

Notes on birds in the Severn and Avon Vales (the “Severn Hams”), Gloucestershire and south Worcestershire April – June 2007

General introduction

The main sites are (from the north):

- Upton Ham (Worcs): the Upper Ham, a hay meadow south of the town, is an SSSI and is the best conserved of the riverside hams in botanical terms; south of the old railway embankment is the Lower Ham; across the river is Ryall Gravel Pit, still being exploited, and a magnet for many waterbirds, notably waders.
- Longdon Marsh (Worcs), a nearly enclosed basin north of the M50 motorway, flowing via Bushley Brook to the Severn above Tewkesbury.
- 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 (sometimes called the “Great Hay Meadow”) and Summer Leasow at Twyning (Glos); Rectory Farm Meadows, a botanical SSSI 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 Worcestershire Wildlife Trust 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” proper, 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 and its riverside meadows 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. Maisemore Ham is now largely converted to arable farming.
- Sites on the edge of urban Gloucester, once flood meadow: Port Ham, Oxlease 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.
- Minsterworth Ham, on the west bank of the Severn below Gloucester; few records for this period.
- Walmore Common, on the west bank of the Severn below Gloucester; also the little marsh at Rodley (Wilmore Common), 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

Anticyclonic, bright and sunny for the first three weeks of April; dry, with winds generally northerly, unfavourable for incoming migrants; the only spell of wet weather was on 22/23 April, when a front moved through from the southwest with cloud and light drizzle, anticyclone reasserting itself from 24 April; nationally, the warmest April on record and one of the driest. April's anticyclonic conditions continued in the first week of May, though winds remained cold, easterly and north-easterly; but they at last gave way to unsettled frontal weather from the west, with considerable rainfall from 6 - 18 May; from 19 - 25 May, a ridge of high pressure extended westwards across southern England, giving pleasant summery weather; frontal weather from the west again from 26-31 May, with extensive rain, and at times very heavy showers, which may have seriously affected nesting birds at a time when they had young birds in the nest; nationally the wettest May since 1967, and the first year since 1987 when daytime temperatures in May were colder than in April. Early June showed high pressure again, dry and hazy with winds easterly from 5 to 12 June; but fronts moving in from the Atlantic, from 13 June to the end of the month, brought much heavy rain, locally, in the upper Severn catchment and north east England; while some areas of UK were not particularly wet, the Midlands had more than twice the average June rainfall and Northeast England three times; the rain was particularly heavy from 20 June because of a very slow-moving front; many stations had their highest ever June rainfall figures..

The Severn was low throughout April, and so were water levels on meadows and marshes, after almost continuous deep flooding from late November 2006 to mid-March 2007. The early April floods experienced in 2005 and 2006 did not recur in 2007, and with the lack of rain, most sites dried out extraordinarily fast after the winter flooding. The winter flooding and lack of rain in April meant that in most sites grass was very slow to grow and much lower than in most years. However, river and ditch levels rose between 13 and 20 May, following the rainfall early in the month, producing a moderate flood in mid-May (as in 2006) which must have severely affected ground nesting waders, and also passerines nesting in long grass like Sedge Warblers and Reed Buntings. Water levels then dropped in late May, and grass cutting for silage began in some places as early as 25 May. Levels remained low in early June, only to rise again from 13 June; the Severn level rose sharply (with levels of 9.00 metres at Haw Bridge, more reminiscent of midwinter, on 16 June, dropping later, but then rising again to 9.10 on 25 June and 9.68 on 26 June, 10.80 on 27 June and 10.93 on 28 June, then down to 9.30 on 30 June); as a result not merely did local streams back-flood, flooding many fields at an unaccustomed time of year, and producing the heaviest July flooding since 1968 and 1969, hitting nesting birds once again and preventing hay-making; from 27 June a major Severn Flood was in progress, the Severn overtopping both banks at Haw Bridge, adding to the flood depth.

Conditions at the main sites

Upham Meadow, Twyning: No flooding in early spring; grass was slow to grow after March floods and dry April, but recovered fast in wet weather in May, then flooding in late June.

Bredon's Hardwick: Completely under water during the Avon flood of late June.

Ashleworth/Hasfield Hams: The three top boards had been moved from the sluice on the last day of March, so water levels on the Ashleworth reserve dropped from 8.00 in the first few days of April to 7.56 on 7 April; the remaining boards were removed on 7 April, allowing water levels to drop further, so that by mid-April the only standing water was in the pools on the reserve and the level on 26 April was only 7.08. Very dry weather in April led to fields drying rapidly. However, water levels rose again in mid-May since, with high Severn levels, water backed up in the reserve; they did not stay high for long, and grass grew very rapidly during the month. The Constant Effort ringing begun in 1996 was resumed in early May. However, water levels rose again even further from mid-June to levels more usual in midwinter, as water poured back into the reserve and the Severn overtopped.

Coombe Hill: Water levels on meadows were low in April, though scrapes and the Long Pool were full, because earth bunds held the water in. Boards were reinserted in mid-April in the stank at the outflow of Deerhurst Parish Drain to the Severn at Wainlodes, which governs water levels in the meadows, in order to retain water in ditches; following rainfall in early and mid-May, levels increased (to 8.00 at the stank on 15 May) and were higher in the meadows from about 13 - 20 May; levels dropped slowly in late May and early June (stank level 7.50 on 9 June), but rose again in mid June (8.06 on 19 June, 8.60 on 26 June) causing a rise in water levels in ditches and scrapes; the islands in

the scrapes were under water on 26 June, and the whole area was under water at the end of the month.. The Grundon Hide was not accessible from 25 June. Some fields cut for hay on Cobney Meadows by 9 June.

Leigh Meadows: No flooding at all in April. River Chelt high on 15 May. First meadows cut for silage about 25 May, more cut late May and early June. Extensive flooding from 25 June.

Walmore Common: March floods gone by early April; pool and flashes on the Common drying rapidly, most surface water gone by late April, but rising again with May rainfall, and some water in Common Pool and flashes round 21 May.

Bird records

Grebes

Little Grebe: Breeds in a few sites in the Vale with permanent water. At Ryall Pits, whinnying (so presumably breeding) on 30 April. At Coombe Hill, after a complete lack of records since early March, noted on 9-11 May, then again on floodwater on 25 June (they were probably nesting discreetly again as in 2006 and had been overlooked, but the nest was perhaps washed out by floods).

