THE

ESSEX Bird Report 2020

Editor: Neil Sumner

The ESSEX BIRDWATCHING SOCIETY

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The Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer of the Society are *ex-officio* members of all Committees. Additional members can be recruited as and when required throughout the year to fill vacant positions or create new positions.

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Acknowledgements and Editorial

Neil Sumner

This is my first *Essex Bird Report* which will explain why it is a bit late in publication. In future years I intend to bring it back to the dates set by Simon Wood, our previous editor. My first acknowledgement is to Simon for a comprehensive handover and for supporting me during the editing work. Being not much more than a casual observer and surveyor it at first seemed rather daunting to be following the author of Birds of Essex 2007, but this concern was assuaged with the realisation that the *Essex Bird Report* is very much a team effort.

With the broadest perspective, that team starts with the observers who submit records, ranging from casual garden observations to many hours of intensive surveying, counting, and sea-watching. Discovering the degree of dedication of many observers, as I went through the records and the drafts, has been quite humbling. Then there is enormous credit due to our County Recorder Mick Tracey who collates, sorts, clarifies and validates these data (approximately a quarter of a million records) and segments it for the editing team. Then the gratitude and acknowledgement extend to the industry of the sub-section writers in analysing the data and writing their findings in line with Report standards before it is passed to the vigilant proof readers. All the names of editors and proof readers are listed below.

Thanks also go to Sean Nixon for selecting and collating the photographs and illustrations, and to the photographers who provided them. And to Howard Vaughan for the Seasonal Summary, along with Andy Goodey for weather information, and to David Wilkinson for the Ringing Report. And to Mick Tracey, again, for writing and providing data for several sections of the Report including the names of observers and Essex List. Also, to Alf Mullins who collated the Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) data, so essential input to the fortunes of many of the County's important species, and to David Jobbins who has managed our file sharing facility.

The Report is greatly enhanced by Simon Wood's paper on the Continental race of the Coal Tit and by Adrian Dally's comprehensive report of his surveys of the West Dengie area, a most enjoyable read and a giant of a piece of work that arose from the restrictions of lockdowns. The latter is a reminder that 2020 was 'the first pandemic year' for the Report which includes a brief commentary on the impact on our birding.

From previous acknowledgements in past Reports there are obviously many others who contribute who I have not been in direct contact with but have supported some of those mentioned above, so my thanks also go to them (and my apologies for not yet knowing you).

There is again a change to the order in the Systematic List, so I have tried this year to put an index around this section to help the reader find any species they are looking for.

We are always looking for new sub-editors to join our team to help with spreading the work and to relieve those who may wish to end their service in the role

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Colin Mackenzie-Grieve	Brant Goose to Green-winged Teal
Paul Brayshaw	Red-crested Pochard to Ruddy Duck
Kate Williams	Red-legged Partridge to Common Pheasant
John Hart	European Nightjar to Eurasian Collared Dove
Mark Bridges	Water Rail to Black-necked Grebe
Paul Brayshaw	Eurasian Stone-curlew to Ruddy Turnstone
Alf Mullins	Red Knot to Common Greenshank
Paul Wood	Black-legged Kittiwake to Black Tern
Liz Huxley	Great Skua to Atlantic Puffin
John Buchanan	Red-throated Loon to Little Egret
Simon Wood	Western Osprey to Common Buzzard
Chris Balchin	Western Barn Owl to Short-eared Owl
Graham Smith	Eurasian Hoopoe to European Green Woodpecker
Colin Mackenzie-Grieve	Common Kestrel to Peregrine Falcon
Graham Smith	Rose-ringed Parakeet to Northern Raven
Ian Woodward	Bohemian Waxwing to Bearded Reedling
John Sutherby	Woodlark to Red-rumped Swallow
Neil Murphy	Cetti's Warbler to Dartford Warbler
Mark Bridges	Common Firecrest to Common Starling
David Hutley	Song Thrush to Ring Ouzel
Kate Williams	Spotted Flycatcher to Northern Wheatear
David Wilkinson	Eurasian Tree Sparrow to Dunnock
David Jobbins	Western Yellow Wagtail to Eurasian Rock Pipit
Neil Sumner	Common Chaffinch to Eurasian Siskin
Simon Wood	Lapland Longspur to Common Reed Bunting
Barry Jones	Category D and Escapes

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We are always looking for good photographs and artwork for reproduction in the Bird Report. Please contact the Editor for further details.

Front cover photograph – Corn Bunting, Abberton Reservoir (SEAN NIXON)

Coronavirus restrictions in 2020

Neil Sumner

2020 was a year like no other for nearly all observers. The risks of contracting the Coronavirus and the legal restrictions imposed had an enormous impact on all aspects of our lives – including our hobby of bird-watching and the regular citizen science activities of surveys, counts, ringing, monitoring etc.

Throughout the Report there are references to the impact of the restrictions and we have aimed to use standard terminology based on a House of Commons Library report (Brown, Kirk-Wade, 2021) and as follows.

First lockdown: from 21st March to end June 2020, we were ordered to stay at home, being allowed to leave for one period of daily permitted exercise only until 13th May when we were permitted to leave for outdoor recreation. On many private nature reserves, such as Rainham Marshes and Hanningfield Reservoir, access was not allowed for the public and access trails were closed until July.

Autumn restrictions: from 14th September a patchwork of varying restrictions was introduced based on a tier system. Essex was placed into Tier 2 until Saturday 17th October. The impact was more on mixing with people and did not rule against walking in open spaces except a limit, continued from the summer, on numbers of people allowed to do so together.

Second lockdown: from 5th November to 1st December national restrictions were reintroduced in England. However, we were still allowed outdoors for permitted exercise so limited birding activities were still allowed.

Winter travel restrictions: On 2nd December, the tier system was reintroduced. Initially Essex was placed in Tier Two then gradually different boroughs were moved to Tier Four culminating with the County being entirely in Tier Four on 23rd December. Observers were affected by travel restrictions between boroughs so some of the more popular sites had fewer visitors.

Impact on observations

Much of the impact on observations has been commented on under the affected species within the Systematic List but some general commentary is worthwhile for our recollection.

The most significant impact came within the first lockdown when many birders had to keep to local patches and gardens. Hence the records increased from some sites but decreased from others. The reports of common resident song-birds sometimes came from different locations than previous years and reduced human noise may have had a positive impact as the song of birds became more audible. There were many more garden records, but these did not come for all species. Garden records of, for example, over-flying Red Kite and Western Osprey increased but some common garden species such as Dunnock continued to be under-reported. There was an increase in Grey Wagtail observations on territory but a decrease in Western Yellow Wagtail, probably because the former was picked up by permitted exercise in urban settings but the latter, of which many in are in reserves such as Wallasea Island, could not all be counted. The permitted exercise did not allow birders to linger and confirm the presence of elusive rarities or observe less obvious evidence of breeding.

The constant effort of monitoring breeding success of wader numbers, such as Common Redshank was hindered for a year. Although there were gaps in the Wetland Bird Survey counts, the first winter counts were unaffected and, it seems, sufficient observers lived local enough to the count sites to provide good reports in the second winter.

In the summer, the relaxing of restrictions also had an effect on observations, sometimes more positive. The freedom after unprecedented confinement caused many people to venture out and this, coupled with not being able to travel overseas, increased use of almost every natural site in the County. Observers were amongst the people enjoying this relative freedom, hence an increase in records came from sites that would usually be less frequented. The down-side of the relaxing of restrictions was increased disturbance and we know that Little Tern suffered and possibly many other species too. Using a personal experience, I just could not get a sustained quiet period of observation at a local farmland patch in June because of the constant stream of ramblers so had to give up on breeding evidence for several species.

Overall, though, most of the observers obviously made the best of the situation and enjoyed birding where they could and generated thousands of useful records.

References

Jennifer Brown, Esme Kirk-Wade Coronavirus: *A history of 'Lockdown laws in England*
https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9068/CBP-9068.pdf

Seasonal summary of 2020 records

Howard Vaughan, with weather summaries by Andy Goodey

Editor's note: As the summary is a collation of reports initially written at the end of each month it is possible that it includes some unconfirmed reports. Please refer to the Systematic List for accepted records of scarce and rare species.

January 2020

January began with high pressure over the south of the UK bringing settled weather with plenty of cloud. This gradually moved south eastwards allowing western frontal systems to develop. From 7th to 17th, the weather was unsettled and windy although somewhat mild. After this date, conditions settled somewhat, the result of high pressure up until 25th and plenty of sunshine gave way to overcast conditions on 22nd. From 26th, wet and windy weather returned, and it snowed in some areas on 27th and 28th on high ground, thereafter mild weather returned on the last three days of the month.

RSPB Rainham Marshes

Wildfowl numbers continued very much the same as at the end of 2019. A female Common Goldeneye on the 1st was the only additional duck species and a juvenile Greater White-fronted Goose was seen, amongst the Greylag Goose, on the 3rd, 9th and 11th while the Bar-headed Goose was still attracting attention. A disappointingly low 19 European Golden Plover on the 29th was the peak amongst 1,500 Northern Lapwing and there were still two Ruff to be found. There were also occasional sightings of Green Sandpiper and Jack Snipe, and a European Woodcock was seen on the 1st. At least ten different Caspian Gull were found as well as a few Yellow-legged Gull and two Mediterranean Gull. There were sporadic sightings of a juvenile Iceland Gull. Four Short-eared Owl wintered but were often elusive and Red Kite were noted on the 6th and 21st. Western Marsh Harrier continued to delight observers as did Peregrine Falcon and Common Buzzard and a female Merlin was seen on the 1st. Two Common Firecrest were present in the Cordite with a few overwintering Common Chiffchaff and Eurasian Blackcap but Bearded Reedling sightings were erratic.

Metropolitan LNHS Essex (London Natural History Society area)

Two Western Cattle Egret continued to winter around Hall Marsh Scrape Waltham Abbey. Seventy Acres and Holyfield Lakes between them hosted a pair of Smew and approximately ten Common Merganser(Goosander). There were three Red-crested Pochard seen there on the 4th. The male Greater Scaup remained on the King George V Reservoir with a male Smew. At Walthamstow Wetlands the male Greater Scaup also continued his residency and the 1st saw the arrival of a male Black Redstart and two Bearded Reedling which stayed throughout the month, as did two Common Firecrest. A Dark-bellied Brant was seen on the 6th. The adult Caspian Gull remained at Eagle Pond Leyton and the second-winter Caspian Gull was seen on Wanstead Flats on the 19th. A juvenile Iceland Gull was at Creekmouth Barking from the 8th where there were also approximately 12 Common Chiffchaff and a Black Redstart in the adjacent private sewage works. Northern Raven were seen over Holyfield Lake, Kelvedon Hatch and Loughton. A female Merlin dashed through the Ingrebourne Valley on the 4th where a pair of Smew were seen on the 22nd and two pairs of Common Merganser(Goosander) on the 23rd. A Northern Goshawk was seen over Woodford Green and there were several Red Kite sightings throughout the area. There was a very unusual first-winter European Turtle Dove in Valentines Park in Ilford first seen on 26th which remained until 8th February and attracted national attention, being featured on BBC's Winterwatch.

South Essex

A single Greater White-fronted Goose was at West Canvey on the 2nd, as were eight Barnacle Goose. The latter moved to Bowers March on 18th and increased to ten. Two each of Water Pipit, Spotted Redshank and Common Greenshank were wintering between the three RSPB South Essex Marshes reserves. Another Water Pipit was at Ropers Farm along the River Crouch on several dates. A pair of Red-breasted Merganser were off Two Tree Island on the 11th and another female was off Canvey Point on the 25th. The River Thames was otherwise quiet. 21 Mediterranean Gull was a peak count at the end of Southend Pier. Five Western Cattle Egret were seen over Benfleet Creek on the 12th and and four were present there on the 20th. RSPB Wallasea still held at least four Short-eared Owl during January along with three ring-tailed and an adult male Hen Harrier. There were also regular occurrences of Merlin and Peregrine Falcon and up to three Great Egret. Two Whooper Swan were seen there on the 5th and the 8th and a female Common Merganser (Goosander) was in the channels on the 13th. European Golden Plover numbers at the site peaked at 4,000 and there were also three Northern Raven present. Three Twite were at East Tilbury and a Black Redstart was on Fobbing on the 8th while the Common Firecrest continued to winter in St Mary's Shoebury and on Two Tree Island with three at the latter site on the 19th. Short-eared Owl were seen at Blue House Farm and Burnham-on-Crouch with a Whimbrel wintering at the latter site and a flock of Corn Bunting on the 16th. A family party of four Pale Bellied Brant and a pair of Black Brant were found at Stow Marsh on the 10th. A Black Brant was at Bradwell Bird Observatory as well as ringtail Hen Harrier, Merlin and 28 Twite on 5th. Dartford Warbler (25th) and 291 Red-throated Loon (29th) were also noted at the site. Inland, a Great Egret was at Hanningfield as were eight Common Merganser (Goosander) on the 1st and eight Greater White-fronted Goose on the 19th increased to ten from the 25th.

Mid Essex

At Abberton Reservoir many of the birds of interest in December lingered into January. A Western Cattle Egret remained until the 8th and Great Egret numbers peaked at seven. Two Whooper Swan were first seen on the 8th and visited again several times throughout the rest of the month. Four Tundra (Bewick's) Swan increased to six on the 25th. Five Greater White-fronted Goose arrived on the 3rd and slowly increased to the highest count for the month of 16 on the 19th. A single Pink-footed Goose flew through on the 1st. Two drake Ring-necked Duck continued to be seen with three Long-tailed Duck, four Smew, five Greater Scaup and a Black-throated Loon that arrived on the 1st. A Green-winged Teal was found on 1st and was seen until the 3rd. A Barn Swallow on the 1st was a complete surprise and was subsequently seen at least until the 18th. Three adult Mediterranean Gull were seen on the 1st and two ring-tailed Hen Harrier lingered, one being a radio-tagged bird. Merlin and Peregrine Falcon were also seen around the reservoir. At Mersea Island, although the rivers were quieter than usual, up to three Common Loon (Great Northern Diver) were off the west end on 25th, nine Common Merganser, four Mediterreanean Gull, five Horned (Slavonian) Grebe and a Red-necked Grebe were seen on the 1st. At the east end there were seven Horned (Slavonian) Grebe on 25th, two Common Eider on 10th, a Great Egret on 4th and a Pale-bellied Brant on 12th. Ten Greater White-fronted Goose arrived on the 5th and slowly increased to 12 on the 20th. A pair of Hen Harrier were seen over Langenhoe Marsh. Four Greater White-fronted Goose were at Tollesbury on the 24th where a Red-necked Grebe and two Horned (Slavonian) Grebe were located on the same day. Two Western Cattle Egret were at RSPB Old Hall Marshes on the 4th with a single there on the 8th and there were also two sightings of Western Cattle Egret at Copt Hall. Old Hall Marshes also hosted a male Hen Harrier (21st), two Common Loon (Great Northern Diver) (Great Northern Diver) and a Short-eared Owl as well as a first-winter Black Guillemot, a very rare visitor to the County, on 9th. A male Smew was at Chigborough Lakes and a Red-crested Pochard at Lofts Farm Gravel Pits Heybridge on the 3rd. At Heybridge Gravel Pit there were ten Bearded Reedling on 7th and a Great Egret on 16th. A Black Brant was at Maldon on the 5th. The River Colne was quiet with the highlights being 500 Pied Avocet and a Great Egret on 21st. At Fingringhoe there were two Water Pipit and at Fingringhoe Mill a Common Firecrest, both on 20th. A Northern Raven was over Wivenhoe on 11th

and a Black Redstart at The Hythe from the 3rd. Inland a Great Egret was at Ardleigh Reservoir on the 18th and 14 Common Merganser(Goosander) commuted between Great Braxted and Great Totham. Six Hawfinch were seen in Danbury on the 31st.

North Essex

At Mistley Quay a first-winter Black Guillemot was present on the 15th, a second occurrence of this rare species in the month. Also at this site, 40 Common Goldeneye and three Greater Scaup were there on the 24th and eight Barnacle Goose and 170 Pied Avocet on the 1st. A Common Merganser (Goosander) was at Cattawade on the 4th and 85 Northern Pintail, 26 Red-breasted Merganser and six Horned (Slavonian) Grebe were off Wrabness on the 21st. Eleven Snow Bunting remained at Stone Point and a Merlin, a Common Firecrest and a male Hen Harrier were rewards for the hardy Naze birders. Four Purple Sandpiper remained at Holland Haven and two Pink-footed Goose at Wigboro Wick Farm on the 1st were joined by six Greater White-fronted Goose in the evening. The latter had increased by two to 13 by the 7th. A ring-tailed Hen Harrier and Merlin were seen over Wigboro Wick Farm on the 7th. Inland there were several Northern Raven and Red Kite sightings and a flock of 30 Hawfinch were seen in Hatfield Forest.

February 2020

There were four days of changeable westerlies in the opening days of the month but this was followed for a short period by high pressure which moved across the country from 5th to 7th. This resulted in sunshine and frosty nights and it was generally settled in southern and central areas. Wind and wet conditions characterised much of the remainder of February with rain moving in from the west and southwest. Two named storms, Ciara on 9th and Dennis on 15th, resulted in large rainfall totals while on 28th, Storm Jorge also brought wet weather. Odd spells of brighter weather were felt in between the storms but there were blustery showers, often wintry, although snow rarely covered low lying areas for long.

The storms undoubtedly tested the resolve of the County's birders so records were sparse and there was little change or movement of species across the County from 2019.

RSPB Rainham Marshes

Duck and wader species were much the same as they were in December. A Jack Snipe was seen over one of the mammoth tides on the 10th and two Ruff and a Caspian Gull remained around the site. A fine adult Iceland Gull visited on the 11th and 12th while an adult Mediterranean Gull was seen with 500 Black-headed Gull on the 10th. Peregrine Falcon were especially active during the month as were six Western Marsh Harrier. A female Merlin was present on the 13th and a male on the 19th. A Red Kite was seen on the 3rd and three more drifted through on the 11th while two Short-eared Owl were present but made only sporadic appearances. Several Common Firecrest were seen occasionally from the trails as were several Bearded Reedling and European Stonechat.

Metropolitan LNHS Essex (London Natural History Society area)

The European Turtle Dove remained in Valentines Park until at least the 8th but proved difficult to find. Three Black Redstart, two Bearded Reedling and several Common Firecrest were at Walthamstow Wetlands throughout the month. The juvenile Iceland Gull was at Creekmouth Barking until the 9th where Caspian and Mediterranean Gull were also present and Brambling and Siberian Chiffchaff were observed in the adjacent sewage works. The adult Caspian Gull was seen again on Eagle Pond Leyton as were a first-winter Caspian Gull at Roding Valley Meadows Chigwell on the 16th and a Yellow-legged Gull on Wanstead Flats on the 1st. Further Mediterranean Gull were seen at the Walthamstow Wetlands on 18th, Valentines Park on 11th and Barking Park on 12th. Red Kite started to reappear in regular spots and Northern Raven were seen in the mid-Lee Valley. Two Western Cattle Egret were still around Hall Marsh in the Lee Valley and a female Smew, seven Common Merganser (Goosander) and two Eurasian Bittern were seen with some regularity around Seventy Acres Lake Holyfield. Two Black-necked Grebe were on the William Girling Reservoir Chingford and the Hooded Merganser was on the King George V Reservoir again on the 6th. Up to five Common Merganser (Goosander) were on Connaught Water and at Weald Park and a Common Loon (Great Northern Diver) went past Grays on the 14th. Common Sandpiper were along the River Lee at Bow and Walthamstow Wetlands and 45 Pied Avocet were at West Thurrock Marshes on the 4th. A Great Egret flew over Woodford Green. A bizarrely unseasonal Sandwich Tern was over Fair Play Farm in Upminster on the 5th and there was also a notable count of 52 Yellowhammer there on the 13th. Two Common Firecrest were seen in Wanstead Park on the 4th along with a European Woodcock and a Eurasian Tree Sparrow was a pleasing find at Holyfield Hall Farm on the 21st.

South-east Essex

The raptor numbers were much the same as the previous month at Wallasea Island with at least four Hen Harrier among the Western Marsh Harrier, Peregrine Falcon and two Merlin. Short-eared Owl numbers peaked at five and the two Great Egret remained while Northern Raven made the occasional appearance. A male Hen Harrier was also seen at Blue House Farm on 6th and a Short-eared Owl there on the same day and a male Smew on the 5th. A Great Egret was over South Woodham Ferrers on the 12th and the ten Barnacle Goose were still present at West Canvey Marsh. Water Pipit were at Bowers Marsh, Ropers Farm/Barling Marsh and South Woodham Ferrers. Ropers Farm also had the only County record for the winter of Lapland Bunting on the 8th and several Common Firecrest remained in Shoebury throughout the month. Canvey Point was very quiet due to the westerly wind with a European Shag on the 15th being the only notable sighting and a single Twite was amongst Linnet on the 6th at East Tilbury where Pied Avocet were estimated to be 1,000+. Bradwell Bird Observatory was quiet other than the Dartford Warbler reappearing on the 5th.

Mid-Essex

Three Great Egret remained at Abberton Reservoir as did two Whooper Swan, drake Ring-necked Duck, three Long-tailed Duck and pair of Greater Scaup. Ten Greater White-fronted Goose were seen on the 8th whilst Common Merganser (Goosander) dropped to 14 and only three red-headed Smew were seen. Conversely Common Goldeneye reached a remarkable 300 (3rd) and a Horned (Slavonian) Grebe appeared on the 17th while an elusive drake Ferruginous Duck was found on the 6th and lingered into the month. A female Merlin was seen on the 3rd and a male on the 16th and Grey Partridge on the 19th was a pleasing local sighting of this species. The River Blackwater had few sightings of note probably due to the appalling viewing conditions rather than a lack of birds. Thirty Red-breasted Merganser were off Goldhanger on 7th with Dartford Warbler, Merlin and two Great Egret seen there on the same day. 16 Red-breasted Merganser and 12 Common Merganser (Goosander) were fishing on the river off Fingringhoe on the 4th. Probably the same Common Merganser were seen on the lake in University of Essex Colchester, while 14 more were once again around Great Totham during the month. A count of 14 Bearded Reedling at Heybridge Gravel Pit on the 6th was notable and a Black Redstart was at the Hythe from the 1st while Northern Raven were once again seen over Chalkney Wood.

North Essex

The River Stour was also quiet with a single Horned (Slavonian) Grebe, Greater Scaup, 15 Red-breasted Merganser, 11 Common Goldeneye, one Mediterranean Gull and two Common Greenshank from Mistley on the 12th being the only notable reports. Three male and a female Hen Harrier and 20 Western Marsh Harrier roosted in Hamford Water on the 4th where there was also a Merlin, while another Merlin was at the Naze on the 8th. Six Common Merganser (Goosander) were regularly seen at Ardleigh Reservoir and four Purple Sandpiper were at Holland Haven on the 20th. Seven Hawfinch were in Hatfield Forest on the 8th and Northern Raven were seen over Farnham on 12th.

March 2020

The month began somewhat cool and showery with occasional sunshine amid longer periods of rain. Sleet and snow was confined to higher ground. The second week was more unsettled and milder with regular rain belts countrywide with brighter periods. High pressure then built across Britain resulting in dry, sunny weather with warm days and cold nights from 22nd to 27th. At this time, slow moving fronts brought cloud and rain to north-western Britain. On 28th, wintery showers occurred in eastern Britain followed by dry and cloudy weather.

RSPB Rainham Marshes

A juvenile Iceland Gull visited on the 4th, 5th and 10th and there were two sightings of Caspian Gull. Mediterranean Gull were noted from the middle of the month, the first Common Tern was seen on an early date of the 21st and a flock of 21 Black-legged Kittiwake headed upstream along the River Thames on a windy 29th. Two White Stork drifted in and out of the reserve on the 11th and 12th before showing very well on the 13th and two Western Cattle Egret flew through on the 16th. In the misty morning on 19th, 15 Common Scoter were found on the River Thames and a few Brant Goose were seen. The first Northern Wheatear was seen on the 11th with the next on the 19th. Little Ringed Plover and Sand Martin were seen from the 15th. The first Sedge Warbler, braving the cool weather, was recorded on the 30th. Western Marsh Harrier were displaying and there were a few sightings of Red Kite.

Metropolitan Essex (London Natural History Society area)

At Walthamstow Wetlands the pair of Bearded Reedling, multiple Common Firecrest and a Black Redstart all remained at the site where there was also Pied Avocet (14th), Bar-tailed Godwit (22nd), Black-necked Grebe (23rd), Common Scoter (27th) and Little Ringed Plover (19th). Northern Wheatear arrived at this and at other sites in the Lee Valley from the 16th with others at Wanstead Flats. The first Sand Martin was over Upminster on the 10th and the second at King George V Reservoir on the 13th. The Reservoir also continued to hold the immature male Hooded Merganser, drake Smew, Greater Scaup, up to 12 Common Merganser (Goosander) and 38 Common Goldeneye throughout the month. Thirteen Common Scoter were at The Reservoir on the 19th and a Brant Goose was seen on the 25th. Further north along the River Lee valley nine Common Merganser (Goosander) and a single Smew were at Seventy Acres Holyfield. The two Western Cattle Egret remained at Old Hall Marsh till at least the 20th and a Great Egret flew over Wanstead Flats on the 25th. A flock of 33 Brant Goose over Woodford Green on the 24th was unusual. Two Greater White-fronted Goose were at Dagenham Chase from the 2nd to 21st and two White Stork were there on the 12th. A very early Western Osprey was over Upminster on the 6th with another over Leyton Flats on the 24th. Red Kite sightings were astonishingly numerous, with some obvious passage but also the certainty that they are now firmly resident even in some of the more urbanised areas. A male Hen Harrier was over Upminster on the 24th as was the first Tree Pipit of the year. Thirty-two Mediterranean Gull moved over Upminster on the 28th, a single Little Gull was over Chafford Hundred on the 27th and the juvenile Iceland Gull returned to Beckton until the 18th after its visit to Dungeness and then Rainham. Four Waxwing were seen at Thornwood Common in Epping Forest on the 17th and Common Firecrest were still lingering in traditional wintering spots.

South-east Essex

A ringtail Hen Harrier remained at Wallasea Island during the month and up to three Short-eared Owl also remained along with a single Great Egret at least until the 25th. Three Western Cattle Egret were at Blue House Farm on 20th and flew through Wallasea Island on the 22nd. The first Sand Martin were seen on 18th at Blue House Farm and at Vange Marsh on the same day. Also on 18th the first Barn Swallow of the year for the area was seen at West Canvey Marsh. Five Water Pipit remained at Vange Marsh during the month where ten Barnacle Goose were last seen on 8th. At Bowers Marsh the three Greater White-fronted Goose stayed until at least the 26th and a single Black-necked Grebe on the 21st increased to three from the 28th. Also at Bowers Marsh, a Eurasian Spoonbill was seen on the 15th, Little Ringed Plover were present on the 21st when 221 Pied Avocet were counted. Two White Stork, presumed to have come from Knole Park in Kent, appeared over Thameside Thurrock Nature Park on the 12th. A Hen Harrier was at North Fambridge on the 15th and Blue House Farm hosted a Black Brant (9th) and Northern Raven (15th). Stow Marsh hosted two Taiga Bean Goose on the 2nd. A Western Osprey was over Chelmsford on the 7th and, inland, Red Kite sightings increased once again including around Hanningfield Reservoir where there were also regular Northern Raven sightings. The 11 Greater White-fronted Goose lingered at Hanningfield Reservoir until the 6th. 21 Red-breasted Merganser and a male Hen Harrier were at Bradwell Bird Observatory on the 8th and four Sandwich Tern were seen from Gunners Park Shoebury on the 31st, At Tilbury, there were three Little Ringed Plover on the 19th when three Northern Wheatear were also seen and 995 Black-tailed Godwit were counted.

Mid-Essex

At Abberton Reservoir three Great Egret stayed till the 3rd, reducing to two thererafter. The pair of Whooper Swan and the trio of Long-tailed Duck remained until the 24th, three red-headed Smew until 7th, 16 Common Merganser(Goosander) until 21st and two female Greater Scaup until 16th. A Black-necked Grebe was seen on the 1st and 7th and a pair of Garganey were seen on the 14th and 15th. Four Little Ringed Plover, a Western Yellow Wagtail and a Northern Raven were seen or heard on the 21st. The regular Common Merganser (Goosander) flock that moved between Rivenhall Place Silver End, Great Totham and Great Braxted peaked at 22 on the 9th and a Western Osprey went through the area on the 18th. A Common Loon (Great Northern Diver) was seen off Tollesbury on the 1st with a Horned (Slavonian) Grebe. Two Mediterranean Gull and a Merlin were at Tollesbury on the 11th and the first (none-over-wintering) Barn Swallow of the year for the County was seen there on the 16th. A Jack Snipe was seen at The Hythe on the 6th and a Great Egret at Old Hall Marshes on the 15th. Red Kite were seen at numerous locations throughout the month.

North Essex

A Great Egret was a good inland find at Broomhouse Flash Langham on the 4th while a juvenile White-tailed Eagle overflew Wix on the 30th and Elsenham on 31st. Red Kite sightings increased in this area too, being seen at numerous locations throughout the month. Merlin at The Naze and Colne Point added raptor interest along with a male Hen Harrier at Wix on the 21st. Common Firecrest and Black Redstart were seen at The Naze (24th) and Holland Haven (25th), Notable migration was observed at Frinton as follows: 4th, 237 Red-throated Loon, 106 Brant Goose; 14th, Common Loon (Great Northern Diver), 31 Red-throated Loon, 187 Western Jackdaw flying out to sea, 16th: Northern Wheatear; 18th, Northern Wheatear, two Black Redstart, 32 White Wagtail flying in off the sea; 19th, 43 Red-throated Loon, Common Loon (Great Northern Diver), 12 Barnacle Goose, 728 Common Chaffinch, one Brambling, 35 European Greenfinch, 36 Common Chiffchaff, two Common Firecrest, one Black Redstart; 20th, 356 Red-throated Loon, five Common Loon (Great Northern Diver), 426 Common Chaffinch, ten Eurasian Siskin, one Hawfinch, 15 Great Tit, two Common Firecrest, 54 Carrion Crow; 21st, 67 Red-throated Loon, one Common Loon (Great Northern Diver) , seven Northern Fulmar, one European Shag, 114 Northern Gannet, one Great Skua, one Black Redstart; 25th, three Sandwich tern, six Mediterranean Gull, one Black Redstart; 26th, 173 Red-throated Loon, one Common Loon (Great Northern Diver), 765 Common Chaffinch, 101 Eurasian Siskin, 26 European Greenfinch; 27th, 145 Red-throated Loon, 18 Little Gull, 2,059 Common Chaffinch, 72 Eurasian Siskin, 41 European Greenfinch, 16 Brambling, Northern Wheatear, 59 Carrion Crow, one Whimbrel, one Merlin; 28th, 1,466 Common Chaffinch, 24 Brambling, 113 Eurasian Siskin, 42 Carrion Crow; 30th, 228 Red-throated Loon, one Great Skua; 31st, 121 Red-throated Loon, 1,320 Common Chaffinch, 36 Eurasian Siskin, four Brambling.

April 2020

April was fine and mainly settled for the most part but there was rain in short spells. Additionally, throughout was high pressure in the vicinity of the UK, mostly to the north, and easterly winds. Less settled weather prevailed from 1st to 6th and again on 11th to 13th and a cyclonic spell from 27th onwards bucked this trend. Temperatures were generally well above normal and there was plenty of sunshine. There were, however, several late frosts in north and eastern Scotland. Generally, rainfall was lower than normal throughout except for central southern counties.

RSPB Rainham Marshes

With the reserve being closed records were restricted to observations made from the wall alongside the River Thames. A Eurasian Spoonbill was seen on the 2nd and two Great Egret on the 7th. Many Northern Lapwing, Common Redshank, Eurasian Oystercatcher, Pied Avocet and Little Ringed Plover took up territories for breeding. Along the river edge, Bar-tailed Godwit started to arrive on the 13th with single figures on several dates and Whimbrel were recorded on nine dates totalling 37 birds with 12 on the 12th being the highest. Four Common Greenshank were seen on the 20th and the last Black-tailed Godwit seen were four on the 6th. Common Tern became regular throughout the month and the first three Arctic Tern passed through on the 6th with an impressive 60 on the 13th and another 29 on the 18th. Several single Sandwich Tern were seen as was a single Black Tern on 28th. Numerous Mediterranean Gull and a Black-legged Kittiwake were seen on the 3rd. There were a few Northern Wheatear observed and six Greenland Wheatear on the 30th. Whinchat were seen on the 14th and 30th and Ring Ouzel on the 16th and 18th. A Common Redstart was seen on the 6th and the usual warblers that breed at the sight were present with the exception of Grasshopper Warbler. Western Marsh Harrier established territory and there were four sightings of Red Kite and several of Northern Raven. Two Short-eared Owl were last seen on the 1st.

Metropolitan Essex (London Natural History Society area)

Lockdown concentrated sightings to gardens and observers' immediate local sites. Over 100 Red Kite were reported with seven over Collier Row on the 23rd being the highest single day count – this was made from a day watch from a flat roof. Common Buzzard were prolific and Western Marsh Harrier were seen in Romford (3rd), Woodford Green (5th and Upminster (25th) along with numerous Peregrine Falcon, Eurasian Sparrowhawk and Common Kestrel and the first Eurasian Hobby of the year. Western Osprey were seen over Hornchurch (18th), Upminster and Dagenham (20th), two over Romford (25th) and Gidea Park (26th). The most exciting raptors were a Black Kite low over Hornchurch on the 15th and the immature White-tailed Eagle that soared over Harold Hill on the 21st. There were eight records of Northern Raven and a Short-eared Owl was over Wanstead Flats on the 8th. A Western Cattle Egret remained at Cornmill Meadows Waltham Abbey until the 17th and another was near Upminster on the 2nd. Great Egret were over Upminster (16th) and the Banbury Reservoir along the Lea Valley (24th) and a Eurasian Bittern over Rush Green on 4th was a pleasing garden record. Several observers recorded migrating Common Scoter, either orally or on Noc Mig (Nocturnal Migration) equipment during the first week of the month. A single Common Scoter was on the King George V Reservoir from the 12th to the 18th. Also at the Reservoir, the immature male Hooded Merganser remained until the 24th, five Common Goldeneye and a Common Merganser(Goosander) until 30th and two drake Greater Scaup until 21st. Drake Long-tailed Duck was seen on 23rd, a pair of Northern Pintail on 1st and a Brant Goose on the 2nd. The Reservoir also hosted most of the witnessed inland tern passage with Arctic Tern (ten on 13th, two on 17th and 13 on 28th), Sandwich Tern (singles on 1st, 11th, 17th, 23rd and 28th), Black Tern (11th, three on 18th, 19th and 23rd) and Little Tern (singles on 17th and 19th). There were 66 Little Gull moving through on seven dates including 24 on 10th, 20 on 20th and 14 on 23rd. Other sites in the Lea Valley were also popular with gulls and terns: at Walthamstow Wetlands there were Little Gull on 19th, ten Arctic Tern on 28th and four Sandwich Tern on 6th. Another Arctic Tern was at Hooks Marsh on the 7th. At the Thames Barrier two Arctic Tern were seen on the 5th and three Sandwich Tern on the same day. A drake Garganey was seen at Dagenham Chase on the 10th and 17th. Wader passage observations were concentrated on the reservoirs. At Walthamstow Wetlands, 13 Bar-tailed Godwit, Common Greenshank, Turnstone, Eurasian Oystercatcher, Green Sandpiper and Common Sandpiper were all reported along with 12 Whimbrel on the 28th. At the King George V Reservoir there were 17 Bar-tailed Godwit and eight Whimbrel (18th). In total 43 Whimbrel were reported from eight sites and they found their way onto several observers' lists made during the first lockdown. Two Pied Avocet on Cornmill Meadows (23rd) were a very notable bird for the Lea valley and a Wood Sandpiper was an early migrant near Warley on the 22nd. There were a few late Fieldfare and Redwing in the first week of the month with the last of the former being on Wanstead Flats on the 14th. Ring Ouzel were at Wanstead Flats with two on the 18th and a single on the 28th and others were seen near Upminster on the 7th and 10th and at Dagenham Chase from the 10th-12th. Northern Wheatear were seen at regular spots but in no great numbers and Whinchat were at King George V Reservoir (16th), Walthamstow Wetlands (22nd and 29th) and Wanstead Flats (28th – 30th). Thirteen Common Nightingale were discovered on territory and Common Redstart were on King George V Reservoir (7th), Walthamstow Marshes (14th), Cely Woods (21st) and Wanstead Flats (23rd). A Black Redstart was seen on Sewardstone Marsh until the 6th. Sixteen male Common Cuckoo were heard and two Grasshopper Warbler were heard reeling. Two male Common Firecrest were on territory in Cranham and Woodlark flew over Upminster (22nd) and the Mardyke (25th). There were only a few Western Yellow Wagtail recorded but a Blue-headed Wagtail was seen on Walthamstow Marshes on the 27th. The only Tree Pipit were over Purfleet on the 6th and Wanstead Flats on the 15th. The most significant sighting of the month was a fine Red-rumped Swallow gracing Sewardstone Marsh on the 13th.

South-east Essex

The Western Cattle Egret were seen again at South Fambridge heading to roost on the 5th and 30th and Great Egret were at Great Wakering on the 10th and on Foulness Island on the 5th and 13th. A Eurasian Spoonbill was at Paglesham Lagoon on the 19th with another making a great flyover garden tick in Westcliffe on the 24th. The two Whooper Swan remained on Lower Raypits Canewdon until at least the 29th. Foulness also hosted a Eurasian Hoopoe from the 15th which amazingly lingered until the 22nd while another was seen probing a lawn in Ingatestone on the 17th. A fine male Ring Ouzel spent 12 days from the 10th near Rochford and another was seen in Gunners Park on the 23rd. Ten Common Nightingale were singing on Canvey Wick and Grasshopper Warbler were reeling at Vange and Wakering. There were many Red Kite sightings as well as Western Osprey over Rayleigh on the 8th and Fobbing on the 19th. A very late Black-throated Loon was off Gunners Park on the 28th and the first local Little Tern was there on the same day whilst at Tilbury there were seven Arctic Tern on the 20th and 25 on the 28th. European Turtle Dove were purring at Shoeburyness from the 21st and others were in Southend and Boreham gardens. A pair of Garganey were at Hullbridge from the 25th to 28th.

Mid-Essex

The first lockdown made it a quiet month for records but there were some highlights. The Whooper Swan pair remained at Abberton until at least the 15th and a Great Egret was still present on the 27th. The last Long-tailed Duck sighting of the spring was on the 9th when 20 Western Yellow Wagtail were also seen and five Common Nightingale were on territory. Three Common Crane were tracked by several birders on the 7th and the same with a Western Osprey on the 10th while the White-tailed Eagle was the third sighting over Richard Allen's garden on the 7th. At the same location, two Northern Raven flew over on the 17th and a singing Common Firecrest was heard on several dates. A Great Egret was in Limbourne Creek on the 29th with another at Old Hall Marshes on the 20th along with a Western Cattle Egret and 15 Whimbrel and a single Crane on the 22nd. A single Common Loon (Great Northern Diver) gradually increased to five in one flock by the 6th, off Mersea Island, where Red-necked Grebe, two Common Eider and a European Shag were present on the 4th. Common Nightingale and Common Firecrest were in Friday Wood but unsurprisingly no records came from

Fingringhoe Wick. Red Kite were seen by probably every observer who watched the skies from their garden during the month.

North-east Essex

In Wix, observations under first lockdown restrictions proved productive with a first Red Kite on the 2nd followed by ring-tailed Hen Harrier on the 6th and 8th, Northern Raven on the 6th and the three Common Crane on the 7th that later passed over Maldon. Another Northern Raven was seen at Cattawade on the 11th and over Black Notley on the 28th where the first Spotted Flycatcher of the year was seen on the 28th. Three male Mandarin Duck at Fuller Street on the 5th were unusual and the female Lesser Spotted Woodpecker was seen again in the Halsted garden on the 4th. Two Ring Ouzel and a Great Egret were at Holland Haven on the 8th. Essex is often perceived as not getting the best of coastal passage, However, observations from Frinton-on-Sea this month again showed that there is a spectacle of migration to be enjoyed where an observer is willing and able to put in the time and effort. Counts from Frinton-on-Sea were: 1st: 656 Red-throated Loon, 261 Great Cormorant, five European Shag, 1,867 Brant Goose, 25 Mediterranean Gull, Glossy Ibis, 26 Common Buzzard, Hen Harrier, 388 Common Chaffinch, six Eurasian Siskin and two Brambling; 2nd, Common Loon (Great Northern Diver) and 227 Red-throated Loon; 5th, 65 Little Gull, three Whimbrel; 7th, 14 Red-throated Loon, pair Garganey, Eurasian Spoonbill, two Little Gull, 19 Common Buzzard, 242 Common Chaffinch and two Ring Ouzel remained on the golf course until 25th; 8th, eight Northern Fulmar; 10th, Hooded Crow and lots of waders at night; 12th, 63 Brant Goose, Common Eider and Whinchat; 13th, 29 Whimbrel; 14th, 18 Common Buzzard, two Black-legged Kittiwake, 14 Mediterranean Gull; 15th, 48 Whimbrel; 16th, Arctic Tern; 17th, 18 Northern Fulmar, 24 Whimbrel, Great Skua, Parasitic Jaeger (Arctic Skua), two Black-legged Kittiwake, 12 Sandwich Tern, six Arctic Tern and five Little Tern; 18th, six Northern Fulmar, 97 Whimbrel, 196 Bar-tailed Godwit, 23 Common Scoter, Great Skua, 72 Northern Gannet and two Red-throated Loon; 19th, 10 Bar-tailed Godwit, 137 Whimbrel, 32 Red Knot, Redwing, Northern Wheatear, two Arctic Tern and a Great Egret; 20th, Eurasian Hobby, 17 Arctic Tern, ten Sandwich Tern; 21st, Great Skua; 22nd, 43 Whimbrel; 23rd, 74 Whimbrel; 24th, seven Northern Fulmar and a Red Kite; 25th, 45 Whimbrel; 27th, 40 Whimbrel, two Red-breasted Merganser and five Northern Fulmar; 28th, 41 Whimbrel, Parasitic Jaeger (Arctic Skua), Great Skua and 46 Arctic Tern and 29th, 14 Arctic Tern, Eurasian Spoonbill and a full-plumage adult Pomarine Jaeger.

May 2020

It was showery and cool at the beginning of the month, the result of low pressure, but this was soon replaced by high pressure between 2nd and 4th giving more settled weather. From 5th, most areas had warm sunshine although there were showers from 7th onwards. A cold snap began on 10th lasting until 15th. There then followed more changeable weather generally before the south experienced warm sunshine until the close of May following high pressure from 24th.

RSPB Rainham Marshes

With the first lockdown continuing it was a sparse month of sightings and these were restricted to viewing from the river wall. Four Eurasian Spoonbill visited at different times with one or two being present for most of the month. A few Arctic Tern were noted with two on 3rd, three on 7th, six on 10th and four on 13th and there were a peak of 70 Common Tern and three Black Tern on the 7th. Mediterranean Gull were seen regularly and a Little Gull headed upstream on the 14th. Wader passage was slow: a few Common Greenshank, Whimbrel and Common Sandpiper were noted along with Sanderling on the 7th and 18th and Turnstone on the 15th and 30th. Two Black Redstart were seen on the 15th with a single on the 19th and two late Northern Wheatear were noted. A Spotted Flycatcher was seen on the 25th. Corn Bunting and four male European Stonechat were holding territory and Pied Avocet, Northern Lapwing, Common Redshank and many duck species produced young. Western Marsh Harrier remained on site and there were several sightings of Red Kite.

Metropolitan Essex (London Natural History Society area)

Walthamstow Wetlands hosted two Eurasian Spoonbill which were presumed to be some of those seen at Rainham Marshes. Also seen there were three Arctic Tern, a Western Osprey (2nd), a Sandwich Tern (7th), seven Whimbrel (10th) and a Northern Wheatear (18th). Two Whinchat were on the nearby Marshes on the 3rd and 6th and a Common Quail was put up on Sewardstone Marsh on the 4th where nine Whimbrel flew through on the 16th. An immature male Common Scoter was on the King George V Reservoir until the 8th and a female Common Merganser (Goosander) lingered there until the 6th. There was a good selection of common waders passing through the reservoir including Common Sandpiper and Common Greenshank with 17 Dunlin on the 2nd being particularly notable. Six Black Tern were seen on the 6th and two on the 31st and there were three Arctic Tern on the 9th and a single on the 14th. Another Black Tern was seen on the Girling on 7th. Three Whinchat (5th, 7th and 15th) and a Black Redstart (2nd) was also seen on the King George V Reservoir. A Western Marsh Harrier was over Seventy Acres on the 12th and a Honey Buzzard was seen over Woodford Green on the 9th. Another Western Osprey was over Ilford on the 4th and an immature White-tailed Eagle circled there on the 24th. Red Kite were seen throughout the area with peak counts of six over Ardleigh Green (2nd) and Upminster (18th). In addition to these, ten possible territories have been identified in the area. Northern Goshawk were noted in a regular site and Eurasian Hobby sightings were frequent. Spotted Flycatcher were seen in Chafford Hundred (16th), Waterworks Leyton Nature Reserve and on Wanstead Flats including at one known breeding site. European Turtle Dove passed through gardens in Upminster and South Ockendon and a purring male returned to North Weald. Five Common Firecrest were on territory at three sites with a brood seen at one and a passage birds were in the Mardyke (9th) and Upminster (30th) while two pairs of Hawfinch were confirmed at a traditional residential site. At Brook Farm Upminster a European Bee-eater went over on the 16th. A male Golden Oriole was a seen at Grimston's Oak in Epping Forest where there were more Mandarin broods reported than for many years. A roving female Smew appeared again at Highams Park and the immature drake Hooded Merganser that wintered on the King George V Reservoir was seen at Connaught Water Epping Forest on two occasions.

South-east Essex

Bowers Marsh was productive with a drake Garganey and Black-necked Grebe on several dates along with five singing Grasshopper Warbler and a few passage waders that included up to three Wood Sandpiper from the 14th and eight Common Greenshank. A Short-eared Owl was seen on the 8th and other late birds were at Lower Ray Pits Canewdon and Blue House Farm. The pair of Whooper Swan at Lower Ray Pits lingered. The three roaming Western Cattle Egret were seen at Wallasea Island on the 14th and Great Egret were at South Fambridge (2nd) and on Foulness (3rd) where the Little Egret seemed to be having a productive breeding season. A Glossy Ibis was seen near Wat Tyler on the 7th and 8th while another Western Cattle Egret was on Fobbing on the 14th. A summer plumage Red-throated Loon was a great find off Gunners Park on the 19th and a Black Redstart was seen there on the 10th. European Turtle Dove were purring at six sites and Common Cuckoo, Common Nightingale and Grasshopper Warbler numbers were seemingly in good numbers. Spotted Flycatcher and Common Firecrest were found on territory at Westley Heights Langdon Hills and Northern Raven were noted over Shoebury and Tilbury. The River Thames was generally quiet with a few Arctic Tern at Tilbury in the first week of the month and Mediterranean Gull, probably from the Kent breeding sites, were seen daily. Red Kite sighings were again very numerous, especially over gardens.

Mid-Essex

A Great Egret remained at Abberton Reservoir during May and three Western Cattle Egret were seen regularly entering the Little Egret colony. A Western Osprey was seen on the 6th and a 1st summer Little Gull was noted on the 14th and 29th while a drake Garganey showed well on the 10th. A Great Egret was on West Mersea on the 25th and a pair of Western Cattle Egret were at another potential breeding site in the area. A White Stork circled Ulting on the 24th and Red Kite sightings were numerous.

A Black Redstart was holding territory in Maldon, a Common Firecrest was singing at Friday Wood Colchester and European Turtle Dove were heard purring at least five sites. Two Mediterranean Gull were inland at Ardleigh Reservoir on the 13th and a Northern Raven was seen over Stanway on the same day. Rosy Starling was seen in Mayland on the 28th and a female Red-footed Falcon was at Althorne on the 26th .

North-east Essex

The Naze was very productive this month for rare and accidental migrants: Great Reed Warbler (2nd), Red Crossbill (10th and 23rd), Red Rumped Swallow (18th) , Hawfinch (19th) ,Common Redstart (22nd), seven Mediterranean Gull (23rd), Red Backed Shrike, Redwing and Tree Pipit (25th), Common Rosefinch (26th), European Bee-eater (27th).

Holland Haven was also productive with 23 Whimbrel (5th), the first Tawny Owl record at the site for 20 years (17th), two Temminck's Stint (18th), perched Honey Buzzard (20th), Caspian Gull (22nd) and two Spotted Flycatcher from the 18th. Frinton-on-Sea produced a scattering of Northern Gannet, Northern Fulmar, Black-legged Kittiwake, Common Murre (Guillemot) and tern with 36 Little Tern on the 8th being notable. A Great Skua and five Parasitic Jaeger (Arctic Skua) were seen on the 4th and there were eight more Parasitic Jaeger (Arctic Skua) and a Pomarine Jaeger on the 11th. Dark-bellied Brant counts included 223 (23rd), 34 (24th) and 119 (25th). Three Northern Pintail and two Tufted Duck (10th) and Common Pochard (24th) were also seen. There were several Common Cuckoo and Eurasian Hobby recorded coming in off the sea as well as Hawfinch (19th), five Red Crossbill (24th), a Serin (25th) and a 1st summer male Red-footed Falcon briefly on the 26th. Elsewhere across the area there were many migrant Red Kite sightings as well as the resident birds and European Turtle Dove were heard purring at Wrabness.

June 2019

The fine weather at the end of May continued into June but showery and long spells of rain were prevalent from 3rd for five days. There followed brief, settled conditions before wet weather was felt nationwide by the 10th followed by a spell of warm and showery weather with thunderstorms in central, western and southern areas and it was generally rather humid. From 23rd to 25th, hot and sunny spells were over much of England and this triggered a thundery breakdown in places. At the end of the month, it was windy and cloudy with rain.

RSPB Rainham Marshes

Common Redshank and Northern Lapwing breeding numbers continued to be good. Pied Avocet, Little Ringed Plover and Eurasian Oystercatcher nested within the electric fence, helped by good water levels. Two broods of Western Marsh Harrier fledged and young wildfowl and warblers were plentiful around the reserve. Late wader passage included a Sanderling until 4th along with ten Common Ringed Plover and two Dunlin and three Eurasian Curlew summering. Three *limosa* Black-tailed Godwit were seen on the 26th when an adult Eurasian Spoonbill was also seen and then two adults remained until 30th. A Great Egret drifted through on the 29th and there were two Red Kite sightings. Three Barnacle Goose were noted on the 8th and Great Black-backed Gull bred for the first time near the reserve on one of the redundant jetties on the River Thames. The first Yellow-legged Gull were noted to have returned by the 22nd and Caspian Gull was recorded on the same day. A Black Redstart was seen again and two Grasshopper Warbler started reeling again, presumably in advance of second attempts at nesting.

Metropolitan Essex (London Natural History Society area)

Walthamstow Wetlands was graced again by the adult and immature Eurasian Spoonbill on the 1st and 20th and a late Western Osprey drifted through on the 1st. Wader passage began from the 23rd with the first Green Sandpiper and Common Sandpiper, the latter numbering 12 on the 30th. Two Eurasian Curlew on the 27th were also noteworthy. Little Ringed Plover bred at Dagenham Chase and Green Sandpiper were also there and also in the Ingrebourne Valley from the 16th while a Wood Sandpiper called over Chafford Hundred on the 24th. Red Kite drifted around with a definite movement south east observed on the 2nd and 3rd comprising five over Hornchurch and Upminster and six over Wanstead Flats . A Common Quail was flushed in the Ingrebourne Valley on the 14th and one was singing in rural Upminster on the 25th. In Epping Forest, there were two singing Common Firecrest and more broods of young were reported for Mandarin. There was a notable passage of Common Swift on the 30th with 2491 south over Brook Farm during that day. There was an apparent movement of Mediterranean Gull with some seen over Chafford and Grays and nine were as far upriver as Beckton Sewage Works on the 13th. A total of 37 Red Crossbill were seen and heard from the 19th.

South-east Essex

Bowers Marsh continued to host Black-necked Grebe and was visited by a Eurasian Spoonbill on the 24th and 26th. Three Eurasian Wigeon were unseasonal stayers throughout the month and Common Greenshank, Green Sandpiper and Spotted Redshank (14th and 18th) all hinted that the mid-summer wader return was already underway. On nearby Vange Marsh there were also 14 Black-tailed Godwit on the 27th and a Red Knot was with five Dunlin on Wallasea Island on the 12th. The first Yellow-legged Gull were at East Tilbury from the 20th with 20 counted by the end of the month. A Sandwich Tern was also at that location on the 27th. Two Little Tern were seen off Gunners Park on the 11th and 12th and a Black Tern there on the 14th. Mediterranean Gull established themselves further as a feature in summer in South Essex with dozens of birds along the sea front at Southend, counts of 28 on Canvey Island (12th), 100 at Gunners Park (29th) and 109 over Blue House Farm (Also 29th). Three Western Cattle Egret remained at Blue House Farm throughout the month. Two Common Murre (Guillemot) were seen off Canvey Island on the 11th and a single Short-eared Owl was seen on Foulness. Grasshopper Warbler continued to reel at Bowers Marsh and Canvey Wick and a singing Marsh Warbler at South Benfleet was a popular attraction with bird-watchers from the 9th to at least the 21st. Two Northern Raven and six Red-crested Pochard were at Hanningfield Reservoir on the 7th and Red Kite continued to circulate. Only one Red Crossbill (Belfairs on 23rd) was noted.

Mid-Essex

Abberton Reservoir continued to hold a single Great Egret and there were two Western Cattle Egret at Tollesbury. Also at Abberton Reservoir, two female Common Goldeneye remained throughout the month, a drake Garganey was seen on the 13th and a large number of Common Swift congregated over the water. A Western Osprey was over Shrub End on the 6th, a few Red Kite were seen while two Northern Raven were over Galleywood on the 22nd. Bradwell Gravel Pit near Coggeshall held a Wood Sandpiper on the 28th and 29th as well as breeding Little Ringed Plover, Sand Martin and Common Tern, and a summering Eurasian Wigeon. The Black Redstart were seen again in Maldon and Red Crossbill were noted over Copford (14th), Berechurch and Wivenhoe (22nd).

North-east Essex

At The Naze a singing Marsh Warbler on the 3rd and Blyth's Reed Warbler on the 5th were part of a national influx of both species. A Black Redstart was seen on the 1st and the 3rd and a Red-breasted Flycatcher and 17 Red Crossbill were there on the 8th. There were regular Mediterranean Gull sightings and a Eurasian Siskin moved through on the 13th. Nearby, Holland Haven had a Great Egret on the 2nd and seven Mediterranean Gull. At Hamford Water, Barnacle Goose dropped in on the 4th, a colour ringed and flagged *limosa* Black-tailed Godwit paid several visits from the 12th and the first *icelandica* race bird were noted on the 28th with 27 seen. The highlight at this site was the European Bee-eater on the 13th. Grey Partridge were seen inland at Thaxted and a brood of young Mandarin were recorded in Newport. Nine Red Crossbill flew over Mistley on the 8th. The last few straggling Brant Goose headed north past Frinton with 67 on the 2nd and four on the 3rd. A Black Swan was north offshore from Frinton with a bizarre sight of 73 Canada Goose. A Great Egret headed north on the 13th and there was a small migration of Common Swift on the 5th with 1461 noted along with a fine male Red-backed Shrike. A further 1,443 Common Swift moved through

on the 27th and on the 29th an astonishing total of 17,180 recorded south. Another 1,270 moved through on the 30th. Finches were also on the move with nine Eurasian Siskin on the 26th and 67 on the 29th with four Red Crossbill on 27th, 18 on 25th and 23 on the 29th. A Rosy Starling was at Colne Point on the 9th.

July 2019

Low pressure dominated the start of July and it was mainly cloudy with showers and longer rain spells. This pattern continued until 9th and was followed by high pressure over the south of the UK which resulted in sunny weather before moving off to the north. From 23rd, for a week, somewhat changeable conditions occurred before hot weather occurred over much of the country peaking at 37.8 °C (100 °F) in the southeast.

RSPB Rainham Marshes

With the trails reopening in mid-July, observations increased. An eclipse male Garganey was visible from the Ken Barrett Hide from the 18th and there were two more fly-overs by a White Stork on the 23rd and 24th. There were a few passage waders with Common Sandpiper, Green Sandpiper, Black-tailed Godwit, Whimbrel, a Common Greenshank (18th) and Turnstone (19th). Yellow-legged Gull numbers built up slowly with a peak of 55 on the 23rd and Caspian Gull were noted on the 7th, and two on the 23rd along with regular Mediterranean Gull sightings. A single Sandwich Tern on the 7th was the only tern species other than Common Tern. A Eurasian Spoonbill dropped in on the 15th continuing the good run this year and there were early Whinchat (12th) and Northern Wheatear (27th) seen along the river wall as well as five passage Eurasian Siskin on the 7th and a few Western Yellow Wagtail. Western Marsh Harrier and Peregrine Falcon were seen daily and there was a juvenile Merlin on the 31st. A juvenile Common Cuckoo was seen on several dates.

Metropolitan LNHS Essex

There was a good early wader passage at Walthamstow Wetlands with 12 Common Sandpiper and one Common Greenshank (1st), Black-tailed Godwit (one on 4th and eight on 19th), Whimbrel (14th and 16th), Eurasian Oystercatcher (16th), Common Redshank and Dunlin (19th), Little Ringed Plover (20th) and Turnstone (23rd). Four Western Cattle Egret visited the heronry on the 12th with two again on the 22nd. Willow Warbler and Spotted Flycatcher were early migrants and there was a Whinchat on the 18th. Common Greenshank (21st) and a good number of Common Sandpiper were also on the King George V Reservoir and an Arctic and Little Tern were both present there on the 27th with two Little Tern on the following day. Elsewhere there were Little Ringed Plover, Common Sandpiper and Green Sandpiper noted at Dagenham Chase and a Eurasian Curlew over Romford (11th) and Whimbrel over Wanstead Flats (22nd) pointed at further movement. At Gallions Reach there were 17 Black-tailed Godwit, eight Common Sandpiper, Sandwich Tern and two Arctic Tern on the 19th and generally there were good numbers of Common Sandpiper along that stretch of the Thames. Different adult Mediterranean Gull were seen at Dagenham Chase on three dates and two Great Egret were over Brook Farm Upminster on the 27th. A Common Quail was singing in North Ockenden on the 3rd. A Common Redstart was seen at Gilbert's Slade in Epping Forest on the 26th and the first Whinchat was on Tylers Common on the 11th. A few Eurasian Siskin were noted on the move as were, predictably, Red Crossbill with five at Ardleigh Green (2nd), 13 at Wanstead Park (6th), three at Dagnam Park (17th), one at South Weald (18th) and three in Epping Forest (20th). The Northern Raven resident at Kelvedon Hatch were seen occasionally drifting down towards Brentwood.

South-east Essex

Black-necked Grebe, three Eurasian Wigeon, Common Greenshank and Spotted Redshank were at Bowers Marsh and Vange Marsh which also played host to three roosting White Stork presumed to be from the Knepp rewilding project on the 22nd and surprisingly an unringed bird on the 23rd and 24th. This trio and a single has been reported from various Thameside locations. Western Osprey were noted over Hanningfield (7th) and Basildon (3rd) and a family of Northern Raven was at Tilbury on the 11th. Northern Raven were also seen out at Fleet Head and on Foulness. A Great Egret was on Wallasea Island (15th) and up to five Western Cattle Egret were still being seen around the Blue House Farm area suggesting they may be breeding locally. On the River Thames there was a good early count of 938 Black-tailed Godwit, 377 Pied Avocet and 81 Yellow-legged Gull at East Tilbury on the 23rd and two early Common Goldeneye and two Black Tern were seen off Canvey Point on the 31st. Mediterranean Gull were ever present in the outer Thames with dozens present along the seafront at Southend and aggregations that included over 100 anting above Coombe Wood on the 30th. A Little Gull was noted over Rayleigh on the 2nd, located by its call. The only Red Crossbill recorded were four over Boreham on the 1st and eight over Bowers Marsh on the 24th. The first local Whinchat was at Bowers Marsh on the 21st with more being seen from the 28th while a Northern Wheatear was at Gunners Park on the 30th.

Mid-Essex

Up to three Great Egret were at Abberton Reservoir and at least one Western Cattle Egret was noted there along with two Garganey (3rd), five Red-crested Pochard (12th), the three summering female Common Goldeneye and a (now traditional) mid-summer Ruddy Shelduck from the 26th. A single Eurasian Spoonbill was seen on the 1st and two on the 18th and four Mandarin Duck were noteworthy. Old Hall Marshes held up to seven Western Cattle Egret and four Eurasian Spoonbill along with ten Spotted Redshank amongst the other returning waders. A single unseasonal Brant Goose was seen on the 29th and European Turtle Dove were heard in the farmyard trees. A female Red-crested Pochard was on Lofts Farm on the 29th and there was an excellent record of a brood of Garganey near South House farm, Maldon, on the 18th. Just as exciting was the continued presence of the Black Redstart collecting food in Maldon. A Western Osprey was over Heybridge on the 20th and another Garganey was inland at Bradwell-juxta-Coggeshall Gravel Pit on the 12th where there was also a good passage of waders on 19th comprising 12 Little Ringed Plover, Green Sandpiper, Common Sandpiper, Black-tailed Godwit and two Dunlin. A flock of 27 Black-tailed Godwit dropped into Titchmarsh Reservoir in Writtle on the 9th. A family of Spotted Flycatcher were in Copford Church.

North Essex

There was still some movement to be noted from Frinton with four-figure Common Swift counts of several dates (including 4,328 on the 27th) and a steady southward movement of hirundines. Red Crossbill were regularly noted with 59 on 6th, two on 8th, 33 on 17th, three on 21st and ten on the 29th along with a few Eurasian Siskin and the first arrival of migrating warblers with ten Willow Warbler arriving on the 29th. Mediterranean Gull were moving with daily counts with 93 (14th) and 35 (13th) being the most notable. The first autumn Parasitic Jaeger (Arctic Skua) was seen on the 22nd and three Northern Fulmar were seen on the 31st. There were some good congregations of Sandwich Tern at the Naze and in Hamford Water. On the Tendring Coast waders seen, probably returning from the Arctic Circle, were 135 Sanderling, 62 Bar-tailed Godwit, 40 Whimbrel and 49 Common Greenshank on the 18th while the local Barnacle Goose flocks reached 124.

August 2020

The month started with cloudy and showery weather, resulting from low pressure. It turned warm, sometimes hot, over much of the country reaching over 30 °C in the south and parts of south-east England. More unsettled weather from the middle of the month produced long spells of rain. From the 19th it was frequently windy and wet with depressions coming in from the west and this and storms Ellen and Francis ensured these conditions continued up to the 25th for much of the country before cooler weather was felt in the last days of the month.

Rainham Marshes

Passage waders were light with a few Green Sandpiper and Common Sandpiper and a Wood Sandpiper showing well on the 15th. On the River Thames there were Pied Avocet, a few Black-tailed Godwit and a single Bar-tailed Godwit on the 1st. The immature Eurasian Spoonbill was seen throughout

the month, a Western Cattle Egret arrived on the 7th and five Western Cattle Egret were present briefly on the 19th. A Great Egret was seen on the 15th and was possibly the one summering on Dartford Marsh. The River Thames was very quiet with very few Common Tern and no addition to the notable movement past Tilbury in the first week of the month and the Sandwich Tern on three dates. A flock of 38 Arctic Tern headed purposefully through on the 25th. The occasional Western Yellow Wagtail, Northern Wheatear and Whinchat were reported and Tree Pipit (15th) and Red Crossbill (22nd) were part of the ongoing passage. A Garganey was noted on the 22nd and a Red Kite on the 3rd along with the resident Western Marsh Harrier and Peregrine Falcon.

Metropolitan LNHS Essex:

Walthamstow Wetlands continued with its early wader passage with Black-tailed Godwit (4th and 9th), Common Greenshank (10th) and Whimbrel (13th) amongst the regular Green Sandpiper and Common Sandpiper. Western Osprey passed through on the 27th and 29th and with a Western Marsh Harrier on the 3rd. A Great Egret flew through on the 8th and another was over the Ingrebourne on 7th. In the Lee valley the Greater Scaup remained with 2,000 Tufted Duck on the King George V Reservoir and Arctic Tern (18th) and Black Tern on the 29th and 31st added interest along with the usual waders. A juvenile Black-legged Kittiwake was on Seventy Acres Lake Holyfield (17th), and a Little Gull over Upminster (15th). Mediterranean Gull were noted by a few observers including a juvenile at Dagenham Chase on the 3rd. A Wood Sandpiper was a notable observation at Dagenham Chase on the 16th and 17th and a few other waders were noted on nocturnal migration including Green Sandpiper, Common Sandpiper, Eurasian Oystercatcher, Dunlin and Whimbrel. It was a good month for migrants from several sites especially Wanstead Flats, the Ingrebourne Valley and Walthamstow Wetlands. Highlights were: 27 European Pied Flycatcher from eight sites, 15 of which were at Wanstead Flats; 32 Tree Pipit from six sites including ten in the Ingrebourne Valley which included three ringed and 17 from WansteadFlats; 19 Common Redstart from six sites including seven at Wanstead Flats and six at Dagenham Chase. Most of these sites also held Spotted Flycatcher and Whinchat. The highest count of Whinchat was seven at Wanstead Flats on the 26th. This site also had a Common Nightingale which remained for three days from the 15th, Red Crossbill on 7th and a Short-eared Owl on the 25th and 26th. Another Short-eared Owl was in Roding Valley Meadows on the 13th. Other Red Crossbill were seen at Dagnam Park (1st), North Ockendon (2nd), Hornchurch (4 over on 8th) and Harold Wood Park (4 over on 16th) and a few Eurasian Siskin were also noted moving through the County. A Wood Warbler was at Dagnam Park on the 10th and a Grasshopper Warbler was at Gallions Reach on the 2nd. The latter site hosted a few terns along the Thames with Sandwich Tern on four dates, including 12 on the 3rd, several Arctic Tern, including 12 on the 29th, and Little Gull and Black-legged Kittiwake (both on 29th) were also seen. A Merlin was seen on the 25th and a female Northern Goshawk was noted (a previous autumn occurrence here) on 26th. At West Thurrock marshes there was a collection of 11 Turnstone, six Curlew Sandpiper, single Little Stint and nine Red Knot and the roving immature Eurasian Spoonbill on 30th. A Western Osprey was over the Ingrebourne Valley on the 24th and a party of seven Red Kite including juveniles were following a plough in Upminster on the 20th.

South-east Essex

Watching the River Thames from Canvey Island produced eight Great Skua and 60 Arctic Tern on the 29th and 12 Great Skua, 21 Parasitic Jaeger (Arctic Skua) and a Little Gull on 30th. Earlier in the month there were 60 Mediterranean Gull on 9th, 57 Common Scoter on 16th, 32 Arctic Tern on 22nd and 22 Arctic Tern on 24th and 26 Black Tern on 8th. At Tilbury and East Tilbury there were several very impressive tern counts made with a peak of 1,103 Common Tern on the 7th. However, similar numbers were not picked up either upstream or downstream on those dates, a pattern that now seems the norm but is still unexplained. Fourteen Arctic Tern on the 29th at Tilbury did, however, reflect the movement passed Canvey Island noted above. Pied Avocet at East Tilbury peaked at 908 (13th); single Curlew Sandpiper and Little Stint were seen on the 20th and Yellow-legged Gull reached a count of 47 on 13th. A flock of 19 Little Tern was seen off Wakering Stairs on the 8th. Up to seven Western Cattle Egret, mainly immature, were present between Fobbing, Vange and Wat Tyler and two Great Egret were on Wallasea Island on the 21st where there were also two Curlew Sandpiper from the 15th and a Wood Sandpiper on the 22nd. The South Essex Marshes still held the Black-necked Grebe at Bowers Marsh as well as the usual small numbers of genus tringa including five Spotted Redshank on Vange (8th) and a Wood Sandpiper on Bowers (31st). A Western Osprey was over the River Crouch and seen from several spots on the 8th and 9th and another was over Lower Raypits on the 24th and another lingered off Gunners Park Southend and Shoebury from the 26th. Short-eared Owl were seen around Tilbury and on West Canvey on the 25th and 29th and South Fambridge on the 30th. Merlin passed through four different sites from the 22nd with both males and females reported from Wallasea and Lower Raypits Canewdon. Northern Raven continued to be seen in the east of the area. Ten European Dotterel were on private land at Deal Hall on the 22nd and a Corncrake was heard near there on the 28th. A Garganey was at Blue House Farm on the 9th and two more were at Hanningfield Reservoir on the 3rd. Also at Hanningfield Reservoir were two Arctic Tern, Sanderling and Wood Sandpiper were seen on the 16th and Red-crested Pochard numbers peaked at 17 on the 21st. Western Osprey were seen there on several dates. Tree Pipit were over Rayne, Benfleet, Potton Island and Gunners Park, 17 European Pied Flycatcher were across seven sites and there were a good scattering of Whinchat and Spotted Flycatcher sightings too. Red Crossbill were seen over Gunners Park (8th) and Rayne (18th) but only one Common Redstart was recorded, at Mill Meadows Billericay on the 28th. Wood Warbler were noted at East Tilbury on the 13th and 17th.

Mid-Essex

The Great Egret increased at Abberton Reservoir to at least ten on 25th . There were 60 Little Egret in the evening roost and Western Cattle Egret peaked at seven including juveniles from breeding at the site for the first time. Red-crested Pochard increased to 13 by the 25th and an early Common Merganser (Goosander) was noted on the 20th while Mandarin and Ruddy Shelduck paddled the causeway margins and a Garganey was seen on the 5th and 27th. There was a good scattering of regular passage waders which included several Wood Sandpiper (peak count of four on 27th) and Curlew Sandpiper on the 10th, 24th and 27th. A Eurasian Spoonbill from the 24th was joined by a second on the 28th. Three Black Tern were seen on the 27th. At Old Hall Marshes up to seven Eurasian Spoonbill lingered throughout the month and the Western Cattle Egret flock there slowly rose to a peak of ten on the 26th. Amongst the waders were 42 Spotted Redshank and 60 European Golden Plover on the 14th and 27 Green Sandpiper and two Curlew Sandpiper on the 11th. The Black Redstart successfully fledged young in Maldon and Red Crossbill were noted over Copford (3rd) and Braintree (7th). The only European Pied Flycatcher were at Wigborough Church on the 26th when Spotted Flycatcher were also noted.

North Essex

European Pied Flycatcher featured at Frinton (2) and The Naze (2) and Holland Haven (1) on the 9th then at The Naze with 15 on the 15th, five on the 17th and singles on the 19th and 29th; and then at Holland Haven on seven more days with a peak of five on the 16th. Common Redstart were at Holland Haven on the 24th and at The Naze on 17th where an Icterine Warbler was seen on the 12th. Tree Pipit were over the Haven on the 16th and The Naze on 22nd when a Eurasian Tree Sparrow was also seen and both sites also recorded Red Kite. A Little Stint at Holland Haven lingered till the 22nd and a Wood Sandpiper was seen from the 14th with another on 24th. Curlew Sandpiper and a Eurasian Spoonbill were present on 23rd. A Long-tailed Jaeger and two Parasitic Jaeger (Arctic Skua) were seen moving south on the 29th. Seven wader species were noted on a nocturnal migration listen at Frinton on the 11th and seven European Pied Flycatcher were on the sea-front there on the 15th. Another European Pied Flycatcher was at Colne Point on the 17th and a Wryneck was at Kirby-le-Soken on the 22nd. Five Short-eared Owl were at Wigboro Wick Farm on the 31st and a Western Osprey was over Cattawade on the 27th.

September 2020

September began with a ridge of high pressure, but westerlies dominated from the 2nd. This brought a mixture of rain with brighter showery weather up to the 12th although the influence of high pressure was prevalent in the south. Mid-month saw hot conditions, especially in south-east England and settled weather up to 21st for most areas. Thereafter, it turned much cooler and less settled with high winds in parts of East Anglia on the 25th. Clear skies and a drop in wind saw frost developing in some areas.

RSPB Rainham Marshes

Wader passage continued to be slow with only a steady trickle of Black-tailed Godwit, Eurasian Curlew, Dunlin, Green Sandpiper and the Pied Avocet flock, along with a Curlew Sandpiper (9th), Red Knot (19th and three, 29th), Bar-tailed Godwit (three, 19th), Turnstone (29th), Grey Plover (19th), four Ruff and Jack Snipe (27th). River watching eventually produced two Northern Gannet, a juvenile Sabine's Gull (27th) and a Common Murre (Guillemot) (20th). There were only a few terns and no skuas seen and just a single Brant Goose (21st) and an early Common Goldeneye (18th). A Great Egret was seen on two dates and a single Western Cattle Egret dropped in on the 24th while two Common Crane that flew east on the 27th were tracked across the south-east. The immature Eurasian Spoonbill remained throughout the month although it occasionally wandered elsewhere. The only Red Kite was on the 17th and a ringtail Hen Harrier was quartering on the 26th and 27th with a Merlin also seen on the 26th while several Eurasian Hobby hunted the dragonflies. Duck numbers slowly rose with Eurasian Wigeon, Eurasian Teal and Northern Pintail arriving along with a Garganey on the 4th. Egyptian Goose were in double figures and a Barnacle Goose was also seen on the Targets. Finches were on the move throughout the month with several groups of Eurasian Siskin reported along with Red Crossbill (20th), Brambling (19th) and several Lesser Redpoll (18th). A late Spotted Flycatcher was seen on the 18th along with a juvenile Common Cuckoo and the traditional late September arrival of European Stonechat.

Metropolitan Essex (London Natural History Society area)

Passerine passage continued through the area. Common Redstart and Tree Pipit again featured prominently with eight sites accounting for 19 records of the former and six sites with ten of the latter. Wanstead Flats hosted European Turtle Dove (25th), Woodlark (17th), Eurasian Rock Pipit (21st), Short-eared Owl (25th), Brambling (28th) and the two Common Crane on their way to Rainham on the 27th. Unusually, waders were also recorded with Green Sandpiper and Common Sandpiper, Dunlin and Common Greenshank while a female Northern Pintail on the 30th was the first on this site since 1975. Whinchat were seen on almost any scrubby grassland patch with a record for Wanstead Flats of six on the 5th. At the end of the month European Stonechat were arriving in numbers and recorded at several sites with the highest count being 11 on the 28th at Wanstead Flats. European Pied Flycatcher were noted in Great Warley (8th) and Woodford Green on the 1st and 23rd where the same garden also held Common Firecrest (24th) and a Yellow-browed Warbler (29th). Spotted Flycatcher were seen at several sites well into the month and a Wood Warbler was at Belhus Woods on the 8th. The first Redwing arrived on the 27th over Hornchurch and Wanstead Flats. An early Ring Ouzel was at Walthamstow Wetlands (17th) and another Woodlark was at Weald Park (20th). Finch movements were notable with Eurasian Siskin dominating and recorded from many gardens and later in the month Lesser Redpoll were noted at several locations. A single Hawfinch was over the Ingrebourne Valley (6th) and seven Red Crossbill were over Weald Brook (4th). Hirundines were also noted moving south with a good garden count from Brook Farm Upminster of 639 Sand Martin and 273 Barn Swallow on the 10th when 23 Common Buzzard were also noted going south. Walthamstow Wetlands again fared well with Red-crested Pochard (2nd), Black-necked Grebe (one on 18th and two from 25th), Great Egret (7th) and a juvenile Northern Gannet (27th) that hit power lines, but survived and continued northwards where it was then seen over the King George V Reservoir. A male Blue-headed Wagtail (1st) and six Sandwich Tern (5th) were recorded at King George V Reservoir, while six Black-necked Grebe were on the William Girling Reservoir from the 23rd with a Curlew Sandpiper also there on 23rd. Northern Raven were seen over Romford, Upminster, Warley and Kelvedon Hatch. Western Osprey were seen over Gidea Park (1st), Upminster (8th) and Holyfield Lake(10th) and the Eurasian Spoonbill , presumably from Rainham Marshes visited Gallions Reach Beckton on the 2nd and 12th where river watching also produced Great Egret (20th and 26th), Black-legged Kittiwake (17th), three Sandwich Tern, 15 Common Tern, Little Gull and an adult Iceland Gull (25th). A Black-legged Kittiwake and an Arctic Tern were seen from the sewage works near Beckton on 26th.

South-east Essex

Seawatching off Canvey highlights were predominately over four dates: 16th, 81 Parasitic Jaeger (Arctic Skua), two Manx Shearwater and a Sooty Shearwater; 17th, Manx Shearwater, Western Osprey and seven Brant Goose; 26th, 111 Northern Gannet, Pomarine Jaeger and Sooty Shearwater; 27th, 725 Northern Gannet, 35 Parasitic Jaeger (Arctic Skua), Long-tailed Jaeger, 83 Great Skua, four Atlantic Puffin, 320 Common Scoter and a Merlin. A male Common Eider and the two roving Common Crane were seen on 28th. At Wakering Stairs a Leach's Storm Petrel and 50 Mediterranean Gull were seen on the 10th and at Gunners Park Shoebury a European Shag was seen on the 10th, 26th and 27th and 500 incoming Brant Goose on the 23rd. Four Northern Gannet were inland at South Fambridge on the 28th and at Coalhouse Fort on the 27th there were 184 Northern Gannet, 28 Great Skua, four Parasitic Jaeger (Arctic Skua), Common Murre (Guillemot) and Merlin. A roost of 94 Little Egret were on Two Tree Island (8th) and 63 were on Wallasea on the 21st when a Great Egret was also seen. Four Curlew Sandpiper (7th) and several Merlin were also seen on Two Tree Island and Short-eared Owl were noted at six sites including four at Wakering Stairs on the 10th. The Western Cattle Egret flock remained around the South Essex Marshes with six or seven recorded and two Great Egret were also noted regularly. Curlew Sandpiper and Little Stint were seen on Vange Marsh. A Glossy Ibis was seen briefly at Coalhouse Fort on the 30th and a Honey Buzzard over Rayleigh on the 6th was the most interesting raptor of the month. A flock of 62 Western Yellow Wagtail were at Stow Marsh on the 2nd. Merlin were encountered at South Woodham Ferrers and Blue House Farm on two dates while Northern Raven were seen there and also at East Tilbury. Whinchat were seen across the region (including ten on Bowers Marsh on the 2nd) as well as a good number of Spotted Flycatcher and at least six Common Redstart and a single European Pied Flycatcher (Bowers Marsh on 8th) and, as elsewhere, Eurasian Siskin were on the move with many small parties reported and the highest count of 240 though Gunners Park on the 23rd. A few Lesser Redpoll were also noted along with Red Crossbill over Rayne (eight on 20th) and Rochford (six on the 5th.) A Yellow-browed Warbler in South Woodham Ferrers was the first of the autumn on the 21st. Inland at Hanningfield Reservoir the Black-necked Grebe stayed throughout the month and Garganey increased to three by the 9th and Red-crested Pochard to 15 on the 29th. An Parasitic Jaeger (Arctic Skua) was a good record on the 25th and visits from Western Osprey on the 9th, 12th and 17th proved entertaining.

Mid-Essex

At Abberton Reservoir, Great Egret numbered at least 13 on 2nd but by the month end only five or fewer remained. Western Cattle Egret (12th), Eurasian Bittern (10th) and Eurasian Spoonbill (1st) were recorded while amongst the waders there was an arrival of 11 Curlew Sandpiper, Little Stint and Common Ringed Plover after rain on the 2nd. Spotted Redshank, Wood Sandpiper, Common Greenshank and Ruff added some interest. A Black Tern was seen until the 4th when Red-crested Pochard reached eight. The first Common Merganser(Goosander) arrived on the 7th. A juvenile Northern Gannet circling on the 10th was an unusual and interesting site record. The 'heron fest' continued at Old Hall Marshes with up to nine Western Cattle Egret and six Eurasian Spoonbill in the early weeks of the month and two Common Crane over on the 28th which were later seen heading upstream along the River Colne towards Wivenhoe. Seven Glossy Ibis over Wivenhoe on the 19th unfortunately did not land and a White Stork was in St Lawrence on the 10th. A Western Osprey

was on Geedon Saltings from the 7th and five Red Kite were together over fields at Boreham (9th). There were many Whinchat seen and southbound groups of Eurasian Siskin. The stormy winds brought in a Red-throated Loon inland at Russell Green on 27th and a Yellow-browed Warbler was in nearby Broomfield on the 13th.

North Essex

Passage at The Naze was good in the second half of the month with notable sightings on the following dates: 1st, four Brant Goose; 15th, Merlin, Pomarine Jaeger; 16th: 460 Eurasian Siskin, Eurasian Tree Sparrow; 18th, Leach's Storm Petrel; 19th, 88 Eurasian Siskin, Tree Pipit and Merlin; 21st, European Pied Flycatcher, Yellow-browed Warbler, Blyth's Reed warbler, 230 Eurasian Siskin, 71 European Robin and Short-eared Owl; 24th, Ring Ouzel; 30th, Purple Sandpiper. Holland Haven also fared well with a Red-backed Shrike on the 1st and Short-eared Owl being seen on several dates as they arrived in off the sea. Seawatching produced Manx Shearwater and Sooty Shearwater (17th), two Leach's Storm Petrel (18th), Pomerine Jaeger (19th) and Common Loon (Great Northern Diver) (27th). Several Common Redstart and Whinchat, migrating Eurasian Siskin, Ring Ouzel (22nd), Lapland Bunting (28th), Caspian Gull (23rd) and Hen Harrier and elusive Radde's Warbler (26th) added to a good month for the site. Western Osprey were regularly seen at Cattawade and Mistley Quay until the 11th. Six Short-eared Owl continued to be seen around Wigboro Wick Farm St Osyth with Merlin and Ring Ouzel also there on the 30th. Three Short-eared Owl were seen moving at Colne Point on the 6th and a flock of 12 Purple Sandpiper was reported at Dovercourt on the 17th.

Frinton-on-Sea

Observing the visible migration was highly productive this month. The following numbers are approximations and are more accurately shown in the Systematic List: 4,300 Eurasian Siskin with the highest daily counts being 572 (16th) and 878 (28th); 3,700 Barn Swallow including 1,081 on 9th; 2,150 Common House Martin including 989 on 5th; 2100 Meadow Pipit including 335 (9th) and 351 (20th); three Tree Pipit; 35 Grey Wagtail including 17 on the 20th; several Red Crossbill (6th, 9th, 20th); Brambling (27th); falls of Common Chiffchaff, Song Thrush, European Robin; falls of Dunnock including 34 (16th), 24 (21st), 39 (22nd); the first Redwing (19th); three Eurasian Tree Sparrow (9th); European Pied Flycatcher (22nd); Lapland Bunting (28th); Woodlark (27th); at least 14 Short-eared Owl; Western Osprey (10th); Merlin; several Western Marsh Harrier. Seabird counts included: two Eurasian Spoonbill (13th) ; Great Skua (17th); two Sooty Shearwater (17th); Manx Shearwater (17th) ; Leach's Storm Petrel (18th); 422 Brant Goose (19th); Pomarine Jaeger (19th); 16 Pink-footed Goose (24th); Pale-bellied Brant (26th). On 27th there was a notable movement of duck including 63 Northern Pintail, Common Goldeneye, 452 Eurasian Wigeon and 366 Common Scoter, along with 142 Northern Gannet. On 28th there were 240 Common Scoter, 181 Northern Gannet, seven Great Skua, Long-tailed Jaeger, Pomarine Jaeger, Greater Scaup, Atlantic Puffin, Common Eider, Red-throated Loon and Common Loon (Great Northern Diver).

October 2020

Unsettled conditions brought very strong winds and rain to England and Wales at the start of October and was the result of Storm Alex. From 4th up to 13th, it remained unsettled, winds changed to north or north westerly. Easterly winds and more settled weather occurred from 14th to 18th with widespread cloud. It then turned windy and very wet on following days with westerly and south westerly winds producing belts of rain although interspersed with brighter weather at times.

RSPB Rainham Marshes

Wildfowl and waders generally increased during the month with good numbers of Eurasian Teal and Eurasian Wigeon on the marsh and a few interesting waders amongst the Northern Lapwing, Common Redshank and Black-tailed Godwit with up to 22 Pied Avocet, Red Knot on two dates and the occasional report of Grey Plover, European Golden Plover, Turnstone, Ruff and Jack Snipe. Windy conditions on the 2nd brought four Little Gull upstream along the River Thames and a single Little Gull on the following day. Twenty-five Yellow-legged Gull were still around on the 8th and Caspian Gull and Mediterranean Gull were also reported. A single Barnacle Goose was seen with the Canada Goose flock on several dates but the only Brant Goose sightings were on the 2nd and 14th. A Common Goldeneye on the 16th was the sole record for the year. A Great Egret flew through on the 2nd and a Western Cattle Egret was seen on five dates up until the 22nd. A Northern Wheatear stayed until at least the 14th and the occasional Barn Swallow were seen. There was a visible migration of passerines with the 9th being the most notable with 1,128 Common Chaffinch, 28 Brambling, seven Lesser Redpoll, 24 Eurasian Siskin, Eurasian Tree Sparrow and Woodlark all recorded heading west along the river wall. The finch passage featured throughout the month and thrushes included Redwing and Fieldfare and a Ring Ouzel on the 29th. A Yellowhammer was a pleasing and irregular record on the 15th and a Yellow-browed Warbler on the 16th was a found on the river wall. A few Eurasian Rock Pipit and Water Pipit returned and a single Short-eared Owl was hunting on several dates from the 5th.

