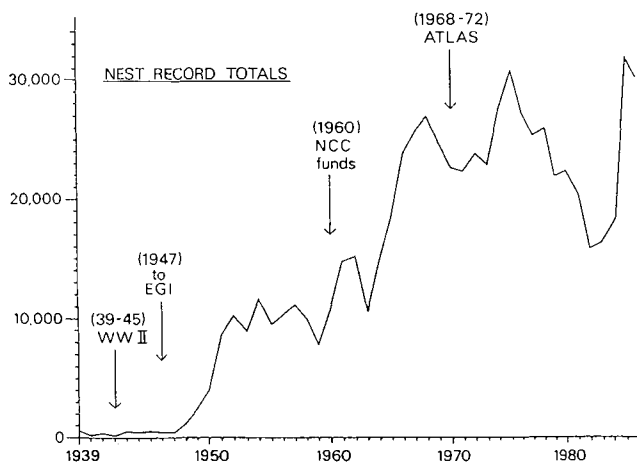


Nest Record News

A Newsletter prepared specially for supporters of the BTO's NEST RECORD SCHEME
No.3 June 1987

1986 - A DAMP BUT REWARDING SEASON

A very cold late winter, cool spring and wet summer in many parts did little to dampen the enthusiasm of nest recorders in 1986 - though many bird species were less happy about breeding conditions, as your fieldwork revealed. By the close of March 1987 30,003 cards, covering 173 species and ranging from just a single Osprey to 2,968 Blackbird nest histories, had been filed at BTO Headquarters. This represents a 5.6% reduction on the previous summer's record intake - yet still ranks as the third highest annual card total since the Scheme was instigated in 1939 (see figure). A huge vote of thanks is extended to all 592 individual contributors and 59 bird clubs, ringing groups, natural history societies and so on who helped - the largest band of nest finders yet to help. Fingers are firmly crossed that the early fair weather aids an enjoyable and productive season in 1987 - for nest recorders and birds alike.



UPS AND DOWNS FOR DIFFERENT SPECIES

Three main factors contributed towards the generally poor season for so many species in 1986; the poor quality of the natural winter larder, the severity of the late winter weather (notably the blanket snow cover and long run of frosts in February) and the cool wet spring that persisted through March to mid-June in many places.

Great, Blue and Coal Tits were extremely late egg laying - up to a month behind the normal date in places. Many clutches were started, then stopped, with desertions widespread. Co-ordinators of nestbox schemes countrywide reported from 20% to 70% fewer titmice reared in 1986 than the previous year.

Little, Long-eared and Tawny Owls all suffered poor breeding seasons, comments including 'lowest occupancy rate ever' (Inverness) and 'worst season to date' (Northumbria). Low rodent numbers and high mortality in the late spring contributed to the situation. Barn Owls reared some late broods but again it was a below average season. The small number of cards received for some overwintering residents like Goldcrest, Treecreeper and Long-tailed Tit reflected cold weather population losses.

It was a very patchy season for most diurnal raptors. Late laying Peregrine, Buzzard and Sparrowhawk all reared generally small broods where nesting was attempted. Site occupancy but lack of breeding evidence was widely reported. On the 'plus' side, Red Kites were reported by the RSPB as successfully rearing to fledging another record number of young, while 13 young Montagu's Harriers from at least seven pairs represents a substantial recovery from the absence of confirmed breeding pairs in 1974 and predicted loss from Britain. Late nesting Kestrel and Hobby also fared reasonably well.

The persistent rains of April and May had their impact on many birds. Early Dipper and Grey Wagtail nests were lost, as is often the case, but those better concealed second broods fared well in parts of Wales, Northern England and Scotland. Great Crested Grebe, Coot, Moorhen, Ringed Plover and Common Sandpiper were high on the list of those species whose nests were lost in the early rains.

The cold wet spring led to a two to three week delay in egg laying by several of the waders, including Lapwing and Redshank. In early June flocks of Dunlin, Ringed Plover and Lapwing were further indications of non-breeding and failure.

The sizzling hot temperatures of late June continued into July and came just in time to improve the success of late summer visitors like Swallow, Willow Warbler and some residents with second and subsequent broods. Pied Flycatcher exceeded their record 1985 output in places and made further range extensions in parts. It was very encouraging to see further indications of a recovery in the populations of Sand Martin and Whitethroat, while Redstart arrived in high numbers and reared large broods the length of Britain.

