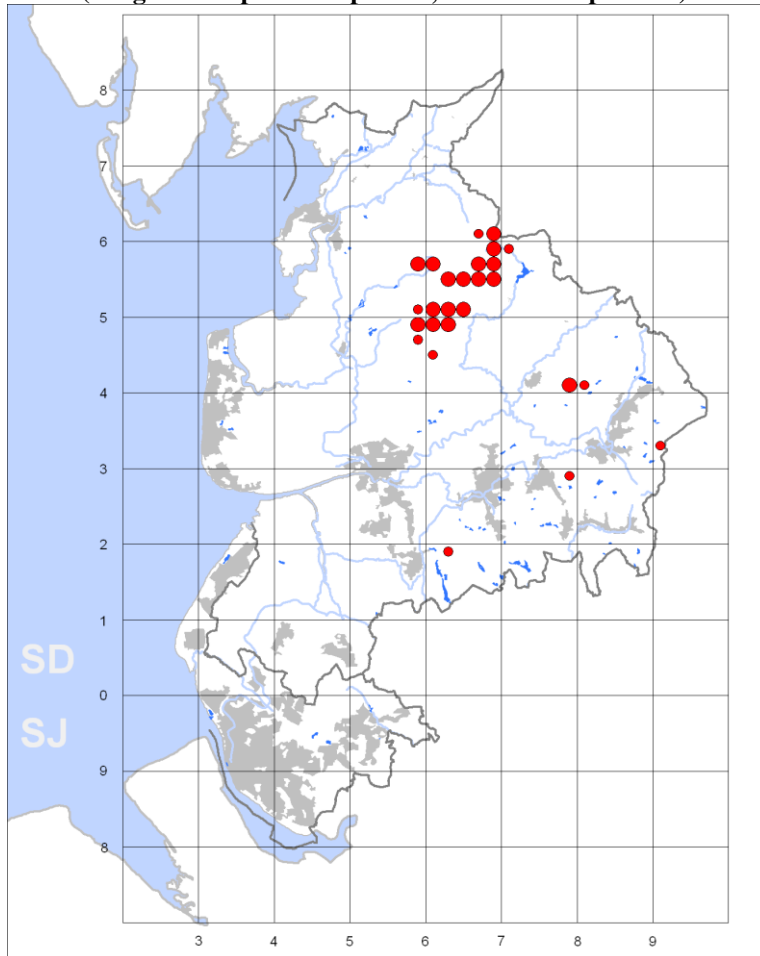


RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus*

Breeding

The status of this charismatic summer visitor to the Lancashire uplands has been one of slow but almost uninterrupted decline since the 1970s. The 1968-72 national Atlas recorded the species in 20 10km squares within the present county boundaries with breeding confirmed in all of them; the range had been reduced to 16 squares by the 1988-91 New Atlas, with proof of nesting in only eight.

Figure 1. Ring Ouzel: breeding distribution, 2008-2011.
(Large dots = probable/proven; small dots = possible).

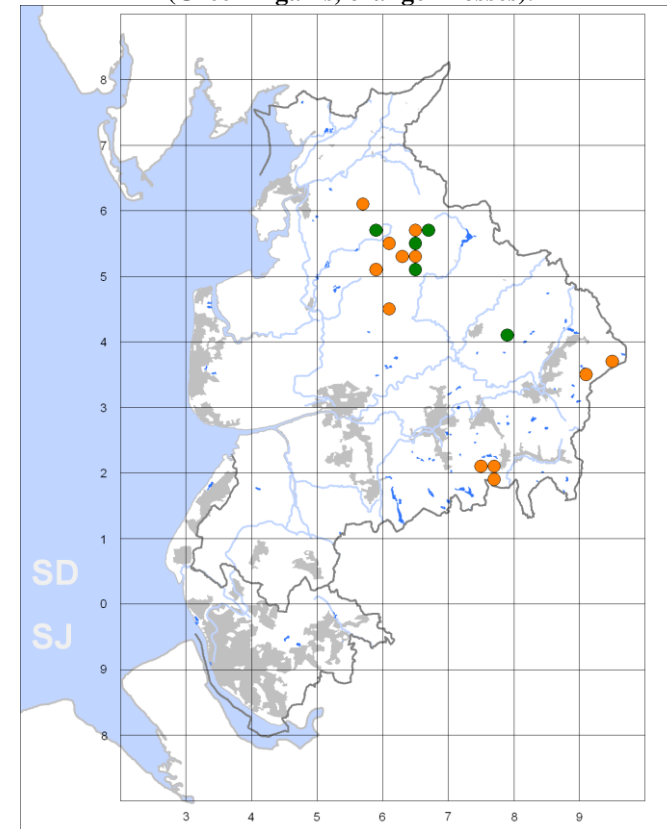


The present survey found Ring Ouzels in 26 tetrads with proven or probable breeding in 17, a range contraction of 29.2% (Fig.1). All twelve tetrads in which breeding was proven were in Bowland, where nesting was thought probable in a further four tetrads. The one probable breeding record away from this core area was in the Pendle Hill area, while the three possible breeding records in the south-east of the county, at White Coppice, Great Hameldon Hill (Hyndburn) and Hameldon (Pendle), were perhaps single migrants briefly exploring suitable habitat.

The breeding change map shows that the species has fallen back into an ever-shrinking outpost in Bowland, with losses from almost all the outlying tetrads identified in the 1997-2000 survey (Fig.2).

The population was estimated at 20 pairs.

Figure 2. Ring Ouzel: changes in breeding distribution, 1997-2000 to 2008-2011.
(Green = gains, orange = losses).



Winter

Our Ring Ouzels migrate to winter in Iberia and North Africa but late autumn passage birds are not unusual in Lancashire. Three November records earned the species two tetrads in the Winter Atlas survey, birds at Cockersand on 15 November in both 2007 and 2008 and one at Belmont in 2010; none overwintered.

BM

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

Breeding

Blackbirds were probably or proven to be breeding in 892 tetrads during 2008-2011, 95% of the county total (Fig.1). They were absent only from the highest ground in Bowland, north-east and east Lancashire and Rossendale, and from one area of the south Ribble saltmarshes. In addition birds were thought possibly to be breeding in six tetrads, mostly in these same areas but also on the West Pennine Moors.

The breeding range increased slightly between 1997-2000 and 2008-2011 by 16 tetrads (about 2%) but this was mostly accounted for by possible breeding records in upland areas of the West Pennine Moors and the edges of their previous range in Bowland; 17 tetrads were gained during the present survey and one lost (Fig.2).

Counts made during timed visits revealed significant variations in breeding density between broad areas of the county. These were twice as high in the west of the county compared with the east, and 25% higher in the south versus the north. Consequently the highest densities were present in North Merseyside and south-west Lancashire and the lowest by a factor of 2.5 in north-east Lancashire.

Producing a population estimate for such a widespread and numerous species is fraught with difficulties. A total of 16500 individuals was counted during the four years of the survey but it is certain that large numbers were missed, and a reasonable guess as to population size might be around 35000 pairs. This is somewhat lower than the 1997-2000 estimate of 40000 pairs but this was calculated as a percentage of the British population; it is certain that Blackbirds are thriving in Lancashire and likely that their numbers have increased in line with the national situation.

Figure 1. Blackbird: breeding distribution, 2008-2011.
(Large dots = probable/proven; small dots = possible).

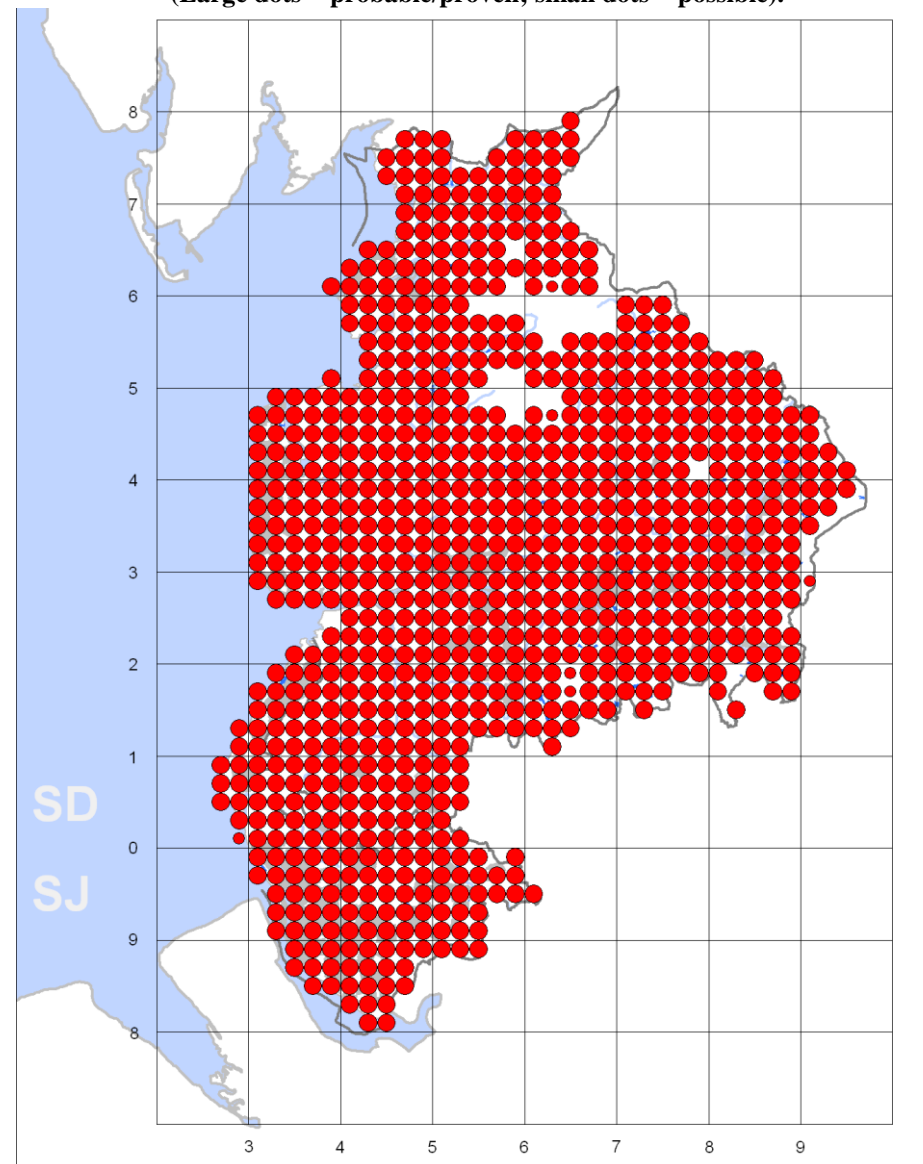


Figure 2. Blackbird: changes in breeding distribution, 1997-2000 to 2008-2011.
(Green = gains, orange = losses).

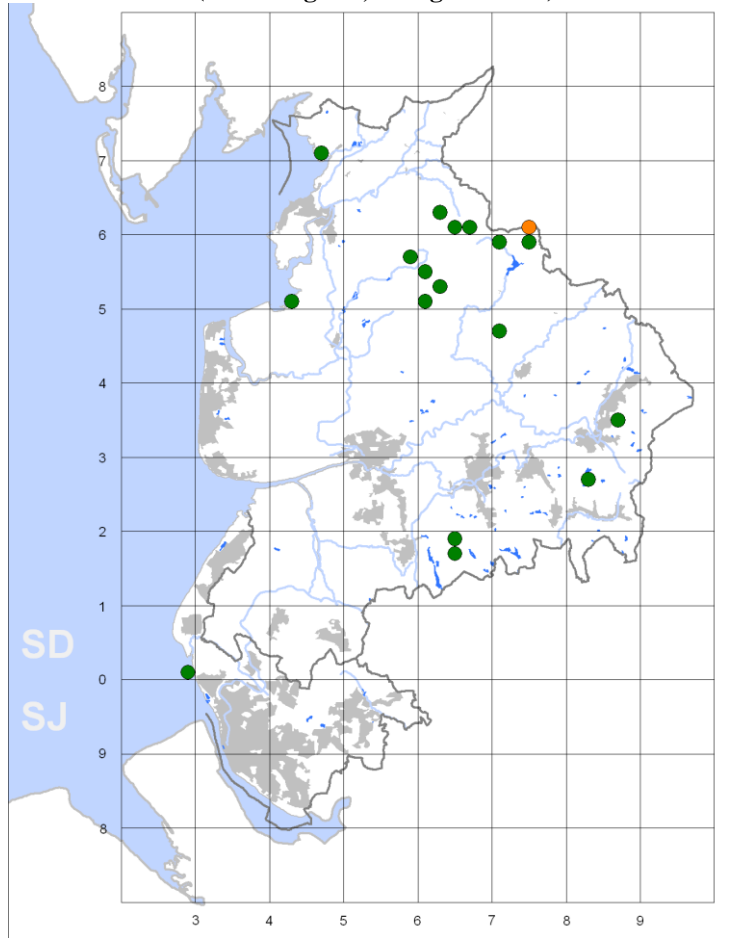
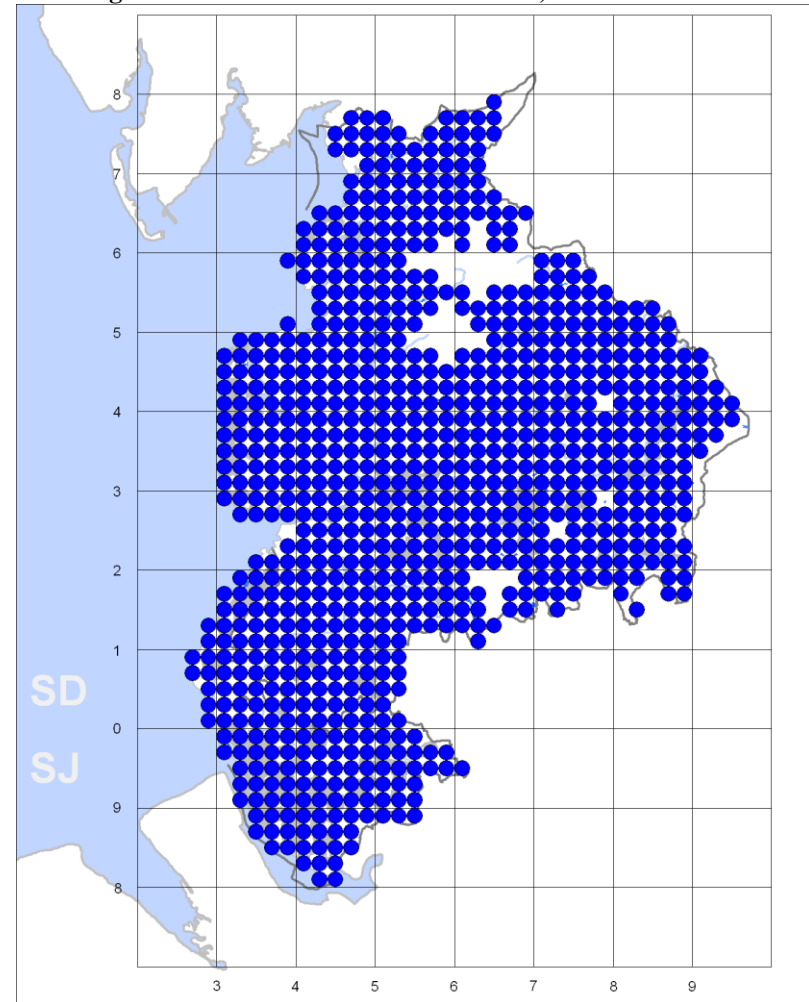


Figure 3. Blackbird: winter distribution, 2007/08-2010/11.

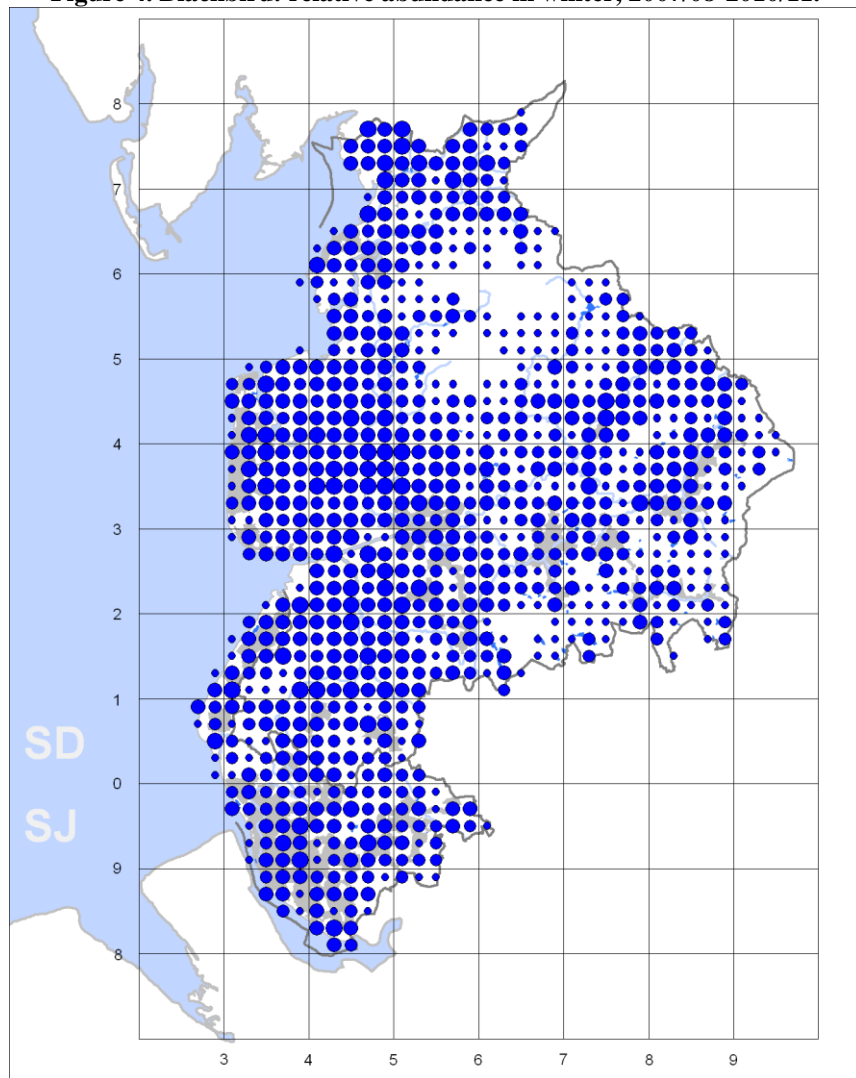


Winter

Blackbird distribution in winter was essentially the same as in the breeding season (Fig.3). Birds were found in 873 tetrads, 92% of the county total. The seasonal difference was almost wholly accounted for by a withdrawal from those areas in the uplands where breeding was either uncertain or densities very low; the one exception to this was their rather surprising apparent absence from SD47V (Carnforth).

As in summer birds were more than twice as numerous in the west of the county than the east although the difference between the south-west and north-west was less marked (Fig.4). Where birds were present densities were low in all upland areas. There was little overall difference between urban and rural areas although the inner areas of the Liverpool conurbation and the Fylde coast supported relatively low numbers, while suburban areas often held quite large populations.

Figure 4. Blackbird: relative abundance in winter, 2007/08-2010/11.



Dot size in descending order: 50-180; 20- 49; 10- 19; 1-9

Fifty or more Blackbirds were counted in 61 tetrads with the largest number 180 at Marton Mere.

Observers provided their own estimates of population size for 277 tetrads, ranging from two to 500 with an average of around 68. Scaled up for all tetrads where birds were present this would produce a county population estimate of 60000 but, given the scale of winter immigrants added to a largely

sedentary breeding population, this is probably significantly on the low side and the real numbers may well be in excess of 100000. If so, then Blackbirds would account for close to 5% of all birds wintering in Lancashire.

SJW

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

Fieldfares are common winter visitors from Fennoscandia arriving, often in large flocks, from early October; sizeable parties of late stragglers may remain in the county well into April. Numbers and patterns of movement vary considerably from one year to the next; in some years large flocks remain with us throughout the winter whilst in others most birds appear to move on further south and west soon after arrival. In several of the present survey winters (2008 and 2010 in particular) very large flocks of Fieldfares were present into the survey period, beginning on 1 November; in other years heavy influxes in October had moved on well before that date.

Fieldfares were recorded in 762 tetrads, 80.6% of the total, during 2007/08-2010/11 (Fig.1). The Winter Distribution map shows records in all regions of the county, with only small areas of the Ribble Valley, the coast and Bowland lacking wintering Fieldfares.

The largest counts were spread fairly evenly between the west and east of the county but with few in central Lancashire (Fig.2). Sixteen tetrads recorded 500 or more; the highest counts were of 2000 at Marton Mere, 1200 at Swinden/Lee Green Reservoirs and 1000 at Blacko/Barrowford Reservoir.

It is extremely difficult to estimate the size of the wintering population for the reasons listed above. However, adding the peak counts recorded in each tetrad produces a total of 60500 seen during the survey. This figure undoubtedly includes a large number of duplicated records both within and between winters but perhaps an average of 20000 birds, which would represent roughly 3% of the British population, is not too far off the mark.

BM

Figure 1. Fieldfare: winter distribution, 2007/08-2010/11.

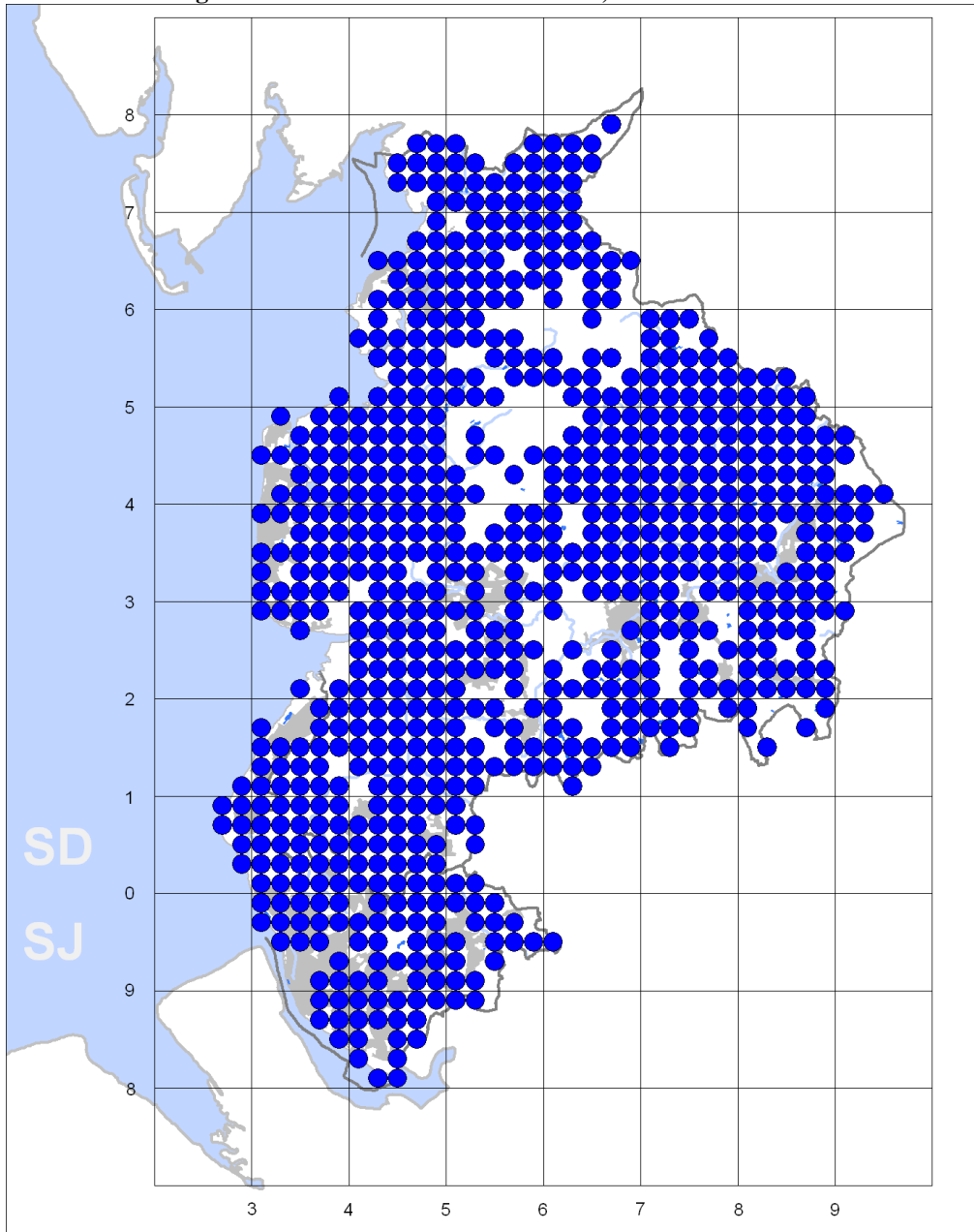
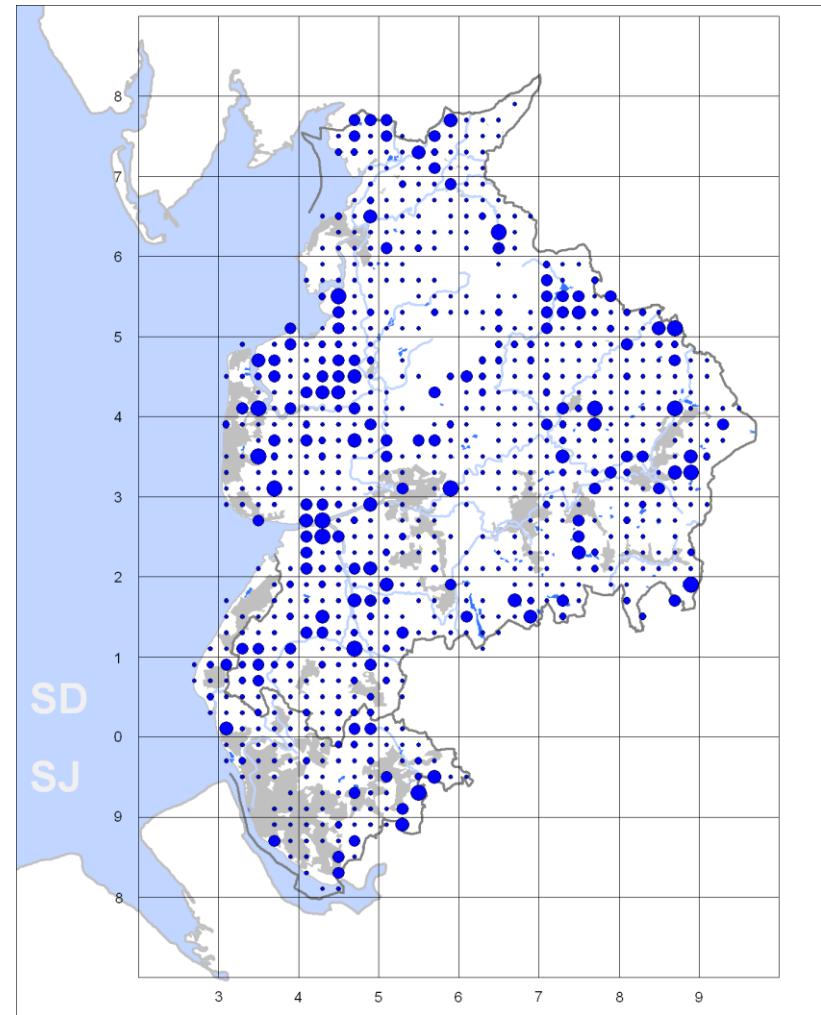


Figure 2. Fieldfare: relative abundance in winter, 2007/08-2010/11.



