



Borders Bird Report 2022



Borders Bird Report

2022

No. 39

Edited by
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Front cover: Goldeneye (D Wolfenden), Little Stint (DK Graham)
Inside back cover: Kingfisher (J Montana), Barn Owl & Wryneck (DK Graham)
Back cover: Chiffchaff (J Montana), Bullfinch (A Cutter)

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Introduction

Welcome to the *Borders Bird Report* (No.39) for 2022, produced by the Borders Branch of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club (SOC).

2022 was an extraordinary year for birds within the region on a number of fronts.

- The highest ever species total in a year by a large margin
- An exceptional number of first records for the area
- A very strong supporting cast of rarely seen species

The full details are covered in this Report. As well as providing a comprehensive record of all bird sightings in 2022, this report sets out to analyse the trends involved and to provide a digest of the current status of each species within the Scottish Borders.

General Round-up

A total of **236 species** were recorded, an extraordinary increase of 17 species on 2021 and the **best year ever** for number of species in the Borders, by a long way. There were a remarkable **seven new species** to potentially add to the Region's bird list: - Ring-necked Duck, Black Kite, White-winged Black Tern, Pallid Harrier, Caspian Gull, Hume's Leaf Warbler and Cattle Egret. More information can be found in the review of the *Borders Birding Year* (p.9) and in the relevant species accounts in the *Classified List*.

A total of 89,939 records were submitted, which is over 6.0% higher than in 2021 and only just below the numbers received in 2020. Most records were again entered through *BirdTrack*, but this Report also encompasses other sources such as the *Borders Ringing Group*, *Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS)*, the *Breeding Bird Survey (BBS)* and the annual *Rocky Shore Count*. Additional records and analysis came from the *St Abb's Head NNR Seabird Report*, the *SE Scotland Raptor Study Group Report* and the *Ringing Report* (p.221).

Many observers continued to supply breeding evidence with their submissions, which is reflected in the highest ever number of tetrads with evidence of breeding for many species, a practice which continues to be strongly encouraged.

Submission and validation of records

Wherever possible contributors are asked to submit their records via BTO's *BirdTrack*; this remains the primary source of records in compiling this Report. Not only is it a means of ensuring that your records are secure and can be readily downloaded, but this method makes the job of collating data for the Bird Report very much easier. Using *BirdTrack* also means that you are contributing to a national database which can be used for future research. Further guidelines for submitting records via *BirdTrack* are shown in Appendix 2 (p.248).

If you do not submit records by *BirdTrack* then you can send your records directly to the recorder at bordersrecorder@gmail.com. You can also ring the recorder, David Parkinson, on 07979 365134.

If you do wish to submit records directly to the recorder, please include the following information: species name; site (see Appendix 1 on preferred use of tetrads), date of observation, count, your name and further comments where relevant, e.g. breeding evidence. If you would like a *pro forma* Excel file then please ask.

All records are encouraged to be submitted by the last day in January of the succeeding year, e.g. records for 2023 should be submitted no later than 31 January 2024. Wherever possible, please submit your records regularly, preferably throughout the year, rather than leaving a large number of records to be submitted at the last minute, which can then delay the recorders work in validating or checking submissions.

Although mention is made in the Report of some species that have not (yet) been validated, because a “description” of the find was not submitted, or because the validation process is not yet completed, these records will not be part of the overall Borders database until such validation is completed.

UK rarities are considered by the *British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC)*. When a species on the *BBRC* list is entered on *BirdTrack*, a red button will appear alongside "Notifications" on the home page and when clicked will automatically take you to the *BBRC* website, where the relevant form for a rarity submission can be found. Species not considered rarities by *BBRC*, but considered rarities in Scotland, are reviewed by the *Scottish Birds Records Committee (SBRC)*. A full list of those species considered by *SBRC* can be found on the *SOC* website <https://www.the-soc.org.uk/bird-recording/sbrc-list-past-lists>.

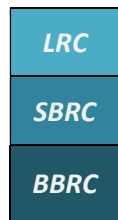
Some species are classed as local rarities (see table below) and require a report to be submitted to the Borders recorder. You will be led to a validation form, which you can complete if submitting records via *BirdTrack*. Otherwise, you can request a Local Rarities Report by emailing bordersrecorder@gmail.com

Validation of these local rarities is undertaken by the *Local Rarities Committee (LRC)*, with the membership in 2022 made up of Dave Graham, Richard Jackson, Martin Moncrieff and David Parkinson.

The following species require a local description, with those seen in 2022 **highlighted**:

Wildfowl:	Taiga Bean Goose, Tundra Bean Goose , American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal , Ring-necked Duck , Surf Scoter
Grouse:	Ptarmigan, Capercaillie
Nightjars:	Nightjar
Doves:	Turtle Dove
Rails & Allies:	Corncrake, Spotted Crake
Cranes:	Crane
Plovers & Allies:	Avocet, American Golden Plover, Dotterel
Sandpipers & Allies:	Temminck’s Stint, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper , Grey Phalarope , Red-necked Phalarope
Gulls & Terns:	Sabine’s Gull , Ring-billed Gull, Little Tern, Roseate Tern
Skuas:	Long-tailed Skua
Auks:	Black Guillemot
Divers:	White-billed Diver
Storm-Petrels:	Leach’s Petrel
Shearwaters:	Balearic Shearwater
Ibis/Spoonbill:	Glossy Ibis, Spoonbill
Storks/Herons:	White Stork , Bittern, Great White Egret
Hawks, Eagles & Owls:	Honey-buzzard , Golden Eagle , White-tailed Eagle , Rough-legged Buzzard , Little Owl
Hoopoe-Falcons:	Hoopoe , European Bee-eater, Wryneck , Hobby
Orioles-Crows:	Golden Oriole, Chough
Tits & Larks:	Bearded Tit, Marsh Tit, Willow Tit, Penduline Tit, Shore Lark
Warblers & Kinglets:	Pallas’s Warbler , ‘Siberian’ Chiffchaff, Blyth’s Reed Warbler, Marsh Warbler, Icterine Warbler, Firecrest
Starlings:	Rose-coloured Starling
Chats & Flycatchers:	Bluethroat, Red-breasted Flycatcher
Pipits & Wagtails:	Richard’s Pipit, Olive-backed Pipit, Water Pipit, ‘Grey-headed’ Wagtail
Finches:	Hawfinch , Common Rosefinch
Buntings:	Corn Bunting, Little Bunting

The appropriate level for rarity validation is shown in each species banner on the Classified List, where relevant (as right). The list of species for validation at each level is periodically reviewed, including those requiring local validation.



Conventions & Abbreviations

The species sequence and the names used follow the Scottish Birds Records Committee's Scottish List, which can be found in the Bird Recording menu of the SOC website at www.the-soc.org.uk.

The inclusion of a record does not mean that that record has been or will be validated by the relevant body. Any additions and corrections to previous records can be found at the end of the Classified List on p.218.

Status definitions

Each species summary has a banner heading in which its status in Borders Region is summarised. The terms used to describe their historical abundance are given below with their definitions:

Very rare	no more than ten individuals in the past 40 years
Rare	11-30 individuals in the past 40 years
Scarce	less than four individuals per year
Very uncommon	5-50 individuals per year
Uncommon	51-100 individuals per year
Well-represented	101-300 individuals per year
Common	301-2,000 individuals per year
Abundant	over 2,000 individuals per year

The same status descriptions are used for breeding species but in reference to pairs and not individuals, e.g. 5-50 pairs are regarded as very uncommon.

The following abbreviations are used in the Report:

AON	Apparently Occupied Nest*	Pr	present but no count submitted
AOS	Apparently Occupied Site*	RSC	<i>Rocky Shore Count</i>
BBRC	<i>British Birds Rarities Committee</i>	RSG	(SE Scotland) Raptor Study Group
BBR	<i>Borders Bird Report</i>	S	South
BBS	<i>Breeding Bird Survey</i>	SBRC	<i>Scottish Birds Rarities Committee</i>
BRG	<i>Borders Ringing Group</i>	SESA1	<i>South-east Scotland Breeding Atlas, 1988-94</i>
br	brood	SESA2	<i>South-east Scotland Atlas, 2007-13</i>
BTO	<i>British Trust for Ornithology</i>	SOC	<i>Scottish Ornithologists' Club</i>
E	East	sp.	species
F	Female	ssp.	subspecies
IGC	<i>Iceland Goose Count</i>	SUP	<i>Southern Upland Partnership</i>
LRC	Local Records Committee	SUW	<i>Southern Upland Way</i>
M	Male	TTV	Timed Tetrad Visit
N	North	W	West
NNR	National Nature Reserve	WBBS	<i>Waterways Breeding Bird Survey</i>
PIT	Passive Integrated Transponder tag	WeBS	<i>Wetland Birds Survey</i>

*AON – Apparently occupied nest i.e. a well-built nest capable of holding eggs with at least one bird in attendance.

*AOS – Apparently occupied site i.e. a site with a bird sitting tightly on a reasonably horizontal area judged large enough to hold an egg.

Reference is frequently made to breeding evidence using BTO codes. These are given below:

BTO Codes		Observation
Possible Breeding		
1	H	Observed in suitable nesting habitat. NOT USED in this report.
2	S	Singing male present (or breeding calls heard) in breeding season in suitable breeding habitat
Probable Breeding		
3	P	Pair observed in suitable nesting habitat in breeding season
4	T	Permanent Territory presumed through registration of territorial behaviour (song etc.) on at least two different days in a week or many individuals present on one day showing territorial behaviour
5	D	Courtship and Display (judged to be in or near potential breeding habitat; be cautious with wildfowl)
6	N	Visiting probable Nest site
7	A	Agitated behaviour or Anxiety calls from adults, suggesting probable presence of nest or young nearby
8	I	Brood patch on adult examined in the hand, suggesting Incubation
9	B	Nest Building or excavating nest-hole
Confirmed Breeding		
10	DD	Distraction-Display or injury feigning
11	UN	Used Nest or eggshells found (occupied or laid within period of survey)
12	FL	Recently Fledged Young (nidicolous species) or downy young (nidifugous species). Careful consideration should be given to the likely provenance of any fledged juvenile capable of significant geographical movement. Evidence of dependency on adults (e.g. feeding) is helpful. Be cautious, even if the record comes from suitable habitat
13	ON	Adults entering or leaving nest-site in circumstances indicating Occupied Nest (including high nests or nest holes, the contents of which cannot be seen) or adults seen incubating
14	FF	Adult carrying Faecal sac or Food for young
15	NE	Nest containing Eggs
16	NY	Nest with Young seen or heard

Contributors are encouraged to report the highest level of breeding evidence that is practicable.

Where abbreviations above have a number before them it refers to the number of cases of evidence, e.g. 2P refers to 2 pairs, while NY (4) refers to 4 young in a single nest. An abbreviation such as 2br7 means two broods which total seven chicks; imm. refers to immature birds; juv. refers to juvenile.

Bird-day refers to the number of days that a bird (not necessarily the same bird) was recorded or assumed to be present. Thus, a single bird seen for a period of 12 days and two other birds seen for a day would add up to 14 bird-days.



Whooper Swans, Bemersyde Moss, December (A Cutter)

Contributors

Records were submitted by over 290 observers, which is a little higher than last year.

Those observers submitting over 500 records in the year are highlighted in **bold**, together with their initials, which are used against sightings in the Classified List. As last year, Gavin Paterson contributed the most records, with 13,230 records in 2022 (14.7% of total), which was even more than in 2021 and far surpassing any other contributor. Another eight contributors submitted more than 3,000 records each, totalling over 39,000 records (43% of the total).

A	I Abernethy; D Adams; A Aldron; P Andeson; IJ Andrews; S Ankers, AB Ash.
B	AW Baker; G Baptie; S Beal; D Belford; B Bell; J Bennett; E Benson; M Betts; Z Bhatia; EL Bickmore (ELB) ; L Binns; S Black; C Blackie; K Blackmore; J Booth; N Bowman; D Bradnum; D Braithwaite; AT Bramhall (ATB) ; R Bramhall (RB) ; T Brewis (TB) ; I Broadbent; K Brooke; I Brown; MJ Bruce; D Bryant; P Buckley; P Bullock; P Burns; D Burt; C Burton; S Bush; JR Butcher.
C	A Cage; A Cameron; K Campbell; E Carnell; N Carter; R Catalano; J Chapman; G Checkley; G Christer; J Chubb; C Clark; N Clark; S Clifford; M Cockburn; J Connor; N Cook; P Cook; C Coombs; C Corrigan; P Crabtree; RS Craig; I Crosbie; M Cummings; N Cummins; GJ Cundall; A Cutter (AC) .
D	C Dalmeny; R Dalziel; B Daniels; RW Daniels; J Davies; F Davis; GW Dodds; TW Dougall (TWD) ; J Douglas; J Drakes; J Drew; R Drew; A Drummond.
E	M Eaton; H Edge; A Edney; T Edwards; F Evans.
F	J Farish-Brown; M Fenwick; A Finlayson; C Forman; B Frew.
G	M Gallico; G Garner; B Gilmour; A & L Gilroyd; M Gladstone; J Gordon (JG) ; DK Graham (DKG) ; C Grant; D Gray; C Greaves; P Greaves; CD Green (CDG) ; J Green.
H	JDH Hadfield; N Hammatt (NH) ; M Hannam; L Hanson; C Hargest; M Harper; R Harrison; M Harrop; C Hartley; C Hatsell (CH) ; PL Hatton; A Heath; A Heavisides; E Henderson; M Henderson; G Hewitt; P Hogg; R & S Holden; M Holling; D Hosie; K Houston; S Hunt; N Hunter; PP Hyvonen.
I	K Ingleby; L Ireland; A Ives.
J	R Jackson (RJ) ; A Jameson; N Jervis; S Jones.
K	A Kelly; I Kennedy; C Kenyon; A Kerr; B Kerr; H Kerr; S Kerr; B Khursheed; F Kilgour; C Kinnear; A Kirk; R Kirk; M Kirkland.
L	MB Lamire; L Lamont; A Lawrence; D Lewis; M Lewis; A Lindsay; M Lindsay; G Liston; C Little; R Littlejohn; J Lloyd; D Long; K Loudon; D Lowe; F Luther; S Lyth .
M	R Manning (RM) ; A Martin; P Massey; A Matthews; B Maynard; S McAvoy; R McBeath; K McCormick; I MacDonald; D McGarvie; V McKay; D MacKenzie; J McKenzie; H McKerchar; S McMahan; M McNeely; S McNeill; I McPherson; E McQuade; J McTague; D Methven; S Middlemass; S Miller; N Milligan; N Minnis; A Mitchell; M Moir; M Moncrieff (MM) ; J Montana; C Moses; AP Mossop (APM) .
N	J Nicholson; P Noyes.
O	D Oleksiewicz; T Oliver; D Orr-Ewing; B Outram; J Owens.
P	R Park; D Parkinson (DP) ; M Parratt; G Paterson (GP) ; J Paterson; D Patterson; AJ Pearson; J Pearson; M Pearson; N Pearson; A Perry; IR Poxton; L Pulawski.
Q	B Quinton.
R	S Rae; C Ralph; AG Reid (AGR) ; A Reiss; G Richardson; D Richens; C Riddell; D Riddell; K Ritchie; D Robertson; K Robeson (KR) ; R Robinson; J Robson; C Rooney; E Rooney; MB Ross ; J Ruddick; G Runciman.

S	P Safford; R Safford; A Sandeman; S Sanders; S Sapkota; G Scott; M Scott; S Seeds; C Shaw; G Shaw; C Shepherd; E Shilland; R Singleton; A Smith; L Smith; R Smith; S Sonsino; A Spybey; G Stephen; R Steven; D Stevenson; R Still; N Stratton (NS) ; P Stronach; M Symonds.
T	S Taylor; C Tees; A Tharme; D Thompson; D & M Thorne ; M Thornton; N Todman; H Tooby; J Towill; S Turnbull (ST) .
U	H Urquhart.
V	RA Vasey; P Veitch.
W	J Waddell; K Waddell; J Walker; D Warburton; SD Ward; D Warden; G Waters; C Watson; CW Watson ; R Watterson; K&P Weaver Fordyce; A Wetherhill; B Whyte; D Wilson; G Wilson; J Wilson; K Wood; S Wood; J Woolliams; F Wragg; N Wright.
Y	J Young, M Young.

Records have also been collated from the BBS/WBBS/WeBS surveys, the Borders Ringing Group and from BirdGuides. In addition, some records from Hare Moss, Hule Moss and Yetholm Loch were contributed anonymously, or with just initials or first names in the hide log books.

Acknowledgements

Annual bird reports like this are founded on the information from the enthusiastic bird-watchers of the region, who observe, identify and (as crucially) record their sightings, which is essential for the wider understanding of the bird life in any report area. Increasingly, details such as breeding evidence, numbers of birds and other information, together with sometimes excellent photos, add richness to this picture.

So my first thanks are to all the contributors (named above), who have made this report possible. I can only encourage you to continue reporting your sightings and adding as much detail as you can. If you have any comments or suggestions about this report please email the editor at bbreditor2023@gmail.com.

Many of you will also participate in more formal bird surveys such as BBS, WeBS, Rocky Shore Count, Heronries etc., and these are invaluable in covering potentially under-watched areas and habitats to build a more systematic and comprehensive picture of Borders bird life.

I also thank Martin Moncrieff, who manually transferred some additional records, from various sources, into the BirdTrack system and then validated the records in BirdTrack. David Parkinson was involved in coordinating submissions to SBRC, and both recorders managed the acceptance (or otherwise) of local rarities records.

This Report also benefits from the inclusion of other documents on ringing activities, raptor monitoring, seabird counts at St Abb's Head NNR and particular species monitoring (e.g. Black Grouse, Little Ringed Plover). I thank the respective authors for these reports and their permission to use them here.

Tom Brewis, as my co-author, was invaluable in developing the analytical methods used to compile the species accounts and establishing many of the formats used and I thank him for his continued contribution.

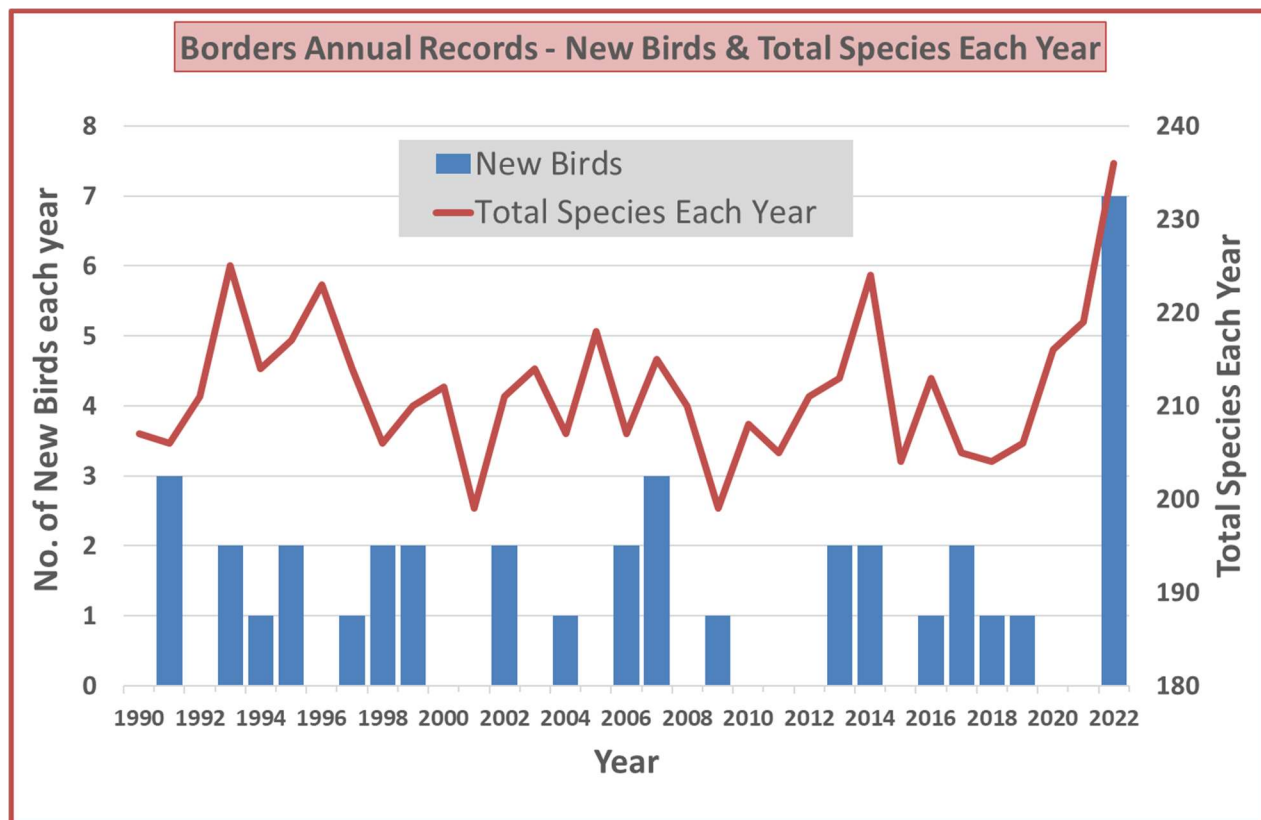
I am also indebted to the many photographers who allowed me to use their images to illustrate and enhance this Report. They are specifically credited alongside their photographs.

The Report was proof read by Tom Brewis, Chris Green, Bridget Khursheed, Andrew Mossop and Neil Stratton. They are thanked for pointing out areas where the Report was in error or could be improved. Any remaining mistakes, omissions etc. are entirely the fault of the editor, apologies for which are offered in advance.

I must also thank my wife Julie, for her support throughout the year.

The Borders Birding Year: Selected highlights of 2022

By nearly all measures this was the best ever birding year in the Borders. The total number of species seen was **236**, which is 17 more than in 2021. The best previous years were 1993 (225 species) and, more recently, 2014 (with 224 species), so even these records were 'smashed'!



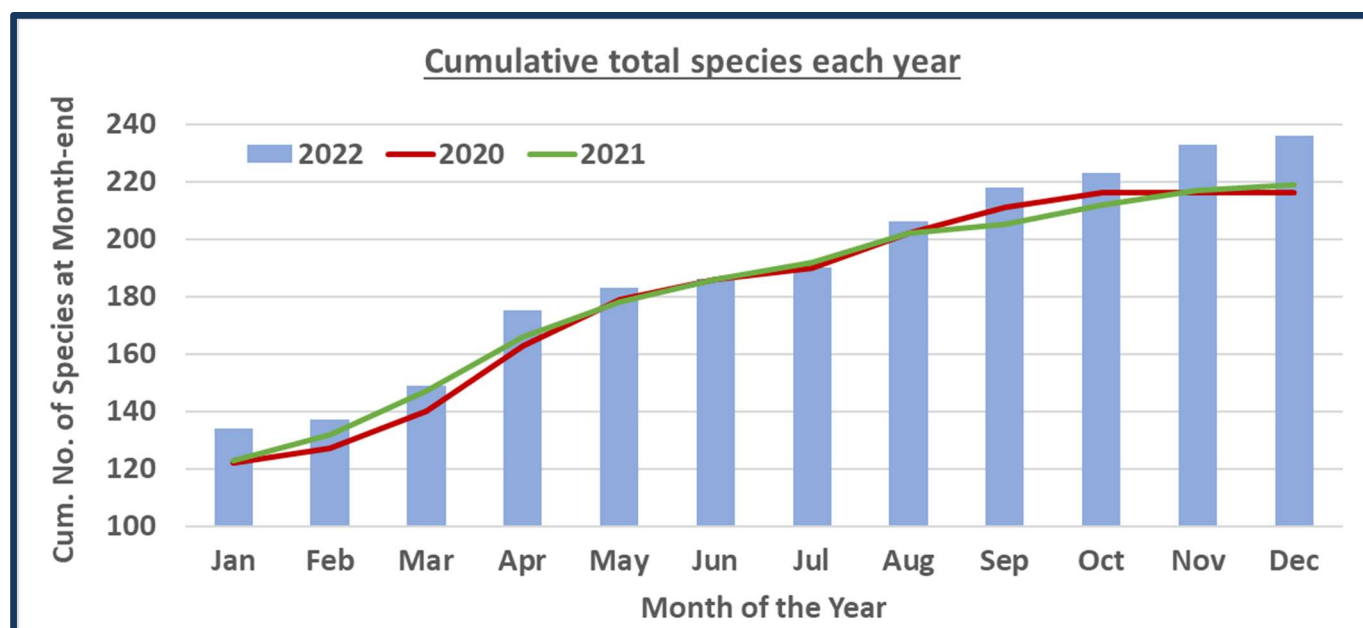
The number of new species was also unprecedented, with 7 species having presumed acceptable first records, which was more than double the total in any year since 1990, with 3 in 1991 and in 2007. In many years there are no new species at all, including the last two years. In addition, there were several other records of BBRC and SBRC rarities, again far more than in other recent years. These are tabulated below.

