

*A newsletter for supporters of the NEST RECORD SCHEME, forming part of the BTO's Integrated Population Monitoring programme funded by a partnership of the British Trust for Ornithology and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (on behalf of English Nature, Scottish Natural Heritage, the Countryside Council for Wales, and the Environment & Heritage Service in Northern Ireland).*

June 2002

Number 18

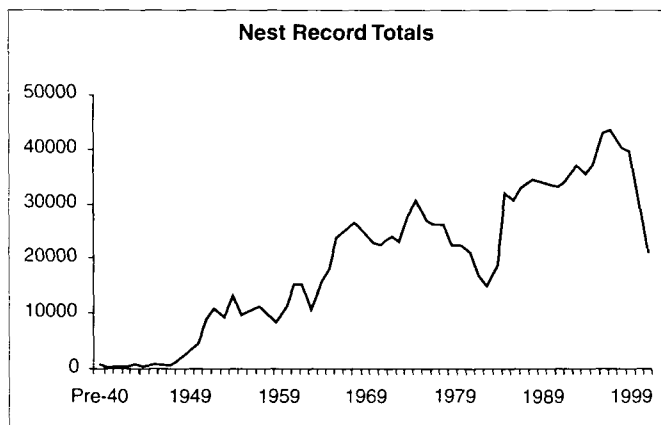
## Nest Recording in 2001

Despite the restricted access to much of the countryside during 2001 we still received an impressive total of 20,980 nest record cards covering 164 species by the end of March 2002. This total was made up of contributions received from 334 individual nest recorders and 37 groups of recorders. As usual, totals for different species varied widely – from single records for Hawfinch and Siskin to over a thousand cards for Blackbird, Swallow, Great Tit and Blue Tit.

As expected, the number of cards received and the number of observers taking part in the scheme fell due to the foot and mouth outbreak. However there was good news in 2001 with a massive increase in the number of records received elec-

tronically via the Integrated Population Monitoring Reporter (IPMR) system. This year the new Constant Nest Monitoring Programme is underway and we hope to continue the development of the nest record scheme, ensuring that the data collected by our dedicated nest recorders is more valuable than ever in helping to shape conservation policy for the UK's birds. Let's hope that 2002 will be a great season and that the number of records will bounce back up above the 30,000 mark!

**A big thank you to all nest recorders for their efforts during the difficulties of 2001.**



Welcome to Nest Record News 18 – this is my opportunity to introduce myself as the new Nest Records Officer and say hello to all nest recorders. I arrived at the BTO from working in the RSPB office in North Wales and have been a keen birdwatcher and naturalist for a long time. I have a particular interest in Lapwing nesting and ecology, hold a trainee ringing licence and I am keen to develop my skills as a songbird nest finder. I am certainly looking forward to meeting many of you when any opportunities arise.

Like many other surveys, the Nest Record Scheme was hit hard by the Foot and Mouth outbreak and the impressive number of nest records in 2001 is a remarkable achievement. Hopefully 2002 will be better than ever and I look forward to receiving record breaking numbers of cards over the coming year!

Andy Simpkin

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# Year 2001 Breeding Season Report

By David Glue

Very sadly, imperative access restrictions installed to help eliminate Foot and Mouth disease, seriously limited fieldwork by many nest recorders in 2001. Arguably, this was the saddest, most frustrating, and testing season in the 63-year history of the BTO's Nest Record Scheme. Nonetheless, 362 nest recorders were able to make a concerted effort on their local 'patches', contributing a doubly prized sample of 20980 nest histories. Reports overall indicated a compact, topsy-turvy breeding season of mixed fortunes for many species, as extremes of weather played a major role. A cool 'late' spring held back much nesting activity among residents and spring migrants alike (in contrast to recent years); consistently high water levels affected breeding wildfowl and waders; cool down-pours hit nest box-users and open-nesting passerines; steamy mid-summer heat initially helped multi-brooded insectivores; before intense July heat and finally a cool September prematurely closed most nesting operations.

Nest recorders were well placed to describe some intriguing changes in status and breeding sites used by both rare 'flagship' and more abundant species in 2001. On an upbeat note, range extensions noted involved Peregrine, Osprey, Mediterranean Gull, Little Egret and Avocet among others. On the debit side worries mounted for threatened breeding pockets of Hen Harrier, Lapwing, Tree Pipit and Redstart, and more generally for Woodcock, Cuckoo, Yellow Wagtail, Willow Tit, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker and more. Nest Record Cards submitted for these, and other BTO 'Target Species', will quickly help to quantify any significant changes in nesting performance among species undergoing status losses and gains to help guide remedial conservation measures.

Overall, the year enhanced the trend towards a warmer climate – not necessarily to the benefit of the UK's breeding birds. Comments on key aspects from stalwart Nest Recorders in far flung places included: 'Barn Owl and thrushes egg-lay

early after winter losses' (Dumfries & Galloway); 'Plovers, pipits and Reed Bunting thrive after spring washout' (Camsb); 'Song Thrush and Skylark make encouraging noises but Cuckoo and Turtle Dove now lost' (Staffs); 'Kittiwake, auks and Roseate Tern enjoy a better year' (Northumberland); 'successful Peregrine, Common Tern and Reed Warbler our breeding highlights' (London); 'late laying Great Tits do better but Pied Flys struggle' (Devon); 'prolific garden Blackbird and Robin slowed by scorching weather' (Gwynedd) and 'mobile Crossbill and Siskin family parties a good sign' (Highland).

## Nesting grebes and thrushes defy New Year cold

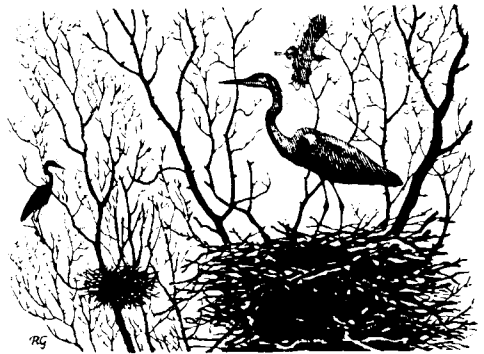
The year 2001 demonstrated, for a fifth consecutive breeding season, how a mild winter and early spring warmth, are not necessarily the ideal ingredients for overall nesting success. Breeding activity remained low-key over a remarkably mild, largely frost-free, if very wet autumn quarter during 2000 (September to November), enabling a scattering of House Martin, Dunnock, and Greenfinch to fledge second broods, and a smaller number of Swallow, Blackbird and Song Thrush to fledge third families into October, helping to bolster another mediocre season for many. Thereafter, a few active nests involved Great Crested Grebe, Mallard and Barn Owl, along with Woodpigeon and Feral Pigeon.