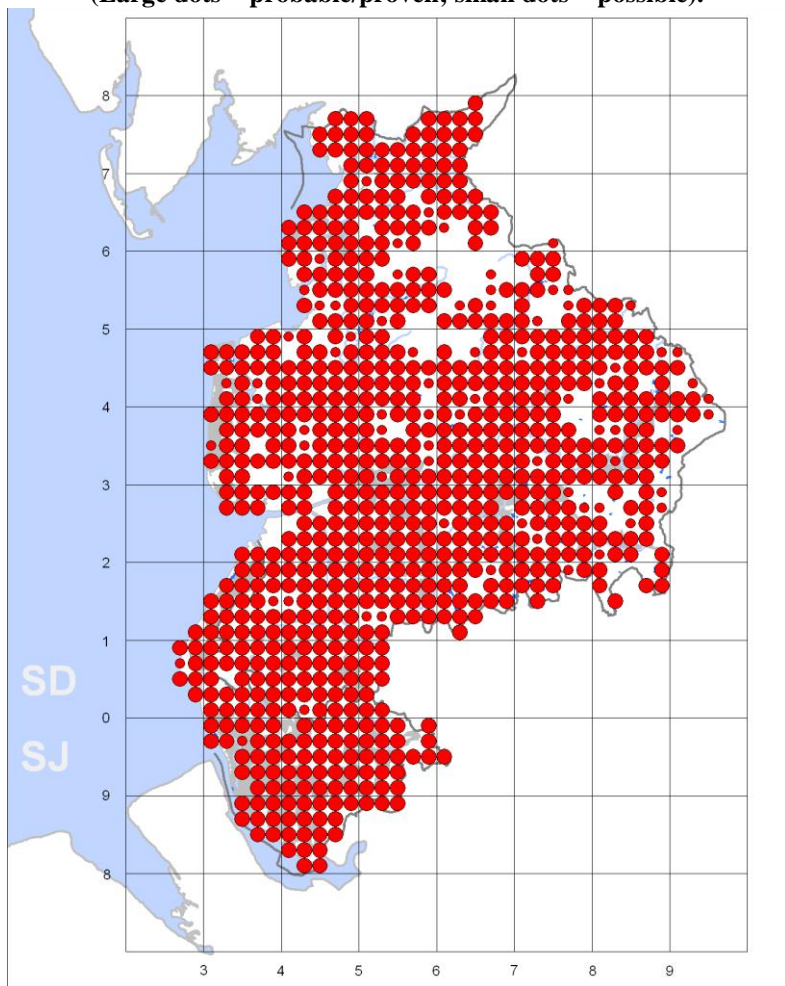
Dot size in descending order: 500-2000; 300-499; 150-299; 100-149; 1-99

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

Breeding

Song Thrushes appear to have enjoyed a small resurgence – or at least held their own – in Lancashire during the twenty-first century; in 2008-2011 they were found in 825 tetrads, covering 88% of the county total and indicating a 6% increase in range since 1997/2000 (Fig.1).

Figure 1. Song Thrush: breeding distribution, 2008-2011.
(Large dots = probable/proven; small dots = possible).



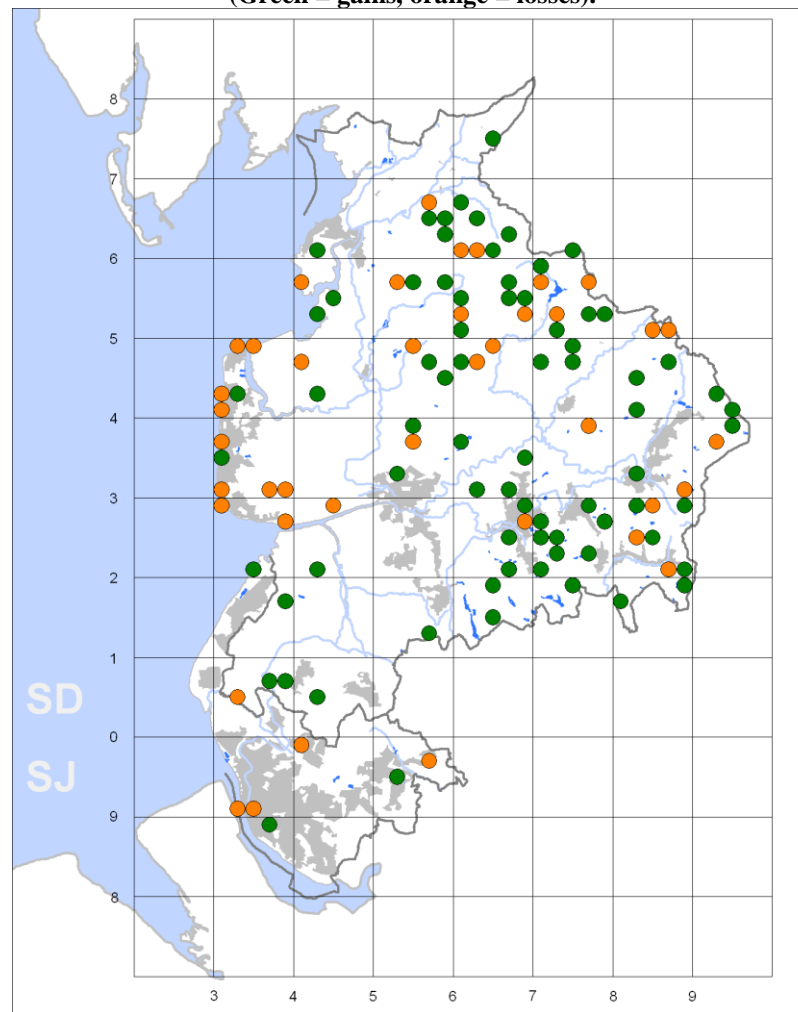
Like so many other species Song Thrushes do not breed on saltmarshes and by and large avoid the uplands, although they are distributed thinly on the fringes of the uplands. They were, however, not confirmed in a handful of lowland tetrads.

A total of 75 tetrads had been freshly occupied since 2000, most of them in the east of the county, while 40 had apparently been abandoned, most noticeably in the Fylde (Fig.2)

The densities in occupied tetrads were 33% higher in the west of the county than the east, but there was no difference between north and south.

Individual tetrad population estimates suggested an average of seven pairs per occupied tetrad, producing a county population estimate of 6000 pairs, 80% fewer than the county Blackbird population and 0.5% of the British total.

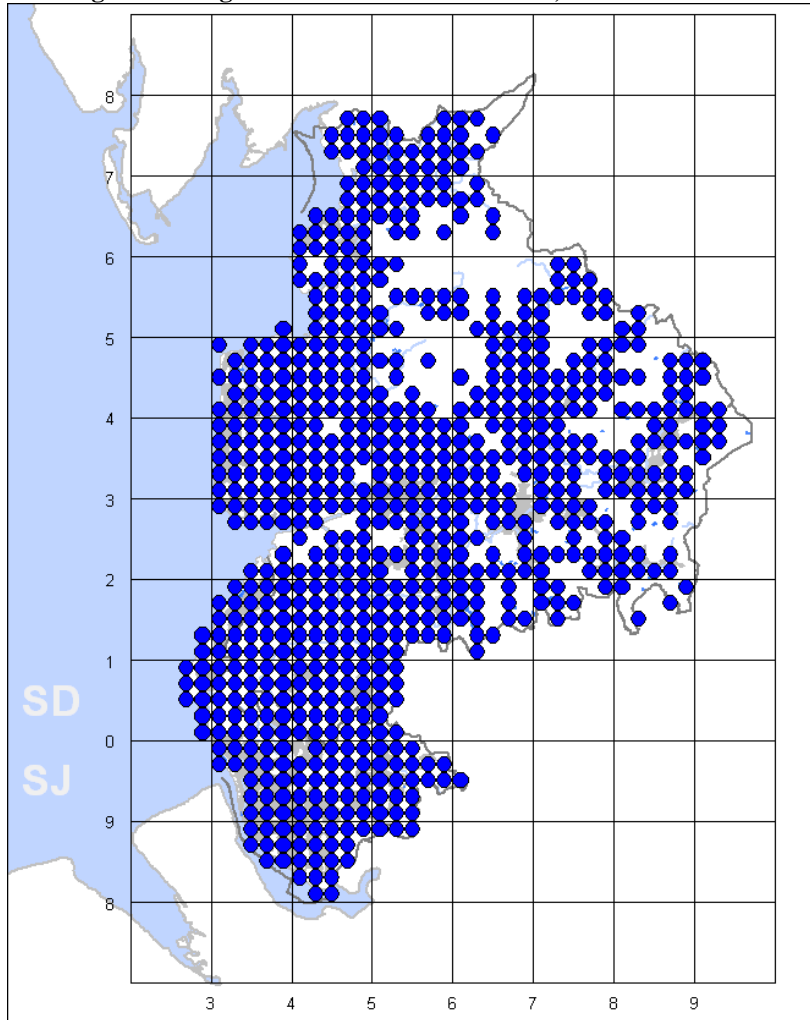
Figure 2. Song Thrush: changes in breeding distribution, 1997-2000 to 2008-2011.
(Green = gains, orange = losses).



Winter

Birds were present in 749 tetrads during 2007/08-2010/11, their range covering 79% of the county, around nine percentage points less than during the breeding season (Fig.3).

Figure 3. Song Thrush: winter distribution, 2007/08-2010/11.



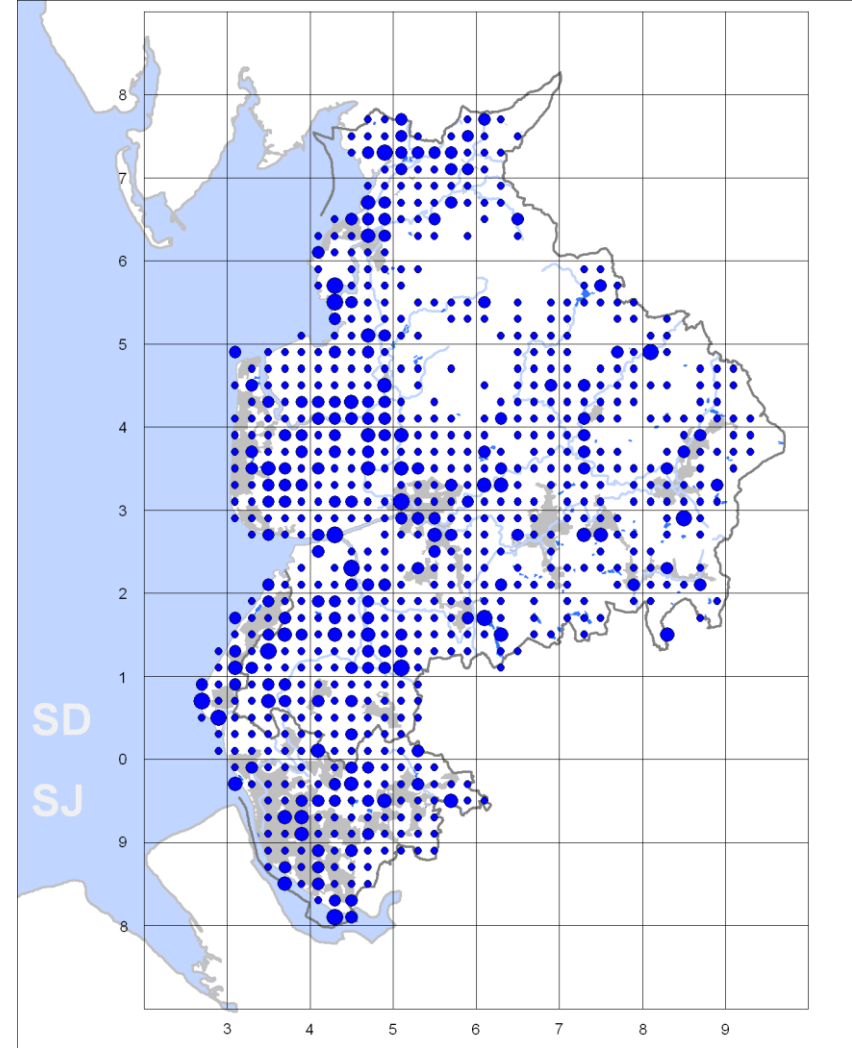
This resulted from a withdrawal from upland areas and a general shift towards the west of the county (Fig.4). There were four peak counts of 20 or more, the largest being 27 at Oglet, 25 at Freckleton Naze, and 20 at Ingol

and Altcar Rifle Ranges/Cabin Hill; the highest in the east was 17 in the Ribble Valley in the Stirk House tetrad (SD84E).

The species is largely sedentary so the best estimate of the winter population, based upon the assumption of an average of three birds surviving from each breeding pair, was 18000 individuals.

SJW

Figure 4. Song Thrush: relative abundance in winter, 2007/08-2010/11.

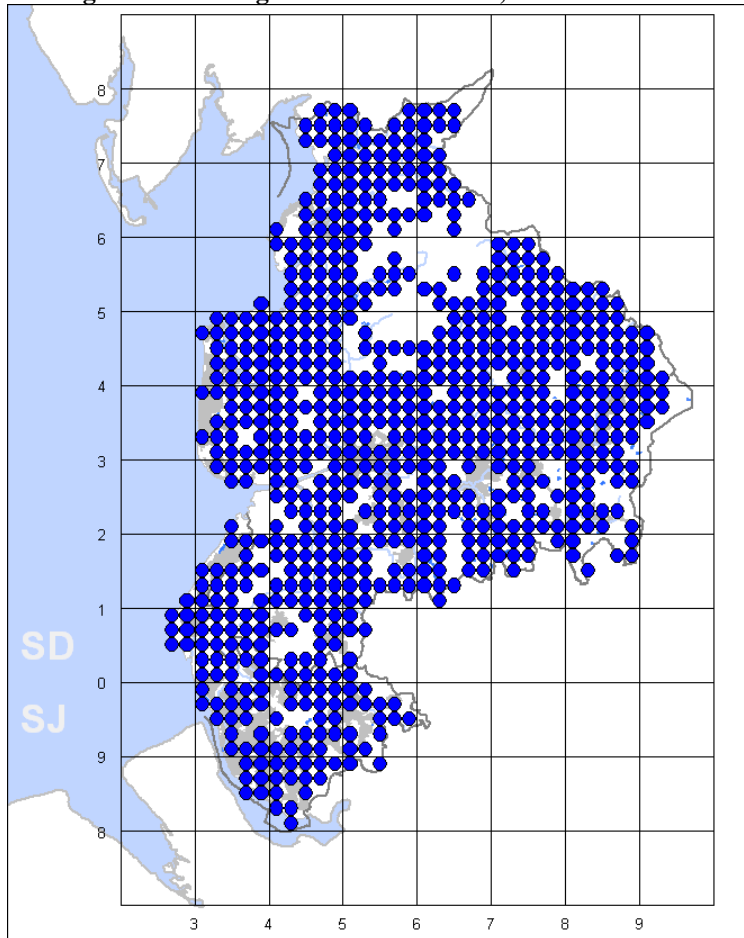


Dot size in descending order: 15-27; 10-14; 5-9; 1-4

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

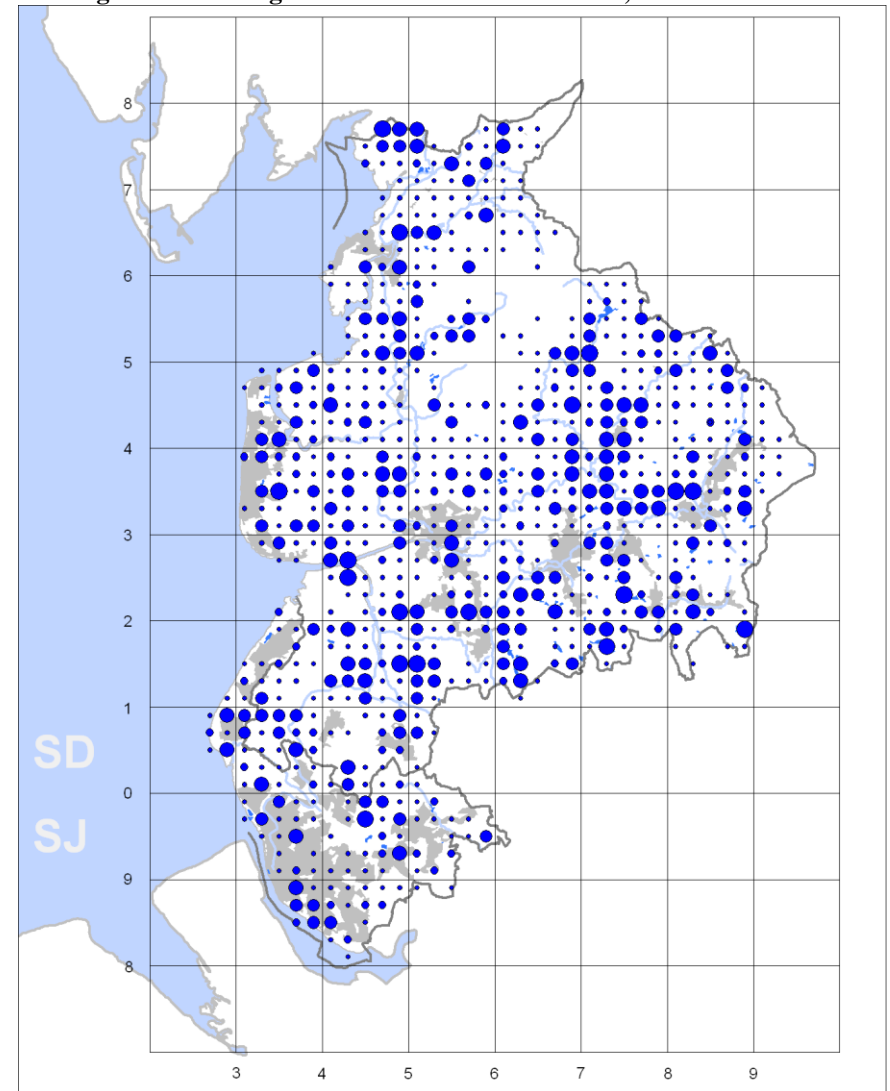
Redwings normally begin to arrive in Lancashire from northern Europe in late September or early October, often in substantial flocks and frequently travelling in company with Fieldfares. As in the case of the latter species numbers staying to overwinter in the county vary considerably from one year to the next and in some years hard-weather movements may bring further large flocks into Lancashire late in the winter. Most Redwings have normally left us by the beginning of March although small numbers of stragglers are recorded during April in most years.

Figure 1. Redwing: winter distribution, 2007/08-2010/11.



The distribution map shows that Redwings were present in 749 tetrads, 79% of the total, during 2007/8-2010/11 (Fig.1). Only in the highest fell country of Bowland were there extensive tracts of the county without wintering Redwings.

Figure 2. Redwing: relative abundance in winter, 2007/08-2010/11.



Dot size in descending order: 200-900; 100-199; 50-99; 30-49; 1-29

During the four winters covered by the present survey most of the largest flocks recorded in autumn had moved on by the beginning of the survey period in November, a pattern followed particularly in 2008, 2009 and 2011, when several counts of over a thousand birds during October were succeeded by flocks in the low hundreds from November and December onwards. The 2010 winter showed the reverse sequence, however, with generally very low numbers in autumn and early winter followed by significant influxes with the onset of very cold weather in mid-December, including 1200 on Hesketh Marsh on the 16th.

Although Redwings and Fieldfares go together in the minds of most birders and, indeed, their distributions during the survey period were virtually identical, there were subtle differences in the location of larger counts (Fig.2). The largest counts of Redwings were more evenly spread than those of Fieldfares, with rather more higher-density tetrads located in east Lancashire. Absolute numbers of Redwings were, however, significantly lower. Seventeen tetrads recorded counts of 200 or more, the largest 900 at Facit in Rossendale, 415 at Calf Hey Reservoir and 380 at Marton Mere.

Records totalling 27800 birds were submitted during the four winters but there was undoubtedly some large degree of duplication within winters, and the average winter population is perhaps closer to 12000.

BM

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*

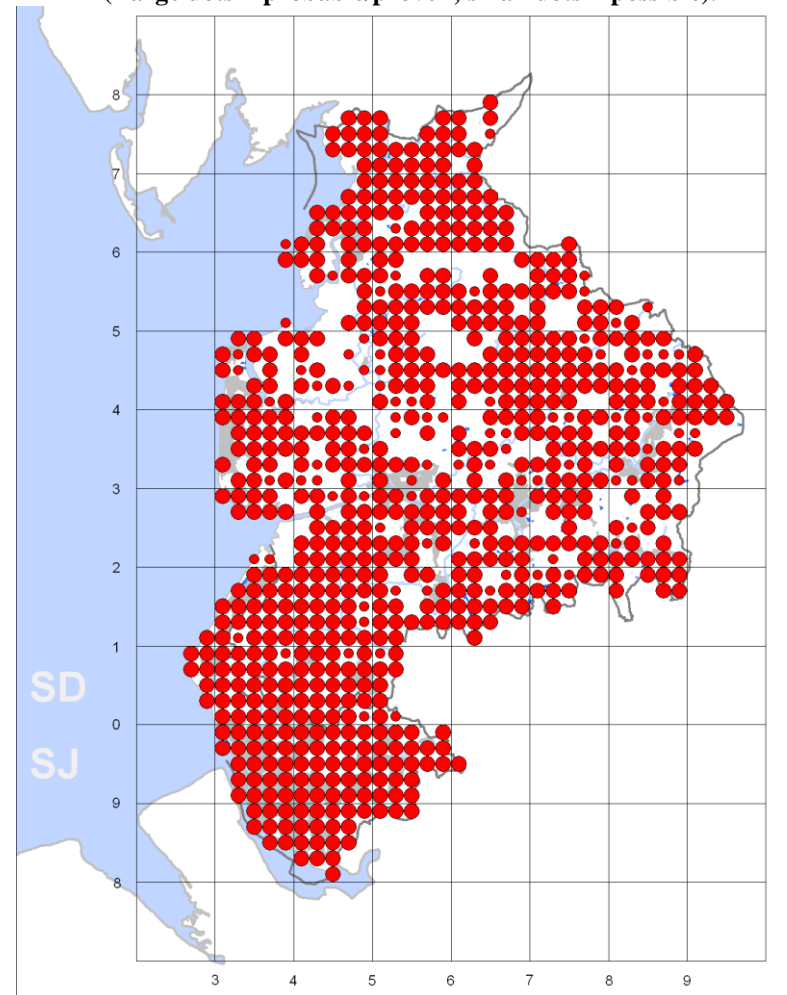
Breeding

Mistle Thrushes bred in 770 tetrads during 2008-11, precisely the same number as in 1997-2000, 83% of the county total (Fig.1).

They were present in all parts of the county but their distribution was completely solid throughout Merseyside, West Lancashire and most of north and east Lancashire away from the highest ground, but rather patchy in central Lancashire and eastern areas of the Fylde.

Birds were found to be breeding in all urban tetrads in Merseyside but, rather unaccountably, more sparsely in Blackpool, Preston, Blackburn, Accrington and Burnley.

Figure 1. Mistle Thrush: breeding distribution, 2008-2011.
(Large dots = probable/proven; small dots = possible).

