

Bird Atlas 2007-11

August 2009



Welcome to the August 2009 issue of the Bird Atlas 2007-11 Newsletter. We are now half-way through the project and making tremendous progress, but there is still much to do. Thank you for all your help!

Peregrines spread their wings

Since the last Winter Atlas in 1981-84 Peregrines have become widespread across Britain and Ireland in winter. There are now more records in the east and south-east, reflecting expanding breeding populations and dispersal to lowland areas. Peregrines tend to winter below 400m and will use a variety of habitats, such as farmland, saltmarshes, city centres and coastal cliffs. Further fieldwork is required in Ireland to accurately map Peregrines in winter.

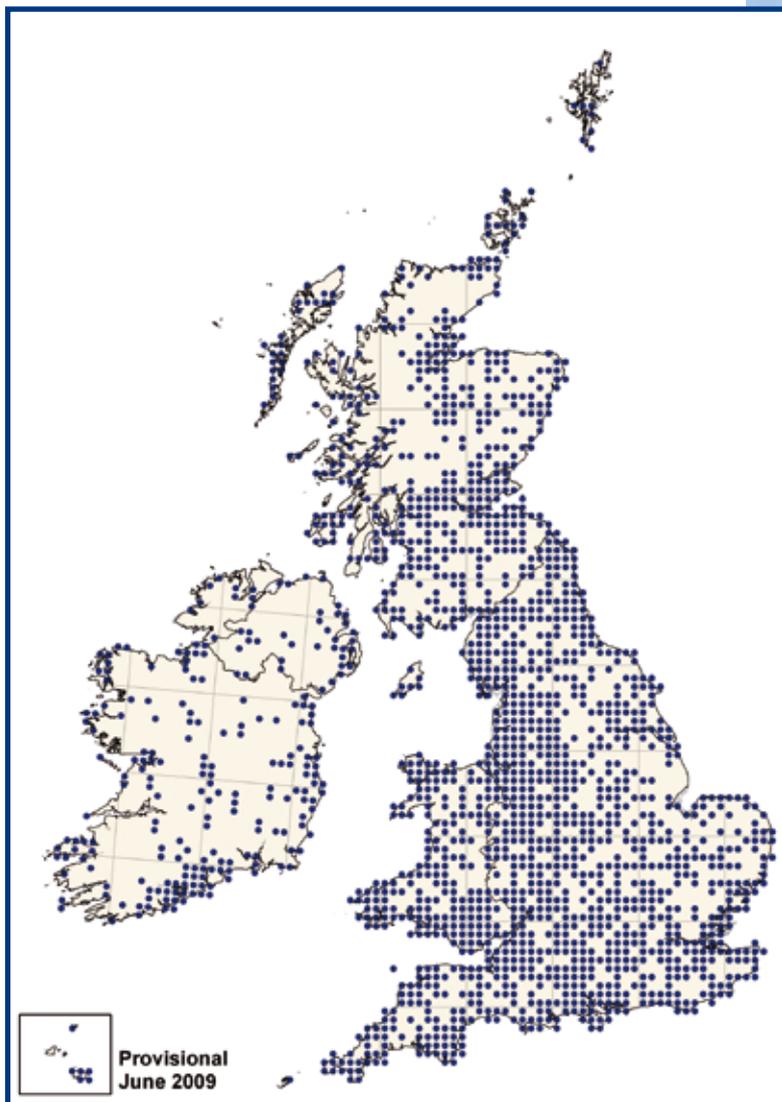


Figure 1. Provisional distribution of Peregrine in winter 2007/08 and 2008/09. Each dot represents a 10-km square.

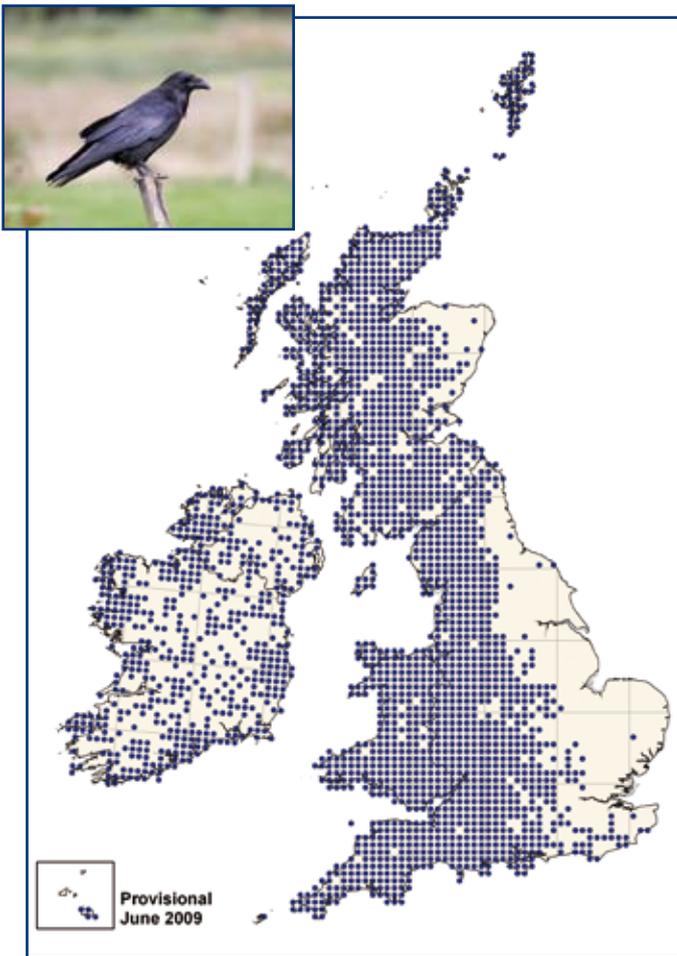


Figure 2. Raven – winter distribution 2007/08 and 2008/09. Since the Winter Atlas of 1981-84, Ravens have spread eastwards in England and Scotland. In Ireland their range has also expanded. Photo: John Harding

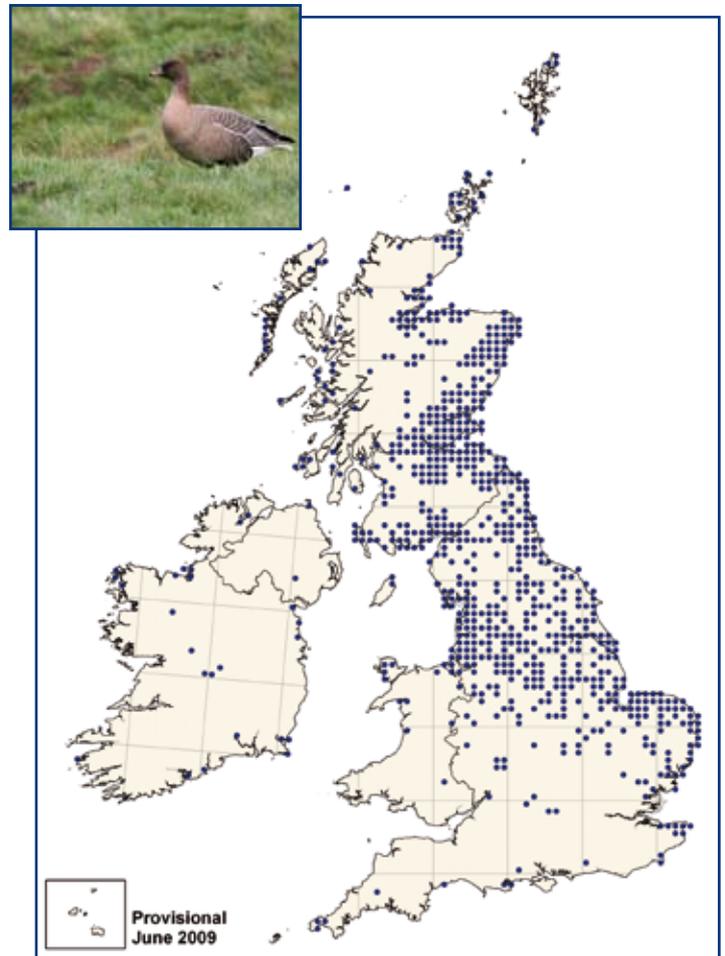


Figure 3. Pink-footed Goose – winter distribution 2007/08 and 2008/09. The range of Pink-footed Goose in winter has expanded dramatically over the last 25 years, along with a big increase in numbers wintering here. Photo: Andy Wilson

