



Report on Rare birds in Great Britain in 1998

M.J.Rogers and the Rarities Committee
With comments by John Martin and Doug Page

Systematic list of accepted records

The principles and procedures followed in considering records were explained in the 1958 Report (Brit. Birds 53: 155-158). The systematic list is set out in the same way as in the 1997 Report (91: 455-517). The following points show the basis on which the list has been compiled:

1. The details included for each record are (1) county; (2) locality; (3) number of birds if more than one, and age and sex if known (in the case of spring and summer records, however, the age is normally given only where the bird concerned was not in adult plumage); (4) if photographed, tape-recorded or video-recorded (and this evidence seen or heard by the Committee); (5) if trapped or found dead and where specimen is stored, if known; (6) date(s); and (7) observer(s), normally up to three in number, in alphabetical order.
2. In general, this report is confined to records that are regarded as certain, and 'probables' are not included. In the cases of the very similar American *Pluvialis dominica* and Pacific Golden Plovers *P.fulva*, Long-billed *Limnodromus scolopaceus* and Short-billed Dowitchers *L.griseus* and Eastern *Phylloscopus orientalis* and Western Bonelli's Warblers *P.bonelli*, however, we publish indeterminate records, and this also applies to those of pratincoles *Glareola*, albatrosses *Diomedea* and frigatebirds *Fregata*.
3. The sequence of species, English names and scientific nomenclature follow the '*British Birds' List of Birds of the Western Palearctic* (1997).
4. The three numbers in parentheses after each species' name refer specifically to the total number of individuals recorded in Britain & Ireland (excluding those 'at sea') (i) to the end of 1957, (ii) for the period since the formation of the Rarities Committee in 1958, but excluding (iii) those listed here for the current year. The decision as to how many individuals were involved is often difficult and rather arbitrary, but the consensus of members is indicated by 'possibly the same' (counted as different in the totals), 'probably the same' (counted as the same in the totals), or 'the same' when evidence is certain or overwhelming. An identical approach is applied to records of a particular species recurring at the same locality after a lapse of time, including those that occur annually at the same or a nearby site. In considering claims of more than one individual at the same or adjacent localities, the Committee usually requires firm evidence before more than one is counted in the totals. A detailed breakdown of the figures for previous years is held by the Honorary Secretary.
5. Irish records, assessed and accepted by the Irish Rare Birds Committee or by the Northern Ireland Birdwatchers' Association, are included separately, following the subheading IRELAND.

White-billed Diver *Gavia adamsii* (18, 175, 9)

Angus & Dundee Barry Buddon, Tay Estuary, 24th-25th May (S.R.Green, T.Green, R.McCurley *et al.*).

Cornwall Carlyon Bay, 19th February; presumed same, Porthpean, 6th April, Charlestown, 9th (R.Lane).

Northeast Scotland Peterhead, two adults, 12th October (M.Innes).

Orkney Papa Westray, first-summer, 29th April (S.D.Wellock); adult, 12th October (J.Chester). Holm Sound, first-summer, 1st July (K.E.Hague).

Outer Hebrides Ard A'Chadlais, Vatersay, first/second-summer, 17th May (D.Waudby).

Shetland Heogland, Unst, adult, 15th May (M.G.Pennington).

IRELAND

1996 Kerry Brandon Point, adult, 6th October (Irish Birds 6: 287).

The arrival of three adults in northern Scotland on 12th October, including two together at Peterhead, was unexpected. The Cornwall record was only the fourth for the county since 1958, excluding one off Scilly in May 1990. Most other records fitted in with the expected spring passage in northern waters (Brit. Birds 90: 115, 292-293), though the Holm Sound bird was late.

Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps* (0, 26, 4)

Argyll Loch Peallach, Mishnish Lochs, near Tobermory, Mull, 8th June (N. & Mrs P.McKee), 15th June (M.Cocker *et al.*).

Cornwall Crowdy Reservoir, 30th March to 19th April, photo. (A.Bond *et al.*). Nanjizal, 5th November to 1999, photo. (I.M. & K.A.Wilson *et al.*).

Forth Area Airthrey Loch, Stirling, 3rd-7th June, photo. (K.Ranson).

Greater London Tooting Bec Common, since 5th December 1997 to 10th February (Brit. Birds 91: 459), to 12th (A.Gibson).

IRELAND

1997 Clare Near Kilbaha, 11th-14th December (Irish Birds 6: 287).

1997 Cork Rostellan, 1st February to 23rd March; presumed same, 10th October to 31st March 1998 (Irish Birds 6: 287).

Though the coincidence of dates may suggest otherwise, it is considered unlikely that the Airthrey Loch bird moved 150 km only instantly to be relocated on a little-watched loch on Mull. A pronounced pattern of spring movements is beginning to emerge for this enigmatic species and will, in due course, form the basis of a more detailed analysis in British Birds. Records from Bryher and Tresco, Scilly, were not received in time for inclusion in this report.

Madeira/Cape Verde Petrel *Pterodroma madeira/feae* (0, 25, 1)

Northumberland Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, 24th August (M.P.Frankis, J.R.Todd *et al.*).

IRELAND

1997 Clare Bridges of Ross, 31st July (Irish Birds 6: 288).

1997 Cork Cape Clear Island, 24th August (Irish Birds 6: 288).

Late August is becoming the rush hour and Northumberland seems as good a bet as anywhere for this much-sought-after bird, surely Number One on many sea-watchers' wish-lists.

Wilson's Storm-petrel *Oceanites oceanicus* (4, 24, 3)

Cornwall Newquay, 10th September (S.M.Christophers).

Pembrokeshire Strumble Head, 11th September (C.Greyall, G.H.Rees *et al.*).

Scilly About 5 km SSW of Bishop Rock, 11th August (W.H.Wagstaff).

The previous ten years produced only four land-based sightings in Britain but nine in Ireland. The bird in Scillonian waters was just reward after several unsuccessful boat trips. The Committee has yet to receive any details from various 'pelagics' in the Southwest Approaches.

Magnificent Frigatebird *Fregata magnificens* (1, 0, 0)

Tiree, Argyll, immature female *F.m.rothschildii*, 9th July 1953 (Ibis 1956: 154; Brit. Birds 47: 58-59), now transferred from Category B to Category A (Ibis 141: 176). No details have yet been received of one taken into care in the Isle of Man, but the Committee understands that the record will be submitted in due course.

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus* (150, 199, 1)

Devon Slapton Ley, male, 21st-31st March (D.Elphick *et al.*).

1990 Cumbria Cark-in-Cartmel, 25th March to 13th April (Brit. Birds 87: 510), was not accepted.

1995 Highland Handa Island, male, 8th May, dead.9th (P.Moore, J.Stoneman).

1997 Hertfordshire Rye Meads, male, 17th-18th May, trapped 17th (Brit. Birds 91: 461), was not trapped.

IRELAND

1997 Kerry Coonanna Harbour, near Caherciveen, first-year male, freshly dead, 22nd or 23rd March (Irish Birds 6: 289).

The worst year since 1991 when there was none. This year's bird seemed healthy enough, in contrast to the other five post-1958 March records all of which involved exhausted, moribund or dead individuals. Of these, only a female in Co. Cork on 16th March 1990 (found dead the next day) was earlier than the Slapton bird.

Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* (165, 401, 7)

Anglesey Pentre Berw, adult, at least 16th-23rd April, photo. (R.Pritchard *et al.*).

Gloucestershire Slimbridge, first-summer, 4th-24th June (R.Burroughs, M.J.McGill *et al.*).

Kent Sevenoaks, juvenile, 7th-16th November, photo. (M.Coath, C.Seabrook, C.Turner *et al.*).

Lancashire & North Merseyside Scorton, adult, 5th-7th April (S.Petrie).

Norfolk Holkham Park, adult, 17th May to 28th July, photo. (A.I.Bloomfield, J.R.McCallum *et al.*).

Warwickshire Grandborough, adult, 10th-16th April (D.Bromwich, J.Wagstaff).

Yorkshire, West Marley, first-summer, 14th April (D.C.Barker, M.James, K.Moir *et al.*).

1989 Sussex, East Near Newhaven, adult, 30th April to 3rd May (Brit. Birds 83: 443), 6th May (I.J.Whitcomb).

1993 Devon Starcross, adult, 25th June to 1st July, photo. (L.Collins *et al.*).

1997 Kent Dungeness, subadult, 15th-17th June (D.Walker *et al.*).

1997 Lancashire & North Merseyside Whitendale Fell, two adults, 25th May (M.J.Ainscough).

1997 Norfolk Broad Fen, Dilham, first-summer, 14th August, video. (S.Burch per P.J.Heath).

1997 Somerset Westhay Moor (Brit. Birds 91: 462), should read: adult, 12th August; two, age uncertain, 13th-14th, three, 22nd, 25th (per B.D.Gibbs).

1997 Wight Sandown area, adult, 3rd-5th April (G.Sparshott).

The Lancashire duo in 1997 was not far from the extensive reed-beds of Leighton Moss. That year also saw the long stay (and display) of two on the Somerset Levels, with three in August (Brit. Birds 92: 395-396), and an intriguingly early juvenile not far away in Gwent. The events at Holkham that year were not repeated in 1998, but another long-staying bird there was of note.

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides* (95, 48, 2)

Norfolk Pensthorpe, 26th April to 5th May, photo. (W.M.Makins *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: plates 227 & 228).

Nottinghamshire Attenborough, 27th June; same, Martin's Pond, Wollaton, 29th to 1st July, photo. (R.Martin *et al.*).

1997 Cambridgeshire Ouse Washes area, 7th to at least 9th July (Brit. Birds 91: 462), presumed same, near Haslingfield, last week of May to 3rd June (H.Stringer).

The Cambridgeshire bird in 1997 was evidently following the course of the Rivers Ouse and Cam.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* (2, 88, 11)

Caernarfonshire Foryd Bay, 19th April (B.Doughty, W.Evans).

Dorset Portland Bill and Weymouth area, 19th-20th March, photo. (M.Cade *et al.*). Abbotsbury, 11th December (S.A.Groves *et al.*).

Greater London Wanstead Park, 10th May (R.Vaughan).

Kent Graveney, 16th-22nd January (A.Sayers *et al.*). Walland Marsh, three, 28th June to 1st July (S.D.McMinn); presumed one of same, Dungeness, 2nd July (P.G.Akers *et al.*).

Norfolk Holkham, 18th May (D.Norgate).

Somerset Berrow, 21st March to 18th April, photo. (Mr & Mrs A.M.Meyrick, Mr & Mrs B.E.Slade *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: page 560 fig. 1). Chilton Trinity, 3rd, 7th-8th April (C.F.S.Avent, W.P.Bovett).

1996 Cornwall Near Land's End, 29th December (T.George).

Bare-part coloration indicated that all those in spring in the Southwest were different.

Great White Egret *Egretta alba* (10, 90, 12)

Cambridgeshire Hemingford Grey, 11th January (M.J.Everett, W.Simmonds); presumed same as Fen Drayton Gravel-pits and Marsh Lane Gravel-pits, December 1997 (Brit. Birds 91: 463), also Northamptonshire, below.

Cleveland Dorman's Pool and Haverton Hole, 17th-18th April, photo. (M.A.Blick *et al.*).

Cornwall Nanjizal, 15th May (K.A.Wilson). Penberth, 21st October (M.C.Hall, S.M.Lister *et al.*).

Devon Countess Wear, 26th November (R.Jutsum).

Dorset Arne, Stanpit Marsh and Radipole, 2nd-3rd February, photo. (J.Badley, R.Burgess, H.Woods *et al.*).

Fife Eden Estuary, 16th June (L.Hatton).

Hampshire Needs Ore Point, 9th January (M.Rafter).

Kent Dungeness, 8th-14th July, photo. (C.W.Pettigrew, T.R.Smeeton *et al.*).

Norfolk Stiffkey and Warham Greens, since 28th December 1997 to 29th March, photo. (per G.E.Dunmore); presumed same, Sennowe Park, 22nd March (G.F. & S.J.Simmons) and West Somerton, 3rd-14th March (P.Hooper *et al.*).

Northamptonshire See 1997 Northamptonshire; below.

Northumberland Farne Islands, 7th June (D.Coles *et al.*); same, Chevington, Hauxley and Cresswell and Holywell Ponds area, 9th-11th (I.Fisher *et al.*).

Sussex, East Hastings, 16th March (A.P.Phillips); presumed same, Beachy Head, 17th (J.F.Cooper).

Yorkshire, South Old Moor Wetlands, 15th-16th June (J.Hewitt, M.Smith *et al.*).

1997 Norfolk See Norfolk above.

1997 Northamptonshire Billing Aquadrome, Northampton, and other localities, 27th November to 14th March 1998, photo. (G.P.Douglas *et al.*); also in Cambridgeshire.

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Down Comber Estuary, Strangford Lough, 25th November to 6th December (per G.Gordon).

1997 Cork Cape Clear Island, 26th October; presumed same, Croagh Estuary, Schull, 31st October to 3rd November (Irish Birds 6: 291).

1997 Londonderry Black Glen, 8th October to 29th November (Irish Birds 6: 291).

1997 Wicklow Roundwood, 29th November to 22nd February 1998 (Irish Birds 6: 291).

The subspecific identification of the Northamptonshire individual remains under investigation.

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* (26, 111, 2)

Northeast Scotland Ythan Estuary, first-summer, 3rd-19th July, photo. (Mrs S.Jackson, B.Marshall, H.I.Scott *et al.*); also in Northumberland, Suffolk.

Northumberland Holywell, first-summer, 8th August (T.R. & Mrs A.Cleeves, N.P.Dales); same as Northeast Scotland.

Suffolk Benacre and other coastal localities, first-summer, 12th August to 12th September, photo. (D.Fairhurst, P.Read, B.J.Small *et al.*)(Brit. Birds 92: plate 229); same as Northumberland.

Sussex, West Pulborough Brooks, 8th May (T.M.Murray, J.Phillips, C.Rosebottom).

1993 Lancashire & North Merseyside Near Hightown, 13th May (S.J.Riley).

A poor showing by recent standards, though there was none in 1997. The first-summer tracked down the East Coast was appreciated by many, especially when it settled in Suffolk for a month.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* (many, 78, 0)

1996 Cheshire Inner Marsh Farm and Burton Marsh, 24th-25th November (C.Broadbent).

1997 Yorkshire, North Blubberhouses Moor, four, 10th April (F. & J.L.Topham).

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1997 Cork Ballycotton, 17th January to 1st April (Irish Birds 6: 291).

The 1997 Yorkshire record is one of those extraordinary events which seems to defy explanation.

Tundra Swan *Cygnus columbianus*

North American race *C. c. columbianus* (0, 4, 1)

Lincolnshire Nocton Fen, adult, 22nd January (K.Durose).

Only the second British 'Whistling Swan', with previous occurrences from 1986 to 1990 in Hampshire and (mainly) Somerset referring to a returning individual. Allowing for duplication, three is the revised total for Ireland and there are five accepted records for the Netherlands, so this is a truly rare bird in Europe. The percentage of yellow on the bill is believed to be the only reliable field characteristic (Auk 97: 697-703).

Lesser White-fronted Goose *Anser erythropus* (47, 88, 1)

Gloucestershire Slimbridge, adult, 4th-27th February, photo. (D.B.Paynter *et al.*)(Brit. Birds 92: plate 230).

Once a regular visitor to this famous winter goose haunt, but much scarcer of late. There were 15 there during 1958-67, 14 during 1968-77, 12 during 1978-87 and only three during 1988-97. Records away from Slimbridge have recently increased, possibly at least partly as a result of the Fennoscandian Lesser White-fronted Goose Conservation Project (Birding World 12: 242-246) and reflecting the growing winter population of the Netherlands (Dutch Birding 17: 70-72; 20: 111-113). It is becoming difficult to be sure of the origins of Lesser White-fronts, but Slimbridge birds are still as good as you are going to get.

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

North American and E Siberian race *B. b. nigricans* (1, 86, 7)

Dorset The Fleet, 12th October to 21st December (B.Spencer *et al.*).

Kent Gillingham, 13th-25th April (C.G.Bradshaw, Miss A.J.Sheppard *et al.*); presumed same as Motney Hill, 2nd-30th November 1997 (Brit. Birds 91: 464).

Norfolk Lynn Point, 8th February (A.O.Collins); presumed returning individual of 5th February 1997 (Brit. Birds 91: 464); presumed same, 29th November (A.O.Collins). Titchwell, Holme and Thornham area, since 5th December 1997 (Brit. Birds 91: 464), to 28th March, photo. Titchwell, at least 4th December (Dr A.J.Culshaw, S.P.Smethurst *et al.*); presumed same, Burnham Norton, 6th (V.Eve). Wells, 22nd to at least 24th September; possibly same, with another, 6th-8th November (J.R.McCallum). Cley and Blakeney area, two, 7th November to 1999, photo. (A.M.Stoddart *et al.*); one of same, Sheringham, intermittently, 6th December to 1999 (D.H.Sadler, M.A.Webster, T.Wright *et al.*).

Suffolk Cowton, since 26th December 1997 to 6th January (Brit. Birds 91: 464).

1991 Essex Kirby-le-Soken, 30th January (Dr S.Cox), present 27th January to 3rd March; presumed returning individual of 15th-20th January 1990 (Brit. Birds 84: 459).

