

Little Ringed Plover 1973

Title

Little Ringed Plover census 1973

Description and Summary of Results

This survey was run in conjunction with the Ringed Plover survey but was a separate project.

Little Ringed Plovers *Charadrius dubius* first nested in Britain at Tring Reservoirs in 1938 and breeding numbers then increased steadily, accompanied by a westward and northward range expansion. By 1950 there were about 30 pairs, 98 were found in 1959, and by 1967 at least 223 pairs at 154 sites in 26 counties.

Following the Breeding Atlas of 1968-1972 a complete census was attempted in 1973. The total was found to have increased by over 100% since 1967 to at least 467 pairs. However both this and the 1967 figure are certainly underestimates -- in 1973 some areas, especially in the north, were incompletely covered. Birds were found in over 260 localities and many other, possibly suitable, sites were checked.

The bulk of the increase took place within the existing breeding range with a strong correlation with new excavation and extension of existing sand and gravel pits. By 1973 though, the species had extended its breeding range in England to Northumberland (1968) and Westmorland, Worcestershire and Wiltshire (1970), thus leaving only Cumberland, Shropshire, Herefordshire and the southwest unoccupied. Nesting was noted in Scotland in 1968, but the site became overgrown and unsuitable and no further nesting was reported. In NE Wales, a pair nested unsuccessfully in 1970, five pairs (four successful) were at four sites in 1971, one pair recorded in 1972, but this site was drained in 1973 and no nesting was reported in Wales during the survey.

The considerable majority of sites used were man-made and subject to subsequent ecological change -- gravel pits rapidly become unsuitable when they are worked out (becoming overgrown or filled), new reservoirs similarly when completed and waste ground when cleared and developed. The Little Ringed Plovers then move to other sites and these have to be found by the census worker.

Methods of Data Capture

The survey aimed to count at all 'sites' where Little Ringed Plovers were thought to occur. Observers were asked to record all adults seen on their sites on each visit, but numbers were later interpreted in terms of pairs. For example, one incubating adult was counted as one pair of birds, and at a site where there were 6 sitting birds, it was assumed that 6 pairs were present, whether 12 adults were seen or not.

The data include all pairs known to have made scrapes and to have laid eggs in them, taking into account that some are double-brooded and that replacement nests are usually made if one fails. It also includes pairs whose behaviour suggested that they were nesting, even though no nest was located, and those seen regularly in the same area throughout the summer but never actually observed in territorial or courtship displays.

Purpose of Data Capture

To carry out a complete census of the Little Ringed Plover in Britain.

Geographic Coverage

All of the UK and Ireland, although in practice birds were only found in England.

Temporal Coverage

The breeding season of 1973.

Other Interested parties

The survey was organised and run by John Parrinder as a volunteer and supported by the BTO.

Organiser(s)

John (E.R.) and Eileen Parrinder.

Current Staff Contact

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Publications

The main report of the survey is:

Parrinder, E.R. & Parrinder, E.D. 1975. Little Ringed Plovers in Britain in 1968-1973. *British Birds* 68: 359-368.

The survey was noticed in *BTO News* numbers 51, 57, 63 and 65 in conjunction with the Ringed Plover survey being run at the same time.

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

1 box of correspondence, 1 box of 6x4 cards containing the data as summarised by John Parrinder. All data and associated correspondence have been scanned.

Notes on Access and Use

Little Ringed Plover remains on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. This means that a specific licence is required to visit or inspect nests.

Other information**Notes on Survey Design****Specific Issues for Analysis**