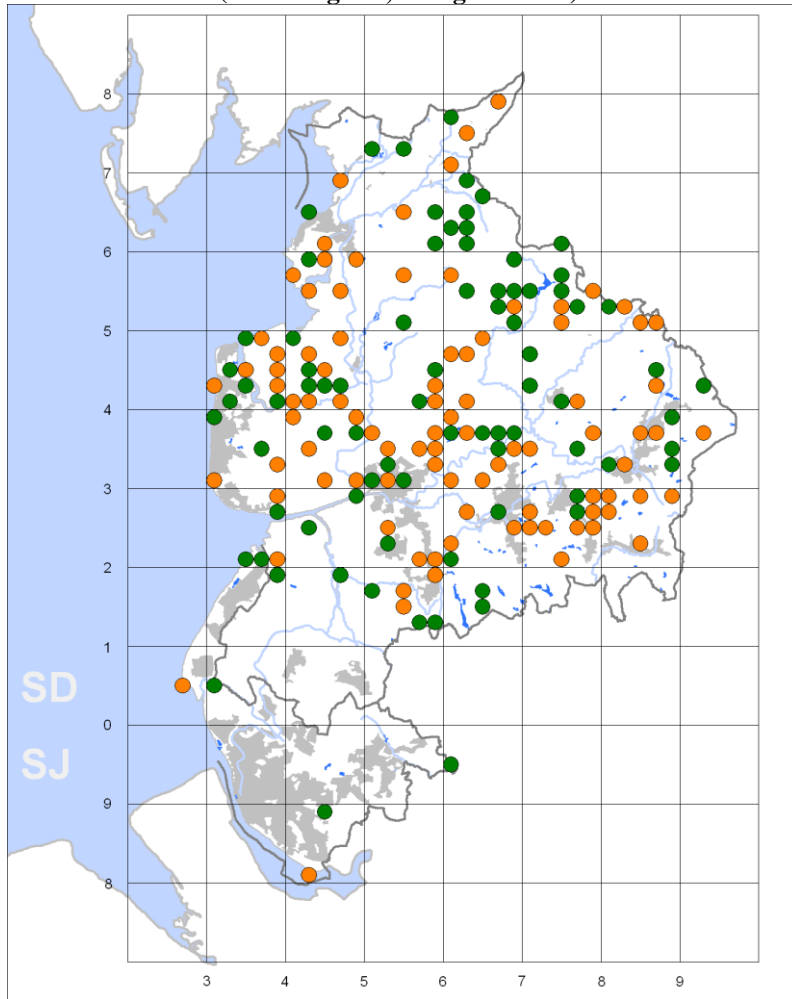


Despite the stability of their overall range, there were significant changes in smaller-scale distribution in the last ten years, with newly-occupied tetrads matched by those apparently abandoned (Fig.2). Merseyside and West Lancashire were almost entirely unaffected by these changes but they were relatively evenly spread elsewhere and somewhat concentrated in an east-west belt across the centre of the county.

Breeding densities in occupied tetrads were 50% higher in the west than the east but there were no differences between the north and south, with the north-west and south-west supporting very similar numbers.

On the basis of figures provided by surveyors it was estimated that average population density was 4.5 pairs per occupied tetrad, suggesting a county total of 3400 pairs or 2% of the British total.

Figure 2. Mistle Thrush: changes in breeding distribution, 1997-2000 to 2008-2011.
(Green = gains, orange = losses).



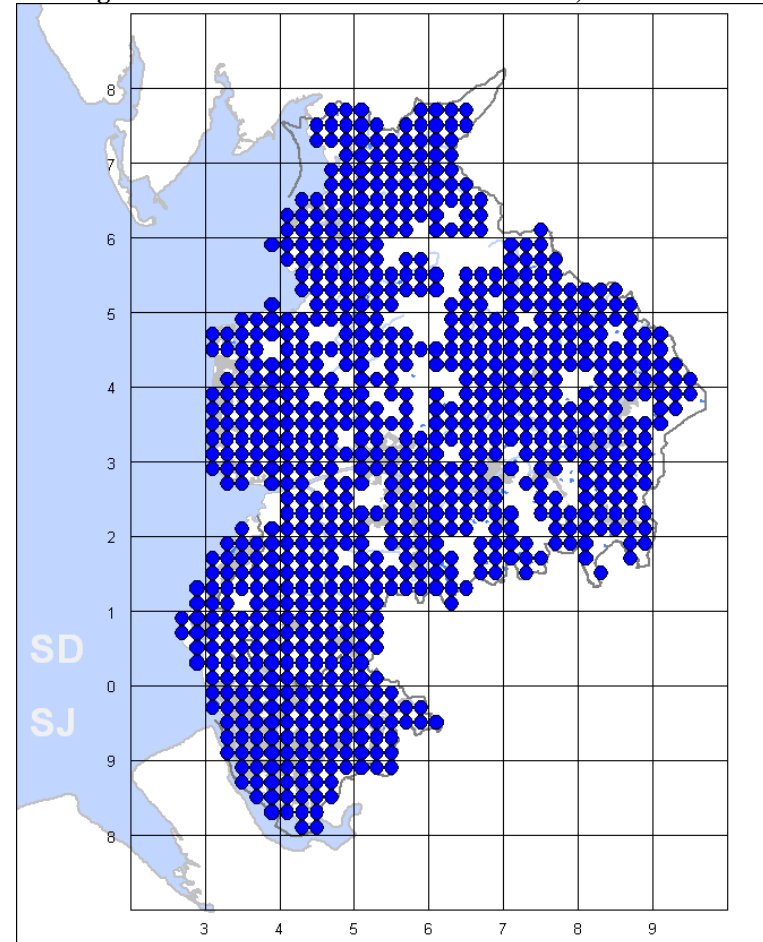
Winter

Mistle Thrushes were present in winter in 824 tetrads, 87% of the county total during 2007/8 to 2010/11, and so were slightly more widespread than during the breeding season (Fig.3). Unsurprisingly for a more or less sedentary species, their distribution, however, was essentially unchanged between seasons.

Allowing for one surviving juvenile for each breeding pair the county population was estimated at 10000 individuals.

SJW

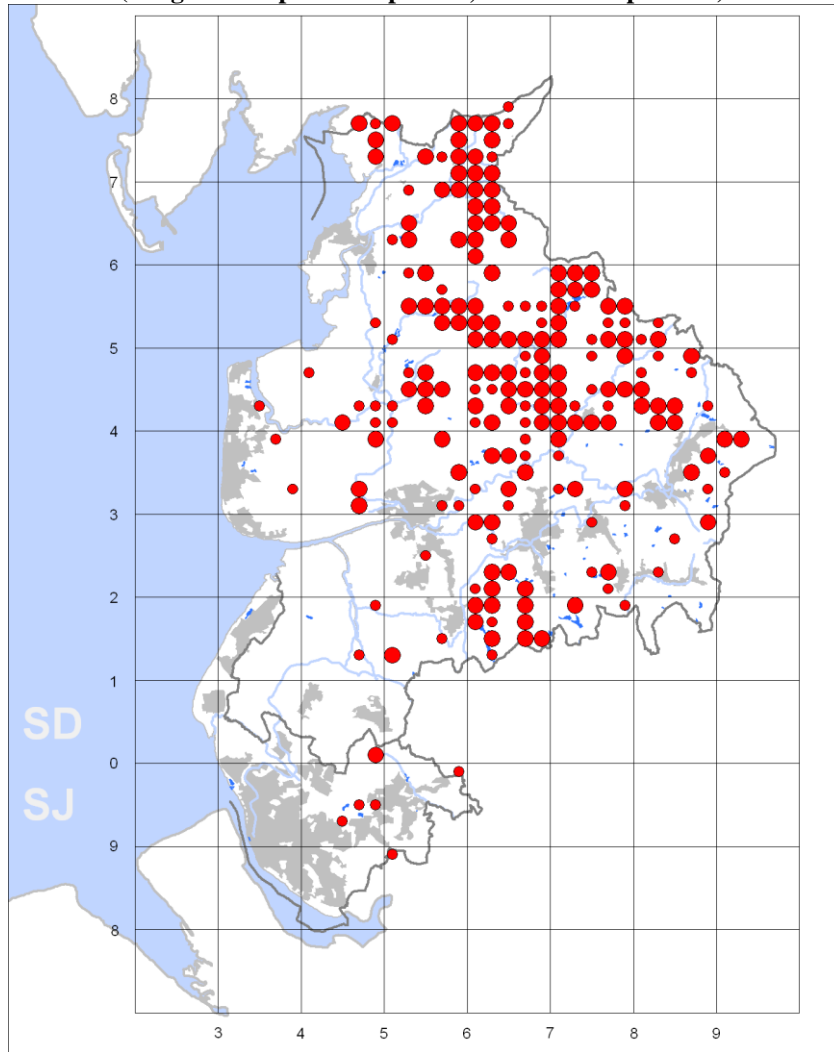
Figure 3. Mistle Thrush: winter distribution, 2007/08-2010/11.



SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*

Following their catastrophic decline both locally and nationally during the second half of the last century – caused it is thought mainly by problems in their wintering grounds – Spotted Flycatchers have continued their downward spiral during the last decade.

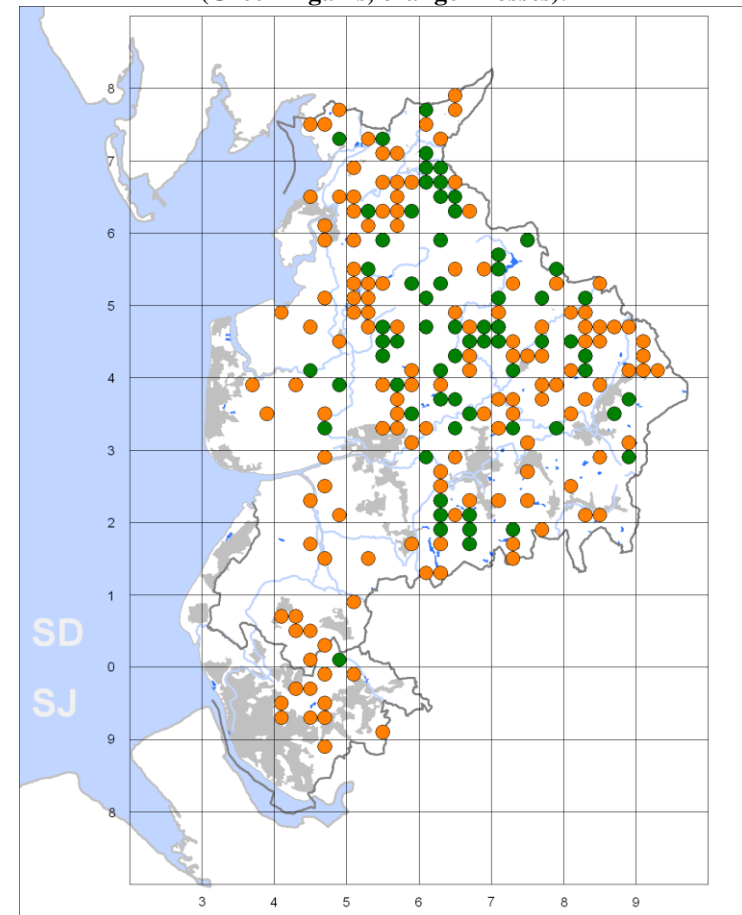
Figure 1. Spotted Flycatcher: breeding distribution, 2008-2011.
(Large dots = probable/proven; small dots = possible).



They were found in 207 tetrads during 2008-11, covering 22% of the county, but 76 (36%) of these were classified only as possible breeding and some of these may have related only to males singing on migration (Fig.1). Nevertheless, this represented a 25% decline since 1997-2000.

The distribution of Spotted Flycatchers was heavily concentrated in the north-east of the county, with a scattering of records elsewhere in east Lancashire and clusters around Silverdale and east of Chorley. Holiday Moss was the only probable breeding site in Merseyside and Harrock Hill in West Lancashire, but the species retained a precarious toehold in the Fylde at four sites.

Figure 2. Spotted Flycatcher: changes in breeding distribution, 1997-2000 to 2008-2011.
(Green = gains, orange = losses).



Apparently-abandoned tetrads outnumbered newly-occupied ones by 132 to 64 (Fig.2). Those gained were mostly in the north-east of the county, where they more than counteracted the losses, giving some slight cause for optimism that we may retain Spotted Flycatchers in Lancashire in the longer term. There were other small clusters of gains in the Rivington-Belmont area and in the upper Brock Valley. In the west of the county the lost tetrads heavily outnumbered the few gains; losses were most dramatic in Merseyside where the species is poised on the edge of extinction, but also scattered throughout north Lancashire.

There were no obvious differences in breeding densities in any part of the county as all tetrad counts were in low single figures, and the average was estimated as 1.5 pairs per occupied tetrad, yielding a county total of 300 pairs, a 50% reduction since 2000.

SJW

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

Breeding

There has been no discernible change in the range, distribution or numbers of breeding Robins for more than 100 years. They were found in 892 tetrads during 2008-2011 with breeding confirmed or thought probable in almost all (Fig.1). Their range covered 95% of the county, amongst the largest of any species, and they were absent only from the very highest, featureless fells and from three coastal tetrads.

Consequently, there was almost no change in distribution since the 1997-2000 survey; the nine apparently-abandoned tetrads were mostly on the Fylde coast, while the eleven newly-occupied ones were scattered throughout (Fig.2).

Population density was 25% higher in the west of the county than the east and 15% higher in the south than the north, so that the largest numbers were found in the south-west.

Robins are easy to locate when singing although it is no simple matter to get accurate counts, but the best population estimate is based on an average of 40 pairs per occupied tetrad, producing a county total of 35000 pairs, around 0.5% of the British population.

Figure 1. Robin: breeding distribution, 2008-2011.
(Large dots = probable/proven; small dots = possible).

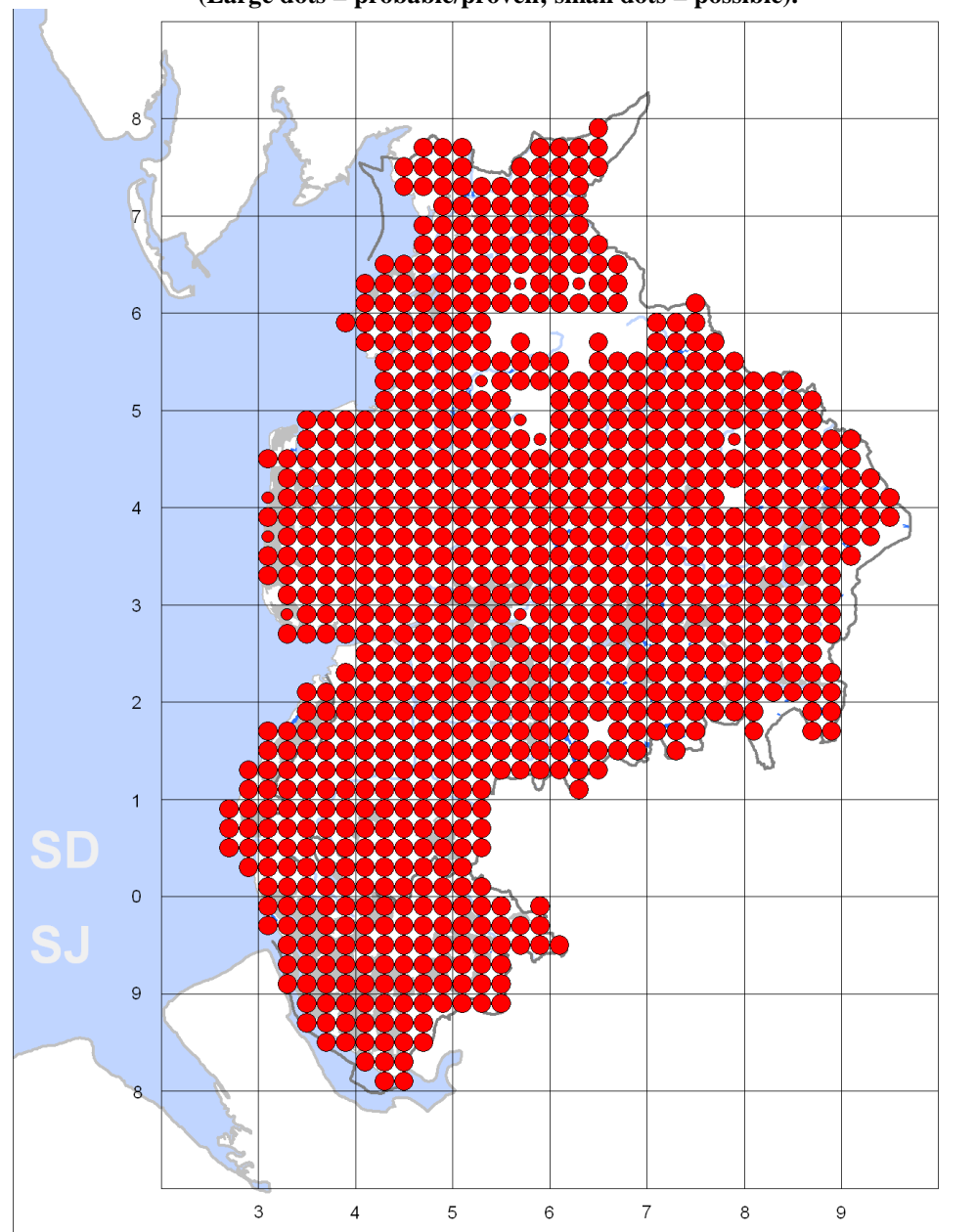
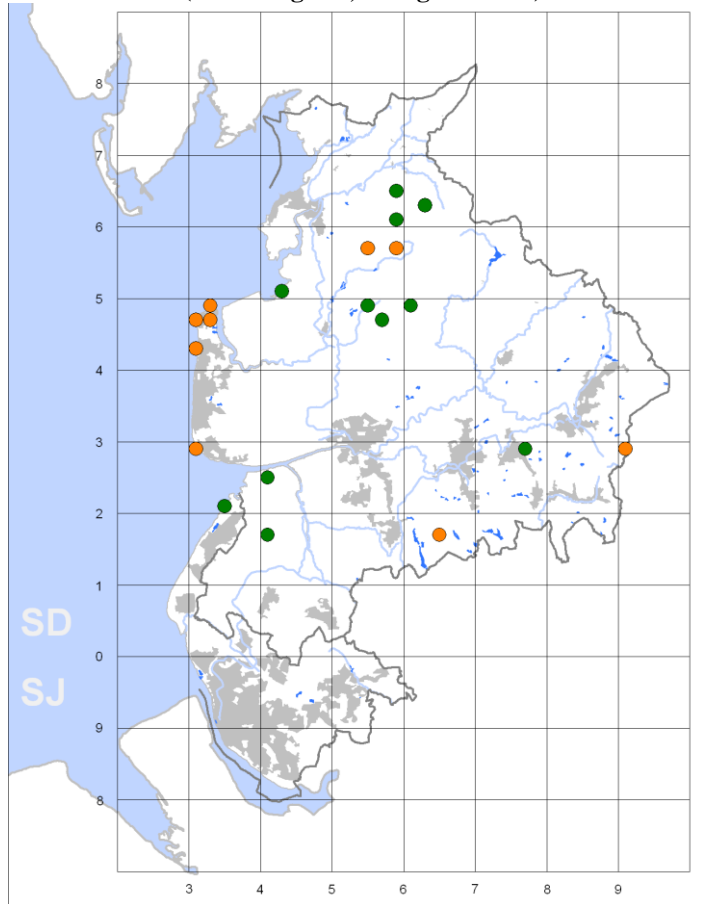


Figure 2. Robin: changes in breeding distribution, 1997-2000 to 2008-2011.
(Green = gains, orange = losses).



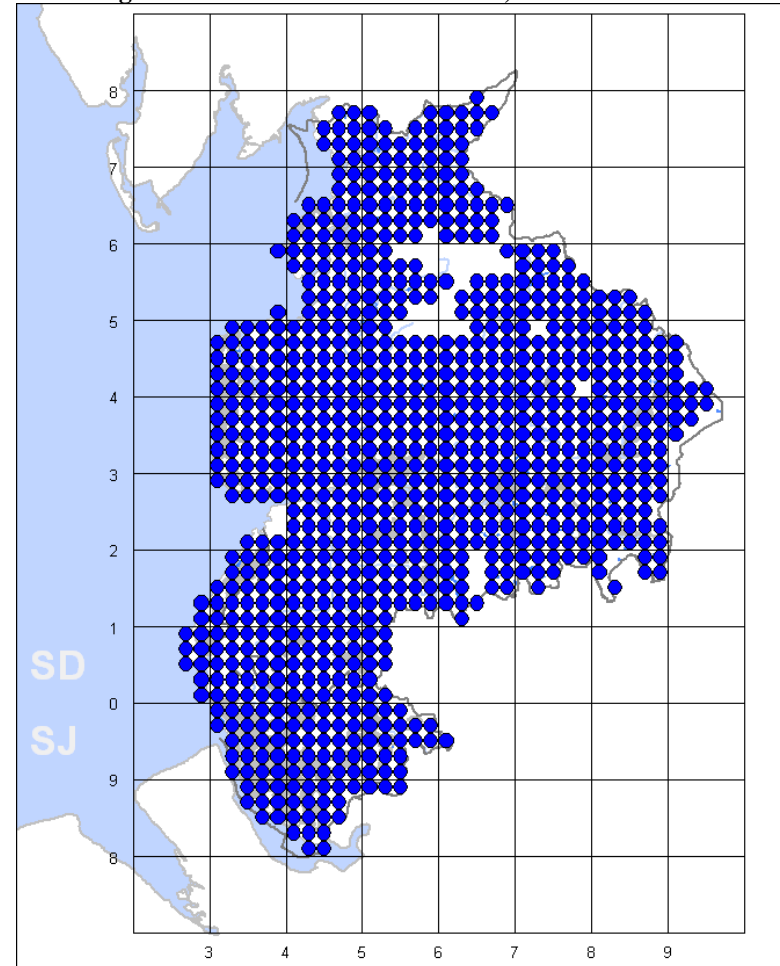
Winter

Robins wintered in 892 tetrads during 2007/08 to 2010/11, their range that covered 94% of the county being almost identical to that of summer (Fig.3). Contrary to what has previously been published there appears to have been little movement away from the uplands but this may have been because a majority of surveys were carried out before the hard winters at the end of the survey period.

Numbers varied hugely throughout the county with single-figure counts registered in almost 50% of tetrads (Fig.4). Higher densities were found in all

four quarters of the county with fairly clear-cut clusters to the north-east of Preston, in the Lune Valley, the Chorley area and the central Ribble Valley.

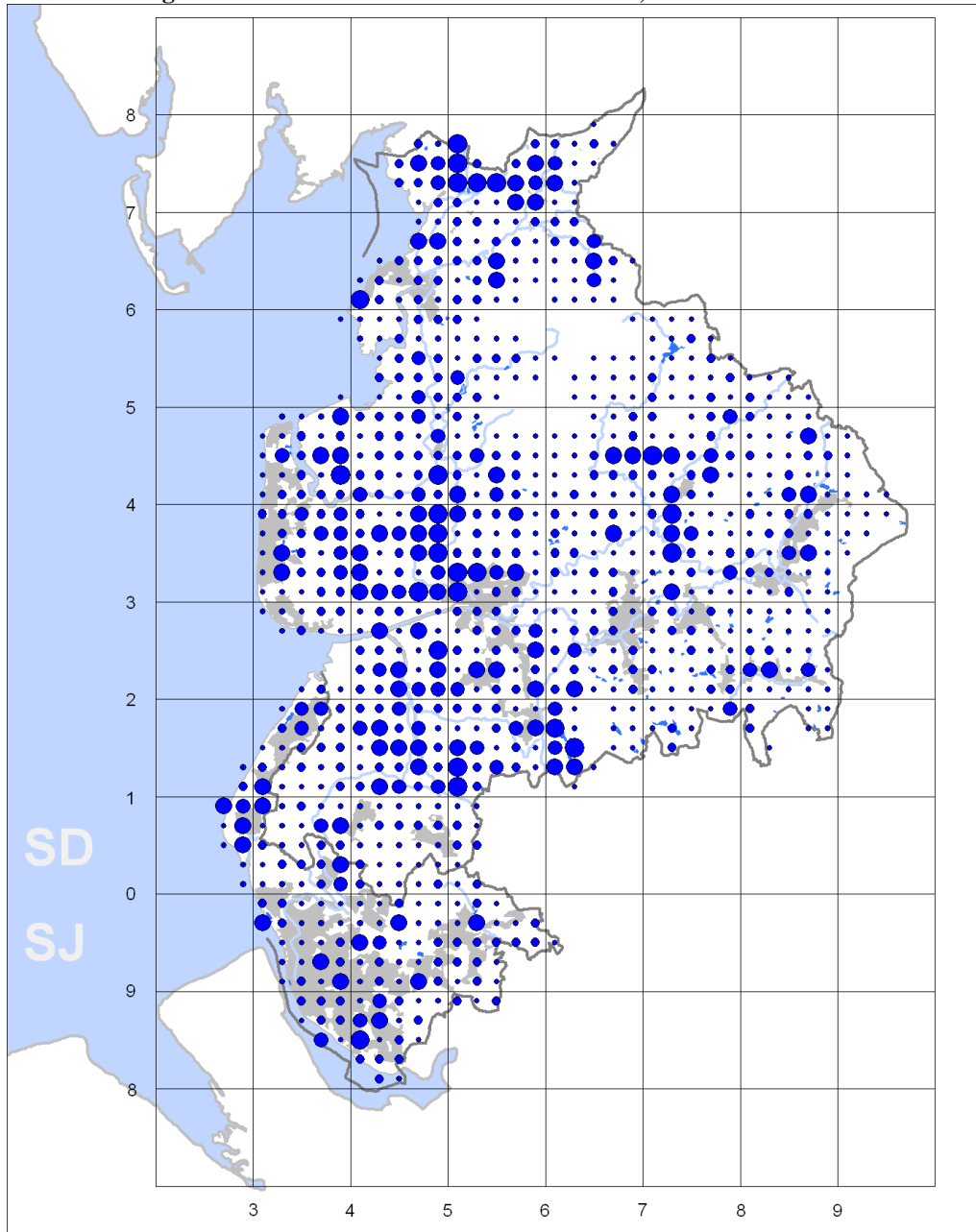
Figure 3. Robin: winter distribution, 2007/08-2010/11.



It is known that there is some unquantified winter movement of continental migrants into Lancashire but the only practicable way of estimating the midwinter population is by scaling up from the breeding estimate, assuming that three birds survive for every pair; on that basis the county total is some 100000 individuals.

SJW

Figure 4. Robin: relative abundance in winter, 2007/08-2010/11.