Metropolitan Essex (London Natural History Society area)

There was highly visible migration of finches and thrushes across the region. The 9th was the most significant date for Common Chaffinch with 435 through Wanstead Flats being notable and this was reflected by many garden watchers who also added Lesser Redpoll and Eurasian Siskin to their lists throughout the month. Some Brambling were seen amongst the moving flocks of finches and there was also a Hawfinch reported at Connaught Water and two over Upminster. Red Crossbill also featured well with 23 recorded from seven sites, all flying over. Woodlark were seen over Pole Hill in Epping Forest (12th) and three over Upminster (5th). Amongst the Redwing and Fieldfare on the move were Ring Ouzel over Chafford Hundred (12th) and North Ockenden (19th). Common Firecrest were noted at several sites and late Whinchat were on Wanstead Flats and Roding Valley Meadows until 9th. There were a few lingering hirundines including two Barn Swallow over Grays on the 26th. A Tree Pipit was on Chingford Plain (17th), Common Redstart were in Wanstead Park (6th) and Wanstead Flats (7th) and the last Western Yellow Wagtail recorded for the year was over Beckton on the 9th. A Dartford Warbler was on the Purfleet promenade on the 15th and a Yellow-browed Warbler was in Dagenham at Fords on 6th, followed by one at Dagenham Chase (9th-10th) and another in North Ockenden (19th). The eastern race Lesser Whitethroat on Wanstead Flats on the 25th and 26th was the scarcest autumn waif although, in a local context, the Corn Bunting there on the 24th was equally rare. Two Great Egret were tracked over Wanstead Flats and then Leytonstone on the 12th and another single was similarly tracked on the 27th. Three Jack Snipe on the 16th was unprecedented and there were further single of the species on the 19th and 24th. A Short-eared Owl as seen on the 6th and 7th while others were over Pole Hill (12th), Leytonstone (16th), Gunpowder Park Waltham Abbey (from 27th) and Walthamstow Wetlands (23rd). At the latter site two Black-necked Grebe remained throughout the month, a Black-legged Kittiwake and Northern Gannet were recorded on the 3rd and two Common Scoter on the 17th and 19th. A Great Egret flew through on the 26th and another was at Beckton Sewage Treatment Works on the 14th. There were ten Little Egret in Valentines Park Ilford on the 16th. A Western Cattle Egret was again touring the mid-Lee Valley with sightings at Cornmill and Hooks Marsh from the 8th and European Woodcock began to appear along with further Jack Snipe at Dagenham Chase on the 1st and 30th. Two Red-necked Grebe were on the King George V Reservoir on the 15th and there were regular Common Merganser(Goosander) and Common Goldeneye sightings there along with a Greater Scaup (25th), Black Redstart (18th and 26th) and a smart Eurasian Rock Pipit on the 26th. Another Common Merganser (Goosander) was a good patch record on Hollow Pond in Epping Forest from the 25th and 22 Barnacle Goose were unusual visitors to Fairlop Waters on the 22nd. Common Wood Pigeon movement south was notable late in the month including counts from the Upminster area: 8,000 (23rd), 14,353 (24th), 9,122 (25th) and 14,305 (27th).

South-east Essex

Finch passage was also notable in this area. Amongst the Common Chaffinch flocks were many Lesser Redpoll, Eurasian Siskin and a few Brambling and Red Crossbill. Yellow-browed Warbler were at Burnham-on-Crouch (14th), Gunners Park (13th-17th) and South Woodham Ferrers on 19th and a Pallas's Warbler was at Shoebury East Beach on the 18th. Common Firecrest were at several sites and a Black Redstart was in Hadleigh on the 14th. A Woodlark was recorded over South Woodham Ferrers on the 18th and Northern Raven were noted at several sites away from the coast. There were two Ring Ouzel reported on the Dengie Peninsula amongst the winter thrush arrival and a Great Grey Shrike was at Coryton from the 23rd to 28th while a Dartford Warbler was at East Tilbury on the 26th. An immature Eurasian Spoonbill was seen between Thurrock Thameside Nature Park and Coalhouse Fort on two dates and watching over the River Thames produced two Little Stint (1st), 28 Brant Goose on 2nd and 41 Brant Goose on 14th when 24 Common Scoter were also seen. Great Egret were seen at Bowers Marsh on 1st, 7th and 30th and the seven Western Cattle Egret around Wat Tyler Country Park were still being noted until the 18th. Another Great Egret was on Wallasea Island on the 3rd, 24th and 28th with two birds of the species around Battlesbridge from the 19th and one on Canvey Island on the following day. Wallasea only had report of ringtail Hen Harrier on 18th when Merlin and a flock of 43 Common Buzzard were seen the same day. A lone Whooper Swan was reported there on the 23rd. A group of 23 Common Buzzard were seen worm-hunting in a field with Northern Lapwing at High Roding on the 26th while a male Hen Harrier was seen at Coombe Wood (14th) and over Two Tree Island (15th) and a ringtail Hen Harrier on Foulness on the 25th. The most exciting raptor sighting was of a wild juvenile White-tailed Eagle seen over Hanningfield Reservoir on the 17th before making its way to Kent. Hanningfield Reservoir also held a Black-necked Grebe on the 22nd and up to 12 Red-crested Pochard. A Greater Scaup, Little Auk and 5,000 European Golden Plover were at Bradwell Bird Obs on the 18th and three Common Eider and a Common Merganser (Goosander) were pleasing records at Deal Hall on the 15th. Short-eared Owl were seen at three sites and 5,700 Brant Goose were counted off Wakering Stairs on the 16th. Watching the River Thames from Canvey Island was productive on some days, the 2nd being the best with Pomarine Jaeger, 24 Great Skua, 11 Parasitic Jaeger (Arctic Skua), Razorbill, Manx Shearwater, Northern Fulmar, 340 Northern Gannet, Sabine's Gull, Grey Phalarope, Purple Sandpiper, 20 Common Scoter and one European Shag. A Little Gull was seen on the 3rd and 40 Northern Gannet, 12 Razorbill and 45 Black-legged Kittiwake were logged on the 11th. On the 14th, 119 Northern Gannet, six Razorbill, 22 Common Scoter, two Common Eider and three Parasitic Jaeger (Arctic Skua) were seen. On the 16th there were four Common Eider, Little Gull and two Red-Breasted Merganser. A European Shag was seen off Gunners Park on the 1st and 16th and five Common Eider were there on the latter date when five Little Gull drifted through. Passage reduced after 16th when the winds moved to westerly.

Mid-Essex

Great Egret at Abberton Reservoir rose to 20 on the 22nd and then a staggering 38 on the 26th. The Old Hall Marshes Western Cattle Egret flock climbed to 16, seen on several dates and it is suspected that more were present. Abberton Reservoir attracted increasing wildfowl with Common Merganser (Goosander) numbers reaching ten by the 28th, a Long-tailed Duck arriving on the 24th and two Greater Scaup on the 30th. Red-crested Pochard numbered five by the 30th. There was a good selection of waders which included seven Little Stint (3rd) and a juvenile Pectoral Sandpiper on the 14th. Northern Raven were seen on a couple of dates and a Eurasian Bittern returned to the west end of the Reservoir from the 22nd. There were late Western Yellow Wagtail on the 3rd and Spotted Flycatcher on the 6th and Short-eared Owl and Merlin were seen on several dates. A hybrid Carrion x Hooded Crow was seen on the 28th. As elsewhere there was a notable finch passage across the region including seven Red Crossbill at Fingringhoe on the 23rd along with 110 Lesser Redpoll. Two late Common Redstart were at West Mersea on the 11th and two Whinchat and a Ring Ouzel were at The Hythe on the 7th while a Snow Bunting at Cudmore Grove took up residency from the 7th. A Purple Sandpiper remained at Cudmore Grove until 28th. A Great Egret on Northey Island on the 25th was the only one seen away from Abberton Reservoir.

North Essex

The Naze had another superb month of migration, many records due to the hard work of birders in a challenging location. Tree Pipit were seen on the 1st and 4th and Yellow-browed Warbler singles were noted on the 3rd and 4th and two on the 6th. A Pallas's Warbler was present on the 14th. Dusky Warbler were seen and heard on the 4th and 17th and amongst the overhead finch passage were 12 Red Crossbill (15th), Eurasian Tree Sparrow (26th) and a Ring Ouzel (14th). Merlin and Short-eared Owl were regularly seen and Spotted Flycatcher (4th), Common Redstart (4th) and several Common Firecrest added interest. A European Woodcock was not unexpected on the 15th and a Purple Sandpiper was on the breakwater on the 6th. Holland Haven was similarly productive with two Yellow-browed Warbler on the 3rd and singles on another six dates thereafter. Finch movement was heavy and Spotted Flycatcher (7th and 11th) and Common Redstart (3rd and 7th) added interest. Two Western Osprey drifted south on the 5th and Short-eared Owl were regularly seen. A Great Egret took up residence from the 23rd and a Western Cattle Egret on the 10th was only the second record for the site. Jack Snipe were seen on the 4th and 20th and the first European Woodcock was on the 17th with a Purple Sandpiper on the 26th and Leach's Storm Petrel offshore on the 2nd. Short-eared Owl were also seen at Colne Point where there was a Whimbrel and Common Firecrest on the 5th and 12 Red Crossbill on 6th. A Yellow-browed Warbler was in Clacton on the 6th. At Wigboro Wick Farm St Osyth there was a Yellow-Browed Warbler (4th) with a late Tree Pipit on the same day. A Yellow-browed Warbler was also seen at Harwich on the 16th. Two Coal Tit, presumed to be of the Continental race, were there on the 9th when two Woodlark were also seen. Further Red Crossbill, five over Gosfield (22nd) and six over Wix (27th), were recorded.

Frinton-on-Sea

Finches dominated the visible migration with month totals (and peak days) as follows: 11,462 European Goldfinch (2,480 on 9th), 1,759 Common Chaffinch (270 on 13th, 272 on 23rd), 5,143 Eurasian Siskin (754 on 5th, 918 on 7th, 694 on 9th), 1,981 Linnet (505 on 9th), 1,518 Redpoll (203 on 22nd, 201 on 23rd), 33 Brambling and 110 Red Crossbill. The supporting cast included 2,330 Meadow Pipit, 17 Short-eared Owl, 1,323 Barn Swallow, 1,543 Common House Martin (1,390 on 8th), 37 Grey Wagtail and 27 Eurasian Rock Pipit. Other notable sightings included: 3rd, Common Redstart; 5th, 87 Song Thrush, Tree Pipit (with another on 9th); 10th, Western Cattle Egret in from the sea, two Woodlark, six Eurasian Tree Sparrow; 11th, 995 Redwing; 16th, a large fall of Goldcrest and a single Common Firecrest, Yellow-browed Warbler. The bird of the month was a Dusky Warbler, which arrived on 16th and stayed until 20th. Conditions at sea were generally poor but a brief easterly wind early in the month produced two Leach's Storm Petrel, 118 Northern Gannet, 1,885 Brant, 438 Eurasian Wigeon, 346 Eurasian Teal and 5 Parasitic Jaeger (Arctic Skua) on 2nd, then a stunning 11,358 Brant south (out of a month total of 19,342). Wildfowl included 327 Common Scoter and 2 Greater Scaup. A Common Merganser (Goosander) and 4 Razorbill were notable sightings on 14th.

November 2019

The month opened with wet, windy and mild weather but from 4th to 7th it turned colder and more settled with a ridge of high pressure. Southerly and south-westerly winds blew from the 7th to 18th and brought mild weather and spells of wind and rain. The mild, unsettled conditions continued until 26th when it turned colder and settled; high pressure and cloud and widespread fog then further rain spread south on the final day of the month.

RSPB Rainham Marshes

Numbers of some duck species dropped with peaks of just 301 Eurasian Wigeon and 310 Eurasian Teal on the 15th although Northern Pintail rose to 31 and Shoveler leapt to 242 suggesting an influx of perhaps more local birds rather than those of continental origins. Dark-bellied Brant were seen

on several dates but with no more than three at any one time and two Barnacle Goose were noted sporadically with the Canada Goose. Wader numbers were static with low counts of Common Redshank and Dunlin but Pied Avocet did reach 41 on the 6th and Black-tailed Godwit to 380 on the 26th. Up to three Ruff were on the pools along with a few Common Snipe. Caspian Gull were seen on a couple of dates and a Eurasian Spoonbill popped in for a day on the 20th. A Short-eared Owl was seen on two dates and Northern Raven became more regular as they often do at this time of year. Western Marsh Harrier, Common Buzzard and Peregrine Falcon were encountered daily. Water Pipit and Eurasian Rock Pipit returned for the winter and a few mobile Corn Bunting were seen. A flyover Richard's Pipit on the 10th was the most notable passerine and brought a final touch of autumn.

Metropolitan LNHS Essex

The massive Common Wood Pigeon passage continued with concerted counting over Grays producing 37,326 on the 4th and another 30,000 during the next few days. Lesser Redpoll were a feature of the month with several settled flocks including 50 at Folkes Lane (27th), 50 on Wanstead Flats and over 70 at Gunpowder Park near Waltham Abbey. Parties of Red Crossbill were seen over Belhus Woods (3rd) and Upminster (23rd) but there was no visible finch passage. Common Firecrest were wintering at five sites with at least seven birds seen and, amongst a few scattered Eurasian Blackcap and Common Chiffchaff, a Siberian Chiffchaff was seen at Walthamstow Wetlands on the 25th. This site also hosted a Yellow-browed Warbler on the 19th and another daily from the 27th while another one was at Cornmill Meadows in the Lea Valley on the 14th. Another Siberian Chiffchaff was at Dagenham Chase on the 20th. Black Redstart were noted again at Walthamstow Wetlands (24th) and King George V Reservoir(4th) where there was also a good array of wildfowl including Greater Scaup (11th and 24th), Dark-bellied Brant and Horned (Slavonian) Grebe (7th), Common Scoter (8th), peaks of 18 Common Goldeneye and seven Common Merganser(Goosander), Black-necked Grebe (24th), Short-eared Owl through on the 9th and 10th, Eurasian Rock Pipit on three dates and a very notable Corn Bunting (9th). Two Short-eared Owl took up residency at Gunpowder Park Waltham Abbey from the 2nd. At Hall Marsh Scrape Waltham Abbey there was a Great Egret on the 7th and a Western Cattle Egret on the 28th and the first Eurasian Bittern was on Seventy Acres Lake Holyfield from the 4th. This wetland complex also held up to seven Common Merganser (Goosander) and the resident female Smew. At Walthamstow Wetlands the Black-necked Grebe stayed until the 3rd when a Eurasian Rock Pipit was also seen. A Black-legged Kittiwake on the 5th was unfortunately injured or unwell and taken into care. A single Yellowhammer in the Ingrebourne on the 12th was notable, in a site where counts of nearly 200 were formerly usual, and 12 Yellowhammer were seen on Orsett Fen. Two Bearded Reedling in the Ingrebourne Valley on the 6th were a pleasing local sighting. Barn Swallow were over Wanstead Flats on the 5th and 12th and a Western Cattle Egret was over Grays on the 6th. A Yellow-legged Gull was at Dagenham Chase on the 15th where a Jack Snipe was seen on the 20th. Eurasian Woodcock were put up at several boggy sites including Fairlop Waters where a small flock of European Golden Plover slowly increased to 26 on the 29th and where a Merlin was seen hunting on the 14th and 21st. Around the River Thames the only notable sighting were three Brant Goose on the 20th at Beckton Sewage Works. The 29th saw the start of an arrival of grey geese from the east starting with at least two Pink-footed Goose yipping over Brentwood in the cloud on the 29th followed by a single Greater White-fronted Goose at Walthamstow Wetlands and again at Wanstead Flats on the 30th. The adult Caspian Gull returned to Eagle Pond and Northern Raven were drifting around with several reports from the Lee Valley and the Brentwood ridge area with three over Tylers Common on the 18th and five over Weald Park on the 3rd. As per Red Kite, Northern Raven are now a part of the local avifauna.

South-east Essex

River watching on the Thames was productive late in the month. Gunners Park was particularly good between the 27th and 30th with 24 Red-throated Loon, Black-throated Loon (29th and two 30th), Common Loon (Great Northern Diver) (29 and 30th), 98 Northern Gannet (27th), peaks of 103 and 90 Common Scoter (27th and 29th), Greater White-fronted Goose, Common Eider, Great Skua, two Razorbill and Atlantic Puffin (29th) and three more White-fronted Goose two Pink-footed Goose , two Greater Scaup, Long-tailed Duck and Great Skua (30th). A Woodlark and 14 Barn Swallow headed south there on the 4th. Meanwhile at Canvey Point there were the following noteworthy days: 9th: 118 Common Scoter, Common Eider, Razorbill and 18 Northern Gannet; 26th: Black-throated Loon; 29th: Long-tailed Duck, 18 Common Scoter and Black-legged Kittiwake and 30th: Greater White-fronted Goose, two Greater Scaup and two Great Skua. Great Egret were still lingering around Vange Marsh with two seen around Wallasea Island, Paglesham Lagoon and on the River Crouch at Hullbridge. Two Western Cattle Egrets were on Bowers Marsh on the 23rd and up to ten were around South Woodham Ferrers on the 26th and 27th. A Eurasian Bittern was at Vange Marsh on the 14th and a Eurasian Spoonbill was once again at Thurrock Thameside Nature Park on the 1st along with a male Merlin. Three Barnacle Goose were on Bowers Marsh until the 26th, increasing to seven on the 29th. Another Barnacle Goose was with a flock of Dark-bellied Brant off Two Tree Island on the 4th and 15th and a Pale-bellied Brant was with flocks of Dark-bellied Brant at Stow Marsh (6th and 13th), Fleet Head (17th) and North Fambridge (29th). A Black Brant was with the latter flock and on the following day there were 55 Greater White-fronted Goose with 3,500 Dark-bellied Brant at Deal Hall. A flock of 21 Greater White-fronted-Goose was on Wallasea Island on the same day and a Pink-footed Goose was heard over Paglesham Lagoon on the 28th. Earlier in the month there were eight Pink-footed Goose over Stow Marsh and two Whooper Swan were briefly at Wallasea on the 4th. A male Hen Harrier and two ringtail Hen Harrier were seen regularly around this south east corner of the County along with several Merlin and Northern Raven. Another ring-tailed Hen Harrier headed into Kent over Shoebury on the 28th. Two Yellow-legged Gull were wintering at Hullbridge and a Caspian Gull was at Fleet Head from the 14th along with 40 Grey Partridge. Water Pipit were noted at Barling, Bowers, Hullbridge and South Fambridge and two Lapland Bunting and 70 Corn Bunting were at Stow Marsh on the 6th. Seven Common Firecrest were seen across four inland woods and a Horned (Slavonian) Grebe and 20 Common Goldeneye were at Hanningfield Reservoir on the 25th while a female Red-crested Pochard in Southchurch Park from the 12th was an interesting location, being other than Hanningfield.

Mid-Essex

At Abberton Reservoir Great Egret numbered 16 on the 4th and were still in double figures at the end of the month. A Great Egret newly colour-ringed in Lithuania was seen from the 4th. Up to five Western Cattle Egret regularly roosted and fed in the local fields and a Eurasian Bittern was seen on the 7th. Common Merganser (Goosander) peaked at 31 on the 27th and the single Long-tailed Duck increased to three from the 22nd. Two Red-necked Grebe were among over 1,000 Great Crested Grebe from the 11th and a Black-necked Grebe was seen on the 27th. Two Common Scoter (4th) and a female Greater Scaup and two Red-crested Pochard were present throughout the month. A male Hen Harrier was noted in the last few days of the month along with Western Marsh Harrier, Red Kite and Short-eared Owl, indicating a good rodent population around the periphery of the reservoir. Two Northern Raven were regularly seen throughout the month. The Western Cattle Egret flock at Old Hall Marshes moved to Salcott with up to 11 there on the 1st and another eight at Tollesbury on the 3rd. A Black Brant was with the Brant Goose flock at Salcott from the 29th and a Pink-footed Goose was there on the 22nd but there were no Greater White-fronted Goose seen. A single Tundra Bean Goose was at Russell Green on the 1st. Several Merlin were noted and Northern Raven also visited the area around Old Hall Marshes but there was only one Short-eared Owl sighting on the 28th. Two Common Loon (Great Northern Diver) were regular in the Salcott Channel. Two Short-eared Owl were on Mersea Island on 7th and one was in Brightlingsea on 4th while a Purple Sandpiper showed well at Cudmore Grove on the 1st and 6th. Passerines of interest were two Common Firecrest at Tollesbury (3rd) and a Snow Bunting there on the 29th and a Woodlark in a field near Alresford on the 3rd.

North Essex

The Naze produced regular Common Firecrest sightings including seven on the 7th and the third Dusky Warbler of the autumn on the 26th and 27th. A Merlin was seen on the 4th and 7th and ten Grey Partridge were, as always, a notable sighting. A Common Loon (Great Northern Diver) was offshore on the 29th and 11 Greater White-fronted Goose moved south on the 29th with eight more of this species and a single Tundra Bean Goose seen on 30th. A Yellow-browed Warbler was at Wigboro Wick Farm on the 5th, a Long-eared Owl was there on the 7th and a nice mix of five Tundra (Bewick's) Swan, four Greater White-fronted Goose and a Barnacle Goose on the 30th. A flight of 26 Pink-footed Goose headed over Mistley on the 19th and a late Western Osprey was fishing there on the 14th and 15th. A male Hen harrier was hunting around Hamford Water on the 23rd and three Greater Scaup and three Pink-footed Goose were there on the 29th. A Dartford Warbler was at Holland Haven from 4th -9th and a Short-eared Owl was there on the 10th. Also at Holland Haven were Velvet Scoter, Little Gull and Common Loon (Great Northern Diver) (14th) and Long-tailed Duck (19th). Two very late Barn Swallow were seen on the 22nd and Common Firecrest were noted on a couple of dates. At least 12 Greater White-fronted Goose arrived on the 29th along with nine Barnacle Goose and three Tundra Bean Goose. On 30th the White-fronted Goose flock had increased to 48 and up to seven Purple Sandpiper were regularly seen on the breakwater. A Mealy Redpoll was at Great Holland Pits with Lesser Redpoll on the 19th. A Merlin and three Green Sandpiper were at Ardleigh reservoir on the 4th and Northern Raven at Leez Reservoir. The latter sight hosted a flock of 55 Yellowhammer, a very high number in these times, on the 7th. 15 Red Kite in fields at Little Bardfield on the 19th indicated how common this species is becoming.

Frinton-on-Sea

There were several days when good movement of birds was seen offshore. Divers reached peak numbers for the second winter with 203 Red-throated Loon on 22nd, a Black-throated Loon later in the month, and five Common Loon (Great Northern Diver). Also recorded were Red-Necked Grebe on 23rd, 1,166 Great Cormorant on 26th and 1,504 on 28th, five European Shag on 5th and 354 Northern Gannet on 14th. The total of Common Scoter were 1,654 (including a peak of 412 on 22nd) and Little Gull numbered eight. Mid-month saw a heavy passage of 3,588 Great Black Backed Gull, peaking at 1,044 on 21st, whilst Great Skua were regularly observed during this time with a peak of 12 counted on 21st. Pomarine Jaeger were noted on 14th, 15th and 20th. Scarcer seaduck included Velvet Scoter on two dates and Long-tailed Duck on 28th. A strong wildfowl movement at the end of the month included peaks of 389 Shelduck, 833 Eurasian Teal and 346 Eurasian Wigeon. Greater White-fronted Goose totalled 45 and nine Tundra Bean Goose went over on from 29th to 30th.

The numbers of finch moving reduced as expected but there were still good monthly totals of 2,160 European Goldfinch (peak 392 on 4th), 1,139 Eurasian Siskin (peak 274 on 4th) and 567 Lesser Redpoll (peak of 114 on 16th). Observations of the migration also produced four Short-Eared Owl, 20 Red Crossbill, 13 Brambling, 39 Barn Swallow (last on 23rd) and 3,095 Starling. The on-shore area was generally quiet with just two Common Firecrest on 7th and a Snow Bunting on the beach on 20th.

December 2020

For the final month, colder weather occurred and it was generally unsettled with slow moving low pressure resulting in spells of rain and, on high ground, sleet and snow which in some areas reached lower levels. From 8th, it turned milder but was still somewhat wet. Bands of rain dominated from 13th to 23rd from the south and southwest with occasional brighter, windier weather. The last week became colder and there was wet and wind throughout from Storm Bella on Boxing Day. Conditions remained much the same to the year's end with snow penetrating to lower areas.

RSPB Rainham Marshes

There was an increase in numbers of wildfowl with Northern Pintail peaking at a very respectable 46 and Eurasian Wigeon at 1,260. Two Barnacle Goose were present throughout the month, as were the occasional Brant Goose but the reserve only had a single Greater White-fronted Goose (4th and 5th) despite the ongoing influx into the country. Three Tundra Bean Goose were present on the 5th. Dunlin numbers reached around 1,000 but the mild weather meant few waders were drawn in so Northern Lapwing remained low in number but Pied Avocet did hit 41 and Ruff six. Gull counting produced Caspian Gull on three dates: single on the 18th, six on the 23rd and four on the 31st, along with a few Yellow-legged Gull and the occasional Mediterranean Gull. Seven Western Marsh Harrier were present, Peregrine Falcon and Common Buzzard were seen daily and a female Merlin was seen on the 20th but only one Short-eared Owl was seen occasionally. The rarity of the month was a bugling Common Crane dropping in on the 23rd late in the day but this was gone by first light on the following day. Bearded Reedling were very elusive but there were good numbers of Eurasian Rock Pipit and Water Pipit around along with hundreds of Fieldfare in the last week of the year.

Metropolitan LNHS Essex

The Greater White-fronted Goose influx continued through the month. Singles on Wanstead Flats and Walthamstow Marshes stayed throughout the month and another joined the first at Wanstead Flats from the 18th. There were also two of this species over Chafford Hundred and one on Cornmill Meadows on the 1st, the latter staying until the 5th. Flocks of five and 16 were over Upminster on the 4th and 12th, 16 at Holyfield Hall Farm on the 1st increasing to 22 by the 5th and remaining into the New Year and a single was at Fairlop Waters on the 12th. The three Tundra Bean Goose from Rainham flew over Upminster when they left the reserve on the 5th. Common Merganser (Goosander) were seen at several sites with a peak of 14 in Weald Park, 15 at Connaught Water, eight on King George V Reservoir and 11 on Seventy Acres Lake Holyfield. The resident female Smew at the latter site was joined by a drake in the last couple of days of December and a single Eurasian Bittern was seen there irregularly and a Merlin on 2nd. The King George V Reservoir also held up to three male Greater Scaup, a pair of Northern Pintail, two female Red-breasted Merganser (28th) and a Black Redstart from the 30th. Other Black Redstart were seen at Holyfield Hall Farm (30th) and at Fair Play Farm in Upminster (18th) with 16 Yellowhammer in the hedges there on the same day. Six more Yellowhammer were noted at Nazeing on the 10th while up to 40 European Greenfinch roosting in Brentwood (London Road cemetery) is now a noteworthy event. Common Firecrest were found wintering in four regular spots and a few Common Chiffchaff and Eurasian Blackcap were recorded along with an influx of winter thrushes late in the month. The Siberian Chiffchaff was seen again at Walthamstow Wetlands on the 5th and 7th and the Yellow-browed Warbler surprisingly reappeared there on the 1st and 29th. Up to three Short-eared Owl were at Gunpowder Park Waltham Abbey throughout the month and others were found in South Ockendon and Upminster. Northern Raven and Red Kite were noted at regular spots. A Western Cattle Egret was seen regularly between Hooks Marsh and Cornmill Meadows at Waltham Abbey and a Great Egret flew through the wetlands on the 4th with another at Weald Park on the 2nd and 3rd. The adult Caspian Gull continued to draw admirers at Eagle Pond Leyton and a 1st winter was also seen on Wanstead Flats with others at Seventy Acres Holyfield Lake and Creekside Beckton Nature Reserve. Two 1st winter Mediterranean Gull on Wanstead Flats showed well from the 19th. On the River Thames there were 47 Pied Avocet and seven Yellow-legged Gull and a Water Pipit at West Thurrock Marshes on the 26th.

South-east Essex

Greater White-fronted Goose poured in from the continent in two waves and were recorded at nine different sites. Some lingered and others in flocks moved on or fed over wide areas. A single flew past Tilbury on the 1st and seven at Hanningfield Reservoir on the 2nd stayed until at least the 18th while seven over Stow Marsh and ten over Blue House farm on the 1st were also moving through. Four arrived at Bowers Marsh on the 2nd and had increased to 27 by the 3rd. In the area of RSPB South Essex Marshes reserves there were several counts of numbers of 40+ with a high of 48 on the 15th and seemingly two groups were present. Other goose species mixed with these flocks: seven Barnacle Goose from the 2nd and two Tundra Bean Goose on the 5th and 6th with another on the 30th. A flock of 104 Greater White-fronted Goose were at Bradwell on the 16th with 170 there on the 21st while in the Wallasea Island /Paglesham Lagoon /Fleet Head area there were initially 37 on the 1st

rising quickly to 128 on 8th, 270 on the 18th, 320 on the 28th and a staggering number for the County of 442 on the 30th. Three Tundra Bean Goose were at Fleet Head on the 5th and a single Pink-footed Goose was on Bowers Marsh on 2nd and in Benfleet Creek with several Dark-bellied Brant a Barnacle Goose and a Pale-bellied Brant on the 29th. Another Pale-bellied Brant was at Paglesham Lagoon where two Great Egret were also noted along with an immature Greater Scaup from the 25th. Great Egret were also noted across Wallasea Island, Fleet Head and Potton Island and another 2 were regularly on the River Crouch at Hullbridge and one fed in a field at Rawreth. Another Great Egret was around Bowers Marsh throughout the month and two Western Cattle Egret seen at West Canvey Marshes until the 6th were the only local sightings of this species during the month. At least two ringtail and an adult male Hen Harrier were patrolling the Wallasea area and another ringtail Hen Harrier was at Stow Marsh along with a Merlin on the 17th, where Common Greenshank and Whimbrel were seen on the 2nd. At Blue House Farm a Short-eared Owl on the 5th was the the only sighting of this species along with Water Pipit (6th) and Purple Sandpiper (15th). River-watching of The Thames from Canvey Island produced regular counts of Red-throated Loon with 40 on the 12th being the high while Great-crested Grebe were present in large numbers with several counts greater than 100 including 130 (7th) and 155 (29th). A Red-necked Grebe was with them on the 6th as well as Common Loon (Great Northern Diver) on the same day and another on the 27th. Two Black-throated Loon were seen on the 31st with European Shag on several dates and two Velvet Scoter on the 29th. A Common Loon (Great Northern Diver) was also seen off Gunners Park on the 12th and this site also held a European Shag. A Barn Swallow was seen flying south on the 2nd. Eurasian Woodcock were seen at dusk at several sites and a female Lesser Spotted Woodpecker was found at Hanningfield Reservoir on the 14th when nine Common Merganser (Goosander) were also seen. A Black-throated Loon on the 30th was a great inland find. There were three Dartford Warbler wintering between Thurrock Thameside Nature Park and Coalhouse Fort and four Black-legged Kittiwake were seen on the River Thames heading upstream on the 19th. Common Firecrest were reported at three sites and there were Black Redstart at Wallasea Island (14th) and Thorpe Bay where a male entertained from the 8th- 15th.

Mid-Essex

The goose influx continued with nine sites reporting Greater White-fronted Goose on the 1st. A single at Abberton increased to three on 2nd when four were at Russell Green and three were recorded over Boreham. Nine of the species were inland at Bradwell Gravel Pits on the 6th increasing to 12 on the 13th, and seven were at Old Hall on the 7th. Eleven passed over Alresford also on 7th, 30 were at Brightlingsea on the 10th, 13 at Ulting on the 10th and 13 over Copt Hall on the 16th. On 17th the numbers of the species increased further with 25 at Abberton Reservoir that became 31 by the end of the month and 65 were over Mersea Island on the 31st. Unsurprisingly Tundra Bean Goose were also noted with five at Abberton on the 1st increasing to six at the end of month. A single Tundra Bean Goose was with Greater White-fronted Goose at Bradwell Gravel Pits on the 13th. Two Black Brants were seen around the Old Hall/Salcott area and two more were noted on Mersea Island. Two Pale-bellied Brant were also seen. At Abberton Reservoir up to nine Great Egret and four Western Cattle Egret were present throughout the month and there were occasional sightings of Eurasian Bittern. Three Long-tailed Duck, two Greater Scaup and six Tundra (Bewick's) Swan were present almost throughout the month and Common Merganser (Goosander) peaked at just 24 and the only Smew was a female arriving on the 28th. A Red-necked Grebe was present throughout and a Black-necked Grebe was seen from the 28th. A male Hen Harrier was seen on a few occasions and what was probably the same male was at Copt Hall while the pair of Northern Raven seemed to be settling into the area and probably were the birds seen between Abberton Reservoir and the Colchester suburbs. A Caspian Gull was found on 2nd and a Eurasian Rock Pipit proved obliging on two dates. Two Great Egret were also seen at Old Hall Marshes and a female Long-tailed Duck and up to three Common Loon (Great Northern Diver) and 28 Red-breasted Merganser were regular in the Salcott Channel with a Greater Scaup there on the 2nd when Short-eared Owl and 12 European Stonechat were also noted. Three Jack Snipe were at The Hythe (30th) and 11 Common Merganser (Goosander) were on that stretch of the Colne as far upstream as Alresford while a Pale-bellied Brant was with a flock of Dark-bellied Brant Goose at Brightlingsea on the 24th. A Great Egret there on the 29th increased to three on 30th when they moved onto the Geedon Saltings. Three Great Egret were also seen at Boreham on the 29th. Common Firecrest were seen in Wivenhoe (4th) and Alresford (26th) and Northern Raven were seen quite regularly over the valley. A Eurasian Tree Sparrow was an unusual record at Cudmore Grove Country Park on the 16th and at the east end of Mersea Island there were a Short-eared Owl (15th), Great Egret (28th) and Purple Sandpiper on several occasions. At West Mersea there were some productive days of sea-watching in the mouth of the River Blackwater with six Red-breasted Merganser, Common Loon (Great Northern Diver), Black-throated Loon, Red-necked Grebe, three Common Eider and two Mediterranean Gull on the 9th and a similar selection on the 28th when 310 Great-crested Grebe, three Common Loon (Great Northern Diver) and two Horned (Slavonian) Grebe were also seen along with a European Shag on the 27th. At Tollesbury there were three Red-necked Grebe, a single Horned (Slavonian) Grebe, ten Common Scoter and 20 Red-breasted Merganser on the 13th. A female Greater Scaup was seen at Lofts Farm on the 2nd and 25 Yellowhammer were around Leez Reservoir on the 15th.

North Essex

Holland Haven recorded excellent numbers of goose with the first wave of 119 of Greater White-fronted Goose on the 1st being present on 2nd with 13 Tundra Bean Goose. Goose species were present on most of days in the month but it was unclear how much turnover there was. A flock of 111 arrived off the sea on the 6th and 70 were present on the 27th. Two Tundra Bean Goose were again noted on the 27th and 28th and a single Pink-footed Goose also joined them. At Howlands Marsh there were 17 Greater White-fronted Goose on the 1st and 32 on the 6th At Wigboro Wick Farm 16 on 1st increased to 24 on 2nd and may have been the same group , and seven stayed until the 16th with a solitary Tundra Bean Goose. On 17th there were 30 Greater White-fronted Goose at St Osyth also with a single Tundra Bean Goose. A flock of 112 Greater White-fronted Goose were on the River Stour at Dedham on the 21st where there were three Mandarin Duck on the 26th. In Hamford Water there were 48 Greater White-fronted Goose on the 11th and 85 on the 21st and a Merlin, 12 Western Marsh Harrier and a male Hen Harrier were in the raptor roost on the 11th. Seven Purple Sandpiper were seen along the Holland sea-front and this site also held Merlin, colour-ringed European Shag (10th) and a Caspian Gull (29th) while Colne Point had a fine male Hen Harrier (1st), five Grey Partridge and also a Caspian Gull (28th). Merlin were seen at several other sites along the coast including The Naze where there was also a Purple Sandpiper, Black-throated Loon and Short-eared Owl (5th), four Common Firecrest and nine Common Eider (6th) and a solitary Snow Bunting (12th). Along the River Stour there was a Common Loon (Great Northern Diver) off Wrabness on the 9th and a Short-eared Owl there on the 11th. Inland there were two Common Firecrest and 23 Red Kite around Clavering (2nd), numerous Northern Raven sightings and two Great Egret in a ditch at Bocking on the 19th while a Great Grey Shrike was reported from Elmstead on the 18th.

Frinton-on-Sea

Offshore movement was noted with five Tundra Bean Goose on 2nd, and peaks of 111 and 130 Greater White-fronted Goose on 6th and 8th respectively (the former then moved to Holland Haven). Otherwise it was fairly quiet with European Shag on 3rd and 14th, small numbers of Northern Gannet (peak 44 on 13th), Common Scoter (145 on 23rd) and small numbers of auk species until the expected influx of Red-Throated Loon which peaked with 519 south on 22nd (when also a site record of 70 Great-crested Grebe was recorded) and 549 on 24th. The latter day also produced 116 Black-legged Kittiwake, seven Northern Fulmar, four Great Skua and a Razorbill. Single Common Loon (Great Northern Diver) were noted passing on five dates.

The Society records its thanks to the Met Office for the weather information.

Systematic List 2020

Introduction

In all, a total of 251 species was recorded in 2020, approximately 64% of the Essex List, which remains at 394 species. This compares with 261 species recorded in 2019 and 264 in 2018.

The only abbreviations used in the Systematic List are

♂ for male (and ♂♂ for males) and ♀ for female (and ♀♀ for females).

BTO – British Trust for Ornithology

DEFRA – Department for Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs

The following books may be referenced in the text:

- M. Dennis 1996 – *Tetrad Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Essex*. Mike Dennis. Essex Birdwatching Society 1996
- S. Wood 2007 – *Birds of Essex*. Simon Wood. Christopher Helm, London 2007

Places names have been standardised. The full names and descriptions of sites mentioned in the text can be found in the Gazetteer. The Systematic List follows the generic order within the BOURC British List 9th Edition (2017) together with changes published in BOURC Reports since.

International World Bird List name are now used, but where significantly different to the more commonly recognised English name, this is also given.

Trinomial Latin names (*e.g. Burhinus oedicnemus oedicnemus*) are, where applicable, used and those sub-species occurring within Essex are identified wherever possible. In some cases, the identity of sub-species occurring in the County is uncertain and this is mentioned in the individual status lines (see below). Where it is not known which sub-species is occurring in the County, the Latin name is marked with an asterix * *e.g. Phasianus colchilus**

In the body of the Systematic List, you will notice the **statistics**, which are depicted as coloured numbers and letters, as shown in the species' headings below:

Great Auk *Pinguinus impennis* — UK EX REX
Vagrant, especially after alcohol. — EBSIP (3, 2, 5)
Passenger Pigeon *Ectopistes migratorius* — UK
Vagrant, although no records for 200 years. — BBRC (5, 0, 5)

Legend

UK denotes a UK Red List species; Birds of Conservation Concern 4 (2015)

UK denotes a UK Amber List species; Birds of Conservation Concern 4 (2015)

EX denotes one of the five Essex Biodiversity Action Plan species (Bittern, Grey Partridge, Stone-curlew, Song Thrush, Skylark)

REX denotes one of the Essex Red List species

BBRC (5, 0 5) – the species requires a description that should be forwarded to the British Birds Rarities Committee

EBSIP (3, 2, 5) – the species requires a description that should be forwarded to the Essex Identification Panel
(See The Essex List and Submission of Records in this report.)

In both instances above the figures in brackets (1, 2, 3) refer to -

1. the total number of Essex records up to and including those detailed in the *Birds of Essex* [Wood 2007], together with any records for that period subsequently accepted by BBRC/BOURC or EBSIP. The numbers relates to the number of individuals not the number of records, so for example a flock of three Ring-necked Duck would be recorded as three records, not one. Also, individuals recorded in several years e.g. a returning Red-breasted Goose or Black Brant, are only counted the first time of occurrence, not each and every time they arrive.
2. the total number of records since the *Birds of Essex* [Wood 2007] up to and including those in 2018.
3. the total number of Essex records to the end of 2020.

For some rapidly increasing species, or widely wandering and long-lived species these figures are often no more than a best guess given the difficulty in establishing just how many individuals may be involved.

Records are not published in the *Essex Bird Report* until accepted by the British Birds' Rarities Committee (BBRC) or British Ornithologists' Union Records Committee (BOURC).

Note that where a species has **EBSIP** but no numbers after it in brackets, the species has either recently bred and/or is too common to be able to assess actual numbers occurring, but none-the-less a description is still required by the Identification Panel.

Beneath the species' English and Latin names is a brief description of the species and its sub-species (where appropriate) within the County. The following broad definitions are used -

Abundant	occurs in large numbers in suitable weather and habitat.
Common	occurs regularly or is widely distributed in suitable habitat.
Fairly common	occurs in small numbers in suitable habitat and season.
Locally common	occurs in small numbers but restricted to specific habitats.
Uncommon	occurs annually in small numbers.
Scarce	2-10 records annually or restricted to specific habitats.
Very scarce	1-2 records each year.
Rare	occurs less than annually.
Very rare	11-20 records in the past 50 years.
Vagrant	ten records or less during the past 50 years.

Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) tables are provided for certain species, the monthly totals being derived from the mid-monthly Wetland Bird Survey counts. In the top left of each table are two numbers. These are, firstly, in blue (*e.g.* **GB 700**), the qualifying level for a site to be of National importance, and secondly, in red (*e.g.* **IN 2,500**), the qualifying level for the site to be of International importance (as assessed by the Wildfowl and Wetland Trust).

Where a monthly count at a particular site is above the GB threshold then that count is highlighted in blue, e.g. **1,234,** whilst if it exceeds the International threshold then it is highlighted in red, *e.g.* **5,678**.

The letters 'nc' denote that no count was made or, if it was, that no details were received for that month, whilst a zero indicates that the species was not present. Where **WeBS Total** appears in a table, the figure represents the summed total for that month for all Wetland Bird Survey localities, including sites that may not be listed in the table. Figures for the Stour Estuary include counts for the whole estuary, including the Suffolk shore, in order to include birds that feed in Essex but use Suffolk roosts at high tide when the counts are generally made.

Data were supplied by the Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS), a partnership between the British Trust for Ornithology, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the 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 and Wetland Trust.

Although Wetland Bird Survey 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 Wetland Bird Survey data, enquiries should be directed to the WeBS team at the British Trust for Ornithology, The Nunnery, Thetford, IP24 2PU (**webs@bto.org**).

2019 WeBS tables correction

Due to an error in the extract of WeBS data, figures shown in the WeBS count tables in *Essex Bird Report* 2019 for the Stour Estuary were incorrect: the actual figures for that estuary should in all cases be half of the number shown (with a corresponding reduction in the totals). This correction applies to every species for which Stour Estuary WeBS figures were given.

Due to changes in the generic order, the Systematic List is prceceded with an index of species.

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Systematic List 2020

BRANT GOOSE *Branta bernicla* UK REX

Dark-bellied Brant *Branta bernicla bernicla*

Very common passage migrant and winter visitor.

Inland reports in the first winter came from: Walthamstow Wetlands, one on 6th January; Abberton Reservoir, 1-2 on a few dates in January; King George V Reservoir Chingford, one on 25th March and 2nd April; Woodford Green, an impressive group of 33 flying over on 24th March; Kelvedon, two flew north-west on 11th April; Hazeleigh Wood, seven flying over on 24th April. The concentration of inland records during the spring departure period is typical. In the closing months one was at Abberton Reservoir on various dates from 10th November to 15th December, two flew over Brook Farm Upminster on 27th September and one was at King George V Reservoir Chingford on 6th November.

The only records received from the Inner Thames in the first winter were a single at East Tilbury on 18th January, four nearby at Coalhouse Fort on 19th January and, at Rainham Marshes, singles on 14th March and 2nd April and ten on 25th March. In the second winter the same areas produced more records and higher numbers, with reports on six dates from the Tilbury area and on nine dates from Rainham Marshes. The highest counts were 28 at Tilbury on 2nd October and 46 at Coalhouse Fort East Tilbury on 30th November. At Rainham Marshes the maximum was just three, on 29th November, these three (presumably) also being seen at Beckton Sewage Works on 20th November.

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts were:

GB 980 INT 2,000	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total	**26244**	**22851**	**16176**	**572**	**7**	**3439**	**15181**	**19365**	**14619**
Stour Estuary	718	nc	316	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	**3334**	**2048**	**1112**	nc	nc	0	602	**1143**	**2335**
Holland Haven	120	0	0	nc	0	0	0	0	95
Colne Estuary	**2887**	917	**1075**	nc	0	22	686	**1548**	549
Blackwater Estuary	**4680**	**4760**	**7005**	122	0	0	**1229**	**4684**	**3473**
Dengie	**1740**	nc	**1687**	nc	0	0	750	**3000**	**1530**
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	**7972**	**7995**	**1484**	nc	0	0	124	1134	2270
Foulness/Thames	**4793**	**7131**	**3497**	450	7	**3417**	**11790**	**7856**	**4367**

See Introduction for details of a correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

It can be seen from the table that there was no repeat of the exceptional influx to the Thames Estuary (and Foulness Island in particular) recorded in the autumn of 2019. While that area again saw the main October arrival, numbers were little more than one third of those in the previous year. Across the County, numbers in the second winter were back to those in 2017 and 2018, with the absence of counts from the Stour Estuary accounting for the slight dip (by comparison with those years) in the overall County totals in the closing months.

As in 2019, very few non-WeBS counts of the larger flocks were received. Approximately 4,000 were estimated to be at Burnham-on-Crouch on 30th January and 3,000+ at Deal Hall Dengie on 8th November. Elsewhere, apart from the coastal passage movements reported below, no other non-WeBS counts exceeded 2,000.

Counts of juveniles came from the same two observers as in 2019 and indicated a wide variation between different sites. At Shoebury, Deal Hall Dengie and North Fambridge, very healthy figures of 27.3%, 26.6% and 24.1% juveniles respectively were found (DLo). However in two flocks at Old

Hall Marshes only 9.9% and 6.5% were found (DLo), while in a flock at Colne Point only 7.4% were found (CBa).

For the fourth year running, reports of late spring birds came from ten sites in the last 12 days of May. Several of these do reflect regular observer coverage year on year but the consistency in the number of sites involved is still striking. The largest of the lingering groups were 250 at Two Tree Island Leigh-on-Sea on 16th May and 267 at Steeple on the following day. At Frinton-on-Sea the peak northward movement in this period was 223 on 22nd May. Typically, this latter passage continued into very early June, with 141 on 1st, 67 on 2nd and a final four on 3rd. Otherwise June/July produced singles on several dates at Colne Point and Old Hall Marshes, with further sightings of what could have been the same two singles at East Mersea on 1st June and 24th June, Lawling Creek on 7th June and Steeple on 7th July.

In August, two at Old Hall Marshes on 3rd were no doubt summering but seven on Foulness Island on 16th were possibly very early returning birds. At Frinton-on-Sea the first three flew south on 2nd September and there was one at Gunners Park Shoebury on the following day. A week's lull followed until four were seen at Wakering Stairs on 10th, after which a trickle slowly built into something more substantial in the third week of the month, when there were 422 past Frinton-on-Sea on 19th and 137 at Canvey Island on 20th, these being followed by 500 at Gunners Park Shoebury and 300 at Two Tree Island Leigh-on-Sea, both on 23rd.

As usual the main autumn arrival was in October. The largest counts (in great measure no doubt a reflection of some impressive observer effort) came from Frinton-on-Sea, where 1,889 on 2nd were followed by a spectacular 11,374 on 3rd – the sixth five-figure day-count at that site by the observer (see *Essex Bird Report 2017 page 169*). This year that movement included a single flock of 2,000. Later passage past that site included 2,505 on 12th and 2,790 on 14th. In the Thames Estuary, where the largest early autumn gatherings are often noted, no substantial October totals were reported outside the Wetland Bird Survey counts, the highest being 1,300 at Gunners Park Shoebury on 8th and 1,500 at Two Tree Island Leigh-on-Sea on 11th.

Pale-bellied Brant *Branta bernicla hrota*

Uncommon winter visitor.

In the first winter, numbers improved only slightly on the poor showing of the previous autumn. Reports came from: Mersea Island, two on 12th January and one on 7th and 9th March; Heybridge, one on 5th January; Foulness Island, up to two on four dates, 13th January-13th March; Stow Marsh South Woodham Ferrers, four on 10th January.

In the second winter the sub-species was more widespread, though again in low numbers. Reports came from a dozen sites ranging from Kirby-le-Soken in the north to Benfleet on the Thames Estuary. The earliest flew past Frinton-on-Sea on 26th September, followed in October by singles at Wakering Stairs on 18th and Tollesbury Wick on 22nd. All reports were of single birds apart from two at various points on Mersea Island from 16th November, with three at East Mersea on 22nd December, and two at Paglesham Lagoon, also on 22nd December.

Black Brant *Branta bernicla nigricans*

Rare winter visitor. EBSIP

Birds which had been reported in autumn 2019 probably accounted for all the birds seen in the first winter which were as follows (singles unless stated): Mersea Island, on four dates between 12th January and 21st February; Bradwell Bird Observatory, 5th January; Foulness Island, 13th January; Blue House Farm, 9th March; Stow Marsh South Woodham Ferrers, two on 10th January.

Similarly, the birds seen in the second winter were all very possibly returning birds. Apart from one on Foulness Island on 13th December, all reports came from Mersea Island/Old Hall Marshes/Salcott-cum-Virley, on a number of dates from 16th November to the year end. All reports were of singles until two were seen on Mersea Island on 19th and 29th December.

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis canadensis*

Common, naturalised, resident.

Confirmed breeding was reported from 40 sites (55 in 2018, 46 in 2019), a reduction probably due to first lockdown restrictions. No full breeding survey reports were received from Rainham Marshes, Bowers Marsh, Blue House Farm or Old Hall Marshes, while on Foulness Island only four breeding pairs were found (22 in 2019). The only major site to produce a full count was Walthamstow Wetlands, where 25 pairs reared 20 broods. At least 6-7 broods were found at Wanstead Flats and there was a crèche of 30 young at Hainault Forest on 12th May and another of 36 at Fairlop Waters on 30th May. Four broods were found at Warren Gorge Chafford Hundred and five at Belhus Woods Aveley but no other site reported more than three broods.

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts were:

GB (600)*? INT?	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total	**2699**	**1834**	**1118**	**125**	**2699**	**2956**	**1901**	**1138**	**3000**
Stour Estuary	2	nc	10	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	2	1	4	nc	nc	0	29	0	0
Holland Haven	3	2	0	nc	0	0	0	0	1
Colne Estuary	15	19	15	nc	0	0	0	18	0
Blackwater Estuary	167	80	69	35	180	171	433	163	134
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	540	354	132	nc	313	**636**	190	209	**1339**
Foulness/Thames	**751**	533	358	0	385	**897**	**890**	457	**688**
Abberton Reservoir	160	102	6	30	578	361	37	87	78
Hanningfield Reservoir	281	128	54	nc	595	287	110	20	296
Lee Valley	224	202	153	32	186	302	195	184	154
Other	554	413	317	28	462	302	17	0	310

See Introduction for details of correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

Counts of 350+ not included in the above figures were as follows (only the highest site count being given in each case): Cattawade, 400 on 1st December; Bradwell-juxta-Coggeshall Gravel Pit, 418 on 20th September; Blue House Farm, 560 on 15th December; South Fambridge, 500+ on 12th December; Wallasea Island, 600 on 8th July and again on 6th December; Paglesham Lagoon, 565 on 6th September; West Canvey Marsh, 350 on 28th October; Bowers Marsh, 500 on 29th November; Rainham Marshes, 480 on 8th November; Wanstead Flats, 377 on 27th July. The similarity of the counts at the sites along the Crouch and Roach estuaries points to the same flock being involved in many of them. In addition, counts of 250 or more were received from Heybridge Basin, Walthamstow Wetlands and Seventy Acres Lake Holyfield.

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis* UK

Scarce winter visitor but fast increasing naturalised population.

There were again no reports of confirmed breeding but the naturalised flock in Hamford Water had almost tripled in size from 2019, peaking at 124 on 19th July. Elements of this flock no doubt accounted for records of up to eight at sites in the north-east of the County in the summer months. Elsewhere in that season, three at Abberton Reservoir in late May, up to three at Bowers Marsh in June and two at Fairlop Waters in July, along with singles elsewhere, were probably of even more dubious origin.

In the first winter the only double-figure counts away from Blue House Farm (see Barnacle/Canada Goose below) were ten, which commuted between West Canvey Marsh and Bowers Marsh in the first three months of the year, and 12 flying north past Frinton-on-Sea on 19th March.

In the second winter, away from Blue House Farm, there were no double-figure counts but a flurry

of records in late November/early December coincided with a marked influx of Greater White-fronted Goose and conceivably points to a small arrival from the Netherlands of the present species (or, perhaps a localised movement from Hamford Water). The largest groups were nine at Holland Haven on 29th November, up to eight at Old Hall Marshes in December, three at Bradwell Power Station on 1st December and up to seven at Bowers Marsh in early December, with singles being seen at several other sites.

BARNACLE/CANADA GOOSE *Branta leucopsis/canadensis*

The hybrid flock at Blue House Farm peaked in the first winter at 20 on 24th March and in the second winter at 39 on 17th December. In both periods the obvious hybrids were accompanied by varying numbers of apparently pure-bred Barnacle Goose. No less than 20 appeared to be pure-bred in late March/early April, an unlikely time for wild immigrants. Unless the birds are sporting rings fitted at Spitzbergen, they are assumed to have originated from much closer to home.

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser anser*

UK Common, naturalised, resident.

Confirmed breeding was recorded at 28 sites (30 in 2020). No full breeding reports were received from Rainham Marshes, Wallasea Island or Old Hall Marshes. The highest breeding count came from Walthamstow Wetlands, where there were 21 broods on 1st June. At Bowers Marsh "numerous" broods were reported on 6th June. All other counts were of 1-4 broods.

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts were:

GB 1,400*	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS Total	**1796**	**1073**	**663**	**65**	**738**	**623**	**1017**	**1141**	**2063**
Hamford Water	441	122	263	nc	nc	0	150	0	0
Holland Haven	195	8	0	nc	0	0	127	141	145
Colne Estuary	97	219	43	nc	0	0	72	112	0
Blackwater Estuary	120	62	80	7	77	207	328	37	42
Dengie	0	nc	2	nc	0	0	0	0	0
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	130	84	51	nc	15	30	42	0	138
Foulness/Thames	570	345	107	0	22	54	164	290	629
Abberton Reservoir	74	37	6	19	575	203	122	490	884
Lee Valley	57	117	53	31	9	14	2	67	73
Other	112	79	58	8	40	115	10	4	152
Other	554	413	317	28	462	302	17	0	310

See Introduction for details of correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

Counts of 200+ not included in the above figures were as follows, only the highest site count being given:

Broomhouse Flash Langham	300	12th September
Holland Haven	223	24th November
The Hythe Colchester	250+	30th November
Bradwell-juxta-Coggeshall Gravel Pits	374	20th September
Abberton Reservoir	600	20th January
Tollesbury Wick	200	18th January
Lofts Farm Gravel Pits Heybridge	230	21st February
Russell Green Gravel Pits Boreham	233	24th November
Hanningfield Reservoir	600	26th August and 20th October
Gobions Pit, East Tilbury	509*	10th September
Coalhouse Fort East Tilbury	c500*	28th October
Wallasea Island	200	24th November
Fairlop Waters	200	3rd July
Rainham Marshes	562	6th November

**presumably referring to the same flock.*

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus* UK

Scarce passage migrant winter and visitor.

The year started promisingly, with a flock of 30+ in flight over Great Holland on 1st January, plus two at Colne Point and one at Abberton Reservoir on the same day. However, there were no further reports in the first winter.

Records in the autumn/second winter started with a group of 16 flying north past Frinton-on-Sea on 24th September, followed by a group of 20 at Colne Point on 16th October, when a single bird arrived at Old Hall Marshes, being seen either there or at neighbouring Salcott until at least 17th December. In November eight flew over Stow Marsh South Woodham Ferrers on 13th and a flock of 26 flew past Mistley on 19th. Further fly-overs in November were: one at Paglesham Lagoon on 28th; two over Brentwood (the only inland record of the second winter) on 29th; three over Hamford Water also on 29th; two which landed on the estuary off Gunners Park Shoebury on 30th. In December two were at Bowers Marsh on 2nd and singles at: Bradwell-on-Sea on 16th; Holland Haven from 20th to the year end; Benfleet Creek on 29th.

TUNDRA BEAN GOOSE *Anser serrirostris* UK

Scarce winter visitor. **EBSIP (170, 182, 352)**

There were no records in the first winter. In the second winter, a single bird at Russell Green Gravel Pits Boreham on 1st November was the forerunner of a modest but still marked influx which began towards the end of that month and was clearly linked to the substantial arrival of Greater White-fronted Goose at the same time. This was the best year for this recently split species since 2010, matching on the spread of records though not on numbers. All records received are given.

Holland Haven saw the strongest showing, three on 29th November building to 13 on 3rd December, one on 19th December and two from 27th to the year end. Elsewhere in the north-east there were two at Cattawade on 29th-30th November, one still being present on 5th December, and there was one at Walton Hall Marsh on 30th November. Also on 30th, eight flew in at Frinton-on-Sea (with five Greater White-fronted Goose) and landed offshore before flying on south, while one flew south with a flock of Brant Goose. On 2nd December five passed Frinton-on-Sea and were seen to land at Holland Haven. Later in December several records of single birds on 16th-22nd December from St Osyth, Wigboro Wick Farm and Colne Point presumably all referred to the same individual.

Away from the coast, five were at Abberton Reservoir from 1st to at least 20th December and proved popular with observers. Further inland, a single bird arrived with a group of White-fronted Goose at Bradwell-juxta-Coggeshall Gravel Pits on 13th December and photographs showed this to be a different individual to the bird at Russell Green reported above. Prior to these records there had been only three inland records of Bean Goose (of either species) in the County away from the reservoirs.

The south of the County saw a flurry of records on 5th December, when there were three at Fleet Head Wakering, two at Bowers Marsh (also seen the next day), and three which flew east over Rainham Marshes and were seen shortly afterwards over Brook Farm Upminster. A single bird was at Bowers Marsh on 28th-30th December.

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons* UK

Russian Greater White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons albifrons*

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.

After an exceptionally quiet second winter for this species in late 2019, there was a marked arrival of small groups in the north-east of the County in the first week of January. Records of more than two follow: Holland Haven, 12 on 1st increased to 16 on 3rd-5th; ten north past Frinton-on-Sea on 5th; Colne Point area, six on 2nd increased to 13 on 7th which remained until 12th; East Mersea six on 4th increased to ten on the following day, these birds remaining until 1st February; Abberton Reservoir, nine on 1st January increased to 23 on 4th, then falling back to 16 which stayed until 19th, with 15 remaining until 26th; Old Hall Marshes, five arrived on 1st January with four moving straight on to Tollesbury Wick where they were reported again on 24th; Hanningfield Reservoir, eight arrived on 19th, with 11 by 26th, which then stayed until 8th March.

In the south of the County the only representatives of the arrival in January were six on Foulness Island on 12th. In March two were at Dagenham Chase from 2nd to 17th, one remaining to 21st, and three were at Bowers Marsh from 3rd March to 11th April.

The second winter saw the largest influx into the County since the winter of 2010/2011. Holland Haven and its hinterland recorded the main early arrivals, with five on 28th November quickly building to 48 two days later and 122 on 1st December. The broad front of the influx was immediately apparent, with records from 14 further sites in the last two days of November, from Cattawade in the north to the Lee Valley. At Wallasea Island, which with neighbouring Paglesham was to dominate later on, 37 had arrived by 1st December. Other counts of more than 20 in the first few days came from: Cattawade, a peak of 54 on 2nd December; Frinton-on-Sea, 33 south on 30th November; Deal Hall Dengie, 29 on 29th November increasing to 55 on 30th; on 2nd December, 57 at Bradwell-on-Sea, 38 at Southey Creek Maldon and 21 at Holyfield Hall Farm.

In the following week, to 10th December, the Holland Haven flock was still present, with at least 110 birds, probably 130, in the area, reducing to 50 by 19th. The most significant new or increased groups were: Wigboro Wick Farm St Osyth/ Colne Point 26 on 6th; Howlands Marsh, 32 on 6th, Fleet Head Great Wakering, 40 on 5th. Further arrivals were apparent in mid-month, when the December Wetland Bird Survey count on Foulness Island found 156 on 13th. Elsewhere, 48 were at Oakley Marshes Hamford Water on 11th, 30 at Brightlingsea and 92 at Bradwell-on-Sea, both on 14th, and the Wallasea flock built to 122 on the same day, with the flock at Wat Tyler reaching a maximum of 48 on 15th. But the biggest increase came from 19th, when the Wallasea flock grew to 270 and 110 were found at Dedham, with 170 at Bradwell-on-Sea on the following day, by which date numbers had reached 27 at Abberton Reservoir and 44 at Bowers Marsh.

On 21st there were 85 in Hamford Water at Beaumont Quay and numbers at Dedham peaked at 112. At Abberton Reservoir the peak was 31 on 28th and 31st, at Bowers Marsh it was 45, at neighbouring West Canvey Marsh it was 32, and at Holyfield Hall Farm it was 24, all on 27th. In late December the Wallasea throng moved to Paglesham East End and just kept on growing, to 320 on 28th, 421 on 29th and 442 on 30th. On the last day of the year 65 at Mersea Strood may have been new arrivals, suggesting that there might be more to come in the New Year.

In all, birds had been recorded in the November/December influx at 55 sites, 19 of which were inland. Apart from those already mentioned above, double-figure inland counts (all in December) came from: Writtle College, 12 on 1st; Ulting, 13 on 10th; Brook Farm Upminster, 16 on 13th; and Bradwell-juxta-Coggeshall Gravel Pits, 12 on 13th.

The Paglesham flock was the third or fourth largest ever recorded in the County (the lack of precision being because one of the previous large flocks was recorded as "400 to 500") and the largest since 1997.

The total number of birds arriving in the County from late November is very difficult to estimate. For this purpose it seems sensible to assume, for example, that it was parts of the Paglesham flock that were seen at Deal Hall Dengie, Wallasea Island, Potton Island, Foulness Island and elsewhere along the Crouch and Roach. Also it is sensible to assume: that the Holland Haven flock accounted for the various groups seen inland from the Haven and two large flocks seen from Frinton-on-Sea; that one flock accounted for all the sightings from Wat Tyler, Bowers Marsh and West Canvey Marsh; that the various sightings around Hamford Water all related to one group. If the maximum count in each area is then taken, the total would be 1,553. This makes no allowance for longer movements within the County but the number of flocks seen flying over was relatively small and the evidence indicated that most flocks, once arrived, stayed in their area. Nonetheless a cautious rounding-down would perhaps suggest a figure of 1,300-1,400.

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor* UK

Common resident and winter visitor.

In total 82 pairs were reported from 66 sites (85 from 68 in 2019). (As previously, some sites reported pairs, other sites reported nests or broods and some a combination of these. In the absence of other information it has been assumed that the number of nests or broods at any given site was the same as the number of pairs.) With young broods being easy to find in late summer, these figures were perhaps less affected by the first lockdown than those of some other species. But, probably because of lockdown restrictions, no breeding survey results for this species were received from any of the main reservoirs and reserves apart from Walthamstow Wetlands, where three pairs raised two broods between them. The highest count came from Wanstead Park, where four pairs nested successfully. No other sites recorded more than two pairs or broods.

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts were:

GB 500 INT 320	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total	**481**	**297**	**506**	**155**	**693**	**564**	**352**	**333**	**400**
Stour Estuary	143	nc	176	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	50	12	9	nc	nc	4	5	4	0
Holland Haven	4	0	0	nc	0	0	10	7	7
Colne Estuary	3	2	6	nc	0	9	14	22	5
Blackwater Estuary	11	16	28	2	28	13	12	2	8
Dengie	0	nc	0	nc	0	0	2	0	2
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	117	65	119	nc	3	28	6	42	102
Foulness/Thames	27	18	12	0	12	110	83	65	66
Abberton Reservoir	64	141	100	143	499	202	95	93	105
Hanningfield Reservoir	13	3	3	nc	54	76	27	8	22
Lee Valley	35	30	41	8	38	67	50	47	33
Other	14	10	12	2	59	55	48	43	50

See Introduction for details of correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

The August gathering at Abberton Reservoir climbed again, from 448 in 2019 to 499 this year, but still falls short of the 558 recorded in 2011 and the peak counts in the 1990s. Elsewhere no three-figure counts were received other than those shown in the table.

TUNDRA SWAN *Cygnus columbianus bewickii* (Bewick's Swan) UK

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.

In the first winter the four that had been at Abberton Reservoir since the previous November remained in January until 24th, increasing for one day only to six on 25th, after which a single bird at the same site on 6th February was the only other record of the first winter.

In the late autumn five (three adults and two immatures) visited Wigboro Wick Farm St Osyth for one day on 30th November. A group of six (five adults and an immature) then arrived at Abberton Reservoir on 2nd December, staying until 17th, after which three remained until 30th. Elsewhere five were on Potton Island on 13th December and two at Hanningfield Reservoir on Christmas Day.

WHOOPER SWAN *Cygnus cygnus* UK

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

In the first winter two were on Wallasea Island on 5th January. What may have been the same two birds then arrived at Abberton Reservoir on 8th January for a protracted stay to 16th April. Three days later two (possibly the same birds) were on the Crouch at Lower Raypits Canewdon, where they stayed until 3rd May, one being seen again on 17th May.

In the second winter a lone individual was seen at Bradwell-on-Sea on 3rd November and 3rd and 11th December. Elsewhere in November, two were on Wallasea Island briefly on 4th and one was at The Strood Mersea Island on 30th. At Abberton Reservoir two were seen on 28th November and again on 4th December but not subsequently.

A bird seen on Bramble Island on 6th March, 21st September and 16th November was no doubt the rehabilitated bird which has been reported since at least 2016 (with it, or possibly another, first noted in 2012 but not in the next three years).

EGYPTIAN GOOSE *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

Fairly common, and increasing, resident.

Breeding was confirmed at 23 sites (17 in 2019) an increase of over 30%. The increase in broods was even more striking, with 32 as compared to 18 in 2019. Walthamstow Wetlands was again the principal site, with five pairs rearing five broods (two rearing two in 2019). Other sites where two broods were reared were Old Hall Marshes (the first time the species had been proved breeding at that site), Lakeside Retail Park, Dagenham Chase, Raphael Park Romford and Barking Park, while at South Park Ilford two pairs were present but only one brood was seen. The other sites reporting confirmed breeding were Cattawade, Lawford, Langham, Ardleigh Reservoir, Abberton Reservoir, Chigborough Lakes, Lofts Farm Gravel Pits Heybridge, Nazeing Gravel Pits, Shoebury Park, Thorndon Park North, Thurrock Thameside Mucking, Valentine's Park Ilford, Netherhall Gravel Pits, Holyfield Hall Farm and Three Mills Bromley.

Reports without confirmation of breeding (and not necessarily in the breeding season) came from a further 118 sites (81 in 2019). This was, again a very substantial jump in one year. Interestingly, of all the sites where the species was recorded (including the breeding sites) just over half were in the Metropolitan area and along the Thames estuary. This was also the case in 2019, suggesting that expansion is occurring at much the same rate across the County.

The number of sites reporting double-figure counts also increased, to 20 from 12 in 2019. Wanstead Flats and Abberton Reservoir remained consistently the most favoured areas, each breaking convincingly the previous site record (of 66) but with Wanstead Flats setting a new record of 112 on 29th August, followed by Abberton Reservoir with an impressive count of 78 on 19th November. Elsewhere, Hollow Pond Leyton Flats also broke the previous record, with 70 on 31st October, while two new sites for counts of this species, Brook Farm Upminster and Bradwell-juxta-Coggeshall Gravel Pits, came not far behind with 53 from 13th October to 7th November (at Brook Farm) and 52 on 16th August (at Bradwell). The only other site reporting 20 or more was Hanningfield Reservoir, with 20 on 7th July.

Other double-figure counts came from Mistley, Lofts Farm Gravel Pits Heybridge, Heybridge Basin, Trifarm Pit Boreham, Thorndon Park South, Manor Farm South Ockendon, Fairlop Waters, Dagenham Chase, Belhus Woods Aveley, Rainham Marshes, Walthamstow Wetlands and Holyfield Hall Farm.

COMMON SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna* UK

Locally common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Coastal breeding was confirmed at 16 sites (26 in 2019, 16 in 2018). The first lockdown may have played a part in the reduction from the previous year, though broods do not usually emerge until mid-May or later when lockdown restrictions were being eased. As usual the numbers will have been mainly a reflection of the extent to which observers chose to look for and report broods. There was no full count on Foulness Island (just one brood being recorded) and the highest number of broods reported elsewhere was five on 2nd July at Old Hall Marshes, where again this year there was no full survey. There were three broods at Beckton Sewage Works and no other site reported more than two broods.

Inland there were four broods at Walthamstow Wetlands and single broods at Bradwell-juxta-Coggeshall Gravel Pits and at Mole Hall Widdington (again the furthest inland site to report any birds, breeding or otherwise).

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts were:

GB 470 INT 3,000	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total	**6313**	**3089**	**2787**	**57**	**3**	**1186**	**2859**	**2673**	**2885**
Stour Estuary	**629**	nc	247	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	1063	**504**	391	nc	nc	111	332	**740**	343
Holland Haven	15	9	29	nc	1	6	7	2	5
Colne Estuary	429	152	209	nc	2	164	369	357	307
Blackwater Estuary	**2038**	**897**	**946**	26	0	356	**880**	**529**	339
Dengie	140	nc	192	nc	0	0	32	2	61
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	**1815**	**1300**	**706**	nc	0	**499**	**906**	**733**	**1473**
Foulness/Thames	165	219	64	25	0	50	330	305	348
Abberton Reservoir	18	2	3	4	0	0	1	5	9
Hanningfield Reservoir	0	6	0	nc	0	0	0	0	0
Lee Valley	1	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0

See Introduction for details of correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

The lack of counts from the Stour Estuary in the second half of the year largely explains the lower figures shown in the "total" row for that period. Outside the WeBS surveys, 1,070 were counted from Mistley Walls on the inner Stour estuary between Hogmarsh Island Manningtree and Stutton Mill on 6th November: as with most Stour estuary counts, the flock will have been spread across the County boundary into Suffolk. Again on the inner Stour, 650 were counted from Cattawade on 10th January and 363 from Mistley Quay on 19th December. On the Colne Estuary, non-WeBS maxima were approximately 300 at Fingringhoe Wick on 25th February and 250 at Alresford on 21st November. On the inner Blackwater Estuary, the highest non-WeBS count received was 700 between Maldon Promenade and Southey Creek on 2nd December (with, no doubt part of the same flock, 500+ at Coopers Creek on 30th December), while in the first winter there had been approximately 500 at Heybridge Basin on 9th January.

On the Crouch Estuary by far the highest numbers at Wallasea Island were found during WeBS counts (where they formed the bulk of the Crouch/Roach/Wallasea figures in the above table), the highest non-WeBS figure being 500 on 5th February. On the Thames Estuary the main flock was as usual between Thurrock Thameside Mucking and East Tilbury, highest non-WeBS figures being 401 at the former on 20th September and 430 at the latter on 28th May. Elsewhere, a total of 389 flew past Frinton-on-Sea in small groups on 30th November.

Inland records away from the breeding sites came from a further 37 locations (40 in 2019). At Abberton Reservoir the species was present in very small numbers for much of the year, the only double-figure count being of 15 on 25th January. At the other major reservoirs peak (non WeBS) counts were just four at Hanningfield Reservoir on 4th February and six at King George V Reservoir Chingford on 28th March. Otherwise all double-figure counts came from sites within a few miles of tidal waters: 20 at Shrub End Colchester on 14th April; up to 20 at Beeleigh Weir in late April; ten at Chigborough Lakes in late April/early May; ten at Hazeleigh Wood on 17th May.

MANDARIN DUCK *Aix galericulata* REX

Slowly increasing, naturalised resident.

Although no formal breeding survey was arranged, coverage in the Epping Forest area was much more comprehensive than in any year since 2009, possibly because of permitted exercise during the first lockdown. This increased effort found 20 broods, just one fewer than in 2009. Wintry Wood, Strawberry Hill Ponds and Butler's Retreat Pond each held four broods, while there were three at Blackweir Pond (also known as Lost Pond). There were two broods at Connaught Water and single broods at Wake Valley Pond, Warren Pond and Highams Park. Outside Epping Forest there was also a single brood at Weald Park and, at Hanningfield Reservoir, two fully fledged but not yet fully grown young were seen with a female on 15th July and considered likely to have been locally bred. Elsewhere a brood was found at Newport, another example of the tendency of this species to produce isolated breeding records well away from the core area.

In the first winter, double-figure counts were all in January and all confined to Epping Forest as follows (site maximum in each case): Barn Hoppett Chingford, 21 on 3rd; Connaught Water, 25 on 10th; Strawberry Hill Ponds, 14 on 21st.

In autumn, numbers peaked at 50 at Connaught Water on 21st September. At Thorndon Park North there were ten on 30th September and 11 on 16th December. Other double-figure counts in the second half of the year came from Woodford Green, ten on 5th November and Warren Pond, 14 on 14th December.

Elsewhere small numbers were reported from a further 43 sites (26 in 2019). Of these, 15 were in Epping Forest or the Lee Valley. Other sites were thinly spread across the County. All reported five or less apart from six on 8th March at Mole Hall Widdington and seven at Goldings Hill Pond Epping Forest on 4th August. In addition to the Widdington record and the Newport breeding record (above), the only record from the north-west this year was of two at Hadstock on 1st February.

GARGANEY *Spatula querquedula*

UK Breeds occasionally. Uncommon, but annual, passage migrant.

It was a relatively poor year for this species, with only 103 records received (171 in 2019). The spring was particularly quiet, with records coming from just seven sites (19 in 2019, 14 in 2018). The first lockdown may have had some impact on the number of records. The first record was of two at Abberton Reservoir on 14th March, after which two flew north past Frinton-on-Sea on 7th April and there was a drake at Dagenham Chase on 10th April, with presumably the same bird also seen there a week later. Much the most productive site was Old Hall Marshes, where a local observer found a drake on 20th April and up to four birds (two pairs) on many dates between 25th April and 19th May. The only other spring records came from: Bowers Marsh, a ♀ on 23rd March and a ♂ from 23rd to 29th May; Great Henny, two on 23rd April; Goldhanger, a pair on 7th June; Abberton Reservoir, a ♂ on 12th-17th June and one (gender not reported) on 23rd June; Cattawade, a ♂ on 19th June.

Given the apparent paucity of the spring passage, it was perhaps not surprising that there were no confirmed breeding records. The only summer records were (all in July) a ♀ at Bradwell-juxta-Coggeshall Gravel Pits on 12th and 16th, one at Holland Haven on 14th, a ♂ at East Tilbury on 16th, one at Limbourne Creek on 18th and one at Rainham Marshes on 18th to 23rd. All of these could perhaps equally be classified as early autumn passage.

Subsequent autumn numbers are summarised in the following table:

	July	August					September	
Week commencing	30th	6th	13th	20th	27th	3rd	10th	17th
Numbers	3	3	2	6	7	8	3	3
Locations	2	3	2	3	2	3	2	2

Only ten sites were involved in the July-September records. The highest confirmed counts were of four at Hanningfield Reservoir on 28th August and at Woodham Fen on 4th September. Hanningfield Reservoir again produced the most comprehensive series of records, with 1-2 present on many dates throughout the period tabulated above and three on 24th - 26th August, as well as the record of four mentioned above. At Abberton Reservoir there were 1-2 on several dates between 5th August and 21st September, with three on 27th August. No other site recorded more than single birds.

NORTHERN SHOVELER *Spatula clypeata* UK REX

Breeds in small numbers. Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor.

No breeding surveys could be carried out at Old Hall Marshes or Rainham Marshes, which are normally the breeding strongholds for this species. Just single broods were reported by casual observers at both sites. The only other site to report a brood was Cattawade Marshes. The species was reported from 26 other sites during the breeding season (taken as May/June). Four pairs were reported at Abberton Reservoir; no other site reporting more than two pairs.

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts were:

GB 190 INT 400	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total	**983**	**1205**	**846**	**176**	**749**	**1663**	**1301**	**1797**	**1635**
Stour Estuary	1	nc	0	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	42	18	0	nc	nc	0	8	8	13
Holland Haven	18	4	33	nc	0	1	0	6	0
Colne Estuary	47	32	43	nc	0	5	25	34	34
Blackwater Estuary	94	6	108	0	0	1	20	63	**263**
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	**417**	**808**	**399**	nc	0	40	**664**	**553**	**568**
Foulness/Thames	127	133	102	4	0	14	125	**262**	**406**
Abberton Reservoir	89	115	90	172	**702**	**1173**	**252**	**780**	93
Hanningfield Reservoir	4	0	17	nc	15	164	64	36	**208**
Lee Valley	125	70	53	0	32	262	139	53	33
Other	19	19	1	0	0	3	4	2	17

See Introduction for details of correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

The peak WeBS count of 1,173 at Abberton Reservoir was well down on the autumn numbers at that site in recent years. The figures for Crouch/Roach/Wallasea include a site-record count for Wallasea of 717 on 6th February and a single flock there of 664 on Stokes Lagoon on 16th October. Both would appear to be record coastal counts of this species in Essex, the previous highest being 409 at Barking Creekmouth on 3rd December 2010 and 400 at Paglesham Lagoon (almost next door to Wallasea) on 29th October 2017. From other sites the only non-WeBS counts of 150 or more were 180 at Old Hall Marshes on 22nd January and 150 at Walthamstow Wetlands on 29th September.

GADWALL *Mareca strepera strepara* UK REX

Uncommon breeder. Slowly increasing, fairly common, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding was confirmed at six sites (five in 2019, nine in both 2017 and 2018). All reported single broods apart from Langham, where there were two broods at Broomhouse Flash and one on the lagoons. On 26th July the same sites held a total of five family parties but two of these were considered by the observer to have moved across the County border from a nearby breeding site in Suffolk (where he had seen them previously). The sites with single broods were Holland Haven, Abberton Reservoir, Foulness Island, Bowers Marsh and Rainham Marshes.

At Walthamstow Wetlands five pairs summered and there were two pairs each at Abberton Reservoir and North Fambridge. Single pairs were noted in May/June at Walton Hall Marsh, Bradwell-juxta-Coggeshall Gravel Pits, Russell Green Gravel Pits Boreham, Coalhouse Fort East Tilbury, Wanstead

Park, Wanstead Flats and Highams Park. Reports of 2+ birds present in May/June, but with no mention of pairing, came from a further 19 sites.

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts were:

GB 310 INT 600	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS Total	**1195**	**911**	**275**	**63**	**958**	**668**	**394**	**477**	**840**
Stour Estuary	0	nc	4	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	94	46	21	nc	nc	3	6	8	28
Colne Estuary	8	56	15	nc	0	0	0	4	4
Blackwater Estuary	18	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	8	56	4	nc	0	72	2	58	87
Foulness/Thames	62	63	48	0	7	25	133	43	88
Abberton Reservoir	**696**	**517**	52	55	**779**	287	88	231	**314**
Hanningfield Reservoir	135	99	30	nc	112	100	31	19	156
Lee Valley	161	67	87	8	38	163	124	88	136
Other	13	7	8	0	22	18	10	26	27

See Introduction for details of correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

Three-figure non-WeBS counts (site maximum in each case) came from: Vange Marsh, 200+ on 22nd August; Wanstead Park, 140 on 27th October.

EURASIAN WIGEON *Mareca penelope* UK

Erratic breeder. Common passage migrant and winter visitor.

There were no records indicative of breeding, despite an encouraging series of breeding season records from Bowers Marsh. At that site four were found on 14th May, increasing to five on 15th May before decreasing to three from 24th May to 7th June, after which a pair remained until at least 19th June and a single bird remained for the rest of the summer. Elsewhere in May/June there was one at Abberton Reservoir on 24th and 26th May, with six there on 28th May, while there were two at Tollesbury Wick on 17th May and again on 9th June, and one at Bradwell-juxta-Coggeshall Gravel Pits on 28th June.

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts were:

GB 4,500 INT 15,000	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total	**17603**	**9533**	**6306**	**8**	**13**	**7080**	**14867**	**10077**	**13557**
Stour Estuary	1041	nc	226	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	3132	398	236	nc	nc	161	477	478	464
Holland Haven	260	195	175	nc	0	4	0	33	140
Colne Estuary	1081	1026	569	nc	0	233	786	1300	1349
Blackwater Estuary	3165	1862	2455	0	0	184	1470	1165	1394
Dengie	235	nc	0	nc	0	14	220	0	160
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	**5347**	3724	1583	nc	0	502	1760	**4536**	**7103**
Foulness/Thames	857	1203	714	0	2	**5246**	**9800**	1775	1143
Abberton Reservoir	2154	583	19	8	11	702	259	597	817
Hanningfield Reservoir	185	503	215	nc	0	17	37	145	836
Lee Valley	146	39	114	0	0	17	54	48	151
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0

See Introduction for details of correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

Included in the above figures is much the largest site count of the year, an impressive total of 7,045 on the Thames side of Foulness Island in October, while in December the WeBS count from the various sections of Wallasea Island came to a total of 4,149. Elsewhere non-WeBS counts of more than 1,000 were received as follows (site maxima in each case): East Mersea, 1,500 on 10th and 24th January; Abberton Reservoir, 2,500 on 3rd January; Old Hall Marshes, 2,500 on 10th November; Stow Marsh South Woodham Ferrers, 1,100 on 13th November; Rainham Marshes, 2,000 on 11th January.

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos platyrhynchos* UK

Common and widespread resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Due to the first lockdown, no full breeding season counts of pairs or broods were received from Old Hall Marshes, Foulness Island or Rainham Marshes, all of which had reported substantial breeding numbers in recent years. At Braintree the regular observer again reported 30+ pairs and other sites reporting double-figure numbers of pairs or broods were: Bradwell-juxta-Coggeshall Gravel Pits, 12 broods; Lawling Creek, 13 pairs; Althorne Creek, 11 pairs; Walthamstow Wetlands, 16 broods. At Colne Point at least eight pairs were present and there were four pairs or broods at Lofts Farm Gravel Pits Heybridge, Mundon West Sluice, Fairlop Waters, the Mardyke Valley and Barking Park. All other reports were of three or less.

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts were:

GB 6,700 INT 20,000	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total	**3665**	**2236**	**1669**	**478**	**3246**	**2527**	**2061**	**2698**	**2833**
Stour Estuary	203	nc	32	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	608	524	419	nc	nc	19	12	199	107
Holland Haven	8	8	6	nc	2	0	4	0	4
Colne Estuary	94	74	63	nc	24	63	41	91	117
Blackwater Estuary	211	147	184	15	62	188	195	324	441
Dengie	58	nc	13	nc	12	11	30	5	100
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	369	159	144	nc	0	249	309	476	533
Foulness/Thames	395	394	82	17	268	147	448	414	244
Abberton Reservoir	930	470	241	321	2071	975	455	600	374
Hanningfield Reservoir	95	56	73	nc	113	171	158	161	280
Lee Valley	423	258	223	103	355	333	249	347	384
Other	271	146	189	22	339	371	160	81	249

See Introduction for details of correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

Early autumn numbers at Abberton Reservoir seem to be building over recent years but are still barely half of those found in the 1980s and previously. Non-WeBS counts of 150 or more were: Mistley Quay, 130 on 5th December; Stour Wood, 300 on 8th November; Irlams Point Little Oakley, 160 on 28th December; Mole Hall Widdington, 218 on 18th October; Chigborough Lakes, 350 on 28th September; Wanstead Park, 171 on 5th December.

NORTHERN PINTAIL *Anas acuta* UK

Breeds occasionally. Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor.

There were no records suggestive of breeding. Indeed the only records in the period May/July were of a single bird at Vange Marsh on 7th May and three flying north past Frinton-on-Sea three days later. The first returning birds were four at Hanningfield Reservoir on 13th August.

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts were:

GB 200 INT 600	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total	**1328**	**804**	**317**	**3**	**14**	**512**	**402**	**624**	**642**
Stour Estuary	**204**	nc	90	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	114	51	2	nc	nc	2	1	30	65
Holland Haven	0	2	3	nc	0	0	0	0	0
Colne Estuary	0	0	0	nc	0	0	0	10	56
Blackwater Estuary	**513**	**275**	158	0	0	0	132	180	29
Dengie	**250**	nc	0	nc	0	0	49	0	**274**
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	117	**279**	42	nc	0	2	130	**332**	124
Foulness/Thames	50	29	22	0	0	2	28	31	57
Abberton Reservoir	80	168	0	3	0	**489**	59	41	37
Hanningfield Reservoir	0	0	0	nc	0	16	3	0	0
Lee Valley	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	14	0	0	0	0

See Introduction for details of correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

The few non-WeBS three-figure counts received were as usual all from sites which are comprehensively covered as part of the WeBS survey. At Abberton Reservoir, returning birds had already built up to 200 on 2nd September, ahead of the WeBS count of 489 on 22nd September. There were good numbers at Wallasea Island, where the WeBS figures (forming part of the Crouch/Roach/Wallasea totals in the above table) included 224 in February and 303 in November, while non-WeBS counts there included 200+ on both 24th January and 27th December. On the Blackwater Estuary, the highest non-WeBS counts were 200+ at Mill Beach on 5th January and nearby at Heybridge Gravel Pit on 12th January and 120 at Osea Road Heybridge on 15th February.

EURASIAN TEAL *Anas crecca*

UK REX

Breeds occasionally. Common passage migrant and winter visitor.

There were no reports indicative of breeding and the only records in the first half of May were two at Holland Haven on 3rd and one inland at Audley End on 14th. At Bowers Marsh, following a single bird on 20th May, two were seen intermittently until 7th June with five on 13th June perhaps being the first returning birds, increasing to 14 on 17th. There was a similar pattern at Abberton Reservoir, where 1-2 were seen on a few dates between 24th May and 23rd June but seven on 9th June, then 11 on 27th increasing to 17 on 30th June. Separating summering birds from returning ones was equally difficult elsewhere, with birds seen in the second half of May and/or in June at a further 18 sites. All records were of 1-4 apart from six on 22nd June at Fingringhoe Ranges, a past breeding site (rarely accessible in the breeding season and only with MOD authorisation), nine at Cattawade on 11th June and 18+ at Vange on 27th June.