1995 Kent Coombe and St Mary's Bays, 3rd, 26th December (Brit. Birds 91: 464); presumption should have referred to one or other of Gillingham individuals, November to December 1995, one or other of which last noted 7th January 1996 (Brit. Birds 90: 461).

1997 Dorset Ferrybridge, 14th-17th January (Brit. Birds 91: 464), first noted 1st; also in Portland Harbour.

1997 Essex Cudmore Grove, two, at least 26th-28th January, one since 25th (Brit. Birds 91: 464), one since 21st January, one or other to 15th February (D.Urquhart *et al.*).

1997 Kent Otterham Creek and Horsham Marsh, 18th January to 2nd February (Brit. Birds 91: 464), third named observer was Miss A.J.Sheppard. Riverside Country Park, Gillingham, 5th May (C.G.Bradshaw); presumed same as above. Motney Hill, two, 7th April (Brit. Birds 91: 464), same as 1995 individuals referred to above; single, 2nd-30th November (Brit. Birds 91: 464) was one of same.

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1997 Londonderry Ballykelly, Lough Foyle, 27th November; presumed returning 1996 individual (Brit. Birds 91: 464; Irish Birds 6: 292).

Whether or not a third individual, with a much reduced neck band, in the Sheringham-Cley-Blakeney area at the end of the year, can be safely attributed to this subspecies remains under consideration.

Red-breasted Goose *Branta ruficollis* (15, 36, 4)

Cleveland Dorman's Pool, age uncertain, 7th January (T.Bell).

Northeast Scotland Loch of Strathbeg, adult, 1st-18th April (D.C.Butcher, P. & R.A.Schofield *et al.*).

Perth & Kinross Vane Farm and Gellybank, adult, 31st March to 15th April (G. & W.Brown, I.Munroe *et al.*). Kercock, adult, 13th December (E.D.Cameron).

1996 Essex Old Hall Marshes, 3rd-14th January (Brit. Birds 91: 464), finder/identifier, P.Charlton. Mersea Island, 21st December to 16th February 1997 (Brit. Birds 91: 464), finder/identifier, D.Urquhart.

1996 Hampshire Langstone Harbour, adult, 14th-15th October (P.Durnell, A.Parfitt *et al.*).

1996 Suffolk Bramford, adult, 25th December (J.Zantbeer).

The escape likelihood continues to be a problem, but the April records are not necessarily suspicious as the only two recent occurrences in that month were also in the North. It has to be said, however, that none of these April records conforms to the previous well-established pattern of November to March records with flocks of Brent *B. bernicla* or White-fronted Geese *Anser albifrons* in the South and East. The Suffolk and Hampshire records given above may well have involved birds of captive origin.

American Wigeon *Anas americana* (22, 335, 26)

Argyll Ardfern, Loch Craignish, male, 1st October (S.Bearhop, S.C.Votier).

Caernarfonshire Conwy Estuary area, male, since 13th December 1997 (Brit. Birds 91: 464-465), to 18th April; presumed same, 25th September to end of year, photo. (I.Higginson *et al.*).

Carmarthenshire Penclacwydd, male, 3rd -9th October (R.O.Hunt, N.C.Williams).

Cleveland South Gare, North Gare and Bran Sands, male, 19th April (M.Corner *et al.*).

Clyde Merryton, male, 25th October to 12th November (A.I.English *et al.*).

Cornwall Hayle, male, since 3rd October 1997 (Brit. Birds 91: 465), to at least 25th January; presumed same, 4th September to end of year (per G.Conway). Mawgan Porth, female, 29th-31st December (S.M.Christophers).

Devon Instow, female, 26th-29th November (D. & S.Churchill, A.M.Jewels, I.Kendall); present, 1st November to 19th December. Isley Marsh. male, 29th November (D.J.Davies).

Dorset Abbotsbury and The Fleet area, males, two, 5th-6th January, one to 11th, one or other, 11th, 25th March, one or other intermittently since 28th October 1997 (Brit. Birds 91: 465); presumed another, 26th September to 1999 (S.A.Groves *et al.*); additional male, 7th November (L.G.R.Evans, W.Urwin, K.E.Vinicombe *et al.*).

Hampshire Farlington Marshes, male, 6th December to at least 21st February 1999 (D.Ireland, M.Tribe *et al.*).

Lancashire & North Merseyside Leighton Moss, male, at least 7th November (N.R.Higgins, P.A.J.Morris).

Lothian Tynninghame, male, 6th-21st June (N. & Mrs B.D.Griffin *et al.*).

Moray & Nairn Lossie Estuary, first-winter male, 5th February (R.Proctor *et al.*); present, 4th February to 29th March, photo.; male, 14th November to at least 12th December, possibly returning individual (R.Proctor *et al.*).

Norfolk Blakeney Harbour, male, 1st January to at least 27th March (R.C.Abel *et al.*). Berney Marshes, male, 25th November (P.R.Allard, J.Rowe).

Northeast Scotland Ythan Estuary, male, 2nd-6th May (C.Barton, K.Gillon *et al.*).

Northumberland Cresswell Pond, male, 8th October; same, Amble Braid, 25th-26th, 1st-4th November, photo (I.Fisher *et al.*). Amble Braid, additional male, 9th-16th, 25th October (I.Fisher *et al.*); one or other, Cresswell Pond, intermittently; 11th-26th November. Elwick, male, 4th November (M.J.H.Denny); presumed same, Budle Bay; 6th (M.S.Hodgson).

Nottinghamshire Idle Stop, first-winter male, 8th March to 17th April (C.Hardy, M.Lynes, R.Burgin *et al.*). Lound Gravel-pits, first-summer male, 4th-27th April, photo. (R.Martin *et al.*).

Orkney Shapinsay; male, 2nd-8th May (P. & Mrs L.Hollinrake *et al.*).

1996 Lincolnshire Toft Newton Reservoir, male, 14th March (K.Durose).

1997 Cheshire Inner Marsh Farm, male, 17th March (C.C.Schofield), present 14th-19th.

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Antrim Shesk River, Ballycastle, two males, 8th March (per G.Gordon).

1996 Down Quoile Pondage, male, 5th May (Irish Birds 6: 292; Northern Ireland Bird Rep. 1996: 30); presumed returning 1995 individual (Brit. Birds 90: 462); additional to female, 4th (Irish Birds 6: 68).

1996 Galway Lough Atalia, first-winter male, 8th November (Irish Birds 6: 292).

1997 Armagh Reedy Flat, Lough Neagh, male, 24th-29th April (Northern Ireland Bird Rep. 1997: 31).

1997 Cork Charleville Lagoons, male, 12th January (Irish Birds 6: 292); presumed returning 1995 individual (Brit. Birds 90: 462).

1997 Donegal Blanket Nook, male, 16th November to 4th January 1998 (Irish Birds 6: 292); presumed returning 1996 individual (Brit. Birds 91: 466).

1997 Galway Rahasane Turlough, male, 27th November (Irish Birds 6: 292).

1997 Wexford North Slob, male, 23rd October to at least 1st November (Irish Birds 6: 292); presumed returning 1996 individual (Brit. Birds 91: 466); female or immature, 23rd-28th October (Irish Birds 6: 292).

1997 Wicklow Broadlough, male, 1st February to 8th March; presumed same, 21st December to 16th January 1998 (Irish Birds 6: 292).

The table below gives the monthly new arrivals in Britain during 1998:

Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May.	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
2	1	1	2	2	1	0	0	1	5	7	2

A total of 12 new arrivals during October-November clearly indicated a marked peak in transatlantic passage.

American Black Duck *Anas rubripes* (1, 22, 3)

Cornwall Camel Estuary, male, 10th October (S.M.Christophers); another male, 27th December to 2nd January 1999 (S.M.Christophers, B.M.Phillips *et al.*). Stithians Reservoir, male, 29th October to 20th February 1999, photo. (C.D.R.Heard *et al.*).

1997 Highland Alturlie, female, 14th January (I.Dillon), present 13th January to 1st April, photo.

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1993 Cork Loughaderry, male, 30th January to at least 9th February (Brit. Birds 88: 502), to 15th March (Irish Birds 6: 292).

1994 Cork Kinsale Marsh, male, 13th March (Irish Birds 6: 292).

1996 Kerry Barrow Harbour, male, 19th September into 1997 (Brit. Birds 91: 466) to 15th February (Irish Birds 6: 292).

1997 Kerry See 1996 Kerry above.

This unprecedented trio was part of the major late-autumn influx of Nearctic wildfowl.

Blue-winged Teal *Anas discors* (19, 209, 12)

Argyll Loch a'Phuill, Tiree, male, 16th May (M.Williamson). Loch Gruinart, Islay; male, 24th-25th May (A.S.Cook *et al.*).

Cornwall Marazion, male, 15th-28th September (P.A.Fraser *et al.*).

Hertfordshire Hilfield Park Reservoir, male, 25th August (G.Elton, J.Fearnside, S.Murray).

Kent Dungeness, male, 6th-30th August, 12th September (P.G.Akers *et al.*). Stodmarsh, two males, 24th October (M.D.Hodgkin, R.I.Jenkinson, M.S.Speck *et al.*). Reculver, two males, female, 11th-12th December (M.J.Hindle *et al.*).

Leicestershire Eyebrook Reservoir, male, 29th August to 12th September, photo. (M.G.Berriman, A.H.J.Harrop, J.Wright *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: page 565 fig. 2).

Yorkshire, South Potteric Carr, female, 28th April (S.Bird, D.Carroll).

1997 Lincolnshire Messingham Gravel-pits, female, 11th March to 13th April, photo. (W.C.Nimick *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: plate 231).

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1996 Wexford Tacumshin, female or immature, 12th-13th October (Irish Birds 6: 292).

1997 Dublin Rogerstown Estuary, female, 11th January to 8th February (Irish Birds 6: 292).

Three fairly typical spring records and a fair scattering in autumn from August onwards, but there was no significant arrival in the Southwest to match that of other Nearctic wildfowl. A pair of captive origin bred successfully in Essex in 1997 (Brit. Birds 92: 475). Winter records of this American equivalent of the Garganey *A.querquedula* are often viewed with suspicion.

Canvasback *Aythya valisineria* (0, 1, 0)

Norfolk Welney, male, since 1997 (see below) to 9th March, photo. (J.B.Kemp *et al.*).

1997 Essex Abberton Reservoir, male, 23rd-24th, 30th November, photo. (N.C.Green, D.Rhymes *et al.*); presumed same as Norfolk.

1997 Norfolk Wissington, male, intermittently, 18th-25th January (C.M.Donner *et al.*); same, Welney, intermittently, 21st January to 10th March, photo.; presumed same, 3rd December to 1998 (J.B.Kemp *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: plate 232).

The panic that this bird generated when news emerged of its arrival at Welney now seems a little over the top as it proved a long-stayer, apparently still being reported, again in East Anglia, in early 1999. This should not detract from the 'credibility' of a long-predicted 'first' as the phenomenon of site fidelity by rare diving ducks was established long ago. The population in North America has recovered from a slump in the 1970s and 1980s, following widespread habitat creation and management.

Lesser Scaup *Aythya affinis* (0, 25, 8)

Argyll Ardnave Loch, Islay, first-winter female, 6th November to 9th December, photo. (C.Bradshaw, A.J.Leitch *et al.*).

Cornwall Argal Reservoir, two first-winter females, 13th December to 1999 (S.M.Christophers *et al.*).

Lincolnshire/Nottinghamshire Rampton Lakes, Cottam, male, 14th-17th May, photo. (K.Durose *et al.*).

Nottinghamshire See Lincolnshire/Nottinghamshire above.

Orkney Loch of Tankerness, female, 7th December to 10th January 1999, video. (K.E.Hague *et al.*).

Shetland Loch of Spiggie, first-winter male, two first-winter females, 1st November to 1st December, first-winter male and first-winter female to 2nd, photo. (P.M.Ellis, M.Mellor, J.D.Okill *et al.*).

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1992 Armagh Oxford Island/Kinnegoe Bay, Lough Neagh, male, 15th November to 15th January 1993 (Brit. Birds 87: 516; 90: 465; Irish Birds 6: 293; Northern Ireland Bird Rep. 1993: 25). Also in 1993 Down, below.

1993 Armagh See 1992 Armagh above.

1993 Down Hillsborough Lake, male, 31st January to 15th March, same as 1993 Armagh above (Irish Birds 6: 293; Northern Ireland Bird Rep. 1993: 25).

1994 Armagh/Down Ellis's Gut, Lough Neagh, male, 27th-30th March; same, Oxford Island, Lough Neagh, 31st March to 7th April (Irish Birds 6: 293; Northern Ireland Bird Rep. 1995: 29).

1994 Down See 1994 Armagh/Down above.

1996 Armagh Oxford Island, Lough Neagh, male, 31st December; presumed returning individual last noted Washing Bay, Lough Neagh, Tyrone, 1995 (Brit. Birds 6: 293).

A record autumn influx, with small flocks and plenty of the more-tricky females. Also during late autumn, there were provisional reports from Tenerife (a party of eight: Brit. Birds 92: 283) and the Azores (Birding World 12: 15), which, if verified, will provide strong evidence in support of the wild origin of the majority of those occurring in Britain. It should be noted that the Northern Ireland total is now revised downwards to three individuals because of reassessment of returning birds.

King Eider *Somateria spectabilis* (62, 96, 5)

Angus & Dundee Balmossie, male, 11th November (S.R.Green, M.S.Scott).

Cleveland Hartlepool Headland and South Gare, second-winter male, 4th July, photo. (M.A.Blick *et al.*); locality erroneously given as South Oare (Brit. Birds 91: 581).

Fife Tayport, male, 1st-28th March (D.E.Dickson). Tentsmuir Point, male, 1st March (D.E.Dickson). Both presumed same as Tayport 1997 (Brit. Birds 91: 468). Methil, female, 1st July (K.D.Shaw); presumed same, Seafield, Kirkcaldy; 29th July to 2nd August (D.E.Dickson, D.Ogilvie); also in Lothian; presumed same as Leven area, 1997 (Brit. Birds 91: 468).

Lothian Aberlady, female, 1st May (I.M.Thomson), 8th-23rd July (I.M.Thomson *et al.* per I.J.Andrews); presumed same as 1996, 1997 Lothian below; also in Fife.

Moray & Nairn Burghead Bay, male, 5th-11th October (A.J.Lawrence *et al.*); presumed same as Lossiemouth area, 1997 (Brit. Birds 91: 468).

Northeast Scotland Blackdog, male, 10th July (M.L.Hawkes, S.J.Patient); present 5th-12th; presumed same as 1997 (Brit. Birds 91: 468).

Orkney North Ronaldsay; male, 10th June, photo. (H. & J.W.Sobering).

Shetland Skeld, male, 24th January (P.V.Harvey); presumed same as Raewick, Redayre, Tresta, 1997 (Brit. Birds 91: 468). Mousa Sound, male, since 22nd December 1997 (Brit. Birds 91: 468), to at least 29th January (P.M.Ellis *et al.*). Uyea, Unst, male, 13th May (A.Thomson per M.G.Pennington); presumed same, Aith, Fetlar, 21st to at least 4th June (D.Houghton, M.Smith *et al.*). West Voe, Sumburgh, male, 23rd May to 19th June (P.V.Harvey; I.S.Robertson *et al.*).

1996 Lothian Aberlady Bay, female, 27th June to 10th July (Brit. Birds 90: 465); same, Musselburgh, 6th-7th June (M.Darling per I.J.Andrews).

1997 Lothian Aberlady Bay; female, 5th-8th May; 22nd June to 6th July (I.M.Thomson per I.J.Andrews); presumed same as 1996 Lothian above and 1997 Fife (Brit. Birds 91: 468).

IRELAND

1997 Antrim Rathlin Island, male, 24th-29th April (Brit. Birds 91: 469), to 27th only (Irish Birds 6: 293).

Site fidelity is singularly strong in this species despite the vagaries of the sea (or maybe it is just very fussy about which mussels it eats).

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

North American and East Siberian race *M. n. americana* (0, 5, 0)

1992 Highland Burghead Bay, male, at least 8th December (Brit. Birds 87: 518), locality is in Moray (then Grampian); first noted, Findhorn Bay, 29th to at least 31st October (B.Robson *et al.*).

Bufflehead *Bucephala albeola* (5, 5, 1)

Devon Roadford Reservoir, male, 20th November to 1999, photo. (R.Jones, J.Tidball *et al.*).

Suffolk Heveningham Hall Lake, male, since 29th November 1997 (Brit. Birds 91: 470), to 21st January (Brit. Birds 92: plate 233).

The one in Devon coincided with the influx of Nearctic wildfowl in both timing and Southwestern location. Further support may follow from provisional reports of two in France and one in the Azores during November (Birding World 12: 15). The Devon bird, however, apparently bore a metal ring and, although this does not necessarily mean that it was an escapee, it may be argued that it does slightly alter the odds against its being a genuine vagrant.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans* (5, 260, 16)

Cornwall Sancreed, 2nd May (D.S. & H.C.Flumm). Land's End and Nanjizal, first-summer, 12th May (J.Chapple, J.Hawkey, K.A.Wilson).

Devon Thurlestone, 3rd May (P.A.Stidwell). East Prawle, 3rd October (J.C.Nicholls).

Hampshire Martin Down, 17th May; flew into Wiltshire at Vernditch Chase (A.R.Shakespeare). See also West Sussex below.

Kent Dungeness, 24th April (R.J.Price).

