

## DARTMOOR BIRD REPORT 2015

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This report replaces the *Dartmoor Bird Report*, published from 1996 to 2014 by the Dartmoor Study Group. It covers the same geographical area of its predecessors and *The Birds of Dartmoor* (Smaldon 2005): that is, the boundary of the National Park, with the addition of the china clay districts around Lee Moor, Shaugh Moor and Crownhill Down, left out of the National Park designation for political and business reasons.

Names and sequence of species follow those used in the *Devon Bird Report* species accounts, where scientific names can also be found. The records used are those submitted to Devon Birds for 2015 and assigned to the Dartmoor parent site, plus some results from the Brent Bird Survey (see below), yet to be submitted. Observer initials are used only for the most unusual records or hard-won data, and can be deciphered by reference to the List of Observers in the *Devon Bird Report*. Four tables are included, in addition to Appendices. The latter show the monthly occurrence of species in 2015, together with maximum monthly counts where appropriate.

Hopefully this report will serve as a useful summary of birds recorded on Dartmoor in 2015, but inevitably much of what was seen and heard is not included because the records have not been submitted. If gaps and deficiencies in the report trigger the submission of at least some of these records, then a revised version will be produced later in the year. It might even encourage a more complete submission of Dartmoor records for 2016 and beyond! Please copy me in to any late submission of 2015 records at [peter.p.j.reay@btinternet.com](mailto:peter.p.j.reay@btinternet.com) as well as the [datamanager@devonbirds.org](mailto:datamanager@devonbirds.org).

In addition to records from casual observations, the results of the following more targeted surveys are also included:

- **Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS).** Monthly WeBS counts provide the basis for the maximum site counts given in Table 1, but non-WeBS counts are also included where appropriate, and two of the sites are non-WeBS sites.
- **Nest data.** Information on nest productivity collected by RJH and SMT, mostly around Clearbrook, Shaugh Prior and Warren House, has been presented as total numbers of nests, eggs and fledged young in the relevant species accounts. Nest box data for Blue Tit, Great Tit and Pied Flycatcher are summarized in Table 2.
- **Fingle Woods.** These woods in the Teign Valley around SX765895 have an area of 338 ha and the survey by RNM consisted of six visits from Apr to Jun. For each relevant species the number of pairs/territories is given in the species accounts.
- **Dunsford Woods.** A long-term breeding bird census in 57 ha of woods around SX800885, also in the Teign Valley. For each relevant species, the number of pairs/territories is given, plus additional data from previous years, with comments, in Table 3.
- **Brent Bird Survey 2014–16.** A parish survey recording monthly occurrence per 1-km square, with a total of 38 squares are on Dartmoor, 22 moorland and 16 lowland. For most species, information is given on the total number of squares in which it was recorded in 2015, the monthly maximum number of squares and the number of squares with probable or confirmed breeding. For further information, visit [www.brentbirdsurvey.co.uk](http://www.brentbirdsurvey.co.uk). In addition, the results of a more detailed survey by BW of breeding birds in the 22 moorland squares in the parish are shown in Table 4.

Thanks are due to: Malcolm Burgess (nest box data in Table 2); Mark Darlaston (Goshawk information); Julia Harris (Devon Birds database); Tony John (useful comments, and the results of the Whinchat and Stonechat survey); Mike Lock (useful comments); David Price (Dunsford Woods data in Table 3); Dave MacDiarmid (Brent Bird Survey data); David Rogers (Heronries data); Roger Smaldon (useful comments); Barrie Whitehall (Brent Bird Survey data in Table 4); and all other observers who submitted Dartmoor records in 2015.

**MUTE SWAN.** Recorded from two sites, both at the southern edge of the area: South Brent, the resident bird of unknown origin on private fishing lakes; and Portworthy, recorded in all months with a max of nine on 13 May.

**CANADA GOOSE.** Max count of 92 at the ECC Pit Complex on 15 Oct, and counts >25 at only three other sites. Several other records, often of birds flying over. Breeding recorded at Burrator, Cadover, Lydford, Portworthy and South Brent. Recorded in 20 Brent squares (monthly max 15 in Apr), breeding in two.

**SHELDUCK.** Records from three sites: ECC Pit Complex, two on 9 Feb; Portworthy, two on 12 Apr, six on 15 Jun and an imm on 8 Sep; and, more unusually, Meldon, two on 19 Apr.

**MANDARIN DUCK.** Buckfastleigh is by far the most important site on Dartmoor and in Devon, with a max of 91 on 12 Feb, and counts >80 also in Jan and Dec, the only other count >10 being 12 at Spitchwick on 20 Nov. Most other records also from the R Dart as far as Prince Hall (one on 28 Jun), with a max of five at Huccaby on 1 Apr. Also recorded at: Burrator, max of eight on 10 Feb and 12 Mar, and present all months except Jun and Aug; Parke, two on 19 Apr; Portworthy, one on 2 Sep; and Yarner Wood, eight on 12 Apr. Breeding on the R Dart at Buckfast Abbey, and at Yarner.

**WIGEON.** Three at Burrator on 11 Sep, and one to three at Portworthy 12 Sep – 20 Dec, but the main site continues to be private fishing lakes at South Brent with a new max and Dartmoor record of 94 on 1 Feb (SHo), most unusual for a small freshwater site away from the coast.

**TEAL.** Highest counts came from Portworthy with a max of 97 on 13 Dec. Other double-figure counts came from Avon Dam, Burrator and Fernworthy and a private lake near Harbourneford (10 in Dec) and, other than a max of nine at the ECC Pit Complex on 10 Mar, only one–two recorded elsewhere. The only hint of breeding was of at least one male flushed from suitable habitat on the high moor on 1 Jun. Recorded in four Brent squares (monthly max three in Dec).

**GREEN-WINGED TEAL.** A male at Portworthy on 27 Nov, among Teal (MCD).

**MALLARD.** The highest counts came from Burrator (max 151 on 9 Nov) and Portworthy (max 94 on 8 Sep), with double-figure counts from seven other sites and records from other sites throughout the year. Breeding recorded at seven sites. Recorded in 19 Brent squares (monthly max: 14 squares in Mar and May), breeding in three.

**PINTAIL.** A female at Portworthy in Jan, Oct and Dec, and another bird (subsequently identified in early 2016 as a male) at the Avon Dam on 16 Oct and 9 Nov.

**SHOVELER.** One at Portworthy on 2 Aug.

**RED-CRESTED POCHARD.** *New to Dartmoor.* A male at Portworthy on 15 Nov and 13 Dec (SM), and at nearby ECC Pit Complex on 28 Nov (RJH).

**POCHARD.** One at ECC Pit Complex on 20 Jan and 10 Mar.

**TUFTED DUCK.** Present at the three main sites in most months, including breeding season, but no breeding records. Max counts for each site were 48 at Hennock Res on 11 Nov, 28 at ECC Pit Complex on 10 Mar and nine at Portworthy on 13 Dec. Elsewhere, the only record was of two at Fernworthy in Jan and Feb.

**SCAUP.** A female/1st winter was at Burrator on 9 Nov, then ECC Pit Complex 15-16 Nov, followed by two at Burrator on 22 Dec.

**GOOSANDER.** The highest site count was 51 at Burrator at dawn on 9 Feb, which contributed to a synchronized count of 93 (including 17 males) on all Dartmoor roost sites; the synchronized count at dawn on 12 Jan was 83. The only other sites with counts >10 were at Avon Dam and Venford. Away from the reservoir roosts, records of at least five included: eight at Shaugh Lake clay workings on 18 Feb; six at Big Pond on the interesting date of 23 Aug;

and five at Cadover Bridge on 2 Jan and at Swincombe Valley intake works near dusk on 22 Mar. Two broods of ducklings were seen on the R Dart and one on the R Plym. Recorded in five Brent squares (monthly max: four squares in Dec).

**QUAIL.** One calling at Bagtor on 13 May, within 15 m of observer, but remained invisible (JDA).

**RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE.** One with five chicks at Metherall on 1 Jul was the only breeding record; otherwise just singles at four sites, and two at another.

**RED GROUSE.** No indication of breeding, but records in most months, and from 17 sites in total. Max counts of 10 nr Fernworthy in Jan, and five at Ryder's Hill in Oct and Hewdown in Nov.

**PHEASANT.** Widespread in first half of year when more conspicuous and vocal, thereafter most records from South Brent, which also produced the max count of 30 near Harbourneford in Jan. Nests found at Buckland Monachorum, Shaugh Prior and Whitchurch. Recorded in 30 Brent squares (monthly max: 22 squares in Apr and May), breeding in three.

**GREAT NORTHERN DIVER.** One at Burrator on 8 Mar and two over heading N, near Two Bridges, on 15 May at 06:00 (JMW).

**CORMORANT.** Recorded in all months, mostly from reservoirs but also occasionally from lakes and rivers and in flight. Mostly one-two, but max counts of seven from Hennock (Kennick) in Apr, Oct and Nov, and six from Burrator in Aug, Sep and Nov. Recorded in nine Brent squares (monthly max: eight squares in Oct).

