Report on rare birds in Great Britain in 1991

Michael J. Rogers and the Rarities Committee with comments by Colin Bradshaw and Peter Clement

This is the thirty-fourth annual report of the Rarities Committee, and with its publication Carl Zeiss—Germany has reached the tenth anniversary of sponsorship of the Committee's work. To celebrate a decade of this much appreciated co-operation, an article about the Committee and Carl Zeiss—Germany will appear in the October issue of the magazine Bird Watching.

Rarities Committee membership is listed on the inside front cover of British Birds each month, and on the back of the title page in each volume. Points of interest arising mainly from the Committee’s annual meeting in April 1992 have been published already in ‘Rarities Committee news and announcements’ (Brit. Birds 85: 330-333), which includes information on the Committee’s new record form, fact sheet and list of species considered, copies of which may be obtained from the Secretary, Michael J. Rogers, whose address is at the end of this report (please enclose a suitable SAE). All records of any species on the Committee’s list should be sent to the Secretary or, in the case of a trapped and ringed rarity, to the BTO Ringing Office, both preferably via the appropriate county or regional recorder.

1991 and earlier years

The Committee has already processed 540 records for 1991, 78% of which have been accepted. Delays in assessment can be caused by late submission (by the observer or by the county recorder), problems concerning the identification which require detailed investigation, or the sheer workload of the Committee. A total of 233 records for 1990 and earlier years is still outstanding: 159 of these are under active consideration, whilst the remaining 74 are awaiting the results of further enquiries. The Rarities Committee is currently engaged upon reviews of the records of American Golden Plover Pluvialis...
dominica and Pacific Golden Plover P. fuka, Citrine Wagtail Motacilla citreola, Olivaceous Warbler Hippolais pallida and Arctic Warbler Phylloscopus borealis.

Of most interest to readers are those records which involve potential ‘firsts’ for Britain and Ireland or birds which have not been recorded here since before 1958 and are thus candidates for upgrading from Category B to Category A of the British and Irish list. Such records in England, Scotland and Wales are considered, in turn, by the British Birds Rarities Committee and by the British Ornithologists’ Union Records Committee. This report contains five such highlights: Soft-plumaged Petrel Pterodroma mollis/P. (m.) madeira/P. (m.) feae at Porthgwarra, Cornwall, in August 1989, Barrow’s Goldeneye Bucephala islandica at Irvine, Strathclyde, in November-December 1979, Ancient Murrelet Synthliboramphus antiquus on Lundy, Devon, in May-June 1990 and April-June 1991, Tree Swallow Tachycineta bicolor on St Mary’s, Isles of Scilly, in June 1990, and Yellow-throated Vireo Vireo flavifrons at Kenidjack, Cornwall, in September 1990, all of which are new to Britain and Ireland. Each of the five species was or will be added to Category A of the British and Irish list (the Barrow’s Goldeneye being upgraded from Category D) when published in the BOUC’s Sixteenth and Seventeenth Reports (Ibis 134: 211-214; Ibis in press).

Those pre-1991 records with which the BBRC is currently involved concern ‘Giant Petrel’ Macronectes halli/M. giganteus, White-chinned Petrel Procellaria aequinoctialis, Madeiran Petrel Oceanodroma castro, Matsudaaira’s Petrel O. matsu­dairae, South Polar Skua Stercorarius maccormicki, White-cheeked Tern Sterna repressa, Least Tern S. (albifrons) antillanum, and Blyth’s Pipit Anthus godlewskii. Excluding very old records which are under reconsideration, those pre-1991 records being investigated by the BOUC concern Yellow-nosed Albatross Diomedea chlororhynchos, Double-crested Cormorant Phalacrocorax auritus, Falcated Duck Anas falcata, Marbled Duck Marmaronetta angustirostris, White-headed Duck Oxyura leucocephala, Mourning Dove Zenaida macroura, Mottled Swift Apus aequinoctialis, Eastern Phoebe Sayornis phoebe, Cedar Waxwing Bombycilla cedrorum, Northern Mockingbird Mimus polyglottos, Blue Rock Thrush Monticola solitarius, Spectacled Warbler Sylvia conspicillata, Two-barred Greenish Warbler Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus, White-cheeked Starling Sturnus cineraceus, Pallas’s Rosefinch Carpodacus roseus, Lark Sparrow Chondestes grammacus, Lazuli Bunting Passerina amoen, Painted Bunting P. ciris, Yellow-headed Blackbird Xanthocephalus xantho­cephalus and Brown-headed Cowbird Molothrus ater. (Records considered by the BBRC and subsequently passed to the BOUC have not necessarily been accepted by the Rarities Committee.)

Acknowledgments
We wish to thank most sincerely all observers and county and regional recorders, bird observatory wardens and reserve wardens and their committees for their continued co-operation, upon which the day-to-day work of the Rarities Committee and this report’s accuracy and completeness are entirely dependent. We are grateful also to the Irish Rare Birds Committee and its Secretary, Patrick Smiddy, for permission to include in the report all accepted records of rare birds in Ireland and for supplying the details which enable us to provide a complete review of all rare-bird records and running totals of all rare species in the geographical unit of Britain and Ireland.

In addition, we are indebted to many individuals and organisations for assistance during the past year. For an amazing fifteenth consecutive year, Mike Rogers has carried out the enormous task of compiling the report. The species comments have been written jointly by Dr Colin Brad-
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shaw (non-passerines) and Peter Clement (passerines), and the running totals for each species have been compiled by Peter Fraser and Dr John Ryan. The Seabirds Advisory Panel, whose members are Peter Colston, Bill Curtis, Jim Enticott, Steve Madge and Tony Marr, continue to provide the Committee with specialist advice. The BTO, English Nature, the Countryside Council for Wales, Scottish Natural Heritage, the Rare Breeding Birds Panel, the RSPB and the British Museum (Natural History), Tring, have liaised over various matters.

The Committee continues to encourage the submission of photographs and transparencies with rarity records, though not as substitutes for the written record, and thanks all photographers who have sent pictures of rarities, a selection of which enhances this report. Next month's issue of British Birds will feature 'The Carl Zeiss Award', which will be presented to the photographer who has supplied to the Rarities Committee 'the most helpful, interesting and instructive' photograph or transparency of a rarity, taken in the field in Britain (see Brit. Birds 84: 589 for the full rules). The Committee is grateful also to those observers who included drawings of rarities in their record submissions; some of these are included in this report.

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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 1990 report (84: 449-505). The following points show the basis on which the list has been compiled.

(i) 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 or tape-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) up to three in number, in alphabetical order.

(ii) In general, this report is confined to records which are regarded as certain, and 'probables' are not included. In the case of the very similar Long-billed Limnodromus scolopaceus and Short-billed Dowitchers L. griseus, however, we are continuing to publish indeterminate records, and this also applies to those of pratincoles Glareola, albatrosses Diomedea and frigatebirds Fregata.

(iii) The sequence of species, English names and specific nomenclature follow The 'British Birds' List of Birds of the Western Palearctic (1984). Any sight records of subspecies (including those of birds trapped and released) are normally referred to as 'showing the characters' of the race concerned.

(iv) The three numbers in brackets after each species' name refer respectively to the total number of individuals recorded in Britain and Ireland (excluding those 'At sea') (1) to the end of 1957, (2) for the period since the formation of the Rarities Committee in 1958, but excluding (3) 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 totals), or 'the same' when the evidence is certain or overwhelming. An identical approach is applied to records of the same species recurring at the same locality after a lapse of time, including those which 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.

(v) The world breeding range is given in brackets at the beginning of each species comment.
White-billed Diver *Gavia adamsii* (18, 120, 10)


**Lothian** Gosford Bay, Aberlady and Gullane Bay area: at least one first-summer, 31st July to September; two first-somers, at least 25th-30th August (A. Brown, P. Ford, N. Hunter *et al.*).

**Orkney** Burray, first-winter, 9th-22nd February (M. Gray *et al.*).

**Shetland** Whalsay, adult, since 1990 *(Brit. Birds* 84: 452) to 9th April (per D. Suddaby). Bluemull Sound, juvenile, 13th January (M. Heubeek, D. Suddaby *et al.*). West Burrafirth, adult, 7th-9th February (P. M. Ellis, D. Suddaby *et al.*). Holm of Heogland, Unst, adult, 19th November (M. Heubeek, M. Mellor, R. J. Tulloch).

**Stromness**, 20th February (M. Gray).

**Western Isles** Rubha Ardvale, South Uist, first-summer, 14th June (T. J. Barker, R. S. Slack).

(Atlantic Russia eastwards to Arctic Canada) One of the better years for this species, with the long-staying Gwynedd bird filling a hole on many lists that did not stretch back to the 1981 Hartlepool bird. The Whalsay individual failed to return for what would have been its fourteenth successive winter.

Black-browed Albatross *Diomedea melanophris* (2, 25, 0)

**Shetland** Hermaness, Unst, individual last recorded 10th June 1990 *(Brit. Birds* 84: 452), 23rd March to 13th April, intermittently to 4th June (per D. Suddaby).

**1990 Dyfed** Skokholm, 19th August (G. Thompson).

(Southern Oceans) A record from sea area Viking in 1989 was just outside British waters and has been passed to the Norwegian rarities committee. The Hermaness bird once more returned, albeit sporadically. It has been recorded since 1972, with the exception of 1988-89. Records from Norway suggest, however, that on at least two occasions in the last five years another albatross has been within a few hundred kilometres of this lonely bachelor or spinster.

Soft-plumaged Petrel *Pterodroma mollis* (0, 1, 0)

**1989 Cornwall** Porthgwarra, 12th August (P. A. Flint, D. J. W. Walker); 13th (B. R. Field, P. Harrison *et al.*); 14th (T. M. Blackburn, N. J. Hallam, I. Lewington *et al.*).

(Atlantic south from Madeira, southern Pacific and Indian Oceans) This new species for the British list was seen on three successive days, allowing one of the few ‘twitches’ for a seabird ever (because of the circuitous feeding movements of other species off Porthgwarra, the Committee feels that these records probably relate to the same individual). *(British Birds,* following Voous 1977, *List of Recent Holarctic Bird Species*, recognises only one species, regarding *madeira* and *feae* as races of *P. mollis*.)

Wilson’s Petrel *Oceanites oceanicus* (4, 11, 0)


(Southern Oceans) Once again, all this year’s records come from boats either ‘Desperately Seeking Seabirds’ or en passant.

American Bittern *Botaurus lentiginosus* (50, 9, 1)

**Lancashire** Marton Mere, adult, 24th January to at least 12th May, photographed (P. I. Holt, D. J. McCullagh *et al.*). *(Brit. Birds* 84: plates 173 & 176).

(North America) Another bird that wiped the complacent grins off the faces
of 1981 birders. The first in Britain since the equally obliging birds of that year.

**Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax* (165, 299, 1)

**Bedfordshire** Brogborough Lake, second-summer, 28th November (R. Dumpleton, R. D. Moore).

1989 **Wight, Isle of** Brading Marsh, juvenile, 3rd November (M. Webb).

1990 **Devon** Ermington, adult, taken into care exhausted, 27th March, photographed, released Lopwell, 28th (L. Hurrell, R. Swinfen).

1990 **Man, Isle of** Michael, adult, 30th March to 4th April (A. & J. Hopson, A. S. Moore et al.).

1990 **Scilly** St Mary’s, six adults: 17th March to 1st April; 19th-24th March, when dead; 29th March to 4th April; 4th April to 2nd May; 9th April to 13th May; 24th April to 4th June; two first-summers: 17th-18th March; 3rd May to 15th June. St Martin’s, adult, 17th, 29th March, presumed same, Tresco, 18th March to 9th April (D. J. D. Hickman, I. R. Hunt, W. H. Wagstaff et al.).

1990 **Surrey** Bookham Common, first-summer, 7th-16th April, photographed (D. Connell, D. Element).

1990 **West Midlands** Hay Head Wood, Walsall, adult, 16th-22nd April (Brit. Birds 84: 454), same, Park Lane Lime-pits, 25th; original finder was J. M. Beechey (per T. Hesketh).

(South Eurasia, Africa and the Americas) In complete contrast to the previous year, there was a dearth of Night Herons in 1991, although a couple of records are still in circulation and some others have not been submitted yet. The list of continuing acceptances for 1990 illustrates just how good a year that was for this species. A record of an adult and a second-winter at Horning, Norfolk, on 17th January 1982 was considered to relate to birds of captive origin; the former bore yellow rings on each leg.

**Squacco Heron** *Ardeola ralloides* (95, 31, 0)

1990 **Devon** Aveton Gifford, 3rd-6th June, photographed (H. & Mrs J. Huggins, P. Sanders et al.).

(Southern Europe, Southwest Asia, and Africa) No records in 1991, but another from 1990, which was the best-ever year since at least 1958 for this species.

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta* (23, 713, −)

1989 **Gloucestershire** Sharpness, 2nd September; same, Purton, to 2nd October (Mr & Mrs J. Gay et al.).

1989 **Merseyside** Seaforth, 18th August (A. Quinn et al.), probably same as Clwyd individual, 19th-24th (Brit. Birds 83: 443).

1989 **Yorkshire, South** Sprotborough Flash, 25th May (H. Parkin).

1990 **Cheshire** Neumann’s Flash, 6th May (D. & R. Elphick), probably same as Clwyd individual, 11th, 23rd (Brit. Birds 84: 455).

1990 **Dyfed/Glamorgan, West** Penclawdd, up to five, 6th August to at least 29th September (Brit. Birds 84: 456), up to six, Wernffrwd and Penclawdd, 11th-13th August, five of same, Penclawdd, Dyfed, 13th; one of same, Weobley, West Glamorgan, 11th (W. E. Jones, K. R. Lloyd).

1990 **Somerset** Burnham-on-Sea, 14th January (R. M. Andrews et al.).


(South Eurasia, Africa and Australia) The Committee members heaved a collective sigh of relief when they made the decision that Little Egret should be removed from the list. The Committee still, however, has to deal with the
hangover from 1990 which left the members punch-drunk. Several extensions of the 1990 records are added above, and on top of that come the Channel Islands records for 1990: St Saviour, Jersey, up to four, 5th January to 18th March, singles during 12th-15th May; up to six, 2nd July to end of year, and an additional party of sixteen on 5th September.

**Great White Egret** *Egretta alba* (10, 42, 1)

**Cornwall** Lynher Estuary, 30th March (E. Griffiths).

1989 **Devon** Kingsbridge, 23rd-24th April (S. Bird, B. R. Field, P. McQuillan et al.).

1990 **Gwynedd** Bardsey, 17th October (P. M. Howlett, S. W. Walker).

(Almost cosmopolitan; extremely local in Europe) Only a single record in 1991, contrasting with six in each of the preceding two years.

**Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra* (26, 58, 22)

**Cornwall** St Buryan, 27th August (A. Blunden, J. Warwick).

**Devon** Credeniton, 30th August (H. Meller, J. Schofield). Dene Prior, three adults, 22nd September (L. R. & Mrs M. Cox, J. C. Lowen).

