

Nest Record News

A newsletter for supporters of the NEST RECORD SCHEME, forming part of the BTO's Integrated Population Monitoring Programme carried out under contract to the Nature Conservancy Council.

No. 6 MAY 1990

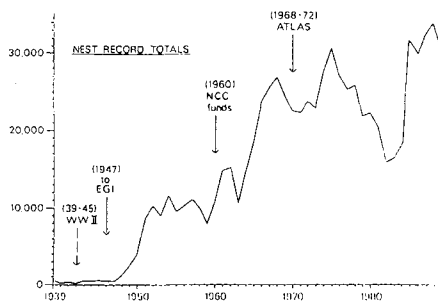
THE NEW CARD AT LAST!

1990 sees the full-scale introduction of the NEW NEST RECORD CARD!

The new orange-and-white card is a big step forward for the Nest Record Scheme: it incorporates several revolutionary changes while retaining some of the tried and tested attributes of the old green card. To find out more, see inside this issue of Nest Record News or, even better, write or phone for some new cards to use this season.

THE FIRST ANNUAL BREEDING REPORT

1989 saw the publication of the first annual breeding report of the Nest Record Scheme in BTO News (No.164) entitled "Breeding Birds in 1988". This was the first tentative step towards providing an annual appraisal of the breeding performance of a range of species compared with the average levels for the previous ten years. The article gave information on the laying dates and clutch sizes of 27 species. The analysis involved 47,340 cards that had been entered onto the BTO computer: mind-boggling to imagine how long such an analysis would have taken in the pre-computer era! If you have not seen a copy of this report in BTO News please don't hesitate to write in to the Nest Records Unit at Beech Grove and one will be sent to you without delay.



ANOTHER EXCITING SEASON

1989 proved to be another in the recent series of excellent seasons for the Scheme. By 31st March, the grand total of 30,762 cards covering 174 species had been received and safely housed at the BTO's headquarters - a total just short of last season's record breaking year.

A VERY LARGE "THANK YOU"
TO YOU ALL!

MORE MILESTONES PASSED IN 1989

Among the raptors, the 1,500th Barn Owl card came from G.Pearce, Devon and the 3,000th Buzzard nest history came from G. & G.Austin, Strathclyde. Among the shore and water birds, the 500th Rock Pipit card came from B.J.Robson on the Inner Farnes, Northumberland; the 2,000th Great Crested Grebe card from J.Szczur, Nottingham; the 3,000th Mute Swan card from B.Proctor & A.E.Coleman, Staffs (6 cygnets hatched on reed-fringed lake); and 9,000th Oystercatcher card from R.Stevens, Notts Birdwatchers (clutch of 2 on island of fast flowing Highland river). Higher up the league table were several passerines including the 10,000th House Sparrow card submitted by J.E.Veal, Kent (brood in the roof lining of toilets in a military camp).

1989 - ANOTHER EARLY START: GLOBAL WARMING OR WHAT?

Breeding activities were well underway in the New Year as record-breaking mild weather occurred in mid-winter for the second year running. JANUARY saw exceptional cases of Raven and Great Crested Grebe with young as well as Robin, Blackbird and Song Thrush. It heralded the start of a very protracted season for many residents. FEBRUARY produced reports of early Moorhen, Mallard and Mistle Thrush broods before late frosts and snow in parts of the country during MARCH and APRIL led to widespread losses among early nesting waders, wildfowl, Rook, Woodlark and Dipper. The consistently dry winter and spring in most regions held back vegetation development and nest-building by a variety of birds, including Mute Swan, Coot and Reed Bunting.

TITMICE AND OWLS MISS OUT

Many nestbox scheme operators describe 1989 only as a 'fair' year, success-wise, for Great, Blue and Coal Tits. Pairs at lower altitudes tended to get off to an early start: less so those on higher ground where egg laying was often staggered, with cases of repeat clutches and second broods few. Most partial losses of broods were attributed to a poor match of the main caterpillar crop and developing young.

Owls, also, could not match the outstandingly successful season of 1988. Mice and vole populations collapsed widely despite another favourable mild winter. Tawny and Long-eared Owls were particularly badly affected. Some Tawnies held territory but failed to lay; others reared small broods, often a single owlet. Some observers reported owl clutches forsaken and boxes taken over by later-rearing Kestrels. Kestrels and Barn Owls seem to have been better able to exploit avian and immature rat prey this year in places.

HOT SUMMER HELPS MANY RESIDENTS

The prolonged fine and generally warm weather from much of APRIL through to JULY in many regions ensured a productive year for most resident birds. After a third mild winter in a row, the populations of residents such as Goldcrest, Robin, Pied Wagtail, Treecreeper and Long-tailed Tit were already at an unusually high level. This was reflected by high card totals submitted for such species. Repeated successful nest outcomes should provide the basis for further rises, although brood sizes seemed to be decreasing, perhaps in response to over-crowded territories. The exceptionally high temperatures of MAY, and a continuing lack of substantial rainfall, did not benefit all residents. Parched meadows, marsh and moorland, and low river levels combined to limit some foods and expose vulnerable nests; this resulted in high losses locally among Curlew, Redshank, Lapwing and Kingfishers.