**LITTLE EGRET.** All singles. Several records from around South Brent in Feb and Mar, including one at Avon Dam on 9 Feb, were probably of the same bird; and again in May, Oct and Nov. Otherwise from the Cadover/Brisworthy area in Mar, Jul, Aug and Sep, and over Yennadon Down on 14 Aug. Recorded in eight Brent squares (monthly max: three squares in Feb).

**GREY HERON.** Widespread on a variety of sites, but usually singles. Away from heronries, max count of four at Burrator, Mar–May and Dec. Breeding (with best estimates of occupied nests per DR) at: Beardown (5), Buckfast (1) and Venford (3) on the Dart; Hoo Meavy (3) on the Plym and Wanford Wood (3) on the Bovey. Recorded in 25 Brent squares (monthly max: 12 squares in Aug).

**LITTLE GREBE.** Recorded at seven sites, the main ones being Burrator (max of eight on 8 Feb, and present Jan–Mar and Jul–Dec) and ECC Pit Complex (max of 22 on 12 Sep, and present Feb–Nov). Breeding occurred at Kennick, Lee Moor and South Brent fishing lakes (records from all months except Jan and Nov) and probably Manaton.

**GREAT CRESTED GREBE.** Bred at Hennock. Only recorded on reservoirs, and during Jan–Aug, most consistently Hennock with max of three.

**BLACK KITE.** One N over Soussons on 26 May (NCW).

**RED KITE.** Apart from single(s) over Brentor on 18 Feb and Princetown two days later, all records were between 6 Apr (Buckfastleigh) and 14 Jun (Yelverton). Max counts were on 13 May (seven at Buckfastleigh and six at South Brent, probably same birds) and 23 May (five at Yennadon). Records from 10 sites in Apr, 19 in May and seven in Jun.

**HEN HARRIER.** To 20 Apr (Soussons) and from 8 Oct (Ringmoor Down and Two Bridges). Records from 15 sites Jan–Apr, with a max roost count of seven (two ad males) on 15 Feb, and 14 sites Oct–Dec, with a max roost count of eight (four ad males) on 16 Nov. No kills recorded, but seen chasing Snipe, Bullfinch and Meadow Pipit. An **unidentified Harrier** (ringtail) was nr Langstone Cross on 28 Apr.

**GOSHAWK.** A below average breeding year for this species, based on data from sites monitored by MD, which produced a mean of 1.5 young per pair. Three sites occupied in 2014 were unoccupied in 2015, though two new sites were found. There was tendency for the quieter, less disturbed, woods to be the more productive sites, although one failed (predated, possibly by another Goshawk) at the medium-large young stage, which is unusual. The main mammal prey was Grey Squirrel and Rabbits, while birds included mainly Woodpigeon, Carrion Crow, Jay and Magpie, although Tawny Owl, Blackbird and Song Thrush remains also found.

**SPARROWHAWK.** Widespread, but breeding only confirmed at Walkhampton and Yennadon. Up to four seen together. Prey included Blackbird, Collared Dove and Starling. Recorded in 25 Brent squares (monthly max: 12 squares in Apr and Oct), breeding in one.

**BUZZARD.** Display noted at several sites, but breeding only recorded at South Brent, Whiteworks and Yennadon. Max count was 28 at South Brent on 13 May (with Red Kites, following plough), the other high counts coming from Buckfastleigh (16 in Apr, 15 in Mar and 10 in Sep) and Ramshorn Down (12 in Mar). Fingle Woods: four pairs. Recorded in all 38 Brent squares (monthly max: 31 squares in Apr), breeding in one.

**OSPREY.** Four records, singles unless stated: over Fingle Woods on 8 Apr (carrying fish), Buckfastleigh on 13 Apr (following Dart), Wigford Down on 7 Sep (arrived from N) and Portworthy on 23 Sep (two circling).

**MOORHEN.** Scarce on reservoirs, and counts >10 only from Portworthy, in Feb and Aug–Dec. Up to seven at Brook Manor. Breeding recorded at Buckland Monachorum, Fernworthy, Harbourneford and South Brent, and probably widespread but unrecorded on many small water bodies. Recorded in six Brent squares (monthly max: five squares in Jan and Jul), breeding in three.

**COOT.** Breeding only at Portworthy, which also produced the only counts >10, mainly in autumn and winter, though present all year, as at Hennock. Also two at ECC Pit Complex on 27 Apr, and one-two at Fernworthy Jan–Apr, with max of three on 17 Apr.

**GOLDEN PLOVER.** To 3 Apr (200 at Leeden Tor) and from 6 Sep (one at Blackdown/Willsworthy). Counts >100 from: Ringmoor Down, 1,000 on 17 & 19 Jan, 800 on 21 Feb and 300 in Mar and Nov; Haytor Down, 520 on 25 Oct; Leeden Tor, Roborough Down, Routrundle and Wigford Down, all with at least 200; and Cadover, Harbourne Head, Smith Hill and Yar Tor, all with at least 100. No records from WeBS sites. Surprisingly few in Dec, with a max count of only 50, at Little Kneeset on 7 Dec. Recorded in six Brent squares (monthly max: three squares in Mar).

**DOTTEREL.** One at Wigford Down on 11 Sep (RJL).

**LITTLE RINGED PLOVER.** Apart from one at Avon Dam on 28 Apr (BW), all records from ECC Pit Complex/Portworthy where at least two prs bred, as evidenced by courtship display and juveniles (SM,NST).

**LAPWING.** The only non-breeding site was at Princetown, occupied by a wintering flock of up to 28 (2 Jan) on the prison fields, last recorded on 22 Feb, then again on 29 Oct, but none reported in Nov or Dec. Up to five nests at the only breeding site, but only one chick found, in spite of predator control (JDA).

**WHIMBREL.** One heard over Dousland at 23:00 on 16 May (JFJ).

**CURLEW.** Up to four pairs at the only breeding site, first noted on 9 Feb and present until Jun, but no evidence of successful breeding (JDA). Also one heard calling, presumably in flight, over the north moor on 12 Jun.

**LITTLE STINT.** First record since 1998. Two at Portworthy on 12 Aug (NST).

**DUNLIN.** Breeding appears stable, with up to 18 possible territories located, though two nests had been predated, probably by Carrion Crows (MLHS). No other records.

**COMMON SANDPIPER.** Recorded at Avon Dam, Burrator, Hennock, Portworthy and Venford on passage, between 8 Mar (one at Hennock) and 9 Oct (three at Burrator). One pair bred at ECC Pit Complex.

**GREEN SANDPIPER.** One at Portworthy until 18 Mar presumably overwintered there. The next was on the unusual date of 14 Jun at Cowsic Head (MLHS), followed by birds at: Portworthy, between 18 Jul and 16 Sep, with a max of three on 12 Aug; ECC Pit Complex on 16 Aug; Gibbet Hill 24-26 Aug; Hennock on 29 Aug; Avon Dam on 30 Aug; and near Harbournford (flooded road) on 31 Aug.

**WOOD SANDPIPER.** One on 13 Apr at Hanger Down, flushed from a small pond, spiraled high, then headed N (JDA).

**REDSHANK.** Singles at Portworthy on 3 Jul and Meldon on 23 Jul (both NST).

**JACK SNIBE.** To 1 May (Bagtor) and from 13 Oct (Cadover and Sharp Tor). Records from 12 sites, all singles apart from two-three in Cadover/Brisworthy area and Wigford Down, and all moorland and marshy sites apart from one in a Huccaby garden on 13 Feb.

**SNIBE.** Confirmed breeding at Bagtor, Bonehill, Dunnabridge and Hanger Down (JDA), and chipping and/or bleating from around 20 other scattered sites. Max winter count was 32 at Wigford Down on 14 Jan, and all counts >10 from either here or nearby Cadover/Brisworthy area, except for 18 at Hart Tor Brook and 10 at Harefoot Cross, both on 28 Dec. Recorded in 19 Brent squares (monthly max: eight squares in Jan and Oct), breeding in two.

**WOODCOCK.** To 14 Mar (Harford) and from 23 Oct (Scorrison Down). Records from 20 sites mostly of flushed singles, but four at Laughter Tor on 15 Feb and at Burrator on 27 Nov. Recorded in 14 Brent squares (monthly max: seven squares in Nov).

**BLACK-HEADED GULL.** Counts >10 only in winter months and from large water bodies; Fernworthy, 260 at roost on 11 Jan; 51 at Portworthy on 13 Dec; and 50 at Burrator on 4 Dec, with 35 there on 16 Nov. Absent Mar–Jun inclusive, apart from two nr Dousland on 13 Apr, but several records Jul–Sep. Recorded from two Brent squares.

**MEDITERRANEAN GULL.** Records of one at Yelverton airfield on 14 Aug, 12 Sep and 28 Nov (RJL), may have referred to one individual progressing through moult.