MANY MILESTONES PASSED

1986 saw milestones reached by a variety of species. The Scheme's first Scaup card was completed by A.D.K. Ramsay on the Outer Hebrides; the 10th Quail card by W.D. Allen in Shropshire (a good year for this scarce migrant); and the 100th Marsh Warbler nest history by E.G.I. student M.J. Kelsey, working in the remnant stronghold of this bird in Worcestershire. The Trust's holdings for three species reached the 1,000th card mark in 1986, the species and the respective observer concerned being Barn Owl covered by G. Shaw, Dumfries and Galloway, Little Ringed Plover by D. Garner, Cambridgeshire and Canada Goose by R.A. Frost, Derbyshire. At the top end of our league table the 10,000th Starling card was also completed by G. Shaw while the pleasure of filling in the 25,000th Dunnock nest history fell to the Rye Meads Ringing Group, Hertfordshire.

1986 CARD INTAKE - SAMPLE HIGHLIGHTS

Contributions from nest recorders ranged in size from just one to 789 cards in 1986. Again the vital core of the annual intake was provided by those recorders filling in a handful of cards in their garden, on their CBC farm or woodland plot, ringing site or favourite birdwatching place like the local marsh, gravel pit or sewage works. It is these contributions which enable the Trust to monitor with confidence breeding success both by habitat and region for a range of species.

Some members are able to devote more time to nest finding than others and those who sent in one hundred or more nest histories in 1986 are listed on the following pages. The list gives a broad indication of the geographical spread of records. The picture is quite encouraging with most regions represented. Batches of 500 or more cards for instance came from Bucks and Lincs in the south and east, Warwicks and Notts in the Midlands, Northumberland and Durham in the north of England, Grampian and Orkney in Scotland, and County Antrim in Northern Ireland. Patchily or poorly covered areas include Ireland (both the North and Republic), western parts of Scotland, central and north Wales, and a number of English counties including Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Cornwall, Dorset, Derbyshire, Kent, Leicestershire and Wiltshire.

W.D. Allen (Shrops) 208 cards including 1 Quail, 13 House Martin, 5 Yellowhammer; G.E. and G.K. Austin (Shrops) 182 cards including 18 Wood Warbler, 11 Reed Warbler; M.J. Austin (Suffolk) 125 cards including 21 Lapwing, 6 Whinchat; P. Baker (Cumbria) 138 cards including 46 Cormorant, 59 Swallow; R.E. Batty (Middx) 137 cards including 34 Blackbird, 7 House Sparrow; L.G. Baxter (Clwyd) 160 cards including 86 Black-headed Gull, 6 Dipper; P. Boyer (Western Isles) 173 cards including 41 Heron, 5 Dunlin; J.E.A. Brook and R.C. Cooke (Warks) 789 cards including 21 Oystercatcher, 217 Wood-pigeon, 10 Garden Warbler; R.H. Bucknall (Northumberland) 170 cards including 5 Kestrel, 17 Lapwing; I.D. Bullock (Gloucs) 242 cards including 76 Pied Flycatcher, 129 Blue Tit; Dr P.J.K. Burton, T.G. Holder, M. Hunt and D.A. Lees (Herts) 291 cards including 78 Kestrel, 5 Hobby, 11 Little Owl; R.F.E. Butler (Worcs) 105 cards including 18 Canada Goose, 8 Jackdaw; J. Callion (Cumbria) 240 cards including 8 Yellow Wagtail, 26 Sedge Warbler; J. Clark (Gwynedd) 165 cards including 24 Tufted Duck, 3 Ruddy Duck; G. Condell (Gloucs) 121 cards including 75 Pied Flycatcher, 36 Great Tit; J.E.S. Cooper and R.F. Sanderson (Sussex) 308 cards including 5 Tawny Owl, 109 Blue Tit; D. Cox and B. Hawes (Bucks) 517 cards including 173 Blackbird, 29 Robin, 23 Pied Wagtail; Dr S. Cox and Mr and Mrs J. Orth (Essex) 240 cards including 108 Little Tern, 109 Ringed Plover; A.V. Cross (Dyfed) 146 cards including 27 Buzzard, 86 Raven; J.K. Cross (Hants) 118 cards including 4 Tawny Owl, 13 Chaffinch; R.E. Danson (Lancs) 387 cards including 4 Shelduck, 152 Tree Sparrow; P.G. and S.G. Davis (Surrey) 197 cards including 12 Woodlark, 15 Linnet; M. Davison (Northumbria Ringing Group) 378 cards including 18 Meadow Pipit, 81 Pied Flycatcher; S.J. Denny (Suffolk) 275 cards including 13 Canada Goose, 145 Sandwich Tern; R.A. Denyer (Surrey) 119 cards including 5 Mandarin, 14 Stock Dove; C. du Feu (Notts) 104 cards including 12 Song Thrush, 22 Great Tit; R. Duncan (Grampian) 530 cards including 113 Skylark, 42 Linnet; M.R. Fletcher (MAFF, Surrey) 298 cards including 111 Starling, 104 Tree Sparrow; D. Fulton and T. Crossman (Shrops) 140 cards including 23 Wheatear, 10 Spotted Flycatcher; D.J. Garner (Cambs) 134 cards including 8 Long-eared Owl, 9 Reed Warbler; H.R. Hammacott (Bristol Naturalists' Society)