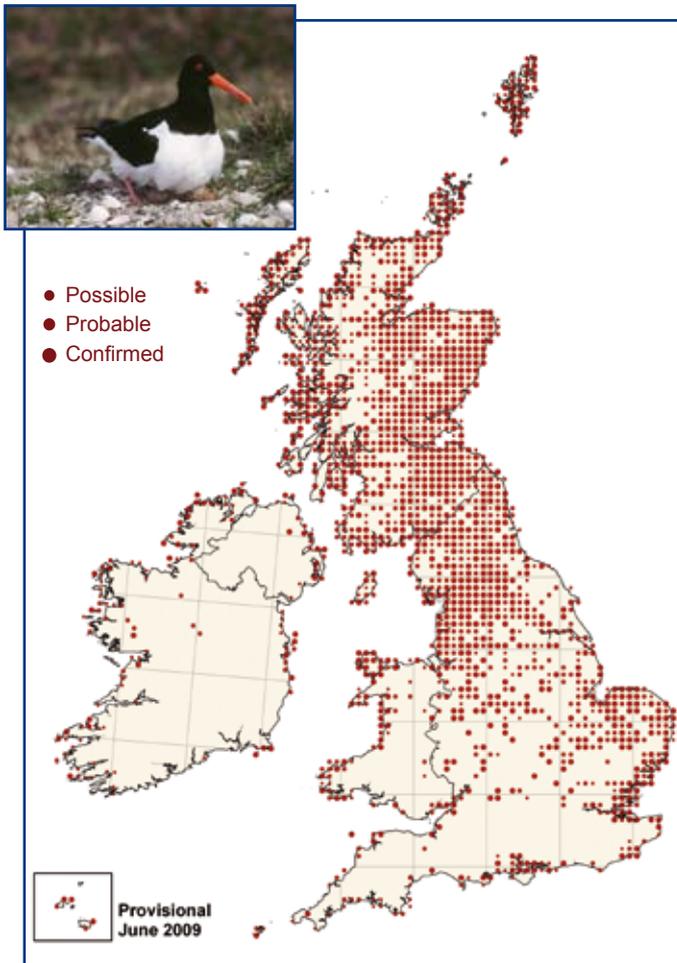


Figure 4. Oystercatcher - breeding distribution 2008 and 2009. There is a suggestion that Oystercatchers are expanding their breeding range in central England. There is still much work to do in Ireland to confirm breeding. Photo: Derek Belsey

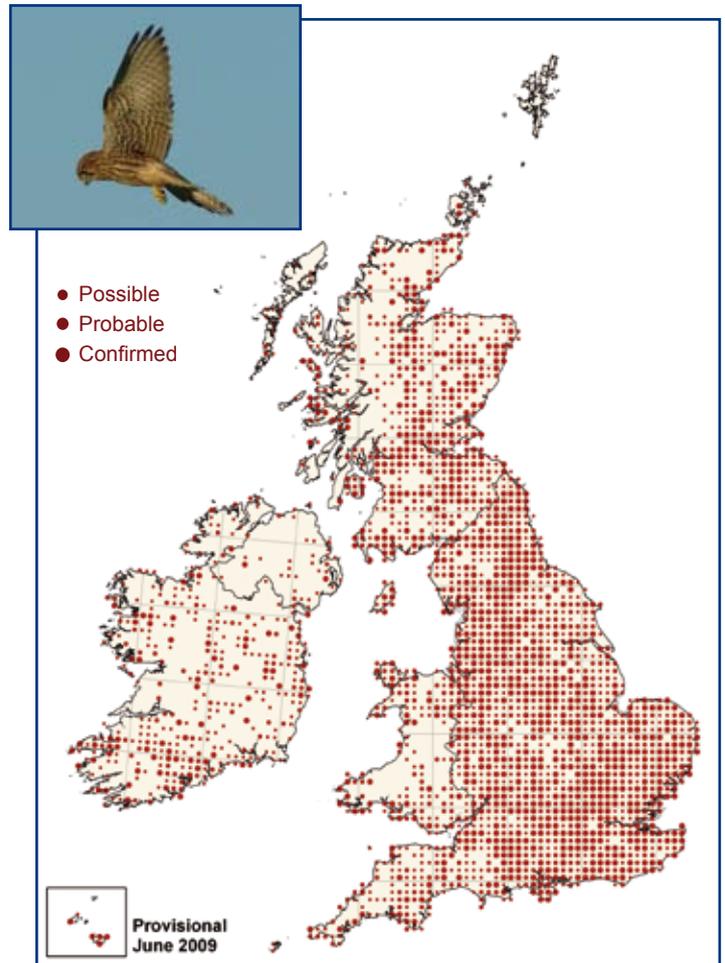


Figure 5. Kestrel - breeding distribution 2008 and 2009. Provisional results suggest a range contraction in the west, notably in Ireland, south-west England, Wales and northern Scotland. Can you help confirm the gaps? Photo: Richard Brooks

Progress update: Timed Tetrad Visits

Timed Tetrad Visits (TTVs) are a key part of Atlas fieldwork and will provide information we can use to map the relative abundance of each species in each 10-km square across Britain and Ireland. We've made fantastic progress so far – thank you for all your help! It's been great to hear about the enjoyment you've had visiting new areas close to home and much further afield.

A tetrad requires two Timed Tetrad Visits in the winter and two visits in the breeding season and then that tetrad is complete. In each 10-km square we require a minimum of eight tetrads (2 x 2-km squares) to be covered or, if the 10-km square contains fewer than eight tetrads (such as coastal squares), then all tetrads should be covered. In the Republic of Ireland we are operating a chequerboard approach, so that every other 10-km square is targeted for TTVs, to ensure even coverage across the whole of the country. Professional fieldworkers are also being used and their efforts can clearly be seen in the north-west and central Irish counties.



Hugh Inasley and Ronan Dugan surveying on The Feshire Cairngorms.

On the maps below, the 10-km squares with a blue (winter) or red (breeding) dot have reached the minimum of eight tetrads covered. In many of the counties conducting local Atlases they are aiming for coverage of all 25 tetrads. The 10-km squares shaded grey have fewer than eight tetrads covered and we should aim to complete these in the next year. The areas without a coloured dot have not yet received any coverage for TTVs. Areas such as mid-Wales, Lincolnshire, Dorset, Argyll, south-west Scotland and much of Ireland still need volunteers to take on TTVs. Why not consider taking a holiday in one of these areas and spend a few days covering tetrads? In remote or difficult to access areas a single visit of two hours can be sufficient and a repeat visit may not be required – please contact the Atlas Regional Organiser to find out which areas could be covered by this approach.