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts were:

GB 4,300 INT 5,000	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total	**23309**	**11437**	**3960**	**146**	**3548**	**6839**	**9852**	**9610**	**12751**
Stour Estuary	688	nc	61	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	2303	867	325	nc	nc	658	525	2022	1634
Holland Haven	140	123	110	nc	15	180	95	65	54
Colne Estuary	322	264	255	nc	0	53	259	910	234
Blackwater Estuary	2860	1312	1219	3	0	396	1157	1137	933
Dengie	0	nc	0	nc	0	0	1	0	9
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	2047	2490	942	nc	0	433	825	1696	3825
Foulness/Thames	1217	1481	586	0	153	463	2007	618	1160
Abberton Reservoir	**13516**	**4587**	358	135	3247	**4347**	**4766**	2984	4164
Hanningfield Reservoir	92	233	23	nc	122	249	129	139	648
Lee Valley	108	80	67	8	11	58	84	29	90
Other	16	0	14	0	0	2	4	10	0

See Introduction for details of correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

Numbers at Abberton Reservoir stole the headlines early in the year. The January count of 13,516 in the table was made by the professional consultants employed by Essex and Suffolk Water on 15th January. The Wetland Bird Survey team found a considerably lower but still impressive number, 7,633, when counting on the following day (16th). A similar divergence occurred in 2018 at the time of the record count in September of that year (see *Essex Bird Report 2018, page 31*). Movement between Abberton Reservoir and coast could be an explanation: Abberton Reservoir is less than two miles from tidal waters at its closest points. Another factor could be that Teal is a difficult species to count across the whole Reservoir because it can move undetected between different areas (flying very low and keeping close to the bank). This makes allowances for duplication a matter for debate, which could result in differing conclusions as to the total number of birds present.

From February onwards numbers at Abberton Reservoir reverted to much more typical levels – see the table. At other sites, non-WeBS counts of 500 or more were received as follows (site maximum in each case): Frinton-on-Sea, 833 on 29th November; Alresford, 500 on 21st November; Old Hall Marshes, 1,000 on 10th November; Heybridge Basin, 500 on 8th November; Stow Marsh South Woodham Ferrers, 1,250 on 13th November; Wallasea Island, 500 on 4th January; Coryton, approximately 500 on 4th January; East Tilbury, 646 on 6th February; Rainham Marshes, 868 on 11th January.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL *Anas carolinensis*

Rare passage migrant and winter visitor. EBSIP (18, 11, 29)

Abberton Reservoir ♂ 1st and 3rd January (SG, DP-D *et al.*)

RED-CRESTED POCHARD *Netta rufina*

Scarce, naturalised, resident, uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.

Confirmed breeding comprised five broods at Hanningfield Reservoir (none in 2019, three in 2018), continuing the reduced reporting seen in recent years. As is normal, the population at this site increased into summer, from 15 on 14th June, to 29 on 4th July, and 26 on 23rd August. However, dispersal was less definitive as while the latter birds appeared to move to Abberton Reservoir with 20 on 26th August, the September peak was 15 at both sites (with combined daily totals from both sites fairly consistent) indicating a large amount of interchange between the two reservoirs.

Estimated numbers, with peak counts at the two main reservoirs, were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number	15	4	9	10	12	15	35	27	16	25	4	8
Locations	4	2	3	1	3	1	4	3	3	3	3	5
Abberton Reservoir	5	-	1	-	-	-	5	20	15	5	2	2
Hanningfield Reservoir	6	9	7	10	10	15	29	26	15	19	-	3

In total, birds were reported from 14 sites, all singles bar groups of three at Holyfield Lake on 4th January and Garnham's Island Hamford Water on 9th February.

COMMON POCHARD *Aythya ferina* UK REX

Uncommon breeder. Common winter visitor and passage migrant.

Confirmed breeding reports totalled 35 pairs from 15 sites (82 from 16 in 2019, 40 from 11 in 2018). However, there was no count from Old Hall Marshes (55 in 2019). Eighteen broods at Walthamstow Wetlands was by far the largest count although the first breeding record for Warren Gorge Chafford Gorges was notable.

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey counts were:

GB 230 INT 3,500	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total	**803**	**1421**	**558**	**35**	**1818**	**2382**	**8792**	**2703**	**2464**
Stour Estuary	6	nc	0	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	10	19	31	nc	nc	0	0	0	0
Colne Estuary	0	1	2	nc	0	0	0	0	0
Blackwater Estuary	0	9	43	9	1	0	0	0	0
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	0	43	5	nc	0	0	0	109	170
Foulness/Thames	56	92	34	0	5	24	22	26	19
Abberton Reservoir	**432**	**1120**	**259**	14	**1704**	**2313**	**1633**	**2446**	**2085**
Hanningfield Reservoir	164	3	47	nc	89	6	5	12	34
Lee Valley	103	84	85	12	9	17	90	106	137
Other	32	50	52	0	10	22	7	4	19

See Introduction for details of a correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

There was a marked increase in reporting with 56 counts of 200 or more (20 in 2019, 38 in 2018, six in 2017), with nearly all coming from Abberton Reservoir. Elsewhere counts of 200 were more came from: Hanningfield Reservoir, 200 on 22nd July and 10th September; Paglesham Lagoon, 216 on 25th December.

FERRUGINOUS DUCK *Aythya nyroca*

Rare passage migrant and winter visitor. BBRC (35, 11, 46)

Abberton Reservoir	Adult ♂	6th-25th February	GBr *et al*

Note that two records involving birds considered to have been escapes at the time of their occurrence are now placed in Category E and the statistics adjusted accordingly

RING-NECKED DUCK *Aythya collaris*

Vagrant. EBSIP (8, 4, 12)

The presence of two adult drakes at Abberton Reservoir was confirmed on 1st January when two were seen concurrently from Layer-de-la-Haye causeway. Thereafter single birds were reported up to 4th February. Both are assumed to have been the same as 2019, with one first noted in December 2016. A single (unsexed) was subsequently reported from Blue House Farm on 11th March and it is assumed, for the statistics, that this was one of these birds.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Confirmed breeding pairs/broods comprised 34 from 27 sites (58 from 20 in 2019, 64 from 24 in 2018). The only reports received that indicated more than two broods at a single site came from Hanningfield Reservoir and Thameside Nature Park Thurrock with three at each.

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts were:

GB 1,300 INT 12,000	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total	**2582**	**2122**	**2533**	**392**	**6605**	**4819**	**6131**	**6710**	**7158**
Hamford Water	21	19	56	nc	nc	0	0	0	30
Colne Estuary	33	18	29	nc	0	0	0	0	0
Blackwater Estuary	1	25	75	32	6	5	14	2	0
Dengie	0	nc	0	nc	0	0	1	0	0
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	4	28	21	nc	0	0	0	29	38
Foulness/Thames	11	48	26	0	4	5	8	8	20
Abberton Reservoir	1007	1156	788	290	**1390**	1176	**4456**	**4882**	4497
Hanningfield Reservoir	350	22	447	nc	1978	892	623	206	583
Lee Valley	1031	683	941	58	**3011**	**2527**	997	**1577**	1911
Other	124	123	150	12	216	214	32	6	79

See Introduction for details of a correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

Peak counts reported showed a further improvement with 60 non-WeBS reports in excess of 200 from four sites (50 from five in 2019, 29 from four in 2018), with monthly peaks as follows:

Abberton Reservoir, 3,700 on 7th January, 900 on 21st February, 432 on 12th August, 2,000 on 23rd October, 1,000 on 22nd November, 2,000 on 5th December; Hanningfield Reservoir, 350 on 15th August, 1,000 on 8th September, 500 on 11th October; King George V Reservoir Chingford, 1,000 on 12th July, 500 on 30th August, 300 on 15th September; Walthamstow Wetlands, 301 on 13th January, 300 on 13th February, 1,130 on 14th July.

GREATER SCAUP *Aythya marila* UK

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant; occasional in summer.

Low numbers were recorded in 2020, although many birds were long-staying at accessible sites. In the early part of the year sightings came from four areas: Stour Estuary, reported until 12th February with peaks of five on 19th January and 7th February; Abberton Reservoir, peaks of five on 1st January and 8th February reducing to two until 16th March; Hanningfield Reservoir, two on 5th and 7th January with a single remaining to 18th March; King George V Reservoir Chingford, a single through January and February with up to two from 7th March to 21st April, with the last report two days later; a male at Walthamstow Wetlands on 9th January was assumed to be the same bird.

A single mid-summer record came from King George V Reservoir Chingford on 12th July.

Autumn coastal movement was limited to one on 28th September and two on 3rd October passing Frinton-on-Sea, one upriver at Bradwell Bird Observatory on 16th October, and two upriver at both Gunners Park Shoebury and Canvey Point on 30th November.

Elsewhere birds were reported from 13 sites but were generally short-staying singles. A slight peak occurred in late November. Sites recording multiple birds were as follows: Hamford Water, three on 29th November; Blackwater Estuary/Mersea Island, one from 19th November was joined by a second on 30th December; Abberton Reservoir, one from 14th October, increasing to two from 30th, and three from 20th December to the year-end; Hanningfield Reservoir, two on 23rd November; King George V Reservoir Chingford, one from 25th October increasing to three on 22nd December with two to the year-end.

An estimated summary of all records is given below.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number	13	12	5	2	-	-	1	-	1	6	14	12
Locations	4	4	3	1	-	-	1	-	1	4	10	7

COMMON EIDER *Somateria mollissima mollissima* UK

Declining passage migrant and winter visitor with small numbers in summer.

A very poor year with a total of 111 records received from 15 sites (121 from 21 in 2019, 72 from 21 in 2018) but no double-figure counts. Records are summarised as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
The Naze	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
Frinton-on-Sea	-	1	-	-	3	1	-	-	1	6	6	-
Blackwater Estuary	2	2	2	9	4	1	1	1	1	8	-	3
Gunners Park Shoebury	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	1	1
Canvey Island	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	-

The majority of the records came from the vicinity of the Blackwater and Colne Estuaries, being regularly reported from Bradwell Bird Observatory, Mersea Island and Colne Point in particular. Peaks were nine at the Colne Point on 26th April and five off Bradwell Bird Observatory on 15th October. Elsewhere a very light coastal passage was most widely observed over 14th-16th October, with a maximum count being nine south at The Naze on 6th December.

Estimated monthly totals with the previous two years' figures for comparison were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	2	3	2	9	7	2	1	1	4	19	8	12
2019	26	11	8	0	10	3	1	11	11	33	96	24
2018	9	0	0	1	6	1	0	0	2	12	161	37

VELVET SCOTER *Melanitta fusca* UK

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor, rare in summer.

Another poor year with just seven reports of an estimated nine birds in 2020 (11 in 2019, 21 in 2018).

All records were in late autumn and winter: Frinton-on-Sea, one south on 14th and two north on 28th November, the former also seen at Holland Haven; Bradwell-on-Sea, one on 2nd December, Blackwater Estuary (Rolls Farm Tollesbury, St Lawrence Bay), three on 23rd and 29th December; Canvey Point, two on 29th December.

COMMON SCOTER *Melanita nigra* UK

Locally common passage migrant and winter visitor with small numbers in summer.

An average year with a strong diurnal and nocturnal spring migration and a steady autumn passage.

Inland records came from five sites (singles unless otherwise stated): Abberton Reservoir, 14th October, two on 4th November; Hanningfield Reservoir, 18th October; King George V Reservoir Chingford, 13 on 19th March, 22nd March, 12th April to 8th May; Sewardstone Marsh, 9th May presumed same as previous; Walthamstow Wetlands, 27th March; two on 17th October, 19th October.

In addition, the first lockdown resulted in increased focus on nocturnal migration (nocmig) with a heavy national passage of this species in early April recorded. In Essex reports of up to four flocks were noted at: Wanstead Flats, 2nd, 3rd April; Grays, 4th April; Southend-on-Sea (Southchurch), 3rd April, Rayleigh, 2nd April; Canewdon, 3rd, 4th, 6th and 16th April. This movement was reflected in diurnal passage past Frinton-on-Sea where northwards movements of 106 and 165 were noted on 1st and 3rd April respectively.

Inner Thames records came from: East Tilbury / Thurrock Thameside Mucking, two between 5th-19th January, singles on 6th February, 1st and 15th March, two on 9th and one on 30th August, one on 27th September, peaks of 26 and 76 on 7th-8th November with four on 30th, two on 27 December; Tilbury, one on 16th and eight on 18th September, 24 on 14th October; seven on 20th November; Rainham Marshes, 15 on 19th March.

Estimated monthly maxima with the previous two years' figures for comparison were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	77	72	111	341	39	124	134	149	804	792	1760	371
2019	123	14	62	190	122	-	135	93	157	1325	1499	284
2018	107	41	33	117	71	103	35	45	122	615	455	90

Autumn passage past Frinton-on-Sea noted 3,642 between July and December (3,286 in 2019, 1,115 in 2018). Passage peaked earlier than usual with 366 and 240 on 27th-28th September, 327 and 308 on 3rd and 14th October respectively, and 412 on 22nd November.

Coastal passage was noted from other watchpoints but the only three-figure counts coincided with the Frinton peaks with 105 at Southend Pier and 320 at Canvey Island on 27th September; 105 at Holland Haven on 3rd October; and 103 at Gunners Park Shoebury on 27th November.

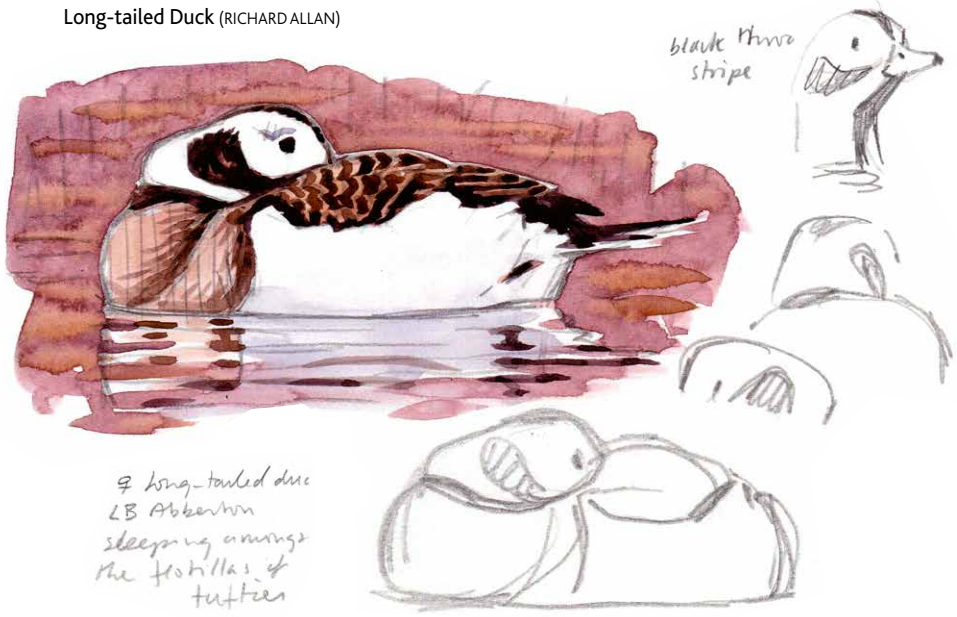
LONG-TAILED DUCK *Clangula hyemalis* UK

Declining, scarce, passage migrant and winter visitor.

A below average year with only approximately 12 birds, although these included long stayers at both ends of the year.

Abberton Reservoir again produced the vast majority of the records with birds present from 2019 (two) until 9th April peaking at four on 17th January. A single returned on 17th October, with three reported on 22nd November and four on 29th December.

Long-tailed Duck (RICHARD ALLAN)



Elsewhere there were singles at King George V Reservoir Chingford on 23rd April, Bradwell-on-Sea, Frinton-on-Sea and Gunners Park Shoebury on 24th, 28th and 30th November respectively, and at Old Hall Marshes/Bradwell-on-Sea on 2nd-3rd December. The estimated County total, given below for the last ten winters, assumes the latter then moved to Abberton Reservoir and that the early and late winter birds at this site were different.

Winter	2020 /19	2019 /18	2018 /17	2017 /16	2016 /15	2015 /14	2014 /13	2013 /12	2012 /11	2011/ 10	Average
Totals	12	5	12	62	4	10	15	14	8	12	15.4

COMMON GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula clangula* UK

Common passage migrant and winter visitor; occasional in summer.

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts were:

GB 190 INT 11,500	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS Total	**423**	**342**	**323**	**2**	**1**	**7**	**33**	**377**	**353**
Stour Estuary	25	nc	8	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Blackwater Estuary	5	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	0	0	0	nc	0	0	0	0	4
Abberton Reservoir	335	329	276	2	1	6	24	344	260
Hanningfield Reservoir	26	10	23	nc	0	0	9	28	68
Lee Valley	32	3	13	0	0	1	0	5	21

See Introduction for details of a correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

The last reported birds of the spring were in mid-May with two at Hanningfield Reservoir on 15th and one at King George V Reservoir Chingford on 17th. Up to three birds summered at Abberton Reservoir but numbers had increased to four on 30th August and five on 1st September. The first returning birds were therefore likely to have been the two which flew upriver at Canvey Point on 31st July.

There were 32 non-WeBS counts in excess of 50, all from Abberton Reservoir bar a count of 64 at King George V Reservoir Chingford on 13th March.

Autumn coastal passage was barely noticed with a total of only ten recorded on five dates between 27th September and 30th November at Frinton-on-Sea, Canvey Point and East Tilbury.

SMEW *Mergellus albellus* UK

Uncommon winter visitor occurring in variable numbers.

Another poor year with low numbers in both winter periods.

In the first winter were present at five sites: Abberton Reservoir, peaks of five on 2nd January, three on 19th February, two to 7th March and the last on 18th March; Chigborough Lakes Heybridge, male on 1st January; South Fambridge (River Crouch), male on 5th February; Ingrebourne Valley, pair on 22nd January; Lee Valley, maximum of two at Seventy Acres Lake on 13th January.

As in 2019 and 2018, a redhead, of unknown origin, was present in the Lee Valley during the late spring, being reported from Buckhurst Hill, Friday Lake, Fishers Green and Highams Park between 18th April and 25th May.

A redhead returned to Seventy Acres Lake Holyfield on 15th November and remained in the Lea Valley area to the end of the year being joined by a male from 29th December. The only other record concerned a redhead at Abberton Reservoir from 27th December into 2021.

Estimated monthly numbers were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number	10	5	3	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	3
Locations	8	4	4	2	3	-	-	-	-	-	1	2

Estimates of numbers have assumed the largest single count from any Lee Valley site is that for the entire area unless comments indicated otherwise.

COMMON MERGANSER *Mergus merganser merganser* (Goosander)

Locally common passage migrant and winter visitor.

Abberton Reservoir produced the vast majority of records and numbers with peak monthly counts as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Abberton Res	63	62	29	-	-	-	-	1	2	15	36	62

Double-figure counts were only reported from four other sites: Ardleigh Reservoir, 12 on both 1st January and 10th December; Alresford, 11 on 23rd December; Connaught Water Epping Forest, 15 on 13th December; Weald Park, peak of 14 on 5th December.

The last reported bird of the spring was a female at King George V Reservoir Chingford on 8th May, with the first return at Abberton Reservoir on 20th August. Coastal passage was barely recorded with just singles passing Frinton-on-Sea on 14th and 27th October.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator*

Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor; occasional in summer.

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts were:

GB 100 INT 1,700	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total	**67**	**52**	**126**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**6**	**35**	**91**
Stour Estuary	17	nc	46	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	5	0	0	nc	nc	0	0	0	7
Colne Estuary	18	15	5	nc	0	0	0	31	52
Blackwater Estuary	25	35	73	0	0	0	3	4	27
Dengie	2	nc	0	nc	0	0	3	0	2
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	0	0	2	nc	0	0	0	0	0
Foulness/Thames	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	3

See Introduction for details of a correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

The last of the spring was a pair north past Frinton-on-Sea on 27th April, with the first returning birds two, also north, past this site and then The Naze on 26th September. There was a summer record of a single at Wrabness on 26th August.

Inland records came from: Abberton Reservoir, one noted on three dates 11th-20th January; Hanningfield Reservoir, one noted on three dates 1st-28th November. A ♀ was seen on the River Thames from Grays on 28th March (BR).

Autumn passage was again light with 42 noted passing Frinton-on-Sea. No double-figure counts were recorded.

There were few notable non-WeBS counts submitted with peaks of: Old Hall Marshes, 37 on 25th January; Goldhanger, 36 on 7th February; Fingringhoe Wick, 32 on 25th February.

RUDDY DUCK *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Now rare, naturalised, non-breeding visitor.

A female was noted on three dates during December at Abberton Reservoir.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa rufa*

Fairly common and widespread, naturalised, resident.

Due to mass releases for shooting, it is not usually possible in the field to distinguish genuine wild birds from those captive-bred and released. It is difficult to say how much its status relies on releases of captive birds *(Wood, Birds of Essex, P146)*.

In total 818 records were received (503 in 2019, 508 in 2018) from around 194 sites (184 in 2019, 195 in 2018) encompassing all corners of the County. A minimum of 46 pairs was reported from 25 sites including 15 pairs recorded around the Black Notley area. Other reports of more than two pairs came from: Howlands Marsh St Osyth, three pairs; Hollybush Hill, three pairs. In addition, two or more birds were reported from 34 further locations during the breeding season (May-July).

Breeding was confirmed in fields near Old Hall Marshes from the sighting of recently fledged young.

Outside the breeding season coveys of more than 25 were reported as follows:

Fleet Head Great Wakering, 45 on 18th January, 45 on 2nd February, 100 on 16th November and 100 on 5th December; Stisted, 120+ on 18th October which were thought to be a release of captive bred birds; Fuller Street Fairstead, 60 on 26th December.

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix perdix* UK EX REX

Much declined and now scarce resident.

In total 166 records were received from 47 locations (92 from 37 in 2019, 47 from 35 in 2018, 58 from 34 in 2017). This seems like a good upturn but 58 of these records came from Colne Point where birds were observed and counted every month. A bird at Old Hall Marshes was the first for the observer since 2009 but it is thought that farmers are releasing them locally (CJM-G).

Breeding was confirmed at three sites (one in 2019) with the sighting of recently fledged young: Colne Point, Leez Priory Hartford End and Foulness. Courtship and display were observed at Bonnetts Wood Upminster and Stapleford Tawney with birds found on territories at Thameside Nature Park and South Ockendon Mardyke. Additional pairs or calling males were found at eight other locations.

Outside the breeding season there were double-figure counts at four locations.

Regular counts were made in the area around Bulphan/South Ockendon/Mardyke with maximum monthly counts of: 35 on 19th September; 19 on 31st October and 11 on 11th November. Other counts of ten or more: The Naze, ten on 28 November; Colne Point, 11 on 26th October; Foulness, 11 on 16th August; Fleet Head Great Wakering, 40 on 14th November.

COMMON QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix coturnix* UK

Scarce passage migrant and summer visitor, subject to influxes.

A species of a secretive nature, more often heard than seen, this bird often remains undetected. An interesting year for this species with nine birds reported from seven sites (2019: four from three, 2018: three from three; 2017: ten from seven; 2016: four from four; 2015: five from five.) Most appear to be summering birds but three that arrived along the coast at Clacton-on-Sea on 4th September may have been birds on passage.

All records are as follows: Canewdon, one heard calling on 3rd June, then further records of possibly the same bird calling on 24th June, 3rd July and 27th August; Bonnetts Wood Upminster, one heard singing on 22nd May (2019, two seen); Ingrebourne Valley, 14th June, one seen when accidentally flushed; Manor Farm North Ockendon, one reported on 3rd July; Warley, one reported on 25th June; Sewardstone Marsh, one seen on 4th May

Annual minima for singing ♂♂ and confirmed breeding pairs are:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	Average
Numbers	2	1	2	10	4	4	4	3	9	12	5.1

COMMON PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus**

Common and widespread naturalised resident, many different sub-species released annually many of which hybridise and naturalise with existing populations.

A staggering 3,326 records were received this year (1,571 on 2019, 1,808 in 2018, 1,641 in 2017). Of these records, 55 are specifically stated as being from observers' homes (the species is often seen in gardens picking up spilled seed from feeders). Although the population fluctuates, as it is significantly determined by the release of captive-bred birds for shooting, the growth in records this year is probably due to increased observations in gardens and on local patches during the lockdowns.

Confirmed breeding was reported from seven sites: The Naze, Frinton-on-Sea, Colne Point, Old Hall Marshes, Coalhouse Fort East Tilbury, Foulness and Upminster.

Counts of 20 or more were reported from: Great Holland, 28 on 28th October; Alresford, 20 on 29th September; Wallasea Island, 50 on 5th February; Bowers Marsh, 27 on 28th September; Middleton, 21 on 6th October and 22 on 20th October;

Braintree, 20 on 31st May; Great Leighs, 20 on 22nd November; North Weald, 32 on 23rd February; Bonnetts Wood Upminster, 21 on 2nd September.

COMMON SWIFT *Apus apus apus* UK

Common summer resident and passage migrant.

Nearly 2,000 records were received during the year. Probable breeding records totalled 92 from 17 locations (60 from 18 in 2019). A large proportion of the records came from three locations: Latchingdon, where 16 pairs nested in the church; Braintree, ten pairs (15 in 2019), Billericay, 13 pairs. This is a glaring mismatch with the information collected under the auspices of the Essex Swift Partnership (*EBR 2019, The Breeding Status of the Common Swift, S Wood, J Smart*). Inter alia, the report identifies recent known breeding sites (2017-2019) and further sites which were historically active and may continue to be so, many of which are missing from the records submitted to the Society. Observers are encouraged to forward as much information as they can so that the Society is provided with the best possible picture of the status in the County of this species of both local and national concern. The BTO have reported a national 58% decline in the breeding population since 1995.

The first sighting for the year was on 29th March in the Ingrebourne Valley (PJ). This is an early date although a 26th March sighting was recorded in 2010. Otherwise the norm over the last 25 years is for the first arrivals to be noted during the first three weeks of April. The end of summer departures have a wider spread, commonly in September, tailing off in October, although November reports and even December are not unknown. The final observation of the year was on 15th October with three birds in Colchester

Recent EBRs have noted the decline and almost demise of large gatherings at our reservoirs and other suitable locations in recent years. 2020 saw a dramatic reversal of this trend. Four-figure counts were received from four locations: Rainham Marshes 1,000 on 5th May; Paglesham Lagoon 1,000 on 14th May; Abberton Reservoir 1,000+ on 23rd May, 1,000 on 6th June and 2,000 on 8th June; Walthamstow Wetlands 1,000 on 5th June and again on the 6th plus 1,200 on 29th June and 1,000 on 30th June.

Additionally large numbers of birds were also noted passing Frinton-on-Sea on passage in late spring/early summer.

Numbers of Common Swift counted passing Frinton-on-Sea in June and July:

	June				July						
Week commencing	5th	27th	29th	30th	1st	4th	6th	8th	25th	27th	28th
Number of hours counted	4	4	6	4	3	2.5	4	4	3.5	5	4
Count	1461	1443	17180	1270	2671	1614	1051	2448	1402	4328	2531

Two other locations scored large passage counts: Colne Point with 2,227 past in two hours on 29th June and Brook Farm Upminster with 2,491 on 30th June. On a lesser scale, but nevertheless encouraging, some observers noted a welcome increase in gatherings on their local patches, although it is possible that first lockdown restrictions increased these observations.

COMMON CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus canorus* UK

Declining summer resident and passage migrant.

Just over 1,200 records were received for the year (871 in 2019). The number of territories/singing ♂'s/pairs totalled 147 from 120 locations (123 from 90 in 2019). The increases in these figures are likely to be attributable to better coverage and reporting rather than to an uplift in the species' fortunes. The highest territory count was from Rainham Marshes with four (five in 2019). Foulness Island, with 17 singing ♂'s, was by far the largest contributor to 2019 breeding records but, although breeding was confirmed there in 2020, no further details are available due to the first lockdown restrictions. Any further details which observers can add to their reports on the detection method would be appreciated. For example, a number of birds are simply recorded as heard when the distinction between a call and a singing male would be particularly helpful.

The first sightings of the year were singles on April 3rd which the same fortunate observer recorded in Great Burstead and Billericay (JBr). (Great Burstead was also the location of the first sighting in 2019 though this is probably co-incidental.) The final sighting was on September 20th at Rainham Marshes, predictably a juvenile. Nine other locations specifically recorded juveniles, all singles except two at Bowers Marsh.

Rufous/hepatic females were reported from six locations (four in 2019): Brightlingsea on April 18th and 20th; Canvey Wick on April 26th and 6th May; Colne Point on six dates in May; Abberton Reservoir on May 26th; Lower Raypits Canewdon on 9th June and Old Hall Marshes on 22nd June.

ROCK DOVE/FERAL PIGEON *Columba livia livia*

Common resident.

Just over 1,900 reports were received (1,300 in 2019). Breeding was noted at eight locations but the actual numbers were apparently small and in most instances were unspecified. The breeding reports available clearly do not reflect the true status of the species as an Essex breeder.

A total of 15 three-figure counts were received (12 in 2019):

King George V Reservoir	100 (8th January, 30th August)
Creekmouth Barking	100 (2nd February, 16th August, 3rd September)
Waltham Abbey	120 (2nd February)
Fishers Green Holyfield	100 (6th March)
Wanstead Flats	c150 (20th March), 330 (29th August), 150 (10th October)
Rainham Marshes	280 (3rd August)
Upminster	100 (16th September), 130 (9th December)
Mistley Walls	120 (11th November)
Witham	170 (22nd November)

As ever the species is widespread throughout the County but disproportionately located in or close to urban settings.

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas oenas* UK

Fairly common resident and passage migrant.

Just under 1,800 reports were received (1,600+ in 2019). Probable or confirmed breeding totalled 212 from 103 locations (139 from 54 in 2019). The virtual doubling of locations is probably due to increased coverage and reporting of breeding efforts rather than a significant change to the species fortunes. There were a few counterpoints e.g. one observer noting increased frequency of birds in his garden including seven at one time and another noting a first in his garden after thirty years of watching. The highest individual breeding count was at Wanstead Park with 24 territories.

Counts of over 100 were noted at Rainham Marshes with 140 on 17th September; East Tilbury with 113+ on 24th November; Ingrebourne Valley with 180 on 27th November and Hanningfield Reservoir with 140+ on 11th December.

Some use of owl boxes for nesting was reported including the surprising discovery of one bird at Peldon incubating two eggs alongside two Barn Owl chicks, though it is not known if the Stock Dove chicks survived.

COMMON WOOD PIGEON *Columba palumbus palumbus*

Abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

The number of reports received was 7,775, approaching a 50% increase on those supplied in 2019 (a little under 5,500).

With multiple broods and a favourable supply of food this species has flourished and has come to dominate observations during many a country walk. That success is not reflected in the number of breeding reports received. 75 pairs were reported from Braintree and there were records from 47 other locations but virtually all of these noted probable or confirmed breeding without any indication of the numbers involved.

There were six counts of 500+ birds during the first winter and spring: 500 at Mersea Island on 6th January; 5,000 at Ashdon on 8th February; 500 at Mundon on 3rd April; 1,000+ at Black Notley on 4th April; circa 500 at Hamford Water on 6th April and 500 at The Strood Mersea Island on 15th April.

There were 21 reports of autumn passage involving 500+ birds mostly from the south of the County. The three largest counts were all made at Chafford Gorges Grays: 14,353 on 24th October, 14,305 on 27th October and a massive 37,236 on 4th November.

EUROPEAN TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur turtur* UK RED

Rapidly declining summer resident and passage migrant.

Another bleak year, although the restrictions of the first lockdown make it impossible to report accurately if there was any further decline in the fortunes of this species. One casualty to reporting was that no records were received from Foulness Island, a known stronghold.

181 reports were received from 63 locations (205 from 60 in 2019). The probable/possible breeding records were particularly disappointing with 28 records including purring ♂'s from 21 locations (41 from 27 in 2019). Wrabness again provided four breeding records. Two juveniles were seen; one in Wrabness and the other at Old Hall Marshes.

The first sighting of the year was a first-year bird observed in Valentine's Park Ilford on 21st January, thereafter seen, recorded and photographed by many observers until its final showing on 8th February and featuring national media attention including on BBC's Winterwatch. The next record for the year was on a more typical 7th April. The final sighting for the year was at Wanstead Flats on 23rd September reprising the last observation date in 2019.

As ever, all records for this species, which has shown an accelerated pattern of decline nationally, would be particularly welcome.

EURASIAN COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto decaocto*

Common resident.

Approximately 3,750 reports were received (2,700 in 2019). Breeding was noted widely across the County in ones and twos or without a specific count but the only notable record was 60 pairs at least in Braintree (60 in 2019).

Eleven reports of 25+ birds were received: c30 at The Strood Mersea Island on 21st January; 35 at Valentine's Park Ilford on 27th January followed by 50 there on January 28th, 25+ on 2nd February and 75 on 3rd February. (The concentration of records from the latter location is probably due to the number of observers present for the Turtle Dove). In the autumn and second winter, reports

came from: Little Clacton, 41 on 14th October, 36 on 28th October, 48 on 10th November and 44 on 9th December; Fordham, c35 on 30th October; Mundon 25 on 17th December.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the species is not quite as common as it was. It is however still widely observed across the County, although the significant increase in the number of records this year may have been influenced by more observations closer to home during lockdowns.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus aquaticus* REX

Scarce resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Sightings were reported from 98 sites across the County (71 in 2019). Breeding was confirmed at Bowers Marsh, Lawling Creek Maylandsea, Mardyke Valley Stifford-Aveley, Mundon Hall, Mundon Wash Sluice and Old Hall Marshes.

Counts of between two and four birds were received from 33 sites while counts of five or more came from: Bowers Marsh, five on 12th January; Rainham Marshes, five on 1st January, 8th January, 19th March, 11th November, 13th November and 28th December, eight on 12th January and 8th November; Seventy Acres Lake Holyfield, ten on 25th November; Vange Marsh, six on 4th November.

Approximate monthly totals were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Numbers	159	56	72	16	2	13	10	15	28	66	130	93

COMMON MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus chloropus*

Very common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

At least 147 pairs/territories were reported from 78 sites (121 from 70 in 2019, 117 from 81 in 2018). Breeding was confirmed at 56 sites. Summering was reported from a further 100 sites.

Observers are encouraged to report all possible/confirmed breeding.

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts were:

GB 3,000 INT 20,000	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total	**355**	**313**	**237**	**28**	**223**	**225**	**270**	**190**	**221**
Stour Estuary	7	nc	8	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	18	15	11	nc	nc	3	2	3	21
Holland Haven	4	2	4	nc	1	0	2	0	1
Colne Estuary	24	12	13	nc	4	22	5	34	19
Blackwater Estuary	25	24	18	2	15	9	26	15	9
Dengie	0	nc	2	nc	2	2	0	0	0
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	9	12	9	nc	0	13	0	6	8
Foulness/Thames	100	108	51	0	38	6	89	27	26
Abberton Reservoir	8	5	3	2	12	16	11	0	3
Hanningfield Reservoir	3	0	4	nc	3	4	4	4	2
Lee Valley	83	56	56	23	59	69	56	81	73
Other	74	79	58	1	89	81	75	20	59

See Introduction for details of a correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

Non-WeBS Counts of 30 or more were reported from: Abberton Reservoir, 100 on 3rd February; Braintree, 40 on 31st May; Chafford Gorges Grays, 32 on 14th January, 35 on 22nd January, 38 on 18th February, 31 on 3rd March, 229 on 1st November, 34 on 18th November, 35 on 3rd December; Colne Point, 38 on 11th November, 30 on 12th November, 38 on 18th November, 38 on 9th December; Mardyke Valley Stifford-Aveley, 31 on 18th August, 34 on 22nd October, 30 on 12th December; Warren Gorge Chafford Hundred, 36 on 18th February, 35 on 8th November, 34 on 18th November, 31 on 22nd November, 35 on 3rd December; West Mersea, 50 on 28th January.

Tundra Bean Goose, Abberton, December (SEAN NIXON)

Turtle Dove, Wrabness, May (SEAN NIXON)

Black-necked Grebe, Bowers Marsh, June (GRAHAM OAKES)

Purple Sandpiper, Holland Haven, December (MATT TURNER)

EURASIAN COOT *Fulica atra atra*

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

At least 130 pairs were reported from 58 sites (180 from 69 in 2019, 200 from 79 in 2018). Reports of more than ten pairs came from Barking Park, 12 on 1st June; Bradwell-Juxta-Coggeshall Gravel Pit, 11 on 7th June; Highams Park, 13 on 1st June; Walthamstow Wetlands, 20 on 1st June. Summering birds were reported from a further 63 locations.

Observers are encouraged to send all records of breeding pairs and broods.

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts were:

GB 2,000 INT 15,000	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total	**2162**	**1493**	**1352**	**296**	**6680**	**8844**	**9833**	**15400**	**7558**
Stour Estuary	1	nc	0	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	32	15	14	nc	nc	0	0	0	0
Colne Estuary	30	41	20	nc	0	8	6	7	3
Blackwater Estuary	10	22	44	2	6	14	17	12	5
Dengie	2	nc	0	nc	2	0	0	0	2
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	15	14	38	nc	0	5	0	61	75
Foulness/Thames	84	230	85	0	27	11	40	121	96
Abberton Reservoir	226	287	135	197	**4233**	**4296**	**5346**	**12815**	**3669**
Hanningfield Reservoir	190	161	212	nc	1126	**2942**	**2395**	753	1594
Lee Valley	1416	569	694	87	1056	1399	1920	1579	1957
Other	156	154	110	10	230	169	109	52	157

See Introduction for details of a correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

Non-WeBS counts of 150 or more were reported from: Abberton Reservoir (selected totals from 24 reports), 170 on 7th January, 250 on 3rd February, 500 on 25th July, 274 on 4th August, 150 on 14th August, 1,200 on 1st September, 1,000 on 23rd October, 1,000 on 12th December; Hanningfield Reservoir (selected totals from 19 reports), 886 on 5th July, 500 on 7th August, 624 on 23rd August, 757 on 19th September, 1,961 on 18th October, 733 on 12th December; Hooks Marsh Waltham Abbey 250 on 15th January; King George V Reservoir Chingford 150 on 12th January, 312 on 20th October; Rainham Marshes 197 on 14th February; Thurrock Thameside Mucking 173 on 5th July, 173 on 12th July; Walthamstow Wetlands 323 on 13th January, 160 on 15th January, 282 on 13th February.

COMMON CRANE *Grus grus*

UK

Scarce, less than annual, mainly autumn passage migrant.

EBSIP (117, 65, 182)*

Ten reports were received of birds flying over: Maldon, Heybridge Gravel Pits and Wix where two on 7th April were likely the same birds (SDw *et al*); Old Hall Marshes, one on 22nd April (CTy); Mersea Island, one on 22nd September (IB); Leigh-on-Sea (Belton Hills), Canvey Point, Mersea Island and Old Hall Marshes, three on 28th September were likely the same birds (CJM-G *et al*); Rainham Marshes RSPB and Wanstead Flats, two on 27th September were likely the same birds (WBi); Rainham Marshes one on 23rd December.

Annual totals over the last decade have been:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Numbers	12	9	3	12	5	1	0	2	3	6

** Statistics have been corrected following mathematical errors in previous Essex Bird Reports.*

LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis ruficollis*

Fairly common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

By including pairs seen in potential breeding habitat with those for which stronger evidence of a nesting attempt was provided, approximately 70 pairs were located (115 in 2019). Given that the first lockdown prevented a count from Rainham Marshes and this held 27 territories in 2019, this indicates that the population continues to be stable. Four sites recorded more than two pairs/territories: Bradwell-Juxta-Coggeshall Gravel Pit (three); Chafford Gorges Grays (four); Walthamstow Wetlands (three); Wanstead Park (three).

Principal Monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts were:

GB 150 INT 4,000	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total	**172**	**84**	**100**	**13**	**87**	**282**	**196**	**182**	**195**
Stour Estuary	4	nc	1	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	64	29	11	nc	nc	1	38	30	43
Colne Estuary	12	2	12	nc	0	15	20	24	11
Blackwater Estuary	22	10	22	6	16	52	30	20	10
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	18	3	23	nc	0	43	4	42	23
Foulness/Thames	14	17	13	0	18	52	28	39	16
Abberton Reservoir	0	3	1	0	29	56	24	12	7
Hanningfield Reservoir	21	0	2	nc	17	42	34	0	62
Lee Valley	8	9	3	7	1	20	7	9	8
Other	9	11	12	0	6	1	11	6	15

See Introduction for details of a correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

WeBS counts were significantly lower than in 2019 in the first winter, even prior to the lockdown; reasons not currently known.

The largest non-WeBS gathering was at Paglesham Lagoon, 57 on 6th September. Counts of 30 or more came from: Walthamstow Wetlands, 40 on 29th January, 42 on 17th October, 45 on 10th December; Hanningfield Reservoir, 30 on 24th August, 31 on 11th December; Coalhouse Fort East Tilbury, 30 on 10th September.

RED-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps grisegena grisegena* UK

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.

Records were received from: Frinton-on-Sea, one on 23rd November; Mersea Island, one on 1st January, one on 4th April, one between 9th December and 28th December; Old Hall Marshes, one on 1st January; Tollesbury Wick, one on 24th January; Rolls Farm Tollesbury, two on 25th November, one on 28th November, three on 13th December; Goldhanger, one on 23rd December; Maldon (Promenade), two on 13th December; St Lawrence Bay, one on 23rd December; Stour Estuary, one on 5th January; Abberton Reservoir, up to two between 11th November and 30th December; King George V Reservoir Chingford, two on 15th October.

Annual totals over the last decade have been:

	2020/19	2019/18	2018/17	2017/16	2016/15	2015/14	2014/13	2013/12	2012/11	2011/10	Average
Numbers	21	7	4	6	5	4	8	5	10	4	7.4

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus cristatus*

Fairly common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Records received indicate that approximately 45 pairs at 21 sites at least built a nest with most hatching young. Additionally approximately 20 pairs were recorded in potential nesting habitat, some of which were deemed by observers to be probably breeding.

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts were:

GB 170 INT 3,600	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total	**274**	**367**	**642**	**217**	**616**	**736**	**1028**	**2247**	**341**
Stour Estuary	12	nc	10	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	4	2	9	nc	nc	0	1	0	4
Holland Haven	0	0	0	nc	0	0	0	0	1
Colne Estuary	10	1	9	nc	0	7	5	15	19
Blackwater Estuary	53	129	139	4	1	130	94	20	19
Dengie	0	nc	0	nc	0	0	0	0	4
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	19	16	43	nc	0	6	2	5	5
Foulness/Thames	18	68	85	25	0	2	3	6	7
Abberton Reservoir	86	91	**209**	165	119	**218**	**628**	**2056**	147
Hanningfield Reservoir	13	1	18	nc	**294**	**179**	105	54	32
Lee Valley	58	55	113	22	**176**	**189**	**185**	82	95
Other	1	4	7	1	26	5	5	9	8

See Introduction for details of a correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

Significant non-WeBS counts on tidal waters were: 560 and 310 off Mersea Island on 6th February and 28th December respectively (250 on 18th January in 2019) and 125 and 130 off Canvey Point on 8th February and 7th December respectively (227 on 11th January in 2019).

HORNED GREBE *Podiceps auritus auritus* (Slavonian Grebe) UK

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

Estimated monthly totals were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Abberton Reservoir	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Colne/Blackwater Complex	10	10	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	4
Frinton-on-Sea	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Hanningfield Reservoir	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
King George V Reservoir	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Stour Estuary	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Monthly totals	17	20	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	11

In the above table the highest single monthly count at each location is shown but this may, in a few cases, underestimate the true numbers involved, especially the Colne/Blackwater complex where reports came from a number of vantage points. The highest single monthly count came from Mersea Island where ten were seen on 24th January and 6th February. The last of the first winter was at Old Hall Marshes on 13th March with the first returning bird at Mersea Island on 17th October.

BLACK-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps nigricollis nigricollis* UK

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor; occasionally nests.

Breeding was recorded at Hanningfield Reservoir where a juvenile was recorded on 29th July with adult and juvenile on 5th August.

Estimated monthly totals were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Abberton Reservoir	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Bowers Marsh	0	0	3	2	4	4	1	0	0	0	0	0
Hanningfield Reservoir	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	4	1	0	0
Holyfield Lake	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
King George V Reservoir	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Thurrock Thameside Mucking	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Walthamstow Wetlands	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	0
William Girling Reservoir Chingford	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	13	16	0	0	0
Monthly totals	4	3	7	2	4	4	4	16	22	3	3	1

In the above table the highest single monthly count at each location is shown but this may not fully reflect the true numbers involved.

The highest single counts received this year refer to 13 on 22nd August and 16 on 20th September on William Girling Reservoir Chingford.

EURASIAN OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus ostralegus* UK

Resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

A total of 84 confirmed breeding pairs were reported from 23 sites (215 from 38 in 2019, 111 from 22 in 2018), the lower totals no doubt being due to non-reporting during the first lockdown. The only sites with more than five pairs were (2019 figures in brackets, not counted is shown as 'nc'): Alresford Creek, seven (nc); Old Hall Marshes, 28 (nc); Tollesbury Wick, seven (eight); Lawling Creek, nine (nc); Althorne Creek, seven (nc); Rainham Marshes, six (seven). Confirmed breeding at inland sites was restricted to pairs at Broomhouse Flash Langham and Russell Green Gravel Pits Boreham.

The number of inland records away from tidal waters remained steady with 157 (183 in 2019), although the only count of more than four birds away from breeding areas was five at Ingrebourne Valley on 10th March.

Autumn diurnal passage past Frinton-on-Sea was very light with monthly totals of 175 and 270 in July and August respectively with a peak of 101 on 15th August.

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts were:

GB 2,900 INT 10,200	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total	**9684**	**10396**	**9087**	**973**	**10870**	**14873**	**14551**	**13204**	**6668**
Stour Estuary	90	nc	79	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	296	148	321	nc	nc	12	281	176	312
Holland Haven	0	0	4	nc	0	0	0	0	0
Colne Estuary	637	307	230	nc	160	210	716	497	412
Blackwater Estuary	667	550	376	17	2	1078	969	503	592
Dengie	7	nc	1010	nc	700	600	1230	5	538
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	242	264	304	nc	6	16	62	147	253
Foulness/Thames	7745	9126	6755	950	10002	12957	11293	11876	4561
Abberton Reservoir	0	0	1	6	0	0	0	0	0
Hanningfield Reservoir	0	1	3	nc	0	0	0	0	0
Lee Valley	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0

See Introduction for details of a correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

Just three non-WeBS four-figure counts were received from three areas, all in March: Bradwell Bird Observatory, 1,000 on 18th; Gunners Park Shoebury, 1,500 on 8th; Canvey Point, 1,000 on 15th.

A leucistic bird was noted at Wakering Stairs 11th September and Shoeburyness on 17th November.

BLACK-WINGED STILT *Himantopus himantopus*

Rare passage migrant. EBSIP (20, 36, 56)*

Bowers Marsh RSPB	two	10th-12th April	TBo

This is the seventh year in a row that the south-east of the County has attracted a pair in spring.

**Corrections to statistics have been made due to records at Deal Hall in 2016 and Fingringhoe in 2015 being published in the respective Essex Bird Reports but never submitted, whilst a record at Blue House Farm in 2016 was found not proven by BBRC. All are now excluded from the statistics.*

PIED AVOCET *Recurvirostra avosetta* UK REX

Increasing summer visitor, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Confirmed/likely breeding records were estimated at 80 pairs from 16 sites (325 from 16 in 2019, 127 from 12 in 2018), although reporting remains inconsistent. Estimated numbers from sites holding double-figures were (2019 total in brackets): Holland Haven, ten (11); Old Hall Marshes, 36 (20). There were no breeding counts recived from Blue House Farm and Bowers Marsh.

Inland reports away from tidal waters were as follows (singles unless stated): Abberton Reservoir, 12th January, three on 27th March, two on 2nd September, 22nd September; Hanningfield Reservoir, 21st July, 21st August to 2nd September (with two on 23rd August), five on 10th September; Cornmill Meadows Waltham Abbey, two on 23rd April; Walthamstow Wetlands, 14th March.

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts were:

GB 87 INT 730	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total	**1644**	**859**	**949**	**0**	**35**	**293**	**1144**	**1253**	**1245**
Stour Estuary	0	nc	162	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	905	119	233	nc	nc	0	410	490	317
Holland Haven	0	0	0	nc	4	0	0	0	0
Colne Estuary	82	13	0	nc	8	79	170	138	61
Blackwater Estuary	315	57	175	0	2	8	9	49	186
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	306	562	358	nc	0	172	518	394	582
Foulness/Thames	36	108	21	0	19	33	37	182	99
Abberton Reservoir	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0

See Introduction for details of a correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

As usual the largest non-WeBS counts came from: Fingringhoe Wick, 2,000 on 23rd February; and East Tilbury, peak of 1,870 on 17th September.

NORTHERN LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus* UK REX

Uncommon resident. Common passage migrant and winter visitor.

Confirmed breeding records were received from 17 sites, totalling 168 pairs (170 from 18 in 2019). Consistent individual site reports were patchy, probably to some extent due to the first lockdown, with the primary sites as follows (2019 totals in brackets): Old Hall Marshes, 56 (54); Rainham Marshes, 76 (82).

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts were:

GB 6,200 INT 20,000	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total	**19369**	**8921**	**936**	**6**	**634**	**1589**	**4703**	**7890**	**14414**
Stour Estuary	237	nc	0	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	2812	2144	35	nc	nc	17	258	519	1077
Holland Haven	600	335	37	nc	12	18	120	58	0
Colne Estuary	759	201	14	nc	8	111	279	350	918
Blackwater Estuary	4204	889	412	0	57	187	359	1370	1171
Dengie	40	nc	0	nc	0	0	250	0	3
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	**6975**	3165	144	nc	0	885	1680	2638	5004
Foulness/Thames	1938	2129	292	0	253	161	1098	1897	3967
Abberton Reservoir	1790	10	0	0	291	177	555	974	1782
Hanningfield Reservoir	0	0	0	nc	13	33	102	57	404
Lee Valley	14	48	2	6	0	0	2	27	88

See Introduction for details of a correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

Coastal non-WeBS counts of 2,000+ came from five sites: Old Hall Marshes, 2,400 on 14th February; Blue House Farm, 2,000 on 5th December; Wallasea Island, 5,000 on 12th December; Vange Marsh, 2,230 on 8th January; Rainham Marshes, 2,000 on 28th December.

Inland, counts of 250+ came from two sites: Abberton Reservoir (non-WeBS) peaks of 2,500 on 26th January, 555 on 14th October and 1,000 on 3rd December; Silver End, 300 on 17th October.

An arrival off the sea was noted on 30th November including 404 at Frinton-on-Sea and 120 at Gunners Park Shoebury.

EUROPEAN GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor.

Spring passage reports were limited by the first lockdown with the last at Old Hall Marshes on 22nd April. Birds returned from mid-June with eight at Copperas Bay Wrabness on 17th, then noted passing south past Frinton-on-Sea with two on 22nd June, one on 9th and two on 25th July, after which birds were more widely reported.

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts were:

GB 4,000 INT 9,300	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total	**17429**	**11295**	**1041**	**0**	**288**	**1328**	**6294**	**7701**	**8126**
Hamford Water	3501	615	378	nc	nc	14	101	605	682
Colne Estuary	36	80	267	nc	50	120	71	572	542
Blackwater Estuary	2006	610	322	0	41	780	490	519	290
Dengie	120	nc	0	nc	0	70	**5000**	0	50
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	**4146**	1830	56	nc	0	277	316	**4332**	1714
Foulness/Thames	**7620**	**8160**	18	0	197	67	316	1146	3413
Abberton Reservoir	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	527	1435

See Introduction for details of a correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

All the high numbers of non-WeBS counts came from between Old Hall Marshes and Wallasea Island with peaks of 4,800 on 10th December and 5,000 on 12th December at each respective site.

The highest inland counts (50+) were: Abberton Reservoir, 527 on 19th November, 2,000 on 17th December; Boreham, 55 on 28th December; Liston, 100 on 31st December; Stambourne, 95 on 28th October.

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola squatarola* UK

Common passage migrant and winter visitor.

June and July records comprised 35 from seven sites, of which five related to double-figure counts. The peak counts were 25 at Colne Point on 28th June and 18 at The Naze on 26th July.

Diurnal autumn migration was very light with Frinton-on-Sea recording a total of only 32 (98 in 2019, 86 in 2018) with no notable influxes noted elsewhere in the County.

The only records away from tidal waters were singles at: Abberton Reservoir on 24th August, 5th October, 29th November and 16th December; Chafford Hundred, 9th April.

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts were:

GB 330 INT 2,500	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total	6117	3021	6941	628	625	2080	2708	3193	4171
Stour Estuary	11	nc	282	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	**1092**	**552**	**834**	nc	nc	61	273	293	388
Colne Estuary	101	81	141	nc	9	73	213	**616**	238
Blackwater Estuary	**545**	**907**	**1878**	8	1	**592**	**682**	**387**	707
Dengie	**1420**	nc	**2051**	nc	75	107	**600**	15	**403**
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	**2392**	**1207**	**1168**	nc	0	112	**611**	**1329**	1491
Foulness/Thames	**556**	274	**587**	**620**	**540**	**1135**	329	**553**	**943**
Abberton Reservoir	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

See Introduction for details of a correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

COMMON RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula* UK REX

***C. h. hiaticula* is an uncommon resident and common passage migrant and winter visitor whilst *C. h. tundrae* is a common passage migrant and winter visitor. There are no ringing recoveries to suggest *C. h. psammodromus* has occurred as a passage migrant.**

Approximately 15 breeding pairs were confirmed from eight sites (38 from 15 in 2019, ten from six in 2018. Site totals were (2019 figures in brackets): The Naze, five (four); Colne Point, one, but a further eight possible (six); Stone Point Mersea Island, two; Mersea Island (Fen Farm), one; Old Hall Marshes, four; Tollesbury Wick, one (five); Lawling Creek, one.

Inland records came from six sites during the year (singles unless stated): Abberton Reservoir, noted from 9th August to 27th December with peaks of 30 on 2nd September, 160 on 3rd October, and 54 on 19th November; Hanningfield Reservoir, noted from 3rd August to 18th November with peaks of ten on 16th August and 5th September, 12 on 31st October, 34 on 16th November; Chafford Hundred, 16th May; William Girling Reservoir Chingford, 26th September; King George V Reservoir Chingford, 29th April, 29th May, 31st August; Walthamstow Wetlands, 11th September.

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts were:

GB 420 INT 730	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS Total	**474**	**197**	**120**	**8**	**138**	**719**	**612**	**699**	**390**
Hamford Water	22	30	37	nc	nc	4	5	27	29
Colne Estuary	93	31	33	nc	19	15	52	62	158
Blackwater Estuary	88	8	9	0	0	97	166	78	30
Dengie	29	nc	9	nc	0	0	35	17	34
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	63	61	28	nc	0	401	300	362	125
Foulness/Thames	179	67	4	8	118	202	18	99	12
Abberton Reservoir	0	0	0	0	0	0	36	54	2
Hanningfield Reservoir	0	0	0	nc	1	0	0	0	0

See Introduction for details of a correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

There were six non-WeBS counts of 250+: Wallasea Island, peak of 290 on 8th September and 8th October; East Tilbury, 346 on 20th August.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius curonicus* REX

Uncommon summer resident and passage migrant.

Breeding was confirmed at 12 sites with 16 pairs reported (ten sites with 18 pairs in 2019).

The spring arrival commenced with a single at Rainham Marshes on 15th March. Sites recording notable counts were: The Hythe Colchester, four on 6th May; Abberton Reservoir, four on various dates; Lower Raypits Canewdon, four on 10th April; Bowers Marsh, ten on 30th April; Coalhouse Fort East Tilbury, four on 22nd March; Rainham Marshes, four on 26th March; Cornmill Meadows Waltham Abbey, four on 10th April.

There were 17 records of six or more birds during July to September, including passage and breeding birds, with passage peaks as follows: Abberton Reservoir, eight on 25th July, ten on 6th September; Bowers March, eight on 1st July; Vange Marsh, seven seen on 8th August. The last report of the year was a single at the latter site on 29th September.

EURASIAN DOTTEREL *Charadrius morinellus* UK

Scarce passage migrant. EBSIP (277, 59, 336)*

Deal Hall	ten	21st-22nd August	CSh, RP

The Dengie peninsula again produced an autumn "trip", albeit in an area with no public access.
**The statistics have been revised following a review of records from 2004 and earlier.*

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus phaeopus* UK

Common passage migrant; occasional in winter.

In the first winter, wintering birds remained from 2019 at Old Hall Marshes and in the river estuary near Burnham-on-Crouch. Unusually February also produced records from Heybridge Basin on 10th (presumably the same then being seen at Lawling Creek on 8th March), Rainham Marshes on 18th and Cudmore Grove CP East Mersea on 26th. Two were noted at Mersea Island on 8th March before the first apparent spring bird flew north past Frinton-on-Sea on 27th March.

Passage peaked between mid-April and early May with seven sites holding 20+ birds and maxima as follows: Hamford Water (Irlams Beach), 24 on 16th April; Frinton-on-Sea, a total of 528 north with earlier than usual peaks of 97 and 137 on 18th-19th April; numbers at Holland Haven and the adjacent golf course peaked at 33 on 27th April; The Strood Mersea Island, 45 on 26th April; Old Hall Marshes, 34 on 22nd April; Marsh Farm South Woodham Ferrers, 28 on 4th May; Shoebury East Beach, 22 on 7th May.

A single at Canvey Point on 12th June may have been over-summering but return passage was certainly underway from 28th June when a single passed Frinton-on-Sea. and involved ten double-figure counts between 8th July and 29th August. There were four day counts in excess of 20: Frinton-on-Sea, 34 on 8th July and 34 on 1st August, all southbound; Fleet Head Great Wakering, 49 on 1st August; Wakering Stairs, 22 on 8th August. The final passage birds departed in late-October leaving wintering birds at Old Hall Marshes, Stow Marshes and near Burnham-on-Crouch/Wallasea Island.

Inland reports came from eight sites, primarily singles, with the more notable records being: King George V Reservoir Chingford, noted on nine dates between 2nd April and 29th May with peaks of four on 2nd April, eight on 18th April, 12 on 28th April; Walthamstow Wetlands, seven on 10th May.

EURASIAN CURLEW *Numenius arquata arquata* UK

Common passage migrant and winter visitor.

Inland counts away from tidal waters came from (singles unless otherwise stated): Abberton Reservoir, four on 28th March, 31st August, three on 26th September, 21st November, 3rd December; Boreham, 27th June, 28th December; Hanningfield Reservoir, 12th and 15th August, two on 17th September; Chafford Hundred, 2nd April; Ingrebourne Valley and (presumed same bird) Brook Farm Upminster, 31st August; Sewardstone Marsh, 22nd March, 8th August; King George V Reservoir Chingford, 22nd and 25th March.

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts were:

GB 1,200 INT 8,500	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total	**4774**	**3745**	**4282**	**126**	**1380**	**3393**	**3993**	**2041**	**2963**
Stour Estuary	40	nc	212	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	519	399	249	nc	nc	84	112	183	206
Holland Haven	7	1	15	nc	0	6	0	3	0
Colne Estuary	435	198	238	nc	163	93	439	411	212
Blackwater Estuary	1093	577	**1222**	11	20	724	798	483	395
Dengie	90	nc	3	nc	0	35	210	16	2
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	260	341	392	nc	6	382	220	141	327
Foulness/Thames	**2330**	**2229**	**1951**	115	1191	**2069**	**2214**	**804**	**1821**

See Introduction for details of a correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

Coastal passage past Frinton-on-Sea was again strong in early to mid-April with a northbound peak of 207 on 11th. Autumn passage was noted from late May with peaks of 106 on 21st June and 196 on 9th July.

The only non-WeBS count in excess of 300 was 414 at Old Hall Marshes on 2nd September.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica lapponica* UK

Common passage migrant and winter visitor; a few during summer.

Recorded in every month of the year, but with just two June records: Colne Point, throughout the month; Roach Estuary, 8th.

Inland records away from tidal water came from five sites: Abberton Reservoir, six on 1st October; Sewardstone Marsh, one on 22nd March; Hall Marsh Scrape Waltham Abbey, two on 14th April; King George V Reservoir Chingford, two on 15th April, 12 on 30th April; Walthamstow Wetlands, two on 13th April, four on 20th, seven on 28th, one on 29th.

Inner Thames records came from Rainham Marshes where birds were noted on 30th January, between 13th and 29th April with a peak of seven on the latter date, 2nd-3rd August, 19th-21st September, 20th-21st November. Elsewhere a single was at Beckton on 1st January.

The April inland passage was also observed at the coast with northbound movements past Frinton-on-Sea peaking with 196 on 18th and 109 on 19th.

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts were:

GB 500 INT 1,200	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total	**4466**	**5403**	**2071**	**350**	**566**	**3791**	**1098**	**1181**	**2627**
Stour Estuary	0	nc	137	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	385	**640**	483	nc	nc	0	92	130	93
Colne Estuary	1	0	0	nc	0	2	10	4	7
Blackwater Estuary	92	240	207	0	0	10	88	40	25
Dengie	300	nc	71	nc	0	0	1	0	0
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	**1104**	**1883**	5	nc	0	4	4	249	**616**
Foulness/Thames	**2584**	**2640**	**1168**	350	**566**	**3775**	**903**	**758**	**1886**

See Introduction for details of a correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

Autumn passage was typically light with the only three-figure non-WeBS counts being: The Naze, 158 on 5th September; Wakering Stairs, 150 and 600 on 8th and 23rd August respectively.

Peak numbers at Wallasea Island increased markedly again with the previous site record of 416 in 2019 being surpassed by counts of 1,100 on 13th January and 1,400 on 16th February.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa* UK

Icelandic Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa islandica*

Much increased passage migrant and winter visitor.

Good numbers were present in the first winter period with 13 four-figure counts (additional to the Wetland Bird Survey) and peak site counts as follows: Mistley, 1,300 on 1st February; Heybridge Gravel Pit, 1,000 on 12th January; Maldon, 1,000 on 5th February; Vange Marsh, 2,000 on 22nd February and 11th March; Canvey Wick, 3,200 on 20th March; Thurrock Thameside Mucking, 1,657 on 23rd March; East Tilbury, 3,500 on 24th March.

Numbers built quickly during July with 503 at East Tilbury on 9th increasing to 938 on 23rd. Eight counts reached four-figures, most in the late-August to mid-September period with peaks of: Manningtree, 2,000 on 19th December; Roach Estuary, 1,000 on 17th November; Two Tree Island, 2,000 on 16th September; Thurrock Thameside Mucking, 1,034 on 30th August.

A total of 246 records were received from ten inland locations summarised as follows:

Broomhouse Flash Langham,	six on 27th March, one on 28th June, 16 on 26th July and five on 12th September;
Bradwell Gravel Pit Coggeshall	single on 19th July
Friday Wood Colchester	single on 7th December
Abberton Reservoir	reported in all months bar February and April with peaks of 20 on 10th January, 27 on 29th May, 135 on 28th August, 310 on 22nd September, 122 on 6th October, 70 on 24th and 29th November, 50 on 3rd December
Russell Green Gravel Pits Boreham	single on three dates 29th June - 9th July, two on 10th July
Great Baddow	eight south on 27th June
Writtle	27 on 8th July
Hanningfield Reservoir	monthly peaks of three on 19th February, six in July, seven on 3rd August and five on 2nd September
King George V Reservoir Chingford	single on 19th March
Walthamstow Wetlands,	eight on 19th July, single on 4th August and three on 9th August

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts were:

GB 390 INT 470	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total	**4095**	**3527**	**5174**	**242**	**432**	**4339**	**2621**	**4081**	**1877**
Stour Estuary	**1770**	nc	240	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	**528**	167	0	nc	nc	0	366	**453**	**420**
Holland Haven	1	0	0	nc	6	1	0	0	0
Colne Estuary	263	**720**	**1371**	nc	2	144	160	256	312
Blackwater Estuary	**427**	**1765**	**3156**	242	219	**1723**	**1145**	**1048**	46
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	**1045**	**791**	369	nc	6	**587**	**722**	**1546**	**778**
Foulness/Thames	61	81	38	0	111	**1574**	143	**677**	293
Abberton Reservoir	0	0	0	0	88	310	85	101	28
Hanningfield Reservoir	0	3	0	nc	0	0	0	0	0

See Introduction for details of a correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

Continental Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa limosa*

Vagrant. **EBSIP (0, 8, 8)**

A Dutch colour-ringed bird was present at Holland Haven from 12th June to 6th July.

RUDDY TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres interpres* UK

Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor.

Recorded in every month of the year, with 13 records in June, of singles unless stated, as follows: Copperas Bay Wrabness, five on 17th; Dovercourt, 30th; The Naze, two on 13th; Hamford Water, 22nd; Alresford Creek, 2nd; Colne Point, noted on seven dates, peak of ten on 15th; Cudmore Grove, 8th.

Inland records away from tidal waters came from five sites (singles unless stated):

Abberton Reservoir, 1st January, 26th July, 16th-26th August, two, increasing to nine on 27th, 29th August, 3rd-4th September, 2nd December; Hanningfield Reservoir, 14th and 22nd August; King George V Reservoir Chingford, two on 19th April; William Girling Reservoir; 22nd August; Walthamstow Wetlands; 23rd July.

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts were:

GB 400 INT 700	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total	**1445**	**388**	**1614**	**294**	**244**	**834**	**800**	**961**	**592**
Stour Estuary	212	nc	76	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	108	39	98	nc	nc	7	56	45	64
Holland Haven	0	0	5	nc	0	2	1	1	0
Colne Estuary	210	31	110	nc	0	321	230	224	118
Blackwater Estuary	238	188	**418**	94	106	317	348	**449**	205
Dengie	35	nc	45	nc	0	7	109	36	32
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	3	29	23	nc	2	24	28	8	8
Foulness/Thames	**639**	101	**839**	200	135	156	28	198	165
Other	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

See Introduction for details of a correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

There were no non-WeBS counts of 250 or more, but there was a notable count of 207 at Mistley Walls on 19th August.

RED KNOT *Calidris canutus islandica* UK

Common passage migrant and winter visitor; a few during summer.

Inland records were received from: Abberton Reservoir, singles on 21st August, 3rd September, 3rd October and six on 26th October; Hanningfield Reservoir, single on 3rd September. June records were all of singles: Colne Point on 15th and 28th; Wallasea Island on 12th.

There were no five-figure counts except for those listed in the Wetland Bird Survey table below.

GB 2,600 INT 4,500	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total	**58038**	**27636**	**13728**	**4260**	**212**	**2320**	**7676**	**28178**	**19298**
Stour Estuary	180	nc	824	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	1554	79	208	nc	nc	0	1250	2466	455
Colne Estuary	123	20	4	nc	0	7	79	1854	**3406**
Blackwater Estuary	**7281**	**16370**	2334	0	0	11	1600	**6938**	1478
Dengie	**10000**	nc	**5000**	nc	0	40	770	0	**4000**
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	**9041**	**4766**	298	nc	0	42	72	**4982**	1301
Foulness/Thames	**29859**	**6401**	**5060**	**4260**	212	2220	**3905**	**11938**	**8658**

See Introduction for details of correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

RUFF *Calidris pugnax* UK

Common passage migrant and winter visitor.

All double-figure counts occurred in the second half of the year as follows: Abberton Reservoir, 12 on 18th August, on six dates in September with a maximum of 21 on 2nd, on six dates in October with a maximum of 15 on 6th, 15 on 29th November, 13 on 1st December and 12 on 15th; Vange Marsh, 11 on 31st August.

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) were:

GB 9 INT 12,500	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS Total	**8**	**2**	**7**	**0**	**17**	**24**	**14**	**8**	**4**
Hamford Water	6	0	0	nc	nc	0	0	0	0
Holland Haven	0	0	0	nc	5	0	0	0	0
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	0	0	4	nc	0	0	0	0	0
Foulness/Thames	2	2	3	0	0	0	3	2	2
Abberton Reservoir	0	0	0	0	12	20	8	6	2
Hanningfield Reservoir	0	0	0	nc	0	4	3	0	0

See Introduction for details of correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea* UK

Passage migrant, rare in spring, regular in autumn in variable numbers.

There were no records in the first half of the year.

Autumn passage was poor with a minimum of 113 (90 in 2019) birds. The only double-figure counts were at Abberton Reservoir, 11 on 2nd and ten on 3rd September. The only second winter record was a single at Blue House Farm on 24th November.

Minimum monthly counts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	38	70	5	1	0
Locations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	25	5	1	0

TEMMINCK'S STINT *Calidris temminckii*

Scarce, almost annual passage migrant. EBSIP (193, 54, 248)

Holland Haven	18th May	two	(PLo)

An average year. Annual totals for the last ten years were:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	Average
Number	2	5	0	3	2	5	1	0	9	4	3.1

SANDERLING *Calidris alba alba* UK

Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor; occasional in summer.

June records were received from the following locations (maximum counts shown):

The Naze	50	7th
Walton-on-the-Naze	20	5th (possibly part of same flock at The Naze)
Frinton-on-Sea	37	2nd
Colne Point	24	6th
Rainham Marshes	single	2nd-4th

Inland records were all singles: Hanningfield Reservoir on 16th August; King George V Reservoir Chingford on 30th May and 30th August.

With the exception of those listed in the Wetland Bird Survey table, the only counts of 500 or more came from Gunners Park Shoebury, 1,000 on 8th April.

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts were:

GB 200 INT 1,200	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total	**1002**	**825**	**81**	**25**	**50**	**107**	**244**	**276**	**224**
Stour Estuary	80	nc	0	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	83	10	24	nc	nc	16	0	15	14
Colne Estuary	91	18	2	nc	1	0	36	26	73
Blackwater Estuary	0	0	0	0	0	0	28	32	35
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	0	0	0	nc	0	0	0	3	0
Foulness/Thames	**748**	**797**	55	25	49	91	180	**200**	102

See Introduction for details of correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina alpina/schinzii/arctica* UK

***C. a. alpina* is a very common passage migrant and winter visitor, whilst *C. a. schinzii* is a passage migrant. The status of *C. a. arctica* in the County is uncertain.**

Inland records at the main reservoirs are summarised below (maximum monthly counts):

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Abberton Reservoir	1							2	4	30	87	49
Hanningfield Reservoir							1	1	3	2	1	
King George V Reservoir			1	2	17		3					

June records were received from seven sites (none in 2019): The Naze, two (7th); Colne Point, nine (7th), three (15th and 28th); Cudmore Grove East Mersea, 18 (8th); The Strood Mersea Island, 20 (17th); Wallasea Island, five (12th); Bowers Marsh, single (24th); Rainham Marshes, two (3rd-4th), single (30th).

The only five-figure count not listed in the Wetland Bird Survey table was 10,000 at Coalhouse Fort East Tilbury on 11th February.

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts were:

GB 3,400 INT 13,300	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total	**34289**	**21791**	**13976**	**2708**	**146**	**1628**	**12433**	**25995**	**24679**
Stour Estuary	1850	nc	943	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	2433	1185	441	nc	nc	180	634	371	4008
Colne Estuary	1596	1458	1142	nc	0	71	1871	5947	3340
Blackwater Estuary	**7266**	**7629**	2666	8	4	75	**4523**	**6314**	2881
Dengie	2450	nc	**4050**	nc	0	68	490	760	970
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	**6483**	**5006**	789	nc	2	291	2987	**5932**	**6868**
Foulness/Thames	**12211**	**6513**	**3945**	2700	138	939	1921	**6584**	**6593**
Abberton Reservoir	0	0	0	0	0	1	7	87	19

See Introduction for details of correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

PURPLE SANDPIPER *Calidris maritima* UK

Uncommon, and declining, passage migrant and winter visitor.

In the first winter period records were received from: Holland Haven, 1-4 throughout January-March, single on 18th April; Mersea Island, single on 1st March.

As in 2019, records were received from a wider range of sites in the second winter period:

Dovercourt	11 (17th December)
The Naze	two (28th September) singles (five dates 30th September to 5th December)
Holland Haven	1-8 (14th October to 31st December)
Jaywick	singles (15th September, 8th October, 5th December)
St Osyth Stone	single (16th December)
Cudmore Grove East Mersea	single (on eight dates 28th October to 11th December)
Old Hall Marshes	19th, 23rd and 30th October
Tollesbury Wick	single (16th October and 17th November)
Bradwell-on-Sea	single (8th October)
Blue House Farm	single (15th December)
Canvey Island	single (2nd October)

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*

Regular autumn passage migrant, very scarce in spring; occasional in winter.

All first winter records came from Coalhouse Fort East Tilbury in January with a single on 1st, two on 5th and 12th and five on 19th.

There were no spring records for the first time for at least 40 years.

Autumn passage was light, the only sites recording more than singles being (maximum counts):

Holland Haven	two (20th August)
Old Hall Marshes	two (1st October)
Vange Marsh	two (12th-13th September)
Coalhouse Fort East Tilbury	three (17th September and 10th October)
Abberton Reservoir	eight on 5th October

Estimated monthly totals were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	23	21	4	0
Locations	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	9	7	3	0

Estimated totals for the last ten years were:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Number	63	17	59	210	128	62	67	79	72	130

EURASIAN WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola* UK

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

There were 32 records of two or more (21 in 2019) as follows (two unless stated):

Stour Estuary (Copperas Bay)	8th December (three)
The Naze	29th November
Garnham's Island Hamford Water	9th February
Pewit Island Hamford Water	9th February
Deal Hall Dengie	4th September
Hadleigh Downs /Castle Park	11th March
Canvey Wick	5th February, 8th February (four), 1st March, 12th December (three)
Wat Tyler	14th December
Great Loveney Hall Mount Bures	1st February, 1st December, 30th December (three)
Shut Heath Wood	19th March
Abberton Reservoir	25th January, 18th March
Great Baddow	23rd March
Hanningfield Reservoir	11th February (four), 11th and 13th December
Dunmow (Cobler's Green)	28th December (three)
Manor Farm North Ockendon	1st December (three)
Ingrebourne Valley	25th January (nine), 22nd November, 12th December
Prior's Wood Takeley	26th March
Chingford Plain Epping Forest	8th November
Fairlop Waters Barkingside	21st November;
Wanstead Flats	4th January, 21st January, 5th November (four)

Estimated monthly totals were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number	32	25	33	1	1	0	1	0	4	5	33	43

JACK SNIPE *Lymnocryptes minimus*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

There was an estimated total of 35 individuals from 16 sites (62 from 16 in 2019). Estimated monthly totals were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number	3	2	7	0	0	0	0	0	2	12	6	3
Locations	1	1	7	0	0	0	0	0	2	6	6	1

The only counts of more than one were: Rainham Marshes, two on 2nd January; Holland Haven, two on 4th October; Wanstead Flats, three on 16th October; The Hythe Colchester, three on 30th December.

COMMON SNIPE *Gallinago gallinago gallinago* UK REX

***G. g. gallinago* is a very rare breeder, common passage migrant and winter visitor. The status of *G. g. faeroeensis* in the County is uncertain given the lack of ringing recoveries in Essex.**

There were no records indicative of breeding.

The only site recording counts of 50 or more was Rainham Marshes (as in 2018) with a maximum of 88 on 12th January.

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts were:

GB 10,000 INT 20,000	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total	**162**	**114**	**58**	**0**	**15**	**22**	**33**	**97**	**59**
Stour Estuary	5	nc	0	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	21	0	0	nc	nc	0	0	2	3
Holland Haven	13	10	4	nc	0	4	1	9	0
Colne Estuary	1	16	15	nc	1	2	2	26	13
Blackwater Estuary	4	13	5	0	0	0	8	13	5
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	2	0	0	nc	0	8	1	2	0
Foulness/Thames	92	74	31	0	2	3	13	44	36
Abberton Reservoir	3	0	3	0	12	2	2	0	0
Lee Valley	21	1	0	0	0	1	5	1	2

See Introduction for details of correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

RED PHALAROPE *Phalaropus fulicarius* (Grey Phalarope)

Scarce passage migrant. EBSIP (96, 26, 124)

Canvey Seafront	2nd October	1st winter	(NCh)

An average year, totals over the last ten years being:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	Average
Totals	1	1	2	2	1	0	4	0	0	1	1.3

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos* UK

Common passage migrant and scarce winter visitor.

Estimated minimum monthly totals were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number	22	5	3	45	74	7	206	250	99	23	13	13
Locations	7	4	3	22	26	5	46	61	40	16	12	7

Apart from 12 at Walthamstow Wetlands on 30th June, all double-figure counts were in the second half of the year, from the following, with maximum site counts given:

Frinton-on-Sea	22 (11th August)
Fingringhoe Wick	20 (1st September)
Two Tree Island	26 (29th August)
Rainham Marshes	12 (31st August)
Beckton	15 (16th August)
Abberton Reservoir	18 (7th August)
Hanningfield Reservoir	13 (15th August)
King George V Reservoir	14 (28th July)
Walthamstow Wetlands	19 (11th August)
Wanstead Flats	ten (5th September)

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus* UK

Common passage migrant and much increased winter visitor.

Estimated minimum monthly totals were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number	28	23	36	28	2	34	119	206	122	62	42	30
Locations	20	17	21	18	2	18	39	53	48	33	26	18

In the first winter period the highest count was five at Ardleigh Reservoir on 18th February.

Spring passage was very light with an estimated total of 100 in March to June (156 in 2019). The only site recording five or more was Old Hall Marshes with a maximum of eight 15th March.

Autumn passage was higher with 509 records in July-October (363 in 2019). Double-figure counts came from (maximum site counts): Fingringhoe Ranges, 12 on 6th July; Mersea Island, ten on 13th July; Old Hall Marshes, 27 on 10th August; Thames Estuary, 11 on 16th August; Abberton Reservoir, 12 on 18th August; William Girling Reservoir Chingford, ten on 23rd August.

In the second winter period the highest counts were of five on Mersea Island on 16th November and at Walthamstow Wetlands on 9th December.

COMMON REDSHANK *Tringa totanus totanus/robusta* UK REX

***T.t. totanus* is a locally common resident declining in some areas, common passage migrant and winter visitor, whilst *T. t. robusta* is a common passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Confirmed breeding was reported from only six sites (12 in 2019), with very little information on the success of breeding, due to restrictions of the first lockdown: Wallasea Island, approximately 30 pairs; Foulness; Rainham Marshes, 92 pairs (87 in 2019); Bowers Marsh; Clementsgreen Creek South Woodham Ferrers, three young; Lower Raypits Canewdon. Probable breeding records came from a further seven sites.

The only four-figure count apart from those given in the Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) table below was of 1,347 at Mersea Island on 12th January.

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts were:

GB 9400 INT 1,500	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total	**7340**	**5155**	**4904**	**294**	**1588**	**5486**	**4704**	**5285**	**3857**
Stour Estuary	255	nc	388	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	**1548**	885	742	nc	nc	256	427	572	518
Holland Haven	0	0	0	nc	3	1	1	0	0
Colne Estuary	**1464**	564	565	nc	30	**1183**	**1249**	**1303**	741
Blackwater Estuary	**2183**	**1471**	**1820**	82	365	**1145**	**1297**	888	616
Dengie	167	nc	85	nc	3	12	140	101	128
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	**1159**	**1318**	842	nc	167	**1584**	595	764	873
Foulness/Thames	555	913	462	210	**1017**	**1305**	**993**	**1652**	**977**
Abberton Reservoir	8	4	0	0	2	0	2	5	4

See Introduction for details of correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola* UK

Scarce passage migrant.

Estimated minimum monthly totals were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number	0	0	0	0	3	4	1	24	5	0	0	0
Locations	0	0	0	0	1	4	1	17	3	0	0	0

In spring, all records were of singles except for 2-3 at Bowers Marsh on 12th-14th May.

In autumn, records of two or more came from six sites (six in 2019). Maximum counts from each site (two unless stated): Holland Haven on 24th August; Old Hall Marshes, three on 20th September; Blue House Farm on 31st August; Wallasea Island on 22nd August; Abberton Reservoir, four on 27th August; Hanningfield Reservoir on 15th August.

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus* UK

Fairly common passage migrant and scarce winter visitor.

Estimated minimum monthly totals were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number	7	10	7	5	8	3	46	61	126	23	12	6
Locations	5	4	3	4	4	2	9	5	10	8	9	3

There were no double-figure counts in spring, the highest being four at Wat Tyler on 8th March.

In autumn, double-figure counts were received from three sites (four in 2019). Maximum counts were: Abbotts Hall Farm, 32 on 14th September; Old Hall, 42 on 14th August; Salcott Creek, 44 on 6th September.

COMMON GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia* UK

Common passage migrant and scarce winter visitor.

Estimated minimum monthly totals were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Coastal	17	11	9	58	56	3	139	160	241	79	24	11
Inland	0	0	0	11	3	3	7	8	1	5	1	0
Numbers	17	11	9	69	59	6	146	168	242	84	25	11
Locations	12	6	6	29	23	6	35	43	46	24	18	6

In spring, the only double-figure count was 12 at The Hythe Colchester on 3rd May.

In autumn, counts of 20 or more came from (maximum counts): Hamford Water, 49 on 19th July; Heybridge Basin, 35 on 13th September; Two Tree Island, 41 on 18th August.

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla tridactyla* UK

Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor: occasional in summer.

Wintering numbers were again low. The only double-figure counts during January and February were of birds moving south past Frinton-on-Sea: in January, 25 on 12th, 16 on 17th, 42 on 27th and ten on 28th; in February, 14 on 9th.

Spring passage was very light, with again there being just one double-figure count: Rainham Marshes, 21 on 29th March.

The only summer records came from Frinton-on-Sea: in June, two on 1st, nine on 12th, four on 13th June all heading north and 26 heading south on 19th June; in July, three on 8th heading north.

There were no double-figure counts during autumn passage and the only reports of more than three birds were from Canvey Point: five on 29th August and five on 27th September.

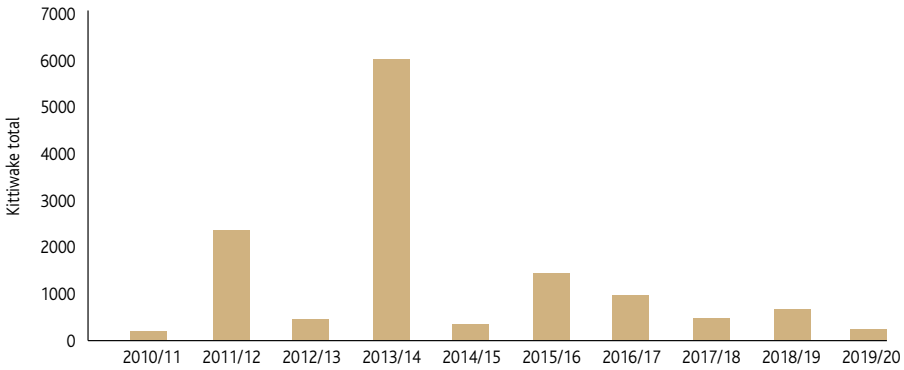
Numbers improved in the second winter period with double-figure counts from: Frinton-on-Sea, 11 on 5th and 44 on 6th November, 38 on 18th, ten on 19th and 116 on 24th December; Canvey Point, 12 on 27th November and 40 on 1st December.

Inland records came from (all singles): Seventy Acres Lake Holyfield, 17th April and 17th August; Walthamstow Wetlands, 3rd October and 5th November.

Estimated monthly totals were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Numbers	113	21	27	5	18	41	3	14	12	6	97	240

Annual totals for the last decade have been:



BLACK-HEADED-GULL *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* UK

Abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Records from the main breeding colonies (with 2019 data), omitted from many sites this year, probably due to first lockdown restrictions, were as follows:

Hamford Water	No details (1,500 adults in colonies)
Stone Point The Naze	No details (no details)
Rat Island River Colne	No details (no details)
Old Hall Marshes	No details (62+ young)
Abberton Reservoir	No details (no details)
Cindery Island Brightlingsea Creek	No details (no details)
Bridgemarsh Island Crouch Estuary	18 pairs
Heybridge Gravel Pit	Two colonies (large colony)
Wallasea Island	Two colonies (1,928 nests)
North Fambridge Marina	Two pairs
Foulness Island	No details (104 pairs, 30 young)
Blue House Farm	No details (no details)
Paglesham Lagoon	No details (52 nests)
Bowers Marsh	Colony, minimum 110 young fledged (75 nests)
Russell Green Gravel Pits Boreham	125 pairs, 150+ young fledged (150+ pairs)
Seventy Acres Lake Holyfield	No details (at least 20 young)
Fishers Green Holyfield	No details (100+ pairs)
Walthamstow Wetlands	Ten pairs, 25 young
Wat Tyler	No details (60+ young)

The County Recorder would welcome more breeding records from observers.

Counts of more than 1,500 were as follows: Hamford Water, 3,500 on 14th March; Frinton-on-Sea, 2,878 on 13th July; Mersea Island, 2,000 on 13th July; Abberton Reservoir, 2,000 on 3rd February; Wallasea Island, 4,116 on 21st May; Rainham Marshes, 2,000 on 13th November; William Girling Reservoir Chingford, 4,019 on 13th January.

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts were:

GB 22,000 INT 20,000	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total	**11081**	**5006**	**8634**	**1794**	**7286**	**6098**	**3244**	**3441**	**3290**
Stour Estuary	435	nc	566	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	1914	1000	1501	nc	nc	752	377	212	177
Holland Haven	15	280	150	nc	60	54	25	65	25
Colne Estuary	115	416	186	nc	140	277	156	47	14
Blackwater Estuary	543	435	1284	685	412	421	431	155	136
Dengie	175	nc	80	nc	400	344	400	0	45
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	300	245	1095	nc	0	253	29	41	79
Foulness/Thames	1020	1037	632	0	3757	1717	608	1701	459
Abberton Reservoir	352	116	994	1002	1378	300	399	455	555
Hanningfield Reservoir	574	0	286	nc	582	499	173	245	158
Lee Valley	4478	371	471	97	327	1330	503	326	270
Other	1160	1106	1389	10	230	151	143	194	1372

See Introduction for details of a correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

Peak monthly WeBS counts over the last decade:

2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11
11081	9156	13151	15412	22576	17160	21008	15531	16479	21942

Although this peak was higher than 2019 it does not match previous years so the overall trend may still be downwards, as with all the commoner gull species.

LITTLE GULL *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Rare summer visitor, fairly common passage migrant and scarce winter visitor.

There was just a single record in the first winter period: two at Purfleet on 11th January.

Spring passage commenced on 13th March with one at Abberton Reservoir. Further records during March came from: Old Hall Marshes, one on 19th; Walthamstow Wetlands, 20 on 24th; Frinton-on-Sea, 18 on 27th, Chafford Hundred, one on 27th; Grays, one on 27th.

