

# THE **Lincolnshire** **BIRD REPORT 2017**



**The  
Lincolnshire  
Bird Club**  
[www.lincsbirdclub.co.uk](http://www.lincsbirdclub.co.uk)

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**FRONT COVER:** Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*

Willow Tree Fen Mar 24th 2017 © Steve Keightley

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# *Welcome to the 2017 Bird Report*



Hobby *Falco subbuteo* adult N Lincolnshire Aug 26th 2017 © Graham Catley



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# THE LINCOLNSHIRE BIRD CLUB 2017 REPORT

## Welcome to the 2017 Lincolnshire Bird Report

On behalf of the Lincolnshire Bird Club (LBC) we are pleased to present our annual report on the birds of Lincolnshire. The publication of the Bird Report involves a huge amount of work, with many individuals involved in its publication. Thanks are due to the observers who submit records to LBC, the two bird recorders, John Clarkson and Phil Hyde, the Lincolnshire Bird Records Committee (LBRC), Roy Harvey and to Colin and Sheila Jennings for all the work undertaken in converting the raw data into the building blocks of the report. Colin Casey has changed the way raw data is organised into our Wildlife Recorder database which has radically improved our data management for the purpose of report writing and we are extremely grateful to him and Jack Levene of Wildlife Recorder for the work they have done. We are also grateful to John and Nicky Clarkson for proof reading this report.

## Contributing Authors

The LBC would like to thank all of the authors who volunteered their time to complete species write-ups or articles for the 2017 report:

Graham Catley	George Gregory	James Siddle
Andrew Chick	Chris Grimshaw	Bill Sterling
John Clarkson	Grahame Hopwood	Ben Ward
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## Photographers

LBC is very grateful to the following photographers for supplying images for the 2017 report. All images included in the report have been obtained in Lincolnshire during 2017 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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## Records and contributions

The Lincolnshire Bird Report is an annual publication of records, articles and photographs relating to all aspects of Lincolnshire ornithology. 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.

## Submissions of Records

All observers are encouraged to submit records on a regular, at least 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, unless individuals ask us to omit their names.

There are several ways of submitting records to LBC, and below we list some of the best. Please remember that, as a small, volunteer-run organisation, we are unable to monitor and extract records from the many personal blogs and similar online sources that now exist. Your records are valuable, so please make sure that they are sent somewhere secure and accessible.

**Twitter:** For short messages, to get the news out to others, you can tweet @lincsbirding.

**LBC Forum:** For LBC members, you can post sightings of what you have seen, where and when you saw them, on our forum (with an image if you have one). Go to the LBC website [www.lincsbirdclub.co.uk](http://www.lincsbirdclub.co.uk), log in and follow the links to the forum.

**LBC Template:** Twitter and Forum records have to be transferred to the LBC database, which takes a lot of time. Submitting records using the LBC Excel spreadsheet template saves a lot of that work. You can either fill records into the spreadsheet yourself or export data into the spreadsheet from your recording software package, and email it to [info@lincsbirdclub.co.uk](mailto:info@lincsbirdclub.co.uk). Download the template from [www.lincsbirdclub.co.uk/site/media/LBC\\_Template\\_import.zip](http://www.lincsbirdclub.co.uk/site/media/LBC_Template_import.zip).

**BirdTrack:** Many birders are now using BirdTrack ([www.bto.org/birdtrack](http://www.bto.org/birdtrack)) to maintain their personal records online. All such records (barring confidential ones) for Lincolnshire are passed to us 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. Please ensure your BirdTrack sites have a clear geographic place name in them or we cannot use the data. Site names like “Home”, “Patch” or “A52” are unusable.

### National Rarities

Nationally rare birds are indicated as such by the identifier **BBRC** (British Birds Rarities Committee) after the species name in the systematic list in this report. Consideration of records of these is by the BBRC and submission of details should be made direct to BBRC at [www.bbrc.org.uk](http://www.bbrc.org.uk). Records of all such rarities will only be published in our report once assessed 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.

### County Rarities

Species or races 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, Steve Keightley, Nigel Lound, James Siddle, Andy Sims and Phil Hyde. The chairman of the 2016-17 LBRC is John Clarkson and Roy Harvey is secretary ([roy.harvey100@btinternet.com](mailto:roy.harvey100@btinternet.com)). Details and descriptions of LBRC species can be submitted by emailing them to the LBRC secretary or using the online form (visit [www.lincsbirdclub.co.uk/site/index.php/sightings](http://www.lincsbirdclub.co.uk/site/index.php/sightings) and click on the green ‘Submit a record’ button). 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. For further information on the treatment of county rarities, please contact one of the county recorders.

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### 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](mailto:charlie.barnes@glnp.org.uk).



**GLNP**  
GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE  
NATURE PARTNERSHIP

## **Data Sources used in the 2017 Bird Report**

LBC offers their thanks to the following individuals and organizations for supplying and letting us use their data in the 2017 bird report. Apologies to anyone we have missed off the list.

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

**BirdGuides Data.** Data supplied by BirdGuides Ltd has been used in the production of the 2017 bird report. Further details can be found at [www.birdguides.com/](http://www.birdguides.com/).

**BTO BBS Data.** Scott Mayson, the National Organiser of the Breeding Birds Survey, for providing Lincolnshire specific BBS data. The BBS is run by the British Trust for Ornithology 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).

**BTO BirdTrack Data.** Data supplied by BirdTrack has been used in the production of the 2017 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 [www.birdtrack.net](http://www.birdtrack.net).

**BTO Heronry Data.** LBC is grateful to Barrie Wilkinson, our county organiser, 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.

**BTO WeBS Data.** Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) data are used; kindly made available by the WeBS partnership, 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 statutory nature conservation bodies: Natural England, Natural Resources Wales and Scottish Natural Heritage and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland) 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](mailto:webs@bto.org)).

**BTO Woodcock Survey.** Greg Conway, at BTO, for the 2017 results of the BTO/Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust Woodcock monitoring survey.

**eBird.** Data supplied by eBird has been used in the in the publication of the 2017 bird report. Further details can be found at [www.ebird.org/](http://www.ebird.org/)

**Forest Enterprise.** For permission to use data collected on the heathland recreation project in Laughton Forest by Graham Catley, on behalf of Forest Enterprise.

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

**Gibraltar Point Dataset.** Kev Wilson and Richard Doan for supplying data from Gibraltar Point NNR and Gibraltar Point Bird Observatory, and for answering queries about records.

**Grimsby Areas Members Group.** Bill Sterling for submitting data from the Grimsby Areas Members Group.

**Kestrel, Barn Owl and Little Owl Data.** Alan Ball and Bob Sheppard for supplying data from their extensive ringing project in 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 bedrock for this report. At the end of each month they produce a spreadsheet that contains all of the bird records for that month. We are grateful to Chris Grimshaw and Carl Annall for helping Colin and Sheila with data input. Colin Casey has been assisting the Jennings's by making improvements to the operation of the LBC records' database.

**LBC website:** A major revision of the LBC website ([www.lincsbirdclub.co.uk](http://www.lincsbirdclub.co.uk)) was made during 2017, with work on it continuing. The website contains a section summarising the status of all bird species recorded in Lincolnshire (the Lincs List); this section is being co-ordinated by Phil Hyde.

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

**Middleton Ecological Consultants.** Thanks to Peter Middleton for a copy of the survey report of Nightjars on Crowle Moors.

**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](mailto:graham.catley@btopenworld.com) or via his website at <http://pewit.blogspot.com/>

**Ringing Data.** The Online BTO Ringing Report, 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.

**RSPB.** For supplying data from their reserves at Frampton Marsh, Freiston Shore, Read's Island and Tetney Marsh. We are especially grateful to Anthony Bentley and Toby Collett for resolving queries concerning the Wash reserves.

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

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

*Andrew Chick and Phil Espin, February 2019*



# Review of the Year 2017

## Summary

A total of 266 species was noted in the county in 2017 compared to 268 in 2016 (excluding the record in 2016 of a potential Stejneger's Stonechat).

The year began with two showy rarities – a **Bluethroat** and a **White-billed Diver** – but overall in terms of rare and scarce birds it was not a classic year. In addition to the highlights below, the first **Purple Heron** for six years and a well-watched **White-rumped Sandpiper** in the autumn were notable.

- Mandt's Black Guillemot – possibly the 1st British record of this high Arctic race if accepted
- 3rd White-billed Diver
- 5th Marsh Sandpiper
- 7th Black Stork
- 11th Long-billed Dowitcher
- 12th Olive-backed Pipit
- 16th Caspian Tern
- 19th Alpine Swift

There were good numbers of **Bohemian Waxwings** in the first winter period (but none in the second half of the year). Migration highlights included the visible migration noted along the coast in late May and also in the autumn with large numbers of finches, particularly **Goldfinches**; there was also a good passage of **Common Swifts** and **Sand Martins** in summer and autumn respectively. In the autumn high numbers of **Yellow-browed Warblers** were noted and there was a very enjoyable influx of **Hawfinches**. Scarce waders were highlighted by good numbers of **Pectoral Sandpipers**, **Temminck's Stints** and **Red-necked Phalaropes**.

Of the breeding or wintering species there were worryingly low numbers of **Tree Pipits**, **Turtle Doves**, **Corn Buntings** and **Snow Buntings**.

Those species which were under-represented included only one **Wryneck**, singles of **Common Rosefinch** and **Icterine Warbler** and two **Red-Backed Shrikes** and two **Honey Buzzards**. Also on the low side was **Sooty Shearwater** with a paltry dozen birds noted. There were no records of **Golden Oriole** or **Barred Warbler**.

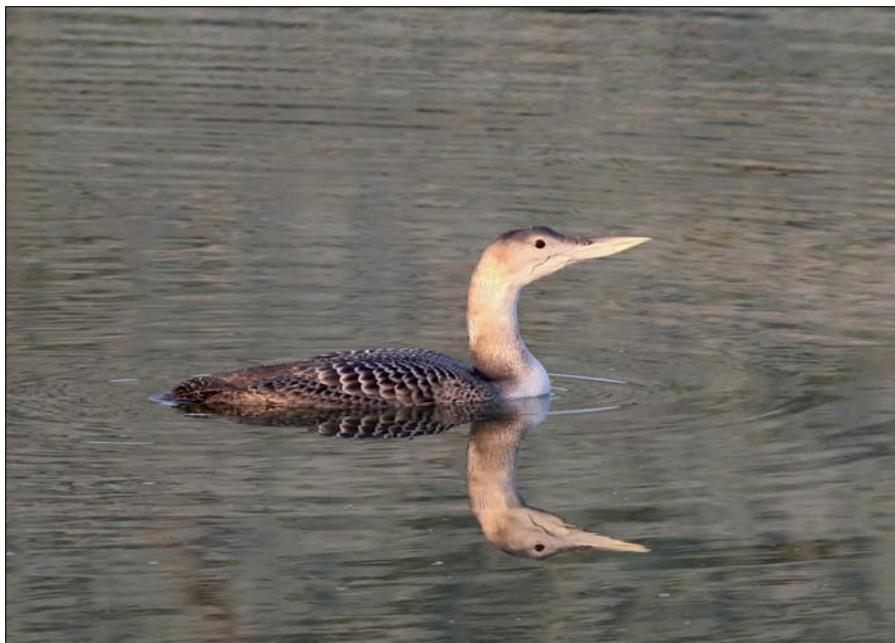
## January

Two **Tundra Bean Geese** at Winteringham on New Year's Day were the first of many sightings in the first three months of the year of this newly elevated species. A redhead **Smew** at Barton Pits the same day was one of only perhaps five birds seen during the year. Two **Iceland Gulls** at Carlton and Manby on the 2nd were the first of several records of this species. The **Western Swamphen** from 2016 was noted at Alkborough Flats on the 4th. In a good year for the species the first **Glaucous Gulls** were noted from the 4th – including two that day at Tetney. Up to five **Long-eared Owls** were regularly noted at Deeping Lakes during the month and into February. **Short-eared Owl** numbers were up on 2016 with the peak count being ten at Hawthorpe during January. Up to 22 **Shore Larks** were noted during the month at Donna Nook. The peak count of 31 **Snow Buntings** at Cleethorpes on the 14th was a reflection of another poor winter for this species.

Three wintering **Great Grey Shrikes** were noted during the month. There were numerous records of **Bohemian Waxwing** during the first winter period with 34 at Burton Stather the highest January count. An excellent count of 250 **Reed Buntings** was noted at Fockerby during the month.

The **Red-necked Grebe** noted off Donna nook on the 8th was the only record in the first half of the year. A **Great Northern Diver** off Gibraltar Point on the 12th was one of only six birds in the first half of the year. Good numbers of **Velvet Scoters** were along the coast between Trusthorpe and Saltfleetby peaking at 44 on the 13th. The total of 160 **Yellowhammers** at Mablethorpe on the 19th was the only three-figure count during the year.

Undoubtedly one of the highlights of the year had a distinct feeling of déjà vu about it when a stunning **White-billed Diver**, the county's third, was found on the River Witham from the 20th, frequenting the same stretch of river as the second county record 21 years earlier. Eight **Taiga Bean Geese** were at Thurlby on the 21st. A count of 24 **Red Kites** at Hawthorpe on the 24th was the peak count in the first winter period. A **Black Brant** at Gibraltar Point on the 27th was the first of several records during the year.



White-billed Diver *Gavia adamsii* River Witham near Woodhall Spa Jan 22nd 2017 © Paul Neale

## February

At Donna Nook a total of 32 **Lapland Buntings** was counted on the 5th. Two **Taiga Bean Geese** were at Willow Tree Fen on the 6th. A count of 700 **Skylarks** at Frampton on the 9th was more than double the next highest count during the year. A superb male **Bluthroat** was found at Willow Tree Fen on the 10th and stayed into March. A **Lesser Whitethroat** noted at Marston from the 14th was mooted as a possible *blythi*.

A **Shag** at Barton Pits from the 15th was the first of only nine county records in 2017. Next day a count of 11 **Bewick's Swans** at Wroot was the only double figure count during the year. A **Purple Sandpiper** at Donna Nook on the 17th was the first of at least ten birds this year – good by recent standards. A **Siberian Chiffchaff** was at Marston on the 18th. The **Rough-legged Buzzard** at Throckenholt from the 19th was surprisingly the only record for the year. **Bohemian Waxwing** reports were widespread with a peak of 80 in Scunthorpe from the 20th.

A **Cattle Egret** at Marton on the 22nd was the first of several sightings around the county of what has become an increasingly regular visitor in recent years. The first returning **Sand Martin** was a welcome sight at Deeping High Bank on the 28th.

## March

The month began with a **Goshawk** in Laughton Forest on the 1st. A **Dotterel** at Frampton on the 4th was an unusual record. A **Hooded Crow** at Donna Nook on the 10th was the first of seven records during the year. The first returning **Northern Wheatear** – always eagerly anticipated – was at Donna Nook on the 11th.

A **Green-winged Teal** was at Boultham Mere from the 12th when a flock of 700 **Common Scoters** was noted in the Wash at Terrington. The first returning **Osprey** was at Willow Tree Fen on the 17th. A migrant **Great Grey Shrike** was noted at Gibraltar point on the 21st. A **Hobby** at Marston on the 30th was over two weeks earlier than the modern mean arrival date for this species. On the same date the **Bluthroat** was last reported at Willow Tree Fen.

## April

The month began with a **Green-winged Teal** at Alkborough on April Fool's day. A **Siberian Chiffchaff** was at Gibraltar Point next day. On the 3rd a **White Stork** was at Frampton - the only other record for the year was at Gibraltar Point on the 24th. A **Bohemian Waxwing** at Grimsby on the 15th was the last of a good winter period and, indeed, the final record of the year.

The first returning **Turtle Dove** was noted at Claypole on the 19th in what was another concerning year for this species. The only **Wryneck** of the year was in a garden at Miningsby on the 20th. The month ended with strong south-easterly winds and a resulting good passage of **Arctic Terns** was noted including 232 at Chowder Ness on the 30th. The same movement also produced good numbers of **Black Terns** with 30 at Whisby the peak count.

## May

May was a productive month in the county. A male **Pied Flycatcher** at Gibraltar Point on the 4th was the first of five birds at this site during the month. On the 6th two separate **Red-rumped Swallows** were noted at Gibraltar Point and a **Wood Warbler** was seen briefly there that evening and ringed next day. Following this bird **Wood Warbler** records came from Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe on the 9th and there were two singles at Donna Nook. A **Yellow-browed Warbler** was in the East Dunes at Gibraltar Point on the 7th.

On the 8th **Dotterel** were noted at Horseshoe Point and Tetney with three at the latter site on the 10th when two were noted over Gibraltar Point. Spring passage was completed with two at Worlaby Top from the 13th: another poor spring for this species. A late **Shore Lark** was at Marshchapel on the 11th when a pair of **Black-winged Stilts** arrived to spend two days at Frampton. A **Pectoral Sandpiper** was at Frampton on the 12th and a **European Bee-Eater** was noted over Gibraltar Point the next day.



Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* Covenham Reservoir May 7th 2017 © Mark Johnson

A **Purple Heron** at Boultham Mere on the 14th was a very good find – the first in the county for six years. Also on the 14th the first of a dozen spring **Temminck's Stints** was noted, this bird being at Frampton Marsh – ten of the dozen birds were at Frampton with the only two away from this site being at Gibraltar Point on the 15th. A female **Montagu's Harrier** at Alkborough on the 20th was one of only two birds noted this year. A superb adult male **Red-footed Falcon** was at Tetney on the 21st.

The **European Bee-Eater** seen heading south following the coastal dunes at Anderby, in rather blue Mediterranean-like skies on the morning of the 23rd, was also heard calling as it passed over

Gibraltar Point later the same morning. A male **Red-footed Falcon** made its way across the New Saltmarsh at Gibraltar Point on the 25th. The first **Quail** was at Donna Nook on the 26th.

A **Honey Buzzard** was over Tetney on the 28th on a day of noteworthy visible migration in the county. It was a real red letter day at Gibraltar Point where a reserve record of 31 **Red Kites** headed south along with eight **Common Buzzards**, four **Hobbies**, good numbers of **Common Swifts** and, borrowed from Spurn, an **Alpine Swift** scything southward over the East Dunes. Also borrowed from Spurn was a first-summer male **Red-footed Falcon** which buzzed Mill Hill before hunting over the Old Saltmarsh and then heading out over the Wash and, in the early afternoon, a **Black Stork** circled high over the reserve (subject to BBRC acceptance). A **Common Crane** was also tracked from Tetney to Frampton via Skegness. A **Red-necked Phalarope** at Frampton on the 30th was the first of a record-breaking nine recorded during the year.

## June

Monitoring of breeding **Marsh Harriers** in North Lincolnshire highlighted a decline of almost a third since 2015. A **Corncrake** was noted calling in the Boston area for several weeks. **Common Swift** passage at Gibraltar Point was noteworthy on several dates during the month including 4990 south on the 22nd. Only three sites held breeding **Spotted Flycatchers** this year.

## July

The month began with a **Honey Buzzard** over Gibraltar Point noted for two days from the 1st. The first returning **Pectoral Sandpiper** was at Frampton from the 13th - the first of nine autumn records. A **Caspian Tern** was at Baston and Langtoft Pits on the 15th and 16th. During the month there were some good counts of **Common Scoter** – with counts over 900 at several sites and a peak of 965 at Tetney.

A highlight of the early autumn was a first-year **Black Stork** at Dunsby Fen on the 24th and 25th, the bird showing very well. The county's fifth **Marsh Sandpiper** at the high tide roost at Freiston Shore on the 25th was unfortunately a short stayer. Next day a juvenile **White-winged Black Tern** was noted on Pursuit Pit and Far Ings and this bird remained into August. A second year male **Montagu's Harrier** was noted at Worlaby Carrs on the 31st.

## August

The first returning **Pied Flycatcher** was at Gibraltar point on the 5th. The first **Sooty Shearwater**, off Huttoft on the 9th, was one of only a dozen birds noted this year. On the same date the first of four autumn **Sabine's Gulls**, an adult, was noted flying north past Gibraltar Point and the first two **Roseate Terns** of the year – the first of eight birds – were noted at Freiston Shore. A **Dotterel** was at Frampton on the 15th. **Willow Warbler** passage was not particularly noteworthy during the autumn with a peak of just 76 at Gibraltar Point on the 20th.

The all county total of 956 **Little Egrets** during August was a new county high. The only **Spotted Crake** of the year was noted at Frampton Marsh on the 21st. Next day an adult **White-rumped Sandpiper** made a brief appearance at the wader roost at Greenshank's Creek at Gibraltar Point. On the 26th some 10,000 **Sand Martins** were estimated at Frampton Marsh. A **White-rumped Sandpiper** at Humberston Fitties from the 30th proved to be a popular long stayer.

## September

On the 12th visible migration produced 4,418 **Meadow Pipits** at Gibraltar Point. Six **Long-tailed Skuas** off Gibraltar Point on the 13th represented a third of all birds noted during the autumn. A significant movement of **Great Skuas** occurred on the 14th with 170 noted at Huttoft and 65 off Gibraltar Point. A further notable movement over the sea at Gibraltar Point occurred on the 18th when ten **Puffins** were noted.

One of the highlights of the autumn was a long-staying **Long-billed Dowitcher** at Saltfleet from the 16th (having previously been seen at Spurn and remaining into November). It was another excellent year for **Yellow-browed Warblers** and the first of the autumn was noted at Gibraltar Point on the 16th in a variable northerly wind.

An early **Little Auk** was off Gibraltar Point on the 18th in what was ultimately a disappointing year for this species. On the 19th a **Red-backed Shrike** was briefly at Pye's Hall and was followed by an elusive but longer staying juvenile at Gibraltar Point next day. A **Common Rosefinch** was noted at Gibraltar Point on the 25th when five **Common Redstarts** were at Donna Nook – the highest count in yet another disappointing year for this species. A **Marsh Tit** at Frampton on the 26th was a notable coastal record. The same day the only **Wood Warbler** of the autumn was noted at Theddlethorpe St Helen.



A **Little Bunting** double occurred on the 27th with a bird trapped at Donna Nook and another at Rock Ridge at Gibraltar Point. On the 29th there were 230 **Goldcrests** counted at Gibraltar Point – the highest count of the year. The next day the same site, in light south-westerly winds, recorded 1827 **Linnets** heading south along with 2804 **Goldfinches** and 443 **Reed Buntings**.



Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus* Saltfleet Haven Sep 16th 2017 © Mark Johnson

## October

Despite light westerly winds during the month both common and some scarce migrants still arrived along the coast. On the 9th there were 180 **Robins** at Gibraltar Point and a **Great Grey Shrike** was at Alkborough on the 10th. On the 17th the only **Leach's Petrel** of the year remarkably flew over the reserve at Frampton Marsh. A significant influx of **Redwings** on the 19th included 8,000 at Crook bank and 2497 at Gibraltar Point. A feature from the 20th was the county enjoying part of a nationwide influx of **Hawfinches**. The first appeared at Gibraltar Point and the monthly peak was 11 there on the 20th.

A **Snow Goose** went south over Saltfleetby St Peter on the morning of the 20th and also on the same day an impressive 18,100 **Pink-footed Geese** were noted in the Read's Island area. On the 19th there were 300 **Lesser Redpolls** at Crook Bank. South-westerlies were the prevalent wind direction during this period and produced some good visible migration at Gibraltar Point including 372 **Siskins** on the 18th, an excellent 3,696 **Goldfinches** on the 19th and 347 **Skylarks** south on the 23rd along with 184 **Rock Pipits**, 260 **Chaffinches** and 67 **Bramblings**. It was certainly a joy to watch the large numbers of larks, pipits, finches and other migrants heading down the coastal strip at Gibraltar Point during the month – 25,000 **Goldfinches** were noted in October alone!

On the 25th a double rare pipit day was had at Gibraltar Point - a **Richard's Pipit** was initially in the East Dunes before it eventually headed south and an **Olive-backed Pipit** was found in the cycle track hedge in the afternoon. The **Siberian Chiffchaff** at Gibraltar Point on the 27th was the first of only three during the autumn. **Pomarine Skua** movement at the end of the month, in strong northerlies, peaked with 15 off Gibraltar Point on the 29th and 19 on the next day at Freiston Shore.

## November

A **Grey Phalarope** at Witham Mouth on the 7th was the only one noted this year. On the same day a **Great Grey Shrike** was in the same area. One of the highlights of the month was a **Red-necked Phalarope** found at Covenham on the 10th which remained in situ to the 6th December, becoming the latest ever recorded in the county. Also on the 10th a **Richard's Pipit** was at the Seacroft end of Gibraltar Point. On the 12th eight **Pomarine Skuas** were off Gibraltar Point. On the 19th a **Glossy Ibis** was at Frampton – perhaps surprisingly the only record during the year. A **Pectoral Sandpiper** at Alkborough Flats from the 24th-25th was the latest county record. Among the small numbers of **Shore Larks** recorded during the month a bird at Covenham on the 22nd was noteworthy.

On the 24th the 16 **Woodcocks** noted at Gibraltar Point represented the highest count of the autumn. At Hawthorpe there were 25 **Red Kites** on the 26th. The only **Greenland White-fronted Goose** of the year was near Crowle from the 29th.



European Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola* Rimac Nov 17th 2017 © Paul Coombes

## December

The 1,500 **Fieldfares** at Frampton Marsh on the 5th was the highest count of the year. Perhaps the most significant record during the month was a popular **Black Guillemot** at Witham Mouth from the 7th which showed characteristics of the northern race *mandtii* - a potential British first of this high arctic race. Many observers travelled to enjoy this bird despite the snow and bitter conditions. The 21 **Hawfinches** at Broughton on the 31st represented the highest count of the year.

# SYSTEMATIC LIST 2017

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## Key to abbreviations:

**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.

**BoCC4** - Birds of Conservation Concern 4: Eaton M.A., Aebischer N.J., Brown A.F., Hearn R.D., Lock L., Musgrove A.J., Noble D.G., Stroud D.A. and Gregory R.D. (2015) Birds of Conservation Concern 4: the population status of birds in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. *British Birds* 108: 7080746.

Available online at [britishbirds.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/BoCC4.pdf](http://britishbirds.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/BoCC4.pdf)

BB	British Birds
BBRC	British Birds Rarities Committee
BBS	Breeding Bird Survey
BTO	British Trust for Ornithology
CP	Country Park
GC	Golf Course
GP	Gravel Pit(s)
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
NNR	National Nature Reserve
NR	Nature Reserve
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SQ	Sand Quarry
STW	Sewage Treatment Works
WeBS	Wetland Bird Survey
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 Lincolnshire Bird Club (LBC) database plus that from Gibraltar Point Bird Observatory (GPBO) and Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (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, a joint scheme of the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), RSPB and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) (the last on behalf of the statutory nature conservation bodies: Natural England, Natural Resources Wales and Scottish Natural Heritage and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland) 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](mailto:webs@bto.org)). Where a site's counts comprise solely WeBS data, an asterisk marks the site name. 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.

No WeBS counts are used alone, all are incorporated with LBC data.

### **BBS data**

The BTO kindly supplies the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) data. The BBS is run by the BTO and is jointly funded by the BTO, the 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 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. Lincolnshire indices are available for only a limited number of species, for which adequate county data are available. We also show a few charts illustrating changes in numbers counted on BBS squares for other, less common, species. It should be stressed that these are less reliable as guides to population trends than the indices calculated by the BTO, but they may provide an indication of how species are faring. They show the average number of individuals of a species counted in each BBS square in the county, and the percentage of squares in which that species occurred each year. 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 recovery data included in either a summary table or as additional comments 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 a 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 continue to take 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. Information is actively sought by LBRC when possible. 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.

### **Website**

The recently revised Lincolnshire Bird Club website includes a section describing the status of species in the county. Brief summaries are available to all but only LBC members can see more detailed information (please join!). Population trends and seasonal patterns of occurrence are described, with detailed listing of the records of the rarest species. This can be found at:

<https://lincsbirdclub.co.uk/site/index.php/information/the-lincs-list>

Information on how to submit records to LBC are provided at:

<https://lincsbirdclub.co.uk/site/index.php/sightings>

### **Conservation status**

The species header indicates whether the species/sub-species is in the Red, Amber or Green List of the BOCC4 ([britishbirds.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/BoCC4.pdf](http://britishbirds.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/BoCC4.pdf)).



Those in the 'Red List' are 'Globally Threatened'. Those in the 'Amber List' are those with an unfavourable conservation status in Europe and those on the 'Green List' are those that don't meet the criteria for inclusion in the Red or Green Lists (see BoCC4 for further definition of these terms).

WeBS thresholds for international or national (Great Britain) importance are given for all species where numbers approach, match or exceed one or more thresholds. International importance signifies that 1% of the birds use a particular flyway or which regularly or site during their annual cycle.

### Brent Goose *Branta bernicla* □

Winter visitor. Three distinct races occur. Amber List (nominate and *hrota*). WeBS threshold for international importance 2400 and national importance 910 (nominate).

### Black Brant *B.b.nigricans*

Former vagrant, first seen in 1982 with just three records to 1991. Very scarce but annual in small numbers, with Dark-bellied flocks. **LBRC**

In the early part of the year there was one at Gibraltar Point on Jan 27th (KMW, RDn) and probably the same bird on Feb 20th (WPB) and at Frampton Marsh RSPB on Jan 29th (GH) with another one at Donna Nook on the 31st (SL). One was at Frampton Marsh RSPB on Mar 12th and 23rd (PS) and one at Tetney Marsh was noted on Apr 7th (CA, DKW), 23rd (CA) and May 10th (WPB). At the end of the year there were single birds at Donna Nook on Nov 13th (SL) and (a possible hybrid) at Gibraltar Point on Nov 14th (GPBO).

### Dark-bellied Brent Goose *B.b. bernicla*

Very common coastal winter visitor Sep-May, mainly to The Wash and outer Humber. Scarce but regular in summer, especially on The Wash. Occasional inland.

Site Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Frampton Marsh	4000	4000	3000	2200	1000	5	5	5	300	900	1200	3500
Freiston Shore	400	1200	664	2100	70	1	10	5	13	1000	340	60
Witham Mouth	3500	750	150	1000	850	-	2	2	24	800	1000	800
Gibraltar Point	950	1200	400	120	130	1	1	-	95	400	552	144
Butterwick	227	112	43	33	22	3	-	-	27	53	112	189
Wrangle	2760	700	-	150	154	1	-	-	86	660	570	569
Donna Nook	1100	1200	280	6	170	-	-	-	46	44	830	530
Grainthorpe	1300	565	511	467	72	-	-	-	-	114	420	530
Tetney	600	300	750	156	170	-	-	-	284	240	98	-
Saltfleetby Theddlethorpe	326	274	232	-	2	-	-	-	7	11	466	30
Marshchapel	180	240	23	32	170	-	-	-	48	334	107	-

The table shows all sites that recorded birds in eight or more months and additionally includes all peak counts. Frampton Marsh held the largest concentration with numerous counts of over 3500 birds during both winter periods and with birds recorded on site during every month of the year. A count of c1000 on May 13th indicates just how late significant numbers of birds linger before their spring migration north. Away from tabulated sites peak counts in the first winter period included 1100 at Saltfleet on Jan 14th, 554 at Wainfleet on Feb 12th, 2760 at Wrangle on Jan 17th, 950 at Welland Marsh on Mar 12th and 1076 at Terrington on Jan 14th. In the second winter period there were 679 at Wainfleet on Nov 27th, 1920 at Kirton Marsh on Dec 9th, 570 at Wrangle on Nov 6th, 1100 at Welland Marsh on Nov 5th and 684 at Terrington on Nov 8th. There were just three inland records with singles at Alkborough Flats on Mar 16th, South Kyme on Mar 31st and at Toft Newton Res from Nov 25th-Dec 12th.

### Pale-bellied Brent Goose *B.b. hrota*

Scarce coastal winter visitor, in variable numbers.

Site Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Donna Nook	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	1
Gibraltar Point	5	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	3	-
Frampton Marsh	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	1	1	2	-

The table shows all sites that recorded birds in four or more months. The peak count of the year was five birds at Gibraltar Point on Jan 27th and five at Huttoft on Sep 25th. Away from tabulated

sites two birds were present at Tetney from Jan 26th-28th with singles nearby at Saltfleetby Theddlethorpe on Feb 2nd and Nov 23rd. A single flew west at Barton Pits on Nov 11th and the last record of the year was a single bird at Witham Mouth on Dec 12th.

### 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.

The table below shows the top ten sites holding a count of 150 or more birds in any month of the year. Overall peak counts were down around 12% on 2016. The species was found in 8% of BBS squares (2016 15%) with an average of 4.1 birds per occupied square (2016 3.3).

Site Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe	86	172	69	47	23	29	-	80	420	150	256	250
Gibraltar Point	20	50	30	16	50	40	40	400	420	100	300	22
Reads Island	1	-	63	15	67	405	125	90	75	100	-	50
Freiston Shore	400	1	4	1	3	-	9	-	-	130	95	-
Grimsthorpe	232	-	113	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	252	380
Frampton Marsh	100	25	7	20	30	15	140	260	45	30	60	325
Saltfleet	70	-	-	7	2	-	-	-	-	2	216	268
Witham Mouth	-	-	-	-	-	-	250	24	-	-	-	-
Fiskerton	89	20	6	2	-	1	-	-	-	200	-	-
Risesholme	-	104	23	8	-	-	-	-	55	156	57	41



Barnacle Geese *Branta leucopsis* Alkborough Flats Jan 30th 2017 © Graham Catley

### Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*



Fairly common localised feral population. Has bred as a feral bird since the late 1980s, with a large population established on the Humber (most nesting in Yorkshire). Wild birds are scarce but erratic winter visitors, mainly to the coast. Amber listed.

Site Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alkborough Flats	1700	660	1460	1	40	-	-	80	370	43	-	330
Whitton	200	1700	91	109	65	22	59	100	700	40	50	-
Cleethorpes	110	115	-	8	40	46	-	-	140	-	100	100
Frampton Marsh	-	5	1	1	2	5	2	5	4	3	25	3

The table shows all sites where this species was recorded in eight or more months during the year. The population in the upper Humber continues to increase with peak counts of 1700 recorded at

Alkborough Flats on Jan 29th and Whitton on Feb 24th with nearby counts of 290 at Fockerby on Aug 30th and 121 at Tetney on Feb 22nd being the only other counts of note. A regular meta-population occurs within the Cleethorpes area that regularly commutes between the Boating Lake and the sea front at Pleasure Island with a peak count of 140 recorded on Sep 5th. Single inland birds recorded during the year were at Covenham Reservoir on Jan 22nd, Baston Fen from Feb 12th-26th, Crowland Feb on 22nd, Deeping St James on Mar 5th and Apr 7th, Kirton in Lindsey on Mar 12th, Baston on Sep 23rd and Denton Reservoir on Oct 2nd.

The number of feral birds in the UK blurs the status of Barnacle Geese in the county, but it should be borne in mind that not all birds even in a feral flock are necessarily of feral origin. Wild birds may travel with these flocks. Birds in the regular wintering flock at Hornsea, for example, were of wild origin. One present there 21st Oct-2nd Nov 1980 had been ringed in Spitzbergen as an adult on 23rd Jul 1977, and another present from 23rd Dec 2008-23rd Jan 2009 had a yellow darvic ring (ACA) and was originally ringed as a 1st year, also in Svalbard. The flock of 43 that flew west at Alkborough Flats on Oct 8th were considered to be wild and arrived at the same time as a major arrival of Spitzbergen geese in the north-east.

### Greylag Goose *Anser anser* □

The nominate form is a fairly common but localised feral resident and has bred since the late 1980s, with a large population now established on the Humber (most nesting in Yorkshire). Wild birds from the Scottish population are likely to be scarce but erratic winter visitors mainly to the coast but are difficult to detect. Icelandic and northern European/Russian birds may also occur but are likewise difficult to detect. Amber listed (nominate form).

The table below shows the top ten sites holding counts of 490 or more birds in any month of the year apart from a report of 2000 birds at Winterton on Jan 8th, the only report from that site of the year. The species was found in 37% of BBS squares (2016 37%) with an average of 4.7 birds per occupied square (2016 5.4).

Site Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Woodhall Spa	8	30	18	37	16	50	17	2	1500	300	10	1
Alkborough Flats	138	92	100	35	360	1	400	900	500	892	472	320
Messingham	800	78	12	38	200	31	65	42	34	17	44	9
Carlton & Manby												
Washlands	230	-	-	2	3	-	230	565	722	2	-	1
Marston	-	223	-	13	3	2	1	30	-	680	165	400
RAF Woodhall Spa LWT	90	90	47	44	1	380	-	672	-	-	-	-
Langtoft	650	80	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	300	74
Denton	-	-	-	6	-	12	23	-	589	21	-	-
Cleethorpes	1	50	-	10	70	505	-	-	-	-	-	30
Baston	35	472	4	14	1	-	200	-	490	-	-	3

### Taiga Bean Goose *Anser fabalis* □

Rare winter visitor, with occasional larger influxes. Red List. WeBS threshold for national importance: 4. LBRC.

Tundra Bean Goose *Anser serrirostris* and Taiga Bean Goose *Anser fabalis* are now treated as separate species. We hope that observers seeing Bean Geese will make every effort to determine which species they belong to. However, in most instances we are likely to assume that those not specifically identified are Tundra Bean Geese. Red List.

Following a blank year for this recently elevated species there were just one record of eight at Thurlby Pits on Jan 21st (DMJ).

### Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus* □

A very common winter visitor during Sep-Apr, mainly to the Humber and The Wash, but there are many coastal and inland movements. A few injured birds remain in summer. Amber Listed.

WeBS threshold for international importance: 3500. WeBS threshold for national importance: 3600.

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Whitton	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	18100	-	700
Reads Island	2000	1500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12000	4380	120
Gedney Marsh	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3000	-	-

Alkborough Flats	45	-	3	21	3	-	-	-	34	2000	2500	125
Goxhill	2500	-	1000	-	-	-	-	-	-	442	90	2500
East Halton	1500	-	400	-	-	-	-	-	30	515	90	2500
Gibraltar Point	550	300	180	1	2	1	1	1	248	1428	1640	300
Wrangle	1370	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Saltfleetby Theddlethorpe	600	250	26	-	1	-	-	-	230	867	1100	1100
Bonby	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1000	-	-
Winteringham	800	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Barton upon Humber	800	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
South Ferriby	800	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Barton Pits	677	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	500	1	-	1
East Keal	80	60	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	600	-	-
Crowle	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	600	-
Frampton Marsh	300	250	-	1	1	-	7	-	40	250	550	400
Donna Nook	14	550	200	6	-	-	-	-	409	270	280	-
Tetney	520	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	280	-	-	-
Saltfleetby St Clement	13	170	-	-	-	-	-	-	150	500	300	-
Nocton	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	500	-

The table includes all locations at which counts of 500 or more were made regularly. Early in the year, the highest counts were on The Humber with 2500 on Jan 14th and 21st. Numbers diminished through Feb-Mar, though there were still 1000 at Goxhill on Mar 11th, and by Apr virtually all birds had departed with a maximum of just 21 at Alkborough Flats on Apr 15th with three remaining until May 7th. One or two birds remained on The Wash during May-Aug, mainly from Frampton Marsh and Gibraltar Point presumed to involve injured birds.

The first autumn arrivals were in early Sep, with six at Horkstow on 4th followed by 39 at Gibraltar Point and 18 at Tetney, both on Sep 12th, and by the end of the month flocks in the low 100s had been seen at around a dozen sites, the largest being one of 500 on 17th at Barton Pits. Very large numbers then arrived on the Humber during Oct with 12000 at Read's Island on 15th increasing to a combined total of 18,100 at the Read's Island and Whitton Sands roost sites on 20th, close to the record count of 18430 in 2015. Nov maxima were somewhat lower as birds dispersed but flocks of up to 800 persisted across the county and there was a Nov peak of 4380 at Read's Island on Nov 17th. Somewhat lower numbers were recorded in Dec with a peak of 2500 at Goxhill Haven-East Halton on Dec 10th.

For detailed, up to date satellite tagging information on the movement of these geese within the UK and beyond see <https://sites.google.com/view/telemetry/pinkfeet-201718?authuser=0>.



Pink-footed Geese *Anser brachyrhynchus* Alkborough Flats Nov 10th 2017 © Graham Catley



### Tundra Bean Goose *Anser serrirostris*



Scarce winter visitor, mainly coastal, in variable numbers. Amber list. WeBS threshold for national importance: 3. LBRC.

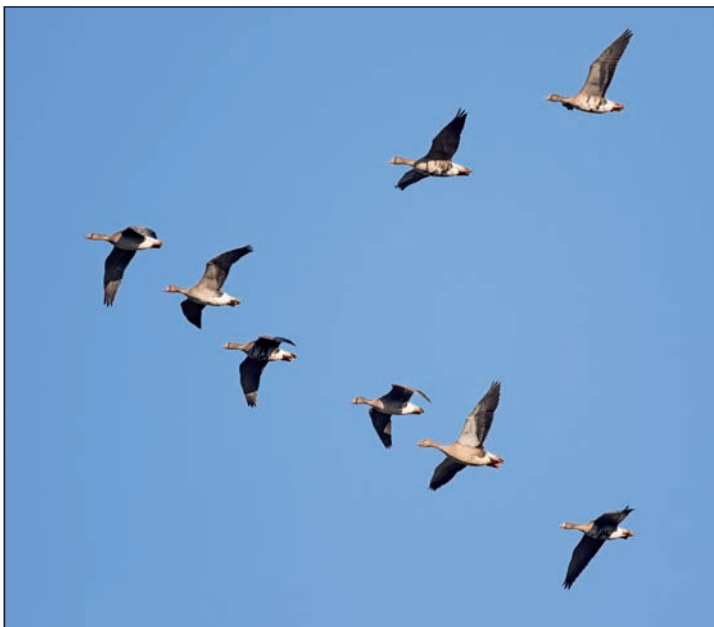
Tundra Bean Goose and Taiga Bean Goose *Anser fabalis* are now treated as separate species. We hope that observers seeing Bean Geese will make every effort to determine which species they belong to. However, in most instances we are likely to assume that those not specifically identified are Tundra Bean Geese.

This was an exceptional year for this species with many sightings in the first two months. In the north of the county there were two at Winteringham on Jan 1st that were still there on the 8th and one at Alkborough Flats on Jan 2nd. These birds to the west of Barton increased to 10 on Jan 18th and were also seen at South Ferriby and, presumably part of the same herd, eight were at Alkborough Flats on the 29th. To the east of Barton there were 10 at East Halton on Jan 15th, eight at New Holland on the 21st and seven at Goxhill on the 23rd, again all part of a mobile herd. Elsewhere in Jan, four were at Tetney on the 2nd, one at Baston on the 4th, one at Cleethorpes on the 8th, two at Gibraltar Point from the 10th-14th with one remaining to the 16th, one at Tetney on the 21st, 26th and 28th and three at Donna Nook on the 25th with two the following day and one staying until the Feb 4th. Also in Feb up to nine birds were with a mobile, mixed herd of geese seen at Skidbrooke, Theddlethorpe and Saltfleetby St Clement from Feb 2nd-10th. Two were at Willow Tree Fen on Feb 6th with one staying until the 12th. One was at Spalding from Feb 7th-13th and one was at Baston on the 11th and from 25th-26th. One was in the Croft/Gibraltar Point area from the 14th-16th and nine were again seen at Alkborough Flats on the 21st. The final bird of the early part of the year was at Baston on Mar 30th. At the end of the year there was one at Donna Nook on Oct 9th, one at Gibraltar Point Oct 14th with two there the following day, one again at Donna Nook on Oct 21st, three at Gibraltar Point on Nov 1st and finally one at Crowle on Nov 29th.

### Greater White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*



Scarce winter visitor Sep-Apr, occasionally fairly common. Two distinct races occur. Red List (both forms). WeBS threshold for national importance: 24 (*albifrons*).



Greater White-fronted *Anser albifrons* and Greylag Geese *Anser anser* Goxhill Marsh Jan 14th 2017  
© Graham Catley

### Greenland White-fronted Goose *A.a. flavirostris*

Very rare or scarce winter visitor. **LBRC.**

There was just one record of this sub-species, a single bird with Pink-footed Geese in fields between Crowle and Eastoft on Nov 29th-30th.

### Eurasian White-fronted Goose *A.a. albifrons*

Scarce winter visitor, mostly Nov-Mar, numbers variable between years.

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar
Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR	151	2	2
Covenham Reservoir	135	-	-
Goxhill Haven - East Halton Skitter	107	-	90
Gibraltar Point	39	104	-
Frampton Marsh	38	45	5
Spalding	3	30	-
Willow Tree Fen	5	30	-
Great Carlton	-	28	-
Alkborough Flats	23	-	-
Huttoft	21	-	-
Saltfleetby St Clement	-	17	-
Donna Nook	10	12	-
Skidbrooke	-	12	-
Freiston Shore	10	-	-

Last year, 2016, saw an unprecedented number of this species in the county with good numbers still present in Dec. These birds continued to over-winter into 2017 with flock of more than 100 at three sites. A flock of 140 was between Saltfleetby All Saints and Great Carlton on Jan 4th and the same flock roosted at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR SW and flew inland to feed near Covenham Reservoir on Jan 25th, numbering up to 151 birds. Up to 107 were in the Goxhill Marsh-East Halton Skitter area in Jan with 90 lingering there until Mar 12th. This was the last big flock of the winter as birds departed and a single bird appeared at Boultham Mere on Mar 13th and stayed until Apr 27th; it was last seen flying over Whisby NR with Greylags on Apr 30th. The autumn was the veritable damp squib for this species with two at Frampton Marsh on Sep 29th, one at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Oct 10th, eight flew north-west over Gibraltar Point on Oct 20th and the final record was of two at Frampton Marsh on Dec 29th.

### Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Fairly common resident and partial migrant.

The table below shows the top ten sites holding maximum counts of 89 or more birds in any month of the year. The species was found in 17% of BBS squares (2016 16%) with an average of 5.9 birds per occupied square (2016 4.8).

Site Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Deeping St James	12	6	12	40	24	47	184	170	49	27	6	67
Cowbit	100	32	104	83	77	-	14	9	-	159	148	130
Spalding	104	36	114	142	77	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bassingham	47	100	2	29	68	122	-	-	-	-	-	5
Crowland	120	120	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	60	-	50
Branston Booths	113	98	105	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bardney	29	76	75	70	29	60	65	83	98	45	-	8
Willow Tree Fen	50	36	94	14	21	8	1	-	8	8	6	7
Pinchbeck	66	83	92	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	42	56
Deeping St Nicholas	89	30	-	-	-	-	4	2	-	-	-	-

### Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus bewickii*



Scarce passage migrant and very scarce winter visitor, mainly Oct-Mar, exceptional in summer. Amber List. WeBS threshold for national importance: 70.

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
Pinchbeck Common-Pode Hole	6	-	-	-	-	-
Wroot	8	11	6	-	-	-
Frampton Marsh-Wyberton	9	2	2	-	-	1

Crowland-Deeping High Bank	3	7	-	-	-	-
Bardney-Branston Booths-Nocton	4	5	4	-	-	-
Gibraltar Point	-	-	-	-	-	4

This year was a very poor one for this species: just one double figure count in the entire year; reports received from six sites/geographical areas; most presence in the first quarter. The counts recorded in Jan most probably relate to birds wintering in these areas from Nov-Dec 2016 although in much smaller numbers. The eleven at Wroot on Feb 12th-16th was the highest count of 2017 and six remained there until Mar 13th, the last record in the first quarter of the year.

There were hardly any records to report in the last quarter of the year – four at Gibraltar Point on Dec 2nd and one there on Dec 31st were the only ones. This is not a complete surprise as the UK wintering population has been in decline since the early 1990s with the BTO WeBS index showing a 77% decline in numbers between 1990/1 and 2015/16, a trend in line with the overall decrease in the entire north-western European wintering population.



Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus* New Holland Jan 2nd 2018 © Graham Catley

### Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus* ■

Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor, with a notable increase since the late 1990s. Occurs mainly Oct-Apr, exceptional in summer. Amber List. WeBS threshold for international importance: 270. WeBS threshold for national importance: 110.

Coastal	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Donna Nook	6	6	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	7
Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe	8	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	30	5	6
Huttoft	-	-	33	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	64	96
Gibraltar Point	7	13	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	180	235	1
Freiston Shore	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	19	22	-
Frampton Marsh	92	72	72	4	1	5	1	1	2	45	52	72
Upper Humber												
Alkborough Flats	2	-	23	-	-	-	-	-	-	23	11	9
Inland												
Covenham Reservoir	-	-	32	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	-
Toft next Newton	-	-	-	5	1	-	-	-	-	18	4	-
Fiskerton	-	1	100	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	-

Nocton	45	-	21	-	-	-	-	-	-	21	58	87
Bardney	48	54	57	1	-	-	-	-	-	34	-	46
Whisby NR	-	-	10	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	6	-
Boultham Mere	-	-	22	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	9	5
Willow Tree Fen	13	17	180	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11
Pinchbeck	10	21	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
Crowland	74	65	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
Baston	-	1	35	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Tabulated sites include locations with counts in five or more months and/or peak counts, although it is possible that some records will relate to birds on passage or a combination of birds present and on passage. In the first winter period peak counts at traditional overwintering sites included 57 at Bardney on Mar 12th, 33 at Huttoft on Mar 13th, 180 at Willow Tree Fen on Mar 15th and 21 at Nocton on Mar 19th. At Frampton Marsh the overwintering herd at College Farm roosted overnight on the RSPB reserve returning early morning with a peak of 72 on Mar 18th; an identical peak count was recorded on Dec 9th during the second winter period. A single bird at Frampton remained throughout the year and was regularly recorded throughout 2017, as was an inland bird that summered at Thurlby Pit and was recorded nearby at Whisby NR on May 20th and Sept 16th. Return passage in spring occurred from mid-Mar to early Apr with autumn migration concentrated from Oct 4th to the end of the month that included a strong passage at Gibraltar Point of 101 on Oct 27th. In the second winter period peak counts were nine at Alkborough Flats on Dec 11th, 12 at Fockerby on Nov 24th, 96 at Huttoft on Dec 29th, nine at Boultham Mere on Nov 14th, 46 at Bardney on Dec 10th and 87 at Nocton on Dec 20th.



Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus* Frampton Marsh Nov 6th 2017 © Neil Smith

### Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

A scarce feral resident. Numbers have so far been concentrated in the Tattershall/Kirkby on Bain area but recent increases have seen a spread of records, including breeding, more widely across the county. **RBBP**

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Tattershall Thorpe/												
RAF Woodhall LWT	4	40	2	17	12	10	-	8	42	-	-	-
Kirkby on Bain	4	4	5	7	12	16	29	18	19	5	4	2
R. Witham, Woodhall Spa	2	4	6	13	4	6	2	13	37	6	-	-
Frampton Marsh	2	2	5	9	9	5	2	2	2	-	-	-
Whisby NR	4	3	4	2	2	2	4	3	7	3	3	3
Boultham Mere	6	5	3	2	2	-	-	2	5	3	3	2
Messingham	2	-	2	2	6	5	4	4	3	4	5	3

This year 37 sites reported the presence of Egyptian Geese; this species' stronghold is in the Kirkby-Tattershall-Woodhall Spa area where there is likely to have been overlap between the tabulated counts. At this inland site complex, monthly maxima were somewhat higher than in the two previous years. The highest count of the first quarter was 40 on Feb 22nd at the RAF Woodhall Spa LWT reserve (Tattershall Thorpe) and this probably represents the total number for the Kirkby-Tattershall-Woodhall Spa area, as numbers elsewhere in the locality were negligible.

Breeding was proven at RAF Woodhall LWT reserve where an adult with four juveniles was seen on Apr 22nd; at Frampton Marsh, an adult with seven goslings on Apr 22nd; at Messingham SQ, a pair with four juveniles on May 13th. Autumn numbers peaked at RAF Woodhall LWT reserve where 42 were counted on Sep 11th and on the same date 37 were recorded during a WeBS count on the River Witham (Chapel Hill to Kirkstead Bridge); post-breeding, it is known that moult gatherings occur in UK birds. Thereafter counts drop dramatically with no more than six reported during Oct-Dec and there were 1-3 birds at around seven sites – is this lack of coverage or do they disperse to other under-watched areas?

### Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* □

Common resident, partial migrant and winter visitor, with concentrations mainly in the Humber, on the north-east coast and in The Wash. Fairly common as a breeding species in estuaries and coastal areas but scarce inland. Amber List. WeBS threshold for international importance: 3000. WeBS threshold for national importance: 610.

The table below shows the top ten sites holding maximum counts of 228 or more birds in any month of the year. The species was found in 9% of BBS squares (2016 12%) with an average of 3.4 birds per occupied square (2016 2.4).

Site Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Pyewipe	360	880	920	210	423	400	1500	820	1020	1216	980	1060
Reads Island	6	150	620	531	430	1100	1300	800	750	250	850	652
Witham Mouth	-	100	100	10	4	-	40	4	6	750	100	5
Donna Nook	265	144	52	73	35	104	32	57	85	247	638	46
Grainthorpe	52	3	348	529	310	68	240	67	166	66	306	257
Freiston Shore	410	20	52	35	22	17	15	35	2	10	60	1
Saltfleet	144	256	60	7	13	10	12	-	3	1	59	115
Tetney	126	45	19	30	39	156	164	56	246	190	220	-
South Ferriby	-	9	53	65	237	63	40	-	-	-	12	26
Frampton Marsh	50	59	66	130	228	150	34	130	55	16	70	52



Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata* North Somercotes Jan 30th 2017 © John Clarkson

## Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata*

Scarce feral resident or visitor and local escapee, possibly increasing.

Records were received from around 15 sites in 2017 and in seven of the months between Jan-Oct. One was at Banthorpe GP (Ryhall) and as in previous years a single bird was at North Somercotes Warren on Jan 30th, presumably derived from the wildfowl collection there. In Feb, two were at Holywell Lake on 13th and one was at Deeping Lakes NR on 21st. The next record wasn't until Apr 17th, a male at Kirkby GP. May provided the bulk of the 2017 records with a male at Whisby NR from 2nd-10th, the third record for the Reserve, which briefly visited the adjacent North Hykeham Pits on the 5th, at Baston on May 9th, and a pair was flushed from the River Witham at Belton on May 28th. The presence at Kirkby GP continued into Jul-Aug when male and female birds in eclipse were present all month, and four juvenile birds were seen on Oct 27th. One at Gibraltar Point on Oct 2nd was only the second record for that site. In the south of the county four females were seen on Oct 13th-14th at Culverthorpe Lakes and there were also four females at Marston STW on Oct 17th.

The stronghold of Mandarin Ducks is in south-east England, the Severn Vale and the Peak District. In autumn and winter there are regularly 250+ in lowland Derbyshire and at the Dukeries in Nottinghamshire; the species looks set to become firmly established in this county too.

## Garganey *Spatula querquedula*

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

Garganeys were reported from 24 sites this year, up from 19 in 2016. The first arrival was at Frampton Marsh from Mar 15th-18th and another was at nearby Kirdon on Mar 19th and at Frampton Marsh again on Mar 31st. Soon after there was one at Bardney on Apr 4th, and the first pair at Saltfleetby St Clements on Apr 9th. Further short-staying one-day pairs were reported from Messingham on Apr 14th, Barton Pits on Apr 17th and Tetney on May 1st. There was no confirmed breeding for the second consecutive year. The biggest single count was three at Frampton Marsh on May 22nd. Probable breeding of longer staying single pairs was reported from Alkborough Flats, Anderby Marsh, Deeping Lakes NR, Frampton Marsh, and Gibraltar Point. No juveniles were reported at all this year and the latest bird was reported at Frampton Marsh on the comparatively early date of Sep 7th compared to Oct 29th in 2016.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of sites	-	-	2	12	18	6	3	3	2	-	-	-
Minimum Lincs Total	-	-	2	21	24	7	5	7	2	-	-	-

## Shoveler *Spatula clypeata*

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant, and very scarce/scarse breeding species. Amber List. WeBS threshold for international importance: 400. WeBS threshold for national importance: 180. **RBBP**

The table below shows the top 10 sites holding maximum counts of 64 or more birds in any month of the year. Other sites holding 50 or more birds were Langtoft 62 on Jan 15th and 54 on Dec 17th, Kirkby on Bain Pits 54 on Sep 9th and Deeping St James Lake 64 on Oct 5th. The max total across all sites reported was 1140 in Mar. Three pairs probably bred at Alkborough Flats and other probable pairs were reported as follows: Frampton Marsh (23), Barton Pits to Barrow Haven Pits (3) Kirkby on Bain Pits (2), Willow Tree Fen (2), Manby Wetlands (1) and Middlemarsh Farm, Skegness (1). There was a total of 35 pairs in 2017, down from the 43 in 2016. The only significant sea movement reported was 13 south at Huttoft Car Terrace on Sep 28th.

Site	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bardney	63	100	64	31	2	2	-	-	63	300	146	115
Whisby NR	55	117	138	62	2	5	1	27	43	30	29	24
Alkborough Flats	60	120	136	30	13	16	50	130	91	75	121	36
Willow Tree Fen	24	120	76	28	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Frampton Marsh	24	50	58	56	20	45	16	75	34	40	20	114
Boultham Mere	12	10	14	1	2	4	4	29	102	64	75	12
Gibraltar Point	71	34	100	9	3	6	7	14	19	42	64	59
Killingholme	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	34	100	-
Freiston Shore	22	45	99	1	-	-	4	-	-	8	12	1
Saltfleetby- Theddlethorpe	52	64	68	28	1	-	2	-	1	7	14	31



### Gadwall *Mareca strepera* ■

Fairly common though localised breeding species and winter visitor. Numbers have increased greatly since the 1970s. Amber List. WeBS threshold for national importance: 250.

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Whisby NR	343	192	122	68	28	17	109	123	83	109	119	344
Alkborough Flats	17	170	244	70	72	130	32	20	20	32	95	36
Boultham Mere	29	28	31	35	23	80	120	30	230	128	110	31
Tattershall Thorpe	170	160	23	28	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kirkby on Bain	150	150	103	74	67	36	9	80	90	159	75	35
Barton Pits	51	122	21	15	1	1	4	8	18	46	47	102
Lincoln	86	117	19	24	12	31	30	56	62	41	44	95
Marston	104	41	65	24	12	23	-	1	40	25	71	22
Frampton Marsh	30	35	60	50	31	100	38	90	50	5	10	9

The table shows all sites having a count of at least 100 birds in one month and more than 90 sites across the county recorded this common dabbling duck. The highest counts were predominantly in the Lincoln area; the highest of all being 343 at Whisby NR on Jan 20th and an almost identical count of 344 there on Dec 16th.

The only other site holding 100 or more was RAF Woodhall LWT reserve. Although pairs of Gadwall were widely reported in the usual areas, the only confirmed breeding came from Gibraltar Point where a minimum of two pairs with ducklings were seen, from Kirkby GP where there were at least two broods, and from Alkborough Flats where five pairs bred and two broods were seen. Although there is insufficient BBS data for Lincolnshire, the BTO trend graph for Gadwall in England, 1994-2017, has shown an unremitting upward trend and the population has more than tripled in that time.