D A Thelwell

October became increasingly unsettled, culminating in an intense cyclone which crossed central Britain during 28-30th, with winds gusting to 90 knots. Though marginally deeper than the infamous Great Storm of October 1987, damage to humans and wildlife was less severe. However, rafts and stick nests used by colonial nesting Grey Heron and corvids and platforms and cavities used long-term by Buzzard, Osprey, Goosander, Tawny Owl and Woodpecker were dislodged or destroyed. On Christmas Eve a bitterly cold 'arctic' blast crossing N Scotland, quickly brought modest snow accumulations and penetrating frosts (down to -12C) from the Highlands south to the West Country, effectively terminating nesting activity in the Millennium Year. Nature is quick to bounce back, and as a southerly airflow in the third week of the New Year saw temperatures climb, Great Tit, Jackdaw, Ring-necked Parakeet and Robin were observed claiming nest-sites, while Grey Heron, Great Crested Grebe and corvids were busy refurbishing nests. Before the month's end, Collared Dove and Feral Pigeon were reported egg laying, along with small numbers of Blackbird, Song Thrush and Woodpigeon within the warmer microclimate of suburbia.

In late February and early March, spells of 'spring-like' heat prompted a scattering of egg-laying among Grey Heron, grebes, dabbling duck, thrushes and doves. Before March was out, completed clutches involving Peregrine, Raven, Moorhen, Mistle Thrush and Long-tailed Tit were noteworthy. However, a cool March, with wintery spells, followed by the coldest April widely since 1989, with sleet, snow, hail and heavy downpours at times, prolonged the wintery feel and held back many summer visitors, in contrast to the recent trend towards earlier breeding and debate on Global Warming.



Robert Gilmour

### Waterfowl and owls hit by winter chill and spring rains

In most parts, Winter 2000/2001 was the most severe since twin episodes in an otherwise mild 1990s decade. Worst were 10 snowy days in February 1991, a northeasterly Siberian blast causing heavy losses among coastal waders and vulnerable 'passerines, including Cetti's Warbler and Dartford Warbler (BTO News 175: 9). Later, in December 1995, a week of 'arctic' northerlies with severe wind-chill, hit Scottish waders,' notably Redshank, Barn Owl and tender songbirds (BTO News 203: 5,8). Fortunately, in Winter 2000/2001, cold snaps were generally of short duration, 3-5 days at most, with relieving milder interludes. Nonetheless, BTO surveyors and nest recorders, mainly in Scotland and N England, attributed losses via vacant territories and nest sites, among Barn Owl, Little Owl, Stonechat, Goldcrest, Grey and Pied Wagtail and others, to severe winter weather.

Torrential rains from Atlantic troughs in late April, compounding record-breaking winter rainfall, had a mixed impact on breeding success. Barn Owl widely and Long-eared Owl locally, endured a generally poor year, as high water levels in parts excluded favoured small mammal prey. Elsewhere, coastal nesting Short-eared Owl exploited exposed abundant rodent prey on dykes and banks. Over time the extra wetland habitat created in places was used by Water Rail, Curlew, Snipe, Redshank and plovers. High water tables, along with habitat creation and protection measures, led to a welcome recovery in breeding numbers of Bittern, Slavonian Grebe and Black-tailed Godwit.

### Tits and warblers suffer as spring stutters along

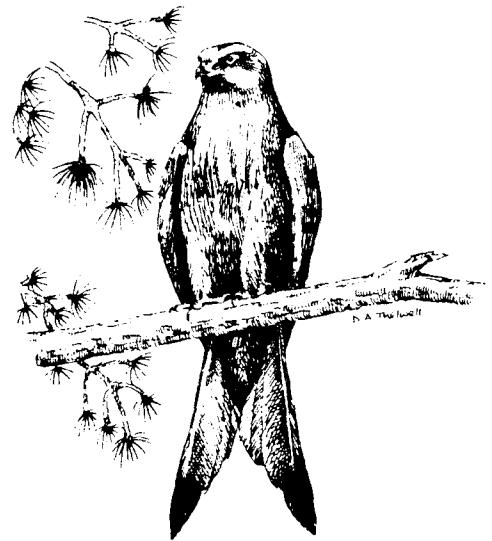
Welcome warm and sunny episodes in May favoured many breeding resident insectivores and

summer visitors alike. Migrants flooded back, in variable strength, notably during hot and surprisingly humid spells from 10-13th and 22nd-30th. Nesting activity and song output among warblers, flycatchers and pipits was frenetic, but frustratingly short. The rich mix of warm showers and dry interludes favoured many soil invertebrates and many bird species that feed on these invertebrates – Rook, Magpie, Jackdaw, Robin, thrushes and Starling – fledged initial large broods. The elements were not always favourable. Winter-like chill on 17th, and some tropical deluges at times in middle and end of May, swamped nests and led to chilled broods for Mute Swan, Grey Heron, grey geese, duck, open-nesting Skylark and Reed Bunting, as a 'stop-go' season stuttered along.

A relatively warm June (a cooler and sunless Scotland excepted), with welcome dryness, was a mixed blessing for many. Cool northwesterly winds initially depressed larval insect food supplies (especially defoliating caterpillars) for single-brooded tits, Treecreeper, Nuthatch and Great Spotted Woodpecker. Chilled clutches, partial brood losses and prolonged fledging periods were regular features, notably among tits which had-over-wintered widely in strength, bolstered by bumper beech mast and allied seed crops. Competition for nestboxes between them and late arriving Pied Flycatchers was locally intense. Some chilly nights in mid June, and thundery downpours during 11-16th hit insect-seeking warblers, pipits and finches. Wetland nesting Dipper, Kingfisher, Sand Martin and wagtails lost broods in flash floods, but many repeated successfully, often from the 17th as gathering high pressure provided a welcome respite. Many coastal breeding gulls and terns (including Roseate) enjoyed a more productive summer, inland raft and roof-top nesting colonies showing, on balance, an upturn in fortunes. Encouragingly, Spotted Flycatcher and Reed Warbler returned to Regent's Park, Inner London, and bred successfully after a lengthy absence. On the negative side, study populations locally suffered at the hands of various hyper-active predators: Common Gull (Highland), Little Tern (N Wales) and House Martin (Bucks) were lost to rogue fox, Kestrel and weasel respectively.

