on 14 Jan with 35 there on March, 20 on Mawdesley Moss on 11 March and 50 near Sollom on the 15th. At MMWWT 92 were counted on 28 Jan and ten were at Shirdley Hill on the 11th. Much larger numbers were to be encountered on the Fylde with the feeding stations in the Eagland Hill area proving ever-popular to visiting birders. Here, numbers reached a maximum of 110 on 1 Feb with 90 at Cogie Hill on the 14th and 43 at Lousanna Farm on the 15th. There were also counts of 80 at Holmes on 10 Jan and 14 at Lower Ballam on 18 Feb.

Four singing males were holding territories along Black Moss Lane, Scarisbrick, an increase over recent years and four were singing on Mawdesley Moss on 20 June. Eleven pairs bred at Hesketh Out Marsh and singing males were recorded at Downholland Cross, Lunt Meadows and Springfield

Farm, Halewood. On the Fylde, singing males were noted at St Annes Moss (6), Ballam (2), Lytham Moss, Bone Hill, Cogie Hill, Light Ash, Nateby, Stalmine Moss and Winmarleigh. One flew over Knott End on 11 May.

Second winter period counts were much subdued though there were some good flocks, including 45 at Longton Marsh on 6 Nov, 25 at Bretherton Eyes on 23 Oct, 28 at Out Rawcliffe on 6 Dec and 44 at Peel on 11 Dec.

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citrinella*

Fairly common but decreasing resident, mostly in the south. Scarce autumn passage migrant. Red list (breeding decline).

In a similar vein to Corn Buntings, Yellowhammers are generally confined to the western lowlands, getting furthest east around the Chorley area. One extralimital record was in a garden at Marl Hill in Bowland on 12 March.

Only two areas held double figures in either winter period, around Eccleston and Eagland Hill with peak counts 18 at the former and 23 at the latter, where regular feeding in the area provided a focal point for the species. Birds were also regularly seen at Gorse Hill (Ormskirk), Burscough, MMWWT, Mowbreck, Treales and Nateby.

Singing males on the Fylde were at Kirkham, Treales (4), Eagland Hill-Pilling (7), Nateby (2), Out Rawcliffe and St Michael's-on-Wyre, while in the Chorley area three were singing on Mawdesley Moss and four on Croston Moss in June. Four pairs were located around Roby Mill and a total of eleven singing males were heard from sites in Knowsley, primarily around Halewood. Birds were also present around Haskayne, Plex Moss, Rainford and Kirkby Moss.

Autumn brought a few passage birds with singletons over Lunt Meadows on 26 Sept, over Brockholes on 9 Oct, Oglet on the 19th and over Knott End on 11 Nov.

The second winter period saw a dearth of records with very few on the Fylde and a maximum of seven at Eccleston and 15 at Eyes Lane, Sollom in December.

ORTOLAN BUNTING* *Emberiza hortulana*

Vagrant

One was sound-recorded as it flew over Knott End on 21 Aug (Chris Batty). This was the twelfth county record and the first since a bird at Fleetwood GC in September 2011. Seven out of the twelve records have occurred on the Fylde.

LITTLE BUNTING* *Emberiza pusilla*

Vagrant

One was seen and heard as it flew south over New Laithe Farm, Newton-in-Bowland on 18 Oct (Mark Breaks). This is only the eighth county record and the first since 2013.

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Common breeding bird and winter visitor. Double passage migrant. Red list (breeding decline).

It seems to have been a reasonable year for this often overlooked species. As Reed Buntings have been on the decline nationally in recent years, many people have started to report them in more detail. It is certainly more common in the coastal regions in the winter though birds do remain in the uplands where several decent flocks occur.

In January the Winter Survey in the Lancaster region recorded just 21 birds, the majority unsurprisingly at Leighton Moss and around Conder Green. A large flock developed most appropriately in a wild-bird seed crop at Woods Lane, Nateby reaching a peak of 120 on 29 Jan and also good numbers at Fleetwood Marsh with a minimum of 35 on 2 Jan. In the east, there were seven counts in double figures with excellent flocks of 50 on Gorpel Track on 14 Jan and 35 at Swinden Reservoir on 28 Feb. Sixteen were above Calf Hey Reservoir on 26 Jan and 15 at Belmont Reservoir on 3 Feb. At Knott End, 33 flew over between 27 Feb and 19 Apr with a maximum of six on 23 March.

Breeding reports were generally positive. In south Liverpool/Knowsley four territorial males were recorded around Speke with further males at Tarbock, Croxteth Park and Halewood. Regularly-monitored sites in north Liverpool and Sefton indicated the following numbers of territorial males: Seaforth NR had two, Aintree four, Freshfield Dune Heath two, Cabin Hill five, Birkdale BBS square

eleven, Birkdale Dunes 13 and Marshside also 13. There were 14 pairs at Lunt Meadows, four at Roby Mill, three at Mere Sands Wood while MMWWT had 58 pairs, a small increase over 2016. Six pairs were recorded at Hesketh Out Marsh, 18 pairs around Brockholes but only eleven around Belmont Reservoir, the lowest since 2011. A sample of 28 sites across the West Pennine Moors recorded 54 territories, suggesting that the number breeding in the SSSI is far greater than the previous estimate of 90 pairs; rush-infested upland pastures held the highest densities. Further east, breeding was recorded at 23 locations with up to four at Clowbridge Reservoir and a similar number around the Grane reservoirs. Twenty-nine singing males were recorded on the Fylde from 18 sites including five at Lytham St Annes NR and four at Carr House Green Common. Only one pair nested at Heysham.

A good autumn passage of 332 was recorded at Crosby between 5 Aug and 5 Nov with peaks of 36 on 30 Sept and 111 on 15 Oct. Peak counts at Cabin Hill were 45 on 23 Sept and 31 the next day. Heysham recorded a total of 51 but with no double-figure counts. Fifty-nine were ringed at Fleetwood Marsh. Analysis of sound-recordings registered 179 over Knott End between 1 Sept and 19 Nov, peaking at 26 on 18 Oct.

Second winter period counts were generally low with peaks of 18 at Brownsills, Great Harwood on a couple of occasions and 20 around Belmont in late December. Eighteen were at Preesall Flashes on 5 Dec, twelve on a cereal field in Pilling and 15 at Lytham Moss during December.

LAPLAND BUNTING* *Calcarius lapponicus*

Rare autumn passage migrant and winter visitor to coasts.

The only records submitted and accepted were of a male at Cockersand on 24-25 March (P Woodruff) and one sound-recorded over Knott End on the night of 25 Sept (CG Batty). Several others were reported through online services but none were documented.

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Fairly common winter visitor to summits and coasts.

In the first winter period two were seen regularly at Starr Hills, Blackpool from the turn of the year up until 7 March. The only other reports were of one or two at the Grane Reservoirs, Rossendale on 2 & 26 Jan and another at Cockersand on 27 Feb & 6 March.

The first of the autumn at Knott End on 21 Oct was followed by singles at Rossall Point on the 27th, Grizedale Head on 12 Nov and Rossall again on the 15th and 18th. Three appeared on Pendle Hill on 17 Nov and numbers here gradually rose to six on the 23rd, eleven on the 29th, a peak of 27 on 12 Dec and 21 reported on the 28th. A feeding station in Rossendale held 18 birds on 11 Dec and 22 on the 22nd. A single bird was on Crosby beach from 24 Nov to 6 Dec and one was at Rossall Point again on the 9th. A female was on Ainsdale Dunes on 14 Dec and, finally, two were on St Annes Beach from 22-31 Dec.



Snow Bunting, Crosby shore, 28 December (Steve Young)

ESCAPES & CATEGORY D

TRUMPETER SWAN *Cygnus buccinator*

The long-staying individual was reported on the Ribble at Ribchester on three occasions between 5 April and 25 July with presumably the same bird at Dinckley on 3 & 8 April.

BLACK SWAN *Cygnus atratus*

It is extremely difficult to assess the number of Black Swans or to track their movements across the country.

Singles were on Holmeswood Moss on 2 Jan with probably the same at MMWWT and Sollom Moss later that month, at Alston Wetland from 27 Feb to 17 March with probably the same at Grimsargh Wetland on 29 April and 17 June, at Bretherton Eyes on 20 Feb and Warton Bank on 23-24 March.

CHINESE GOOSE *Anser cygnoides*

One was on Warton Marsh on 25 April to 22 May.

SNOW GOOSE *Chen caerulescens*

A blue morph Lesser Snow Goose was found at Skitham on 28 Jan and subsequently appeared at several sites in the Fylde until last seen at Copthorne on 4 March; it was almost always seen in the company of Greylags. The same bird, identified on the basis of head pattern was at Burholme in east Lancashire on 14 March and was seen at Stocks Reservoir the following day.

EMPEROR GOOSE *Chen canagica*

One at Sawley in east Lancashire, reported on 9, 15 & 17 March, was assumed to be an escape from the nearby Greendale wildfowl collection.



Lesser Snow Goose with Greylag Goose, Copthorne,
4 February (Paul Ellis)

BAR-HEADED GOOSE *Anser indicus*

Five were reported this year: at Bull Beck on 9 & 23 March, on the Eric Morecambe complex from 12 March to 22 May, The Snab on 5 April, Marshside on 23 May, Anglezarke Reservoir on 26 May and Copthorne on 15 Dec.

EGYPTIAN GOOSE *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

One was on the Lune at Gressingham and Melling on 2-17 March, and two were at MMWWT and Marshside on 18 Oct, and two at Aldcliffe on 8 Dec. One was found shot and injured at Eagland Hill on 30 Nov and taken into care.

FULVOUS WHISTLING DUCK *Dendrocygna bicolor*

Single(s) were at Marshside on 25 May to 1 June and at Brookside in east Lancashire on 22 May.

WHITE-FACED WHISTLING DUCK *Dendrocygna viduata*

One was at Poulton-le-Fylde on 24 Sept.

RUDDY SHELDUCK *Tadorna ferruginea*

A male was reported on six dates 16-28 March in the Towneley Park area of Burnley, while one, tentatively identified as this species, was at Marshside and Hesketh Out Marsh on 1-14 May and then at MMWWT on the 17th.

MUSCOVY DUCK *Cairina moschata*

Singles were regular at two sites near Belmont throughout the year, while five or more were on Croft Lodge, Brinscall. Others were seen at Brookside from 30 April to the end of the year, at Cleveleys on

11 Jan and 30 Dec, Anglezarke Reservoir for most of the year and Taylor Park, St Helens in January and October.

SPECKLED (SHARP-WINGED) TEAL *Anas flavirostris oxyptera*

One was at Brockholes in January and March.

CHILOE WIGEON *Mareca sibilatrix*

A female was at Jackhouse on 6 Dec.

WOOD DUCK *Aix sponsa*

A pair was on Lower Towneley Pool on 15 Sept, one was at Bradshaw lane, Eagland Hill on 5 Nov and a female on a large private pond at Belmont in late November to early December.

RED-CRESTED POCHARD *Netta rufina*

One was on Walton Hall Park Lake, Liverpool all year.

INDIAN PEA FOWL *Pavo cristatus*

Up to four adults were present throughout the year at the Household Waste Disposal Centre at Siddows, where breeding was proved by the presence of juveniles, with a maximum count of five young on 13 Nov. In addition to these long-term resident Clitheroe birds, a male was seen at Marl Hill on 11 March and three at Harle Syke on 27 May.

Away from east Lancashire one was at Marton Mere on 20-21 April.

REEVES'S PHEASANT *Symaticus reevesi*

A pair was at Weeton on 16 April.

GOLDEN PHEASANT *Chrysolophus pictus*

Single(s) were in a garden at Thornton (Fylde) on 18 Oct and 21 Nov, and at Glasson on 28 Nov.

GREY JUNGLE FOWL *Gallus sonneratii*

One was at Pilling on 8 Oct.

HARRIS'S HAWK *Parabuteo unicinctus*

In east Lancashire one was seen at Gawthorpe on 26 Feb. What was possibly the same bird was then seen at Grove Lane Plantation on 14 March and just across the river at Gawthorpe the following day; one reported from Winckley on 12 July was probably a different bird.

There were two other records: at Blackpool on 7 Feb and Brockholes on 4 May.