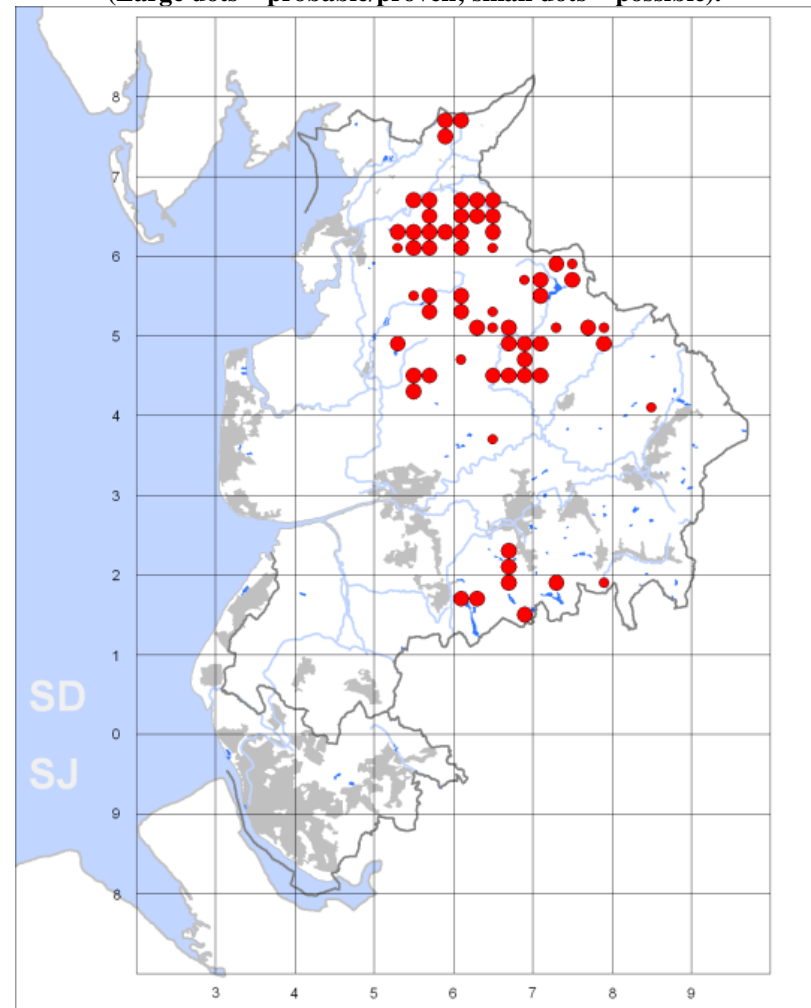


Dot size in descending order: 40-70; 25-39; 20-24; 10-19; 1-9

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*

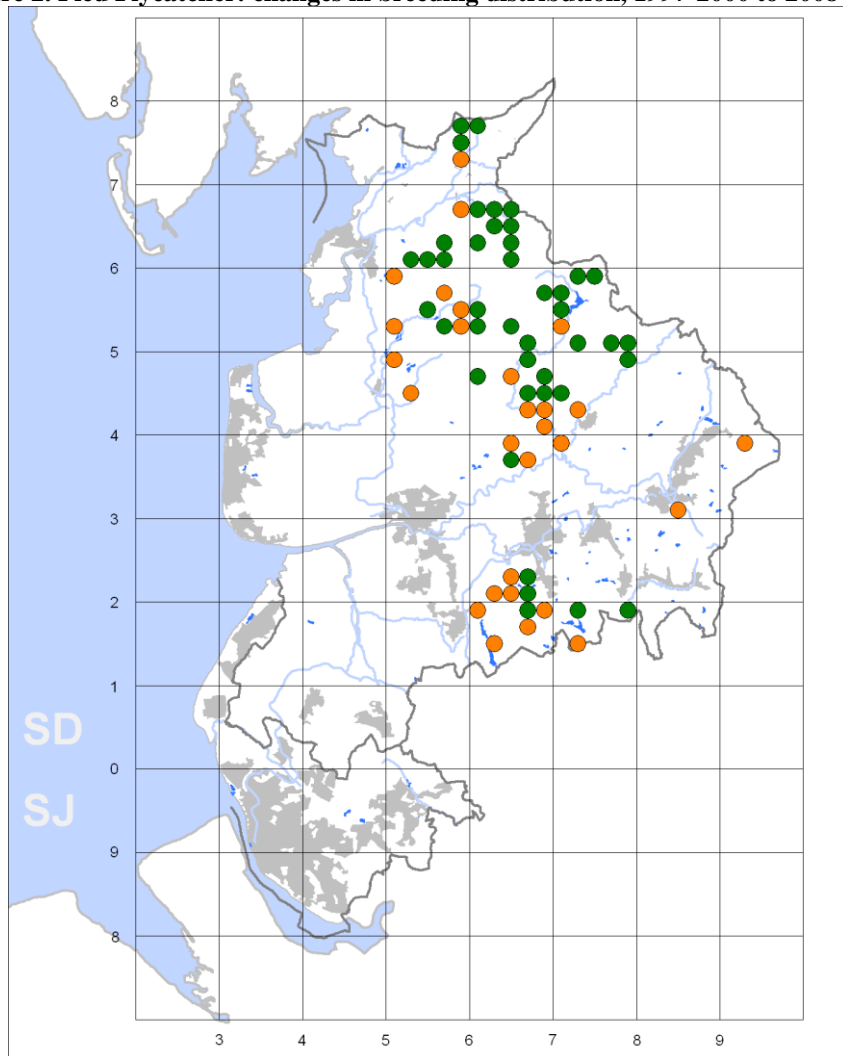
Pied Flycatchers have never been common in Lancashire but, as elsewhere in Britain, began to increase after the middle of the last century with the widespread provision of nest-boxes. In many parts of the country, including Lancashire, they remain largely or wholly dependent on nest-boxes and their distribution is to a large extent determined by the local efforts of ringers and others in erecting and maintaining them.

Figure 1. Pied Flycatcher: breeding distribution, 2008-2011.
(Large dots = probable/proven; small dots = possible).



Despite these efforts the population has fallen by 50% between 1995 and 2010 nationally, but Lancashire seems to have bucked this trend. Birds were found to be at least possibly breeding in 66 tetrads during 2008-2011, an increase in range of 10% since 1997-2000 (Fig.1). Their distribution is determined by the presence of suitable woodlands, which restricts them to the north of the county and a smaller region in the Rivington/West Pennine Moors area.

Figure 2. Pied Flycatcher: changes in breeding distribution, 1997-2000 to 2008-2011.



Because nest-box provision is such an important factor caution is needed in interpreting any changes in distribution within the breeding range (Fig.2). However, there do appear to have been significant net losses in the Anglezarke/Roddlesworth area, south-west Bowland and the extreme east (where the species may be close to extinction), with net gains concentrated in north-east Lancashire.

The largest numbers are found in the Lune Valley ((Roeburndale, woodlands alongside the Lune, Hindburndale and Littledale – in descending order of importance), which probably now supports more than half of the county population; 68 pairs nested there in 2008, 54 in 2009, 63 in 2010 and 92 in 2011. Peak totals elsewhere during the survey period included 17 on the United Utilities estate, 15 at Moor Piece, six at Bowland Wild Boar Park, and five in the Brock Valley, at New Laithe Farm in Newton-in-Bowland and in the Anglezarke-Belmont area. The Lancashire population was estimated at 150 pairs, a little less than 1% of the British total.

RJH

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros*

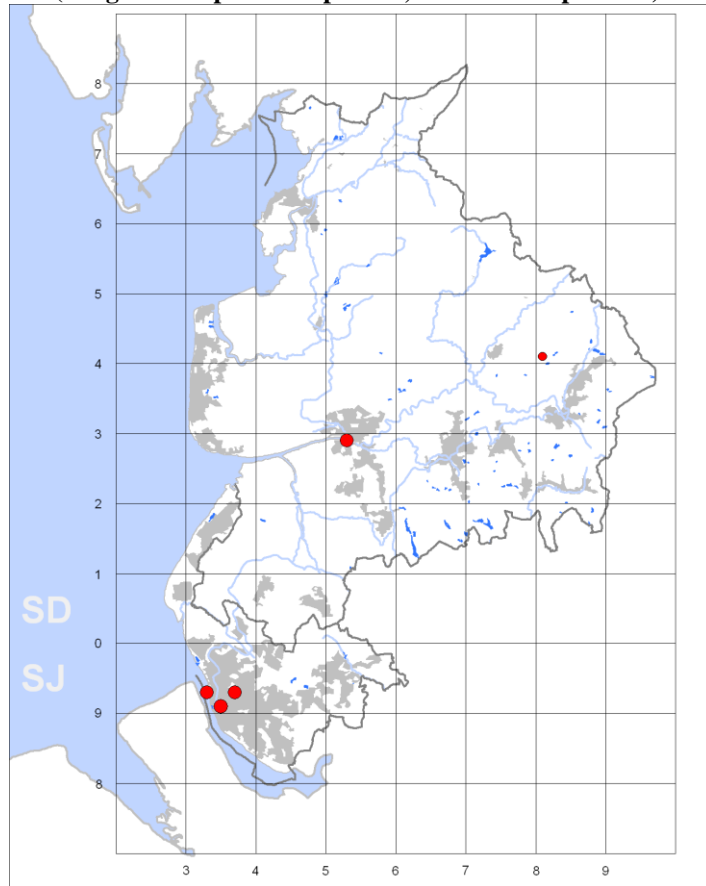
Breeding

Confirmed breeding by Black Redstarts has been recorded irregularly in a small number of urban and dockland locations in Lancashire since colonisation of Liverpool from at least 1977; nesting has also been considered likely at a few upland sites. The 1997-2000 Lancashire Atlas estimated an annual population of two to five pairs, with nesting confirmed in four tetrads, two in Liverpool and one each in Blackpool and Blackburn; presence was recorded in another four tetrads in the Pendle Hill area and on the West Pennine Moors.

The present survey recorded confirmed or probable nesting in four tetrads, three of them in Liverpool, where the docklands and commercial district have been occupied probably continuously since the late 1970s; a pair nested successfully in Preston city centre in 2010 and 2011 (Fig.1). Breeding was also considered possible in the Pendle area, where singles or pairs have been fairly regularly recorded in the breeding season over many years, but without confirmation of nesting.

The annual population is estimated at one or two pairs; small though this is it remains significant in the context of a national population of 19-44 pairs.

Figure 1. Black Redstart: breeding distribution, 2008-2011.
(Large dots = probable/proven; small dots = possible).



Winter

Black Redstarts were present in 31 tetrads during the winter atlas survey period (Fig.2) but this gives a misleading impression of their real winter distribution, in part because eleven of these records were in November and were late migrants which did not linger.

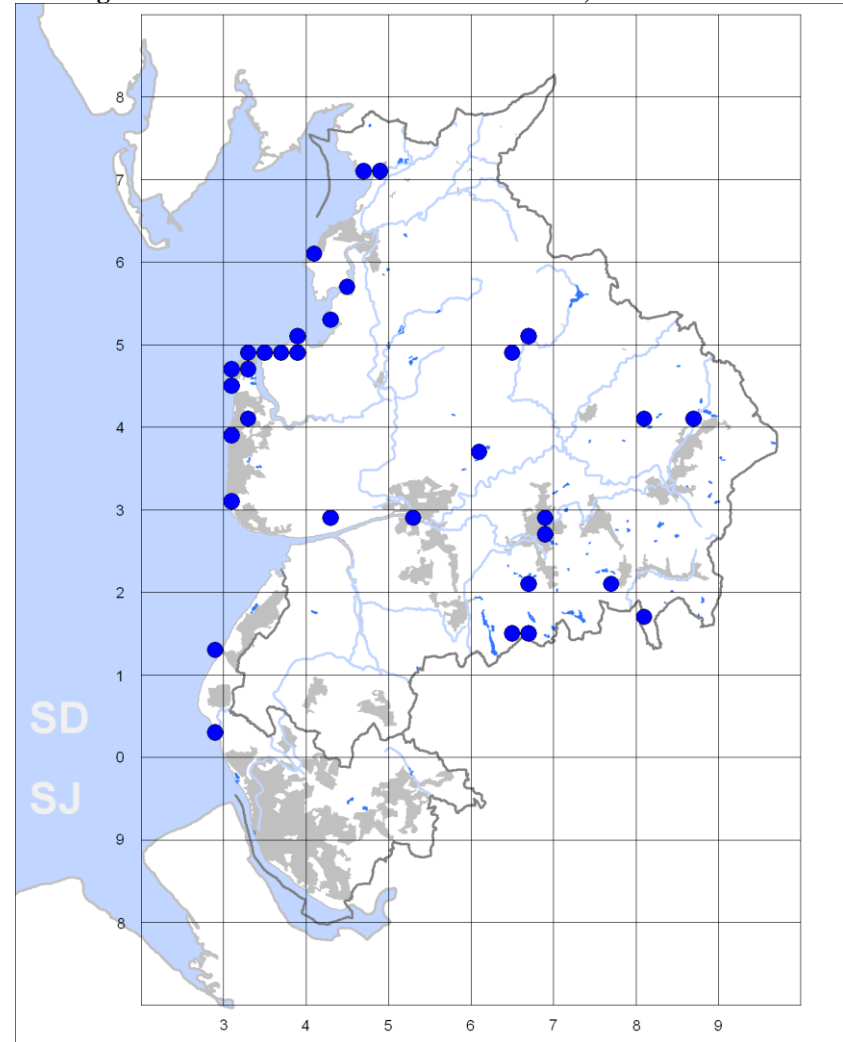
Excluding these November records annual totals for truly wintering birds varied between one in 2010/11 and eight in 2009/10 with five and six in

2007/08 and 2008/09 respectively; several of these probably involved birds returning to broad wintering areas. The average wintering population is thus less than ten individuals, perhaps closer to five.

The largest number of records were on the Fylde coast with a large cluster between Rossall Point and Cockerham but elsewhere there was a thin scattering of records with no obvious pattern.

SJW

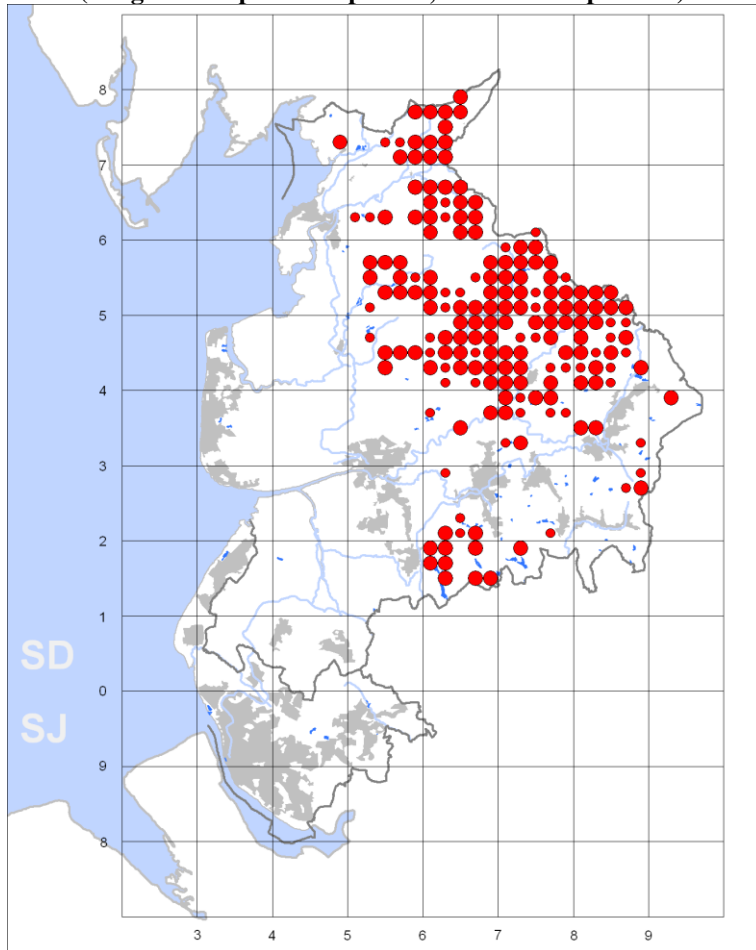
Figure 2. Black Redstart: winter distribution, 2007/08-2010/11.



REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

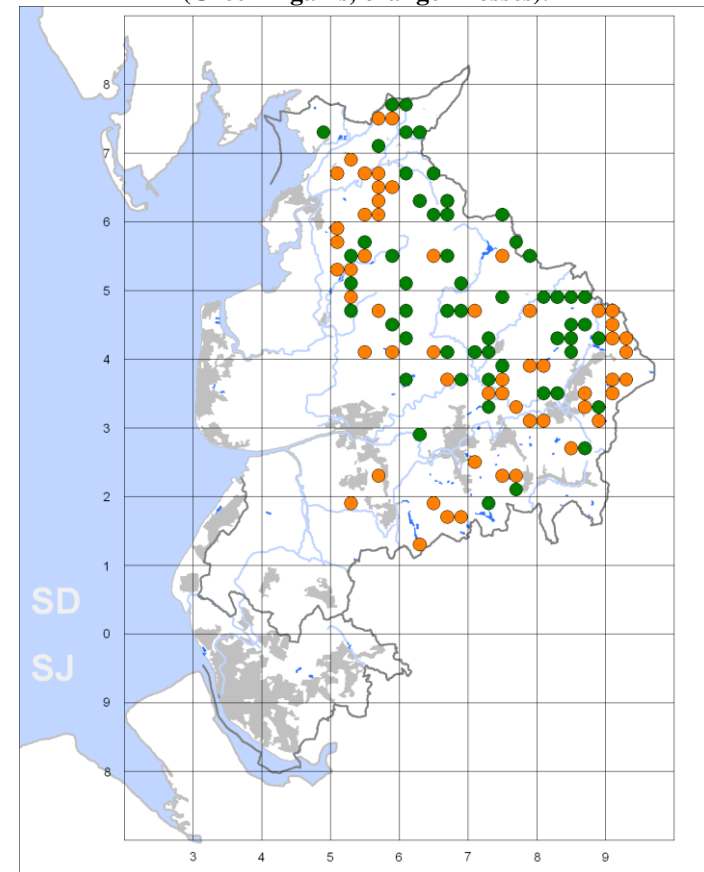
The Lancashire population of this summer visitor had not been fully surveyed prior to the 1997-2000 atlas, but what data are available suggest a largely stable long-term situation, albeit with local increases and declines. Redstarts bred in 28 10km squares during the 1968-72 national Atlas, contracting to 21 squares by the time of the 1988-91 New Atlas, but the losses were mainly at the edges of the range as breeding Redstarts had disappeared from the lowland west and from Rossendale.

Figure 1. Redstart: breeding distribution, 2008-2011.
(Large dots = probable/proven; small dots = possible).



The present survey located proven or probable nesters in 134 tetrads, with another 50 possibles, a total of 184 identical to that of a decade earlier during the 1997-2000 survey (Fig.1). The overwhelming majority of records were in the north-east of the county, in Bowland and the Lune and Ribble Valleys, with another fairly solid cluster in the woodlands on the edge of the West Pennine Moors especially around Rivington and Anglezarke. The only breeding record in the western third of the county was in the Warton Crag tetrad, with other outliers at Cliviger, Wycoller, Great Harwood and Pendle Hall/Wood End.

Figure 2. Redstart: changes in breeding distribution, 1997-2000 to 2008-2011.
(Green = gains, orange = losses).



Although newly-occupied and apparently-abandoned tetrads were evenly balanced, losses were concentrated on the edge of the core range with

a slight but perceptible trend for the gains to be concentrated in the north and east (Fig.2)

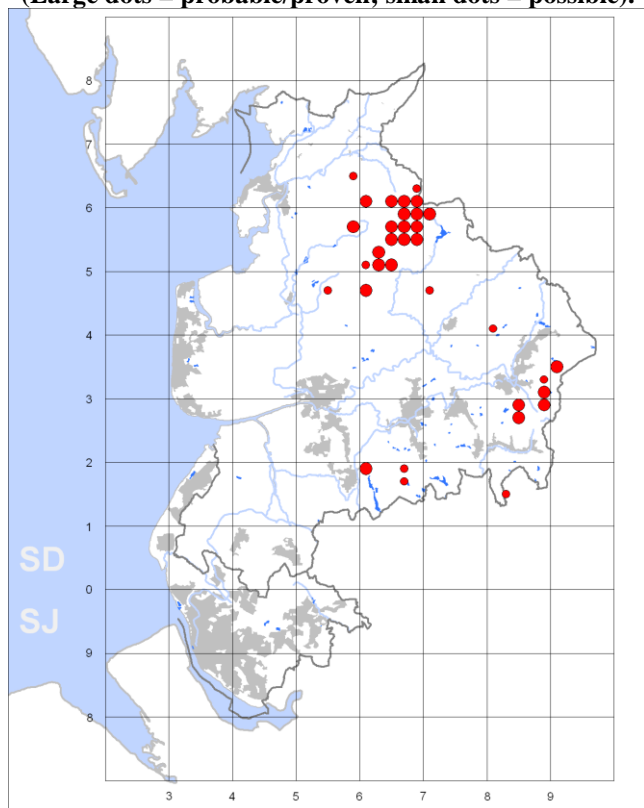
The population is estimated at 600 pairs at approximately three pairs per occupied tetrad, roughly 0.5% of the British population.

BM

WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*

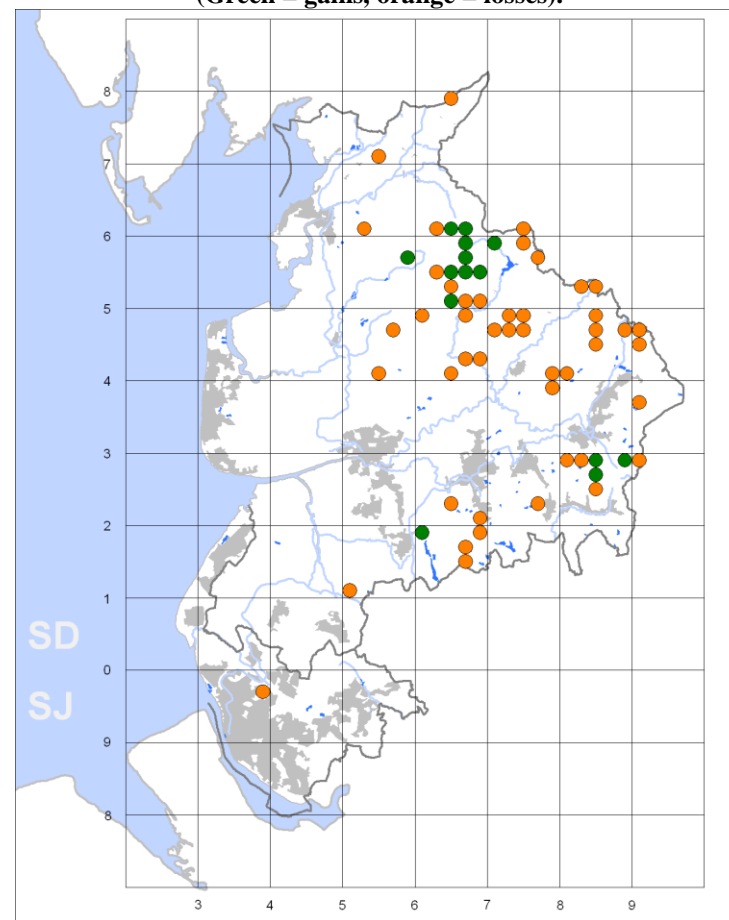
Whinchats bred throughout Lancashire in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries but the lowland birds had largely retreated to the Sefton Coast after the 1950s, finally breeding there in 1982. They were completely absent in the lowlands during the 1988-91 national atlas survey but one pair made an unexpected comeback, breeding at Fazakerley Reedbed in Liverpool in 1997-2002.

Figure 1. Whinchat: breeding distribution, 2008-2011.
(Large dots = probable/proven; small dots = possible).



During 2008-11 Whinchats were recorded in 34 tetrads, indicating a 55% range contraction since 1997-2000 – a rate of decline that suggests they are fast heading for extinction in the county (Fig.1).

Figure 2. Whinchat: changes in breeding distribution, 1997-2000 to 2008-2011.
(Green = gains, orange = losses).



A total of 14 tetrads were newly-occupied, at Healey Nab, the Burnley to Rossendale area (where three gains were counteracted by four losses) and Duckenshaw Fell, with the remainder in Bowland in SD65 (Fig.2). The 47 losses occurred throughout the north and east of the county, in Liverpool and on the West Pennine Moors, where it looks unlikely that they will hang on for much longer.

The highest counts on timed visits were six at Croasdale and five at Bloe Greet but both were late season visits and may have included some juveniles.

The county population was estimated at 40 pairs but that may have been a little optimistic.

SJW

STONECHAT *Saxicola torquata*

Breeding

This is a species, along with Hen Harrier, for which the present surveys provide a highly misleading picture of present status in the county. Records from the early years of the project, winter 2007/08 to summer 2009, confirmed the pattern of dramatic increase in breeding and winter numbers recorded since the beginning of the present century.

The very severe snowfalls and freezes of January and December 2010, however, hit this historically vulnerable species very hard, and the breeding, passage and winter records summarised in the 2010 and 2011 Lancashire Bird Reports provide a succinct account of a ravaged population.

The maps and statistics presented here, largely reflecting the pre-crash situation up to the summer of 2009 therefore bear little resemblance to the situation obtaining by 2011.

Up to the late 1970s the majority of Lancashire's breeding Stonechats were to be found along the coast; by the mid-1990s this population had dwindled but inland breeding, especially in the uplands, had become widespread.

The 1997-2000 Lancashire atlas survey, at the beginning of the species' rapid range expansion, recorded presence in 46 tetrads with breeding confirmed in 38; the population was estimated at 60 pairs, with the majority in Bowland, in the Pendle Hill area, on the West Pennine Moors and on the Sefton Coast from Birkdale south to Crosby.

The present survey found proven or probably-breeding Stonechats in 141 tetrads, a range expansion of 200% (Fig.1). They were concentrated in three main areas, Bowland, the West Pennine Moors east into Rossendale and the South Pennines, and the Sefton and Fylde coasts.

Figure 1. Stonechat: breeding distribution, 2008-2011.
(Large dots = probable/proven; small dots = possible).

