

KOS News

The Newsletter of the Kent Ornithological Society

Number 529 November 2020



Shore Lark by Chris Bond

- **News & Announcements** ●
- **Fieldfares and Redwings in Kent** ●
- **Bar-tailed Godwits – extraordinary travellers** ●
- **Bird Sightings – SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER** ●
- **Fifty Years Ago** ●

Editorial

We have finally arrived at the last newsletter of 2020, a year which in some ways many would rather forget. Restrictions on travel at both local and global level have resulted in many people re-appraising their birding, often to find new and rewarding experiences closer to home. Nonetheless, for the avid world birder it must have been a bit galling to be stuck in dear old Kent! Mind you, this year has been remarkable for the number and range of good rare and semi-rare sightings particularly through the autumn. Outstanding amongst these was the Masked Shrike at Shuart; needless to say, I did not get to see it, even though I made a determined effort and needed a good dose of pain killers beforehand and a decent double malt as a restorative afterwards! Good to get it back on the county list after the expulsion of the 1905 Woodchurch bird, deleted as part of the Hastings Rarities in 1962. Fortunately for my peace of mind I had managed to study a good number of this charismatic species in Eastern Thrace on September 2019, so I do have notes and sketches in my files to look at on cold lockdown evenings!

Apart from the fact that I am always looking out for birds wherever I am, I have only been out on 'birding days' twenty-eight times this year, managing to amass a total of 166 species so far. One thing that has struck me is the number of extra people out birding, presumably recent converts to the cause. Indeed, some key sites like Oare Marshes seem to be in danger of installing turnstiles and pay-per-view so busy have they become. It is also clear from discussions that many of these newcomers need all the help they can get in spite of sporting some impressive optical equipment. It remains to be seen if they fully engage with our passion for birds, or whether the dark, damp days of winter put them off. Back in the dim and distant past of my motorbiking days we poured scorn on 'fair-weather bikers' even though winter brought more than its fair share of hazards. In my current state of infirmity, I have become a fair-weather birder, sometimes using lockdown restrictions as an excuse. I am very lucky to have a decent garden with good views of open country and a big sky, but I am still a bit miffed that in a year when I spent more time than ever in the garden gazing skyward, I failed to add either White-tailed eagle or Lammergeier to the garden list!

Keep safe!

Good birding

Norman

News and announcements

IMPORTANT NOTICE

. The British trust for Ornithology has suspended all organised survey work for the current season. However, the details of current and future surveys are shown below in case any members are able to collect relevant data safely during the lockdown. This information would still be welcome for KOS archives and can be submitted through normal channels via Local Area Recorders, details on the KOS website.

RARE BREEDING BIRDS IN KENT

The Kent Ornithological Society, like other county bird clubs, coordinates records of rare breeding birds and submits them to the national Rare Birds Breeding Panel (RBBP). However, this is not straightforward. At a time when birders are being exhorted to be careful about publishing records of rare breeding birds on social media, we suspect that many observations are not reported. There are several ways in which you can help monitor rare birds and not risk publicising breeding locations.

1. Ensure you follow the bird watchers code, <https://www.bto.org/sites/default/files/u10/downloads/taking-part/health/bwc.pdf> and do not disturb the bird,
2. Always follow the RBBP guidelines for reporting on social media <http://rbbp.org.uk/>
3. Submit to the KOS database, <http://birdgroups.co.uk/kos/default.asp>, there is an automatic filter, which means that the records are not shown on the website but stored in the database,
4. Submit your records to Birdtrack, there is a similar filter and your observations will be secure.
5. You can e mail in confidence the county recorder Barry Wright umbrellabirds66@gmail.com or the county RBBP coordinator Brian Watmough brianrwat@yahoo.co.uk.

The RBBP <http://rbbp.org.uk/> collects data on the rarer species of birds breeding in the United Kingdom. Its records allow the production of annual totals of breeding pairs for each species on its list. It was formed in 1972 by representatives of the RSPB, the BTO, The Nature Conservancy Council and *British Birds*. The present Panel is made up of representatives of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, RSPB, BTO, three independent members, and a Secretary and a report is published each year in *British Birds* and available on their website. Approximately 160 species are monitored by the RBBP, although the list is reviewed and changing so that in 2019 Cetti's Warbler will no longer be recorded but Turtle Dove is now being considered. Each year details of between twenty and twenty-five species are submitted by the KOS. Records from Kent are collated by the Kent Ornithological Society and submitted to the UK RBBP. These records form the basis for relevant sections in the annual KBR.

For more information refer back to the previous KOS May Newsletter.

Brian Watmough
brianrwat@yahoo.co.uk

APPEAL FOR 2020 BREEDING RECORDS

As a result of Covid-19, many reserve wardens and staff were furloughed during the spring of 2020. One result of this was that the usual monitoring of breeding birds did not take place this year. Despite the closure of hides and visitor centres, it was usually still possible for people to visit these reserves. If anyone has records of confirmed breeding noted during such visits, particularly for species of conservation concern, please can you submit them to the KOS website <http://birdgroups.co.uk/kos/News.asp> or BirdTrack (www.birdtrack.net) etc. These might involve a brood of Pochard or Shoveler, or waders with young, or recently fledged Bearded Tits. Please search your notebooks/blogs etc. All such records will help to assess the 2020 breeding season. Thank you.

KOS TURTLE DOVE SURVEY 2021



Readers will hopefully be aware, from previous newsletters, that the Kent Ornithological Society is planning to survey Turtle Doves in 2021, which is the year that the KOS will be celebrating its 70th year since its founding in 1951.

It has recently been announced that the RSPB, in conjunction with RBBP, Natural England and BTO, also intend to conduct a national survey of Turtle Doves next year.

Following discussion with the national organiser (Simon Wotton), it has been agreed that the Kent survey will continue as planned. Common methodology will be employed with survey squares set by the national survey to align with sampling strategy across other core counties. Kent data will feed into the UK results. However, the Society will use its own online survey design which will also seek to gather records of additional species that are important within the county.

Full details of the survey and how to take part will be communicated in late winter/spring, but anyone wishing to volunteer should contact either:

Murray Orchard (murray.orchard@live.co.uk)
Brian Watmough (brianrwat@yahoo.co.uk)
or **Nicole Khan (nicole.khan@rspb.org.uk)**

LOW-TIDE COUNTS THE SWALE

Are you able to spend two or three hours a month between November and February to help monitor waterbirds on The Swale? If so, please read on and hopefully contact me to volunteer.

Throughout the year teams of birders monitor the numbers of birds using our estuaries as part of the Wetland Bird Survey (WEBS) organised by the BTO. These roost counts, which have been made for nearly fifty years, estimate the numbers of birds using the estuaries and show that the Swale regularly supports more than 60,000 waterbirds. However, these counts do not tell us which inter-tidal areas are important for the birds.

Low Tide Counts (LTC) are an important tool for monitoring bird populations on estuaries. A national programme is co-ordinated by the BTO as part of the Wetland Birds Survey (WeBS). Ideally LTC are completed every seven years but it is now ten years since the last count on the Swale. Unlike WEBS counts they are not coordinated and can be done any day within the month. The counts aim to record the densities of water birds using inter-tidal and other areas at low tides and are made two hours either side of low tide once a month from November to February.

The Swale is divided into more than 80 different sectors; however, it will be possible to amalgamate some of these sectors and to count several sectors on the same tide. We are especially looking for birders to count the extensive inter-tidal areas between Whitstable and Seasalter and at the eastern end of Sheppey.

Please will you let me know if you will be able to help.

There is more information on Low Tide Counts at <https://www.bto.org/our-science/projects/wetland-bird-survey/taking-part/low-tide-counts-methods>

Brian WATMOUGH

Brianwat@yahoo.co.uk

Surveys

Current surveys are usually posted on the KOS website, for further information please contact Murray Orchard at murray.orchard@live.co.uk

EVENTS AT SANDWICH BAY BIRD OBSERVATORY

The observatory runs a regular series of talks and presentations which, since Corona virus, have been made available on-line via Zoom. Please see the link below to see what is available. <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/sandwichbaybirdobservator/y/>.

The following film made by the observatory about the birds within its recording area may also be of interest to Kent birdwatchers.

A 60 minute film -
'Birds Of Sandwich Bay'

sbbot.org.uk

£11.00
(inc p&p)

On an **8Gb USB** stick
for viewing on most modern
televisions or your computer.

This unique film, in four parts
(winter, spring, summer & autumn)
takes you on a trip around the
Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory
Recording Area showing many of
the species that you may encounter.