### Eurasian Wigeon *Mareca penelope* ■

Common or very common winter visitor and passage migrant, especially to The Wash and the Humber. Scarce in summer, and occasionally suspected of breeding. WeBS threshold for international importance: 15,000. WeBS threshold for national importance: 4400. **RBBP**

The table below shows the top 10 sites holding maximum counts of 620 or more birds in any month of the year. Other sites reporting 500 or more birds were Bonby 500 on Feb 21st, Read's Island 500 on Oct 15th, Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe 600 on Feb 27th and Dec 13th, Terrington Marsh 597 on Nov 8th and Tetney Marsh 600 on Jan 23rd. Although summering birds were reported at a number of sites, including 7 pairs at Frampton Marsh, there was no evidence of breeding.

Site	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Frampton Marsh	6000	5000	1459	500	24	7	8	19	760	4806	3000	3000
Witham Mouth	200	300	100	-	-	-	-	-	50	5150	1300	18
Freiston Shore	1070	800	2363	4	4	-	2	3	400	4000	1880	1
Welland Marsh	380	470	40	-	-	-	-	-	32	2500	960	-
Alkborough Flats	2000	832	650	200	4	1	-	5	200	399	1201	300
Middlemarsh Farm	1200	1000	1200	7	3	-	-	-	250	30	-	700
Willow Tree Fen	600	500	1000	6	2	-	-	-	-	-	30	200
Gibraltar Point	350	350	120	15	3	2	3	30	112	759	600	300
Marton	120	85	655	2	-	-	-	-	25	-	-	-
Tattershall Thorpe	490	620	56	14	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

### Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* ■

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber Listed. WeBS threshold for national importance: 6800.

The table below shows the top ten sites holding maximum counts of 175 or more birds in any month of the year. The species was found in 69% of BBS squares (2016 69%) with an average of 6.3 birds per occupied square (2016 5.8).

Site Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Deeping St James	330	40	6	10	13	55	90	144	72	22	38	20
Frampton Marsh	50	22	145	32	100	100	80	325	120	87	59	170
Covenham Reservoir	313	118	120	146	94	181	139	280	237	89	150	272
Alkborough Flats	92	74	90	32	110	135	29	60	170	220	222	64

Holywell	204	83	35	-	-	-	-	-	88	119	-	70
Gibraltar Point	130	50	26	14	23	42	132	181	120	125	98	61
Carlton & Manby												
Washlands	179	78	42	20	33	99	88	144	166	64	72	39
Sleaford	-	-	7	20	1	-	-	28	121	50	175	55
Woodhall Spa	110	162	38	19	27	42	42	137	38	73	102	1

### Pintail *Anas acuta* ■

Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor. Very scarce in summer. Amber List. WeBS threshold for national importance: 290. **RBBP**

The table below shows the top eight sites holding maximum counts of 20 or more birds in any month of the year. Birds were reported from 37 sites and the top three sites accounted for 95% of the Lincolnshire peak monthly wintering population of 784 in Jan. Unusually this year, several individuals lingered through the summer months both at Frampton Marsh where there were two pairs and at Deeping Lakes NR where there was a single drake; however, there was no suggestion of any attempted breeding. Peak southerly movements reported over the sea south in Sep were 26 at Gibraltar Point on 10th and 21 at Huttoft Car Terrace on 14th.

Site	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Terrington	582	-	57	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	110
Freiston Shore	90	6	212	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	8	1
Frampton Marsh	70	120	40	6	6	1	2	3	20	10	54	54
Alkborough Flats	1	3	23	14	4	-	-	3	16	22	27	1
Gibraltar Point	12	13	10	1	-	-	1	3	26	18	8	2



Eurasian Teal *Anas crecca* Frampton Marsh Jan 22nd 2017 © Neil Smith

### Eurasian Teal *Anas crecca* ■

Common migrant and winter visitor. Scarce in summer, and very scarce and localised as a breeding species. Amber List. WeBS threshold for international importance: 5000. WeBS threshold for national importance 2100.

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Frampton Marsh	1000	2500	334	150	22	16	32	270	140	2000	471	500
Alkborough Flats	530	760	520	570	290	48	1	1000	800	972	2215	778
Reads Island	1	600	150	96	-	-	-	-	276	2000	160	41
Bonby	1	600	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	900	-	-
Gibraltar Point	400	100	50	20	7	18	48	71	170	300	620	140

Donna Nook	490	200	100	45	2	3	18	90	91	140	140	96
Freiston Shore	15	48	414	44	1	1	7	1	200	2	110	1
Middlemarsh Farm	400	150	100	24	10	12	7	41	80	26	-	50
Killingholme	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	12	57	400	108
Whisby NR	214	40	17	40	8	1	12	19	35	57	146	385
Kirkby on Bain	150	21	19	10	5	2	10	70	360	189	32	56
Tattershall Thorpe	350	205	60	54	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Carlton & Manby Washlands	310	300	197	164	30	1	7	18	163	113	76	21

The table shows all sites having a count of 300 or more in at least one month. Frampton Marsh and Alkborough Flats both surpass the WeBS threshold for a site of national importance for the species. The peaks at both of these sites are well below that of the previous two years - 3480 in 2016 and 4460 in 2015, both at Alkborough Flats. As in previous years, birds lingered into the summer at several locations but no confirmation of breeding was reported. Surveys at Frampton Marsh suggested 13 pairs present (compared to 19 in 2016 and 28 in 2015) 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. Southward movement was apparent at Gibraltar Point from mid Jul to the end of Nov, but most pronounced in Sep. A total of around 800 (less than half the 2016 total) was counted flying south that month with consequently lower peaks of 153 on 4th, 119 on 15th and 126 on 16th.

### Green-winged Teal *Anas carolinensis*

Very scarce visitor, first record in 1984 and almost annual since 1996. **LBRC**

There were two records, the first was at Boultham Mere on Mar 12th-13th (ACS) and the second was at Alkborough Flats on Apr 1st-2nd (GPC, ND) both adult males. It is difficult to know the exact numbers of individuals that have been recorded in the county, but including this year's records, there have been more than 40 records in total involving about 34 birds.

### Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*

Scarce winter visitor and very scarce breeding species. Increasing numbers of feral birds present in the county, especially in the southwest. **RBBP**.

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Baston	-	18	12	3	8	5	4	91	95	70	-	10
Frampton Marsh	1	-	-	-	1	5	6	-	-	12	-	1
Deeping St James	1	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-
Langtoft	5	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hartsholme	2	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tongue End	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Whisby NR	-	3	4	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	-
Barton Pits	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Lincoln	2	2	2	-	-	-	2	-	2	2	2	2

In 2017, sightings were received from 13 sites mainly in the southern half of the county. Birds were recorded throughout the year. A long staying pair was recorded in almost every month at Swanholme Lakes and less than three miles away at Whisby NR, counts of three to four were recorded in Feb-Mar. The best count of the year was an impressive 95 at Baston-Langtoft Pits on Sep 22nd, the same count as the 2016 peak and the county's stronghold for this species. Elsewhere the highest count was of 12 at Frampton Marsh on Oct 14th-15th. There were no reports of confirmed breeding in 2017 despite the presence of pairs at several sites during the breeding season.

### Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*



Rapidly declining winter visitor, and a scarce breeding species found mainly in gravel and clay pits. Red List. WeBS threshold for national importance 380. **RBBP**.

The table below shows the same sites as featured for this species in the 2016 report. The reason is to highlight the fact that these sites had peak wintering bird counts in Feb of 730 in 2015, 654 in 2016 and 443 in 2017. The total Feb wintering population across all 53 sites reporting birds for the year was 569. This red data bird continues to decline fast as a wintering species in Lincolnshire. Only one site not in the table held more than 25 birds, Fillingham which had 31 birds in Feb. It was also a poorer breeding year. There were reports of a total of 27 pairs compared to 31 in

2016. These were as follows. Barton to Barrow Haven Pits, four females raised seven young, the only record of confirmed breeding, there were 10 other probable breeding females here. Other probable pairs were reported from Frampton Marsh (6), Kirkby on Bain Pits (5), Alkborough Flats (1) and Greetwell (1). Birds were present in May and Jun at Bardney Pits, Boultham Mere and Messingham but as no details of the sex of these birds was submitted it is difficult to know if these birds were summering or probable breeders. It would be helpful if all Pochard reports could specify the sex of the birds counted.

Site Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alkborough Flats	-	-	-	-	-	26	-	-	-	-	3	-
Barton Pits	70	60	30	26	8	5	23	10	8	10	15	28
New Holland	-	34	40	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Barrow Haven	-	-	15	1	2	4	2	-	-	-	-	5
Gibraltar Point	10	6	3	1	1	1	1	15	2	1	8	1
Frampton Marsh	38	25	8	7	7	24	1	1	30	3	23	41
Bagmoor	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	156	-	-	-
Messingham	17	20	9	30	17	14	-	2	5	1	22	11
Toft next Newton	67	51	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	4	29	96
Boultham Mere	13	16	11	3	4	3	1	1	3	4	2	4
North Hykeham Pits	58	23	14	2	1	3	-	2	-	27	22	31
Whisby NR	51	65	8	1	3	1	9	42	2	68	32	35
Norton Disney	4	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	45	-
Thurlby Pit, Bassingham	50	40	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	130
Bardney	-	7	17	2	5	32	17	8	-	2	21	14
Kirkby on Bain	43	60	33	6	4	9	15	8	9	5	9	10
Deeping St James	14	30	4	-	1	3	101	125	28	3	-	1



Common Pochard *Aythya ferina* (1K ringed in France and a regular breeder at Waters Edge),  
Waters Edge Barton Mar 27th 2017 © Graham Catley

### Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*

Scarce. LBRC

After an absence of records in the county last year, there were two records in 2017. The first, a drake was present at Kirkby GP on Jan 7th (KDR) and present until Jan 31st at least. The second record was of a female also at Kirkby GP on Dec 9th and 15th (GPC, ND *et al*). These constitutes the 38th and 39th county records.



Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris* (1st Calendar year female) Kirkby Pits Dec 9th 2017  
© Graham Catley

### Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula* ■

Fairly common breeding species on gravel pits and similar water bodies, and fairly common or common winter visitor. Green List. WeBS threshold for national importance: 1100.

The table below shows the top ten sites holding maximum counts of 126 or more birds in any month of the year. There was also a count of 200 at Holland Fen on Jan 17th. The peak count of 250 at Cadney in Aug was down from the 2016 peak count of 380 at this site the previous Aug. The species was found in 12% of BBS squares (2016 16%) with an average of 3.9 birds per occupied square (2016 3.6).

Site Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cadney	-	-	-	-	-	-	210	250	160	88	13	22
Covenham Reservoir	246	180	143	142	70	77	62	41	151	-	44	92
Barton Pits	64	105	125	98	6	5	40	148	71	31	26	220
Kirkby on Bain	200	71	75	60	17	42	40	118	80	55	82	18
North Hykeham	178	102	98	36	22	27	61	50	74	179	88	194
Whisby NR	165	116	164	121	36	18	146	167	103	111	174	162
Deeping St James	134	100	86	86	14	15	84	107	57	22	27	75
Toft next Newton	132	25	36	48	14	2	2	15	31	53	38	53
Spalding	107	130	39	7	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bardney	16	34	27	126	29	50	90	48	75	17	73	43

### Greater Scaup *Aythya marila* ■

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor to estuaries and coast; numbers have declined. Rare in summer; bred in 1944. Red List. Threshold for national importance: 52.

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
East Halton/Goxhill	40	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Barton Pits	1	5	13	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1
Barton-upon-Humber	-	4	13	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Crowland	8	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Frampton Marsh	2	2	3	5	1	-	1	-	-	2	1	1
Freiston Shore	-	1	5	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Deeping St Nicholas	4	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Butterwick	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-
Gibraltar Point	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	1	4	-	-



Greater Scaup *Aythya marila* Barton Pits Mar 10th 2017 © Graham Catley

Records were received from 33 sites with the highest count of the winter being 40 on the Humber in the Goxhill/East Halton Skitter area on Jan 15th. Four to five were on Barton Pits in Feb with more in Mar when 13 (seven drakes) were present on 10th. Single birds were present at several sites and there were some long-staying birds: the injured drake first seen at Barton Pits in Mar 2016 was present all year; a drake at Deeping Lakes NR from Feb 6th-Dec 19th; two to three birds at Frampton Marsh from Jan 22nd-May 2nd, with one bird there on Jul 12th, perhaps injured.

Apart from the long-stayers, the first autumn birds were two at Gibraltar Point on Aug 8th with 50 Common Scoter. As the table shows though, it was a poor autumn and winter overall with no more than one or two birds reported, with the highest counts being four birds at Gibraltar Point on Oct 9th and four, perhaps the same birds, at Butterwick Marsh on the Wash on Nov 5th. Singles were inland at Covenham Reservoir and River Witham at Tattershall on Dec 14th, and at North Hykeham from Dec 14th-31st.

### Common Eider *Somateria mollissima*



Present offshore throughout the year: fairly common on passage and in winter, scarce in summer. Mainly found in The Wash and rare inland. Under-recorded because most of the population stays well offshore; however, numbers have recently declined. Red List. WeBS threshold for national importance 550.

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Freiston Shore	3	2	15	2	-	-	11	15	20	1	30	-
Leverton	-	30	19	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Gibraltar Point	11	7	6	11	3	2	8	-	4	22	29	6
Grainthorpe	-	-	22	-	9	-	10	11	22	-	-	-
Mablethorpe	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	21
Witham Mouth	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	15
Wrangle	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13

Eider numbers were extremely low in 2017 and it seems astonishing that the winter peak in Jan-Mar was just 30 birds at Leverton on Feb 11th. Summer records were sparse with a maximum count of 15 at Freiston Shore on Aug 26th. The picture was the same in the autumn with a peak of 30 at Freiston Shore on Nov 8th. Numbers remained low throughout Nov/Dec. Unsurprisingly there were no inland records of this almost exclusively marine duck. In the BTO WeBS survey (table below) Common Eider had a record low index value and is known to have declined as a breeding species in Europe and the decline is ongoing. Europe (including Greenland) holds >60% of the global population so the decline is significant. The causes are complex and include reduced food supply, poor duckling survival, infection and predation, including hunting.

#### Annual peak counts (BTO WeBS data)

Site name	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	Peak month	5yr average
The Wash	519	3,721	2,130	280	741	1,222	226	Dec	920
Humber Estuary	22	19	71	15	12	14	22	Mar	27



### Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*



Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Rare inland and in summer. Red List. WeBS threshold for national importance: 25.

This was a good year for this normally scarce bird with birds arriving at various sites on the north-east coast from Jan 1st. There were 34 at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Jan 2nd increasing to 44 on Jan 13th. There was continuous presence along the Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe-Mablethorpe-Trusthorpe coastline right through until Mar 25th. This flock peaked at 43 in Feb on 17th and 42 in Mar on 17th. The last birds there in the spring were 27 on Mar 25th. Up to 21 were at Tetney in this period with eight double figure counts to Jan 20th and the last bird there was on Feb 4th. In summer a lone male was at Gibraltar Point on Jun 4th and another bird was at Tetney on Jul 16th.

The autumn proved far less spectacular with the first birds two south at Gibraltar Point on Aug 22nd. In Sep there were singles at Tetney and Huttoft on 14th and four at Benington on 23rd. Thereafter during Oct-Dec, one flew up the Humber off Barton on Oct 5th, there were one to three birds at the usual coastal sites with maxima of four at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR and Mablethorpe, presumably the same birds, where the last three of the year were seen on Dec 15th.

### Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*



Fairly common offshore passage migrant and winter visitor, scarce in summer but autumn movements begin in Jun-Jul. Rare inland. Red List. WeBS for national importance: 200.

Site Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Tetney	120	13	-	-	4	120	965	300	80	-	-	-
Gibraltar Point	264	100	40	105	67	680	950	805	380	256	114	200
Donna Nook	-	1	1	10	40	-	30	920	35	260	25	-
Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe	300	200	100	30	-	50	47	28	290	92	700	500
Terrington	-	-	700	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mablethorpe	40	65	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	-	75	400
Huttoft	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	270	193	109	3	-
Witham Mouth	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20	10	1	250	8
Marshchapel	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	200	-	1	-	-
Grimsby	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	200	-	-	-	-
Chapel St Leonards	-	174	-	-	-	-	-	-	58	25	-	-
Freiston Shore	-	5	-	-	-	-	70	80	40	100	1	-
Barton on Humber	-	-	-	-	-	-	100	64	25	1	1	-

Wintering flocks peaked in Jan with 300 at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Jan 9th and 264 at Gibraltar Point on Jan 21st and both sites recorded three figure counts into Feb. Tetney had a peak of 120 on Jan 7th. Inland there were singles at four sites in Jan-Feb. Birds moved off in Mar and there was a huge flock of 700 in the Wash at Terrington on Mar 12th. Spring migration saw numbers fall in Apr-May and coastal movements noted at sites like Gibraltar Point where the highest count in this period was of 105 south on Apr 24th.

Numbers increased dramatically in Jun with 120 at Tetney on Jun 27th, 150 at Gibraltar Point on Jun 29th increasing to 680 on Jun 30th, a mixed raft of birds including both adults and juveniles. Inland, a flock of 21 appeared at Apex Pit, North Hykeham also on Jun 30th. After the Jun influx numbers peaked in Jul-Aug with maxima of 950 at Gibraltar Point on Jul 6th, 965 at Tetney on Jul 25th and 920 at Donna Nook on Aug 10th. Given the mobility of Common Scoter flocks it is tempting to surmise that there was movement between the main sites, although where counts were summed at these sites when counts were made on the same dates in Jul-Aug, there were maxima of 1235 on Jul 25th and 1420 on Aug 19th. Coastal sites held four figure totals (all sites) throughout Jul-Dec with most being recorded on the sea off Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR in this period with a maximum of 700 on Nov 24th and 500 on Dec 3rd.

### Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*



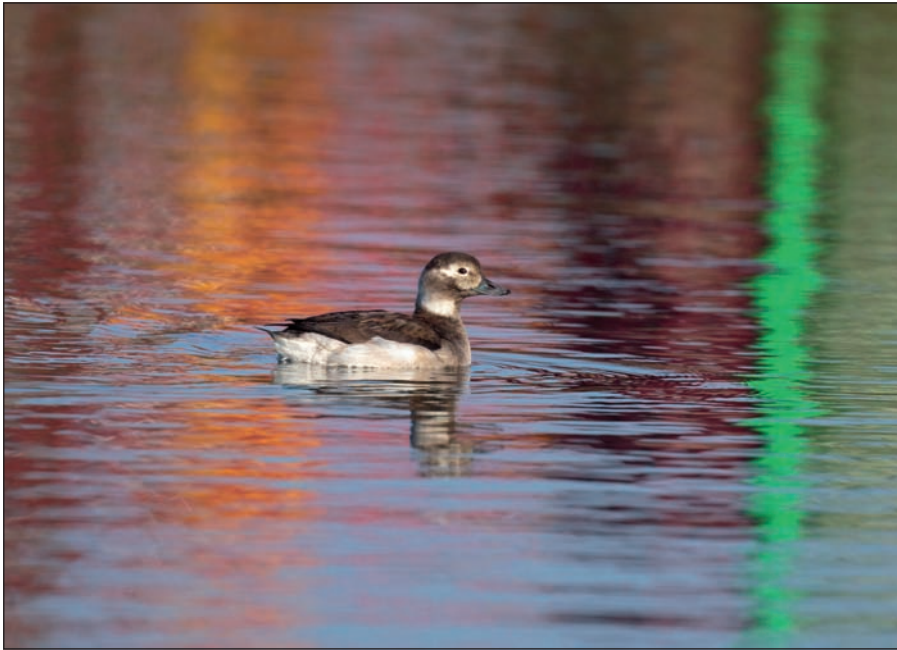
Very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor, rare in summer and inland. Red List.

Records in the first quarter came from around 11 sites but in small numbers. On the coast four were at Donna Nook on Jan 3rd with three on Jan 6th, possibly the same three birds at Tetney on Feb 15th, and a single was still at Donna Nook on Mar 6th. Elsewhere one was at Gibraltar Point on Jan 2nd and one to two there from Feb 25th-Mar 2nd. Singles were at Mablethorpe on several dates between Jan 24th and Mar 3rd and at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR Mar 9th-25th. Inland, one bird wintered on the River Welland between Four Mile Bar and Deeping Lakes NR

near Crowland and was extensively reported between Jan 28th-Apr 24th; a second bird joined it on Feb 5th. Singles lingered in Apr and May at Barton Pits, Freiston Shore and Witham Mouth with the last bird of the spring at the latter site on May 13th.

There were fewer reports in the autumn with an adult male seen flying north on Oct 29th at Gibraltar Point and then probably the same bird north past Mablethorpe. Singles were then at Paradise Pool, Saltfleet on Nov 3rd, Freiston Shore on Nov 8th, and Gibraltar Point on Nov 13th and 30th.

In Dec four were at Witham Mouth on 7th, two were at Donna Nook on 9th and two remained at Witham Mouth until Dec 11th, the last of the year.



Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis* Mablethorpe Boating Lake Jan 24th 2017 © Graham Catley

### Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula* □

Fairly common but somewhat localised winter visitor, rare in summer. Amber List. WeBS threshold for national importance: 200.

Although generally a winter migrant to Lincs from Scandinavia and Russia the species was recorded in every month of the year albeit with small numbers between May and Sep. Just over 1200 records were received with maximum totals seemingly well down on those of last year. Of all the counts of over 70 birds all but two came from Covenham Reservoir. The largest total came from between Goxhill and New Holland when 175 were recorded in Dec. The next best count was from the same area with 102 in Jan. At Covenham the best count was 93. The last birds of the spring were three at Barton Pits on Jun 6th and an injured drake was at Barton all summer. Two birds were observed at Messingham and one at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR and heralded the start of autumn migration on Oct 6th. Within another week birds were noted inland at Cadney, Covenham and Deeping St James. During the same period and throughout the month coastal movement of small but increasing larger numbers was observed.

Site Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Goxhill	102	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	45	175
Covenham Res	93	91	61	9	-	-	-	3	3	4	32	75
Barton Pits	10	58	29	7	3	1	1	2	1	44	7	5

North Hykeham	34	34	54	25	-	-	-	-	-	6	15	23
Freiston Shore	34	48	23	-	-	-	-	-	-	40	30	-
Witham Mouth	7	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	45	9	8
Deeping St James	36	28	19	1	-	-	1	-	2	1	2	14
Whisby	32	24	19	5	-	-	-	-	-	4	8	5
Bassingham	2	28	12	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4

### Smew *Mergellus albellus*

Very scarce winter visitor, with occasional larger influxes in severe weather. Amber List. WeBS threshold for national importance: 2.

Sightings came from nine locations with possibly just five birds noted. The first of the year was a redhead at Barton Pits on New Year's Day. In the south of the county a female was noted at Deeping High Bank and Deeping St James on Jan 24th and a female was seen at Boston and Cowbridge on Feb 13th. Alkborough Flats hosted a redhead on 17th-18th of Feb. A bird with no gender given was on the Witham at Woodhall Spa on Nov 25th-26th. In Nov there was a redhead at Coningsby on 26th and 28th on the Witham. Presumably this could have been the Woodhall bird. Another female or perhaps the Coningsby bird lingered and was seen south of Tattershall Bridge on Dec 14th-15th.

### Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor, mainly inland. Rare in summer. Green List.

Site Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lincoln	20	60	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	6	8
Boultham Mere	42	35	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	12	7
Willow Tree Fen	5	12	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	39
Crowland	20	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Deeping St James	11	20	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	8
Woodhall Spa	10	12	12	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	20	5
Covenham Reservoir	15	18	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Spalding	18	11	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
Stixwold	18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kirkstead Bridge	18	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

Goosander was noted from around 53 countywide locations in all months other than Jun and Jul with a dozen counts of 20 or more. There were no records of suspected breeding as has apparently occurred recently in some lowland areas such as East Anglia and Hampshire. The close proximity of some of the water-bodies makes it difficult to avoid duplication where birds regularly move between sites. There were around 115 records from the six areas in or around Lincoln including the highest count of 60 at Swanholme Lakes on Feb 5th, with 42 on 4th and 40 on 5th Jan at Boultham Mere. The last bird of spring in the Lincoln area was on Mar 27th and they returned on Oct 30th. The Deepings and Crowland areas had records from 67 days with two high counts of 20. The last record of spring was on Mar 13th and returning birds appeared on Nov 18th. Covenham Reservoir had small counts on 33 occasions, with the largest being one of 38. The Fiskerton area had 26 counts between Jan-Mar and again in Nov-Dec with a maximum of 13 birds recorded.

The origins of wintering Goosanders in the county has not been confirmed by ringing recoveries, but given the significant range expansion across the UK in the last 45 years it seems likely that many are native birds. In addition, the BTO ringing scheme has documented recoveries from Scandinavia, the Baltic region and Russia.

### Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor, mainly coastal and especially in The Wash. Scarce inland and in summer. Green List. WeBS threshold for national importance: 84.

The species was noted from just 13 locations; all coastal and all south of Skegness unlike last year when the species was recorded on the Humber and at three inland locations. They were recorded 42 times during the first four months of the year and 32 times in the last four months. Six locations accounted for all totals of 10 and above which were recorded 22 times. Gibraltar Point accounted for ten totals above 10 and had the two highest counts of 59 and 42 both in mid Jan. Freiston Shore had six totals in excess of 10 with its highest being 30.

**Ruddy Duck** *Oxyura jamaicensis*

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

This was the third blank year with no confirmed records and the species is presumed extinct as a resident breeding bird.

**Red-legged Partridge** *Alectoris rufa*

A common species of arable farmland, with a resident population augmented each year by releases for shooting.

The species was found in 43% of BBS squares (2016 52%) with an average of three birds per occupied square (2016 - 3). The BBS graph in the 2016 LBR showed a declining trend and the sharp drop in presence in 2017 certainly implies that the decline is continuing.

**Grey Partridge** *Perdix perdix*

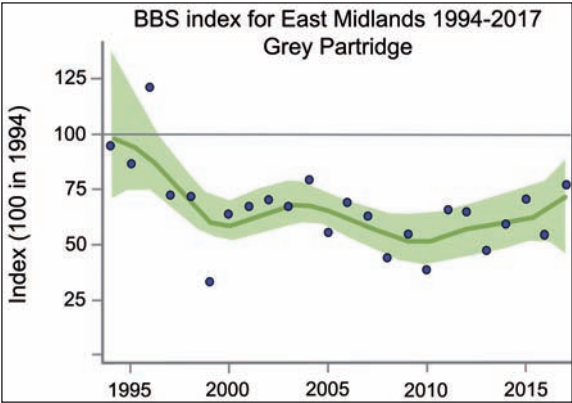


Common resident with recent decline, especially in the southern half of the county. Red List.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Welbourn	32	12	-	-	3†	1	12†	11	18	-	-	12
Baumber area*	12	5†	2†	2†	2†	2†	10†	20†	20†	5	11	9
West Ashby	9	2	-	2†	4†	-	-	-	4†	4	5	5
Woodhall Spa	16	-	2	-	2	1	1	-	1	20	-	-
Normanby	7	12	7	4	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	8
Tetney	5	1	2	2	2	2	2	4	-	-	-	-
Lincoln	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	12†	-	-	-	4
Branston Booths	8	2	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Toft next Newton	-	4	2†	4†	2	2	-	-	-	2	3	-
Boultham-Swanpool	-	2	3	2	3†	1	-	-	-	-	3	-

(\*Includes Baumber, Great Sturton and Hemingby; † Denotes probable or confirmed breeding)

The table shows the most prominent sites in the county, based on a combination of peak counts and number of months reported. As expected the highest counts were either in the winter period when coveys increase in size and are less obscured by crops/vegetation, or post-breeding congregations of family parties. Grey Partridge was recorded in more than 80 sites across the county and in 19.8% of BBS squares (2016 22%) with an average of 2.8 birds per occupied square (2016 2.8/sq.). BBS data for the period 1995-2016 shows declines of 60% in England and 31% in the East Midlands. However, the trend graph for the East Midlands (below) shows a more stable picture between 2000-2015.



**Common Quail** *Coturnix coturnix*



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

Overall, records increased slightly on the previous year, but numbers remain below the recent average levels (from 2011 onwards). There was a total of eight birds across seven sites, mostly

singing males, with the first at Donna Nook on May 26th. There were three further records in Jun, two at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes on 2nd and 19th, and one at North Cotes on 17th-19th. There were only two records in Jul – at Welbourn on 15th and at Welton on 31st. There was a series of records near Baumber/Great Sturton on Aug 5th, 9th and 15th that presumably relate to the same calling bird and the final sighting, a presumed migrant flushed at Gibraltar Point, was on Sep 18th.

### **Common Pheasant** *Phasianus colchicus*

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

The species was found in 92% of BBS squares (2016 90%) with an average of 5.4 birds per occupied square (2016 5.7/sq.). Overall there was no obvious change in status from 2016. Pheasant ranks 7th most widespread species in Lincolnshire on the percentage of BBS squares occupied and 14th in terms of total numbers counted. In terms of biomass its presence is much higher. It would be interesting to compare breeding densities and trends from BBS squares in areas where little or no Pheasant releases for game shooting take place with areas where it does, to see how self-sustaining our Pheasant population really is. The scattering of birds from release areas owing to shoots would also make an interesting satellite tracking study.

### **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. Green List. WeBS threshold for national importance: 170.

In the first quarter the vast majority of records came from Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR and Gibraltar Point, reflecting observer effort as much as a realistic distribution. Peak counts were: 164 at Gibraltar Point on the 12th, 122 at Rimac (Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR) on Jan 30th, 249 at Crook Bank (Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR) on Feb 20th and 186 at Gibraltar Point the following day, 187 at Crook Bank on Mar 1st, 176 there on Mar 4th and 40 at Gibraltar Point on Mar 6th. Regular double figure counts were made at both sites; the only other site to achieve this was Donna Nook with 17 on Mar 10th. One flew south at Gibraltar Point on Apr 10th and there were two at Rimac on Jun 26th. Returning birds started to appear in mid-Aug with two between Theddlethorpe and Mablethorpe on the 13th, one at Saltfleet on the 27th and one at Gibraltar Point on the 30th. Single figure counts were more widespread until the year's end and the larger numbers were mainly at the sites mentioned above with peaks of 24 at Gibraltar Point on Sep 13th, 33 at Crook Bank on Sep 19th and 18 at Huttoft on Sep 28th. There was a similar picture in Oct with high counts of 28 at Gibraltar Point on the 4th and 19 at Crook Bank on the 6th; the highest count away from these areas was eight at Donna Nook on the 7th. Numbers were lower in Nov and apart from one at Huttoft on the 2nd all counts came from Crook Bank where the high was 15 on the 29th and Gibraltar Point where there were 25 on the 30th. More widespread wintering numbers were noted in Dec when there were peak counts of 26 at Cleethorpes on the 2nd, eight at Saltfleet on the 4th, 46 at Mablethorpe on the 5th, nine at Donna Nook on the 9th, five at Witham Mouth on the 11th, six at Crook Bank on the 16th, 33 at Mablethorpe on the 18th and 35 at Gibraltar Point on the 23rd.

### **Black-throated Diver** *Gavia arctica*



Scarce winter visitor to coastal and inland waters. Mainly Sep-Apr, rare in summer. Amber List. WeBS threshold for national importance: 6.

In the first quarter of the year single birds were noted at Gibraltar Point on Jan 6th, at Donna Nook on Jan 8th, Freiston Shore on Jan 14th, and another at Gibraltar Point on Jan 18th. Two were at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Feb 20th, and the rest of the early birds were all singles at Gibraltar Point on Feb 25th and 27th and on Mar 3rd and 17th.

The first autumn bird was recorded on Sep 13th at Gibraltar Point followed by singles at Chapel St Leonards on Sep 16th, Gibraltar Point on the 18th, Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on the 19th, Gibraltar Point on the 24th and Huttoft on the 25th. All Oct records came from Gibraltar Point with one on the 1st, three on the 2nd and two on the 29th. At the end of the year there were single birds in Nov at Freiston Shore on the 7th, probably the same bird on the 8th and one on the 24th at Gibraltar Point where there was one on Dec 1st, one at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Dec 3rd and the final bird at Terrington on Dec 9th. There were no inland records in 2017.



White-billed Diver *Gavia adamsii* River Witham near Woodhall Spa Jan 22nd 2017 © Russell Hayes



White-billed Diver *Gavia adamsii* River Witham near Woodhall Spa Jan 29th 2017 © Neil Smith





White-billed Diver *Gavia adamsii* River Witham near Woodhall Spa Jan 27th 2017 © Paul Coombes



White-billed Diver *Gavia adamsii* River Witham near Woodhall Spa Jan 22nd 2017 © Mark Johnson

### Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*



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

There were just six records in the first half of the year beginning with single birds at Gibraltar Point on Jan 12th and 14th, one at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Jan 30th, two at Gibraltar Point on Feb 25th and two at Donna Nook on Mar 3rd. The first bird of the autumn, an adult in full summer plumage, flew south at Gibraltar Point on Sep 11th with another there on the 13th. One was noted at Donna Nook on Sep 14th and two flew south at Mablethorpe on the 16th. In Oct there were single birds at Gibraltar Point on the 8th, 13th, 16th and 19th followed by singles at Donna Nook and Gibraltar Point on the 29th. There were single birds in Nov at Gibraltar Point on the 2nd, Freiston Shore on the 5th and 8th, Marshchapel on the 22nd and Gibraltar Point on the 26th. One was at Gibraltar Point on Dec 6th when there was also one at Witham Mouth with probably the same bird there on the 7th, three there on the 11th and the final bird of the year at Gibraltar Point on the 19th. With sightings on just twenty-five days of the year comprising a maximum of 32 birds this continues to be a scarce bird in the county.

### White-billed Diver *Gavia adamsii*

Vagrant. BBRC

A very well watched juvenile/2CY bird frequented the River Witham between Tattershall Bridge and Stixwold from Jan 20th to Feb 1st (David Curtis *et al*). Remarkably the second county record was on the same stretch of river in Feb 1996; the first was found dead at Friskney Marsh in the Wash in Mar 1976.

### European Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*



Rare offshore migrant Jul-Nov averaging more than one per year but variable between years; exceptional inland and in other months. Amber List. LBRC

There were no records of this Petrel in 2017 and it remains a true county rarity.

### Leach's Petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*



Rare offshore migrant generally Sep-Nov, but also May and Dec-Jan. Exceptional inland. Amber List. LBRC

There was just one record at Frampton Marsh RSPB on Oct 17th that was filmed as it flew inland over scrapes at 2.30pm (SBk). The finder's video can be seen on his Twitter feed here <https://twitter.com/noirer/status/920380424144195584>.

### Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*



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

Fulmars were recorded on only 31 days this year with the great majority of records coming, as usual, from Gibraltar Point. The first two of the year flew north there on Jan 1st followed by another on the 27th. There were three Feb records with one at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on the 14th and singles at Gibraltar Point on the 16th and 17th and the final bird of the first quarter was there on Mar 29th. There were seven records in the second half of Apr with singles at Gibraltar Point on the 17th, 20th and 25th, one at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on the 26th, single birds again at Gibraltar Point on the 27th and 28th and one at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on the 30th. There were single birds in May at Gibraltar Point on the 1st, Frampton Marsh RSPB on the 6th and Gibraltar Point on the 20th and 31st. Jun records were from Gibraltar Point with one south on the 8th and one at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on the same day, two at Gibraltar Point on the 12th and one on the 16th. Summer records were at Gibraltar Point on Jul 17th and 24th and Aug 3rd and 9th, all being single birds. Autumn records were concentrated in Sep beginning with one south at Gibraltar Point on the 3rd, two there on the 14th and four on the 15th on which day there was one at Huttoft Bank and 11 at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR. There were 10 at Gibraltar Point on the 16th followed by singles there and at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on the 18th and one more at Gibraltar Point on the 19th. The final bird of the year flew north off Gibraltar Point on the 29th Nov.

### Sooty Shearwater *Ardenna grisea*



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

A very poor year for this species with a maximum of 12 birds seen on just six days. One was seen off Huttoft car terrace on Aug 9th and then in Sep two flew past Donna Nook on the 14th, four flew north past Gibraltar Point on the 15th when two also flew past Crook Bank. There were two past Donna Nook on Oct 5th and the final bird of the year flew north at Sutton-on-Sea on Oct 29th.

### Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*



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

Birds were recorded on 19 dates mainly in Sep with the great majority of sightings at Gibraltar Point. First of the year were Jun 7th when nine flew past Horseshoe Point and another went north at Gibraltar Point. Five more went north at Gibraltar Point on Jun 16th and another two north on 23rd. There were two Jul records from the same site with one north on 14th and two south on the 17th and a single flew past Huttoft car terrace on Aug 9th.

Autumn passage began in earnest on Sep 10th when there were two south at Gibraltar Point, one on the sea there on 11th, two south on the 12th and five more south on the 13th when there were 14 off Freiston Shore. On the 14th there were 22 (20 north) at Gibraltar Point, 30 off Freiston Shore, two flew south at Mablethorpe and four past Huttoft. Six flew past Huttoft on the 15th when four went north at Gibraltar Point and 11 flew past Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR. After this brief, intense period passage slowed with four (three north) at Gibraltar Point on Sep 16th, one south on 18th and another there on the Wash being harassed by large gulls on 25th. Another also flew past Trusthorpe on 25th, and a dead bird was found on the same day at Wolla bank. In Oct there was a handful of records with one south Oct 3rd at Gibraltar Point, another north on the 5th and 6th and one south 16th. The last birds of the year were singles going north on 29th at Gibraltar Point and at Sutton-on-Sea.

### Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*



Fairly common resident, partial migrant and winter visitor, the latter especially noticeable in coastal regions. Green List. WeBS threshold for national importance: 160.

The table below shows the top ten sites holding maximum counts of 16 or more birds in any month of the year apart from reports of 30 at Bagmoor on Oct 23rd and Dec 16th and 18 at Crowland on Jan 22nd. The species was found in 8% of BBS squares (2016 8%) with an average of 1.9 birds per occupied square (2016 1.7). Overall there was no obvious change in status from 2016.

Site Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Frampton Marsh	2	3	6	4	6	3	9	15	40	16	16	5
Kirkby on Bain	35	6	5	2	1	6	1	3	33	1	2	3
Donna Nook	6	10	3	2	1	3	4	5	6	6	15	34
Gibraltar Point	17	17	17	12	8	9	15	12	29	31	24	12
Holywell	14	19	8	-	-	-	-	-	10	18	-	26
Freiston Shore	15	9	5	-	-	1	8	10	8	25	9	1
Alkborough Flats	-	5	10	1	2	3	8	3	20	11	2	-
Tetney	15	16	9	1	1	1	1	8	10	6	10	2
Deeping St James	16	7	4	1	1	1	3	5	5	6	1	16

### Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*



Rare/scarce passage migrant and winter visitor, Sep-Apr; rare in summer. Red List. WeBS threshold for national importance: 1.

There was only one record from the first winter period - a bird off Donna Nook on Jan 8th. A well-watched juvenile on the reservoir at Frampton Marsh from Sep 19th-28th kicked off a better autumn, with further passage birds at Gibraltar Point on Oct 6th and Nov 12th and a small wintering group of up to three birds between Freiston Shore and Witham Mouth from Oct 30th to Dec 20th. The only other record was a bird at Deeping St. James from Dec 8th-11th. A total of at least eight birds for the year is in line with recent trends.

## Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*



Common resident, partial migrant and winter visitor. Green List.

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Covenham Reservoir	22	5	7	5	7	16	22	35	47	41	5	3
Freiston Shore	2	2	5	-	-	1	5	4	3	15	40	-
Witham Mouth	9	-	2	4	2	-	4	10	12	8	22	12
Frampton Marsh	1	1	6	4	20	7	12	8	8	3	1	-
North Hykeham	6	3	6	5	6	3	6	10	14	20	17	34
Toft next Newton	23	8	6	5	5	3	3	6	18	30	33	33
Gibraltar Point	17	9	6	1	4	2	3	3	2	8	13	2
Whisby NR	5	9	13	16	12	10	17	9	9	7	3	3
Swanholme Lakes	2	2	6	5	4	4	5	5	6	15	6	6
Barton Pits	10	10	7	7	4	5	14	7	4	4	12	8

The table shows the most prominent sites in the county, based on a combination of peak counts and number of months reported, although smaller counts were found on nearly all of the larger lakes and ponds in the county, as well as wintering records offshore, with reports from 70 sites. Peak numbers were generally lower than 2016 at inland sites, but similar on the coast. Evidence of breeding activity (including display) was reported at just 11 of the sites, with six pairs at Whisby NR, four pairs at Barton Pits, three pairs at Deeping Lakes and either one or two pairs on other waters.



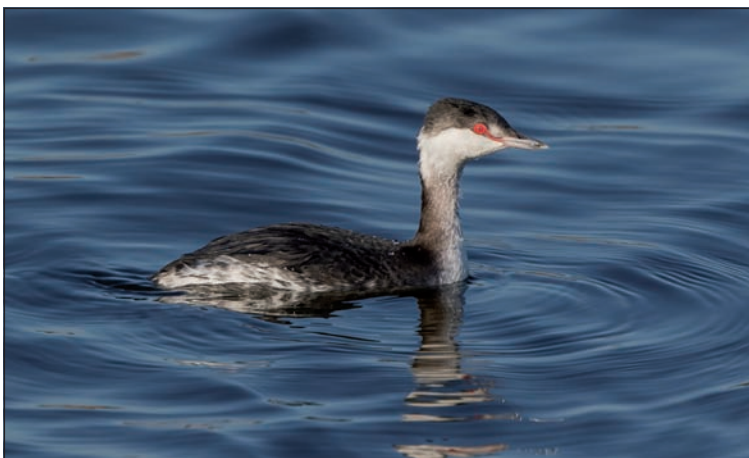
Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* Frampton Marsh Jun 18th 2017 © Neil Smith

## Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*



Rare/ scarce passage migrant and winter visitor, mainly Aug-May. Red List. WeBS threshold for national importance: 11.

There were a number of coastal records in the first winter period, with a single bird seen at Crook Bank (Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR) intermittently from Jan 4th to Feb 17th, up to two birds at Gibraltar Point from Jan 18th to Feb 25th and a further single at Witham Mouth on Jan 18th. There were also inland records at Cleethorpes CP from Jan 22nd to Feb 4th and a one-day report at Covenham Reservoir on Feb 20th. In the autumn there were up to four birds at Freiston Shore from Oct 7th to Dec 6th and then probably this group at nearby Witham Mouth until Dec 28th. Other coastal records came from Crook Bank again on Oct 11th and Nov 23rd and at Gibraltar Point on Oct 28th, Dec 5th and Dec 8th. There was a long-staying bird at Far Ings from Oct 31st-Nov 13th and another at Covenham Reservoir from Nov 13th-14th. In total there were probably six birds in the first half of the year and at least eight in the second half.



Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus* Cleethorpes Jan 25th 2017 © John Clarkson

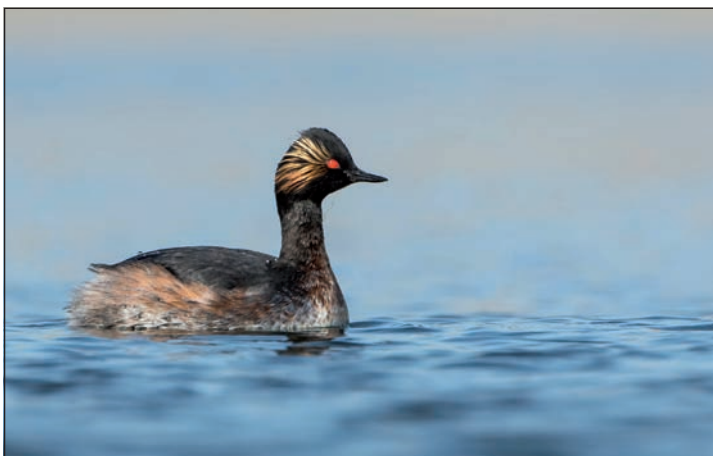
#### Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*



Rare breeder, scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber List. WeBS threshold for national importance: 1. **RBBP**

In the early winter single birds were present at Covenham Reservoir on Jan 1st and 30th and at Toft Newton Reservoir Jan 1st-28th and again on Feb 24th. In spring a single bird was present at North Hykeham Pits Mar 18th-May 11th, at Barton Pits Mar 6th-17th, Covenham Reservoir Mar 23rd-30th and Apr 30th and at Frampton Marsh on May 6th.

At traditional breeding sites the picture was of a continued gradual reduction with no confirmed breeding for the second successive year. Site A had single birds on Mar 21st and Mar 25th with three there on Apr 21st. Site B had no records at all. Site C had two birds on Mar 12th and three on Mar 25th and May 9th. Numbers rose to five on May 14th and 18th with four on Jun 5th and Jun 11th and finally one on Sep 10th. A juvenile was reported at Deeping St James on Aug 5th and 6th. Singles were also reported at Witham Mouth on Dec 11th, Toft Newton Reservoir on Dec 28th and Frampton Marsh on Dec 28th.



Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* Covenham Reservoir Mar 26th 2017 © Mark Johnson





Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* Dunsby Fen Jul 25th 2017 © Steve Keightley



Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* Dunsby Fen Jul 25th 2017 © Steve Keightley





Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* Dunsby Fen Jul 25th 2017 © Russell Hayes



Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* Dunsby Fen Jul 25th 2017 © Steve Keightley

**Black Stork *Ciconia nigra***

Rare vagrant. The first record for the county was at Freiston Shore in 1984. Recent records reflect the presence of a growing breeding population in northern France. **BBRC**.

A 1CY bird was found at Dunsby Fen, Rippingale on Jul 24th-25th (I. Warsap *et al*). Accepted by BBRC (BB 111 p566). This represented about the seventh record for the county, pending resolution of the complex series of sightings in 2015.

**White Stork *Ciconia ciconia***

Rare vagrant. Status complicated by the existence of reintroduction schemes on the near continent. **LBRC**

There were just two records: the first was at Frampton Marsh RSPB on Apr 3rd (RSPB) and the other was at Gibraltar Point on Apr 24th (KMW). As usual there are concerns about the origins of this species but these dates are suggestive of migrants.

**Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus***

Rare but increasing passage migrant; breeding attempt in 2014. **LBRC RBBP**

There was one at Frampton Marsh RSPB on Nov 19th (Russell Phillips, Tom Danaher, Angela Plumb). This is the 24th county record.



Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* Frampton Marsh Sep 2nd 2017 © Mark Johnson

**Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia***



Scarce visitor, mainly coastal in Apr-Sep, and exceptionally in winter. Amber List. WeBS threshold for national importance: 1. **RBBP**

As in previous years there were three main summering locations - Gibraltar Point/Middlemarsh Farm, Alkborough Flats and Frampton Marsh, which all had an almost continuous presence from Apr to Oct, with only intermittent and generally single reports from elsewhere. Numbers at the main sites are shown in the table below.

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gibraltar Point	-	-	-	1	2	5	16	20	14	4	-	-
Middlemarsh Farm*	-	-	-	-	-	5	10	-	-	-	-	-
Alkborough Flats	-	-	-	1	2	3	15	15	20	4	-	-
Frampton Marsh	-	-	-	1	1	2	3	7	9	-	-	-

(\* The records at Middlemarsh Farm probably reflect movement between there and nearby Gibraltar Point)

The first record was at Alkborough Flats on Apr 1st and the last was over Saltfleetby St. Peter on Oct 31st. Six were observed flying past Goxhill Haven/New Holland on Sep 10th. Other inland records came from Haverholme, with three flying SW on May 25th, and two at Woodhall Spa on Jun 14th.



Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* Gibraltar Point Sep 4th 2017 © Paul Neale

**Eurasian Bittern *Botaurus stellaris***



Rare breeder, rare winter visitor. Bred to early 19th century, from 1940s-1979 and in recent years. Amber List. WeBS threshold for national importance: 6. **RBBP**

Bitterns continue to maintain their foothold in the county with better breeding success. The year began with a small wintering population, well down on 2016. In all reports came from 17 sites down from 18 in 2016, with five to eight birds reported Apr-Jul, and a maximum of eight in Nov. The highest single count was at Barton Pits where there were of five in May and there were sightings there in 11 months of the year. Single booming males were reported at Alkborough Flats from Apr 13th to May 12th, Huttoft Pit on Apr 20th, Baston Fen on May 18th, and Messingham SQ throughout May. Single long-staying wintering birds were reported from Whisby NR on 18 dates from Jan 1st to Mar 14th and on 13 dates from Nov 16th to Dec 18th and at Boultham Mere on 13 dates from Oct 10th to Dec 12th.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of sites	4	4	3	5	4	4	5	3	1	4	4	4
Minimum Lincs total	4	4	3	5	8	4	7	3	2	4	8	4

**Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis***

Rare vagrant. **LBRC**

This species is becoming much more regular. The first was at Marton on Feb 22nd (PSc) followed by sightings of single birds in Mar at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR from 1st-15th (CG *et al*), at Gibraltar Point 19th-20th (RDn) and at Alkborough Flats 19th-24th (GPC, ND *et al*). One was at Deeping Lakes NR Apr 4th (J.Pegson *et al*) and another at Anderby Apr 16th (GWr, RHay). Two were at Frampton Marsh RSPB May 29th-Jul 10th (H. Barnard), the first record for the reserve. In the autumn there were three at Baston on Aug 24th (KKH), one was at Theddlethorpe St Helen on Sep 9th-13th (CSc) which was presumably one of the two at Saltfleetby St Clements from Sep 14th to the 18th (ACS). A third bird joined these two from Sep 23rd (GWr) and all three remained in the area until Nov 5th.





Eurasian Bittern *Botaurus stellaris* Far Ings Jan 12th 2017 © Paul Coombes



Eurasian Bittern *Botaurus stellaris* Far Ings Jan 12th 2017 © Paul Coombes



Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* Saltfleetby Mar 8th 2017 © Roy Harvey

### Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*



Fairly common resident, partial migrant and winter visitor. Green List.

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Kirkby on Bain	8	5	19	12	10	3	2	5	2	3	1	1
Tetney	2	2	-	16	15	5	4	4	3	-	-	-
Frampton Marsh	4	5	2	3	2	2	2	12	6	6	5	4
Carlton & Manby Washlands	1	1	1	2	1	1	12	1	12	-	2	2
Alkborough Flats	4	5	8	4	4	10	1	3	4	2	2	1
Anwick	2	8	9	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Hartsholme	5	3	8	6	6	7	-	2	-	2	1	1
Spalding	6	4	7	8	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gibraltar Point	-	8	1	1	2	4	2	4	6	8	1	1

Size and ease of identification of this species make for full and fairly accurate recording. Away from its breeding quarters it is recorded widely in low numbers, the main sites are tabulated above. Reports of one to nine were noted at about 150 sites. Higher numbers were at Alkborough Flats where there were 10 on Jun 29th, 12 at Carlton and Manby Wetlands on Jul 27th, 12 at Frampton Marsh on Aug 27th and 12 again at Carlton and Manby Wetlands on Sep 9th. No notable ringing recoveries were reported during 2017.

Data from the long-running BTO Heronries Census is tabulated below, and shows that the total number of occupied nests in 2017 was 194, this compares with 175 in 2016. Without the increase in the numbers recorded at Hospital Cottage Spinney the total for 2017 would have been 180 – the increase was due to a change of observer at that site. Howsham Wood was not checked in 2016 but was confirmed deserted in 2017.

Numbers of Grey Heron nests recorded at Lincolnshire heronries in the BTO Heronries Census, 2017

Abbey Wood	24	Lea Marsh	9
Appletree Ness	9	Long Wood	5
Baston Sand & Gravel Pits	6	Nocton Wood	6
Belton Park	4	North Cotes Spinney	8
Dowsby Fen	Nil	Patterson's Pit	16
Fitties Nature Reserve	3	The Deepes	5
Hartsholme Country Park	20	The Mere, Deeping St James	9
Hospital Cottage Spinney	20	Troy Wood	7
Howsham Barff Wood	Nil	Warren Plantation	4
Kingerby Wood	Nil	Welland Farm	6
Kirkby Pits (west)	15	Willoughby Wood	18



Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* Alkborough Flats Nov 17th 2017 © Paul Coombes

#### Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

Rare vagrant. **LBRC**.

Whilst most herons seem to be increasing this species remains stubbornly rare and an adult at Boultham Mere on May 14th (ACS) was the first record since 2011.

#### Great White Egret *Ardea alba*

Scarce but increasing visitor recorded in all months, scarcer Jul-Aug. **LBRC**

The first county record was in Aug 1979 and it was a BBRC species until 2005. It is now rapidly increasing and was seen in every month of the year. During the first quarter singles were noted at twenty sites with about 15 birds seen, though some are very mobile, and two were together in the Deeping/Crowland area on Mar 11th. One was at Fiskerton Apr 4th and singles were at Frampton Marsh RSPB Apr 16th and 30th. This latter bird was seen in the Frampton area on several dates in May and last noted on Jun 4th. In Jul single birds were at Friskney on the 23rd, Whisby NR and Tetney on the 26th and presumably the same bird at Donna Nook 27th and 28th. One was at Whisby NR again on Aug 23rd and one was seen at Freiston and Frampton from 27th-30th. One was at Anderby on Sep 11th, one at Immingham on Sep 22nd and Long Sutton on Sep 28th. Single



birds were noted in Oct at Alkborough Flats on the 5th, Frampton Marsh on the 10th and 21st, Barton Pits on the 10th, Kirkby on Bain on the 28th and Beckingham on the 31st. The year ended as it had begun with records from 17 sites and involving about 10 birds.

### 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. Green List. WeBS threshold for national importance: 45. **RBBP**

District minimum totals	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
The Humber	34	21	38	53	86	91	143	150	193	59	38	25
East coast	17	35	65	14	10	20	22	40	35	62	12	16
The Wash	43	86	84	69	83	93	607	718	483	214	144	47
Inland	163	137	102	93	39	33	54	48	49	28	50	60
Minimum Lincs total	257	279	289	229	218	237	826	956	760	363	244	148

The summary table above shows the monthly minimum peak counts of all birds recorded in each of four districts comprising the whole county; the East Coast includes Saltfleetby to Skegness. The total in Aug of 956 beats the previous record monthly total of 873 in Sep 2013. Based on the Jan figures that show 63% of birds inland, there may be an increased propensity to winter away from the coast as only 37% of records were inland in Jan 2016.

The table below (anonymous sites referred to as site A to I by descending row) shows that the number of breeding pairs nearly trebled in a year to 218 pairs. This is due to a change in counting technique at site A in 2017 - it is likely the previous method may have led to under-counting in earlier years. This seems to answer the mystery of the missing big egretty that has long been suspected to be present close to The Wash. Up at The Humber it is thought that birds abandoned site E and returned to site B. Little Egret continues to go from strength to strength. It is now turning up in 6% of Lincolnshire BBS squares, the same as Oystercatcher and Common Tern.

Number of nests	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
A Wash	-	5	7	6	6	8	6	7	6	25	5	150
B Humber	1	11	14	11	27	17	12	-	8	14	13	22
C Inland	-	-	1	4	5	7	6	8	10	12	6	4
D Humber	-	-	-	-	2	3	3	4	20	15	22	18
E Humber	-	-	-	-	-	8	32	20	32	21	11	-
F Inland	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	5	8	8	10	14
G Wash	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
H Inland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	5
I Humber	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	4	5
Total	1	16	22	21	40	45	63	44	84	101	74	218

Two interesting colour-ringed birds were recorded in the county in 2017. GC85732 was ringed as a nestling in Norfolk in May 2010 and seen at Middlemarsh Farm, Skegness in Jan 2017, aged six years and seven months. A second bird, GR93594, also ringed as a nestling in Anglesey, was seen at unnamed sites in Lincolnshire in Jul and then in the West Midlands in Aug. It returned to Lincolnshire in late Aug when it was seen at Frampton Marsh on 23rd and again on Oct 9th.

### 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. Amber List.

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gibraltar Point	80	1	-	11	3	69	76	87	568	626	240	1
Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe	15	-	2	5	4	43	6	9	482	85	38	-
Freiston Shore	-	-	-	-	1	-	22	3	200	250	-	-
Tetney	-	-	-	-	-	2	10	3	236	-	-	-
Huttoft	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	72	170	7	1	-
Sutton on Sea	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	168	4	-
Donna Nook	-	-	-	3	-	1	24	11	163	107	-	-
Mablethorpe	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	123	-	-	5
Witham Mouth	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	30	80	28	1	20

The table includes all sites where there were counts of 80 or more. There were few records in the first four months of the year apart from two notable counts of 80 and 76 at Gibraltar Point on Jan



Great White Egret *Ardea alba* Fiskerton Fen Nov 26th 2017 © Russell Hayes



Great White Egret *Ardea alba* Nocton Fen Dec 22nd 2017 © Russell Hayes



Great White Egret *Ardea alba* Donna Nook Jul 27th 2017 © Mark Johnson



Great White Egret *Ardea alba* Frampton Marsh Sep 17th 2017 © Neil Smith

2nd and 4th, respectively. Elsewhere there were 10 at Anderby on Jan 4th, four at Grainthorpe on May 12th and three at Saltfleet on Jun 11th. Counts picked up during Jul-Oct with most birds being seen at the coastal sites noted in the table. Elsewhere there were 10 at Welland Marsh on Jul 26th, 14 at Grainthorpe on Aug 11th, 15 at Nene Mouth on Sep 8th, 30 at Chapel St Leonard's on Sep 16th, 27 at Welland Marsh on Sep 23rd, and two juveniles past Barton Pits on Oct 30th. Things were very quiet at the year's end with four at Anderby on Nov 19th and 20 at Witham Mouth on Dec 11th. There was just one inland record of a juvenile at Blackmoor Bridge, Aubourn on Dec 29th.

There was a notable ringing recovery of bird CIJ-F15680 that was ringed as a nestling in 1992 on Alderney in the Channel Islands in Jun 1992 and found dead at Gedney Drove End in Jul 2017, aged 25 years.

### Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* █

Usually rare/scarse winter visitor Aug-May to the coast and inland, with occasional larger influxes. Exceptional in summer. Red List.

In a poor year for this species there were only 12 records, three being ringed birds found dead: the first at Barton Pits from Feb 15th-26th, another at Frampton Marsh/Witham Mouth on May 14th and two at Gibraltar Point on May 30th. One was at Crook Bank, Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Sep 15th and another was at Gibraltar Point on Sep 18th. The last records were in Dec: one at Witham Mouth from the 7th-20th with two there on the 11th.

Three ringing recoveries of birds found dead in the county were all of birds ringed as nestlings. Two were from the Isle of May and one was from Craigleith, Firth of Forth. Bird 1272492 was nearly 26 years old, not far off the BTO longevity record for the species of 29 years and ten months.

1444013	Nestling	15-06-09	Isle of May: 56°10'N 2°33'W (Fife)
	Alive (colour rings seen)	11-05-11	Isle of May: 56°10'N 2°33'W (Fife), 0km, 1y 10m 26d
	Dead	18-02-17	Donna Nook: 53°27'N 0°10'E (Lincolnshire), 351km SSE, 7y 8m 3d
1472192	Nestling	08-06-15	Isle of May: 56°10'N 2°33'W (Fife)
	Freshly dead	08-02-17	Cleethorpes: 53°32'N 0°1'E (N. E. Lincolnshire), 336km SSE, 1y 8m 0d
1272492	Nestling	15-06-91	Craigleith, Firth of Forth: 56°4'N 2°43'W (East Lothian)
	Freshly dead	07-02-17	Cleethorpes: 53°33'N 0°1'W (N. E. Lincolnshire), 329km SSE, 25y 7m 23d



Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* Barton Pits Feb 19th 2017 © Graham Catley



## Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* ■

Fairly common winter visitor, mainly coastal but increasing numbers inland and in summer. Inland breeding colony established 1992. Amber List. WeBS for international importance: 1200. WeBS threshold for national importance: 350.