Species	Comment	
Ring-necked Duck	FIRST Record (of two females) - Yetholm Loch in January & April	LRC
Black Kite	FIRST Record - Saughtree (Newcastleton) in May	SBRC
White-winged Black Tern	FIRST Record - Burnmouth in September	SBRC
Pallid Harrier	FIRST Record - Newcastleton Forest in November*	BBRC
Caspian Gull	FIRST Record - Eyemouth in November	SBRC
Hume's Leaf Warbler	FIRST Record - Mire Loch, St Abb's Head in November	BBRC
Cattle Egret	FIRST Record - Whitmuirhaugh (Sprouston) in December	SBRC
Paddyfield Warbler	SECOND Record - Mire Loch, St Abb's Head in August	BBRC
Pallid Swift	SECOND Record (of four birds) -St Abb's area in October	BBRC
Purple Heron	THIRD Record - Teviot Haughs in August	SBRC
Cory's Shearwater	FOURTH Record - off St Abb's village in September	SBRC
Great Shearwater	FIFTH-SEVENTH Records - off Eyemouth in August & September	SBRC
Montagu's Harrier	SIXTH Record - Alemoor Reservoir in August	SBRC
Pectoral Sandpiper	SIXTH Record - Birgham Haugh in September	LRC
White-billed Diver	SIXTH Record - off St Abb's Head in November	LRC
Green-winged Teal	SEVENTH Record - Teviot Haughs in December	LRC
White Stork	TENTH Record - Maxton in April	LRC

Species	Comment	
Roseate Tern	14 th -17 th Records - St Abb's to Burnmouth in August & September	LRC
Other Local Rarities		
Golden Eagle	Increasing records in the west due to reintroductions	LRC
Great White Egret	Growing number of reports, mainly in autumn and winter	LRC
Crane	Two records (of six birds). The sixth year in a row with records	LRC
Hawfinch	Just two single birds, one on spring migration, one in winter	LRC
Garganey	A spring pair and an autumn single after a blank in 2021	LRC
Dotterel	A spring 'trip' of four birds briefly. Now far from annual	LRC
Turtle Dove	A brief bird in spring, the first record since 2015	LRC
Nightjar	An excellent set of results, stemming from nocturnal audio records	LRC
Honey-buzzard	One migrant bird in spring for this non-annual visitor	LRC
Ruddy Shelduck	One bird seen with geese in June. Possible escape	-
Sabine's Gull	An adult seen well after a blank year in 2021	LRC
Long-tailed Skua	A better than average year with 6 single records	LRC
Balearic Shearwater	Two single birds in an excellent year for rare seabirds	LRC
Wryneck	Three autumn migrants, making this the best year since 1998	LRC
Little Stint	Three juveniles in autumn. Best recent year for this species	LRC
Hoopoe	One inland bird reported, for the second year in a row	LRC
Firecrest	Two singles in autumn after a blank year in 2021	LRC
White-tailed Eagle	An immature bird on two dates in the north-west of the county	LRC
Barred Warbler	A late autumn migrant for a few days after a blank last year	LRC
Pallas's Warbler	A single bird after an absence in 2021	LRC
Black Guillemot	The third year in a row with a single passing bird at sea	LRC
Grey Phalarope	One passage bird for the second year in a row	LRC
Tundra Bean Goose	Two groups of five birds, making this the best showing since 2011	LRC
Rough-legged Buzzard	An incoming bird in late autumn, the first since 2015	LRC
Smew	Just making it into 2022, with records in both of the last two years	

* - the record of Pallid Harrier near Newcastleton was subsequently found 'not proven' by BBRC

As can be seen from the list above it was a particularly good year for uncommon and rare waders, seabirds, herons, raptors and leaf-warblers. There were a couple of single species that were notably absent, however, with no European Storm-petrels recorded and, despite a species-specific survey, no Marsh Tits could be found. At least this particular story has had a happier ending in 2023, with the discovery of a small population of Marsh Tits in an area to the south-west of the region (more details will be in the next BBR).



The graph opposite shows how the number of species grew through each of the last 3 years. Although this year started strongly, with a good number of species by the end of January (and the first of the Borders' **FIRST**s), this 'lead' had disappeared by the end of June, with exactly the same cumulative total of species (186) in each of the last three years at the half-way point. In 2022 there was a much better late summer and autumn period than in all recent years. The months of August, September and November were particularly rich in new species, including five **FIRST** records in these months and leading to the record total of 236 species. The monthly summaries are set out below.

January 2022	Bird of the Month:	Ring-necked Duck
<p>Weather: Temperatures were generally 1-2°C warmer than normal, with above average sunshine throughout and very dry, especially in the east. Storm Malik hit on the 29th, with wind speeds of up to 60mph, but it did not have the impact of Storm Arwen in the previous November.</p>		
<p>In a good start to the year, nearly all the common (and many not so common) resident and wintering species were seen, with a dozen more species seen than in January 2020 and 2021. These included some birds over-wintering from 2021, such as Iceland Gull, Greenshank, Common Sandpiper, Whimbrel and several early seabirds. Little Egrets and Green Sandpipers are now expected wintering birds and they were also seen early. There were also records of Glaucous Gull, Long-tailed Duck, Great Northern Diver, Mediterranean Gull and both Chiffchaff and Blackcap by mid-month. The first rarity of the year and a NEW SPECIES for Borders, two female Ring-necked Ducks, were first seen on the 16th, staying a few days. A very early Manx Shearwater was seen on the 25th.</p>		

February 2022	Bird of the Month:	Great Crested Grebe
<p>Weather: Remaining warmer than normal (c. 1°C), although sunshine was more variable, being higher than average in the north and east, but lower to the south-west. Rainfall was generally high, especially in the west.</p>		
<p>February was a quieter birding month, with only three new species added from January, which included the return of single Great Crested Grebes to both the Haining Loch (where breeding was confirmed again later) and Fruid Reservoir. Several Pintails were also visitors to Whitrig Bog and Tushielaw.</p>		

March 2022	Bird of the Month:	Crane
<p>Weather: Another warmer month, still c. 1°C above normal and very sunny throughout, particularly in the west. Rainfall was also about average in many areas, but much drier in the west.</p>		
<p>Starting this month, a search was carried out to try and find Marsh Tits, unfortunately to no avail. Several summer migrants started to arrive with Wheatear, Sand Martin, Ring Ouzel all quite early and rarer species such as Osprey and Little Ringed Plover also back on territories. The first of the two records of Cranes (2 birds) was seen over Galashiels on the 22nd and three Common Redpolls were seen.</p>		

April 2022	Bird of the Month:	White Stork
<p>Weather: With a mean temperature of 7°C and c. 150 hours of sunshine this was a typical April, although rainfall remained at or below average levels, particularly to the south-west.</p>		
<p>Most of the remaining common migrants arrived and there was a strong coastal passage of Ring Ouzels in the month, with around 30 birds present. Four Dotterel, briefly present on the 13th, were the only representatives of that species for the year, and a pair of Garganey were equally brief on the 16th. One of the Ring-necked Ducks was re-found on the 17th, in the company of a Pochard and a Red-necked Grebe. A couple of days later, the first White Stork in Borders for 10 years was seen near Maxton and a smart Hawfinch was seen at the coast on the 25th and 26th.</p>		

May 2022	Bird of the Month:	Black Kite
<p>Weather: May was around 1-2°C warmer than average, especially in the east, although it was cloudier than normal and rainfall in most areas was typical, although drier in the north-west.</p>		

May 2022

Bird of the Month: **Black Kite**

Overall, May was relatively mediocre, although another NEW BIRD for Borders (**Black Kite**) was seen on the 10th at Saughtree and the first **Turtle Dove** for 7 years was briefly seen on the 17th at Newmains. There were also some good records of **Wood Warblers** and **Marsh Harriers** in potential breeding areas.

June 2022

Bird of the Month: **Little Egret (first breeding)**

Weather: The month was 1°C warmer than normal, with sunshine at typical levels. It was, however, very dry, with less than half the expected rainfall in most areas.

Although June was also quiet, it started well with a **Honey-buzzard** on the 1st and there was the widest distribution of **Quail** records for several years, although numbers were small at each site. The most significant event was the first ever confirmed breeding of **Little Egrets** in the Borders. Several other species apparently had good breeding seasons, with breeding tetrads and/or fledged young reaching new highs e.g. **Canada Goose**, **Greylag Goose**, **Shelduck** etc.

July 2022

Bird of the Month: **Roseate Tern**

Weather: During a UK-wide heatwave, the **highest ever temperature in Scotland was recorded at 34.8°C near Greenlaw**, exceeding the previous record (also in Borders, in 2003) by an astonishing 2°C. Not surprisingly this was another warm month, with day temperatures up by 2°C from average. It was also very dry again, especially in the north-west, although sunshine levels were more typical.

Although July was also rather lacklustre for new species for the year (perhaps it was the heat!), two of the three **Hobby** records occurred early in the month and the **Nightjar** survey went into overdrive, finding new sites and giving the best set of records for this species for many years. The **Gannet** colony at St Abb's reached new heights in breeding pairs, although only one chick fledged, due to avian flu. The first of three records of **Roseate Tern** was seen on the 27th, a positive harbinger for a good seabird year.

August 2022

Bird of the Month: **Paddyfield Warbler**

Weather: August was a sunnier month than normal and remained extremely dry, with some areas receiving less than 20% of expected rainfall levels. Many river levels were extremely low and the land parched, although not as severely as in southern England. Temperatures were also slightly above average for the 4th month in a row.

The first half of the month was relatively slow, although wader passage was starting to build, with good numbers of **Whimbrels** from the 5th, **Sanderlings** on the 11th and **Black-tailed Godwits** from the 13th. A **Montagu's Harrier** was seen inland on the 9th, and **Water Rails** were confirmed to breed at a couple of sites. In the first of several good sea-watching periods this year, a **Great Shearwater** and a **Balearic Shearwater** were seen passing on the 16th and a **Sabine's Gull** the following day. More waders also arrived, with several **Ruffs**, **Knots** and **Bar-tailed Godwits** reported before the month end. An unusual inland record of a **Black Tern** was reported on the 21st and the month concluded with a **Purple Heron** on the 27th/28th (Borders' third) and then the Borders' second record of **Paddyfield Warbler** on the 31st.

September 2022

Bird of the Month: **White-winged Black Tern**

Weather: After six drier than normal months, rainfall was much higher than average, particularly in the north-east. Despite this, it remained relatively warm and with typical levels of sunshine or above.

The first half of September was spectacular for many reasons, including a continuation of the excellent seabird passage, some notable wader records and a sizeable 'fall' of common and scarce migrants along the coast. A **Cory's Shearwater** was seen on the 1st, another **Balearic Shearwater** on the 6th, with several **Pomarine Skuas** and **Long-tailed Skuas** through in the surrounding days and the FIRST Borders record of **White-winged Black Tern** on the 5th. Passerine numbers also started to build at Dowlaw and St Abb's Head, mostly peaking around the 10th, with three **Wrynecks**, a **Red-backed Shrike**, a **Yellow-browed Warbler**, over 40 **Pied Flycatchers**, 25+ **Whinchats** and **Redstarts**, and several **Lesser Whitethroats** seen, making this the best autumn migration period for several years. Wader passage was equally 'spicy' with a **Pectoral Sandpiper**, **Little Stint** and **Spotted Redshank** all at Birgham on the 7th/8th. Resting and feeding terns were another feature, with two more **Roseate Terns**, another **Black Tern** and record numbers of **Sandwich Terns** between Eyemouth and Burnmouth on the 17th/18th. Although the last few days

September 2022

Bird of the Month:

White-winged Black Tern

quietened a little, there was a **Hoopoe** reported inland on the 20th and several more **Yellow-browed Warblers** up to the month end. A family party of four **Cranes** stopped over on the 29th/30th, before being tracked down the east coast, presumably to winter in Eastern England.

October 2022

Bird of the Month:

Pallid Swift

Weather: Another sunnier than average month, with rainfall at typical levels, with temperature still around 1-2°C warmer throughout, especially at night.

Although October was not quite as busy, there were still some good birds to be found and there was a strong finish to the month, in the shape of a party of no less than four **Pallid Swifts** on the 29th, the second Borders record. There were two **Firecrests**, one on the 8th and one on the 21st and a **Barred Warbler** stayed a few days from the 22nd. An immature **White-tailed Eagle** was seen in the NW on the 9th, another late **Little Stint** was seen at close quarters on the 26th and there were several reports of **Snow Buntings** and **Black Redstarts** at the coast.

November 2022

Bird of the Month:

Hume's Leaf Warbler

Weather: The seventh month in a row with temperatures above average (mostly by 2°C), although sunshine and rainfall were generally at typical levels, except for some 'wet-spots' in the north-east.

November was another brilliant month, with three Borders' FIRSTs and a strong supporting cast of rarely seen species. A **Pallid Harrier** near Newcastleton was another Borders' FIRST on the 9th and a **Pallas's Warbler** was at St Abb's on the 13th. Seawatching was again proving very worthwhile on the 14th, with a FIRST **Caspian Gull** for Borders, the only **Black Guillemot** of the year and several **Little Auks**, which had their best overall numbers for 10 years. Although still quite small-scale, the incoming **Waxwing** numbers were higher than the last couple of years and another spell of seawatching on the 20th added **Slavonian Grebe** and **Grey Phalarope**. During another 'purple patch', a passing **White-billed Diver** was seen, quickly followed by a FIRST Borders' record of **Hume's Leaf Warbler** on the 21st, which stayed for 5 days. The next day five **Tundra Bean Goose** were found and the first **Rough-legged Buzzard** since 2015 was found on the 26th.

December 2022

Bird of the Month:

Cattle Egret

Weather: For the first month this year temperatures were below average by 1-2°C, especially at night, with several days of hard frost mid-month. Sunshine and rainfall amounts were generally at typical levels.

The final month of the year also started (and finished) strongly, with a **Cattle Egret**, the last Borders' FIRST of the year, found on a SOC outing on the 3rd, which stayed until the 7th. The icy conditions mid-month resulted in several **Jack Snipe** sightings, as well as some wildfowl congregations along any ice-free stretches of watercourses or lakes. At least two **Great White Egrets** were seen through the month at Yetholm, staying into 2023. Observers in the last few days of the year uncovered the only **Smew** of the year, a female, on the 29th and a brief **Green-winged Teal** on the 31st, the first since 2018.

**Would you like to contribute an interesting study
about local birds in a future bird report?**

- **How about a short write-up on your gem of a local patch, a longer-term study of a species you find particularly interesting or a wonderful birding experience?**
- **Submissions will be very welcome. Help with content, formatting, data analysis, presentation of maps and so on can be arranged.**

CLASSIFIED LIST (Non-passerines)

Brent Goose

Branta bernicla

Very uncommon passage migrant and rare winter visitor, mostly to coast. Most are pale-bellied Svalbard birds (ssp. *hrota*), wintering at Lindisfarne.

Nine records. All records submitted were from the section of coast between Dowlaw and Eyemouth.

Sites - Brent Goose records	Date	Number	Observer
Dowlaw (Coldingham)	27-Feb	2	F Evans
St Abb's village	01-Sep	4S, 1N	R Jackson
St Abb's village	03-Sep	1S	P Safford
Coldingham Bay	03-Sep	1S	G Paterson
Eyemouth	03-Sep	1S	DK Graham
Dowlaw (Coldingham)	08-Sep	5	N Hammatt
Eyemouth	17-Sep	10S	R Jackson
Black Gable (St Abb's Head)	18-Sep	2	C Hatsell
Starney Bay (St Abb's Head)	14-Nov	3	C Hatsell

All birds are assumed to be fly-overs and of the pale-bellied (*hrota*) ssp. All three sightings from St. Abbs village, Coldingham Bay and Eyemouth on 3-Sep are presumed to be of the same bird.

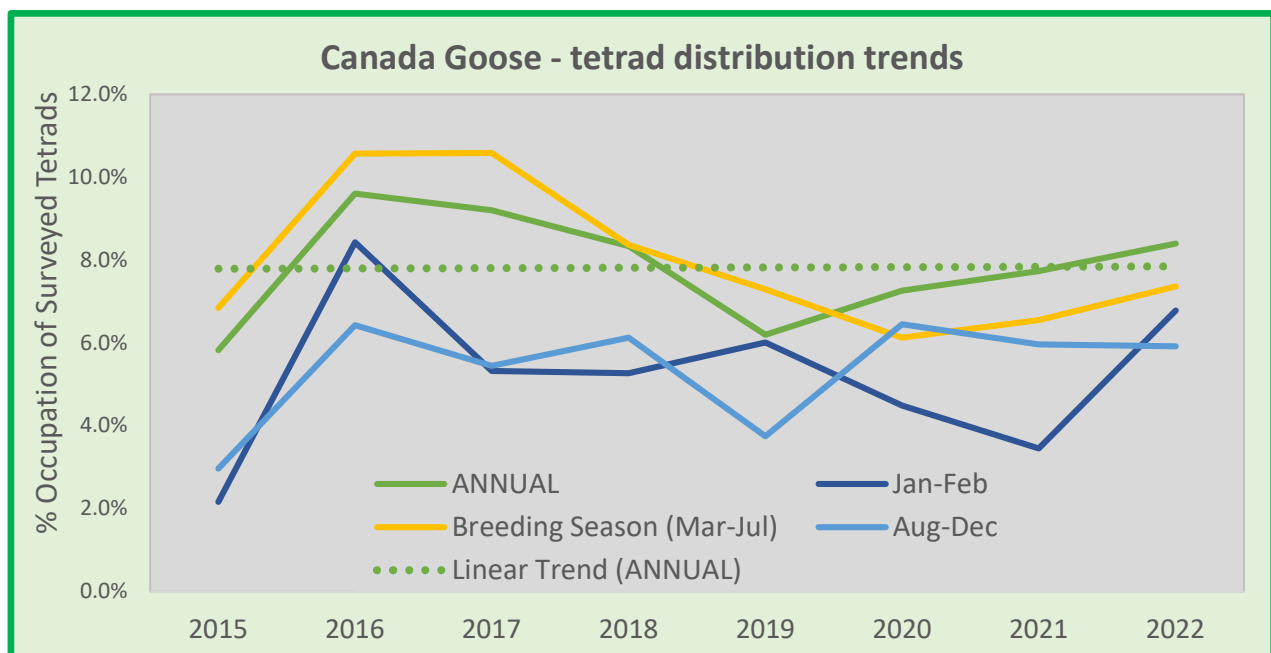
These records represent a fairly typical year, although the counts are slightly lower than the average for the past 10 years.

Canada Goose

Branta canadensis

Well-represented and increasing. Derived from feral populations in England or from local releases. Molt migration passes through in May-June and August-September.

The trend graph for Canada Goose shows some stability in distribution over the past few years, although there are pronounced annual variations, particularly in the breeding season. Winter distribution is generally more limited, probably as the species tends to congregate at fewer sites.

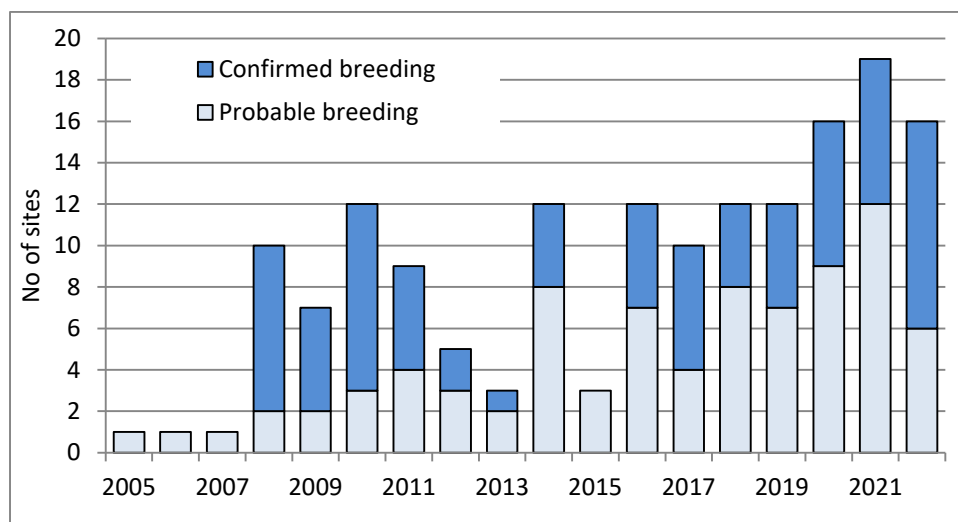


Monthly peak counts of 10 or more for tetrads with an annual aggregate peak count of 50 or above:

Tetrads - Canada Goose counts	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Tweed: Kelso-Coldstream	111	59	11				75	100	100	50	27	130
Bemersyde Moss / Whitrig Bog	18	20	12	16	12				32	210		
Cauldshiels & Faldonside Lochs (Selkirk)	36	16									18	200
Dowlaw (Coldingham)						153						
Watch Water Resr						45	99					
Cammerlaws (Westruther)		47								15	61	
St Abb's Head						116						
Hule Moss								100				
Lindean Reservoir (Selkirk)	25		42	12			13					
The Hirsell	10									45	26	
Synton Loch (Hawick)		20	20	23		12						
Burnmouth				10	26	23						
Foulden Hill		57										
Total no. of occupied tetrads	15	19	20	31	25	12	13	7	13	18	10	10
Aggregate count of all peak counts	402	362	192	180	172	263	235	317	246	704	186	503

Some of these records will be of fly-overs and some will be duplicate counts. The sites around Whitrig Bog and Bemersyde Moss have been amalgamated. The largest count of the year was of 210 at Bemersyde Moss on 16-Oct (AC).

Breeding evidence: There were 10 tetrads with confirmed breeding (tabled) and a further 6 tetrads with probable breeding. The longer-term trend is shown on the graph. Based on received records, Canada Goose breeding appears to be stable, although this is the highest number of confirmed breeding records to date.



Canada Goose: no. of tetrads with breeding evidence, 2005-2022

Site/Tetrad - Canada Goose confirmed breeding	Date	Br. Code	Observer
St Abb's Head	10-Apr	ON	C Hatsell
Burnmouth	16-Apr	ON	N Hammatt
Kingside Loch (Buccleuch)	18-Apr	ON	AG Reid
Bemersyde Moss-Brotherstone (Smailholm)	14-May	FL	A Cutter
Mordington Holdings (Lamberton)	23-May	FL	M McNeely
Whitrig Bog-Westfield (Smailholm)	31-May	FL3	A Cutter
Watch Water Resr-Rawburn (Longformacus)	07-Jun	FL	M Holling

Site/Tetrad - Canada Goose confirmed breeding	Date	Br. Code	Observer
Synton Loch (Hawick)	11-Jun	FL8	M Moncrieff
Hendersyde Farm (Kelso)	21-Jun	FL	R Manning
Eckford-Wooden Loch (Jedburgh)	25-Jun	FL7	CD Green

See Introduction for breeding codes.

Barnacle Goose

Branta leucopsis

Uncommon passage migrant in variable numbers in late September-early October. Rarer during spring passage in May. Small numbers can winter with Pink-footed Geese.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with records	6	8	13	6	18	16	12	23

Northbound movements

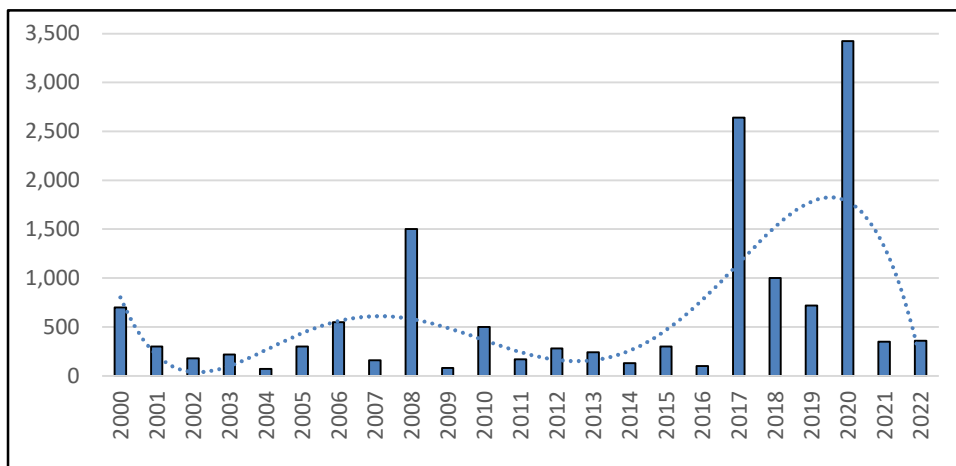
Five records of northbound birds came from 5 tetrads. The largest count/estimate was of 90 fly-overs at Whitsomehill (Swinton) on 14-May (J Towill). The last record was of a single bird at Eyemouth on 20-May (P Veitch).

Southbound movements

The first record of autumn was of 3 birds on 27-Sep at Whitrig Bog, near Smailholm (AC). Other notable counts were 250 at Tweedbank-Abbotsford-Langlee on 7-Oct (ATB), 200+ at Cowdrait-Lamberton Holdings on 8-Oct (CDG), 359 at St Abbs-Coldingham on 14-Oct (CH), 283 at Eyemouth on 16-Oct (DKG) and 133 at St Abb's Head on 25-Oct (CH). The last record was of a single on 26-Oct, seen feeding in an emerging wheat field near Yetholm Loch (D Warden).

A total of 36 records were submitted from 20 tetrads.

While the peak count of 359 was well below those of recent years there is, of course, a significant random element to being in the right place at the right time to observe some of the larger skeins.



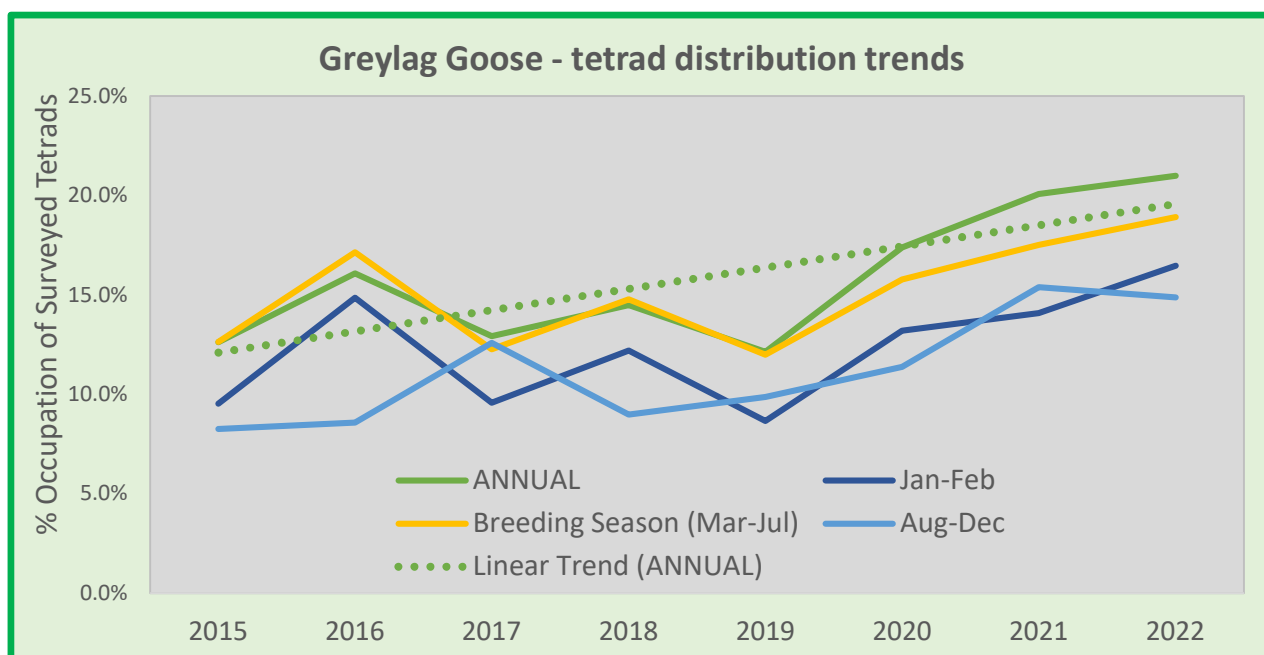
Barnacle Goose: annual peak counts, 2000-2022.

Greylag Goose

Anser anser

Well-represented, increasing breeding population from introductions. Icelandic birds are apparently an uncommon winter visitor.

The overall distribution trend for Greylag Goose is now generally positive, with a significant rise in tetrad occupation in all seasons over the 2015-22 period, although there appeared to be some sign of retreat in 2017-19, which has now been recovered.