238 cards including 11 Whitethroat, 45 Willow Warbler; D.G. Harris, R.G. Short, M. Short and T. Kidd (London) 115 cards including 16 Spotted Flycatcher, 9 Greenfinch; P. Hawkey The National Trust (Northumberland) 602 cards including 121 Kittiwake, 118 Arctic Tern; P., I., and D. Hildred (Lincs) 225 cards including 7 Whitethroat, 36 House Sparrow; D.R.E. Hird (Kent) 119 cards including 56 Blackbird, 21 Linnet; D. Holloway (Cumbria) 283 cards including 32 Wheatear, 32 Chaffinch; P. Holness (Norfolk) 322 cards including 13 Skylark, 154 Swallow; B.R. Hughes (Surrey) 103 cards including 12 Pied Wagtail, 11 Robin; K. Hughes and Rev. J. Dagger (Hants) 195 cards including 14 Stonechat, 53 Dartford Warbler; J. Kieser (Hants) 295 cards including 24 Willow Warbler, 20 Yellowhammer; T. Kutchel (West Yorks) 139 cards including 25 Heron, 20 Blue Tit; P. Leader Rye Meads Ringing Group (Herts) 313 cards including 54 Common Tern, 21 Sedge Warbler; D.E. Lewis (Gwent) 162 cards including 9 Little Owl, 11 Chaffinch; J.M.S. Lewis and S.J. Roberts (Gwent) 147 cards including 9 Buzzard, 30 Dipper; J.V. Lloyd (Dyfed) 165 cards including 14 Blackbird, 15 Rook; R.J. Louch and D. Tompson (Oxford) 266 cards including 12 Grasshopper Warbler, 20 Whitethroat, 13 Chiffchaff; B. Lynch (Tay Ringing Group) 228 cards including 34 Swallow, 16 Sedge Warbler; Dr A.D.L. Lyszkowski (London) 162 cards including 10 Great Crested Grebe, 23 Sand Martin; B.A. Madden (Dublin) 148 cards including 74 Swallow, 20 Jackdaw; C.F. Mapletoft Birklands Ringing Group (Notts) 521 cards including 30 Dunnock, 136 Blackbird, 48 Chaffinch; P. Maynard and J. Baldwin (Hants) 179 cards including 9 Sparrowhawk, 14 Willow Warbler; I. McAlpine (Cheshire) 179 cards including 10 Oystercatcher, 33 Blackbird; M.O. Meadows (Essex) 253 cards including 23 Magpie, 60 Rook; W.R. Meek (South Humberside) 228 cards including 44 Song Thrush, 11 Blackcap; G. and D. Moss (Gwynedd) 112 cards including 8 Barn Owl, 53 Pied Flycatcher; R. Murray (Moray) 102 cards including 11 Woodpigeon, 11 Chaffinch; Northumbria Ringing Group 211 cards including 18 Redstart, 54 Blue