

THE Lincolnshire BIRD REPORT 2015



**The
Lincolnshire
Bird Club**
www.lincsbirdclub.co.uk

TWO HIGHLIGHTED DATES WERE 2015-16 IN THE LAST REPORT??

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FRONT COVER: Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus* juvenile

Gib Point Sep 25th 2015 © Graham Catley

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Welcome to the 2015 Bird Report



Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* South Somercotes Aug 11th 2015 © John Clarkson



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THE LINCOLNSHIRE BIRD CLUB 2015 REPORT

Welcome to the 2015 Lincolnshire Bird Report

On behalf of the Lincolnshire Bird Club ("LBC") it gives us great pleasure in presenting the annual report on the birds of Lincolnshire. The publication of the Bird Report always involves a huge amount of work, with many individuals involved in its publication. Thanks are due to them and the growing numbers of observers who submit records to the LBC. This year we have again succeeded in verifying more reports and gathering more records than in previous years and thanks must go to the two bird recorders, the Lincolnshire Bird Records Committee ("LBRC"), Roy Harvey and to Colin and Shelia Jennings for all the work undertaken.

The LBC is extremely grateful to Andrew Henderson for editing the 2015 bird report. Andrew's dedication, appetite for hardwork, meticulous attention to detail and continual quest for improvement is the driving force that produces the report.

Species Authors

The LBC would like to thank all the authors who volunteered their time to complete species write-ups for the 2015 report. Inevitably, using a pool of authors will lead to difference in writing styles throughout the report but Andrew Henderson's editing makes for a readable final report.

Notes for Contributors.

The Lincolnshire Bird Report is an annual publication of records, articles and photographs relating to all aspects of Lincolnshire ornithology. If you would like to contribute please contact chairman@lincsbirdclub.co.uk for more information.

Submissions of Records

All observers are encouraged to submit records on a monthly basis as this helps considerably with managing the workload and speeding up production of the annual report. If it isn't possible to submit records until the end of the year, the deadline is **by the end of February of the following year**. Late records cause serious problems in drafting the systematic list and may be omitted. The names of all contributors will be published.

How to submit records

You can submit records in many ways. For casual sightings please use our Online Sightings Form at http://www.lincsbirdclub.co.uk/contact_report.htm. This is an ideal way to let us know quickly of interesting bird sightings from within the LBC recording area. Information on interesting birds, once received, can be easily distributed to our members and others using the internet as well as being added to the LBC database. This method can also be used for the submission of confidential records.

The Club is moving rapidly towards the electronic submission and processing of records so that we can produce our Annual Reports more efficiently, and we encourage you to do this if possible. Many birders are now using BirdTrack (www.bto.org/birdtrack) to maintain their personal records online. All such records (barring confidential ones) for Lincolnshire are passed to LBC by BTO and are published in this report subject to our usual checking procedures. LBC supports BirdTrack and a single submission to BirdTrack will suffice; there is no need for you to send duplicate records direct to LBC. However, as an alternative to BirdTrack, we have produced our own spreadsheet (in Excel format) for anyone to use – and there is free software you can download if you do not have Excel itself. You can download the spreadsheet and read more about how you can use it at http://www.lincsbirdclub.co.uk/lbc_recordgathering.htm.

Non-electronic submission of records

We will continue to accept records submitted manually but this does cause our editorial team additional work in converting your records to a digital format so we would encourage all observers to submit records electronically, preferably using the Club spreadsheet where possible.

Records can also be submitted via the LBC Forum, by using the casual record form on the LBC website and via the recorders email address (see below). For further detail please contact Mr Colin Jennings – thejennings@colin97.freemove.co.uk

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National Rarities.

National rare birds are dealt with by the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC). A full and up to date list of species considered by BBRC can be downloaded from the BBRC website www.bbrc.org.uk. All BBRC rarities should be submitted to the BBRC, and the LBC report will only publish records submitted and accepted by BBRC.

The submission of descriptions of national rarities is important. Bird news providers do not assess records passed to them and without full submission to BBRC such records cannot be published and will be lost. Finder details will be published, but where these are not known records will be attributed to *per LBC*.

County Rarities.

Species or forms considered rare at county level are dealt with by the Lincolnshire Bird Record Committee and are indicated as such by the identifier **LBRC** after the species name in the systematic list in this report. The committee currently comprises John Clarkson, James Siddle, Steve Keightley, Andy Sims, Phil Hyde and John Badley. The chairman of the 2015-16 LBRC is John Clarkson and Roy Harvey is secretary.

Please send all details and descriptions of any LBRC species to Roy Harvey - roy.harvey100@btinternet.com.

All records of LBRC species should be submitted as soon as possible after the sighting and not left until the end of each year. County rarities accepted by the LBRC will be published in the report together with the initials of the finder/identifier.

The submission of description of county rarities is important. The verification of the data that appears in the annual report is essential to the production of an accurate and meaningful report. A systematic approach to the verification of ALL rare bird records, no matter who has reported them, prior to the production of the annual report is required before they are published.

From time to time the LBRC will reserve the right to seek additional details of other records deemed exceptional by virtue of, for example, date, location, or number.

LBC Data

LBC has a data sharing agreement with the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership based at LWT headquarters, Banovallum House Horncastle. All our bird data from the late 1990s onwards can be accessed by requesting a search from the Information Officer. Searches are free for members of LBC and students undertaking scientific research. Commercial organisations and others may need to pay a fee. There are restrictions on access to confidential data for rare breeding birds. Further details can be obtained from Charlie Barnes, Information Officer, GLNP on 01507 528381 and charlie.barnes@glnp.org.uk.



GLNP
GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE
NATURE PARTNERSHIP

Data Sources used in the 2015 Bird Report

LBC offers their thanks to the following individuals and organisations for supplying and letting us use their data in the 2014 bird report. Apologies to anyone we have missed off the list.

RSPB. For supplying data from their reserves at Frampton Marsh, Freiston Shore, Read's Island and Tetney.

Heronry Data. LBC is grateful to Barrie Wilkinson for supplying data on breeding Grey Heron and Little Egret in Lincolnshire. This long running dataset is extremely important for the monitoring of herons in Lincolnshire, and we would encourage all LBC members to submit data to this survey.

WeBS Data. Data were supplied by the Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS), a joint scheme of the British Trust for Ornithology, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and Joint Nature Conservation Committee (the last on behalf of the Countryside Council for Wales, Natural England, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency) in association with The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust. Although WeBS data are presented within this report, in some cases the figures may not have been fully checked and validated. Therefore, for any detailed analyses of WeBS data, enquiries should be directed to the WeBS team at the British Trust for Ornithology, The Nunnery, Thetford, IP24 2PU (webs@bto.org).

BirdTrack Data. Data supplied by BirdTrack has been used in the production of the 2015 bird report. BirdTrack provides free online bird recording software for Britain and Ireland and is being developed in a partnership between the BTO, RSPB and Birdwatch Ireland. All Lincolnshire records are available for download by the LBC. Further details can be found at <http://www.birdtrack.net>.

eBird. Data supplied by BirdTrack has been used in the production of the 2015 bird report. Further details can be found at www.ebird.org/.

BirdGuides Data. Data supplied by BirdGuides Ltd has been used in the production of the 2014 bird report. Further details can be found at <http://www.birdguides.com/>.

Deeping Lakes Site bird recorder. David Griffith for supplying data from Deeping Lakes.

Gibraltar Point Dataset. Kev Wilson and Richard Doan for supplying data from Gibraltar Point NNR and Gibraltar Point Bird Observatory.

Far Ings NNR Dataset. Andy Sharp and the Far Ings Bird Group for supplying data from Far Ings NNR.

Forest Enterprise. For permission to use breeding bird data collected on the wet heath project in Loughton Forest by Graham Catley on behalf of Forest Enterprise.

Whisby Nature Reserve Dataset. Grahame Hopwood for supplying data from Whisby Nature Park.

Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust. Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, including Dave Bromwich, Grahame Hopwood and Barrie Wilkinson.

Ringling Report Data. The Boston Ringing Association, the Mid-Lincs Ringing Group, Gibraltar Point Bird Observatory, Wash Wader Group and the Birkland Ringing Group for submitting their annual ringing reports and especially Mark Grantham from the British Trust for Ornithology for help compiling the 2014 ringing report.

Grimsby Area Members Group. Bill Sterling for submitting data from the Grimsby Area Members Group.

Kestrel, Barn Owl and Little Owl Data. Alan Ball and Bob Sheppard for supplying data from their extensive ringing project in Lincolnshire.

North Lincolnshire Marsh Harrier Monitoring. Graham Catley for access to his marsh harrier monitoring data. For more details contact Graham Catley at graham.catley@btopenworld.com or via his website at <http://pewit.blogspot.com/>

Alkborough Flats Partnership. The Alkborough Flats Partnership for supplying data from Alkborough Flats.

BTO BBS Data. Sarah Harris the National Organiser of the Breeding Birds Survey for providing Lincolnshire specific BBS data. The Breeding Bird Survey is run by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) and is jointly funded by the BTO, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) (on behalf of the statutory nature conservation bodies: Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs - Northern Ireland, Natural England, Natural Resources Wales and Scottish Natural Heritage), and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB).

Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust. For supplying partridge count data for Lincolnshire.

LBC Database Team

All records that are submitted on the LBC Forum and via the online records system are collated by Colin and Sheila Jennings. The amount of work that Colin and Sheila do in gathering these records is outstanding, and forms the lynchpin for this report. At the end of each month they produce a spreadsheet that contains all the bird records for that month. We are grateful to Chris Grimshaw and Carl Annall for assisting Colin and Sheila with data input.

Wildlife Recorder. Thanks to Jack Levene who is very generous with his time and patience while sorting out LBC database issues.

Contributing Authors for the 2015 report

The Lincolnshire LBC is very grateful to the following contributing authors for the 2015 Lincolnshire LBC report. We are very keen to hear from anyone who is interested in volunteering to help produce future bird reports, please contact chairman@lincsbirdclub.co.uk.

Contributing Authors: Graham Catley, Andrew Chick, John Clarkson, Phil Espin, Vin Fleming, Chris Grimshaw, Andrew Henderson, Grahame Hopwood, Phil Hyde, Steve Lorand, Ian Macalpine-Leny, Andy Sims, Bill Sterling, Ben Ward, Kev Wilson.

Photographers

LBC is very grateful to the following photographers for supplying images for the 2014 report. All images included in the report have been taken in Lincolnshire during 2014 and many are referred to in the text. All images are labelled with the photographer's name, their contact details are listed below.

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The LBC Database and Gathering Records in General

We aim to have a complete and workable database for each year by the end of February the following year. This means that all description birds are verified by that date.

Andrew Chick and Phil Espin, Feb 2017

SYSTEMATIC LIST 2015

Collated and edited by: Andrew Henderson

Contributing Authors: Graham Catley, Andrew Chick, John Clarkson, Phil Espin, Vin Fleming, Chris Grimshaw, Andrew Henderson, Grahame Hopwood, Phil Hyde, Steve Lorand, Ian Macalpine-Leny, Bill Sterling, Ben Ward.

Key to acronyms:

LBRC - Rare or scarce in Lincolnshire. Description and/or photograph required for consideration by the Lincolnshire Bird Club Records Committee.

BBRC - National rarity: Description and/or photograph required for submission to British Birds Rarities Committee. Records in this category are not published in the annual report or input to the database if they have not been accepted by BBRC.

RBBP - Nationally scarce breeding species monitored by the Rare Breeding Birds Panel. Any breeding season sighting in suitable habitat should be reported to the Rare Breeding Bird Panel representative as soon as possible.

BB	British Birds	NNR	National Nature Reserve
BBRC	British Birds Rarities Committee	NR	Nature Reserve
BBS	Breeding Bird Survey	RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
BTO	British Trust for Ornithology	SQ	Sand Quarry
CP	Country Park	STW	Sewage Treatment Works
GP	Gravel Pit(s)	WeBS	Wetland Bird Survey
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee	WWT	Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust

Tables:

Tables are provided to convey information in a minimum of space. The sites included vary between species, and are selected to include areas holding significant numbers (sometimes defined in the text), usually with counts in several or many months. The figures shown are the highest counts for each month.

WeBS data

For waterfowl (wildfowl, waders and other waterbirds), tables use data from the LBC database plus that from Gibraltar Point Bird Observatory and RSPB Reserves, to whom we are grateful for sharing this information. In addition, Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) data are used, kindly made available by the WeBS partnership, which is funded by BTO, RSPB and the JNCC (on behalf of, in England, Natural England), in association with WWT, and run by the BTO. Where a site's counts comprise solely WeBS data, the site name is marked by an asterisk. The tables for some species also give the sums of Lincolnshire WeBS sector totals for the Humber (which extends to Mablethorpe) and The Wash. WeBS counts extend systematic coverage away from more intensively watched areas but are, in most cases, made on a single date near the middle of the month, and thus may miss higher counts made on other dates. Note that there may occasionally be overlap between sites in the table; we try to avoid it but occasionally it is preferable to not presenting important data. An example of this concerns the Witham Mouth WeBS sector, which includes part of Freiston Shore RSPB reserve and is used by birds from both Freiston and Frampton reserves.

BBS data

The Breeding Bird Survey data are kindly supplied by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO). The survey is jointly funded by the BTO, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) (on behalf of the statutory nature conservation bodies: Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs - Northern Ireland, Natural England, Natural Resources Wales and Scottish Natural Heritage), and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). Each year, we choose a few species to illustrate population trends in Lincolnshire with comparable data for the East Midlands region (which includes most of Lincolnshire) and for England as a whole. In most cases, we use the smoothed indices for East Midlands and England, so as to draw attention to long-term trends rather than to year-on-year changes. Because the Lincolnshire data are unsmoothed, and because of the relatively small sample size (about 80 out of over 3500 UK squares are in the county), the lines showing Lincolnshire trends tend to be more variable. Additional BBS coverage is desirable and anyone wishing to help with this valuable and straightforward survey should contact their local BTO representative (see inside front cover) or visit the BTO website.

Ring recovery data

A selection of the more interesting recoveries or sightings of ringed birds affecting Lincolnshire are included with the species entries. These should be fairly self-explanatory, with the ring numbers in the left hand columns, then details of the individual and the recovery method, then the dates, and in the right hand column the locations of ringing and recovery/sighting. Where no county (or overseas country) is specified, the location is in Lincolnshire. In many cases, additional comment is included in the text.

Rare and scarce species

Many reports of rare and scarce species are submitted each year without documentation, in some cases even without a named observer. This poses difficulties, because we cannot be certain that mistakes have not been made, something that is important for understanding of species' status now and, even more so, in the future when patterns of occurrence are reviewed and analysed. However, because of the numbers of records now coming without supporting details, we have taken a pragmatic approach for this report. Records have been included in the systematic list if the LBRC was confident that a mistake was unlikely, taking into account the experience of observers, the circumstances of the sighting and any verbal information received, and how the record fits into the known pattern of occurrence of the species. This approach will be kept under active review for future reports. If a significant record is missing from the report and documentation is available, please let the editorial team know. Records, including those from national information services, which have no named observer, may often be excluded. Please note that this can apply to reports of commoner species that are out of season or in atypical locations, as well as to LBRC species.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Fairly common resident and partial migrant.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Humber WeBS totals	29	41	35	76	97	50	51	117	109	57	43	57
Wash WeBS totals	7	8	16	16	6	21	5	16	2	22	2	16
Barrow-Goxhill	11	-	3	26	44	4	2	7	17	23	32	25
Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe	31	17	32	21	43	15	1	6	12	15	99	1
Wroot	60	23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20	-
Brayford Pool, Lincoln	8	11	30	22	23	33	-	-	22	24	24	16
Whisby NR	19	16	9	10	14	9	11	16	24	42	47	54
Thurlby/Norton GP	12	35	15	12	30	64	1	98	84	82	45	1
Branston Fen	47	90	31	50	50	12	1	-	-	-	59	110
Five Mile Ho-Bardney	26	40	25	99	20	71	75	52	84	34	36	37
Bardney-Nocton area	66	75	79	56	18	13	2	4	22	-	16	100
Spalding-Crowland area	244	126	105	40	35	59	28	46	22	85	198	89
Deeping area pits	6	20	58	37	66	136	158	137	111	51	24	42

In addition to the Lincolnshire Humber and Wash WeBS count totals, the table shows the peak monthly counts for most sites with counts of over 50 birds. There were also 50 at Burgh le Marsh on Jan 7th and c110 at Blankney Fen on Jan 18th. Maximum counts for the well-known population at Brayford Pool are included, as are those around New Holland, where numbers are dramatically down from the 200-300 present until about 2009. Most of the largest site counts this year came from the southwest of the county, including 183 along the R Welland between Spalding and Borough Fen on Nov 15th, 158 at Deeping St James Lake on Jul 26th, while along the R Witham there were c110 at Blankney Fen on Jan 18th, 110 at Branston Fen on Dec 11th and c100 at Bardney on Dec 28th. Widespread reports of 1-2 breeding pairs were received but no more extensive counts or larger numbers. The two ringing recoveries are both long-distance for Mute Swan, and the first is also notable for its age: the BTO longevity record is 29 years 1 month.

Z87646	Adult Female	06-07-1996	Berwick-upon-Tweed: 55°45'N 2°0'W (Northumberland)
	Caught by ringer	06-05-2015	Cowbit Road A16: 52°44'N 0°8'W 357km SSE 18y 10m 0d
XY2024	Adult Male	20-09-2015	Queen Elizabeth II Country Park, Woodhorn, Ashington: 55°10'N 1°33'W (Northumberland)
	Alive (ring read in field)	12-11-2015	Harvestman Farm, Short's Corner: 53°2'N 0°1'W 259km SSE 0y 1m 23d



Mute Swan *Cygnus olor* Frampton Marsh Jan 18th 2015 © Neil Smith

Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus*

Cygnus columbianus bewickii: Scarce passage migrant/winter visitor, mainly Oct-Mar and exceptional in summer.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
Wroot	13	15	2	-	-	5
Huttoft Bank	5	8	-	-	-	-
Gibraltar Point	-	-	-	-	7	-
Long Sutton	-	-	20	-	-	-
Kirkby on Bain GP	-	-	-	-	4	-
Branston-Nocton Fens	4	3	-	-	6	8
Willow Tree Fen	4	-	-	-	-	-

The peak counts for all locations holding four or more birds are shown above. The majority of records came from three areas: around Wroot, Nocton Fen and Huttoft Bank. At Wroot, 13 were present on Jan 1st, up from the eight there late in Dec 2014. Up to 13 were present for much of Jan, with 15 on Feb 5th, then declining to four by Feb 28th, but there were also two present on Mar 18th. In the Huttoft Bank-Sandilands area, there were five adults for much of the period from Jan 4th to Feb 21st, with eight there on Feb 2nd. At Nocton Fen, two were present during Jan 21st-27th with four counted on the 25th. Elsewhere early in the year, there were two at Gayton le Marsh on Jan 18th, two adults and two juveniles at Willow Tree Fen on Jan 24th, one at Saltfleetby All Saints on Feb 16th, and two at Long Sutton on Mar 16th and 22nd. The first of autumn was an adult at Covenham Res on Nov 1st, followed by two adults at Freiston Shore on Nov 2nd, and four adults at Kirkby on Bain GP on the 4th. At Gib Point, one flew south on Nov 7th and seven south on the 13th. Three were at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes on Nov 16th. Meanwhile a wintering group had arrived in the Nocton Fen area, starting with six at Branston Fen on Nov 21st, then with up to eight present during Dec 19th-31st. The only report from Wroot was five on Dec 20th.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Fairly common passage migrant/winter visitor, mainly Oct-Apr and exceptional in summer.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Wroot	143	203	115	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16	6
Alkborough Flats	-	9	53	-	1	-	-	-	-	18	6	7
Donna Nook	55	59	25	70	-	-	-	-	-	6	37	5
Covenham Res	-	1	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	24	74	5

Saltfleet-Theddlethorpe	38	57	104	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	77	1
Sandilands-Mogg's Eye	61	55	35	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25	2
Gibraltar Point	3	2	4	2	-	-	-	-	-	44	249	8
Frampton Marsh	53	50	400	68	-	1	-	-	1	12	26	34
Whisby NR	8	-	102	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	6	15
Nocton Fen-Bardney	41	60	48	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	19
Bourne South Fen	11	15	11	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

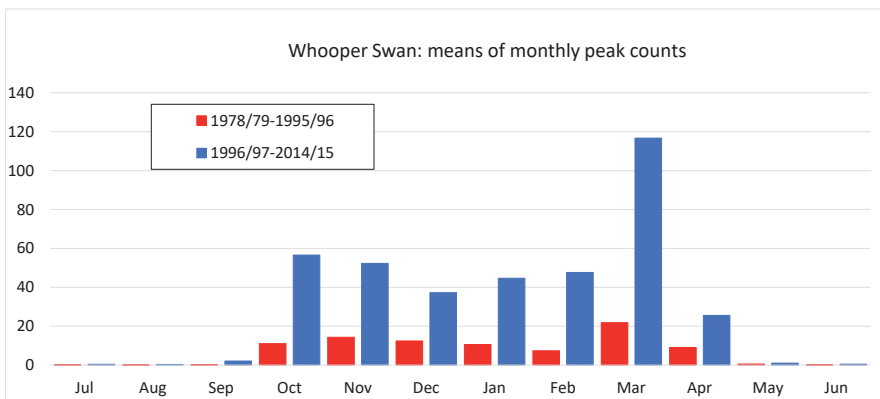
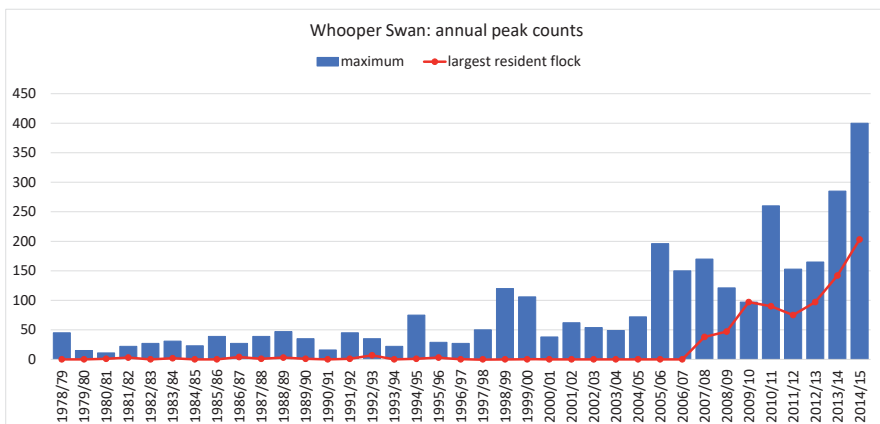
The table shows all sites with at least one count of 40 or more, and one other month with 10 or more; note that in some cases counts involve birds on passage, or combinations of birds present and on passage. Wintering herds are now present in several areas of the county including a small group of up to 15 in the south-west at Bourne South Fen, but the largest remains that near Wroot, which peaked at 203 on Feb 8th. Elsewhere high counts included 59 at Donna Nook on Feb 7th, 61 at Sandilands on Jan 21st and 60 at Bardney on Feb 28th. By that last date, passage was starting, with 94 north across the Humber at South Ferriby. Northbound flocks were widespread throughout Mar, many at inland sites. Three-figure counts were 103 at Rimac on Mar 7th, 102 at Whisby NR on Mar 11th, and on Mar 22nd about 385 and perhaps 400 north-west at Frampton Marsh, 103 north at Frithville and 130 at Morton (Bourne). A last pulse of movement occurred on Apr 5th, including 68 at Frampton Marsh, c.70 at Donna Nook, and 30 at Kirkby Moor NR. Four at Frampton Marsh on Apr 6th were the last of spring. Two later records of lingerers were one at Alkborough Flats during May 9th-24th and one at Frampton Marsh on Jun 12th-14th, also seen at Frithville on the 14th. One was seen at Frampton Marsh on Sep 16th but the first migrants were five there on Oct 8th. On the 14th, 15 flew south at Gib Point but early passage was sluggish, with 44 south at Gib Point on Oct 23rd and 54 at Theddlethorpe on Nov 9th the highest totals until 98 south at Gib Point on Nov 12th. Southerly movements at Gib Point exceeding 100 birds followed on five dates during Nov 15th-20th, the largest being 239 on the 17th and 249 on the 20th. Wintering flocks remained small in Dec.



Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus* Covenham Res Nov 16th 2015 © John Clarkson

The first chart below shows the increasing numbers passing through and now wintering in Lincolnshire. This is based on all available data sources but it is possible that resident flocks (defined as those present for at least two weeks) are incompletely recorded for 1997-2007 when there were no annual reports. Even though this shows the single largest counts each winter, rather than throughput of birds or the sum of resident flocks, the steady rise in numbers since the 1990s is clearly apparent. The second chart shows the seasonal pattern of numbers, illustrating how

passage numbers in October-November and especially in March are higher than those in mid winter. It is also the case that arrival and departure dates have shifted a little. During 1979-1996, the mean first date was Oct 10th whereas during 1997-2015 it was Oct 1st. Excluding birds judged to be lingering because they were sick, mean last dates in the same periods were, respectively, Apr 5th and Apr 23rd.



Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*

Winter visitor, mainly coastal, Oct-Apr. Two races occur: Taiga Bean Goose *A.f. fabalis*: rare; and Tundra Bean Goose *A.f. rossicus*: scarce. Both races **LBRC**

All confirmed records during the year were identified as Tundra Bean Goose. Two were at Coleby near Scunthorpe on Feb 5th-6th (ND). A flock of 12 was found on Feb 27th in the Read's Island/South Ferriby area where they remained until Mar 5th (GPC *et al.*). Two seen flying south at Gib Point on Nov 6th (KC) were probably the same as the two seen there on Nov 9th and 16th (KMW, NAL), and one was nearby at Croftmarsh LNR on Dec 12th (NAL).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Common winter visitor Sep-Apr, mainly to the Humber and Wash, but many coastal and inland movements. A few injured/escaped birds occasional in summer.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>The Humber & coast</i>												
Whitton Sands	-	880	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10230	7100	-
Alkborough Flats	300	300	5	-	-	1	-	-	200	2000	500	32
Read's Island area	-	-	1	-	8	-	-	-	1500	8200	4480	50
Barton Pits	150	12	-	6	-	-	-	-	270	5000	30	1000
Goxhill	250	260	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	240	300	550
Cleethorpes/Tetney	1	550	300	-	-	-	-	-	48	1700	730	53
Donna Nook	-	980	1	-	-	-	-	-	360	362	480	180
Saltfleet-Mablethorpe	1200	1296	-	-	-	-	-	-	450	1600	1116	200
<i>The Wash</i>												
Gibraltar Point	2890	2480	120	26	2	1	1	2	732	1465	1685	1010
Freiston Shore	120	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1500	2	-
Frampton Marsh	2000	1300	3	2	1	1	2	1	120	1500	1500	1000
<i>Inland</i>												
Whisby	75	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	300	180	1

The table includes the majority of locations at which counts of 500 or more were made regularly. There were similar counts more widely within the feeding range of the Humber flock and, elsewhere, mainly as single counts of passage birds. The peak count on the Humber was 18430 on Oct 19th-20th, with 10230 on Whitton Sand (mostly in Yorkshire but these birds range widely over Lincs and Yorks farmland) and 8200 on Read's Island. This total set a record for the Humber, the previous highest estimate being 15000 in winter 1959/60. Significant northward movements in the first winter period began in mid Jan, with the largest totals at Gib Point: 1540 north-west on Jan 20th and 2480 northwest on Feb 9th. The highest inland passage count was 1000 at Welbourn Heath on Jan 20th. There were no reports over 20 after Mar 8th and passage petered out by Apr 23rd, with one late record of eight at Read's Island on May 9th. After that 1-2 presumed injured birds remained at each of Frampton Marsh and Gib Point through to Sep. Four at Gib Point on Sep 7th may have been the first migrants but larger numbers did not appear until Sep 19th. The first three-figure count was 125 south at Crook Bank, Theddlethorpe on Sep 22nd and by Sep 30th there were 1500 at Read's Island, with 5980 there on Oct 2nd. Autumn passage mainly through to Norfolk was noted widely in Oct-Nov including up to 2250 in the Gedney area, 1120 at Fulbeck, 1000 at Langholme and 1500 at Wroot. Many of these and other inland records refer to overflying flocks but some, such as at Wroot, involve feeding birds.

Below are details of a ring that surfaced during the year. Unfortunately, we do not know the circumstances of its recovery, nor when the bird actually died. The assumption is that it was some time prior to 2015 but geese can be long-lived: the BTO longevity record for Pink-footed Goose is 38 years. See also the entry for Shoveler.

1006061	Adult Female	19-10-1958	Kinross: 56°11'N 3°25'W (Perth and Kinross)
	Unknown (ring only)	(06-05-2015)	Site Confidential (North Lincolnshire) 333km SSE 56y 6m 17d

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

Rare/scarce winter visitor Sep-Apr, occasionally fairly common. Two distinct races occur.

European White-fronted Goose *A.a. albifrons*: scarce but regular.

Birds present at the end of Dec 2014 were two at Deeping Lakes which remained there until Feb 6th, and three at Frampton Marsh which reduced to two after Jan 2nd but they were then present until at least the 13th. The largest flock this year was at Frampton Marsh where 32 were seen on Feb 9th. Elsewhere early in the year, one flew south at Gib Point on Jan 7th, and there were seven at Alkborough Flats on Feb 13th-14th. In autumn, two flew south-west at Tetney Marsh on Oct 10th, and at Gib Point, three (two adults and a juvenile) were present on Nov 11th-12th, with five (an adult and four juveniles) on the 16th and two (adult and juvenile) on the 24th. At the end of Dec, there was one at Frampton Marsh on the 26th, the five on the 29th-31st.

Greenland White-fronted Goose *A.a. flavirostris*: rare. LBRC

Three adults were found at Marston STW on Nov 22nd, remaining to Dec 8th (DRob *et al.*). Another adult was at Alkborough Flats on Nov 28th-Dec 6th (ND, GPC).



Greenland White-fronted Goose *A.a. flavirostris* Alkborough Flats Nov 29th 2015 © Graham Catley



Greenland White-fronted Goose *A.a. flavirostris* Marston STW Nov 27th & Dec 7th 2015
© Russell Hayes (left) and © Steve Nesbitt (right).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Formerly a common resident in the Fens up to about 1800. Feral population established in the 1950s with rapid expansion and now common. Wild birds may occur (scarce) Sep-Apr, but difficult to detect.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alkborough Flats	88	158	134	40	180	-	120	1200	25	614	1280	586
Messingham SQ	45	157	50	60	85	120	4	1	11	69	-	400
Read's Island	38	4	117	60	50	-	150	350	121	100	3	73
Bagmoor Floods	65	45	9	14	80	203	-	107	552	75	600	210
Barton Pits	127	172	106	50	30	166	218	35	621	250	158	112
Covenham Res	1	35	24	2	9	3	21	74	190	392	123	-
Manby Wetland	2	4	1	2	2	-	7	430	660	3	2	14
Biscathorpe	-	37	-	-	-	-	-	109	300	250	-	1
Gibraltar Point	155	16	12	13	20	8	20	106	257	270	87	5
Freiston Shore	235	1	3	2	-	3	-	-	10	4	3	-
Frampton Marsh	200	30	12	30	38	60	1	30	30	280	7	50
Hagnaby Lock Fen	54	20	2	2	-	-	29	80	193	-	50	174
Whisby-N Hykeham	39	115	41	56	68	303	127	59	30	1	174	150
Norton/Thurly area	162	150	40	12	2	1	101	250	250	250	250	200
Fiskerton-Nocton	83	225	74	50	30	39	260	300	700	554	450	90
Woodhall Spa Airfield	-	-	-	-	102	150	1	1	1	-	1	900
Kirkby on Bain GP	210	110	35	50	47	218	220	320	450	350	400	150
Tattershall Lakes CP	9	5	2	14	2	-	2	29	200	35	110	18
Spalding-Borough Fen	150	15	122	4	24	7	9	-	-	2	-	4
Deeping Lakes	250	222	60	40	81	259	181	106	441	29	20	134
Baston-Langtoft	12	558	88	6	1	-	-	1	300	355	-	22
Grimsthorpe Lake	10	53	65	-	-	-	-	-	435	258	340	-
Marston STW	130	100	52	25	5	-	-	200	420	-	300	257

The table includes all regularly counted sites holding significant numbers and all those holding 250 or more, except for 300 at Benington in May and 600 at Kirton in Lindsey in Oct. The upper Humber flock continues to be the largest on a regular basis with the year's peak of 1280 during the first half of Nov, but six other areas held at least 500 in one month or more. The mobility of the species makes it difficult to know how many there are in the county as a whole. However, the monthly sums of peaks for all sites gives totals of 1500-2500 during Jan-Jul but 5000 or more for the rest of the year, including around 8000 in Sep. Few breeding reports were received, and none was significant. The two ringing recoveries are the oldest during 2015 (the Greylag longevity record is 18 years), and the second is the longest-distance one of the year.

5207179	Adult	05-07-2001	Ancaster Gravel Pits, Sleaford: 52°58'N 0°33'W
	Freshly dead	04-12-2015	West Willoughby: 52°58'N 0°34'W 3km 14y 4m 29d
5239306	First-year	08-07-2004	Ancaster Gravel Pits, Sleaford: 52°58'N 0°33'W
	Alive (trapped)	17-07-2006	Pickering Park: 53°43'N 0°24'W (Kingston upon Hull) 86km N 2y 0m 9d
	Freshly dead (shot)	01-09-2015	Eccup Reservoir: 53°51'N 1°33'W (West Yorkshire) 121km NNW 11y 1m 24d

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Common resident, introduced from North America in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The taxonomic status of Canada geese has recently changed with Canada Goose *Branta canadensis* and Cackling Goose *B. hutchinsii* now being recognised as two distinct species. Only Canada Goose occurs as a feral resident in Britain.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alkborough Flats	78	120	3	1	-	-	50	58	160	112	306	242
Bagmoor Floods	55	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	13	6	10	180
Read's Island	-	297	40	20	50	-	150	68	126	59	-	16
Barton Pits	18	83	25	33	10	61	108	42	220	170	2	6
Covenham Res	-	7	8	5	6	-	10	138	186	155	1	1
Manby Wetland	1	3	1	4	3	9	8	82	41	1	2	2
Saltfleet-Theddlethorpe	37	64	7	12	5	22	-	12	155	22	166	67
Gibraltar Point	48	40	46	40	43	52	50	150	255	450	200	-

Wrangle Brickpits	56	86	16	14	7	1	17	-	-	-	-	-
Freiston Shore	4	1	21	8	1	4	19	1	20	3	520	2
Frampton Marsh	150	150	26	30	43	64	50	168	20	100	242	200
Riseholme Lake	42	34	21	10	22	32	-	-	102	104	118	-
North Hykeham Pits	63	9	8	5	23	44	27	-	19	18	21	-
Whisby NR	1	2	8	8	23	55	37	85	22	2	64	3
Norton/Thurlby area	19	50	10	12	5	12	5	70	150	6	40	18
Fiskerton Fen	-	-	11	10	6	-	45	20	13	-	-	-
Kirkby on Bain GP	18	19	13	9	8	36	17	38	25	2	-	6
Holywell Lake	25	85	27	-	-	-	-	-	13	36	-	65
Grimsthorpe Lake	4	90	25	-	-	-	-	-	212	-	285	-

Additional counts above 75 but not in the table were 191 at Bardney in Oct and 150 at Boston Haven in Dec. As last year, little change in abundance from the previous year was evident, with some areas holding more birds but others with fewer. This general stability is in line with the national trend, which showed a steep increase from the mid 1960s through to around 2000, after which it has levelled out.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Has bred irregularly as a feral bird since the late 1980s, with a large population now established on the Humber. Wild birds are scarce/fairly common winter but erratic visitors, mainly to the coast, Oct-May.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alkborough/Whitton Sand	116	1000	782	81	19	300	282	390	50	1960	2000	1212
Cleethorpes-Tetney	50	1	0	2	1	27	62	1	90	30	0	0
Gibraltar Point	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
Freiston Shore	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Frampton Marsh	2	1	8	8	1	1	0	1	1	1	3	2

The numbers in the upper Humber continue to rise like a rocket. The maximum count on Alkborough Flats was 1480 on Nov 5th, while on Whitton Sand (most of which is in Yorkshire) the peak counts for the year were 1960 on Oct 19th and 2000 on Nov 16th. Most nest on the north side of the island but 34 broods with 91 young were present along the south (Lincolnshire) side on Jun 29th. The smaller population at Cleethorpes was counted as 62 birds (45 adults and 17 juveniles) on the boating lake on Jul 28th and 90 birds were at Tetney Marsh on Sep 8th. At least one was at Frampton Marsh for most of the year, with a maximum of eight on Mar 4th and Apr 5th. Elsewhere, occurrence was occasional. At sites not included in the table, there were one at Kirkby on Bain GP in Feb, six of Toft Newton Res on Mar 7th with two there on Apr 3rd, four at the Nene mouth on Oct 27th, one at Woodhall Spa Airfield on Dec 9th, and 2-3 at Boston Haven in Dec. There was no evidence that any of these were wild birds. The feral populations of north-west Europe have grown enormously, with several thousand pairs now nesting annually, notably in southern Sweden and the Netherlands, and there are signs that Britain may be joining this trend.

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

Winter visitor. Three distinct races occur.

Dark-bellied Brent Goose *B.b. bernicla*: very common coastal winter visitor Sep-May, mainly to The Wash. Scarce but regular in summer, especially on The Wash. Occasional inland.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>The Humber</i>												
WeBS totals	3440	2624	1741	170	15	4	-	-	-	2592	2837	4088
Tetney-Somercotes	2594	2007	2200	250	3350	35	1	-	109	2410	2656	3417
Saltfleet-Theddlethorpe	846	609	80	8	-	-	-	-	18	182	428	671
<i>The Wash</i>												
WeBS totals	16686	10729	10422	9335	1634	12	3	19	550	4946	3167	4638
Gibraltar Point	1952	3200	2000	122	200	3	-	1	95	780	1004	1150
Wainfleet	1470	701	391	96	17	-	-	-	-	650	-	-
Friskney*	3050	1962	1190	160	1	-	-	15	-	162	341	320
Wrangle	2540	-	1191	155	30	1	-	-	22	505	-	2050
Leverton*	360	1143	311	611	68	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Butterwick	1000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	119	305	202

Freiston Shore	2960	1462	500	1500	125	2	5	1	100	1800	350	1100
Witham*	-	25	700	500	-	4	2	-	200	1200	500	450
Frampton Marsh	4500	2000	2500	1800	2000	4	3	-	150	2000	3000	2500
Welland*	2000	1480	1460	2515	580	-	-	1	46	2100	2150	50
Gedney*	1175	320	1800	506	250	2	-	-	53	111	2000	-
Terrington*	906	221	534	1643	-	-	-	-	-	21	-	-

It needs to be stressed that there is overlap of bird use between areas. Thus the Gib Point counts may include many of the Wainfleet birds, and Witham birds are accounted for under the two RSPB reserves. Also, as for other waterfowl, it is clear that WeBS counts sometimes understate the true totals present, partly because not all sectors are counted in every month. Nevertheless, this year saw higher numbers than in 2014 in the Humber and the outer Wash, but lower counts in the inner Wash. There was a marked difference in productivity between 2014 and 2015. From six samples between Saltfleet and Gib Point in Jan-Mar, first-year birds comprised 32% (range 23-42%) of the total, whereas from eleven samples in Oct-Dec, the figure was 1% (range 0-4%). Many birds remained in the estuaries well into May and return passage was apparent from mid Sep; there was no count exceeding 35 during May 27th-Sep 12th. As usual, a few strayed up the Humber beginning with one at Barton on Jan 6th, then eight at East Halton Skitter on Feb 15th, and three at South Ferriby on Mar 10th. One was then at Barton Pits on Mar 13th-16th and perhaps the same in the Alkborough Flats area on Mar 22nd-26th, when it looked very sick. Later in the year there were singles at Barton on Oct 27th and Nov 15th, and two at Alkborough Flats on Dec 31st. There was also one at Covenham Res on Oct 4th.

Pale-bellied Brent Goose *B.b. hrota*: rare/scarce coastal visitor; generally Oct-Apr.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Humberston-Grainthorpe	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	2
Grainthorpe-Somercotes	3	1	1	2	-	-	1	2	-
Gibraltar Point	2	2	1	-	-	1	2	-	2
Frampton Marsh	2	1	3	3	1	-	2	-	3

In addition to those in the table, there were two at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes on Feb 2nd, one on the Humber off Barton on Feb 22nd-23rd and at Read's Island on Feb 27th-Mar 2nd, one north at Huttoft Bank and Sutton on Sea on Nov 21st, one at Rimac on Dec 11th, and one at Freiston Shore (probably the same as at Frampton Marsh) on two dates in Dec.

Black Brant *B.b. nigricans*: Former vagrant first 1982 with just three records to 1991. Now annual in small numbers, with Dark-bellied flocks. **LBRC**

Because this species is long-lived, mobile and prone to return in successive winters, and because hybrids with Dark-bellied Brent Goose may sometimes be confused with true Black Brants, it has become difficult to determine how many occur. The account below is our attempt to summarise this year's sightings. It is possible that only two mobile individuals plus one hybrid occurred during Jan-May, and two plus perhaps the same hybrid during Oct-Dec.



Black Brant *B.b. nigricans*: Gib Point Mar 8th & 9th 2015 © Paul Neale

An adult was in the Donna Nook-Grainthorpe area, often near Pye's Hall, from late Dec 2014 through to Feb 27th (SL, CA *et al.*), with presumably the same individual reported at Horseshoe Point on Feb 8th and 24th (BGU), and it or another (unaged) was at Grainthorpe Marsh on Apr 22nd and 25th (CA, IGS *et al.*). At Gib Point, adults were noted on Feb 25th and 27th (KMW,

RDn), and on Mar 7th and 9th (KMW, PNe), the Mar records considered to relate to a different, smaller bird than in Feb. At Frampton Marsh/Freiston Shore, there were singles on Jan 4th-10th, considered to be a hybrid on the last date (JRW, IE, JB), on Feb 17th-21st (TC, ABe), and on Apr 13th-May 13th (IE *et al.*). The last was said to be an adult but the others were not aged. In autumn, an early arrival was one (unaged) at Frampton Marsh on Oct 7th-9th (PS, BGu *et al.*), and an adult was at Donna Nook on Oct 29th-31st (SL, CA, GPC); the latter was perhaps the same as the one in the same area early in the year. Later reports were singles at Horseshoe Point-Tetney Haven on Dec 16th (WeBS) and at Frampton Marsh on Dec 28th (SK). One Brent x Black Brant hybrid was at Gib Point on Feb 25th and Mar 6th-9th (GPBO), perhaps the same as that at Freiston Shore on Jan 10th.

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

Rare/scarce feral visitor. Some local releases also involved and breeds occasionally. **RBBP**

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alkborough Flats	-	-	4	4	-	-	-	1	2	-	6	12
Messingham area	-	-	9	5	6	4	2	-	3	-	-	-
Fillingham Lake	2	2	1	8	8	-	-	-	-	5	6	-
Boultham-Whisby	2	2	1	2	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	2
Fiskerton Fen-Bardney	2	-	1	1	6	6	6	6	-	-	-	-
Kirkstead-Chapel Hill	-	2	2	4	-	1	6	27	16	5	12	-
Woodhall Spa Airfield	-	-	-	-	5	2	1	1	30	2	4	2
Kirkby on Bain GP	4	18	11	8	14	27	10	15	10	5	16	9
Tattershall Lakes CP	-	3	2	2	-	11	-	-	-	-	-	-
Frampton Marsh	-	2	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Deeping Lakes	1	2	3	2	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-

There were also three at Covenham Res in Oct and six at Gib Point in Nov, plus 1-2 at scattered locations elsewhere. While there must be interchange between many of the tabulated sites, there appear to have been substantially high counts this year than before. Breeding was confirmed (single broods) at Messingham SQ, Fillingham Lake, Fiskerton Fen, Woodhall Spa Airfield and Kirkby on Bain GP.

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

Rare. Vagrant/feral birds are recorded in most years. Small flocks are regular and form an occurrence pattern unique to this species amongst escaped or vagrant wildfowl. **RBBP**

There were fewer this year than of late. Three were on Alkborough Flats on Jun 29th, with two there on Sep 9th. The only other occurrence was of one thought to be a hybrid with Cape Shelduck, which was at Donna Nook intermittently during Sep 4th-Nov 15th.

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Very common resident/partial migrant; mainly Humber/north-east coast and Wash but breeds regularly inland.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>The Humber</i>												
WeBS totals	1792	1865	2745	793	726	2639	3032	1658	3398	1413	1198	1985
Alkborough Flats	157	196	186	282	202	304	110	5	156	243	136	137
Read's Island	200	22	720	500	500	1970	2600	1120	2700	700	2	495
Killingholme	-	14	194	-	-	-	-	-	10	-	-	-
Pyewipe-Grimsby	396	740	1373	360	72	319	322	427	180	475	360	353
Humberston-Horseshoe Pt	236	264	60	55	2	24	32	37	274	315	188	173
Horseshoe Pt-Somercotes	615	395	229	71	126	157	36	115	179	624	621	868
Saltfleet-Mablethorpe	413	383	75	30	15	11	5	32	7	5	69	188
<i>The Wash</i>												
WeBS totals	1883	1252	699	476	169	190	20	17	28	353	773	218
Gibraltar Point	87	154	118	60	67	163	150	67	30	135	234	94
Wainfleet	189	140	15	14	3	-	-	13	-	-	-	-
Levertown*	181	32	-	3	5	-	-	4	-	-	-	-
Butterwick*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	21	246	19
Freiston Shore	39	255	68	71	1	29	1	1	1	-	310	4

Witham*	300	50	-	14	-	2	-	-	8	50	20	-
Frampton Marsh	154	71	91	104	100	100	60	15	22	3	5	80
Welland*	-	114	102	45	23	27	-	-	-	2	8	-
Holbeach	500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dawsmere*	-	150	2	25	6	15	-	-	-	90	-	4
Gedney*	478	288	-	35	-	25	-	-	-	1	-	1
Terrington*	304	187	163	111	-	-	11	6	-	16	-	-
<i>Inland</i>												
Messingham SQ	9	18	24	30	8	16	13	3	14	14	-	17
Toft Newton Res	7	2	9	20	17	13	8	-	-	-	2	-
Covenham Res	4	5	54	20	9	8	5	4	-	1	-	-
Manby Wetland	-	10	17	19	6	8	-	-	-	-	-	1
Bardney-Nocton	-	14	4	9	5	1	14	12	10	6	-	-
Kirkby on Bain GP	2	3	11	20	13	6	-	-	-	-	-	2

Numbers were substantially higher than last year on the Humber, due especially to counts at Read's Island where there were peaks of 2600 on Jul 16th and 2700 on Sep 15th. There were also some good counts from Pyewipe, where the maximum was 1373 on Mar 8th. Elsewhere, totals were broadly similar, though in The Wash both monthly mean and peak totals were somewhat smaller than in 2014. Small numbers moving offshore at Gib Point included 33 south on Jul 14th, 32 south on Aug 26th, 53 north on Aug 31st, and 45 north on Nov 22nd. Breeding estimates on the RSPB Wash reserves were seven pairs at Freiston Shore and 27 pairs at Frampton Marsh. Elsewhere a few broods were reported at estuarine sites including Alkborough Flats, Donna Nook and Gib Point, and inland breeding was confirmed at Messingham SQ, Covenham Res, Toft Newton Res, Donington on Bain, West Ashby Pits, and Middlemarsh Farm (Skegness).



Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* North Killingholme May 25th 2015 © Colin Smale

Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata*

Rare/scarce feral resident/visitor and local escapee.

There were four (three males, one female) in Belton Park on Mar 9th and a pair (the female leucistic) at Queen Elizabeth Park, Grantham, on Apr 9th, while at Grimsthorpe Lake, there were counts of two on Mar 8th, 18 on Oct 18th and five on Nov 15th. No evidence of nesting was reported from that area, but the species was suspected of breeding at the other end of the county, at North Somercotes Warren, where a pair was seen on Mar 21st and Apr 9th and 19th, with one noted on Nov 11th. Those birds are within a wildfowl collection and, while they may be free-flying, they may not be truly wild birds. Elsewhere, a male was at Kirkby on Bain GP on Apr 18th

with one of uncertain age/sex on Jun 26th, a male at Freiston Shore during Apr 27th-May 7th, and a male at Fillingham Lake on Nov 9th.

Mandarin may well be under-recorded in the county. Naturalised populations nest in tree holes beside well-wooded streams and lakes and, in addition to often being in areas little visited by birders, can easily be overlooked. Numbers have grown in Lincolnshire, with some of the highest totals counted at Grimsthorpe, as this year. Much larger numbers now occur in neighbouring counties, with substantial and increasing populations at places like the Welbeck Estate in Notts, and Harewood and Castle Howard in Yorks. Dedicated coverage of suitable habitat might well prove worthwhile.



Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata* North Somercotes Apr 19th 2015 © Mark Johnson

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant. Rare but regular in summer. **RBBP**

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>The Humber</i>												
WeBS totals	884	1024	538	-	-	19	3	12	227	739	1737	390
Alkborough Flats	761	592	646	62	2	-	3	7	460	1078	1725	450
South Ferriby/Read's Island	200	130	225	15	-	-	-	12	165	517	51	219
Barton Pits	77	49	28	32	-	-	1	8	6	102	109	79
Tetney-Somercotes	620	50	6	1	1	13	-	8	120	800	1280	200
Saltfleet-Mablethorpe	400	200	60	2	-	-	-	-	64	200	320	40
<i>Coast</i>												
Huttoft Bank Pit	144	164	1	-	1	6	3	3	6	46	168	-
<i>The Wash</i>												
WeBS totals	9071	3848	2130	157	-	1	-	-	391	2202	4375	5365
Gibraltar Point	144	180	134	10	1	4	4	18	174	866	495	93
Middlemarsh Farm	1000	500	300	4	2	1	1	8	82	200	350	500
Freiston Shore	6242	1505	1115	56	-	1	-	1	185	1000	2500	2500
Witham*	850	200	150	-	-	-	-	-	57	-	50	-
Frampton Marsh	4300	3000	2000	200	5	14	20	125	3000	5000	5000	5142
Welland	-	63	-	-	-	-	-	-	120	1800	3600	-
<i>Inland</i>												
Bagmoor/Winterton Floods	300	70	65	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	108
Trent Port (Marton)	205	190	30	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	120	220
Covenham Res	212	158	48	10	-	-	-	-	27	37	98	168
Manby Wetland	230	161	30	2	1	-	-	-	23	75	89	40
Withern Washlands	3	6	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	140
Lincoln-Norton area	500	600	300	60	2	-	1	3	70	255	280	372
Fiskerton-Bardney	150	26	70	1	1	-	-	-	19	4	80	120
Kirkby on Bain pits	117	74	20	1	2	1	6	2	100	300	416	266
Tattershall Lakes	-	115	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Willow Tree Fen	200	450	480	19	2	-	-	-	-	70	340	550
Deeping Lakes	121	200	7	3	-	-	-	1	55	275	23	99
Baston Fen & Pits	4	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	120

The table shows maxima for most sites/areas holding 500 or more on The Wash, 200 on the Humber and coast, and 100 inland. Additional to the table, there were 400 at Cumberworth in Jan, 280 at Bonby Carrs in Feb, 2000 at Holbeach Marsh in Sep, and 350 on the Humber at Barton on Oct 28th. The total in the table of 6242 for Freiston Shore in Jan was the combined count for the Freiston WeBS sector; the highest count reported for the reserve alone was 3200 on Jan 27th. Frampton Marsh was estimated to hold 5000 birds from Oct 14th through to the end of Dec with a peak of 5142 on Dec 23rd. The sight and sound of these birds taking off has become one of the great wildlife experiences of Lincolnshire. Away from The Wash there were high counts of 1725 at Alkborough Flats on Nov 4th-5th, 1050 at Tetney Marsh on Nov 12th and 1000 at Middlemarsh Farm (Skegness) on Jan 17th. Further inland there were 600 at Thurlby Pit, Bassingham, on Feb 9th (with 500 at nearby Blackmoor Bridge in Jan and Feb) and 550 at Willow Tree Fen on Dec 14th. There were Jun records at eight sites but none involved possible breeding pairs. Autumn passage off Gib Point was less pronounced than in some previous years, with an Oct total of 995 south and a high of 764 south on Oct 29th, well down the October 2014 values of 5300 during the month, with 1300 as the peak count.



Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope* Frampton Marsh Feb 18th 2015 © Neil Smith

American Wigeon *Anas americana*

Vagrant. **LBRC**

A drake was photographed at Saltfleetby St Clement on May 31st-Jun 1st (SM, RHa, CMo), comprising the 15th individual to be recorded in Lincolnshire. It was accompanied by a female, considered to be a Eurasian Wigeon or perhaps a hybrid. Two separate male American Wigeon were seen in the Spurn-Hornsea area in Yorkshire during the same period, each paired with definite female Eurasian Wigeons. One of the males is assumed to have been the Rimac bird.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Scarce resident and fairly common winter visitor. Increased numbers since 1970s with breeding now regular mainly on Fenland rivers and drains and gravel and clay pit complexes.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alkborough Flats	2	12	34	38	12	67	14	10	37	22	11	-
Barton Pits	50	71	38	11	3	3	7	54	46	69	77	72
Covenham Res	1	44	18	8	2	-	-	3	5	18	32	17
Biscathorpe-Stenigot	2	-	5	12	2	17	4	6	22	22	-	-
Middlemarsh Farm (Skegness)	28	17	31	13	14	34	11	19	22	10	-	7
Gibraltar Point	83	85	42	24	17	24	20	25	31	23	33	35
Frampton Marsh	75	100	92	38	30	58	45	40	30	1	60	50

Messingham SQ	108	66	39	42	11	12	17	1	29	35	-	41
Toft Newton Res	19	13	17	11	4	-	-	-	-	-	45	30
Fillingham Lake	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	50	33
Burton GP	61	64	10	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	39
Boultham Mere/Swanholme	83	36	56	65	32	60	38	63	44	159	314	128
Swanholme/Hartsholme	200	45	28	-	-	-	-	12	-	6	100	38
North Hykeham Pits	11	57	27	20	9	42	-	-	-	-	3	4
Whisby NR	173	39	28	15	10	61	140	73	224	116	274	365
Thurlby/Norton pits	51	42	50	20	2	1	-	20	80	100	40	17
Fiskerton-Bardney	40	39	61	90	96	39	25	74	96	26	24	10
Nocton-Metheringham	-	7	17	9	23	17	1	-	5	-	-	11
Kirkby on Bain pits	73	230	255	105	38	39	34	16	115	170	133	102
Holywell Lake	24	20	48	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	-	36
Deeping Lakes	23	58	10	2	4	3	23	39	55	76	18	63
Willow Tree Fen	12	38	28	9	12	-	-	-	-	-	6	-
Marston STW	40	15	12	12	5	-	-	-	30	-	62	5

The table includes the majority of sites holding 25 or more. Other localities holding between 25 and 40 at some point were Louth, Huttoft Bank Pit, Wolla Bank Pit and Freiston Shore, and there were 150 at Woodhall Spa Airfield on Dec 9th. As usual, some sites saw increased numbers while others declined. Notable high counts this year were 255 at Kirkby on Bain GP on Mar 8th, 314 at Boultham Mere on Nov 18th, and 365 at Whisby NR on Dec 19th, the last believed to be a Lincolnshire site record. Breeding reports included estimates of five pairs at Freiston Shore and 29 pairs at Frampton Marsh, and breeding was confirmed also at Barrow Haven, Grainthorpe Marsh, Manby Wetland, Gib Point, Metheringham Delph and Kirkby on Bain GP.

Eurasian Teal *Anas crecca*

Common migrant and winter visitor. Scarce in summer, with localised breeding.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>The Humber</i>												
WeBS totals	1248	908	570	103	3	4	22	657	1401	2043	1580	950
Alkborough Flats	492	442	261	134	28	43	29	612	2280	4460	3404	1465
Read's Island	324	250	88	9	-	-	-	503	480	2200	185	125
Barton Pits	103	163	54	20	1	1	4	75	34	90	130	71
Killingholme Marshes	10	216	103	14	-	-	-	2	20	10	-	50
Humberston-Grainthorpe	376	4	16	14	-	-	3	141	110	74	33	115
Grainthorpe-Donna Nook	196	222	240	120	6	-	4	78	150	1500	315	274
Saltfleet-Mablethorpe	165	130	44	30	2	1	4	15	251	500	110	80
<i>The Wash</i>												
WeBS totals	2161	942	482	173	7	13	16	68	207	616	290	1342
Middlemarsh Farm (Skegness)	120	50	50	22	1	3	5	100	200	50	40	200
Gibraltar Point	544	209	154	80	26	32	71	232	850	1200	1060	719
Freiston Shore	1500	150	150	90	-	8	1	40	44	76	1	32
Witham*	400	20	75	-	-	-	-	-	108	20	-	-
Frampton Marsh	1500	2000	1000	150	4	56	30	100	300	394	2000	1560
<i>Inland</i>												
Manby Wetland-Withern	361	342	252	95	20	2	2	150	214	235	227	140
Boultham Mere-Swanpool	263	69	3	2	-	1	1	45	85	120	21	56
Whisby NR	184	12	34	26	8	5	7	9	32	151	179	126
Bardney/Nocton	105	29	41	8	-	-	3	18	129	29	106	30
Kirkby on Bain GP	85	109	30	21	5	1	2	85	350	413	420	210
Willow Tree Fen	75	32	65	53	20	-	-	1	3	100	250	220

Most areas supporting 200 or more are included in the table. There were also up to 500 at Shep Whites in Jan, 850 on the R Ancholme at Bonby Carrs in Feb and 300 at Blackmoor Bridge in Jan-Feb. Counts were particularly high in the inner Humber. There were 2000 or more at Alkborough Flats from the end of Sep to the end of Nov, peaking at 4460 on Oct 30th, and up to 2200 at Read's Island during Oct 10th-19th. Estimates of up to 1500 at Donna Nook in late Oct also were much higher than usual. Birds lingered into the summer at several locations but no confirmation of breeding was reported. Surveys at Frampton Marsh suggested 28 pairs present (up from nine in 2014) but these are based on standardised methods that do not allow for non-breeding birds and

it is not certain that any actually nest there. Offshore movement at Gib Point was most evident in autumn, including 131 south on Aug 21st, 101 south and 54 north on Sep 5th, 177 south on Sep 21st, 343 south on Oct 29th, 120 south on Nov 5th and 140 north on Nov 21st. Below are details of the only Teal ringing recovery affecting Lincolnshire in 2015: a bird reared in central Finland and shot near Bourne in its first winter.

SFH	Nestling	04-07-2014	Sitilinjärvi: 63°9'N 27°42'E (Kuopio) Finland
ST287444	Freshly dead (shot)	25-01-2015	Bourne: 52°45'N 0°23'W 2,007km SW 0y 6m 21d



Eurasian Teal *Anas crecca* Frampton Marsh Jan 18th 2015 © Neil Smith

Green-winged Teal *Anas carolinensis*

Vagrant. LBRC

A drake was at Read's Island/South Ferriby on Feb 7th-8th (ND, GPC, RHa). Two months later, a drake thought to be an adult was at Alkborough Flats from Apr 24th to May 12th (ND, GPC *et al.*). On plumage, this was different from the previous individual. The coincidence of dates for the Alkborough bird with that in 2014 (Apr 24th-May 5th) is striking and lends more support to the idea that many records involve returning birds.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

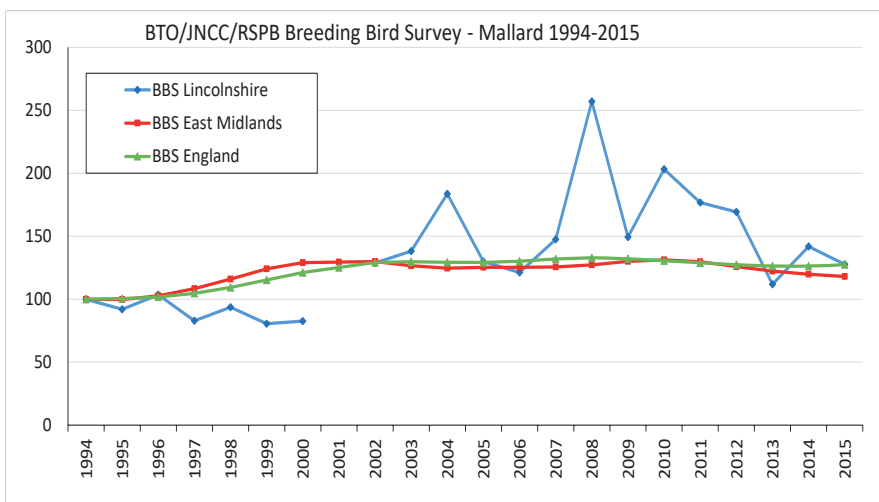
Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>The Humber</i>												
WeBS totals	753	599	251	269	130	211	315	365	593	648	643	747
Alkborough Flats	84	76	58	70	29	90	110	340	90	119	207	253
Barton Pits	100	66	59	78	37	84	107	31	104	113	93	74
Barrow-New Holland	47	96	0	25	26	40	0	56	130	207	0	114
Goxhill-East Halton	154	32	39	15	20	16	14	20	61	19	76	132
Donna Nook	233	177	53	50	29	40	18	65	120	192	162	175
Huttoft-Anderby	8	18	19	7	5	11	164	122	99	35	44	44
<i>The Wash</i>												
WeBS totals	865	439	276	261	102	178	146	129	363	353	243	501
Gibraltar Point	158	128	100	45	35	100	179	319	220	228	211	141
Wrangle	111	140	57	61	17	10	18	150	40	29	5	120
Freiston Shore	52	22	18	42	1	58	24	29	72	66	9	38
Frampton Marsh	500	150	140	47	90	108	60	221	130	500	130	200

Inland

Cadney Res	120	0	0	0	6	8	2	0	190	22	64	0
Covenham Res	308	115	67	79	64	70	77	181	314	394	307	311
Manby Wetland	240	140	40	28	30	110	53	150	100	58	112	115
Thurlby-Norton Disney	80	40	70	20	3	7	1	30	100	60	80	100
Fiskerton-Chapel Hill*	589	355	135	124	98	199	138	327	283	352	294	110
Nocton-Metheringham	48	80	98	71	101	272	17	114	55	65	19	43
Kirkby on Bain GP	70	37	30	23	32	78	182	96	100	146	141	149
Hagnaby Lock Fen	157	37	62	17	8	62	36	130	73	7	10	22
Spalding-Borough Fen*	181	249	137	87	118	141	158	159	0	74	29	101
Deeping Lakes	92	196	38	29	25	64	148	90	77	36	8	68

The table includes all localities that held 150 or more birds. The highest site counts were estimates of 500 at Frampton Marsh on Jan 10th and Oct 14th, 394 on Covenham Res on Oct 15th, 359 along the Chapel Hill-Kirkstead section of the R Witham on Jan 18th, and 340 on Alkborough Flats on Aug 4th. Estimates of breeding populations on the Wash RSPB reserves were 29 pairs at Freiston Shore and 54 pairs at Frampton Marsh, both up on 2014 values but only 12 broods were seen at Alkborough Flats. Breeding was confirmed at many other sites but no other estimates of breeding numbers were provided. The BBS (see chart) probably does not record Mallard trends especially well, but – while there are year-to-year fluctuations that are perhaps anomalous – the long-term county trend as in wider contexts appears to be one of stability.



Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*

Fairly common/common passage migrant and winter visitor. Rare in summer. **RBBP**

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>The Humber</i>												
Alkborough Flats	-	9	-	3	1	-	-	30	10	16	23	12
Read's Island	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	14	-	4
Barton Pits/Humber	20	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	6	1	13	-
Saltfleet-Mablethorpe	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	11	3	-	11
<i>The Wash</i>												
Gibraltar Point	7	2	5	6	-	-	-	21	72	32	13	14
Freiston Shore	51	6	4	4	-	-	-	-	2	5	51	220
Frampton Marsh	163	54	15	6	-	-	1	6	75	82	82	105
Gedney	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	-	-	-
Terrington*	247	147	26	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Inland

Covenham Res	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	1	2
Boultham Mere-Swanpool	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	7	1
Kirkby on Bain GP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	2	-
Willow Tree Fen	-	4	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

The table includes coastal and estuarine locations attracting 10 or more, plus the inland sites with greatest frequency of occurrence. In addition there was a count of 22 at Huttoft Bank Pit on Sep 16th. After a fall in 2014, numbers at the two RSPB Wash reserves were back up again in 2015. Together with the concentration in the Terrington WeBS sector, which peaked at 247 on Jan 24th, these three Wash sites accounted for 90% of the Lincolnshire wintering population. There was a dearth of records in May-Jun and no firm evidence of breeding. The only noteworthy observations were at Messingham SQ where there was a male on May 23rd and 2 males and a female on Jun 2nd, with a single male present to Jun 14th. Autumn offshore movement at Gib Point included 30 south on Sep 27th, 70 south on Sep 30th and 29 south on Oct 29th. On the Humber, 20 moved west at Barton on Jan 10th and 13 west on Nov 22nd.

Below are details of an adult present in Essex one Aug, and at Frampton Marsh three years later. The ringing date, especially, is early for a female from the continental breeding populations to have arrived in Britain, and this may imply that the bird belonged to the very small British breeding population.

FH19236	Adult Female	06-08-2012	Abberton Reservoir, near Colchester: 51°48'N 0°48'E (Essex)
	Freshly dead	26-08-2015	Frampton Marsh, Boston: 52°55'N 0°0'E 138km NNW 3y 0m 20d

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

Scarce passage migrant, rare summer visitor, breeding occasionally. Exceptional in winter. **RBBP**

Peak monthly counts	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Number of sites	1	10	15	5	2	4	10	3
Minimum Lincs total	1	15	29	13	2	11	10	4

Garganey was reported from 27 sites this year, up from 21 in 2014. The first arrivals were a week later than 2014, with one at Frampton Marsh on Mar 30th followed by one at Kirkby on Bain GP on Apr 1st. Singles followed at Covenham Res on Apr 8th and Gib Point on Apr 10th. During Apr-Jun, short-staying pairs were reported from Donna Nook, Huttoft Bank Pit, Manby Wetland and Saltfleetby St Clements. Frampton Marsh held up to four pairs with a peak of eight birds on Jun 1st. Four pairs probably bred at this site but there was no evidence of confirmed breeding. Two other sites held probable breeding pairs: Freiston Shore and Gib Point. Confirmed breeding took place at a confidential site near the Wash where a pair present from May 24th raised young; four juvenile birds were counted on Aug 4th and one bird lingered until Oct 6th. The only other immature specifically reported was one at Marston STW which was reported from Sep 9th to Oct 22nd and was also the last bird of the year.

Blue-winged Teal *Anas discors*

Vagrant. **BBRC**

An adult male was at Donna Nook from Apr 12th to Apr 28th (SL *et al.*) Accepted by BBRC (BB 109 p.572), this was the ninth Lincolnshire record, involving 12 individuals. Most have been found in autumn but previous spring records have been singles in Apr 1947 and Mar-Apr 1997.

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Scarce/fairly common resident and passage migrant. **RBBP**.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>The Humber</i>												
Alkborough Flats	3	2	2	9	-	14	2	110	156	114	58	46
Read's Island/South Ferriby	2	-	2	-	-	-	1	3	2	16	34	8
Barton Pits	16	7	13	5	-	-	7	15	24	23	13	17
Barrow-New Holland	17	2	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	14	-	-
Killingholme Marshes/Pit	6	21	12	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Saltfleet-Theddlethorpe	15	30	37	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14
<i>The Wash</i>												
Gibraltar Point	111	87	43	32	5	9	2	24	58	97	88	81
Middlemarsh Farm	7	5	2	8	10	8	2	7	2	11	14	14



Garganey *Anas querquedula* Grainthorpe May 9th 2015 © Mark Johnson



Blue-winged Teal *Anas discors* Donna Nook Apr 25th 2015 © Graham Catley

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Scarce breeder and a common winter visitor. **RBBP**

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>The Humber</i>												
Alkborough Flats	5	16	30	25	8	5	1	0	0	25	1	0
Barton Pits	158	271	156	59	11	28	151	164	8	9	16	19
Barrow-New Holland	2	6	0	32	20	61	5	0	6	5	0	23
<i>The Wash</i>												
Gibraltar Point	13	12	5	1	7	3	1	0	2	26	5	6
Frampton Marsh	36	100	30	10	10	10	1	1	3	4	9	25
<i>Inland</i>												
Bagmoor Floods	9	46	37	1	1	0	0	38	64	66	35	11
Messingham SQ	11	7	15	19	15	26	13	2	4	23	0	32
Toft Newton Res	16	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	11	13	20
Boultham Mere	28	13	14	1	5	12	6	3	2	6	16	22
North Hykeham Pits	27	27	8	0	1	1	6	0	9	1	20	10
Whisby NR	6	26	2	1	1	1	4	2	7	8	5	4
Norton Disney/Thurlby Pits	16	60	40	2	0	0	1	20	16	20	16	50
Bardney Pits	3	56	48	27	3	19	7	6	2	13	5	0
Kirkby on Bain GP	21	56	48	27	9	19	7	6	40	10	46	55
Deeping Lakes & Pits	18	32	11	0	0	2	101	69	20	1	0	3

The table includes all sites holding 25 or more birds with the exception of Baston Fen, where there were 44 on Jan 31st. Pochard in most areas were seen in higher numbers during 2015 than in 2014, and Barton Pits which consistently holds large numbers had a peak of 271 during Feb 12th-24th compared to 196 in the same month in 2014. However, at some sites in the central part of the county peaks were down on 2014 with 60 (100, in 2014) at Thurlby Sand Pit on Feb 17th, 56 (85) at Bardney Pits on Feb 14th, and c20 (60) at Toft Newton Res on Dec 5th. At Frampton Marsh, a count of 100 was made on Feb 15th. In the south, the Deeping Lakes peak of 101 was on Jul 26th. The Deeping Lakes counts suggest the site is used for moulting/post breeding dispersal rather than wintering. Eight pairs were thought to have bred at Barton Pits, with 26 juveniles noted on Jul 1st. Two broods were seen at Barrow Haven, with broods of two and three noted on Jul 4th. No other reports of confirmed breeding were received but probable breeding was reported at Alkborough Flats (one pair), Frampton Marsh (two pairs), Messingham SQ (two pairs) and Kirkby on Bain GP (two pairs). A single male Common Pochard x Tufted Duck hybrid was reported at Thurlby Pit, Bassingham, on Mar 7th.

Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*

Scarce. **LBRC**

After an absence of records in the county last year, a drake was present at Alkborough Flats for four days during Jun 16th-19th (ND, GPC, WG). This constitutes the 37th county record (though defining a 'record' for birds which move about regularly is difficult) but is considered to be just the 15th individual bird. Several are believed to have returned in successive years, including one from 2009 to 2013.



Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris* Alkborough Flats Jun 17th 2015 © Graham Catley

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Common resident and winter visitor

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>The Humber</i>												
Barton Pits-New Holland	180	201	135	172	21	31	56	211	88	104	116	140
<i>The Wash</i>												
Gibraltar Point	71	55	51	45	58	50	31	23	52	37	24	18
Freiston Shore	50	70	116	32	1	10	-	-	-	-	-	4
Frampton Marsh	100	150	32	58	60	52	14	4	20	3	50	39
<i>Inland</i>												
Cadney Res	3	-	-	-	2	-	172	-	140	30	-	-
Covenham Res	193	122	88	101	47	68	101	73	301	353	323	230
Toft Newton Res	30	6	29	24	10	-	9	34	65	90	90	61
North Hykeham Pits	60	81	56	32	18	27	90	86	261	310	98	104
Whisby NR	127	112	120	89	38	42	94	134	90	107	53	105
Norton Disney/Thurlby Pits	48	100	100	100	6	18	1	45	150	50	100	300
Bardney Pit	5	25	72	77	48	30	92	54	72	21	33	-
Kirkby on Bain GP	40	95	86	54	39	27	37	33	60	77	193	186
Spalding-Borough Fen*	96	81	88	114	28	23	2	-	5	6	73	88
Deeping Lakes & Pits	84	90	154	82	33	20	184	141	112	58	90	84
Baston-Langtoft Pits	60	114	55	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

The table includes all sites with counts of 90 or more, except for Manton Fisheries where there were 123 in November. The highest totals were recorded at Covenham Res, where there were 193 on Jan 5th and maxima exceeding 200 in the four months Sep-Dec, peaking at 353 on Oct 4th. Other areas consistently holding high numbers can be seen in the table. The Barton-New Holland area had 201 on the Feb WeBS count and there were 211 on Barton Pits in mid Aug, while 172 were counted at Cadney Res in the Aug WeBS count. North Hykeham Pits and Whisby NR also held large numbers, with peaks at North Hykeham of 261 on Sep 23rd and 310 on Oct 5th, while not far away there were c300 at Thurlby Pit (Bassingham) on Dec 27th. At Kirkby on Bain GP, WeBS counts included 193 on Nov 15th and 186 on Dec 13th. At Deeping Lakes and Pits, the combined WeBS count of Jul 27th was 184. Breeding was confirmed at 18 sites around the county, with 26 pairs estimated at Frampton Marsh. Maximum reported counts of juveniles understate true numbers in many cases, but included five at Alkborough Flats in Jul, five at Barton Pits in Aug, five at Horseshoe Point on Jul 15th, five at Pye's Hall on Jul 31st, six at Gib Point on Jul 24th and Aug 4th, four at Middlemarsh Farm (Skegness) on Aug 3rd, three at Boultham Mere Jul 31st, seven at Whisby NR on Jul 17th, seven at Kirkby on Bain GP on Aug 2nd, six at Thurlby Fen on Jul 7th, and juveniles present at Woodhall Spa Airfield on Aug 6th, and. Breeding was probable at a further eight sites. A male considered to be a Pochard x Tufted Duck hybrid was at Thurlby Pit (Bassingham) on Jan 4th, Mar 7th and Dec 23rd. A bird thought to be a Greater Scaup x Tufted hybrid was at Donna Nook on Feb 9th.