Norfolk Norwich, 17th May (I.Maclean). Sheringham, 18th May (A.P.Benson).

Pembrokeshire Skomer, 20th May, photo. (R.Lindner, M.Nickerson, S.Smith).

Sussex, East Icklesham, two, 11th May (T.Squire).

Sussex, West Pilsey and Thorney Islands, 11th May; flew into Hampshire (C.B.Collins).

West Midlands Balsall Common, 17th March (N.P. & Mrs C.Barlow).

Wight Godshill, 28th April (D.B.Wooldridge). Near Freshwater Bay, 30th April, photo. (D.Eddis, G.Giddens).

Wiltshire See Hampshire above.

Yorkshire, East Tophill Low, 9th May (R.Lyon *et al.*).

1997 Norfolk Burnham Norton, 31st May (A.Armstrong, J.Wood).

1997 Oxfordshire Witney, 23rd April (D.A.Doherty).

Inadequate descriptions continue to depress both the acceptance levels and members of the Committee.

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla* (many, 24, 1)

Kent Graveney Marshes, juvenile, 7th-8th October, photo. (M.Roser, J.A.Rowlands *et al.*).

This bird coincided with the arrival of two Sociable Lapwings *Vanellus gregarius* and was so remote from the re-established breeding population that there was little doubting its wild origin. This species was removed from the Committee's list as from 1st January 1999 (Brit. Birds 92: 113-114).

Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus* (100, 590, 4)

Hampshire Beaulieu Heath, two first-summer males, 25th May (D.A.Thelwell *et al.*); both present 24th-29th, one to 4th June, photo.

Kent Dungeness, first-summer male, 31st May (S.J.Broyd).

Suffolk Bramford Gravel-pits, female, 16th May (S.H.Piotrowski).

Surrey Hidestyle Wildlife Hospital, male, in care since July 1997 (Brit. Birds 91: 471), released in good health, Thursley Common, 30th May (per D.M.Harris).

1989 Sussex, East Newmarket Hill, female, 29th May to 3rd June (Brit. Birds 83: 458), to 4th (I.J.Whitcomb).

1997 Essex Colne Point and St Osyth area, female, 5th May (A. & R.Stroud).

1997 Kent Dungeness, male, 22nd July (S.P.Clancy).

1997 Norfolk Burnham Overy, female, 20th May (S.J.M.Gantlett). East Runton, May (Brit. Birds 91: plates 118-120), locality was East Ruston (Brit. Birds 91: 471).

1997 Oxfordshire Near Merton, female, 23rd to at least 25th June (Brit. Birds 91: 471), to 30th (M.J.Palmer).

1997 Suffolk Minsmere, female, 30th-31st May (Brit. Birds 91: 471), to 1st June (per D.F.Walsh).

IRELAND

1997 Cork Ballycotton, female, 9th-17th May (Irish Birds 6: 295).

A poor year, though all typical in terms of date and location. An autumn record came from the Channel Islands, where a juvenile was at Grouville Marsh, Jersey, on 9th-10th October.

Gyr Falcon *Falco rusticolus* (many, 126, 2)

Cornwall Rame Head, adult white-phase, 6th, 9th April (A.E.C.Aston, S.C.Madge, E.H.Williams); also in Devon.

Devon Wembury, adult white-phase, 6th-8th April, photo. (N.C.Ward, B.Whitehall *et al.*); same as Cornwall.

Outer Hebrides Near Tigharry, North Uist, first-winter white-phase, intermittently; 12th March to 16th April, photo. (B.J. & Mrs L.L.Lowe, B.Rabbitts *et al.*).

IRELAND

1997 Clare Fanore, white-phase, 9th March (Irish Birds 6: 295).

The observer who found the famous Berry Head bird in 1986 (NCW) now earns yet more undying gratitude from a new generation of birders in the Southwest.

Little Bustard *Tetrax tetrax* (92, 17, 1)

Shetland Ringasta area, Sumburgh, female, 4th-6th October when taken into care injured, dead 8th, photo.; now at National Museum of Scotland (A.Fitchett *et al.*).

Since 1958, this species has only twice occurred north of Norfolk: in Wigtownshire in April 1964 (Brit. Birds 58: 359) and the recent Fair Isle bird in November 1994 (Brit. Birds 88: 508). Though there are seven more, pre-1958, Scottish records dating back as far as 1833, this is only the second for Shetland. Most records relate to the period October to January, but this is the earliest recent (post-1958) autumn record by almost two weeks.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* (98, 216, 5)

Cambridgeshire Cam Washes, 9th May (I.Barton, Miss K.Rosewarne).

Hampshire Pennington Marsh, 1st April (D.Thelwell *et al.*); present 31st March to 5th April.

Kent Elmley, male, female and female or first-summer, 26th May, male, female of same, Oare Marshes, 28th, returning to Elmley intermittently to 31st (G.W., K.G. & Mrs J.M.Holland, J.A.Rowlands, P.Royston *et al.*).

Norfolk Titchwell, from 1997 (Brit. Birds 91: 471), throughout year, photo.

1997 Kent West Hythe, first-winter, 7th September (I.A.Roberts); presumed same as Rainham Marsh, Essex, 10th-20th (Brit. Birds 91: 471).

Information has recently been received to the effect that, although there is no absolute proof, the long-staying Norfolk individual may have escaped from the premises of a Norfolk aviculturist in August 1993 shortly before the saga commenced on 18th of that month.

Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola* (31, 52, 0)

Kent Elmley, 14th May (G.W.Allison, J.A.Rowlands, R.Smith *et al.*); presumed same as Norfolk, Suffolk, 1997 (Brit. Birds 91: 472).

Norfolk Titchwell, Holme, Snettisham, Cley area, 18th May to 9th July (per G.E.Dunmore); presumed returning 1997 individual as above.

Northamptonshire Earls Barton, 15th-16th May, photo. (M.Adkins, I.Dobson *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: plates 234 & 235); presumed same as Norfolk.

An interesting example of a vagrant becoming familiar with extralimital locations. Though now habitually aberrant, in a migratory sense, the timing of its visits is unaffected; it was at Earls Barton during 13th-25th May 1996, for example (Brit. Birds 90: 468).

Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus* (0, 2, 0)

Devon Dawlish Warren, 31st March to 10th May, photo. (I.W.Lakin *et al.*); presumed returning individual of mid April to 21st September 1997 (Brit. Birds 91: 472).

The return of this bird was hardly to be expected. Perhaps it followed local Great Ringed Plovers *C.hiaticula* in autumn 1997 and later returned with them. Although it had clearly moulted since last year (this plumage being in much fresher condition than it was the previous summer), it still exhibited non-breeding plumage. Is this within normal variation for the species or does it suggest some deeper biological defect which may also have affected its migratory skills?

Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus* (0, 1, 0)

1997 Sussex, West Pagham Harbour, adult, 14th-16th August, photo. (J.W.P.Bacon, T.J.Edwards, R.Hollins, J.Hunt *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: plates 207,208 & 236).

This long-distance migrant has occurred as a vagrant in several European countries as well as in at least four US states and two Canadian provinces. Its discovery here was perhaps only a matter of time, and very careful observation, as the identification problem presented by Greater *C.leschenaultii* and Lesser Sand Plovers can be one of the toughest that there is. An identification triumph for the finders, then, who initially suspected this bird to be *mongolus* and who were eventually proved right. The solidly dark mask of this summer-plumage bird indicated that it belonged to the western *atrifrons* group of races. The identification was discussed in *Birding World* (10: 294-297). A full account will appear in *British Birds* in due course.

American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica* (6, 219, 13)

Cornwall Sennen, juvenile, 30th September to 4th October (M.D.Wallace *et al.*); another two juveniles, 18th October, photo.; possibly same as Scilly below (M.D.Wallace, I.M. & K.A.Wilson *et al.*).

Dorset Stanpit Marsh, adult, 6th May (D.N.Smith).

Hampshire Pennington Marshes, adult, 20th May to 2nd June, photo. (S.R.Ingram, T.Parmenter *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: plate 237).

Lancashire & North Merseyside Marshside Marsh, juvenile, 27th-28th October (B.Woolley *et al.*).

Nottinghamshire Gringley Carr, juvenile, 5th-15th November, photo. (R. & S.Bird, D.Carroll, M.Lynes *et al.*).

Scilly St Agnes, juvenile, 21st September to 5th October, again, 8th-17th, photo. (D.Page *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: plate 8); another juvenile, 11th-17th October (M.A.Wilkinson *et al.*). St Mary's, two juveniles, 17th October, both same as St Agnes (per W.H.Wagstaff).

Shetland Fetlar, adult, 16th-17th September (J. & T.G.Davies). Spiggie, juvenile, 24th October (P.V.Harvey; Dr R.Riddington *et al.*).

Yorkshire, East Saltend, Hull, adult, 8th September (B.Richards).

Yorkshire, South Old Moor Wetlands, juvenile, 15th-26th October, photo. (J.H.Goddard *et al.*).

1987 Northumberland St Mary's Island, juvenile, 13th October (A.Hutt, K.W.Regan, M.B.Shaw *et al.*).

1994 Devon Kingsbridge Estuary, first-summer, 1st-3rd May (M.K.Ahmad *et al.*); previously not accepted (Brit. Birds 89: 531).

1996 Yorkshire, South South Anston, first-summer, 5th September (J. & M.Clay, R.Hardcastle *et al.*).

IRELAND

1996 Clare Lough Donnell, juvenile, 7th October (Irish Birds 6: 296).

1997 Clare Loop Head, juvenile, 30th September (Irish Birds 6: 296).

1997 Cork Ballycotton, adult, 24th-31st August. Rosscarbery, juvenile, 4th October (Irish Birds 6: 296).

1997 Wexford Tacumshin, adult, 10th-14th September; same, Lady's Island Lake, to 9th October (Irish Birds 6: 296).

This species has been located with inland flocks of European Golden Plovers *P.apricaria* in all but two years during the 1990s.

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva* (3, 40, 3)

Cumbria Campfield Marsh, juvenile, 19th September, photo. (D.G.H. & Mrs M.West).

Norfolk Buckenham Marsh, adult, 5th-24th July, photo. (D.Machin, S.Smith, A.M.Stoddart *et al.*); present 4th-25th.

Shetland Fetlar, adult, 10th July (J. & T.G.Davies).

Two typical July adults and an excellent find of an immaculate September juvenile.

American/Pacific Golden Plover *P.dominica/fulva* (9, 281, 16)

IRELAND

1997 Donegal Rocky Point, 9th March (Irish Birds 6: 296)

Sociable Lapwing *Vanellus gregarius* (5, 33, 2)

Kent Graveney and Nagden Marshes, age uncertain, 8th-19th October, photo. (J.A.Rowlands, P.K.Worsley *et al.*).
Capel Fleet, age uncertain, 10th October to 1st November (J.A.Rowlands *et al.*).

This multiple arrival occurred during a purple patch in Kent. Did they start the journey together and then get split up?

Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla* (2, 86, 1)

Sussex, West Chichester Gravel-pits, juvenile, 12th-21st September, photo. (A.R.Kitson *et al.*).

IRELAND

1997 Wexford The Cull, juvenile, 26th-30th August (Irish Birds 6: 296).

Though annual since 1980, this species still requires careful observation and a thorough description.

Western Sandpiper *Calidris mauri* (1, 7, 1)

Orkney Deerness, juvenile, 28th September to 3rd October, video., photo. (K.E.Hague *et al.*).

One of the finds of the autumn, this is still a major rarity, outnumbered more than ten to one by the previous species.

Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla* (6, 30, 0)

IRELAND

1993 Cork Kinsale Marsh, adult, 29th-30th August (Irish Birds 6: 296).

White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis* (24, 404, 14)

Avon Aust Warth, juvenile/first-winter, 22nd-26th November, video. (P.D.Bowerman, B.Lancastle *et al.*).

Cleveland Dorman's Pool, adult, intermittently, 13th-27th August (J.B.Dunnett *et al.*); same, Coatham Marsh, 17th-19th (N.A.Preston *et al.*).

Devon Dawlish Warren, adult, 28th-30th May, photo. (J.E.Forthey *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: Page 574 fig. 3); adult, 25th-27th July (F.C.Burch, J.E.Forthey, M.R.Langman *et al.*); same, Bowling Green Marsh, 26th (M.Plunkett, I.D.S.Smith *et al.*).

Kent Elmley, adult, 17th-18th July (G.W.Allison, J.A.Rowlands *et al.*). Pegwell Bay, adult, 29th-30th July (D.C.Gilbert, P.Milton *et al.*). Oare Marshes, adult, 19th-26th August (E. & J.Price, B.Short *et al.*).

Leicestershire Rutland Water, adult, 7th-19th November, photo. (J.Wright *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: Page 573 fig. 4).

Lincolnshire Read's Island, adult, 7th August (G.P.Catley, A.Grieve).

Norfolk Breydon, adult, 6th July (J.R.Lansdell, S.Smith, C.Wills *et al.*). Cley, adult, 11th-12th August, video. (R.G.Millington per A.M.Stoddart).

Northeast Scotland Ythan Estuary, adult, 4th-6th August (C.Barton, Dr P.S.Crockett, I.Gordon *et al.*).

Northumberland Hauxley, adult, 21st July (M.A.Eaton, T.Farooqi).

Yorkshire, South Thorne Moors, adult, 21st-22nd August (W.H.Priestley, B.P.Wainwright *et al.*).

At sea Sea area Sole or Plymouth, vessel en route to Glasgow, taken into care injured, 3rd November, photo.; released in good health, Argentina, January 1999 (per S.A.Keller, T.Marsh, C.Mills *et al.*).

1996 Hampshire Farlington Marshes, adult, 18th August (I.R.Dickie), present 16th-31st, possibly same as Needs Ore Point, 8th-9th September (Brit. Birds 90: 471).

IRELAND

1997 Cork Ballycotton, adult, 20th-27th July. Foxhole, Youghal, adult, 10th September (Irish Birds 6: 296).

1997 Dublin North Bull Island, adult, 28th September (Irish Birds 6: 296).

1997 Wexford Tacumshin, juvenile, 3rd September (Irish Birds 6: 296).

The late adult in Leicestershire was atypical, as was the route taken back to Argentina by the bird picked up in the Southwestern Approaches.

Baird's Sandpiper *Calidris bairdii* (5, 205, 6)

Caernarfonshire Conwy, juvenile, 24th September (I.Higginson).

Ceredigion Aberystwyth, juvenile, 19th September (M.B.Hughes).

Cornwall Davidstow Airfield, juvenile, 11th-20th September (J.Hawkey *et al.*); additional juvenile, 16th September, both photo. (S.M.Christophers, D.I.Julian, K.Pellow).

Dorset Stanpit Marsh, juvenile, 24th August to at least 2nd September (D.N.Smith *et al.*).

Nottinghamshire Lound Gravel-pits, adult, 19th-24th August, photo. (P.Hobson, P.Palmer *et al.*).

IRELAND

1997 Wicklow Broadlough, adult, 12th August (Irish Birds 6: 296).

Multiple occurrences are exceptional in Britain, with the Davidstow records recalling events at Annachie Lagoon, Peterhead, in 1990, when a juvenile which stayed from 6th to 17th September was joined by another from 15th to 18th. In Ireland, there are three such instances, including a trio at Tacumshin in September 1980.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata* (5, 20, 0)

IRELAND

1997 Wexford Tacumshin, adult, 14th-15th September (Irish Birds 6: 297).

The second Irish record.

Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus* (23, 176, 3)

Norfolk Cley, 21st-23rd May (S.J.M.Gantlett *et al.*).

Northeast Scotland Rattray Head, at least 3rd-4th June, photo. (P.A.A.Baxter *et al.*).

Suffolk Minsmere, 26th May (P.Green *et al.*).

IRELAND

1997 Wicklow Kilcoole, adult, 5th-8th May (Irish Birds 6: 297).

A fairly typical trio, though this species is less than annual in Scotland. The previous ten years produced only seven north of the Border, three of them in 1988.

Stilt Sandpiper *Micropalama himantopus* (1, 26, 0)

1997 Suffolk Minsmere, adult, 7th-13th September (Brit. Birds 91: 476), finders included M.R.Morley, E.W.Patrick.

Great Snipe *Gallinago media* (180, 98, 7)

Kent Walland Marsh, 9th October (S.D.McMinn).

Norfolk Holkham, 12th May (A.I.Bloomfield, J.R.McCallum).

Orkney North Ronaldsay, 6th September (P.Brown, M.Clay, P.Cosgrove); 21st September (T.Dean *et al.*); 2nd-6th October (G.Anderson *et al.*).

Shetland Fair Isle, 3rd September (I.Fisher, C.A.Holt); juvenile, 15th September (D.H.Hatton *et al.*); same, 18th to 6th October, trapped 28th, photo. (C.A.Holt *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: plate 238).

1996 Orkney Sanday, 21st September (K.Durose).

1997 Kent Chetney, 24th August (T.Manship).

1997 Orkney Loch of Tankerness, 28th August (K.E.Hague).

Any claimants of this species in mid winter are advised to bear in mind that it usually winters in sub-Saharan Africa.

Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus* (9, 195, 6)

Cumbria Bowness-on-Solway, juvenile, 4th-9th November, photo, (D.G.H.West *et al.*); possibly same as Lancashire & North Merseyside, below.