EURASIAN EAGLE OWL *Bubo bubo*

Breeding was confirmed at one site in Bowland but the outcome is unknown.

YELLOW-CROWNED BISHOP *Euplectes afer*

A male was at Seaforth on 8 Oct.

GREY COCKATIEL *Nymphicus hollandicus*

A party of three was seen flying over Whittle on 2 Sept.

BLACK AND WHITE WARBLER *Mniotilta varia*

One was found dead on a ship entering the Seaforth Docks on 20 October. The ship had originated in north America but had made a previous stop on the continent, so there was no evidence of it having been alive in Western Palaearctic, let alone British waters.



Black and White Warbler, Seaforth Docks,
20 October (Neil Hunt)

LANCASHIRE RINGING REPORT

Covering the period July 2017 to July 2018

Pete Marsh

Another interesting year with often wet and unpredictable summer season weather in 2017 presumably responsible for a reduction in warbler recoveries, along with other species requiring pre-arranged group mist netting 'expeditions', as opposed to the single 'garden net'. One very useful item during the 2017 mist netting sessions was the rain alarm of which there are some very reliable apps these days. Combined with a decent field of view and an awareness of the direction of cloud movement led to some really good "two-three hour sessions with nets sheltered from southerly sector winds before the weather front" at Middleton NR, from which you can see half the sky in the northern hemisphere! This was greatly helped by being able to drive to a few metres from the mist net rides, not possible at many other sites. These conditions can, of course, 'drop' migratory birds and you can catch far more than during say five hours of nice calm clear sunny weather when you are often watching paint dry.

On the other hand, there were masses of ringing recoveries to sift through from the "ring reading in the field" industry and we are really grateful for these. As a result we have had to be very selective in this report so please don't feel that your contribution is commonplace and duplicated by others, as has happened to some extent with Mute Swans. One of the outstanding opportunities in recent years has been to read Sandwich Tern rings from mass aggregations on the Fylde and Sefton coasts. These have been accompanied by other species and part of the motivation is surely to hope for one of them with an orange bill! I'll address the Sefton coast Sandwich terns from 2018 in next year's report but the Knott End ones are published here. Thanks to everyone involved in this and please note that some of the most interesting ones are repeat sightings year after year, so please do keep sending them in again. For example, why do some Mediterranean Gulls breeding in France, Poland, Germany etc. migrate north-west to Heysham Power Station outfalls and other sites to moult in late summer, then go south again to winter along the French and Spanish coasts? The repeat sightings show that this moult migration is a regular thing, not an 'out of the way' one-off. Maybe the moult is (as especially so with the flightless Greylags and Canada Geese at Windermere) a communal aggregation thing at a safe location and the wintering site more of an individual territory?

Please could I have the ringing recoveries for next year's report sent in, if possible, as close to the Excel arrangement used here. Note that the 'years and days' stuff on 'standard' metal-ringing recoveries is missed out as it often messily sends them on to another line and is not that difficult to work out from the dates! On the other hand, distance and direction of movement is very informative. Thanks to the following for provision of one or more sighting: Fylde Ringing Group, Chris Batty, Bob Danson, Craig Bell, Hugh Jones, Mark Breaks, North Lancs Ringing Group, Ian Hartley, Pete Woodruff, Malcolm Downham, Janet Packham, Janice Sutton, Mark Nightingale, Tim Vaughan, Tony Conway, Gavin Thomas, Ian Walker, Stuart Darbyshire, Mike Standing, Charlie Liggett, Kane Brides, Pete Kinsella, Richard du Feu, Paul Ellis, Paul Slade, John Dempsey, Bill Aspin, Peter Knight, Rose Maciewicz, Peter Alker, SW Lancs Ringing Group, Merseyside Ringing Group, Andrew Billington, Jon Greeb, Jeff Neale, Steve White. Apologies if anyone accidentally omitted.

MUTE SWAN

W44909 (right leg) Nestling F	27/08/2017	Nantwich, Cheshire
Seen	13/03/2018	Marine Lake, Southport, 74km NNW
CFP2 Cygnet F	17/08/2014	Queens Park Lake, Crewe, Cheshire
Seen	21/03/2018	Marine Lake, Southport, Merseyside, 71.5km NNW

Oldest were two ringed as 1CY at Ainsdale on 04/01/1993 and located there on 02/01/2018 (dead) and 16/11/2017 (ring read).

WHOOPEE SWAN

A10070/ ZVV Adult F	17/08/2016	Kalbforgararvatn, Fljotsheidi, ICELAND
Seen	01/01/2018	Martin Mere WWT, Lancashire

An example from the year under review.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE

142256 & 142556	Pair	19/07/2017	Haugakvisl, Eyvindarstaðaheiði ICELAND
Seen together		07/12/2017	Luddington, Lincolnshire
Seen together		23/12/2017	Cabin Hill, Formby, Merseyside

A succinct version of origin and typical winter pattern for this species

GREENLAND WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE

Y5T	Adult F	24/02/2017	Wexford North Slob, IRELAND
Seen		04/11/2017	Martin Mere WWT

A first ringing recovery of this form in Lancashire. Satellite tracking of birds ringed in Iceland has produced some unexpected migration routes on return passage to Wexford eg via Kent!

GREYLAG GOOSE

5279806 / SAN	Adult F	25/06/2016	Ambleside, Windermere, Cumbria
Seen		09/10/2017	Barnacre Reservoir, Lancashire
Seen		10/10/2017	Barnacre Reservoir, Lancashire
Seen		18/11/2017	Hay-a-Park, Knarborough, North Yorkshire
Seen		24/12/2017	Copthorne, Fylde
5279872 / SDV	Adult F	25/06/2016	Ambleside, Windermere, Cumbria
Seen		11/05/2017	Semer Water, North Yorkshire
Seen		24/09/2017	Copthorne, Fylde

Two of the more interesting life histories of birds ringed at the Windermere moult.

CANADA GOOSE

BAVH/ 5274016	Adult F	28/06/2014	Fellfoot Park, Lake Windermere: 54°16'N 2°57'W (SD3887)
Seen		01/10/2016	Martin Mere WWT 72km S
Seen		27/10-31/10/2017	Martin Mere WWT 72km S

SHELDUCK

AJ58830/CR	2CY F	12/02/2011	Seaton Marshes, Devon
Seen		25/03/2018	Bare, Morecambe 377 km N
GN50267	2CY M	06/03/2005	Ribble Marshes
Seen		14/03/2018	Martin Mere WWT

The first a perhaps unprecedented movement, the second the oldest bird reported.

TUFTED DUCK

nasal saddle	1W M	09/03/2016	São Jacinto Dunes, PORTUGAL
Seen		16/11/2016	São Jacinto Dunes, PORTUGAL
Seen		24/01/2017	Vela Lagoon, PORTUGAL
Seen		08/03/2017	Vela Lagoon, PORTUGAL
Seen		26/05/2017	Ormsgill Reservoir, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria
Seen		08/01-11/01/2018	Ormsgill Reservoir, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria
Seen		07/02/2018	Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park, Fylde

MANX SHEARWATER

FB36539	Adult	09/06/2013	Bardsey Island, Gwynedd, Wales
Dead on beach		11/09/2017	Ainsdale, Merseyside 150km NE

Strong winds at the time of discovery.

CORMORANT

CSH (green ring)	Nestling	18/06/2011	Puffin Island, Anglesey
Seen		21/02/2018	Birkdale Beach, Southport, Merseyside
CRY (green ring)	Nestling	18/06/2011	Puffin Island, Anglesey
Seen		21/02/2018	Birkdale Beach, Southport, Merseyside
5269083	Nestling	29/06/2012	Puffin Island, Anglesey
Dead (Usual source)		28/01/2018	Bolton-le-Sands 119 km NE

SHAG

1496251	Nestling	13/06/2017	Puffin Island, Anglesey
Found dead (Usual source)		22/01/2018	Southport Beach, Merseyside, 76km ENE (found near pier)

LITTLE EGRET

GC98850/CRs	Nestling	15/06/2013	Besthorpe, Newark-on-Trent, Nottinghamshire
Seen		03/05/2015	Conder Green, Fylde
Found dead		05/03/2018	Chipping, Lancashire
GR93522/CRs	Nestling	01/08/2015	Ynys Welltrog, Menai Strait, Anglesey, Wales
Seen		22/05/2016	Saltcotes, Fylde
Seen		20/01/2018	Freckleton Naze, Fylde

Could do with a ringing programme for Lancashire nestlings

MARSH HARRIER

FH22046/ZH	Nestling M	30/07/2017	nr Haddiscoe Norfolk/Suffolk
Seen		mid-Oct 2017	Leighton Moss
Seen		15/10/2017	Brigsteer wetlands, Cumbria
Seen		30/11-01/12/2017	Crossens, Ribble Estuary
Seen		29/01/2018	Martin Mere WWT
Seen		23/02-19/03/2018	Leighton Moss

Far more winter period mobility shown here than has been assumed to be the case with the 'Leighton wintering Marsh Harriers'. Recent contact with the ringer indicates no further sightings.

OSPREY

Blue 9C	Nestling M	15/06/2014	Glaslyn, Gwynedd, North Wales
Seen		25/07/2017	Leighton Moss
Seen		from 21/04/2018	Leighton Moss

One of a pair which built a nest late season in nearby Cumbria in 2017, then nested 'properly' in 2018 with many Leighton fishing visits by this male. In addition, the male of the long-standing Foulshaw pair, darvic ring YW, once again visited Leighton Moss many times in order to fish. YW was ringed as a nestling at Bassenthwaite in 2008 and paired to Blue 35 (ringed at Kielder 2010) which was not reported fishing in Lancashire in 2017/8

COOT

BNJ	1CY F	17/11/2012	Killingworth Lake, North Tyneside
Seen		13/12/2015	Southport Marine Lake
Seen		21/02/2017	Southport Marine Lake
FXF	Full Grown	15/09/2017	Redesmere Lake, Siddington, Cheshire
Seen		16/01-30/01/2018	Preston Dock, Lancashire, 67km NNW
GK32183	Adult F	30/01/2018	Brockholes NR, Preston
Seen		19/03/2018	Woolston Eyes, Warrington 44km S

The three most lengthy movements.

AVOCET

FS99260/CRs	Nestling	08/07/2014	Ile d'Ollonne, Marais des Loirs, FRANCE 46 55N 1 79W
Seen		03/08/2014	Ile d'Ollonne, FRANCE
Seen		10/02/2015	Esnandes, Pointe St-Clément FRANCE 46 25N 1 14W
Seen		22/05-04/06/2015	Sainte-Radegonde-des-Noyers, La Prée Mizottière FRANCE 46 32N 1 10W
Seen		03/07/2015	Mesquer, Le Moulin à eau FRANCE 47 39N 2 48W
Seen		12/12/2015-	
Seen		25/01/2016	Esnandes, Pointe St-Clément FRANCE 46 25N 1 14W
Seen		30/01/2018	Noirmoutier-en Lile, RNN des marais de Müllembourg FRANCE 46 99N 2 22W
Seen		03/04/2018	Marshside RSPB, Merseyside
Flag DV	Nestling 1/3	28/06/2016	Nosterfield NR, North Yorkshire
Seen		13/08/2016	Alkborough Flats, Lincolnshire
Seen		24/03/2018	Marshside, Southport

Alkborough Flats the usual post-breeding season location for a proportion of Nosterfield birds; Marshside sighting 'a surprise'.