Greater Scaup *Aythya marila*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Rare in summer; bred in 1944.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gibraltar Point	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	4	-	4	2	-
Freiston Shore	2	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Frampton Marsh	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2
Tattershall Lakes CP	-	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

The table includes all counts of two or more except three in the Leverton WeBS sector in Feb. Numbers continue to be very low by historic standards. A drake at Barton Pits on Mar 7th was the only one seen within the Humber, though there was one out at Saltfleet on Oct 22nd and – perhaps the same – an adult male at Crook Bank, Theddlethorpe on Oct 26th. At Gib Point two females were noted on Feb 15th and two again on Mar 18th. The only locations with prolonged sightings were the Wash RSPB reserves, with one-two at Witham Mouth on Jan 10th, Jan 17th and Jan 22nd presumably involving the same birds. At Frampton Marsh, a first winter male was present from Jan 22nd to Feb 23rd and three birds noted on Jan 25th, while at Freiston Shore, there were two on Jan 9th, one on Feb 5th and the regular sightings, with gaps, of a male from Mar 10th to Apr 19th which was the last of spring. Early autumn records at Gib Point were a male with Eiders on Aug 21st, and two males and two females north on Aug 31st. Four flew south at Gib Point on Oct

29th and two south on Nov 10th. A first winter bird was at Frampton Marsh on Oct 21st-24th with a first winter female there on Nov 16th and 19th, and then a first winter male from Nov 22nd to the end of the year. Inland, at Lea Marsh (Gainsborough) a female was found on Jan 29th-30th and Feb 4th-5th, while at Tallington/West Deeping Lakes a first winter male was present on Jan 25th and 28th and on Feb 8th. Tattershall Lakes CP held three males on Feb 8th and on Mar 22nd. At Whisby NR a first winter female was discovered on Nov 30th and stayed in the area until the year end, making a short commute to North Hykeham Pits on Dec 16th.

Common Eider *Somateria mollissima*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor, present in all months. Under-recorded because most of the population stays well offshore. Mainly found in The Wash. Very rare inland.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>The Humber</i>												
WeBS totals	-	-	7	-	3	-	1	-	9	14	-	2
<i>The Wash</i>												
WeBS totals	337	298	163	32	4	2	38	23	13	40	50	478
Gibraltar Point	7	11	27	13	7	25	20	15	8	12	41	485
Wainfleet*	36	35	68	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Friskney*	40	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	40	45	74
Wrangle*	210	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	400
Leverton*	16	221	-	26	-	-	23	2	-	-	-	-
Freiston Shore	40	30	50	30	-	2	6	10	12	6	3	4
Witham*	32	8	40	4	-	-	-	-	5	1	-	-

There was no sign of a recovery of Eider numbers. This year saw especially low counts over the summer, when previously totals of 100-300 on the Lincolnshire side of The Wash have been typical. The highest counts early in the year were 210 in the Wrangle sector of The Wash on Jan 23rd and 221 in the Leverton sector on Feb 21st. At the end of the year, numbers remained low until mid Dec, when there were 400 in the Wrangle sector on the 15th, and then relatively high counts at Gib Point from the 24th, including 115 (98 flying south) on the 24th, 485 on the 27th and 120 on the 29th. Humber totals were low throughout the year, with most seen between Horseshoe Point and Grainthorpe Haven, including the peak of 14 on Oct 17th. The only reports west of Grimsby were two flying west under the Humber Bridge at Barton on Sep 21st and one west there on Nov 22nd.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor, rare in summer.

One at Witham Mouth on Jan 10th was the only bird early in the year. One was seen at Huttoft Bank on Oct 10th. A first winter female appeared at Deeping High Bank on Oct 31st, and remained there until Nov 11th, an unusual record so far inland. More typical were singles at Grainthorpe Marsh on Nov 3rd, flying south at Gib Point on Nov 10th, and at Huttoft Bank on Nov 21st, with two at Crook Bank, Theddlethorpe on Nov 22nd. In Dec, singles were seen at Gib Point on the 22nd and Tetney Marsh on the 23rd.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor. Rare inland.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>The Humber</i>												
WeBS totals	-	-	-	-	-	-	28	50	-	29	-	180
Barton upon Humber	-	-	-	-	-	4	12	-	4	6	33	-
Tetney-Somercotes	-	-	-	-	-	-	185	130	230	40	10	-
Saltfleet-Theddlethorpe	-	1	-	-	-	-	140	250	110	50	200	268
Theddlethorpe-Mablethorpe	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	38	104	8	120	200
<i>The coast</i>												
Mablethorpe-Skegness	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	306	45	44	182	-
<i>The Wash</i>												
WeBS totals	55	-	61	-	-	-	25	-	-	15	-	-
Gibraltar Point	120	200	8	16	14	140	150	190	870	167	483	300

In the first half of the year, very few were seen away from Gib Point, and counts there were small. In Jan-Feb, there were singles off Theddlethorpe on Feb 20th and 24th, and up to 12 at Freiston Shore between Feb 6th and 22nd, but otherwise no reports away from Gib Point, where the only counts over 55 were 120 on Jan 11th, 120 on Feb 8th and 200 south on Feb 9th. In Mar, 60 in the Friskney sector of The Wash on the 22nd was the only double-figure count. Spring numbers were tiny but there were a few inland, including one at Thurlby Pit (Bassingham) on Mar 23rd, one at Covenham Res on the 25th, with two there on Apr 8th, and one at Toft Newton Res on Apr 23rd. Up the Humber, a female was at Alkborough Flats on Mar 22nd, a female in the R Trent between Garthorpe and Alkborough on Mar 31st, with two (male and female) there on Apr 6th. Later in the year, numbers were slightly better, beginning with 140 at Gib Point on Jun 30th. High count during autumn included 306 off Anderby Creek and 250 at Rimac on Aug 2nd, 870 (the majority moving north) at Gib Point on Sep 9th, 483 at Gib Point on Nov 21st and 268 off Theddlethorpe on Dec 27th. In the Humber, six flew west at Alkborough Flats on Aug 2nd and 11 west there on Aug 15th. Later in the autumn, quite a few were seen between Barton and Goxhill including 26 at Goxhill Haven on Oct 26th and 33 at Barton on Nov 22nd. Birds found wholly inland were one at North Hykeham Pits on Aug 22nd, one at Covenham Res on Sep 11th, another there on Nov 4th, and a female at Covenham Res during Nov 28th-Dec 20th.

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Rare inland and in summer.

There were two at Freiston Shore on Jan 8th, with one there or in the Witham Mouth on the 9th-10th, and presumably the same at Frampton Marsh on Jan 25th. Two (male and female) were seen offshore at Gib Point on Jan 31st. One was at Freiston Shore/Witham Mouth on Feb 5th-6th. Three were at Witham Mouth on Mar 16th. A female/immature south at Gib Point on May 6th was the last of spring. In Aug, a sub-adult drake flew up the Humber but turned back at the bridge on the 17th, and one flew south at Gib Point on the 23rd. One at Donna Nook on Sep 23rd was the only one that month. More sightings occurred from Oct onwards, including singles offshore at Gib Point on four dates during Oct 8th-18th and three dates in Nov, and two on Dec 14th. Elsewhere, two were at Tetney Marsh on Oct 25th, two flying north off Huttoft-Mablethorpe on Nov 21st, with two at Anderby Creek on the 22nd and one at Crook Bank on the 23rd and 27th, with other singles seen at the last site on Dec 8th, 12th and 14th. One was at the Witham Mouth on Nov 29th, two at Donna Nook on Dec 9th, two off Skegness on Dec 14th and two at Tetney Marsh on Dec 27th.

Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

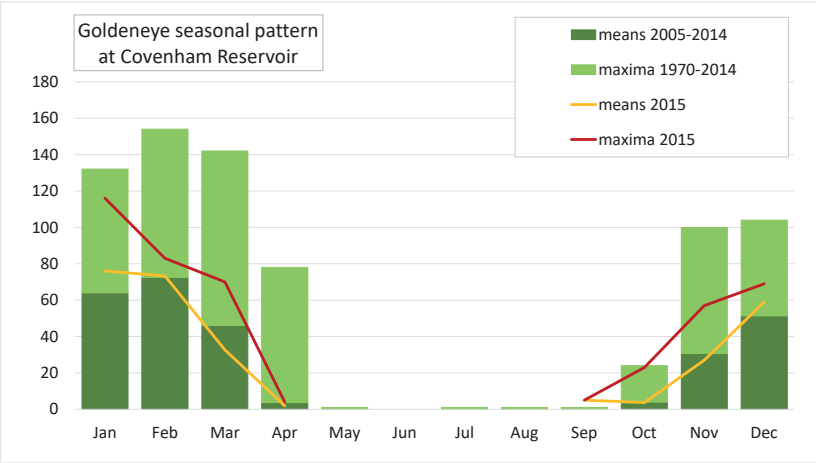
Fairly common winter visitor, rare in summer.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Barton Pits	23	95	87	33	3	1	-	-	-	5	51	39
Barrow-Goxhill	90	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	206
Covenham Res	116	83	70	4	-	-	-	-	5	23	57	69
Toft Newton Res	12	7	9	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	9	18
Gibraltar Point	5	8	6	2	-	-	-	-	-	29	32	4
Freiston Shore	26	12	30	6	-	-	-	-	1	7	-	68
Frampton Marsh	13	9	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	6
North Hykeham	16	15	19	16	-	-	-	-	-	1	12	10
Whisby NR	18	11	18	3	-	-	-	-	-	1	7	10
Norton Disney/Thurlby Pits	1	14	20	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	6
Bardney Pit	10	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kirkby on Bain GP	13	17	6	2	1	-	1	1	-	-	3	7
Langtoft West End GP	6	4	16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Deeping Lakes	23	18	14	11	1	-	-	-	-	-	5	18

The table incorporates all counts of 10 or more, apart from coastal movements in November. Counts of 50 or more were made on 84 occasions but only involved eight locations. Away from Covenham, there were four counts of 50 plus from Barton Pits: 95 on Feb 12th, 87 on March 7th-8th, 50 on Mar 28th and 51 on Nov 22nd. New Holland/Goxhill had counts of 90 on Jan 18th and 206 on Dec 4th. At Freiston Shore, there were 68 including 18 on the sea on Dec 29th. The species was recorded in every month of the year. During the summer, lingering birds occurred at Barton Pits where there were three during May 2nd-22nd and one during Jun 19th-Sep 13th, and at Kirkby on Bain GP where there was one during May 3rd-26th and on Jul 31st and Aug 12th. There were five females at Covenham res on Sep 11th and one at Freiston Shore on the 13th,

but no others until the second week of Oct. A substantial northward coastal movement occurred on Nov 21st, including 28 at Gib Point, 67 at Huttoft Bank and 80 at both Sutton on Sea and Mablethorpe.

The article in the 2014 report on the birds of Covenham reservoir included incorrect data for the chart showing the seasonal pattern of occurrence of Goldeneyes. A corrected version is shown below, together with the monthly means and maxima for 2015. The reservoir continues to be very well covered, and there were counts of Goldeneye on 79 dates during Jan-Apr and 61 dates during Sep-Dec, with broadly typical numbers.



Smew *Mergellus albellus*

Scarce winter visitor Oct-Apr.

An extremely poor year, with just two reports of a single bird or birds (sex not reported) at Kirkby on Bain GP on New Year's Day and on Jan 18th.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Scarce coastal passage migrant and winter visitor. Scarce inland and in summer.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>The Wash</i>												
WeBS totals	53	37	52	30	-	-	-	-	-	5	3	-
Gibraltar Point	21	26	19	6	-	-	2	-	1	14	31	19
Leverton*	7	-	1	27	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Benington*	-	-	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Freiston Shore	30	25	40	20	-	-	-	1	6	3	-	-

The table includes all sites at which there were 10 or more. Birds were recorded in all months other than May and June, with none between Apr 21st and Jul 9th. During July, one or two occurred at Gib Point on five dates, while in Aug there were four at Pye's Hall on the 7th and one at Freiston Shore on the 28th. More regular sightings began in mid Sep including six at Freiston Shore on Sep 25th. In comparison to last year, numbers were down, and only four counts of 30 or more were noted. These were 30 at Freiston Shore on Jan 9th, 35 there on Mar 18th and 40 on Mar 21st (the county's highest count of the year), with 31 at Gib Point on Nov 19th. Other fairly high counts were 27 in the Leverton WeBS sector of The Wash on Apr 18th, 26 flying south at Gib Point on Feb 19th, and four counts of 25, one at Wainfleet on Jan 25th and three at Freiston Shore on Feb 22nd, Mar 20th and Mar 31st. The only birds that could be deemed to have been inland were one in the middle of Boston on Apr 6th, and singles on the Humber at Barton on Oct 26th and on Nov 20th.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor, mainly inland. Rare in summer.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>Lincoln area</i>												
Fillingham Lake	12	17	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	8	3
Boultham Mere/Swanpool	6	7	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	36
Boultham Park	4	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	8
Swanholme/Hartsholme	14	22	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	6
Thurlby/Norton Disney	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	1
<i>Other areas</i>												
Donna Nook	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	4	-
Bonby-Broughton Carrs	1	7	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12
Covenham Res	4	6	2	2	-	-	-	1	-	1	2	7
Toft Newton Res	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Witham, Lincoln-Martin	26	15	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	19
Witham, Kirkstead-Dogdyke	6	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Gibraltar Point	-	1	-	1	-	6	-	-	-	3	9	5
Spalding-Borough Fen	9	32	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
Deeping Lakes	6	14	8	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Willow Tree Fen	3	2	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
Belton Park	10	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2

The table includes all sites attracting five or more and with records in two or more months. The first three months of the year saw reasonable numbers present throughout the county before a significant exodus during April. The best counts of the early part of the year were 25 along the R Welland between Spalding and Borough Fen on Feb 8th, with a total of 32 in a wider selection of watercourses in that area, and 22 at Swanholme Lakes on Feb 23rd. The last of spring was one south at Gib Point on 23rd. Birds were not present in the county during May or Jul but there was one record of six immature/females flying south at Gib Point on Jun 8th. One was at Covenham Res on Aug 21st and small numbers began to return to the county in Oct and Nov before higher counts in Dec, including two pre-roost counts at Boultham Mere of 36 on the 18th and 24 on the 27th.

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Former scarce feral breeder and winter visitor, now very rare.

For the first time since at least 1979, this species was not recorded in the county.

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Scarce summer visitor Apr-Sep; rare in winter. Probably much under-recorded. **RBBP**

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Number of sites	11	16	15	42	22	7	8	19
Number of birds	13	22	18	64	27	8	18	26

There were records from 19 widely spread sites, the first being one at Aubourn on May 14th with one at Frampton Marsh from May 22nd and one at Wroot on May 23rd. The only localities with more than single birds noted were at Seacroft Fields, just north of Gib Point reserve, where there were two calling on Jul 15th, and at Worlaby Carrs where four were reported singing on Jun 9th. Based on numbers of singing males, eight pairs probably bred but there were no records of confirmed breeding. One bird at Middlemarsh Farm was reported singing from Jun 1st through to Aug 22nd and was the last bird of the year. While numbers were again fairly low, this year saw an increase on 2014.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Very common feral resident; huge numbers released for shooting annually.

There were about 600 records from 105 sites with a maximum of 50 at Branston on Oct 15th. With many thousands being released on shooting estates every year throughout the county, such records are largely academic. The breeding population in some districts is considered largely stable but the breeding success of released birds is generally considered poor, and in the county as a whole, as more widely in the East Midlands, the BBS shows a declining population trend.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Common resident with recent decline, especially in the southern half of the county.

The Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust's Partridge Count Scheme returns (44 for Lincolnshire) indicate that the September density of birds on the sampled farms in the county declined from 23.6 per 100 ha in 2014 to 21.5 per 100 ha, and the young to old ratio had decreased from 2.7:1 to 2.5:1. There were about 640 bird club records from about 120 sites (110 in 2014) and 58 records of confirmed or probable breeding (13 in 2014), so breeding is still being under recorded. Small numbers of birds are being released on some shooting estates that together with specific measures to encourage Grey Partridges are helping to reduce the decline in Lincolnshire. The largest count reported during the year was 38 in 3 coveys at Baumber on Nov 22nd. The only other site to record more than 20 was Kirmond le Mire, where there were c25 on Sep 8th.

Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Very common feral resident: huge numbers released for shooting annually.

There were about 2800 records from 250 sites with the highest counts reported being 50 at Dunsby Fen on Jan 18th and 50 at Marston STW on Dec 1st. Again, with many thousands of birds released on shooting estates annually, such records are largely academic. Few breeding records were submitted for such a common resident. A male bird seen eating mistletoe berries growing on an apple tree in a Stickford garden on Feb 4th was noteworthy.

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

Fairly common offshore passage migrant and winter visitor Aug-May with peaks in mid-winter. Rare inland and in summer.

In the first quarter of the year the great majority of coastal records came from the southern half of the county and mainly from Gib Point where high counts in Jan were 105 on the 8th, 50 on the 9th and 29 on the 22nd with smaller numbers being recorded most days. Elsewhere in Jan there were 12 at Rimac, near Saltfleetby, on the 3rd and 12 at Moggs Eye on the 27th. In Feb peak counts at Gib Point were 10 on the 3rd, 27 on the 11th and 15 on the 21st. Other significant counts were at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR where 34 were noted off Crook Bank on the 12th and no less than 314 (41 on the sea, the rest moving south) were recorded of Rimac on the 27th, and 10 were at Donna Nook on the 28th. Numbers reduced rapidly in March as birds returned to breeding grounds, with peaks of 11 at Gib Point on the 3rd and 11 at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on the 25th. From Apr to Aug, 1-5 birds were noted on just thirteen days, mainly at Gib Point and Donna Nook. Post-breeding movements began in Sep when birds were recorded every day of the month in small numbers. High counts were 10 at Gib Point on the 9th, 31 there on the 21st and 12 on the 24th with 1-5 being noted at most coastal watch points. This pattern was repeated during Oct with 91 at Gib Point on the 9th, 13 on the 11th, and 10 on three dates, plus 1-5 being recorded there most days, whilst only 1-2 were noted at a handful of other sites. During Nov the only double figure counts were at Gib Point including 22 on the 5th, 17 on the 10th, 19 on the 17th, 36 on the 22nd and 19 on the 25th, with peaks elsewhere of seven at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on the 20th and five at Huttoft Bank/Car Terrace on the 21st. The year ended as it had begun with most high counts from Gib Point where there were 21 on Dec 6th, 43 on the 11th, 16 on the 20th and 76 on the 27th whilst at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR there were 26 on the 4th, 16 on the 14th, 34 on the 16th and 75 on the 27th and the last recorded birds of the year were 11 at Gib Point on Dec 31st.

There has never been a ringing recovery of this species affecting Lincolnshire (and none between Britain and Russia), so the results of satellite tagging of Red-throated Divers in the German sector of the North Sea are of interest (www.divertracking.com). One female, tagged in March 2015, which was in breeding grounds close to the mouth of the Ob River in Russia (68°E) in 2015 and 2016, spent part of winter 2015/16 in waters off the Lincolnshire coast.

A note on the status of Red-throated Divers in Lincolnshire offshore waters in on p.190.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

Scarce winter visitor to coastal and inland waters. Mainly Sep-Apr, rare in summer.

Most records throughout the year came from Gib Point, beginning with one south on Feb 21st followed over two months later by one on the sea on Apr 8th and two south on Apr 11th. An adult summer bird at Gib Point flew north close in on Aug 24th and one was on the sea there on the 26th. One flew north at Gib Point on Sep 4th and two were there on the 5th. Singles were at Tetney Marsh on Sep 11th, Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Sep 20th and 30th, and Gib Point on Sep 24th, Oct 13th and again on the 14th, with one at Huttoft Bank/Car Terrace on the

same day. Also in Oct were one at Tetney Marsh on the 22nd and 28th and two at Gib Point on the 29th. Nov was the most productive month for this species with all records coming from Gib Point where there were four winter-plumaged birds south on the 10th, one on the sea on the 13th, one on the 20th and one on the 24th. There were just two Dec records, both from Gib Point with one on the 7th and the last bird of the year on the 14th. It is not possible to be sure, but some records on closely separated dates could have involved the same individuals.

Identifying divers out of summer plumage requires care, and although this species is now excluded from the list of LBRC species, the committee will continue to seek documentation for records involving unusual locations or dates, or from inexperienced observers.

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

Rare/scarse winter visitor Aug-May. Mainly coastal and exceptional in summer.

Singles flew south at Gib Point on Jan 6th, 8th and 14th. One was well watched on the R Witham at Bardney from Jan 24th until Feb 1st. Singles were at Gib Point on Mar 6th and at Witham Mouth on Mar 15th, 21st and 22nd, and the final bird in the first half of the year flew north at Gib Point on May 9th. The first returning bird was noted at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Sep 30th followed by one north at Gib Point on Oct 11th and one south there on the 17th. There were two at Gib Point on Nov 18th and another on the 24th, all flying south. December records were one south at Gib Point on the 4th, one between Grainthorpe Haven and Horseshoe Point on the 11th, one at Gib Point on the 14th, one at Freiston Shore on the 15th and finally a single bird at Frampton Marsh on the 20th. As with Black-throated Diver, these records may include some duplication.



Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer* River Witham, Bardney Jan 30th 2015 © Russell Hayes

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Offshore visitor, declined from fairly common to scarce, mainly Mar-Nov. Rare in winter and very infrequent inland.

The decline of Fulmar in the county is in line with trends across the North Sea in the last thirty years probably owing to a reduction in available food as a result of rising sea temperatures and changing fishing practices. As noted last year, this species continues to be scarce and this year it was recorded on only forty-eight days so all sightings are shown here. The first for the year flew south at Gib Point on Jan 9th and another on the 11th. There were three at Witham Mouth/Freiston Shore on Feb 6th and singles at Gib Point on Feb 12th, 13th and 21st. One flew north at Witham Mouth on Mar 14th and in Apr one was at Freiston Shore on the 18th with two north at Gib Point on the same day followed by singles at Freiston Shore on the 22nd and at Gib Point on the 26th. Records in May were: one south at Gib Point on the 9th, one at Donna Nook on the

12th, four north at Gib Point on the 14th, one on the 15th, one at Donna Nook on the 16th, and single birds at Gib Point on the 20th, 23rd, 25th and 31st. All Jun records were from Gib Point, beginning with one north on the 5th, four north on the 6th, two on the 15th, one north on the 22nd and two south on the 30th. There were three singles in Jul, all at Gib Point with one south on the 15th, one south on the 18th and one north on the 30th. One flew north at Gib Point on Aug 7th and two north on the 13th, one was noted at Donna Nook on Aug 15th and another flew north at Gib Point on the 19th. The first two weeks of September were the busiest time of the year of the year beginning with one at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on the 1st with one north at Gib Point and two at Huttoft Bank/Car Terrace on the same day. There were three north and one south at Gib Point on the 2nd and two at Donna Nook on the 2nd and 3rd. Four flew north and one south at Gib Point on Sep 4th and six north on the 5th with 10 at Witham Mouth on the same day. Then there were two at Donna Nook on the 6th, 13 north at Gib Point on the 7th, seven on the 8th, and 10 north there on the 9th when one was also seen at Tetney Marsh. One was at Frampton Marsh on Sep 10th, four flew north at Gib Point on the 11th and one south on the 12th, one was at Frampton Marsh on the 13th and there were singles, perhaps the same, at Huttoft Bank/Car Terrace and Moggs Eye on the 15th. The final few birds of the year were in mid-Oct with one north at Gib Point on the 14th, four at Huttoft Bank/Car Terrace also on the 14th, two north at Sutton on Sea on the 15th and one north at Gib Point on the 17th.

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

Scarce offshore passage migrant Jul-Nov, mostly Sep. A few winter records; Dec-Jan.

From the middle of Aug until Nov there was a maximum of thirty-eight individuals noted on just fourteen days mostly of one to three birds. One was at Donna Nook on Aug 15th followed by another one there on Sep 2nd and one off Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Sep 3rd. The highest count of the year was on Sep 5th at Gib Point when 13 flew north; there were also two at Mablethorpe the same day. Also in Sep were: one at Donna Nook and one at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on the 6th, two north at Gib Point on the 7th, one there on the 8th with three on the 11th and two on the 30th from the same site, all flying north. In Oct one flew north at Gib Point on the 11th, three north there on the 14th and a single bird passed Donna Nook on the 17th. The final birds of the year were two at Huttoft Bank/Car Terrace on Nov 15th and three north at Gib Point on the 21st and, presumably, two of the same birds past Huttoft Bank/Car Terrace on the same day.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

Scarce/fairly common offshore visitor/passage migrant, Apr-Nov with most Sep. Occasional inland records after south-west gales.

2015 was a poor year in the county for this species with a maximum of forty-nine birds recorded on just sixteen days from May to Oct. All May birds were at Gib Point with five north on the 19th, four north on the 20th and 13 south on the 31st. Two were noted at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Jun 3rd, one flew north at Gib Point on Jun 15th with two there on Jul 16th, one on the 17th and another on the 18th. Two flew north together at Gib Point on Aug 13th and there were four there on the 23rd. Birds in Sep were: one north at Gib Point on the 4th, three north there on the 5th, four north on the 7th with one at Huttoft Bank/Car Terrace on the same day, and three north at Gib Point on the 8th. In Oct there was one at Freiston Shore on the 13th and the last bird of the year was at Witham Mouth on the 17th.

European Storm-petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*

Rare offshore Jul-Dec; exceptional inland and in other months. **LBRC**

The only confirmed record of the year was of one north at Gib Point on Sep 5th (KMW).

Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus*

Regular offshore visitor/passage migrant most of the year. Fairly common/common Jul-Nov, but scarce at other times and rare inland.

Few birds were noted in the first four months of the year, with records of 1-4 along the coast and in The Wash, but with most seen at Gib Point where there were also six south on Apr 19th, on which date an adult was found asleep beside a track at Jenkin's Marsh, then asleep on an island on the 20th and found dead on the 21st. Birds were seen regularly during May, mainly at Gib Point where there were 16 north on the 2nd, 30 on the 14th, 23 on the 20th, 23 on the 30th and 47 mainly south on the 31st. Elsewhere 1-5 were seen on the coast with a high of 13 at Donna Nook on the 17th. Most significant Jun counts were again from Gib Point, with 49 on the 8th, 61 on the 15th

and 35 on the 30th whilst 1-5 were noted at a few other sites and 10 at Anderby Creek on the 24th. This trend was repeated in Jul but with significantly larger counts including 58 at Gib Point on the 14th, 57 on the 16th, 89 on the 24th, 70 on the 25th, 147 on the 27th, 76 the following day and 51 on the 29th; the only other sites to see double figures were 15 past Rimac, Saltfleetby, on the 27th and 30 off Huttoft Bank/Car Terrace on the 29th. Migration developed considerably through Aug with high counts of 144 at Gib Point on the 13th, 91 at Donna Nook on the 15th, 108 at Gib Point on the 20th with 390 there on the 21st, and 300 at Freiston Shore/Witham Mouth on Aug 29th, and single figure counts were widespread. There were seven juveniles over the Humber at Barton on Aug 23rd, when one juvenile flew east over the A1 at Claypole, and two at Barton on the 24th. Sep was the peak month with most high counts coming from Gib Point, but is summarised by the highest counts at principal sites. Early in the month, there were 47 at Donna Nook on the 2nd and 42 there on the 3rd when there were 33 at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR, then 102 at Gib Point on Sep 4th, and a massive 500 at Freiston Shore/Witham Mouth on the 5th, when there were also 60 at Chapel Point and 220 at Gib Point. There were 167 at Gib Point on the 7th, then a quieter period until 228 at Huttoft Bank/Car Terrace and 140 at Moggs Eye on the 15th, 141 at Gib Point on the 16th, and 43 at Mablethorpe and 78 at Huttoft Bank/Car Terrace on the 17th. Later there were 153 at Gib Point on the 21st, 144 south on the 24th, 50 at Holbeach Marsh on the 25th and 300 at Freiston Shore on the 30th. There were four juveniles at Barton on Sep 9th, and truly inland birds were two at Thimbleby on the 8th, a juvenile found on the roadside at Hemingby on the 16th and one at Oxcombe on the 28th. Early Oct was similar to Sep, with 86 at Gib Point on the 5th, 144 on the 9th, 180 on the 10th, 47 at Crook Bank, Theddlethorpe, 268 at Gib Point and 300 at Freiston Shore on the 13th, and 324 at Gib Point and 122 at Huttoft Bank/Car Terrace on the 14th. The second half of Oct was quieter with 23 at Gib Point on the 16th, whilst on the 17th there were 30 at Witham Mouth, 39 at Gib Point and 56 at Donna Nook, 13 were at Humberston Fitties on the 19th, 20 were at Gib Point on the 23rd, 77 there on the 24th and 16 on the 29th. The only counts above 10 in Nov were 37 at Huttoft Bank/Car Terrace on the 15th, 106 at Gib Point on the 21st on which day 41 were noted at Huttoft Bank/Car Terrace and 40 at Sutton on Sea, and 28 at Gib Point on the 22nd. There was a handful of records in Dec with one on the 1st at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on the 1st, one at Gib Point on the 3rd, two at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on the 14th, three adults there on the 16th, a juvenile south at Gib Point on the 22nd and the final birds of the year were seven adults past Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on the 29th.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Fairly common winter visitor, mainly coastal but increasing numbers inland and in summer. Inland breeding colony established 1992.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>Coastal</i>												
Humberston Fitties-Tetney	18	1	7	9	-	7	32	57	68	126	250	22
Donna Nook	24	14	17	17	3	5	30	34	50	27	4	42
Saltfleet-Theddlethorpe	83	317	39	3	5	3	1	24	18	25	12	32
Anderby	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	84	1	2	2	-
Gibraltar Point	300	310	50	16	10	12	36	58	36	188	300	450
Friskney	14	1	11	5	-	-	1	30	120	7	-	6
Terrington*	76	62	27	22	-	-	2	12	-	4	-	-
<i>Inland</i>												
Covenham Res	12	10	1	2	4	4	3	37	54	202	356	310
North Hykeham Pits	80	54	24	13	9	7	-	4	8	2	5	4
Whisby NR	42	28	24	13	12	9	16	16	47	35	68	92

The table includes all sites holding 75 or more birds. Other significant counts, not in the table, were 70 at Deeping Lakes on the Jan WeBS count on the 17th, 33 in the Wainfleet WeBS sector on Aug 16th, 40 at Woodhall Spa Airfield on Nov 1st and 25 there on Dec 9th, 25 at Messingham SQ on Dec 11th, 32 from Barrow to Barton on Dec 13th, and 25 at Deeping Lakes NR on Dec 19th. The Jan high count at Gib Point of 300 were all birds flying north over a five minute period at 10:30 on the 25th, while that in Dec involved 450 birds flying south from 10:20 to 10:45 on the 17th. Highest counts at other sites included 356 at Covenham Res on Nov 26th, 317 off Crook Bank, Theddlethorpe on Feb 20th and c250 at Tetney Marsh on Nov 25th. Breeding was again confirmed at Deeping Lakes but with no indication of the number of nests; regular counts of these would be welcome. The sixth foreign-ringed Cormorant to be found in Lincolnshire is shown below. Numbers coming to Britain in winter from the Netherlands and Denmark have increased since the 1980s.

DKC	Nestling	02-06-2013	Vensholm, Ravnsborg: 54°55'N 11°1'E (Storstrøm) Denmark
246959	Unknown	01-11-2015	Sibsey, Boston: 53°1'N 0°1'E 749km WSW 2y 4m 30d



Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* Covenham Res Nov 19th 2015 © Andrew P. Chick

European Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Usually rare/scarce winter visitor Aug-May to the coast and inland but with occasional larger influxes. Exceptional in summer.

With only nine records this continues to be a scarce county bird. Early year records were all at Gib Point: one on the sea, close inshore, on Mar 23rd, an adult flew south on Apr 19th and another was on the sea on May 25th. There were two autumn records also at Gib Point where one flew north on Sep 7th and another (perhaps the same) was seen on the 8th. Towards the year's end one was at Donna Nook on Nov 22nd followed by another at Tetney Marsh on Nov 25th. The final birds of the year were at Freiston Shore where there were two on Dec 29th and 31st. The bird below, the only recovery affecting Lincolnshire this year, is additional to those described above.

1484216	Nestling	11-06-2015	Inchkeith, Firth of Forth: c. 56°1'N 3°8'W (Fife)
	Freshly dead	30-12-2015	Donna Nook: 53°28'N 0°9'E 352km SE 0y 6m 19d

Eurasian Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Rare breeder, rare winter visitor. Bred to early 19th century, from 1940s-1979 and in recent years.

BBBB

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of sites	3	4	3	3	2	1	1	2	3	2	5	4
Minimum Lincs total	6	8	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	6	4

A slightly better year for Bittern in the county with reports from 14 sites, up from 11 the previous year, and a cumulative monthly Lincs total for the year of 44, up from 39 the previous year. The Humber Bank pits held birds most of the year (records in nine months) with a maximum of four in Jan-Feb. All other sites had single birds only. Breeding attempts were limited to reports of one booming bird for a short period at Barton Pits in May. There was no other evidence of breeding and it is ironic that while Bittern breeding numbers are booming across England their position in Lincolnshire is increasingly dire. Single wintering birds were reported from Boultham Mere (Jan-Feb and Jul-Dec), Cleethorpes CP (Feb-Mar) and Whisby NR (Jan-Feb and Nov-Dec).



Eurasian Bittern *Botaurus stellaris* Far Ings Feb 21st 2015 © Graham Catley

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*

Vagrant. **BBRC**

An adult male was found at Kirkby on Bain GP on Jun 28th (KSho, JFa, GWr *et al.*), one of the finders being the finder of the previous day's Squacco Heron. Accepted BBRC (BB 109 p.577), this bird was considered to be the same as those present for extended periods previously in Suffolk and subsequently in Yorkshire.

This was the thirteenth record for Lincolnshire, three between about 1870 and the early 1900s, and the rest from 1953 onwards. Of the ten recent birds, eight have been males, with finding dates between 19th April (in 1978) and 28th June (this year's). Two juveniles have been found in August, in 1953 and 1976. Three of the males were seen on single dates but the other individuals stayed for between two and 11 days. They have occurred in localities widely spread across the county.



Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus* Kirkby on Bain Jun 28th 2015 © Colin Scott

Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

Vagrant. **LBRC**

An adult was found near Burgh le Marsh on May 10th, remaining to the 13th (NYe, RYE, KMW *et al.*).

The first in Lincolnshire was a juvenile shot at Tetney on 26th November 1888. The next was in 1973, and this year's bird takes the total to 16 (excluding a known feral bird in 1988). Ten of the 16 have occurred in spring, between 25th March and 3rd June, with the rest spread across September-December. Three in November-December were juveniles but others were second calendar year or older. Most have been around the coasts and estuaries, with one inland at North Hykeham in 2006.

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*

Vagrant. **BBRC**

An adult was found at Kirkby on Bain GP on Jun 27th (KSho, RHay *et al.*). Accepted BBRC (BB 109 p.578).

This was only the fourth for Lincolnshire, previous birds being shot at Fillingham Lake in June 1861, an immature shot at Great Coates on 29th September 1910, and an adult at Messingham fishing ponds on 3rd-11th June 1999.



Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides* Kirkby on Bain Jun 27th 2015 © Graham Catley (left) and © Russell Hayes (right)

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Formerly a rare/scarse visitor in all months, a few wintering since 1993/94. Now a scarce breeding bird and increasingly common resident. **RBBP**

District minimum totals	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
The Humber	47	29	32	29	30	31	66	70	74	51	58	47
East coast	24	14	19	10	14	4	13	8	16	31	21	29
The Wash	31	66	46	53	59	54	174	295	398	162	51	45
Inland	5	11	19	5	2	12	19	24	22	18	12	23
Minimum Lincs total	107	120	116	97	107	101	272	397	510	262	142	144

An article describing the changing status of the Little Egret in Lincolnshire can be found at p.184. The summary table above shows the monthly minimum peak WeBS counts of birds recorded in each of four districts; the east coast includes Saltfleetby-Skegness. Little Egrets are now so widespread and numerous at all times of the year that the easiest way to present their occurrence is based on standardised WeBS counts rather than individual reports. However, it's important to remember that, because of gaps in coverage and because only one count is made per month, WeBS may miss some local high totals. For example, the largest single site count in 2015 was c250 at Boatmere Scrape on Oct 13th, considerably more than the whole Wash WeBS total for that month. Interestingly, WeBS counts for The Wash throughout Jul-Dec were down on the previous years' counts. It is not clear whether this reflects incomplete counting or genuine lack of birds. Another record breeding year for Little Egrets, with a minimum of 101 pairs reported in the table below. Since first breeding in 2006 the species has gone from one to 101 pairs in 10 breeding seasons. Two small new colonies were reported, listed as H and I in the table. At site E, 26 nestlings were ringed. There were at least 200 breeding birds around in Apr-May when the Heronry survey was done and it is interesting to note that the WeBS total in that period was only half that number, though of course many breeding adults would be attending nests at that time.

Numbers of nests	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
A Wash	-	5	7	6	6	8	6	7	6	25
B Humber	1	11	14	11	27	17	12	0	8	14
C Inland	-	-	1	4	5	7	6	8	10	12
D Humber	-	-	-	-	2	3	3	4	20	15
E Humber	-	-	-	-	-	8	32	20	32	21
F Inland	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	5	8	0
G Wash	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	0	0
H Inland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
I Humber	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
County total	1	16	22	21	40	45	63	44	84	101

Two ringing recoveries are shown, being the oldest and the longest-distance during 2015. The former, at six years of age, was a longevity record for the county and presumably a fairly local breeding bird while the latter (also included in last year's report) shows typical first-year dispersal followed by return to the natal area. Other Lincolnshire nestlings from previous years were reported in Shropshire and Surrey (one bird), and Northumberland (two birds).

GM41333	Nestling	31-05-2008	near The Laurels Farm, Terrington St Clement: 52°46'N 0°18'E (Norfolk)
	Alive (colour rings seen)	11-02-2013	Fiskerton Fen: 53°13'N 0°22'W 68km NW 4y 8m 11d
	- ditto -	13-03-2015	Fiskerton Fen: 53°13'N 0°22'W 68km NW 6y 9m 10d
	- ditto -	20-03-2015	Fiskerton Fen: 53°13'N 0°22'W 69km NW 6y 9m 17d
GR37162	Nestling	07-05-2014	North Cotes: 53°28'N 0°1'E
	Alive (colour rings seen)	11-09-2014	Aberlady Bay Local Nature Reserve: 56°0'N 2°51'W (East Lothian) 336km NNW 0y 4m 4d
	- ditto -	06-12-2014	Cocklemill Marsh: 56°11'N 2°53'W (Fife) 353km NNW 0y 6m 29d
	- ditto -	20-02-2015	River Ythan, near Newburgh: c. 57°19'N 2°0'W (Aberdeenshire) 445km NNW 0y 9m 13d
	- ditto -	24-07-2015	Killingholme Haven: 53°39'N 0°14'W 26km NW 1y 2m 17d
	- ditto -	01-08-2015	RSPB Blacktoft Sands: 53°41'N 0°43'W (Yorkshire) 56km WNW 1y 2m 25d

Great White Egret *Ardea alba*

Rare visitor. **LBRC**

The first of the year was at Deeping Lakes NR on Jan 2nd (DNw). Next were singles, perhaps the same, at Frampton Marsh on Feb 17th (ABe) and on Mar 9th and 12th (TC). An adult in breeding plumage was at Rimac, Saltfleetby, on Apr 10th (NAL). Two were at Frampton Marsh on Apr 24th (MPn). Another adult in breeding plumage, which stayed put a little longer, was at Huttoft Bank Pit on May 1st-9th (GWr *et al.*). There was then a gap until one flew north at Gib Point on Jul 4th (RDn). Another long-stayer was at Alkborough Flats on and off from Jul 24th to Aug 29th, also visiting Blacktoft Sands in Yorkshire. One was at Spridlington on Aug 27th (CSc). One was photographed at Boultham Mere on Sep 14th and 17th (ACS *et al.*), and also on the 17th one was at Frampton Marsh (TC, PS). An adult was seen and photographed at Middlemarsh Farm (Skegness) on Sep 25th-26th (NAL *et al.*). In Oct, singles at Gib Point on the 3rd-4th (MDW, JPS, EJM) and at Rimac, Saltfleetby, on the 6th (ACS, PEs) were perhaps the same, and also could have been the same as those in late Sep. The next was not until late Nov, when one was found near



Great White Egret *Ardea alba* Middlemarsh Farm, near Skegness Sep 26th 2015 © Russell Hayes



Great White Egret *Ardea alba* Alkborough Flats Jul 25th 2015 © Graham Catley

Toft Newton Res on the 27th (GJF), and then in Dec there was one at Covenham Res on the 4th before, finally, one took up residence in the Bardney-Nocton area from Dec 14th and remained into 2016 (KAM *et al.*).

Thus there were 17 records, one of two birds. Quite a few of the records could have involved the same birds, but it is not possible to say with certainty how many occurred. This species does, though, remain a rare bird. It is unfortunate that several records have had to be omitted because they were not supported by any documentation. We encourage observers to provide at least brief details of sightings.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Fairly common resident, partial migrant and winter visitor.

The total number of occupied nests in Lincolnshire counted as part of the BTO Heronries Census during 2015 is shown in the table below. There is increasing concern that the larger traditional heronries are declining and/or breaking up, suggesting that smaller sites are being missed from the annual census. All members are encouraged to submit any records of breeding or probable breeding site to ensure an accurate annual count is undertaken.

Abbey Wood	30	Lea Marsh	7
Appletree Ness	4	Long Wood	3
Baston Sand & Gravel Pits	8	Nocton Wood	8
Belton Park	3	North Cotes Spinney	6
Bottom Barff Wood	nil	Patterson's Pit	21
Dowsby Fen	1	The Deeps	3
Fitties Nature Reserve	3	The Mere, Deeping St James	7
Hartsholme Country Park	15	Troy Wood	9
Hospital Cottage Spinney	4	Tuetoes Wood	nil
Howsham Barff Wood	nil	Warren Plantation	7
Kingerby Wood	3	Welland Farm	6
Kirkby Pits (west)	12	Willoughby Wood	27
Legbourne Wood	nil		



Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* North Killingholme Jul 6th 2015 © Colin Smale

The total number of occupied nests in 2015 was 187; this compares with 190 in 2014 and 183 in 2013. The above data are collected as part of the BTO Heronries Census, which has monitored Grey Herons in the UK since 1928 and shows the species to have been more abundant in the early 2000s than at any time in the last 80 years. The long-term trend in England is a shallow increase but with a strong downturn evident since 2001. The Lincolnshire data show a similar pattern but the decline started earlier, around 1990. The Lincolnshire Bird Club is grateful to Mr Barrie

Wilkinson for organising the BTO Heronries Census within Lincolnshire and supplying the data for use in the bird club report. Away from the breeding sites this is a regularly encountered birds with most records involving low numbers of birds. No significant passage was recorded on the coast, with four reported low in off the sea at Gib Point on Aug 19th being the largest movement recorded. In the first winter period peak counts included 12 at Deepings Lakes on Jan 16th, 14 on the River Witham between Bardney Bridge and Five Mile House on Feb 6th and ten on the River Welland between Spalding and Borough Fen on Mar 8th. In the second winter period, there were only 12 counts of five or more birds including nine at Pyewipe on Oct 18th, 10 seen from the River Witham/Welland cruise on Oct 21st, six at Boultham Mere/Swanpool on Nov 10th and Dec 27th, nine at Baston Fen on Nov 26th, and 10 at Nocton Fen on Dec 31st.

There were only two ringing recoveries affecting Lincolnshire this year, and the one below was the longest-distance. An unexceptional recovery but shown to draw attention to the cause of death. It is difficult to imagine a heron being mistaken for a duck or goose, or even a harrier.

1506299	Nestling	21-04-2014	Besthorpe Gravel Pits, Newark: c. 53°9'N 0°47'W (Nottinghamshire)
	Freshly dead (shot)	21-10-2014	Wingland Marsh: 52°45'N 0°12'E 80km SE 0y 6m 0d

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*

Vagrant. BBRC

At least three individuals were seen this year, as part of a continuing upsurge in numbers reaching Britain, in part from the population now breeding in northern France. The first was an adult which flew north-west at Kirkby on Bain GP on May 22nd (GPC). This had been tracked through Norfolk on the 21st-22nd and was seen in Yorkshire on the 24th. It was reported to have passed over Frampton Marsh on the 22nd but that remains undocumented. In Aug, there were multiple sightings of two or three juveniles, but unfortunately again not all of these have yet been considered by BBRC. Documented sightings, accepted by BBRC (BB 109 p.580 & online for Aug 12th), are as follows. An unringed bird was at Tetney Marsh and coastal areas south of there on Aug 3rd-4th (KC) and at and around Gib Point on Aug 5th-12th (ABe *et al.*). Another bird was at Covenham Res on Aug 11th (KRo).



Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* South Somercotes Aug 11th 2015 © John Clarkson

We hope that additional information for the two Aug records listed above, and for a third individual that month, will be included in future BBRC reports. While stressing that the following is not the 'official' BBRC record, our understanding of the sightings can be summarised as follows. The first, unringed, individual arrived in the county across the River Trent from Blacktoft Sands, Yorks, to Alkborough on Aug 3rd, and presumably the same bird was at Tetney Marsh later that day and on the 4th when it moved south towards Mablethorpe, being seen at Gib Point on the 5th and remaining in that area until the 15th. Another juvenile flew south over Read's Island and up the River Ancholme on Aug 4th; this is believed to be different from either the first individual which was already on the coast, or the third bird which was still at Spurn. The third individual was a colour-ringed juvenile which had earlier been in the Spurn, Yorks, area during Aug 3rd-10th. This was the bird seen over Covenham Res on Aug 11th, which later that day was seen at North

Cockerington and Saltfleet and photographed at South Somercotes, confirming its identity with the colour ring F05R, before it was last seen flying north. Although not yet in the BBRC record, this bird was then re-found in Yorkshire during Aug 17th-Sep 13th, apart from a day-trip to Cleethorpes on Sep 1st.

The bird F05R was ringed as one of a brood of three in the Ardennes, north-east France, on Jun 3rd 2016. The story has a sad end, as it was found dead just north of Madrid, Spain on Oct 20th. Another of the brood, F05P, was present at the Loch of Strathbeg, north-east Scotland, during Aug 6th-24th but so far there have been no further sightings of that bird.

The three individuals so far accepted take the county total for Black Stork to six, previous birds occurring in April 1984, June 2006 and May 2104. As outlined above, several records in 2015 were either not submitted to BBRC or for some other reason have not been adjudicated, and consequently are not included here. Black Stork remains a rare species and, as for records of other rarities, we appeal to observers not to assume someone else will submit details, but to do it themselves.



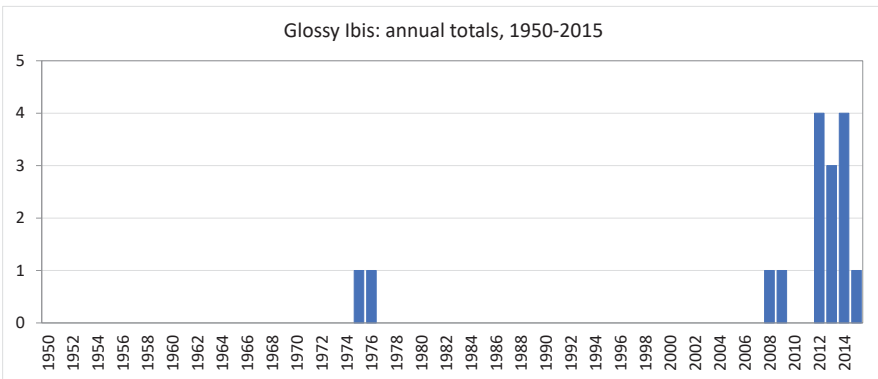
Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* Cleethorpes Sep 1st 2015 © David Bradbeer

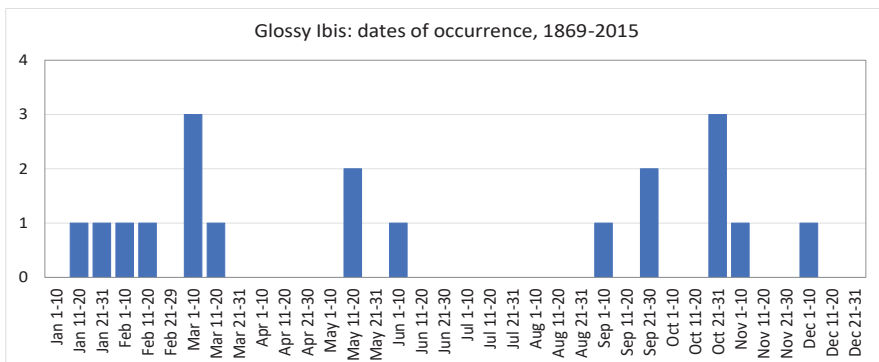
Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

Vagrant. **LBRC RBBP**

After three-four in each year during 2012-2014, there was only one this year, at Frampton Marsh and off Witham Mouth on Jan 18th-19th (JB *et al.*).

The first for Lincolnshire was one shot on Read's Island in autumn 1869, and there were two – both shot at Skegness – in autumn 1881 plus one at Tetney in September 1923. In the modern era, after two singles in 1975 and 1976, the latter the first spring bird, a thirty year gap ensued before the start of the recent upsurge which included the breeding attempt at Frampton Marsh in 2014. The individual in 1976 visited Wisbech as well as Gibraltar Point, and since then inland occurrences have been as frequent as those on the coast and estuaries.





Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

Scarce visitor, mainly coastal in Apr-Sep, and exceptionally in winter. **RBBP**

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alkborough Flats	0	0	1	1	1	2	6	9	10	0	0	0
Tetney-Donna Nook	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0
Gibraltar Point	0	0	0	2	4	9	14	18	11	0	0	0
Frampton Marsh	0	0	1	1	1	9	2	5	5	1	1	0

There were no reports in winter, at either end of the year. The first for the year was one at Alkborough Flats on Mar 14th-15th, then there were singles at Frampton Marsh on Mar 30th and Gib Point on Apr 4th. Counts remained at 1-2 until late May, when Gib Point counts reached four on the 27th. Numbers both there and at Alkborough Flats built up slowly through to Aug when there were peaks of nine at Alkborough Flats on the 15th and 18 at Gib Point on the 29th. At both places, numbers fell off quite quickly after the peaks but there was a brief resurgence at Alkborough, with 10 there on Sep 16th. After Sep 17th, the only records were two at Gib Point on Sep 18th-19th, one there on Sep 27th, and singles at Frampton Marsh on Oct 25th and Nov 14th. Away from the tabulated sites, there were scattered records of 1-2 at various coastal and estuarine locations, plus one at Whisby NR on May 19th, the first record for the reserve. Two sets of colour-ringed bird sightings show again the origin of the birds seen in Lincolnshire, and illustrate their wanderings.

DEW	Nestling	10-06-2011	Mellum: 53°43'N 8°9'E (Ostfriesische Inseln) Germany
6474	Alive (colour rings seen)	02-06-2014	Cley Marshes: 52°57'N 1°3'E (Norfolk) 479km W 2y 11m 23d
	- ditto -	10-06-2014	Alkborough: 53°41'N 0°41'W 583km W 3y 0m 0d
	- ditto -	30-06-2014	Cley Marshes: 52°57'N 1°3'E (Norfolk) 479km W 3y 0m 20d
	- ditto -	08-07-2014	Alkborough Flats: 53°41'N 0°40'W 582km W 3y 0m 28d
	- ditto -	16-07-2014	Cley Marshes: 52°57'N 1°3'E (Norfolk) 479km W 3y 1m 6d
	- ditto -	11-08-2014	Titchwell Reserve: 52°57'N 0°35'E (Norfolk) 509km W 3y 2m 1d
	- ditto -	14-09-2014	Alkborough: 53°41'N 0°41'W 583km W 3y 3m 4d
	- ditto -	30-05-2015	Alkborough: 53°41'N 0°41'W 583km W 3y 11m 20d
NLA	Nestling	31-05-2012	Sloegebied, Vlissingen: 51°28'N 3°40'E (Zeeland) The Netherlands
8056350	Alive (colour rings seen)	17-06-2015	Findhorn Bay, Moray: 57°38'N 3°36'W (Moray) 830km NNW 3y 0m 17d
	- ditto -	05-08-2015	Cresswell Pond: 55°14'N 1°33'W (Northumberland) 544km NW 3y 2m 5d
	- ditto -	06-08-2015	Gibraltar Point: 53°5'N 0°19'E 291km NW 3y 2m 6d

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Fairly common resident, partial migrant and winter visitor, the latter especially noticeable in coastal regions.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alkborough Flats	2	2	6	8	1	0	6	15	6	7	2	7
Barton Pits	7	3	1	1	1	1	2	7	1	9	4	5
Barrow-New Holland	2	0	5	0	3	1	0	10	4	5	0	1
Tetney Marsh-Horseshoe Pt	11	9	16	6	0	0	2	8	11	14	16	10



Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* Gib Point Jul 15th 2015 © Paul Neale (top)
and Sep 2nd 2015 © Mark Johnson (bottom)



Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* Gib Point Jul 18th and Jul 21st 2015 © Paul Neale

Donna Nook	15	26	7	6	4	1	4	9	15	12	17	6
Covenham Reservoir	15	5	1	3	0	1	1	1	5	6	3	3
Middlemarsh Farm (Skegness)	0	0	1	3	2	1	4	10	6	0	0	0
Gibraltar Point	13	17	23	19	16	12	23	28	26	26	16	17
Freiston Shore	20	12	6	7	0	2	1	10	21	10	1	11
Frampton Marsh	6	8	10	6	3	12	5	21	20	24	22	10
Welland*	0	7	16	0	0	0	0	0	18	13	5	0
Toft Newton Res	4	7	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	4	4
Whisby NR	0	1	4	17	4	2	1	5	15	4	5	1
Norton/Thurlby Pits	2	3	5	4	0	0	0	8	10	10	12	8
Bardney Pits	0	1	5	8	3	6	4	6	19	10	0	0
Woodhall Spa Airfield	0	0	0	0	4	1	1	0	12	0	11	17
Kirkby-on-Bain GP	8	8	12	5	0	2	1	9	34	25	18	9
Holywell Lake	12	12	7	0	0	0	0	0	17	9	0	12
Deeping Lakes	12	8	3	2	1	4	5	4	7	1	2	0

Other maxima of 10 or more were 14 on the Chapel Hill-Kirkstead section of the R Witham in Jan, 12 at Stoke Rochford Park in Feb, 11 at Melwood Quarry in Apr, and 12 on Friskney Marsh in Sep. Many other sites supported smaller totals. The highest counts included 34 at Kirkby on Bain GP on Sep 24th, which was a reserve record, 28 at Gib Point on Aug 27th and 22 at Frampton Marsh on Nov 19th. Estimates of breeding numbers included two broods reared at Alkborough Flats, at least three pairs (rearing five broods) at Whisby NR, at least five pairs at Gib Point and six pairs at Frampton Marsh.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Common resident, partial migrant and winter visitor.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>Humber & Wash</i>												
Barton Pits	11	14	17	8	5	8	5	2	10	4	3	9
Saltfleetby-Mablethorpe	6	33	13	-	6	3	-	-	1	-	2	11
Gibraltar Point	9	6	5	4	13	10	3	6	3	8	6	16
Freiston Shore	12	20	10	12	1	2	2	3	5	30	-	-
Frampton Marsh	2	8	4	6	8	14	4	1	1	-	1	1
<i>Inland Sites</i>												
Covenham Reservoir	30	18	7	9	4	7	38	56	63	78	78	69
Toft Newton Reservoir	8	8	23	18	13	4	9	12	10	27	30	38
North Hykeham Pits	15	15	16	9	6	4	6	35	42	18	19	13
Whisby NR	8	12	15	29	11	10	16	23	15	6	3	2
Norton-Thurlby Pits	8	16	28	16	2	8	1	12	12	6	3	6
Kirkby on Bain GP	1	3	7	8	17	10	5	7	8	2	1	1
Spalding-Borough Fen*	5	5	31	26	30	29	7	7	-	1	-	-
Deeping Lakes NR	3	6	16	15	9	7	14	16	15	7	2	7

The table includes sites at which 25 or more were recorded plus a selection of other consistently-recorded places. As often the case, the highest counts came from Covenham Res, where there were over 70 for much of Oct-Nov. The largest were 35 at North Hykeham Pits on Aug 15th with 42 there on Sep 11th, 38 at Toft Newton Res on Dec 29th and 33 offshore at Crook Bank, Theddlethorpe, on Feb 12th. Limited breeding data amounted to no more than 13 pairs spread across ten sites, which are far short of the true county totals. Small offshore movements were noted especially during Oct-Nov but the only double-figure count was 13 south at Gib Point on Dec 6th.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

Rare/scarse passage migrant and winter visitor, Sep-Apr; rare in summer.

Only one was seen early in the year, moving south with two Great Crested Grebes at Gib Point on Mar 6th. An unusual record started autumn sightings, with two adults at Woodhall Spa Airfield on Sep 2nd. This was followed by one at Donna Nook on Sep 6th and probably the same at Tetney Marsh on the 8th. There was one at Freiston Shore on Sep 30th. Later in the autumn, one flew south at Gib Point on Nov 19th, and one was on the sea off Sutton on Sea on Nov 21st.

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

Rare/scarse passage migrant and winter visitor, mainly Aug-May.

As in 2014 there were possibly more than 20, although a more conservative assessment would be around 18. This year saw only three in the first half of the year: one was at Freiston Shore on Jan 8th and one was on the sea at Gib Point on Feb 28th. In autumn, an adult moved north at Gib Point on Oct 14th, five were at Freiston Shore on Oct 17th, and two at Covenham Res on the 26th with one still present on the 30th. Next, there was one on flashes by North Cotes airfield on Nov 11th, and one on the sea at Gib Point plus one at Frampton Marsh/Witham Mouth on the 21st. Three were offshore together at Gib Point on Nov 24th, with another arriving from the north there on the 25th. Subsequent sightings of singles on the sea at Gib Point were on Dec 2nd, 5th, 7th, 12th and 14th, which could have referred to just one bird.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

Rare breeder, scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. **RBBP**

The first bird of the year was at Covenham Res from Mar 25th to 29th. There were also spring singles at Toft Newton Res from Apr 9th to 29th, Messingham SQ on Apr 11th-12th and Witham Mouth on May 19th-20th. Breeding records at traditional sites were as follows: Sites A and B had no birds reported during the breeding season. At Site C, three birds were first noted on Apr 4th and there were 11 on Apr 19th and May 17th. On Jun 6th there were 13 and on Jun 27th a pair was observed with three chicks around three days old and two birds could be seen sitting on eggs. On Jul 31st six adults and one juvenile were observed. Thus there were three confirmed breeding pairs and additionally three probable pairs there. On Aug 16th nine birds were still present and the last report was of three on Sep 16th. During autumn/winter, the only other reports of Black-necked Grebes were singles at Bagmoor Floods on Aug 1st, Covenham Res on five dates between Aug 21st and Sep 14th and one on Nov 30th, Deeping Lakes on Aug 13th-16th, Kirkby on Bain GP during Aug 27th-Sep 22nd, Freiston Shore on Oct 17th-18th, and a late staying bird at Woodhall Spa Airfield from Sep 13th to Nov 12th.

Honey-buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

Rare/scarse passage migrant. **LBRC RBBP**

There were four this year, all at or near Gib Point. In spring, one flew south at Gib Point on May 27th (ABe). In autumn, one flew north with a Common Buzzard at Croft Marsh on Aug 27th (JPS) and, a week later on Sep 5th, one flew very high over Gib Point and away to Norfolk (AHa). Finally, one flew high south at Gib Point on Oct 1st (SOH, SCR).

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*

Vagrant. **LBRC**

One that moved slowly northwards, and was photographed, over Donna Nook (SL) on Apr 15th was the first in the county since 2011.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Scarce, occurring in most months though mainly winter to spring; increasing due to re-introduced birds. Bred to 19th century and since 2008.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Marston STW	6	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Woolthorpe by Belvoir	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-
Colsterworth	10	5	-	1	3	1	-	4	-	-	-	5
Hawthorpe-Bulby area	12	5	7	2	2	3	3	1	-	5	10	9
Grimsthorpe-Swinstead	3	1	-	1	-	1	1	3	-	7	2	-
Stamford	3	-	4	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-

The table shows sites that held five or more. The population remains concentrated in the south-west and, although birds were recorded at over 150 sites across the county, they were least frequent and usually single birds in the northernmost sector and along the coast. Four nests were reported, all in the south-west, and eight chicks were ringed from three of them. The sightings below concern a bird bred in Northamptonshire and regularly feeding in Lincolnshire in winter.

GC96699	Nestling	16-06-2011	near Wadenhoe: 52°25'N 0°31'W (Northamptonshire)
	Alive (wing-tag seen)	20-10-2011	Fermyn Woods Hall, near Brigstock: 52°27'N 0°36'W (Northamptonshire) 6km NW 0y 4m 4d

- ditto -	04-02-2012	Colsterworth Landfill Site: 52°48'N 0°39'W 42km NNW 0y 7m 19d
- ditto -	29-02-2012	Fermyn Woods Hall, near Brigstock: 52°27'N 0°36'W (Northamptonshire) 6km NW 0y 8m 13d
- ditto -	28-11-2012	Lilford Park: 52°26'N 0°30'W (Northamptonshire) 3km 1y 5m 12d
- ditto -	23-12-2012	Colsterworth Landfill Site: 52°48'N 0°39'W 42km NNW 1y 6m 7d
- ditto -	08-12-2013	Colsterworth Landfill Site: 52°48'N 0°39'W 42km NNW 2y 5m 22d
- ditto -	31-12-2013	Colsterworth Landfill Site: 52°48'N 0°39'W 42km NNW 2y 6m 15



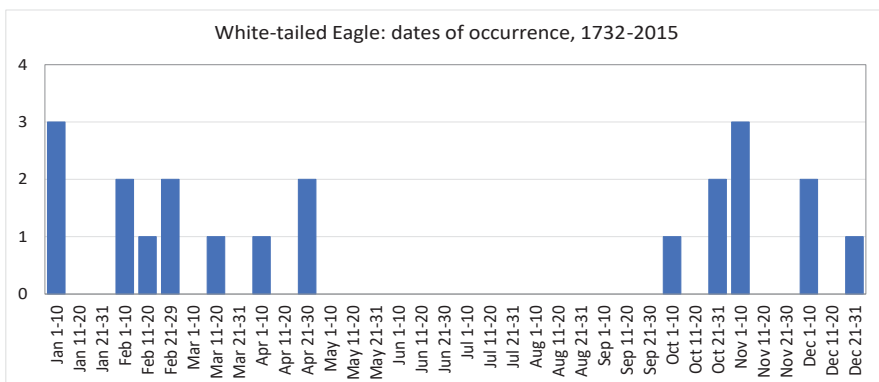
Red Kite *Milvus milvus* Grantham Jul 7th 2015 © Steve Nesbitt

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*

Vagrant. **LBRC RBBP**

An adult, which had earlier been seen along the Norfolk coast, leaving Holme at 1440 hrs, soared high over Gib Point at 1515 hrs on Apr 25th, before moving away to the west (SHu, ABs, RBW).

The first to be recorded in Lincolnshire was shot at Nocton in January 1732. All records have been of single birds. Excluding a few eagles not identified with certainty as White-tailed, there were five in the nineteenth century, then eleven between 1902 and 1933 before a fifty year gap until the next in 1985. After that, further records came in 1989, 1990 and 2005, followed by a recently released individual from Scotland in 2010 (not included in the county statistics). The remaining bird before this year was the long-staying individual in Apr-Aug 2011. The arrival dates of all except two, for which only the year is known, are shown in the chart below. Where reported, all previous birds have been described as immatures, so it appears that this year's bird is the first adult. As shown by the 2010 record, it is possible for birds from the Scottish reintroductions to reach Lincolnshire but it is also the case that the species has been increasing in mainland Europe, and more arrivals from there may be expected.





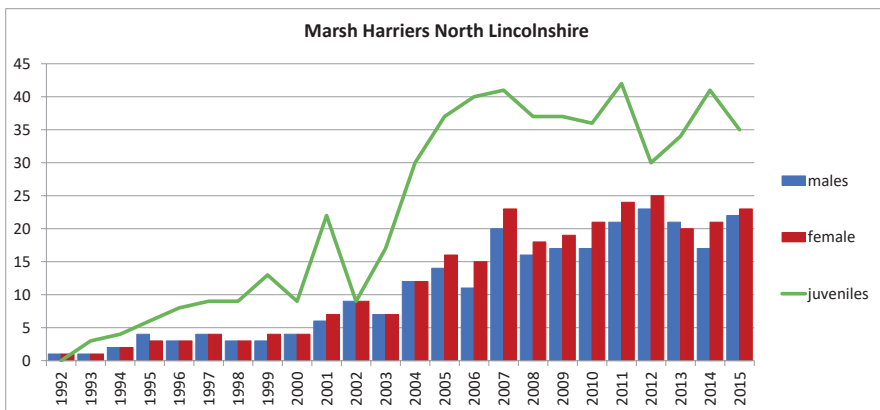
Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* Dunsby Fen Oct 29th 2015, wing-tagged female from Dunkirk, Cambs © Steve Nesbitt

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Fairly common passage migrant and summer visitor, increasing in winter. **RBBP**

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
North	29	24	28	51	16	17	56	17	27	43	39	43
Coast	2	3	8	18	11	14	14	22	19	7	3	1
Wash	12	10	17	21	9	14	25	39	37	27	25	6
Inland	11	10	12	22	34	16	16	24	18	8	6	11

The table includes sums from localities within four broad regions, though it is difficult to be sure which reports refer to the same birds within these. Wintering numbers seemed higher than in 2014. The largest roost counts were of 17 at Fosdyke Wash on Nov 7th, 15 at Winteringham Haven on Dec 8th, and 12 at Whitton Sand on Nov 12th. No other roost counts over 10 were received but there was a count of 10 at Gib Point on Aug 6th. In north Lincolnshire there was a rise in the number of breeding males from 17 to 22 and females from 21 to 23, but the total of 35 fledged young was lower than the 41 in 2014 (see chart below, based on Graham Catley's data). Elsewhere, 16 confirmed nests were reported plus a further 17 probable breeding attempts. These 33 pairs were widely spread with 13 from the inland fens, 14 from The Wash and six from the coastal marshes. Overall, breeding numbers were up with 56 pairs compared to 50 pairs in 2014.



Below are three sightings in Lincolnshire of first-winter birds from nests further south, in Norfolk and Cambridgeshire, behaviour that we now know to be typical.

FH27702	Nestling Male	14-07-2014	Dersingham Bog: 52°49'N 0°27'E (Norfolk)
	Alive (wing-tag seen)	08-10-2015	near Messingham: 53°30'N 0°37'W 107km NW 1y 2m 24d
GF65268	Nestling Female	12-06-2014	Brandon Fen, Lakenheath Fen: c. 52°26'N 0°30'E (Suffolk)
	Alive (wing-tag seen)	19-12-2014	near Dunsby: 52°49'N 0°18'W 71km NW 0y 6m 7d
FP94323	Nestling Male	22-06-2015	Dunkirk, Little Downham, near Ely: 52°26'N 0°14'E (Cambridgeshire)
	Alive (wing-tag seen)	29-10-2015	near Dunsby: 52°49'N 0°18'W 57km NW 0y 4m 7d

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor; mainly Sep-May; rare in summer. Bred to 1872. This species has become less numerous since the 1990s. Former roosting sites on The Wash used to hold double figures throughout the winter periods. **RBBP**

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alkborough Flats	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1
Tetney Marsh-Donna Nook	1	1	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	1
Saltfleet-Mablethorpe	1	1	2	-	1	1	-	-	-	3	2	1
Gibraltar Point	2	1	2	3	-	-	1	-	-	2	3	3
Freiston Shore	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Frampton Marsh	3	5	3	3	-	1	-	1	-	2	3	4
Fiskerton-Nocton	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2

In spring there were no reports of more than one after Apr 7th, and the last were singles at Sturton by Stow and Weelsby Woods on May 11th. In summer, there were sightings of females at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes on Jun 4th and Frampton Marsh on Jun 6th-7th, and a first summer male was at Gib Point on Jul 17th-30th. There were just two records in the second half of Aug and only one in Sep, before more regular sightings from Oct 4th. Numbers continue to be at a low ebb. Although the reported age/sex of birds in the inner Humber makes clear that more than one bird was present at each end of the year, there were no sightings of two together there. The only count of five was at Frampton Marsh on Feb 17th, comprising two males, two females and a first winter. Inland reports came from about a dozen widely spread localities and tended to be one-off occurrences of wide-ranging or passage birds, but they did include birds at Deeping Lakes in Feb and Oct, and at Marston STW in Dec. There were, however, fairly regular sightings of a ringtail in the Nocton Fen area in Jan and Nov-Dec (with two there on Dec 9th).

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus*

Vagrant. **BBRC**

A juvenile, which had been at Spurn on Oct 25th, was found at Donna Nook on Oct 27th where it remained on the 28th (SL *et al.*) but then moved to Gib Point during Oct 29th-Nov 8th (NAL *et al.*). Presumably the same bird was then in Norfolk on Nov 15th-17th. Accepted BBRC (BB 109 p.582).

This was the second for Lincolnshire. The first was a first summer bird at Gibraltar Point on 8th May 2012.

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*

Scarce passage migrant and summer visitor, though breeding irregularly. **RBBP**

There were no reports of breeding in the county in 2015. A pair of Montagu's Harriers bred at Blacktoft Sands in east Yorkshire in 2015, fledging a single juvenile; during the period that the birds were at Blacktoft the male and female wandered across the Trent to Alkborough Flats where the male was seen on several dates between June 11th and its last appearance on Aug 9th; the female was seen first on Jul 23rd and on a few dates, being last seen on Aug 17th but the juvenile was never known to have occurred on the Lincolnshire side of the Trent. A series of records at Gib Point started with an unsexed immature on Jun 8th, presumably the second calendar year male seen to the 17th; a male in primary moult was seen on Jul 4th but it is unclear whether the ringtail on Jul 8th and 14th was the same bird as the Jun sightings but two birds described as ringtails were noted on Jul 17th; single birds were then reported variously as second calendar year male, ringtail and female/immature between Jul 19th and Aug 5th. The only other records in the year were a second calendar year male at Donna Nook on Jul 6th-8th and a ringtail at Deeping Common on Aug 22nd. A particularly poor year for this declining species.



Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* Gib Point Nov 7th 2015 © Russell Hayes (top left only)
© Graham Catley (all others)

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Common resident and passage migrant. After extinction as a breeder in 1950s, due to pesticides and persecution, recolonised rapidly from the early 1980s.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Tetney Marsh-Tetney	1	1	2	3	-	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Donna Nook	1	1	2	4	1	-	1	2	2	3	2	1
Saltfleet-Theddlethorpe	1	2	3	1	1	3	-	2	2	2	2	1
Gibraltar Point	3	2	4	4	5	2	2	3	7	12	4	2
Frampton Marsh	2	2	4	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1
Whisby NR	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	3

Widely but sparsely distributed, about 96% of records were of 1-2 birds. The table includes a selection of consistently recorded sites with peaks of three or more. Most of the higher counts came during Mar-May and Sep-Nov, and as suggested by the table tended to be coastal. All day-totals of five or more were at Gib Point, including five on both May 5th and May 7th, most flying south, and autumn peaks of seven on Sep 18th, seven on Oct 15th and 12 on Oct 17th. There were negligible breeding reports. Two interesting hunting attempts were noted. One bird at Freiston Shore on Jan 6th knocked a Golden Plover into deep water, then landed on it until the plover drowned before carrying it off. On Dec 11th, a male was seen to attack a Woodcock, resulting in "feathers everywhere".

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Bred to 19th century before local extinction. Now common breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Donna Nook	1	3	6	7	4	4	2	8	14	3	3	1
Covenham Res	5	5	7	9	2	4	5	3	11	4	4	5
Louth	2	10	6	8	2	1	-	3	3	1	-	1
Gib Point	2	3	5	5	5	3	2	8	14	21	2	2
East Keal	4	2	18	4	6	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
Midville	-	-	-	1	3	2	-	-	10	-	-	-
Marston STW	1	1	4	3	2	-	-	-	15	-	3	5

The table shows sites with records in four months or more and counts of at least 10. In just a few years, the Buzzard has gone from a passage migrant and winter visitor, with the few breeding attempts listed in full in the report, to become so common that few observers bother to report breeding: only ten such reports this year. For the year as a whole, records came from over 500 named locations. For about 60% of these, counts were of 1-2 but there were many of 4-8 and a few larger. Reports of 10 or more together came from ten localities spread across the county, though more frequently at Donna Nook and Gib Point than elsewhere. The highest of all were 18 over East Keal on Mar 16th, 14 at Donna Nook on Sep 19th, 15 at Marston STW and 14 at Gib Point on Sep 27th, and 18 at Gib Point on Oct 2nd.

How times change. A look at the 1995 LBR reveals that twenty years ago there were 1-3 at 15 sites during Jan-Mar, few during Apr-Jun apart from eight passage birds at Gib Point, none in Jul (reported at 70 sites in 2015), and slightly more later in the year including 3-5 at seven sites during Sep-Oct. The report speculates that some of the autumn groups could have been from local breeding – but confirmation of nesting did not come until 1996.

