

**Notes on birds in the Severn and Avon Vales (the “Severn Hams”),
mainly Gloucestershire
July – September 2006**

General introduction

The main sites are (from the north):

- Longdon Marsh (Worcs), a nearly enclosed basin north of the M50 motorway, flowing via the Longdon Brook to the Severn above Tewkesbury. Few records available for this period.
- Avon Meadows (on either side of the Avon north of Tewkesbury), along the border between Gloucestershire and Worcestershire, and including: the restored gravel pits at Bredon’s Hardwick (Worcs); Upham Meadow and Summer Leasow (sometimes called the “Great Hay Meadow”) at Twynning (Glos); Rectory Farm Meadows, across the Avon from Upham Meadow (Worcs); Strensham Pits, sludge pools below the waterworks at Strensham (Worcs); further north along the Avon is Gwen Finch Reserve near Nafford (Worcs), an area of shallow lakes by the Avon. Just to the east is Kemerton Lake (Worcs), a restored gravel pit in the valley of the Carrant Brook, which flows through Cowfield Marsh into the Avon just above Tewkesbury.
- The “Severn Hams” between Tewkesbury and Gloucester, in which the main wetland areas are: Ashleworth and Hasfield Hams; Coombe Hill Canal and Meadows (including Cobney Meadows at the western end); and the Leigh Meadows alongside the River Chelt and Leigh Brook above Wainlodes; Barrow Ponds are beside the Chelt, east of the A 38. Ashleworth Ham and Coombe Hill are Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust reserves, and are particularly well-watched. This area also includes: the Severn Ham at Tewkesbury; the Severn between Lower Lode and Haw Bridge; and the Severn from Wainlodes, past Ashleworth Quay and Sandhurst, to Gloucester. The River Leadon flows into the Severn just above Gloucester, but its valley, extending back past Newent, has been little prospected. Near Sandhurst and Maisemore there are a number of abandoned overgrown riverside brick pits.
- Sites on the edge of urban Gloucester and once flood meadow: Port Ham and Castlemeads on Alney Island, Sudmeadow, and the Gloucester Landfill Site (GLS). Port Ham has recently been restored and some shallow scrapes dug; at the southern end of Port Ham is Lower Parting where the two arms of the Severn meet again; Sudmeadow is immediately south of Lower Parting; GLS attracts large numbers of gulls, and has a pond attractive to passage and some resident waterbirds. Port Ham seems to have been better watched than before in this period.
- Minsterworth Ham, on the west bank of the Severn below Gloucester. Few records available for this period.
- Walmore Common, on the west bank of the Severn below Gloucester; also the little marsh at Rodley, west of Walmore, along the stream west of Boxbush Farm.
- Elmore Back, on the east bank of the Severn below Gloucester, opposite Walmore. Few records available for this period.

Most of these sites are marshes which flood when the level of the Severn is high (either because of water coming down from North Wales, or because of high tides downstream; or more often a combination of both), thus preventing local streams from reaching the Severn, so that they back flood. When there is a major Severn flood, with water coming over the flood banks along the river, there may be extensive floods over the whole floodplain area. The major Severn tributary, the Avon, does not have flood banks in many places and so floods easily above Tewkesbury. The River Chelt holds running water, and is small enough to have muddy edges and mud banks. Coombe Hill Canal is a long disused and overgrown canal, which runs through the centre of Coombe Hill Meadows. Bredon’s Hardwick gravel pits, Mythe Hook, Sandhurst and Maisemore brick pits, and Walham Pools are all artificial excavations in the floodplain or along the rivers. Barrow Ponds are created by the artificial damming of a small tributary of the Chelt.

Weather and flooding: general

Heat-wave in July with minimal rainfall, the hottest July on record at national level. August on the other hand was relatively cool (though there have been 65 cooler Augusts in the last 100 years); August

was also wetter than average nationally, though southwest England and South Wales only had 68% of the normal monthly rainfall. Heat-wave conditions again in September.

Conditions at the main sites

Upham Meadow, Twyning: Hay all cut south of motorway by 11 July, but the lowest lying are north of motorway still uncut on this late date.