To purchase, please transfer **£11.00** to:
SBBOT Bank Account (Ref:-Your Name +USB)
Sort code **30-93-34** Account Number **02785982**
Non-members should email their address to
treasurer@sbbot.org.uk

Kent Breeding Bird Atlas

We still have a modest stock of this useful publication which was well received on its release a couple of years ago. If you do not yet own a copy there will shortly be an opportunity to purchase some of the remainder of the stock at a reduced price. Keep an eye on the KOS web site for further details

Editorial and Records sub-committee

The KOS Editorial & Records Committee would like to hear from any individuals within the membership that would like to join the county rarity panel. Contact Barry Wright or Alan Fossey, (details above)

We would like to encourage members to contribute items or photographs for inclusion in the newsletter, especially regarding birds in Kent. If you are interested, I am always happy to offer advice or assistance to aspiring authors. To facilitate page composition text needs to be presented as a Word document, photos or illustrations as j-peg files.

Norman McCanch (Editor) : nvmccanch@hotmail.com

We like to keep in touch with all our members, so if you change address, email address or phone numbers please remember to inform our membership secretary, Chris Roome. He can be contacted at:

Chris Roome, Rowland House, Station Rd., Staplehurst TN12 0PY

Tel: 01580 891686 e-mail: chrisroome105@icloud.com

FIELDFARES AND REDWING IN KENT



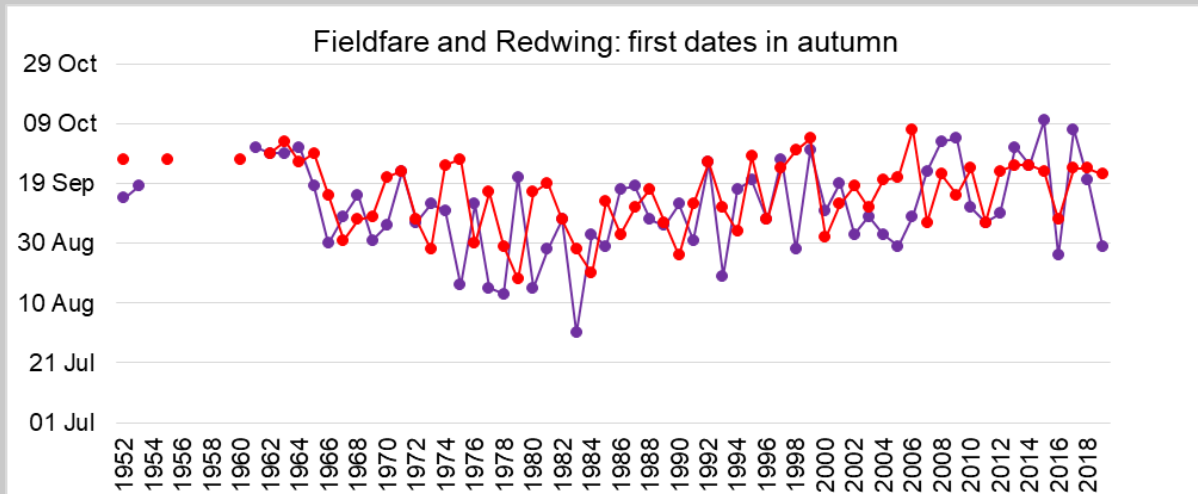
Fieldfare by Richard Hanman

The two thrushes, Fieldfare and Redwing, are perhaps the winter visitors that birders most look out for, to mark the arrival of the new season, as they do for Swallow and Cuckoo in spring. Non-birders, however, who will often know what a Swallow looks like or how a Cuckoo sounds, can be unaware of the two thrushes, even though they're very numerous and – to birders – obvious.

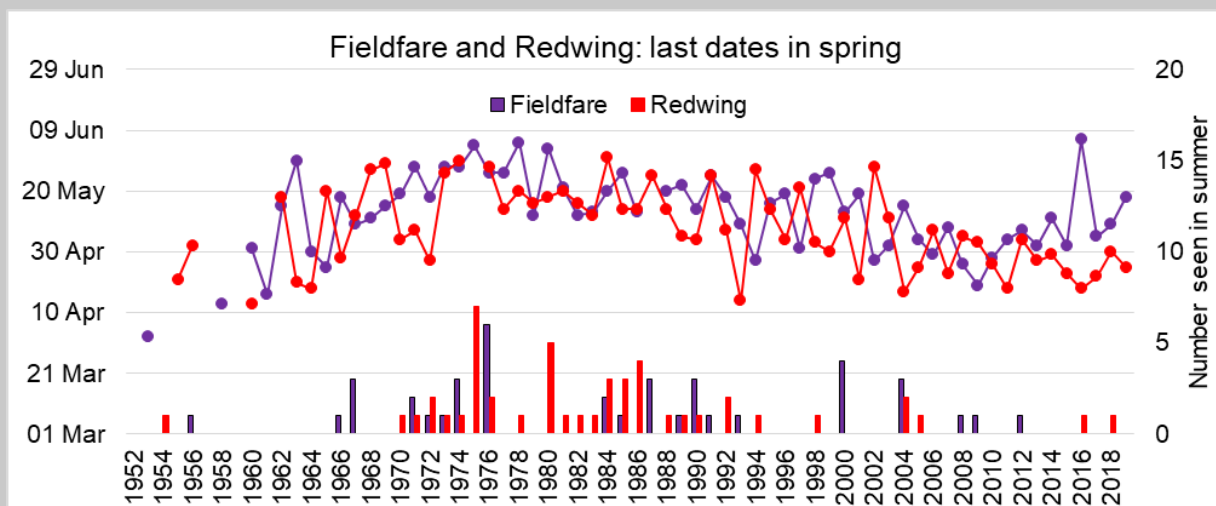
This short article looks at the comings and goings, the ups and downs of these two attractive birds. It is based mainly on the accounts provided by the annual Kent Bird Reports. Because those are summaries, sometimes they miss out details that are needed for consistent analysis across the years, but much of the raw data is on record cards that are not currently available for research. However, I believe that the patterns shown here wouldn't change much if all the data were available.

Arrivals and departures

One piece of information that is included in most KBRs (apart from some of the earliest ones) is the date of the first to be seen each autumn, and the last of spring. These 'firsts' and 'lasts' don't, of course, describe the timing of the main passage periods, but they do perhaps indicate how it has changed through the years. On average during 1960-2019, Redwing was noted about four days later and departed about six days earlier than Fieldfare, but the patterns of arrival and departure for the two species are strikingly similar, with the shifts of seasonality moving in parallel.