**COMMON GULL.** Only at Portworthy, with three on 5 Jan, eight on 13 Dec and six on 20 Dec.

**LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL.** Virtual absence of records after Aug due, at least partly, to an absence of counts from Fernworthy, where there were 204 at roost on 11 Jan and 39 on 8 Feb. The only other counts >10 were from: Burrator on 11 Feb; Portworthy during Mar–May with a max of 21 on 12 Apr; Roborough Down, 12 over on 29 Mar; and Yennadon, 10 on 13 Apr. Recorded from eight Brent squares (monthly max: four squares in Jul).

**HERRING GULL.** Apart from 126 at roost on Fernworthy on 11 Jan, the highest counts were during May–Jul from cut silage or newly ploughed fields: 300 at South Brent on 13 May, Alston Cross on 16 Jun, Avon Dam (bathing) on 23 Jun and Cator on 17 Jul; and 200 at Peek Hill on 13 Jun. No breeding records, but small numbers regular on roofs in South Brent village. Recorded from 31 Brent squares (monthly max: 23 squares in Jun).

**GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL.** Recorded in all months, usually in small numbers, on reservoirs, pastures or flying over, sometimes feeding on carcasses. Max counts were: seven at Portworthy in Apr, with six there in May; and six at Fernworthy in Jan and in the Walkham Valley in Mar. Recorded in 18 Brent squares (monthly max: 11 squares in May).

**STOCK DOVE.** Rather neglected, with only one breeding record, at Huccaby, and records from only 15 sites throughout the year. Max counts were 12 in South Brent in Sep and eight at Bagtor Down in May. Recorded in 17 Brent squares (monthly max: nine squares in Feb).

**WOODPIGEON.** Highest counts linked with migrating autumn flocks, but also 100 at Cripton/Ingra Tor on 17 Jun, and 52 moving S in small groups over Moorgate on the evening of 25 May. Autumn movements recorded from 16 Nov (Soussons and Henlake) to 13 Dec, the highest count being 6,500 over South Brent on 22 Nov 07.45–09.00h (SHo), also 5,000 over Buckfastleigh the previous day. Several breeding records, the most unusual being 1.5 m up in a gorse bush in the Cadover/Brisworthy area, with two young present on 29 Apr. Recorded in 31 Brent squares (monthly max: 27 squares in Jul), breeding in four.

**COLLARED DOVE.** Max count of 20 was at Princetown in Jan and Feb but at least 10 were there all year, and 16 were at South Brent (Moorland Park) Jul–Oct. Breeding only recorded at four sites, but presumably occurred at most of the 15 sites where recorded, and elsewhere. Recorded in 14 Brent squares (monthly max: 12 squares in Apr), breeding in three.

**CUCKOO.** From 2 Apr (Burrator) to 10 Aug (Widcombe). Main influx from 15 Apr, with wide distribution around the edge of the moor. All those in Jul and Aug were juvs. On 29 Jun, the last ad was seen at Venford, while on the same day the first juv was below Warren House. The only egg reported was in a Whinchat nest at Warren House on 27 May, subsequently deserted and then predated (RJH,SMT). Bubbling by females (indicating egg laying) was heard at High House Waste, Soussons and Yennadon, and juveniles were seen being fed at Bonehill Rock, Fernworthy and Vitifer. Recorded in 19 Brent squares (monthly max: 17 squares in May), bubbling in three.

**BARN OWL.** No breeding records, but reported to be present at Challacombe throughout the year. Otherwise recorded from Clearbrook in Jan, Yarner Wood (two) in Apr, Dartmeet in Jun, Harbourneford in Sep, Laughter Tor in Oct and Wrangaton in Dec.

**LITTLE OWL.** All singles. Recorded only from South Brent in Feb, Apr, May, Aug (one of uncertain provenance, subsequently electrocuted, the corpse dangling from overhead wires for several months), Oct and Nov, and the White Tor area in Feb, Jun and Aug.

**TAWNY OWL.** Recorded in all months, with a max count of five at South Brent in Jan. Breeding occurred in nest-boxes at Dousland and Yelverton, and a fledgling was found near Kennick Res. Recorded in 14 Brent squares (monthly max: 12squares in Apr), breeding in three.

**SHORT-EARED OWL.** All autumn records apart from one at Prince Hall on 17 Feb. In Oct, occurred at Avon Dam on 16th, Laughter Tor (two) on 19th, Halsanger (four) on 20th and Whiteworks on 29th. In Nov at Shovel Down on 15th, Henlake Down on 16th, Statt's Bridge on 26th (also there on 8 Dec) and Flat Tor on 30th, followed by two in the Princetown area 28–31 Dec.

**NIGHTJAR.** From 12 May to 8 Aug (Bellevier). The only sites were Bellevier (max nine including seven males on 11 Jun), Fernworthy, Haytor area, Heathercombe, Natsworthy, Ramshorn Down, Soussons (max 12 including eight males on 18 Jun) and Stiniel Common.

**SWIFT.** From 20 Apr (Buckfastleigh) to 23 Aug (Kennick). Several references to late arrival at breeding sites and scarcity. At Drewsteignton, seven active nests in 10 nest boxes, nine juvs ringed from four, the other three were late clutches which failed (NLD). Also bred at Lustleigh and South Brent. Recorded in 19 Brent squares (monthly max: 14 squares in Jun), breeding in two.

**KINGFISHER.** Recorded in all months, mostly occasional sightings and no indication of breeding, though present at three sites in the breeding season. Recorded at Burrator, Fenworthy and Meldon reservoirs, on the rivers Avon, Bovey, Dart, Harbourne, Meavy, Teign and Walkham, and on smaller water bodies at Harford Moor, Lydford, Moortown and Vogwell. Recorded in six Brent squares (monthly max: two squares) in Jan, May, Jul, Aug and Oct–Dec.

**WRYNECK.** Singles by track to Avon Dam on 22 Aug (M & J Lees) and in a Yelverton garden on 28 Aug (M Harper, J&GH).

**GREEN WOODPECKER.** Dunsford Woods: one pair (see Table 3). Also bred at Lustleigh, South Brent and Whitchurch. Recorded in 28 Brent squares (monthly max: 15 squares in Oct), breeding in three.

**GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER.** Bred at Yelverton and Dunsford Wood (three pairs, typical of recent years). At Bridford, where six ads and nine juvs were caught and ringed, it was 'present all year, breeds in nearby woods and visits garden feeders throughout year, but mainly by young in Jul-Aug' (DJP), a description that probably applies to much of Dartmoor. Dunsford Woods: three pairs (see Table 3). Fingle Woods: 13 pairs. Recorded in 29 Brent squares (monthly max: 17 squares in Nov), breeding in two.

**LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER.** Only recorded Feb–Apr, including breeding records for Step's Bridge/Dunsford Woods, where up to four seen together and two prs bred (see Table 3), and Yarner Wood. Otherwise, just one at Fingle Bridge in Apr.

**KESTREL.** No breeding records, but present throughout the year. Max count was four together (family) on Hameldown on 7 Aug. Three were recorded together on Three Barrows in Jun, at the Avon Dam, Devil's Elbow and Walkhampton in September, at Cox Tor in Oct and at Dunnabridge in Nov. Recorded in 36 Brent squares (monthly max: 24 squares in Sep).

**MERLIN.** To 10 Apr (Challacombe and Ugborough Moors) and from 20 Oct (Brent Moor), apart from singles in the Blackdown/Willsworthy area in Aug and Sep (AGLH). Recorded at six sites in Jan, and at two-three in each of Feb, Mar, Apr, Oct, Nov and Dec. Recorded in seven Brent squares (monthly max: three squares in Feb).

**HOBBY.** From 28 Apr (Soussons) to 29 Sep (Buckfastleigh). Records from three sites in Apr, 13 in May, six in Jun, 12 in Jul, eight in Aug and 10 in Sep. An injured juv from 2014 returned as a 2 cy, and spent much of Sep in South Brent (SHo; see Hopper 2016). Recorded in 11 Brent squares (monthly max: four squares in Jul).

**PEREGRINE.** Breeding reported from three sites. Records from seven sites in Jan and five in Mar, otherwise just two–three each month. Recorded in 14 Brent squares (monthly max: four squares in Apr).

**RED-BACKED SHRIKE.** A female seen and photographed at Soussons on 30 May, but not seen thereafter.

**GREAT GREY SHRIKE.** To 26 Mar (Warren House) and from 25 Oct (Emsworthy). Single(s) recorded in the first winter-period mostly in the Warren House/Soussons area, but including records from North Bovey on 2 Jan, near Corndon Down on 23 Jan and Fernworthy on 17 Feb; these could all refer to the same bird. In autumn, none after 25 Oct until 19 Nov at Bellever, then at Soussons on 23 Nov and 28 Dec and near Hound Tor on 24 Dec.

**JAY.** As well as singles and pairs, groups of four-five recorded in most months, with six at Soussons on 27 Jan and at Belstone on 14 Feb. The only breeding reported was at Yelverton, apart from Fingle Woods: nine pairs. Recorded in 26 Brent squares (monthly max: 22 squares in Oct).

**MAGPIE.** The highest flock counts were: 17 at Whitchurch in Aug; 13 gathering to roost at South Brent in Dec; 10 at Gribblesdown, South Brent in Jan; and nine feeding on bird seed at Norsworthy Bridge in Nov. Recorded in 29 Brent squares (monthly max: 27 squares in Aug and Oct), breeding in two.

