

BRENT BIRD REPORT 2019

Brent Birders (compiled by Peter Reay)



Part of a flock of Lapwing near Broadamoor on 2 Feb 2019 (Phil Dean)

The Birds of South Brent Parish before during and after the 2014–16 survey (Brent Birders 2018) provides a comprehensive account of the parish birds up to the end of 2017. Since then, the full parish survey has continued, although now just in January and May, and a Garden Bird Survey was launched in October 2018 to cover the winter months from October to April. Birds also continue to be recorded on a more casual basis in other months of the year, and it seems appropriate to produce annual reports to summarise what was seen and heard. This report, the *Brent Bird Report 2019*, follows on from last year's which covered both 2017 and 2018. All species recorded in 2019 in the South Brent Parish (SBP) area are included, and the species accounts are based on records from a variety of sources, including Brent Birders surveys where appropriate:

- **January and May Parish Surveys.** Number of squares where recorded in January and May in 2019, and for species recorded in both months, the overall number of squares. (Also given for 2014–19 in Table 2 at the end of the report.)
- **Garden Bird Survey.** Number of gardens where recorded in 2019 in both January–April and October–December periods.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to all those who took part in surveys and sent in records and observations. Please continue to submit casual records for subsequent reports as and when they occur, or at the end of the year, either through brentbirdsurvey@gmail.com or to peter.p.j.reay@btinternet.com. Essential information required is species, date, location, number and, for rarities, how identified and/or a photo.

Abbreviations and codes

New for parish (since at least 2014): species name in red

New for square or month (since at least 2014): square number or month in blue

SBP = South Brent Parish Bird Survey area (see Brent Birders 2018)

= square

ADR = Avon Dam Reservoir; **STW** = Sewage (Wastewater) Treatment Works; **WTW** = Water Treatment Works

Observers and initials

MA – Margaret & Philip Andrade
 DB – Devon Birds database
 JB – Jo Brooks
 JC – Julia & Michael Cady
 MDa – Mike Daniels
 JD – John Day
 PD – Phil & Sue Dean
 MDy – Martin Dyer
 PE – Paul Edginton
 RF – Richard Finnemore
 HG – Hayden Gabriel
 MG – Mike & Jan Goss
 SHa – Sylvia & Peter Hamilton
 PH – Paul & Barbara Heatley
 MH – Mo Holder
 GH – Gill Honey

RH – Rob Hubble & Stella Tracey
 SH – Steve Hopper
 MK – Maggie King
 DL – Dianne Lennox
 DM – Dave MacDiarmid
 AM – Andy Morgan
 DP – Dave Pakes
 PR – Peter Reay
 PS – Perry Sanders
 DS – Dave Scott
 NS – Norman Sellers
 AS – Andy Smith
 DW – David West
 JW – John Wilson
 MW – Margaret Worrall

Species accounts (in the systematic order used in Devon and Dartmoor Bird Reports)

Some 2019 highlights

New species: Common Rosefinch and (since 2014) Crossbill. **New months and/or squares:** Black Redstart, Cirl Bunting, Coot, Cuckoo, Goshawk, Green Sandpiper, Kingfisher, Lapwing, Lesser Redpoll, Little Grebe, Snipe, Spotted Flycatcher and Tufted Duck.

CANADA GOOSE

Recorded in one square in Jan, nine in May and 10 in total. At ADR, only recorded 8 Mar to 17 May (Table 1), typically flying out before dawn, with a max count of seven. Bred at South Brent Lakes, where first seen on 3 Feb, with a max count of five in Mar and Jul. Max count of 10 at Dockwell on 17 Mar (DP). The only record outside the breeding season was a flock of 27 going W low over the village on 1 Aug (DM,PR).

MUTE SWAN

The resident free flying cob remained at South Brent Lakes throughout the year. On two occasions it was seen to show extreme aggression to incoming Canada Geese, other than the breeding pair.

WIGEON

All records from South Brent Lakes, with monthly maxima of 24 in Jan, two in Feb and 28 in Dec. Last seen on 18 Feb, with first returns on 18 Dec (PR).

MALLARD

Recorded in eight squares in Jan, 12 in May and 14 overall. Present all year at ADR, with a max count of 18 in Jan (Table 1), and at least one brood of ducklings (10 on 16 Jul). Max count of 36 at South Brent Lakes on 14 Oct.