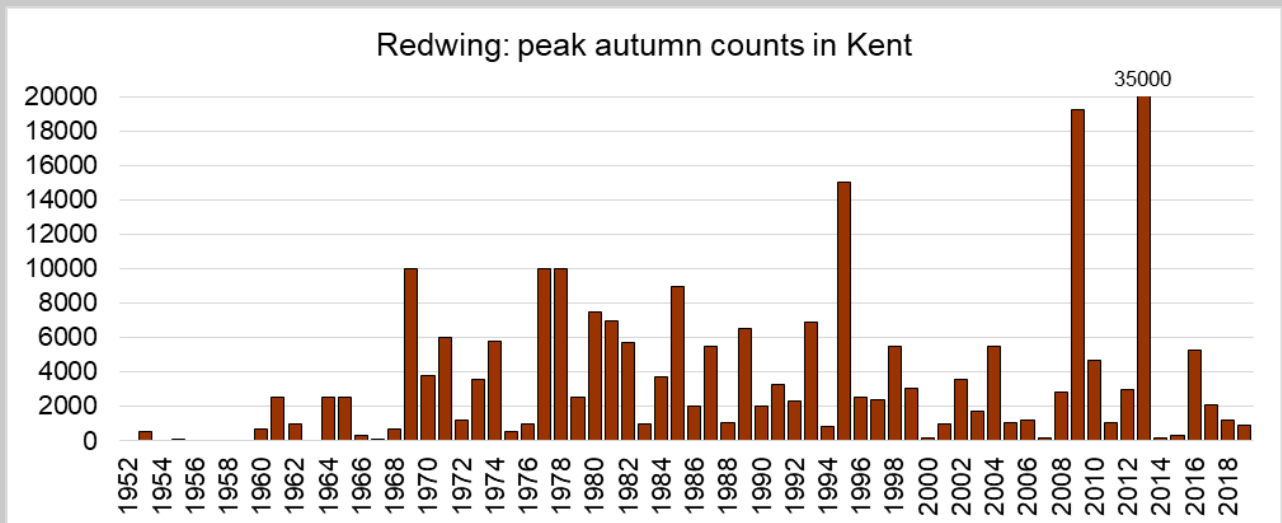
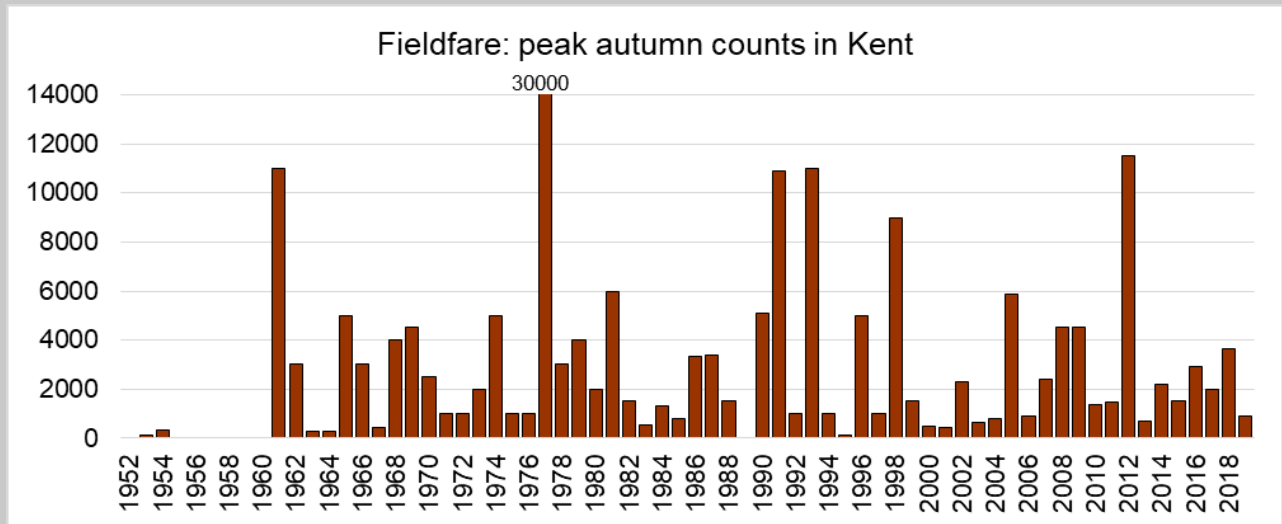
Quite why arrivals moved earlier and departures later, reaching a maximum point around the late 1970s and then gradually returned towards their earlier timing, is an interesting question. Is it something to do with climate, and if so what aspect, or could population size be involved as well? The variation is large. Looking at average first dates, for example, for Fieldfare it was 25th August during 1975-84 but 18th September during 2010-19. The equivalent figures for Redwing were 6th September and 21st September.



The chart of spring dates, above, also shows the number of birds noted in Kent in summer (and excluded from analysis of first and last dates). These were at a peak during the late 1970s and 1980s, when departures were latest and arrivals earliest, and this was when most of the breeding records of Redwing in Kent occurred (the full span of breeding seems to be 1968-1986, but the details of some records remain imprecise, not to say opaque).

Autumn passage

For the rest of this article, I've extracted peak counts for three seasons over a 68 year period. The seasons are autumn (September-November), winter (December-February) and spring (March-May). The birds don't obey the calendar, of course: some of the autumn roost counts may really involve wintering birds, and some February counts will be of passage birds. Furthermore, it's a simplification to select just the one maximum count each year – it doesn't necessarily reflect the overall size of populations, though it's noticeable from reading KBRs that if there is one high count in a season, there will often be several.



Peak autumn counts (note differing y-axis scales) are highly variable, and no doubt are influenced to a large degree by weather conditions. Even ignoring the early years, when there were few observers and compressed KBR accounts, and the odd year like 1989 when the report fails to give a figure, the difference between years is huge. In the period from 1990 onwards, there were seven years with counts of 5,000 or more for Fieldfares and for Redwings, and eight years with peaks under 1,000 for Fieldfare and six for Redwing. Some arrivals have been spectacular: 30,000 Fieldfares arriving at Dungeness on 18th October 1977, 19,000 Redwings moving SW at Pegwell Bay on 31st October 2009, and 35,000 Redwings W at Seabrook on 11th October 2013.

It's not possible to be sure if there is or isn't a trend in the size of passage counts. Certainly for Fieldfare, there's not much suggestion of one. For Redwing, is there perhaps a decline from about 1980, offset by occasional large movements?

We often think of these two thrushes as associating, and as noted above they often arrive and depart at about same time, yet very often the big movements involve only one of the species. During the Seabrook count of around 35,000 Redwings, for example, only four Fieldfares were seen. Winter roosts also can be composed mainly of one species (e.g. Fieldfares at Stodmarsh) but often, especially in earlier times, they contained both.



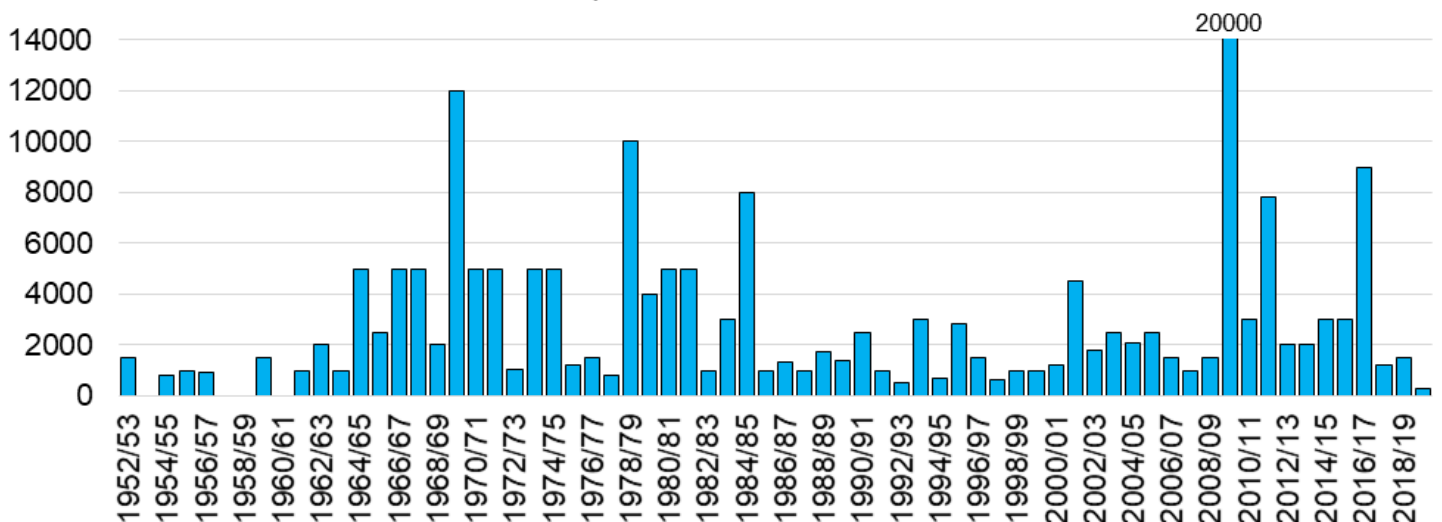
Redwing by Brendan Ryan

Winter numbers

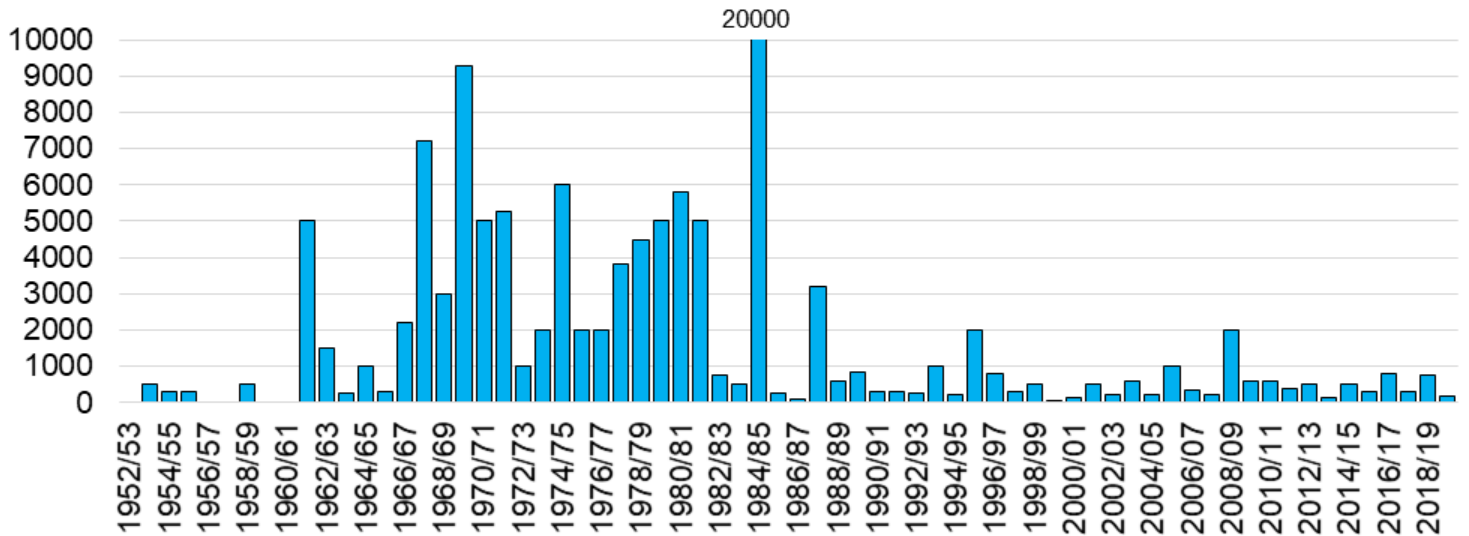
Movement doesn't stop during December-February. The tail-end of autumn passage may be in early December, and cold-weather movements can occur when freezing conditions spread across continental Europe. But many birds will be less mobile, and at this season we can see some difference between Fieldfare and Redwing in the long-term trends.