**JACKDAW.** Flocks of at least 200 recorded in six months, mostly autumn and winter, the max being 300+ N over Dousland mid-morning on 25 Feb. Reported nest sites, other than buildings, included tree-hole at Burrator and a mine chimney at Druid Wood, Ashburton. Recorded in 24 Brent squares (monthly max: 23 squares in May), breeding in 12.

**ROOK.** Only four records! Two rookeries at South Brent (Didworthy and Brent Mill). The highest counts were 60 near Shipley Bridge in Oct and 50 at Hanger Down in Nov, but 20 well out on the moor at South Tavy Head on 14 Jun was also of note. Recorded in 21 Brent squares (monthly max: 14 squares in Apr), breeding in two.

**CARRION CROW.** Max counts were over 50 at Hanger Down in Jul and 40 at Lee Moor in Oct. Of five nests reported by RJH/SMT only one resulted in fledged young, losses including both egg and chick predation. Recorded in all 38 Brent squares (monthly max: 37 squares in Sep and Oct), breeding in 12 (see also Table 4).

**RAVEN.** Highest counts: 40 circling, with Jackdaws, over Shaugh Prior on 6 Oct; 26 on cow carcass near Glaze Head on 2 Dec; and 20 at Wigford Down on 28 Sep. Breeding noted from 12 sites, mostly in either tall conifers or quarries. Fingle Woods: two pairs. Recorded in 37 Brent squares (monthly max: 29 squares in Oct), breeding in four.

**FIRECREST.** Two 'chasing and flitting around an oak tree' at Burrator Arboretum on 15 May (SMT), then more typical autumn records of singles from four sites: Burrator on 3 Oct; Buckfastleigh on 14 Oct and 1 Nov; Parke on 20 Nov; and Scorrison Down on 18 Oct.

**GOLDCREST.** Several counts >10, but rarely clear whether or not records refer to flocks. Breeding at Burrator and Lady's Wood. Two highest counts were 40 at Soussons on 28 Jan in a mixed species flock, and 52 ringed at Soussons during October. Dunsford Woods: five pairs (see Table 3). Fingle Woods: 168 pairs. Recorded in 27 Brent squares (monthly max: 23 squares in Nov), breeding in one.

**BLUE TIT.** The highest counts identified as flocks were 20 in a mixed-species flock at Bench Tor in Sep, 10+ in a Yelverton garden in Jun and 10 at Soussons in Jan. Nest-box productivity (see Table 2). Dunsford Woods: 41 prs (see Table 3). Fingle Woods: 109 pairs. Recorded in 30 Brent squares (monthly max: 27 squares in Oct), breeding in 13.

**GREAT TIT.** The highest count identified as a flock was just six in a mixed-species flock at Soussons in Nov. Nest box productivity (see Table 2). Dunsford Woods: eight pairs (see Table 3). Fingle Woods: 22 pairs. Recorded in 29 Brent squares (monthly max: 25 squares in Mar and Apr), breeding in 10.

**COAL TIT.** The highest counts identified as flocks were in Jan at Soussons, with 20 under beeches at Ephraim's Pinch, and 15 in a mixed-species. Nine young fledged from a nest-box at Blackingstone Quarry Wood. Dunsford Woods: nine pairs (see Table 3). Fingle Woods: 136 pairs. Recorded in 24 Brent squares (monthly max: 19 squares in Oct), breeding in four.

**WILLOW TIT.** Singles only recorded from Vogwell on 19 Apr and 20 Sep (both JBa) and Spitchwick on 23 Aug (JMW).

**MARSH TIT.** One at Cadover/Brisworthy on 31 Oct was the first seen there in 30 years of visits. Bred at Burrator, Bench Tor, Lady's Wood and Shaugh Prior. Dunsford Woods: two pairs (see Table 3). Fingle Woods: six pairs. Recorded in 14 Brent squares (monthly max: eight squares in Oct).

**SKYLARK.** Present throughout year, but scarce on the moor in winter with Jan records only from South Brent area, Princetown and Ringmoor Down, and in Dec only from Broadal Top and Stall Down. Probable breeding widespread but only confirmed at Cator Common and Headland Warren (carrying food) and Maiden hill (nest with eggs). Recorded in 30 Brent squares (monthly max: 27 squares in Oct), breeding in two.

**SAND MARTIN.** From 28 Apr (Portworthy) to 15 Aug (Cadover). Most records from presumed breeding site on the R Plym near Cadover, in Jun, Jul and Aug, plus singles at Brook Manor on 5 May, Avon Dam on 15 May, three at Portworthy on 13 Jul and two at Burrator on 16 Jul.

**SWALLOW.** From 25 Mar (Drewsteignton) to 5 Nov (Dousland). Largest counts were 50 at Buckfastleigh on 20 Apr and 35 feeding over bracken at Soussons on 7 Sep. Recorded in 35 Brent squares (monthly max: 30 squares in May and Aug), breeding in eight.



**HOUSE MARTIN.** From 8 Apr to 10 Oct (both Grenofen). Largest flocks of 120 at Aish, South Brent on 3 Sep and of 50 at both Lustleigh on 27 Sep and Whitchurch Down on 2 Oct. Breeding recorded (with number of occupied nests) at: Bellever (2); Challacombe Farm (9); Grenofen; Haytor (24); Hexworthy (3); Manaton (7); Prince Hall (15); South Brent; Venford Res buildings (6); Walkhampton; and Widecombe. A white and sandy-brown juv at Buckland Beacon on 3 Oct was presumably one with aberrant plumage rather than the hybrid House Martin x Sand Martin suggested. Recorded in 28 Brent squares (monthly max: 14 squares in Jul), breeding in two.

**LONG-TAILED TIT.** Flocks of 10 or more only in Jan, Feb and Jul–Dec, the largest being 20 at Huckworthy Down in Sep, and 18 at both Fernworthy in Feb and Soussons in Nov. In Hembury Woods in Dec, a group of eight roosted in different trees on different nights, Holly, Blackthorn and Alder Buckthorn. Confirmed breeding at several sites. Dunsford Woods: four pairs (see Table 3). Fingle Woods: 10 pairs. Recorded in 27 Brent squares (monthly max 23 in Nov), breeding in one. Recorded in 23 Brent squares (monthly max: 17 squares in Oct), breeding in three.

**YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER.** One caught and ringed at Bridford on 16 Oct (DJP) and another seen in the valley below Avon Dam on 26 Oct (DMS) were the first since two in 2008, and become the sixth and seventh Dartmoor records.

**WOOD WARBLER.** Only from 16 Apr at Bovey Valley Woodland to 30 May (Venford). Singing males were at Dart Valley Woods (including five between Dartmeet and Newbridge on 29 May, and four at Venford alone on 30 May), Fingle Bridge to Whiddon Deer Park (four on 17 May), Soussons (two on 20 May) and Yarnor Wood (five on 18 May). Dunsford Woods: three pairs (see Table 3). Fingle Woods: seven pairs.

**CHIFFCHAFF.** In Jan and Dec, only from South Brent, including up to four at the Sewage Works 15 Jan to 5 Feb, and in Feb only from here, Buckfastleigh and Drewsteignton. Absence of records 18 Feb to 15 Mar and 14 Oct to 22 Nov may mark transition between winter and summer visitors. Max count at Shipley of 30 on 6 Sep. Fewer pairs in Bridford than in 2014 and only 21 juvs caught and ringed Jul–Oct compared to 96 in 2014 (DJP). Dunsford Woods: 11 pairs (see Table 3). Fingle Woods: 78 pairs. Recorded in 30 Brent squares (monthly max: 28 squares in Apr), breeding in two.

**WILLOW WARBLER.** From 7 Apr (Deancombe) to 23 Sep (Cadover Bridge). Soon widespread after initial arrival, e.g. 16 singing at Criptor/Ingra Tor on 11 Apr. Nine nests monitored at Clearbrook and Warren House, three predated, 31 fledged from 46 eggs (RJH/SMT). Dunsford Woods: five pairs (see Table 3). Fingle Woods: 29 pairs. Recorded in 23 Brent squares (monthly max: 19 squares in Apr), breeding in six.

**BLACKCAP.** Highest winter numbers from a Yelverton garden, until 31 Mar and from 18 Nov, with a max of seven in Feb, fewer than usual (J&GH); otherwise one-two in Jan and Feb at Buckfastleigh, Lustleigh and South Brent, and in Nov and Dec from Buckfastleigh and South Brent. Widespread in breeding season, but no confirmed breeding. Dunsford Woods: 19 pairs (see Table 3). Fingle Woods: 117 pairs. Recorded in 26 Brent squares (monthly max: 21 squares in Apr), breeding in four.

**GARDEN WARBLER.** From 25 Apr (Badworthy, South Brent) to 24 Aug (Cadover/Brisworthy). Breeding season records from over 20 sites, but confirmed breeding only at Berrator, Burrator, Lady's Wood and Dockwell. Fingle Woods: four pairs. Recorded in nine Brent squares (monthly max: seven squares in May), breeding in two.