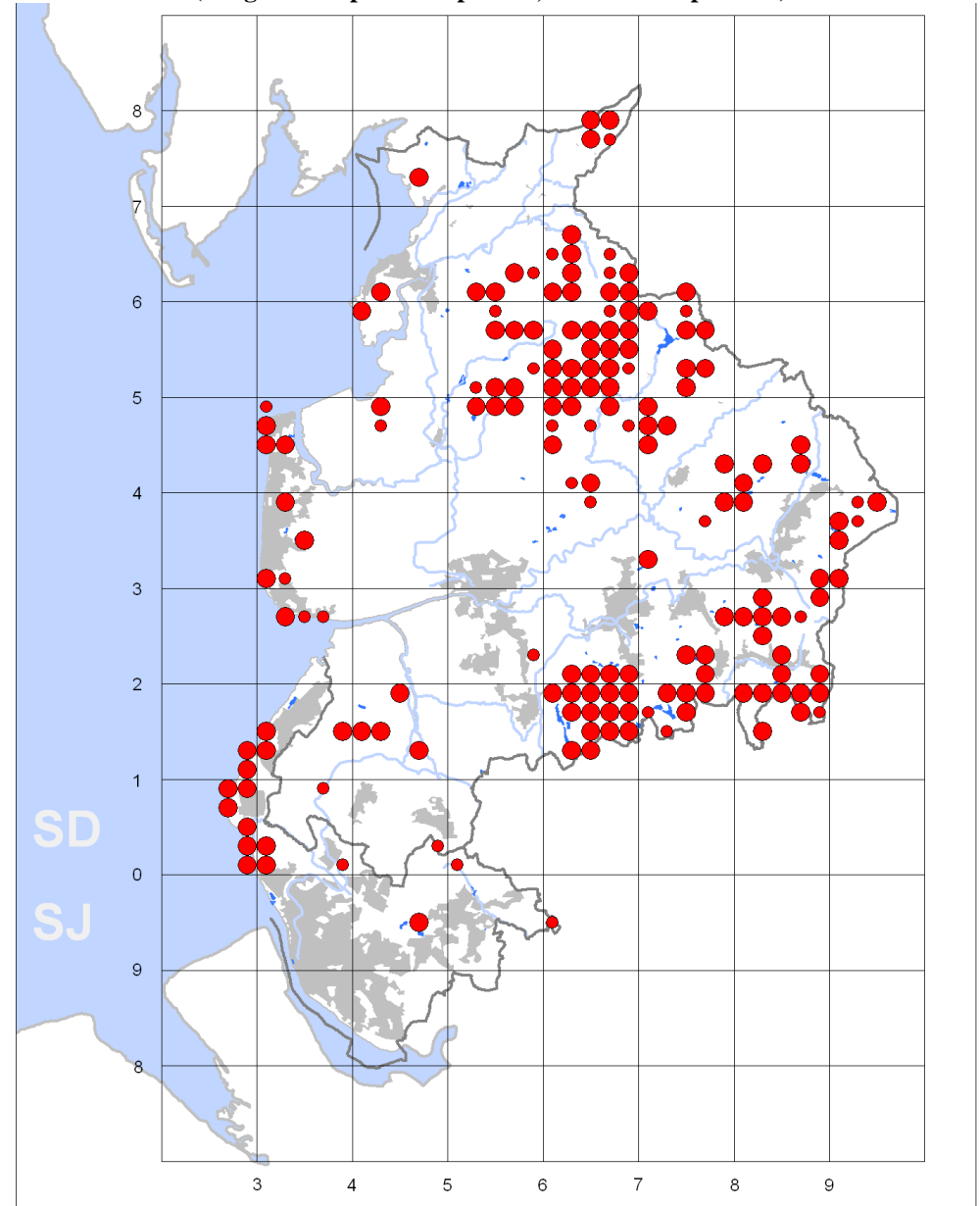
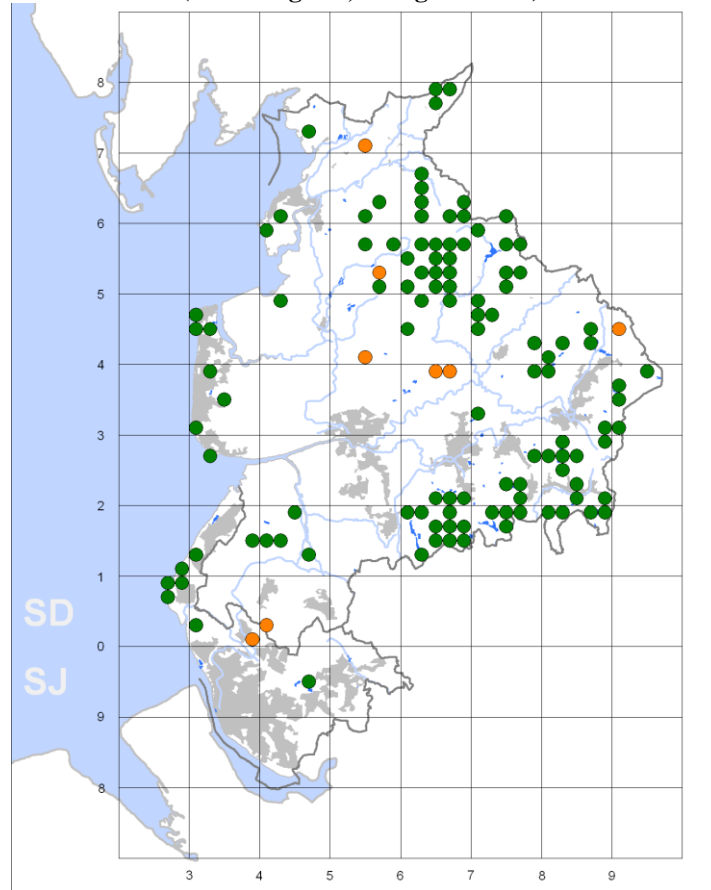


Figure 2. Stonechat: changes in breeding distribution, 1997-2000 to 2008-2011.
(Green = gains, orange = losses).



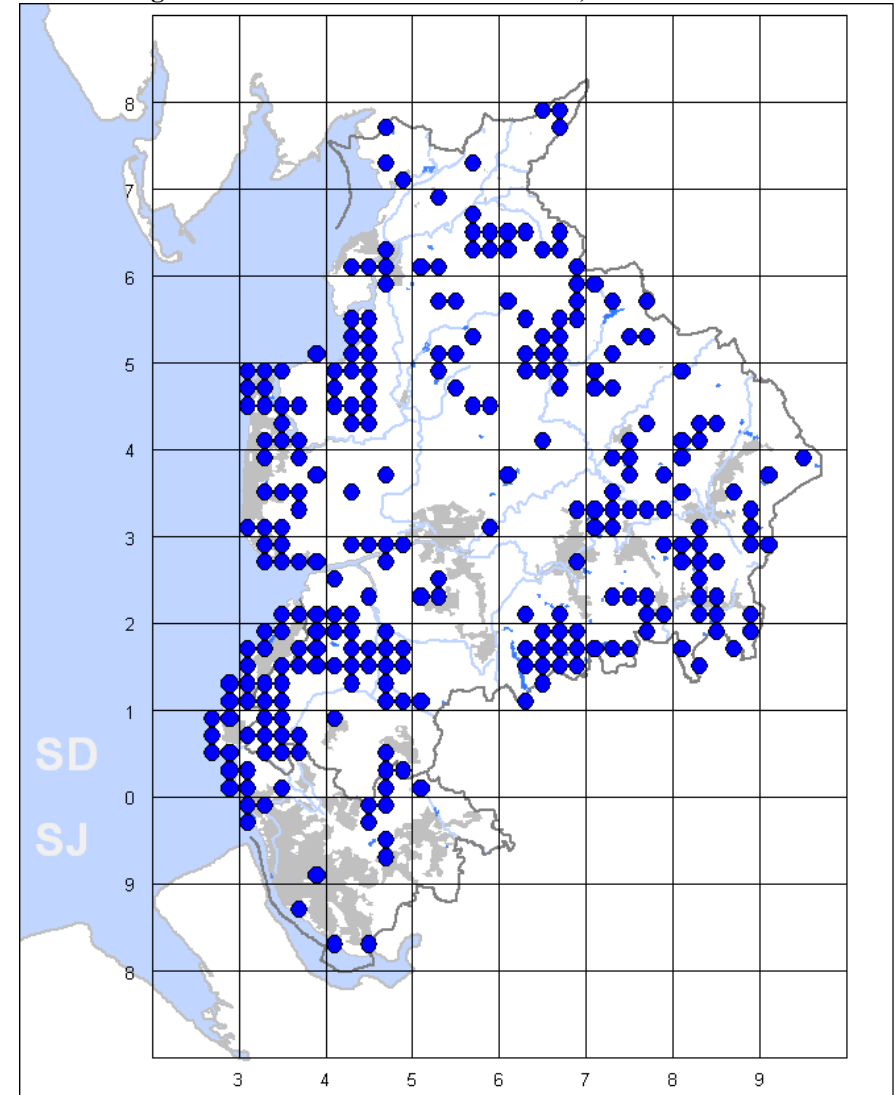
New tetrads were occupied in all of these core areas with a major spread across upland Lancashire since 1997-2000 and a smaller though significant extension of the relict coastal population northward to the Fylde coast and the shores of the Lune Estuary; the eight lost tetrads were widely scattered (Fig.2).

The population was estimated at 275 pairs; at its peak in summer 2010 this was about 0.5% of the British population. The population has probably more than halved since then.

Winter

The winter distribution map records the Stonechat's presence in 275 tetrads, 29.1% of the total, and reveals a strong tendency for birds to remain in the uplands during the winter (Fig.3).

Figure 3. Stonechat: winter distribution, 2007/08-2010/11.



This behaviour may have spelt doom for many when sub-zero conditions struck twice in succession in 2009/10 and 2010/11, although the coastal winterers seem to have fared little better.

The winter population was estimated at 500 but is now likely to be a mere fraction of that. Stonechats, both nationally and in Lancashire have survived a series of crashes in hard winters since 1947 at least, followed by slow but steady recoveries. It is to be hoped that this pattern will repeat itself over the next decade; records submitted to the 2012 Lancashire Bird Report suggest that a slight but widespread improvement in both breeding and wintering numbers may already be underway.

BM

WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Breeding

Widespread coastal and mossland breeding by Wheatears in Lancashire during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had virtually ended by the time of the 1968-72 Atlas and the species had effectively been restricted to the uplands. By the time of the 1988-91 New Atlas the coastal population had been reduced to a single site, on Carnforth Slag Tips a broad-brush pattern that remained unchanged during 1997-2000.

Wheatears were found in 154 tetrads during 2007/08-2010/11, 11% of the total and a range contraction of 15% since 1997-2000 (Fig.1). With the exception of a handful of tetrads in western Bowland and a single pair holding out at Carnforth, all were in the eastern half of the county with discrete core populations in the West Pennines, Rossendale the South Pennines and Bowland, and smaller outliers around Pendle Hill and Leck Fell.

This distribution was essentially similar to that of 1997-2000. Newly-occupied tetrads were most evident in eastern Bowland and the West Pennine Moors, while losses were more prominent in western Bowland and the South Pennines (Fig.2)

The population was estimated at 300 pairs, roughly two pairs per occupied tetrad.

Figure 1. Wheatear: breeding distribution, 2008-2011.
(Large dots = probable/proven; small dots = possible).

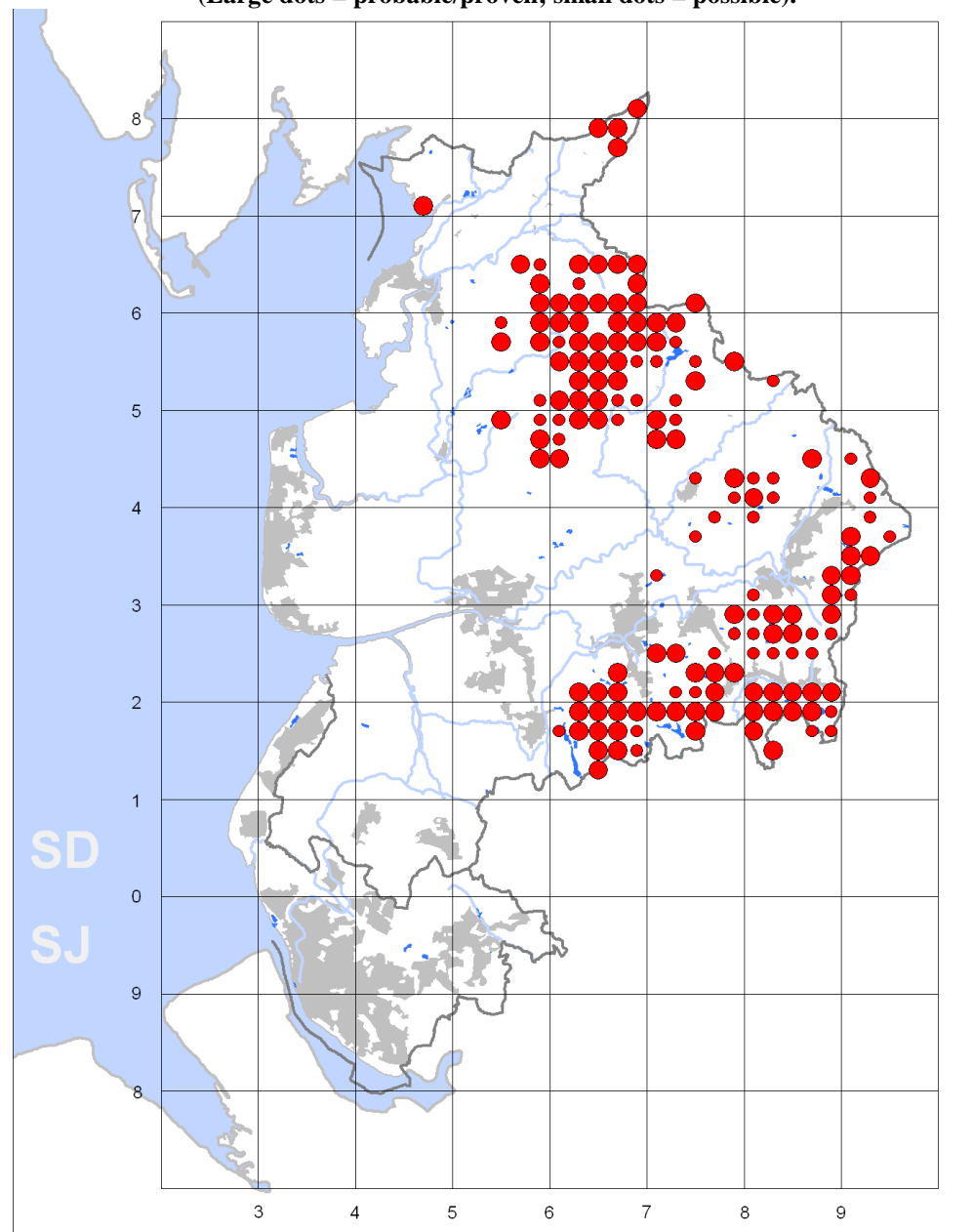
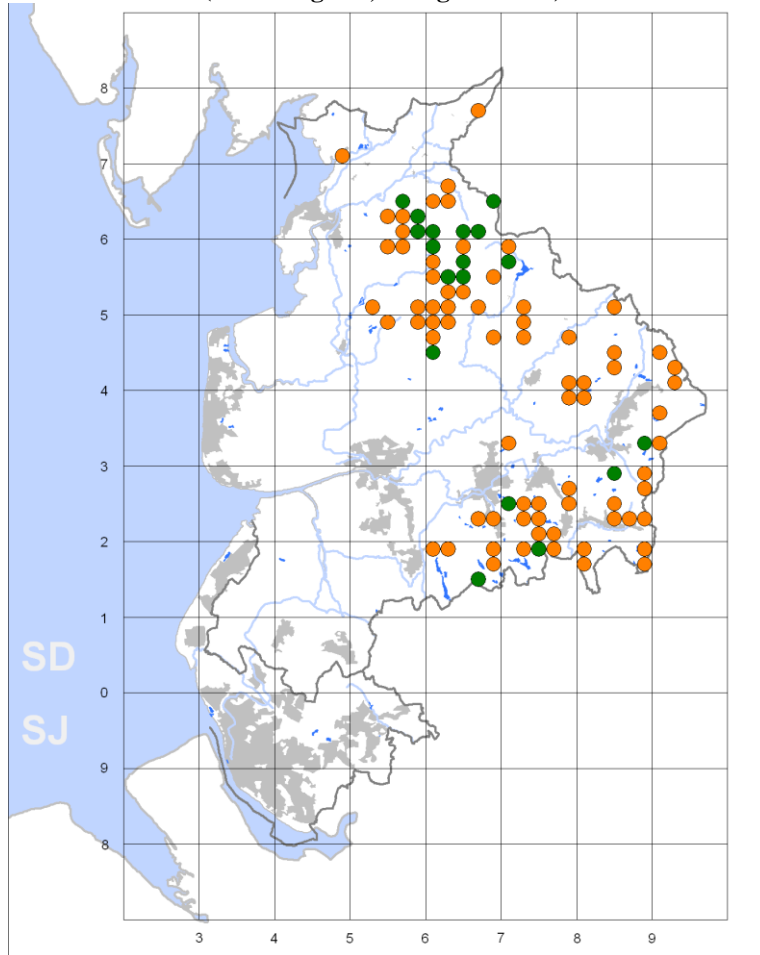


Figure 2. Wheatear: changes in breeding distribution, 1997-2000 to 2008-2011.
(Green = gains, orange = losses).



Winter

Wheatears were present in four tetrads during 2007/08-2010/11. November birds were recorded in 2007 at Pendle and in the Lune Valley, in 2009 at Heysham, Martin Mere and Barnoldswick and in 2010 at Knott End. No overwintering Wheatear has ever been recorded in Lancashire, and it may safely be assumed that all these November birds were late migrants.

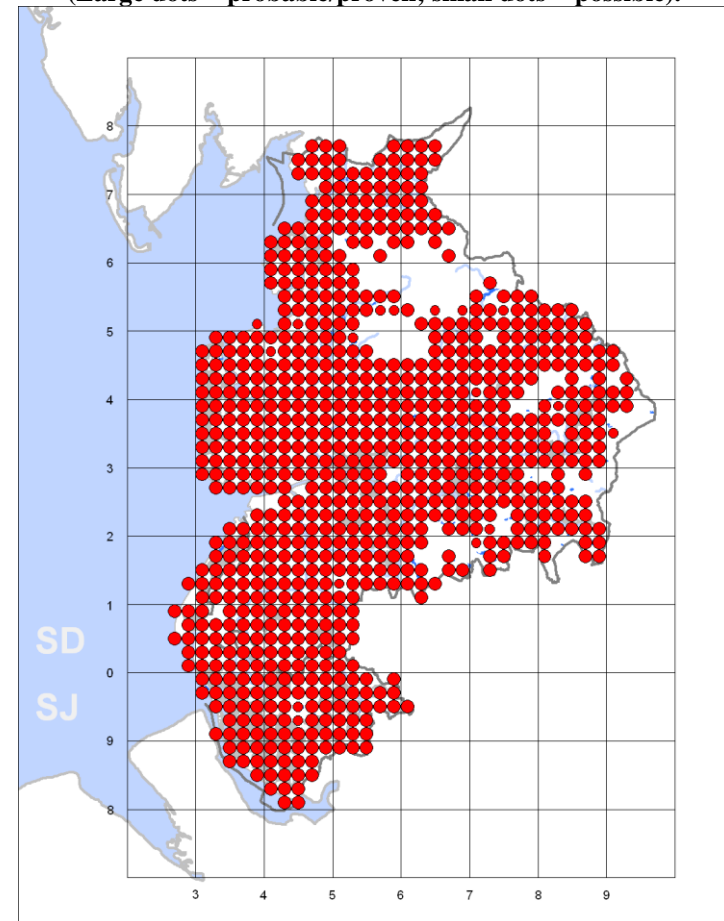
BM

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

Breeding

Long taken for granted by birders and the general public alike, the House Sparrow was the subject of much concern during the 1990s in Lancashire as in other parts of Britain, with widespread reports of range contractions and population declines. The total British population fell by 64% between 1970 and 2010, but by only 2% during 1995-2010, indicating a more-or-less stable situation at present.

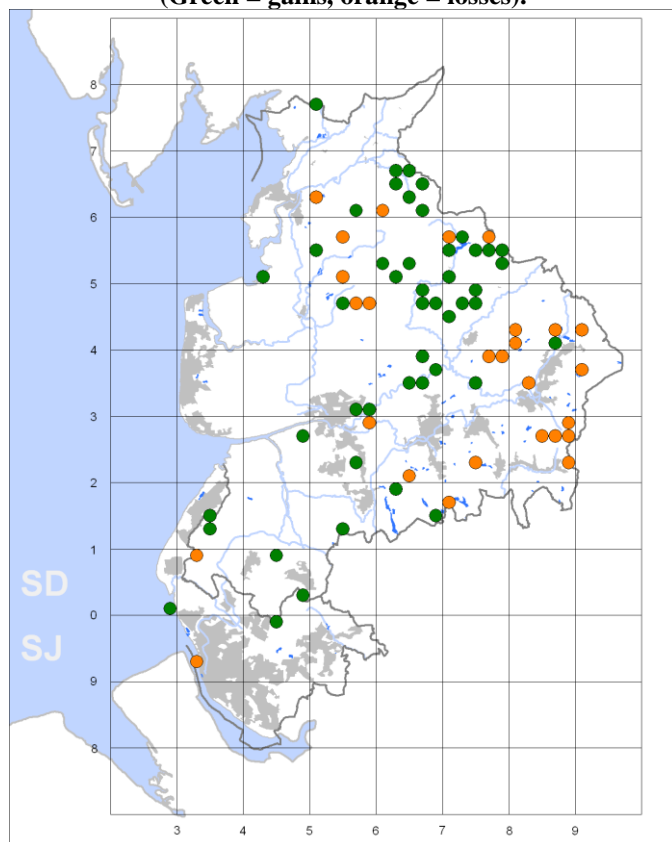
Figure 1. House Sparrow: breeding distribution, 2008-2011.
(Large dots = probable/proven; small dots = possible).



Local surveys in Lancashire, some involving long-term monitoring of House Sparrow populations, produced complex and often apparently contradictory results; very obvious losses were evident in some localities, balanced by increases in others. In addition, breeding numbers in closely adjacent areas containing apparently similar habitats were found to be very different.

Whatever the true situation in the recent past may have been, the House Sparrow's overall breeding status has changed very little between our two surveys. The species was recorded in 821 in 2008-2011, 87.3% of the total and a 3.5% increase in range since 1997-2000 (Fig.1). The breeding distribution map shows the species to be absent only from the highest areas of Bowland, the West Pennine Moors and the south Pennines.

Figure 2. House Sparrow: changes in breeding distribution, 1997-2000 to 2008-2011.
(Green = gains, orange = losses).



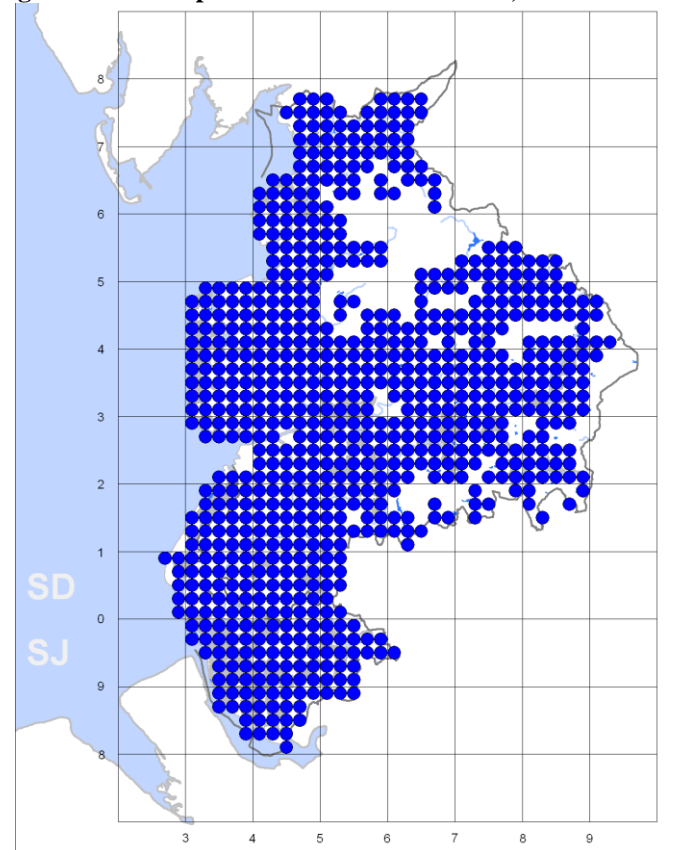
Fifty tetrads, most of these in upland regions from the Ribble Valley northward, recorded gains in breeding House Sparrows, for a loss of 27 more widespread tetrads (Fig.2).

The population was estimated at 35000 pairs, roughly 0.7% of the national population. Relative breeding densities are, however, very different from one region of the county to another, unsurprisingly highest in the urbanised south-west.

Winter

As in most regions of Britain, Lancashire's House Sparrows are highly sedentary, so it is no surprise to find that the winter distribution map is virtually identical to that for breeding; the species was recorded in 781 tetrads, 82.6% of the total (Fig.3).

Figure 3. House Sparrow: winter distribution, 2007/08-2010/11.