Rough-legged Buzzard *Buteo lagopus*

Rare/scarse passage migrant and winter visitor. **LBRC**

Early in the year, one appeared to be resident in the Frampton Marsh area but was reported only intermittently during Jan 7th-11th, Jan 26th, Feb 2nd-6th, Feb 14th, and Mar 13th-14th (CG, JB, SL *et al.*). It is possible that it was not always the same bird but, equally, it is possible that it was, and was the same as that present during Nov 6th-Dec 20th 2014. Inland in the Fens, there were sightings on at Dunsby Fen on Jan 7th (CJJ, SJ) and Anwick STW on Jan 11th (GH), but none at Helpringham Fen where there had been one until late Dec 2014. At Gib Point none was seen until spring, when one moved south/south-west on Apr 21st (KMW) and another moved north on Apr 25th (KMW). The first of those dates, Apr 21st, also saw birds moving over Donna Nook (GW) and Crook Bank, Theddlethorpe (NAL), which are assumed to have been the same as that at Gib Point. In autumn, two were together at Gib Point on Oct 17th before one moved off to the south, the other remaining on the 19th (KMW, GGr). One was seen hunting at Frithville on



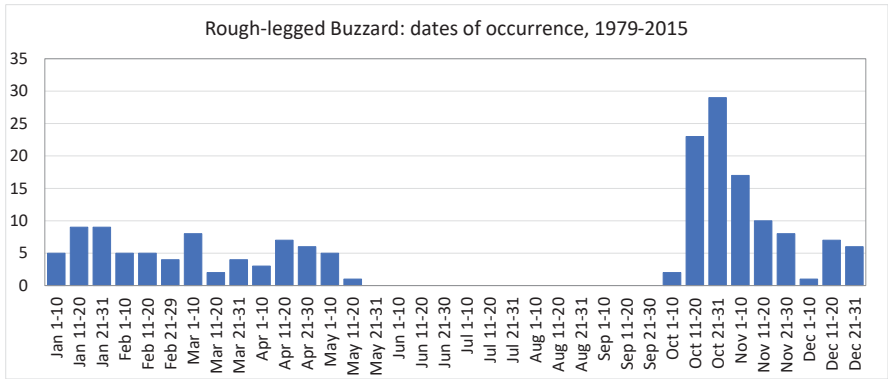
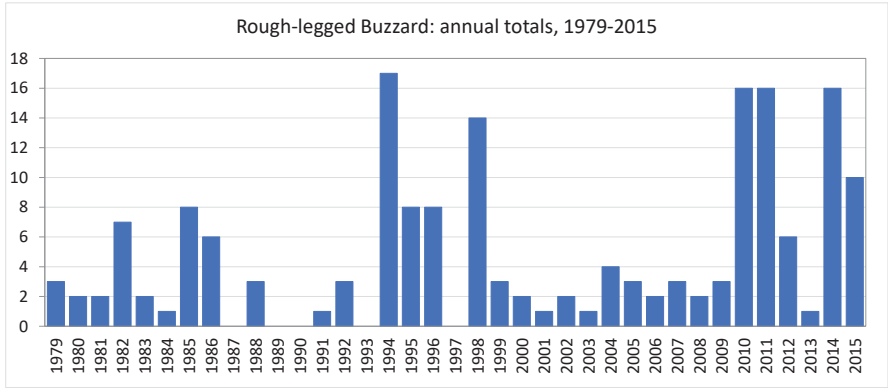
Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo* East Kirkby Apr 6th 2015 © Neil Smith



Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo* Alkborough Flats Jan 30th 2015 © Graham Catley

Oct 29th (SK), and then a juvenile moved south after hunting for a while at Gib Point on Oct 31st (KMW *et al.*). A number of other reports, some of which could have been further sightings of the birds listed above, remained undocumented. Rough-legged Buzzard is a very scarce species, and observers sometimes do not realise the variability of Common Buzzard appearance and the consequent potential for confusion. Providing a few words in support of a submission and, if possible, a photograph will make it far easier for LBRC decide whether an error is unlikely and thus for a more accurate report to be published.

In the period from 1979 onwards, the earliest in autumn until this year was at Gib Point on 4th October 1998. However, an individual ringed as a nestling in northern Sweden in July 1973 was found dead at Ulceby on 15th September 1977, which was just a little earlier than the Donna Nook bird in 2015. The pattern of Rough-legged Buzzard seasonal occurrence is one of autumn arrivals, mainly in October and early November, with some new arrivals or birds remaining in diminishing numbers through to March, followed by a small pulse of spring passage in April and into May. The latest recorded was a first summer bird at Loughton Forest on 17th May 1996. The annual totals vary greatly, and there were several years in the 1980s and 1990s with none. Historically, larger arrivals in Britain were associated with low lemming numbers in the Arctic but it is not clear whether that association persists or is very strong. There are also two factors which affect assessment of the numbers occurring. First, it can be difficult to know whether individuals seen at different sites or intermittently are the same or not. Second, especially with increasing numbers of Common Buzzards, there is concern that some misidentifications may be made. Observers should be aware that some Common Buzzards can be pale and have other features similar to those of Rough-legs.



Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Scarce passage migrant, rare in summer. **RBBP**

One flew north over Scunthorpe on Mar 16th, and other Mar records were singles north over Saxilby on the 21st and at Belton Park on the 24th. There was one at Gunby Park (Spilsby) on Apr 13th but, surprisingly, only one other Apr record, at Frampton Marsh on the 24th. More occurred in May, beginning with one at Blackmoor Bridge on the 9th, then Messingham SQ and Bottesford (assumed to be the same) on the 10th, Donna Nook on the 17th, Gib Point on the 19th, Frampton Marsh on the 20th, Worlaby (Tetford) on the 23rd, Swineshead Bridge on the 29th, and Biscathorpe on the 30th. Some of these could be the same but the distributions and timings do not point to any obvious connections. Further migrants in Jun included singles at Covenham Res on the 2nd, Gib Point on the 5th, Manby Wetland on the 8th, Scunthorpe on the 17th, and Saltfleetby All Saints on the 24th. Individuals at Castle Bytham on the 7th and near Stamford on the 28th might have been local breeding birds. On Jul 8th, one with a Darvic ring appeared at Donna Nook. What is assumed to have been the same bird was then seen there frequently (but with some gaps) until Sep 4th; it tended to be at long range and the ring, details of which were not seen, was reported as both green and blue. One at Saltfleet/Saltfleetby on Jul 18th-19th may well have been the same bird. During late summer, there were also reports from Frampton Marsh on Jul 16th, Fiskerton Fen on Jul 31st and Aug 25th, Donington on Bain on Aug 1st, and Black Bank (Messingham) on Aug 16th. One was photographed at Whisby NR on Sep 1st, and there were singles at Deeping Lakes NR on Sep 2nd, Witham Mouth on Sep 4th and Kirkby on Bain GP on Sep 10th and 13th (assumed the same). One at Donna Nook on Sep 12th was thought likely to be different from the summering individual, but presumably the same as that seen on the 14th. One was at Cut End, Witham Mouth, on Sep 19th, and another was at Deeping Lakes on Sep 29th. The last was one photographed moving north over Belchford on Oct 9th. Our assessment of the totals amount to 20 in spring, the summering bird at Donna Nook, and 13 in autumn.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Scarce resident fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor. Much under-recorded. **RBBP**



Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus* Marston STW Apr 6th 2015 © Steve Nesbitt

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alkborough Flats	1	1	10	2	-	1	23	6	1	1	4	3
Messingham SQ	1	1	1	6	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	1
Barton Pits	12	8	18	3	1	2	4	2	9	1	10	4
Goxhill Marsh	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	-	2	-	-
Town's Holt, Grimsby	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	1	1
Cleethorpes CP	2	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Donna Nook	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	2	1	1	-
Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe	4	4	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	-
Gibraltar Point	2	4	3	1	1	-	1	3	3	9	6	4
Frampton Marsh	12	2	1	-	-	1	1	2	1	1	2	1
Boultham Mere/Swanpool	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	3	2	2
Baston Fen NR	3	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Willow Tree Fen	4	1	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	1	-
Marston STW	13	12	5	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	4	12

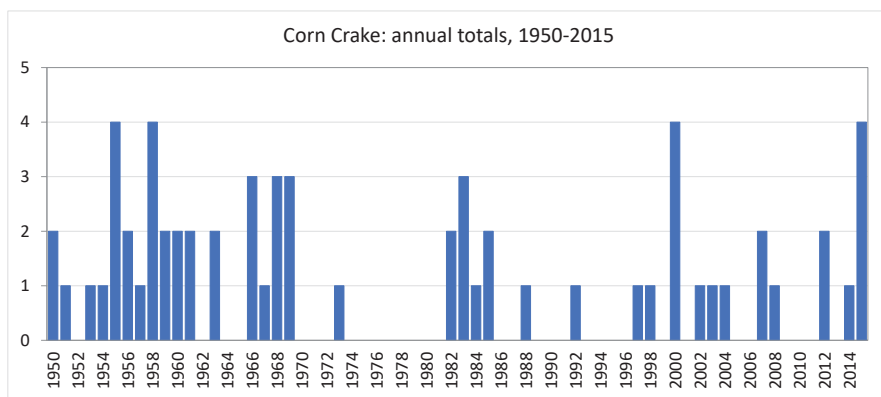
The table above includes sites with records of three or more, or in eight or more months. Breeding Water Rail numbers continue to increase though there was no repeat of last year's winter influx in Nov. Twenty singing males were reported from Alkborough Flats in May, with young noted from Jun 3rd and broods seen in many parts of the area. Confirmed breeding came from four other sites: Boultham Mere where an adult with a single juvenile were seen on Jun 29th and two juveniles on Jul 29th, Boatmere Scrape where a juvenile was seen on Jun 29th, and Frampton Marsh where an adult and juvenile were seen on Aug 4th. Ten territories were reported from Barton Pits and two from Goxhill Marsh. This suggests there were at least 36 breeding pairs in the county, nearly double the previous year's total of 20 but still probably understated.

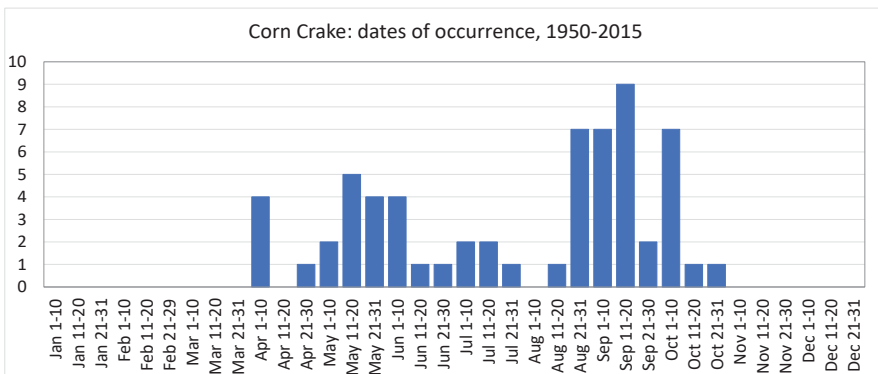
Corn Crane *Crex crex*

Rare passage migrant. **LBRC RBBP**

One was heard and seen at Willow Tree Fen on May 22nd, June 1st and Jun 2nd (JOv, EJR, SBk). Another was heard near Swinethorpe on Jul 22nd (DMY). One was seen at Gib Point on Aug 31st (JPS) and another was seen at Freiston Shore on the late date of Oct 14th (ABe).

Four in the year was the most since 2000, and the annual average for the past 30 years has been just 0.7 birds (but note that we are not certain that the chart below is complete for the 1970s). Regular nesting in Lincolnshire ceased by about 1920 and, while there are occasional short stays by calling birds, breeding has not been proven for many years. In the light of the introduced population not far away on the Nene Washes, the presence of the bird at Willow Tree Fen in 2015 lends hope to their return before too long. There have been several records after the end of September in the period from 1950, including 8th October 2007, 10th October 1992 and, the latest of all, one calling at Gibraltar Point on 24th October 1982.





Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Very common resident and partial migrant.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>Humber & Wash</i>												
Barton Pits	14	35	23	8	3	6	9	9	10	11	9	13
Tetney Marsh	16	-	6	8	4	5	8	15	12	25	25	20
Middlemarsh Farm (Skegness)	83	60	38	11	16	12	11	24	16	35	25	46
Gibraltar Point	54	56	43	41	29	16	33	28	34	32	33	32
Frampton Marsh	75	80	54	23	35	24	10	15	16	25	33	38
<i>Inland</i>												
Fillingham Lake	20	16	22	17	15	-	-	-	-	1	1	1
Boultham Mere	45	60	35	12	8	10	7	15	22	30	35	37
Boultham Park	9	35	-	18	-	-	-	-	-	20	20	20
Whisby NR	19	16	24	17	11	14	17	15	24	11	31	17
Norton Disney-Thurlby	15	12	10	4	1	1	1	6	8	8	8	5
Fiskerton-Bardney*	45	44	22	22	11	13	22	24	3	24	8	26
Kirkby-on-Bain Pits	9	9	12	8	3	5	6	20	11	11	12	10
Holywell Lake	20	11	19	-	-	-	-	-	19	17	-	11
Spalding-Borough Fen*	35	73	30	17	9	8	4	5	-	16	6	11
Willow Tree Fen	28	3	27	12	4	6	1	5	1	3	6	6

The table includes most regularly-counted sites with totals of 20 or more; there were also 20 at Louth in Feb. Counts of more than 50 came from four sites, including 83 at Middlemarsh Farm (Skegness) on Jan 3rd, 80 at Frampton Marsh on Feb 15th, 60 at Boultham mere on Feb 11th and 68 along the R Welland between Spalding and Borough Fen on Feb 8th. In general, numbers were similar to last year's.

Common Coot *Fulica atra*

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bagmoor Floods	120	98	48	27	9	24	-	103	49	16	-	-
Messingham SQ	31	21	40	52	29	29	85	-	29	47	-	71
Barton-New Holland	336	187	154	117	26	75	121	220	175	222	176	139
Killingholme	40	53	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	20	-	-
Covenham Reservoir	105	116	93	26	9	41	112	152	221	287	298	295
Toft Newton Reservoir	70	78	48	15	13	-	8	29	61	81	118	158
Burton GP (Lincoln)	37	60	30	13	7	10	20	15	14	24	26	49
Boultham Mere	12	16	15	16	15	56	91	38	38	10	18	36
Swanholme Lakes	83	40	6	-	-	2	-	24	-	24	-	76
North Hykeham Pits	90	117	62	27	16	35	22	84	45	30	197	129
Whisby NR	489	212	142	95	63	127	175	163	329	125	150	316

Norton/Thurlby pits	197	700	200	100	47	60	1	250	500	500	250	200
Bardney Pits	17	39	32	23	31	63	105	128	144	76	5	-
Woodhall Spa Airfield	-	-	-	-	61	56	1	1	1	-	1	121
Kirkby-on-Bain Pits	164	185	95	48	40	94	109	124	140	217	198	228
Middlemarsh Farm (Skegness)	47	23	81	26	42	37	30	65	10	1	3	1
Gib Point	53	106	54	43	36	39	30	32	14	10	2	15
Frampton Marsh	50	100	51	53	76	62	35	35	5	1	4	15
Spalding-Borough Fen*	57	52	64	44	38	26	29	21	-	4	3	5
Deeping Lakes	159	94	63	26	11	64	278	194	336	312	142	119
Denton Res	131	94	42	19	17	21	37	54	96	139	182	91

The table includes most sites that held at least 50 birds, but there were also 57 at Heighington Fen in Jan, 190 at Cadney Res in Sep, 83 at Manton Fisheries in Nov, and 200 at Baston GP in Dec. Comparing this year's counts with those in 2014 presents a confusing picture. Several areas saw far lower peaks than in 2014, notably Barton-New Holland, North Hykeham, Norton-Thurlby and Frampton Marsh, but the Deeping Lakes had much larger numbers. It is also the case that more sites reached the threshold of 50 or more than last year while a couple (Manby Wetland and Tattershall Lakes) no longer reached it. Some of these differences may be more to do with changes in counting and reporting than to actual changes in numbers but, equally, there may well be variations in feeding conditions that lead to redistribution. Breeding was confirmed at many sites across the county but there were very few extensive population estimates. At Frampton Marsh, the total of 18 pairs was down from 22 in 2014.

Common Crane *Grus grus*

Rare, but increasing migrant, recorded most months. Former breeding species and a common migrant to 16th/17th centuries. **RBBP LBRC**

On Mar 13th six were seen flying west over North Cave (Yorks) and Alkborough Flats (unknown observers) and later over Island Farm, Garthorpe (ACBH). On Mar 14th there were two at Donna Nook (SL), and on Mar 17th one flew south over Gib Point (DJM *et al.*). A pair was seen at Wroot on Apr 30th (CRo) which may have been breeders from adjacent counties. During May there was one at Dogdyke on the 7th (JTk), two flew over Willow Tree Fen on the 22nd (JOv). On Sep 15th three birds were seen flying south over Skegness (RKW) and later that day, what may well have been the same three birds were seen flying south-east over Frampton Marsh (JB). Two were seen at Navenby Lowfields on Sep 16th (CIG). The final bird of the year was one seen in a field at Croft Marsh LNR on Nov 9th (GPBO).

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

Very rare, but increasing, visitor. **RBBP LBRC**

A female was between Grainthorpe and Covenham Res on May 4th-9th (SL, KSK *et al.*). Later in the month, a pair was at Frampton Marsh on May 27th-28th, where display, mating and nest-building were observed but the breeding attempt went no further (IE, TC, JB *et al.*).

The first record for Lincolnshire was of two flying south at Gibraltar Point on 26th April 1965. There have now been 17 records, two of which (at Willow Tree Fen and Frampton Marsh in 2012) are believed to relate to the same bird. Half of those seen have been single birds but, as well as the first record, there were two together in 2010, 2013 and now 2015, and three together in 2006. Of the 22 individuals, 19 have occurred during Apr-Jun, with singles in Sep and Oct and the remarkable record of one at Grantham STW in Dec 1968 and Feb 1969. This year's events are the first attempted breeding in the county but there have been several successful attempts elsewhere in the country in recent years as the numbers arriving in Britain have increased.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Increasing coastal breeder, has colonised inland localities in the past few years. Fairly common passage migrant, rare in winter and scarce inland. **RBBP**

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>Humber</i>												
Alkborough Flats	10	245	300	350	40	545	1202	1039	1150	352	156	1
Read's Island	-	156	310	44	100	441	925	700	750	1580	950	25
Barton Pits	-	-	3	10	12	9	-	1	-	-	-	1
Killingholme	-	-	25	-	6	14	-	-	-	-	-	-
Donna Nook	-	-	20	40	50	63	23	-	-	-	-	-



Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* Grainthorpe May 9th 2015 © Mark Johnson

<i>Wash</i>												
Middlemarsh Farm	-	-	-	10	26	13	16	15	-	-	2	-
Gibraltar Point	-	15	222	67	50	100	57	70	33	23	11	2
Freiston Shore	-	-	20	24	6	35	60	1	3	-	-	-
Frampton Marsh	-	24	93	150	200	162	200	2	7	2	1	1
<i>Inland</i>												
Messingham SQ	-	-	2	8	12	11	1	-	-	-	-	-
Manby Wetland	-	-	-	-	2	-	4	4	-	-	-	-
Kirkby on Bain GP	-	-	8	21	11	30	5	3	-	-	-	-

Ten birds were present at Alkborough Flats on Jan 1st but birds did not arrive in numbers until late Feb when 245 were counted there on the 28th. Breeding numbers were well up this year with 266 pairs reported from 12 sites compared to 216 pairs from 12 sites in 2014. Breeding success was patchy. Read's Island was the most important site but as in the previous year 100 pairs raised no young. Elsewhere on the Humber, 20 pairs at Alkborough Flats raised four young; 11 pairs bred at Barton Pits raising no young but at Killingholme Haven Pits five pairs raised at least five young. Further down at the mouth of the estuary at breeding colonies established in 2014, three pairs at Horseshoe Point raised no young, while 15 pairs at Donna Nook Realignment raised 20 young. Around The Wash, 20 pairs raised no young at Gib Point, while close by at Middlemarsh Farm three pairs fledged nine young. No birds attempted to nest at Freiston Shore and 81 pairs bred at Frampton Marsh where productivity was said to be "good". Inland sites reporting breeding were Blackmoor Bridge (one pair), Kirkby on Bain GP (six pairs raised no young) and Manby Wetland where one pair fledged three young. Despite the poor breeding season, there were 1202 at Alkborough Flats on Jul 30th with 1150 still there on Sep 9th. At Read's Island, there were over 700 by the end of Jul, and then good numbers through to Nov with 1580 on Oct 19th and 950 on Nov 6th. Late in the year, there were 25 at Read's Island on Dec 20th and two lingered at Gib Point and one at Frampton Marsh until the end of the year.



Avocet Recurvirostra avosetta juvenile North Killingholme Jul 7th 2015 © Colin Smale

Below is a selection of sightings of colour-ringed birds. These and others reported this year came from colonies elsewhere along the east coast and exhibited typically extensive wanderings along the east and south coasts, and in some cases crossing to The Netherlands or France.

ET07234	Nestling	03-06-1998	Site Confidential (Norfolk)
	Alive (colour marks seen)	29-08-1998	Cliffe Pools: 51°27'N 0°28'E (Kent) 154km S 0y 2m 26d
	- ditto -	09-04-1999	Blacktoft Sands: 53°41'N 0°43'W (East Riding of Yorkshire) 120km NW 0y 10m 6d
	- ditto -	01-08-1999	Brownsea Island: 50°41'N 1°58'W (Dorset) 290km SW 1y 1m 29d
	- ditto -	06-08-2013	Alkborough Flats: 53°41'N 0°40'W 116km NW 15y 2m 3d

	- ditto -	08-03-2015	Snettisham Coastal Park: c. 52°52'N 0°26'E (Norfolk) 5km 16y 9m 5d
	- ditto -	19-07-2015	Alkborough Flats: 53°41'N 0°40'W 116km NW 17y 1m 16d
EG25243	Nestling	16-06-2010	Seal Sands, Teesmouth: c. 54°36'N 1°11'W (Stockton-on-Tees)
	Alive (colour rings seen)	14-06-2012	North Cave Wetlands: 53°46'N 0°38'W (East Riding of Yorkshire) 101km SSE 1y 11m 29d
	- ditto -	18-04-2013	Boue, Aisne, Picardy: 50°0'N 3°42'E (Aisne) France 612km SSE 2y 10m 2d
	- ditto -	19-02-2014	Lytchett Bay, Upton: c. 50°43'N 2°2'W (Dorset) 436km S 3y 8m 3d
	- ditto -	13-08-2015	Alkborough Flats: c. 53°41'N 0°41'W 109km SSE 5y 1m 28d
EW43232	Nestling	18-06-2011	Orfordness: c. 52°5'N 1°34'E (Suffolk)
	Alive (colour rings seen)	30-07-2011	Trimley Marshes, near Felixstowe: 51°57'N 1°16'E (Suffolk) 25km WSW 0y 1m 12d
	- ditto -	21-03-2012	Prunjeppolder: 51°42'N 3°49'E (Zeeland) The Netherlands 162km ESE 0y 9m 3d
	- ditto -	16-06-2012	Orfordness: c. 52°5'N 1°34'E (Suffolk) 0km 0y 11m 29d
	- ditto -	21-04-2013	Orfordness: c. 52°5'N 1°34'E (Suffolk) 0km 1y 10m 3d
	- ditto -	08-03-2014	Frampton Marsh: 52°55'N 0°0'E 141km NW 2y 8m 18d
	- ditto -	14-07-2014	Freiston Shore: 52°57'N 0°5'E 140km NW 3y 0m 26d
	- ditto -	26-08-2014	Havergate Island: 52°4'N 1°30'E (Suffolk) 4km 3y 2m 8d
	- ditto -	02-04-2015	RSPB Frampton Marsh: 52°55'N 0°0'E 142km NW 3y 9m 15d
	- ditto -		

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Very common coastal passage migrant/winter visitor and fairly common resident. Less common inland, but now breeds in small numbers.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>The Humber</i>												
WeBS totals	3934	3189	1869	1698	506	558	1216	4061	4257	3467	4264	3269
Cleethorpes-Horseshoe Pt	2000	1960	250	1298	1	270	855	2900	2970	1468	1820	1430
Horseshoe Pt-Donna Nook	1910	1211	1613	299	457	535	322	1150	1148	1766	2251	1765
Saltfleet-Mablethorpe	30	14	63	89	38	12	36	395	139	233	193	74
<i>The Wash</i>												
WeBS totals	7290	7643	5498	4936	2498	1891	3646	8285	10861	5815	2690	4969
Gibraltar Point	300	1120	389	807	3003	303	358	8000	7000	4000	2050	2740
Wainfleet*	375	2050	1052	618	503	-	371	1207	-	-	-	-
Friskney*	2600	1	2	149	141	62	30	1100	2145	-	140	240
Wrangle*	50	-	260	164	180	755	1812	940	3230	2665	-	1350
Leverton*	1339	63	125	673	26	-	105	17	-	-	-	-
Freiston Shore	350	2200	1000	1600	895	730	810	3700	2500	2500	2000	602
Frampton Marsh	720	776	817	382	345	20	30	22	10	-	-	130
Welland	1500	878	504	162	34	24	11	145	133	950	1300	-
Dawsmere*	-	500	350	500	300	60	125	700	500	-	-	-
Terrington*	1700	921	486	340	-	-	220	961	-	-	-	-
<i>Inland</i>												
Messingham	-	-	4	5	3	3	3	-	-	2	-	-
Market Rasen	-	-	2	2	2	4	2	-	-	-	-	-
North Hykeham Pits	-	3	6	4	4	5	-	2	-	-	-	1
Whisby NR	1	5	8	6	6	5	8	1	-	-	-	-
Fiskerton Fen	-	-	2	3	4	-	6	4	-	-	-	-
Woodhall Spa Airfield	-	-	-	-	4	8	6	3	-	-	-	-
Woodhall Spa	-	-	3	2	2	1	7	-	-	-	-	-
Kirkby on Bain GP	-	2	12	8	8	6	3	-	-	-	-	-
Spalding-Borough Fen*	-	-	4	1	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Willow Tree Fen	-	-	2	4	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Thurlby Fen	-	-	-	-	4	-	4	-	-	-	-	-
Deeping Lakes	1	5	4	7	11	2	1	-	-	-	-	-

The table includes all estuarine and coastal areas supporting at least 500 birds, and inland sites attracting at least four, apart from West Ashby Pits where there were four in Jun. Wintering Oystercatcher numbers in Britain have been declining gradually since 1990 but the Humber and The Wash remain sites of major importance. The Wash is of international importance, attracting well above the threshold of 8200, while the Humber population clearly exceeds the national

importance threshold of 3200. There were, though, some differences in counts between 2014 and 2015 especially in The Wash where totals overall were lower, despite increases in the sectors between Gib Point and Wrangle, because of large decreases in several sectors between Freiston and Gedney. The significance of and reasons behind these changes are unknown. Inland numbers, which are mainly breeding birds, remain small but showed an increase on 2014. Breeding was confirmed at several inland sites, including North Hykeham pits, Whisby NR, Woodhall Spa Airfield, Kirkby on Bain GP and Deeping Lakes NR. Two pairs attempted breeding at Alkborough Flats, there were two pairs on Read's Island, 10 pairs at Tetney Marsh and at the Wash RSPB reserves, there were 12 pairs at Freiston Shore and 10 pairs at Frampton Marsh.



Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* and **Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa* at Freiston Shore
Nov 1st 2015 © Steve Keightley

The ringing recoveries are a bumper collection. The first three are the oldest recoveries of the year, all over 30 years compared to the BTO longevity record of 40 years 1 month. Next come four showing a range of movements, beginning with a Shetland nestling using The Wash in autumn over a number of years, then two caught on the same day in south Wales, one of which (at least) was an inland Lincolnshire-bred bird, and an immature bird moving between the Solway and Wash. Finally, there are a couple of birds from The Netherlands, one ringed there as a nestling and the other perhaps breeding there, and both using The Wash in autumn; the details of these two and the Solway bird have taken quite a few years to be retrieved from the back of filing cabinets!

FA07301	Adult Caught by ringer	12-08-1983 02-08-2015	Friskney New Marsh: c. 53°3'N 0°13'E Friskney: 53°1'N 0°11'E 5km 31y 11m 21d
FA07559	Adult Caught by ringer	08-09-1983 02-08-2015	Wrangle Tofits: c. 53°1'N 0°9'E Friskney: 53°1'N 0°11'E 2km 31y 10m 25d
FV50492	Second-year Caught by ringer	28-03-1982 20-08-2013	Terrington Marsh: c. 52°47'N 0°17'E (Norfolk) Wainfleet Marsh: 53°4'N 0°17'E 32km N 31y 4m 23d
FR72787	Nestling Caught by ringer Caught by ringer	30-06-2003 21-08-2005 13-09-2014	Out Skerries: c. 60°24'N 0°45'W (Shetland) Holbeach St Matthew: 52°51'N 0°8'E 841km S 2y 1m 22d Wainfleet Marsh: 53°4'N 0°17'E 818km S 11y 2m 14d
FA62955	Second-year Caught by ringer Caught by ringer	06-07-1996 31-07-1996 16-10-2015	Holbeach St Matthew: c. 52°52'N 0°5'E Holbeach St Matthew: c. 52°52'N 0°5'E 0km 0y 0m 25d Whiteford Sands, Gower: c. 51°37'N 4°15'W (Swansea) 327km WSW 19y 3m 10d
FH37359	Nestling Caught by ringer	26-05-2010 16-10-2015	Blankney Sand Quarry: 53°6'N 0°25'W Whiteford Sands, Gower: c. 51°37'N 4°15'W (Swansea) 308km WSW 5y 4m 20d

FV07229	Second-year Caught by ringer	05-05-1985 15-08-1987	Bowness-on-Solway: 54°56'N 3°13'W (Cumbria) Friskney New Marsh: c. 53°3'N 0°13'E 307km SE 2y 3m 10d
NLA 5233090	Full-grown Caught by ringer	25-03-1987 11-08-1987	Flaauwers Inlaag: 51°40'N 3°51'E (Zeeland) The Netherlands Friskney New Marsh: c. 53°3'N 0°13'E 291km WNW 0y 4m 17d
NLA 5161911	Nestling Caught by ringer Caught by ringer	17-06-1981 11-09-1987 01-08-1996	Sneekerveer: 53°1'N 5°45'E (Friesland) The Netherlands Wrangle Tofts: 53°2'N 0°10'E 372km W 6y 2m 25d Wrangle Tofts: c. 53°1'N 0°9'E 374km W 15y 1m 15d

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*

Vagrant. BBRC

A bird of unknown age in winter plumage was at Alkborough Flats on Jan 29th (ND, GPC). Accepted BBRC (BB 109 p.584). This was the fifth Lincolnshire record (six birds), all from the Humber area but the first not to appear in Jul. An article about it can be found on p.176.

European Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

Very common passage migrant and winter visitor, occasional in summer.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>The Humber</i>												
WeBS totals	7732	2392	3199	-	-	-	72	418	1818	11751	9070	14874
Alkborough Flats	4002	2500	-	-	-	1	9	8	400	2300	5000	2000
Read's Island	300	10000	2500	3	-	-	-	-	10	1500	18000	17000
Cleethorpes-Grainthorpe	3500	175	2500	-	-	6	200	600	1800	5670	5000	5000
Grainthorpe-Somercotes	2550	717	369	1	-	-	120	730	2500	3500	3110	1367
Saltfleet-Theddlethorpe	280	300	1	-	-	-	1	1	40	550	200	127
<i>The Wash</i>												
WeBS totals	1832	1397	153	1	-	-	296	475	813	4657	1310	4700
Gibraltar Point	6050	5000	1500	50	-	-	500	1000	800	2000	5500	4200
Wainfleet*	-	30	-	-	-	-	-	-	200	-	300	50
Wrangle*	20	-	-	-	-	-	54	40	110	216	-	2400
Leverton*	64	86	131	-	-	-	34	71	-	-	-	-
Freiston Shore	2000	1200	1	1100	1	-	45	250	-	3000	1000	2000
Frampton Marsh	8500	7000	5000	200	5	1	50	100	200	500	5000	8000
Welland*	-	45	-	-	-	-	-	-	210	2300	500	-
Dawsmere*	-	30	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	800	-	-
Gedney/Lutton	-	45	-	-	-	-	-	400	450	1500	3000	-
Terrington*	286	505	-	-	-	-	-	138	-	260	-	-
<i>Inland</i>												
Anwick-Ruskington Fens	11500	3500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3000	-
Spalding-Borough Fen	215	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	150	100	15	-
Willow Tree Fen	15	800	50	50	9	-	-	40	-	1500	-	-

The table includes the majority of sites attracting 1000 or more but there were also 1000 at Middlemarsh Farm (Skegness) and 2000 at Haconby Fen in Jan. There were few records in May-Jun, and none between May 18th and Jun 1st. While totals remain very impressive, counts in most areas, and in The Wash and Humber as a whole, were well down on those of 2014. Almost all of the counts exceeding 10000 were at Read's Island, where the peaks were c10000 on Feb 13th, and at the end of the year 18000 on Nov 6th and 17000 on Dec 24th. There was an estimate of 15000 at Frampton Marsh on Jan 13th, well above the next highest count there of 8500 on Jan 5th. One outstanding inland count was c11500 at Anwick Fen on Jan 19th.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Common passage migrant and common winter visitor. Rare inland.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>The Humber</i>												
WeBS totals	394	754	70	18	8	-	9	132	115	191	748	961
Goxhill-East Halton Skitter	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	100	20	-
Cleethorpes-Grainthorpe	55	578	4	1	-	-	8	120	85	1000	563	860
Grainthorpe-Donna Nook	254	171	61	16	147	-	1	197	200	69	112	52
Saltfleet-Mablethorpe	77	28	3	1	-	-	-	8	4	66	53	49

The Wash

WeBS totals	3208	2670	3957	4398	6470	5	809	2690	2050	935	748	1355
Gibraltar Point	800	3400	3000	1500	500	15	122	6000	4000	4000	830	600
Wainfleet*	1010	280	364	1056	1761	-	367	58	-	-	-	-
Wrangle*	715	-	1280	870	1624	-	10	458	1005	20	-	744
Leverton*	373	271	234	840	1760	-	188	252	-	-	-	-
Freiston Shore	1	30	50	75	90	-	1	250	1	500	1	-
Frampton Marsh	206	393	85	28	68	-	2	54	5	14	45	11
Welland	500	220	550	490	1050	-	2	1170	590	45	90	-
Dawsmere*	-	600	-	-	-	-	-	-	50	2	-	-
Gedney*	90	132	-	257	-	-	-	22	-	198	-	-
Terrington*	269	80	108	4	-	-	-	51	-	-	-	-

The table includes all sites with counts of 100 or more. There were up to 15 at Gib Point in Jun but none elsewhere between May 26th and Jul 7th. Site changes from 2014 were variable but, overall, there appear to have been slight decreases on both The Wash and the Humber. The majority of high counts came, as usual, from Gib Point, and all those of 2000 or more fell during Feb 21st-Mar 21st and Aug 31st-Oct 16th. Nationally, Grey Plovers tend to show a mid-winter peak but it may be that here we are seeing concentrations of the migrants that winter further south in Europe and Africa.

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Declining breeding species, becoming scarce, and very common passage migrant and winter visitor:

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>The Humber</i>												
Alkborough Flats	3830	1815	29	10	3	194	400	600	1700	1304	5500	7640
South Ferriby-Read's I.	138	150	283	-	2	111	95	1	250	300	125	3127
East Halton-Killingholme	160	783	7	4	10	6	2	80	40	135	200	611
Cleethorpes-Grainthorpe	700	300	1	-	-	-	14	-	21	160	1400	1900
Grainthorpe-Somercotes	1100	931	120	2	-	-	46	47	83	500	620	1200
<i>The Wash</i>												
Gibraltar Point	500	700	66	10	14	56	182	297	202	399	1000	1000
Freiston Shore	2500	1500	1	31	-	30	93	300	47	93	85	1700
Frampton Marsh	3000	2445	400	131	76	200	200	200	250	180	2500	3500
Welland*	-	150	-	-	4	1	-	-	-	245	1100	-
<i>Inland</i>												
Whisby NR	500	70	24	8	18	69	165	73	200	99	230	209
Branston Fen	124	315	66	12	2	3	2	90	-	234	1500	500
Kirkby on Bain GP	170	110	60	2	4	75	200	700	1000	970	140	400
Anwick Fen	3250	850	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Spalding-Borough Fen	292	-	67	5	8	5	19	-	162	623	400	-
Willow Tree Fen	15	1000	90	27	20	12	-	-	12	350	150	300

Counts of 1000 or more not included in the table were 2000 on Butterwick Marsh in Jan, 2508 at Ruskington Fen in Nov and 1800 at the Nene Mouth in Dec. Apart from the total of 7600 at Alkborough Flats on Dec 26th-27th, counts in most areas were well down on those of 2014. The year's peak at Read's Island, for example, was down by 3800, at Donna Nook by 2000, at Gib Point by 2500 and at Freiston Shore by 2000. Breeding was widely reported though seldom with details of numbers of nests or broods. At the RSPB Wash reserves, there were estimates of 10 pairs at Freiston Shore and 54 pairs at Frampton Marsh (where 27 fledged young were seen).

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant since 1950. **RBBP**

Peak monthly counts	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Alkborough Flats	-	4	1	-	14	4	1	-
Messingham SQ	-	2	3	4	-	-	-	-
Barton Pits	-	2	2	1	-	1	-	-
Donna Nook	-	4	4	3	5	3	4	-
Manby Wetland	-	2	3	1	4	-	-	-

Middlemarsh Farm	-	3	4	6	7	2	-	1
Gibraltar Point	-	2	4	1	5	6	1	-
Freiston Shore	-	1	-	-	7	4	-	-
Frampton Marsh	1	6	8	4	5	2	3	-
North Hykeham	2	2	4	3	-	-	-	-
Whisby NR	2	6	4	8	2	-	-	-
Blackmoor Bridge	-	4	2	1	-	-	-	-
RAF Woodhall	-	4	3	3	3	-	-	-
Kirkby on Bain GP	-	4	4	4	5	3	-	-
Willow Tree Fen	-	2	3	-	-	-	-	-
Number of sites	3	22	19	13	13	18	5	1
Minimum Lincs total	5	65	55	41	60	37	10	1

The first bird was one at Whisby NR on Mar 25th, and Frampton Marsh had one on Mar 26th. The Apr arrival of at least 65 birds was up from the 2014 total of 45 birds, with records from 22 sites, well up from 17 in 2014. Overall, birds were reported from 44 sites, up from 37 in 2014. Surprisingly, despite the good arrival, reported breeding numbers were down with 17 pairs across nine sites, compared to 23 from 10 sites in 2014. Confirmed breeding (numbers of pairs in brackets) was reported from: Barton Pits (one), Blackmoor Bridge (two), Donna Nook (one), Frampton Marsh (five), Gib Point (one), Kirkby on Bain GP (two), Manby Wetland (one) Middlemarsh Farm, near Skegness, (three) and Woodhall Spa Airfield (one). The peak late summer count was made at Alkborough Flats with 14 on Jul 16th. The county total in Jul of at least 60 birds at 13 sites was similar to 65 birds at 12 sites in 2014. The latest records were three at Frampton Marsh on Sep 21st and one at Middlemarsh Farm on Oct 6th.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Fairly common passage migrant, mainly coastal. Breeding has spread to inland sites in last 40 years.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>The Humber</i>												
WeBS totals	117	118	37	38	671	39	3	762	144	117	67	22
Alkborough Flats	-	-	1	11	12	8	3	45	3	-	-	1
Goxhill-Killingholme	10	-	-	-	200	-	-	306	8	-	-	-
Cleethorpe-Grainthorpe	79	105	22	-	6	6	5	321	104	79	63	55
Grainthorpe-Somercotes	1	2	-	60	354	21	-	22	9	-	1	-
Saltfleet-Mablethorpe	22	11	9	17	288	14	2	104	40	11	11	-
<i>The Wash</i>												
WeBS totals	123	68	94	163	1227	7	53	353	191	74	10	3
Gibraltar Point	12	18	56	400	584	38	40	216	120	28	18	4
Wainfleet*	-	-	-	-	504	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Friskney*	-	-	-	-	142	-	20	60	-	60	-	-
Leverton*	-	-	-	-	374	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Benington*	-	-	-	-	160	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Freiston Shore	15	-	-	-	22	-	6	48	33	50	55	3
Witham*	-	-	-	1	-	3	-	250	150	-	10	-
Frampton Marsh	120	60	38	11	350	200	20	150	28	45	33	11

The table includes all counts of 50 or more. Note that there may be some overlap between WeBS counts and others in The Wash, for example between Gib Point and the Wainfleet sector, or between the Witham sector and Freiston Shore and Frampton Marsh. Numbers were generally higher throughout the year than in 2014, with impressive passage totals in May and Aug. The thresholds for national and international importance are, respectively, 340 and 730. Most of the highest counts occurred during Apr 28th-May 25th. There were three counts over 500 at Gib Point, the highest being 584 on May 10th, and elsewhere there were 374 in the Leverton sector of The Wash on the 16th, 468 in the Wainfleet sector and 320 at Donna Nook on the 17th, and 350 at Frampton Marsh on the 18th. One pair bred unsuccessfully at Frampton Marsh, while at Gib Point 23 pairs reared 42 young in what was an exceptional year by recent standards. Breeding was confirmed also at Gedney Drove End and, inland, at Woodhall Spa Airfield, while it was thought possible or probable at Kirkby on Bain GP and Blackmoor Bridge. Two colour-ring sightings are shown below, seen here in Sep 2014 only 3-5 weeks after being ringed in southern Norway where they may well already have been on passage from further north.

NOS	First-year	24-08-2014	Makkevika, Giske: 62°30'N 6°1'E (More og Romsdal) Norway
8B45122	Alive (colour rings seen)	15-09-2014	Gibraltar Point, Skegness: 53°6'N 0°18'E 1,098km SSW 0y 0m 22d
	Alive (colour rings seen)	30-09-2014	Tennyson Sands, Gibraltar Point NNR, Skegness: 53°6'N 0°18'E 1,098km SSW 0y 1m 6d
NOS	First-year	02-09-2014	Revtangen, Klepp: 58°45'N 5°28'E (Rogaland) Norway
8B46850	Alive (colour rings seen)	28-09-2014	Seacroft, Skegness: 53°6'N 0°19'E 705km SSW 0y 0m 26d

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

Rare/scarse passage migrant, mainly spring.

The first were four flying north over Huttoft Bank Pit on May 4th, and the next were two at Horseshoe Point on the 5th and one flying north-west at Cleethorpes on the 8th. The largest flock of the year was a trip of 11 flying north at Donna Nook on May 12th, and also on that day there was one at Crook Bank, Theddlethorpe. In autumn, a juvenile was in a field near Moulton Seas End on Sep 22nd. With a total of 20 birds, this was a return to normal after two above-average years.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Fairly common/common passage migrant, mainly coastal. Exceptional in winter.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>The Humber</i>												
WeBS totals	-	-	-	11	5	-	221	15	1	3	-	-
Alkborough Flats	-	-	-	1	7	1	18	2	-	-	-	-
Tetney Marsh-Grainthorpe	-	-	-	3	2	-	10	48	7	1	1	-
Grainthorpe-Somercotes	-	-	1	6	3	-	189	56	5	-	-	-
Saltfleetby-Mablethorpe	-	-	-	74	10	1	30	4	4	-	-	-
<i>The Wash</i>												
WeBS totals	-	1	3	29	8	-	65	61	5	-	-	-
Gibraltar Point	-	-	-	18	40	2	221	39	11	3	-	-
Freiston Shore	-	-	3	15	-	-	3	40	-	-	-	-
Witham*	-	1	3	10	-	-	43	5	3	-	-	-
Frampton Marsh	-	-	-	25	35	8	12	12	30	-	-	-

The earliest bird of the year was recorded at Freiston Shore/Witham Mouth on Feb 21st. It was another month before a further three birds were recorded at the same location on Mar 21st. One other early spring record was a bird at Donna Nook on Mar 23rd. The first double figure counts were 16 at Gib Point and 44 at the Witham Mouth, both on Apr 19th. This was the start of peak spring migration to the breeding grounds as in addition there were counts of 74 at Rimac on Apr 25th, 45 at Witham Mouth on Apr 28th, 35 at Frampton Marsh on May 3rd and 40 at Gib Point on May 4th. Inland, 17 was a good count at Blackmoor Bridge on May 4th. Single figure counts continued through Jun and the first half of Jul, but 12 at Rimac on Jul 14th perhaps marked the start of the passage from the north to the western and southern African wintering areas. The peak counts soon followed, including 221 at Gib Point on July 17th, 87 at Donna Nook on Jul 20th, 30 at Rimac on Jul 27th, 40 at Freiston Shore on Aug 1st, 40 at Holbeach Range on Aug 4th and 48 at Tetney Marsh on Aug 8th. There were only single-figure counts after Sep 1st, and regular sightings stopped on Sep 30th. However, there were three at both Gib Point and at South Ferriby on Oct 20th.

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor; scarce and local breeder.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>The Humber</i>												
WeBS totals	1139	1179	987	362	54	372	814	1011	1428	749	951	1063
Alkborough Flats	451	427	314	165	14	40	409	318	258	251	290	453
Read's Island-South Ferriby	21	-	282	60	10	331	250	64	62	28	56	120
Barton Pits	42	70	46	39	1	2	23	17	121	54	14	14
New Holland-Goxhill	300	97	33	29	13	23	76	83	100	34	25	80
Pyewipe	275	172	191	230	20	1	21	352	201	151	92	51
Cleethorpes-Grainthorpe	48	69	106	39	9	9	207	90	174	84	101	121
Grainthorpe-Somercotes	143	210	95	42	2	17	71	132	202	300	120	209
Saltfleet-Mablethorpe	562	442	352	16	21	14	143	235	465	224	469	453

The Wash

WeBS totals	2791	2167	1618	1953	281	172	2273	4471	1402	634	559	994
Gibraltar Point	200	174	116	40	60	118	530	315	431	271	179	301
Wainfleet*	420	439	157	762	-	-	115	567	-	-	-	-
Friskney*	731	155	370	242	162	-	370	830	121	44	288	196
Wrangle*	320	-	200	255	1	3	366	470	589	195	-	421
Leverton*	73	179	58	84	86	-	64	185	-	-	-	-
Benington*	120	140	170	45	16	-	120	8	23	-	65	-
Freiston Shore	113	231	50	50	1	40	540	81	200	48	87	141
Frampton Marsh	114	175	115	104	5	10	10	13	30	40	76	89
Welland*	-	75	248	224	10	-	-	730	11	158	32	-
Holbeach	500	-	7	6	-	120	-	500	150	-	-	-
Gedney	325	233	-	40	-	5	115	446	620	23	-	-
Terrington*	460	269	133	86	-	-	332	827	-	53	-	-

Inland

Withern Washland	30	1	9	40	1	1	-	2	15	5	36	29
Hagnaby Lock Fen	39	76	169	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	16	39
Marston STW	19	3	48	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16	20

The table includes all estuarine and coastal areas with counts of 250 or more, and most inland areas with relatively high counts. Over 2000 records were received for the year, with the species recorded on all but a handful of dates. Over 30 localities areas recorded counts of 100 or more, but only seven counts exceeded 500, all from The Wash. Terrington had the highest with 827 on Aug 2nd, 800 were at the Nene Mouth on Sep 30th, 762 at Wainfleet on Apr 19th, 620 at Guy's Head on Sep 1st and 600 at Friskney on Aug 15th. Wainfleet had a count 567 on Aug 16th and nearby Gib Point had 530 on Jul 27th. Some good counts came from inland. A fair-sized flock lingered at Hagnaby Lock Fen throughout Feb and into Mar, with regular reports of 60 plus in Feb and over 100 in the first half of Mar. At Marston STW, there were up to 48 in early Mar, and later in spring counts of 40 at Caistor on Apr 11th and 40 at Withern Washland on Apr 13th. Breeding was noted at Scopwick Heath/Digby airfield and it was thought possible or probable at Blackmoor Bridge, Hawthorpe and Barkston Heath.

Four of the recoveries below relate to long-lived birds (the BTO longevity record is 32 years 7 months) and also demonstrate winter site fidelity. The last of the recoveries is of a bird moving from The Wash to a wet grassland breeding area between Osnabruck and Bremen.

10051	Adult	18-09-1985	Leverton Outgate: c. 52°59'N 0°7'E
	Caught by ringer	01-09-2007	Friskney New Marsh: 53°2'N 0°12'E 6km NE 21y 11m 14d
	Caught by ringer	01-09-2015	Friskney New Marsh: 53°3'N 0°14'E 10km NE 29y 11m 14d
SFH	Nestling	23-06-1991	Nivala: 63°58'N 24°45'E (Oulu) Finland
CT078056	Caught by ringer	04-08-2012	Leverton Outgate: 53°0'N 0°8'E 1,868km SW 21y 1m 12d
FA46628	Adult	18-09-1993	Holbeach St Matthew: c. 52°52'N 0°5'E
	Caught by ringer	13-08-2014	Lawyer's Farm, Holbeach St Matthew: 52°52'N 0°5'E 0km 20y 10m 26d
A46889	Adult	09-09-1994	Wrangle Tofts: c. 53°1'N 0°9'E
	Caught by ringer	01-09-2007	Friskney New Marsh: 53°2'N 0°12'E 3km 12y 11m 23d
	Caught by ringer	14-08-2014	Wrangle Tofts: 53°1'N 0°10'E 2km 19y 11m 5d
FH31728	Adult	14-08-2014	Wrangle Tofts: 53°1'N 0°10'E
	Caught by ringer	25-04-2015	Bergfeiner Moor, Damme: 52°33'N 8°19'E (Weser-Ems) Germany 550km E 0y 8m 11d

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

L.l. islandica: common passage migrant and winter visitor. *L.l. limosa*: rare migrant and has bred, last in 1974. **RBBP**

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>The Humber</i>												
Alkborough Flats	162	158	152	260	29	38	195	257	224	211	275	158
East Halton-Pyewipe	3800	742	437	520	80	10	1500	5000	3000	6080	530	413
<i>The Wash</i>												
Gibraltar Point	33	46	42	39	23	9	137	229	203	111	72	12
Freiston Shore	800	205	300	100	-	22	1300	185	1700	1200	1500	3000

Frampton Marsh	240	150	312	255	350	76	1300	5000	2900	900	35	68
Holbeach	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	200	2000	-	-	-
<i>Inland</i>												
Manby Wetland	-	-	-	8	1	-	87	162	14	16	21	1

Other counts of 100 or more were 100 at Shep Whites on Jan 16th and 105 at Goxhill Marsh on Sep 13th. The East Halton-Pyewipe data include 520 at Rosper Road Pools on Apr 18th. Numbers of Black-tailed Godwit continue to be at a high level. The threshold for international importance is 610, and so it can be seen that both the Humber and The Wash are of major importance. Totals were highest in autumn but there were up to 3800 at Pyewipe in the first week of Jan. In autumn, peak counts were c5000 at North Killingholme Haven on Aug 18th, c5000 at Frampton Marsh on Aug 30th, and 6080 at North Killingholme Haven on Oct 7th. At the end of the year, 3000 at Freiston Shore on Dec 24th was noteworthy. Small numbers, most in single figures, were recorded at scattered inland sites; the most favoured was Manby Wetland where the maximum was 162 on Aug 9th.

Numerous colour-ringed Black-tailed Godwits are seen each year in Lincolnshire and some have been published in LBRs before. All contribute to understanding of the patterns of movements but it is impractical to report all of them here; also some have not yet permeated through to the official BTO record. Those below include a fairly old bird but another was seen on the Humber in 2015 that had been ringed on The Wash in 1995 (the BTO longevity record is 23 years 3 months), the longest movement within Britain & Ireland, and one foreign-ringed bird, from Portugal, which seems to be treating the British Isles as a pinball machine, although presumably it also makes unrecorded trips to Iceland.



Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* Frampton Marsh May 11th 2015 © Neil Smith

EP85259	Adult	09-09-2002	Lawyer's Farm, Holbeach St Matthew: 52°52'N 0°6'E
	Caught by ringer	07-08-2003	Hazelwood, near Ham Creek: 52°9'N 1°33'E (Suffolk) 126km SE 0y 10m 29d
	Caught by ringer	10-09-2015	Iken Marsh, near Iken: 52°8'N 1°33'E (Suffolk) 127km SE 13y 0m 1d
DE39575	Adult	10-09-2013	Lough Beg, Ringaskiddy: 51°49'N 8°20'W (Cork)
	Alive (colour rings seen)	01-09-2014	Sumburgh: 59°51'N 1°17'W (Shetland) 996km NNE 0y 11m 22d
	- ditto -	19-09-2014	Frampton Marsh, Boston: 52°55'N 0°1'E 580km ENE 1y 0m 9d
	- ditto -	29-09-2014	Freiston Shore, Boston: 52°56'N 0°4'E 584km ENE 1y 0m 19d
POL	Adult	19-02-2007	Salinas de Alhos Vedros, Setubal: 38°39'N 9°1'W (Setúbal) Portugal
I010376	Alive (colour rings seen)	09-04-2007	Welney, Ouse Washes: 52°31'N 0°2'W (Cambridgeshire) 1,692km NNE 0y 1m 21d

- ditto -	16-07-2007	Cley-next-the-Sea: 52°56'N 1°2'E (Norfolk) 1,767km NNE 0y 4m 27d
- ditto -	17-10-2007	Cley-next-the-Sea: 52°56'N 1°2'E (Norfolk) 1,767km NNE 0y 7m 28d
- ditto -	24-03-2008	Berry Fen: 52°20'N 0°0'E (Cambridgeshire) 1,673km NNE 1y 1m 5d
- ditto -	03-08-2008	Cley-next-the-Sea: 52°56'N 1°2'E (Norfolk) 1,767km NNE 1y 5m 15d
- ditto -	11-03-2009	Cley next The Sea: 52°56'N 1°2'E (Norfolk) 1,767km NNE 2y 0m 20d
- ditto -	27-07-2009	Cley next The Sea: 52°56'N 1°2'E (Norfolk) 1,767km NNE 2y 5m 8d
- ditto -	19-04-2010	Oronsay: 56°0'N 6°15'W (Argyll and Bute) 1,941km N 3y 2m 0d
- ditto -	19-07-2010	Cley-next-the-Sea: 52°56'N 1°2'E (Norfolk) 1,767km NNE 3y 5m 0d
- ditto -	12-09-2010	Freiston Shore: 52°55'N 0°4'E 1,732km NNE 3y 6m 24d
- ditto -	24-04-2011	Shannon Airport: 52°41'N 8°56'W (Clare) 1,561km N 4y 2m 5d
- ditto -	07-08-2011	Cley-next-the-Sea: 52°56'N 1°2'E (Norfolk) 1,767km NNE 4y 5m 19d
- ditto -	11-04-2012	Welches Dam: 52°27'N 0°8'E (Cambridgeshire) 1,689km NNE 5y 1m 23d
- ditto -	28-06-2012	Cley-next-the-Sea: 52°56'N 1°2'E (Norfolk) 1,767km NNE 5y 4m 9d
- ditto -	27-03-2013	Fen Drayton: 52°17'N 0°3'W (Cambridgeshire) 1,668km NNE 6y 1m 8d
- ditto -	17-04-2013	Ouse Washes RSPB: 52°27'N 0°9'E (Cambridgeshire) 1,690km NNE 6y 1m 29d
- ditto -	21-04-2013	Loch Gilp: 56°0'N 5°26'W (Argyll and Bute) 1,946km N 6y 2m 2d
- ditto -	23-06-2013	Langwith House: 54°13'N 1°34'W (North Yorkshire) 1,820km NNE 6y 4m 4d

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Very common coastal passage migrant and winter visitor. Scarce inland.

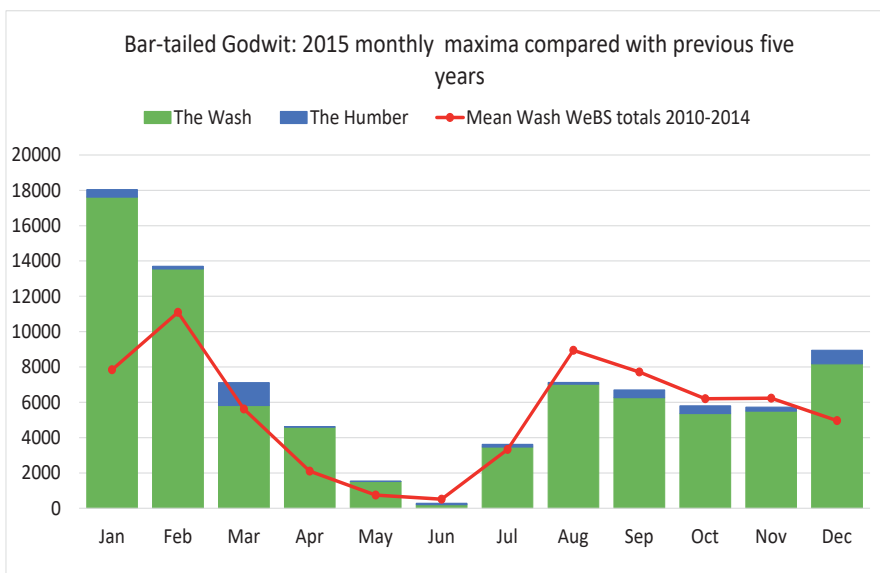
Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>The Humber</i>												
WeBS totals	271	114	64	18	-	3	3	23	8	48	108	548
Pyewipe (Grimsby)	120	-	1200	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cleethorpes-Grainthorpe	56	30	53	2	-	-	140	25	10	400	80	537
Grainthorpe-Somercotes	51	1	1	1	-	-	1	30	20	20	50	61
Saltfleet-Mablethorpe	159	112	3	-	-	-	2	2	400	4	28	29
<i>The Wash</i>												
WeBS totals	16041	10122	4509	3233	1463	188	3420	4533	1253	1110	1503	7698
Gibraltar Point	1000	3500	2100	1500	60	50	50	2500	5300	4001	4000	500
Wainfleet*	5670	3750	666	-	375	-	146	1560	-	-	-	-
Friskney*	4000	1500	300	2780	150	-	150	-	190	410	1500	5000
Wrangle*	1200	-	1640	8	250	160	2420	1680	664	700	-	2673
Leverton*	5165	4000	1072	265	570	-	504	1100	-	-	-	-
Freiston Shore	40	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Frampton Marsh	40	2	6	50	1	1	-	3	6	2	2	3
Welland	500	-	-	-	80	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Holbeach	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	180	98	-	-	-
Dawsmere*	-	800	-	-	-	-	200	-	-	-	-	-

The table includes all areas with counts of 200 or more apart from 200 at Gedney Drove End on Jul 18th and 250 at Witham Mouth on Oct 21st. With 1200 being the WeBS threshold for international importance, it is clear how important The Wash is to the species. At well-watched Gib Point, 17 counts exceeded the threshold, Wainfleet two, Friskney three, and Wrangle and Leverton two – and those are just small parts of the whole estuary. Forty or so miles further north, Pyewipe (Grimsby) also had a count of 1200 in March. There were six inland records, all in April. Single birds were noted at Woodhall Spa Airfield on the 5th, Kirkby on Bain GP on the 9th, Toft Newton Res on the 17th and Greetwell Hollow on the same day. Two birds were at Fiskerton Fen on the 22nd, one at Blackmoor Bridge on the 26th and the highest number (closest to the coast) was seven at Burgh le Marsh on the 25th. The selection of ringing recoveries reported this year (some from long ago) are not exceptional, but include the two oldest (the BTO longevity record is 33 years 11 months) and some of the longest distance ones. These include two within UK, one from the north and one from the south, and all four foreign recoveries.

DN52395	Adult	10-09-1987	Leverton Outgate: c. 52°59'N 0°7'E
	Caught by ringer	15-08-2014	Wrangle Tofts: 53°1'N 0°10'E 5km 26y 11m 5d
DK07202	Adult Male	01-08-1992	Wrangle Tofts: c. 53°1'N 0°9'E
	Caught by ringer	03-09-2015	Leverton Outgate: 53°0'N 0°8'E 4km 23y 1m 2d

DN34174	First-year Male Caught by ringer	24-08-1986 14-08-1987	Whiteness Head, Nairn: 57°35'N 4°0'W (Highland) Wainfleet Marsh: c. 53°4'N 0°17'E 570km SSE 0y 11m 21d
DB49983	First-year Female Caught by ringer Caught by ringer	01-12-2001 31-08-2003 18-09-2012	Brownsea Island, Poole Harbour: 50°41'N 1°58'W (Dorset) Leverton Outgate: 52°59'N 0°7'E 295km NNE 1y 8m 30d Friskney New Marsh: 53°3'N 0°14'E 304km NNE 10y 9m 17d
DD73246	Adult Freshly dead	12-08-2010 08-06-2015	Friskney New Marsh: 53°3'N 0°14'E Sevettijarvi, Ukonpaa, Inari: 69°33'N 28°45'E (Lappi) Finland 2,355km NE 4y 9m 27d
PLG GN26852	First-year Caught by ringer	10-09-2012 26-07-2013	Ujscie Wisly, Swibno: 54°21'N 18°57'E (Pomorskie) Poland Leverton Outgate: 53°0'N 0°8'E 1,247km W 0y 10m 16d
NLA 1221016	Adult Female Caught by ringer	14-02-1986 14-08-1987	Slikken Van Dortsman: 51°34'N 4°0'E (Zeeland) The Netherlands Wainfleet Marsh: c. 53°4'N 0°17'E 304km NW 1y 6m 0d
NLA 1125163	Adult Caught by ringer	05-11-1974 14-08-1987	Kroonspolder: 53°15'N 4°58'E (Vlieland) The Netherlands Wainfleet Marsh: c. 53°4'N 0°17'E 313km W 12y 9m 9d

Bar-tailed Godwits wintering in Lincolnshire breed in arctic Europe and western Siberia, though some including many of the first year birds remain with us in summer. In addition, birds nesting further east in Siberia pass through Britain (especially towards the south-east) on passage to and from their wintering areas in West Africa. These patterns of movement are evident in the Lincolnshire counts as well as from the ringing data. The chart below shows 2015 counts (from WeBS and other sources) and the 2010-2014 averages from Wash WeBS counts (Lincolnshire side). Low numbers in mid-summer rise rapidly as birds arrive from the breeding grounds in late summer and early autumn. The small autumn peak reflects the through-passage of West African winterers, and totals then remain high through mid-winter, until many birds move to the eastern North Sea in February-March to fatten up prior to migration to the Arctic. The return passage of West African birds takes place in late April and May but is not really noticeable here, since within Britain it is largely confined to Sussex and Kent. One feature of the 2015 counts was the higher than average numbers present in January-February and December. This was evident also in 2014, and in December 2013. It is not known if it truly reflects the numbers present or perhaps an artefact of count coverage (this analysis does not take the variations in coverage into account). There was also a particularly high total in February 2010, which may have resulted from cold weather movements.



Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Fairly common/common passage migrant and winter visitor. Rare inland.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>The Humber</i>												
WeBS totals	197	32	27	-	18	28	23	28	12	32	116	23
New Holland-East Halton	154	3	-	-	5	10	-	-	40	50	100	7
Grimsby	57	55	94	21	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cleethorpes-Tetney Marsh	2	29	49	48	6	5	11	5	53	14	52	53
<i>The Wash</i>												
WeBS totals	100	42	84	267	22	69	32	288	257	22	21	149
Gibraltar Point	25	20	19	26	11	10	24	22	80	21	26	22
Wrangle*	25	-	55	51	6	69	-	-	2	-	-	120
Freiston Shore	12	2	3	175	1	-	4	150	52	192	1	6
Welland*	-	-	-	12	-	-	-	195	190	22	-	-

The table includes most counts of 50 or more. In the early part of the year there were regular counts of 10-30 birds at nine sites in the Humber and The Wash. Larger numbers were 154 between East Halton Skitter and Goxhill Haven on Jan 18th, a peak of 57 at Grimsby Docks on Jan 24th, a peak of 94 at Grimsby-Clee North Wall on Mar 1st and 49 at Cleethorpes on Mar 23rd. Spring passage involved generally lower numbers. Easily the highest count was 175 at Freiston Shore on Apr 19th, with 48 at Cleethorpes on Apr 4th and 50 at Witham Mouth on Apr 26th, while during May no site recorded more than 12 birds. Birds were noted at only six sites in early Jun, although there were 60 at Wrangle on the 5th, while 28 at Grainthorpe Haven-Horseshoe Point on the 12th were the last of the spring. Return passage began on Jun 30th and there were regular small numbers at Gib Point until mid-July when birds became more widespread along the coast. Autumn counts of more than 50 were recorded at 11 sites with higher numbers including 130 at Freiston Shore on Aug 3rd, 150 there on Aug 31st and 192 on Oct 1st, 180 at Welland on Aug 17th and 190 there on Sep 13th, c100 at Holbeach Marsh on Sep 25th, 100 at East Halton Skitter-Goxhill Haven on Nov 22nd and 120 at Wrangle on Dec 15th. A count of 149 at Barton Haven-Barrow Haven on Oct 26th included a male in full summer plumage. Inland birds at Covenham Reservoir were two on May 6th-7th and single birds on the 23rd and 30th, and also one on Aug 12th.

Two ringing recoveries from almost 30 years ago that have just come to light are shown below. Both birds were using The Wash repeatedly in autumn, and the second is known to have belonged to the Finnish/Scandinavian population. Turnstones wintering in Britain mainly belong to the Greenland/north-east Canada breeding populations. Those from Fennoscandia mostly travel much further south to winter in West Africa, some passing through eastern England en route.

CE04900	Adult	28-07-1976	Snettisham: 52°52'N 0°27'E (Norfolk)
	Caught by ringer	10-08-1987	Friskney New Marsh: c. 53°3'N 0°13'E 26km NW 11y 0m 13d
FH	Nestling	20-06-1984	Valsorarna, Bjorkoby: 63°25'N 21°4'E (Vaasa) Finland
AT037647	Caught by ringer	10-08-1987	Friskney New Marsh: c. 53°3'N 0°13'E 1,670km SW 3y 1m 21d
	Caught by ringer	02-08-1988	Benington: 52°58'N 0°6'E 1,681km SW 4y 1m 13d

Red Knot *Calidris canutus*

Very common passage migrant and winter visitor. Rare inland.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>The Humber</i>												
WeBS totals	2515	8650	4158	-	-	-	158	135	1002	2717	5300	7073
Alkborough Flats	-	-	-	-	-	14	1	25	9	-	-	-
Cleethorpes	300	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	500
Tetney-Grainthorpe	600	6420	3165	-	-	-	3	1000	800	10000	4700	7000
Grainthorpe-Somercotes	820	830	1000	2	80	-	61	250	500	370	600	770
Saltfleet-Mablethorpe	1281	1400	-	-	-	-	97	40	24	310	380	1281
<i>The Wash</i>												
WeBS totals	30053	20902	55366	30075	15453	2710	2664	78857	78085	27935	8575	10161
Gibraltar Point	3000	10000	25000	18000	3000	800	2237	65004	80000	60000	25000	1510
Wainfleet*	1670	4900	16500	6000	4300	-	252	3700	-	-	-	-
Friskney*	20080	1222	12400	1390	2235	150	200	12000	8540	370	4000	4000
Wrangle*	70	-	-	-	2700	1660	1453	3870	6583	550	-	2850
Leverton*	2635	1850	1550	2835	5900	-	556	3030	-	-	-	-

Freiston Shore	1	1200	-	12	-	-	4	600	950	2	800	2000
Frampton Marsh	7	95	6	4	-	6	5	11	10	1200	300	400
Welland*	-	5000	650	1200	-	-	-	3	401	6000	3550	-
Holbeach*	-	-	150	300	300	100	-	150	1500	-	-	-
Dawsmere*	-	1300	-	350	-	-	-	500	600	-	-	-
Gedney*	3200	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

The table includes all areas holding 500 or more, and also Alkborough Flats which attracts most of those in the inner Humber. Other records away from the principal sites included 1-3 on five dates during Jul-Oct at Barton upon Humber, and singles at Kirkby on Bain GP on Mar 31st, Baston-Langtoft Pits on Aug 13th and Covenham Res on Sep 15th. Generally, numbers were down on 2014, especially on The Wash where the average of monthly WeBS counts was down by 11000. The peak counts in the Gib Point area and the Wainfleet WeBS sector were each down by 25000-30000. Only in the Friskney sector were numbers substantially higher than in 2014. The estuaries continue to hold huge numbers, of course, and are of vital importance for the species: the threshold for international importance is just 4500. Gib Point estimates reached 80000 on Sep 1st and 70000 on Sep 27th. A lot of Knots are ringed on The Wash and these generate many recoveries: over 300 in Britain and 210 foreign exchanges involving Lincolnshire are known. Those below include the two oldest reported this year (the oldest known was 27 years 3 months), and five foreign ones from along the east Atlantic flyway between the eastern Canada/Greenland breeding grounds and West Africa.

XR55536	Adult Caught by ringer	31-08-1992 11-02-2012	Wainfleet Marsh: c. 53°4'N 0°17'E Snettisham: 52°52'N 0°27'E (Norfolk)	25km SSE 19y 5m 11d
XR49280	Adult Caught by ringer	14-02-1998 14-08-2014	Heysham, near Lancaster: 54°1'N 2°54'W (Lancashire) Wrangle Tofts: 53°1'N 0°10'E 233km ESE	16y 6m 0d
CE21250	Adult Freshly dead (shot)	02-01-1976 10-10-1976	Friskney, near Wainfleet: 53°3'N 0°15'E Niaqornat, Umanak: 70°45'N 53°30'W	Greenland 3,357km NW 0y 9m 8d
FRP	Adult	23-03-2012	Reserve de Moeze-Oleron, Moeze: 45°52'N 1°4'W (Charente-Maritime)	France
M15978	Caught by ringer	14-08-2014	Wrangle Tofts: 53°1'N 0°10'E 800km N 2y 4m 22d	
ISR	Adult	28-05-1987	Brjanslaekur, Vatnsfjordur, Vestur Bardastrandar: 65°31'N 23°12'W	Iceland
741771	Caught by ringer Caught by ringer	14-08-1987 15-10-1989	Wainfleet Marsh: c. 53°4'N 0°17'E 1,907km SE 0y 2m 17d Holme: 52°57'N 0°31'E (Norfolk)	1,928km SE 2y 4m 17d
ISR	Adult	26-05-2007	Hlídsnes, Alftanes: 64°4'N 22°1'W (Kjósarsýsla)	Iceland
753558	Caught by ringer	14-08-2014	Wrangle Tofts: 53°1'N 0°10'E 1,770km SE 7y 2m 19d	
POL	Adult	31-08-2012	Quinta de Marim: 37°1'N 7°49'W (Faro)	Portugal
G20845	Caught by ringer	26-07-2013	Leverton Outgate: 53°0'N 0°8'E 1,880km NNE 0y 10m 25d	

Ruff *Calidris pugnax*

Fairly common passage migrant and scarce winter visitor. Bred to 19th century. **RBPP**

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alkborough Flats	1	4	11	14	10	1	15	85	103	32	38	28
Tetney-Donna Nook	3	1	1	2	1	-	2	8	8	4	-	-
Manby Wetland	-	-	-	2	-	-	10	100	19	-	-	-
Middlemarsh Farm, Skegness	-	-	-	-	4	-	3	10	21	3	-	1
Gibraltar Point	-	-	-	2	1	3	3	14	13	16	3	-
Freiston Shore	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	1	-	-	-
Frampton Marsh	150	100	100	65	44	13	70	100	100	3	15	100
Bardney Pits	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	22	6	-	-
Fiskerton Fen	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	6	-	-	-	-

There was a large number, estimated at c100, at Manby Wetland on Aug 24th, and the count of at least 103 at Alkborough Flats on Sep 5th was the second highest for that site the highest was 135 in Oct 2007). Reports at Manby on the 20th and 29th were of only 30-35 birds, while at Alkborough, only 50 could be found on the 6th. At Frampton Marsh, the peak autumn counts of c100 came on Aug 22nd and Sep 1st, with no more than 70 on other dates around then. Winter counts at Frampton were similarly variable from day to day. These changing totals may reflect active passage through the sites, but may also show how difficult it can be to obtain full counts

especially when birds are spread across grassland. Up to 13 were at Frampton Marsh in Jun but no breeding activity was reported. Elsewhere, the only reports between May 25th and Jul 1st were one in the Gedney sector of The Wash on Jun 6th, one at Alkborough Flats on Jun 29th and three and one at Gib Point on Jun 29th and 30th.

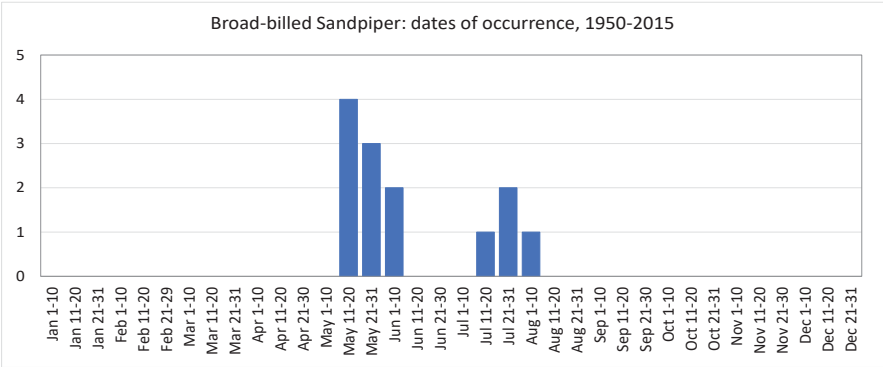


Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* Frampton Marsh Apr 24th 2015 (left) and Mar 22nd 2015 (right) © Neil Smith

Broad-billed Sandpiper *Calidris falcinellus*

Vagrant. BBRC

An adult was at Frampton Marsh on Jun 9th-12th (PS *et al.*). Accepted BBRC (BB 109 p.586). This was the thirteenth for Lincolnshire, from the first in 1959. By a narrow margin it was the latest, so far, of the spring records.



Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Passage migrant, scarce in spring and scarce/fairly common in autumn. Rare in winter.

Peak monthly counts	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Donna Nook	-	-	2	-	2	-	2
Gibraltar Point	-	-	2	-	3	4	4
Freiston Shore	-	-	-	-	1	6	1
Frampton Marsh	1	1	5	2	4	20	3
Holbeach Marsh	-	-	-	-	-	-	3

An early bird was at Frampton Marsh on Mar 23rd and the 30th. Single birds appeared there during Apr 27th-May 1st and May 5th-7th, thereafter 1-2 birds were regularly present until Jun 9th with peaks of five on May 16th-17th, three on the 22nd-23rd, five on the 25th-27th and 29th,

and four on May 30th. Elsewhere the only spring sightings were of an inland bird at Woodhall Spa Airfield on May 7th, one at Cleethorpes on May 8th, two at Gib Point on May 9th and one there on the 24th, and two at Donna Nook on May 15th. Autumn passage was also most marked at Frampton Marsh where 1-2 birds, occasionally three, were regular throughout Jul 4th-Sep 23rd, plus five on Aug 22nd and 28th and 20 on Aug 23rd. One-three birds were regular at Gib Point during Jul 19th-Sep 6th and at Freiston Shore there were single birds on Jul 19th and Aug 1st, six on Aug 3rd and singles on four dates during Sep 15th-29th. Two were at Donna Nook on Jul 26th with two on Sep 4th-6th, one on the 11th and two on Sep 23rd. Additional birds were one at Middlemarsh Farm, near Skegness, on Jul 30th, one at Theddlethorpe-Mablethorpe North End on Aug 15th, one at Cleethorpes next day, one at Middlemarsh Farm on Aug 22nd, two at Witham Mouth on Aug 25th, one at Boatmere Scrape on Aug 28th and two at Boston Haven on Aug 30th. In Sep, there were two at Manby Wetland on the 1st-5th, one at New Holland on the 13th, three at Holbeach Marsh on the 25th and one at Killingholme Haven Pits on the 26th.

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

Rare passage migrant. **LBRC**

This was another year with above-average numbers of Temminck's Stints. The first two were at Frampton Marsh on May 8th (ABe, RDn), followed by one at Middlemarsh Farm (Skegness) on May 10th (RWrr). Two more were at Frampton Marsh on May 15th-17th with one remaining on the 18th-19th (TC, JB *et al.*). One was seen at Gib Point on May 21st (JPS) and another was at Manby Wetland on May 22nd (GW). More sightings at Frampton Marsh involved one on May 27th-28th, two on the 29th-30th and one on the 31st, these treated as just two birds. Two were photographed together at Middlemarsh Farm on Jun 2nd (RWrr, NAL *et al.*). One more was at Frampton Marsh on Jun 4th-9th (IE *et al.*), and yet another there to start autumn passage on Jul 16th-19th (IE *et al.*). A month later, one was at Frampton Marsh on Aug 20th (RSPB), and then a juvenile was at Gib Point on Aug 25th-30th (JPS *et al.*). Finally, one more was at Frampton Marsh on Sep 8th (TC *et al.*). The minimum total for the year would seem to be 15, of which 10 were at Frampton Marsh.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor. Scarce inland.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>The Humber</i>												
WeBS totals	281	384	128	65	144	194	167	118	22	238	201	44
Cleethorpes-Horseshoe Pt	36	60	3	30	-	-	25	40	10	45	30	42
Grainthorpe-Donna Nook	120	256	60	113	270	-	21	60	25	150	80	160
Saltfleet-Mablethorpe	150	120	92	-	344	194	131	68	12	109	109	55
<i>The Wash</i>												
WeBS totals	222	84	45	712	2115	1080	797	5461	387	490	53	19
Gibraltar Point	280	200	45	1580	7000	880	1500	9000	3200	1440	550	220
Wainfleet*	210	78	0	580	1060	0	17	630	0	0	0	0
Friskney*	-	-	-	-	8	-	-	1200	60	-	-	-
Leverton*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	131	-	-	-	-

On the north-east coast, there were first winter period peaks of 130 at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes on Jan 2nd, 144 at Theddlethorpe-Mablethorpe North End on Jan 16th and 220 at Donna Nook on Feb 8th. In the Wash, there were 280 at Gib Point on Jan 24th and 210 at Wainfleet on the following day. Counts were generally much lower in Mar, but passage birds in Apr brought highs of 1580 at Gib Point on the 18th, 580 at Wainfleet on the 19th and 113 at Donna Nook on the 22nd. Four-figure counts were made at Gib Point on six dates in May, the best being 3000 on the 14th and 30th, 4000 on the 21st and 7000 on the 19th. Peaks elsewhere were much lower, namely 240-270 at Donna Nook from May 17th-23rd, 1060 at Wainfleet on the 17th and 344 at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes on the 20th. Gib Point had 750 on Jun 4th, 880 on the 7th and 490 on Jun 8th, then after 40 flew high to the north on the 16th, there were only occasional single figures seen here and elsewhere until the start of autumn passage. The first sizeable return was of 60 birds at Gib Point on Jul 14th, rising to 300 by the 16th, 780 by the 19th and to 1500 on Jul 28th. Lower numbers were recorded at other sites during late Jul, the most being 131 at Saltfleet on the 19th. Gib Point continued to produce the biggest counts by far with four figures noted on 17 dates in the autumn up to Oct 29th. The best records were 9000 on Aug 2nd, 6050 on Aug 4th and 7700 on Aug 15th. Other locations reported much lower counts, usually in double figures, during Aug-Oct, although there were 131 in the Leverton WeBS sector on Aug 15th and 630 at Wainfleet next day. After 470 at Gib Point on Nov 1st, no more than 300 were noted there to the

year end, apart from 550 on Nov 28th. Up to 85 were at Donna Nook during this period with 160 on Dec 31st, while there were up to 55 at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes and up to 42 at Tetney Marsh. One was inland at Middlemarsh Farm, near Skegness, on Jan 27th and single birds penetrated the Humber at Alkborough Flats on May 15th and Aug 20th and at Barton Pits on Aug 11th. Birds further inland in spring were four at Whisby NR on May 18th, and at Covenham Res five on May 24th with two on the 26th, singles on the 27th and 31st, and nine on Jun 2nd. In autumn, two were at Covenham Res on Jul 30th with one on Aug 4th.

A colour-marked bird seen at Donna Nook on its way north in Jun 2012 had been ringed at one of the key West African shorebird sites almost ten years before.

NLA	Adult	10-12-2002	Iwik, Parc National du Banc D'Arguin: 19°52'N 16°18'W	Mauritania
H286610	Alive (colour rings seen)	04-06-2012	Donna Nook: 53°27'N 0°9'E 3.993km NNE	9y 5m 25d

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Very common passage migrant and winter visitor, mainly coastal. Bred to early 20th century and in 1958.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>The Humber</i>												
WeBS totals	5248	5881	2523	759	804	0	410	3017	2089	3399	5957	6122
Alkborough Flats	1530	1480	550	75	28	5	49	54	17	1000	465	619
Winteringham-Read's I	380	280	1324	0	0	0	0	40	0	2200	3000	1500
Barton	80	14	5	0	0	0	12	52	5	0	300	0
Pyewipe	1470	1440	3000	0	490	0	32	223	120	623	290	1340
Cleethorpes-Grainthorpe	736	1300	158	120	1	0	14	610	400	200	1810	1360
Grainthorpe-Somercotes	572	1021	270	739	1200	0	274	2100	1571	1200	2432	1226
Saltfleet-Mablethorpe	1105	1222	150	0	15	2	101	152	100	607	929	1048
<i>The Wash</i>												
WeBS totals	15492	10620	8004	5789	10251	202	2961	14654	5787	6065	1601	5858
Gibraltar Point	1501	5290	2370	3000	4000	100	3013	10400	6410	10439	2600	650
Wainfleet*	3170	1795	1775	325	2200	0	395	2060	0	0	0	0
Friskney*	2600	30	200	30	410	200	15	5000	600	200	100	850
Wrangle*	1280	0	2700	2045	1950	1	601	705	1300	2220	0	3300
Leverton*	1722	813	1323	520	1158	0	256	1354	0	0	0	0
Freiston Shore	702	1200	2000	400	180	1	605	852	850	0	200	1131
Witham*	350	1000	50	900	0	1	30	200	800	0	50	0
Frampton Marsh	1322	1355	600	200	600	40	63	100	35	5	43	200
Welland	500	150	30	670	1500	0	220	295	125	900	176	0
Holbeach*	0	0	360	300	0	0	0	55	150	0	0	0
Dawsmere*	0	600	0	0	0	0	0	0	800	300	0	0
Gedney*	3500	910	0	440	0	0	0	15	7	0	0	0
Terrington*	368	114	421	80	0	0	0	89	0	2	0	0

The table includes most counts of 300 or more, but there were also up to 320 on fields at Garthorpe in Jan-Feb, 300 in the Benington sector of The Wash in Jan and up to 730 at Killingholme Marshes in May. Compared to 2014, numbers on the Humber were higher (perhaps partly due to better counting) while those on The Wash were a little down. Most of the highest single counts came from Gib Point in autumn, including the peaks of 10400 on Aug 15th and 10430 on Oct 29th. Numbers in The Wash are of international importance (threshold 13300) while those on the Humber are nationally important (threshold 3500). Small amounts of passage were noted especially at Gib Point, where the peaks were 200 south on May 4th and 169 south on Jul 18th, but the one three-figure count at Barton was 300 west up the Humber on Nov 22nd. A selection of the many ringing recoveries reported this year are shown, including three old ones, showing movements to or from places far to the north or south of birds ringed on The Wash in autumn.

FH	Second-year	30-07-1976	near Pori: 61°31'N 21°33'E (Turku-Pori)	Finland
PT11985	Caught by ringer	31-08-1981	Leverton, Boston: 52°59'N 0°6'E 1,594km SW	5y 1m 1d
	Caught by ringer	08-09-1987	Benington: c. 52°59'N 0°5'E 1,597km SW	11y 1m 9d
SFH	First-year	27-08-1977	Yyteri, Pori: 61°33'N 21°34'E (Turku-Pori)	Finland
P342044	Caught by ringer	22-07-1978	Leverton, Boston: 52°59'N 0°6'E 1,596km SW	0y 10m 25d
	Caught by ringer	10-09-1987	Leverton Outgate: c. 52°59'N 0°7'E 1,596km SW	10y 0m 14d

NOS	First-year	31-08-1978	Saevika, Farsund: 58°4'N 6°36'E (Vest-Agder) Norway
8301335	Caught by ringer	11-09-1987	Wrangle, Boston: 53°1'N 0°8'E 694km SW 9y 0m 11d
BT07011	Adult Male	24-07-2009	Butterwick: 52°57'N 0°5'E
	Caught by ringer	05-05-2015	Cuinabunag, Benbecula: 57°26'N 7°23'W (Western Isles) 687km NW 5y 9m 11d
POL	Adult	24-09-2010	Salinas Do Samouco, Setubal: 38°43'N 9°1'W (Setúbal) Portugal
D42201	Caught by ringer	26-07-2013	Wrangle Tofts: 53°1'N 0°10'E 1,741km NNE 2y 10m 2d

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Rare/scarse passage migrant and winter visitor, mainly coastal.

In another very poor year, there were only three records. They were singles at Barton Pits (Chowder Ness) on Oct 21st, photographed at Frampton Marsh on Nov 18th (the first for the reserve), and flying south at Gib Point on Dec 6th.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Passage migrant, rare/scarse in spring and scarce/fairly common in autumn with rare winter records

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alkborough Flats	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-
Donna Nook	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	3	4	-	-	-
Covenham Res	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	-	-	-
Gibraltar Point	-	-	-	-	3	1	1	3	1	-	-	-
Freiston Shore	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	1	-	-	-
Frampton Marsh	-	-	1	1	11	2	9	8	6	2	1	1

A wintering bird was present at Alkborough Flats during Jan 1st-25th and one was seen at Frampton Marsh on Mar 20th. After a single bird on Apr 24th, there were fairly regular sightings of 1-2 birds at Frampton Marsh from May 6th-Jun 14th with peaks of four on May 30th and 11 on the following day. Gib Point recorded singles on May 10th, 15th and 27th, two on the 29th and three on May 30th, then single birds in Jun on the 4th, the 13th and the 17th. There was also one at Manby Wetlands on May 5th, one at Donna Nook on the 15th and the 17th, plus two on the 18th, one at Killingholme Marshes on May 27th and two at Middlemarsh Farm, near Skegness on Jun 2nd. The first returning bird was at Frampton Marsh on Jul 16th with three there on the 18th and nine on the 19th. One was at Freiston Shore on Jul 18th and one was at Gib Point from the 23rd- 26th. One-three birds were seen regularly at Frampton Marsh during Aug, with 5-6 on several days and eight on the 23rd-24th. One-three birds were noted on at least four dates during the month at each of Alkborough Flats, Covenham Res, Donna Nook, Gib Point and Freiston Shore, while single birds were seen at seven other sites. Frampton Marsh still had 1-3 birds regularly present in Sep until the 29th, plus six on the 3rd and four on the 4th-6th. Up to four were seen at Donna Nook on seven dates to the 23rd and three were at Covenham Res on Sep 21st-24th, one remaining on the 25th. Single birds were present at eight other locations during the month. Later birds were one at Kirkby on Bain GP on Oct 3rd, one at Read's Island on Oct 18th, two at Frampton Marsh on Oct 10th and one on the 11th, and one there on Nov 18th and Dec 31st.

White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis*

Vagrant. **LBRC**

An adult in summer plumage remained at Frampton Marsh from May 29th to Jun 12th (TC, IE *et al.*)

Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Calidris subruficollis*

Vagrant. **LBRC**

An adult was at Middlemarsh Farm (Skegness) on Jun 2nd (NAL *et al.*).

The first for Lincolnshire was shot at North Cotes on 20th September 1906. Twenty-eight more have occurred from 1975 onwards, and from 2006 they have been found every year except 2006, with a maximum of five in 2011. Four can be regarded as spring migrants, between 24th May and 12th June; the others appeared between 14th July and 22nd October.



Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos* juvenile at Bagmoor Floods Sep 13th 2015 © Graham Catley



Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos* juvenile at Bagmoor Floods Sep 13th 2015 © Graham Catley

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

Rare autumn migrant, vagrant in spring. **LBRC**

Four confirmed records was the fewest since 2006. The first, presumably an adult, was at Manby Wetland on Jul 22nd (GW). An adult was at the Humberston Fitties yacht club pools from Aug 8th to Aug 15th (JAS, CA *et al.*). A little later, single juveniles were seen at Alkborough Flats on Sep 4th-5th (ND, GPC) and at Bagmoor Floods on Sep 13th (ND, GPC). It is possible that those two were the same but they are counted as different.

Wilson's Phalarope *Phalaropus tricolor*

Vagrant. **BBRC**

A juvenile was briefly at Frampton Marsh on Sep 8th (EJM, TC). Accepted BBRC (BB 109 p.587).

Of the 13 recorded in Lincolnshire, two have occurred in June, in 1975 and 1987, and the other 11 between mid August and early October, so this year's bird was typical. Most have been singles but two were seen together at Wisbech SF in both 1967 (the first county record) and 1979.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

Rare passage migrant, mainly autumn. **LBRC**

An adult female in summer plumage was at Frampton Marsh on Jun 11th-13th (JB, RHa). Next, two were seen together at Middlemarsh Farm (Skegness) on Jun 20th (MKi). Another adult female in summer plumage was at Freiston Shore on Jun 20th-21st (DNw *et al.*). In autumn, three juveniles were seen, at Gib Point on Aug 23rd (JS *et al.*), at Frampton Marsh on Aug 30th (CJJ, SJ, IPM), and at Frampton Marsh on Sep 8th (RHa, DNw, IE *et al.*). The total of seven is the most recorded in one year in Lincolnshire: there have several times been four in a year but only once five (1966) and never more.

Grey Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius*

Rare passage migrant, mainly autumn, exceptional in winter. **LBRC**

A moulting adult was at Alkborough Flats on Aug 9th (ND, WG *et al.*). This was noteworthy since, of over 140 recorded in the county, only two have been found in Aug previously: at Holbeach Marsh in 1959 and at Barton Pits in 1985. Three more birds were at more usual times of year. One was at Freiston Shore on Oct 21st (TC), a first winter bird flew north at Sutton on Sea on Nov 21st (GPC, ND) and, at the end of the year, one was at Frampton Marsh on Dec 26th-29th (DNw, JB, SK *et al.*).

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Fairly common passage migrant, rare in winter. Bred in 1979.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alkborough Flats	-	-	-	-	2	-	10	10	5	-	-	-
Barton Pits	-	-	-	2	2	-	1	11	4	-	-	-
Donna Nook	-	-	-	2	1	-	2	6	3	-	-	-
Covenham Res	-	-	-	4	6	1	7	48	17	1	-	-
Manby Wetland	-	-	-	1	2	-	1	12	2	-	-	-
Gib Point	-	-	-	1	3	2	10	15	2	3	-	-
Freiston Shore	-	-	-	4	2	-	3	6	2	-	-	-
Boston-Witham Mouth	-	-	-	10	-	-	1	30	4	3	-	-
Frampton Marsh	-	-	-	6	1	2	5	4	10	-	-	1
Kirkby on Bain GP	-	-	1	2	1	-	1	10	3	-	-	-

The table includes all sites attracting 10 or more, including the two RSPB Wash reserves and Boston Haven-Witham Mouth, where there is some overlap. Singles (perhaps the same bird) at Sutton Bridge on Jan 5th and Tydd St Mary's marsh on Jan 18th were typical winter records from the inner Wash. Another was reported on the R Witham between Chapel Hill and Kirkstead on Jan 18th. The first in spring was one at Whisby NR on Apr 14th followed by widespread records over the next few days. Most counts in spring were of 1-5 but there were 10 at Witham Mouth on Apr 26th, six on Frampton Marsh on Apr 27th and six at Covenham Res on May 10th. By the end of May and into early Jun, most reports were of 1-2. After Jun 5th, there was one at Huttoft Bank Pit on Jun 14th, then regular occurrence once more from Jun 27th. Ten at Alkborough Flats on Jul 18th and at Gib Point on Jul 31st were the only double-figure counts that month but they

became more frequent in Aug. The highest totals were c30 at Boston Haven on Aug 7th, 48 and probably more at Covenham Res on Aug 23rd, with 21 there the next day and 19 on both the 25th and 27th. The count of 48 was the highest at Covenham Res since 70 in Aug 1980. There were 17 at Covenham Res on Sep 3rd but no counts anywhere exceeding five after the 5th. Small numbers were seen through to mid Oct, with the last three at Witham Mouth on Oct 21st. Yet again a wintering bird appeared, at Frampton Marsh on Dec 7th-10th.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Fairly common autumn passage migrant, scarce in spring and also as a regular winter visitor.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of sites	7	6	9	15	1	7	26	37	25	15	8	10
Minimum Lincs total	8	8	10	23	1	16	80	135	44	22	10	11
Alkborough Flats	1	-	1	1	-	1	4	10	1	2	1	1
Messingham SQ	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	4	1	-	-	-
Tetney-Grainthorpe	-	-	-	3	-	-	1	2	1	-	-	-
Donna Nook	-	-	-	4	-	-	3	9	1	1	-	-
Middlemarsh Farm (Skegness)	-	-	-	1	-	1	8	8	-	-	-	-
Gib Point	-	-	1	-	1	1	3	5	4	1	1	-
Freiston Shore	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	3	1	-	-	-
Frampton Marsh	1	-	-	3	-	7	12	7	5	2	-	1
Manby Wetland	-	-	-	2	-	-	16	25	1	-	-	-
Whisby NR	-	-	1	1	-	1	1	3	-	-	-	1
Bardney Pits	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	2	3	-	-
RAF Woodhall	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	3	-	-	-
Kirkby on Bain GP	-	-	-	-	-	4	2	10	2	1	1	-
Marston STW	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	5	-	-	2	1

The table above includes all sites recording birds in at least four months and with maxima of three or more. In the first quarter, birds were seen at about 15 localities, all single birds apart from two at Louth/Kedington on three dates, at Wainfleet Common on Jan 4th and Theddlethorpe St Helen on Feb 9th. Spring passage began in early Apr but was poor, with maximum counts of three at Tetney Marsh and Frampton Marsh on Apr 9th, and four at Donna Nook on Apr 11th with three there on the 12th-13th. After one at Frampton Marsh on Apr 25th, there was one at Gib Point on May 13th, but then none until two at Frampton Marsh on Jun 15th and one at Alkborough Flats on Jun 16th. The first double-figure count was 16 at Manby Wetland on Jul 4th, and this was the site that provided the highest totals of any this year. Subsequent counts there included 16 on Jul 19th, 14 on Jul 24th and 25 on Aug 24th. Elsewhere counts of 10 or more were 11 at Frampton Marsh on Jul 13th, 12 there on the 23rd, 10 at Kirkby on Bain GP on Aug 12th and 10 at Alkborough Flats on Aug 30th. Numbers generally had fallen away from mid Aug, and while there were widespread reports through Sep and the first half of Oct, none exceeded five birds. Birds were reported from 15 sites during Nov-Dec, including twos at Woodhall Spa on Nov 20th, Marston STW on Nov 25th and West Ashby Pits on five dates in Dec.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

Passage migrant, rare/scarce in spring but fairly common in autumn. Scarce but regular in winter.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alkborough Flats	10	10	9	16	11	6	4	22	25	20	7	8
Gibraltar Point	-	-	-	2	2	2	2	8	7	5	3	1
Frampton Marsh	3	3	4	4	3	5	11	6	7	6	6	4
Boatmere Scrape, Gedney	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	8	4	-	-

At Alkborough Flats, there were up to ten birds wintering until Mar 2nd, thereafter up to three were present until nine from Mar 30th to Apr 10th. The only other birds during this period were singles at Read's Island/South Ferriby on Jan 19th and Mar 10th, with two there on Feb 8th, one at Donna Nook from Mar 15th-20th and one at Frampton Marsh from Jan 13th with three on Jan 31st-Feb 1st and in Mar a peak of four on the 20th. Spring passage was marked at Alkborough Flats with regular sightings of up to six birds during Apr and May and peaks of 16 on Apr 23rd-24th and 11 on May 2nd. At Frampton Marsh there were 1-4 birds regularly during Apr 1st-May 5th, then single birds until May 12th, while elsewhere there was one at Manby Wetland and two at Gib Point on Apr 11th and single birds at Wainfleet on Apr 19th, Saltfleetby St Clement on Apr 24th, and Grainthorpe Marsh on Apr 27th and May 1st. Later spring migrants were 1-2 birds

regularly at Gib Point during May 14th-Jun 15th and 1-2 at Saltfleet-Theddlethorpe from Jun 12th-14th. One was at Middlemarsh Farm, Skegness on Jun 20th, and returning birds in the last week of June were 4-6 birds at Alkborough Flats, 1-2 at Gib Point and up to 5 at Frampton Marsh. At Alkborough Flats there were 1-2 throughout July with four on 31st rising to 11 by Aug 5th and to 22 by Aug 13th. Regular double figure counts ensued here and notable peaks were of 20 on Aug 23rd and Oct 6th and 25 on Sep 7th. Lower counts of up to eight birds were regular there in Nov and Dec. Up to 11 were present at Frampton Marsh in Jul, then only 1-2 birds during Aug apart from six on the 30th-31st, but 6-7 were noted throughout Sep. Counts of 1-2 there were normal again during Oct, then 1-4 were recorded to the end of the year with up to six on Oct 31st-Nov 3rd, Nov 8th and Nov 18th. There were also 1-3 on a few dates during Aug-Dec at Freiston Shore. The other main site of Gib Point had 5-8 birds from Jul to the first week of Oct, thereafter there were 1-2 birds regularly with three on Nov 7th. Mainly low counts were experienced at other sites during the autumn, although eight were at Boston Haven on Jul 8th. One was at Grainthorpe Marsh on Jul 21st, while in Aug there were single birds at Messingham SQ on the 10th-11th, Donna Nook on the 12th, Willow Tree Fen on the 14th and Witham WeBS sector on the 16th, then two birds at Cleethorpes on the 24th, one at Tetney Marsh on the 29th and four at Boston Haven on the 30th. Boatmere Scrape produced counts of 1-4 birds on six dates between Sep 1st and Oct 26th plus a peak of eight on Sep 30th. Elsewhere there were two at Boston Haven on Sep 2nd and Dec 28th and one there on Sep 23rd, one at Tetney Marsh on four dates between Sep 11th and the 29th, and one there on Nov 1st, one at Donna Nook on Sep 17th, two at Holbeach Marsh on Sep 25th and two at Toft Newton Res on Sep 26th.



Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus* Grainthorpe Marsh May 25th 2015 © Colin Smale

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Passage migrant, fairly scarce in spring, fairly common in autumn. Rare in winter.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>Coast & estuaries</i>												
Grainthorpe-Somercotes	-	1	1	6	6	1	5	50	9	2	1	-
Gibraltar Point	-	-	-	3	4	2	29	32	21	7	3	1
Freiston Shore	-	-	-	1	1	-	20	40	3	1	1	-
Frampton Marsh	-	-	1	3	5	6	5	6	15	4	2	3
Boatmere Scrape	-	-	-	-	-	-	77	56	41	9	-	-
<i>Inland</i>												
Manby Flashes	-	-	-	-	2	2	2	3	-	1	-	-

The table includes all sites holding 15 or more, with a few exceptions, and the inland site with most records. In Jan-Mar, the regular wintering adult was seen a few times in the South Ferriby area. There were also early records at Donna Nook on four dates during Feb 20th-Mar 5th, at Frampton Marsh on Mar 10th and 31st, and at Friskney Marsh on Mar 22nd. More occurred from early Apr but spring numbers were low, peaks being six at Donna Nook on Apr 21st, 5-6 at Grainthorpe Marsh on Apr 27th and May 1st, and five at Frampton Marsh on May 15th and

21st. Numbers fell away in early Jun but picked up again by the end of the month. A notable early peak was 20 at the Freiston Shore reservoir on Jul 4th. As in 2014, Boatmere Scrape near Gedney Drove End proved a major attraction, with monthly peaks of 77 on Jul 19th, 56 on Aug 3rd and 41 on Sep 1st all exceeding numbers at other sites in those months. Peaks elsewhere included 40 at Freiston Shore on Aug 1st, 32 at Gib Point on Aug 7th and 50 at Donna Nook on Aug 24th. After smaller numbers in much of early Sep, there were 21 at Gib Point on the 15th and 28 at Boatmere Scrape on the 16th, but then only single-figures counts though records continued to be frequent and widespread along the coast and in the estuaries until early Nov. Later records were one at Donna Nook on Nov 12th, two at Frampton Marsh on Nov 27th, and singles at Wainfleet common on Dec 2th, Willow Tree Fen on Dec 14th, Gib Point on Dec 19th and Read's Island on Dec 27th. Inland records were scarce throughout the year and consisted of 1-2 birds apart from three at Manby Wetland on Aug 14th.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Passage migrant, usually rare in spring and scarce in autumn.

An early bird was at Manby Wetland from Apr 10th-14th and one was there from the 24th-26th. Frampton Marsh also recorded one on Apr 24th and one on the 30th. Light passage during May involved singles at Gib Point on the 1st and 11th, singles at Manby Wetland on the 2nd-4th and 16th-17th, one at Frampton Marsh on the 2nd-5th with additional singles on the 4th, 13th and 19th, one at Fiskerton Fen Scrapes on the 4th, two at Saltfleetby St Clement on the 6th, and two at Saltfleet Haven on the 24th-25th. The first returning birds were four at Manby Wetland and one at Alkborough Flats on Jun 29th followed by one at Frampton Marsh next day. Only a few passed through during Jul with single birds on most days at Frampton Marsh to the 21st and two there on the 22nd, one at Manby Wetland on four dates between the 7th and the 24th with two on the 22nd, two at Freiston Shore on the 19th and one next day, one at Gib Point on the 21st and one at Whisby NR on the 24th. Passage was more pronounced in Aug when there were regularly 1-2 birds at Frampton Marsh rising to four on the 17th, seven by the 20th and six on the 22nd, then 1-4 to the end of the month. Single birds were seen on nine days at Manby Wetland with four on the 20th and two on the 29th, while Alkborough Flats had occasional single birds until 2-3 from the 24th-30th. Similarly, Gib Point had one on eight days between the 2nd and the 24th and 2-4 birds from 25th-31st. Good counts were also made at Middlemarsh Farm, near Skegness, hence five on the 19th-20th, six on the 22nd and 27th and three on the 30th. Elsewhere in Aug, two were at Tetney Marsh on the 6th and one there on the 12th-14th, and singles at Donna Nook on the 7th, 21st and 27th, Fiskerton Fen on the 7th, Marston STW on the 14th-15th, Kirkby on Bain GP on the 23rd, Killingholme Haven Pits and Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes on the 28th and East Halton Skitter on the 30th. Single birds were present at Gib Point on six dates in Sep until the 17th, two were at Boston Haven on the 2nd and there was one at Alkborough Flats from the 5th-7th which indulged in brief song-flight and display. One was at Middlemarsh Farm, near



Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* Frampton Marsh Sep 20th 2015 © Neil Smith

Skegness, on Sep 11th and one was at Killingholme Haven Pits on the 12th. After five at Frampton Marsh on Sep 2nd and 1-4 during the 3rd-12th, only 1-2 birds remained there until the last of the year on Sep 26th.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Relatively small numbers occur inland where it is a scarce breeder.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>The Humber</i>												
WeBS totals	1110	1493	756	217	52	40	356	866	956	617	935	1201
Alkborough Flats	101	52	64	120	4	11	51	96	78	73	66	95
Read's Island-South Ferriby	12	31	63	21	1	-	10	147	130	120	8	42
Barrow-Goxhill	93	121	3	57	-	-	-	-	27	57	9	94
Killingholme-Immingham	23	56	177	-	-	-	-	155	201	40	-	43
Pyewipe	70	439	-	-	-	-	-	81	203	131	67	212
Cleethorpes-Grainthorpe	130	275	142	46	35	35	36	83	180	80	242	147
Grainthorpe-Somercotes	523	311	300	260	16	3	134	197	212	220	405	240
Saltfleet-Mablethorpe	244	223	127	22	8	8	152	115	75	115	176	324

<i>The Wash</i>												
WeBS totals	2738	2388	2521	1206	349	290	1296	2306	2725	806	666	1701
Gibraltar Point	251	220	200	500	32	97	403	602	405	300	339	350
Wainfleet*	205	173	103	193	49	-	30	19	-	-	-	-
Friskney*	730	420	860	86	109	66	40	6	21	32	80	125
Wrangle*	119	-	197	102	90	129	109	14	74	116	-	188
Leverton*	251	283	142	86	26	-	25	18	-	-	-	-
Benington*	170	25	30	25	15	-	15	8	3	-	20	-
Freiston Shore	100	257	54	122	1	57	117	1150	1016	7	200	1136
Witham*	450	150	100	10	-	-	53	12	300	4	30	6
Frampton Marsh	220	120	161	169	80	228	100	7	100	21	40	75
Welland*	-	254	321	26	8	6	401	880	839	350	290	1
Dawsmere*	-	90	29	4	3	-	-	-	40	30	-	28
Gedney	72	196	-	73	-	3	63	5	14	78	-	-
Terrington*	320	312	396	71	-	-	37	85	-	144	-	-

Inland

Covenham Res	5	13	2	8	1	1	-	1	7	3	4	4
Kirkby-on-Bain GP	3	1	7	7	1	1	-	-	-	4	14	2
Nocton Fen	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Chapel Hill-Kirkstead	-	13	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-

The table shows all inland sites with 10 or more and all coastal sites with 100 or more. The majority of high counts came from The Wash, and especially from Freiston Shore in autumn, where the peaks were 1150 on Aug 3rd, 1100 on Aug 17th, and 1000 on Aug 28th and Sep 13th. The highest counts at Gib Point were 500 on Apr 24th and 602 on Aug 4th. The largest total on the Humber was a roost count of 439 at Pyewipe on Feb 8th. Breeding estimates included two unsuccessful pairs at Alkborough Flats, one pair at Read's Island, 58 pairs (70 in 2014) at Tetney Marsh, 11 pairs (36) at Freiston Shore, 114 pairs (223) at Frampton Marsh. Inland breeding has almost completely ceased in the county, making the sharp falls in estuarine populations at Tetney and in The Wash particularly worrying. Three ringing recoveries are shown, all historic but only reported this year, including two fairly old ones (the BTO longevity record is 20 years 1 month) and the longest-distance of the batch.

DR32257	Adult	31-07-1976	Friskney, near Wainfleet: 53°3'N 0°15'E
	Caught by ringer	10-08-1987	Friskney New Marsh: c. 53°3'N 0°13'E 3km 11y 0m 10d
	Long dead	05-03-1991	Titchwell: 52°57'N 0°36'E (Norfolk) 26km ESE 14y 7m 2d
DR45190	Adult	16-08-1977	Friskney, near Wainfleet: 53°3'N 0°15'E
	Caught by ringer	10-08-1987	Friskney New Marsh: c. 53°3'N 0°13'E 3km 9y 11m 25d
	Dead (cold weather)	03-03-1991	Friskney: 53°2'N 0°13'E 3km 13y 6m 15d
DN57676	Second-year	18-05-1985	Rubha Ardvule, South Uist: 57°13'N 7°27'W (Western Isles)
	Caught by ringer	10-08-1987	Friskney New Marsh: c. 53°3'N 0°13'E 672km SE 2y 2m 23d

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Probably much under-recorded.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of sites	7	5	8	5	1	3	7	6	5
Minimum Lincs total	14	8	18	8	1	3	8	9	7

Birds were seen at similar numbers of sites as last year but with higher numbers in the first half but lower numbers in the second half of the year. Counts vary depending to a large extent on the amount of searching for them, something which, as noted last year, can cause disturbance to Jack Snipe and wildlife in general and so should be kept to a minimum. It is possible to list all counts of three or more, which began with four at Alkborough Flats on Jan 1st, with three there on the 2nd. There were three at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Jan 21st with four there on Feb 7th. The highest total was five at Winthorpe, near Skegness, on Mar 20th. Other spring counts were three at Pyewipe on Mar 23rd and three at Gib Point on Mar 24th and Apr 9th was the most recorded there. The last of spring were two at Donna Nook on Apr 25th with one there on the 27th and one on May 3rd. The first of autumn was one at Frampton Marsh on Sep 26th. The only record of more than two at the end of the year was three at Frampton Marsh on Nov 2nd.



Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus* Gib Point Oct 17th 2015 © Russell Hayes

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Fairly common resident in restricted habitat, passage migrant and winter visitor.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gib Point 2015	6	4	9	2	-	-	-	-	1	3	11	4
Gib Point 2014	10	8	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	4	6	3
Gib Point 2013	25	10	15	67	-	-	-	-	-	4	8	7
Gib Point 2012	4	44	10	1	-	-	-	-	-	7	5	53
Gib Point 2011	21	14	9	1	-	-	-	-	-	3	12	6

This was a year in which no especially high counts were made, and as noted last year, records of birds flushed by the beating lines on shooting estates would give a more accurate picture of winter visitors. The majority of the largest came from Gib Point, as summarised in the table and including peaks of nine on Mar 9th and 11 on Nov 20th. The larger totals elsewhere were six at Belchford on Jan 17th, four at Scamblesby on Feb 16th, and six at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes on Oct 16th with five there on the 17th. In the breeding season, one bird was noted in Twyford Wood on May 10th, and up to three at Willingham Woods in Jun. At Laughton Forest, in the course of a

full survey, 14 roding males were located, the same number as in 2012, but due to the difficulty of surveying this species, the actual population could have been higher or lower. The recovery below concerns a bird ringed in north Wales, either wintering there or perhaps in Ireland, on its way back to continental breeding grounds.

EY56736 First-year 17-12-2014 Newborough Warren: 53°8'N 4°22'W (Isle of Anglesey)
 Freshly dead (bird of prey) 23-03-2015 Grimsby: 53°33'N 0°4'W 289km E 0y 3m 6d

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Rare breeder, common passage migrant and winter visitor.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alkborough Flats	32	46	12	110	1	-	4	20	69	45	38	46
Barton Pits	11	21	9	3	-	-	-	-	12	31	7	6
Tetney Marsh	29	1	4	1	-	-	1	8	1	5	5	-
Donna Nook	3	2	8	9	1	-	1	1	6	3	2	2
Saltfleet-Theddlethorpe	43	45	18	15	1	-	-	3	2	14	34	24
Manby Wetland	10	-	3	14	6	-	10	15	26	26	28	-
Gibraltar Point	4	14	12	10	2	-	9	10	21	26	7	13
Freiston Shore	3	7	3	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	3	-
Frampton Marsh	16	15	2	3	1	2	10	10	30	6	27	1
Laughton Forest	10	-	28	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	30	77
Trent Port (Marton)	17	18	42	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	6	16
Whisby NR	11	9	7	8	-	1	1	2	3	12	14	24
Woodhall Spa Airfield	-	-	-	2	2	-	1	-	11	-	-	56
Baston Fen	4	6	42	14	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-
Willow Tree Fen	4	-	-	3	-	-	-	21	1	2	-	2

The table includes most sites recording counts of 20 or more, but there were also 21 at Bonby Carrs in Feb, 40 at Winthorpe in Mar, 22 at Fiskerton Fen in Aug, and 40 at Deeping Lakes NR in Oct. Even though it is declining, the snipe is Britain's most widespread wintering wader, being less habitat-restricted than most, and it is interesting to note during the year that over 1200 records came from over 90 locations. Many sites held only small numbers, of course. Alkborough Flats is becoming established as the area with the highest counts, and this year they reached 110 on Apr 13th. The largest totals elsewhere were 77 at Laughton Forest on Dec 7th and 50 at Woodhall Spa Airfield on Dec 17th. In lowland Britain, breeding Snipe have been in severe decline for many years. Evidence from Lincolnshire backs this up, and there were only three records this year. Possible breeding activity, presumably drumming though this was not always stated, was noted at Blackmoor Bridge on Mar 29th, Messingham SQ on Apr 4th and Frampton Marsh in Apr.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Generally scarce but exceptionally fairly common autumn passage migrant. Rare in winter and spring. Exceptional inland.

After the large numbers of Nov-Dec 2014, it was back to normal this year. There were three records early in the year, all at Gib Point and most or all moving south: two immatures on Jan 11th, five juveniles on Jan 31st and four juveniles on Feb 1st. The start of autumn passage was an adult north at Gib Point on Jul 30th. In Aug, an adult flew south at Gib Point on the 14th, then an adult and an immature (possibly juvenile) were seen there on the 19th. Two light morph adults then roosted, with Arctic Skuas, on the beach on the 20th-21st and single adults, perhaps the same, were seen each day during the 22nd-25th. A first summer bird and an adult were seen, also at Gib Point, on Aug 26th. On Sep 5th, a juvenile flew north at Gib Point, and further singles were at Gib Point on Sep 7th and 12th, juvenile and sub-adult respectively. One was at Witham Mouth on Sep 20th, followed by singles at Gib Point on the 21st, and 24th. The first more substantial movement was 11 juveniles south at Gib Point on Sep 30th. A juvenile flew north there on Oct 11th, and three were seen off Crook Bank, Theddlethorpe, on Oct 13th, with three off Huttoft Bank on Oct 14th. One was seen at Donna Nook, a juvenile flew north at Gib Point on Oct 17th, and one was seen at Tetney Marsh on Oct 25th. The largest single count of the year was 19 off Huttoft Bank on Nov 15th, but Nov 21st saw more widespread sightings: seven at Mablethorpe, six at Sutton on Sea, 12 at Huttoft Bank and 16 (including 10 pale adults) south at Gib Point, with some overlap likely. And that was it for the year.



Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus* (left) and Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus* (right)
The Wash Sep 20th 2015 © Steve Keightley

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Fairly common/common autumn passage migrant. Scarce in spring, and rare in winter and inland.

One was seen flying east down the Humber at Alkborough Flats on Apr 25th, and one flew north at Gib Point on Apr 26th. The only records in May were one at Donna Nook on the 10th and two there on the 12th, and two offshore at Gib Point on Jun 15th were the only birds reported that month. In Jul, there was one at Donna Nook on the 6th and three there on the 26th, but at Gib Point birds were seen throughout the month and especially in the second half, when counts included 11 on the 25th, 16 on the 27th and 11 on the 28th. The dominance of Gib Point continued throughout Aug, the peaks there being 34 on the 13th, 26 on the 20th and 21 on the 21st, but there were 1-5 on a few dates at other coastal locations, plus on the 23rd six at Freiston Shore, four at Frampton Marsh and nine at Barton upon Humber. Continuing movement was especially evident during Sep 4th-7th, including 53, mostly south, at Gib Point and 15 at Huttoft Bank on the 4th, 13 at Witham Mouth and 11 at Chapel Point on the 5th and 33, mostly north, at Gib Point on the 7th. Later in the month, there were 26 at Gib Point on the 16th and 27 south on the 27th. Other sightings in Sep, away from Gib Point, along the coast and in The Wash were in low single figures. In Oct, 1-4 were seen at Gib Point on a few dates, and 11 south on the 13th, with two at Freiston Shore on the 13th and singles at Saltfleet and Huttoft Bank on the 14th. The Nov records were one at Crook Bank, Theddlethorpe, on the 18th, and a pale morph adult at Gib Point on the 21st-23rd.

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*

Rare/scarce passage migrant, Jul-Nov. Exceptional inland. **LBRC**

There were nine records this year, amounting to up to 16 individual birds, though some duplication may have been involved in early Sep. The first was an adult that flew north at Gib Point on Aug 13th (KMW). Most were seen on Sep 4th-5th. On the 4th, four juveniles flew south at Gib Point (NAL, KMW). On the 5th, two juveniles (dark and intermediate morphs) were at Gib Point (KMW, AHa) and during early morning one flew north at Chapel Point (DMJ) and two (adult and dark morph juvenile) flew north at Mablethorpe (CA, JFF), while three were seen at Witham Mouth (PS). Much later, an adult flew south at Sutton on Sea on Nov 21st (GPC, ND, DHur).

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

Fairly common autumn passage migrant, but rare in winter and spring. Rare inland.

Singles were seen each day during Jan 9th-12th at Gib Point, with one also at Huttoft Bank on the 12th. Two flew south at Gib Point on Jan 31st and four were seen there on Feb 1st. Summer records were singles south at Gib Point on Jun 8th and Jul 16th. The first in autumn were singles at Donna Nook on Aug 22nd and Witham Mouth on Aug 29th. After 1-2 at Donna Nook and Witham Mouth on Sep 2nd-3rd, more were seen along with other skuas during the 4th-5th. These comprised five at Gib Point and two at Huttoft Bank on the 4th and 12 at Witham Mouth and three at Gib Point on the 5th. During the rest of Sep, there were occasional records of 1-2 at various places between Donna Nook and Freiston Shore. Sightings continued to be occasional through Oct but included 11 south at Gib Point on the 7th, five there on the 11th, 17 at Huttoft Bank on the 13th and five at Donna Nook on the 17th. There were nine at Huttoft Bank on Nov

15th but more concentrated movement was noted on Nov 21st-22nd. In strong northerlies on the 21st, five were seen at Mablethorpe, 12 at Sutton on Sea, 24 at Huttoft Bank and 17 at Gib Point, most of those moving south, and also 14 at Witham Mouth. A few remaining on the 22nd were two at Crook Bank, Theddlethorpe, and seven at Gib Point. The only later records were singles at Gib Point on Nov 23rd and Crook Bank, Theddlethorpe, on Dec 29th.

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

Rare passage migrant, but can occur in any month. Exceptional inland. **LBRC**

One at Witham Mouth on Feb 6th (ABe, JB) and one at Freiston Shore on Apr 18th (PS) were the only records this year.

Razorbill *Alca torda*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor, but can occur in any month. Exceptional inland.

There was one at Tetney Marsh on Mar 3rd. Single birds were seen flying north at Gib Point on May 2nd and 7th, then 1-5 birds flew north past there on four dates to May 21st, plus two birds on Jun 15th. One was at Donna Nook on Jul 27th. Two birds at Gib Point on Aug 6th were followed by records of single birds on Sep 7th and 15th, on Oct 17th and on four days in Dec to the 30th. One was at Freiston Shore on Dec 31st.

Little Auk *Alle alle*

Scarce/common passage migrant and winter visitor.

One at Witham Mouth on Feb 5th was the only record in the early part of the year. After five birds were seen at Huttoft Bank/Car Terrace on Nov 15th, all of the other sightings followed northerly storms in late Nov. Seawatching on the 21st produced eight north at Mablethorpe, 15 at Sutton-on-Sea, seven at Huttoft Bank/Car Terrace, 15 at Gib Point and three at Witham Mouth. Records in the calmer weather of the 22nd were two birds at Grimsby, eight at Trusthorpe, three at Huttoft, six at Anderby Creek, eight at Gib Point and single birds on the Humber at Barton, at Donna Nook and Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes. One was found dead on the River Witham at Lincoln on Nov 28th.

Common Guillemot *Uria aalge*

Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor but can occur in any month. Rare inland.

Single birds at Gib Point on Jan 9th, Moggs Eye on Jan 27th and Donna Nook on Feb 8th were the only records in the early months. There were ten records of 1-4 birds at Gib Point in May and Jun, plus six north and 12 south there on May 14th. Occasional birds were noted in Jul and Aug between Saltfleet and Gib Point, becoming more frequent between Tetney Marsh and The Wash from early Sep onwards. Most records involved single figures and Gib Point still provided the bulk of them. The highest counts, all in Oct, were 68 at Gib Point on the 10th, 54 there on the 11th, 59 at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes on the 13th and 88 at Huttoft Bank/Car Terrace on the 14th. One-four birds, though occasionally up to nine, were seen at several sites in Nov and Dec.

Unidentified auks, at the usual seawatching sites and often at distance were presumed to be mostly Common Guillemots. Spring birds were mainly in single figures during May and early Jun with peaks of 23 at Gib Point on May 19th and 26 on May 31st. Small numbers up to 20 were noted in autumn, and the highest counts, all at Gib Point, were 58 north on Oct 11th, 165 north on Oct 14th and 58 south on Nov 18th.

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

Fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant. Occasional inland. **RBBP**

Peak monthly counts	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Humberston-Grainthorpe	-	-	5	-	4	-
Grainthorpe-Donna Nook	-	2	-	-	11	-
Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe	-	3	-	3	-	-
Gibraltar Point	35	67	100	250	40	2
Freiston Shore	5	-	-	-	1	7

The first of spring were four north at Gib Point on Apr 18th and 16 north on Apr 19th. The well monitored and protected Gib Point breeding colony held 32 pairs which reared 30 young to fledging, the second or third most productive year recorded. No breeding was reported from

elsewhere. The peak at Gib Point was 250 “on The Wash at dawn” on Jul 22nd but a perhaps more accurate count of birds at an evening high tide roost on the beach of 228 was made on Jul 15th. These counts are the highest in the last ten years, the previous best being 223 at Gib Point in Aug 2010. Inland, there were singles at Thurlby Pit, Bassingham, on May 9th-10th, Manby Wetland on May 18th and one at Covenham Res on May 31st, identified as a first summer. Later on there was one at Deeping Lakes on Aug 14th. On the inner Humber there was one at Alkborough Flats on Jun 5th. The inner Wash was thin on reports with four at Terrington on Aug 17th and seven at Freiston Shore on Sep 2nd. The last bird of the year was at Freiston Shore on Sep 19th. A couple of ringing recoveries are shown, demonstrating interchange between east coast colonies.

V50314	Nestling	12-07-2006	Gibraltar Point, Skegness: c. 53°5'N 0°18'E
	Freshly dead	23-05-2015	Scolt Head Island: 52°58'N 0°39'E (Norfolk) 26km ESE 8y 10m 11d
NW32604	Nestling	11-07-2014	Crimdon Park, near Hartlepool: 54°43'N 1°15'W (Durham)
	Alive (colour rings seen)	15-07-2015	Gibraltar Point: 53°5'N 0°18'E 207km SSE 1y 0m 4d

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*

Vagrant. **LBRC**

One was on the ground at the end of Millennium Ridge, Gib Point, for about 30 minutes before flying off slowly south on May 30th (RDn, KMW). Accepted BBRC (BB 109 p.592).

The first for Lincolnshire was shot at Caythorpe on 23rd May 1853 but the next was not until 1971. Two more followed in the 1970s, then four in the 1980s, one in 1992 and singles in 2002, 2009 and this year, giving a total of 12. Five have been in May but dates of occurrence are otherwise fairly well spread between the extremes of 5th May in 1988 and 5th September in 1971.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

Fairly common passage migrant from spring to autumn. **RBBP**. *Chlidonias niger surinamensis* (American Black Tern) Vagrant. **BBRC**

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Barton Pits	-	-	-	-	4	-	-
Cleethorpes-Horseshoe Point	-	-	-	-	22	1	-
Donna Nook	-	-	-	-	10	6	-
Covenham Reservoir	4	-	-	-	2	-	4
Huttoft Bank-Chapel Point	-	-	-	-	14	2	-
Gibraltar Point	-	-	-	1	23	2	-
Freiston Shore/Witham Mouth	-	-	-	-	13	2	-
Frampton Marsh	1	-	1	-	1	1	-
Kirkby on Bain GP	-	-	-	-	30	-	-
Baston-Langtoft Pits	-	-	-	-	6	-	-
Number of sites	2	-	1	1	13	9	-
Minimum Lincs total	5	-	1	1	139	17	-

Records came from 16 sites and on 35 dates. The first bird of the year was at Covenham Reservoir on Apr 17th with the next being a week later when there were four at Covenham Res and one at Frampton Marsh. A poor spring passage was highlighted, as it was Jun 11th before another bird was present, also at Frampton Marsh. Autumn passage began with single birds on Jul 21st and 28th, Aug 4th, 7th and 14th, all at Gib Point. Also on the 14th there was one at North Hykeham Pits, and there were ten north at Donna Nook on the 15th. Good numbers were counted at several sites throughout the rest of August with c30 being the highest, at Kirkby on Bain GP on Aug 23rd. Other high counts were 22 at Tetney Marsh on Aug 20th and 22 at Gib Point on Aug 21st. Numbers dropped off quickly at the end of Aug, and there was just a handful of records during Sep with the last sighting being of a single bird at Freiston Shore on Sep 21st.

White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*

Vagrant. **LBRC**

There were two sightings during the year. The first was a well-watched adult at Frampton Marsh on Jul 5th-7th (JB, DNw, SK *et al.*). The second bird, which was a juvenile, was at Gib Point on Sep 9th (KMW, RDn, NAL). These counts constitute the 38th and 39th records (40 individuals) for the county.



White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus* Frampton Marsh Jul 5th 2015 © Neil Smith

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

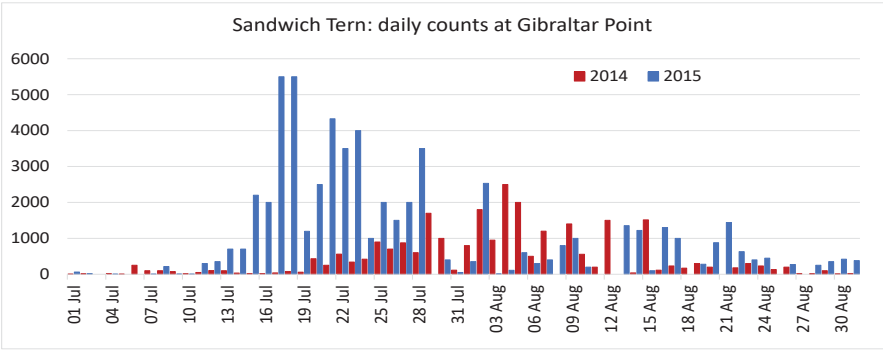
Passage migrant, scarce in spring but common in autumn. Rare inland. Occasional pairs in summer.

Peak monthly counts	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
<i>The Humber & coast</i>							
WeBS totals	-	-	19	205	598	33	-
Cleethorpes-Tetney	-	-	-	7	105	2	-
Horseshoe Point-Donna Nook	3	2	5	118	215	130	-
Saltfleet-Mablethorpe	-	-	18	124	406	29	-
Mablethorpe-Anderby	-	-	4	30	60	500	1
<i>The Wash</i>							
WeBS totals	-	-	19	205	598	33	-
Gibraltar Point	91	176	74	5500	2530	234	13
Wainfleet-Butterwick*	-	-	-	15	193	45	-
Freiston Shore/Witham Mouth	-	4	4	5	38	100	3
Frampton Marsh	1	-	7	-	10	-	-

The first bird of the year was seen at Frampton Marsh on Apr 11th and this was followed by three the following day at Gib Point. Spring passage was slow in April with nine records from just three locations, and a peak of 91 north on the 26th. Passage continued slowly in May, the best counts being 118 on the 9th and 176 on the 12th at Gib Point. In fact all twenty counts of five and above during May came from Gib Point. Sightings increased slowly during June, and more dramatically from Jul 8th with large numbers of adult and juvenile birds moving south or roosting. During Jul, twenty-seven counts totalled 100 or more with all but two being from Gib Point. Fifteen of these counts amounted to 1000 or more, and there were another eight such counts during Aug as numbers only gradually declined. The highest counts of all, from Gib Point, were 5500 on both Jul 17th and 18th. The upper chart below shows counts at Gib Point during autumn passage, illustrating the larger totals and earlier start to the main passage period in 2015 compared to 2014. The day-to-day fluctuations could just be a lack of eyes in the right place at the right time. Numbers did drop away in Sep, but several good counts occurred with the highest being 500 at Mablethorpe on the 5th. Birds continued to be seen during Oct, the last of these being one at Gib Point on the 18th. However, the last bird of the year was one flying slowly south at Gib Point on the very late date of Dec 18th. Inland birds occurred on the Witham between Chapel Hill and Kirkstead with one on May 18th and two on Jun 15th. One was also spotted flying over the golf course at Market Rasen on Jul 12th.

There have been several December records before, including 8th December 1959 and 9th December 2013 (incorrectly published as 4th December in the 2013 report), and the latest was at Witham Mouth on 30th December 2000. There has also been one January record, also at Witham Mouth, on 19th January 2012. There has been a trend recently for the last dates to be later than previously, as shown by the lower of the charts below. Excluding the January bird, the averages for three 12-year periods have been:

	1980-1991	1992-2003	2004-2015
First date	6th Apr	12th Apr	9th Apr
Last date	25th Oct	24th Oct	17th Nov

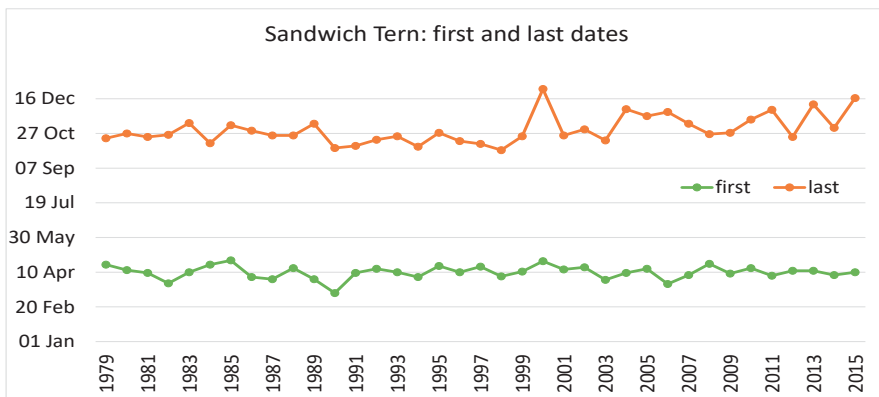




Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* Frampton Marsh May 11th 2015 © Neil Smith



Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* Covenham Res Aug 16th 2015 © John Clarkson



Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Fairly common summer visitor and common passage migrant. Most breeding colonies are now inland.

Peak monthly counts	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
<i>The Humber & coast</i>							
WeBS totals	-	2	2	17	503	-	-
Barton area (Chowder-New Holland)	14	20	18	4	45	-	-
Cleethorpes-Horseshoe Point	-	-	-	45	596	31	-
Horseshoe Point-Donna Nook	-	13	-	9	2700	50	-
Saltfleet-Mablethorpe	-	-	-	22	61	12	-
Huttoft-Anderby	-	2	1	-	80	-	-
<i>The Wash</i>							
WeBS totals	-	-	33	413	236	51	-
Gibraltar Point	11	41	6	152	415	20	-
Wrangle*	-	-	-	35	110	6	-
Freiston Shore & Witham Mouth	20	90	42	520	400	175	-
Frampton Marsh	9	75	86	5	1	-	-
<i>Inland</i>							
Messingham SQ	1	5	10	9	5	2	-
North Hykeham Pits	3	13	8	-	3	-	-
Whisby NR	7	17	9	24	5	-	-
Kirkby on Bain GP	25	50	60	75	25	-	-
Tattershall Lakes	3	2	10	3	1	-	-
Four Mile Bar-Borough Fen	-	1	13	4	-	-	-
Deeping Lakes	12	51	45	14	2	-	-

The first bird of the year was at Toft Newton Res on Apr 10th. Small numbers began to arrive throughout the county during the rest of the month, with the highest counts being 20 at Witham Mouth on the 26th and 25 at Kirkby on Bain GP on the 30th. Twelve counts of 20 or over occurred during May with the best being 90 at Freiston Shore on the 5th, and the highest during Jun was 60 at Kirkby on Bain GP on the 29th. Although details on breeding were in some cases sketchy, it was confirmed at Messingham SQ, Barton Pits, Boultham Mere, Whisby NR, Kirkby on Bain GP, Middlemarsh Farm, Gib Point, the Wrangle sector of the Wash, Freiston Shore, Frampton Marsh, and Deeping Lakes. At Freiston Shore, 21 apparently occupied nests yielded just two fledged young, and productivity was poor also at Frampton Marsh, where there were 43 AON. At Whisby NR, the total of only five nests and no fledged young was the worst year ever. A first wave of autumn passage occurred during Jul 17th-23rd with a high count of 520 at Freiston Shore on the 18th. A second wave was apparent during August when there counts totalling 100 or more on 18 dates. The largest were 2700 at Donna Nook on Aug 7th, 1340 there on the 17th, and 596 at Tetney Marsh on the 21st, but the higher totals of 2014 were not repeated. Numbers dropped

away dramatically during September with one good count at Witham Mouth of 175 on the 5th, and the final bird flying north at Gib Point on the 26th.

2014 correction In the table of Common Tern counts, data in the row for Cleethorpes-North Cotes was misplaced. The counts given for September, October and November should have been for August, September and October.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

Fairly common/common passage migrant and sporadic breeder. Mainly coastal but there is a regular inland passage in spring.

Peak monthly counts	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Alkborough Flats	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
Barton Pits	-	2	-	-	7	-	-
Tetney Marsh	-	15	-	4	4	-	-
Donna Nook	-	-	1	1	40	5	-
Covenham Res	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mablethorpe-Anderby	-	-	-	-	4	1	-
Gibraltar Point	3	8	1	30	30	1	-
Friskney*	-	-	-	-	6	-	-
Freiston Shore/Witham Mouth	7	1	-	1	-	1	1
Frampton Marsh	7	-	2	1	2	-	-
Boultham Mere	4	2	-	-	-	-	-
Hartsholme CP	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Whisby/North Hykeham	-	2	-	-	1	-	-
Moulton Marsh NR	6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Deeping Lakes	-	20	-	-	-	-	-

There were approximately 80 reports from 19 sites, nearly 60% of them of just one or two birds. The first birds of the year were three at Covenham Res on Apr 21st. There were another nine records on four other dates in Apr, with seven birds at both Frampton Marsh on the 24th and Freiston Shore on the 30th. Birds were seen on ten days spread through May, with peaks of 15 at Tetney Marsh on the 1st and 5th, and 20 at Deeping Lakes on the 18th. With the light spring passage ending, there were no significant numbers between May 23rd and mid Jul. Numbers were still low until the last third of Jul, when the light autumn passage began. Other than one count of four at Tetney Marsh, all records of three or over in Jul came from Gib Point, including 14 on the 24th and 30 on the 28th. Passage continued into August with the best count of 40 at Pye's Hall on the 7th. Also on the 7th, Gib Point had a count of 30, and other counts there included 12 on the 13th and 13 on the 14th. Maxima elsewhere were seven at Barton upon Humber on the 24th and six at Friskney on the 15th. Sightings were sporadic during Sep, through to the 16th, with a count of five at Donna Nook on the 2nd being the best. The final bird of the year was a month later, at Witham Mouth on Oct 17th.

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

Rare passage migrant May-Oct. **LBRC RBBP**

Two sightings of adults, both going to roost at Gib Point: the first was on Millennium Ridge on Jul 21st (NAL) with the second on Aug 14th (KMW).

Sabine's Gull *Xema sabini*

Rare coastal migrant in autumn Jul-Nov. Exceptional inland. **LBRC**

There were two records of this high Arctic species, both on Oct 13th: an adult or second winter bird was observed from Crook Bank, Theddlethorpe (NAL) and a juvenile was seen at Freiston Shore (PS, JSA)

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Common but declining passage migrant and winter visitor with small numbers in summer. Scarce inland.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Donna Nook	-	-	12	2	17	-	-	-	16	-	2	-
Mablethorpe	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	500	-
Sutton on Sea	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1800	-

Huttoft Bank/Car Terrace	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	804	-
Gibraltar Point	17	3	-	1	24	4	25	14	49	35	1517	10
Freiston Shore	1	-	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	30	1	-

Recorded throughout the year, typically in small numbers, from nine coastal sites. Autumn passage, primarily in the second half of Nov, saw good movement including 640 at Huttoft Bank/Car Terrace on Nov 15th and culminating with four figure counts made from two sites on Nov 21st: an impressive southerly passage of 1800 past Sutton on Sea and 1517 past Gib Point. The only records away from the coast were a second calendar year bird at Barton upon Humber on Mar 24th and 18 adults on the River Trent at Garthorpe on Mar 31st.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Very common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>The Humber</i>												
WeBS totals	905	242	372	19	106	61	1590	7857	6591	781	454	356
Alkborough Flats	10	25	1	50	1	-	50	4000	1	600	1	45
Barton Pits	70	121	71	100	60	44	40	115	200	200	100	100
Cleethorpes-Tetney	360	180	200	80	20	80	1000	2000	2000	1000	6000	800
Tetney-Grainthorpe	16	64	84	-	41	9	-	8000	38	60	44	58
Donna Nook	42	200	150	60	15	20	969	4300	1500	1800	100	50
Saltfleet-Mablethorpe	431	300	240	4	21	56	401	6468	5340	2000	302	212
<i>The Wash</i>												
WeBS totals	4176	2588	1580	2569	819	1292	4053	7691	4292	1858	386	360
Middlemarsh Farm	500	-	580	440	500	230	350	500	130	609	250	400
Gibraltar Point	9424	3364	700	2161	230	431	3000	5588	7285	3011	7288	10001
Leverton*	3663	378	70	399	-	-	-	878	-	-	-	-
Freiston Shore	1500	36	300	300	50	270	230	50	125	71	76	1
Frampton Marsh	200	300	1000	600	1400	1718	500	400	100	127	54	100
Welland*	-	582	119	122	6	410	681	-	2603	547	79	-
Terrington*	-	900	-	-	-	-	400	2100	-	-	-	-
<i>Inland</i>												
Cadney Res	370	-	-	-	2	3	75	-	1200	4500	600	-
Covenham Res	5	8	120	250	150	70	220	2700	1500	700	400	60
Toft Newton Res	15	1000	400	16	4	-	7	20	30	800	400	550
North Hykeham Pits	4000	2000	2000	900	500	91	-	-	120	2000	3000	5000
Whisby NR	3800	250	2000	2244	1000	500	1	1	5	235	2000	123
Norton Disney/Thurlby	270	100	2000	250	2	2	1	60	80	60	4000	5000
Kirkby on Bain GP	130	100	1200	150	70	200	450	50	74	202	400	700
Tattershall Lakes CP	20	3800	30	9	2	3	11	70	35	18	45	100

The table includes most counts of 1000 or more. Those made between autumn and early spring relate primarily to winter roosts, the most notable of these being The Wash, but inland the Lincoln area holds significant numbers with large roosts occurring at North Hykeham Pits (Apex Pit) and Norton Disney/Thurlby Pits. This year's annual nest count at Whisby NR gave an all-time record with 628 nests on Thorpe Lake, 347 on Grebe Lake, two on Willow Lake and 145 on Teal Lake, totalling 1122 nesting pairs. This year's notable increase is due to further opportunities becoming available with the creation of suitable nesting habitat at Teal Lake. Productivity varied, only sixteen chicks fledged at Teal Lake due to persistent attention from a locally nesting pair of Peregrines. However the colony on Grebe and Thorpe Lakes fared better with pairs judged to have fledged 1.5 chicks per pair giving an estimated total of 1462 fledged young, still a very respectable figure for this important inland breeding colony.

Whisby NR	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Breeding Pairs	36	87	126	142	316	326	540	709	527	843	1122

The other major breeding colonies at the RSPB Wash reserves produced counts of 859 occupied nests at Frampton Marsh and 66 at Freiston Shore, but productivity was respectively poor or nil at these. At Gib Point 31 pairs nested with 22 nests on Freshwater Mere, eight nests on Tennyson's Sands and one on Jackson's Marsh. Barton Pits held 26 breeding pairs which fledged approximately 20 young. At Melwood Quarry it was estimated there were 120 nests. Breeding was also confirmed at Messingham SQ, Kirkby on Bain GP, Boultham Mere, Middlemarsh Farm (Skegness) and Deeping Lakes NR.

Ringing recoveries to or from most countries in northern Europe are quite common but those below are to countries less frequently involved than many; the third is the first between Iceland and Lincolnshire. The bird from Finland was the oldest reported this year, though at 17 years was well short of the BTO record of 32 years.

SFH ST198496	Nestling Dead	26-06-1998 04-09-2015	Kokkola, Keski-Pohjanmaa: 63°55'N 22°54'E (Vaasa) Finland Covenham Reservoir: 53°26'N 0°1'E 1,752km SW 17y 2m 9d
EP39493	First-year Alive (colour rings seen)	11-04-2008 23-03-2010	Baston Fen, Market Deeping: c. 52°43'N 0°18'W Sophiapolder, Oostburg: 51°19'N 3°28'E (Zeeland) The Netherlands 302km ESE 1y 11m 12d
	Freshly dead	25-06-2015	le Zwin, Knokke: 51°21'N 3°21'E (West-Vlaanderen) Belgium 293km ESE 7y 2m 14d
ISR 590761	Nestling Alive (ring read in field)	09-06-2014 23-03-2015	Akureyri: 65°40'N 18°6'W (Eyjafjararsýsla) Iceland Boultham Mere, Lincoln: 53°13'N 0°34'W 1,692km SE 0y 9m 14d

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Fairly common passage migrant in spring and autumn, scarce in summer, rare in winter, occurring in all months. RBBP

The first winter period saw three records received, all from Gib Point, with singles on Jan 9th and Jan 10th, and three north on Feb 1st. The species was regularly recorded between spring and autumn, though with only one report between Jun 17th and Jul 12th. Most inland records were in spring; they included a first summer bird at Bagmoor Floods on Apr 7th-8th, a first summer at Trent Port (Marton) on Apr 23rd, and six adults in summer plumage at Covenham Res on Apr 23rd. At Covenham, 1-2 were recorded on 26 dates between May 8th and Jun 9th. On the coast, counts of more than two came on Jun 6th when six first summers were at Gib Point, and there were three at Theddlethorpe on Aug 15th, six south past Gib Point on Sep 15th, eight north past Gib Point on Oct 14th and eight past Mablethorpe on Nov 21st. Dwarfing all of those was a count of 80 at Witham Mouth on Aug 16th. While there were then so few elsewhere in the county, but this is the period in the year when large numbers occur off the Yorkshire coast and similar movements into The Wash in Aug have taken place before, e.g. in 2009. The only Dec record was of a first winter at Huttoft Bank Pit on the 21st. No inland records were received on typical autumn dates but notable was a first winter bird present in the winter gull roost at Thurlby Sand Pit on Nov 21st. Generally, the year saw lower numbers than usual.

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Scarce, but increasing visitor throughout the year, most in late summer/early autumn. RBBP

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alkborough Flats	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	-	-	1
Barton Pits	3	-	-	-	-	-	4	4	-	-	1	-
Pyewipe-Cleethorpes	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
Tetney-Horseshoe Pt	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	1	-	-
Donna Nook area	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	5	2	2	-	-
Covenham Res	-	-	-	1	-	1	2	1	-	-	-	4
North Hykeham Pits	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Whisby NR	1	-	2	4	4	4	2	-	-	-	-	-
Blackmoor Bridge	-	-	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gibraltar Point	1	-	2	2	3	2	3	3	1	1	1	1
Freiston Shore	1	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Frampton Marsh	-	1	2	2	3	3	1	-	-	1	-	-

Despite now being widespread, numbers in the county remain fairly low. The table includes areas that held at least two birds with records in at least three months. Additional records of three or more were three at Cove Farm Quarry on Feb 21st, four at Cinder Plot, Doddington on May 27th, and three at Manby Wetland on Jul 22nd, and of smaller numbers at about 15 other sites, well spread but largely on or near the coast. The highest count was five at Donna Nook on Aug 20th. Reports were received this year of thirteen Polish-ringed Mediterranean Gulls in the county, doubling the number of such birds. At Frampton Marsh, an adult pair was present throughout the spring, mating was observed and these birds held territory on one of the islands in the reedbed, nesting was suspected although not confirmed due to the vegetation cover. At the time hatching was due there was no sign of any chicks, and the same was the case for all the Black-headed Gulls on the island. It is suspected that predation by rats and possibly also foxes and/or badgers led

to breeding failure, but additionally vegetation growth smothering the nest could have been a factor. The last time both birds were seen together was Jun 7th with one individual present until Jul 1st. At Whisby NR 11 different individuals were recorded during 2015, with four birds, three adults and a second summer, present in the Black-headed Gull colony during the breeding season. However, no nesting attempt took place this year. These summering Whisby birds were found to be visiting the nearby farmland around Blackmoor Bridge to feed.



Common Gull *Larus canus* Donna Nook Mar 15th 2015 © John Clarkson

Common Gull *Larus canus*

Very common passage migrant and winter visitor.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>The Humber</i>												
WeBS totals	672	392	167	7	4	30	51	1261	2101	510	1147	492
Cleethorpes-Horseshoe Pt	20	15	25	15	-	-	30	200	30	100	40	100
Donna Nook	121	300	200	100	8	-	25	500	150	429	800	166
Saltfleet-Mablethorpe	1000	250	200	6	2	29	20	990	1980	200	768	400
Huttoft Bank	36	50	50	1	-	-	6	8	117	102	500	100
<i>The Wash</i>												
WeBS totals	101	207	26	21	2	-	68	229	45	9	526	1
Gibraltar Point	874	1500	300	27	30	11	200	460	21	500	943	350
<i>Inland</i>												
Covenham Res	85	40	110	50	5	1	49	400	15	30	600	350
Whisby NR	1400	6	800	3	2	-	8	15	-	10	250	-
Thurlby Pit	-	4	1000	2	-	-	-	-	-	4	800	1000

The table includes most counts of 500 or more. During the first quarter, records were widespread and the highest numbers recorded for the most part were at traditional roost sites such as Apex Pit and Thurlby Sand Pit though counts of three figures or more were received from 19 locations up until the first week of Apr. The peak counts in Jan-Feb were c1000 at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Jan 3rd, 1400 at Whisby NR on Jan 5th, c1500 at Gib Point on Feb 1st and 990 there on Feb 23rd. A white-winged individual was recorded at Covenham Res on Feb 15th. Numbers dropped off during Mar but there were two notable inland counts of 1000 at Thurlby Pit (Bassingham) on the 7th and 800 nearby at Whisby NP on the 14th. Typically scarce during the spring months, most records in this period related to non-breeding individuals. A juvenile was at Boultham Mere on the early date of Jul 1st and towards the month's end counts of three figures were again made as individuals began to flood back from their breeding grounds. Notable counts in Aug included 990 between Saltfleet and Mablethorpe on the 15th, 400 inland at Covenham Res on the 12th and 500 at Donna Nook on the 17th. During the second winter period, high counts

included 1930 between Theddlethorpe and Mablethorpe on Sep 13th, 400 at Donna Nook on Oct 9th with 800 there on Nov 22nd, 943 at Gib Point on Nov 13th and 1000 inland at Thurlby Pit (Bassingham) on Dec 23rd.

Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans*

Scarce all-year visitor. **LBRC**

Thirteen different individuals were identified during 2015 of this species that has become harder to find due to the closure of landfill sites within the county. The first bird of the year was a first winter at Bagmoor/Winterton Floods on Jan 3rd (ND). A first summer was at Whisby NR on May 20th (DN) and what is thought to have been the same bird returned to Whisby NR on May 22nd (GHo). An adult was at Whisby NR on Jul 21st (BWd). A juvenile was at Kirkby on Bain GP on Jul 29th (GPC) and a second summer there on Aug 1st (GPC). An adult was at Marton on Aug 10th (DN). A first summer was at Boultham Mere on Aug 25th (ACS), again on Aug 28th, and what is considered to have been the same bird was later that day at North Hykeham Pits (BWd). This same individual returned to North Hykeham Pits on Sep 9th (DN, BWd) and was observed on seven further occasions, last on Sep 22nd. An adult was at North Hykeham Pits on Sep 7th (DN, BWd) and was observed on ten further occasions, last on Oct 3rd. Also at North Hykeham Pits, a different second winter from that of Aug 28th-Sep 22nd was identified on Sep 19th (DN, BWd) and a first winter on Sep 20th (BWd). A first winter was at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe NNR on Oct 7th (NAL). An adult was at Gib Point on Oct 18th (NAL, RKW, HW). An adult was at Norton Disney on Nov 16th (DN) and what is considered to have been the same bird was at Whisby NR on Nov 27th (BWd).