## Raptors and hirundines flourish short-term in summer heat

Consistently, from late June, through July until late August, pulses of hot and humid air drawn up from Iberia and the tropical Atlantic brought steamy heat waves interspersed with monsoon-like downpours. Initially, the elements helped many resident insectivores and seedeaters – Wren, thrushes, Linnet and Yellowhammer profiting. Ongoing free-flying broods of Little Grebe, Kestrel, Little Owl, Great Tit and Swift were indicative of much late nesting. 'Flagship' raptors continued to prosper. Extra limital pairs of Red Kite enhanced the remarkable UK total of 430 pairs surveyed in Millennium Year. Osprey returned to breed in England after an absence exceeding 200 years, pairs alongside Bassenthwaite Lake (Cumbria) and Rutland Water raising single young each, and the stage is set for a substantial recolonization. Peregrine turned increasingly to man-made structures for nest sites (some 30 sites occupied across UK), the most-watched pair atop Battersea Power Station (Central London), where four young fledged.



D.A. Thelwell

As searing heat intensified in late July, temperatures regularly topping 30, broken only by cool interludes from thunder troughs, a sharp downturn was noted in nesting operations for Blackbird, Robin, scrub and leaf warblers, Tree Sparrow and buntings. A few Kingfisher, Little Ringed Plover, Nightjar and Reed Warbler successfully reared second broods into August while a few Swallows, Song Thrush and Stock Dove fledged subsequent families. Thereafter, dominant chilly northerly winds in the coolest September widely since 1994, foreshortened a tardy breeding season. A few determined seabirds, hirundines and doves raised late broods but unseasonably cold northeasterly winds from 19-26th September led to reports of dead chicks and orphaned young Stock Dove and House Martin. Many visitors had vacated breeding haunts sharply, a thin scattering of resident Barn Owl, Collared Dove and Woodpigeon were able to take advantage of record-breaking Indian Summer heat in October, as a generally unsatisfactory breeding season for many species petered out.



Derek Robertson

DAVID GLUE

## Nest Record Milestones Passed in 2001

The records for the 2001 season included nest record landmarks for several species. Probably the most exciting is a new species for the scheme – Little Egret. Mrs J.Pritchard provided seven nest records for little egret taking the total number of species covered by the scheme to an impressive 232. These records will surely be the first of many as this delightful species continues to expand its breeding range.

Other landmarks in 2001 – the 7,000<sup>th</sup> Grey Heron came from Merseyside Ringing Group and the 7,000<sup>th</sup> Eider came from The National Trust, Farn Islands. D.Warden provided the 17,000<sup>th</sup> Coot, the contribution from the Brook and Cooke included the 14,000<sup>th</sup> Rook and the 16,000<sup>th</sup> Starling and the 6000<sup>th</sup> Whitethroat came from the Louch and Thompson team. Both sparrow species reached highpoints with the 13,000<sup>th</sup> House Sparrow and the 18,000<sup>th</sup> Tree Sparrow courtesy of Miss V.King and J.Terry respectively. P.N.Watts provided the 1,000<sup>th</sup> Yellow Wagtail, R.Ward the 60,000<sup>th</sup> Great Tit and finally P.Roe submitted both the 14,000<sup>th</sup> Greenfinch and the schemes 55,000<sup>th</sup> Swallow.

# Latest Trends from the Nest Record Scheme

The many thousands of nest records we receive each year allow us to monitor how well our breeding birds are performing for the UK government. Any species showing significant declines in breeding performance are the subject of alerts to the UK's Joint Nature Conservation Committee, this information can then be used to help decide how and where to spend vital conservation funding.

These latest results from the Nest Record Scheme derive from analysis undertaken for the web-based report 'Breeding Birds of the Wider Countryside 2001 ([www.bto.org/birdtrends](http://www.bto.org/birdtrends)) and include data from the year 2000.

There are currently eight species on the Nest Records Alert List and the recent analysis shows that for six species the overall downward trend in breeding performance has not changed, but for one, the linnet, there are some promising signs of short term improvement. The year the species first appeared on the NRS Alert list is provided in parenthesis:

**Reed Bunting (1991):** The proportion of nests failing at the egg stage has increased from 11% to 37% since 1968. Although unlikely to have contributed to the species population decline this increase in nest losses may be holding back any potential recovery. In 2000 the failure rate was especially high with just over half (52%) of all nests failing when nests contained eggs.

**Linnet (1991):** The year 2000 was relatively good for this species despite the average failure rate of nests increasing from 38% to 53%. In fact egg stage failure rates have fallen steadily for the last five years from 37% in 1996 to 17% in 2000 – the lowest on record. It would appear that the prospects for the linnet are looking brighter, as shown by a recent slight upturn in its population trend.

**Moorhen (1992):** Increases in egg stage failure rates from 31% to 41% and declines in average clutch size may indicate declines in both the quality and quantity of water bodies available as nesting habitat. Populations have declined on farmland Common Bird Census plots and have fluctuated widely on waterways monitored by the Waterways Bird Survey.

**Red-throated Diver (1995):** Since 1980 egg stage failure rates have increased from 13% to 40%. This is a species listed as having an "unfavourable conservation status in Europe" but unfortunately we receive too few records to be able to monitor breeding performance sufficiently well.

**Lapwing (1995):** The overall failure rate of nests at the chick stage has increased from 40% to 49% since 1968. However 2000 was the worst year on record with 63% of nests failing at the egg stage – possibly due to the cold april weather that affected the UK.

**Ringed Plover (1996):** Failure rate at the egg stage has increased from 51% to 67%, possibly due to human disturbance at its nesting sites which are often located areas of high recreational usage. This is particularly worrying as the breeding population is not monitored by any other scheme in the UK and the Nest Record Scheme provides the only source of information on this species during the summer months.