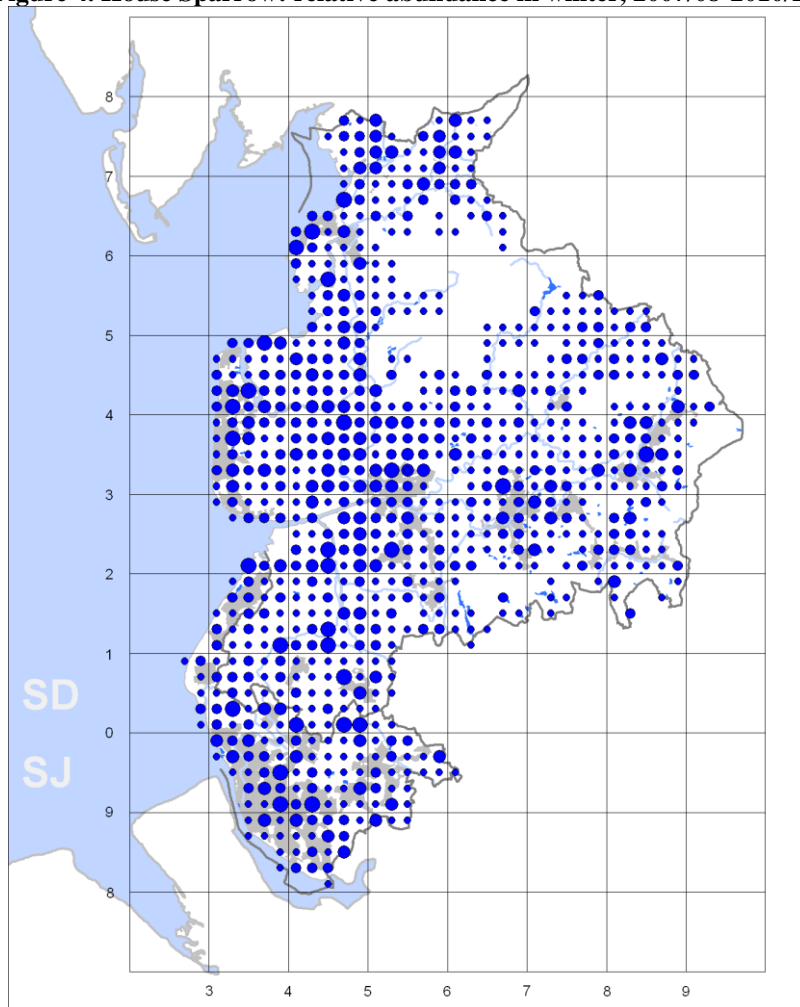


However, the species was recorded in a total of 833 tetrads in either winter or summer during 2007-2011 and it is likely that this may give a more complete picture of their total range.

Unsurprisingly, the highest densities were found in urban areas, especially in suburbia on the edge of the main conurbations (Fig.4). The winter population is estimated at around 100000 individuals.

BM

Figure 4. House Sparrow: relative abundance in winter, 2007/08-2010/11.



Dot Size in descending order: 75-209; 40-74; 20-39; 1-19

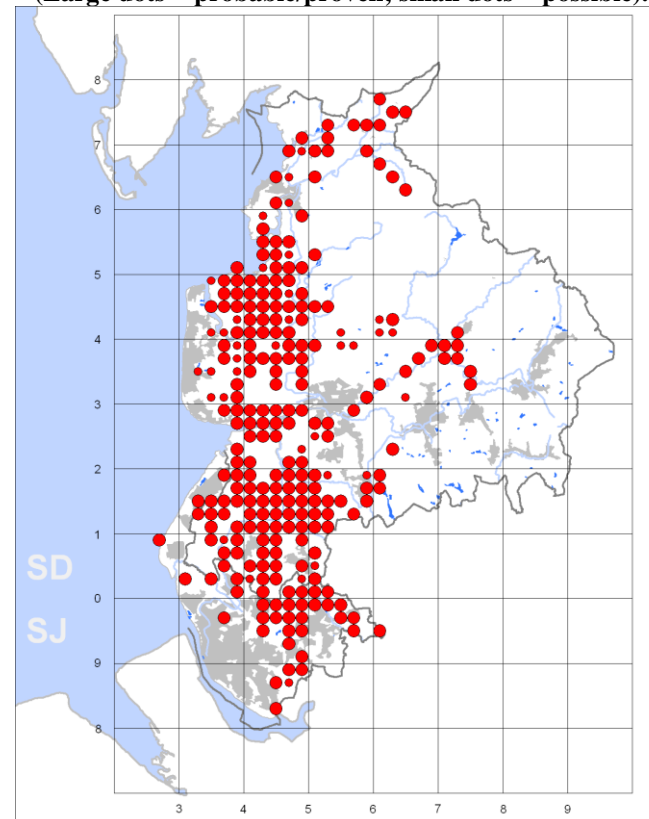
TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*

Breeding

Evidence and commentary from the early years of Lancashire ornithology paint a picture of successive increases and declines in Tree Sparrow ranges and populations. A precipitous decline from the late 1970s left nesting Tree Sparrows in only 37 10km squares by the 1988-91 New Atlas, a decline which continued, apparently inexorably, into the 1997-2000 Lancashire atlas survey.

The tone of the account in the 2001 Atlas was distinctly pessimistic about the species' prospects but it expressed the hope that increased local nest-box schemes and provision of supplementary winter feeding might help it to survive.

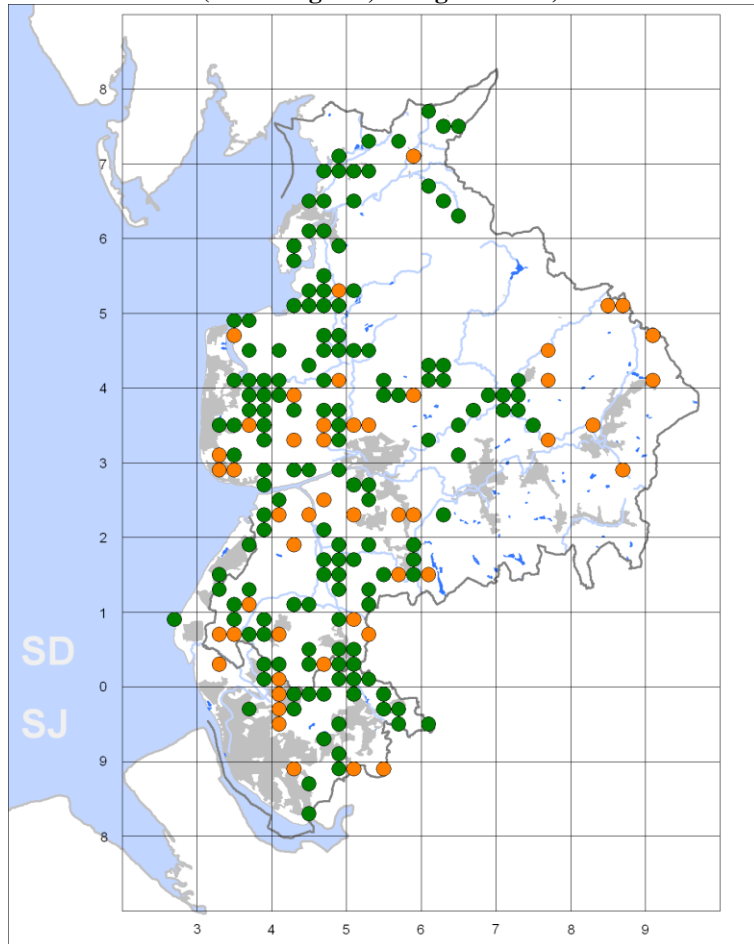
Figure 1. Tree Sparrow: breeding distribution, 2008-2011.
(Large dots = probable/proven; small dots = possible).



The results of the present breeding survey have more than justified those hopes. Tree Sparrows were recorded during 2008-2011 in 257 tetrads, 27.6% of the total, a range increase of 62.4% (Fig.1). More than 90% of occupied tetrads remain in the western half of the county, with virtually solid distributions in St. Helens, West Lancashire, either side of the Ribble Estuary and most of the Fylde. The most easterly breeding took place around Oswaldtwistle.

Overall, 148 tetrads were newly occupied since 1997-2000 with 48 apparently abandoned (Fig.2).

Figure 2. Tree Sparrow: changes in breeding distribution, 1997-2000 to 2008-2011. (Green = gains, orange = losses).



Gains were made throughout much of the county but most notably in St. Helens, central Fylde, north Lancashire and the Ribble Valley. Losses were mostly scattered throughout the core range but nine tetrads in the far east of the county were also lost.

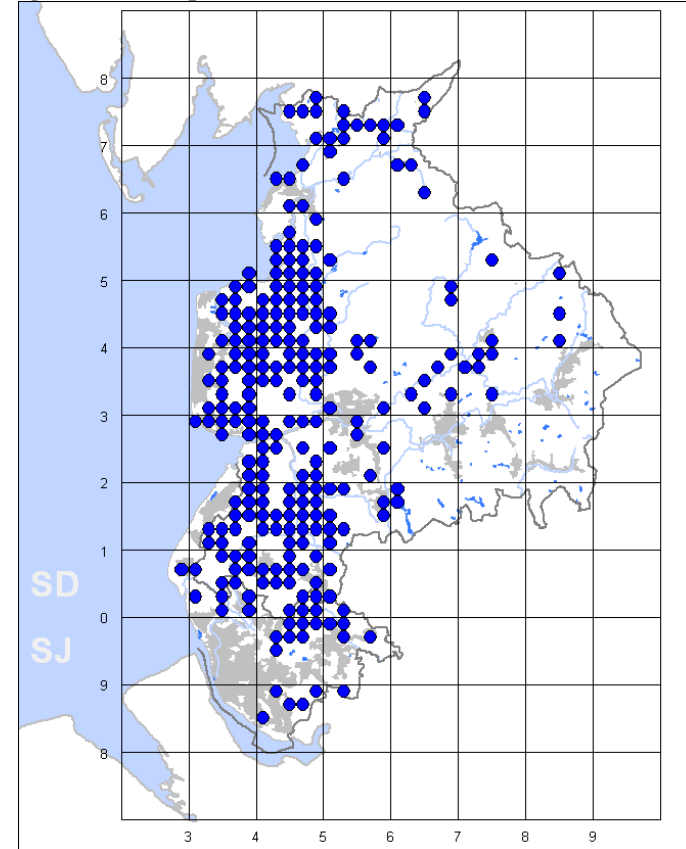
The instigation of nest-box provision and winter feeding have undoubtedly helped the species but these projects are far from universal and cannot alone account for its spectacular resurgence.

The population was estimated at 2000 pairs.

Winter

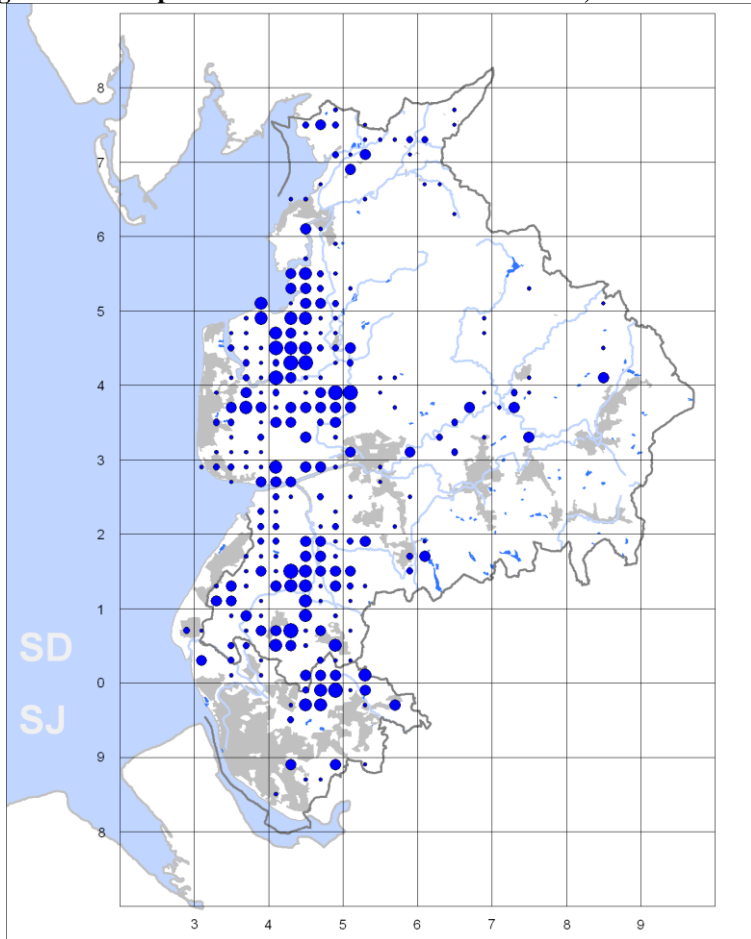
Tree Sparrows were present in 252 tetrads, 26.7% of the total, with a distribution that closely matched that of the breeding season (Fig.3).

Figure 3. Tree Sparrow: winter distribution, 2007/08-2010/11.



The largest numbers were found in eastern Fylde, West Lancashire and Rainford (Fig.4). Sixteen tetrads recorded counts of 50 or more, the largest of which were 305 at Skitham and 280 on Rawcliffe Moss.

Figure 4. Tree Sparrow: relative abundance in winter, 2007/08-2010/11.



Dot size in descending order: 100-305; 30-100; 10-29; 5-9; 1-4

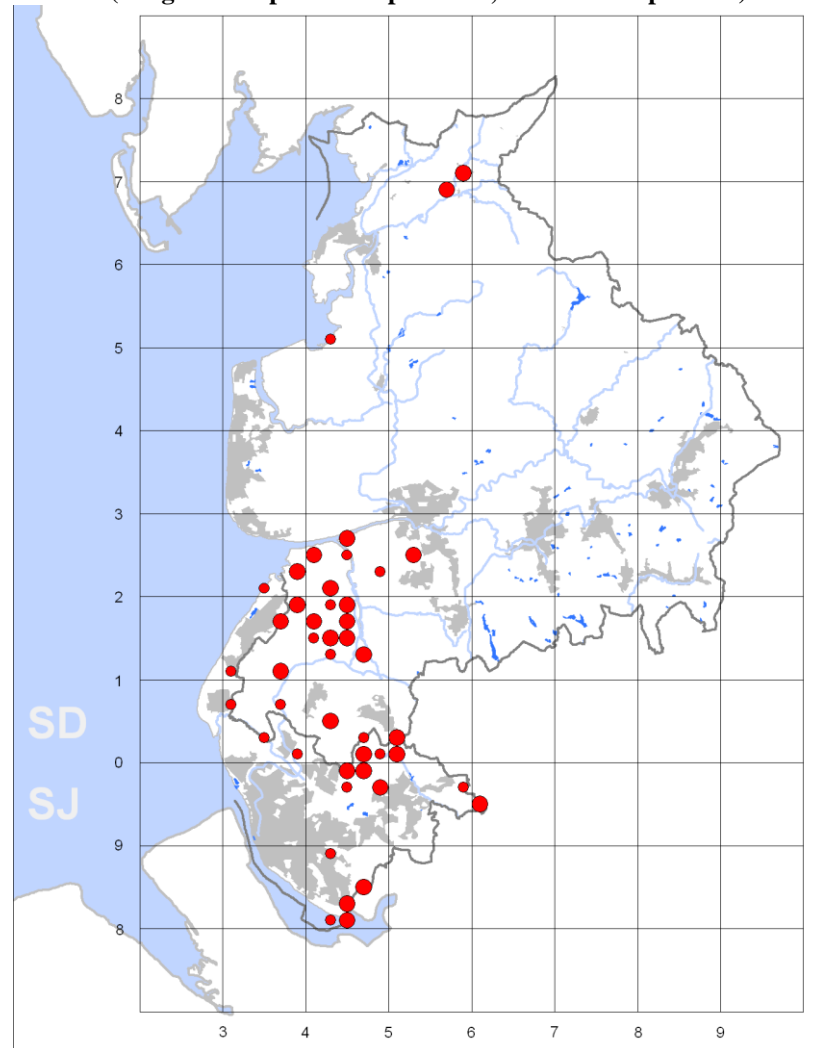
As the species is essentially sedentary in Europe, and we have no evidence from ringing recoveries of any significant winter immigration into or emigration from, Lancashire, it is likely that the vast majority of records are of local breeders and their offspring. The population was estimated at about 6000 individuals, the breeding population multiplied by three.

BM

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava flavissima*

Yellow Wagtails have been in increasing trouble as a British breeding species for many years, their population declining by 72% between 1970 and 2010 and by 50% since 1995. The Lancashire population has mirrored the national trend although, because the county is close to the edge of the species' range, the decline has perhaps been steeper and more rapid.

Figure 1. Yellow Wagtail: breeding distribution, 2008-2011.
(Large dots = proven or probable; small dots = possible)



Proven or probably breeding birds were found in 27 tetrads during 2008-2011, indicating a reduction in range of 37% since 1997-2000 (Fig.1). They were regarded as possibly breeding in a further 18 tetrads compared with 39 in the previous survey and if these are taken into account the range contraction would be close to 50%. On whichever criterion it is clear that Yellow Wagtails are close to being lost as a breeding species in Lancashire.

Although they continue to be reasonably widespread in the south-west of the county, their range is now almost entirely confined to farmland south of the Ribble.

The only exception is the upper Lune Valley where one or two pairs are hanging on, having declined from 28 pairs in the 1970s and eight pairs at the start of our last atlas survey; the decline here is thought to be linked to poor rates of productivity insufficient to maintain the population. The other possible breeding record in the north of the county was seen in May 2009 on Cockerham Marsh and was probably a migrant.

Yellow Wagtails were described as virtually extinct in east Lancashire in the 1997- 2000 atlas, a prognosis that has now come to fruition; the species is now a rarity anywhere in the east of the county.

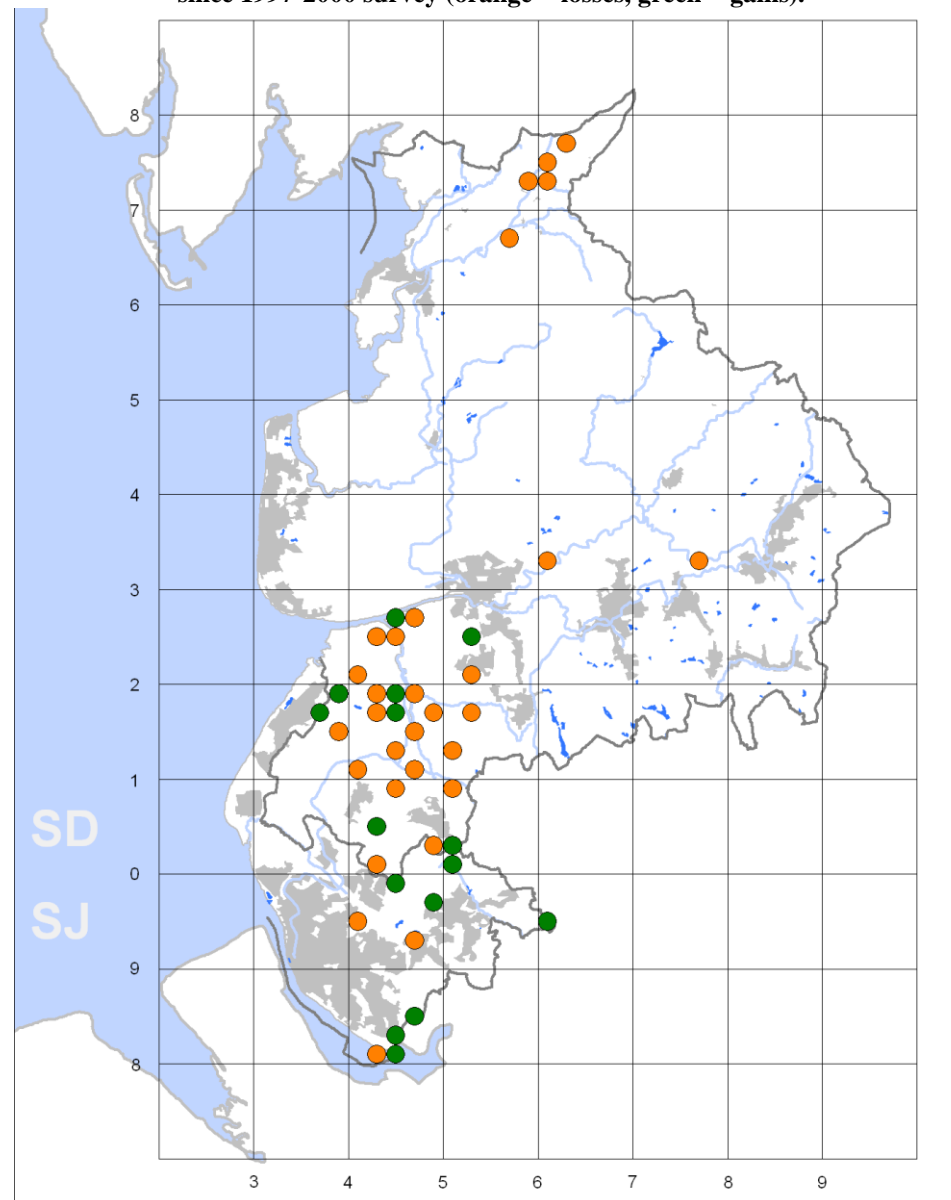
There are three core areas in the south-west, the largest of them in West Lancashire, especially in the Rufford-Burscough area, with one proven breeding outlier on Farington Moss near Chorley. Yellow Wagtails also continue to hold on in similar farmland habitat on the Rainford mosses and in south Liverpool, and an eastern outlier on the Greater Manchester boundary near Golbourne.

The small number of newly-occupied tetrads are vastly outweighed by those that have apparently been abandoned (Fig.2). All of the 15 gains have been in the south-west and most probably represent no more than a slight shift in nesting area. The losses were proportionately most severe in east Lancashire where none were found during 2008-2011, and in the Lune Valley. However, the majority were in the south-west, indicating a significant contraction, particularly in southern areas of West Lancashire, in their last remaining Lancashire 'stronghold'.

The county population was estimated at 40 pairs.

PJM

Figure 2. Yellow Wagtail: change in breeding distribution since 1997-2000 survey (orange = losses, green = gains).

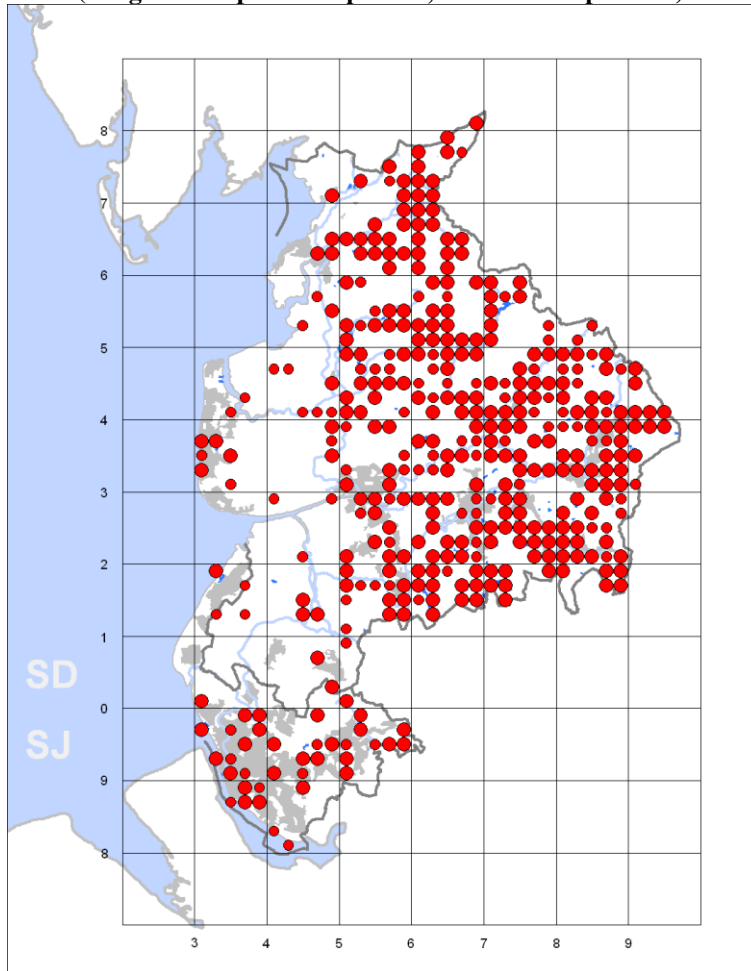


GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

Breeding

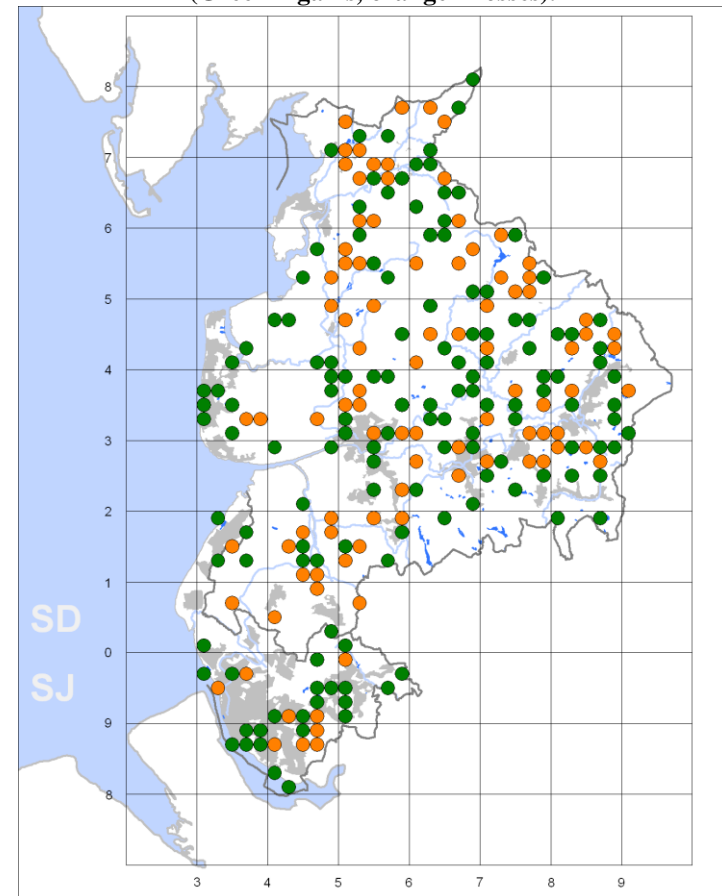
Grey Wagtails were found in 388 tetrads during 2008-2011, 41% of the county total and an increase in range of 12% since 1997-2000 (Fig.1). This species is closely associated with breeding near water, especially streams and rivers where the surface is broken by rocks and pebbles, but this is not such a limiting factor as with some other riverine species such as Dipper.

Figure 1. Grey Wagtail: breeding distribution, 2008-2011.
(Large dots = probable/proven; small dots = possible).