3421474	Nestling	20/06/2016	Burgwerd (Friesland) NETHERLANDS 53 4N 5 32E
Seen		28/04/2018	Allen Pool, Leighton Moss 563kms WNW

No further reports were received of this bird in NW England that I am aware of

OYSTERCATCHER

4117749/CR	Adult	21/05/2017	Hoskuldarne, ICELAND
Seen		04/02/2018	Half Moon Bay, Heysham 1552km SSE
4117552/CRs	Nestling	12/06/2016	Fijatshlid N ICELAND 67 7 N 19 8W
Seen		17/04/2018	Half Moon Bay, Heysham
4116127/CRs	Nesting Ad	13/05/2016	Strand, NW ICELAND 65 93N 22 3W
Seen		01/06/2016	Strand, NW ICELAND 65 93N 22 3W
Incubating		28/05/2017	Strand, NW ICELAND 65 93N 22 3W
Seen		23/12/2017	Half Moon Bay, Heysham
LN-W(AA)/			
4100883	Nesting Ad	25/05/2003	Miðsandur, Hvalfjörður, Borg, SW ICELAND
CR added	Nesting Ad	29/05/2016	Miðsandur, Hvalfjörður, Borg, SW ICELAND
Chick rearing		04/06-27/07/2016	Miðbúð, Hvalfjörður, Kjós, SW ICELAND
Feeding		18/04-23/04/2017	Miðbúð, Hvalfjörður, Kjós, SW ICELAND
Seen		19/11/2017	Formby Point, Formby Beach, Merseyside
Seen at HT roost		07/02-21/02/2018	Birkdale Beach, Southport, Merseyside
T06/ FH57587	Adult	01/04/2012	Ballater, Aberdeenshire, Scotland
Caught:darvic added		29/03/2014	Ballater, Aberdeenshire, Scotland
Seen		20/03-21/04/2015	River Roost, Ballater, Aberdeenshire, Scotland
Seen		18/03-31/03/2016	River Roost, Ballater, Aberdeenshire, Scotland
Seen		18/03-23/03/2017	River Roost, Ballater, Aberdeenshire, Scotland
Seen		21/02/2018	Southport Beach, Merseyside, England
Seen		14/03/2018	River Roost, Ballater, Aberdeenshire, Scotland
FA14219	3CY+	28/07/1984	Wig, nr Bangor Gwynedd
Traffic casualty		12/09/2017	Marine Road, Marshside, Southport 83km ENE

Note the age of this bird.

CURLEW

CT169908/CJ6	Nestling	07/07/2012	nr Oulu, FINLAND 64 27N 25 42E
Seen		20/04/2013	Brockholes NR
Seen		01/04/2014	Brockholes NR
Seen		02/03/2015	Brockholes NR
Seen		01/03/2016	Brockholes NR
Seen		27/02/2018	Brockholes NR
Seen		15/03/2018	Alston Reservoir

ICELANDIC BLACK-TAILED GODWIT

CRs	Adult M	20/02/2012	Enguias Tanks, Tagus Estuary, Setúbal, PORTUGAL
Seen		04/07/2012	Samouco Canas, Tagus Estuary, Setúbal, PORTUGAL
Seen		17/10-25/10/2012	Samouco Canas, Tagus Estuary, Setúbal, PORTUGAL
Seen		28/08 & 01/10/2013	Odiel Marsh, Huelva, Andalusia, SPAIN
Seen		31/03-02/04/2015	Heidenskip, Friesland, NETHERLANDS
Seen		25/02/2016	Enguias Tanks, Tagus Estuary, Setúbal, PORTUGAL
Seen		02/09/2016	Odiel Marsh, Huelva, Andalusia, SPAIN
Seen		17/02/2017	Alhos Vedros Qta Prata, Tagus Estuary, Setúbal, PORTUGAL
Seen		14/10/2017 & 10/01/2018	Montijo, Tagus Estuary, Setúbal, PORTUGAL
Seen		15/04/2018	Newton Marsh, Ribble Estuary

This may be of the nominate form

CRs	Full Grown	28/03/2005	Breydon Water, Norfolk
Seen		24/06/2006	Skjaldarvík, Eyjafjarðarsýsla, N ICELAND
Seen		19/08/2005	Humber Estuary, Lincolnshire
Seen		04/03/2006	Breydon Water, Norfolk
Seen		08/08/2006	Humber Estuary, Lincolnshire
Seen		30/11/2006	Colne Estuary, Essex
Seen		10/08-14/10/2007	Humber Estuary, Lincolnshire
Seen		16/08-26/11/2008	Humber Estuary, Lincolnshire
Seen		06/08-12/12/2009	Humber Estuary, Lincolnshire
Seen		21/03-03/04/2010	Welney, Ouse Washes, Norfolk
Seen		23/07-21/09/2010	Humber Estuary, Lincolnshire

Seen	04/03-07/03/2011	Welney, Ouse Washes, Norfolk
Seen	03/07-10/09/2011	Humber Estuary, Lincolnshire
Seen	28/09-29/09/2012	Humber Estuary, Lincolnshire
Seen	21/01/2013	Breydon Water, Norfolk
Seen	01/04/2013	Nene Washes, Cambridgeshire
Seen	06/04/2013	Ouse Washes, Cambridgeshire
Seen	31/07/2013	Humber Estuary, Lincolnshire
Seen	24/02-06/03/2014	Fen Drayton, Cambridgeshire
Seen	12/02/2015	Ouse Washes, Cambridgeshire
Seen	08/04-13/06/2015	Welney, Ouse Washes, Norfolk
Seen	24/08/2015	Breydon Water, Norfolk
Seen	07/09/2015	Humber Estuary, Lincolnshire
Seen	08/09/2015	Breydon Water, Norfolk
Seen	03/02/2017	Breydon Water, Norfolk
Seen	25/07-29/07/2017	Humber Estuary, Lincolnshire
Seen	01/04/2018	Ouse Washes, Cambridgeshire
Seen	20/07/2018	Brockholes NR, Preston

This is the second year running there has been an inland sighting of an ancient well-recorded bird which has never been seen at a NW coastal site. Please do keep sending in the coastal sightings even though there is only room to publish one of the 24 plus received this year which mysteriously seemed to 'rise from the dead' in terms of regular ring-reading.

CRs	Full grown	02/08/1996	Terrington, The Wash, Norfolk
Seen		20/10/1998	Île de Ré, Charente-Maritime, FRANCE
Seen		04/05/1999	Akureyri, Eyjafjarðarsýsla, N ICELAND
Seen		27/04/2000	Pollengi, Árnessýsla, ICELAND
Seen		15/09-17/09/2001	Clonakilty, County Cork, IRELAND
Seen		10/02/2002	Baie de l' Aiguillon, FRANCE
Seen		29/04/2002	Stokkseyri, Árnessýsla, ICELAND
Seen		10/02/2003	Baie de l' Aiguillon, Vendee, FRANCE
Seen		31/08-01/10/2004	Colne Estuary, Essex
Seen		09/08-21/08/2005	Colne Estuary, Essex
Seen		22/09/2005	Freiston Shore, The Wash, Lincolnshire
Seen		23/04/2006	Blackwater Estuary, Essex
Seen		25/07-05/09/2006	Colne Estuary, Essex
Seen		02/03/2007	Fen Drayton, Cambridgeshire
Seen		27/03-08/04/2007	Blackwater Estuary, Essex
Seen		23/04/2007	Titchwell, Norfolk
Seen		22/08-12/09/2007	Colne Estuary, Essex
Seen		13/07-10/08/2008	Colne Estuary, Essex
Seen		26/09/2008	Blackwater Estuary, Essex
Seen		20/07-11/08/2010	Blackwater Estuary, Essex
Seen		26/03/2011	Blackwater Estuary, Essex
Seen		05/04/2011	Blackwater Estuary, Essex
Seen		12/02/2014	Little Paxton, Cambridgeshire
Seen		02/08/2017	Bank End, Lune Estuary, Fylde

Typical pattern for a coastal sighting but why not previously in Lancashire?

BAR-TAILED GODWIT

7218378/CMs	1CY	06/09/2017	Revtangen, Klepp, Rogaland, NORWAY	58 45'N 05 29E
Seen		09-10/09/2017	Revtangen, Klepp, Rogaland, NORWAY	58 45'N 05 29E
Seen		01/01/2018	South Gare, Tees Estuary, Cleveland	609km SW
Seen		26/04/2018	Leighton Moss	720km SW
DE42151 / ME	adult	05/08/2015	Snettisham, The Wash, Norfolk	
Seen		13/02/2016	Knott End, Fylde	
Seen		21/11/2017	Knott End, Fylde	
DT10585/& CMs	Adult	30/03/2018	Altcar, Hightown, Merseyside	
Seen		28/05/2018	Dublin port, Ireland	207km W

KNOT

In September 17 and March 18 two catches of Knot were made on the Altcar training grounds beach (Formby Point) to increase our understanding of Knot using the North West for moulting and wintering. In total about 1,000 were individually colour marked with an engraved orange flag which has produced approximately 2,500 observations

up until 1st August 2018. The majority of these are on the within the Liverpool bay region up to and including the Ribble. Around 100 individuals were seen in Iceland on spring passage thanks to the efforts of a dedicated team of observers with individuals seen in Northern Norway, Germany and Holland. Many more have been seen in Ireland, Morecambe Bay, two in Orkney and one on Benbecula. A huge thanks to all the observers and in particular Jim Wilson, Rose Maciewicz and Peter Knight for instigating this project at Formby which has shown, once again, the importance of the estuaries in the North West for Knot and the connectivity between them that Knot need for their survival. Any sightings of these colour-ringed Knot are of great interest to Jim Wilson. Please email him at jimwils@frisurf.no

N6RPRR	Adult	16/10/2015	Schiermonnikoog NETHERLANDS 53 28N 6 15 E
Seen		05/08/2016	Texel, NETHERLANDS
Seen		14/04/2017	Eric Morecambe Pool, Leighton Moss
SR99304	Adult	30/03/2018	Altcar
Seen		08/04/2018	Crosby
Seen		13/05/2018	Hitarnes Snæfellsnessysla ICELAND
Seen		17/05/2018	Hitarnes Snæfellsnessysla ICELAND
Seen		29/07/2018	Revtangen, Rogaland, NORWAY
SR76729	Adult	22/09/2017	Altcar
Seen		06/10/2017	Formby Point
Seen		08/05/2018	North Ronaldsay, Orkney
Seen		13/05/2018	Hitarnes Snæfellsnessysla ICELAND
Seen		15/05/2018	Lambastadir Myrarsysla ICELAND
SR76990	Adult	22/09/2017	Altcar
Seen		23/10/2017	Formby Point
Seen		29/10/2017	Crosby
Seen		04/11/2017	Formby Point
Seen		21/11-25/12/2017	Thurstaston
Seen		15/05/2018	Lambastadir Myrarsysla ICELAND
Seen		06/08/2018	Crosby

Very selective. Anyone wanting to see the full list of Knot sightings from the Altcar catches, please contact the author.

SANDERLING

8109427	Adult	19/05/2016	Sandgerdi, Gullbringu, Gullbringusýsla, ICELAND 64 1N 22 41W
Caught		22/09/2017	Altcar, Hightown, Merseyside 1617km SE
8109420	Adult	17/05/2016	Sandgerdi, Gullbringu, Gullbringusýsla, ICELAND 64 1N 22 41W
Caught		22/09/2017	Altcar, Hightown, Merseyside 1617km SE
8108482	Adult	22/05/2016	Sandgerdi, Gullbringu, Gullbringusýsla, ICELAND 64 1N 22 41W
Caught		22/09/2017	Altcar, Hightown, Merseyside 1617km SE

DUNLIN

8M68920	1CY	04/09/2017	Makkevika, Giske, More og Romsdal, NORWAY 62 30N 6 1E
Caught		22/09/2017	Altcar, Hightown, Merseyside 1130km SSW

REDSHANK

N-YGW/3M009536	Adult	13/02/2011	Fienteira, Sanxenxo (Pontevedra), SPAIN 42°27'32"N 08°50'19"W
Seen		20/02/2011	O Vao, O Grove (Pontevedra), SPAIN 42°27'07"N 08°52'15"W
Seen		20/02/2011	Fienteira, Sanxenxo (Pontevedra), SPAIN 42°27'32"N 08°50'19"W
Seen		17/09/2011	Fienteira, Sanxenxo (Pontevedra), SPAIN 42°27'32"N 08°50'19"W
Seen		20/10-08/12/2011	Dena, Meaño (Pontevedra), SPAIN 42°27'22"N 08°49'20"W
Seen		17/12/2011	O Vao, O Grove (Pontevedra), SPAIN 42°27'07"N 08°52'15"W
Seen		07/01/2012	Fienteira, Sanxenxo (Pontevedra), SPAIN 42°27'32"N 08°50'19"W
Seen		19/02-28/02/2012	Dena, Meaño (Pontevedra), SPAIN 42°27'22"N 08°49'20"W
Seen		28/07/2012	Arnosa, Sanxenxo (Pontevedra), SPAIN 42°27'32"N 08°50'19"W
Seen		17/08-08/09/2012	Dena, Meaño (Pontevedra), SPAIN 42°27'22"N 08°49'20"W
Seen		22/09-04/10/2012	Arnosa, Sanxenxo (Pontevedra), SPAIN 42°27'32"N 08°50'19"W
Seen		19/10/2012-06/02/2013	Dena, Meaño (Pontevedra), SPAIN 42°27'22"N 08°49'20"W
Seen		26/07/2013-02/02/2014	Dena, Meaño (Pontevedra), SPAIN 42°27'22"N 08°49'20"W