MIXED FORTUNES AMONG MIGRANTS

The high temperatures of late spring and summer tended to favour most migrants. Nestbox co-ordinators in the north and west reported another fine year for Pied Flycatcher and Redstart, both in terms of fresh boxes taken and broods reared. It was also especially encouraging to see further successes for the formerly depleted populations of trans-saharan migrants, notably Sand Martin, Sedge Warbler and Yellow Wagtail.

The wealth of insect life helped birds on heath, moor and farm, such as Nightjar, Whinchat and Swallow, to consistently rear twin sets of young. Sadly no nest histories for Marsh Warbler were received and just a lone Red-backed Shrike held territory on one traditional Breckland site. But nature never fails to amaze one and our formerly 'lost' Osprey population has now swollen to over 50 occupied nests while the fragile relict Montagu's Harrier population yielded almost 20 free-flying young in a generally productive year all round.

If the warm winters are heralds of a global warming effect, the Nest Record Scheme will provide an interesting record both to chart its effects on our populations of breeding birds and to allow prediction of its consequences.

1989 CARD INTAKE - SAMPLE HIGHLIGHTS

A great strength of the Nest Record Scheme comes from the wide national coverage that is achieved each year. In almost all parts of the country there are birdwatchers who fill in just a handful of detailed cards for nests found on their local "patch". Then there are others who are able to spend more time, sometimes concentrating on a particular species or travelling widely to find nests. Such 'specialists' provide very useful detailed information that can be used to calibrate the widespread national coverage achieved by other recorders. Both types of recorder are equally vital to the maintenance of the value of the Scheme. Among these, nest finders who completed one hundred or more cards are listed below. This gives some idea of the spread of nest finders, shows which species are receiving specialist attention and reveals just what can be achieved by an individual or group.

This year the Trust received cards from 430 individuals and from 65 groups. Those birdwatchers operating through the 24 local bird clubs, 26 ringing groups, or the 15 National, County or RSPB Nature Reserves have the advantages of being able to exchange ideas, helping with co-operative projects, and reducing the Trust's time with administration. THANK YOU ALL!

This year we have not only shown how many Nest Record Cards each recorder or group has sent to the BTO, but also how many of these cards were for nests visited more than once (eg: 109/82 means 109 cards of which 82 were multi-visit nest histories). Single-visit cards have limited usefulness, primarily to describe habitat and nest-site: relatively few may be used to reveal other information, except when a nest is found at egg-laying, hatching or fledging. Multiple-visit cards are much more valuable, because even just two visits allow the calculation of the survival rate of a nest during the period between two visits. Furthermore, multiple-visit cards show whether egg laying has finished, and hence whether the observed clutch size is complete, and allows a more accurate calculation to be made of the first egg laying date - an important fact.

G & H Alexander (Hants) 109/82 cards inc. 48 Swallow, 12 House Martin;
W D Allen (Shrops) 168/166 cards inc. 4 Spotted Flycatcher, 20 Blue Tit;
D J Andrews (Co. Down) 102/98 cards inc. 9 Black Guillemot, 6 Rock Pipit;
Argyll Bird Club (Strath) 221/217 cards inc. 32 Pied Flycatcher, 53 Great Tit; P & G Baker (Cumbria) 470/315 cards inc. 11 Lapwing, 125 Blue Tit;
Barnsley Ringing Group (S. Yorks) 159/109 cards inc. 21 Heron, 69 Sparrowhawk; J & C F Barrett (Co Durham) 151/151 cards inc. 9 Redstart, 12 Coal Tit; G Bottomley (Cumbria) 120/120 cards inc. 56 Pied Flycatcher, 18 Great Tit; J E A Brook & R C Cooke (Warks) 1,078/887 cards inc. 35 Oystercatcher, 310 Woodpigeon, 106 Blackbird; R H Bucknall (Northum) 134/88 cards inc. 5 Kestrel, 7 Sand Martin; P J K Burton, T G Holder & M Hunt (Herts) 134/122 cards all Kestrel; R F Butler (Worcs) 147/142 cards inc. 27 Canada Goose, 17 Blackbird; Calf of Man Bird Observatory (I.O.M.) 245/192 cards inc. 76 Greater Black-backed Gull, 52 Razorbill; J M Cheverton (I.O.W.) 100/42 cards inc. 12 Moorhen, 26 House Martin; J Clark (Gwynedd) 246/229 cards inc. 23 Tufted Duck, 75 Common Tern; D H Connick & M Humphreys (Glamorgan) 130/130 cards inc. 66 Pied Flycatcher, 43 Blue Tit; J E S Cooper & R F Sanderson (Sussex) 274/254 cards inc. 94 Great Tit, 9 Nuthatch; M J Cowlard (Surrey) 107/94 cards inc. 75 Sparrowhawk, 2 Kestrel; D Cox & I. M & B Hawes (Bucks) 492/455 cards inc. 54 Pied Wagtail, 58 Song Thrush, 11 Linnet; A V Cross (Dyfed) 143/120 cards inc. 7 Barn Owl, 90 Raven; R E Danson (Lancs) 355/355 cards inc. 55 Swallow, 13 Jackdaw, 96 Tree Sparrow; P G & S G Davis (Surrey) 146/128 cards inc. 10 Woodlark, 11 Spotted Flycatcher; C N Davison (Lothn) 142/93 cards inc. 18 Skylark, 13 Willow Warbler; M Davison (Northumbria Ringing Group) 395/377 cards inc. 21 Merlin, 18 Tawny Owl, 135 Blue Tit; S J Denny (RSPB Havergate Island, Suffolk) 178 cards inc. 117 Common Tern; M L Denton (W Yorks) 128/128 cards inc. 11 Black-headed Gull, 10 Dunnock; J Driver (Gwynedd) 250/249 cards inc. 15 Redstart, 81 Carrion Crow; C Du Feu & family (Notts) 108/108 cards inc. 6 Wren, 26 Great Tit; J Dyda (Gwynedd) 150/127 cards inc. 35 Wren, 9 Rook; J E Flynn (Glos) 142/74 cards inc. 17 Dipper, 36 Pied Flycatcher; D M Francis (Northants) 101/94 cards inc. 16 Coal Tit, 26 Blue Tit; D J Garner (Cams) 168/112 cards inc. 9 Long-eared Owl, 3 Kingfisher;