Great Crested Grebe: Needs large areas of open water to breed. At Bredon's Hardwick, where it regularly breeds, up to six were present throughout the period. Unusually, birds began to reappear at Coombe Hill when water levels rose in mid-May, from 18 May; one on Long Pool on 26 May, two actually displaying there on 29 May, still present on 2 June, when one looked very surreptitious, but not seen later. Two on the Severn near Chaceley on 22 June.

Cormorant: Numbers at Bredon's Hardwick, the main loafing spot, usually decline in summer: 28 on 6 April, eleven on 19 April, ten on 22 April, two on 16 June. Birds occasionally seen in the vale, no doubt on route to and from Bredon's Hardwick: two flew over Ashleworth, going northwest on 15 April, while two flew over Coombe Hill, going southwest, on 8 May.

Little Egret: As usual in the last few years recorded fairly regularly in summer, especially at Coombe Hill, though not invariably present there. At Ashleworth, two on 19 May. At Coombe Hill, one or two from 4 to 12 April, but then none until 4 May; one or two on several dates from 15 May, seen leaving to roost elsewhere on the evening of 20 May, but five on evening of 11 June, again leaving to SW to roost, perhaps at Barrow Ponds. At Port Ham, two on 21 April. At Sudmeadow, where they are rarely reported, one on 3 May.

Grey Heron: Ones and twos at most suitable sites throughout the period: Upton Ham, Ryall Pits, Longdon, Nafford, Bredon's Hardwick, the Great Hay Meadow, Ashleworth, Coombe Hill, Leigh Meadows and Walmore. Maximum seven on 29 May and eight on 19 June at Coombe Hill. At Ashleworth, later in the period, they seemed to be attracted by large carp trapped in the pools.

Mute Swan: A good number of pairs breed, often at traditional sites, in the Vale. Immatures or adults which have not succeeded in winning a breeding site, gather in non breeding flocks. Among breeding birds were the following: Ryall Pit (nest being incubated on 30 April); Nafford (a nest in April not seen on 17 May); Strensham Pits (nest being incubated on 28 April); Twyning (a pair on the Avon with five cygnets on 1 June); the Mill Avon at Tewkesbury (a male on guard on 10 May); Ashleworth (two nests being incubated from 24 April, one family party with six small cygnets seen on 26 May, the other with seven on 23 June); Coombe Hill (female continuing to incubate nest built in late March by Wharf, with seven cygnets hatched by 12 May, pair left nest on canal for ditches on 22 May, but back by Wharf again from 2 June, with only six cygnets from 9 June); pool north of Coombe Hill Canal near Apperley (same two adults as last year, identified by colour rings, hatched seven tiny cygnets on 8 May, still on ditches on 22 May); Cobney Meadows (nest being incubated on island in pool from 7 April, hatched with six cygnets on 15 May); Red Lion fishing pool, Wainlodes (parents with small cygnets seen near nest on 8 May, with seven cygnets on ditch in Cobney Meadows on 9 June); Handkerchief Pool, Haw Bridge (nest being incubated on 7 April, but abandoned on 8 May). At Walmore, only one pair seem to have bred, raising three cygnets.

Non-breeding birds: flock of 18 on Avon by Strensham on 28 April; at Coombe Hill, a flock (of up to 30 in April) grazed by day on Southern Meadows and came late to roost on scrapes; over 20 grazing by day on the reserve on 15 May, maximum of 40 on 22 May, numbers decreasing to 20 on 2 June, twelve on 19 June. At Walmore, a group of six non-breeders on 30 April, feeding separately from breeding birds and going to roost on Severn at dusk; eleven on 21 May.

Geese

Greylag Goose: The only regular breeding site is Bredon's Hardwick, but more and more birds are being noted in summer. At Nafford, up to three in April. At Bredon's Hardwick, up to 15 in April, four adults with 12 goslings on 17 May, nine with three goslings on 24 May, twelve with flying young on 10 June. No sign of breeding elsewhere: at Ashleworth, four roosting on 5 April, four flew over on 5 May; at Coombe Hill, two or three in April, including at least one with a broken wing; flock of up to 25 on several dates in May; smaller numbers in June.

Canada x Greylag cross: At Great Hay Meadow, one on Avon on 1 June. Probably the same bird reported from Coombe Hill on 11 June.

Canada Goose: Normally the large numbers of wintering birds move out in early spring, leaving very few breeding pairs, but a few have always nested in Worcs and there seems to have been an increase in breeding birds, particularly in Gloucestershire, this year.

At Ryall Pits three pairs at least on 30 April, but no sign of nesting. At Nafford up to 26, with three nests in April. At the Great Hay Meadow, two nests with eggs along the Avon on 28 April, but no young seen on 1 June. At Bredon's Hardwick, up to 35 in April, 35 adults and 24 goslings on 24 May, flock of 125 and crèche of 17 goslings on 6 June. At Coombe Hill, at least one pair near the scrapes with five goslings (first breeding record for the reserve?) on 10 May was seen repeatedly until 26 June, and possibly a second pair with five goslings north of the reserve on 20 May. At Cobney Meadows, a nest being incubated on 24 April, adults with one small gosling on from 8 May to 5 June, not found 9 June, but a pair with one gosling on the Severn nearby on 10 June were perhaps the same family. Near Ashleworth Ham, a pair nested on a pool at Stonebow Farm and had seven small goslings on 22 May and 10 June. At Port Ham, a pair on 21 April.

Several parties of non-breeders, often injured birds with damaged wings: at Upton Ham, about 15 on 27 April; at Ashleworth, ten on 5 April, seven on 26 April, three of them with damaged wings, still there through May and June; at Coombe Hill, seven (three pairs and one with broken wing) on 7 April; 39 coming to roost on 18 April, up to 20 by day on several dates in May and June. At Walmore, two on 30 April, one on 21 May.

Barnacle Goose: Odd feral birds reported: one at Bredon's Hardwick on 17 May and 10 June; two, unringed, with Canada Geese at Coombe Hill on 29 May.

Ducks

Shelduck: Numbers decreased considerably from the flocks of 50 or more seen on the floodwaters in March. Some birds stayed on - often in pairs, displaying actively and holding territory - but there was only proof of breeding at two sites (Longdon and GLS); yet in flooding at the end of June a group of seven and other singles reappeared from nowhere.