**LESSER WHITETHROAT.** One singing briefly on 17 Apr near Bullhornstone Farm, South Brent (BW).

**WHITETHROAT.** From 16 Apr (Challacombe Farm) to 3 Sep at (Didworthy). Confirmed breeding at Christow, Clearbrook, South Brent and Soussons. Fingle Woods: one pair. Recorded in 15 Brent squares (monthly max: eight squares in Jun), breeding in two.

**DARTFORD WARBLER.** Three records: a female/imm above Dockwell Hole on 20 Feb (PJR); a male at Mountsland Common on 22 Feb (JSR); and a pair at Aish Tor on 17 Jun (SMG).

**GRASSHOPPER WARBLER.** From 23 Apr (Soussons) to 7 Aug (nr Great Cator), the last reeling reported on 17 Jul. No confirmed breeding sites, but a juv was at Hawns and Dendles on 31 Jul. Other sites: several around the Bala Brook and R Avon, including Knattabarrow Pools, and three birds seen nr Huntingdon Cross; Criptor/Ingra Tor; several sites in the Warren House/Soussons area; Postbridge; Routrundle; Smith Hill. Recorded in five Brent squares (monthly max: four squares in May).

**SEDGE WARBLER.** All passage birds and, apart from one at Princetown Prison Fields on 13 May, all in August from the South Brent area. Recorded in five Brent squares: two sites near Aish Ridge on 15 Aug, and five birds between Petre's Pit and Zeal Gulley on 17 Aug (BW).

**NUTHATCH.** One feeding on Haytor Rock on 20 Apr was well away from typical habitat. Several breeding records including nest-boxes at Druid Wood (four fledged from eight eggs), East Dartmoor NNR (11 fledged from 25 eggs) and Shaugh Prior (five fledged from five eggs). Dunsford Woods: four pairs (see Table 3). Fingle Woods: eight pairs. Recorded in 23 Brent squares (monthly max: 19 squares in Apr), breeding in three.

**TREECREEPER.** Breeding at Challacombe, Dunsford Woods, Meldon Woods and White Wood. In Burrator Wood on 18 Apr 'at least three pairs feeding together' (M&RH). One foraging among ivy on Pennaton Bridge on 30 May caught a large orange moth which was fed to a juv in nearby tree tops (RHH). Dunsford Woods: one pair (see Table 3). Fingle Woods: four pairs. Recorded in 14 Brent squares (monthly max: six squares Jan–Apr).

**WREN.** Scarce on the high moor in winter, but one at Hew Down on 1 Nov. Dunsford Woods: 36 pairs (see Table 3). Fingle Woods: 220 pairs. Recorded in 35 Brent squares (monthly max: 33 squares, and more than 30 Mar–Oct), breeding in 15.

**STARLING.** Lower than usual winter numbers, highest in Jan: 4,000 going to roost at Whiteworks on 9 Jan; 1,000 W at Huccaby on 24 Jan, presumably heading to roost at Whiteworks; 500 roosting in bamboos at Aish, South Brent on 28 Jan (and 400 in South Brent area in Feb and Mar); 400 at Smeardon; and flocks of up to 250 at several other scattered sites. In the second winter-period the highest were 500 at Wapsworthy on 23 Dec, 200 at Whiteworks on 18 Nov and 200 on 29 Oct on Wind Tor. Breeding only reported from Dousland and South Brent, but juvenile flocks May–Jul at Cadover/Brisworthy, Princetown, Whiteworks and Trowlesworth. Recorded in 26 Brent squares (monthly max: 18 squares in Jan), breeding in four.

**DIPPER.** Recorded from usual rivers, successful breeding reported from Cadworthy, Challacombe, Goodameavy and Grenofen Bridge. Early singing on 29 Dec on the R Avon. Fingle Woods (R Teign): three pairs. Recorded in 12 Brent squares (monthly max: seven squares in Mar), breeding in two.

**RING OUZEL.** The survey funded by Devon Birds and the RSPB produced a slight improvement this year with eight confirmed pairs and three additional males, all perhaps on territory. The range contraction remains apparent with few sites occupied. Of the 12 nesting attempts only five were successful producing c. 20 fledglings. Winter birds at: Brent Hill/Aish Ridge, male 16–19 Jan, Buckfastleigh garden, male until 5 Apr; Oke Tor, 22 Jan; and Western Beacon, 3 Feb. First spring arrival on 20 Mar at Combestone Tor, followed by others at five other sites away from breeding areas until 27 Apr. Autumn passage from 7 Sep (Avon Dam) to 1 Nov (Dockwell Ridge and Sandyhole), with a max count of only four and records from only 11 sites. Recorded in 10 Brent squares (monthly max: four squares in Oct).

**BLACKBIRD.** First singing on 7 Feb, first fledgling on early date of 25 Feb in South Brent. Of 43 eggs laid in 12 nests, mostly in SW Dartmoor, 25 young fledged (RJH,SMT). Garden influxes of 20 and 15 noted at Buckfastleigh on 1 Oct and 21 Nov. Unusual out on the moor, presumed migrant was flushed at Wallabrook Hd on 1 Nov. Newt dismembered and fed to young at Dousland on 30 May. Dunsford Woods: 23 pairs (see Table 3). Fingle Woods: 114 pairs. Recorded in 30 Brent squares (monthly max: 29 squares in Mar and Jun), breeding in 19.

**FIELDFARE.** To 2 Apr (Berrator) and from 25 Sep (Moorgate, Okehampton). Largest flocks: 400 at Merrivale on 1 Dec; 350+ at Dunnabridge on 16 Nov; 300+ at Wind Tor on 29 Oct; and 300 at Whiteworks on 4 Jan. Recorded in 31 Brent squares (monthly max: 23 squares in Nov).

**SONG THRUSH.** First singing on 27 Nov at Dousland. Dunsford Woods: six pairs (see Table 3). Fingle Woods: 89 pairs. Recorded in 25 Brent squares (monthly max: 20 squares in May), breeding in two.

**REDWING.** To 29 Mar (26 in Lustleigh area) and from 10 Oct (Shaugh Prior). Largest counts on 15 Oct: Bridford, 1,000 heading NE in small groups from 08:00 to 09:00 (six caught for ringing suggested Scandinavian origin); between Yelverton and Lee Moor, 700 over. Largest winter flocks: 300 at Sheepstor on 2 Jan and 200 at Hennock Res feeding in holly on 14 Nov. Recorded in 23 Brent squares (monthly max: 21 squares in Nov).

**MISTLE THRUSH.** Largest flocks in Aug: 60+ in Vavy Cleave on 6 Aug; 56 at Kennick on 23 Aug and 30 at Yelverton on 10 Aug. Confirmed breeding at Burrator, Cator Common, Laughter Tor, Prince Hall, Shaugh Prior, South Brent and Yennadon. Dunsford Woods: two pairs (see Table). Fingle Woods: 11 pairs. Recorded in 26 Brent squares (monthly max: 19 squares in Feb), breeding in nine.

**SPOTTED FLYCATCHER.** From 11 May (Hembury and Challacombe) to 1 Oct (Burrator), but otherwise, no records after 10 Sep. Confirmed breeding only at Challacombe and Yarner Wood (nestbox), but probable also at Becka Brook, Brimpts, Cadover/Brisworthy, Hembury Woods, Postbridge, South Brent (Lutton) and Venford Res. Records from about 40 sites in total, 16 in May, 12 in Jun, 10 in Jul, 11 in Aug, six in Sep and one in Oct. Dunsford Woods: one pair (see Table 3). Fingle Woods: one pair. Recorded in 11 Brent squares (monthly max: six squares in Aug).

**ROBIN.** First eggs at Shaugh Prior on 14 Feb. Dunsford Woods: 50 pairs (see Table 3). Fingle Woods: 371 pairs. Recorded in 31 Brent squares (monthly max: 29 squares in Apr, May and Sep, minimum 23 in Jul), breeding in 16.

**BLACK REDSTART.** Spring migrants at Middle Brook (Bala Brook) on 20 Apr (female) and nearby Black Tor on 7 May (male). Autumn migrants at Moretonhampstead on 24 Oct, Ashburton on 15 Nov and South Brent village 10–21 Nov, with two on 19th. One at Buckfastleigh on 23 Dec presumably wintered. Recorded in four Brent squares (monthly max: two squares in Nov).

**REDSTART.** From 8 Apr (Dunsford Woods) to 1 October (Sheepstor). Breeding confirmed at Bellever, Burrator, Cadworthy Woods, Challacombe, Hexworthy (box on house), Norsworthy, Prince Hall, Soussons (seven territories), Yarner Wood (box), Yennadon and Zeal. Autumn migrants included six at Cadover Bridge on 1 Sep, three at Dockwell on 2 Sep and singles at Avon Dam on 28 Aug, Brent Hill on 17 Aug and Aish Ridge on 8 Sep. Dunsford Woods: possibly three pairs (see Table 3). Fingle Woods: three pairs. Recorded in 12 Brent squares (monthly max: six squares in Aug), breeding in one.