R Graham (Dumfries) 164/95 cards inc. 10 Sparrowhawk, 13 Chaffinch; K Green (Lancs) 124/124 cards inc. 22 Swallow, 16 Tree Sparrow; S R Hacker (Tays) 262/262 cards inc. 18 Lapwing, 61 Swallow, 51 Tree Sparrow; H R Hammacott (Bristol Naturalists' Society) 361/136 cards inc. 46 Willow Warbler, 28 Linnet, 41 Yellowhammer; P Hawkey (The National Trust, Northumberland) 702/702 cards inc. 73 Shag, 90 Kittiwake, 97 Guillemot; L S Higgins (W Yorks) 217/139 cards inc. 101 Swallow, 19 Dipper; L P & D Hildred (Lincs) 152/148 cards inc. 2 Woodcock, 14 Robin; P & D Hill (G. Manchester) 101/66 cards inc. 15 Great Crested Grebe, 13 Coot; T W Hill (Mersey) 235/235 cards inc. 38 Song Thrush, 27 Linnet; P R Holness (Suffolk) 337/141 cards inc. 1 Egyptian Goose, 209 Swallow, 16 Pied Wagtail; B R Hughes (Surrey) 108/79 cards inc. 25 Pied Wagtail, 11 Rook; J Keiser (Hants) 208/208 cards inc. 5 Cuckoo, 23 Reed Warbler; T Kuechel, C Harrison & P & V Roe (W Yorks) 183/157 cards inc. 35 Blackbird, 10 Mistle Thrush; J M S Lewis & S J Roberts (Gwent) 238/207 cards inc. 3 Wigeon, 53 Dipper, 12 Wood Warbler; J V Lloyd (Dyfed) 179/135 cards inc. 21 Swallow, 35 Pied Flycatcher; R Louch & D Tomson (Oxon) 305/305 cards inc. 29 Whitethroat, 34 Blackcap, 58 Chiffchaff; I McAlpine (South Wirral) 113/64 cards inc. 13 Moorhen, 8 Arctic Tern; B A Madden (Dublin) 153/153 cards inc. 104 Swallow, 9 Jackdaw; C F Mapletoft (Birklands Ringing Group, Notts) 926/893 cards inc. 67 Wren, 186 Blackbird, 46 Chaffinch; F Mawby (Cumbria) 133/111 cards inc. 43 Lapwing, 8 Curlew; P Maynard, J Baldwin & J Groves (Hants) 463/369 cards inc. 18 Barn Owl, 18 Nightjar, 20 Tree Pipit; M Meadows (Essex) 484/440 cards inc. 40 Song Thrush, 28 House Sparrow, 18 Greenfinch; B Mearns (Dumfries) 108/79 cards inc. 13 Oystercatcher, 11 Chaffinch; C Smith (Mid-Lincs Ringing Group) 162/136 cards inc. 13 Tawny Owl, 20 Blue Tit; J Mullins & A Riley (Midxx) 100/30 cards inc. 10 Sparrowhawk, 8 Tree Pipit; C Murray (Durham) 103/65 cards inc. 8 Sparrowhawk, 5 Long-tailed Tit; D A Myers (Hereford) 123/95 cards inc. 7 Oystercatcher, 22 Starling; P C Noakes (Norfolk) 158/148 cards inc. 140 Swallow, 4 Pied Wagtail; Dr D Norman (Cheshire) 240/115 cards inc. 39 Grey Heron, 10 Skylark; A B Old (Cumbria) 154/154 cards inc. 92 Pied Flycatcher, 21 Great Tit; Orkney Ringing Group (per E R Meek) 481/297 cards inc. 46 Red-throated Diver, 67 Hen Harrier, 15 Hooded Crow; L O'Toole (Tipperary Ringing Group) 214/165 cards inc. 52 Black-headed Gull, 30 Swallow; P Page (Devon) 158/158 cards inc. 81 Pied Flycatcher, 49 Blue Tit; R H Peart (Dorset) 255/192 cards inc. 42 Blackbird, 19 Spotted Flycatcher; P F J Playford (Gwent) 103/103 cards inc. 58 Pied Flycatcher, 32 Blue Tit; I Proctor (Glos) 308/308 cards inc. 92 Pied Flycatcher, 50 Great Tit; W Proctor (Warwick) 847/772 cards inc. 43 Heron, 71 Mute Swan, 43 Starling; G Richardson (Staffs) 112/111 cards inc. 22 Coot, 3 Redstart; J Richardson (Durham) 1242/620 cards inc. 39 Lapwing, 106 Song Thrush, 23 Chaffinch; H Robb (Stirling) 225/211 cards inc. 13 Grey Wagtail, 65 Redstart; J A L Roberts (Clwyd) 152/152 cards inc. 69 Pied Flycatcher, 7 Rook; J & T Robinson (Cumbria) 104/92 cards inc. 19 Swallow, 13 Great Tit; A Shaw (Notts) 100/52 cards inc. 19 Nightjar, 5 Ring Ouzel; G Shaw & A Dowell (Dumfries & Galloway) 190/132 cards inc. 48 Barn Owl, 40 Pied Wagtail; S P Singleton (W Yorks) 144/144 cards inc. 4 Wood Warbler, 77 Blue Tit; S J Smith (Gwent) 133/102 cards inc. 20 Meadow Pipit, 61 Whinchat; I M Spence (Clwyd) 195/195 cards inc. 6 Tawny Owl, 55 Pied Flycatcher; B Standley (Cheshire) 126/72 cards inc. 5 Reed Warbler, 4 Long-tailed Tit; R J Stevens (Notts Birdwatchers) 331/322 cards inc. 20 Oystercatcher, 33 Nightjar, 55 House Martin; R L Swann (Glenurquhart Bird Club, Highland) 222/194 cards inc. 17 Buzzard, 28 Tawny Owl, 12 Wheatear; J Szczur (South West Notts Ringing Group) 629/557 cards inc. 5 Nightingale, 42 Sedge Warbler, 57 Reed Bunting; D M Tuck (Surrey) 118/98 cards inc. 6 Canada Goose, 21 Blackbird; S J Tyler, S J Ormerod, D Hudson & S Pester (Powys) 292/227 cards inc. 81 Grey Wagtail, 187 Dipper; G A Vaughan (Devon) 127/127 cards inc. 68 Pied Flycatcher, 13 Nuthatch; R Walton (Tyne and Wear) 103/103 cards inc. 22 Swallow, 11 Spotted Flycatcher; D Warden (Avon) 210/167 cards inc. 32 Coot, 51 Reed Warbler; E H Webb (Suffolk) 127/125 cards inc. 21 Swallow, 46 Blue Tit; P Webb (South Derbyshire Ringing Group) 376/376 cards inc. 171 Pied Flycatcher, 15 Nuthatch; S M Williams (Gwent) 143/96 cards inc. 8 Wheatear, 11 Song Thrush; A D D Wilson (Rye Meads Ringing Group, Herts) 351/328 cards inc. 37 Common Tern, 37 Sedge Warbler, 24 Reed Bunting; N Winter (Wilts) 106/76 cards inc. 7 Great Crested Grebe, 32 Reed Warbler.