Table 1. Monthly maximum counts of wildfowl at Avon Dam Reservoir in 2019

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Canada Goose			3	7	6							
Mallard	18	4	2	4	2	7	3	1	12	14	16	14
Teal	22	13	6	6					1	5	17	20
Goosander	25	31	17	10	8	12		3	8	14	25	22
Great Crested Grebe				2	2	2						

TEAL

Recorded in two squares in January (ADR & Thynacombe), none in May. Last seen at ADR on 12 Apr, with first returns on 14 Sep, and a max count of 22 on 19 Jan (Table 1); courtship display, including mating, seen on 25 Mar (PR).

TUFTED DUCK

A male at South Brent Lakes on 31 Dec (PR) was the first since 2016, and the first in winter (seen again in Jan 2020).

GOOSANDER

Recorded in three squares in Jan, one in May and three in total. Recorded at dawn at ADR in all months except Jul, but whereas some always present up to 22 Jun and from 18 Sep, there was only one record (three on 13 Aug) in between these dates (PR). The last adult male was on 17 May, the first return on 28 Oct. Max count was 31 (4 males) on 16 Feb (Table 1). Mating was observed in Jan, and 12 on 1 Jun may have been a female with free-flying young, but no evidence of breeding in SBP. Day-time records included: one Avonwick Bridge on 6 Jan (PH) and a pair further up river at Avonwick on 13 Jan (PR); a pair above the ADR at Bishop's Meads on 19 Jan (PR); three (one male) at ADR at 10:00 on 23 Feb (JC); one brown-head flying towards ADR at 09:30 on 24 Feb, pursued by a Peregrine (DS); a pair

on the river at Penstave on 20 Feb (LG); two on the river above Shipley Bridge on 15 Oct and one there on 5 Nov (PR).



Goosanders on the Avon Dam, Oct 2019 (Peter Reay)

PHEASANT

Recorded in 12 squares in Jan, 23 in May and 26 in total; also in four out of 25 gardens in Jan–Apr, but in none of 15 in Oct–Dec.

LITTLE GREBE

None in Jan but recorded in four squares (all on private ponds) in May. First seen at South Brent Lakes (both lakes, so two squares), where at least one pair bred, on 18 Feb, and then present until at least 18 Dec, with a max count of four. Also present again on ponds at Higher Beara and Lincombe Farm, and at a new site, a pond at Merrifield in Mar #13 (PS).

GREAT CRESTED GREBE

The annual spring visit involved a pair from 30 Apr to 5 Jun (PR). Although full courtship behaviour was seen on 30 Apr, this was clearly a breeding pair from elsewhere, perhaps Fernworthy Reservoir. Both flew off at 05:45 on 10 May but were back again on 21st.

GREY HERON

Recorded in eight squares in Jan, three in May and 10 overall; also in four out of 25 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in one out of 15 in Oct–Dec. On 8 Mar, two flying about together and calling, quite high up above ADR (JC) were perhaps a breeding pair from the nearest heronry at Venford Reservoir. Recorded occasionally at ADR in Mar, Apr and Jul–Sep, with two together on the dam wall on 24 Jul.

CORMORANT

Recorded in two squares in Jan, one in May and three overall. Most records were from ADR where singles recorded occasionally Jan–Jun and Oct. Elsewhere, one was on the river at Brent Mill on 4 Jan (SH).

SPARROWHAWK

Recorded in seven squares in Jan, four in May and 10 overall; also in seven out of 25 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in three out of 15 in Oct–Dec. One was eating a juvenile Jackdaw in a Brakefield garden on 22 Aug (AP).

GOSHAWK

An adult female flew over the Glaze Valley #50 on 20 Oct (DS,SH).

RED KITE

A poor year. One over Hillside on 20 Apr (SH) was the only record.

BUZZARD

Recorded in 32 squares in Jan, 23 in May and 37 overall.

MOORHEN

Recorded in seven squares in both Jan and May, and in nine overall. Present throughout the year at South Brent Lakes, where several pairs probably bred, with a max of 12 seen on 7 Jan (PR). Other regular sites included Dockwell, Higher Beara, Lincombe Farm, Lisburne Farm, Hatchlands and one was seen at Stidston on 27 Dec, the first there since 2017.