However, the overwhelming majority of records were in the eastern two-thirds of the county and they were virtually absent in the west with the important exceptions of the urban areas of Merseyside and Blackpool. A significant number of newly-occupied tetrads were in these and other urban areas but the remainder were within the core areas of the east, mostly in the Ribble Valley or to the south (Fig.2). The 94 apparently-abandoned tetrads were spread throughout the county with no clear pattern. However, within local areas many of the new tetrads border others abandoned, possibly due to birds moving short distances along waterbodies, making it difficult to be sure exactly where they are breeding.

Figure 2. Grey Wagtail: changes in breeding distribution, 1997-2000 to 2008-2011.
(Green = gains, orange = losses).

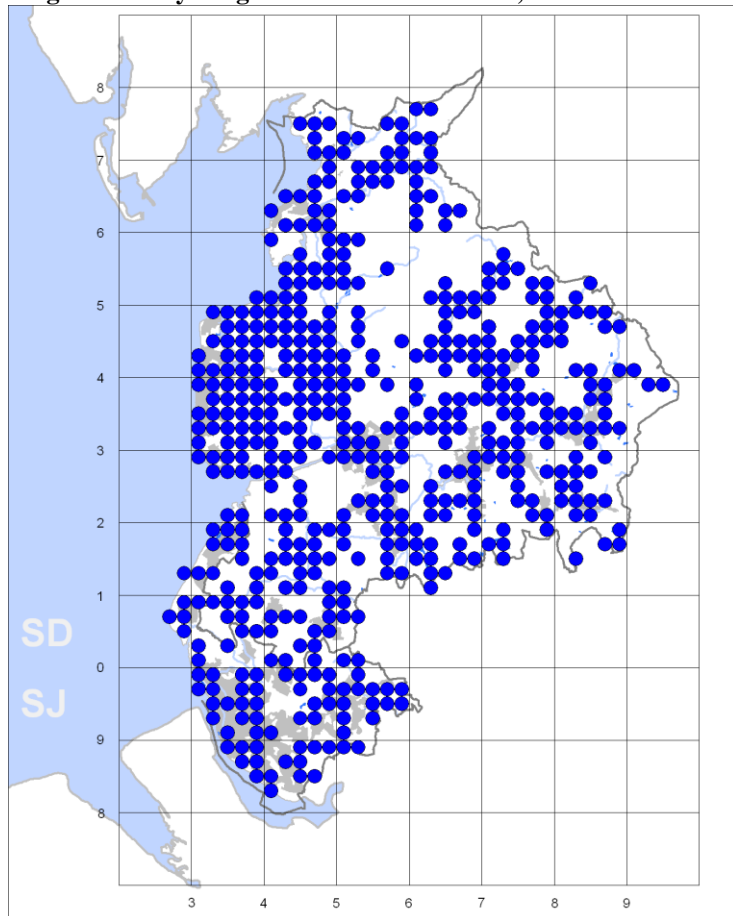


Like most riverine species, Grey Wagtails suffer in severe winters but numbers recover to former levels as 'normal' climatic conditions return; since most survey work was carried before the hard winter of 2009/10 any subsequent losses may be underestimated in the information presented here. With that proviso, the population was estimated at 650 pairs, slightly less than 2% of the British population.

Winter

Grey Wagtails' winter habitat is far more varied than their riparian breeding preferences with records during 2007/08-2010/11 coming from 517 tetrads, 55% of the county total and over 14 percentage points more than in summer (Fig.3).

Figure 3. Grey Wagtail: winter distribution, 2007/08-2010/11.



Their distribution was also radically different with most records occurring in the western lowland half of the county, notably in the Fylde where very few breed but almost every tetrad was occupied in winter. Similarly, far more were found in urban areas than in summer, while proportionately fewer were present on higher ground.

67% of tetrad counts were of single birds but five or more were seen in 13 tetrads. The population estimate was estimated at 2300 which probably cannot be wholly accounted for by the county's breeding birds, possibly implying some degree of immigration into the county.

GH

PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

Breeding

Pied Wagtails breed extensively throughout Lancashire, often associated with all types of water-bodies and in most cases making use of man-made structures, including extensive stone walls in upland areas. They are absent from extensive woodland and heather moorland (unless bisected by stone walls). Birds were recorded in 808 tetrads during 2008-2011, covering 86% of the county total (Fig.1).

This represented a 4.5% increase in range since 1997-2000 but it is probable that much of this can be accounted for by increased survey effort, especially on marginal sites. The national population trend is ambiguous, having increased by 23% between 1970 and 2010 but falling by 11% since 1995.

The 78 apparently-abandoned tetrads were more than compensated for by 101 newly-occupied ones (Fig.2). Most of these changes can probably be attributed to small shifts in nesting sites or mapping errors but there do appear to have been genuine gains in some urban areas, particularly throughout the Liverpool conurbation and to a lesser extent around Accrington and Blackburn.

Breeding densities in occupied tetrads were 35% higher in the west of the county than the east but there was no difference between north and south. Although they are very widespread, Pied Wagtails tend to nest quite distantly from each other and the average density per occupied tetrad was four pairs, producing a county population estimate of 3200 pairs, a little over 0.5% of the national total.

Figure 1. Pied Wagtail: breeding distribution, 2008-2011.
(Large dots = probable/proven; small dots = possible).

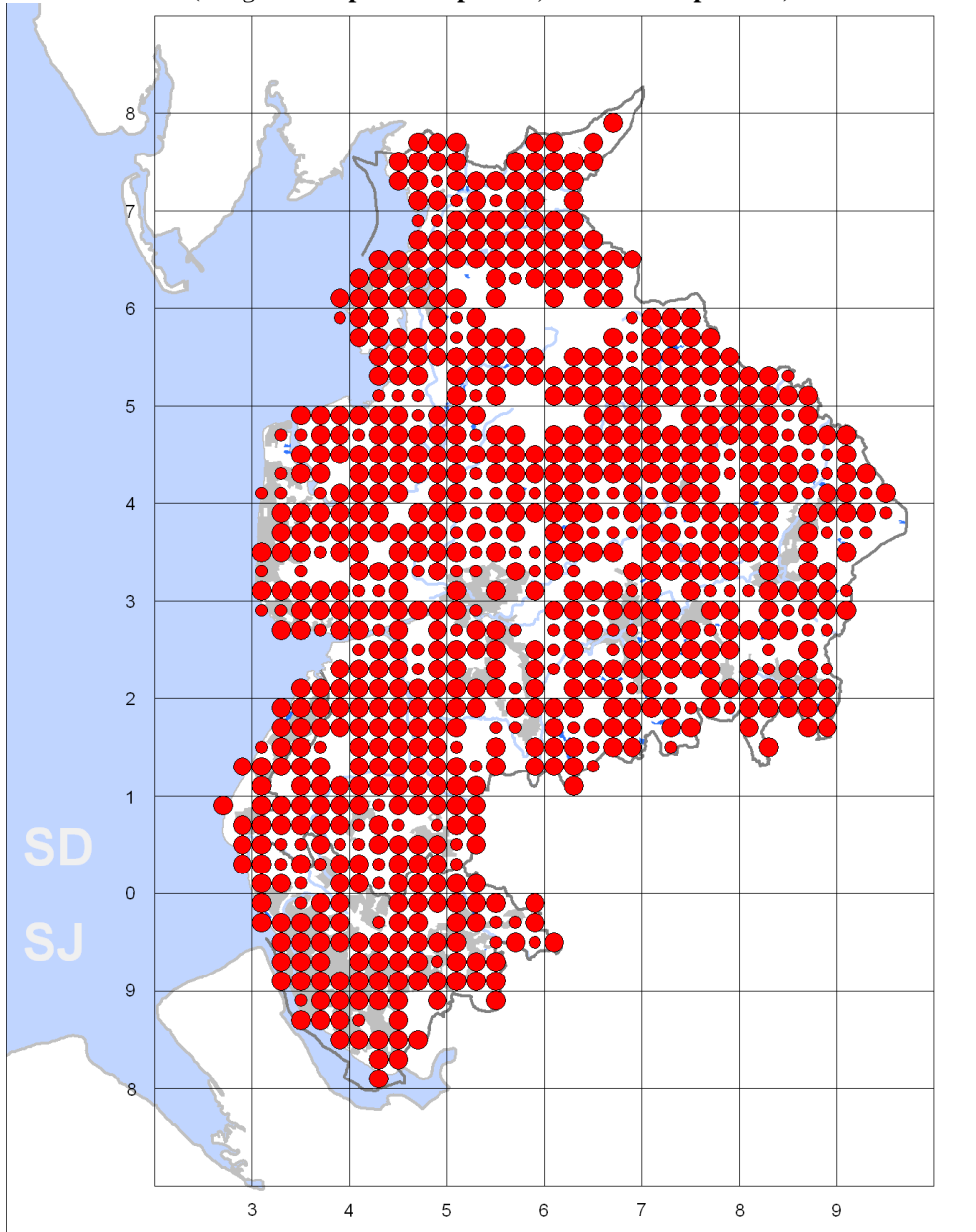
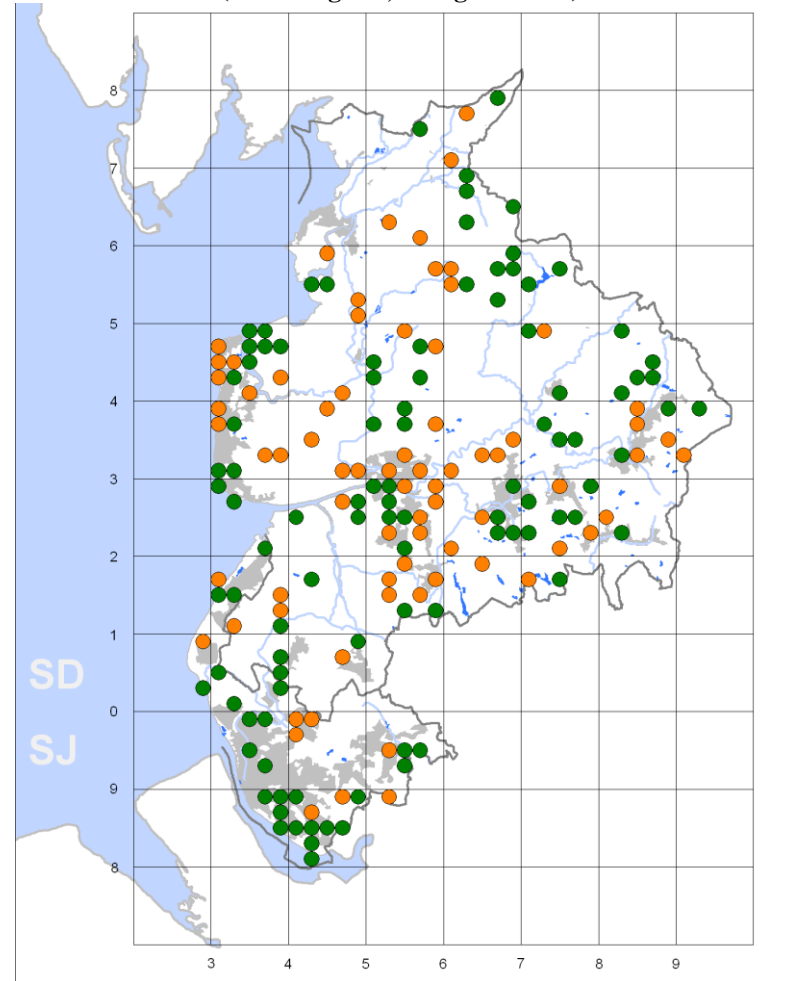


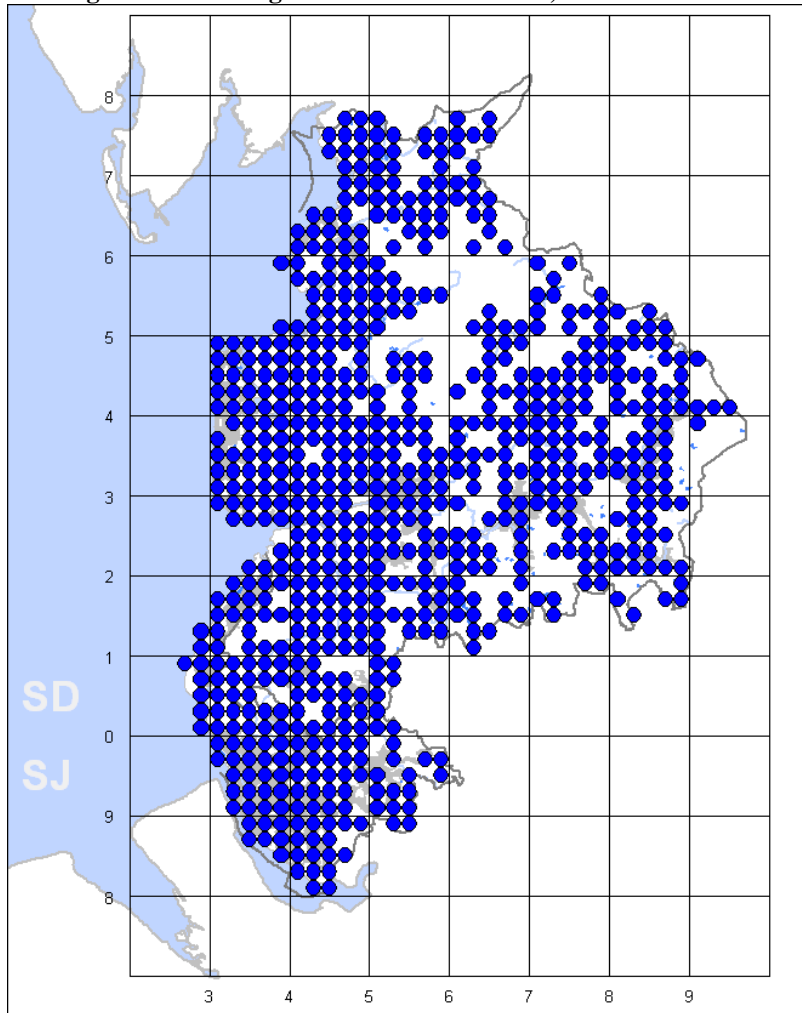
Figure 2. Pied Wagtail: changes in breeding distribution, 1997-2000 to 2008-2011.
(Green = gains, orange = losses).



Winter

Although the winter range was similar to that of summer in broad terms it was more restricted. Pied Wagtails were present in 708 tetrads during 2007/08-2010/11, 75% of the county total and ten percentage points fewer than during the breeding season (Fig.3).

Figure 3. Pied Wagtail: winter distribution, 2007/08-2010/11.

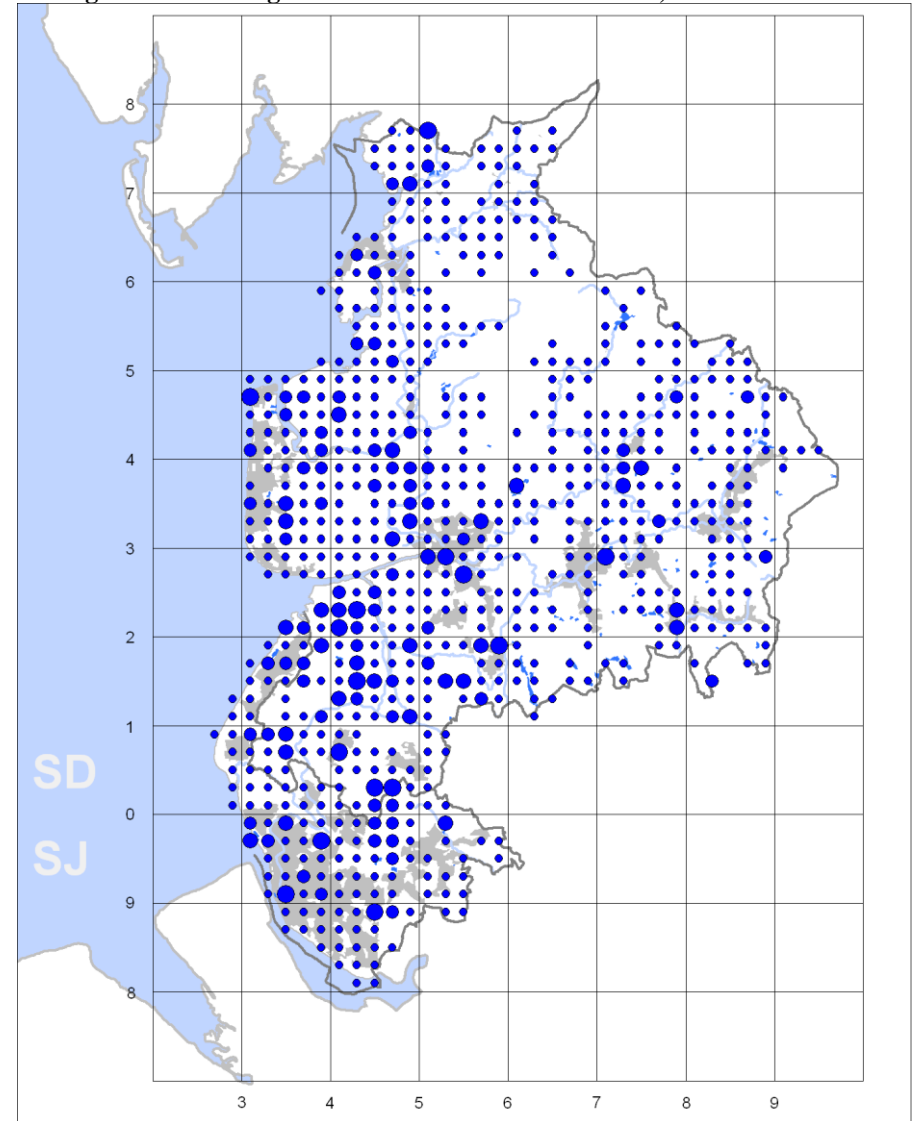


This change is largely due to absence from higher ground in winter and a greater concentration in the western half of the county.

As with other resident or short-distance migrant passerines, some return towards upland breeding areas in late winter and this may account for some registrations in the east and north. Some do, however, remain near the uplands throughout the winter, especially around wetland habitats, for example sewage farms in north-east Lancashire.

An even more striking feature of their winter distribution is the preponderance of high-density tetrads in urban areas, where many of the highest counts were made (Fig.4).

Figure 4. Pied Wagtail: relative abundance in winter, 2007/08-2010/11.



Dot size in descending order: 100-570, 25-99; 10-24; 1-9

However, this is a little misleading since Pied Wagtails are hardly more gregarious in winter feeding areas than they are in summer, but they do gather in communal night-time roosts, taking advantage of higher temperatures in urban areas. Counts of 100 or more were made in 15 tetrads, the largest of which were 570 in Liverpool city centre, 490 in Preston, 372 in Fleetwood and 352 on Hesketh Moss; the largest count in north Lancashire was 100 in the Hale Moss tetrad (near Yealand Conyers) and in the east 200 at Rishton Reservoir.

Estimating the size of the winter population is confounded by our lack of knowledge of how many of Lancashire's breeding birds migrate south and how many from further north move in to replace them. It is further complicated by the clumped nature of their distribution at roost sites, not all of which may have been counted. The best that can be done, therefore, is little more than a 'guesstimate' of 4-5000 birds.

PJM

RICHARD'S PIPIT *Anthus richardi*

A migrant at Alston Wetland on 12 November 2011 was the only record during the winter atlas period.

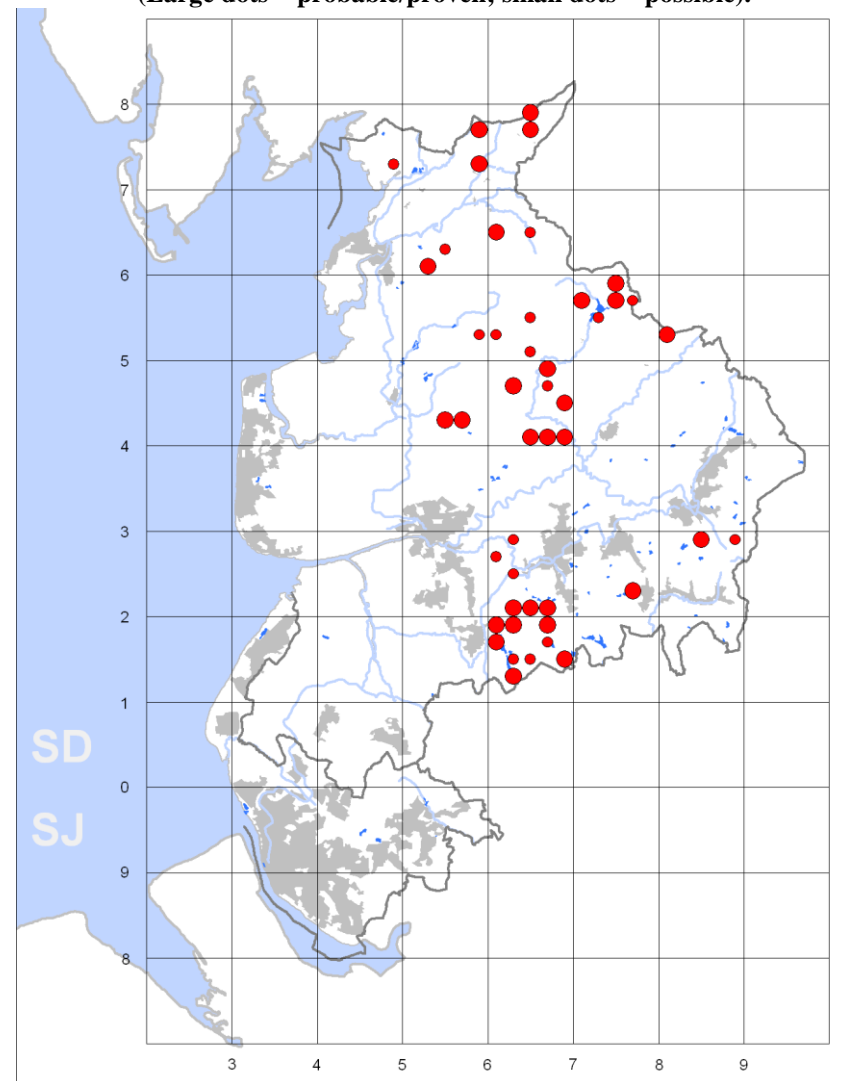
SJW

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

Tree Pipit numbers declined nationally by 73% between 1970 and 2010 but it seems that this has slowed more recently with the population falling by only 5% since 1995. Evidence from the current survey, however, suggests that their Lancashire range, and presumably population, has continued to shrink dramatically in the past ten years.

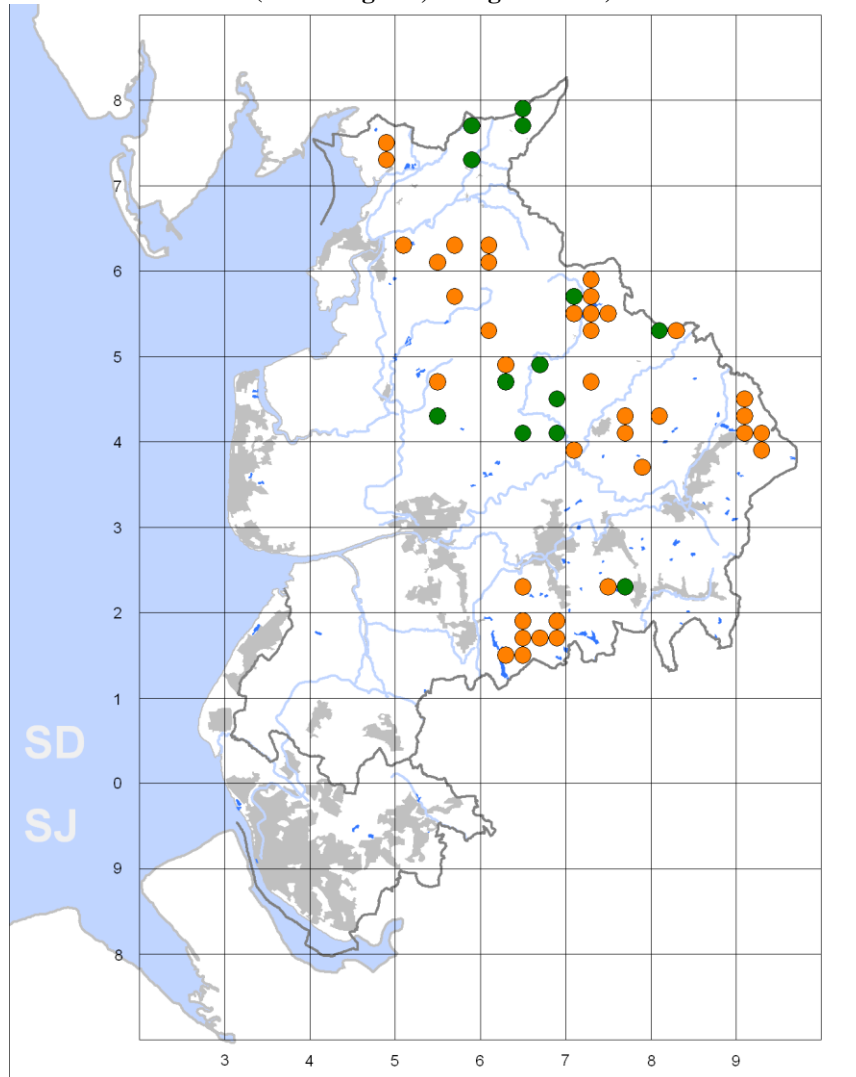
Tree Pipits were proven or probably breeding in 29 tetrads during 2008-2011, indicating a county range contraction of 47% since 1997-2000; they were thought to be possibly breeding in a further 17 tetrads and if these are taken into account the reduction in range has been 60% over the same period (Fig.1). On either measure the species is clearly in some trouble in Lancashire.

Figure 1. Tree Pipit: breeding distribution, 2008-2011.
(Large dots = probable/proven; small dots = possible).



Areas with sparse tree cover which are the favoured breeding habitat are fairly widespread in the east of the county, in clear-fell and early-growth plantations and in the upper cloughs of the northern and western fringes of Bowland, but not all of them are occupied by Tree Pipits.