Ashleworth/Hasfield: Water levels remained low throughout the summer. Hay cutting began on Hasfield section of SSSI by 8 July, cutting on GWT began 20 July; very rapid regrowth of grass in September. Constant Effort Site Ringing continued here throughout the period, though high catches of passing juveniles often encountered in previous years in July, did not materialize this year.

Coombe Hill: Water levels in the scrapes and Long Pool were higher than in previous years, and lasted throughout the period, creating conditions attractive to breeding birds and waders on southward passage; this was no doubt due to the sluice on the Deerhurst Parish Drain where it meets the Severn at Wainlodes, which prevented outflow to the Severn. Hay cut on GWT reserve in mid July, with aftermath grazing by cattle and sheep; vegetation cut round scrapes on 22 September.

Leigh Meadows: Remained pretty dry throughout period.

Walmore Common: Remained pretty dry throughout period.

Bird records

Grebes

Little Grebe: Not often recorded in summer because water levels normally drop fast, but seems to have bred (probably for the first time ever) at Coombe Hill, thanks to higher summer water levels in scrapes and Long Pool. At Nafford, one on 21 September. At Coombe Hill, a juvenile on scrapes in mid-August, following report of adults with chicks; one or two on various dates through September.

Great Crested Grebe: Little sign of breeding except perhaps at Bredon's Hardwick where there were nine on 13 July, four on 4 August, two on 28 September. One on Severn at Lower Lode on 16 August.

Cormorant

Cormorant: Main loafing area in recent years has been Bredon's Hardwick, where maxima recorded were nine on 13 July, 19 on 27 August, eleven on 21 September. But it is suspected, from observations of birds flying downstream in the evening, that they may be roosting at Barrow Ponds. At Lower Lode, tight flock flying downstream at dusk on 11 July; at Haw Bridge, two flying downstream in evening on 16 July turned towards Barrow Ponds

Hérons and Egrets

Little Egret: Over the past few years, up to ten have occurred at Coombe Hill in summer. Such records continued by day this year, with a July maximum of ten on 27 & 29 July, an August maximum of four on 8 August, and a September maximum of two on 16 September; few evening records, so they may be roosting elsewhere. Few records from Ashleworth Ham: two on 28 July, one on 28 September. A lot more records from Port Ham this year, with nine on 31 July, one on 20 August, one on 19 September – birds from Coombe Hill? No continuation of the April records from Walmore.

Grey Heron: Usual summer/autumn records of small numbers, after the breeding season, widely spread throughout the period, with no very noticeable peaks. At Bredon's Hardwick, up to three from July to September. At Upham Meadow, 2 or 3 on 11 July. At Lower Lode, one on 11 July. At Ashleworth, one or two in July and August. At Coombe Hill, one or two throughout the period, with seven on 20 July and eight on 21 July; one catching large coarse fish in scrapes on 26 August.

Swans

Mute Swan: Most observations related to pairs that had bred locally and were now accompanying their offspring; few non-breeding flocks (most go to Slimbridge). At Nafford, four (presumably breeding) adults with three cygnets on 11 August and 21 September. At Upham Meadow, five non breeders on 11 July. On Avon at Twyning, pair with five cygnets on 11 July. At Severn at Lower Lode, two or three non-breeders on 11 July. At Ashleworth the pair that bred, with three cygnets, on 27 August. At Coombe Hill, the pair that nested by the Wharf were on Deerhurst Parish Drain with four cygnets on 15 July but only one cygnet on 30 September; some non-breeders without cygnets at Coombe Hill: six in 20 July, four in 19 August, 11 on 30 September.

Geese

Greylag Goose: Only small numbers breed locally, but more and more are now coming to winter. At Bredon's Hardwick, where goslings had been seen in May, up to eight from July to September. At Coombe Hill, a group of 60, presumably birds that had recently arrived, from 19 September onwards.

Canada Goose: Again, only small numbers breed locally, but small flocks summer, and many more move in (apparently from higher up the Avon) to winter. At Bredon's Hardwick, where goslings were noted in May, 35 on 5 July, 20 on 11 July, 50 on 11 August, 65 on 21 September. At Upham Meadow, about 20, including one family with six goslings, on 11 July. At Coombe Hill, no sign of breeding but the small summering group built up from 11 on 20 July, to 60 on 29 August, with 35 on 2 September.