COOT

One at South Brent Lakes on 3 Jan (MG), 21 Jan and 18 Apr (PR) was the first since Mar 2016, and only the second SBP record.

LAPWING

A cold spell coincided with the appearance of a flock of 100–200 in pasture fields near Broadamoor on 2 Feb (PD), perhaps (and if so, quite a coincidence) the 180 heading W over Haldon on 1 Feb (SH). These were the first in SBP since two over Overbrent in Jan 2017, and the first on the ground since 2010, also in the Broadamoor area.

GOLDEN PLOVER

Recorded in three squares in January. Other records included: 17 at Western White Barrow on 26 Feb (PR); 30 on Brent Forehill on 31 Mar (MK); 250 on the east side of Ugborough Beacon on 20 Oct (DS); and 20 near ADR on 21 Dec (AS).

WOODCOCK

Recorded in seven squares in Jan, including two in a Hillside field ditch on 12 Jan (SH). None in the second winter-period until Dec, with records from Bala Weir (MDy) and Didworthy (JB).



Sparrowhawk male with Blackbird (Steve Hopper)

SNIPE

Recorded in eight squares in Jan, two in May and eight overall, all on the moor. Other records included: three flushed from bracken in Broadamoor on 2 Feb; one in a wet field near Aish #25 on 3 Feb; and nine from a field entrance near Harbourneford Cross on 14 Feb (all pR). Drumming was first heard at Smallbrook Mire on 30 Mar, and on subsequent visits until 3 May, so probably breeding site (PR).

COMMON SANDPIPER

The only records were of singles at ADR on 30 Apr, 3 May and 10 May (PR).

GREEN SANDPIPER

One was reported from Higher Beara lake #38 on 9 Feb (DW), the first since 2016 and the first in winter.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

No records in Jan but recorded from two squares in May. Other records included: five in a field at Dockwell and three at ADR on 25 Apr; and two at 05:00 on 24 Jul at ADR, which presumably roosted overnight (gulls roost overnight at other reservoirs, mainly Fernworthy, but unusual at ADR).

HERRING GULL

Other than flying birds, recorded in 23 squares in Jan, 11 in May and 26 overall; also in nine out of 23 gardens in Jan–Apr and in three out of 15 in Oct–Dec. Widespread throughout the year, and sometimes in flocks of several hundred, but the only ones reported were 150 in pasture near Lutton on 10 Jun, probably linked to 200 later in the day at ADR (PE), and 161 at Marley Thatch on 2 Jan (MG). Adults present on village roof tops throughout the year, but no evidence of breeding.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL

None recorded in either Jan or May. The only record was of one over Hillside in Oct (SH).

STOCK DOVE

Recorded in eight squares in Jan, 15 in May and 18 overall; also in two out of 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in one out of 14 in Oct–Dec. The max count was 14 in a field near Bloody Pool Cross on 10 Jun (PR), but there were up to eight at Hillside in Nov (SH).

WOODPIGEON

Recorded in 32 squares in Jan, 39 in May and 40 overall; also in 23 out of 25 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in 14 out of 15 in Oct–Dec 2019. The usual autumn passage occurred, with a max count of 1,500, including one flock of 400, flying W over Hillside on 5 Nov between 07.10 and 08.30 (SH). Small flocks were seen flying W over Brent Hill between 27 Oct and 2 Dec (PR). More unusual was a *spring* flock of 200 NE over Brent Hill on 8 Apr at 11.20 (PR).

COLLARED DOVE

Recorded in 15 squares in Jan, 20 in May and 22 overall; also in 21 out of 25 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in 13 out of 15 in Oct–Dec. The max count was 11 at Harbourneford on 24 Jan.

CUCKOO

Recorded in 16 squares in May. All on the moor apart from one heard at Didworthy on 21 Apr (SD), a female at Stidston #38 on 10 May (DS) and one calling on or near Brent Hill on 24 May (perSH).

BARN OWL

Recorded in one square in both Jan and May, and in two overall. Recorded at Harbourneford in Jan (NS) and at Hillside on 1–8 May (roosting in field shelter) and 26–27 Oct (heard)(both SH).

TAWNY OWL

Recorded in six squares in both Jan and May, and in 10 overall; also in seven out of 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in four out of 15 in Oct–Dec 2018.