Figure 2. Tree Pipit: changes in breeding distribution, 1997-2000 to 2008-2011.
(Green = gains, orange = losses).



The woodlands in the Rivington-Anglezarke-Roddlesworth area on the western edge of the West Pennine Moors remained the species' relative stronghold but most occupied tetrads were on the edges of Bowland and scattered throughout other areas of north and east Lancashire.

Newly-occupied tetrads were outnumbered by those that were apparently abandoned (Fig.2). Most of the gains were probably attributable to increased survey effort compared with the previous survey, especially in the Leck Valley and the SD64 section of Bowland. Losses occurred throughout the county. Hardest hit were areas of east Lancashire south of the Ribble and around the Gisburn Forest, the Darwen-West Pennine Moors area, where the number of proven/probable breeding tetrads halved, and parts of north Lancashire. Tree Pipits appear to have disappeared as a consistently regular breeding bird from Warton Crag and almost the whole of SD66, and proven breeding in the Gisburn Forest area declined from eight tetrads to just three.

Average breeding densities were a little less than 1.5 pairs per occupied tetrad and the county population was estimated at 60 pairs.

It is not known to what extent forestry practices, specifically maturation of plantations and the amount of felling, has contributed to this recent decline, but these are likely to have been one important factor; in 2013 for example, after the atlas was completed, three pairs held territory in upper Hindburndale after the felling of Thrushgill Plantation which left many standing 'dead' trees to act as song-posts.

PJM

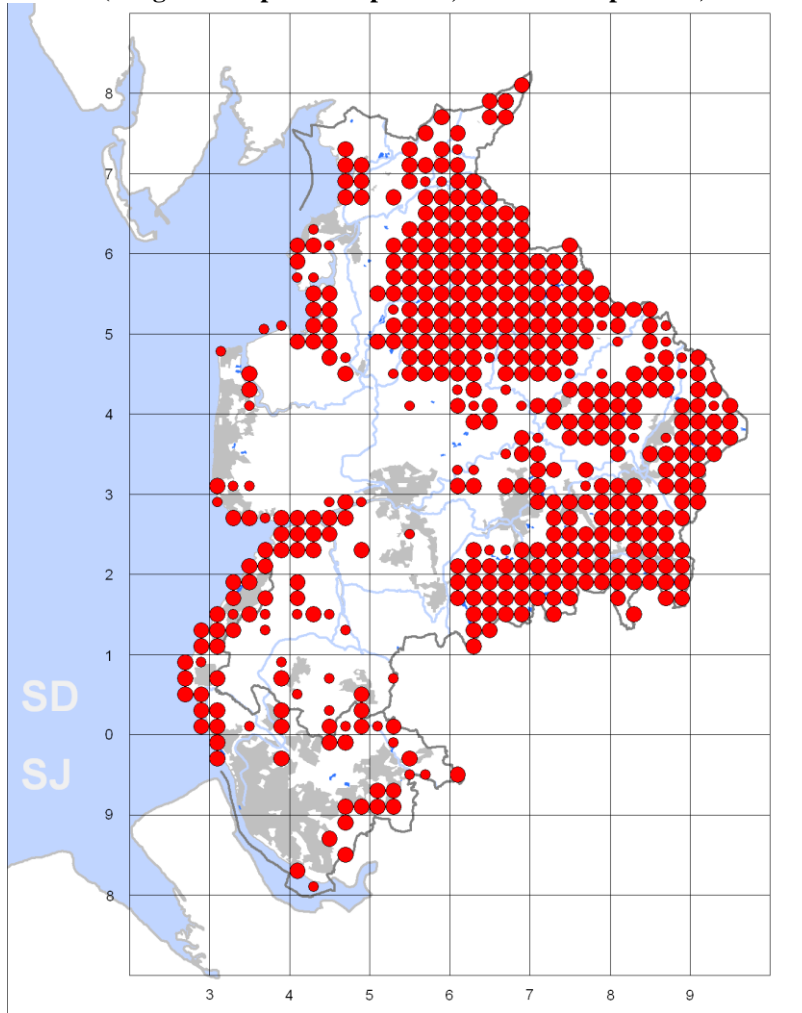
MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

Breeding

Meadows Pipits were present in 470 tetrads during 2008-2011, 50% of the county total and indicating an 11% decrease in range since 1997-2000 (Fig.1).

They have one of the most disjunct distributions of any of Lancashire's breeding species. The vast majority of their current range is in the uplands of Bowland, Leck and the South and West Pennines, and most of the remainder on coastal saltmarshes and sand dunes. A small remnant of what used to be a much larger population hangs on in the agricultural lowlands, most notably in St. Helens and to a lesser extent in West Lancashire. There is thus a massive gap in their distribution in the centre of the county.

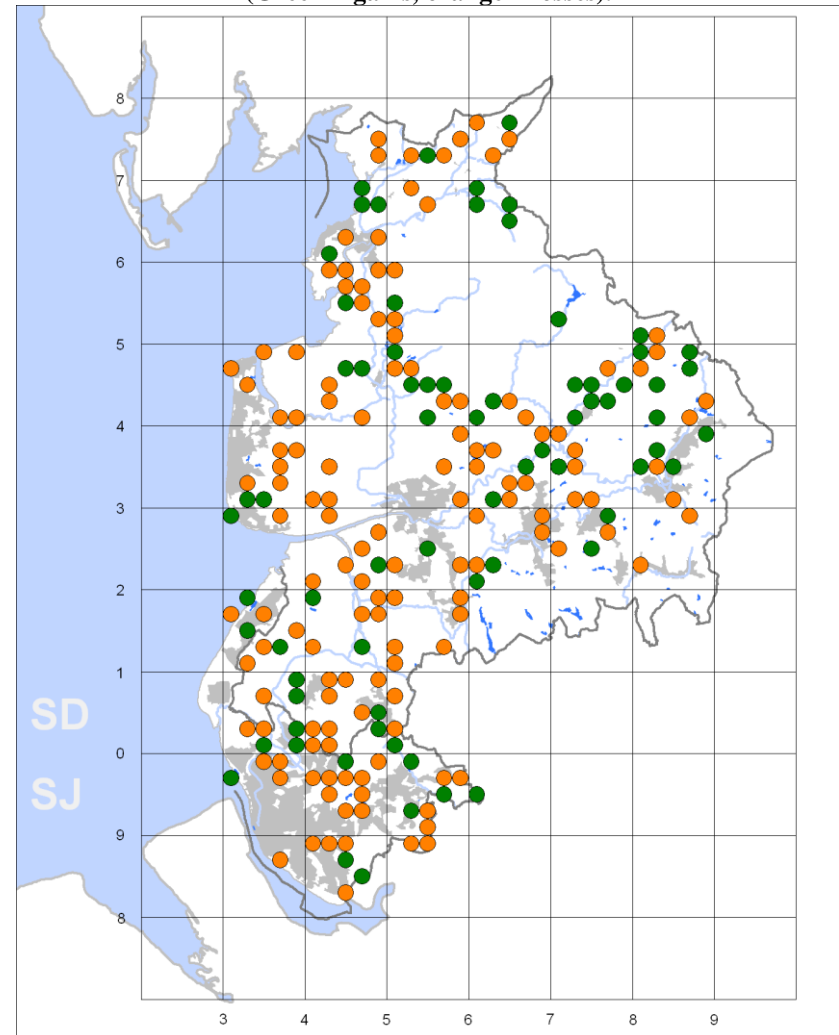
Figure 1. Meadow Pipit: breeding distribution, 2008-2011.
 (Large dots = probable/proven; small dots = possible).



More than twice as many tetrads have apparently been abandoned since 1997-2000 as those that have been newly occupied (Fig.2). There has been no major change in distribution in upland areas with virtually all the losses occurring throughout the lowlands with the Fylde and parts of Merseyside and the south-west mosses hardest hit. The gains were scattered, apparently almost randomly, but with one small cluster in the Ribble Valley.

Breeding densities in occupied tetrads were almost twice as high in the east of the county as in the west but there were no differences between north and south. Gauging the size of the county population is extremely difficult as densities vary considerably within and between broad areas but a rough average of 20 pairs per occupied tetrad would imply a total population of 10000 pairs, around 0.5% of the British total.

Figure 2. Meadow Pipit: changes in breeding distribution, 1997-2000 to 2008-2011.
 (Green = gains, orange = losses).

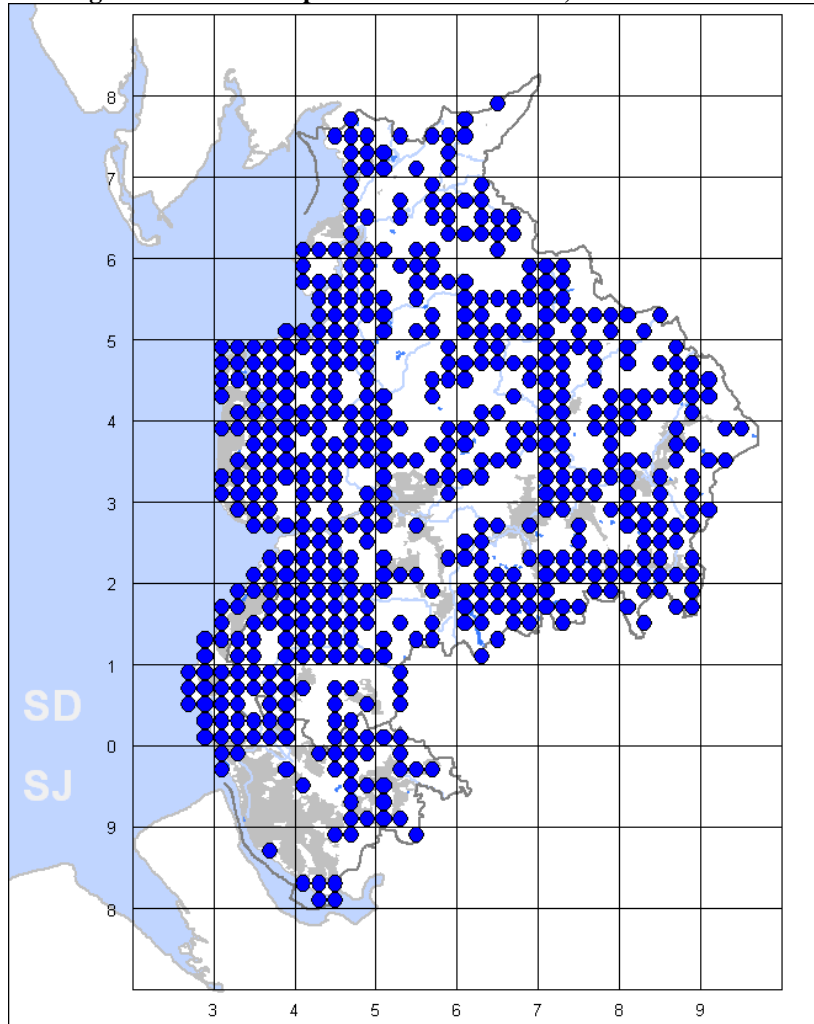


Winter

Meadow Pipits were found in 572 tetrads during 2007/08-2010/11, 60.5% of the county total and with a winter range around 20% greater than during the breeding season (Fig.3).

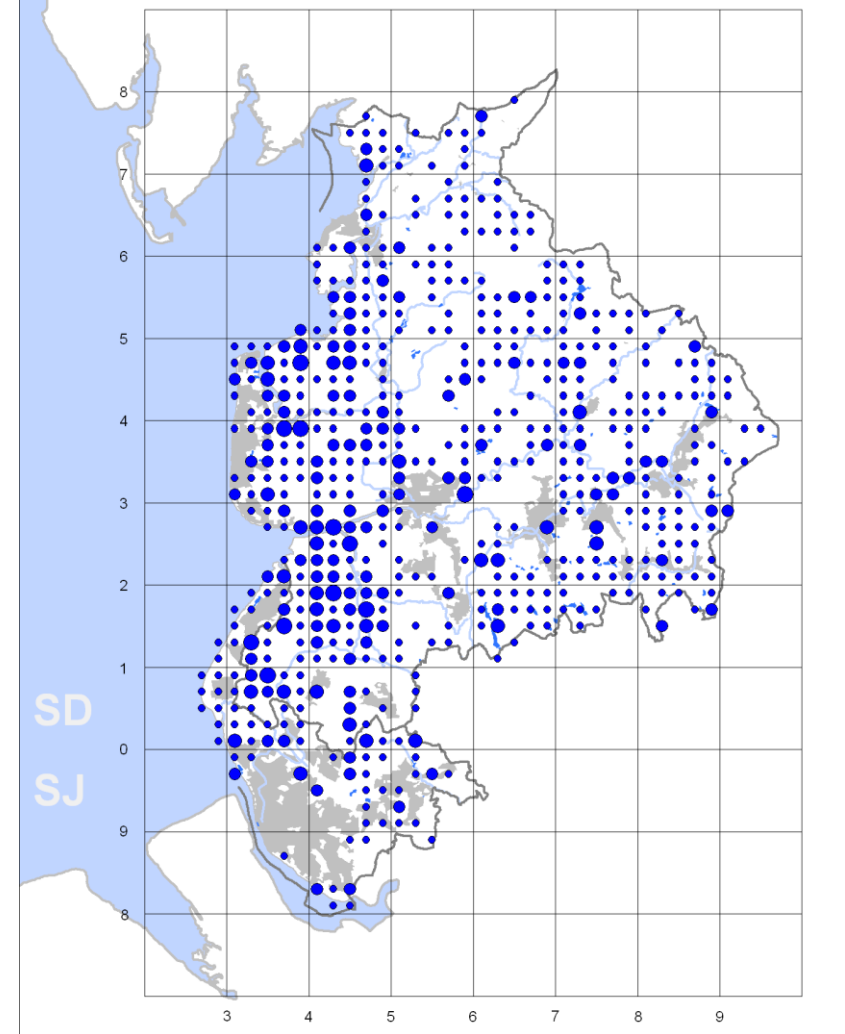
This range is close to being a mirror image of summer's with most lowland tetrads occupied and a very much patchier distribution in the uplands, where winter presence is probably significantly exaggerated by records of late migrants in November and early-returning birds in February.

Figure 3. Meadow Pipit: winter distribution, 2007/08-2010/11.



Meadow Pipits can be very difficult to find in upland areas in midwinter: ones and twos may be found in favoured wet hollows in fields but double-figure flocks are conspicuous by their absence, in complete contrast to the breeding season densities. The survey carried out by the Lancaster and District Birdwatching Society of north Lancashire each January exemplifies this with an average of just 39 birds found during the four years of the atlas survey.

Figure 4. Meadow Pipit: relative abundance in winter, 2007/08-2010/11.



Dot size in descending order: 80-350; 15-79; 1-15.

Whilst there are a few favoured pockets in the river valleys in the east, the vast majority of sizeable wintering numbers can be found in the agricultural fields of the Fylde (from which they were conspicuously absent in summer, similar habitat in Merseyside, damp brownfield sites such as Middleton NR and coastal saltmarshes and dunes (Fig.4).

Peak counts of 50 or more were made in 24 tetrads, the largest 350 on Longton Marsh, 158 on Downholland Moss, 157 at Rufford and 150 at Brockholes. The highest count in the Fylde was 90 at Little Singleton, in Chorley 60 at Withnell Fold and in the West Pennines 50 on Oswaldtwistle Moor, while in east Lancashire the handful of larger counts were closer to 20.

Most survey work was carried out before the severe winters of 2009/10 and 2010/11 which may have encouraged increased emigration, but the only supporting evidence we have is that numbers recorded in the Lancaster January surveys averaged 46 between 2008 and 2010 but fell to 14 in 2011.

The population was estimated at an average of 16 per occupied tetrad, a county total of 9000 birds. We do not know what proportion of our wintering birds are long-distance migrants, relatively local altitudinal migrants or, in some cases, near-resident. However, it is clear that net emigration is very high, as the minimum to be expected if the entire Lancashire breeding population remained over winter would be around 30000.

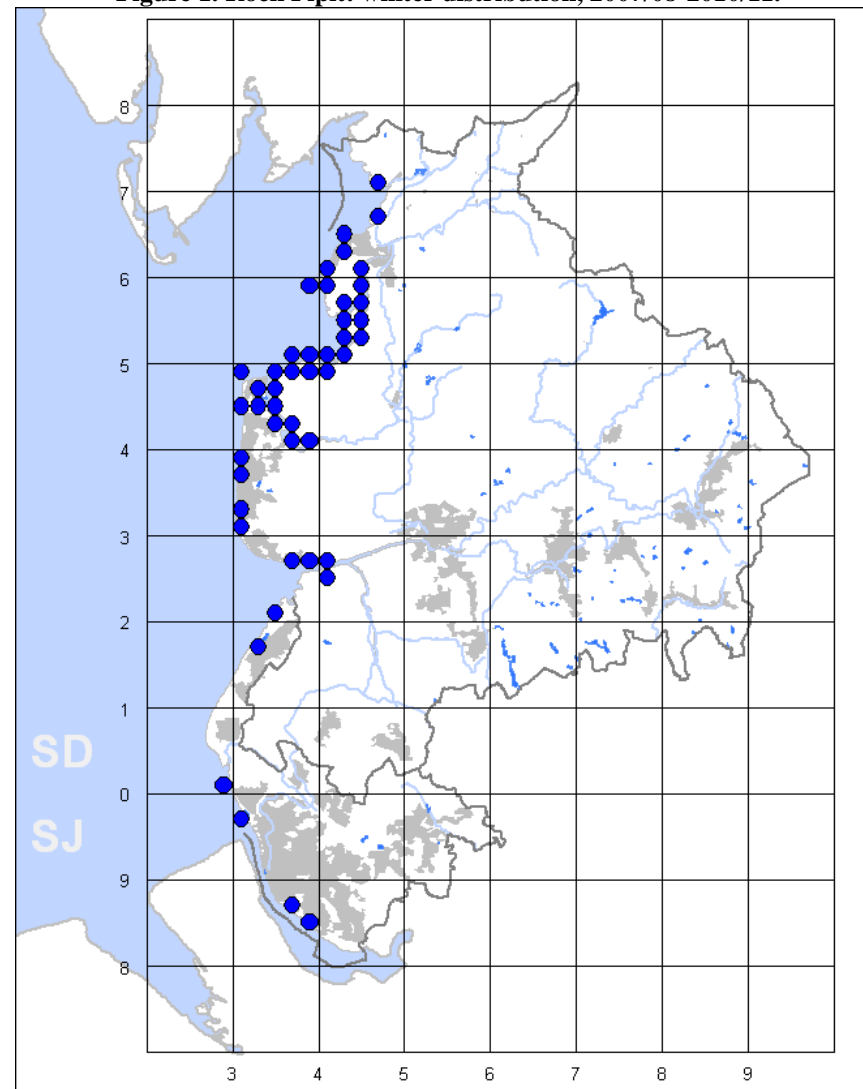
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ROCK PIPIT *Anthus petrosus*

Wintering Rock Pipits were found in 47 tetrads during 2007/08-2010/11 (Fig.1). Although there have been very occasional inland records in Lancashire, none occurred during the present survey; all records were on the coast.

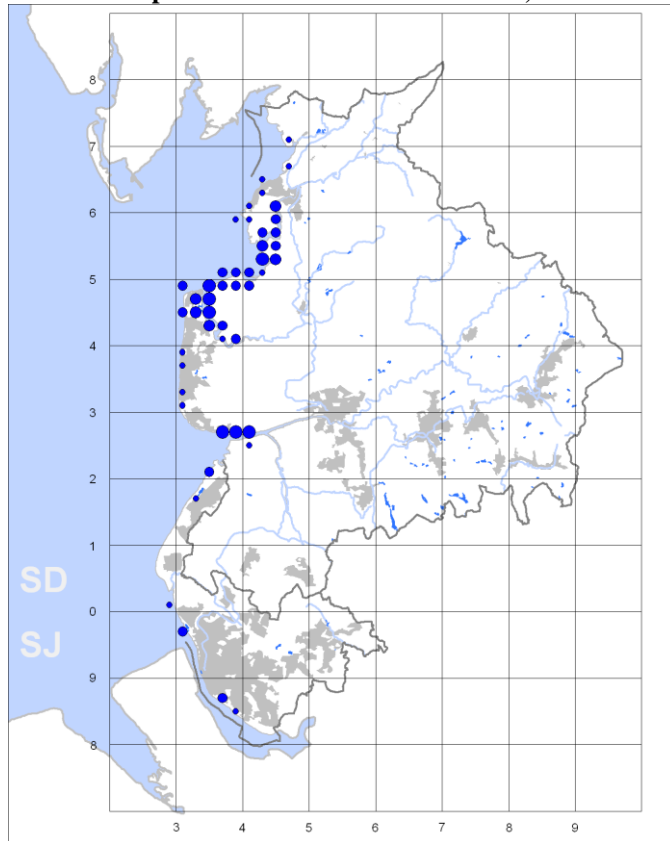
Virtually all Lancashire's Rock Pipits are found on estuarine saltmarshes and the combination of this often inaccessible habitat and their somewhat skulking behaviour makes them one of the most difficult passerines to survey. A large proportion of sightings are made when spring tides flood the marshes and force birds out of their favoured feeding habitat in outer saltmarsh creeks, where they feed on *Hydrobia* and other small marine invertebrates. This may go some way to explain the lack of records from Banks Marsh, the county's most extensive and least accessible saltmarsh.

Figure 1. Rock Pipit: winter distribution, 2007/08-2010/11.



The largest counts were made from the north bank of the Ribble and the Wyre and Lune Estuaries; all others were in single figures (Fig.2). The species shows a preference for ungrazed or lightly-grazed saltmarshes and is therefore relatively scarce on the heavily sheep-grazed Carnforth and Silverdale Marshes. The population was estimated at 50 birds.

Figure 4. Rock Pipit: relative abundance in winter, 2007/08-2010/11.



Dot size in descending order: 10-19; 5-9; 2-4; 1.

Because of their strict habitat preference it is thought that the vast majority of Lancashire's birds are of the Scandinavian sub-species *littoralis*, although there is only one definite and one probable piece of ringing evidence to support this, and few ever linger long enough in spring to develop their distinctive breeding plumage. British breeding Rock Pipits of the nominate sub-species do, however, live up to their name and favour rocky shores, of which Lancashire has virtually none. Thus it is possible that some of the small number of birds found during the survey on the open coast, at Heysham Harbour and on the rubble shores at Seaforth may have been *petrosus*, but definite *littoralis* have also been recorded in the past at the latter site.

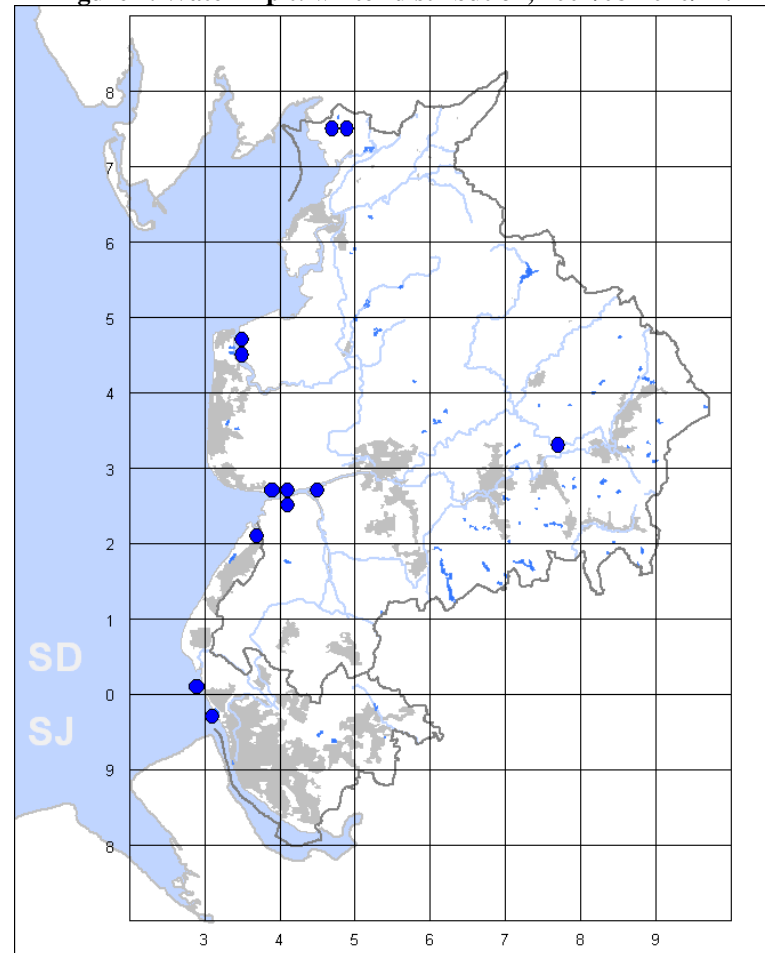
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WATER PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta*

In winter Lancashire's Water Pipits share their saltmarsh habitat with, presumed Scandinavian, Rock Pipits, although possibly occupying a slightly different niche on the upper, more freshwater, marshes.

They are as elusive as their congeners and are rarely seen except when flushed by the highest spring tides. There are a very limited numbers of viewpoints from which these can be observed and consequently we have only a sketchy idea of how many birds overwinter.

Figure 1. Water Pipit: winter distribution, 2007/08-2010/11.



Water Pipits were recorded in twelve tetrads during 2007/08-2010/11, the majority of them on the Ribble and Wyre marshes (Fig.1). Peak counts during the atlas period from these key sites were ten at Warton Marsh on the north bank of the Ribble, one or two on Banks Marsh and Marshside on the south bank, and up to four on the Wyre at Barnaby's Sands, Burrows Marsh and The Heads. Two were seen at Leighton Moss during the first two winters of the period.

All other records were probably migrants seen in November, February or March: one inland at Altham on the Calder, one at Hightown on the Alt Estuary and three records of singles at Seaforth.

We have no idea how many go undetected but on the basis of what are regularly seen the average county population is around ten individuals, out of an estimated British population of 190.

SJW