Ducks

Shelduck: Clearly 2006 was a poor summer in the vales for this species. The small numbers seen in May and June tailed off and the only records were at Coombe Hill: an immature on 19 & 29 August.

Mandarin Duck: A female on the Severn at Haw Bridge on 28 July.

Surface-feeding ducks: Few records in summer of this group of birds; the main interest is the date of return, quite early in Teal and Shoveler.

Wigeon: A couple of birds may actually have summered, and returning winter visitors occurred from late September. At Bredon's Hardwick, an eclipse male on 27 July, then 75 from 21 September. At Ashleworth, two on 1 July and one on 18 July may have summered. At Coombe Hill, one on 29 August, up to eight on 16 September, 20 on 30 September.

Gadwall: At Nafford, two on 7 July. At Coombe Hill, one on 2 September._

Teal: Good numbers on the scrapes at Coombe Hill, still holding water, from late July. At Nafford, 39 on 28 September. At Coombe Hill, four on 20 July were the first of the autumn, then up to 11 in August, up to 20 throughout September, with 40 on 30 September.

Mallard: Still some birds with ducklings in July. At Bredon's Hardwick, maxima were 40 in July, 25 in August, 25 in 21 September. At Upham Meadow, ten on 11 July. At Lower Lode brickpits, 40 on 15 July. On the Severn by Lower Lode, 20 on 11 July, a female with two ducklings on 15 July, 100 on 18 August. At Haw Bridge, 20, including a family with ducklings, on 28 July. At Ashleworth, 10 on 27 August. At Coombe Hill, 40 on 15 July included three females with medium sized ducklings on the Long Pool; 70 on 20 July including 2-3 females with ducklings, 20 on 19 August, 60 on 2 September.

Pintail: At Bredon's Hardwick, one on 18 July.

Garganey: Rarely recorded in the vales in autumn, but at Coombe Hill, the scrapes, dry in previous years, attracted a number of birds of on return passage, one on 12 August, two (a male and a juvenile) on 19 August, a female or juvenile, probably the same bird from 22 August to 23 September.

Shoveler: Noted only on the scrapes at Coombe Hill, where numbers of returning birds built up rather more slowly than Teal: one on 12 August, two on 15 August, three on 9 September, six on 19 September, 12 on 23 September, nine on 30 September.

Diving ducks: Few records.

Pochard: At Coombe Hill, one on 17 August.

Tufted Duck: Wet conditions in the scrapes and Long Pool at Coombe Hill attracted two pairs to breed, a rare event in the vales, and probably a first for Coombe Hill. At Bredon's Hardwick, three on 5 July. At Coombe Hill, a male twice in early July, and one on the Severn nearby at Haw Bridge on 15 July; then a female with eight downy ducklings on the scrapes from 12 to 29 July, and another female with eight ducklings on the Long Pool on 29 July; in August, two females with slightly less ducklings through most of August; eight birds on 2 September, two on 6 & 9 September.

Raptors

Sparrowhawk: An adult female was seen chasing Sand Martin at the Lower Lode colony on 18 August, and was later mist-netted. One or two noted regularly at Coombe Hill in August and September. One at Port Ham on 23 July

Buzzard: Many records. At Upham Meadow, one on 11 July. At Ashleworth and Coombe Hill, one or two seen regularly in July and August.

Osprey: A bird stayed for several days at Bredon's Hardwick from about 13 September, and flew into Gloucestershire on 16 September (Shothunger) and 17 September (Twynning).

Kestrel: Under-recorded.

Hobby: Birds in July and August may have been nesting in the vales. At Tewkesbury, one round school on morning of 22 July. At Port Ham, one on 23 July. At Lower Lode, one chasing Sand Martins over the riverside colony on 16 August, one adult mist-netted there on 18 August. At Ashleworth, one flew over on 27 August. At Walmore, singles on 20 August and on 17 September.

Peregrine: Still recorded, even in late summer; non-breeders or off duty birds? At Leigh Meadows, one on 11 July. At Port Ham one on 23 July. At Ashleworth, one on 8 August, one flying over on 30 September.

Gamebirds and Rails

Quail: As in early summer, no records in this period.

Water Rail: Only records are at Coombe Hill: one heard in Long Pool on 19 August and 6 September.