Kent Elmley, adult, 4th-15th July, 24th October (G.W.Allison, J.A.Rowlands *et al.*); same, Oare Marshes, 18th July intermittently to 11th October (M.E.Wright *et al.*); presumed returning individual last noted 7th December 1997 (Brit. Birds 91: 476). Pegwell Bay, juvenile, 15th October (D.C.Gilbert *et al.*).

Lancashire & North Merseyside Leighton Moss, juvenile, 5th October to at least 1st November (P.Blackmore, A. & Mrs J.Rimmer *et al.*), another, 22nd October to 1999, both photo. (per M.Jones). Marshside Marsh, juvenile, intermittently, 19th November to 1999 (Dr B.McCarthy *et al.*); presumed same as Leighton Moss.

Norfolk Welney, juvenile/first-winter, 10th October to 1st November (J.B.Kemp, C.Mitchell *et al.*).

Northumberland East Chevington, Amble Braid and Cresswell Pond area, adult, 8th August intermittently to 15th November, photo. (D.J.Britton, I.Fisher, S.Sexton *et al.*).

1997 Kent Elmley; adult, intermittently, 8th July to 7th December (Brit. Birds 91: 476); same, Swale, 15th-21st July (per C.G.Bradshaw).

IRELAND

1997 Clare Lough Donnell, juvenile, 26th September to at least 3rd November (Irish Birds 6: 297).

Extremely long stays seem to be becoming the rule rather than the exception. Distinguishing some summer adults from the much rarer Short-billed Dowitcher *L.griseus* remains one of the biggest challenges in wader identification (Brit. Birds 91: 93-106). Details have yet to be received for autumn occurrences in Dumfries & Galloway and Northeast Scotland.

Long-billed/Short-billed Dowitcher *L.scolopaceus/griseus* (18, 291, 6)

1997 Lothian Tynninghame, adult, 2nd-9th August (C.N.Davison *et al.*).

Upland Sandpiper *Bartramia longicauda* (15, 33, 1)

Cornwall Caerbran Farm Nature Reserve, Sancreed, 18th September (A.Hathway, B.C.McTurk); presumed same, near Godrevy, 2nd October (W.Makin *et al.*).

Where was it for two weeks?

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* (12, 89, 0)

1997 Kent Dungeness, 23rd August (G.C.Nicholls, P.Saunders).

The first blank year since 1986.

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* (35, 229, 11)

Cambridgeshire Ouse Washes, juvenile, intermittently, 21st September to 26th October (D.Suddaby *et al.*); also in Norfolk.

Cornwall Land's End, juvenile, 18th-28th August (R.Andrew, T.George *et al.*); presumed same, Nanjizal, 19th (K.A.Wilson).

Derbyshire Carr Vale, adult, 22nd August, photo. (M.A.Beevers *et al.*).

Essex Great Wakering, juvenile, at least 21st-23rd September (A.R.Perkins, C.Todd *et al.*). Abberton Reservoir, adult, 26th October to 6th November, photo. (G.Brown, A.Kettle *et al.*).

Essex/Greater London Rainham Marsh, adult, 26th-27th August (S.Connor *et al.*).

Gloucestershire Frampton-on-Severn, 26th April to 1st May (R.Baatsen, N.R.Smart *et al.*).

Greater London See Essex/Greater London above.

Kent Elmley, adult, 16th July (G.W.Allison, F.Cackett, J.A.Rowlands *et al.*).

Lancashire & North Merseyside Banks and Marshside Marshes and Martin Mere, two first-winters, since 1997 (Brit. Birds 91: 477), intermittently to end March (Brit. Birds 92: plate 239), one or other, mostly Banks Marsh, intermittently to 1999, photo. (per M.Jones *et al.*).

Moray & Nairn Findhorn Bay, age uncertain, 31st October to 7th November (M.J.H.Cook, S.Murphy *et al.*).

Norfolk Welney, juvenile, intermittently, 12th September to 4th November (J.B.Kemp, C.Mitchell *et al.*); same as Cambridgeshire.

Oxfordshire Otmoor, adult, 29th August to 5th September (J.S.Baker *et al.*).

Sussex, East Cuckmere Haven, juvenile, 25th September to at least 1st October, photo. (R.J.Fairbank, N.Greenaway, J.P.Shaughnessy *et al.*).

1997 Cambridgeshire Fen Drayton Gravel-pits, 12th-14th May (D.Anderson *et al.*).

IRELAND

1995 Cork Ballycotton, adult, 2nd-4th August (Irish Birds 6: 299).

1996 Cork Kinsale Marsh, 28th April (Irish Birds 6: 297).

1996 Offaly Shannon Harbour, 13th-17th December (Irish Birds 6: 297).

1997 Cork The Geragh, 26th January to 9th March (Irish Birds 6: 297).

1997 Louth Dundalk Docks, adult, 13th July to 24th May 1998 (Irish Birds 6: 297).

1997 Wexford The Cull, adult, 6th August to 4th December (Irish Birds 6: 297).

The long-staying Lancashire birds proved tricky to work out; since two were reported again at Banks Marsh in late January 1999, it seems likely that both were present all year. The similarity in the departure dates of the Abberton, Findhorn and Welney birds may be more than mere coincidence. A report from East Tilbury, Essex, has yet to be documented.

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus* (3, 45, 5)

Clyde Ardmore Point, at least 31st October (J.Bell, J.Duncan).

Dorset Stanpit Marsh, 13th-16th May, photo. (D.Taylor *et al.*).

Kent Shellness, 5th-10th May, photo. (G.Westley, R.V.White *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: plate 240).

Moray & Nairn Findhorn Bay, 29th-31st October (D.M.Pullan *et al.*).

Suffolk Walberswick, 6th September, photo. (C.R.Naunton, B.Wentworth).

The best-ever year, exceeding the fours in 1986 and 1995. The Kent bird was the earliest recent spring record by a day, although that at Radipole Lake, Dorset, in 1974, may have 'cheated' by wintering in Devon (Brit. Birds 68: 317). The two late-autumn records in Scotland were most unusual.

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularia* (6, 115, 2)

Leicestershire Eyebrook Reservoir, 9th-10th May, photo. (A.H.J.Harrop, D.Summerfield *et al.*).

Shetland Wester Water, Mainland, 30th June (M.Mellor); same, Punds Water, 2nd July (Dr R.Riddington).

1988 Greater London Barn Elms Reservoirs, 16th May. (J.P.P.Wilczur).

IRELAND

1997 Cork Tramore River, near Cork City Dump, juvenile, 26th September to 2nd October (Irish Birds 6: 299).

This species has become distinctly rare here in autumn. Inner London belatedly notches up another good rarity (see also Rosy Starling *Sturnus roseus*).

Wilson's Phalarope *Phalaropus tricolor* (1, 273, 1)

Meirionnydd Tywyn, age uncertain, 27th-28th August (R.I.Thorpe *et al.*).

1997 Yorkshire, South Rother Valley Country Park, first-winter, 15th September (P.Graham, R.Greasley).

IRELAND

1997 Londonderry Lough Beg, two first-winters, 21st-22nd September (Irish Birds 6: 299; Northern Ireland Bird Rep. 1997: 58).

1997 Louth Dundalk Docks, first-winter, 24th August to 4th September (Irish Birds 6: 299).

The slump in this species' occurrences referred to in the last report continues.

Laughing Gull *Larus atricilla* (2, 89, 5)

Argyll Cliad, Coll, first-winter, 28th November (A.J.Leitch).

Cornwall Maer Lake, Bude, adult, 11th-13th January (D.Churchill *et al.*).

Dorset Radipole, adult, 15th July (K.Ballard, G.Barlow, M.Slater *et al.*); same, West Bexington, 15th (I.McLean); same, Abbotsbury, 15th (S.A.Groves).

Lincolnshire Kirkby-on-Bain, adult, 24th May (K.D.Robertson); presumed same as Norfolk.

Norfolk Burnham Norton, adult, 18th-20th May (P.M.Wilson *et al.*); present, Holme, Hunstanton, Titchwell area, 9th May to June, photo. (per G.E.Dunmore *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: plate 241). Also in Lincolnshire.

Shetland Boddam/Hillwell area, first-winter to first-summer, 17th March to at least 2nd August, photo. (M.Mellor *et al.*).

1997 Cheshire Houghton Green, adult, 12th January (K.Foster).

1997 Cornwall Drift Reservoir, second-winter/adult, 16th December (B.Dodd, G.Hobin).

IRELAND

1992 Dublin Rogerstown, first-winter, 21st-30th November (Irish Birds 6: 301).

The long-staying summer adult in Norfolk at first displayed in the Black-headed Gull *L.ridibundus* colony at Titchwell and later came regularly to bread in Hunstanton town centre.

Franklin's Gull *Larus pipixcan* (0, 35, 2)

Gower Eglwys Nynydd Reservoir, adult, 28th October to 1st November, photo. (G.Randall, D.Rich *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: plate 242).

Lincolnshire Kirkby-on-Bain, first-summer, 13th May (K.Durose); presumed same as Norfolk, Shetland.

Norfolk Titchwell, first-summer, 10th May; photo. (T.Humpage, B.J.Small *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: plates 243 & 244); also in Lincolnshire, Shetland.

Shetland Hillwell, first-summer, 15th May (M.Mellor *et al.*); presumed same as Lincolnshire, Norfolk.

IRELAND

1997 Louth Cruisetown Strand, adult, 17th-18th August (Irish Birds 6: 301).

The tracking of a first-summer from Norfolk to Shetland over five days was remarkable. It was evidently in a hurry to move north and perhaps even back to its native land. It was of note that individuals of this and the preceding species should be seen at such widely separate sites during the same period.

Bonaparte's Gull *Larus philadelphia* (11, 97, 8)

Anglesey Beddmanarch Bay, two first-winters, 16th May (A.Davies, O.Roberts *et al.*); one of same, Penrhos, 17th (T.ap Rheinallt).

Angus & Dundee Broughty Ferry, first-winter, 26th to at least 30th December (S.R.Green).

Cheshire Richmond Bank, first-winter, 20th February (J.Clarke).

Cornwall Drift Reservoir, first-winter, 17th January (G.Hobin).

Kent Elmley, first-summer, 25th May (C.G.Bradshaw *et al.*); presumed same, Herne Bay and Seasalter area, 30th May to 20th June, photo. (G.J.A.Burton *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: plate 245).

Lothian Musselburgh, first-summer, 17th August (B.Hickman); same, 9th September (A.Brown).

Northumberland Cresswell Pond and area, first-summer, 26th-27th July, 8th, 11th, 19th August, 12th September (T.R.Cleeves, D.M.Turner *et al.*); considered not same as Lothian.

1995 Derbyshire Ogston Reservoir, first-winter, 29th December (R.J.Lowe, S.Mannet *et al.*).

1996 Derbyshire Willington Gravel-pits, first-winter/first-summer, 5th May, video. (R.S.Brown, N.Topliss).

1997 Devon West Hoe, adult, 24th, 26th March (M.K.Ahmad *et al.*).

1997 Pembrokeshire Strumble Head, first-winter, 28th September (G.H.Rees).

IRELAND

1997 Cork Dunkettle and near Blackrock Castle, adult, 15th April (Irish Birds 6: 302).

A good annual total. All were first-year, which is remarkable as about 40% of post-1958 records relate to adults. The Northumberland and Lothian birds are here considered different for various reasons including the timings of sightings and the large distance between the two sites.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

***L. a. smithsonianus* (0, 26, 0)**

Scilly St Mary's, first-winter, intermittently since 18th December 1997 to at least 6th April (Brit. Birds 91: 479) (Brit. Birds 92: plates 211-213).

1997 Gloucestershire Frampton-on-Severn, first-winter, 15th December (M.T.Elliott, J.D.Sanders).

IRELAND

1992 Cork The Lough, first-winter, 18th-19th February; same, Cork City Dump, 28th (Irish Birds 6: 302).

1996 Galway Nimmo's Pier, first-winter, 1st January (Brit. Birds 90: plate 80; Irish Birds 6: 302).

1997 Antrim North Foreshore Tip, Belfast, first-winter, 15th February (Brit. Birds 91: 479), was 5th March.

1997 Cork The Lough, first-winter, 6th December to 4th January 1998. Ballycotton first-winter, 21st December to 15th January 1998 (Irish Birds 6: 303).

1997 Louth Lurgangreen, second-winter, 6th February, presumed same as Clogher Head, 27th December 1996 (Brit. Birds 91: 479; Irish Birds 6: 302).

An immaculate description of a more-or-less classic individual in Gloucestershire presented no problems. A number of other records are pending, otherwise under investigation, or have yet to be submitted. Observers need to be aware that there is considerably more variation within Lesser Black-backed Gull *L.fuscus* and other races of Herring Gull than is often realised. Both can show completely dark tails, for example. It is important to identify these birds on a combination of as many features as possible. Doubtless this American race also exhibits considerable variation (e.g. it can even show a tail band Western Birds 29: 63-64), but at present only classic individuals are likely to be accepted.

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoides*

***L. g. kumlieni* (0, 71, 7)**

Cambridgeshire Ouse Washes, adult, 1st January (R.G.Newell). Milton, adult, 1st February, photo. (R.G.Newell *et al.*).

Cornwall Hayle, adult, intermittently, 7th-26th February (R.James, P.A.Rutter, L.P.Williams *et al.*). Camel Estuary, adult, 21st February to 1st March (S.M.Christophers *et al.*).

Gower Swansea, adult, 15th December to at least 16th January 1999 (R.J.Howells, P.R. & S.L.Murray *et al.*).

Kent Cliffe, adult, 1st January (R.C.Peters, A.Pocock *et al.*).

Outer Hebrides See 1997 Outer Hebrides below.

Pembrokeshire Llys-y-fran Reservoir, first-winter, 1st-5th February (D.J.Astins *et al.*).

1996 Durham Gateshead, third-winter/third-summer, 5th February (S.C.Votier).

1996 Shetland Tingwall, second-summer, 12th June (F.J.Maroevic, M.Mellor).

1996 Suffolk Minsmere, adult, 28th December (C.A.Buttle, D.Fairhurst, B.Robson *et al.*).

1997 Essex/Greater London Rainham Marsh, adult, 13th December (M.K.Dennis).

1997 Greater London See 1997 Essex/Greater London above.

1997 Outer Hebrides Stornoway, adult, 13th December to 14th April 1998, photo. (R.D.Wemyss).

IRELAND

1994 Cork Ballymacoda, adult, 26th January; same, Ballycotton, 6th February (Irish Birds 6: 303).

1994 Kerry Blennerville, adult, 8th March (Brit. Birds 91: 481), to 27th March (Irish Birds 6: 303).

1996 Galway Galway Tip, first-winter, 1st-2nd January (Irish Birds 6: 303).

1997 Antrim North Foreshore Tip, second-winters, 5th March, two, 7th, one or other to 28th (per G.Gordon).

1997 Donegal Killybegs, first-winter, 26th December (Irish Birds 6: 303).

1997 Wexford Killurin Tip, first-winter, 20th-21st February; second-winter, 4th March (Irish Birds 6: 303).

Records of this subspecies will no longer be considered by the Committee as from 1st January 1999, for reasons explained by Prof. Colin Bradshaw (Brit. Birds 92: 113-114). One was that it remains unclear where the boundaries of this taxon lie with respect to both Iceland *L.g.glaucoides* and Thayer's *L.g.thayeri* Gulls. An interesting input to this taxonomic and identification nightmare is provided by Steve Howell's paper 'Shades of gray: the catch 22 of Thayer's Gull' (Birder's Journal 7: 6, 305-309).

Ross's Gull *Rhodostethia rosea* (2, 80, 3)

Cornwall Maenporth, adult, 25th January; same, Swanpool, Falmouth, 25th-31st (Dr G.W.Davies, A.R.Pay *et al.*).

Shetland Lerwick, then Tingwall, adult, 16th January to at least 5th May, photo. (P.V.Harvey *et al.*).

IRELAND

Antrim Black Head, Belfast Lough, second-winter, 5th February (per G.Gordon); also in Down.

Down Briggs Rock, Belfast Lough, second-winter, 9th-12th February (per G.Gordon); same as Antrim above.

1995 Cork Cape Clear Island, adult, 24th February (Irish Birds 6: 303).

1995 Galway Galway Docks, adult, 27th January to 1st February (Brit. Birds 91: 481), to 2nd February (Irish Birds 6: 303).

1997 Dublin Bullock Harbour, adult, 15th February to 29th March (Irish Birds 6: 303).

The 110-day stay of the Shetland bird was exceeded only by one which remained at Thurso, Caithness, from 20th November 1983 to 16th May 1984.

Ivory Gull *Pagophila eburnea* (76, 41, 2)

Glamorgan Aberthaw, first-winter, 2nd January, photo. (S.P.Hinton *et al.*).

Highland Inverpolly, Wester Ross, first-winter, 7th December, photo. (S.Edwards, D.Mainland).

The Glamorgan bird was presumably blown into the Bristol Channel by the severe westerly gales which deposited many other seabirds far up the Severn Estuary in the first few days of January. This was the third record for the Bristol Channel in recent years.

Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia* (30, 219, 6)

Caernarfonshire Bardsey, 28th May, 1st June (L.Humpage, S.D.Stansfield).

Norfolk Hickling and Breydon, 2nd, 4th-6th, 10th August (J.Harris, I.Smith, S.Smith *et al.*).