Tit; A. Old (Cumbria) 102 cards including 58 Pied Flycatcher, 14 Great Tit; Orkney Ringing Group (E.R. Meek) 545 cards including 57 Red-throated Diver, 155 Black Guillemot, 35 Hooded Crow; P. Page and A. Robinson (Devon) 112 cards including 7 Redstart, 60 Pied Flycatcher; R.H. Peart (Dorset) 174 cards including 49 Blackbird, 13 Greenfinch; G.D.A. Platt (Co Antrim) 560 cards including 16 Buzzard, 39 Lapwing, 40 Raven; R. Proctor (Elgin) 134 cards including 10 Heron, 55 Common Gull; W. Proctor and M. Mulligan (Warks) 502 cards including 57 House Martin, 11 Blackbird, 24 Starling; A.D.K. Ramsay, D. Butterfield and R. Graham (Ross-shire) 605 cards including 44 Shag, 44 Buzzard, 47 Guillemot; J. Richardson (Durham) 621 cards including 128 Black-headed Gull, 22 Feral Pigeon, 76 Song Thrush; S.J.R. Rumsey Rye Bay Ringing Group (Sussex) 219 cards including 93 Reed Warbler, 16 Carrion Crow; G. Shaw (Dumfries and Galloway) 101 cards including 20 Shag, 5 Barn Owl; K.B. Shepherd and P. Ball (NCC Moorland Bird Survey) 184 cards including 46 Oystercatcher, 5 Dunlin; C. Smith (Mid-Lincs Ringing Group) 554 cards including 93 Blackbird, 126 Rook; C. Snook (Devon) 100 cards including 22 Pied Flycatcher, 30 Blue Tit; I.M. Spence (Lancs) 120 cards including 38 Swallow, 17 Great Tit; R. Squires (Powys) 129 cards including 7 Redstart, 77 Pied Flycatcher; R. Stevens of the Trent Valley Birdwatchers (Notts) 101 cards including 35 Coot, 4 Nightjar; R.L. Swann Glenurquhart Bird Club (Inverness) 190 cards including 19 Buzzard, 17 Pied Wagtail, 8 Wheatear; C.J. Tyas (Shrops) 166 cards including 6 Hen Harrier, 11 Pied Flycatcher; Dr S.J. Tyler and S.J. Ormerod (Gwent) 261 cards including 56 Grey Wagtail, 175 Dipper; Dr L.L.J. Vick (Edinburgh) 140 cards including 8 Whinchat, 60 Wheatear; Mrs P. Webb (Derby) 230 cards including 67 Blue Tit, 8 Magpie; D. Warden (Bristol) 167 cards including 36 Kittiwake, 62 Reed Warbler; E. Wood (Cleveland) 102 cards including 4 Collared Dove, 21 Great Tit; I. Wolfenden (Lancs) 140 cards including 32 Skylark, 15 Whitethroat; C. Young (Caithness) 124 cards including 7 Eider, 6 Greenfinch.