Corncrake: At Port Ham, one flushed on 12 September, the second recent Severn Vale record of this once familiar species.

Spotted Crake: The early summer absence continued.

Moorhen: Widespread, but most records from Coombe Hill, where it clearly breeds: at least ten on Long Pool on 15 July included several full grown juveniles; 20+ on 19 August, including not fully grown juveniles; 20 on 26 August, 10 on 30 September.

Coot: At Nafford, a couple in August and September. At Bredon's Hardwick, 25 on 18 July. At Lower Lode pits, 40 including three or four families with young, on 15 July. At Coombe Hill, up to half a dozen in July with two young on 22 July and 29 July; juveniles seen on 7 August; up to ten in August, two or three on 2 September.

Waders

Some breeding waders like Lapwing and Redshank have finished their breeding activities by late June, others like Oystercatcher and Curlew may still be engaged in breeding in early July. From late June, the first return migrants appear, and this year there was a good showing (especially on beaches along the Severn, at Coombe Hill and at Port Ham) of passage species, notably Greenshank, Green and Common Sandpiper.

Oystercatcher: At Bredon's Hardwick, the replacement nest first noted on 15 June, was tended by an adult with a half grown chick on 11 July, three adults with one young on 13 July, the young bird being seen to 11 August.

Little Ringed Plover: At Coombe Hill, one on 9 September, no doubt a migrant.

Ringed Plover: Migrants at Coombe Hill included a juvenile on 22 July and another bird on 8 September.

Lapwing: No further breeding activity in July after a breeding season disrupted by flooding in April and May; all records are of post-breeding flocks. At Bredon's Hardwick, monthly maxima of 72 on 18 July, 90 on 27 August, 60 on 28 September. At Coombe Hill, maxima of 180 on 5 July (with a roosting flock of 45 non-breeding migrants on the scrape on the evening of 12 July), 40+ on 7 August, 15 on 2 September.

Dunlin: Odd birds passing through Coombe Hill: six on 5 August, one on 22 August, two on 9 September.

Jack Snipe: The first one of the winter at Coombe Hill on 30 September.

Snipe: Once again, no breeding had been recorded earlier, though a presumed returning migrant was found as early as 18 June at Coombe Hill; all records from July are considered as passage migrants or winter visitors. At Bredon's Hardwick, three on 28 September. At Coombe Hill, one flew over high on evening of 12 July, two on 22 July, as many as 15 on 27 July, one on 29 July; up to six throughout August; small numbers early September, then 15 on 22 & 30 September. At Walmore, three on 17 September.

Black-tailed Godwit: Single birds, all no doubt migrants: at Bredon's Hardwick on 27 July and 28 September; at Coombe Hill on 1 July, 5 & 7 August, 27 & 29 August and 2 September.

Curlew: Seems to have survived early summer flooding better than other breeding waders, and young birds reported from Upton Ham and Upham Meadow; no sign of last year's sizable flocks of failed breeders in cut hayfields. At Bredon's Hardwick, one in grazed field on 11 July; on pits one on 5 and 18 July. At Upham Meadow, five, including one young of the year just able to fly, on 11 July. On Avon Meadows by Fleet Lane on 11 July, three on hayfield, no sign of wing-moult. At Coombe Hill, one still coming to roost on scrapes on 12 July, and unusually a single (same bird??) was recorded from 21 July, throughout August and on 2 & 23 September. At Leigh Meadows deserted by 12 July.

Whimbrel: None recorded on passage this autumn; more often seen on spring passage.

Spotted Redshank: None recorded among other Tringa species

Redshank: Breeding birds had deserted Upham Meadow by 11 July and Leigh Meadows by 12 July. No sign of through passage with other Tringa species.

Greenshank: More than usual recorded on passage, the wet scrapes at Coombe Hill once again proving an attraction. At Nafford, one on 18 August. At Lower Lode, one on beach by Severn on 16 August. At Coombe Hill, singles on 22 & 29 July, two on 5 August, one on 8 August, three on 19 August, one on 22 August. At Port Ham, singles on 20 August and 2, 16 & 19 September. At Lower Parting, one on 20 September.