April saw the peak of spring passage with double-figure counts from: Frinton-on-Sea, 65 on 5th; Walthamstow Wetlands, 21 on 10th, 24 on 19th and 29 on 20th. Only nine birds were reported in May, singles apart from two at East Tilbury on 10th and two at Chafford Gorges on 24th.

Mid-summer saw birds reported from: Beckton, one on 18th June; Rayleigh, one on 2nd July; Tiptree, two on 6th July; Holland Haven, one on 29th July.

Autumn passage commenced with one south past Frinton-on-Sea on 4th August but was thereafter very poor. The only records involving more than one bird were: Rainham Marshes, four on 2nd October; Gunners Park Shoebury, five on 16th October; Holland Haven, four on 14th November; Frinton-on-Sea, three on 9th, two on 20th, three on 22nd and eight on 30th November.

Estimated monthly totals were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Numbers	2	0	42	150	9	1	4	5	2	11	21	0

The count of 65 at Frinton-on-Sea on 5th April is the highest recorded at a single site on spring passage in the County (the previous highest being 62 at East Tilbury on 1st May 2004) and is particularly notable because most of the spring passage in the County is usually at inland sites.

MEDITERRANEAN GULL *Ichthyaetus melanocephalus* UK

Increasing resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

There were no reports of definite breeding activity in 2020, although this may well have been due to first lockdown restrictions.

The only three-figure counts received were: Wallasea Island, 260 on 26th June; Gunners Park Shoebury, 100 on 29th June; South Fambridge, 109 on 29th June; Thundersley, 100 on 30th July.

Double-figure counts of 20 or more came from 17 sites (19 in 2019): The highest counts from each site, which show a general tendency to be in mid-summer, were:

Frinton-on-Sea	93	14th July
Holland Haven	26	14th July
Mersea Island	40	6th July
Abberton Reservoir	22	16th December
Wallasea Island	26	21st May
Wakering Stairs	30	30th June
Paglesham Lagoon	45	18th August
Southend Pier	20	4th September
Southend-on-Sea	31	24th April
Gunners Park Shoebury	30	30th June
Canvey Point	60	9th August

Two Tree Island	20	23rd July
Leigh-on-Sea	20	12th/13th July
Rochford	30	12th July
Benfleet	30	23rd June
Bowers Marsh	20	19th June
East Tilbury	21	19th July

An adult bird, considered by the observer to be a Mediterranean x Black-headed Gull hybrid, was at Lawling Creek Maylandsea on 31st May (AD).

MEW GULL *Larus canus* (Common Gull) UK

Mew Gull *Larus canus canus*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor.

Counts of more than 200 were received from:

Frinton-on-Sea	224 (north, 2nd April)
Abberton Reservoir	312 (15th January), 500 (27th November)
Bradwell	412 (12th January), 242 (8th March), 600 (22nd August), 800 (4th November)
Hanningfield Reservoir	228 (12th January)
Wethersfield Airfield	500 (4th March), 1,000 (9th March)
Bradwell-juxta-Coggeshall Gravel Pit	350 (22nd November)
East Tilbury	1,200 (29th October)
William Girling Reservoir Chingford	800 (1st February)
Walthamstow Wetlands	250 (1st December)
Wanstead Flats	1,000 (3rd January), 500 (1st February), 350 (13th February), 520 (19th February), 750 (24th February), 350 (16th November), 500 (4th December)
Fordham	380 (6th February)
Roding Valley Meadows Chigwell	300 (16th February), 310 (10th March), 300 (5th December)

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey Counts (WeBS) were:

GB 7,000 INT 16,400	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total	**1706**	**454**	**812**	**0**	**1454**	**412**	**463**	**474**	**627**
Stour Estuary	64	nc	41	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	11	9	18	nc	nc	2	24	6	2
Holland Haven	0	1	2	nc	0	0	0	0	0
Colne Estuary	4	3	4	nc	0	1	0	2	0
Blackwater Estuary	70	116	181	0	18	24	4	12	34
Dengie	400	nc	134	nc	152	103	91	0	11
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	34	3	9	nc	0	44	3	2	3
Foulness/Thames	267	142	118	0	1265	236	284	336	257
Abberton Reservoir	312	40	24	0	16	0	6	42	102
Hanningfield Reservoir	228	0	47	nc	0	0	2	49	0
Lee Valley	72	11	8	0	1	2	41	5	13
Other	244	129	226	0	2	0	8	205	20

See Introduction for details of a correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

Peak monthly WeBS counts over the last decade:

2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11
1252	1125	1303	1464	1715	2094	1605	2813	2018	2024

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus* UK

Fairly common passage migrant and winter; a few during summer.

Three-figure counts in the first winter came from: Frinton-on-Sea (heading north), 178 on 2nd April; Rainham Marshes, 150 on 28th February, 100 on 5th March,

Three-figure counts in the autumn/second winter were:

	September	October	November	December
Hamford Water			148 (15th)	
The Naze			113 (17th), 275 (21st)	
Frinton-on-Sea (heading south)			388 (12th), 286 (13th),	
216 (17th), 444 (18th),				
290 (19th), 371 (20th),				
224 (22nd), 325 (24th)	247 (4th)			
Colne Point			161 (28th)	
Abberton Reservoir	100 (5th)	166 (14th)	177 (19th)	105 (4th), 140 (16th)
East Tilbury/Thurrock Thameside Nature Park		129 (25th)	118 (24th)	
Rainham Marshes			100 (13th)	100 (24th)

There were widespread reports of immatures over-summering, including: Colne Point, five on 27th May, five on 21st July; West Thurrock Marshes, six on 9th August.

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey Counts (WeBS) were:

GB 760 INT 4,200	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS Total	**310**	**115**	**78**	**0**	**61**	**133**	**257**	**451**	**185**
Stour Estuary	3	nc	11	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	34	18	44	nc	nc	0	2	157	12
Holland Haven	1	0	0	nc	0	0	4	1	4
Colne Estuary	6	1	4	nc	0	4	16	41	5
Blackwater Estuary	13	2	5	0	1	5	13	6	3
Dengie	2	nc	1	nc	0	10	9	0	6
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	3	26	6	nc	0	8	0	8	6
Foulness/Thames	143	24	0	0	38	30	26	57	0
Abberton Reservoir	95	44	0	0	10	65	166	177	140
Hanningfield Reservoir	10	0	7	nc	12	11	21	4	4
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5

See Introduction for details of a correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

Peak monthly WeBS counts over the last decade:

2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11
1,087	691	752	520	919	844	582	455	570	684

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucoides* — EBSIP (99, 63, 162)

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoides glaucoides* — UK

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. — EBSIP (99, 62, 161)

A single long-staying juvenile was seen regularly at Rainham Marshes and Beckton between 8th January and 21st March (DMo *et al*).

Annual winter totals over the last decade have been:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	Average
Number	1	1	4	3	2	6	3	3	18	3	4.8

EUROPEAN HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus argenteus/argentatus* — UK

***L.a. argenteus* is present all year round and breeds in small numbers. Passage migrants and winter visitors also occur. *L. a. argentatus* is a common passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Records from the main breeding sites (with 2019 data) were as follows:

Hamford Water	No details (large colony still active)
Frinton-on-Sea	Four pairs, nine fledged young (no details)
Point Clear St Osyth	One pair (one pair)
Cindery Island Brightlingsea Creek	50-60 pairs (Approximately 60 pairs bred)
Lawling Creek Maylandsea	Eight pairs
Wivenhoe	No details (one pair)
Heybridge Gravel Pit	Six pairs
Chigborough Lakes Heybridge	No details (one pair)
Maldon	30+ pairs, 40+ fledged young
Braintree	12 pairs (eight pairs)
Chelmsford	No details (no details)
Walthamstow Wetlands	19 pairs (five pairs)
Beckton	No details (no details)

The County Recorder would welcome more breeding records from observers.

Significant counts outside the breeding season came from: Frinton-on-Sea, 536 north on 2nd April; Colne Point, 250 on 3rd May; Holland Haven, 258 on 26th November; Copford, 300 on 16th November, 700 on 30th December; Bradwell, 388 on 8th March; North Benfleet, 450 on 14th January; East Tilbury, 400 on 29th October; Purfleet, 300 on 11th January; Rainham Marshes, 500 on 5th March, 622 on 24th March, 3,000 on 9th October (MJ), 300 on 8th November, 10,000 on 13th November (SLe *et al*).

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) Counts were:

GB 7,300 INT 10,200	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total	**1706**	**2443**	**1557**	**24**	**658**	**2255**	**906**	**862**	**968**
Stour Estuary	37	nc	178	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	111	86	59	nc	nc	78	97	162	114
Holland Haven	4	30	90	nc	55	36	120	25	20
Colne Estuary	140	42	121	nc	0	92	86	20	16
Blackwater Estuary	78	61	184	21	40	52	85	18	73
Dengie	75	nc	265	nc	155	78	140	0	39
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	110	470	103	nc	0	113	12	30	78
Foulness/Thames	802	1688	486	0	172	1636	215	419	421
Abberton Reservoir	65	43	0	0	72	63	128	167	54
Hanningfield Reservoir	66	0	9	nc	37	34	2	10	142
Lee Valley	158	1	5	1	62	60	21	10	5
Other	60	22	57	2	65	13	0	1	6

See Introduction for details of a correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

Peak monthly WeBS counts over the last decade:

2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11
2,443	2,649	2,275	2,621	2,722	2,916	3,221	4,605	3,600	4,506

The general trend in peak count numbers appears to be downwards.

CASPIAN GULL *Larus cachinnans* — UK

Locally uncommon late summer visitor, mainly along the Thames; occasional in winter. EBSIP

The Thames and adjacent areas again produced the majority of the records in the County and the only records away from Thames area sites were (singles unless stated otherwise): Holland Haven, 23rd September, 15th October and 29th December; Colne Point, 28th December; Abberton Reservoir, a first calendar-year bird, from 15th November to 2nd December; Bradwell, 11th February and 28th October; Fleet Head Great Wakering, second calendar-year, 14th-16th November; Hole Haven Creek Canvey Island, first calendar-year, 29th December; East Tilbury, 24th August; Beckton, 1st February, 23rd March, 2nd September and two on 30th December; William Girling Reservoir Chingford, second calendar-year, 23rd September; Seventy Acres Lake Holyfield, third calendar-year, 11th December; Wanstead Flats, third calendar-year, 19th January, first calendar-year 25th December and a sub-adult 26th December; Leyton Flats, returning adult 2nd January-15th February and 7th-30th November and a second calendar-year on 24th January; Roding Valley, second calendar-year, 16th February.

The estimated number of birds from Rainham Marshes and other sites on the Thames are as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rainham Marshes	7	4	2	0	0	2	2	0	1	1	2	6
Other Sites	2	4	1	0	0	0	0	1	3	2	3	7
Total	**9**	**8**	**3**	**0**	**0**	**2**	**2**	**1**	**4**	**3**	**5**	**13**

As the majority of reports came from nearby sites along the Thames and adjacent inland areas, it is difficult to determine accurately the total number of birds involved. Estimated annual totals over the last decade have been:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	Average
Number	50	45	40	25	25	15	20	15	15	20	27

Observers are reminded that this remains an EBSIP species and is rare away from the Thames area and so photographs and/or a description are required for all records.

YELLOW-LEGGED GULL *Larus michahellis michahellis* UK

Fairly common late summer visitor, mainly to the Thames and scarce winter visitor.
Estimated monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rainham Marshes	5	4	1	0	0	2	55	27	15	25	5	1
East Tilbury / Thurrock Thameside	1	0	0	0	2	19	81	80	20	10	2	0
Other sites	5	4	5	2	1	3	12	26	18	4	9	14
Total	**11**	**8**	**6**	**2**	**3**	**24**	**148**	**133**	**53**	**39**	**16**	**15**

The Thames and nearby sites continue to account for the majority of records. Peak counts in the July to September period were:

	July	August	September
Rainham Marshes	55 (23rd)	27 (27th)	15 (25th)
East Tilbury / Thurrock Thameside	81 (19th)	80 (2nd)	20 (12th)

Away from the Thames the only sites to record more than two were: Frinton-on-Sea, three on both 1st and 3rd August; Abberton Reservoir, three on 14 September; Hanningfield Reservoir, regularly from 14th August to 24th November with a peak of five on 28th August.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus graellsii/intermedius* UK

***L. f. graellsii* is present all year and breeds in increasing numbers, as well as being a common passage migrant. *L. f. intermedius* is a (common?) passage migrant.**
Records from the main breeding sites (with 2019 data) were as follows:

Hogmarsh Island Manningtree	No details (no details)
Hamford Water	No details (colony still active, no count)
Colne Point	One pair (two pairs)
Clacton-on-Sea	No details (one pair)
Cindery Island Brightlingsea Creek	10-15 pairs (approximately 15 pairs)
Heybridge Gravel Pit	17 pairs
Maldon	10+ pairs, 20+ young
Bowers Marsh	One pair, two fledged young
Wat Tyler	No details (one pair)
Beckton	No details (no details)
Walthamstow Wetlands	No details (13 pairs)
Braintree	12 pairs (12+ pairs)

The County Recorder would welcome more breeding records from observers.

Counts of more than 50 came from: St Osyth Stone, 60 on 6th May; Abberton Reservoir, 81 on 18th August, 54 on 19th November; Rainham Marshes, 100 on 12th February, 200 on 5th March, 150 on 9th October, 100 on 8th, 150 on 13th, 100 on 21st November; Creekmouth Barking, 100

Mediterranean Gull, Two Tree Island, May (MATT TURNER)

Hen Harrier, Abberton, January (SEAN NIXON)

Red Kite, Dunmow, December (PAUL CHAMBERLAIN)

White-tailed Eagle, Hanningfield, October (DAVID ACFIELD)

on 6th, 400 on 16th August; William Girling Reservoir Chingford, 367 on 13th January, 61 on 22nd August; Walthamstow Wetlands, 70 on 15th April; Roding Valley Meadows Chigwell, 134 on 18th January, 100 on 16th August, 200 on 17th August, 70 on 17th September, 60 on 10th November, 110 on 14th December; Chigwell, 140 on 24th November; Loughton, 52 on 14th September, 100 on 18th November.

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey Counts (WeBS) were:

GB 1,200 INT 10,200	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total	**474**	**95**	**150**	**17**	**235**	**208**	**147**	**118**	**241**
Stour Estuary	10	nc	20	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	10	14	16	nc	nc	2	8	1	0
Holland Haven	0	0	2	nc	0	4	1	0	0
Colne Estuary	1	1	3	nc	1	4	2	1	0
Blackwater Estuary	12	11	42	4	23	26	2	3	3
Dengie	0	nc	0	nc	0	1	3	0	0
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	6	27	2	nc	0	7	0	2	4
Foulness/Thames	22	5	13	0	8	54	41	35	51
Abberton Reservoir	0	9	4	2	81	22	15	54	23
Hanningfield Reservoir	6	0	2	nc	8	17	0	6	36
Lee Valley	406	17	44	3	81	58	64	13	11
Other	1	11	2	8	33	13	11	3	113

See Introduction for details of a correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

Peak monthly WeBS counts over the last decade:

2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11
474	268	367	316	336	559	380	545	892	587

SANDWICH TERN *Thalasseus sandvicensis* UK

Local summer visitor and common passage migrant.

The first of the spring were one at Bradwell on 24th March and three off Frinton-on-Sea on 25th March. The only double-figure counts during spring passage were all of birds heading north past Frinton-on-Sea: in April, 12 on 17th, 15 on 19th, ten on 20th and 11 on 30th, 16 on 11th May and 40 on the late date of 13th June.

There were widespread reports during the summer months, including up to 90 at The Naze on 30th July. In nearby Hamford Water, 46 were seen on 19th July, including a juvenile being fed by an adult and many adults carrying food, but there were no other reports of breeding activity.

Autumn passage produced the following counts of 25 or more: The Naze, 70 on 1st and 30 on 23rd August, 45 on 8th and 29 on 12th September, 25 on 4th October; Frinton-on-Sea, 47 on 2nd, 91 on 4th, 34 on 5th, 78 on 15th, 54 on 30th August, 46 on 16th September; Canvey Point, 25 on 19th, 25 on 24th and 30 on 25th August.

The last reports of the year were at Frinton-on-Sea: two on 1st and one on 6th November.

Inland records came from: Boreham, two on 8th July; King George V Reservoir Chingford, singles on 11th and 17th April and six on 5th September; Walthamstow Wetlands, four on 6th April and one on 7th May.

Estimated monthly totals were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number	0	0	8	101	65	90	165	620	295	52	3	0

LITTLE TERN *Sternula albifrons* UK REX

Declining summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first of the spring were five north past Frinton-on-Sea and one at King George V Reservoir Chingford on 17th April. There was just one double-figure count of birds on spring passage: Frinton-on-Sea, 36 north on 8th May.

At Horsey Island Hamford Water there were 12 pairs but only two young fledged, which are less than one third of the 2019 numbers and understood to be caused by disturbance by trespassers after the first lockdown restrictions were eased (RSPB Annual Little Tern Newsletter). Birds summered at Colne Point (maximum count 11) but there was no evidence of breeding. Two pairs attempted to breed at Old Hall Marsh, but both failed, although two juveniles were seen fishing there on 25th August.

There were only five records of five or more during autumn passage: Colne Point, five on 16th August; Wakering Stairs, 19 on 8th and eight on 23rd August and five on 9th September; Crouch Estuary, six on 19th August.

The post-breeding (August-September) total birds seen is estimated at 67 maximum allowing for some duplication (76 in 2019) indicating that the decline continues.

The last report for the year was five at Wakering Stairs on 9th September which included three juveniles.

Inland records came from: King George V Reservoir Chingford, singles on 17th and 19th April and 27th July, and two on 28th July.

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo hirundo* UK

Common summer resident and passage migrant.

Records from the main breeding sites (with 2019 data) were as follows:

Old Hall Marshes	48 pairs (32+ young fledged)
Tollesbury Wick	No data (one pair)
Abberton Reservoir	No data (one pair)
Braintree	Two pairs (two pairs)
Bradwell-juxta-Coggeshall Gravel Pit	Five pairs
Russell Green Gravel Pits Boreham	12 pairs
Wallasea Island	Bred, but no details received (at least six young fledged)
Paglesham Lagoon	Eight Pairs (seven pairs)
Blue House Farm	No data (three pairs)
Wat Tyler	No data (four young fledged)
Thurrock Thameside Mucking	One pair (one pair)
Hanningfield Reservoir	Five Pairs (three pairs)
Belhus Woods Aveley	One Pair (one pair)
Dagenham Chase	No data (one pair)
Fishers Green Holyfield	No data (three pairs)
Seventy Acres Lake Holyfield	One pair (three pairs)
Walthamstow Wetlands	No data (none)

The first of the spring was one at Rainham Marshes on 21st March.
Spring passage (double-figure counts) were:

	April	May
Frinton-on-Sea	26 (17th), 24 (18th), 56 (19th), 24 (20th), 27 (26th), 24 (29th)	25 (4th)
Abberton Reservoir	65 (29th)	
Gunners Park Shoebury		17 (3rd)
Bowers Marsh		70 (13th)
Thurrock Thameside Mucking		25 (17th)
Rainham Marshes	37 (15th), 17 (18th), 15 (24th), 26 (28th), 60 (29th), 40 (30th)	12 (13th), 36 (20th), 14 (25th)
Beckton		12 (31st)
King George V Reservoir Chingford	25 (20th), 49 (21st)	

Three-figure counts during autumn passage came from: Frinton-on-Sea, 136 on 4th, 170 on 7th and 176 on 30th August; Canvey Point, 100 on 3rd, 120 on 9th and 135 on 31st August; Two Tree Island, 160 on 21st August; East Tilbury, 244 on 9th August; Tilbury, 960 on 7th, 367 on 8th and 254 on 29th August.

The last bird of the year was a single at Frinton-on-Sea on 14th October.

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea* UK

Fairly common passage migrant. Bred in 1959 and 1960.

The first record of the year was from Thames Barrier Park being two on 5th April. Thereafter, double-figure counts during spring passage came from: Frinton-on-Sea, 17 on 20th, 46 on 28th and 14 on 29th April; Tilbury, 25 on 28th April; Rainham Marshes, 60 on 13th and 29 on 18th April; King George V Reservoir Chingford, ten on 13th and 13 on 28th April, Walthamstow Wetlands, ten on 28th April.

There were no records of summering birds and the first of autumn were two at Beckton on 19th July. Autumn passage was widespread on the coast with double-figure counts reported from: Canvey Point, 32 on 22nd, 22 on 24th, 20 on 25th and 66 on 29th August, 18 on 27th September; Tilbury, 14 on 29th August; Rainham Marshes, 38 on 25th August; Beckton, 12 on 29th August.

The last record of the year was a juvenile off Frinton-on-Sea on 20th November.

Estimated monthly totals were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Coastal	0	0	0	230	36	0	4	266	28	10	1	0
Inland	0	0	0	41	13	0	1	12	1	0	0	0
Total	**0**	**0**	**0**	**271**	**49**	**0**	**5**	**278**	**29**	**10**	**1**	**0**

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger niger*

Fairly common passage migrant.

The first of the spring was at King George V Reservoir Chingford on 11th April. Passage was very light thereafter with only two counts above three: Hanningfield Reservoir, seven on 6th May; King George V Reservoir Chingford, six on 6th May.

Summer (or perhaps very late passage) records came from: Hanningfield Reservoir, two on 7th June; Gunners Park Shoebury, one on 14th June.

Autumn passage commenced with two at Canvey Point on 31st July and remained very light throughout August and September. There were only four counts above three: Canvey Point, four on 7th and 26 on 8th August; East Tilbury, eight on 16th August; Gunners Park, Shoeburyness, six on 3rd September.

The last of the year was at Hanningfield Reservoir on 7th October.

Estimated monthly totals were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Coastal	0	0	0	2	3	1	2	55	7	0	0	0
Inland	0	0	0	13	16	2	0	6	2	1	0	0
Total	**0**	**0**	**0**	**15**	**19**	**3**	**2**	**61**	**9**	**1**	**0**	**0**

Annual totals over the last decade have been:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	Average
Number	110	256	1,014	293	423	388	135	638	99	403	376

GREAT SKUA *Stercorarius skua* UK

Uncommon, principally late autumn, passage migrant.

Estimated monthly totals (allowing for multiple sightings at same location on same date when the highest count has been taken in each case):

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
The Naze								3	1			
Frinton-on-Sea		2	1	3	4	1		5	9	3	56	10
Holland Haven								1			10	
Clacton-on-Sea							1					
Gunners Park Shoebury									14		3	
Southend Pier									42			
Canvey Island								21	95	27	2	
East Tilbury								3	30	11		1
Thameside Nature Park									22			
Total		2	1	3	4	1	0	1	30	212	30	61	11

The highest day count was an impressive 83 from Canvey Point on 27th September (JSa).

Annual totals over the last ten years have been:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	Average
Number	248	69	201	196	205	182	205	120	222	234	188.1

This year's total is the highest annual figure since 1997 (259) and a marked increase on last year (69).

POMARINE JAEGER *Stercorarius pomarinus* (Pomarine Skua)

Uncommon, principally late autumn, passage migrant.

A below average year for this species. The only spring records were of singles at Frinton-on-Sea on 29th April and 11th May.

Autumn passage involved single birds unless stated: The Naze on 15th September and 1st October; Frinton-on-Sea on 19th and 28th September, 1st October, 4th and 15th November, three on 30th November; Holland Haven on 19th September and 15th November (probably refer to birds also seen at Frinton-on-Sea); Gunners Park Shoebury on 27th September; Canvey Point on 27th September and 2nd October; East Tilbury, two on 2nd October, one on 29th and 30th November.

Estimated monthly totals were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	4	3	7	0

Annual totals over the last ten years have been:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	Average
Number	16	28	87	29	16	19	45	16	79	100	43.5

PARASITIC JAEGER *Stercorarius parasiticus* (Arctic Skua) UK

Fairly common, principally autumn, passage migrant.

All spring records came from Frinton-on-Sea with singles on 17th and 28th April, 4th and 13th May, and eight on 11th May.

The first autumn bird was one from Frinton-on-Sea on 22nd July; followed by light passage through August. The only counts of more than one were at Gunners Park Shoebury, two on 30th; Canvey Point, four on 29th and 21 on 30th; Coalhouse Fort East Tilbury, three on 30th.

The main passage occurred in the second half of September, the earliest being 81 from Canvey Point on 16th. Counts of five or more came from: Frinton-on-Sea, five on 27th and six on 28th; Southend Pier, 12 on 27th; Canvey Point, eight on 17th and 35 on 27th; Thurrock Thameside Nature Park, six on 27th. The only inland record was of one at Hanningfield Reservoir on 25th.

Passage eased during October: Frinton-on-Sea, five on 2nd, one on 3rd and 12th, six on 14th; Canvey Point, three on 14th; Canvey Island, nine on 2nd, one on 21st; East Tilbury, six on 2nd. The last report of the year was one from Frinton-on-Sea on 5th November.

Estimated monthly totals were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number	0	0	0	2	10	0	1	30	160	26	1	0

Annual totals over the last ten years have been:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	Average
Number	230	136	230	160	89	87	203	128	253	369	188.5

LONG-TAILED JAEGER *Stercorarius longicaudus* (Long-tailed Skua)

Very scarce autumn passage migrant. EBSIP (147, 51, 199)

Canvey Point	one	27th September	JSa
Frinton-on-Sea	one	28th September	PBr

Annual totals over the last ten years have been:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	Average
Number	2	1	1	3	0	1	5	1	3	8	2.5

LITTLE AUK *Alle alle*

Scarce winter visitor, but subject to periodic influxes.

Again in 2002, there was no influx and the year saw the lowest number of records within the previous ten years.

Dengie Flats	one	16th October

Annual totals over the last ten years have been:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	Average
Number	1	8	5	15	16	21	4	11	3	17	10.1

COMMON MURRE *Uria aalge aalge/albionis* (Common Guillemot) UK

Both races are passage migrants and winter visitors.

A quiet year with no significant influx.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number	6	0	2	0	2	3	0	3	17	6	11	8

The only reports from the first part of the year were: Frinton-on-Sea, two on 5th January, three on 12th January (two at Holland Haven probably referred to the same birds), one on 8th March; Walton-on-The-Naze, one on 21st March; Canvey Point, one on 10th January.

Numbers remained low throughout the year, and the only reports of more than one bird were: Frinton-on-Sea, three on 27th and four on 28th September, five on 14th October, four on 5th and two on 14th November, two on 23rd December; Holland Haven, two on 17th September; Gunners Park Shoebury, two on 24th December; Canvey Point, two on 11th June, three on 30th August, two on 27th September.

Estimated annual totals over the last ten years have been:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	Average
Number	57	91	108	202	359	87	329	159	192	240	182.4

RAZORBILL *Alca torda islandica* UK

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor. *A. torda torda* may occur in Essex waters but there have been no ringing recoveries to confirm this.

All records came from the last three months of the year and were singles unless stated: Hamford Water on 13th and 31st December; Frinton-on-Sea on 11th and 14th (four) October, 9th and 26th November, 16th and 24th December; Gunners Park Shoebury, two on 29th November and three on 1st December; Canvey Point on 14th October (eight) and 30th December; Canvey Island on 2nd October; Coalhouse Fort East Tilbury on 1st November.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	5	8

Estimated annual totals over the last ten years have been:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	Average
Number	27	18	30	52	78	13	8	14	37	20	29.7

BLACK GUILLEMOT *Cepphus grylle arcticus* UK

Vagrant. EBSIP (9, 4, 13)

Old Hall Marshes	one	1st & 8th-9th January	CJM-G *et al*
Manningtree/Mistley Walls	one	15th January	SCo *et al*
Mersea Island	one	26th January	DnT

There have only been two previous substantiated 21st century records:

Deal Hall Dengie	one	6th September 2006
Frinton-on-Sea	one	5th December 2018

ATLANTIC PUFFIN *Fratercula arctica* UK

Very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. EBSIP (97, 29, 126)

An above average year, with all records coming in September.

Frinton-on-Sea	one	28th September	PBr
Gunners Park Shoebury	one	29th September	NCh

Annual totals over the last ten years have been:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	Average
Number	2	1	1	0	0	1	0	3	3	2	1.3

RED-THROATED LOON *Gavia stellata* (Red-throated Diver)

Common passage migrant and winter visitor.

Coastal records were received for the first winter period from The Naze to Canvey Island, the great majority being of movements off Frinton-on-Sea, Holland Haven and Bradwell Bird Observatory. January peak three-figure counts were: Bradwell Bird Observatory, 291 (29th); Frinton-on-Sea, 221 (17th); Holland Haven, 100+, (3rd). Also, ten were off Southend-on-Sea on 2nd January.

Numbers reduced in February with a maximum figure of 92 passing south off Frinton-on-Sea on 5th February. Birds started moving north again in March, with a maximum count of 356 on 20th off Frinton-on-Sea and, into April, with an impressive 656 off the same site on 1st. There were 75 counted off Clacton-on-Sea on 2nd April.

A summer-plumaged bird was off Gunners Park Shoebury on 19th May (MCl).

First winter estuary records were sparse. Along the Blackwater, there were mainly records of single birds from Goldhanger to Mersea Island, three off Tollesbury Wick on 8th January and four off Mersea Island on 6th February. In the Thames Estuary there were just occasional records from Canvey Island including two on 10th and 11th January.

The autumn records began with an early record of one from Deal Hall on 3rd August. The first autumn sighting past Frinton-on-Sea was one on 11th September. Subsequent autumn/ winter coastal records were received all the way from the Stour Estuary to Coalhouse Fort Tilbury. The only three-figure counts were from Frinton-on-Sea with peaks of 203 on 22nd November and 549 on 24th December, in both cases the great majority heading south. The maximum count from Gunners Park Shoebury was of circa 20 on 30th November.

Counts from Frinton-on-Sea were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of hours observation	24.5	26.5	66	98.5	101.25	92.5	52.65
Total	967	267	2005	989	27	401	1944

Along the Blackwater Estuary there were records from Rolls Farm Tollesbury to Mersea Island, all singletons apart from a group at the end of December off Mersea Island, peaking at six on 28th. Also on 28th December there was a single bird on Paglesham Lagoon.

Along the Thames, apart from a single record off Coalhouse Fort Tilbury on 29th November, all records came from Canvey Island, with ones and twos recorded from 30th September through November with some higher counts in December including an exceptional 40 on 12th December.

It was another disappointing year for inland observers with, as in 2019, just one inland record: Russell Green Gravel Pits Boreham, adult still showing signs of summer plumage, 19th September (GBr *et al*).

BLACK-THROATED LOON *Gavia arctica arctica* (Black-throated Diver) UK

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.

The only inland record for the year was the individual first seen at Abberton Reservoir on 29th December 2019 and which stayed into the New Year and was observed frequently during the early weeks of 2020 and last seen on 20th February. Other records for the first half of the year were one off Holland Haven on 26th February and one off Gunners Park Shoebury on 28th April.

Records for the second winter began with one at Frinton-on-Sea on 3rd November, with further single sightings there on five dates through November to 28th. Other records (single birds unless stated): Holland Haven, 24th November; Canvey Point, 26th November and 29th November; Gunners Park Shoebury, two on 30th November; The Naze, 5th December; Mersea Island, 9th and 29th December.

COMMON LOON *Gavia immer* (Great Northern Diver) UK

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

It was a relatively poor year for this species, particularly during the first winter period. In January the only records were from Mersea Island/ Old Hall Marshes/ Tollesbury Wick, with up to three seen from Mersea Island and a maximum of two from the other sites (though some records may have been of the same bird). This pattern continued through February when others were seen at: Frinton-on-Sea, one on 1st February; Bradwell Sales Point, one on 12th February and Grays, one on 14th February.

Sightings increased in March with notable passage. At Frinton-on-Sea there were records of birds passing north throughout the month, mostly of singletons, but with five recorded on each of 6th and 20th March. Single birds were also noted in March from Holland Haven. The final spring records at the coast were on 2nd April with single sightings off both Frinton-on-Sea and Clacton-on Sea. Numbers also increased in the Blackwater Estuary during this period with monthly peaks at Mersea Island of four on 7th March and five on the 16th April. The last Blackwater record was of one off Mersea Island on 29th April.

The first autumn record was a single off Holland Haven on 27th September. From then there were odd coastal records to the end of the year at various points from Wrabness to Gunners Park Shoebury, all of single birds other than three that were heading south off Frinton-on-Sea on 6th November.

Estuary sightings were all from the Blackwater. These were mainly from Mersea Island/ Old Hall Marshes/ Tollesbury Wick/ Rolls Farm, with up to three birds seen, with the exception of 17th December when six were seen from Old Hall Marshes and four from Tollesbury Wick which may have been the same birds.

There were also sightings from the south side of the estuary with one in Mayland Creek on 16th November, one at Cooper's Creek Mundon (possibly the same bird) on 30th December and two in St Lawrence Bay on 23rd December.

The only inland record was of one on Hanningfield Reservoir on 16th November.

LEACH'S STORM PETREL *Hydrobates leuchora leuchora* UK

Scarce, principally autumn, passage migrant. **EBSIP (201, 43, 251)**

A good year with seven seen, the highest total since 2013:

Wakering Stairs	one	10th September	PBa
Holland Haven	two (both also seen at Frinton-on-Sea and one then seen at The Naze)	18th September	SCo
Deal Hall	two	27th September	DWa
Frinton-on-Sea	two (initially one of these seen at Holland Haven)	2nd October	PBr (SCo)

Annual totals over the last decade have been:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	Average
Number	7	6	3	5	2	0	0	7	6	1	3.7

NORTHERN FULMAR *Fulmarus glacialis glacialis* UK

Uncommon passage migrant and non-breeding visitor.

As has been generally the case, the great majority of records were from the north-east coast, from The Naze to Colne Point. The chart below of monthly occurrences shows the typical pattern of most being seen during northerly passage in the spring, mainly from Frinton-on-Sea. (There may be some duplications of birds within these numbers).

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number	0	10	23	83	24	28	7	17	1	2	0	7

Most records were of only one or two birds in any single day. Peak counts were eight off Frinton-on-Sea on 8th April and 18 off the same site on 17th April. An unseasonal record was of seven off Frinton-on-Sea on 24th December (PBr).

Records from elsewhere were: Bradwell-on-Sea, one on 25th August (CMa); Canvey Point, two on 26th August (TBo); Canvey Island, 1-2 on 2nd October (SGr, NCh).

CORY'S SHEARWATER *Calonectris borealis*

Vagrant. **EBSIP (4, 7, 12)**

Single flying south off Frinton-on-Sea, 29th September (PBr).
This was the 12th County record and the first since 2017.

SOOTY SHEARWATER *Ardenna grisea*

Uncommon, principally autumn, passage migrant **EBSIP (152, 92, 244)**

A typical year with four records:

Frinton-on-Sea	two (one of which was also seen off Holland Haven)	17th September	PBr (SCo)
Canvey Point	one	16th September	MCr
Canvey Point	one (also seen from Gunners Park Shoebury)	26th September	PBa (JWr)

Annual totals over the last decade have been:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	Average
Number	4	2	4	3	8	9	1	1	1	6	4.0

MANX SHEARWATER *Puffinus puffinus* UK

Uncommon, principally autumn, passage migrant.

A relatively poor year, with a likely total of five. All records occurred over a two-day period in September.

Canvey Island	two (one upstream, two downstream, assumed two in total)	16th September	MCr, NCh
Canvey Island	one	17th September	PBa, JWr
East Tilbury	two (one assumed to be same as Canvey bird)	17th September	PLa
Holland Haven/ Frinton-on-Sea	one	17th September	PBr *et al*

Annual totals over the last decade have been:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	Average
Number	5	6	19	11	7	3	0	3	9	48	11.1

WHITE STORK *Ciconia ciconia ciconia*

Rare passage migrant and summer visitor. EBSIP (29, 16, 45)*

Rainham Marshes/ Dagenham Chase	two	11th-14th March	mo
Rainham Marshes	one	23rd-24th July	mo
Bowers Marsh	one (considered unringed/ full-winged so very likely same as above Rainham bird)	23rd-24th July	mo
St Lawrence	one	9th-10th September	KBr

With successful breeding at the introduction project at Knepp Estate in West Sussex, in addition to potential escapes from collections, the derivation of numbers of White Stork seen in Essex is becoming increasingly difficult to fathom. The above records suggest the presence of a minimum of five birds in the County, of which the Bowers Marsh individual at least was considered to be unringed and full-winged and so potentially of other origin.

**Records from Abberton in 2000 and various sites in 2012 have been moved to Category E as they were thought to have been escapes so statistics have been adjusted accordingly.*

NORTHERN GANNET *Morus bassanus* UK

Common passage migrant and non-breeding summer visitor.

There were four inland records of single birds, all in the autumn: Abberton Reservoir, a juvenile on 10th September; Hornchurch, a juvenile on 27th September; King George V Reservoir Chingford, a juvenile on 27th September; Walthamstow Wetlands, (age not recorded), 3rd October.

Records from the east coast show a peak during spring and a more significant peak during the autumn. In spring the birds seem to bypass the estuaries and hence the great majority of estuary records were in the autumn.

Estimated monthly totals of coastal records were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Row A	2	2	225	103	49	15	33	131	299	586	574	94
Row B	7	0	0	4	0	0	0	85	890	450	168	32

Row A includes all sightings from The Naze to Wakering Stairs. Row B refers to the Thames Estuary, from Shoeburyness to Rainham Marshes.

Records from the Blackwater estuary were received on three dates in September and October with a peak count of 12 off Mersea Island on September 28th and, on the same date, four off South Fambridge, the only record on the River Crouch this year.

Highest single counts were 725 off Canvey Island on 27th September and 354 off Frinton-on-Sea on 14th November.

GREAT CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo carbo/sinensis*

***P. c. sinensis* is a scarce resident, common passage migrant and winter visitor whilst *P. c. carbo* is a common resident, winter visitor and passage migrant.**

Only a limited number of breeding colony counts were received, no doubt due to the first lockdown restrictions. Those noted were as follows (2019 figures for the same sites are in brackets): Abberton Reservoir, four occupied nests early in season (202);

Lofts Farm Gravel Pits Heybridge/Chigborough Lakes, occupied nests but not counted (21); Walthamstow Wetlands, 134 occupied nests (65). No breeding records were received from Holyfield Lake (54 occupied nests in 2019). As the records are incomplete for 2020 it is inadvisable to draw conclusions on breeding population changes.

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey Counts (WeBS) were:

GB 620 INT 1,200	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total	**2197**	**1580**	**601**	**275**	**1911**	**4073**	**3461**	**2060**	**1539**
Stour Estuary	14	nc	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	116	98	51	nc	nc	2	10	14	28
Holland Haven	0	14	1	nc	4	4	1	0	7
Colne Estuary	195	28	37	nc	0	38	76	52	105
Blackwater Estuary	143	**1045**	14	11	15	140	270	122	43
Dengie	13	nc	0	nc	0	23	87	0	0
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	66	64	100	nc	11	52	48	46	57
Foulness/Thames	191	66	61	0	49	106	81	91	73
Abberton Reservoir	**1286**	91	170	241	**1434**	**2843**	**2296**	**1520**	**920**
Hanningfield Reservoir	34	58	67	nc	261	534	383	17	140
Lee Valley	136	115	96	19	121	311	188	175	132
Other	3	1	1	4	16	20	21	23	34

See Introduction for details of a correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

Abberton Reservoir continues to hold numbers of international importance (counts of above 1,200 birds). The numbers are often difficult to quantify due to large numbers of the species moving between sites to take advantage of fishing opportunities. Nevertheless, it is clear that numbers outside of the breeding season have been generally increasing over recent years.

The below chart compares Essex WeBS totals 2018-2020:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total 2018	1371	958	393	427	2993	2109	2667	1901	966
WeBS total 2019	2392	870	690	520	1245	2292	3103	2395	927
WeBS total 2020	2197	1580	601	275	1911	4073	3461	2060	1539

Non-WeBS highest counts were of a heavy passage off Frinton-on-Sea, with 1,106 on 26th November and 1,504 on 28th November, and a count of 1,340 off Old Hall Marshes on 20th January.

It is likely that a great many of the Great Cormorant seen in Essex are of the continental form *sinensis*. However the only records received that specifically noted this form were from Abberton Reservoir and the River Crouch.

EUROPEAN SHAG *Phalacrocorax aristotelis aristotelis* UK

Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor.

Records were received from January to April and then from August to year end. All were of single birds other than five at Frinton-on-Sea on 1st April and another five at the same site on 5th November, in both cases coinciding with large passages of Great Cormorant. Other sites where birds were recorded on more than one occasion were Gunners Park Shoebury, Southend Pier, Holland Haven, Shoebury, Canvey Island, Mersea Island and Copperas Bay. There was one inland record, a single at Great Chesterford on 26th September (PB-S)

Estimated monthly totals from coastal and estuarine sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number	6	1	2	6	0	0	0	2	3	4	6	5

GLOSSY IBIS *Plegadis falcinellus*

Rare, but increasing, and now almost annual, visitor. **EBSIP (14, 39, 53)**

Frinton-on-Sea	Two (going north)	1st April	PBr
Bowers Marsh	One	7th-8th May	JWr, TBo

Estimated annual totals (new birds only) over the last decade have been:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	Average
Number	3	1	4	7	5	2	2	3	3	3	3.7

EURASIAN SPOONBILL *Platalea leucorodia leucorodia* UK

Uncommon passage migrant and rare winter visitor.

In total, 168 records were received (154 in 2019). These were recorded from 28th February to 21st November and included some passage birds, but most referred to birds lingering during the summer months. Most notable was the long-staying party that frequented Old Hall Marshes/ Abbotts Hall Farm area from the end of July to early September.

The first sightings of the year were of single birds on 28th February at Holland Haven then on 15th March at Bowers Marsh. In April, passage birds were seen at Rainham Marshes, Frinton-on-Sea/ Holland Haven, Bowers Marsh and Westcliff-on-Sea.

May records were all from Rainham Marshes (up to three) and Walthamstow Wetlands (up to two), with some of these birds staying into later months. In June, as well as further sightings from these sites, there were single birds seen at Wallasea Island (11th-12th) and Bowers Marsh (24th and 26th).

July records were: a single at Abberton Reservoir on 1st and two on 18th; Old Hall Marshes, single from 2nd to 5th which may have been passing through, although a small flock of four appeared on the 21st building up to six on the 30th, which stayed until the 7th September, moving around and seen commuting between Old Hall Marshes and Abbotts Hall Farm. The six increased to seven on 26th-27th August and four were still at Old Hall Marshes 16th September.

Other sites with records through this period were (all single bird sightings): Rainham Marshes, an adult in July, an immature in August and until 19th September; Bowers Marsh, 18th July; South Fambridge, 24th July; Wallasea Island, 23rd August; Gallions Reach Beckton, 2nd and 12th September; Frinton-on-Sea, 13th September.

In October the summering birds had all departed and the only records were from East Tilbury, Thurrock Thameside Mucking and Stanford Warren, all most likely referring to the same individual bird, from 11th October.

In November there was a single at Walton-on-the-Naze on the 15th and one at Rainham Marshes 20th-21st. Records from Thurrock Thameside Mucking on 1st and West Thurrock Marshes on 20th no doubt refer to the long stay bird from October.

Estimated monthly totals, along with equivalent totals for the previous year, were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2019	1	0	4	3	7	2	2	9	12	7	0	0
2020	0	1	1	5	5	6	11	11	10	1	3	0

EURASIAN BITTERN *Botaurus stellaris stellaris* UK EX REX

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.

Number of birds/sites was lower than in recent years with winter records of birds only received from Abberton Reservoir and the Lee Valley. (In 2019 there were winter records received from seven different sites).

In the first winter period there was one at Abberton Reservoir on 15th January and one at Seventy Acres Lake / Fishers Green Holyfield from 3rd February to 13th March, with two seen 8th and 10th February. Spring records were: Frinton-on-Sea, one on 2nd April; Romford (Rush Green), one on 4th April.

In the second winter period one was at Abberton Reservoir from 10th September to 28th December and one was seen at Seventy Acres Lake Holyfield on 4th and 14th December.

WESTERN CATTLE EGRET *Bubulcus ibis*

Scarce passage migrant and rare, but increasing, summer visitor.

Following the first County breeding record at Chigborough Lakes in 2019, breeding was confirmed at three sites in 2020, all at existing Little Egret colonies. Records comprised sightings of juveniles at Chigborough Lakes and Abberton Reservoir and sightings of two nests at a third site in the Maldon District from which one fledged juvenile was seen.

Overall, 394 reports were received, a further big increase on the previous year's total of 317 reports. No doubt the number of repeat sightings is greatly influenced by the long-staying birds at popular birdwatching locations and by them being very photogenic.

Estimated monthly totals, along with equivalent totals for the previous year, were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2019	1	0	7	6	5	6	13	19	9	13	7	8
2020	7	4	12	7	14	15	17	31	25	25	34	8

The autumn peak was due to the presence of small flocks/ family parties following successful breeding. Maximum counts at the main sites were: Old Hall Marshes, 16 on 9th and 12th October; Tollesbury Wick, 11 on 6th August; Abberton Reservoir, 11 on 1st November; Wat Tyler Country Park, six on 13th-30th September; Blue House Farm (including surrounding area), five on 1st July; Rainham Marshes, five on 19th August; Walthamstow Wetlands, four on 12th July.

The species is now occurring around the County. Other sites where birds were recorded were at Wallasea Island, multiple sites along the Lee Valley and most notably Hall Marsh Scrape Waltham Abbey, Canvey Island, Upminster, Chigborough Lakes, Limbourne Creek Maldon, Wrabness, The Naze, Fingringhoe, Hanningfield Reservoir, Frinton-on-Sea, Holland Haven, Bowers Marsh and Grays.

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea cinerea*

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Only a limited number of breeding colony counts were received, no doubt due to the first lockdown restrictions during the time of main breeding activity. The figures available are shown in the table below.

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
St Osyth	2	4	8	10	9	17+	18	9+	11	10
Abberton Reservoir	6	14	16	25	19	20	14	6	1	nc
Chigborough Lakes	nc	11	13	13	10	10	5	6	7	8
Warren Gorge Chafford Gorges	8	16	10	10	7	7	7	7	8	5
Mayesbrook Park Dagenham	nc	1	1	nc	nc	nc	3	nc	1	3
Walthamstow Wetlands	42-45	4+	43	5+	nc	33	30	15	nc	71
County Total	**58+**	**50+**	**172+**	**136+**	**100**	**144**	**134**	**117+**	**111+**	**174**

In 2019 breeding records were received from 15 sites, including Netherhall Gravel Pit Nazeing, the heronry with the second highest recorded figure of 27 occupied nests, so it can be seen that the 2020 picture is very incomplete. Although a number of sites might appear to be showing declines, this lack of data makes it inadvisable to draw conclusions on breeding population changes at this stage.

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts were:

GB 450 INT 2,700	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS Total	**118**	**118**	**139**	**54**	**94**	**170**	**168**	**99**	**87**
Stour Estuary	7	nc	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	4	3	1	nc	nc	2	8	5	0
Holland Haven	0	0	0	nc	1	1	1	2	0
Colne Estuary	6	2	6	nc	1	10	8	11	4
Blackwater Estuary	12	7	4	0	3	17	9	5	3
Dengie	0	nc	0	nc	3	0	2	1	3
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	19	35	32	nc	1	31	24	7	11
Foulness/Thames	23	24	14	0	29	21	28	22	30
Abberton Reservoir	15	21	31	37	27	37	50	19	7
Hanningfield Reservoir	3	0	4	nc	2	11	7	5	10
Lee Valley	27	24	40	15	17	24	20	18	9
Other	2	2	4	2	10	16	11	4	10

See Introduction for details of a correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

The highest counts were made where the heronries are, with 50 on the 14th October at Abberton Reservoir being the largest number submitted. Although a total count of birds at the Walthamstow Wetlands heronry was not submitted, it is likely to have been the highest number as 42-45 occupied nests were counted.

Away from the heronries and WeBS counts, the most significant totals recorded were: Wallasea Island, 20 on 21st May; Old Hall Marshes, 20 on 10th November; Colne Point, 17 on 5th October. Notable numbers were recorded at Frinton-on-Sea in the first few days of October, with a single group of five in-off the sea on 2nd, ten seen on the 3rd and a single flock of 15 flying south on 5th. The Colne Point count above is likely to be associated with some of the movements around Frinton-on-Sea.

GREAT EGRET *Ardea alba alba*

Uncommon but increasing passage migrant and visitor throughout the year

Another significant increase, with 796 records received (558 in 2019). The high number of records is influenced by long-staying birds being present at regularly watched sites. Abberton Reservoir is the main site for this species with 66% of records received and the only site regularly reporting double-figure counts. However, Great Egrets are very mobile and were often seen overhead flying in a determined manner. They were reported widely throughout the County, from a total of 72 sites.

Estimated monthly totals were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	16	20	9	11	7	8	14	24	29	55	42	40

Peak counts included: Abberton, 36 on 14th October (Wetland Bird Survey count); Abberton, 25 on 29th October (MT); Roach Estuary, 12 on 20th August. The maximum recorded at other sites was three. The only coastal movements noted were of singles flying north at Frinton-on-Sea on 19th April and 13th June .This perhaps reflects the fact that egrets migrate mainly at night.

It is interesting to contrast occurrence with Eurasian Spoonbill and Western Cattle Egret. Whilst the latter two are essentially summer visitors, Great Egret is appearing mainly as a passage migrant or winter visitor. The scale of journeys being undertaken was highlighted by the sighting of a Great Egret that had been ringed as a nestling in Lithuania in May 2020 and then seen at Abberton from the last week of October to early November at least, following a stopover in Holland.

LITTLE EGRET *Egretta garzetta garzetta*

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. First bred in 2000.

Only a limited number of breeding colony counts were received, no doubt due to the first lockdown restrictions during the time of main breeding activity.

Those noted were as follows (2019 figures for the same sites are in brackets).

St Osyth Priory	one nest visible (22 occupied nests)
Chigborough Lakes	occupied nests but not counted (ten)
North Fambridge Hall	36 occupied nests (29)
Walthamstow Wetlands	20+ occupied nests (37)
Warren Gorge Chafford Hundred	36 fledged (18 occupied nests)
Abberton Reservoir	seven occupied nests (eight)
Puddledock Fishery Upminster	one pair (one occupied nest)

In 2019 breeding records were received from 11 sites, including Netherhall Gravel Pit Nazeing and Foulness Island, so it can be seen that the 2020 picture is very incomplete. This lack of data makes it inadvisable to draw conclusions on breeding population changes at this stage.

Principal monthly Wetland Bird Survey Counts (WeBS) were:

GB 110 INT 800	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WeBS total	**275**	**195**	**184**	**40**	**437**	**707**	**789**	**393**	**250**
Stour Estuary	6	nc	3	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Hamford Water	38	27	31	nc	nc	36	96	66	36
Holland Haven	0	0	1	nc	0	0	0	0	0
Colne Estuary	31	10	22	nc	31	94	104	76	42
Blackwater Estuary	43	19	33	7	32	**117**	**161**	55	23
Dengie	7	nc	5	nc	12	47	77	14	19
Crouch/Roach/Wallasea	40	37	52	nc	11	**179**	102	42	46
Foulness/Thames	89	91	27	0	**263**	**166**	**125**	**124**	70
Abberton Reservoir	1	2	2	29	73	46	105	5	1
Hanningfield Reservoir	0	0	0	nc	2	4	6	2	0
Lee Valley	16	7	5	1	8	12	9	3	8
Other	4	2	3	3	5	6	4	6	5

See Introduction for details of a correction to 2019 Wetland Bird Survey data.

Besides the WeBS count data, the highest site counts recorded were Mersea Island, 105 on 2nd September; Two Tree Island, 94 on 8th September; Hogmarsh Island Manningtree, 79 on 17th September; Old Hall Marshes, 57 on 15th August; Hamford Water, 55 coming in to roost on 22nd November.

Little Egrets were recorded on just six dates at Frinton-on-Sea, all in different months and no more

WESTERN OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus haliaetus* UK

Uncommon, but increasing, passage migrant.

A very good year with record spring and autumn passages.

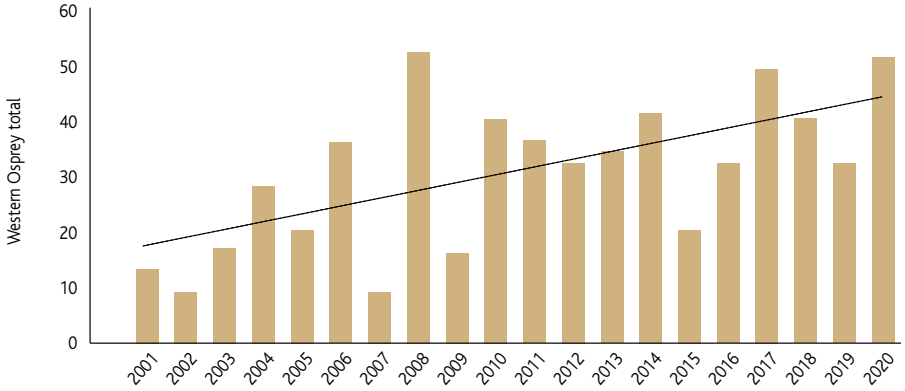
A single bird at Fair Play Farm Upminster on 6th March, and presumably the same individual the next day by the A12 at Great Baddow, was the earliest County record by nine days, the previous earliest bird being one at Manningtree on 15th March in 1981. In all, some 17 individuals were recorded between 6th March and 7th June making it the best spring on record. The first lockdown undoubtedly played its part as lockdown restrictions meant more observers spent time watching the sky from gardens. Four observations of birds passing over a garden in Heybridge may have been different birds.

The first returning bird was seen on 7th July when one took up long-term residence at Hanningfield Reservoir (photographic evidence confirmed this), where it was present until the mid-September, then joined by another bird on 15th September. All other autumn sightings were single birds, making an impressive total for the season of 34. A few made short stays, including some within the Mistley area and around the Colne estuary. The last bird of the year was at Mistley on 14th-15th November, a late but not unprecedented, date.

Estimated monthly totals were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number	0	0	2	6	6	3	3	11	13	6	1	0

The UK breeding population is slowly increasing, so it is not surprising that the numbers recorded



annually over the last decade shows a very positive trend:

EUROPEAN HONEY BUZZARD *Pernis apivorus* UK

Uncommon passage migrant. **EBSIP (312, 64, 376)**

Holland Haven	One	20th May	AR
Birdbrook	One	22nd June	BW
The Strood Mersea Island	One	12th July	DUr

Annual totals over the last decade have been:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	Average
Totals	3	1	3	2	3	2	1	1	2	1	1.9

In addition, a further record was received without a description.

EURASIAN SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus nisus*

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

With 2,550 records, this was by far the most received in a year, no doubt influenced by the lockdowns. A total of 12 pairs were confirmed to have bred with a further 31 records indicative of probable breeding (15 and 15 in 2019).

There were a surprising number of records that suggested movement into/through the County, mainly from Frinton-on-Sea, both in the spring and autumn. Spring saw a total of six birds between 27th March and 15th April, including two in off the sea on 1st April and another on 2nd. The autumn saw 11 between 5th September and 10th October including one in off the sea on 7th October and three moving south on 9th. At The Naze, one was seen drifting out to sea on 24th October and another arrived in off the sea on 7th November. One that flew in off the sea at Harwich on 11th September may have come from Felixstowe Suffolk.

NORTHERN GOSHAWK *Accipiter gentilis gentilis*

Probable very rare breeder. Very scarce resident and passage migrant. **EBSIP**

Several records of single birds were received, without supporting information. The majority of these were in areas of the west and south-west of the County where the species is almost certainly now resident. This is a very secretive bird in the UK and remains rare in Essex although it is perhaps very, very slowly consolidating its position in the west.

WESTERN MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus aeruginosus* UK REX

Fairly common summer visitor, common passage migrant and winter visitor.

A total of 2,118 records were received for 2020, a similar figure to 2019 (2,260).

Seven pairs were confirmed to have bred, including four that raised 12 young at Rainham Marshes, with a further six records indicative of probable breeding. This is a very similar figure to the 12 potential breeding pairs noted last year, but still somewhat below the ten-year average. Other pairs may have been present but interpreting data is difficult; just one of the records submitted this year refers to displaying birds.

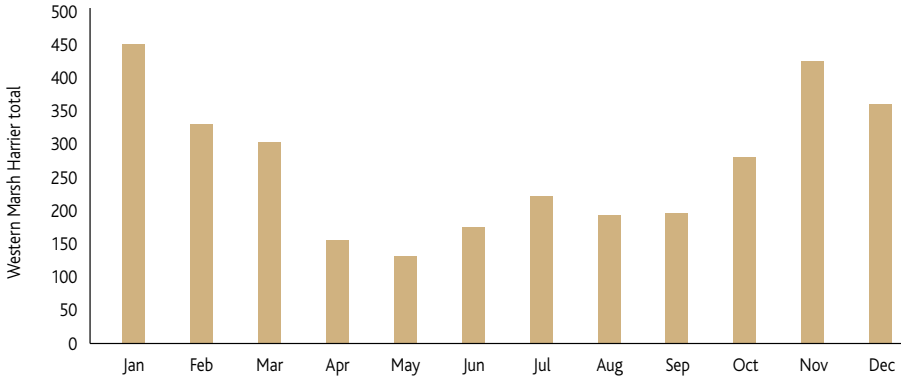
Annual confirmed/probable breeding pairs over the last decade have been:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	Average
Pairs	13	12	18	20	20	25	13	23	23	16	18.3

At the principal roosts the peak monthly counts were: Hamford Water, 18 on 17th January, 23 on 8th February, 17 on 14th March, 16 on 19th October; 15 on 13th November and 16 on 19th December; Langenhoe Marsh, 16 on 15th January, 15 on 27th November, seven on 14th December: Old Hall Marshes, eight on 8th January, 29 on 19th February, 13 on 26th November and ten on 6th December. These counts are generally lower than in recent years but are likely to have been affected by lockdown restrictions. Other sites reporting double-figures were: Fingringhoe Wick, ten on 18th February (presumably Langenhoe Marsh birds); Tollesbury Wick, ten on 11th March; Wallasea Island, ten on 3rd December; Rainham Marshes, 16 on 11th July, presumably including recently fledged birds.

There was another increase in the number of sites that the species was reported from during the year to about 170 (125 in 2019). With ever increasing numbers, tracking the number of birds present during the year is now nearly impossible. However, an analysis of all birds recorded in a month ('bird-days') once again suggests that the largest numbers are present in winter from November-January with numbers tailing off in February, presumably as birds return to their breeding areas (see graph overleaf).

Inland sightings continue to increase with the two main reservoirs at Abberton and Hanningfield recording them in every month. Elsewhere, records of single birds came from a total of 16 sites, all single records unless shown otherwise in brackets: Beckton area (four); Boreham; Brook Farm



Upminster (two); Copford (two); Barking; Chingford Plain Epping Forest; Gidea Park; Leyton Flats; Laindon; Seventy Acres Lake Holyfield; Romford (two); Russell Green Gravel Pits Boreham; Walthamstow Wetlands; Wanstead Flats; Wanstead Park; Woodford Green.

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

UK REX

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.

In the first winter period, numbers declined to nine birds (from 16 in December 2019) but with 11 present in February. Perhaps a dozen or so birds were present in the first six months of the year, with up to four birds present in Hamford Water (two in January, four in February [two male, one immature male and one immature female], two in March) and on Wallasea Island (three in January, four in February [adult male, adult female and two ringtail], two in March), whilst three wandered around Abberton and the mouth of the Colne/Blackwater (three in January [male and two ringtails], two in February and one in March). The last of the spring was an immature male at Colne Point on 18th May.

Estimated monthly totals were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Totals	9	11	8	3	1	0	1	0	2	7	7	6

Unusually, there was an adult male at Bradwell Bird Observatory on 8th July, but it was not seen on any other dates.

The first bird of the autumn was a ringtail at Rainham Marshes on 26th September, whilst another ringtail came in off the sea at Frinton-on-Sea on 29th September. Numbers thereafter were then very low compared to recent years with particularly poor numbers during December. The most favoured locality was again Wallasea Island where up to three birds were present (two in October, three in November [male and two ringtails] and December) with just singles in Hamford Water, Abberton Reservoir and Dengie areas.

Inland, away from Abberton Reservoir, there was a one at Brook Farm Upminster on 24th March.

This was a poor year for the species.

MONTAGU'S HARRIER *Circus pygargus*

UK

Has bred on four occasions; otherwise scarce passage migrant.

EBSIP

Dengie	Ringtail	21st July	CSh

Another record was received but without a description so the single sighting is typical of the recent trend.

than the total any one day. This perhaps reflects the fact that egrets migrate mainly at night.

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	Average
Totals	1	1	2	0	2	0	1	2	3	2	1.4

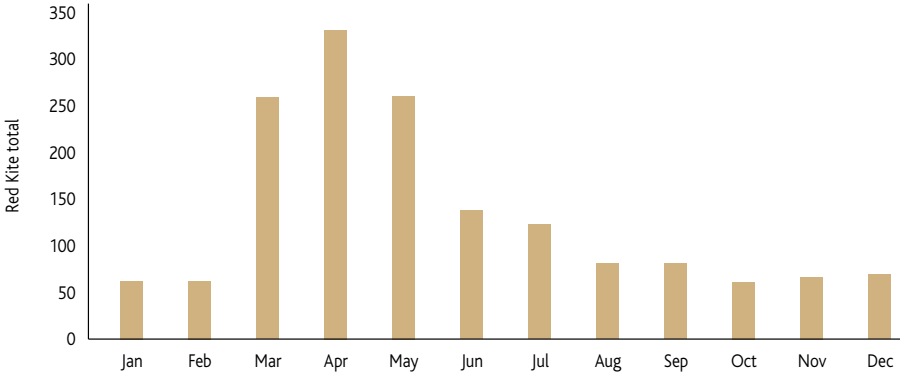
RED KITE *Milvus milvus milvus*

Increasing passage migrant. Recent (re)colonist.

This wil probably be recognised as the year when the species gained a firm foothold in the County. Nine pairs were confirmed to have bred, mainly in the west of the County, and a further eight pairs possibly/probably bred. This is almost certainly a significant underestimate as the far north-west of the County is known to hold a number of birds during the winter months and, given that fewer bird records in general are received from this area, many probably will have gone unreported.

It is impossible to keep an accurate estimate of numbers for this species as they are very mobile and the same bird is probably reported from several locations. A simple analysis of the sum of all birds recorded in a month ('bird-days') shows a pronounced spring passage, although the peak in April (March in 2019) seems to have been late this year.

Otherwise the pattern of occurrence was remarkably similar to 2019, but records during the breeding season were at a much higher level. What is notable is the similarity of the number of records through January-February to October-December. Ths may be evidence of a stable winter population or a statistical coincidence.



The majority of the 1,220 or so records involved 1-2 birds but there were 44 involving three birds, 16 of four, seven of five, three of six and two of seven with just two double-figure counts: at least 15 at Little Bardfield on 19th November; 23 in Clavering area on 2nd December

BLACK KITE *Milvus migrans migrans*

Rare passage migrant.

EBSIP (18, 16, 34)

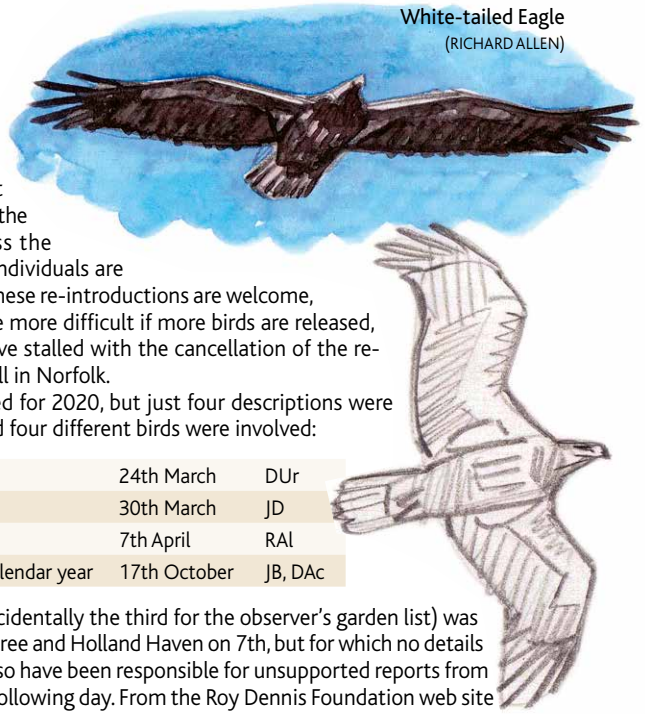
Hornchurch	One	15th April	AGd

Another typical year with just one record. With three birds in the 1980s, ten in the 1990s, ten in 2000s but then just seven in 2010s, the trend had been generally one of increase but the decline in the 2010s is surprising given how regular the species is becoming in the south of England.

WHITE-TAILED EAGLE
Haliaeetus albicilla albicilla

UK

Vagrant. EBSIP (15, 8, 23)



White-tailed Eagle
(RICHARD ALLEN)

Assessment of the number of White-tailed Eagles seen in the County is becoming more difficult since the re-introduction scheme on the Isle of Wight, as birds roam across the County and it is not known which individuals are involved in which sightings. Whilst these re-introductions are welcome, assessment of numbers will become more difficult if more birds are released, although the initiative seems to have stalled with the cancellation of the re-introduction scheme at Wild Ken Hill in Norfolk.

A total of 16 records were received for 2020, but just four descriptions were received and accepted. It is assumed four different birds were involved:

The Strood West Mersea	One	24th March	DUr
Wix	Juvenile	30th March	JD
Wivenhoe	Immature	7th April	RAl
Hanningfield Reservoir	Second calendar year	17th October	JB, DAc

Presumably the Wivenhoe bird (incidentally the third for the observer's garden list) was the same as reported from Manningtree and Holland Haven on 7th, but for which no details were received. The same bird may also have been responsible for unsupported reports from Abberton and Leigh-on-Sea on the following day. From the Roy Dennis Foundation web site this individual is now identified as a female, G324, from the Isle of White re-introduction programme. She passed over Essex in a roughly straight line from Manningtree to Grays and was a different bird to the West Mersea and Wix individuals.

ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD *Buteo lagopus lagopus*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. **EBSIP**

No accepted records this year.

Annual totals for the last ten winters have been:

2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	Average
0	2	0	1	4	2	2	0	6	4	2.1

COMMON BUZZARD *Buteo buteo buteo*

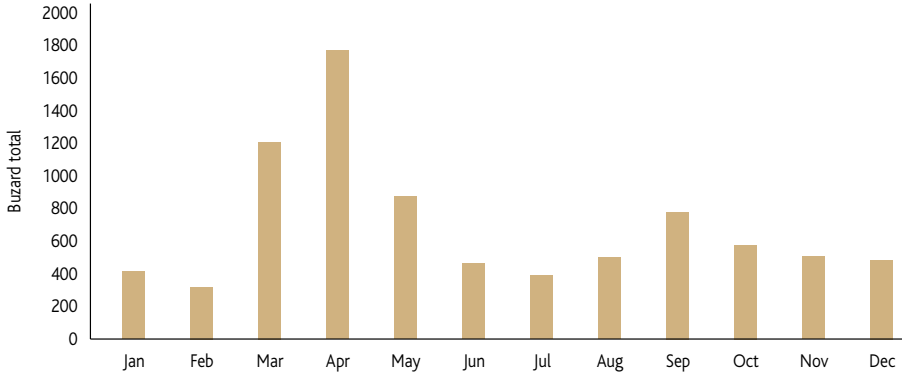
Common resident, passage migrant and possible winter visitor. Recent (re)colonist.

Over 4,700 records were received, a huge increase on the 3,600 in 2019.

Approximately 85 pairs were reported on territory or in suitable habitat but, given the large number of reports during the breeding season, this is considered to be an underestimate of the true size of the County breeding population. Just nine pairs were confirmed to have bred, compared to 33 last year; lockdown restrictions clearly limited observations away from observers' immediate areas.

Across the year there were 58 double-figure counts, 44 in the period 1st February to 25th May and 13 from 31st August to 6th November. Most counts involved 10-20 birds, with those of more than 20 coming from: Great Canfield, 23 in a field on 26th October and 6th November; Frinton-on-Sea, 26 south in five hours on 1st April; Brook Farm Upminster, 26 flew north on 7th April with 30 on 24th March.

With such large numbers of birds now present and moving through the County, differentiating between passage and resident birds is now impossible but a simple analysis of the sum of all birds recorded in a month ('bird-days') shows a clear peak of occurrence in April – presumably due to migration through Essex and birds becoming more obvious during spring territorial displays – and a smaller September peak as birds move through the County in autumn.



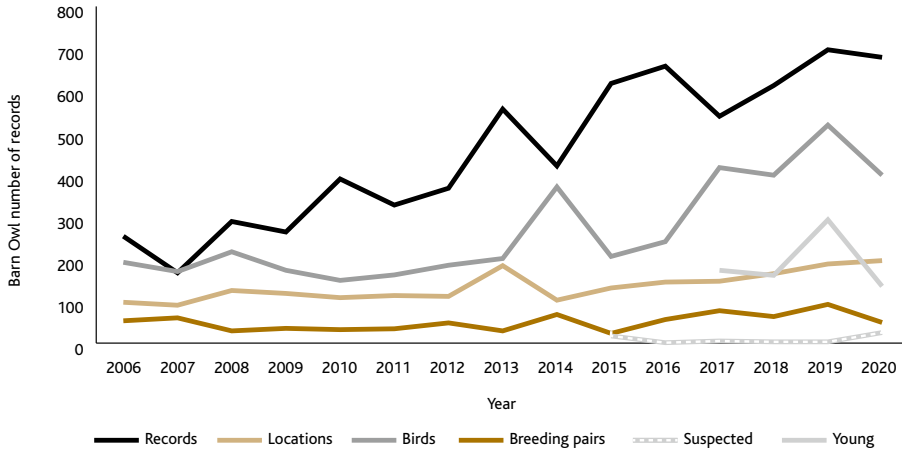
WESTERN BARN OWL *Tyto alba* REX

Barn Owl *Tyto tyto alba*

Local resident, primarily in low lying coastal areas.

In total, 679 records involving at least 264 individuals (excluding juveniles) were received from 188 sites (697 records of at least 518 (including juveniles) in 2019; *for earlier years see chart below*). The Society received reports of 55 breeding pairs which produced at least 135 chicks, of which at least two died and also 25 suspected breeders, (92 plus three suspected in 2019 producing 293 young; *for earlier years, see chart below*).

A summary of Barn Owl records for the period 2006 - 2020



After an exceptional year in 2019 this was not such a good year, though numbers are similar to those in 2018 so this may just be closer to the long-term trend.

Outside the breeding season, records peaked in February, when 60 were reported (44 in February 2019, 39 in March 2018). Only 23 birds were seen in December, though December counts are often low.

There were two dead birds reported, one of which was found in West Bergholt on 31st March and was ringed but details have not been forwarded to The Society. The other, a road casualty, was found in Tillingham on 4th November, this bird having been ringed by SCo at Tolleshunt D'Arcy as a nestling during the previous year. Injured birds found at Earls Colne, Frating and East Mersea were all successfully rehabilitated and released.

An interesting record was of a nest box where two chicks shared with Stock Doves incubating eggs at Peldon. It is not known if the Stock Dove chicks survived.

This species has its stronghold in the coastal low-lying areas between the Blackwater and Stour estuaries in the northeast, with far fewer records coming from the western part of the County.

All sightings will be welcomed by the Recorders.

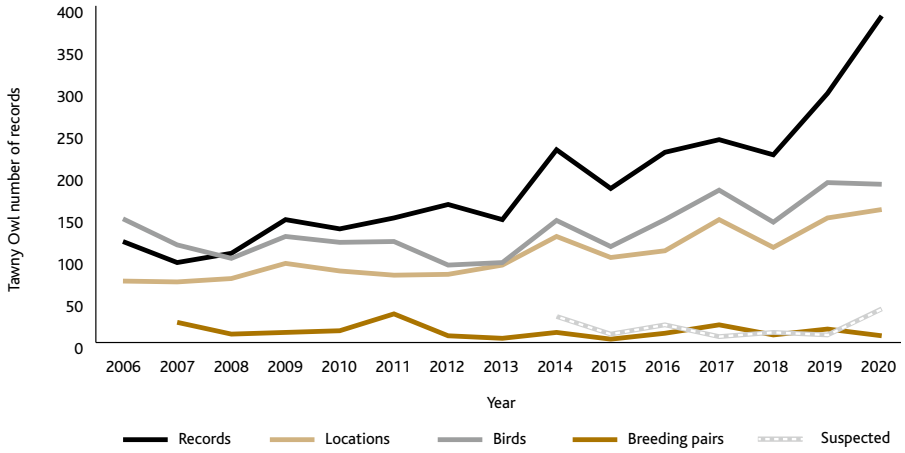
TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco sylvatica* UK

Common resident.

In total, 388 records were received concerning 188 individuals from 158 locations (296 records of 190 individuals from 148 locations in 2019, *for earlier years see chart below*). In general the species has a wide distribution in the County.

Breeding was proven for eight pairs with seven juveniles being noted, plus a further 40 where breeding was suspected (16 pairs plus nine suspected in 2019, *for earlier years see chart below*).

A summary of Tawny Owl records for the period 2006-2020:



The north-east of the County appears to be where this species is doing well with the majority of breeding records received came from this area. As in previous years evidence of breeding was worryingly low, although it is acknowledged that it is not easy to confirm. These figures are, without doubt, a significant underestimate of the County population and illustrate how little data is received for the species. There were 28 potential territories that had birds present during both halves of the year but showed no evidence of breeding and a further 28 locations that were only occupied for one half of the year.

Short-eared Owl, Wallasea Island, January (PAUL CHAMBERLAIN)

Merlin, Wallasea, September (JEFF DELVE)

Peregrine Falcon, Mistley, November (MATT TURNER)

Bearded Reedling, Wat Tyler CP, Pitsea, July (JEFF DELVE)

In summary 2020 was a good year for this species, being much the same as 2019. There was, however, a noticeable increase in observer records and, as this did not result in increased counts of birds or breeding records, it is possible that this species has peaked in the areas covered by observations. There was a noticeable increase in possible breeding records from the south-west of the County.

Four birds were taken into care, all of which were successfully rehabilitated. No dead birds were reported. Daylight calling was noted at one location, Donyland Woods on 22nd April.

All records are welcomed and hopefully this will clarify the status of this species. Tawny Owls can breed very early and young may have fledged by the beginning of March. It is possible to start recording territorial birds as early as the New Year. Observers are encouraged to record birds holding territory, even if breeding is not proved, to allow the most complete picture of the species' status to be given.

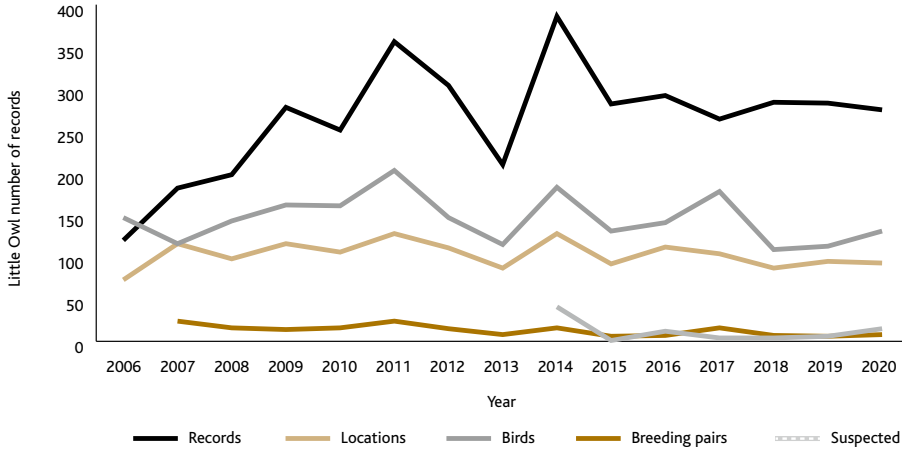
LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

Fairly common resident.

There were 275 records concerning 131 individuals from 93 localities (283 records of 113 individuals from 95 locations in 2019, *for earlier years see chart below*).

There were eight breeding records submitted with a further 15 suspected (six breeding records with six suspected in 2019, *for earlier years see chart below*). Breeding reports came predominately from the north-east of the County, although breeding was again confirmed in the south-west.

A summary of Little Owl records for the period 2006-2020:



Overall, this was a slightly better year for this species than last year indicating what is hopefully the start of a slow recovery although there is still concern that the species is in decline. Numbers in all categories are below the ten-year average. There were few reports received from the north-west of the County.

Four birds were taken into care all were released after rehabilitation. One dead bird was reported this year.

Confirming breeding for this species is not easy and all suspected breeding needs to be reported to the recorder as the figures reported greatly underestimate the breeding population.

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus otus* REX

Rare breeder, scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

There were 53 records concerning 42 birds, from 20 locations. A summary of recent years' records for the species:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
Records	53	59	28	45	17	15	10	30
Birds	42	28	8	16	14	6	13	18
Locations	20	12	5	5	7	4	8	16

There was evidence of breeding at eight locations with at least seven youngsters seen (four in 2019, none in 2018, three in 2017, two in 2016, none in 2015, four in 2014, one in 2013). This increase in breeding records was due to a determined effort to locate the species by one observer in the Dengie area (see article in this report, West Dengie, A Lockdown Census). Nest sites were reported to be mostly in impenetrable stands of low-level private deciduous woodland planted within the last two decades. As the observer notes that these areas have few other attractions for the active birdwatcher, and if this trend is countywide, then there could be another 40 pairs in the County evading recording.

A good winter roost was noted at one site with up to 11 in the second winter period but, disappointingly, none were reported in the first winter period. In addition, there was one possible migrant recorded: Wigboro Wick Farm St Osyth, on 7th November.

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus flammeus* UK REX

Rare breeder, regular passage migrant and winter visitor.

In total, 352 records concerning 125 individuals from 59 locations were received (229 records of 69 individuals from 48 locations in 2019, 232 records of 64 individuals from 40 locations in 2018,). As would be expected, the majority of records came from coastal or estuarine areas.

Having bred in the County in 2012 and 2013, this was the seventh year running without a breeding record and no birds were seen between 18th May at Blue House Farm and 13th August at Roding Valley Meadows, other than singles on 2nd July at Deal Hall and on 16th July at Abberton Reservoir.

Outside the breeding season, estimated monthly maxima were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	19	12	14	16	7	34	37	28	19
2019	21	19	12	13	5	-	12	22	23
2018	4	6	12	11	7	10	30	26	21
2017	33	23	16	23	10	12	17	16	7
2016	46	30	31	36	19	1	32	19	32
2015	28	32	21	23		11	63	46	33
2014	14	-	7	5	-	10	30	35	29

The year started with similar number of birds in the County to that of December 2019 but the number declined thereafter. In the second winter period the first migrant arrived on 13th August at Roding Valley Meadows and, on the following day, one was at Old Hall Marshes. Individual birds were then seen at a number of sites throughout the month. There was an exceptional gathering at Colne Point from 23rd August through to the 18th October which involved up to six birds.

Other sightings away from coastal and estuarine sites and of single birds were: Chingford (Kings Head Hill) on 12th October; Walthamstow Wetlands on 23rd October; Wanstead Flats in both winter periods and Leytonstone on 16th October. There were also up to three at Gunpowder Park Waltham Abbey during December.

In the first winter period the largest gathering was up to four at Wallasea Island in January and February and there were four birds present at Rainham Marshes on 4th January. During the second winter period four birds were at Old Hall Marshes on 22nd November.

COMMON KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis ispida* UK

Fairly common resident and passage migrant.

Reported from 60 sites during the breeding season (April-July), two fewer than in 2019. Confirmed or probable breeding totalled 12 from ten locations (14 from 12 in 2019). Breeding numbers appear to be stable at the present time, but the success rate of confirmed breeding pairs is difficult to assess. Fledged young were reported from: Harrow Lodge Park Hornchurch, Dagenham Chase and Wanstead Park, all on 1st June; Chafford Gorges Grays on 24th June, and Belhus Woods Aveley on 2nd July.

Overall, there were 274 reports from 84 locations (147 from 59 in 2019). Two well watched locations, the Lea Valley and Abberton Reservoir, dominated by providing approximately 20% of the total reports.

The highest location counts were seven on both 17th October and 12th December in the Holyfield Hall Farm area and eight at Chafford Gorges Grays on 23rd June.

EUROPEAN BEE-EATER *Merops apiaster*

Rare summer visitor and passage migrant. EBSIP (43, 17, 60)

There were two records this year:

Brook Farm, Upminster	One	16th May	RBa
Holland Haven	One	13th June	MMa *et al*

Annual totals over the last decade have been:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	Average
Sites	2	0	0	0	1	2	0	6	3	1	
Totals	2	0	0	0	1	2	0	6	3	1	3.6

EURASIAN WRYNECK *Jynx torquilla torquilla*

Scarce passage migrant, mainly in autumn. EBSIP

Kirby-le-Soken	One	22nd August	LH, DSt

Annual totals over the last decade have been:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	Average
Totals	1	6	4	0	3	4	8	13	4	5	4.8

Apart from 2017, when none were recorded, this was the poorest showing in the past ten years. This may have been partly due to autumn restrictions on access to some key sites, but also to a dearth of easterly winds during the autumn.

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dryobates minor comminutus* UK

Scarce resident.

There were no reports of confirmed breeding and only nine reports from six locations during the first three weeks of April (seven reports from three locations in 2019), with no further sightings until 1st June, on which date birds were reported on territory from Thorndon Park North, Cely Woods Aveley and Staples Hill Epping Forest. Drumming birds were heard from only two further sites during other seasons.

Overall, there were 58 reports from 23 locations (74 from 26 in 2019). The presence of two birds at the same time came from only two sites. One location dominated the numbers: Shut Heath Wood Great Totham (14) while numerous reports of a female on a garden bird feeder came from Halstead during January-April.

The future in the County for this Red List species looks bleak and all records would be appreciated.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major anglicus/major*

***D. m. anglicus* is a common resident whilst *D. m. major* may occur as a rare passage migrant.**

The total number of records received, 2,979, was much higher than in either 2019 (2,103) or 2018 (2,200), possibly due to the increase in observations in gardens and local patches during the first lockdown. However, reports of possible, probable, or confirmed breeding remained approximately the same, with 158 territories or drumming ♂♂ reported from 105 locations compared to 164 from 104 locations in 2019. Actual breeding numbers are probably much higher in the County – there were again many reports of multiple birds in the breeding season not supplemented by evidence of breeding, indicating that breeding is under-reported. Reasons for the increase in the species in recent decades are probably due to a number of factors, including adaptation to linear wood features in town and country, supplementary (garden) feeding, Dutch Elm disease and increase in Birch woods (*Wood, 2007 page 384)*.

Double-figure counts were reported as follows: Belhus Woods Aveley, ten on 5th June; Cely Woods Avely, 11 on 18th May; and Clay Tye Wood/Farm Upminster, 11, also on 18th May; all three records included broods of fledged young.

EUROPEAN GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis viridis*

Common resident.

The number of records received was 3,478, a marked increase on the 2,281 reported in 2019 and 2,600 in 2018, possibly due to an increase in local observations during the first lockdown. Reports of 'yaffling' or of pairs on territory came from approximately 67 locations, from which 23 reported confirmed breeding. Sightings of 7-9 birds came from eight sites while there were ten in Belhus Woods CP on 5th June.

As in recent years, records are distributed across all areas of the County and occurred on almost every day in the year.

COMMON KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus tinnunculus* UK

Fairly common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding was confirmed for 33 pairs at 30 sites (23 pairs at 19 sites in 2019 – adjusted figures see below). There was no full breeding survey on Foulness Island (where three pairs bred in 2018 and five pairs were present, but with no confirmation of breeding, in 2019). All records of confirmed breeding were of single pairs apart from two each at Ongar Park Wood, Abbotts Hall Farm and Wix. At most sites breeding was confirmed by the presence of fledglings or recently fledged young but the total also includes three sites where only occupied nests were reported. Three broods of five were seen and five broods of four, the remainder being of 1-3.

Reports of a further 37 pairs, present in the breeding season (taken as April-July) but not confirmed to have bred, came from 29 additional sites (29 pairs from 19 sites in 2019). These included three pairs at Lawling Creek, all other reports being of 1-2 pairs.

Hence the total number of pairs reported in the breeding season was 70 (52 in 2019, 43 in 2018). This year's increase is largely accounted for by a newly- received report of a nest box study in an area south of Chelmsford, where 12 pairs fledged between them a total of 38 young. Elsewhere the numbers are again primarily a reflection of observer coverage. For example, of the three sites reported above as holding two successful pairs each, none were included in the 2019 figures. (However, it has since been confirmed that two pairs bred at Ongar Park Wood in that year: the 2019 totals given above are figures revised to include these additional pairs).

The largest counts were again from Foulness Island during monthly Wetland Bird Surveys: 17 on 12th January, 13 on 9th February, five on 8th March, 25 on 16th August, 15 on 20th September, 13 on 18th October, eight on 15th November and 13 on 12th December. Elsewhere double-figure counts received were as follows (site maximum in each case): Wallasea Island, ten on 7th January; Blue House Farm, 15 on 9th September; Rainham Marshes, 19 on 2nd October. Other sites reporting more than six birds (again only site maxima given) were: Colne Point, eight on 31st August; Abberton Reservoir, eight on 25th January and 14th August; Old Hall Marshes, eight on 21st November; Latchingdon/St Lawrence, seven on 25th November.

The total number of records received (from all times of year) was 3,911. This was a significant increase on 2,932 in 2019 and 3,100 in 2018. Again these records included multiple reports of the same birds at well-watched sites and multiple reports by single observers via BirdTrack. The increase is perhaps a reflection of increased local-patch birding during the lockdowns (which may also be an additional factor in the increased numbers of pairs reported above). Whatever the reasons, the increases seem likely to be more a reflection of changes in observer coverage than of population changes, which for a widespread species can only properly be measured by formal surveys.

RED-FOOTED FALCON *Falco vespertinus*

Rare passage migrant and summer visitor. **EBSIP (28, 9, 37)**

Althorne	Second calendar-year ♂	26th May	AD
Frinton-on-Sea	Second calendar-year ♂	26th May	PBr

The third year in succession that this species has been seen in the County. The Althorne bird was found late evening and seen to go to roost but was not found at six a.m. the next morning. The Frinton bird was also found in the (same) evening and, after pausing briefly, flew on. The timings and the respective plumage descriptions pointed to these being two individual birds.