**Willow Warbler (1998):** Nest failure rates at the chick stage have increased from 18% to 26% and this may well be a factor in the current population decline, the Constant Effort Sites Scheme has also shown a decline in productivity for this species in recent years. Nesting success was actually relatively good in the year 2000.

**Yellow Wagtail (1999):** Average brood size has declined by nearly half a chick since 1968, this

may be a factor in the population decline shown by the BTO's Waterways Bird Survey. This is another species where nest record sample sizes are small and more cards are needed to monitor breeding performance effectively.

Many of the 70 species monitored by the Nest Record Scheme have shown improvements in some aspects of breeding performance over the past 30 years. Clutch size has increased significantly for 13 species, brood size for 27 species, nest survival at the egg stage for 34 species and at the chick stage for 15 species. These improvements are associated with increases in population size (e.g. Nuthatch and Collared Dove) and the declining influence of organochlorine pesticides, such as DDT, in the environment (e.g. Sparrowhawk and Buzzard). However in some cases these improvements have occurred as populations have declined (e.g. Yellowhammer and Bullfinch) – this is probably because the species have been lost from poorer breeding areas. The converse argument is a reasonable explanation for the declines in nesting success for some increasing species (e.g. Mute Swan and Great Tit). As these species spread into less suitable areas overall breeding performance may decline.

### The Year 2000

The breeding season in 2000 started with a warm early spring, followed by a cold April and mixed weather in May and June. Eleven of the species analysed laid significantly early in 2000, with 5 species recording their earliest average laying date since 1968 (Reed Bunting, Robin, Sedge warbler, Spotted Flycatcher and Starling). Only four species started laying significantly later than usual. Average clutch sizes tended to be large, probably as a result of the warm early spring, with six species laying significantly large clutches and only three laying significantly smaller clutches than normal. However the cold wet weather later in the season seems to have taken its toll on average brood sizes – 18 species suffered from significantly small brood sizes and only 2 species enjoyed significantly large broods.

Complete nest failures were generally within expected levels, but Bullfinch suffered

significantly high failure rates at the chick stage, while Chaffinch (chick stage), Song Thrush (egg stage) and Willow Warbler (chick stage) enjoyed significantly lower failure rates than normal. It was one of the worst years on record (since 1968) for Crow, Garden Warbler, Greenfinch, Grey Heron, Grey Wagtail, Meadow Pipit and Pied Wagtail.

Hopefully these results give some idea of the importance of your nest record cards and the vital role played by the Nest Record Scheme in shaping conservation policy for birds in the UK.

## Top Nest Recorders in 2001

Despite the problems of the foot and mouth outbreak many nest recorders still managed to submit impressive totals of nest histories. Listed below are the 49 recorders and groups who contributed more than 100 nest records in 2001.

National Trust Farne Islands	2196
J.E.A. Brook & R.C. Cooke	1778
D.Warden	730
Merseyside Ringing Group	687
R. Louch & D. Thompson	455
R. Danson	453
R.W. Grainger	418
R.L. Swann	342
Birklands Ringing Group	332
R.W. Goff	305
I. Proctor	302
M. Meadows	300
Calf of Man Bird Observatory	286
Rye Meads Ringing Group	233
R. Ward	219
R. Stevens	212
D.M. Francis	185
D. W. Oliver	184
G.A. Vaughan	165
P. Roe	160
I. Randall	151
J. & M. Hodson	150

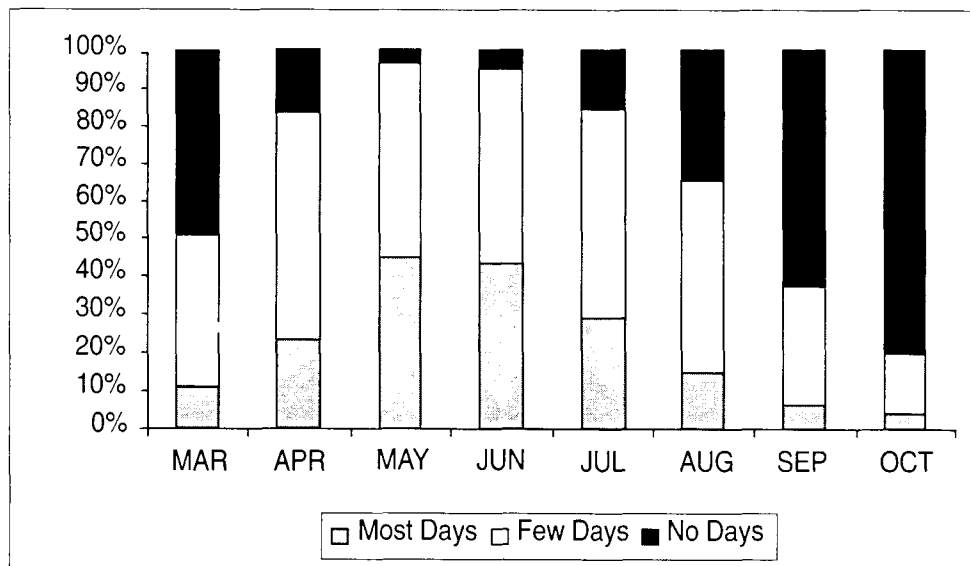


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I. & P. Hildred	148	R. Morton	120
WWT Welney	147	J.M.S. Lewis	118
N. J. Lewis	144	D. Holman	109
D. Mercer	143	M. Carrier	108
A.G. Stamp	143	R.A. Jenkins	108
D. J. Trigg	142	South Derbyshire Ringing Group	107
E.D. Cameron	140	R.J. Lanaway	105
M.D. Russell	134	J. Callion	102
P.J. Johnson	133	G. Lowe	102
J. & C. Holt	129	M.H. Rogers	102
R.J. Haycock	125	I.M. Spence	101
Lancs & District Birdwatching Society	124	East Dales Ringing Group	101
Bristol Natural History Society	124	N. Winter	100
		D.A. Myers	100

## Monthly Coverage

To give the complete picture of breeding success for our birds we need nest recorders to find and monitor nests for the full breeding season of our native species. Many birds start to nest in March and some species continue nesting into October and beyond! It is very important that we include records for as many of these early and late nests as possible in our analysis and we would therefore encourage all keen nest recorders to keep finding nests all year long. The graph below shows monthly recording effort by observers in 2001 based on summary forms returned to the Nest Record unit. It is good to see that over 50% of nest recorders still spend at least a few days searching for nests in July and August. It is also worth noting that observer effort in 2001 will have been influenced heavily by foot and mouth disease and the associated access limitations.