SOME INTERESTING TOTALS

The list of card totals (pages 5-8) shows how the marked improvement in the card intake for many species in 1985 was to a large extent maintained last season. Nevertheless of the 82 identified 'Target Species' for which extra records were identified as deserving extra attention (see p.8) 53 were down in numbers and only 29 up on last season. These 82 species still merit extra attention this current season where time allows.

TOTALS FOR NEST RECORD SCHEME FROM PRE 1985 to 1986

SPECIES	Pre-85	1985	1986	TOTAL
Red-throated Diver +	1,089	88	133	1,310
Black-throated Diver +	127	8	2	137
Little Grebe *	1,227	66	48	1,341
Great Crested Grebe *	1,563	113	112	1,788
Slavonian Grebe +	118	6	5	129
Black-necked Grebe +	12	-	-	12
Fulmar	1,557	180	298	2,035
Manx Shearwater	51	-	-	51
Storm Petrel	19	-	11	30
Leach's Petrel +	2	-	-	2
Gannet	18	-	-	18
Cormorant *	806	53	65	924
Shag *	1,972	132	185	2,289
Bittern +	13	4	-	17
Little Bittern +	1	-	-	1
Grey Heron *	1,739	150	223	2,112
Mute Swan *	2,430	131	123	2,684
Greylag Goose +	182	37	112	331
Canada Goose	839	86	116	1,041
Egyptian Goose	2	-	-	2
Shelduck	167	12	12	191
Mandarin	79	26	36	141
Wigeon	91	-	10	101
Gadwall	40	1	2	43
Teal	150	3	6	159
Mallard *	5,046	254	247	5,547
Pintail +	6	1	-	7
Garganey +	6	1	-	7
Shoveler	81	5	4	90
Pochard	92	9	6	107
Tufted Duck	562	49	63	674
Scaup +	-	-	1	1
Eider	1,002	103	223	1,328
Common Scoter +	29	-	-	29
Goldeneye +	8	3	3	14
Red-breasted Merganser	190	5	9	204
Goosander	106	14	4	124
Ruddy Duck	8	5	4	17
Honey Buzzard +	8	-	-	8
Red Kite +	12	1	1	14
Marsh Harrier +	5	-	-	5
Hen Harrier +	398	50	51	499
Montagu's Harrier +	45	-	-	45
Goshawk +	36	17	17	70
Sparrowhawk *	2,114	181	212	2,507
Buzzard *	2,180	211	206	2,597
Golden Eagle +	260	29	13	302
Osprey +	23	1	1	25
Kestrel *	3,024	265	228	3,517
Merlin +	686	57	96	839

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>Pre-85</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1986</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Hobby +	257	26	32	315
Peregrine +	748	79	107	934
Red Grouse	394	16	31	441
Ptarmigan	78	3	3	84
Black Grouse	30	2	-	32
Capercaillie	60	-	1	61
Red-legged Partridge *	342	16	12	370
Grey Partridge *	681	13	19	713
Quail +	9	-	1	10
Pheasant *	1,527	67	52	1,646
Lady Amherst's Pheasant	1	-	-	1
Water Rail	52	8	1	61
Corncrake +	25	-	-	25
Moorhen *	14,601	478	439	15,518
Coot *	7,366	442	415	8,223
Oystercatcher *	6,901	490	384	7,775
Avocet +	3	-	-	3
Stone-curlew +	366	3	-	369
Little Ringed Plover +	924	52	37	1,013
Ringed Plover *	4,080	407	395	4,882
Kentish Plover +	19	-	-	19
Dotterel +	110	4	7	121
Golden Plover	554	20	33	607
Lapwing *	13,388	563	397	14,348
Temminck's Stint +	1	-	-	1
Purple Sandpiper +	3	-	-	3
Dunlin	412	11	31	454
Snipe *	1,093	23	20	1,136
Woodcock	456	15	13	484
Black-tailed Godwit +	6	-	-	6
Whimbrel +	42	-	-	42
Curlew *	1,697	75	88	1,860
Redshank *	1,537	91	41	1,669
Greenshank +	116	8	1	125
Wood Sandpiper +	2	-	-	2
Common Sandpiper *	862	48	44	954
Red-necked Phalarope +	32	-	-	32
Arctic Skua	185	5	19	209
Great Skua	256	6	13	275
Black-headed Gull *	2,820	249	144	3,213
Mediterranean Gull +	2	-	-	2
Common Gull *	1,594	60	97	1,751
Lesser Black-backed Gull	680	10	4	694
Herring Gull	3,235	148	89	3,472
Great Black-backed Gull	744	7	13	764
Kittiwake	1,387	108	245	1,740
Sandwich Tern	138	-	146	284
Roseate Tern +	98	13	5	116
Common Tern *	2,175	130	273	2,578
Arctic Tern *	979	103	274	1,356
Little Tern +	2,171	260	348	2,779
Guillemot	515	68	104	687
Razorbill	283	56	36	375
Black Guillemot	163	192	245	600
Puffin	79	68	18	165
Rock Dove	101	14	21	136
Feral Pigeon	741	38	52	831
Stock Dove *	3,325	226	156	3,707
Woodpigeon *	14,825	614	688	16,127
Collared Dove *	1,595	158	160	1,913
Turtle Dove *	1,552	41	27	1,620
Ring-necked Parakeet	1	-	-	1