Coastal sites	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gibraltar Point	390	324	232	24	13	12	32	37	60	340	600	530
Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe	180	164	92	6	7	10	21	14	67	30	80	32
Wrangle	-	5	-	2	2	39	4	130	140	3	2	1
Donna Nook	76	38	35	13	25	6	40	28	53	49	8	9
Barton Pits	20	17	3	4	1	1	6	5	20	30	47	60
Saltfleet	56	21	51	-	5	2	2	6	1	16	6	3
Witham Mouth	15	28	15	6	6	-	20	20	20	-	15	6
Inland sites	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Covenham Reservoir	20	4	2	5	5	8	8	6	46	110	19	8
Deeping St James	60	40	30	32	51	90	38	39	25	4	22	23
North Hykeham Pits	36	-	-	-	1	-	3	11	1	-	9	82
Whisby NR	58	27	11	3	11	5	44	36	26	12	23	63
Boultham Mere	10	14	14	8	1	18	12	13	16	23	15	15

The tables above include all sites that regularly hold significant numbers, with the highest coastal counts coming from Gibraltar Point and inland at Covenham Reservoir. Elsewhere in the first quarter, significant counts included 20 at Tongue End on Jan 1st, 18 at Langtoft Jan 15th, 33 at Middlemarsh farm on Feb 23rd and 18 there on Mar 8th. Numbers dropped off significantly from Apr onwards with a few exceptions; there were 46 at Tetney on Apr 14th, 19 at Tattershall Thorpe Apr 15th and 34 at Friskney Apr 29th. Other high counts included 83 at Friskney on Jun 24th, 90 at Terrington Jul 25th, 30 at Frampton Marsh also on Jul 25th, 50 there Aug 12th, 30 at Marshchapel Sep 25th, 30 at Reads Island on Oct 15th, 70 at Terrington Oct 23rd, 99 there on Nov 8th, 42 at Seacroft on Dec 24th and 20 at Fillingham on Dec 27th. Cormorants were almost exclusively breeders in Britain until 1981 when they first started nesting in trees. At Deeping Lakes, the only county breeding site, numbers peaked at 90 in Jun but there is no information about occupied nests or breeding success.

## Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* ■

Scarce passage migrant, rare in summer. Amber List. RBBP

The first record of the spring was an early bird at Willow Tree Fen on Mar 17th with the second record not until two weeks later, at Gibraltar Point on Mar 29th. There were another 17 records thereafter up to May 31st, 11 coastal and six inland. Overall, the spring arrivals involved a conservative estimate of 18 birds, with multiple arrivals of three on Apr 15th and two on Apr 23rd. At least three of the birds at Gibraltar Point were seen coming in off the sea and departing west or north-west.

There were one to two birds at Messingham SQ on Jun 22nd-23rd, at Denton on Jul 13th and 19th, and Tetney on Jul 16th. One was seen at Gibraltar Point on Aug 4th, coming in from the south and then drifting off north.

Autumn migration usually begins in mid-Aug and birds will often stop off *en route* to feed for some days. One such bird at Donna Nook was present from Aug 21st-31st. A further 12 autumn records were reported between Aug 22nd and Oct 2nd, the last of the autumn at Gibraltar Point. Given their propensity for significant stopover periods in the autumn, it is possible that this involved only eight or nine birds.

## Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus* ■

Very scarce passage migrant, with occasional larger autumn influxes. Amber List. LBRC RBBP

There were three records; the first was at Tetney on May 28th (CA) and at Gibraltar Point on Jul 1st (RDn) and Sep 23rd (GPBO).

## 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. Green List.

The table below shows the top two sites holding maximum counts of five or more birds in any month of the year. It reflects the pattern of migration observed at these two premier coastal sites,

which shows a peak in autumn. The species was found in 11% of BBS squares (2016 9%) with an average of 1.2 birds per occupied square (2016 1.0). On these figures Sparrowhawk is our third most widespread raptor after Buzzard (61%) and Kestrel (55%). However factoring in that it was found in all Lincolnshire 10km squares in the last BTO Atlas and its relative lack of visibility into the breeding season it is likely that this species is under-reported in BBS compared to the more visible Buzzard and Kestrel.

An interesting control concerned DR22241, originally ringed as a second year male at Gibraltar Point on 1st Jan 2010 and retrapped on 22nd Dec 2017 near Lynford Arboretum, in Norfolk when aged 7 years and 11 months.

Site Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gibraltar Point	2	2	3	5	3	2	2	2	8	5	4	1
Donna Nook	2	1	1	2	2	1	0	1	5	3	1	1

### Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis* ■

Rare visitor/passage migrant, mainly autumn to spring. Green List. **LBRC, RBBP**

A 2CY bird was seen in Laughton Forest on Mar 1st (GPC), the first record there in 34 years of survey work. It was not seen subsequently in spite of regular surveys. Presumably persecution in the counties nearest to Lincolnshire is preventing their spread, given apparently suitable habitat in the Wolds and elsewhere.

### Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* ■

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

Peak monthly count	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
North	26	6	25	24	18	26	40	15	16	37	31	25
Coast	-	2	6	9	7	6	3	6	8	2	2	-
Wash	15	8	13	15	15	7	29	15	25	20	21	18
Inland	4	6	10	26	22	16	17	24	7	4	3	5



Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* Confidential Lincolnshire Site Jul 2017 © Jack Dawson



**Table 1: Peak monthly counts from four regions within the county.**

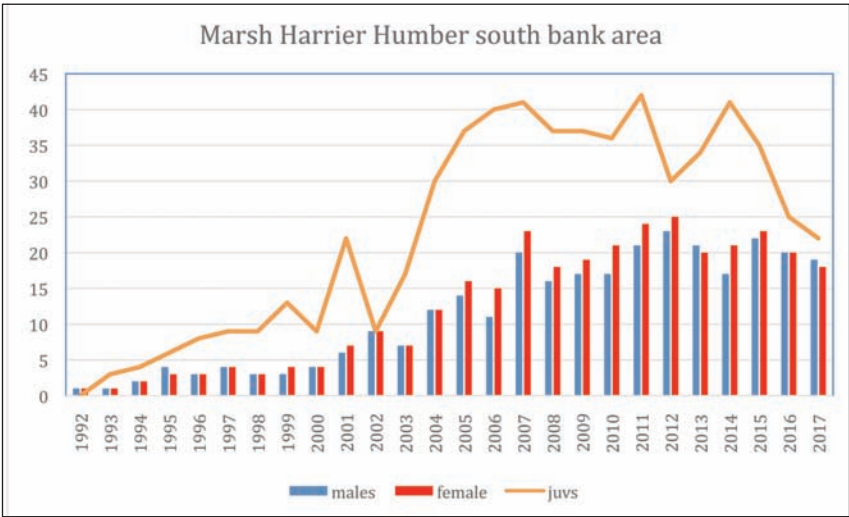
Table 1 includes totals from localities within four broad regions, though it is difficult to be sure which reports refer to the same birds within these. This is the fifth consecutive year that data has been presented consistently in this way. Table 2, below, shows how a sample of total monthly counts for the county have varied over the last five years.

Peak monthly count	Jan	May	Dec
2017	45	62	48
2016	64	108	46
2015	64	70	61
2014	48	80	38
2013	25	63	21

**Table 2: Variation in monthly counts over a five-year period**

Table 2 suggests that the wintering population in Jan 2017 was well down on Jan 2016 and this is reflected by lower winter counts of eight at Alkborough Flats on Jan 4th, nine on Nov 30th and 13 on Dec 14th.

In North Lincolnshire in the south Humber bank region, surveyed by GPC since 1993, there was a third successive year of decline in the number of breeding males, females and juveniles fledged.



The losses in 2017 were mainly concentrated at one site but a reduction in food availability seems to be affecting breeding success in general. Two green-tagged birds from Norfolk nests were seen in the area in 2017; XR ringed at Thorpe-Haddiscoe on the Norfolk/Suffolk border on Jun 12th 2017 was seen intermittently at Alkborough Flats from Sept 7th–Oct 8th then again on Dec 13th. Female VS ringed Jun 4th 2017 near Strumpshaw, Norfolk, was from a brood of five seen at Alkborough Flats on Dec 28th and then in Bonby Carrs on Jan 18th and Feb 25th 2018.

Elsewhere there were 18 confirmed nests of which one failed and 17 nests produced 51 fledged young. A further three probable pairs were reported. The total of 21 reported pairs was down from 26 in 2016. Of these 21, 15 came from the inland fens, 3 from the Wash and 3 from the coast. Overall there were 39 pairs, down from 46 in 2016 and 56 in 2015. Speculation about the decline of breeding Marsh Harriers in the fens centres on recent changes in agricultural practices with rye grass production for bio-ethanol possibly implicated in loss of hunting habitat and consequently prey species. More detailed research on the Lincolnshire Marsh Harrier population is needed to find out why a recently successful recolonising species has started to decline.



Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* Gibraltar Point Nov 5th 2017 © Russell Hayes

### 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. Red List. **RBBP**

48 sites recorded Hen Harrier in 2017, although 30 of these only recorded the species in one month of the year. Peak counts continue to be low, and only Frampton Marsh and Gibraltar Point reported three birds. Birds were reported from Jan 1st through to late May when birds lingered largely on the coast. The last coastal records were of singles at Gibraltar Point and Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on May 18th and another was inland at Aubourn on May 20th.

An early autumn bird was seen at Branston Booths on Aug 29th followed by a trickle of records in Sep with singles at Frampton Marsh on Sep 13th and Gibraltar Point on Sep 19th. Frampton Marsh had three on Oct 24th, but otherwise there were one or two birds through until the end of the year at a number of sites. Aging and sexing birds was infrequent, but adult males were noted

at Gibraltar Point and Witham Mouth on the Wash and a good record was of one going east over Bolingbroke Castle on Oct 28th.

Records were received from 13 sites in the period Nov-Dec, six of which were on The Wash. Inland, Crowland, Deeping St James and Dunsby recorded single birds on one date in that period; New Holland was the only Humber site to see one, Dec 23rd, Donna Nook had just a single, Nov 17th, and Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR also had single birds on various dates between Nov 11th and Dec 18th. Overall, 2017 was a pretty thin year for this much-persecuted species.

**Montagu's Harrier** *Circus pygargus* ■

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

The 2016 text commented upon the declining fortunes of the Montagu's Harrier in Lincolnshire and this report continues in the same vein with the lowest ever number of birds seen, just two individuals in the whole year. A summering female that frequented Blacktoft Sands in Yorkshire was seen over Alkborough Flats on May 20th, Jun 4th and 10th and a 2CY male was in Worlaby Carrs on Jul 31st.

**Red Kite** *Milvus milvus* ■

Scarce resident and, from 2008, very scarce breeding species mainly in the southwest of the county. Green List.

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gibraltar Point	1	-	1	1	31	1	1	1	-	1	1	-
Bulby	14	9	11	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	25	12
Hawthorpe	24	5	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kirkby Underwood	-	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Marston	-	1	-	-	1	5	-	-	-	-	-	-
Colsterworth	-	4	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Frampton Marsh	-	-	1	1	4	2	1	1	2	-	-	-
Creeton	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	4	-



Red Kite *Milvus milvus* Stamford Feb 7th 2017 © Russell Hayes

The table shows all areas that held four or more and with the species becoming more widespread, reports were received from 106 areas during 2017, although counts were only received in one to three months of the year for the majority. Most of the larger counts this year came from the Hawthorpe -Bulby-Callan's Lane area, where there is almost certainly overlap in counts. There

were good numbers of wintering birds in that area, with 14 at Bulby on Jan 3rd and 24 at Hawthorpe on Jan 21st.

The largest count of the year came in the spring from Gibraltar Point where groups of seven and five went south over the east dunes, and a total of 31 went south during the day on May 28th; later on 12 of these were seen disappearing along the sea bank at Wainfleet. Four were seen at Frampton Marsh on the same date but there were no other coastal records that day in the county. Otherwise no counts of four were made away from the south-west. Breeding was confirmed or strongly suspected at four sites, fledged juveniles being seen at three of these and adults thought to be near to a nest at the fourth. Six pulli were ringed in 2017, two chicks in each of three nests.

Fewer were seen in Sep-Oct than at other times with no evidence of any coastal migration. Winter numbers built up in Nov and Dec with roosts of 25 on Nov 26th and 12 on Dec 3rd in the Hawthorpe-Bulby area.

### Rough-legged Buzzard *Buteo lagopus*

Rare/scarc coastal passage migrant and winter visitor, chiefly Oct-Nov and occasionally Dec-May. **LBRC.**

After a few years in which significant numbers were noted this species has become a rare bird with only one record at Throckenholt from Feb 19th-22nd (ZH). It was also regularly seen over the border in Cambridgeshire.

### Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*



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

The table below shows the top 10 sites holding maximum counts of eight or more birds in any month of the year. There were also nine at Muckton on Mar 24th. The Mar peak probably represents Buzzard peak noticeability when these birds are engaged in their distinctive territorial displays. Migrants account for the Sep coastal peak at Gibraltar Point and Donna Nook. The species was found in 61% of BBS squares (2016 62%) with an average of 1.8 birds per occupied square (2016 1.6). It is now so widespread in Lincolnshire that it has a similar prevalence to Starling and House Sparrow, though of course its numbers are much fewer.

Site Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Laughton Forest	-	-	30	1	5	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Tetney	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	28	1	-	-	-
Donna Nook	3	3	2	10	4	7	2	8	26	2	1	1
Gibraltar Point	1	3	3	4	14	1	2	5	16	11	3	2
Whisby NR	2	4	13	9	2	4	6	4	8	5	3	3
Marton	4	2	5	10	-	-	5	-	8	-	-	-
Messingham	3	6	8	8	5	2	2	10	4	5	3	3
Covenham Reservoir	3	7	6	8	4	3	3	2	3	1	1	1
Boultham Mere	3	4	8	4	6	2	3	5	8	4	2	2
Saltfleetby Theddlethorpe	1	2	8	4	3	1	-	1	1	3	1	3

### Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*



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

Peak monthly count	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alkborough Flats	3	2	2	40	40	40	40	3	3	3	-	2
Barton Pits	8	5	6	20	20	20	20	12	-	2	11	-
Gibraltar Point	4	1	2	1	3	-	2	1	3	7	14	5
Willow Tree Fen	1	2	6	4	1	8	-	-	-	-	-	-
Marston STW	8	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	3	6	7
Whitton	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Whisby NR	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	4
Killingholme	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	1	-	-	-
Frampton Marsh	3	2	1	2	1	1	2	1	4	3	2	2
Boultham Mere	2	3	2	1	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	2

The table includes all sites with records of more than four birds and sites are listed in descending order of the peak count. There were 27 confirmed broods this year, 25 at Alkborough Flats in

Jul and one each at Boultham Mere Jul 28th-30th and Frampton Marsh Aug 13th. A total of 76 territories were reported, more than twice last years total of 35 pairs. Probable pairs were at Alkborough Flats (15), Barton Pits (20), Willow Tree Fen, Killingholme Pits and Whitton with four each and Goxhill Pits with two. There were also six possible breeders at other sites. In all 82 breeding records came from 14 sites compared to 39 from 11 sites last year. The numbers reported in the last four months of the year did not suggest an autumn influx this year. Thanks to GPC for his thorough checking of sites on the Humber Bank that have yielded a more realistic breeding population number for 2017.



Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus* (breeding pair) Far Ings Apr 26th 2017 © Graham Catley



Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus* (chick) Alkborough Flats Aug 23rd 2017 © Graham Catley

### Corn Crane *Crex crex*



Very scarce passage migrant. Red List. LBRC RBBP

There was one record of a calling male on private land north of Boston. The owner didn't give exact dates but said the bird had kept the household awake for many weeks in Jun-Jul. It was last reported around Jul 28th (PAH).

### Spotted Crane *Porzana porzana*

Rare migrant, though historically a breeding species up to the latter half of the 19th Century. LBRC

There was just one record at Frampton Marsh RSPB on Aug 21st (C.L.Wood, eBird).

### Western Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio*

Very rare vagrant. BBRC

A 3CY+ Western Swamphen was seen at Alkborough Flats on Jan 4th (GPC *et al*) and presumed to be the same individual seen there from Aug-Nov 2016 at least. Accepted by BBRC (BB 111 p 568).

### Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*



Very common resident and partial migrant. Green List.

The table below shows the top ten sites holding maximum counts of 22 or more birds in any month of the year. The peak count at Middlemarsh Farm of 62 in Jan compares to a peak of 54 the previous Jan at that site. The species was found in 31% of BBS squares (2016 34%) with an average of 2.0 birds per occupied square (2016 1.9).

Site Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Middlemarsh Farm	62	44	32	14	12	10	20	20	17	1	-	42
Boultham	30	25	7	6	7	3	-	-	-	8	25	60
Frampton Marsh	14	25	11	45	35	10	8	51	10	10	7	20
Stamford	37	24	32	13	5	-	-	-	11	16	-	7
Boultham Mere	30	15	7	7	7	8	10	14	20	8	8	16
Tetney	26	21	-	8	13	14	15	15	20	-	-	5
Kirkstead Bridge	9	1	-	-	-	-	-	16	25	18	19	20
Whisby	24	6	15	13	15	8	16	20	16	9	14	15
Sleaford	-	-	1	3	-	-	5	9	13	13	20	24
Holywell	22	11	11	-	-	-	-	-	13	9	-	17

### Common Coot *Fulica atra*



Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Green List. WeBS threshold for national importance: 1800.

The table below shows the top ten sites holding maximum counts of 150 or more birds in any month of the year. The peak count at Thurlby Sand Pit, Bassingham, of 600 on Jan 5th compares to a peak of 349 the previous Jan at nearby Whisby. The species was found in 17% of BBS squares (2016 12%) with an average of 2.7 birds per occupied square (2016 2.6).

Site Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bassingham	600	100	80	60	80	20	-	-	-	-	-	150
Tattershall Thorpe	290	155	56	42	-	20	-	-	-	-	-	-
Norton Disney	198	29	13	29	15	-	-	-	-	277	177	84
Covenham Reservoir	104	60	23	21	11	31	65	160	251	265	200	100
Kirkby on Bain	250	120	61	25	26	59	72	75	65	80	93	170
Barton Pits	220	83	36	51	29	5	250	183	105	66	120	145
Deeping St James	85	50	10	13	10	15	56	156	225	222	20	15
Whisby NR	188	123	120	60	61	57	110	97	31	42	113	181
Toft next Newton	85	66	19	6	7	3	3	24	63	90	112	155
Cadney	-	-	-	-	-	-	70	40	40	150	40	2



### Common Crane *Grus grus*



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

One was photographed at North Scarle on Mar 4th (per GHo) and later in the month one flew low south at Middlemarsh Farm on Mar 21st (NAL). In Apr five were seen at Alkborough Flats on 20th (per GPC) when nine also flew south at Gibraltar Point (Alan Brewster). In May there was one at Gibraltar Point on 2nd (RDn, ML, KMW), one at Tetney on 15th (RL), and two at Frampton Marsh on 26th (RSPB). There followed a series of records of one bird all of which may relate to one individual – May 28th at Tetney (CA), later at Middlemarsh Farm (NAL) and Frampton Marsh (RSPB) on the same day. There were further records at Frampton Marsh on May 29th (Mark Avery), three records at Gibraltar Point on Jun 3rd, 9th and 17th (D. Hitchin, GPBO) and lastly one at Frampton Marsh on Jun 21st (PAH). There was a single autumn record of one in the north of the county on Sep 4th (CRO).



Common Crane *Grus grus* Gibraltar Point Jun 4th 2017 © Paul Neale

### Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*



Very common coastal passage migrant / winter visitor and fairly common resident. Less common inland but now breeds in small numbers. Amber List. WeBS threshold for international importance: 8200. WeBS for national importance: 3200.

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Freiston Shore	1000	700	1100	1200	600	950	2100	12000	3100	2500	1200	80
Gibraltar Point	1500	2500	2490	1000	1000	352	2000	5000	7450	5250	5000	700
Frampton Marsh	124	20	85	264	700	20	20	12	80	3000	-	1
Witham Mouth	1100	1500	50	2000	25	-	100	2000	3000	1700	20	5
Humberston	2200	1	-	1	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-
Terrington	-	-	110	270	240	-	320	-	-	1500	1900	1900
Wrangle	1200	1000	-	385	300	880	1810	900	350	20	25	400
Tetney	1500	1800	750	400	487	424	450	1200	1600	280	300	-
Marshchapel	488	510	443	500	300	323	780	1540	1171	210	1650	-
Cleethorpes	564	750	360	228	140	87	474	730	1600	250	500	354
Friskney	-	480	1100	1600	717	133	1311	-	-	-	-	-

Only one site in the county, Freiston Shore with 12000 in Aug, held birds in numbers of international significance (>8200) whilst numbers at Gibraltar Point were of national significance with more than 3200 birds from Aug-Nov inclusive. The Table lists all those sites with counts exceeding 1500 birds; elsewhere in the county a further three sites had numbers exceeding 1000:

Saltfleet, Donna Nook & Wainfleet, all coastal. Overall Oystercatchers were recorded from 100 sites across the county; breeding was probable or confirmed at 21 sites, inland and coastal, and was possible at three others.

Ringling data for FH52527 and FH52569 demonstrate the great site fidelity of these birds in two different parts of the country after being caught on passage on the Wash and then wintering in Devon.

FH52638	Adult	04-08-15	Holbeach St Matthew: 52°51'N 0°8'E (Lincolnshire)
	Long dead	10-06-17	Nibon: 60°26'N 1°27'W (Shetland), 847km N, 1y 10m 6d
FH52527	Adult	02-08-15	Friskney: 53°1'N 0°11'E (Lincolnshire)
	Alive (ring read in field)	19-12-15	Dawlish Warren: 50°35'N 3°26'W (Devon), 369km SW, 0y 4m 17d
	Alive (ring read in field)	24-12-16	Dawlish Warren: 50°36'N 3°27'W (Devon), 368km SW, 1y 4m 22d
	Alive (ring read in field)	27-07-17	Dawlish Warren NNR: 50°36'N 3°26'W (Devon), 368km SW, 1y 11m 25d
	Alive (ring read in field)	16-10-17	Dawlish Warren NNR: 50°36'N 3°26'W (Devon), 368km SW, 2y 2m 14d
FH52569	Adult	02-08-15	Friskney: 53°1'N 0°11'E (Lincolnshire)
	Alive (ring read in field)	01-02-16	Dawlish Warren: 50°35'N 3°26'W (Devon), 369km SW, 0y 5m 30d
	Alive (ring read in field)	24-12-16	Dawlish Warren: 50°36'N 3°27'W (Devon), 368km SW, 1y 4m 22d
	Alive (ring read in field)	02-09-17	Dawlish Warren NNR: 50°36'N 3°26'W (Devon), 368km SW, 2y 1m 0d
	Alive (ring read in field)	28-12-17	Dawlish Warren NNR: 50°35'N 3°27'W (Devon), 370km SW, 2y 4m 26d

**Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus*

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

A pair spent two days on the north scrape at Frampton Marsh, May 11th-12th (JSa *et al*). They built a nest and were observed mating but unfortunately *Vulpes vulpes* disturbed them. This is the second time in the last three years a pair has tried to breed at Frampton Marsh, how long before they breed successfully?

**2016 addition** A 2CY+ female was at Frampton Marsh on 3rd-4th May (per R. Harvey) and the same bird was presumed to have been the individual at Anderby Wetlands on 5th-7th May (D. Satterthwaite *et al*, per R. Harvey). Accepted by BBRC (BB 111 p623). This was the last year in which Black-winged Stilt was a BBRC species.

With the addition of this record to the Lincolnshire total, there have now been 17 records of Black-winged Stilt in the county involving 24 birds. Nine of these records have come during 2010-2017, involving 13 birds and two failed breeding attempts.

**Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta*



Increasing now fairly common coastal breeder, has colonised inland localities in the past few years. Fairly common passage migrant, rare in winter and scarce inland. Amber List. WeBS threshold for international importance: 730. WeBS threshold for national importance: 75. **RBBP**

Peak monthly count	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Reads Island	36	219	600	122	200	154	2000	1600	2000	1000	242	7
Alkborough Flats	-	9	250	100	36	352	780	940	396	720	36	11
Frampton Marsh	2	17	200	145	57	120	150	70	40	6	6	-
Gibraltar Point	1	6	60	68	60	81	100	57	34	34	3	-
Freiston Shore	-	8	12	50	59	43	89	6	-	-	-	-
Killingholme	-	-	70	1	-	11	15	-	12	50	20	-
Donna Nook	-	-	-	31	32	30	25	-	-	-	-	-
Skegness, Middlemarsh Farm	-	-	4	23	26	23	12	6	-	-	-	-
Messingham SQ	-	-	-	6	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Only one bird was reported on Jan 1st, from Barton Pits, and eight were there on Jan 6th. Reads Island held 36 on Jan 5th. Frampton Marsh had ones and twos from Jan 17th onwards. Gibraltar Point had its first on Feb 18th and the first significant count was from Reads Island of 219 on Feb 19th while Frampton Marsh was up to 17 on Feb 25th. Numbers built significantly in early Mar with 600 at Reads Island on Mar 7th and 80 at Frampton Marsh on Mar 8th. The highest count outside the table above of the 10 most important sites was 12 at Manby Wetlands on May 20th. Breeding numbers were down this year with 235 pairs reported from 13 sites compared to 258 pairs from 9 sites in 2016. Breeding success was as usual patchy. Read's Island formerly our most important breeding site, held only 40 pairs, which raised no young. Silt accretion has been such that the island is connected to the mainland apart from high tides and predation by badgers is now thought to be the cause for nesting failure. Elsewhere on the Humber, one pair nested at

Alkborough Flats and failed and one pair failed at Barton Pits. Eleven pairs at Killingholme Haven Pits raised eight young while four pairs at nearby Rosper Road Pools failed. At the mouth of the estuary none bred at Horseshoe Point, while 16 pairs nested at Donna Nook Realignment and three of these raised 8 young. Around The Wash, 21 pairs nested at Gibraltar Point and close by at Middlemarsh Farm four pairs fledged eight young and one pair at Seacroft raised three young. 50 pairs nested at Freiston Shore and 81 pairs bred at Frampton Marsh but no productivity data was submitted from either site. Inland sites had a very poor year with no breeding at Blackmoor Bridge or Manby Wetland and at Kirkby GP/Tattershall Thorpe Pits six pairs raised no young and a single nest at West Ashby also failed.

Migration on the Humber was down on the previous year's best ever totals. The Jul peak at Reads Island was 2000 on Jul 30th compared to 2741 in 2016 and the Alkborough Flats peak was down from 1100 to 940 on Aug 5th. The latest birds reported were one at Witham Mouth on Dec 11th and seven at Reads Island on Dec 12th.



Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* Read's Island Sep 8th 2017 © Graham Catley



Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* Frampton Marsh Jun 18th 2017 © Neil Smith

A series of birds ringed as chicks elsewhere in the UK were recorded in the county, together with a chick originally ringed as a chick at a French colony:

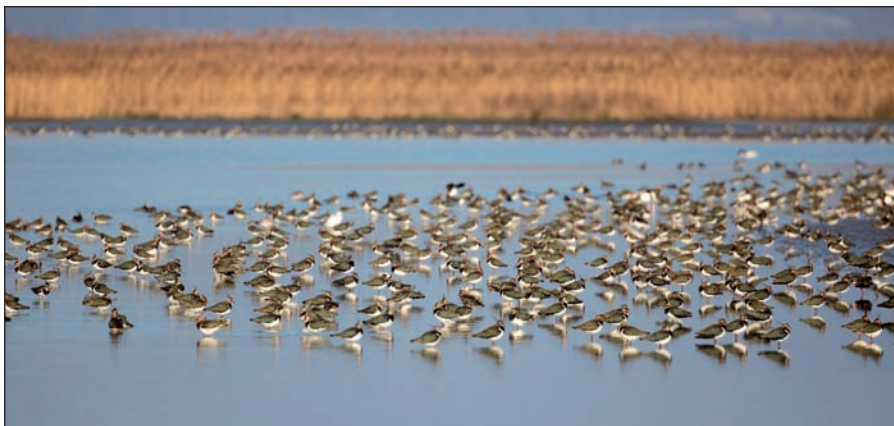
British-ringed birds seen in Lincolnshire			
EY04575	Nestling	14-06-12	Seal Sands, Teesmouth: c. 54°37'N 1°12'W (Stockton-on-Tees)
	Alive (colour rings seen)	19-04-17	Tennyson Sands, Gibraltar Point NNR, Skegness: 53°5'N 0°18'E (Lincolnshire), 197km SSE, 4y 10m 5d
	Alive (colour rings seen)	18-05-17	Tennyson Sands, Gibraltar Point NNR, Skegness: 53°5'N 0°18'E (Lincolnshire), 197km SSE, 4y 11m 4d
EY98075	Nestling	10-06-15	Seal Sands, Teesmouth: c. 54°36'N 1°11'W (Stockton-on-Tees)
	Alive (colour rings seen)	12-04-17	Gibraltar Point NNR: 53°5'N 0°18'E (Lincolnshire), 196km SSE, 1y 10m 2d
	Alive (colour rings seen)	22-06-17	Alkborough Flats: 53°41'N 0°40'W (North Lincolnshire) 110km, SSE, 2y 0m 12d
EY98063	Nestling	02-06-17	Seal Sands, Teesmouth: c. 54°36'N 1°11'W (Stockton-on-Tees)
	Alive (colour rings seen)	22-03-17	Middlemarsh Farm, near Skegness: 53°8'N 0°16'E (Lincolnshire), 191km SSE, 1y 9m 20d
	Alive (colour rings seen)	14-07-17	Alkborough Flats: c. 53°41'N 0°40'W (North Lincolnshire), 110km SSE, 2y 1m 12d
EW43333	Nestling	26-05-14	Orfordness: c. 52°5'N 1°34'E (Suffolk), 504km N, 1y 10m 12d
	Alive (colour rings seen)	03-08-14	Orfordness: c. 52°5'N 1°34'E (Suffolk), 0km, 0y 2m 8d
	Alive (colour rings seen)	02-09-17	Gibraltar Point, near Skegness: 53°5'N 0°18'E (Lincolnshire), 141km NW, 3y 3m 7d
Foreign-ringed birds seen in Lincolnshire			
FRP	Nestling	30-07-15	Reserve Naturelle de Sene: 47°37'N 2°43'E (Morbihan) France
FS88767	Alive (Colour rings seen)	21-03-17	Shell Ness, Pegwell Bay: 51°18'N 1°22'E (Kent), 423km NNW, 1y 7m 19d
	Alive (Colour rings seen)	26-03-17	Mistley: 51°56'N 1°4'E (Essex), 496km NNW, 1y 7m 24d
	Alive (Colour rings seen)	16-04-17	Gibraltar Point Bird Observatory: 53°6'N 0°19'E (Lincolnshire), 633km NNW, 1y 8m 17d
	Alive (Colour rings seen)	10-06-17	Orfordness: c. 52°5'N 1°34'E (Suffolk), 504km N, 1y 10m 11d
	Alive (Colour rings seen)	11-06-17	Minsmere: 52°14'N 1°36'E (Suffolk), 519km N, 1y 10m 12d
	Alive (Colour rings seen)	16-06-17	Minsmere: 52°14'N 1°36'E (Suffolk), 519km N, 1y 10m 12d

### Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Declining breeding species, becoming scarce, and very common passage migrant and winter visitor. Red List. WeBS threshold for international importance: 20000. WeBS threshold for national importance: 6200.

Site	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alkborough Flats	4300	4100	25	4	16	164	50	750	900	850	2380	5180
Frampton Marsh	4000	4000	1500	120	96	70	250	230	200	63	266	1450
Reads Island	1	3100	50	2	15	96	110	230	200	300	240	1
Witham Mouth	2500	300	-	-	-	-	3	1	-	-	50	28
Tetney	600	2000	-	-	1	-	6	1	3	-	3	2
Freiston Shore	1000	1750	3	1	1	126	8	12	-	500	250	1
Marshchapel	13	1623	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Killingholme	-	1400	-	-	-	-	-	41	128	-	295	37
Donna Nook	1150	1250	1	1	1	7	9	1	115	40	32	120
Goxhill	1200	65	17	15	15	4	3	-	30	41	40	318

Lapwings were recorded from 138 sites across the county; no individual site held numbers that exceeded the threshold (6200) for national significance though the collective sites on the Wash (26323) and Humber (23198) did so. The ten most significant sites (with more than 1500 birds) are listed in the Table but a further 18 sites held over 500 birds and an additional 37 held over 100. Peak counts were predominantly over autumn and winter from Aug to Feb before birds dispersed to breeding grounds. The BBS trend for lapwing in the East Midlands continues to decline and this is reflected, perhaps, in probable and confirmed breeding being reported from only 16 sites. Despite the ongoing decline in breeding birds, this is surely an under-estimate.



Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* Alkborough Flats Oct 20th 2017 © Graham Catley

### European Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*



Very common passage migrant and winter visitor, occasional in summer. Green List. WeBS threshold for international importance: 9200. WeBS threshold for national importance: 4000.

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Reads Island	20000	20000	500	-	-	-	-	80	20	10000	1200	-
Frampton Marsh	6000	10000	2000	6	3	-	50	30	300	1000	427	3800
Witham Mouth	8000	1500	-	-	-	-	-	-	20	-	-	1
Whitton	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6000	-	-
Leverton	5300	137	3500	-	-	-	177	-	-	-	-	-
Gib Pt	2500	1000	120	5000	6	-	50	200	2500	2000	1650	800
Donna Nook	1100	950	110	-	-	1	60	800	4000	1150	480	70
Marshchapel	165	-	-	-	-	-	440	4000	724	3900	882	-



European Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria* Read's Island Oct 15th 2017 © Graham Catley



Key sites for the species in Lincolnshire are included in the Table, all of which have at least one count of national importance (>4000). Read's Island (with peak 20000 birds in Jan and Feb) and Frampton Marsh (peak count 10000 birds in Feb) each hosted numbers of international significance (>9300) and so contributed significantly to the international importance of both the Humber and the Wash for the species. Overall, 15 sites had counts that exceeded 1000 birds, the majority being on or near the coast, with 44 sites spread more widely hosting numbers over 100. Small numbers of birds persisted into May and Jun with up to six at Gib Pt (May 7th), four at Freiston (Jun 1st) three at Frampton (May 4th) and Tetney (May 11th), and a single at Saltfleet until Jun 11th; 22 at Wrangle on Jun 25th marked the start of a gradual increase in passage and wintering birds through Jul-Oct, with most at Read's Island, as expected, on Oct 20th.

### Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* ■

Common passage migrant and common winter visitor. Rare inland. Amber List. WeBS threshold for international importance: 2500. WeBS threshold for national importance: 430.

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gibraltar Point	2500	4650	6620	5000	2000	51	200	2500	3000	3080	3700	1500
Wainfleet	-	211	4300	1240	1565	52	75	-	-	-	-	-
Marshchapel	340	524	3900	758	107	1	10	108	3525	1330	2000	-
Wrangle	900	650	-	850	1500	46	40	1000	960	200	1200	600
Friskney	-	110	1370	1050	1172	100	131	-	-	-	-	-
Cleethorpes	-	1	175	-	235	-	8	50	1100	-	13	45
Tetney	3	2	-	40	27	7	-	1050	120	-	-	5
Welland Marsh	15	70	480	600	-	-	350	-	70	540	70	-
Leverton	311	212	300	530	76	46	76	-	-	-	-	-
Donna Nook	350	500	44	110	63	7	9	125	43	10	72	60

The table shows monthly counts from all those sites (10 in total) with at least one count with more than 500 birds and so exceeding the threshold (430) for national importance; a further six sites had counts exceeding 100 birds. Individually, three sites (Gib Pt, Wainfleet, Marshchapel) had counts of international importance (>2500); Gibraltar Point maintains its position as the key site for the species in Lincolnshire with the highest counts (peak count of 6620 birds) and with records from all 12 months. All the sites mentioned are on the Wash or the Humber and reflect the collective importance of both estuaries for the species with counts at both typically peaking in spring and/or autumn passage. Away from the coast, single birds were recorded in spring at Baston (Mar 28th, May 6th & 29th; two there Apr 30th), Deeping Lakes (Apr 30th & May 8th), and North Hykeham Pits (May 4th).

### Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* ■ (nominate) ■ (*tundrae*)

Nominate British and southern Scandinavian form fairly common passage migrant, mainly coastal. Breeding has spread to inland sites in last 40 years. Northern Scandinavian and Russian form *tundrae* ("Tundra Ringed Plover") fairly common passage migrant. Red List (nominate) and Green List (*tundrae*). WeBS threshold for international importance: 730. WeBS threshold for national importance: 340.

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gibraltar Point	10	23	23	126	250	80	300	450	250	60	26	1
Frampton Marsh	30	50	30	32	300	15	175	400	50	50	-	25
Freiston Shore	20	-	-	3	1	-	67	300	400	45	4	1
Theddlethorpe St Helen	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	350	-	-	-	1
Marshchapel	-	42	16	18	156	29	3	315	71	22	-	-
Witham Mouth	15	-	-	-	13	-	1	100	-	-	300	1
Tetney	120	-	-	-	255	2	1	11	26	40	66	-
Saltfleetby Theddlethorpe	11	4	8	120	180	39	18	247	148	8	12	17
Reads Island	-	10	1	-	8	-	7	241	10	-	-	1
Wainfleet	-	-	-	39	227	18	-	-	-	-	-	-

Of the ten sites with the highest monthly count in the table only Gibraltar Point recorded Ringed Plover in every month. May and Aug saw the highest monthly totals for the county. In general, inland records were of one or two birds only although there was an unusual count of 28 at Billinghay in Jun.



Of interest was this nestling ringed in Germany in Jun 2016, recorded on passage at Frampton Marsh in Jul 2016, and seen again in Cornwall in Oct 2017. British and European Ringed Plovers use the East Atlantic flyway and move south through Iberia and on to West Africa.

Foreign-ringed bird seen in Lincolnshire

DEW	Nestling	11-06-16	Beltringharder Koog: 54°31'N 8°54'E (Schleswig-Holstein) Germany
T009118	Alive (Colour rings seen)	25-07-16	Frampton Marsh: 52°55'N 0°1'E (Lincolnshire), 611km WSW, 0y 1m 14d
	Alive (Colour rings seen)	01-10-17	Camel Estuary, near Wadebridge: 50°31'N 4°50'W (Cornwall), 1,031km WSW, 1y 3m 20d

### Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*



Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant since 1950. Green List. RBBP

Site Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Frampton Marsh	-	-	4	5	32	5	20	14	5	-	-	-
Alkborough Flats	-	-	-	6	4	1	14	5	1	-	-	-
Baston	-	-	6	10	8	-	3	2	1	-	-	-
Tattershall Thorpe	-	-	-	6	9	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Middlemarsh Farm	-	-	1	7	8	5	3	5	-	-	-	-
Seacroft	-	-	-	2	3	7	2	-	-	-	-	-
Whisby NR	-	-	-	2	1	3	6	-	-	-	-	-
Donna Nook	-	-	2	5	5	2	3	-	-	-	-	-
Gibraltar Point	-	-	2	3	2	3	4	3	-	-	-	-
Kirkby on Bain	-	-	2	4	3	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Minimum Lincs total	-	-	17	72	87	38	67	32	13	-	-	-
Number of sites	-	-	6	22	18	16	17	10	7	-	-	-

The earliest bird was at Middlemarsh Farm on Mar 12th, followed by singles at Frampton Marsh on Mar 17th and 25th, Donna Nook from Mar 18th onwards, Baston Fen on Mar 28th and Gibraltar Point on Mar 29th. The main arrival took place from mid Apr onwards. Reported breeding numbers were up with 33 pairs reported from 12 sites compared to 27 pairs from 10 sites in 2016. Confirmed breeding reports came from four sites. At Middlemarsh Farm two pairs fledged five young, at Seacroft one pair fledged three young, at Whisby NR one pair fledged two young and at Baston Fen there were two pairs. Reports of probable breeding pairs were as follows (number of pairs in brackets): Frampton Marsh (16), Pyewipe Marsh, Grimsby (2), Middlemarsh Farm (2), Donna Nook Realignment (2). There were single probable pairs at Alkborough Flats, Freiston Shore, Gibraltar Point, Kirkby on Bain Pits and Woodhall Spa Airfield. The county total in May was 87, which was well up on the Jul 2016 peak count of 60 birds. The latest records were one at Covenham Reservoir on Sep 14th, three at Frampton Marsh on Sep 15th and a single there on Sep 18th.

### Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*



Rare/scarce passage migrant, mainly spring. Red List. LBRC

Following a dismal spring passage for Dotterel in 2016, 2017 wasn't much better. However, the year started with a twist when an adult in winter plumage associating with Golden Plover was photographed at Frampton Marsh on Mar 4th (NS). The rarity of this event is emphasised by the absence of other Dotterel records on Birdtrack from Dec to Mar. Usual service was resumed with a spring female at Horseshoe Point on May 8th (GPC, JRC) and one at nearby Tetney on the same date (CA). On May 10th there were three at Horseshoe Point (WPB) and two flew north, calling, over Gibraltar Point at dusk (KMW). Inland there were two females at Worlabby Top on May 13th-14th (ND, WG, CCG). The sole autumn record was a juvenile at Frampton Marsh on Aug 15th (Nick Hughes).

### Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*



Fairly common passage migrant, mainly coastal. Rare in winter. Red List. WeBS threshold for national importance: 1.

Site name	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Freiston Shore	30	1	5	118	1	-	-	-	-
Saltfleetby Theddlethorpe	91	22	1	11	14	2	-	-	-
Holbeach Marsh	-	-	-	70	-	-	-	1	-
Gibraltar Point	23	53	50	50	52	6	1	-	-
Frampton Marsh	47	20	4	12	5	7	2	-	-



Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* Frampton Marsh May 24th 2017 © Neil Smith



Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* Covenham Reservoir Apr 20th 2017 © John Clarkson



Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus* North Cotes May 8th 2017 © Graham Catley



Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus* Frampton Marsh Apr 4th 2017 © Neil Smith

Middlemarsh Farm	41	14	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Donna Nook	5	30	7	18	10	1	-	-	-
Saltfleet	3	26	-	-	3	-	-	-	-
Witham Mouth	20	2	-	2	12	10	-	-	-
Gedney Drove End	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

There were no records of Whimbrel from Jan to Mar or in Dec. Numbers were highest in Apr and May during the spring migration and in Jul and Aug of birds returning southwards. This is typical of the species which generally arrives on its breeding grounds in late May and leaves in Jul. Though Whimbrel is regarded as a fairly common passage migrant total monthly numbers recorded in Lincolnshire did not exceed Jul's total of 383 in 2017. There was little difference in spring and autumn migration numbers suggesting perhaps a lack of breeding success.



Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* Frampton Marsh Apr 30th 2017 © Steve Nikols

### Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*



Common passage migrant and winter visitor; scarce and local breeder. Red List. WeBS threshold for national importance: 1400.

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>Coastal sites</i>												
Gibraltar Point	212	300	250	160	16	161	800	479	330	84	117	200
Leverton	123	59	31	10	9	68	714	-	-	-	-	-
Alkborough Flats	232	320	497	112	1	13	265	270	200	176	228	229
Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe	398	477	429	30	8	38	75	78	204	176	404	321
Wrangle	300	150	-	12	5	33	140	426	190	161	300	200
Freiston Shore	120	40	43	20	-	110	200	28	400	35	52	1
Pyewipe	300	126	77	157	7	6	298	255	338	327	178	227
Reads Island	3	23	130	332	61	4	337	240	40	50	-	4
Wainfleet	2	45	317	12	7	16	252	2	-	-	27	-
Donna Nook	206	175	67	28	7	59	104	220	309	50	125	89
Witham Mouth	-	100	75	15	20	-	300	240	65	50	70	10
Goxhill	70	1	60	55	14	2	109	-	71	260	38	124
Welland Marsh	5	4	12	6	4	-	250	-	170	40	130	-
<i>Inland sites</i>												
Stickney	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	104
Caistor	-	-	-	57	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Candlesby	50	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Withern	6	1	-	39	-	-	20	-	2	10	1	3
Fockerby	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20

The UK is estimated to hold over 30% of the European breeding population of this species which is classified as Near Threatened on the IUCN Red List. The WeBS threshold for national importance is 1400. The table includes all estuarine and coastal sites with counts of 250 or more, and inland sites with 20 or more in any month. Birds are recorded in every month on the Wash and Humber estuaries, which are the most important locations throughout the year. They are widely scattered in very small numbers at inland sites. No breeding records were received during the year. The highest monthly total in 2017 was 4813 in Jul. The longevity record for this species is 32 years 7 months set by a bird ringed as a chick in Lancashire in 1978 and found freshly dead in Cheshire in 2011. The Lincolnshire-ringed bird FA97831 was among the oldest reported in 2017, details below:

FA97831	Adult	28-09-99	Holbeach St Matthew: c. 52°52'N 0°5'E (Lincolnshire)
	Caught by ringer	21-10-16	Gedney Drove End: 52°49'N 0°11'E (Lincolnshire), 8km ESE, 17y 0m 23d

A car sadly killed FH30764, an adult bird that was ringed in 2013 at Leverton Outgate. It was presumably on or near its breeding ground at the time:

FH30764	Adult	27-07-13	Leverton Outgate: 53°0'N 0°8'E (Lincolnshire)
	Freshly dead (hit by car)	14-06-17	Mutala, Joroinen: 62°10'N 27°49'E (Mikkeli) Finland 1,930km ENE 3y 10m 18d



Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata* Saltfleet Oct 1st 2017 © John Clarkson

**Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica***



Very common coastal passage migrant and winter visitor. Scarce inland. Amber List (nominate). WeBS threshold for international importance 1200. WeBS threshold for national importance: 380.

The table summarises all sites where at least 200 were recorded in one month, all of them coastal as expected. Counts of 1200 or more, the threshold for international importance, came from The Wash between Wrangle and Gibraltar Point, and on The Humber at Pyewipe. There were eight inland records at six sites involving single birds between Mar and May. Gibraltar Point held the largest number with 4800 in Nov and the highest total for the four most important Wash sites together was 10710 in Feb. In Jun only five birds were recorded, between the end of spring migration in May and the start of the return migration in Jul. An all-sites total of 12163 birds for Feb was the highest total in 2016.

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gibraltar Point	4006	3500	3400	2000	1500	1	8	4200	4500	4560	4800	2500
Friskney	-	2550	3200	1680	285	-	576	-	-	-	-	-
Wrangle	1100	2450	-	60	450	1	100	2000	1500	1500	2500	1500
Wainfleet	-	2210	1800	1788	176	-	538	-	-	-	-	-



Grimsby	-	-	250	-	12	-	-	-	-	178	1450	1550
Marshchapel	110	34	17	7	13	-	-	40	1055	412	46	-
Leverton	870	680	430	311	19	-	809	-	-	-	-	-
Saltfleet	2	394	52	1	132	-	-	2	3	41	145	-
Cleethorpes	208	2	80	6	8	-	22	360	300	4	44	150
Tetney	120	12	-	120	4	-	9	320	80	-	-	-
Frampton Marsh	3	260	2	11	8	1	1	1	15	2	1	2

The longevity record for this species is an amazing 33 years and 11 months. This bird was an adult male when ringed on the Wash in 1974, and was controlled at almost the same site in 2008. Another long-lived bird that was also ringed on the Wash was DK57076, ringed as an adult at Wrangle Tofts in Sep 1995 and controlled at nearby Leverton Outgate, 4km away, in Aug 2017 when age 21 years and 11 months.

Bird NOS 7218393 that was ringed as a first calendar year bird in Norway, and identified from its colour rings and yellow leg flag (NAH) in Lincolnshire at North Killingholme from Nov 6th-Dec 21st, provided good evidence of the origins of some of our wintering birds:

NOS	First-year	29-09-17	Revtangen, Klepp: 58°45'N 5°28'E (Rogaland) Norway
7218393	Yellow leg flag NAH	06-11-17	North Killingholme, Immingham: 53°39'N 0°14'W (North Lincolnshire), 668km SSW 0y 1m 8d Yellow leg flag NAH 21-12-17 North Killingholme: c. 53°38'N 0°12'W (North Lincolnshire) 667km SSW, 0y 2m 22d



Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* Frampton Marsh Aug 22nd 2017 © Steve Nikols

### Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

◻ (*islandica*) ◻ (nominate)

*L.l. islandica*: common passage migrant and winter visitor. *L.l. limosa*: rare migrant and has bred, last in 1974. Amber List (*islandica*) and Red List (nominate). WeBS threshold for international importance: 610. WeBS threshold for national importance: 430. RBBP

Peak monthly counts are shown in table below. Highest counts recorded were 7000 at Frampton Marsh high tide roost on Sept 11th, 4600 at Grimsby on Nov 17th and 4000 at Killingholme on Sep 29th. Birds were recorded in every month of the year at Frampton Marsh, Alkborough Flats and Gibraltar Point.

Site Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Frampton Marsh	200	25	49	120	80	60	1500	3560	7000	1200	300	95
Grimsby	1560	449	100	230	-	-	35	-	80	1500	4600	3485
Killingholme	-	-	123	-	-	-	2740	3500	4000	3810	1	7
Welland Marsh	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1400	2200	-

Freiston Shore	5	900	10	50	250	1	138	43	10	1500	500	-
Terrington	23	-	-	-	-	-	12	-	-	868	400	820
Witham Mouth	2	-	-	-	-	-	6	250	10	-	20	600
Alkborough Flats	49	107	240	205	144	87	426	330	246	266	149	90
East Halton	21	-	1	-	1	-	66	42	50	415	12	26
Goxhill	21	-	1	-	1	-	66	-	18	415	12	26
Gibraltar Point	46	45	20	40	37	26	125	278	275	180	100	1

Notable counts from non-coastal locations included 20 at Covenham Reservoir on May 5th, and 18 at Baston and Langtoft Pits on Jul 2nd. At West Ashby there were 29 on Jul 6th, and singles on Aug 9th and 10th. Small numbers, up to five, were recorded at Boultham Mere, Carlton and Manby Washlands, Deeping Lakes NR, Kirkby GP, Messingham Sand Quarry, Rippingale, Stenigot, Tattershall, Whisby NR, and Woodhall Spa Airfield LWT Reserve, mainly during the autumn migration period.

Colour-ringed Black-tailed Godwits, virtually all of the Icelandic race *L.l.islandica*, are a regular sight in the county. Two examples (among many) provided more evidence of their longevity, both recorded at Frampton Marsh in Aug 2017 and having in earlier years been ringed in Iceland: ISR628699 (14 years 2months) and ISR629308 (12 years 2 months). Most of these birds have been ringed as nestlings in Iceland, and a few trapped as adults there. As with all ringed birds, some recoveries come about as a result of traffic collisions. EL09171, which had been ringed as an adult at Holbeach St. Matthew in Aug 2010 was one such bird. This was found freshly dead at Midjanes in Iceland after being hit by a car in Jun 2017 when presumed to be on its breeding grounds. The complete (and extensive) catalogue of colour-ring sightings and recoveries can be found on the BTO website at <https://app.bto.org/ring/countyrec/results2017/recGBLI2017.htm>.



Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* Grainthorpe Marsh May 13th 2017 © Mark Johnson

### Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* ■

Fairly common/common passage migrant and winter visitor. Rare inland. Amber List. WeBS for international importance: 1400. WeBS threshold for national importance: 480.

The peak site count occurred in the Wash at Freiston Shore with 330 on Aug 12th. The only site to records birds for all twelve months was Gibraltar Point.

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Freiston Shore	15	120	150	40	3	-	76	330	220	200	50	1
New Holland	-	140	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Cleethorpes	51	67	1	46	42	24	34	20	135	-	71	32
Goxhill	42	-	41	26	6	-	3	64	-	23	120	1

Donna Nook	55	90	1	-	4	-	1	-	-	-	1	26
Wrangle	5	-	-	19	80	8	52	87	50	-	-	19
Grimsby	-	-	85	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gibraltar Point	50	28	16	15	68	11	49	64	20	18	30	20
Welland Marsh	36	1	25	-	18	-	5	-	55	-	-	-
Witham Mouth	12	4	-	6	-	-	6	40	-	50	-	5
East Halton	42	-	8	-	6	-	3	-	2	23	5	-
Tetney	40	-	-	-	-	-	2	4	2	-	1	-

Away from the coast there were two at Baston and Langtoft Pits on Apr 30th and May 7th and a single bird there on Dec 11th. A single bird was at Covenham Reservoir on May 5th-14th, on Aug 23rd, and one on Sep 21st. One was at Toft Newton Reservoir on Apr 30th, and another at Whisby NR on Sep 17th.

### Red Knot *Calidris canutus* █

Greenland and Canadian form *islandica* abundant passage migrant and very common winter visitor. Very scarce inland. Amber List (*islandica*). WeBS threshold for international importance: 4500. WeBS threshold for national importance: 3200.

Early in the year numbers peaked at the main sites in Mar, then gradually decreased as birds departed for their northern breeding grounds during Apr-May. There were still 15000 at Gibraltar Point and 35000 at Friskney in Apr. Two sites recorded birds in Jun, when 184 were at Gibraltar Point on the 30th and 120 at Frampton Marsh on 15th. During Jul numbers began increasing, and by Aug 70000 were at Gibraltar Point, and 12500 at Marshchapel. The highest count of the year came from Gibraltar Point with a spectacular 103000 birds present on Sep 23rd, considerably up from the 2016 maximum of 80000.

Inland birds are scarce, the only records being two at Baston and Langtoft Pits on Apr 30th; singles at Kirkby on Bain GP on Apr 30th and May 1st.

Site Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gibraltar Point	7000	20000	21500	15000	5000	184	7500	70000	103000	85000	83000	500
Frampton Marsh	500	-	19	1	10	120	30	70000	240	3000	500	-
Friskney	-	3275	5000	35000	2470	-	3100	-	-	-	-	-
Wrangle	3030	1250	-	125	600	-	3	11000	20300	300	500	5000
Wainfleet	-	7500	15500	5500	1800	-	7188	-	-	-	300	-
Marshchapel	180	4450	4960	760	25	-	31	60	12500	9100	5000	-
Cleethorpes	2020	120	1000	-	40	-	260	3000	10000	-	3000	3000
Grainthorpe	280	670	4520	3270	420	-	3	-	15	-	5390	6870
Witham Mouth	400	3000	-	-	-	-	-	5000	10	-	150	5
Donna Nook	2350	1700	300	250	-	-	25	830	35	-	80	4500
Welland Marsh	-	-	1900	2500	1200	-	-	-	-	1200	3500	-
Tetney	1000	2000	-	-	3	-	70	3000	800	-	-	-
Freiston Shore	3000	45	160	-	-	-	100	400	1	1900	3000	1
Saltfleet	1150	700	585	55	38	-	8	12	-	115	1600	3000
Leverton	2000	1330	2770	246	120	0	2900	-	-	-	-	-
Terrington	2500	-	-	1500	-	-	-	-	-	-	800	2700

Three ringed birds caught or seen in the field with colour rings had all been marked in the Wash in previous autumns and recorded further to the NW in the autumn of 2017:

ST31036	Adult Caught by ringer	26-07-13 14-11-17	Leverton Outgate: 53°0'N 0°8'E (Lincolnshire) Findhorn Bay, Moray: 57°38'N 3°36'W (Moray), 567km NNW, 4y 3m 19d
ST32200	First-year Caught by ringer  Alive (colour rings seen)	15-09-16 22-09-17  31-10-17	Gedney Drove End: 52°49'N 0°11'E (Lincolnshire) Altcar Rifle Range Foreshore, Hightown: 53°31'N 3°5'W (Merseyside), 233km WNW, 1y 0m 7d Caldy: (Merseyside), 231km WNW 1y 1m 16d
ST32171	First-year Caught by ringer	17-09-16 22-09-17	Wainfleet Marsh: 53°4'N 0°17'E (Lincolnshire) Altcar Rifle Range Foreshore, Hightown: 53°31'N 3°5'W (Merseyside), 231km WNW, 1y 0m 5d Alive (colour rings seen) 23-10-17 Altcar Ranges, near Southport: (Merseyside), 231km WNW, 1y 1m 6d

## Ruff *Calidris pugnax*



Fairly common passage migrant and scarce winter visitor. Bred to nineteenth century. Red List. WeBS threshold for national importance: 8. **RBBP**

Site Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alkborough Flats	-	-	3	9	12	-	24	43	59	257	99	54
Fockerby	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	120	-	-
Frampton Marsh	60	30	60	50	38	9	100	80	101	85	35	75
Killingholme	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	56	-	-
Donna Nook	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	35	7	-	1
Kirton Marsh	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	35	8	-	-
East Halton	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	35	8	-
Gibraltar Point	-	1	1	5	7	1	5	3	16	7	-	-
Saltfleetby Theddlethorpe	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	3	9	16	1	-

Ruffs were recorded at 41 sites with about a third of those sites being inland. The main sites for the species were Frampton Marsh (recorded on 151 days) and Alkborough Flats. Birds were present on 82 dates at Gibraltar Point and at inland sites Covenham Reservoir had 30 bird days and Whisby NR 13. Alkborough Flats had the largest count in the county with 257 there on Oct 17th. Alkborough Flats also had counts of 164 on Oct 1st, 123 (105 juveniles) on the 2nd, 140 (111 juveniles) on the 5th, 170 on the 7th and 108 on 20th. At nearby Fockerby 120 birds were noted flying towards Alkborough Flats. Far to the southeast, Frampton Marsh had counts of 100 on Jul 25th and 101 on Sep 30th. All counts during the first three months of the year in double figures came from Frampton Marsh with a high total of 60. Between Apr and Jun numbers were fairly stable but birds were noted from more widespread locations. During the period from Jul to Sep totals began to increase only slightly but in Oct numbers certainly increased noticeably before dropping off again during the last two months of the year.

As in recent years, lekking was observed on two sites at Frampton Marsh in early Jun with a total of seven males and two females being involved. No other reports of lekking behaviour were received.



Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* Covenham Reservoir Sep 20th 2017 © John Clarkson

## Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*



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

Site Name	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Frampton Marsh	2	3	1	7	5	15	10	3	-
Alkborough Flats	1	1	-	-	1	5	10	-	-
Freiston Shore	-	-	-	4	-	4	1	-	-
Donna Nook	-	1	-	-	-	3	1	-	-
Killingholme	-	-	-	1	-	-	3	-	-

19 areas recorded the species with the first bird of the year being a bird in winter plumage at Alkborough Flats Apr 7th-8th with an adult May 19th. Alkborough Flats had 17 bird days for Curlew Sandpiper, the highest count being of ten on Oct 1st and 2nd. Frampton Marsh recorded birds in eight months and there were around 133 bird days in all. This well-watched site had the year's highest totals of 15 on two days in Sep and also counts of 14 and 12 in the same month as well as the last two birds of the year on Nov 12th. Freiston Shore had 16 bird days with four present on three of these. The table shows the top sites for numbers. All the other sites had no more than two birds at any one time. Birds appeared infrequently at all sites other than Gibraltar Point where up to two birds appeared in five months.

#### Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii* ▣

Rare passage migrant. Red List. LBRC

The first of the year was an adult at Middlemarsh Farm on May 12th (RWr) followed by a single at Frampton Marsh on May 14th and there were two there on May 15th (RSPB). There was one at Gibraltar Point on May 15th (RDn *et al*) and two at Frampton Marsh on the same date (RSPB). Frampton Marsh had the rest of the action during May with one on 16th-17th, two on 18th, one on 19th-23rd, two on 25th and one from May 27th-31st (RSPB). With a possible 12 birds altogether, the same as 2016, this was another good year.



Sanderling *Calidris alba* Mablethorpe May 6th 2017 © Steve Nesbitt

#### Sanderling *Calidris alba* ▣

Common passage migrant and winter visitor. Scarce inland. Amber List. WeBS threshold for international importance: 1200. WeBS threshold for national importance: 160.

Site Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gibraltar Point	500	800	485	290	2000	70	5000	4130	3400	1990	400	220
Friskney	-	37	-	-	371	-	616	-	-	-	-	-
Wainfleet	5	-	-	-	470	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe	100	80	104	100	450	10	56	50	67	25	125	89
Donna Nook	250	400	80	80	133	-	2	56	83	24	19	166
Pyewipe	-	-	-	-	18	-	-	-	-	87	-	-
Saltfleet	47	-	22	20	300	11	-	22	-	-	4	-
Cleethorpes	14	15	70	-	180	-	-	1	40	-	71	80
Theddlethorpe St Helen	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	150	-	-	-	-
Mablethorpe	24	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	3	90



Birds were observed in 34 areas of which seven were inland. Of all the counts that totalled 400 or more all but four came from Gibraltar Point. Friskney had a count of 616 on Jul 23rd, Wainfleet 470 on May 23rd, Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe 450 on May 31st and Donna Nook 400 on Feb 5th. Gibraltar Point had 50 counts that exceeded 400. This obviously included the high total of 5000 on Jul 25th. 4130 were counted on Aug 27th and 4000 on Jul 24th and 26th. Numbers were fairly consistent through the first four months of the year. There were good numbers observed in a couple of locations during May with little activity in Jun before the high numbers of Jul. During the next three months numbers remained high before dropping off again in the last two months of the year.

### Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

■ (*arctica*) ■ (*schinzii* and *alpina*).

Southern form '*schinzii*' a common passage migrant; north-east Greenland form '*arctica*' a passage migrant in unknown numbers; Scandinavian/Russian form '*alpina*' a very common passage migrant and winter visitor, mainly coastal. Bred to early 20th century and in 1958. Green List (*arctica*). Amber List (*schinzii* and *alpina*).

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gibraltar Point	840	2000	4200	2800	1000	200	4000	7690	5500	5000	4800	1000
Killingholme	-	-	920	-	-	-	400	190	240	2600	140	5530
Marshchapel	290	2370	5150	1424	322	2	14	150	956	4870	700	-
Grimsby	1780	1670	500	630	20	-	-	-	700	2200	3300	3520
Cleethorpes	150	150	350	-	200	-	18	580	300	-	3500	1200
Wainfleet	2	710	2770	3270	1870	-	758	-	-	-	-	-
Wrangle	600	2900	-	300	2200	20	1390	1000	640	800	3000	800
Reads Island	1	2000	140	-	16	-	18	1	20	1600	2900	100
Frampton Marsh	600	600	600	542	600	6	2000	2000	400	800	35	30
Barton Pits	2000	23	29	166	9	-	115	3	-	500	28	400
Alkborough Flats	531	240	88	1	34	-	57	220	90	2000	1600	164
Freiston Shore	12	95	270	150	25	1	700	2000	215	2000	600	1
Friskney	-	376	1630	1600	1079	-	735	-	-	-	-	-
Leverton	700	547	110	545	33	33	1160	-	-	-	-	-
Saltfleet	300	1050	255	333	310	6	40	115	1	60	500	2
Donna Nook	890	1000	530	380	900	0	132	302	570	600	450	400
Witham Mouth	500	150	20	-	50	-	20	40	60	-	1000	60

All sites recording a maximum monthly count of 1000 birds or more are included in the summary table.

This very common wading bird was recorded in every month of the year and noted somewhere in the county most days. 56 areas held Dunlin with 42 of those counts totalling 2500 or more with 28 of these coming from Gibraltar Point. The highest count of the year was from Gibraltar Point with 7690 in Aug but this was about 50% down on the maximum of last year. There were just seven counts of more than 5000, five from Gibraltar Point and the other two along the Humber/northeast coast with 5530 in Dec at North Killingholme. In Mar a count of 5150 came from between Horseshoe Point and Tetney Haven. Spring migration saw numbers tail off during May with the maximum of 2200 at Wrangle the highest for the month.

During Jul numbers began to increase significantly at the onset of southern passage. The highest counts came from Gibraltar Point and other Wash sites. Migration appeared to carry on through autumn and counts increased well into Nov. The highest count in Dec was one of 5530 at Killingholme, with three other sites recording 1000 or more.

### Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

■

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

It seems there were 10-12 birds recorded during 2017 compared to the six in 2016 and three in 2015. Reports by site as follows: at Donna Nook at least two birds were noted, the first on Feb 17th, 24th and 26th and an autumn bird on Sep 16th. At Frampton Marsh a bird was present Mar 22nd-24th. Another was present there on Jul 21st and Nov 4th. At Covenham two birds were recorded, the first Sep 4th-6th and a second on Nov 17th. At Trusthorpe one was present on Sep 6th. At Tetney a bird was present on Sep 11th. Three records came from Gibraltar Point with sightings on Oct 9th, Oct 28th and Nov 4th.



Dunlin *Calidris alpina*, Little Stint *Calidris minuta*, Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*  
Covenham Reservoir Sep 24th 2017 © Paul Neale



Little Stint *Calidris minuta* Covenham Reservoir Sep 20th 2017 © John Clarkson



White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis* Humberston Fitties Aug 31st 2017 © Graham Catley



White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis* Humberston Fitties Sep 5th 2017 © Paul Coombes

### Little Stint *Calidris minuta*



Passage migrant, very scarce in spring and scarce/fairly common in autumn with rare/very scarce winter records. Green List. WeBS threshold for national importance: 1.

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Frampton Marsh	-	-	5	2	2	2	5	5	25	47	3	1
Saltfleetby Theddlethorpe	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	3	-	-	-
Donna Nook	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	3	2	-	-
Gibraltar Point	-	-	-	-	1	1	2	2	1	2	-	-
Middlemarsh Farm	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	4	-	-	-
Freiston Shore	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	1	2	5	-	-
Killingholme	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-
Tetney	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	2	-	-	-
Grainthorpe	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Alkborough Flats	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	13	5	3
Covenham Reservoir	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	-	-	-

This was a poor year for Little Stints, particularly in the spring, with only four sites returning double figure autumn counts. The first spring bird was at Frampton Marsh on Mar 11th-28th; in Apr Frampton Marsh recorded Little Stints on 13 days with a maximum of two on 22nd. During May, there were records of one to two from five coastal sites. The last record of the spring was of two birds at Freiston Shore on Jun 15th.

Autumn passage began in mid-Jul with up to five birds present at coastal sites and it was generally the same story in Aug but throughout Sep numbers increased significantly as birds arrived before heading further south to the Mediterranean or Africa. On the final day of Sep, Frampton Marsh had the best count of the month with 25 birds. Numbers remained fairly constant during Oct with most at Frampton (47 on the 1st) and counts of 30 on the 2nd and again on the 6th. Totals decreased during the last two months of the year with Alkborough Flats having five on Nov 18th and 24th. Away from the coast and the Humber six counts in excess of 10 were recorded. At Covenham Reservoir 11 were counted on Sep 23rd and 26th. Up to five birds remained at Alkborough Flats and three at Frampton Marsh during Nov. Numbers dwindled during Dec with three at Alkborough Flats on 4th and one or two to the 31st.

### White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis*

Very scarce migrant. **LBRC**

An adult in worn summer plumage was picked out in the Greenshank's Creek wader roost at Gibraltar Point on the morning of Aug 22nd (KMW, JS) and a second popular and long staying adult was found at Humberston Fitties Yacht Club Pools on Aug 30th (CA *et al*), where it remained until Sep 12th. These were the 26th and 27th records in Lincolnshire.

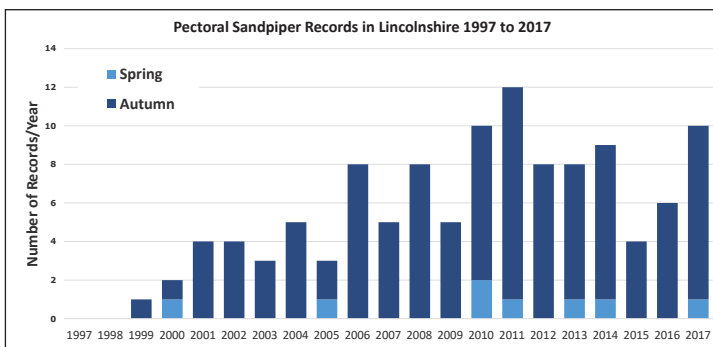
### Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

Rare autumn passage migrant and very rare in spring. **LBRC**

This was another excellent year for Pectoral Sandpiper records in the county with around eight records in the year. The first and only bird of the spring was on May 12th at Frampton Marsh (MPn).

In the autumn, the first returning bird was an adult at Frampton Marsh from Jul 13th-Aug 3rd (MPn *et al*), which made a brief visit to Freiston Shore on Jul 26th (RHs). This or another was reported on Jul 23rd during the WeBS count at Friskney Marsh (A. White). An adult bird appeared at Middlemarsh Farm on Jul 28th (NAL, RDn, and SAi) and was seen again at Middlemarsh Farm, on Jul 31st (NAL). The first juvenile bird was at Frampton Marsh from Aug 13th-Sep 9th (RSPB, SK) and another juvenile was at Donna Nook realignment area on Sep 1st (SL). Another turned up at Frampton Marsh on Sep 14th (ABe), and probably the same bird was also reported on Sep 20th (M. Fitzgerald) and Sep 30th (RSPB). In the north of the county a juvenile was along the north bank of Covenham Reservoir from Oct 15th-17th (GL, JRC). The last bird and the latest Lincs record ever was a first-winter at Alkborough Flats Nov 24th-25th (GPC, ND). Overall (1997-2017) this species is showing an increasing trend in the county, and the increased availability and watchability of wetland sites such as Alkborough Flats, Frampton Marsh, Freiston Shore, Middlemarsh Farm and expansion of existing lagoons at Gibraltar Point for feeding/roosting must be playing a part.





Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos* Frampton Marsh Aug 26th 2017 © Steve Keightley



Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos* Frampton Marsh Aug 26th 2017 © Steve Nikols



**Long-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus scolopaceus*

Rare vagrant. BBRC

A 1CY bird was found at Paradise Pool, Saltfleet on Sep 16th and remained until Nov 6th (P. Roworth *et al*). Accepted by BBRC (BB 111 p573). This constituted the eleventh Long-billed Dowitcher to be identified in the county and the second successive year that this species has been found in Lincolnshire.



Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus* Saltfleet Haven Sep 27th 2017 © John Clarkson

**Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola*



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

The national decline of Woodcock seems to be reflected in the county with sightings from just 18 locations. In autumn and winter the British population is greatly increased by up to a million Scandinavian and northern Europe birds. In Jan six were at Knaith on 1st and later in the month seven were flushed at Linwood Warren on 21st and another seven were at Sutterby on Mar 6th. In May-Jun at least ten birds were roding in Laughton Forest. Roding was also observed at Southrey on May 30th, where six passes were recorded in a 75-minute survey; at Greetwell on Jun 6th, Keb Wood on Jun 8th and at Broughton East Wood, also on Jun 8th.

The first autumn coastal records came in the second week of Oct with singles at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR and Gibraltar Point from 11th. Nine were at Gibraltar Point on Oct 30th, seven of which were trapped and there were 10 on the 31st, seven of which were seen coming in off the sea. The highest count of the autumn was 16, recorded there on Nov 24th. Only one or two birds were reported from nine sites in Dec. There was one recovery of a Finnish-ringed bird, which was sadly shot in the county in Dec 2017:

SFH	First-year	07-10-17	Kemionsaari, Varsinais-Suomi: 60°4'N 22°28'E (Turku Pori) Finland
BT007276	Freshly dead (shot)	28-12-17	Barrowby: 52°54'N 0°41'W (Lincolnshire), 1,627km WSW, 0y 2m 21d



Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus* Saltfleet Haven Oct 4th 2017 © Graham Catley



Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola* Laughton Forest May 23rd 2017 © Graham Catley

### Jack Snipe *Lympocryptes minimus*



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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of sites	12	9	8	3	1	-	-	-	-	5	6	5
Minimum Lincs total	15	13	13	3	1	-	-	1	-	10	7	5

The totals in the table approximate to those of previous years and in all probability represent a considerable underestimate of the true figure.

One or two birds were noted at up to 12 sites during the first quarter with a maximum of five birds the Woodhall Spa Airfield LWT Reserve (Tattershall Thorpe) on Feb 16th. No other site reported more than one bird. Singles lingered at Alkborough Flats, Frampton Marsh and Gibraltar Point into late Apr and the last record was at Frampton Marsh on May 7th.

The first returning bird was seen at Marston on Oct 8th followed by four coastal sightings the following day. Five came in off the sea at Gibraltar Point on Oct 28th, the most of the autumn. Throughout the year this secretive species was recorded in 21 different locations but as usual these were generally lone birds. On eight occasions two birds were seen, twice at Alkborough Flats, Grainthorpe, Gibraltar Point and Frampton Marsh; once at Saltfleetby/Theddlethorpe and Tattershall Thorpe. Away from the Humber and the coast birds were observed inland at Crowland, Marston, Marton, Spalding Tattershall Thorpe, Whisby NR and Willow Tree Fen.

Note that the Clyde Ringing Group are colour-ringing Jack Snipe with a yellow ring and also tagging with a geolocator, so please report any you see (!) to <http://www.cr-birding.org/node/3851>. The scheme has been going since 2016 and has marked 20 birds so far.





Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus* Alkborough Flats Jan 4th 2017 © Graham Catley

### Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*



Very scarce breeder, fairly common/common passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber List (nominate).

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alkborough Flats	41	31	62	43	6	-	1	7	65	19	118	68
Laughton Forest	-	41	61	6	1	-	-	-	-	22	100	-
Whitton	42	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	72
Woodhall Spa Airfield LWT	37	60	46	16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Killingholme	56	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	-	15	3
Frampton Marsh	40	9	5	4	2	4	22	50	40	50	4	12
Gibraltar Point	6	16	19	7	3	-	3	13	23	34	27	17
Whisby NR	9	15	23	18	1	-	-	11	13	14	14	30
Saltfleetby Theddlethorpe	5	5	9	-	1	1	5	1	4	28	12	12
Anton's Gowt	-	-	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bonby	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25	-	-
Barton Pits	5	2	4	2	-	-	-	1	-	24	8	23
Marton	2	21	20	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Records came from 77 widespread localities and although reports from some sites were intermittent, particularly in the summer months, the species was noted in every month of the year. The key sites in the table recorded 20-62 birds in the first quarter and Alkborough Flats still had 43 birds on Apr 10th and the Woodhall Spa Airfield LWT Reserve (Tattershall Thorpe) 16 on Apr 20th. Three drumming birds were noted at Frampton Marsh during Jun. No other sites reported breeding activity.

From late Jul onwards birds from northern Europe, Iceland and the Faroes swell the resident bird population, peaking in mid-Oct. This is reflected to an extent in the summary table, with 22 birds back at Frampton on Jul 25th, with further increases at coastal sites in Sep and Oct. In all there were around 130 double figure counts (there were unfortunately about 170 cases where no count was recorded and just "presence" noted) with 21 of 40 birds or more. Alkborough Flats had eight of these including the years highest total of 118 on Dec 3rd, with another five counts in the sixties and two in the forties. A count of 100 came from Laughton Forest on Nov 10th. The BTO's Bird Atlas reports a decline in the species due to agricultural intensification and the drainage of wet tussocky grassland which may explain why just one site, a managed nature reserve, was the only one reporting evidence of any breeding activity reported this year.



Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* Frampton Marsh Jun 14th 2017 © Neil Smith

#### Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*



Very scarce passage migrant, with generally more in autumn than in spring. Red List. **LBRC**

With eight birds during the year, this was a new record, topping the seven observed in 2014. There were two spring records; the first was a one-day bird on May 30th at Frampton Marsh (RSPB), the second an adult male at the same site on Jun 7th-9th (TC). The first autumn birds were also at Frampton Marsh: one from Jul 19th-25th (L. Willocks, RSPB), followed by a juvenile on Aug 23rd (TC) and it or another from Sep 2nd-6th (M.P. Bevan). Finally, other sites got in on the action with a bird at Covenham Reservoir from Sep 19th-25th (GPL *et al*) and another juvenile at Alkborough Flats from Sep 23rd-Oct 2nd (GPC, ND *et al*) (the first record for the site). The final bird was another long-staying juvenile at Covenham Reservoir from Nov 10th-Dec 6th (GL, KR), becoming only the third Nov record and the latest ever, beating a bird at Chowder Ness from Nov 17th-27th in 2009.



Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* Alkborough Flats Sep 28th 2017 © Graham Catley





Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* Covenham reservoir Sep 20th 2017 © John Clarkson

### Grey Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius*

Very scarce passage migrant, mainly autumn, rare in winter. **LBRC**

In contrast to the good year for Red-necked Phalaropes (see above), there was just a single Grey Phalarope record this year, with a bird reported at Witham Mouth on Nov 7th (IE, TC). This was the lowest number since 2006, when no phalaropes of either species were seen.

### Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*



Fairly common passage migrant, rare in winter. Bred in 1979. Amber List. WeBS threshold for national importance: 1.

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gibraltar Point	-	-	-	5	3	3	22	6	4	1	-	-
Tetney	-	-	-	-	5	1	26	9	2	-	-	-
Covenham Reservoir	-	-	-	4	10	1	16	7	1	1	-	-
Frampton Marsh	1	1	-	2	3	2	8	6	2	1	3	-
Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe	-	-	-	-	4	-	17	3	-	-	-	-
Kirkby-on-Bain GP	-	-	-	2	2	-	8	2	1	-	-	-
Barton Pits	-	-	-	4	4	-	7	8	-	-	-	-
South Ferriby	-	-	-	-	1	-	8	4	1	-	-	-
Toft-next-Newton	-	-	-	3	2	-	6	3	2	-	-	-
Witham Mouth	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	1-	7	-	-	-

The table shows the most prominent sites in the county, based on a combination of peak counts and number of months reported, although there were less regular reports of smaller numbers from a further 44 sites. There were a good number of wintering birds at the start of the year, with a report from Gainsborough on Jan 7th (presumably the same as the bird on Dec 18th 2016), followed by a single on two dates at Frampton Marsh (Jan 11th and Feb 17th) and four birds at Friskney on Jan 25th. The first spring report was on Apr 12th at Covenham Reservoir, becoming more widespread at 20 sites by the end of the month. After a lull in reports in Jun, the highest counts were in Jul as autumn passage ensued and tailed away during Aug/Sep. After seven reports of single migrants in Oct, the last on the 22nd at Butterwick, there were three late birds at Frampton Marsh on Nov 28th.

## Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* ■

Fairly common autumn passage migrant, scarce in spring and also as a regular winter visitor. Amber List. WeBS threshold for national importance: 9.

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Frampton Marsh	-	-	1	1	2	2	13	9	4	1	1	-
Gibraltar Point	-	-	1	5	-	1	2	7	4	3	-	-
Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe	-	1	-	1	-	1	7	1	-	-	1	-
Marston STW	2	1	-	-	-	1	5	3	5	3	3	-
Kirkby-on-Bain GP	1	-	-	-	1	1	6	5	4	-	-	-
Alkborough Flats	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	7	4	3	-	-
West Ashby/ Hemingby	-	-	-	1	1	-	6	5	1	-	-	-
Middlemarsh Farm	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	7	2	-	-	-
Whisby NR	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
Whisby Quarry	-	-	1	-	-	-	6	1	-	-	-	-

The table shows the sites with the highest peak monthly counts and this illustrates a typical spread of dates and locations, with a clear peak in late summer. In the first winter period there were reports of at least 10 birds from nine sites, the first being recorded on Jan 3rd at Keddington (Louth). The first spring migrants were reported from Mar 8th. Autumn passage was largely unremarkable with peak numbers in Jul. Presumed wintering birds were found at six sites, including three at Marston STW on Nov 6th and the last of the year at Boultham Mere on Dec 29th.

## Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* ■

Nominate British and continental form a common passage migrant and winter visitor and fairly common breeding species of coastal marshes. Scarce / very scarce inland. Icelandic form (*robusta*) a common passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber List (both forms). WeBS threshold for international importance 2400. WeBS threshold for national importance: 1200.

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Freiston Shore	19	112	26	15	2	7	1086	1000	1500	80	200	1
Frampton Marsh	41	300	43	100	65	40	430	50	50	1000	42	60
Welland Marsh	22	140	20	20	5	-	320	-	1220	70	870	-
Grimsby	580	222	83	140	67	-	182	556	410	710	380	350
Gibraltar Point	141	176	159	190	25	30	482	309	150	215	450	100
Donna Nook	150	300	245	130	4	34	65	202	285	400	190	90
Witham Mouth	240	30	12	2	6	-	5	350	40	12	50	35
Terrington	245	-	72	50	14	-	18	-	154	153	390	138
Killingholme	205	160	150	-	-	-	240	250	113	362	124	220
Wrangle	200	100	-	32	30	24	60	260	30	40	50	70

The table shows the highest counts, seven of the sites being in The Wash, three on The Humber or at other coastal locations. The Wash continues to be of international importance and The Humber of national importance, as wintering and passage feeding and roost sites. By comparison the only double figure counts inland were 18 at Anton's Gowt in Feb, together with 14 at Covenham Reservoir and 12 at Hagnaby (East Kirkby) in Mar. Breeding was noted at only eight sites, with recently fledged young observed at only three of these - Middlemarsh Farm, Frampton Marsh and Wainfleet. On the Wash, 145 pairs of Redshanks bred or attempted to breed at Frampton Marsh. Another 29 pairs were at Freiston Shore, including 13 on the realignment that is a record number there.

The longevity record for Redshank from BTO ringing data is 20 years and 1 month, which was ringed as an adult in Kent in 1987. Two Lincolnshire controls of interest are tabulated below. DK57507 was controlled in Iceland in May 2017 when aged 15 years and 10 months (and was presumably on its breeding grounds):

DK57507	Adult Caught by ringer	21-07-01 31-05-17	Kamarad Farm, Terrington Marsh: 52°48'N 0°14'E (Lincolnshire) Sydri-Vollur, Gaulverjabæ, Arnes: 63°49'N 20°52'W (Árnessýsla) Iceland 1,727km NW, 15y 10m 10d
DD15248	First-year Caught by ringer	30-09-07 20-09-16	Wrangle Tofts: 53°1'N 0°10'E (Lincolnshire) Friskney: 53°1'N 0°11'E (Lincolnshire), 0km, 8y 11m 21d



Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* Frampton Marsh Aug 18th 2017 © Neil Smith

### Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatalis*

Rare vagrant. BBRC

A 1CY individual was found at Freiston Shore on 25th Jul (ABe and RDn). Accepted by BBRC (BB 111 p 576).

This was the fifth record for Lincolnshire and the first since 2011, an adult at Alkborough Flats 11th- 21st Jul.

### Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*



Scarce passage migrant, in spring and autumn. Amber List.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Frampton Marsh	-	-	-	1	1	2	4	4	3	1	-	-
Middlemarsh Farm	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	4	1	1	-	-
Manby Washland	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	4	-	-	-	-
Freiston Shore	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	1	3	-	-	-

Overall, a rather poor year for this species as evidenced by the summary table. The first of the year was seen at Frampton Marsh on Apr 22nd and stayed into May, with the second at Willow Tree Fen on Apr 26th. After these two records there were a further 12 birds at 10 sites during May and a similar number during Jun. The return passage showed up to 15 birds at eight sites during Jul increasing slightly to 19 birds at nine sites during Aug; the table above showing the sites with more than two. Numbers slowly decreased during Sep, and five birds during Oct as follows: Middlemarsh Farm on Oct 1st, Gibraltar Point on Oct 3rd (perhaps the Middlemarsh bird), Frampton Marsh on 1st- 4th, Tetney on Oct 14th and a juvenile at Alkborough Flats Oct 2nd-17th.



Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* Frampton Marsh Sep 2nd 2017 © Mark Johnson

### Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus* ■

Passage migrant, very scarce in spring but fairly common in autumn. Very scarce but regular in winter. Amber List. WeBS threshold for national importance: 1.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alkborough Flats	9	8	11	16	8	9	20	21	23	24	8	6
Frampton Marsh	5	5	5	4	2	2	10	13	20	10	3	2
Gibraltar Point	-	-	1	1	1	-	1	10	9	9	3	-
Donna Nook	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	5	4	-	-
Freiston Shore	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	-	1	-	-	-

Both Alkborough Flats and Frampton Marsh had their regular small, but growing, populations of wintering birds and they remained the dominant sites throughout the year, as can be seen from the table above. This species is particularly tied to coastal and estuarine marshes, with only five birds reported from just four inland sites in the year. The peak counts during spring and autumn passage occurred from Mar to May/Jun and then again from Jul to Oct.



Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus* Alkborough Flats Nov 17th 2017 © Paul Coombes

## Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* ■

Passage migrant, scarce in spring, fairly common in autumn. Very scarce in winter. Amber List. WeBS threshold for national importance: 6.

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gedney Drove End	-	-	-	1	-	-	51	73	41	18	4	-
Freiston Shore	-	-	-	3	5	-	22	37	9	20	-	-
Frampton Marsh	1	7	1	5	6	2	6	10	15	3	2	1
Gibraltar Point	-	-	1	3	4	1	12	15	12	9	1	-
Donna Nook	-	-	-	1	1	2	1	10	18	3	-	-
Alkborough Flats	-	-	-	2	5	1	12	5	4	3	-	-
Welland Marsh	3	4	-	1	-	-	12	-	8	-	1	-
Friskney	3	-	-	3	-	-	14	-	-	-	-	-
Gedney	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	3	-	8	-	-

All of the peak counts of Greenshank were on the coast or on our major estuaries. There were a small number of winter records at several of the tabulated sites, and a single additional bird at Trent Port (Marton) on Feb 26th. There was a notable increase in records, both in numbers and spread from Apr 11th onwards into May, indicating the spring passage, also primarily through estuary and coastal sites, although it is more widespread at inland sites than some of its congeners with 15 birds at nine inland sites. After the usual hiatus in Jun the return autumn passage showed strongly from Jul through to Oct with similar counts to previous years. There were only two birds noted during Dec, one at Deeping Lakes on Dec 19th and one at Frampton Marsh on Christmas Day.

One interesting colour-ringed bird was DE41539, ringed as an adult at Holbeach St. Matthew in Aug 2015 and recorded in successive springs in Norway:

DE41539	Adult	31-08-15	Lawyer's Farm, Holbeach St Matthew: 52°52'N 0°5'E (Lincolnshire)
	Alive (colour rings seen)	21-05-16	Kattfjordeidet: (Troms) Norway 2,095km NNE 0y 8m 20d
	Alive (colour rings seen)	09-05-17	Hensoran, Isfjorden, Rauma: 62°34'N 7°46'E (Møre og Romsdal) Norway 1,169km NNE 1y 8m 8d

## Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla* ■

Fairly common/common but declining passage migrant and winter visitor with small numbers in summer. Scarce inland. Red List.

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gibraltar Point	29	1	6	-	2	18	7	7	26	489	2700	1
Freiston Shore	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1150	-	-
Sutton on Sea	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	320	-	-
Saltfleetby Theddlethorpe	2	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	15	1	26	-
Mablethorpe	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	-	-	11
Witham Mouth	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15
Huttoft	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	1	-

Very scarce during the first half of the year, being recorded on just 16 dates. Only five records received in Jul and five in Aug, it was not until late Sep that Kittiwakes were seen offshore with any degree of regularity. Oct saw passage start to become evident with 67 south at Gibraltar Point on the 13th with the first juvenile of the year seen there on the 16th, a feeding flock of 1150 was at the Witham Mouth on the 29th, 320 went north past Sutton on Sea and 409 north past Gibraltar Point on the same date and 100 were at Freiston Shore on the 30th. The peak count for the year came on Nov 12th when 2700 went south past Gibraltar Point. There were four Dec records and the last birds for the year were 11 at Mablethorpe and 15 at Witham Mouth both on the 11th.

## Sabine's Gull *Xema sabini*

Very scarce coastal migrant in autumn, mainly Aug-Oct. Exceptional inland. LBRC

There were four records of this high arctic gull in 2017 the first an adult going north close inshore at Gibraltar Point on Aug 9th (NAL). Another adult was at Crook Bank, Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Aug 21st (CMo). The last two records were both on Sep 15th: one bird (not aged) was at Tetney Marsh (RL) and the other a juvenile at Gibraltar Point (KMW *et al*).



## Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* ■

Very common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber List. WeBS threshold for international importance: 20,000/ WeBS threshold for national importance: 22,000.

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gibraltar Point	4000	5000	754	200	90	150	2500	6500	2000	15000	3000	500
North Hykeham	6500	5150	49	-	5	1	4	-	-	-	9085	9440
Saltfleetby	150	400	100	5	5	20	588	6500	5000	1500	297	100
Sutterton	-	-	-	-	-	-	6000	-	-	-	-	-
Leverton	138	-	5500	-	91	213	272	-	-	-	-	-
Whisby NR	160	200	3400	1039	1400	1	-	200	1	-	1	1
Frampton Marsh	16	6	353	628	321	250	3000	300	38	75	21	25
Bardney	3000	432	850	168	65	15	23	176	64	19	550	1000
Covenham Reservoir	1	50	1	450	30	-	-	-	3000	65	300	12
Toft Newton	170	150	25	4	6	3	1000	40	80	250	2300	20

During the breeding season sites holding colonies consisting of 100 pairs or more were as follows; 1058 pairs at Whisby NR, 200 at Kirkby GP, 150 at Middlemarsh Farm and 100 at Melwood Quarry. The year's peak count came from Gibraltar Point on Oct 11th when 15000 roosted. In the winter period roosts at the Wash on the coast and inland at North Hykeham Pits continue to be the most important sites for this species.

Some interesting ringing data was received in 2017: ER86483 was ringed in Feb 1999 at the Slippery Gowl landfill site in Boston and was controlled in Poland in May 2017, aged 18 years and 3 months. Large numbers of colour-ringed Black-headed Gulls are recorded in the county each year. Just one example is HA15386 that was ringed as an adult in Feb 1999 in Sopron, Hungary and recorded several times in Skegness (Red ring HROR) in Aug 2017. This was the first ever colour-ringed Black-headed Gull recorded in Britain. It spent Jul-Oct 2014 in and around Middlemarsh Farm but wintered in Switzerland Dec 2014-Feb 2015, after which it was seen in Poland in Jul 2015 before arriving at Gibraltar Point in Aug 2017. For the full (and extensive) catalogue of these sightings, see the BTO website at <https://app.bto.org/ring/countyrec/results2017/recGBLI2017.htm>



Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus* Frampton Marsh May 12th 2017 © John Clarkson

## Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus* ■

Fairly common passage migrant in spring and autumn, scarce/very scarce in summer and winter. Green List. RBBP

The first birds of the year were eight off Gibraltar Point on Jan 5th. During Feb singles were recorded at Gibraltar Point on the 12th and Saltfleetby on the 13th. In Mar single adults were at Alkborough Flats 13th-18th and at Woodhall Spa 25th-29th and there was a notable count of eight at Middlemarsh Farm on the 27th. A single at Woodhall Spa on Apr 6th may have been the same bird from the end of the previous month. There were further reports in Apr from Frampton of a single from 10th-29th with two there on 23rd, a single at Freiston on the 19th, eight at Covenham Reservoir on the 20th, an adult at Whisby NR on the 29th, an adult and a 2CY flying east at Alkborough Flats on the 30th with singles at Kirkby and at the Witham Mouth on the same date. Reports were more frequently received during May and Frampton hosted up to five 18th-26th and the only other multiple count was four at Saltfleetby on the 20th. There was a sprinkling of coastal summer records but it was not until Aug 9th that passage was again in evidence when seven flew north at Gibraltar Point where there was also a juvenile on the 19th. Little Gulls were sporadically recorded during the rest of the month and Sep with the only inland record a single at Covenham Reservoir on Sep 23rd. The five records received in Oct all came from Gibraltar Point. Two at Saltfleetby on Nov 29th and a flock of eight adults north at Gibraltar Point on the same date were the last birds of the year.

### Mediterranean Gull *Ichthyaeetus melanocephalus* ■

Scarce, but increasing visitor throughout the year, most frequent in late summer/early autumn. Amber List. WeBS threshold for national importance: 18. **RBBP**

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gibraltar Point	1	2	1	2	3	2	2	5	2	3	-	1
Whisby NR	-	1	2	4	1	3	1	-	-	-	-	-
Frampton Marsh	-	-	1	4	2	2	3	-	-	-	-	-
Barton Pits	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	1	1	-	-
North Hykeham	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	1
Saltfleetby	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-
Boultham Mere	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-
Donna Nook	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	1	-	-

Typically scarce at the start of the year with only two Jan records and only sporadically recorded during Feb. The table shows sites with records in at least three months.

An adult in the Black-headed Gull colony at Whisby NR on Mar 13th marked the spring return of this likely future colonist and a second adult on the 16th joined it. During Apr four different adults frequented the same colony at Whisby NR, courtship behaviour was noted but no nesting took place with three leaving the colony by the month's end. There were also up to four birds at Frampton Marsh during the month. In May the remaining adult at Whisby NR had paired with a Black-headed Gull and had laid one egg but by Jun 21st it had become apparent that the attempt had failed. The first juvenile of the year was seen on Jul 13th, again at Whisby NR but likely to have hatched outside of the county. The most notable counts of the autumn were five at Gibraltar Point on Aug 11th and four at Horseshoe Point on Aug 26th, the latter count being all 1CY birds. Sightings dwindled through Sep and in Oct and the best counts were an adult and a 3CY south at Gibraltar Point on the 3rd, three adults south there on the 6th and two 1CY into roost at North Hykeham Pits on the 18th. All Nov records related to birds using the traditional winter roost at North Hykeham Pits with at least three different birds seen there, with the exception of a single at nearby Lincoln on the 21st. Just three Dec records were a new adult to roost at North Hykeham Pits on the 7th, one at Gibraltar Point on the 27th and the last bird for the year a new 1CY to roost at North Hykeham Pits.

Polish colour-ringed birds continue to be seen in the county and bird PLG-FN27453, which was ringed as an adult in Poland in May 2004, was recorded for the second time in the county at Gibraltar Point in Sep 2017 when it was 13 years and 3 months of age.

### Common Gull *Larus canus* ■

Very common passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber List. WeBS threshold for national importance: 7000.

Site Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
North Hykeham Pits	1200	860	-	-	4	-	4	3	4	-	1820	2360
Gibraltar Point	2000	1500	50	72	11	4	150	250	120	400	300	500
Cadney	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20	-	-	15	1500
Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe	1200	483	100	30	50	74	200	1200	1250	750	622	227
Donna Nook	150	20	20	1	7	-	16	140	150	400	59	50

Witham Mouth	300	25	100	5	10	-	-	3	2	-	-	5
Covenham Reservoir	1	57	1	1	1	-	-	-	1	8	200	7
Carlton & Manby												
Washlands	70	27	173	10	-	-	-	-	3	11	75	14
East Keal	75	130	160	0	0	0	0	20	0	40	30	120
Toft next Newton	60	15	20	26	4	0	10	3	2	100	45	27

This year's peak count of 2360 at North Hykeham Pits on Dec 27th is significantly down from last year's peak of 4000 at Gibraltar Point, though demonstrating the importance and significance of the long-standing traditional winter roost at Apex Pit.

During the first quarter counts of 500 or more came from Gibraltar Point, with the additions of 1200 to roost at North Hykeham Pits on Jan 13th, 800 at Saltfleetby on Jan 27th and 860 to roost at North Hykeham Pits on Feb 9th. There were typically low numbers during the second quarter with small numbers of immatures staying to summer coastally. The first signs that return passage was underway came when 200 roosted at Saltfleetby on Jul 12th, and the next notable count came again from Saltfleetby when there were 610 on Aug 7th. The first juvenile to be noted was at Gibraltar Point on Aug 11th and there were 800 birds at Saltfleetby on Aug 14th and 1200 there on Aug 21st. With the exception of 1250 at Saltfleetby on Sep 9th, the next significant counts were not until well into the fourth quarter when wintering totals at North Hykeham Pits, Cadney and Gibraltar Point were the most significant.

### Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus* □

Very common passage migrant and winter visitor with some immatures remaining in summer. Amber List. WeBS threshold for national importance: 760.

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gibraltar Point	250	40	35	55	30	17	80	80	100	500	125	60
Frampton Marsh	4	1	1	1	1	1	10	12	9	209	59	2
Saltfleetby Theddlethorpe	150	100	50	14	20	20	27	26	82	80	70	80
Middlemarsh Farm	13	3	1	2	9	4	5	100	120	100	-	2
Whisby NR	112	2	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	4	-	62
Donna Nook	70	20	30	9	15	9	5	9	20	50	100	50
North Hykeham	84	16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	9	-
Witham Mouth	80	-	4	-	-	-	8	20	10	-	-	5
Kirkby on Bain	75	5	6	5	6	1	-	-	-	2	-	1
Butterwick	32	40	72	62	36	9	9	-	3	37	43	51

An average if concerning year for this apparently declining passage migrant and winter visitor. The year's peak count of 500 at Gibraltar Point on Oct 6th is very much in keeping with county peak counts of previous years. Worryingly, there were only seven coastal three-figure counts made away from Gibraltar Point and three of those were at the nearby Middlemarsh Farm. The only inland sites where counts of 50 or more were made were 84 at North Hykeham Pits on Jan 2nd, 56 at Whisby NR on Jan 7th, 75 at Kirkby on Jan 20th, 112 at Whisby NR on Jan 21st, 50 at Kirkby on Jan 27st and in the second winter period there were 62 at Whisby NR on Dec 10th.

There were two recoveries of British-ringed Great Black-back Gulls in the county, both ringed in Scotland and both aged less than one year old. One foreign-ringed bird with a Lincolnshire connection was NOS3039473, ringed as a nestling on Norway in Jun 2014, recorded at Crook Bank in Nov 2014 (colour ring read in the field) but then found long dead in Mar 2017 at Mundesley in Norfolk.

### Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus* □

Rare/scarse passage migrant and winter visitor, rare in summer. Amber List. LBRC

About 16 sites reported Glaucous Gulls, all but four being on the coast. Most records were received in Jan and some duplication will inevitably have occurred in what was a busy start to the year.

The first of the year, all on Jan 4th were: a 2CY at Mablethorpe (NAL), two at Tetney Marsh (RL), a 2CY at Carlton-Manby Washlands (BMC) and another 2CY at Crook Bank (NAL), some of which may relate to the same birds. One of the Tetney birds was still present the next day (RL). At Donna Nook the first of the year was a 2CY bird on Jan 10th which was present on and off through Feb and Mar with two present on Mar 2nd, 9th and 16th (SL). There was also a 3CY bird in the area on Mar 10th (SL); the final record there was a 2CY bird on Apr 1st (SL). At least one of these 2CY birds was also seen at Tetney and Horseshoe Point on various dates until Mar 11th

(CA) seen feeding on a Conger Eel on Jan 22nd-24th (GPC). In addition, one or two 2CY birds were reported from the Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe area on various dates in Jan-Feb (CMo, NAL).

Inland, Kirkby GP and landfill site then played host to a 2CY from Jan 7th-Apr 6th (ZH) with two there on Jan 8th (KDR). One was at Deeping Lakes NR on Feb 18th, when an adult was present at Whisby NR (WBR, BWd). A 2CY bird visited Carlton and Manby Washlands on Jan 4th and 12th (JRC), possibly one of the coastal birds seen at that time, and on Apr 20th (JRC). The last bird of the spring was seen over Louth on Apr 23rd (BMC), and a summering bird was at Crook Bank on Jul 10th (CMo).

The autumn and winter was much quieter and the first record was a 1CY south at Gibraltar Point on Nov 12th (KMW, NAL) and another flew north at Crook Bank on 29th (NAL). There were also just two records in Dec: a 1CY at Grimsby fish dock on 21st (LBC) and a 1CY again at Crook Bank (NAL).



Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus* with Conger spp. North Cotes Point Jan 24th 2017 © Graham Catley



Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus* Mablethorpe Jan 23rd 2017 © John Clarkson

## Iceland Gull *Larus glaucooides* ■

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

A reasonable number of Iceland Gulls appeared in the county along with the Glaucous Gull influx, some clearly remaining from late winter 2016. Around 11 sites recorded the species from Jan-May but only from Nov in the second winter period. The first records came from Carlton and Manby Washlands where 2CY and 3CY birds were seen on Jan 2nd (RLb) with up to three present here on and off until Jan 27th. Elsewhere birds were at Gibraltar Point on Jan 2nd (KMW) and Covenham Reservoir on Jan 3rd (KRo) and a 2CY was seen between Cleethorpes and Grimsby on several dates between Jan 5th and Feb 21st (JRN, JAS). One was at Tetney (RL), and four (two 2CY and two 3CY) were at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Jan 21st (BMC). An adult appeared at Cleethorpes on Feb 2nd and Feb 21st on Chapman's Pond (JRN). A 2CY bird was inland at Kirkby GP on Feb 14th (GPC).

In the spring, a 2CY bird was again present at Carlton and Manby Washlands on Mar 11th (PEs) and what may have been the same bird was still there on Apr 9th (GW); finally a 3CY was present on May 9th (AJH). A 2CY bird was at Freiston Shore on Apr 3rd (JDa) and another 2CY bird was seen on four dates in Apr at Saltfleetby St. Peter (BMC). This or another 2CY bird was at the latter site on May 16th, the last bird of the spring.

Autumn and winter birds in the last quarter were much scarcer in contrast to the first half of the year. There were just two other records in Nov: a 1CY was at Gibraltar Point on 19th (BWd) and a 3CY/adult bird at Saltfleetby St. Peter on 19th and 20th (BMC). The last record of the year was a 3CY bird at Carlton and Manby Washlands on Dec 28th (RLb).

## Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

■ (*argenteus*) ■ (*argentatus*)

British form '*argenteus*' a common passage migrant and winter visitor; very scarce breeding species. Nominate northern European form '*argentatus*' a fairly common winter visitor. Red List (*argenteus*) and Green List (*argentatus*). WeBS threshold for national importance: 4500.

Monthly peak count	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gibraltar Point	3600	3000	1560	800	750	180	350	200	192	700	800	500
Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe	578	1200	69	100	450	408	21	51	100	120	20	61
Witham Mouth	350	75	-	-	35	-	10	50	50	-	1100	5
Friskney	-	185	-	367	72	67	699	-	-	-	-	-
Leverton	31	52	600	131	51	14	167	-	-	-	-	-
Freiston Shore	45	210	200	520	200	410	10	55	4	8	20	1
Kirkby on Bain	500	11	107	82	15	2	3	-	7	4	-	1
Terrington	50	-	20	500	500	-	-	-	1	26	-	-
Manby	100	-	32	400	270	200	-	-	1	1	12	3
Donna Nook	130	50	30	7	180	30	14	24	100	100	250	250

All four figure counts this year were made at Gibraltar Point with the exceptions of 1200 at Saltfleetby on Feb 24th and 1100 at Witham Mouth on Nov 5th. Despite Kirkby landfill still being active, albeit in its final stages, numbers utilising that site were significantly lower than in previous years. The trend is that this is becoming a species confined more to coastal habitats due to inland feeding opportunities disappearing with the eventual cessation of landfill activities within the county. There were 46 nests on the roof of Bargain Madness, Grimsby May 25th and two at Deeping St James (east pits) on May 15th. Observers are encouraged to report all nesting attempts.

It is worth mentioning that the majority of birds recorded in the county are of the subspecies *argenteus* but on passage and during the winter months good numbers of the more easterly and northerly nominate *L.a. argentatus* are present; typically these are larger and darker birds than *argenteus*, adults being safely identifiable by their distinct primary pattern.

An adult ringed at the Slippery Gowt landfill site in Boston in Jun 2001 was found dead, hit by a car, in Scarborough in Jul 2017, making it more than 16 years old. Colour-ringed birds continue to be reported in numbers, with three ringed at Rufforth Waste Disposal Site in York providing three sightings during the year, all at Gibraltar Point in Jan 2017.

## Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans* ■

Very scarce all-year visitor. Amber List. **LBRC**

There were fewer records than in 2016, most of them at Gibraltar Point, where a 2CY bird was seen on the beach on Jan 5th (KMW). A well-photographed adult/5CY bird was on Festival Pools



in Skegness on Feb 12th (NAL) and another 2CY bird was at Crook Bank on Feb 22nd (NAL). A 2CY bird was present on the beach at Gibraltar Point on Feb 24th (KMW), thought to be a male on account of its large size, and was seen again there on Mar 14th (KMW). In addition, 3CY birds were present on Feb 25th (KMW) and Mar 2nd (NAL) respectively. The last record at Gibraltar Point was of a 2CY bird on Apr 27th (KMW).

Caspian Gulls were seen on two dates in Sep: Two adults were at Willingham by Stow on Sep 19th (DN) and a 3CY bird at Bagmoor on Sep 21st was coloured ringed with a yellow ring (TCL). The bird was too distant to read any details but most Caspian Gulls with yellow rings are Polish in origin (more rarely Ukrainian).



Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans* (5th Calendar Year) Skegness Jan 12th 2017 © Nige Lound

#### Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis* ■

Scarce visitor, mainly in late summer/autumn. **RBBP** Azorean Yellow-legged Gull *L.m.atlantis* is a very rare vagrant. Amber List (nominate). WeBS threshold for national importance: 11. **BBRC**

There were one or two unseasonal records from the start of the year including an adult frequenting Swanpool and Boultham Mere Feb 25th–28th, the same individual was seen in the nearby Whisby NR roost on the evening of the 25th. The only Mar record related to the same bird, seen again at Boultham Mere on the 3rd. An adult Yellow-legged Gull was apparently paired with an adult Herring Gull at Deeping Lakes NR from mid-Apr onwards and although there was a nesting attempt it was unsuccessful.

Jul and Aug being the best months for passage of this species there were notable counts including 10 at Kirkby on Jul 21st with nine at Marston on the same date and three at Norton Disney on Jul 31st. In Aug there were three at Denton on the 4th, three at North Hykeham Pits on the 10th, three at Gibraltar Point on the 12th, three at Barkston on the 13th, 17 at Norton Disney on the 16th being the peak count for the year. There were eight records during Sep, all singles with the exception of two at Gibraltar Point on the 10th and two there on the 13th. Singles at Gibraltar Point on Oct 6th, North Hykeham Pits on Oct 17th and two at Tattershall on Oct 21st were the last birds for the year.

#### Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus* ■ (*graellsii*) ■ (*intermedius*).

Present all year: western European form '*graellsii*' common on spring and autumn passage, scarce but increasing in winter and as breeding species. Danish and southern Scandinavian form '*intermedius*' is a fairly common passage migrant. Birds showing characters of the northern Scandinavian form '*fuscus*' (Baltic Gull) have been noted but none accepted as yet. Amber List (*graellsii*) and Green List (*intermedius*). WeBS threshold for national importance: 1200. Many immatures summer.

Monthly peak count	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
North Hykeham	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	110	40	435	25	2
Deeping St James	1	10	60	102	86	90	139	76	12	1	1	-
Alkborough Flats	1	-	1	1	1	1	5	126	1	1	1	-
Welland Marsh	3	-	100	70	80	-	4	-	-	2	-	-
Boultham Mere	2	4	6	9	26	20	80	40	6	34	4	1
Toft next Newton	1	10	3	4	4	1	50	40	65	3	1	-
Baston	-	2	13	15	20	-	55	45	4	-	-	-
Butterwick	22	30	37	43	28	-	21	38	8	45	33	50
Kirkby on Bain	20	2	7	39	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Whisby NR	3	13	13	6	5	12	22	29	-	-	-	1

Records were widespread in Jan with small numbers present across the county. Double figure counts came from Witham Mouth where there were 12 on the 8th, 20 at Kirkby on the 11th and 22 at Butterwick on the 15th. Towards the end of Feb it was apparent that this early migrant was on the move. Few three figure counts were made this year: 100 at Welland Marsh on Mar 12th, 102 at Deeping Lakes on Apr 8th, with return passage consisting of: 650 at Marston on Jul 21st being the years peak count, 139 at Deeping Lakes on Jul 24th, 126 at Alkborough Flats on Aug 1st, 250 at Denton on Aug 4th, 110 at North Hykeham Pits on Aug 10th and 435 at North Hykeham Pits on Oct 17th. Numbers typically dwindled by Nov but notable counts were 25 at North Hykeham Pits on Nov 4th, 25 at Witham Mouth on Nov 5th and 33 at Butterwick on Nov 9th. The only double figure count made during Dec was a notable 50 at Butterwick on the 9th. Breeding records were received this year from Deeping St. James (east pits) where there were 22 nests May 14th and another ten were on the roof of Bargain Madness, Grimsby May 25th. Observers are encouraged to report all nesting attempts.

### Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*

Rare vagrant. BBRC

A 3CY+ individual was found at Baston and Langtoft Pits Jul 15th-16th (MWe *et al*). Accepted by BBRC (BB 111 p582). This takes the Lincolnshire total to 16, the period of occurrences spanning May-Sep. The extreme dates are May 5th and Sep 5th.

This individual was considered by BBRC to have wandered widely across Wales and England and also occurred in Avon, Buckinghamshire, Carmarthenshire, Derbyshire, East Glamorgan, Norfolk, Northamptonshire and Yorkshire.

### Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis*



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

Site name	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Gibraltar Point	1	35	14	133	1800	3090	2960	130
Saltfleetby Theddlethorpe	-	1	2	15	50	480	300	21
Saltfleet	-	-	-	5	400	77	-	-
Anderby	-	-	-	3	-	300	-	2
Witham Mouth	-	-	-	-	257	300	20	-
Donna Nook	-	2	-	-	135	48	280	-
Huttoft	-	-	-	-	-	210	20	1
Marshchapel	-	-	4	-	5	200	-	-
Freiston Shore	-	-	-	-	150	8	20	2

The table shows what were the principal sites for Sandwich Terns, all of them coastal; twenty-one sites recorded this species, two of them inland. The first bird of the year was at Gibraltar Point on Mar 21st. One was noted at Covenham Reservoir on Apr 9th and one with the influx of Black Tern at Whisby NR on Apr 30th. Gibraltar Point remains the principal site: there were 37 counts of 500 or more, 20 of these being of more than 1000. Peak counts occurred from mid-Jul to mid-Sep with 3090 on Aug 30th. Counts of between 300 and 480 were recorded at Saltfleet, Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR, Anderby and Witham Mouth. Between Mar and Jun the highest number counted was 133. During Oct there was a rapid drop off in numbers until two birds going south at Gibraltar Point on the Oct 31st was the final sighting of the year.

**Little Tern *Sternula albifrons***



Scarce summer visitor and fairly common passage migrant. Occasional inland. Amber List. RBBP

Site Name	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Gibraltar Point	78	170	69	100	8
Saltfleetby Theddlethorpe	2	34	2	-	3
Witham Mouth	-	-	-	-	30

The table shows the main coastal sites for this scarce summer visitor. The first two returning birds arrived at Gibraltar Point on Apr 23rd, five days later than in 2016 and on Apr 27th 70 were counted moving north. The following day a further 19 birds were moving north with 37 lingering there. Birds were then recorded at Gibraltar Point daily through to Aug 3rd. The only inland records were two at Alkborough Flats on Apr 30th and a single on the same date that was at Thurlby Pits in the morning then at nearby Whisby NR that afternoon. There were breeding attempts at two sites on the north-east coast this year, one of two pairs and another of three pairs and clutches were laid but sadly washed out by a high tide on May 22nd. At the county stronghold of Gibraltar Point 50 to 60 birds were present throughout May and 113 were seen moving south on May 15th. Ultimately 20 pairs attempted to breed fledging seven chicks. The biggest roost count was of 100 birds on Jul 11th, down on the peak of 114 the previous Jul 22nd. Towards the end of the season 30 were seen at Witham Mouth on Aug 10th, singles were noted at Gibraltar Point on Aug 18th and 26th and last of the summer were 6 on Aug 29th at Freiston Shore.

The breeding success of this species at Gibraltar Point (Table below) has been low in the last two decades but with improved protection has improved since 2014, though the numbers of pairs there is still less than half of that seen in 2005-8.

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total pairs	44	44	43	52	3	32	12	3	8	20	28	20	20
Chicks fledged	3	30	3	2	-	13	-	-	-	26	30	11	7
Fledglings/pr	0.07	0.66	0.07	0.04	-	0.41	-	-	-	1.3	1.07	0.55	0.35

**Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii***



Very scarce passage migrant, May-Oct. Red List. LBRC RBBP

Five or more have been recorded in recent years (2006, 2008 and 2009), but since then there have been no more than two per year. The year 2017 was better than average with eight birds recorded at five sites. As is usual all birds were seen on autumn passage. Two were at Freiston Shore on Aug 9th (ABe) and another two were at Tetney on Aug 21st (CA). An adult was seen at Horseshoe Point on Aug 26th (GPC) and it or another at nearby Tetney Marsh (RL). An adult was then seen at Gibraltar Point on Aug 30th in the tern roost at Greenshank Creek (KMW). Finally, a juvenile flew south at Gibraltar Point on Sep 13th (RDn).

**Common Tern *Sterna hirundo***



Fairly common summer visitor and common passage migrant. Most breeding colonies are now inland. Amber List (nominate).

Site name	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Donna Nook	-	-	1	-	200	2400	38	-
Marshchapel	-	-	-	-	5	800	-	-
Gibraltar Point	-	26	10	4	566	348	147	3
Saltfleetby Theddlethorpe	-	-	1	-	1	190	37	2
Tetney	-	-	-	1	140	160	180	-
Witham Mouth	-	5	10	-	35	150	7	-
Freiston Shore	-	-	49	55	150	10	12	-
Kirkby on Bain	-	50	76	75	110	14	-	-
Tattershall Thorpe	-	-	-	62	-	-	-	-
Deeping St James	-	6	25	53	12	2	-	-

The first bird of the summer was noted at Frampton Marsh on Mar 13th virtually a month earlier than noted last year. It was three weeks before the next bird was noted at Deeping St James on the more typical date of Apr 3rd. Another two weeks passed before birds became more prevalent and were soon being observed countywide. By the end of Apr a count of c50 came from the Kirkby Pits area. In May birds were widespread with the largest count of 49 at Freiston Shore. In Jun there were several counts in excess of 50 with 75 the largest at Kirkby on Bain. Proof of breeding came

from Freiston Shore (38 nests), Kirkby GP (43 nests May 31st, minimum of 20 fledged young), Frampton Marsh (8 nests), Gibraltar Point and Whisby NR (8 nests) although none of these were successful. Five pairs made several attempts at Barton Pits but all young were predated by Otters *Lutra lutra*, or Mink *Neovison vison*.

Jul saw counts increase with six totals in excess of 100. On the last day of the month 566 were noted at Gibraltar Point. 23 counts exceeded 100 in Aug. The best counts of the year were in this month with 2400 at Pye's Hall on the 24th and 800 just to the north at Horseshoe Point on the 26th. There was a downturn in numbers during Sep but with five counts still exceeding 100, the best being 180 at Tetney Marsh. The last birds of the year were two observed at Crook Bank on Oct 11th.



Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea* Barton Apr 4th 2017 © Graham Catley

**Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*** ■

Fairly common passage migrant, mainly coastal but there is a regular inland passage in spring. Has bred. Amber List.

Site name	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Barton Pits	-	232	-	-	-	-	-	-
Covenham Reservoir	-	85	20	-	-	-	-	-
Alkborough Flats	-	51	12	-	-	-	1	-
Gibraltar Point	-	31	2	-	27	11	5	2
Saltfleetby Theddlethorpe	-	-	4	-	-	28	1	1
Donna Nook	-	-	-	-	-	28	1	-
Whisby NR	-	15	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gedney Drove End	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	-
Freiston Shore	-	-	-	-	3	3	5	-

Recorded on 71 dates and at 26 sites with the first being seen at Frampton Marsh on Apr 9th. Notable spring passage occurred in the north of the county on the last day of Apr with the year's best total of 232 moving east just to the west of Barton Pits at Chowder Ness. On the same day 85 were recorded at Covenham Reservoir and 51 at east and north-east at Alkborough Flats. During May the most significant count was of 20 at Covenham Reservoir on the 7th. Emphasising its status as a passage migrant, most had gone through by mid-May and no birds recorded in Jun. The

first returning bird was at Gibraltar Point and Gedney Drove End on Jul 1st though Jul numbers were relatively low until 27 flew south at Gibraltar Point on the 26th. Aug numbers were also low until 28 were counted between Churchill Lane and Crook Bank on the 22nd and the same total at Donna Nook two days later. Five was the largest total in Sep at Gibraltar Point and two there on Oct 31st were the last sightings of the year.

**White-winged Black Tern** *Chlidonias leucopterus*

Vagrant. LBRC

There was one record this year of a juvenile on Pursuit Pit at Barton Jul 26th-Aug 5th (MBa *et al*).

**2009 addition** An adult in summer plumage was at Covenham Reservoir on May 14th (GPL, KRo).

These two records bring the total to 41 in all (42 individuals). The 2009 bird was not submitted at the time but one of the observers noticed Appendix 2 in the LBR 2009 (p153) and dug out his notebook description. Historic records are always welcome when accompanied by good notes made at the time of the observation.