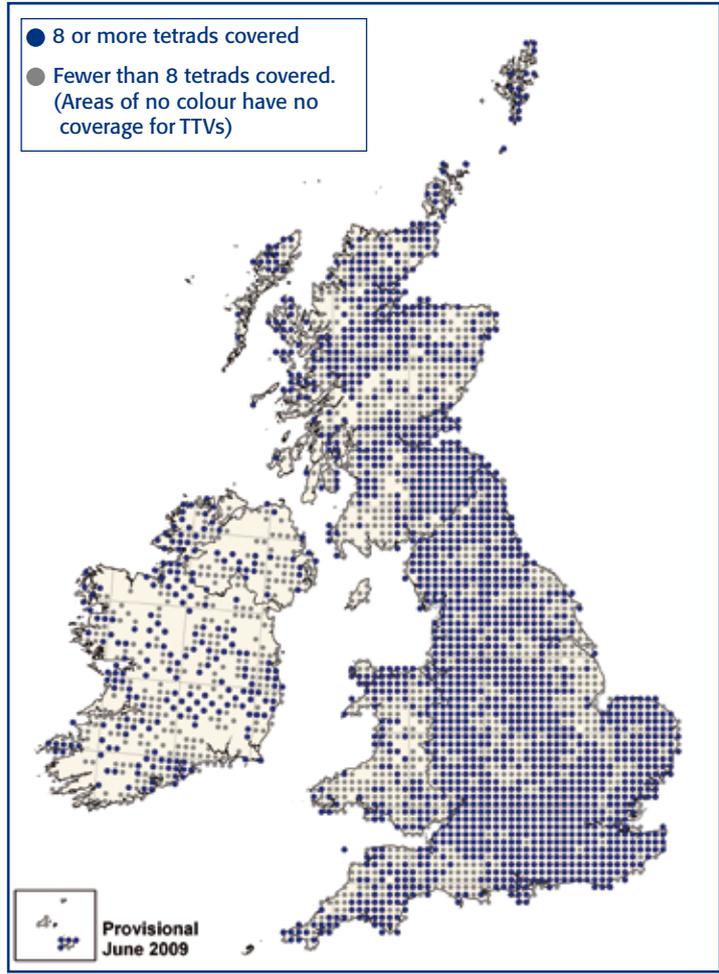


Figure 6. Timed Tetrad Visits in winter. The map is based on online and paper submissions.

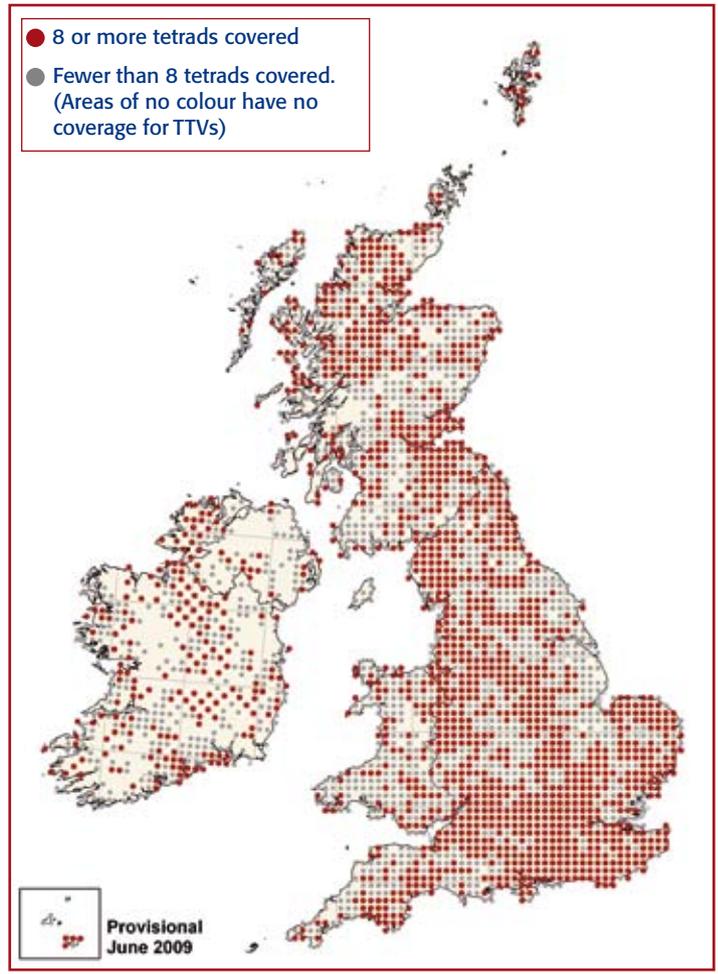


Figure 7. Timed Tetrad Visits in breeding season. The map is based largely on 2008 records and those submitted online for 2009. Paper records for 2009 are still to be added.

Progress update: Species richness

The species richness maps below are another good indicator of our coverage and now start to highlight those areas that need extra effort over the next year. Using lists of birds found in each 10-km square in the Winter Atlas (1981-84) and Breeding Atlas (1988-91) we can work out what proportion of the expected list we have already recorded for winter (Figure 8) and the breeding season (Figure 9) respectively. On the map for the breeding season only those species recorded as possible, probable or confirmed breeding are included. More detailed maps showing species richness at the regional level can be found on the website at http://www.bto.org/birdatlas/latest_results/regionalresultsnav.htm

The map for winter is looking really good and it's clear to see those areas that need to be targeted for fieldwork. A good way of building up the species list is through Roving Recording, so a day spent birdwatching in a 10-km square will make a considerable difference.

It is more difficult in the breeding season to reach over 90% of the expected list (large red dots) because breeding evidence is required. There is still a lot of work to do in the breeding season. Anyone holidaying during the summer in areas of low species richness is encouraged to spend some time gathering Roving Records with breeding evidence.



Nick Brown

Kathleen Patrick Roving at Ludwell (Wiltshire) in ST92.

Where are the hot spots?

Breeding season SD47 118 species (this is a coastal 10-km square covering Lancashire and Cumbria and includes Leighton Moss RSPB, Silverdale, Arnsdale and Grange-over-Sands)

Winter TM46 188 species (this is a coastal 10-km square in Suffolk and includes Minsmere RSPB, Sizewell, Leiston and Friston)

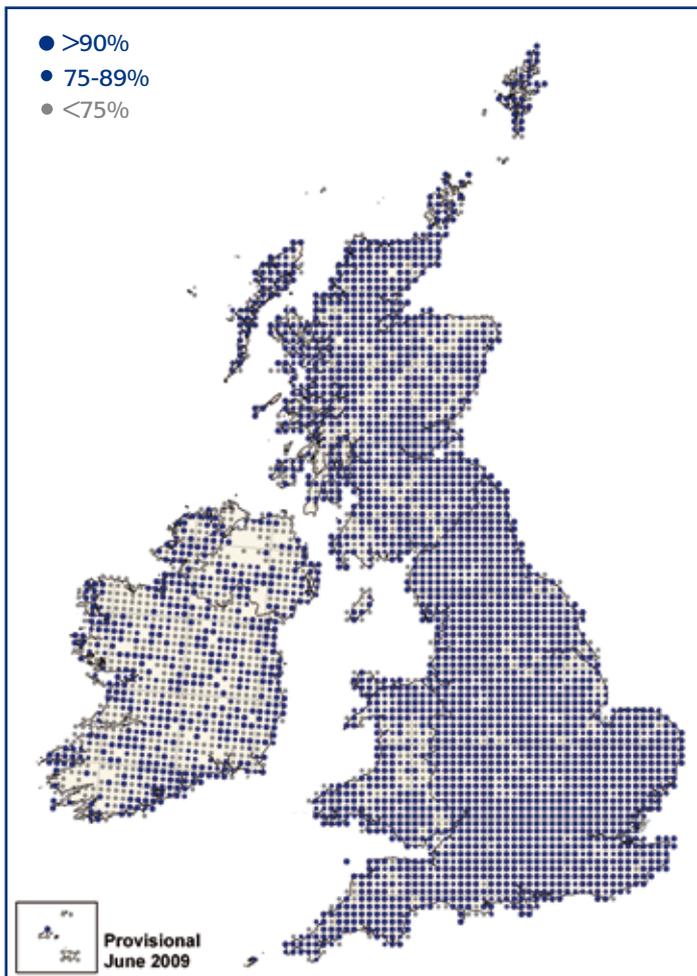


Figure 8. Percentage of expected species richness in winter. This map is based on online and paper submissions for 2007/08 and 2008/09 (November-February only).