Barn Owl (Steve Hopper)

NIGHTJAR

After records in 2018, the first confirmed in SBP since 1963, churring was again heard, and birds seen, at dawn and dusk above Shipley between 9 Jun and 16 Jul (PR,MI).

SWIFT

Recorded in two squares in May, the lowest since the survey began, partly due to late arrival. None were seen at Avonwick until 8 Jul when eight appeared (PH). There was also late arrival at a Hillside nest site where, in spite of having to replace a chick that had fallen from the nest, two young probably fledged (GH).

KINGFISHER

Recorded in two squares in Jan, one in May and two overall. One was seen in Jan, May and Nov on the R Avon below Didworthy #20 (JB) and in Jan, Aug & Sep on the Horsebrook at Stidston #38 (DS).

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER

Recorded in 11 squares in Jan, 13 in May and 19 overall; also in 20 out of 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in 11 out of 15 in Oct–Dec.

GREEN WOODPECKER

Recorded in four squares in Jan, six in May and nine overall, the lowest since the survey began; also in five out of 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in two out of 15 in Oct–Dec.

KESTREL

Recorded in two squares in Jan, five in May and seven overall. Other records include one near Ugborough Beacon on 1 Jun (MD), two on Brent Hill on 22 Aug, several records of one or two between Avon Dam and Shipley in Oct (several observers) and at Hillside on 10 Nov and 25 Dec (SH).

MERLIN

One near Harbourneford #40 on 3 and 4 Dec (PR) was the only record.

HOBBY

Not recorded in May, but present in the Glaze Valley during the breeding season (DS). Post-breeding records included a juvenile over Brent Hill on 15 & 19 Aug (PR), one at Hillside on 30 Aug (SH), birds hunting over Stidston in Aug/Sep (DS), two over the Avon Dam on 20 Sep (PR) and one below Ugborough Beacon on 21 Oct (DP).

PEREGRINE

Recorded in three squares in Jan, and none in May. Frequently recorded at Hillside (attracted to domestic pigeons?) and the Avon Valley, and over Stidston in Dec (two juveniles) and on Brent Hill in Jan and Dec.

JAY

Recorded in 16 squares in Jan, 13 in May and 21 overall; also in 11 out of 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in 10 out of 15 in Oct–Dec.

MAGPIE

Recorded in 35 squares in Jan, 31 in May and 38 overall; also in 22 out of 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in 14 out of 15 in Oct–Dec.

JACKDAW

Recorded in 32 squares in Jan, 31 in May and 36 overall; also in all 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in 14 out of 15 in Oct–Dec. The largest flocks reported were 100 over Clobells on 28 Jan, a pre-roost gathering of 120 near Brent Mill on 13 Feb (both MG) and 70 feeding in pasture near Brent Hill on 20 Oct (PR).

ROOK

Recorded in 13 squares in Jan, 17 in May and 19 overall, the lowest since the survey started in 2014; also in five out of 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in two out of 15 in Oct–Dec. In the village, 38 nests were found in Mar in four colonies: one in Railway Wood, Palstone (10 nests) and three around Brent Mill (31, five and two nests) (PR).

CARRION CROW

Recorded in 46 squares in Jan, 51 in May and overall; also in five out of 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in two out of 15 in Oct–Dec.

RAVEN

Recorded in 28 squares in Jan, 19 in May and 33 overall, the highest since the survey began; also in two out of 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in two out of 15 in Oct–Dec.

COAL TIT

Recorded in 18 squares in Jan, 12 in May and 19 overall; also in 22 out of 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in all 15 in Oct–Dec.

MARSH TIT

Recorded in six squares in Jan, two in May and seven overall; also in four out of 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in four out of 15 in Oct–Dec. Remains regular throughout the year in gardens at Pennaton (PD) and Didworthy (JB,JC). Other records included those of two birds on feeders at both Little Bullhornstone on 29 Nov (AM) and Moorland Park on 8–10 Dec (PR).

BLUE TIT

Recorded in 37 squares in Jan and May, and in 39 overall, the highest since the survey began; also in all 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in all 15 in Oct–Dec.

GREAT TIT

Recorded in 30 squares in Jan, 30 in May and 36 overall; also in all 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in all 15 in Oct–Dec.