TOTALS FOR NEST RECORD SCHEME FROM PRE 1988 to 1989

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>Pre-88</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Red-throated Diver + *	1,422	122	92	1,636
Black-throated Diver +	143	8	4	155
Little Grebe	1,400	76	51	1,527
Great Crested Grebe	1,901	60	80	2,041
Red-necked Grebe +	-	1	-	1
Slavonian Grebe +	135	4	7	146
Black-necked Grebe +	12	-	-	12
Fulmar	2,203	153	218	2,574
Manx Shearwater	51	3	41	95
Storm Petrel	30	1	-	31
Leach's Petrel +	2	-	-	2
Gannet	22	-	-	22
Cormorant	1,018	7	40	1,065
Shag	2,549	331	85	2,965
Bittern +	17	-	-	17
Little Bittern +	1	-	-	1
Grey Heron *	2,302	121	227	2,650
Mute Swan *	2,804	107	181	3,092
Whooper Swan +	-	1	-	1
Greylag Goose +	406	18	11	435
Canada Goose	1,194	122	120	1,436
Egyptian Goose	2	3	2	7
Shelduck	201	-	8	209
Mandarin	156	11	16	183
Wigeon	110	7	8	125
Gadwall	46	4	5	55
Teal	160	9	5	174
Mallard	5,771	265	202	6,238
Pintail +	11	3	4	18
Garganey +	7	-	-	7
Shoveler	97	6	3	106
Pochard	107	-	-	107
Tufted Duck	730	53	42	825
Scaup +	1	-	-	1
Eider	1,558	157	109	1,824
Common Scoter +	30	1	7	38
Goldeneye +	18	4	4	26
Red-breasted Merganser	208	3	8	219
Goosander	140	11	20	171
Ruddy Duck	24	3	6	33
Honey Buzzard +	8	-	1	9
Red Kite +	15	-	-	15
Marsh Harrier +	7	2	1	10
Hen Harrier + *	576	124	165	865
Montagu's Harrier +	46	-	-	46
Goshawk +	93	21	44	158
Sparrowhawk *	2,742	237	283	3,262
Buzzard *	2,772	140	116	3,028
Golden Eagle +	332	16	22	370
Osprey +	26	4	-	30
Kestrel *	3,766	365	350	4,481
Merlin + *	966	194	166	1,326
Hobby + *	333	27	11	371
Peregrine + *	1,066	103	112	1,281
Red Grouse	493	40	14	547