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

Present all year: scarce but increasing Dec-Feb, common passage Mar-May and Aug-Nov Increasing breeder. Many immatures summer Jun-Jul.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>The Humber</i>												
WeBS totals	3	0	4	3	5	3	25	14	9	16	2	2
Saltfleet-Mablethorpe	0	1	2	350	3	7	5	150	3	100	1	0
<i>The Wash</i>												
WeBS totals	80	21	130	235	854	573	91	1112	24	21	20	14
Gibraltar Point	3	2	11	36	105	94	41	68	50	6	5	3
Welland*	0	1	100	217	813	550	14	800	0	0	0	0
Gedney*	0	5	0	2	0	22	59	268	1	20	0	0
<i>Inland</i>												
North Hykeham Pits	0	0	11	3	8	7	0	175	3500	500	58	1
Thurlby Pit	4	3	2	20	0	0	0	50	50	12	250	20
Kirkby on Bain GP	7	1	15	100	100	44	40	1	40	0	100	0
Deeping Lakes	2	7	20	40	24	38	140	50	12	1	2	0

The table includes most counts of 100 or more. There were 27 occupied nests on Read's Island, and some young fledged there. In a poor year for breeding records Boultham Mere was the only other site where breeding was confirmed when two newly fledged juveniles were observed on the rooftop of a nearby industrial building. It is likely there a number of successful breeding attempts have been overlooked and we would encourage observe to report all nesting attempt in Lincolnshire. This year's very notable peak count of 3500 at North Hykeham Pits on Sep 17th related to the formation of a short-lived roost on Apex Pit, associated with a short spell of landfilling at the nearby North Hykeham 'Energy from Waste' incinerator site. The largest counts elsewhere were 800 in the Welland sector of The Wash in May and Aug. Most birds recorded in the county are of the subspecies *graellsii* though the swarthier subspecies *intermedius* does make up numbers of those recorded on passage. Of interest was an adult showing characteristics of 'Baltic Gull', the nominate *L.f. fuscus*, present in the Apex Pit roost at North Hykeham Pits Sep 19th-20th at least (DN, BWd), but note that this has not been assessed by BBRC. One ringing recovery of a bird following the usual migration route is shown below.

GG77910	Nesting	11-07-2009	Havergate Island: 52°4'N 1°30'E (Suffolk)
	Alive (colour rings seen)	10-10-2009	Stoke Orchard, Tewkesbury: 51°56'N 2°6'W (Gloucestershire) 249km W Oy 2m 29d
	Alive (colour rings seen)	01-11-2009	Esmele, near Ferrol: 43°31'N 8°16'W (Coruna) Spain 1,196km SW Oy 3m 21d
	Alive (colour rings seen)	15-06-2015	Huttoft Bank: 53°15'N 0°18'E 156km NNW 5y 11m 4d

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

Rare/scarce passage migrant and winter visitor, rare in summer. **LBRC**

The first bird of the year was a second winter at Bagmoor/Winterton Floods during Feb 19th-27th (ND). Presumably the same bird returned there on Mar 24th-29th (ND) and again on Apr 4th (WG, ND). There was also a first winter at Bagmoor/Winterton Floods on Mar 14th (ND). The final bird of winter was a first summer at Gib Point on Apr 19th (RKW) and again on Apr 21st (JPS). Towards the year end the only bird to be recorded was a juvenile which flew south past Mablethorpe (CA, JJF) and Sutton on Sea (GPC, ND) on Nov 21st.

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoides*

Rare passage migrant and winter visitor Aug-May. The subspecies known as Kumlien's Gull *L.g. kumlieni* is a vagrant. **LBRC**

The first bird of the year was an adult at Bagmoor/Winterton Floods on Jan 3rd (ND). What is assumed to have been the same bird was roosting at Whitton Sand during Feb 20th-25th (ND). A third winter bird was at Grimsby Docks between Jan 20th and Feb 2nd (AJH, SJM, JAS *et al.*) with a second winter frequenting the same area during Feb 12th-25th (AJH, RLb *et al.*). The final bird for the year was a first summer that flew north past Seaview, Saltfleetby, with presumably the same bird also at Tetney Marsh on Apr 1st (CA, RL).

Kumlien's Gull *Larus glaucoides kumlieni*: vagrant. LBRC

A second winter bird was discovered on Jan 3rd, initially on the Wolds then later on the Humber near the bridge (GPC).



Kumlien's Gull *Larus glaucoides kumlieni* Barton-upon-Humber Jan 3rd 2015© Graham Catley

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*

Scarce visitor, mainly in late summer/autumn. **RBBP** The subspecies known as Azorean Yellow-legged Gull *L.m. atlantis* is a vagrant.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of sites 2015	1	0	1	2	1	2	6	22	8	3	4	2
Minimum total 2015	1	0	1	2	1	2	8	78	49	17	9	4
Minimum total 2014	1	2	1	1	1	5	16	77	13	4	3	1
Minimum total 2013	3	1	8	4	3	8	52	42	10	2	4	1
Minimum total 2012	7	2	3	7	6	17	70	30	21	16	5	1
Minimum total 2011	7	2	2	4	7	19	47	32	20	21	8	1
Minimum total 2010	2	1	2	7	4	7	32	19	17	8	5	6

The first juvenile of the year to be observed was at Kirkby on Bain GP on Jul 29th. Double figure counts during Aug came from Alkborough Flats with 10 there on the 4th and from Eastoft where there were 23 on the 25th. At North Hykeham Pits, a short spell of landfilling during Sep at the nearby incinerator site attracted good numbers to the area, with double-figure counts on 14 dates during the 7th-23rd including 21 on the 8th, 26 on the 18th and 25 on the 19th. As the ages of all birds recorded during Sep at North Hykeham Pits were noted, it can be said that no less than 33 different individuals were observed, though the true number was probably much higher. During Oct smaller numbers were still being recorded at North Hykeham Pits with a peak on 15 on the 3rd. Winter records came in the form of singles at Thurlby Pit on Dec 27th and North Hykeham Pits on Dec 28th, and three at Thurlby Pit on Dec 28th. Yellow-legged Gull is rare during winter and these December records may relate to the same individuals given the close proximity of the two sites.

Azorean Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis atlantis* ; vagrant. BBRC

An adult was briefly at Marston on the morning of Oct 26th (BWd, DRob) before flying over the county border into Nottinghamshire. Accepted BBRC (BB 109 p.596). This constitutes the first Lincolnshire record of this distinctive taxon (see finder's note on p.174) and relates to a bird discovered in Oxfordshire in 2009, being the second British record accepted to date.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

Very common passage migrant, rare breeder and common winter visitor.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>The Humber</i>												
WeBS totals	525	899	1157	584	480	379	134	641	358	470	488	588
Cleethorpes-Tetney	45	2	40	120	10	40	312	300	100	800	350	60
Donna Nook	319	300	400	452	220	30	47	500	200	397	320	500
Saltfleet-Mablethorpe	152	697	789	150	368	129	73	395	164	50	170	100
<i>The Wash</i>												
WeBS totals	2116	1170	2146	2639	2107	879	1136	3251	887	276	759	722
Middlemarsh, Skegness	420	1	80	7	11	120	50	150	62	250	150	200
Gibraltar Point	973	3500	610	1000	190	270	253	600	250	310	2421	305
Wainfleet*	-	142	101	142	209	-	214	262	-	-	-	-
Friskney*	1340	155	375	830	345	67	235	950	120	5	65	122
Wrangle*	200	-	200	290	500	60	120	230	-	22	-	262
Leverton*	307	120	41	209	185	-	-	70	-	-	-	-
Freiston Shore	150	64	12	18	1	32	11	10	18	7	20	10
Frampton Marsh	40	40	8	10	40	45	2	15	4	20	20	30
Welland*	-	87	676	322	430	440	17	405	114	27	8	-
Holbeach*	-	300	500	570	230	30	350	410	130	-	-	-
<i>Inland</i>												
Kirkby on Bain GP	72	70	250	800	600	60	1500	700	2300	6	164	1400

The table includes most counts of 500 or more. During the breeding season there was one occupied nest on Read's Island and five occupied nests on the lagoon at Freiston Shore, otherwise a pair observed prospecting on Tennyson's Sands at Gib Point on 17th Apr was the only record relating to potential breeders. It is highly unlikely that these nesting birds at Freiston Shore were the only ones in the county this year. While roof-nesting pairs will more difficult to detect, the paucity of information more likely reflects the under-recorded nature of nesting Herring Gulls in the county. The Wash accounted for all of this year's four-figure coastal site counts, though the Humber as a whole reached that level in Mar. Inland, Kirkby on Bain GP continues to be an important site for this species, but the upcoming closure of the landfill site there will of course impact significantly on the numbers using the area. The vast majority of birds recorded in the county are of the subspecies *argentatus* but during the winter months good numbers of the more easterly and northerly nominate *L.a. argentatus* often referred to as 'Scandinavian' Herring Gull are present; typically these are larger and darker birds. Two typical Herring Gull movements are shown below, one travelling a fair distance, the other one far less.

GR46471	Adult Male	17-05-2013	Rosemount, Aberdeen: 57°8'N 2°6'W (Aberdeen)
	Alive (colour rings seen)	17-01-2014	Skegness: 53°8'N 0°19'E 471km SSE 0y 8m 0d
GV31686	Second-year	26-10-2015	Rufforth Waste Disposal Site: c. 53°57'N 1°11'W (York)
	Alive (colour rings seen)	25-11-2015	Gibraltar Point: 53°5'N 0°18'E 141km SE 0y 0m 30d

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Very common passage migrant and winter visitor with some immatures remaining in summer.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>The Humber</i>												
WeBS totals	145	167	167	111	48	15	132	111	172	266	256	212
Alkborough Flats	1	4	-	8	-	-	40	18	1	1	1	25
Barton Pits	30	1	2	2	-	4	1	2	2	4	1	2
Cleethorpes-Tetney	61	1	18	8	-	1	30	26	35	44	54	53
Donna Nook	86	50	100	83	34	7	28	100	60	124	150	137
Saltfleet-Mablethorpe	56	250	71	20	9	9	19	38	95	130	111	100
Huttoft Bank	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	12	104	118	28
<i>The Wash</i>												
WeBS totals	21	23	14	50	3	11	31	162	151	5	70	48
Middlemarsh, Skegness	100	1	5	-	1	25	18	68	72	94	50	64
Gibraltar Point	56	54	57	50	20	102	100	500	300	250	400	80
Frampton Marsh	7	3	1	1	6	2	1	5	2	19	26	1
<i>Inland</i>												
North Hykeham Pits	73	1	5	10	-	3	-	20	100	200	-	10
Whisby NR	73	1	36	4	1	3	5	1	-	3	25	127
Norton Disney/Thurlby	350	-	-	6	-	-	-	3	8	3	30	73
Kirkby on Bain GP	28	45	6	-	30	2	20	100	230	1	26	90

The table includes most counts of 100 or more. The Aug WeBS count from the Wash of 1162 represents the highest count in Lincolnshire for several years; 1100 of these birds were in the Welland sector alone. Otherwise, coastal counts were in keeping with those of the previous year. Numbers of individuals using the large inland winter roosts in the Lincoln area continues to dwindle, though a count of 350 at Norton Disney Pits on Jan 4th was notable, this decline clearly being a knock-on effect of the closure of nearby landfill sites.

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*

Common and widespread resident.

Feral Pigeon continues to be neglected by most birders which is a shame, given its importance as a food source for Lincolnshire's growing Peregrine population. We have BirdTrack to thank for over 85% of 867 Feral Pigeon records received. A new location, Branston yielded the top count with 200 on Nov 18th. Last year's leading site, Pyewipe, near Grimsby, which held 236 in 2014, failed to enter a count this year. Always a front runner, Freiston Shore came in second with 150 on Sep 19th. Bracebridge Heath had 100 on Nov 9th and Sutton Bridge 80 on Mar 22nd. It should be noted that the observer submitting 17% of all records had a maximum count of two. This is indicative of the fact that most birders do not provide a count of Feral Pigeon's seen through BirdTrack. More counts would be of interest. Can anyone beat 236? Up to 400 were reported from Holme in 2010. What has happened to Lincolnshire's star colony?

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Common resident and winter visitor.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Donna Nook	14	13	45	26	40	34	31	40	60	50	40	50
Gibraltar Point	9	13	19	6	7	11	10	15	7	39	50	22

Other counts of 40 or more were 156 at Garthorpe, 44 at Gayton le Marsh, 40 at Manby and 51 at Stenigot-Biscathorpe, all in Jan. There was only one count of over a hundred birds, and 17 over 40, most of those from Donna Nook in autumn. There were very few reports of confirmed breeding. This does not accurately represent the widespread and common status of the species. British Stock Doves are very sedentary and most of the flocks are probably local birds. However, some continental migrants may sometimes pass through south and east England, and the autumn peaks on the coast could include such passage birds.

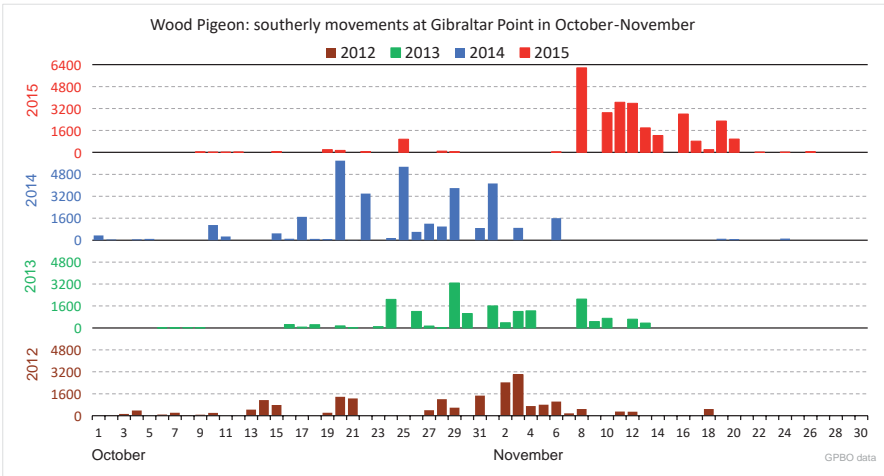
Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus*

Very common resident and partial migrant.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Tetney Marsh	550	-	200	80	20	50	80	120	600	600	300	350
Donna Nook	800	1500	1200	300	300	50	80	120	200	400	500	500
Withern	1000	125	245	140	22	102	17	36	35	140	64	2
Gibraltar Point	500	400	860	520	308	81	150	200	300	1380	6160	313
Wrangle Brickpits	500	100	200	200	100	1	200	200	100	250	200	100
Welbourn area	1000	200	500	53	85	100	47	-	33	194	500	2400

The table includes the more consistently counted sites with maxima of 500 or more. Similar counts also came from another ten less regularly counted sites. The BTO Atlas points out that the Wood Pigeon occupies almost every 10 km square within Britain and Ireland with the exception of the higher mountains and some treeless islands. Its population has been rising steeply since the 1960s, though there is some indication of a recent downturn, and it is no wonder that over 4000 records from almost 400 sites were received this year. Counts of 500 or more were in the first or last quarters of the year, with one in Apr and two in Sep. Most were made on the coast, at Tetney Marsh, Donna Nook and especially Gib Point, but a few came from Louth, Stenigot-Biscathorpe, Whisby NR and Welbourn Heath. Autumnal movement was, as usual, noted mainly at Gib Point. It is visible elsewhere but the concentration of birds by geography and consistency of coverage means that it is best recorded there. Totals of over 3000 occurred on four dates, with the maximum of 6160 south on Nov 8th. The chart below shows, with daily totals, how passage at Gib Point was markedly later in 2015 than in the previous three years. The highest counts elsewhere were c3000 at Stenigot-Biscathorpe on Nov 23rd and 2400 at Welbourn Heath on Dec 16th. One set of ringing details are given, of quite an old bird; the BTO longevity record is 17 years 8 months.

FC75021	Adult	03-09-2004	Gibraltar Point, Skegness: c. 53°5'N 0°18'E
	Caught by ringer	30-07-2015	Gibraltar Point: 53°5'N 0°18'E 0km 10y 10m 27d

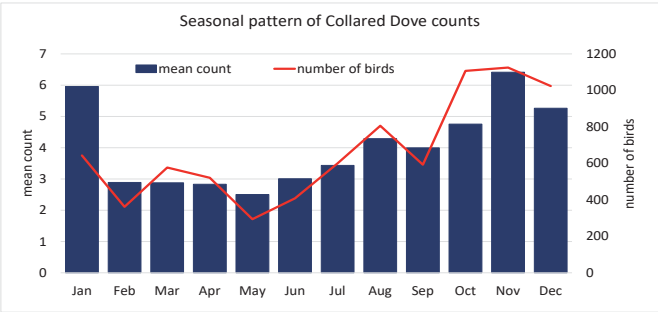
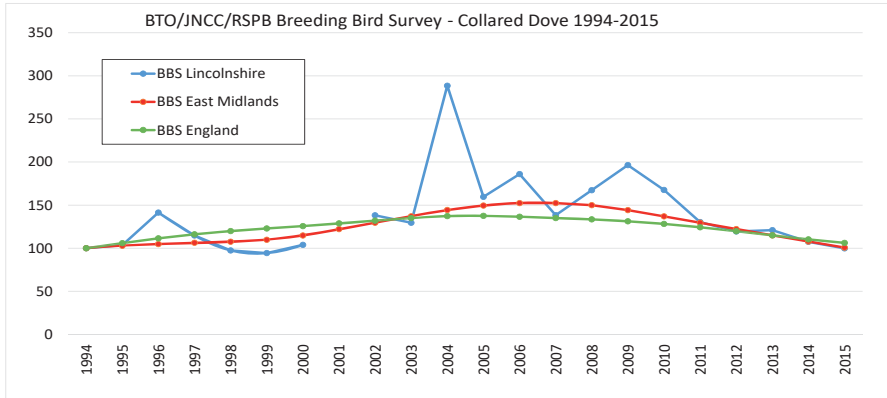


Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Very common resident.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Barton Pits	3	2	2	3	6	4	2	5	30	4	2	4
Tetney Marsh	40	-	15	15	10	20	20	25	25	30	40	40
Gibraltar Point	-	-	6	2	4	10	2	30	2	2	3	-
East Keal	24	-	30	8	14	-	-	-	-	-	4	-
Ruskington Fen	-	-	35	-	24	-	45	7	13	19	4	-
Spalding-Borough Fen	11	31	13	6	12	2	5	8	3	-	4	10

The table includes all maxima of 30 or more, apart from c100 at Pinchbeck on Sep 27th. The species was recorded somewhere in the county on every day of the year, and the 2000 records included 86 counts of 30 or more. It was 1955 when the Collared Dove first bred in Britain but it is now often taken for granted and very few reports of breeding were received. In fact, the BBS (see first chart below) suggests that numbers are now in slow decline from a peak about ten years ago. The second chart is derived from the 15 sites for which records were submitted on 40 or more dates during the year (and including four with more than 100, the highest being 244 dates at Branston). The blue columns shows the average number of birds recorded per visit across the 15 sites during each month, and the orange line shows the monthly bird-day totals at all of the sites combined. The chart is testament to great recording effort of a bird that's often overlooked, and while this analysis perhaps demonstrates little more than the expected build-up in numbers through the species' long breeding season followed by losses in winter, it is this sort of recording that will allow us to detect longer-term changes. It is tempting to wonder if the high Jan mean count is a reflection of a burst of New Year enthusiasm!



Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

Restricted and declining summer visitor and passage migrant.

Peak monthly counts	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Barton Pits								
Donna Nook	-	-	3	1	-	2	1	-
Saltfleetby/Theddlethorpe Dunes	-	-	4	4	1	8	1	-
Gibraltar Point	-	1	10	11	10	3	2	-
Frampton Marsh	-	2	6	4	2	3	3	1
Baumber	-	-	2	2	1	1	-	-
Kirkby on Bain GP	-	1	2	3	2	2	-	-

Number of sites 2015	-	6	22	26	19	16	9	1
Number of sites 2014	-	8	39	39	20	18	6	-
Number of sites 2013	-	4	23	26	21	11	3	1
Number of sites 2012	-	12	34	29	18	14	9	1

The first record was extraordinarily early: one at Frampton Marsh on Mar 30th. The next was one at Tydd St Mary's Marsh on Apr 16th-17th, followed by singles at both Frampton Marsh and Kirkby on Bain GP on Apr 24th and then from other locations on subsequent dates during the rest of the month. The number of records received was about 7% down on the average of the previous two years, suggesting that the ongoing decline continues. The minimum monthly totals of birds reported (showing 2014 totals in brackets) were 8 (13) in April, 50 (81) in May, 57 (71) in Jun, 34 (43) in Jul, 32 (44) in Aug and 27 (8) in Sep. The highest count of the year was 12 at Woodhall Spa on Sep 11th, and there were several counts of 8-11 at Gib Point in May-Jul, plus eight at Crook Bank, Theddlethorpe on Aug 23rd. Breeding was confirmed at Walesby Moor in June and at Woodhall Spa Airfield and Dunsby in August, and is assumed to have taken place at Gib Point and Frampton Marsh. In addition probable breeding was recorded at another seven sites, namely Crowle Moors, Barton Pits, Killingholme Haven, Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes, the Baumber area, Kirkby on Bain GP and South Witham NR, and it was thought possible at a further ten sites around the county. There was a handful of records in the second half of Sep, and the final bird of the year was at Frampton Marsh on Oct 1st.



Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur* Gib Point Jun 9th 2015 © Paul Neale

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Fairly common but declining summer visitor.

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Donna Nook	2	2	2	1	2	-	-
Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes	4	3	5	1	1	-	-
Gibraltar Point	3	6	6	3	2	1	-
Sum of site peaks 2015	36	87	41	13	15	1	-
Number of sites 2015	25	68	28	10	13	1	-
Number of sites 2014	25	69	33	8	10	-	-
Number of sites 2013	16	51	32	8	12	6	-
Number of sites 2012	22	69	22	15	7	4	2
Number of sites 2011	33	43	30	6	7	4	1
Number of sites 2010	43	46	24	10	4	-	1

Early birds were three at Gib Point on the 9th with one on the 10th, and one at Marston STW on Apr 13th. Fresh arrivals included birds at Aubourn and Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes on Apr

14th, Temple Wood on the 16th and Laughton Forest and Donna Nook on the 20th, followed by more widespread records of 1-2 birds to the end of the month. The only higher early counts were of three birds at Gib Point from Apr 23rd onwards, four at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes on the 23rd and three at Howden's Pullover on the 24th. Numbers continued to be poor in May with 1-2 birds being fairly regular at various coastal and inland sites, although 5-6 were seen at Gib Point in the second half of the month and there were five males at Laughton Forest on May 23rd. Four-six birds were present at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes and Gib Point in early June, but only 1-2 birds were at all other locations. The first juvenile was seen at Kirkby on Bain GP on Jun 27th with more well-scattered records of mainly single juveniles from Jul 2nd onwards. Regular sightings continued until Aug 19th with occasional birds to the end of the month. The only record in Sep was a juvenile at Gib Point on the 4th.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Widespread common resident with good breeding years coinciding with peaks in the vole population.

Dark-breasted Barn Owl *T. a. guttata* is a rare vagrant. **BBRC**

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total number of nests†	298	‡ 330	155	394	77
Failures	40	131	18	38	20
Broods ringed	243	185	126	333	44
Chicks ringed	627	427	378	1214	104
Mean no. chicks ringed per brood	2.6	2.3	3.0	3.6	2.4

† "Total nests" includes broods not ringed and with unknown outcome as well as those ringed or failing.

Note that boxes containing no clutch or brood are excluded.

‡ High number of nests in 2012 due to early failures and subsequent re-laying.

Brood size 2015	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Number	9	17	12	5	1	-	44
Total chicks	9	34	36	20	5	-	104

There were reports from 228 sites across the county; Barn Owl evidently remains widespread in Lincolnshire. Most casual reports were of 1-2 birds, but threes and fours were noted at several sites. Bob Sheppard and Alan Ball as usual kindly supplied a summary of their nestbox data for 2011-2015, summarised in the tables above. Compared with 2014, this was a poor breeding season: they ringed just 44 broods involving 104 chicks, which was more than 10-fold fewer chicks than in 2014. The majority of broods were of two or three chicks, with only one of five chicks (there were 66 in 2014). The BTO Nest Record Scheme for 2015 showed that the national average for laying dates was 17.6 days *earlier* than the 5-year (2010-14) average; clutch size (-10.2%) and brood size (-18.5%) though were significantly decreased. Barn Owls have the potential to breed several times during each season but the stormy weather in August and September may have reduced the number of later breeding attempts, while the mid-summer crash in vole numbers and the resulting poor condition of adult birds may have reduced the number of pairs able to produce late broods. The ringing recoveries below are the oldest and longest distance during the year; the species' longevity record is just 15 years 3 months, and only about 3% of the county's Barn Owls move more than 100 km.

GN40936	Nestling	05-06-2002	Packet House Farm, New York, Coningsby: 53°4'N 0°9'W
	Freshly dead (hit by car)	04-04-2015	Raithby by Spilsby: 53°10'N 0°2'E 19km NE 12y 9m 30d
GC82493	Nestling	10-07-2014	Barnaby Side Farm, Guisborough: 54°32'N 1°7'W (Redcar and Cleveland)
	Freshly dead (hit by car)	16-12-2015	Addlethorpe: 53°11'N 0°18'E 177km SSE 1y 5m 6d

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Locally common resident and very sedentary.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total number of nests†	68	59	70	80	70
Failures	18	18	20	16	17
Broods ringed	44	37	45	57	44
Chicks ringed	133	105	103	188	108
Mean no. chicks ringed per brood	3.0	2.8	2.3	3.3	2.5

† "Total nests" includes broods not ringed and with unknown outcome as well as those ringed or failing.

Note that boxes containing no clutch or brood are excluded.



Little Owl *Athene noctua* North Thoresby
Apr 6th 2015 © Colin Smale

Reporting of this species was slightly down compared to 2014, with records coming from 69 localities, a decrease from the 83 in 2014. Counts were all of 1-2 birds with the exceptions of groups of three reported from Nocton Fen (Jan-Feb) and Ruskington Fen (Aug), and of four in close proximity at Aubourn (Feb & Apr), Bassingham (Jan) and South Hykeham (Mar). Bob Sheppard and Alan Ball kindly provided a summary of their nest box data from 2011-2015, as in the table. They ringed 108 chicks in 2015 from 44 broods, an average of 2.5 chicks per brood; there were 17 failures. The BTO Nest Record Scheme for Little Owls in 2015 showed that the national average for laying dates was 9.9 days *later* than the 5-year (2010-14) average, possibly due to the wet weather during March delaying breeding attempts. Breeding was additionally confirmed at Baumber, Garthorpe and Marshchapel, and four other sites reported possible or probable breeding. Ringed owls are often repeatedly seen in boxes during inspections; the one below, at seven years, was still about four years short of the BTO record of 10 years 11 months.

EW30460	Adult Female	08-05-2008	Thorpe Tilney Fen: c. 53°6'N 0°16'W
	Caught by ringer	09-05-2015	*Caught by ringer one each year 2008-2013*
			Thorpe Tilney Fen: c. 53°6'N 0°16'W 0km 7y 0m 1d

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Localised widespread resident.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total number of nests	34	18	13	60	6
Failures	3	1	3	4	0
Broods ringed	31	17	8	53	3
Chicks ringed	70	30	12	112	5
Mean no. chicks ringed per brood	2.3	1.8	1.5	2.1	1.7

There was no indication of any significant change in status. Records came from 91 locations, with the majority being of 1-2 birds, but 3-6 birds were reported from 10 sites. Confirmed breeding was reported from just four sites – Anton's Gowt, Fishtoft, Twyford Wood and Wellingore Heath but confirmed breeding is grossly under-reported for this species and given their sedentary nature, any calling pairs are likely to be on nesting territories. Unlike Barn and Little Owls, the BTO Nest Record Scheme for 2015 showed no significant changes in Tawny Owl laying dates, clutch size, brood size, chick survival or numbers fledged. Alan Ball and Bob Sheppard recorded relatively few of this species this year (see table) with the six nests showing slightly below average productivity. Tawny Owls like to hunt on road verges, as do Barn Owls (see above); one frequent result is depressingly common.

GR41019	Adult Female	24-04-2013	Jack's Furze, Louth: 53°21'N 0°3'W
	Caught by ringer	11-05-2015	near Firsby, Spilsby: 53°9'N 0°10'E 28km SE 2y 0m 17d
GR97521	Nestling	28-04-2014	Bourne Wood: 52°45'N 0°23'W
	Dead (hit by car)	18-11-2015	Bourne: 52°45'N 0°23'W 2km 1y 6m 21d
GR97569	Nestling	07-05-2014	Bourne Wood: 52°45'N 0°23'W
	Freshly dead (hit by car)	06-02-2015	Between Witham on The Hill and Little Bytham: 52°44'N 0°28'W 6km SW 0y 8m 30d
GR82200	Nestling	24-04-2014	Bourne Wood: 52°45'N 0°23'W
	Freshly dead (hit by car)	02-05-2015	Bourne Wood: 52°45'N 0°23'W 0km 1y 0m 8d



Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus* Branston Fen Dec 29th 2015 © Russell Hayes



Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus* in off at Sutton on Sea Nov 21st 2015 © Graham Catley



Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus* Bonby Carrs Dec 12th 2015 © Graham Catley

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

Scarce and declining breeding bird in county and winter visitor. **RBBP**

Birds were recorded from ten locations during 2015, two fewer than in 2014. In the first three months of the year, Deeping Lakes NR held from one to three roosting birds between Jan 7th and Mar 18th. There was a single bird reported from North Kyme Fen on Feb 1st. There were spring records of single adults on the coast at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Apr 9th and Gib Point on May 20th-21st. No reports of any kind of breeding activity were submitted this year. Given that there were four confirmed breeding records in 2014 it is assumed there was under-recording rather than local extinction of this species as a Lincolnshire breeder. In the autumn single birds were noted at Saltfleet on Sep 30th, Donna Nook on Oct 3rd, 27th and Nov 1st, Tetney Marsh on Oct 26th, and Gib Point on Nov 14th and 22nd. A roost of five birds was found at Metherringham Delph on Dec 23rd.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Winter visitor and occasional breeder. **RBBP**

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Wroot	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Alkborough Flats	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	3	3	1
Bonby Carrs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	7
Barton Pits	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1
Goxhill-East Halton Skitter	1	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	1	1	3	2
Tetney-Grainthorpe	2	-	-	1	-	-	1	2	1	2	-	1
Grainthorpe-Somercotes	-	1	-	2	1	-	2	2	-	2	4	1
Saltfleet-Theddlethorpe	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	2	2	1
Gibraltar Point	2	-	1	2	1	-	2	3	2	2	2	1
Wainfleet	-	5	2	2	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	-
Freiston Shore	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	2	1	1	-	2
Frampton Marsh	1	1	1	2	1	-	5	3	4	1	-	-
Holbeach	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	-
Guy's Head	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-
Fiskerton-Branston Fen	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3
Metherringham-Dunston Fen	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2
Bourne-Thurlby Fen	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	1
Hawthorpe	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of sites 2015	11	8	7	12	4	0	6	17	16	15	23	27
Sum of site peaks 2015	17	13	9	19	5	0	12	24	23	26	41	43
Sum of site peaks 2014	20	11	15	6	4	0	1	4	4	11	24	10
Sum of site peaks 2013	27	15	29	15	16	2	0	0	1	12	10	19
Sum of site peaks 2012	66	35	72	69	77	19	11	9	14	34	31	44

The table shows all area with at least three birds or records in at least three months. Though the year started out with similar numbers to 2014, Nov-Dec numbers were much better returning to levels last seen in 2012. The Ancholme valley returned to prominence with the highest count of seven at Bonby Carrs on Dec 6th. There were five at Wainfleet on Feb 22nd, four at Frampton Marsh on Sep 2nd and three at Alkborough Flats on Sep 29th and Oct 15th-Nov 2nd. Two birds were seen at seven separate coastal sites at various times during Apr-May but there were no indications of breeding apart from a single brief display by a male at Gib Point on Apr 19th.

European Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Rare summer visitor and rare passage migrant.

A full survey of the two main sites in the county Laughton Forest-Scotton Common and Crowle Moors produced totals of 19 and 15 territorial males respectively. The Crowle total was up slightly from 13 in 2014. The Laughton-Scotton total is down by one on the last full survey of that area in 2012 and continues to reflect the loss of clear fells in the forest complex, as the most recent areas reach thicket stage and exclude breeding Nightjars. The first dedicated survey visit at Laughton on May 25th produced a total of four males on the wet heath census area, where later arrivals revealed the presence of nine males, demonstrating the late arrival of several birds in 2015. Away from these two sites two birds were reported at Willingham Woods on Jun 24th but it was not reported if they were two males or a pair. A coastal migrant was seen at Gib Point on Aug 6th-7th and a late bird at Frampton Marsh on Sep 21st.

Common Swift *Apus apus*

Very common summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first reports were of two at Barton Pits and one at Boultham Mere on Apr 19th. The first double figure counts of 10 at Barton Pits and 12 at Frampton Marsh came on May 2nd. A major influx started on May 4th with 47 at Gib Point on the 4th, 110 there on the 5th and 150 at Covenham Res, 400 at Whisby NR and 125 at Frampton Marsh on the 6th. Other large counts in May were 600 at Covenham Res on May 14th and 700 on May 19th, 500 at Whisby NR on May 18th and 500 at Barton Pits on May 20th-21st. During the summer, there were large movements south at Gib Point including 2328 on Jun 17th, 2965 on Jul 2nd, 2500 on Jul 27th and 2000 Aug 4th, but there were no four-figure counts elsewhere. After mid Aug when most breeding birds left, numbers rapidly fell away with a peak count of 211 south at Huttoft Bank/Car Terrace on Aug 19th (the only three-figure count after Aug 6th). During Sep there were 33 widespread reports compared to only six in 2014. However, the last reported bird was 40 days earlier than 2014, one at Gib Point on Oct 5th. One ringing recovery is shown: was this bird below still on passage on one or both occasions, or had it changed its breeding site to such an extent? Breeding birds are thought to be very site faithful.

SH07222	Adult	15-05-2013	Marston Sewage Works: 52°57'N 0°39'W
	Freshly dead (hit building)	18-05-2015	Tralee: 52°15'N 9°42'W (Kerry) 616km W 2y 0m 3d

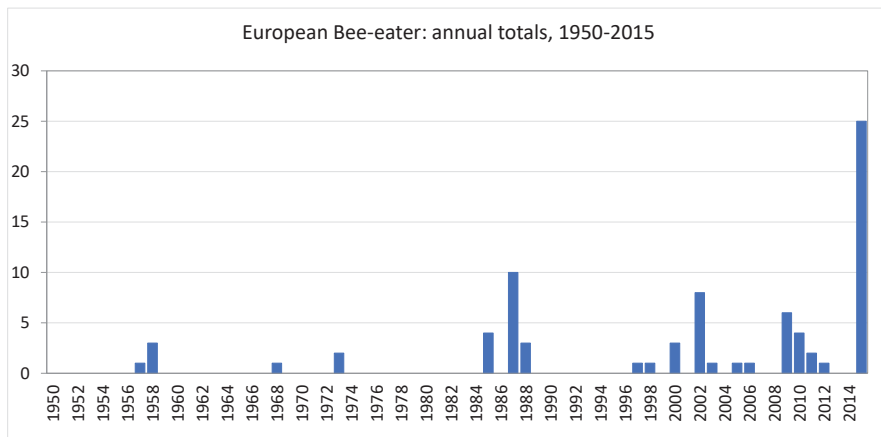
European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*

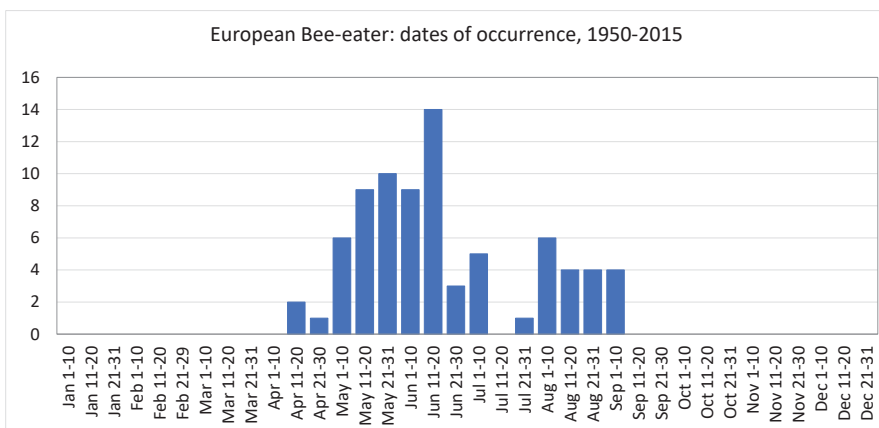
Vagrant. **LBRC RBBP**

Two were watched at close quarters at Woodland Waters, near Ancaster, on May 12th (AHe). Two were heard passing south over Alkborough Flats on May 15th (ND). On Jun 5th, six flew over Chambers Farm Wood (TBg) and one was heard flying north at Rimac (PLE). Ten flew north-west, calling, high over Tetney Marsh on Jun 16th (RL). One was at Dowsby Fen on Jun 19th (TBa). On Aug 1st, two circled over Gib Point before flying off to the west (KMW). One was at Alkborough Flats on Aug 5th (ND). Finally, on Aug 7th, one was circling over Gib Point with Swallows for a few minutes before moving away to the south-west (JPS).

1987 addition: Four were seen at Saltfleet on Aug 19th (MJT). Accepted BBRC (BB 109 p.627).

The first two Bee-eaters in Lincolnshire were shot at Ingoldsby in July 1879 and at Tetney on 15th August 1880. The next, after a long gap, was one at Gibraltar Point on 2nd September 1957 with, coincidentally, three there on 2nd September 1958. Occurrence remained erratic until the late 1990s, after which they have been almost regular (see first chart below). However, the total of 25 in 2015 was unprecedented. The majority of records have been of single birds but small groups have been quite frequent, including parties of four in 1987, five in 2002 and 2009, and then the largest flocks of all this year (see above). The chance of finding the species is better in spring than in autumn (second chart), with 59 out of the 78 post-1950 individuals found before mid June. The earliest were two near Spilsby on 14th-15th April 2011, while the latest were the 2nd September records in 1957 and 1958.





Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Fairly common resident and partial migrant.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly totals 2011	7	8	12	6	8	16	20	31	33	24	21	16
Monthly totals 2012	24	15	21	14	7	8	24	21	35	32	21	11
Monthly totals 2013	21	16	22	24	19	18	14	37	36	33	27	21
Monthly totals 2014	41	30	25	24	26	24	28	42	52	42	50	38
Monthly totals 2015	57	35	57	51	29	29	17	55	70	55	35	35

The table shows how peak monthly counts have grown steadily during a series of mild winters from 2011 through to 2015. Kingfisher is widespread throughout Lincolnshire and reports were received from around 130 sites. The peak monthly total of 70 in Sep 2015 was the highest total in the five year period. The largest single count was of five birds at Raithby Lake, nr Louth, on Sep 2nd. Confirmed breeding was reported from Barton Pits (three pairs), Baston Fen, Boultham Mere, Grantham, Nettleham, Tetney Outfall Sluice and Town Holt Grimsby. There were no high autumn counts suggestive of migration.

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

Rare/scarce passage migrant Apr-May and Aug-Oct, mainly coastal. Bred to early 20th century.
RBBP

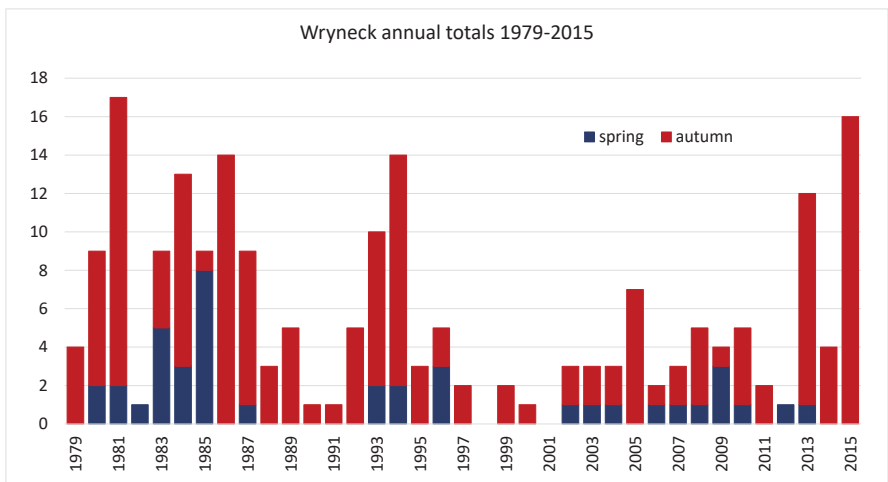


Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* Sleaford Aug 24th 2015 © Alan Ball (left) and Donna Nook Aug 24th 2015 © Chris Atkin (right)

Sixteen birds were found during a 15 day period, in six different locations though with most at Gib Point. The first was at Donna Nook on Aug 23rd-24th. On the 24th, there were also three at Gib Point and one lucky observer was able to photograph one in his garden in Sleaford. The following day, Aug 25th, saw seven at Gib Point. Two of these were considered to be the same as on the previous day but the others were new. On Aug 26th, there was only one at Gib Point but that was thought to be a new bird, and there were singles in the Seaview/Rimac area near Saltfleetby and on the Carr Lane allotments at Cleethorpes. The last was seen again on the 28th-30th. Two were at Gib Point on the 29th. At Frampton Marsh, a bird was present on Sep 2nd and again on the 6th.

1981 addition: One was seen at the Willoughby Branch Line NR on May 2nd (BB 110 p.69).

The long-term decline of the Wryneck is well-known and has been apparent in the increasing scarcity of passage migrants in Lincolnshire, but 2013 and 2015 saw higher totals than since the early 1990s. The presence of seven in one area on one day was the largest concentration since 12 were at Gib Point on 20th August 1977.



Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Fairly common resident and partial migrant.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Toft Newton Res	1	1	1	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	1
Dunholme	-	-	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	1
Boultham Mere/Swanpool	1	2	4	5	3	3	2	4	3	2	1	1
Whisby NR	1	2	4	2	2	-	1	2	1	2	1	1
Heighington	1	-	1	2	1	-	1	1	1	-	1	-
Branston	1	2	2	3	1	3	2	2	2	1	1	1
Norton Disney/Thurlby	1	-	1	1	-	1	-	2	1	-	1	1
Woodhall Spa	-	1	3	2	2	1	2	-	1	-	-	2
Kirkby on Bain GP	-	1	1	2	1	2	3	1	4	2	-	-
Gibraltar Point	1	1	1	3	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1
Frampton Marsh	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1
Anwick/Anwick Fen	-	1	2	2	2	1	2	3	-	-	1	-
Elsea/Math Woods	-	-	5	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
Willow Tree Fen	3	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	-	1
Deeping Lakes NR	3	1	2	1	1	1	3	3	4	1	-	1
Number of sites 2015	35	45	49	66	39	28	39	40	30	21	21	22
Number of sites 2014	24	28	44	51	22	24	39	22	26	28	15	19
Number of sites 2013	13	17	25	36	20	16	15	27	15	18	15	13

The table includes all sites where there were counts of four or more, apart from four at Nocton Wood in Dec, or records in eight months or more. Birds were recorded in about 160 areas, 20% more than in 2014 but perhaps reflecting the increasing volume of records received via BirdTrack. The highest counts were of five on two occasions as shown in the table. In 1989 in The Birds of Lincolnshire & South Humberside, Steve Lorand and Keith Atkin commented on the scarcity of the species in coastal areas. There has been some improvement in the intervening years as a rough analysis reveals around 150 records in such areas covering all months of the year, mainly single birds but with a few counts of two. Breeding is obviously widespread but was confirmed only at Anton's Gowt, where juvenile birds were seen along with adults on Jul 5th & 9th, and in the Branston area in the middle of Jun and at Boultham Mere/Swanpool area at the beginning of Aug. Probable breeding behaviour was noted at East Keal, Welbourn and Kirkby on Bain GP in Jul. Possible breeding behaviour was noted at another six sites in addition to those listed above.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Fairly common resident and partial migrant.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alkborough Flats	1	-	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	1	1	1
Messingham SQ	2	1	1	2	2	3	-	-	1	-	-	3
Barton Pits	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1
Covenham Res	1	-	1	1	1	-	-	1	2	1	2	1
Tetney Marsh	2	-	1	1	1	2	1	1	-	1	1	1
Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe	-	2	1	1	1	1	-	1	4	3	1	1
Gibraltar Point	2	2	2	2	2	3	5	4	6	4	3	3
Lincoln	1	1	1	2	1	-	1	1	1	-	-	-
Boultham Mere/Swanpool	2	2	2	2	4	5	1	2	2	2	2	1
Whisby NR	1	1	1	1	1	-	1	1	1	1	1	1
Branston	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	2
Woodhall Spa	2	1	2	2	1	-	2	-	2	1	-	2
Tattershall Lakes CP	1	2	-	1	-	1	1	1	-	1	1	-
Anwick	1	-	2	7	3	6	1	1	-	-	1	1
Number of sites 2015	52	44	50	65	50	41	23	29	33	31	25	39
Number of sites 2014	32	33	51	44	22	21	22	20	28	30	28	27
Number of sites 2013	24	25	31	40	21	22	16	15	16	28	24	30

The table includes all sites where there were counts in eight months or more. Records came from 175 sites. Counts of seven came from each of Anwick STW, Elsea/Math Woods and Gunby, all in the first two weeks of Apr and were the largest totals of the year. Anwick and Elsea also had had counts of six, as did Ruskington and Gib Point. Although far from comprehensive, breeding information was improved on 2014, being confirmed at Lawn Wood & Meadows NR, Boultham Mere/Swanpool, Flixborough, Messingham and Gib Point. Probable breeding evidence was noted at 11 sites and possible breeding at another seven locations. Birds were noted in all months all along the coast, where autumn peak counts came from Gib Point, with six on Sep 20th, five on Sep 13th and 22nd and six counts of four, and from Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes which had a count of four on Sep 11th. Below are details of the oldest ringed bird reported this year; seven years compares to the BTO longevity record of 11 years 1 month.

CF05096	First-year	28-09-2008	Bourne Wood: 52°45'N 0°23'W
	Caught by ringer	02-04-2009	Bourne Wood: 52°45'N 0°23'W 0km 0y 6m 5d
	Caught by ringer	26-11-2015	Bourne Wood: 52°45'N 0°23'W 0km 7y 1m 29d

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor*

Rare resident. RBBP

Records came from just twelve sites, six in the Lincoln area close to and including a remarkable breeding record in Swanpool. Activity was closely monitored there between Jan 29th to Aug 1st at what proved to be a nesting site from which six young were raised. A full account by the finder ACS is published at p.179 of this report. It is possible that all records in the vicinity, especially those at Hartsholme CP and Swanholme Park during Feb could be attributed to this pair. A male was heard and seen drumming on Apr 16th and May 14th at Highall Wood. A drumming bird was at Belton Park on Apr 5th and another was at Woodhall Spa on Apr 2nd where breeding had been confirmed the previous year. Other single date sightings with no detail provided included singles at Aubourn on Feb 21st, Deeping Lakes on Feb 27th and a female at Elsea/Math Wood on Mar 7th. A single bird was reported at Whisby NR on four dates between Sep 11th and Nov

23rd. On Dec 31st a pair were seen at Hartsholme CP. A website giving guidance on finding and reporting nesting Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers is now at www.woodpecker-network.org.uk; please support this as well as reporting all sightings of the species at any time of year to LBC or through BirdTrack.



Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor* Hartsholme Park Feb 14th 2015 © Mike Cook (left) and Swanpool Mar 22nd 2015 © Andy Sims (right)

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Common resident and passage migrant.

Alan Ball and Bob Sheppard have kindly provided the data relating to their Kestrel ringing programme. The majority of nests are located within chambers incorporated above pole mounted barn owl nest boxes although they additionally monitor a number of bespoke Kestrel nest boxes and occasionally birds will commandeer the main chamber of a barn owl nest box. This year, 44 nests were monitored, of which 5 failed and 22 were not ringed for various reasons, meaning that 17 broods were ringed, a considerable reduction from the 111 in 2014. A total of 46 chicks was ringed (average 2.7 per brood). Making comparisons with previous years is difficult, as differing numbers of nest sites have been monitored, but during 2011-2014 mean brood sizes were, respectively, 4.2, 2.8, 3.2 and 4.0, suggesting that this year was considerably below average, as it was also for barn owls, and it would seem the lack of voles hit both species very hard during 2015. The below table shows the data collected 2011-2015 and highlight the 2015 poor breeding season.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total number of nests†	85	117	82	150	43
Failures	7	27	10	16	5
Broods ringed	55	66	54	111	17
Chicks ringed	236	186	171	449	46
Mean no. chicks ringed per brood	4.2	2.8	3.2	4.0	2.7

†“Total nests” includes broods not ringed and with unknown outcome as well as those ringed or failing.
Note that boxes containing no clutch or brood are excluded.

Brood size 2015	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Number	3	5	5	2	2	-	17
Total chicks	3	10	15	8	10	-	46

Throughout the year, birds were recorded across the county with majority of records relating to single individuals, with little difference in winter and summer distribution. Peak coastal spring counts included seven at Donna Nook on May 3rd and six at Gib Point on May 4th which included two birds south. Autumn passage started in early Aug with six at Gib Point on the 1st, 14 on the 4th, and 10 on the 22nd and 31st and on Sep 5th, with numerous birds recorded flying south during this period, suggesting a turnover of birds. There were also 10 at nearby Wainfleet Marsh on Aug 31st. At Donna Nook the counts mirrored the pattern at Gib Point with 10 on Aug 12th and 21st, 14 on Aug 27th, and 15 on Aug 28th and 30th. Elsewhere peak counts included nine at Metheringham Delph on Jan 18th, eight at Thorpe Tilney on Jun 9th, eight at Frampton Marsh on Aug 1st and 16 at Holbeach Range on Aug 4th.

The first two ringing recoveries concern fairly old birds, the BTO record being 15 years 11 months. The others concern foreign exchanges. Most British-bred Kestrels do not disperse far but a few move substantial distances including to the continent as did the one in Belgium. Those breeding in Finland and Scandinavia are more migratory and many come to Britain in winter; the example here seems to have been lucky to recover from a collision with a car.

ET32407	Nestling	09-06-2005	Holbeach Hurn: 52°49'N 0°4'E
	Dead	01-12-2015	Fawsley: 52°11'N 1°11'W (Northamptonshire) 112km SW 10y 5m 22d
EL60253	Nestling Female	23-06-2005	near Walcot: 53°5'N 0°18'W
	Freshly dead (predated)	25-05-2015	Ruskington Fen: c. 53°3'N 0°19'W 6km SSW 9y 11m 2d
EY93217	Nestling	18-07-2014	Leverton, Boston: 52°59'N 0°6'E
	Freshly dead (disease)	10-03-2015	Clermont, Walcourt: 50°15'N 4°19'E (Namur) Belgium 421km SE 0y 7m 20d
SVS	Nestling Female	02-07-2014	Molltorp, Karlsborg: 58°28'N 14°24'E (Västra Götaland) Sweden
7221301	Sick (hit by car)	04-09-2014	Worlaby, Scunthorpe: 53°37'N 0°27'W (North Lincolnshire) 1,068km WSW 0y 2m 2d
	Caught by ringer	24-04-2015	River Derwent, Wheldrake, York: c. 53°53'N 0°57'W (York) 1,076km WSW 0y 9m 22d

Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus*

Vagrant. **LBRC**

An excellent year with three birds occurring, corresponding with an influx in southern Britain and across northern Europe. A first-summer male, which had originally been seen in Staffordshire from early Jul to Aug 8th was present at Willow Tree Fen from Aug 12th until Sep 2nd (GMcQ *et al.*). This bird was also presumed to be that seen in Northumberland on Sep 9th-10th and found shot dead near Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire, on Sep 19th. The next seen was a juvenile, recorded at Donna Nook on Aug 25th (SL). This coincided with an influx of birds, including two juveniles at Spurn Point, Yorkshire, on the previous day, one of which flew off towards the Lincolnshire coast. It is possible that the Donna Nook individual was that bird. Another juvenile bird was at Gib Point during Sep 24th-30th (KMW) and was regularly recorded hawking dragonflies over the plantation. This was thought to have been the bird on the Isle of May, Fife, on Sep 14th-19th.

The first Red-footed Falcon in Lincolnshire was shot at the mouth of the Humber in early November 1864. There was another in May 1902 but all 30 others have occurred from 1963 onwards. They have all been single birds but, as shown in the chart below, there have been two in four years, and three in three years including 2015. Slightly more have been found in spring than in autumn, with 19 during 6th April-30th June and 13 during 25th July-2nd November (plus the undated one in 1864). Nine of the 32 were inland, the rest being on or close to the coast or estuaries.



Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus* Gib Point Sep 28th 2015 © Paul Neale



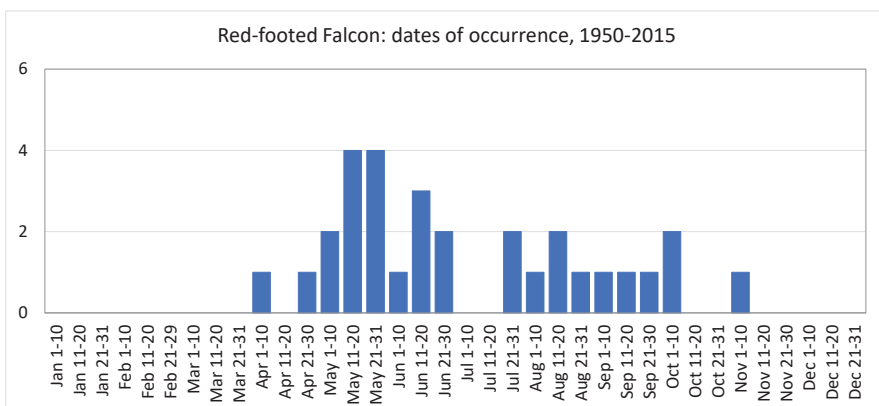
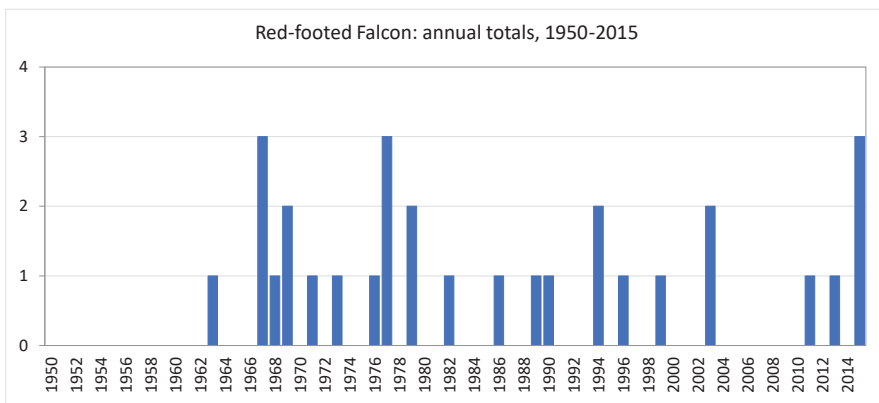
Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus* Gib Point Sep 28th 2015 © Paul Neale



Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus* Willow Tree Fen Aug 22nd 2015 © Mark Johnshon



Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus* Willow Tree Fen Aug 26th 2015 © Graham Catley



Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Scarce/fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant; scarce in summer. Bred sporadically in the 19th century.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>The Humber</i>												
Alkborough Flats	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	-	2
<i>Coastal</i>												
Tetney Marsh	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	1
Donna Nook	1	3	1	1	1	-	1	1	1	2	2	1
Saltfleet-Theddlethorpe	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	2	1	2
<i>The Wash</i>												
Gibraltar Point	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	3	5	2
Freiston Shore	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1
Frampton Marsh	3	3	3	2	-	-	1	2	1	2	3	3

Birds were seen most consistently at coastal sites, including both The Wash and Humber, with nine sites recording birds in four or more months, as shown in the table. In the first winter period, coastal birds were recorded from nine sites with birds recorded daily at the well watched sites of Gib Point and Frampton Marsh, with both sites regular recording two birds and a peak count of three birds at Frampton Marsh on seven dates throughout the period. At Donna Nook there were

also three birds on Feb 8th. There were just a handful of coastal and Wash records in May-Jul with single birds recorded on two dates at Alkborough Flats and Donna Nook, on three dates at Gib Point, a single record at Friskney and on five dates at Frampton. In the second winter period birds were recorded from twenty coastal sites with most records involving single birds. During Oct records of two or more were almost daily from Gib Point and Frampton Marsh with two at Tetney Marsh on the 16th, Donna Nook on the 27th and 30th, and Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on the 31st. During Nov-Dec a peak count of five at Gib Point included three singles south over the sea and two locals hunting Greenshanks Ridge together on Nov 11th, and three at Frampton Marsh on Nov 27th and three dates in Dec. Inland birds during the first winter period were singles at Sturton by Stow on Jan 3rd, Langholme on Jan 8th, Deeping High Bank on Jan 14th, Wold Newton on Feb 10th, Whisby village on Feb 14th, Willow Tree Fen on Feb 18th, Wasps Nest on Feb 20th, Kirkby Moor NR on Feb 27th, Mareham le Fen on Mar 4th, East Keal on Mar 16th, Wroot on Mar 18th, Marston STW on Apr 4th and Covenham Res on Apr 11th. The only inland record during May-Jul was one at Midville on May 23rd, and there were others at Frithville on Aug 5th and at Willow Tree Fen on Aug 13th. During the second winter period, inland birds were singles at Hawthorpe on Oct 25th, Covenham Res on Nov 3rd, Nocton Fen on Nov 16th, Wroot on Nov 18th and Dec 2nd, Baumber and Deeping High Bank on Nov 19th, Louth on Dec 5th, Branston Fen on Dec 6th, Bonby Carrs on Dec 7th, Baston Fen on Dec 20th and Bardney on Dec 22nd.

EY56183	Nestling Female	24-06-2015	Middleton: 54°37'N 2°5'W (Durham)
	Freshly dead	03-08-2015	Normanton-on-Cliffe: 53°0'N 0°35'W 205km SSE 0y 1m 10d

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant. Bred to early 1900s and sporadically in the 1970s, regularly from the mid-1980s. **RBPP**

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Number of sites 2015	13	34	33	31	43	41	5	1
Number of sites 2014	6	34	25	26	32	29	4	-

The table shows numbers of sites reporting birds per month. The total number of locations where birds were recorded at least once between May and Aug was 85, up from 80 in 2014. Confirmed breeding was reported from three sites, understating the true position. As in 2014, two broods (one of three and one of two) were raised in Laughton Forest, one brood of two at Boultham Mere, and a brood of one at Blackmoor Bridge. The first bird of the year was at Tetney Marsh on Apr 14th, with further birds recorded at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Apr 15th and Wyberton and Donna Nook on Apr 16th. During the period May-Aug, ten sites recorded birds during every month, of which seven were probable breeding sites: Alkborough Flats, Donna Nook, Frampton Marsh, Gibraltar Point, Kirkby on Bain GP, North Hykeham Pits, and Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR. Most records involved single individuals or occasionally two in flight, with the exception of three at Whisby NR on Jun 6th. There were four Oct records: singles at Baston Fen and Kirkby on Bain GP on the 1st, Gib Point on the 2nd and the last at Frampton Marsh on the 4th. The BTO longevity record for Hobby is 14 years 10 months so the one below was quite old, but its cause of death was deplorable.

ET32462	Nestling	01-08-2003	Deeping St Nicholas: 52°43'N 0°13'W
	Freshly dead (shot)	15-09-2015	Berry Hill, Ropley: 51°4'N 1°6'W (Hampshire) 192km SSW 12y 1m 14d

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

Scarce but widespread resident, passage migrant and winter visitor; now breeds in larger numbers than previously recorded. **RBPP**

Following last year's bumper record of 19 confirmed pairs and six prospective nest sites, boosted by the 2014 national BTO survey, this year no reports were received from 17 of those sites. Eleven confirmed pairs raised 17 young. Three of these sites were new, including St James's Church, Louth, where three young were raised in the first successful nesting on this steeple. The pair at Boston Stump raised three young and at Lincoln Cathedral four young were raised. At St Wulfram's Church, Grantham, repairs continued and no nesting took place. Numbers of Peregrines generally are probably still increasing but the trend may be levelling off. Birds were reported on more days in 2015 compared to 2014 (337 vs 322) but such comparisons (and of the numbers of records and sites) are confounded by recording biases. Birds can now be seen almost anywhere, though at higher frequencies on the coast. Birds are seen throughout the year with a lower frequency of sightings only at the time when birds are sitting on nests.



Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* juvenile Louth Jul 11th 2015 ©John Clarkson

Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

Rare. Vagrant from feral populations and occasional local escapes.

All of this year's records were in the south of the county and would appear to be linked to escaped birds, possibly from Friskney Parrot Zoo. There was one at Fishtoft on Jan 27th-28th and one at Skegness on Apr 5th. Two were at Wainfleet All Saints on Oct 20th, and in Dec, there was one at Anton's Gowt on the 21st, four at Willoughby on the 26th and one at Gib Point on the 27th.

Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

Rare migrant mainly spring/early summer, but recorded Apr-Aug. **LBRC RBBP**

A female-like bird flew south over Theddlethorpe dunes on May 11th (JRW). A singing male was seen at Seaview, Theddlethorpe, on May 13th (PRo, JRow) and on the same day a singing first summer male was photographed at Gib Point (NAL). On May 14th-15th, a full adult male and a female, together with the immature male from the 13th, were present at Gib Point, both males singing (KMW, ABe *et al.*). On the 16th, an adult male and a female/immature were seen at Gib Point; one or both could have been new birds but they are counted as the same as on previous days. On May 17th, an adult male was at Seacroft, just north of Gib Point, and this too is assumed to have been the same. Another female/immature was seen at Gib Point on Jun 14th (JAS, KMW).



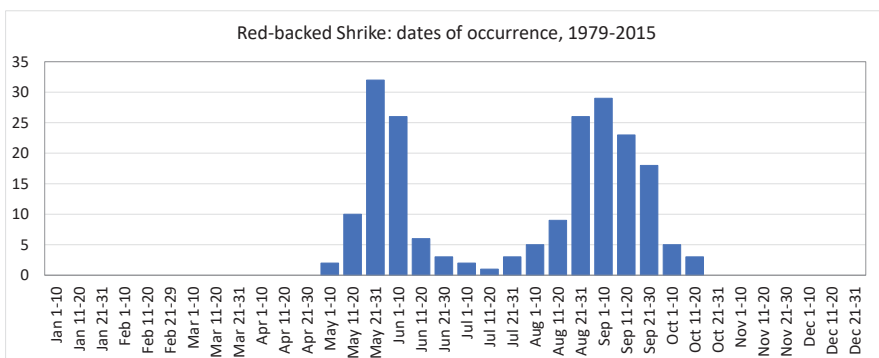
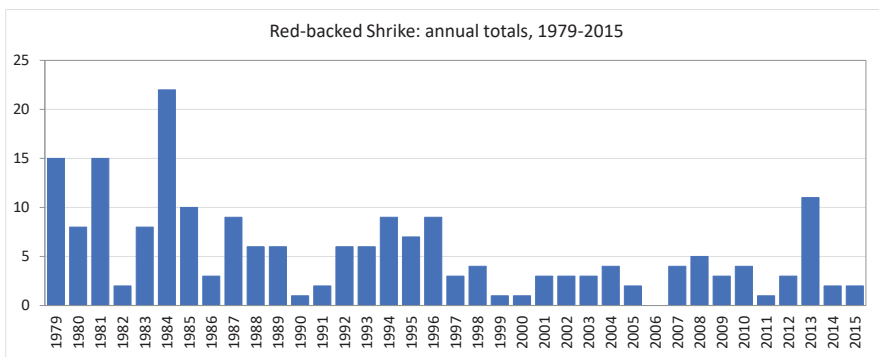
Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus* Gib Point May 16th 2015 © Graham Catley

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

Rare passage migrant and occasional summer visitor. Former rare breeder. **LBRC RBBP**

There were two juveniles in autumn this year, at Gib Point on Aug 25th-27th (JAS *et al.*) and at Cleethorpes on Aug 29th-Sep 2nd (JRN *et al.*).

Red-backed Shrikes last bred in Lincolnshire in 1978, just before the period shown in the charts, but seems never to have been a regular breeder, from the late 19th century at least. The numbers of migrants found in the county vary from year to year but the underlying trend is one of decline. The average number per year was 7.9 during 1979-1995 but 3.4 during 1996-2015. Roughly similar totals have occurred in spring and in autumn and, with occasional July records, it is hard to discern a real break between those seasons. The earliest record during 1979-2015 was a female at Saltfleetby on 5th May 1985 and the latest was a juvenile also at Saltfleetby on 14th October 1988. Most are found on the coast between Cleethorpes and Gibraltar Point but a few are inland, in both spring and autumn.



Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*

Rare passage migrant and rare winter visitor Oct-Apr. Exceptional in summer: **LBRC**

One at Blyton, found there on Dec 24th 2014, remained to Jan 4th (ND *et al.*). One was found near Wold Newton on Jan 23rd, and it stayed there until Feb 18th (WM, SJM *et al.*). In the west of the county, one seen at Stainby Tip on Jan 30th (APC) is assumed to have been the same as that seen at Skillington on Feb 19th (MBu), though searches could not locate it on other dates. One was near Aubourn on Feb 22nd-23rd (BWd) and one was at Skellingthorpe on Mar 27th (RMo), which could possibly have been the same but is treated as different. The last in spring was one at Donna Nook on Apr 11th (CJ, SJ, SL). One appeared at Gib Point on Oct 11th-13th, and was joined by a second on the 14th-15th (GGr, NAL *et al.*). Records at Gib Point on Oct 18th-20th are assumed all to refer to one bird, trapped on the 19th (NAL, GGr), but another was at Seacroft Fields on the 19th (KMW). Also at this time, there were singles at Tetney Marsh on Oct 18th (JRN), Frampton Marsh on the 19th (JB), and Cleethorpes on Oct 20th (JRN). In Nov, one was at Gib Point on the 1st (RKW) and one at Donna Nook on the 22nd (SL). The total for the year is thus 16: six in winter-spring including the one from 2014, and 10 in autumn.

Gib Point is developing a habit of getting interesting Great Grey Shrike recoveries (see the 2013 report). This year, a migrant from the previous autumn was found in west Wales at a regular wintering site for the species: this bird had been there some time when caught, and possibly since Nov 2014 (midwalesringers.blogspot.co.uk).

LE46843	Adult	14-10-2014	Gibraltar Point: 53°5'N 0°18'E
	Caught by ringer	04-03-2015	Cross Inn Forest, Llanon: c. 52°15'N 4°5'W (Ceredigion) 312km WSW 0y 4m 18d



Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor* Gib Point Oct 11th 2015 © Paul Neale

Magpie *Pica pica*

Very common resident.

Counts of 10 or more came from 39 sites, with totals tending to be largest over-winter and especially during Jan-Mar. Roosts and flocks of birds contribute many of the reports of this species, and thus counts tend to fall away after pre-breeding dispersal in Mar. The highest count anywhere in the county was of c70 at Cleethorpes CP on Feb 16th. All other high counts (30-45) were recorded during Jan-Mar and Oct-Dec. There was no evidence of any autumn movements. The all-England BBS results from the BTO showed no statistically significant change between 2014 and 2015. There were no significant ringing data for this species in 2015.

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Common resident, irregular migrant and winter visitor.

A total of about 140 sites reported Jays during 2015, similar to the number in 2014. The year 2015 was a largely unremarkable one, with the exception of a significant spring movement on the coast at Gib Point. This was not reported at other coastal sites and no inland sites recorded any more than 1-5 birds. There were no records at all at Gib Point before Apr 10th, and the first sign of a significant event was on Apr 22nd when 26 were recorded, including one flock of 14 birds. Numbers continued to increase into May and by 11th a maximum of 54 was recorded. The largest single flock was one of 26 on May 12th. Altogether there were eight days during Apr 22nd-May 13th on which over 25 were counted, and several more in the range 10-22 through to May 21st. Numbers dwindled thereafter and by the end of the month just 7 were recorded. It was very difficult to know the true total of birds present and passing through, as there was no common direction of movement. Birds moved up and down the reserve, eventually moving away to all points of the compass! At least 10 were trapped and ringed. There was no repeat of this phenomenon in the autumn, when the Gib Point maximum was just two birds, and the only sites elsewhere reporting double figure counts were Belton Park with 10 on Sep 27th and Boultham Mere with 10 on Sep 29th. Counts in the last quarter of the year were unremarkable.

There has been speculation about the origins of irrupting Jays, with those in autumn (e.g. in 1983 or 2012) often assumed to be largely continental birds though there is little evidence of this from plumage characteristics or ringing recoveries. An interesting recovery of a bird caught at both Seacroft and Gibraltar Point at the tail-end of the autumn 2012 event is shown below. This seems likely to have been a local bird; certainly there is nothing to suggest it came from the continent. It

is believed that British birds can get caught up in irruptions from the continent but Jay movements, including localised concentrations such as in Apr-May 2015, remain something of a mystery.

DA85480	First-year	25-10-2012	Seacroft, Skegness: 53°6'N 0°19'E
	Caught by ringer	29-10-2012	Gibraltar Point: 53°5'N 0°18'E 2km 0y 0m 4d
	Freshly dead (shot)	26-03-2015	Leverton Outgate: 52°59'N 0°6'E 20km SW 2y 5m 1d

Western Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

Very common resident, also passage migrant and winter visitor.

Nordic Jackdaw *C.m.monedula*. Rare or overlooked winter visitor.

BBS trends continue to show an increasing Jackdaw population, as has been apparent for the last decade or so; the all-England change between 2014 and 2015 was a significant gain of 11% (though in this county it was a non-significant 1% increase). Reports this year came from about 280 sites across the county, significantly more than in 2014. There were some counts of 100 or more in every month but with the largest totals restricted to the year-ends. Counts of 100-450 during the first quarter were recorded at Branston, Colsterworth Landfill, Croftmarsh LNR, Gib Point, Kirkby on Bain GP, Linwood Warren, Louth, Nettleton, North Hykeham, Norton Disney Pits and Trent Port (Marton). Prolonged southward movements were noted at Gib Point in spring and autumn although they did not involve huge numbers. Daily counts of up to 105 south were made during early Mar-late May. In autumn pre-roost gatherings of up to 160 were noted there from late Aug and later small flocks going southwards were noted from mid Sep through to Nov. As in previous years there were some large flocks in Nov and Dec, with 200-400 being noted at Bourne Fen South, East Keal, Gib Point and Willingham Forest. The largest counts were all in Dec, though, at North Hykeham Pits (600), Whisby NR (600) and Trent Port, Marton (900). There were two notable ringing recoveries during 2015 each involving sedentary birds of around 8 years of age, though these are well short of the British longevity record of 17 years.

EL88882	Nestling	28-05-2007	near Pinchbeck Marsh, Spalding: 52°48'N 0°7'W
	Caught by ringer	30-05-2015	Six House Bank: 52°48'N 0°14'W 7km WSW 8y 0m 2d
EL72242	Nestling	21-05-2007	Newball Wood, near Langworth: c. 53°16'N 0°22'W
	Freshly dead (shot)	14-02-2015	Hardy Gang Wood, Apley: 53°15'N 0°21'W 2km 7y 8m 24d

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Very common resident, also passage migrant and winter visitor.



Rook *Corvus frugilegus* Coningsby Sep 30th 2015 © Neil Smith

Rook remains an abundant and widespread species. The national BTO BBS population trend has shown a downward trend since 1995 (-12%), but that for the East Midlands has been fairly

static. The population is now similar that in 1995. As with many common species, Rook is not very well reported in the county, although counts were received from about 230 sites, many more than in 2014. In the first quarter of the year, monthly peaks of 150 or more came from 14 sites: Tetney Marsh, Middlemarsh Farm, Nettleton (all 150); Donna Nook (180); Alderfen (Wroot), Hawthorpe, Heighington, Woodhall Spa and Wrangle Brickpits (all 200); Covenham Res (220); North Moor (250); East Keal (260); Scunthorpe and Winterton (both 300).

Breeding was confirmed at 15 sites and probably occurred at a further six sites, clearly a gross under-estimate. Nest counts received were as follows: 13 at East Keal; 58 at Hagnaby Fen; 62 at Kirkby on Bain GP; 10 (minimum) near Tattershall Castle; 13 at Marshchapel; and 30 at Melton Ross. A small amount of movement was noted at Gib Point in spring and autumn, the largest counts being 42 south on Apr 15th and 37 south on May 4th. In the last quarter of the year, several sites recorded 100-250 birds, but the highest counts were 600 at Willingham Forest and 400 at Metheringham Delph in Nov, and 700 at Bicker Fen and 600 at Trent Port (Marton) in Dec.

Rooks are resident over the western and southern parts of their western European range, including British breeding birds, but migratory to the north and east. Ringing recoveries indicate an intricate pattern of wintering areas for migratory populations, most of which forsake breeding grounds during Oct. There have been irregular influxes from the Baltic and Dutch breeding population winters to eastern England although these appear to have become very infrequent since at least the 1950s.

Carriion Crow *Corvus corone*

Common resident, also passage migrant and winter visitor.