**Dorset** Near Ringstead Bay, 8th August (H. Squire).

**Dyfed** Skokholm, 27th-28th April (M. Betts). Skomer, 29th July (S. J. & Mrs A. C. Sutcliffe, S. Wilson); same, Marloes, 2nd August (R. M. Bishop, S. J. & Mrs A. C. Sutcliffe).

**Essex** Epping Forest, 7th July (K. Evans, N. A. May et al.). Frinton-on-Sea, 30th September (Dr R. J. & Mrs T. M. Banham).

**Gwynedd** Near Carmel Head, Anglesey, 22nd June (Dr M. H. J. & Mrs E. A. Finch).


**Kent** Elmley, 12th May (J. A. Rowlands, D. W. Taylor et al.). Dungeness, 1st June (D. Boyle, D. C. Gilbert et al.).

**Leicestershire** Husband’s Bosworth, two, 18th July (N. W. Hagley).

**Norfolk/Suffolk** Santon Downham, 3rd July (C. Kightley, B. Small) (fig. 1).

**Sussex** West Cissbury, 26th August (C. E. Hope).

**Western Isles** Uig, Lewis, two, 25th to about 31st July, one of same, 4th August, dead, 5th, both photographed 25th July (P. Cunningham, R. Macintyre, F. Maciver et al.) (plate 215).

**Yorkshire, North** Dalby Forest, 9th June (J. G. Sigsworth, D. G. Storey et al.).

1990 **Dumfries & Galloway** Caerlaverock, 24th-25th June (J. B. Doherty, P. Shimmings), probably same as Leighton Moss, Lancashire, individual, 21st (Brit. Birds 84: 458).

1990 **Essex** See 1990 Suffolk below.

1990 **Greater London** See 1990 Suffolk below.

1990 **Northamptonshire** See 1990 Suffolk below.

1990 **Suffolk** Ellough and Sotterly area, juvenile, 28th-29th July, 16 further localities to at least 1st September (Brit. Birds 84: 458); at least two individuals involved as follows: adult, Hulver and Ellough area, 28th-29th July; same, Benacre, 29th; Hemley, 29th; possibly same, Minsmere, 17th August; Bromeswell, 21st; possibly same as Greater London individual, 25th; immature, Iken and Snape area, 4th-8th August; presumed same, Blythburgh, 19th; Benacre, 20th; presumed same, Northamptonshire, 27th-28th July, Essex, 25th-26th August; presumed same, Covehithe, 12th September (D. Tutt). (All Suffolk data per P. W. Murphy.)

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Fig. 1. Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*, Santon Downham, Suffolk, July 1991 (Brian Small)

(Eurasia and Southern Africa) A remarkable series of records in a year not renowned for southern vagrants. The unpredictability of how far and in what direction this species wanders makes it impossible safely to relate any of the 1991 records to another. Sufficient to say that this is far and away the best year on record.

**Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus* (many, 59, 0)

**Kent** Stodmarsh area, 1990 individual (*Brit. Birds* 84: 458) January to March, 27th-28th April, regularly May, 16th August to end of year; same, Elmley, 17th-18th May, 27th-30th June (per D. W. Taylor).

1989 **Yorkshire, South** Thorpe Marsh, 24th-29th May (A. Oates, D. Page, P. Sutton); same, intermittently, Fairburn Ings, North/West Yorkshire, Leventhorpe Hall, North Yorkshire, 29th May to 26th June (C. Winn et al.).

1989 **Yorkshire, North** See above.

1989 **Yorkshire, West** See above.

(Almost cosmopolitan but nearest breeders in Camargue, France) The long-staying Kent bird was the only record received in 1991. The 1989 Yorkshire bird fits in well with the Northumbrian individual (*Brit. Birds* 83: 447). Care should be taken in the identification of this species as there are known to be free-flying Puna Ibises *P. ridgwayi* in Britain.

**Bewick’s Swan** *Cygnus columbianus* (0, 7, 0)

An individual showing the characters of the nominate North American and East Siberian race was recorded as follows:

1990 **Somerset** Wet Moor, adult, 3rd-4th January; same, King’s Sedgemoor, 15th February
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(D. J. Chown per B. Rabbitts); same, Curry Moor, 3rd March (A. J. Bundy per B. Rabbitts); presumed returning individual last recorded 23rd December 1989 (Brit. Birds 83: 448).

(Northern Holarctic) The wanderer returns, for the fifth year.

Lesser White-fronted Goose *Anser erythropus* (47, 76, 0)

(Northeast Europe and Siberia) Whilst 1991 records from Norfolk, Avon and Lancashire have been received, it is believed that a number of others remain outstanding. The Committee is anxious to study all records of this species during winter 1990/91 so that a proper assessment may be made of the movements of individuals that may not originate in the wild.

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla* (1, 52, 1)

Individuals showing the characters of the North American and East Siberian race *B. b. nigricans* were recorded as follows:

- **Lincolnshire** Wainfleet All Saints, adult, 10th January (P. I. Holt, J. Lawson et al.).
- **1990 Kent** Swalecliffe, adult, 23rd October to 25th November; presumed same, Leysdown, 4th November (C. G. Bradshaw, A. J. Fossey).

(Arctic North America and East Siberia) The only accepted record so far for 1991, although several others still remain in circulation. The picture is now clouded by the presence of presumed hybrids in Britain. Records of this subspecies must show all the diagnostic features to be acceptable.

American Wigeon *Anas americana* (22, 214, 8)

- **Cornwall** Marazion, ♂, 7th-10th April, photographed (S. Rogers, Dr J. F. Ryan et al.). Loe Pool, first-winter ♂, 1st-4th September (Dr J. F. Ryan et al.).
- **Devon** Exmouth and Dawlish Warren, ♂, since 24th December 1990 to at least 5th January (Brit. Birds 84: 459).
- **Fife** Stenhouse Reservoir, ♂, ♀, to 19th December 1990 (Brit. Birds 84: 459), ♂ to 4th March, ♀ to 15th January (per D. E. Dickson). Lochore Meadows, ♂, 15th October to at least 8th December (A. Hibbert, D. Seawright et al.), possibly returning Stenhouse Reservoir individual.
- **Gloucestershire** Dudgrove, Cotswold Water-park, ♂, since 16th December 1990 to 24th January (Brit. Birds 84: 459). Slimbridge, ♂, at least 10th March, photographed (T. E. Bond et al.).
- **Highland** Loch Ussie, Ross-shire, ♂, 8th December to 18th January 1992 (Dr D. M. & Mrs J. Edge, R. J. Evans et al.).
- **Kent** Elmley, ♂, 1st April to 11th May (L. F. Woolard et al.).
- **Lincolnshire** Whisby, ♂, 21st October to 1st November (D. Bromwich, K. D. Durose et al.).
- **Lothian** Gladhouse Reservoir, ♂, since 17th October 1990 (Brit. Birds 84: 460), 27th January (G. N. Buchanan et al.).
- **1990 Cheshire/Clwyd** Burton Marsh, ♂, 25th April; same, Inner Marsh Farm, 26th (B. S. Barnacal, I. Higginson, C. Wells).
- **1990 Fife** See Fife above.
- **1990 Lothian** See Lothian above.
- **1990 Merseyside** Seaforth, ♂, 15th September, photographed (C. Kehoe et al.) (Brit. Birds 84: plate 78).

(North America) In Ireland, an adult male was at Lough O’Grady, Co. Clare, from 19th to 26th November, and two males returned to Co. Cork, at Ballintubbrig and Rostellan, Cork Harbour, from 1991 to 1992.

There are still several records in circulation, so the picture is incomplete. This species has, however, never shown the western bias usually associated with transatlantic vagrants. The spring female in Cornwall reacted vigorously to the recorded call of a male American Wigeon whilst studiously ignoring the call of a male Wigeon *A. penelope.*
Teal *Anas crecca* (13, 320, −)

Drakes showing the characters of the North American race *A. c. carolinensis* were recorded as follows:


1989 Cheshire Rostherne Mere, 28th January to 12th February (M. Bailey, T. Drew et al.).

1990 Berkshire Pingewood, 21st April (B. Utley).

1990 Cheshire Inner Marsh Farm, 15th March (G. H. Rhodes, C. E. Wells).


1990 Norfolk Welney, 15th-16th March (*Brit. Birds* 84: 460), first recorded 4th (per P. R. Allard). Cley, 21st March to 25th April (M. A. Golley, D. J. Holman et al.).

1990 Sussex West Arundel, 10th-24th March (R. J. L. Kemp et al.).

(North America) A batch of records from previous years. Records of this race dated after the end of 1990 are not considered by the Committee.

Blue-winged Teal *Anas discors* (19, 149, 5)

Cornwall Loe Pool, δ, 2nd October (D. & Mrs M. M. Walbridge, G. & Mrs S. Walbridge).

Orkney Rackwick Bay, δ, 27th May (K. Fairclough, A. Garven, J. Randall et al.; possibly same, Loch of Stenness, 30th (P. S. Wells). Western Isles Hirta, St Kilda, δ, 16th-17th September (J. Vaughan).


1990 Norfolk Titchwell, δ, to at least 29th September (*Brit. Birds* 84: 461), to 4th October (per P. R. Allard).

(North America) In Ireland, a juvenile was shot at Lough Durnesh, Co. Donegal, on 18th October. Another poor year compared with the late 1980s, although there is a pleasing western bias to the records. Perhaps the 'Colditz spirit' has been bred out of this species.

Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris* (1, 298, 8)

Cheshire Woolston Eyes, δ, 5th-8th February (J. Walsh); same, Rostherne Mere, 9th, Chorlton, 16th to 14th March (per A. M. Broome).

Cornwall Drift Reservoir and Marazion, two δ δ since 1990 (*Brit. Birds* 84: 461) to 6th March, one to 22nd (Dr J. F. Ryan et al.).

Devon See 1990 Devon below.

Dumfries & Galloway Auchenreoch Loch, θ, 19th January to at least 24th February (M. Ilett et al.). See also 1990 Dumfries & Galloway below.

Fife Lochgelly Loch, δ, 29th April to 2nd May (S. Brown, J. S. Nadin et al.).

Hampshire Allington Lane, δ, 9th-28th March (D. J. Unsworth).

Highland Inverdruie, δ, end of April to end of June; same, Loch Morlich, 16th to at least 24th September, Loch Insh, 11th October to at least 22nd December (Z. Bhatia, D. M. Pullan et al.), presumed returning 1989-90 individual below.

Lancashire Carnforth, θ, since 26th October 1990 (*Brit. Birds* 84: 462) to 23rd April; same, Leighton Moss, to 26th May (P. J. Marsh et al. per M. Jones). Stocks Reservoir, δ, since 1990 (see 1990 Lancashire below) to 27th January; same, Dean Clough Reservoir, 24th (per M. Jones); presumed same, Wayoh Reservoir, 26th November to 22nd December (per M. Jones). Norfolk Acle and Ranworth and Wroxham Broads, δ, 10th-25th February (J. R. Appleton, M. Fiser, M. J. Seago et al.); presumed same, 17th December to 1992 (per P. R. Allard).

Northumberland Holywell Pond, δ, 9th April (I. Fisher), same as Tyne & Wear.

Strathclyde Ardnae Loch, Islay, δ, intermittently, 27th January to at least 22nd April (M. A. Peacock, A. J. Stanbury et al.). Loch Nell, Argyll, δ, 14th to at least 16th February (J. M. Harris­on, Dr A. R. Jennings, Mrs J. Mauchline et al.).

Tayside Loch of Kinnordy, δ, 23rd-25th June (J. Scott et al.).

Tyne & Wear Marden Quarry, δ, 7th April, 6th, 28th May (A. Hutt, R. Johnson per B. N. Rossiter), presumed returning individual last recorded Marine Park Lake, South Shields, 11th-
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12th December 1990 (Brit. Birds 84: 462); same, Marine Park Lake, intermittently, 13th April to 28th October (A. L. Armstrong et al. per B. N. Rossiter); also in Northumberland.

Yorkshire, West
Allerton Bywater, δ, 20th March (G. Carr, S. Gear, M. Simpson); same, Parker’s Pond, Ledston, 24th (J. Martin); same, New Swillington Ings, 31st (M. P. Lawlor et al.); presumed returning New Swillington individual, 1990 (Brit. Birds 84: 462). Winterton Reservoir, δ, 26th-28th August, 19th-20th September (S. Denny, P. Smith et al.), probably same as New Swillington individual.

1988 Cornwall
Sithians Reservoir, δ, 6th March to 24th April (L. M. & R. L. Lowndes et al.).
1989 Highland
Loch Morlich, δ, 2nd January to 13th February; same, Loch Garten, 8th April (D. M. Pullan et al.), same as 1988 Highland individual (Brit. Birds 83: 453).

1990 Cornwall
Sithians Reservoir, juvenile or first-winter, 26th August to 28th October (D. M. Pullan et al.), presumed same as at Loch Pool, 29th September to 19th October (Brit. Birds 84: 461). Parker’s Pond, Ledston, 24th (J. Martin); same, New Swillington Ings, 31st (M. P. Lawlor et al.); presumed returning New Swillington individual, 1990 (Brit. Birds 84: 462).

1990 Devon

1990 Dumfries & Galloway
Milton Loch, δ, at least 24th December (T. Drew, P. Shimmings et al.), presumed same, Auchenreoch Loch, 1991 above.

1990 Highland
Loch Pityoulish, δ, 18th February (Brit. Birds 84: 462), 2nd March; same, Loch Vaa, 24th-25th March, Inverdruie, 16th-19th April, Loch Morlich, 1st-30th November, Loch Insh, 18th December (D. M. Pullan et al.); all refer to individual first recorded in 1988. See also 1991 above.

1990 Lancaster
Stocks Reservoir, δ, since 1989 (Brit. Birds 83: 452), intermittently to 18th March, also at Foulridge Reservoir, Wood End Sewage-farm (R. Ashworth, E. G. Davis, P. J. Hornby et al. per M. Jones); presumed same, Clowbridge Reservoir, 27th September, Black Moss and Dean Clough Reservoirs and Primrose Lodge, Clitheroe, 2nd December to 1991 (A. A. Cooper, S. E. Duffield, P. I. Holt et al. per M. Jones).

1990 Oxfordshire
Henley Road Gravel-pit, Dunsden, δ, 18th March (R. G. Bowles).

1990 Somerset
Wimbleball Lake, δ, 15th-31st December (B. D. Gibbs et al. per B. Rabbitts); same, Clatworthy Reservoir, at least 16th December (per B. Rabbitts); presumed returning 1989 individual (Brit. Birds 83: 452).

1990 Yorkshire, West

(North America) The sole Irish record accepted so far for 1991 is of a male at Inch Lake, Co. Donegal, on 5th May.