There are big year-to-year fluctuations, and the average peak count of Fieldfare has fallen a bit over the years. During 1961/62-1989/90 it was 3,536, while during 1990/91-2018/19 it was 2,958 (excluding the huge count in 2010 reduces it to 2,544). For Redwing, however, there's been a much more marked change: the 1961/62-1989/90 average was 3,563 (omitting the one big total takes it to 2,908), while during 1990/91-2018/19 it was only 543.

Fieldfare: peak winter counts in Kent



Redwing: peak winter counts in Kent



Those large counts of 20,000 birds were a cold-weather movement of Redwings at Dungeness on 4th January 1985 and a roost count of Fieldfares at Grove Ferry on 16th January 2010 (again, probably influenced by cold weather).

Other large winter totals of Fieldfare were 12,000 at Bicknor on 6th-7th January 1970 and 10,000 roosting at Newington on 14th January 1979. The second highest winter total for Redwing was 9,300 flying NW at Dover on 12th December 1969. All three of these additional high counts also coincided with cold spells.

So far as Kent is concerned, it's possible that changing observer numbers and focus has affected counts. Almost certainly, the low numbers in the 1950s can be explained by smaller numbers of bird-watchers (and perhaps because fewer people actually counted common birds). Later on, in the 1960s and 1970s, a lot of the high counts came from a couple of roosts, at Newington near Sittingbourne and Elmstone near Wingham, which are now seldom recorded. But the few visits that are made reveal low numbers, so that's probably no more than part of the explanation.

Favoured feeding areas of both species include permanent pastures and, perhaps especially, apple orchards. Many of the big counts of both species are close to fruit-growing areas, where the birds feed on fallen apples and those dumped because they can't be marketed. The amounts of waste fruit may well have fallen – because of more efficient orchard management and growing demand for imperfect fruit for juicing – but even if that is the case, it doesn't explain why one species has been more affected than the other.

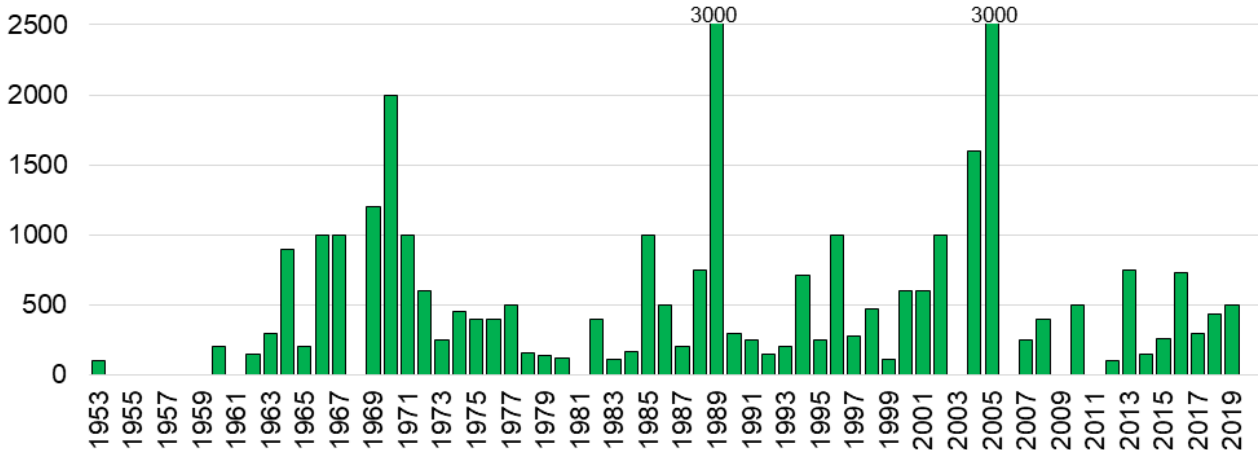
Could it be 'short-stopping', with migrants now able to remain on the continent because winters there are less severe? It could be, but it would be surprising that Redwing showed the effect more than Fieldfare, since they tend to be less able to stand the cold, birds often found dead when caught by a sudden spell of freezing weather.

In fact, the greater decline in Redwing numbers matches what is known about the two species' wider populations. Fieldfare populations are believed to be stable, while Redwings have declined by probably more than 30% since 1980 (BirdLife International). But we don't know what is driving that decline.

Spring passage

Apart from the occasional high count, spring records are less well covered in KBRs than those in autumn and winter. Quite often, it's clear that peak counts are not mentioned if they were not

Fieldfare: peak spring counts in Kent

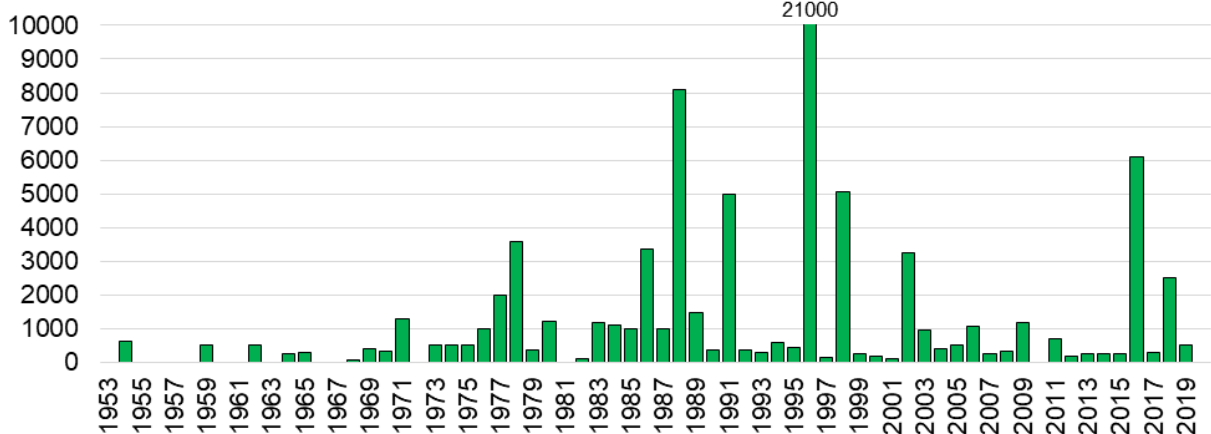


especially large. As a result, it's unlikely that much can be drawn from the charts of peak counts, but I've included them anyway.

The highest totals for Fieldfare at this season (March-May) were 2,000 roosting at Newington on 9th April 1970, a roost of up to 3,000 at Boughton Park in March 1989, and 3,000 at Laddingford on 4th March 2005.

For Redwing, peaks are higher more often – there were nine years when the maximum was 2,000 or more. The highest were 8,100 W at Minnis Bay on 11th March 1988 (part of sustained heavy movement over several days) and the stand-out total of 21,000 W at Swalecliffe on 8th April

Redwing: peak spring counts in Kent



1996 (note that there had already been 7,780 W at St Margaret's Bay on 28th March that year, and the 8th April movement was widespread, including 7,500 W at Minnis Bay).

One feature of the spring counts is worth noting: most of the high Redwing totals fall in the period when its winter counts were relatively low. Could that be an observer effect, or could it be that weather conditions have been more likely to push returning migrants from elsewhere into Kent? The 1996 count came towards the end of a prolonged period of north-easterlies, which could well have led to more migrants from France and Iberia passing through the county than usual.