Green Sandpiper: Strong signs of birds moving through on post-breeding passage in July and August, tailing off in September before the arrival of winter visitors, particularly at Coombe Hill and along the Severn. At Coombe Hill, singles on 18 & 20 July, up to five till the end of the month; recorded throughout August, maximum seven on 12 August; up to three in September, latest date 9 September. At Ashleworth, one on 27 August. At Sudmeadow, one on 4 August. At Port Ham, four on 20 August, singles on 2 & 16 September, two on 19 September.

Wood Sandpiper: A scarce migrant: one at Coombe Hill on 29 July.

Common Sandpiper: Good crop of records, especially along the Severn: at Lower Lode, two on Severn on 11 July, one on 23 July. At Haw Bridge, one on Severn beach on 26 August. At Coombe Hill, singles on five dates from 27 July to 2 September. At Port Ham, one on 23 & 31 July. At Llanthony Weir in Gloucester, four noisy birds on 24 July. At Lower Parting, one on 2 September.

Gulls and Terns

Mediterranean Gull: An adult on Plock Court, north of Gloucester on 24 July.

Black-headed Gull: At Lower Lode brickpits, 30 sunning themselves on dead trees on 15 July. On Severn at Lower Lode about 20 downriver to roost on 11 July, including one juvenile.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: At Upham Meadow, only one or two, not a threat to wader chicks, on 11 July. At Bredon's Hardwick, 90 on 18 July, 110 on 27 July, 140 on 4 August.

Herring Gull: At Bredon's Hardwick, five on 11 July, 12 on 4 August.

Common Tern: At Bredon's Hardwick, where they have nested for some years and a nest was already seen in June, one on island on 11 July, two apparently on nest on 13 July, three (one young) on 18 July, four (two young) on 4 August. An adult flew south over Sudmeadow on 14 July; rarely recorded here.

Pigeons

Stock Dove: At Upham Meadow, one or two on 11 July. At Ashleworth, one on 27 August.

Turtle Dove: No records at all of this red-listed species.

Cuckoo

No records after they stopped singing another tune in June.

Owls

Barn Owl: One at Sudmeadow on 27 September, one at Corse Lawn on 29 September.

Little Owl: Remarkably few records of a species that used to be widespread in the area. At Lower Lode, one calling on evening of 11 July, two on evening of 18 August.

Tawny Owl: At Lower Lode, two calling on 18 August. At Tirley, one was calling at 02h45 on 29 July. At Ashleworth, one on 27 August. At Wainlodes, one on kill on road at 02h30 on 19 July.

Swift

40+ over Tewkesbury on 22 July.

Kingfisher

At Lower Lode, one seen and mist-netted by Severn on 11 July, another seen on 16 August. At Haw Bridge, one over Severn on 28 July. At Coombe Hill, one on scrapes on 15 July, two on 7 August. At Port Ham, one on 23 July.

Woodpeckers

Green Woodpecker: Frequently recorded, among others as follows: at Haw Bridge, one on 23 July, and at Coombe Hill, one on 26 August.

Great Spotted Woodpecker: Frequent: at Ashleworth, a juvenile trapped on 1 July; one or two seen on 22 July. At Coombe Hill, one on 26 August.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker: Very scarcely recorded, but probably overlooked, only record is one at Walmore on 17 September.

Wryneck: Most unusually, one was recorded in a garden in Staunton on 5 August.

Passerines

Skylark: Some birds still singing well into the summer: at Upham Meadow, several singing on 11 July; and at Ashleworth, still some song on 1 and 16 July. During September, some visible migrants noted: six to the south over Ashleworth on 28 September; at Coombe Hill, 35+ to south on 26 September, and 40 on 30 September.

Sand Martin: Ringing at colonies in the banks of the Severn, begun in late June, continued. At the Lower Lode colony, 73 caught on 11 July, including 22 retraps, three or four from last year's operations, all but eight of them juveniles, so this was perhaps the peak of juvenile emergence; some females in egg, so clearly some second or replacement clutches; on 15 July, still about 100 birds by day; on 23 July, 100+ in evening; on 16 August, when young still calling from nest holes, only 30-40 birds present; on 18 August slightly less. The second small colony, north of Haw Bridge at Malthouse Farm, was again occupied with three or four holes apparently being used. The third colony south of Haw Bridge was also occupied: at least fifteen holes on 11 July, 60 birds present; 12 adults and nine young caught on 16 July; 100 birds seen on 23 July; 100 present, 20 caught, including many juveniles, on 28 July. Few observations away from colonies: two, no doubt migrants, at Coombe Hill on 19 August.