The large number of records disguises the fact that there are very few new records in 1991, with perhaps eight at most. One is left to speculate why there is such a high percentage of males compared with females, and also when we are going to have the first British-bred Ring-necked Ducks. There were hopes in Tyne & Wear in 1990, but the female seemed more interested in Tufted Ducks A. fuligula and the male in displaying to male Pochards A. ferina.

Lesser Scaup Aythya affinis (0, 4, 0)
Dumfries & Galloway See below.

1990 Dumfries & Galloway
Milton Loch, δ, 29th December (R. Hesketh et al.); same, Auchenreoch Loch, 31st to 25th January 1991 (I. Murray et al.).

(Western North America) This bird had the good sense to turn up right next to a café so that cold birders could have coffee and bacon butties whilst watching both this and a Ring-necked Duck Aythya collaris. It is interesting that the first individual recorded in Ireland also turned up with a Ring-necked Duck; the Committee opts for mass immigration rather than mass break-out.

216. Top, Arctic Redpoll Carduelis hornemanni, Norwich, Norfolk, February 1991 (Robin Chittenden)
217. Centre left, Little Bunting Emberiza pusilla, Milford, Surrey, April 1991 (E. F. J. Garcia)


223. Below, female Lesser Crested Tern *Sterna bengalensis* in colony of Sandwich Terns *S. sandvicensis*, Inner Farne, Northumberland, July 1991 (*Phil Palmer*)
Rare birds in Great Britain in 1991

King Eider  *Somateria spectabilis* (62, 154, 10)

**Borders**  St Abb’s Head, first-year ♂, 8th-28th June (R. D. Murray, D. Watson *et al.*); presumed same as Grampian.

**Fife**  Tayport, ♂, intermittently, 30th January to 18th March (per D. E. Dickson), presumed one of Ythan Estuary, Grampian, individuals.

**Grampian**  Ythan Estuary, ♂, since 23rd December 1990 (*Brit. Birds* 84: 463), to at least July (per K. D. Shaw); additional ♂, 17th March (M. Kimber), 31st (A. & W. Brydges, I. Phillips, A. Tate *et al.*), to at least July (per K. D. Shaw); first-year ♂, 17th March (M. Kimber), presumed also in Borders. Murcar, ♂, 27th June (L. Austen, R. A. Schofield, K. D. Shaw *et al.*). Blackdog, two ♂♂, 15th July into August, photographed (I. Talbot, I. M. Tidmarsh *et al.*). Donmouth, ♂, 9th October (per K. D. Shaw). All presumed same as Ythan Estuary. See also Fife, Lothian. Burghhead, ♂, 25th May (C. H. Crooke, D. C. Orr-Ewing); presumed same, Kingston-on-Spey, 12th June (C. Gervaise, R. Shewan); presumed from Highland.

**Highland**  Brora, Loch Fleet, Lothbeg area, ♂, 28th-31st March (G. Dutton, A. S. Kennedy *et al.* per A. R. Mainwood); 6th April, 1st-4th May (A. R. Mainwood); 11th June (N. E. Gammon, Mrs P. Walton); presumed same, 8th December (A. Vittery per A. R. Mainwood); probably also in Grampian above.

**Lothian**  Seafield, Edinburgh, ♂, 5th to at least 15th December (G. Hopwood *et al.*), presumed one of east Grampian individuals.

**Orkney**  Deerness, ♂, 19th May to 2nd June (E. R. Meek, E. & L. Tait *et al.*).

**Shetland**  Lerwick, first-year ♂, 29th March to at least 18th May (C. Donald *et al.*). Noss, first-year ♂, 10th-28th May (R. Armstrong, D. Suddaby *et al.*); first-year ♀, 15th May to 7th July (R. Armstrong, D. Suddaby *et al.*). Trondra, first-year ♂, 7th to at least 18th May (I. Brown, F. Finen, D. Suddaby *et al.*). Trebister Ness, first-year ♂, 20th August (M. Heubeck), presumed one or other of preceding individuals above. Sumburgh Head, first-year ♂, 27th June to at least 21st August (M. Heubeck *et al.*), presumed one or other of preceding individuals; ♀, 3rd July (J. N. Dymond). Lerwick, ♂, 27th September to 3rd October (A. V. Moon *et al.*). Whalsay, first-year ♂, 5th October to 1st November (J. L. Irvine, Dr B. Marshall, N. D. Poleson), possibly one or other of preceding individuals.


(Circumpolar Arctic) Once again, a difficult task trying to sort out individuals and numbers. There is to be a paper soon in *British Birds* which will attempt to unravel the knot of King Eider records.

Harlequin Duck  *Histrionicus histrionicus* (7, 4, 1)


(Iceland, Greenland, North America and East Siberia) For those of us who missed the Islay bird, this was a most welcome visitor, and the long drive did not seem to deter anyone. Yet another rare duck to turn up within viewing distance of a very good café.

Surf Scoter  *Melanitta perspicillata* (75, 290, –)

1990 Dyfed  Marros Sands, ♂, 14th October to 4th November (F. B. Jenkins *et al.*).


1990 Humberside  Barmston, ♂, 18th January (P. Piringer).

(North America) A late record of one at Rostrevor, Co. Down, on 12th November 1989.

Another species now off the Committee’s list makes perhaps its swan-song.

Barrow’s Goldeneye  *Bucephala islandica* (0, 1, 0)

(Iceland, Southwest Greenland, Western Canada and the USA) The record
of an adult male at Irvine, Strathclyde, on 4th November to 28th December 1979 (Brit. Birds 76: 528) has now been admitted to Category A.

**Hooded Merganser** *Mergus c. cucullatus* (5, 1, 0)
(North America) A female at Holme, Norfolk, on 3rd-15th June 1990 and a male at Peasholm Park Lake, North Yorkshire, from 24th September to 23rd December 1989 are both considered to have been escapes.

**Black Kite** *Milvus migrans* (5, 142, 7)

- **Cornwall** St Columb Major, 15th April (S. M. & Mrs A. D. Christophers, J. Hawkey). Marazion, 25th May (D. S. Flumm, M. Hutchens).
- **Dorset** Portland, 23rd May (D. & G. Walbridge et al.).
- **Northumberland** Kielder Forest, 18th April (M. Davison).
- **Staffordshire** Morridge, 14th May (A. & W. J. Brydges, P. C. Fontana, P. Jones et al.).
- **Wight, Isle of** Newchurch, 22nd May (J. C. & Mrs R. Gloyn).


(Most of Eurasia, Africa and Australia) The fourth Irish record was a single at Midleton, Co. Cork, on 20th April. A poor showing, with fewer than in any year since 1984. It is interesting to note that up to 1966 there had been only five records of this species in Britain. Now we consider six in Britain in one year as bad.

**Red-footed Falcon** *Falco vespertinus* (100, 375, 5)

- **Greater London** Rainham Marsh, first-summer δ, 8th-16th June (S. R. Pickering et al.).
- **Leicestershire** Thornton Reservoir, δ, 28th June (D. J. S. Gamble) (fig. 2).
- **Norfolk** Titchwell, 9, 26th May (W. Parker, A. J. Shearman et al.); presumed same, Sandringham Warren, 26th (A. Harris, S. Rasch, J. Redwood).
- **Scilly** St Martin’s, 9, 29th May to 2nd June (J. A. Flynn, D. & Mrs M. Hawkins et al.).

Fig. 2. Male Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus*, Thornton Reservoir, Leicestershire, June 1991 (Dave Gamble)

1988 **Dyfed** Tregaron, 9, 25th May to 2nd June (S. Parr, P. N. Prior et al.).


1990 **Cleveland** Seal Sands, δ, 10th May (Brit. Birds 84: 466), to 20th.

1990 **Gloucestershire** Sec 1990 Wiltshire below.

1990 **Hampshire** Farlington Marshes, 9, 4th May (G. C. Stephenson).

1990 **Kent** Dover, δ, 27th June (A. J. Greenland).


1990 **Norfolk** Cley, 9, 20th May (Brit. Birds 84: 467), observers were T. C. Davies, M. A. Golley, S. J. Harris. Cley, first-summer δ, 23rd June (Brit. Birds 84: 467), same, Kelling, 24th (per P. R. Allard).

1990 **Wight, Isle of** Scratchell’s Bay, 9, 31st May (S. & B. K. Abbott).

1990 **Wiltshire** Cotswold Water-park, first-summer δ, 27th-29th May (Brit. Birds 84: 467), departed into Gloucestershire, 29th (per G. R. Avery).
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(East Europe to Central Siberia) One on Cape Clear Island, Co. Cork, on 31st May is only the sixth record for Ireland.

Rainham Marsh now joins the favoured sites for this delightful species. Numbers were comparatively low in 1991, although there are still several reports in circulation; it certainly did nothing to prepare us for the onslaught of 1992. Observers should note that it will make the Committee’s job a lot simpler if adequate descriptions are submitted with all records for 1992, even though they may appear to be ‘as common as Kestrels F. tinnunculus’ this year.

Gyrfalcon *Falco rusticolus* (many, 96, 2)

1990 Grampian Strathdon, 21st April (D. Calder, B. L. Cosnette).

(Circumpolar Arctic) Long-staying singles in Ireland, with one near Ballyconnelly, Co. Galway, from 1st to 10th April, and a first-winter at Akeragh Lough, Co. Kerry, from 5th November into 1992.

The Grampian bird was an exciting find for a raptor worker on his spring censuses. The problem of large falcons in the south of England is taxing the Committee and the British postal service. With the recent increasing availability of falconers’ hybrids, descriptions of this species need to be virtually perfect.

Sora *Porzana carolina* (5, 6, 1)

Scilly St Mary’s, first-winter, 15th October to 1st November, probably since 4th October (B. C. Forrester, J. R. Hough, P. Morrison et al.) (plate 44, fig. 3).

(North America) This bird followed the pattern of some previous records both by arriving in September-October and by totally confusing the first few observers who saw it. Once it was sorted out, it seemed easy, but which of us has sufficient experience of the small crakes to be sure enough to be the first to put a name to one? This bird behaved beautifully (as did most of the birders and some of the photographers) for the rest of its stay.

![Fig. 3. First-winter Sora Porzana carolina, St Mary's, Scilly, October 1991 (Julian Hough)](image-url)
Rare birds in Great Britain in 1991

Baillon’s Crake *Porzana pusilla* (many, 7, 1)

**Shetland** Fair Isle, juvenile ?, trapped 28th September, found dead 2nd October, photographed (S. J. M. Gantlett, P. V. Harvey, D. Suddaby et al.) (plate 227), mounted specimen retained by D. Suddaby.

**1990 Gwynedd** Bardsey, probably first-winter ß, dead, 16th June (P. M. Howlett et al.), now at National Museum of Wales.

(Eurasia, Africa and Australasia) Rumour reaches the Committee that several birders on Fair Isle were praying that this would be a Little Crake *P. parva* when it was caught, as they had all seen the Sunderland Baillon's Crake in 1989. In contrast to that bird, the identification of this individual was by no means straightforward. What a sad end for a very good bird.

Sandhill Crane *Grus canadensis* (1, 1, 1)

**Shetland** Eswick and Sumburgh, first-summer moulting to second-winter, 17th-26th September, photographed (M. Davison, P. M. Ellis et al.) (plate 40).

(North America, Cuba and Northeast Siberia) The third record for Britain and Ireland allowed many to catch up with a species that most thought had gone for ever. Not satisfied with that, it then took off and did the same for Dutch birders (*Dutch Birding* 13: 226).

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* (98, 168, 3)

**Bedfordshire** Dunstable, 26th-27th April, photographed (W. Drayton, P. J. Reese, P. Trodd et al.), probably same as Staffordshire individual.

**Humberside** Southfield Reservoir, 7th May (C. Featherstone); presumed same, Flamborough Head, 11th (B. J. N. Hill, M. Newsome, B. Richards); also in Lincolnshire.

**Lincolnshire** Covenham Reservoir, 6th May (K. E. Wilson et al.), also in Humberside.

**Staffordshire** Croxhall Gravel-pits, Alrewas, 28th April to at least 13th May (Mr & Mrs R. A. Wilson et al.), probably same as Bedfordshire individual.

**Suffolk** Trimley Marshes, 7th-25th July, photographed (R. Beecroft et al) (plate 224).

(Southern Eurasia, Africa, Australia and the Americas) Only small numbers compared with 1987 and 1990, but more reminiscent of the general pattern for this species. There are still some records in circulation.

Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola* (30, 48, 0)

**1990 Dorset** Abbotsbury, 3rd May (S. A. Groves et al.).

**1990 Scilly** St Agnes, 3rd-4th April, died 4th (J. W. & Mrs P. Hale).

(Southern Europe, Southwest Asia and Africa) No records for 1991 and just the sweepings from the previous year.

Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus* (9, 36, 1)

**Western Isles** Balranald, North Uist, at least 5th May (N. Briden, N. & Mrs R. Lester, Dr P. B. & Mrs J. A. Maxted et al.).

**1990 Durham** Cronkley, 25th March (D. Sharrod).

(North America) A local crofter had claimed to have seen the North Uist bird since late March, and this would fit in more with the established pattern of occurrence of this species.

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225. Adult White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicolis* with Dunlins *C. alpina*, Saltholme Pool/Greatham Creek, Cleveland, July/August 1990 (M. N. Sidwell)


227. Bottom, juvenile female Baillon's Crake *Porzana pusilla*, Fair Isle, Shetland, October 1991 (Alan Brown)
**Greater Sand Plover** *Charadrius leschenaultii* (0, 9, 1)

**Grampian** Don Estuary, adult or first-summer, 18th-19th August, photographed (D. J. Bain, K. D. Shaw, G. Smith et al.) (plate 43).

(Southern Russia cast to Mongolia) The first since the Walney bird of 1988. Like that one, the Don Estuary bird showed some features suggestive of Lesser Sand Plover *C. mongolus*, and it was only when all the features had been critically analysed that the observers were happy with the identification.

**American Golden Plover** *Pluvialis dominica* (3, 144, 5)

**Orkney** North Ronaldsay, first-winter, 6th October to 2nd December, trapped 7th October (P. J. Donnelly, A. E. Duncan et al.); first-winter, 3rd-4th November, trapped 3rd (D. Patterson et al.).

**Scilly** St Agnes, juvenile, 26th September to 16th October, photographed (per W. H. Wagstaff) (plate 41).

**Shetland** Pool of Virkie, Quendale and Ringasta, juvenile, 9th-27th October (P. M. Ellis, M. Mellor, D. Suddaby et al.). Loch of Spiggie and Ringasta, juvenile, 20th October to 3rd November (P. M. Ellis, J. D. Okill, G. W. Petrie et al.).

(Arctic North America and extreme Northeast Asia) Unfortunately, many of the reports of this species are still in circulation. The first North Ronaldsay individual is one of the longest-stayers on record, as well as being the first to be ringed in Britain, and was rapidly followed by a second record from the same island.