At Longdon Marsh, a pair nested successfully on the Wildlife Trust reserve; up to four throughout April, then a single on 26 June. At Nafford, two in April. At Bredon's Hardwick, 12 on 6 April. At Chaceley, two flew down the Severn on 22 June. At Ashleworth/Hasfield, four on 4 April, two on 4 May, four on 17 May, two on 10 June. Most records at Coombe Hill were in April and May, and there was much display but no evidence of breeding: 16 on 4 April, two pairs on 7 April, three pairs on evening of 8 April, six on 11 April, seven on 17 April; a single pair in mid-April, then nine birds on 28 April; up to five on many dates in May, including some immatures from last year, occasionally appearing to fly in to rest and feed (perhaps from a breeding site elsewhere?); one on 26 June; at Cobney Meadows, a pair on 7 and 24 April. At Leigh Meadows, a pair on 5 April, seven on floodwater on 26 June. At Port Ham, a pair on 21 April. At GLS a pair nested, six small ducklings first seen on

the early date of 10 May, still present in June until they departed from the site (presumably for the estuary).

Mandarin Duck: At Ashleworth, one or two on three dates in late April. At Coombe Hill, a male on the Long Pool on 26 May and a bird in eclipse there on 9 June, perhaps the Ashleworth birds.

Surface-feeding ducks: Numbers decreased rapidly after the end of March, and, except for Mallard, and perhaps Gadwall and Garganey, any birds remaining were undoubtedly injured birds not undertaking return migration to the breeding grounds in Russia. Signs of Teal returning from breeding grounds by mid June.

Wigeon: Wintering numbers dropped very rapidly, but a few individuals (no doubt injured or sick birds) stayed on. At Bredon's Hardwick, 18 on 6 April. At Ashleworth, 110 on 4 April dropped to 25 on 7 April, eight on 15 April, three on 28 April, a flying pair to 22 May at least, male and female throughout June. At Coombe Hill, still seven on 18 April, six (all males) on 25 April, up to five (four males and a female) throughout May and up to 16 June at least.

Gadwall: At Ashleworth, numbers dropped after a high count of 24 on 4 April; ones and twos in rest of April, one on 11 May. At Coombe Hill, ones and twos in April and May. No indication of breeding this year.

Teal: Again, winter numbers dropped fast, and spring observations are likely to have been of injured or sick birds: no sign of breeding. At Nafford, eight on 6 April, two on 22 April. At Bredon's Hardwick six on 6 April. At Ashleworth, 80 on 4 April, 31 on 12 April (with a Speckled Teal *Anas flavirostris*, clearly an escape), a pair on from 17 April to 5 May, female on 11 May (with damaged wing?), male on 15 May, female on 14 June. At Coombe Hill, 40 on 7 April, 10 on 8 April, two on 27 April, then two from 16 June, perhaps migrants returning early? At Cobney Meadows, two on 7 April. At Walmore a single, flying poorly, on 30 April.

Mallard: A widespread breeder, though many ducklings seem to fall foul of predators. At Nafford, a female with 8 ducklings on 19 April. At Strensham, a female on the Avon with two ducklings on 28 April. At the Great Hay Meadow, 30 adults on 28 April, a female with four large ducklings on 1 June. At Bredon's Hardwick, 25 and a female with seven tiny ducklings on 15 April; about 20 and a female with six small ducklings on 6 June, 45 on 14 June. By the Mill Avon in Tewkesbury, a female with nine bigish ducklings on 10 May. At Ashleworth, a female with one duckling on the main ditch on 5 May; still 20 adults on 10 May. At Coombe Hill, about 30 adults and a female with eight tiny ducklings on 7 April, only two ducklings left on 8 April; at least four females with young on 18 April; one with young on 24 April, one with one duckling on 15 May, one female with 13 tiny ducklings and another with two medium-sized young on 22 May, 40 adults on 9 June, a female with two bigish ducklings on 11 June, 25 birds on 16 June plus a female with two large young on the Long Pool; at Cobney Meadows, 20 on 7 April. At Walmore, 15, including one female with a duckling on 21 May.

Pintail: Rapid decline in wintering birds: at Ashleworth, 15 on 4 April, eight on 7 April, four on 10 April, two until 28 April.

Garganey: None in early April as occurs in many years, but at Coombe Hill, a pair appeared in early May and was seen mating on 2 May and remained throughout the month; the male was seen until 12 June, moulting with surprising rapidity into eclipse plumage. The species is known to be extremely secretive when nesting; nesting is strongly suspected, though not proven, and it seems likely that the late June flood would have flooded out any nests. This behaviour also suggests that, following similar behaviour last year, the species may also have bred in 2006, when juveniles were seen in late summer.

Shoveler: Once again, rapid decline in numbers of birds that had wintered. At Bredon's Hardwick, two on 6 April. At Ashleworth, 75 on 4 April, ten on 12 April, a drake with a damaged wing from 17 April to late June. At Coombe Hill, ten on 7 April, a drake in mid April, two on 21 May.

Diving ducks:

Pochard: Unusual in summer. One appeared at Coombe Hill, on Long Pool, on 5 June.

Tufted Duck: In recent years has stayed to breed at sites with deep enough water in the Severn and Avon Vales. At Ryall Pit, two males and a female on 30 April. At Nafford, three pairs on 17 May. At Bredon's Hardwick, two pairs in April, five males and a female on 5 June, much courtship chasing, three males on 14 June. At Lower Lode, two in flight over Severn on 1 June. Up to half a dozen adults regularly seen on the scrapes at Coombe Hill from April to June; breeding by two or three pairs suspected, and finally confirmed when a female with two small ducklings was seen on 19 June, then another with seven tiny ducklings on floodwater on 26 June. At GLS a pair on 12 May. At Walmore a pair on 29 June.

Ruddy Duck: Only record is of two males at Bredon's Hardwick on 30 June, when the pits were submerged by the Avon flood.

Raptors

Goshawk: A single record at The Mythe reserve, Tewkesbury, on 8 April of this hawk, which is scarce in the Vale.

Sparrowhawk: Widespread and relatively common, though not too many records: one at Longdon on 17 April; one at Strensham on 28 April; at Ashleworth, several records of singles in June; at Coombe Hill, a female on 11 April, another on 22 May, a male with prey on 9 June.

Buzzard: Very widespread and frequently seen, undoubtedly breeding in many large trees. At Upton Ham, three soaring on 30 April. At Ryall, two on 30 April. At Great Hay Meadow, one on 28 April, two soaring on 1 June. At Haw Bridge, five soaring on 15 May. At Ashleworth three or four from April to June. At Coombe Hill and Cobney Meadows, at least two from April to June. At Walmore, two on 30 April.

Osprey: After several records in Gloucestershire in late March, another at Coombe Hill perched in a dead tree, on 9 April.

Kestrel: Widespread and undoubtedly breeding. At Ryall, one on 30 April. At Strensham a single on 28 April. At Ashleworth one on 3 May. At Coombe Hill, one on several dates in May. At Port Ham, one on 21 April.