**WHINCHAT.** From 20 Apr (Bala Brook) to 28 Sep (Vitifer). Migrants mostly in Sep, including one off moor on Brent Hill on 1 Sep, a total of 12 above South Brent on 7 Sep and four at Cadover on 23 Sep. Elsewhere, confirmed breeding in the Soussons area where 19 young fledged from 55 eggs laid in 11 nests, including one, later abandoned, parasitised by Cuckoo (RJH,SMT). The Dartmoor Study Group survey of 12 1-km squares in the Warren House-Challacombe area found 59 territories, *cf.* 41 in 2005 (pAGWJ). Recorded in 16 Brent squares (monthly max: 13 squares in Sep), breeding in nine (see also Table 4).

**STONECHAT.** Fewest records in Dec: three Brent squares and one on Western Beacon. Only records off the moor were from Brent Hill (not a breeding site) in Jan and Sep. Widely reported over an extended breeding season, with young being fed 7 May to 18 Aug, and max counts from: South Brent (see Table 4); Yennadon (14 territories/pairs); Brent Fore Hill (11 in one km square); and Corndon, Headland Warren, Laughter Tor and Statt's Bridge, all with five-six pairs. From 41 eggs in nine nests in the Cadover, Clearbrook and Warren House areas, 26 fledged (RJH,SMT). The Dartmoor Study Group survey of 12 1-km squares in the Warren House-Challacombe area found 69

territories, cf. 48 in 2005 (pAGWJ). Recorded in 25 Brent squares (monthly max: 19 squares in Jun, Sep and Oct), breeding in 18 (see also Table 4).

**WHEATEAR.** From 13 Mar (Devil's Elbow) to 1 Nov (Fur Tor).; 24 territories in survey of 22 moorland squares (BW). Elsewhere, confirmed breeding from about 15 sites. October records from six sites. Away from breeding sites, the only records were from Brent Hill, five on 6 Sep and one on 24 Sep. Recorded in 22 Brent squares (monthly max: 17 squares in May), breeding in nine (see also Table 4).

**PIED FLYCATCHER.** From 7 Apr (East Dartmoor Woods) to 20 Sep (Vogwell). Recorded at over 20 sites Apr–Jun but none in Jul and only one in Aug and two in Sep. Confirmed breeding only in boxes at 12 sites, from which 840 young fledged (see Table 2), and in natural holes at Dunsford Woods and Venford Res. Single autumn migrants at Shipley on 28 Aug, Dockwell on 2 Sep and Vogwell on 20 Sep. Dunsford Woods: 24 pairs (see Table 3). Fingle Woods: 13 pairs. Recorded in two Brent squares, in Aug and Sep.

**DUNNOCK.** Unusual on the moor away from gorse, one was in bracken near Eastern White Barrow (445 m) on 29 Aug. Out of nine nests at various sites, seven were unsuccessful, with 26 eggs producing only five fledged young (RJH,SMT). Dunsford Woods: five pairs (see Table 3). Fingle Woods: eight pairs. Recorded in 33 Brent squares (monthly max: 27 squares in Apr), breeding in nine.

**HOUSE SPARROW.** Breeding probably in most villages and farms, but only confirmed at Dousland, Lydford, Princetown, South Brent and Yelverton. Max count of 40 at Christow and Princetown, and 35 at Lustleigh and South Brent, though at Christow a breeding population of 45 pairs was inferred by DJP from the total number ringed (45 ads and 50 juvs) and the percentage of ringed birds at feeders (50%). Recorded in 17 Brent squares (monthly max: 15 squares Feb–May), breeding in 10.

**YELLOW WAGTAIL.** The only record was of three on Brent Hill on 6 Sep (PJR).

**GREY WAGTAIL.** Five fledged from clutches of five on the R Plym, Meavy, Warren House and Yellowmeade and four from four at Bellever (RJH,SMT). Breeding also confirmed on the R Avon, Fernworthy Res, Golden Dagger Mine, Prince Hall and Yarner Wood. Fingle Woods: six pairs. Recorded in 24 Brent squares (monthly max: 12 squares in Jun and Sep), breeding in five.

**PIED/WHITE WAGTAIL.** Highest counts were: 113 going to roost at Fernworthy Res on 11 Jan; 80 in stubble nr Harbourneford in early Oct; max of 69 on 22 Sep gathering to roost at Beara, South Brent and max of 62 on 29 Oct roosting in South Brent village. One on the track below Three Barrows on 3 Oct was adrift from usual sites. Confirmed breeding at 15 sites. Recorded in 26 Brent squares (monthly max: 17 squares in Apr), breeding in six.

**White Wagtail.** A loosely associated pair fed by the R Avon near Huntingdon Cross on 28 Apr (BW).

**TREE PIPIT.** From 18 Mar (Pew Tor) to 30 Sep (over Buckfastleigh). Confirmed breeding at Bonehill Rock, but singing/display reported from over 20 other sites during Apr–Jun. Dunsford: two pairs (see Table 3). Recorded in 11 Brent squares (monthly max: 10 squares in Jun), breeding in seven (see also Table 4).

**MEADOW PIPIT.** The largest counts were in spring and autumn: 100 at Cadover on 13 Mar and at Lydford the next day; 200 at Pew Tor on 10 Sep; 300 at Fur Tor on 3 Oct 'all along N side of rocky slopes in the sun' (M&RH); 60 at Huntingdon Warren on 8 Oct and 80 in stubble near Harbourneford the next day. Widespread breeding on the moor, including a pair feeding a juv Cuckoo at Bonehill Rock on 10 Jul. In six nests at Clearbrook, Pizwell and Warren House, 19 young fledged from 25 eggs (RJH,SMT). Recorded in 37 Brent squares (monthly max: 31 squares in Apr), breeding in 22.

**BRAMBLING.** To 1 Apr (Princetown), from 2 Nov (Dousland). Max counts in Jan feeding on beech mast with Chaffinches: max of 20 at Soussons on 30 Jan; six at Fernworthy on 24 Jan; and three above Dousland on 23 Jan. Otherwise three in a Dousland garden on 27 Jan, and one-two at Burrator, Postbridge, Prince Hall, Princetown and

Shaugh Prior during Feb–Apr. The only autumn/second winter-period records were singles in gardens in Nov–Dec at Dousland, Ilsington, Princetown, Shaugh Prior and South Brent.

**CHAFFINCH.** The highest count was 300 in Jan at both Burrator and Prince Hall, and 200 at Soussons in both Jan and Mar. The highest garden count was of 50 at South Brent in Jul. First song reported at Hexworthy on 7 Feb. Eight nests at Buckland Monachorum, Goodameavy and Warren House areas held a total of 25 eggs but produced no fledglings (RJH,SMT). Dunsford Woods: 16 pairs (see Table 3). Fingle Woods: 110 pairs. Recorded in 31 Brent squares (monthly max: 30 squares in Jun), breeding in five

**BULLFINCH.** Only confirmed breeding at Yelverton, where a max count of seven in Jan was also recorded. Furthest away from usual habitat were three on Hamel Down on 11 Aug. Fingle Woods: eight pairs. Recorded in 23 Brent squares (monthly max: 17 squares in Aug), breeding in three.

**GREENFINCH.** Apart from 30 in South Brent on 16 Nov, the highest counts were of 12–15 in a Princetown garden throughout the year. Recorded in 18 Brent squares (monthly max: 10 squares in Apr and Jun), breeding in one.

**LINNET.** From 6 Apr (Kennick) to 20 Oct (Cold East Cross), apart from a flock of 100 in a ploughed field near Cator Common on 30 Jan (SHo, DHP). Up to two pairs and five juvs visited a garden feeder at Dousland in Apr–Jun (M&RH). Largest flocks in Sep: 50 at Dunnabridge (also 40 in Aug) and Wigford Down; and 30+ at Brent Moor, Dewerstone and Yennadon. In eight nests, mostly at Clearbrook, 26 fledged from 35 eggs (RJH,SMT). Recorded in 23 Brent squares (monthly max: 18 squares in Jun), breeding in five.

**LESSER REDPOLL.** Very few counts of more than 10, and not always clear whether or not in flocks; the highest were counts of 35 at Burrator on 11 Sep and near Portworthy on 11 Oct (NST). Up to seven, including pairs and juvs, visited a Princetown garden from January until 26 Aug (J&MD,MTD). Nine flew E over Wistman's Wood on 21 Oct. Singing/displaying birds in May and Jun were at: Avon Dam, Bagtor Down, Becka Brook, Bennett's Cross, Cator Common, Challacombe, Fernworthy, Haytor, Lustleigh, Okehampton Camp, Soussons/Warren House, Swincombe Valley, Trendlebeare/Yarner, Venford and Wigford. Recorded in four Brent squares (monthly max: two squares in Jun and Jul).