**Species Totals for Nest Record Scheme**

Species	pre-2000	2000	2001	Total
Red-throated Diver	2319	10	9	2338
Black-throated Diver	207	4	2	213
Little Grebe	2305	65	45	2415
Great-crested Grebe	3534	88	52	3674
Red-necked Grebe	1			1
Slavonian Grebe	182	5	2	189
Black-necked Grebe	30			30
Fulmar	6146	133	155	6434
Manx Shearwater	336	2	57	395
Leach's Petrel	7			7
Storm Petrel	88	4		92
Gannet	33			33
Cormorant	1906	16	37	1959
Shag	10980	648	683	12311
Bittern	38	1		39
Little Egret			7	7
Night Heron	3			3
Grey Heron	6241	690	106	7037
Spoonbill	2			2
Mute Swan	5605	155	100	5860
Whooper Swan	13	4		17
Bar-headed Goose	3	1	1	5
Greylag Goose	645	29	14	688
Snow Goose	8			8
Barnacle Goose	36	8	3	47
Canada Goose	3530	149	135	3814
Egyptian Goose	82	7	5	94
Shelduck	312	4	1	317
Mandarin	414	11	5	430
Wigeon	183	1		184
Gadwall	137	6	4	147
Teal	224	3	1	228
Mallard	8460	136	101	8697
Pintail	23			23
Shoveler	174	11	1	186
Pochard	148	7	9	164
Tufted Duck	1218	21	10	1249
Eider	6093	903	545	7541
Common Scoter	43			43
Goldeneye	211	4	1	216
Red-breasted Merganser	275	2	1	278
Goosander	285	4	2	291
Ruddy Duck	138	5	4	147
Honey Buzzard	40	13	10	63
Red Kite	43	13	15	71

*Nest Record News*

Species	pre-2000	2000	2001	Total
Marsh Harrier	60	5	8	73
Hen Harrier	1559	51	35	1645
Montagu's Harrier	53			53
Goshawk	680	63	40	783
Sparrowhawk	5188	63	46	5297
Common Buzzard	5213	221	146	5580
Golden Eagle	498	18	12	528
Osprey	71	1		72
Kestrel	7009	172	105	7286
Merlin	3202	119	43	3364
Hobby	702	58	34	794
Peregrine	2530	78	63	2671
Red Grouse	837	1		838
Ptarmigan	131			131
Black Grouse	77	1	1	79
Capercaillie	82	1		83
Red-legged Partridge	460		3	463
Grey Partridge	841	1	4	846
Quail	16			16
Pheasant	2135	13	21	2169
Golden Pheasant	6			6
Water Rail	87	4	7	98
Corncrake	30			30
Moorhen	21723	397	267	22387
Coot	16347	491	362	17200
Oystercatcher	15199	255	132	15586
Black-winged Stilt	2			2
Avocet	618	30	4	652
Stone Curlew	430			430
Little Ringed Plover	2018	83	62	2163
Ringed Plover	9183	151	108	9442
Kentish Plover	19			19
Dotterel	252		1	253
Golden Plover	867	14		881
Lapwing	24782	368	135	25285
Purple Sandpiper	4			4
Dunlin	551	7		558
Common Snipe	1714	26	11	1751
Woodcock	634	5	6	645
Black-tailed Godwit	30		5	35
Whimbrel	60			60
Curlew	2929	17	6	2952
Redshank	2598	96	74	2768
Greenshank	159			159
Wood Sandpiper	2			2
Common Sandpiper	1482	12	9	1503

## Nest Record News

Species	pre-2000	2000	2001	Total
Red-necked Phalarope	167			167
Arctic Skua	361	1		362
Great Skua	400			400
Little Gull	3			3
Black-headed Gull	9606	37	4	9647
Mediterranean Gull	8	10		18
Common Gull	5157	39	9	5205
Lesser Black-backed Gull	4571	8	12	4591
Herring Gull	6927	176	42	7145
Greater Black-backed Gull	3419	11	17	3447
Kittiwake	12459	681	846	13986
Lesser Crested Tern	5			5
Sandwich Tern	1813			1813
Roseate Tern	758	35	44	837
Common Tern	6280	263	200	6743
Arctic Tern	8896	474	463	9833
Little Tern	5548	229	214	5991
Guillemot	1110	1		1111
Razorbill	1171	57	59	1287
Black Guillemot	1462	29	33	1524
Puffin	528	125	50	703
Rock Dove	511			511
Feral Pigeon	2157	36	29	2222
Stock Dove	8013	298	243	8554
Wood Pigeon	25802	684	473	26959
Collared Dove	4466	141	126	4733
Turtle Dove	1955	59	5	2019
Ring-necked Parakeet	48		1	49
Cuckoo	2108	26	15	2149
Barn Owl	5089	501	340	5930
Little Owl	1914	86	34	2034
Tawny Owl	9085	370	258	9713
Long-eared Owl	724	5	7	736
Short-eared Owl	380	7	2	389
Nightjar	1564	34	43	1641
Swift	1740	37	39	1816
Kingfisher	635	9	5	649
Wryneck	23			23
Green Woodpecker	375	16	16	407
Great Spotted Woodpecker	1280	48	35	1363
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	191	7	3	201
Woodlark	1302	89	46	1437
Skylark	7991	48	33	8072
Sand Martin	1759	293	33	2085
Swallow	52917	2027	1200	56144
House Martin	9079	276	137	9492