Hobby: This year, no migrants found hawking large flying insects at midday in late April and early May, no doubt because of cold winds and poor conditions for flying insects, but on 5 May two birds flew over Ashleworth rapidly, chasing one another, perhaps in courtship. At Coombe Hill, singles on 24 and 30 April. At Walmore, one on 12 May. Small numbers no doubt breed.

Peregrine: Regularly recorded, mainly on electricity pylons at Ashleworth, but also at Coombe Hill and Leigh Meadows, more in early April then, after something of a gap, in June. Attempts to nest on buildings in Gloucester, and these birds may come from the nest. At Walmore, one on 25 May.

Gamebirds and Rails

Quail: Only records this year were of two or more calling at Longdon in late May and early June.

Water Rail: Must be breeding in several places, particularly in such a wet period, but few records. One heard at Coombe Hill on the evening of 20 May and on 26 June.

Spotted Crane: None heard anywhere, despite evening searches.

Moorhen: Under-recorded; regularly seen at Coombe Hill, with chicks in June.

Coot: Breeds in small numbers. At Ryall, two pairs with six and three chicks on 30 April. At Nafford, up to 16 in April. At Bredon's Hardwick, up to in April, ten in May and June. At Great Hay Meadow two or three on Avon on 28 April, one on 1 June. At Ashleworth, numbers dropped from more than 50 on 5 April to five by 26 April, a few in May (including injured birds with broken wings), but probably did not breed. At Coombe Hill, 10 on 18 April, pair with four redhead chicks on the canal at the Wharf on 25 April, three seen throughout May and into June; two nests being incubated on the Long Pool

during May appeared to have been flooded out on 22 May; birds seemed to move from Long Pool to scrapes afterwards, with 15 from 22 May into June; two pairs with chicks on 19 June; as floodwaters rose on 26 June at least five nests (one with three tiny chicks) were being strengthened with rush stems. At Castlemeads in Gloucester, two pairs with young on 12 May.

Waders

One of the principal items of interest in this period is the breeding success or otherwise of the four traditional breeding wader species (Lapwing, Snipe, Curlew, Redshank). This year they were not affected by spring floods in April, but conditions turned extremely wet in mid May and June. Two "new" breeding species, Oystercatcher and Little Ringed Plover, also attracted attention. In general, passage of migratory species on their way northwards until mid May was poor; in the dry conditions, most must have gone straight through without stopping. As usual, the first returning migrants (birds which had either failed in nesting, or immature birds which had not gone as far as the breeding ground) had appeared by mid June, with Green Sandpiper in the vanguard.

Oystercatcher: The usual breeding pair at Bredon's Hardwick certainly tried to nest, but may have failed, leaving the parents to wander: two on 15 April, one apparently on nest; one apparently on nest on 29 April, two on 17 May; none seen 31 May or 10 June, but one on 14 and 16 June. At Great Hay Meadow, two on 1 June (birds from Bredon's Hardwick?). On cut hay-meadows near Haw Bridge, two on 10 June (birds from Bredon's Hardwick again?). At Ashleworth, one on 14 April. At Coombe Hill, up to three birds appeared several times from 26 April to 21 May and appeared to be about breed: pair mating on 4 May and nest building on 5 May; three on 15 May, two of them mating; none again till two on 11 June, perhaps the birds from Bredon's Hardwick seen earlier at Haw Bridge?

Little Ringed Plover: Passes through on northward passage in early spring and some stay to nest where habitat is suitable, especially gravel pits. At Upton Ham, an adult on drying scrape on 27 April, two in same place on 30 April; migrants or wanderers from Ryall? At Ryall Pit, at least two pairs appeared to be nesting on 30 April. At Coombe Hill, a complete enigma: singles seen throughout the period, until 19 June, occasionally two (e.g. on 14 April, when one had colour rings); behaviour discreet, no sign of territorial behaviour; it seems more likely that there is a constant presence with a single bird hanging on, the more so as the habitat is not ideal, though they have bred in previous years. But any birds trying to nest will have been flooded out by the late June flood. At Walmore, two on 25 April.

Ringed Plover: small trickle of northward passage at Coombe Hill: one on 29 and 30 April, then one briefly on the morning of 12 May.

Lapwing: Those individuals nesting in wet meadows were severely hit by the May and June floods. Some which tried to produce a second clutch were flooded a second time, or lost eggs or young to predators. The adults persistently chased off foxes and Carrion Crows, and were permanently worried by the presence of small gangs of marauding Jackdaws

At Upton Ham, a pair apparently with eggs on 30 April. At Ryall, about five pairs nesting on 30 April. At Longdon Marsh, up to 12 displaying in April, and at least one nest seen; chicks seen later on. At Nafford, one in April. At Rectory Farm Meadows, none seem to have nested in the arable area this year. At Great Hay Meadow, none found nesting and none on arable round about either. At Bredon's Hardwick, no sign of nesting though some loafing birds: up to nine in April, odd ones in May and June. At Ashleworth, as many as five pairs displaying over the reserve in early April; none nested on the main reserve field but one may have tried to nest at the rear; but in late April and early May there were three pairs apparently breeding, like last year, at Hasfield Ham; not clear if they were successful or washed out by May floods, but little activity there in late May.

At Coombe Hill, Lapwings were clearly nesting in April, though not very early in the month; the monthly maximum recorded round the scrapes was 22 birds on 21 April, but the general impression was that perhaps seven pairs were nesting. One was perhaps sitting on 8 April; on 18 April about twelve present, perhaps three or four sitting females, with males still doing tail-up display; on 25 April three sitting females by scrapes, another by Long Pool and one or two pairs on a setaside field northeast of the reserve. The monthly maximum in May was 16 birds; on 8 May two females were still sitting, others appeared to have lost their eggs, still no young seen; on 12 May complete change in behaviour, as though all eggs or young lost (to crows or bad weather?), and they were starting the cycle again: males doing aerial breeding display and calls again, very aggressive to one another, no females sitting, attempted mating seen; on 15 May some display, one incubating what must have been a second clutch in different nest site; but on 22 May, some chicks were at last seen, two one week-old young birds (which implies egg laying round 15-20 April) round scrapes and two females were sitting; these two chicks were seen growing up through late May and June, and could just fly by 12 June; they were with the flying adult flock on 19 and 26 June, so survived the flooding. No other chicks appear to have been produced around the scrapes following wet weather in mid May and by 29 May, six of the ten adults present appeared to have given up and were sitting around preening, though they did help to chase off a fox which walked near the chicks. One pair appears to have tried unsuccessfully to nest east of the Long Pool, and one pair was successful on the set aside, where a tiny chick was attended by its parents on 19 June (implying laying - or more likely relaying - in mid May); the adults were still agitated on 26 June as though the chick had survived the flood, but had gone on 27 June when water levels had risen further, presumably drowning the chick. Thus for seven pairs on the scrapes, two round the Long Pool and two on the set aside, several of them clearly laying twice, the total production by late June was two fledged young and one tiny chick, the latter almost certainly drowned.