Conclusions

The very simple form of data extraction used for this article doesn't permit any earth-shattering conclusions, but perhaps it contains some snippets of new information for interested readers (if there are any).

It would be possible to get a slightly better picture of changes over the years by extracting more data from the huge numbers of records submitted to the KOS, but that would be a massive task and not really likely to produce anything much more reliable. The unsystematic nature of records submitted to county bird clubs – dependent on the ever-changing numbers of observers and fashions in birding – constrain their use for long-term monitoring. That's why systematic surveys such as WeBS and BBS are so valuable; their consistent site definition and methodology contribute reliability. It's a shame there's never been a long-term winter equivalent of the BBS, to track wintering bird populations. Unfortunately, it's hard enough to get enough support for the existing surveys without adding another one!

In any case, I'd encourage everyone to take part in these surveys, or at the very least to contribute records through BirdTrack or the KOS online database, so that we can continue to track common birds as well as rarities. And why not try to find a thrush roost, and count the birds as they stream in, chacking and chooking?

Andrew Henderson

Thanks to everyone who has submitted thrush records since 1952, and for help with particular points: Alastair Henderson, Robin Mace, Brendan Ryan and Martyn Wilson.

Bar-tailed Godwits – Extraordinary travellers



Remaining fragment, Bar-tailed Godwit by Norman McCanch

This lanky, beaky and noisy wader is one of my favourite shorebirds. I first identified one on a school natural history society trip to Cliffe in 1965 at the tender age of twelve! Prior to that I had seen this different wader amongst Curlew on the shore near my Grannies house in Pembrokeshire but had no idea what it was. Subsequently I have found them in many places, from the sandy shores of West Africa to a soggy football pitch in an upland village in central Sweden. In most of the places I have enjoyed them they have not been numerous but their subtle autumn biscuit colours are enchanting, while in breeding plumage they are fiery red.

The western subspecies *Limosa lapponica lapponica* breeds on the tundra from northern Scandinavia eastwards into Siberia. Another race *Limosa lapponica baueri* occupies the high Arctic tundra of eastern Siberia and into Alaska. Some of the western race winters in Britain, but most head farther south to the coasts and mangroves of the West African coast.

Most of these western birds wintering in West Africa assemble on the coast of Mauretania as Spring approaches and generally depart from the Banc d'Arguin around the 25th April, then fly non-stop to the Wadden Sea, arriving several days later. There are no recoveries of birds in intervening areas of North Africa or Spain, Portugal or France, which, along with other research shows that spring passage from Mauretania is extremely quick and generally non-stop. (Piersma et al 1990; in BTO Migration Atlas)

These fast-moving birds can provide a significant spectacle along the Kent coast, with Godwit passage at Dungeness sometimes being quite remarkable. This impressive movement at Dungeness was first noted in 1937, when 2,000 flew northeast there between 30th April-2nd May. Passage at Dungeness has proved to be highly concentrated and occasionally spectacular, with day totals over 1,000 being recorded between 19th April-3rd May almost annually in the 1970s. In 1972 there were 3,850 on 26th April, while the following year there was a record spring total of 8,060, including a peak of 4,190, again on 26th April.

More recently numbers have declined somewhat; in 2017 passage at Dungeness was noted from March 23rd to May 26th and totalled 1,732 birds, with a maximum of 614 on April 29th (KBR2017). The following year numbers were higher, with 2,646 birds recorded between March 2nd and May 27th, with a maximum count of 828 on April 29th.

The scale of passage and its rapidity are impressive, but recent research on the eastern subspecies has revealed an extraordinary journey from wintering grounds in New Zealand to breeding sites in Siberia. No godwit in history has commanded as much attention as 'E7' did in 2007 when her entire annual flight from New Zealand to Yalu Jiang, on to Alaska and back to New Zealand was traced by a satellite transmitter implanted in her abdomen. Until then only a very few people believed Bar-tailed Godwits were capable of such enormous non-stop flights. Flights that seem to defy human logic, in both their endurance and distance covered to say nothing of the extraordinary navigational skills such birds must possess.

On 17 March 2007, E7 took off from Miranda and after flying for seven days and nights, arrived at Yalu Jiang having not stopped flying for one moment on the 10,200km journey. This was the longest confirmed non-stop flight by any land bird and in doing so not only showed godwits could fly nonstop to East Asia but all the way to the northern shores of the Yellow Sea in a single flight. E7's last footsteps in New Zealand were at Miranda on the Firth of Thames, her next footsteps were in the mud at YJNNR, two sites already linked with a sister site agreement, nothing could have illustrated this link better. Her amazing flight was tempered with the concern that Yalu Jiang is the most northern refuelling site in East Asia for godwits and that she had bypassed other suitable sites further south. As godwits are known to be very site faithful, Yalu Jiang is almost certainly E7's only regular staging site.

Even more concerning is the fact she spent the next five weeks in and around Site 2 and the mudflats south of Donggang, the area under most development pressure. Should this site become so degraded godwits can't feed there, what will they do? It is extremely unlikely they will go south again looking for food when the urge to continue north to Alaska is very strong. So, will they continue northward with insufficient fuel to reach Alaska or to breed successfully if they get there?

On 1 May 2007, E7 slipped away from Yalu Jiang, unseen by the human eyes that had been looking for her, but watched from space by an orbiting satellite. She flew east then north skirting bad weather to reach the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta in southwest Alaska six days later. Again, she eluded humans

including one from Miranda who was only 30km to the north of her final destination at the time but was unable to reach her location.

After apparently breeding she refuelled on the Kuskokwim Shoals, (the most important staging site for godwits leaving Alaska), before departing southwards, and once again into the record books, this time by flying for eight days and nights non-stop back to Miranda in New Zealand. Here, after 11,760km, she slipped quietly back into a difficult to reach part of the coast and remained there, unseen for several more weeks. This story was picked up by media around the world and was talked about for many weeks.

Of course, what E7 did was just one example of what thousands of godwits do each year as they travel between breeding and non-breeding grounds but surely few people could remain unmoved by E7's story? It is hoped that she and her like are able to continue making this remarkable journey for many years to come.



Bar-tailed Godwit 'E7's Flight path from Miranda to Yalu Jiang, then Alaska and back to Miranda

<http://www.miranda-shorebird.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/E7s-journey.pdf>

This year another godwit made an even more extraordinary journey, completing a non-stop journey flying for 11 days straight from Alaska to New Zealand, traversing a distance of 7,500 miles (12,000 kilometres) without stopping, exceeding the achievements of E7, what more could we learn of these remarkable birds? It is humbling to see how they encompass the planet in their small lives as we struggle to make sense of our own existence.

Norman McCanch

KENT BIRD SIGHTINGS FOR SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 2020 - Chris Hindle

Species printed in **red** require descriptions or good quality photographs to be accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee (species in capital letters) or the KOS Rarities Committee (species in lower case). The results of these committees' deliberations are regularly published on the KOS website.

WEATHER

September began with a ridge of high pressure over the country, but westerlies dominated from the 2nd until the 12th with the high pressure influencing the south at times. It turned hot from the 15th to the 21st with high pressure and plenty of sunshine and 31.3°C recorded at Frittenden on the 15th. The weather turned cooler and more unsettled from the 22nd with strong northerly winds on the 25th and 26th.

October began very unsettled with Storm Alex bringing rain and strong winds. From the 4th to 13th it remained unsettled with rain or showers and with north westerly winds from the 8th. It was more settled from the 14th to 18th with easterly winds, but the weather turned very wet and windy from the 19th onwards with mainly south-westerly winds bringing frequent belts of rain across the country. Some parts of the south-east received 200% of their normal October rain with 106 mm falling at Bishopstone during the month.

WILDFOWL

A **Black Brant** was found at Seasalter on Oct 22nd whilst single **Pale-bellied Brent Geese** flew W past DBO on Oct 8th and 12th and another was seen at South Swale LNR on Oct 24th.



Black Brant by Mike Gould

Seven **Pink-footed Geese** arrived at Swale NNR on Oct 3rd and were seen at Capel Fleet from the 5th-7th whilst there were also two at Scotney on Oct 9th and singles at Stodmarsh on the 10th and Swalecliffe on the 12th. Eleven birds flew N at Reculver on the 15th and there were two at DBO on the 18th.

Four **White-fronted Geese** flew E past Reculver and Grenham Bay and 14 flew E past Foreness on Oct 14th whilst on the 15th there were four at Worth Marshes and two at Grain. Eighteen birds arrived at Swale NNR on Oct 19th and had increased to 25 by the end of the month. There were also 14 birds at Scotney at the end of October.