Nest Record News

Species	pre-2000	2000	2001	Total
Tree Pipit	1687	57	62	1806
Meadow Pipit	9358	88	47	9493
Rock Pipit	782	12	7	801
Yellow Wagtail	994	2	29	1025
Grey Wagtail	5689	114	38	5841
Pied Wagtail	9456	191	101	9748
Dipper	9568	197	28	9793
Wren	15067	279	246	15592
Dunnock	29737	265	262	30264
Robin	20063	411	366	20840
Nightingale	462	3	2	467
Black Redstart	162	4	3	169
Redstart	6300	141	40	6481
Whinchat	2254	91	39	2384
Stonechat	3165	148	67	3380
Wheatear	3715	90	28	3833
Ring Ouzel	1689	67	2	1758
Blackbird	127586	1358	1033	129977
Fieldfare	7			7
Song Thrush	72698	590	509	73797
Redwing	113	2		115
Mistle Thrush	7800	107	64	7971
Cetti's Warbler	28			28
Grasshopper Warbler	373	3	8	384
Savi's Warbler	2	2		4
Sedge Warbler	4706	46	48	4800
Marsh Warbler	168			168
Reed Warbler	13692	787	421	14900
Dartford Warbler	462	16	5	483
Lesser Whitethroat	848	13	17	878
Whitethroat	5911	80	121	6112
Garden Warbler	1992	39	35	2066
Blackcap	3401	82	62	3545
Wood Warbler	2411	31	32	2474
Chiffchaff	2946	113	92	3151
Willow Warbler	12561	174	118	12853
Goldcrest	804	13	10	827
Spotted Flycatcher	10657	134	132	10923
Pied Flycatcher	37951	1029	463	39443
Bearded Tit	202	69	19	290
Long-tailed Tit	5507	150	99	5756
Marsh Tit	1418	27	28	1473
Willow Tit	461	8	6	475
Crested Tit	416	19	2	437
Coal Tit	5175	114	106	5395
Blue Tit	88327	3384	2526	94237

Nest Record News

Species	pre-2000	2000	2001	Total
Great Tit	55961	2653	1943	60557
Nuthatch	3366	113	101	3580
Treecreeper	2432	49	27	2508
Golden Oriole	41			41
Red-backed Shrike	256			256
Jay	1527	18	13	1558
Magpie	7618	132	114	7864
Chough	699	26	18	743
Jackdaw	7042	212	131	7385
Rook	13588	262	423	14273
Carrion Crow	7332	131	74	7537
Hooded Crow	1124	5	2	1131
Raven	3538	156	44	3738
Starling	15546	257	228	16031
House Sparrow	12724	192	168	13084
Tree Sparrow	17019	723	519	18261
Chaffinch	21975	345	277	22597
Greenfinch	13836	156	179	14171
Goldfinch	3123	55	45	3223
Siskin	85		1	86
Linnet	27380	271	135	27786
Twite	861		2	863
Redpoll	1313	11	17	1341
Parrot Crossbill	4			4
Common/Scottish Crossbill	153	1		154
Bullfinch	5533	129	78	5740
Hawfinch	190	3	1	194
Snow Bunting	202			202
Yellowhammer	7261	252	65	7578
Cirl Bunting	255			255
Reed Bunting	7832	40	46	7918
Corn Bunting	934	12	17	963
<b>Total</b>	<b>1177049</b>	<b>30012</b>	<b>20980</b>	<b>1228041</b>

Species highlighted are those used within the BTO's Integrated Population Monitoring Programme. Other species are added as funds allow but their records still provide a valuable archive for future generations. Totals for pre-2000 and 2000 have changed since those printed in Nest Record News No. 17 due to the addition of cards received at the BTO after March 2001. The total for 2001 includes all cards received up to and including 31 March 2001.

# Integrated Population Monitoring Reporter (IPMR) Update

IPMR enables nest recorders to enter their nest observations directly onto computer instead of using nest record cards and, at the end of the season, nest records are submitted to the BTO electronically via email or on a disk. The system allows nest recorders to keep permanent records of nest record data collected each season and it can also be used to plan nest visits, produce reports and calculate productivity statistics.

Nest record submissions from IPMR are easily loaded into the BTO's nest record database and this reduces the nest record scheme's data input costs by a significant amount. Therefore increased use of the IPMR system enables the BTO to handle and process nest records more quickly and efficiently than ever before – providing the necessary data to monitor the breeding performance of Britain's birds.

The number of nest records submitted via IPMR increased massively in 2001 with a total of 3,145 records received electronically – this represents 15% of the total records in 2001. Next year the target is 20% and with your help this should be no problem!

Any nest recorders interested in IPMR simply need to download the system from the BTO website (<http://www.bto.org/ringing/ringsoft/ipmr>) or contact the Nest Records Unit and we can send you a copy of the system on CD-Rom.

## Constant Nest Monitoring Programme

The Constant Nest Monitoring Programme is an exciting and important new scheme designed to complement the existing Nest Record Scheme by providing additional information on breeding success throughout the season and relationships between productivity and habitat. The programme is being developed as a way to achieve a more structured and standardised form of nest recording and will allow us to answer even more questions about our breeding birds.

The basic idea is that nest recorders monitor the breeding activity of one or more species on defined monitoring plots. These plots will be monitored every year and we are asking observers to record any habitat changes in their plots, along with details of search effort (e.g. number of hours in the field) and counts of the number of pairs present of each study species. An initial census of numbers is important as this allows us to assess levels of coverage (i.e. the proportion of breeding pairs nests found). We would expect observers to record nests throughout the entire breeding season of their chosen species and plots should be large enough to include at least one territory of the species concerned.

This year a number of pilot plots are underway throughout Britain and many Nest Recorders are keen to be involved with the project. We hope to have 20 registered plots next season (including one here at the Nunnery!) and any Nest Recorders interested should contact Andy Simpkin at the Nest Records Unit for further details.

# Everything You Wanted To Know About Nest Record Cards But Were Afraid To Ask!!

Every season many nest recorders contact the Nest Record Unit with problems filling in their nest record cards. Hopefully the following list of common problems and useful tips will answer the questions of all the puzzled nest recorders out there!

## Species Code

If possible please use the BTO five-letter species code (a list of these codes is given in the Nest Record Scheme Handbook). Alternatively write the species name in full, please don't use BTO two-letter codes or your own species codes. If species identification is uncertain please do not send the record.

## Observer Code

Every nest recorder is allocated a unique observer code. Please write this on all cards as observer codes and not names are computerised. Please contact the Nest Record Unit if you are new to the scheme and require an observer code.