Seen		16/10-15/11/2014	Arnosa, Sanxenxo (Pontevedra), SPAIN 42°27'32"N 08°50'19"W
Seen		27/11/2014-11/01/2015	Dena, Meaño (Pontevedra), SPAIN 42°27'22"N 08°49'20"W
Seen		01/08-19/09/2015	Dena, Meaño (Pontevedra), SPAIN 42°27'22"N 08°49'20"W
Seen		08/11/2015-02/02/2016	Arnosa, Sanxenxo (Pontevedra), SPAIN 42°27'32"N 08°50'19"W
Seen		13/03/2016	Marshside RSPB, Merseyside, UK 53°40'50"N 02°58'46"W
Seen		27/08/2016	Fianteira, Sanxenxo (Pontevedra), SPAIN 42°27'32"N 08°50'19"W
Seen		03/09-15/10/2016	Dena, Meaño (Pontevedra), SPAIN 42°27'22"N 08°49'20"W
Seen		15/12/2016	Fianteira, Sanxenxo (Pontevedra), SPAIN 42°27'32"N 08°50'19"W
Seen		11/03/2017	Ribble Estuary National Nature Reserve, Lancashire, UK 53°40'50"N 02°58'46"W
Seen		30/12/2017	Fianteira, Sanxenxo (Pontevedra), SPAIN 42°27'32"N 08°50'19"W
Seen		26/03/2018	Crossens Inner Marsh, Merseyside, UK 53°40'50"N 02°58'46"W
D51612/CRs	Full grown	03/09/2016	Thorney Island, Chichester Harbour, W Sussex, S England
Seen		03/12/2016	Emsworth (west), Chichester Harbour, Hampshire
Seen		20/08/2017-07/01/2018	Emsworth (west), Chichester Harbour, Hampshire
Seen		18/02/2018	Thorney Deepes, Chichester Harbour, Sussex
Seen		28/03/2018	Emsworth Sailing Club, Chichester Harbour, Hampshire
Seen		14/04/2018	Leighton Moss RSPB reserve, Lancashire, NW England

SANDWICH TERN

The following selection from north of the Ribble complements those published last year from the Sefton Coast with the addition of the Hodbarrow birds where ringing commenced in 2017.

DB35865 / 2S.4	Nestling	20/06/1998	Coquet Island, Amble, Northumberland
Retrapped		14/06-30/6/2017	Scheelhoek eilanden, Haringvliet, Zuid-Holland, NETHERLANDS
Seen		04/09/2017	Knott End, Fylde
DK52818 / UZH	Nestling	12/07/2014	Coquet Island, Amble Northumberland
Seen		01/08/2016	Coquet Island, Amble Northumberland
Seen		May-Aug 2017	Coquet Island, Amble Northumberland
Seen		04/09/2017	Knott End, Fylde
DD92436 / UZS	Nestling	17/07/2013	Inner Farne, Farne Islands, Northumberland
Seen		28/08/2013	Findhorn, Moray, Scotland
Seen		05/09/2017	Cocker's Dyke, Fylde
EBN / DE35884	Adult	16/08/2010	Ythan Estuary, Aberdeenshire, Scotland
Seen		28/04/2012	Girdle Ness, Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Scotland
Seen		20/07/2015	Whitehead, Belfast Lough, County Antrim, Northern Ireland
Seen		24/08-07/09/2016	Ainsdale, Merseyside
Seen		21/08/2017	Donaghadee, County Down, Northern Ireland
Seen		28/08/2017	Kinnegar Shore, Belfast Lough, County Down, Northern Ireland
Seen		02/09/2017	Whitehead, Belfast Lough, County Antrim, Northern Ireland
Seen		04/09/2017	Knott End, Fylde
ELC / DE81147	Adult	17/07/2014	Ythan Estuary, Aberdeenshire, Scotland
Seen		11/09/2014	Duncannon, County Wexford, Ireland
Seen		04/09/2017	Knott End, Fylde
Seen		05/09/2017	Cocker's Dyke, Fylde
EDZ / DT02598	Nestling	16/06/2014	Sands of Forvie, Ythan Estuary, Aberdeenshire, Scotland
Seen		17/08/2017	St Annes Beach, Fylde
ESH / DT03499	Nestling	11/06/2015	Sands of Forvie, Ythan Estuary, Aberdeenshire, Scotland
ringed		20/03-28/03/2016	Mile 4 Salt Works, Swakopmund, NAMIBIA
read in field		04/09/2017	Knott End, Fylde
read in field		24/10-04/11/2017	Mile 4 Salt Works, Swakopmund, NAMIBIA
DK38103 / KCA	Juvenile	03/09/2015	Ynyslas, Dovey Estuary, Ceredigion, Wales
Seen		04/09/2017	Knott End, Fylde
DD34672 / E18	Nestling	17/06/2017	Hunterston, Ayrshire, Scotland
Seen		05/09/2017	Cocker's Dyke, Fylde
Seen		12/09/2017	Rhos-on-Sea, Conwy, Wales

DD34673 / E19	Nestling	17/06/2017	Hunterston, Ayrshire, Scotland
Seen		17/08/2017	St Annes Beach, Fylde
One other ringed as a nestling at Hunterston in 2017 only recorded at Knott End in autumn 2017			
DE02028 / KBF	Nestling	16/06/2015	Inish, Lady's Island Lake, County Wexford, Ireland
Seen		18/02-19/02/2016	Mile 4 Salt Works, Swakopmund, NAMIBIA
Seen		13/05/2017	Mile 4 Salt Works, Swakopmund, NAMIBIA
Seen		04/09/2017	Knott End, Fylde
DE02135 / KLJ	Nestling	23/06/2015	Inish, Lady's Island Lake, County Wexford, IRELAND
ringed		05/09/2017	Cocker's Dyke, Fylde
DD78276 / KAT	Nestling	17/06/2017	Inish, Lady's Island Lake, County Wexford, IRELAND
Seen		21/08/2017	Clwyd Estuary, Rhyl, Denbighshire, Wales
Seen		04/09/2017	Knott End, Fylde
DD78268 / KAF	Nestling	17/06/2017	Inish, Lady's Island Lake, County Wexford, IRELAND
Seen		17/08/2017	St Annes Beach, Fylde

In addition two others ringed as nestlings at Lady Island Lake in 2017 only recorded at Knott End/Cocker's Dyke in autumn 2017.

1589669 / TSA	Nestling	25/06/2017	Utopia, Texel, NETHERLANDS
Seen		28/06/2017	Utopia, Texel, NETHERLANDS
Seen		15/07-20/7/2017	Slufter-zuid, Texel, NETHERLANDS
Seen		05/09/2017	Cocker's Dyke, Fylde
DT54029 / C29	Nestling	30/06/2017	Hodbarrow, Duddon Estuary, Cumbria
Seen		20/08/2017	Ainsdale, Ribble Estuary, Lancashire
Seen		12/09/2017	Knott End, Fylde
DT54033 / C34	Nestling	30/06/2017	Hodbarrow, Duddon Estuary, Cumbria
Seen		04/09/2017	Knott End, Fylde
Seen		05/09/2017	Cocker's Dyke, Fylde
Seen		18/11/2017	Mile 4 Saltworks, Swakopmund, Walvis Bay, NAMIBIA
DT54035 / C36	Nestling	30/06/2017	Hodbarrow, Duddon Estuary, Cumbria
Seen		14/08/2017	Rhos Point, Conwy, Wales
Seen		04/09/2017	Knott End, Fylde
DT54037 / C38	Nestling	30/06/2017	Hodbarrow, Duddon Estuary, Cumbria
Seen		10/08/2017	Ainsdale, Ribble Estuary, Lancashire
Seen		04/09/2017	Knott End, Fylde

In addition, a further five ringed as nestlings at Hodbarrow in 2017 recorded only at Knott End (once) in autumn 2017.

COMMON TERN

Birds originally ringed at Shotton (12), Banks Marsh, Ribble (3), Mere Sands Wood (2) and Seaforth (1) were recorded in 2018 along with the following:

99Z21293	Adult	07/04/2005	La Somone, SENEGAL
Seen		18/06/2017	Preston Dock, Ribble Estuary, Fylde
4H58786	Adult	29/03/2011	Mile 4 Saltworks, NAMIBIA
Seen		10/06/2018	Preston Dock, Ribble Estuary, Fylde

Also present at Preston 2014-17 inclusive

ST04574	Nestling	14/07/2011	Rockabill, Co Dublin, Ireland
Seen		24/06/2018	Preston Dock, Ribble Estuary, Fylde

Also present at Preston 2016/7

SR82457	Nestling	10/07/2009	Saltholme, Teesmouth, Cleveland
Seen		24/06/2018	Preston Dock, Ribble Estuary, Fylde

Perhaps surprisingly only recorded at Preston for the first time in 2017

SR49822	Nestling	15/06/2009	Stoke Lake, River Wey, Guildford, Surrey TQ0251
Seen		03/07/2016	Preston Dock

One of just a handful of records in the county from southern England.

SR32527	Nestling	10/07/2006	Glas Eilenan, Sound of Mull, Argyll
Seen		08/07/2017	Seaforth

SR43723 Seen	Nestling	24/06/2011 08/07/2017	Attenborough NR, Nottinghamshire Seaforth
ST82110/ Black C22 Seen	Nestling	21/06/2018 22/07/2018	Marsh Lane NR. West Midlands Seaforth
Black C15 Seen	Nestling	21/06/2018 08/08/2018	Marsh Lane NR. West Midlands Seaforth
Green U70 Seen	Nestling	01/07/2016 18/06/2018	Watermead CP, Leicestershire SK6011 Seaforth
Green U90 Seen	Nestling	01/07/2016 27/06/2018	Watermead CP, Leicestershire SK6011 Seaforth

Yet more confirmation of the regular movement from the English Midlands.

ST67057/ blue PKE Nestling Seen		27/06/2015 02/06/2018	Liffey River, ESB Colony, Dublin, IRELAND Seaforth
On nest		14/06/2018	Skerries, Anglesey
ST67228 / blue PLV Nestling Seen		03/07/2015 05/08/2017	Liffey River, ESB Colony, Dublin, IRELAND Seaforth

ARCTIC TERN

XR80313 Dead on shore	Adult	20/06/2016 20/10/2017	Skerries, Anglesey, Wales Hest Bank, Lancs 139km ENE
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BLACK-HEADED GULL