The highest count for the year was of c.600 at Lees Haugh (Coldstream) on 1-Jan (MM). Monthly peak counts of 50 or more for tetrads with an annual aggregate count of 200 or more are tabled below:

Tetrads - Greylag Goose counts	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	
The Hirsell	200	100			All peak counts below 50			300	440	250	300		
Tweed: Kelso-Coldstream	600	100		55			97	250	300				185
Stantling Craig Res (Clovenfords)	180	100	262	125				80				455	300
Folly Loch								200	500	240			
Hule Moss								250	300	200	65		
Torsonce (Stow)	138	116	143					60		52	230		
Hoselaw Loch (Yetholm)	250	54	245										
Whitrig Bog-Westfield	71	135	200	161									
Teviot Haughs	100	266											170
Cammerlaws (Westruther)		215									110	110	
Watch Water Reservoir			66	63			60	127			75		
Eckford-Wooden Loch (Jedburgh)		200											170
Bemersyde Moss-Brotherstone	200	55							80				
Caddon Water: Millbank		334											
Dowlaw (Coldingham)									102	188			
Newmains (Reston)	124											134	
Parkgatestone (Broughton)											130	126	
Total no. of tetrads	45	44	69	86	61	29	25	26	40	36	30	32	
Agg. count of all peak counts	3,056	2,441	1,683	1,005	598	402	717	1,544	3,300	1,812	1,952	1,253	

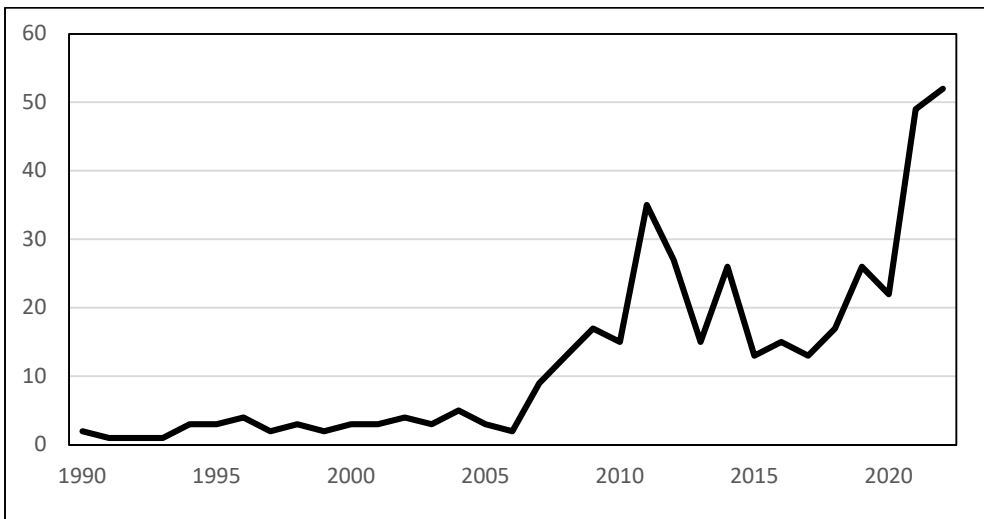
Unfortunately, it is not always possible when collating records to confidently distinguish flyovers from birds on the ground. Contributors are encouraged to indicate if birds are flyovers when submitting records. A big thank you to those observers who already do this.

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	13	15	13	17	26	22	49	52

Of the 52 tetrads with breeding evidence, 26 were confirmed and 26 were probable. The sites with the largest numbers of pairs/broods were Stantling Craig Resr (Clovenfords) with 9 pairs and 44 goslings, Watch Water Resr (Longformacus) with 30 goslings, Fireburnmill (Coldstream) with 2 pairs and 12 goslings, Mailingsland (Peebles) with 10 goslings, Easter Housebyres (Galashiels) with 2 pairs, 8 goslings and St Abb's Head also with 8 goslings. Others were thought to be single pairs or broods.

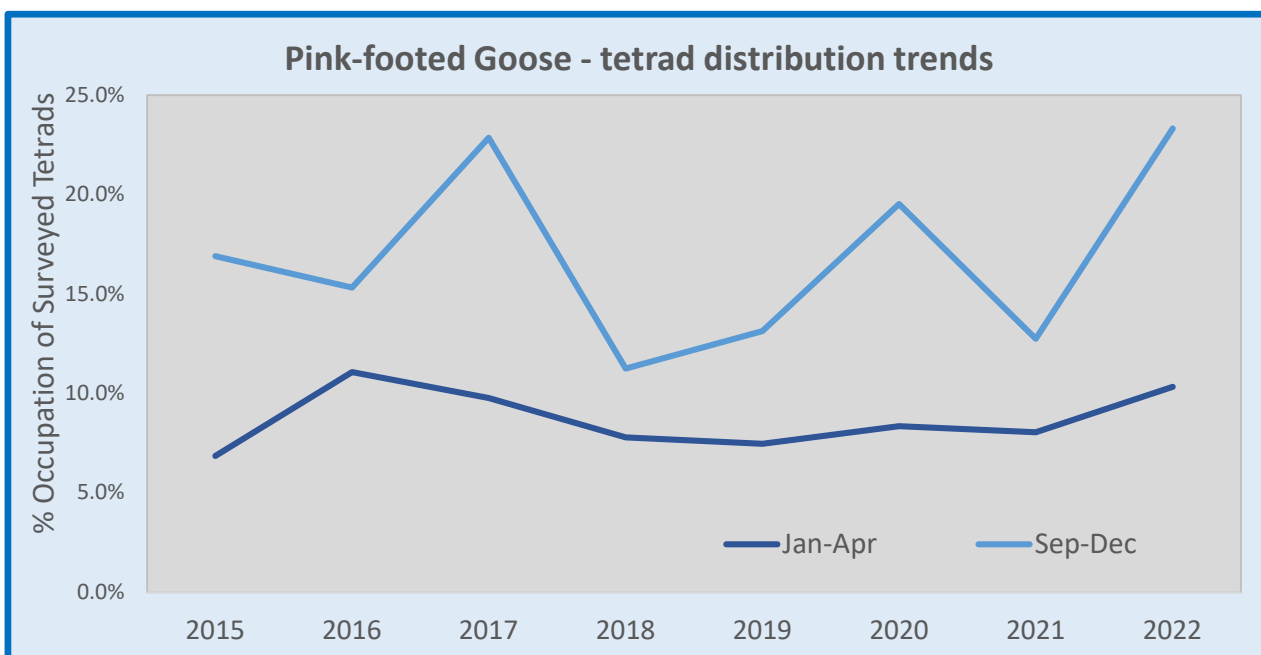
The numbers of tetrads with breeding evidence continues to strongly increase:



Greylag Goose: numbers of tetrads with confirmed or probable breeding evidence, 1990-2022

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*
 Abundant winter visitor and passage migrant: Sep-May, peaking in Oct-Nov, with important roost sites in the region.

The distribution trends show a fairly level distribution over the last few years, although there are marked annual variations, especially in autumn. Incoming skeins in autumn are clearly seen more widely than the settled winter flocks.



While it is often problematic to team-up feeding grounds with roost sites, associations of the two have been made here on proximity, e.g. the nearby Teviot Haughs are taken as the feeding grounds for birds that mainly roost at Folly Loch. However, such assumptions will sometimes be incorrect. It is likely the case that the relationship is dynamic. Thus, the combination of roost/feeding areas in the table below (showing selected peak counts) is arbitrary and should be regarded with caution. The tables below do not include records where sightings were given as fly-overs. It is probable that some of the records that are shown here are, in fact, of fly-overs but with no indication of such in the submission of records. Observers are encouraged to state for all wildfowl counts if the sighting involves flyovers by entering the 0 code in “highest breeding evidence” when using BirdTrack.

The table below, showing counts of 200 or more, is not intended to be a comprehensive summary of all submitted records during the respective periods but is designed to give an idea of the range of counts and sites in Borders. It will, of course, involve many cases of duplicate counts. Given that there were no records submitted from West Water Reservoir (an historically significant site for overnight roosts), the dataset for this species may be less complete than would otherwise be the case.

Sites - Pink-footed Goose Peak Counts		Jan	Feb	Mar	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Hule Moss - Gordon	Hule Moss	6,100	2,000	10,000		12,000	1,600	
	Gordon					2,000		
	Old Greenlaw			500				
	Bassendean (Gordon)						280	
	Raeclough Head (Duns)		260		200			
	Rumbleton (Greenlaw)			200				
Folly Loch- Teviot Haughs- Morebattle & Kelso	Teviot Haughs	2,200	4,000	945	170	1,000		
	Folly Loch				450	8,500*		
	Kersknowe (Kelso)						1,700	
	Blakelaw (Kelso)						1,400	
	Upper Nisbet (Ancrum)			1,120		200		
	Ploughlands (Kelso)					1,000		
	Caverton Mains (Morebattle)	650						700
	Eckford Haugh	400	500			200	300	
	Frogden (Morebattle)			450				
	Lurdenlaw N (Kelso)	250					700	
	Windywalls (Kelso)	250					800	
	Tweed: Kelso-Birgham	200						
Bemersyde- Smailholm	Bettyfield (Smailholm)					7,000		
	New Smailholm					5,000	150	
	Whitrig Bog	440	600	2,000	500	4,600	500	200
	Charterhouse (Smailholm)					4,000		
	Bemersyde Moss	700	1,000	200		800	1,800	
Makerstoun (Kelso)						400		
West Water- North West	Hartree Hotel (Broughton)	650						
	West Linton		1,592	2,686		1,000		
	Whitfield (West Linton)		250	2,000				
	Lynedale (West Linton)		205					
	Callands Ho (West Linton)		100					
	Kaimes (West Linton)			1,000				
	Parkgatestone (Broughton)			560		1,170		
	Slipperfield House (West Linton)			300	300			
	Easter Deans (Portmore)				300			
Broughton			211					

Sites - Pink-footed Goose Peak Counts		Jan	Feb	Mar	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Coldingham Moor-coast	Dowlaw (Coldingham)	915			3,000			
	Whitsome (Chirnside)#					700		
	Newmains (Reston)	480						
	Coldingham Common		205	1,100				
	Haud Yards (Grantshouse)		200					
	St Abb's Head			128			565	
South-West	Hopehouse (Ettrick)	200		150				
	Yarrowford				200			

* - Folly Loch count in October was 7,000-10,000, with 8,500 the median value

- Whitsome (Chirnside) is grouped with the coastal sites, but is equidistant to Hule Moss as well.

In summary, the main roost sites/feeding areas during the year were as follows (and in bold above): -

Roost Sites-Feeding Areas	Spring		Autumn		Observer(s)
	Peak Count	Date	Peak Count	Date	
Hule Moss area	c. 10,000	26-Mar	c. 12,000	11-Oct	AP Mossop
Folly Loch-Teviot Haughs	c. 4,000	25-Feb	c. 7-10,000	16-Oct	M Henderson, EL Bickmore
Bemersyde-Westfield	c. 2,000	20-Mar	c. 7,000	13-Oct	WeBS, A Cutter
Coldingham Moor-the coast	c. 1,100	26-Mar	c. 3,000	28-Sep	DK Graham, N Hammatt
West Linton-the north west	2,686	26-Mar	c. 1,170	09-Oct	B Gilmour, D Stevenson

The autumn count for Folly Loch of c. 7,000-10,000, represents the highest count for that site since local records began. The maximum roost site counts are tabled below for the last 13 years, showing the trend, however no dawn/dusk counts have been made at West Water since a one-off count in Oct 2019.

	West Water	Hule Moss	Bemersyde-Westfield	Coldingham Moor	Folly Loch-Teviot Haugh	East Merse	Aggregate
2010	16,650	7,750	2,228	700	2,200		29,528
2011	25,000	2,500	5,000	1,200	1,200		34,900
2012	20,250	1,450	6,000	4,700	850		33,250
2013	28,200	9,830	3,000	7,000	1,535	332	49,897
2014	32,200	7,000	5,000	7,800	3,000	1,795	56,795
2015	82,920	10,000	4,600	4,000	4,737	1,165	107,422
2016	47,000	15,900	12,000	7,670	5,826	1,149	89,545
2017	48,218	10,000	3,600	8,980	4,500	4,460	79,758
2018	3,800	9,000	4,800	5,600	6,032	1,600	27,032
2019	27,000	10,000	5,000	11,282	5,690	3,575	62,547
2020	7,450	17,000	3,000	9,240	5,182	700	42,572
2021	1,129	14,000	3,000	10,830	4,350	110	33,419
2022	1,170	12,000	7,000	3,000	8,500	700	32,370

Pink-footed Goose: peak counts during autumn-winter for main roost sites, 2010-2022.

While there appears to have been a significant decrease in abundance in 2021 and 2022 when compared with earlier years, it is important to take into consideration two important influences. Firstly, a notable number of observers now identify records as being fly-overs (which are not included in any of the above data but were more likely to have been included in the past). Secondly, for the second successive year there were no dawn/dusk records submitted from West Water, which, in the past, involved birds numbering tens

of thousands. As a result, we are not able to make any reasonable statements about trends of either range or abundance for this species.

The largest counts of reported flyovers for the year as a whole were:

Site/Tetrad – Pink-footed Goose flyovers	Count	Date	Observer
West Linton	2,000	21-Mar	SD Ward
Hule Moss	2,000	27-Oct	J Connor
Eyemouth	1,993	02-Oct	G Paterson
Tweed: Banff Mill-Redden	c. 1,400	27-Dec	R Manning
Georgefield (Earlston)	c. 1,000	19-Sep	M Moncrieff
Netherbyres-Fancove Head (Eyemouth)	c. 680	29-Sep	G Paterson
Teviot Haughs (Crailing)	540	03-Oct	M Moncrieff
Huntershall (Oxton)	500+	04-Oct	C Rooney

Note that these counts are based on observers identifying counts as fly-overs. It is very likely that the table for roost/feeding sites above also involve counts which are of fly-overs but have not been specified as such in the submission of the records. Contributors are encouraged to state whether counts are of fly-overs. The best way to do this is to use the code of 0 in the menu for highest breeding evidence when entering records on BirdTrack.

Tundra Bean Goose

Anser serrirostris LRC

Very rare winter visitor, usually amongst other grey geese. Recent previous records in 2015 and 2021.

Six records. Although 6 records were submitted, these represent two flocks of five birds at two sites. Whether this was the same roving group is hard to say, but they are treated here as different groups.



Tundra Bean Goose (4 of the 5 birds), nr. Reston, November (DK Graham)

On 22-Nov, 5 birds were reported in the area between Newmains (Reston) and a field to the west of the village (DKG, K Gibb, CDG, RJ), before flying off to the north at dusk. This group was possibly seen thereafter in East Lothian.

Four birds were then seen at Whitrig Bog-Westfield on 12-Dec, increasing to 5 the next day (AC). In addition, a sixth bird on the 13-Dec was thought to be a possible Taiga Bean Goose, but with the identification uncertain it has been accepted only as a Bean Goose species.

This is the best showing of Tundra Bean Goose since 2011, when there was a large national influx.



Tundra Bean Goose and Bean Goose sp., Whitfield Bog, December (A Cutter)

White-fronted Goose

Anser albifrons

Rare winter visitor with other grey geese. Not annual. Most recent previous records in 2019 (Greenland race *flavirostris*) and in 2021 (Russian race *albifrons*).

Five records. The only record in the first winter period was a single seen at Cairneymount (Earlston) on 30-Jan (AC). The race of this bird was not identified.

The next records were of two flying past Eyemouth on 20-Nov (DKG), followed subsequently by a single (one of the two?) feeding with Greylags at Newmains (Reston) the same day, remaining there until the following day (DKG, RJ). The race of these was identified as the Russian race *albifrons*.

White-fronted Geese have been reported in seven years out of the last ten.

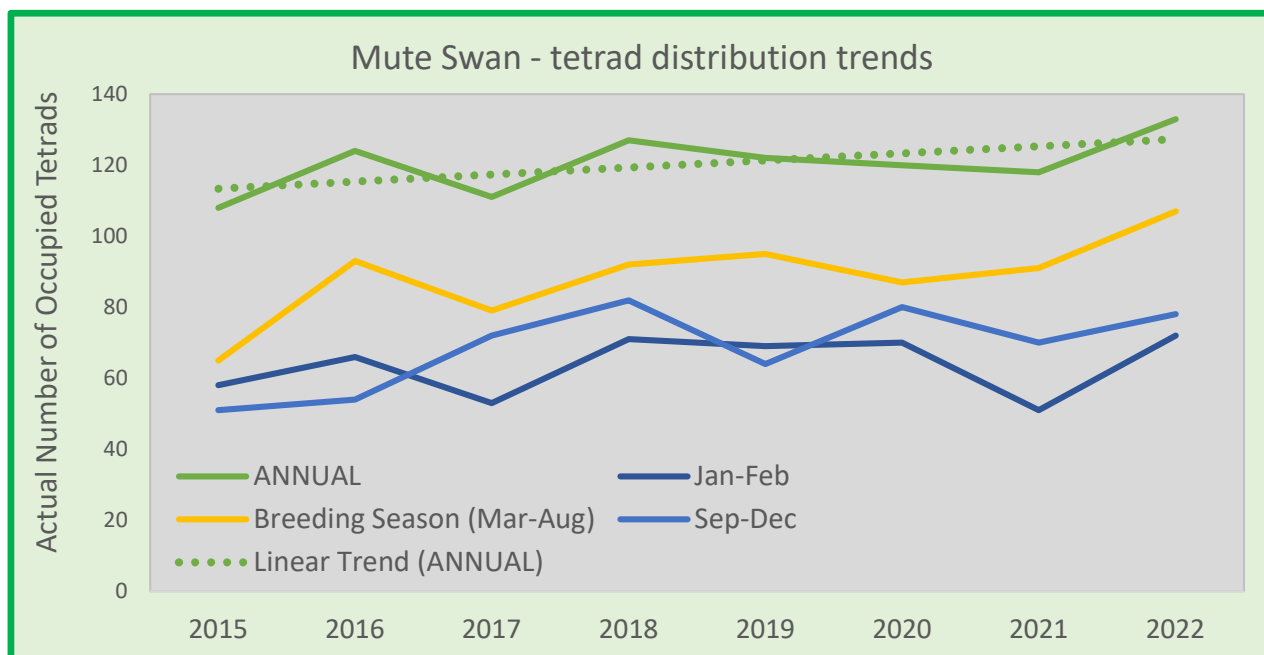
Mute Swan

Cygnus olor

Well-represented breeder on rivers and on still-water sites. Many moulting non-breeders on lower Tweed and widespread in winter.

Although showing an apparent reduction in the percentage of tetrads occupied in recent years, the actual number of occupied tetrads is the highest since at least 2015 (see table below). Since the distribution of Mute Swan is influenced by proximity to waterways and waterbodies, which have been fairly consistently covered over many years, the percentage occupation figures are impacted by the higher overall tetrad coverage more recently. On that basis, the distribution trend graph below shows actual tetrads rather than the percentage occupation trend used for other species.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>actual no. of occupied tetrads for year</i>	108	124	111	127	122	120	118	133



Counts of 20 or more and an aggregate count of 50 or more came from the following sites:

Tetrads - Mute Swan counts	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Tweed: Kelso-Coldstream	154	20	68	127	65		64	27	108	211	312	106
Yetholm Loch	33	26	21	40	45	95	60	119	78	43	16	12
Tweedbank-Abbotsford-Langlee	20	21	22	22	25	19	20	20	21	18	20	35
Teviot Haughs	53	22		55			10		21	26		
Eckford-Wooden Loch (Jedburgh)	47	55	35	20	13							
Synton Loch (Hawick)	12	13	10			12				14	21	22
Ploughlands (Kelso)						11		11	11	19	36	
Folly Loch		10			20	27	10		15			
The Hirsell					14				10	19	18	20
Total no. occupied tetrads	57	45	51	73	51	42	33	35	42	43	43	44
Agg. count of all peak counts	501	262	308	450	300	264	246	281	347	450	507	291

Breeding evidence:

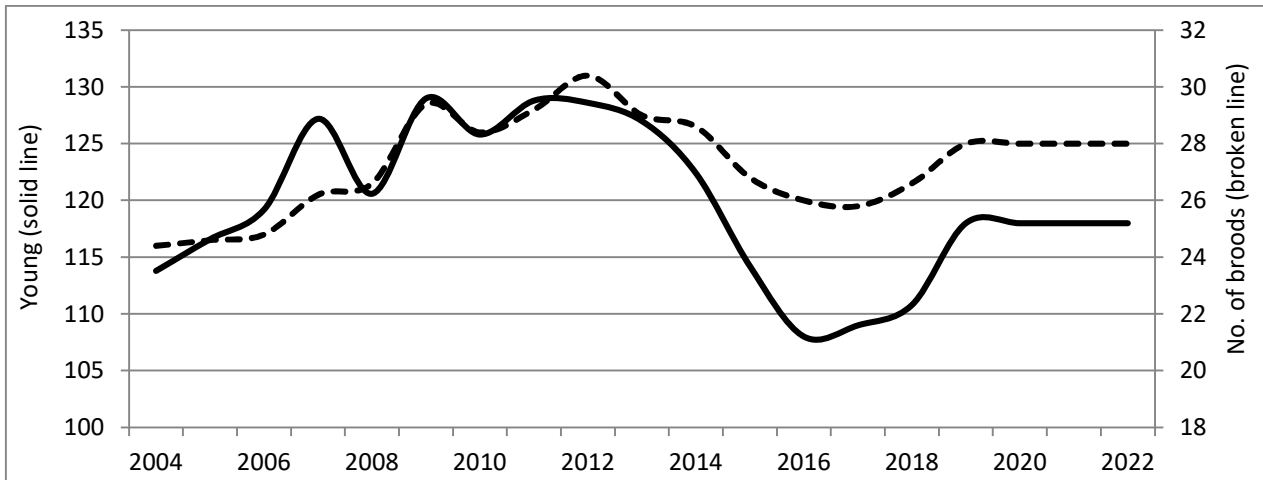
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with confirmed breeding</i>	25	37	33	33	38	38	26	46

In addition to the 46 tetrads with confirmed breeding, there were a further 11 tetrads with probable breeding. The sites with the largest numbers of pairs/broods reported are tabled below. There were a further 13 tetrads with identified broods sizes of 6 or fewer, uncounted numbers of fledglings in 5 tetrads and occupied nests in 13 tetrads. Four September broods are counted as confirmed breeding, but could possibly refer to more advanced juveniles from other tetrads.

Site/Tetrad - Mute Swan largest broods	Date	Br. Code	Observer
Yetholm Loch (2 tetrads)	25-Jun	2br10	M Moncrieff
Tweed: Broomlands-Whitmuirhaugh	14-Aug	2br9	MB Ross
Ploughlands (Kelso)	23-Jun	br9	M Moncrieff
Fireburnmill (Coldstream)	17-May	br8	N Stratton
Quickningair Hill (Craik Forest)	26-May	1br7	G Paterson
Loch Tima (Craik Forest)	29-May	1br7	G Paterson
Bemersyde Moss	30-May	1br7	A Cutter

Site/Tetrad - Mute Swan largest broods	Date	Br. Code	Observer
Williestruther Loch	2-Jun	br7	D Parkinson
Wooden Loch	7-Jun	br7	CD Green
Maxwellheugh (Kelso)	27-Jun	1br7	G Paterson

See Introduction for breeding codes.



Mute Swan: 5-year running averages for no. of broods and young recorded, 2004-2022.

While the notable increase in occupied tetrads with confirmed breeding might be explained, to some extent, by improved observer effort, the 5-year running average for numbers of broods and young counted suggest a degree of stability, although, of course, these figures are also influenced by observer effort. The number of tetrads with records of Mute Swans also suggests a degree of stability in the population. Readers should be aware that these figures have their limitations. To increase their validity, observers are encouraged to submit records with details of numbers of broods and numbers of young, e.g. a record such as 2br12 or even br12 is better than FL (see Introduction for breeding codes).



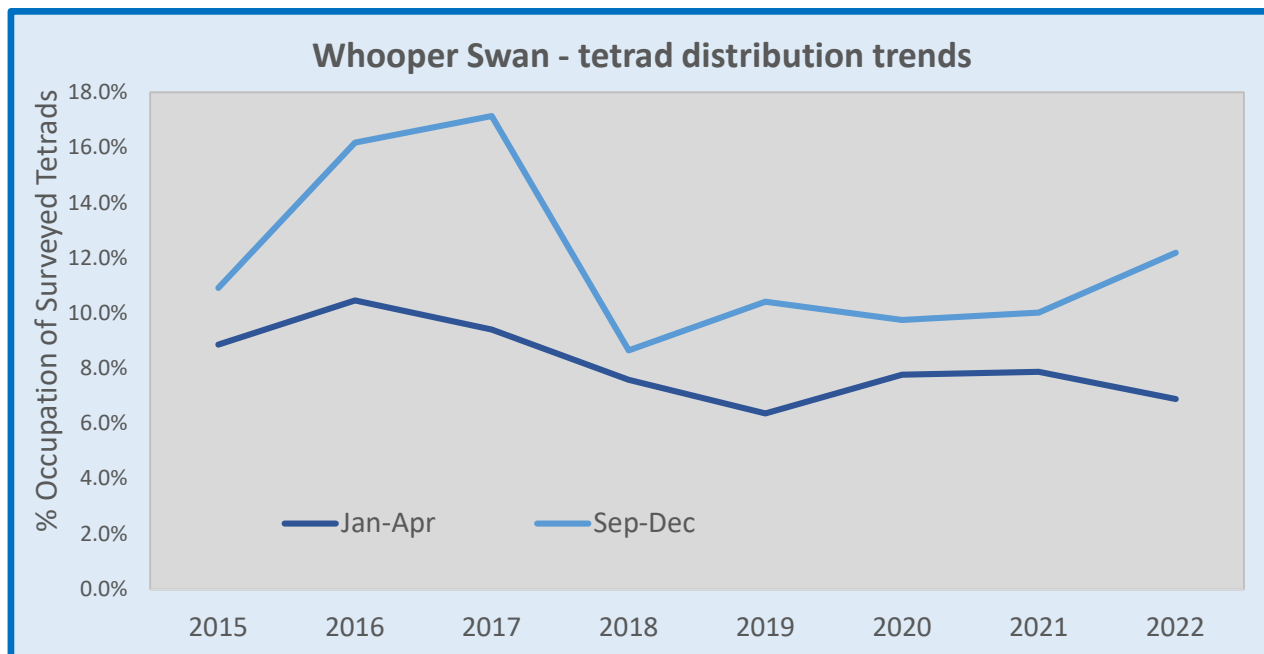
Mute Swan, Tweed at Sprouston, December (D Gray)

Whooper Swan

Cygnus cygnus

Common winter visitor Sep-Apr, with notable flocks on Teviot and Tweed Haughs. Occasional birds in summer, probably injured.

As with Mute Swans, the % occupation trends show a dip after 2017, but this is primarily due to the large increase in overall tetrad coverage, rather than any reduction in the absolute number of tetrads.