## Grid Reference

Grid references are the best method for recording nest location and are of great value when it comes to analysing nest record data. Four and two-figure grid references can be used to maintain confidentiality of nest sites. Further details on the use of grid references can be found in the Nest Record Scheme handbook.

## Status codes

Please use official two letter status codes only! Details of the status codes are on the coding card and in the Nest Record handbook.

## Adult Activity

These codes are often overlooked but can provide useful information about the status of a nest, especially where nest contents are hard to record.

## Nest Outcome

Use all appropriate codes for the nest outcome. If some young fledge and some die use both failure

and success codes. Failure codes for eggs or chicks can be written on any visit.

## Habitat

Filling in the habitat section of nest record cards is extremely important and not as hard as it looks – see the handbook and coding card for habitat details.

## Nest Site

Only one of the two boxes 'centre' and 'margin' may be used. This also applies to the 'field' and 'wood' boxes.

## Additional Nesting Attempts

Any additional nesting attempts by a pair should be recorded on a new card and stapled to the first card.

## Inactive Nests

Please do not submit cards for nests that failed before the egg stage or had already failed when found.

## Number of Visits

If possible please visit active nests at least twice as this provides much more useful information than a single visit.

## Summary Form

When submitting your nest record cards please take a few minutes to fill in your summary form. These forms make it easier for us to enter your records into our database and also give us valuable feedback about seasonal coverage and any single species studies that nest recorders may be involved in.

## Don't Panic!

Don't worry too much about how to fill in the cards, if in doubt please feel free to contact the Nest Record Unit. The cards are designed to be quick and easy to complete and filling them in should be an enjoyable experience and not too much hard work!



# Community Nest Recording

Nest recorder John Clarke enlisted the help of the local community in a census of a nationally declining species – the Spotted Flycatcher.

## Spotted Flycatcher Project – Bredon Hill (2001)

There is plenty of published evidence to confirm the decline of the Spotted Flycatcher in woodland and farmland habitats. Between 1995 and 1999 several pairs were noted breeding in villages on the southern slopes of Bredon Hill, South Worcestershire and a small study in 2000 revealed that the situation varied considerably between villages, with anecdotal evidence suggesting that the Spotted Flycatcher no longer bred in many former village sites.

This project sought to enlist the help of the local community in assessing the status of the Spotted Flycatcher in several Bredon Hill villages. A leaflet was designed and distributed locally outlining the project and asking for help and notices were published in two local church parish magazines. The co-operation of householders was vital in order to gain access to properties with breeding pairs of Spotted Flycatchers and the public response to the project was so strong that the original target of four villages was expanded to nine.

A general survey of flycatchers was carried out in each village and anecdotal evidence was collected about past breeding. Once a bird was found or reported the house-owner's permission was sought to locate and monitor the nest. The nests were located and checked, using an adjustable mirror attached to an extending handle, thus avoiding the disturbance of fragile shrubs with a ladder. Full coverage of all villages was not possible as much of the basic survey work was conducted from the road and time available was limited.

Information and data collected from each site or 'territory' was recorded on a simple computer spreadsheet and then relevant data transferred on to Nest Record Cards issued by The British Trust for Ornithology. This includes information about location, situation, clutch size, brood size and fledging success. In addition an estimate was made of the numbers of pairs missed. This was based on practical experience and could only be made where reasonable coverage had been achieved. Weather conditions are likely to affect breeding success but given the limitations of the project, the information was restricted to brief, general notes.

## Results

Due to the increased size of the project the amount of coverage varied considerably between villages. Nests were not always found, due to restricted access or failure by observers to pinpoint the sites. Some nests were not located until after hatching and in two instances, just as the young were fledging.

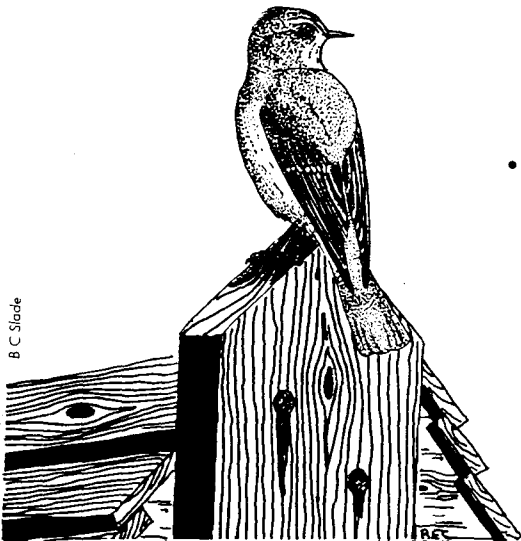
- An estimated 70 people co-operated in the survey.
- From the 30 definite pairs of spotted flycatcher identified, 23 nests were found and monitored. A further 10 nests (second attempts and second broods) were found and monitored later in the season. The first record of nest building was 19th May and the last fledging date was 12th August.
- 25 nests were found on house walls, four on garden walls, two on garden fences, one in a shed and one in a tree. One pair used the old nest of another species (Blackbird) as a nest platform. The average height of nest sites above the ground was 2.4 metres.
- The 33 nests located produced an estimated total of 135 eggs, from which a minimum total of 73 young fledged.

- Analysis of data from monitored nests – average clutch size 4.09, average brood size 2.2, average success rate (young fledged per egg) 54%.
- 9 of the 33 nests failed, giving a failure rate of 27%. Causes of failures included storm damage, infertile eggs, adult mortality and predation by cats, Tawny Owl and rodents.
- Two pairs used their first nest for second broods. A third used the same coconut shell site, after it had been cleaned out following the first fledging.
- Weather notes: cold/windy/wet when birds arrived, good weather with occasional cooler/windy spells during first brood, bad weather after fledging and during second egg-laying period, heat-wave in mid-July, cool/heavy rainstorms/winds during second brood.