Swallow: At Lower Lode, coming readily to tape lure by Sand Martin colony on 16 August (30 caught) and 18 August (20 caught, mainly juveniles). At Haw Bridge, eight caught round Sand Martin colony on 28 July. At Coombe Hill, many newly-fledged young perched in willow trees and being fed by parents on 15 July. Several records of visible migrants: some moving south at Coombe Hill on 29 July; 100+ moving through to south, feeding en route on 19 August; 15 on 26 August; at least 65 moving south on 27 August; 30+ moving south on 26 September, six on 30 September.

House Martin: Some around Haw Bridge Sand Martin colony on 18 and 23 July. At Coombe Hill, five on 26 August, some southward movement with Swallows on 27 August, and eight with Swallows on 26 September; at Cobney Meadows on 26 August, five on 30 September.

Meadow Pipit: Some visible migrant in September. At Ashleworth, ten moving south on 28 September, ten seen on 30 September. At Coombe Hill, passage throughout September: four on 6 September, 35+ migrants over on 26 September, ten on 30 September.

Yellow Wagtail: No indications of breeding anywhere in riverside meadows. Small through passage in the first half of September: at Coombe Hill, 10 with cattle on 2 September, two on 6 September. At Walmore, four on 17 September.

Pied Wagtail: At Haw Bridge, family party of eight adults and juveniles, and at Lower Lode two on evening of 23 July.

Redstart: Several records of locally born young birds, plus some later that may have been passing migrants. At Ashleworth, four juveniles caught on 1 July, five caught on 16 July, one seen on 22 July, one seen on 19 August, one juvenile caught on 27 August, one caught on 30 September. At Coombe Hill singles, probably migrants on 19 & 30 August and 19 September; one at Cobney Meadows on 26 August.

Stonechat: No sign of breeding this year, but several early autumn migrants or winter visitors. At Ashleworth, an early bird on 27 August, three on 28 September. At Port Ham, one on 19 September.

Whinchat: No indication of breeding, but fair flush of passage migrants. At Coombe Hill, one on 2 & 30 September. At Port Ham, two on 23 July and 12 September, three on 16 September, five on 19 September. At Walmore, one on 20 August.

Wheatear: Just one record of a passing migrant: one at Coombe Hill on 2 September.

Fieldfare and Redwing: No records of these winter visitors before the end of September.

Grasshopper Warbler: As in spring, no records, not even passage birds caught at Ashleworth.

Sedge Warbler: Indications earlier in the summer were that the May floods had reduced breeding success. At Upham Meadows on 11 July, still 5+ in uncut vegetation, some still singing. At Ashleworth catches in July were small: still some song there on 1 July, when ten caught including seven juveniles; on 16 July, a little song but only four caught (one a French control) with just one juvenile; practically no song on 22 July, when ten birds caught including only four juveniles and three new adults which must have come from outside the area; none caught or seen on 27 August; one caught on 30 September. At Coombe Hill, still a little song on evening of 12 July and 15 July; three seen along canal on 29 July, one seen 2 & 7 September.

Reed Warbler: At Upham Meadow, still one singing along Avon on 11 July. At Lower Lode, one singing on 11 July. At Ashleworth, one heard on 22 July. At Coombe Hill, short burst of song at dusk on 12 and 20 July; at least five round Long Pool on 19 August. At Walmore a late one on 17 September.

Lesser Whitethroat: Appears to have bred locally, with light through passage later. At Ashleworth on 1 July, one new juvenile caught; on 16 July two juveniles caught; on 22 July four caught (a new moulting adult and three juveniles); on 27 August two caught (one adult, one juvenile). At Coombe Hill, still present along canal on 7 and 19 August.