Tetrads with monthly peak counts of 30 or more or an annual aggregate count of 50 or more were:

Tetrads - Whooper Swan counts	J	F	M	A	M	J	J/A	S	O	N	D	
Tweed: Kelso-Coldstream	230	180	140	All counts between April-August had counts of less than 10.					44	114	200	
Crossrig (Paxton)												300
Whitsomehill (Swinton)	100	120										
Folly Loch			15							109	37	
St Abbs-Coldingham											85	17
Teviot Haughs		17								67		34
Whitsome (Chirnside)			26							90		
Yetholm Loch	13		11						13	40	25	
St Abb's Head										81	18	
Ale Moor Loch (Hawick)	27	12								20	12	14
Upper Nisbet (Ancrum)										70	12	
Ravelaw Farm (Chirnside)										80		
Synton Loch (Hawick)	17	24	16									12
Hare Moss-Green Diamonds	15	15	15									18
Pirnie (St Boswells)	37											
Broomdykes (Chirnside)	31											
Total no. occupied tetrads	33	17	21		7	6	3	0	8	35	29	27
Agg. count of all peak counts	580	431	254	12	4	4	0	52	789	469	663	

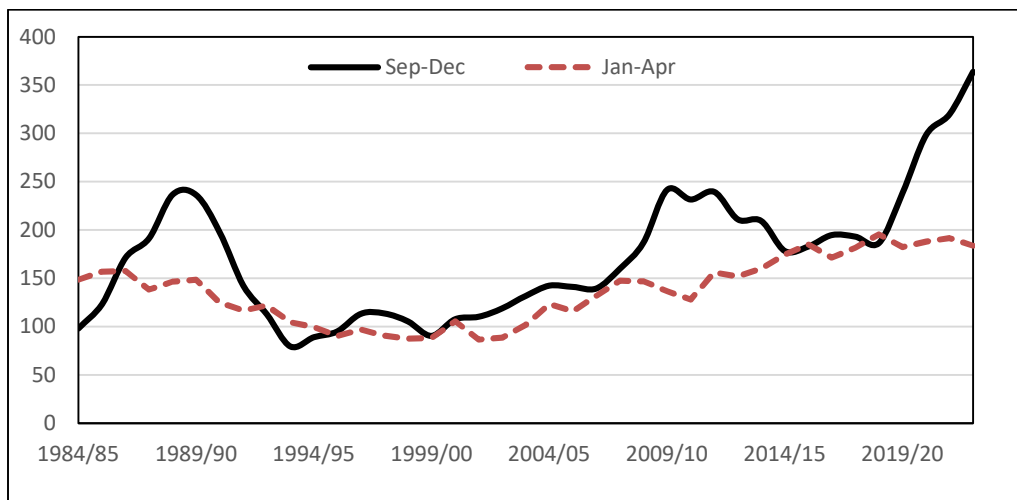
Small numbers lingered at a few sites into May and June, including singles at Lindean Resr (Selkirk) to 8-May, Tweed: Kelso-Coldstream to 17-May, Yetholm Loch to 31-May and Folly Loch to 12-Jun. Nearly all the

wintering birds had left by 27-Mar, however. Up to two at Hule Moss on 15-Jun and 21-Jun were presumably summering in the region, although there were no records in July and August.

Given the proximity of many sites and the mobility of this species, there is obviously an element of duplicate counting in the above. A further complication is that, while records given as fly-overs have not been included, not all records of fly-overs will have been reported as such. **As with all wildfowl records, observers are asked to indicate if the sighting involved fly-overs.**

The first arrivals in autumn were 13 recorded at Yetholm Loch on 7-Sep (A Kelly). The highest count of the year was of 300 at Crossrig (Paxton) on 17-Dec (APM).

Although the peak counts for winter-spring were less than in recent years they were still part of a general trend of increasing numbers.



Whooper Swan: 5-yr running average of winter-spring/ autumn-winter peak counts, 1984/5-2021/22.

(Common) Shelduck

Tadorna tadorna

Uncommon on passage and moult migration and very uncommon breeder near coast or on inland waters.

As with some other waterbirds (e.g. Mute Swan), the actual number of occupied tetrads is used here in preference to the percentage of those tetrads surveyed for the whole of the Region. This also better reflects the presence of the scarcer species, like Shelduck.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>actual no. of occupied tetrads for year</i>	20	24	23	21	19	21	24	31

Peak counts per tetrad for the more significant sites are tabled below:

Sites/Tetrads - Shelduck counts	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Hule Moss	3	3	11	8	18	8		2				
Folly Loch	4	2	14	11	5	3	4	1				
Eyemouth									8		7	
Dowlaw (Coldingham)			1	1*	4	4						
Whitrig Bog-Westfield (Smailholm)		1	2	3	2							
Yetholm Loch				2		4	2					
Teviot Haughs (Nisbet)		1	1	4			1					
Edrington Castle (Paxton)						6						

Sites/Tetrads - Shelduck counts	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
St Abb's Head					2						4	
Coldingham Common			2	1	2							
Tweed: Kelso-Coldstream								2			3	
Mellerstain House (Gordon)				4								
Total no. occupied tetrads	4	5	12	13	9	6	3	3	1	1	3	0
Agg. count of all peak counts	10	8	43	42	38	26	7	5	8	1	14	0

Asterisk indicates fly-overs. Note: only adult birds are counted in the above table.

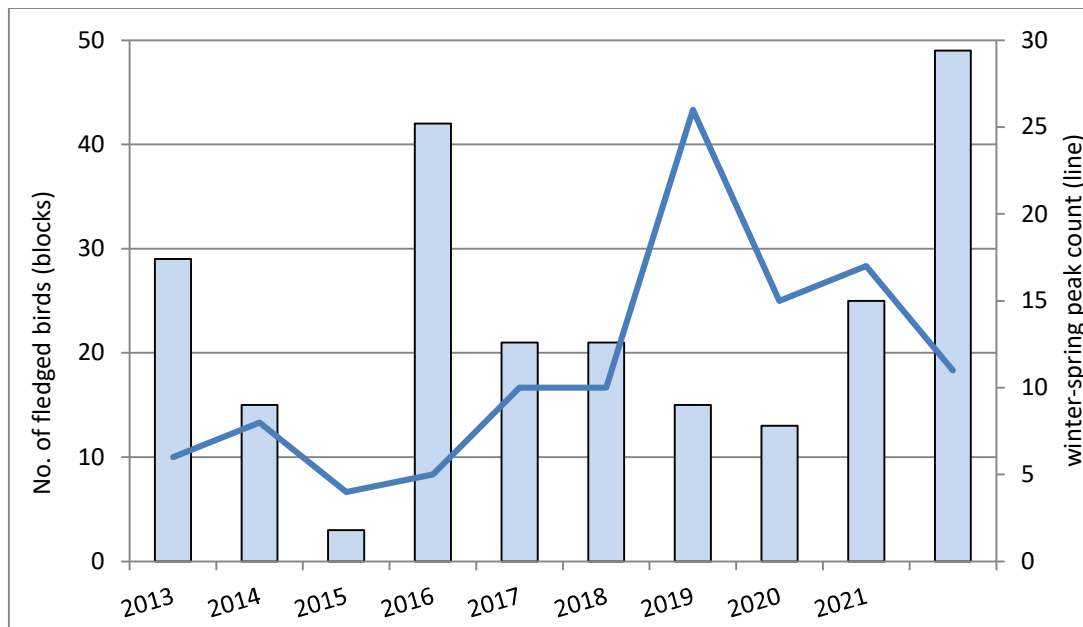
Other sites with at least one record of singles/duos were Leadburn, Scarce Rig/Spurlens Rig/Whim Farm (Portmore), Caverton Mains (Morebattle), Dalks Law (Grantshouse), Dunglass Bridge (Cockburnspath), Fawside (Gordon), Parkgatestone (Broughton), West Linton, West Water Resr, Burnmouth, Hummelknows (Hawick), Lees Haugh (Coldstream) and Newmains (Reston).

The highest count of the year was 18 at Hule Moss on 12-May (D Warden).

Confirmed breeding records came from 6 tetrads:

Site/Tetrad - Shelduck confirmed breeding	Date	Br. Code	Observer
Dowlaw (Coldingham)	30-May	1br8	N Hammatt
Whitrig Bog-Westfield (Smailholm)	31-May	br2	A Cutter
Hule Moss	15-Jun	4br22	M Moncrieff
Yetholm Loch N	19-Jun	1br2	G Paterson
Folly Loch	23-Jun	1br10	M Moncrieff
Edrington Castle (Paxton)	29-Jun	1br5	R Manning

This represents the largest record of fledged young since at least 1990, although the spring peak count (March-April) of 11+ on 26-Mar at Folly Loch (**ELB**) is a decrease on recent years.



Shelduck: no. of reported fledged young and winter-spring peak counts.

March-April counts used in order to avoid inclusion of young birds common in counts later in year.

While greater observer effort may be at least be partly responsible for this suggestion of an increased breeding population, there is reason to believe that the breeding population is, in fact, increasing.

Ruddy Shelduck

Tadorna ferruginea

Potential rare vagrant, although all modern records generally treated as escapes or, at least, of unknown origin. One old record from 1892, an invasion year, treated as a Category B vagrant.

[**One record.** A single bird was seen flying overhead at St Abb's Head, accompanying geese on the morning of 2-Jun (CH). This was the first record since 2019 and before that 1994, although the origin of all these more recent birds is unknown].

Mandarin Duck

Aix galericulata

Scarce and elusive introduced resident breeder, primarily found along Eye Water and Whiteadder, but with increasing records elsewhere.

As Mandarin is scarce and localised in Borders, the actual number of occupied tetrads is used here, in preference to the percentage of those tetrads surveyed for the whole of the Region.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>actual no. of occupied tetrads for year</i>	4	5	2	5	7	7	6	8

Site/Tetrad	Date(s)	Count	Breeding evidence	Observer
Linthill (Eyemouth)	13-Mar to 11-Apr	Up to 8	4P	DK Graham <i>et. al.</i>
Leitholm (Coldstream)	13-Mar	1		R Jackson
Abbey St Bathans (2 tetrads)	21-Apr, 23-Apr	2	P	CD Green, K Ingleby
Ayton	25-Apr	5		F Evans
Peebles	03-Jun	1		AG Reid
Alemill (Eyemouth)	25-Jun	4	FY	DK Graham
The Hirsell	25-Sep, 6-Oct	1-3		R Jackson, D Parkinson

All records are shown in the table. The record at Peebles is particularly interesting, as it is apparently a first in that area, although birds were seen at Leithen Lodge in 2009. Whether this bird had wandered from the east or other viable populations, such as in Kielder (Northumberland), is unknown.

While the Eye Water and Whiteadder catchments are still the main focus for finds of Mandarin in Borders, the table above suggests that overall numbers may be at least stable if not growing with an expanding range. The last full survey in 2012 found 20-30 pairs in the Eye Water area. Another dedicated survey now would surely find an increased population.



Mandarin, Ale Water, April (DK Graham)



Garganey, Mire Loch, April (C Hatsell)

Garganey*Spatula querquedula*

LRC

Very rare summer visitor, not seen annually. Most recent previous records in 2017 and 2020.

Two records. A pair was seen at Mire Loch (St Abb's Head) on 16-Apr (CH) and one was at Dowlaw on 10-Sep (RJ).

Shoveler*Spatula clypeata*

Scarce, declining, possibly extinct breeder. Very uncommon autumn passage migrant and scarce winter-spring passage migrant.

As Shoveler is scarce in Borders, the actual number of occupied tetrads is used here in preference to the percentage of those tetrads surveyed for the whole of the Region. All records (23) are shown.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>actual no. of occupied tetrads for year</i>	13	18	10	8	10	7	5	7

Sites - Shoveler records	Date(s)	Number	Observer(s)
Bemersyde Moss-Brotherstone	4-Mar, 10-Mar	2m, 1f	A Cutter
Hule Moss	17-Apr, 12-May	1m	A Mossop, D Warden
Bemersyde Moss-Brotherstone	30-May	1m, 2f	A Cutter
Millar's Moss (St Abb's Head)	28-Aug	2	D Wilson, Z Bhatia <i>et. al.</i>
The Hirsell	2-Sep to 30-Oct	1-2	R Jackson, G Paterson <i>et. al.</i>
Coldingham Common	11-Sep, 24-Sep	2	WeBS, DK Graham
Bemersyde Moss (2 tetrads)	21-Sep to 23-Oct	2m	A Cutter, N Stratton
Millar's Moss (St Abb's Head)	11-Oct	1	C Hatsell
Eckford-Wooden Loch (Jed.)	14-Nov	1f	CD Green

Abundance and range continue at a low level and there was no evidence of breeding.

Gadwall*Mareca strepera*

Uncommon resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Scarce, but regular breeder, in very small numbers on eastern waters.

As Gadwall is uncommon in Borders, the actual number of occupied tetrads is used here in preference to the percentage of those tetrads surveyed for the whole of the Region.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>actual no. of occupied tetrads for year</i>	11	13	9	11	17	14	16	32

The peak counts at the most favoured sites are shown below, and there were a further 11 tetrads with one-off records of singles, duos or trios, generally in spring or autumn months.

Sites/Tetrads - Gadwall counts	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
The Hirsell	40	4	6	2	11			30	58	64	64	73
Yetholm Loch-Yetholm Pond (2 tetrads)	20	2	10	10	7	9	2	12	14	16	4	3
Tweed: Kelso-Coldstream		2	2	8	10		3	4	6			
Tweed: The Rink-Lowood		2		2	1	1			4	4	4	2
Leitholm (Coldstream)			6	3								

Sites/Tetrads - Gadwall counts	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Eckford-Wooden Loch (Jedburgh)			4									2
Newmains (Reston)				2	3							1
Cauldshiels & Faldonside Lochs (Selkirk)			1							4		
Hoselaw Loch (Yetholm)										4		
Philippaugh Farm (Selkirk)											2	1
Total no. occupied tetrads	6	5	8	15	10	4	3	4+	5	8	8	8
Agg. of all peak counts	65	12	31	28	33	13	3	46	83	93	79	85

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	3	2	3	4	3	4	4	9

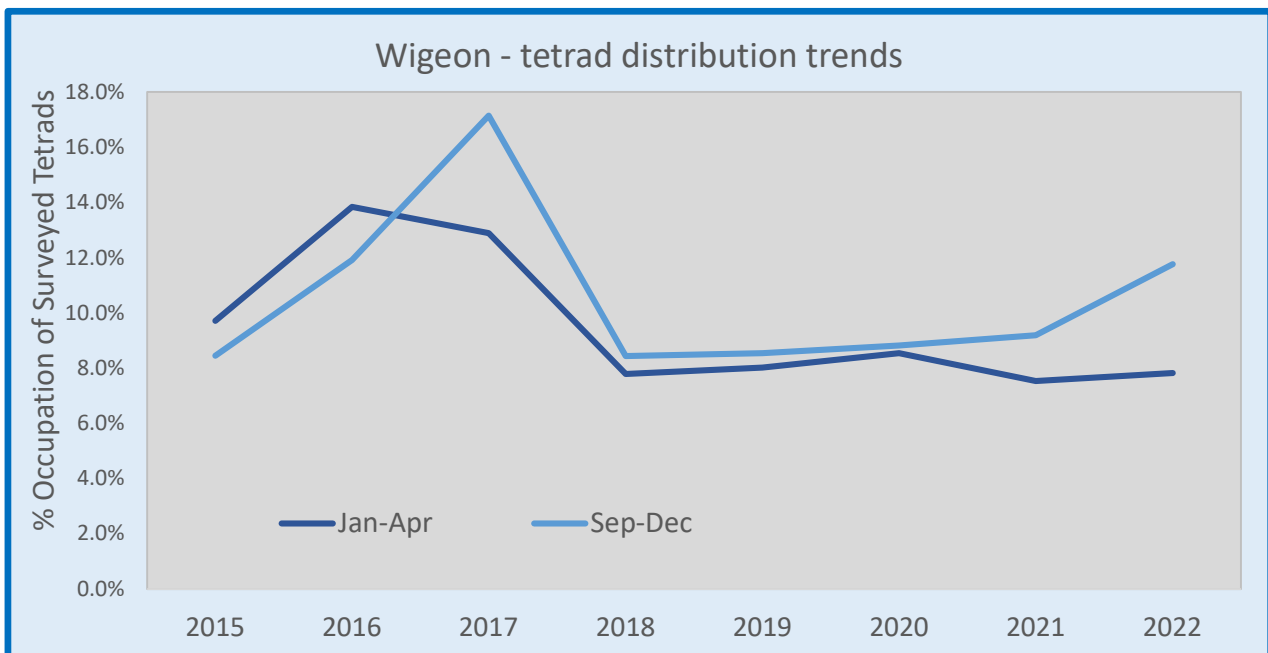
Site/Tetrad - Gadwall breeding	Date	Br. Code	Observer
The Hirsell	20-May	1br4+	D Parkinson
Ploughlands (Kelso)	17-Mar	P	M Moncrieff
Leitholm (Coldstream)	27-Mar	3P	R Jackson
Lees Haugh (Coldstream)	14-Apr	P	R Jackson
Homebank (Coldstream)	17-Apr	2P	T Brewis
Newmains (Reston)	18-Apr	P	DK Graham
Yetholm Loch N-Cherrytrees	25-Apr	2P	N Stratton
Gala Hill-Galashiels	17-Jun	D	G Paterson
Tweed: The Rink-Boleside	15-Sep	2P	G Paterson

Confirmed breeding was reported for the first time since 2018, and there were a further 8 tetrads with pairs present or displaying, all of which is an encouraging sign of becoming established. Autumn-winter numbers also appear to be growing. Dedicated local surveys in January, and especially April, will undoubtedly have been partly responsible for the apparent increase in range for those months.

(Eurasian) Wigeon

Mareca penelope

Common winter visitor and well-represented autumn passage migrant along coast Very scarce former breeder.



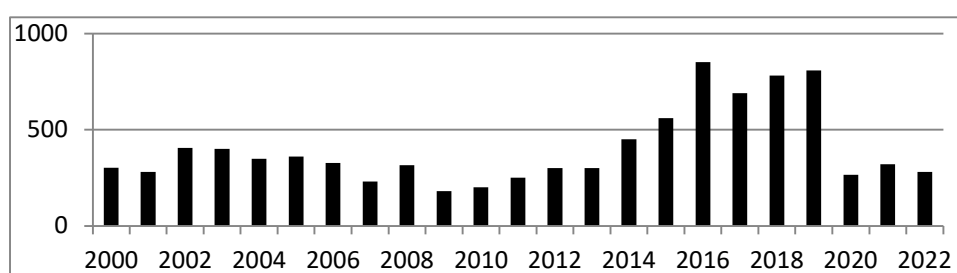
Peak counts of 20 or more and an annual aggregate count of 50 or more:

Sites/Tetrads - Wigeon counts	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	
Whitrig Bog	110	150	150	No peak counts of 20 or greater.						110	110	280	
Bemersyde Moss	120	120	80									28	120
Tweed: Kelso-Coldstream	40	48	20								25	28	137
Cauldshiels & Faldonside Lochs	38	40	52								50	28	50
St Abb's Head	52	62	48							22		40	
Stantling Craig Resr (Clovenfords)	47	45	41									20	50
Synton Loch (Hawick)	67	19									36	49	
Lindean Resr (Selkirk)		100	65										
Ploughlands (Kelso)	20	25	30							20	40	20	
Dunglass Bridge (Cockburnspath)	88											50	
Folly Loch	27		34								38		
Pease Bay-Redheugh	24	33											31
Dunglass-Pease Bay (W)	82												
Hare Moss S (Carlops)	80												
Essenside Loch (Hawick)	71												
Hartree Hotel (Broughton)	22		36										
Hule Moss	50												
West Water Reservoir												50	
Total no. occupied tetrads	33	19	22	13	1	0	1	4	16	29	34	27	
Agg. count of all peak counts	1,100	686	653	73	1	0	1	11	161	514	559	831	

There is a likelihood that the counts for Whitrig Bog and Bemersyde Moss involve some duplication.

The Whitrig Bog area continues to be the focus of winter influxes of the species with this year's peak count of 280 occurring on 21-Dec (ELB).

After a period of high peak counts in Borders (2014-19), counts appear to have returned to a level more typical of the years immediately before 2014:



Wigeon: peak counts, 2000-2022.

Where possible, fly-overs have not been included. There is however, a likelihood that some records submitted have not made reference to them being of fly-overs. **As with all wildfowl records, observers are asked to indicate if the sighting involved fly-overs.**

There were two fly-over records submitted which involved significant numbers of birds: on 29-Sep at Eyemouth a total of 197 birds were seen flying north and on 13-Nov at Burnmouth a total of 40 were seen flying north with some of these birds then flying south. Both records submitted by G Paterson.

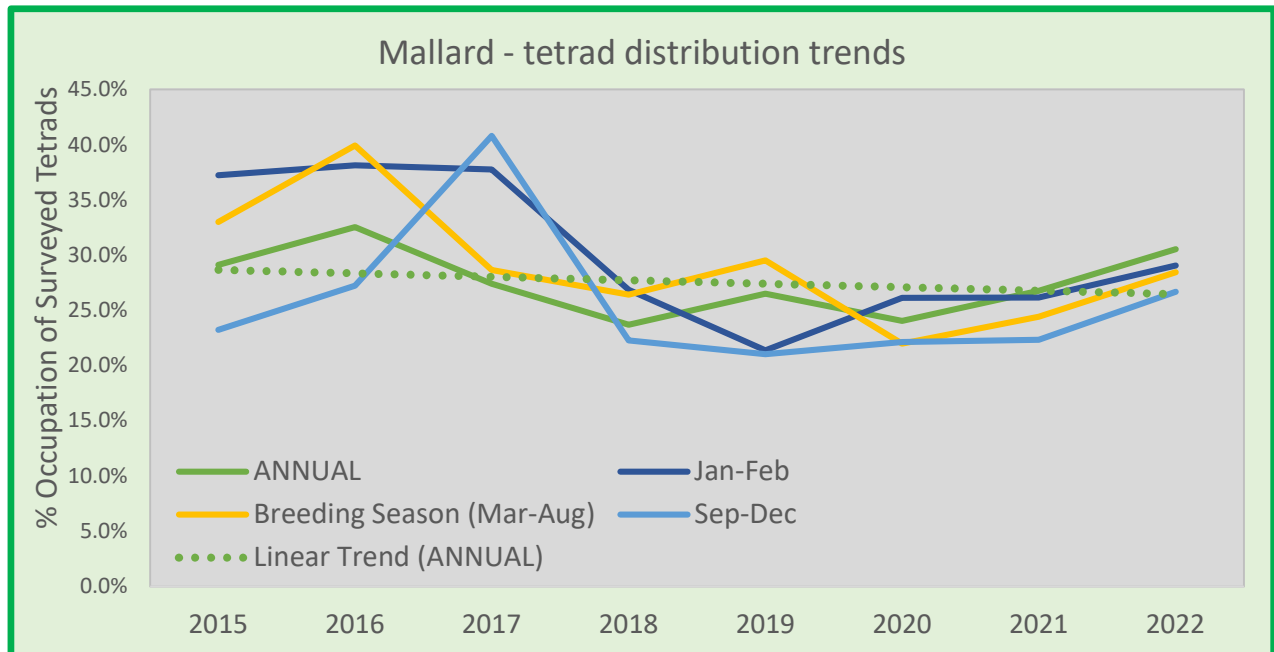
Breeding evidence: as usual, breeding evidence was sparse, limited to pairs observed at three sites. In chronological order these were: 27-Mar at Coldingham Common (**DKG**); 17-Apr at Big Knock, Fruid Reservoir (S Hunt) and 24-Apr at Newmains (Reston) (**DKG**).

Mallard

Anas platyrhynchos

Abundant and widespread breeder. Numbers inflated locally by shoot releases. Several large moult assemblies in late summer. Large but declining winter counts are thought to include immigrants.

The distribution of Mallards has remained stable over the last few years and there are no appreciable differences across the seasons, at least since 2018 onwards.



Peak counts of 30 or more and with an annual aggregate count of at least 250:

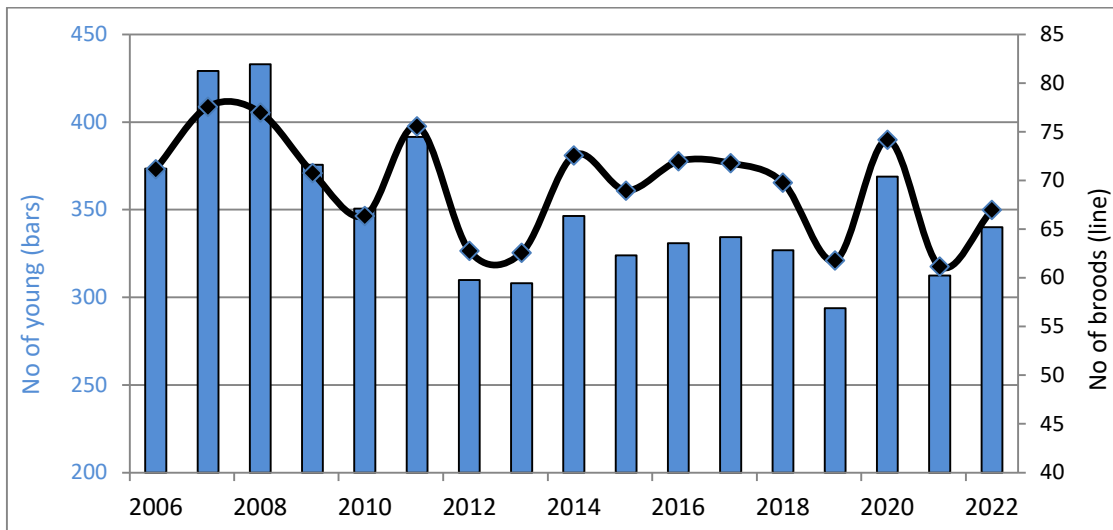
Sites/Tetrads - Mallard counts	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Tweed: Kelso-Coldstream	583	252	310	283	360		439	250	394	414	394	304
Tweed: The Rink-Lowood	147	95	85	42	47	174	200	113	168	165	185	121
Tweed: Lowood-Leaderfoot	39	31		51	53	53	52	168	215	40	68	75
The Hirsell	87	33				50			50	280	98	132
Folly Loch							75	143	189	99	100	
Tweed: Mertoun Bridge-Mertoun Ho.	168	42						110	35	34	62	66
Yetholm Loch						90		66	50	148	70	
Allanbank-Craigswalls (Chirnside)	50			43							300	
Teviot Haughs	56	54	63				30	40		30	32	57
Tweed: Cardrona-Thornielee	60	68									60	83
Dowlaw (Coldingham)								135	130			
Total no. occupied tetrads	95	81	101	126	106	86	55	55	64	81	70	71
Agg. count of all peak counts	2,488	1,420	1,252	1,170	1,044	999	1,580	1,659	2,407	2,535	2,472	2,513

Other locations with an annual aggregate count greater than 150 were: Bemersyde Moss; Faughill Moor (Melrose); St Abb's Head; Tweed: Mertoun Br-Kelso; Hule Moss; Watch Water Resr; Whitrig Bog; Heiton-Roxburgh; Tweed: Thornielee-The Rink; Torsonce (Stow).