Annual totals over the last decade have been:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	Average
Numbers	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0.7

MERLIN *Falco columbarius aesalon* UK REX

Increasing passage migrant and winter visitor.

The total number of reports received was 284 (199 in 2019, 210 in 2018). The species may be increasing again after a short period of decline. The first lockdown would not have impacted significantly on records received. Autumn/winter restrictions and the second lockdown would have prevented some site visits so it is possible that an even more significant increase in second winter birds was unreported.

The largest number at any given site in one day was three on two dates at Old Hall Marshes (two ♀♀ and a ♂ on 8th January, an adult ♀, a first calendar-year ♀ and a first calendar-year ♂ on 18th November). Records of two in a day came from The Naze on 4th November; the Strood Mersea Island on 21st December; Old Hall Marshes on 28th September, 24th and 26th November and 1st December; Goldhanger on 6th March; Wallasea Island on 7th and 18th January and 9th November.

After early/mid-April records from Colne Point (up to 6th), St Osyth (Earl's Hall Farm on 13th) and Coalhouse Fort East Tilbury (on 6th). There was a high-summer record of a juvenile at Rainham Marshes on 31st July.

The second half of August saw a marked early-autumn arrival. There was a cluster of records from the estuaries of the Crouch and Roach, with singles on Foulness Island on 16th, the Dengie on 21st, Wallasea Island (an adult ♂ on 22nd and a juvenile on 31st), Potton Creek Wakering Stairs on 23rd and Lower Raypits Canewdon, a ♀ on 24th and an adult ♂ on 31st. Elsewhere further August records comprised one near Ardleigh on 30th, singles at Old Hall Marshes on 23rd (thought probably ♀) and 26th (an adult ♂), and a ♀ at Beckton Sewage Works on 28th.

Inland, the majority of records came from Abberton Reservoir (unsurprising given that parts of the reservoir are less than two miles from the nearest saltings). Single birds were reported at that site on six dates in January (including a ♀ on 3rd, the others not being sexed) and two dates in February (including a ♂ on 16th), with November single(s) on 7th and 14th. Other inland records (in addition to the sighting at Ardleigh above) were a ♀ in the Ingrebourne Valley on 4th January (a ♀ also being

seen there on 12th December), a ♂ at Fair Play Farm Upminster on 5th January, one at Orsett Fen on 6th February, a ♂ at Great Totham on 16th September, one at Ardleigh Reservoir on 4th November, a ♀ at Fairlop Waters Barkingside on 7th and 14th November, one at Seventy Acres Lake Holyfield on 2nd December and one at Stanway Green on 24th December. Only a few of these sites are any distance from tidal water.

Estimated monthly totals are given below, using the same assumptions as in *Essex Bird Reports* for 2013 to 2019. In particular, the totals assume that birds seen on opposite sides of outer estuaries were different individuals but that there was movement between adjacent or close sites on the same side of an estuary. The totals also assume that, at any given site, only one bird was involved in all the month's sightings unless proved otherwise.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Numbers	15	13	9	2	1	0	1	6	12	14	16	19
Locations	22	14	10	3	1	0	1	10	12	16	23	26

The increased total number of reports (mentioned above) seems to be reflected in these totals, particularly from August onwards, when every month except October showed significant increases, both in numbers of birds and in numbers of locations. But, as usual, there were multiple reports of the same few birds from several well-watched sites. As in recent years, accuracy in estimating numbers can be improved if, where possible, observers would please note and report the age and sex of individual birds. As in 2019, some 33% of records contained all or part of this information.

EURASIAN HOBBY *Falco subbuteo subbuteo* REX

Uncommon breeder, fairly common passage migrant.

Breeding was only confirmed from four sites, two of which were new this year. There does seem to be a pattern of pairs being discovered at new sites, using them for a year or two at most and then disappearing. However, there were some indications of breeding at traditional sites: breeding season records were received from a further eight sites where the species has previously bred. The table below gives details for 2020 from sites which have previously held confirmed or probable breeding pairs, plus the new sites referred to above. It uses the same pair numberings as in EBRs 2012-2019 and shows the status in 2020 of the pairs listed for the previous year(s). Sites where no birds were seen in the last two years (2019 and 2020) are omitted:

Pair one	Established	Up to two seen in late June and singles on a few dates in July but no evidence of breeding.
Pair two	Established	A pair nested and three young fledged.
Pair three	Re-established	No records in 2020.
Pair six	Established	A pair present all summer, again to mid-September and breeding suspected but no young seen.
Pair seven	Established	Singles seen on several dates from mid-June to late July.
Pair 13	First reported in 2012	Two seen in late July.
Pair 18	First reported in 2013	Three seen displaying on 20th May and 2nd June but no further sightings.
Pairs 21-22	First reported in 2014	One pair bred, successfully fledging one chick.
Pair 23	First reported in 2014	A probable pair seen on 31st May but not subsequently.
Pair 24	First reported in 2014	After several spring records, singles seen on a few dates in the second half of June and in July.
Pair 26	First reported in 2016	A pair mating on 15th May but not seen subsequently.
Pair 28	First reported in 2018	No reports received.
Pair 29	First reported in 2019	Site visited in 2020 but no birds seen.
Pair 30	First reported in 2019 but present for about ten years previously	Sight visited in 2020 but no birds seen.
Pair 31	First reported in 2020	A pair raised one young.
Pair 32	First reported in 2020	A pair seen displaying on 25th May but not subsequently
Pair 33	First reported in 2020	A pair raised three young, seen close to fledging on 3rd August.

The species was reported at 69 sites in July (46 in 2019) and a further 13 in the second half of June (a further 11 in 2019). The great majority of these were reported on only one day and many of the sites were close together, so the total of 73 birds in July shown in the table below (with 13 in the second half of June at the 11 sites mentioned above) is likely to be a considerable over-estimate. Nonetheless, the continuing increase in casual records in this period of the breeding season is encouraging and, along with the records in the breeding table above, there is some hope that the actual breeding number in the County is significantly higher than the four pairs detected.

The first birds of spring were singles at Heybridge Gravel Pit and Rayne, both on 6th April, followed the next day by singles at Doddinghurst and Brook Farm Upminster. Singles then trickled through a dozen sites between 10th and 20th April, with a more widespread arrival (and/or passage) in the last ten days of the month. The month's estimated total of 53 was the highest since at least 2012 and perhaps reflected the greater emphasis on local-patch birding imposed by first lockdown restrictions. The May total of 126 birds was less exceptional but these were reported from 81 sites, the highest number since at least 2009 (when monthly figures were first tabulated in these reports), again suggesting increased records from local birding. The highest counts received were ten at Bowers Marsh on 16th May and eight at Holyfield Hall Farm on the following day, all other counts being of 1-5.

Estimated numbers in autumn, 77 in August and 82 in September, were significantly lower than in 2019 (107 and 124 respectively) and 2018 (89 and 113). The same method of estimating numbers was used in all three years (see further below) and the reasons for the reduction are unclear. The highest counts in August were both of five birds, at Abberton Reservoir on 15th and at Beckton on 30th. All other counts were of 1-4. September numbers at Rainham Marshes built to ten and at Old Hall Marshes to 7+, both on 13th, all other counts again being of 1-4. October totals (see table below) were similar to those in 2019. All October records were of 1-2 birds apart from three at Colne Point on 2nd. The last birds of the year were singles at Rainham Marshes on 9th October and at Bradwell Bird Observatory on 9th-10th October.

The total number of records received, at 822 from 177 sites, was significantly higher than for 2019 (706 from 141) and very similar to 2018 (799, again from 177), with higher numbers in April/May seeming to counterbalance lower numbers in autumn. As in 2014-2019, the following totals make no allowance for duplication between sites but assume that, at any given site, the same birds lingered throughout the month unless, during passage periods, the pattern of peaks and troughs strongly suggested otherwise.

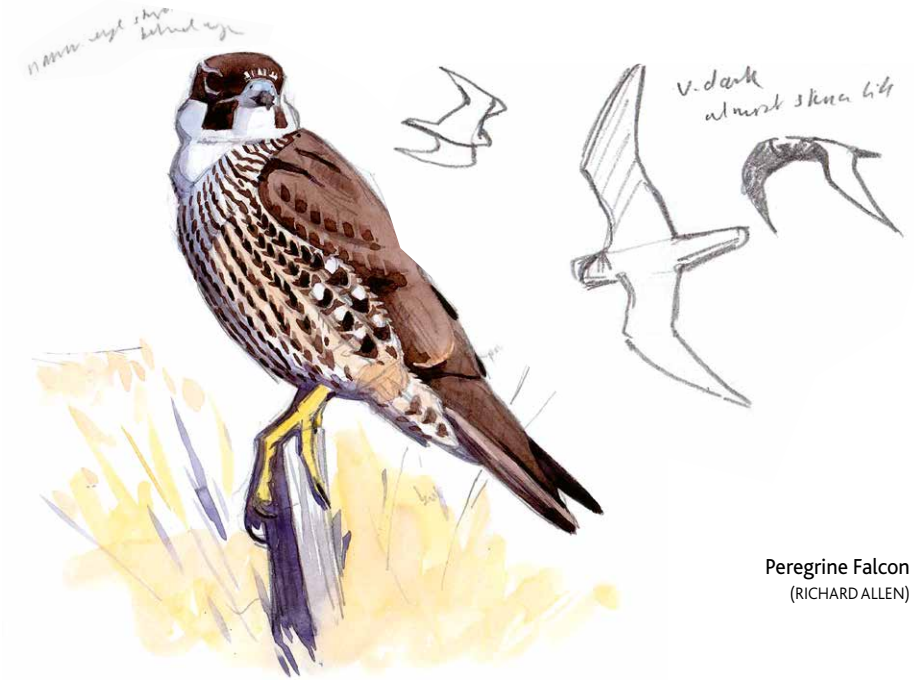
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Numbers	53	126	73	73	77	82	11
Locations	43	81	60	69	56	55	8

PEREGRINE FALCON *Falco peregrinus peregrinus*

Uncommon resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Pairs were observed in the breeding season at 13 sites (12 in 2019). In total, 24 young fledged from ten nests (24 from nine in 2019). At the three other sites where pairs were present in the breeding season there was no evidence of confirmed breeding.

The total number of records received during the year was 1,305, a marked increase on 1,043 in 2019. This may have been partly explained by more observers watching from home, or at least



Peregrine Falcon
(RICHARD ALLEN)

locally, during the first lockdown, as the number of sites from which records were received showed a distinct increase during March/May over recent years. There was also an increase during the last four months of the year, both in the estimated numbers of birds and in the numbers of sites from which they were reported. Numbers of young birds fledged in the County were very slightly lower than in 2018, so there was no increase in breeding success to account for the increased autumn numbers and it is possible that there was a small influx from elsewhere during the closing months. Monthly figures are tabulated below.

Away from the vicinity of breeding sites there were no reports of more than three birds in a day.

Inland observations came from 96 sites (71 in 2019) out a total of 184 (146 in 2019), so a slightly higher proportion than in 2019 (and also 2018), perhaps due to more birds being noticed at or near observers' homes. As usual many of the inland sites were close to the coast and estuaries. Reports from the north-west came from Audley End, Saffron Walden, Thaxted, Ugley and Widdington.

The minimum numbers of birds estimated to have been observed in the County in each month are shown in the table below. The figures have been prepared using the same assumptions as in 2014-2019, in particular that the same bird is responsible for all sightings of a single bird at a given location during the month unless ageing and/or sexing shows more than one bird to have been involved. As in the previous six years it has also been assumed, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, that sightings at multiple locations along the Stour, Colne, Blackwater and Crouch/Roach estuaries refer to the same individual(s) hunting along the full length and on both sides of the relevant estuary. For the much longer Thames estuary, a similar approach has been adopted but dividing the estuary loosely into three sections and assuming duplication only within each section. Inland, the wide scatter of sites makes estimates even more difficult. For the Lee Valley, assumptions have been made on similar lines to the estuaries but dividing the valley into a northern section and a southern section, with the M25 as the arbitrary dividing line.

The totals include birds reported near possible or probable breeding sites during the breeding season (taken for this purpose as May-July) but not (during those months) confirmed breeders or their young (the figures for which are already given above).

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Numbers	34	34	37	35	26	17	20	29	40	39	34	39
Locations	48	47	54	44	33	20	23	40	53	47	52	46

The accuracy of the table would be increased if more observers could give the age and sex of birds they are reporting. The proportion of records containing some or all of this information in 2020 fell to approximately 15%, making it very difficult for The Society to get an accurate picture of the number of breeding pairs in the County. Observers are asked again to submit the gender and age (adult or juvenile) of the bird with each record.

ROSE-RINGED PARAKEET *Psittacula krameri bore*

Scarce but increasing, naturalized, resident and visitor. First bred in 2004.

The (not altogether welcome) increase in records continued this year with 1,217 reports being received compared with 951 in 2019, 912 in 2018 and 687 in 2017. The great majority of these came, as usual, from the south-west of the County, with sightings from only ten locations north of Brentwood. All the latter involved 1-2 birds apart from six at Billericay on 16th November and none remained for more than one or two days.

The only records of confirmed breeding came from two sites in Epping Forest: Warren Pond and Ongar Park Wood.

Three-figure counts were received from four sites, the maximum count at each being as follows: Walthamstow, 257 on 6th September; Belhus Woods Aveley, 101 on 8th September; Wanstead Flats, 881 on 15th September; Gunpowder Park Waltham Abbey, 120 on 22nd November. In addition, 71 were seen at Roding Valley Meadows on 21st October. There were no other counts of more than 56 birds.

RED-BACKED SHRIKE *Lanius collurio*

UK

Very scarce passage migrant, mainly in autumn.

EBSI

There were three records this year:

The Naze	Adult ♀	25th May	DSt
Frinton-on-Sea	♂	5th June	PBr
Abberton Reservoir		28th August	KC

Numbers recorded over the last decade have been:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	Average
Totals	3	2	4	1	0	4	0	0	4	3	2.2

GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor excubitor*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

EBSIP

Following two successive blank years, there were two records all in the second winter:

Fobbing Marsh	22nd-26th October	SSw *et al*
Coryton	26th October	SGr

Winter totals over the last decade have been:

2020/19	2019/18	2018/17	2017/16	2016/15	2015/14	2014/13	2013/12	2012/11	2011/10	Average
0	0	0	5	5	1	4	1	2	6	2.4

EURASIAN JAY *Garrulus glandarius rufitergum/glandarius*

***G. g. rufitergum* is a common resident whilst *G. g. glandarius* may occur as a rare passage migrant.**

In total 2,898 records were received compared with 1,597 in 2019 and 1,729 in 2018, an increase that is difficult to explain other than there being increased observations on local patches during lockdown restrictions. As a breeding species it is under-recorded as it can be surprisingly inconspicuous when breeding, despite its colourful plumage. There were records from 154 sites during May-July with evidence of possible breeding coming from 17 sites, probable breeding from seven, and successful breeding from just three.

The only evidence of a possible autumn influx was a party of 11 birds in Hutton (in the vicinity of Hutton Country Park) on 14th October.

EURASIAN MAGPIE *Pica pica pica*

Common resident.

One of our most widely reported species with 5,994 individual records in 2020 (4,524 in 2019). The species was reported from approximately 280 sites during the breeding season (May-July) with 20 sites reporting possible breeding, nine probable breeding and nine confirmed breeding involving about 18 pairs. The breeding population in the Braintree & Bocking area is reported to be stable at 40+ pairs.

Counts of 25 or more birds were received from 21 sites, often relating to birds going to or coming from roosts. The highest counts were peaks of 117 on 22nd January and 102 on 3rd December at Chafford Gorges Grays, followed by a peak of 70 at Dagnam Park Harold Hill on 10th October, 60 at Maldon on 19th December, 52 at Roding Valley Meadows on 27th January, and 51 at Beeleigh on 17th November.

WESTERN JACKDAW *Coloeus monedula*

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Another well-reported species, with 4,103 records received in 2020 (2,614 in 2019). As with the other corvids, however, much under-recorded in the breeding season with possible breeding coming from 17 sites, probable breeding from another 11 and confirmed breeding coming from 11 further sites and involving 122 pairs. A total of 50+ territories were noted in Frinton on Sea (Pedlars Wood), 25 in Clay Tye Wood Upminster and 13 in the Mardyke Valley.

Counts of 200 or more came from 18 sites with four-figure counts coming from three: Abberton Reservoir, 3,500 on 19th December; Chigborough Lakes, 2,000 on 26th November; Weeley, 1,350 on 15th December; Hawe's Wood Stow Maries, 1,100 (roosting with Rook) on 31st December; Brook Farm Upminster, 1,000 on 27th June, and 1,000 at Gunpowder Park Waltham Abbey on 27th December.

"Nordic Jackdaw" *Coloeus monedula spermologus*

Status uncertain. **EBSIP (0, 11, 11)**

Records at three locations have been accepted:

Frinton-on-Sea	26th September	PBr
Ingatestone,	6th June	DAc
Colne Point	five dates 11th January-21st March	CBa

The Identification Panel continues to undertake a full review of the subspecies' status in Essex, together with criteria for identification.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus frugilegus*

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

In total, 2,019 records were received (1,555 in 2019). Possible breeding records were received from 11 sites, probable breeding from a further eight sites and confirmed breeding from a further 29 sites. In all, approximately 383 nests were reported.

Counts of 300 or more came from six sites, mostly involving birds moving to/from roosts. The largest roost was at Hawe's Wood Stow Maries where 800 were counted on 31st December. Elsewhere there were 700 in fields at Stow Marsh South Woodham Ferrers on 18th February; 600 in fields at Brook Farm Upminster on 11th October; 494 on East Tilbury (Gobions Pit,) on 25th January, 400 at Middleton on 18th March.

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone corone*

Common resident and passage migrant.

Almost 7,000 records were received (4,817 in 2019) though, in common with the other corvids, breeding records were sparse. Possible breeding occurred at 34 sites, probable at a further 11 and breeding was confirmed at a further 17.

Three-figure counts were received from 11 sites during the year with the highest being 400 feeding on the tip at Orsett Fen on 3rd June, 250 at Doddinghurst on 28th October, and 250 at Bowers Marsh on 4th September.

Apparent migration passing Frinton-on-Sea was much in evidence this year, at least during the spring with predominately northerly movements of 266 birds on 14 dates in March, and a total of 300 on 18 dates during April.

NORTHERN RAVEN *Corvus corax corax*

Scarce resident and visitor.

In total 260 records were received, a similar level to 2019 (272), consolidating its steady increase within the County.

Breeding occurred at three widely scattered locations. At one of the sites used last year, in the centre of the County, where one young was raised, three young fledged in 2020. Two young fledged at a new, coastal, site whilst a third site, close to the Suffolk border, was known to be successful but no further details were received.

It is clearly becoming difficult distinguishing breeding birds and young from wandering individuals. Estimated monthly totals, including young birds were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Numbers	21	14	28	13	20	8	13	13	15	14	18	19

Geographically, the species is likely to be recorded in any part of the County, continuing to be commonest in the south-west, and with breeding now having occurred in several parts of Essex. The species has colonised Essex from the west and has been scarce in coastal districts, but there are now signs that this is changing.

BOHEMIAN WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulus garrulus*

Almost annual winter visitor and passage migrant in highly variable numbers.

Abberton Reservoir	One	2nd January
Thornwood Common Epping Forest	Four	17th March

It was another poor year for this species with just five recorded, all in the first winter.

COAL TIT *Periparus ater*

Coal Tit *Periparus ater britannicus*

Common resident.

Breeding records were received from 34 locations and involved some 43 pairs/singing ♂♂s/territories (67 from 36 locations in 2019). The number of sites at which the species was recorded in the breeding season was 110 (95 in 2019). The main breeding counts came from: Three Rivers Golf Course Cold Norton, four pairs; Braintree, at least five pairs;.Ongar Park Wood Epping Forest, 12 pairs (15 pairs in 2019). There were no other records of more than two pairs/singing ♂♂s /territories.

There was just one site with a peak count of ten or more, the same as in 2019 (four in 2018): Weald Park, ten on 23rd June.As in 2019, no records were received that suggested a notable movement or dispersal.

Addendum 2019: The record of 15 pairs in Ongar Park Wood Epping Forest was missing from the EBR 2019 and has been included in the breeding records totals above .

Continental Coal Tit *Periparus ater ater*

Rare migrant but subject to periodic influxes. **EBSIP**

Although no records were received this year, there is a review of the status of the species in this Report – see section 'The status of the nominate Continental Coal Tit ***Periparus ater ater*** in Essex'.

MARSH TIT *Poecile palustris dresseri* **UK REX**

Scarce, sedentary resident.

Records were received from just 18 sites this year (33 in 2019, 27 in 2018) with breeding not confirmed at any sites (one in 2019, five in 2018). The lack of breeding evidence is probably due to the first lockdown rather than a genuine sharp decline.

One pair was observed at Brookes Wood Greenstead Green just prior to the first lockdown on both 13th and 20th March, after which the only spring record was of three at Foxearth on 13th May. In July, two were seen at Feering on 2nd and two widely separated birds at Hatfield Forest on 24th.

Outside the breeding season, the species was recorded at a further 14 sites including two counts of five, at Bocking on 11th January and at Hatfield Forest on 8th February. There were also four counted at Liston on 6th December. The species is now rarely recorded in the south of the County so one at Leyton Marsh on 7th September was notable.

EURASIAN BLUE TIT *Cyanistes caeruleus obscurus/caeruleus*

***C. c. obscurus* is an abundant resident that only disperses locally. *C. c. caeruleus* is probably a rare passage migrant.**

Possible breeding was reported from 84 sites, probable breeding at a further 96 sites and breeding was confirmed at 77 sites.

The minimum number of breeding pairs reported (probable and confirmed breeding) was 313. However, most breeding records do not include a full count of pairs and hence this number fluctuates from year to year due to differences in reporting and will be substantially lower than the true figure. Counts of 20 or more pairs/singing ♂♂s were received from (2019 figures in brackets): Braintree, an estimate of at least 40 pairs (40+) where the species was reported to be stable; Mardyke Valley Stifford-Aveley, 31 (26); Belhus Woods Aveley, 22 (24).

Counts of 40 or more were reported from ten sites (14 in 2019, 16 in 2018). It seems likely this is due to reduced coverage during the first lockdown rather than a real decrease in numbers. The peak counts from each site were: Frinton-on-sea, 109 high flying over the seawall on 7th October; Fingringhoe Wick, 44 on 1st October; Marks Hall Coggeshall, 60 on 6th February; Sunnymead Farm Wivenhoe, 50 on 30th January; Mardyke Valley Stifford-Aveley, 58 on 12th June; Dunmow, 43 on 31st December; Belhus Woods Aveley, 73 on 5th June; Chafford Gorges Grays, 46 on 1st November and 3rd December; Hainault Forest, 48 on 26th February; Connaught Water Epping Forest, 60 on 21st November.

GREAT TIT *Parus major newtoni/major*

***P. m. newtoni* is a very common resident whilst *P. m. major* is a scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Possible breeding was reported from 91 sites, probable breeding at a further 98 sites and breeding was confirmed at 96 sites.

The minimum number of breeding pairs reported was 281. However, most breeding records do not include a full count of pairs. Counts of ten or more pairs/singing ♂♂s were received from (2019 figures in brackets): Braintree, an estimate of at least 30 pairs (30+) where the species was reported to be stable; Mardyke Valley Stifford-Aveley, 27 (21); Clay Tye Wood Upminster, 13; Bonnetts Wood Corbets Tey, 11; Belhus Woods Aveley, 18 (22); Lion Gorge Chafford Gorges, ten; Walthamstow Wetlands, 13.

Counts of 30 or more were reported from seven sites (14 in 2019), with the peak counts being: Frinton-on-sea, 54 high flying birds over seawall on 7th October; Sunnymead Farm Wivenhoe, 40 on 30th January; Mardyke Valley Stifford-Aveley, 59 on 12th June; Belhus Woods Aveley, 67 on 5th June; Chafford Gorges Grays, 40 on 1st November; Roding Valley Meadows, 43 on 16th April; Connaught Water Epping Forest, 40 on 21st November.

BEARDED REEDLING *Panurus biarmicus biarmicus* (Bearded Tit) **REX**

Variable breeding population. Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding records were received from five sites (six in 2019). An adult male was seen feeding newly fledged young at Stanford Warren, and juveniles or family groups were observed at the other four sites at: Old Hall Marshes; Hanningfield Reservoir; Bowers Marsh (two pairs) and Rainham Marshes (three pairs). Birds were also observed in May or June at eight further sites including Langenhoe Marsh and Vange Marsh. Away from the breeding sites, there were records as follows (one bird unless otherwise stated):

Holland Haven	20th-21st March, 25th March, 19th May;
The Strood Mersea Island	9th March (two);
Burnham-on-Crouch	16th March;
Blue House Farm	20th May;
East Tilbury (Gobions Pit)	8th April;
Beckton	23rd March;
Walthamstow Wetlands	1st-7th March (two), 14th March, 10th April (three), 11th April.

During the autumn, records were received from 22 sites including four at East Tilbury on 15th October, six at Holland Haven on 18th October and at least four at Wivenhoe (Ferry Marsh) on 26th October. The peak count was 35 at Fingringhoe Ranges on 12th October.

Winter records were submitted from ten sites in the first winter and 19 sites in the second winter (ten in each winter in 2019). Double-figure counts were received from three sites during the first winter and four during the second winter (two and two in 2019), with the peak counts being: Holland Haven, 11 on 4th November; Fingringhoe Ranges, 17 on 23rd November; Heybridge Gravel Pit, 14 on 6th February; Old Hall Marshes, 14 on 4th November; Vange Marsh, ten on 4th January; Bowers Marsh, 12 on 7th February and 20 on 2nd December.

WOODLARK *Lullula arborea arborea*

Scarce passage migrant. Very rare breeder – last nested 1990 **EBSIP**

Although 22 birds were reported (exceeding last year's good total of 11), descriptions were received for only three of these. The other submissions are shown in Unsubstantiated Records - if any descriptions are subsequently submitted and accepted for any of these records in future they will be included in future *Essex Bird Reports*. As in previous years observers must be reminded that as Woodlark is a County rarity all sightings must be submitted with a description to the County Recorder.

Accepted records for 2020:

Frinton-on-Sea	Two	Singles south at 08:54 and 10:17	10th October	PBr
South Woodham Ferrers	One	Vocal bird north-east	18th October	ASh

Annual totals over the last decade

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	Average
Totals	3	11	0	1	1	3	4	5	9	0	5.6

EURASIAN SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis arvensis* UK EX REX

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

The reports of breeding birds/territories were lower this year, although the number of sites reported is slightly higher. However, several sites that have recorded good numbers of breeding Skylarks in the past were notable omissions this year, presumably due to the first lockdown. There were 639 territories recorded from 122 sites (1,218 from 115 in 2019, 895 from 107 in 2018). A further 11 sites were reported to have singing or territorial birds but only recorded as "present" or without any supporting numbers. There were also many reports during the spring and summer from other sites, including historical breeding sites, without any information of breeding.

There were 20 locations reporting ten or more singing/territorial birds (27 in 2019): Tollesbury Wick, ten (34); Mayland Creek, ten; Lawling Creek Maylandsea, 17 (14); Limbourne Creek Maldon, 20; Burnham-on-Crouch, 15; Wallasea Island, 40 (231); Broomhouse Flash Langham, ten (15); Thaxted, 14; Abberton Reservoir, 13 (20); Bowers Marsh, 20 (34); Stanway, 12; Copford, 15; Epping Green, 11; Waltham Abbey, ten; Barleylands Billericay, ten; Dunnings Lane West Horndon, 15 (ten); Orsett Fen, 22 (22); Manor Farm North Ockendon, 14; Upminster, 12 (ten); Rainham Marshes, 25 (43).

Higher numbers than last year were recorded for the first winter period with 28 reports of 25 or more birds (19 in 2019). Of these there were 13 reports of 50 or more (five in 2019) from January into the first week of February, including six three-figure counts (one in 2019): Dunnings Lane West Horndon, 108 on 3rd January, 115 on 6th February; Mersea Island, 100 on 7th January; Tollesbury Wick, 300 on 18th January; Wormingford Airfield, 100+ on 27th January; Wallasea Island, 100 on 5th February.

Higher numbers were also reported during the second autumn/winter period. Counts of 25 or more birds were more than double those of last year with 87 reported (41 in 2019). Thirty-five of these counts were of 50 or more birds (17 in 2019), including seven three-figure counts (five in 2019): Abberton Reservoir, 115 on 3rd October; Colne Point, 104 on 5th October; Frinton-on-Sea, 223 on 9th October, 204 on 10th October; The Strood Mersea Island, 100+ on 12th October; Maydays Farm West Mersea, 100 on 22nd November; Rayne, 137 on 20th December.

HORNED LARK *Eremophila alpestris flava* (Shorelark) UK

Scarce but annual passage migrant and winter visitor.

Another poor year with just a single record:

Jaywick	One	17th November

Winter totals over the last decade have been:

	2020/19	2019/18	2018/17	2017/16	2016/15	2015/14	2014/13	2013/12	2012/11	2011/10	Average
Numbers	3	1	15	3	1	2	3	1	5	13	4.7

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia riparia* REX

Locally common summer visitor and passage migrant.

As during last year, the Sand Martin colony at Bradwell-juxta-Coggeshall Gravel Pit suffered badly from site work. Seventy-four nest holes were reported occupied during May but during early June the gravel company started work adjacent to the colony resulting in most of the nests being deserted. Although there were still 25+ pairs in early June by July there were 62 nest holes still visible but just 20 birds seen.

Better news was received from elsewhere with 130 occupied nest holes reported at Wrabness, which is a significant improvement on last year's 25.

Other confirmed breeding and possible/probable breeding reports received were: Mistley Quay,eight birds in May visiting probable nest site; Brightlingsea, ten territories in May; Cudmore Grove East Mersea, the first breeding for several years with four occupied nest holes in June; Asheldham Gravel Pit, 11+ birds in July may have bred; Shrub End Colchester, 20 birds nesting in May; Russell Green Gravel Pits Boreham, ten+ birds in June possibly breeding; King George V Reservoir Chingford, 20 pairs in June; Barking (River Roding), ten pairs in June; William Girling Reservoir Chingford, 15 pairs in June.

Where possible all breeding records should be submitted to the County Recorder.

As in past years birds were recorded throughout the County at many sites during the spring and summer without supporting details of nesting behaviour.

The first record for the year came from Harold Wood Sewage Works with two birds reported on 10th March then single figures were reported over the next few days from five sites, all in the south of the County. From the 18th until the end of the month low double-figures were being reported from various sites but still from the south only and not exceeding 25 birds. This trend continued during the first two weeks of April, although reports started to come in from further afield around the County. The rest of the month saw an increase in reports but not in very high numbers, except for just five reports of 50 or more (24 in 2019) and of these there were only two three-figure reports (nine in 2019), both from Walthamstow Wetlands with 150 on 28th and 29th.

There were no remarkable figures reported during May or June either and, apart from the Wrabness breeding colony, there were just two three-figure counts reported, in June, also from Walthamstow Wetlands, 100 on 29th, 120 on 30th.

Good numbers were reported throughout July including 20 three-figure counts (six in 2019) with the majority coming from Walthamstow Wetlands – see table below. The rest were as follows: Mersea Island, 200 on 1st, 442 on 6th; East Tilbury, 400 on 4th; Frinton-on-Sea, southbound movements of 104 on 6th, 107 on 25th, 101 on 29th; Wrabness, 150 on 17th; Thurrock Thameside Mucking, 148 on 19th.

Walthamstow Wetlands three-figure counts recorded for July:

Date	2nd	3rd	6th	7th	9th	10th	11th	14th	16th	18th	27th	28th
Totals	250	150	400	100	300	300	200	120	150	100	120	100

Many reports were received for August with 15 of these reports being of 50 or more birds. Of these there were five three-figure counts (nine in 2019): Frinton-on-Sea, 102 south on 1st, 186 south on 2nd; Abberton Reservoir, 235 on 25th, 200 on 30th; Walthamstow Wetlands, 100 on 29th.

There were still many reports received in September, mostly lower numbers, but with seven of 50 or more birds (nine in 2019) including two three-figure counts: Hanningfield Reservoir, c100 on 4th; Brook Farm Upminster, 639 south on 10th.

There were 15 reports received during October, all being single figures except for: Abberton Reservoir, ten on 6th; Jaywick, ten on 8th. The last birds of the year were also recorded on the 8th; with additional records of eight at Frinton-on-Sea and one at Rainham Marshes.

BARN SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica rustica*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant.

Following on from last year's very late/overwintering bird on 4th and 5th December at The Hythe Colchester possibly the same bird was reported from nearby Abberton Reservoir during January. Identified as a 1st winter bird it was reported daily up to the 19th January with no further reports of it after that date.

There were very many reports of Barn Swallow received of which a substantial number indicated that there was possible/probable breeding but there were few confirmed breeding records received. This was undoubtedly because of first lockdown restrictions but also because of some incomplete and, at times, confusing reports. Observers are asked to provide breeding evidence and state numbers of nests or pairs, if possible. There were just 69 confirmed breeding pairs or permanent territories reported from 29 sites (129 from 37 in 2019). Also, recently fledged juveniles were reported from a number of additional sites too; so along with the unconfirmed records would probably indicate that breeding was more widespread.

The first bird of the year, apart from the over wintering bird, was of a very early record of one reported from Deal Hall Dengie on 1st February, although it is possible that this was also a wintering bird. Another six weeks passed before the next bird was reported, a single bird at Tollesbury on 16th March. On 18th March more birds were reported: West Canvey Marsh, one; Wickford, two. There was then a gap in records until the end of March when more birds started to arrive: West Canvey Marsh, one on 28th; Roding Valley Meadows Chigwell, two on 29th; Ingrebourne Valley, three on 29th; Ardleigh Reservoir, one on 30th; Rainham Marshes, 12 on 31st.

During April sightings increased around the County, mostly single figures, but 40 reports were of double figures (56 in 2019), of these there were six reports of 50 or more (nine in 2019): Frinton-on-Sea, 63 north on 7th, 54 south on 26th, 72 south on 27th; East Tilbury, c50 on 13th; Abberton Reservoir, 200 on 16th; Seventy Acres Lake Holyfield, 100 on 29th.

There were many records received during May mostly of single and low double figures but ten reports of 50 or more (12 in 2019) including four of three figures (six in 2019): Frinton-on-Sea, 123 north on 7th, 312 south on 24th; Paglesham Lagoon, 200 on 14th; Abberton Reservoir, 100 on 14th.

During June and July there are records of juveniles and the double-figure counts started to increase. There were two reports of 50 or more during June (one in 2019): Abberton Reservoir, 50+ on 4th; East Mersea, 50 on 9th. In July there were eight reports of 50 or more (three in 2019): Mersea Island, 70 on 1st; Bradwell Bird Observatory, 57 on 6th; Colne Point, 54 on 15th, 70 on 22nd; Coalhouse Fort East Tilbury, 58 south on 17th; The Naze, 50 on 18th; Mucking, 60 on 20th; Frinton-on-Sea, 61 south on 25th.

August and September saw many more birds being reported, involving feeding flocks and migration. Peak movement past Frinton-on-Sea is summarized in the table below. There were 18 three-figure reports for August (12 in 2019) with none reaching 500 except for one four-figure count of 1,000 birds from Abberton Reservoir on 30th. There were 22 three-figure counts received for September (23 in 2019) with five of 500 or more (six in 2019) and the only one away from Frinton-on-Sea being Holland Haven with 645 on 5th.

Many records were received in October with many double-figure counts although most were of single figures. However there were five three-figure records during the early part of the month including: Bowers Marsh, 200 on 1st; Jaywick, 360 on 8th.

Frinton-on -Sea three/four-figure counts recorded late summer/autumn:

	Aug	Sep								Oct		
Date	2nd	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	9th	22nd	6th	7th	9th
Number	108	244	152	487	796	518	506	1081	184	145	485	235

As would be expected numbers dwindled away into November but small numbers were recorded, mostly at coastal locations, throughout the month with 25 reports of 92 birds. However some of these were in all probability the same birds recorded at multiple locations as they moved south.

Barn Swallow, Abberton, January (SEAN NIXON)

Dusky Warbler, Frinton, October (SEAN NIXON)

Siberian Chiffchaff, Fingringhoe SW, January (SEAN NIXON)

Blyth's Reed Warbler, The Naze, September (SIMON PATIENT)

The last bird recorded in November was of one at Frinton-on-Sea on 23rd.

Locations and numbers of birds recorded during November:

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	11th	12th	13th	18th	19th	22nd	23rd
Locations	3	2	3	7	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1
Number	11	13	7	40	4	3	2	2	1	1	7	1

The last bird of the year recorded in the County was a single bird at Gunners Park Shoebury on 2nd December, which may have been a late migrant or another overwintering bird.

COMMON HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbicum urbicum*

UK REX

Common but declining summer visitor and passage migrant.

There were 178 confirmed occupied nests reported from 24 sites (193 from 22 in 2019, 214 from 33 in 2018) and there were nine sites reporting double-figure breeding (five in 2019): Langenhoe, ten; Braintree, 20; Latchingdon, 14; Greenstead Green, 11; Stow Maries Aerodrome, 15; Brentwood, 11; Orsett Fen, 15; Walthamstow Wetlands, 30; Warren Gorge Chafford Hundred, ten including four nests destroyed by decorators leaving the dead juveniles on the floor. This last report of the willful destruction of active nests makes rather disturbing reading, more so as the House Martin is declining as a breeding bird in the County.

Breeding was reported from two other sites, but unfortunately no further details were submitted, and another 12 sites reported possible/probable breeding (11 in 2019) but again not confirmed. Full details of all breeding records should be submitted to the County Recorder.

The first bird of the year was of a single recorded at Hanningfield Reservoir on 12th March. Another three weeks passed before any more were seen with one at Wanstead Park on April 4th. Thereafter birds were reported daily around the County during April mostly in single numbers. As the month progressed there were six double-figure reports peaking with 50 at Walthamstow Wetlands on 30th.

As reports started to rise during May so did records of double-figures. There were also some three-figure counts: Sewardstone, 250 on 12th; Walthamstow Wetlands, 150 on 13th; Paglesham Lagoon, 500 on 14th.

During June and July there were 17 reports of 50 or more birds received with the majority, and the only three-figure counts, coming from Walthamstow Wetlands: 100 on 3rd and 4th June, 120 on 2nd July, 100 on 3rd July.

Numbers of birds started to rise during August, mostly of feeding concentrations and probably including some of the year's young, with 20 reports of 50 or more birds (ten reports in 2019). Of these there were seven three-figure counts (two in 2019): Hanningfield Reservoir, 100+ on 15th, 150+ on 30th; Rainham Marshes, 100 on 15th; The Naze, 123 west on 29th; Walthamstow Wetlands, 200 on 29th; Abberton Reservoir, 200 on 30th; King George V Reservoir Chingford, 120 on 30th.

The concentrations and movements of birds increased during September and there were many records received from around the County with 27 reports of 50 or more. Among these there were 11 of three/four figures (22 in 2019): Gunners Park Shoebury, 2,000 south-west on 4th; Frinton-on-Sea, southbound movements of 989 on 5th, 283 on 6th, 158 on 9th, 502 on 25th; Holland Haven, 788 on 5th; Abberton Reservoir, 100 on 6th; Walthamstow Wetlands, 300 on 24th, 100 on 26th; Hornchurch, 100 on 27th; Wanstead Flats, 107 on 30th.

Good numbers continued to be seen during the first ten days of October with 26 double/three-figure records received, including a notable four-figure record from Frinton-on-Sea. Ten were of fifty or more birds (eight in 2019): Chigborough Lakes, 80 on 1st; Hanningfield Reservoir, 200 on 1st; Wanstead Flats, 68 on 2nd; Rainham Marshes, 300 on 2nd; Walthamstow Wetlands, 75 on 5th, 60 on 6th and 7th; Frinton-on-Sea, southbound movements of 122 on 7th, 1,390 on 8th; The Naze Walton-on-the-Naze, 80 on 7th. Thereafter reports continued to be received of single figures from around the County with the last bird of October coming from Walthamstow Wetlands on the 28th.

Single birds were then reported in November from: Frinton-on-Sea and Holland-on-Sea on 4th; The Hythe Colchester on 18th. The last bird/birds (count not provided) of the year was reported at Walthamstow Wetlands on 23rd November.

CETTI'S WARBLER *Cettia cetti cetti*

Locally common and increasing breeding resident.

There were 336 singing ♂♂/apparently occupied territories reported from 113 sites (321 from 97 in 2019). Records were mainly from the coast and the Lee and Ingrebourne valleys with the Thames marshes again being a particular stronghold. Counts of six or more (2019 figures in brackets): The Naze, six (seven); Old Hall Marshes, seven; Chigborough Lakes, eight; Heybridge Gravel Pit, six (12); Limbourne Creek Maldon, eight; Maldon, six; Canvey Wick, six (six); Bowers Marsh, eight (six); Rainham Marshes, 51 (57); East Tilbury, six; Fishers Green Holyfield, six; Ingrebourne Valley, six (nine); Mardyke Valley, 12 (six); Walthamstow Wetlands, seven.

Estimated occupied territories over the last decade have been:

Cetti's Warbler
(RICHARD ALLEN)

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Singing ♂♂	336	321	201	323	432	262	237	211	176	167
Sites	113	97	81	105	124	86	77	69	53	59

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*
Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus rosaceus*

Common resident.

Reports of territorial pairs or evidence of confirmed breeding came from around 27 sites (35 in 2019) but it was common and widespread throughout the County during the year. There were three broods reported from Belhus Wood and Cely Woods Aveley in June and May respectively and four pairs at Hanningfield Reservoir (west bank). Several other sites reported more than 1-2 pairs but, given that this species is obviously widespread, many more breeding records must go unrecorded.

Counts of 30+ were recorded from 16 sites (ten in 2019): The Naze, 30 on 1st September; Frinton-on-Sea (Undercliff), 32 on 5th October; The Strood Mersea Island, 30 on 2nd December; Chigborough Lakes, peak count 55 on 17th November; Heybridge Gravel Pits, 30 on 14th November; Gobions East Tilbury, circa 30 on 18th November; Mundon (Mundon Furze), peak count 45 on 4th October; Belhus Woods Aveley, peak count 47 on 5th October; Chafford Gorges Grays, peak first winter count 41 on 22nd January and peak autumn/second winter 36 on 3rd December; Fordham Hall, 33 on 22nd December; Braintree, 30 on 31st May where 15 pairs were counted and reported to be stable; Liston, 40 on 21st November; Fishers Green Holyfield, 30 on 11th January; Epping Forest 30 on 1st November at Warren Hill and 40 on 29th November in the Fairmead area; Mardyke Valley, peak count 51 on 2nd December; Orsett Fen, 33 on 17th November; Wanstead Flats, circa 35 on 29th July.

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* UK REX

Scarce passage migrant. Bred until 1991.

There were 13 records received (eight in 2019), all of single birds. In chronological order these were:

Bulmer (Parsonage Wood)	21st April
Clacton	27th April
The Strood Mersea Island	29th July
The Naze	29th July
Dagnam Park	10th August
East Tilbury	13th August
East Tilbury	17th August
The Naze	18th August
Walthamstow Wetlands	19th August
Weald CP	21st August
Two Tree Island	28th August
The Naze	1st September
Belhus Woods	8th September

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Uncommon passage migrant.

There were 26 recorded between 13th September in Chelmsford and 29th December at Walthamstow Wetlands (where it had been present since 19th November). All involved single birds, bar two at The Naze on 6th October. Most, as expected, were from coastal locations, apart from the Chelmsford bird above and others at Cornmill Meadows Waltham Abbey, Dagenham Chase, Eagle Pond Leyton Flats, Rainham Marshes, Walthamstow Wetlands and Woodford Green.

PALLAS'S LEAF WARBLER *Phylloscopus proregulus*

Rare passage migrant. EBSIP (39, 19, 58)

The Naze	One	14th -15th October	GM

Recent numbers are: 2019, one; 2018, two; 2017, one; 2016, four.

RADDE'S WARBLER *Phylloscopus schwarzi*

Vagrant. EBSIP (1, 3 4)

Holland Haven	One	26th September	PN

This is the first record received since 2008.

DUSKY WARBLER *Phylloscopus fuscatus fuscatus*

Vagrant. EBSIP (4, 7, 11)

Frinton-on-Sea*	One	16th-20th October	MMa
The Naze	One	17th October	BCo

**Also seen at Holland Haven on 17th October (CBa)*

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus trochilus/acredula* UK

***P. t. trochilus* is a common, but declining, summer resident and passage migrant, whilst *P. t. acredula* is probably a fairly common passage migrant.**

More were recorded this year than recently, although this does not give a reason to suppose that the decline has reversed as this may be due to greater observer coverage locally, stimulated by the first lockdown.

From late April to June, around 109 pairs/singing ♂♂ were reported from 63 sites (77 from 48 sites in 2019) which contained potential breeding habitat. Counts of four of more came from: The Naze, five; Braintree area, seven; Bonnetts Wood Corbets Tey, four; Cely Woods Aveley, five (five in 2019); Clay Tye Wood Upminster, five; Ingrebourne Valley, four; Pages Wood Upminster, four.

The only records of confirmed breeding came from Bonnetts Wood Corbets Tey and Belhus Woods Aveley where recently fledged young were seen at both sites (RBa). Probable breeding came from 14 other sites which were primarily in the west of the County around Epping Forest and Upminster.

The first spring record was from Walthamstow Wetlands with two on 9th March. The main spring arrival in the County was during the week commencing 6th of April. Passage was fairly light but several counts of 6-8 were received during the third week of April.

Autumn passage was generally steady throughout August and until mid September but with a notable peak of 176 seen across the County on 24th August.

Main double-figure counts in August were: The Naze, 11 on 19th and 12 on 23rd; Holland Haven, ten on 2nd; Belhus Woods Aveley, ten on 23rd; Bonnetts Wood Corbets Tey, ten on 2nd; Wanstead Flats, 11 on 24th.

The only double-figure count in September was at The Naze, ten on 1st.

The last of the year were two at Hutton and one at Abberton Reservoir both on 14th October.

Estimated occupied territories over the last decade have been:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Singing ♂♂	109	77	85	125	87	99	96	77	67	62
Sites	63	48	68	77	57	63	46	25	28	35

COMMON CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*
Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita collybita/abietinus*

***P. c. collybita* is an abundant summer resident and passage migrant, whilst *P. c. abietinus* is probably a passage migrant. Small numbers, of uncertain sub-species, occur in winter.**

From mid March to late April around 898 pairs/singing ♂♂ were reported from 276 sites (808 from 216 sites in 2019). Double-figure counts of singing males or pairs came from (2019 figures in brackets): Abberton Reservoir, 14; Heybridge Gravel Pit, ten (ten); Maldon, 12; Friday Wood Colchester, 20 (30); Bures, ten; Beeleigh (weir), 20; Borley, ten; Chigborough Lakes, ten; Braintree and Bocking, 20 (20); Cely Woods Aveley, 13 (11); Hanningfield Reservoir, ten; Hazeleigh Wood, 15; Mardyke Valley Stifford-Aveley, 18 (18); Wanstead Park, 12.

Spring passage was as expected with large numbers (totalling 80+) reported on several days from mid-March onwards and peaking in early April.

During January and February birds were reported from 50 sites (50 in 2019), all 1-3 except for: Creekside Beckton, 15; Colne Point, four; Walthamstow Wetlands, 15.

Ten were counted at Middlewick Ranges Colchester on 1st March.

In autumn there were many double-figure counts of 20. The notable high counts in In September were: The Naze, 31 on 21st; Frinton-on-Sea, 30 on 6th and 43 on 21st; Abberton Reservoir, 20 on 12th; Mundon, 23 on 11th; Rainham Marshes, 22 on 18th; Belhus Woods, 28 on 8th; Fairlop Waters Barkingside, 35 on 26th; Walthamstow Marshes, 25 on 23rd; Wanstead Flats, 30 on 28th. Highest counts in October were: The Naze, 30 on 7th; Bradwell Bird Observatory 20 on 7th; Fishers Green Holyfield, 20 on 3rd.

In November and December reports were received from 50 sites (38 in 2019), all records involving 1-4 birds apart from: Creekside Beckton, 15; Chigborough Lakes, five; Rainham Marshes, six; Walthamstow Wetlands, ten.

Estimated occupied territories over the last decade have been:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Singing ♂♂	898	808	626	1169	1135	No data			459	325
Sites	276	216	252	217	175				61	53

Siberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita tristis*

Rare passage migrant **EBSIP (15, 14, 30)**

Fingringhoe Sewage Farm	One	17th January

GREAT REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus arundinaceus arundinaceus*

Vagrant. **BBRC (3, 2, 5)**

The Naze	Singing ♂	2nd May	DSt
Wivenhoe	Singing ♂	25th May	CPo

These were the first records received since 2004.

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Common, but declining, summer resident and passage migrant.

Some 199 territories from 77 sites (360 from 70 in 2019) were reported. The reduction will in part be due to the first lockdown which limited access around key sites for the species. In particular this will have affected the number recorded at Rainham Marshes – however there is still a downward trend at this site from 122 singing ♂♂ in 2018 to 31 in 2019.

Localities with five or more singing ♂♂ were (2019 figures in brackets): The Naze, eight (seven); Mersea Island, five; Old Hall Marshes, five (20); Mundon Wash, eight; Limbourne Creek, ten; Maldon, five; Bowers Marsh, six (seven); Rainham Marshes, five (31); Chigborough Lakes, ten; Heybridge Gravel Pit, eight (16); Beeleigh Weir, ten.

Confirmed breeding was reported from just three sites and probable breeding from 17 other sites. This species appears to be well distributed across the County but in ever smaller numbers.

The earliest report was from Rainham Marshes on 30th March, with the main arrival from 10th April.

The last reported bird was at Walthamstow Wetlands on 1st October.

Estimated occupied territories over the last decade have been:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Singing ♂♂	199	360	336	333	343	271	294	285	279	453
Sites	77	70	77	80	60	73	78	75	73	59

BLYTH'S REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus dumetorum*

Vagrant. **EBSIP (1, 4, 5)**

The Naze	Singing ♂	5th June	DSt
The Naze	one	21st September	SPa

EURASIAN REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus scirpaceus*

Locally common summer resident and passage migrant.

Some 428 singing ♂♂/territories were reported from 118 sites (868 from 109 in 2019). The reduction is probably in part affected by the first lockdown which limited access around key sites for the species. In particular this will have affected the numbers recorded at Rainham Marshes and Bowers Marsh.

Ten or more (2019 figures in brackets) were recorded from: Mersea Island, ten; Old Hall Marshes, 14 (12); Tollesbury Wick, ten; Lawling Creek, 14; Maldon, 12 (ten); Burnham-on-Crouch, 12 (17); Marsh Farm South Woodham Ferrers, ten (12); Bowers Marsh, 14 (59); Vange Marsh, ten (25); Rainham Marshes, 15 (217); Walthamstow Wetlands; ten. Confirmed breeding was reported from ten sites.

The first report of the spring was one at Bradwell Power Station, on 7th April, with the main arrival from 20th April.

In autumn, there were very few large counts: Holland Haven, ten on 7th, 20 on 16th and 12 on 27th August; Bowers Marsh, eight on 6th August; Mardyke Valley, 14 on 4th August; Rainham Marshes, ten on 16th August. The last record was from Little Baddow (TriFarm Pit) on 19th October.

Estimated occupied territories over the last decade have been:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Singing ♂♂	428	868	913	782	901	653	725	695	660	656
Sites	118	109	123	121	96	118	125	120	112	70

MARSH WARBLER *Acrocephalus palustris*

UK REX

Breeds occasionally. Rare migrant and summer visitor.

EBSIP (24, 18, 42)

Benfleet Downs	Singing ♂	9th-21st June	TBo

Addendum – ommission from EBR 2013

Maldon	Singing ♂	11th June	RNe, SDW.

The statistics have been amended to include this previously overlooked record

COMMON GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia naevia*

UK REX

Uncommon summer resident and passage migrant.

Only 15 reeling ♂♂ were considered to have established territories and were reported from seven sites (11 from nine in 2019), although several more were reported singing on spring passage. Counts of two or more came from (2019 figures in brackets): Bowers Marsh, five; East Tilbury, five (two).

The earliest report was from Dagenham Chase on 7th April.

Remarkably there were four autumn records as follows: Holland Haven, 1st September and 5th October; Ingrebourne Valley, two trapped 8th August; Beckton, 2nd August.

In total, just 114 records were received covering some 25 sites (52 from 13 in 2019).

Estimated occupied territories over the last decade have been:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Singing ♂♂	15	11	23	17	19	5	15	10	11	37
Sites	7	9	4	13	9	4	10	9	9	26

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla atricapilla*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant. Small numbers winter.

Some 1,427 singing ♂♂/territories from 341 sites were reported (1,684 from 284 in 2019). Sites reporting 15 or more were as follows (2019 figures in brackets): Maldon, 20; Burnham-on-Crouch, 23; Althorne, 20; Canvey Wick, 20; Colchester, 16; Friday Wood Colchester, 20 (107*); Braintree and Bocking, 20 (15); Beeleigh (weir), 20; Hanningfield Reservoir, 25; Bonnetts Wood Corbets Tey, 15; Cely Woods Aveley, 28 (18); Clay Tye Wood Upminster, 17; Epping Forest (High Beech), 16; Hazeleigh Wood, 20; Mardyke Valley Stifford-Aveley, 25 (30).

**this significant difference between 2019 and 2020 is due to restrictions during first lockdown.*

There were 72 reports of some 77 individuals from 26 sites (114 individuals in 2019) in the period from January to the first week in March, with two or more reported from: Great Baddow, two; Mersea Island, four; South Benfleet, two; Woodford Green, two.

Numbers of obvious migrants reported in spring were again high with double-figure counts in April coming from numerous well scattered locations.

In autumn, the highest double-figure inland counts were from: Belhus Woods, 24 on 23rd August; Hooks Marsh Waltham Abbey, 20 on 28th August; Ingrebourne Valley, 40 on 31st August and 27 on 5th September.

Coastal watch-points September maxima were: The Naze, 30 on 1st, 25 on 8th and 28 on 14th; Mundon, 22 on 11th; Wakering Stairs, 20 on 9th; Gunners Park Shoebury, 20 on 8th.

In October there were still 20 on 3rd at Holland Haven, 24 on 5th at Frinton-on-Sea and 25 on 5th at The Naze.

In the last two months of the year, there were 53 records of 34 individuals from 31 sites (26 individuals in 2019) with two reported from Heybridge Gravel Pit, Witham and Woodford Green.

Estimated occupied territories over the last decade have been:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Singing ♂♂	1427	1684	1148	1059	897	1053	996	975	941	656
Sites	341	284	315	234	227	246	231	220	211	70

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin borin*

Declining summer resident and passage migrant.

Reports of some 128 singing ♂♂/territories were received from 79 sites (95 from 39 in 2019). Sites with four or more (2019 figures in brackets): Brookes Wood Greenstead Green, five; Gosfield Airfield, four; Hanningfield Reservoir, ten (six); Barn Hoppett Chingford, seven.

The earliest spring record was from two sites, on 9th April, with the main arrival again during the last week of April.

In autumn, just one site reported two birds or more during August, there were no reports for September, but four were recorded at The Naze on 3rd October.

The last record was from South Ockendon on an unusually although not unprecedented late date, 28th October (SR).

Estimated occupied territories over the last decade have been:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Singing ♂♂	128	95	102	135	118	101	112	123	941	656
Sites	79	39	75	70	74	67	75	81	211	70

BARRED WARBLER *Curruca nisoria nisoria*

Rare passage migrant.

EBSIP (54, 8, 62)

Bradwell GPs, Coggeshall	1st winter	11th October	CJM-G

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Curruca curruca*

Lesser Whitethroat *Curruca curruca curruca*

Declining summer resident and passage migrant.

Reports of some 315 territories were received from 161 sites (206 from 121 in 2019). Although the species does fluctuate, the increase was probably due to the first lockdown, and subsequent lifting of restrictions, causing most observers to cover their local patches more regularly than usual.

Sites with four or more (2019 figures in brackets): Marsh Farm South Woodham Ferrers, five; Wakering Stairs, five; Canvey Wick, five (five); Copford, five; Abberton Reservoir, five (four); Aldham, six; Chigborough Lakes, six (eight); Braintree and Bocking, six (five); Beeleigh (weir), eight; Canewdon, six; Chafford Gorges, five.

Estimated occupied territories over the last decade have been:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Singing ♂♂	315	224	205	237	163	221	221	245	225	186
Sites	161	122	112	117	77	125	125	133	141	88

In spring, the first record was from Bonnetts Wood Corbetts Tey on 7th April, with the main arrival commencing on 15th April. Passage was fairly steady and the highest count was 16 from The Naze on 3rd May.

In August the highest counts received were: Dagenham Chase, 11 on 14th, Gunners Park Shoebury, 30 on 17th; The Naze, 13 on 17th. In September the counts received were: Old Hall Marshes, 22 on 1st, The Naze, ten on 1st and 15 on 5th, Gunners Park Shoebury, ten on 7th. The last report was from Wanstead Flats on 26th October .

Siberian Lesser Whitethroat *Curruca curruca blythii*

Vagrant. **EBSIP (0, 2, 2)**

One showing characteristics of *blythii* was seen visiting a feeder at Rayleigh on 31st January (JDe). The bird may have been present from late December 2019.

COMMON WHITETHROAT *Curruca communis communis*

Summer visitor and passage migrant.

Some 1,297 singing ♂♂/territories from 272 sites (1,354 from 243 in 2019) were reported. Sites with 15 or more singing ♂♂ being (2019 figures in brackets): Wrabness, 15; The Naze, 15 (20); Burnham-on-Crouch, 15; Althorne, 30; Canvey Wick, 20 (20); Vange Marsh, 20; Mardyke Valley Stifford Aveley, 20 (22); Rainham Marshes, 23 (83); Friday Wood Colchester, 15; The Hythe Colchester, 25 (47); Aldham, 20; Braintree and Bocking, 25 (25); Paglesham, 16; Fairlop Waters Barkingside, 15.

In spring, the first record was on 7th April from Wivenhoe with the main arrival commencing around 12th April. Passage was good and peaked around 19th to 30th April, with double-figure counts coming from several widely scattered sites.

Autumn passage was again high, as in recent years. The highest counts in August were at: The Naze, 24 on 20th and 16 on 28th; Holland Haven, 15 on 4th; Old Hall Marshes, 32 on 23rd; Gunners Park Shoebury, 50 on 17th. Highest counts in September: The Naze, 30 on 1st and 15 on 5th; Fingringhoe Ranges, 18 on 7th; Old Hall Marshes, 18 on 1st. The last records were from Wanstead Flats and Jaywick on 8th October.

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Singing ♂♂	1297	1345	1152	1169	1135	1203	1294	1250	1028	1480
Sites	272	243	216	217	175	211	218	206	194	161

DARTFORD WARBLER *Curruca undata dartfordiensis* UK

Scarce, mainly winter, visitor. **EBSIP (46, 70, 116)**

Bradwell Bird Observatory*	♀	29th January-5th February	JSu
East Tilbury	1st winter	26th October-27th December	SSw
Holland Haven	One	4th-10th November	mo
Thurrock TNP	One	12th December	PLa

*the same bird as seen in November-December 2019.

COMMON FIRECREST *Regulus ignicapilla ignicapilla* REX

Breeds occasionally. Otherwise, uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding was confirmed at only one site in 2020, with two pairs at Ongar Park Wood Epping Forest on 1st June (breeding has been confirmed for this site on seven occasions between 1998 and 2010).

Singing males were reported from seven sites (six in 2019, three in 2018, four in 2017, 11 in 2016 and four in 2015) between 16th April and 23rd June.

Records were received from 14 sites in January and ten in February. The annual sites where the species was recorded in the first two winter months (January, February in brackets) are as follows:

2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
24 (14, 10)	16 (8,8)	21 (9,12)	14 (7,7)	26 (15,11)	11 (6,5)

Long staying birds were at Rainham Marshes, The Naze and Walthamstow Wetlands.

Records of up to 14 birds were recorded at eight coastal sites in March, five at four coastal sites in April and five at four coastal sites in May. Up to four birds were recorded at four inland sites in March, 11 at nine inland sites in April and eight at seven inland sites in May.

A minimum of nine summering birds were reported from five sites in June and August.

The first autumn record was a single at Mundon on 11th September, and three were at this site on 30th September. A single was also reported at Woodford Green on 24th September.

Passage movement was lighter on the coast in 2020 with up to 25 individuals recorded at eight coastal sites (63 at six sites in 2019). Also up to eight were recorded at four inland sites. Highest counts at a coastal site were at The Naze: four on 3rd October and three on 17th October.

In November and December records came from eight coastal and 18 inland sites.

Counts of three or more came from two sites: The Naze, seven on 7th November, four on 28th November, three on 29th November, four on 6th December and three on 12th December; Tile Wood, three on 14th November. Long stayers were at The Naze, Tile Wood and Woodford Green.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus regulus*

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

A minimum of 120 singing males/territories were reported from 66 sites (75 from 59 in 2019, 65 from 43 in 2018, 75 from 66 in 2017, 75 from 55 in 2016, 42 from 28 in 2015), but the species was observed during the period April – July at a further 78 sites.

In January and February, a minimum of 400 birds were reported from 101 sites. The annual number of birds and sites where the species was recorded in the first two winter months are as follows:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Number	400	720	730	970	1390	250
Sites	101	124	152	164	194	116

Counts of five or more were received from the following sites:

	January	February
Shoeburyness	6 (1st), 5 (7th)	
The Naze	9 (4th)	6 (15th)
Chafford Gorges	5 (14th), 7 (22nd)	
Hangman's Wood Little Thurrock	6 (29th)	
Wintry Wood Epping Forest	7 (4th)	
Lee Valley Water Works	5 (5th)	
Belhus Woods Aveley	14 (2nd)	
Cely Woods Aveley	7 (2nd)	

	January	February
Mardyke Valley	9 (16th)	6 (5th)
Dagenham Chase		5 (13th)
Clay Tye Wood Upminster	7 (2nd)	

A minimum of 450 birds were reported from 112 sites during Spring, the highest counts were: Hockley Woods, six on 2nd March; Grays New Cemetery, six on 3rd March; Belhus Woods, ten on 8th March; The Naze, seven on 14th March; Holland Haven, five on 18th March; Braintree, 16 on 31st May.

A minimum of 200 summering birds were reported from 77 sites, the highest counts were: Ongar Park Woods, seven on 1st June; Brook Farm Upminster, six on 23rd June; Grays New Cemetery, eight on 1st July; Hanningfield Reservoir, six on 31st August.

Autumn passage was higher than in recent years with ten coastal sites reporting double-figure counts through October and November as follows:

	October	November
Harwich	30 (16th)	
The Naze	20 (4th), 12 (5th), 10 (6th), 60 (14th), 25 (15th), 70 (17th), 18 (18th), 10 (25th), 16 (26th), 15 (29th), 18 (30th)	15 (7th), 12 (8th), 11 (21st), 11 (28th)
Holland Haven	14 (3rd), 25 (14th), 11 (15th), 12 (16th)	15 (21st)
Frinton-on-Sea	24 (14th), 24 (15th), 115 (16th), 52 (17th), 20 (18th)	15 (7th), 30 (16th)
Colne Point	12 (14th), 10 (16th)	
Southend (Southend High School For Girls)	50 (12th) (SB)	
Bradwell Bird Observatory	10 (16th)	
Deal Hall Dengie	80 (15th)	
Gunners Park Shoebury	10 (14th), 16 (16th), 12 (17th)	
Mundon	22 (17th), 21 (24th)	14 (8th)

Double-figure counts of between ten and 24 were received from a further 13 inland sites during October and November. A minimum of 300 birds were reported from 87 sites in December. Counts of ten or more were received from: Belhus Woods Aveley, 15 on 6th December; Chafford Gorges Grays, 12 on 3rd December.

EURASIAN WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes indigenus/troglodytes*

***T. t. indigenus* is and abundant and widespread resident. *T. t. troglodytes* may occur as a rare passage migrant.**

Abundance of this species can vary sharply from year to year, especially following cold weather, but there was no great variation in 2020 on the previous year.

Singing males were reported from 128 sites (146 in 2019 which was a significant increase over previous years). Pairs/territories were reported from 47 sites (46 in 2019) including 30+ territories in the Braintree area. Possible/probable breeding was reported from five sites (23 in 2019). Breeding was confirmed at 15 sites (15 in 2019): Belhus Woods Aveley, Bonnetts Wood Corbets Tey Upminster, Braxted Park, Brook Farm Aveley, Chafford Gorges Grays, Cely Woods Aveley, Foulness Island, Grays New Cemetery, Great Henny, Friday Wood Colchester, Hainault Forest, Maldon, Mardyke Valley Stifford-Aveley, Raphael Park Romford and Tillingham. As the Gazeteer lists 4-500 sites, most of which probably have this species breeding, this species is obviously under-recorded.

EURASIAN NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea caesia*

Sedentary resident, currently stable.

At least 42 pairs/singing males were reported from 32 sites with possible/probable breeding reported from 18 sites. Breeding was confirmed at Belhus Woods Aveley, Cely Woods Aveley, Ongar Park Wood, Thorndon Park North and Westley Heights Langdon Hills. Breeding is almost certainly under recorded for this species which was seen at a further 44 sites between April and July, and at 65 more sites during the rest of the year.

Counts of three or more birds were reported from 17 sites. Highest counts were received from: Copped Hall Epping Forest, seven on 6th April; Ongar Park Wood, ten on 1st June; Thorndon Park North, 12 on 12th June; Weald Park, eight on 24th June.

EURASIAN TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris britannica*

Common resident.

At least 52 pairs/singing males were reported from 32 sites with possible/probable breeding reported from 20 sites. Breeding records were received from 11 sites: Cely Woods Aveley, Three Rivers Golf Course Cold Norton (where three pairs bred), Galleyhill Wood Lee Valley, Hanningfield Reservoir, Langdon Hills Plotlands, Langham, Mardyke Valley Stifford Aveley, North Fambridge Hall, Ongar Park Wood, Thorndon Park South, Westley Heights Langdon Hills.

Breeding is almost certainly under-recorded for this species which was seen at a further 39 locations between April and July, and at 56 more sites during the rest of the year.

Counts of between three and six birds were reported from 23 sites. Highest counts were received from Ongar Park Woods, 20 (ten pairs) on 1st June; Hockley Woods, ten on 23rd June.

ROSY STARLING *Pastor roseus*

Vagrant. **EBSIP (15, 7, 22)**

There were two birds reported:

Mayland	one	28th May	(EG)
Walton-on-the-Naze	one	5th June	(ML)

A previously accepted record of one at Southminster for several months in 1961/62 has been moved to Category E, and so removed from the statistics.

COMMON STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris vulgaris* UK

Abundant but declining resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

No breeding counts were received but breeding was confirmed at 24 sites. The largest post-breeding flocks containing juvenile birds reported were from: Brook Farm Upminster, 63 on 5th July; Colne Point, 70 on 21st May; Loughton, 60 on 24th May. Flocks of between ten and 50 birds containing juveniles were reported from a further eight sites. Breeding and post-breeding is almost certainly under-recorded for this species.

Notable first-winter counts were: Blue House Farm, 750 on 4th January; Colne Point, 800 on 5th March and 8th March; Foulness Island, 900 on 12th March; Purfleet, 1,000 on 11th January; Rainham Marshes, 2,000 on 30th January, 1,000 on 31st January, 8th February, 18th February and 29th February. Counts of between 50 and 500 birds were reported from a further 32 sites.

The highest counts in autumn were from: Colne Point, 1,900 on 24th September, 1,500 on 7th October; Deal Hall Dengie, 2,000 on 15th October; Gallions Reach Beckton, 1,500 on 2nd September; Rainham Marshes, 2,000 on 4th September; Colne Point, 1,500 on 7th October. Counts of between 50 and 100 birds were reported from a further 71 sites.

During the second winter, the highest counts were reported from: Chigborough Lakes, 1,500 on 23rd November, 4,500 on 26th November; East Tilbury, 1,500 on 30th November; Fairplay Farm Upminster, 1,240 on 28th December; Frinton-on-Sea, 1,055 on 5th November; Rainham Marshes, 2,000 on 13th November. Counts of between 50 and 1,000 birds were reported from a further 50 sites.

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos philomelos/clarkei* UK EX REX

***T. p. clarkei* is common and largely resident, whilst *T. p. philomelos* is a passage migrant and winter visitor.**

The total of possible, probable and confirmed breeders was at least 448 at 226 sites (462 at 194 in 2019). This is an under-estimate as more than 130 of these records include breeding evidence but only state the species is 'present' with no count given. In these cases, we have assumed that there is just one singing male, territorial male or pair. Observers are requested to give a value for a count to give a more accurate estimate of the numbers of breeding pairs for this Red-list species.

Double-figure counts of territories, or other evidence of breeding, were found at four sites: Braintree, ten; Clay Tye Wood Upminster, 17; Belhus Woods Aveley, 22; Mardyke Valley, 23. This is probably more of a reflection of observer effort rather than an indication of how many sites in Essex have important populations.

In the first winter double-figure counts came from five sites with 20+ being recorded at: Mardyke Valley, 25 (season maximum) on 25th January; Belhus Woods Aveley, 22 on 5th February.

Autumn passage at Frinton-on-Sea was higher than last year with an October total of 323 in 24hrs (229 in 46.25hrs in 2019).

Elsewhere in October, double-figure counts were as follows: The Naze, 80 (seasonal maximum) on 4th; Bradwell-juxta-Coggeshall Gravel Pit, 70 on 11th; Holland Haven, 50 on 4th; Mundon, 17 on 17th; Grays, 16 on 15th; Fair Play Farm Upminster, ten on 12th. There was a nocturnal migration record of 20 at Canewdon on 13th.

Double-figure counts in November were: Frinton-on-Sea, 22 on 30th; Rainham Marshes, ten on 27th; Cely Woods Aveley, ten on 2nd; Clay Tye Wood Upminster (including adjacent farm), ten on 2nd.

Double- figure counts in December were: Rainham Marshes, 11 on 28th; Mardyke Valley (monthly maximum), 14 on 2nd; Bonnetts Wood Corbets Tye, ten on 1st.

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus viscivorus* UK

Locally common resident and partial migrant.

The total of possible, probable and confirmed breeders was at least 145 at 132 sites (122 at 97 in 2019). The increase may be due to lockdown restrictions causing more observers to report the species from home and local patches. It is possible that this is an under-estimate as where breeding evidence is given but the species is 'present' with no count given, we have assumed that there is just one singing male, territorial male or pair. Observers are requested to give a value for a count to give a more accurate estimate of the numbers of breeding pairs for this Red-list species.

Only three sites recorded two territories this year, considerably lower than 2019 (nine). One further site reported three territories (Mardyke Valley) and four territories were reported from Ongar Park Wood Epping Forest.

Post breeding flocks or counts were low this year with the largest reported being 20 at Abberton Reservoir on 3rd October, there were only three other flocks in double figures, all of ten birds.

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*
Redwing *Turdus iliacus iliacus* UK

Common passage migrant and winter visitor.

Once again reports were widespread in the first winter period but, as with recent years, generally in small numbers. There were eight three-figure flocks reported this year (five in 2019 and seven in 2018). Only one of these flocks was of more than 200 birds: 238 on 3rd January at Dunnings Lane West Horndon. Other sites recording three-figure flocks in this period were: Rochford (Doggetts Farm), 130 on 2nd April; Ingatestone, 100+ on 2nd January; Thorndon Park (North), 100 on 7th February; Epping Forest Copped Hall, 130 on 8th March; Bonnetts Wood Corbets Tye, 135 on 9th March; Woodford Green, 13 on 2nd April; Valentines Park Ilford 100+ on 12th February.

The most signification visible migration of the first period was once again witnessed at Frinton-on-Sea with 2,103 bird recorded in 17 hours in March (a notable increase on the 587 birds reported in 15.5 hours in 2019). The last received report of the first winter period was of a flock of 15 birds at Hamford Water on 17th May.

The first report of the second winter period came from Frinton-on-Sea, a single bird on 19th September. Visible migration was noted at Frinton-on-Sea with 2,124 birds reported in 36 hours during October (1,873 in 42.25 hours in 2019). On 6th November nocturnal migration monitoring at Frinton-on-Sea produced calls from 946 birds in three hours.

Outside of this location, 28 sites reported three-figure flocks, a significant increase on the previous two years (11 in 2019 and 17 in 2018). Two of these were 600+: a maximum count of 612 at Wanstead Flats on 12th October and 600 from Arlesford Creek to Brighlingsea on 11th October. Other counts of 250+ were all received in October: Wivenhoe, 300 on the 12th; The Strood Mersea Island 300 on 11th; Halstead, 500 on 11th; Chingford Plain Epping Forest, 298 on 12th; Brook Farm Upminster 532 on 13th and 400 on 14th. All other flocks reported were of 200 or more and occurred mainly in October and December.

COMMON BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula merula*

Abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Counts of more than 15 singing/territorial males/pairs in the breeding season were only reported from one site this year (four in 2019), Braintree and Bocking, 75+, where numbers were reported to be stable. Only two other sites reported double-figures of territories: Belhus Woods Aveley and Mardyke Valley both with 14 pairs/singing males. This is no doubt an under-estimation to the extent that it it is not representative of the true status of the species.

In the first winter period high counts were low once again with only one count of 30+ (two in 2019), East Tilbury on 4th January.

There were very many records received of the species being 'present', primarily from BirdTrack, with no count specified which may account for the counts of two figures continuing to be low this year.

Counts of visible migration at Frinton-on-Sea were unsurprisingly minimal in the first period due to the first lockdown. October numbers were 398 (1,006 in 2019) and November were 403 (255 in 2019).

Outside of these records the highest count of the 2nd period was 86+ at Bradfield at dusk on 23rd November. Only two other counts of 30+ were received: 30 at Deal Hall Dengie, and 35 at Grays, both on 15th October.

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris* UK

Common passage migrant and winter visitor. Has summered.

Reports of three-figure flocks were lower for the second consecutive year in the first winter period with records coming from nine sites (16 in 2019 and 42 in 2018). The largest reported count was a seasonal maximum of 215 at Good Easter on 6th February. The only sites where flocks of 200 or more were recorded were: Fordham, 200 on 3rd February; Alresford, 200+ on 16th March and from Wivenhoe to Alresford Creek approximately 200 also on 16th March (the latter two records may include many of the same birds).

The last report of the first winter period was a single bird at Frinton-on-Sea on 4th May.

The first record of the autumn was of three at St Osyth Beach on 7th October.

There were again no four-figure flocks reported (the only record of a four-figure flock in the past ten years was in 2016). More encouragingly three-figure flocks were reported from 34 sites, a large increase on the previous two years (ten in 2019 and 26 in 2018). The largest flock of the autumn/second winter was 500 at Mardyke Fen on 26th December. A maximum count of 412 came from Bowers Marsh on 28th December, closely followed by three reports of flocks of 400 at: Goldhanger, 23rd December; Abberton Reservoir, 27th December; Mundon (Old Church), 28th December.

RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus torquatus* UK

Passage migrant.

The first record of the spring consisted of two at Holland Haven on 4th April. Reports received during the spring migration were similar to last year being 17 at 14 sites (16 at 11 in 2019, 25 at 13 in 2018). Three locations had reports of more than one and they were all of two birds: Wanstead Flats, 18th April; Frinton-on-Sea 7th–24th April and the aforementioned Holland Haven birds from 4th-23rd April with one bird being reported for the latter two sites until the 28th and 26th of April respectively.

As per spring, autumn passage began at Holland Haven with a single reported on 22nd September. In general, autumn passage was noticeably down on last year but more in line with previous years with 19 reported from 12 sites (67 at 23 in 2019, 13 at 8 in 2018). The largest group report was three at Deal Hall Dengie on 15th October with the last record of the year being a single at Rainham Marshes on 29th October.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata striata* UK REX

Declining summer resident and passage migrant.

Six pairs were proved to have bred (five in 2019, four in 2018, seven in 2017, eight in 2016) with nests or recently fledged young being sighted. Pairs were seen at another four sites and a singing male from one other site in June.

The first bird of the year was recorded at Black Notley on 28th April.

There did not appear to be any spring passage this year with birds appearing in very small numbers at inland sites and few at coastal sites. Highest count for May was four at The Naze on 23rd May.

Autumn passage was evident from mid-August to the end of September. Reports in August came from 29 sites (excluding sites holding confirmed or probable breeders) and were mainly of one or two birds. Counts of three or more were made at seven sites: The Hythe Colchester, three (28th); Maylands Golf Club, four (24th); Great Braxted, five (4th); South Weald, three (12th); Thorndon Park North, three (24th); Wanstead Flats, five (18th), four (24th, 28th and 30th), three (26th and 31st).

September reports came from 39 sites and again were mainly of one or two birds. Counts of three or more were all at the beginning of the month at six sites: Mersea Island, four (8th); Bowers Marsh, three (8th); Great Warley, three (8th); Fairlop Waters Barkingside, five (5th); Ingrebourne Valley, four (5th); Wanstead Flats, three (5th). The last bird of the year was reported from Holland Haven on 11th October.

Estimated monthly totals using maximum count per site per month:

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Number	1	26	16	19	64	69	5

EUROPEAN ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula melophilus/rubecula*

***E. r. melophilus* is an abundant, widespread and relatively sedentary resident whilst *E. r. rubecula* is a relatively common passage migrant and also winter visitor in small numbers.**

Numbers were consistent throughout the early months suggesting that there were no wintering birds remaining from 2019. Numbers reported dropped in June, July and August, as is usual in the summer moult season, and rose again in September when individuals take up territory for the winter. There was a noticeable migratory influx at the end of September and in the first half of October with high coastal counts at Frinton-on-Sea and The Naze. In November the numbers dropped back to a more usual level.

There were several high counts during the early part of the year (site maximum in each case): Rainham Marshes, 26 on 9th March; Belhus Woods Aveley, 27 on 2nd January and 31 on 5th February; Mardyke Valley, 27 on 16th January.

Singing birds were recorded in every month, with streetlights often encouraging ♂♂ to sing, even at night. High counts of singing ♂♂ or territories were as follows:

Belhus Woods Aveley CP, 27 territories; Bonnetts Wood Corbets Tey, 11 territories; Cely Woods Aveley, 18 singing; Chafford Gorges Grays, 21 singing with six clear territories; Clay Tye Wood Upminster, 18 territories; Mardyke Valley, 22 territories.

Breeding was confirmed by observing fledglings or adults carrying faecal sac or food at 31 sites. Intersting choices of pairs' nest sites included within a herb planter and on a rake in an outbuilding.

COMMON NIGHTINGALE *Luscinia megarhynchos megarhynchos* UK REX

Summer resident and passage migrant.

The first records of the year were on 6th April, both of single birds at The Hythe Colchester and University of Essex Colchester, possibly the same bird.

In total 125 singing ♂♂ were reported from 62 sites (2019: 131 from 38; 2018: 109 at 31; 2017:103 at 33; 2016: 119 at 47). This is a higher number of sites than previous years, a good indicator for this species. Singing males may have been undercounted where more than one bird was singing at the same location. The count does depend on the recorder indicating that birds were singing.

There was only one record from Fingringhoe Wick, a known stronghold for the species, of two birds recorded on territory. As this was undoubtedly due to the first lockdown it should not be compared with the previous years of 2019-2017 when 15, 20 and 25 singing ♂♂ were recorded. At Middlewick Ranges Colchester, seven singing ♂♂ (21 in 2019) were reported and at Friday Wood Colchester ten singing ♂♂ (38 in 2019). The reductions in observations at these two important sites were again probably due to the first lockdown.

Other counts of more than five singing ♂♂ were as follows: Abberton Reservoir, seven on 28th April and six on 24th May; Canvey Wick eight on 20th May; Copford, six on 19th April; Wrabness, six on 5th May.

There were three confirmed records of breeding: Langdon Hills (Willow Park), 21st May; Danbury Common, two recently fledged birds with adults on 28th May; Mardyke Valley, two recently fledged birds seen on 7th July; Abberton Reservoir a bird was seen carrying food on 19th July.

Last record of the year was of a single bird seen at Wanstead Flats on 18th August.

Approximate monthly totals using maximum count per site per month:

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Number	0	138	135	31	7	2	0	0

RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula parva*

Rare passage migrant. EBSIP (30, 5, 35)

A single bird was found on 3rd June in the John Weston Nature Reserve at The Naze (DSt).

The previous Birds of Essex (Wood, 2007) total was given as 29, but now revised to 30

EUROPEAN PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca hypoleuca* UK

Rare spring, but fairly common autumn, passage migrant.

There were no spring records this year, the first record for the year being at Colne Point on 20th June. There was one record from Deal Hall Dengie on 15th July but most records for this species came in August with birds being seen from 7th to 31st and then occasionally during September.

From 9th to 15th August, an estimated 44 birds were recorded from 12 locations. A count of 15 at The Naze, plus seven at Frinton-on-Sea on 15th, provided half of this total. From 15th to 22nd August, there were an estimated 36 birds from 15 locations with coastal birds at The Naze and Holland Haven making up half the total. The highest count was of 15 at The Naze on 15th August.

The main passage appeared to finish at the end of August with just a few birds being seen from 1st to 23rd September, an estimated 11 birds at eight locations. The last bird of the year was seen at The Naze on 4th October.

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros gibraltariensis* UK REX

Small breeding and wintering population. Passage migrant in small numbers.

Sightings in January and February were all of single birds, located at sewage treatment works, reservoirs or wetlands with the birds taking advantage of the insects available there. The earliest bird of the season at a coastal site was on 17th March at The Naze, followed on 18th March by two at Frinton-on-Sea comprising a ♀ on the undercliff and an immature ♂ on the beach. This was probably the beginning of the spring passage as birds started to appear regularly at coastal sites for the rest of the month and at inland sites from 27th March.

The only singing male reported was from Maldon where breeding was confirmed. The male was singing on 21st May, then from 12th June was repeatedly reported carrying faecal sac or food until recently fledged birds were seen on 11th August. Pairs were also reported at Rainham Marshes on 15th May and in Stratford on 1st June.

No autumn passage was observed. A few birds were observed in the winter with one bird remaining at Thorpe Bay throughout December.

Estimated monthly totals using maximum count per site per month:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number	4	2	17	4	4	8	6	3	2	4	4	5

COMMON REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus phoenicurus* UK

Regular passage migrant in small numbers. Bred until 1993.

Spring migration was light and spread throughout April and May. The first was seen at Rainham Marshes on 6th April and the last at The Naze on 22nd May. Other reports came from six locations (ten in 2019, eight in 2018, nine in 2017, 20 in 2016). All were of singles except for Colne Point where two were seen on 21st May.

A single was observed in Epping Forest on 26th July.

The first bird of the autumn was at Dagenham Chase on 10th August. Autumn passage was light, with a minimum total of around 40 individuals at 32 sites (35 at 27 in 2019, 21 at 14 in 2018, 31 at 19 in 2017, 75 at 33 in 2016). Birds were confined to the coast and south of the County. Most counts were of one or two with The Naze being the only site with a higher count when three were seen on 3rd October.

The last of the year was seen on 31st October at Mundon.

Estimated monthly totals using maximum count per site per month were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number	0	0	0	6	3	0	1	14	23	13	0	0

WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra* UK

Regular passage migrant. Formerly bred.

The first spring record was a single male seen on the golf course at Frinton-on-Sea on 12th April. Passage was light with a minimum of 14 birds seen at nine sites (25 birds from 18 sites in 2019, 23 from 17 sites in 2018, 19 from nine sites in 2017, 40 from 22 sites in 2016). All records were either coastal or in the south of the County. Most records were of singles, but two were recorded at: Rainham on 14th April; Walthamstow Wetlands on 29th and 30th April and again on 3rd and 8th May; Wanstead Flats on 29th April and 2nd May. Movement had finished by mid-May with the last spring sighting at King George V Reservoir Chingford on 15th May.

No breeding behaviour was observed;. One bird was seen at Clacton-on-Sea on 18th June and a minimum of seven birds were seen at six sites during July.

Autumn migration started on 6th August with one at West Mersea. A light movement continued through the first two weeks of August but was more noticeable by mid-August. Numbers were approximately 25% higher than in 2019, with the peak at the end of August covering two weeks rather than one as in 2019. Most sightings were coastal, including estuaries, or at reservoirs or gravel pits.

Passage during the main period is summarised in the table below, showing totals of the highest count of birds at all sites in each week.

	Aug					Sep			
Week commencing	2nd	9th	16th	23rd	30th	6th	13th	20th	27th
Numbers	10	20	20	151	102	74	40	12	8
Locations	8	11	16	33	30	29	18	7	7

Passage had tailed off by 6th October although birds continued to appear in ones or twos at a few coastal locations until 14th when the last two were seen at Colne Point. The last of autumn was reported from Braintree on 4th November.

Counts of eight or more in autumn were as follows: Mersea Island, 13 on 23rd August; Fingringhoe Ranges, 17 on 24th August; Bowers March, eight on 1st September.

EUROPEAN STONECHAT *Saxicola rubicola hibernans* REX

Small breeding population. Regular passage migrant and winter visitor.

Fourteen pairs were reported from eight locations: Mersea Island, Holland Haven, Blue House Farm, Foulness, Bowers Marsh, East Tilbury, Rainham Marshes and Braintree. Breeding was confirmed at five locations with pairs raising between one and five fledglings.

Probable or confirmed breeding during the last decade has been:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Pairs/Territories	14	6	3	11	10	5	5	5	3	2
Locations	8	4	2	7	7	2	5	3	2	2

Estimated monthly totals using maximum count per site per month were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number	134	119	125	8	21	26	38	64	137	347	289	189
Locations	52	42	39	5	10	10	11	13	45	73	78	67

Counts were higher than 2019 throughout the year which may have been due to either increased observation or a higher population due to the mild weather.

The highest counts of the first winter period were: Colne Point, seven on 29th February; Rainham Marshes, eight on 8th January and seven on 29th January; Coalhouse Fort East Tilbury, seven on 30th January; Abberton Reservoir, eight on 25th January; Wanstead Flats, seven on 26th February.

The highest counts in the autumn were: Fingringhoe Ranges, 15 on 24th August and 13 on 7th September; Coalhouse Fort East Tilbury, 15 on 24th August; Wanstead Flats, 13 on 26th September.