Northamptonshire Ditchford and Stanwick Gravel-pits, 1st August (N.M.Butler, S.P.Fisher); same, Earls Barton Gravel-pits, 1st (P.Britten *et al.*); also in East Yorkshire, below.

Nottinghamshire Lound Gravel-pits, 3rd July, photo. (P.Palmer *et al.*); also in East and South Yorkshire.

Orkney Papa Westray, 16th April (S.D.Wellock).

Suffolk Sizewell, 5th July (D.Thurlow).

Yorkshire, East Beacon Ponds, Kilnsea, 27th June (L.J.Degnan, N.Pickering *et al.*); also in Nottinghamshire, South Yorkshire. Tophill Low, 3rd August (A.Hutt, F.X.Moffatt); presumed same as Northamptonshire.

Yorkshire, South Thorne Moors, 21st June (M.Limbert, J.M. & P.C.Rowarth); Thryburgh Reservoir, 2nd July (P.Burke); both presumed same as Kilnsea, East Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire.

1996 Kent Stodmarsh and Hersden, 15th June (D.C.Gilbert *et al.*).

1997 Cornwall Hayle, first-winter, 1st August (R.Addison).

1997 Gower Eglwys Nynydd Reservoir, 6th-8th August (M.Bailey-Wood, G.F.Thomas); presumed same as Kenfig, Glamorgan, 6th (Brit. Birds 91: 482).

1997 Norfolk Breydon, 30th July (Brit. Birds 91: 482); also at Burgh Castle in recording area of Suffolk.

1997 Suffolk See 1997 Norfolk above.

The Committee takes the view that, in view of the time-lapse involved, two individuals visited Yorkshire, as well as other counties. It also seems clear, from the details of dates listed, that the Norfolk bird was additional, as was that in Suffolk. A report that the Norfolk bird was at Bawdsey, Suffolk, on 11th August has yet to be dealt with.

Lesser Crested Tern *Sterna bengalensis* (0, 7, 1)

Sussex, East Rye, 4th May (P.M.Troake).

The timing and location recall records from Kent and East Sussex in 1989 which were attributed to 'Elsie', the famous Farne Islands bird which had been recorded there each summer since 1984. As she was, sadly, not seen this summer, it seems likely that this year's bird was not she.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida* (20, 105, 1)

Essex East Tilbury, 26th July (A.J.A.Dally).

IRELAND

1994 Waterford Dungarvan, adult, 24th-30th April (Irish Birds 6: 304).

1997 Wexford Tacumshin, 11th May; same, Lady's Island Lake, 11th-18th (Irish Birds 6: 304).

A typical record in terms of location and date.

White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus* (50, 684, 9)

Anglesey Llyn Traffwll, juvenile, 8th-14th September (K.G.Croft, I.Higginson, R.Pritchard *et al.*).

Dorset Portland Bill, juvenile, 26th July (M.Cade).

Gloucestershire/Wiltshire Cotswold Water Park, juvenile, 22nd-30th August, photo. (N.Pleass *et al.*).

Kent Oare Marshes, juvenile, 6th September (A.Parker, J.E.Tilbrook).

Norfolk Cley, adult, 30th-31st July, photo. (B.J.Burton *et al.*); same, Titchwell, 31st (P.Bradley per G.E.Dunmore).

Somerset Cheddar Reservoir, juvenile, 15th-18th September (D.Buckingham *et al.*). Steart, juvenile, 18th September (B.D.Gibbs, R.Musgrove).

Sussex, West Chichester Gravel-pits, juvenile, 15th-21st September (A.House, A.R.Kitson, R.Pulley *et al.*).

Wiltshire See Gloucestershire/Wiltshire above.

Yorkshire, South Old Moor Wetlands, adult, 2nd August (S.C.Renouf, D.M.Waddington *et al.*).

1996 Lincolnshire Covenham Reservoir, second-summer, 2nd June (K.Atkin, K.E.Wilson *et al.*).

1996 Oxfordshire Farmoor Reservoir, juvenile, 24th August (Brit. Birds 91: 495), to at least 26th (M.J.Palmer *et al.*).

1997 Essex Hanningfield Reservoir, juvenile, 3rd-4th September (K.Barratt, C.Barton, J.T.Smith *et al.*).

1997 Kent Cliffe, adult, 23rd June (Brit. Birds 91: 495), was 23rd August; now presumed same as Stodmarsh, 24th (Brit. Birds 91: 495).

1997 Orkney North Ronaldsay, juvenile, 28th August (R.McGregor, S.D.Stansfield).

IRELAND

1997 Louth Cruisetown Strand, two adults, 13th July (Irish Birds 6: 304).

1997 Wexford Tacumshin, adult, 14th-17th August (Irish Birds 6: 304).

None in spring, but a fairly typical autumn passage, including a nice influx of juveniles in September.

Great Spotted Cuckoo *Clamator glandarius* (6, 33, 1)

Devon Dawlish Warren, adult, 22nd February (S.Tonkin *et al.*).

The first since 1995 and on an exceptionally early date, although not completely without precedent as one was found dead in Co. Kerry in February 1918. The ageing, identification and summary of occurrences of this species were dealt with by P.G.Lansdown on behalf of the Rarities Committee (Brit. Birds 88: 141-149).

Eurasian Scops Owl *Otus scops* (65, 25, 1)

Clyde Near Beith, taken into care, injured, 20th May, released in good health, 12th June, photo. (A. & G.Christie, I.P.Gibson *et al.*).

Upon release in front of an admiring crowd after its successful rehabilitation, it promptly disappeared, never to be relocated.

Snowy Owl *Nyctea scandiaca* (many, 126, 1)

Moray & Nairn Ben Macdui area, 2nd August (G.N.Brind).

1996 Highland Strathroary, Ross & Cromarty, 12th November (C.Leslie).

Away from the Northern Isles, the Ben Macdui and Cairngorm plateau is the most favoured locality for this beautiful, almost ghostly creature.

Hawk Owl *Surnia ulula* (8, 2, 0)

1959 Lancashire & North Merseyside Near Chipping, 13th September (Brit. Birds 53: 421, 446), now considered inadequately documented.

With this doubtful identification having been brought to our attention by the county records committee, just two post-1958 accepted records remain of this highly sought-after species.

Common Nighthawk *Chordeiles minor* (3, 11, 2)

Scilly St Agnes, male, 9th-13th September, dead, 14th, photo. (F.D.G.Hicks, N.Wheatley *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: plate 246). St Mary's, female or first-winter, 12th-20th September, photo. (A.M.Broome, A. & Mrs L.Roberts, W.Rogers *et al.*).

The highlight of the ornithological year for many observers. Scilly remains the place to see this often diurnal nightjar, the last being a juvenile on Tresco in September 1989. The St Mary's bird performed wonderfully, often hawking over the Borough Farm/Green Lane area in bright sunshine. This is the first recent multiple occurrence, but a record of two together on St Agnes, Scilly, in September/October 1955 is currently under review.

Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus* (0, 11, 3)

Derbyshire Willington Gravel-pits, 3rd August (J.A.Eaton, R.O.Hutchinson, M.P.Radford *et al.*).

Kent Cliffe, 25th May (A.M.Hanby *et al.*).

Scilly St Agnes, 17th May, photo. (D.Page *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: plate 247).

The highest total since the three in November 1984. Could the Kent and Scilly birds have been one and the same? That in Derbyshire was the second to have been encountered in August, hot on the heels of the one in Norfolk in 1997. This remains an erratic and very rare species of which a long-stayer would be most welcome.

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba* (150, 395, 25)

Avon Chew Valley Lake, 18th February (D.J.Angell).

Cambridgeshire March, recently dead, 5th March, photo., skin retained by R.I.Allison (D. & M.Bradshaw). Little Paxton, 11th May (M.L.Hawkes). Wicken Fen, 7th June (P. & W.Miles). Bainton, 19th July (M.Murray).

Carmarthenshire Llanelli, 26th April (I.K.Morgan *et al.*).

Cheshire Budworth Mere, 4th March (J.Walsh). Hoylake area, 23rd April (Dr J.E.Turner).

Cornwall Marazion, 2nd April (P.A.Fraser). Nanjizal, 8th May (J.Summers). Lizard, 9th May (P.L.Stubbs).

Derbyshire/Nottinghamshire Bennerley Marsh, 1st September (K.Tomlinson).

Devon Start Point, 13th May (J.R.Hopkins).

Dorset Portland Bill, two, 11th May (M.Cade, R.Newton *et al.*); another, 13th (P.Green). Hengistbury Head, 5th September (D.N.Smith).

Hertfordshire Wilstone Reservoir, 27th May (S.Rodwell).

Nottinghamshire See Derbyshire/Nottinghamshire above.

Wight Brading Marsh, 6th-8th May (N.Boynton. J.C.Gloyn *et al.*).

Yorkshire, East Spurn, 7th June (A.Dawson. D.R.Middleton *et al.*); another, 8th (D.P.Boyle); 21st June (D.P.Boyle, J.Hamilton. A.Hutt *et al.*); 21st July (R.Bolton, D.P.Boyle). Blacktoft Sands, 5th April (N.Carter, A.Forsyth, E.Ward).

1996 Lincolnshire Skegness, 19th May (K.Durose).

IRELAND

Down Orlock Head, 23rd June (per G.Gordon).

1997 Down St John's Point, 4th May (Irish Birds 6: 305; Northern Ireland Bird Rep. 1997: 75).

1997 Dublin Malahide, 23rd-26th March (Irish Birds 6: 305).

A typical showing, with a broad spread of records throughout the spring and summer. March and early April occurrences have been regular, but that in Avon in February is without precedent.

Little Swift *Apus affinis* (0, 13, 3)

Cleveland Boulby Cliffs, 10th May (M.A.Blick, S.Farish).

Cornwall Porthgwarra, 10th May (D.S.Flumm *et al.*).

Lincolnshire Barton-on-Humber, 26th June, photo. (G.P.Catley *et al.*).

With just ten records from the first in 1967 to 1996, the recent surge, with three in both 1997 and 1998, is rather puzzling. The Barton-on-Humber individual stayed for several hours, enabling many observers to catch up with this distinctive small swift.

Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica* (7, 314, 8)

Cornwall Millbrook, 1st-10th March, photo. (J.Tidball *et al.*).

Devon Beesands, 3rd May (P.Sanders).

Dorset Hengistbury Head, 26th February (S.Simmonds). Lodmoor, 25th April, photo. (P. & Mrs C.Leigh *et al.*).

Durham Whitburn, 31st May (P.Cook).

Kent Dungeness, 12th May (D.Walker).

Lothian Skateraw, 30th May (A.Brown, M.Griffin).

Pembrokeshire Bosherton Ponds, at least 20th-23rd February, photo. (A.S.Wraithmell *et al.*).

IRELAND

1997 Wexford North Slob, 27th October (Irish Birds 6: 305).

Disappointingly, at least ten other occurrences, including two more in February, were not submitted in time for inclusion in this report. It is a matter of record that late-winter/early-spring records are becoming more regular, but why should this be so?

Blyth's Pipit *Anthus godlewskii* (1, 6, 2)

Dorset Portland Bill, two, 22nd-24th November, one to 6th December, both trapped 22nd, photo. (M.Cade, P.A.Coe, J.A.Lucas, G.Walbridge *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: plate 25).

The first multiple occurrence, enabling further clarification of the field characters to be made. Any observer who thinks that this species is easy to identify should refer to the salutary letter from Martin Gray (Brit. Birds 89: 144-146). All claims will continue to receive the most stringent examination by the Committee, and only those with full plumage and structural characters, together with properly described calls, have any prospect of acceptance.

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni* (1, 207, 1)

Scilly St Mary's, 20th-23rd October, photo. (J.Baker, J.A.Hobson, C.J.McCarthy *et al.*).

1994 Essex Pitsea, 13th January to 26th February (Brit. Birds 88: 529), to 2nd April.

1994 Yorkshire, East Flamborough Head, 22nd-23rd September (V.A.Lister, J.McLoughlin).

A disappointing year, almost identical to 1983, when the only record was also in Scilly, on 21st October.

Pechora Pipit *Anthus gustavi* (13, 51, 3)

Shetland Fair Isle, 24th-26th September, photo. (C.A.Holt, T.Warrick *et al.*); 1st-6th October (Dr P.S.Crockett, C.A.Holt, S.J.Turner *et al.*). Fetlar, 8th October (J. & T.G.Davies).

Despite a recent scattering of records on mainland Britain, Shetland, particularly Fair Isle, retains a near-monopoly of this tiger-striped pipit.

Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus* (30, 343, 18)

Cleveland South Gare, 25th September (N.A.Preston).

Cornwall Nanjizal, 3rd October (K.A.Wilson). The Lizard, 18th October (R.C.James, A.R.Pay).

Dorset Weston, Portland, 14th October (P.A.Coe, G.Walbridge).

Fife Fife Ness, 5th September (J.L.S.Cobb, A.W.Lauder).

Greater London Beddington Sewage-farm, 3rd October (J.Allan, G.Messenbird, A.Pearson).

Kent St Margaret's, 10th October (I.P.Hodgson, T.Morgan).

Norfolk Brancaster, 14th May (R.Q.Skeen); presumed same, Scolt Head, 14th (N.M.Lawton). West Runton, 9th October (M.D.Crewe); possibly same, Sheringham, 10th (M.Webster, T.Wright).

Outer Hebrides North Rona, 4th June (C.J.Camphuysen, M.Gray *et al.*).

Scilly St Agnes, 5th-7th October (M.Hepple, T.M.Melling, K.A. & K.D.Shaw *et al.*). St Mary's, 19th-21st October (J.Atkinson, C.W.Melgar, I.J.Whitcomb *et al.*); presumed same, Tresco, 21st (R.M.Fray, A.J.Mackay *et al.*).

Shetland Fair Isle, 5th-12th June, trapped 8th (Dr H. & Dr P.E.Baker, C.A.Holt *et al.*); 1st-2nd October (C.A.Holt, S.J.Turner *et al.*).

Yorkshire, East Kilnsea, 27th September; same, Spurn, 27th-28th (G.E.Dobbs, D.R.Middleton, R.Swales *et al.*). Spurn, another two, 28th (C.J.Bishop, N.A.Chambers, P.I.Davison *et al.*); 1st October (D.P.Boyle, A.Hutt, M.F.Stoyle *et al.*); presumed same as 27th-28th.

1988 Scilly St Mary's, 3rd October (J.McLoughlin, W.Simpson).

1992 Yorkshire, East Sammy's Point, Easington (then Humberside), 23rd May (Brit. Birds 89: 513), present 22nd-26th (per L.J.Degnan).

1997 Devon Lundy; 5th May (R.J.Campey).

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1994 Wexford Tacumshin, first-winter, 24th-30th October (Irish Birds 6: 306).

1997 Cork Dursey Island, 17th October; 21st October (Irish Birds 6: 306).

An above-average showing this year. Some claims of this species continue to be problematic, although it is pleasing to note that observers are starting to make improved efforts to describe the callnote, evidently paying much closer attention to this whilst actually on the spot.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

Black-headed Wagtail *M. f. feldegg* (0, 6, 1)

Caernarfonshire Conwy, male, 8th-9th May, photo. (I.Higginson *et al.*).

Separation of this race from the not always typically grey-headed race *thunbergi* is rarely straightforward. Very careful observation of plumage details and calls is essential, despite the bird's apparently distinctive appearance.

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola* (2, 111, 5)

Devon Lundy, first-winter, trapped 6th August, photo. (R.Duncan, D.Kightley) (Brit. Birds 92: plates 248 & 249).

Northeast Scotland Girdleness, first-winter, 22nd-25th September (S.A.Reeves, A.Webb *et al.*).

Shetland Fair Isle, first-winter, 3rd September (C.A.Holt, N.J.Riddiford *et al.*). Baltasound, Unst, first-winter, 6th-7th September (H.J.Burgess, M.G.Pennington, S.C.Votier). Quendale, juvenile/first-winter, 13th-14th September, photo. (P.V.Harvey, S.C.Votier *et al.*).

1997 Orkney North Ronaldsay, first-winter, 26th-28th September (Brit. Birds 91: 500), full dates, 25th September to 7th October.

1997 Warwickshire Brandon Marsh, female, 18th May (A.Archer, L.Berry, J.M.Rushforth *et al.*).

A late August/early September pattern is well established, but a first-winter bird as early as 6th August is without precedent. The 1997 Warwickshire record, which was left out of last year's report in error, was on the same date as that at Eyebrook Reservoir, Leicestershire, in 1991.

Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia* (2, 126, 8)

Fife Isle of May; 29th May to 1st June, trapped 29th; first-summer, 30th May to 1st June, trapped 30th, photo. (J.Burgess, A.D.Keates *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: plates 250-252).

Shetland Fair Isle, adult, 10th-15th May; trapped 10th (Dr P.E.Baker, J.M.Reid *et al.*); first-summer, 12th May (R.Mitchell, J.M.Reid *et al.*); first-summer, 1st-23rd June, trapped 1st, photo. (J.M.Reid, S.J.Turner *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: plates 253-255); first-summer, 5th June (J.M.Reid *et al.*). Whalsay; first-winter, trapped 10th September (J.L.Irvine, Dr B.Marshall *et al.*).

Sussex, East Icklesham, trapped 11th September, photo. (P.Jones, T.Squire, J.Willsher).

A typical cast, with the exception of the Sussex record which was some way from this species' more usual East Coast localities.