The R. Tweed continues to be the main focus for submitted records with higher counts. The highest count of the year was of 583 between Banff Mill and Redden on the Tweed, recorded on 23-Jan (MB Ross).

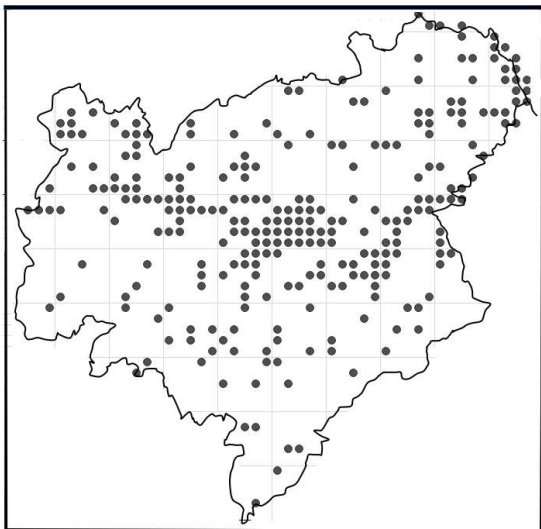
Breeding evidence:

Submitted records involving breeding evidence suggests a minimum of 72 broods and a minimum of 352 young from 50 sites. This, of course, is no more than a crude estimate since many observers do not include breeding details and many more cases of families will be missed. To some extent this might explain the fluctuations in numbers of broods and young from year to year.

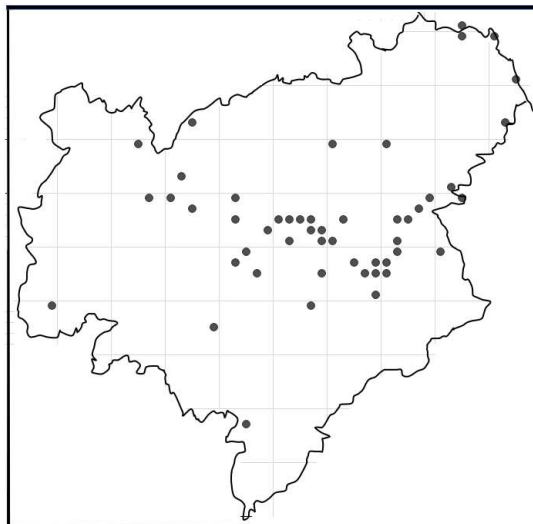


Mallard: 5-year running average of numbers of broods and young recorded, 2006-2022.
 (Note: 2007-13 covers the SE Scotland atlas period).

On the basis of such limited data we are unable to state confidently any trends for breeding in Borders. However, there is a suggestion that over the past ten years or so there has been a degree of stability.



Mallard: all tetrads with records, 2022.



Mallard: tetrads with young recorded, 2022.

The two maps above give some indication of the extent to which young birds are under-recorded. Contributors are encouraged to give full, detailed records of breeding where applicable.

Pintail

Anas acuta

Very uncommon, but annual, winter visitor, September to April, peaking October-November. Has bred twice, in 1901 and 2008.

Eighteen records from 10 tetrads were submitted - higher figures than in recent years. All records are tabulated, including some autumn flypasts at Eyemouth.

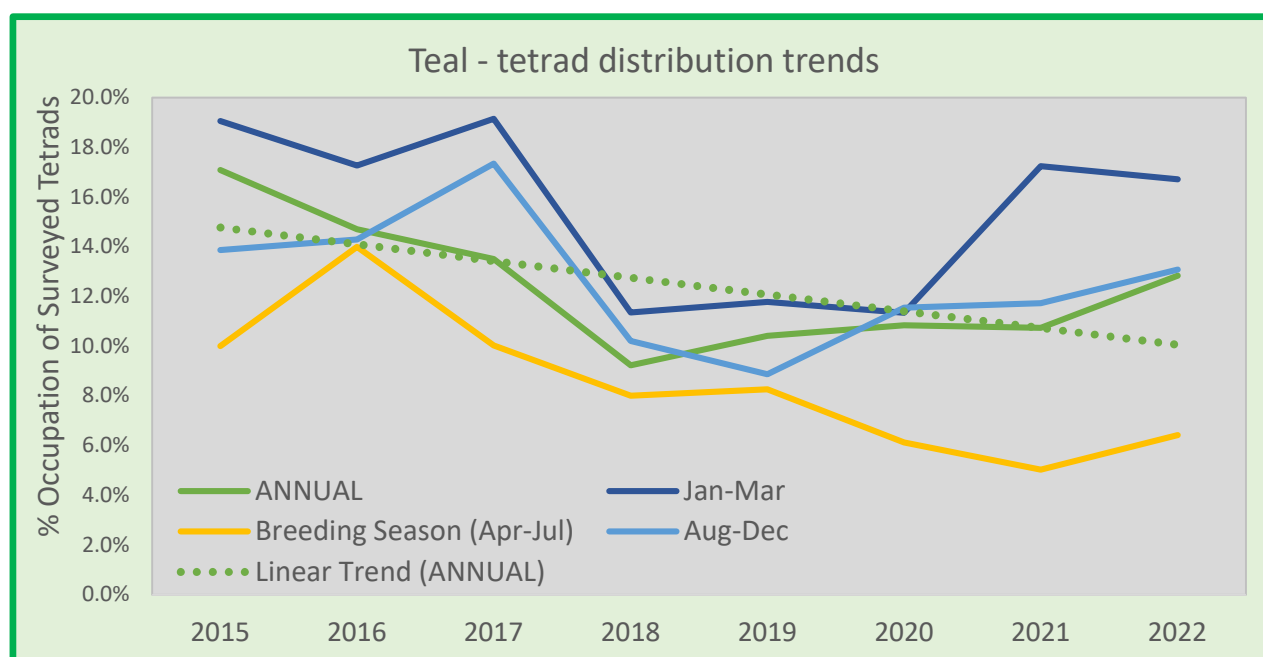
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. occupied tetrads for year</i>	4	6	8	7	7	5	6	10
<i>highest count at any one site</i>	1	5	3	3	3	2	6	6

Sites – Pintail records	Date(s)	Number	Observer(s)
Whitrig Bog-Westfield (Smailholm)	19-Feb	2	MB Ross
Tushielaw (Ettrick)	21-Feb	5	EL Bickmore
Burnmouth	1-Mar	1	C Hatsell
Dalks Law (Grantshouse)	26-Mar	3	DK Graham
Starney Bay (St Abb's)	26-Aug	1	C Hatsell
The Hirsell	2-Sep, 25-Sep	1-2	R Jackson
Dowlaw (Coldingham)	2-Sep to 12-Sep	1-2	N Hammatt, R Jackson
Eyemouth	3-Sep	1 South	G Paterson
Hule Moss	13-Sep, 11-Oct	1-2	AP Mossop
Eyemouth	2-Oct	6 South	G Paterson
Yetholm Loch	2-Oct, 26-Oct	2	G Paterson, D Warden
Eyemouth	5-Nov	1	DK Graham

(Eurasian) Teal

Anas crecca

Common winter visitor and passage migrant, tending to be found in standing waterbodies. Uncommon breeder mostly on fringes of upland areas.



The distribution of Teal continues to fall overall, but particularly in the breeding season, although effects of greater non-wetland tetrad coverage by observers may be having an effect, similar to other wildfowl.

The winter distribution trends are more positive, but only in so far as to recover ground lost between 2018 and 2020.

Peak counts of 15 or more with an annual aggregate count of 50 or more:

Sites/Tetrads - Teal counts	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	
Hule Moss	600	50	100	41	No counts of 15 or greater			84	300	450	160		
Newmains (Reston)	430	100									110	270	310
Bemersyde Moss-Whitrig	80	92	40	40				20	44	75	80	75	
Tweed: The Rink-Lowood	110	106	65						51	71	40	99	
Folly Loch	45	15	16	29				67	40	45	40		
Dowlaw (Coldingham)	52							82	124	22			
The Hirsell	105								30	50	40	55	
St Abb's Head	24	25	16	20				30	29	24	45	42	
Coldingham Common	34	27							80	23	38		
Stantling Craig Resr (Clovenfords)	24	30	26	19								40	
Scarce Rig (Portmore)			52						20		24	17	
Tweed: Kelso-Coldstream		16						20	20			50	
Yetholm Loch								15	40	47			
Summerhope (St Mary's Loch)		29									17	20	
Ploughlands (Kelso)									63				
Monteviot House (Ancrum)	57												
Teviot Haughs								15	40				
Dalks Law (Grantshouse)			54										
Total no. occupied tetrads	42	37	43	46	16	6	7	19	31	34	36	40	
Agg. count of all peak counts	1815	680	628	357	52	20	27	394	969	1025	916	986	

The highest count of the year was of 600 at Hule Moss on 24-Jan (APM). The above table does not include flyovers. Significant records of flyovers were:

Sites - Teal flyovers	Date	Observation	Observer
St Abbs-Coldingham	03-Sep	6S, 16N which turned and went S	G Paterson
Eyemouth	19-Oct	22N (10, 6, 4 and 2)	G Paterson
Eyemouth	22-Oct	c. 15 S	G Paterson

Breeding evidence:

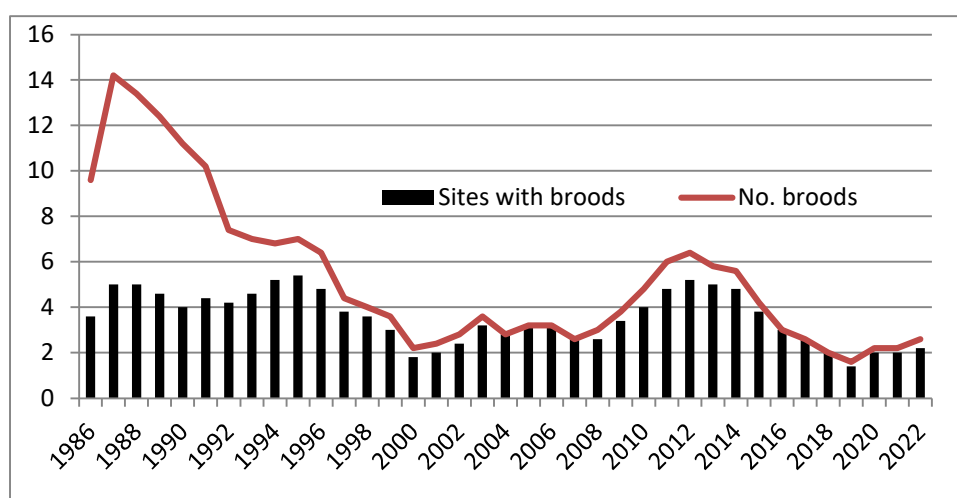
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	12	12	6	7	10	7	13	13

Only two tetrads held evidence of confirmed breeding and there were 11 with probable breeding.

Site/Tetrad - Teal breeding	Date(s)	Br. Code	Observer
Broad Law (Heriot Water)	26-Apr to 18-Jul	3br16	TW Dougall
Hule Moss	21-Jun	2br9	A Mossop
Mire Loch (St Abbs Head)	07-Mar	P	E Benson
Mellerstain House (Gordon)	10-Apr	B	AG Reid
Philiphugh Farm (Selkirk)	12-Apr	P	G Scott
Tweed: Mertoun Bridge-Mertoun House	12-Apr	P	A Cutter
Faldonside Loch (Selkirk)	17-Apr	P	MB Ross
Kingside Loch (Buccleuch)	18-Apr	P	AG Reid

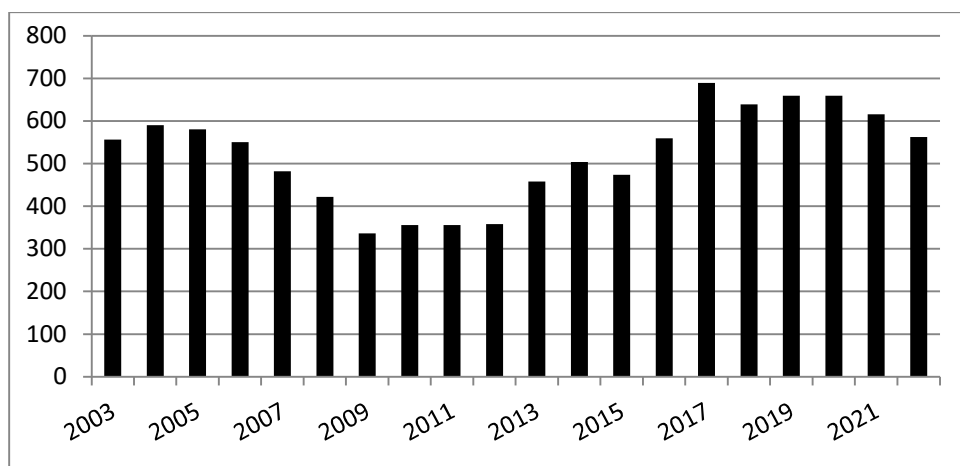
Site/Tetrad - Teal breeding	Date(s)	Br. Code	Observer
Eckford-Wooden Loch (Jedburgh)	20-Apr	P	CD Green
Piper of Peebles Grave (Dewar Burn)	26-Apr	2P	TW Dougall
Garvald Lodge (Heriot Water)	27-Apr	P	G Paterson
Whitrig Bog-Westfield (Smailholm)	28-Apr	3P	MB Ross
Lochton (Kelso)	30-Apr	P	R Manning

Breeding levels continue at a low level. However, limited significance can be attached to these figures given that breeding Teal are rather secretive and are usually found in out-of-the-way locations.



Teal: 5-year running averages for recorded breeding levels, 1986-2022.

Winter peak counts, after an increase in recent years, appear to be declining slightly.



Teal: 5-year running averages for winter peak counts, 2003-2022.

Green-winged Teal

Anas carolinensis LRC

Very rare American vagrant. Most recent previous record in 2018.

One record. A drake was seen on a flooded stubble field at Teviot Haughs (Nisbet) on 31-Dec (ST). This is the seventh Borders record. This species seemingly appears regularly every 4-5 years, with records in 2005, 2010, 2014, 2018 and now 2022 (just). Expect the next in 2026/27!

Pochard

Aythya ferina

Now extinct as a breeder, numbers having collapsed since the 2000s. Also declining, uncommon winter visitor, arriving October-November, leaving Mar-Apr.

There were a total number of 13 records in 7 tetrads. These are tabled below. This represents a fairly typical year, although the flock in December was notable.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. occupied tetrads for year</i>	9	4	11	14	4	10	7	7

Sites - Pochard records	Date(s)	Number	Observer(s)
Yetholm Loch (2 tetrads)	10-Apr to 18-Apr	1M	N Stratton <i>et. al.</i>
Lumsdaine	6-May, 11-May	1	N Hammatt
Hare Moss-Green Diamonds (Sel.)	10-May	1	K & P Weaver Fordyce
Cauldshiels Loch	10-Oct	1M	D Parkinson
Leadburn	27-Oct	1	AG Reid
Millar's Moss (St Abb's Head)	11-Dec	20	E Carnell (WeBS)

Ring-necked Duck

Aythya collaris LRC

Extremely rare vagrant from North America. First records in 2022.

Two birds. A total of 12 records were submitted of this **FIRST** for Borders, all at Yetholm Loch. Two female Ring-necked Ducks were found there on 16-Jan (**RJ**), with the finder's account on p. 228 and this was also covered in an article for *Scottish Birds* (Vol 43(1), p.64).

These two birds were well watched intermittently until 23-Jan and appeared to have left (**CDG et. al.**). However a single female was re-found on 17-Apr (**RJ, CDG**), staying until the following day (**NH et. al.**), which was almost certainly one of the January duo.



Female Ring-necked Duck (R), with male Scaup (L), Yetholm Loch, January (R Jackson)

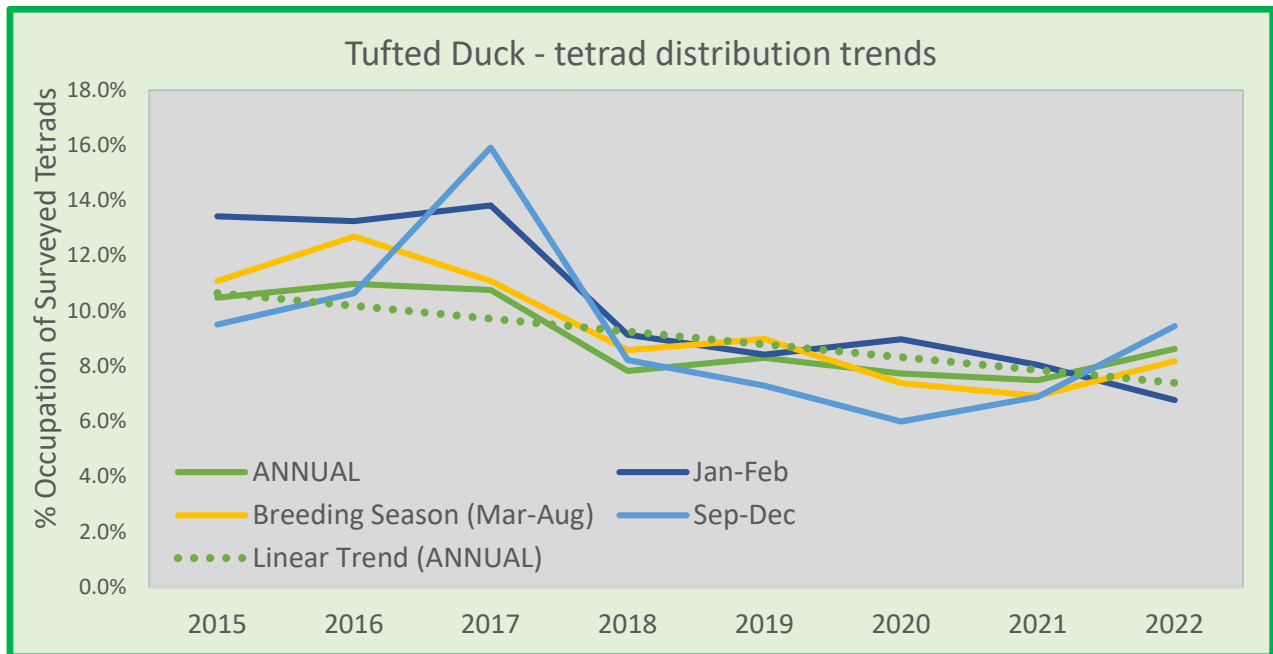
A further record of a female was also submitted from Yetholm Loch on 8-Aug (M Gladstone), but this was not substantiated.

Tufted Duck

Aythya fuligula

Increasingly less common breeder, including the lower reaches of the Tweed. Well-represented winter visitor, peaking November-December.

The distribution of Tufted Ducks has been in an apparent gradual decline (from the graph), although this is probably due to the larger number of tetrads now being covered away from waterbodies after 2017. A stable distribution, with little seasonal variation is the overall picture.



Tetrads with monthly peak counts of 10 or more and an annual aggregate count of 25 or more:

Sites/Tetrads - Tufted Duck counts	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
The Hirsell	46			15						17	110	125
Tweedbank-Abbotsford-Langlee	34	32	20	20	25	16			12	34	34	51
Hule Moss	84		49	37		10			40	25	16	
Yetholm Loch	48	16	20	20					38	47	12	25
St Abb's Head	16		32	35	47	17		21		16	18	20
Folly Loch	52	22	29	11	17			13	11			
Westloch (Portmore)									74	27	48	
Haining Loch (Selkirk)	18		22			32	20				12	18
Hare Moss-Green Diamonds			15	17	11		11	16	16			
Eckford-Wooden Loch (Jedburgh)			13	20								32
Tweed: Kelso-Coldstream												62
Synton Loch (Hawick)		12	11	18							11	
Cauldshiels & Faldonside Lochs										10		40
Bowmont Forest (Kelso)						11	15	17				
Burnmouth					24			12				
Portmore Loch			20	16								
Whitton Loch (Hownam)			20							11		
Williestruther Loch-Acreknowe Res				31								
Tweed: The Rink-Lowood												26
Total no. occupied tetrads	19	20	25	34	27	28	17	23	22	26	22	26
Agg. count of all peak counts	367	190	317	369	212	167	94	139	250	243	314	475

The highest count of the year was of 125 at The Hirsell on 3-Dec (A Spybey).

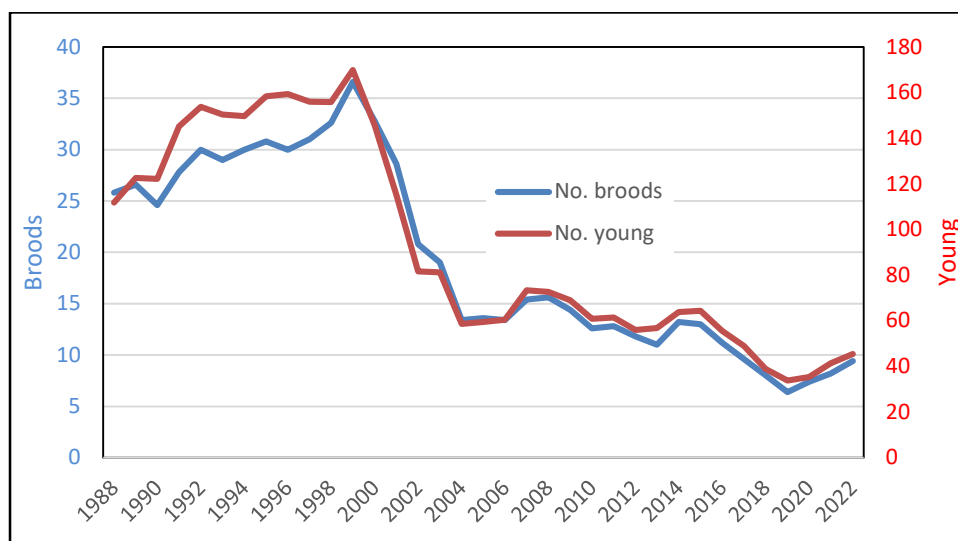
Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	26	27	11	12	21	19	25	37

Of the 37 tetrads that had breeding evidence, 29 were based on records of pairs. Only eight tetrads returned confirmed breeding evidence:

Site/Tetrad – Tufted Duck confirmed breeding	Date(s)	Br. Code	Observer
Abbotrule (Bonchester Bridge)	24-Jul, 4-Aug	2br10	A Cutter
Tweedbank-Abbotsford-Langlee	17-Jun to 7-Aug	1br13	AT Bramhall
Hare Moss-Green Diamonds (Selkirk)	15-Jul to 4-Aug	1br7	EL Bickmore <i>et. al.</i>
Bowmont Forest (Kelso)	24-Jul, 18-Aug	1br5	N Stratton
Ladyrig (Kelso)	3-Aug	1br5	M Moncrieff
Watch Water Resr-Rawburn (Longformacus)	7-Jun	1br5	M Holling
Synton Loch (Hawick)	13-Jul, 18-Jul	1br2	M Moncrieff, GP
Pot Loch (Selkirk)	6-Jul	FL	AJ Pearson

Breeding levels continue at a low level since the apparent ‘crash’ after 2000.



Tufted Duck: 5-yr running averages for no. of recorded broods and young, 1988-2022.

Scaup

Aythya marila

Scarce but annual passage migrant and winter visitor, usually in singles.

Seventeen records were submitted, coming from four tetrads, a fairly typical annual number. All are tabled. A photo of the January bird at Yetholm Loch is on p. 37, in the company of a Ring-necked Duck.

Sites - Scaup records	Date(s)	Number	Observer(s)
Millar’s Moss (St Abb’s Head)	8-Jan to 10-Jan	1F	C Hatsell, DKG, P Safford
Yetholm Loch (2 tetrads)	16-Jan to 22-Jan	1M	R Jackson, CD Green, CH
St Abb’s Head	25-Jan to 23-Mar	1	C Hatsell
Hule Moss	13-Sep	2	AP Mossop
Yetholm Loch	16-Nov	1F	R Jackson

Eider*Somateria mollissima*

Well-represented but declining along whole coast throughout the year, formerly abundant. Rare breeder with little evidence of success. Very rare inland.

Peak monthly counts per coastal section:

Coastal sections - Eider counts	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Dunglass-Pease Bay (W)	5	5						34			7	2
Pease Bay-Redheugh	8										4	6
Redheugh-Souter	16				2	9			1		21	
Souter-Pettico Wick	31				1							
Pettico Wick-Coldingham Bay	20	19	8	3	2	10			6	4	7	8
Coldingham Bay-Eyemouth	28							1	4	8		1
Eyemouth-Burnmouth	40	21	20	6	4			4	6	6	26	14
Burnmouth-Border	32		2	9		5	1	2	4	7	3	32
Aggregate of peak counts	180	45	30	18	9	24	1	41	21	25	68	63

The Rocky Shore Count (RSC), carried out on 23-Jan, had a total count of 147 birds. This is roughly comparable to the last ten years, but is only a fraction of the counts from earlier in the millennium. Yet again there were no signs of breeding.



Female Eider, Burnmouth, September (J Montana)

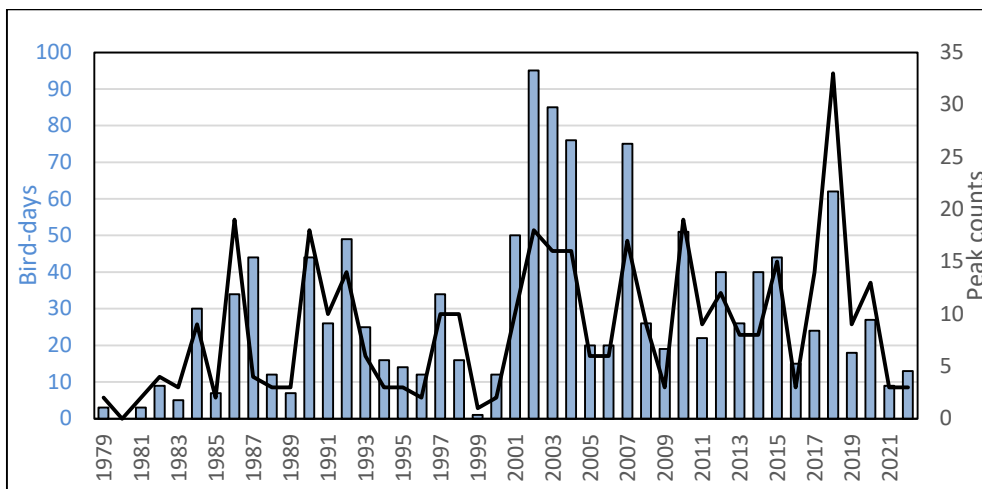
Velvet Scoter*Melanitta fusca*

Uncommon autumn (Aug-Dec) passage migrant to coast. Very occasional in spring. Two inland records.

