

## Little Ringed Plover 1960s

### Title

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### Description and Summary of Results

The Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* first bred in Britain at Tring, Hertfordshire, in 1938. The history of its increase and spread since then was documented by John Parrinder in a series of papers in *British Birds*, including a comprehensive review up to 1962 (*British Birds* 57: 191-198).

Through the 1960s he continued to monitor the breeding numbers of the species and attempted to keep track of the spread in range. (Note this was before the advent of such as the Rare Breeding Birds Panel so such monitoring was not done as a matter of course.) The BTO supported the aims of this monitoring with regular publicity and 'Requests for Information' although did not attempt to run major surveys. The Breeding Atlas fieldwork from 1968-1972 provided a boost and there was a major specific survey, in conjunction with one for Ringed Plover *C. hiaticula*, in 1973 just after the atlas fieldwork finished (and subsequent ones in 1984 and 2007).

In 1962 158 pairs of Little Ringed Plovers were located in 24 English counties. By 1967 the total had increased to about 230 pairs on 154 sites, but this was thought likely to be an underestimate because not all the new gravel pits, industrial waste areas and other suitable man-made sites which were constantly being formed were investigated, and it was almost certain that some pairs were overlooked as a result, especially in areas where they had nested for many years and so lost their rarity interest.

In 1962 the only counties with an appreciable gravel production where nesting had not occurred were Durham and Northumberland, to the north of the main breeding area and Lancashire to the north-west. Between 1962 and 1967 sand and gravel production in England rose by 33.5% (a high proportion of this increase in the north and east) and by 40% in Scotland.

On the northern edge of the range the number of pairs of Little Ringed Plovers recorded in Yorkshire rose from 18 pairs at 10 sites in 1962 to about 33 pairs at 20 sites in 1967. It spread to Durham in 1962 (and to Northumberland and Scotland in 1968).

Gravel pits were (and are) the most numerous of the habitats which the Little Ringed Plover appears to regard as suitable for nesting in Britain. Other sites include sewage farms, reservoirs and adjoining wasteland, brick pits, excavated land by building sites, ash lagoons at power stations, factory and colliery waste areas, open-cast coal mining sites, and shale or slag in the vicinity of flashes caused by mining subsidence. The nature of most of these means that they are often only suitable for nesting for a few years, and the birds therefore often move on at regular intervals.

It was thought that the degree of disturbance to which the nesting sites were subjected was the most likely factor limiting the rapidity of increase, and that the rate of increase would be even less than 15% per annum but for the remarkable tolerance of disturbance shown by the species and their persistence in laying repeat clutches.

**Methods of Data Capture**

Counts of breeding pairs were requested at known sites and observers were asked to look at any potentially new sites.

**Purpose of Data Capture**

To monitor the numbers and distribution of Little Ringed Plovers spreading through the country.

**Geographic Coverage**

All of UK although in practice the species was only recorded nesting in England. There were, however, odd records starting to appear in Scotland and Wales.

**Temporal Coverage**

Every year through the 1960s which carried on through the period of the first breeding atlas (1968-1972) and ended with a full survey in 1973. This was a continuation of the monitoring which had already been going on for some years by 1960.

**Other Interested parties**

The monitoring was organised and run by John Parrinder with help from the BTO as a Trust-aided enquiry.

**Organiser(s)**

E R (John) Parrinder with help from his wife Eileen D Parrinder.

**Current Staff Contact**

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**Publications**

Periodic reports appeared in *British Birds*.

Parrinder, E.R. 1964. Little Ringed Plovers in Britain during 1960-62. *British Birds* 57: 191-198.

Parrinder, E.R. & Parrinder, E.D. 1969. Little Ringed Plovers in Britain in 1963-67. *British Birds* 62: 219-223.

The breeding atlas and later period was summarised in:

Parrinder, E.R. & Parrinder, E.D. 1975. Little Ringed Plovers in Britain in 1968-73. *British Birds* 68: 359-368.

**Available from NBN?**

No.

**Computer data -- location**

None.

**Computer data -- outline contents**

N/A.

**Computer data -- description of contents**

N/A.

**Information held in BTO Archives**

4 boxes of data, letters and other material.

**Notes on Access and Use**

**Other information**

**Notes on Survey Design**

**Specific Issues for Analysis**