**Black Tern** *Chlidonias niger*



Scarce/fairly common passage migrant in spring and autumn. **RBBP**. American Black Tern *C.n.surinamensis* is a vagrant. Green List. **BBRC**

Site name	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Whisby NR	24	2	-	-	-	1	-	-
Barton Pits	18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Alkborough Flats	10	6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kirkby on Bain	9	9	-	-	-	-	-	-
Messingham	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	-
Covenham Reservoir	5	4	-	-	2	-	-	-
Gibraltar Point	1	1	-	1	2	5	1	-
Donna Nook	-	-	-	-	5	1	-	-
Bassingham	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Frampton Marsh	-	3	-	-	-	1	-	-
Marshchapel	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-
Tetney	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-
Number of sites	7	12	-	2	7	9	1	1
Minimum Lincs total	77	41	-	2	18	15	1	1



Black Tern *Chlidonias niger* Gibraltar Point Apr 30th 2017 © Paul Neale





White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus* Barton Pits Aug 5th 2017 © Graham Catley



White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus* Barton Pits Aug 5th 2017  
© Graham Catley (left) and © Steve Routledge (right)

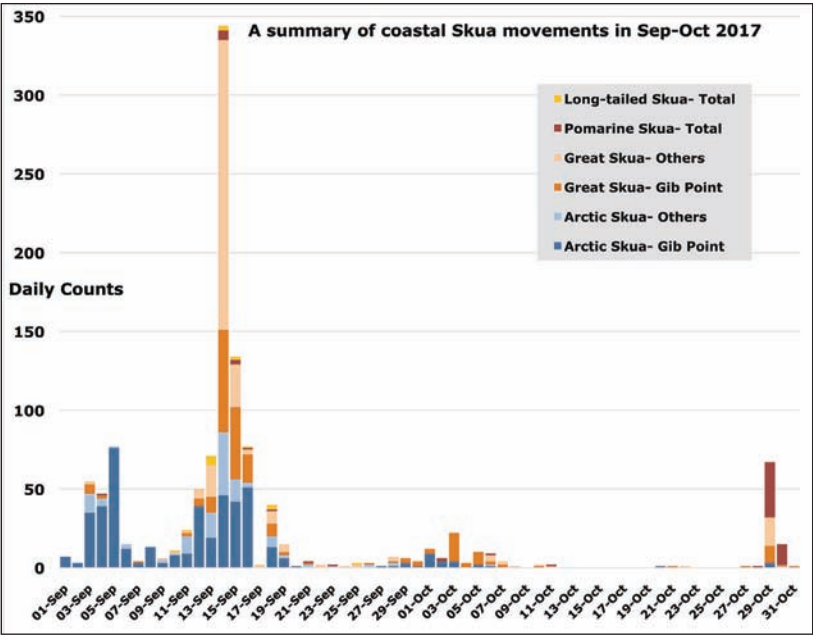
All records of three birds or more are shown in the table and 21 sites reported birds on 46 dates. The first bird of the year was seen at Deeping Lakes NR on Apr 20th-21st, two weeks earlier than last year. On Apr 30th there were nine observations from six areas including 24 at Whisby NR, the highest count of the spring, 18 east at Barton and ten east at Alkborough Flats. These were the only double figure counts of the year. During May, records came from 12 locations on 14 dates. A trickle of birds moved south from late Jul and into Aug and Sep. The final bird of the year was at Toft next Newton on the late date of 16th Nov.

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*



Fairly common autumn passage migrant, mainly Aug to Nov and rare in winter and spring. Rare inland. Amber List.

There were a small number of mid-winter records with one at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Jan 2nd and three there on Jan 4th with seven reported the same day at Gibraltar Point. There was also a single at Tetney on Feb 8th. There were no spring or early summer records this year and all reports were from the usual coastal watch points commencing with single birds at Gibraltar Point on Jul 19th and 25th followed by occasional further reports of up to three birds during Aug, all at Gibraltar Point. Single figure counts built up from a few locations in early Sep culminating in the largest movement of the year on Sep 14th and 15th, with 170 past Huttoft and 65 past Gibraltar Point on Sep 14th (see chart of skua movements below). Thereafter there were regular reports of up to 18 birds until Nov 12th, mostly from Sutton-on-Sea southwards. The last reports were two at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Nov 29th and a single at Witham Mouth on Dec 11th.



Coastal skua movements in Lincolnshire in autumn 2017

Sep is usually the month for the “Skua day” in the county and 2017 was no exception with a large movement of mainly Great Skuas on Sep 14th. Numbers of Arctic Skuas were low in comparison to recent years, no doubt in part reflecting their decline as a breeding species in the UK. It was a below average year for Pomarine Skuas which classically peak late in the autumn. Long-tailed Skuas remained as scarce as ever with all records being coastal, mainly at Gibraltar Point.

### **Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus***



Generally scarce autumn passage migrant, although occasional larger movements, mainly Sep to Nov. Rare in winter and spring and exceptional inland. Green List.

All records this year were in autumn and from a total of nine coastal locations with broadly similar peak numbers to those seen in 2016. The earliest report was from Horseshoe Point on Aug 9th with more regular reports, particularly from Gibraltar Point, of small numbers from Sep 4th and through to Oct 11th, with a maximum of just four birds on Sep 14th. After a short gap the largest movement of the year occurred on Oct 29th and 30th, although this was still relatively small, with a peak of 15 birds at Gibraltar Point on 29th and a single flock of 18 birds at Freiston Shore on the 30th. The latter flock was noted to be harrying a feeding flock of Kittiwakes. There were a further eight birds on Nov 12th at Gibraltar Point and a single at Sutton-on-Sea on the same day followed by the last reports of singles at Gibraltar Point on Nov 26th and a late bird at Witham Mouth on Dec 11th.

### **Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus***



Fairly common, but decreasing, late summer and autumn passage migrant, mainly Jul to Oct. Very scarce in spring and winter and exceptional inland. Red List.

There was a typical spread of records during the year, all bar one from 10 coastal watch points between Jul 5th and Oct 30th. The exception was a lone inland bird at Covenham Reservoir on Sep 18th. Gibraltar Point had the majority of sightings, with reports on an almost daily basis from mid-Jul to the end of Oct and also the largest daily movements, with a maximum of 76 on Sep 5th. Daily numbers for Gibraltar Point and other main watch points (including Donna Nook, Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR, Huttoft and Freiston Shore) are shown on the graph of skua movements above.

### **Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus***



Very scarce/scarcely autumn passage migrant, mainly Aug-Oct and exceptional inland. Green List. LBRC

There were 12 records, involving 18 birds, probably mainly juveniles, all concentrated in just over a two-week period in Sep. Gibraltar Point had the majority of sightings, with single birds on five days between Sep 10th and 16th, six birds on the 13th and two on the 18th. Other sightings of singles came from Huttoft on the 14th, Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on the 15th and 18th and at Donna Nook on the 14th and the last of the year on Sep 25th.

### **Little Auk *Alle alle***



Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor, with occasional larger influxes. Green List (nominate)

This was a poor year for this species and there were none at all in the first winter period. The first of the year was an early record at Gibraltar Point on Sep 18th, followed by a flurry of records with one at Sutton on Sea, four at Mablethorpe, one at Donna Nook and two at Gibraltar Point, all on Oct 29th. Another was at Huttoft Oct 30th. There were none in Nov. Two were at Gibraltar Point Dec 1st and the final record of the year was one at Witham Mouth Dec 11th.

### **Common Guillemot *Uria aalge***



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

Early in the year there were two offshore at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Jan 6th. At Gibraltar Point there were two on Jan 11th-12th, one on 13th, eight on 18th and one on 21st. Two were at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Jan 30th. In Feb there were singles at Gibraltar Point on the 2nd and 3rd, one at Donna Nook on the 5th and at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on the 15th and 17th. Six were at Gibraltar Point on the 25th, the last of the winter period. Spring and summer birds were few and far between with five at Gibraltar Point on May 9th and one May 21st; two at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on May 25th, one at Tetney May 29th, two at Gibraltar Point Jun 8th and three at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Jun 8th.

Birds were offshore again from Aug, with singles at Gibraltar Point on 1st, 5th, and 7th and another at Tetney, Aug 25th. Main autumn passage though began in Sep and Oct with ones and twos at a number of coastal sites on most days. Maxima were 18 at Gibraltar Point Sep 18th, and 14 at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR Sep 15th and 18th. A northerly movement was noted on Oct 29th, with 290 at Sutton on Sea, 109 at Gibraltar Point and 45 at Freiston Shore while 50



Black Guillemot *Cepphus grylle* Witham Mouth Dec 9th 2017 © Graham Catley



Black Guillemot *Cepphus grylle* Witham Mouth Dec 9th 2017 © Russell Hayes



Black Guillemot *Cepphus grylle* Witham Mouth Dec 9th 2017 © Steve Gantlet

were at Freiston Shore on Nov 7th. Gibraltar Point, Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR and Witham Mouth also recorded single figures on several dates throughout the month. The only Dec records were confined to The Wash, with two at Witham Mouth 8th and one on 9th, five on 11th and the last bird of the year was at Frampton Marsh Dec 23rd.

### Razorbill *Alca torda* ■

Western European form (*islandica*) scarce passage migrant and winter visitor, but can occur in any month. Exceptional inland. Amber List (*islandica*).

Early in the year the only reports came from Gibraltar Point with singles on Jan 6th and 12th with another on Feb 27th. Another single was at Donna Nook Feb 19th.

In the summer and early autumn one was at Gibraltar Point Jul 6th and five were at Donna Nook Aug 12th. During Sep two were at Gibraltar Point on 18th, 10 were at Huttoft 15th, and five were at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on 18th. The highest count of the year came from Gibraltar Point with 27 birds Oct 29th. The only other record that month was one at Freiston Shore also on 29th. The only Dec record and last of the year was of one at Witham Mouth on Dec 11th-12th.

### Black Guillemot *Cephus grylle* ■

A very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber List.

One very significant record was a bird showing characters of one of the northern races at the Witham Mouth Dec 7th-11th (DRob). The record was submitted as being a possible Mandt's Black Guillemot *C.g.mandtii*, but the racial identification of this bird currently rests with the BOURC who are conducting research on the identification criteria of this and the other races (*nominate grylle*, *arcticus*, *islandicus*, and *faeroensis*).

### Puffin *Fratercula arctica* ■

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

This was a better year than average for this locally rare auk with a record number on one day in Sep. There were just two records in the first half of the year when one was at Gibraltar Point on Jan 12th (KMW) and another on Feb 28th (NAL). The first record of the autumn was on Sep 18th at Gibraltar Point when 10 were seen offshore (KMW, RDn, JPS), most departing to the north. Two more were seen on the same date at Crook Bank, Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR (NAL), when many more common auks were also on the move. In Oct, the remaining two records were both at Gibraltar Point: one went south on Oct 17th (KMW) and three went north on Oct 29th (KMW, SML).

### Feral Pigeon *Columba livia* ■

Common and widespread resident. Green List.

Large counts of this species seem to be declining in spite of requests for more and better information in previous reports. The top three counts this year were of 100 at Ruckland in Feb, 100 at Witham Mouth in Jul and 90 at Freiston Shore in Oct. This compares to a top count of 250 from Grantham in 2016. This valuable Peregrine food needs better recording! The species was found in 22% of BBS squares (2016 22%) with an average of 10 birds per occupied square (2016 5).

### Stock Dove *Columba oenas* ■

Common resident and winter visitor. Amber List.

Site Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Donna Nook	45	40	26	20	24	75	39	20	60	1	-	-
Fockerby	30	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	31	-	-	55
East Keal	12	51	11	8	-	-	15	-	-	12	8	1
Covenham Reservoir	22	16	20	5	2	-	-	-	51	-	-	15
Metheringham	45	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Willow Tree Fen	24	2	2	1	5	1	-	2	-	2	-	30
Saltfleetby Theddlethorpe	3	9	1	6	3	8	-	5	5	27	5	19
Carlton & Manby Washlands	2	26	2	5	-	2	6	-	2	-	-	-
Baston	25	5	2	4	1	2	3	8	4	13	1	-
Stixwold	25	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-



There were 2370 records of Stock Dove received in 2017 and the peak monthly counts from the top ten sites are shown in the chart above. It is still regarded as being under-recorded, due to its sedentary nature, and because it occurs mainly in agricultural areas seldom visited by birdwatchers.

The highest counts recorded were 75 at Donna Nook on Jun 24th and 60 there on Sept 18th. There were 55 at Fockerby on Dec 12th, 51 at East Keal on Feb 4th, 51 at Covenham Reservoir on Sep 23rd and 45 at Metherringham on Jan 29th. Birds were recorded in all 12 months of the year at Boultham Mere, Frampton Marsh, and Tattershall. There were only six confirmed breeding records received.



Stock Dove *Columba oenas* North Kelsey Moor Jun 4th 2017 © Roy Harvey

**Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus***



Abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Green List.

The table shows a selection of the most consistently counted sites with a max count over 500. The count of 7480 at Gibraltar Point in Oct was by far the largest in the county in this and the previous year. The species was found in 99% of BBS squares (2016 100%) with an average of 43 birds counted per occupied square (2016 38) making it both the most widespread and numerous bird in the county.

Site Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gibraltar Point	500	200	1002	300	300	200	150	250	200	7480	700	1100
Tetney	250	200	-	100	150	200	200	300	2500	-	-	1
Donna Nook	1000	1000	400	200	200	100	60	50	150	-	2	1
Saltfleetby Theddlethorpe	300	100	200	150	50	40	1	100	100	650	250	100
Toft next Newton	35	15	20	500	220	16	12	11	90	70	100	10
Middlemarsh Farm	500	300	300	500	400	150	100	200	200	1	-	20

**Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur***



Scarce and declining summer visitor and passage migrant. Red List.

Peak Monthly Counts	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Claypole	-	3	1	-	-	15	3	-
Saltfleetby Theddlethorpe	-	-	9	4	4	5	10	-
Gibraltar Point	-	2	6	2	2	2	-	-
Kirkby on Bain	-	1	2	1	5	-	-	-
Frampton Marsh	-	4	3	2	2	3	2	-
Woodhall Spa	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-
Burgh le Marsh	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-
Deeping St James	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	-

Donna Nook	-	-	2	-	-	1	-	-
Dunsby	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	-
Metheringham	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
Eagle	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-
Whisby Quarry	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-
Witham Mouth	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
Theddlethorpe St Helen	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Donington	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Linwood	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Swinderby	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-
Gedney Drove End	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	-
Thorpe Tilney	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Walcot	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Crowle	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Marston	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Branston	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Pinchbeck	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Dunston	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Rippingale	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Canwick	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-

The table shows all records from all sites, with a total of 29 sites recording birds during the year. The first bird of spring was one at Claypole on Apr 19th and there were two there on Apr 25th. One was at Frampton Marsh on Apr 22nd; two were there on Apr 24th and four on Apr 29th. Singles were at Kirkby on Bain on Apr 26th, Burgh le Marsh on Apr 27th, two were at Gibraltar Point on Apr 29th and one was at Theddlethorpe St Helen on Apr 30th.

In May the majority of records were of single birds or pairs, with the significant exceptions of nine at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on May 9th and six at Gibraltar Point on 21st.

There were 13 singing males, or birds considered to be holding territory, during May, Jun, Jul and Aug. These probable breeding records mean that Turtle Doves cling on in the county for another year as this species continues its dramatic decline across its summer and winter range. Please submit all records for this species and confirm any breeding activity wherever possible.

### Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*



Very common resident. Green List.

A widespread bird particularly associated with the urban and suburban environment. Higher counts tend to occur in late summer when for example there were 60 in Ancaster and 58 in Sleaford in Aug, and 44 in Kirton in Sep. The species was found in 48% of BBS squares (2016 50%) with an average of 5.8 birds per occupied square (2016 4.5).

### Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*



Fairly common but declining summer visitor. Red List.

Peak Monthly Counts	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Gibraltar Point	3	6	4	1	1	1
Frampton Marsh	1	5	-	1	1	-
Mablethorpe	-	5	-	-	-	-
Crowle	-	-	5	-	-	-
Saltfleetby Theddlethorpe	3	4	2	2	1	1
Donna Nook	2	4	3	1	-	-
Laughton Forest	1	4	3	-	-	-
Kirkby on Bain	1	4	1	-	-	-
Whisby NR	-	3	4	-	-	-
Anderby	1	3	1	-	-	-
Tetney	1	3	2	-	1	-
Freiston Shore	-	2	3	-	-	-
Fiskerton	-	3	2	-	-	-
Metheringham	-	3	-	-	-	-

Records this year were received from 75 sites. The table shows sites with more than three birds monthly. The first bird of the spring was at Gibraltar Point on Apr 14th, with two the next day and another on Apr 16th when the first inland birds were reported from Hill Holt Wood and Bardney.



Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus* Fiskerton Fen May 18th 2017 © Russell Hayes

Other significant records of more than one bird, were two Saltfleetby, Apr 17th and three on 18th. There were three at Gibraltar Point on Apr 20th and 21st, and two or three birds were seen there daily to the end of the month. Two birds were at Billingham on Apr 23rd, at Saltfleetby Apr 28th and at Donna Nook on Apr 29th.

May saw a good countywide spread of records with the most being four at Gibraltar Point on May 1st and two at Deeping St James; six Gibraltar Point on May 2nd, four there on May 5th and 6th; four at Saltfleetby and three at Anderby, also on May 6th. A Hepatic female was at Whisby NP on Jun 12th.

During Aug single birds were at Willow Tree Fen on 5th, Tetney and Gibraltar Point 7th, Anton's Gowt, 11th, Saltfleetby and Deeping Lakes 12th, Frampton Marsh and Burton Pits 14th, Goxhill 17th. One bird was at Gibraltar Point on Sep 2nd and 6th and the last record of the year was of one at Saltfleetby on Sep 19th.



Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus* North Somercotes Jun 29th 2017 © Mark Johnson

**Barn Owl *Tyto alba***



Common and widespread resident with good breeding years coinciding with peaks in the vole population. Dark-breasted Barn Owl *T. a. guttata* is a rare vagrant. Green List. **BBRC**

There were reports from 133 sites across the county; considerably fewer than in the last two years, but Barn Owls still remain widespread in Lincolnshire. Most casual reports were of one to two birds, but three to five were noted at ten sites.

Bob Sheppard and Alan Ball as usual kindly supplied a summary of their nestbox data for 2011-2017, summarised in the tables below. Numbers of nests reported was slightly above the average for 2011-2017 and the majority of broods had between one to four chicks. Alan and Bob have now ringed an incredible 3727 chicks over this period!

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	
Total number of nests	298	330*	155	394	77	272	280	
Failures	40	131	18	38	20	41	62	
Broods ringed	243	185	126	333	44	198	191	
Chicks ringed	627	427	378	1214	104	522	455	
Mean number of chicks ringed per brood	2.6	2.3	3.0	3.6	2.4	2.6	2.4	
* High number of nests in 2012 due to early failures and subsequent re-laying.								
** Total nests = “missed” and “outcome unknown” as well as ringed + failures								
Brood size 2017	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
Number	50	61	47	25	7	-	1	191
Total chicks	50	122	141	100	35	-	7	455

These four ringed birds in the table below and caught at the nest all refer to mature adults aged between 9-12 years with two caught at or very close to their natal sites. GN88857 is a Cambridgeshire-bred female in her 12th year and another female bred in the county moved across to Leicestershire as a two-year old; this was the fourth occasion she has been re-trapped at the nest site. All four have now been trapped on multiple occasions at these nesting sites.

GN88857	Nestling Female Caught by ringer	24-06-04 13-05-17	Site Confidential: (Cambridgeshire) Site Confidential: (Lincolnshire), 12km NNE, 12y 10m 19d
GN94773	Nestling Female Caught by ringer	27-06-06 09-06-17	Site Confidential: (Lincolnshire) Site Confidential: (Leicestershire), 32km, WSW, 10y 11m 13d
GC31408	Nestling Female Caught by ringer	29-05-07 21-05-17	Site Confidential: (Lincolnshire) Site Confidential: (Lincolnshire) 5km, 9y 11m 22d
GC57801	Adult Male Caught by ringer	01-09-07 02-07-17	Kent's Bridge, Eastville, Boston: 53°6'N 0°5'E (Lincolnshire) Site Confidential: (Lincolnshire), 0km, 9y 10m 1d

### Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*



Common resident, widespread but predominantly in wooded areas. Amber List.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total number of nests*	34	18	13	60	6	23	42
Failures	3	1	3	4	-	2	1
Broods ringed	31	17	8	53	3	20	32
Chicks ringed	70	30	12	112	5	40	68
Mean number of chicks ringed per brood	2.3	1.8	1.5	2.1	1.7	2.0	2.1

\* Total nests = "missed" and "outcome unknown" as well as ringed + failures

Records came from 64 locations, significantly fewer than in 2016. Most reports were of single birds, but 17 sites recorded two and seven recorded three to four birds. Territorial calling was commonly recorded and given their sedentary nature, any calling pairs are likely to be on nesting territories. However, despite their widespread distribution across the county, they remain a difficult species in which to confirm breeding, ringing sites apart. Confirmed breeding was only reported Gibraltar Point. Alan Ball and Bob Sheppard recorded 42 nests in 2017 showing average productivity. The female trapped in Bourne Woods was last caught in 2011 and is now nearly ten years old.

GC14498	Nestling Female Caught by ringer	09-05-07 26-04-17	Bourne Wood: 52°45'N 0°23'W (Lincolnshire) Bourne Wood: 52°45'N 0°23'W (Lincolnshire), 0km, 9y 11m 17d
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### Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Common resident, very sedentary.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total number of nests*	68	59	70	80	70	78	87
Failures	18	18	20	16	17	23	26
Broods ringed	44	37	45	57	44	51	50
Chicks ringed	133	105	103	188	108	138	141
Mean number of chicks ringed per brood	3.0	2.8	2.3	3.3	2.5	2.7	2.8

\* Total nests = "missed" and "outcome unknown" as well as ringed + failures

Reporting of this species was down compared to 2016, with records coming from 45 localities, and still well down on the 83 sites reporting Little Owl in 2014. Counts were of one to two birds without exception and 38 localities reported sightings in one month of the year only. Bob Sheppard and Alan Ball kindly provided a summary of their nest box data from 2011-2017, in the table above. They ringed 141 chicks in 2017 from 50 broods, an average of 2.8 chicks per brood; there were 26 failures. These figures are extremely similar to those of 2016.

BTO ringing data confirms the very sedentary nature of these owls and the extensive record of these four Lincolnshire birds re-trapped between five and eight times at exactly the same sites in the south of the county, often annually. The oldest of these birds is now eight years, the longevity record from BTO data being 13 years and 10 months.

EW30817	Adult Female Caught by ringer each year 2011-2017	03-05-09 08-05-17	Dogdyke, Tattershall: c. 53°4'N 0°12'W (Lincolnshire) Age: 8y 0m 5d
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EW30097	Nestling Female Caught by ringer each year 2012-2017	13-06-09 05-04-17	Rippingale Fen: 52°50'N 0°20'W (Lincolnshire) Age: 7y 9m 23d
EW30906	Adult Female Caught by ringer each year 2012-2017	28-04-11 30-05-17	New House Farm, Morton Fen: 52°47'N 0°19'W (Lincolnshire) Age: 6y 1m 2d
EW30902	Full-grown Female Caught by ringer each year 2012-2017	22-04-11 22-05-17	Thurlby Fen, Bourne: c. 52°44'N 0°21'W (Lincolnshire) Age: 6y 1m 0d



Little Owl *Athene noctua* Frampton Marsh Jul 30th 2017 © Neil Smith

### Long-eared Owl *Asio otus* ■

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

The only Long-eared Owl highlight in Lincs in 2017 was the winter roost at Deeping Lakes NR where birds were reported from Jan 1st and there were up to five until Jan 14th, falling to a maximum of three to Feb 19th and one or two most days until the last single bird was seen on Apr 17th. At Gibraltar Point a single bird was seen on Jan 9th and 11th. Otherwise it was a disastrous showing in the county with no spring passage, no confirmed breeding, in fact little evidence of breeding at all, and an exceptionally poor autumn passage. The only breeding season reports were of single birds at Chambers Wood on Apr 1st and Crowle on Jun 9th. Just one autumn migration report was received of one at Gibraltar Point on Oct 2nd. Later in the winter one to two birds were seen at Deeping Lakes NR from Nov 2nd until Dec 16th and a single was at Frampton Marsh on Dec 28th.

### Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus* ■

Scarce winter visitor and occasional breeder. Amber List. **RBBP**

Site Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Hawthorpe	10	5	5	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bourne	7	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Crowland	4	6	4	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Deeping St Nicholas	4	6	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Frampton Marsh	4	4	5	3	-	-	1	1	4	2	1	3
Donna Nook	3	5	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Saltfleet	-	5	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-



Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus* Elm House Farm, Donna Nook Jan 16th 2017 © John Clarkson

Tetney	3	3	4	1	2	-	-	1	1	-	-	-
Dunsby	4	2	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gedney Drove End	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-

The table shows all sites holding four or more birds in any month of the year. The year started out well for Short-eared Owl fans with birds twice as numerous as the previous year and widespread around the county. Hawthorpe was the focus of attention with up to 10 feeding over the extensive grasslands in that area. The south of the county put on a particularly strong show. However this did not translate into breeding and no evidence of any kind of breeding activity was received although single birds did summer at Gibraltar Point and Butterwick, both saltmarsh sites where breeding has taken place in the past. The end of the year could not have been more different from the start with numbers well down and only Frampton Marsh providing any regular spectacle in Dec.



Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus* Gibraltar Point May 29th 2017 © Paul Neale

### European Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* □

Scarce summer visitor and very scarce passage migrant. Amber List.

Birds were reported from four breeding areas during the breeding season: Crowle Moors, no details provided; Walesby – Willingham Woods, one male; Greetwell Common, a male with two females and Laughton Forest. At the latter site (where there was no full survey in 2017) eight males held territories on the wet heath survey area, one down on 2016, and at least two additional pairs bred one of which had a ten day old chick on Aug 6th with this bird still in the nest on Aug 23rd. Away from breeding sites birds were reported from Crook Bank, Theddlethorpe NNR on May 2nd, an early date, and Nocton Fen May 30th.

### Alpine Swift *Apus melba*

Vagrant. Recorded from Mar-Aug with a single record from Oct. LBRC.

One flew south over Gibraltar Point just before midday on May 28th, having earlier flown over Spurn Point at 09.45h (JS, KMW, RDn, RKW). This was the first record since 2013 and the 19th for Lincolnshire.

### Common Swift *Apus apus* □

Very common summer visitor and passage migrant. Amber List.

The first two Swifts of the spring arrived in Stamford on Apr 14th with other early arrivals across the county occurring between Apr 21st-30th. Larger numbers soon appeared going into May, with 200 at Bassingham and 100 over both Frampton Marsh and Toft Newton Reservoir on 6th. There

were other flocks of 20-80 at several sites on that date. A flock of 700 on 15th at Middlemarsh Farm was the highest of the month. Counts of 250 or more were made regularly between mid-May and early Aug, but mainly in locations where the species congregates for feeding or on passage. Some very high counts were made at Gibraltar Point where there were 4990 on Jun 22nd, 3225 on Jul 11th and 2290 on Aug 4th, all going south.

The sum total of counts of southerly movement at Gibraltar Point was 23364 between Jun 1st-Aug 31st, with 12,407 in Jun, 8,168 in Jul and 2,789 in Aug. Some of these will have been movements to feed or ahead of weather fronts; it has been well established that such large summer movements take place ahead of depressions over northern England or Scotland. Emigration to their winter quarters usually begins in late Jul-early Aug, so the count of 2290 at Gibraltar Point on Aug 4th was probably the start of the autumn passage. Counts thereafter were well down and the last bird at Gibraltar Point was on Sep 29th. There were just a few later birds elsewhere on the coast: at Chapel St Leonard's on Oct 2nd and Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR Dunes NNR on Oct 10th and 11th, the last of the year.

Two middle-aged Swifts, retrapped at Marston STW, are shown below. The typical lifespan of this species is about 9 years; the current record for a ringed bird is just under 18 years.

SB93843	Adult	09-06-09	Marston Sewage Farm, Grantham: 52°57'N 0°39'W (Lincolnshire)
	Caught by ringer	09-05-17	Same site, 7y 11m 0d
SH07026	Adult	08-05-10	Marston Sewage Farm: 52°57'N 0°39'W (Lincolnshire)
	Caught by ringer	30-05-13	Same site, 3y 0m 22d
	Caught by ringer	08-06-17	Same site, 7y 1m 0d



Common Swift *Apus apus* Frampton Marsh May 7th 2017 © Neil Smith

### Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*



Fairly common resident and partial migrant. Red List.

Peak monthly counts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly totals 2017	47	33	34	35	23	22	37	60	54	35	39	25
Average totals 2011-16	32.8	22.8	29.3	23.2	19.3	18.0	22.0	37.7	47.7	39.7	32.5	26.2

Counts were received from 92 sites across the county. The numbers reported this year were above the 2011-2016 average, which period began after the severe winter of 2010/11. The highest count this year was six (three pairs in residence) at Barton Pits in Mar-Apr, while another 12 sites recorded three to five birds in at least one month. Instances of confirmed breeding came from Boultham Mere, Barton Pits, Gibraltar Point and Kirkby on Bain GPs. The monthly counts were highest in Aug-Sep in the post-breeding period. It was not recorded in any of the 86 BBS squares covered in Lincolnshire this year. Kingfishers are not ringed in any quantity in the county (eight

juveniles in 2017) and there were no recoveries to report (no individual ringed in Britain has been recovered more than three years since ringing).



Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* Nov 24th 2017 Far Ings © Paul Coombes

#### European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*

Vagrant. About 83 county records, 80 of these since 1957. **LBRC**

After the notable influx in 2015 and no records in 2016, there were three records of two birds this year, at Gibraltar Point and Anderby. The first was heard over the Old Saltmarsh at Gibraltar Point on May 13th (JS) and later seen to fly south and out on to the Wash (KMW, M Laing) and was probably the bird reported through Spurn earlier the same morning. A second bird was seen going south over Anderby Creek on May 23rd (JS) and then later heard going south, independently by two observers, over Gibraltar Point (RDn, KMW).

#### Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*



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

One in a garden at Miningsby on Apr 20th was the sole county record in 2017. The year's total was thus some way below the average (5.4) for the previous ten years and well below the exceptional 16 in 2015. Although it gives only an approximation, the total number of Wrynecks trapped in the UK in 2017 was just 11. The totals in the period 2010-2016 varied between 19-35. Is this another passage migrant on the wane?



**Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dryobates minor***



Rare and declining resident. Red List. **RBBP**

This species continues to teeter on the brink of extinction in Lincolnshire and reports this year refer to as few as four birds at five sites. The male at the study site of ACS in west Lincoln that heroically raised two young in 2016 after the female deserted returned on Jan 2nd and was observed drumming and excavating a nest hole on 53 dates up until May 12th. After this it did not reappear having failed to attract a female. Probably the same bird was also reported from nearby Hartsholme Park on Mar 13th. The only other reports were of single birds at Grantham and Ingleby both on Jan 24th and Southrey Wood on May 28th.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major***



Fairly common resident and partial migrant. Amber List.

Records were received from 108 sites. The species was found in 17% of BBS squares (26% in 2016) with an average of 1.7 birds per occupied square (1.7 in 2016). There is no immediately obvious explanation for the drop in abundance from 2016 to 2017. An interesting coastal migration of this species appeared to occur in Sep from well-watched coastal and inland sites. A peak of 15 birds counted at Gibraltar Point on Sep 30th including 12 moving south was the highest day count in Lincolnshire at one site in the last years; there were 11 there in Oct 2012. Apart from the counts in the table, inland there were counts of five at Willingham Woods in Jan and five at Bourne Woods in Mar. One interesting record of a locally-ringed bird concerns a female bird ringed at Gibraltar Point in her first calendar year that has since been retrapped four times, the latest occasion being in Sep 2017, when she was just over five years old.

**Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis***



Fairly common resident and partial migrant. Green List.

This species has continued to spread east across the county over the last 10 years. Records were received from 101 sites in 2017. There is no obvious pattern in numbers throughout the year that is predictable given its sedentary habits and high counts tend to be low for this highly territorial bird. Maximum counts of five were received from Willingham Woods in Jan and East Keal in Jun. A further six sites had maximum counts of four all of which were in the south and west of the county as follows: Deeping St James Aug and Sep, Boultham Mere Apr, Whisby NR Jul, Belton Park May, Haverholme Mar and Pinchbeck Aug. However, the north of the county has never recovered from the 2010–2011 losses attributable to the hard winter then and is found in far fewer sites than pre-2010 – e.g. Laughton Forest had at least 15 pairs but the population is now down to only one or two pairs.

The species was found in 19% of BBS squares (2% in 2016) with an average of 1.8 birds per occupied square (1.7 in 2016).

**Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus***



Common resident and passage migrant. Amber List.

This species is well distributed and ubiquitous throughout the county, with confirmed or probable breeding recorded in all 10-km squares in the Bird Atlas 2007-11 and present in most open habitats. The data tabulated below is from the regular Kestrel nest box monitoring and chick-ringing programme, as provided by AGB. The numbers of nests and ringed chicks during 2017 were broadly similar to the previous year but overall the data illustrates how variable the population in Lincolnshire is, dependent as the species is on the local vole populations.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total Number of nests**	85	117	82	150	43	98	110
Failures	7	27	10	16	5	4	4
Broods ringed	55	66	54	111	17	58	61
Chicks ringed	236	186	171	449	46	203	195
Average number of chicks/brood ringed	4.2	2.8	3.2	4.0	2.7	3.5	3.2

\*\*total number of nests includes broods not ringed and/or with unknown outcome.

Boxes containing no clutch or brood are excluded.

During the year observations were received from over 200 locations, generally of singles or pairs, although some larger groups were reported, particularly at some coastal locations in late summer and early autumn, providing evidence of some limited migration and juvenile dispersal. The largest day counts were 20 at Frampton Marsh on Aug 3rd and 21 at Gibraltar Point on Sep 7th.



Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* Covenham Reservoir Nov 8th 2017 © John Clarkson

### Red-footed Falcon

Vagrant. Thirty-four county records, 32 of these since 1963. **LBRC**

After a blank year in 2016, there were three records in 2017 all male birds. An adult male was at Tetney on May 21st (RL *et al*) and an adult male drifted south across the New Saltmarsh at Gibraltar Point on May 25th (KMW, J Shaw). This was quickly followed by a 2CY male at Gibraltar Point on May 28th (JS *et al*).



Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus* Gibraltar Point May 25th 2017© James Siddle

### Merlin *Falco columbarius*

■ (*aesalon*) ■ (*subaesalon*)

British form '*aesalon*' is a scarce winter visitor and passage migrant, very scarce in summer. Bred sporadically in the 19th century. Icelandic form '*subaesalon*' may also occur. Red List (*aesalon*) and Amber List (*subaesalon*).

This small but feisty falcon was reported from a total of 43 sites, around half along the coast or on the Humber, with reports of two or more at nine of the sites. The table below shows the sites with the most consistent Merlin presence. The only site with more than two was Gibraltar Point, with three on Jan 28th, Feb 21st and five dates in Oct and then Nov 17th, with four birds seen on Oct 10th-11th and Nov 23rd. There were reports in every month of the year, with two sightings in May (Gibraltar Point on 10th and Donna Nook on 15th) and two reports in Jun (Gibraltar Point on 3rd and Wainfleet on 25th), followed by a further six reports in Jul, including two together on Welland Marsh on Jul 26th.

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gibraltar Point	3	3	2	2	1	1	-	1	2	4	4	2
Frampton Marsh	2	2	2	1	-	-	1	1	2	2	2	2
Donna Nook	2	2	2	1	1	-	-	1	1	1	1	1
Alkborough Flats	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	2
Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2	2
Terrington	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	1

There were 32 reports, all singles, from 22 inland sites, mainly in the two winter periods, although early returning birds were noted at Deeping St. Nicholas on Jul 12th and Marston STW on Jul 20th.

### Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

■

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of sites in 2017	-	-	1	14	30	22	32	33	30	6	-	-
Number of sites in 2016	1	1	1	7	32	25	28	27	22	3	-	-
Number of sites in 2015	-	-	-	6	34	25	26	32	29	4	-	-

The first of the year was on Mar 30th at Marston STW (Dave Roberts) and there was another at Willow Tree Fen on Apr 1st (Steve Black), both early records by historical standards with the 1997-2016 first date average being around Apr 15th. The table shows the number of sites the species was reported from by month. There is a slight indication of a generally earlier arrival and later departure this year. There were eight reports of confirmed breeding, with five of these coming from GPC's study area in Laughton Forest. Three of these pairs fledged six young. Confirmed breeding was also reported from Alkborough (three young fledged), Dunsby Fen (two young fledged) and Kirkby-on-Bain where a nest with young was observed. From the data received using the same criteria as in previous years it was judged that there might have been a further 30 probable and 24 possible breeding pairs in Lincolnshire. A total population of 63 pairs compared to 71 in 2016. The best day count was five at Whisby NR on May 5th feeding over the north side of Teal Lake. The last records in Oct were from Gibraltar Point on 6th, 8th and 11th and Frampton Marsh on 14th, 15th and 28th. The latter being particularly late compared to the average last date in the 20 years to 2016 of Oct

### Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

■

Scarce but widespread resident, passage migrant and winter visitor; now breeds in larger numbers than previously recorded. Green List (nominate). **RBBP**

As Peregrines become more widespread keeping track of them becomes more difficult. Most pairs exhibit extreme nest site fidelity and there are now 36 known nesting sites in Lincs from which we are certain 19 pairs bred (up from 16 in 2016), six were not used, one site could not be accessed and no reports were received from 10. It may be the latter category contains sites that were not used and negative reports were not made. Of the 19 pairs that bred, 12 pairs fledged 32 young, three failed and no reports were received from four. One of the failures was again a result of a pair being driven off by Ravens. Fledging success from successful pairs at 2.7 chicks per nest was an improvement on last years 2.2 chicks per nest. This was the most productive year for chicks on record beating the previous best of 31 chicks from 16 pairs in 2011. The especially well-watched sites: St James Church Louth and Lincoln Cathedral both produced 3 chicks. For some reason, possibly disturbance, the Boston Stump pair switched to another nest site in the town docks from

2016 onwards and also raised three chicks. The way things are at the moment it is probable that a suitable nesting platform placed high on the gable end of any tall farm/industrial building has a good chance of being colonised by Peregrines.

Of note was colour-ringed bird GV30571 that was ringed in Staffordshire as a nestling on Jun 2nd 2017 and seen in the county on Oct 28th when its colour ring was read.

Finally a juvenile Peregrine possibly of the race *calidus* (so-called Arctic Peregrine, from Lapland to NE Siberia) was seen at Pye's Hall on Oct 9th but had rings on both legs and its origin is therefore open to question.

### Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

Rare. Vagrant from feral populations and occasional local escapes.

One was seen at Friskney on Feb 21st and in the spring there were three birds at Burgh le Marsh on May 20th and one at Gibraltar Point on May 24th. The last bird was one at Gibraltar Point on Nov 6th-7th.

### Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*



Very scarce passage migrant. Former rare breeder. Red List. **LBRC RBBP**

There were just two records, the same number as last year and continuing the general downward trend since the mid-1990s (see 2015 LBR). The first was a brief sighting at Pye's Hall (Donna Nook) on Sep 19th (GW), followed by a juvenile bird at Gibraltar Point north end from Sep 20th-26th (KMW *et al*).



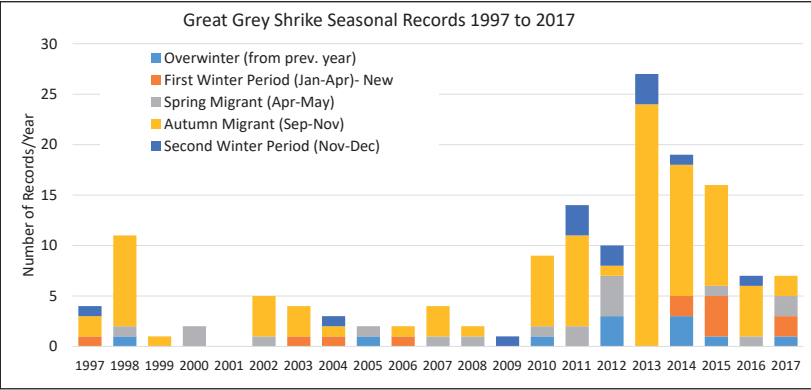
Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio* with *Aeshna* spp. dragonfly Gibraltar Point Sep 20th 2017  
© James Siddle

### Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*

Very scarce passage migrant and rare winter visitor Oct-Apr. Exceptional in summer. **LBRC**

The year started well, with three wintering birds found in Jan, including a long staying and well-watched bird at Deeping High Bank from Jan 29th to Mar 1st (IG *et al*). There was also a mobile bird near Claxby St. Andrew (south of Alford) from Jan 17th-24th (EJM, GRu), which was presumably the same bird seen there on Dec 19th 2016, and a single report of a bird near Hawthorne, in the SW of the county, on Jan 20th (VF). Finally in the first quarter there was a spring migrant on Mar 21st at Gibraltar Point (GPBO). The autumn was 'slower' with just two passage birds, the first at Alkborough Flats on Oct 10th (GPC) and then a bird at Witham Mouth on Nov 7th (IE).

The chart below summarises Great Grey Shrike numbers, 1997-2018, separated into wintering and migrant birds. The seven records in 2017 were similar to those in 2016 but significantly fewer than in the previous five years, particularly those on autumn passage.



Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor* Deeping High Bank Feb 22nd 2017 © Steve Nikols



### Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*



Very scarce migrant, mainly spring/early summer, but recorded Apr-Aug. Red List. LBRC RBBP

There were no records in 2017. Hunting of this species in the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern countries is proving a grave threat to this species.

### Jay *Garrulus glandarius*



British form '*rufitergum*' is a common resident, irregular migrant and winter visitor. Amber List.

A total of 85 sites reported Jays during 2017; this is the second successive year there has been a drop in sites reporting Jays since 2015. There was no sign of any significant coastal movements as has previously occurred at sites such as Gibraltar Point in 2015. Low counts were reported throughout the year and across the county. Several sites recorded three to six birds in the spring and summer months, and although there were no reports of confirmed breeding the species obviously breeds widely in the county's woodlands. The picture was similar in the autumn and winter with low counts throughout with maxima of 15 at Boultham Mere on Oct 30th and Swanholme Lakes on Dec 12th, and ten at Twyford Forest Oct 27th. Overall 2017 was another thoroughly unremarkable year.

### Magpie *Pica pica*



Very common resident. Green List.

This species was found in 77% of BBS squares (71% in 2016) with an average of 2.7 birds per occupied square (2.6 in 2016). It is the 16th most widespread species in Lincolnshire but only the 28th most numerous as counted on BBS. This may be due to its addiction to Larsen traps that are still legally used to persecute this species. Despite this over the last 20 years it has become more widespread as evidenced by BBS that had it in around 56% of squares at that time. The only counts reported of over 35 birds were 40 at Boultham Mere in Dec, 40 at Cleethorpes in Jan, 35 in Tetney in Jul and 35 at Gibraltar Point in Oct.

### Jackdaw *Coloeus monedula*



Western European form '*spermologus*' very common resident, also passage migrant and winter visitor. Nordic Jackdaw, *C.m.monedula*, rare or overlooked winter visitor. Green List (both forms).

This species was found in 76% of BBS squares (72% in 2016) with an average of 15 birds per occupied square (12 in 2016). It is the 17th most widespread species in Lincolnshire and the 5th most numerous as counted on BBS. Jackdaws are a loosely colonial breeding bird that flock up outside the breeding season. By far the highest count of the year came from Gibraltar Point on Oct 16th where there was a massive 1800 birds. At North Hykeham on Dec 24th there were 900. A flock of 400 was at Stenigot on Jul 14th and there were 300 at Deeping St James on Jan 22nd.

### Rook *Corvus frugilegus*



Very common/abundant resident, also passage migrant and winter visitor. Green List.

Counts of Rooks in excess of 100 came from 28 sites of which by far and away the largest was of 900 at Welbourn in Jan followed by 479 at Sleaford in Aug. The species was found in 76% of BBS squares (2016 63%) with an average of 22 birds per occupied square (2016 30). Rook is the 18th most widespread species in Lincolnshire but the 2nd most numerous reflecting it's highly successful colonial breeding habit which is the subject of an ongoing LBC survey.

There are very few ringing recoveries of this species, so EL87419 is notable in having been ringed in Nottinghamshire in May 2007 and recovered in the county in Feb 2017 when nine years and nine months old, victim of a domestic animal.

### Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*



Very common resident, also passage migrant and winter visitor. Green List.

The species was found in 94% of BBS squares (2016 93%) with an average of 8 birds per occupied square (2016 9). Carrion Crow is the 4th most widespread species in Lincolnshire and the 9th most numerous. Like Magpie it has become more widespread increasing from around 80% in 1997 to it's current level. Big winter counts are quite usual and this year the highest was of 150 from Boultham Mere in Dec, there were also 120 at Donna Nook in Jan and 120 at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR in Dec. The peak count of 500 was at Marston in Jun. Dave Roberts reports there are often 300 to 400 birds there through winter but this count was an exceptionally high count for the time of year.

### **Hooded Crow** *Corvus cornix*



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

There was a slightly better showing in 2017 with seven records from six sites. The first was on Mar 10th at Donna Nook. Then there were two spring records with one at Gibraltar Point on May 7th and another at Boultham Mere on May 18th. There followed three autumn records: one at Tetney on Sep 10th, another at Branston Booths on Sep 30th and the last of the year at Donna Nook on Nov 5th.

### **Raven** *Corvus corax*



Resident to 18th century but was extirpated, but now a very scarce but increasing resident. Green List.

Reports came from 43 sites this year, slightly less than in 2016 but one more than 2015, and involving between one and 11 sites per month. As in previous years, the reports were concentrated in the south-west and into the Wolds, with a scattering along the Lincoln edge and a few in the north and along the coast. The number of breeding pairs is slowly increasing but incompletely recorded. There were four reports of confirmed breeding in central and south-west Lincolnshire, although in one case it was unclear if the pair involved had come from a known site nearby or from a new site, and one confirmed pair in north Lincolnshire that fledged one young. At the most successful nest five young fledged in mid-May; at another three juveniles were seen in early Jul; and at the other two sites two or more young fledged in late Jun.



Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus* Lincoln Jan 5th 2017 © John Clarkson

### **Waxwing** *Bombycilla garrulus*



Passage migrant and winter visitor, most in Oct-Apr. Scarce most winters but fairly common in irruption years. Green List.

Hundreds of Waxwings were being reported in Scotland in Jan where a colour-ringing project was in progress in Aberdeen. Many of these birds moved off south when local supplies of red berries ran out. The project reported that five colour-ringed birds reached Ireland, one the Isle of Man (which then diverted south to Wales rather than carry on west to Ireland) and that there was an overall build-up in the Midlands. Birds also reached North London and Kent, with the furthest south being a bird in Crawley, West Sussex.

This influx and subsequent southward movement was reflected in the numbers recorded in Lincolnshire. There were flocks of 34 at Burton Stather and 24 in Lincoln in Jan, along with smaller ones of 10-11 at Grimsby and Stamford. This presaged a larger movement in Feb with some impressive flocks recorded, mainly in the north and centre of the county. The first flocks

arrived early in Feb with 17 at North Hykeham on 1st, 32 at Bishopbridge on 3rd, and 30 at Grimsby on 8th. Later in the month numbers increased when there were 80 in Scunthorpe on 20th-24th and then an increase to 40 in Grimsby on 18th-20th. As usual these birds moved around and during Mar there were 18 at Baumber on 6th, 20 at Frampton on 14th, up to 24 in Gainsborough on 11th-18th and lastly a large flock of 65 at Boultham Mere on 23rd. Small numbers (one to three) were seen in various places and some lingered into Apr with 11 at Alkborough on 1st, eight at Washingborough on 8th, four in Woodhall Spa on 6th and the final birds of the spring at Frampton Marsh on 13th and Grimsby on 15th. These were the final records for 2017 with none at all in the ensuing autumn.

#### Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

■ (*britannicus*) ■ (nominate)

British form '*britannicus*' is a widespread resident and passage migrant. Nominate continental form a very scarce irruptive visitor in autumn. Amber List (*britannicus*) and Green List (nominate).

Reports in double figures came from only two sites this year with Gibraltar Point reporting 18 in Nov and Willingham Woods holding 10 in Apr. The species was found in 9.3% of BBS squares (2016 7.3%) with an average of 1.6 birds per occupied square (2016 1.8).

There were no remarkable ringing recoveries for this species in terms of distance or origins, but four birds ringed locally between 2011-2012 have each been retrapped several times up to 2017 and all are now more than five years old (the longevity record for this species stands at nine years and two months).

#### Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

■

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

This species is red-listed in BoCC4, and as in 2016 just 18 sites recorded the species in its established range in the south-west part of the county and south-west side of the Witham valley. No records were received from some sites such as Callan's Lane Wood that has previously held birds. Most records were of one to two birds apart from six at Bulby in Mar and five in Dec and four at Potterhanworth in Jan.

As in 2016, there was a confirmed coastal record of a single bird at Frampton Marsh on Sep 26th that was noteworthy and indicates, as for records at Freiston Shore in 2016, Gibraltar Point in 2014 and Alkborough Flats in 2013-15, that some individuals are not entirely sedentary. There were no records of breeding activity from any site although submitted records suggest little recent change in distribution of the species. Marsh Tit is certainly under-recorded and we appeal to all observers for additional records.

A notable control, V256627 was originally ringed in Bourne in Feb 2007 and has since been retrapped three times at the same site, most recently in Feb 2017, now 10 years old.



Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris* Nocton Nov 25th 2017 © Neil Smith

## Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*



Once common and widespread, now seriously declining and scarce. Red List. **RBBP**

Site Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Haverholme	-	-	4	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Stenigot	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Barton Pits	1	1	2	1	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	1
Anwick	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Crowle	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Willingham Woods	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
Loughton Forest	-	1	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Whisby NR	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Messingham SQ	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
New Holland	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bulby	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Boultham Mere	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Donington-on-Bain	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

After last year's shocking evidence that two thirds of our breeding Willow Tits had gone in the last five years, down from 41 pairs in 2011 to an optimistic 16 in 2016, this year the picture has become even worse. There were two singing males and a probable female at Barton Pits, two singing males at Loughton Forest, a male re-trapped at Donington-on-Bain (see below) and single singing birds at Haverholme, near Sleaford, and at New Holland – a maximum of six possible breeding pairs. No singing from former LWT strongholds at Whisby NR and Messingham SQ and as the table shows only six sites with more than two birds recorded in the year. The table shows all 12 sites that reported birds in the breeding season from Feb to May or more than two birds in any month. Reports of single birds outside the breeding season were received from nine other sites. The world really does seem to be standing on its head when Peregrine Falcon is much more common in Lincolnshire than Willow Tit. LBC plan to take part in a national breeding survey of Willow Tit in 2019 and it is hoped that more effort to locate birds will reveal the picture is not quite as grim as this data paints.

One noteworthy control refers to Y475977, ringed as a juvenile male at Donington-on-Bain in Jul 2012, and re-trapped at the same site four times, most recently in May 2017, when aged four years and ten months.

## Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*



British form '*obscurus*' a very common resident. Amber List (*obscurus*).

The species was found in 85% of BBS squares (2016 78%) with an average of 4.7 birds per occupied square (2016 3.4). After a poor breeding season in 2016 it was good to see breeding birds were more widespread and numerous in 2017. It is the 12th most widespread bird in Lincolnshire from BBS coverage and the 18th most numerous. Ringing data showed two unusually long distance controls, both of more than 100km:

D940851	Adult	09-12-15	Tatton Park, Knutsford: 53°18'N 2°22'W (Cheshire)
	Caught by ringer	05-05-17	Gibraltar Point Nature Reserve, Skegness: 53°5'N 0°19'E (Lincolnshire), 183km E, 1y 4m 26d
S170466	First-year Male	03-10-16	Dunsby, Bourne: 52°49'N 0°22'W (Lincolnshire)
	Caught by ringer	23-12-17	Wolverton, near Stratford: 52°15'N 1°42'W (Warwickshire) 111km, SW, 1y 2m 20d

## Great Tit *Parus major*



British form '*newtoni*' a very common resident. Amber List.

Only four sites reported more than 20 birds this year compared to 11 in 2016. Top count was 85 from Gibraltar Point in Jan (exceeding the highest there in 2016 of 69). There were 31 at both Tetney and Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR in Sep and 30 at Louth in Dec. The species was found in 87% of BBS squares (2016 78%) with an average of 3.2 birds per occupied square (2016 2.4). It was the 9th most widespread bird in Lincolnshire in 2017 but only the 23rd most numerous.

### Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*



Scarce and localised, but increasing, resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Green List. **BBBB**

Site Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alkborough Flats	30	2	2	104	6	1	1	7	1	100	1	1
Garthorpe	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	4	-
East Halton	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	15	2	1
Goxhill	-	-	-	2	-	4	4	-	-	14	2	1
Whitton	12	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	10	-	6
Frampton Marsh	10	6	9	2	6	3	2	3	-	3	2	1
Barton Pits	-	3	5	12	12	12	8	-	5	2	10	1

The table above shows all sites reporting 10 or more birds in any month of the year. Bearded Tits can be surprisingly difficult to see when they are breeding and given that there were 52 pairs breeding at Alkborough Flats compared to 33 the previous year, its perhaps surprising that so few were reported through the summer. There were also six pairs confirmed between Barton and Barrow Pits and a single pair at Goxhill Marsh with a single probable pair at Frampton Marsh. The total number of pairs at 60 was by far the highest in the last 30 years. An interesting event occurred in mid-Oct when there seems to have been something of an irruption along the Humber. There were 17 birds at Garthorpe (just across the Trent from Alkborough Flats) on Oct 6th, 100 at Alkborough Flats 14 at Goxhill and nine at South Ferriby on the 8th and on the 15th there were 15 at East Halton and 10 at Whitton. Elsewhere there were six at Huttoft Pit on Oct 7th.



Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus* Gib Point Nov 8th 2017 © Paul Neale

### Woodlark *Lullula arborea*



Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant, rare in winter. Bred to 1959 and again from 1984 with numbers peaking around the year 2000, although now steadily declining. Green List. **BBBB**

Breeding birds were located in five broad areas; Laughton Forest – Scotton Common, where there was no full survey, where five pairs bred and the first bird was found on Feb 20th; Risby Warren at least one pair; Broughton–Manton Heaths where a full survey located 12 pairs, 13 males; and Kirkby Moor where one bird was reported. There were no reports from the Market Rasen area.

On the coast spring passage at Gibraltar Point saw one on Feb 26th, two on Mar 1st, one on Mar 4th, four on Apr 2nd, one on Apr 27th and one on May 9th–10th. One was at Donna Nook on Apr 7th and one at Tetney on Apr 12th.

Autumn passage was extremely light and only Gibraltar Point recorded any, with singles on Sep 30th, Oct 3rd and 16th.



### Skylark *Alda arvensis*



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

Despite a decline in breeding numbers for decades there has been little noticeable change in distribution throughout the country according to the 2007-11 BTO Bird Atlas. In Lincolnshire nearly 2000 records were received from around 164 locations with 36 significant counts of 100 or over; 700 was the highest total of the year at Frampton Marsh on Feb 9th. All of the high counts were from coastal locations other than three counts at Welbourn Heath on Jun 10th (100), Oct 12th (108) and Dec 11th (138). During Mar-Jun there were 100 counts of 50 or more birds and 18 counts of 100 or more, but little evidence from observers of significant migration. Birds dispersed during the high summer months with just two records of 100 plus birds.

In the autumn, Gibraltar Point noted southward passage from late Sep with 199 south on Sep 30th and this continued throughout Oct with nine counts of more than 100 and a peak of 347 south on Oct 23rd. In all, only six sites recorded 100 or more birds and later the largest winter flock was one of 245 at Saltfleet on Nov 26th.

### Shore Lark *Eremophila alpestris*



Scarce winter visitor. Currently low numbers compared to the 1960s and 1970s. Exceptional inland. Amber List.

Donna Nook held a wintering flock of up to 22 birds Jan-Mar and was the only site in the county holding any numbers in the early winter. Winter maxima there were 18 on Jan 29th, 22 on Feb 4th, 5th and 7th, and 22 on Mar 4th and 30th. Shortly after, the flock moved off with just two birds left on Apr 3rd. Elsewhere a single migrant bird was at Greenshank Ridge, Gibraltar Point on Apr 23rd. A very late bird was discovered during a WeBS count at Marshchapel on May 11th. The first returning bird lingered for a week at Donna Nook between Oct 21st-28th. Three birds were at Gibraltar Point from Nov 7th until Dec 12th. A single bird was present on the beach at Saltfleet on Nov 7th. Between Churchill Lane and Crook Bank a flock of around seven roamed the salting's from Nov 19th until the last sighting on Dec 18th. The only bird away from the coast was a single at Covenham Reservoir on Nov 22nd.



Shore Lark *Eremophila alpestris* Brickyard Lane Nov 26th 2017 © Mark Johnson

### Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*



Common summer visitor and passage migrant. Green List.

The first bird of the year was seen at Deeping High Bank on the early date of Feb 28th. Four days later three birds were noted at Frampton Marsh. During Mar numbers were low until the last five days of the month when reasonable numbers were counted at wide-ranging sites such as Whisby

NR (45), Willow Tree Fen (25), Kirkby on Bain (25), and Messingham SQ (30). In Apr fifteen counts of 100 or more were recorded with 300 being the highest total at Whisby NR on the 25th. Whisby NR also had the highest total in May with around 250 birds scattered around the reserve on the 3rd. During Jun nesting activity was observed at Stenigot, Donington on Bain, Messingham SQ and Kirkby on Bain. Little or no breeding activity was reported in Jul but there was plenty of southward passage. There were 14 counts of more than 100 with 1500 at Barton Pits on the 27th and 1000 four days later. Southward movement continued through Aug with some very large numbers including many juveniles counted. Six counts were in excess of 1000. At Frampton Marsh a spectacular total of 10000 was estimated on the 26th with 2000 for each of the next two days and 1500 on the 30th. In Sep numbers declined slowly with some decent sized flocks still evident until the last three of the year were observed at Gibraltar Point on Oct 3rd.

As is evident from the 2017 account, Sand Martin passage through the county is impressive and D537055 and S362107, both controlled in the county, came from very different locations:

D537055	Juvenile Male Caught by ringer Caught by ringer	10-08-13 26-06-17 29-07-17	Gibraltar Point Nature Reserve, Skegness: 53°5'N 0°19'E (Lincolnshire) Ythan Estuary: 57°20'N 2°0'W (Aberdeenshire), 496km NNW 3y 10m 16d Ythan Estuary: 57°20'N 2°0'W (Aberdeenshire), 496km NNW 3y 11m 19d
S362107	First-year Caught by ringer	11-08-16 04-07-17	Confidential Site in West Midlands: 52°25'N 1°40'W (West Midlands) Vernatt's Drain: c. 52°49'N 0°6'W (Lincolnshire), 116km ENE 0y 10m 23d



Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* Frampton Marsh Aug 11th 2017 © Neil Smith



Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* Frampton Marsh Aug 27th 2017 © Steve Keightley

### Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*



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

The first bird of the year was flying around the river bridge at South Kyme on Mar 15th and single birds were noted on another 12 dates at six other locations by the end of Mar. For the first three weeks in Apr sightings were widespread but generally in small numbers. A high total of 200 was recorded on the 26th at Covenham Reservoir and 125 were at Whisby NR and 124 at Covenham simultaneously on the 24th. During May 21 totals of 100 birds or more were counted. Ten of these counts occurred at Gibraltar Point (the highest five being 1005, 891, 513, 372, 350) and six at Covenham Reservoir (450, 250). Small numbers were observed in Jun with increases in totals in Jul as the start of southward movement was observed. Ten totals of 250 or over were observed at Donna Nook or Gibraltar Point. In Aug nine totals of more than 500 were recorded including one at Witham Mouth of 2000 on Aug 26th and another at Gibraltar Point of 1580 on Aug 29th. Seven counts in excess of 500 were observed at Gibraltar Point or Covenham Reservoir during Sep. Numbers dropped off significantly in Oct with 141 at Gibraltar Point on the 2nd being the largest with the next highest total at the same location being just 52. The last bird of the year and only bird recorded during Nov was one on 5th at Saltfleetby Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR.

Barn Swallows travel vast distances to their African wintering grounds. There are fewer than 20 British recoveries from the DR Congo, where sadly Z790621 was shot:

Z790621	First-year	14-09-15	Marston Sewage Works: 52°57'N 0°39'W (Lincolnshire)
	Freshly dead (shot)	18-02-16	Kapanga, Ouadda: 8°19'N 22°37'E, Democratic Republic of Congo, 5,396km SSE, 0y 5m 4d

### House Martin *Delichon urbicum*



Common summer visitor and passage migrant. Amber List.