There were 8 records submitted, one in the spring and 7 in the autumn.

Site/Tetrad - Velvet Scoter records	Date	Count	Observer
St Abb's Head	19-Jan	2	C Hatsell
Eyemouth	17-Aug	3	DK Graham
St Abb's Head	08-Sep	1	C Hatsell
Eyemouth	24-Sep	2	DK Graham
Eyemouth	29-Sep	2	R Drew
St Abb's Head	29-Sep	1	C Hatsell
Dunglass Bridge (Cockburnspath)	08-Oct	2	DK Graham
Eyemouth	20-Nov	1	R Jackson

The records for 29-Sep are here assumed to involve a duplicate count of one bird, so the estimated number of bird-days was 13, which is well below the average of recent years. The peak count of 3 was similarly below that of recent years, although being relatively scarce, the sightings are somewhat random.



Velvet Scoter: peak counts and bird-days, 1979-2022.

Common Scoter

Melanitta nigra

Well-represented late summer and autumn passage migrant and uncommon winter visitor to coastal areas. Rare inland.

Peak counts by coastal section:

Coastal sections- Common Scoter counts	J	F	M	A/M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Dunglass-Pease Bay (W)	57	30	21			5			2	32	
Pease Bay-Redheugh										4	
Redheugh-Souter	1						18	8			
Souter-Pettico Wick											
Pettico Wick-Coldingham Bay	9	15			41	157	22	43	14	86	
Coldingham Bay-Eyemouth						5				35	
Eyemouth-Burnmouth	2						83	54	3	10	
Burnmouth-Border	15						25	25	30	6	
Aggregate of peak counts	84	45	21	0	41	167	148	130	49	173	0

There was an inland nocturnal migration ('noc-mig') record with c.5 birds heard in the late evening, flying low over Leitholm (Coldstream) on 1-Apr (RJ).

This was another good year when viewed in terms of the annual total of monthly aggregates of peak counts. The highest count of the year was of 157 off Black Gable (St Abb's Head) on 19-Jul (CH).

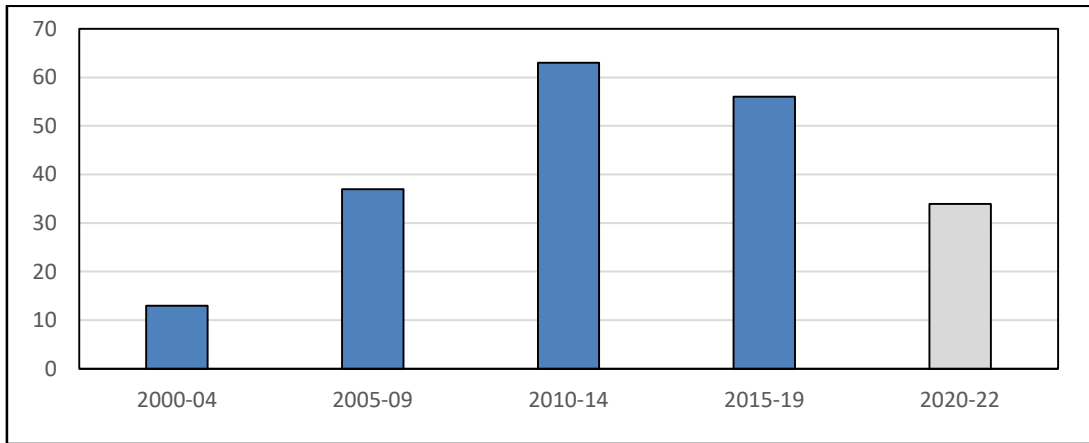
Long-tailed Duck

Clangula hyemalis

Very uncommon winter visitor and autumn passage migrant to coast. Rare inland.

There were 11 records submitted from just 4 tetrads, all from coastal locations:

Site/Tetrad - Long-tailed Duck records	Date(s)	Count(s)	Observer(s)
Dunglass Bridge (Cockburnspath)	2-Jan	1	DK Graham
Pease Bay	9-Jan to 22-Feb	1-9	G Paterson, DK Graham
St Abb's-Coldingham	22-Feb	1	G Paterson
St Abb's Head	18-Nov	1	C Hatsell
Dunglass Bridge (Cockburnspath)	27-Nov	1	DK Graham
Pease Bay	29-Nov	1	R Jackson



Long-tailed Duck: average bird-days for 5-year periods, 2000-2004 to 2020-22.

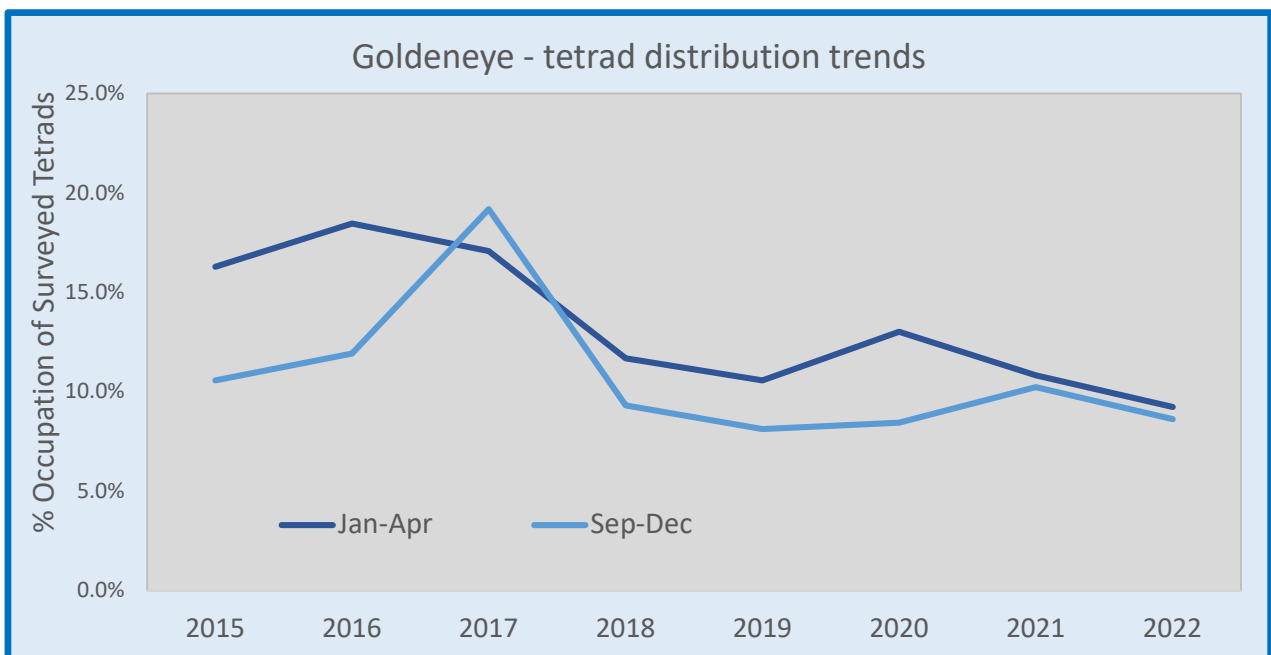
Goldeneye

Bucephala clangula

Common but declining winter visitor, October-May. Occasionally summers and has bred.

The winter distribution of Goldeneyes has shown a small decline in the % of tetrads occupied over the last few years, although this is most likely to be due to the greater number of non-wetland sites now being covered by observers, rather than any real contraction.

Historical data from past BBRs and WeBS show that, while recent years' counts have had fairly stable numbers, these are low compared with those of the 1990s. This may be due to more birds now wintering in Scandinavia and northern continental Europe, with generally milder winter conditions now the norm.



Peak counts of 10 or more:

Tetrads - Goldeneye counts	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Yetholm Loch	38	54	24	28							45	35
Tweed: Kelso-Coldstream	61	29	24									46
The Hirsell	51	38	20								20	30
Summerhope (St Mary's Loch)	24	22	13								11	25
Hule Moss	25	10	26								11	
Portmore Loch	19		16									
Tweed: Coldstream-Norham		19										14
Ale Moor Loch (Hawick)		19										
Redheugh-Souter	11											
St Abb's Head	11											
Tweed: Cardrona-Thornielee												11
Bowhill (Selkirk)		10										
Essenside Loch (Hawick)		10										
Synton Loch (Hawick)			10									
Total no of tetrads	42	36	30	21	2	0	1	0	2	23	20	31
Agg. count of all peak counts	327	277	208	93	7	0	1	0	3	55	146	228

It is assumed that none of the above records were fly-overs. There were only two records of fly-overs with a count of over 10: 26 off Eyemouth on 9-Oct (**GP**) and 11 at Westloch (Portmore) on 23-Oct (R Singleton).

The latest record in spring was of 4 birds at Westloch (Portmore) on 2-May (**RB**). The single record in July was of one bird at Hare Moss-Green Diamonds (Selkirk) on 19th (C Coombs).

The first record of autumn was on 7-Sep when an undisclosed number of birds were seen at Yetholm Loch (A Kelly). Two birds were reported from Mire Loch (St Abb's Head) on 9-Sep (**CH**).

Smew

Mergellus albellus

Increasingly rare winter visitor. Not annual, with the most recent previous records in 2019 and 2021.

Four records. All the records relate to a female ('redhead') bird on the lake at The Hirsell on 29-Dec, which stayed until the following day (**APM, CDG, DKG et.al.**). Although it couldn't be found on New Year's Eve, it did appear again a few days later, at the start of 2023.



Smew, The Hirsell, December (R Jackson)



Smew, The Hirsell, December (N Hinchliff)

This is the second year in a row with a single record and there have been 10 birds in total over the previous 10 years, although it is no longer reliably annual, which it was until 2007-8.

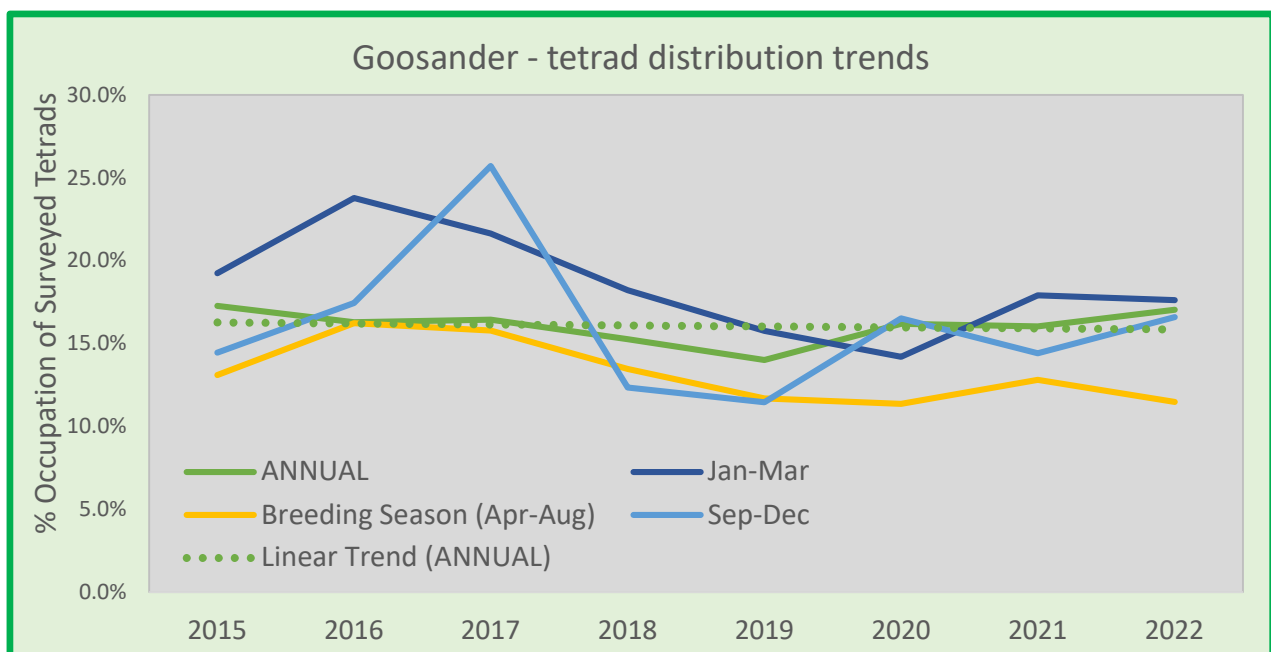
Goosander

Mergus merganser

Common winter visitor in October to May. Large winter roosts of hundreds of birds, but possibly decreasing. Locally common breeder along major rivers.

The overall distribution trend for Goosanders is one of stability, although seasonal distribution is a more variable, with winter distribution generally being more extensive than in summer.

The numbers present at most sites has also remained broadly similar to previous years, with the Tweed and Teviot rivers still the main centre of distribution.



Monthly peak counts of 10 or more, with an annual aggregate count of 20 or more:

Tetrads - Goosander counts	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Stantling Craig Resr (Clov.)	27		10	5					228	21		
Tweed: Kelso-Coldstream	20	33	21	34	31			5	42	40	16	44
Tweed: Lowood-Leaderfoot	14	9	6	10	12	13		11	21	5	7	18
Tweed: The Rink-Lowood	10			8	5	14	13	18	21	10	6	5
Tweed: Mertoun Br-Kelso	14	6	11		6			8	32	8	7	12
Teviot Haughs		9	9			12	12	23	5	9		
Tweed: Cardrona-Thornielee			20		16				15	5		11
Teviot: Eckford-Kelso							30			17		15
Cauldshiels Loch (Selkirk)									21	40		
Tweed: Thornielee-The Rink				7					38		5	6
Tweed: Peebles-Cardrona						11			26			
Westloch (Portmore)										28		
Teviot: Hawick-Ancrum Br			6						18			
Cappercleuch (St Mary's Loch)						21						
Summerhope (St Mary's Loch)							6	15				
The Hirsell											15	5
Total no of tetrads	52	34	61	56	41	21	19	19	47	48	36	38
Aggregate of all peak counts	205	114	191	163	123	95	101	136	537	251	108	160

The highest count for the year was of 228 at Stantling Craig Resr (Clovenfords) on 10-Sep (**GP**). Three-figure counts are rare and this congregation appears to be the largest seen in the Borders for some time. From July onwards, numbers can be inflated when including dependent juvenile birds, and contributors are asked to try to submit counts of adults only, wherever possible.

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. tetrads with confirmed breeding evidence</i>	4	9	12	7	15	20	13	11

In addition to the 11 tetrads with confirmed breeding (tabled below), there were a further 25 tetrads with probable breeding (mostly pairs in suitable habitat).

Site/Tetrad - Goosander confirmed breeding	Date	Br. Code	Observer
Tweed: Lowood-Gattonside	10-Jun	2br18	J Gordon
Tweedbank-Abbotsford-Langlee	24-Jun	1br13	AT Bramhall
Tweed: Mertoun Bridge-Mertoun House	19-Jul	2br11	A Cutter
Teviot Haughs (Nisbet)	23-Jun	br11	M Moncrieff
Eckford-Wooden Loch (Jedburgh)	02-Jun	br10	CD Green
Tweed: Millmount-Ravenswood (Melrose)	05-Jun	br8	J Gordon
Tweed: Melrose-Millmount	19-Jun	1br7	WeBS
St Boswells	26-May	1br5	A Cutter
Cardrona	20-May	FL	G Paterson
Selkirk	30-Jun	FL	A Aldron
Tweed: The Rink-Boleside	08-Jul	FL	A Aldron

See Introduction for breeding codes

There were a minimum of 13 broods recorded and 89 young. Over the past 15 years breeding records have shown an overall stability with annual fluctuations - possibly the product of variable observer effort.

Caution should be exercised when considering these figures. The mobility of this species and its tendency to aggregate young into creches makes counting problematic, especially the number of broods.

Red-breasted Merganser

Mergus serrator

Uncommon passage migrant to coast, September-March. Occasionally seen inland. Former rare breeder but no recent evidence of even summering birds.

There were a total of 28 records submitted, coming from locations between Dunglass and Burnmouth and there was an inland record near Lauder.

Site - Red-breasted Merganser records	Date(s)	Count(s)	Observer(s)
Dunglass Bridge (Cockburnspath)	2-Jan, 15-Jan	1-4	DK Graham
Pease Bay	9-Jan to 21-Feb	2-8	G Paterson <i>et. al.</i>
Burnmouth	9-Jan	1m2f	G Paterson
Eyemouth	19-Mar	1m	P Veitch
Harryburn House (Lauder)	20-Mar	1	R Catalano
St Abb's Head	6-Jul	3	C Hatsell
Eyemouth	17-Sep, 18-Sep	2-4	DK Graham
St Abb's Head	29-Sep	2	C Hatsell
Reed Point Offshore (Cockburnspath)	7-Nov	2	N Hammatt
Pease Bay	13-Nov	4	DK Graham
Black Gable (St Abb's Head)	18-Nov	1	C Hatsell
Eyemouth	20-Nov	1	DK Graham
Pettico Wick (St Abb's Head)	27-Nov	1	C Hatsell
Dunglass Bridge (Cockburnspath)	29-Nov	1f	R Jackson
Pease Bay	17-Dec, 22-Dec	1m2f	G Paterson
Burnmouth	25-Dec	1	R Manning
St Abb's-Yellow Craig	28-Dec	1	J Drew

The July record is only the fifth summer record in the past 10 years, with the other records conforming to the usual occurrence pattern. Overall numbers were up on 2021, although these are highly variable due to changing observer effort and the weather patterns affecting offshore passage.

Red Grouse

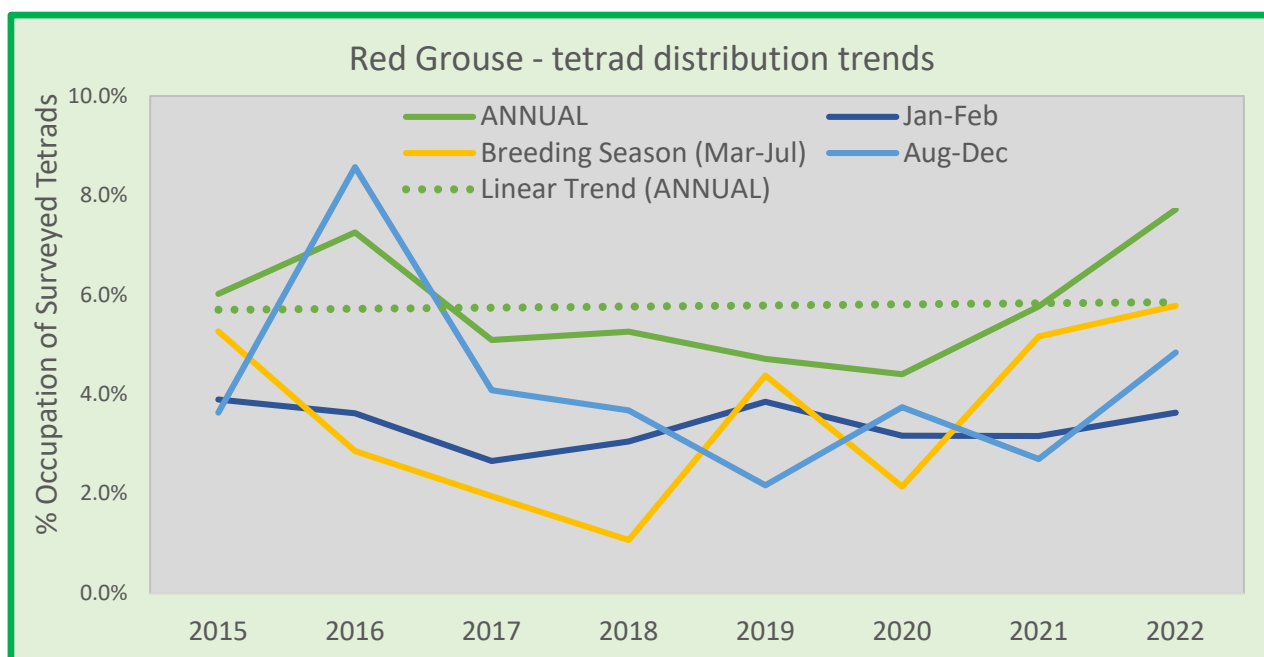
Lagopus lagopus

Common breeding resident of heather moorland. Especially numerous in northern hills where moors are actively managed for shoots. Hard-weather movements can drive birds into unusual habitats.

The distribution trends for Red Grouse are rather erratic, probably mirroring, at least in part, the variable observer coverage in the mostly remote moorland sites, with access problems to some shooting estates.

The overall distribution trend is one of stability, although this masks the changes in seasonal occupation. The initial decline in summer occupation after 2015 now seems to have been recovered, notwithstanding the comments above on observer coverage.

The three-figure counts of 184 at Blackhopebyre (Glentress Water) on 19-Feb (**RB**) and 150 at Slipperfield (West Linton) on 10-Oct (B Gilmour) are unusual and the highest counts since 160 at Duddy Bank (Cranshaws) in November 2018.



Peak counts for the more popular tetrads, with at least 10 seen during the year:

Sites/Tetrads – Red Grouse counts		J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Moorfoot Hills	Blackhopebyre (Glentress Water)		184	4	6	3	1		8		5	23	10
	Piper of Peebles Grave (Dewar Burn)	20		12	5	1							
	Kirknie Law (Innerleithen)			6		8	3						
	Weddelscairn Moor (Oxton)					11	3						
	Broad Law (Heriot Water)			2	6		5		Pr			Pr	Pr
	Bowbeat Hill (Glentress Forest)					6	2				4		
	Eshiels Hope (Glentress Forest)								11				
Lammermuir Hills	Hule Moss	9	5	11	5		1		10	2	9	6	10
	Buckholm (Galashiels)			6	10	2	1	2	2	12	4	6	5
	Watch Water Resr. (Longformacus)			23	3								7
	Nenthorn House (Smailholm)	10											
Pentlands	Slipperfield House (West Linton)						5				150		
	Baddingsgill Resr (West Linton)				4					6			
Ettrick Forest	Eildon Hills-Dingleton	2			3		1		2	1		3	
	Birehope Burn (Clovenfords)		3		7						1		
	Darny Rig (Clovenfords)			6		1				3			
	Hunt Law (Tweedsmuir)					17							
Total no. of tetrads		11	5	14	22	15	11	2	8	5	13	10	8
Aggregate count of all peak counts		60	195	77	82	57	25	3	42	17	193	51	37

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	1	2	8	9	14	7	10	12

There were 3 tetrads with confirmed breeding and a further 6 with probable breeding (tabled below).

Site/Tetrad - Red Grouse breeding	Date	Br. Code
Broad Law (Heriot Water)	15-Jun	5NY
Killpallet (Longformacus)	29-May	FL

Site/Tetrad - Red Grouse breeding	Date	Br. Code
Hule Moss	21-Jun	UN
Kirknie Law (Innerleithen)	24-Mar	P
Watch Water Resr. (Longformacus)	25-Mar	P
Horseupcleugh (Longformacus)	04-Apr	D
Scroof (Stow)	15-Apr	P
Birehope Burn (Clovenfords)	15-Apr	P
Buckholm (Galashiels)	17-Apr	D

See Introduction for breeding codes.

Black Grouse

Lyrurus tetrix

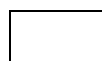
Uncommon and declining local resident on hill fringes, especially in Ettrick-Moorfoot area.

The distribution and numbers of this once reasonably common upland bird continue at their historically low ebb, although there does not appear to be much recent decline. The main lek sites are mostly surveyed annually, co-ordinated via the Southern Uplands Partnership, but other sites may be only rarely covered.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>actual no. of tetrads occupied</i>	13	13	14	14	19	18	13	19

The table below documents the highest counts each month at each site, although most sites will only have one record each month, at most.

Sites/Tetrads - Black Grouse counts	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Blackhopebyre (Glentress Water)				2		1						
Broad Law (Heriot Water)	8	4	12	7								
Buckholm (Galashiels)				6	6	3	2	2	3			4
Darny Rig (Clovenfords)				4								
Garvald Lodge (Heriot Water)			2									
Hawksnest (Stow)										2		
Leithen Water: The Ley-Colquhar				1	3							
Piper of Peebles Grave (Dewar Burn)				3								
Scroof (Stow)				1								
Sell Moor Hill E (Stow)	1											
Wull Muir (Heriot Water)			2					1				
Williamshope (Clovenfords)					1							
Damhead Shiel (Traquair)					2							
Fauldshope Hill (Ettrickbridge)			1									
Muckle Dod (Hawick)			1									
Stanygill Rig (Newcastleton)										9		
Fruid Resr (Tweedhopefoot)				1		1						
Riskinhope (Loch of the Lowes)					1							
Blackburn (Newcastleton)										1		
Total no of tetrads	2	1	5	8	5	3	1	2	1	3	0	1
Aggregate count of all peak counts	9	4	18	25	13	5	2	3	3	12	0	4



Moorfoot Hills



Ettrick Forest



Tweedsmuir Hills-Newcastleton Moors

The highest count of the year was of 12 near Carcant, Broad Law (Heriot Water) on 20-Mar (MB Ross).



Black Grouse, Moorfoots, April (A Cutter)

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	3	5	3	6	7	6	6	6

With the exception of one record of one bird on territory (Fruid Resr, Tweedhopefoot), all breeding records were of leks (probable breeding), mainly in the Moorfoots Hills and highlighted in blue text in the table.

Grey Partridge

Perdix perdix

Well-represented but declining resident of arable farmland. Spreads into hill areas in summer.