Red-flanked Bluetail *Tarsiger cyanurus* (3, 14, 3)

Kent St Margaret's, female or first-winter male, 18th-19th October, photo. (S.Carter, N.L.Jarman *et al.*).

Northeast Scotland Foveran Bushes, Ythan Estuary, male, 27th-28th September, trapped 27th, photo. (P.Cosgrove, J.Farquhar, M.Smits *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: plates 256 & 257).

Northumberland Farne Islands, male, 25th September (M.L.Cornish *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: page 590 fig. 5).

The geographical pattern of occurrence continues to expand for this gorgeous chat, with the late September to early November period still the best time for it to be found. Three in one autumn goes one better than the two in East Anglia in October 1994.

Common Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*

***Eastern race S. t. maura/stejnegeri* (1, 260, 11)**

Ayrshire Turnberry, female or first-winter, 26th September (R.H.Hogg).

Dorset Portland Bill, female or first-winter, 17th-18th October (M.Jenkins, C.Trott, G.Walbridge *et al.*).

Norfolk Mundesley, first-summer male, 4th May (M.Fiszer *et al.*). Stiffkey and Warham Greens, female or first-winter, 7th-13th October, photo. (D.J.Holman, J.R.Williamson *et al.*).

Northumberland Cresswell, female or first-winter, 2nd-8th October, photo. (S.Sexton, S.Taylor *et al.*). Hauxley, female or first-winter, 19th-26th October (M.A.Eaton).

Shetland Bressay, female or first-winter, 3rd October (P.Goddard). Sandwick, female or first-winter, 24th October (P.M.Ellis). Spiggie, female or first-winter, 24th-25th October (P.V.Harvey *et al.*).

Sussex, East Rye, female or first-winter, 29th October, photo. (P.M.Troake *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: plate 258).

Yorkshire, North Filey Brigg, first-winter male, 8th-11th October, photo. (P.Mountain *et al.*).

1996 Orkney Sanday, female or first-winter, 20th September (K.Durose).

A welcome return to form after two relatively lean years. Unusually in the realm of rare-bird identification, it is the spring adult male which is the most difficult to identify satisfactorily.

Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina* (1, 13, 3)

Shetland Fair Isle, first-winter, 20th-29th September, photo. (P.S. & R.Crockett, I.Gordon, C.A.Holt *et al.*).

Suffolk Southwold, first-winter, 1st October (J.M.Cawston *et al.*); presumed same, Minsmere, 4th (P.Green, A.Johnson, B.J.Small *et al.*).

Yorkshire, North Whitby, age uncertain, 26th September (J.A.Beaumont, R.S.Slack).

Despite all that has been written on the separation from pale individuals of Northern Wheatear *O. oenanthe*, this species remains a difficult one to get right, and it could be that the problems surrounding its identification are clouding its true status as a vagrant. The best source of reference remains 'Field identification of West Palearctic wheatears' by Peter Clement (Brit. Birds 80: 137-157, 187-238).

Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka* (3, 36, 2)

Northumberland Tynemouth, first-winter female 8th-14th December, photo. (M.P.Carruthers *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: plate 34).

Yorkshire, East Spurn, male, 2nd-5th October, photo. (R.A.Frost, M.E.Taylor *et al.*).

A typical showing of a species which has become almost annual during the last two decades. The Northumberland record echoes that in Devon on 4th-6th December 1983. This survival in a Northeast December was undoubtedly aided by its finder, Mary Carruthers, who regularly fed it.

Black-eared Wheatear *Oenanthe hispanica* (15, 43, 1)

Dorset Winspit, female, *O.h.hispanica*, 16th May (M.Anderson, A.Blunden, J.Young *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: page 592 fig. 6).

1997 Essex Writtle, Chelmsford, male, race uncertain, 3rd May (W.Angell).

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1997 Wexford Great Saltee Island, first-year male, race uncertain, 22nd May (Irish Birds 6: 307).

Observers keen to see this species need to be quick off the mark, as short stays are the norm. Possible racial attribution of a number of past records is shortly to be investigated.

Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti* (11, 61, 1)

Lothian Musselburgh, female, since 1st December 1997 to 4th January (Brit. Birds 91: 503).

Yorkshire, East Flamborough Head, male, 5th-6th April (P.A.Lassey *et al.*).

IRELAND

1997 Wexford Rosslare Harbour, first-year male, 2nd-15th December (Irish Birds 6: 307).

After the flood of records in 1997, this year sees a return to normality. Spring records are uncommon, but one on St Agnes, Scilly, during 23rd-30th March 1976 was even earlier than this year's bird in East Yorkshire.

Rock Thrush *Monticola saxatilis* (6, 22, 0)

1996 Sussex, East/West Locality withheld, female, 19th-20th May (Brit. Birds 90: 496), was in West Sussex.

No records this year.

White's Thrush *Zoothera dauma* (30, 20, 2)

Lothian Ormiston Hall first-winter male, recently dead at window, 12th October, photo. (J.Busby per I.J.Andrews).

Outer Hebrides Tolsta, Lewis, 14th to at least 26th October, photo. (A. & Mrs A.M.Henderson *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: plate 12).

The photographs of the Lewis bird were positively mouth-watering (e.g. Brit. Birds 92: plate 12). No clear pattern of occurrence is emerging, although northern locations in autumn are favoured. A record of one shot at Langley, Essex, in January 1894 (Christie, A.M., Birds of Essex, Supplement, 1902), has been added to the statistics.

Hermit Thrush *Catharus guttatus* (0, 6, 1)

Shetland Fetlar, 30th April to 1st May (J. & T.G.Davies).

Although often associated with October, it is worth remembering that the first for Britain was on Fair Isle on 2nd June 1975. Could both these spring records be due to 'overshooting' from Northeast America, as proposed by Keith Vinicombe in the excellent Rare Birds in Britain and Ireland: a photographic record (1996)?

Grey-cheeked Thrush *Catharus minimus* (1, 42, 1)

Cornwall St Ives, first-winter, recently dead, 23rd October, photo., specimen retained by N.J.Hallam (N.J.Hallam, Mrs D.Hill).

A sad end, but a typical date for a vagrant associated with fast-moving October Atlantic depressions. It is therefore not surprising that the Southwest, and especially Scilly, remains the most frequent point of arrival.

Veery *Catharus fuscescens* (0, 4, 0)

1995 Outer Hebrides Newton, South Uist, 20th-22nd October (Brit. Birds 90: 497), to 28th.

1997 Devon Lundy, trapped 14th May, photo. (R.J.Campey, M.Gade, S.Wing *et al.*).

Remarkably, the second record for that splendid island, Lundy, the other being in autumn 1987. See the comment under Hermit Thrush (above) concerning spring vagrants.

Dark-throated Thrush *Turdus ruficollis* (3, 40, 2)

Berkshire Maidenhead, male, *T.r.atrogularis*, probably first-winter, 26th December to 1999, photo. (B.D.Clews, B.Pavey *et al.*).

Norfolk Snettisham, female, *T.r.atrogularis*, 25th-28th April, photo. (G.Woodburn *et al.*).

For this now almost annual visitor, a clear pattern is now emerging of autumn coastal arrivals, inland wintering and spring coastal departures. It may be that they travel with visiting flocks of Fieldfares *T.pilaris*. The statistics given above include the one record of the red-throated nominate race.

American Robin *Turdus migratorius* (11, 20, 1)

Scilly St Agnes & Gugh, male, probably first-winter, 26th-28th October, photo. (M.A.Croose, A.Jayne *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: plate 259).

The third for Scilly, all on St Agnes. This one arrived in the wake of a westerly storm just after the majority of observers had left the islands. As the last twitchable one was in Northeast Scotland in December 1988, many promptly returned to feast their eyes on this one.

Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella certhiola* (3, 18, 4)

Shetland Fair Isle, four: first-winter, trapped 30th September (A.J.Bull, N.J.Riddiford, C.Turner *et al.*); first-winter, 1st-3rd October, trapped 1st, photo. (Dr P.E.Baker, A.M.Stoddart *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: plates 209 & 210); first-winter, 3rd-6th October, trapped 3rd (J.G.Brown, C.A.Holt, F.J.Maroevic *et al.*); 8th October (M.A.Newell).

Even by Fair Isle standards, four in one autumn is truly staggering. Shetland retains its near-monopoly on this major rarity, so, for anybody hoping to see one, that must be the place to go.

Lanceolated Warbler *Locustella lanceolata* (9, 65, 6)

Shetland Norwick, Unst, 21st-22nd September (P.A.Harris, P.V.Harvey). Fair Isle, five: first-winter, trapped 26th September, photo. (Dr P.E.Baker, A.Bridges *et al.*); first-winter, trapped 27th September, photo. (Dr P.E. & Dr H.Baker); probably first-winter, trapped 29th September, photo. (Dr P.E.Baker, C.A.Holt, M.R.W.Sell *et al.*); 5th October (C.A.Holt, P.Macklam *et al.*); 6th-10th October, trapped 6th, photo. (A.J.Bull *et al.*).

Six in one autumn is without precedent, far exceeding the three, all on Fair Isle, in 1982. Confusion with Grasshopper Warbler *L.naevia* still arises on an almost annual basis and careful attention to plumage features is needed for a firm identification (see Brit. Birds 85: 62-78; 88: 430-438).

River Warbler *Locustella fluviatilis* (0, 28, 1)

Lincolnshire Gibraltar Point, in song, 29th May (K.Durose *et al.*).

The recent increase in occurrences of singing males in both spring and summer surely corresponds with the spread in Northern Europe. Could it be just a matter of time before a breeding attempt is made in Britain? Silent females may well be going undetected.

Moustached Warbler *Acrocephalus melanopogon* (8, 1, 0)

1979 Sussex, East Angmering, 18th August (Brit. Birds 73: 522), now considered inadequately documented.

As past records of this species are regarded with a degree of scepticism in some quarters, an article dealing with identification and the provenance of earlier records will shortly be published in British Birds.

Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum* (9, 28, 0)

1997 Yorkshire, East Flamborough Head, first-winter, 21st-24th October, trapped 21st, photo. (P.A.Lassey, J.M. & N.A.Pearson, D.A.Rushforth *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: plate 260).

Despite what has been written about the identification of this species, claimants should remember that potential pitfalls still abound, particularly in respect of field observations.

Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus* (23, 176, 8)

Kent Dungeness, 4th-5th October (R.J.Price *et al.*).

Norfolk Berney Marshes, male and one other, 26th May (P.R.Allard *et al.*).

Northumberland Tynemouth, 12th-14th May (M.P.Carruthers *et al.*); another, 31st (M.P.Carruthers).

Pembrokeshire Skomer, 21st May (N.A.Littlewood, M.S.Wallen *et al.*).

Suffolk Levington, trapped 16th May, photo. (P.Newton, S.Rackman *et al.*).

Sussex, East Rye, 8th May (Dr B.J.Yates *et al.*).

1997 Borders Mire Loch, St Abbs, 1st-6th June (T.Reid *et al.*).

1997 Norfolk Burnham Norton, in song, 18th-19th May (V.Eve *et al.*).

An altogether to-be-expected appearance of the grumpy giant songster, although the successive records in Northumberland were noteworthy, as was the possible pair in Norfolk. The two belated 1997 records take the total for that year to normal proportions.

Olivaceous Warbler *Hippolais pallida* (0, 11, 1)

Scilly St Agnes, 24th September to 8th October, photo. (D.Page *et al.*) (Brit. Birds plates 261 & 262).

The following records have now been reassessed by the Committee and are no longer considered acceptable, the decisions in respect of those in 1951 and 1956 having been confirmed by the BOURC:

1951 Pembrokeshire Skokholm, 23rd September to 3rd October (Brit. Birds 46: 191-192, plate 27).

1956 Dorset Portland Bill, 16th August (Brit. Birds 53: 312-313).

1962 Dorset Portland Bill, 5th September (Brit. Birds 56: 405).

1967 Dorset Portland Bill, 27th August (Brit. Birds 62: 490).

1968 Cornwall Porthgarra, 14th September (Brit. Birds 62: 478).

1976 Yorkshire, East Flamborough Head, 22nd October (Brit. Birds 71: 520).

As with the 1984 and 1985 birds, also in Scilly, this individual performed very obligingly for its many admirers, displaying the full suite of structural, plumage, vocal and behavioural features which are now well-documented. The paper by Hadoram Shirihai, David A. Christie and Alan Harris (Brit. Birds 89: 114-138) summarises the latest criteria for identification of Hippolais warblers. The outcome of the review of past records confirms that this is indeed a very rare species in Britain. The figures given above include three past records in Ireland.

Booted Warbler *Hippolais caligata* (1, 69, 6)

Argyll Balemartine, Tiree, 20th September (M. & Mrs R.Williamson).

Shetland No Ness, near Sandwick, 3rd-7th September (P.V.Harvey, D.Vaughan *et al.*). Scatness, 5th-13th September, photo. (I.Fisher, P.V.Harvey, Dr R.Riddington *et al.*). Fetlar, 9th-10th September (J. & T.G.Davies, D.Houghton, M.Smith). Out Skerries, 14th September, photo. (S.J.Dodgson, E.Tait); 29th September to 2nd October, trapped 29th, video., photo. (S.J.Dodgson, E.Tait).

The Tiree individual is the first record for western Scotland. The species has yet to be found in Ireland. The possible racial attribution of the second Out Skerries individual this year is currently under investigation. This species is perhaps easier to identify in the field than it is to convey convincingly on paper.

Spectacled Warbler *Sylvia conspicillata* (0, 2, 0)

1997 Suffolk Landguard, male, 20th April to 2nd May (Brit. Birds 91: 506), first date, 26th.

The specific problems of separation from Common Whitethroat *S.communis* and first-winter female Subalpine Warbler *S.cantillans* were discussed by Hadoram Shirihai, Alan Harris and David Cottridge (Brit. Birds 84: 423-430) and further clarified by Brian Small (Brit. Birds 89: 275-280).

Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans* (12, 403, 15)

Borders St Abb's Head, male, 30th May to 6th June, photo. (E.Forbes, A.Henderson *et al.*).

Caernarfonshire Bardsey, male, 24th May (W.Earp, S.D.Stansfield *et al.*).

Cornwall Nanjizal, first-summer male, trapped 17th May, photo. (K.A.Wilson).

Kent Dungeness, first-winter male, 3rd-4th November (W.Attridge *et al.*).

Northeast Scotland Girdle Ness, female or first-winter male, 30th April (C.Barton, K.Gillon *et al.*).

Orkney Deerness, male, 26th-27th May (K.E.Hague *et al.*).

Scilly St Mary's, male, age uncertain, 17th May (P.A.Stancliffe).

Shetland Fetlar, male, 16th May (J. & T.G.Davies). Fair Isle, male, 22nd May (C.A.Holt, S.J.Turner). Out Skerries, male, age uncertain, 29th-30th May, photo. (S.J.Dodgson *et al.*). Noss, male, 22nd June (J.G.Brown). Quendale, first-winter male, 6th-8th September (I.Fisher, P.V.Harvey, Dr R.Riddington *et al.*).

Yorkshire, East Spurn, male, 12th-13th May, photo. (M.J.Pilsworth *et al.*); male, age uncertain, 27th September to 8th October, trapped 29th, photo. (D.P.Boyle *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: plate 263); first-winter, 28th September (N.P.Whitehouse).

1995 Devon Lundy, age/sex uncertain, 14th May (R.J.Campey).

1997 Devon Lundy; male, 15th-16th June (D.Nevitt).

A typical showing. By far the majority of spring records refer to males; is this merely because they are more conspicuous, or because they are more liable to overshoot than are females or are looking for unchallenged territories to occupy?

Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala* (1, 52, 1)

Shetland Sumburgh, female or first-summer male, 10th May, photo. (M.Mellor, G.Petrie, G.Robertson *et al.*).

Last year, 1997, was the first blank year in a decade during which records reached a peak of eight in 1992. Such an easy species to pass by unless it happens to take flight or announce its presence vocally.

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides* (13, 313, 7)

Norfolk Blakeney Point, 30th May (K.Murray, T.Wilson *et al.*). North Lopham, in song, 1st June (D.R.Moore).

Orkney North Ronaldsay, 14th-20th August, trapped 14th (P.Brown, A.E.Duncan *et al.*).

Scilly St Agnes, in song, 1st-5th June, photo. (G.M.Cook, N.Wheatley *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: plate 264).

Shetland Norwick, Unst, first-winter, 3rd-8th September (W.Dickson, M.G.Pennington, S.C.Votier *et al.*). Boddam, first-winter, 9th-10th September (P.V.Harvey; Dr R.Riddington, J.Stenning *et al.*).

Yorkshire, East Flamborough Head, 3rd-4th September (P.A.Lassey *et al.*).

1996 Kent Margate, 6th-7th September (D.C.Gilbert, N.Faulkner *et al.*).

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1997 Cork Ballycotton, first-winter, 22nd-25th September (Irish Birds 6: 308).

The late-spring occurrence pattern continues, followed by a totally expected August/early September scatter. The inland record in Norfolk in spring has only one precedent, that of a singing male at Aberfeldy, Perth & Kinross (then Tayside), in May-June 1983 (Brit. Birds 81: 583).

Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis* (19, 212, 3)

Norfolk Near Eccles-on-Sea, 29th September (N.Bowman, M.Fischer, A.J.Kane *et al.*).