No sign of breeding on Cobney Meadows. At Leigh Meadows, one pair looked like breeders on 5 April, but not seen afterwards. At Walmore, 14 (7 pairs?) in late April, with much display, clearly nesting; two tiny chicks seen on 12 May, when seven other pairs were considered to be nesting; eight birds (four pairs?) on 21 May, when two tiny newly-hatched chicks, definitely different from those on 12 May, were seen. Three pairs are believed to have bred successfully: two juveniles and four well grown chicks in two families on 21 June.

Dunlin: Only a small trickle of northward migrants: at Bredon's Hardwick, one on 29 April; at Coombe Hill three in summer plumage on 8 May, ten on 10 May, eight on 21 May.

Ruff: Only record is of one, no doubt an early returning migrant, at Coombe Hill floods on 26 June.

Snipe: This species, believed to have bred until perhaps 2003 because of the presence of drumming males, almost certainly did not breed in 2007 because no drumming males were found despite extensive evening searches. It is just possible that some may have been overlooked, especially if they drummed late at night. At Ashleworth, one flushed on 26 April was probably a late migrant. At Coombe Hill, occasionally flushed and two or three heard calling at dusk on several dates until 28 April but no drumming. At Cobney Meadows, two flushed on 7 April. At Port Ham, one flushed on the very late date of 20 May. At Walmore, two on 25 April, six on 30 April, two on 12 May, but no drumming at dusk.

Black-tailed Godwit: Rather few on northward passage after the good numbers seen in March: three on 1 April and one on 4 April at Coombe Hill. Very early return, with a flock of nine adults in full summer plumage round floodwater at Coombe Hill on 26 June.

Bar-tailed Godwit: At Coombe Hill, one, most unusually, on 18/19 May.

Curlew: Breeds over a wide part of the area in large hay meadows, but often loses young to predators or modern hay-making methods. This year, with little hay making until the end of June, conditions looked promising for successful production of young birds, but the deep floodwater in late June is likely to have drowned many chicks. Since young Curlews do not generally fledge until 10 or 15 July, the final result will only become apparent later.

At Upton Ham, two with display flights on 30 April on Lower Ham. At Longdon, one or two in April. At Rectory Farm Meadows, does not seem to have nested this year. At the Great Hay Meadow near

Twynning, 14 displaying on 6 April, eleven on 15 April, nine on 19 April (much display); about six with rather little display on 28 April, when a nest with four eggs was found, the clutch apparently complete, despite the short grass; on 1 June, about ten birds, mostly with alarm calls as though they had young; on 25 June, as the floods rose, at least six birds, apparently with young. At Bredon's Hardwick, two on 22 April, one bubbling over nearby fields on 6 June, but none coming to roost. At the Severn Ham, Tewkesbury, one bubbling convincingly on 10 May. At Staunton, a site where they have not previously been noted, a territorial pair reported in April on a field through which the new gas pipeline is passing. At Chaceley, a regular breeding site, two, perhaps four, on 22 June. At Haw Bridge, two displaying, one north, one south of the bridge early in the season, but they did not stay to breed; some on cut hayfields north of Haw Bridge on 10 June. At Ashleworth/Hasfield, two pairs bubbling and displaying rather discreetly, one at the bottom of Stank Lane, one near the Ashleworth outfall from April to late June; still bubbling from both sites on 23 June and an adult flew off giving alarm calls as though young were about on 23 June. At Coombe Hill, birds nesting in surrounding fields often come to a communal evening roost on the scrapes, even when they are holding territory in neighbouring fields; two or three birds on 7 April; 11 coming to roost on evening of 8 April including a male with a gammy right leg; six at roost on 18 April, five on 28 April; on 20 May about ten came to roost in evening, very active and noisy; still four on 26 June; two pairs appear to have nested, one on Southern Meadows, one near north-east corner of reserve; latter area under water on 27 June, so uncertain if chicks survived. At Cobney Meadows one or two birds displaying from April, throughout May and into June. At Leigh Meadows, two to three pairs from April onwards; three pairs, all very excited as though they had young, on 12 June. A territorial pair near Twigworth, another site where they have not previously been reported, on 2 May.

Whimbrel: As usual, generally noted at dusk, as passing migrants dropped in to roost en route to Icelandic breeding grounds: at Coombe Hill, four on the evening of 22, three on 23 April, one on 28 April, two on 5 May, 15 on 8 May, one on 16, 19 May. One at Leigh Meadows on the evening of 23 April.

Redshank: Breeds in moderate numbers in wet areas; since young birds usually fledge in mid June, they may just have succeeded in bringing young off before the floods rose in late June. At Upton Ham, one doing song flight in late April. At Ryall, two or three pairs apparently nesting on 30 April. At Longdon, nine on 10 April, and several pairs nested successfully on the Wildlife Trust reserve. At Nafford, one on 19 April. At Strensham Pits none on 28 April. On the Great Hay Meadow, worryingly, none on 28 April, but on 1 June at least two pairs, not found on 25 June, perhaps the young had fledged and flown? At Rectory Farm Meadows, a pair displaying on 1 June, and one pair apparently with young, possibly a second, on 6 June. At Bredon's Hardwick, two on 22 April, but no sign of breeding. None on Severn Ham at Tewkesbury on 10 May. At Ashleworth/Hasfield, no sign of breeding, as in the last few years. At Coombe Hill, two or three pairs apparently attempted to nest, as up to five or six birds were seen with mutual chasing (courtship display?), particularly in the evenings; two on 8, 12 May looked like males feeding while females incubated; three on 15, 20 May; finally on 2 June, four adults and four tiny chicks seen; at least six adults on the evening of 11 June, displaying angrily at passing fox, probably had chicks in Long Pool; a single middle sized chick seen on 19 June, presumably the sole survivor of those seen on 2 June; on 23 June two smaller young birds, clearly from a different breeding pair, seen. Not known how many of these two broods survived the floods in late June, probably only the larger individual. At Cobney Meadows another pair in April and early May, very agitated as though they had young on 29 May, but not found later and perhaps washed out by storms. At Leigh Meadows, none bred. At Walmore, a pair in late April appeared to have left because of dry conditions by 12 May.