**Pacific Golden Plover** *Pluvialis fulva* (3, 13, 2)

**Norfolk** Cley and Blakeney, juvenile, 3rd-6th December (R. Aberdein, S. J. M. Gantlett, M. A. Wilkins et al.).

**Orkney** North Ronaldsay, adult, 14th July to 9th August (P. J. Donnelly, M. Gray, E. R. Meek et al.).

**1990 Lancashire** Pilling, adult, 22nd July to at least 6th August, photographed (D. Jackson, M. Jones, P. G. D. Morgan et al.).

(North and Northeast Asia) A number of records of this species are still in circulation. The pattern of adults appearing in July seems to be well established, although not all ‘Lesser Golden Plovers’ appearing at this time are *P. fulva*, as there are several well-documented records of American Golden Plover *P. dominica* in the summer months. In Europe, records of Pacific Golden Plovers in 1991 ranged from 12th May to 25th June, and then two juveniles in the Netherlands in September. This, plus the juvenile in December, suggests that this species is being overlooked in the autumn.

**American or Pacific Golden Plover** *Pluvialis dominica/P. fulva* (6, 159, 8)

**Norfolk** Titchwell, 28th July, photographed (S. J. Hughes et al.).

**1990 Western Isles** Hirta, St Kilda, 22nd-24th September (S. J. Holloway).

The totals include those specifically identified. The Committee is currently reviewing past records of both species.

**Sociable Plover** *Chettusia gregaria* (5, 29, 1)

**Cambridgeshire** Somersham, 5th to at least 20th October, photographed (D. Harlow et al.).

**1980 Wight, Isle of** Newtown, 5th October (P. A. Gandy).

(Southeast Russia and West-central Asia) Whilst the photographs of the first individual were adequate to identify the species, neither of those reported here could be reliably aged.
Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla* (2, 61, 1)


No acceptable records in Britain for 1991 yet. The spring bird in Teesside replaces the 1989 Norfolk bird as the first individual recorded in spring in Britain.

Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla* (6, 26, 2)

**Cornwall** Landulph Marsh, adult, 25th August (D. Clegg, S. M. Macmahon, S. C. Madge et al.).

**Humberside** Beacon Ponds, Kilnsea, adult, 28th-29th July (A. Gibson, D. R. Middleton et al.).

(North America) The last six records have been between 17th July and 25th August, and have involved adults.

White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscomelas* (24, 312, 2)

**Avon** Chew Valley Lake, juvenile moulting to first-winter, 5th to 19th October (R. M. Andrews, I. D. Broadbent, A. J. Musgrove et al.).

**Western Isles** North Bay, South Uist, juvenile, 1st-3rd October (P. R. Boyer, T. J. Dix).


1990 **Cleveland** Saltholme Pool and Greatham Creek, adult, 23rd July to 3rd August, photographed (B. J. K. Caswell, G. C. Joynt et al.) (plate 225); presumed same as Tyne & Wear individual below.

1990 **Scilly** St Mary's, adult, 29th August (D. J. D. Hickman et al.).

1990 **Tyne & Wear** Whitburn, adult, 15th-27th August, photographed (G. K. Gordon et al.); also in Cleveland.

(North America) A below-average year for this species, even with some additional records still outstanding.

Baird’s Sandpiper *Calidris bairdii* (5, 153, 2)

**Merseyside** Marshside Marsh, juvenile, 12th September (Dr B. McCarthy, B. Woolley).

**Shetland** Fair Isle, juvenile, 5th-16th September, trapped 5th (P. V. Harvey, O. J. Leysdon et al.).

(North America and Northeast Siberia) A further poor year, though another rare wader trapped in the Northern Isles.

Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus* (23, 133, 3)

**Gloucestershire** Frampton-on-Severn, 8th-10th June (G. R. Avery, M. L. King, C. W. Martin et al.); presumed same, Slimbridge, 10th (L. P. Alder).

**Kent** Swale, 18th-20th May (T. P. Laws, M. A. Warburton et al.).

**Norfolk** Breydon, 21st-22nd May (P. R. Allard et al.).

1990 **Cheshire** Inner Marsh Farm, 8th-13th May (I. Higginson, W. Roberts, Dr J. E. & M. G. Turner).

1990 **Cleveland** Greatham Creek, 23rd June, photographed (J. Grieveson, G. C. Joynt et al.).

(North Eurasia) The worst year for this species since 1981. Spring 1991 was, however, a bad time here for all Scandinavian and North Russian birds.

Stilt Sandpiper *Microspadilla himantopus* (1, 22, 1)


(North America) A juvenile at Rosscarbery, Co. Cork, on 19th September was the only record for 1991.
Great Snipe *Gallinago media* (180, 66, 2)
Norfolk Welney, 6th September (J. B. Kemp et al.).
Orkney North Ronaldsay, 30th October (P. J. Donnelly, D. Patterson et al.).
(Northeast Europe and Northwest Asia) There has been a trend towards better descriptions and multi-observer records of this difficult species in the past few years. The critical features were noted in the 1988 report (*Brit. Birds* 82: 525).

Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus* (9, 151, 1)
Kent See 1990 Kent below.
Lothian Aberlady, adult, 12th-13th May (P. R. Gordon et al.).
1990 Somerset West Sedgemoor, 15th to at least 16th October (J. Leece, J. Porter); probably same, Durleigh Reservoir, 18th-23rd (B. D. Gibbs et al.).
(North America and Northeast Siberia) Only a small proportion of records are in spring. The poorest year since 1972.

Upland Sandpiper *Bartramia longicauda* (15, 27, 1)
(North America) A juvenile on Dursey Island, Co. Cork, on 18th September, but no records from Britain.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* (12, 60, 1)
Kent Elmley, 24th-29th April, photographed (M. C. Buckland, D. Hennessy et al.).
1990 Clwyd Oakenholt Marsh, 7th May (J. Higgison, F. Jenkins, Dr R. J. Raines).
(Southeast Europe, West and East Asia) The numbers of this elegant wader fluctuate from year to year, but Elmley is establishing itself as the premier spot in Britain. The year 1990 was particularly good, and there are further records still under consideration.

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* (35, 175, 5)
Orkney Loch of Tankerness, juvenile, 15th September (K. E. Hague).
1990 Dyfed Kidwelly Marsh, first-winter, 27th September to 18th November, photographed (F. B. Jenkins et al.).
(North America) In Ireland, Co. Cork had four records, with a juvenile on Cape Clear Island on 25th-28th August (plate 226) and singles at Youghal, Kinsale Marsh and Ring, Clonakilty, in September.
The Orkney record is the first for that archipelago.

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus* (3, 33, 2)
Norfolk Wissingham, 1st-4th June (C. Donner et al.).
Shetland Mid Yell Voe, Yell, 5, song heard, 25th May (G. W. Allison et al.).
1990 Northumberland Cresswell Pond, adult, 17th August (Miss W. A. Kelly), presumed same as Blyth individual.
(Northeast Europe and Siberia) The Northumbrian Terek sneaks into a third year’s report, but disappeared in a particularly nasty spell of cold weather that could have signalled a permanent end to this bird’s tenure at Blyth. The Shetland individual arrived in the middle of a bird race and gave one member of the Rarities Committee an unfair advantage over the other competitors.
**Spotted Sandpiper** *Actitis macularia* (6, 92, 4)

**Shetland** Lerwick, adult, 22nd-26th September (D. Coutts, D. Suddaby *et al*).

**Somerset** Burnham-on-Sea, 17th-18th May (B. Rabbitts *et al*).

**Strathclyde** Balgray Reservoir, Barrhead, 27th September to 1st October (J. Coyle, J. McOwat, J. & Mrs V. Wilson *et al*).

**Yorkshire, West** Welbeck Southern Washlands Nature Reserve, 30th June to 7th July (P. Smith *et al*).

(North America) The Yorkshire individual was associating with a Common Sandpiper *A. hypoleucos* and three full-grown young. It may merely have been playing uncle, or we may have some fairly odd-looking sandpipers in Britain soon.

**Wilson’s Phalarope** *Phalaropus tricolor* (1, 232, 4)

**Devon** Axe Estuary, 7th-12th October (P. Abbott, P. A. Dennis *et al*) (fig. 4).

**Dyfed** Penclacwydd, 29th September (R. G. Hogarth, M. J. Pointon *et al*).

**Leicestershire/Northamptonshire** Stanford Reservoir, juvenile moulting to first-winter, 29th-30th September, photographed (I. M. & J. M. Wilson *et al*).

**Suffolk** Benacre, 14th-19th September (A. Riseborough, Dr N. J. Skinner, C. Walker *et al*).

**1989 Somerset** Cheddar Reservoir, 14th October (R. Palmer *et al*).

(North America) A similar pattern to the previous year. Most of these were multi-observer records, but, in at least one case, getting an acceptable description was as difficult as milking bulls.

**Laughing Gull** *Larus atricilla* (2, 55, 6)

**Norfolk** Walcott, first-winter, 25th December to 1992 (M. & Miss K. Fiszer *et al*) (plates 197 & 206).

**Orkney** Stenness, adult, 16th-22nd May (E. R. Meek *et al*).

**Sussex, East** Seaford, adult, 6th April (G. W. Gowlett, N. J. Thomas); also in West Sussex.
Rare birds in Great Britain in 1991

Sussex, West
Shoreham-by-Sea, 6th April (R. J. Fairbank, R. Simpson); same, Widewater, Lancing, 6th (C. J. Corrigan, Miss H. Jacobs); also in East Sussex.

(North America and the Caribbean) Two juveniles at the Bann Estuary, Co. Londonderry, on 19th October and first-winter at Drogheda, Co. Louth, from 21st November to 1st December.

In Britain, this gull has never shown the westerly bias displayed by Ring-billed Gull *L. delawarensis*, and 1991 conforms to this pattern, with the first record for Norfolk and the first from Sussex since 1923. The Norfolk bird was first noted by the young daughter of a keen birder, who asked ‘Daddy, what’s that funny gull?’ and caused him to choke on his cup of coffee when he saw what it was. Not the first bird to be found in such a way.

Franklin’s Gull *Larus pipixcan* (0, 18, 3)
Cleveland Reclamation Pond, Teessmouth, adult, 19th-23rd June, photographed; presumed same, 28th August to 1st September (G. C. Joynt et al.); presumed same, Longnewton Reservoir, 4th September (M. A. Blick).
Norfolk Breydon, adult, 30th June (K. R. Dye et al.); also observed from Burgh Castle, formerly Suffolk (W. J. Brame, J. M. Cawston, E. W. Patrick).
Shetland Skellister, South Nesting, adult, 27th May, photographed (N. & Mrs E. K. McMahon) (plates 220 & 221).

(North America) An excellent set of records which could – just conceivably relate to a single individual. Some records are still in circulation (whilst others were not received in time even to be circulated).

Bonaparte’s Gull *Larus philadelphia* (11, 62, 0)
Devon Plymouth, adult, 7th January to 24th February (V. R. Tucker et al.); presumed same, Plym Estuary area, 24th April to 7th May (R. W. White et al.).
Merseyside Seaforth and New Brighton, adult, intermittently 20th March to 20th April (C. Kehoe et al.) (plate 222), presumed one or other April 1990 individuals (*Brit. Birds* 84: 475).

(North America) Presumably the Merseyside record relates to one of the 1990 adults, whilst the Devon record probably relates to the second-winter bird from the same area in 1990.

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis* (0, 613, –)

(North America) Now no longer considered by the Committee (thank heavens!).

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus* (0, 11, 1)

(North America) In Ireland, first-winters showing the characters of the race *L. a. smithsonianus* as follows: Cobh, Co Cork, 16th November to mid December 1986; Cork City dump 23rd February 1990, joined by another on 28th February and another on 3rd March; Ballycotton, Co. Cork, 3rd March 1990; two, Killybegs, Co. Donegal, 3rd March to 16th April 1990; Belfast Harbour Estate, Co. Down, 27th March 1990, another 29th March to 17th April, another 31st March; Galway dump, Co. Galway, 4th-17th March 1990, another 13th January 1991.
**Iceland Gull** *Larus glaucores* (0, 10, 1)
(Northern Canada) An adult showing the characters of the race *L. g. kumlieni* was on the Skerries, Co. Dublin, on 9th-10th March.

**Ivory Gull** *Pagophila eburnea* (76, 35, 0)
**Gloucestershire** Frampton Sands, first-winter, 30th December 1990 to 1st January (*Brit. Birds* 84: 476).

**Gull-billed Tern** *Gelochelidon nilotica* (52, 186, 3)
**Cleveland** Reclamation Pond, Teessmouth, 5th June (J. B. Dunnett, S. J. Hinley et al.).
**Humberside** Hornsea, 13th July (D. R. Middleton).
**Suffolk** Landguard, 28th May (J. Askins, N. Cant, N. Odin).

(April cosmopolitan, nearest breeding colony in Denmark) A noticeable improvement on 1990 and there are still some records in circulation. The Teesside bird was gratefully received in the gathering gloom by one member of the Rarities Committee as it filled in an embarrassing space on his British list.

**Caspian Tern** *Sterna caspia* (30, 177, 7)
**Cambridgeshire** Grafham Water, 30th-31st July (B. A. E. Marr, P. & Mrs M. Smout).
**Dorset** Radipole, 30th June (M. Cade et al.).
**Gloucestershire** Slimbridge, 27th July (L. P. Alder).
**Leicestershire** Eyebrook Reservoir, 27th July (A. S. Brett, K. E. & H. R. Carter, R. F. Davis et al.).
**Norfolk** Breydon Water, Hickling and Filby Broads, Cantley Reservoir, 6th July to 1st August, two, at least 12th, 15th July, photographed (P. R. Allard, D. A. Dorling et al.), also in Suffolk. Bacton, 1st September (M. Fiszer).
**Suffolk** Minsmere, 28th July, photographed (G. A. Goffin, M. A. Steel, J. P. & P. Thompson et al.); presumed also in Norfolk.

1990 **Humberside** Flamborough Head, 6th May (B. K. Higham, P. A. Lassey).

(April cosmopolitan except South America, everywhere local) Another average year, with two birds once again in the Hickling area. Maybe one year they’ll breed. With records from both Grafham Water and Eyebrook this year, and Rutland Water in 1988, this species must represent one of the best chances for reservoir-watchers to find a rarity.

**Royal Tern** *Sterna maxima* (1, 4, 0)
1987 **Glamorgan, West** Mumbles, Swansea, first-winter, 21st December, metal ring on left leg (N. Pinder).

(West Africa, North America and the Caribbean) A well-described individual from south Wales. Two days prior to this record, an ‘orange-billed tern’, also in first-winter plumage, was observed at Dawlish Warren, Devon, and identified as Lesser Crested *S. bengalensis*. The documentation did not enable the Committee to accept the identification nor confidently to equate it with that at Mumbles. The observer of the Dawlish bird was adamant, however, that it was unringed.