The first bird of the year was at Marston on Mar 31st followed by another single at North Scarle on Apr 1st. In Apr, birds were noted far and wide in small numbers for a couple of weeks before double figure counts came in. The highest count of the month was 100 at Whisby NR on Apr 25th. During May 11 totals of 100 or more occurred with the highest count of 710 being at Gibraltar Point on the 13th; Marston had two counts of 500 in the month. With numbers beginning to decline as birds dispersed to their breeding areas, the largest count recorded in Jun was 100 at Boultham Mere. During Jul numbers were generally low until a count of 180 was counted at Whisby NR at the end of the month. A build up of numbers post breeding was observed in Aug with 18 counts exceeding 50. Gibraltar Point had the best Aug totals towards the end of the month with counts of 265 (24th), 595 (29th) and 650 (30th). Southward passage continued with nearly 30 totals of more than 100 birds counted in Sep. The highest counts again came from Gibraltar Point where there were 2385 on 13th and 2460 on the 20th. After a count of 276 on Oct 2nd and 180 the following day at Gibraltar Point numbers rapidly declined and the final birds of the year were nine over Grimsby on Remembrance Day, Nov 11th.

### Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica*

Very scarce migrant, almost annual since 2003. LBRC.

Two individuals of this increasingly regular spring migrant were seen at Gibraltar Point on May 6th (RDn, NAL, KMW). Between 2003 and 2017 there have been only four blank years with groups of three to six birds being seen in four of these years.

### Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*



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

In the analyses that follow a wintering bird has been recorded as any bird staying in a locality for seven days or more between Oct and Feb with breeding territories being assumed for singing males remaining for seven days or more between Apr and Jul.

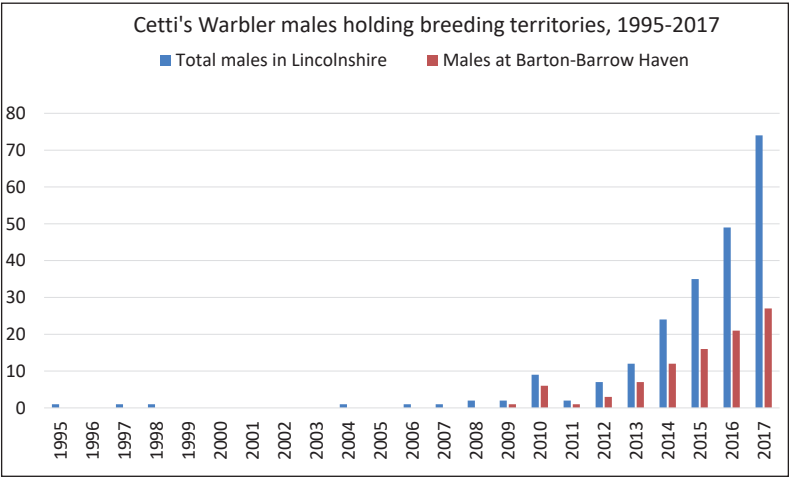
There appeared to be a number of missing records from the database in 2017, but despite this there was a new all time high of 74 singing males recorded. The fortunes of the species did however, vary significantly between sites with the Humber environs generally seeing a continuing positive trend in numbers of breeding and wintering birds while some other sites such as Marston, Bardney and Kirkby Pits lost all of their breeding birds in 2017 due to unknown factors.

At the key site of Barrow Haven – Barton Pits the number of birds holding territories was up from 21 males in 2016 to a minimum of 27 in 2017 with 32 occupied territories being possible. The

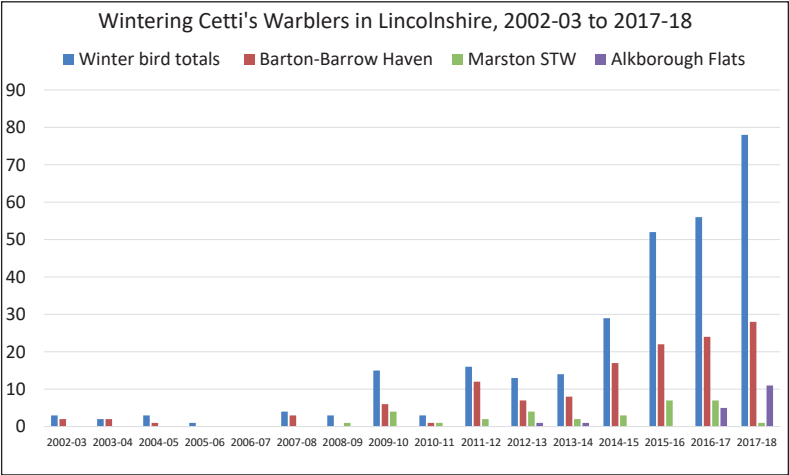
other greatest increase also came from the Humber at Alkborough Flats where numbers increased from two males in 2016 to 11 males in 2017. One-off breeding season records included one at North Cleethorpe on May 3rd and one at Burgh le Marsh on May 22nd.



Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti* Far Ings Nov 24th 2017 © Paul Coombes



Outside the breeding season records came from 24 sites but the maximum in the late winter period was just 78 birds surely a massive under-recording considering the sedentary nature of much of the breeding population; the key sites that were surveyed constantly through the year were again Barrow Haven – Barton Pits with 28 singing males in the late winter period and Alkborough Flats with 11 singing males in the same period; no other site recorded more than four singing males and females in this period. Some coastal passage is evident in spring and autumn with some long-staying birds at Gibraltar Point in the autumn period.



Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

British form '*rosaceous*' a common resident and partial migrant. Nominate Scandinavian form ('Northern Long-tailed Tit') extremely rare vagrant. Amber List (*rosaceous*).

This species was found in 30% of BBS squares (2016 42%) with an average of 2.3 birds per occupied square (2016 2.8). Post-breeding numbers were on a high with 16 sites reporting more than 20 birds up from six last year, all the highest counts coming in Oct. As in 2016, the peak of 60 came from Whisby NR, which was double the max count of 30 the previous year. At nearby Boultham Mere the peak was 30 compared to 20 in 2016. On the coast the Gibraltar Point peak was 33 compared to 35 in 2016. One interesting series of ringing controls was provided by DXD705, which has reached the ripe old age of five years having been retrapped at the same site three times since being first ringed in Oct 2012 (probably an exception to the rule):

DXD705	Full-grown	13-10-12	Moor Farm, Brandon: 53°1'N 0°41'W (Lincolnshire)
	Caught by ringer	13-01-13	Moor Farm, Brandon: 53°1'N 0°41'W (Lincolnshire), 0km, 0y 3m 0d
	Caught by ringer	16-02-14	Moor Farm, Brandon: 53°1'N 0°41'W (Lincolnshire), 0km, 1y 4m 3d
	Caught by ringer	02-11-17	Moor Farm, Brandon: 53°1'N 0°41'W (Lincolnshire), 0km, 5y 0m 20d

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

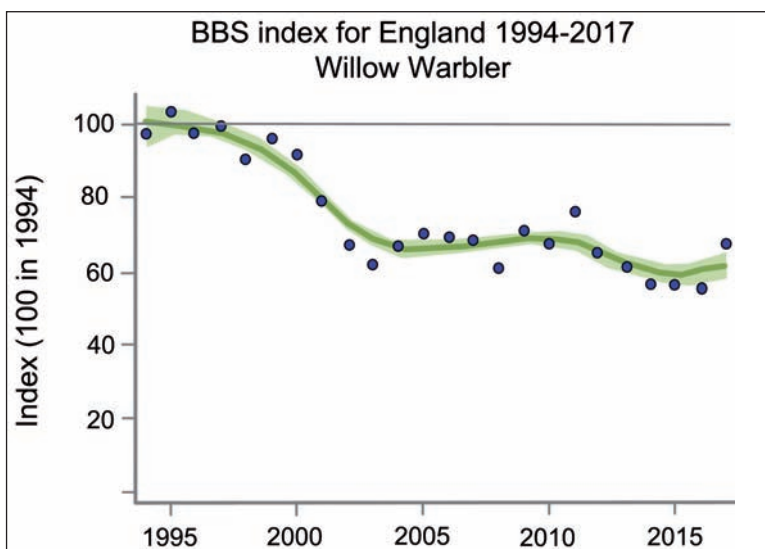
Nominate form a very common summer visitor and passage migrant. Northern form *acredula* scarce passage migrant to the UK. Green List.

Willow Warblers were reported from 100 sites across the county and the first bird arrived at Ruskington on Mar 26th. Before the end of the month there were one to two at Boultham Mere, Gibraltar Point, North Hykeham Pits, Rippingale and Whisby NR.

There then followed a large arrival between Apr 11th-15th when 60 were in Laughton Forest on 11th, 30 at Barton Pits on 12th and 40 in Twyford Wood on 15th. On the coast, highest counts were of 20 at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Apr 24th and 19 at Gibraltar Point on Apr 17th.

Willow Warbler is not frequent enough for a Lincolnshire index to be generated, but the trend for England as a whole has arguably bottomed out in the last few years although the population has fallen by 40% between 1995 and 2016 (Trend graph courtesy of the BTO):





Very little evidence of breeding was reported with only one report of fledged young at East Keal on Aug 6th. Autumn passage was underway before the end of Jul, and was well marked through to early Sep. At Gibraltar Point, there were 14 days with 20 or more, with a peak of 76 on Aug 20th. Elsewhere coastal passage was poor with a peak of just 10 at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Aug 20th. Thirty were at Barton Pits on Aug 13th but there were no other significant numbers to report. Sep counts were low indeed with a maximum of just six birds at Gibraltar Point Sep 3rd-10th. A few birds were reported on the coast in Oct with three still at Gibraltar Point on 8th and the final bird there on 27th.

Among a batch of interesting retraps and controls was DJA518, originally ringed as an adult male in Jun 2012 at Donington-on-Bain. He has since returned to that site in 2014, 2016 and 2017 and is now at least five years old. Two Lincolnshire-ringed birds were controlled in Yorkshire and a first year bird (JBD141) was controlled in France, having travelled 755 km in nine days:

JHC147	First-year	08-08-16	Gibraltar Point Nature Reserve, Skegness: 53°5'N 0°19'E (Lincolnshire)
	Caught by ringer	09-04-17	Catterick Garrison: c. 54°22'N 1°44'W (North Yorkshire), 196km NW, 0y 8m 1d
	Caught by ringer	07-05-17	Catterick Garrison: c. 54°22'N 1°44'W (North Yorkshire), 196km NW, 0y 8m 29d
HXK951	First-year	16-08-16	Gibraltar Point Nature Reserve, Skegness: 53°6'N 0°19'E (Lincolnshire)
	Caught by ringer	21-08-17	Winterset Reservoir, Wakefield: 53°37'N 1°26'W (West Yorkshire), 131km WNW, 1y 0m 5d
JBD141	First year	14-08-17	Fishtoft Sewage Works: 52°56'N 0°0'E (Lincolnshire)
	Caught by ringer	23-08-17	Batardeau, Saint-Clement-Des-Baleines: 46°13'N 1°31'W (Charente-Maritime) France, 755km S, 0y 0m 9d

### Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*



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

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gibraltar Point	1	-	14	15	12	11	14	35	45	59	2	-
Barton Pits	-	-	25	38	1	1	4	1	1	-	-	-
Whisby NP	1	1	12	30	21	1	2	4	1	1	1	1
Dunsby	1	-	2	1	1	-	1	25	5	-	-	-
Messingham	-	-	7	20	8	1	2	1	-	-	-	-
Temple Wood	-	-	-	20	17	-	-	2	-	-	-	-

Reports came from 16 locations in Jan-Feb, mostly single birds but up to seven were at Marston STW in Feb, four at Alkborough Flats on Jan 20th and three at Fulbeck on Feb 13th. Obvious arrivals of passage birds took place between Mar 11th-13th and there were 25 at Barton Pits by 22nd. Both Barton Pits and Whisby NR recorded more than 30 singing birds in Apr.

Migrants started to appear on the coast from Aug 21st, and all counts of 20 or more came from Gibraltar point, with peaks of 45 on Sep 17th and 59 on Oct 4th; 16 on Oct 19th was the last double figure count there. In Nov there was a maximum of seven at Bulby on Nov 26th and one to two at several other sites in Dec were presumably wintering birds.

Two adult birds ringed at Gibraltar Point tell different stories, one recovered in Africa, the other controlled 1416km away in successive springs:

HXK867	Adult	23-05-16	Gibraltar Point Nature Reserve, Skegness: 53°6'N 0°19'E (Lincolnshire)
	Caught by ringer	13-05-17	Veszprem (Csatar-Hegy): 47°6'N 17°52'E, Hungary 1,416km ESE, 0y 11m 20d
KCP031	Full-grown	03-10-17	Gibraltar Point Nature Reserve, Skegness: 53°5'N 0°19'E (Lincolnshire)
	Freshly dead	15-11-17	Safi: 32°16'N 9°13'E, Morocco, 2,423km SSE, 0y 1m 12d

**Siberian Chiffchaff** *P.c. tristis*: very scarce migrant and winter visitor. **LBRC**

One was at Marston STW on Feb 18th (TML) and another at Gibraltar Point on Apr 2nd (JPS). In the autumn, there was one at Gibraltar Point on Oct 27th (KMW) and again on Nov 5th (KMW) and Nov 14th (KMW), probably different individuals.

**Wood Warbler** *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*



Very scarce and declining passage migrant. Red List. **LBRC**

One was found at Gibraltar Point on May 6th (KMW) and was trapped the next day (GGr *et al*). Another was at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on May 9th (NAL) and one singing male was at the south end of Donna Nook on May 11th (SL) and another on May 25th (SL), presumed to be a different individual. There was a single autumn record at Theddlethorpe St Helen on Sep 26th (BMC). Overall, a better showing than in the past two years of this red-listed species.

**Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus*

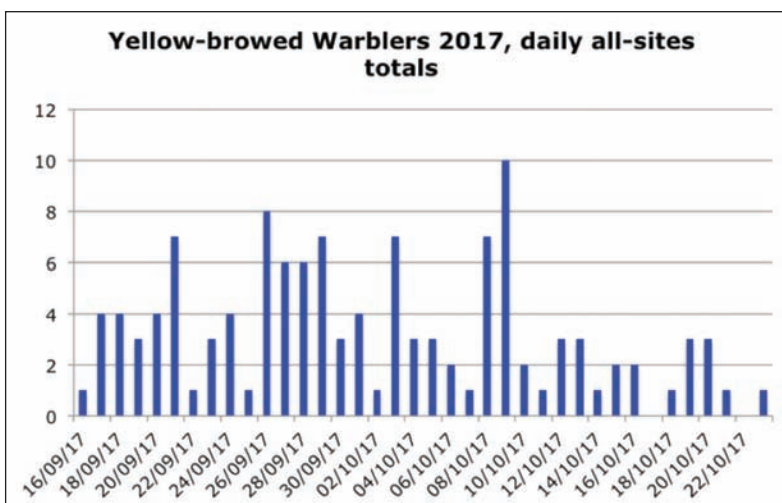
Scarce but increasing passage migrant Sep-Nov, rare inland.

This year was another record-breaking one across the country for this species. In the last three decades alone the average number of Yellow-browed Warblers recorded in the UK has risen from 328 in 1990-99, to 749 in 2000-09, to 1984 in 2010-2016.

There was a spring record of a bird at Gibraltar Point on May 7th, seen well and heard calling. Given the numbers now recorded in the UK, this is unsurprising with spring birds recorded in at least the previous three years. There was a singing male at Holkham, Norfolk on 5th-6th May 2014, for example, and there were seven spring records in 2016, the latest being on Apr 17th.

The first bird of the autumn was at Gibraltar Point on Sep 16th and there was an almost continuous presence throughout Sep-Oct with peaks of four on Sep 18th and six on Oct 8th. Donna Nook was the next best site with three Sep 20th-21st and Sep 26th-Oct 3rd and five on Oct 9th. Elsewhere there were one to two birds at several other coastal sites and single inland birds at Willoughby Sep 21st, Grantham Oct 6th, and Sleaford Oct 12th. The last birds were at Gibraltar Point on Oct 21st and Donna Nook on Oct 23rd.

Given their continuous presence at major sites such as Gibraltar Point, an accurate count of the number of individuals was not possible. To give an idea of presence in the county during Sep-Oct though, the total number of birds reported each day at all sites was plotted, below, which showed peaks of eight on Sep 26th and ten on Oct 9th. The variation in daily numbers may be due to new arrivals or to variation in observer coverage.



#### Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*



Common summer visitor and passage migrant. Green List.

The first bird of the spring was a singing male at Willow Tree Fen on Mar 28th. More followed during the first week of Apr with four at Frampton Marsh on Apr 5th and by the end of Apr 10-12 singing males were at Thurlby, Gibraltar Point, and Frampton Marsh. More arrived during May and the highest counts were of 35 at Fiskerton on 2nd, 34 at Gibraltar Point on 10th and 30 at Frampton Marsh on 31st.

From Aug, the reports started to diminish, Gibraltar Point being the only site to report numbers and with a maximum of 32 on Aug 7th and then counts of 27 on 11th and 25 on 13th. Numbers dwindled rapidly into Sep, with a maximum of four at Gibraltar Point on Sep 6th and just singles there until Oct 6th. The last of the autumn was at Frampton Marsh on Oct 8th.

From BTO ringing data in 2017, the following two Lincolnshire-ringed birds had moved the greatest distance within Britain and Ireland:

D538352	First-year Male	22-09-13	Gibraltar Point Nature Reserve, Skegness: 53°5'N 0°19'E (Lincolnshire)
	Caught by ringer	13-08-17	Kirkton of Logie Buchan: 57°20'N 2°1'W (Aberdeenshire), 496km NNW, 3y 10m 22d
Z534935	Juvenile	15-07-17	Donington-on-Bain: 53°19'N 0°9'W (Lincolnshire)
	Caught by ringer	31-07-17	Pett Level, Sussex: 50°54'N 0°40'E (East Sussex), 277km S, 0y 0m 16d

#### Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*



Common summer visitor and passage migrant that has increased in the last 10 years. Green List.

The first Reed Warbler duly arrived on Apr 12th, a single at Barton Pits. Thereafter numbers slowly rose through Apr, with 20 at Barton Pits by 22nd. There were 27 at Kirkby on Bain GPs on May 11th, 22 at Metherringham on May 24th and 20 at Willow Tree Fen on May 21st. Counts of 10-16 were reported at seven other sites and Tetney had 15-20 through May-Jul. These records show the wide distribution to every corner of the county in suitable reedbed habitats, including many *Phragmites*-lined drains and ditches in the Fens. There was no survey done at Alkborough Flats in 2017 after last year's mammoth count. Autumn counts were very low with only one to three reported from many sites in Sep-Oct as birds quickly departed. Two birds were at Gibraltar Point on Oct 5th and a very late bird was at Frampton Marsh on Nov 1st, seen well and heard calling.

The ringing details below concern a bird caught as a juvenile male at Marston STW and since re-trapped on four occasions, lastly in 2017 when nearly six years old:

Y260231	Juvenile Male	22-08-11	Marston STW, Grantham: 52°57'N 0°39'W (Lincolnshire)
	Caught by ringer	25-08-11	Same site, 0y 0m 3d
	Caught by ringer	25-07-12	Same site, 0y11m 3d
	Caught by ringer	04-07-14	Same site 2y 10m 12d
	Caught by ringer	30-06-17	Same site 5y 10m 8d

### 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. Red List.

Site name	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Alkborough Flats	3	8	-	-	-	-
Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe	5	5	2	-	-	-
Gibraltar Point	3	4	1	3	1	1
Barton Pits	2	3	-	1	-	-
Pinchbeck	2	1	1	-	-	-
Anderby	2	2	1	2	-	-
Frampton Marsh	1	2	1	1	1	-

As in 2016, records came from nineteen locations in all, of these thirteen were from coastal sites or on the Humber and six were from inland sites. The table shows sites reporting the species in at least two months.

The first of the year was one at Barton Pits on Apr 5th, three days earlier than in 2016. Most records in Apr-May were of one to two but higher counts were five singing at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Apr 24th–May 2nd, eight singing males at Alkborough Flats and three at Gibraltar Point on May 7th. Six sites reported singing males during Jul and a pair with a juvenile was reported at Gibraltar Point on 30th. Aug records were few and far between with singles at Frampton Marsh on 1st, Gibraltar Point on 12th, 16th, 21st and 28th and Tetney on 27th. The final records of the year were single birds at Gibraltar Point on Sep 13th and 30th.



Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia* Gibraltar Point May 14th 2017 © Paul Neale

### Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* ■

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

Reports came from four sites in Jan-Feb, three of singles and one report of two at Rippingale on Feb 17th. There were records of silent birds in Skegness on Mar 3rd and Cleethorpes on Mar 5th but the first singing males were reported on Mar 25th. Birds were seen at eleven other sites by the end of Mar. Most were recorded during Apr with 48 at Barton Pits on 14th and 42 at Whisby NR

on May 2nd. Confirmed breeding was reported from Gibraltar Point, Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR and Whisby NR. The BBS data showed that Blackcaps were recorded in 73.3% of squares (57% in 2016) and that 186 birds were recorded in these squares (169 in 2016). The trend for Blackcaps in the East Midlands is still strongly upward.

Autumn passage was most marked from late Aug to early Oct. Gibraltar Point recorded 10-30 on many dates between Aug 12th-Oct 8th and 11 were recorded late on Oct 26th, thereafter one to two birds were present until Nov 26th. Only single birds were recorded elsewhere up to Nov 13th and there were no records in Dec.

These ringing data show two cases of site fidelity and one of an autumn migrant caught in the county as a juvenile and subsequently trapped two years later, perhaps on passage or as a local breeder:

Y702985	First-year Male Caught by ringer	31-08-13 01-05-17	Donington-on-Bain: 53°19'N 0°9'W (Lincolnshire) Donington-on-Bain: 53°19'N 0°9'W (Lincolnshire), 0km, 3y 8m 0d
Y987337	Full-grown Female Caught by ringer	12-04-14 21-08-17	Saul's Bank, Benington: 52°58'N 0°5'E (Lincolnshire) Saul's Bank, Benington: 52°58'N 0°5'E (Lincolnshire), 0km, 3y 4m 9d
D960963	Juvenile Female Caught by ringer	24-08-15 29-04-17	Fishtoft Sewage Works: 52°56'N 0°0'E (Lincolnshire) Wicken Fen: c. 52°18'N 0°16'E (Cambridgeshire), 75km SSE, 1y 8m 5d

### Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*



Fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant. Green List.

The first birds arrived in late Apr when 35 birds at 20 localities were seen. The highest total recorded was 10 from around Whisby NR on Apr 30th. In May about 10 birds were counted at Loughton Forest on the 5th and Whisby had 16 on the 2nd, 19 (the highest total of the year) on the 6th and 12 on the 7th. Breeding activity was noted at Whisby NR and in another dozen countywide locations during the month. Birds became much harder to see in Jun with breeding activity at its peak and trees and bushes in full bloom. Only 28 records came from the month with about a third of the reports mentioning breeding activity. Throughout the summer over thirty sites reported possible breeding activity. Only seven sightings were recorded in Jul with one at Thurlby (Bourne) being the final location to suggest breeding activity. Numbers again were low in Aug with just five sites, Boultham Mere, Whisby NR, Donna Nook, Gibraltar Point and Frampton Marsh having any records at all; other than three and 10 at Gibraltar Point all sightings were of single birds. In Sep numbers were again low with birds seen at just six sites. Five was the largest total on two dates at Gibraltar Point and the last bird of the year was there on Oct 19th.

### Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria*

Rare coastal passage migrant mainly Aug-Oct, exceptionally to Dec. LBRC

Null reports are not usually written up, but significantly 2017 was the second year in a row in which no Barred Warblers were trapped or recorded in the county. There were seven records in 2015 and between 2000-2015 there was an average of three to four birds per year, including an exceptional 15 in 2010. This species has significantly declined since its heyday in the county in the late 1960s to mid-1980s (See p126, LBR 2014).

### Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*



Common summer visitor and passage migrant. Siberian form *blythi* (Siberian Lesser Whitethroat) may have occurred in recent times.

A candidate bird of the eastern race (*Sylvia curruca blythi*) was noted and photographed at Marston SW on six days between Feb 14th-26th, but it wasn't until Apr 5th that a single nominate bird was noted at Frampton Marsh. Throughout the month birds trickled in to their breeding habitat with the largest total of eight counted at Barton Pits on the 17th and the same total between Churchill Lane and Crook Bank on the 29th. In May all counts of five or more came from either Gibraltar Point or the Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR area. The largest count was 13 at Gibraltar Point on the 7th. Breeding activity was observed at eight sites. Over 60 observations were made in Jun with several involving breeding activity. In Jul numbers of observations began to decline but numbers of birds counted seemed to increase suggesting a successful breeding season. During Aug there were 11 counts between 11-18 suggesting successful breeding and southern migration underway. Sightings were fairly numerous from Gibraltar Point with around 40 counted during Sep with the last bird of the year seen there on the 30th.





Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca* Whisby NP May 1st 2017 © Russell Hayes

### Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*



Nominate form a fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant. Green List (nominate form).

The first bird of the year was recorded at Frampton Marsh on Apr 9th. Single birds were also seen at Freiston Shore and Boultham Mere on the same date. By the end of the month, birds were recorded at 49 sites with the largest total of 30 on the 29th at Gibraltar Point. In May they were reported from over 70 countywide localities with much breeding activity in evidence. The highest count of the year was one of 110 on May 10th at Gibraltar Point on a day of full coverage. In Jun and Jul there were still very good numbers on view with breeding evidence clearly apparent. Crook Bank recorded 14 pairs by late Jun. In Aug and Sep numbers and sites where the birds were seen began to decline as southern dispersal began in earnest. Throughout the summer all counts of over 40 came from the well-watched sites of Donna Nook or Gibraltar Point. The last two birds of the year were noted at Freiston Shore on Oct 10th and at Monks Wood, Dunholme on Oct 15th.

### Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*



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

This was a quieter year for Firecrest with no over-wintering birds and with Gibraltar Point again seeing most of the action with 24 out of 36 reports. The first report was a single in a private garden in Nettleham on Mar 11th followed by singles at Freiston Shore on Mar 15th and Willow Tree Fen NR on 22nd. Gibraltar Point had two on Mar 22nd. Donna Nook had singles on Mar 27th and Apr 22nd. Between Mar 29th and Apr 21st, birds were reported at Gibraltar Point on eight dates with three on Apr 20th, which included two singing males and one trapped female. A female with a brood patch was trapped there on May 14th but there was no other evidence to tie that bird to breeding at Gibraltar Point. Lincolnshire still awaits its first confirmed breeding record. Elsewhere in spring single birds were reported from Tetney on Apr 27th and Tab's Head from May 2nd-3rd.

In the autumn Gibraltar Point recorded single birds on Sept 22nd and 29th, and on Oct 3rd. Elsewhere there was one at Frampton Marsh on Oct 2nd and one at Crook Bank, Theddlethorpe in a mixed tit flock on Oct 4th and again on 8th. Later records were all from Gibraltar Point where two were present on Oct 15th and 19th and one on 30th. In Nov, there were singles on 13th and 15th, two on 19th and the last bird of the year was on Nov 28th.



Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla* Gibraltar Point Nov 19<sup>th</sup> 2017 © Nigel Taylor

### Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*



Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Green List.

This common but somewhat elusive little bird was recorded in every month of the year and at 114 localities, with the highest counts being on the coast. Most counts of more than 30 came from Gibraltar Point, of which there were nearly forty instances, with nine being in excess of 100. The largest counts there were 230 on Sep 29th and 140 on Oct 4th. There were also many counts of 30-60 at Donna Nook, mainly in May-Jun and likewise at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR where the highest count was of 39 at Crook Bank on May 5th. Elsewhere there were 20 at Tetney Marsh RSPB on Mar 4th; 15 at Chapel St Leonards on Oct 20th; and 14 at both Anderby Creek and Sleaford on Oct 20th. Inland there was an exceptional 40 birds at Swanholme Lakes on Nov 15th.

Fledged young were noted at East Keal on Jun 26th and Aug 6th. An adult carrying either food or faecal sac was observed by the River Bain, Tattershall on May 31st. Possible breeding activity was observed at around 20 other sites.

Passage through the county was emphasised by these six birds ringed in the county, five were controlled well to the south, one to the west:

JHD911	First-year Female Caught by ringer	20-09-17 10-10-17	Gibraltar Point Nature Reserve, Skegness: 53°5'N 0°19'E (Lincolnshire) Sandwich Bay Estate: 51°16'N 1°22'E (Kent), 216km SSE, 0y 0m 20d
HRT881	First-year Male Caught by ringer	09-10-16 30-11-16	Near North Somercotes: 53°26'N 0°9'E (Lincolnshire) Bidston, Wirral: 53°23'N 3°4'W (Merseyside), 215km W, 0y 1m 21d
JHD867	First-year Female Caught by ringer	12-09-17 26-10-17	Gibraltar Point Nature Reserve, Skegness: 53°5'N 0°19'E (Lincolnshire) Northward Hill, High Halstow, Rochester: 51°27'N 0°32'E (Medway), 183km S, 0y 1m 14d
CNX148	First-year Male Caught by ringer	18-10-17 06-11-17	Theddlethorpe St Helen, Mablethorpe: 53°21'N 0°13'E (Lincolnshire) Near Hollesley Heath: 52°3'N 1°25'E (Suffolk), 168km SSE, 0y 0m 19d
CNT756	First-year Male Caught by ringer	08-10-16 03-11-16	Theddlethorpe St Helen, Mablethorpe: 53°21'N 0°13'E (Lincolnshire) Wood Walton Fen: 52°26'N 0°12'W (Cambridgeshire), 108km SSW, 0y 0m 26d
KCP055	Full grown male Caught by ringer	04-10-17 26-10-17	Gibraltar Point Nature Reserve, Skegness: 53°5'N 0°19'E (Lincolnshire) Brighton, Cayeux-Sur-Mer (Somme): 50°10'N 1°30'E France, 334km SSE, 0y 0m 22d

### Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* ■

Abundant resident and partial migrant. Green List.

This species was found in 94% of BBS squares with an average of 8.1 birds per occupied square compared to 2016 when it was 7.8. It is the fifth most widespread bird in Lincolnshire from BBS coverage and the tenth most numerous. Since 1994 the Lincolnshire BBS index shows this species has increased by a massive 125% and it's population is probably at it's highest for 55 years. Before the last severe winter in 1963 that seriously knocked the Wren population back there was no detailed population measurement. Counts of more than 40 came from Gibraltar Point: 64 in Sep, 75 in Oct and 65 in Nov. Elsewhere, high counts came from Haverholme: 54 in May, 46 in Jun and 55 in Jul; Sleaford: 48 in Aug and 43 in Sep; and at Ancaster 48 in Aug.



Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* Marston STW May 21st 2017 © Steve Nesbitt

### Nuthatch *Sitta europaea* ■

Fairly common and increasing woodland resident. Green List.

This species was found in 3.5% of BBS squares with an average of 1.0 bird per occupied square, a decrease on 2016 when it was in 3.7% of squares with an average of 1.3 birds. Reports of four or more birds came from nine sites, up from six in 2016. The top count of six birds came from Callan's Lane Wood near Bulby in Mar. Reports of five came from Willingham Woods in Jan,

Temple Woods and Bourne Woods in Mar and Ruskington in Dec. Breeding was confirmed at five sites from the end of May including Chambers Wood, Baysgarth Park in Barton upon Humber, Temple Woods, Tealby and Osgodby.



Nuthatch *Sitta europaea* Nocton Dec 16th 2017 © Neil Smith

**Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris***



British form *britannica* a common resident and partial migrant. Nominate Scandinavian and eastern European form a very rare vagrant. Green List (nominate).

Treecreeper was recorded from 70 sites, fewer than the 86 in 2016 and 110 in 2015. As in previous years most records were of one to three birds but five birds were seen at Hartsholme CP in Jan and Metheringham in Feb. Adults were seen carrying food to nest sites at both North Hykeham and at Thurlby Fen and five pulli were ringed at another nest out of a 2017 total of 35 birds ringed in the year. DEE458, below, was trapped for the seventh time and is one of the oldest in the BTO archive (the longevity record is 8 years and 8 months). The species was recorded in just four of 86 BBS squares in the county compared to five of 82 in 2016.

DEE458	Adult	29-03-12	Willingham Forest: 53°24'N 0°18'W (Lincolnshire)
	Caught by ringer	15-12-12	Same site, 0y 8m 16d
	Caught by ringer	05-07-13	Same site, 1y 3m 6d
	Caught by ringer	06-04-14	Same site, 2y 0m 8d
	Caught by ringer	14-09-14	Same site, 2y 5m 16d
	Caught by ringer	15-07-15	Same site, 3y 3m 16d
	Caught by ringer	09-05-17	Same site, 5y 1m 10d

**Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris***



Very common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Red List.

Site Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Frampton Marsh	6500	4000	20000	60	100	250	4000	550	2000	150	1500	2000
Whisby NR	10000	7000	30	10	5	40	200	85	20	2900	2900	20000
Barton Pits	75	10000	20000	1	1	1	60	1	1	8	2500	10
Boultham Mere	9000	15000	80	60	80	40	15	20	40	300	11000	9000
Alkborough Flats	1000	250	30	1	4	1	800	192	1500	5000	1	160
Freiston Shore	5000	25	1	1	8	60	400	40	2	1	800	1
Gibraltar Point	250	191	4200	19	262	257	1860	985	448	4500	850	150
Donna Nook	125	100	260	7	180	2600	900	500	550	400	300	450

This red data list species was found in 65% of BBS squares (2016 66%) with an average of 2.6 birds per occupied square (2016 2.4). It is the 24th most widespread breeding bird in Lincolnshire from BBS coverage and the 6th most numerous. Although currently holding its own it is important to note that this species is down 67% on the Lincolnshire BBS since 1994. Winter flocking and murmurations can be spectacular as reflected in the table above. Other flocks over 5000 not included in the table were 10000 at Grantham in Feb and 5000 at North Hykeham in Jan.

### Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus* ■

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

Around 116 or so records were received from 20 locations ranging from the East Coast, the Humber, three localities roughly adjacent to the Trent Valley and another two inland sites in the southern part of the county. There may have been some duplication making it difficult to count the number of birds involved accurately.

The first bird of the year was on Mar 13th at Willow Tree Fen. There was a single on Mar 23rd at Gibraltar Point followed by between one and four birds seen at a number of sites with five at Weelsby Wood on Apr 11th being the next highest of the spring. Inland, birds were noted during Apr at Ancaster, Anton's Gowt, Cleatham, Dragonby, North Somercotes and near Saxby All Saints. Finally, an unusually late bird was at Frampton Marsh on Jun 9th.

The first birds of the autumn were singles at Donna Nook and Frampton Marsh and three at Gibraltar Point, all on Sep 25th. In general, autumn passage was light with all records being from coastal sites between Donna Nook and Gibraltar Point, mostly of one to three birds. Five was the highest count on Oct 23rd at Gibraltar Point and the last birds of the year were both on Oct 30th at Gibraltar Point and Saltfleet Haven.



Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus* North Somercotes Apr 12th 2017 © Mark Johnson

### Blackbird *Turdus merula* ■

Very common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Green List.

The species was found in 99% of BBS squares (2016 96%) with an average of 12 birds per occupied square (2016 12). It is the 2nd most widespread bird in Lincolnshire from BBS coverage and the 4th most numerous. Counts of 50 or more came from 13 sites this year compared to eight last year. The highest counts came from Gibraltar Point where autumn migration brought peaks of 490 in Oct rising to 690 in Nov. Elsewhere the highest counts were of 100 from Whisby NR in Dec and 90 in Sleaford in Nov.



### Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*



Very common passage migrant and winter visitor, mainly Sep-Apr; rare in summer. Red List. **RBBP**

A total of 840 sightings were reported from 140 localities; counts of 100 or more came from 40 of these. The highest total recorded was 350 at Trent Port, Marton on Jan 13th. In Mar 300 were at Marton and at Barton on Humber. Numbers elsewhere were unremarkable and the last bird of the spring was at Gibraltar Point on May 10th.

The first bird returning in autumn was a singleton at Gibraltar Point on Sep 25th, followed by one at Crook Bank on 26th and four at Tetney Marsh on 28th. In Oct modest numbers arrived increasing to 112 at Dunsby on Oct 27th. During Nov there were eight counts of more than 100 with the best totals being 400 at Bonby and Frampton Marsh. In Dec there were eight counts of more than 100 with 1500 at Frampton Marsh on Dec 5th, the highest total of the year.

### Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

(nominate) (*coburni*)

Nominate Scandinavian and Russian form a very common passage migrant and winter visitor, mainly Sep-Apr, rare in summer. Icelandic form *coburni* a very rare vagrant. Red List (nominate) and Green List (*coburni*). **RBBP**

Counts came from just over 100 localities with 23 counts of 100 or more from just seven areas. During the first five months of the year there were six counts of more than 100 plus with the highest totals coming from Gibraltar Point where there were 460 on Apr 1st, 329 on Mar 31st and 314 on Mar 12th. Trent Port, Marton, had a count of 180 on Jan 13th, 150 were at Tetney Marsh on Jan 3rd and 120 in the Lea area on Mar 8th. The final bird of spring was seen at Gibraltar Point on May 25th and there were no reports of summering birds.

The first bird of the autumn was at Rimac on Sep 1st, followed by just a trickle of records of one to three birds on the coast. In Oct though numbers increased rapidly with Donna Nook, Crook Bank and Gibraltar Point having 15 counts of more than 100. On the 19th Crook Bank had a massive fall of 8000 (the year's highest count) with another 2497 at Gibraltar Point. The following day the two reserves had counts of 2000 and 2290 respectively. Numbers settled during Nov with 150 the maximum total at Gibraltar Point on the 3rd and Forest Pines on the 28th. In Dec around 300 were counted at Barton Pits on the 3rd and 100 were along the Witham on the Water Rail Way on the 6th.

### Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

(*clarkei*) (nominate)

British form *clarkei* a common resident. Nominate continental form a common passage migrant.

The species was found in 66% of BBS squares (2016 74%) with an average of 2.6 birds per occupied square (2016 2.4). It was the 23rd most widespread bird in Lincolnshire in 2017 but only the 33rd most numerous. This red data bird is found in sufficient BBS squares to compute an index for Lincolnshire that showed a (statistically non-significant) 15% fall over 2016. Interestingly the index from 1994 to 2017 shows 0% change in our Lincolnshire breeding population of this bird. There is a big influx of northern European birds every winter and this is reflected in the peak site counts. All of those over 20 came from coastal sites in Oct with Gibraltar Point the highest at 120, Anderby 32, Donna Nook 30 and Saltfleetby Theddlethorpe 20.

### Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*



Common resident and partial migrant. Red List.

The species was found in 28% of BBS squares (2016 40%) with an average of 1.5 birds per occupied square (1.6 in 2016). On the face of it from the BBS results Mistle Thrush was less widespread in 2017 though the number of locations reporting five or more birds at 20 was similar to 21 in 2016. The top count of 34 came from Gibraltar Point in Sep with 30 at Market Rasen in Aug and 15 at Baumber in Aug.

### Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*



Fairly common but much decreased and now very local summer visitor and passage migrant. Red List.

The first spring arrivals were on May 13th at Bicker and Dunsby. More followed later in the month and records were received from 46 sites during the summer season. Numbers were low in spring though with one to three birds reported and a maximum of six at Linwood on May 25th. There were very few coastal arrivals.

During the breeding season from Jun to early Aug records came from around 37 locations, with confirmed breeding from just three sites: two adults were feeding fledged young at Stenigot, Jul 21st; two adults were feeding four fledged young at East Keal Jul 24th-Aug 6th; and at Hill Holt Wood, an impressive 16 young fledged from three nests.

Autumn passage commenced around mid-Aug with singles at several coastal sites from Aug 12th; maximum number was a count of four at Gibraltar Point on 21st. Sep was somewhat similar with one to four recorded from both coastal and inland locations with most being four on 24th, again at Gibraltar Point. The last records of the year were a single at Donna Nook on Sep 29th and two at Gibraltar Point on Sep 30th.

### Robin *Erithacus rubecula* ■

British form *melophilus* a very common resident. Nominate continental form a common passage migrant and winter visitor. Green List (both forms).

Robins were found in 88% of BBS squares (2016 92%) with an average of 5.3 birds per occupied square (2016 5.1). It is the 8th most widespread bird in Lincolnshire from BBS coverage and the 16th most numerous. Another of our common garden species whose UK population index is at a 50 year high at the moment. The Lincolnshire BBS index shows the population of this bird in 2017 was 112% up on 1994. The large breeding population is supplemented each winter by an influx of continental birds. This year the peak coastal counts reflecting this migration were well down on those for 2016, the figures for the latter year in brackets. The peak count at Gibraltar Point was 180 on Oct 9th (320 Oct 5th), Donna Nook 25 on Sep 25th (300 Oct 14th) and Saltfleetby Theddlethorpe 24 Sep 26th (150 Oct 15th). Counts over 50 inland came from Sleaford with 115 in Aug, 98 in Sep, 85 in Nov and nearby Ancaster of 85 in Aug. There were two noteworthy ringing recoveries as follows:

Z337421	Adult	17-09-15	Haseley Manor, Arreton: 50°39'N 1°14'W (Isle of Wight)
	Freshly dead (in building)	07-05-17	Winterton: 53°38'N 0°35'W (North Lincolnshire), 335km N, 1y 7m 20d
Z913083	Full-grown	15-10-16	Gibraltar Point Nature Reserve, Skegness: 53°5'N 0°19'E (Lincolnshire)
	Freshly dead	20-03-17	Great Waltham, Chelmsford: 51°46'N 0°27'E (Essex), 147km S, 0y 5m 5d

### Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*

Nominate Scandinavian form (Red-spotted Bluethroat) rare migrant. Central and southern European form cyanecula (White-spotted Bluethroat) a very rare vagrant. **LBRC RBBP**

A well-watched and photographed immature male was present at Willow Tree Fen from Feb 10th to Mar 30th. Scrutiny in the field and of the numerous photographs appeared consistent with it being a 2nd-calendar year bird. Covert edging seen in fresh autumn plumage is presumed to have worn off by early spring of the following year. The record came to light as a result of a photograph posted on Facebook by Alan Meloy, a Sheffield photographer. After some scepticism, the bird was seen by several hundreds of birdwatchers from far and wide.

### Common Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos* ■

Scarce and declining local summer visitor and very scarce passage migrant. Red List.

Whisby NR and a small part of the adjacent North Hykeham Pits are now the only reliable location for Nightingales in the county. The first bird arrived back Apr 11th followed by expected further birds, and the annual breeding census of this population produced a total of six singing males, a further decrease from eight in 2016. The two sub-populations were once again represented with three of these males around Coot Lake and three around the Teal Lake/Apex Pit/Butterley's Pit area. On June 9th, a pair at North Hykeham Pits were alarm calling suggesting probable presence of young nearby, and on Jun 13th a bird was carrying food for young to a probable nest in the Oakwood area of Coot Lake at Whisby NR. The first observation represents probable breeding whilst the second represents confirmed breeding (BTO BBS codes), although in both cases it's not known if any young successfully fledged.

Elsewhere in the county, migrant birds included a singing male at Kirmington on May 4th and another was singing at Gibraltar Point May 8th-12th. The only other record of a bird in suitable habitat during the breeding season was one at Pickworth Great Wood on May 12th-26th, on the extreme south-western edge of the county. The last bird of the year was at Whisby NR on Jun 27th. There were no autumn records.



Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica* Willow Tree Fen Mar 28th 2017 © Mark Johnson



Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica* Willow Tree Fen Mar 7th 2017 © Neil Smith



Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica* Willow Tree Fen Feb 15th 2017 © Steve Nesbitt



Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica* Willow Tree Fen Feb 13th 2017 © Paul Coombes

### Red-flanked Bluetail *Tarsiger cyanurus*

Very rare vagrant. BBRC

There were no records of this species received for 2017.

**2016 addition** A 1CY+ individual was at Gibraltar Point from Oct 12th-14th (RDn *et al*). There were two other accepted and previously published records for Lincolnshire in 2016, bringing the total to eleven in all. Accepted by BBRC (BB 111 p623) and 2016 was the last year in which Red-flanked Bluetail was a BBRC species.

### Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*



Scarce passage migrant, mainly coastal; very scarce in spring and scarce in autumn. Red List.

The few spring records were all at Gibraltar Point May 4th-11th. There was a male in the East Dunes on 4th and a female joined it on 5th. A second male appeared on May 6th-7th and was quite vocal as well as indulging in sub-song. What was probably a different female turned up on May 9th-10th and the last was present on May 11th.

Autumn passage commenced with two at Gibraltar Point on Aug 5th, with one still present on Aug 8th, but was generally very light. Two more were at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR and one was at Gibraltar Point on Aug 26th. Singles continued to turn up on the coast at these latter two sites, at Donna Nook and at Frampton Marsh into Sep. No inland sites recorded any and totals were very low. Maximum counts were of three at Gibraltar Point on Sep 17th-19th. A single was at Donna Nook on Oct 9th, and on several dates in Oct at Gibraltar Point until the last bird there on Oct 21st.

### Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*



European form *gibraltariensis* ('Western Black Redstart') a scarce passage migrant, rare and irregular breeder and very scarce winter visitor. One record of 'Eastern Black Redstart' of one of the Central Asian forms *phoenicuroides/rufiventris/xerophilus*. Red List (*gibraltariensis*). RBBP

There were no wintering birds in 2017. Spring passage commenced in Mar with a single at New Holland on the 11th, and further birds on Mar 28th, at Covenham Reservoir, Donna Nook and Marton. One was at Gibraltar Point from Mar 28th-Apr 2nd, and another at Donna Nook from Apr 3rd-4th completed the first small wave of spring migrants. A second arrival occurred during May 1st-8th with a single inland at Deeping St James 1st-2nd, one at Gibraltar Point 3rd-4th and finally one at Burgh Le Marsh on 8th. There were no summer records.

Autumn passage was very light and there were none reported before late Oct, all between 20th and 31st: Gibraltar Point saw one on 20th, two on 21st and one on 27th, one was reported at Cleethorpes on 27th and the last of the year was at Donna Nook on 31st, an extremely poor year overall.

### Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*



Rare summer visitor and scarce passage migrant in spring, fairly common in autumn. Amber List.

A few migrants appeared during Apr with the earliest being singles at Donna Nook on Apr 8th, Gibraltar Point on 12th and Gedney Drove End on 23rd. Small numbers were recorded during May with up to four at Gibraltar Point on 7th and 10th. A singing male was at Greetwell on Apr 29th and was still singing on May 22nd, though there was no other evidence of breeding there. There was just one record from Linwood Warren on May 14th, but no evidence of breeding there either. There was an unusual record of a male at Trent Port on Jul 16th.

The first birds of autumn were two at Gibraltar Point on Aug 21st although the rest of the autumn here and across the county was extremely poor with very few records anywhere. Gibraltar Point had a peak of just three on Sep 30th with two on five other dates. Elsewhere there were one to two birds from late Aug to late Sep at Boultham Mere, Saltfleetby, Whisby Quarry, Whisby NR, and Witham Mouth with five at Donna Nook on Sep 25th and two on Sep 27th. The last record of the year was of two at Gibraltar Point on Oct 3rd.

### Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*



Scarce/fairly common passage migrant. Formerly bred. Red List.

Whinchat remains a scarce migrant in the county in spring, when the first migrant turned up at Gibraltar Point on Apr 23rd with singles there on several dates to May 6th when there were two,



the last of the spring for that site. Elsewhere, there were singles at just five other sites, the last of the spring being at Boultham Mere on May 20th. There was no evidence of breeding.

Autumn passage started with a single at Deeping Fen on Jul 15th followed by one at Freiston Shore on Jul 28th. A trickle of birds appeared during Aug at 14 sites with a maximum of four at Bonby Carrs on Aug 14th. As expected, Sep was the peak month, with 12 at Gibraltar Point on 6th, 16 on 7th and 10 on the 8th. Elsewhere there were one to three birds at several sites, most being six at Donna Nook on 25th. Most departed the county by the end of Sep and Oct records were restricted to singles at Alkborough Flats and Kirton in Lindsey on Oct 8th, and one to two at Gibraltar Point until the last bird of the year there on Oct 18th. Overall, 2017 was a rather poor year.



Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* Marston STW Sep 9th 2017 © Steve Nesbitt

### European Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*



Scarce/fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor, mainly Sep-Apr. Rare and sporadic breeder. Green List.

Site Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Max Count	Mths seen
Gibraltar Point	3	4	2	-	-	-	1	1	2	25	9	5	25	9
Alkborough Flats	5	5	2	1	-	-	-	-	9	16	7	10	16	8
Whitton	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	-	4	10	2
Frampton Marsh	8	4	1	-	-	-	-	2	1	4	4	3	8	8
Saltfleetby Theddlethorpe	5	2	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	4	3	5	6
Carlton & Manby Washlands	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	1
Crowland	1	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	2

All sites recording five or more in at least one month are tabulated, above. There were records from 52 locations in 2017, with widespread winter records and a notable passage during the autumn. Maximum day counts during the first quarter of the year peaked with eight at Frampton Marsh in Jan, five at Alkborough Flats, Carlton & Manby Washlands and Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR. One to four birds were present during Jan-Mar at about 39 other sites. Wintering birds dispersed thereafter and there was no notable spring passage. The only reports during May-Jun came from Fockerby and Laughton Forest with just one to two birds present until Jun 18th. There was no evidence of breeding.

Autumn passage started in late Jul, and autumn to end of year maximum day counts included 20-25 birds at Gibraltar Point on five dates between 3rd and 15th. Alkborough Flats had 16 on Oct 8th, and Whitton 10 on Oct 20th. Gibraltar Point and Alkborough Flats were the main sites for wintering birds with three to six present for most of Dec.



European Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola* Rimac Dec 10th 2017 © Mark Johnson

#### Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*



Fairly common passage migrant and former local breeder but no recent certainty, although pairs are regular in late spring. Greenland form ('Greenland Wheatear') *leucorhoa* is a scarce migrant in spring/autumn. Green List (both forms).

The first returning migrants arrived as usual during Mar with the first at Donna Nook on 11th, which was the earliest recorded there by Steve Lorand, the previous earliest record being Mar 13th 1977. Another 10 sites recorded these harbingers of spring between then and 31st on which date there were four at Gibraltar Point. Widespread records followed thereafter throughout Apr and May with typical day counts of between one and four, and with peak counts in Apr at Gibraltar Point of 16 on 20th and 15 at Middlemarsh Farm on 24th. The arrival continued during May across a fairly broad front but with highest numbers still on the coast. Gibraltar Point recorded 19 on 7th; there were 10 at Marshchapel on 10th and two to five in many areas.

None was reported between May 25th and Jul 3rd, when a juvenile at Gibraltar Point marked the start of autumn passage. Further singles followed during Jul, mainly on the coast, with two at Gibraltar Point on 9th, and with one inland at Risby Warren on 16th. Birds continued to trickle through in small numbers during Aug with a maximum of eight at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on 26th, one to four elsewhere. Numbers built up on the coast during Sep but only Gibraltar Point recorded double figures with 19 on 7th and 51 on 9th, the highest count of the year. The latter count included an afternoon arrival of 42 all down the east dunes. Numbers dwindled rapidly into Oct when they were reported from just four coastal sites: Frampton Marsh, Gibraltar Point, Ingoldmells and Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR, with just one to two individuals there between 2nd-12th. Rather oddly, the two at Gibraltar Point were the last of 2017.

Six Wheatears showing characters of the Greenland race *leucorhoa* were seen at Frampton Marsh on Apr 13th and another was at Garthorpe on May 31st.



Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* Frampton Marsh Aug 10th 2017 © Neil Smith



Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* Gibraltar Point Aug 13th 2017 © Paul Neale

### House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*



Common resident and partial migrant. Red List.

This species was found in 64% of BBS squares (63% in 2016) with an average of 19 birds per occupied square (14 in 2016). It was the 25th most widespread bird in Lincolnshire in 2017 and the 3rd most numerous. The population of this red data bird crashed by nearly four-fold from 1976 to the early 90s and has since stabilised. The Lincolnshire index shows that the 2017 population was 6% below the 1994 population with a 5% increase over 2016. Neither change is statistically significant. Big winter flocks are a distant memory from the 70s and flocks over 50 were reported from only 14 localities, up from nine in 2016. Counts over 100 were as follows: Anwick (110, Feb); Haverholme (130, Jul); Freiston Shore (100, Jul); Sleaford (110, Aug); Ancaster (110, Aug); Ruskington (110, Dec).

## Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* ■

Fairly common resident though localised resident and partial migrant. Red List.

Site Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gibraltar Point	-	-	5	3	3	-	-	112	214	268	96	-
Deeping St Nicholas	-	-	100	-	-	-	4	30	-	-	-	-
Baumber	25	24	-	-	-	-	-	45	60	75	-	-
Frampton Marsh	1	5	5	5	2	26	2	70	3	8	2	1
South Ferriby	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	50	-	-	-
Scunthorpe	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	40	-	-	-
Freiston Shore	37	12	5	1	2	1	20	8	-	28	24	4
Tetney	2	1	1	8	12	15	35	30	30	-	-	-
Winterton	35	16	7	-	-	-	-	30	-	-	-	-
Fockerby	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	35

This red data species was found in 34% of BBS squares (2016 33%) with an average of 4.2 birds per occupied square (3.6 in 2016). It is astounding that the English population of Tree Sparrow has crashed by 95%. Most of this decline followed agricultural intensification as a result of joining the Common Agricultural Policy when subsidies were paid for the tonnage of crops grown. Unfortunately insufficient BBS squares are covered to plot an index for Tree Sparrow in Lincolnshire. In 2017, 86 were covered of which 29 recorded this bird. Another 10 squares covered should give sufficient squares (30) to calculate an index. Tree Sparrow is found in only 5% of English squares compared to 34% in Lincolnshire. The county has 12% of the birds counted indicating how important it remains for the Tree Sparrow population. Nest box schemes encourage colonial breeding and supplemental feeding supports large winter flocks. This is one species where it can be relatively easy to boost the population as many of our nature reserves and more enlightened farmers have shown. The table shows the top 10 sites recording a maximum of more than 30 birds.

## Dunnoch *Prunella modularis*

■ (*occidentalis*) ■ (nominate)

British form *occidentalis* a very common resident and partial migrant. Nominate continental form a scarce passage migrant, mostly in autumn. Amber List (*occidentalis*) and Green List (nominate).

This amber listed species was found in 87% of BBS squares (92% in 2016) with an average of 4.0 birds per occupied square (3.6 in 2016). It is the 10th most widespread bird in Lincolnshire from BBS coverage and the 21st most numerous. It is amber listed because its UK population fell by half from the early 70s to the early 90s and it has since recovered only gradually. In Lincolnshire our BBS index shows the population is up by 20% since 1994. The coast usually produces the biggest numbers during spring but mostly, autumn migration. Gibraltar Point had a peak of 48 in May, the same as in 2016. The autumn peak of 96 at Gibraltar Point in Oct was up from 82 in Sep 2016. Donna Nook had 40 in Sep down from a peak of 100 in Oct 2016. Inland the highest count of the year came from Asterby where there were 15 in Mar. TV98203 ringed at Gibraltar Point was re-trapped on the south coast nine days later:

TV98203	Full-grown	08-04-15	Gibraltar Point Nature Reserve, Skegness: 53°5'N 0°19'E (Lincolnshire)
	Caught by ringer	17-04-17	Littlesea, Weymouth: 50°36'N 2°29'W (Dorset), 340km SW, 2y 0m 9d

## Yellow Wagtail group *Motacilla flava*

Summer visitor and passage migrant. One common race occurs and several others are scarce/rare.

## Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava flavissima* ■

British form a common summer visitor and passage migrant mostly Apr-Sep. Red List.

Site name	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Gibraltar Point	1	13	50	2	27	58	65	8
Frampton Marsh	-	28	6	1	12	60	60	1
Marston	-	21	2	1	50	1	-	-
Toft next Newton	-	10	6	-	5	20	30	-
Alkborough Flats	-	6	17	1	-	30	5	-
Witham Mouth-	-	-	-	-	30	6	-	-
West Ashby	-	1	2	-	1	15	26	-
Reads Island	-	-	-	-	-	22	-	-
Covenham Reservoir	-	7	20	1	3	21	7	-

The table records all sites with records of more than 20 birds. The first bird of the year was seen at Gibraltar Point on Mar 31st followed by more during Apr increasing to maxima of 21 at Marston STW on Apr 16th and 28 at Frampton Marsh on Apr 19th. Similar counts were made during May with 50 at Gibraltar Point on 13th.

Birds were recorded in 24 out of 86 (27.9%) BBS squares surveyed, a drop from 34/82 (41.5%) compared with 2016. Birds counted fell from 105 in 2016 to 79 in 2017 although the number of birds counted in squares where they were present was similar (3.1 in 2016; 3.3 in 2017). It continues to be the UK red-listed species (BoCC4) for which Lincolnshire is most important.

The Aug and Sep peak migration counts were well down on autumn 2016. The Jul peak was 50 at Marston STW on 13th. In Aug, there were 60 at Frampton Marsh on the 23rd and 58 at Gibraltar Point on the 28th. In Sep, there were 65 at Gibraltar Point on the 6th and 60 at Frampton Marsh on the 5th. The last records were of two at Butterwick on Oct 22nd and one at Gibraltar Point on Oct 23rd.



Yellow Wagtail *M. f. flavissima* Frampton Marsh Apr 19th 2017 © Neil Smith

### Blue-headed Wagtail *M.f. flava*



Very scarce passage migrant, mainly spring. Has bred sporadically. Amber List. **LBRC RBBP**

The only reports of this distinctive sub-specie of Yellow Wagtail were of male birds at Frampton Marsh, where the first one was reported on Apr 22nd (ABe). There were also reports on Apr 30th (RSPB), May 1st (RSPB) and May 6th (ABe) although it is uncertain how many individuals were involved. A female or “Channel” Wagtail (*flava* x *flavissima*) was at Willingham by Stow on May 13th (DN).

### Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*



Scarce passage migrant (mainly coastal) and winter visitor (mostly inland). Very scarce breeder, formerly sporadic, but has become regular in recent years. Red List.

Site Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of sites	24	18	17	10	13	5	10	12	12	21	21	17
Min. no. of birds	33	22	30	14	18	10	19	29	52	37	28	21

Records were received from 73 sites this year down from 100 last year and more in line with around 80 in 2015. The minimum number of birds in Jan at 33 was slightly down on 37 in Jan 2016 and the highest Sep minimum count of 52 across all sites was similar to the peak of 58 in Oct 2016. The peak one-day site counts were at Gibraltar Point in Sep with 15 on 12th, 14 on 14th and 12 on 29-30th. The next highest count was of six at Frampton Marsh on Aug 1st. Reports of confirmed breeding came from Haverholme, Hemingby, Kirkby on Bain/Tattershall GP and Cogglesford Mill, Sleaford. The species was recorded in two of the 86 BBS squares surveyed in Lincs in 2017 with one bird being counted in each square.



## Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrelli*



Common resident and passage migrant. Amber List.

