

Ringed Plover 1984

Title

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Description and Summary Results

Note: This survey was run in conjunction with the Little Ringed Plover survey but as a separate project.

The first national census of Ringed Plovers *Charadrius hiaticula* breeding in Great Britain and Northern Ireland was undertaken by the BTO in 1973-1974, estimating a minimum total of 5700 pairs although coverage was poor in several parts of Scotland known to hold quite large numbers. Subsequently detailed and extensive survey work was carried out by the Wader Study Group and the Nature Conservancy Council in the Western Isles, and similar intensive work in Orkney and Shetland, had revealed much larger numbers than had been estimated. In addition a distinct spread inland in England had been reported in county bird reports, but some coastal observers were commenting upon substantial local decreases, usually in response to increased leisure activities. Thus, not only were better counts being made, but there was some evidence that population and distributional changes had occurred since the previous census. To establish a baseline for future study and to examine possible reasons for these changes, a second census was carried out in summer 1984.

Within England, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Channel Islands virtually all suitable areas were visited. In the Isle of Man coverage was good but some estimates, based on the 1973 data, had to be made. In Scotland coverage in counties and islands north and west of a line from the Firth of Clyde to Banff was patchy, and for parts of this region, it was necessary to make estimates in areas of apparently suitable habitat using sample counts and past data. In England a total of 2303 territorial pairs was recorded and a further 86 pairs estimated of which 405 (17% cf 9% in 1973-1974) were inland (loosely defined as at least half a mile (ca 1km) or one field from the shoreline). This represents an overall increase of about 20% -- nearly 125% inland and 8% along the coast.

An estimated 224 pairs bred in Wales, representing a 21% increase on 1973-1974, and with the considerable majority on the coast. Observers in Northern Ireland located a total of 134 pairs, but direct comparisons with 1973-1974 are difficult because of larger differences in coverage.

In Scotland 5796 pairs were estimated to be present in 1984. This is 2228 more than in 1973-1974 but problems of coverage mean it is not possible to determine the overall population trends.

Overall therefore 7534 pairs were counted with a further 1083 pairs estimated (total 8617 territorial pairs) of which just over two-thirds were in Scotland.

The majority of birds were found on open coastal stretches although just over a quarter were found in the Western Isles, most of them on the dry machair.

Methods of Data Capture

The census used the same methods as in 1973-1974. Counts of territorial birds, usually pairs, were made between late April and early July 1984 at all known sites, but no attempt was made to prove that apparently territorial birds were actually breeding: this minimized disturbance and was much less time-consuming than looking for nests or young. Broad details of the habitat occupied were also requested, but because the precise nesting or feeding habitat was not sought, this can only provide a guide to the critical features. The comprehensive survey work carried out on the Uists and Benbecula in 1983 was incorporated into this census.

Purpose of Data Capture

To obtain an up-to-date estimate of the numbers and habitat preferences of breeding Ringed Plover in the UK.

Geographic Coverage

All of the UK.

Temporal Coverage

The breeding season of 1984 with counts made between late April and early July.

Other Interested parties

The survey was organised, run and funded by the BTO.

Organiser(s)

Tony Prater as a volunteer.

Current Staff Contact

archives@bto.org

Publications

The main report of the survey is:

Prater, A.J. 1989. Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* breeding population of the United Kingdom in 1984. *Bird Study* 36: 154-160.

The survey was also noticed in *BTO News* numbers 125, 129, 131, 137 and 153.

Available from NBN?

No.

Computer data -- location

None.

Computer data -- outline contents

N/A.

Computer data -- description of contents

N/A.

Information held in BTO Archives

1 Transfer Case containing all the data cards. All have been scanned.

Notes on Access and Use**Other information****Notes on Survey Design****Specific Issues for Analysis**