Whitethroat: Breeding birds seemed to be less affected by May floods than others (perhaps because their nests are in higher vegetation). Numbers of birds passing through Ashleworth on passage lower than in some previous years. At Ashleworth on 1 July, a bit of song, 14 caught, mainly juveniles; on 16 July a little song, nine caught, all juveniles – so perhaps not as badly hit as Sedge Warbler; on 22 July, no song but 20 caught nearly all juveniles, but one moulting adult; on 27 August, one new bird caught. At Coombe Hill, still two or three singing on 12 July, some churring on 15 July, up to five along canal in late July and August, last two on 26 August. At Leigh Meadows, one or two still singing on 12 July.

Garden Warbler: At Ashleworth, on juvenile caught on 22 July, first of year a scarce bird in the vales.

Blackcap: Still some song well into July, some passing through. At Ashleworth on 1 July, some song, three juveniles caught (first caught this year); on 16 July, some song, two juveniles caught; on 22 July a little song, a new juvenile caught. At Coombe Hill, some song on 15 July; two along canal on 21 July; subsong along canal on 19 August, one on 26 August, one singing on 2 September.

Chiffchaff: Birds, mainly juveniles, regularly caught at Ashleworth in July and August; more in evidence than other warblers in August and September, often with tit flocks, sometimes singing. At Ashleworth on 1 July, still some song, five caught mainly juveniles; on 16 July, some song, three juveniles caught; on 22 July, a little song, three juveniles caught; four juveniles caught on 27 August; two on 28 September; two caught, one singing on 30 September. At Lower Lode, one singing on 18 August. At Coombe Hill, two along canal on 21 July, 20+ in hedges on 19 and 26 August, 12+ on 30 August; one singing and several calling on 2 September, two or three on 22 September, one or two on 30 September; one at Cobney Meadows on 26 August.

Willow Warbler: At Ashleworth on 1 July, still some song, five caught mainly juveniles but one moulting adult; on 16 July, four juveniles caught; no song but three new juveniles caught on 22 July; one adult retrapped on 27 August.

Spotted Flycatcher: A declining species: very little sign of breeding birds, but quite strong passage, more than usual, in September. At Ashleworth Quay one on 1 July may have been a local breeder? At Lower Lode, one on 16 and 18 August. At Ashleworth, three or four seen and one caught on 27 August. At Coombe Hill, one on five dates in the second half of August. At Walmore, one on 17 September.

Long-tailed Tit: At Ashleworth, seven caught on 27 August. At Coombe Hill, 10+ on 26 August, 10 on 30 September.

Jay: At Ashleworth, two or three on 22 July. At Coombe Hill, six on 26 August, three or four on 30 September.

Jackdaw: At Coombe Hill, roost of 100 on 20 July

Carrion Crow: At Upham Meadow, about 200 feeding in grass with Rooks on 11 July

Raven: At Tirley, two flying south on 20 September. At Ashleworth, one on 30 September. At GLS, where they are regularly recorded scavenging, 60 on 1 August.

Linnet: At Coombe Hill, 50 on 9 September.

Bullfinch: a Red-listed species, regularly found in thick hedges, and often mist-netted at Ashleworth; clearly breeds locally. Three caught (one adult, two juveniles) at Ashleworth on 16 July; six (including three new juveniles) on 22 July; four on 27 August. At Coombe Hill, five on 19 August; two or three on 26 August.

Yellowhammer: At Coombe Hill, one calling by canal on 21 July, one on 26 August. At Leigh Meadows, two or three still singing on 12 July.

Reed Bunting: In May and June breeding birds appeared to have suffered from late floods; numbers of birds passing through in late summer lower than in previous years. At Upham Meadows, still about five singing on 11 July. At Lower Lode, one or two singing on 11 July. At Ashleworth on 1 July, still some song, ten caught mainly juveniles; on 16 July, 17 caught, fifteen juveniles, did they recover from May flooding with replacement broods?; on 22 July, 13 caught including ten new juveniles, one new and three retrap adults; on 27 August two new juveniles caught. At Coombe Hill, a little song on 15 July, one on 21 July, two on 29 July, still present on 2 September, odd few on 30 September.

Corn Bunting: None at all recorded this year at Upham Meadow, one of the last Severn Hams strongholds.

Compiled by M. Smart from his own observations and those of Les Brown, Andy Jayne, and Gordon Avery, with some cherries picked from the Gloster Birder website.

24 November 2006