Greenshank: At Coombe Hill, one on 8 April, no doubt on northward passage.

Green Sandpiper: At Port Ham, one on 21 April. Three, the first returning migrants, at Coombe Hill on 19 June, one on 23 and 26 June, two sitting on fence posts in flooded meadows, like breeding Redshanks, on 27 June.

Common Sandpiper: At Bredon's Hardwick, one on 29 April. At Coombe Hill, one on 14 May. At Port Ham, four on 18 April.

Gulls and Terns

Mediterranean Gull: In the Avon Meadows near Mitton, two adults flew into Gloucestershire from Worcs on 1 April.

Black-headed Gull: At Coombe Hill, 30 first summer immatures on scrapes on 15 May.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: At Bredon's Hardwick, 210 on 19 April, 90 on 6 June, one with nest on island.

Great Black-backed Gull: None nesting at Bredon's Hardwick this year.

Common Tern: Has nested at Bredon's Hardwick and Kemerton in recent years, but rather more attempts (generally unsuccessful because of flooding) this year. At Bredon's Hardwick, two birds, one sitting in May, but none seen on 10 June. At Coombe Hill, two passed through to north on 26 May; one on an island in the scrape from 5 June, then two for rest of month (could these have been birds displaced from Bredon's Hardwick??); one was incubating eggs, while the other stood guard and was very aggressive to passing predators like Lesser Blackbacks and herons (another first breeding record for the reserve); but the nest seemed to have been flooded out by high water on 23 June. A second pair bred at another site in the Vale.

Pigeons

Stock Dove: At Great Hay Meadow, ten on 28 April, four on 1 June. At Haw Bridge, two pairs round nesting trees on 15 May, five on 10 June. At Ashleworth, two pairs doing joint nuptial flights on 26 May, 3 June; two on 18 June. At Coombe Hill, paired nuptial flight on 2 June, two on 12 June.

Cuckoo

Lots of song, well into June. At Upton Ham, one singing on 30 April. At Longdon, one on 29 April and 17 May. At Strensham, one on 28 April. At Severn Ham, Tewkesbury, one on 10 May. At Haw Bridge, one on 10 June. At Ashleworth, one or two from 19 April, two in dialogue on 22 May, three on 21 May and at least three on 26 May including two females with egg-laying call, one or two calling until 23 June. At Coombe Hill, one singing from 17 April to 19 June. At Leigh Meadows, one singing on 7 May, 12 June. At Maisemore Ham, one on 17 May. At Castlemeads in Gloucester, a female on 12 May

Owls

Barn Owl: At least two nests found, one in the Leadon Valley, one in the Apperley area, others suspected. Birds regularly seen hunting in the meadows: at Ashleworth, one at dusk on 18, 19 and probably 21 June. At Coombe Hill, two seen on evening of 11 June, one heading towards Apperley and carrying food; the other emerged from a hedge near Wharf.

Little Owl: Numbers of this once frequent owl seem to have gone down drastically. At Upton Ham, one calling on 27 April. At Ashleworth, one seen in Stank Lane on 7 April, one very early on 26 May, again on 23 June. At Coombe Hill, one calling at dusk on 18 April. At Leigh Meadows, one flew out of an oak at midday on 29 May. At Elmore Back, one on 21 May.

Tawny Owl: Common, just a few records cited. At Tirley, one on 19 April. At Ashleworth, three juveniles on 17 June, one or two calling on 18 June.

Swift

At Ryall, at least 15 on 30 April. At Severn Ham Tewkesbury, five on 10 May. At Ashleworth, first two on 22 April. At Coombe Hill, two or three on 25 April, 35+ on 7 May; considerable movement, more than 100 birds on 12 May in shower, 50 on 15 May.

Kingfisher

At Ashleworth, one flying in from Severn, probably to catch food for young in nest in river bank, on 26 May; one fishing over pool on 17, 18 June. At Coombe Hill, one on 9 June and one hovering over scrapes on 19 June, maybe the same bird at Wainlodes on same date. At Llanthony in central Gloucester, two flying along the Severn on 12 May. They too may have lost nests in Severn banks when water rose at the end of June.

Woodpeckers

Green Woodpecker: Common. At Coombe Hill, one on 22 May. At Leigh Meadows, one yaffling on 5 April.

Great Spotted Woodpecker: Common. At Upton Ham, one drumming on 27 April. At Ashleworth, a female with brood patch trapped on 5 May, probably the female from the nest in an old oak close to the Meerend Thicket car park, with noisy young being fed by parents from 11 to 26 May, which appeared to have left nest on 29 May. At Coombe Hill, one drumming on outside of Long Pool Hide while (human) observers were inside. At Castlemeads in Gloucester, one on 12 May.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker: Very scarce and hard to find. At Ashleworth a male and a female on 15 April, and reported in May at bottom of Stank Lane.

Passerines

Skylark: Frequently found singing over meadows. At Great Hay Meadow, at least ten singing on 28 April, five on 1 June. At Severn Ham, Tewkesbury, five on 10 May. At Ashleworth, couple singing regularly in May and June. At Coombe Hill, two or three singing from 24 April to 19 June. At Cobney Meadows, two or three singing on 24 April. At Leigh Meadows, several singing on 12 June. At Walmore, one singing, seemed to be nesting, on 21 May

Sand Martin: Nests in three colonies in the Severn bank round Haw Bridge and Lower Lode. At Ryall, about 20 on 30 April. Two over south end of Severn Ham, Tewkesbury, on 10 May. At the Lower Lode colony, birds may have been washed out by high river levels in mid May, but about 30 birds were there on 1 June, with six to eight active nests on 22 June, just before the waters rose and swamped the nests. At Malthouse Farm, no sign of colony being occupied on 10 June. At Haw Bridge, half a dozen birds round colony on 24 April, only two on 15 May when river was nearly up to nesting holes, two or three on 22 May, five to ten on 9 June, when river level much lower, then ten on 16 June, when river levels had risen again; floods on 26 June had completely submerged nesting holes. At Coombe Hill, three or more passing over to the north on 7 April.

Swallow: At Upton Ham, two or three hawking insects over Ham on 30 April. At Ryall Pit about 10 on 30 April. At Severn Ham, five hawking on 10 May. At Ashleworth, a couple hawking insects on 5, 10 May. At Coombe Hill, two over to north on 11 April, four on 14 April, ten on 12 May. At Wainlodes one nesting under bridge of water control structure on Parish Drain.