FS16291 Seen	Adult	16/06/2016 08/07/2018	Zbiornikprzykona, Wielkopolskie, POLAND 52°00'20 18°39'29' Seaforth NR 1461km WNW
1A184309/black X14V Seen	Nestling	14/05/2018 08/07/2018	Island Böhmke, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, GERMANY 53 57N 14 02E Seaforth Nature Reserve
EZ90201/ 2P30 Seen	Pullus	14/06/2017 16/01/2018	Slimbridge, Gloucestershire Preston Docks, Lancashire, 225km N
ET53375 Seen	Nestling	20/06/1999 03/12/2010	Upper Barden Reservoir, North Yorkshire Marine Lake, Southport, Merseyside, 79km WSW
Seen		23/01/2016	Marine Lake, Southport, Merseyside, 79km WSW
Seen		19/03/2018	Marine Lake, Southport, Merseyside, 79km WSW
S7228 Seen	Nestling	01/06/2009 06/02/2016	Satini-Sesile: 56°37'N 22°25'E LATVIA Marine Lake, Southport, Merseyside, 1,648km W
Seen		19/03-21/3/2018	Marine Lake, Southport, Merseyside, 1,648km W
LIK.HV02696 EY02610/2C49 Seen	Pullus	08/06/2002 10/02/2012	Nemuno Salos, Prienai, LITHUANIA 54°39'N 23°58'E Marine Lake, Southport, Merseyside, 1,761km W
Seen	Old ring removed	06/12/2012	Redesmere, Siddington, Cheshire, 1,722km W
Seen		19/01/2013	Marine Lake, Southport, Merseyside, 1,761km W
Seen		02/02/2013	Redesmere, Siddington, Cheshire, 1,722km W
Seen		06/11-08/11/2013	Redesmere, Siddington, Cheshire, 1,722km W
Seen		20/02/2014	Marine Lake, Southport, Merseyside, 1,761km W
Seen		23/11/2014	Redesmere, Siddington, Cheshire, 1,722km W
Seen		14/01/2016	Marine Lake, Southport, Merseyside, 1,761km W
Seen		20/01/2016	Redesmere, Siddington, Cheshire, 1,722km W
Seen		02/10/2016	Marine Lake, Southport, Merseyside, 1,761km W
Seen		10/11/2016	Whisterfield, near Siddington, Cheshire, 1723km W
Seen		23/11/2016	Redesmere, Siddington, Cheshire, 1,722km W
Seen		14/09/2017	Marine Lake, Southport, Merseyside, 1,761km W
Seen		06/03/2018	Marine Lake, Southport, Merseyside, 1,761km W
HA09693 / P954 Seen	Nestling	16/06/2011 18/11/2013- 24/02/2014	Kalviu karjerai, Klaipėdos, Lietuva, LITHUANIA Blackpool South Shore, Fylde
Seen		29/08-03/11/2014	Blackpool South Shore, Fylde
Seen		31/12/2016	Blackpool South Shore, Fylde
Seen		28/01-19/02/2017	Blackpool South Shore, Fylde
Seen		12/03/2017	Stanley Park, Fylde

Seen		30/12/2017	Blackpool South Shore, Fylde
HA29443	Nestling	21/06/2014	Kretuono ez., Didzioji sala, Svencioniu, LITHUANIA
Seen		22/01/2016	Fairhaven Lake, Fylde
Seen		19/02/2017	Fairhaven Lake, Fylde
EZ33044 / 2BC1	Nestling	20/06/2017	Elvanfoot, South Lanarkshire, Clyde, Scotland
Seen		24/09/2017	Wyre Estuary, Little Singleton, Fylde
EY26801	Adult	26/02/2014	Pine Lake Carnforth, Lancashire
		21/04-26/05/2014	Carrickfergus, Antrim 209 km WNW
		25/12/2016	Pine Lake Carnforth, Lancashire
		01/08/2017	RSPB Hodbarrow, Cumbria 34 km WNW
EW81634	Adult	04/06/2011	Point of Ayre Isle of Man
Seen		18/04/2018	Allen Pool, Leighton Moss 106 km ESE

All Baltic States sightings I could find and some more unusual British nestling origins, plus an ancient Barden Res. bird where large nos. used to be ringed. In addition, there were 17 other life histories received involving Norway, Denmark, Sweden and the usual Lancashire coastal duck-feeding sites!

MEDITERRANEAN GULL

CZP.EX78711	Nestling	03/06/2003	Chomoutov, Olomouc, CZECH REPUBLIC
Seen		every "winter" period to at least Feb 2018,	usually feeding along the north harbour wall 1452km WNW
1A121586/ ASRE	Nestling	10/06/2016	Rehbach Gravel Pit, Leipzig, Sachsen. GERMANY 51° 15' 54" N 12° 17' 4" E
Seen		15/07/2016	Rehbach Gravel Pit, Leipzig, Sachsen. GERMANY 51° 15' 54" N 12° 17' 4" E
Seen		25/12/2016	Azurara, Vila do Conde, Porto PORTUGAL 41° 20' 18" N 8° 44' 38" W 1950km SW
Seen		08/03/2017	Playa de San Lorenzo, Gijon, Asturias SPAIN 43° 32' 32" N 5° 39' 10" W 1596km SW
Seen		10/03-12/03/2017	Playa El Rinconin, Gijon, Asturias SPAIN 43° 32' 54" N 5° 38' 19" W 1595km SW
Seen		23/03/2017	Playa de San Lorenzo, Gijon, Asturias SPAIN 43° 32' 32" N 5° 39' 10" W 1596km SW
Seen		25/05/2017	Rehbach Gravel Pit, Leipzig, Sachsen. GERMANY 51° 15' 54" N 12° 17' 4" E
Seen		22/06/2017	Gunners Park, Shoeburyness, Essex UK 51° 31' 32" N 0° 46' 58" E 798km WNW
Seen		12/09/2017	Heysham Power Station outfalls 1067km NW
Seen		05/02/2018	Playa de San Lorenzo, Gijon, Asturias SPAIN 43° 32' 32" N 5° 39' 10" W 1596km SW
Seen		01/04/2018	Montmirail Landfill, colony, Sarthe FRANCE 48° 6' 35" N 0° 45' 55"
Seen		31/07-12/08/2018	Heysham Power Station outfalls 1067km NW

I wonder what its status was in France in April 2018?

3693897/ LCG	Nestling	24/06/2010	De Kreupel Island, IJsselmeer, Noord-Holland, NETHERLANDS 52,48N 5,14E
Seen		19/08/2010	Knott End-on-Sea, Lancashire, GB 53,35N 2,59W
Seen		20/08/2010	Cocker's Dyke, Pilling Lane, Lancashire, GB 53,35N 2,57W
Seen		20/02/2011	Malaga harbour, Malaga, SPAIN 36,43N 4,25W
Seen		11/08/2013	Heysham Power Station outfalls 54 1N 2 55W
Seen		09/01/2015	Olhao salinas, Algarve, PORTUGAL 37,02N 7,48W
Seen		19/01/2016	Santa Cruz, La Coruña, SPAIN 43,21N 8,2W
Seen		18/01/2017	Playa San Lorenzo, Gijón, Asturias, SPAIN 43,32N 5,39W
Seen		29/12/2017	Playa de El Rinconin, Gijón, Asturias, SPAIN 43,32N 5,38W
Seen		21/01-09/02/2018	Playa San Lorenzo, Gijón, Asturias, SPAIN 43,32N 5,39W
Seen		31/07 & 12/08/2018	Heysham Power Station outfalls 54 1N 2 55W

Breeding location a mystery here

FS32314/ PKR4			
Ringed on nest	3CY Female	26/05/2018	Wisla, Mazowieckie, POLAND 52 28N 19 57E
Seen		26/07/2018	Heysham Power Station outfalls 1518km WNW

FS71953/ R13E	Nestling	15/06/2009	Oye Plage, Les Huttes d'Oye, Pas-de-Calais, FRANCE 50,59N 2,03E
Seen		20/09/2009	Le Portel, Pas-de-Calais, FRANCE 50,42N 1,34E
Seen		07/02/2010	Piriac-sur-Mer, Loire-Atlantique, FRANCE 47,23N 2,33W
Seen		18/02/2010	Piriac-sur-Mer, Loire-Atlantique, FRANCE 47,23N 2,33W
Seen		21/04/2010	Barbâtre, Polder de Sebastopol, Vendée, FRANCE 46,56N 2,09W
Seen		27/04/2011	Barbâtre, Polder de Sebastopol, Vendée, FRANCE 46,56N 2,09W
Seen		03/08/2011	Heysham Power Station outfalls 54 1N 2 55W
Seen		21/07-22/07/2013	Heysham Power Station outfalls 54 1N 2 55W
Seen		31/12/2014	Noyalo, étang, Pont Grandic, Noyalo, Morbihan, FRANCE 47,37N 2,41W
Seen		05/07/2015	Heysham Power Station outfalls 54 1N 2 55W
Seen		23/07/2016	Heysham Power Station outfalls 54 1N 2 55W
Seen		06/03/2017	Playa de El Rinconin, Gijón, Asturias, SPAIN 43,32N 5,38W
Seen		28/07/2018	Heysham Power Station outfalls 54 1N 2 55W

Presumably wintering in Morbihan as an adult

5405056/

AKRS>ANLT	Nestling M	16/06/2012	Pionierinsel Lühe, Steinkirchen, Stade, Niedersachsen GERMANY 53° 34' 59" N 9° 36' 10"
Seen		08/07-21/07/2013	Heysham Power Station outfalls 54 1N 2 55W
Seen		14/05/2016	Pionierinsel Lühe, Steinkirchen, Stade, Niedersachsen GERMANY 53° 34' 59" N 9° 36' 10"
re-ringed Nest 25		22/05/2016	Pionierinsel Lühe, Steinkirchen, Stade, Niedersachsen GERMANY 53° 34' 59" N 9° 36' 10"
Seen		31/03/2017	Pionierinsel Lühe, Steinkirchen, Stade, Niedersachsen GERMANY 53° 34' 59" N 9° 36' 10"
Seen		30/08/2017	Heysham Power Station outfalls 54 1N 2 55W
Seen		28/07-14/08/2018	Heysham Power Station outfalls 54 1N 2 55W

Where is it wintering?

PUH9/FS15738	Nesting 4CY	17/05/2016	MIETKOWSKI, DOMANICE I, MIETKÓW, DOLNOŚLĄSKIE, POLAND 50°57'04.7"; 16°36'05.2"
Seen		04/07/2018	Seaforth Nature Reserve, Merseyside 1360km WNW
3726868 / E610	Nestling	22/06/2011	De Kreupel, IJsselmeer, Enkhuizen, NETHERLANDS
Seen		30/10-04/11/2011	Playa de Arealonga, Barreiros, Lugo, SPAIN
Seen		02/04/2012	Marais de la Guittière, Talmont-Saint-Hilaire, Vendée, FRANCE
Seen		25/07/2012	Musselburgh Lagoons, Lothian, Scotland
Seen		19/10/2012	Nevern Estuary, Newport, Pembrokeshire, Wales
Seen		03/11/2012	Santa Cruz, La Coruña, SPAIN
Seen		12/04/2013	Burton Mere Wetlands, Cheshire
Seen		16/10/2013	Caldebarcos, Carnota, Galiza, SPAIN
Seen		20/10/2013	San Pedro beach, Carnota, A Coruña, SPAIN
Seen		04/09/2014	Seaforth Nature Reserve, Merseyside
Seen		20/10/2014	Plage des trois Moutons, Lampaul, Ploudalmézeau, Finistère, FRANCE
Seen		17/01/2015	Santa Cruz, La Coruña, SPAIN
Seen		31/01/2015	Gijón, El Musel Port, Asturias, SPAIN
Seen		24/09/2015	Skippool Creek, Wyre Estuary, Lancashire
Seen		20/12/2015-01/01/2016	Santa Cruz, La Coruña, SPAIN
Seen		25/02/2016	Playa San Lorenzo, Gijón, Asturias, SPAIN
Seen		15/07/2016	Skippool Creek, Wyre Estuary, Lancashire
Seen		22/10/2016	Santa Cruz, La Coruña, SPAIN
Seen		02/02-03/02/2017	Playa San Lorenzo, Gijón, Asturias, SPAIN
Seen		14/04/2017	Martin Mere, Lancashire
FS00433/ red PRA2	Nestling	05/06/2017	Zb Nysa Wojcice (Opolskie) POLAND 50 25 N 17 13E
Seen		15/04/2018	Allen Pool, Leighton Moss
FS22407 / PUR8	Nestling	06/06/2017	Mietkowski, Damanice I, Mietkow, Dolnoslaskie, POLAND
Seen		26/08/2017	Skippool Creek, Wyre Estuary, Fylde

COMMON GULL

5101705/ JE274	Adult	01/08/2017	Hindalsdammen, Stavanger, Rogaland, NORWAY
Seen		14/01/2018	Birkdale Beach, Southport, Merseyside, 799km SW
5153058/ J6VA	Adult male	27/04/2013	VIGELAND, Lindesnes, Vest-Agder, NORWAY
Seen		29/05/2014	Glapsalen, Lindesnes, Vest-Agder, NORWAY, 10km WSW
Seen		12/07/2014	Njerveskjæran, Lindesnes, Vest-Agder, NORWAY 10km WSW
Seen		04/05/2016	Njerne, Lindesnes, Vest-Agder, NORWAY 9km WSW
Seen		15/05/2016	Njerveskjæran, Lindesnes, Vest-Agder, NORWAY 10km WSW
Seen		19/04/2017	VIGELAND, Lindesnes, Vest-Agder, NORWAY
Seen		27/04/2017	Njerveskjæran, Lindesnes, Vest-Agder, NORWAY 10km WSW
Seen		27/04/2017	Jåbekk, Mandal, Vest-Agder, NORWAY 13km ESE
Seen		07/02/2018	Ainsdale Beach, Southport, Merseyside, UK 815km SW
5165628/ J07Y	Nestling	30/06/2004	Flatøya Nord, Ørland, Sør-Trøndelag, NORWAY
Seen		28/09/2015	Ainsdale beach, Merseyside, UK 1335km SW
Seen		14/08 & 02/09/2016	Ainsdale Beach, Lancashire, UK 1334km SW
Seen		07/02/2018	Ainsdale Beach, Southport, Merseyside, UK 1334km SW