SKYLARK

Recorded in one square in Jan, 34 in May and 35 overall. The only winter record was of 18 in stubble at New Cross, a regular winter site, on 17 Jan (PR). May records came from both moorland and farmland. Although breeding probably occurred on and/or close to Brent Hill, six seen there on 19 Sep were considered to be migrants.

SWALLOW

Recorded in 31 squares in May, the lowest since the survey began. A nest with four eggs in the pump house above Shipley was predated (RH). Following successful breeding at Aish, one bird lingered there until 4 Oct (HG).

HOUSE MARTIN

Recorded in 10 squares in May, the lowest since the survey began. The largest flock was 30 near Pennaton on 8 July (PD), but no records of the usual autumn gathering at Aish. Breeding occurred at several sites, including Aish, Zempson and in the village including houses on the new estate at Lower Green.

WILLOW WARBLER

Recorded in 24 squares in May. First recorded on 12 Apr at Avon Dam.

CHIFFCHAFF

Recorded in one square in Jan, 28 in May and 29 overall, as in 2018, the lowest since the survey began; also in eight out of 23 gardens in Jan–Apr (mostly Apr), and in one of 15 in Oct–Dec. Winter records comprised one at STW in Jan and singles in a hedge below Brent Hill 2 Dec, and in a hedge off Portford Lane on 27 Dec (PR).

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER

Not recorded in May but one caught and ringed at Ugborough Beacon #50 on 21 Apr (DS), and one was reeling above Small Brook Mire on 24 Apr (AS).

BLACKCAP

Recorded in five squares in Jan, 31 in May and overall; also in 13 out of 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in one of 15 in Oct–Dec. Winter records comprised a male in a hedge near Gingaford on 25 Jan (PD), records from at least seven village gardens in Jan–Mar, and in Dec, with the first appearing in a Brakefield garden on 3 Dec (perSH).



Blackcap male (Steve Hopper)



Wren (Steve Hopper)

GARDEN WARBLER

Recorded in nine squares in May. Singing first noted at Gingaford Cross on 1 May. Unlike 2018, no singing was heard from the Avon Dam quarry.

WHITETHROAT

Recorded in 18 squares in May. Birds at Gribblesdown on 25 May (singing) and 31 Aug, were the first for #19.

FIRECREST

None in Jan or May nor in any of the 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, but occurred in two of 15 gardens in Oct–Dec. The gardens were in Moorland Park on 3 Oct (PR) and in Clobells on 22 Nov (MG). At least one had also been in the Clobells area from 17 Nov (MI).

GOLDCREST

Recorded in four squares in Jan, six in May and eight overall, the lowest since the survey began; also in two out of 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in three out of 15 in Oct–Dec.

WREN

Recorded in 26 squares in Jan, 47 in May and 49 overall, the highest since the survey began; also in 21 out of 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in 12 out of 15 in Oct–Dec.

NUTHATCH

Recorded in 19 squares in Jan, nine in May and 21 overall; also in 19 out of 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in 12 out of 15 in Oct–Dec.

TREECREEPER

Recorded in eight squares in Jan, five in May and 10 overall; also in six out of 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in three out of 15 in Oct–Dec.

STARLING

Recorded in 22 squares in Jan, nine in May and 24 overall; also in 14 out of 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in nine out of 15 in Oct–Dec. Roosts included 200 in bamboos at Gribblesdown on 5 Jan (PR) and 100 in conifers at Pennaton on 8 Mar (PD). The largest daytime groups were 300 in pasture near Gingaford Cross on 22 Oct and 100 around Higher Green on 19 Nov (DM).

RING OUZEL

No records until an early autumn migrant above the Avon Dam on 15 Sep (PR). All other records were between 14 and 28 Oct in the Glaze Valley above Moorgate and Avon Valley above Shipley (several observers), with max counts of 18 in the Glaze Valley on 20 Oct (DS), and 16 in the Avon Valley on 16 Oct (DB).

BLACKBIRD

Recorded in 38 squares in Jan, 40 in May and 41 overall; also in all 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in all 15 in Oct–Dec.

FIELDFARE

Recorded in seven squares in Jan; also in one out of 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in two out of 15 in Oct–Dec. Last recorded on 2 Apr at Bloody Pool, with first returns on 20 Oct in the Avon Valley.

REDWING

Recorded in 25 squares in Jan; also in two out of 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in four out of 15 in Oct–Dec. Last recorded on 15 Apr at Dockwell (DP), with first returns at Hillside on early date of 16 Sep (SH).