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>PRE-88</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Ptarmigan	87	6	2	95
Black Grouse	32	-	1	33
Capercaillie	61	1	-	62
Red-legged Partridge	382	8	5	395
Grey Partridge	730	7	10	747
Quail +	10	-	-	10
Pheasant	1,681	44	42	1,767
Lady Amherst's Pheasant	1	-	-	1
Water Rail	62	2	3	67
Corncrake +	26	-	-	26
Moorhen *	15,954	382	421	16,757
Coot	8,589	369	439	9,397
Oystercatcher	8,219	522	404	9,145
Black-winged Stilt +	1	-	-	1
Avocet +	95	56	24	175
Stone-curlew +	370	14	2	386
Little Ringed Plover +	1,128	52	69	1,249
Ringed Plover *	5,433	300	224	5,957
Kentish Plover +	19	-	-	19
Dotterel +	126	5	4	135
Golden Plover	670	53	22	745
Lapwing *	15,022	552	489	16,063
Temminck's Stint +	1	-	-	1
Purple Sandpiper +	3	-	-	3
Dunlin	499	13	5	517
Ruff +	1	-	-	1
Snipe	1,197	41	24	1,262
Woodcock	501	11	7	519
Black-tailed Godwit +	6	6	-	12
Whimbrel +	47	-	5	52
Curlew	1,973	83	65	2,121
Redshank	1,721	53	39	1,813
Greenshank +	134	3	8	145
Wood Sandpiper +	2	-	-	2
Common Sandpiper	1,007	35	34	1,076
Red-necked Phalarope +	32	-	1	33
Arctic Skua	221	8	6	235
Great Skua	286	6	1	293
Little Gull +	3	-	-	3
Black-headed Gull	3,628	493	550	4,671
Mediterranean Gull +	2	-	-	2
Common Gull	1,918	148	176	2,242
Lesser Black-backed Gull	794	121	42	957
Herring Gull	3,551	158	75	3,784
Great Black-backed Gull	867	97	3	967
Kittiwake	2,025	346	380	2,751
Lesser Crested Tern +	-	-	1	1
Sandwich Tern	510	63	1	574
Roseate Tern +	130	-	-	130
Common Tern	2,760	304	238	3,302
Arctic Tern	2,688	213	119	3,020
Little Tern +	3,092	212	197	3,501
Guillemot	817	73	106	996
Razorbill	431	37	76	544
Black Guillemot	759	88	39	886
Puffin	165	-	-	165
Rock Dove	172	4	18	194
Feral Pigeon	876	43	48	967
Stock Dove *	3,887	145	164	4,196
Woodpigeon	16,665	544	676	17,885
Collared Dove *	2,093	153	156	2,402

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>Pre-88</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Turtle Dove	1,651	20	23	1,694
Ring-necked Parakeet	2	-	-	2
Cuckoo	1,502	52	33	1,587
Barn Owl + *	1,198	236	196	1,630
Snowy Owl +	1	-	-	1
Little Owl *	1,124	48	59	1,231
Tawny Owl *	4,003	361	307	4,671
Long-eared Owl *	432	31	20	483
Short-eared Owl *	211	29	28	268
Nightjar	685	49	96	830
Swift	832	36	50	918
Kingfisher +	386	34	37	457
Hoopoe +	1	-	-	1
Wryneck +	12	1	2	15
Green Woodpecker	231	13	13	257
Great Spotted Woodpecker	657	52	31	740
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	120	5	7	132
Woodlark +	399	37	23	459
Skylark *	5,630	141	104	5,875
Sand Martin	771	79	48	898
Swallow *	29,914	2,171	1,826	33,911
House Martin	3,485	616	489	4,590
Tree Pipit	1,166	48	62	1,276
Meadow Pipit *	7,042	312	170	7,524
Rock Pipit	469	24	29	522
Yellow Wagtail	793	28	15	836
Grey Wagtail *	3,623	264	270	4,157
Pied Wagtail	6,233	255	359	6,847
Dipper	5,579	494	535	6,608
Wren *	10,592	391	567	11,550
Duncock	25,619	453	529	26,601
Robin *	15,042	464	468	15,974
Nightingale	349	22	23	394
Bluethroat +	1	-	-	1
Black Redstart +	121	5	-	126
Redstart *	3,838	223	258	4,319
Whinchat	1,336	118	112	1,566
Stonechat	1,764	46	43	1,853
Wheatear *	2,491	155	101	2,747
Ring Ouzel	1,119	60	40	1,219
Blackbird	106,905	2,088	2,013	111,006
Fieldfare +	5	-	-	5
Song Thrush *	63,663	967	983	65,613
Redwing +	88	3	5	96
Mistle Thrush	5,778	178	208	6,164
Cetti's Warbler +	18	-	-	18
Grasshopper Warbler *	273	15	6	294
Savi's Warbler +	2	-	-	2
Sedge Warbler *	3,380	111	124	3,615
Marsh Warbler +	106	-	-	106
Reed Warbler *	8,252	333	276	8,861
Dartford Warbler +	333	18	21	372
Lesser Whitethroat *	645	25	18	688
Whitethroat *	4,616	98	110	4,824
Garden Warbler *	1,225	76	60	1,361
Blackcap *	2,231	105	102	2,438
Wood Warbler *	1,525	110	77	1,712
Chiffchaff *	1,563	125	121	1,809
Willow Warbler *	9,745	338	308	10,391
Goldcrest *	610	9	50	669
Firecrest +	9	-	-	9