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>Pre-85</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1986</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Cuckoo *	1,245	164	40	1,449
Barn Owl +	856	92	108	1,056
Snowy Owl +	1	-	-	1
Little Owl *	958	52	59	1,069
Tawny Owl *	3,185	335	162	3,682
Long-eared Owl	369	24	17	410
Short-eared Owl	144	19	20	183
Nightjar	497	30	15	542
Swift *	756	31	17	804
Kingfisher +	334	16	19	369
Hoopoe +	1	-	-	1
Wryneck +	11	-	-	11
Green Woodpecker	205	8	11	224
Great Spotted Woodpecker	525	35	52	612
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	101	4	9	114
Woodlark +	316	9	46	371
Skylark *	4,866	231	293	5,390
Sand Martin	648	9	27	684
Swallow *	25,804	1,258	1,375	28,437
House Martin *	2,688	211	230	3,129
Tree Pipit	1,010	52	61	1,123
Meadow Pipit *	5,941	394	326	6,661
Rock Pipit	415	16	19	450
Yellow Wagtail	740	18	22	780
Grey Wagtail	2,765	182	199	3,146
Pied Wagtail	5,450	249	253	5,952
Dipper	4,029	440	560	5,029
Wren *	9,638	373	262	10,273
Dunnock *	23,912	675	530	25,117
Robin *	13,578	629	457	14,664
Nightingale	321	11	10	342
Bluethroat +	1	-	-	1
Black Redstart +	108	7	4	119
Redstart *	1,938	171	183	2,292
Whinchat *	1,133	97	45	1,275
Stonechat *	1,654	31	40	1,725
Wheatear *	1,820	213	237	2,270
Ring Ouzel *	979	55	29	1,063
Blackbird *	98,256	3,254	2,968	104,478
Fieldfare +	1	-	2	3
Song Thrush *	60,345	1,267	1,105	62,717
Redwing +	78	7	3	88
Mistle Thrush *	5,193	227	182	5,602
Cetti's Warbler +	16	1	-	17
Grasshopper Warbler	232	14	12	258
Savi's Warbler +	2	-	-	2
Sedge Warbler *	2,916	121	146	3,183
Marsh Warbler +	83	16	7	106
Reed Warbler *	7,232	230	389	7,851
Dartford Warbler +	227	45	55	327
Lesser Whitethroat	584	29	16	629
Whitethroat *	4,300	89	137	4,526
Garden Warbler *	1,030	64	67	1,161
Blackcap *	1,846	150	96	2,092
Wood Warbler	1,202	81	93	1,376
Chiffchaff *	1,340	78	52	1,470
Willow Warbler *	8,411	600	395	9,406
Goldcrest *	570	26	6	602
Firecrest +	7	1	-	8
Spotted Flycatcher *	6,975	276	357	7,608
Pied Flycatcher	11,439	1,027	1,395	13,861
Bearded Tit +	46	6	1	53
Long-tailed Tit *	2,962	123	74	3,159
Marsh Tit	819	35	24	878

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>Pre-85</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1986</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Willow Tit	310	12	6	328
Crested Tit +	121	14	10	145
Coal Tit *	3,169	139	109	3,417
Blue Tit *	33,652	2,597	2,280	38,529
Great Tit *	21,519	1,959	1,395	24,873
Nuthatch *	1,100	113	116	1,329
Treecreeper *	1,435	89	35	1,559
Short-toed Treecreeper +	1	-	-	1
Golden Oriole +	-	1	-	1
Red-backed Shrike +	251	-	-	251
Jay *	1,031	39	35	1,105
Magpie *	3,741	267	281	4,289
Chough +	288	41	19	348
Jackdaw *	3,179	226	168	3,573
Rook *	2,707	263	490	3,460
Carriion Crow *	3,615	176	217	4,008
Hooded Crow	548	45	114	707
Raven *	1,542	82	192	1,816
Starling *	8,811	927	368	10,106
House Sparrow *	9,234	192	189	9,615
Tree Sparrow *	11,373	543	266	12,182
Chaffinch *	14,392	756	652	15,800
Serin +	-	1	-	1
Greenfinch *	10,632	266	312	11,210
Goldfinch *	2,267	56	33	2,356
Siskin	34	6	5	45
Linnet *	20,708	572	344	21,624
Twite	719	21	14	754
Redpoll *	1,091	49	28	1,168
Common Crossbill +	80	8	-	88
Parrot Crossbill +	3	1	-	4
Scarlet Rosefinch +	1	-	-	1
Bullfinch *	4,364	109	78	4,551
Hawfinch	106	2	3	111
Snow Bunting +	10	-	-	10
Yellowhammer *	5,040	165	132	5,337
Cirl Bunting +	55	-	2	57
Reed Bunting *	6,023	125	116	6,264
Corn Bunting *	308	121	6	435
<u>TOTALS</u>	<u>PRE-85</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1986</u>	<u>GRAND TOTAL</u>
	637,154	31,782	30,003	698,939