**CROSSBILL.** Confirmed breeding at Soussons where present all months except Aug and Sep, with highest counts of 30 on 18 Jul and 23 on 4 Oct. Other main sites: Bellever (Jan–May and Oct, max of 50 on 17 Oct); Burrator (Jun and Oct, max of six); Fernworthy (Jan and Mar–Jul, max of 14 on 17 Apr); and Hennock Res (Feb, Jul, Aug and Oct, max 19 on 1 Aug). Smaller numbers and irregular occurrence at nine other sites. Highest count and most sites in Oct.

**GOLDFINCH.** Many garden records, and most of the monthly maxima came from a Princetown garden, but higher counts in autumn came from: Brent Hill, 80 on 7 Aug; Brimpts, 100 on 12 Sep; Widecombe, 100 on 20 Sep; and Treeland Down, 55 on 26 Sep. Food sources included seeds of *Verbena bonariensis* at Yelverton in Jan, marsh thistle on Brent Hill in Aug and soft rush on Three Barrows in Oct. Confirmed breeding only at Pizwell and Soussons, but widespread in breeding season. Recorded in 32 Brent squares (monthly max: 21 squares in Sep), breeding in one.

**SISKIN.** Max count was of 30 at Soussons in both Mar and Oct, but counts of 10 or more also came from: Bridford (44 ads ringed Apr–Jul); Deacombe, Burrator; Dousland garden; Princetown garden; Kennick area; Lustleigh area; and Yennadon. Considered 'very plentiful' at Bellever on 12 Feb, and at Soussons on 15 Apr there were 'birds in just about every suitable mature stand of conifers' (RS). First juvs noted on garden feeders in late Apr at South Brent and Dousland. Dunsford Woods: six pairs (see Table 3). Fingle Woods: 12 pairs. Recorded in 11 Brent squares (monthly max: six squares in May), breeding in two.

**SNOW BUNTING.** One at Kestor on 18 Nov (S Rouse).

**YELLOWHAMMER.** The max flock count was of 13 around feeders at South Brent in Apr. The only other garden records were at Dousland of two to three in Feb and Mar, and at Yelverton in Aug. A presumed leucistic bird was

seen between Postbridge and Widecombe in Apr. Recorded in 22 Brent squares (monthly max: 14 squares in Apr), breeding in seven (see also Table 4).

**REED BUNTING.** Few records in Jan, Nov and Dec. Garden records were all in spring and from: Dousland (two on 10 Mar); Shaugh Prior (one 27 Mar to 1 Apr); South Brent (up to four, 11 Feb to 1 Apr); and Yelverton (two on 11 Mar). Confirmed breeding at Cadover Bridge, Avon Dam area (three sites) and Vogwell (apparently predated by adder). Recorded in 20 Brent squares (monthly max: 16 squares in Jun), breeding in six (see also Table 4).

*Category E species*

**BAR-HEADED GOOSE.** Two at Burrator Res in Feb. **MUSCOVY DUCK.** Up to four at Burrator in Apr and Jul–Dec. **LADY AMHERST’S PHEASANT.** A male in South Brent in June. **EAGLE OWL.** One seen and photographed at Yardworthy on 28 Feb and 16 Mar.

**Table 1. Dartmoor 2015. Waterbird species. Maximum counts for each site in 2015** (all WeBS sites except River Dart and South Brent (private fishing lakes)).

	Avon Dam Res	Burrator Res	ECC Pit Complex	Fernworthy Res	Hennock Res	Meldon Res	Portworthy	River Dart	South Brent	Venford Res
Mute Swan	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	-	1	-
Canada Goose	4	39	92	60	2	16	73	-	8	-
Shelduck	-	-	2	-	-	2	6	-	-	-
Mandarin Duck	-	8	-	-	-	-	1	91	-	-
Wigeon	-	3	-	-	-	-	3	-	94	-
Teal	18	18	9	30	-	-	97	-	-	-
Green-winged Teal	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Mallard	36	151	44	18	28	5	94	32	20	12
Pintail	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Shoveler	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Red-crested Pochard	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Pochard	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tufted Duck	-	-	28	2	48	-	9	-	-	-
Scaup	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Goosander	19	51	8	4	8	9	-	3	-	25
Great Northern Diver	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cormorant	2	6	3	2	7	1	1	-	-	1
Little Egret	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grey Heron	1	4	2	1	1	1	1	-	1	3
Little Grebe	-	8	22	4	4	-	6	-	5	-
Great Crested Grebe	1	1	-	2	3	-	-	-	-	2
Moorhen	-	-	2	4	2	-	14	-	8	-
Coot	-	-	2	3	7	-	20	-	-	-
Little Ringed Plover	1	-	7	-	-	-	4	-	-	-

Common Sandpiper	3	3	2	-	1	-	2	-	-	2
Green Sandpiper	1	-	1	-	1	-	3	-	-	-
Redshank	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-
Black-headed Gull	-	50	-	260	-	-	51	-	-	-
Common Gull	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	-	-	-
Lesser Black-backed Gull	1	10	-	204	3	2	21	-	-	-
Herring Gull	300	45	-	126	40	-	68	-	-	-
Great Black-backed Gull	4	3	-	6	1	-	7	-	-	1
Kingfisher	-	1	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	-

Table 2. Dartmoor 2015. Summary of nest box data (FL = mean number of fledged young per pair).

Site	BLUE TIT		GREAT TIT		PIED FLYCATCHER		Recorder
	pairs	FL per pair	pairs	FL per pair	pairs	FL per pair	
Blackadon					4	5.5	pMDB
Blackingstone Quarry Woods	7	6.6	5	6.4			JBa, J&G Lear
Buckland Monachorum/Shaugh Prior	6	4.3	4	3.8			RJH,SMT
Bridford Woods	13	6.6	6	4.0	9	4.3	T &MW
Brook Manor					9	2.6	pMDB
Combestone Farm					16	5.3	pMDB
Dendles Wood					7	3.6	pMDB
Druid Wood	13	3.2	8	4.0	4	5.0	MRG
Dunsford Woods	27	5.9	5	1.4	22	5.1	DJP
East Dartmoor NNR	86	3.2	40	1.8	71	5.6	pMDB
Fingle Woods					6	5.9	pMDB
Heathercombe					3	3.3	pMDB
Meldon					18	4.9	pMDB
Sampford Spiney					6	3.3	pMDB
TOTAL/MEAN					150	5.6	

Table 3. Dartmoor 2015. Dunsford Woods. Number of pairs/territories ranked by 2015 abundance (DJP)

Species	2015	2014	Post 1990	Comments
			Mean	
Robin	50	43	30.0	A further increase, breaking last year's record of the highest ever number recorded since surveying began in 1980.
Blue Tit	41	35	26.8	Further big increase to the highest figure recorded since surveying began in 1980, and well above the post-1990 average of 26.8.
Wren	35	30	21.1	Further increase, to reach the highest number since surveying started in 1980.
Pied Flycatcher	24	20	18.3	All but two pairs in nest boxes. A slight improvement on 2014, but still short of the 2007 peak of 28.

<b>Blackbird</b>	<b>23</b>	20	17.4	Highest recorded since surveying began in 1980. Just crept over previous figure of 22, in 2000, 2007 and 20011.
<b>Blackcap</b>	<b>19</b>	15	8.7	Apart from a brief dip to 10prs in 2013 due to the arctic spring, the remarkable increase over recent years has continued. 19 pairs is the highest since surveying began in 1980.
<b>Chaffinch</b>	<b>16</b>	17	17.2	At average numbers for recent years, but still well down on the 1990s decade when the annual average was 21 pairs.
<b>Chiffchaff</b>	<b>11</b>	11	7.3	Still taking time to recover from being knocked back by the cold spring of 2013.
<b>Coal Tit</b>	<b>9</b>	7	5.5	Further improvement after the low of just 3 pairs in 2013.
<b>Great Tit</b>	<b>8</b>	11	6.7	Unlike Blue Tits, breeding pairs dropped back after 11 & 12 in recent years, and fewer used boxes.
<b>Song Thrush</b>	<b>6</b>	6	4.3	Slightly above average over the last three seasons with 5 in 2013,6 in 2014 and 6 this year
<b>Duncock</b>	<b>5</b>	1	1.5	Not really a woodland bird, but reached its highest number this year since surveying started in 1980.
<b>Goldcrest</b>	<b>5</b>	5	4.3	The rapid recovery in 2014 from just one pair in 2013 has not been maintained.
<b>Siskin</b>	<b>5</b>	7	1.2	Maintaining numbers. First bred at Dunsford in 2010, but now well established.
<b>Willow Warbler</b>	<b>5</b>	3	6.0	The best showing for four years, and against the national trend. Probably more to do with local conditions, and in particular regrowth of scrub habitat.
<b>Long-tailed Tit</b>	<b>4</b>	8	4.3	Fewer than in 2014, but still at average numbers for the last 15 years.
<b>Nuthatch</b>	<b>4</b>	3	1.9	Well represented this year, and well above the post 1990 average of 1.9.
<b>Great Spotted Woodpecker</b>	<b>3</b>	4	3.2	Typical number for recent years.
<b>Wood Warbler</b>	<b>3</b>	1	5.0	Despite five singing males initially, only three stayed and held territory.
<b>Lesser Spotted Woodpecker</b>	<b>2</b>	1	1.5	One pair has occupied the same territory for 5 years running.
<b>Marsh Tit</b>	<b>2</b>	3	2.6	
<b>Mistle Thrush</b>	<b>2</b>	0	1.8	A welcome return after two seasons when there were no definite breeding birds.
<b>Pheasant</b>	<b>2</b>	3	1.8	A welcome return to more sustainable numbers after peaks of 13 and 16 pairs in 2011 & 12, when birds were released nearby for shooting.
<b>Redstart</b>	<b>2</b>	1	0.7	Possibly 3 pairs. Becoming an annual breeder, having bred every year since

Commented [DP1]: Error on my part with figure of 2.4



Tree Pipit	2	2	1.7	2010. Prior to that only bred in six of the previous 20 years. The usual two pairs on the heathy area of Boyland Common.
Green Woodpecker	1	0	0.9	Encouraging to have a breeding pair again. But has only bred once (2prs in 2012) since 2005, prior to which it nested virtually every year.
Spotted Flycatcher	1	3	1.2	Only one obvious breeding pair, though in mature woodland detecting of birds high in the canopy can be difficult.
Treecreeper	1	3	0.8	Surprisingly, only one location where birds were seen regularly.