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>Pre-88</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Spotted Flycatcher	7,948	306	269	8,523
Pied Flycatcher	15,511	1,861	1,893	19,265
Bearded Tit +	53	-	-	53
Long-tailed Tit	3,262	102	175	3,539
Marsh Tit	910	31	34	975
Willow Tit	343	19	9	371
Crested Tit +	165	14	17	196
Coal Tit	3,565	154	130	3,849
Blue Tit	41,172	2,994	2,431	46,597
Great Tit	26,372	1,736	1,640	29,748
Nuthatch *	1,418	127	144	1,689
Treecreeper	1,644	71	85	1,800
Short-toed Treecreeper +	1	-	-	1
Golden Oriole +	6	9	3	18
Red-backed Shrike +	251	-	-	251
Jay	1,143	33	33	1,209
Maggie *	4,506	201	188	4,895
Chough +	375	11	16	402
Jackdaw	3,781	216	209	4,206
Rook	3,840	935	849	5,624
Carrion Crow	4,237	200	226	4,663
Hooded Crow	832	70	43	945
Raven *	1,945	151	141	2,237
Starling *	10,474	475	436	11,385
House Sparrow	9,828	163	214	10,205
Tree Sparrow	12,462	284	290	13,036
Chaffinch *	16,401	429	426	17,256
Brambling +	-	2	-	2
Serin +	2	-	-	2
Greenfinch	11,472	211	218	11,901
Goldfinch	2,405	47	74	2,526
Siskin	49	7	-	56
Linnet *	22,052	356	391	22,799
Twite	768	9	14	791
Redpoll	1,196	19	13	1,228
Common Crossbill +	93	3	1	97
Parrot Crossbill +	4	-	-	4
Scarlet Rosefinch +	1	-	-	1
Bullfinch	4,657	66	65	4,788
Hawfinch	114	12	3	129
Snow Bunting +	10	-	-	10
Yellowhammer	5,505	142	136	5,783
Cirl Bunting +	57	1	6	64
Reed Bunting	6,442	186	158	6,786
Corn Bunting *	447	14	19	480
<u>TOTALS</u>	<u>Pre-88</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>GRAND TOTAL</u>
	733,506	32,461	30,762	796,734

- + Bird species protected under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act
 * TARGET SPECIES - deserving special attention as indicators of environmental change within the BTO's Integrated Monitoring Programme.

The totals for pre-1988 and 1988 have changed since those printed in Nest Record News No.5 due to the addition of cards received at the BTO after March 1989.

WHY A NEW NEST RECORD CARD?

The new card has been introduced for three very good reasons:

- 1) To increase the usefulness of each record by introducing a standardised coding system for habitats and for the stage of the nest and its contents. This will allow comparisons to be made easily between different nest records and will guide recorders as to the amount of information that the BTO needs.
- 2) To increase the speed and efficiency with which the BTO can analyse the cards. No longer will BTO staff have to spend a considerable length of time trying to categorise the habitat descriptions on cards. The sheer number of cards that we have has required one person to be occupied full-time simply coding the cards. Now, the use of "tick-boxes" on one side of the card will allow the information to be read automatically into the BTO computer using an Optical Mark Reader a machine similar to those that "read" bar-codes on library books or on food packaging: being both accurate and speedy!
- 3) To decrease the amount of writing required from recorders. The introduction of "tick-boxes" for habitat and nest-site and of two-letter codes for describing the nest and its contents will substantially decrease the amount of writing on the new card compared with the old. This can't be a bad thing!

Easier with time

At first, it may take some time to become familiar with the new codes, but the experience of the majority of recorders who tried out the prototype card in 1989 was that the new systems of codes were quickly learnt and the cards were easier to complete.

The benefits to the Trust, of the increased potential of the Nest Record Scheme due to the new card, will be enormous. If you have not yet received the new instruction booklet, yellow coding cards and new Nest Record Cards, do please drop us a line, or telephone, to the Nest Records Unit at Beech Grove. We will be very pleased to send you a set.

ANALYSES OF NEST RECORD CARDS

The last year saw the publication of a number of interesting analyses of Nest Record Cards. All such publications are a fitting tribute to the thousands of hours of fieldwork made each year by you, the Nest Recorders. They bear ample witness to the value of all your efforts and are a tangible proof of the worth of the information that has been collected over the years: (a) David Glue published his synthesis of "The Breeding Biology of the Grasshopper Warbler in Britain" in British Birds (Vol 83: pages 131-145); (b) Martin Kelsey and co-workers wrote a pair of papers on Marsh Warblers in Bird Study (36:205-210) and British Birds (82:239-256); (c) Davies and Brooke studied the evolution of anti-Cuckoo behaviour by hosts (Journal of Animal Ecology 58:225-236); (d) R. Green wrote a theoretical paper on the analysis of nest survival rates using Snipe nest records (Ibis 131: 305-306); (e) Eileen Parrinder used Nest Record Cards to add to the BTO national survey of Little Ringed Plovers (Bird Study 36:147-153).