Four **Whooper Swans** were found at Allhallows on Sept 28th and remained there until at least Oct 23rd.

Up to 58 **Egyptian Geese** were recorded at Dungeness, Bough Beech, Conningbrook, Edenbridge, Seasalter, Cliffe Marshes, Reculver Marshes, Grove Ferry, Cooling Marshes, Shuart, Northward Hill and Nacolts and as many as 27 **Mandarins** were seen at Bough Beech, Eastwell Park, Hayesden, Furnace Pond and Leigh.

In September up to three **Garganey** was seen at Cliffe Pools, Grove Ferry and Dungeness RSPB.

A male **Red-crested Pochard** frequented Cliffe Pools between Sept 12th and the 30th and again on Oct 18th and a male **Scaup** flew N at Sandwich Bay on Sept 27th with other birds seen at Deal on Oct 17th and at Cliffe Pools on the 23rd.

A **Velvet Scoter** flew past Leysdown-on-Sea on Sept 27th and one was seen at Willop Outfall on Sept 30th. During October up to 10 were recorded at Willop Outflow, Grenham Bay, DBO and Harty Ferry.

A **Goosander** was reported from Bough Beech on Oct 3rd.

PARTRIDGE TO CORMORANT

A **Black-throated Diver** was reported from Grenham Bay on Sept 27th and in October one or two birds were recorded from DBO, Grenham Bay, Grain, Botany Bay, Deal, Swalecliffe, Tankerton, Sandwich Bay and Reculver whilst the first **Great Northern Divers** of the autumn were two seen at DBO on Oct 20th with one on the 25th and another at Reculver on the 30th.

A **Leach's Petrel** was reported on the sea off Tankerton on Sept 17th and there were three at Foreness on Sept 26th and others flew E at Minnis Bay on the Sept 27th, W at DBO on Oct 8th and E at Swalecliffe and Grenham Bay on Oct 15th.

Single **Sooty Shearwaters** flew past DBO on Sept 19th and Oct 2nd and 12th with four on Oct 24th. On Oct 31st, two flew past DBO and one flew past Mill Point.

Single **Manx Shearwaters** were seen at Foreness on Sept 14th and at Swalecliffe on the 16th with two at North Foreland on the latter date. There were six at Swalecliffe on Sept 26th and singles at Tankerton on the 26th and 27th. During October, a bird was seen at Samphire Hoe on the 2nd with others at DBO on the 25th and 31st.

Two **Balearic Shearwaters** flew past DBO on Sept 1st with singles there on the 3rd, 9th and 16th and three on the 13th and 16th. One was also seen in the mouth of the Swale at Oare Marshes on Sept 17th and in October two were seen at DBO on the 4th.

Single **Slavonian Grebes** were reported from Minnis Bay on Oct 19th and 20th and at Swalecliffe on the 28th and a **Red-necked Grebe** was seen at Swalecliffe on Sept 24th whilst during these two months there were up to four **Black-necked Grebes** at Dungeness RSPB and one at Lade on the Sept 6th and Oct 5th and 10th.

With the **White Stork** reintroduction scheme at Knepp in Sussex, it is not surprising that single birds were seen at Dungeness, Lade, Strood, Lenham, Brabourne Lees, Worth Marshes, Sandwich, Eastry and Chartham. In addition, a group of 17 flew high over Stone-in-Oxney on Sept 12th and there were four at Bramling on Oct 3rd and three at Scotney on the 11th.



Glossy Ibises by Chris Powell

The immature **Glossy Ibis** first seen at Dungeness RSPB on Aug 9th remained there until Oct 13th when it was joined by another bird until the end of the month. Four were reported from Romney Marsh on Oct 18th and were then seen flying E at Foreness on the 23rd, at Worth Marshes from the 23rd-26th and at Chartham, Oare Marshes and Conyer on the 28th. Another bird was also seen flying SE at Sandwich Bay on the 23rd.

Up to six **Spoonbills** were seen at Stodmarsh, Cliffe Pools, Halstow Marshes, Egypt Bay, Cooling, Dartford, Sandwich, Tankerton, Oare Marshes, Bough Beech and Uplees whilst on Sept 22nd, 14 birds flew S over Oare Marshes.



Spoonbills by Martyn Wilson

Single **Bitterns** were seen at Dungeness RSPB on Sept 6th and 15th, at Oare Marshes on Oct 20th and 29th and at Swale NNR on Oct 26th.

Reports of **Cattle Egrets** continue to increase with up to eight seen at Dungeness RSPB, Stoke, Grain, Allhallows Wouldham, Swale NNR, Romney Marsh, Seasalter, Oare Marshes, Higham, Worth Marshes, Stodmarsh, Walmer and Sandwich Bay. A flock of 27 was also seen at Dungeness RSPB on Sept 17th.

As many as seven **Great White Egrets** were seen at Dungeness RSPB, Hythe, Oare Marshes, Bough Beech, Worth Marshes, Cliffe Pools, Capel-le-Ferne, Wittersham, Stodmarsh, Capel Fleet, Hampton, Riverside CP, Burmarsh, Appledore, Brenzett, Small Hythe, Shuart, Abbotscliffe, Sevenoaks WR, Foreness, Lydd, South Swale LNR and Romney Marsh.

A **Shag** was recorded at Copt Point on Sept 22nd and in October two were seen at Foreness on the 6th with four on the 19th and single birds at Samphire Hoe on the 12th and Swalecliffe on the 17th and two at Sandwich Bay on the 20th.

BIRDS OF PREY

*The wandering, immature **Lammergeier** from the Swiss reintroduction scheme was reported from Fordcombe, Tunbridge Wells on Oct 12th.*



Lammergeier per Matthew Parsler

Single **Ospreys** were recorded from Elmley, Kingsferry Bridge, Oare Marshes, Shuart, Reculver, Bishopstone, Biddenden, Swalecliffe, Dungeness RSPB, Riverside CP, Rainham, Nor Marsh, Faversham, Dover, New Hythe, Funton Creek, Worth, East Malling and Conyer with the final bird at Sandwich Bay on Oct 5th.

During September **Honey Buzzards** were seen at Langdon Cliffs, Staple, Deal, Dungeness RSPB, Sandwich Bay, Foreness, Capel Fleet, South Foreland, Stodmarsh, Naccolt, Cooling Marshes, Copt Point and Worth Marshes.



Honey Buzzard by Alex Perry

One or two **Hen Harriers** were reported from Grove Ferry, Oare Marshes, Shellness, Chattenden, Abbotscliffe, Dungeness RSPB, DBO, Shuart, Uplees, South Foreland, Copt Point, Pegwell Bay, Leysdown-on-Sea, Harty, Sandwich Bay and Reculver.

One or two **Red Kites** were seen at South Foreland, Oare Marshes, Challock, East Peckham, Blean, Chattenden, Chartham, Riverhead, Eastling, Reculver Marshes, Snodland, Elmley, East Malling and Womenswold with single **Black Kites** reported from Small Hythe and Tunbridge Wells on Sept 2nd.

A **White-tailed Eagle** was seen over the sea at Reculver and then circling over Manston on Oct 17th whilst **Rough-legged Buzzards** were reported from Shellness and Graveney Marshes on Oct 3rd and Eastchurch on Oct 6th.

RAILS TO WADERS

An injured **Corn Crane** was found at Pegwell Bay on Sept 30th and another was reported calling at Stodmarsh at 0400 hours on Oct 11th.

Two **Common Cranes** flew over Cliffe Pools on Sept 27th and a **Stone-curlew** was disturbed from the shingle at Dungeness RSPB on Oct 7th.

An adult **American Golden Plover** was identified at Oare Marshes and was also seen at Shellness between Sept 1st and 16th. It seems likely that it was the same bird that was seen at Sandwich Bay from Sept 22nd-24th, at Dungeness RSPB on Sept 29th and Oct 12th, near St Margarets-at-Cliffe on Oct 3rd and back again at Oare Marshes between Oct 14th and 24th.

Two **KENTISH PLOVERS** were reported from Capel Fleet on Sept 8th and two **Dotterel** flew over DBO on Sept 16th with one there on Oct 3rd.

As many as 10 **Curlew Sandpipers** were seen at Oare Marshes, Cliffe Pools, Dungeness RSPB, Minnis Bay, Sandwich Bay, Pegwell Bay, Reculver, Stodmarsh, Shellness, Dartford, Elmley and Seasalter with the last two reported from Oare Marshes on Oct 21st.

The first three **Purple Sandpipers** of the autumn were recorded from Minnis Bay on Sept 29th and subsequently as many as six birds were seen at Foreness, Reculver, DBO and Swalecliffe.