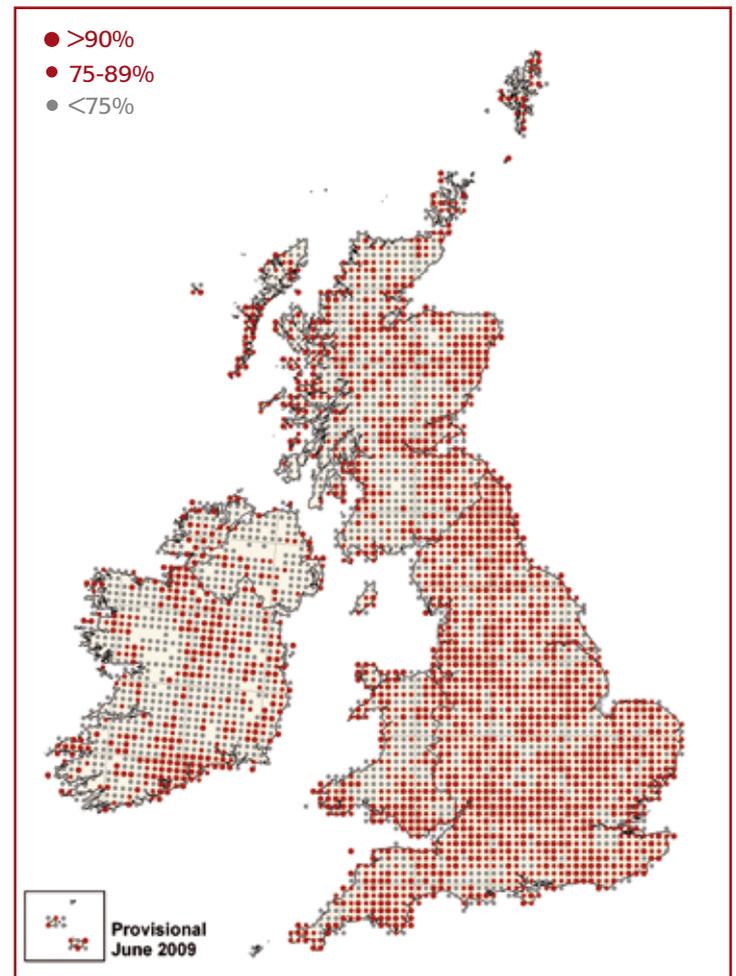


Figure 9. Percentage of expected species richness in the breeding season. This map is based on all records for 2008 and online submissions only for 2009 (April-July only). Only records of birds that are possibly, probably or confirmed breeding are included.

Priorities for winter 2009/10

Timed Tetrad Visits

Take on new tetrads or complete those you already have allocated so we reach the minimum of eight tetrads covered in every 10-km square. Counties doing local Atlases may want to cover all 25 tetrads.

If you are prepared to, please consider travelling further afield to 10-km square that still need help. You can find these on the Atlas website in Data Home by clicking on 'Request TTV'.

If you have taken on tetrads and can no longer cover them please contact your Atlas Regional Organiser as soon as possible.

Roving Records

The aim is to produce a comprehensive species list for every 10-km square (or every tetrad for local Atlas projects). In winter a species only needs to be recorded once although significant counts may be useful at the local Atlas level.

You can see species lists for all 10-km squares and tetrads by using the 'Any Square Summary' button accessible from Data Home. Alternatively contact the Atlas Coordinator for a list for your local 10-km square. Use this list to identify any likely species missing or key habitats not yet covered.

Impressive volunteer effort – every tetrad counts!

One of the joys of working on the Atlas is having contact with so many volunteers from all walks of life who share an interest in Atlasing. It's great to receive photos of spectacular scenery, hear tales of adventures trekking up mountains and the simple joys of exploring places close to home. It's also good to be reminded of the not-so-glamorous places visited during Atlas work. It's humbling to see the sheer volume of data coming in for the Atlas and the tremendous effort all our volunteers go to, whether Roving, doing Timed Tetrad Visits or entering lists into BirdTrack.

Every tetrad counts, whether you've done one, ten or a hundred. There are clearly some very dedicated volunteers who are undertaking a large number of Timed Tetrad Visits – and they are not all retired! The table below (created 30 June) lists the top 20 volunteers ordered by the number of tetrads they have visited (left-hand side) and the number of visits undertaken (right-hand side). In some remote areas single visits of two hours are carried out, so the number of tetrads may be high but the number of visits lower – but the effort involved in reaching some of these remote tetrads is impressive!

Thank you to everyone who has undertaken a Timed Tetrad Visit. There are equally impressive statistics for Roving Records like the 16,109 Roving Records submitted by Tim and Janet Dean. Thank you all and keep it up!

Dawn Balmer
Atlas Coordinator

Name	Location	No. of Tetrads
Chris Reynolds	Lewis & Harris	172
Pat Smiddy	Republic of Ireland	109
Geoff Hunt	Republic of Ireland	97
Ray Murray	South-east Scotland	95
Paul Walsh	Co Waterford	94
Dave Butterfield	Scotland	92
Tim Hodge	Kent	87
Donald Omand	Caithness	80
Malcolm Priestly	Cumbria	79
Peter Gordon	Highland	75
Mr R A Jones	Cornwall	75
David Jardine	Scotland	74
Blitz Group	South-east Scotland	71
Dartmoor Study Group	Devon	68
Hugh Insley	Inverness-shire	68
Kenneth Crane	Skye	68
Malcolm Henderson	Scottish Borders	68
Paddy Knowles	Inverness-shire	66
Neil Trout	Devon	65
Roger Broad	Argyll	64

Name	Location	No. of Visits
Chris Reynolds	Lewis & Harris	412
Pat Smiddy	Republic of Ireland	352
Ray Murray	South-east Scotland	254
Kenneth Crane	Skye	253
Tim Hodge	Kent	246
Neil Trout	Devon	235
Dave Butterfield	Scotland	219
Dartmoor Study Group	Devon	218
Paddy Knowles	Inverness-shire	201
David Jardine	Scotland	194
Graham Pyatt	South-east Scotland	191
Geoff Hunt	Republic of Ireland	190
Mr R A Jones	Cornwall	184
Shane Wolsey	Northern Ireland	183
Paul Walsh	Co Waterford	174
Michael Bell	Perthshire	169
Malcolm Priestly	Cumbria	168
Edmund Fellowes	Dumfries & Galloway	166
Donald Omand	Caithness	164
Don Matthews	Clackmannanshire	161

Target areas for fieldwork in winter

Many areas throughout Britain and Ireland require further Atlas fieldwork over the next year. Below we highlight those areas where there are large gaps in coverage which could be tackled by day trips for Roving Records or weekends and holidays for Timed Tetrad Visits (especially to remote areas).

Contact details

National Organiser

Dawn Balmer
Tel: 01842 750050
E-mail: dawn.balmer@bto.org

Irish Organiser

Brian Caffrey
Tel: 00 353 5 791 51676
E-mail: bcaffrey@birdwatchireland.ie

Scottish Organiser

Bob Swann
Tel: 01862 894329
E-mail: bob.swann@bto.org

NORTHERN IRELAND

- All counties

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

All areas, especially:

- Co Kerry
- Co Mayo
- Co Galway
- Co Wexford
- Co Kilkenny
- Co Tipperary
- Co Monaghan
- Co Cavan



CHANNEL ISLANDS

- All islands

WALES

All areas, especially:

- Mid-Wales
- Pembrokeshire
- Cardiganshire

ISLE OF MAN

- All 10-km squares

SCOTLAND

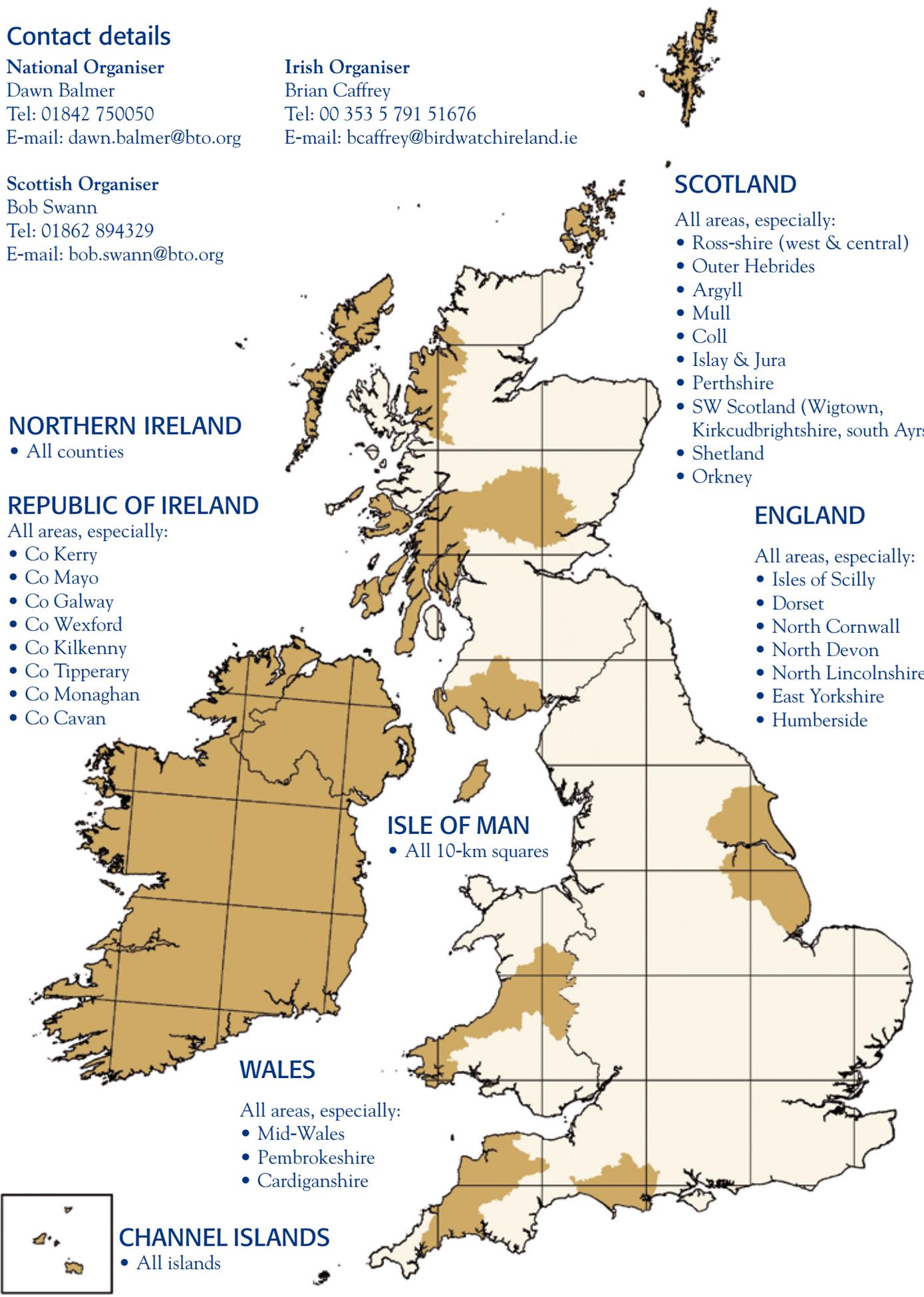
All areas, especially:

- Ross-shire (west & central)
- Outer Hebrides
- Argyll
- Mull
- Coll
- Islay & Jura
- Perthshire
- SW Scotland (Wigtown, Kirkcudbrightshire, south Ayrshire)
- Shetland
- Orkney

ENGLAND

All areas, especially:

- Isles of Scilly
- Dorset
- North Cornwall
- North Devon
- North Lincolnshire
- East Yorkshire
- Humberside



Priorities for breeding season 2010

Timed Tetrad Visits

Take on new tetrads or complete those you already have allocated so we can aim to reach the minimum of eight tetrads covered in every 10-km square. If you've taken on a tetrad and feel you can no longer cover it, then please contact your Atlas Regional Organiser as soon as possible so it can be re-allocated. In counties undertaking local Atlases the aim might be to complete all tetrads.

Record any breeding evidence you see whilst surveying. Try to put a breeding code against all species in suitable breeding habitat, even the minimum of singing (S) or habitat (H) is useful.

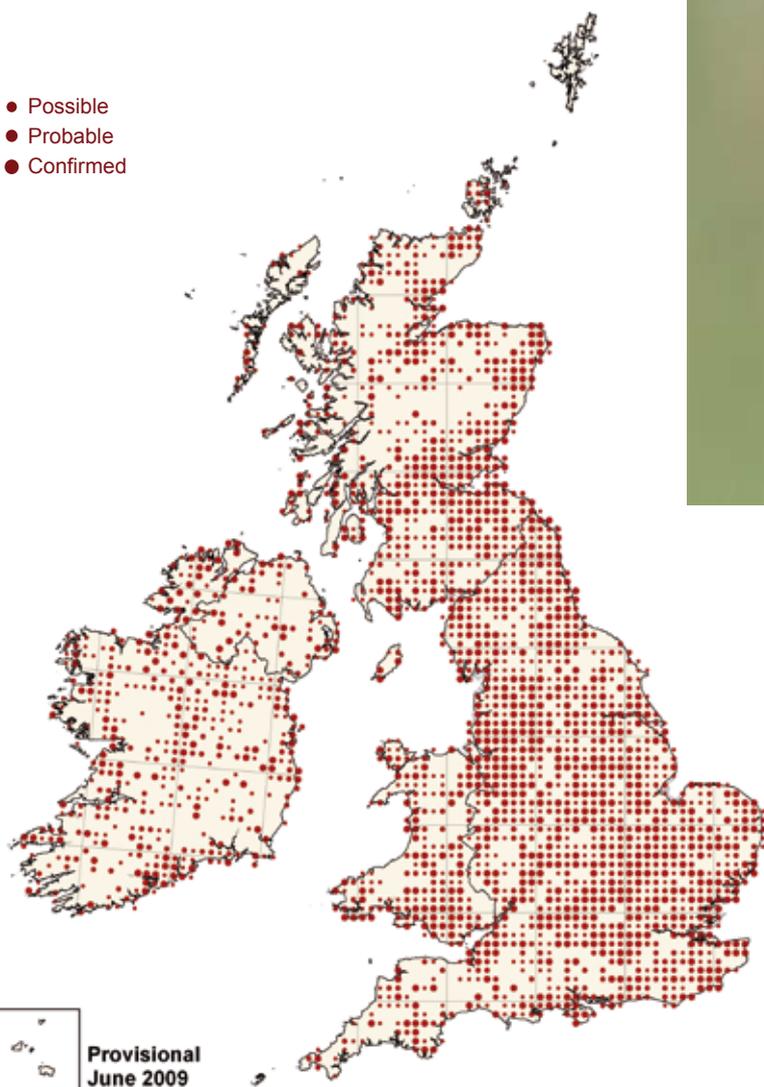
Roving Records

A lot of effort is required in 10-km squares (and tetrads for local Atlases) to compile a comprehensive list of species between April and July.

Special effort should be made to record breeding evidence for all species you encounter in suitable nesting habitat. Early in the season listen out for birds singing against each other; several Willow Warblers singing at the same time would qualify for permanent territory (T) and would give probable breeding status. Also, look out for adults carrying nesting material (B) or visiting a probable nest site (N). The best way to confirm breeding is to look for adults carrying food for young (FF).