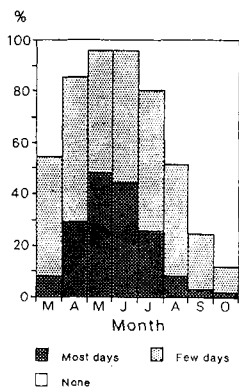
"Breeding Birds of the Isle of Wight" by J.M. Cheverton. Published by IOW Nat.Hist. & Archaeol.Soc., 66 Carisbrooke Rd., Newport, IOW, PO30 1BW. 99 pages. £7.50. This is an excellent book by a Nest Recorder who has been contributing Nest Record Cards to the BTO since 1955. Here he has charted the breeding records of birds obtained over many seasons by himself and by the many Island birdwatchers who have contributed to the local Bird Reports and to the 1st BTO National Breeding Atlas. Each species is covered by a map of breeding records on a one-kilometre square basis and is accompanied by a brief description of typical nest sites and some useful details about the breeding distribution shown.

New Projects

Eleven new projects were initiated by Nest Recorders in 1989: (a) David Baines - Black Grouse; (b) Michael Bayliss - Cuckoo (to draw up a list of hosts found in Oxfordshire for the forthcoming County Atlas); (c) John Callion - Stonechat; (d) Peter Hudson - Red Grouse; (e) Alan Maule - Avocet (for the RSPB); (f) Clive McKay - Choughs; (g) Malcolm Ogilvie - Common Scoter (for the Nature Conservancy Council); (h) Robin Perry - Little Tern records for an area near Redcar to help in drawing up a conservation plan; (i) Peter Reynolds - Short-eared Owl (in relation to Orkney Vole populations); (j) David Snow - Willow Tit (to fill in a vital gap in the next BWP (Birds of the Western Palearctic), of which he is the chief editor); (k) Bill Taylor - Crested Tit (he has contributed about one third of all Crested Tit cards).

What about you?

Currently there are 37 studies underway that are using Nest Record Cards, 11 of which are by amateur birdwatchers. Analysing Nest Record Cards is interesting, challenging and rewarding and not just for the scientist. If you would like to get to know a particular species better and fancy analysing a set of Nest Record Cards, please don't hesitate to contact Humphrey Crick or David Glue. We will be pleased to give you advice and help in planning, analysis and writing up your study.



SEASONAL COVERAGE: ENCOURAGING SIGNS

In order to assess accurately the breeding performance of our birds it is vital that the scheme receives records covering the entire season. The adjacent histogram shows the monthly effort expended overall by some 380 recorders during 1989, based upon the summary sheets sent in by them.

As in earlier years, nest finding effort was concentrated during the key months of April, May and June, but 1989 does show some encouraging signs of increased effort both before, and after, these months. Do please make every effort in 1990 to improve the picture further by searching systematically through the entire laying period to ensure a record of those important second and third broods.

SENDING IN YOUR CARDS

Please send all completed cards in one batch as soon as your fieldwork finishes - by the end of January if at all possible and by 15th February at the very latest (if you want them to be included in next year's Nest Record News). Early batches of cards and comments throughout the season provide useful material for articles prepared for BTO News. Cards can be handed directly to staff, if you are passing Beech Grove, or if you plan to attend one of the BTO's conferences.

PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOUR CARDS ARRIVE IN ONE PIECE BY BINDING THEM WITH RUBBER BANDS OR STRING, BEFORE PLACING THEM IN A POLYTHENE BAG AND PAPER WRAPPING WITH A BOLDLY MARKED ADDRESS LABEL. Many thanks. It is always tragic when cards go missing in the post due to flimsy packaging. Ordinary envelopes are not strong enough to take more than 20 cards; padded envelopes are much more suitable. Please don't let your hard-won data be lost like this.

SUCCESSIVE NESTING ATTEMPTS

Please make sure that all successive nesting attempts by a known pair of birds are clearly marked as such and that the cards are clipped together.

CUCKOO CARDS

Please complete a duplicate card for every Cuckoo nest found, so that cards can be filed under Cuckoo as well as the species of the foster parent.

GRID REFERENCES

Please, please enter complete grid references on your cards if possible. A description of how to find out grid references are given on Ordnance Survey maps. A fair number of recorders give six-figure grid references but omit the two letters that should precede the numbers; this causes the BTO a great deal of extra work in looking up the location in gazetteers. So please do include the letters, eg: TN 136 783. (If there is a problem with confidentiality of the site, it is quite acceptable to simply enter the 10 km square, eg: TN 13- 78-, or maybe even just the 100km square, eg: TN 1-- 7--.