Table 4. Dartmoor 2015. Summary results from a survey of 22 moorland 1-km squares in South Brent parish (part of the Brent Bird Survey) by BW.

Species	Number of squares occupied	Number of territories	Max number of territories per square (and square GR)
Carrion Crow	11	13	3 (SX 6663)
Whinchat	9	20	4 (SX 6664)
Stonechat	18	60	11(SX 6661)
Wheatear	9	24	6 (SX 6666 & 6764)
Tree Pipit	9	14	4 (SX 6863)
Yellowhammer	10	35	6 (SX 6964)
Reed Bunting	12	19	4 (SX 6664)

Appendix 1. Dartmoor 2015. Maximum monthly species counts, or presence (●) wildfowl to gulls.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Mute Swan	1	1	1	1	9	2	1	1	1	1	8	7
Canada Goose	44	65	10	16	32	52	60	22	45	92	39	73
Shelduck	-	2	-	2	-	6	-	-	1	-	-	-
Mandarin Duck	83	91	52	8	35	6	1	-	1	4	15	84
Wigeon	12	94	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3	3	50
Teal	45	79	62	9	-	1	7	23	72	29	60	97
Green-winged Teal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Mallard	134	94	46	49	32	63	94	84	138	109	151	91
Pintail	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1
Shoveler	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Red-crested Pochard	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Pochard	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tufted Duck	21	22	28	27	7	6	11	6	30	31	48	42
Scaup	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Goosander	41	51	16	6	3	10	6	6	3	6	28	38
Quail	-	-	-	-	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Red-legged Partridge	-	-	-	-	●	●	●	-	●	-	-	-
Red Grouse	●	-	-	-	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	-
Great Northern Diver	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Cormorant	3	4	2	7	3	3	2	6	6	7	7	3
Little Egret	-	1	1	-	1	-	1	1	1	1	1	-
Grey Heron	2	6	4	4	4	2	3	3	2	1	1	4
Little Grebe	5	8	4	4	6	5	4	17	22	13	5	4
Great Crested Grebe	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	-	-	-	-
Black Kite	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Red Kite	-	1	-	2	7	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hen Harrier	5	7	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	6	5
Osprey	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-
Moorhen	7	10	8	6	2	3	4	12	16	14	14	12
Coot	11	7	10	9	8	9	14	15	15	20	20	18
Golden Plover	1000	800	300	200	-	-	-	-	11	520	300	50
Dotterel	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Little Ringed Plover	-	-	-	4	3	3	7	2	3	-	-	-
Lapwing	28	12	-	-	9	4	-	-	-	11	-	-
Whimbrel	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Curlew	-	6	3	6	5	7	-	-	-	-	-	-
Little Stint	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Dunlin	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Common Sandpiper	-	-	1	2	-	1	1	3	1	3	-	-
Green Sandpiper	1	1	1	-	-	1	1	3	1	-	-	-
Wood Sandpiper	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Redshank	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Jack Snipe	2	3	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	2
Snipe	32	8	6	4	2	2	4	2	3	15	19	18
Woodcock	3	4	3	-	3	-	-	-	-	2	4	2
Black-headed Gull	260	10	-	2	-	-	9	6	7	1	35	51
Mediterranean Gull	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	-
Common Gull	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
Lesser Black-backed Gull	204	39	19	21	14	3	5	7	-	-	-	-
Herring Gull	126	75	100	63	300	300	300	70	36	21	40	80
Great Black-backed Gull	6	3	6	7	12	4	4	3	2	1	2	2

The following were also recorded in all months: Pheasant, Sparrowhawk and Buzzard.

Appendix 2. Dartmoor 2015. Maximum monthly species counts, or presence (●) Cuckoo to buntings.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Cuckoo	-	-	-	●	●	●	●	●	-	-	-	-
Barn Owl**	●	-	-	●	-	●	-	-	●	●	●	-
Little Owl	-	●	-	-	-	●	-	●	-	-	-	-
Short-eared Owl	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	●	●	●
Nightjar	-	-	-	-	●	●	●	●	-	-	-	-
Swift	-	-	-	6	10	8	25	22	-	-	-	-
Wryneck	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	●	-	-	-	-
Lesser Sp. Woodpecker	-	●	●	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Merlin	●	●	●	●	-	-	-	●	●	●	●	●
Hobby	-	-	-	●	●	●	●	●	●	-	-	-
Red-backed Shrike	-	-	-	-	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Great Grey Shrike	●	●	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	●	●	●
Magpie	10	9	7	7	6	6	6	17	8	6	9	13
Jackdaw	100	300	100	200	100	80	120	180	200	200	200	200
Rook	50	40	22	30	30	30	30	22	55	50	50	50
Carrion Crow	20	18	21	15	25	23	50	25	25	60	12	45
Raven	5	7	3	4	6	6	7	8	20	40	4	26
Firecrest	-	-	-	-	●	-	-	-	-	●	●	-
Willow Tit	-	-	-	●	-	-	-	●	●	-	-	-
Skylark	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Sand Martin	-	-	-	●	●	●	●	●	-	-	-	-
Swallow	-	-	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	-
House Martin	-	-	-	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	-	-
Yellow-browed Warbler	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	●	-	-
Wood Warbler	-	-	-	●	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Willow Warbler	-	-	-	●	●	●	●	●	●	-	-	-
Garden Warbler	-	-	-	●	●	●	●	●	-	-	-	-
Lesser Whitethroat	-	-	-	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Whitethroat	-	-	-	●	●	●	●	●	●	-	-	-
Dartford Warbler	-	●	-	-	-	●	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grasshopper Warbler	-	-	-	●	●	●	●	●	-	-	-	-
Sedge Warbler	-	-	-	-	●	-	-	●	-	-	-	-
Starling	4000	400	400	15	30	30	30	100	50	200	200	500
Ring Ouzel	1	1	1	2	●	●	●	-	3	4	1	-
Fieldfare	300	200	32	2	-	-	-	-	3	300	350	400
Redwing	300	100	40	-	-	-	-	-	-	1000	200	100
Mistle Thrush	10	4	4	2	9	18	20	60	25	16	3	5
Spotted Flycatcher	-	-	-	-	●	●	●	●	●	●	-	-
Black Redstart	-	-	-	●	●	-	-	-	-	●	●	●
Redstart	-	-	-	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	-	-
Whinchat	-	-	-	●	●	●	●	●	●	-	-	-
Wheatear	-	-	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	-
Pied Flycatcher	-	-	-	●	●	●	-	●	●	-	-	-
Yellow Wagtail	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	●	-	-	-
Pied Wagtail	113	16	28	●	●	●	●	●	●	80	62	43
Tree Pipit	-	-	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	-	-	-
Meadow Pipit	15	28	100	50	16	8	12	40	200	300	18	5
Brambling	20	3	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Chaffinch	300	25	200	50	20	20	50	25	15	15	25	24
Linnet	100	-	-	10	14	12	13	40	50	9	-	-
Lesser Redpoll	7	8	5	7	10	7	6	6	35	28	5	22
Crossbill	10	9	3	14	8	6	30	19	2	50	4	12
Goldfinch	25	25	25	25	20	20	20	80	100	40	30	32
Siskin	25	15	30	18	15	23	20	13	6	30	15	5
Snow Bunting	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-

The following were also recorded in all months: Stock Dove, Woodpigeon, Collared Dove, Tawny Owl, Kingfisher, Green Woodpecker, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Kestrel, Peregrine, Jay, Goldcrest, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Coal Tit,

**Marsh Tit, Skylark, Long-tailed Tit, Chiffchaff, Blackcap, Nuthatch, Treecreeper, Wren, Dipper, Blackbird, Song Thrush, Robin, Stonechat, Dunnock, House Sparrow, Grey Wagtail, Pied Wagtail, Bullfinch, Greenfinch, Yellowhammer and Reed Bunting.**