**Lesser Crested Tern** *Sterna bengalensis* (0, 4, 0)
**Northumberland** Farne Islands, ♀, 14th May to 18th August, presumed returning 1990 individual (*Brit. Birds* 84: 476), again paired with Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*, breeding not
proven (D. C. Richardson et al.) (plate 223). Hauxley, 16th June (A. H. Banks), presumed Farnes individual.


(North and East Africa, east to Australia) The eighth year in succession that 'Elsie' (a cryptic name) has returned to the Farne Islands. So far, there has been no sign of the 1989 hybrid.

A 'large orange-billed tern' at Gibraltar Point, Lincolnshire, on 30th May 1989 was accepted as such, but could not be regarded as specifically identified.

**Forster's Tern** *Sternula forsteri* (0, 18, 2)

(North America) In Ireland, an adult at Millisle, Co. Down, from 6th January to 8th February, and one at Wexford Harbour, Co. Wexford, on 28th December.

**Bridled Tern** *Sternula anaethetus* (3, 10, 2)

*Essex* West Thurrock, 2nd June (W. J. Brane, D. C. S. Davies et al.); same, Hanningfield Reservoir, 2nd (D. Acfield, J. T. Smith et al.), also in Kent.

*Kent* Broadness, 2nd June (P. Larkin, B. Wright), same as Essex.

*Scilly* Tresco and Crow Sound, 6th July to 13th August, photographed (F. Hicks, W. H. Wagstaff et al.) (plate 45).

(Caribbean, West Africa, Red Sea, Indian and Pacific Oceans) Another good year, with two new individuals. The Scilly bird shows that not only will the boatmen deliver you to the rare birds, but they will also occasionally find one for you.

**White-winged Black Tern** *Chlidonias leucopterus* (50, 524, 8)

*Avon* Chew Valley Lake, adult, 29th July (J. J. Packer).

*Cambridgeshire* Grafham Water, juvenile, 10th-13th September (J. L. F. Parslow, A. D. W. Tongue et al.).

*Cornwall* Tamar Estuary, juvenile, 17th September (E. Griffiths).

*Dorset* Stanpit Marsh, juvenile, 1st-3rd September (L. Chappell, E. Lloyd, P. Morrison et al.).

*Essex* West Thurrock, 2nd June (P. J. Vines et al.), same as Kent.

*Grampian* Annachie Lagoon, St Fergus, adult, 14th-22nd July (T. W. Marshall et al.).

*Kent* Near Sittingbourne, 31st May (D. Sydall, R. R. Thompson); presumed same, Broadness, 2nd June (P. Larkin, B. Wright), same as Essex.

*Leicestershire* Swithland Reservoir, juvenile, 21st September (R. E. Davis, D. Dixon, J. A. Forryan et al.).

*1990 Lancashire* Leighton Moss and Dockacres Gravel-pits, adult or second-summer, 15th-16th July, photographed (M. G. Anderson, J. W. Bateman, A. D. McLevy et al.).

(Southeast Europe, West and East Asia) Two records from Ireland, with singles at Oxford Island, Co. Armagh, on 18th August 1990 and Tacumshin, Co. Wexford, on 17th August 1991.

Rather more juveniles than in 1990, but several omissions from the list of accepted records are caused by late submissions.

**Brünnich's Guillemot** *Uria lomvia* (2, 24, 1)

*Orkney* Sule Skerry, 25th January (M. Gray).

(Circumpolar Arctic) The first live individual recorded from Orkney, which has previously had four corpses, including two found by this observer, who must have been relieved to find a live one at last.
Ancient Murrelet *Synthliboramphus antiquus* (0, 1, 0)

**Devon** Lundy, adult, 14th April to at least 20th June (A. M. Jewels *et al*), presumed returning 1990 individual below.

1990 **Devon** Lundy, adult, 27th May to 26th June, photographed (R. J. Campey, K. A. Mortimer, J. Waldon *et al*).

(Pacific seaboard of Alaska and Northeast Siberia) This species joins Elegant *Sterna elegans* and Aleutian Terns *S. aleutica* as one of the least-to-be-expected Pacific Ocean vagrants to this side of the planet.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus americanus* (22, 32, 2)

**Orkney** North Ronaldsay, freshly dead, 25th September, photographed (A. E. Duncan, C. Hill, L. A. Lamont *et al*).

**Surrey** Oxted, caught, ringed, 17th October, photographed (P. Jones).

(North America) The Orkney record is not without precedents: previous records were in 1936 and 1956, but this is the first in Scotland since 1970. The Surrey record (only the third inland) mirrors the 1990 individual found dead in Bedfordshire in December. Of the 34 individuals recorded since 1958, 15 are known to have died here.

Scops Owl *Otus scops* (64, 19, 0)

1988 **Shetland** Collafirth, 9th June (B. Robertson per J. N. Dymond).

(South Europe, Russia, West Asia and Northwest Africa) A crofter's sighting on a roadside fence-post; otherwise, a typical date and of typical duration.

Snowy Owl *Nyctea scandiaca* (many, 98, 4)

**Grampian** St Fergus, ♀ or first-winter ♂, 29th April to 3rd May (L. T. A. Brain, T. W. Marshall, K. D. Shaw *et al*).

**Humberside** Spurn, second-winter ♂, 30th March (J. Cudworth, K. Fisher *et al*); same as Lincolnshire.

**Lincolnshire** Wainfleet and Friskney area, first-winter ♂, 24th December to 1991 (Brit. Birds 84: 478), was second-winter, last recorded 18th March (per G. P. Catley).

**Norfolk** Blakeney Point, second-winter ♂, 23rd March (R. G. Drew, M. I. Eldridge, A. M. Stoddart); same, Stiffkey, 23rd, Burnham Overy, 24th, Burnham Norton, 25th (per G. E. Dunmore), same as Lincolnshire.

**Orkney** North Ronaldsay, second-winter ♂, 27th April to 5th May (J. & P. J. Donnelly, A. E. Duncan *et al*). Sandyb, ♀ or immature ♂, 12th April (T. Leslie, R. F. H. Thorne); 10th May, photographed (Dr A. Mills, W. Sinclair, R. F. H. Thorne); ♀ or immature ♂, 10th June (C. Freeborn). Stronsay, immature ♂, 22nd April (R. Goodwin, J. F. & Mrs S. M. Holloway *et al*). All probably same as North Ronaldsay.

**Shetland** Fetlar, two ♀♂ from 1990 (Brit. Birds 84: 478) throughout year; presumed one of same, Unst, occasionally, May to October (per P. M. Ellis). Ollaberry, second-winter ♀, 22nd April, photographed (P. M. Ellis, B. W. Stephen). Fair Isle, age/sex uncertain, 11th May (J. & Mrs A. Stout).

1990 **Lincolnshire** See Lincolnshire above.

(Circumpolar Arctic) The Lincolnshire/Humberside bird of late 1990 (Brit. Birds 84: 478) certainly got around; it is conceivable that all records, with the exception of the Fetlar residents and the Grampian records, refer to the same much-travelled individual; its movements from 10th June onwards seem to have carefully avoided Fetlar.

Needle-tailed Swift *Hirundapus caudacutus* (2, 5, 3)

**Kent** Maidstone, 26th May, photographed (D. W. Taylor *et al*) (Brit. Birds 84: plate 305).

**Shetland** Noss, 11th-14th June (S. J. Brown, L. A. Gilbert *et al*).
Staffordshire Blithfield Reservoir, 1st June (M. J. Inskip, G. J. Mant).

(West Siberia to Japan, south to Northern China; also Himalayas east to Taiwan) Perhaps the same individual involved in all three records; but, if so, it seems to have taken a leisurely pace, for such a fast flier, from Kent to Shet­land. The previous record was in Orkney in May/June 1988 and the final comment in the rarities report for that year said ‘Late May/early June is the key period for its next fly-through’. How right that was, three years later.

**Pacific Swift** *Apus pacificus* (0, 0, 0)

(Asia from Kamchatka west to North India) With the abolition by the BOURC of a separate Category E for offshore records, last year’s statement (*Brit. Birds* 84: 478) is now countermanded; the species is upgraded to Category A (but still does not feature in the statistics given above, since it was an ‘At sea’ record, from an offshore gas platform).

**Alpine Swift** *Apus melba* (150, 292, 5)

**Gwent** Monmouth, 11th April (B. J. Gregory).

**Scilly** Tresco, 7th July (per W. H. Wagstaff); same, St Martin’s, 8th (P. J. Robinson). St Mary’s, 10th October, briefly taken into care stunned, photographed (W. H. Wagstaff, K. A. Wilson et al.).

**Sussex, East** Beachy Head, 13th April (D. P. Dunk, R. D. M. Edgar, N. Lannaway).

**Yorkshire, South** Sheffield, 25th April (B. C. Sheldon).

1988 **Sussex, East** Beachy Head, 27th March (P. M. Leonard, A. Tagg).

1990 **Kent** North Foreland, 24th March (R. Boulden). St Margaret’s, 1st July (A. Malone).

(Southeast Eurasia, Northwest and East Africa) The poorest showing since 1971, although one or two records are still under consideration. There are now 14 March records, mostly in the latter half of the month, but the trend towards earlier records in March and April is continuing. The Committee has commented before (*Brit. Birds* 82: 535) that claims of this species often still fail to establish the size of the bird and take into account the possibility of aberrantly plumaged Swifts *A. apus*.

**Little Swift** *Apus affinis* (0, 9, 1)

**Shetland** Fair Isle, 1st November (H. R. Harrop, C. J. Orsman, A. Prior et al.).

(Africa, Middle East and South Asia) A chance sighting late one afternoon for a fortunate few remaining on Fair Isle. The tenth for Britain and Ireland and the third in November (others have been in the period May to August).

**Bee-eater** *Merops apiaster* (154, 326, –)

1989 **Kent** St Margaret’s, five, 28th May (*Brit. Birds* 83: 472), presumed four of same, Sandwich Bay, 29th (I. D. Hunter).

1990 **Dorset** Portland, 1st May (G. Walbridge).

1990 **Merseyside** Hilbre, 6th June (D. Bates).

(South Europe, Southwest Asia and Northwest Africa) This species was dropped from the Committee’s list at the end of 1990.

**Roller** *Coracias garrulus* (135, 82, 2)

**Dyfed** Near St Nicholas, adult, 2nd to at least 11th August, photographed (D. A. J., Mrs J. L. & Miss R. Nelmes et al.).

**Norfolk** Holkham Meals, 29th July (R. A. Stroud et al.).

1989 **Devon** East Budleigh Common, 28th May to 14th June (*Brit. Birds* 83: 472), also 17th (R. Dunn).
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(South and East Europe, West Asia and Northwest Africa) A typical showing; another record, from Suffolk, was received too late for inclusion in this report.

Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla* (40, 327, 21)


**Humberside** Spurn, 27th-30th October (L. J. Degnan et al.).

**Lincolnshire** Gibraltar Point, 11th-20th October (S. P. Bodham, P. M. Troake et al.).

**Norfolk** Cley, 13th-19th October (D. & R. Frost et al.).

**Orkney** North Ronaldsay, 7th-20th October, two, 10th-15th, three, 12th (K. Fairclough, M. Gray, D. Patterson et al.).

**Scilly** St Martin’s, 28th-30th October (V. Jackson, D. F. Walsh et al.).

**Shetland** Fair Isle, six: 28th-30th April (H. R. Harrop, H. A. Williams et al.); 17th-31st May (P. V. Harvey); 30th September to 5th October (T. R. Cleaves, P. V. Harvey et al.); 9th-26th October, killed by Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor* (S. Kolodziejki, A. Mullins et al.); 10th-14th (J. A. Flynn et al.); 15th-22nd (P. V. Harvey et al.). Fetlar, four: 28th September (A. J. Stanbury, B. H. Thomas et al.); another two, 29th (I. D. Bullock, A. J. Stanbury et al.); another, 30th; three to 5th October, two to 12th, one to 13th (I. D. Bullock, A. J. Stanbury et al.). Virkie and Ward Hill, 28th September to 12th October (P. M. Ellis, H. Loates, G. W. Petrie et al.). Scatness, 12th October (D. Sudbury).

1989 **Scilly** St Mary’s, 7th May (G. M. & Mrs S. H. Haig).

1990 **Dorset** Portland, 7th May (G. Walbridge).

1990 **Norfolk** Weybourne, 15th-25th September (K. B. Shepherd et al.).

1990 **Yorkshire, North** Robin Hood’s Bay, 21st May (T. J. Barker).

(South Eurasia and North Africa) As reflected in the rarities reports for the last three years, this is a typical spread of records; the only point of note is the small-scale influx into Shetland in late September and early October.

Tree Swallow *Tachycineta bicolor* (0, 1, 0)

1990 **Scilly** St Mary’s, 6th-10th June, photographed (D. J. D. Hickman et al.) (Brit. Birds 84: plate 266).

(North America) The first record for Britain and Ireland and the Western Palearctic; one of the species predicted by Chandler S. Robbins as a likely candidate for transatlantic vagrancy (Brit. Birds 73: 448-457). It is perhaps more likely that it had crossed the Atlantic the previous autumn. It was associating with House Martins *Delichon urbica* and Swallows *Hirundo rustica* hawking insects over Porthellick Pool and disappeared when the other hirundines left.

Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica* (7, 214, 2)

**Derbyshire** Ogston Reservoir, 5th-8th May (A. D. & N. G. Burton, A. Davison et al.).

**Scilly** Tresco, 28th May to 1st June (T. J. Edwards, J. A. Flynn et al.).

1988 **Lincolnshire** Gibraltar Point, 14th November (P. Davey et al.).

1990 **Gwynedd** Mynydd Rhiw, Lleyn Peninsula, 29th August (D. G. P. Chatfield).

1990 **Kent** Foreness, 17th November (F. Solly, M. P. Sutherland et al.).

1990 **Norfolk** Winterton, 5th May (P. Gawky).

(South and East Eurasia and Africa) In the Channel Islands, there was another late acceptance for 1988 of one at Grouville Pond and St Ouen, Jersey, on 9th April.

In stark contrast to the totals in 1987-90, with over 120 records (including a group of seven together in 1987), this is a return to the previous levels of the 1970s and early 1980s. The 1988 and 1990 November records are not unusual and conform to the spread of records in the years of high occurrence.
Two 1991 records which were submitted late remain under consideration by the Committee.

**Olive-backed Pipit** *Anthus hodgsoni* (1, 117, 12)

**Borders** Coldingham Bay, trapped, 12th October, photographed (R. S. Craig, A. Kerr) (plate 232).

**Cornwall** Near Land's End, 15th October (P. H. Aley).


**Orkney** North Ronaldsay, 10th October (A. E. Duncan, K. Scott et al.). Stroma, 14th-15th October; another, 14th, photographed (J. F. Holloway, N. J. & Mrs S. B. Morgan et al.).