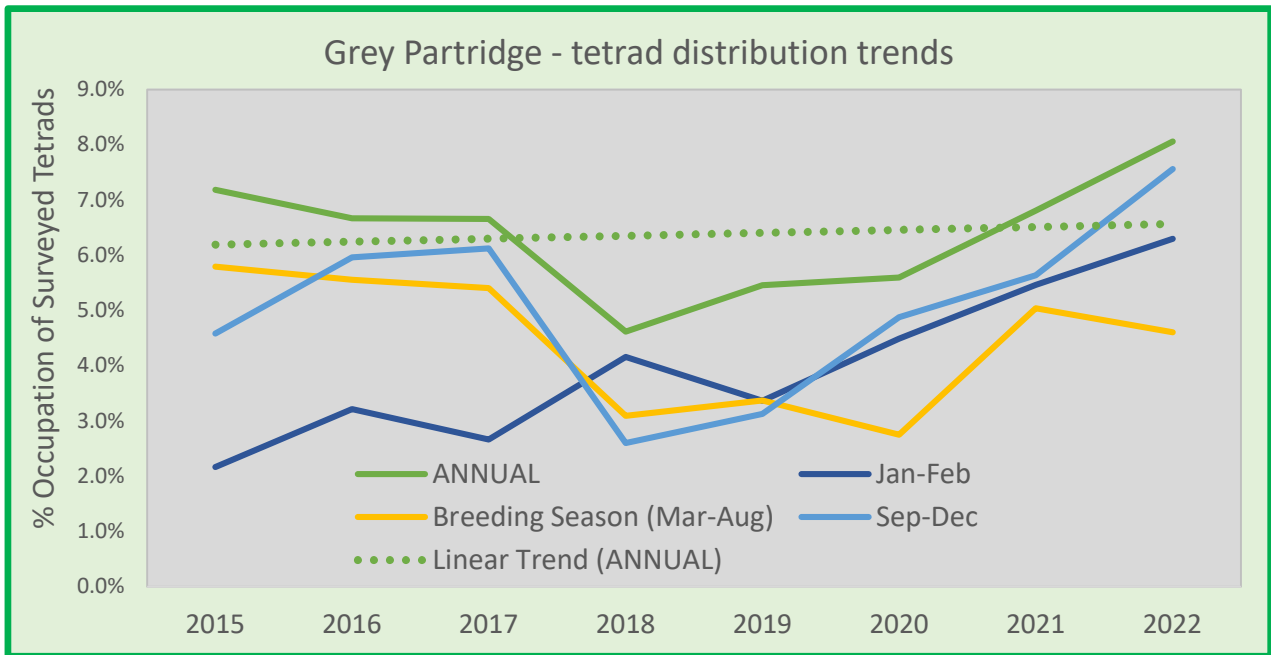
The overall tetrad distribution of Grey Partridges now appears to have recovered from a contraction of the range in 2018/19, leaving it broadly flat over the last few years. The breeding season distribution, however, has not recovered so well, although the winter distribution is more extensive than in 2015. As always, the true trend may be masked by changing observer behaviours and areas of coverage.

The highest counts in the year were at Heiton-Roxburgh with 26 on 1-Oct (**NS**), 23 at Birgham (Kelso) on 18-Oct (**RJ**), c.20 at Nenthorn Bridge (Kelso) on 29-Dec (**RM**), with coveys of 15 or more at Foulden-Clarabad, Hoselaw Loch (Yetholm), Prendergust (Ayton), Lurdenlaw N (Kelso), Sprouston (Kelso), Teviot: Heiton Mill-Teviot Bridge, Graden Moor (Kelso) and at Tweed: Banff Mill-Redden.

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	8	10	3	7	8	14	19	16

With the exception of one confirmed record, at Ednam (Kelso), on 23-Aug (**RJ**), all breeding evidence was for probable breeding in the form of pairs, and all records, except for one from Hundleshope (Manor Valley), came from the Merse, centred on Kelso. The majority of these were submitted by R Manning.

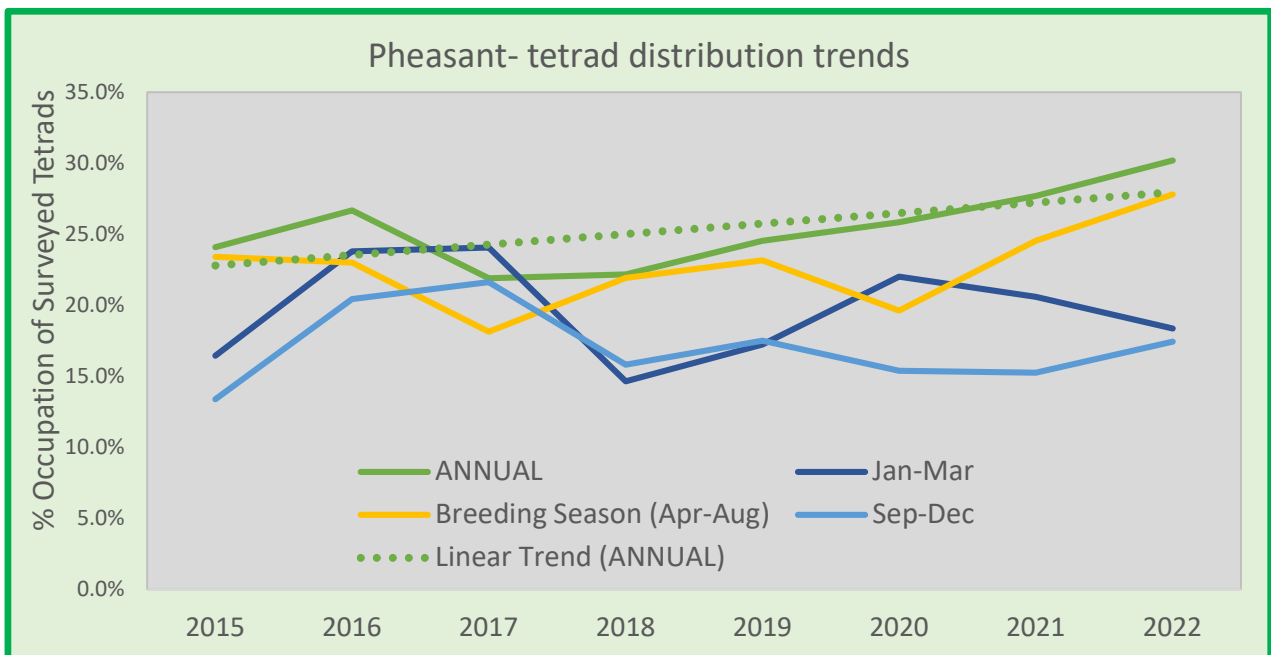


Pheasant

Phasianus colchicus

Abundant and widespread resident. Many birds are 'managed' by shooting interests with releases involving tens of thousands of birds.

The tetrad distribution trend is shown below, with a steady overall increase. The situation is dominated by the large release of birds for shooting, particularly in late Summer and this tends to lead to the highest numbers in autumn, although in more concentrated areas.



The highest counts were: Monteviot House (Ancrum) - 230+ on 7-Oct (**ELB**); Yetholm Loch S-Yetholm Pond - 200+ on 3-Sep (**CDG**); Gala Water: Torwoodlee-Bowland Wood - up to 150 during autumn (**AC**) and

Buckholm (Galashiels) - 80 on 28-Nov (also **AC**). The highest count in spring was 50+ at Elba (Abbey St Bathans) on 3-Apr (**RJ**).

It is difficult to read anything into these figures given the scale of commercial releases. Breeding evidence is not reported due to the difficulty in determining whether the breeding is in the wild or from pens.

Quail

Coturnix coturnix

Uncommon migrant with variable numbers, generally from April-September. Proven breeding rare with most records of singing males.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>actual no. of tetrads occupied</i>	28	10	7	3	7	13	13	17

Although not seen as a “Quail year”, records were from the greatest range since those reported in 2015. The first was comparatively early on 15-Apr at Gavinton (Duns), the last record, on 17-Aug, at Newmains (Reston), also being earlier to depart than the average. All records are tabled below.

Site/Tetrad - Quail records	Date(s)	Counts	Observer(s)
Gavinton (Duns)	15-Apr,15-May	1	A Mitchell
St Abbs-Coldingham	24-May	1	C Hatsell
Woodheads (Greenlaw)	03-Jun	1	AP Mossop
Newmains (Reston)	4-Jun to 17-Aug	1-3	DK Graham
Edrom (Duns)	08-Jun	1	AP Mossop
Cairneymount (Earlston)	13-Jun	1	J Gordon
Preston Law (Manor Valley)	22-Jun	1	AW Baker
Charterhouse (Smailholm)	24-Jun	1	R Manning
Dowlaw (Coldingham)	29-Jun	1	N Hammatt
Whitsomehill (Swinton)	30-Jun to 18-Jul	1-2	J Towill
Lurdenlaw N (Kelso)	04-Jul	1	R Manning
Cappuck (Jedburgh)	06-Jul	1	CD Green
St Abb's Head NNR	12-Jul, 22-Jul	1	J Green, C Hatsell
Billiemains (Chirnside)	23-Jul	1	S Jones
Linkim Shore (Coldingham)	11-Aug	1	R Jackson
Teviot Haughs	14-Aug, 15-Aug	1	S Turnbull

Although most were only detected as singing males, the only longer duration presence of multiple birds was at Newmains (Reston) and Whitsomehill (Swinton), which could both claim to have probable breeding.

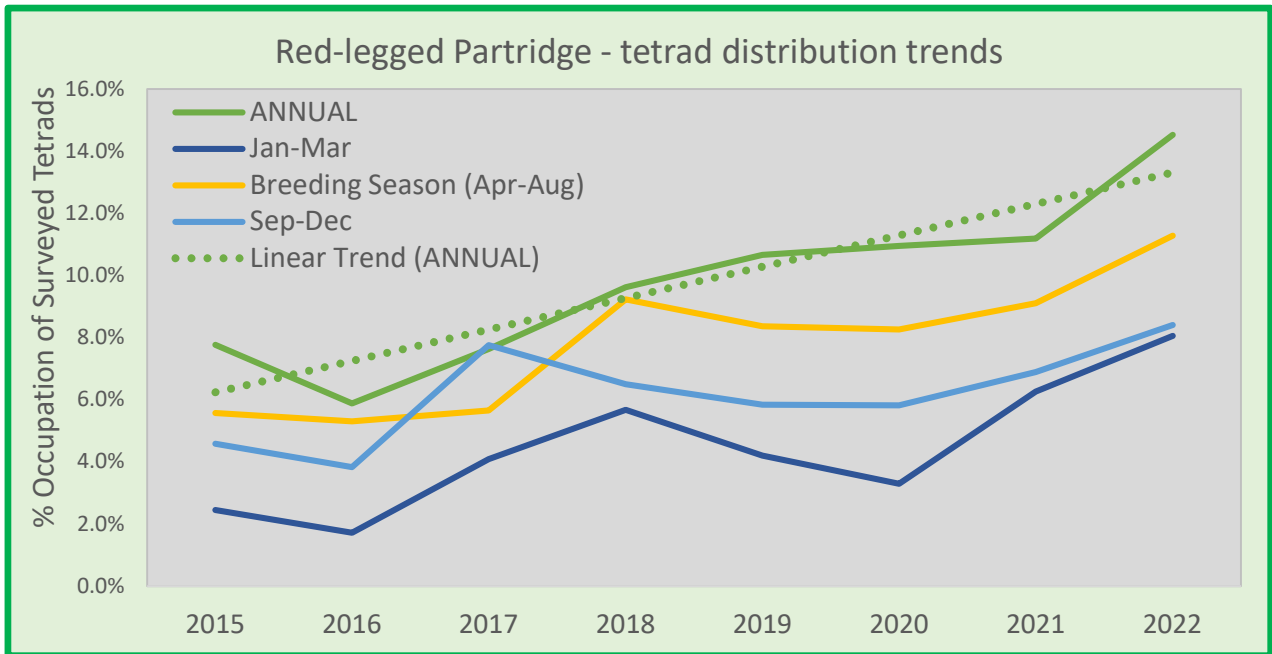
Red-legged Partridge

Alectoris rufa

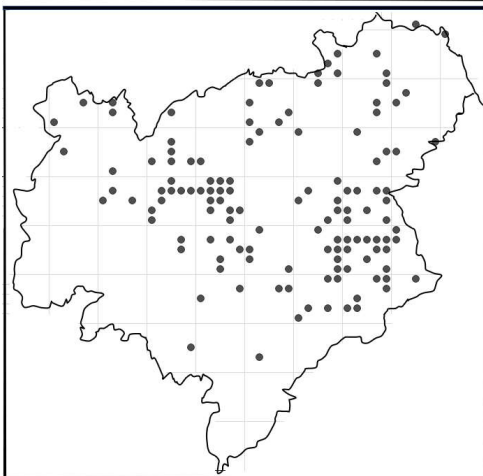
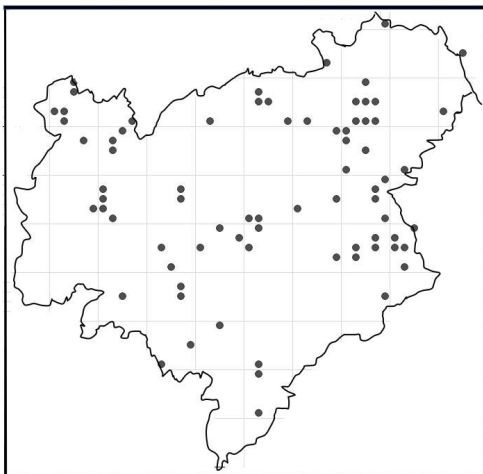
Formerly scarce and erratic introduced game species but now abundant due to releases for shooting, mostly in August-September. Only a few thought to breed.

The increasing trend evident with respect to percentage occupation of surveyed tetrads and counts is probably a reflection of the numbers of birds released by shooting interests and possibly of increased observer recording. This is also borne out by the contrasting tetrad maps over the last decade (below).

There was an extraordinarily high count of 150+ in the Yetholm Loch area on 27-Sep and, nearby, 24 at The Yett (Hownam) on the same day (both **RM**), with more normal counts of 33 at Eckford-Wooden Loch (Jedburgh) on 5-Jan (**CDG**), 21 at Teviot Haughs (Crailing) on 10-Jan, the same number at Elibank (Walkerburn) on 26-Oct and 20+ at Riddell (Lilliesleaf) on 11-Oct. Summer counts were all 6 or fewer.



Like Pheasant, many of the birds are released are held in pens, so breeding in the wild is difficult to determine and therefore no breeding numbers are reported, although confirmed breeding occurred at Ashiestiel-Peel (Clovenfords), Eckford-Kalemouth (Kelso) and at Bemersyde Moss in 2022.



Tetrads occupied by Red-legged Partridges, 2013 (top) and 2022 (bottom)



Red-legged Partridge, Torwoodlee, June (A Cutter)

Nightjar

Caprimulgus europaeus

LRC

Rare summer visitor. Formerly a very uncommon breeder that disappeared in the middle of the 20th century. Just a handful of recent records prior to 2022.

A survey involving nocturnal audio recording was successful in finding several probable breeding territories, including some new areas that had not previously been visited at night. Most recent years have only found single birds on territory, at best, so the records this year are a huge step-up in illuminating the status in Borders. Even so, this probably still understates the true position. The records are tabled below. Observers/Recorders were DK Graham, P Massey, AP Mossop, G Paterson and AG Reid.

Site/Tetrad - Nightjar records	Date(s)	Br. Code	Audio/Visual
Greenlaw Moor	3-Jun	S	Audio
Wauchope Forest – site 1	22-Jun to 4-Jul	P, T	Audio + Visual
Wauchope Forest – site 2	Jul to 7-Aug	T	Audio
Monynut Forest	9-Jul	S	Visual
Wauchope Forest – site 3	31-Jul	-	Audio
Wauchope Forest – site 4	23-Sep	-	Visual

A short article on the audio recording for Nightjars and the other species found is on p. 235.

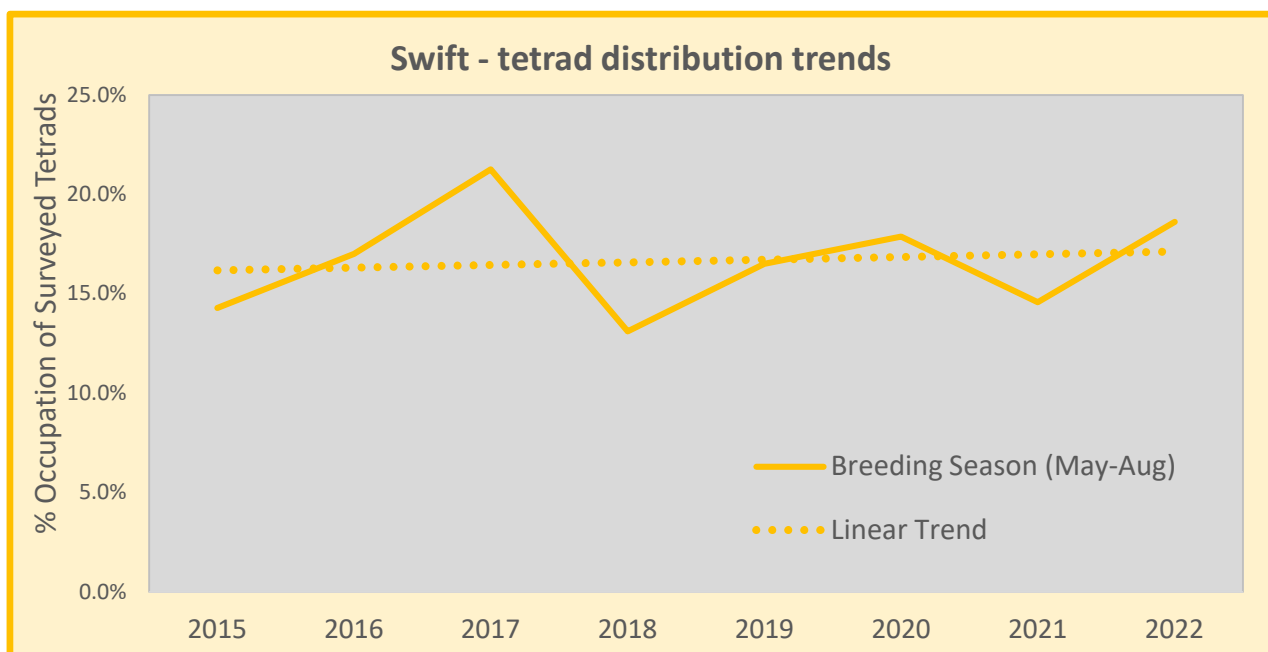
(Common) Swift

Apus apus

Common and widespread summer visitor. Present May-September, rare later.

The first sightings were singles on 5-May at Innerleithen and the following day at Tweedbank (both **ATB**). These are comparatively late; around nine days behind the recent average. Larger numbers were seen from 9-May onwards.

Reports during the summer breeding season showed that Swifts occurred in 124 tetrads (18.6% of the seasonal total), with a broadly level trend of occupancy since 2015. As a prominent species that particularly nests in human settlements, it is presumably well covered by observer records.



There were large gatherings over several areas during the year, with 285 at St Abb's Head on 22-Jun and 55 there on 19-Jul due to coastal movements. Large feeding assemblages were at Hawick - 50 and Whitsomehill (Swinton) - 50, both on 1-Aug; 45 at Tweedbank on 6-Jun and 45 over Kelso on 9-Aug, presumably feeding up prior to departure.

Breeding evidence: As usual, this is quite limited, with submitted records below.

Site/Tetrad - Swift breeding	Date(s)	Br. Code	Observer
Rigfoot (Longformacus)	10-Jul	FL	K Campbell
Leitholm (Coldstream)	30-May to 9-Aug	FL, N	R Jackson
Lauder	14-May	N	S Seeds
Netherbyres (Eyemouth)	17-May	N	F Evans
The Hirsell	20-May	D	D Parkinson
Roberton (Hawick)	23-May	D	S Taylor
Hawick	12-May	P	R Singleton

See Introduction for breeding codes.

The main departure was around 10-Aug, although there were small numbers recorded to the end of August and the first few days of September, with the last inland at Yetholm Loch on 2-Sep. The last coastal record was on the typical date of 12-Sep at St Abb's Head (K Blackmore).

Pallid Swift

Apus pallidus **BBRC**

Extremely rare vagrant to UK, mainly in late autumn. Only previous Borders record in 1999.

One record. During a large and unprecedented national influx, no fewer than four of these southern swifts were seen together between St Abb's village and the nearby Northfield Farm area of St Abb's Head NNR on 29-Oct (R Safford, CH, DKG). **To be submitted to BBRC.** These would be the 2nd-5th birds for Borders.

Roger Safford described the initial sighting: "There were 2 swifts over the village for one hour from 0945. Then 4 around ranger's office from 1630, watched with Ciaran Hatsell and others, including one of the morning's birds recognisable by a displaced primary feather".

Almost certainly these same four birds were seen further north along the coast at Dunbar in East Lothian the next day, again with the same distinctive individual with a displaced primary feather.

In addition, there was an unidentified swift species seen briefly over St Abb's Head lighthouse on 27-Oct that was most likely a Pallid (P Burns).

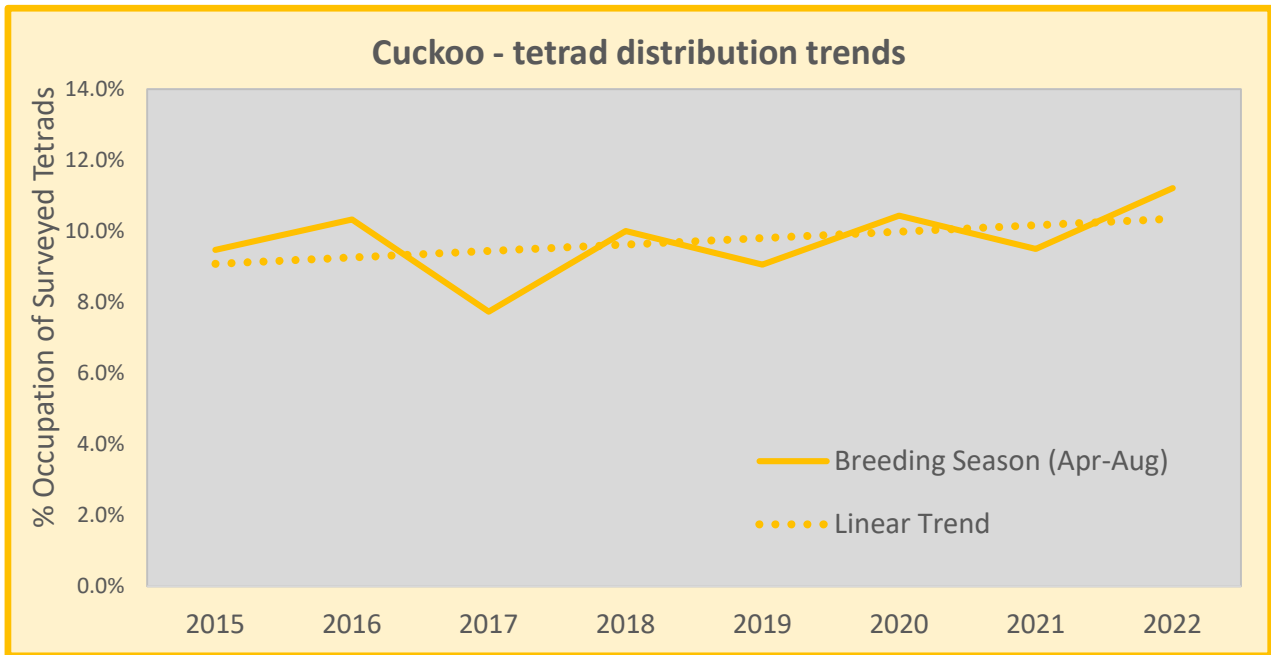
Cuckoo

Cuculus canorus

Uncommon and declining summer visitor to hills and coast. Mostly late April-July with a few juveniles to late September. One winter record.

The first Cuckoos were seen well inland at Hundleshope (Manor Valley) on 24-Apr and at Dawyck House (Drumelzier) on 26-Apr (both H Urquhart), these being typical arrival dates. The next was at North Esk Resr on 28-Apr (C Shepherd), with the widespread influx in the first few days of May.

It was reported from 85 tetrads (11.2% of the seasonal total), which are the highest figures seen in recent years (although only marginally). This suggests that Cuckoo distribution remains stable in Borders.



Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	13	12	12	15	31	35	42	38

36 of the tetrads with breeding evidence were calling males only, with just two tetrads recording anything more substantial. Confirmed breeding is difficult to obtain for this brood parasite.

Site/Tetrad - Cuckoo probable breeding	Date	Br. Code	Observer
Baddingsgill Resr (West Linton)	30-May	D	B Gilmour
Langton Edge (Duns)	20-May	T	F Evans

See Introduction for breeding codes.



Juv. Cuckoo, Dowlaw, September (N Hammatt)



Cuckoo, Leithen Lodge, May (A Cutter)

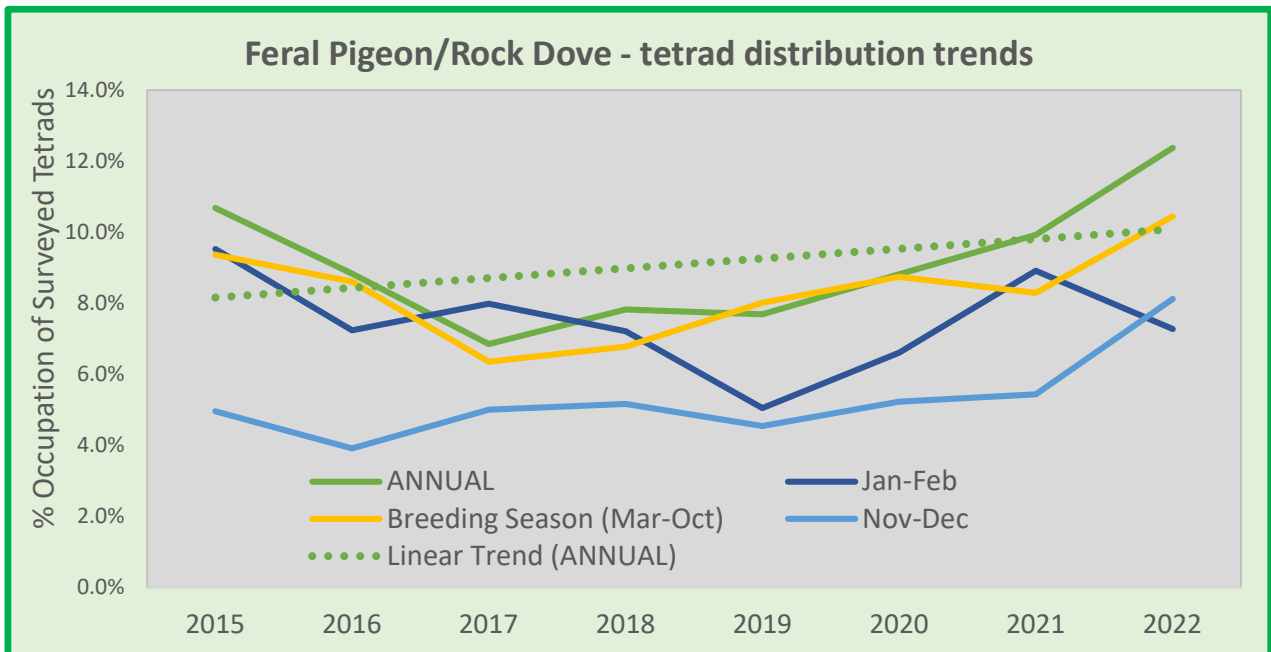
With no parenting duties the adults tend to depart early and the last adult record was on 9-Jul at Doorpool (Bonchester Bridge) (**AC**). After a gap, presumed juveniles were seen at Sprouston on 19-Aug (**KR**) and one lingered at Dowlaw (Coldingham) from 21-Aug to 10-Sep (**NH**), which is an unusually late date in comparison with other recent years.