- + Bird species protected under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act
- * TARGET SPECIES - deserving special attention. These species fall into two categories:
- 1) a range of 'indicator' species which the BTO is able to use to assess variations in breeding performance between years, regions and habitats.
 - 2) species for whom the sample of nest histories is nearing the point where sufficiently large numbers are housed at Beech Grove to merit a more detailed analysis and publication of a paper on the breeding biology of the bird.

All cards are treasured for the range of "Target" species.

BIRD SPECIES PROTECTED UNDER THE WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981

A reminder that the species listed below are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. If you wish to consider visiting the nests of any of these species do write to the BTO for an application form to be licensed by the Nature Conservancy Council first. No nest of the species listed may be visited without prior approval.

GENERAL LIST OF FIRST SCHEDULE SPECIES

Crossbill (all species)	Owl, Barn
Diver, Red-throated (except in Fetlar, North and South Uist and south of the Great Glen)	Plover, Little Ringed
Greenshank	Quail, European
Kingfisher	Redstart, Black
	Tit, Crested
	Whimbrel (Shetland only)

SPECIAL LIST OF FIRST SCHEDULE SPECIES

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

N.B. A rarer breeding species than these may be added to the Special List without warning so, if you find one, contact the Nest Record Officer for clearance.

CODE OF CONDUCT

It is a great privilege to inspect nests and follow the fortunes of their contents through to fledging - a thrill and joy experienced by all nest recorders. We should never forget, though, just how sensitive a time in the annual cycle this period represents. If you have any queries on when or where to inspect what nests do consult The Nest Record Scheme (BTO Guide No. 12) by Henry Mayer-Gross and adhere closely to the Code of Conduct described. Safety of the bird and the contents of its nest must come first at all times.

ANALYSES OF CARDS UNDERWAY

It is pleasing to see how the historical bank of cards at Beech Grove is continuing to be put to good use. The premier publication over the past year which incorporated material collected by nest recorders was undoubtedly the comprehensive volume Farming and Birds. Co-authors Mike Shrubbs and Raymond O'Connor drew on the findings from analyses of over 80,000 nest record cards. The book was published by Cambridge University Press and copies can be purchased direct from the BTO - price £18.50 postage paid.

At the same time the card holdings of a wide variety of species have attracted the attention of both amateur and professional ornithologists. These include - Little Grebe (Mrs G. Moss, Gwynedd), Mandarin (A.K. Davies, Surrey), Lapwing (M. Shrubbs, Powys), Little Owl (M. Green, Derbys.), Tawny Owl (P. Johnson, South Yorks), Cuckoo (Dr N.B. Davies and M. de L. Brooke, Cambridge), Yellow Wagtail (J. Callion, Cumbria), Whinchat (M. Garnett, Gwynedd), Nuthatch (M. Hodgson, Northumberland), Twite (D.C. Jardine, West Lothian). It is hoped that more birdwatchers who have a particular interest in the breeding biology of a species or group of birds will come forward and help with the analysis of material.

Internally at Beech Grove the past year has seen the continuation of a number of analyses including aspects of the nesting habits and breeding performance of a range of birds including Heron, Rook, Nightjar, the woodpeckers, owls, Woodlark and Grasshopper Warbler. Meanwhile information extracted from cards was supplied to a number of organizations to help with either conservation or management problems. Specific requests came from the Nature Conservancy Council (Snipe laying seasons and Nightjar breeding performance); The RSPB (Hen Harrier and Cirl Bunting breeding performance) and the Game Conservancy (Pheasant and Jay breeding ecology).

TECHNICAL REVIEW GROUP

Over the past year a small group of technically minded nest record enthusiasts have met at Beech Grove under the chairmanship of Dr Ian Newton. The group's remit has been to review the working procedure of the Scheme, to scrutinize methodology and make recommendations for future development. They have tackled a wide range of topics including possible improvements to card design, the use of colony sheets, the relative value of multi-visit cards compared with those with just single entries and the scope for future research and expansion of the Scheme's monitoring role. Changes based upon recommendations made by the group are likely to come into operation over the next two years.