The national breeding population trend for this species continues to show a consistent but gentle increase and the number of sites reporting Carriion Crow (about 330) reflects its common status across the county. There were counts of 100 or more in the first quarter of the year from three sites, at Blackmoor Bridge (100), Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR (100) and Thurlby Pit (200). There were no notable spring or summer records but there was a modest build-up again during the autumn and winter. Most were seen on the coast, although not quite so numerous as in the first quarter. Up to 150 were counted at Donna Nook in Nov, and in Dec there was a maximum of 210 at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR. Inland, flocks of 20-75 were also widely reported, and there were 150 at Whisby NR in Dec.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*

Very scarce migrant and winter visitor formerly much more common in winter. **LBRC**

Hooded Crow remains a rare visitor and there were no reports at all in 2015.



Common Raven *Corvus corax* Horncastle Mar 4th 2015 © Russell Hayes

Common Raven *Corvus corax*

Resident to 18th century but now a rare breeder and rare/scarc, but increasing visitor.

Reports came from 45 sites this year, slightly fewer than the 51 in 2014, with reports coming from between 2-12 sites per month. The reports were concentrated in the southwest and into the Wolds with a scattering along the Lincoln edge and a few to north Lincolnshire and the coast. The continuing spread is emphasised by this being the first year with multiple sightings at Gib Point, including singles in Jul and Aug, then one on Nov 19th and two on the 20th. The number of breeding pairs is slowly increasing but incompletely known. This year, fewer territorial pairs were reported, with just two confirmed cases of successful breeding and probable breeding at two other sites.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Tetney Marsh	-	-	2	1	-	1	-	-	5	40	6	1
Donna Nook	1	-	2	11	-	-	1	1	10	180	10	1
Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe	-	3	1	2	-	-	-	2	40	3000	4	1
Huttoft Bank	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	60	-	3
Anderby Creek	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	50	10	-
Gibraltar Point	8	7	8	25	2	-	-	2	83	1500	32	6
Freiston Shore	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	50	2	-
Louth	10	10	1	6	1	1	-	10	1	-	-	1
Willingham Forest	-	-	5	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	50	-

The table includes all sites at which more than 30 were noted or with records in nine or more months. Spring numbers reported were very small and breeding was confirmed at only two sites (Anton's Gowt and Louth), although of course substantial breeding populations around the county are inadequately reported. There were 83 at Gib Point on Sep 20th, but all other counts of 50 or more during the year occurred in Oct. The main arrival was on Oct 11th when c3000 were at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes and c1000 at Gib Point. Birds lingered and continued to arrive over the next seven days with c2000 at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes and the Donna Nook peak of 180 on the 12th, and c1500 at Gib Point on the 14th. Several other coastal sites recorded concentrations of 50 or so. Numbers continued high for a few days, with estimates on the 17th including 800 at Gib Point and 400 at Crook Bank, Theddlethorpe, after which numbers tailed off and after 500 at Gib Point on Oct 19th and 130 there on the 20th, there were no more counts exceeding 100. Obviously, it was very difficult to obtain accurate counts of these birds but the numbers trapped and ringed also were exceptional. At Gib Point, 1152 were trapped during Oct 11th-18th including 382 on the 11th and 228 on the 17th, while at Crook Bank, Theddlethorpe, 909 were trapped over a similar period. These really large numbers were confined to the coast but some elevated totals were recorded inland in Oct, such as 15 at Trent Port (Marton) on Oct 7th. There was also an estimate of c50 in Willingham Woods (where many breed) on Nov 12th. Autumn arrivals of Goldcrests are highly variable. In some years, the peak counts are only a few tens. More commonly, there will be maxima of a few hundreds and occasionally estimates run into the thousands, as both this year and 2014.

There were a good number of foreign ringing exchanges this year. None of them is particularly surprising but one pinpoints the precise night when the bird made its North Sea crossing from Denmark. The bird which crossed from Gib Point to Germany in autumn is likely to have already crossed from Scandinavia to here, as few if any British-bred Goldcrests winter on the continent.

HHC664	First-year Female Caught by ringer	15-10-2014 07-04-2015	near North Somercotes: 53°26'N 0°9'E Parnassiaeweg, Bloemendaal: 52°25'N 4°33'E (Noord-Holland) The Netherlands 317km ESE by 5m 23d
HXK702	First-year Male Caught by ringer	18-10-2015 07-11-2015	Gibraltar Point: 53°5'N 0°18'E near Eversdorf (Kreis Steinburg): 53°58'N 9°28'E (Schleswig-Holstein) Germany 614km E 0y 0m 20d
DKC P20230	First-year Male Caught by ringer	11-10-2015 12-10-2015	Romo, Skaerbaek: 55°4'N 8°33'E (Sønderjyllands) Denmark near North Somercotes: 53°26'N 0°9'E 574km WSW 0y 0m 1d
SVS TS5001	Full-grown Female Caught by ringer	04-10-2015 14-10-2015	Torhamn: 56°6'N 15°51'E (Blekinge) Sweden Theddlethorpe St Helen, Mablethorpe: 53°21'N 0°13'E 1,048km WSW 0y 0m 10d

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*

Scarce passage migrant and rare winter visitor. Rare summer records and territorial behaviour. **RBBP**

With one exception, there were only spring and autumn migrants this year. The first in spring were at Burgh le Marsh and Gib Point on Mar 5th. At least two singles occurred at Donna Nook during Mar 8th-10th and one at Gib Point on Mar 14th and 16th. For the remainder of the spring, Gib Point had a virtual monopoly with 1-2 birds recorded during Apr and May, and maxima of four on Apr 2nd and 6th. Single birds were trapped there on Apr 5th and May 10th (the last recorded in spring). Elsewhere, single birds were seen at Gunby near Spilsby on Apr 13th and at Kirkby Moor on May 3rd. In summer, a male was singing at Gib Point on Jun 17th. In the autumn, the first record was at Tetney Marsh on Sep 28th. Thereafter, singles appeared in Oct at Gib Point on the 1st, Rimac, Saltfleetby on the 2nd and Donna Nook on the 3rd-4th. There were four at Gib Point on Oct 11th, when two were trapped, and 1-2 there daily through to the 19th and one on Oct 23rd. At Donna Nook, there was one on Oct 12th, two on the 18th and one on the 26th-27th, while at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR there were singles on Oct 12th and 27th. The only other autumn record away from these sites was of one at Freiston Shore on Oct 18th. The final record of the year at Gib Point on Nov 3rd.

Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*

Rare: extremely local resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. **RBBP**

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alkborough Flats	8	17	+	+	46	+	40	7	100	16	8	7
+ indicates birds present but not counted												
Winteringham Haven	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	-	-	-	-	-
Barton Pits	4	2	5	4	1	4	2	1	14	18	2	2
Gibraltar Point	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	-	-

It was yet another record year for numbers of breeding Bearded Tits. The Alkborough Flats population was not closely monitored through the breeding season but it is thought at least 23 pairs bred, and many broods were seen to have fledged. Subsequently 100 were reported on Sep 29th. There were at least six pairs at Winteringham Haven where twelve birds were present on Jul 15th. There was probably at least one pair at Barton Pits where one male and three females were seen on Apr 24th and a possible feeding flight was observed on May 27th. The total estimate of 30 pairs is similar to the 28 pairs in 2014. Records from sites not in the table were four at Messingham SQ on Jan 11th, two at South Ferriby Cliff on Mar 10th, one at Huttoft Bank Pit on Sep 7th, four on Read's Island on Oct 18th and c2 at East Halton Skitter on Oct 26th. At Frampton Marsh one to two birds were seen on eight dates between Sep 30th and Oct 17th.

Woodlark *Lullula arborea*

Scarce semi-resident, summer visitor and passage migrant. Bred to 1959 and again from 1984 with numbers peaking around the year 2000, although now steadily declining. **RBBP**

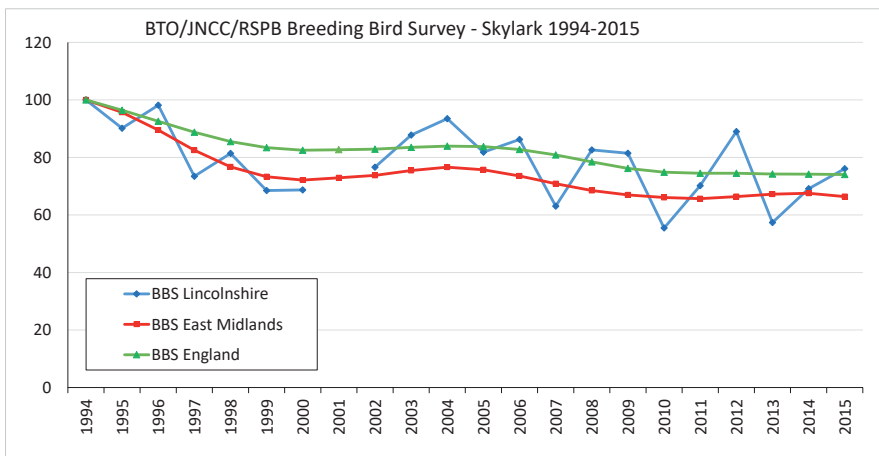
A wintering bird was reported from Knaith on Jan 5th with the first spring migrant at Gib Point on Feb 19th-20th; there were subsequent records at Gib Point on Mar 7th and 10th, Apr 9th and May 8th, all flying south. In Loughton Forest-Scotton Common the first birds were found on Mar 17th but only four pairs bred though additional males were noted in seven more areas for short periods in the spring. This is the worst total recorded since 1989 and continues the decline of this species in what was the key site for the species in the county; the last birds of the year there were seen on Jul 30th. The only reports from Kirkby Moor-Moor Farm were of single birds on Feb 25th and Apr 8th, surely an under representation of the situation there? One was noted singing at Woodhall Golf Course on Mar 5th, 11th and May 14th, with breeding suspected. There was no survey of the important Greetwell Warren area but birds were known to be present. At least one pair bred on Risby Warren and one was seen at Messingham SQ on Apr 4th. Away from breeding sites, autumn coastal migrants were seen at Gib Point Oct 4th and Pye's Hall on Oct 11th.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Very common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Breeding numbers have declined in recent years.

Seven sites on the coast produced counts of over 100 in Jan and Feb, the highest being 400 at Wrangle on Jan 23rd, 290 at Donna Nook on Feb 6th, 350 at Wainfleet also on the 6th and 359 there on Feb 22nd. Wintering numbers began to decline at most sites by late Feb, although very little visible passage was observed. Breeding birds were well-distributed across the county but the

main concentrations were chiefly coastal. Surveys showed that 69 pairs nested at Frampton Marsh with 14 pairs at Freiston Shore, while at least 70-80 pairs were estimated at Donna Nook and 88 territories at Alkborough Flats. While there can be dense concentrations at nature reserves and similar areas, birds nest at low densities in much of the wider countryside and there is little sign of the long-term decline being reversed (see BBS chart). Other notable counts during the summer included up to 33 birds at Garthorpe, 87 at Welbourn Heath, 156 at Gib Point, 110 at Wrangle, 36 at Thorpe Tilney and 35 at Ruskington Fen. By Oct 100-180 birds were regularly present at Donna Nook, Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes and Gib Point and other good totals were 98 at Welbourn Heath on Oct 9th and 72 at Friskney on the 31st. Smaller numbers were present at most sites in late autumn, but there were still good peaks of 300 between Horseshoe Point and Tetney Haven on Nov 16th, 380 at Donna Nook on Dec 11th, 140 at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes on Dec 14th and 120 at Wrangle on Dec 15th. Light southerly movements were noted along the coast on most days from Oct 1st-Dec 31st with the main passage recorded at Gib Point: 279 on Oct 9th was easily the best day there, and monthly visible passage totals were 961 in October, 598 in Nov and 88 in Dec.



Shore Lark *Eremophila alpestris*

Scarce winter visitor. Currently low numbers compared to the 1960s and 1970s. Exceptional inland. LBRC away from Donna Nook and Gib Point.

One was at Cleethorpes on Jan 2nd-4th and three were at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes from Jan 2nd-Mar 14th with four birds recorded there on Jan 7th and 19th. Single birds in autumn were at Cleethorpes on Nov 8th, and at Tetney Marsh on Nov 25th-26th and 29th. The ringing details below (late in reaching us) show a bird that was site-faithful to the Lincolnshire coast in winter.

K962129	Full-grown Male	21-12-1996	Gibraltar Point, Skegness: c. 53°5'N 0°18'E
	Alive (colour marks seen)	22-11-1997	Gibraltar Point: c. 53°5'N 0°18'E 0km 0y 11m 1d
	- ditto -	07-01-1998	Gibraltar Point: 53°5'N 0°18'E 0km 1y 0m 17d
	- ditto -	16-04-1998	Gibraltar Point: 53°5'N 0°18'E 0km 1y 3m 26d
	- ditto -	05-02-2000	Wainfleet: 53°5'N 0°18'E 2km 3y 1m 15d
	- ditto -	05-02-2000	Gibraltar Point: 53°5'N 0°18'E 0km 3y 1m 15d

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first were one at Whisby Quarry on Mar 11th and five at Whisby NR on Mar 14th. No more were seen until the 20th but more followed soon after that. There were 10 at Barton Pits by the 29th and c50 at both Barton Pits and Kirkby on Bain GP on Apr 12th. However, counts throughout the summer were relatively small, and there was no repeat of the major movements at Gib Point and concentrations elsewhere of late summer 2014. Maxima in spring were 500 at Bagmoor Floods on Apr 24th, 200 at Thurlby Pit (Bassingham) on May 9th and 100 at Messingham SQ, Whisby

NR and Kirkby on Bain GP on a few dates between Apr 28th and Jun 14th. The only report of confirmed breeding was from Biscathorpe/Donington on Bain, and of probable/possible breeding from three other places. More information including nest counts would be welcome. Numbers built up a little from mid Jul, and movement was noted especially at Gib Point in Jul-Aug, with maxima of 153 south on Jul 17th and 400 south on Jul 21st. The only totals of 100 or more away from Gib Point were c100 at Barton Pits on Aug 17th and c150 there on Aug 20th. There were 25 at Far Ings on Sep 4th and up to 10 at various locations through to Sep 18th but then fewer, and one at Donna Nook on Oct 3rd was the last. The following was, surprisingly, the only ringing recovery affecting Lincolnshire this year.

L669040	Adult	09-08-2011	Pett Level: c. 50°54'N 0°40'E (East Sussex)
	Caught by ringer	18-05-2015	Fishtoft Sewage Works: 52°56'N 0°0'E 233km N 3y 9m 9d

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Very common summer visitor and passage migrant. Exceptional in winter but recorded in most months.

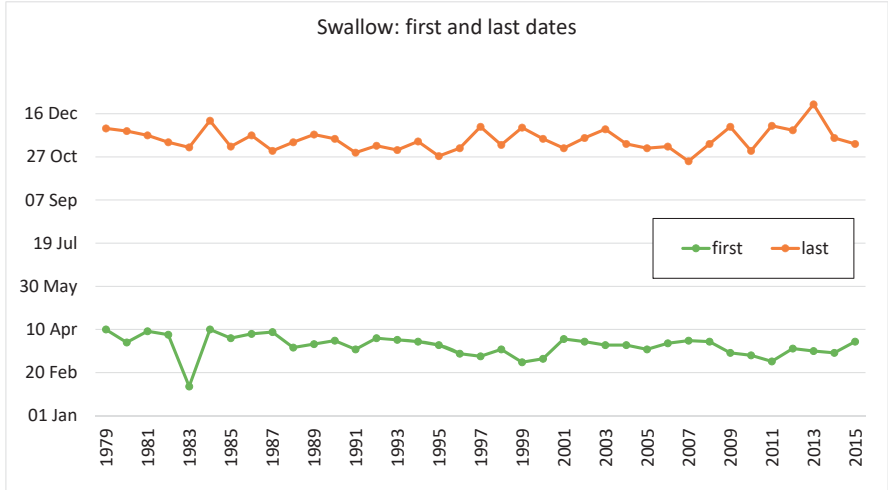
One at Wolla Bank on Mar 28th was the latest first arrival since 2007, and against the trend towards earlier arrival (see below). There were a few more in Mar but generally numbers were small. The first double-figure count was 12 at Covenham Res on Apr 8th. Larger counts later in Apr included 130 at Covenham Res on the 15th, 200 at Bagmoor Floods on the 25th and 250 at Covenham Res on the 29th. Numbers continued to build in May, when maxima included 862 south on the 11th and 964 south on the 12th at Gib Point, 300 at Toft Newton Res on the 14th and 500 at Covenham Res on the 18th. With birds dispersed at breeding sites, counts in Jun were lower but they started to rise in Jul, when there were 200 south at Gib Point on the 17th and 440 at Donna Nook on the 31st. Passage quickly built after that, with 1000 at Donna Nook on Aug 3rd and 1000 at Gib Point on the 6th. There were 1020 at Gib Point on Aug 21st, but the largest counts came on Aug 28th, with 1150 at Donna Nook, 700 at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes and c4000 south at Gib Point. Big counts during Sep included an estimate of 1000 at Barton Pits on the 8th, 970 at Gib Point on the 15th with 3892 there and 700 at Alkborough Flats on the 16th. Most at Gib Point were moving south as was the case with 1350 on Sep 18th. After that there were few counts exceeding 100. Regular sightings of small numbers continued to Oct 20th, with an Oct peak of 24 at Gib Point on the 9th. Sightings of 1-2 were made on six dates in Nov through to the last one at Alkborough Flats on the 12th.



Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* Frampton Marsh Sep 6th 2015 © Neil Smith

Arrival dates of Swallows have become earlier over the past few decades but there has not been much change in the date of the last bird seen. Note that the chart and summary table showing averages in three 12-year periods include the exceptional record of one at North Hykeham on 4th February 1983. If that is replaced by the next one that year (11th April), the 1980-1991 average becomes 31st March.

	First date	1980-1991	1992-2003	2004-2015
	Last date	25th Mar	20th Mar	18th Mar
		15th Nov	14th Nov	17th Nov
There were no especially significant ringing recoveries this year; the following was the oldest, still well short of the BTO record of 11 years 1 month.				
X585846	Nestling	04-07-2009	Baumber Park: c. 53°14'N 0°11'W	
	Freshly dead (cat)	09-04-2015	Croxby: 53°27'N 0°12'W 25km N 5y 9m 5d	



House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first was one at Carlton-le-Moorland on Apr 5th followed by two at Gib Point and one at Ingham on the 9th. Numbers gradually increased, reaching 60 at Marston STW on Apr 19th and 60-65 at Covenham Res on Apr 28th-30th. May saw peaks of 249 south at Gib Point on the 9th, 500 at Washingborough Road, Lincoln on the 17th, and 500 at Covenham Res on the 18th. Concentrations were smaller during Jun-Aug especially Jul, though there were 200 at Covenham Res on Jun 13th and some larger totals were reported at the end of Aug, including 220 at Gib Point on the 25th and 300 at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes on the 28th. There were larger counts in the first three weeks of Sep, with the following peaks of 250 or more: 250 at Lincoln cathedral on the 2nd, 300 at Barton Pits, 350 at Covenham Res and 400 at Huttoft Bank on the 15th, and 400 at Marton on the 17th. Also, at Gib Point, there were several counts over 250 peaking at 420 south on the 21st. Reports were only occasional in Oct, though there were 28 south at Gib Point on the 7th. After Oct 25th, there was a gap until Nov 9th but then six more records through to the last two at Skegness on Nov 20th. Almost any recovery of ringed House Martins is notable, so the following, involving the first in either direction, between Belgium and here, and the repeat captures of one at Bourne, are worth including.

BLB	First-year	16-09-2014	Sommethonne: 49°34'N 5°27'E (Luxembourg) Belgium
13887521	Caught by ringer	02-06-2015	Marston Sewage Works: 52°57'N 0°39'W 568km NW 0y 8m 17d
Y767889	Adult Male	08-08-2012	Pasture Hill Farm, Bourne: 52°45'N 0°25'W
	Caught by ringer	08-08-2013	Pasture Hill Farm, Bourne: 52°45'N 0°25'W 0km 1y 0m 0d
	Caught by ringer	11-08-2015	Pasture Hill Farm, Bourne: 52°45'N 0°25'W 0km 3y 0m 3d

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica*

Vagrant. **LBRC**

There were two records this year, both at Covenham Res. The first was on May 7th (GPL) and the second on May 29th (KRo).

The first for Lincolnshire was at Gibraltar Point on 29th October 1977, and this year's birds took the total to 36 individuals (only 26 records, as there have been four records of two and two of four). Since 2003, they have become almost regular, being found in ten of the thirteen years. No less than 26 birds occurred at Gibraltar Point, with the others spread between Messingham SQ, Barton, Donna Nook, Freiston Shore and Frampton Marsh. The majority (28 of the 36) have been in spring, between 17th April and 29th May (one of this year's), and the others in autumn between 5th October and 14th November.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Very common resident.

Records were received from about 300 sites, with most records being of ten birds or fewer. Consistently the highest counts came from Gib Point at which 30 birds or more were recorded in every month except in Mar, May, Oct and Nov; counts there peaked at 47 in both Feb and Sep. A further twenty sites had counts of 20 or more birds. These included an exceptional count of 70 birds (5 adults and 65 juveniles) trapped and ringed in Bourne on Sep 18th. Other notable counts were of 50 in Louth in Jan and 42 at Far Ings NNR in Mar. Movements south of 73 birds in total were recorded at Gib Point over 19 dates in Mar-Apr but, in the autumn, only 13 were counted heading south over four dates during Sep 26th-Oct 9th. Five Blue Tits were reported in the county this year that had survived more than five years (the longevity record is 10 years 3 months); the following was the only one that had not remained at the ringing site.

X405540	First-year Female	01-10-2009	Retford: c. 53°19'N 0°56'W (Nottinghamshire)
	Freshly dead (cat)	25-05-2015	Cleethorpes: 53°31'N 0°1'W 66km ENE 5y 7m 24d

Great Tit *Parus major*

Very common resident.

Records were received from about 280 sites across the county, 30 more sites than in 2014, and 11 of which had counts of 20 or more birds. As for Blue Tit, the highest monthly counts came from Gib Point where 20 or more birds were recorded in every month except Nov. Counts there exceeded 50 birds in six months, peaking at 62 in Feb and Mar and 73 birds in Jun. Other records exceeding 30 birds were at Louth (50 in Jan), Messingham SQ (30 in Mar), Swanholme Lakes (33 in Jan) and in Bourne where 58 (24 adults and 34 juveniles) were trapped and ringed on Sep 18th. Movements recorded at Gib Point were of 26 birds south over four dates in Feb, 169 south over 12 dates in Mar and 32 birds south over eight dates in Apr (with an additional five birds north on one date in Mar and six north on one date in Apr). Autumnal recorded movements were of a total of 17 birds south over four dates in Sep and Oct. The ringing details below concern the oldest Great Tit reported this year; the UK longevity record is 13 years 11 months.

TH57272	Nestling Male	25-05-2006	near Kenwick Hall, Legbourne: c. 53°20'N 0°0'E
	Caught by ringer	24-03-2015	near Kenwick Hall, Legbourne: c. 53°20'N 0°0'E 0km 8y 9m 27d

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Widespread resident and passage migrant.

Records were received from 130 sites spread widely across the county, though confirmed breeding was reported at only nine sites. Most records were of five or fewer birds; double figures were noted at only four sites with 20 birds at Twyford Wood in Apr, 23 at Osgodby Moor in Sep, 10 at Chambers Farm Wood in Nov and 10 at Messingham SQ in Dec. Other counts of five or more birds came from a further seven sites: Louth and Belton Park (Jan), Market Rasen, Willingham Forest, Callan's Lane Wood and Elsea/Math Wood (Mar), and Kirmond le Mire (Sep). There were no obvious indications of passage.

Willow Tit *Poecile montana*

Once common and widespread, now seriously declining with nearly all records from the northern half of the county. **RBBP**

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alkborough Flats	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-
Barton Pits	2	2	1	1	-	1	1	3	2	2	2	2
Messingham SQ	4	6	3	6	-	2	1	1	1	-	-	6
Laughton Forest +	-	-	3	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	-
Trent Port (Marton)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	2
Whisby NR	-	1	2	6	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	1
Anwick STW	-	4	-	1	1	2	1	1	-	-	-	-
Number of sites	5	9	10	8	2	6	6	9	4	4	3	4

+ see text for additional information

The table includes sites with counts of three or more and those with records in four or more months. Records also came from a further 22 sites from across the middle and north of the county. Sites with both Marsh and Willow Tits included Alkborough Flats (see Marsh Tit) and Anwick STW but no records were received of Willow Tit from Haverholme Park, from which both have previously been recorded. Breeding was confirmed or highly likely in four areas. In Laughton Forest, nine (just possibly ten) territories were located, compared to 21 in the last full survey as recently as 2012. At Whisby NR, survey work found three pairs/territories. At Biscathorpe/Donington on Bain, a pair in breeding condition was trapped in Jun, and two juveniles caught in Jun-Jul. At Barton Pits, there were one or possibly two territories at Far Ings and one pair to the east of Barton. Birds were seen at thirteen other sites during Feb-Jun, so likely to be breeding; at most of these only 1-2 were reported but there were four at Anwick STW in Feb and up to six at Messingham SQ in Feb-Apr. With the continuing decline in both Willow Tit and the following species, Marsh Tit, increased effort to record both species, taking care with identification, and to confirm breeding is encouraged.

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

Fairly common but local resident, mainly in the south-west.

Just under 50 records were received from 20 sites in the traditional range of this species, namely in the south-west of the county and the south-west side of the Witham valley. Most records were of 1-3 birds but six birds were recorded in Callan's Lane Wood in Jan and May, six at Denton in Apr, and four at Haverholme Park in Sep and in Potterhanworth Wood in Jan. Breeding was confirmed at Temple Wood with breeding probable at Callan's Lane Wood and at Lawn Wood and Meadows NR. The only noteworthy additional record, away from the established range of the species, was a single bird at Alkborough on Apr 27th. It was suspected, though not certain, that this was the same bird as present in winter 2013-14, that had crossed the Humber from established Marsh Tit range in Yorkshire.

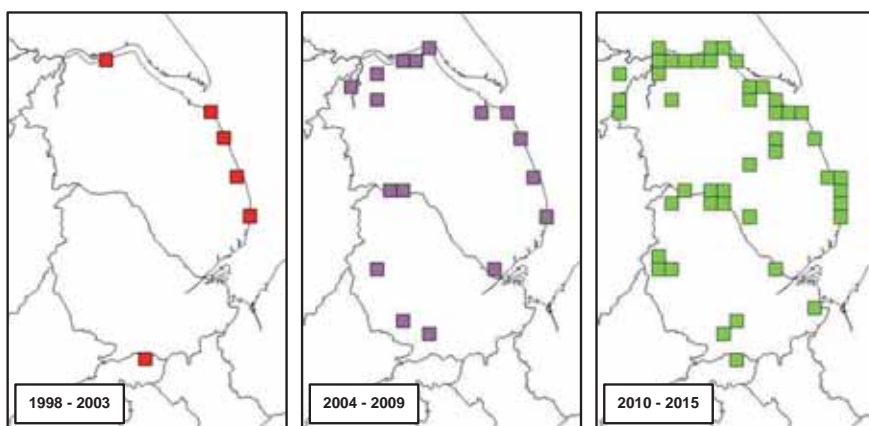
Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

Rare but increasing breeding resident and passage migrant/winter visitor; first proven breeding in 2008. **RBBP**

This species continues to increase in the county but, as noted in 2014, there may well be sites that hold breeding birds that are not being checked by birders. Nevertheless, the maps below showing all records, by 5km squares, illustrate how the species has spread in successive six year periods. At the main county location for this species, Barton-Barrow Haven pits, there were 16 occupied territories in Apr-Jun, up from 12 in 2014, and in the autumn a minimum of 18 singing males were located in Sep-Oct. Most birds were considered to have bred and the total population at the end of the breeding season must have been in the region of 50+ birds. Information for other breeding sites on the Humber can be summarised as follows: at Alkborough Flats one male sang in spring and a pair were presumed to breed but by Oct there were four males in song and at least two other birds present through to Dec; at Winteringham Haven present during Apr 14th to Jul 1st, when presumed breeding, and from Sep 6th to Nov 1st; and at Goxhill Marsh two males were present with one pair proven breeding and a male there in Oct-Nov. In the coastal strip, at least three were reported at Grimsby (Town's Holt)-Laceby in spring (presumably all males and assumed to be breeding) and 1-2 in Oct-Dec; one was at Huttoft Pit on Sep 13th (a former breeding site possibly not checked in spring); one sang and possibly bred in spring at Anderby Creek with three males in song on Dec 27th; three males were at Wolla Bank Pits in April with presumed breeding and up to two in Oct-Dec; and two were noted as possibly breeding at Chapel Six Marshes during Mar

10th-May 3rd. Inland, one male was at Burton Stather pits where breeding occurred in previous years; at Louth-Keddington one pair was present during Apr 19th to May 9th and probably bred; at Bardney Pits one pair bred with juveniles seen on Sep 5th and birds were present through to Dec; at Deeping Lakes there was no survey information but at least one possible breeding record; and at Marston STW probable breeding was recorded with at least one singing in spring and a maximum of three birds in Dec. Summing the known and presumed breeding pairs gives a total for the county of 33 in 2015 up from the 27 recorded in 2014, but it seems clear that pairs are breeding at other sites and not being reported while data from some priority sites are totally inadequate.

Away from known breeding sites, there were records as follows. On the Humber, singles at Whitton on Oct 20th and South Ferriby on Oct 19th; and two males at New Holland on Nov 17th. On the coast and Wash, one was at Cleethorpes CP during Feb 6th-Mar 9th and one again on Oct 5th; one at Tetney Marsh on Oct 20th-Nov 3rd and Nov 25th; one at Donna Nook on Oct 2nd; one at Rimac (Saltfleetby) on Dec 16th; singles at Gib Point on Feb 12th, Apr 4th-5th, and at least two (trapped) during Sep 25th-Dec 23rd; at least one at Frampton Marsh from Jan to Apr 6th, Jun 6th and 27th and Sep 26th-Nov 23rd; and one at Nene Mouth on Nov 6th. Inland, there were singles at Messingham SQ on Mar 9th to Apr 4th and Dec 19th; one at Raithby (Louth) on Sep 2nd, one Boultham Mere from Oct 4th to Nov 25th; one at Whisby NR on Dec 19th-23rd, two at Nocton Fen on Sep 5th; one at Kirkby Pits on Jun 29th (another likely breeding site); one at Grimsthorpe Lake on Sep 13th (a possible breeding site); and one at Willow Tree Fen Jan 27th and Oct 12th with two on Nov 1st.



Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti* Louth Apr 19th 2015 ©John Clarkson

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Common resident and partial migrant.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Barton Pits	17	18	20	18	2	16	30	13	20	20	20	14
Messingham SQ	15	4	20	4	6	4	-	1	3	-	-	15
Tetney Marsh	9	-	7	3	2	12	15	12	12	23	24	12
Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe	11	15	6	4	4	14	-	13	23	22	17	8
Louth	20	20	1	6	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	1
Gibraltar Point	15	15	15	5	14	16	17	23	24	23	20	18
Frampton Marsh	20	3	10	2	4	4	-	20	15	5	-	1
Lincoln	16	2	3	1	1	5	-	-	2	40	-	4
Boultham Mere/Swanpool	15	8	25	8	13	15	15	10	15	30	15	9
Whisby NR	14	10	14	12	10	22	-	-	5	25	16	16
Bransdon	10	16	11	2	6	13	10	11	6	10	30	15
Woodhall Spa	1	1	16	4	3	4	4	-	2	40	1	-
Tattershall Lakes CP	2	8	2	2	1	3	2	5	15	20	2	7

The table includes all sites with counts of 20 or more and records in nine months or more. Overall, records came from about 210 sites spread widely across the county, with breeding confirmed at 14 sites and probable at a further 12. Forty-nine records of 20 or more birds were made from 29 sites; these peak counts were recorded throughout the year, apart from the months of Apr and May, with most in Oct and Nov. The highest count, of 46 birds, came from Kirby on Bain GP in Jun with counts of 40 birds in Lincoln and Woodhall Spa both in Oct. Other counts of 30 or more birds came from Crowle Moors (Jan), Far Ings (Jul), Boultham Mere/Swanpool (Oct), Anderby Creek (Oct) and Bransdon (Nov). Two old, but sedentary, Long-tailed Tits are shown below. The BTO longevity record for the species is 8 years 11 months.

BDC524	Full-grown	18-10-2007	near Nettleton: 53°28'N 0°19'W
	Caught by ringer	09-01-2011	near Nettleton: 53°28'N 0°19'W 0km 3y 2m 22d
	Caught by ringer	13-12-2015	near Nettleton: 53°28'N 0°19'W 0km 8y 1m 25d
BDC588	Full-grown	28-09-2010	near Nettleton: 53°28'N 0°19'W
	Caught by ringer	05-11-2011	near Nettleton: 53°28'N 0°19'W 0km 1y 1m 8d
	Caught by ringer	24-01-2015	near Nettleton: 53°28'N 0°19'W 0km 4y 3m 27d
	Caught by ringer	02-10-2015	near Nettleton: 53°28'N 0°19'W 0km 5y 0m 4d
	Caught by ringer	13-12-2015	near Nettleton: 53°28'N 0°19'W 0km 5y 2m 15d

Pallas's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus*

Rare late autumn passage migrant; one spring record. **LBRC**

The first of five this year was at Sea Lane, Saltfleet, on Oct 12th-13th (BGU, MBe). At Gib Point, one was present on Oct 17th, first seen flying over the old saltmarsh before being watched in the plantation near the yacht club (JAS *et al*). Another was present at Gib Point, this one at the north end of the reserve, on Oct 18th (EJM). Finally, on Oct 27th, one was at Sea View Farm, Theddlethorpe, (JRW, PRo) and one, trapped and ringed at Donna Nook, was determined to be a male on wing measurement (ACoo, MA, SL). The total of five was above the average for the previous ten years (2.8).

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Rare/scarce passage migrant Sep-Nov, exceptional inland. Has increased and become regular in recent years.

Records this year spanned the period Sep 19th-Nov 8th. The first was at Gib Point on Sep 19th with presumably the same bird there on the 20th. One at Crook Bank, Theddlethorpe, on Sep 26th started the main phase of arrivals. On the 27th, at least six were present between Saltfleetby and Gib Point including three at the latter site. That began a continuous 23 day presence at Gib Point, rising gradually to a peak of 10 on Oct 3rd and with six still on Oct 8th and 1-3 subsequently until the 19th. At Donna Nook, there were two on Sep 29th, then up to six daily during Oct 1st-6th and 1-2 subsequently most days to Oct 17th. Elsewhere, coverage tends to be less consistent and it is likely that many are missed. In the Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe area, birds were reported most days during Sep 26th-Oct 16th, with maxima of four on Oct 2nd and five on Oct 6th. Between Mablethorpe and Gib Point, there was one at Huttoft Bank on Sep 27th, one at Ingoldmells on Sep 28th, seven around Skegness on Oct 4th (when there were eight at Gib Point) and three at Skegness on Oct 8th. Records from other areas were one at Tetney Marsh on Sep 28th-30th, one at

Frampton Marsh on Sep 30th, one in Boston town centre on Oct 4th, one trapped and ringed well inland at Dunsby on Oct 9th, and two at Scartho, near Grimsby, on Oct 10th. The only records after Oct 19th were one at Donna Nook on Nov 2nd and one at Frampton Marsh on Nov 8th. This all yet again made for another record number for the year. Even simply summing the peak counts in each area gives a total of 42 and that does not allow for turnover of birds from day to day. An assessment taking that into account suggests a total of around 94 birds, including about 30 at Donna Nook and about 30 at Gib Point. A little icing on the rich Yellow-browed cake was the retrapping in Cornwall just a week later of one ringed on the peak day at Gib Point.

HPY702	First-year	03-10-2015	Gibraltar Point: 53°5'N 0°18'E
	Caught by ringer	10-10-2015	Nanjizal, Lands End: 50°2'N 5°42'W (Cornwall) 536km SW 0y 0m 7d



Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus* Gib Point Oct 4th 2015 © Russell Hayes



Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus* Gib Point Oct 15th 2015 © Graham Catley

Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus*

Vagrant. **LBRC**

One was at Gib Point from Oct 13th to Oct 21st (MDw, DN, KMW *et al.*). It was first identified by call in the East Dunes where it remained until the 17th when it was trapped and ringed. It was refound near Tennyson's Sands on Oct 19th and was last seen there on the 21st. Another was trapped at Crook Bank, Theddlethorpe, on Oct 15th (BRG) and seen there again on Oct 19th (GPL, GPC).

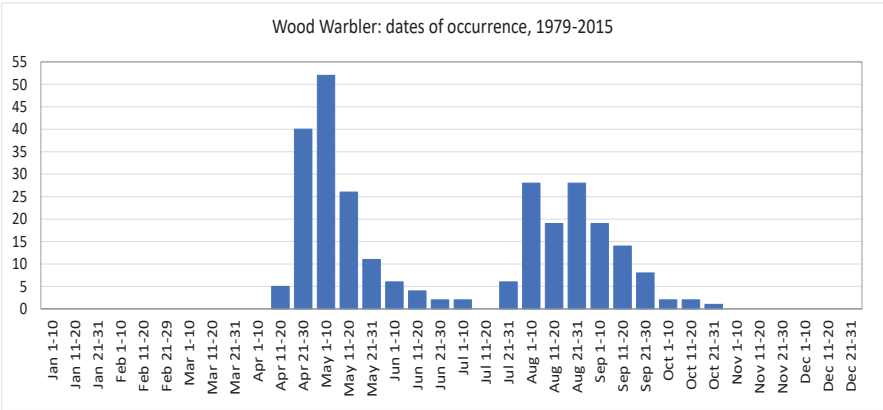
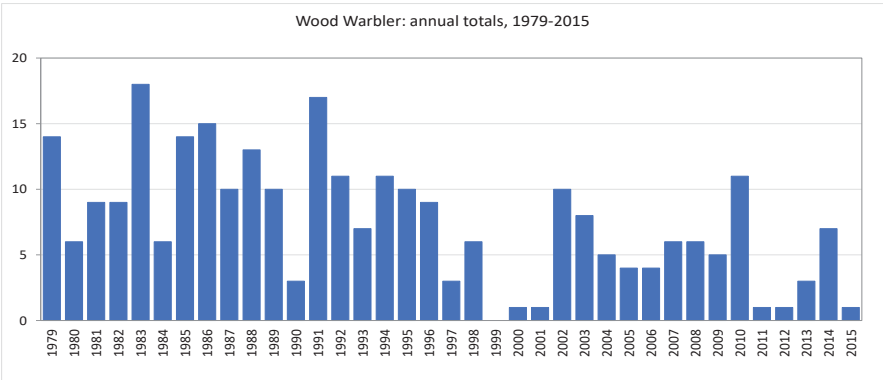
There have been eight Dusky Warblers in Lincolnshire previously, counting the sightings at Theddlethorpe in 2013 as two birds, with finding dates ranging from Sep 25th to Nov 3rd.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Rare passage migrant. **LBRC**

After seven in 2014, there was only one this year, found in the Churchill Lane-Brickyard Lane part of Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Aug 24th (JRW).

Wood Warbler last definitely bred in Lincolnshire in the 1920s. There have been occasional but increasingly infrequent singing or even territorial males since then, but no proven breeding. Even as a passage bird, the species has gradually grown scarcer, as illustrated by the chart for 1979-2015. During 1979-1995, there was an annual average of 10.8 birds, while during 1996-2015 it was only 4.6. Through the same period, the species has tended to occur less in spring and more in autumn: 59% of birds were found before mid July during 1979-1995, but that fell to 43% during 1996-2005.



Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant. Rare/scarse in winter.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Barton Pits	1	5	15	49	9	11	2	9	8	1	1	1
Donna Nook	-	1	2	9	3	2	1	3	3	9	1	-
Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe	-	1	1	8	5	3	-	11	9	5	1	1
Gibraltar Point	1	-	5	23	15	6	12	8	31	24	1	-
Whisby NR	-	-	17	55	35	6	-	1	6	2	1	1

The species was recorded in widespread locations in every month of the year. The first birds of the year were on New Year's Day at Cleethorpes CP and at Gib Point. Birds were also seen at Dunsby, Far Ings, Marston STW, Frampton village and Pinchbeck on ten other dates in the month. The only place where more than one was encountered was Marston STW, which saw a maximum of six on the 24th. Nine locations had birds during Feb with five at Stenigot on the 5th and also five at Far Ings on the 25th. With birds present at so many locations in the first two months of the year, it is difficult to pinpoint the onset of spring migration, but birds were reported on most days in Mar with counts above eight coming from Whisby NR and Barton Pits. The largest counts of the year were reported in Apr, including 55 in a co-ordinated count at Whisby NR on the 10th and 49 between Barton and Barrow Havens on the 11th. In May, 35 at Whisby NR and 20 at Messingham SQ were the best counts. This is a widespread and increasing breeding species but, despite around two thousand records being submitted, just seven instances of confirmed breeding were reported. Numbers reported declined significantly during Jun-Aug with 16 at Normanby-by-Spital on Jul 5th being the highest total. There was little evidence of autumn passage except at Gib Point in Sep, where there was 31 (with a dozen trapped) on the 18th, 15 on the 19th and 23rd, and 19 on the 28th. The only counts above 10 elsewhere were 20 at Marston STW on Sep 9th, with 25 there on the 27th. In Oct, Gib Point peaks were 16 on the 3rd and 8th, and 24 on the 17th. During Nov, records of 1-2 came from 11 widely spread locations on half the days of the month. In Dec records came from eight locations mostly singles but with two at Marston STW on the 29th. This year's ringing recoveries were unexceptional; the oldest and longest-distance ones are shown.

OL6530	First-year Caught by ringer	20-08-1994 29-10-1999	Willingham Forest: 53°24'N 0°18'W Rye Meads: c. 51°46'N 0°0'W (Hertfordshire)	183km S 5y 2m 9d
HPY275	First-year Caught by ringer	08-10-2015 14-10-2015	Gibraltar Point: 53°5'N 0°18'E Blashford Lakes: 50°52'N 1°47'W (Hampshire)	287km SSW 0y 0m 6d

Siberian Chiffchaff *P.c. tristis* LBRC

There were two records this year. One was at Donna Nook on Oct 11th (GPC, ND, SL) and the other at Gib Point on Oct 13th (WPB).

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Very common summer visitor and passage migrant.

Peak counts	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Barton Pits	33	11	1	-	13	1	-
Donna Nook	7	3	1	-	40	6	1
Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe	10	10	3	-	16	3	1
Gibraltar Point	17	15	8	20	249	14	1
Whisby NR	66	41	7	5	2	-	-

The first birds of the year one at Tabs Head on Apr 5th and one at Barton Pits on Apr 6th. Within two weeks significant numbers were being counted. Laughton Forest held 70 and 124 on the 15th and 20th respectively. Whisby NR held 51 and 66 during co-ordinated counts on the 17th and 24th. A count of 33 was made at Barton Pits (Waters' Edge to Barrow Haven) on the 16th and 25 were counted in Twyford Wood on the 20th. Another co-ordinated count at Whisby NR found 41 on May 8th before things quietened down after territory establishment. Migration became apparent on the coast from Jul 31st though it was concentrated in late Aug. The largest total of the year was 249 at Gib Point on Aug 25th, the highest count there since Aug 2010. The reserve also had counts of 97 on Aug 24th, 40 on the 27th and 65 on the 30th. Donna Nook also had a count of 40 on the 24th. Numbers dropped off abruptly in Sep with the best total being 19 at Witham Mouth on the 4th. There were no counts over three after Sep 18th, and the final bird of the year was seen at Gib Point on Oct 19th. Below is the only foreign ringing recovery this year.



Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* Grantham Apr 8th 2015 © Steve Nesbitt



Siberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita tristis* Donna Nook Oct 11th 2015 © Graham Catley

HPY320	First-year	12-08-2015	Gibraltar Point: 53°5'N 0°18'E
	Caught by ringer	19-08-2015	Grand Predembourg, Grande-Synthe: 51°1'N 2°16'E (Nord) France 268km SSE 0y 0m 7d

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant. Scarce winter visitor Dec-Mar.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Barton Pits	-	-	-	23	19	12	7	2	3	1	1	-
Donna Nook	-	-	-	6	6	7	1	2	3	4	2	-
Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe	-	-	-	9	6	6	-	21	20	10	-	1
Gibraltar Point	-	-	1	24	24	10	15	49	36	30	2	1
Whisby NR	2	-	-	64	70	10	-	2	3	-	-	-

The table includes all sites recording 25 or more. The species was recorded in every month of the year and noted at ten sites in Jan, including at Belton Park, Louth and Stamford on New Year's Day. The species was seen at five sites during Feb with two of the Jan birds again noted. Apart from two at Whisby NR on Jan 6th, all Jan-Feb records were of single birds. Mar was the month when the bird was at it scarcest, being noted only three times but probably including the first migrant of spring at Gib Point on the 26th. The floodgates opened from Apr 1st with birds recorded from far and wide. The highest counts were from Whisby NR, where co-ordinated counts peaked at 64 on Apr 24th and 70 on May 8th. The largest totals elsewhere were 23 between Barton and Barrow Havens on Apr 16th, and 24 at Gib Point on Apr 21st and May 8th. Numbers settled down during Jun-Jul with no count exceeding 19. From the middle of Aug into Sep, the coast featured more prominently in returns as migration became apparent. Counts at Gib Point were highest, including 49 on Aug 30th and 36 on Sep 13th. In Oct, there was a count of 30 from Gib Point on the 3rd, and up to 20 through to the 17th. In Nov, counts of 1-2 were made on 11 dates, from four sites, and there were only four Dec records, from three sites, all singles. The foreign ringing exchanges are included below. The first was the only new one this year, as the second involved the retrapping of one that was included in last year's report.

Z364000	First-year Female	19-10-2015	Gibraltar Point: 53°5'N 0°18'E
	Caught by ringer	29-10-2015	Herne: 50°43'N 4°1'E (Brabant) Belgium 367km SE 0y 0m 10d
X529436	First-year Male	23-10-2012	Jews Gate: 36°7'N 5°19'W Gibraltar
	Caught by ringer	30-05-2014	Newball Wood, nr Langworth: c. 53°16'N 0°22'W 1,943km NNE 1y 7m 7d
	Caught by ringer	15-06-2015	Newball Wood, nr Langworth: c. 53°16'N 0°22'W 1,943km NNE 2y 7m 23d
	Caught by ringer	08-08-2015	Newball Wood, nr Langworth: c. 53°16'N 0°22'W 1,943km NNE 2y 9m 16d

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first birds of the year were two at Branston were on Apr 16th, with singles at three more sites up to the 20th. Counts at Whisby NR reached five on the 23rd and 27th. In May, there were four counts in double figures: three of up to 36 at Whisby NR and 25 at Loughton Forest. In Jun, counts came from 24 locations but no total reached ten, and there were just nine records in Jul with three at Messingham SQ being the best. Birds were noted more during Aug, with 22 counts coming from the coast showing that passage was underway. The highest count was only seven at Gib Point on the 30th. All records in Sep were of single birds, other than two counts of four at Gib Point on the 1st and 13th. The last bird of the year was one at Donna Nook on Oct 2nd. Breeding was reported at over twenty locations, but with few details of confirmation or population size. This remains a widespread breeding species in Lincolnshire but the national population trend is one of falling numbers, with a decline of 28% in England since 1995.

Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria*

Rare coastal passage migrant Aug-Dec, though mainly Aug-Sep. **LBRC**

Seven birds were recorded this year, with the first at Pye's Hall on Aug 14th (SL). The next was one trapped at Crook Bank, Theddlethorpe, on Aug 25th (BRG) and another was at Seaview, Saltfleetby, on Aug 29th (JRW). A first calendar year bird was present in the Petrified Forest-Mill Hill area of Gib Point from Aug 29th to Sep 2nd (JS *et al.*). A first winter bird trapped at the observatory at Gib Point on Sep 6th is assumed to be different from the previous individual (CFI,

NJu). A different bird was trapped and ringed in the same area of Gib Point on Sep 19th (GGr, KC) and retrapped there on the 20th and 22nd. The final bird of the year was at Tetney Marsh on Oct 16th (RL).

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first was one at Donna Nook on Apr 13th, with the next at Anwick STW on Apr 17th and more from the 19th. Records were received from around 30 locations in Apr, with a maximum of seven at Gib Point on the 26th. The highest count of May was 16, also at Gib Point, on the 8th. The coastal counts, of course, overlook the breeding populations present in suitable inland habitat. Little information was forthcoming on this, though census work at Whisby NR located 10 singing males and probable or possible breeding was noted at 23 locations. Reports for Jun-Jul did not exceed four, except at Gib Point where up to 17 were counted. Similarly, very few places recorded more than 1-3 in Aug-Sep, and all of these were on the coast or Humber. Counts of 10 or more included c10 at Barton Pits on Aug 15th and 24th, 14 at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes on Aug 25th, and up to 39 on fourteen dates at Gib Point during Aug 8th-Sep 22nd. The highest were 26 on Aug 24th, 27 on Aug 25th and 39 on Aug 30th. Occasional sightings of 1-3 continued into Oct at Donna Nook and Gib Point, with the final bird of the year at Donna Nook on Oct 19th. The individual below appears keen to renew its acquaintance with the Gib Point ringing team each May.

X231927	Juvenile	08-08-2009	Gibraltar Point: 53°5'N 0°18'E
	Caught by ringer	08-05-2011	Gibraltar Point: 53°5'N 0°18'E 0km 1y 9m 0d
	Caught by ringer	06-05-2012	Gibraltar Point: 53°5'N 0°18'E 0km 2y 8m 28d
	Caught by ringer	19-05-2013	Gibraltar Point: 53°5'N 0°18'E 0km 3y 9m 11d
	Caught by ringer	04-05-2014	Gibraltar Point: 53°5'N 0°18'E 0km 4y 8m 26d
	Caught by ringer	10-05-2015	Gibraltar Point: 53°5'N 0°18'E 0km 5y 9m 2d

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Very common summer visitor and passage migrant.

Peak monthly counts	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Boultham Mere/Swanpool	8	15	15	4	6	3	-
Donna Nook	15	45	60	40	20	4	-
Tetney Marsh	1	8	20	20	12	2	-
Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe	7	22	12	-	49	2	-
Gibraltar Point	26	74	143	89	48	15	1

The table shows localities with consistent recording and counts of 15 or more. Three birds at Donna Nook on Apr 13th were the first of the spring. The majority of counts in Apr-May of 15 or more came from Gib Point or Donna Nook, reflecting the intensity of recording in those areas. Numbers at Gib Point gradually rose, to reach 74 on May 13th, while the maximum at Donna Nook was 45 on the 13th and the 25th. Of the numerous counts in Jun, the best totals were both at Gib Point with 73 on the 8th and 143 on the 15th. The highest totals reported away from the coast were at Thorpe Tilney, with 23 on May 10th and 30 on Jun 9th. Peak counts in Jul-Aug were lower and there were no outstanding passage arrivals; the maxima were 49 between Churchill Lane and Crook Bank, Theddlethorpe, and 48 at Gib Point. Numbers reduced sharply at the start of Sep, with 14 and 15 counted at Gib Point on the first two days of the month but no more counts of over nine. The only reports after Sep 29th were singles at Gib Point on Oct 15th, 17th and 18th. Only 22 foreign ringing recoveries have resulted from Lincolnshire-ringed Whitethroats, most in France and Iberia. The one below is the first to The Netherlands.

Z191977	Juvenile	16-08-2015	near North Somercotes: 53°26'N 0°9'E
	Caught by ringer	19-09-2015	Saeftinghe: 51°21'N 4°13'E (Zeeland) The Netherlands 362km SE 0y 1m 3d

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant. Decline in late 20th century but recent trend uncertain because of small population size and fluctuations.

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Number of sites	11	5	5	4	6	1	1
Sum of site peaks	18	5	5	5	7	1	1

Records came from 19 locations. Totals, in terms of sites occupied and numbers, were similar to those of 2014 and remain meagre. The first bird of the year was at Gib Point on Apr 14th. Another ten sites had birds present during Apr, and the best count was four at Donna Nook on the 21st. During May single birds were recorded at Alkborough Flats, Donna Nook, Saltfleet Haven, Gib Point and Woodhall Spa, and during Jun at Alkborough Flats, Crowle Moors, Frampton Marsh, Horkstow Bridge and Town's Holt (Grimsby). There were two at Donington on Bain on Jul 31st and one there the following day. The general lack of consistency in these lists is probably indicative of the infrequent song of birds holding established territories as much as anything else. Breeding was considered probable or possible at Alkborough Flats, Horkstow Bridge, Saltfleet Haven, Rimac, Donington on Bain and Twyford Wood. There were ten reports in Aug-Sep, all singles except for two at Town's Holt (Grimsby). After the end of Aug, the only records were of singles trapped and ringed at Gib Point on Sep 22nd and Oct 18th.

Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*

Rare passage migrant May-early Jun and late Jul-Oct, exceptional inland. **LBRC RBBP**

A singing male was present on Drake Road at Seacroft on May 21st (KMW, DNw).

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant

The first singles at Saltfleetby on Apt 10th and Far Ings on the 11th were quickly followed by others, and the first double-figure count was 12 between Barton Haven and Barrow Haven on the 16th. The majority of the higher counts were made between then and the end of Jun. They included c30 at Midville on May 3rd, and 20 at Gib Point on May 16th and 22nd, with 22 there on Jun 15th, but generally there were few noteworthy counts. Breeding population estimates included 50 territories at Alkborough Flats, 19 pairs at Frampton Marsh (down from 22 in 2014) and six singing males at Whisby NR (down from 11 in 2014). Sedge Warbler numbers in Britain have shown a long-term moderate decline, though with shorter-term fluctuations, and BBS results for England suggested a small decline between 2014 and 2015. Later in the summer, there were few high counts. There were c30 at Frampton Marsh on Jun 27th and 29 (14 adults and 15 juveniles, some recently fledged) were ringed at Donington on Bain on Jul 24th, but no further double-figure counts were reported after the latter date. After the end of Aug, records became progressively more infrequent and none exceeded four birds. The only reports in Oct were one at Frampton Marsh on Oct 5th and a juvenile at Alkborough Flats on Oct 10th. Four foreign ringing exchanges this year was above average but they all involved travel along the expected route through Iberia towards Africa.



Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* Frampton Marsh Jun 24th 2015 © Neil Smith

D132490	Adult Male Caught by ringer	14-06-2014 06-09-2015	Market Stainton: c. 53°18'N 0°9'W Lagunas de Atapuerca, Atapuerca: 42°22'N 3°30'W (Burgos) Spain 1,240km SSW 1y 2m 23d
D540292	Adult Caught by ringer Caught by ringer	04-05-2014 30-05-2014 09-08-2014	Gibraltar Point: 53°5'N 0°18'E Gibraltar Point: 53°5'N 0°18'E 0km 0y 0m 26d Plaisance, Saint-Froult: 45°54'N 1°4'W (Charente-Maritime) France 807km S 0y 3m 5d
Z362676	First-year Caught by ringer Caught by ringer	08-08-2015 09-08-2015 10-09-2015	Gibraltar Point: 53°5'N 0°18'E Gibraltar Point: 53°5'N 0°18'E 0km 0y 0m 1d Bokrijk: 50°57'N 5°25'E (Limburg) Belgium 423km SE 0y 1m 2d
FRP 6801060	First-year Freshly dead (hit by car)	04-08-2012 19-06-2015	Pk 21, Sandouville: 49°30'N 0°19'E (Seine-Maritime) France Irby in The Marsh: 53°9'N 0°10'E 406km N 2y 10m 15d

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant, has increased in the last 10 years.

The wintering bird at Marston STW, found on Dec 1st 2014, was last reported on Feb 1st. The first of spring was one at Middlemarsh Farm (Skegness) on Apr 13th, and there were widespread reports in small numbers over the next few days. There were no double-figure counts until 18 singing males were found at Kirkby on Bain GP on May 4th. During the year, counts of ten or more came from 14 sites but few were especially high. There were 35 at Far Ings on May 23rd, c30 at Frampton Marsh on Jul 9th and 29 at Tennyson's Sands, Gib Point, on Jul 24th but most reports understate the true abundance the species can achieve in reedbeds and along ditches. Breeding estimates were few but included 227 territories at Alkborough Flats, 21 pairs at Frampton Marsh (up from 18 in 2014). Reed Warblers are believed to have undergone a substantial long-term increase nationally but with indications of a recent downturn. BBS results, however, suggest a small increase between 2014 and 2015. Late summer counts were small this year, with no more than nine at any one site in the first half of Aug, nor of more than seven in the second half. Five at Gib Point and six at Marston STW on Sep 13th were the highest that month. A few were seen in early Oct, the last being on trapped at Gib Point on the 4th and one seen at Boultham Mere on the 9th.

FRP 7146489	Second-year Caught by ringer	29-08-2014 13-05-2015	Marais-Moisan-Central, Messanges: 43°48'N 1°22'W (Landes) France Wainfleet Bank: 53°6'N 0°11'E 1,040km N 0y 8m 14d
FRP 7098021	First-year Caught by ringer	02-09-2013 12-08-2015	Etang-De-Moisan, Messanges: 43°48'N 1°22'W (Landes) France Marston Sewage Works: 52°57'N 0°39'W 1,020km N 1y 11m 10d



Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* Marston STW Jan 20th 2015 © Steve Nesbitt

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*

Passage migrant and winter visitor, most in Oct-Apr. Rare/scarce most winters but fairly common in irruption years.

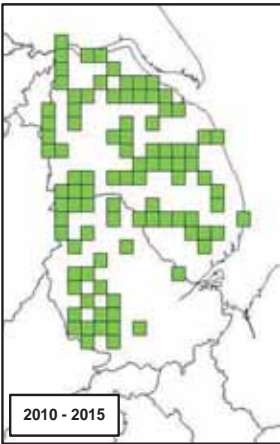
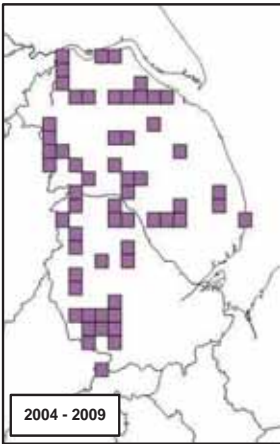
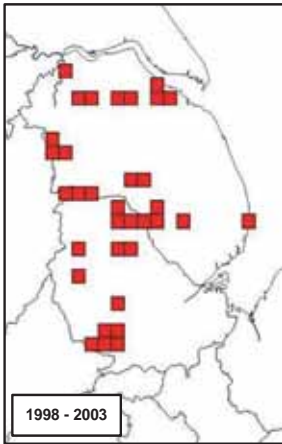
Continuing the poor winter for Waxwings from 2014, a single bird between Great Limber and Kirmington on Jan 7th provided the only record for that month. In Feb, a single bird was in Cleethorpes on the 3rd with five birds in Immingham the same day. The latter location held nine birds on the 4th increasing to ten on the 8th and 9th, with a final record of nine on the 11th. Elsewhere in Feb, a single bird was in Grimsby on the 17th and two in Stamford on the 22nd. At Gib Point, two birds were present on Feb 17th, with four there on the 26th and Mar 1st. At the end of the year, only a single bird was recorded in Nov coming in off the sea at Gib Point on the 21st before flying off to the west. Three birds were then recorded there on Dec 6th and a single on the 19th before it headed south. Elsewhere, two birds were at Tetney Haven on Dec 15th and, on the 27th, a single bird at Donna Nook and two at Saltfleetby St Peter on the 27th brought an unremarkable year for Waxwings to a close.

Eurasian Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Scarce local resident.

Records were received from 72 sites, widely spread across the county in suitable habitat, continuing the increase from the 45 sites recorded in 2013 and 63 last year. The maps below, showing all records by 5km squares, illustrates how the species, which at the end of the last century was a localised bird in the west of the county, has become widespread in woodland more or less everywhere, in less than twenty years. Records peaked in Jan, Feb and Apr (from 23, 21 and 27 sites respectively), but there were records from no more than ten sites per month for the rest of the year, with records from only two sites in Aug and one site in Oct. This pattern reflects, in part, the detectability of the species and also, perhaps, when birdwatchers most visit woodlands. Breeding was confirmed at Upton (at least three pairs) and in Temple Wood, and three territories were identified along the hillside above Alkborough Flats, with probable or possible breeding indicated at a further eight sites. Most records were of 1-4 birds but maximum counts were also noted of eight at Callan's Lane Wood (Jan), six at Belton Park (Jan) and five at Grainsby Park (Apr), Normanby Hall CP (Feb) and Upton (Apr). Away from more regular woodland haunts, one was noted at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Jun 25th and, two days later on the 27th, a juvenile female was trapped and ringed at Gib Point, only the seventh site record there. Remarkably, that ringed bird was subsequently found in woodland south-east of Louth (see below).

TV98263	Juvenile Female	27-06-2015	Gibraltar Point: 53°5'N 0°18'E
	Caught by ringer	29-08-2015	Muckton Bottom: 53°18'N 0°2'E 31km NW 0y 2m 2d
	Caught by ringer	16-09-2015	Muckton Bottom: 53°18'N 0°2'E 31km NW 0y 2m 20d



Eurasian Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Common resident and partial migrant.

Records were received from over 110 sites widely distributed around the county. Records peaked in Jan and Apr (from 44 and 46 sites respectively) and were fewest in Aug and Oct (11 and 13 sites). Most sightings comprised 1-3 birds but six birds were recorded from Belton Park (Sep) and Willingham Forest (Mar), and four birds from Little Cawthorpe and Whisby NR (Mar), Messingham SQ (Apr), Woodhall Spa (Jun), and Swanholme Lakes and Denton Reservoir (Sep). Breeding was confirmed at six sites and was probable at a further six. From 1-3 birds were recorded, and some trapped and ringed, at Gib Point on several dates from Jun to Oct inclusive with a peak in records in Sep and Oct. A bird seen at Theddlethorpe Dunes on Oct 19th (see photograph) appeared pale, with 'frosted' upperparts, but insufficient detail was seen to support as submission to BBRC as a bird of the northern race *C.f. familiaris*.

2013 correction The bird trapped and ringed at Donna Nook on 14th-15th October 2013 should be described as showing characters of the northern race, *C.f. familiaris*, rather than definitely of that race, since precise identification criteria still need to be developed (BB 109 p.629).



Northern Eurasian Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris* Theddlethorpe Dunes Oct 19th 2015 © Graham Catley

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Very common resident and partial migrant.

A very common and widespread species in the county with a noticeable increase in the number of locations recorded to around 315 (225 in 2015). No doubt a common breeding bird, with little information received, although 16 territories at Alkborough Flats, and 14 pairs at Frampton Marsh and nine pairs at Freiston Shore were recorded. Selected high counts made during the year included 68 at Anwick STW on Aug 4th, 68 at Gib Point on Oct 19th, 48 at Ruskington Fen on Jul 14th, 35 at Gunby (Spilsby) on May 15th and 32 at Bratoft on Jul 11th.

Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Starling remains common and widespread, with records from around 260 locations throughout the county, including a scattering of confirmed breeding records. The largest counts in Jan-Feb were c4000 in the Colsterworth-Skillington area on Jan 24th and c3000 at Norton Disney on Feb 4th. Large early spring counts are unusual but some were recorded at Gib Point, many of them moving south or east, including 2170 on Mar 12th, 5430 on Mar 22nd and 3067 on Mar 23rd. However, it is the regular autumn influx of continental birds which can produce impressive pre-roost murmurations. Although not as pronounced as previous years, peak counts, most near roosts, included 5600 at Donna Nook on Oct 15th, 10000 at Alkborough on Oct 30th-31st, 10000 at South Ferriby on Dec 20th, c5000 at Boultham Mere/Swanpool between Dec 23rd and 27th, and c9000 at Kirkby on Bain GP on Dec 24th.

Rose-coloured Starling *Pastor roseus*

Rare passage migrant. **LBRC**

Recorded in the county for the second year in a row, a first summer bird was photographed in a Stallingborough garden on May 6th (IBm). This was the 28th record (all singles) for Lincolnshire. It was, by 15 days, the earliest spring arrival but there have been four long-stayers in winter, arriving in 1955, 1983, 2002 and 2004, that have remained into Mar or Apr.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

Scarce passage migrant Mar-May and Sep-Nov; rare in winter.

There were records from more than 30 sites during Apr and it appeared to be a better than average spring on the whole. The first bird, an adult male, was noted at and around Weelsby Woods on the 8th, quite a late date compared with previous years, and was present until 15th. A second male was present in the area on Apr 9th, and also a female on Apr 14th and a later male on the 27th-28th. Elsewhere there were 1-2 birds at other sites, both coastal and inland, from Apr 9th into early May. Most seemed to arrive during the period Apr 13th-21st with highest numbers being at Donna Nook, where there were peaks of six on the 13th and 19th, at Risby Warren, where there were up to seven on the 18th-21st, with 13 on the 20th, and 1-2 on the 26th-30th and at Nettleton, where there were five on the 18th and one on the 24th. The maximum at Gib Point was three on Apr 16th, including a singing male. Many were found inland and, in addition to those at Risby Warren and Nettleton, birds (singles unless stated) were noted at Caistor (two on the 11th), Marton (1-2 on the 13th-14th), Toft Newton Res (15th and 18th), Crowland and Greetwell Hollow (16th), Little Steeping (17th), Crowle Moors (two on the 17th-18th), Holland Fen (two on the 18th), Barnettby-le-Wold/Kettleby (three on the 18th-19th), Messingham SQ (18th-20th), Covenham Res (two on the 18th-20th), Laceby (two on the 20th), Nocton Fen (two on the 24th), Ancaster (two on the 23rd), and Nettleham (24th). Records in May were one at Alkborough Flats on the 2nd-3rd, and one at Gib Point on the 9th. One at Gib Point on Sep 28th was the first of autumn, and there were more from Oct 4th onwards. Passage then became more noticeable, with birds recorded in Oct at just seven coastal sites but with good numbers counted, especially at Gib Point with 16 on Oct 6th and 48 on the Oct 11th. In each instance, the majority of these arrivals left overnight, with only 2-3 remaining on the following mornings. At Donna Nook, five on the 6th and six on the 7th were the highest counts of the autumn. Following the peak at Gib Point on 11th, there were just 1-3 birds at coastal sites, plus four at Donna Nook on the 14th. The sole autumn inland record was of one at Dunsby Fen on Nov 1st, the penultimate autumn record; the final bird of the year was at Gib Point on Nov 4th.

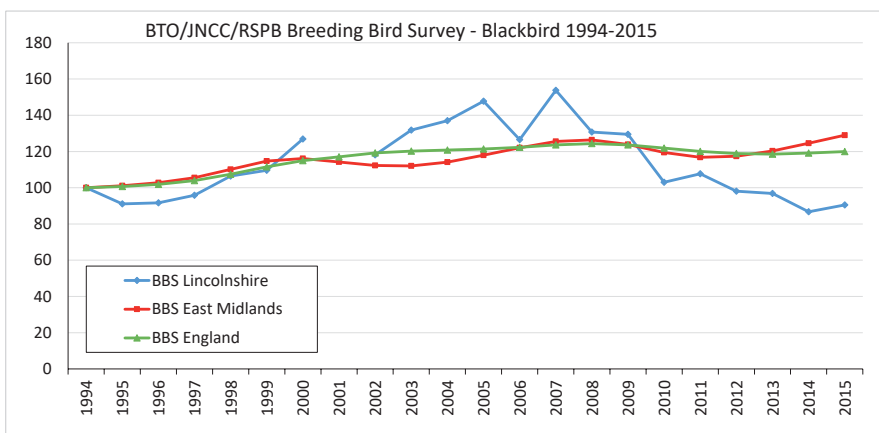


Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus* Risby Warren Apr 21st 2015 © Graham Catley

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Very common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

An extremely common and widespread breeding bird and winter visitor that was reported from around 350 locations throughout the county. Counts of 25 or over came from 31 locations, a figure that could have been swollen except that many observers chose to record the species as present rather than making an attempt to count them. Breeding numbers in the county (see BBS chart) seem to have fallen over the past ten years, while national and regional populations are stable. Monthly maxima of 50 or over were achieved eight times at six sites in the first quarter of the year, and eleven times at seven sites in the last quarter, but not at all during Apr-Sep. The highest counts during Jan-Mar were at Anwick STW (66, Feb 7th), Louth (60, Feb 4th), Covenham Res (58, Jan 25th), Grainsby (52, Jan 19th), Gib Point (50, Mar 6th) and Welbourn Heath (50, Jan 20th). There were 20 at Donna Nook and 25 at Gib Point on Oct 6th, marking the start of autumn passage. Between Oct 14th and Oct 19th, large numbers arrived at Gib Point including 180 on Oct 14th. Other coastal sites recorded similar numbers with 170 at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Oct 27th and 110 at Donna Nook on Oct 31st. The two largest counts of the year though were at Gib Point in Nov, with 210 there on the 22nd and 220 on the 23rd. Gib Point had ten counts exceeding 100 birds during Oct-Nov, but overall the 2015 autumn passage was much more moderate than in 2014, when there were 600 at Tetney Marsh, 950 at Donna Nook and 665 at Gib Point on late Oct. Numbers had tailed off by Dec when the highest counts were 62 at Marshchapel on Dec 13th, and 60 at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR and 58 at Gib Point on Dec 27th.



Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

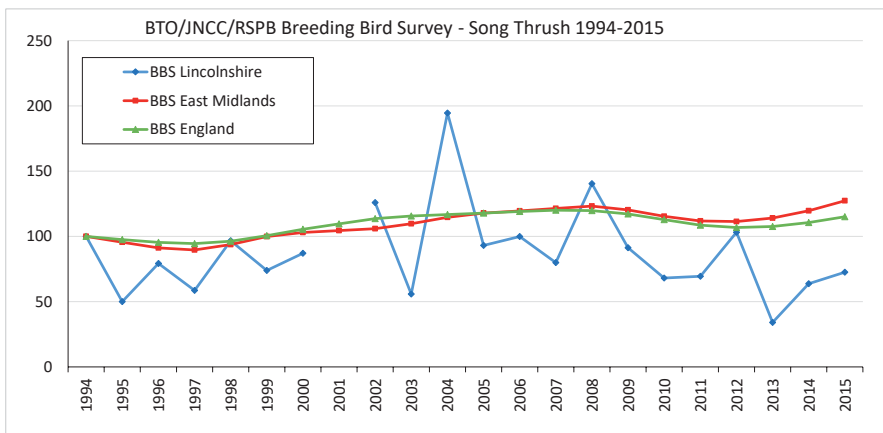
Very common passage migrant and winter visitor, mainly Sep-Apr; rare in summer. **RBBP**

The species was common and widespread throughout the county during the autumn and winter months with counts from nearly 200 widespread locations. Totals of over 350 came from 13 sites and are listed here. Only three of the counts were in the first part of the year, namely 500 at Grainsby on Feb 15th, 625 at Dorrington on Mar 2nd and 626 at Dunholme on Mar 19th. The last birds of the spring were both in the north of the county on May 24th at Barton Pits and at Eastoft. A single bird was seen at Gib Point on Jun 23rd with Mistle Thrushes, perhaps an injured or summering individual but equally possibly an arrival from Scandinavia (see also Redwing). There was an early autumn migrant at Gib Point on Aug 23rd, but in Sep the only reports were of 1-2 on four dates from the 10th at Gib Point. The first three-figure count of autumn was 138 at Gib Point on Oct 11th, increasing to 940 on Oct 27th and 550 on Oct 28th. Large flocks were seen during Nov at Gib Point on Nov 5th (670), South Willingham (1000) and Bonby Carrs (600) on Nov 7th, Dunsby Fen on Nov 8th (500), Wroot on Nov 14th (500), and Metheringham Delph on Nov 23rd (400). Flocks in Dec were equally impressive with 500 still at Bonby Carrs on Dec 7th, 1000 at Nebraska Wetlands on Dec 11th, 400 at Tetney Haven on Dec 15th and finally 900 at Bourne South Fen on Dec 28th.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

This continues to be a widespread but often inconspicuous resident and winter visitor with records from around 200 locations throughout the county, though probable or confirmed breeding was reported from only eight of these, including 14 singing males logged at Whisby NR during census work there in spring. Nationally and regionally, the BBS (see chart) has revealed a gentle increase over the past twenty years, following steep declines in the previous period, but this is not yet evident from the results for Lincolnshire. Autumn migration was apparent from late Sep when 18 were at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Sep 21st with more arriving, as expected, in Oct. Gib Point recorded 84 on Oct 6th, 43 of which moved south, and there were 45 at Donna Nook on the same day. Gib Point had three days during Oct when more than 100 were recorded: 118 on Oct 11th, 113 on Oct 13th and 101 on Oct 15th. There were no notable counts elsewhere and numbers tailed off during Nov and Dec with most inland counts in single figures.



Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Very common passage migrant and winter visitor, mainly Sep-Apr; rare in summer. **RBBP**

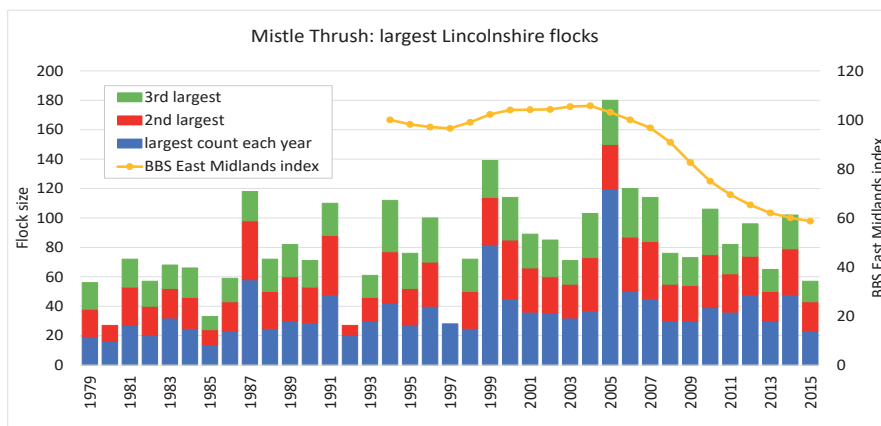
Common and widespread throughout the county early in the year although there were only three counts of over 100 during Jan-Mar, these being of 100 at Epworth Turbary on Jan 18th, 160 at Haugham Wood on Feb 17th and 161 at Aubourn on Mar 11th. In Apr passage was light with counts of 154 at Gib Point and 75 at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Apr 5th the high points. There was just a trickle of records through Apr, the last being one at Frampton Marsh on the 26th, then one more was seen near Wainfleet on May 14th. A possible returnee from Scandinavia or an over-summering bird was trapped at Gib Point on Jun 21st (see also Fieldfare). The first autumn record was of a single bird trapped at Gib Point on Sep 1st and there were just small numbers at various places during the rest of the month. After Oct 4th significant numbers began to arrive including at Gib Point where there were 330 on the 5th and 494 on the 6th. These were the harbingers of a larger arrival during the second week of Oct when Gib Point had 845 on the 11th, 545 on the 13th, 630 on the 14th and 538 on the 15th, with birds moving quickly on to the south and west. Numbers elsewhere were still modest at this time, with Donna Nook for instance having just 40 on Oct 12th. However, the largest arrival occurred at Gib Point on Oct 17th when 2400 were recorded, with 900 remaining the next day, decreasing to 300 on the 19th. Few were elsewhere on the 17th, with the next largest count being of 59 at Far Ings NNR, but there were 100 at Donna Nook on the 15th and 200 at Trent Port (Marton) on the 16th. Another large arrival occurred on Oct 27th when 900 were logged at Gib Point, 280 at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR and 200 at Donna Nook. Birds continued to arrive during Nov with 232 at Gib Point on the 3rd and 500 at Alkborough Flats on the 7th. Dec counts were more modest, with the highest counts being inland, with 500 at Nebraska Wetlands on the 11th and 200 at Stenwith on the 29th.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Common resident and partial migrant.

Widespread throughout the year with records from nearly 200 different locations from around the county with confirmed breeding records coming from eight of these, and a further 26 reporting probable or possible breeding. The largest flock of the year was one of 23 on Market Rasen GC on Aug 27th. The next largest totals were of flocks of 14 at Baumber on Sep 9th rising to 20 on the 12th, and 14 at Thorpe on the Hill on Sep 1st. Autumn passage was unremarkable with small numbers going south on the coast during Sep and Oct, highest counts being of 10-12 birds on several days at Gib Point and Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR. Numbers remained low until the end of the year.

The chart below shows the size of the three largest site maxima each year (only two are known for 1992 and one for 1997), using data extracted from Lincolnshire Bird Reports, and from the LBC database for 1997-2007. Most of these high counts were made in late summer and early autumn, when post-breeding flocks of adults and young form, but a few were at other times of year. The peak counts of all were 82 at North Kelsey Moor in 1999 and 120 at Honington in 2005. Since then, there has been a marked decline and the maximum in 2015 of just 23 was the lowest since 1992. That is in line with the national and regional trends, derived from the BBS, which have shown a steady decline in the UK as a whole since about 2005; the BBS indices for the East Midlands (including most of Lincolnshire) are shown on the chart. Prior to the start of the BBS in 1994, the Common Birds Census (CBC) suggested that a decrease was underway from around the 1970s. That appears to be counter to the Lincolnshire pattern but it is known the CBC was biased towards south-east England. The recent decline in Lincolnshire flock sizes clearly matches the steep decline recorded by the BBS. Peak counts are a rather crude measure of population size, but they do provide further evidence that the species is currently in trouble.



Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Formerly common, now very local summer visitor and passage migrant.

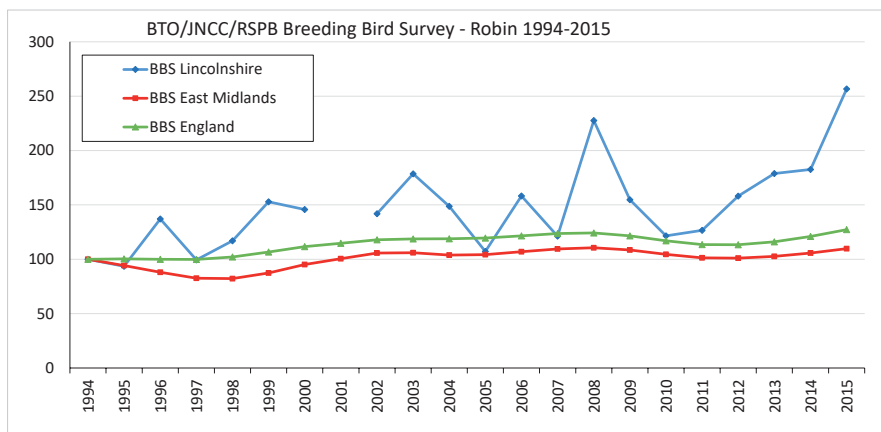
One at Frampton Marsh and two at Huttoft Bank Pit on May 5th were the first returning migrants, closely followed by singles at Donna Nook, Hubbards Hills (Louth), Raithby (Louth) and Freiston Shore all on May 8th. Peak spring counts included five at Gib Point on May 11th, four at Donna Nook on May 13th and Old Bolingbroke on May 26th. During the breeding season, from Jun to late Aug, records came from about 40 locations, a similar figure to the previous year. Of these, breeding was confirmed in at least 14 locations, whilst possible or probable breeding was reported at a further eight sites. Widely reported in single figures throughout the county during Aug-Sep, with a few double figure counts. An impressive post-breeding gathering of 22 birds was found in a wooded area overlooking fields and mature hedges at Spridlington on Aug 5th, with 12 present there on the 6th (but only five on the 7th and none on the 8th). The next highest inland counts were seven at Baumber on Sep 1st and seven at Belton Park on Sep 17th. The highest passage count on the coast (and the only one of more than five) was 12 at Gib Point on Aug 25th. There was just one Oct record, of one at Saltfleet on the 1st.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Very common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

A very common and widespread species, with an increase in reports to around 320 locations (245 in 2014) from all over the county. In addition, although not routinely recorded, breeding was confirmed from a scattering of sites. As the BBS chart below shows, Robin numbers have been slowly increasing over the past twenty years. This trend seems to be steeper in Lincolnshire than in wider contexts. Autumn typically brings a pronounced passage particularly at coastal sites; the highest counts came mainly from Gib Point, where there were thirteen days when counts exceeded 100 during Oct 11th-Nov 3rd. Peak coastal site counts were 325 at Gib Point on Oct 15th, 40 at Donna Nook on Oct 6th and 30 at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Oct 11th. Inland peak day counts included 38 at both Anwick STW on Aug 10th and Ruskington Fen on Sep 20th, with 26 at Far Ings NNR on Feb 28th. The ringing recovery below shows a quick transfer from The Netherlands to Gib Point, to the north of west.

NLA	First-year	10-10-2015	Castricum: 52°31'N 4°36'E (Noord-Holland) The Netherlands
BC73044	Caught by ringer	11-10-2015	Gibraltar Point: 53°5'N 0°18'E 295km WNW 0y 0m 1d



Common Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*

Scarce and declining local summer visitor and scarce passage migrant.

At the only reliable location for this iconic summer visitor, Whisby NR again provided the majority of records, with the first returning bird singing at 05:00 on Apr 11th. Further birds arrived as expected and for the twelfth consecutive year, census work was carried out to map breeding activity, with a total of 11 singing males recorded. Two sub populations are now well defined and comprising six around the Coot Lake area and five around the Teal Lake/Apex Pit/Butterley's Pit area (referred to as North Hykeham Pits by some observers). Nocturnal surveys at the end of May, which apparently indicate unpaired males, detected just four singing birds, and suggests that most males may have been paired with females. Certainly, two pairs were confirmed breeding, with fledged young recorded in two territories. Elsewhere in the county, full coverage was not attempted but possible or probable breeding records included two males singing at both Twyford Wood during Apr 20th- May 10th and Bourne Wood during May 7th-15th, whilst a single was heard singing at Kirkby Moor NR on May 26th. On the coast, migrants included singles at Donna Nook on May 1st and 2nd, and – more unusually – a female with a brood patch which was trapped and ringed at Gib Point on Jun 7th. Singing continued later than average at Whisby NR with the last bird heard on Jun 20th, whilst the last bird for the year was recorded there on Aug 11th. There were no coastal autumn records.

Red-flanked Bluetail *Tarsiger cyanurus*

Vagrant. **BBRC**

The first record since 2008, a first winter female was trapped, ringed and photographed at Gib Point on Oct 20th (G.Gr *et al.*). Accepted by BBRC (BB 109 p.616).

This was the eighth record for the county, previous records being as follows:

- 1903 North Cotes, adult male seen, Sep 23rd – the first British record
- 1978 Donna Nook, first winter female, Oct 10th
- 1988 Theddlethorpe Dunes, female or first winter trapped, Oct 12th
- 1999 Skegness, female or first winter, Oct 22nd-23rd
- 2002 Gib Point, female or first winter, Nov 15th-16th
- 2008 Chapel Six Marshes, first winter male, Nov 6th
- 2008 Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes, first winter trapped, Nov 8th

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva*

Rare passage migrant in May and Sep-Nov. Exceptional inland and in spring. **LBRC**

After two years with above average records, it was back to some form of normality with a single record of one in the Sea View-Rimac area of Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Sep 27th (CA *et al.*).

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Passage migrant, mainly coastal; rare/scarce in spring and scarce/fairly common in autumn.

Although always scarce during spring passage, surprisingly there were no records this year. Therefore all records refer to autumn passage which started with a single at Donna Nook and three at Gib Point on Aug 14th. A notable influx to coastal areas occurred during Aug 23rd-31st and included peak day counts of 14 at Horseshoe Point and 12 at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe NNR on the 23rd, and 31 at Donna Nook and 43 at Gib Point on the 24th, whilst a further 11 sites recorded between one and six birds. Sep was quieter although passage occurred all month, once again all at coastal sites, and included peak day counts of five at Donna Nook and four at Gib Point, with a further six locations each recording 1-2 birds. During Oct one was at Saltfleet on the 1st, whilst 1-2 were at Gib Point on the 1st-3rd, the two on the 3rd being the last of the year.



Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca* Gib Point Aug 24th 2015 © Paul Neale

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Scarce passage migrant, rare and irregular breeder and rare winter visitor. **RBBP**

Spring passage included singles at Bourne on Mar 20th, Greetwell Hollow/Quarry on Mar 24th, Covenham Res on Mar 27th, Boston on Apr 16th, Grimsby on May 13th, Garthorpe on May 16th and a late bird at Gib Point on Jun 10th. A second calendar year male was photographed in Scunthorpe on Jun 13th; this was in a garden close to the steelworks and raises the interesting possibility that breeding could have been attempted there in 2015. Autumn passage commenced

with a juvenile at Marston STW on Sep 7th with no other records during the month. There were 1-3 at Gib Point on twelve dates during Oct 11th-Nov 6th, with single birds at Donna Nook on Oct 11th, 26th and 31st, and just inland one was at Sloothby on the 27th. Additional Nov records were singles in Grimsby on the 2nd and Market Rasen on the 13th-15th.



Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros* Gib Point Oct 31st 2015 © Russell Hayes

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Rare summer visitor and scarce passage migrant in spring, fairly common/common in autumn.

The first returning migrants typically arrived back during Apr and included singles at Weelsby Woods, Grimsby, on the 13th, at Donna Nook and Frampton Marsh on the 16th, Barton Pits on the 19th and Swanpool on the 20th, whilst two were at Donna Nook on the 24th with one on the 25th. May was even quieter for passage with just one at Donna Nook on the 3rd. During the nesting season, probable/possible breeding included singing males at Linwood Warren on May 4th and 30th and at Wharton Wood on Jun 1st. Autumn passage commenced with one in the West Dunes at Gib Point on Jul 28th but there were no more until one at Donna Nook on Aug 14th. Single figure counts of between one and eight birds then continued through the rest of Aug, with records at nine coastal/estuarine and four inland locations. Passage was more or less continuous throughout Sep, but again day counts were low with between one and eight birds at ten coastal and two inland locations, and no counts exceeding four after the 12th. Migrants continued well into Oct with 1-3, all at coastal locations, on eleven dates through to the last one of the year at Gib Point on the 19th.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Fairly common passage migrant. Formerly bred.

The first returning migrant was a female at Weelsby Wood, Grimsby, on Apr 11th-13th, followed by a further three single birds at three widely spread locations during Apr 21st-30th. May was more productive than the recent norm, with one or two birds recorded from ten sites during the 1st-17th; surprisingly six of those sites and half of the 18 birds involved were inland rather than at coastal migration locations. Autumn commenced with one at Freiston Shore on Aug 1st, followed by a fairly continuous passage from mid-month onwards with high counts of 32 at Gib Point on the 25th and 16 at Freiston Shore on the 29th, although day counts of 1-8 were more typical. Likewise throughout Sep a widespread passage included typical day counts of between one and nine birds from 12 coastal and three inland locations, with just one double figure count of 13 at Gib Point on the 1st. The last of the year was one at Gib Point on Sep 27th.



Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* Marton May 7th 2015 © Colin Scott

European Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor, mainly Sep-Apr. Sporadic breeder.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of sites	28	22	18	3	1	1	-	2	6	14	12	21
Sum of site peaks	46	31	33	4	1	1	-	2	16	36	25	42

A return to previous form with widespread wintering records at both ends of the year. Peak day counts included five at Alkborough Flats on Jan 25th, five at Willow Tree Fen on Nov 1st and five at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe NNR on Dec 11th, whilst during autumn passage peak day counts included seven at Gib Point on Sep 27th, five at Skegness on Oct 4th, and five at Gib Point on four dates during Oct 3rd-25th. During the breeding season no reports were received that indicated that nesting might have taken place.



European Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola* Frampton Marsh Mar 7th 2015 © Neil Smith

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Fairly common/common passage migrant. Former local breeder but no recent proof, although pairs are regular in late spring.

Greenland Wheatear *O.o. leucorrhoa* Scarce migrant in spring/autumn.

The first returning migrants arrived as usual during Mar with singles at Swinderby on the 23rd and Frampton Marsh on the 27th. Passage was then typically widespread throughout the county during Apr and May and included peak day counts of 12 at Gib Point on Apr 14th, 24 at Risby Warren on Apr 18th with another peak of 23 there on Apr 30th, and 11 at Frampton Marsh on Apr 28th. Jun records included singles at Marshchapel on the 6th and at Red Hill (Goulceby) on the 15th, while at Frampton Marsh there were four on the 3rd and one on the 24th. Frampton Marsh also recorded a presumed early autumn passage juvenile on Jul 17th-21st, whilst intriguing was a report of three in Greetwell Hollow/Quarry on Jul 22nd. Aged as two adults and a juvenile there remains the real possibility that an undetected pair may have nested in this large abandoned quarry complex. Passage continued throughout the rest of Jul and into Aug and Sep, and although widespread, peak day counts were mostly in single figures with between one and seven birds. Only two double-figure counts were received of 16 at Gib Point and 13 at Saltfleet Haven, both on Sep 12th. One or two birds were recorded regularly, mainly on the coast, up to Oct 18th with just one later record of one at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Nov 6th.

Individuals reported as showing characters of the Greenland race *leucorrhoa* included 14 at Risby Warren on Apr 21st, six at Saltfleetby St Clement on May 6th, at least one at Tetney Lock on May 10th, up to two at Gib Point May 13th-14th and one at Alkborough Flats on May 23rd.

Duncock *Prunella modularis*

Very common resident and partial migrant.

Common and widespread with an increase in reports, from around 255 sites throughout the county. There is little to suggest that this isn't a common breeding bird although reports of confirmed breeding were received for only a scattering of sites. In addition seven pairs at Frampton Marsh and two pairs at Freiston Shore were noted. Inland high counts during the year included 30 at Messingham SQ on Mar 25th, 28 at Ruskington Fen on Mar 11th and 21 at Anwick STW on Apr 5th. Peak day counts during spring passage were mostly from Gib Point where the peaks were 60 on Mar 17th and 59 on Apr 6th, though many of these may have been residents: there was a midsummer count there of 62 on Jun 15th. Autumn peak counts included 63 at Gib Point on Aug 24th and 30th, with 88 there on Sep 22nd and 66 on Oct 6th, 50 at Donna Nook on Oct 6th and 12th, and 25 at Tetney Marsh on Oct 28th.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Common resident and partial migrant.

Numerous reports came from the locations where counts are made regularly, but equally many observers do not bother to count this species (similar to 2014, 17% of House Sparrow reports were submitted merely as 'present'). Thirty sites recorded 30 or more birds, with 12 of these recording 50 or more in at least one month. The highest of these were 145 at Ruskington & Dorrington Fens on May 4th (with 110 in the same area in Mar and Aug, and up to 80 in other months), 100 at allotments outside Barton upon Humber on Aug 15th, 80 at each of Anwick STW (on Feb 7th), Leasingham (Apr 8th) and Withcall (Mar 22nd), and 60 at Far Ings on Feb 12th and at North Hykeham on Dec 7th. There was no clear month-to-month variation in peak numbers. Confirmation of breeding was received from just five sites, and there was no detailed information on colony numbers. Data from the BTO BBS scheme suggests the breeding population in the East Midlands, as a whole, is relatively stable but Lincolnshire data suggested a 15% decline (non-significant) between 2014 and 2015.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Fairly common resident and partial migrant.

Counts of up to 50 were widespread during the first quarter, with peaks of 60 at Wrangle Brickpits on Jan 11th and 17th and 72 there on Mar 8th, and also 50 at Conisholme on Jan 8th and 50 at Garthorpe on Feb 8th. Smaller totals were reported during the breeding season, when there was confirmed breeding at 12 widely spread sites (including 60 occupied nest-boxes at Deeping St. Nicholas) and possible/probable breeding at a further 12 sites. Numbers increased through Jul, Aug and Sep, peaking in Oct. Autumn monthly maxima were of 40 at Freiston Shore on Jul 18th, with 50 there on Aug 17th, 80 at Covenham Res on Sep 9th, and 80 at Gib Point on Oct 12th and 15th. Southward movement at Gib Point was most pronounced between mid Sep and early Nov. Totals south were as follows: 85 in Sep, 424 in Oct and 56 in Nov. Maxima elsewhere included 54 at Normanby-by-Spital on Sep 19th, 40 at Tetney Marsh on Oct 12th, 28 at Tetney Marsh on Oct 31st and 30 at Dunholme on Dec 27th.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

Summer visitor and passage migrant. One common race occurs and several others are scarce/rare.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava flavissima*: common summer visitor and passage migrant mostly Apr-Sep.

Peak counts	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Covenham Res	-	22	5	3	5	40	3	-
Toft Newton Res	-	45	6	-	3	50	12	-
Gibraltar Point	-	22	22	2	13	69	35	2
Freiston Shore	-	16	1	2	1	40	6	-
Frampton Marsh	-	50	5	6	2	50	150	-
Willow Tree Fen	-	50	4	-	-	25	8	-
Marston STW	-	70	-	-	-	14	2	-

The table records all sites with records of more than 40 birds, apart from 56 flying south at Huttoft Bank on Aug 21st and 51 at Manby Wetland on Sep 5th. The first birds of the year were two reported from Normanby by Spital on Apr 4th, followed by singles at Frampton Marsh on Apr 6th and Gib Point on Apr 8th. Peak April counts involved 70 at Marston STW on 16th, 50 at Frampton Marsh on the 15th, 50 birds at Willow Tree Fen on the 22nd and 45 at Toft Newton Res on the 29th. Peak May counts were 22 at Gib Point on May 4th and 15 at Midville on May 23rd. The numbers on spring migration were higher than 2014. Breeding numbers were slightly down on 2014. Birds were recorded in 29 out of 85 BBS squares surveyed with a total of 102 birds counted. Yellow Wagtails were found in only 168 BBS squares in UK as a whole, and Lincs thus contributed around 17% of the recorded squares. Autumn migration counts were comparable to those in spring but down on autumn 2014. It was also noticeable that passage was later than in 2014 with Jul peaks lower and Sep peaks higher than the previous years'. The meagre Jul peaks came at the end of the month with 13 at Gib Point on 31st and 12 at Alkborough on the 26th. In Aug there were 50 at Toft Newton Reservoir on the 14th and 22nd, 69 at Gib Point on the 22nd, and 50 at Frampton Marsh on the 23rd and 30th. In Sep the only counts above 40 were 100 at Frampton Marsh on the 2nd with 150 there on the 7th, 75 at Witham Mouth on the 4th and 51 at Manby Wetland on the 5th. The last records of the year were singles at Cleethorpes CP on Oct 13th and one at Gib Point on Oct 17th.



Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava flavissima* Frampton Marsh Apr 14th 2015 © Neil Smith

Blue-headed Wagtail *M.f. flava*: scarce passage migrant, mainly spring. Has bred sporadically. LBRC RBBP

A good year with at least 12 individual birds resembling *M.f. flava* reported. Singles were at Covenham Res on Apr 12th, Willow Tree Fen on Apr 14th, Frampton Marsh on Apr 12th-17th

and May 1st, Toft Newton Reservoir Apr 16th-18th with another reported there on May 1st, Marston STW on Apr 16th-23rd, and a pair at Middlemarsh Farm, Skegness, on Apr 24th. During May there were reports of singles at Gib Point on 5th, at Blackmoor Bridge/Aubourn on 11th and 15th-16th and again on Jun 3rd.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Scarce/fairly common passage migrant (mainly coastal) and winter visitor (mostly inland). Rare breeder, formerly sporadic, but has become regular in recent years.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of sites	18	20	16	23	11	7	9	14	31	39	23	27
Min number of birds	22	24	25	33	20	12	14	21	61	77	27	30

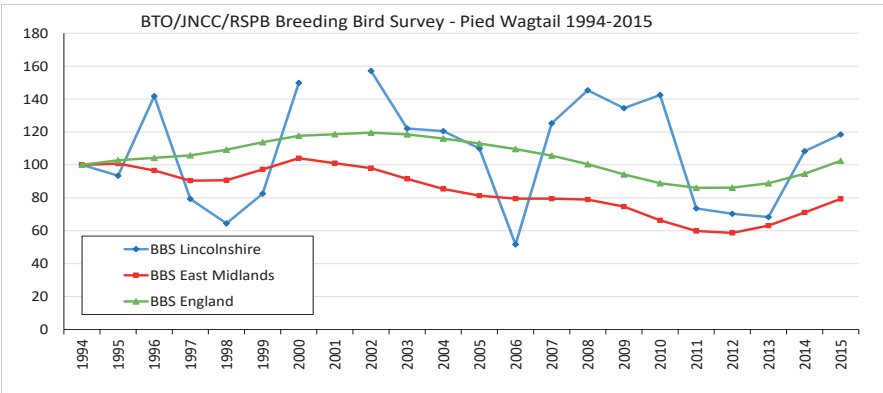
Records were received from over 80 sites (up from 68 in 2014) of which around 12 were coastal/estuarine and the rest inland. The table indicates that there is pronounced dispersal or autumn passage especially in Sep-Oct. The peak coastal counts were 15 south at Gib Point on Sep 18th with nine at Skegness on Oct 4th, further counts at Gib Point of eight south on Sep 17th and seven south on the 20th, and six at Witham Mouth on Sep 20th. Inland the maximum count was six at Anwick STW on May 9th. Breeding was confirmed at Anwick STW with adults and one juvenile seen on Jun 12th, Keddington on May 9th, Sleaford on May 16th and Hubbards Hills, Louth, on Jul 25th. It was not recorded in any of the 83 BBS squares surveyed in Lincs in 2015. It is relatively widely but thinly spread in winter with most records being of single birds.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrelli*

Common resident and passage migrant.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Risby Warren	-	100	15	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Covenham Res	4	4	9	20	6	7	30	45	60	14	18	5
Toft Newton Res	3	4	20	30	10	10	100	50	50	25	6	6
Brayford Pool	400	60	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Gibraltar Point	4	3	9	8	11	12	45	110	80	29	20	58
Marston STW	40	-	100	22	-	-	-	12	10	-	35	100

The table includes all sites recording 50 or more, with the exception of 120 at Tydd St Mary's Marsh and 70 at Boston in Feb, 75 at Tattershall Lakes CP in Mar, 90 at Kirkby on Bain GP in Apr. Many of the higher counts were at roosts or pre-roost gatherings. These were most impressive at Brayford Pool, Lincoln, with c400 on Jan 17th, and at Gib Point in autumn, reaching 110 on Aug 25th. Breeding information from BBS found a total of 101 birds in 45 out of 85 BBS squares surveyed, which was up on 2014 suggesting 2015 was a better year than 2014. Over the longer term, the Lincolnshire BBS index (see chart) shows wide fluctuations, as expected for a species occurring at low densities, but the general trend mirrors that of regional and national populations, with a gentle increase evident over the past three or four years.



White Wagtail *M.a. alba*: scarce passage migrant, mainly Mar-Jun. RBBP

Spring passage started with single birds at Gib Point on Mar 12th with another there on Mar 18th. From then to May 23rd, adult breeding plumage birds were reported from 23 sites none in Jun. Peak counts were of 40 at Frampton Marsh on Apr 16th and 19th and 10 at Toft Newton Reservoir on Apr 17th. Single adult birds were seen at Gib Point on Jul 25th and Oct 4th. A few others were reported in autumn but it is sometimes not clear whether birds are being reported as true White Wagtails or merely as Pied/White. Autumn identification is not easy and we are not publishing birds as White Wagtail unless we are sure that identification was certain.

Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi*

Rare passage migrant, mainly Sep-Nov, rarely Dec-Jan and Apr-May. LBRC

One at Gib Point on Apr 22nd (JPS) was the first spring record since 2004, though there was a bird at Skidbrooke during Jan 12th-Apr 12th 2008. One flew north at Donna Nook on Oct 3rd (JJE, CA) and there was also one near Pye's Hall on Oct 6th (CA, GPC). At Gib Point, a series of sightings is considered to relate to six individuals, although it is possible that fewer were involved. One was seen on Oct 4th (RDn *et al.*), with two on the 5th-6th (KMW *et al.*) followed by a gap until one was seen on Oct 12th (NAL), and finally singles moving south on both Oct 17th (PMG, KMW, JS) and 18th (GGr). Thus the total for the year was nine birds.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Rare summer visitor and scarce passage migrant. Breeds locally, mainly in the western half of the county.

At the remaining key breeding site in the county, Laughton Forest-Scotton Common, the first birds were noted on Apr 15th but as there were nine males present there had clearly been an earlier arrival; a full survey revealed a total of 26 breeding territories, down from 35 recorded in the last full survey of the area as recently as 2012. At their peak there were 52 territories in the survey area in 2002 and 45 in 1999, with 40 recorded in 1992 and 42 as recently as 2006, so the decline in numbers is clearly accelerating. This is, in part, due to a loss of prime breeding habitat as the area of clear fells has declined but also reflects the wider decline of the species in the east of England in the last 25 years. On the wet heath project within the forest, where habitat is maintained for heathland bird species, there has been an ongoing decline of territories from a peak of 27 in 2006/7 to 19 by 2010 and 13 in 2014 and 2015, showing that the decline is being driven by factors other than just the loss of suitable breeding habitat. There was as usual little information from other breeding sites. At Crowle Moors, there were only two reports of single birds, noted as possible breeding, while it is likely that there are still several pairs at this locality, and possibly in excess of 10 pairs. At Linwood Warren, one was reported on May 4th and 12th but no further information was received. Away from breeding areas, first and last dates were Apr 10th and Oct 11th. Birds were seen on seven dates at Gib Point during Apr 10th-22nd including two on the 15th-17th and three on the 20th, and five dates during May 3rd-20th including two on the 7th. Other spring migrants were seen at Covenham Res on Apr 16th and at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes on Apr 21st. In the autumn, one was Donna Nook and one at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes on Aug 24th, with further singles at Donna Nook on Aug 25th and Sept 18th, one at Frampton Marsh on Aug 30th, one at Far Ings on Sep 15th and at Gib Point regular records from Aug 19th to Oct 11th with peaks of 13 on Aug 24th, eight on the 25th and four on Sep 17th.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Tetney Marsh	19	5	15	10	20	2	2	35	20	15	10	-
Donna Nook	25	25	30	25	11	15	65	13	140	160	25	30
Gibraltar Point	3	4	179	91	30	89	47	89	2437	178	138	16
Wainfleet-Wrangle*	57	46	143	28	35	37	52	4	82	16	21	26
Freiston Shore	4	2	10	14	1	54	5	3	15	5	6	1
Frampton Marsh	25	14	30	32	15	146	2	15	100	15	3	13
Covenham Res	30	30	29	1	2	-	-	-	8	25	40	50
Branstons	30	-	5	1	1	1	2	20	-	100	100	20

The table includes some of the more consistently recorded coastal sites, plus a couple of inland ones, including all areas with records of 75 or more birds. The highest individual site count early in the year was 55 at Saltfleet on Jan 6th, but the combined Wash WeBS sectors of Wainfleet, Friskney and Wrangle held 57 in Jan; no doubt large numbers are present across other saltmarsh around

the county but it is difficult to achieve comprehensive counts of these. The peak spring count was 179 at Gib Point on Mar 23rd when small parties were recorded moving south on most days, and at the same time there were 143 in the Wainfleet-Wrangle sectors. Breeding estimates on The Wash RSPB reserves were 27 territories at Freiston Shore and 73 territories at Frampton Marsh, slightly fewer than last year, but at Alkborough Flats there was a sharp increase to 110 territories from 72 in 2014. Recording of visible passage at Gib Point gave a total of about 10360 moving south during Sep with peak counts of 2310 on 17th and 2362 on 18th, and counts exceeding 500 on five other dates during Sep 16th-25th. Southwards movements continued through Oct but on a much smaller scale with fewer than 600 recorded all month. The highest autumn counts elsewhere were 200 at Heighington on Sep 8th, 100 at Frampton Marsh RSPB on Sep 16th, 140 at Donna Nook on Sep 22nd and 220 at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Sep 25th. In early Oct, 160 were at Donna Nook on the 4th, and 150 at Witham Mouth and 100 at Branston on the 8th. Smaller wintering numbers remained into Dec at many sites.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor Sep-Apr; scarce inland.

Scandinavian Rock Pipit *A.p. littoralis* common but overlooked passage migrant and winter visitor.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Donna Nook	35	40	11	1	-	-	-	-	2	7	23	33
Saltfleet-Theddlethorpe	120	77	8	-	-	-	-	-	1	39	40	180
Gibraltar Point	59	125	30	4	-	-	-	-	28	120	92	72
Freiston Shore	6	9	3	1	-	-	-	-	7	3	7	-
Frampton Marsh	89	49	21	8	-	-	-	-	-	8	4	6

The coastal areas holding most wintering birds are given in the table. These are believed to be largely of the race *littoralis* from Fennoscandia. The nominate race *petrosus*, which does not breed in the county, is not migratory though there is some dispersal from breeding areas. In winter, the two races are not distinguishable but in spring some *littoralis* become quite strongly coloured. There were no significant numbers recorded during the first quarter away from the coastal sites. There were no records between the last of spring on Apr 22nd at Freiston Shore and the first of autumn at Gib Point on Sep 5th. Gib Point and Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR were the two main coastal sites reporting large wintering numbers, with far fewer recorded at Frampton Marsh RSPB than last year. The Oct peak at Gib Point of 120 on the 29th included 60 south and a further 60 flushed off the New Saltmarsh by a Hen Harrier. Birds moving south were 41 in Sep, 462 in Oct and 263 in Nov. In contrast the numbers at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR built up more slowly through Nov and Dec, with a peak count of 132 on Dec 20th (and the sum of WeBS counts in the area in Dec was 180). Surprisingly few penetrate the Humber, but there were 1-2 at Alkborough Flats on three dates in Oct-Nov, and 2-3 on the Humber shore at Barton in the same period. Away from coast and estuaries, there were singles at Covenham Res on four dates between mid-Oct and early Nov, and two at Toft Newton Res on Apr 14th with a single there on Oct 10th.

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

Rare/scarse passage migrant and winter visitor Oct-Apr. Mainly coastal, possibly increasing. LBRC

Water Pipits are scarce winter visitors from alpine areas of southern Europe. Most occur in coastal areas and the highest numbers in the UK occur between the Humber and Suffolk, and in the Fens (BTO Bird Atlas 2007-11). In 2015, more were recorded in the first winter period than at the end of the year. During Jan-Mar, birds were seen along the Humber, coast and Wash as follows: 1-2 at Alkborough Flats during Jan 2nd-15th (GPC, ND), one at Barton Pits on Jan 6th-Feb 11th (GPC), two at East Halton Skitter on Feb 6th (GPC), one at Humberston Fitties/Tetney Marsh on Jan 24th-27th and Mar 3rd (DN, CSc, PAn), one at Donna Nook during Jan 23rd-Mar 12th (SL *et al.*) then two there on Apr 2nd and 4th with one reported on the 6th (BMC, MJT, CA *et al.*), one at Saltfleet Haven on Mar 20th (NAL), one at Brickyard Lane, Theddlethorpe on Feb 28th-Mar 1st (IPM, GH), 1-2 intermittently at Gib Point during Jan 7th-Apr 2nd (KMW, NAL *et al.*), two at Frampton Marsh during Jan 4th-25th then one until Apr 5th (ABe, TC, SK *et al.*). Exceptionally, one was found inland at Whisby NR on Apr 1st. There was one late bird at Frampton Marsh on Apr 18th (SK).

The first birds of the autumn were singles on Oct 26th at East Halton Skitter (GPC) and Gib Point (GPBO), with another there on the 27th (GPBO). Records for Nov-Dec are presented for sites in

the same sequence as above. At Alkborough Flats, there was one from Nov 4th increasing to two on Nov 26th and three from Dec 20th to 27th at least (GPC, ND). Three were seen at Killingholme Haven Pits on Dec 1st (GPC). Singles were at Tetney Marsh on Nov 20th, Dec 23rd and 27th (CA). At Donna Nook, one was noted on five dates between Nov 9th and Dec 10th (SL). At Rimac, Saltfleetby, two were seen on Nov 2nd and 10th (NAL *et al.*) and four on Nov 25th (GPC). At Frampton Marsh, there were two on Dec 23rd and one on Dec 24th-27th (TC *et al.*).



Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta* Donna Nook Mar 5th 2015 © John Clarkson

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Winter visitor and passage migrant. Exceptional in summer. **RBBP**

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Forest Pines GC, Broughton	23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gibraltar Point	2	1	1	5	-	-	-	-	-	65	128	3
Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes-				2	-	-	-	-	-	28	4	4
Dunston Fen/Nocton Wood	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20

Just over 40 sites reported Bramblings although they were decidedly thin on the ground in the first quarter of the year, the only substantial count being of up to 23 birds at Forest Pines, Broughton, in Jan. The spring maximum was of just five birds at Gib Point in Apr 9th, with the last bird of the spring there on Apr 24th. Autumn arrivals were not noted until Oct, with the first one at Gib Point on Oct 2nd. Numbers built up from Oct 10th onwards, with peaks at Gib Point of 54 on the 11th, 57 on the 15th, 55 on the 23rd and 65 on the 31st. Peaks elsewhere were 28 at Crook Bank, Theddlethorpe, on Oct 11th and 11 at Donna Nook on the 27th. Continued presence at Gib Point in Nov included 56 on the 8th, 87 on the 10th and the maximum of 128 on the 11th, but these were clearly passage birds and very few remained anywhere in the county during Dec, excepting small flocks of c20 in Nocton Wood/Dunston Fen and up to 10 at Wroot. The ringing recovery concerns a bird caught at Seacroft in a previous autumn, found presumably at or near its breeding site.

L690351	First-year Male	15-10-2013	Seacroft, Skegness: 53°6'N 0°19'E
	Caught by ringer	20-05-2015	Dividalen Fs, Malselv: 68°46'N 19°40'E (Troms) Norway 2,019km NNE 1y 7m 5d

Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Very common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

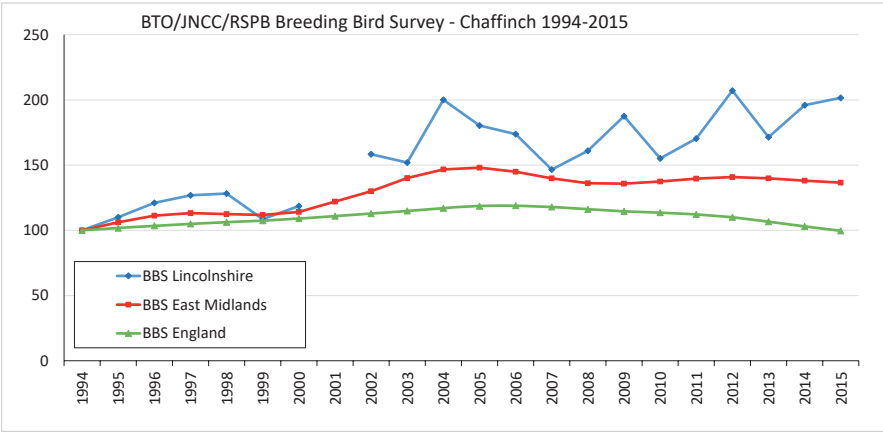
Chaffinch abundance has increased rapidly since the early 1970s, according to BTO surveys, but numbers seemed to stabilise for a period during the 1990s. There was a downturn in numbers from 2006, linked to the widespread and severe outbreak of trichomonosis that began in 2005. Currently, changes in adult survival seem the major contributor to annual population change. The table shows sums of monthly peaks from about 340 sites, and the totals are remarkably similar to those for 2014.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sum of all site peaks	1229	1048	1191	914	741	666	223	214	447	696	969	730

Local Chaffinches are highly sedentary but from autumn onwards, large numbers of Scandinavian migrants join them. Peak counts during the first quarter changed little. The highest counts in Jan-Feb were 100 at Wold Newton on Jan 23rd and 100 at Louth on Jan 25th. Spring migration began during Mar with significant numbers recorded moving south at Gib Point: the monthly total was 1146 with a peak movement of 473 birds on the 29th. Numbers decreased during Apr as birds dispersed further with a maximum of 80 at Gib Point on the 2nd. Breeding numbers, as recorded by the BBS (see chart), continue in a trend of slow increase, in contrast to regional and national populations which have levelled out. Autumn immigration began during Sep with peak counts of 25-60 at Boultham Mere, Covenham Res, Far Ings NNR, Folkingham, Gib Point, Tetney Marsh and Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR. Numbers increased into Oct, with more than 100 per day recorded at Gib Point on 4 days and a site maximum of 152 on the 31st. Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR recorded 120 on Oct 3rd. The influx continued into Nov, when the peak count at Gib Point was 499 on 11th and nearly 2500 went south during the month. Alderfen (Wroot) recorded 100 in Dec when southwards movements on the coast had dried to a trickle.

The ringing details include the oldest reported during the year which, at eight years, is still well short of the BTO record of almost 14 years. Also shown are the longest distance recovery within Britain, and one showing the Swedish breeding area of a bird wintering in Lincolnshire in 2012.

V521136	First-year Female	20-12-2006	Usselby Plantation, near Market Rasen: 53°24'N 0°20'W
	Caught by ringer	25-01-2011	Usselby Plantation, near Market Rasen: 53°24'N 0°20'W 0km 4y 1m 5d
	Caught by ringer	17-09-2015	Usselby Plantation, near Market Rasen: 53°24'N 0°20'W 0km 8y 8m 28d
Y750922	First-year Female	05-03-2013	Sand Hutton Common, York: 54°0'N 0°58'W (North Yorkshire)
	Caught by ringer	20-04-2015	near Kenwick Hall, Legbourne: c. 53°20'N 0°0'E 100km SE 2y 1m 15d
Y574532	Adult Female	29-02-2012	Northorpe Fen: 52°44'N 0°20'W
	Caught by ringer	21-04-2012	Landsjon, Skarstad: 57°52'N 14°21'E (Jönköping) Sweden 1,088km ENE 0y 1m 23d



Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Rare local resident and rare passage migrant. **LBRC RBBP**

Another extremely poor year for this increasingly rare visitor with just one spring record, of a female at Saltfleetby on Apr 7th-9th (MJT). Autumn records were of three single birds on the coast in October, at Gib Point on Oct 12th (KMW) and Oct 31st (KMW, NAL, MDw), both flying south, and at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Oct 20th (NAL). There were no records during the breeding season. These records continue the county trend with most records during autumn migration in coastal or estuarine areas away from traditional breeding sites.

Common Rosefinch *Erythrina erythrinus*

Vagrant May-Jun and Aug-Oct. **LBRC RBBP**

For the first time since 2006, this was a year with no records.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Common resident, but largely absent from the fens.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sum of all site peaks	177	156	108	118	78	74	35	57	59	63	109	117

This somewhat secretive species is certainly being under-recorded, and the counts above merely give an indication of the relative frequency of birds seen each month, based on records from 150 sites, a similar number to 2014. For comparison, 195 Bullfinches were ringed in the county in 2015, just four more than in 2014 – this clearly illustrates how the species is visually under-reported. Very few UK-ringed birds have been recovered abroad (eight), and even fewer foreign-ringed birds have been found in the UK (six). The largest monthly peak counts were made during the first and last two months of the year, when birds are most noticeable. In Jan-Feb, counts in double figures came from Barton Pits (10), Branston (11), Louth (11), Walesby (13) and Whisby NR (14). Similar counts in Nov-Dec were at Denton Res (10), Barton Pits (14) and Whisby (13). Confirmed breeding was reported from Donington on Bain, Lincoln and Louth and 18 sites reported possible or probable breeding. There were no significant counts from coastal sites.



Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* Grantham Dec 21st 2015 © Steve Nesbitt

Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*

Very common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Counts were received from just over 200 sites across the county. Greenfinch numbers nationally, regionally and in Lincolnshire, have continued to fall as a result of the protozoan parasite *Trichomonas gallinae*, a phenomenon first noted in 2006. Wintering flocks of 20-60 during the first quarter were noted at eleven sites across the county with the largest at Gib Point (55, Jan) and Whisby NR (a roost of up to 200, Feb). After Mar, numbers quickly fell as wintering flocks dispersed to breeding territories. In the autumn, there was evidence of a small coastal build-up during Oct with maxima of 90 at Donna Nook on the 12th, 180 at Saltfleetby on the 19th, and 190 at Gib Point on the 23rd, with most parties moving south. Southwards movements continued throughout Nov with more than 700 recorded through Gib Point including 170 on the 11th. Relatively large inland counts were 95 at Whisby NR on Nov 4th and 120 at Metheringham Delph on Nov 23rd but Dec counts were unremarkable. Three ringing recoveries are shown including what are for Greenfinch two fairly long-distance ones, one of which involves a quick journey to Herefordshire.

TP80204	Adult Male	15-03-2010	Fishtoft Sewage Works: 52°56'N 0°0'E
	Caught by ringer	08-04-2010	Fishtoft Sewage Works: 52°56'N 0°0'E 0km 0y 0m 24d
	Caught by ringer	25-02-2013	Fishtoft Sewage Works: 52°56'N 0°0'E 0km 2y 11m 10d
	Caught by ringer	12-10-2015	Fishtoft Sewage Works: 52°56'N 0°0'E 0km 5y 6m 27d
VZ13225	First-year Female	08-10-2015	near North Somercotes: 53°26'N 0°9'E
	Caught by ringer	20-10-2015	Moccas: 52°4'N 2°56'W (Herefordshire) 259km SW 0y 0m 12d
TT89911	First-year Female	26-01-2013	Gibraltar Point: 53°5'N 0°18'E
	Caught by ringer	25-01-2015	Branch End, Stocksfield: 54°56'N 1°54'W (Northumberland) 250km NW 1y 11m 30d

Linnet *Linaria cannabina*

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alkborough Flats	22	130	1	40	1	6	5	1	200	40	30	70
Cleethorpes-Tetney	100	200	55	20	10	12	34	200	300	80	340	200
Donna Nook	60	42	65	300	80	45	85	100	400	220	70	65
Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe	330	40	13	43	25	16	50	200	300	90	500	140
Gibraltar Point	81	55	22	238	135	57	52	140	401	192	239	159
Sum of all site peaks	2028	1555	1000	1612	1048	500	518	1366	3333	2605	2523	2357

Recorded widely throughout the county all year with counts from about 230 sites, and peak counts except at Gib Point were similar to those of 2014. This is reflected in the BBS index graphs for the East Midlands and England as a whole that have shown an upturn since around 2008. Jan was the peak winter month but some notable flocks of 100 or more were recorded at several sites throughout the first quarter: Saltfleet (330, Jan), Metheringham Delph (300, Jan), Thealby (300, Jan), Wainfleet (275, Feb), Cleethorpes CP (200, Feb), Wrangle (150, Mar), Alkborough Flats (130, Feb), East Keal (120, Mar) and Cleethorpes (100, Jan). Spring movements saw counts increase, reflecting the national picture on BirdTrack which records maximum numbers in Apr. Spring maxima were 238 at Gib Point on Apr 15th and 300 at Donna Nook on Apr 21st-22nd, and 1185 were recorded moving south at Gib Point during the month. A further 437 south were logged there in May, but counts generally were much lower, with maxima of 135 at Gib Point and 174 at Dunholme the only three-figure counts. Autumn number built up from Aug onwards, post-breeding, and continued to increase into Sep as coastal passage got underway. However, at Gib Point, visual migration was less impressive than in 2014, with a total of 1032 (1219) south in Sep and 485 (4649) in Oct (2014 totals in brackets). Maximum day counts there were 401 on Sep 17th (including those on Croftmarsh LNR) and 192 on Oct 9th. Elsewhere on the coast, there were 400 at Donna Nook on Sep 11th and 220 there on Oct 9th, when there were also 400 at Frampton Marsh and c350 inland at Owlet Plantation. Notable wintering flocks were at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe NNR (500, Nov), Metheringham Delph and Toft-next-Newton (200 at each, Nov), Willow Tree Fen (150, Dec) and Tunnel Pits, Wroot (100, Dec).

Twite *Linaria flavirostris*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant, mainly Sep-Apr. Rare inland.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Tetney Haven-Horseshoe Point	69	100	-	3	-	-	-	30	17	50
Grainthorpe Marsh-Donna Nook		34	150	120	150	-	-	-	25	80
Saltfleetby-Mablethorpe	451	200	40	-	-	-	-	13	200	120
Wainfleet*	76	73	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Frampton Marsh	38	16	80	57	1	1	-	1	70	75
Sum of all site peaks	655	723	306	211	1	1	-	92	392	405

The most significant flocks in the first quarter of 2015 were on the north-east coast at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR, Tetney Haven-Horseshoe Point and Grainthorpe Marsh-Donna Nook. Eighteen sites recorded Twite during Jan, 14 in Feb, when the peak monthly counts were reported. The combined Humber and Wash WeBS counts in Jan gave a total of 702, around 450 of them in the Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe area, and the February peak count (all sites) of 723 was the highest since 2010 (720), which was itself a record number for recent years. One at Alkborough Flats on Mar 23rd was the only one away from the coast and Wash early in the year. Most had departed by late Apr, with the Donna Nook flock of 150 on Apr 2nd dwindling to 23 by Apr 24th. The last bird of spring was at Frampton Marsh RSPB reserve on May 7th. A single bird moving south at Gib Point on Oct 9th was the first of autumn, with another there on the 15th and five on 18th. A sharp build-up of numbers occurred from Oct 23rd- 31st, including 30 at Tetney Marsh, 25 at Donna Nook, and 13 at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR. Numbers at the latter site increased to 200 on Nov 6th. One was seen near Chowder Ness, Barton Pits, on Nov 12th. The monthly peak totals changed little moving into Dec although more sites recorded them. Two colour-ringed birds seen at Tetney in Nov belonged, as is the case for many of those wintering on the Lincolnshire coast, from the population breeding in the Pennines.

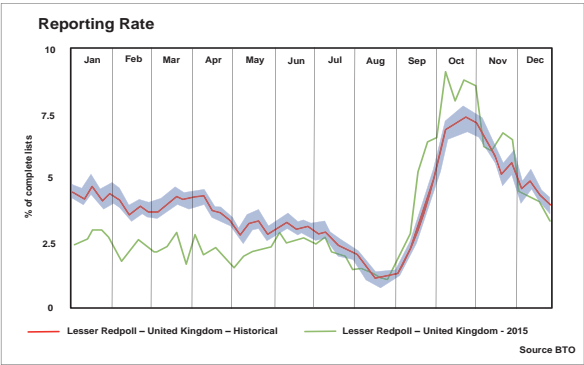
Z380859	First-year Male	14-04-2015	Booth Wood Reservoir, Rishworth: 53°38'N 1°58'W (West Yorkshire)
	Alive (colour rings seen)	21-04-2015	Owlers Clough, Hey Green, Marsden: 53°36'N 1°58'W (West Yorkshire)
	- ditto -	26-08-2015	Owlers Clough, Hey Green, Marsden: 53°36'N 1°58'W (West Yorkshire)
	- ditto -	11-11-2015	Tetney Marshes: 53°30'N 0°3'E 134km E 0y 6m 28d
Z649170	First-year	17-10-2015	Booth Wood Reservoir, Rishworth: 53°38'N 1°58'W (West Yorkshire)
	Alive (colour rings seen)	11-11-2015	Tetney Marshes: 53°30'N 0°3'E 134km E 0y 0m 25d

Lesser Redpoll *Acanthis cabaret*

Rare breeding bird, common passage migrant and winter visitor.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sum of all site peaks	254	117	114	126	-	1	1	-	299	183	270	154

Records were received from about 60 sites across the county, and the monthly totals were higher than in 2014 although 2015 was not an unusual year for Lesser Redpoll numbers nationally (see the BirdTrack graph below, courtesy of Nick Moran, BTO).



There were some notable flocks in the Lincoln area during the first quarter of 2015 with maxima in Jan of 38 at Boultham Mere, 25 at North Hykeham Pits, 22 at Swanholme Lakes and 50 at Whisby NR, and up to 64 were recorded in Lincoln throughout Jan-Mar. Few birds were noted on the coast in the spring. Up to 28 remained in Lincoln until Apr 6th and thereafter numbers across the county dwindled with the last spring record being of a single at Donna Nook on Apr 22nd. There were no reports of breeding attempts, and records were restricted to singles at Gib Point on Jun 14th, Jul 22nd and Jul 25th. The first autumn immigrants appeared during Sep, when four flew south at Gib Point on Sep 2nd. Southerly passage along the coast throughout Sep included c650 at Crook Bank, Theddlethorpe, and almost 500 at Gib Point (including those identified as Redpoll sp.). The peak day was Sep 20th, when c150 were logged at Crook Bank and 108 at Gib Point. Movement continued through Oct, with a total of 507 south through Gib Point, and Nov, when 532 went south there including day-counts of 122 on the 10th and 113 on the 11th. The highest count away from the coast was c60 at Marston STW on Nov 25th. Dec was a quieter month with small flocks of 10-20 recorded inland, mainly in the Lincoln area. The ringing recoveries below are not particularly unusual but provide more evidence of the seemingly random movements of the species.

D373158	Full-grown Caught by ringer	20-04-2013 23-10-2015	Bourne Wood: 52°45'N 0°23'W Deer Park Forest Croft: 57°34'N 4°10'W (Highland) 585km NNW 2y 6m 3d
Y984792	First-year Caught by ringer	08-03-2014 30-10-2015	Bourne Wood: 52°45'N 0°23'W Damhead Farm, Carluke: 55°44'N 3°45'W (South Lanarkshire) 395km NNW 1y 7m 22d
D392354	First-year Caught by ringer	24-01-2015 23-11-2015	Barnland, Gorey: 52°42'N 6°18'W (Wexford) Ropsley Rise Wood: 52°53'N 0°34'W 387km E 0y 9m 30d
Z845529	First-year Male Caught by ringer	08-10-2015 03-11-2015	near North Somercotes: 53°26'N 0°9'E Pett Level: c. 50°54'N 0°40'E (East Sussex) 286km S 0y 0m 26d
Y929660	Adult Female Alive (ring read in field) - ditto -	25-10-2012 15-03-2015 04-04-2015	Pett Level: c. 50°54'N 0°40'E (East Sussex) Lincoln: 53°11'N 0°36'W 270km NNW 2y 4m 18d Lincoln: 53°11'N 0°36'W 270km NNW 2y 5m 10d

Redpoll reminder

Some observers continue to confuse Lesser and Common Redpolls. This may be a problem as much with terminology as with identification. All Redpolls can be variable and confident identification in the field can be difficult. For this reason observers are reminded that **all** field records of **Common** (formerly **Mealy**) **Redpolls** in Lincolnshire should be supplemented by supporting details such as a written description, ringing report and/or photographic evidence. Only the following records below met these criteria and were deemed acceptable.

Common Redpoll *Acanthis flammea*

Scarce/rare winter visitor, but probably overlooked. **LBRC**

Common Redpoll remains a truly scarce winter visitor, with just one in the whole year, a bird trapped and ringed in Willingham Forest on Mar 17th (SAB).

2014 correction The following records at Humberston Fitties were included in the 2014 report in error; these birds were identified as Lesser Redpolls: three on Feb 19th, two on Apr 2nd and one on Oct 26th.

2013 correction The following records at Humberston Fitties were included in the 2013 report in error; these birds were identified as Lesser Redpolls: two on May 4th, singles on Oct 13th, Oct 21st, Oct 30th, Nov 1st-2nd and Nov 16th-17th, plus two on Oct 27th and three on Nov 15th.

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Scarce/fairly common irruptive passage migrant and visitor, mainly Jun-Apr, occasionally all year. Proved to breed on a few occasions.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sum of all site peaks	-	-	1	1	-	24	47	7	10	2	1	-

Crossbills were reported from just fourteen sites and little sign of any significant coastal movements: another poor year overall. No reports were received before Mar 15th, when one was seen at Gib Point, and further singles were reported there on Apr 11th and 19th, and again on Jun 4th. Later

in Jun a small flurry of records were received, with six at Gib Point and 14 at Market Rasen GC on Jun 15th, seven at Gib Point on Jun 17th and three north at Alkborough Flats on Jun 21st and two south there on the 27th. Jul was the peak month of the year with records from eight sites, including a flock of 25 in Weelsby Woods on the 10th and up to eight recorded at Gib Point including females or immatures. Small numbers moved south along the coast from early Aug onwards with a low autumn maximum of 10 birds at Gib Point on Sep 26th. Away from the coast, there were singles at Alkborough Flats on Aug 3rd and 6th, Covenham Res on Aug 24th and Walesby on Nov 19th. No evidence of breeding was received.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Common resident and passage migrant.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Barton Pits	14	26	27	21	10	23	12	55	140	31	40	15
Tetney Marsh	20	-	20	25	8	25	20	50	200	120	60	60
Donna Nook	75	45	40	31	12	6	10	65	80	160	120	80
Saltfleet-Theddlethorpe	24	30	8	12	11	6	20	50	250	80	27	45
Gib Point	30	22	41	79	50	27	60	150	243	1131	746	50
Frampton Marsh	9	10	7	15	13	12	15	100	100	40	50	24
Dunholme	16	15	55	25	58	28	49	105	67	29	12	71
Branston Fen	-	-	-	-	3	4	10	5	20	20	100	100
Welbourn Heath	-	-	3	18	-	10	43	-	200	245	13	15

More than 300 sites reported Goldfinches but the table summarises sites with maxima of 100 or more and with records in six months or more of the year. Most British Goldfinches move to Iberia in winter but some remain in the UK. The UK population has been increasing since around 2000 and, although showing signs of flattening out, the population is currently at an all-time high. In the first quarter, many sites held 10-50 birds, with the largest flocks being of 80 in Louth and 75 at Donna Nook, both in Jan. Numbers tailed off a little in the spring months, but there was some modest southerly passage along the coast during Apr at Gib Point, with a maximum of 57 moving south on Apr 15th. Autumn counts were very much larger with passage building up during Aug and Sep, and the peak as shown in the table in Oct. However, this masks the true totals moving south. At Gib Point, 2378 went south during the month with a high of 788 on Oct 9th out of the total of 1131 logged there that day. Southerly movement continued at Gib Point during Nov with a monthly maximum of 716 south on Nov 10th and 2851 counted during the whole month. The wintering population in Nov and Dec was substantially lower, though during Dec there were flocks of 50-120 wintering at Blackmoor Bridge, Bracebridge, Branston Fen, Donna Nook, Dunholme, Frampton Marsh, Gib Point, Tetney Marsh, Wroot and Willow Tree Fen NR. The five recoveries shown below are the longest distance ones reported this year; they all lie all the typical north-south migration axis.

D796406	Adult Male Caught by ringer	12-03-2014 05-04-2015	Northorpe Fen: 52°44'N 0°20'W North Lodge, House of Dun: 56°43'N 2°33'W (Angus) 465km NNW 1y 0m 24d
D171876	Adult Male Freshly dead	29-10-2012 15-05-2015	Pickworth: c. 52°53'N 0°27'W Drummore: 54°40'N 4°53'W (Dumfries and Galloway) 354km NW 2y 6m 16d
Z192663	Juvenile Caught by ringer	18-09-2014 04-01-2015	Six House Bank: 52°48'N 0°14'W Dukes Warren: 51°10'N 0°22'W (Surrey) 182km S 0y 3m 17d
Z562508	First-year Male Caught by ringer	15-04-2015 31-12-2015	Six House Bank: 52°48'N 0°14'W West Horsley: 51°16'N 0°27'W (Surrey) 171km S 0y 8m 16d
D373833	Adult Male Caught by ringer Caught by ringer	06-11-2013 18-01-2015 14-02-2015	Butterwick, Boston: 52°58'N 0°3'E Herpinriere, Checy: 47°52'N 2°1'E (Loiret) France 582km SSE 1y 2m 12d Herpinriere, Checy: 47°52'N 2°1'E (Loiret) France 582km SSE 1y 3m 8d

European Serin *Serinus serinus*

Rare migrant Apr-Jun and Sep-Nov. **LBRC**

A male was found on Mar 8th at Washingborough, which stayed until Apr 2nd (SMk, APC). The second of the spring was one at Gib Point on May 7th, heading south past the Wash Viewpoint (NAL). In the autumn, two flew south half an hour apart over Mill Hill, Gib Point on Oct 23rd

(KMW, NAL). These four take the county total to 31, all of which have been singles. Seventeen have been at Gib Point, and 22 occurred in spring, but the Washingborough bird was notable for being the first in Mar. The previous earliest was one at Gib Point on Apr 7th 2011.



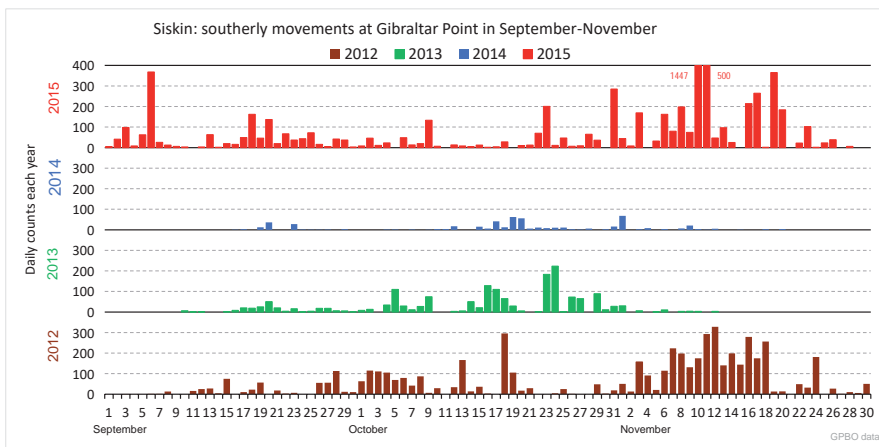
Serin. *Serinus serinus* adult male, Washingborough Mar 16th 2015 © Andrew P. Chick

Siskin *Spinus spinus*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor. Scarce in summer but may breed in some years.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gibraltar Point	1	1	25	5	10	11	169	30	384	300	1447	174
Number of sites	9	12	10	3	2	8	19	7	22	17	25	28
Sum of all site peaks	41	111	60	13	12	32	243	43	747	438	1814	585

Counts were received from around 75 sites in 2015. Only small numbers were seen during the first quarter compared with many previous years, with flocks of 20-30 reported from Aubourn and South Hykeham, Snipe Dales and Gib Point. There was a steady southward trickle at Gib Point during Mar and Apr but few were noted in the county during the later spring and summer. At least one pair probably bred at Laughton Forest. Also, song was heard at Woodhall Spa in Mar and breeding was suspected at Willingham Forest in late Jun, though that did coincide with the start of an unusual and early influx, most evident in early Jul. The largest totals were at Gib Point, including 152 moving south on the 8th and another 123 on the 9th, but there were also small numbers inland including 20 south at Haltham Wood on Jul 6th. The month's total of birds moving south at Gib Point was 480. These birds clearly didn't stay and the Aug totals were very low, as reflected in the table above. Migration picked up again in Sep with significant flocks moving south on the coast again. The month's passage total at Gib Point was 1462 with a peak of 368 south on the 6th. Up to 150 were reported from Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR during the last ten days of Sep as well, most moving south. There were smaller numbers in Oct, but "viz miggng" at Gib Point still logged 1131 birds moving south during the month. The influx picked up again in Nov, which had the highest peak total for the year. Summing the southward movement of birds through Gib Point again illustrated the high totals achieved by diligent recording on a daily basis there – the largest day total was 1447 south on Nov 10th and the month's total was 4106. Smaller flocks of 10-30 elsewhere on the coast and inland were reported during Nov too. The movement ceased during Dec with some of the Nov flocks persisting; the highest numbers reported then were again at Gib Point (including 168 south on the 11th) but with inland flocks of 30-60 at North Hykeham Pits, Messingham SQ, Fillingham, Whisby NR and Kirkby on Bain GP. The chart below shows, with daily totals for the whole of Sep-Nov, the variable size of the visible passage of Siskins at Gib Point from year to year. This year saw some outstandingly high peaks (the largest since 2008, when peak counts were 3200 south at Gib Point on Sep 12th and 1000 at Crook Bank on Nov 8th) and also a high sum total of birds moving through. The bird-day total for Sep-Nov in 2015 was more than tenfold larger than in 2014, and almost 25% larger than in 2012, which saw a particularly sustained period of passage in Nov though without the high maxima of 2015.



One 2015 recovery is shown of a bird much further south in late Apr in its first winter than in Feb two years later, when it was near Inverness. Also included are two foreign recoveries omitted last year, including a noteworthy one to Slovakia, the first Siskin to be recorded moving in either direction between Britain and Slovakia. The majority of Siskins that pass through inland Lincolnshire are of the Scottish breeding population, but presumably we get a few birds late in spring that are of Swedish/Finnish origin that winter to the east or west in succeeding winters.

D373138	First-year Male	20-04-2013	Bourne Wood: 52°45'N 0°23'W
	Caught by ringer	21-02-2015	Fort Augustus: 57°7'N 4°41'W (Highland) 558km NNW 1y 10m 1d
D372785	First-year Male	29-03-2013	Bourne Wood: 52°45'N 0°23'W
	Caught by ringer	18-04-2014	Zdiar: 49°16'N 20°16'E (Poprad) Slovakia 1,495km ESE 1y 0m 20d
BLB	Adult Male	27-02-2012	Hockai: 50°28'N 5°58'E (Liege) Belgium
12574649	Caught by ringer	17-03-2013	Gibraltar Point: 53°5'N 0°18'E 486km NW 1y 0m 18d

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Regular winter visitor and passage migrant on coast, mainly Sep-Apr; exceptional in summer. Scarce but fairly regular inland.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cleethorpes	100	40	6	-	-	-	5	49
Tetney-Horseshoe Point	40	-	-	-	1	-	5	-
Donna Nook	60	1	-	-	-	5	-	1
Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe	35	80	27	-	-	1	19	35
Theddlethorpe-Mablethorpe	17	17	9	-	1	-	-	30
Sandilands-Ingoldmells	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Gibraltar Point	41	55	25	-	-	1	8	1
Number of sites	11	9	6	0	4	4	6	8
Sum of all site peaks	344	224	80	0	4	8	44	120

Two races occur regularly in Europe: the Scandinavian/Greenland race *Plectrophenax nivalis nivalis* and the Icelandic race *P.n. insulae*. (A third race, the Siberian *P.n. vlasovae* is a vagrant to western Europe.) Scottish ringing studies have shown that c.20% of birds wintering there are *nivalis* with the majority being *insulae*. In The Netherlands both races also winter, but the majority there are *nivalis*. Birds of the race *nivalis* tend to arrive later in the UK, coming across the North Sea via Belgium and the Netherlands, whereas the Icelandic race *insulae* tend to arrive earlier and also to leave slightly earlier.

Counts were received from around 38 sites across the county and, as expected, the vast majority of these were coastal with only small numbers in The Wash and Humber. Most Snow Buntings arrive from Nov onwards and are concentrated in the north-east coastal area with few further south at, for example, Gib Point. These wintering flocks on the coast disperse in Feb and early

Mar. The wintering birds in the first quarter of the year were closely similar to the high numbers reported in Dec 2014, but autumn numbers were back to more usual numbers after the influxes of the previous two winters. The highest peak counts are given in the summary table, although it should be borne in mind that some of these areas overlap as will the flocks. The highest single count of the year was c100 at Cleethorpes CP on Jan 3rd. There were still up to 80 along the Saltfleetby to Mablethorpe coastline during Feb but as usual, numbers dwindled through Mar as birds moved northwards. Most had departed by mid-Mar with the last coastal bird at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Mar 18th and an unusual inland bird photographed at Wroot on the 20th. The first in autumn was on Sep 5th at Mablethorpe. There were more singles elsewhere along the coast on two dates in Sep and more frequently from the start of Oct, including one at Barton upon Humber on Oct 3rd-18th. The main arrivals though, as usual, were in mid-Nov with the bulk being on the north-east coast. Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR hosted the only double figure flock, reaching 19 on Nov 23rd. Further south there were maxima of eight at Gib Point on Nov 20th and six at Frampton Marsh on Nov 21st. A further arrival occurred in the first week of Dec with increased counts at Cleethorpes and Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR, and a further flock at Theddlethorpe-Mablethorpe. Apart from a singleton at Covenham Res on Dec 6th, there were no other inland records.



Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis* Barton-upon-Humber Oct 10th 2015 © Graham Catley

Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*

Scarce local passage migrant and winter visitor Sep-Apr. Rare inland.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cleethorpes-Horseshoe Point	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3
Donna Nook	8	8	-	-	-	1	1	-
Saltfleet-Mablethorpe	4	-	-	-	-	-	3	1
Gibraltar Point	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	1
Witham-Frampton	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-
Number of sites	2	1	-	-	-	3	6	4
Sum of all site peaks	12	8	-	-	-	4	11	6

Eleven coastal sites recorded Lapland Bunting, with some overlap possible. A very quiet year for this species with numbers similar to those of 2014. A small flock at Donna Nook for much of Jan-Feb reached a maximum of eight from Jan 27th to Feb 6th when birds began to disperse and the last bird of the first quarter of the year was as early as Feb 20th when three were seen at Pye's Hall. Autumn arrivals were very scarce, beginning with one south at Gib Point on Oct 3rd and occasional records of 1-2 through Oct, mainly at Gib Point and Donna Nook. An interesting record was of 2-4 birds on Oct 10th at Gib Point still in almost full summer plumage. Small numbers continued to be seen through Nov and Dec with just 1-3 coastal birds being reported at the usual sites. One less usual record was of one that flew north at Alkborough on Dec 25th.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Common resident, but numbers have decreased.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Saltfleetby-												
Theddlethorpe Dunes	58	23	4	2	2	3	-	-	3	6	18	28
Stenigot-Biscathorpe	31	-	1	1	-	4	-	4	2	26	43	50
Wrangle Brickpits	46	33	30	-	4	1	4	1	-	10	6	-
Aubourn	27	66	24	8	4	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Woodhall Spa Airfield	-	-	-	-	3	2	1	-	1	-	-	50
Welbourn Heath	44	29	27	17	8	11	9	-	1	10	22	15
Sum of all site peaks	805	618	516	402	279	272	186	113	132	302	305	417

Flocks of Yellowhammers are much diminished across England but still a familiar scene in winter in many parts of the county. BBS data for England as whole show a 25% decline during 1995-2014 and a steeper decline before that, but the East Midlands region including most of Lincolnshire showed the smallest decline of only 10%. Counts were received from about 230 sites across the county. In the first quarter, low double figure flocks were widespread with the maximum of the sum of site peaks occurring in Jan. Flocks of 50 or more were reported from Aubourn (66), Conisholme (70), Grimoldby Ings (65), Marlborough Fen (58), Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR (58), North Rauceby Heath (50) and Withcall (60). Numbers decreased after mid Feb, low counts reflecting birds dispersing and returning to breeding territories. In the autumn, small numbers moved south along the coast during Oct and by Nov there several inland flocks of 10-30, maintained into Dec. The largest flocks at the end of the year were at Woodhall Spa Airfield (50), Stenigot-Biscathorpe (50) and Wold Newton (75), all in Dec. Four sets of ringing details come from sites spread around the county, demonstrating that Yellowhammers are very sedentary. The BTO have recorded them to 11 years of age but the first one, at almost six years, was moderately old.

X677453	Adult Female Caught by ringer	20-02-2010 13-12-2015	Northorpe Fen: 52°44'N 0°20'W Northorpe Fen: 52°44'N 0°20'W 0km 5y 9m 23d
Y392406	First-year Male Caught by ringer Caught by ringer Caught by ringer	20-04-2012 17-05-2012 24-06-2013 03-06-2015	Newball Wood, near Langworth: c. 53°16'N 0°22'W Newball Wood, near Langworth: c. 53°16'N 0°22'W 0km 0y 0m 27d Newball Wood, near Langworth: c. 53°16'N 0°22'W 0km 1y 2m 4d Newball Wood, near Langworth: c. 53°16'N 0°22'W 0km 3y 1m 14d
L650277	Adult Female Caught by ringer Caught by ringer	20-11-2010 10-06-2011 12-02-2015	near Stenigot: 53°19'N 0°7'W near Stenigot: 53°19'N 0°7'W 0km 0y 6m 21d near Stenigot: 53°19'N 0°7'W 0km 4y 2m 23d
Y147381	First-year Male Caught by ringer Caught by ringer Caught by ringer	29-03-2012 07-10-2013 07-08-2014 23-09-2015	near North Somercotes: 53°26'N 0°9'E near North Somercotes: 53°26'N 0°9'E 0km 1y 6m 8d near North Somercotes: 53°26'N 0°9'E 0km 2y 4m 9d near North Somercotes: 53°26'N 0°9'E 0km 3y 5m 25d

Rustic Bunting *Emberiza rustica*

Vagrant. **BBRC**

A first winter male was found at Gib Point on Oct 11th (AT, MSw, KMW), frequenting the Jackson's Marsh cycle track. Accepted by BBRC (BB 109 p.624).

The species remains a vagrant to the county, this being just the eighth county record, four in spring between Mar 22nd and May 24th and four in autumn between Sep 22nd and Oct 11th. Rustic Bunting has been upgraded from Least Concern to Vulnerable by BirdLife International, following analysis that revealed a 32–91% decline of the world population in just ten years. Only around 20% of the species' global breeding range occurs in Europe, but the population in European Russia has declined by more than 30% since 2000 and by over 50% since 1980 (BirdLife International, 2016, Species factsheet: *Emberiza rustica*).

Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla*

Vagrant. **LBRC**

A very good year for this vagrant bunting. The first was a singing male found at Gib Point on Apr 20th and identified when still present on the 21st (JPS, RDn, KMW). An astonishing four autumn records followed, but believed to relate to three birds. The first was at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR, near Sea View Farm, on Oct 2nd (MJT *et al.*). One trapped and ringed at Gib Point



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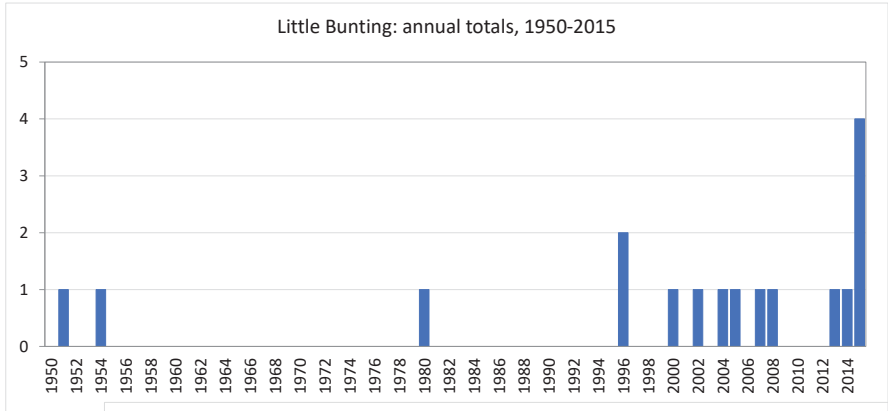
Rustic Bunting *Emberiza rustica* Gib Point Oct 11th 2015 © Martin Swannell

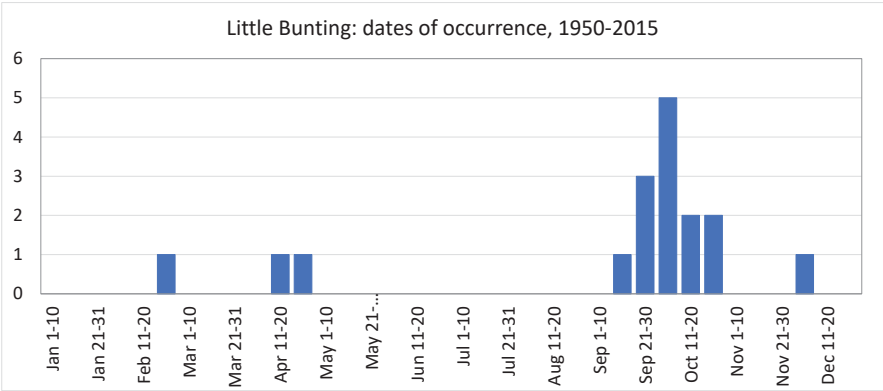
followed on Oct 10th (MRB), and another seen on the next day, Oct 11th, at Donna Nook (CA, ND *et al*) was thought to be the same as that in the same area on Oct 27th (SL, AJH *et al*), despite the gap between sightings.