SONG THRUSH

Recorded in 27 squares in Jan, 35 in May and 37 overall, the highest since the survey began; also in 14 out of 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in four out of 15 in Oct–Dec. A presumed migrant was above the Avon Dam on 2 Oct, and first song of autumn heard in the village on 19 Nov (PR).

MISTLE THRUSH

Recorded in 12 squares in Jan, 10 in May and 16 overall, the lowest since the survey began; also in six out of 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in three out of 15 in Oct–Dec. The largest reported flock was 35 at Dockwell on 15 Aug. First song of autumn heard on 23 Nov.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER

Recorded in three squares in May, at Shipley on 30 May (DB), just below the Avon Dam, on 31 May (PR) and at Stidston where a pair bred, but lost eggs to a Jay (DS). There were no other confirmed breeding records, but there was at least one at Pennaton on 8 Jul (PD), and at least three below Aish Ridge on 27 Jul, including an adult feeding a juvenile (PR). A lighter than usual autumn passage comprised singles at Dockwell on 1 & 5 Aug (DP) and one at Overbrent on 2 Sep (PR).

ROBIN

Recorded in 38 squares in Jan, 39 in May and 41 overall, the highest since the survey began; also in all 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in all 15 in Oct–Dec.

PIED FLYCATCHER

Recorded in one square in May, a singing male on 2 May in Newland's Brakes (PR) where two pairs successfully bred in boxes, fledging five and six young (DS). Two early autumn migrants were in hawthorns on Brent Hill #33 on 12 Aug (PR).

BLACK REDSTART

Three autumn singles were at Didworthy on 25 Oct (DL), Underhill (adult male) on 31 Oct & 1 Nov (PR, MG) and at Sanderspool #31 on 3 Nov (MH).

REDSTART

Recorded in two squares in May, both in the Glaze Valley. Juveniles on Brent Hill on 3 Jul, below Aish Ridge on 5 Jul and at Dockwell on 26 Jul may have been from local breeding population, but adults on Brent Hill on 1, 17 & 19 Sep were perhaps migrants from further afield (all PR).



Black Redstart male, Underhill, 31 Oct (Peter Reay)

WHINCHAT

Recorded in three squares in May, the lowest since the survey began. The first was above ADR on 3 May. Migrants comprised one at Long-a-traw on 18 Aug and one-two on Brent Hill on 19 Aug and 2, 7 & 13 Sep (all PR).

STONECHAT

Recorded in two squares in Jan, 20 in May and overall, the highest since the survey began. No records from Charford, the only ones away from the moor coming from Brent Hill where recorded on 27 Feb & 19 Mar 2019. Brent Hill records comprised adults on 27 Feb and 19 Mar and adults and juveniles often in family parties between 10 Jul and 20 Oct, with a max of 10 on 10 Oct (all PR).

WHEATEAR

Recorded in eight squares in May. First away from breeding sites were in pasture at Dockwell on 26 Jul and in a bare field near Aish Ridge on 27 Jul. On Brent Hill, one-two were recorded on 19 Aug, 1 Sep & 19 Sep and on 29 Sep two were in a field at Bloody Pool Cross (all PR).

DIPPER

Recorded in eight squares in Jan, five in May and nine overall. A pair bred successfully, with five young fledged, above Shipley (RH). Almost all other records were from the R Avon, but one frequented a small stream crossing a field at Didworthy in Nov (JC) and the Horsebrook at Stidston in Dec (DS).

HOUSE SPARROW

Recorded in 20 squares in Jan, 27 in May and overall; also in 22 out of 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in 11 out of 15 in Oct–Dec.

DUNNOCK

Recorded in 19 squares in Jan, 29 in May and 35 overall; also in 21 out of 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in 12 out of 15 in Oct–Dec.

YELLOW WAGTAIL

At least seven at Overbrent on 27 Aug, and one there on 31st (PR).

GREY WAGTAIL

Recorded in eight squares in Jan, 11 in May and 17 overall; also in two out of 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in four out of 15 in Oct–Dec.

PIED/WHITE WAGTAIL

Recorded in 13 squares in Jan, 14 in May and 22 overall; also in 17 out of 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in nine out of 15 in Oct–Dec. Roost gatherings at Whinfield included 70 on 1 & 8 Jan, 35 on 27 Feb, 38 over Hillside on 28 Feb and 20 in Nov/Dec (RF,SH,PR).