HERRING GULL

GC23749/ A3RS	Juvenile	12/09/2007	Spike Island, Widnes, Halton, Cheshire - Released by RSPCA Rehabilitation Centre
Seen		15/09/2017	Marine Lake, Southport, 39km NNW
Seen		28/09/2017	Marine Lake, Southport, 39km NNW
Y:002/ GV31680	1CY	26/10/2015	Harewood Whin Landfill, Rufforth, North Yorkshire
Seen		13/03/2017	Formby Point, Merseyside
Seen		09/07/2017	Formby Point, Merseyside
Seen		07/02/2018	Ainsdale Beach, Southport, Merseyside
E24538 / W6KF9	Nestling	12/05/2015	Chouet, Guernsey, CHANNEL ISLANDS
Seen		17/09/2017	Skipool Creek, Wyre Estuary, Fylde
GV52835	1CY	04/11/2016	Harewood Whin Landfill, Rufforth, North Yorkshire
Seen		11/03/2017	Jameson Road Landfill, Fylde
GV16552/A:E66	Nestling	05/07/2017	Lady Isle, Troon, Ayrshire
Seen		31/12/2017	Whinney Hill Tip, Altham
GR88025/T:55H	Nestling	13/07/2015	Montrose Docks, Angus, Scotland 56 70N 2 45E
Seen		31/12/2017	Whinney Hill Tip, Altham
Y:992	1CY	17/02/2017	Harewood Whin Landfill, Rufforth, North Yorkshire
Seen		31/12/2017	Whinney Hill Tip, Altham
Seen		18/03/2018	Southport Marine Lake

Two others ringed at Harewood in 2015 and 2016 were seen at Southport Marine Lake on 27/12/17 and 17/3/18 respectively.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL

CDK/ FP86889	Adult	24/11/2007	Stoke Orchard Landfill Site, Gloucestershire. 51.56N 02.06
Seen		18/11-20/11/2008	Stoke Orchard L.S., Gloucestershire
Seen		23/11/2009	Grundons L.S., Gloucestershire 2 km N
Seen		28/01/2011	Portimao, Faro, PORTUGAL 1702 km SSW
Seen		12/03-19/03/2011	Preston Docks, Lancashire 206 km NNW
Seen		29/12/2012	Portimao, Faro, PORTUGAL 1702 km SSW
Seen		13/01-28/01/2013	Quarteira, Faro, PORTUGAL 1718 km SSW
Seen		21/02/2013	Aviles Estuary, Asturias (Oviedo), SPAIN 972 km SSW
Seen		22/02/2015	Preston Docks, Lancashire 206 km NNW
Seen		15/03/2017	Preston Docks, Lancashire 206 km NNW
Seen		27/02-01/03/2018	Preston Docks, Lancashire 206 km NNW

A typical example of the seasonal movements

MERLIN

DT21001	Nestling M	05/07/2017	Site Confidential Ivelet: (North Yorkshire)
Caught by ringer!		25/08/2017	New Laithe Farm, Newton: (Lancashire) 57km SSW
DE49158	Nestling M	01/07/2017	Bowland (Lancashire)
Dead		18/04/2018	Blois (Loir-et-Cher) FRANCE 47 34N 1 19 E

GOLDCREST

JVH917	Adult F	18/10/2017	Heysham NR
Caught		25/10/2017	Woolston Eyes, Warrington, Cheshire 77 km S
DYD245	1CY F	01/11/2016	Chillington Hall, Staffordshire
Caught		02/11/2017	Heysham NR 161km NNW

Slightly later migration in 2017?

KLJ349	1CY F	27/10/2017	Bardsey BO, Gwynedd
Caught		09/01/2018	Ince Blundell, Merseyside 144km NE
JDT164	1CY	06/10/2017	Hightown, Merseyside
Freshly dead		10/10/2017	Preston 35km NE

Whilst westerly, and in one case, north-westerly movements from east coast 'falls' are not unusual, why were these two moving north-east, especially the wintering bird in Merseyside?

JDT126	FG M	28/09/2017	Ince Blundell, Merseyside
Caught		27/10 & 27/11/2017	Nanjizal, Land's End, Cornwall 427km SSW
HYA087	FG M	11/10/2016	Brookvale, Merseyside
Caught		28/03/2017	Holme BO, Norfolk 243km ESE
KNC292	1CY M	19/09/2017	Billinge Hill, near Billinge, Merseyside
Cat		25/11/2017	Fromes Hill, Ledbury, Herefordshire, 157 km S
HDB637	1CY F	01/09/2017	South Walney, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria
Caught		10/09/2017	Billinge Hill, near Billinge, Merseyside, 68 km SSE
KJX423	1CY M	02/09/2017	Billinge Hill, near Billinge, Merseyside
Found dead		20/09/2017	Hannington, Hampshire, 267 km SSE
JBX614	Ad F	07/09/2015	Billinge Hill, near Billinge, Merseyside
Caught		24/03/2017	Copeland Bird Observatory, Down, 226 km NW

A great series. However they reflect the 'westerly' autumn of 2017 with no records involving east coast migration sites and implicitly few Scandinavian or further east birds (some of which can be identified by plumage/biometrics) 'over this side'. Therefore they reflect the high population level of British birds.

FIRECREST

KEY063	1CY M	28/09/2017	Calf of Man BO, Isle of Man
Caught		08/11/2017	Ince Blundell, Merseyside 132km ESE

At the very least, surely near the end of its autumn migration and probably a prospective wintering bird.

BLUE TIT

Z296525	Juvenile	18/09/2014	Middleton NR
Recaptured	Nesting F	20/05/2018	Warton Crag 15km N

Caught as a autumnally-dispersing juvenile, then nesting in perhaps also its natal area.

GREAT TIT

S069287	Juvenile M	22/12/2016	Thorlby:(North Yorkshire)
Seen		27/03/2017	Stocks Reservoir: (Lancashire) 25km W

Longest movement reported from any of the tit species during the review period

COAL TIT

Z708161	1CY	12/10/2015	Middleton NR
Caught		02/12/2017	Ashley's Farm, High Tatham 21km ENE

Caught in the garden of one of the Middleton ringing team

SAND MARTIN

S372624	Adult	05/07/2017	Whittington, Lune valley
Caught		28/04/2018	Longis Reserve ALDERNEY (Channel Islands) 498 km S
S330769	Nestling	07/07/2017	Applegarthtown, Lockerbie, Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland
Caught		21/08/2017	Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park, Fylde

The third one from this artificial-nest colony at coastal Lancashire roosts (two at Middleton in previous years)

D996758	Juvenile	20/06/2014	R Lune, Whittington (Lancashire)
Caught		16/08/2017	Hayberries LNR (Durham): 59 km NE

7526726	Juvenile	20/08/2015	Rochefort (Charente-Maritime) 45°56'N 0°56'W, FRANCE
Caught		20/06/2017	R.Lune, Nether Burrow: (Lancashire) 922km N
7891926	Adult	25/08/2016	Rochefort (Charente-Maritime) 45°56'N 0°56'W FRANCE
Caught		08/07/2017	R Lune, Whittington: (Lancashire) 924km N
Z337833	Juvenile	06/09/2015	Arretton: (Isle of Wight)
Caught		20/06/2017	R Lune, Nether Burrow: 400km NNW

SWALLOW

S784839	1CY F	13/08/2017	Middleton NR
Caught		09/06/2018	Thornton (Merseyside) 60km S

CETTI'S WARBLER

Z296371	Juv	04/11/2014	Leighton Moss, RSPB:(Lancashire)
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This was recaptured as a breeding male at Woolston Eyes, Cheshire (89km S) during 2015-2018 with no evidence it left this breeding site after 2015. This suggests it was an autumnal-dispersing juvenile when caught at Leighton, not a Leighton Moss-born individual.

LONG-TAILED TIT

HKK845	Juvenile	18/05/2017	Woodvale Airfield Formby (Merseyside)
Dead		03/11/2017	Aldcliffe 55 km NNE

A previous example of a notable north-easterly movement in autumn (two birds from Heysham to near Brechin)

CHIFFCHAFF

JVC544	1CY	06/09/2016	Billinge Hill, near Billinge, Merseyside
Caught		07/08/2017	Beddington Sewage Farm, Greater London, 295 km SE

Very early for this species to be on the move unless it bred in the London area

JVH811	Juvenile	26/09/2017	Heysham NR
Caught		06/10/2017	Icklesham :(East Sussex) 424km SE

BLACKCAP

S043760	1CY F	24/09/2016	Stanford Reservoir, Northamptonshire,
Caught		23/04/2017	Billinge Hill, near Billinge, Merseyside, 163 km NW
S691077	1CY M	21/08/2017	Woolston Eyes, Warrington, Cheshire
Caught		14/07/2018	Leighton Moss 89km N
S094217	1CY F	07/09/2016	Staining (Lancs)
Recaptured		27/04/2018	Middleton 23 km NNE

SEDGE WARBLER

7617446	Adult	09/08/2016	Reserve du Massereau (Loire-Atlantique)
			FRANCE 47 13N 01 55 W
Caught		04/05/2018	Middleton NR 757km N
6985751		11/08/2013	Langueux, Côtes-d'Armor, FRANCE
		04/05/2018	Middleton NR 613km N

Caught during one of the biggest spring falls at Heysham/Middleton along with a Belgian bird where details not yet received (see also Reed Warbler)

A304355	Adult M	19/04/2018	Leighton Moss
Caught breeding x 4		04/05-24/06/2018	Middleton NR 18km SSW

Note the minor overshoot on spring passage

S532736	Adult	03/06/2017	Middleton NR
Caught		11/08/2017	Hollesey Heath, Suffolk 363km SE
S373851	Juvenile	25/07/2017	Leighton Moss, RSPB:Lancashire)
Caught		06/08/2017	Reculver: (Kent) 412km SE

REED WARBLER

Z961687	1CY M	27/07/2016	Leighton Moss
Caught		10/09/2016	Les Barthes-de-Quarter-Bas (Pyrenees Atlantiques)
			FRANCE 1195km S
Caught		10/07/2018	Leighton Moss
Z051393	1CY	08/08/2015	Llangorse Lake, Powys, Wales
Nesting female		18/05/2018	Brockholes NR, Preston 210km NNE

S042298	1CY	24/08/2016	Leighton Moss
Caught	Male	25/06/2017	Eshton Tarn (N Yorks) 48 km ESE
Z708847	Adult M	17/06/2016	Leighton Moss
Caught		31/07/2017	Worsley (Gt.Manchester) 79 km
S474742	Juvenile	05/08/2017	Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park, Fylde
Caught		28/08/2017	West Down Plantation, Salisbury Plain, Wiltshire
ADA0454	Adult	04/05/2018	Middleton NR
		22/07/2018	Blackers Rock Lough Neagh .N Ireland 225 kmWNW

Still a scarce bird in Northern Ireland. This landfalled at Middleton as part of one of the biggest spring 'falls' recorded at Heysham Obs.