Better recording of breeding evidence

- Possible
- Probable
- Confirmed



Richard Stonier

During the breeding season, the aim is to record a breeding evidence code for every bird you see or hear. There will only be a very small number of species and circumstances where codes do not apply. Here are some useful reminders:

- T – permanent territory. This can be applied when you have many individuals singing against each other at the same time. This is a really useful code in remote areas where you may not be going back for another visit later in the season.
- U – summering. Use this code for non-breeding gulls, terns and herons away from the colony. It also applies to summering waterfowl such as Wigeon.
- F – flying over. Note this should NOT be used for some species such as Barn Owl, Kestrel, Buzzard, Raven, Swallow which are likely to be using habitat and hunting for food rather than flying over. Please use H (for habitat) instead.

Figure 10. Provisional distribution of Reed Bunting in the breeding season. Only records with breeding evidence are used in the distribution maps.

Atlas holidays

Australia next year, or Scotland *again*? We visited Scotland four times during the past nine months – November, February, April and July – do these dates ring bells? Each visit a week long, to the same lovely, peaceful, rolling and sea-girt Rhins of Galloway. Five of us in various combinations, spending our holidays covering 24 tetrads during both seasons and hundreds of Roving Records too.

At the crack of dawn each day, two cars went their separate ways, responding to the boss's masterly planning. Our 2-hour visits took us to the sea coast – wild cliffs in the west, gentler in the east – meandering lanes through farmland, stands of ancient beech as well as the occasional bog. We met up for picnic lunch, sea watching, reporting our finds. Then off again for more tetrads sometimes in reconfigured pairs, depending on our strengths and preferences. One day we spent 'leap-frogging' along a remote high moorland road – one car, two sets of car keys, and nine one-hour TTVs done in a single day – each one a glorious walk.



Tricia Galpin



Tricia Galpin

At the end of each winter's day it was back, exhausted, to our cosy self-catering accommodation to light the fire, heat up the stew, open the wine, and discuss our records. In sunny April we sat outside the pub above Portpatrick harbour looking down on the 18 Tysties we just counted there.

The birds – Ravens on ruined castles, a Peregrine kill, hunting Hen Harriers, flocking Twite, nesting Fulmars, passing Whinchat, wintering Long-tailed Duck – not often encountered back home in Northants. The flowers, butterflies, landscapes and people are all different too. It's just like being on holiday!

So, Australia or Scotland? No contest! Next year's team is already getting together. **Tricia Galpin, Northamptonshire**

Near my Berkshire home all the tetrads are allocated and many TTVs have been completed. The organisers for my local 10-km squares have been encouraging observers to gather Roving Records to fill in missing species and to prove breeding. Another of my hobbies is walking, so I have been exploring new footpaths and topping up the Atlas records as I go.

I knew that there were some parts of the country where there are few observers, with many tetrads unallocated and few records of any kind. So, I asked if I could help with Atlas work in one of the less-well-covered areas and got special dispensation to do single breeding season TTVs in Ceredigion in West Wales. Single visits of two hours are permitted in remote or difficult to access areas but these must be agreed with the Regional Atlas Organiser first. In this part of Ceredigion there are few birdwatchers and no TTVs had been carried out in the 10-km square I worked in, so it was agreed I could visit and carry out single visits of two hours. Perhaps someone might be willing to make early visits next summer to complete the picture?

At the beginning of June I spent five days staying in a small town, walking through several tetrads each day where there were plenty of quiet roads and public footpaths. Large-scale maps were a great help and are easily available from the Atlas website, under Taking Part/Atlas Tools. It's a hilly area with lots of streams, dominated by pasture, with woodland on the steep hillsides and along the valley bottoms. I had expected to see Dipper and Raven but was really pleased to find Pied Flycatcher. I had time to ask questions about my home patch. House Martins were widespread in small numbers and House Sparrows were common, whereas both are often difficult to find at home. I can't explain the difference. **Peter Newbound, Berkshire**



John Harding

Pied Flycatcher was a bonus whilst carrying out TTVs
(Note: the beak full of food would confirm this one breeding)

If you are interested in organising an Atlas holiday, please contact the Atlas Regional Organiser or the National Organisers to discuss potential areas to visit.

Recording colonial species

As part of the Timed Tetrad Visit (TTV) fieldwork during the breeding season we ask you to record the presence of colonial nesting species such as Rooks, Sand Martins, terns, auks, gulls and herons in your tetrad and, where possible, to provide a count of apparently occupied nests or a count of individuals. It's not always possible to provide a count due to the inaccessibility of the colony or simply the sheer number of birds present.

Here we take a look at the findings so far for Common Gull, based on TTVs and Roving Records submitted by mid-June 2009. Figure 11 shows the distribution of Common Gulls using Roving Records, TTVs and BirdTrack records where a breeding status code has been submitted to indicate possible, probable or confirmed breeding. This map is more or less what we might expect at this stage of the project, with a few gaps to fill in over the next two years.

Derek Belsey & Cliff Reddick



If we use the counts collected during the TTV we can then produce a map to show where Common Gulls can be found during the breeding season, irrespective of breeding status (see orange shading on Figure 12). The darker the shading the higher the number of birds counted on TTVs. These may be non-breeding birds or immature birds and the map shows that they are quite widespread during the breeding season (April-July). We've used the counts from the TTV colony table (mostly apparently occupied nest) and produced black dots to indicate the size of the breeding colony. In addition, those colonies that were indicated by a tick (and no count provided) are shown by grey squares.

So, whilst the basic distribution map provides us with information on the location of breeding Common Gulls, using the counts from the TTVs gives us a lot more information on where we might encounter birds during the breeding season.

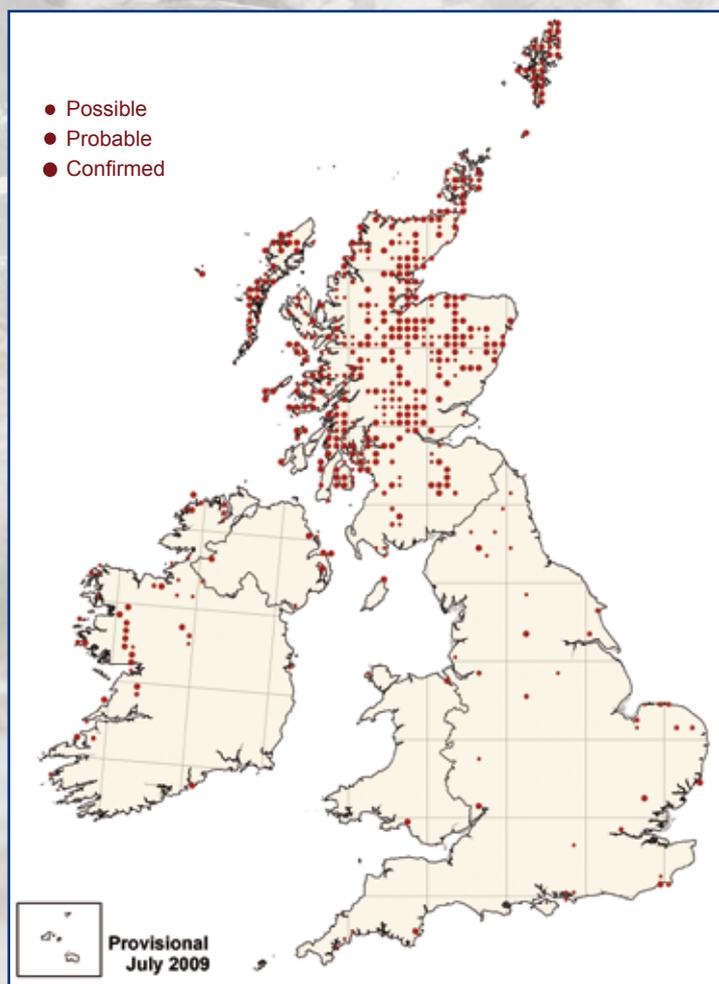


Figure 11. Provisional distribution of Common Gulls in the breeding season that have been recorded as possible, probable or confirmed breeding.