MEADOW PIPIT

Recorded in five squares in Jan, 19 in May and 24 overall, the lowest since the survey began; also in one out of 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in one out of 15 in Oct–Dec. Only recorded in one garden, where 25+ dropped in on 15 Jan before heading up valley (SH). Recorded from 26 Mar to 2 Dec on Brent Hill, one of the few breeding sites away from the moor (PR).

TREE PIPIT

Recorded in six squares in May. The first was near Shipley on 23 Apr, the last near Long-a-Traw on 24 Jul. No records away from the moorland edge.

CHAFFINCH

Recorded in 27 squares in Jan, 42 in May and overall; also in all 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in all 15 in Oct–Dec.

BRAMBLING

Unrecorded in Jan or in any gardens in the Jan–Apr survey, and in only one garden out of 15 in Oct–Dec, one bird in Nov at Aish (HG).

BULLFINCH

Recorded in 10 squares in Jan, 11 in May and 16 overall, the lowest since the survey began; also in 18 out of 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in nine out of 15 in Oct–Dec.

COMMON ROSEFINCH

A juvenile/female on a garden feeder in the village (Avon Close #31) on 19 Nov (JD), was the first for SBP and only the third record for Dartmoor. A rare vagrant from northern Europe in Devon, with one or two records most years, but mostly on Lundy. Record accepted by the Devon Birds Rarities Committee.



Common Rosefinch (left), South Brent, 19 Nov 2019 (John Day)

GREENFINCH

Recorded in four squares in Jan, seven in May and eight overall, as in 2018, the lowest since the survey began; also in 15 out of 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in nine out of 15 in Oct–Dec. A flock of 27 in a bare tree Avonwick at dusk on 25 Dec (PR,PH) was presumably a pre-roost gathering. Max garden count was 12 near Brent Mill in Feb (JW).

LINNET

Recorded in 15 squares in May, none in Jan, and in no gardens. Confirmed breeding at Bloody Pool (DS) where on 9 Jun there was a flock of about 100 (PR), an early date for such a flock which presumably comprised adults and juveniles from the local breeding population. Recorded on Brent Hill from 26 Mar to 19 Sep.

LESSER REDPOLL

Recorded in three squares in May, none in Jan; also in one out of 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in none in Oct–Dec. The most consistent site continues to be below the Avon Dam between dam and quarry, not all of which is in SBP. Up to four, including display flights, were seen from 19 Apr to 29 Jun (PR). A group of six in the same area on 15 Oct (PR), the first autumn record in SBP, may have been migrants. Also recorded at Dockwell Hole on 6 May (PR), on a feeder at White Oxen in May (MA) and in a Didworthy #21 garden on 13 Jun (MW).

CROSSBILL

One flew NW over Stidston #38 on 23 Apr (DS), the first recorded in SBP since 2013.

GOLDFINCH

Recorded in 16 squares in Jan, 34 in May and 36 overall, the highest since the survey began; also in 20 out of 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in 13 out of 15 in Oct–Dec. The largest garden flocks were from near Brent Mill with a max of 30 in Feb (JW) and 70 at Hillside on 13 Oct (SH).

SISKIN

Recorded in five squares in Jan, four in May and six overall; also in 10 out of 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in one out of 15 in Oct–Dec. Very scarce in autumn, the only record was a flock of 10 in roadside hedge at Hillside, briefly, on 14 Nov (SH).

YELLOWHAMMER

Recorded in two squares in Jan, 13 in May and 14 overall; also in four out of 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, and in one out of 15 in Oct–Dec. Garden records in Jan–Apr came from Aish, Avonwick and Didworthy (MK,PH,JB,JC), but

in Oct–Dec only from Didworthy, first seen on 14 Dec (JB). First back on the moor was a pair above the Avon Dam on 27 Feb (JC).

CIRL BUNTING

The fourth SBP record, and third since 2014, was a singing male seen and heard at Bloody Pool Cross #34 on 20 & 22 May (PR).

REED BUNTING

Recorded in two squares in Jan, six in May and eight overall; also in two out of 23 gardens in Jan–Apr, but in none of 15 in Oct–Dec. Winter records included: three at ADR on 19 Jan (PR); and one or two frequenting three different Hillside gardens Jan–Mar (SH,DM, SHa).