The highest counts of the second winter period were: Fingringhoe Ranges, 18 on 9th November; Old Hall Marshes, 17 on 27th November; Bowers Marsh, 25 on 8th November; Rainham Marshes, 13 on 13th November and 11th December.

NORTHERN WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*
Northern Wheatear *Oeananthe oenanthe oenanthe*

Occasionally breeds. Common passage migrant.

The first spring bird was seen on 29th February at The Naze then the second was not seen until 11th March at Rainham Marshes. Spring passage commenced in earnest on 16th of March when birds were seen at ten locations. This was followed by two quiet weeks before a steady flow through April.

The overall passage was light and very similar to 2019, tabulated as follows:

	Mar				Apr				May		
Week commencing	8th	15th	22nd	29th	5th	12th	19th	26th	3rd	10th	17th
Numbers	1	20	5	2	23	57	57	39	22	8	10
Locations	1	10	4	2	9	19	28	21	16	5	9

There were two double-figure counts, both in April: 11 at Frinton-on-Sea on 6th and 16 at Holland Haven on 16th. The last birds of the spring were seen on 19th May at three coastal locations but then three were seen at Hanningfield Reservoir on 31st May and one at Bowers Marsh on 6th June.

There were six records for July, all coastal, with two being seen at Holland Haven on 29th and two at Gunners Park Shoebury on 30th.

Autumn migration commenced in the first week of August with four at Holland Haven on 2nd, the same week as in 2019, and finished with a final movement in the week commencing 4th October. Double-figure counts at the coast showed peaks in early September and again in early October: 14 at Frinton-on-Sea and ten at The Naze on 4th and 5th September and double-figure counts of up to 20 at Frinton-on-Sea between 5th and 9th October.

Estimated weekly totals were:

	Aug					Sep				Oct
Week commencing	2nd	9th	16th	23rd	30th	6th	13th	20th	27th	4th
Numbers	21	13	21	84	80	42	32	26	35	53
Locations	14	8	13	30	25	27	15	19	20	21

Singles were seen at 13 locations during the remainder of October. The final sighting of the year was a single at Frinton-on-Sea on 5th November.

Greenland Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe leucorrhoa*

Passage migrant.

There were a few sightings of birds with Greenland characteristics: Frinton-on-Sea, one ♂ on 5th and 6th May; Lawling Creek Maylandsea, two ♁ on 8th May; Rainham Marshes, two on 29th April and six on 30th April; Hanningfield Reservoir, one ♁ on 31st May; King George V Reservoir Chingford, two on 6th and 9th May.

EURASIAN TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus montanus* UK REX

Declining passage migrant. Bred until 1999.

There were 29 records from 19, mostly coastal, sites through the year. The vast majority of sightings came from the north-east coast, although a single was recorded at Rainham Marshes on 9th October.

Non-coastal records were: 10 and four at Colchester Garrison on 24th April and 4th May respectively (in suitable breeding habitat although no further breeding evidence was received); a single bird at Stansted Airport on 21st November; a single bird at Holyfield Hall Farm on 21st February; and another record from the Lee Valley at Fishers Green on 7th March. There were no substantiated records of possible or confirmed breeding.

Autumn passage saw various individual birds spotted with the largest single count of the second half of the year coming at Frinton-on-Sea on 10th October when six birds were sighted.

Estimated monthly totals below show passage trends in April-May & September-October.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number	0	1	1	10	12	4	1	2	5	13	2	2

Marsh Warbler, South Benfleet, June (SEAN NIXON)

Lesser Whitethroat *blythi*, Rayleigh, January (JEFF DELVE)

Common Nightingale, Wrabness, May (PAUL CHAMBERLAIN)

Black Redstart, Thorpe Bay, September (JEFF DELVE)

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus domesticus* UK

Abundant resident.

A widely reported and highly abundant bird throughout Essex with 4,126 records received throughout the year. Breeding records continue to be very much under-reported in Essex with just 14 cases of confirmed breeding, clearly significantly lower than the true amount.

The highest specific count of the year was received on 22nd December at Latchford Farm in Upminster, where 146 were recorded. The highest estimated count received was from The Strood Mersea Island where, on several days in August, counts of over 200 were reported. Reports of 100 or more birds came from just seven other locations at various times of the year: South Fambridge, 100 on 31st March and 31st December; Bowers Marsh, 100 on 24th July; Grays, 114 on 12th February and 112 on 3rd March; Rainham Marshes, 120 on 20th January and 120 on 13th November; Braintree, 100 on 31st May; Latchford Farm Upminster, 151 on 20th November and 121 on 1st December; Brook Farm Upminster, 100 on 31st May and 104 on 23rd November. Additionally there were 50 or more birds from 12 other sites totalling 19 sites (18 in 2019).

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis occidentalis/modularis* UK

***P. m. occidentalis* is an abundant and widespread resident prone to some southward movements outside the breeding season, whilst *P. m. modularis* is likely to be a passage migrant and winter visitor.**

A widely reported and highly abundant bird throughout Essex with 3,873 records received. It is clear that this species is exceedingly abundant across the County with many counts of "Present" reported across the whole year from a range of sites across the County. However, breeding is very under-reported for this seemingly very much overlooked species. Confirmed breeding success was recorded at just seven sites with breeding behavior noted 52 times (76 in 2019) from 24 sites. The true number is probably significantly higher, with there being such an abundance of birds and an ability to breed across a variety of habitats. More records of breeding would help to create a more accurate picture of the species' status.

A small autumn passage migration was evident with numbers exceeding 25 on nine occasions, with five of these records coming from coastal sites. The 1st October saw a high of 55 birds at Frinton-on-Sea under cliffs and in seafront gardens, followed by 52 on 7th October; then on 17th October a count of 45 came from Mundon.

WESTERN YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*
Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava flavissima* UK REX

Declining summer visitor.

With only 39 records of possible or probable breeding, numbers were significantly down on 2019's 117 pairs. It is likely that the restrictions of the first lockdown hampered counts at a critical time especially at key sites. Just ten pairs were confirmed to have bred. While the distribution of records was wider, with 35 locations recorded (15 in 2019), Wallasea Island recorded only one pair – although it is probable that there were more, given the numbers of individuals reported during the breeding season and the absence of "official" RSPB data. Numbers were also down on Foulness Island, with just one pair, compared with 500+ individuals in 1995.

One at Abberton Reservoir on 21st March was the first of the year, followed by one at Brook Farm Upminster on 28th March. The main arrival got under way in the second week of April, with 20 at Abberton Reservoir, 12 at Tillingham, and nine at King George V Reservoir Chingford on 9th. Numbers were low, with only two counts or ten, two of nine and five of eight during the month. Again, the first lockdown will have effected observers' access to sites.

During May there were only 11 double-figure counts from eight sites: Wallasea Island, 24 on 21st and 12 on 29th; Abberton Reservoir, 15 on 14th, ten on 26th and 29th; Dengie (Holliwell Point), 15 on 3rd; Fleet Head Great Wakering, 15 on 21st; The Strood Mersea Island, ten on 15th and 12 on 21st; Lower Raypits Canewdon, ten on 3rd; and Marsh Road, Burnham-on-Crouch, 12 on 31st. There were only four double-figure counts in June: Wallasea Island, ten on 2nd and 20 on 12th; Abberton

Reservoir, ten on 20th; and Fleet Head Great Wakering, ten on 19th.

A less scientific assessment of breeding numbers can be derived from the significant counts during July: Old Hall Marshes, 80 on 30th; Stow Marsh, 35 on 30th; Wallasea Island, 25 on 11th and 30 on 30th; Orsett Fen, 24 on 7th; Linford, 15 on 31st; Blue House Farm, 14 on 15th; Bowers Marsh, 12 on 24th.

August and September saw some spectacular counts: the highest being 180 at Marsh Farm South Woodham Ferrers, on 4th September; 172 at Abberton Reservoir on 13th August, and 142 at Gunners Park, Shoebury on 24th August. There were two counts in excess of 60: Stow Marsh, 62 on 2nd September; Abberton Reservoir 60+ on 22nd August. In addition, there were four counts of 50 and seven of 40.

October was quiet with only a handful of reports, none reaching double figures.

The last record of the year was a coastal migrant at Frinton-on-Sea on 19th October.

Blue-headed Wagtail *Motacilla flava flava*

Scarce summer visitor.

Walthamstow Wetlands	one	27th April	J-PE
King George V Reservoir Chingford	♂	1st September	PHr

With no reports of the hybrid *flava x flavissima* 'Channel Wagtail' to confuse matters, two individuals of this European sub-species represented a reduction from 2019 when up to three were recorded.

Estimated totals over the past decade show a fairly stable pattern of occurrence:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	Average
Totals	2	3	3	4	5	0	2	3	3	4	2.9

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea cinerea* UK

Increasing resident breeder and passage migrant.

Breeding took place at seven sites with eight confirmed pairs (16 at 11 in 2019) but there was an upsurge in the numbers of probable/possible breeding pairs to 34 at 28 sites (six at five in 2019). This may have been due to an increase in observations on local patches during first lockdown, but could also be attributed to recent mild winters.

Most records in the first three months of the year were of singles. Ten at King George V Reservoir Chingford on 4th March was exceptional. Other high counts in that period were of eight at Beckton Sewage Works on 10th February and at Walthamstow Wetlands on 26th February, and six at King George V Reservoir Chingford on 3rd March and six at both Cornhill Meadows Waltham Abbey and Walthamstow Wetlands on 6th March. The latter site continued to hold significant numbers with up to five throughout April. Apart from three at Chelmsford (Moulsham) on 27 April all other spring sightings were of 1-2 individuals.

Autumn passage began with two past Frinton-on-Sea on 11th July but was then light until September when five flew south on each of three days. October saw 12 south on 6th with six on 9th. A light passage continued until the end of the month with one or two on six days.

Counts of eight or more, where it was not possible to differentiate between local and migrating birds, came from: Frinton-on-Sea (eight on 5th September, ten on 9th September, 17 on 20th September, 12 on 6th October); Beckton Sewage Works (nine on 19th August, ten on 23rd August, and eight on 28th August); King George V Reservoir Chingford (nine on 1st September, eight on 17th October, ten on 19th October); Walthamstow Wetlands, ten on 17th and 19th October).

In the second winter period, counts of three or more were recorded at ten sites (five in 2019): Rainham Marshes, three (13th November); Creekside Beckton, five (22nd November), three (30th December); Beckton Sewage Works, 11 (5th December); Abberton Reservoir, nine (27th November), three (12th December); Stanway Green, three (6th December); Dedham, three (3rd November); Braintree, four (12th December); King George V Reservoir, four (10th November), three (24th November); Walthamstow Wetlands, eight (4th/5th November), four (10th November, 4th and 29th December, three on 30th December); Wanstead Park, three on 10th November.

Estimated monthly totals were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Totals	86	71	132	76	66	84	54	68	291	162	100	80
Locations	78	30	53	42	41	45	22	29	65	72	65	48

WHITE WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba*
Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

Common resident and passage migrant.

Breeding records increased, with 51 confirmed/probable/possible pairs at 45 sites (36 at 19 in 2019).

Principal roosts reported in the first winter period were at Braintree, 250 on 4th January; Witham, 200 on 19th January; Epping, 120 on 8th January and 114 on 12th February; Warley, 90 on 21st February; and Southend-on-Sea, 50 on 4th February. Significant roosts lasted well into spring, notably at Braintree (Freeport) where there were 150+ on both 23rd and 27th March.

Migration was extremely light at Frinton-on-Sea with 32 past on 18th March being the only count of substance and most other counts of 2-4 birds on five dates between 16th March and 8th April. The only other indication of migration was of seven over Heybridge Gravel Pits on 19th March. Peak autumn movement past Frinton-on-Sea was 94 on 7th October.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba alba*

Fairly common passage migrant.

The true occurrence of *Motacilla alba* in the County remains no easier to establish. Identification, especially in autumn, remains challenging, and technical issues with eBird mean that some Pied Wagtail records are reassigned to this sub-species. Observers are requested to specifically mention *Motacilla alba* when reporting this species.

A total of 70 apparent individuals were recorded in 2020, substantially fewer than the 302 in 2019. One early January bird was omitted as the date is considered unlikely for a migrant, as were four present at Hanningfield Reservoir for much of December.

Of the remainder, just 11 records of 14 individuals were unambiguously regarded by observers as being of this race. All were singles recorded between 2nd March and 28th October, except for three at Coalhouse Fort East Tilbury on 22nd September and two north past Frinton-on-Sea on 18th March.

One intriguing record was of a female associating with seven Pied Wagtail gathering food presumably for young at Stow Maries on 17th-18th May, but breeding could not be proved.

The remaining reports, among them a juvenile at Dagenham Chase on 30th June, are presumed to be *Motacilla alba*. The first of the year was at Cockaynes Wood on 19th February. The main passage was at the end of March when seven were at Bradwell-on-Sea (Sales Point) and two at Tillingham on 24th. The last were three at Bradwell Bird Observatory on 6th-11th November.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Totals	0	3	15	11	4	1	2	5	13	13	3	0
Locations	0	2	7	8	4	1	1	4	6	5	1	0

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis* UK

Common resident and passage migrant.

After last year's upbeat assessment of breeding in the County (95+ pairs from 16 sites), this year's count was just 40 pairs from 21 locations. This is probably due to the constraints on observers' mobility during the first lockdown. However, it is still a continued improvement on 2018 (39 pairs from 19 sites). No, or very limited, data were received from five of 2019's strongholds.

In January and February counts of 30 or more came from nine sites (seven in 2019): Fingringhoe

Mill, 30 on 21st January; Fingringhoe (south west) 40 on 30th January; The Strood Mersea Island, 30 on 23rd January; River Roach, 60 on 2nd January; Wallasea Island, 60 on 5th January, 50 on 5th February; The Hythe Colchester, 50 on 23rd January; Abberton Reservoir, 70 on 2nd January, 50 on 24th January; Thorndon Country Park (North), 40 on 4th January, 30 on 7th February; King George V Reservoir Chingford, 35 on 19th January.

Migration past Frinton-on-Sea began slowly with two on 3rd March then increased mid-March with 22 on 19th, six on 20th and 11 on 27th, then peaking in April with 23 on 7th, 17 on 8th, four on 9th and 12 on 20th.

Peak counts during March were as follows: Hanningfield Reservoir, 30 on 4th; Wanstead Flats, 70 on 13th; Bradwell-on-Sea, 35 on 12th; Wanstead Park, 34 on 13th; The Strood Mersea Island, 30 on 2nd; King George V Reservoir Chingford, 20 on 3rd, 24 on 14th; Manor Farm North Ockendon, 23 on 26th; Bradwell Power Station, 22 on 13th; Walthamstow Wetlands, 20 on 19th.

Autumn passage began in earnest in September and continued to the end of November. Counts past Frinton-on-Sea totalled 5,400 (2,930 in September, 2,330 in October and just 140 in November), significantly more than the 4,623 recorded in 2019. Counts of over 300 were of 335 on 9th, 351 on 20th, and 315 on 29th. In October there were 511 on 6th, 348 on 7th and 390 on 9th.

Other large counts in the two main migration months were: Holland Haven, 250 on 29th September, 150 on 7th October; Colne Point, 239 on 28th September, 173 on 7th October; Bowers Marsh, 200 on 1st October; Wanstead Flats, 250 on 21st September, 310 on 5th October.

In the last two months of the year records were received from 139 sites, a significant improvement on 2019 (56 sites). Counts of 40 or more came from six sites: Salcott, 112 on 28th November; Wallasea Island, 40 on 9th November; Rainham Marshes, 40 on 11th December; East Tilbury (Gobions Pit), 50 on 23rd December; Boreham, 76 on 31st December; Hanningfield Reservoir, 40 on 4th and 45 on 28th November.

Observers are requested to send in all records to help establish the species' status in the County as numbers reported fluctuate significantly year on year.

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis trivialis* UK RED

A rare and decreasing summer visitor and passage migrant.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number	0	0	2	3	1	1	0	53	28	9	0	0

There was again no suggestion of breeding in the County in 2020, and an individual seen at Clacton-on-Sea on 19th June was most likely a very late migrant.

The first of the year was at Brook Farm Upminster on 24th March, earlier than last year's first by five days.

Autumn passage was moderate, extending from early August to mid-October. The last flew over Thorndon Park South, calling, on 15th October.

Estimated weekly totals during the peak period were:

	August				September			
	6th	13th	20th	27th	3rd	10th	17th	24th
Week No	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39
Wanstead Flats	0	3	9	11	0	3	0	0
Elsewhere inland	4	2	8	5	6	10	0	0
Elsewhere coast	0	2	3	1	5	1	2	1
Totals	4	7	20	17	11	14	2	1
Locations	3	4	6	5	8	8	2	1

Largest counts were of four at Wanstead Flats on 23rd August and in the Ingrebourne Valley on 24th August. There were three counts of three and 14 of two birds.

WATER PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta spinoletta* UK

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

Estimated monthly totals were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bowers Marsh	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
Fingringhoe Mill	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rainham Marshes	6	8	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	7
Vange Marsh	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Other sites	7	5	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	6	11
Totals	18	18	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	8	12	19
Locations	8	9	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	6	10	11

This is a return to lower numbers compared with 2019, particularly in the second winter, when it was, however, more widespread than in the early months of the year. The sporadic nature of observer coverage because of the second lockdown may be a factor. The data above represent the peak monthly number, so it is possible that some migration is overlooked.

Rainham Marshes is the principal location of observation in the County, as has been the case for many years. First winter peak counts there were of eight on 11th February, six on 29th January, five on 19th January, and four on 8th January and 19th February. In the second winter Rainham Marshes held seven on 28th December and four on 13th and 20th November and 11th and 18th December. Only Vange Marsh had similar numbers, with five on 18th March. The only other site to hold four birds was Lawling Creek Maylandsea on 11th December.

The last bird of the spring was at The Hythe Colchester, on 12th April, and the first of the second winter was at Rainham Marshes on 9th October.

EURASIAN ROCK PIPIT *Anthus petrosus*
Scandinavian Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus littoralis*

Passage migrant and winter visitor to the coast. Scarce passage migrant inland.

First winter records came from only 23 sites (63 in 2019) – as this period was before the lockdown, restrictions do not account for this decrease. Counts of five or more came from: Hamford Water, six on 7th January; Old Hall Marshes, ten on 8th January and six on 7th February; Tollesbury Wick, six on 8th January and five on 24 January.

There were ten records in March but only one in April, this being a migrant past Frinton-on-Sea on 5th.

First autumn arrival was one at West Thurrock Marshes on 9th August. Passage past Frinton-on-Sea was light, with a total of 23 during October (four on 9th, 10th and 13th; three on 22nd and 29th; singles on 6th, 8th, 23rd, 28th and 31st). Inland records included singles at Hanningfield Reservoir on 12th October, King George V Reservoir Chingford on 20th October, and Walthamstow Wetlands (14th and 16th October).

In the second winter, 11 sites held five or more birds, including: ten at The Naze on 4th November; up to 15 at Colne Point on various dates in December; 13 at Old Hall Marshes on 21st November; 12 at Tollesbury Wick on 3rd November.

Although records in Essex are usually of the Scandinavian race *Anthus petrosus littoralis*, most were reported as Eurasian Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*. Specific records of the Scandinavian race were received as follows. During the first winter: singles at St Osyth Beach on 2nd January, Manningtree on 15th January and Beckton Sewage Works on 24th January; Rainham Marshes, eight on 19th January and 12 on 11th February. A single first seen at King George V Reservoir Chingford on 22nd March, was still present on 1st April. In the second half of the year, records of 20 individuals came from eight sights, including Rainham Marshes where there were ten on 17th October and seven on 28th December.

Additional record for 2019: a juvenile was photographed at Hanningfield Reservoir on July 18th (CSh)

COMMON CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs gengleri/coelebs*

***F. c. gengleri* is an abundant but apparently declining resident whilst *F. c. coelebs* is a common passage migrant and winter visitor.**

In the breeding season, records came from around 290 locations (250 in 2019), with some evidence of breeding recorded in 87 of these (80 in 2019) although confirmed breeding was reported from just three sites. Locations where there were at least five territories reported were: Dagenham Chase (five); Bonnets Wood Corbets Tey (eight); Belhus Wood Aveley (seven); Clay Tye Wood Upminster (seven); Dunnings Lane Orsett (five); Orsett Fen (nine). There were several sites in 2019 where five or more territories were reported but from which no records came in 2020, probably due to the first lockdown restrictions.

In the first winter period, counts of 50 or more were recorded at 15 sites (14 in 2019). Four of these (six in 2019) had counts of three figures and were mainly in the Lee Valley: Seventy Acres Lake, 100 on 22nd January and 260 in wild bird cover on 2nd February; Fishers Green Holyfield, 100 on 17th February; Holyfield Hall Farm area, 200 on 8th January. The other notable count was 189 in a garden in Clacton-on-Sea on 26th and 28th March.

Spring passage was recorded on seven days in March from 16th at Frinton-on-Sea where the highest count was 2,059 in 4 hours on 27th seen in 98 flocks of up 130 birds. There were also four-figure counts of 1,466 in 3 hours on 28th March and 1,320 in three hours on 31st March with three-figure counts recorded on four other dates. Numbers tended to be higher when the wind was north, east or north-east.

Autumn passage at Frinton-on-Sea was higher than in 2019 but still considerably lower than in 2018. Cumulative totals for the months were: September, 132 in 109 hours (142 in 45 hours in 2019); October, 1,766 in 101 hours (813 in 94 hours in 2019); November, 273 in 92.5 hours (94 in 21.5 in 2019). The total for the three months was 2,171 (1,049 in 2019, 4,793 in 2018). There were four days on which the total of birds seen exceeded 200, the highest being 272 on 23rd October, an improvement on 2019 where the highest day total was 159.

In October, away from Frinton-on-Sea, passage or counts were considerably higher than in 2019. There were six sites (six in 2019) where three-figure counts were recorded: Fingringhoe Wick, 300 moving west in groups throughout the morning on 23rd October; Bradwell Bird Observatory, 300 going north on 16th October; Gunners Park Shoebury, 100 on 27th October; Rainham Marshes, 1,128 on 9th October (MJ *et al*); Beckton, 420 moving north-west also on 9th October; Wanstead Flats on eight dates from 9th October with the highest being 1,026 on 14th (WBi) and another notable count on 9th October of 435.

Records of significant counts reduced in November and December but there were ten counts of 50 or more (five in 2019). Three of these were of more than three figures (two in 2019): Seventy Acres Lake Holyfield, 110 on 9th November; Paglesham Lagoon (in nearby fields), 200 on 17th November and 100 on 26th December. Sites with 50 or more birds were: Ramsden Heath, 50 on 2nd November; Bradwell-on-Sea, 63 on 21st November; Stansted Airport, 80 on 21st November; West Hanningfield, 50 on 16th December; Goldhanger, 50 on 17th December; Osea Road Heybridge, 66 on 17th December.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor in variable numbers.

First winter numbers were low with only 11 birds reported in January and February (14 in 2019, 97 in 2018). Most of the March records were from Frinton-on-Sea where 45 were recorded in 13.5 hours although only two were recorded there in April. The totals for March and April excluding Frinton were just 13 (180 in 2019). Given the timing, the first lockdown is not a significant factor in the reduced observations.

Estimated monthly total were (months with no birds recorded not shown)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Frinton-on-Sea	0	0	45	2	1	33	13	0
Elsewhere	6	5	10	3	4	68	27	8
Totals	6	5	55	5	5	201	40	8
Locations	4	5	7	4	4	37	21	5

Autumn passage improved on 2019 with 241 birds in October and November (124 in 2019). The total count at Frinton of 46 was accumulated in 193 hours of watching. Double-figure counts (excluding Frinton) came from just two locations (four in 2019): Rainham Marshes, 28 on 9th October (MJ *et al*); Fingringhoe Ranges, 12 on 19th October. The last bird of the spring was one at The Strood Mersea Island on 19th April and the first bird of autumn was at Rainham Marshes on 19th September.

HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes coccothraustes* UK REX

Extremely rare, perhaps extinct, resident; rare passage migrant and winter visitor. Major influx autumn/winter 2017/18.

A significant improvement on 2019. Records of more than one bird came from the following sites:

Location	Maximum count	Date (s)
Danbury (Pheasant House Farm)	Six	31st January
Ongar Park Wood	Two	1st June
Hatfield Forest	Ten	13th January to 8th February
Brook Farm Upminster	Two	11th October

Single birds in the first half year were also seen at: Frinton-on-Sea, 20th March (with a group of Chaffinch) and 19th May, this bird also being seen at The Naze; Woodford Green, 27th March and 6th April; Thorndon Park (North), 7th February.

Single birds in the second half of the year were also seen at: The Naze, 4th October; Daws Heath (Pound Wood), 15th December; Thorndon Park, 17th July; Connaught Water Epping Forest, 9th October; Woodford Green, 9th October; Ingrebourne Valley, 6th September.

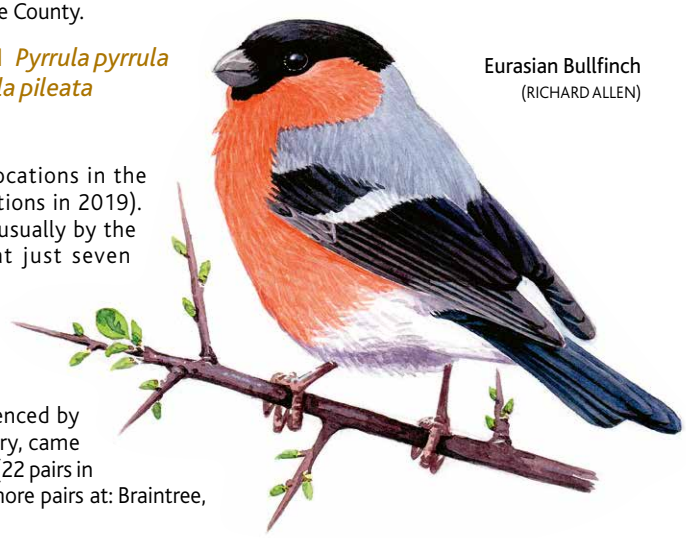
There was also a female calling, suggesting the possible presence of a juvenile at Hatfield Forest on 26th July (AD). This, and the presence of birds at Woodford Green and Thorndon Park in the breeding season, are just faint hopes that the species may again be resident in the County.

EURASIAN BULLFINCH *Pyrrula pyrrula*
Bullfinch *Pyrrula pyrrula pileata*
UK REX

Declining resident.

Records came from 74 locations in the breeding season (98 locations in 2019). Breeding was confirmed, usually by the presence of juveniles, at just seven locations: Copford, Braintree, Ongar Park Wood, two sites in the Langdon Hills area, Stapleford Tawney and Ingrebourne Valley.

Probable breeding, evidenced by pairs or permanent territory, came from a further 18 locations (22 pairs in 2019). There were two or more pairs at: Braintree,



Eurasian Bullfinch
(RICHARD ALLEN)

five (four in 2019) and Hutton Country Park, three. Other breeding season counts of more than two birds were at: Black Notley, five; Wrabness, four; Langdon Hills, four. As per 2019, records are centred in mid and north Essex but notably absent from many wooded areas. There was a notable decline in the Billericay area with no records from several former sites including Norsey Wood. An absence of records from seven sites which had two or more pairs in the breeding season in 2019 may have been due to the first lockdown but, overall, a continuing decline seems evident.

Late summer records of note were very few with three or more birds being seen at only 111 locations; the highest count being five at Belhus Woods Aveley on 1st August.

In the first winter period, records came from just 65 locations (105 in 2019), with only 31 being of two or more birds. Counts of five or more came from ten locations (11 locations in 2019). The most notable were: Wrabness, 12 on 25th February; Thorndon Park (North) ten on 7th February; Hatfield Forest, eight on 13th and 19th January.

In the second winter, sightings were more dispersed than they were for previous quarters with 107 records from 70 locations (105 from 48 locations in 2019). Counts of five or more came from four sites (three in 2019): Chigborough Lakes, six on 13th October; Leez Reservoir, six on 7th November; Doddinghurst, five on 12th December and Thorndon Park (North), five also on 12th December.

EUROPEAN GREENFINCH *Chloris chloris chloris*

Common but recently declined resident and passage migrant.

A substantial increase in records received this year probably due to the first lockdown allowing observers to record garden and local patch sightings of this partly urban species. From April to June 1,149 records were received from 276 sites (521 from around 174 in 2019).

In the breeding season, records came from 276 sites with confirmed breeding at 11 of these and probable breeding at 43. (Breeding season records comprise all records for April-July plus any records of confirmed breeding, and some of probable breeding, in March and August). There were two locations with more than five pairs: Braintree, eight, where the species was reported to stable or possibly declining; Galleywood, at least six pairs. There were no other reports of locations with five or more males holding territories (five in 2019). There were, however, seven other sites where double-figure counts were reported during the breeding season but with no breeding evidence submitted.

Many observers commented on garden sightings as being infrequent or scarce. Positive news came from Old Hall Marshes, where the species had returned after 2-3 years absence, and Rayne with several males displaying after a few years absence.

Post breeding double-figure counts came from ten locations (seven in 2019) with the highest count being 16 in the Ingrebourne Valley on 5th September.

In the first winter period, records came from 168 locations (198 in 2019) but, as per 2019, most observations were of small numbers and there were no counts of 50 or more (one in 2019). Counts of 30 or more (other than at Frinton-on-Sea) came from just five sites: West Canvey Marsh, 30 on 1st February; Bowers Marsh, 35 on 7th February; Wat Tyler, 30 on 19th January; Sunnymead Farm Wivenhoe, 32 on 30th January and 35 on 17th March; Great Baddow, 36 on 1st January.

There was more evidence of spring migration at Frinton-on-Sea than in 2019: birds recorded on six dates in March totalling 164 with the highest being 41 on 27th March; 13 recorded in April (2nd). Autumn passage was even more light than in 2019. At Frinton-on-Sea birds were recorded on six dates in October totalling 98 and three dates in November totalling just 39 birds. Other evidence of passage was at Gunners Park Shoebury with 63 birds moving south-west in two flocks on 1st October.

Double-figure counts during the autumn/second winter came from 23 locations (11 in 2019), the higher counts (35 or more) being at Bowers Marsh, 40+ on 24th November; Brentwood (Cemetery), roosting flocks totalling 37 on 20th December; Great Baddow, 35 on 29th November; West Canvey Marsh, 35 on 26th November.

There were only two autumn records of more than 50 birds: Chigborough Lakes, a roost of 75 in reeds on 26th November; Writtle, a nowadays unprecedented and welcome circa 300 on 27th October (MH).

TWITE *Linaria flavirostris pipilans/flavirostris* UK

Both sub-species are very rare passage migrants and winter visitors.

Records in the first winter were very localised. The 28 seen at Bradwell Bird Observatory in December 2019 were seen again on 5th January 2020. Other records were of one or two on ten dates from 4th January to 6th February at three locations in the Tilbury area. In the second period of the year only one record was received: a single at Frinton-on-Sea on 15th October.

COMMON LINNET *Linaria cannabina cannabina* UK REX

Common but declined resident and passage migrant.

In the breeding season, records came from 228 locations (182 in 2019, similar to 2018 and 2017) with probable or confirmed breeding in 48 of these. This increase may be due to higher than usual observations on local patches and after first lockdown restrictions were eased. Conversely, lockdown restrictions caused few or no breeding records from sites which usually have good numbers, such as Rainham Marshes and Foulness Island. Counts of five or more pairs on breeding territories came from Ongar Park Wood, five (reported as best year since 2010); Braintree, seven (reported as stable); Lawling Creek Maylandsea, six; The Naze, where five families and two pairs were counted.

Other sites that probably had more than five pairs were Limbourne Creek Maldon and Colne Point where counts of 20 or more birds included some pairs.

Records of recently fledged young included one on 1st September at Coalhouse Fort East Tilbury (SSw).

During the first winter, three-figure counts came from eight sites (nine in 2019): Fingringhoe Wick, 120 on 24th January; The Strood Mersea Island, 200 on 7th April and 100 on 8th April; Abberton Reservoir, 100 on 4th January; Tollesbury Wick, 150 on 24th January; East Tilbury, 200+ on 5th January, 160 on 9th January and 150+ on 19th January; Beckton, 100 on 1st January; Mount Bures, c200 on 2nd January; Lee Valley Holyfield Farm, 150 on 8th February. Winter flocks continued into April but none were three-figure counts. There was an interesting count of 50 during the breeding season at Tilbury (Princess Margaret Road) on 13th May (PS).

At Frinton-on-Sea, spring migration was primarily during April: counts (2019 numbers in brackets) were:

	Mar	Apr	May
Number of hours of observation	66 (14.5)	98.5 (20)	67.5 (8.5)
Highest Day count	14 [26th]	309 [19th]	6 [1st]
Total	14 (61)	1314 (327)	8 (56)

Post-breeding flocks of more than three figures came from four sites (six in 2019): Colne Point: 101 on 10th and 14th September; Abberton Reservoir, 100 on 4th September; Dengie Flats, 165 on 5th September and Rainham Marshes, 100 on 4th September.

Passage at Frinton-on-Sea was again notable only in October. The total for the three months September-November was 2,454 which was less than in 2019 (3,705) but higher than in previous years (720 in 2018, 1,653 in 2017). Numbers of Common Linnet at Frinton-on-Sea during autumn:

	Sep	Oct	Nov
Number of hours of observation	108.75	101.24	92.5
Highest Day count	75 [20th]	505 [9th])	27 [4th]
Total	302	2075	76

There were 40 records of three-figure counts from 14 other locations and these counts were much higher in 2020 than in recent years, averaging 308 birds (170 in 2019). Counts of 200 or more were reported from six sites: West Hanningfield, 200+ on 16th December and circa 235 on 30th December; Colne Point, 200 on 5th October; Cockaynes Wood Wivenhoe circa 200 on 7th December; Mersea Island, 200 on 29th November.

The numbers of sites recording three-figure wintering flocks were ten in the first winter (January-March) and nine in the second winter (November-December). Annual numbers of three-figure wintering flocks have been:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Total flocks	167	176	211	237	262	432	323	201	321	336
100+	19	11	12	11	6	8	5	12	10	10

LESSER REDPOLL *Acanthis cabaret* UK REX

Formerly resident, now a scarce and decreasing passage migrant and winter visitor.

In the first winter, numbers were very low, (following on from 2019), with an estimated 29 birds from nine sites. The largest flock was of 11 at Shenfield on 22nd January. There was an interesting mid-summer record of a single bird on 2nd July at Feering. The autumn/second winter saw a significant increase in numbers on 2019 and 2018. In September, birds were reported from 25 locations, initially in small numbers from 9th (with the exception of 20 at Abberton Reservoir on 10th), then. building to double-figure counts as follows: Wanstead Flats, 15 on 21st; The Naze, 14 also on 21st; Holland Haven, 10+ on 22nd and 30+ on 29th; Brook Farm Upminster, 11 on 27th September and Thorndon Park (North), 40 on 30th. The species was widespread throughout October with records from 68 locations. There was only one three-figure count: 195 at Colne Point on 7th where 88 were seen on 27th. Other notable counts (40 or more) were: Gunners Park Shoebury, 40 on 27th October; Wanstead Flats, 62 on 17th October; Chafford Gorge Grays, 42 on 27th October and at Grays (Mill Wood) also 42 on the same date may have been the same flock.

Records were widespread again in November, when it was noted from 57 locations, with the highest counts (40 or more) being from: Gunpowder Park Waltham Abbey, 73 on 6th; Belhus Woods Aveley, 63 on 3rd and Wanstead Flats, 50 on 7th. In December, numbers reduced with the only notable count being 40 at Wanstead Flats.

Estimated monthly totals below are based on the assumption that records from the same location in the same month were often repeated observations of the same bird, therefore only the maximum count has been used.

Estimated monthly total of Lesser Redpoll in 2020:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Total	15	11	6	0	0	0	1	0	218	1255	720	289

RED CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra curvirostra*

Has bred. Irregular visitor in very variable numbers.

After a series of poor years, 2020 was rewarding, featuring birds arriving from May and being observed in all months until November, albeit observations were thinly spread and mainly of single-figure parties of birds. There were four at Holland Haven on 21st March and one at The Naze the following day. A lack of records in April may in part be due to the first lockdown. In May, observations resumed with five at Frinton-on-Sea and one at The Naze. There were many observations throughout June with the highest numbers on the coast being at The Naze, (17 on 8th) and Frinton (14 on 10th and 18 on 25th). Birds started to be seen inland in June mainly in single numbers from eight sites with the highest being at Danbury (six on 19th), Buckhurst Hill (12 on 20th) and Harold Wood Park (13 on 30th). Sightings came from a further 13 inland sites in July, the most notable being Danbury (eight on 15th), Wanstead Park (13 on 6th) and Bowers Marsh (eight on 24th). All other double-figure parties were at Frinton with the highest count being 59 on the 6th. In August, numbers reduced, comprising nine records of 1-4 birds in dispersed locations, mainly inland. There were ten records in September, three of which came from Frinton, the highest count being ten on 9th. Inland the highest numbers were near Harold Hill (Maylands Golf Club, seven on 4th), Rayne (eight on 20th) and Thorndon Park South (seven on 28th).

In October the records surged to 41 from 23 locations. Double-figure counts were all from Frinton. The notable inland counts were both on 9th: Walthamstow Wetlands (eight) and Epping Forest (nine). There were just seven records in November from five locations. The last of the year was nine at Brook Farm Upminster on 23rd November although December observations may have been reduced by winter travel restrictions.

Estimated monthly totals were:

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Frinton	0	0	0	63	114	0	13	110	20
Other Coastal sites*	5	0	6	33	9	3	6	48	2
Inland	0	0	0	46	49	13	26	54	16
Total	5	0	6	142	172	16	45	212	38

**includes records within 1km of the coast or estuaries*

EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis britannica*

Common but declined resident and passage migrant.

Records in the breeding season came from 387 locations, considerably more than in recent years (282 in 2019 and 270 in 2018). This is probably due to increased observations on local patches during the first lockdown and after the relaxing of restrictions in late spring. However, this additional coverage did not extend to breeding records which were confirmed in just 11 locations (13 in 2019) with probable breeding in a further 34. This is likely to be an understatement of actual breeding which requires patient observation due to the secretive nature of the adults - as confirmed by the accidental discovery of a nest of three young in a bay tree near Old Hall Marshes. The long breeding season of the species was evident. Pairs and permanent territories were reported in March and early April, the first nest record was at Colne Point on 3rd April (16th April in 2019 at the same site) and eggs hatched near Old Hall Marshes on 29th April. In the summer a bird was seen with possible nest material in the Ingrebourne Valley on 29th July. The only significant count of breeding territories was in the Braintree area with an estimate of 20+ pairs (20 in 2019).

During the first winter records came from 244 locations (285 in 2019). Counts of 50 or more birds came from just two locations (six in 2019): Tollesbury Wick, 50 on 14th January; Gunpowder Park Waltham Abbey, 84 on 31st January.

Spring passage at Frinton-on-Sea was much more evident than last year:

	Mar	Apr	May
Number of hours of observation	66	98.5	67.5
Highest Day count	62 [19th]	148 [19th]	35 [2nd]
Total (2019 in brackets)	289 (5)	1026 (66)	152 (11)

A few small flocks were recorded in May: 20 at Rewsalls Marsh West Mersea on 26th May, 20 at Two Tree Island on 18th May and inland 19 and 18 at Middleton (near Sudbury) on 12th and 14th May respectively although it is not known if these included juveniles. At Brook Farm Upminster, 21 on 28th/30th May included 5-6 fledged young.

Late summer counts of more than 50 are shown below:

	Jul	Aug	Sept
The Naze			60(16th)
Jaywick			85 (15th)
Fingringhoe Ranges MoD			75(7th)
Bradwell Bird Observatory			70 (30th)
Bowers Marsh RSPB	100(26th)		

	Jul	Aug	Sept
East Tilbury Marshes			50 (18th)
East Tilbury		80 (27th)	
Coalhouse Fort East Tilbury		50(24th)	74(8th)
West Thurrock Marshes		70 (9th)	
Abberton Reservoir		100 (14th)	100(12th &19th)
Fordham		50 (8th)	
Thorndon Park South		50 (2nd)	
Chafford Gorges EWT		53 (5th)	
Mardyke Fen		100 (31st)	
Gunpowder Park Waltham Abbey			51(7th)

Autumn counts passing Frinton-on-Sea were again comparable with the record year of 2017 and considerably exceeded it in November. Counts were as follows:

	Sep	Oct	Nov
No. of hours of observation	108.75	101.24	92.5
Highest Day count	92(29th)	2,480(9th)	392 (4th)
Month Total	**256**	**11,462**	**2,160**
Month Total 2019	172	15,457	785
Month Total 2018	16	2,512	606
Month total 2017	978	17,269	925

Regular autumn recording at Colne Point was very much concentrated in October:

	Sep	Oct	Nov
No. of days of counts	19	20	19
Highest Day count	21 (30th)	1114(7th)	103 4th)
Month Total	**125**	**4284**	**381**
Month Total 2019	217	2,600	86

Other three-figure autumn/ second winter counts received:

Holland Haven,	600+ on 7th October and 110 on 25th October;
Jaywick,	165 on 8th October;
Gunners Park, Shoebury,	475 on 27th October
Coalhouse Fort,	100 on 1st October
East Tilbury,	100 on 6th October
Abberton Reservoir,	100 on 29th December

As in 2019 there were no three-figure counts in November.

Other than at Frinton-on-Sea and Colne Point there were 32 further records received of counts of 50 or more from ten locations from October-December. The highest on the coast were: The Naze, 81 on 17th October; Holland Haven, 93 on 15th October; Shoebury East Beach, 89 on 6th October. Inland highest counts: Stanford Rivers, 60 on 30th November; Lee Valley King George Reservoir Chingford, 79 on 20th October; Gunpowder Park Waltham Abbey, 80 on 22nd November and 60 on 2nd December; Fair Play Farm Upminster, 68 on 12th October.

In December there were 65 records of birds in double-figures from a total of 309 records (32 from 186 records in 2019), which did buck the recent trend of declining wintering numbers.

EUROPEAN SERIN *Serinus serinus*

Rare passage migrant. **EBSIP (14, 23, 38)**

Frinton-on-Sea	Calling ♂ flying north	25th May	PBr

EURASIAN SISKIN *Spinus spinus*

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

The year was memorable for a spectacular movement into the County in the autumn. In the first winter, 65 records came from 33 locations (127 from 71 in 2019). Inland there were two flocks of 50 or more: 50+ in Norsey Wood Billericay on 5th January and 60+ at Marks Hall Coggeshall (Arboretum) on 1st February. There were no records of breeding for the fourth consecutive year although a few records of single birds came in the breeding season from Rayne (12th May), Canewdon (5th June) and Thaxted (8th June).

A single at The Naze on 5th June may have been the first of an influx that started in early summer and continued into the autumn. At Frinton-on-Sea, 88 were counted across six days in June, 67 of these being seen in six hours on 29th, and 153 were counted across 11 days in July with a notable movement of 12 flocks comprising 106 birds on 6th. Elsewhere in July, 60 were counted across 22 locations. There was a comparative lull in August with just one on 13th at Dagnam Park Harold Hill then two also in Harold Hill on 29th and ten at Bedfords Park Havering-atte-Bower on 30th. On the final day of August, records came from seven locations including double-figure counts at Mundon (11) and Frinton-on-Sea (18 in four hours).

The species was seen on every day in September and numbers recorded totalled approximately 8,300 across 89 locations. All the counts of 50 or more were from coastal areas and comprised birds flying over in small flocks. Of the day counts, 24 were three-figure, the most notable being from Frinton, 878 on 28th September, many coming in off the sea, and 572 on 16th – both of these exceeded the previous day record of 559 in September 2008. Also notable were 460 on 16th September at The Naze, moving north in flocks of 10-15.

In October the movement throughout the County continued with numbers totalling approximately 7,850 across 79 locations. Highest day counts were again at Frinton: more than 500 were recorded on 1st (563), 5th (754), 7th (918) and 9th (692). Inland there were two counts of 50 or more: South Benfleet (although this could be classified as a coastal site), 78 on 1st October feeding in trees around gardens; Lee Valley, 80 on 3rd. In November the movement reduced with 1,805 counted from 60 locations. In December the movement almost ceased and there were just a few records of small flocks of birds with some lingering, with the only counts of 50 or more being: circa 70 at Marks Hall Wood Coggeshall (arboretum) on 18th and circa 70 at Great Monks Wood on 19th.

Total recorded autumn movement through principle coastal sites:

	Sep	Oct	Nov
The Naze	1245	204	8
Frinton	4757	5265	1139
Holland Haven	465	186	34
Gunners Park	490	102	0

Estimated monthly total were

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Coast*	1	1	349	30	0	94	18	25	7203	6700	1245	3
Inland	153	102	72	6	1	10	195	30	1030	1148	560	429
Total	154	103	421	36	1	104	213	55	8300	7848	1805	432

**includes records within 1km of the coast or estuaries.*

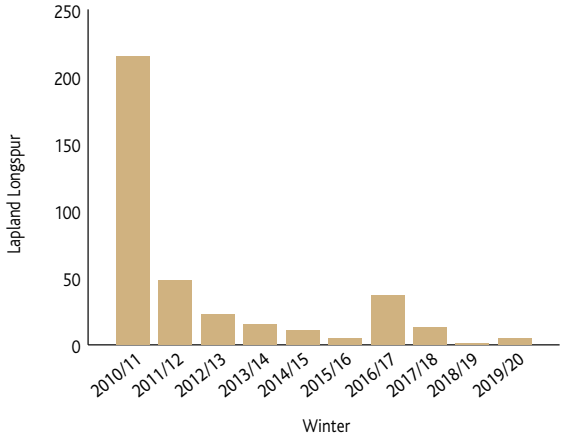
LAPLAND LONGSPUR *Calcarius lapponicus lapponicus* (Lapland Bunting) UK

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor in variable numbers.

Another poor year with just four records of five birds:

Roper's Farm/Barling Marsh	One	8th February
The Naze	One	19th September
Frinton-on-Sea	One	28th September
Stow Marsh South Woodham Ferrers	Two	6th November

A species that is prone to significant fluctuations in occurrence, numbers have varied over the last decade from the largest ever influx into the County in the winter of 2010/11 to just a single bird in 2018/19:



SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis insulae/nivalis* UK

***P. n. insulae* is a passage migrant and local winter visitor with *P. n. nivalis* perhaps also, rarely, occurring.**

Apart from a flock of 10-11 at The Naze on 1st-3rd January, all records came from Colne Point in the first half of the year with three birds on 6th-9th January, increasing to four from 19th-31st January and the last record involving three on 1st February.

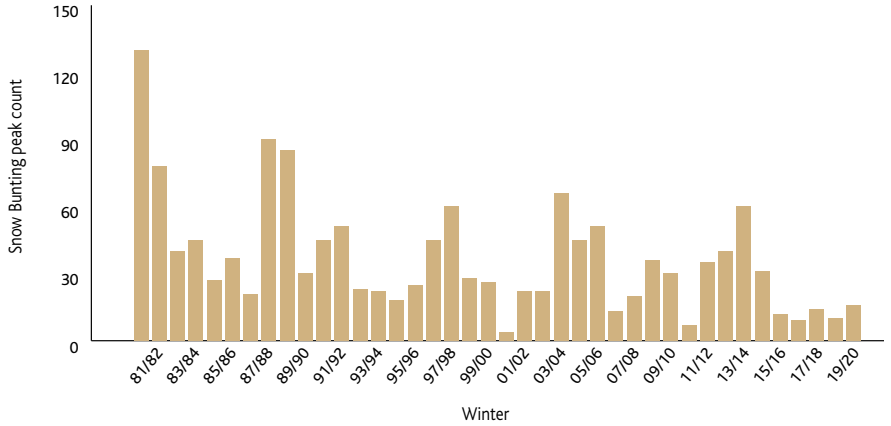
The first bird of the autumn was not until 7th October when one was at Cudmore Grove East Mersea, remaining into November with numbers increasing to three on 30th November and four on 31st December. None were recorded elsewhere during October but there were singles at The Naze on 4th November, Dengie from 10th-14th November and Frinton-on-Sea/Holland Haven on 20th, with nine at The Naze on the same date.

During December, birds were noted from five sites: Irlam's Beach Dovercourt, one on 28th; The Naze, one on 12th; Jaywick, up to three (on 17th); Cudmore Grove East Mersea, up to four (on 31st); Coalhouse Fort East Tilbury, one on 5th-6th.

Monthly totals were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Totals	15	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	11	7
Sites	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	5

Assessing winter totals of this species is particularly difficult as observation suggests that a single flock wanders widely around the mouth of the Colne/Blackwater and probably along the north-east coast and into the Hamford Water area. However, the peak individual site count recorded each winter over the last decade reveals a steady decline in numbers:



CORN BUNTING *Emberiza calandra calandra* UK REX

Declining resident.

The numbers of singing males/territories recorded was severely affected by the first lockdown. In all, a total of about 120 males/territories were reported from 42 sites (233 from 30 in 2019). However, the upside of lockdown was that many additional sites in the wider countryside were surveyed. If we assume that counts at those sites that did not return data for 2020 were the same as in 2019, the total number of pairs/territories this year would have been well in excess of 270.

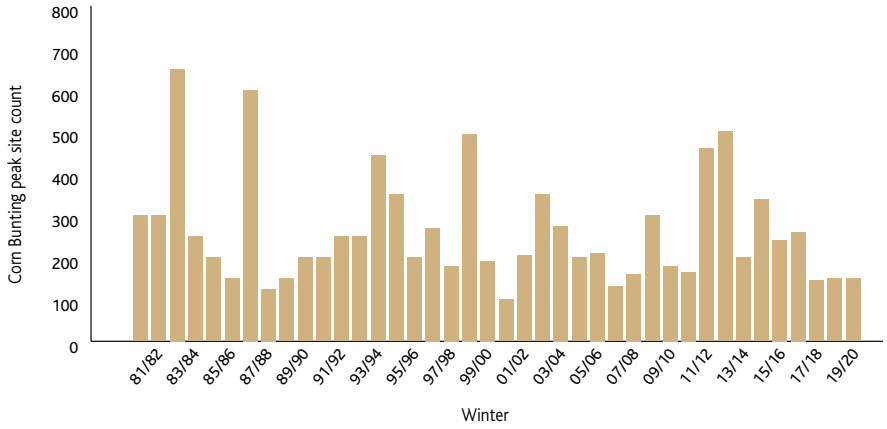
Sites reporting three or more singing males/territories were: Little Bromley, four; Maldon (west), three; Mundon (Wash-Sluice), eight; Lawling Creek Maylandsea, nine; Latchingdon, eight; Steeple, three; Bradwell Bird Observatory, four; Blue House Farm, six; Althorne Creek, eight; Clementsgreen Creek South Woodham Ferrers, four; South Fambridge, five; Paglesham, eight; Bulphan/South Ockendon area, seven; Great Stambridge, five; Chafford Gorges Grays, three.

Double-figure counts came from a total of 14 sites (21 in 2019) during the first winter period, with counts of 50+ coming from four (six in 2019) at which the peak counts were, all in January: Abberton, 70 on 1st; Mundon (east of Old Church), 70 on 27th; Burnham-on-Crouch, 90 on 15th; Stow Marsh South Woodham Ferrers, 55 on 10th.

Late summer counts were again low with 30 at Lower Ray Pits Canewdon on 31st August the only significant record.

The second winter period saw double-figure counts from 23 sites (16 in 2019) with counts of 50+ from four (six in 2019), at which peak counts were: Colne Point, 72 on 29th November; Mundon (east of Old Church), 65 on 17th December; Bradwell Bird Observatory, 60 on 14th October and 1st December; Stow Marsh South Woodham Ferrers, 75 on 27th November.

Assessing population changes in this relatively sedentary species using the data that the Society has received over several decades is difficult. However, graphically illustrating the largest individual site count recorded in each of the last 40 autumn/winter periods produces a clear negative trend. This is consistent with the known national decline of this species:



YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citrinella caliginosa* UK REX

***E. c. caliginosa* is a common but declining resident, whilst *E. c. citrinella* may be a scarce migrant.**

As a farmland species that breeds at low concentrations across much of the County, it is perhaps not surprising that one result of the first lockdown was that more records of Yellowhammer were received during 2020 than in recent years. A total of 213 singing males/pairs were reported from 81 sites (198 at 65 in 2019). The total would have been nearer to 300 males/pairs if those sites in the north of the County that are surveyed diligently in recent years had been included, assuming similar counts to 2019.

Counts of three or more males/pairs came from: Little Bromley, four; Holyfield Hall Farm, three; near Thaxted, 21 in a survey of four x 1km squares; Great Henny, three; Aldham, eight; Coggeshall, six; Epping, four; Greensted, four; Toot Hill, five; Doddinghurst, three; Mountnessing, seven; West Horndon, three; Great Notley Country Park, three; Black Notley, five; Terling, three; Hatfield Peverel, three; Great Totham, three; west of Maldon, four; Stow Maries, three; Latchingdon, six; Steeple, five; North Fambridge, three; Althorne, four; Mardyke, four; Fen Lane North Ockendon, four; Manor Farm North Ockendon, three; Orsett Fen, seven.

In the first winter period, counts of 10 or more came from 25 sites (22 in 2019) with more than 20 at 12 (seven in 2019): Sunnymead Farm Wivenhoe, 39 on 30th January (76 were trapped/retrapped, from previous sessions, during the year); Bowsers Farm Hadstock 20 on 1st February; Richmonds Green Thaxted, 21 on 2nd February; Greenstead Green, 50 on 11th March; Mole Hall Widdington, a peak of 35 on 12th February; Docura's Farm Little Horkesley, 20 on 5th January; Fordham, 20 on 3rd February; Langham, 20 on 5th January; Good Easter, 135 on 12th January; Leez Reservoir Hartford End, a peak of 30 on 11th February; Little Leighs 20 on 2nd January; Fair Play Farm Upminster, a peak of 52 on 13th February.

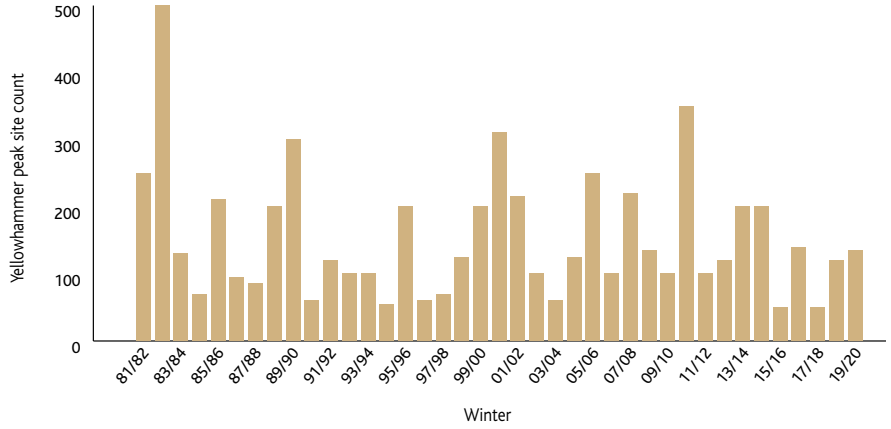
Small double-figure counts were noted into April although there were just three of 20 or more: Black Notley, a peak of 45 on 2nd; Greenstead Green, 40 on 13th; Havering-atte-Bower, 20 on 13th.

There were no obvious late summer counts of any size except for an exceptional 50 at Elmdon on 28th September.

In the second autumn/winter period, there were double-figure counts from 14 sites (17 in 2019) with counts of 20 or more coming from seven (six in 2019): The Hythe Colchester, 30 on 17th October and 30th December; near Old Hall Marshes, 33 on 21st October; Rayne, 36 on 20th December; near Tolleshunt d'Arcy, 25 on 30th November; Leez Reservoir/Priory a peak of 55 on 7th November; Thorndon Park, 20 on 9th December; Fairplay Farm Upminster, 23 on 10th November.

Using the same simple method of analysing and illustrating the data graphically, used for Corn Bunting above, again produces a negative trend:

If the exceptional count of 500 in 1982/83 had been more typical, the trend would have been almost be flat. Indeed, after a clear decline in the 1990s, counts appeared to improve in the 2000s before declining again from the mid-2010s. The overall pattern of decline is similar to the national one.



COMMON REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus schoeniclus* UK REX

Much declined resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Numbers reported declined to total of around 220 singing males/territories from 70 sites compared to the 388 from 71 in 2019, principally due to the first lockdown causing an absence of counts from sites holding traditionally large breeding populations. Assuming that 2020 counts at these 'missing' sites would have been similar to those in 2019, adding these to the 220 in 2020 would have given a figure of around 400 pairs from 73 sites.

The first winter period saw double-figure counts from just 15 sites with counts of more than 20 from five (30 and ten in 2019): Mole Hall Widdington, 24 on 12th February; Sunnymead Farm Wivenhoe, 21 on 30th January; Tollesbury Wick, 75 on 18th January; Bradwell Bird Observatory, a peak of 37 on 12th January; Wallasea Island, 40 on 5th February.

Spring passage is often discerned by the presence of an increased number of males in particular passing through inland sites although this did not appear to be as noticeable this year, presumably due to limits on observers' movements, although the fact that just one apparent migrant was reported from Frinton-on-Sea (in February) compared to 15 in 2019 perhaps points to a weaker passage than last year.

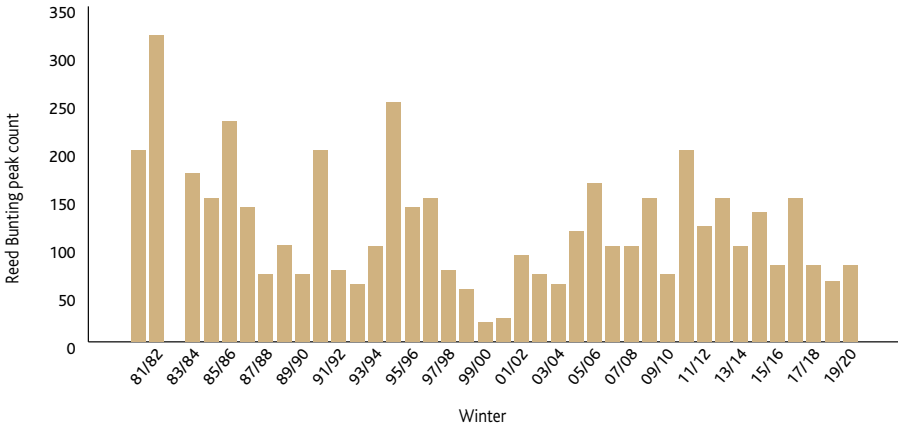
A small handful of double-figure counts in August and September presumably related to local birds, although there may be some local movement occurring. A count of 50 roosting in a reed bed at Wallasea Island on 19th September is notable, whilst there were 28 at Old Hall Marshes on 28th September.

Autumn passage was discerned at Frinton-on-Sea where a total of 58 headed south in almost 38 hours observation (102 in 2019) between 30th September and 28th October, including peaks of 12 on 10th and nine on 22nd October. Elsewhere, signs of autumn passage were not forthcoming, no doubt in part due to second lockdown restrictions.

During the second winter period double-figure counts came from 21 localities with more than 20 recorded from seven (ten and three from 2019): Colne Point, a peak of 27 on 7th October; Tollesbury Wick, 30 on 17th December; Tolleshunt d'Arcy, 40 on 30th November; Osea Road Heybridge, 34 on

17th December; Goldhanger, 21 on 17th December; Bradwell-on-Sea, 28 on 9th November; Ingrebourne Valley, 30 on 22nd November.

Using the same method as above for Corn Bunting and Yellowhammer reveals the steady decline in numbers that the species is experiencing nationally:



The analysis of the Society's data consistently points to population declines of all our breeding buntings. This indicates that we do not yet have effective policies and schemes to reverse the continued decline of birds in the wider countryside.

APPENDIX I: CATEGORY D SPECIES

SNOW GOOSE *Anser caerulescens*

Scarce and wandering feral resident

Three were reported at Holyfield Hall Farm on 17th May and again nearby at Fishers Green Holyfield on 19th May.

RUDDY SHELDUCK *Tadorna ferruginea*

S.E.Europe, central and south-east Asia

A ♀ was at Abberton Reservoir from 26th July through to 29th August. Singles were reported at three locations: Stour Estuary, 26th July to 10th September; Bradwell-juxta-Coggeshall Gravel Pit, 20th September; Braintree (Braintree Golf Club), 21st September to an unspecified date in December.

WOOD DUCK *Aix Sponsa*

North America

Seventy Acres Lake Holyfield	Two	29th April	(SPp)

APPENDIX II: CATEGORY E SPECIES

FULVOUS WHISTLING-DUCK *Dendrocygna bicolour*

Southern USA southwards to north and eastern South America

Connaught Water Epping Forest	One	13th October

BLACK SWAN *Cygnus atratus*

Australia and New Zealand.

There were again no reports of breeding.

There were 205 reports throughout the year mainly from two areas, Abberton Reservoir and the Stour Estuary where the maximum count was four. The maximum count at Abberton Reservoir was two on 13th December. There were two reported at Hall Marsh Scrape Waltham Abbey on 11th January. Elsewhere, singles were reported from: Holland Haven, 23rd January - 18th March; Frinton-on-Sea, 2nd June; on the River Crouch near Hullbridge, 6th September. It is difficult to ascertain the population overall but a reasonable estimate is 7-8.

Annual totals over the last decade have been:-

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
Numbers	7+	9+	10+	8+	10+	12	3-4	11	11	9+	16+
Locations	13	11	13	11	12	9	3	5	7	11	13

SWAN GOOSE *Anser cygnoides*

Northern China, Mongolia, and S.E. Russia

Abberton Reservoir	One	30th May
Heybridge Gravel Pit	One	8th September
Hanningfield Reservoir	One	2nd January - 12th May

BAR-HEADED GOOSE *Anser indicus*

Central Asia

Hanningfield Reservoir	One	3rd August - 23rd September.
Rainham Marshes	One	1st - 11th January.
Dagenham Chase	One	4th February - 13th February
Fairlop Waters Barkingside	One	3rd July

RADJAH SHELDUCK *Radjah radjah*

Indonesia, New Guinea and Australia

Brook Farm Upminster	One	23rd August to 11th October

MUSCOVY DUCK *Cairina moschata*

Central and South America

Thurrock Thameside Mucking	One	12th June
Stanford Warren	One	15th December
Rainham Marshes	One	11th January
Hainault Forest	One	throughout the year

RINGED TEAL *Callonetta leucophrys*

South America

Connaught Water Epping Forest	Two	13th December
Warren Pond Epping Forest	One	14th December

WHITE-CHEEKED PINTAIL *Anas bahamensis*

Caribbean and mainly central South America

Abberton Reservoir	One	10th-21st April
Abberton Reservoir	One	15th November - 20th December
Hooks Marsh Walthan Abbey	One	22nd August

HOODED MERGANSER *Laphodytes cucullatus*

A single ♀ was reported from King George V Reservoir Chingford on 7th and 11th March and at Connaught Water Epping Forest between 9th May and 7th July, and then again on 9th October. A ♂ was also noted at William Girling Reservoir Chingford on 20th September.

HYBRID DUCKS AND GEESE

Scaup-Tufted Duck ♀ hybrid	Hanningfield Reservoir	One	18th September.
Tufted Duck-Common Pochard hybrid	Thurrock Thameside Mucking	One	throughout the year

HARRIS'S HAWK *Parabuteo unicinctus*

South, Central and North America

Witham	One	throughout the year

RED-TAILED HAWK *Buteo jamaicensis*

North and Central America and Caribbean

West Canvey Marsh	One	30th July

REEVE'S PHEASANT *Syrmaticus reevesii*

North and Central China

Braxted Park	One	12th April

HELMETED GUINEAFOWL *Numida Meleagris*

Southern Africa

The species was reported 'present', but with numbers unspecified, from Braxted Park on 25th March and Kelvedon on 14th May.

Up to 12 were at Galleywood Common between 24th July and 10th September and four were at Navestock on 28th May.

INDIAN PEAFOWL *Pavo cristatus*

South Asia

Marks Hall Coggeshall	One	26th January - 13th March
Kelvedon	One	3rd April - 14th May
Braxted Park	One	23rd April
North Weald	One	18th June
Ongar Park Wood	One	23rd June

COCKATIEL *Nymphus hollandicus*

Australia

Cattawade	One	22nd January
Rochford (Rochford Golf Club)	One	12th July

BUDGERIGAR *Melopsittacus undulatus*

Australia

Wanstead Flats	One	9th September

WHITE-CHEEKED TURACO *Tauraco leucotis*

Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea

Wanstead Flats	One (Probably the one occasionally reported in the area since October 2009)	1st June
Braintree (Pentlow)	One	17th May

Unsubstantiated records 2020

Corn Crake	Bradwell-on-Sea	28th August
Common Crane	Maningtree-Cattawade	1st April
Red Phalarope	Tollesbury Wick	16th October
Sabine's Gull	Canvey Point	2nd October
Iceland Gull	Rainham Marsh	10th January
Long-tailed Jaeger	Canvey Point	17th September
Atlantic Puffin	Canvey Point	27th September
White Stork	Colchester	7th April
Glossy Ibis	Wivenhoe	19th September
Glossy Ibis	Leyton Flats	28th November
Montagu's Harrier	Bradwell-on-Sea	4th August
Black Kite	Gosfield	5th September
Eurasian Scops Owl	Brentwood	6th January
Red-backed Shrike	Holland Haven	1st September
Great Grey Shrike	Elmstead Market	18th December
Eurasian Golden Oriole	Epping Forest	27th May
Woodlark	Woodford Green	31st March
Woodlark	Brook Farm Upminster	22nd April
Woodlark	Mardyke Valley Stifford-Avely	25th April
Woodlark	Cornmill Meadows Waltham Abbey	25th April
Woodlark	Brook Farm Upminster	15th September
Woodlark	Wanstead Flats	17th September
Woodlark	Weald Park	20th September
Woodlark	Brook Farm Upminster	5th October
Woodlark	Rainham Marshes	9th October
Woodlark	Wigboro Wick Farm St Osyth	9th October
Woodlark	Epping Forest (Pole Hill)	12tth October
Woodlark	The Naze	19th October
Woodlark	Arlesford	3rd November
Woodlark	Gunners Park Shoebury	4th November
Red-rumped Swallow	Sewardstone Marsh	13th April
Red-rumped Swallow	The Naze	18th May
Pallas's Leaf Warbler	Shoebury East Beach	14th October
Pallas's Leaf Warbler	The Naze	9th November
Dusky Warbler	The Naze	3rd October
Dusky Warbler	The Naze	26th-27th November
Siberian Chiffchaff	Beckton	18th January – 8th February
Siberian Chiffchaff	Walthamstow Wetlands	26th November-7th December
Marsh Warbler	The Naze	11th June
Dartford Warbler	Goldhanger	7th February
Dartford Warbler	Purfleet	15th October
Dartford Warbler	Wigboro Wick Farm St Osyth	13th November
Rosy Starling	Colne Point	9th June
Rosy Starling	Bradwell Bird Observatory	28th June
Richard's Pipit	The Naze	4th October
Common Redpoll	Great Holland Pits	19th November
Common Redpoll	Tiptree Heath	24th November
Common Redpoll	Chigborough Lakes	26th November

List of Observers

mo = many observers

Abdo, Y
Acfield, D (DAc)
Agar, J
Ahmad, S
Akkaraju, S
Allen, A
Allen, D
Allen, H (HAl)
Allen, R (RAl)
Anderson, N
Anderson, S
Andersson, M
Andrews, D (DAn)
Antram, H
Arlow, S
Armstrong, A
Armstrong, S
Arnold, M
Astley, J
Atkins, C (CAt)
Attiwell, J
Austin, D
Austin, T
Avis, B
Avis, D
Aylen, P
Aylward, P
Aylward, S
Bacon, M
Bacon, S
Bailey, S
Baillie, S
Baines, C
Baker, J
Baker, P (PBa)
Baker, W, R
Balchin, C (CBa)
Baldock, A
Ball, S
Balstone, N
Bamber, A
Banks, S
Banwell, A
Barber, B
Barbour, J
Bard, K
Barlow, E
Barnes, C
Barnes, E
Barnes, P
Barnes, R (RBa)
Barnett, D
Barrett, D
Barrie, E
Barry, L
Barry, S
Bartleet, F
Bartlett, S
Bater, S
Bates, T
Batho, G
BBO
Beadle, D
Beard, P
Beardmore, M
Beckett, S
Bell, A
Bell, T
Benjamin Reji, M
Bennett, L
Benson, S
Bertuzzo, M
Beswick, N
Betts, B
Bhakar, M
Birding Ecotours
Birkett, J
Bishop, B
Bishop, P
Bissett, D
Black, I(IB)
Blackburn, M
Blackburn, T
Blackford, D
Blade, J
Blake, J
Bleach, R
Blow, M
Blurton, D, R
Bodini, L
Boersch-Supan, P
Boldini, L (LBo)
Bolton, B
Bonsor, R
Booth, A
Botterill, N
Bournat, O
Bourne, T (TBo)
Boxall, N
Boyes, G
Boyle, G
Braddock. R
Bradnum, D
Bradshaw, D
Bradshaw, H
Bradshaw, I
Brady, L
Braun, A
Braun, M
Bravery, M
Brayshaw, P (PBr)
Bremner, J
Brennan, K
Brierley,S (SB)
Bright, A
Bright,J (JBr)
Brittain, P
Brockington, M
Bromiley, D
Brooke, K
Brooker, M
Brookes, C
Brookes, S
Brown, B
Brown, C
Brown, G (GBr)
Brown, L
Brown, M
Brown, O
Brown, R
Brown, T
Bruce, K(KBr)
Brunt, J
Bruty, M
Buchanan, J (JBu)
Buck, S
Buckley, M
Bullen-Smith, P (PB-S)
Bulpitt, M
Burfield, I
Burfield, J
Burgess, R
Burgum, N
Burns Zaragoza, M
Butler, J
Butler, T
Butson, P
Byrne, E
Cadera, J
Calbrade, N
Calderon, S
Callahan, D
Camp, J
Campbell, C
Campbell, D
Campbell, J
Campbell, T
Canham, T,J
Canning, C
Capper, D
Carr, P
Carson, B
Carter, N
Carter, P
Catapultman, M
Catchesides, M
Cattini, F
Cedar, J
Chamberlain, P
Chambers, D
Chambers, H
Chambers, N (NCh)
Chaney, J
Chanter, B
Charles, P
Chauhan-Patel, S
Chenery, H
Chickadee, L
Chrich, A
Christodoulou, L
Churches, B
Clancy, A
Clancy, T
Clark, F
Clark, J
Clarke, M (MCl)
Clarke, T
Clements, A
Clements, H
Colbert, S
Cole, R
Coleman, E
Coleman, M
Colling, K
Collins, P
Collins, S
Colson, R
Combes, B (BCo)
Condon, M
Connolly, J
Cook, A
Cook, C
Cook, K
Cook, P
Cook, R
Cooke, J
Cooper, B
Cope, R(RC)
Copp, J
Corbett, M
Cordingley, P
Cornwell, D
Cornwell, L
Cossey, S
Cotgreave, P
Cottee-Jones, E
Cottis, O
Court, T
Cousins, D
Cousins, R
Cox, A
Cox, A (AC)
Cox, B
Cox, M
Cox, S (SCo)
Coxall, S
Cracknell, M
Cracknell, M (MCr)
Crago, K(KC)
Cramp, R
Cresswell, M
Cripps, R
Croasdale, K
Croft, N (NCr)
Crooks, B
Crossley, M
Crowly, P
Crozier, G
Cullum, H
Cullum, S
Cummins, T
Cunningham, M
Curle, D
Curtis, A
Cutts, M
Dagley, J
Dalby, G
Dally, A(AD)
Daniels, S
D'aranjo, L
Darnell, A
Darrell-Lambert, D (DDL)
Davidson, J (JD)
Davies, C
Davies, J,W
Davies, L
Davies, M
Davis, C (CDa)
Davison, M
Dawton, B
Day, P
de Brito, J
Dear, L
Deighan, M
Delve, J (JDe)
Dent, A
Dent, M
Devenish, A
Dewsnap, I
Digby, D
Dillon-Hooper, E
Dimitrov, K
Dives, D
Dobson, J
Dodd, B
Dodd, M
Doe, J
Donovan, T
Dorward, J
Douglas, A
Drake, S
Draper, G
Drew, M
Ducat, A
Duncan, K
Dunne, R
Dutta, A
Dutton, D
Dutton, S
East, M
Easton, W
Ebbs, L
Edney, A
Ekins, G
ELBF
Ellam, C
Elliott, R
Ellis, I
Ellis, M
Ellisdon, D
Elmes, J-P (J-PE)
Elwell, S
Emerson, C
Emmens, R
Engelken, D
Entwistle, S (SEn)
Erskine, P
Evans, L
Evans, M
Evans, R
Everett, J
Everett, P
Everingham, D
Ewen, J
Fagan, B
Fairhurst, J
Fairley, M
Fallows, G
Fance, T
Farrell, C
Farthing, C
Faulkner, T
Fehily, L
Fell, J (JF)
Fellowes, S
Field, J
Field, S
Finn, L
Firmin, R
Fisher, E
Fisher, M
Fisher, P
Fisher, S (SFi)
Fisher, T
Fishwick, C
Fleet, P
Flesher, R
Fletcher, D
Flight, A

Flight, S
Flory, O
Fountain, T
Frampton, P
Francis, G, J
Francis, P
Francis-Lawton, M
Franks, S
Freeland-Haynes, L
Freeman, P
Frone, J
Furie, D
Gales, A
Gannaway, C
Garrett, M
Gates, S
Gebbie, B
Gedge, D
Georgiev, T
Gill, J
Given, P
Godden, C
Godfrey, E(EG)
Goodey, A (AGy)
Goodey, B
Gooding, A (AGo)
Gooding, J
Gouldstone, A (AGd)
Gowers, J
Gray, P
Gray, R
Graydon, J
Grealy, M (MGr)
Gree , N
Green, B
Green, D
Green, N
Green, V
Greene, S
Greenway, S
Gregory, M
Gregory, S
Griggs, P (PGr)
Grimsdale, H
Grimwade, S (SGr)
Grimwood, S
Guilder, I
Gutierrez, C
Gymer, P
Haigh, P
Haine, R
Hale, D
Hallam, S
Halley-Frame, V
Hamblin, N
Hambling, A
Hamid, G
Hamilton, A
Hamilton, S (SHa)
Hammersley, C
Hands, C
Hannam, J
Hannam, J,C
Harbisson, Y
Hardie, A
Hardie, D
Hardwick, M
Hargreaves, P
Harringay Birder
Harris, A
Harris, C
Harris, M
Harris, N
Harris, S
Harris, T
Harrison, D
Harrison, H
Harrison, L
Harrison, R
Harrop, T
Hart, K
Hart, P (PHr)
Hart, S
Hartwell, C
Harvey, J
Harvey, M
Harvey, S
Haven WhatsApp
Hawes, C
Hawes, G
Hawkins, P (PHa)
Hay, E
Haydon, R
Hayward, T
Heal, J
Healey, S
Hearn, R. (RHe)
Heasman, C
Heath, D
Heaton, R
Hedden, B
Hellicar, M
Henry, M (MH)
Henson, P (PHe)
Herrington, N
Hewitson, D
Heywood, M
Hibbard, A
Hickman, G
Higgins, T
Hilder, C
Hill, S
Hilliard, D
Hills, D
Hills, S
Hodge, C
Hodgson, J
Hodkinson, D
Holden, D&T(DnT)
Holden, M
Holmes, A
Hooper, M
Hopkins, P
Horn, G
Houston, D
Howey, S
Howie, G
Hubbard, C
Hudgell, K
Hudson, A
Hudson, J
Huggins, S
Hughes, S
Humble, J (JHu)
Hunt, M
Hunting, S (SHu)
Hurley, J
Husband, B
Hutchings, E
Hutchinson, P
Huxley, L (LH)
Hythe Lagoons website
Iddon, M
Imbush, K
Impett, W
Instabirders Team
Irwin, R
J Jones, J
J Lanfear, J
J Lilley, J
J Nottage, J
Jackson, A
Jackson, M
Jakab, N
James, D
James, G (GJa)
James, G, A
James, P
Jamie, G
Jeffree, M
Jeffries, P
Jenkins, S
Jennings, R
Jennings, S
Jobbins, D
Johnson, J
Johnson, M
Johnson, R
Jones, B (BJ)
Jones, C
Jones, D
Jones, J
Jones, N
Jones, R
Jones, S
Jordan, M (MJ)
Jordan, T
Jupp, C
Karunanayake, K
Keane, D
Keeble, E
Keeble, M
Keeper, T
Keith, R
Kelly, J
Kelly, S
Kempa, M
Kennelly, A
Keogh, N
Kerrigan, S
Khan, S
Kiggins, M
Kilic, L
King, M
Kingston, P
Kinnerman, J
Kinsler, V
Kirby, A
Kirby, M
Kirkham, J
Kirkland, M
Knight, D
Knight, R
Knox, S
Kodi, H
Kohler, M
Kortlandt, D
Kurtz, R
Kyrieleis, O
Laban, K
Lacey, H (HLa)
Lamb, J
Lambert, N
Lambert, P
Lambourne, P
Lane, C
Lane, M
Larkin, C
Larkin, P (PLa)
Lawrence, B
Lawrence, J
Lawrence, S
Lawson, A
Lay, N
Layfield, A
Leach, D
Lead, M
Leavett, R
Lee, D
Leeder, E
Lees, G
Legg, M(MLe)
Leighton, R
Leonard, C
Leport, B
Lethbridge, J
Levey, P
Levy, S (SLe)
Lewis, A
Lewis, J
Lewis, P
Limehouse, M
Lindsay, M
Lindsell, S
Linnell, A
Litchfield, A
Littlechild, B
Livings, D
LNHS
London Wildlfe Trust
Lonsdale, M (MLo)
Lotz, C
Loud, P (PLo)
Lowe, D(DLo)
Lowe, S
Lowther, A
Lowther, P
Lune, A
Lush, C
Lycett, I
Lyness, D
Mac, M
Mackenzie, A
MacKenzie, C(CMa)
Mackenzie-Grieve, C (CJM-G)
Malcolm, P
Mapp, B
Marchant, J
Martin, A
Martin, J
Martin, M(MMa)
Martin, R
Marylebone Birdwatching Society
Massey, A
Matthews, D
May, N
Mc Neil, K
McAllister, C
McAvoy, S
McCall, D
McCleary, M
McGilvray, K
McGinty, M
McGough, D
McHattie, D
McKay. P
Mckellar, C
McKenzie, D
McLaughlin, J
Meadhurst, D
Meadows, L
Medrano Besa, A
Mee, G
Meed, J
Mellor, M
Mercer, S
Merchant, P (PMe)
Meredew, W
Merryweather, A
Messenger, M
Middleton, A
Miers, C
Miller, B
Miller, T
Mills, J
Mitchell, D
Monckton, A
Moore, A
Moore, C
Moore, G (GM)
Moore, P
Moore, S
Morden, R
Morgan, D
Morris, P
Morris-Hale, G
Morrison, D (DMo)
Moss, L
Mullins, A (AMu)
Mullins, A
Mundy, M
Murphy, N
Murray, G
Murray, K (KMu)
Mylett, T,M
Nagle, M
NE London RSPB Group
Neal, A
Neave, R (RNe)
Nelson, R
Newton, P
Newton, P(PN)
Newton, S
Nice, S
Nichols, S
Nichols, S
Nicholson, S
Nixon, S (SNi)
Noble, K
Noble, S
Norris, M
Norris, O
Norris, R
Nowers, M
Nunn, D
O'Brian, T
Oakes, G (GOa)
Oakland, M
Oakman, R
O'Brian, T
O'Brien, C
O'Hanlon, M
Orchard, M
Orwin, R
Osgood, P
Outten, M (MOu)
Padmore, M
Pallash, D
Palmer, J
Pamphilon, A
Panting, C
Papps, S(SPp)
Park, J
Parkes, G
Parry-Davies, D (DP-D)
Parsons, N
Partridge, E
Partridge, J (JPa)
Passey, S
Patel, P
Patient, S (SPa)
Patmore, S
Patrick Elmes, J
Paul, D
Pawar, V
Peacock, S
Pearce, J
Pearson, P
Pease, R (RP)
Peck, T
Peers, M
Pelanek, O
Pell, T
Pennington, M
Pentelow, G
Peppiatt, R
Petts, D (DP)
Phillips, A
Phillips, H
Phillips, M
Phillips, P
Phoenix, G
Piccolo, A
Pinch, J (JP)
Pink, S
Piotrowski, S
Plant, T
Platt, J
Plumb, N
Plume, I
Poole, C (CPo)
Porter, I
Porter, S
Poulton, K
Preedy, H
Price, K (KPr)
Prideaux, P
Priestnall, S
Pryor, D
Puttock, B
Pyrah, R
Rafinski, A
Rainey, H
Ramsey, D
Rand, C
Rankin, J
Raper, S
Ratcliffe, D
Rawcliffe, G
Rawlings, N
Rawlins, T
Raybould, A
Redfern, M
Reed, B
Regan, C
Reginald O'Donoghue, R
Reid, A
Rhodes, P
Rice- Oxley, Y
Richards, M
Richards, P
Richardson, J
Richardson, N
Richardson, P
Richardson, R
Riddler, M
Rimmell, M
Rivers, M
Rivoire, J
Roast, E
Roast, M
Roast, P
Roberts, E
Robertson, F
Robertson, M
Robertson, S
Robinson, E
Robson, C
Robson, I
Rodway, S(SR)
Rogers, A(AR)
Rogers, E
Roker, L (LRo)
Roper, M
Roscoe, A
Rose, I
Rose, P
Rowe, P
Rowe, T
Rowell, M
RSPB
RSPB NE London Group
RSPB SE Herts
Rtveliashvili, O
Ruis, C
Rumsby, B (BR)
Rumsby, M
Russell, D
Ryan, P
Ryan, S
Ryland, G
Rymer, T
Samuels, L
Sapatsch, E
Satchell, S
Saul, C
Saville, D
Saville, R
Saward,J (JSa)
Saward, P
Sayers, B
Scheibel, S
Scott, J
Scott, P
See, M
Seehra, M
Self, A
Senior, B
Seymour-Fairey, D
Sharod, J
Shayler, D
Shearan, D
Shearman, A
Shearring,A (ASh)
Sheilds, C
Sheldon, P
Sheldon,R (RSh)
Shelley, S
Shepherd,D (DSh)
Shepherd, M (MSh)
Shepherd-Wells, M
Sheppard, A (AShp)
Sherriff, R
Sherris, R
Shields, C (CSh)
Shippey, S
Shuttleworth, P
Siby, J
Sileo, M
Simmonds, J
Simmonds, W
Simmonds, Y
Simms, O
Simon, T
Simpson, B
Simpson, F (FSi)
Singleton, M
Siskos, G
Slee, J
Small, N (NSm)
Smart, D
Smart, J
Smart, O
Smethurst, A
Smiles, M
Smith, A
Smith, D
Smith, D, L
Smith, G
Smith, Gra (GSm)
Smith, J
Smith, M
Smith, N
Smith, Nev (NSm)
Smith, R
Smith, S
Smith, T
Smithbury, D
Smithhaw, D
Smith-Little, J
Smithtone, D
So, A
Somerville, F
Sparkes, C
Speller, T
Spicer, N
Spinks,G
Stachnicki, T
Stallard, B
Stannard, B
Steele, A (ASt)
Stephens, R
Stephens, W
Stewart, A
Stewart, G
Stewart, G
Stiles, D (DSt)
Stitchman, M
Stobart, E
Street, F
Street, P
Stroud, A (AStr)
Stuart, P
Sullivan, D
Sumner, N
Sutherby, J (JSu)
Sutherby, J,C
Sutton, G
Sutton, K
Swaby, S
Swan, J
Swanson, I
Swinney, E
Swinney, S (SSw)
Switzer, C
Szimuly, G
Tanner, C(CTa)
Tarbin, I
Taylor, C
Taylor, G
Taylor, J
Taylor, M
Taylor, N
Taylor, R
Taylor, S
Telford, P
Thom, R
Thomas, A
Thomas, T
Thomason, E
Thompson, A
Thompson, E
Thorneycroft, T
Thornton, J
Thorogood, J
Threadgold,P (PTh)
Tickle, S
Tidy, P
Tietjen, A
Todd, J
Toloi, F
Toon, P
Tordoff, J
Torrice, D
Townsend, D
Townsend, K
Tozer, G
Tracey, M
Tranfield, B
Treen, P
Trevillion, M
Trollope, A
Tullah, S
Tunnicliffe, K
Turner,C (CTu)
Turner, H
Turner, M(MT)
Turner, S
Tusa, F
Tweed, A (ATw)
Twells, G
Twyford, N
Tyas, C J (CTy)
Underwood, D
Undrill, C (CU)
ungate, C
Upton, G
Upton, N
Urquhart, D (DUr)
USA Bird Group
Vale, M
Van Tol, M
Vaughan, B
Vaughan, H (HVa)
Vaughan, L
Vaughan, P
Vaughan, R
Venus, K
Wagstaff, D. (DWa)
Wakefield, L
Wakeford, H
Wakering, V
Walet, D
Wallace, D
Wallis, I
Walmsley, J(JWa)
Walsh, D
Walthamstow Birders
Wanstead Birders
Wardman, M
Warne, P
Warner, N
Warner, P
Warzala, B
Wasse, J
Waters, B
Watkins, V
Watling, Y
Watson, I
Watson, S
Watts, B
Watts, X
Webb, M
Webb, N
WeBS
Wells, A
Werpachowski, R
Werran, R
Weston, N
Westover, J
White, A
White, C
White, G
White, J
Whitelegg, D
Whitfield, J
Whitfield, M
Wildman, T
Wiles, C
Wilkin, D,R
Wilkins, P
Wilkins, R
Wilkinson, A
Wilkinson, D
Willaims, B
Willett, M
Willetts, T
Williams, B(BW)
Williams, M
Wilson, A
Wilson, B
Wilson, C
Wilson, D
Wimsett, M
Winkworth, M
Winstanley, A
Winzar, P
Wirtz, P
Womack, G
Wood, P
Wood, S D (SDW)
Woodhouse, A
Woodrow, L
Woodruff, M
Woods, P
Woodward, C
Woodward, I
Woodward, R
Woodward, T
Woollard, D
Wren Conservation Group
Wright, J (JWr)
Wrycraft, D
Yaffy, D
Yankov, T
York, R
Young, B
Younger, S