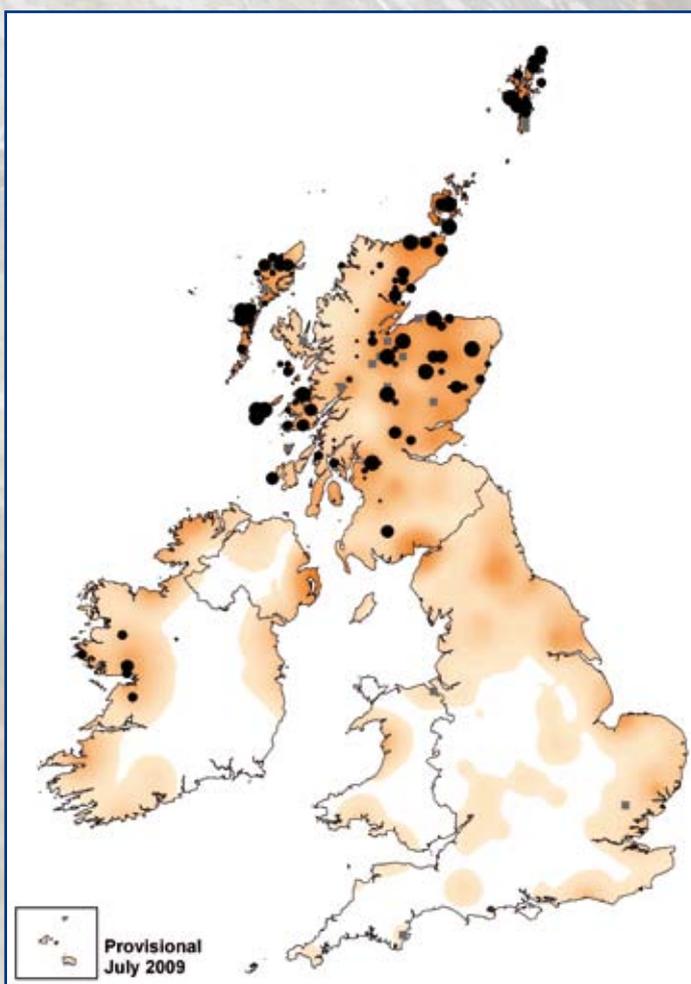


Figure 12. Relative abundance of Common Gulls in the breeding season based on counts from Timed Tetrad Visits. Colony counts are shown as five sizes of dot and the presence of a colony (no count) is shown by a grey square.

Atlas news

Validation – turning records into data

The process of reviewing and checking all the records submitted to the Bird Atlas and BirdTrack began in December 2008. This is a huge but very important task for our volunteer Atlas Regional Organisers to carry out and we appreciate any help you can give if your records are queried. Only a very small proportion of the records are queried and these tend to be problems with grid references not matching the place name provided, high counts or a query over the breeding status. Very few records are queried over problems with identification and these mainly relate to records of locally or nationally rare species. If you are confident about your identification you may be asked to supply a brief description of the bird you saw; this is a standard request to meet the needs of local and national bird recording.

Tetrad Population Estimates

The Atlas Working Group reviewed the potential value in recording Tetrad Population Estimates at its meeting on 17 July 2009 and agreed that we should continue to record these for the duration of the Atlas project. Tetrad Population Estimates are an optional part of the Timed Tetrad Visit fieldwork. To date they have been completed on c.25% of TTVs and provide another strand of information that will help us with the difficult task of estimating national population sizes, especially in the winter.

Local Atlases

Nearly 40 local atlases are underway across Britain and Ireland and they aim to map the distribution of birds at the tetrad (2 x 2-km square) scale. Any help we can give by recording birds at the tetrad level in those participating counties would be really helpful. A full list of local Atlas projects can be found at http://www.bto.org/birdatlas/taking_part/localatlases.htm

Records from BirdTrack (BTO/RSPB/BWI)

Over 1.6 million records from BirdTrack have been used in the Atlas so far and these have made a significant contribution. Records feed into the Atlas once you have defined your sites at the 1-km, tetrad or 10-km level so the records can be used at the appropriate scale. It's very important that your whole BirdTrack site fits within the boundary of the 1-km, tetrad or 10-km square. BirdTrack sites that overlap boundaries of 10-km squares should not be defined. Where possible, try to keep your BirdTrack sites to a manageable size for bird recording. Sites called 'Scotland', 'Lake District' or 'Cornwall' cover a large geographical area and cannot be used in the Atlas. During the breeding season it's also really useful if you can include breeding evidence. By selecting a one column format for the species list (in My Details and Settings), it's easy to enter breeding codes. During the breeding season only records with a breeding status code can be used in the Atlas, so please make a special effort to record this.

Records from other BTO surveys

Over the course of the autumn, we hope to start the process of bringing in 'top up records' from other BTO projects, to fill in gaps in species in 10-km squares (and tetrads where possible). We will be starting with the Nest Record Scheme and Ringing Scheme records from the 2008 breeding season, as these will really help with breeding evidence. We plan to consider records from the Breeding Bird Survey in due course, but it is important to remember that there are no breeding evidence codes attached so they only provide information on presence. If you carry out BBS, Garden BirdWatch, Waterways Breeding Bird Survey, Wetland Bird Survey and record breeding evidence for a species, it would be really helpful if you could submit these as Roving Records to ensure the breeding evidence is recorded.

Sabbaticals

Getting complete Atlas coverage of the remoter parts of the northwest Highlands was always going to be a major problem. However, over the last two summers, great progress has been made. RSPB members of staff can apply for sabbaticals after seven years of service. This can be used to undertake ornithological research, including survey work. In 2008, Len Campbell used his sabbatical to survey over 20 tetrads in north-west Sutherland, whilst in 2009 David Butterfield, Pete Gordon and Paul and Liz Outhwaite covered over 150 tetrads in Wester Ross during their sabbaticals. Not only was this a fantastic achievement by those concerned it was also a terrific boost to Atlas coverage in Scotland. Paul and Liz so enjoyed their visit north, they have booked a holiday in the same area for 2010 and hope to cover a few more tetrads.

Records from BirdWatch Ireland surveys

We will also be using records, where possible, from BirdWatch Ireland surveys, such as Countryside Bird Survey, I-WeBS and Garden BirdWatch. Breeding evidence is not collected during these surveys, so they will only add information on presence of a species in a 10-km square. Please make a special effort to record any breeding evidence you see whilst carrying out these surveys and submit as a Roving Record.

Training courses

A number of training courses are planned for the next few months. Many of these include training on Atlas methods whilst others are more general. A list of planned courses is listed below:

SNH Great Glen House, Inverness	26 September 2009	Intro to bird surveys and Bird Atlas (Free)
Kindrogan FSC, Perth	16-18 October 2009	Bird Survey Techniques
Chatelheraut Country Park, Hamilton	24 October 2009	Bird ID and intro to winter surveys (Free)
Flatford Mill FSC, Suffolk	28-30 October 2009	Bird Survey Techniques
Make Birds Count 2009 Duchy College, Stoke Climsland, near Callington, Cornwall To book (free event) email mbc@rspb.org.uk or Tel: 01392 453763	21 November 2009	Atlas, BBS & RSPB's Volunteer & Farmer Alliance training

See <http://www.bto.org/notices/trgworkshops.htm> and http://www.bto.org/regional/bto_scotland/bbms/training.htm for information on BTO led courses or telephone BTO. The North Wales Bird Atlas team are also planning more Atlas training events, see www.northwalesbirdatlas.co.uk for more information or contact Geoff Gibbs (01277 823007).