SENDING IN YOUR 1987 CONTRIBUTION

Several points are well worth bearing in mind when planning your fieldwork and before finally sending on your batch of cards to the BTO for incorporation into the National Collection.

1. Seeing the season through. As spring turns to summer and the vegetation thickens and holidays are taken, so the number of days spent nest finding by many observers dwindles (see BTO News No. 148). Do remember that some multi-brooded species like certain of the grebes, hirundines, finches and buntings may have young in the nest well into September, or even later. Sparrows, doves and others may rear young in every month of the year when conditions are favourable. Aim to get as full a coverage of the nesting season as your time allows.
2. Sending on cards. Please send all completed cards in one batch as soon as your fieldwork finishes - by the end of the year if possible and by 1st March 1988 at the very latest. Early batches of cards together with comments on the way your season has gone can be included in articles prepared by staff for the Trust's bulletin BTO News. Some contributors like to take the opportunity of passing large batches of completed cards to a BTO staff member at the Trust's Annual or Ringing Conference held at Swanwick in Derbyshire or by popping in to Beech Grove to collect fresh recording materials at the same time. This helps ensure a safe passage of cards and saves on postage costs.
3. Successive nesting attempts. Make sure that all successive nesting attempts by a known pair of birds are clearly marked as such and the cards clipped together.
4. Duplicate Cuckoo cards. Please complete a duplicate card for any Cuckoo nest found so that cards can be filed under Cuckoo as well as the foster parent.
5. Completing a Summary Sheet. Complete and attach a summary sheet to all batches of cards. It is a great help if all cards are arranged in Vooous order, that the individual species' totals tally exactly with those on your master sheet, and that your name is clearly marked and address given in full.
6. Safe arrival of cards. It is pleasing to report that all batches of cards reached Beech Grove in one piece in 1986 - good news after several spilt offerings relayed by the Post Office in 1985. Most contributors heeded the suggestion of first binding large samples with rubber bands or string before placing them in a polythene bag and paper wrapping with a boldly marked address label. Safety first with all original and often irreplaceable material!
7. Group co-ordinators. It was also very encouraging to see how more members of bird clubs, ringing groups, observatories and natural history societies have taken on the role of 'Nest Records Co-ordinator' within their groups. A single large batch of cards and accurate summary sheet helps release valuable research time at Headquarters for analysing your raw data.

RECENT STAFF CHANGES

The past year has seen a number of changes involving those staff at Beech Grove involved with the Nest Record Scheme. In February Mrs Mercedes Tourle (nee Gibbs) left on maternity leave. She is now the proud mother of a daughter Zoe who was hatched in May. Mercedes was largely responsible for relaying recording materials to contributors over the last three years. Her role has currently been taken over by David Pearman who, together with the current Manpower Services Commission Team, comprising Paula Adams, Linda Dawson, Jayne Drage, Jennifer Goodman and Jeanette Hocking, helped to calculate the 1986 card totals incorporated in this Newsletter.

Meanwhile the current Nest Records Officer, David Glue, relinquished the post in May and resumed a research role to help generate more publications from your hard won fieldwork. The task of running the day-to-day activities of the Scheme now lie with Miss Sara Cross who, together with David Pearman, will be your contacts at Headquarters. The signs are that at last the Nest Record Scheme is shedding its Cinderella image as one of the Trust's smaller surveys and is assuming its rightful status as the largest and most advanced scheme of its kind in the world.

INCREASING SUPPORT IN 1987

Do please put us in touch with any careful nest finder who you consider could blossom into a useful contributor to the National Scheme under your guidance. If at any point in the season you run out of nest record instructions, cards, summary sheets or code of conduct, please drop a line to:

Miss Sara Cross (Nest Records Officer), or David Pearman (Assistant to Nest Records Officer), British Trust for Ornithology, Beech Grove, Tring, Herts, HP23 5NR.

DAVID GLUE

May 1987

BRITISH TRUST FOR ORNITHOLOGY, BEECH GROVE, TRING, HERTS, HP23 5NR

Tel: Tring (044 282) 3461