6950500	Adult	14/08/2014	Les Barthes-de-Quartier-Bas, Pyrénées-Atlantiques, FRANCE 43 27N 1 28W
Caught		08/07/2017	Brookvale, Liverpool 1119km N
D998806	Juvenile	17/07/2014	Leighton Moss
Breeding		17/05 & 04/06/2017	Cors Ddyga Llangefni (Anglesey)145km SW

WAXWING

+CRs	1CY M	29/12/2016	Warrington, Cheshire
Seen		05/01/2017	Blackburn 40 km NNE

A midwinter movement to the north-east is against the usual pattern with this species

BLACKBIRD

7887855	1CY M	23/10/2017	Horumersiel (Weser-Ems) GERMANY 53 40N 8 0E
Recaptured		25/11/2017	Underhand, Newton-in-Bowland 687km W
LA288964	1CY M	16/03/2015	Heysham NR
Dead		28/03/2018	Royknes (Vest-Agder) NORWAY 58 19N 7 52E 821km NE

ROBIN

S808539	Adult	11/03/2017	Kildary, Cromarty Firth (Highland)
Caught		01/05/2018	Heysham NR 420km S

This was an obvious 'grey orange-breasted' bird of presumed north European origin so we jokingly hoped for a repeat of the Fair Isle Reed Bunting (see below). Not far out. Passage for some species was quite late in spring 2018 and this presumably accounts for the variation in dates. It was the ONLY bird caught at Heysham NR on 1/5/18!

PIED FLYCATCHER

S007061	Nestling	03/06/2017	Strid, Bolton Abbey (North Yorks)
Caught	Nesting F	24/05/2018	Black Wood, Claughton, Lunevalley 51 km WNW
D078988	Nestling	13/06/2015	Thrushcross Reservoir: (North Yorkshire)
Caught	Nesting F	11/06/2017	Birkett, Newton-in-Bowland 48km WSW
L351877	Nestling	15/06/2016	Baringham (Durham)
Caught	Nesting F	18/05/2017	New Laithe Farm, Newton-in-Bowland 71km SSW

The most distant movements recorded for 'new' birds, but the Durham-ringed veteran (see last year's report) returned to Roeburndale in 2017/8

GREY WAGTAIL

D657071 & CRs	1CY	21/09/2013	Heysham NR
Seen		15/11-26/12/2016	Sandbach, Cheshire 105km SSE
Seen		from 30/11/2017	Sandbach, Cheshire 105km SSE

Has it been wintering at Sandbach since 2013 and where is it breeding (assuming the origin is from the north of Heysham)?

ADA0058	1CY	25/09/2017	Heysham NR
Dead in cold weather		01/03/2018	Stoke Park, Market Drayton, Shropshire 137km S
S371334	1CY	14/09/2016	Middleton NR
Hit window: dead		13/03/2018	Glanwydden, Conwy 99km SW

Three recoveries within the established zone of wintering birds, but the first two to have been found dead; all the rest (bar one caught by a ringer) have been successfully read in the field due to the colour rings (some reported as Yellow Wagtails!). In addition, three wintered in the Cockerham/Thurnham area of nearby north Fylde.

GREENFINCH

TV61815	1CY F	17/08/2017	Heysham NR
Fresh dead		02/02/2018	Somercotes (Derbyshire) 149km SE

CHAFFINCH

S643533	Adult M	11/03/2018	Mere Sands Wood
Dead		02/04/2018	Ahlhorn, Grossenkneten, Weser-Ems, GERMANY 52 52N 8 13E 741km E
9BB4108	Adult M	19/03/2017	Stenvaenget, Hillerod, Frederiksberg, DENMARK 55 57N 12 16E
Caught		18/12/2017 & 25/02/2018	Mere Sands Wood 1003km WSW

TWITE

S347045 & CRs	1CY M	21/01/2017	Booth Wood Reservoir, Rishworth, West Yorkshire
Seen		15/10/2017	Bank End, Cockerham, Fylde 69km WNW

This is odd. I can't find any previous examples of Pennine birds wintering or near the breeding site, then at least dispersing to, if not intending to winter at a Lancs coastal site. Ringing at Heysham and other observations suggest only a small proportion winter on the Lancs coast with most heading SE to East Anglia etc

Z295815	1CY M	15/02/2015	Heysham north harbour wall
Recaptured		05/12/2017	Askam-in-Furness, Cumbria 27 km

Much more typical; several examples of birds reaching Lancs one winter, then staying SW Cumbria in a subsequent winter and vice-versa

LESSER REDPOLL

Z671583	1CY	18/10/2017	Calf of Man (Isle of Man)
Caught		02/11/2017	Middleton NR 126 km E
Z836197	1CY F	06/05/2015	Heysham NR
Caught x 3		25/3-08/04/2018	Hope under Dinmore Leominster (Herts) 208 km 702 days
S144922	2CY M	21/04/2016	Billinge Hill, near Billinge, Merseyside
Caught		25/04/2018	Leswalt, Dumfries and Galloway, 221 km NW
D717537	Adult M	03/04/2014	Llanfyllin, Powys
Caught		13/05-20/07/2015	Crawford, near Up Holland, Lancashire
Caught		18/03/2016	Crawford, near Up Holland, Lancashire
Caught		01/11/2017	Billinge Hill, near Billinge, Merseyside, 89 km NNE
Y435706	1CY M	19/10/2011	Icklesham, Sussex, East Sussex,
Caught		06/04/2017	Billinge Hill, near Billinge, Merseyside, 370 km NW
Y415223	1CY M	10/08/2013	Ty Rhyg, Rosebush, Pembrokeshire,
Caught		29/10/2013	Litlington, East Sussex, 368 km ESE
Caught		25/03/2017	Billinge Hill, near Billinge, Merseyside, 227 km NE
Z854359	1CY M	23/09/2015	Billinge Hill, near Billinge, Merseyside
Caught		14/03/2017	Culford School, Suffolk, 264 km ESE
Z835876	Juvenile	08/10/2015	Leighton Moss, RSPB: (Lancashire)
Caught		14/03/2017	Culford (Suffolk) 310km SE
Z707072	1Y M	18/02/2016	Rishton, nr Blackburn
Caught		13/04/2017	Deer Park Forest Croft (Highland) 438km NNW

GOLDFINCH

Y990717	1CY F	19/01/2014	Draycott (Gloucester)
Caught		08/04/2018	Rishton, nr Blackburn 198 km NNW
S783294	1CY F	06/10/2017	Rishton, nr Blackburn
Dead		20/10/2017	Cheadle (Staffs) 91 km SSE
S371727	Juvenile	21/10/2016	Middleton Nature Reserve: (Lancashire)
Caught		13/04/2017	Leswalt (Dumfries and Galloway) 174km
Z295490	Juvenile	01/11/2015	Rishton, nr Blackburn
Caught		04/04/2016 & 04/04/2017	Leswalt : (Dumfries and Galloway) 217km

Z707626	Juvenile	30/10/2016	Rishton, nr Blackburn
Caught		14/01/2017	Macclesfield (Cheshire) 56km SSE
S374162	Adult M	11/02/2017	New Laithe Farm, Newton-in-Bowland
Caught		23/09/2017	Lydox Mill Dairsie (Fife) 269km N
S783344	Juvenile	20/10/2017	Rishton, nr Blackburn
Caught	Juvenile	28/10/2017	Lower Basildon (West Berkshire) 265km
AAC0223	1CY M	10/01/2018	Dunton (Buckingham)
Caught		07/04/2018	Heysham NR 275km NNW
Z751550	1CY F	01/11/2017	Clayton Brook, Lancs SD5724
Freshly dead		07/07/2018	Temple Sowerby, Cumbria 102km N
Y527583	Juvenile	29/10/2017	Dungeness, Kent
Caught		17/04/2018	Thornton, Merseyside SD3300 393km NW
Z019887	1CY F	01/01/2016	Crawford, near Up Holland, Lancashire
Caught x 2		26/03 & 08/04/2018	Leswalt, Dumfries and Galloway, 218 km NW
S881290	Juvenile	06/08/2017	Billinge Hill, near Billinge, Merseyside
Caught	Female	27/10/2017	Dunsby, Bourne, Lincolnshire, 174 km ESE

SISKIN

S783515	2CY F	24/03/2018	Rishton, nr Blackburn
Killed by cat		06/05/2018	Elverum (Hedmark) NORWAY 60 51N 11 45E 1151 kms NE
S374260	1CY M	12/03/2017	New Laithe Farm, Newton-in-Bowland
Caught		27/04/2018	Drummond (Highland) 407 km N
S374141	Adult F	11/02/2017	New Laithe Farm, Newton-in-Bowland
Dead		13/04/2017	Dunlichity: (Highland) 395km NNW

REED BUNTING

Z860844	1CY F	12/10/2016	Pilling Marsh, Fylde
Breeding female		10/05 & 14/06/2017	Little Crosthwaite, Keswick, Cumbria
S474533	Adult M	05/07/2017	Marton Mere, Fylde
Caught		27/10/2017	Chelmarsh Reservoir, Bridgnorth, Shropshire
S387264	1CY M	08/01/2017	Chelmarsh Reservoir, Bridgnorth, Shropshire
Caught		25/07/2017	Middleton NR 174km N
S371035	1CY M	09/10/2016	Middleton NR
Caught		24/04/2018	Fair Isle (Shetland) 618 km N

The key to this is the ringing date and what was happening then c/f Siberian Accentors, Yellow-browed Warblers etc.. Was this appearance of a presumed Scandinavian or further east bird on autumn passage in Lancashire a weather-related 'vagrant' or do small numbers regularly pass through?

FIRST FOR LANCASHIRE

BLACK-THROATED THRUSH IN FULWOOD, 12-13 MARCH 2017

Chris Batty

On the evening of 12 March 2017 Sam Baxter posted on the UK Wildlife Photographers and UK Bird Identification Facebook groups a video of an unidentified thrush that he had taken with his smartphone in Fulwood earlier that day. Although overexposed the video was of sufficient quality to show that the bird was a Black-throated Thrush due to the grey upperparts, lightly streaked underparts, black tail and yellow base to the bill. The white throat indicated that the bird was a female and a moult limit in the greater coverts (replaced second generation feathers contrasting with worn retained juvenile feathers) showed it to be a first-winter.

On learning the significance of the sighting Sam kindly advised birders that the exact location was a grass verge in an industrial estate at Forest Green. On 13 March I arrived at dawn and was soon joined by Zac Hinchcliffe who at 06:20 located the Black-throated Thrush in the exact spot Sam had left it. The bird was feeding on worms in the grass by the path for less than a minute before it flicked up into the trees never to be seen again.

Black-throated Thrush breeds in Russia from the Ural Mountains east to north central Siberia and south to the Tarbagatai Mountains and northwest Mongolia. Its wintering range stretches east from the eastern Middle East to the Himalayas, south China and north Myanmar (Collar 2018).

This Lancashire record represents the eightieth example of the species in Britain but only the second in northwest England – the first having been present in Greater Manchester at Sale on 24 November 1983 – with other proximal records from Denbighshire (December 2016), Derbyshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, North Yorkshire (2) and South Yorkshire (2). Nationally, October is the peak month of occurrence but away from coastal migration watchpoints inland records are concentrated in the winter months and are frequently discovered in suburbia (Slack 2009).

References

Collar, N. 2018. Black-throated Thrush (*Turdus atrogularis*). In: del Hoyo, J., Elliott, A., Sargatal, J., Christie, D.A. & de Juana, E. (eds.). Handbook of the Birds of the World Alive. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona. (retrieved from <https://www.hbw.com/node/58259> on 13 April 2018).

Slack, R. 2009. Rare Birds Where and When. An Analysis of Status & Distribution in Britain and Ireland. Vol. 1 sandgrouse to New World orioles. Rare Bird Books, York.

Abbreviations used in the text

1S - first-summer, 1W - first-winter, and so on.

GC	Golf Course	MSW	Mere Sands Wood (LWT)
GP	Gravel Pit	SNR	Seaforth Nature Reserve (LWT)
LNR	Local Nature Reserve	BBRC	British Birds Rarities Committee
ML	Marine Lake	BOURC	British Ornithologists Union Records Committee
NR	Nature Reserve	BTO	British Trust for Ornithology
NNR	National Nature Reserve	CBC	Common Bird Census (BTO)
Qry	Quarry	BBS	Breeding Bird Survey (BTO)
Res	Reservoir	WeBS	Wetland Bird Survey
SW	Sewage Works	CDNHS	Chorley & District Natural History Society
WwTW	Waste water Treatment Works	ELOC	East Lancs Ornithologists Club
EMP/C	Eric Morecambe Pools complex	LDBWS	Lancaster and District Birdwatching Society
MBR	Morecambe Bay Reserve (RSPB)	LWT	Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside Wildlife Trust
MB(ay)S	Morecambe Bay South (Lancashire section of Morecambe Bay WeBS)	SWLRG	South-West Lancashire Ringing Group
MMWWT	Martin Mere Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust Reserve		

Migrant Dates 2017

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 2017.
- The earliest recorded spring and latest recorded autumn records.
- The average (mean) first arrival and last departure dates 1990-2017.
- The trends for earlier or later arrival or departure where these are statistically significant between 1990 and 2017.