**Shetland** Fair Isle, four: 10th-13th October, trapped 11th (P. A. Maker, K. Pellow, H. A. Williams et al.); 11th-23rd, trapped 15th (P. V. Harvey, S. Kołodziejski et al.); 20th (C. J. Orsman); 1st November (H. R. Harrop).

1990 **Dorset** Portland, two, 22nd October (P. Coe, G. Walbridge), presumed same as 14th (Brit. Birds 84: 480).

1990 **Grampian** Cruden Bay, 20th October (B. J. Best, L. Brain, A. L. Broom).

1990 **Humbreland** Flamborough Head, 19th October (P. A. Lassey, J. M. Pearson); 24th-25th October (J. C. Lamplough, P. A. Lassey, N. A. Pearson).

1990 **Orkney** North Ronaldsay, 27th-28th October (P. J. Donnelly et al.).

(Northeast Russia to Central and East Asia) The fifth record for Ireland was one at Cobh, Co. Cork, on 23rd-24th January.

Well below the 1990 showing of 46 records, a return to the slightly above-average numbers of the 1980s. Leaving aside midwinter records, one of which extended into spring, the Dorset bird was only the fourth in spring. The Irish record is now the third for the midwinter period.

**Pechora Pipit** *Anthus gustavi* (13, 22, 6)

**Man, Isle of** Calf of Man, 4th-9th May (N. V. McCanch, J. Reid et al.).


1990 **Cornwall** Land's End, 20th-21st October (J. McCallum, G. C. Stephenson, J. M. Walters et al.).

1990 **Dorset** Portland, 20th October (G. Walbridge).

(Northeast Russia, Central and East Asia) Fair Isle maintains its place of prominence for this elusive Siberian skulker, but for the third year running there are as many records away from there (albeit two elsewhere in Shetland); and note the second in spring. The autumn 1990 records in Cornwall and Dorset provide a much-needed sign that there is hope for the rest of us.

**Red-throated Pipit** *Anthus cervinus* (30, 200, 12)


**Northumberland** Farne Islands, 29th May (D. M. Lamacracht et al.).

**Orkney** North Ronaldsay, 11th October (P. J. Donnelly, M. Gray).

**Scilly** St Mary's, 17th October (P. M. Griggs, M. J. Taylor et al.); presumed same, 22nd-26th (M. A. Hardwick et al.). St Agnes, 21st-25th October, photographed (I. M. Beggs, A. R. Dean, P. A. Dukes et al.) (plate 233).

**Shetland** Fair Isle, 14th-16th May (P. V. Harvey et al.); 18th-23rd May (D. J. Unsworth, H. A. Williams et al.); another, in song, 18th-23rd (P. V. Harvey, D. J. Unsworth et al.); 22nd-28th September (D. Fairhurst, H. R. Harrop, P. Scholes et al.).

1990 Norfolk Burnham Norton, 11th-12th May (V. Eve).

(Arctic Eurasia) A good year, with 1988 the best since 1985, a fairly typical pattern of May and September-October occurrences reflecting passage over the eastern North Sea. There must be precious few observers who have heard this species singing in Britain.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* (3, 15, 0)

A male showing the characters of the southwest Asian and southeast European race *M. f. feldegg* was recorded as follows:

1985 Suffolk Landguard, 30th June (T. Holzer et al.).

(Balkans and Asia Minor) Observers should continue to take special care to eliminate black-headed individuals of the race *thunbergi* from consideration when identifying *feldegg*.

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola* (2, 51, 5)

Leicestershire Eyebrook Reservoir, first-summer ♂, 18th May, photographed (C. M. Husband, I. Merrill et al.) (plate 240).

Northumberland Hauxley, ♀, 15th-16th May (C. Bradshaw, I. Fisher, M. J. Sharp et al.).

Orkney North Ronaldsay, first-winter, 14th-15th October (M. Gray, D. Patterson, K. Scott et al.).

Shetland Sumburgh, first-winter, 23rd September (A. Brown, P. M. Ellis, J. D. Okill et al.). Fair Isle, first-winter, 26th September (H. J. Fearn, T. Ford, T. M. Melling et al.).

(Northeast and East Russia, West Siberia, West and Central Asia) The best year bar one for records of this species; it includes the first and second in spring. The well-watched individual on St Agnes, Scilly, in October 1978 remains under active consideration. An identification paper is in preparation by Peter Clement and Tim Inskipp for a future issue.

Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia* (2, 91, 1)

Shetland Sumburgh, 14th-15th June, trapped 14th (Dr C. F. Mackenzie, J. D. Okill, K. Osborn et al.).

(Scandinavia, East Europe and West Asia) A poor showing in comparison with recent years (maximum of ten in 1989). June records are not unusual, but this record is the latest in ‘spring’ and equals one on Fair Isle on 15th June 1974. Once considered to be a potential colonist.

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata* (1, 142, 2)

Individuals showing the characters of one or other of the eastern races *S. t. matura* or *steinegeri* were recorded as follows:

Norfolk Happisburgh, ♀ or immature, 27th-28th October (K. Bailey, G. Cresswell, M. Fiszer et al.).

Scilly Tresco, ♀ or immature, 15th-23rd October (M. D. & Mrs A. C. Wilson, R. A. & Mrs E. Wilson et al.).

1990 Humberside Flamborough Head, ♂, 21st April; ♂, 7th May (P. A. Lassey, M. Newsome, P. J. Willoughby et al.); ♀ or immature, 20th October (M. Newsome, D. I. M. Wallace); ♀ or immature, 26th-29th (D. Beaumont, P. Hansbro, P. A. Lassey et al.).


1990 Orkney North Ronaldsay, ♀ or immature, 14th-16th October (A. Duncan, M. Gray et al.).
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1990 Tyne & Wear Marsden, ♀️ or immature, 7th-9th October (A. L. Armstrong, P. T. & Mrs M. Bell et al.).

An individual showing the characters of one or other of the above races or of S. t. variegata was recorded as follows:

1990 Norfolk Stiffkey, ♂️, 14th-16th October, photographed (A. Bloomfield, A. Jenkins). (White Sea, eastwards across Siberia, East Caucasus and Northern Iran)

Following the decision by the Committee to delete this and other species from its list from the end of 1990, the Committee met again in April 1992 and, in response to requests from county recorders and others, reconsidered its view on the consideration of records of certain races showing distinctive or characteristic features (Brit. Birds 85: 330-331).

There was a good showing in 1990, boosted to 18 by the additions here; 1991, by contrast, was a poor year. Several other records have yet to be submitted or are still in circulation around the Committee.

Isabelline Wheatear Oenanthe isabellina (1, 6, 1)

Scilly St Agnes, 15th October (A. R. Dean et al.); same, Gugh, 15th-26th, photographed (D. Bridges, C. & J. R. Lamsdell et al.) (plates 235 & 238).

1990 Scilly St Mary’s, 18th October to 2nd November, photographed (G. M. Haig et al.) (Brit. Birds 84: plate 100).

(Southeast Europe east to Mongolia) Two in as many years in Scilly brings the total to eight for Britain (five of which have been in October). The 1990 record was regrettably submitted too late for inclusion in the rarities report last year and was not, despite completely unfounded hearsay, experiencing difficulties with the Committee.

Pied Wheatear Oenanthe pleschanka (3, 19, 5)

Cornwall Dodman Point, ♂️, 1st-5th November (S. M. Christophers, J. Hawkey, D. Jackson et al.).

Humberside Spurn, first-summer ♂️, trapped, 20th June, photographed (B. R. Spence et al.). Also in North Yorkshire.

Lothian Thornton Loch, first-winter ♂️, 27th-30th October, photographed (S. J. Dodgson, P. R. Gordon et al.) (plates 234 & 237).

Shetland Sumburgh, first-winter ♂️, 9th-13th October, photographed (P. M. Ellis, A. McCall, D. Saddaby et al.); Lerwick, first-winter ♂️, 17th October (N. J. Riddford et al.).

Yorkshire, North Scarborough, first-summer ♂️, 22nd-23rd June, photographed (R. Crofton et al.) (Brit. Birds 84: plate 304), presumed same as Humberside individual above.

(Southeast Europe and South-central Asia) With the presumption that the Spurn and Scarborough birds were the same individual, five records in one year follows the recent increase in records, makes 1991 the best year ever, and brings the total for Britain and Ireland to 27. Following the second record outside the September to December period in July 1990, the well-watched bird in June in Humberside and North Yorkshire was a surprise.

Desert Wheatear Oenanthe deserti (11, 25, 5)

Dorset Portland, first-winter ♀️, 9th-12th October, trapped 11th (M. Cade, D. J. Chown, M. Rogers et al.).

Kent Langdon, ♂️, 24th November (I. P. Hodgson, M. Stephenson et al.).

Lancashire Fleetwood, ♀️, 5th-19th November, photographed (D. Rusling, R. Scholes et al.).

Lincolnshire Donna Nook, ♀️ or first-winter, 10th-13th October (K. Akin, K. E. Wilson et al.).

Shetland Fair Isle, ♀️, 26th October (H. R. Harrop, P. V. Harvey).
Rare birds in Great Britain in 1991

(North Africa, Northwest Arabia, east to Mongolia) These five records (equalling those of 1989) reflect an increasing trend. This species has now appeared in every year since 1984, prior to which there was a five-year gap. The period October-November is typical for Desert Wheatears in Britain. Details of the December 1990 bird (Brit. Birds 84: plates 181 & 182) have not yet been submitted to the Committee.

White’s Thrush Zoothera dauma (29, 15, 0)
1990 Borders St Abb's, freshly dead, 26th September, photographed (R. Goff, J. D. Lough, D. Patterson), mounted specimen retained by R. Goff.

(Northern and Central Siberia) This record brings the total for 1990 to three, an all-time high since at least 1958. Another report, also from Scotland, in late September 1991, was submitted late and is still in circulation to the Committee.

Siberian Thrush Zoothera sibirica (1, 3, 0)
1976 Hampshire Alice Holt, 6, 28th December (Brit. Birds 70: 429; 72: 121), now considered to be inadequately documented, so no longer accepted.

Swainson’s Thrush Catharus ustulatus (1, 16, 1)
Scilly St Mary’s, 7th-8th October, photographed (S. Browne, T. Wheeler et al).

(North America) The eighth record for Scilly. Of the 18 records in Britain and Ireland, all except one have been from 30th September to 31st October (the first, in Co. Mayo, was in May 1956).

Gray-cheeked Thrush Catharus minimus (1, 37, 3)
Scilly St Agnes, 22nd-26th September, trapped 24th, photographed (C. J., P. G. & S. R. Williams et al); 16th-17th October (G. M. Haig, J. Herbert et al). St Mary’s, 17th-20th October (R. Parry, M. D. & Mrs A. C. Wilson, R. A. & Mrs E. Wilson et al) (plates 236, 239, 251 & 252).

(North America and Eastern Siberia) The first St Agnes record is slightly early and the first for September; the October records are expected, on predictable dates for this almost-annual visitor (given a favourable wind).

Eye-browed Thrush Turdus obscurus (0, 12, 1)
Scilly St Mary’s, 12th-13th October (K. Colcombe, I. Saville et al).

(Siberia and Eastern Asia to Japan) The sixth record for Scilly at what is seemingly a typical time, but the first to stay for more than a day (a feature appreciated by many observers). This species has now appeared in the archipelago in three of the last five years – almost a Western Palearctic hot-spot for the species. Descriptions of another, or possibly the same individual (opinions are divided as to how many individuals were involved), on Tresco and again on St Mary’s on dates following the above record, are still in circulation to the Committee.

Lanceolated Warbler Locustella lanceolata (9, 41, 2)
Shetland Fair Isle, first-winter, 28th September to 5th October, trapped 28th (T. G. Francis, N. C. Green, D. Suiddaby et al); another, 10th October, photographed (N. C. Green, H. R. Harrop, P. V. Harvey et al).

1990 Gwynedd Bardsey, trapped, 18th October (P. M. Howlett, S. Hughes, S. W. Walker et al).
Rare birds in Great Britain in 1991

(East Eurasia from Central Russia to North Japan) Fair Isle maintains its grip on the species, but all things are possible; who would have predicted the next record (the eleventh) away from there would be off the west coast of Wales?

**Great Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus arundinaceus* (23, 140, 2)

- **Gwynedd** Bardsey, 22nd May (S. W. Walker et al.).
- **Shetland** Norwick, Unst, 27th September (H. J. Burgess, M. G. Pennington).
- **1990 Berkshire** Windsor Great Park, in song, 22nd May to 16th June, trapped 27th (C. Herbert et al.).

(Europe, Southwest and East Asia and North Africa) One at St Ouen, Jersey, on 18th August 1984 was only recently submitted to the Committee.

A typical showing, though September records are particularly noteworthy.

**Booted Warbler** *Hippolais caligata* (1, 30, 1)

- **Humberside** Spurn, 2nd-6th September, trapped 2nd, photographed (P. J. Alker, B. R. Spence et al.) (plate 106).

(Northwest Russia, east to Mongolia and south to Iran) Has appeared every year but two since 1980; early records were mostly in Shetland, there have been seven in Scilly, and this is the third for the Spurn area on what are fairly typical dates.

**Subalpine Warbler** *Sylvia cantillans* (12, 250, 1)

- **Northumberland** Farne Islands, 26th April (G. C. Richardson et al.).
- **1990 Humberside** Flamborough Head, trapped, 16th May, photographed (J. C. Lamplough, P. A. Lassey, G. A. Speck et al.).
- **1990 Man, Isle of Gaff of Man** first-summer, trapped, 21st May, photographed (P. Naylor, J. Sanderson, A. Sapsford).
- **1990 Norfolk** Blakeney Point, 20th-21st May (Br. Birds 84: 492), also 22nd (per P. R. Allard).

(South Europe, West Turkey, Northwest Africa) The lowest showing since 1978; almost everyone hoping to add this species to their British list in 1991 will have been disappointed. The average number of records since 1970 has been ten a year, with a maximum of 32 in 1988.

**Sardinian Warbler** *Sylvia melanocephala* (1, 23, 1)

- **Norfolk** Muckleburgh Hill, 27th April (S. J. M Gantlett, B. Ram et al.).
- **1990 Cornwall** The Lizard, 18th-26th March (B. Cave, A. R. Pay et al.).

(South Europe, Middle East and North Africa) The total for 1990 now moves to five and equals 1988 as the best year for records of this species. The first March record in 1990 (Br. Birds 84: 492) cannot have been far from the second at the same time, also in Cornwall: a small arrival? The Committee would be interested in hearing from anyone with knowledge of where the Norfolk individual might have been ringed.

**Desert Warbler** *Sylvia nana* (0, 5, 1)

- **Wight, Isle of** Bembridge, 27th October to 9th November, trapped 27th, photographed (J. C. Gloyn, J. High et al.) (plate 104).

(Middle East, Central Asia and Northwest Sahara) The sixth for Britain and the second record for the Isle of Wight, and very close to the previous occurrence in October 1988; all records have been in the period 20th Octo-
Ber to 2nd January. Details of the individuals in Humberside and Kent have only recently been submitted and are still in circulation around the Committee.