These four individuals constitute the fourteenth to seventeenth Little Buntings for Lincolnshire. The first was one killed at Saltfleet on 5th October 1951, and the majority have been in autumn as shown by the chart below. Most were on the coast or estuaries but two have been well inland: one at Cowbit Wash in October 1954 and one near Gainsborough in February-March 2014.



Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla* Pye's Hall Oct 11th 2015 © Graham Catley





Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Common resident and passage migrant.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alkborough Flats	50	16	1	10	1	15	5	1	1	50	50	13
Garthorpe	350	65	20	13	17	16	-	-	-	-	-	-
Donna Nook	95	35	20	20	15	20	11	3	20	80	15	10
Gibraltar Point	25	75	40	26	16	22	12	17	90	108	77	48
Frampton Marsh	20	20	10	12	8	54	12	1	2	1	6	30
Sum of all site peaks	1110	636	620	437	364	415	200	109	307	496	411	400

Reed Buntings were widely recorded across the county in all months with counts from around 215 sites. An astonishing flock of around 350 was present at Garthorpe on Jan 4th, first noted at the end of 2014 feeding on unharvested wheat adjoining a reedbed, and still with 145 on Jan 21st and 65 on Feb 8th. Elsewhere in the first quarter more modest counts of 40 or more birds were received from Wroot (95), Alkborough (50), Baston Fen (40), Donna Nook (95), Gib Point (75) and Pyewipe (50), after which numbers decreased as birds dispersed to breeding areas. Some observers recorded evidence of breeding, but systematic counts were generally lacking, though at Alkborough Flats at least 163 territories were identified, with 27 at Frampton Marsh and 11 at Freiston Shore. In the autumn, counts built up, especially at coastal sites, towards the middle of Sep and into Oct. There was significant southward movement along the coast, especially at Gib Point, where 314 went south during Sept (max 55 on the 25th) and 293 in Oct (max 86 on the 23rd). The peak at Donna Nook was 80 on Oct 9th and 12th but counts elsewhere were unremarkable. Smaller numbers remained into Dec, but there were substantial flocks at Alkborough Flats (50), up to 48 at Gib Point and 40 at Willow Tree Fen NR.

British-ringed Reed Buntings tend not to move far though there can be some dispersal to milder or better feeding areas: the first two birds below are typically sedentary. The third one, however, could possibly belong to the small number of Scandinavian-breeding birds that either winter in Britain or pass through on their way to wintering areas further south.

X189280	First-year Male	27-12-2008	Warren Wood, Gainsborough: 53°22'N 0°46'W
	Caught by ringer	17-01-2015	Warren Wood, Gainsborough: 53°22'N 0°46'W 0km 6y 0m 21d
X678758	First-year Male	16-03-2010	Northorpe Fen: 52°44'N 0°20'W
	Caught by ringer	17-02-2011	Northorpe Fen: 52°44'N 0°20'W 0km 0y 11m 1d
	Caught by ringer	14-03-2012	Northorpe Fen: 52°44'N 0°20'W 0km 1y 11m 27d
	Caught by ringer	15-04-2014	Northorpe Fen: 52°44'N 0°20'W 0km 4y 0m 30d
	Caught by ringer	17-03-2015	Northorpe Fen: 52°44'N 0°20'W 0km 5y 0m 1d
Z409105	First-year Male	15-10-2014	Site Confidential, near Isle of Grain: c. 51°27'N 0°42'E (Kent)
	Caught by ringer	29-09-2015	Gibraltar Point: 53°5'N 0°18'E 184km N 0y 11m 14d

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*

Scarce and local resident and partial migrant.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Donna Nook	26	20	3	18	8	4	3	1	-	4	2	1
Gibraltar Point	80	60	90	72	14	0	1	1	3	4	17	40
Frampton Marsh	29	7	1	4	3	6	0	1	10	0	8	6
Peak totals (all sites)	267	161	281	136	70	36	28	9	19	20	27	54

British Corn Buntings are resident, with few wandering more than 15 km. The BTO population trend for the UK continues to show a decline. Records were received from about 70 sites across the county, but the majority were of single counts in one month. In the first quarter of the year, significant counts were received from Donna Nook (26, Jan), Frampton Marsh (29, Jan), Gib Point (60-90), Kirton Marsh (23, Mar), Luddington (72, Mar), Stenigot (30, Jan), Withcall (30, Mar) and Wold Newton (27, Feb). Reports during the breeding season included 21 pairs in the Deeping St. Nicholas area (15 on Vine House Farm) and 3 pairs at Frampton Marsh. Up to 35 were at Gib Point in the last quarter, but overall, the picture from the records received was clearly incomplete with minimal information from the south Lincolnshire fens and inconsistent site data elsewhere preventing an overview of the overall status.

Appendix 1

Records in 2015 of species not currently accepted on the BOU British list

This list includes those species that may have non self-sustaining wild populations and any individuals from species that are on the British list, but which are known are strongly believed to have been of captive origin. The Lincolnshire Bird Club request all records of these 'category E' species recorded in Lincolnshire. We are aware that the species on this list are under recorded.

Fulvous Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor*

One at Whisby NR during Sept 8th-29th, and also on Dec 3rd.

White-faced Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna viduata*

One at Frampton Marsh on Jul 13th.

Black Swan *Cygnus atratus*

Singles at Wroot on Jan 1st, Jan 18th-21st and Feb 5th, Holywell Lake on Jan 17th, Feb 8th, Mar 8th, Sep 13th, Oct 17th and Dec 13th, two at Woodhall Spa on Mar 1st, with one there on Apr 2nd, four on 26th and two on Dec 20th, singles at Stickford on Mar 25th and Apr 5th, Black Bank (Messingham) on Mar 28th, two at Frampton Marsh on Apr 8th, singles at Langworth on Apr 21st, Frithville on May 2nd, Boston on May 21st, and two at Fillingham Lake on Nov 29th. Note that no two records from different sites fall on the same date; possibly only a few mobile birds were involved in all these sightings.

Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*

Singles at Kirkby on Bain GP on Jun 3rd and Oct 31st, Tattershall Lakes CP on Jun 27th, Fillingham Lake on Aug 22nd, and Woodhall Spa Airfield on Nov 1st.

Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens*

Two at Frampton Marsh on Apr 5th, and at Nene Mouth on Oct 27th, possibly referring to the same birds.

Wood Duck *Aix sponsa*

One at Frampton Marsh on Jul 13th.

Silver Teal *Anas versicolor*

One at Hobhole (Fishtoft) on Jun 11th was thought to be of the northern subspecies *A.v.versicolor*.

New Zealand Scaup *Aythya novaeseelandiae*

One at Gibraltar Point NNR on Sep 10th.

Helmeted Guineafowl *Numidea meleagris*

Eight at Wrangle village on Feb 12th, and four at Tattershall Thorpe on Aug 25th.

Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus*

Ten at Nocton Wood on Apr 17th, where there has been a feral population for about 30 years, one at Upton on Apr 21st, and four at Fleet Hargate on Nov 8th.

Reeves's Pheasant *Smyraticus reevesii*

A male at Dunston on Aug 31st.

Eagle Owl *Bubo bubo*

One photographed at Donna Nook on Jun 8th (reported to SL).

Alexandrine Parakeet *Psittacula eupatria*

One at Frampton Marsh on Feb 5th.

Azorean Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis atlantis*: first record for Lincolnshire at Marston, 26th October 2015

Ben Ward and Dave Roberts

On the early morning of 26th October, Dave Roberts and I were at Marston. The previous evening we had encountered, just before dusk, a vast finch flock on the surrounding bare fields and we hoped to be able to look through them properly in better light. The fields that the finch flock had frequented were quiet upon arrival though distantly we noticed that there was a relatively small flock of large white-headed gulls on a bare field far to the east. They looked to be predominantly Lesser Black-backed but there was a handful of paler-mantled birds amongst them. We moved closer toward their location in the car, to what seemed to be the best view point, still a fair distance of several hundred yards away. I crept out from the shielded side to have a cursory look with bins, but immediately the flock flushed, flying low to the west and out of sight.

As this area is DR's local patch, and knowing the area like the back of his hand, he fancied that he knew where they might have flown to, so we headed back toward the western side of the area. By 0810 the flock had been relocated and being as stealthy as was possible we viewed from a farmer's access point in the field's hedgerow.

The group was made up of approximately thirty individuals, mainly adult birds, the majority *graellsii* Lesser Black-backed Gull as well as three darker-mantled *intermedius* types; the paler-mantled birds comprised two *argenteus* Herring Gull, one adult Yellow-legged Gull and a further, striking adult 'Yellow-legged Gull'.



Azorean Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis atlantis* at Marston STW Oct 26th 2015 © Ben Ward

With the scope very quickly set up, there was now no doubt about it, this further individual was an extremely interesting looking bird indeed: fairly small, compact, the mantle looking an unusual and unfamiliar darkish grey, contrasting strongly with the bright white wide tertial crescent and underparts, and the mantle tone appeared somewhat intermediate between *michahellis* and *graellsii*. Somewhat startling was the striking 'hooded' appearance of the bird, the dense head streaking in fact formed a perfect hood, most distinctly concentrated around the eye with no

further streaking on the neck or breast. Bare parts appeared in keeping with the bird's smallish jizz, the bill being not overly long and the legs on the short side, both being a strong but not bright yellow. Alarmingly this bird certainly was far removed from any adult nominate *michahellis* I had seen previously.

Just as I started obtaining some digiscoped images the flock appeared to spook and got up, flying high and purposefully toward the Nottinghamshire border, we watched them until eventually they were so distant that they were completely lost from view. At that moment, almost in jest, I said to DR: "Better send the photos to Dean Nicholson later to rule *atlantis* out".

I reasoned that this could possibly be *Larus michahellis* at the most extreme end of the spectrum regarding mantle tone and head streaking, knowing that equally, perhaps more plausibly, a hybrid type could be a possibility. *L. m. atlantis* was well on the radar, but surely was not considered a likely possibility being as at the time it was considered a near mythical extreme vagrant.

Immediately upon arriving home that evening I uploaded and sent Larid aficionado DN a couple of images. His swift response left me speechless; the first two words of the reply were: "Wow! *atlantis*?" . The images were circulated for comment.

A couple of days passed by and then to my amazement, on the 29th, DN got in touch with the news that he had found the bird at Kilvington Lakes, in Nottinghamshire, 5.8 miles from Marston. DN, having studied the bird in the field himself, was now convinced that indeed it was the real deal. It seemed a further generous twist of fate that DN had invited Colin Scott along, as he is an aspiring bird photographer. Whilst DN scrutinized the bird CS was poised with the camera, and flight photographs were soon obtained.

Subsequent comment on the bird was overwhelmingly positive. Feedback from the late great Martin Garner sticks in my mind and will never be forgotten, describing it as "the kind of bird I want to find!" .

Azorean Yellow-legged Gull was added to British list in May 2016 by virtue of a long-staying second calendar year bird in Cornwall in 2008. The Lincolnshire bird is considered to be the bird found in Oxfordshire in October 2009, which has subsequently been seen at various localities around the Midlands. The subspecies is mooted as a potential species split from nominate Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis* as work on the taxon continues. Azorean Yellow-legged Gull breeds on the Azores but birds showing a similar morphology also breed on the Canary Islands and Madeira.



Azorean Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis atlantis* at Marston STW Oct 26th 2015 © Ben Ward

Pacific Golden Plover at Alkborough Flats, January 2015

Graham P Catley and Neil Drinkall

Introduction

Since autumn 2006 a total of 39 species of wader have been recorded at Alkborough Flats but there is still no record of American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica* and so when European Golden Plover *P. apricaria* (hereafter Golden Plover) flocks occur on the site, from September through to April, they receive close scrutiny. The number of Golden Plover present varies daily but the lowest annual peak was 3800 and the highest 14,500. ND and GPC are thus seriously conversant with the variations in Golden Plover plumage and appearance. In spite of 45 years watching, GPC has yet to see anything other than odd grey plumaged juveniles and birds with partial leucism while no birds with any structural features that were obviously different from typical Golden Plovers has ever been recorded. From the 1980s to early 2000s, a regular late summer gathering of Golden Plovers occurred on the inner Humber and in this period GPC located and identified two Pacific Golden Plovers *P. fulva* and three American Golden Plovers in this area. ND has seen winter Pacific Golden Plovers in Goa and both observers saw a winter bird at San Diego in December 1997. In addition GPC observed the winter Pacific Golden Plover alongside Golden Plovers at Fraithorpe, East Yorkshire on 30th January 1985.

Sightings

On the dull and cold morning of 29th January 2015, with few birds about, I was sat with the wife enjoying a nice bacon and brie baguette with a cappuccino in a local cafe before going to choose a new carpet when the phone rang with the claxon Nelly alert warning of an incoming Alkborough communication... The wife instantly knew that carpets were off for the day – Neil Drinkall was on the phone from Alkborough Flats and started his usual self questioning description of a good looking golden plover - ND is an excellent birder and has found Marsh Sand, Semi-palmated Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher, two Lesser Yellowlegs, four Buff-breasted Sandpipers, two Broad-billed Sandpipers, two White-rumped Sandpipers, about 10 Pectoral Sandpipers and Whiskered Tern to name a few birds at Alkborough in the last eight years but he suffers from something of lack of self confidence and always questions his own observations to the extent that he can talk people out of going to see birds he has found. I nearly missed a Broad-billed Sandpiper in the spring when he talked me out of that, so his description of this bird and the fact that he had seen grey axillaries and a dusky underwing quickly saw me exit from the cafe and I was at Alkborough within 40 minutes.



Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva* Alkborough Flats Jan 29th 2015 © Graham Catley

Upon arrival, the bird in question was about 500m away at the back of a grass field that held about 3,000 Golden Plover and 2,500 Lapwing. ND showed me a digi-scoped picture on his camera and I immediately suggested Pacific, as he had been erring on the American side, but the yellow and buff tones to the bird and a recollection of the 1985 Fraithorpe bird suggested Pacific Golden Plover to me. We then got onto the bird again and watched it but still at a similar distance for the next 30 minutes in which time I took several photos with a 500mm lens and 2x converter. Obviously

the images were small but I was relieved to see that at least a few were in focus. In the time I was watching the bird it squatted once when the Goldies flew, and the next time when the flock was spooked and left the area, I did not see it get up and missed the underwing but ND had seen this well earlier when the bird had flushed alone before my arrival. At about 12:45 the whole flock took off and although 1600 Goldies returned the Pacific was not with them. Subsequent searching over several days revealed up to 2,500 Golden Plovers but the Pacific was not seen again.

Description

The bird was noticeably smaller and slither than the accompanying Golden Plovers with proportionally longer and thinner legs; it was estimated to be about 80% of the size of the Golden Plovers with a smaller more square looking head, longer rear end, longer legs and a sleeker profile. In the cold weather, the tibia were mostly covered by the flank feathers but the legs looked thinner than the Golden Plovers and the length meant that it had a quicker gait when running around in the field. The leg thickness can just about be seen in the photos. The bill was finer and longer than those of the Golden Plovers.

It had an open faced look with pale buffy wash from the bill to the rear of the ear coverts and this extended down the upper breast, where it was faintly streaked darker, before ending on the lower breast where the belly and centre of the underparts were off white. There were a few broken black bars on the upper rear flanks and the undertail coverts were off white. The most striking feature of the bird, that allowed it to be picked up at a distance, was the head pattern with a pale yellow-tinged line over the base of the bill that extended back over the eye broadening behind the eye into a wide and bright supercilium that turned down the side of the head and continued to a point level with the bend of the wing. The dark eye stood out on the plain face. The pale ridge above the bill was sharply defined from the darker crown that appeared at the distance we were watching from to be a muddy brown and formed a fairly obvious capped effect. The mantle and scapulars were dark brown prominently spangled with gold feather fringes and notches and this contrasted markedly with the more grey-toned wing coverts, again the colour being formed by fringes and edges of darker brown feather bases. The tertials were dark brown with obvious yellowish notches along the edges and the primaries more blackish-brown. The legs were more blue-grey than those of the Golden Plovers. No call was heard.

ND saw the underwing as the bird took flight and described it as dusky with darker grey-toned axillaries.

Discussion

We are not sure of the bird's age or sex. We speculated whether the bars on the rear flanks indicated early moult to summer or remnants of summer plumage from 2014, but no conclusion was reached.

Given our limited knowledge of the distinctions between American and Pacific Golden Plovers in winter, we consulted Julian Hough about the identification of our bird, sending the images that I had managed to collect. His comments were as follows. "By late October, American's are monochromatic, with the golden bloom all but worn off to the point they look like Grey Plovers. In late January, the yellowish tones to the mantle and the shape of the supercilium, down curling, are pro-Pacific. The actual buff-colour to the supercilium is probably diagnostic just on its own, and is never shown by American at this time of year, though in late August, super-fresh juvenile American's can have the supercilium buffy-tinged.

Additional images to those accompanying this article, and some video of the bird taken with an iPhone and Swarovski telescope can be found at:

<http://pewit.blogspot.co.uk/2015/01/pacific-golden-plover.html>

<http://youtu.be/P9QF235jFVo>.

The record was accepted by BBRC and published in the 2015 rarity report (BB 109 p.584). This was the fifth Lincolnshire record (involving six birds), all of which have been in the north of the county, but the first in winter. The previous records were as follows:

Tetney and North Cotes, one, 21st July-19th August 1986

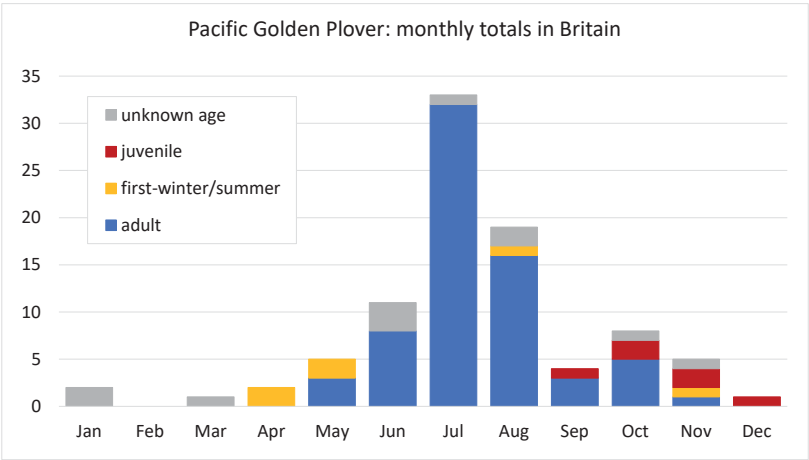
South Ferriby area, one, 2nd-19th July 1993

South Ferriby and Read's Island, one, 10th-11th July 1994

Horseshoe Point, two, 17th-19th July 2002

Up to 2015 (and excluding those not certainly either American or Pacific), there had been ninety records of Pacific Golden Plover in Britain, all of which were single birds apart from the two in Lincolnshire in 2002. The chart below (which omits records of a returning adult in the Outer Hebrides starting in April, October and February of successive years) shows their seasonal

distribution, illustrating how rare they are in mid winter. It also draws attention to the domination of the records by adults, which makes one wonder how many juveniles are missed.



Observations on breeding Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers at Swanpool, Lincoln, 2015-2016

Andy Sims

Introduction

During 2015 and 2016 I was extremely privileged to be able to watch a successful breeding pair of Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers, *Dendrocopos minor* (hereafter LSW). I have been watching this area for 34 years and LSW used to breed regularly in the nearby Swanpool wood but have not done so for about 20 years. I conducted the observations with help and advice from Dr Ken Smith (KS). KS has made a personal study of woodpeckers for more than 30 years. Having retired from a research career in the RSPB in 2008 he realised that the methods he had developed for studying nesting woodpeckers could be used more widely to collect important conservation information on breeding LSW. One of the main hypotheses for the decline of these woodpeckers is poor breeding success. In 2015 KS started the LSW initiative (see www.woodpecker-network.org.uk) to help bird watchers monitor nests and collect data on nest success that could be fed into the BTO nest record scheme.

Methods and equipment

KS uses an endoscope to inspect nest holes. This is a miniature video camera with LED lighting that can be slipped into the nest cavity to take a look at the nest contents. The camera includes a Wi-Fi link so the images can be viewed from the ground on an iPad or iPhone, stored and viewed later. Telescopic poles, normally sold for window cleaning, allow the camera to reach high nests. Over the years KS has refined his nest camera system but currently uses something called a 'crevice cam' supplied by a small UK company called Wildlife Windows. The camera requires at least 2 people to operate it. One person holds the 9m pole & guides it into the nest hole and the second holds the iPad and tells the pole operator when the nest contents can be seen and when to start and end the recording.

Inspecting the nest with these cameras causes minimal disturbance and only takes a few minutes. The birds are soon back at the nest after the temporary disturbance and are often unaware that the nest has been checked. Having used them for more than 15 years on all three species of woodpecker they seem entirely safe.

Observations in 2015

Initial observations

My first sighting of 2015 was of a bird flying over my garden on the afternoon of Jan 29th, followed by a male on the south edge of Swanpool wood on Feb 2nd. Then on Feb 12th at about midday a male was drumming in a small copse of trees by the Catchwater drain. More extensive observations were made during March-June and are detailed below.

March

2nd I heard the male calling from the same copse as on Feb 12th.

16th The male was again calling from the same area.

17th I found the male starting to excavate a nest hole in a dead horse chestnut tree on the edge of the copse. The hole was about 9m high and was facing SE. The male excavated this site for two days & then moved to a new site about 600mm higher on the same broken trunk where he continued to excavate.

23rd A female inspected the nest hole. The female was then seen calling from an adjacent tree and later she was seen looking out of the nest hole. As far as I could ascertain, the male did all of the excavation of the nest hole.

April

all I had eleven sightings of the birds, mainly the male, to the 24th. All were made in the vicinity of the nest.

24th I observed the female looking out of the nest hole

May

5th I observed a changeover at the nest.

- 8th There was a squirrel on the tree trunk near to the nest hole, but there was no significant interaction. The female was looking out of the hole and I noted two changeovers at the nest that day.
- 11th It appeared that the young had very recently hatched. I observed regular changeovers, as both birds were presumably brooding, and noted that both brought food in regularly. The pair flew off quite long distances to fetch food, clearly not finding it nearby. A Mistle Thrush, which was nesting in an adjacent tree, was often aggressive towards the woodpeckers when they flew in with food.
- 12th Regular feeding continued by both adults, who by now were not brooding all the time. At one point the male was seen feeding in dead elders just north of the nest site.
- 14th The weather was cold and brooding was taking place with changeover when food was brought in. Fortunately, the Mistle Thrushes had fledged by now. The following day brooding was intermittent.
- 17th KS visited the site with me and we used his endoscope to inspect the nest. We found that there were six young which were about seven days old. Both male and female carried on feeding the young regularly, bringing both grubs and fat, presumably from a feeder on the nearby housing estate.
- 23rd The adults were first seen feeding the young from outside the nest and only going in to remove faecal sacs; the young could be heard calling continually in the nest.
- 25th Eight visits were recorded in 23 minutes: five by the male and three by the female.
- 27th The young birds could sometimes be seen at the nest hole when being fed.
- 29th Regular feeding continued during pouring rain when the calls of young were heard to be louder and sounded much more like the adults; a pair of Treecreepers was found building a nest under peeling bark on the same tree.
- 31st The young were still calling loudly and two were seen poking their heads out of nest hole. The male was calling back to the young at one point, and I thought he might have been trying to entice them to leave the nest hole.

June

- 1st Both parents were still feeding the young in the nest at 05:30, with the male calling to the young from an adjacent tree after feeding. Three young were then seen to leave the nest between 08:20 and 09:15, when I had to leave. On returning at 10:00 at least one young bird was still in nest, silent but occasionally showing the top of its head. At 12:30 there was no sign of any birds and all was silent and I presumed the whole brood had fledged.

After fledging there was no sign of any birds, adults or juveniles, until August 9th when a juvenile was seen looking out of the nest hole.

Observations in 2016

Initial observations

In 2016 the first sighting was of the male drumming on a tree adjacent to the nest site on Mar 15th, after which I had no further sightings until April. These and other observations during the 2016 breeding season are summarised below.

April

- 6th I found a male LSW excavating a new hole in the same tree as in 2015. He continued with this the next day.
- 8th The male was seen cleaning out the old nest hole, which had not been opened up since last year; the female was also present.
- 11th The male flew onto the nest tree and went into last years nest hole; the female flew in & looked into the hole with the male still inside. The female then flew onto an adjacent tree, still calling, and then flew off leaving the male in the hole.
- 17th The male flew in, silently, at 08:30 & went into nest hole, and was still there when I left. At 10:10 the female was calling from an adjacent tree, but then flew off.
- 20th At 06:20 the female flew onto a tree adjacent to the nest, the male then came out of the hole and female went in.
- 21st At 06:30, exactly the same sequence of events as yesterday occurred. This was the last time the female was seen.
- 24th The male was drumming softly from an adjacent tree at 19:00.

May

- all I continued to follow events keenly and the pertinent observations during May were as follows:
- 4th At 07:50 one bird, sex not determined, was drumming softly from an adjacent tree and then flew into nest hole.
- 5th At 09:40 the male was drumming from an adjacent tree and then flew into nest hole, and 20 minutes later had not emerged. At 20:00 on the same day the same happened but the sex of the bird entering the hole was not determined.
- 6th At 07.40, the same sequence of events occurred as on 5th. Then at 10:30 the male was calling from adjacent tree before flying off south, and at 12.25 he was again drumming nearby.
- 9th The male was drumming from an adjacent tree at 06:05. At 08:10 the male was observed looking out of the nest hole before flying off. Later, at 11:30 a bird was heard drumming close by, but was not seen and the sex thus not determined.
- 12th The male was observed looking out of the nest hole. At 10:45 I checked the nest with KS and we discovered that the male was incubating five or six eggs, KS left the camera equipment with me for future checking of the nest.
- 15th At 13:35 a bird was seen to fly from the nest site to an oak tree in middle of the nearby field.
- 17th The male was observed regularly taking food into nest and often staying in the nest for 15 to 20 minutes, presumably brooding. The food appeared to be unidentified grubs. The same pattern was followed on the 18th.
- 20th I checked the nest with the camera and saw that there were at least 3 young; all had their eyes still closed.
- 23rd The male was still feeding the young regularly, taking in grubs & fat.
- 27th I re-checked the nest and saw 3 half-grown young with their eyes open.



Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor*, screen grab from nest monitoring software showing development of the chicks between May 20th and Jun 2nd 2016 © Andy Sims

June

- 2nd I observed the male feeding but not always going into the nest. I again re-checked the nest with the camera and the three young were almost fully grown. There was one male, one female & one of indeterminate sex.
- 5th The three young fledged between 08:00 & 09:15, with the male seen and heard in adjacent trees. The nest was checked with the camera on the 6th and was completely empty & clean.

My observations confirmed that the female had left the area from Apr 21st, leaving the male on his own. The 2016 spring weather was poor, so he did well to rear three young on his own. No birds were seen after fledging.



Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor* adult male at the Lincoln nest site on Mar 24th 2015 and image showing monitoring equipment in use © Andy Sims

Discussion

LSW *Dendrocopos minor* have declined significantly in the UK since the early 1980s. Consequently it is a UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority species and was added to the UK Red List of birds of highest conservation concern in 2009¹ where it remains. Any observations of this species in the county are thus extremely valuable, especially those concerning a territorial and/or breeding pair. The observations of the Swanpool pair in 2015 and 2016 are in that category and are part of an ongoing UK-wide study of the species (K Smith, *pers. comm.*). One interesting feature of the Swanpool pair in both years was that the birds were bringing fat, presumably from garden feeders to the young in the nest; while Great Spotted Woodpeckers often do, LSW do not usually visit feeders. This behaviour was, though, also seen at a Hertfordshire nest in 2016.

These were two contrasting seasons for the Swanpool LSW. In 2015, the adult pair successfully reared at least four, possibly six, young. In 2016, the female left the area after mating and was not seen in the area after Apr 21st. The male continued to incubate the eggs and reared three young on his own until they fledged. This is not a unique event though and a Swedish study in 2000² found that where the female deserted, the male compensated for the reduced feeding by the female; the males matched the combined rate of both sexes after the female ceased feeding. Furthermore, in both the UK and Scandinavian Lesser Spotted Woodpecker populations there is an imbalance of the sexes, with more males than females. It seems that desertion by females to pair with another male is not unusual and that as many as 10% of females are polyandrous. Polyandry is a class of mating system where one female mates with several males in a breeding season. Given the rarity of LSW's in Lincolnshire, it seems less likely that the Swanpool female disappeared to mate with another male, although this cannot be ruled out.

With regard to the breeding success of the Swanpool pair, it appears that they were above average despite the female's desertion in 2016. A UK study published in 2012 monitored nests in three regions of England (south Yorks, Hants/Wilts and Worcs) during 2007-2009, involving 27 nests in total³. It was found that only 16 out of 27 nests (59%) fledged one or more chicks and that the

commonest cause of nest failure was loss of one or more adults, resulting in chick starvation. In 2016 there were ten known nests and only two of these fledged young. The Swanpool pair has thus had two seasons of success compared to these findings.

It has been fascinating and rewarding to be able to study these birds in details, and I would encourage anyone who finds nesting LSW to get in touch with Ken Smith through the woodpecker network website (www.woodpecker-network.org.uk).

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Ken Smith for his interest and participation in this project, and also Rick Bennett, John Clarkson, Phil Espin and Andy Chick for their assistance with the operation of the camera equipment at various times. Phil Hyde and Andrew Henderson helped me with preparation of this article.

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The status of Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* in Lincolnshire

Phil Hyde

Introduction

On the 30th May 1979, a friend and I had travelled to Cley in Norfolk to try and see an adult Rose-coloured Starling *Pastor roseus* but the bird had gone. Later, as we walked rather disconsolately along the famous East Bank, two Norfolk birders shouted “Little Egret” and a fine adult flew past us on to Cley marshes, my first British record. The British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC) subsequently accepted the record¹. Thereafter, the species began to increase dramatically in the UK and 1990 was the last year in which it featured in the annual BBRC report, when there were 113 records². This short report looks at the species’ status in Lincolnshire.

Little Egrets in Lincolnshire in the 20th century

In the first treatise on the birds of Lincolnshire written by Smith and Cornwallis³ in 1955, the species is not even mentioned. A later update by Lorand and Atkin⁴ published in 1989 summarised the species status as “a rare vagrant recorded with certainty only during recent years”. The first acceptable record for the county was of a bird at Frampton marshes on 23rd July 1966, somehow a very suitable occurrence given the prominence that site now has within the county. Spring influxes of this species and other southern herons to the UK occurred in 1970 and 1973, resulting in six county records. Lorand and Atkin finish by stating that there have been at least five more records since, with one bird over-wintering on the Wash in 1987/88. The likely origin of these birds was hinted at when a Dutch-ringed bird was found dead at the River Welland mouth in September 1979, having been ringed as a nestling two months earlier.



Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* Adult and juvenile North Cotes June 2015 © Colin Smale

In the wider context, Fraser *et al.* (1997)⁵ reported that during 1958-88 the average number of Little Egrets in Britain was fewer than 15 per year with most in spring. However, in 1989 this pattern changed abruptly (when coincidentally there was an over-wintering individual in Lincolnshire) when there was a dramatic autumn influx into Britain and Ireland from mid-July onwards⁶. The August peak for the southwest of England was more than 320 birds, with a slightly later peak (in September) in Dorset, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight reaching nearly 350. Lower August or September peaks were just under 100 (in East and West Sussex and Kent) and 50 (Wales, Avon and Somerset). The influx was much more modest in the midland and eastern counties and the 1989 Lincolnshire Bird Report⁷ noted just a single individual on the Wash into November! The origin of the influx was theorised as being northwest France, where hundreds have wintered from the early 1980s.

The numbers of Little Egrets present annually between 1966 and 2000 are shown in Figure 1. Data have been taken from the LBC archive (1996-2000) and crosschecked against BBRC reports (up to and including 1990). Between 1966 and 1992, the species remained a true rarity and the 1992

LBC Report noted that the two birds reported in that year were just the county's 17th and 18th records. Even then, 1994 was the only year when double figures were reported (10) leading up to the end of the millennium when there were 19.

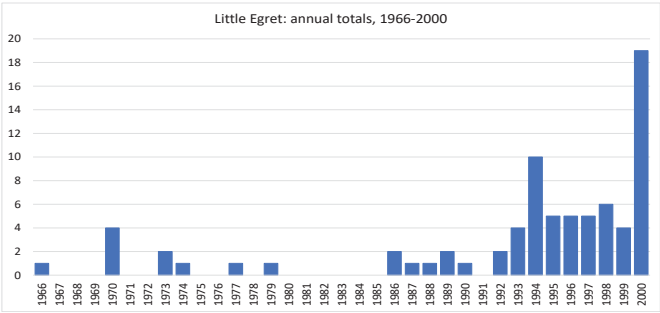


Figure 1: Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* numbers present in Lincolnshire during 1966-2000.

Note that during 1993-2000, the numbers are best estimates where multiple site occurrences had been reported.

Little Egrets in Lincolnshire and United Kingdom in the 21st century

(a) Total population

Little Egret counts in Lincolnshire submitted to the Lincolnshire Bird Club (LBC) and to the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) show an almost exponential increase in numbers from the turn of the millennium (Figure 2). Data have been analysed as follows. Peak monthly counts were identified in each of 26 sections of the county (two on the Humber, two on the coast, 15 on The Wash based on WeBS sectors, and seven inland). Those peaks were then summed to give monthly totals for the four areas (Humber, coast, Wash, inland). In any year, peak monthly totals for different areas may not occur in the same month, and there may be small biases due to duplication or poor coverage, but these factors are unlikely to have affected the displayed trends or estimated population sizes significantly.

The trend mirrors the establishment of Little Egrets as a breeding bird in the county (see below) but will also reflect the species northwards spread in the UK. The Wash has been by far the most important site during this period, with the northerly coastal sites and the Humber becoming significant from 2006 onwards. Inland sites also start to figure from that year. Numbers peaked in 2008 but subsequently suffered reversals due to several prolonged spells of freezing weather, not conducive to the survival of fish-eating birds, notably in 2010/11. There was a rapid recovery by 2013 but it remains to be seen whether the county total will continue to increase.

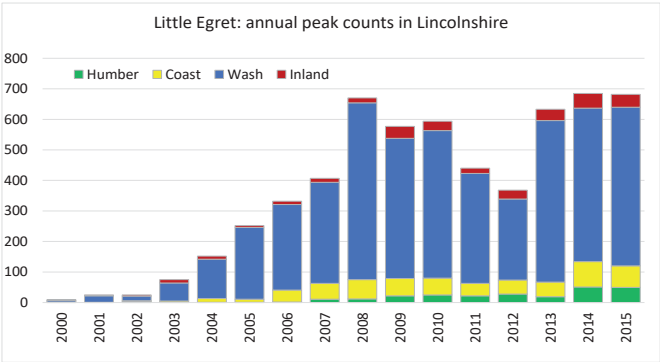


Figure 2: Annual peak counts for Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* 2000-2015. These represent the highest monthly total for each area in each year.

(b) Seasonal pattern of abundance in Little Egret numbers

As would be expected as newly fledged youngsters are added to the population maximum numbers occur in the autumn starting in July and peaking in September (Figure 3). The highest numbers are seen on The Wash and on the coast and on the other estuary, the Humber. The totals will both reflect post-breeding increases locally bred and immigration from elsewhere - birds from Norfolk and Nottinghamshire have been observed in Lincolnshire. Post-juvenile dispersal in many species is a well-known phenomenon and birds ringed as nestlings (pulli) in Lincolnshire have been sighted as far afield as Aberdeenshire, Somerset, the Channel Islands and north-central France in the autumn months (see section (c) below).

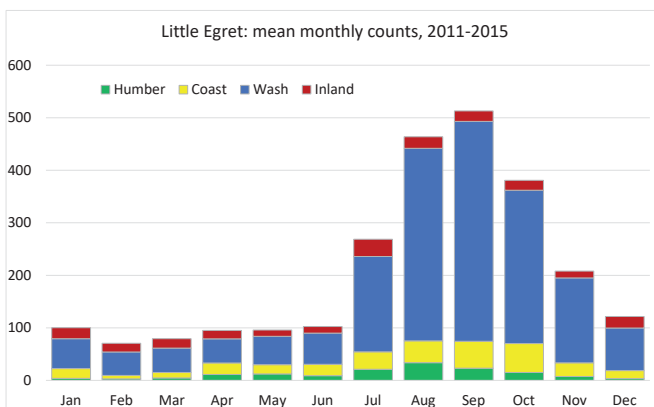


Figure 3: Seasonal pattern of abundance for Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* 2000-2015. For each area, the peak monthly total, averaged for the five years, is shown for each month.

Data for one Humber site, Alkborough Flats, 2007-2015 is also shown in Figure 4, as an example of seasonal variation at a single coastal site. Little Egrets appeared later at this site, reflecting its position on the more northerly Humber estuary, but the autumn increase is again very apparent. Another small difference is that the autumn peak tends to be in August in contrast to the September peak for the county as a whole.

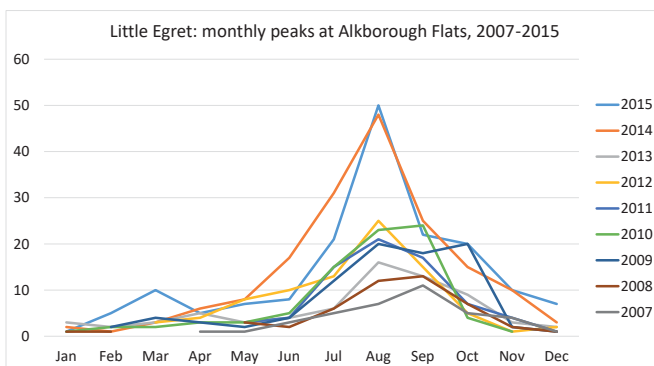


Figure 4: Little Egret monthly count data for Alkborough Flats, 2007-2015.

A late autumn and winter decrease in numbers is also clearly shown at both Alkborough and across the county. It is not known whether this reflects mortality, or movement away from the county into some of the larger concentrations seen further south in England. The UK wintering population is the most northerly in the world and high mortality has been documented in Brittany

in the winters of 1984/5, 1986/7 and 1996/7⁸, and is assumed to have been the cause of the declines in Lincolnshire in 2010-2012.

(c) *Breeding status of Little Egrets in the United Kingdom and Lincolnshire*

The first breeding of this species in Britain was confirmed in 1996, as had been well forecast, when a pair successfully reared three young on Brownsea Island in Dorset⁸. Although successful breeding was known to have taken place only at this locality, probable breeding attempts also occurred at a minimum of six others. Notable milestones after 1996 included a two-fold increase between 2003 and 2005; more than 800 confirmed and probable breeding pairs in 2009; more than 100 sites reporting confirmed or probable breeding in 2013; more than 1,000 breeding pairs in 2014 (the latest RBBP report)⁹. Figure 5 shows the trend in the UK population.

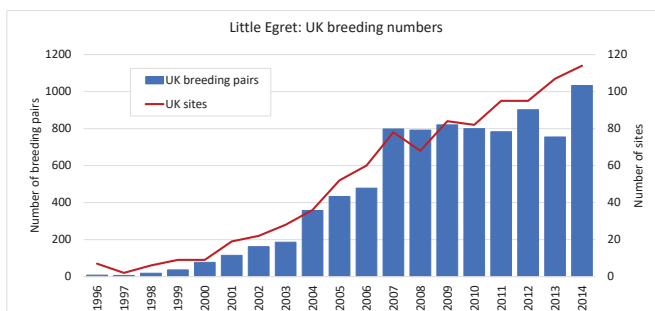


Figure 5: Numbers of breeding pairs of Little Egrets *Egretta garzetta* in the UK, 1996-2013.

Note that "breeding pairs" is the total of confirmed and probable breeders.

Data from the UK Rare Breeding Birds Panel reports, www.rbbp.org.uk

Confirmed breeding in Lincolnshire didn't occur until 2007 when 16-18 pairs were reported from three localities following signs of breeding behaviour in every year from 2003 onwards¹⁰. Numbers of breeding pairs and sites with breeding attempts have increased rapidly since then, as shown in Figure 6, with at least 101 pairs at 9 sites in 2015 (see p.40 of this report). Figure 6 also shows the numbers of nestlings ringed in the county each year; note that these totals reflect ringing effort and do not represent the number of young produced.

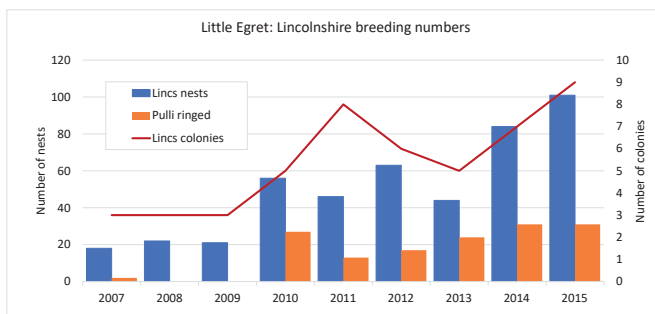


Figure 6: Numbers of breeding pairs of Little Egrets *Egretta garzetta* in Lincolnshire, 2007- 2015. Data from the UK Rare Breeding Birds Panel, www.rbbp.org.uk and Lincolnshire Bird Reports 2007-2015.

Totals include confirmed and probably occupied nests.

Since the first confirmed breeding in Lincolnshire in 2007, 145 pulli have been ringed with both BTO metal rings and colour rings; maxima of 31 were ringed in both 2014 and 2015. Colour-ringed Lincolnshire birds have been observed alive in the field as far north as the Ythan Estuary, Aberdeenshire (445km NNW, Sep 2014), and as far south as Somerset (336km SW, Oct 2013); the Channel Islands (498km SSW, Apr & Nov 2012); Loiret, France (561km SSE, Oct 2009)¹¹. The

BTO longevity record for Little Egret is nine years and six months; that for Lincolnshire to date is six years and nine months¹¹.

Unsurprisingly, the county breeding data mirror that of the rest of the UK with the trend continuing strongly upwards¹². In the context of some other UK breeding species, Little Egret is bucking the trend of some widespread decreases¹³. It's addition to the county avifauna and its establishment as a breeding species a welcome event. Indeed, its herons and their allies in general (Spoonbill, Glossy Ibis, Great Bittern) are also thriving at present. For example, two pairs of Great White Egret *Ardea alba*, first bred in the UK in 2012 (and may soon emulate Little Egrets). This followed a large increase in the wintering populations of Great White Egrets in the UK (records in 6% of 10-km squares in Britain in *Bird Atlas 2007–11*)¹⁰ and in Europe where it formerly wintered in small numbers or only occasionally, with flocks of several hundred individuals reported from some countries¹⁴.



Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* Freiston Shore Sep 13th 2015 © Steve Keightley

Habitat usage by Little Egrets: feeding, roosting and breeding

In Lincolnshire, Little Egrets typically feed in a wide variety of habitat: open or sparsely vegetated shallow to very shallow water, both inland and coastal, including the banks of freshwater rivers and streams, shallow lakes, pools, lagoons, flooded meadows, freshwater ditches draining agricultural land, and open areas in marshes (mostly with *Phragmites*), and coastal mud flats.

Their choice of prey in these areas is quite catholic and they are swift to take advantage of local prey abundance. In Lincolnshire freshwater waterways of all kinds, personal observations have revealed that they favour small fish such as Three-spined Stickleback *Gasterosteus aculeatus* and fry of species such as Common Roach *Rutilus rutilus*, and Rudd *Scardinius erythrophthalmus*. In saline lagoons and creeks, Brown Shrimp *Crangon crangon*, and Green Shore Crab *Carcinus maenas* are commonly taken. Familiar references such as Handbook of the Birds of the World¹⁵ give an exhaustive list of recorded prey species.

Roosting Little Egrets commonly choose somewhere close to their feeding grounds. In Lincolnshire this is primarily saltmarshes behind the shoreline, drainage ditches and tidal mudflats, copses and hedges. A copse largely of Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, is regularly used on the Wash at the Witham mouth, and Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* hedges at Gibraltar Point.

The habitat in which Little Egrets in the county choose to breed often involves co-habitation with Grey Herons *Ardea cinerea*. The colonies are most often sited in stands of conifer, including Larch *Larix decidua*, Scots Pine *Pinus sylvestris* and Norway Spruce *Picea abies*, but also in mixed deciduous and coniferous plantations in coastal shelter belts and copses. At one inland gravel pit site, thick Willow/Sallow scrub *Salix* spp is also used. Choice of host tree thus seems to be opportunistic, and may or may not involve a pre-existing heronry.

Acknowledgements

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Red-throated Divers *Gavia stellata* wintering off Lincolnshire

Andrew Henderson and Kevin Wilson

Introduction

Twenty years ago, a count of 314 Red-throated Divers in Lincolnshire, as made off Rimac on 27th February 2015, would have been thought very high but this is no longer the case. More regular (though still sporadic) seawatching in winter by a small group of regular coastal observers has resulted in almost annual day-counts of 200 or more, and quite often far larger totals. Our understanding of the status of the species in the county's coastal waters has grown in parallel with wider appreciation of the fact that the populations of Red-throated Divers wintering off eastern England are of major international significance. This short article summarises what we know, and explores facets of the species' winter ecology that are less well understood.



Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata* Lincolnshire Coast Oct 2015 © Richard Berridge

How many are seen and when do they occur?

Figure 1 shows the annual peak count in the county in each year from 1978/79 to 2014/15. As this is a winter visitor, it is sensible to show data for July-June years rather than calendar years. This chart suggests that, over the period, there has been a gentle increase in peak numbers, with occasional much larger counts being made.

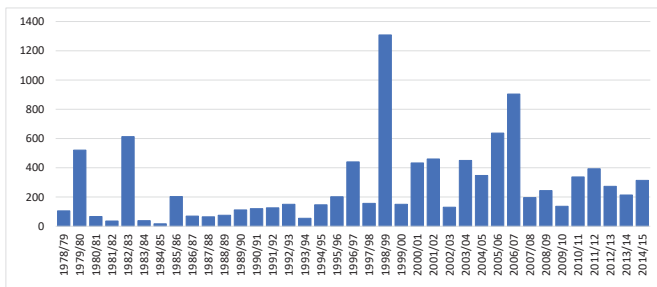


Figure 1. Annual peak counts of Red-throated Divers in Lincolnshire, 1978/79-2014/15

It is possible that the species has increased. The first very high counts recorded, in early January 1980, were unprecedented for Lincolnshire and surprised the observers at the time. At Gibraltar Point, it has been recorded on a frequent basis only since about 1985, and prior to 1959 only single figure counts were made. However, it is likely that much of the apparent increase, certainly since 1978, is the result of increased observer attention at the appropriate times of years. The marked step up in peak counts in the 1990s is believed to be due to a small group of observers, who started to undertake more comprehensive seawatching in winter then and continue to do so today. This improved coverage involved more days with observations, and also increased duration of daily observation periods. At least at Gibraltar Point, most observations have been made in the early morning (between 0700 and 0900 hrs).

The ten monthly peak counts of over 400 birds, including at two sites on one date, were as follows:

Ranked in order of size of count			Ranked in order of date in year		
Gibraltar Point	20th February 1999	1308	Huttoft Bank	6th January 1980	521
Gibraltar Point	9th February 2007	904	Donna Nook	6th January 1980	483
Gibraltar Point	31st January 2006	637	Gibraltar Point	7th January 1997	440
Theddlethorpe	2nd January 1983	613	Gibraltar Point	12th January 2001	433
Donna Nook	6th January 1980	483	Gibraltar Point	27th January 2002	460
Huttoft Bank	6th January 1980	521	Theddlethorpe	2nd January 1983	613
Gibraltar Point	27th January 2002	460	Gibraltar Point	31st January 2006	637
Gibraltar Point	7th March 2004	450	Gibraltar Point	9th February 2007	904
Gibraltar Point	7th January 1997	440	Gibraltar Point	20th February 1999	1308
Gibraltar Point	12th January 2001	433	Gibraltar Point	7th March 2004	450

It is worth noting that there has been no count of more than 400 since February 2007, though 393 at Gibraltar Point on 3rd February 2012 came close to it. As can be seen, most of the highest counts fall within a fairly short period from the beginning of January to the second week of February, plus one later that month and one in March. The highest peak counts in November and December are, respectively, 134 and 120. Thus there is firm evidence that the highest numbers occur early in the year. To look in more detail at seasonal patterns of occurrence, we first extracted the peak count anywhere in the county for each month through the 37 year period. The results of this are shown in Figure 2, with the period before more intensive coverage started shown separately from the later period.

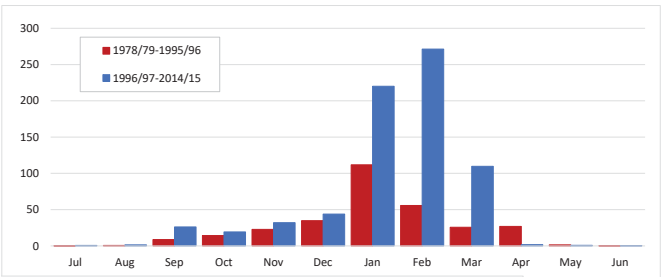


Figure 2. Peak monthly counts of Red-throated Divers in Lincolnshire, 1978/79-2014/15
Values are the means of the monthly peaks in each of the two periods

By separating the more recent years from earlier ones, we can see that in years when counts have tended to be higher (mean annual peaks 1978/79-1995/96 = 151.2; 1996/97-2014/15 = 396.0), high numbers are strongly concentrated in January-March. Earlier, counts were more even throughout November-April, apart from markedly higher numbers in January. A possible interpretation of Figure 2 is that high numbers have been retained for longer during January-March in recent years, but it may be that the isolated peak for January during 1978/79-1995/96 is an artefact of the limited coverage in that period.

The list of highest peak counts above shows the predominance of Gibraltar Point. In fact, that was the site of the peak count in 30 of the 37 years analysed. However, it's noticeable that during 1979-1985, the peaks were at locations along the whole of the coast from Donna Nook to Gibraltar Point, but from 1986 onwards, only the peak count in 2015, made at Rimac, was *not* at Gibraltar Point.

It is at Gibraltar Point that the most consistent observations have been made and this to some extent probably explains the dominance of that location in annual peak counts. Figure 3, showing mean monthly peaks for four nine-year periods, illustrates how the Gibraltar Point counts increased and, since the mid 1990s, stabilised. While it is reasonable to attribute the increase to better coverage, it is also noticeable here that the proportionate increases in February and March are larger than those in January. The mean for January rose by 290% between 1979/80-1996/97 and 1997/98-2014/15, whereas the means for February and March rose, respectively, 579% and 686%.

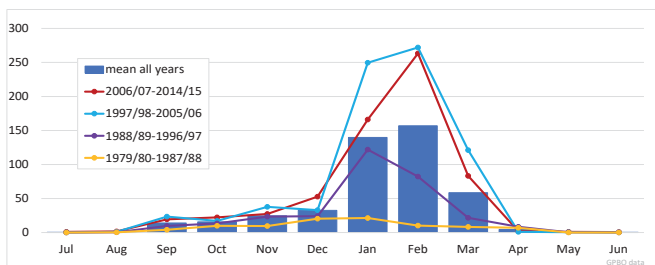


Figure 3. Peak monthly counts of Red-throated Divers at Gibraltar Point, 1978/79-2014/15
Values are the means of the monthly peaks in each of the periods

What are they doing and where are they going?

As already mentioned, it seems likely that some aspects of these patterns are the result of observer behaviour. Very few people have ever seawatched on the Lincolnshire coast in winter but the coverage did increase from the early 1990s due to the efforts of a handful of observers. Prior to that, seawatching in the county was often attempted only during strong northerly winds in autumn, when heavy movements of skuas, auks and other species could be expected. Furthermore, winter coverage has tended to be greatest at the southern end of the coast and especially at Gibraltar Point. These facets of observer behaviour may well be at least part of the cause of the apparent increase in peak counts in the 1990s, and the fact that most have been at Gibraltar Point.

What these birds are doing remains something of a mystery; even regular observers find them unpredictable. When large counts are made, birds may be moving north or south, and some may be resting on the sea. As an example, on 6th January 1980, when 521 flew *south* off Huttoft, 257 were also seen moving *north* there (we have analysed such events using only the count in the principal direction unless observers have said they were certain a higher number was involved). And to add to the confusion, on the same day, 483 divers (not all specifically identified but likely to be mostly Red-throated) flew *north* at Donna Nook with 20 flying south. The movements at Huttoft and Donna Nook were at more or less the same time: observations at Donna Nook were during 0915-1300 hrs while at Huttoft they were during 1200-1300 hrs.

A simple analysis of Gibraltar Point data has been carried out, using only the peak monthly counts, to examine which direction birds are flying in each month. The results are summarised below for October-March during 1997/98-2014/15.

	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Number of birds moving north	0	37	0	198	1335	390
Number of birds moving south	23	186	98	1998	1575	38
% moving south	100%	83%	100%	91%	54%	9%

This suggests that there is a marked change during February-March from earlier in the winter. The typical pattern until January is for southward movement to predominate but subsequently, while such movements continue, there is also substantial and increasing northward movement. More detailed analysis of directional data including more than just the peak monthly counts would help to confirm this pattern, but we speculate that it suggests that in mid winter there is a resident local population that makes regular movements with mainly the southward element visible from shore,

while later in winter those movements continue but there is also migratory movement to the north, perhaps involving the local birds plus others from wintering areas further south.

The conditions that appear to be most productive (or at least, which make the birds easiest to see) are calm and cold days, in the mornings, when the tide is high. It's probable that birds fly at dawn from roosts to feeding areas and then drift back on the tide overnight. There may be other reasons why birds are often *not* seen; they may be invisible from shore because at low tide the sea is distant or because they are hidden by wave height and spray and sand bars or because in windier conditions they may keep further out. Typically, the divers move in small groups or open lines, but there have been cases of larger flocks being seen. The largest of these was a flock of 247 which formed a large part of the count of 314 moving south off Rimac on 27th February 2015.

The divers do appear to be off Lincolnshire mainly in the second half of the winter, and there have been no very high counts during October-December. Thus, while they do not appear simply to be passage birds, we cannot say that they are here throughout the winter – they must be somewhere else, perhaps far offshore or elsewhere in the North Sea, before they move to our waters. Offshore studies including Lincolnshire waters (Lawson *et al.*, 2016) have also found lower numbers in the first half of winters, though the data for those early winter periods are not thought wholly reliable.

Comparing Lincolnshire data with those from Kent shows that January peaks also occur elsewhere. Figure 4 compares Gibraltar Point peak monthly counts with those made at Thanet and Dungeness, for one nine-year period 1997/98-2005/06 for which data were readily available (recording on Thanet is less systematic than at the other sites). It appears that relatively high numbers are maintained over a longer period in Kent than in Lincolnshire: both sites there can have high counts in December, and Dungeness continues to record relatively large numbers into spring. Both of the Kent sites project more into the sea than anywhere in Lincolnshire, and so observers there are more likely to see offshore passage as well as feeding movements of local birds. At Dungeness, there can be a large easterly spring passage of Red-throated Divers, as illustrated by Figure 5 which shows one year (2013) with a particularly large passage and another (2014) in which it is still evident but far smaller. Note that Figure 5 is based on monthly bird-day totals (i.e. the sum of all daily counts throughout each month) rather than the single monthly peak counts. The comparable data for Gibraltar Point shows no spring passage peak.

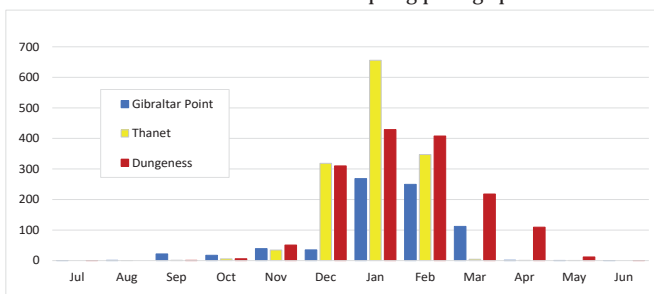


Figure 4. Peak monthly counts of Red-throated Divers at three locations, 1997/98-2005/06
Values are the means of the monthly peaks at each location

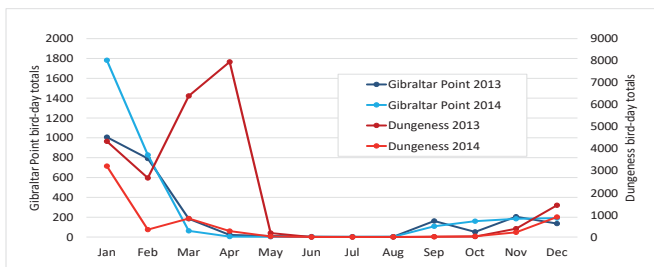


Figure 5. Monthly bird-day totals of Red-throated Divers at Gibraltar Point and Dungeness, 2013 and 2014
Values are the sums of all counts made in each month

Wider studies and implications

Given that the Lincolnshire coastline is hardly favourable for seawatching, lacking the topographic advantages of somewhere like Flamborough Head or Dungeness, it makes one wonder just how many are out there if we can see 500 or 1,000 or more Red-throated Divers from the shore. There have now been many studies of seabirds in the North Sea, often undertaken in connection with wind farm developments, and these are gradually revealing more about the status of divers and other species. For Red-throated Diver, visual aerial surveys during 2001-2006 combined with land-based counts resulted in the GB winter population estimate being raised from the previous 4,850 to 17,000 (O'Brien *et al.*, 2008, Wilson *et al.* 2009). The authors of those reports stressed that the estimate was a minimum and that the true total might be higher. The number occurring in an area stretching from Bridlington to Great Yarmouth, referred to as the Greater Wash, was estimated to be 1,633 on average. That work was updated in a 2016 report (Lawson *et al.*, 2016) which estimated that, using data from surveys during 2003-2006, the average number in the area was 1,787. The report commented that "the Greater Wash area supports 10% of the GB wintering population of red-throated diver and is the second most important site in the UK for this species after the Outer Thames Estuary". The divers were found mainly in a zone extending about 20km out from the shore, with most well out of sight from the land. These surveys extended across the whole winter period though with less coverage in October-November than later. The highest numbers were found during January-March, though substantial totals were recorded earlier in the winter, especially in December 2004

The Outer Thames Estuary has been classified as a Special Protection Area (SPA) for its wintering Red-throated Diver population, on the basis of surveys during 1989-2007 which calculated that 6,466 individuals were present on average, comprising 38% of the current GB population estimate of 17,000. However, a more recent survey using high-resolution aerial photography during January-February 2013 has resulted in a far higher estimate of the numbers of divers present in the Outer Thames SPA, including a peak estimate of 14,161 (Goodship *et al.*, 2015). Numbers in the area are believed to vary between and within winters, but as noted above it was suspected that the earlier surveys were underestimates and some of the apparent increase is probably due to the improved counting technique. As for the Greater Wash, numbers in the Thames were higher during January-March than earlier in the winter though, again, coverage was less frequent in October-December, and none was included in the 2013 high-resolution survey.

The new Outer Thames estimate raises a question over the accuracy of the GB population estimate: the true figure may well be considerably higher than 17,000. Also, if the photographic counting method is confirmed as being more accurate, we can conclude that the earlier estimate of the number in the Greater Wash area is probably too low.

At present, the best estimate is that the Greater Wash supports 10% of the GB wintering population. If the GB estimate is raised, then the percentage in the Greater Wash would fall – but, of course, improved survey of the area for divers would likely reveal far more here, as has happened in the Thames, and so its relative importance would not necessarily fall. We have to work with the best information available at any time, and there is little doubt that the numbers of Red-throated Divers here, as established from both land-based and offshore surveys, are highly significant.

A primary criterion for the selection of a Special Protection Area (SPA) is that it holds 1% or more of the Great Britain population of a species listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive in any season. This is clearly met by the numbers off Lincolnshire/The Wash let alone the wider Greater Wash. Secondary considerations in SPA selection include that an area holding more birds or at higher concentrations is favoured over others, but the existence of such an area does not preclude selection of further SPAs to protect the species. The Greater Wash has indeed now been proposed as an SPA (Natural England 2016) and there was a public consultation period during the 2016/17 winter. Gibraltar Point data have been supplied to inform this process. The importance of the area for Red-throated Divers is only part of the justification for the classification. Other features of interest are the populations of non-breeding Common Scoters and Little Gulls, and the value of the waters to Sandwich, Common and Little Terns as foraging areas. The area extends, at its maximum, to about 30 km offshore. A government decision on the classification is anticipated during 2017.

The designation of SPAs may help Red-throated Divers. The species is known to avoid wind farms (e.g. Dierschke *et al.* 2012, and see also Hidef 2016, the presentations at an international workshop on Red-throated Divers, held in Hamburg on 24th-25th November 2016). One proposed wind farm in the Thames estuary (Phase 2 of the London Array) has already been abandoned because of environmental concerns including specifically the area's diver population.

There remains the puzzle of why the birds are seen in large numbers for such a short period each year. Most birds leave the breeding areas by the end of September, so might be expected to be in

wintering areas soon after that. As already discussed, the largest numbers in the Outer Thames and Greater Wash areas occur in January-February, with smaller though still substantial totals at other times. In the German Bight, there are birds throughout the winter but only in spring (March-April) is there a major concentration, estimated to contain around 25,000 birds (Garthe *et al.* 2015). But we have not encountered any published material documenting large concentrations of divers anywhere in the North Sea in the first half of the winter.

Ringed recoveries show that birds bred in Greenland, Russia, Scandinavia and Scotland winter around the British and Irish coasts, with some as far south as the Bay of Biscay, and Scottish birds travelling shorter distances than others (Wernham *et al.* 2002, Diver 2017). Many of the continental divers are believed to winter in the western English Channel or the Bay of Biscay. There is marked westerly passage through the Strait of Dover in November-December, with return passage in March-April, as illustrated for Dungeness in Figure 5. This is presumably largely of Scandinavian or other continental birds, since spring passage peaks after most Scottish birds are back on breeding territories. However, not all continental divers leave the North Sea in winter. Ongoing tracking studies of Red-throated Divers in the German part of the North Sea (Diver 2017) have revealed that at least some birds from further east in Russia occur in winter off eastern England (including Lincolnshire). Indeed, those tracking studies have not so far revealed any bird travelling further west or south than the Strait of Dover, even though they involve birds caught in the spring concentration in the German Bight, which might be thought to include many of the birds returning up the Channel in spring. It is possible that the German Bight spring assemblage could also include some or many of the birds present off eastern England earlier in the winter; the timing of the decrease off Lincolnshire coincides with the build-up off Germany. The tracking project, while focused on the German Bight, may well generate more findings of relevance to British and indeed Lincolnshire divers before it is complete.

How can the absence of early winter major concentrations of Red-throated Divers in the North Sea be explained? One theory might involve birds being in the Baltic Sea at that time. Numbers there are believed to have declined by over 80% since the 1980s (Skov *et al.* 2011) and in 2007-2009 were estimated to comprise only 8,500 birds. However, it may be a staging area for birds moving to and from wintering areas in the North Sea and Bay of Biscay and could hold some of the birds present off eastern England in late winter. It is also the case that the early winter period coincides with the birds moulting; at some point during September-December, moult may cause the divers to become flightless (Wernham *et al.* 2002). Possibly the birds are simply widely dispersed at that time. Or is a large concentration as yet undiscovered?

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ATu	Aidan Turner	CPt	Christopher Porter
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ATD	Alan Daws	CMo	Cliff Morrison
AHe	Alan Heaton	CBe	Colin Beck
AHu	Alan Hudson	CJJ	Colin Jennings
AT	Alan Temple	CSc	Colin Scott
Alb	Album Record	Csm	Colin Smale
ACL	Alexander Lees	Con	Confidential Record
ABro	Ali Brown	DNw	Daniel Newton
AFP	Alkborough Flats Partnership	DWs	Danny Walsh
ACBH	Andrew Henderson	DAk	Dave Adkin
ACS	Andrew Sims	DJB	Dave Bradbeer
AV	Andrew Vaughan	DRB	Dave Bromwich
AAAt	Andy Atkinson	DSm	Dave Smith
APC	Andy Chick	DWo	Dave Worrell
ASha	Andy Sharp	DKW	Dave Wright
ABe	Anthony Bentley	DCo	David Cohen
AMcD	Anthony McDonald	DMJ	David Jenkins
RBW	Barrie Wilkinson	DMi	David Miller
BMC	Barry Clarkson	DMn	David Morison
BHa	Barry Hancock	DRa	David Ralph
BWd	Benjamin Ward	DROb	David Roberts
WM	Bill Meek	DV	David Vandome
WBS	Bill Sterling	DE	Dean Eades
BGu	Birdguides	DN	Dean Nicholson
BTr	Birdtrack	DJn	Denis Jones
BRG	Birklands Ringing Group	DMy	Derek Morley
RWa	Bob Wacey	DEv	Derick Evans
BHe	Brian Hedley	EJM	Edmund Mackrill
CCl	C Clarke	et al	et al
CAn	Carl Annall	FIBG	Far Ings Bird Group
CCo	Carl Cornish	FJ	Freddy Johnson
Cas	Casual Record	GKn	Garry Knight
CBr	Charlie Barnes	GCS	Garry Steele
CWd	Cheryl Wood	GWr	Garry Wright
CAd	Chris Andrews	GJF	Gary Fenwick
CA	Chris Atkin	GHA	Geoff Annibal
CBl	Chris Bell	GMu	Geoff Mullett
CG	Chris Grimshaw	GW	Geoff Williams
CHe	Chris Heaton	GBi	George Bishop
CLu	Chris Lunn	GGr	George Gregory
CMa	Chris Manning	GRu	George Rutter
CTy	Chris Tyler	GMO	Gervase Orton

GPBO	Gibraltar Point Bird Observatory	KHi	K Hilditch
GAt	Gill Atkins	KSp	Karen Spavin
GPC	Graham Catley	KBi	Katherine Birkett
GF	Graham Fordham	KH	Kay Heath
GH	Graham Hardy	KDR	Keith Robertson
GJT	Graham J Taylor	KRo	Keith Robinson
GHo	Grahame Hopwood	KWa	Keith Warner
GRo	Greg Roberts	KKH	Kerry Harrison
GAM	Grimsby Area Members	KAM	Kevin Marshall
GPL	Guy Langan	KSho	Kevin Shone
HJM	Heber Martin	KSu	Kevin Sullivan
HCa	Helen Cadogan	KMW	Kevin Wilson
HW	Helen Wroe	LDa	Les Davidson
HB	Howard Bunn	LBCF	Lincolnshire Bird Club Forum
HJo	Hugh Jones	LWT	Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust
HM	Hugh Middleton	LHa	Linda Harvey
IAA	I A Ashworth	MRB	M R Briggs
IBm	Ian Beaumont	MJo	Malcolm Johnson
IB	Ian Birch	MKi	Malcolm Kitchen
IE	Ian Ellis	MWs	Mandy West
IG	Ian Gordon	MHs	Mark Hughes
IPM	Ian Misselbrook	MJn	Mark Johnson
IGS	Ian Shepherd	MJG	Martin Gray
ISm	Ian Smith	MSw	Martin Swannell
JAS	J A Smith	MBu	Matt Burgess
JMS	J M Sizer	MHa	Matt Harrison
JPS	J P Shaughnessey	MWb	Matt Webb
JRN	J R Nelson	MTh	Mel Thorn
JWh	J Wheldon	MBe	Michael Betts
JHe	James Hewson	MMal	Michael Maltby
JS	James Siddle	MPn	Mick Paine
JRs	Jan Rousseau	MLRG	Mid-Lincs Ringing Group
JRow	Janet Roworth	MEH	Mike Harrison
JWg	Jim Wright	MJT	Mike Tarrant
JB	John Badley	NHD	N H Dorrington
JRC	John Clarkson	ND	Neil Drinkall
JFa	John Farmer	NKz	Neil Kurz
JTG	John Goy	NRo	Neil Roberts
JAH	John Hayes	PNW	Nicholas Watts
JOv	John Oliver	NCl	Nick Clayton
EJR	John Redshaw	NPT	Nick Tribe
JRW	John Walker	NYe	Nicola Yeadon
JWa	John Watt	NAL	Nigel Lound
JSI	Jon Salmon	OB	Oliver Beacock
JBy	Jonathan Bye	OW	Oliver Woodman
JSa	Jonathan Savory	PMG	P M Gosling
JJF	Josh Forrester	PBe	Patrick Bell
KAr	K Armstrong	PDb	Paul Daubney

PDu	Paul Dumbleton	RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
PMa	Paul Marshall	RTf	Russ Telfer
PNe	Paul Neale	RBn	Russell Bean
PPz	Paul Pultz	RHay	Russell Hayes
PSm	Paul Smith	SAB	S A Britton
PS	Paul Sullivan	SNe	Sandra Neale
PCh	Pete Childs	SJ	Sheila Jennings
PSc	Pete Scott	SSp	Simon Spavin
PSh	Pete Short	SDW	Simon Wellock
PCl	Peter Clement	SRo	Stephen Routledge
PDr	Peter Dryburgh	SR	Stephen Ryland
PHa	Peter Harvey	SGC	Steve Cross
CPO	Peter Overton	SK	Steve Keightley
PRo	Peter Roworth	SL	Steve Lorand
PEs	Phil Espin	SLo	Steve Lovell
PAH	Phil Hyde	SJM	Steve Meek
PLe	Phil Lee	SMo	Steve Moore
PP	Phil Porter	SN	Steve Nesbitt
PHl	Phillip Harland	SWa	Steve Watson
RL	R Lorand	SBk	Steven Black
RJH	Ray Hume	SML	Steven Lister
RRi	Reg Rice	SAi	Stuart Ainsworth
RCm	Richard Camm	SMk	Stuart Mackman
RCa	Richard Caney	TBr	Terry Barker
RDv	Richard Davidson	TBa	Terry Barnatt
RDn	Richard Doan	TCo	Terry Corlett
RHe	Richard Heath	TWe	Terry West
RJa	Richard Jackson	TWh	Terry Whalin
RPi	Richard Pipe	TBg	Tim Bagworth
RYe	Richard Yeadon	TC	Toby Collett
RBe	Rick Bennett	TCL	Tom Lowe
RKW	Rob K Watson	TWo	Tomas Wood
RAk	Robert Atkinson	TBk	Tony Baker
RC	Robert Carr	AJH	Tony Housman
RHr	Robert Hardy	TGu	Trevor Gunby
RMo	Robert Morley	TML	Trevor Lee
RWk	Robert Walker	TwI	Twitter
RNH	Roger Hebb	VF	Vin Fleming
RLb	Roger Labbett	WG	Wayne Gillatt
RWr	Roger Wardle	WBR	Whisby Nature Park Bird Report
RHa	Roy Harvey	WB	William Bowell
RPr	Roy Pearson	WPB	William Brooking

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5 Carlton Avenue, Healing, N. E. Lincs, DN41 7PW,
Tel No 01472 887988, E mail wbsterling@hotmail.com

Lincolnshire Red Data Breeding Birds of Conservation Concern: BBS Trends 1995-2014

Distribution and Population change in Lincolnshire and other parts of UK

Ranked in order of frequency of occurrence in Lincolnshire

Species	% Squares Lincs 2015	% Squares UK 2015	% UK birds in Lincs 2015	% Change Lincolnshire	% Change East Midlands	% Change England	Trend
Skylark	95.3	60.0	5.9	-24	-29	-23	worse
Yellowhammer	85.9	38.2	6.7	35	-10	-25	better
Linnet	85.9	43.5	6.1	18	-26	-24	better
Song Thrush	61.2	76.6	1.2	-27	25	13	worse
Starling	58.8	54.6	2.3	-70	-23	-60	worse
House Sparrow	54.1	58.0	2.4	-10	2	-17	better
Yellow Wagtail	34.1	4.5	24.6	*	-56	-42	
Tree Sparrow	34.1	8.0	7.8	*	14	72	
Grey Partridge	31.8	5.7	13.3	*	-34	-55	
Lapwing	30.6	20.4	3.0	*	-19	-26	
Corn Bunting	9.4	4.2	4.8	*	*	-34	
Cuckoo	7.1	17.9	0.6	*	-85	-68	
Spotted Flycatcher	5.9	4.8	2.0	*	*	-61	
Turtle Dove	3.5	0.8	7.5	*	*	-93	
Marsh Tit	2.4	4.6	0.7	*	*	-35	
Grasshopper Warbler	1.2	2.5	0.7	*	*	-35	
Tree Pipit	0.0	5.0	0.0	*	*	-44	
Willow Tit	0.0	1.1	0.0	*	*	-78	
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	0.0	0.4	0.0	*	*	*	

Notes

1. % Squares UK is extracted from the BTO website and refers to the proportion of BBS squares in which each species was recorded in 2015 (Lincolnshire 85 and UK 3732).
2. Figures in bold indicate statistically significant change at the 95% level.
3. * indicates insufficient BBS squares covered to provide data to compute changes.
4. Trend is % change in Lincolnshire compared to % change in England.
5. Lincolnshire Skylarks had a better year but the position of our Starlings deteriorated.
6. The data suggest Yellow Wagtail, Tree Sparrow, Corn Bunting and Grey Partridge continue to be significantly more widespread in Lincolnshire than the rest of UK but the position of Corn Bunting deteriorated over 2014.
7. % UK birds in Lincs indicates the % of number of birds recorded in Lincolnshire in BBS compared to total birds recorded in UK, provided for information interest.
8. Lincolnshire comprises 3.3% of the land area of UK.

● Main Lincolnshire bird sites



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