Records of overwintering and sickly birds have been omitted.

	Spring				Autumn			
	2017	Earliest	Mean	Trend	2017	Latest	Mean	Trend
Garganey	15/3	24/2/95	29/3		4/10			
Osprey	24/3	4/3/05	22/3	Earlier	12/10	15/11/14	10/10	
LRP	21/3	8/3/10	19/3		16/9	19/10/76	16/9	
Dotterel	22/4	29/3/89	21/4					
Whimbrel	9/4	11/3/78	7/4		/	6/11/88	2/10	
Common Sandpiper	/	18/3/11	4/4	Earlier	1/11	1/11/16	14/10	Later
Wood Sandpiper	25/4	14/4/83	2/5		12/10	5/12/12	18/9	
Little Tern	30/4	12/4/13	23/4		13/9	23/10/03	12/9	
Black Tern	27/4	11/4/80	29/4		29/10	23/11/14	10/10	
Sandwich Tern	27/3	13/3/90	26/3		15/10	2/12/94	15/10	
Common Tern	12/4	30/3/07	12/4		29/10	17/11/77	13/10	Earlier
Arctic Tern	10/4	1/4/94	16/4		30/9	18/11/11	10/10	
Cuckoo	15/4	23/3/00	16/4	Earlier	5/8	9/10/07	30/8	
Swift	17/4	1/4/04	16/4		17/10	4/12/63	5/10	
Sand Martin	5/3	24/2/90	10/3		6/10	13/10/72	5/10	
Swallow	13/3	5/3/14	21/3		17/11	31/12/86	22/11	
House Martin	19/3	17/3/63	31/3	Earlier	22/10	31/12/81	26/10	
Wood Warbler	29/4	14/4/79	24/4		/	26/9/67		
Willow Warbler	22/4	23/3/15	29/3		9/10	18/11/89	10/10	
Garden Warbler	7/4	6/4/11	18/4	Earlier	28/9	13/11/95	12/10	Earlier
Lesser Whitethroat	10/4	3/4/14	18/4	Earlier	26/9	23/11/99	3/10	
Whitethroat	11/4	2/4/14	15/4	Earlier	1/10	23/10/90	1/10	
Grasshopper Warbler	6/4	3/4/14	15/4	Earlier	13/9	4/10/12 & 13	20/9	
Sedge Warbler	3/4	27/3/03	11/4		9/10	14/11/96	29/9	
Reed Warbler	2/4	5/4/11	13/4	Earlier	8/10	14/11/93	13/10	
Spotted Flycatcher	7/5	14/4/15	30/4		26/9	15/11/79	2/10	
Pied Flycatcher	9/4	7/4/11	15/4		5/8	3/11/01	20/9	Earlier
Ring Ouzel	22/3	7/3/16	21/3		19/10	11/12/00	4/11	
Redstart	2/4	28/3/68 & 12	9/4	Earlier	19/9	10/11/82	2/10	
Whinchat	19/4	20/3/76	20/4		1/10	12/11/79	11/10	
Wheatear	5/3	26/2/03	10/3		28/10	27/11/11	31/10	
Yellow Wagtail	16/4	24/3/96	10/4		14/10	11/11/95	10/10	
Tree Pipit	3/4	17/3/57	4/4		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:

- Red-breasted Goose, Marshside & Fylde sites, 4 January to 18 February 2017
- Black-throated Thrush, Fulwood, 12 to 13 March 2017
- Iberian Chiffchaff, Seaforth NR, 8 to 9 April 2017
- Pallid Harrier, Whitendale, 26 April to 14 May, 2017
- Ferruginous Duck, Hesketh Out Marsh, 13 to 16 August 2017
- Caspian Tern, Holden Wood Reservoir, 20 June 2017
- Gull-billed Tern, Martin Mere, 26 July 2017
- Wilson's Phalarope, Alston Wetland, 9 September 2017
- Long-billed Dowitcher, south Ribble Marshes & Martin Mere, two, 9 October to 5 November 2017

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
- 'Cackling Goose, Marshside, 25 October 2012
- North American Canada Geese, various north Fylde sites, 20 January to 2 April 2017
- Caspian Tern, Leighton Moss, 20 to 21 June 2017
- Black-headed Wagtail, Eric Morecambe complex, 14 to 16 April 2018
- Savi's Warbler, Brockholes Wetland, 22 to 25 April 2018

The following record was found to be not proven by the BBRC:

- Coues's Arctic Redpoll, Billinge Hill, 30 December 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. Current members of the committee are Steve White (non-voting 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 and Marsh outside of their known ranges also need to be supported by descriptions. Black-winged Stilt and Red-flanked Bluetail have been dropped as national rarities from the beginning of 2017, while Ferruginous Duck is now treated as a national rarity 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
Lesser Scaup	Long-tailed Skua	Barred Warbler
Surf Scoter	Puffin	Dartford Warbler
Black Grouse	Little Auk	Subalpine Warbler*
White-billed Diver	White-winged Black Tern	Icterine Warbler
Cory's Shearwater	Roseate Tern	Melodious Warbler
Great Shearwater	Sabine's Gull	Blyth's Reed Warbler
Sooty Shearwater	Ring-billed Gull	Marsh Warbler
Balearic Shearwater	Caspian Gull	Red-flanked Bluetail
Wilson's Petrel	Turtle Dove	Rose-coloured Starling
Night Heron	Nightjar	Nightingale
Cattle Egret	Alpine Swift	Bluethroat
Purple Heron	Hoopoe	Red-breasted Flycatcher
Glossy Ibis	Bee-eater	Citrine Wagtail
Red-necked Grebe	Wryneck	Grey-headed Wagtail
Honey Buzzard	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	Richard's Pipit
Black Kite	Red-footed Falcon	Olive-backed Pipit
White-tailed Eagle	Golden Oriole	Common Rosefinch
Montagu's Harrier	Red-backed Shrike	Common (Mealy) Redpoll
Rough-legged Buzzard	Woodchat Shrike	Arctic Redpoll*
Golden Eagle	Chough	Serin
Spotted Crake	Woodlark	Lapland Bunting
Corncrake	Shore Lark	Cirl Bunting
Common Crane	Short-toed Lark	Ortolan Bunting
Stone Curlew	Red-rumped Swallow	Little Bunting
Black-winged Stilt	Penduline Tit	
American Golden Plover	Willow and Marsh Tits	
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! The society currently has around 150 members and if half the people on this list were a member or purchased a copy, we'd certainly have a secure future! Once again we have produced the report in full colour and kept the price at just £7. Thanks to everyone who's submitted images and allowed us use them! We would be delighted to receive further submissions from the growing number of Lancashire birders with high quality photographic equipment.

K Abram	SA Burke	P Ellis	A Holmes	PJ Marsh	W Richmond
C & S Alderson	CI Bushell	M Evans	R Holmes	J Marshant	D Rickards
PJ Alker	J Butcher	K Fairclough	W Honeywell	DS Martin	D Rigby
S Ankers	JR Butcher	M Farrar	PJ Hornby	SJ Martin	M Rimmer
A Ashworth	AJ Cameron	C Farrell	R Horner	PR Massey	J Roberts
R Ashworth	I Cameron	J Fenton	J Howarth	B McCarthy	PA Robinson
WC Aspin	DK Campbell	M Fishwick	J Howarth	M McGough	ST Robinson
A Baines	G Carefoot	JD Fletcher	J Howlett	DJ McGrath	N Root
T Baker	J Carroll	SG Flynn	RE Hoyle	J McTague	L Rose
D Balding	R Carter	S Foote	G Hulme	N Melsom	P Ross
I Ball	J Catt	J Frankland	A Humphreys-	M Memory	D Rothwell
JK Bannon	D Chew	P Fyldes	Jones	J Metcalf	R Rowe
PD Barnet	T Clare	C Fyles	R Hyde	J Mickelthwaite	P Rowlands
CG Batty	P Clark	C Galeski	R Ives	S Milne.	S Ryder
S Baxter	G Clarkson	I Gardner	M Jackson	G Morgan	A Ryding
K Bayliss	J Coates	M Garner	S Jackson	P Morri	M Scott
D Beattie	J Cobham	G Gavaghan	A Johnson	K Morrison	J Scragg
J Beattie	AJ Conway	DL Gifford	C Johnson	T Myerscough	P Sharples
K Beaver	D Cook	N Godden	P Johnson	M Naylor	T Sharples
R&S Bedford	P Cook	D Goulder	H Jones	M Nightingale	CJ Sharratt
D Beevers	M Cookson	K Green	A Jones	D Nuttall	P Slade
C Bell	AA Cooper	ME Green-	G Jones	S O'Hara	PG Slade
DA Bickerton	I Corbett	halgh	H Jones	PJ Olson	P Slater
F Bird	A Cornell	S Grimshaw	M Jones	J Ormerod	MA Small
LG Blacow	P Crooks	I Hadwin	S Jones	D Ousey	J Smith
B Blanchard	P Cross	J Hallsworth	K Kelly	J Packham	PH Smith
P Boardman	S Cross	N Hancock	RJ Kennedy	A Parnell	RH Smith
J Bolton	MJC Cuff	D Hardaker	P King	C Partington	NT Southworth
D Bowker	RE Danson	R Hargreaves	P Kinsella	G Patefield	KG Spencer
B Bracken	S Darbyshire	IM Harper	P Kirk	N Patel	R Spencer
J Bradley	T Darbyshire	L Harrison	B Kirkwood	E Pemberton	D Spiers
I Brady	N Dawson	I Hartley	PJ Knight	S Pettit	R Stinger
J Bray	J Dempsey	C Haworth	P Krischkiw	SG Piner	D Strath
Mgt Breaks	B Derbyshire	S Hayat	JC Lavin	A Pollard	M Stuart
Mk Breaks	AS Disley	K Haydock	A Leach	K Pollard	D Sulway
K Brides	J Donnelly	D Haywood	A Leeming	G Powley	J Sutton
K Briggs	D Downing	E Hediger	N Leeming	L Poxon	K Sutton
R Briggs	A Draper	R Hewitt	C Liggett	A Pryce	JE Taylor
CM Brookes	S Driver	S Heywood	G Lilley	R Pyefinch	S Taylor
D Broome	R du Feu	M Higgin	K Lister	C Rae	Ga Thomas
B Brown	A Dunn	G Higgins	J Love	C Reed	Gr Thomas
A Bunting	S Dunstan	Z Hinchcliffe	D Lumb	P Rhodes	BJ Thompson
N Burke	B Dyson	M Hinchliffe	A Makin	P Rhodes	M Thornhill
P Burke	SP Eaves	D Hindle	B Makinson	RW Rhodes	CG Tomlinson
SA Burke	J Edwards	G Hodgkinson	I Manfield	CJ Richardson	DH Turner

T Vaughan	A Watson	TJ Wells	SJ White	J Wilson	JF Wright
G Waddington	M Watson	SP Wende	I Whittaker	D Windle	A Young
I Walker	WJ Webb	N West	P Whittaker	K Woan	D Young
JF Walsh	P Webster	P West	I Whittle	B Wood	S Young
SD Ward	M Welch	T West	MW Wigley	P Woodruff	
SJ Ward	K Wells	T Westhead	M Wilby	PJ Woods	

Alt WeBS
Birdguides
BTO/RSPB Birdtrack
Chorley & District Natural History report
Cuerden Valley Park report
ELOC Report
Fylde Bird Club database

Heysham NR & Observatory Report
LDBWS report
Lunt Meadows Bird Report
Mersey WeBS
MMWWT logs
Morecambe Bay WeBS
Natural England, Bowlan

North Lancashire Wildlife Group report
Rare Bird Alert
Ribble WeBS
Seaforth Bird Report
United Utilities

Lancashire & Cheshire Fauna Society

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Next Annual General Meeting will be held on 10am Saturday 2nd March 2019 – 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 and ‘The Vertebrates of Lancashire’ in 2017). 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.