Shetland Fair Isle, first-winter, 29th-30th August, photo. (C.A.Holt, R.Proctor, G.Taylor *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: plate 265). Quendale, first-winter, 13th-14th September, photo. (P.V.Harvey, S.C.Votier *et al.*).

Another disappointing year, for no apparent reason.

Hume's Warbler *Phylloscopus humei* (0, 28, 2)

Cornwall Church Cove, The Lizard, 22nd-23rd November (M.Tunmore *et al.*).

Kent St Margaret's, 2nd-3rd November (I.P.Hodgson, C.Johnson, D.Wrathall *et al.*).

1997 Wight Alum Bay, 13th-15th November (I.Ridett, D.Svensson *et al.*).

The nowadays expected November occurrences. Clearly, any bird resembling a 'Yellow-browed Warbler' in that month is worthy of closer scrutiny. Visual features and vocal characters have become increasingly clear in recent years (Brit. Birds 92: 96-100), and records may now be expected annually.

Radde's Warbler *Phylloscopus schwarzi* (1, 172, 1)

Scilly St Agnes, 1st November (M.Hicks, N.Wheatley *et al.*).

1997 Yorkshire, East Spurn, 19th-20th October (Brit. Birds 91: 508), 19th only.

A disappointing showing and the first blank October since 1983. The Committee regularly sees examples of confusion between this species and the next. Observers are urged to concentrate on the structural and vocal characteristics, as well as plumage features. The 1987 paper by Steve Madge remains the identification benchmark (Brit. Birds 80: 595-603).

Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus* (1, 190, 7)

Cornwall Sennen, 23rd November (M.D.Wallace).

Dorset Lodmoor, 23rd January to at least 18th March (D.J.Chown, J.Stirling *et al.*). Abbotsbury, 4th-7th November (S.A.Groves *et al.*).

Norfolk Holkham Meals, 11th-12th October (A.M.Stoddart *et al.*). Stiffkey, 17th-18th November (D.J.Holman, J.B.Kemp *et al.*).

Northumberland Tynemouth, 9th October (A.S.Jack). Bamburgh, 4th-6th November (M.S.Hodgson *et al.*).

1997 Kent North Foreland, 17th-18th October (F.Solly; B.E.Wright *et al.*).

1997 Scilly Tresco, 22nd October (P.V.Hayman *et al.*).

This species continues to outpace Radde's Warbler *P.schwarzi*. The recent trend of singles wintering in southern England is continued by the one at Lodmoor, Dorset.

Western Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus bonelli* (3, 52, 0)

1974 Norfolk, 1989 Norfolk, 1995 Shetland See 1974, 1989, 1995 Western/Eastern Bonelli's Warbler below.

A paper on the separation of this and the recently split Eastern Bonelli's Warbler *P.orientalis* has recently been published (Brit. Birds 92: 524-531).

Eastern Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus orientalis* (0, 2, 1)

Shetland Sumburgh, 27th-28th August; same, Grutness, 29th to 5th September, photo. (S.Croft, I.Dillon, J.N.Dymond, P.V.Harvey *et al.*).

An article by Paul Harvey describing the circumstances and identification of this particular individual, the first record for Scotland, has already been published (Birding Scotland 1: 154-159). As that article stressed, even when trapped, this species and its Western counterpart *P.bonelli* can still give real identification problems. It has to be said that the date of this occurrence also serves as a warning.

Western/Eastern Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus bonelli/orientalis* (3, 140, 2)

Shetland Noss, 22nd August (J.G.Brown, A.Upton).

1974 Norfolk Great Yarmouth, 30th August to 2nd September (Brit. Birds 68: 327), now accepted as Western *P.bonelli*.

1989 Norfolk Holkham Meals, 10th-17th September (Brit. Birds 83: 485), now accepted as Western *P.bonelli*.

1995 Shetland Sumburgh, 13th-18th September, trapped 16th, photo. (Brit. Birds 89: 520, plate 168), now accepted as Western *P.bonelli*.

1997 Shetland Lerwick, first-winter, 23rd September, photo. (M.Ponsford, K.E.Vinicombe *et al.*).

The 1997 Shetland individual may well have been *orientalis*, but unfortunately this was not proved beyond reasonable doubt.

Collared Flycatcher *Ficedula albicollis* (2, 18, 1)

Shetland Fair Isle, male, 28th May (C.A.Holt, J.M.Reid, S.J.Turner *et al.*).

Identification of anything but the most straightforward spring males remains a severe test; to convince any records committee, observers need to undertake a critical and detailed examination of relevant plumage features. Reference should be made to the three-part paper by Krister Mild (Birding World 7: 139-151, 231-240, 325-334).

Short-toed Treecreeper *Certhia brachydactyla* (0, 18, 1)

Kent Dungeness, 30th-31st March, trapped 30th, 31st (W.Attridge, P.M.Howlett, D.Walker *et al.*).

Not surprisingly, Kent, and particularly Dungeness, being so close to the Continent, retains its virtual monopoly of this difficult-to-identify species.

Following the pioneering paper by C.J.Mead and D.I.M.Wallace (Brit. Birds 69: 117-131), further clarification was provided by Simon Harrap (Birding World 5: 10-16), but the reality remains that this is one of the most difficult species to tackle.

Penduline Tit *Remiz pendulinus* (0, 132, 8)

Dorset Lyckett Bay, Poole Harbour, male, 20th January to 13th February, photo. (N.Douglas, C.Whitbourne *et al.*).

Kent Dungeness, male, since 6th November 1997 to at least 19th February, possibly to 14th March (Brit. Birds 91: 510); possibly same, 20th November to at least 14th March 1999 (R.J.Price *et al.*); another male, 20th October only (R.J.Price *et al.*).

Norfolk Titchwell, male, intermittently, 1st January to 4th April, photo. (J.V. & Mrs S.J.Bhalerao *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: plate 266); same, Holme, 14th-18th February (G.F.Hibberd, H.D. & S.C.Matthews). Hickling, 8th March (A.Beaumont); three, 12th December (S.E.Linsell).

Somerset Berrow, male, female and one other, 1st February (A.Payne *et al.*); presumed same as 14th-21st December 1997 (Brit. Birds 91: 510).

1997 Essex Cudmore Grove, female or first-winter, 1st-5th November (D.Urquhart *et al.*).

1997 Norfolk Hickling, male and three others, 20th December (Brit. Birds 91: 510), site was Duck Broad, Heigham Sound.

1997 Suffolk Trimley Marshes, two juveniles, since 20th November 1996 (Brit. Birds 90: 503), to 26th March.

The evident attraction to nicely reeded habitats in southern England continues unabated, and it must surely be only a matter of time before this delightful if often unobtrusive bird becomes a British breeding species, the predicted rise in sea-levels permitting.

In the Channel Islands, a male and one other at Grouville Marsh, Jersey, were noted during 15th-28th March, the male being trapped on 22nd.

Isabelline Shrike *Lanius isabellinus* (1, 49, 1)

Anglesey Cemlyn Bay, female, age uncertain, 2nd July to 8th August, photo. (S.Culley, R.Pritchard *et al.*).

The sight of this bird was enjoyed by many, but, despite its long stay, it remained impossible to establish whether the bird was in its second calendar year or was older. Further detailed work is required to elucidate the complexities of this group of shrikes.

Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor* (32, 125, 1)

Pembrokeshire Camhedryn, 22nd September (O.Roberts *et al.*).

IRELAND

1962 Cork Cape Clear Island, first-year, 14th-26th September (Brit. Birds 90: 504), now reviewed and accepted as Woodchat Shrike *L.senator* (Irish Birds 6: 309).

This continues the sequence of annual occurrences since 1963.

Southern Grey Shrike *Lanius meridionalis*

L. m. pallidirostris (1, 14, 0)

1996 Essex Holland-on-Sea, first-winter *L.m.pallidirostris*, 18th-23rd November (Brit. Birds 90: 504), to at least 4th December.

After records in both 1996 and 1997, a blank year is hardly surprising given the mainly sedentary nature of this species as a whole, although this partially migratory form is undoubtedly attracting the attention of those who consider it worthy of distinct species status.

Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator*

IRELAND

1962 Cork Cape Clear Island, first-year, 14th-26th September, previously accepted as Lesser Grey Shrike *L.minor* (Irish Birds 6: 309).

This species ceased to be considered by this Committee at the end of 1990.

Nutcracker *Nucifraga caryocatactes* (45, 354, 1)

Kent Kingsdown, 6th-7th September (P.J.Chantler *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: plate 267).

1968 Caernarfonshire Beddgelert, 27th August (R. & Mrs E.G.Pritchard *et al.*).

The 1968 Caernarfonshire record complements the two birds in Carmarthenshire also in August of that year. A repeat of the 1968 invasion would be most welcome. Reports of sometimes more than one feeding at suburban bird tables continue to bemuse this Committee.

Rosy Starling *Sturnus roseus* (160, 343, 11)

Argyll Between Ruaig and Caoles, Tiree, juvenile, 28th August (A.J.Leitch).

Cambridgeshire Little Paxton, juvenile, 3rd September (M.L.Hawkes).

Glamorgan Caerphilly, adult, 18th-19th June (N.Davies, D.Whitefoot *et al.*).

Gower Mumbles, juvenile, 13th-30th November, photo. (Mrs R.McNamara, R.H.A.Taylor *et al.*).

Hampshire Andover, juvenile, 18th-28th November, photo. (L.F.Weatherley *et al.*).

Lothian Skateraw, adult, 30th May to 5th June, photo. (A.Brown, M.Griffin *et al.*).

Norfolk Beeston, adult, since 15th November 1997 (Brit. Birds 91: 511), to at least 14th February. Diss, adult, in song, 10th March to 4th April, photo. (J.H.Marchant, A.J.Musgrove *et al.*); presumed same as Beeston.

Northamptonshire Woodford Halse, adult, 14th-22nd September, photo. (M.Adkins, I.Dobson *et al.*).

Northeast Scotland Portknockie, adult, 17th-19th October, video. (Mr & Mrs Evans per M.J.H.Cook).

Scilly St Agnes, juvenile, 1st-17th September (N.Wheatley *et al.*).

Shetland Fetlar, juvenile, 14th-17th September (J. & T.G.Davies).

1996 Highland Portree, Skye, adult, 7th-9th August, photo. (Mrs R.Macdonald).

1997 Cornwall Porthgwarra, adult, 17th June (J.F.Ryan).

1997 Essex Stambourne, adult, 4th August (Mrs C.McShane).

1997 Greater London Battersea, adult, 27th July to 15th August, photo. (B.Mist).

IRELAND

1996 Donegal Malin Head, juvenile, 22nd-23rd September (Irish Birds 6: 309).

1997 Donegal Tory Island, first-year, 10th-27th September (Irish Birds 6: 309).

Juveniles in late August and early September, although not without precedent, remain worthy of note. Records of this species show no signs of diminishing.

Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis* (0, 6, 0)

Cumbria Waterside, male, since 1997 (Brit. Birds 91: 512), to 13th December.

The obliging presence of this bird over such a long period has enabled all interested observers to catch up with a species which seems certain to remain a major rarity. This solitary fellow seems to have been destined to death in exile unless it caught a boat back home.

Red-eyed Vireo *Vireo olivaceus* (1, 110, 2)

Caernarfonshire Bardsey, dead at lighthouse, 19th September (D.Anning, S.D.Stansfield).

Cornwall Loe Pool, 3rd-7th November (T.Raven *et al.*).

IRELAND

1995 Cork Inch Bay; 8th-9th October (Irish Birds 6: 309).

Two rather typical records of this, the commonest of transatlantic passerine vagrants. Although it has occurred on the East Coast, the Southwest, and especially Cornwall, is the most regular port of call.

Arctic Redpoll *Carduelis hornemanni* (30, 719, 2)

Shetland Out Skerries, *C.h.hornemanni*, 29th September to 2nd October, trapped, not ringed, photo. (S.J.Dodgson, E.Tait). Fair Isle, 7th October (A.J.Bull, C.A.Holt, S.J.Turner).

1991 Outer Hebrides North Locheynort, South Uist, 19th October (T.J.Dix, W.D.Oldham).

1996 Yorkshire, North Fewston, 31st March (K.Moir).

1997 Orkney North Ronaldsay, first-winter, 15th October (D.Anning, S.D.Stansfield *et al.*).

The Out Skerries record was relatively early for a species normally associated with the October, November and winter period. It needs to be remembered that this is yet another species which can pose identification problems and even a classic 'snowball' needs to be fully described. The benchmark paper remains 'Identification of Arctic Redpoll *Carduelis hornemanni exilipes*' by Peter Lansdown, Nick Riddiford & Alan Knox (Brit. Birds 84: 41-56). An account of the 1995/96 invasion and an identification update are scheduled for publication in British Birds shortly.

Two-barred Crossbill *Loxia leucoptera* (40, 80, 2)

Gloucestershire Near Parkend, female, 15th February to at least 8th March, photo. (R.C.Curtis, A.H.Eveleigh, A.M.Heaven, D.Murdoch *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: plate 268).

Norfolk Sandringham, first-summer female, 24th May (A.D.Kettle); present, 23rd-24th.

1984 Hampshire Slufter's Inclosure, male, 14th to at least 21st March (Brit. Birds 82: 556), identification no longer supported by P.Combridge; record remains accepted.

As with other irruptive species, this remains sporadic and unpredictable in occurrence, presumably dependent on the available food resource during autumn and winter in its northern forest home. Confusion has arisen over the years with Common Crossbill *L.curvirostra* which can also show wingbar and tertial marking, so it is essential to note structural as well as plumage details.

Summer Tanager *Piranga rubra* (1, 0, 0)

1957 Caernarfonshire Bardsey, first-winter male, 11th-25th September (Brit. Birds 48: 145-147; Ibis 1956: 155), now transferred from Category B to Category A (Ibis 141: 177).

White-throated Sparrow *Zonotrichia albicollis* (1, 20, 1)

Shetland Noss, 8th June (J.G.Brown, A.Upton, S.C.Votier *et al.*).

Six of Shetland's eight records of this species have been in May-June, so this one can be said to be typical in place and time.

Dark-eyed Junco *Junco hyemalis* (1, 20, 0)

Cheshire Vicar's Cross, since 15th December 1997 to 19th April (Brit. Birds 91: 513), photo. (Brit. Birds 92: plate 269).

If you live in the suburbs and hope one day to find a real rarity in your garden, this species could provide the answer to your dreams. So keep putting out the crumbs.

Pine Bunting *Emberiza leucocephalos* (2, 34, 1)

Shetland Fair Isle, female, 8th-11th October (C.A.Holt, S.J.Turner *et al.*).

The clouds which once hung over the identification of other than an adult male have now largely dispersed, but the spectre of hybrids with Yellowhammer *E.citrinella* still stalks the scene. A pattern of late-winter/early-spring and October/November occurrences is now becoming well established.

Yellow-browed Bunting *Emberiza chrysophrys* (0, 4, 1)

Orkney Hoy, 4th-5th May, photo. (K.Fairclough, M.Gray *et al.*).

The first in spring, the second for Orkney and one of the major surprises of the year, not least for its fortunate finder. Now, with three in the space of only seven years, can it be merely a matter of increasing observer-coverage or has there been a change in range or migratory pattern?

Rustic Bunting *Emberiza rustica* (34, 342, 38)

Cleveland Coatham Marsh, 6th October, photo. (M.A.Blick, S.Farish *et al.*).

Dorset Southwell, Portland, 18th-19th October (P.A.Coe, G.Walbridge *et al.*).

Fife Isle of May, male, 15th June (J.M.Wilson *et al.*).

Norfolk Stiffkey Fen, 4th October (P.Bullett, M.L.Hawkes, R.Hughes).

Northumberland Holy Island, 24th-25th September (M.J.H.Denny, Dr M.J.Whittingham *et al.*). Low Hauxley, 27th September (M.J.Carr).

Orkney North Ronaldsay, male, 5th June (P.A.Brown, G.Hamilton *et al.*); 25th September; possibly same, trapped 29th (Dr K.F.Woodbridge *et al.*).

Scilly St Mary's, 11th-14th October, photo. (J.C.Headon *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: plate 270).

Shetland Fair Isle, at least nine, 24th September to 13th October, including five, 25th to 2nd, six, 28th-29th, first-winter male, trapped 3rd (Dr P.E.Baker, A.J.Bull, C.A.Holt, S.J.Turner *et al.*). Bressay, 26th-29th September (P.Goddard, J.A.Wheeler). Swining, 27th-30th September (N.Milligan *et al.*). Fetlar, 28th September (J. & T.G.Davies). Sandwick, 29th September (K.Osborn). Quendale, two, 29th-30th September, one to 3rd October (P.A.A.Baxter, H.I.Scott, K.Osborn *et al.*). Out Skerries, 29th-30th September, photo. (S.J.Dodgson, E.Tait). Skaw, Whalsay, 27th September (J.L.Irvine, Dr B.Marshall). Symbister, Whalsay, three, 27th September to 1st October (C.Barton, Dr B.Marshall, C.Simpson). Newpark, Whalsay, 1st October (C.Barton, G.M.Buchanan, R.A.Mavor *et al.*). Near Hamister, Whalsay, 2nd-3rd October (G.Barton, R.A.Mavor, C.Pollock *et al.*).