**Greenish Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochiloides* (13, 187, 9)

**Grampian**, Collieston, first-winter, 1st-2nd September (J. M. Phillipps, S. A. Reeves et al.).

**Kent** Dungeness, in song, 20th June (D. Boyle et al.).

**Norfolk** Horsey, 14th August (G. P. Catley), Blakeney Point, 1st September (A. M. Stoddart et al.).

**Northumberland** Farne Islands, 22nd August (G. W. Dodds, R. A. Yasey et al.).


**Yorkshire, North** Filey, trapped, 10th October (T. L. Hobson).

1989 **Cleveland** Hartlepool, 31st August (Brit. Birds 83: 483), finder was M. J. (see also Arctic Warbler *P. borealis*).

1990 **Norfolk** Holme, 8th September (D. Hamps, G. F. Hibberd et al.).

(Eurasia, cast from Northern Germany) A typical spread of records from Shetland down the East Coast to Kent. How long before a singing individual in June stays long enough to attract a female? It must have been nice to be on Whalsay on 17th September (see also Arctic Warbler *P. borealis*).

**Arctic Warbler** *Phylloscopus borealis* (19, 144, 6)

**Cleveland** Hartlepool, 31st August to 2nd September, photographed (M. J. Gee et al.).

**Orkney** Holm, first-winter, 16th-20th September, trapped 16th (R. G. Adam et al.).

**Shetland** Fair Isle, two, 16th-20th September, trapped (R. G. Adam et al.). Sunnburgh, 17th September, trapped, photographed (P. M. Ellis, K. Osborn et al.). Whalsay, trapped, 17th September (J. L. Irvine, Dr B. Marshall).

(Northern Fennoscandia east to Alaska) A good year in comparison with recent years, but well below the 1981 maximum of 17. The Cleveland bird was at the same site and on the same date as a Greenish Warbler two years previously, bettered only by the one on Whalsay on 17th September in the same bush and at the same time as a Greenish Warbler.

**Pallas’s Warbler** *Phylloscopus proregulus* (3, 540, )

1990 **Devon** Hallsands Ley, trapped, 20th October, photographed (A. D. & J. Evans). East Soar, 1st November (R. Burridge, A. C. Cole et al.).

1990 **Humberside** Spurn, 21st October (T. Dixon, M. G. Neal), presumed same as Kilnsea, 20th (Brit. Birds 84: 494).

1990 **Sussex, East** Beachy Head, 10th November (G. W. Gowlett).

1990 **Tyne & Wear** Marsden, 21st October (B. S. Bates et al.). Whitburn, 21st October, photographed (J. P. Cook et al.).

(Central, East and South Asia) These records take the 1990 total to 34. The species was removed from the Committee’s list at the end of 1990.

**Radde’s Warbler** *Phylloscopus schwarzi* (1, 105, 16)

**Cleveland** South Gare, 12th-14th October, photographed (N. A. Preston et al.).

**Devon** Prawle Point, trapped, 10th November, photographed (A. K. Searle, N. L. Trigg).

**Fife** Isle of May, trapped, 10th October, photographed (J. Calladine, Dr J. D. Wilson et al.).

**Humberside** Spurn, 9th October (M. Sherwin); trapped, 15th October (J. Cudworth, M. F. Stoye et al.). Grimston, trapped, 12th October, photographed (S. G. Wilson).

**Kent** Sandwich Bay, first-winter, trapped, 5th October, photographed (K. B. Ellis, S. D. Stansfield). Dungeness, first-winter, trapped, 9th October (D. Boyle, K. & R. Palmer, D. Walker et al.).

**Scilly** St Mary’s, 21st-23rd October (K. Arber, B. J. Small et al.).

**Shetland** Out Skerries, first-winter, trapped, 11th October, found dead, 11th (Dr B. Marshall, D. Suddaby, E. Tait et al.), skin retained by D. Suddaby. Fair Isle, first-winter, trapped but not


233. Below, Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus*, St Agnes, Scilly, October 1991 (David M. Cottridge/Avian Photos)

235 & 238. Centre, Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina*, Gugh, Scilly, October 1991 (left, David M. Cottridge/Avian Photos; right, S. L. Satchell)

236 & 239. Bottom, Gray-cheeked Thrush *Catharus minimus*, St Mary's, Scilly, October 1991 (David M. Cottridge/Avian Photos)
240. Above, first-summer male Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*, Eyebrook Reservoir, Leicestershire, May 1991 (M. Cross)


ringered, 10th October (P. V. Harvey, P. A. Maker, S. Rogers et al.). Kergord, first-winter, 11th-12th October, trapped 12th (C. Donald, P. Sclater et al.).

**Suffolk** Holklesley, trapped, 12th October (P. Catchpole, J. Glazebrook).

**Sussex, West** Selsey Bill, 21st October (T. J. Edwards, O. Mitchell, D. I. Smith et al.).

**Tayside** Auchmithie, Castletown Bay, 11th October (M. S. Scott).

**Tyne & Wear** Tynemouth, 11th-14th October, photographed (C. Bradshaw et al.) (plate 242).

1990 **Gwynedd** Bardsey, trapped, 18th October (S. W. Walker et al.).

1990 **Humberside** Hamborough Head, first-winter, trapped, 13th October, photographed (P. A. Lassey, V. A. Lister, J. M. Pearson et al.); 20th October (P. A. Lassey, D. Quinn); first-winter, trapped, 27th October (P. A. Lassey, D. I. M. Wallace, P. J. Willoughby).

1990 **Tyne & Wear** Scaburn, 18th October (B. S. Bates).

(Central and East Asia) A good year; perhaps, with the addition of those records currently still in circulation around the Committee, 1991 records will equal, if not exceed, the record 21 in 1988. Similar patterns of arrival were detectable in both years, with about a dozen individuals arriving during 9th-12th October, a pattern shared with Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*, and two (possibly birds moving on from earlier points of arrival) on 21st; only two were not associated with these dates, at Prawle Point and at Sandwich Bay.

The Committee would again like to make the point that, despite the publication of several identification papers in recent years, descriptions of this species received by the Committee do not always successfully distinguish between this and Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus*; head pattern, bill size and colour tones remain more problematical than many claimants appear to appreciate.

**Dusky Warbler** *Phylloscopus fuscatus* (1, 94, 3)

**Norfolk** Sheringham, 27th-31st October (P. J. Heath et al.).

**Northumberland** Farne Islands, 27th October (S. Breslcy et al.).

**Sussex, East** Beachy Head, 27th-30th October (D. & J. F. Cooper, J. Curson, R. J. Fairbank et al.).

1990 **Humberside** Hamborough Head, 21st October (P. J. Willoughby et al.).

1990 **Kent** Minnis Bay, 20th-21st October (N. Hando, T. N. Hodge et al.).

1990 **Norfolk** Holme, 5th-11th November (*Brit. Birds* 84: 495), 12th (per P. R. Allard); another, 7th (W. J. A. Boyd, P. Fisher, G. F. Hibberd et al.).

(Central and Northeast to Southern Asia) Following the recent pattern of good years (1987 and 1990) followed or preceded by poor years (1986, 1988 and 1989), 1991 was another poor year, in stark contrast to Radde’s Warbler *Phylloscopus schwarzii*, but a number of records remain in circulation around the Committee. From the pattern shown by these records, it is clear that a small-scale arrival took place on 27th October.

**Bonelli’s Warbler** *Phylloscopus bonelli* (3, 107, 3)

**Humberside** Spurn, first-winter, trapped, 24th October, photographed (D. J. Bowes et al.) (plate 241).

**Scilly** Bryher, first-winter, 22nd September to 6th October (C. Thompson, K. A. Wilson et al.).

1990 **Cornwall** Portgwarra, 25th-27th October (G. C. Stephenson et al.).

(Central, West and South Europe, Levant and Northwest Africa) Also one in Ireland, a first-winter trapped on Great Saltee, Co. Wexford, on 2nd-3rd September.

A small but fairly typical scatter of records.

**Short-toed Treecreeper** *Certhia brachydactyla* (0, 10, 1)

Rare birds in Great Britain in 1991

(Central and South Europe, Asia Minor and North Africa) The second individual differed from the one present (from mid October) up to a week previously by lacking a ring. Nine of the 11 British records have been in Kent. These two, and two other records in 1990, are the first since 1982, but several records from earlier years remain under consideration.

Fig. 5. Isabelline Shrike Lanius isabellinus, St Mary’s, Scilly, October 1991 [from painting by Dan Powell]

Penduline Tit Remiz pendulinus (0, 46, 9)

Bedfordshire Priory Country Park, Bedford, adult, 18th September, photographed (D. Kramer et al.).

Hampshire Farlington Marshes, two ♂♂, at least 27th January (S. R. Colenutt et al.).

Kent Sandwich Bay, adult and first-winter, 9th-10th October, first-winter trapped 9th, photographed (K. B. Ellis, P. W. J. Findley et al.). Pegwell Bay, ♂, 14th October (M. P. Sutherland).


Norfolk Titchwell, adult, 9th-10th May (T. R. Dean et al.).

1989 Sussex, West Pagham Harbour, adult and juvenile, 1st November (C. M. & Mrs B. James et al.).

1990 Dorset Radipole, adult, 28th October (Dr T. Elkins, Mrs C. Stanmore, Miss P. Whitehouse et al.).

1990 Kent Locality withheld, east Kent, ♂ at nest, 21st April to 1st May (observer’s name withheld).

1990 Scilly Tresco, ♂, ♀, juvenile, 17th-18th October, photographed (S. L. Rivers, A. E. Shrimpton et al.).
1990 Wight, Isle of St Catherine’s Point, 17th April (D. Swensson).
(Western Europe to Manchuria) The comments in the 1990 rarities report, asking if the first breeding attempts were far off, seem to have been answered before the question was posed.

Isabelline Shrike *Lanius isabellinus* (1, 31, 2)

**Humberside** Easington, first-winter, trapped, 26th October, photographed; released Kilnsea 26th, stayed to 2nd November (M. Coverdale, I. Crowther, J. Hewitt et al.).
**Scilly** St Mary’s, 12th October, photographed (T. D. Codlin, D. Dixon, D. Powell et al.) (fig. 5).

1989 Cornwall Zennor, 27th to at least 30th October, photographed (D., D. P. & W. Leadley, D. Poyser et al.).
(South Asia to China) A fairly typical showing within the normal period of occurrence. The bird in Scilly was in the adjoining field to that containing the Eye-browed Thrush *Turdus obscurus*.

Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor* (32, 106, 1)

**Norfolk** Potter Heigham, adult, 1st-8th September (P. Cawley, N. Maxwell, E. J. Phillips et al.).
(South and East Europe and Southwest Asia) With this record, the species maintains its long run of annual appearances.

Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator* (101, 484, –)

1988 Scilly St Mary’s, 24th April to 4th May (J. A. Norton, K. A. Turner, A. S. Vials et al.).
1988 Sussex, West See 1989 below.
1989 Dorset Abbotsbury, 9th May (S. A. Groves et al.).
1990 Devon Prawle Point, juvenile, 30th September to 14th October (R. Cordery, D. Rhymes, D. Smallshire et al.).
1990 Wight, Isle of St Catherine’s Point, juvenile, 12th August (A. R. & Mr & Mrs M. P. Birch, Miss S. Teo) (fig. 6).
(West, Central and South Europe, Southwest Asia and North Africa) These records take the 1988 total to 28, the 1989 total to 21 and the 1990 total to 22. This species was removed from the Committee’s list at the end of 1990.

![Fig. 6. Juvenile Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator*, St Catherine’s Point, Isle of Wight, August 1990 (Andrew Birch)](image-url)
**Nutcracker** *Nucifraga caryocatactes* (45, 352, 2)

**Hampshire** Copythorne, 22nd-26th October (S. J. Aspinall, C. Chatters, Mrs Clifford).

**Staffordshire** Cocknage Wood, Stoke-on-Trent, 14th October to 9th November, photographed

(Eurasia from Scandinavia and the Alps to Kamchatka and China) The first acceptable records since 1987, despite several ‘back-garden possibles’ from well-meaning members of the public.

**Rose-coloured Starling** *Sturnus roseus* (160, 202, 9)

**Cornwall** Towednack, juvenile, 17th-19th September (M. J. Rogers *et al.*); presumed same, St Ives, 24th September to 30th October (V. A. Stratton *et al.*). Kelynack, juvenile, 6th October (D. Garner, S. Glenn).

**Devon** Hope Cove, juvenile, 3rd-4th September (R. Burridge, A. C. Cole, P. Sanders).

**Fife** Isle of May, juvenile, 14th September to at least 2nd October, trapped 2nd, photographed
(J. G. Brown, C. Redfern *et al.*).

**Humberside** Spurn and Kilnsea, juvenile, 27th October (M. Coverdale *et al.*).

**Scilly** Bryher, juvenile, 30th September (K. M. Wilson *et al.*); presumed same, St Martin’s, 1st October (per W. H. Wagstaff). St Mary’s, juvenile, 3rd-15th October (D. L. Buckingham, K. A. Wilson *et al.* (plate 102).

**Western Isles** Ardivachar Point, South Uist, juvenile, 27th September to at least 8th October
(T. J. Dix, W. D. Oldham, A. T. Simmons *et al.*).

1987 **Yorkshire, West** Normanton, adult, 23rd-24th June, photographed (Miss S. Pettitt).

1990 **Dorset** Portland, adult, since 30th August 1989 to at least February (*Brit. Birds* 84: 498), to
14th April (per G. Walbridge).

1990 **Kent** Biddenden, first-summer, at least 12th-13th May; photographed (Mr Franklin, T. Hatton, M. Wicks *et al.*).

1990 **Lancashire** Near Skelmersdale, juvenile, 17th October (E. J. Smith).

1990 **Scilly** St Agnes, first-summer, 5th-6th August (J. W. & Mrs P. Hale *et al.*).

(Southeast Europe and Southwest Asia) Also, a juvenile on Cape Clear Island, Co. Cork, from 29th August to 22nd October (plates 228 & 229).

A typically random set of records, mostly of autumn juveniles at coastal sites and adults in summer and throughout the winter; the origins of the latter are, naturally, a matter of speculation.

**Yellow-throated Vireo** *Vireo flavifrons* (0, 1, 0)


(North America) The first record for Britain and Ireland and the Western Palearctic. The first of several transatlantic vagrants to arrive in Britain and Ireland at this time, after a period of fast-moving depressions, closely followed by a Red-eyed Vireo *Vireo olivaceus* the next day at Cot Valley, Cornwall, another on 23rd on Dursey Island, Co. Cork, and an Ovenbird *Seiurus aurocapillus*, also on Dursey Island on 24th-25th September (*Brit. Birds* 84: 499, 501, plates 95, 96, 274).