House Martin: At Tirley, three on 11 April. At Ryall Pit about 20 on 30 April. At Severn Ham, Tewkesbury, 10 on 10 May. At Haw Bridge, 20 collecting mud from river's edge on 9 June. At Coombe Hill, movement of 20 with Swifts on 12 May.

Meadow Pipit: None recorded anywhere and clearly not nesting in the Hams.

Yellow Wagtail: A few records of passage migrants in early spring, but no sign of nesting in hay meadows. At Strensham, five on a cereal field on 28 April may well have been breeding there. At the Great Hay Meadow, none breeding but one flying over, probably going to arable near Strensham on 1 June. Near Rudford a male, apparently preparing to breed in arable above the Leadon, on 4 May. At Ashleworth, two over on 29 April. At Coombe Hill a male on 7 May, one on 11 May, one on 18 May. At Broadboard Brook near Longford, a male in a wheat field on 28 May, still there on 26 June.

Grey Wagtail: On Leigh Meadows, one on 4 April.

Duncock: At Ashleworth, first juvenile caught on 26 May.

Robin: At Ashleworth, first juvenile of year caught on 26 May.

Nightingale: None at Strensham, a favoured site, on 28 April.

Redstart: Seems to have had an excellent year at Ashleworth and Coombe Hill, with good numbers singing. At Ashleworth, first three singing on 15 April, several giving alarm calls on 26 April, a total of about ten different males dinging in early May; for the first time ever a Redstart nested in a nest-box, a nest with three eggs being found on 6 May, later predated; six were caught on 17 June, including the first juveniles of the year; on 23 June, no song but plenty of adults giving alarm calls and eight caught, including one moulting adult and seven very recently hatched juveniles; hence at least three broods hatched successfully. At Coombe Hill, one on 12 April, three singing on 24 April, at least seven at west end of canal on 8 May, some still singing in June; at Cobney Meadows, one singing from 24 to 9 June. At Haw Bridge, one singing on 15 May. At Wainlodes, one singing from 15 May, alarm calls on 19 June. At Leigh Meadows, one with alarm calls on 23 April, one singing on 12 June.

Stonechat: No records of breeding birds this year.

Whinchat: Only one record, one at Ashleworth on 22 April.

Wheatear: Passes through in spring. At Bredon's Hardwick, a female on 29 April. At Ashleworth a male along Stank Lane on 7 April; another on 21 April.

Fieldfare: Large flocks gathering at the tops of willows, (to roost, or in preparation for migratory flights) on 5 April, 400 at Leigh Meadows, 260 at Hasfield. A straggler at Ashleworth on 15 April.

Redwing: One or two with the Fieldfares at Leigh Meadows on 5 April.

Mistle Thrush: Family party with young at Rectory Farm Meadows on 6 June.

Grasshopper Warbler: At Ashleworth and Coombe Hill, none found singing on the reserve on evenings in April or early May. But one reeling in a set-aside field outside the reserve, rarely visited, at Hasfield from 6 to 18 May, not found on evening of 23 May; maybe another reeling by day on 23 June.

Sedge Warbler: Breeding birds were probably badly affected by the heavy rain in mid May and floods in June, which will have washed out many nests and young from the long grass. At Strensham, six singing on 28 April. At Great Hay Meadow, about five singing on 28 April and 1 June. At Severn Ham, Tewkesbury, three or four on 10 May. At Ashleworth, several singing on evening of 26 April; of twelve adults caught on 5 May, eight had been trapped in previous years (one from 2003, three from 2004, one from 2005 and three from 2006; some were birds which had previously bred here, others were birds born here, yet others were birds previously caught as adult migrants in autumn); of eight caught on 26 May, five were retrapped adults; eight caught again on 3 June (five retraps), bringing the number of adults caught so far this year to 27, 14 of which were retraps from previous years (same figure as at same stage last year); only six caught on 17 June, including the first juvenile of the year, the small number perhaps representing movement away from area following heavy rain? On 17-19 June one singing very strongly at night, first thought to be a possible Marsh Warbler, but it wasn't; perhaps a bird displaced from elsewhere by heavy rainfall like the Sudmeadow bird below. On 23 June, seven adults caught (one a female in egg), but only one juvenile, last week's bird retrapped; this suggests that while some are trying to breed again after being washed out, others have failed and are moving out, while others are moving in from elsewhere. At Coombe Hill, the first bird singing on 11 April, five singing on 24 April, at least a dozen singing on 12 May, five in late May and early June, rather less song on 9 June, two or three on 12 June; very little song on 16 June, only one heard, one or two by night from 17 to 21 June. At Leigh Meadows several singing on 12 June. At Castlemeads, five singing on 12 May. At Sudmeadow, an area where they are unusual, a male singing on 15 June was the first of the year (perhaps a bird flooded out of its original site by recent heavy rain?). At Walmore, only four singing on 31 May, suggesting that numbers were low.

Reed Warbler: None singing at Strensham or along Avon by Great Hay Meadow on 28 April, but two or three at the Great Hay Meadow on 1 June; one singing by Avon at Rectory Farm Meadows on 6 June. First ones singing in the Severn Hams (where they often arrive late – perhaps because of the lack of reeds?) in osiers at Ashleworth on 11 May; two or three singing on 26 May when one adult was

caught; two singing during June; at Coombe Hill heard from 15 May, with three singing on 12 June and one singing at night late in the month, apparently with a nest very close to the hide. At Walmore, two singing well on evening of 21 May, and nine on 31 May.

Lesser Whitethroat: Seemed to continue singing rather longer than in most years. At Upton Ham, two singing on 30 April. At Longdon, one singing on 2 May. At Bredon's Hardwick, one on 29 April. At Ashleworth, one or two singing on 3 May, three trapped on 5 May, singing until 18 June, first juveniles caught on 23 June. At Haw Bridge, one singing on 9 June. At Coombe Hill, three on 17 April, singing until 19 June. At Leigh Meadows, one singing on 23 April, two still singing on 12 June, one on 16 June. At Port Ham, one on 18 April. At Walmore, one singing on 21 May, and only one on 31 May, suggesting that numbers were low.

Whitethroat: At Upton Ham, one singing on 30 April. At Severn Ham, Tewkesbury, several singing on 10 May. At Ashleworth, three on 22 April, and many singing in low-lying meadows (whereas they used to prefer higher ground), for the third year in succession, in May and June; still singing on 17 June, when six caught including the first three juveniles of year; about ten caught, mainly juveniles, on 23 June. At Coombe Hill, one heard on 7, three or four singing on 24 April, at least six in May, still three or four in June. At Leigh Meadows, three or four singing on 12 June. At Port Ham, one on 21 April, six singing on 12 May.