Earliest and latest dates for Summer Visitors 2020

Species	Arrival Date	Location	Departure Date	Location
Garganey	14-Mar	Abberton Reservoir	30-Sep	Hanningfield Reservoir
Common Swift	29-Mar	Ingrebourne Valley	15-Oct	Colchester
Common Cuckoo	03-Apr	Billericay	20-Sep	Rainham Marshes
European Turtle Dove [1]	07-Apr	Ashdon	23-Sep	Wanstead Flats
Little Ringed Plover	15-Mar	Rainham Marshes	29-Sep	Vange Marsh
Whimbrel [2]				
Temminck's Stint	18-May	Holland Haven	18-May	Holland Haven
Wood Sandpiper	12-May	Bowers Marsh	20-Sep	Old Hall Marsh
Sandwich Tern [3]	24-Mar	Bradwell-on-Sea	06-Nov	Frinton-on-Sea
Little Tern	17-Apr	King George V Reservoir Chingford	09-Sep	Wakering Stairs
Common Tern [4]	21-Mar	Rainham Marshes	16-Nov	Hamford Water
Arctic Tern	05-Apr	Thames Barrier Park	20-Nov	Frinton-on-Sea
Western Osprey	06-Mar	Upminster	15-Nov	Mistley
Black Tern	11-Apr	King George V Reservoir Chingford	07-Oct	Hanningfield
Eurasian Hobby	06-Apr	Heybridge/Rayne	10-Oct	Bradwell Bird Observatory
Sand Martin	10-Mar	Harold Wood	08-Oct	Frinton-on-Sea/Jaywick/ Rainham Marshes
Barn Swallow [5]	16-Mar	Tollesbury	23-Nov	Frinton-on-Sea
Common House Martin	12-Mar	Hanningfield Reservoir	23-Nov	Walthamstow Wetlands
Wood Warbler	21-Apr	Bulmer	08-Sep	Belhus Woods Aveley
Willow Warbler	01-Apr	Braintree	14-Oct	Hutton/Abberton Reservoir
Sedge Warbler	30-Mar	Rainham Marshes	01-Oct	Walthamstow Wetlands
Eurasian Reed Warbler	07-Apr	Bradwell Power Station	19-Oct	Little Baddow
Common Grasshopper Warbler	07-Apr	Dagenham Chase	05-Oct	Holland Haven
Garden Warbler	09-Apr	Epping/Stanway	28-Oct	South Ockendon
Lesser Whitethroat [6]	07-Apr	Bonnetts Wood Corbets Tey	26-Oct	Wanstead Flats
Common Whitethroat	07-Apr	Wivenhoe	08-Oct	Jaywick/Wansted Park
Ring Ouzel	04-Apr	Holland Haven	29-Oct	Rainham
Spotted Flycatcher	28-Apr	Black Notley	11-Oct	Holland Haven
Common Nightingale	06-Apr	The Hythe Colchester	18-Aug	Wanstead Flats
Eurasian Pied Flycatcher	20-Jun	Colne Point	04-Oct	The Naze
Common Redstart	06-Apr	Rainham Marshes	31-Oct	Mundon
Whinchat	12-Apr	Frinton-on-Sea	04-Nov	Braintree
Northern Wheatear	29-Feb	The Naze	05-Nov	Frinton-on-Sea
Western Yellow Wagtail	21-Mar	Abberton Reservoir	19-Oct	Frinton-on-Sea
Tree Pipit	24-Mar	Upminster	15-Oct	Thorndon

Notes

1. One bird seen in Valentine's Park Ilford during January-February 2020
2. Over-wintering birds occur at various coastal locations and present most months of the year so difficult to determine arrival and departure dates
3. One bird seen early on the 5th February 2020
4. WeBs count reported four at Abberton on the 15th January 20 and one at Hamford Water on 16th November
5. One bird seen on New Years Day at Abberton and stayed on site till the 19th January 20. There were also records from Dengie on 1st February and Gunners Park Shoebury on 2nd December that may have been wintering birds
6. One bird showing characteristics of the Eastern form seen in Rayleigh on the 31st January 20

Latest and earliest dates for Winter Visitors 2020

Species	Departure Date	Location	Arrival Date	Location
Pink-footed Goose	01-Jan	Abberton Reservoir/ Holland Haven/Colne Point	24-Sep	Frinton-on-Sea
Greater White-fronted Goose	11-Apr	Bowers Marsh	26-Oct	Old Hall Marshes
Tundra Swan	06-Feb	Abberton Reservoir	30-Nov	Colne Point
Whooper Swan	17-May	Lower Raypits Canewdon	03-Nov	Bradwell-on-Sea
Velvet Scoter			14-Nov	Frinton-on-Sea
Long-tailed Duck	23-Apr	King George V Reservoir Chingford	17-Oct	Abberton Reservoir
Smew	25-May	Highams Park	01-Jan	Abberton Reservoir
Common Merganser	08-May	King George V Reservoir Chingford	20-Aug	Abberton Reservoir
Red-breasted Merganser	27-Apr	Frinton-on-Sea	26-Sep	Wrabness
Red-necked Grebe	04-Apr	West Mersea	15-Oct	King George V Reservoir Chingford
Horned Grebe	13-Mar	Old Hall Marshes	17-Oct	West Mersea
Purple Sandpiper	18-Apr	Holland Haven	15-Sep	Jaywick
Jack Snipe	30-Mar	St Osyth	27-Sep	Rainham Marshes
Common Murre	11-Jun	Canvey Point	30-Aug	Canvey Point
Red-throated Loon	19-May	Gunners Park Shoebury	11-Sep	Frinton-on-Sea
Common Loon [1]	29-Apr	West Mersea	27-Sep	Holland Haven
Eurasian Bittern	04-Apr	Romford	10-Sep	Abberton Reservoir
Hen Harrier [2]	18-May	Colne Point	26-Sep	Rainham Marshes
Merlin [3]	13-Apr	St Osyth	16-Aug	Foulness
Bohemian Waxwing	17-Mar	Epping	02-Jan	Abberton Reservoir
Fieldfare	04-May	Frinton-on-Sea	07-Oct	St Osyth Beach
Redwing	17-May	Hamford Water	19-Sep	Frinton-on-Sea
Water Pipit	12-Apr	The Hythe Colchester	09-Oct	Rainham Marshes
Eurasian Rock Pipit [4]	05-Apr	Frinton-on-Sea	09-Aug	West Thurrock Marshes
Brambling	19-Apr	West Mersea	19-Sep	Rainham Marshes
Twite	06-Feb	East Tilbury	15-Oct	Holland Haven
Eurasian Siskin [5]				
Lapland Bunting	08-Feb	Barling	06-Nov	Stow Marsh South Woodham Ferrers
Snow Bunting	01-Feb	Colne Point	07-Oct	East Mersea

1. One record of a fly by at Frinton-on-Sea/Holland Haven on the 28th September
2. Two records of fly bys one in July and one in August
3. A juvenile was seen at Rainham Marshes on31st July
4. One record of a single bird on the 23rd Jun-20 at Marsh Farm
5. Recorded in every month. Some birds noted staying until June when birds were also appearing to be arriving at coastal locations

Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) Totals for Essex 2020

Care should be taken when interpreting these figures as records from some sites may be incomplete.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Brant Goose (Dark-bellied)	26,244	22,851	16,176	572	7	3,439	15,181	19,365	14,619
Canada Goose	2,699	1,834	1,118	125	2,699	2,956	1,901	1,138	3,000
Greylag Goose	1,796	1,073	663	65	738	623	1,017	1,141	2,063
Mute Swan	481	297	506	155	693	564	352	333	400
Common Shelduck	6,313	3,089	2,787	57	3	1,186	2,859	2,673	2,885
Northern Shoveler	983	1,205	846	176	749	1,663	1,301	1,797	1,635
Gadwall	1,195	911	275	63	958	668	394	477	840
Eurasian Wigeon	17,603	9,533	6,306	8	13	7,080	14,867	10,077	13,557
Mallard	3,665	2,236	1,669	478	3,246	2,527	2,061	2,698	2,833
Northern Pintail	1,328	804	317	3	14	512	402	624	642
Eurasian Teal	23,309	11,437	3,960	146	3,548	6,839	9,852	9,610	12,751
Common Pochard	803	1,421	558	35	1,818	2,382	8,792	2,703	2,464
Tufted Duck	2,582	2,122	2,533	392	6,605	4,819	6,131	6,710	7,158
Common Goldeneye	423	342	323	2	1	7	33	377	353
Common Merganser (Goosander)	81	85	26	0	0	0	13	40	111
Red-breasted Merganser	67	52	126	0	0	0	6	35	91
Water Rail	13	4	6	0	2	1	9	5	10
Common Moorhen	355	313	237	28	223	225	270	190	221
Eurasian Coot	2,162	1,493	1,352	296	6,680	8,844	9,833	15,400	7,558
Little Grebe	172	84	100	13	87	282	196	182	195
Great Crested Grebe	274	367	642	217	616	736	1,028	2,247	341
Eurasian Oystercatcher	9,684	10,396	9,087	973	10,870	14,873	14,551	13,204	6,668
Pied Avocet	1,644	859	949	0	35	293	1,144	1,253	1,245
Northern Lapwing	19,369	8,921	936	6	634	1,589	4,703	7,890	14,414
European Golden Plover	17,429	11,295	1,041	0	288	1,328	6,294	7,701	8,126
Grey Plover	6,117	3,021	6,941	628	625	2,080	2,708	3,193	4,171
Common Ringed Plover	474	197	120	8	138	719	612	699	390
Eurasian Curlew	4,774	3,745	4,282	126	1,380	3,393	3,993	2,041	2,963
Bar-tailed Godwit	4,466	5,403	2,071	350	566	3,791	1,098	1,181	2,627
Black-tailed Godwit	4,095	3,527	5,174	242	432	4,339	2,621	4,081	1,877
Ruddy Turnstone	1,445	388	1,614	294	244	834	800	961	592
Red Knot	58,038	27,636	13,728	4,260	212	2,320	7,676	28,178	19,298
Ruff	8	2	7	0	17	24	14	8	4
Sanderling	1,002	825	81	25	50	107	244	276	224
Dunlin	34,289	21,791	13,976	2,708	146	1,628	12,433	25,995	24,679
Common Snipe	162	114	58	0	15	22	33	97	59
Common Redshank	7,340	5,155	4,904	294	1,588	5,486	4,704	5,285	3,857
Common Greenshank	5	4	4	6	22	74	5	13	0
Black-headed Gull	11,081	5,006	8,634	1,794	7,286	6,098	3,244	3,441	3,290
Mew Gull (Common Gull)	1,706	454	812	0	1,454	412	463	474	627
Great Black-backed Gull	310	115	78	0	61	133	257	451	185
Herring Gull	1,706	2,443	1,557	24	658	2,255	906	862	968
Lesser Black-backed Gull	474	95	150	17	235	208	147	118	241
Great Cormorant	2,197	1,580	601	275	1,911	4,073	3,461	2,060	1,539
Grey Heron	118	118	139	54	94	170	168	99	87
Little Egret	275	195	184	40	437	707	789	393	250
Total	**280,756**	**174,838**	**117,654**	**14,955**	**58,098**	**102,309**	**149,566**	**187,776**	**172,108**

Gazetteer of place names used in the 2020 report

Bold type identifies how the name appears in the Systematic List

Abbreviations :

ECC Essex County Council
EWT Essex Wildlife Trust
FE Forestry England
LWT London Wildlife Trust
LVRP Lee Valley Regional Park
MOD Ministry of Defence
NT National Trust
RHS Royal Horticultural Society
RSPB Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
WT Woodland Trust

Site	Grid Ref
Abberton Manor	TL 9919
Abberton Reservoir (including EWT Visitor Centre)	TL 9817
Abbotts Hall Farm Great Wigborough EWT Reserve	TL 9614
Aldham	TL 9225
Alphamstone	TL 8735
Alresford	TM 0621
Alresford Creek	TM 0619
Althorne	TQ 9099
Althorne Creek	TQ 9097
Ardleigh Green	TQ 5389
Ardleigh Reservoir	TM 0328
Ashdon	TL 5842
Asheldham	TL 9701
Asheldham Gravel Pit	TL 9701
Audley End	TL 5237
Barking Bay/Marsh	TQ 4581
Barking Riverside	TQ 4782
Barleylands Billericay	TQ 6991
Barn Hoppett Chingford	TQ 4094
Barrow Wood Highwood	TL 6302
Basildon	TQ 7088
Beazley End	TL 7430
Beckton	TQ 4481
Beckton Sewage Works	TQ 4582
Bedfords Park Havering-atte-Bower (including EWT Visitor Centre)	TQ 5192
Beeleigh	TL 8407
Belchamp Otten	TL 8041
Belchamp Walter	TL 8140
Belhus Woods Aveley Country Park ECC	TQ 5782
Benfleet	TQ 7786
Berechurch Colchester	TM 0022
Betho Chatto Garden Elmstead Market	TM 0623
Billericay	TQ 6794
Birch	TL 9320
Birchanger	TL 5023
Black Notley	TL 7620
Blackley Lane Gravel Pit Willows Green	TL 7219
Blackwater Estuary	TL 9707
Blackweir Pond Epping Forest	TQ 4297
Blue House Farm North Fambridge EWT Reserve	TQ 8097
Bocking	TL 7624
Bonnetts Wood Corbets Tey	TQ 5584
Boreham	TL 7509
Boreham Gravel Pit	TL 7410
Borley	TL 8442
Bowers Marsh Bowers Gifford RSPB Reserve	TQ 7586
Boxted	TM 0032
Bradwell Bird Observatory	TM 0308
Bradwell Cockle Spit	TM 0308
Bradwell Power Station	TM 0008
Bradwell-juxta-Coggeshall Gravel Pit	TL 8022
Bradwell-on-Sea	TM 0006
Braintree	TL 7623
Bramble Island Hamford Water	TM 2126
Braxted Park	TL 8515
Brentwood	TQ 5993
Bridgemarsh Island Crouch Estuary	TQ 8996
Bridgewick Farm Dengie	TR 0199
Brightlingsea	TM 0817
Broak's Wood Gosfield FE	TL 7831
Brook Farm Upminster	TQ 5987
Brookes Wood Greenstead Green	TL 8126
Broomhouse Flash Langham	TM 0334
Buckhurst Hill	TQ 4194
Bulmer	TL 8440
Bungate Wood Braintree	TL 8324
Bures	TL 9034
Burnham-on-Crouch	TQ 9496
Butler's Retreat Pond Epping Forest	TQ 4094
Buttsbury Wash Ingatestone	TQ 6699
Canewdon	TQ 9094
Canvey Island	TQ 8182
Canvey Point	TQ 8283
Canvey Seafront	TQ 8280
Canvey Wick RSPB Reserve	TQ 7683
Castle Hedingham	TL 7835
Cattawade	TM 1033
Cattawade Marshes/The Splodge RSPB Reserve	TM 0932
Cely Woods Aveley	TQ 5683
Chafford Gorges Grays EWT Nature Park	TQ 5879
Chafford Hundred Grays	TQ 6079
Chalkney Wood Earls Colne ECC	TL 8727

Site	Grid Ref
Chelmsford	TL 7007
Chigborough Lakes Heybridge EWT Reserve	TL 8708
Chigwell	TQ 4493
Childerditch Pond	TQ 6190
Chingford	TQ 3894
Chingford Plain Epping Forest	TQ 3995
Cindery Island Brightlingsea Creek	TM 0916
Clacton-on-Sea	TM 1715
Clavering	TL 4731
Clay Tye Wood Upminster	TQ 5986
Clementsgreen Creek South Woodham Ferrers	TQ 8296
Coalhouse Fort East Tilbury	TQ 6976
Cobmarsh Island West Mersea	TM 0012
Cockaynes Wood	TM0521
Cockaynes Wood Wivenhoe EWT Reserve	TM 0521
Codham Hall Farm Great Warley	TQ 5988
Cody Dock Newham	TQ 3882
Colchester	TL 9925
Colchester Barracks	TL 9923
Collier Row	TQ 5090
Colne Estuary	TM 0617
Colne Point St Osyth EWT Reserve	TM 1012
Connaught Water Epping Forest	TQ 4095
Coombe Wood Thundersley	TQ 7882
Cooper's Creeek Mundon	TL 9005
Copford	TL 9223
Copford Sewage Works	TL 9324
Copped Hall Epping Forest	TL 4300
Copperas Bay Wrabness RSPB Reserve	TM 1932
Copt Hall Marshes Little Wigborough NT Reserve	TL 9814
Cornmill Meadows Waltham Abbey LVRP	TL 3801
Creekmouth Barking	TQ 4581
Creekside Beckton Nature Reserve	TQ 4582
Crowsheath Wood Downham EWT Reserve	TQ 7296
Cudmore Grove East Mersea Country Park ECC	TM 0614
Dagenham Chase Local Nature Reserve	TQ 5185
Dagnam Park Harold Hill	TQ 5593
Danbury	TL 7805
Danbury Common NT	TL 7804
Danbury Park County Park ECC	TL 7704
Daws Hall Lamarsh	TL 8836
Daws Heath	TQ 8288
Deal Hall Dengie	TR 0197
Dengie	TL 9801
Dengie Flats	TR 0399
Dengie Marshes	TM 0000
Distillery Pond Colchester	TM 0123
Docura's Farm Little Horkesley	TM 0233
Donyland Woods	TM0120
Dovercourt	TM 2531
Dunning's Lane Orsett	TQ 6287

Site	Grid Ref
Dunnings Lane West Horndon	TQ6186
Eagle Pond Leyton	TQ 3989
East Hanningfield	TL 7600
East Mersea	TM 0474
East Tilbury	TQ 6878
East Tilbury Marshes	TQ6775
Eastwood	TQ 8190
Elmdon	TL 4639
Elmstead Market	TM0425
Epping Forest Burial Park	TL 3903
Epping High Street	TL 4502
Fair Play Farm Upminster	TQ 5686
Fairlop Waters Barkingside Country Park	TQ 4585
Felsted	TL 6720
Fingringhoe Gravel Pits	TM 0420
Fingringhoe Mill	TM 0320
Fingringhoe Ranges MOD	TM 0318
Fingringhoe Wick EWT Reserve	TM 0919
Fishers Green Holyfield LVRP	TL 3703
Fleet Head Great Wakering	TQ 9489
Fobbing Marsh EWT Reserve	TQ 7184
Fordham	TL 9228
Fordham Hall	TL 9227
Foulness Island	TR 0092
Foxearth	TL 8344
Frating	TM 0923
Frest Lodge Epping Forest	TQ 4299
Friday Lake Waltham Abbey LVRP	TL 3703
Friday Wood Colchester	TL 9821
Frinton-on-Sea	TM 2319
Fuller Street Fairstead	TL 7416
Galleyhill Wood Lee Valley	TL 3903
Galleywood	TL 7002
Galleywood Common	TL 7002
Gallions Reach Beckton	TQ 4481
Garnham's Island Hamford Water	TM 2125
Gestingthorpe	TL 8038
Gidea Park	TQ 5289
Glen Faba Roydon LVRP	TL 3909
Gobions East Tilbury	TQ 6779
Goldhanger	TL 9808
Goldings Hill Pond Epping Forest	TQ 4298
Good Easter	TL 6212
Gosfield	TL 7829
Gosfield Wood	TL 7728
Grays	TQ 6177
Grays New Cemetery	TQ 6378
Great Baddow	TL 7205
Great Bardfield	Tl 6730
Great Braxted	TL 8614
Great Burstead	TQ 6892
Great Cob Island Tollesbury	TL 9810
Great Henny	TL 8637
Great Holland	TL 2119

Site	Grid Ref
Great Holland Pits EWT Reserve	TM 2019
Great Horkesley	TL 9729
Great Monks Wood	TL 8225
Great Notley	TL 7421
Great Stambridge	TQ 8991
Great Tey	TL 8926
Great Yeldham	TL 7638
Greenstead Green	TL 8227
Greensted and Greensted Church	TL5302
Gunners Park Shoebury EWT Reserve	TQ 9384
Gunpowder Park Waltham Abbey LVRP	TQ 3798
Hadleigh Downs	TQ 8086
Hadleigh Marshes	TQ 8185
Hainault Forest Country Park	TQ 4793
Hale End Walthamstow	TQ 3891
Hall Marsh Scrape Waltham Abbey LVRP	TL 3701
Halstead	TL 8130
Hamford Water	TM 2225
Hangman's Wood Little Thurrock	TQ 6379
Hanningfield Reservoir (including EWT Visitor Centre)	TQ 7397
Harlow	TQ 4509
Harold Hill	TQ 5492
Harold Wood Park	TQ 5591
Harold Wood Sewage Works	TQ 5691
Harrow Lodge Park Hornchurch	TQ 5386
Harwich	TM 2530
Hatfield Broad Oak	TL 5416
Hatfield Forest NT Reserve	TL 5419
Hawe's Wood Stow Maries	TQ 8199
Hazeleigh Wood	TL 8304
Headley Common Great Warley	TQ 5891
Henny Street	TL 8838
Heybridge	TL 8507
Heybridge Basin	TL 8707
Heybridge Gravel Pit	TL 8606
Hickford Hill Clare	TL 7844
High Beach Epping Forest	TQ 4097
High Garrett	TL 7726
High Woods Colchester Country Park	TM 0026
Highams Park	TQ 3891
Hill Hall Theydon Mount	TQ 4899
Hockley Woods Local Nature Reserve	TQ 8391
Hogmarsh Island Manningtree EWT Reserve	TM 1032
Holland Haven	TM 2117
Hollybush Hill Great Bentley	TM 1118
Holyfield Hall Farm LVRP	TL 3803
Holyfield Lake LVRP	TL 3704
Hooks Marsh Waltham Abbey LVRP	TL 3701
Hornchurch Park	TQ 5384
Horsey Island Hamford Water	TM 2324
Horsley Cross	TM 1127
Howland Marsh St Osyth EWT Reserve	TM 1016

Site	Grid Ref
Hutton Country Park	TQ 6395
Ilford	TQ 4386
Ingatestone	TQ 6499
Ingrebourne Valley	TQ 5384
Irlam's Beach Dovercourt	TM 2427
Irlams Point Little Oakley	TM 2429
Jaywick	TM 1513
Judas Gap Flatford	TL 8410
Kelvedon	TL 8618
King George V Reservoir Chingford LVRP	TQ 3795
Kirby Cross	TM 2120
Knighton Wood Epping Forest	TQ 4093
Lakeside Retail Park West Thurrock	TQ5878
Lamarsh	TL 8935
Langdon Hills Plotlands EWT Reserve	TQ 6587
Langenhoe	TM 0118
Langenhoe Marsh/Fingringhoe Ranges MOD	TM 0417
Langford	TL 8309
Langham	TM 0333
Langham Treatment Works	TM 0134
Larks Wood Epping Forest	TQ 3892
Latchford Farm Upminster	TL 3920
Latchingdon	TL 8800
Lawford	TM 0931
Lawling Creek Maylandsea	TL 9104
Layer-de-la-Haye	TL 9620
Lee Valley Waterworks Centre	TQ 3686
Leez Priory Hartford End	TL 7018
Leez Reservoir Hartford End	TL 7018
Leigh-on-Sea	TQ 8486
Leyton Flats	TL 3986
Leytonstone	TQ 3987
Limbourne Creek Maldon	TL 8705
Lion Gorge Chafford Gorges Nature Park	TQ 5978
Liston	TL 8544
Little Burstead	TQ 6692
Little Clacton	TM 1618
Lofts Farm Gravel Pits Heybridge	TL 8608
Long Green Epping	TL 4205
Loshes Meadow Great Henny EWT Reserve	TL 8736
Loughton	TQ 4296
Lower Raypits Canewdon EWT Reserve	TQ 9294
Lower Sheering	TL 4914
Lyonshall Wood Fuller Street	TL 7314
Maldon	TL 8506
Maldon Promenade	TL 8606
Manningtree	TM 1031
Manor Farm South Ockendon	TQ 5785
Maplin Sands	TR 0188
Mardyke Valley Stifford-Aveley	TQ 5679
Marks Hall Coggeshall	TL 8426
Marsh Farm South Woodham Ferrers Country Park ECC	TQ 8196

Site	Grid Ref
Marsh Road Burnham-on-Crouch	TQ 9696
Marshhouse Dengie	TM 0103
Mayesbrook Park Dagenham Public Park	TQ 4684
Mayland	TL 9202
Mayland Creek	TL 9103
Mersea Island	TM 0314
Middleton	TL 8739
Middlewick Ranges Colchester	TM 0122
Middlewick Ranges MOD	TM 0122
Mill Beach Heybridge	TL 8807
Mistley Walls	TM 1132
Mistley/Mistley Quay	TM1131
Mole Hall Widdington	TL 5431
Moulsham	TL 7006
Mount Bures	TL 9032
Mountnessing	TQ 6297
Moverons Brightlingsea	TM 0618
Mucking	TQ 6881
Mundon	TL 8702
Mundon Hall	TL 8802
Mundon Old Church	TL 8826
Navestock	TQ 5497
Netherhall Gravel Pit Nazeing LVRP	TL 3908
Norsey Wood Billericay Local Nature Reserve	TQ 6895
North Fambridge	TQ 8697
North Fambridge Hall	TQ 8597
North Shoebury St Mary's Churchyard	TQ 9286
Old Hall Marshes Tolleshunt D'Arcy RSPB Reserve	TL 9811
Olympic Park Stratford LVRP	TQ 3784
Ongar Park Wood Epping Forest	TL 4902
Orsett Fen	TQ 6283
Osea Road Heybridge	TL 8907
Pages Wood Upminster	TQ 5591
Paglesham East End	TQ 9492
Paglesham Lagoon	TQ 9290
Parkhill Wood Alphamstone	TL 8835
Pebmarsh	TL 8533
Peldon	T L9816
Pewet Island Bradwell-on-Sea	TL 9908
Pewit Island Hamford Water	TM 2326
Point Clear St Osyth	TM 0914
Potton Creek Great Wakering	TQ 9490
Priory Park Southend-on-Sea	TQ 8787
Puddledock Fishery Upminster	TQ 5987
Purfleet	TQ 5678
Purleigh	TL 8302
Rainham Marshes RSPB Reserve	TQ 5280
Ramsden Heath	TQ7195
Raphael Park Romford	TQ 5190
Rat Island River Colne	TM 0517
Ray Island West Mersea	TM 0014

Site	Grid Ref
Rayne	TL 7323
Richmond's Green, Thaxted	TL 6229
Ridgewell	TL 7340
Ridgnall's Great Horkesley	TL 9832
Rivenhall End	TL 8316
Roach Estuary	TQ 9893
Rochford	TQ 8790
Rochford Golf Course	TQ 8690
Roding Valley Meadows Chigwell EWT Reserve	TQ 4395
Rolls Farm Tollesbury	TL 9508
Roman River Valley Colchester	TM 0120
Romford	TQ 5289
Ropers Farm/Barling Marsh	TQ 9390
Rowney Wood Debden	TL 5733
Russell Green Gravel Pits Boreham	TL 7512
Saffron Walden	TL 5423
Salcott Creek	TL 9513
Scotch Pature Grove Castle Hedingham	TL 7836
Scrip's Lane Coggeshall	TL 8421
Seawick St Osyth	TM 1212
Seventy Acres Lake Holyfield LVRP	TL 3703
Sewardstone	TQ 3898
Sewardstone Marsh LVRP	TQ 3798
Shoebury	TQ 9384
Shoebury East Beach	TQ 9484
Shoebury Park	TQ 9385
Shrub End Colchester	TL 9723
Shut Heath Wood Great Totham EWT Reserve	TL 8513
Snaresbrook	TQ 4089
South Benfleet	TQ 7886
South Fambridge	TQ 8595
South House Farm Maldon	TL 8605
South Ockendon Landfill	TQ 5882
South Weald	TQ 5793
South Woodford	TQ 4090
South Woodham Ferrers	TQ 8097
Southend Airport	TQ 8789
Southend Pier	TQ 8884
Southend-on-Sea	TQ 8685
St Lawrence	TL 9506
St Lawrence Bay	TL 9603
St Osyth Priory	TM 1215
St Osyth Stone/Beach	TM 0815
Stambourne	TL 7238
Stambridge	TQ 8991
Stanford Warren EWT Reserve	TQ 6881
Stansted Airport	TL 5523
Stansted Airport Lagoons Takeley	TL 5521
Stanway	TL 9523
Stanway Green	TL9523
Stapleford Tawney	TQ 5098

Site	Grid Ref
Staples Hill Epping Forest	TQ 4296
Stebbing	TL 6524
Steeple	TL 9303
Stifford Hall	TQ 6080
Stisted	T L7924
Stone Point Mersea Island	TM 0715
Stone Point The Naze Walton-on-the-Naze	TM 2425
Stones Green Beaumont	TM 1626
Stour Estuary	TM 1733
Stour Wood RSPB	TM 1831
Stow Maries	TQ 8399
Stow Maries Aerodrome	TL 8200
Stow Marsh South Woodham Ferrers	TQ 8496
Strawberry Hill Pond Epping Forest	TQ 4297
Stubbers Adventure Centre Corbets Tey	TQ 5784
Sunnymead Farm Wivenhoe	TM 0522
Terling	TL 7715
Thames Barrier Park	TQ 4179
Thaxted	TL 6131
The Hythe Colchester (and Lagoons)	TM 0124
The Naze Walton-on-the-Naze (inc EWT Visitor Centre)	TM 2624
The Strood Mersea Island	TM 0115
Theydon Bois	TQ 4498
Thorndon Park North/South Country Park (inc EWT Visitor Centre) ECC	TQ 6091
Thornwood Common Epping Forest	TL 4604
Thorpe-le-Soken	TM 1822
Three Rivers Golf Course Cold Norton	TQ 8499
Thundersley	TQ 7988
Thurrock	TQ 5878
Thurrock Thameside Mucking Nature Park EWT Reserve	TQ 6980
Tilbury	TQ 6376
Tile Wood EWT	TQ 8189
Tillingham	TL 9903
Tiptree	TL 8916
Tiptree Heath	TL 8814
Tollesbury	TL 9510
Tollesbury Fleet	TL 9711
Tollesbury Wick EWT Reserve	TM 0419
Tolleshunt d'Arcy	TL 9311
Tolleshunt Major	TL 8911
Toot Hill	TL 5102
Trifarm Pits Boreham	TL 7509
Tumbler's Green Stisted	TL 8025
Twinstead	TL 8636
Two Tree Island Leigh-on-Sea EWT Reserve	TQ 8285
Tye Hall Farm Roxwell	TL 6308
University of Essex Colchester	TM 0223
Upminster	TQ 5687
Valentine's Park Ilford	TQ 4387
Vange Marsh RSPB reserve	TQ 7285
Vange Wick RSPB Reserve	TQ 7385

Site	Grid Ref
Wake Valley Pond Epping Forest	TQ 4298
Wakering Common	TQ 9587
Wakering Stairs	TQ 9787
Wallasea Island Canewdon RSPB Reserve	TQ 9693
Waltham Abbey	TL 3800
Walthamstow	TQ 3890
Walthamstow Filter Beds LVRP	TQ 3588
Walthamstow Marshes LVRP	TQ 3587
Walthamstow Wetlands LVRP LWT	TQ 3589
Walton Hall Marshes	TM 2623
Walton-on-The-Naze	TM 2521
Wanstead Flats	TQ 4086
Wanstead Park	TQ 4187
Warley	TQ 5992
Warren Gorge Chafford Hundred	TQ 5979
Warren Pond Epping Forest	TQ 3994
Warren Wood Epping Forest	TQ 4195
Wat Tyler Country Park Pitsea	TQ 7386
Waterworks Leyton Nature Reserve LVRP	TQ 3686
Weald Park South Weald Country Park	TQ 5794
Weeley	TM 1422
West Bergholt	TL 9527
West Canvey Marsh RSPB Reserve	TQ 7784
West Hanningfield	TQ 7299
West Mersea	TM 0012
West Thurrock Marshes	TQ 5876
West Wood Great Sampford EWT Reserve	TL 6233
Westcliff-on-Sea	TQ 8686
Westley Heights Langdon Hills Country Park	TQ 6886
Wethersfield Airfield MoD	T L7233
Weymarks Dengie	TM 0109
Wickford	TQ 7593
Widdington	TL 5331
Wigboro Wick Farm St Osyth	TM 1114
William Girling Reservoir Chingford LVRP	TQ 3694
Wintry Wood Epping	TL4703
Wintry Wood Epping Forest	TL 4704
Witham	TL 8215
Wivenhoe	TM 0321
Wix	TM 1628
Woodford Green	TQ 4192
Woodham Fen South Woodham Ferrers EWT Reserve	TQ 7997
Wormingford	TL 9331
Wormingford Airfield	TL 9130
Wrabness EWT Reserve	TM 1731
Writtle	TL 6706

The status of the nominate Continental Coal Tit *Periparus ater ater* in Essex

Simon Wood, on behalf of the Essex Birdwatching Identification Panel

The Coal Tit *Periparus ater* has an extensive range across Europe and Asia, from Britain in the west to Japan in the east. Across this vast expanse plumage is variable and many sub-species are known. The most westerly race is that found in Ireland *P. a. hibernicus*, the British race is *P. a. britannicus* and the nominate race *P. a. ater*, colloquially known as Continental Coal Tit in Britain, is found over much of Europe and western Siberia. The latter race is known for irruptive autumn movements in some years.

P.a. ater has always been considered a rare but regular migrant in the County, but prone to occasional influxes (Cox (1984), Wood (2007)). This is a race that, with a clear view of the bird, is possible to identify in the field with certainty. However, the number of records of Coal Tit referred to simply as 'possibly Continental' in the *Essex Bird Report* has been surprisingly high and thus clouded the status of this sub-species in Essex. Indeed, no attempt had ever been made to quantify the number of truly acceptable records.

In a bid to see through this uncertainty and deduce a definite number of *ater* recorded in the County, every *Essex Bird Report*, the 'recent' Essex *Avifaunas* (Hudson and Pyman (1968), Cox (1984) and Wood (2007)) and the EBwS electronic database (back to 1991) were consulted. Every potential record was listed in a spreadsheet and categorised as possible, probable or definite, together with those records of Coal Tit in unusual coastal locations. For each of the possible/probable records and those in odd locations, contact was made, where possible, with the original observers to see if more could be learnt about the records. In some cases, particularly the older records, it was not possible to do this but for many of the recent ones, it was possible to confirm that the records belonged to one race or the other, with the result that most proved to be *britannicus*.

The records were then reviewed using the following criteria:

1 The original record was accepted if previously accepted by EBSIP

2 The original record was accepted if the published record was sufficiently detailed or convincing enough to lead EBSIP to believe that the identification was, on the balance of doubt, correct.

3 The original record was accepted if the observer strongly believed *ater* was involved and the circumstances were supportive even if the original published record was not specific or had not previously been considered by EBSIP. Thus, for example, an influx in 1996 comes under this criterion, as a widely recognised arrival with multiple observers and claims. A review of the number of birds involved in this influx considered that the remarkable consistency of records over several days suggested an initial arrival with birds subsequently remaining in the area. Hence the number of birds involved was reduced from 44 to 34.

4 The original record was considered not proven if there was no clear indication from the printed record or the observer that it was *ater*. For example, that there was a big influx of tits into Britain in 1957, predominantly in the south-east of England. Amongst this influx, a few Coal Tit were recorded at The Naze, although *ater* was not claimed in the 1957 *Essex Bird Report*. Just two *ater* were noted in Norfolk, none in Suffolk but Kent saw double-figure counts at several locations. The evidence is not convincing and there is no clear indication that *ater* was involved, and so the records fall under the 'not proven' criterion.

5 The original record was rejected if it was clearly mistaken or published incorrectly.

It is accepted that this is not the perfect way to consider the records, but it was deemed the most pragmatic, given the passage of time and difficulty of assessment of such historic records. There is the possibility that some perfectly good records have been deemed unacceptable and some unacceptable ones deemed acceptable.

Following the review, 85 *ater* occurrences remained.

The full list is tabulated below with inland records (Rainham Marshes is considered inland for the purposes of this paper) shaded pink and, those on the coast, shaded dark.

Table 1 – list of *Periparus ater ater* records

Year	Location	Date	Count	Note
1952	St Osyth	31st October	One	
1960	Bradwell Bird Observatory	24th April	One	i
1974	Bradwell Bird Observatory	29th September	One	ii
1977	Bradwell Bird Observatory	16th April	One	
1982	Fingringhoe Wick	17th-24th February	One	
1993	Foulness Island	12th September	One	
1996	Abberton Reservoir	15th September	One	
1996	Holland Haven	19-21st September	Ten	
1996	The Naze	19th-22nd September	Seven	
1996	Foulness Island	21st-22nd September	Six	
1996	Grange Outfall Dengie	21st September	One	
1996	Harwich	22nd September	Two	
1996	Middlewick Dengie	22nd September	Five	
1996	The Naze	27th September	One	
1996	Hanningfield Reservoir	13th October	One	
1997	Bradwell Bird Observatory	23rd March	One	iii
2002	Bradwell Bird Observatory	24th March	One	
2002	Bradwell Bird Observatory	7th April	One	
2003	Deal Hall Dengie	17th October	One	
2003	The Naze	17th October-8th November	Six	
2004	Bradwell Bird Observatory	24th March-11th April	One	iv
2005	The Naze	7th-9th October	Four	
2005	Ilford Parkway	11th October and 15th November	Two	
2006	Gunners Park Shoebury	16th April	One	
2006	Foulness Island	16th April	Two	
2007	Rainham Marshes	25th October	One	
2008	The Naze	26th March	One	
2008	The Naze	21st-30th April	One	
2008	The Naze	18th May	One	
2009	The Naze	16th March	One	
2009	Holland Haven	22nd April	Two	
2013	Bradwell Bird Observatory	7th April	One	
2015	Frinton-on-Sea	6th October	Six	
2015	Shoebury	18th October	Three	
2015/16	Black Notley	1st November-28th March	One	v
2016	Great Bardfield	7th February	One	vi
2016	Gunners Park Shoebury	25th March	One	
2016	Rainham Marshes	13th April	One	
2017	Holland Haven	11th October	Two	
2018	The Naze	14th April	Two	

Notes

i Trapped and ringed. Found on Dutch lightship off coast on 03/05/60. Skin in NHM.
ii Trapped and ringed.
iii Trapped and ringed. Controlled Herne, Brabant, Belgium 243km ESE on 23/10/97.
iv Trapped and ringed.
v Trapped and ringed.
vi Found long dead. Was ringed as 1cy bird Bellem, Oost-Vlaanderen, Belgium 233km ESE on 27/09/2015

Discussion

It has often been stated that Coal Tit turning up in odd locations, such as a coastal hotspot at particular times of year, are likely to be *ater*. This is an incorrect assumption, a fact even more relevant in the last decade or so as the resident *britannicus* has continued to increase its range into near-coastal areas e.g., around Holland Haven, although it still remains rare in some areas e.g., Mersea Island, coastal Dengie.

Also, it should not be assumed that a Coal Tit seen inland during the autumn/winter is automatically *britannicus* as a quick perusal of the records shows that there have been seven inland records of *ater*, a fact which does hint at the possibility that inland occurrences may be more numerous than the record suggests.

Table 2. First arrival dates of Continental Coal Tit in Essex 1952-2019

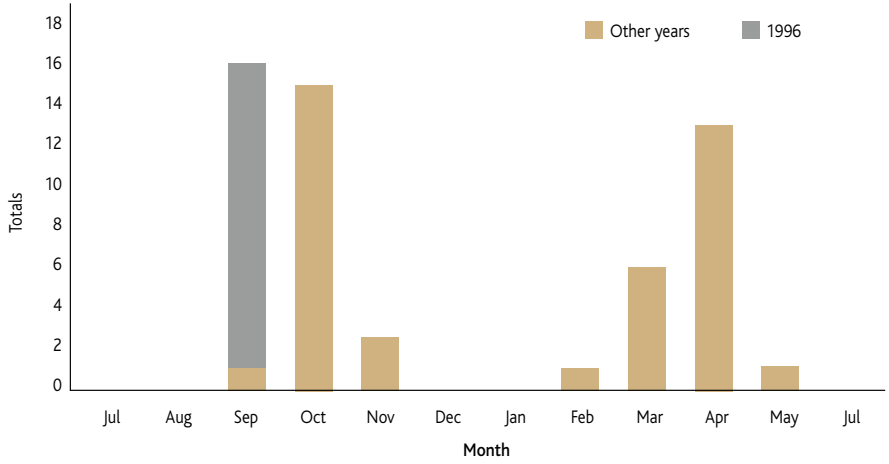
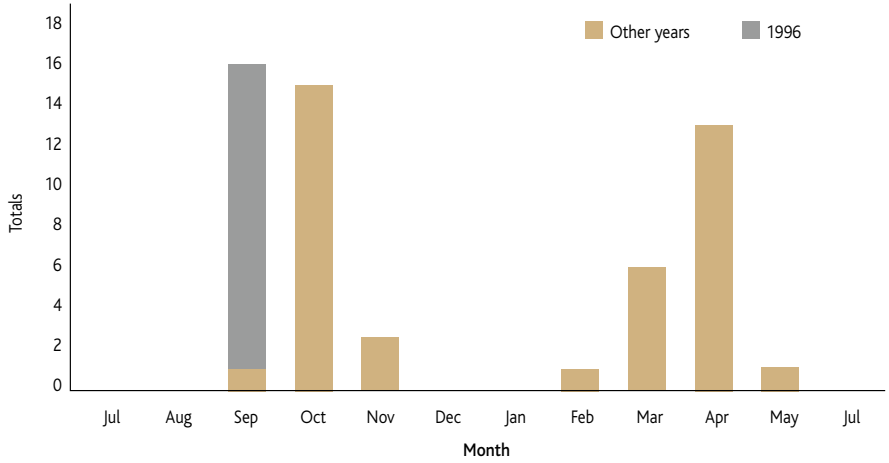


Table 3. Number of Continental Coal Tit present in Essex in each month 1952-2019



The 1996 *ater* influx during September was earlier than most records of the race as October tends to be the peak month of arrival with very few after the end of the month. Return migration is evident from mid-March with most being found in April.

Along the coast from The Naze to Fingringhoe Wick a total of 49 have been recorded, whilst along the coast from Bradwell Bird Observatory to Shoebury has seen 29.

No real trend in annual occurrence is observable, except perhaps that it is caused by increased awareness of the sub-species. The number of years in each decade that the sub-species has been recorded suggests this:

1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s
1	1	2	1	3	8	5

Identifying Continental Coal Tit

A brief summary was previously provided in *Essex Bird Report 2019* pp.212-213.

Detailed information on the differences between the two races is available in many of the excellent field guides that are now available, and I would particularly recommend Shirihai and Svensson (2018).

The following identification features are key to separating the two races. Note that some of these features are best assessed when more than one race is present.

Upperparts

This will be the feature that will putatively flag up any Coal Tit as *ater*:
ater has a bluish grey mantle/back whilst *britannicus* has ochre-tinged blue-grey mantle/back. However, it should be borne in mind that some *ater* can have a very faint olive/'dirty' tinge.

Head

ater has very clean white looking cheeks and nape set off against a jet-black head. *britannicus* shows less 'clean' white cheeks and nape and the black appears less intense. *ater* also tend to show a small head crest, which *britannicus* appears not to. This is a feature that often shows well in photographs; the further east in its range then the more exaggerated the crest in *ater*.

Underparts

ater has greyish underparts on an off-white background whilst *britannicus* has rather strong ochre buff to the underparts. However, there seem to be ater that show more ochre-buff underparts, possibly a clinal variation, so we believe care needs to be taken with this feature. Care also needs to be taken with worn plumage in *britannicus* which may make the underparts appear whiter than they are.

ater has a larger black bib that stretches across the chest.

Photo 1: *ater* (left) and *britannicus*, Black Notley November 2015. Note the blue-grey mantle/back of *ater* and the olive-toned back of *britannicus*. Larger size noticeable here but difficult to appreciate on a single bird in the field. (GEORGE BROWN)

Photo 2 (left): *ater* Gullaug, Buskerud, Norway December 2017. A textbook bird with blue-grey mantle/back. Large throat bib, clean white cheeks, underparts off white ground colour with grey-brown and flanks slightly ochre-brown tinged. Small crest also visible. Note that some birds can also have more extensive underparts and flank colouring but usually not as strong as *britannicus*. (SIMON WOOD)

Photo 3 (right): *britannicus*. Speyside April 2019. Note the olive-tinged greyish mantle/back, the less extensive black bib, white (not clean white) cheeks, ochre-buff underparts, and flanks with no real white background. No crest. (STEVE GRIMWADE)

Structure

britannicus tends to be smaller, shorter tailed and is darker overall than *ater*.

And finally

If you have any Continental Coal Tit records, with suitable descriptions, that are not in the above list then do please send in the details. This sub-species remains a description species so any future records should be forwarded in the usual way to the County Recorder together with any photos, descriptions etc.

My thanks to the current members of EBSIP – Sean Nixon, Steve Grimwade, Bob Pease and Paul Wood – and also to John Buchanan for their thoughts and comments on the draft.

The Essex Birdwatching Society Identification Panel is charged by the Society with assessing all records of the scarce and rare bird species within its remit that occur in the County, as well as maintaining the statistical record.

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West Dengie – A Lockdown Census

Adrian Dally

Introduction

The imposition of the national restrictions in the first lockdown had an initial chilling effect, not just on human activity generally, but also on birdwatching activity specifically. Initially, our one permitted daily outdoor exercise allowed birdwatchers – cautiously – to walk to places nearby, generating some useful local breeding season records in the process. When the Government slightly widened the limits in May it was permitted to drive to one's exercise location and to exercise more than once a day.

With my three-and-a-half hour daily commute to London now replaced by a working day at home consisting of endless virtual meetings pretty much from 8am to 8pm, this opened the door for regular pre-breakfast or evening birdwatching walks in the local area. This was not only essential for my own mental health at a time of crisis - it also optimally coincided with the breeding season. As monitoring breeding birds is my top birding passion, the scene was therefore set for something not attempted since the last Atlas: a local breeding bird census.

Area Covered

With the interests of both virus control and ornithological knowledge in mind, the sensible objective seemed to be to define a census area which, to the best of my knowledge, was unlikely to be visited during lockdown by a similar observer, which had previously been little studied, was broadly representative of habitats in the surrounding area, and which could also be reached within little more than five minutes in a car. The meant an area of 62 square kilometres of the western Dengie peninsula centred on my Latchingdon home, from the Blackwater at Lawling Creek in the north to the Crouch at Bridgemarsh in the south, and from Mayland and Creeksea in the east to Stow Maries and Purleigh in the west.

Consistent with the objectives of the census, important exclusions were made. These were areas already well-watched by other observers at Blue House Farm and areas close to Maldon, such as Hazeleigh Hall Wood, where the local bird populations were already well-known. In practical terms, therefore, the census area was in effect the western half of the Dengie. The 62 square kilometre survey area amounted to 1.69% (or 1/59th) of the land area of Essex – potentially significant enough to gather meaningful data as well as to draw some wider conclusions.

Methodology

For historical reasons to do with the seasonal marshiness of much of the local landscape in medieval times, this area is not blessed with many public rights of way. It is also now a mainly open landscape. These two factors meant that it was practicable to walk every public right of way, and observe from every public road, in the census area at least once during the breeding season (in calm and dry weather), while counting the numbers of apparent pairs or territories of a range of target species visible or audible. For the more conspicuous species, this enabled an almost certainly complete census to be undertaken – not only of, for example, wildfowl, waders and raptors, but also of warblers, many species of which sing almost constantly at the chosen observation times during the breeding season.

The target species, as set out in the table below, were essentially all species but for the commonest passerines whose full counting would not have been feasible within the practical limits of the survey. A disappointing omission in hindsight was Rook for which, by the time the lockdown restrictions were loosened enough to permit the survey, their nests were then obscured by leaf growth. Similar factors hindered counts of Carrion Crow and Eurasian Magpie too. And, in hindsight, it might also

have been possible to attempt counts of some declined species such as Song Thrush, Common Starling, Common Linnet and European Greenfinch. ...

The crepuscular opportunities of the survey allowed something not previously attempted, even during the Atlas periods, which was an owl census. My night-time excursions for 'owling' coincided perfectly with the rest of the family watching the entire box set of *Peaky Blinders*, leading to discussions among us as to whose activities were actually the darker. This 'owling' led to some major surprises – including the discovery of a previously unknown population of Long-eared Owl. This shows that, even when you've lived somewhere for 16 years and have prided yourself on your local birding, you never know as much about the local bird populations as you thought you did. There is always something to find out and boundaries of knowledge to push – sometimes right under your nose.

The breeding bird survey started in the third week of April 2020, for the areas within walking distance of home, and was largely complete by the end of July. Some further work was undertaken during August for late-brooded species such as Hobby and House Martin. This involved, in total, around 240 hours of fieldwork.

Habitat and key sites

The survey area included sections of two estuaries – the Blackwater and the Crouch – which are nationally and internationally important for their wetland bird populations outside the breeding season. Within the sea wall, however, these sections contain virtually no coastal grazing marsh, although there are some areas of managed grassland among the otherwise arable and urban estuary frontage. The most important of these sites is the managed grassland adjacent to Lawling Creek.

The vast majority of the survey area's habitat is open and arable, dominated by a typical rotation of cereals, oilseed rape and beans. Recent years have, however, seen a significant increase in land devoted to both equiculture and viticulture. The first includes not just land for grazing horses but also land devoted to growing crops that support them, such as grass and lucerne. The second includes an increasing area of vines, in particular along the Althorne Ridge which rises to above 60 metres and provides the only significant relief in an otherwise rather flat area. The ten vineyards here make up the increasingly renowned Crouch Valley English wine region. While this survey didn't reveal these two land use types to be either particularly beneficial or harmful, compared to more conventional land use types, there did appear to be positive correlations at least for some species – such as horse grazing for Long-eared Owl, and lucerne (and other leguminous crops) for Corn Bunting. This is clearly an interesting area worthy of future study.

Much of the habitat is open and arable (left), but there are pockets of quality habitat too (right)

There is very little woodland in the survey area. The largest woodlands are predominantly oak / ash at Mundon Furze, Fambridge Hall Wood, Hawe's Wood (Stow Maries) and Kent Wood (Purleigh), none of which exceed 20 hectares but which generally have well-vegetated understorey layers, thanks in part to the absence of Fallow Deer in the area. There are also pockets of mature mixed woodland around Creeksea Place and along the old railway line through Stow Maries and Cold Norton. These areas aside, there are numerous small copses and plantations across the area, usually only a few hectares in size and planted for a variety of reasons, including windbreak, game cover and landscape utility, and more often than not creditably planted using native local tree species. The survey showed these to be of significant ornithological and other wildlife value, notwithstanding their small size.

The findings

The numbers of apparent breeding pairs / occupied territories located for each target species during the survey are set out in the table below (Table 1). For most species, in my judgement, it is likely that the number given is close to the actual number present in the survey area. For those marked with a single asterisk (*), however, the number is likely to be slightly *below* the actual number present. And for those with a double asterisk (**), the number is likely to be *significantly below* the actual number present because the species (for example, Common Whitethroat) is widespread and many areas where they are likely to be present will have been inaudible from public rights of way. For those species whose numbers are highlighted in **green**, there is strong evidence that the local population has increased since the 2007-11 Atlas period, while for those highlighted in **red**, there is strong evidence of a decline over the same period. For those not highlighted, the evidence is not strong enough either way.

Table 1: Estimated breeding pairs or occupied territories

Canada Goose	23	Common Ringed Plover	1	Coal Tit	10
Greylag Goose	5	Common Redshank	4	Common House Martin	42
Mute Swan	2	Black-headed Gull	20	Barn Swallow	81*
Common Shelduck	25	Common Herring Gull	8	Cetti's Warbler	8
Gadwall	2	Western Cattle Egret	2	Long-tailed Tit	16*
Mallard	47*	Grey Heron	13	Willow Warbler	1
Common Pochard	4	Little Egret	36	Common Chiffchaff	31
Tufted Duck	1	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	4	Sedge Warbler	6
Red-legged Partridge	12**	Western Marsh Harrier	1	Eurasian Reed Warbler	27
Grey Partridge	2*	Common Buzzard	15	Eurasian Blackcap	72*
Common Swift	16	Western Barn Owl	11	Lesser Whitethroat	18
Common Cuckoo	10	Tawny Owl	10	Common Whitethroat	170**
Stock Dove	75	Little Owl	9	Goldcrest	5
European Turtle Dove	2	Long-eared Owl	6	Eurasian Nuthatch	1
European Collared Dove	66	Great Spotted Woodpecker	25	Eurasian Treecreeper	11
Water Rail	3*	Green Woodpecker	23	Western Yellow Wagtail	15*
Common Moorhen	35**	Common Kestrel	14	Pied Wagtail	63
Eurasian Coot	11	Eurasian Hobby	1	Eurasian Bullfinch	2
Little Grebe	4	Eurasian Jay	5	Corn Bunting	33
Eurasian Oystercatcher	21	Northern Raven	1	Yellowhammer	17*
Northern Lapwing	2			Reed Bunting	22

*likely to be slightly *below* the actual number present
** likely to be *significantly below* the actual number present

There has not been a past survey against which to directly compare numbers and thus assess population trends over time. However, we do have comparison data available: the tetrads I was responsible for in the 2007-11 Atlas period covered about one third of the 2020 survey area; the breeding birds in an extensive defined area around Lawling Creek have been censused every year since 2005; and the known locations for Rare Breeding Bird Panel species in the survey area have also been checked every year since 2005. Put together, these enable some reasonable trend assessments to be made.

The following are some of the more noteworthy observations that can be made on species status and trends based on the survey data:

- Four pairs of **Common Pochard** is double that previously recorded – not insignificant against a UK population of only around 800 pairs (Holling,M & RBBP 2019)
- There has been a marginal increase in **Common Shelduck** numbers: up from 10 to 13 pairs at Lawling Creek since 2005.
- **Grey Partridge** is teetering on the edge, although one new site was found.
- Two pairs of Western **Cattle Egret** bred for the first time, within the Little Egret colony which itself started in 2007 and which may now be the largest in the County. As that egretry is within sight of a number of permanent suckler cattle herds, this colonization by Cattle Egrets had been predicted, but happened a few years sooner than expected. Both pairs produced young in the nest, but only one young was seen to fledge to flying stage.
- A substantial roost of at least 16 non-breeding **Little Egret** was found while searching for owls. This matters, because such roosts can become future breeding colonies.
- **Common Buzzard** has overtaken **Common Kestrel** as the commonest raptor (just).
- **Eurasian Sparrowhawk** numbers are much lower than expected and give cause for concern – a species which needs closer monitoring.
- **Western Marsh Harrier** again failed to breed in the area. A sub-adult male and female flirted with each other, the latter taking up residence in a reedbed in June, but both subsequently left the area.
- A regular breeding pair of **Eurasian Hobby** which was thought to have left the area a few years ago was relocated in a small oak wood 1 kilometre from the original site, the farmer confirming the birds' presence there since that time.
- Young **Water Rail** were heard at night at three sites, only one of which was previously known, and adult birds were occasionally heard over the house, also at night. But this remains a difficult species to census properly, so trends are hard to assess.
- **Northern Lapwing** and **Common Redshank** are in bigger trouble than I thought, with just two pairs of the former (at one site) and four of the latter (at two sites). There were 11 pairs of Northern Lapwing and seven of Common Redshank at Lawling Creek alone in 2005. The conservation efforts of the RSPB and others at key sites for these species elsewhere thus make complete sense in this context.
- A single pair of **Common Ringed Plover** continues to breed at Mundon Stone Point, in spite of the occasional landing at this narrow site by small boats.
- **Black-headed Gull** has almost deserted the survey area. The Bridgemarsh Island colony has plummeted from 1,240 nests in 2013 to 18 now, and the colony at North Fambridge Marina has similarly plummeted from 184 nests to two over the same period. There may be a positive explanation for this, though, as it appears these colonies may simply have relocated downriver to the excellent new accommodation at Wallasea Island.
- **Mediterranean Gull** appears to have done the same thing: the colony at Bridgemarsh Island which reached 11 pairs in 2015 has now been abandoned.
- The destruction of the pool island at North Fambridge Marina, which housed the Black-headed Gull colony, has also led to the desertion of **Pied Avocet** (up to eight pairs) and **Common Tern** (two pairs). The same pool was formerly also a nesting site for **Northern Shoveler**.
- **Stock Dove** is actually more numerous than **European Collared Dove** – even though it might seem the opposite to us humans given the latter's preference for human environments. The Stock Doves were found nesting semi-colonially in a variety of settings, including ancient petrified oaks in Mundon and an abandoned barge on the saltings at Lawling Creek.
- Just two **European Turtle Dove** territories were found, one in a young plantation and another on the edge of a wood. In both cases the singing males appeared unmated. The Dengie was until recently a national stronghold for this species, and so, to the ears of the birder, these two birds' songs seemed to have a particularly mournful and poignant tone this year.
- Owls were a revelation. The 11 pairs of **Western Barn Owl** and nine of **Little Owl** were much as expected, as these are relatively conspicuous species, the former making some use of boxes put up for them. But the ten pairs of **Tawny Owl** were completely unexpected, as this is a species I had previously encountered in the area on only a handful of occasions, and I had presumed (based on data from the previous Atlases) that the area was too marginal for the species. I had, however, specifically looked for **Long-eared Owl** during the previous Atlas, albeit without success. Even so, it was a major revelation to find six pairs of these. This is significant in an Essex context, so there is more detail about these below.
- The 16 pairs of **Common Swift** in Latchingdon church, a few metres from home, were not a surprise, as I've been monitoring this slowly declining colony for years. But what *was* a surprise was that this was in fact the only colony in the survey area. This goes to show how important are the efforts of the Essex Swift Partnership to provide nest boxes for this clearly vulnerable species.
- The 42 pairs of Common **House Martin** were spread across six colonies and were present in four villages out of seven and on two farmhouses, the largest colony being of 15 pairs on a farmhouse near Stow Maries Aerodrome. But this has been against a backdrop of long term decline. In Latchingdon parish in 2013, there were 39 pairs, all on just one farmhouse, falling to 14 pairs in the present survey – interestingly, all of which were on houses built since 2015.
- It was a shock to discover that **Meadow Pipit** is now extinct in the area. There were ten pairs of these on the seawalls around Lawling Creek alone in 2005. This is hard to explain on habitat grounds as the suitability of grassland in the survey area has, if anything, improved during this period for this species. Perhaps climate factors are involved, with the species' population pivoting to the north.
- **Western Yellow Wagtail** is also in decline, with numbers at Lawling Creek (the principal site) declining from 13 pairs to seven since 2005. The species continues to show a marginal preference in the area for leguminous crops. As *flavissima* is endemic to this island, this decline matters.
- **Willow Warbler** is clinging on by its fingertips, with just one territory, in a young plantation at Stow Maries Aerodrome. The decline of this species in southern Britain has been well documented.
- **Garden Warbler** was found now to be extinct in the survey area, as expected. Four territories were located during the previous Atlas period. Although wider factors have undoubtedly been involved, local habitat may also be a factor, as the decline in woodland management in the area has led to tree and shrub maturation and a loss of the new growth on which this species depends.
- **Cetti's Warbler** has now overtaken **Sedge Warbler** in abundance. This was not unexpected. But what *was* unexpected was that there was now only one site for the latter, Lawling Creek, where the species had in fact shown a slight increase in recent years. **Eurasian Reed Warbler** had also shown an increase at the same site, from nine territories in 2005 to 14 in 2020.

- As expected, **Spotted Flycatcher** is now also extinct. Only one pair was found during the previous Atlas period. The same is true of **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker**.
- With such a paucity of woodland in the area, meagre totals of five pairs of **Goldcrest**, 11 of **Eurasian Treecreeper**, one of **Eurasian Nuthatch** and five of **Eurasian Jay** were in line with expectations. But the ten pairs of **Coal Tit** were genuinely unexpected, as this species was not recorded in the previous Atlas period and as I had never previously found it in the area either. They were found mainly in rather innocuous human sites where there were (even just a handful of) mature evergreen trees – in particular those near medieval buildings where yew and holm oak were present. This may indicate something of a colonisation of the area.
- A pair of **Northern Raven** raised two young, which may represent the first breeding of this species in coastal Essex since the 19th century. An adult was first detected during a clap for the NHS during the first lockdown, when one casually flew down the road at rooftop height over our heads, which was pretty surreal. This in fact became part of a regular feeding circuit for single adults, presumably during incubation and when feeding young, causing me on occasion to lose concentration in otherwise very serious virtual meetings as birds lumbered past the window. The invariably low airspace behaviour of these birds was rather disconcerting – not once were they seen soaring or heard 'cronking' from on high. They simply roamed the area at treetop height, rather like Carrion Crows, or indeed even lower.
- Although **Western Jackdaw** was not fully surveyed, a notable colony was found in Hawe's Wood. There is no public access to the interior of this wood, and so only a minority of nest holes were visible, but flight counting suggested around 83 pairs may have been nesting. This meant that the wood was alive with noise throughout the day, audible from some distance away. This may explain the name of the road that passes the wood – Crows Lane – and possibly also the name of the wood itself, which might conceivably be a corruption of 'Daw's Wood' (*daw* being the Old English word for Jackdaw). Whatever the truth, the road name alone suggests that the colony may be some centuries old.
- Just two pairs of **Eurasian Bullfinch** were found, both in mature mixed woodland. This is less than half the number found during the 2007-11 Atlas period. If this density were replicated across Essex as a whole (which previous Atlas distributions would suggest is plausible), this would represent an Essex population of 118 pairs. The *Essex Bird Report* for 2019 reported the species from 98 sites during the breeding season, including two or more birds at 75 locations – which is a true vote of confidence in the value of the data submitted to the County Recorder.
- The contrasting distributions of buntings were interesting. One species, **Yellowhammer**, was fairly evenly distributed across the drier arable, in particular in areas with the most mature hedgerows – including the vineyards. The other two species, by contrast, were highly clustered. **Corn Buntings** were in four semi-colonies of 8-9 territories each at Mundon Wash, Lawling Creek, Latchingdon and Bridgemarsh. But the 22 pairs of **Common Reed Bunting** were in just one site, Lawling Creek, in the core of which there were 11 territories in just 14 hectares of reedbed surrounded by uncut grass. For both these species there was ample apparently suitable habitat outside these areas which was unoccupied. Yet both had shown a roughly 20% increase in numbers at Lawling Creek since 2005, while over the same period Reed Bunting appeared to have abandoned its previously widespread use of leguminous crops across the area. These are complex and enigmatic species about which we clearly still have much to learn.

Long-eared Owl

The discovery of at least six pairs of Long-eared Owl was the biggest surprise of the survey. To put this into context, the maximum number of pairs found in a single season in Essex hitherto has been 11 (in 1992, 1993 and 1999), leading to a suggestion that the County population was around 8-12 pairs during the previous Atlas period. There was also a suggestion that the fortunes of the species were linked to the area of rough grassland in coastal areas and to competition from Tawny Owls expanding into these areas (Wood 2007). The findings from this survey suggest that the factors involved are complex and more nuanced:

Part of a Long-eared Owl territory

- No pairs were in areas of coastal grazing marsh. And none were found in four other areas of coastal grazing marsh additionally surveyed outside the main survey area.
- Only two sites were on the coastal floodplain. The other four were in drier sites at elevations between 5m and 17m.
- Only one of the six sites was one conceivably likely to be visited by an active birdwatcher – and only very occasionally at that. None of the sites are listed in the Gazetteer of the 2018 *Essex Bird Report*. (Although the 2019 Report states that there was evidence of breeding at four sites in the County, the locations are withheld).
- Five nests were in dense, impenetrable stands of low-level private deciduous woodland, three of which were small plantations consisting of native tree mixes planted within the last two decades. The other two were in mature, extensive hawthorn-dominated scrub.
- The sixth nest was in a mature oak / ash woodland where Tawny Owl was absent.
- All six nests were in former corvid ones – three appeared to be Carrion Crow and three Eurasian Magpie.
- Young were heard in June at all six sites, at two of which at least two were heard. From the third week of June, some of the young began to move considerable distances from the nest – in one case nearly 2 kilometres in less than an hour.
- Four of the six nests were in a cluster in a broad arc, with the distance between the nests respectively 1,500 metres, 2,300 metres and 1,900 metres. This represents a greater dispersion than described in, for example, West Berlin (1,250 metres) and Tambov, south-east of Moscow (800-950 metres) (Cramp 1985), suggesting that even this apparently favourable locality is relatively marginal by the species' standards.
- One 18 hectare woodland had both Tawny Owl and Long-eared Owl nests: the former at one end where the canopy was tall and open and dominated by oak, the latter at the other end where the canopy was lower and impenetrable and dominated by hawthorn and field maple. Their feeding territories in the surrounding fields overlapped not only with each other but also with Western Barn Owl and Little Owl territories.
- Five of the six nesting woods had adjacent grassland used for equiculture, either for grazing or for cropping.
- Each of the six nesting woods had surrounding land with an element of smaller fields surrounded by mature hedgerows – suggesting the species' need (in contrast to Short-eared Owl) for close cover at all times. This may partly explain the species' absence from the areas of coastal grazing marsh, which generally lack such cover.
- One male continued to sing, albeit less frequently, until early June. The calls of the juveniles were obvious from the end of May through to the end of July. With persistence, the species could still be detected (by the adults' occasional contact and alarm calls and 'sharming') until mid-August.
- The nest call of the female was frequently given and was at least as useful in locating nest-sites as were the more familiar song of the male and calls of juveniles. Contrary to previous statements that this call is barely audible at 60 metres (Cramp 1985), it was audible clearly at over 200 metres, perhaps reflecting the more open nature of the sites in an Essex context.

- Two of the six pairs were initially located by sight, as the adults began hunting food for young only a few minutes after sunset in May.

These results suggest that breeding Long-eared Owls in the County may have been overlooked to a greater extent than previously appreciated. Not only have few observers searched for them intensively, but those of us that have may have previously been looking in the wrong places: the birds seem to favour sites that hold few other attractions for the active birdwatcher . Suitable such sites appear to exist in the County in, for example, Metropolitan Essex, in urban fringe and other sites south of the A127, in a number of marginal sites around the coastal fringe, and conceivably in pockets of suitable habitat (including dense conifer plantations, even if small) in the arable interior where equiculture is expanding.

It is also worth considering that breeding density for Long-eared Owls is affected by the abundance of rodents (Mikkola 1983) and in particular Field Voles (Toms, 2014). The previous summer (2019) was a high rodent year in the area leading, for example, to an observer (J Ross) noting exceptional fledging rates for Kestrel on the Dengie. Although, from my personal observation, 2020 appeared to be a more normal rodent year, it is possible that population levels for Long-eared Owl may, as a consequence, in both years have been higher than normal.

Even so, taking all these factors into consideration, it is tempting to suggest in the light of these findings that the true breeding population of the Long-eared Owl in Essex may range between 20 and 50 pairs, considerably higher than previously assumed. Only a full survey would tell us for sure.

Warblers

The following table (Table 2) shows four measures of relative warbler breeding populations in Essex, including the minima from this survey's counts. Also included are the number of pairs / territories / breeding season sites according to the past two *Essex Bird Reports* as well as BTO data on birds counted in Essex Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) squares in 2019.

Table 2: Surveyed and estimated warbler breeding populations

Species	West Dengie survey	Essex Bird Report 2018	Essex Bird Report 2019	Essex BBS 2019
Common Whitethroat	170	1,365	1,345	251
Eurasian Blackcap	72	1,215	1,684	302
Common Chiffchaff	31	660	808	160
Eurasian Reed Warbler	27	950	868	59
Lesser Whitethroat	18	205	224	33
Cetti's Warbler	8	201	321	8
Sedge Warbler	6	336	360	27
Willow Warbler	1	85	77	4

While it is important not to over-interpret a relatively sparse and unscientific dataset, it might be possible to draw some broad conclusions, for example:

While the BBS totals are clearly the most rigorous in describing relative species populations, the *Essex Bird Report* totals are creditably similar. While the EBR does not purport to quantify the overall population, it is clearly a good measure of relative species populations.

That said, there does seem to be some understandable observer bias towards wetland habitats in the EBR totals, leading to proportionately higher totals for Reed, Sedge and Cetti's Warblers and, to some extent, Common Whitethroat.

Even so, the EBR appears to successfully pick up a substantial proportion of the populations of Reed, Sedge, Willow and Cetti's Warblers, taking into account in the case of the last species that numbers were low in 2018 following a harsh winter.

Presumably reflecting the more open nature of the local landscape, the Dengie has a proportionately higher population of Common Whitethroat than the rest of Essex. Yet, perhaps in spite of the landscape and lack of extensive woodland, the relative population of Chiffchaff is broadly similar in the Dengie as elsewhere.

Migrants

Although passage migrants were not part of the survey's objectives, some useful records were obtained as a by-product in the spring. And a specific effort was made in the autumn to measure migrants, now that local populations were better understood.

Spring

In contrast to water birds on the estuaries, where migrants are obvious and well-assessed by our Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts, land bird passage locally in the spring is usually near-imperceptible, as it was this year. The highlight was a first-summer male **Red-footed Falcon** hunting at dusk over a former Hobby nesting wood in Althorne on 26th May, although it was not present on the following day. A male **White Wagtail** was on a lucerne field in Latchingdon on 19th April with a male **Northern Wheatear**, while a female of the former was at Three Rivers Golf Course on 17th-18th May. This bird was associating with seven adult Pied Wagtail which were gathering food for young, suggesting the possibility that it might have been paired, but I was unable to pin down the bird (nor most of the Pied Wagtail) subsequently. Although the probability is that the bird was a migrant, the possibility of breeding cannot be discounted as a male White Wagtail raised young with a female Pied Wagtail 9 kilometres away in 2014. Other migrants, or wandering non-breeders, included two female **Greenland Wheatear** at Lawling Creek on 8th, a **Red Kite** on 23rd and a **Peregrine Falcon** over the house on 27th May, the same day that a solitary **Meadow Pipit** flew NE – the only one of the spring and summer.

Autumn

In contrast to the spring, autumn land bird passage in the area in previous years has been more obvious, if unspectacular, although little effort had been put into observing it. This year allowed a more thorough attempt to be made, so a regular morning circuit of good quality river, scrub and woodland habitat around Mundon was walked roughly every week from the end of August. Backed now by a more thorough understanding of the local breeding populations, this meant that apparent migrants could, with a reasonable amount of confidence, be more easily distinguished and counted. The table below shows the apparent migrants (including overhead ones) that were counted on each circuit.

Table 3: Apparent Autumn Migrants

Species	Aug	Sep			Oct					Nov
	31st	11th	19th	30th	4th	10th	17th	24th	28th	8th
Eurasian Curlew									1	1
Common Snipe						2	1			
Eurasian Woodcock							1			
Common Sandpiper	3									
Green Sandpiper	4	1	1		2	1	1	1		1
Mediterranean Gull	1			1				1		
Western Marsh Harrier		1						1		
Short-eared Owl							2			
Common Kingfisher							1			
Merlin	1									1
Eurasian Jay		4	3	4	7	2	3	2	2	2
Coal Tit		1								

Species	Aug 31st	Sep 11th	Sep 19th	Sep 30th	Oct 4th	Oct 10th	Oct 17th	Oct 24th	Oct 28th	Nov 8th
Eurasian Skylark	27	4	6	45	16	39	34	11	7	6
Sand Martin	8									
Barn Swallow	130	22	4		2	5		2		
Common House Martin	60	13	8	32		4				
Long-tailed Tit			8	21	45	7	30	22	11	27
Eurasian Reed Warbler	7	3								
Sedge Warbler	2									
Eurasian Blackcap	19	22	5	3	4					
Common Whitethroat	8	4								
Lesser Whitethroat	1	4		3						
Willow Warbler		2								
Common Chiffchaff	8	23	13	9	11	5	4	1		
Yellow-browed Warbler								1		
Common Firecrest		1		3	2			1		1
Goldcrest			3	2	4	9	22	21	9	14
Eurasian Wren							27	11		
Eurasian Nuthatch		1			2			1	1	
Common Starling							60	95	45	48
Song Thrush					1	2	17	8	4	13
Redwing							14	4		11
Common Blackbird							21	7		24
Fieldfare							2			4
Ring Ouzel							2			
European Robin							70	19	14	18
European Pied Flycatcher		1								
Common Redstart	1									
Whinchat	4									
European Stonechat				1						
Northern Wheatear	1									
Dunnock							45	17		
Western Yellow Wagtail	7	3								
Grey Wagtail					1	1	2			
White Wagtail									1	
Meadow Pipit	46	2	1	33	11	23	18	8	9	7
Common Chaffinch			2	41	4	17	33	31	13	14
Brambling								2		2
Euarasian Bullfinch						2				
Greenfinch							16	23	11	13
Common Linnet			8	2		2	2	8		
Lesser Redpoll			2	3			3	3	1	7
European Goldfinch		25	40	38	18	41	40	18	26	17
Eurasian Siskin	11		3	7	2	13			6	
Yellowhammer									2	3
Common Reed Bunting						1	2	1	3	2

The number of birds, and variety of species, exceeded expectations. Although 17 kilometres west of the open sea, the experience was not in reality far short of migrant watching at an Essex coastal watchpoint. That said, these counts didn't necessarily push the boundaries of migrant knowledge very far, although the following points are perhaps worth noting:

- The vast majority of visible migration was, as expected, broadly in a south-westerly direction.
- The exceptions to this were Common Chaffinch (where about 40% were heading west or northwest) and European Siskin (where about a third were heading south and two-thirds heading north-west). This is a long-established pattern in the County, an explanation for this being that those heading northwest are arrivals from the Low Countries, the others being of British origin, which is supported by ringing evidence (Wood 2007)
- Movements (presumably fairly local) of relatively sedentary woodland species could clearly be detected – including of Eurasian Jay, Long-tailed Tit, Coal Tit, Eurasian Nuthatch and Eurasian Bullfinch.
- There was a significant and obvious arrival of apparent Fennoscandian migrants on 17th October, following several days of easterly winds which themselves followed a sustained period of westerlies. Now armed with a better understanding of local populations, there was little doubt that this arrival also included substantial numbers of Dunnock, European Robin and even Eurasian Wren, the last of which was suddenly conspicuous, including in places such as dykes and grassy banks where they had not previously been encountered. On the following day's Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) count, there were even some on the Lawling Creek saltings. While there is ringing evidence showing some autumn immigration of continental Dunnock and Eurasian Wren (whose northern populations are highly migratory), there is also a suggestion that the Wren's presence in autumn in sub-optimal habitats (such as reedbeds) may be due to birds losing out in post-moult territorial competition (Wernham *et al* 2002). The timing and context of these counts perhaps suggest, nevertheless, that both factors may have been involved here.
- After a similar set of conditions, there was a similar arrival detectable on 8th November, although this primarily affected thrushes.

Other wildlife

This was a bird survey, of course, but at least half an eye was kept open for other wildlife. The early morning and late evening focus militated against finding much in the way of sun-loving reptiles, dragonflies and butterflies but there were some moderately useful finds along the way.

Dragonfly-wise, the continuing presence of **Scarce Emerald** and **White-legged Damselflies** was confirmed at Lawling Creek, while nearby a new site for **Willow Emerald Damselfly** was found at Mundon Church. And butterfly-wise, the only finding of note was of two **Clouded Yellows** at Mundon Wash on 19th September. Several splendid **Glow Worms** were at the well-known Stow Maries site on 15th July.

Mammal-wise, the continuing spread on the Dengie of both **Grey Squirrel** and **Muntjac** was evident, with the latter being found at six sites, including in several new plantations. But it was equally evident that bats had gone in the opposite direction since I last looked for them intensively in the area a decade ago, with relatively few being encountered in spite of many night-time hours in the field. Even so **Noctule** was found at North Fambridge, Cold Norton and Mayland and **Serotine** was seen twice among oaks and pasture at a long-standing site between Bridgemarsh and Creeksea. **Common Pipistrelle** was widespread in small numbers and **Natterer's Bat** was found at five sites, but disappointingly neither **Soprano Pipistrelle** nor **Brown Long-eared Bat** were found. There were also several *myotis*-type bats along the old railway at Stow Maries, but they were beyond the capabilities of both myself and my bat detector to identify.

Negligible botanical effort was made, although **Wild Service Tree** was found at Hawe's Wood, a site not previously listed for the species.(Jermyn 1974).And five patches of **Hairy Vetchling** continued to thrive around Lawling Creek.

Conclusion

This survey, in addition to revealing the true status of a variety of breeding (and, to some extent, migrant) birds, has shown that there are benefits to studying at an area, rather than just site, level. Doing this appears to reduce potential observer biases, by ensuring that all local habitat types are covered. It also enables some broader phenomena to be identified, such as the highly clustered breeding concentrations of some species.

The survey looked at how populations have changed since the 2007-11 Atlas. During that time, there has been considerable change. Six species have been gained: Little Egret, Western Cattle Egret, Western Marsh Harrier, Cetti's Warbler, Coal Tit and Northern Raven. Nine have been lost: Common Shoveler, Pied Avocet, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Mediterranean Gull, Common Tern, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Meadow Pipit, Garden Warbler and Spotted Flycatcher. Ten regularly breeding species have gone up, and 16 have gone down.

The survey also showed that nine regularly nesting Essex species (Dennis 1996) were absent throughout the period: Great Crested Grebe, Little Tern, Common Kingfisher, Sand Martin, Common Nightingale, Black Redstart, Grasshopper Warbler, Bearded Reedling and Marsh Tit. Lack of habitat is the simple explanation for most of these absences. But the same cannot be said for Common Nightingale, whose continued absence is baffling and which has some substantial populations immediately outside the survey area – another species whose distribution is highly clustered.

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Total number of birds counted in 64 Essex BBS squares surveyed in 2019 (source: BTO)

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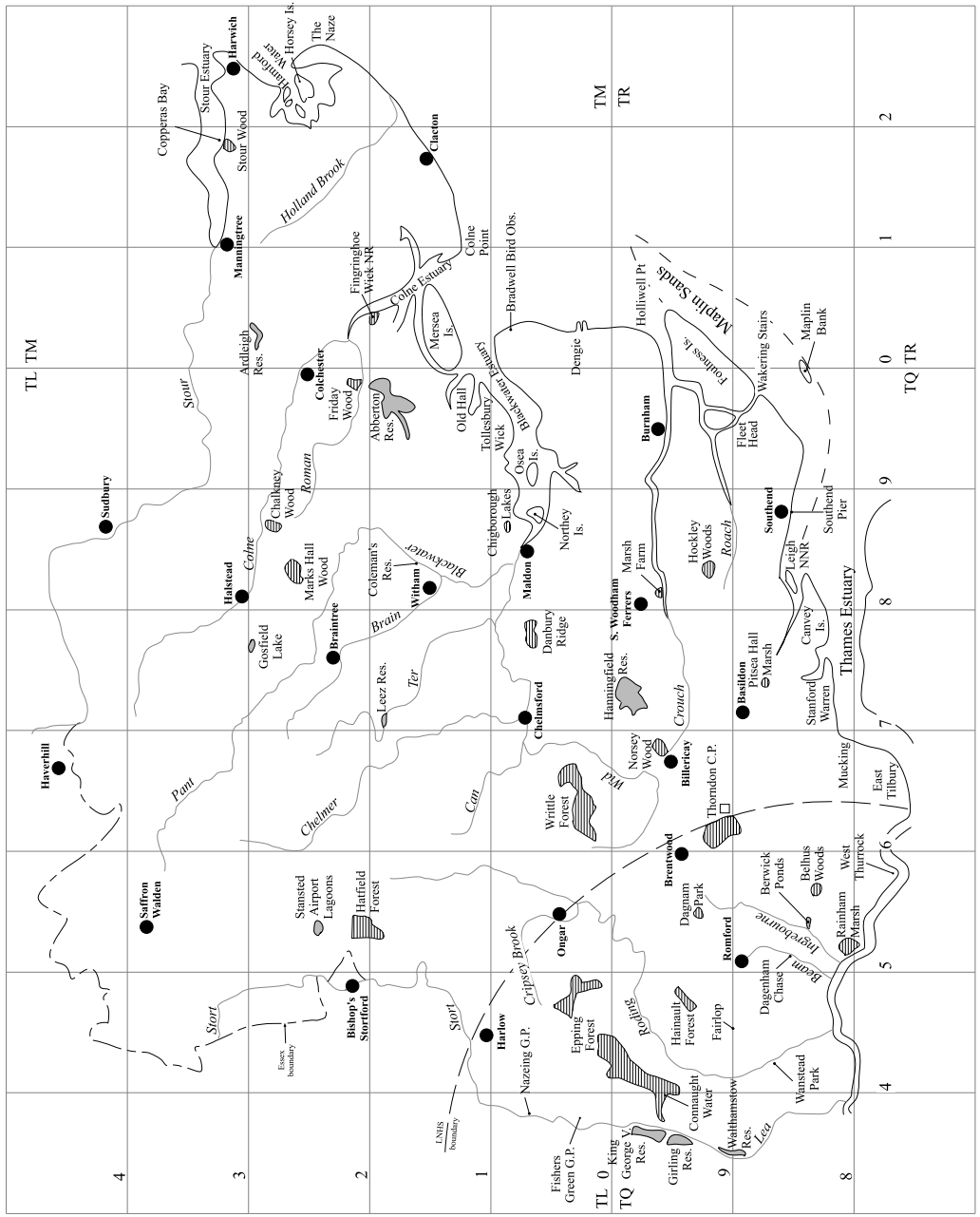
Map of Essex



Essex Ringing Report 2020

David Wilkinson

The BTO database lists a total of 15,104 birds ringed in Essex in 2020, slightly down on the year before, but still above average for the County. Of course, bird ringing activities were significantly curtailed by the lockdown restrictions with a total stop put to ringing outside of private gardens for a couple of months and restrictions on travel, team numbers and land access on and off throughout the rest of 2020. Many ringers, myself included, were able to take some ringing projects into their own backyard but most large projects were postponed or interrupted. This grand total of individual birds that were ringed does include a small number of birds from Rye Meads Nature Reserve which straddles the border with Hertfordshire and some nets are on the other side of the border, but this does not significantly affect results. For some species, our County has made a major contribution to the data collected by the BTO in the UK & Ireland. For example, there were five species of which 15% of the nationwide total were caught in Essex, these being Brent Goose, Canada Goose, Gadwall, Little Egret and Red-crested Pochard, with the latter being the only one ringed in the country throughout the entire year. Of the 46 Brant Goose ringed in 2020, 31 of them were marked in Essex and 11 of the BTO's 27 Little Egrets were ringed as nestlings in this County. As well as the Red-crested Pochard, there were also singles of a few other bird of note, including Turtle Dove, Dartford Warbler & Wheatear.

Because of the restrictions it is difficult to draw too many conclusions from the raw numbers in comparison to last year, as so many projects and operations were restricted, and garden birds were unusually positively skewed. One example of where numbers were low, but may not be a sign of population concern, was the drop from 231 to 111 of ringed Barn Owl. When we consider that all but seven were ringed as chicks, and consider the restrictions, it is probably best to view this number aa not indicative. Other than prior to the first lockdown, the only other part of 2020 that was not restricted was late summer and, from ringing results in this period, we can see that the key breeders and passage migrants such as Blackcap and Chiffchaff had numbers that stayed fairly consistent with the previous year. It is definitely worth the time of the interested reader to read reports on the website of the BTO where all the ringing numbers are interpreted by the research team.

Table 1 Totals of birds ringed in Essex 2020

Species	2019 Total
Brant Goose	31
Canada Goose	21
Greylag Goose	17
Mute Swan	76
Red-crested Pochard	1
Gadwall	4
Mallard	69
Eurasian Teal	8
Little Egret	11
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	8
Common Buzzard	2
Common Moorhen	6
Eurasian Coot	2
Northern Lapwing	7
Little Ringed Plover	1

Species	2019 Total
Dunlin	2
Woodcock	4
Black-headed Gull	11
Herring Gull	4
Common Tern	23
Stock Dove	33
Common Wood Pigeon	45
European Turtle Dove	1
Eurasian Collared Dove	14
Common Cuckoo	1
Western Barn Owl	111
Little Owl	1
Common Kingfisher	4
Great Spotted Woodpecker	43

Species	2019 Total
European Green Woodpecker	11
Common Kestrel	26
Rose-ringed Parakeet	7
Eurasian Jay	8
Eurasian Magpie	21
Western Jackdaw	76
Rook	6
Carrion Crow	6
Coal Tit	92
Marsh Tit	29
Eurasian Blue Tit	4084
Great Tit	1146
Bearded Reedling	11
Barn Swallow	205

Species	2019 Total
Common House Martin	2
Cetti's Warbler	59
Long-tailed Tit	397
Willow Warbler	60
Common Chiffchaff	457
Sedge Warbler	195
Eurasian Reed Warbler	310
Common Grasshopper Warbler	2
Eurasian Blackcap	905
Garden Warbler	17
Lesser Whitethroat	78
Common Whitethroat	311
Dartford Warbler	1
Common Firecrest	7
Goldcrest	225

Species	2019 Total
Eurasian Wren	290
Eurasian Nuthatch	11
Eurasian Treecreeper	29
Common Starling	1230
Song Thrush	84
Common Blackbird	390
Fieldfare	6
Redwing	58
Song Thrush	84
Spotted Flycatcher	1
European Robin	516
European Pied Flycatcher	4
Whinchat	2
European Stonechat	5
Northern Wheatear	1
House Sparrow	515

Species	2019 Total
Dunnock	372
Western Yellow Wagtail	3
Meadow Pipit	266
Tree Pipit	3
Common Chaffinch	161
Brambling	4
Eurasian Bullfinch	23
European Greenfinch	518
Common Linnet	58
Lesser Redpoll	123
European Goldfinch	766
Eurasian Siskin	15
Yellowhammer	136
Common Reed Bunting	189
Grand Total	**15,104**

PLEASE NOTE: Ringers are not allowed to ring Ruddy Duck, Feral Pigeon, Common Pheasant or Red-legged Partridge so any captures of these are not included.

Table 2 Selected recoveries/recaptures involving Essex in 2020

In the table below, the first line of each entry shows ringing details including the age and sex of the bird if known. The following lines indicate the locations of subsequent reports or captures and the distance of the movement in kilometres. I have also included some longevity records for a handful of those species that move only very short distances but where ringing is still a useful method to build a picture of their populations and lifespans. It should be noted that, as above, the Rye Meads site that straddles the border is included. There are many, many recoveries each year but, for interest, I have only included the most unusual and well-travelled. Further recovery details can be found on the 2020 Ringing Report on the BTO website where you can search by County and by species.