**Red-eyed Vireo** *Vireo olivaceus* (1, 65, 4)

**Lothian** Barns Ness, 13th-14th October (D. Garratt *et al.*).

**Suffolk** Lowestoft, 6th October (P. J. Ransome, R. Wilton *et al.*).

1990 **Tyne & Wear** Seaburn, 27th-29th October (B. S. & J. M. Bates, P. Gill, T. I. Mills *et al.*).

(North America) Two in Ireland: a single at Crookhaven, Co. Cork, on 22nd September, and another at Hook Head, Co. Wexford, on 12th October.

Oddly, and completely unpredictably (but not without precedent), all three records in Britain were from sites on the East Coast. The 1990 record takes
the total for that year to nine, third behind 14 in 1985 and 11 in 1988. The one in Suffolk was in the same location as that three years (and one week) earlier. Two 1991 records were submitted late and are still in circulation around the Committee.

**Arctic Redpoll** *Carduelis hornemannii* (30, 171, 58)

**Bedfordshire** New Wavendon Heath, 21st-28th March (B. Nightingale et al.); another, 23rd-24th (M. J. Pulfer, P. Smith, P. Trodd et al.).

**Essex** Hockley Woods, 10th March (the late R. Hare), presumed same, 16th (I. Prentice).

**Kent** Church Wood, Canterbury, four: two, 24th February; three, 3rd March; one, 9th (C. D. Abrams, J. Cantelo). Sevenoaks, 2nd March (J. V. Waterman).


**Norfolk**
- Holkham Meals, seven, 12th January, including four since December 1990 (Brit. Birds 84: 499) (M. I. Eldridge, A. H. J. Harrop, A. M. Stoddart); nine, 2nd February, including seven since 12th January; twelve, possibly fifteen, 16th February (A. H. J. Harrop); ten, possibly fourteen, 17th (per S. J. M. Gantlett et al.). Bradwell, 27th January to 1st March, photographed (P. R. Allard, R. Williamson et al.). Carrow, Norwich, 30th January (R. C. McIntyre). River Wensum, Norwich, at least one, 14th-22nd February, photographed (R. H. Chittenden et al.)(plate 216). Rollesby Broad, at least one, 8th March (J. R. Williamson); eight, 9th (M. I. Eldridge, A. M. Stoddart). Mousehold Heath, Norwich, twenty, 10th-16th March, up to five to 22nd (M. I. Eldridge, A. M. Stoddart).

**Suffolk** West Stow, King’s Forest, two, 26th January to at least 16th February (J. M. Cawston, E. W. Patrick, R. Tomlinson); possibly one of same, 1st April (S. Bishop, R. M. Brown, T. Kertridge).

1976 **Norfolk** Holkham Meals, 1st April (J. B. Kemp).

1982 **Orkney** Deerness, 5th March (R. G. Adam).

1989 **Norfolk** Thorpe End, Norwich, 25th January to 25th March, photographed (B. W. Jarvis, A. M. Stoddart et al.).

1990 **Western Isles** Hirta, St Kilda, 21st September (S. J. Holloway).

(Circumpolar Arctic) All or virtually all of these records concern individuals of the race *exilipes*. The pattern of these records is similar to that for 1990; indeed, some were of the same birds remaining into 1991; most records were from Norfolk, and mainland observers north of Humberside await their first multiple arrivals.

The identification paper by P. G. Lansdown, N. J. Riddiford and Dr A. G. Knox (Brit. Birds 84: 41-56) sets out the criteria by which all records (especially of *exilipes*) will be assessed.

**Two-barred Crossbill** *Loxia leucoptera* (40, 68, 2)

**Dumfries & Galloway** Loch Dee, 3rd April (B. Meams).


**Norfolk** Lynford Arboretum, since 24th November 1990 (Brit. Birds 84: 499), to 1st June (per G. E. Dunmore).

1990 **Devon** Haldon Forest, 8th-9th October (R. Khan).

1990 **Shetland** Fair Isle, juvenile, 28th August (J. Badley and members of YOC).

1990 **Somerset** Stock Hill, Mendip, juvenile, 13th October (P. W. Luxton).

(Northeast Europe, North-central Asia, northern North America and West Indies) Probably all three records are of birds that had been present since the early part of the winter (if not earlier, in late summer or early autumn). The
additions here take the 1990 total to 18, the second-best after 1987, when there was a small-scale influx into Shetland and Orkney. Several other records for 1991 and earlier years remain under consideration.

**Parrot Crossbill** *Loxia pytyopsittacus* (10, 380, 1)

**Durham** See 1990 Durham below.


**Northumberland** Kielder Forest, 9, 19th January (D. C. Jardine), probably same, 24th (P. Doyle).

**Suffolk** Brandon, 9, presumed since 1990, 2nd January to 5th February (per P. W. Murphy); 11th (P. J. Dolton); additional 9, 2nd February (P. J. Dolton), probably also since 1990; 9, probably since 1990, 2nd to at least 30th January (per P. W. Murphy); 11th February (P. J. Dolton).

**Yorkshire, North** See 1990 North Yorkshire below.

1990 **Durham** Castle Eden Dene, seven, 16th December to 10th March 1991, additional nine, 19th December to 1st March 1991 (B. Unwin et al).

1990 **Kent** Sandwich Bay, 9, trapped, 27th October, photographed (P. Brown, J. N. Hollyer, R. Morton).

1990 **Norfolk** Stiffkey, 9, 18th October (V. Eve et al).

Upper Sheringham and Weybourne, 13th October to 8th December: two 9 9, 13th October; 9, 21st; nine individuals, 24th; fourteen, 10th November; eight, 11th; 9, 25th; 9 and four 9 9, 8th December (K. B. Shepherd).

1990 **Suffolk** Brandon, nine, including at least two 9 9, 20th November (A. Howe et al); four, including one 9, 24th November (T. P. Kerridge). See also Suffolk above.

1990 **Yorkshire, North** Near Winkesley, five 9 9, 29th December to 4th January 1991 (D. & N. Becken, P. K. Bowman, P. V. Irving).

(Scandinavia and West Russia) Most of these records are clearly of birds that had arrived in Britain the previous autumn; the previous such influx in 1983 resulted in some remaining to breed in 1984 and 1985, but, despite the high numbers involved in this 1990 influx, most, if not all, seem to have returned to whence they came. The additional records for 1990 take the total for that year to 159 (well over half the total prior to 1990). A large number of records spanning the entire 1990-91 winter period remain under consideration; some accepted records from certain areas not included here have been held over until the picture is complete.

**Blackpoll Warbler** *Dendroica striata* (0, 28, 1)

**Shetland** Fair Isle, 30th September (M. I. Dowie, T. G. Francis, D. Suddaby et al.);

(North America) The first for Fair Isle and the third for Shetland and Scotland; the second was in 1990.

**Dark-eyed Junco** *Junco hyemalis* (1, 14, 0)


(North America)

**Rustic Bunting** *Emberiza rustica* (34, 205, 5)

**Humberside** Easington, 29th October to 3rd November (A. J. Booth, J. McLoughlin et al).

**Orkney** North Ronaldsay, first-winter 9, 23rd-27th September, trapped 23rd (A. E. Duncan, M. Gray et al.); 9, trapped, 10th October (M. Gray et al).

**Shetland** Fair Isle, 8th June (P. V. Harvey, H. A. Williams).
Rare birds in Great Britain in 1991

Sussex, West Littlehampton, 30th October to 1st November, photographed (A. S. Cook, R. J. L. Kemp, S. J. Patton et al.).

1990 Cornwall Land's End, 14th-17th October, photographed (S. R. Colenutt, J. H. Ross et al.).

1990 Dorset Portland, 7th April (G. Wallbridge).

(Northeast Europe across to North Asia) An average year. The total for 1990 now moves to 16, the best year since 1987 (the record-holder with 19). The April 1990 record is bettered only by March records in Grampian in 1905 and Gwynedd in 1981 and equalled by one on this date at St Abb's, Borders, in 1979.

Little Bunting Emberiza pusilla (93, 433, 24)

Devon Land's, trapped, 14th October (J. Arnold, C. Matthew, S. Wing).


Humberside Flamborough Head, 1st October (R. Barnes, N. Gricks, J. C. Lowen).

Kent Sandwich Bay, first-winter, trapped, 9th October, photographed (D. Shaw, S. D. Stansfield).

Lothian Seagull, trapped, 13th October, photographed (I. M. Darling, R. F. & J. P. Durman et al.).

Norfolk Cromer, 27th April (M. P. Lee).

Northumberland Farne Islands, three: 26th September (D. M. Lammers, D. C. Richardson, C. T. Smith et al.); 10th October (G. W. Dodds, R. A. Yaxley et al.); 12th-14th October (G. W. Dodds et al.).

Orkney North Ronaldsay, three: 2nd-6th October (M. Gray, K. N. Scott et al.); 12th-14th (P. J. Donnelly, M. Gray, K. N. Scott et al.); 14th (P. J. Donnelly, A. Scott, A. Swann). 1990 Devon South Milton ley, first-winter, 3rd-4th December, trapped 3rd (R. Burridge, A. C. Cole et al.).

Scilly Tresco, 12th October (S. J. Hibbett et al.); probably same, 14th (C. McClure et al.).

Shetland Fair Isle, 26th April (H. R. Harrop, P. V. Harvey, H. A. Williams); autumn, five: 28th-30th September (A. Brown, R. J. Johns et al.); 8th-11th October (J. R. King et al.); 11th-17th J. A. Flynn, H. R. Harrop et al.); 11th-14th (J. Regan, A. J. Wheaton, R. Wilson et al.); 11th-12th (J. A. Flynn, H. R. Harrop et al.); Fetlar, 17th-18th September (I. D. Bullock et al.). Spiggie, 14th October (M. Mellor, J. Morton).

Surrey Milford, 13th-27th April, trapped 20th, photographed (S. J. Abbott, Dr E. F. J. Garcia, J. J. Wheatley et al. (plate 217).

Wiltshire Chippenham, 28th March to 9th April, photographed (M. Collier, B. R. Mitchell et al. (plates 218 & 219).

Yorkshire, North Filey, 29th September to 2nd October, trapped 29th (T. L. Hobson et al.).

1990 Devon South Milton ley, first-winter, 3rd-4th December, trapped 3rd (R. Burridge, A. C. Cole et al.).


1990 Humberside Flamborough Head, 18th October (P. A. Lassey); probably same, 21st (M. Newsome).

(Yorkshire and North Asia) Also one in the Channel Islands, photographed at Longueville Marsh, Jersey, from 31st December 1990 to 1st January 1991.

These records fit very well with the current trend of recent years (maximum of 49 in 1989), but the total of five spring records (with two remaining for two weeks) is exceptional; the two winter 1990/91 records also conform to the recent pattern.

Yellow-breasted Bunting Emberiza aureola (10, 139, 6)


(Northeast Europe across North Asia) Another Shetland (predominantly
Fair Isle) speciality conforming to type; a return to more usual numbers after the low of only two in 1990.

**Black-headed Bunting** *Emberiza melanocephala* (9, 82, 1)
*Shetland* Sumburgh, first-winter, 26th-31st August (P. M. Ellis, D. Suddaby et al.).
1987 *Dyfed* Near Aberystwyth, 3, about 30th May, photographed (Mrs B. Brown).
1988 *Highland* Near Dundonnell, 3, 13th-19th June (D. M. Pullan et al.).

(Southeast Europe and Southwest Asia) The pattern of late-May and June occurrences is again reflected well here, adds to those of recent years and further supports the theory that these birds are of natural origin; the records in April and May in the early 1970s still need some explaining.

**Indigo Bunting** *Passerina cyanea* (0, 1, 0)

(North America) Although the species is in Category A of the British and Irish list on the strength of the record of an immature in Co. Cork in 1985, this does not alter the views of either this Committee or the BOURC that the Fair Isle, Shetland, occurrence on 3rd-7th August 1964 and that at Walton-on-the-Naze, Essex, on 8th September 1973, previously listed under Category D, relate to likely escapes from captivity. The Rarities Committee is of the opinion that both the Humberside and Norfolk records above, of which the latter attracted much public interest and discussion, also relate to probable escapes, principally on the grounds that both individuals showed clear signs of abnormal moult.

**Bobolink** *Dolichonyx oryzivorus* (0, 14, 2)
*Scilly* St Mary's, 11th-15th October, photographed (D. Bennett, M. A. Hardwick, G. J. Mant et al.).

(North America) The Devon bird is the earliest in England and Scotland by a day (and the only earlier record in Ireland is one on Cape Clear Island, Co. Cork, from 13th to 24th September 1982); it is also the first to occur on the British mainland. The bird on St Mary's was the ninth for Scilly and the first there since 1985.

**Appendix. 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 Honorary Secretary; (b) those which, even if circulated, were not attributed by the observer(s) to any definite species; or (c) those mentioned in 'seasonal reports' or 'recent reports' in this journal, if full details were unobtainable. Birds considered to be certain escapes are also omitted.

In the vast majority of cases, the record was not accepted because we were not convinced, on the evidence before us, that the identification was fully established; in only a very few cases were we satisfied that a mistake had been made.
1991 White-billed Diver Papa Westray, Orkney, 29th May to 3rd June. Pied-billed Grebe Goughneater Reservoir, North Yorkshire, 27th October. Black-browed Albatross Between Stromness and Scrabster, Orkney, 9th July; Berry Head, Devon, 23rd August. Little Shearwater At sea, Sea area Sol, 8th August; Porthgwarra, Cornwall, 23rd August; North Ronaldsay, Orkney, 8th September; St Ives, Cornwall, 18th September; Lavernock Point, South Glamorgan, 25th September; Barry, Gwynedd, 1st October; Filey Ness, Filey, 10th October; Pendeen, Cornwall, 3rd November. Black Stork Walhamstow, Greater London, 11th May; Glen Isla, Tayside, 14th August; Cury, Cornwall, 16th August. Lesser White-fronted Goose Portsmouth Harbour, Hampshire, 21st-29th November. American Wigeon Bursleyworth Ham, Gloucestershire, 5th-20th April; Swinton, Wiltshire, 22nd-26th April. Blue-winged Teal Cawley, Norfolk, 13th July. Lesser Scapa St John’s Loch, Highland, 23rd-24th April. Steller’s Eider St John’s Loch, Highland, 23rd-24th April.

Kestrel Colwick, Nottinghamshire, 30th March.


1986 Gyrfalcon Dyfi Estuary, Dyfed, 28th September.

1985 Lesser White-fronted Goose Exe Estuary, Devon, 30th December. Alpine Swift St Martin’s Down, Isle of Wight, 1st July. Arctic Redpoll Vane Farm, Highland, 26th-29th January.


1982 Little Bunting Haywards Heath, East Sussex, two, 27th July.


1972 Arctic Redpoll Holy Island, Northumberland, 2nd October.

Michael J. Rogers, Bag End, Churchtown, Towednack, St Ives, Cornwall TR26 3AZ