Up to five **Little Stints** were seen at Dungeness RSPB, Oare Marshes, Bough Beech, Cliffe Pools, Bough Beech, Worth Marshes, Sandwich Bay, Pegwell Bay, Minnis Bay and Swale NNR.



Buff-breasted Sandpiper by Alan Pavey

A **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** was identified at Oare Marshes on Sept 7th and two initially very flighty **Pectoral Sandpipers** were seen at Worth Marshes on Sept 7th but stayed there until the 13th with another bird seen at Elmley on Sept 16th.



Pectoral Sandpipers by Chris Bond

The first **Jack Snipe** of the autumn was seen at South Foreland on Sept 29th and during October one was seen at Reculver Marshes on the 18th with four reported from Coombe Bay on the 30th.

A **Grey Phalarope** flew W at Reculver in the morning and spent the afternoon on the sea off the car park on Sept 27th. The next day three were found feeding just offshore at Minnis Bay. One was also seen at DBO on Oct 13th and there was one at Grove Ferry on Oct 26th.

During September one or two **Wood Sandpipers** were seen at Dungeness RSPB, Grove Ferry, Swalecliffe and Worth Marshes.

In September and October up to five **Spotted Redshanks** were seen at Cliffe Pools, Dungeness RSPB, Sandwich Bay, Oare Marshes, Murston, Lower Halstow, Pegwell Bay and Bough Beech.

AUKS TO GULLS

A **Sabine's Gull** was reported from Oare Marshes on Sept 19th and others were seen at Tankerton and Leysdown-in-Sea on Sept 26th and at Oare Marshes and Tankerton on the 27th.

The long staying **BONAPARTE'S GULL** remained at Oare Marshes until at least Sept 13th.

As many as 30 **Little Gulls** were recorded from Dungeness RSPB, Reculver, Swalecliffe, Shellness, Riverside CP, Foreness, Cliftonville, Sandwich Bay, Grenham Bay, Birchington, Walmer and DBO.

Juvenile **Caspian Gulls** were identified at DBO on five dates in September and a first winter bird was reported from Deal Beach on Oct 9th with another at DBO on Oct 14th. There was also a second winter bird at DBO on Oct 25th with first winter birds there from the 26th to the 28th. There were also two first winter birds at Sandwich Bay on the 31st.

During September and October single **Yellow-legged Gulls** were reported from DBO, Sandwich Bay, Tankerton and Foreness.

In September single **Black Terns** were reported from DBO and Shellness and one was seen at Foreness on Oct 14th.

During these two months up to 24 **Great Skuas** were seen at DBO, Reculver, Deal, Shellness, Seasalter, Oare Marshes and Swalecliffe and as many as 45 **Arctic Skuas** were seen at DBO, South Foreland, Oare Marshes, Reculver, Walmer, Deal, Willop Outfall, Foreness, Samphire Hoe and Swalecliffe.



Arctic Skuas by Mike Gould

Two **Pomarine Skuas** were seen from Shellness and Oare Marshes on Sept 25th with a bird at Tankerton on the 26th and one or two at Reculver, Oare Marshes, Grenham Bay and Tankerton on the 27th. One was also seen at DBO on Sept 29th with two the next day. During October there were two at Shellness on the 11th, three at Swalecliffe on the 15th and single birds at DBO on the 26th and 28th. On the 31st, two were seen at DBO with singles at Sandwich Bay and Deal.

A **Long-tailed Skua** flew E at Foreness on Sept 17th and one or two were recorded from Reculver, Shellness and Oare Marshes on Sept 25th, Shellness on the 26th and Reculver, Oare Marshes, Grenham Bay and Tankerton on the 27th.

A **Little Auk** was seen at Sandwich Bay on Oct 16th whilst a **Puffin** was seen off DBO on Oct 31st.

DOVES TO RING-NECKED PARAKEET

A **Long-eared Owl** was found at Sandwich Bay on Oct 3rd and then up to three were seen at Lade, Reculver, Sandwich Bay, DBO and Shuart whilst as many as four **Short-eared Owls** were seen at 30 coastal sites.

A migrant **Nightjar** was seen at DBO on Sept 8th, a **Bee-eater** was seen at Bockhill on Sept 7th and a juvenile **PALLID SWIFT** was identified at North Foreland on Oct 5th.



Wryneck by Paul Cox

A **Wryneck** was found at Swalecliffe on Sept 5th and remained there until the 9th whilst the bird seen at Abbotscliffe on Aug 31st was still there on Sept 10th and another bird was located at Lydden on the 10th. Single birds were seen at Broadstairs and Foreness on Sept 19th and at Abbotscliffe on Sept 29th. In October, a bird was seen at Oare Marshes from Oct 5th-10th with another at Worth Marshes on the 6th.

Up to three **Merlins** were reported from Dungeness, Oare Marshes, Reculver Marshes, Swalecliffe, Bockhill, Foreness, Cliffe Pools, Sandwich Bay, Bough Beech, West Hythe, Chetney, South Foreland, Nonington, Seaton, Botolph's Bridge and Conyer.

SHRIKES TO HIRUNDINES

A **Great Grey Shrike** was reported from Bough Beech on Oct 7th with others seen at Worth Marshes from Oct 17th-31st and at Capel Fleet area from 19th-31st.

The **Red-backed Shrike** found at Abbotscliffe on Aug 31st was still there on Sept 1st and others were seen at Pegwell Bay on the Sept 1st, Worth Marshes on Sept 2nd and 3rd and at Capel-le-Ferne on Sept 7th. During October, a bird frequented Littlestone Golf Course between the 10th and the 29th.

A first winter **MASKED SHRIKE** found at Shuart on Oct 17th was a new species for Kent and only the fifth for the UK and was admired by hundreds of visiting birders. It was still present the next day.



Masked Shrike by John van der Dol

Up to nine **Ravens** were seen at Bough Beech, Goudhurst, Cliffe Pools, Bockhill, Wouldham, Conyer, Sandwich Bay, Lympne, Bourne Park, Seaton, Bishopstone, Ebbsfleet, Throwley Forstal, Maidstone, Bekesbourne, Minnis Bay, Newnham, Furnace Pond, Newington, Nonington, Boughton Monchelsea, Shepherdswell and Oare Marshes.

A **Woodlark** was seen at DBO on Oct 7th with two there on the 9th. On the Oct 10th there were two at West Hythe and single birds at Foreness and Walmer and the next day there was one at Marden with another at DBO on the 12th. One flew W at Stuart Farm on Oct 15th, there were also three at Langdon Bay on the 16th and two at Bockhill on the 17th. On Oct 23rd there were six at DBO and one at Foreness.

A **Shore Lark** was found at St Mary's Bay on Oct 23rd and remained there until the 25th and a **Red-rumped Swallow** flew NE at North Foreland on Sept 22nd and a juvenile was reported from Bockhill on Oct 7th.



Shore Lark by Alison Borlase

CETTI'S WARBLER TO WHEATEARS

As many as four **Grasshopper Warblers** were seen at Bockhill with single birds at Shuart, Abbotscliffe, South Foreland, Western Heights, Aycliff and Conyer with the last bird recorded from Swalecliffe on Oct 5th.



Grasshopper Warbler by Brendan Ryan

Single **Siberian Chiffchaffs** were seen at Shuart on Oct 16th, Bockhill on the 17th, Chamber's Wall on the 19th and Sandwich Bay on the 27th whilst a **Wood Warbler** was found at DBO on Sept 5th.

Single **Dusky Warblers** were seen at South Foreland and Bockhill on Oct 16th and at Sandwich Bay and Reculver on the 17th, Chamber's Wall on the 17th and 18th and at Shuart on Oct 18th. Two birds were also recorded from Shuart on the 23rd when one was ringed and the other seen and heard close by. The unringed bird still present on the 31st.



Dusky Warbler by Chris Hindle

A **Radde's Warbler** found on Worth Marshes on Oct 7th was still there the next day and another was seen briefly and photographed at Shuart on the 14th. A **Pallas's Warbler** was seen at Foreness on Oct 3rd and others were seen at Langdon Bay on Oct 14th and 15th and at Leysdown-on-Sea on the 14th and 18th. On Oct 16th, one was ringed at DBO and others were seen at Sandwich Bay, Foreness and Reculver. The Sandwich Bay bird was also seen the next day when it was ringed whilst the Reculver bird was also refound and other birds were reported from nearby Chamber's Wall and Monkton NR.