### Conclusions

- It is clear from anecdotal evidence (and the author's personal records) that the Spotted Flycatcher no longer breeds in many former local sites - even within villages where it is still comparatively common. Moreover, in recent years, and for the first time in living memory, it has probably completely disappeared from entire villages.
- Although there would appear to be no shortage of suitable nesting habitat there was a tendency for 'clusters' to occur, with some pairs nesting within a few metres of each other. No attempt has been made to accurately compare 'densities', i.e. the number of breeding pairs per hectare of village.
- Although the average clutch size was only slightly smaller than the national average, the fledging success rate was 9% lower. Weather conditions and/or a reduction in food supply would appear to be the most likely causes. As only one out of the 33 nesting attempts failed as a possible result of the loss of an adult, adult mortality would not appear to be a factor.

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- Future nesting success may be increased by ensuring that good nesting habitat is retained, by providing suitably sited artificial nest sites and by trying to deter Predators such as cats, owls and corvids.
- The support and enthusiasm shown by local people for this project was beyond all estimation and thanks must go to all the people involved in the project. It is clear that in future years many will be trying hard to encourage and protect Spotted Flycatchers.

John is continuing the project this year and hopes to have another productive season of flycatcher monitoring.

# More Records Please

A number of species monitored by the BTO's Integrated Population Monitoring (IPM) programme fall short of the ideal target of 150 nest records per year. The nests of many of these species are particularly hard to find or inaccessible and therefore difficult to record accurately but we would still like nest recorders to concentrate on these species where possible.

## IPM Species

Sparrowhawk  
Common Sandpiper  
Curlew  
Snipe  
Redshank  
Turtle Dove  
Little Owl  
Short-eared Owl  
Nightjar  
Green Woodpecker  
Great Spotted Woodpecker  
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker  
Skylark  
Tree Pipit  
Rock Pipit  
Yellow Wagtail

Grey Wagtail  
Nightingale  
Whinchat  
Stonechat  
Wheatear  
Ring Ouzel  
Mistle Thrush  
Grasshopper Warbler  
Sedge Warbler  
Lesser Whitethroat  
Whitethroat  
Garden Warbler  
Blackcap  
Wood Warbler  
Chiffchaff  
Goldcrest

Marsh Tit  
Willow Tit  
Nuthatch  
Treetreeper  
Goldfinch  
Twite  
Bullfinch  
Yellowhammer  
Reed Bunting  
Corn Bunting

## Other Species

Little Grebe  
Woodcock  
Cuckoo  
Hawfinch

## Barn Owl Monitoring Programme

We receive hundreds of Barn Owl nest record cards every year at the BTO and many nest recorders who monitor Barn Owl nests are already involved in the Barn Owl Monitoring Programme. However we would encourage any Barn Owl nest recorders out there who do not yet take part in the monitoring programme to consider taking part. The scheme requires volunteers to monitor natural and artificial nest sites and record site occupancy, clutch size, brood size and breeding success. Qualified ringers may catch and ring adults and chicks and record measurements. If you are interested in this project (NB – a schedule 1 licence is required to record Barn Owl nests) please contact Peter Beaven at the BTO ([peter.beaven@bto.org](mailto:peter.beaven@bto.org)).

## Migration Watch

Migration Watch is a new BTO and BirdWatch Ireland initiative designed to track the arrival and flow of summer migrants through the country. The idea is simple; you make a note of the birds you see and enter your daily observations on a simple-to-use web page. Every night the *Migration Watch* computer at BTO HQ will look at all the records submitted that day by observers across the country and will produce up-to-date maps showing the arrival and spread of summer migrants throughout Britain & Ireland. Its not too late to take part in this exciting new project, simply look at the BTO website or send an email to [migrationwatch@bto.org](mailto:migrationwatch@bto.org) for more information. The project will also take place in 2003 and 2004.

Enjoy your nest recording in 2002.

# Bird Species Protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

The species listed below are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended by the Environmental Protection Act 1990. If you wish to consider visiting the nests of any of these species, write to Jez Blackburn, the Licensing Officer, at the BTO HQ for a licence application form. No nest may be visited without prior approval.

The majority of licenses issued during the breeding season are renewals for the same workers who held the appropriate approval during the previous season. Newcomers to the Nest Record Scheme, or recorders who have never held such a licence before, can apply for the relevant approval through the BTO. However, it is necessary to provide two references from 'respected' ornithologists e.g. County Recorder, BTO Regional Representative, Bird Club Chairman, BTO Bird Ringer etc, or a letter of support from a study group – relevant to the species application being sought. Please note that applications must be received before the end of February to be given priority; and no renewal can be granted until a report form has been submitted (including nil returns) for the previous season.

## List of Schedule 1 species

Avocet	Goose, Greylag	Ruff
Bee-eater	Goshawk	Sandpiper, Green
Bittern	Grebe, Black-necked	Sandpiper, Purple
Bittern, Little	Grebe, Slavonian	Sandpiper, Wood
Bluethroat	Greenshank	Scaup
Brambling	Gull, Little	Scoter, Common
Bunting, Cirl	Gull, Mediterranean	Scoter, Velvet
Bunting, Lapland	Harrier (all species)	Serin
Bunting, Snow	Heron, Purple	Shorelark
Buzzard, Honey	Hobby	Shrike, Red-backed
Chough	Hoopoe	Spoonbill
Corncrake	Kingfisher	Stilt, Black-winged
Crake, Spotted	Kite, Red	Stint, Temminck's
Crossbill, (all species)	Merlin	Swan, Bewick's
Curlew, Stone	Oriole, Golden	Swan, Whooper
Diver, Black-throated	Osprey	Tern, Black
Diver, Great Northern	Owl, Barn	Tern, Little
Diver, Red-throated	Owl, Snowy	Tern, Roseate
Dotterel	Peregrine	Tit, Bearded
Duck, Long-tailed	Petrel, Leach's	Tit, Crested
Eagle, Golden	Phalarope, Red-necked	Treecreeper, Short-toed
Eagle, White-tailed	Pintail	Warbler, Cetti's
Falcon, Gyr	Plover, Kentish	Warbler, Dartford
Fieldfare	Plover, Little Ringed	Warbler, Marsh
Firecrest	Quail	Warbler, Savi's
Garganey	Redstart, Black	Whimbrel
Goldeneye	Redwing	Woodlark
Godwit, Black-tailed	Rosefinch, Scarlet	Wryneck

NB. A rarer breeding species than these may be added to the Schedule 1 list without warning, so if you find one, contact the BTO's Licensing Officer for clearance.