Skylark nest (Dave Scott)



Nuthatch nest (Dave Scott)

Table 2. The total number of 1-km squares in which the main species were recorded in SBP during the January and/or May surveys 2014–19.

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Barn Owl	0	0	0	3	1	2
Blackbird	40	41	42	43	45	41
Blackcap	36	31	35	34	32	31
Blue Tit	34	38	36	38	37	39
Bullfinch	29	20	17	26	20	16
Buzzard	36	42	43	39	40	37
Canada Goose	12	7	14	8	13	10
Carrion Crow	50	49	52	50	50	51
Chaffinch	42	42	44	43	42	42
Chiffchaff	33	31	33	34	29	29
Coal Tit	18	24	21	17	19	19
Collared Dove	19	17	23	20	23	22
Cormorant	1	2	3	2	2	3
Cuckoo	14	17	17	12	18	16
Dipper	7	9	9	8	9	9
Dunnock	36	39	37	40	33	35
Fieldfare	6	13	17	17	11	7
Garden Warbler	7	7	9	10	9	9
Goldcrest	15	14	30	24	18	8
Golden Plover	1	1	5	1	4	3
Goldfinch	24	24	31	33	32	36
Goosander	6	2	3	3	1	3
Grasshopper Warbler	1	4	2	0	1	0
Great Black-backed Gull	3	12	2	6	10	2

Table 2 continued	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Gt Spotted Woodpecker	21	22	21	21	18	19
Great Tit	36	39	35	40	38	36
Green Woodpecker	14	15	16	16	11	9
Greenfinch	14	14	23	13	8	8
Grey Heron	9	10	14	14	12	10
Grey Wagtail	14	16	18	17	10	17
Herring Gull	34	28	22	25	26	26
Hobby	2	3	6	1	2	0
House Martin	16	19	19	19	12	10
House Sparrow	27	26	29	29	25	27
Jackdaw	31	37	37	34	35	36
Jay	26	20	22	26	18	21
Kestrel	8	15	15	15	6	7
Kingfisher	2	3	2	2	0	2
Lesser Black-backed Gull	2	3	4	3	3	0
Lesser Redpoll	1	0	0	2	2	3
Linnet	13	15	21	21	16	15
Little Grebe	1	1	2	2	3	4
Long-tailed Tit	16	20	18	19	16	21
Magpie	37	39	40	42	34	38
Mallard	21	18	17	20	10	14
Marsh Tit	8	9	7	5	3	7
Meadow Pipit	26	29	36	29	29	24
Mistle Thrush	20	24	33	24	24	16
Moorhen	5	6	9	7	6	9
Nuthatch	20	23	23	15	18	21
Peregrine	3	4	7	2	1	3
Pheasant	23	30	32	28	35	26
Pied Wagtail	16	27	29	30	19	22
Raven	26	29	31	30	29	33
Red Kite	3	2	2	1	3	1
Redstart	1	5	0	5	3	2
Redwing	22	29	19	29	32	25
Reed Bunting	9	8	8	11	11	8
Ring Ouzel	0	3	0	0	0	0
Robin	41	44	44	44	42	41
Rook	23	20	20	20	21	19
Siskin	6	8	11	7	6	6
Skylark	32	32	36	37	31	35
Snipe	4	13	14	9	7	8
Song Thrush	36	28	33	32	34	37
Sparrowhawk	13	11	16	9	17	10
Spotted Flycatcher	0	1	1	3	1	2
Starling	21	27	17	27	27	24
Stock Dove	17	13	20	20	18	18
Stonechat	9	19	19	18	16	20
Swallow	38	42	46	43	37	31
Swift	13	12	16	18	7	2
Tawny Owl	6	7	10	8	10	8
Tree Pipit	7	6	10	6	9	6
Treecreeper	9	10	13	9	9	10
Wheatear	13	17	12	7	12	9
Whinchat	7	8	8	7	8	3
Whitethroat	13	10	13	18	13	18
Willow Warbler	20	20	22	27	24	24
Woodcock	1	1	3	3	3	7
Woodpigeon	36	39	39	38	40	40
Wren	41	45	48	47	46	49
Yellowhammer	13	17	18	20	17	14