Pallas Warbler by Russ Blackman

The first **Yellow-browed Warbler** of the autumn was identified at Kingsdown on Sept 20th after which up to three were reported from Dungeness, Sandwich Bay, Shuart, Reculver, Kingsgate, Courtstairs Park, Ramsgate, Broadstairs, Seasalter, Stodmarsh, Chamber's Wall, Kingsdown, Grain, Faversham, Leysdown-on-Sea, Langdon Cliffs, Whitstable, Foreness, Walmer, North Foreland, Folkestone, Foreness, Cliftonville, South Foreland, Bockhill, Dymchurch, Oldstairs, Higham, Pegwell Bay, Herne Bay and Worth.



Yellow-browed Warbler by Chris Powell

An **ARCTIC WARBLER** was reported from Courtstairs Park, Ramsgate on Sept 20th and remained there until the 22nd. If it is accepted by the BBRC it will be the sixth record of this species for Kent

An immature **Barred Warbler** was found on Worth Marshes on Sept 8th where it remained until the 10th and the first **Dartford Warbler** of the autumn was found at Coldharbour, Reculver on Sept 29th after which one or two birds were seen at Dungeness, Oare Marshes, Grove Ferry, Shuart Farm, Langdon Hole, Fan Bay, Sandwich Bay, Swalecliffe and Lade.

During September and October up to three **Firecrests** were reported from DBO, Langdon Hole, Reculver, Netherhale, Tunbridge Wells, Samphire Hoe and Bockhill.

A **SHORT-TOED TREECREEPER** was identified at the Old Lighthouse, Dungeness on October 14th. This is the fourth record at Dungeness this year.

After the first returning **Ring Ouzel** was seen at Ramsgate on Sept 19th as many as 17 birds were seen at Dungeness, Reculver Marshes, Aycliff, Abbotscliffe, Allhallows, Minnis Bay, Pegwell Bay, Copt Point, Bockhill, Foreness, Grain, Chartham, Samphire Hoe, Folkestone, Shuart, Swanscombe, Langdon Cliffs, Marden, Swalecliffe, Warden Point and South Foreland.

A **Red-flanked Bluetail** was found at DBO on Oct 14th and was a new species for the Observatory and one was also found at Northdown Park the next day.



Pied Flycatcher by Nick Smith

During September and October up to four **Pied Flycatchers** were recorded at DBO, Bockhill, Sandwich Bay, North Foreland, Worth Marshes, Whiteness, Pegwell Bay, South Foreland, Birchington, Northdown Park, Ramsgate, Whitfield, Nethergong, Rede Common, Walmer, Shuart, Courtstairs, Warden Point, Kingsdown, Langdon, Foreness and Abbotscliffe.

As many as 10 **Black Redstarts** were seen at Dungeness with smaller numbers at Ramsgate, Bockhill, Nickoll's Quarry, Warden Point, Reculver, West Malling, Foreness, Brooksend, Mereworth Woods, Sandwich Bay, Seasalter, South Swale LNR, Swalecliffe and Langdon Cliffs.

An **EASTERN STONECHAT** was reported from North Foreland on Oct 15th.

DUNNOCK TO BUNTINGS

A **Richard's Pipit** was seen at Swalecliffe on Oct 7th with others at Worth Marshes on the 17th and Seasalter and Sandwich Bay on the 26th whilst a **RED-THROATED PIPIT** was seen and heard calling as it flew over Sandwich Bay on Oct 3rd.

The first **Water Pipit** of the autumn was recorded at Wouldham on Oct 19th after which up to three were seen at Grove Ferry, Worth Marshes and Dungeness RSPB.

Single **Hawfinches** were seen at Shadoxhurst on Sept 6th, at Hadlow on the 11th, at Cliffe on the 21st and Copt Point on the 22nd. In October single birds were seen at Sandwich Bay, Ash, Bockhill, Northward Hill and Foreness.

A **Twite** was seen at Foreness on Oct 16th.

Two **Common/Mealy Redpolls** were ringed at DBO on Sept 30th with singles on Oct 16th and 17th and two others were ringed at Sandwich Bay on Oct 12th with one there on the 20th. One was also recorded from Northward Hill on Oct 23rd.

There was an excellent passage of **Crossbills** during these two months with flocks passing through almost daily and up to 69 recorded at Shuart, Reculver, DBO, Sandwich Bay, Bockhill, South Foreland, Abbotscliffe, Clowes Wood, Aycliff, Shuart, Biddenden, Ramsgate, Swalecliffe, Shingleton, Seabrook, Cliffe, East Malling, Snodland, Birling, Downe, Knole Park, Lympne, Lydd Ranges, Saltwood and Langdon Cliffs and there were also high numbers of **Siskins** moving through Kent during September and October with peak counts of 3,175 at Abbotscliffe and at least 4,000 at Sandwich Bay on the Sept 28th.

An **Ortolan Bunting** was sound recorded flying over Sandwich Bay on the night of Sept 15th and up to five **Lapland Buntings** were recorded from Reculver, Lade, Foreness, North Foreland, Shellness, Langdon Hole, Bockhill, Kingsgate, Dungeness, Littlestone-on-Sea and South Foreland.

The first **Snow Bunting** of the autumn was seen at Sandwich Bay on Oct 3rd and subsequently single birds were seen at Coldharbour, Pegwell Bay, St Mary's Bay, Seasalter and Sandwich Bay.

DBO = Dungeness Bird Observatory **BBRC** = British Birds Rarities Committee
RSPB = Royal Society for the Protection of Birds **BOU** = British Ornithological Union
"The Patch" = the warm water outflow from Dungeness Nuclear Power Station
NNR=National Nature Reserve **NR**=Nature Reserve **LNR**=Local Nature Reserve
FC = Field Centre **WR** = Wildlife Reserve **GP** = Gravel Pits **CP** = Country Park

CONTRIBUTORS

This summary owes much to the contributors to the various sites in "Latest Sightings" on the KOS Website at www.kentos.org.uk, KOSForum, Twitter and the RBA Hotline.

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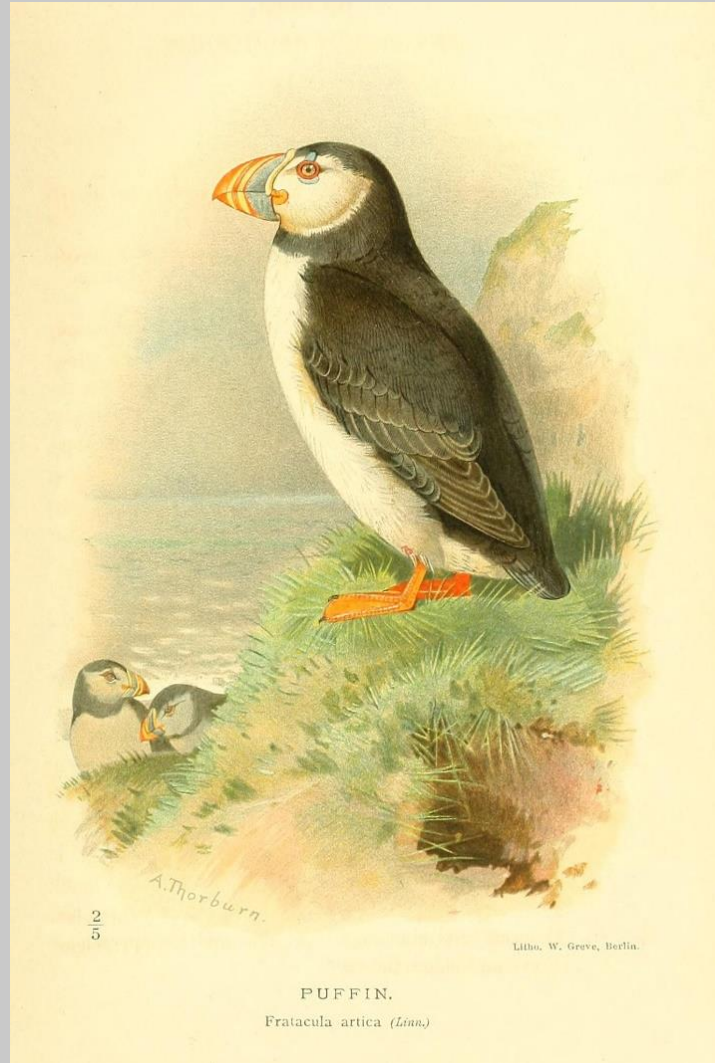
Please send records for this review to:

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Records sent to me may not all be used for this report as I try to extract the more interesting sightings, however all records are equally important and I forward them to the appropriate Area Recorders who enter them all onto the KOS database

Fifty Years Ago.



Puffin by Archibald Thorburn (PDI)

. There was a marked movement of divers on November 7th, which was observed off Sheppey, North Foreland and at Sandwich Bay and a small movement of auks in the Thames Estuary included four **Puffins**.

KBR 1970
Norman McCanch