Yorkshire, East Flamborough Head, 30th May (A.Ford, B.Richards); 3rd-5th October (I.Forsyth, F.X.Moffatt *et al.*). Spurn, two, 25th-29th September, one to 30th, photo. (N.A.Bell, L.J.Degnan, E.Williams *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: plate 271). Sammy's Point, Easington, 3rd October (A.Archer, D.J.Standing).

Yorkshire, North Whitestone Point, Whitby, 3rd-7th October (T.J.Barker, J.B. & Mrs B.Beaumont, R.S.Slack).

IRELAND

1997 Cork Dursey Island, 19th October (Irish Birds 6: 310).

The proportion of spring records was far below the norm, but it was an excellent autumn, particularly in Shetland. June records, on North Ronaldsay and the Isle of May, are particularly noteworthy.

Yellow-breasted Bunting *Emberiza aureola* (10, 188, 3)

Orkney North Ronaldsay, female or first-winter, 5th September (A.E.Duncan, M.Gray).

Shetland Fair Isle, female or first-winter, 5th-11th September (Dr H.Baker, S.J.Turner *et al.*). Grutness, female or first-winter, 13th-14th September (P.V.Harvey, S.C.Votier *et al.*).

1997 Fife Fife Ness, female or first-winter, 18th October (A.Henderson, W.McBay, S.L.Rivers *et al.*).

Although once considered a Fair Isle speciality, the recent trend has been towards a wider geographical spread. Even so, as these records confirm, the Northern Isles in early autumn are still the most likely bet.

Black-headed Bunting *Emberiza melanocephala* (9, 132, 1)

Essex Two Tree Island, in song, 13th May (Mrs J.Akib).

1995 Caernarfonshire Aberdaron, first-summer male, 5th June (R.H.Bonser *et al.*); present, 2nd to 5th, photo.

1997 Devon Lundy, male, 15th-16th July (J.Hutchinson, R.Marshall).

1997 Dorset Durlston Country Park, male, 23rd June (J.Copp, R.J.H.Murray).

IRELAND

1997 Donegal Tory Island, male, 21st-27th July (Irish Birds 6: 310).

1997 Dublin Rockabill, male, 4th July (Irish Birds 6: 310).

Separation in the field of females and first-winters from those of Red-headed Bunting *E.bruniceps* seems to remain at best difficult and at worst well-nigh impossible. If confronted with one, it is essential that the closest scrutiny be paid to bill size and shape, primary projection and even the subtlest of plumage features.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak *Pheucticus ludovicianus* (0, 24, 1)

Scilly Bryher, first-winter male, 30th October to 1st November, photo. (Dr S. & Mrs E.O'Donnell *et al.*) (Brit. Birds 92: plates 272 & 273).

As the number of records in Scilly continues to increase, that at Bridlington, East Yorkshire, in 1991 seems all the more remarkable, although the winter one in Essex in 1975/76 should not be forgotten.

Indigo Bunting *Passerina cyanea* (0, 2, 0)

This species has now been formally admitted to Category A on the British List by virtue of the record of a first-winter male on Ramsey Island, Pembrokeshire, on 18th-26th October 1996 (Brit. Birds 90: 517, plate 189).

Bobolink *Dolichonyx oryzivorus* (0, 20, 1)

Shetland Durigarth, 28th September to 5th October, photo. (K.Osborn, G.Peplow *et al.*).

Shetland and Scilly retain their near-monopoly, with late September to mid October clearly the optimum period. Indeed, those in Scilly in 1976 and in the Outer Hebrides in 1986 also first revealed their presence on 28th September. Despite its distinctive appearance, this is often a difficult bird to locate, so a weedy-field stakeout in Scilly at the right time of year might well prove worthwhile.

Appendix 1. Category D species accepted (see Ibis 136: 253)

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber*

P. r. roseus (-, 9, 0)

Kent Cliffe, since 1997 (Brit. Birds 91: 515), to 11th February (P.Larkin *et al.*).

1997 Norfolk Titchwell, 3rd August (M.L.Hawkes); present 30th July to 14th August.

Falcated Duck *Anas falcata* (0, 14, 1)

Clyde Merryton Haugh, male, 8th-15th March, 1st November to 24th May 1999 (A.I.English *et al.*).

Marbled Duck *Marmaronetta angustirostris* (0, 10, 1)

Greater London Perry Oaks Sewage-farm, 15th May to 7th June (C.Lamsdell).

Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug* (0, 3, 0)

1995 Lincolnshire Kirkby-on-Bain, 22nd April (P.D.Hyde).

Appendix 2. List of records not accepted

This list contains all current records not accepted after circulation to the Committee. It does not include a) those withdrawn by the observer(s) without circulation, after discussion with the Hon. Secretary; b) those which, even if circulated, were not attributed by the observer(s) to any definite species; c) those mentioned in 'Recent reports' in British Birds if full details were unobtainable; or d) certain escapes.

In the vast majority of cases, the record was not accepted because we were not convinced that the identification was fully established; only in a very few cases were we satisfied that a mistake had been made.

1998 Bulwer's Petrel *Bulweria bulwerii* Sizewell, Suffolk, 12th July. **Little Shearwater** *Puffinus assimilis* Sheringham, Norfolk, 11th September. **Double-crested Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax auritus* Martin Mere, Lancashire & North Merseyside, 15th April. **Night Heron** Keyhaven, Hampshire, 9th October. **Great White Egret** Pagham Harbour, West Sussex, 23rd February; Breydon, Norfolk, 19th May; Bardsey, Caernarfonshire, 3rd July. **Black Stork** Calne, Wiltshire, three, 24th July. **Lesser White-fronted Goose** Kercock, Perth & Kinross, 15th November. **American Wigeon** Loch Leathan, Skye, Highland, 11th May; near Stornoway, Outer Hebrides, 12th December. **Black Kite** Mayday Farm, Suffolk, 22nd March; Lower Test Marshes, Hampshire, 18th April; Edmonthorpe, Leicestershire, 19th April; Loughborough, Leicestershire, 25th April; Dunstone Cross, Devon, 2nd May; Bere Alston, Devon, 4th May; near Corby Golf Course, Northamptonshire, 16th May; Deenethorpe, Northamptonshire, 12th June, 24th June; Lower Stow Bedon, Norfolk, 24th June; Warnford area, Hampshire, 5th July; near Llanegryn, Meirionydd, 19th July; Godmanchester, Cambridgeshire, 1st October. **Red-footed Falcon** East Prawle, Devon, 3rd May; St Austell, Cornwall, 18th May; Mynydd Mawr, Caernarfonshire, 6th June; Wandsworth Common, Greater London, 30th June; Tetney Marsh, Lincolnshire, 17th October. **Eleonora's Falcon** *Falco eleonora* Gwernaffield, Flintshire, 11th June. **Gyr Falcon** Beesands, Devon, two, 25th April; Orfordness, Suffolk, 6th September; Cobbinshaw Reservoir, Lothian, 5th October. **Semipalmated Sandpiper** Oare Marshes, Kent, 30th September to 1st October. **White-rumped Sandpiper** Snettisham, Norfolk, 8th July; Dorman's Pool, Cleveland, 4th September. **Broad-billed Sandpiper** Westray, Orkney, 3rd June. **Stilt Sandpiper** Steart, Somerset, 27th September. **Upland Sandpiper** Nanjizal, Cornwall, 27th September. **Lesser Yellowlegs** Milford-on-Sea, Hampshire, 17th February; Maenporth, Cornwall, 21st-22nd September. **Great Black-headed Gull** *Larus ichthyaetus* Sizewell, Suffolk, 2nd January; Cuckmere Haven, East Sussex, 12th January. **Laughing Gull** Bartley Reservoir, West Midlands, 1st January; Sennen Cove, Cornwall, 21st July. **Franklin's Gull** Northam Burrows, Devon, 28th December. **Bonaparte's Gull** Cliffe, Kent, 23rd May, 24th May. **Ross's Gull** Leven/Methil, Fife, 3rd January. **Gull-billed Tern** *Sterna nilotica* Stanpit Marsh, Dorset, 10th October. **Caspian Tern** Harrington, Cumbria, 3rd August. **White-winged Black Tern** Burry Inlet, Gower, 30th May; Wilstone Reservoir, Hertfordshire, two, 3rd September; Dosthill, Warwickshire, 6th September. **Snowy Owl** Rossmorran, Fife, 4th January; Burwick, South Ronaldsay, Orkney, 17th June. **Pallid Swift** Chew Valley Lake, Avon, 11th June; Ossett, West Yorkshire, 8th August. **Alpine Swift** Godshill, Isle of Wight, 28th April; Oxwich, Gower, 30th April; Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex, 25th May. **White-rumped Swift** *Apus caffer* Stronsay, Orkney, 15th May. **Little Swift** Old Hall Marshes, Essex, 29th May. **European Roller** *Coracias garrulus* Tigh na Bruaich, Argyll, 17th August. **Crag Martin** *Ptyonoprogne rupestris* Pett Level, East Sussex, 10th May. **Red-rumped Swallow** Buckton, East Yorkshire, 5th September. **Pechora Pipit** Sandbach, Cheshire, 13th April; Deerness, Orkney, 10th October. **Red-throated Pipit** Penygarrag Reservoir, Radnorshire, 31st March; Cley, Norfolk, 12th May. **Buff-bellied Pipit** *Anthus rubescens* Handa Island, Highland, 5th May. **Yellow Wagtail** *M.f.feldegg* Rattray Head, Northeast Scotland, 12th July, 6th August. **Common Stonechat** *S.t.maura/stejnegeri* Fair Isle, Shetland, 30th April; Minsmere, Suffolk, 6th September. **Isabelline Wheatear** Ardmore Point, Clyde, 26th September; Easington, East Yorkshire, 11th October; Dunkery Beacon, Somerset, 16th November. **Pied Wheatear** West Runton, Norfolk, 12th-13th November. **Black-eared Wheatear** Kirkbean, Dumfries & Galloway, 15th May; Skomer, Pembrokeshire, 4th June; Needwood Airport, Staffordshire, 10th October. **Siberian Thrush** *Zoothera sibirica* Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, 5th October. **Dark-throated Thrush** Penrith, Cumbria, 19th September. **Blyth's Reed Warbler** Hartlepool Headland, Cleveland, 25th September. **Booted Warbler** Fair Isle, Shetland, 28th-31st August; East Fleet, Dorset, 29th September; Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, 2nd-4th October. **Subalpine Warbler** Sammy's Point, Easington, East Yorkshire, 30th September. **Arctic Warbler** Walberswick, Suffolk, 10th-11th October. **Western Bonelli's Warbler** Wembury, Devon, 11th-14th August. **Short-toed Treecreeper** Flat Holm, Glamorgan, 3rd July; Quorn, Leicestershire, 19th September. **Nutcracker** Bishop's Castle, Shropshire, 8th February; Hopton Bank, Shropshire, 8th December. **Rosy Starling** The Lizard, Cornwall, 18th May; Haydock, Lancashire & North Merseyside, mid September. **Two-barred Crossbill** Pennington Marshes, Hampshire, 22nd November. **Trumpeter Finch** *Bucanetes githagineus* Waxham, Norfolk, 5th July. **Pine Grosbeak** *Pinicola enucleator* Holkham Meals, Norfolk, 2nd February. **Yellow-rumped Warbler** *Dendroica coronata* Marden Quarry, Northumberland, 1st November. **Pine Bunting** Bembridge, Isle of Wight, 29th December.

1997 Bulwer's Petrel Calf of Man, Isle of Man, 13th September. **Little Shearwater** Calf of Man, Isle of Man, 29th August. **Night Heron** Near Chattisham, Suffolk, 20th May. **Great White Egret** Llanmorlais, Gower, 1st October.

Lesser White-fronted Goose Near Tophill Low, East Yorkshire, 23rd November. **Red-footed Falcon** Hayling Island, Hampshire, 5th May; Gaitbarrow, Lancashire & North Merseyside, 23rd May. **Pacific Golden Plover** Upton, Cheshire, 4th-6th March. **Stilt Sandpiper** Needs Ore Point, Hampshire, 5th December. **Wilson's Phalarope** Thornton Moor Reservoir, North Yorkshire, 20th September. **South Polar Skua** *Catharacta maccormicki* Sea area Hebrides, 19th September. **Laughing Gull** Caistron, Northumberland, 17th October. **Gull-billed Tern** Pegwell Bay, Kent, 26th May; Thorness Bay, Isle of Wight, 8th September. **Whiskered Tern** Titchwell, Norfolk, 29th May. **Yellow Wagtail** *M.f.lutea* Tresco, Scilly, 18th April. **Pied Wheatear** Allhallows, Kent, 18th October. **Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler** Cleadon Hills, Durham, 24th September. **Nutcracker** Strathnaver, Highland, two, 24th August; Rousham, Oxfordshire, 4th October. **Rosy Starling** Lundy, Devon, 31st July. **Two-barred Crossbill** Kergord, Shetland, 6th July. **Trumpeter Finch** Whitby, North Yorkshire, 27th May.

1996 Yellow Wagtail *M.f.feldegg* Sewardstone, Essex, 5th May. **Common Stonechat** *S.t.maura/stejnegeri* Hoo Peninsula, Kent, 2nd November. **Isabelline Wheatear** St Mary's, Scilly, 13th August. **Arctic Redpoll** Lindley Wood Reservoir, North Yorkshire, 8th April.

1995 Red-footed Falcon Bucklebury, Berkshire, 5th July. **Iceland Gull** *L.g.kumlieni* Bruichladdich, Islay, Argyll, 18th-23rd February; Holywell Pond, Northumberland, 9th December.

1994 Little Shearwater Girdle Ness, Northeast Scotland, 1st September. **Franklin's Gull** Porlock Bay, Somerset, 13th October.

Appendix 3. List of records not accepted but identification proved

This list provides a permanent record of those occurrences which, usually on the grounds of likely escape from captivity, find no place in any category, but which may, at some future date, merit further consideration. It does not include (a) any record of a species for which natural vagrancy is wholly unlikely, or (b) those records of presumed escapes already mentioned in the main text of this or earlier Reports. The decisions have been taken by this Committee unless otherwise shown.

Pallas's Rosefinch *Carpodacus roseus* East Newton, Aldbrough, East Yorkshire, 4th-6th May 1997. **Long-tailed Rosefinch** *Uragus sibiricus* Portland Bill, Dorset, first-summer male, 16th August to 22nd September.

Appendix 4. List of selected records still under consideration

This list is not intended to be complete. Some decisions may have been arrived at and notified to County Recorders/observers prior to the publication of this Report.

1998 American Wigeon Otmoor, Oxfordshire, 23rd February. **Red-footed Falcon** Icklesham, East Sussex, 12th September. **Saker Falcon** Unst, Shetland, 10th January. **American Golden Plover** Langness, Isle of Man, 25th-26th May. **Lesser Yellowlegs** Icklesham, East Sussex, 3rd October. **Spotted Sandpiper** South Walney, Cumbria, 27th September. **Herring Gull** *L.a.smithsonianus* Fishguard, Pembrokeshire, 1st-4th April. **Forster's Tern** *Sterna forsteri* Devoran, Cornwall, 5th November. **Thrush Nightingale** Wells, Norfolk, 29th September. **Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler** Skegness, Lincolnshire, 2nd October. **Greenish Warbler** Whitby, North Yorkshire, 4th September. **Radde's Warbler** Seaton Hole, Devon, 14th-15th November. **Lesser Grey Shrike** Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex, 4th-8th August. **Arctic Redpoll** Shibdon Pond, Durham, 11th January. **White-crowned Sparrow** *Zonotrichia leucophrys* Middle Hope Nature Reserve, Avon, 15th November. **Black-headed Bunting** North Ronaldsay, Orkney, 27th-28th September.

1997 Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* Cove Bottom, Suffolk, 7th May. **Audouin's Gull** *Larus audouinii* Portreath, Cornwall 31st December. **Herring Gull** *L.a.smithsonianus* Walthamstow, Greater London, 27th December. **Pacific Swift** *Apus pacificus* St Mary's, Scilly, 23rd September. **European Roller** Ventnor, Isle of Wight, 9th June. **Red-throated Pipit** St Mary's, Scilly, 10th October (Brit. Birds 91: 517). **Black-eared Wheatear** North Ronaldsay, Orkney; 10th November. **Blyth's Reed Warbler** Unst, Shetland, 16th September to 2nd October. **Radde's Warbler** St Agnes, Scilly, 18th-19th October (Brit. Birds 91: 517).

1996 Madeira/Cape Verde Petrel Pendeen, Cornwall, 24th August (Brit. Birds 91: 527); Cley, Norfolk, 13th September. **Greenish Warbler** Prawle Point, Devon, 24th September (Brit. Birds 91: 517).

1995 American Wigeon Leighton Moss, Lancashire & North Merseyside, 6th-16th October (Brit. Birds 91: 517). **Semipalmated Sandpiper** South Huish, Devon, 8th-9th October (Brit. Birds 91: 517). **Black-eared Wheatear** Great Orme's Head, Caernarfonshire, 20th October (Brit. Birds 91: 517).

1993 South Polar Skua Sea area Sole, 26th August (Brit. Birds 91: 517). **Hume's Warbler** Bridlington, East Yorkshire, 11th February (Brit. Birds 91: 517).

1988 Blyth's Pipit Fair Isle, Shetland, 13th-22nd October.

1985 Collared Flycatcher Holkham Meals, Norfolk, 12th-13th May (Brit. Birds 91:517)