This species was found in 61% of BBS squares (63% in 2016) with an average of 2.1 birds per occupied square (2.1 in 2016). It is the 24th most widespread breeding bird in Lincolnshire from BBS coverage and the 6th most numerous. The table includes all sites recording counts of 40 or more birds in one month. It is notable that only three sites reported winter roost sites over 100 birds this year. It is likely there are many such winter roosts that are not being counted.

Site Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Marston	125	125	-	1	85	2	-	-	-	-	-	30
Gibraltar Point	40	2	6	3	4	4	30	48	110	55	115	1
Anton's Gowt	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Spalding	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	80	-
Thurlby (Bourne)	51	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Whisby NR	49	40	2	20	3	3	10	7	1	15	3	2
Frampton Marsh	1	1	2	30	44	5	15	40	15	3	4	2
Toft next Newton	5	8	20	30	15	15	35	35	40	35	16	6
Woodhall Spa	40	40	4	1	2	1	3	2	2	5	-	-

There was one recovery in 2017 of a foreign-ringed bird:

BLB13248330	First-year Male	10-03-2014	Nieuwpoort: 51°7'N 2°43'E (West-Vlaanderen) Belgium
	Caught by ringer	16-06-2017	Owston Ferry, Epworth: c. 53°29'N 0°47'W (North Lincolnshire), 355km NW, 3y 3m 6d

## White Wagtail *M.a.alba*



Nominate continental form a scarce passage migrant, mainly Mar-Jun. Amber List. **RBBP**

Records came from six sites. Spring passage began on Mar 15th with a report of three birds at Anwick. White Wagtail is usually one of our earliest migrants and this date is consistent with earlier years. Frampton Marsh had a single on Mar 23rd followed by two on Apr 5th. There were subsequent reports on 13 dates in Apr with a peak of three on 27th, with the last a single on 30th. Elsewhere there were two at Covenham Reservoir on Apr 17th, one at Woodhall Spa Airfield on Apr 12th and 15th; two at Crook Bank, Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Apr 25th and the final bird of spring passage was a single at Willow Tree Fen on May 7th. Only one possible autumn record was submitted.

## Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi*

Very scarce passage migrant, mainly Sep-Nov, rarely Dec-Jan and Apr-May. **LBRC**

The year 2017 yielded just two records, both at Gibraltar Point. The first was on Oct 25th (KMW, BWd) seen going south over Mill Hill, then later on the Old Saltmarsh when it eventually flew off south. Another was seen there on Nov 10th (RDn) over the saltings south of Seacroft Lagoons.

Numbers vary greatly from year to year with recent maxima of 11 in 2016 and 19 in 2013. The yearly average is closer to five to six birds.

## Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*



Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gibraltar Point	24	9	90	51	52	30	64	48	4679	417	45	2
Donna Nook	35	13	40	50	30	40	35	27	500	100	9	3
Freiston Shore	3	3	4	11	4	11	6	8	200	6	22	1
Tetney	4	5	1	8	30	12	25	25	200	-	-	3
Saltfleetby Theddlethorpe	9	1	12	12	20	20	10	10	200	31	19	16
Frampton Marsh	4	3	8	20	16	4	10	6	46	40	50	20
Witham Mouth	-	-	-	-	-	-	45	-	20	50	4	6

The table includes some of the more consistently recorded coastal sites, plus an inland one, including all areas with records of 50 or more birds. Low numbers of birds over-wintered in the county with few counts reaching double figures. Spring passage was in evidence at Gibraltar Point in Mar with birds seen moving south on most days in low numbers; the peak count occurred on 28th when 90 were recorded. Up to 40 were present all month at Donna Nook, and inland 48 were at Woodhall Spa Airfield LWT Reserve on 21st.

Breeding estimates included 119 territories at Frampton Marsh and 38 territories at Freiston Shore, significant increases on the 2016 totals. Singing males were noted at several other sites but no further confirmation of breeding was recorded.

Autumn passage was heavy throughout Sep with more than 18000 moving south at Gibraltar Point during the month. Day totals there were above 200 on 20 dates, with an amazing maximum of 4418 south on 12th (out of a day total of 4679). Other high coastal counts in Sep included a maximum of 500 at Donna Nook (30th) and 200 at each of Freiston Shore (12th), Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR (16th) and Tetney (12th). Oct totals were much lower although Gibraltar point still recorded 100 or more birds on 20 days with a peak of 417 on 4th. Numbers dwindled rapidly thereafter with few significant numbers moving or indeed wintering, as at the start of the year.

### Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*



Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant. Breeds locally, mainly in the western half of the county. Red List.

The increasingly dire state of breeding Tree Pipits in Lincolnshire was aptly demonstrated by the fact that breeding season records came from only four localities in 2017. Crowle Moors reported two birds but the figures are known to be higher; Linwood Warren reported just a single bird May 23rd–25th only; Greetwell Heath had 6 territorial males; and Laughton Forest – Scotton Common, where 7 males were recorded on Apr 11th. There was no full survey at the latter site but a minimum of 27 males held breeding territories and there were still 10 birds on Jul 28th.

On the coast spring passage at Gibraltar Point started on Apr 19th with 27 birds recorded through to May 30th with peaks of five on May 10th and 13th. At Donna Nook there were singles on May 2nd, 5th and 7th also at Anderby on Apr 24th and Freiston Shore on May 30th. Saltfleetby–Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR saw one on May 6th and three on 9th. Inland one flew over Barton Pits on Apr 24th.

Autumn coastal passage saw singles at Donna Nook on Aug 26th, Sept 2nd, 9th and 16th. One was at Saltfleetby–Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Aug 26th and Frampton Marsh recorded singles on Sep 13th, 25th and Oct 16th. Gibraltar Point had two on Aug 2nd with birds on a further 21 dates up to the last on Oct 16th involving a total of 47 birds.

### Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*

Vagrant. LBRC.

One was seen skulking in the reserve entrance hedgerow at Gibraltar Point on Oct 25th (JS). This was the twelfth Olive-backed Pipit for Lincolnshire and the first since 2014.



Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni* Gibraltar Point Oct 25th 2017 © James Siddle

### Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta* ■

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor Oct-Apr. Mainly coastal, possibly increasing but can be elusive, making counting difficult. Amber List. **LBRC**

Water Pipits were recorded at 13 sites, all of them coastal apart from Willow Tree Fen LWT reserve.

The site most consistently reporting this species was Gibraltar Point, which had one to three birds during Jan-Apr with a maximum of three birds on Jan 20th and Mar 31st. Alkborough Flats, Donna Nook, Freiston Shore, Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR, and East Halton all reported one to two birds during Jan-Apr and Willow Tree Fen had one on Feb 9th, the only inland site. The last report of the spring was of one at Gibraltar Point on Apr 21st.

The first autumn record was an early bird at Frampton Marsh on Sep 24th. More singles arrived during Oct at four coastal sites between Oct 12th-28th. Single birds predominated on the coast at several sites in Nov but the highest count was five at Goxhill on 19th made during a WeBS count. A few more were present in Dec until the end of the month, with maxima of four at Alkborough Flats, Croft Marsh and Gibraltar Point, although interchange occurs between the latter two sites with possible duplication.

### Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

■ (*littoralis*) ■ (nominate)

Scandinavian Rock form *littoralis* a fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor Sep-Apr; scarce inland. Nominate British and Irish form essentially resident so probably a very scarce winter visitor. Green List (*littoralis*) and Amber List (nominate).

The coastal and estuarine areas holding most wintering birds are given in the table. Early and late in the year, most Rock Pipits are found along the shore and in saltmarsh but there is also a pronounced visible passage at Gibraltar Point in autumn. The highest counts in Jan-Feb were 51 at Gibraltar Point on Jan 24th and 65 there on Feb 3rd; interestingly, a roost of 29 birds was observed on the old saltmarsh there on Feb 1st. Most birds had left by the end of Mar with a few lingering into Apr, when the last record of the spring was at Gibraltar Point on 20th Apr.

The first one in the autumn was at Covenham Reservoir on Sep 14th, a day later than in 2016 with others soon following elsewhere and the majority arriving between the end of Sep and the end of Oct. Visual migration counts at Gibraltar Point recorded 25 birds south in Sep and a total of 1969 south in Oct. More than 100 were recorded on five days, with a peak of 184 going south on Oct 23rd. Flocks of 15-20 were recorded at Donna Nook, Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR and Terrington. Low numbers remained in Dec with 17 at Gibraltar Point on 10th and 25 at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on 13th.

### Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

■ (*gengleri*) ■ (nominate)

British form *gengleri* an abundant resident. Nominate continental form a passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber List (*gengleri*) and Green List (nominate).

Peak counts during Jan-Feb were unremarkable with many areas recording small flocks in double figures. Coastal passage was evident at Gibraltar Point from early Mar building throughout the month. More than 1600 were logged moving south in Mar, with a peak of 269 on 29th Mar and a further 242 south on Apr 1st. Numbers dwindled rapidly thereafter.

Autumn migration began during Sep with 52 south at Gibraltar Point on 12th but it wasn't until late Sep that numbers picked up there with 361 south on 30th. This continued through Oct with more than 100 south on several days and a peak of 260 on 23rd. Elsewhere, 100 went south at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on 18th, and there were 80 inland at Boultham Mere on 31st. Numbers elsewhere in the county were unremarkable.

Southwards movements at Gibraltar Point continued throughout Nov with maxima of 120 south on 5th and 150 on 9th. Many fewer were present in the county in Dec with inland flocks of 40 at Normanby and 38 at Welbourne the only counts of more than 30 received.

### Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla* ■

Winter visitor and passage migrant. Exceptional in summer. Green List. **RBBP**

Just thirty-eight sites reported Bramblings, less than half of the number in 2016. Stoke Rochford, Barton Pits and Raithby-by-Spilsby recorded the highest maxima in the first quarter. There were no substantial coastal movements during the spring, numbers dwindling during Apr and May, when a single bird was trapped at Gibraltar Point.

Small numbers began to arrive during Sep, all on the coast and most records coming from Gibraltar Point where the monthly maximum was six on 27th. Significant autumn arrivals began in Oct, with a total of 247 counted going south at Gibraltar Point during the month, and a maximum count of 67 on 23rd. Significant movements were also recorded at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR with double figure counts on six days, and a maximum of 36 south on 9th. Few were recorded inland, the only notable count being a flock of 13 at East Keal 24th-30th.

Few remained at Gibraltar Point in Nov with a peak of just 16 on the 5th, but some visible migration continued and around 76 went south during Nov-Dec. Just five sites recorded the species in Dec when a flock of 20 at Ruskington represented the majority of birds in the county. Overall 2017 was a poor year. In neighbouring Norfolk, several locations recorded flocks in excess of 100, with one having 800 in Dec.



Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla* Grantham Apr 2nd 2017 © Steve Nesbitt

#### Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*



Very scarce local resident and rare passage migrant, occasionally irruptive. Red List. **LBRC RBBP**

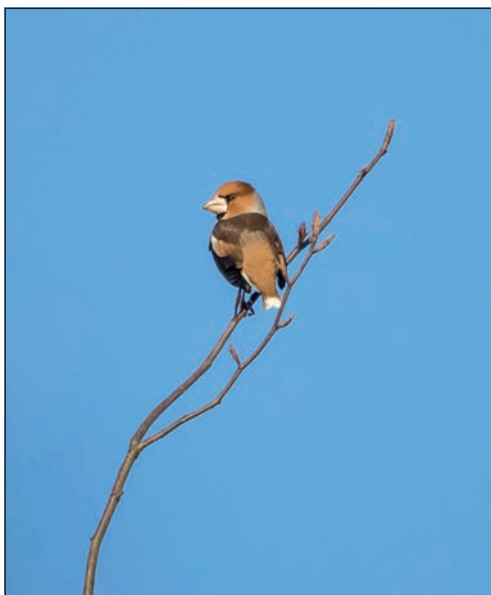
There were no spring or breeding records in 2017 but the year will be long remembered for the autumn invasion of 1000s of Hawfinches into the UK, with the county seeing widespread flocks in unprecedented numbers. This continued into 2018 and a review article will appear in the next annual report.

Twenty-two sites reported Hawfinches, eight of these sites on two or more occasions. The first birds appeared on Oct 14th at Gibraltar Point where there were 11 on Oct 20th. By the end of Oct, counts from the six sites that reported them totalled 38 birds. All observers noted that these birds were moving over suggesting that this total probably reflects the true numbers with little, if any, replication. Around 50 were seen in Nov at 14 sites, nine of them inland, suggesting incoming birds had more widely dispersed. Dec counts were fewer although still significant and the largest flock of the year was reported from Broughton where there were 21 on Dec 31st.



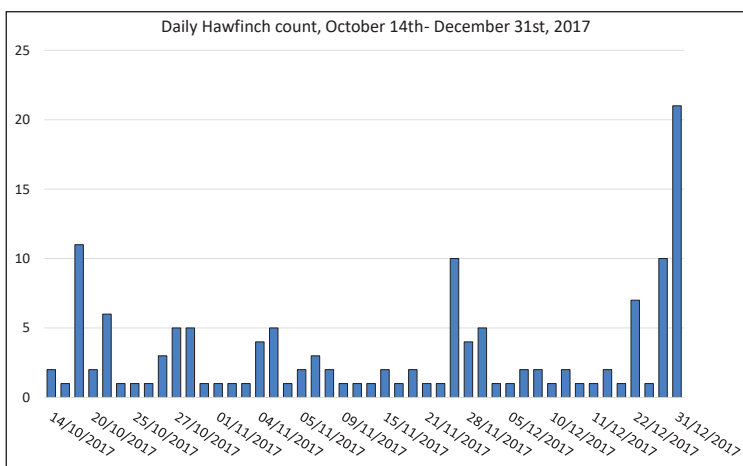


Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* Forest Pines Nov 28th 2017 © Graham Catley



Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* Forest Pines Nov 28th 2017  
© Graham Catley (left) and © Mark Johnson (right)





### Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*



British form *pileata* a fairly common resident, but largely absent from the fens. Nominate Scandinavian form ('Northern Bullfinch') a very rare irruptive visitor in autumn and winter. Amber List (*pileata*).

This somewhat secretive species is certainly being under-recorded, and counts were received from 147 sites, slightly lower than in 2016.

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Boultham Mere	12	62	4	2	2	1	-	2	-	6	7	6
Whisby NR	33	4	4	5	4	1	5	20	5	15	22	8
Gibraltar Point	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	19	7	3
Linwood	10	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

The largest monthly peak counts in the first quarter were made during Jan-Feb and later in the year during Aug-Dec. The sites in the table were the only ones to record 10 or more in any month. The highest count in Jan was one of 33 at Whisby NR and in Feb there was a massive 62 at Boultham Mere on 19th. Whisby had several counts of 10-22 in the autumn and Gibraltar Point had just one day in double figures with 19 on Oct 25th, 16 of which went south.

Confirmed breeding was reported only from North Hykeham Pits on Aug 17th, when fledged young were noted, and two pairs were present at Crook Bank found during the BBS there. There were no other reports of possible or probable breeding.

### Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*

Vagrant May-Jun and Aug-Oct. LBRC RBBP

After a blank year in 2016, there was one at Gibraltar Point on Sep 25th, feeding on Ragwort, *Senecio jacobaea*, with Goldfinches and Greenfinches (KMW).

### Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*

■ (*harrisoni*) ■ (nominate)

British form *harrisoni* a common but declining resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Nominate continental form a winter visitor in unknown numbers. Red List (*harrisoni*) and Green List (nominate).

The well-documented decline, and its causes, of British Greenfinches since 2005 continues and with a long-term decline of 65% (1995–2016), shorter-term declines of 80% (2006–16), 57% (2011–16) as well as a one-year decline of 54% in Northern Ireland plus the declines reported across the UK as a whole, the next BoCC4 assessment seems likely to bring a change of status of Greenfinch in the UK.

Wintering flocks of 20 or more during the first quarter were noted at just seven sites across the county with the largest at Whisby NR (132, Jan), this being the only three-figure count during Jan-Mar. After Mar numbers quickly fell as wintering flocks dispersed to breeding territories.

Autumn coastal passage began from late Sep at Gibraltar Point with 93 south on 30th. This continued through Oct with just over 1000 counted south during the month and with more than 100 counted on five dates. Oct maxima elsewhere included 40 at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR and 30 at East Keal. Numbers declined during Nov-Dec with the only significant counts being at Whisby NR with maxima of 90 on Nov 15th and 150 on Dec 23rd.

There were two instances of ringed birds travelling more than 100km into or out of the county, and one adult male ringed at Gibraltar Point, controlled there twice, perished in The Netherlands in Mar 2017:

VZ79421	First-year Male Caught by ringer	25-10-16 02-04-17	Lichfield Block, Cannock Chase: 52°46'N 2°0'W (Staffordshire) Dunsby, Bourne: 52°49'N 0°22'W (Lincolnshire), 112km E, 0y 5m 8d
TX89797	First-year Female Caught by ringer	10-10-16 21-01-17	Theddlethorpe St Helen, Mablethorpe: 53°21'N 0°13'E (Lincolnshire) Brandon Fen, Lakenheath Fen: c. 52°26'N 0°30'E (Suffolk) 104km S, 0y 3m 11d
TX30992	Adult male Caught by ringer Caught by ringer Freshly dead (hit glass)	28-11-13 04-02-14 15-11-14 26-03-17	Gibraltar Point Nature Reserve, Skegness: 53°6'N 0°19'E (Lincolnshire) Gibraltar Point Nature Reserve, Skegness: 53°6'N 0°19'E (Lincolnshire) Gibraltar Point Nature Reserve, Skegness: 53°6'N 0°19'E (Lincolnshire) Stiens: 53°15'N 5°46'E (Friesland) The Netherlands, 363km E, 3y 3m 26d



Twite *Linaria flavirostris* Theddlethorpe Nov 25th 2017 © Steve Nesbitt-

**Twite *Linaria flavirostris*** ■

Rare coastal winter visitor and passage migrant, mainly Sep-Apr. Rare inland. Red List.

Area / Site Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Humber</b>							
Alkborough Flats	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Cleethorpes	-	-	-	-	-	10	20
Whitton	3	-	-	21	-	-	-
<b>North-east coast</b>							
Donna Nook	180	102	100	26	50	35	50
Grainthorpe	-	-	-	-	-	11	15
Horseshoe Point-Tetney Haven	-	-	3	-	-	2	-
Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR	42	2	58	-	-	40	150

Saltfleet	31	110	-	-	-	-	1
Tetney	30	-	-	-	30	-	-
Theddlethorpe St Helen	-	-	-	-	-	60	50
The Wash							
Butterwick	17	14	18		-	18	50
Frampton Marsh	-	1	10	-	2	-	-
Freiston Shore	-	-	-	-	5	7	20
Gibraltar Point	1	2	-	-	5	1	-
Holbeach Marsh	-	-	-	-	-	33	-
Kirton Marsh	-	-	-	-	-	9	-
Leverton	14	-	-	-	-	-	-
Terrington	1	-	-	-	-	16	-
Wainfleet	-	27	-	-	-	-	-

(Note the discontinuity in the months across the table, no records May-Sep)

In view of the growing scarcity of the species in the county, all 19 sites recording Twite are included in the table, all of them coastal. No records were received for inland sites.

The most significant flocks in the first quarter of 2017 were as usual on the northeast coast with smaller populations on the Wash and Humber. It seems reasonable to assume that the peak counts of more than 100 in Jan-Feb at Donna Nook and Saltfleet refer to the same flock. Those at Donna Nook began to depart in early Mar and by the end of the month the count was down to 22. There were still 21 at Whitton on 1st Apr but no records there after that. The bulk of those at Donna Nook remained until the second week of Apr, dwindling to eight on 27th Apr, the last spring records in the county.

The first record of the autumn was of a single bird on Oct 6th at Gibraltar Point with the main arrival at the end of Oct. Numbers were well down on winter 2016/17 with Donna Nook holding up to 50 during Oct-Dec, the biggest winter count at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR of 150 on 18th Dec and the highest count on the Wash on Dec 9th at Butterwick. Twite remains on the BoCC4 red list.

### Linnet *Linaria cannabina*



Very common/abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Red List.

Recorded widely throughout the county all year with counts from about 159 sites, and with maximum counts being recorded in Sep. The BBS index graph for the East Midlands up to 2017 shows an upward trend almost approximating to the figure of 100, which was the 1994 starting point.

Jan was the peak winter month with flocks of 100 or more recorded at ten sites: Freiston (500), Fockerby (350), Saltfleet (190), Boultham Mere (180), Gibraltar Point (153), Bassingham (150), Tetney (120), Cleethorpes (110), and Woodhall Spa (100).

Spring movements on the coast were seen in Mar-Apr with nearly 600 in Mar and 1123 in Apr mainly south at Gibraltar Point. In contrast, coastal movements at Donna Nook were largely to the north, with Apr maxima of 160 on 15th and 140 on 16th. Many inland sites in Apr recorded smaller flocks of 10-60 birds.

Summer counts were unremarkable but increased in Aug as juveniles fledged and Donna Nook (400), Frampton Marsh (250) and Gibraltar Point, Fockerby and Tetney (200) all recorded large flocks.

Autumn numbers increased into Sep as coastal passage got underway. At Gibraltar Point, visual migration in Sep was impressive with a maximum of 1827 on 30th and a total count of 3586 south. Elsewhere in Sep, particularly high numbers were noted at Tetney with 200 on the 3rd, Frampton Marsh 200 also on the 3rd, Saltfleetby 300 on the 15th, Great Sturton 200 on the 22nd and Donna Nook with 580 on the 29th.

Visual migration at Gibraltar Point continued apace into Oct when an even higher monthly total of 6202 birds south was recorded, with more than 500 recorded on six separate dates. Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR (300), Witham Mouth (270), Freiston Shore (200), Donna Nook (120) and Willow Tree Fen (120) all recorded monthly maxima of more than 100 birds.

Coastal passage declined in Nov and in Dec larger flocks were recorded inland with Sleaford (475), East Keal (400), Laughton Forest (200), Winterton (200), Cleethorpes (180), and Fockerby (165) all saw high monthly maxima.

### 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*



Nominate Scandinavian and Russian form scarce or very scarce, occasionally fairly common, irruptive winter visitor. Greenland form *rostrata* a very rare vagrant. Amber List (nominate). **LBRC**

Common Redpoll remains a scarce winter visitor with records from five sites in the first five months of the year and from just two sites in the autumn.

The first winter record was of one at Barton Pits on Jan 6th with up to three there until Mar 10th and four were at nearby Barton upon Humber on Jan 13th (GPC). A flock of 20 was discovered in Laughton Forest on Feb 14th with five remaining until Mar 10th (GPC). Single birds were seen in Willingham by Stow on and off from Feb 14th-Mar 20th. In early spring one to four birds were present in the Lincoln area from Mar 2nd until Apr 5th (CG) and later one trapped at Gibraltar Point on May 7th (GGr) was the last of the spring.

Autumn records were few and far between. Two arrived at Gibraltar Point on Sep 12th (RDn), another on Sep 29th (BWd) with further singles there on Oct 15th south (GPBO) and another on Oct 25th (BWd). The last bird of the year was trapped at Dunsby on Nov 13th (AB).



Lesser Redpoll *Acanthis cabaret* Marston STW Nov 6th 2017 © Steve Nesbitt

### Lesser Redpoll *Acanthis cabaret*



Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor. Rare breeder. Amber List.

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Saltfleetby Theddlethorpe	-	-	-	-	1	-	300	1	-
Gibraltar Point	-	-	1	1	1	295	94	5	-
Witham Mouth	-	-	-	-	-	-	200	-	-
Laughton Forest	45	160	140	40	-	-	-	-	-
Scunthorpe	-	90	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lincoln	-	6	40	11	-	-	-	-	-
Woodhall Spa	30	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-

Linwood	30	-	-	9	-	-	-	-	-
North Hykeham	12	-	1	-	-	-	7	26	20
Boultham Mere	10	20	11	-	-	-	20	20	25
Alkborough Flats	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	24
Whisby NR	14	12	12	-	1	1	2	21	16

(Note the discontinuity in the months across the table, no records Jun-Aug)

A total of 35 sites recorded Lesser Redpolls, but Laughton Forest, Scunthorpe, Woodhall Spa and Linwood provided the bulk of the records in the first quarter with significant numbers at coastal watch points in the autumn.

The large flock in Laughton Forest remained there through Feb into early Mar, peaking at 160 on Feb 4th. The second largest flock was in Bottesford, Scunthorpe on Feb 19th. Dispersal began in early Mar and up to 30 were present in Doddington Park (Lincoln) during the month with 22 remaining there until Mar 30th, and the last spring record there was on Apr 18th. A sizeable flock of 40 remained in Laughton Forest until Apr 29th (the last spring record there) and the final spring records were of singles at Whisby NR on May 6th, Saltfleetby May 9th and Gibraltar Point May 12th. There were no reports of breeding activity.

The first records of the autumn came from Gibraltar Point on Sep 19th when 14 were present. A further 19 were there on 29th, but a large influx of 295 occurred on Sep 30th. Coastal sites provided the bulk of the records in Oct as birds continued to arrive. Maxima at Gibraltar Point were 94 on 3rd and 84 on 12th. Further north at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR a mid-month influx saw 150 on Oct 17th, 250 on 18th and 300 on 19th in the Crook Bank area, all moving south. Most of this influx passed through the county and in Nov-Dec small flocks of up to 26 birds remained inland, mainly at North Hykeham Pits, Whisby NR, Boultham Mere, and Marston STW.

### 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. Green List.

Crossbills were very scarce in the county in 2017 with records received from just six sites: Alkborough Flats, Bulby, Donna Nook, Frampton Marsh, Gibraltar Point and Laughton Forest.

One to three birds were seen at five of these sites in the first quarter of the year, with the sixth, Gibraltar Point, having 15 on 28th Mar. No reports of breeding were received and only one report was received of a pair in suitable habitat, in Laughton Forest, on Mar 5th. Gibraltar Point was the only site to record Crossbills during Apr-Jun, with a maximum of 11 there on Jun 7th, which included two adult males with adult females. One or two birds were seen there on several dates in Jul and Aug. No records were received at all for Sep, and Oct was not much better with singles on 3rd at Gibraltar Point and at Frampton Marsh on 18th. The last records of the year were again at Gibraltar Point where five went south on Nov 5th and two were in the Plantation on the 22nd.

### Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis* ■

British form *britannica* a common resident and passage migrant. Nominate continental form may also occur. Amber List (*britannica*).

Goldfinch remains one of the commonest finches in the county and was reported from 198 sites, although more than half of these recorded flocks of fewer than ten birds in any one month. The largest wintering flocks at the end of 2016 were at Tetney and Donna Nook and these remained into Jan 2017. A good deal of southwards movement occurred at Gibraltar Point during Mar, with a maximum of 87 south on Mar 29th. Similar numbers passed south there in Apr peaking at 66 on 20th. Jun-Jul was unremarkable, but by Aug post-breeding flocks had started to build up and several sites on the coast and inland reported 100 or more on some days.

At Gibraltar Point large autumn counts were recorded in late Sep, with 850 on 29th (529 south) and a huge 2804 on 30th (2674 south). Nearly 4000 were logged moving south during the month. The Oct numbers though eclipsed even these totals: more than 1000 birds were recorded on eight dates in the month, the highest count being of 3695 on Oct 18th, the majority moving south. This movement occurred all month and in all, visible migration observers logged more than 25000 birds! Inland sites saw good numbers too with maxima over 50 birds as follows (count, month): Welbourne (100, Sep), Morton (96, Oct), Whisby NR (92, Nov), Boultham Mere (80, Dec), Willow Tree Fen (80, Dec), West Ashby (75, Jan), Pinchbeck (70, Jan), East Keal (60, Sep), Ruskington (60, Nov) and Woodhall Spa (50, Dec).



BBS data from the BTO archives shows that over the period 1995-2016, Goldfinches in the UK increased by 136%, and in the east Midlands by 219%; increases reflected in the Lincolnshire records. There was one foreign control of interest of a bird caught in The Netherlands:

S309037	Adult Male	03-12-16	Sutton Water Works: 52°53'N 0°6'W (Lincolnshire)
	Caught by ringer	08-12-17	Utrecht: 52°7'N 4°58'E (Utrecht) The Netherlands, 355km ESE, 1y 0m 5d

### Siskin *Spinus spinus*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor. Scarce in summer but may breed in some years. Green List.

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gibraltar Point	2	43	143	9	3	4	3	1	102	372	162	1
Sum of all sites maxima	206	197	208	19	11	7	3	4	116	466	226	121

Counts were received from just 56 sites in 2017 with most only reporting the species in a few months. Gibraltar Point recorded Siskins in every month, but only seven sites recorded them in four or more months. Overall, the numbers were well down compared with recent years; 15 sites recorded between 10-60 birds in at least one month,

Flocks of 30 or more during Jan-Feb were few and far between (count, month) – Belton (60, Feb), Whisby NR (50, Jan), Hartsholme (50, Jan) and Messingham (30, Jan) were the only ones. Most of the birds moved off during Mar with a peak of 143 on 30th and a monthly total of just 332 birds counted during visible migration observations. Thereafter numbers dwindled dramatically and there were no other significant spring movements.

A pair was noted in Laughton Forest on Apr 29th and two very young juvenile birds were seen at Osgodby on Aug 29th, but these were the only signs of probable breeding. Between these two dates, there was hardly any recorded in the county.

Some autumn migration began at Gibraltar Point in the second week of Sep with up to 14 per day south, with a peak at the end of the month of 102 on 30th. Oct was the peak month as usual, with 2531 counted moving south, and a maximum of 372 south on 18th. Steady movement south continued on a smaller scale in Nov with more than 50 through on nine dates. The number wintering in Dec was very low with records from just 11 sites, and only counts from Baston where there were 24, Louth with 35 and Stenigot with 30 getting into double figures.

There were four controls and one recovery of wintering and passage birds ringed in the county in 2016, all of them in Scotland:

Z951822	First-year Male	31-03-16	Bourne Wood: 52°45'N 0°23'W (Lincolnshire)
	Caught by ringer	07-05-17	Shebster: 58°33'N 3°42'W (Highland), 675km NNW, 1y 1m 6d
Z951108	First-year Male	31-01-26	Dunsby, Bourne: 52°49'N 0°22'W (Lincolnshire)
	Caught by ringer	12-02-16	Dunsby, Bourne: 52°49'N 0°22'W (Lincolnshire), 0km, 0y 0m 12d
	Caught by ringer	11-03-17	Deer Park Forest Croft: 57°34'N 4°10'W (Highland), 579km NNW, 1y 1m 8d
S126021	First-year Male	25-02-16	Market Rasen: 53°23'N 0°19'W (Lincolnshire)
	Freshly dead (hit glass)	20-05-17	Ardgay: 57°52'N 4°22'W (Highland), 559km NNW, 1y 2m 25d
Z703916	First-year Male	28-04-16	Six House Bank: 52°48'N 0°13'W (Lincolnshire)
	Caught by ringer	18-07-17	Cnoc: c. 56°12'N 4°42'W (Argyll and Bute), 475km NW, 1y 2m 20d
Z951365	Adult Male	21-02-16	Bourne Wood: 52°45'N 0°23'W (Lincolnshire)
	Freshly dead	02-06-17	Leapsh Waterpark, Kielder: 55°10'N 2°32'W (Northumberland), 301km NNW, 1y 3m 12d

### Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*

Fairly common but somewhat localised and declining resident. Red List.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gibraltar Point	50	85	117	20	15	-	1	-	64	3	28	4
Ancaster	-	-	-	53	32	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bonby	8	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	32	40	-
Wispington	-	-	30	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Witham Mouth	-	-	-	20	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
Dunsby	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hop Pole	-	-	-	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

East Keal	10	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Baston	-	10	3	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gedney Drove End	-	-	-	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Records were received from 47 sites across the county, all of which recorded Corn Buntings in at least one month of the year. 28 sites recorded the species in only one month of the year.

The winter roost at Gibraltar Point built up through the first quarter, peaking at 117 birds on Mar 6th. There were still 64 on Mar 27th but birds quickly dispersed with few remaining by the first week of Apr. There were one or two reports of singing males but no definite breeding records. An autumn peak of 64 was recorded at Gibraltar Point on Sep 25th, 33 of which were birds moving south. The only other significant numbers recorded in the last quarter of the year were flocks of 32 at Bonby Carr on Oct 27th and 40 there on Nov 9th.

The BBS population trend for the UK continues to be one of decline, and more counts of singing males from defined areas would be welcome.



Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra* Frampton Marsh Jul 23rd 2017 © Steve Nikols

### Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*



Common resident, but numbers have decreased. Red List.

BBS data for England showed a 41% decline during 1995-2016 and a steeper decline before that but Lincolnshire BBS data have shown little change during the same period. In 2017 80.2% of BBS squares recorded Yellowhammers (79.3% in 2016) with an average of 6.0 birds per occupied square (5.8 in 2016). Counts were received from about 150 sites across the county, slightly fewer than in 2016, but the monthly maxima show little change, with most recorded in Jan.

In the first quarter, significant flocks were seen at Mablethorpe (160, Jan 19th), Boultham (80, Jan 11th), Welbourne (72, Jan 19th), Cleethorpes (60, Jan 30th) and Fockerby (47, Jan 29th). Some significant flocks of 20-40 remained throughout Feb, with a monthly maximum of 75 at Marton on Feb 12th. Numbers declined during Mar reflecting the dispersal of birds returning to their breeding territories, and there were no other significant counts until the autumn.

In the autumn, there were no significant coastal movements during Oct-Nov and little change in overall numbers into Dec. Inland the feeders at Boultham Mere maintained a steady flock of 35-45 birds during the autumn and winter, a flock of 92 had built up at Welbourn by Dec 11th, and flocks of between 15-35 were the highest maximum counts recorded at just a small number of other sites.

### Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla*

Rare vagrant. LBRC

There were two confirmed records, both on Sep 27th: one at Gibraltar Point (JPS) and the second, a 1CY bird, was trapped at Donna Nook (SB, AMD *et al*) and not seen after release.



Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus* Frampton Marsh Nov 5th 2017 © Neil Smith

### Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*



Common/very common resident and passage migrant. Amber List.

Site	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gibraltar Point	20	20	14	12	22	20	11	15	443	291	25	19
Fockerby	250	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	220
Mablethorpe	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Freiston Shore	23	7	6	5	6	13	1-	7	2	82	25	3
Alkborough Flats	80	50	4	2	12	1	4	8	6	1	1	2
Witham	2	55	15	-	-	-	1	-	-	50	20	5
Cleethorpes	40	42	12	6	2	-	-	-	5	-	18	7
Willow Tree Fen	1	12	10	9	10	40	1	1	1	24	1	30
Deeping St Nicholas	-	4	35	-	-	-	12	-	-	-	-	-
Saltfleet	14	2	2	1	26	1	1	-	-	5	8	12

Reed Buntings were widely recorded across the county in all months with counts from around 145 sites, slightly down on 2016. Peak counts were recorded in Jan in the first quarter, in Oct during autumn passage, and in Dec in the last quarter.

The sites recording the highest peak counts in any month are tabulated above with Fockerby recording a remarkable 250 in Jan. Predictably, numbers fell during Feb-Mar as birds dispersed. Spring and summer counts were unremarkable and the summer nadir occurred in Aug at a time when both juveniles and adults are undergoing moult and are likely to be at their least conspicuous. The principal moult occurs at the end of the breeding season, differing in its extent between juvenile and adult birds: while the post-juvenile moult is partial, excluding for instance the primary flight feathers, the post-nuptial moult is complete (Reference: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00063657009476284>).

Autumn passage on the coast peaked in Sep and Oct and the regular recording of visual migration at Gibraltar Point recorded a Sep peak of 443 on 30th, remarkably similar to the peak of 439 in 2016, also on Sep 30th! Freiston Shore had a notable peak of 82 in Oct and inland Willow Tree Fen recorded the highest Jun count. Fockerby once again saw a very high winter peak of 220 in Dec. Few were recorded elsewhere.

Ringed recoveries have shown that Reed Buntings from northern Europe and the Low Countries winter in the UK although most British-ringed Reed Buntings tend not to move far. The four birds below proved the exception to this rule, all being controlled more than 100km from where they were ringed:

Z914675	Adult Male Caught by ringer	21-09-17 23-10-17	Gibraltar Point Nature Reserve, Skegness: 53°5'N 0°19'E (Lincolnshire) Orfordness: c. 52°5'N 1°34'E (Suffolk), 141km SE, 0y 1m 2d
S310608	Adult Female Caught by ringer	08-10-16 07-01-17	Near North Somercotes: 53°26'N 0°9'E (Lincolnshire) Thorpe Street, Hinderclay: (Suffolk), 134km SSE, 0y 2m 30d
S764196	Juvenile Caught by ringer	01-07-17 09-10-17	Winterset Reservoir, Wakefield: 53°37'N 1°26'W (West Yorkshire) Gibraltar Point Nature Reserve, Skegness: 53°5'N 0°19'E (Lincolnshire), 131km ESE, 0y 3m 8d
Z951398	First-year Female Caught by ringer	25-02-16 04-11-17	Northorpe Fen: 52°44'N 0°20'W (Lincolnshire) Rye Meads: c. 51°46'N 0°0'E (Essex), 112km S, 1y 8m 10d



Lapland Bunting *Calcurius lapponicus* Donna Nook Feb 12th 2017 © Mark Johnson

### Lapland Bunting *Calcurius lapponicus* ■

Nominate continental form a scarce local passage migrant and winter visitor Sep-Apr. Rare inland. The Greenland and Canadian form *subcalcaratus* may also occur. Amber List (both forms).

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Donna Nook	6	32	3	-	-	1	1	-
Saltfleetby Theddlethorpe	3	13	-	-	-	1	-	-
Frampton Marsh	1	-	-	-	-	-	8	-
Theddlethorpe St Helen	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	-
Cleethorpes	-	1	-	-	-	3	-	-
Gibraltar Point	-	-	1	-	1	3	1	-
Saltfleet	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tetney	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-

Eight coastal sites recorded Lapland Bunting with some overlap possible. This was another quiet year for the species, but with slightly more birds than in 2016; the last year with substantially more was 2011.

Small numbers were present on the north-east coast during Jan but in Feb a flock of 15 was discovered on 4th increasing to 32 on 5th with 30 still present on 15th but down to one bird for the remainder of Feb and into Mar. Few were elsewhere and the last bird of the spring was one flying south at Gibraltar Point on Mar 15th.

Autumn arrivals were very sparse, beginning with one at Gibraltar Point on Sep 27th, the only Sep record. There were further arrivals of one to three birds along the coast in Oct with maxima of just three birds at Gibraltar Point on 12th and 28th, and Cleethorpes on 27th. Single birds continued to be seen through Nov with flocks of eight recorded at Frampton Marsh on 13th and Theddlethorpe St Helen on 23rd. The last bird of the winter was at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Nov 27th. No records were received for Dec.

### Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*



Icelandic form *insulae* a regular winter visitor and passage migrant on coast, mainly Sep-Apr, exceptional in summer. Scarce but fairly regular inland. Nominate Scandinavian form a scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber List (both forms).

Site name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cleethorpes	31	26	2	-	-	-	26	58
Mablethorpe	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	30
Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe	-	-	-	-	1	-	4	25
Huttoft	-	-	-	-	-	-	20	-
Goxhill	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	-
New Holland	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	3
Gibraltar Point	3	14	-	1	-	1	8	4
Frampton Marsh	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	8
Freiston Shore	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	7
Theddlethorpe St Helen	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	-

Counts were received from around 20 sites across the county, much as in 2016 and less than half of the 2015 total, reflecting another poor year for this species. The vast majority of these were on the coast although wintering birds in the first quarter were extremely scarce reflecting the low numbers reported at the end of 2016. There was just a single notable flock in the first quarter, at Cleethorpes LNR. This peaked at 31 on Jan 14th, and most of these birds remained up to the end of Feb when 24 were still present on 24th. The only other sizeable number was a flock of 14 at Gibraltar Point on exactly the same date. Most birds had left the county by the beginning of Mar with just one to two birds here and there on the coast. The last birds of the spring were singles at Gibraltar Point and Tetney, both on Apr 23rd.

The first bird of the autumn was at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR on Sep 24th and just a sprinkling of birds arrived in Oct, with just one to two at various coastal sites. The main arrival occurred during Nov with 12-26 birds at five sites, the largest flock again being that at Cleethorpes LNR where 26 had arrived by Nov 24th. There was one inland record from Covenham Reservoir on Nov 14th.

The highest peak counts are given in the summary table, although it should be borne in mind that the flocks can move between areas. The highest count during Dec was the flock at Cleethorpes LNR - 42 were present on Dec 2nd increasing to 51 on 14th and 58 on 28th. Six at Freiston Shore on Dec 31st were the last of 2017.



Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis* Goxhill Nov 11<sup>th</sup> 2017 © Steve Routledge



# **Appendix 1**

## **Records of birds of suspect origin in 2017, including escapes and those released from captivity**

This list includes those species that may not have self-sustaining wild populations and any individuals from species that are on the British list that are known, or are strongly believed, to have been of captive origin. The Lincolnshire Bird Club asks that all records of these ‘category E’ species recorded in Lincolnshire be submitted. We are aware that the species on this list and other escapes are under-recorded.

### **Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus***

One at Huttoft Bank Pit on Apr 22nd. Presumed to come from feral stock. **RBBP**

### **Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens***

Possibly a vagrant but frequent escapes from wildfowl collections cloud the true status. **LBRC**.

There was a single record of one flying south over Saltfleetby St Peter on the morning of Oct 20th (BMC).

### **Black Swan *Cygnus atratus***

Singles at Skidbrooke on Feb 2nd & 3rd, at Woodhall Spa on Mar 7th, 29th, May 4th, at Saltfleetby St Clements on Feb 2nd, at Bardney on Mar 12th, Apr 2nd, at Baston on Apr 19th, 23rd, May 1st, 2nd, at Holywell on Sep 11th, two at Woodhall Spa on Oct 10th.

### **Muscovy Duck *Cairina moschata***

Singles seen on multiple dates at Boultham between Jan 4th & Oct 5th, Lincoln on Jan 31st, Stoke Rochford on Feb 19th, two seen on multiple dates at Barton Pits between Mar 13th & Dec 12th.

### **Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus***

Two at Fleet Hargate on Jun 13th, six on Jul 23rd, seven at Huttoft on Nov 5th, three at Morton (Bourne) on Nov 12th.

### **Harris's Hawk *Parabuteo unicinctus***

One at Middlemarsh Farm on Apr 28th.

Lincolnshire Bird Club – Systematic List 2017



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The bird ringing activity in the county in 2017 is summarised in the table below. The data has been taken directly from the BTO website and the totals presented are for the whole of Lincolnshire, including the administrative areas of North and North East Lincolnshire (The totals for 2008-2014 exclude data from the former administrative area of Humberside).

Ringing recovery information is placed within the systematic list in order to provide all significant information about each species in one place. By doing so, we hope that non-ringers will derive knowledge and understanding of the value of ringing, while ringers will see how their efforts fit into the wider sphere of bird studies. As ever, we welcome analyses of Lincolnshire ringing data for inclusion in future reports as featured articles.

Pullis are birds ringed in the nest, juveniles are those identified as being in their first calendar year, adults are all birds in their second or later calendar years. In a few species, birds cannot be aged by plumage characteristics and these totals are listed separately in the "Unaged" column.

These totals are of ringing data that have been submitted *electronically* to the BTO.

Species	Pullus	Juvenile	Adult	Unaged	Total birds ringed in 2017	
					Lincs.	Britain/Ireland
Mute Swan <i>Cygnus olor</i>	0	2	3	0	5	2,266
Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	0	0	1	0	1	893
Manx Shearwater <i>Puffinus puffinus</i>	0	1	0	0	1	3,616
Grey Heron <i>Ardea cinerea</i>	9	0	0	0	9	249
Sparrowhawk <i>Accipiter nisus</i>	0	7	6	0	13	702
Marsh Harrier <i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	5	0	0	0	5	116
Red Kite <i>Milvus milvus</i>	6	0	0	0	6	276
Moorhen <i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	0	0	1	0	1	272
Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	4	0	0	0	4	2,188
Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i>	0	0	1	0	1	53
Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i>	0	1	1	0	2	1,252
Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i>	0	1	0	0	1	707
Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i>	0	49	25	0	74	4,758
Woodcock <i>Scolopax rusticola</i>	0	11	1	0	12	1,242
Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>	0	8	8	0	16	1,472
Black-headed Gull <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	142	28	1	0	171	3,088
Lesser Black-backed Gull <i>Larus fuscus</i>	0	0	2	0	2	1,538
Stock Dove <i>Columba oenas</i>	58	0	58	0	116	1,429
Woodpigeon <i>Columba palumbus</i>	10	7	27	0	44	1,335
Turtle Dove <i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	0	0	1	0	1	10
Collared Dove <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	0	1	16	0	17	561
Cuckoo <i>Cuculus canorus</i>	0	1	3	0	4	75
Barn Owl <i>Tyto alba</i>	660	0	154	0	814	11,624
Tawny Owl <i>Strix aluco</i>	120	0	12	0	132	2,029
Little Owl <i>Athene noctua</i> *	163	0	35	0	198	542
Swift <i>Apus apus</i> *	0	0	125	0	125	802
Kingfisher <i>Alcedo atthis</i>	0	8	1	0	9	733
Great Spotted Woodpecker <i>Dendrocopos major</i>	0	32	22	1	55	2,238
Green Woodpecker <i>Picus viridis</i>	0	2	2	0	4	290
Kestrel <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	226	2	7	0	235	2,958
Peregrine <i>Falco peregrinus</i>	7	0	0	0	7	477
Jay <i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	0	4	2	0	6	482
Magpie <i>Pica pica</i>	0	2	2	0	4	480
Jackdaw <i>Coloeus monedula</i>	117	0	7	0	124	2,338
Rook <i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	0	0	1	0	1	388
Carrion Crow <i>Corvus corone</i>	0	0	1	0	1	104
Coal Tit <i>Periparus ater</i>	13	132	79	7	231	14,178
Marsh Tit <i>Poecile palustris</i>	0	3	4	0	7	1,283
Willow Tit <i>Poecile montanus</i>	0	5	1	0	6	455
Blue Tit <i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	798	1,157	798	4	2,757	115,206
Great Tit <i>Parus major</i>	336	682	578	11	1,607	59,188

Sand Martin <i>Riparia riparia</i>	129	45	127	0	301	12,907
Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	118	12	109	0	239	31,594
House Martin <i>Delichon urbicum</i>	0	31	400	0	431	3,558
Cetti's Warbler <i>Cettia cetti</i>	0	0	0	1	1	1,624
Long-tailed Tit <i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	0	20	190	323	533	19,737
Willow Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	0	305	95	10	410	27,710
Chiffchaff <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	7	301	140	42	490	53,204
Wood Warbler <i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>	0	0	1	0	1	448
Yellow-browed Warbler <i>Phylloscopus inornatus</i>	0	0	0	12	12	239
Sedge Warbler <i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	0	46	51	1	98	21,969
Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	0	54	42	1	97	24,839
Grasshopper Warbler <i>Locustella naevia</i>	0	1	0	0	1	2,028
Blackcap <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	0	271	118	39	428	54,740
Garden Warbler <i>Sylvia borin</i>	0	16	8	0	24	3,515
Lesser Whitethroat <i>Sylvia curruca</i>	0	38	34	2	74	1,985
Whitethroat <i>Sylvia communis</i>	10	281	93	1	385	12,335
Firecrest <i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>	0	2	2	1	5	1,478
Goldcrest <i>Regulus regulus</i>	0	612	66	23	701	30,518
Wren <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	13	417	126	10	566	17,822
Nuthatch <i>Sitta europaea</i>	0	1	0	2	3	2,677
Treecreeper <i>Certhia familiaris</i>	5	14	8	8	35	2,140
Starling <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	0	505	282	26	813	15,890
Blackbird <i>Turdus merula</i>	24	523	714	9	1,270	29,665
Fieldfare <i>Turdus pilaris</i>	0	2	5	0	7	1,248
Redwing <i>Turdus iliacus</i>	0	170	123	10	303	16,341
Song Thrush <i>Turdus philomelos</i>	0	138	34	3	175	6,999
Mistle Thrush <i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	0	5	4	0	9	221
Spotted Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa striata</i>	13	4	5	0	22	874
Robin <i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	1	410	245	5	661	25,432
Pied Flycatcher <i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>	0	1	0	0	1	13,872
Redstart <i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	0	5	5	0	10	1,801
Whinchat <i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	0	3	0	0	3	593
Stonechat <i>Saxicola rubicola</i>	0	2	6	0	8	1,866
Wheatear <i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	0	2	3	0	5	719
House Sparrow <i>Passer domesticus</i>	9	192	128	151	480	15,334
Tree Sparrow <i>Passer montanus</i>	955	122	253	218	1,548	14,944
Dunnock <i>Prunella modularis</i>	10	559	265	8	842	20,274
Yellow Wagtail <i>Motacilla flava</i>	0	3	0	0	3	394
Grey Wagtail <i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	0	0	2	0	2	1,298
Pied Wagtail <i>Motacilla alba</i>	10	3	4	0	17	2,956
Meadow Pipit <i>Anthus pratensis</i>	0	59	16	4	79	15,956
Tree Pipit <i>Anthus trivialis</i>	0	1	0	0	1	1,317
Chaffinch <i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	3	364	515	9	891	29,283
Brambling <i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>	0	12	48	0	60	2,342
Bullfinch <i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	0	102	75	0	177	8,577
Greenfinch <i>Chloris chloris</i>	2	435	446	19	902	20,916
Linnet <i>Linaria cannabina</i>	33	130	70	12	245	8,450
Lesser Redpoll <i>Acanthis cabaret</i>	0	98	157	21	276	18,987
Goldfinch <i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	7	1,109	1,330	32	2,478	58,871
Siskin <i>Spinus spinus</i>	0	7	32	0	39	36,333
Corn Bunting <i>Emberiza calandra</i>	0	0	2	0	2	51
Yellowhammer <i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	12	11	149	0	172	5,127
Little Bunting <i>Emberiza pusilla</i>	0	1	0	0	1	7
Reed Bunting <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	0	220	260	41	521	13,741
GRAND TOTAL	4,035	9,813	8,776	1,067	23,691	1,020,369

\* Denotes species that constitute more than 15% of the Britain and Ireland total for 2017.

## Ringling and recovery totals

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total	34,146	30,943	44,060	37,157	36,831	34,329	33,369	30,741	30,141	23,691

The total number of birds ringed in the county in 2017 was the lowest in the last decade. Ringing effort varies from year to year and absentees from the 2017 table included Little Egret, Oystercatcher, Curlew, Black-tailed Godwit, Greenshank and Herring Gull. Two species were ringed in significantly high numbers in the county in 2017 both totals being more than 15% of the British and Irish totals: Little Owl (30%) and Common Swift (16%).

Some significant county totals achieved for the following species were partly or largely down to pulli ringing (% total in brackets): Black-headed Gull (83%), Stock Dove (50%), Barn Owl (81%), Little Owl (82%), Kestrel (96%), Jackdaw (94%), Blue Tit (29%), Great Tit (21%), Sand Martin (43%), Swallow (49%) and Tree Sparrow (62%). Particular mention must be made of the effort put into achieving these totals, especially Tree Sparrow, of which 955 pulli were ringed in 2017!

## Selected recoveries

Some of the most of the interesting recoveries are included in the main body of the report because they represent particularly long-lived birds, birds which have moved a long distance within Britain and Ireland, birds which have gone to, or come from countries with few such recoveries, or because few birds of this species have been recovered, or because the report has been flagged as interesting, usually from having moved a long distance in a small number of days. Here we draw attention to a few of these included in the main text. Sightings or recoveries mentioned below were made in 2017.

Wildfowl recoveries often involve birds which have been shot and in 2017 these included an adult male **Wigeon** ringed in April 2016 in Nottinghamshire shot near Gainsborough in January 2017, an adult female Mallard ringed in October 2015 in Cambridgeshire shot near Crowland in January 2017, two **Tufted Ducks** both ringed as nestlings at Marston STW in July 2004 and both shot at Loch Leven, (Highland) on 13th October aged 13 years and 2 months.

The rapid colonisation of Britain by **Little Egrets** continues to throw up interesting data, much of it via colour ringing with nestlings ringed in the county being seen in Perth and Kinross, Greater London and Durham. Conversely, an Anglesey nestling was seen at Frampton Marsh on October 2017.

Among seabirds, a **Gannet** ringed as a nestling in the Channel Islands in 1992 was found dead on the Wash in July aged 25 years. A 25 year old **Shag** ringed on Firth of Forth in 1991 was recovered dead at Cleethorpes in February and two nestlings from the Isle of May were also recovered dead in February at Donna Nook and Cleethorpes, aged 7 years 8 months and 1 year 8 months respectively. Shags, particularly immature birds, are prone to displacement during long periods of poor weather or onshore winds, which make foraging difficult.

**Marsh Harriers** carrying wing tags are seen regularly in the county four such birds ringed and tagged as nestlings in Norfolk were noted in northern and central Lincolnshire. One of these, a female now nearly six years old, had previously been seen in Portugal and Belgium. A second calendar year **Sparrowhawk** ringed at Gibraltar Point in 2010 was re-trapped in Norfolk nearly eight years later and a **Common Buzzard** ringed in Yorkshire in September was found dead, hit by a car, near Caistor only three months later.

There were many notable recoveries, controls and colour ring observations among the waders migrating through and wintering in the county too numerous to mention here but please check the main accounts for details relating to **Oystercatcher**, **Avocet**, **Ringed Plover**, **Curlew**, **Bar-tailed** and **Black-tailed Godwits**, **Knot**, **Woodcock**, **Redshank**, and **Greenshank**. Among the colour-ringing schemes that came to our attention was one for Jack Snipe in southern Scotland – we can only wish the ringers good luck with that! The picture for gulls is very similar with some significant sightings and recoveries for **Black-headed**, **Mediterranean**, **Great Black-back**, **Herring**, and **Caspian Gulls** reported in the main account.

Movement of the many owl nestlings ringed in the county reveal some interesting site fidelity and longevity statistics and the enthusiastic pullus-ringing activities of AGB and RSh continues to contribute to our knowledge of **Barn**, **Tawny** and **Little Owls** in the county.

More than 15% of British-ringed **Common Swifts** were ringed in Lincolnshire including two adults caught at Marston STW aged seven and nearly eight years. Among the falcons, was a young **Peregrine** ringed in the nest in Staffordshire in June and seen in the county in October and **Common Kestrel** pullus ringing demonstrated how variable productivity is from year to year. Hirundine movements perhaps no longer surprise us but a **Sand Martin** retrapped in Aberdeenshire in July



and a late report of a **Barn Swallow** ringed at Marston STW as a juvenile and shot in **Democratic Republic of Congo** in February 2016 are noteworthy.

Among the passerines, **Willow Warbler**, **Chiffchaff**, **Sedge Warbler**, **Reed Warbler**, and **Blackcap** provided some interesting data. **Goldcrests** are prodigious migrants and provided a whole catalogue of their own in 2017, a Willingham Forest **Treecreeper** was re-trapped for the sixth time aged 5 years, a **Dunnock** ringed as an adult at Gibraltar Point in 2015 was re-trapped in Dorset in April, and a Belgian-ringed **Pied Wagtail** was re-trapped in north Lincolnshire in June. Wintering finches from the low countries are frequently found in the county and a in 2017 included a **Greenfinch** ringed at Gibraltar Point found freshly dead in The Netherlands in March and also a **Goldfinch** re-trapped there in December. There was a familiar series of **Siskin** retraps from northern Britain and shorter-range movements of **Reed Bunting**.

## **Finder's report: The White-billed Diver *Gavia adamsii* in Lincolnshire, January 20th - February 1st 2017**

*(This account by the finder David Curtis and Kevin Wilson, Gibraltar Point LWT reserve manager first appeared on the Bird Guides website on Jan 31st 2017, and is reproduced here with the kind permission of all parties).*

Having been brought up on a farm alongside the River Witham near Tattershall Bridge I have always had a keen interest in wildlife, much of which I have observed from the riverbank when fishing. It's not always about catching fish – it's always nice to have a Kingfisher perched on the end of a rod, to make eye contact with a hunting Barn Owl or to watch a Starling murmuration against the setting sun.

On the sunny afternoon of Friday 20 January, I walked along the Sustrans Water Rail Way from Kirkstead Bridge to Stixwoud. I reached the station house at Stixwoud at approximately 3.30 pm and decided to walk back on top of the riverbank. Somewhere in the vicinity of the iron sheep sculptures I saw a Little Egret, and I dropped down to the water's edge in the hope of getting near enough to take a photo. As I got closer I noticed another bird on the water that I had never seen before. While I am not what you would call an avid birder, I am familiar with most of the usual waterfowl, but the colouring of this bird and its large, pale bill particularly drew my attention. Keeping low along the bank I managed to take some photos until the bird gradually moved away across to the far bank.

Back at home I downloaded the photos and consulted the *Collins Bird Guide*, concluding that it might be a White-billed Diver. My wife works in the offices at the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust and suggested that we email it to Gibraltar Point warden Kev Wilson to confirm and ask if it was common ... I had no idea what I had started!

*Kev Wilson takes up the story ...*

Sue had sent the email late on Friday evening, so I did not pick it up until the Saturday morning. We often receive emails during evenings and weekends about tidying up any administrative errors that the Field Staff (us!) may have made! Therefore, it was a pleasant surprise to see that I was being asked to identify a mystery bird.

Her message read as follows:

*Hi Kev,*

*David, my husband, took this photo on the River Witham this afternoon.*

*Can you help please – Is it a Loon? Are these common?*

*Have a good weekend*

*Sue*

My first thought was that, with David being a keen angler, he would be familiar with Cormorants. As such I was expecting to see an image of, maybe, a Great Northern or a Black-throated Diver, which seem to turn up inland most frequently. However, I had a flashback to the White-billed Diver Kev Durose found on this stretch of the River Witham in February 1996 and which I had been fortunate enough to see.

When I opened the image, I nearly fell off my chair! I regularly get sent photographs of birds to identify – often pinprick sized or blurred images (I like the challenge!) but here was a full-frame, crisp photograph of a juvenile White-billed Diver on the River Witham in January 2017.

My first thought was: "It must be a hoax!"

I immediately rang a couple of birders that I know watch sites in that area, with the caveat that it could be a hoax, while I managed to get a confirmatory message back from Sue via another colleague, Dave Bromwich, that the bird was 'for real'. I then sent messages to many local birders and put the news out nationally.

Like me, many county birders were due at a joint meeting of the Lincolnshire Bird Club and Lincolnshire Naturalists' Union at Whisby, Lincoln that day, where an excellent illustrated presentation was to be given by Graham Catley.

Although one or two people did check out some sections of the river, the diver had moved slightly and it wasn't relocated until very late on in the afternoon. Fortunately the bird remained into the following day and until the end of the month, and was enjoyed by large numbers of visitors. I was fortunate enough to be able to see it on the Sunday afternoon, just before the site became

fog-bound for almost two days. It was seen by many observers and stayed on this stretch of the Witham until 1st February when it flew off south along the River Witham in the direction of Tattershall Bridge, the site of the 1996 bird.

The occurrence of a second White-billed Diver on this stretch of the River Witham, some 20 years after the first, was nothing short of astonishing. How could such a coincidence happen – is there any science to it? Is there a previously undiscovered migration flight path of White-billed Divers in mid-winter over central Lincolnshire? I don't think so! This stretch of river now accounts for two of just four British inland White-billed Diver records. Impressively, there are no other accepted records of a live bird for the entirety of Lincolnshire, including the coast – a dead bird was picked up in The Wash in March 1976.