Garden Warbler: Scarce in the lower lying vale. At Lower Ham, Upton, one singing on 30 April. At Strensham, one singing on 28 April. At Coombe Hill, one by the Long Pool on 26 May.

Blackcap: At Upton Ham, two singing on 30 April. At Ashleworth, one on 15 April, two or three in May and June; first juveniles trapped on 23 June, presumably birds that had bred in surrounding woodland. At Coombe Hill, one singing on 8 April, four on 14 April, two or three singing until 19 June. At Port Ham, one on 21 April.

Chiffchaff: At Upton Ham, four singing on 30 April. At Ashleworth, six singing on 15 April, couple into May and June. At Coombe Hill, singing birds: seven on 5 April, twelve on 9 April, six on 14 April, two on evening of 18 April, rather less in late April and May, until 19 June; one or two singing at Cobney Meadows on 7 April. At Leigh Meadows, one singing on 5 April, two on 12 June. At Port Ham, two singing on 21 April.

Willow Warbler: At Coombe Hill, one singing on 8 April, ten on 14 April, three or four on 24 April continuing until 19 June. At Ashleworth, 20 on 15 April, about four singing on 3, 10 May, couple on 17 June; birds trapped on 23 June included adults in moult and some juveniles, suggesting that breeding was over in this species.

Goldcrest: At Ashleworth, where they are unusual in summer (no fir trees in immediate area), a juvenile caught on 17 June, perhaps born in Hasfield village.

Spotted Flycatcher: Very few records. Near Twynning, one on 1 June. At Ashleworth Quay, one on 19 June; reported to be breeding in Ashleworth village. Two nests on one house at Sandhurst on 26 June.

Long-tailed Tit: At Ashleworth, first fledged juveniles caught on 26 May. At Coombe Hill five on 29 May, ten on 16 June.

Coal Tit: Unusually for a woodland species, three juveniles at Ashleworth on 23 June, were the first ever caught there.

Great Tit: At Ashleworth, first four juveniles caught on 3 June; 30 caught on 17 June, nearly all juveniles.

Treecreeper: At Ashleworth, an adult trapped on 5 May, and a juvenile on 23 June. At Wainlodes, one singing on 24 April. At Coombe Hill, two singing on 7 April, one singing on 22 May, 5 June.

Jay: At Ashleworth, couple on 3 June. At Coombe Hill, two or three on 7 April, one on 12 May, two 29 May. At Leigh Meadows, one on 7 May.

Jackdaw: At Haw Bridge, many feeding on cut hayfields on 10 June. At Coombe Hill at least 30 coming to roost on 28 April; at least 10 harassing young Redshanks on 2 June; 100 coming to roost in willows round Long Pool on 11 June.

Carrion Crow: At Haw Bridge, many on cut hayfield on 10 June. At Coombe Hill, at least 50 gathering to roost on 8 April, 30 on 28 April, must have had an effect on breeding birds; a fledged immature begging for food on the ground there on 12 May. At Leigh Meadows, several hundred on freshly cut hayfields on 29 May, 100 in different fields on 12 June.

Raven: Over Tirley, three on 16 June. Near Haw Bridge, one on 6 May, two on 10 June. At Ashleworth, one on 7 April. At Cobney Meadows, one on 7 April. At Walmore, at least 63 going to roost on 12 May, exceptional figure of 254 roosting on 31 May.

Chaffinch: At Ashleworth, first juvenile caught on 3 June.

Bullfinch: At Ashleworth, two or three on 3 May, two caught on 5 May. At Coombe Hill, up to five in April and May, two or three on 16 June.

Yellowhammer: Like Whitethroat, this species seems to be moving down into low lying meadows from higher arable land. At Strensham, one singing over arable on 28 April. At Rectory Farm Meadows, one singing near Avon on 6 June. At Tirley, one singing on 17 June. At Haw Bridge, one singing on 10 June. At Coombe Hill, one singing on higher ground near Deerhurst Walton on 20 May, one by canal on 29 May, 9, 16 June. At Wainlodes, one or two singing 12 May to 19 June. At Leigh Meadows, two (not singing) on 5 April. At Walmore one singing just west of the Common on 31 May.

Reed Bunting: Seems to have been badly hit by heavy rain in mid May and by June floods; many nests undoubtedly lost in long wet grass. At Upton Ham, one or two were singing in late April. At Great Hay Meadow, about five singing on 1 June. Three or four singing at Rectory Farm Meadows on 6 June. At Severn Ham, Tewkesbury, two or three on 10 May. At Ashleworth, several singing in late April and May; three caught (two retraps from previous years) on 5 May; nest with three or four day-old young found on 26 May, but young did not survive heavy downpours in late May and were found dead; only three caught on 3 June; some song, three caught (including first juvenile of year) on 17 June, maybe reflecting loss of birds in wet weather; singing on 23 June and six juveniles caught, together with a female in egg; this suggests that some birds at least are trying again. At Coombe Hill, five (some song) on 7 April, ten or more on 14 April, five singing on 12 May, up to five singing during May until 19 June. At Broadboard Brook near Longford, two singing on 26 May. At Leigh Meadows, two singing on 7 May, one or two singing on 12 June. At Port Ham, a male on 18, 21 April, two males and a female on 12 May. At Walmore, four, one singing, on 21 May; fourteen singing on 31 May, suggesting that breeding birds may have benefitted from reduced grazing on the Common.

Corn Bunting: At Upton Ham, at least three singing on 27, 30 April. At Strensham and Great Hay Meadow, none on 28 April, but two singing on hedge alongside hay meadow on 1 June. At Severn Ham, Tewkesbury, one singing from telegraph wires on 10 May.

These are unconfirmed records, compiled by M. Smart from his own observations and those of David Anderson, Gordon Avery, Les Brown, Andy Jayne, Mervyn Greening and John Sanders, with some notes from the log-books in the hides at Ashleworth and Coombe Hill, and cherries picked from the Gloster Birder website.

cc: Gordon Avery, Juliet Bailey, Richard Baatsen, Emma Bradshaw, Pete Bradshaw, Les Brown, Colin Butters, Ian Carle, John Clarke, John Coates, David Evans, Colin Evers, Mervyn Greening, Mark Grieve, John Hodson, Robert Homan, Andy Jayne, Mike King, John Martin, Julia Newth, Brian Smith, Colin Studholme, Viv Phillips, Alisa Watson, Ros Willder.