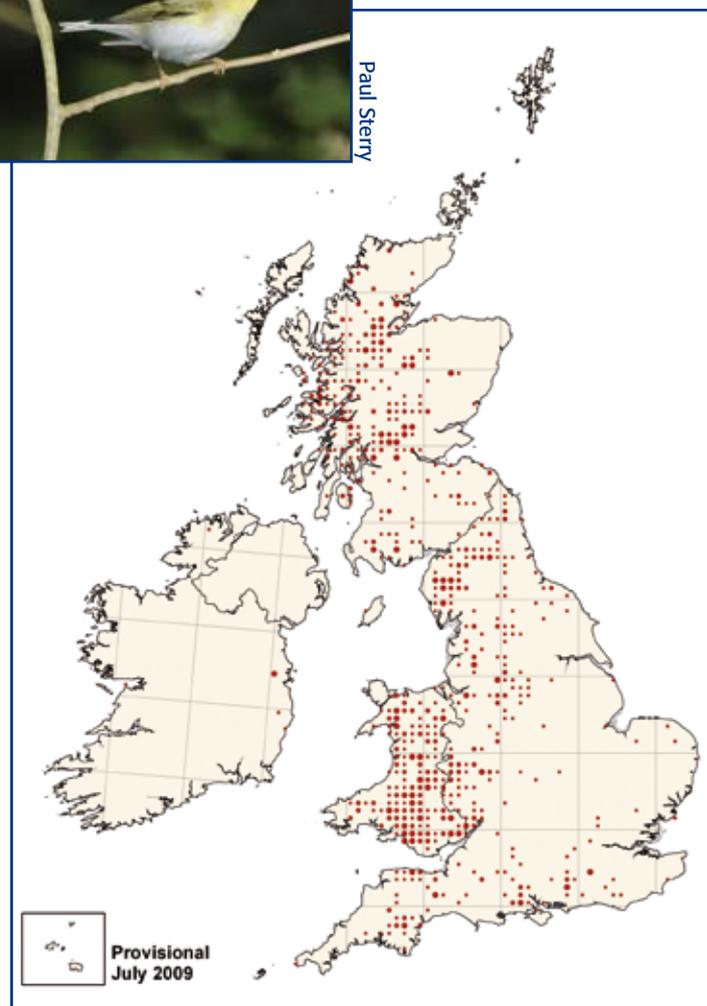
In Ireland, details of training courses can be found in the 'What's on Guide' section of BirdWatch Ireland *Wings* magazine or online at <http://www.birdwatchireland.ie/Events/BranchEvents/tabid/108/Default.aspx>

Out of Africa – For how much longer?

We always knew that the Atlas was going to suggest species and subjects for future research, but we were all taken aback by the speed at which the first alerts were sounded, and even more shocked by the preliminary distribution maps of many of the African migrants. Prior to the Atlas, the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) was producing long-term trend information about some of our summer visitors, and many of you were raising concerns about species which are under-reported by the BBS. However, it is Bird Atlas 2007-11 that is providing up-to-date distributional information.



Paul Sterry



The distributions of, amongst many others, Wood Warbler (see map below) and Whinchat are showing dramatic contraction. Spotted Flycatchers, although still widespread, are showing losses across their range. The declines and range contractions of many of the African migrants are really severe. They suggest that, if we wait until the end of the Atlas, we may be trying to learn about birds that are really hard to find – let alone study.

We made the decision to launch the Out of Africa appeal to fund a suite of projects to try to explain these declines. There are a number of single species projects, but the key project is a joint BTO/RSPB project undertaking a transect survey through Ghana northwards toward Burkina Faso. In the UK, thanks to the efforts of all the BTO supporters, we have considerable data to work with, but many of these migrants spend as little as a quarter of the year here. The West African project aims to fill in the huge gaps in our knowledge about where these birds winter; identifying which habitats are important, and how the migrants move on through the habitat zones. This information is vital to create a clear picture of the problems faced by these birds on their travels.

We need to raise £365K to fund a range of projects and, thanks to the generosity of the BTO Members and Garden BirdWatchers, we have raised over £52,000. However, we have a huge amount of money still to find. The Atlas has given us a timely warning that we need to ascertain the exact nature of these problems now – can you help? To find out more about the BTO's Out of Africa appeal visit www.bto.org or contact the fundraising team for an appeal leaflet on 01842 750050 or e-mail fundraising@bto.org.

Bird Atlas 2007-11: Species Sponsorship

The Atlas Appeal Species Sponsorship Scheme is still receiving tremendous support, so once again we would like to thank all individual members and supporters, companies, organisations, and trusts for their backing. We are now tantalisingly close to our fundraising target, with just over £100K to raise to fund BTO's participation. BirdWatch Ireland are also on track with 75,000 Euros left to find.

Species Sponsorship

Over 90 species have been sponsored for the BTO and BirdWatch Ireland. The majority of species are being sponsored outright. In some special cases, we have allowed the reservation of a species by a group if they have a good chance of securing the £2,000 minimum by the end of the fieldwork period. A great example of this was provided by Swift Conservation, who set up a JustGiving page to which they directed their supporters. Treswell Wood IPM Group is also raising the money for the Treecreeper in this way. The North Northumberland Bird Club has carried out a number of events to boost their sponsorship contribution, while Ernest Charles is matching its customers' donations to sponsor the Great Tit. The readers of *BirdWatching* magazine are also well on their way to sponsoring the Goldcrest. The Wash Wader Ringing Group is collecting funds for the Grey Plover and, given that our own Graham Appleton (BTO Director of Communications a.k.a. Head of Fundraising) is leading this bid for sponsorship, we are confident of its success. If you would like to give any of these groups a boost, contact the BTO fundraising team and we will give you details. To find out about sponsoring a species, contact Kate Aldridge at BTO on kate.aldridge@bto.org or Brian Caffrey at BirdWatch Ireland on bcaffrey@birdwatchireland.ie

We have dedicated some species to honoured members of the BTO who have sadly passed away since the start of the Atlas fieldwork. Recently, we have dedicated the Blackbird to David Snow (BTO Director of Research 1964-68), and would like to thank everyone who sent gifts in his memory. Many of you will also have heard of the death of John Woodland (Devon RR), an outstanding member of the BTO. He sponsored the Lesser Spotted Woodpecker in memory of Mark Blacksell. Now, sadly, it is in memory of them both. We thank them for their commitment to the BTO and Bird Atlas 2007-11.

New Species Sponsors	
Red Grouse	Gillian Stewart in memory of John Stewart
Grey Heron	BTO Swanwick Conference 2008
Marsh Harrier	White Maple Consulting Ltd
Buzzard	Shropshire Orn. Society
Kestrel	Biosearch Expeditions
Peregrine	RWE npower - Fawley Power Station
Sanderling	Joan Harvey
Redshank	Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Councy Council, Ireland
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Richard & Margaret Bentley
Black Guillemot	Norman Harvey
Swift	Swift Conservation
Kingfisher	British Waterways
Great Spotted Woodpecker	Joe Smitherman
Yellow Wagtail	Harris Charitable Trust
Blackbird	David Snow
Song Thrush	Charles & Cath Hazzard
Blackcap	B & G Harvey
Jackdaw	Peggy Smitherman
Rook	Jack & Mary Hazzard
Raven	Campaign Strategy Ltd
House Sparrow	Steph Rooke & friends
Goldfinch	In memory of Lorna Nickell
Reed Bunting	Lesley Nickell

Sponsorships - in progress	
Grey Plover	Wash Wader Ringing Group
Goldcrest	Readers of BirdWatching Magazine
Great Tit	Ernest Charles & Customers
Treecreeper	Treswell Wood IPM Group

Bag a bird for Bird Atlas 2007-11 - 100 species up for grabs!

Throughout the running of the Species Sponsorship Scheme we have received many comments from bird clubs, and smaller organisations, indicating that they would like to sponsor a species but can not achieve the minimum level. With this in mind, during the first two weeks of February 2010 the BTO will be holding an auction of 100 species in aid of the Atlas Appeal. The minimum bid for a species will be dropped from £2,000 to £300 and bids will be taken via email and phone between the 1st and 12th of February.

The list of the species available at this lower minimum will be published in December but if you would like to express your interest in taking part in the auction for yourself, or on behalf of a group or organisation, please contact the fundraising team at fundraising@bto.org or on 01842 750050. We will send you the details of the auction and the list when it becomes available.