Species/ring number	Age/ details	Date	Locations	kms
Greylag Goose	Nestling	26/06/10	Battersea Park (Greater London)	
5256536	Field Record	19/08/10	Southwark Park (Greater London)	7
	Field Record	31/12/11	Southwark Park (Greater London)	7
	Field Record	01/08/19	Southwark Park (Greater London)	7
	Field Record	27/03/20	Horsemill Stream (Essex)	25
	Field Record	23/05/20	Friday Lake (Essex)	26
Mute Swan	Adult	14/02/19	Wellingborough (Northamptonshire)	
W48074	Field Record	17/06/20	Hullbridge (Essex)	115
	Field Record	03/11/20	Hullbridge (Essex)	115
Tufted Duck	Adult	31/12/18	Blunham (Bedfordshire)	
FJ26790	Freshly Dead (Shot)	25/01/20	Threshes Bush (Essex)	55
Little Egret	Nestling	31/05/13	Netherhall (Essex)	
GR58425	Field Record	20/07/13	King George V Reservoir, Chingford (Greater London)	13

Species/ring number	Age/ details	Date	Locations	kms
	Field Record	12/07/14	Abberton Reservoir (Essex)	58
	Field Record	02/12/14	Ardleigh Reservoir (Essex)	67
	Field Record	26/05/15	Amwell Gravel Pits (Hertfordshire)	4
	Field Record	28/07/17	Mistley (Essex)	75
	Field Record	29/03/19	Amwell Gravel Pits(Hertfordshire)	4
	Field Record	01/10/19	Manningtree (Essex)	74
	Field Record	19/09/20	Abberton Reservoir (Essex)	57
Little Egret	Nestling	22/05/20	Netherhall (Essex)	
GY02524	Field Record	16/07/20	Mere Farm Quarry, Chelford (Cheshire & Wirral)	228
Little Egret	Nestling	22/05/20	Netherhall (Essex)	
GY02523	Field Record	21/07/20	Mere Farm Quarry, Chelford (Cheshire & Wirral)	228
Little Egret	Nestling	16/05/18	Netherhall (Essex)	
GV77568	Field Record	15/07/18	RSPB Otmoor (Oxfordshire)	83
	Field Record	02/12/20	Buenavista Del Norte, Isla de Tenerife, **Spain**	2,953
Great Cormorant	Nestling	14/05/08	Abberton Reservoir (Essex)	
5247926	Field Record	09/12/10	Ynyslas, Borth (Ceredigion)	343
	Field Record	19/03/19	Havergate Island (Suffolk)	54
	Field Record	15/04/20	Havergate Island (Suffolk)	54
Great Cormorant	Nestling	29/05/19	Malurtholm, Mon, Storstrom, **Denmark**	
2R7743	Freshly Dead (accidental)	08/03/20	Frating Abbey, Thorrington (Essex)	808
Western Osprey	Nestling	27/06/18	Babke, Mecklenburgische Seenplatte, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, **Germany**	
BA36510	Field Record	06/05/20	Preston's Lake, Pebmarsh (Essex)	833
Western Marsh Harrier	Nestling	30/06/13	Haddiscoe (Norfolk)	
FP29985	Field Record	27/01/14	Ebro Delta, Tarragona, **Spain**	1,322
	Field Record	21/09/14	Surlingham (Norfolk)	14
	Field Record	11/03/15	Sisland, Loddon (Norfolk)	7
	Field Record	07/10/15	Buckenham (Norfolk)	13
	Field Record	15/06/16	Sisland, Loddon (Norfolk)	7
	Field Record	26/01/17	Ebro Delta, Tarragona, **Spain**	1,322
	Caught by ringer	15/06/17	Cantley (Norfolk)	9
	Field Record	06/01/18	Ebro Delta, Tarragona, **Spain**	1,322
	Field Record	19/04/18	Cantley (Norfolk)	9
	Field Record	23/03/19	Cantley (Norfolk)	9
	Field Record	26/02/20	Bradwell Bird Observatory (Essex)	98
	Field Record	31/03/20	Cantley (Norfolk)	9
	Field Record	10/06/20	Sisland, Loddon (Norfolk)	7
Hen Harrier	Nestling	17/07/19	Easter Fearn, Dornoch Firth (Highland)	
FH22456	Dead (Unknown)	18/02/20	Pennyhole Fleet (Essex)	752

Species/ring number	Age/ details	Date	Locations	kms
Eurasian Oystercatcher	Nestling	21/07/11	Stone Point, St Osyth (Essex)	
FH48222	Field Record	10/06/20	Stone Point, St Osyth (Essex)	1
Pied Avocet	Nestling	11/06/20	Holland Haven, Frinton-On-Sea (Essex)	
EW17769	Caught by ringer	06/05/20	Noordervroon, Westkapelle, Zeeland, **The Netherlands**	157
Pied Avocet	Nestling	19/06/13	Site Confidential, Great Oakley (Essex)	
EX65535	Field Record	25/08/13	Orfordness (Sufolk)	33
	Field Record	27/04/14	Holland Haven, Frinton-On-Sea (Essex)	9
	Field Record	11/04/15	Holland Haven, Frinton-On-Sea (Essex)	9
	Field Record	17/03/16	Holland Haven, Frinton-On-Sea (Essex)	9
	Field Record	05/08/16	Polder Breebaart, Groningen, **The Netherlands**	424
	Field Record	09/03/17	Holland Haven, Frinton-On-Sea (Essex)	9
	Field Record	09/09/18	Fingringhoe Wick (Essex)	18
	Field Record	28/08/20	Havergate Island (Suffolk)	29
Pied Avocet	Nestling	11/06/10	Holland Haven, Frinton-On-Sea (Essex)	
EW17769	Caught by ringer	06/05/20	Noordervroon, Westkapelle, Zeeland, **The Netherlands**	157
Common Ringed Plover	Nestling	06/06/19	Beltringharder Koog, Schleswig-Holstein, **Germany**	
T009170	Field Record	28/11/20	Stone Point, St Osyth (Essex)	606
	Field Record	28/12/20	Stone Point, St Osyth (Essex)	606
Black-tailed Godwit	Adult	10/12/18	Welwick Pond (East Yorkshire)	
EL69594	Field Record	19/06/19	Hofstrandasandur, Borgarfjodur Eystri, Nodur-Mulasysla, **Iceland**	1,527
	Field Record	02/02/20	Cudmore Grove, East Mersea (Essex)	217
	Field Record	16/09/20	North Killingholme Pits (Lincolnshire)	18
	Field Record	21/10/20	Immingham Docks (Lincolnshire)	16
Black-tailed Godwit	Adult	06/11/18	Welwick Pond (East Yorkshire)	
EL69573	Field Record	10/05/19	Asmurdarstaoavik, Melrakkasletta, Nodur-Mulasysla, **Iceland**	1,671
	Field Record	05/09/19	North Killingholme Pits (Lincolnshire)	18
	Field Record	21/01/20	Mucking (Essex)	207
Black-tailed Godwit	Adult	22/05/20	Sudergoawei, Workum, Friesland, **The Netherlands**	
2518056	Field Record	30/06/20	Confidential Site (Essex)	315
Sanderling	Adult	20/05/18	Hine Greenie, Sanday (Orkney)	
NB00930	Field Record	03/08/19	Redcar Beach (Redcar & Cleveland)	528
	Field Record	19/02/20	Walton-On-The-Naze (Essex)	859
Black-headed Gull	Nestling	14/06/90	Rat Island, River Colne, Brightlingsea (Essex)	
ER31799	Field Record	12/11/97	Regent's Park (Greater London)	84
	Field Record	25/01/11	Regent's Park (Greater London)	84
	Field Record	13/07/11	Brightlingsea (Essex)	3

Species/ring number	Age/ details	Date	Locations	kms
	Field Record	30/11/11	Regent's Park (Greater London)	84
	Field Record	29/11/12	Regent's Park (Greater London)	84
	Field Record	14/03/13	Regent's Park (Greater London)	84
	Fied Record	30/12/14	Regent's Park (Greater London)	84
	Field Record	28/01/16	Regent's Park (Greater London)	84
	Field Record	28/12/17	Regent's Park (Greater London)	84
	Field Record	17/01/19	Regent's Park (Greater London)	84
	Field Record	19/02/20	Regent's Park (Greater London)	84
Black-headed Gull	Nestling	07/06/93	Hamford Water, Little Oakley (Essex)	
ES26415	Field Record	31/07/19	Clacton-On-Sea (Essex)	10
	Field Record	25/09/20	Clacton-On-Sea (Essex)	10
Black-headed Gull	First Year	12/12/09	Pitsea Landfill Site (Essex)	
EP80197	Field Record	10/10/20	Sligo Harbour, Sligo Town, Sligo, **Republic Of Ireland**	674
Black-headed Gull	Adult	02/03/13	Rainham Tip (Essex)	
EY45026	Field Record	13/03/13	Broomfield Park (Greater London)	26
	Field Record	03/11/14	Broomfield Park (Greater London)	26
	Field Record	12/05/15	Musov Jihomoravsky, Brno, **Czech Republic**	1,202
	Field Record	30/12/15	Broomfield Park (Greater London)	26
	Field Record	20/11/16	Broomfield Park (Greater London)	26
	Field Record	18/07/17	Herstal, **Belgium**	391
	Field Record	22/11/19	Broomfield Park (Greater London)	26
	Field Record	03/01/20	Broomfield Park (Greater London)	26
	Field Record	04/07/20	Deske Budjovice, Ceske Budjovice, **Czech Republic**	1,048
Black-headed Gull	Adult	13/10/12	Pitsea Landfill Site	
ES36467	Field Record	25/11/14	Morges, Vaud, **Switzerland**	710
	Field Record	06/12/15	Morges, Vaud, **Switzerland**	710
	Field Record	16/12/20	Saint-Sulpice, Vaud, **Switzerland**	712
	Field Record	31/12/20	Saint Sulpice, Vaud, **Switzerland**	712
Black headed Gull	Nestling	08/06/13	Hermanice, Ostrava, Moravskoslez Sky Kraj, Ostrav, **Czech Republic**	
ES36467	Field Record	21/02/20	Colchester (Essex)	1,239
Mediterranean Gull	Nestling	15/06/19	Hamford Water (Essex)	
ED04066	Field Record	21/07/19	Hamford Water (Essex)	0
	Field Record	09/01/20	Portscatho (Cornwall)	473
Mediterranean Gull	Adult	20/05/16	Riether Werder, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, **Germany**	
IA176318	Field Record	02/01/20	Thorpe Bay (Southend)	943
	Field Record	17/03/20	Pett Level, Sussex (East Sussex)	973
	Field Record	09/04/20	Elms Farm, Pett Level (East Sussex)	973
Mediterranean Gull	Nestling	11/06/19	Kiesgrube, Rehbach, Leipzig, **Germany**	

Species/ring number	Age/ details	Date	Locations	kms
IA191174	Field Record	25/02/20	Stone Point, St Osyth (Essex)	781
Mew Gull	Adult	10/04/18	Parainen, Varsinais-Suomi, Turku-Pori, **Finland**	
CT182667	Field Record	17/02/20	Leigh-On-Sea, Southend (Essex)	1,643
Mew Gull	Adult	26/01/13	Pitsea Landfill Site (Essex)	
ER16196	Field Record	15/05/20	Mosletta, Sor-Trondelag, **Norway**	1,439
Great Black-backed Gull	First Year	05/02/11	Pitsea Landfill Site (Essex)	
MA26871	Field Record	27/08/11	Pitsea Landfill Site (Essex)	1
	Field Record	04/11/16	Boulogne sur Mer, Pas-de-Calais, **France**	117
	Field Record	11/05/18	Herdlavaer Oygarden, Hordaland, **Norway**	1,038
	Field Record	03/03/19	Herdlavaer Oygarden, Hordaland, **Norway**	1,038
	Field Record	28/07/19	Skogsoy, Langholmsundet, Hordaland, **Norway**	1,039
	Field Record	14/03/20	Herdlavaer Oygarden, Hordaland, **Norway**	1,038
Great Black-backed Gull	First Year	24/01/15	Pitsea Landfill Site (Essex)	
MA30039	Field Record	25/04/20	Vikoyri, Sogn og Fjordane, **Norway**	1,125
Great Black-backed Gull	First Year	17/01/18	Pitsea Landfill Site (Essex)	
MA30196	Freshly Dead (Unknown)	06/05/20	Hauganfjaera, Nord-Trondelag, **Norway**	1,461
European Herring Gull	First Year	11/10/08	Pitsea Landfill Site	
GC84287	Caught by Ringer	09/05/20	Europoort, Rotterdam, Zuid-Holland, **The Netherlands**	250
European Herring Gull	Adult	10/01/09	Pitsea Landfill Site (Essex)	
GC86880	Freshly Dead (Unknown)	10/07/20	Kwade Hoek, Oostdijkseweg, Goedereede, Zuid Holland, **The Netherlands**	241
European Herring Gull	Adult	24/01/15	Pitsea Landfill Site (Essex)	
GR94491	Freshly Dead (Unknown)	18/04/20	Core Hill, St Katherines (Aberdeenshire)	676
Caspian Gull	Nestling	19/05/19	Zwirowina Zakole, Jankowice, Babice, Malopolskie, **Poland**	
DN36613	Field Record	18/01/20	Erith Pier (Greater London)	1,362
	Field Record	27/02/20	Dungeness (Kent)	1,309
	Field Record	02/03/20	Dungeness (Kent)	1,309
Caspian Gull	Nestling	25/05/19	Zb Kozielo, Paczkow, Opolskie, **Poland**	
DN39526	Field Record	23/12/20	Rainham Tip (Greater London)	1,178
Yellow-legged Gull	First Year	29/11/08	Pitsea Landfill Site (Essex)	
GC86515	Field Record	26/01/14	Cap Gris Nez, Pas-de-Calais, **France**	105
	Field Record	28/12/15	Lower Farm Gravel Pit (West Berkshire)	125

Species/ring number	Age/ details	Date	Locations	kms
	Field Record	15/11/17	Bexley Tip (Greater London)	24
	Long Dead (Accidental)	01/03/20	St Leonards-On-Sea, Hastings (East Sussex)	76
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Nestling	21/07/01	Orfordness (Suffolk)	
GA37057	Field Record	16/01/04	Ad Dakhla, **Western Sahara**	3,491
	Field Record	24/07/05	Orfordness (Suffolk)	0
	Field Record	07/02/12	Dakhla, **Western Sahara**	3,489
	Caught by Ringer	02/05/20	Little Clacton, Clacton-On-Sea (Essex)	41
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Nestling	14/07/04	Port Of Felixstowe, Felixstowe (Suffolk)	
GN56634	Field Record	17/02/07	Carcavelos, Lisboa, **Portugal**	1,690
	Field Record	29/11/08	Pinto, Madrid, **Spain**	1,356
	Field Record	25/01/09	Colmena Viejo, Madrid, **Spain**	1,314
	Field Record	05/12/09	Colmena Viejo, Madrid, **Spain**	1,314
	Field Record	13/12/09	Pinto, Madrid, **Spain**	1,356
	Field Record	04/12/10	Colmena Viejo, Madrid, **Spain**	1,314
	Field Record	10/12/11	Colmena Viejo, Madrid, **Spain**	1,314
	Field Record	21/09/12	Mistley, Manningtree (Essex)	17
	Field Record	09/11/12	Colmena Viejo, Madrid, **Spain**	1,314
	Field Record	29/11/15	Colmena Viejo, Madrid, **Spain**	1,314
	Field Record	26/12/16	Colmena Viejo, Madrid, **Spain**	1,314
	Field Record	01/02/17	Gueltas, Moribhan, **France**	520
	Freshly Dead (Hit by car)	04/07/20	Lawford, Manningtree (Essex)	19
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Nestling	14/07/07	Havergate Island (Suffolk)	
GG77706	Field Record	10/01/10	Pinto, Madrid, **Spain**	1,373
	Field Record	16/01/10	Alcazar de San Juan, Ciudad Real, **Spain**	1,455
	Field Record	27/06/11	Brightlingsea (Essex)	45
	Field Record	31/12/11	Pinto, Madrid, **Spain**	1,373
	Field Record	22/12/12	Colmenar Viejo, Madrid, **Spain**	1,331
	Freshly Dead (Injury)	14/05/20	Clacton-On-Sea (Essex)	41
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Adult	15/10/11	Rainham Tip (Greater London)	
FA39918	Field Record	08/08/13	Nidingen, Halland, **Sweden**	994
	Field Record	14/03/15	Pitsea Landfill Site (Essex)	23
	Field Record	28/06/15	Nidingen, Halland, **Sweden**	994
	Field Record	30/03/16	Nidingen, Halland, **Sweden**	994
	Field Record	28/08/16	Nidingen, Halland, **Sweden**	994
	Field Record	14/09/16	Shawell (Leicestershire)	141
	Field Record	26/03/18	Nidingen, Halland, **Sweden**	994
	Field Record	10/07/18	Nidingen, Halland, **Sweden**	994
	Field Record	30/03/19	Nidingen, Halland, **Sweden**	994
	Field Record	18/03/20	Nidingen, Halland, **Sweden**	994
Western Barn Owl	Nestling	28/06/08	Walton-On-The-Naze (Essex)	
GC44367	Freshly Dead (Injury)	16/02/20	Horsey Island (Essex)	2
Common Kestrel	Nestling	26/06/20	Barrow Green Farm, near Lingfield (Surrey)	
EY99417	Freshly Dead (Diseased)	23/09/20	Chigborough Farm, Heybridge (Essex)	78
Peregrine Falcon	Nestling	15/07/20	Site Confidential, Lappi, **Finland**	
D272006	Freshly Dead (hit wires)	30/11/20	Southminster (Essex)	1,652
Eurasian Jay	Adult	08/06/08	Little Clacton (Essex)	
DD46191	Field Record	31/05/20	Little Clacton (Essex)	0
Eurasian Blue Tit	Juvenile	31/05/14	Ivy Chimneys, Epping (Essex)	
D685519	Caught by Ringer	05/06/14	Ivy Chimneys, Epping (Essex)	0
	Caught by Ringer	20/11/14	Ivy Chimneys, Epping (Essex)	0
	Caught by Ringer	06/06/20	Ivy Chimneys, Epping (Essex)	0
Great Tit	Adult	17/07/19	Leighton Moss, Silverdale (Lancashire)	
S728400	Caught by Ringer	05/03/20	Rowney Wood (Essex)	319
Great Tit	Nestling	30/05/18	Maunby (North Yorkshire)	
NF43260	Caught by Ringer	05/03/20	Rowney Wood (Essex)	280
Sedge Warbler	First Year	07/08/20	Holland Haven Country Park (Essex)	
AFK2663	Caught by Ringer	11/08/20	Anderby Creek (Lincolnshire)	171
Sedge Warbler	First Year	03/08/19	Marais de Pompas, Herbignac, Loire-Atlantique, **France**	
8809098	Caught by Ringer	17/07/20	Holland Haven Country Park (Essex)	554
Sedge Warbler	First Year	04/08/20	Holland Haven Country Park (Essex)	
AFK2638	Caught by Ringer	07/08/20	Holland Haven Country Park (Essex)	0
	Caught by Ringer	23/08/20	Mars-Ouest, Sant-Philbert-De-Grand-Lieu, Loire-Atlantique, **France**	563
Eurasian Reed Warbler	Adult	17/07/17	Holland Haven Country Park (Essex)	
S602544	Caught by Ringer	22/07/20	Holland Haven Country Park (Essex)	0
	Caught by Ringer	30/07/20	Holland Haven Country Park (Essex)	0
Common Grasshopper Warbler	First Year	05/08/20	Pett Level (East Sussex)	
ACK5668	Freshly Dead (unknown)	06/08/20	Walton-On-The-Naze (Essex)	112
Eurasian Blackcap	First Year	10/09/19	Gunners Park, Shoeburyness (Essex)	
ABJ3882	Caught by Ringer	16/07/20	Littleton Brick Pits (Gloucestershire)	233
Eurasian Blackcap	First Year	13/09/19	Chilling, Warsash (Hampshire)	
S940683	Caught by Ringer	12/04/20	Sunnymead Farm, Wivenhoe (Essex)	194
	Caught by Ringer	24/04/20	Sunnymead Farm, Wivenhoe (Essex)	194
Eurasian Blackcap	First Year	17/10/20	Walton-on-the-Naze (Essex)	

Species/ring number	Age/ details	Date	Locations	kms
AVN7480	Freshly Dead (hit glass)	05/11/20	Avon, Seine-et-Marne, **France**	399
Eurasian Blackcap	First Year	19/07/19	Dunes du Fort, Marck, Pas-de-Calais, **France**	
8827247	Caught by Ringer	09/06/20	Galleywood, Chelmsford (Essex)	130
	Caught by Ringer	15/07/20	Galleywood, Chelmsford (Essex)	130
Lesser Whitethroat	First Year	29/08/19	Holland Haven Country Park (Essex)	
	Caught by Ringer	10/05/20	Landguard Point, Felixstowe (Suffolk)	15
Common Whitethroat	Adult	13/05/17	Two Tree Island, Leigh-On-Sea, Southend (Essex)	
	Caught by Ringer	02/06/17	Two Tree Island, Leigh-On-Sea, Southend (Essex)	0
	Caught by Ringer	16/05/18	Two Tree Island, Leigh-On-Sea, Southend (Essex)	0
	Caught by Ringer	26/06/20	Two Tree Island, Leigh-On-Sea, Southend (Essex)	0
Common Starling	Juvenile	15/07/19	Birdbrook (Essex)	
LL29493	Caught by Ringer	16/04/20	Davis Avenue, Deal (Kent)	110
Common Blackbird	First Year	15/10/17	Tauvo, Siikajoki, Oulu, **Finland**	
A751283	Freshly Dead (unkown)	05/11/20	Braintree (Essex)	1,986
European Robin	First Year	10/09/14	Sunnymead Farm, Wivenhoe (Essex)	
D749848	Caught by Ringer	16/01/15	Sunnymead Farm, Wivenhoe (Essex)	0
	Caught by Ringer	04/11/16	Sunnymead Farm, Wivenhoe (Essex)	0
	Caught by Ringer	13/06/19	Sunnymead Farm, Wivenhoe (Essex)	0
	Caught by Ringer	31/12/19	Sunnymead Farm, Wivenhoe (Essex)	0
	Caught by Ringer	06/03/20	Sunnymead Farm, Wivenhoe (Essex)	0
House Sparrow	Adult	11/02/15	Temple Mead, Roydon (Essex)	
TS30674	Caught by Ringer	19/05/17	Temple Mead, Roydon (Essex)	0
	Caught by Ringer	01/04/20	Temple Mead, Roydon (Essex)	0
Eurasian Rock Pipit	Adult Male	30/03/17	Maletangen, Fraena, More og Romsdal, **Norway**	
ED09368	Field Record	13/03/18	Holland Haven Country Park (Essex)	1,287
	Field Record	03/01/19	Holland Haven Country Park (Essex)	1,287
	Field Record	05/11/19	Holland Haven Country Park (Essex)	1,287
	Field Record	25/01/20	Holland Haven Country Park (Essex)	1,287
European Greenfinch	Juvenile	05/06/20	Hardham (West Sussex)	
TY31697	Caught by Ringer	06/12/20	Two Tree Island, Leigh-On-Sea, Southend (Essex)	105
Lesser Redpoll	First Year	21/09/20	Drayton Pond, Clumber Park, Worksop (Nottinghamshire)	
AYL1231	Caught by Ringer	09/10/20	Abberton Reservoir (Essex)	204
European Goldfinch	First Year	01/04/20	Sunnymead Farm, Wivenhoe (Essex)	
AFK3125	Caught by Ringer	16/04/20	Flamborough Head (East Yorkshire)	261

The Official Essex List and Submission Of Records

Mick Tracey

Below is the official List of species, and sub-species, recorded in the County from *circa* 991, (White-tailed Eagle and Raven in the famous poem *The Battle of Maldon*) until the end of 2020.

Further information on the make-up of the list can be found below.

Submission of records to the Society is now far easier than at any point in the Society's history. Members can submit their records via

1 The Essex Birdwatching Society website;
2 The British Trust for Ornithology's BirdTrack website;
3 Ebirder;
4 Email to the County Recorder, **ebwsrecorder@gmail.com** but please ensure that if at all possible you send in the information that is requested in the form. If in doubt, please ask for a standard Excel spreadsheet for your use.
5 On paper. This creates a lot of additional work for the County Recorder so please use one of the above methods if at all possible. **After 31st December 2023 we will no longer accept records on paper.**

The Society welcomes all records, but please be aware that the Recorder, the Recording Committee and the Society, may require descriptions for a number of species which are scarce in Essex, but not sufficiently rare to require a submission to the British Birds Rarities Committee (see below). This description could in its simplest form be **JUST ONE PHOTOGRAPH**, provided the species is identifiable from it. It would help the Society, and particularly those involved in the production of the *Essex Bird Report* if you could send your photo(s), drawings, copies of notebooks, descriptions in as quickly as possible after the observation(s). The Society does not ask for a description because the record is doubted; it is simply standard scientific procedure where a record is slightly out of the ordinary. **In addition, the Recorder may ask for clarification of a record or records of species, not highlighted in the List as requiring a description, should this be considered to be appropriate (for example, an exceptionally high count or an unusual location or date).**

If a photo(s) and/or description is/are not submitted then the record will not be published in the *Essex Bird Report* or species' totals therein. This is a frustration for all parties involved!

The conservation status of species is also shown by coloured squares preceding the species' name:

- UK Red List species–Birds of Conservation Concern 4 (BoCC 4), 2015
- UK Orange List species – BoCC 4, 2015
- E Essex Biodiversity Action Plan species – see http://www.essexfieldclub.org.uk/portal/p/Essex+BAP+species
- X Essex Red List species – see http://www.essexfieldclub.org.uk/portal

Records of the rarest species (in Categories A, B, C and D of the British List) should be sent to the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC) via their website. The BBRC is keen to promote online submission of records, including photographs, drawings, notebook copies etc. Please also ensure a copy of the record is sent to the County Recorder, so that the Society is kept aware of the record. In the list below, those species that require descriptions sent to BBRC are shown in **green** and have the number of records to date in **green** in the Essex totals column.

Similarly, those records of species that should be sent to the Essex Identification Panel (EBSIP) are in **blue** and have the number of records to date in **blue** in the Essex totals column.

More common species on the EBSIP species' list, or those that once bred and for which calculating total records is therefore not possible, do not have totals in the EBSIP column.

The British List is managed for the British Ornithologists' Union by its Recording Committee (BOURC). In 1997, categorisation was revised to assist protection under national wildlife legislation, especially of naturalised species. Category C was expanded to allow species with different histories of introduction and naturalisation to be distinguished; Category D (not included in the List totals) was reduced in scope, and a Category E (not included in this list) was introduced to enable local and national recorders to monitor escaped species.

Category A

Species recorded in an apparently natural state at least once since 1 January 1950.

Category B

Species recorded in an apparently natural state at least once between 1 January 1800 and 31 December 1949, but which have not been recorded subsequently.

Category C

Species that, although introduced, now derive from the resulting self-sustaining populations.

- **C1** – Naturalised introduced species - species that have occurred only as a result of introduction, e.g. Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiacus*
- **C2** – Naturalised established species – species with established populations resulting from introduction by Man, but which also occur in an apparently natural state, e.g. Greylag Goose *Anser anser*
- **C3** – Naturalised re-established species – species with populations successfully re-established by Man in areas of former occurrence, e.g. Red Kite *Milvus milvus*.
- **C4** – Naturalised feral species – domesticated species with populations established in the wild, e.g. Rock Pigeon (Dove)/Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*.
- **C5** – Vagrant naturalised species – species from established naturalised populations abroad, e.g. possibly some Ruddy Shelducks *Tadorna ferruginea* occurring in Britain. There are currently no species in category C5.
- **C6** – Former naturalised species - species formerly placed in C1 whose naturalised populations are either no longer self-sustaining or are considered extinct, e.g. Lady Amherst's Pheasant *Chrysolophus amherstiae*.

Category D

Species that would otherwise appear in Category A except that there is reasonable doubt that they have ever occurred in a natural state. Species placed in Category D only form no part of the British List, and are not included in the species totals.

Category E

Species recorded as introductions, human-assisted transportees or escapees from captivity, and whose breeding populations (if any) are thought not to be self-sustaining. Species in Category E that have bred in the wild in Britain are designated as E*. Category E species form no part of the British List (unless already included within Categories A, B or C).

Category F (list being compiled by BOURC)

Records of bird species recorded before 1800.

The Essex List follows the British List except with regard to Ruddy Shelduck and Snow Goose, which are regarded as Category D species within the County. They are not considered part of the Essex List but details can be found in the Category D section following the Essex List.

International English names listed in the British List (which follows the IOC World List v7.3 which was adopted, with subsequent updates, by the BOURC from 1st January 2018) are used but the commonly recognised English names are also shown.

Because of the increasing interest in sub-species, trinomial Latin names have been included throughout the *Essex Bird Report 2020* and are included in this List. Whilst some sub-species have been recorded in Essex, there are others whose occurrence is most likely but there has never been a confirmed record. It is hoped that with a focus on these sub-species, some of the holes in our knowledge can be filled. Where possible the number of times sub-species have been recorded in Essex has been included (and whether the sub-species requires a description sent to BBRC or EBSIP). Where it is not know which sub-species occurs in Essex, the Latin name is followed by an asterix * *e.g. Phasianus colchicus**

The List also provides the year of the very first confirmed written record of each species/sub-species, the last year in which recorded and the number of years since the last record.

Those species/sub-species with the symbol § after their name are those which represent not only the first Essex record but also the first British record. White-tailed Eagle and Raven are probably also British firsts, although it has to be said that the poem in which they appear, the *Battle of Maldon,* may have been written a century after the event (*circa* 911) and probably "embellished".

The current Essex List (Categories A, B and C) stands at 394 species as of 31st December 2020, with 36 additional sub-species identified. Note that four of the "species" on the Essex list are actually difficult-to-separate species pairs –Isabelline/Red-tailed Shrike, Western/Eastern Bonelli's Warbler, Moltoni's/Subalpine Warbler and Siberian/Stejneger's Stonechat, as none have, as yet, been identified to species level in Essex.

Essex Category D totals 12 species as of the same date, whilst 155 are in Category E.

And finally, *British Birds* magazine publishes, at the end of every year (usually in October or November), a full listing of the BBRC accepted, and rejected, rarity records. Subscriptions are available from 4 Harlequin Gardens, St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex, TN37 7PF. Tel/Fax (01424) 755155, subscriptions@britishbirds.co.uk

	Cons. Status	IOC World Bird List Name	English Name	Latin Name	Essex Records to 2020			
	R A E X				No.s	First	Last	Years since last record
1.	A X	BRANT GOOSE	Brent Goose	*Branta bernicla*		1730	2020	0
			Dark-bellied Brant	*Branta bernicla bernicla*		1730	2020	0
			Pale-bellied Brant	*Branta bernicla hrota*		1879	2020	0
			Black Brant §	*Branta bernicla nigricans*	60	1957	2020	0
2.		RED-BREASTED GOOSE		*Branta ruficollis*	13	1871	2016	4
3.		CANADA GOOSE		*Branta canadensis canadensis*		1836	2020	0
4.	A	BARNACLE GOOSE		*Branta leucopsis*		1830	2020	0
5.	A	GREYLAG GOOSE		*Anser anser anser*		1822	2020	0
6.	A	TAIGA BEAN GOOSE		*Anser fabalis*	33	1838	2017	3
7.	A	PINK-FOOTED GOOSE		*Anser brachyrhynchus*		1841	2020	0
8.	A	TUNDRA BEAN GOOSE		*Anser serrirostris*	322	1838	2019	1
9.	R	GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE	White-fronted Goose	*Anser albifrons*		1845	2020	0
			Russian White-fronted Goose	*Anser albifrons albifrons*		1845	2020	0
			Greenland White-fronted Goose	*Anser albifrons flavirostris*	8	1962	1996	24
10.		LESSER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE		*Anser erythropus*	4	1986	2017	3
11.		MUTE SWAN		*Cygnus olor*		1247	2020	0
12.	R	TUNDRA SWAN	Bewick's Swan	*Cygnus columbianus bewickii*		1837	2020	0
13.	A	WHOOPER SWAN		*Cygnus cygnus*		1730	2020	0
14.		EGYPTIAN GOOSE		*Alopochen aegyptiaca*		1868	2020	0
15.	A	COMMON SHELDUCK	Shelduck	*Tadorna tadorna*		1730	2020	0

	Cons. Status			IOC World Bird List Name	English Name	Latin Name	Essex Records to 2020			
	R	A	E	X			No.s	First	Last	Years since last record
16.				X	MANDARIN	*Aix galericulata*		1947	2020	0
17.					BAIKAL TEAL§	*Sibirionetta formosa*	2	1906	2010	10
18.		■			GARGANEY	*Spatula querquedula*		1835	2020	0
19.					BLUE-WINGED TEAL	*Spatula discors*	6	1989	2006	14
20.		■		X	NORTHERN SHOVELER	Shoveler	*Spatula clypeata*		1835	2020	0
21.		■		X	GADWALL	*Mareca strepera strepara*		1837	2020	0
22.					FALCATED DUCK	*Mareca falcata*	1	1998	1998	22
23.		■			EURASIAN WIGEON	Wigeon	*Mareca penelope*		1714	2020	0
24.					AMERICAN WIGEON	*Mareca americana*	2	1962	2004	16
25.		■			MALLARD	*Anas platyrhynchos platyrhynchos*		1714	2020	0
26.		■			NORTHERN PINTAIL	Pintail	*Anas acuta*		1714	2020	0
27.		■		X	EURASIAN TEAL	Teal	*Anas crecca*		1714	2020	0
28.					GREEN-WINGED TEAL	*Anas carolinensis*	29	1956	2020	0
29.					RED-CRESTED POCHARD	*Netta rufina*		1844	2020	0
30.					CANVASBACK	*Aythya valisineria*	1	1997	2001	19
31.	■			X	COMMON POCHARD	Pochard	*Aythya ferina*		1730	2020	0
32.					FERRUGINOUS DUCK	*Aythya nyroca*	46	1880	2020	0
33.					RING-NECKED DUCK	*Aythya collaris*	13	1979	2020	0
34.					TUFTED DUCK	*Aythya fuligula*		1821	2020	0
35.	■				GREATER SCAUP	Scaup	*Aythya marila*		1830	2020	0
36.					LESSER SCAUP	*Aythya affinis*	2	2003	2005	15
37.					KING EIDER	*Somateria spectabilis*	1	1977	1977	43
38.		■			COMMON EIDER	Eider	*Somateria mollissima mollissima*		1865	2020	0
39.					SURF SCOTER	*Melanitta perspicillata*	3	1997	2018	2
40.	■				VELVET SCOTER	*Melanitta fusca*		1829	2020	0
41.	■				COMMON SCOTER	*Melanitta nigra*		1730	2020	0
42.	■				LONG-TAILED DUCK	*Clangula hyemalis*		1832	2020	0
43.	■				COMMON GOLDENEYE	Goldeneye	*Bucephala clangula clangula*		1777	2020	0
44.	■				SMEW	*Mergellus albellus*		1819	2020	0
45.					COMMON MERGANSER	Goosander	*Mergus merganser merganser*		1830	2020	0
46.		■			RED-BREASTED MERGANSER	*Mergus serrator*		1826	2020	0
47.					RUDDY DUCK	*Oxyura jamaicensis jamaicensis*		1958	2020	0
48.					RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE	*Alectoris rufa rufa*		1777	2020	0
49.	■		E	X	GREY PARTRIDGE	*Perdix perdix perdix*		1600s	2020	0
50.		■			COMMON QUAIL	Quail	*Coturnix coturnix coturnix*		1777	2020	0
51.					COMMON PHEASANT	Pheasant	*Phasianus colchicus**		1059	2020	0
52.		■			EUROPEAN NIGHTJAR	Nightjar	*Caprimulgus europaeus europaeus*		1738	2014	6
53.					WHITE-THROATED NEEDLETAIL §	*Hirundapus caudacutus caudacutus*	1	1846	1846	174
54.					ALPINE SWIFT	*Tachymarptis melba melba*	24	1871	2018	2

	Cons. Status			IOC World Bird List Name	English Name	Latin Name	Essex Records to 2020			
	R	A	E	X			No.s	First	Last	Years since last record
55.	■				COMMON SWIFT	Swift	*Apus apus apus*		1818	2020	0
56.					PALLID SWIFT	*Apus pallidus**	1	2001	2001	19
57.					GREAT BUSTARD	*Otis tarda tarda*	2	1879	1890	130
58.					LITTLE BUSTARD	*Tetrax tetrax*	11	1823	1969	51
59.	■				COMMON CUCKOO	Cuckoo	*Cuculus canorus canorus*		1818	2020	0
60.					PALLAS'S SANDGROUSE	*Syrrhaptes paradoxus*	86	1863	1908	112
61.					ROCK DOVE/FERAL PIGEON	*Columba livia livia*		1886	2020	0
62.		■			STOCK DOVE	*Columba oenas oenas*		1838	2020	0
63.		■			COMMON WOOD PIGEON	Woodpigeon	*Columba palumbus palumbus*		1843	2020	0
64.	■			X	EUROPEAN TURTLE DOVE	Turtle Dove	*Streptopelia turtur turtur*		1818	2020	0
65.					EUROPEAN COLLARED DOVE	Collared Dove	*Streptopelia decaocto decaocto*		1957	2020	0
66.					WATER RAIL	*Rallus aquaticus aquaticus*		1830	2020	0
67.	■				CORN CRAKE	Corncrake	*Crex crex*		1822	2013	7
68.		■			SPOTTED CRAKE	*Porzana porzana*	86	1838	2019	1
69.		■			COMMON MOORHEN	Moorhen	*Gallinula chloropus chloropus*		1863	2020	0
70.					EURASIAN COOT	Coot	*Fulica atra atra*		1819	2020	0
71.					BAILLON'S CRAKE	*Zapornia pusilla*	3	1874	2012	8
72.					LITTLE CRAKE	*Zapornia parva intermedia*	4	1873	1973	47
73.		■			COMMON CRANE	Crane	*Grus grus*	182	1888	2020	0
74.					LITTLE GREBE	*Tachybaptus ruficollis ruficollis*		1838	2020	0
75.	■				RED-NECKED GREBE	*Podiceps grisegena grisegena*		1837	2020	0
76.					GREAT CRESTED GREBE	*Podiceps cristatus cristatus*		1838	2020	0
77.	■				HORNED GREBE	Slavonian Grebe	*Podiceps auritus auritus*		1838	2020	0
78.		■			BLACK-NECKED GREBE	*Podiceps nigricollis nigricollis*		1821	2020	0
79.		■	E		EURASIAN STONE-CURLEW	Stone-curlew	*Burhinus oedicnemus oedicnemus*		1832	2019	1
80.		■			EURASIAN OYSTERCATCHER	Oystercatcher	*Haematopus ostralegus ostralegus*		1730	2020	0
81.		■			BLACK-WINGED STILT	*Himantopus himantopus*	56	1947	2020	0
82.		■		X	PIED AVOCET	Avocet	*Recurvirostra avosetta*		1700	2020	0
83.	■			X	NORTHERN LAPWING	Lapwing	*Vanellus vanellus*		1668	2020	0
84.					SOCIABLE LAPWING	Sociable Plover	*Vanellus gregarius*	4	1976	2005	15
85.					WHITE-TAILED LAPWING	White-tailed Plover	*Vanellus leucurus*	1	2010	2010	10
86.					EUROPEAN GOLDEN PLOVER	Golden Plover	*Pluvialis apricaria*		1845	2020	0
87.					PACIFIC GOLDEN PLOVER	*Pluvialis fulva*	2	1896	2000	20
88.					AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER	*Pluvialis dominica*	4	2004	2018	2
89.		■			GREY PLOVER	*Pluvialis squatarola squatarola*		1842	2020	0

	Cons. Status			IOC World Bird List Name	English Name	Latin Name	Essex Records to 2020			
	R	A	E	X			No.s	First	Last	Years since last record
90.	R			X	COMMON RINGED PLOVER	Ringed Plover	*Charadrius hiaticula*		1838	2020	0
						Ringed Plover	*Charadrius hiaticula hiaticula*		~	2020	0
						Eurasian Ringed Plover	*Charadrius hiaticula tundrae*		~	2020	0
91.				X	LITTLE RINGED PLOVER		*Charadrius dubius curonicus*		1947	2020	0
92.					KENTISH PLOVER		*Charadrius alexandrinus alexandrinus*	56	1876	2018	2
93.					GREATER SAND PLOVER		*Charadrius leschenaultii**	1	1992	1992	28
94.	R				EURASIAN DOTTEREL	Dotterel	*Charadrius morinellus*	336	1830	2020	0
95.	R				WHIMBREL		*Numenius phaeopus phaeopus*		1819	2020	0
96.	R				EURASIAN CURLEW	Curlew	*Numenius arquata arquata*		1826	2020	0
97.		A			BAR-TAILED GODWIT		*Limosa lapponica lapponica*		1547	2020	0
98.	R				BLACK-TAILED GODWIT		*Limosa limosa*		1834	2020	0
						Continental Black-tailed Godwit	*Limosa limosa limosa*	8	2007	2020	0
						Icelandic Black-tailed Godwit	*Limosa limosa islandica*		1834	2020	0
99.		A			RUDDY TURNSTONE	Turnstone	*Arenaria interpres interpres*		1826	2020	0
100.		A			RED KNOT	Knot	*Calidris canutus islandica*		1777	2020	0
101.	R				RUFF		*Calidris pugnax*		1833	2020	0
102.					BROAD-BILLED SANDPIPER		*Calidris falcinellus falcinellus*	7	1988	2010	10
103.					STILT SANDPIPER		*Calidris himantopus*	1	1973	1973	47
104.		A			CURLEW SANDPIPER		*Calidris ferruginea*		1826	2020	0
105.					TEMMINCK'S STINT		*Calidris temminckii*	248	1835	2020	0
106.		A			SANDERLING		*Calidris alba alba*		1828	2020	0
107.	R				DUNLIN		*Calidris alpina*		1824	2020	0
						Scandinavian Dunlin	*Calidris alpina alpina*		~	2020	0
						Greenland Dunlin	*Calidris alpina arctica*		~	2020	0
						West European Dunlin	*Calidris alpina schinzii*		~	2020	0
108.					PURPLE SANDPIPER		*Calidris maritima*		1833	2020	0
109.					BAIRD'S SANDPIPER		*Calidris bairdii*	3	1972	2010	10
110.					LITTLE STINT		*Calidris minuta*		1826	2020	0
111.					WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER		*Calidris fuscicollis*	11	1964	2011	9
112.					BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER		*Calidris subruficollis*	17	1975	2007	13
113.					PECTORAL SANDPIPER		*Calidris melanotos*	117	1949	2019	1
114.					SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER		*Calidris pusilla*	2	2010	2011	9
115.					WESTERN SANDPIPER		*Calidris mauri*	1	1973	1973	47
116.					LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER		*Limnodromus scolopaceus*	9	1979	2011	9
117.	R				EURASIAN WOODCOCK	Woodcock	*Scolopax rusticola*		1735	2020	0
118.					JACK SNIPE		*Lymnocryptes minimus*		1838	2020	0
119.					GREAT SNIPE		*Gallinago media*	20	1825	1989	31
120.		A		X	COMMON SNIPE		*Gallinago gallinago gallinago*		1735	2020	0

	Cons. Status			IOC World Bird List Name	English Name	Latin Name	Essex Records to 2020			
	R	A	E	X			No.s	First	Last	Years since last record
121.					TEREK SANDPIPER		*Xenus cinereus*	3	1978	2002	18
122.					WILSON'S PHALAROPE		*Phalaropus tricolor*	6	1977	2015	5
123.	R				RED-NECKED PHALAROPE		*Phalaropus lobatus*	92	1842	2018	2
124.					RED PHALAROPE	Grey Phalarope	*Phalaropus fulicarius*	123	1838	2020	0
125.		A			COMMON SANDPIPER		*Actitis hypoleucos*		1819	2020	0
126.					SPOTTED SANDPIPER		*Actitis macularius*	7	1978	2011	9
127.		A			GREEN SANDPIPER		*Tringa ochropus*		1832	2020	0
128.					SOLITARY SANDPIPER		*Tringa solitaria**	2	1967	1974	46
129.					LESSER YELLOWLEGS		*Tringa flavipes*	15	1921	2016	4
130.		A		X	COMMON REDSHANK	Redshank	*Tringa totanus*		1826	2020	0
						Common Redshank	*Tringa totanus totanus*		~	2020	0
						Icelandic Redshank	*Tringa totanus robusta*		~	2020	0
131.					MARSH SANDPIPER		*Tringa stagnatilis*	14	1956	2019	1
132.		A			WOOD SANDPIPER		*Tringa glareola*		1835	2020	0
133.		A			SPOTTED REDSHANK		*Tringa erythropus*		1832	2020	0
134.		A			COMMON GREENSHANK	Greenshank	*Tringa nebularia*		1738	2020	0
135.					GREATER YELLOWLEGS		*Tringa melanoleuca*	2	1949	1995	25
136.					CREAM-COLOURED COURSER		*Cursorius cursor cursor*	2	1858	1984	36
137.					COLLARED PRATINCOLE		*Glareola pratincola pratincola*	3	1861	2005	15
138.					ORIENTAL PRATINCOLE §		*Glareola maldivarum*	1	1981	1981	39
139.					BLACK-WINGED PRATINCOLE		*Glareola nordmanni*	1	1960	1960	60
140.	R				BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE	Kittiwake	*Rissa tridactyla tridactyla*		1835	2020	0
141.					SABINE'S GULL		*Xema sabini*	156	1862	2019	1
142.					BONAPARTE'S GULL		*Chroicocephalus philadelphia*	8	1994	2019	1
143.		A			BLACK-HEADED-GULL		*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*		1662	2020	0
144.					LITTLE GULL		*Hydrocoloeus minutus*		1845	2020	0
145.					LAUGHING GULL		*Leucophaeus atricilla**	3	1974	2017	3
146.					FRANKLIN'S GULL		*Leucophaeus pipixcan*	3	2000	2016	4
147.		A			MEDITERRANEAN GULL §		*Ichthyaetus melanocephalus*		1866	2020	0
148.		A			MEW GULL		*Larus canus*		1835	2020	0
						Common Gull	*Larus canus canus*		1835	2020	0
						Russian Common Gull §	*Larus canus heinei*	1	1984	1984	36
149.					RING-BILLED GULL		*Larus delawarensis*	31	1979	2018	2
150.		A			GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL		*Larus marinus*		1838	2020	0
151.		A			GLAUCOUS GULL		*Larus hyperboreus hyperboreus*		1885	2019	1
152.		A			ICELAND GULL		*Larus glaucoides*	169	1887	2020	0
						Iceland Gull	*Larus glaucoides glaucoides*	168	1887	2020	0
						Thayer's Gull	*Larus glaucoides thayeri*	1	2010	2010	10

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153.	R				EUROPEAN HERRING GULL	Herring Gull	*Larus argentatus*		1730	2020	0
						Scandinavian Herring Gull	*Larus argentatus argentatus*		~	2020	0
						West European Herring Gull	*Larus argentatus argenteus*		~	2020	0
154.		A			CASPIAN GULL		*Larus cachinnans*		1995	2020	0
155.		A			YELLOW-LEGGED GULL		*Larus michahellis michahellis*		1973	2020	0
156.					SLATY-BACKED GULL §		*Larus schistisagus*	1	2011	2011	9
157.		A			LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL		*Larus fuscus*		1838	2020	0
						Common Lesser Black-backed Gull	*Larus fuscus graelsii*		~	2020	0
						Intermediate Lesser Black-backed Gull	*Larus fuscus intermedius*		~	2020	0
158.					GULL-BILLED TERN		*Gelochelidon nilotica nilotica*	6	1901	2003	17
159.					CASPIAN TERN		*Hydroprogne caspia*	7	1959	2015	5
160.		A			SANDWICH TERN		*Thalasseus sandvicensis*		1738	2020	0
161.		A		X	LITTLE TERN		*Sternula albifrons albifrons*		1820	2020	0
162.					LEAST TERN §		*Sternula antillarum*	1	1991	1991	29
163.					BRIDLED TERN		*Onychoprion anaethetus**	2	1991	2006	14
164.	R				ROSEATE TERN		*Sterna dougallii dougallii*	47	1973	2016	4
165.		A			COMMON TERN		*Sterna hirundo hirundo*		1821	2020	0
166.		A			ARCTIC TERN		*Sterna paradisaea*		1867	2020	0
167.					FORSTER'S TERN		*Sterna forsteri*	2	1999	2016	4
168.					WHISKERED TERN		*Chlidonias hybrida hybrida*	5	1967	2009	11
169.					WHITE-WINGED TERN	White-winged Black Tern	*Chlidonias leucopterus*	76	1912	2019	1
170.					BLACK TERN		*Chlidonias niger niger*		1829	2020	0
171.		A			GREAT SKUA		*Stercorarius skua*		1820	2020	0
172.					POMARINE JAEGER	Pomarine Skua	*Stercorarius pomarinus*		1828	2020	0
173.	R				PARASITIC JAEGER	Arctic Skua	*Stercorarius parasiticus*		1837	2020	0
174.					LONG-TAILED JAEGER	Long-tailed Skua	*Stercorarius longicaudus*	199	1842	2020	0
175.					LITTLE AUK		*Alle alle alle*		1832	2020	0
176.		A			COMMON MURRE	Common Guillemot	*Uria aalge*		1861	2020	0
						Scandinavian Guillemot	*Uria aalge aalge*		~	2020	0
						West European Guillemot	*Uria aalge albionis*		~	2020	0
177.		A			RAZORBILL		*Alca torda islandica*		1840	2020	0
178.		A			BLACK GUILLEMOT		*Cepphus grylle arcticus*	13	1869	2020	0
179.	R				ATLANTIC PUFFIN	Puffin	*Fractercula arctica*	187	1842	2020	0
180.					RED-THROATED LOON	Red-throated Diver	*Gavia stellata*		1777	2020	0
181.		A			BLACK-THROATED LOON	Black-throated Diver	*Gavia arctica arctica*		1840	2020	0
182.		A			COMMON LOON	Great Northern Diver	*Gavia immer*		1813	2020	0
183.		A			EUROPEAN STORM PETREL	Storm Petrel	*Hydrobates pelagicus pelagicus*	72	1801	2017	3

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184.	R				LEACH'S STORM PETREL	Leach's Petrel	*Hydrobates leucorhous leucorhous*	251	1823	2020	0
185.		A			NORTHERN FULMAR	Fulmar	*Fulmarus glacialis glacialis*		1834	2020	0
186.					CORY'S SHEARWATER		*Calonectris borealis*	12	1978	2020	0
187.					SOOTY SHEARWATER		*Ardenna grisea*	244	1969	2020	0
188.					GREAT SHEARWATER		*Ardenna gravis*	3	1990	2012	8
189.		A			MANX SHEARWATER		*Puffinus puffinus*		1866	2020	0
190.	R				BALEARIC SHEARWATER		*Puffinus mauretanicus*	19	1975	2016	4
191.					BLACK STORK		*Ciconia nigra*	10	1881	2014	6
192.					WHITE STORK		*Ciconia ciconia ciconia*	45	1842	2020	0
193.		A			NORTHERN GANNET	Gannet	*Morus bassanus*		1830	2020	0
194.					GREAT CORMORANT	Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax carbo*		1600s	2020	0
						Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax carbo carbo*		1600s	2020	0
						Continental Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis*		?	2020	0
195.	R				EUROPEAN SHAG	Shag	*Gulosus aristotelis aristotelis*		1820	2020	0
196.					GLOSSY IBIS		*Plegadis falcinellus*	53	1872	2020	0
197.		A			EURASIAN SPOONBILL	Spoonbill	*Platalea leucorodia leucorodia*		1815	2020	0
198.		A	E	X	EURASIAN BITTERN	Bittern	*Botaurus stellaris stellaris*		1820	2020	0
199.					AMERICAN BITTERN		*Botaurus lentiginosus*	1	1826	1826	194
200.		A			LITTLE BITTERN		*Ixobrychus minutus minutus*	13	1835	1970	50
201.					BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON	Night Heron	*Nycticorax nycticorax nycticorax*	18	1839	2019	1
202.					SQUACCO HERON		*Ardeola ralloides*	1	2004	2004	16
203.		A			WESTERN CATTLE EGRET	Cattle Egret	*Bubulcus ibis*		1995	2020	0
204.					GREY HERON		*Ardea cinerea cinerea*		1594	2020	0
205.					PURPLE HERON		*Ardea purpurea purpurea*	30	1839	2019	1
206.		A			GREAT EGRET	Great White Egret	*Ardea alba alba*		2002	2020	0
207.					LITTLE EGRET		*Egretta garzetta garzetta*		1950	2020	0
208.		A			WESTERN OSPREY	Osprey	*Pandion haliaetus haliaetus*		1730	2020	0
209.					EGYPTIAN VULTURE		*Neophron percnopterus percnopterus*	1	1868	1868	152
210.		A			EUROPEAN HONEY BUZZARD	Honey-buzzard	*Pernis apivorus*	376	1837	2020	0
211.					GREATER SPOTTED EAGLE	Spotted Eagle	*Clanga clanga*	3	1891	1908	112
212.		A			EURASIAN SPARROWHAWK	Sparrowhawk	*Accipiter nisus nisus*		1835	2020	0
213.					NORTHERN GOSHAWK	Goshawk	*Accipiter gentilis gentilis*		1100s	2020	0
214.		A		X	WESTERN MARSH HARRIER	Marsh Harrier	*Circus aeruginosus aeruginosus*		1823	2020	0
215.	R			X	HEN HARRIER		*Circus cyaneus*		1738	2020	0
216.					PALLID HARRIER		*Circus macrourus*	2	1993	2011	9
217.	R				MONTAGU'S HARRIER		*Circus pygargus*		1832	2020	0
218.					RED KITE		*Milvus milvus milvus*		1768	2020	0
219.					BLACK KITE		*Milvus migrans migrans*	34	1971	2020	0
220.		A			WHITE-TAILED EAGLE		*Haliaeetus albicilla albicilla*	23	c991	2020	0

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221.		ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD		*Buteo lagopus lagopus*		1836	2019	1
222.		COMMON BUZZARD		*Buteo buteo buteo*		1830	2020	0
223.	X	WESTERN BARN OWL	Barn Owl	*Tyto alba*		~	2020	0
			Barn Owl	*Tyto alba alba*		1738	2020	0
			Dark-breasted Barn Owl	*Tyto alba guttata*	10	1843	2002	18
224.		EURASIAN SCOPS OWL		*Otus scops scops*	3	1821	1888	132
225.		SNOWY OWL		*Bubo scandiacus*	2	1963	2014	6
226.		TAWNY OWL		*Strix aluco sylvatica*		1832	2020	0
227.		LITTLE OWL		*Athene noctua viladii*		1865	2020	0
228.		BOREAL OWL	Tengmalm's Owl	*Aegolius funereus funereus*	1	1877	1877	143
229.	X	LONG-EARED OWL		*Asio otus otus*		1829	2020	0
230.	X	SHORT-EARED OWL		*Asio flammeus flammeus*		1587	2020	0
231.		EURASIAN HOOPOE	Hoopoe	*Upupa epops epops*	227	1667	2019	1
232.		EUROPEAN ROLLER	Roller	*Coracias garrulus garrulus*	4	1865	1976	44
233.		COMMON KINGFISHER	Kingfisher	*Alcedo atthis ispida*		1838	2020	0
234.		EUROPEAN BEE-EATER	Bee-eater	*Merops apiaster*	60	1854	2020	0
235.		EURASIAN WRYNECK	Wryneck	*Jynx torquilla torquilla*		1818	2020	0
236.		LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER		*Dryobates minor comminutus*		1830	2020	0
237.		GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER		*Dendrocopos major anglicus*		1832	2020	0
238.		EUROPEAN GREEN WOODPECKER	Green Woodpecker	*Picus viridis viridis*		1838	2020	0
239.		LESSER KESTREL		*Falco naumanni*	1	1974	1974	46
240.		COMMON KESTREL	Kestrel	*Falco tinnunculus tinnunculus*		1890	2020	0
241.		RED-FOOTED FALCON		*Falco vespertinus*	37	1873	2020	0
242.		ELEONORA'S FALCON		*Falco eleonorae*	1	2008	2008	12
243.	X	MERLIN		*Falco columbarius aesalon*		1829	2020	0
244.	X	EURASIAN HOBBY	Hobby	*Falco subbuteo subbuteo*		1818	2020	0
245.		PEREGRINE FALCON	Peregrine	*Falco peregrinus peregrinus*		1823	2020	0
246.		ROSE-RINGED PARAKEET	Ring-necked Parakeet	*Psittacula krameri*		1971	2020	0
			Asian Ring-necked Parakeet	*Psittacula krameri borealis*		~	2020	0
			Indian Ring-necked Parakeet	*Psittacula krameri manillensis*		~	2020	0
247.		RED-BACKED SHRIKE		*Lanius collurio*		1818	2020	0
248.		ISABELLINE/RED-TAILED SHRIKE	Daurian/Turkestan Shrike	*Lanius isabellinus/ phoenicuroides*	2	1988	2016	4
249.		LESSER GREY SHRIKE		*Lanius minor*	3	1989	2008	12
250.		GREAT GREY SHRIKE		*Lanius excubitor*		1827	2020	0
			Great Grey Shrike	*Lanius excubitor excubitor*		1827	2020	0
			Steppe Grey Shrike	*Lanius excubitor pallidirostris*	2	1994	1996	24
251.		WOODCHAT SHRIKE		*Lanius senator senator*	23	1872	2016	4
252.		EURASIAN GOLDEN ORIOLE	Golden Oriole	*Oriolus oriolus*		1830	2019	1

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253.		EURASIAN JAY	Jay	*Garrulus glandarius rufitergum*		1878	2020	0
254.		EURASIAN MAGPIE	Magpie	*Pica pica pica*		1838	2020	0
255.		SPOTTED NUTCRACKER	Nutcracker	*Nucifraga caryocatactes macrorynchos*	23	1855	1968	52
256.		RED-BILLED CHOUGH	Chough	*Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*	2	1888	1888	132
257.		WESTERN JACKDAW	Jackdaw	*Coloeus monedula*		1857	2020	0
			Jackdaw	*Coloeus monedula monedula*		1857	2020	0
			Nordic Jackdaw	*Coloeus monedula spermologus*	11	2006	2020	0
258.		ROOK		*Corvus frugilegus frugilegus*		1838	2020	0
259.		CARRION CROW		*Corvus corone corone*		1835	2020	0
260.		HOODED CROW		*Corvus cornix cornix*		1835	2017	3
261.		NORTHERN RAVEN	Raven	*Corvus corax corax*		c991	2020	0
262.		BOHEMIAN WAXWING	Waxwing	*Bombycilla garrulus garrulus*		1835	2020	0
263.		COAL TIT		*Periparus ater*		1890	2020	0
			Coal Tit	*Periparus ater britannicus*		1890	2020	0
			Continental Coal Tit	*Periparus ater ater*	85	1952	2018	2
264.		EUROPEAN CRESTED TIT	Crested Tit	*Lophophanes cristatus**	4	1829	1844	176
265.	X	MARSH TIT		*Poecile palustris dresseri*		1890	2020	0
266.	X	WILLOW TIT		*Poecile montanus kleinschmidti*		1912	2005	15
267.		EURASIAN BLUE TIT	Blue Tit	*Cyanistes caeruleus obscurus*		1884	2020	0
268.		GREAT TIT		*Parus major*		1890	2020	0
			British Great Tit	*Parus major newtoni*		~	2020	0
			Eurasian Great Tit	*Parus major major*		~	2020	0
269.		EURASIAN PENDULINE TIT	Penduline Tit	*Remiz pendulinus pendulinus*	17	1982	2019	1
270.	X	BEARDED REEDLING	Bearded Tit	*Panurus biarmicus biarmicus*		1738	2020	0
271.		WOODLARK		*Lullula arborea arborea*		1832	2020	0
272.	E X	EURASIAN SKYLARK	Skylark	*Alauda arvensis arvensis*		1865	2020	0
273.		HORNED LARK	ShoreLark	*Eremophila alpestris flava*		1862	2020	0
274.		GREATER SHORT-TOED LARK	Short-toed Lark	*Calandrella brachydactyla**	3	1965	1999	21
275.	X	SAND MARTIN		*Riparia riparia riparia*		1818	2020	0
276.		BARN SWALLOW	Swallow	*Hirundo rustica rustica*		1818	2020	0
277.	X	COMMON HOUSE MARTIN	House Martin	*Delichon urbicum urbicum*		1818	2020	0
278.		RED-RUMPED SWALLOW		*Cecropis daurica rufula*	31	1969	2019	1
279.		CETTI'S WARBLER		*Cettia cetti cetti*		1976	2020	0
280.		LONG-TAILED TIT		*Aegithalos caudatus*		1854	2020	0
			British Long-tailed Tit	*Aegithalos caudatus rosaceus*		1854	2020	0
			Northern Long-tailed Tit	*Aegithalos caudatus caudatus*	6	1912	2004	16

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281.	■			X	WOOD WARBLER	*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*		1821	2020	0
282.					WESTERN/EASTERN BONELLI'S WARBLER	*Phylloscopus bonelli/ orientalis*	1	1988	1988	32
283.					HUME'S LEAF WARBLER	Hume's Warbler	*Phylloscopus humei humei*	1	2004	2004	16
284.		■			YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER	*Phylloscopus inornatus*		1957	2020	0
285.					PALLAS'S LEAF WARBLER	Pallas's Warbler	*Phylloscopus proregulus*	58	1960	2020	0
286.					RADDE'S WARBLER		*Phylloscopus schwarzi*	4	2000	2020	0
287.					DUSKY WARBLER		*Phylloscopus fuscatus fuscatus*	11	1987	2020	0
288.		■			WILLOW WARBLER		*Phylloscopus trochilus*		1818	2020	0
						European Willow Warbler	*Phylloscopus trochilus trochilus*		~	2020	0
						Eurasian Willow Warbler	*Phylloscopus trochilus acredula*		~	2020	0
289.					COMMON CHIFFCHAFF	Chiffchaff	*Phylloscopus collybita*		1818	2020	0
						Common Chiffchaff	*Phylloscopus collybita collybita*		1818	2020	0
						Siberian Chiffchaff	*Phylloscopus collybita tristis*	29	1987	2020	0
290.					GREENISH WARBLER		*Phylloscopus trochiloides viridanus*	4	1983	2017	3
291.					ARCTIC WARBLER		*Phylloscopus borealis*	1	2004	2004	16
292.					GREAT REED WARBLER		*Acrocephalus arundinaceus arundinaceus*	5	1965	2020	0
293.	■				AQUATIC WARBLER		*Acrocephalus paludicola*	9	1957	2008	12
294.		■			SEDGE WARBLER		*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*		1818	2020	0
295.					PADDYFIELD WARBLER		*Acrocephalus agricola**	2	1987	1999	21
296.					BLYTH'S REED WARBLER		*Acrocephalus dumetorum*	5	2003	2020	0
297.					EURASIAN REED WARBLER	Reed Warbler	*Acrocephalus scirpaceus scirpaceus*		1819	2020	0
298.	■			X	MARSH WARBLER		*Acrocephalus palustris*	42	1983	2020	0
299.					BOOTED WARBLER		*Iduna caligata*	1	2006	2006	14
300.					MELODIOUS WARBLER		*Hippolais polyglotta*	10	1961	2012	8
301.					ICTERINE WARBLER		*Hippolais icterina*	26	1962	2009	11
302.	■				SAVI'S WARBLER		*Locustella luscinioides luscinioides*	5	1981	2011	9
303.	■			X	COMMON GRASSHOPPER WARBLER		*Locustella naevia naevia*		1819	2020	0
304.					EURASIAN BLACKCAP		*Sylvia atricapilla atricapilla*		1818	2020	0
305.					GARDEN WARBLER		*Sylvia borin borin*		1819	2020	0
306.					BARRED WARBLER		*Currruca nisoria nisoria*	62	1961	2020	0
307.					LESSER WHITETHROAT		*Currruca curruca curruca*		1819	2020	0
308.					ASIAN DESERT WARBLER		*Currruca nana*	1	1975	1975	45
309.					MOLTONI'S/SUBALPINE WARBLER		*Currruca subalpina/ cantillans**	12	1971	2016	4
310.		■			COMMON WHITETHROAT	Whitethroat	*Currruca communis communis*		1818	2020	0

	Cons. Status			IOC World Bird List Name	English Name	Latin Name	Essex Records to 2020			
	R	A	E	X			No.s	First	Last	Years since last record
311.		■			DARTFORD WARBLER		*Currruca undata dartfordiensis*	117	1837	2020	0
312.				X	COMMON FIRECREST	Firecrest	*Regulus ignicapilla ignicapilla*		1878	2020	0
313.					GOLDCREST		*Regulus regulus regulus*		1738	2020	0
314.		■			EURASIAN WREN	Wren	*Troglodytes troglodytes indigenus*		1874	2020	0
315.					EURASIAN NUTHATCH	Nuthatch	*Sitta europaea caesia*		1838	2020	0
316.					EURASIAN TREECREEPER	Treecreeper	*Certhia familiaris britannica*		1835	2020	0
317.		■			SHORT-TOED TREECREEPER		*Certhia brachydactyla**	2	1975	2005	15
318.					NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD		*Mimus polyglottos**	1	1988	1988	32
319.					ROSY STARLING	Rose-coloured Starling	*Pastor roseus*	21	1856	2020	0
320.	■				COMMON STARLING	Starling	*Sturnus vulgaris vulgaris*		1832	2020	0
321.					WHITE'S THRUSH		*Zoothera aurea aurea*	1	1894	1894	126
322.		■	E	X	SONG THRUSH		*Turdus philomelos*		1676	2020	0
						West European Song Thrush	*Turdus philomelos clarkei*		~	2020	0
						Continental Song Thrush	*Turdus philomelos philomelos*		~	2020	0
323.	■				MISTLE THRUSH		*Turdus viscivorus viscivorus*		1890	2020	0
324.		■			REDWING		*Turdus iliacus*		1831	2020	0
						Redwing	*Turdus iliacus iliacus*		1831	2020	0
						Icelandic Redwing	*Turdus iliacus coburni*	7	1940	2019	1
325.					COMMON BLACKBIRD	Blackbird	*Turdus merula merula*		1735	2020	0
326.	■				FIELDFARE		*Turdus pilaris*		1834	2020	0
327.	■				RING OUZEL		*Turdus torquatus torquatus*		1831	2020	0
328.					RED-THROATED THRUSH		*Turdus ruficollis*	1	1994	1994	26
329.					NAUMANN'S THRUSH §		*Turdus naumanni*	2	1990	1997	23
330.	■			X	SPOTTED FLYCATCHER		*Muscicapa striata striata*		1818	2020	0
331.					EUROPEAN ROBIN	Robin	*Erithacus rubecula*		1838	2020	0
						British Robin	*Erithacus rubecula melophilus*		~	2020	0
						European Robin	*Erithacus rubecula rubecula*		~	2020	0
332.					BLUETHROAT		*Luscinia svecica*	52	1936	2018	2
						Red-spotted Bluethroat	*Luscinia svecica svecica*	7	1957	2002	18
						White-spotted Bluethroat	*Luscinia svecica cyanecula*	16	1958	2018	2
333.	■			X	COMMON NIGHTINGALE	Nightingale	*Luscinia megarhynchos megarhynchos*		1768	2020	0
334.					RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER		*Ficedula parva*	35	1959	2020	0
335.		■			EUROPEAN PIED FLYCATCHER	Pied Flycatcher	*Ficedula hypoleuca hypoleuca*		1822	2020	0
336.					COLLARED FLYCATCHER		*Ficedula albicollis*	1	1979	1979	41
337.		■		X	BLACK REDSTART		*Phoenicurus ochruros gibraltariensis*		1879	2020	0

	Cons. Status			IOC World Bird List Name	English Name	Latin Name	Essex Records to 2020			
	R	A	E	X			No.s	First	Last	Years since last record
338.					COMMON REDSTART	Redstart	*Phoenicurus phoenicurus phoenicurus*		1818	2020	0
339.					WHINCHAT		*Saxicola rubetra*		1819	2020	0
340.				X	EUROPEAN STONECHAT	Stonechat	*Saxicola rubicola hibernans*		1831	2020	0
341.					SIBERIAN/STEJNEGER'S STONECHAT		*Saxicola maurus*/stejnegeri*	4	1984	2012	8
342.					NORTHERN WHEATEAR	Wheatear	*Oenanthe oenanthe*		1819	2020	0
						Northern Wheatear	*Oenanthe oenanthe oenanthe*		1819	2020	0
						Greenland Wheatear	*Oenanthe oenanthe leucorrhoa*		1952	2020	0
343.					DESERT WHEATEAR		*Oenanthe deserti**	3	1958	2012	8
344.					BLACK-EARED WHEATEAR		*Oenanthe hispanica**	2	1989	1997	23
345.					WHITE-THROATED DIPPER	Dipper	*Cinclus cinclus*	15	1830	2013	7
						Black-bellied Dipper	*Cinclus cinclus cinclus*	3	1950	2013	7
346.				X	EURASIAN TREE SPARROW	Tree Sparrow	*Passer montanus montanus*		1833	2020	0
347.					HOUSE SPARROW		*Passer domesticus domesticus*		1808	2020	0
348.					ALPINE ACCENTOR §		*Prunella collaris collaris*	1	1817	1817	203
349.					DUNNOCK		*Prunella modularis modularis*		1890	2020	0
350.				X	WESTERN YELLOW WAGTAIL	Yellow Wagtail	*Motacilla flava*		1820	2020	0
						Yellow Wagtail	*Motacilla flava flavissima*		1820	2020	0
						Blue-headed Wagtail §	*Motacilla flava flava*		1834	2020	0
						Grey-headed Wagtail	*Motacilla flava thunbergi*	17	1954	2012	8
						Channel Wagtail hybrid	*Motacilla flava flava x flavissima*		1999	2019	1
351.					CITRINE WAGTAIL		*Motacilla citreola citreola*	3	1976	2006	14
352.					GREY WAGTAIL		*Motacilla cinerea cinerea*		1831	2020	0
353.					WHITE WAGTAIL	Pied Wagtail	*Motacilla alba*		1876	2020	0
						Pied Wagtail	*Motacilla alba yarrellii*		1876	2020	0
						White Wagtail	*Motacilla alba alba*		1836	2020	0
354.					RICHARD'S PIPIT		*Anthus richardi*	29	1968	2016	4
355.					TAWNY PIPIT		*Anthus campestris*	16	1951	2012	8
356.					MEADOW PIPIT		*Anthus pratensis*		1838	2020	0
357.				X	TREE PIPIT		*Anthus trivialis trivialis*		1818	2020	0
358.					OLIVE-BACKED PIPIT		*Anthus hodgsoni yunnanensis*	4	1992	2013	7
359.					RED-THROATED PIPIT		*Anthus cervinus*	5	1982	1994	26
360.					WATER PIPIT		*Anthus spinoletta spinoletta*		1923	2020	0
361.					EURASIAN ROCK PIPIT	Rock Pipit	*Anthus petrosus littoralis*		1835	2020	0
362.					COMMON CHAFFINCH	Chaffinch	*Fringilla coelebs*		1732	2020	0
						British Chaffinch	*Fringilla coelebs coelebs*		~	2020	0
						European Chaffinch	*Fringilla coelebs gengleri*		~	2020	0
363.					BRAMBLING		*Fringilla montifringilla*		1835	2020	0

	Cons. Status			IOC World Bird List Name	English Name	Latin Name	Essex Records to 2020			
	R	A	E	X			No.s	First	Last	Years since last record
364.				X	HAWFINCH		*Coccothraustes coccothraustes coccothraustes*		1600s	2020	0
365.				X	EURASIAN BULLFINCH	Bullfinch	*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*		1838	2020	0
						Bullfinch	*Pyrrhula pyrrhula pileata*		1838	2020	0
						Northern Bullfinch	*Pyrrhula pyrrhula pyrrhula*	56	2004	2005	15
366.					TRUMPETER FINCH		*Bucanetes githagineus**	1	1985	1985	35
367.					COMMON ROSEFINCH		*Carpodacus erythrina erythrina*	19	1981	2020	0
368.					EUROPEAN GREENFINCH	Greenfinch	*Chloris chloris chloris*		1871	2020	0
369.					TWITE		*Linaria flavirostris*		1820	2020	0
						British Twite	*Linaria flavirostris flavirostris*		~	2020	0
						Scandinavian Twite	*Linaria flavirostris pipilans*		~	2020	0
370.				X	COMMON LINNET	Linnet	*Linaria cannabina cannabina*		1832	2020	0
371.					COMMON REDPOLL		*Acanthis flammea flammea*		1835	2019	1
372.				X	LESSER REDPOLL		*Acanthis cabaret*		c1805	2020	0
373.					ARCTIC REDPOLL		*Acanthis hornemanni exilipes*	11	1976	2008	12
374.					PARROT CROSSBILL		*Loxia pytyopsittacus*	7	1861	2013	7
375.					RED CROSSBILL	Crossbill	*Loxia curvirostra curvirostra*		1826	2020	0
376.					TWO-BARRED CROSSBILL		*Loxia leucoptera bifasciata*	2	1846	1866	154
377.					EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH	Goldfinch	*Carduelis carduelis britannica*		1838	2020	0
378.					EUROPEAN SERIN	Serin	*Serinus serinus*	38	1976	2020	0
379.					EURASIAN SISKIN	Siskin	*Spinus spinus*		1838	2020	0
380.					LAPLAND LONGSPUR	Lapland Bunting	*Calcarius lapponicus lapponicus*		1872	2020	0
381.					SNOW BUNTING		*Plectrophenax nivalis insulae*		1830	2020	0
382.				X	CORN BUNTING		*Emberiza calandra calandra*		1838	2020	0
383.				X	YELLOWHAMMER		*Emberiza citrinella caliginosa*		1877	2020	0
384.					PINE BUNTING		*Emberiza leucocephalos leucocephalos*	1	1992	1992	28
385.					ORTOLAN BUNTING		*Emberiza hortulana*	31	1908	2019	1
386.					CIRL BUNTING		*Emberiza cirlus*	22	1854	1978	42
387.					LITTLE BUNTING		*Emberiza pusilla*	7	1892	2018	2
388.					RUSTIC BUNTING		*Emberiza rustica*	2	1966	2018	2
389.					YELLOW-BREASTED BUNTING		*Emberiza aureola aureola*	1	2002	2002	18
390.					BLACK-HEADED BUNTING		*Emberiza melanocephala*	3	1979	1998	22
391.				X	COMMON REED BUNTING	Reed Bunting	*Emberiza schoeniclus schoeniclus*		1890	2020	0
392.					DARK-EYED JUNCO		*Junco hyemalis hyemalis*	1	2016	2016	4
393.					BALTIMORE ORIOLE		*Icterus galbula*	1	1992	1992	28
394.					ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK		*Pheucticus ludovicianus*	1	1975	1976	44

Category D Species (not part of the Essex List)

All Essex records have been included here whether the report clearly involved an escape or may have been a wild bird.

SNOW GOOSE	*Anser caerulescens*	57+	1911	2020	0
ROSS'S GOOSE	*Anser rossii*	9	1996	2015	5
RUDDY SHELDUCK	*Tadorna ferruginea*	143	1885	2020	0
WOOD DUCK	*Aix sponsa*	74	1960	2020	0
FALCATED DUCK	*Mareca falcata*	3	1994	2006	14
BUFFLEHEAD	*Bucephala albeola*	1	2019	2019	1
MARBLED DUCK	*Marmaronetta angustirostris*	2	2006	2007	13
WHITE-HEADED DUCK	*Oxyura leucocephala*	3	1995	2003	17
GREATER FLAMINGO	*Phoenicopterus roseus*	8	1963	2011	9
GREAT WHITE PELICAN	*Pelecanus onocrotalus*	4	1975	2000	20
SAKER	*Falco cherrug*	12	1984	2014	6
RED-HEADED BUNTING	*Emberiza bruniceps*	5	1958	2002	18

Category E Species (not part of the Essex List)

Based on the chapter 'Appendix 2 Catergory E species" in Wood (2007) and updated to 2019 and includes species for which introductions were attempted in 19th Century.

Modern recording of escapes only began in the mid-1980s so this list is likely to be incomplete.

Some species in this list may also occur in the main Essex List e.g. Common Buzzard, of which examples with jesses have been noted.

African Collared Dove
African Sacred Ibis
African Spoonbill
Alexandrine Parakeet
American Black Vulture
American White Ibis
Atlantic Canary
Australian Shelduck
Australian Shoveler
Bar-headed Goose
Barrow's Goldeneye
Black Kite
Black Swan
Black-bellied Whistling Duck
Black-headed Weaver
Black-necked Swan
Black-rumped Waxbill
Black-winged Red Bishop
Blossom-headed Parakeet
Blue and Yellow Macaw
Blue Magpie sp.
Blue-winged Teal
Booted Eagle
Brown Teal
Budgerigar
Burrowing Parrot
Cackling Goose
California Quail
Cape Teal
Chestnut Teal
Chestnut-tailed Starling
Chilean Flamingo
Chiloe Wigeon
Chinese Grosbeak
Chukar Partridge
Cinnamon Teal
Cockatiel
Common Buzzard
Common Mynah
Common Waxbill
Crested Caracara
Crimson Rosella
Crowned Crane sp.
Cut-throat Finch
Dalmatian Pelican
Demoiselle Crane
Diamond Dove
Eastern Rosella
Emperor Goose
Eurasian Eagle Owl
Falcated Duck
Fischer's Lovebird
Fulvous-whistling Duck
Galah
Golden Pheasant
Greater Blue-eared Starling
Greater Rhea
Greater Scaup
Grey Cockatiel
Grey Parrot
Harris' Hawk
Helmeted Guineafowl
Hill Mynah sp.
Hooded Merganser
Hottentot Teal
Indian Peafowl
Indigo Bunting
Jackson's Widowbird
Japanese Grosbeak
Japanese Quail
Lanner Falcon
Laughing Dove
Laughing Kookaburra
Lesser White-fronted Goose
Magpie Goose
Maned Duck
Marabou Stork
Masked Lapwing
Masked Lovebird
Masked Weaver sp.
Mitred Parakeet
Mongolian Lark
Monk Parakeet
Muscovy Duck
Nanday Parakeet
Nene
New Zealand Scaup
Northern Bobwhite
Northern Red Bishop
Orange-breasted Waxbill
Orange-cheeked Waxbill
Pied Crow
Pine Grosbeak
Pink-eared Duck
Pin-tailed Whydah
Puna Teal
Purple Swamphen
Rajah Shelduck
Red Bishop sp.
Red Grouse
Red Shoveler
Red Turtle Dove
Red-billed Leiothrix
Red-billed Quelea
Red-billed Teal
Red-breasted Goose
Red-chested Sunbird
Red-flanked Lorikeet
Red-headed Lovebird
Red-rumped Parrot
Red-tailed Hawk
Red-tailed Laughingthrush
Red-vented Bulbul
Red-whiskered Bulbul
Red-winged Tinamou
Reeves' Pheasant
Ringed Teal
Rock Eagle Owl
Rosy-billed Pochard
Rosy-faced Lovebird
Ruddy-headed Goose
Rufous Sibia
RufousTreepie
Ryukyu Wood Pigeon
Sarus Crane
Scarlet-fronted Parakeet
Senegal Parrot
Shaft-tailed Whydah
Silver Gull
Silver Pheasant
Silver Teal
Silver-eared Mesia
South African Shelduck
Spotted Laughingthrush
Spur-winged Plover
Sudan Golden Sparrow
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
Swan Goose
Swinhoe's Pheasant
Trumpeter Swan
Turquoise-fronted Amazon
Village Weaver
Vinous-throated Parrotbill
White-backed Duck
White-capped Munia
White-cheeked Pintail
White-cheeked Turaco
White-faced Whistling Duck
White-fronted Parakeet
White-rumped Munia
Yellow-billed Teal
Yellow-crowned Bishop
Yellow-fronted Canary
Zanzibar Red Bishop
Zebra Finch

Total 155 species

In addition, many varied hybrids mainly, but not exclusively, ducks have been recorded.

Essex Birdwatching Society Accounts

Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31st December 2020

Receipts	£
Receipts	£
Subscriptions received	8,195.50
Donations	143.00
Sales of *Essex Bird Reports*	197.63
Sales of *Essex Birding*	5.00
Field Meetings	1,080.00
Lectures	419.10
Conference Tickets	1,520.00
Conference Raffle	586.00
BTO Subscriptions	850.00
BTO Donations	10.00
BTO Gift Aid receipt	0.00
Mugs	0.00
Victuals	54.95
Sweat Shirt Sales	350.00
Essex Field Club fees	7,494.35
Car Stickers	0.00
Advertising	0.00
Legacy	0.00
Gift Aid/Net Covenants received	4,288.80
Raffle	0.00
Pin Badges	12.00
Bank interest	496.82
Conference Display	25.00
	£25,728.15

Payments	£
Lecture fees	214.00
Room Hire Committee	39.10
Room Hire Meeting	258.60
Essex Bird Report costs	0.00
Essex Birding costs	6,814.00
Officer's expenses	158.16
Insurance	607.04
Field Trips	550.00
Bradwell Bird Observatory - Bird Seed	138.43
Bradwell Bird Observatory - Calor Gas	0.00
Swift Boxes	0.00
	8,779.33
Miscellaneous	
Website	0.00
Lanyards - Conference	0.00
Postage - Conference	0.00
Lecture Fees - Conference	0.00
Printing - Conference	0.00
Badges - Conference	0.00
Venue - Conference	0.00
Envelopes - Conference	0.00
Ticket Refund - Conference	20.00
Ringing Project	0.00
Bradwell Bird Observatory - Rates	168.96
Bradwell Bird Observatory - Gift Aid Transfer	430.00
Bradwell Bird Observatory - Signage	0.00
Bradwell Bird Observatory - Repairs	0.00
British Birds Records	0.00
Printing	222.74
Accountancy Fees	396.00
Victuals	15.63
Equipment	117.01
Grants	0.00
First *Essex Bird Report*	0.00
Pin Badges	0.00
Conference Admin	48.20
Laptop	0.00
Zoom Subscription	43.17
Sweatshirts	257.40
	1,719.11
Excess of Income over Expenditure	15,229.71
	£25,728.15

Cash Statement for the year ended 31st December 2020

1st January 2020	£
Balance of Current Account	£612.07
Balance of Business Premium Account **7724 brought forward	£202.13
Balance of Business Premium Account **0696 brought forward	£14,175.22
Balance on Metro Bank Account brought forward £25,477.45	25,205.00
Balance on Metro Bank Instant Account brought forward	£2.20
Balance on Field Meetings Cash Float brought forward	£60.00
Balance on Bradwell Bird Observatory Account brought forward	£1,693.86
	£42,222.93
Excess of income over expenditure	£15,229.71
	£57,452.64

31st December 2020	£
Balance of Current Account carried forward	£14,623.39
Balance of Business Premium Account **7724 carried forward	£14,186.48
Balance of Business Premium Account **0696 carried forward	£202.29
Balance on Metro Bank Account carried forward	£25,961.52
Balance on Metro Bank Instant Account carried forward	£3.53
Balance on Field Meetings Cash Float carried forward	£60.00
Balance on Bradwell Bird Observatory Account carried forward	£2,415.43
	£57,452.64

Connah Goldsworthy
Chartered Certified Accountants
12 Station Court
Station Approach
Wickford
Essex SS11 7AT

14th September 2021

Reservoir Permit Holders 2022/23

The Essex & Suffolk Water Company, in conjunction with English Nature, has over recent years restricted access to Essex Birdwatching Society members at both Abberton and Hanningfield reservoirs.

Abberton Reservoir

Permits were suspended during the extensive work to enlarge the reservoir that took place between 2010 and 2013. Subsequently, access beyond what is now provided to the public via viewing points was not considered necessary, but the Company remains open to further discussions around permits in future should circumstances change. Society members and the public are requested strictly to observe any signage regarding access restrictions at all times on any part of the site.

Hanningfield Reservoir

There are up to ten non-transferable, permanent permit holders, plus two "floating" day permits held at the Essex Wildlife Trust Visitor Centre. Essex Birdwatching Society members may book a "floating" permit in advance or borrow on the day, subject to availability. The Visitor Centre is normally open between 10.00 and 17.00 from February to October and 10.00 to 16.00 from November to January, seven days a week, except for Christmas Day and Boxing Day. However, hours have been restricted during the Coronavirus pandemic, and members are advised to check the Essex Wildlife Trust web site www.essexwt.org.uk or social media for the latest information.

Each permanent permit includes a guest permit that allows one other Essex Birdwatching Society member to accompany the permanent permit holder in restricted areas, as long as the current Essex & Suffolk Water Terms and Conditions are observed at all times by all parties.

The issuing of these permits by Essex & Suffolk Water to the advised chosen Essex Birdwatching Society members is considered a very special privilege, and they must be used to their full potential by active recipients for the regular recording and constant monitoring of the birds at the Hanningfield Reservoir site. Their use is monitored annually by the Essex Birdwatching Society and Essex & Suffolk Water.

The ten permits have been distributed at the discretion of the Executive Committee based on continued information and guidance received from the Recorders. All permits are reviewed and renewed on the basis that regular records have been submitted to the Essex Birdwatching Society Recorder unless there are special mitigating circumstances.

It is mandatory for holders of all types of permits to:

- Notice and observe the current Essex & Suffolk Water Terms and Conditions
- Notify the Essex Wildlife Trust Visitor Centre of any bird sightings
- Send their bird sightings to the Society

The following EBwS members hold permanent, non-transferable, permits for Hanningfield Reservoir:

D. Acfield, J. Bright, T. Bufton, K. Cook, D. Jobbins, J. Lewis, S. Satchell, C. Shields, W. Swift.

Special access conditions have been negotiated with Essex & Suffolk Water and Essex Wildlife Trust if a rarity should be present on either Abberton or Hanningfield Reservoirs.

A continuation of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic may affect visiting arrangements for Essex Wildlife Trust sites. Please check with its web site www.essexwt.org.uk for further information and observe government regulations at all times.