2CY White-billed Diver River Witham, Woodhall Spa, 31st January 2017  
(Photograph © Phil Hyde)

#### Previous county records

##### Friskney Marsh, 26th March 1976

The first county record involved an adult bird found dead by M.R. Plant in The Wash at Friskney Marsh on 26th March 1976. The corpse was deposited at Gibraltar Point and photographed there three days later on 28th March. This was the first of three records in 1976 and the BBRC Report on rare birds in Great Britain in 1976 noted “The geographical scatter of these spring records makes one wonder how many others occurred at points in- between. Observations of this magnificent bird are now mounting and, as D. M. Burn and J. R. Mather (*Brit. Birds* 67: 257-296) concluded, it should be seen as a scarce winter visitor rather than a mere vagrant”. This was the 28th British record since the formation of the Rarities Committee in 1958.

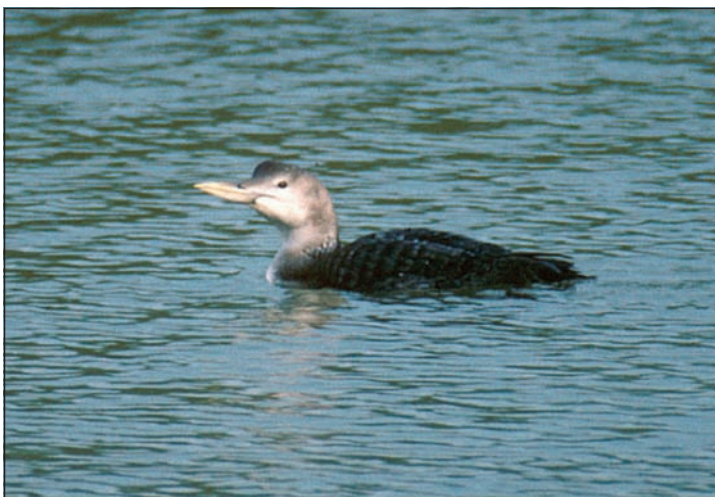




Adult White-billed Diver, *Gavia adamsii*, found at Friskney, 28th March 1976  
(Photographs © Phil Hyde)

#### River Witham, Tattershall Bridge, 29th February – 2nd March 1996

The second record was twenty years later on 29th February 1996, when Kev Durose came across an adult on the River Witham at Tattershall Bridge. This bird was taken into care on 2nd March, having swallowed an angler's pike bait. Unfortunately it could not be saved and the specimen is in the British Museum in Tring. At that time, this was only the second British record of a White-billed Diver away from the coast, the other being of an adult bird present at Audenshaw Reservoirs, Greater Manchester, on 7th-8th December 1987. There were 15 accepted records in the UK in 1996 making a total of 170 since the formation of BBRC in 1958.



Adult White-billed Diver, River Witham, Tattershall Bridge, 29th February 1996  
(Photograph © Graham Catley)

## White-billed Diver – the breeding and wintering areas

The global population of White-billed Divers has been put at somewhere in the region of 16,000-32,000 individual birds, so it is something of a scarcity worldwide. They breed within a relatively narrow band about 1000km wide, lying mainly north of the Arctic Circle, extending from the Varanger Fjord, in northern Norway, eastwards to the Siberian tundra, Alaska and north-west Canada. In the western Palaearctic, they winter in the east Atlantic south to southern Norway but until recently the distribution was poorly known.

From the early 2000s, surveys of seabirds at sea in relation to proposed and actual wind farm sites have been undertaken. In April 2003, one such survey off the Isle of Lewis turned five White-billed Divers. Further searches from 2004-07, covering the islands of Lewis and Harris, as well as certain stretches of north-west mainland Scotland yielded 11 birds in 2003 and 15 in 2005, mostly adults. Some of these birds paused only for a day or two, others longer according to stage of moult, in small loose groups of up to five or six birds (Campbell 2018). Another discovery came from Aberdeenshire when five were counted off Portsoy in April 2011. Boat-based surveys revealed an astounding 13 in surrounding waters in spring 2013 and 10 in 2014 (Campbell 2018).

In addition to these finds in Scottish waters, other surveys in the English part of the North Sea have revealed another hitherto unknown wintering population in the Dogger Bank area where birds are present between November and April. The numbers in the Dogger Bank Zone as a whole surpassed 1% thresholds for populations of national and international importance (Burton *et al* 2013). An average monthly baseline population was estimated at 80 birds, based on combined aerial and boat-based survey data (Thornton 2014).

These findings establish the North Sea as an important wintering area for White-billed Divers that is of international importance. It is not too much of a stretch of the imagination to think that some of these birds may stray further south in northerly winds and then enter the Wash. Presumably the freshly dead bird at Friskney in 1976 arrived in this fashion. Was it a lone vagrant, or was there a wintering population in the North Sea back then? The 1996 and 2017 birds seem likely to have originated from this group, although whether they then made their way up the Witham upstream from the Wash or arrived overland *per se* is even more speculative!

## References

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# Common Buzzards, Red Kites and Ravens in the South Kesteven uplands: trends in occupied territories and relative abundance from 2003-2017

L. Vincent Fleming

## Introduction

Common Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*) is likely to be Britain's most abundant diurnal raptor (Clements, 2002); they are now a frequent sight over all of Lincolnshire to the extent that most birdwatchers probably now pay them little attention.

Following their earlier extirpation from Lincolnshire and most of lowland England (Tubbs, 1974), Buzzards began to be reported regularly in Lincolnshire in the mid-1990s with breeding first reported around 1996 (Lincolnshire Bird Club, 1997). A similar pattern of recovery has been reported for Cambridgeshire (Hawkes, 2005). Stimulated by the range of Buzzard densities reported by Clements (2002), this study was initiated in 2003 to estimate the number of Buzzard territories in hectad TF02, close to Bourne in south-western Lincolnshire (hereafter SW Lincs). The survey has subsequently been repeated at intervals of 3-4 years during which time the area was colonised by Red Kites (*Milvus milvus*), Ravens (*Corvus corax*) and, indeed, Peregrines (*Falco peregrinus*). This paper summarises the outcome of this study and provides data on trends in relative abundance and numbers of apparently occupied territories (AOTs) of three of these species: Common Buzzards, Red Kites and Ravens.

## Study area

Hectad TF02 (100km<sup>2</sup>) covers a portion of the Kesteven Uplands Natural Character Area (Natural England, 2014) to the north-west of Bourne in SW Lincs (Figure 1). The study area is bisected by the valley of the East Glen river which runs roughly north-west to south-east between two broad ridges. The landscape is one of low relief, rising from 15m above sea level (asl) at the fen edge in the east to 90m asl at the highest point; the area is characterised by open rolling country offering wide and long-range views.

Land use is dominated by arable agriculture (winter cereals and oilseed rape) in large open fields edged with isolated trees, thin hedgerows and occasional shelterbelts. However, the poorly-drained clay soils of ridge plateau are, by the standards of both the East Midlands (6%) and England (10%; Forestry Commission, 2013), heavily wooded with an overall cover in the study area of 12%. Much of this woodland is ancient, dominated by ash and oak with occasional stands of conifers; three woodland blocks (Bourne, Callan's Lane and Temple Woods) alone account for over 6km<sup>2</sup>.

Grassland, and associated livestock grazing, is limited, occurring largely in the immediate surrounding of farms and villages but three larger grassland blocks are notable, namely: Grimsthorpe Park and its associated wood-pastures, the long-established set-aside grassland at Hawthorpe, and limestone grassland in the West Glen valley. Urban areas are also limited – Bourne occupies 1.6km<sup>2</sup> of the extreme south-east corner of the hectad; there are also a few small, scattered villages.

## Survey methods

The survey aimed to identify territories apparently occupied by Buzzards by surveying for soaring and displaying birds in spring. Subsequently, the survey also gathered information on Ravens and Red Kites which were encountered when surveying for Buzzards.

The survey method was based on a modification of the approach used by Sim *et al.* (2000).

The study area was split into 25 tetrads (<https://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/birdatlas/methods/correct-grid-references>) numbered A-Z (with no tetrad O). All tetrads, with one exception, were visited and searched for soaring and displaying Common Buzzards (and subsequently Ravens and Red Kites) from fixed vantage points or from transects on public footpaths (Figure 1). The same routes and vantage points were used in each survey period; tetrad M, in which no public access on footpaths or suitable viewpoints were available, was viewed exclusively from adjoining tetrads and cover was thus incomplete. As the aim of the study was to identify AOTs, all birds seen, regardless

of the tetrad in which they were in, were recorded; often the best vantage points for some areas were from a different, adjoining tetrad. Care was taken to avoid double-counting but birds can be very mobile and this cannot be discounted; equally, in a rapid survey method such as this, there is also an equal or greater likelihood that some birds will be missed. Sightings were marked on to maps in the field and later transposed to a master map; birds recorded were, typically, within 1-2km of the observer. Determining AOTs for all three species was based on guidance for locating home ranges and establishing evidence of occupancy contained in Hardey *et al.* (2006); data from each survey period were re-appraised to the same standards for this analysis.



Figure 1. Map of study area showing vantage points (red dots) and transects walked (red lines) during surveys; deciduous woodlands in green, other woodlands shaded other colour.

Map produced by MAGIC on 4 November 2018. Contains, or is based on, information supplied by Natural England and Forestry Commission, respective © copyright and database rights 2018, and OS data © Crown copyright and database rights 2018.

The study aimed to spend c1 hour per tetrad to ensure even survey coverage of the hectad (with a target then of 24 hours in total); visits to tetrads were timed but not time-restricted. Survey effort for each year of the survey is recorded in Table 1. Visits were made from late February to mid-April, from 1000-1600 and, ideally, on fine sunny days with winds of less than Beaufort force 4. On some occasions, notably in the poor spring of 2013, some visits had to be made in less than optimal conditions. All visits were done in the author's spare time and had to be fitted in around work and other commitments. The combination of limited time and suitable available weather conditions meant that time targets could not always be achieved.

Woodland (excluding wood-pastures and woodlands <1ha) and urban areas were measured using GoogleMyMaps; maps were produced using MAGIC (<https://magic.defra.gov.uk/home.htm>). Graphs and statistics were created using Microsoft Excel.

## Results

### Common Buzzard

Common Buzzards were clearly well established in the study area by 2003 with at least 19 AOTs (Table 2); note this total was originally reported as 14 pairs (LBC, 2012) but the results have been re-analysed for this report (five soaring single birds being counted as AOTs). Since then the number of birds seen per hour (Table 1; Figure 2) has more than doubled and the number of AOTs (Figure

3) has trebled over the period to reach 59 probable territories. Nearest neighbour distances are now, in 2017, typically around 1-1.5km or less. Over the period, patterns of distribution of AOTs have changed. In 2003, Common Buzzards were most often associated with larger woodland blocks (Figure 4a). Subsequently, whilst AOTs are still associated most strongly with woodland, territories in 2017 (Figure 4b) were more widely dispersed with many now linked to small areas of woodland or to none and nests can now be found in isolated groups of trees. Nevertheless, there is still a clear concentration of birds along the two wooded ridges. As numbers of territories have increased, it has also become more difficult to differentiate numbers of apparent territories especially within the large blocks of woodland.

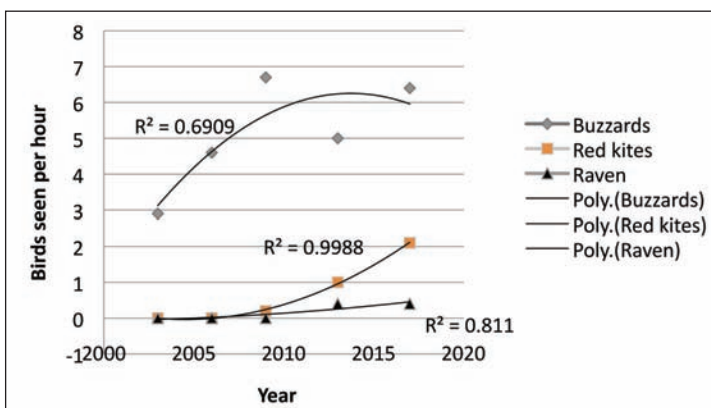
**Table 1.** Survey effort and total number of birds seen (with number of birds seen per hour in parentheses) during surveys of soaring and displaying birds from 2003-2017.

Year	Time (hours)	Buzzard	Red Kite	Raven
2003	20	59 (2.9)	0	0
2006	25.8	120 (4.6)	0	0
2009	22.8	153 (6.7)	4 (0.2)	0
2013	21.1	105 (5.0)	22 (1.0)	9 (0.4)
2017	23.9	154 (6.4)	51 (2.1)	10 (0.4)

**Table 2.** Number of apparently occupied territories of Common Buzzards, Red Kites and Ravens in hectad TF02 from 2003-2017.

	2003	2006	2009	2013	2017
Buzzard	19	29	36	45	59
Red Kite	0	0	0	9	14
Raven	0	0	0	1	2

The study suggests a continued and strongly linear increase in numbers of Common Buzzard AOTs (Figure 3;  $y = 2.7451x - 5479$ ;  $r^2 = 0.9927$ ) but the number of birds seen per hour seems to have plateaued (Figure 2). These two trends seem contradictory. However, on occasions Common Buzzards from several territories may soar together which boosts the numbers of birds seen but may not help identify individual AOTs. In addition, in poor weather, such as the spring of 2013 when good soaring days were limited, few birds may be visible, but each may enable an AOT to be recorded.



**Figure 2.** Number of birds seen per hour on surveys between 2003 and 2017

(polynomial curves fitted to data as follows: Common Buzzard  $y = -0.0272x^2 + 109.68x - 110423$ ; Red Kite  $y = 0.0138x^2 - 55.342x + 55467$ ; Raven  $y = 0.0014x^2 - 5.7178x + 5711.5$ ).

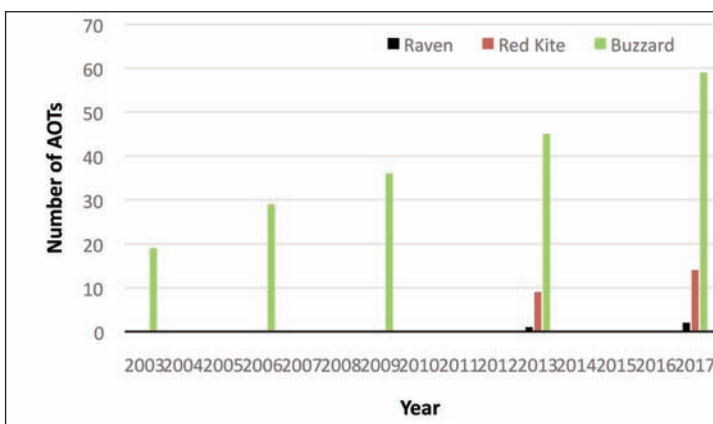


Figure 3. Numbers of apparently occupied territories (AOTs) of Common Buzzard, Raven and Red Kite recorded on surveys between 2003 and 2017.

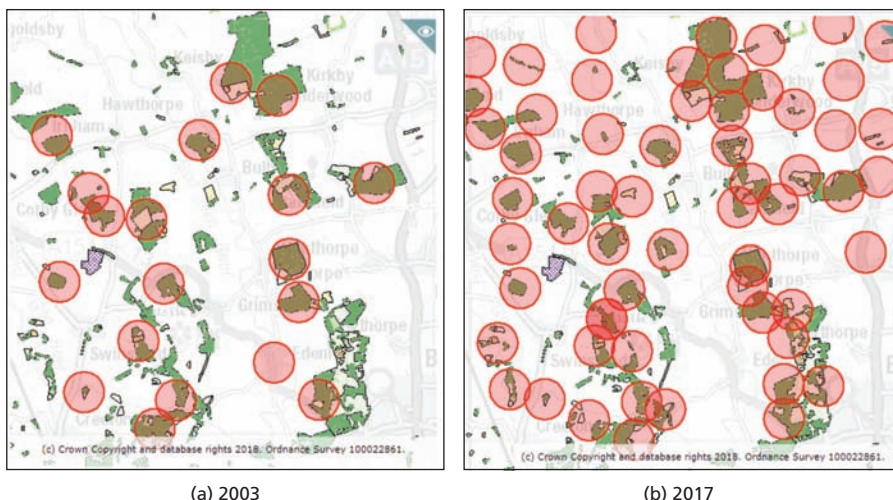


Figure 4. Distribution of Common Buzzard AOTs in the study area in a) 2003 and b) 2017; note that the circles give general location of displaying birds.

Map produced by MAGIC on 4 November 2018. Contains, or is based on, information supplied by Natural England and Forestry Commission, respective © copyright and database rights 2018, and OS data © Crown copyright and database rights 2018.

### Red kite

Red Kites had been seen by the author in the hectad since 2006 but were first recorded by this study in 2009. First breeding in the hectad was confirmed in 2010 but areas to the south and west in Lincolnshire had earlier breeding records reflecting the north-eastern spread of birds from the original release sites in Northamptonshire. Of 21 wing-tagged kites seen by me from 2009 to 2013 in SW Lincs (some birds were seen on multiple occasions), all had been tagged as nestlings in Northamptonshire, Rutland or Cambridgeshire or had an east Midlands origin, indicated by a white left-hand wing tag.

Since 2009, the number of birds recorded in the study has increased rapidly with the number of birds seen per hour having increased ten-fold from 2009 to 2017 (Table 1). Out of the breeding season, it is now possible to see 15-20 birds at communal roosts within the hectad. The number of AOTs has also increased from zero in 2006 to 14 in 2017 (Table 2) with nearest neighbour distances ranging from 1-3km; the numbers suggest Red Kites are now at a stage in their recovery that Common Buzzard had reached sometime before 2003, over 14 years ago.

### Raven

Ravens were not recorded by the survey until 2013. However, a pair began nest building on a telecommunications tower by Temple Wood in February 2010 and have since nested there regularly. Most sightings in 2013 relate to the pair from this site (in Tetrad N); sightings were more widespread in 2017 and included birds seen in Tetrads A, B, E and Q. Whilst some of these sightings related to birds known to be breeding in adjoining hectads, one sighting related to birds which went on to breed and form a second pair in the study area. However, whilst the number of AOTs has now doubled (from one to two), the number of birds seen per hour has remained unchanged. The future rate of increase seems likely to be lower than that for Common Buzzard or Red Kite. Current nearest neighbour distances range from 6.5 to 8km.

### Discussion

This survey has provided a rapid means of assessing trends in numbers of apparently occupied territories occupied by Common Buzzards, Raven and Red Kites following their recovery from earlier extirpation and provides a crude index of relative abundance; Sim *et al.* (2000) suggest that such soaring bird surveys provided a good index of breeding birds in their study. The survey method does not, however, provide a census of the number of birds present nor does it give an estimate of the number of birds breeding in the study area. To achieve either of the latter would have required more intensive study combined with active searches for nests. This hectad will be re-surveyed by the author in future, but at longer intervals, to assess any future changes and, for comparison, will be supplemented by some one-off targeted surveys of other areas with different levels of woodland cover. In time, along with any studies done by others, this might enable an overall estimate of Common Buzzard AOTs to be extrapolated for the county.

The linear increase in Common Buzzard AOTs recorded in this study seems unlikely to be sustained indefinitely and is, because of density dependent factors, likely to level out at some stage, if it has not already done so (as suggested by trends in birds seen per hour). Studies which report much higher densities of Common Buzzards are typically in areas with greater grassland and woodland cover than found in this study area (e.g. Prytherch, 2013). The number of Common Buzzard AOTs recorded here (59 per hectad) is comparable with densities reported in other studies; Clements (2002) suggested 60 pairs per hectad as being typical for areas with >5% woodland.

Red Kites seem to be likely to follow a similar trajectory to that of Common Buzzards though they have re-colonised the area more recently. Whether increasing numbers of kites will affect the number of Common Buzzard AOTs, due to competition between them, remains to be seen. By contrast, Raven numbers have changed more slowly, pairs in the study area and beyond are widely spaced and it seems unlikely that they will ever approach the densities of territories shown by Common Buzzards and, probably in future, by Red Kites. Perhaps raven numbers are more limited by food supply, especially carrion, and/or by the availability of suitable nest sites than the other two species; ravens in SW Lincs use tall artificial structures, tall trees and quarries as nest sites, all of which are of limited availability.

A pair of peregrines have also colonised the study area and other pairs are present elsewhere in SW Lincs, they are not discussed here as this survey method was not designed for the species; the expansion of the species into lowland Britain is described by Wilson *et al.* (2018)

The ongoing recovery of Common Buzzards, kites and ravens described here is reflected across much of lowland England. Although not universally welcomed, especially by those involved in game management (Lees *et al.*, 2012), it represents a return to having populations of native raptors determined more by natural factors than by being artificially suppressed by human actions. The picture is likely to change in future, some species (such as goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*) continue to be absent locally and others, like peregrine, would not have been expected from their historic distribution. Regardless, to be able now, on fine spring days in lowland Lincolnshire, to watch displaying Common Buzzards, Kites and Ravens is both a pleasure and an achievement that was barely credible only a few decades ago.



## Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Willie McLaughlin, Terry Barnatt and Bob Lamin who have generously shared with me information on Common Buzzards, Kites and Ravens in the area.

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# A Preliminary Phenological Analysis of Seven Commoner Autumn Passerine Migrants at Gibraltar Point National Nature Reserve, Lincolnshire, England from 1965 to 2017

By George Gregory, Data Assistant, Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust

The computerisation of historical and recent records of birds at Gibraltar Point National Nature Reserve (GPNNR) has facilitated the extraction and analysis of such records, including this preliminary phenological (occurrence in time) analysis of seven autumn passerine migrants recorded from 1965 to 2017 inclusive.

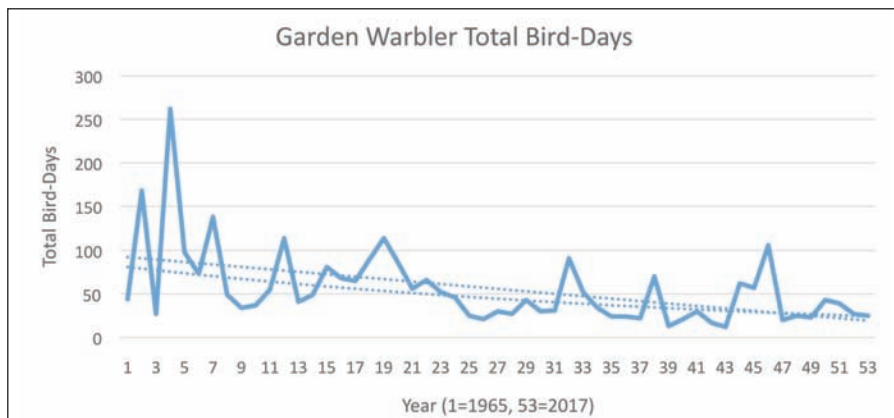
For each of the seven species the date and daily number were tabulated for each day of presence during the autumn migration period at GPNNR, as recorded in the Census Logs, Migration Logs and Daily Record Sheets and entered into the Wildlife Recorder application on the reserve's data computer, for each year during the period covered by this analysis.

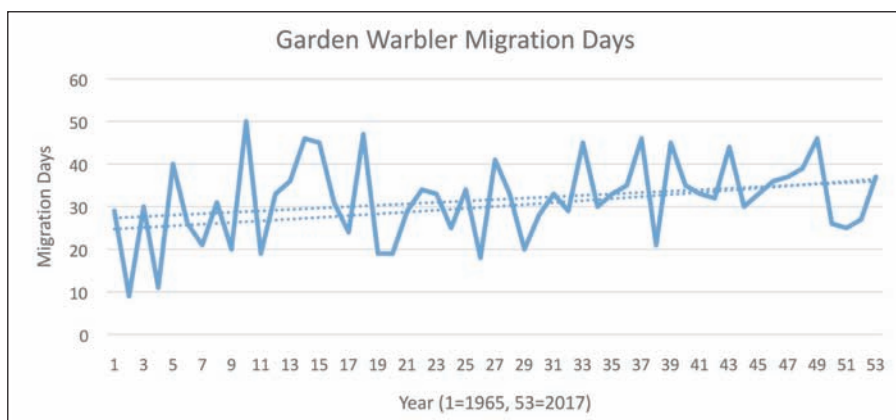
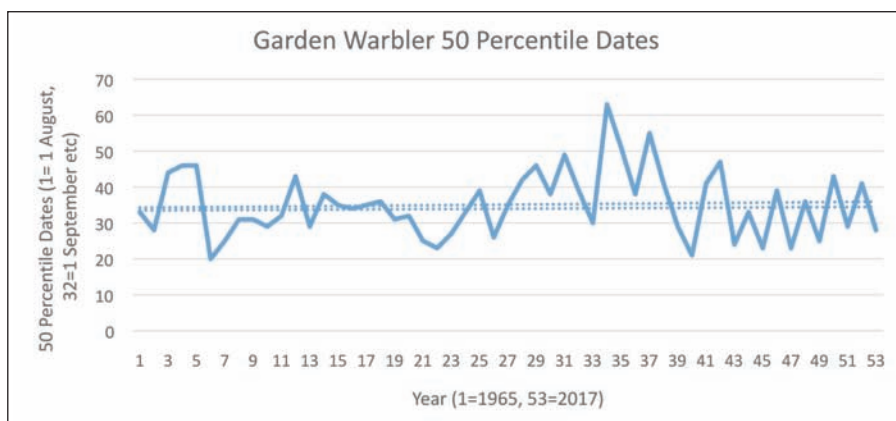
The cumulative daily numbers were calculated and tabulated. Then three measures concerning the autumn migration for each species were determined:

- (1) The total bird-days (sums of daily numbers, standardised measures of numbers of migrants),
- (2) The 50 percentile dates (the first dates on which at least 50 percent of the total sum of the daily numbers has occurred in each year, standardised measures of the mid-point of the migration periods), and
- (3) The number of migration days between the 10 percentile dates and the 90 percentile dates (standardised measures of the duration of the autumn migration period.)

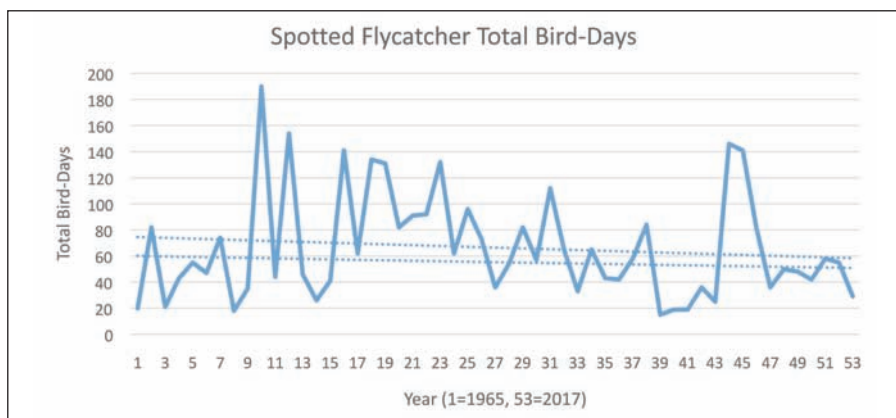
Using the Microsoft Excel application line graphs of the total bird-days, the 50 percentile dates and the number of migration days (days between the 10 percentile dates and the 90 percentile dates for each species for each year were produced, together with exponential and linear trendlines.

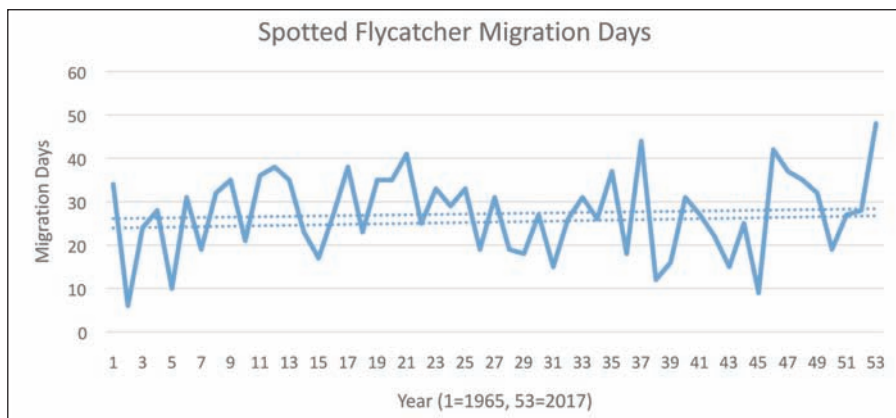
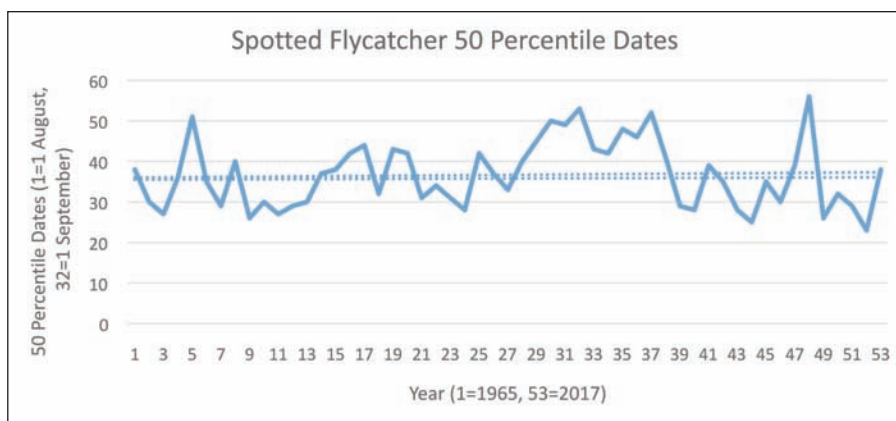
## Results for Garden Warbler



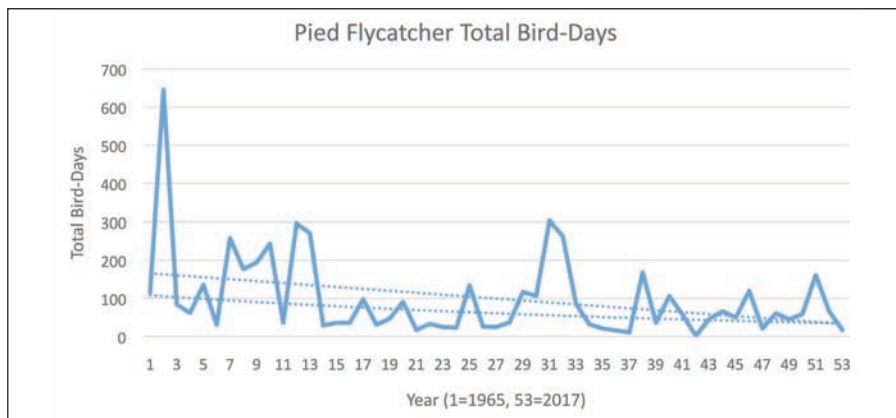


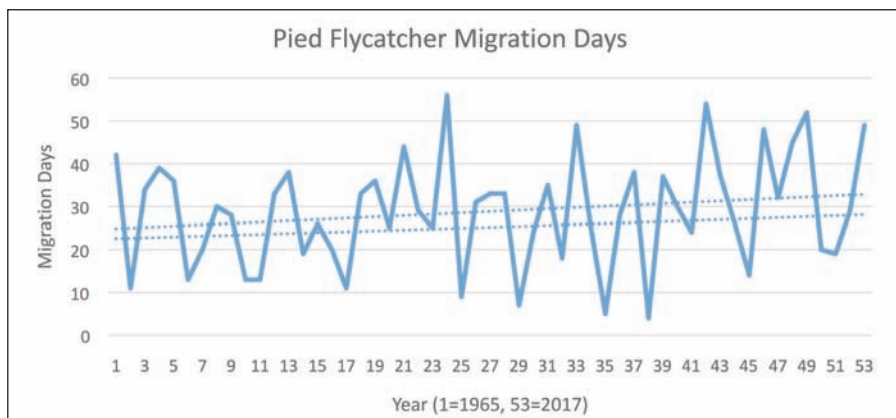
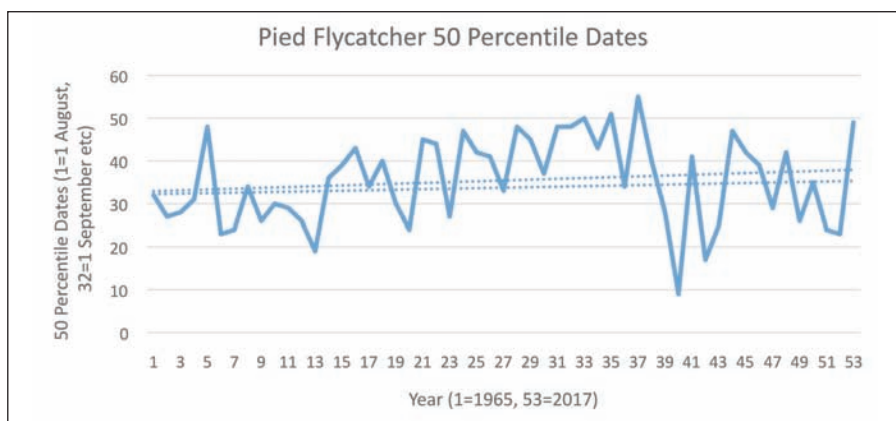
## Results for Spotted Flycatcher



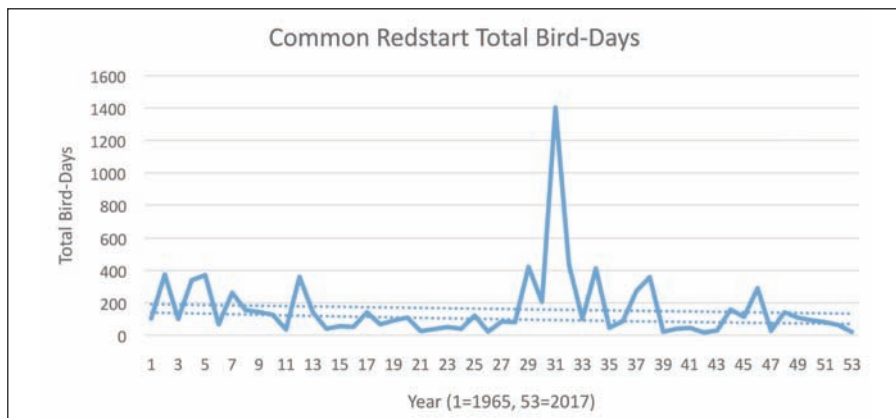


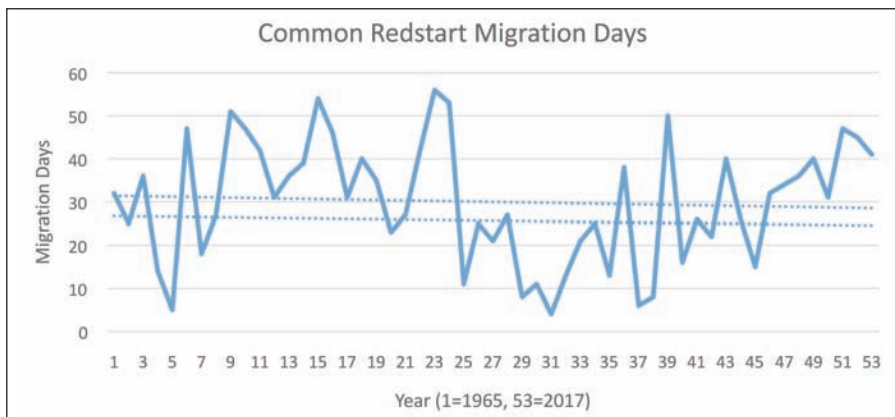
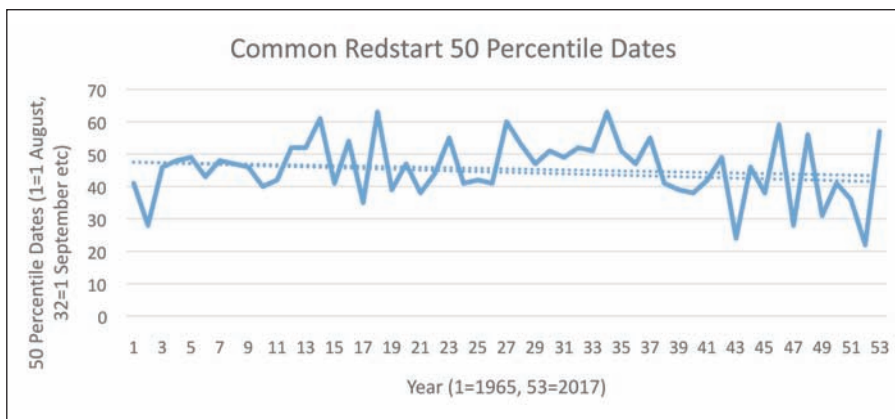
## Results for Pied Flycatcher



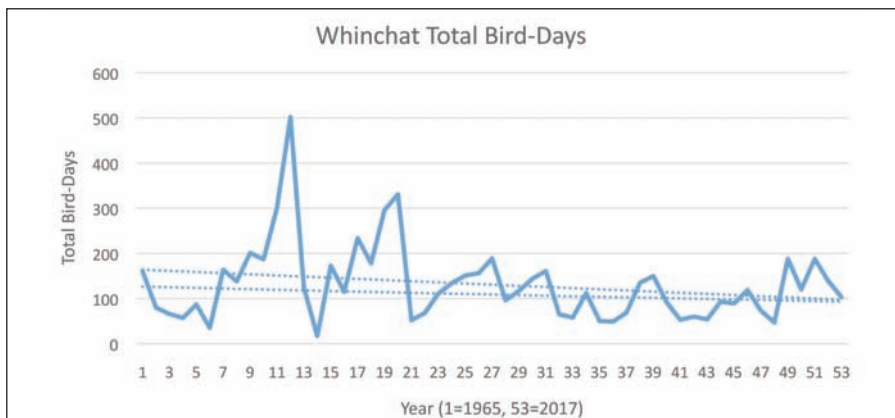


## Results for Common Redstart

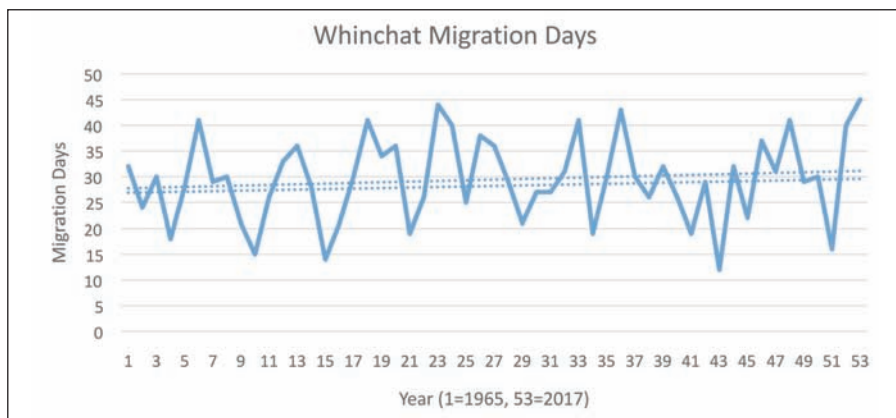
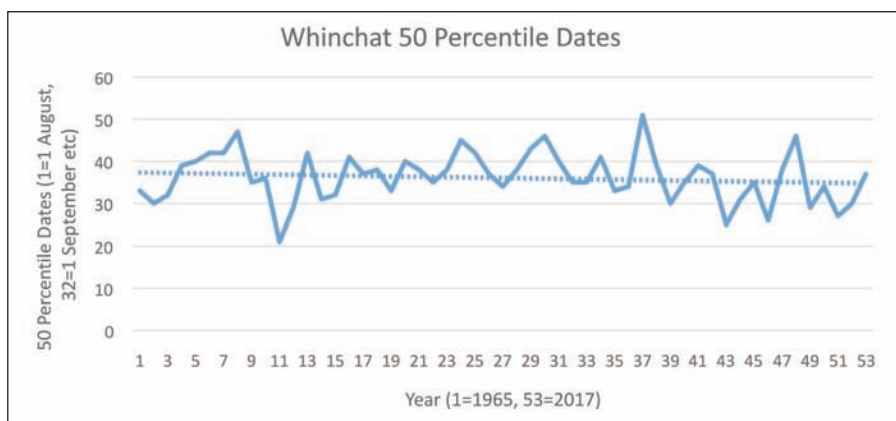




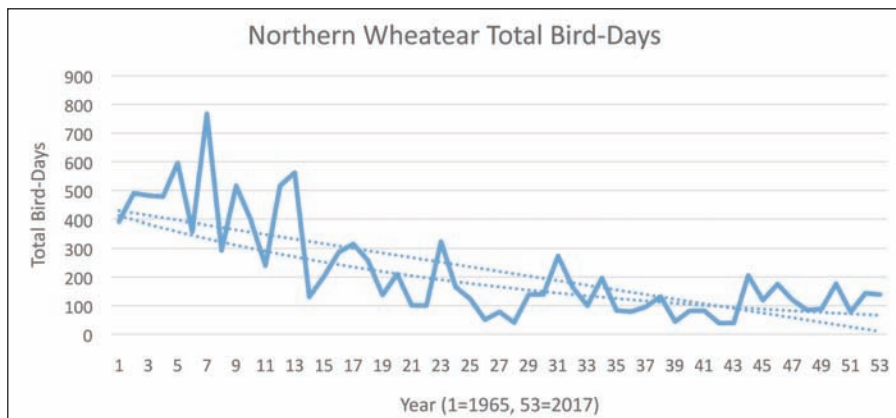
## Results for Whinchat

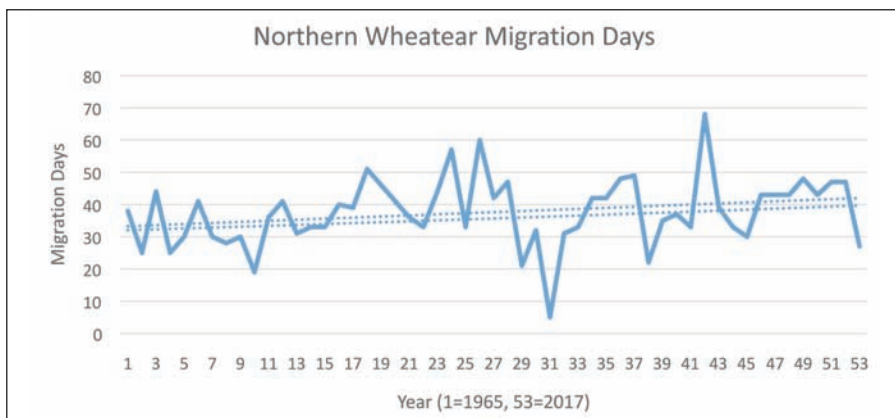
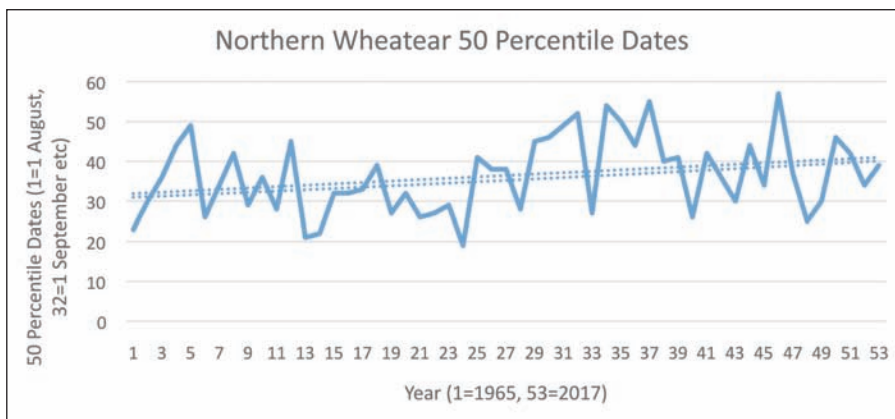




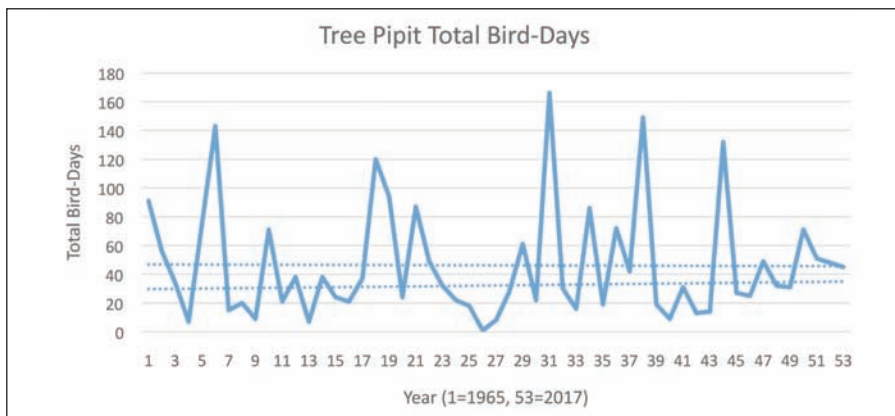


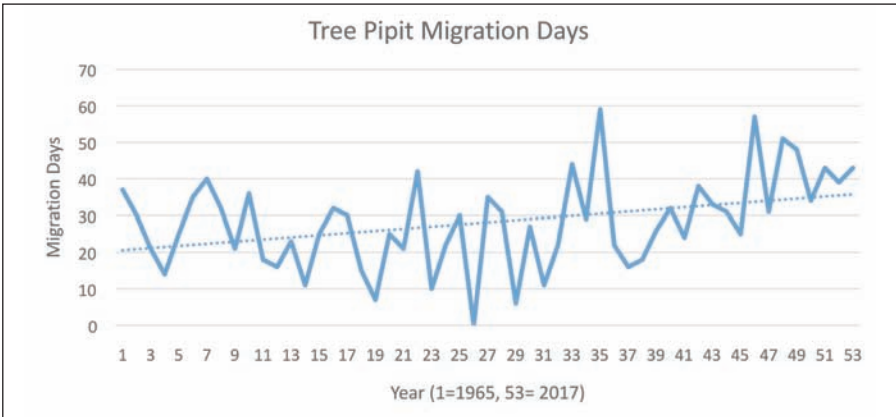
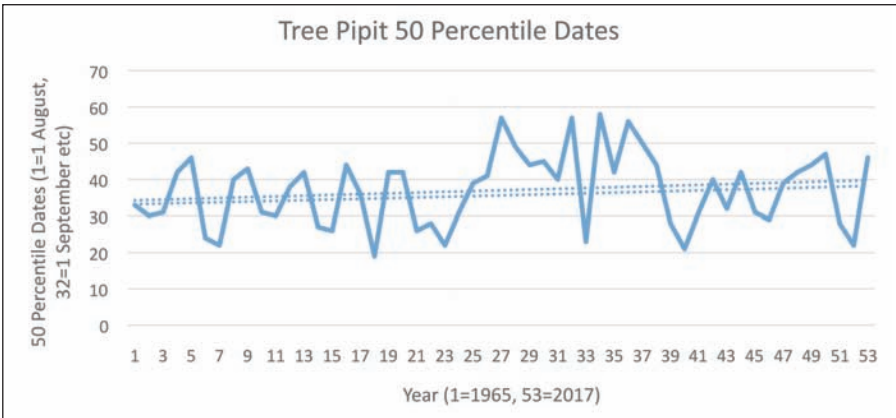
## Results for Northern Wheatear





## Results for Tree Pipit





There is no exponential trendline for the above line graph because one of the values is zero.

### Combined Results for Total Bird-Days

The table below shows the absolute change for each species in total bird-days from 1965 to 2017.

Species	Slope of Linear Regression for Total Bird-Days 1965-2017	Change in Total Bird-Days from Slope Start-Point in 1965 to Slope End-Point in 2017
Garden Warbler	-1.4043	-74.43
Spotted Flycatcher	-0.3119	-16.53
Pied Flycatcher	-2.5471	-135.00
Common Redstart	-1.1201	-59.37
Whinchat	-1.2769	-67.68
Northern Wheatear	-8.0627	-427.32
Tree Pipit	-0.0264	-1.33

Each slope of linear regression is a measure of change in total bird-days during the period covered and equals the mean statistical change every year. A positive slope indicates an increase, and a negative slope indicates a decrease. Thus, for example, in every year during the period covered there were statistically 1.4043 fewer Garden Warbler bird-days than in the previous year, totalling statistically 74.43 fewer bird-days in 2017 than in 1965.

The table below gives an indication of the proportional change for each species in total bird-days from 1965 to 2017.

Species	Mean Total Bird-Days 1965-2017	Change in Total Bird-Days from Slope Start-Point in 1965 to Slope End-Point in 2017	Change in Total Bird-Days from Slope Start-Point in 1965 to Slope End-Point in 2017 as a % of Mean Total Bird-Days 1965-2017
Garden Warbler	55.79	-74.43	-133.41
Spotted Flycatcher	66.47	-16.53	- 24.87
Pied Flycatcher	99.51	-135.00	-135.67
Common Redstart	162.04	-59.37	-36.64
Whinchat	130.77	-67.68	-51.76
Northern Wheatear	219.34	-427.32	-194.82
Tree Pipit	46.23	-1.33	-2.88

There are three points of interest in the above tables:

- (1) There is a decrease in total bird-days in each species. The largest decreases, both absolute and proportional, are shown by Northern Wheatear and Pied Flycatcher.
- (2) There is a decrease in total bird-days for Common Redstart in spite of an extraordinarily high total of bird-days, 1403, for this species in 1995. If this total had been similar to those in other years, then the decreases, both absolute and proportional, would have been larger.
- (3) The decreases in total bird-days for Tree Pipit, both absolute and proportional, are very small. However, they could be artificially small due to increased ability of observers in more recent years to identify this species by flight call, and/or longer periods of recording visible migration in autumn. Many records of this species, in contrast to those of the other six species, are of birds in migratory flight.

#### Combined Results for 50 Percentile Dates

Species	Slope of Linear Regression for 50 Percentile Dates 1965-2017	Change in 50 Percentile Date from Slope Start-Point in 1965 to Slope End-Point in 2017
Garden Warbler	+0.0320	+1.70
Spotted Flycatcher	+0.0254	+1.35
Pied Flycatcher	+0.0961	+5.09
Common Redstart	-0.0807	-4.28
Whinchat	-0.0482	-2.56
Northern Wheatear	+0.1750	+9.28
Tree Pipit	+0.1060	+5.62

The results show that while for Garden Warbler, Spotted Flycatcher, Pied Flycatcher, Northern Wheatear and Tree Pipit the 50 percentile dates are statistically later, by between 1.35 and 9.28 days, in 2017 than in 1965, for Common Redstart and Whinchat they are statistically earlier by 4.28 and 2.56 days, respectively.

One possible explanation for the later 50 percentile dates in the first five species is Global Warming. If an important environmental stimulus triggering autumn migration in these species is a fall in temperature to a particular point, then prolonged higher temperatures in the late summer and early autumn periods could delay the onset of autumn migration.

The earlier 50 percentile dates for Common Redstart and Whinchat may be related to different environmental stimuli triggering autumn migration. One possibility is change in food supply during the period covered by this analysis. However, further work would be necessary to establish the causes of these changes.

Combined Results for Days between 10 Percentile Dates and 90 Percentile Dates

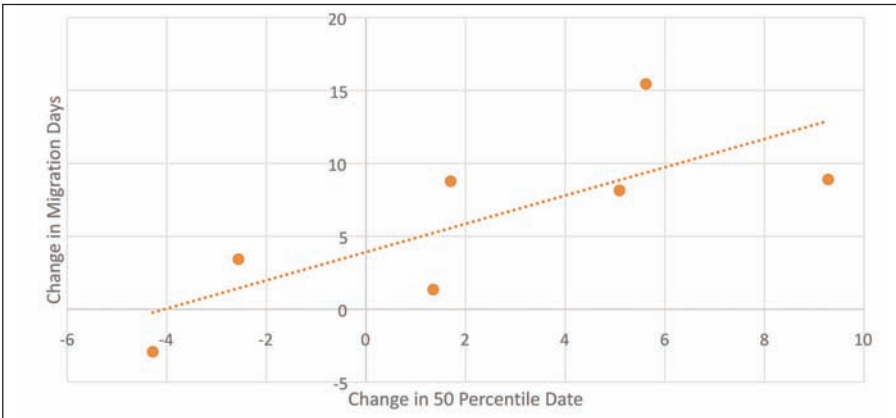
Species	Slope of Linear Regression for Days between 10 Percentile Dates and 90 Percentile Dates	Change in Days between 10 Percentile Dates and 90 Percentile Dates from Slope Start-Point in 1965 to Slope End-Point in 2017
Garden Warbler	+0.1657	+8.78
Spotted Flycatcher	+0.0254	+1.35
Pied Flycatcher	+0.1537	+8.15
Common Redstart	-0.0551	-2.92
Whinchat	+0.0647	+3.43
Northern Wheatear	+0.1679	+8.90
Tree Pipit	+0.2915	+15.45

These results ranged from a small decrease for Common Redstart, through small increases for Spotted Flycatcher and Whinchat, to large increases for Pied Flycatcher, Garden Warbler, Northern Wheatear and Tree Pipit.

Correlation among the Three Measures

Calculation of correlation coefficients among the three measures shows a strong positive correlation (+0.765) between the change in the mid-point (50 percentile date) and the change in duration of the migration period (migration days), i.e. the earlier the migration the shorter it lasts and the later the migration, the longer it lasts.

This is shown by the scatter diagram below.



From left to right the species (indicated by dots on the above scatter diagram) are Common Redstart, Whinchat, Spotted Flycatcher, Garden Warbler, Pied Flycatcher, Tree Pipit and Northern Wheatear.

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JDk	Jon Drakes	MPn	Mick Paine
JDR	John Robinson	MPv	Mark Paver
JFa	John Farmer	MTa	Matt Taylor
JGr	Jim Graham	MTh	Mel Thorn
JHe	James Hewson	MW	M Welbourne
JJF	Josh Forrester	MWe	Mike Weedon
JOv	John Oliver	MWi	Mick Widdowson
JPe	John Pegden	MWs	Mandy West
JPr	Jonathan Price	NAL	Nigel Lound
JPS	J P Shaughnessey	NCl	Nick Clayton
JPu	Julian Purvis	NCr	Nigel Cross
JRC	John Clarkson	ND	Neil Drinkall
JRN	J R Nelson	NGM	Nargila Moura
JRs	Jan Rousseau	NHD	N H Dorrington
JRW	John Walker	NKz	Neil Kurz
JS	James Siddle	NPT	Nick Tribe
JTG	John Goy	NRo	Neil Roberts
JTH	John T Harriman	OB	Oliver Beacock
JWa	John Watt	OD	Oliver Davies
JWg	Jim Wright	OM	Owen Marks
JWh	J Wheldon	OW	Oliver Woodman
JWo	Jane Woodcock	PAH	Phil Hyde
JWW	John Walton	PAI	Paul Alvey
KAM	Kevin Marshall	PBe	Patrick Bell
KBi	Katherine Birkett	PBH	Peter Haywood
KDR	Keith Robertson	PCC	Peter Crick
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PNW	Nicholas Watts	SE	S Evans
PP	Phil Porter	SGC	Steve Cross
PRo	Peter Roworth	SHi	Steve Hiner
PS	Paul Sullivan	SJ	Sheila Jennings
PSc	Pete Scott	SJM	Steve Meek
PSm	Paul Smith	SK	Steve Keightley
RBW	Barrie Wilkinson	SL	Steve Lorand
RC	Robert Carr	SLe	Steven Lewis
RCa	Richard Caney	SLo	Steve Lovell
RCm	Richard Camm	SLy	Steve Lyon
RDn	Richard Doan	SMcE	S J McElwee
RDv	Richard Davidson	SML	Steven Lister
RHa	Roy Harvey	SN	Steve Nesbitt
RHay	Russell Hayes	SPa	Steve Palmer
RHe	Richard Heath	SPr	Sally Prescott
RHr	Robert Hardy	SRo	Stephen Routledge
RHy	Bob Haycock	SWa	Steve Watson
RJa	Richard Jackson	SWI	Simon Wilson
RJH	Ray Hume	TBa	Terry Barnatt
RKW	Rob K Watson	TBg	Tim Bagworth
RL	R Lorand	TC	Toby Collett
RLa	R Lamin	TCo	Terry Corlett
RLb	Roger Labbett	TGu	Trevor Gunby
RMr	Ron Marshall	TK	Trevor Kerry
RNH	Roger Hebb	TML	Trevor Lee
RP	R Parsons	TWh	Terry Whalin
RPi	Richard Pipe	TWo	Tomas Wood
RPr	Roy Pearson	TWr	Trevor Wright
RR	R Riddington	VF	Vin Fleming
RSh	Bob Sheppard	WB	William Bowell
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds	WBR	Whisby Nature Reserve Bird Report
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RTf	Russ Telfer	WG	Wayne Gillatt
RWk	Robert Walker	WM	Bill Meek
RWo	Ray Woodcock	WPB	William Brooking
RWr	Roger Wardle	ZH	Zac Hinchcliffe



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# Lincolnshire Red Data Breeding Birds of Conservation Concern: BBS Trends 1995-2017

## Distribution and Population change in Lincolnshire and other parts of UK

Ranked in order of frequency of occurrence in Lincolnshire

Species	% Squares Lincs 2017	% Squares UK 2017	% UK birds in Lincs 2017	% Change Lincolnshire	% Change East Midlands	% Change England	Trend
Skylark	93.0	60.1	4.9	-38	-20	-23	worse
Yellowhammer	80.2	36.8	6.5	27	0	-28	better
Linnet	75.6	42.2	5.2	57	-19	-19	better
Song Thrush	66.3	78.8	1.2	0	47	28	worse
Starling	65.1	53.4	2.8	-67	-43	-61	worse
House Sparrow	64.0	57.7	3.2	-6	9	-17	worse
Tree Sparrow	33.7	7.0	8.7	*	22	64	
Lapwing	27.9	18.5	1.4	*	-29	-26	
Yellow Wagtail	27.9	5.3	15.4	*	-44	-42	
Grey Partridge	19.8	5.1	10.4	*	-50	-58	
Cuckoo	10.5	15.6	1.6	*	-84	-70	
Corn Bunting	9.3	4.1	3.6	*	*	-33	
Spotted Flycatcher	3.5	4.3	1.2	*	*	-65	
Marsh Tit	3.5	3.8	1.6	*	*	-43	
Turtle Dove	2.3	0.7	3.6	*	*	-94	
Grasshopper Warbler	1.2	3.0	0.5	*	*	-28	
Tree Pipit	0.0	4.6	0.0	*	*	-47	
Willow Tit	0.0	0.7	0.0	*	*	-88	
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	0.0	0.2	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 2017 (Lincolnshire 86 and UK 39581).
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 comparison of % change in Lincolnshire to % change in England.
5. Lincolnshire Linnets had a good year as did Tree Sparrows.
6. The data suggest Yellow Wagtail, Tree Sparrow and Grey Partridge continue to be significantly more widespread in Lincolnshire than the rest of UK but Corn Bunting can no longer be viewed as such.
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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