THE NEST RECORDS UNIT

Dr Humphrey Q.P. Crick (Head of Unit)
David E. Glue (Research Officer)
Caroline Dudley (Assistant Nest Records Officer)
Shirley Fisher (Clerical Assistant)

Humphrey Crick is employed under the NCC contract to develop the use of Nest Record data as part of the Integrated Population Monitoring Programme of the BTO. This is a programme of work aimed at combining the results of nest recording, ringing and censuses to build up an overall picture of how well each species is faring in Britain. To this end, he is modernising the way in which Nest Record data are collected and analysed.

David Glue is undertaking a programme of analysis of the basic breeding biology of species of conservation interest. This he does by a detailed look through collections of cards to glean as much information from them as possible, something not really possible by a computer analysis. Currently he is working on woodpeckers, owls, Woodlark and Nightjar.

Caroline Dudley has special responsibility for maintaining the collection of cards and for overseeing their computerisation. Shirley Fisher helps Caroline in this task and is responsible for a large proportion of the input of cards onto the computer. The contributions of these unsung heroes are huge, because they process all the cards that come in, code them up for computerisation, as well as helping to train our VDU operators.

In addition to permanent staff, the BTO has been fortunate in having an Employment Training Team to computerise the Nest Record Cards. Working hard for us this year have been Violet Csaki, Wendy Wilkins and Pat Napper. A very good number of cards were computerised this year: 28,561. The Trust would like to thank the team for their excellent work.

1990

The season again looks early and bodes well for another interesting year.

WE HOPE THAT YOU WILL ENJOY A REWARDING SEASON.
THE TRUST IS ENORMOUSLY GRATEFUL FOR YOUR VERY KIND HELP.
GOOD LUCK!

British Trust for Ornithology
Beech Grove, Station Road, Tring, Herts., HP23 5NR
Tel: Tring (044282) 3461

BIRD SPECIES PROTECTED UNDER THE WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981

The species listed below are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. If you wish to consider visiting the nests of any of these species, write to Kevin Baker, the Licensing Officer, at the BTO for an application form to be licensed by the Nature Conservancy Council. No nest may be visited without prior approval.

The majority of licenses issued during the breeding season for Special List Schedule 1 species are renewals for the same workers who held the appropriate approval during the previous season. Newcomers to the Nest Record Scheme, or recorders who have never held such a licence before, can apply for the relevant approval through the Trust. However, it is necessary to provide two references from 'respected' ornithologists e.g. County Recorder, BTO Regional Representative, Chairman of Bird Club, etc., or a letter of support from a study group - relevant to the species application being sought. Please apply to Kevin Baker at the BTO.

HANDLING EGGS

The licensing officer at the Nature Conservancy Council has stated that the handling of eggs of species not on Schedule 1 (of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981), by nest recorders who wish to count accurately the number of eggs in a clutch, does not require a licence. However, it must be stressed that Nest Recorders should only do this when necessary and when no harm can come to the eggs from doing so.

GENERAL LIST OF SCHEDULE 1 SPECIES

CROSSBILL	OWL, BARN	QUAIL
KINGFISHER	PLOVER, LITTLE RINGED	REDSTART, BLACK

SPECIAL LIST OF SCHEDULE 1 SPECIES

AVOCET	GODWIT, BLACK-TAILED	SANDPIPER, PURPLE
BEE-EATER	GOOSE, GREYLAG	SANDPIPER, WOOD
BITTERN	GOSHAWK	SCAUP
BITTERN, LITTLE	GREBE, BLACK-NECKED	SCOTER, COMMON
BLUETHROAT	GREBE, SLAVONIAN	SCOTER, VELVET
BRAMBLING	GREENSHANK	SERIN
BUNTING, CIRL	GULL, LITTLE	SHORELARK
BUNTING, LAPLAND	GULL, MEDITERRANEAN	SHRIKE, RED-BACKED
BUNTING, SNOW	HARRIER (ALL SPECIES)	SPOONBILL
BUZZARD, HONEY	HERON, PURPLE	STILT, BLACK-WINGED
CHOUGH	HOBBY	STINT, TEMMINCK'S
CORNCRAKE	HOOPOE	SWAN, BEWICK
CRAKE, SPOTTED	KITE, RED	SWAN, WHOOPER
CURLEW, STONE	MERLIN	TERN, BLACK
DIVER, BLACK-THROATED	ORIOLE, GOLDEN	TERN, LITTLE
DIVER, GREAT NORTHERN	OSPREY	TERN, ROSEATE
DIVER, RED-THROATED	OWL, SNOWY	TIT, BEARDED
DOTTREL	PEREGRINE	TIT, CRESTED
DUCK, LONG-TAILED	PETREL, LEACH'S	TREECREEPER, SHORT-TOED
EAGLE, GOLDEN	PHALAROPE, RED-NECKED	WARBLER, CETTI'S
EAGLE, WHITE-TAILED	PINTAIL	WARBLER, DARTFORD
FALCON, GYR	PLOVER, KENTISH	WARBLER, MARSH
FIELDFARE	REDWING	WARBLER, SAVI'S
FIRECREST	ROSEFINCH, SCARLET	WHIMBREL
GARGANEY	RUFF	WOODLARK
GOLDENEYE	SANDPIPER, GREEN	WRYNECK

N.B. A rarer breeding species than these may be added to the Special List without warning, so if you find one, contact the BTO's Licensing Officer for clearance.