Rock Dove/Feral Pigeon

Columba livia

Common resident breeder around settlements and coastal cliffs. Some flocks in late autumn-winter.

This common species still tends to be under-reported and is often dismissed as a 'trash bird', so any distribution trends, flock counts or breeding evidence needs to be considered within that context. The true Rock Doves that were present on the Berwickshire coast many decades ago, have long been genetically hybridised with released Feral Pigeons, such that no 'pure' Rock Doves now remain.



The trends above show that Feral Pigeons are stable within the region. There tends to be a reduced tetrad distribution in the winter months, coupled with the formation of larger flocks in these more limited areas.

The largest flock was at Harpertoun Farm near Houndridge (Kelso) with c.250 birds present on 16-Nov (**RJ**), followed by flocks of c.145 at Eyemouth on 20-Sep and c.135 on 9-Jan (**GP**). Similar sized post-breeding flocks of c.100 or more were observed between 2-Jul and 24-Sep at Tweed: Lowood-Gattonside, Blakelaw (Kelso), Teviot Haughs (Crailing), Eckford-Wooden Loch (Jedburgh), Yetholm Loch S-Yetholm Pond and Selkirk.

Breeding evidence was again limited, with probable breeding recorded in just 9 tetrads.

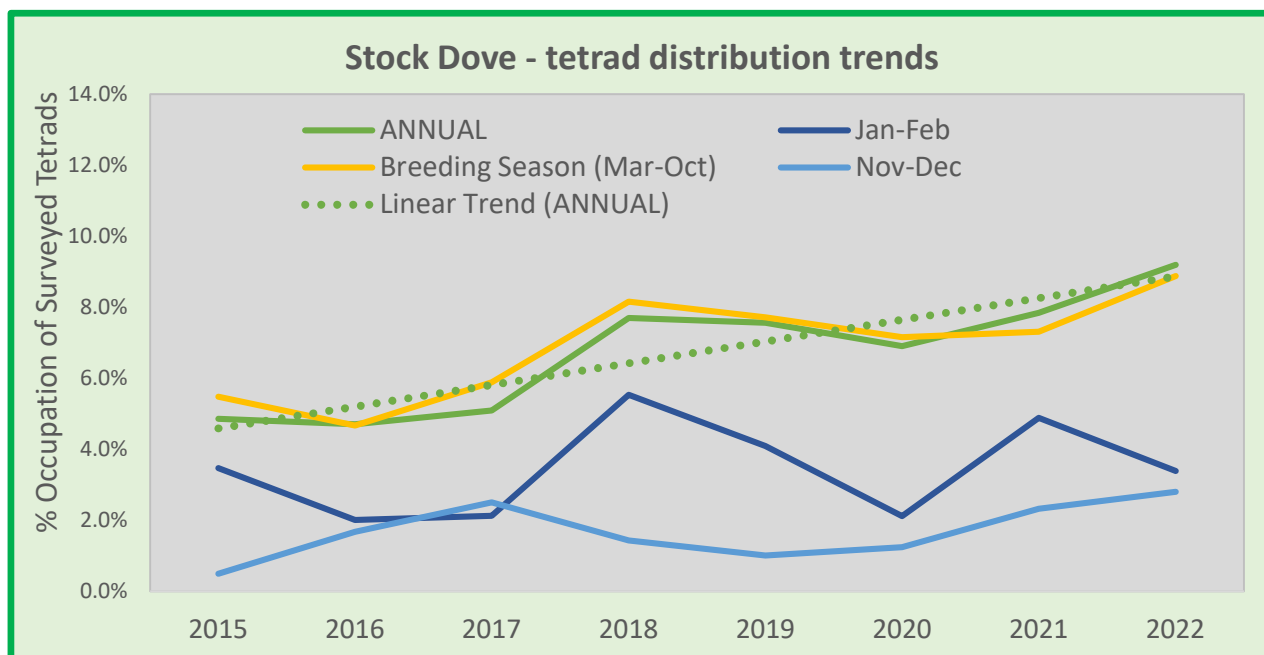
Stock Dove

Columba oenas

Common but localised resident breeder. Locally common in winter, usually in small flocks. Very much under-recorded.

Stock Doves appear to be steadily increasing their distribution over the past few years (see graph below), with 81 tetrads (9.2%) occupied at some point in the year, the majority of these (74 tetrads) during the long breeding season. Winter distribution is more limited. Whether this is due to some birds leaving the region, a greater concentration at a smaller number of sites, becoming more retiring in nature or reduced observer activity, or some combination of these factors, is difficult to say.

The largest flock was of 46 birds at Newmains (Reston) on 7-Jun (**DKG**), with other flocks of over 16 birds there at various times in the year. There was also a flock of c.40 birds between the adjacent tetrads of Ploughlands (Kelso) and Teviot Haughs (Crailing) on 19-Nov (**CDG, GP**). The only other flock in double figures was 11 at Eckford-Wooden Loch (Jedburgh) on 24-Mar (**CDG**).



Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	8	7	13	22	22	30	30	27

There were no records of confirmed breeding, 15 tetrads with probable breeding and 12 with possible breeding. This is a slight decrease on the previous two years.

Site/Tetrad - Stock Dove probable breeding	Date	Br. Code	Observer
Tweedbank-Abbotsford-Langlee	1-Apr, 9-Apr	I, N	AT Bramhall
Tweed: Mertoun Bridge-Mertoun House	10-May	N	A Cutter
Bemersyde Moss-Brotherstone (Smailholm)	17-Apr, 2-May	N	A Cutter
Ashiestiel-Peel (Clovenfords)	28-Apr	T	G Paterson
Eckford-Wooden Loch (Jedburgh)	24-Mar	P	CD Green
Plora Wood (Innerleithen)	27-Apr	P	G Paterson
Mountain Cross (West Linton)	12-Jun	P	G Paterson
Kirndean (Newcastleton)	17-Jul to 24-Jul	P	G Paterson
Rain's Hill (Hermitage)	31-Jul	P	G Paterson
Hermitage	15-Apr	P	R Singleton
Colislinn (Hawick)	24-Apr	P	G Paterson
Edrom (Duns)	28-Apr	P	T Brewis
Burnfoot (Hawick)	1-May	P	G Paterson
Steele Road (Hermitage)	22-Jul	P	G Paterson
Shankend Shiel (Wauchope Forest)	31-Jul	P	G Paterson

See Introduction for breeding codes.

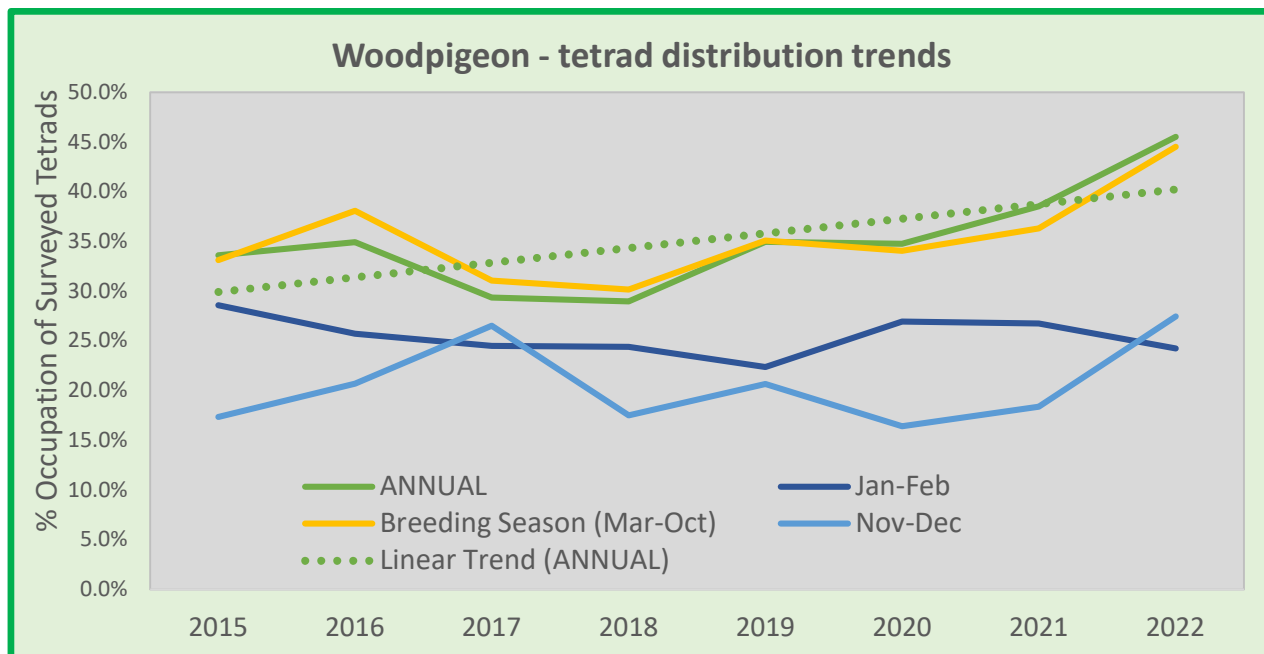
It is pleasing to see so many records of probable breeding in several tetrads to the south of the county, around Hermitage and Newcastleton, where there were no records in 2021 and only a few in 2020, although there were breeding records there at the time of the last atlas (SESA2) in 2007-13.

Woodpigeon

Columba palumbus

Abundant resident breeder. Some big winter flocks, but still often under-recorded

The number of tetrads where Woodpigeons were reported during the year reached 401 (45.5%), suggesting that this species continues to spread or, at least, remain stable in its distribution, particularly during the breeding season. Like its congeners it is relatively less reported in the winter months.



The highest flock count was 1200 at Dowlaw (Coldingham) on 15-Apr (**NH**). This is lower than other recent peak counts, but is probably not too significant.

2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
450	2,500	4,500	500	830	1,250	1,500	7,430	4,500	1,200

Woodpigeon - Annual peak counts 2013-2022

The other sites with large flocks are tabled below, with a wide spread of sites involved. Most were in the winter months (Nov-Feb), with some in spring.

Site/Tetrad - Woodpigeon peak counts	Date	Number	Observer
Dowlaw (Coldingham)	15-Apr	1200	N Hammatt
Foulden-Clarabad	4-Jan	800+	AP Mossop
Burnmouth	16-Apr	800	N Hammatt
Burnmouth	6-May	700	N Hammatt
Whitsomehill (Swinton)	14-Jan	700	J Towill
Cralaw (Westruther)	25-Mar	620+	S Kerr
Yetholm Loch S-Yetholm Pond	22-Jan	500	AT Bramhall
Chirnside Hall Hotel	13-Feb	c.500	G Paterson
Gamescleugh (Ettrick)	28-Nov	c.500	R Bramhall
Bemersyde Moss-Clintmains (Smailholm)	3-Feb	440	A Cutter
Whitsomehill (Swinton)	6-Jan	400	J Towill
Hendersyde Farm (Kelso)	25-Jan	c.400	M Moncrieff
Cairncross (Coldingham)	6-Feb	c.400	G Paterson
Harryburn House (Lauder)	19-Mar	c.400	R Catalano

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with breeding evidence	11	14	27	26	26	33	111	106

Breeding was confirmed in 10 tetrads, was probable in a further 45 tetrads and possible in 51. The step-up in reported breeding has continued and is to be welcomed, although with 371 tetrads occupied in the breeding season, even this high total probably under-reports the true picture.

Turtle Dove

Streptopelia turtur **LRC**

Rare summer passage visitor. Formerly a very rare breeder. Most recent previous record in 2015.

One record. A bird was seen, unfortunately all too briefly, at Newmains (Reston) on 17-May (DKG).

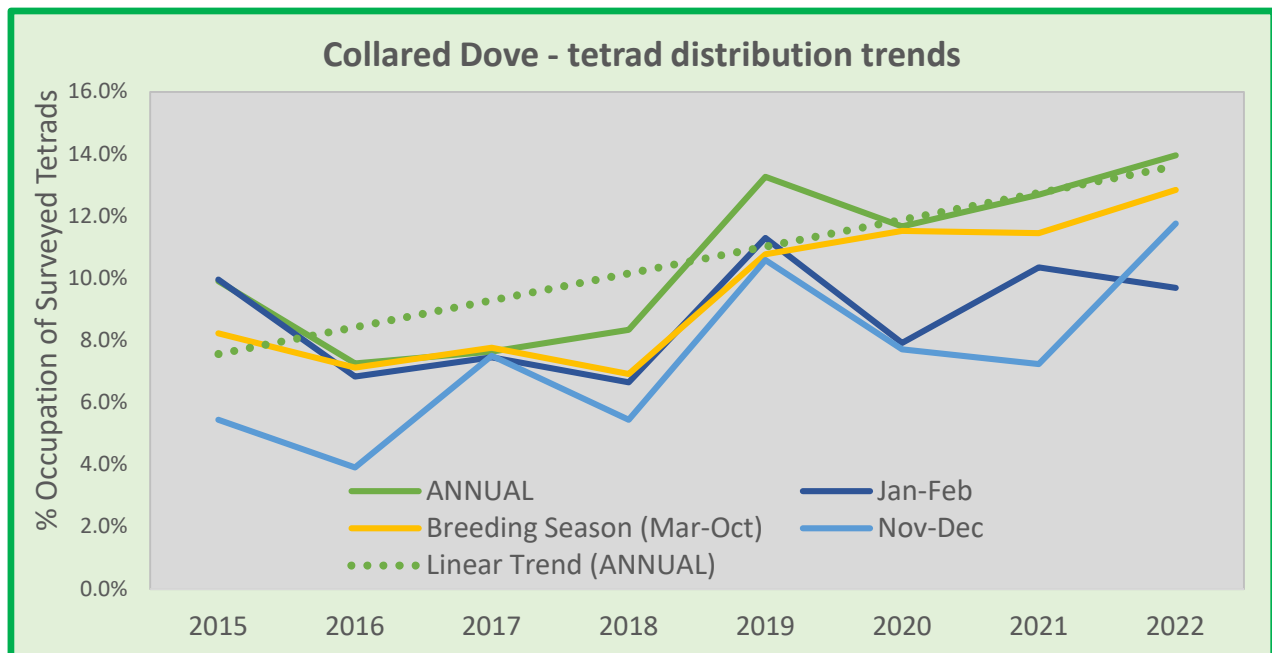
There was a long series of annual records in the Borders from 2003 to 2015, which included probable breeding birds in east Berwickshire from 2010 to 2013. With the species in sharp decline in the UK, occasional very scarce migrants would seem to be the best that Borders can expect from now on.

Collared Dove

Streptopelia decaocto

Abundant resident breeder, most often around human habitations. Some autumn flocks.

The rise in the distribution of Collared Doves seems to have continued in 2022 and across all seasons. The annual number of tetrads was 123 (14.0% of the total), which is the highest to date and c.70% higher than the average from 2015-18. As with the other pigeons and doves, it is recorded in fewer locations in winter, although it generally forms smaller flocks than Woodpigeons.



The highest counts were at St. Boswell's, with a peak of 46 on 14-Oct (MM) and fairly consistently between 17 and 32 on other dates in September-October. There were also 32 at Innerleithen on 5-Nov (RB) and up to 27 at Newmains (Reston) during the autumn. The only other counts over 15 were at Teviot Haughs (Nisbet) - 23 on 22-Oct; Heiton-Roxburgh - 23 on 27-Oct and Anton's Hill (Coldstream) - 16 on 12-Dec. All these counts were in autumn-early winter; the only spring count over 10 was of 12 at Dowlaw (Coldingham) on 12-May.

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	5	6	6	13	19	15	34	32

The only confirmed breeding record was in Peebles, with fledged young on 28-May (AGR). There were a further 18 tetrads with probable breeding and 13 with possible breeding.

Water Rail*Rallus aquaticus*

Scarce and secretive resident of basin mires. May move away in winter. Previous dedicated surveys suggest larger hidden population than once thought. Scarce passage migrant April and Sep-Nov.



Water Rail, Bemersyde Moss, May (A Cutter)

There was another large step-up in records to 124 (up from 69 in 2021 and 46 in 2020), from 30 tetrads (up from 19 and 13 tetrads respectively). Most records were between spring and autumn, but there were records throughout the year.

January-March: Found in 10 tetrads, mainly 1-3 birds heard at traditional sites e.g. Mire Loch, Yetholm Loch, Putts Pool in Plora Wood (Innerleithen) and Bemersyde Moss.

April-August: During the summer Water Rails were found in 19 tetrads. These included four unexpected tetrads in the Craik Forest and Leadburn Community Woodland, where calls were picked up on the nocturnal audio recorders set for Nightjars.

Breeding evidence: Breeding was confirmed at a remarkable 3 sites, with young birds seen or heard and, in one case, well photographed (see Photo Spot over page).

Site/Tetrad - Water Rail breeding	Date(s)	Br. Code	Observer
Bemersyde Moss	14-May to 25-Aug	A, FL	A Cutter
Folly Loch	31-Aug	FL	G Paterson
Putts Pool - Plora Wood (Innerleithen)	4-Jun	FL	R Bramhall
Cairneymount (Earlston)	20-Jun	A	J Gordon
Yetholm Loch	11-Apr	D	N Stratton

September-December: Still found in 17 tetrads in this period, most of which were the same sites as earlier in the year, although the first annual records for Cardrona Sewage Reedbed were not until December, in contrast to 2021 when birds were present throughout the year.



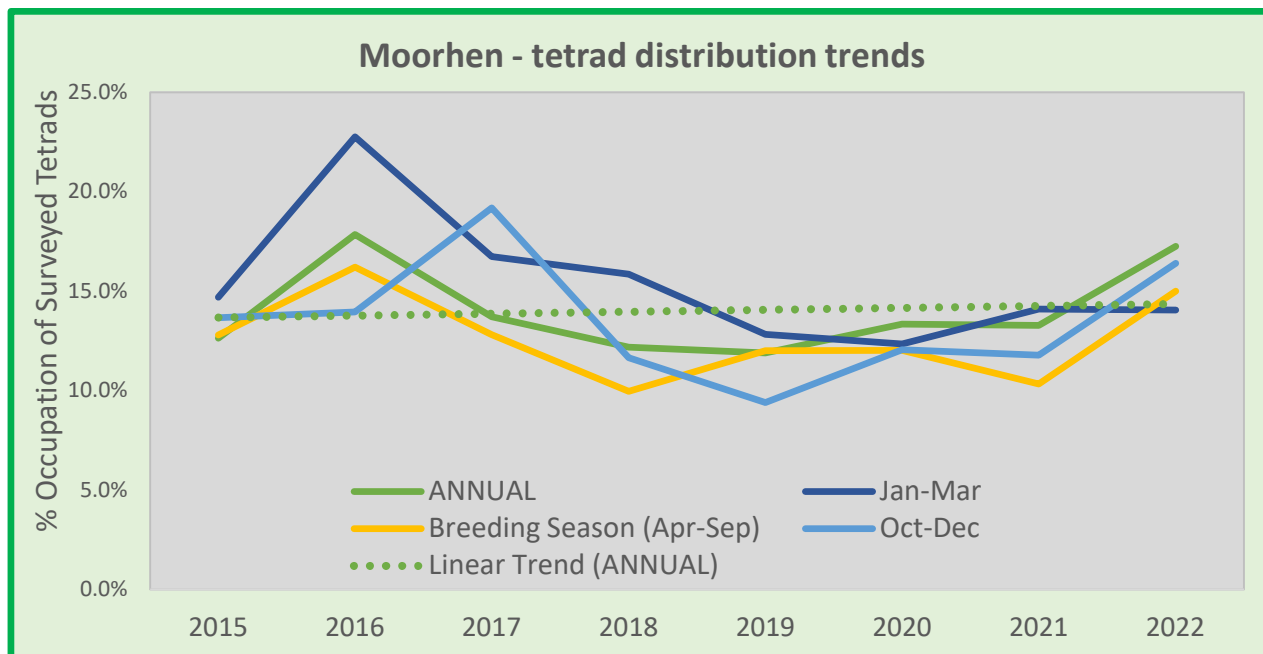
Water Rails in August (Juveniles) and December (Adult)

Moorhen

Gallinula chloropus

Common resident breeder of waterside habitats, with larger groups during hard weather at favoured sites.

The distribution of Moorhens remains broadly stable throughout the year, with little seasonal variation and has also remained stable over the past several years.



There were eight sites, tabled below, where there was a count of 10 or more at some point in the year, with a maximum count of 20 at Tweedbank-Abbotsford-Langlee on 29-Dec (GP).

Site/Tetrad - Moorhen peak counts	Date	Number	Observer(s)
Tweedbank/Galashiels Sewage Wks.	Several, Sept-Feb	Max. 20	GP, JG, ATB
Mellerstain House (Gordon)	14-Nov	19	MM
Putts Pool - Plora Wood (Innerleithen)	Several, Nov-Jan	18	RB
Yetholm Loch	2-Apr, 8 Aug, 2-Sep	Max. 13	DKG, M Gladstone
Haining Loch (Selkirk)	A few, Apr, Jul, Nov	Max. 12	WeBS, ELB, J Douglas
The Hirsell	20-Feb, 5-Nov	Max. 11	WeBS, APM
Bowhill (Selkirk)	23-Oct	10	GP
Langside Fm. - Mailingsland (Peebles)	8-Nov	10	GP

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with confirmed breeding evidence	13	14	8	15	14	15	15	23

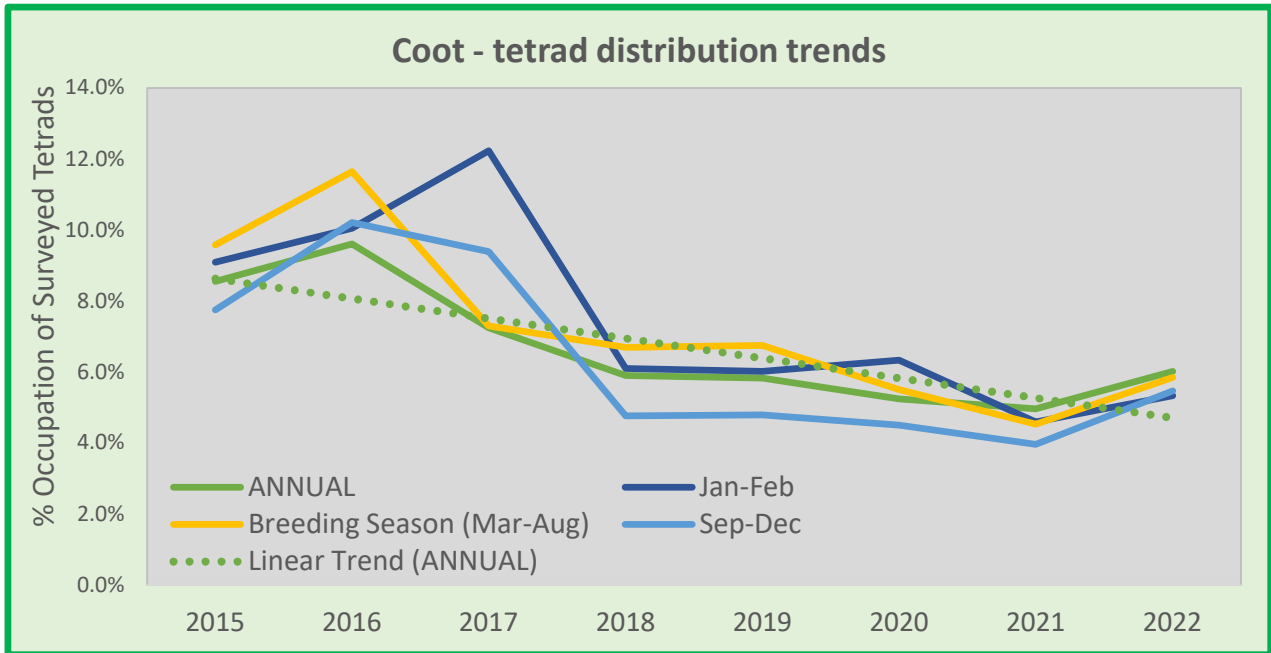
In addition to the 23 tetrads where there was confirmed breeding, there were a further 14 tetrads where breeding was probable. The distribution of breeding tetrads is generally on lower ground, as expected, and is evenly spread throughout all parts of the Borders, but especially the Tweed valley.

Coot

Fulica atra

Well-represented, but declining, breeding resident of still waters and more rarely slow-moving river margins. Some flocking in winter provides peak counts.

In contrast to similar water birds, there has been an apparent decline in the distribution of Coots, although there has been a small uptick in the last year. Waters suitable for Coot have always been well-watched, so this may be an artefact of more tetrads now being covered, rather than a real decline.



Similar to Moorhens, there is no significant difference in the distribution trends over the various seasons. Coot site counts continue to peak in winter months and they may temporarily desert some waterbodies in particularly icy conditions.

The highest count of 46 was at Yetholm Loch on 8-Aug (M Gladstone), with 43 still there on 3-Sep (CDG). In total there were 9 sites, tabled below, where there was at least one count of 10 or more.

Site/Tetrad - Coot peak counts	Date	Number	Observer(s)
Yetholm Loch	Many, all year	Max. 46	M Gladstone <i>et. al.</i>
St Abb's Head (Millar's Moss mainly)	Several, Mar, Jul-Oct	Max. 31	F Evans, CH <i>et. al.</i>
Gunknowe Loch (Tweedbank)	Many, Jan-Jul, Dec	Max. 21	RM, ATB, GP, ELB
Synton Loch (Hawick)	Many, Jan-Mar, Sep-Dec	Max. 15	J Douglas, GP, MM, ELB
Hollybush (Tweed: The Rink-Boleside)	A few, Dec-Mar	Max. 14	GP, MM
Hare Moss-Green Diamonds (Selkirk)	A few, Jun-Aug	Max. 13	MM, ELB, C Coombs
Ploughlands (Kelso)	3-Mar	11	R Manning
The Hirsell	4-Dec	10+	R Jackson
Eckford-Wooden Loch (Jedburgh)	13-Apr	10	N Stratton

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with confirmed breeding evidence	9	18	11	10	17	10	10	17

Probable breeding occurred in 10 further tetrads, so it is pleasing to see recorded breeding evidence in the majority of summer occupied tetrads (27 out of 47 tetrads).

Most of the main breeding sites were the same as many of the larger count sites. In central Borders these were at Gunknowe Loch (5+ nests, **ATB**); Wooden Loch (4+ nests, **CDG**); Synton Loch (4pr, **GP**) and Hare Moss (3 nests, **GP**), with St Abb's Head recording 3 nests on Millar's Moss and 2 on Mire Loch (**CH**).

Crane

Grus grus

LRC

Scarce, recently annual, vagrant in small numbers, most often in spring, but has wintered.

Two records. This is the sixth year in a row with at least one sighting.

The first was at Galashiels on 22-Mar, when two birds were seen flying NE over the town (M Lindsay). One of this duo was probably the same as that seen at Gladhouse Reservoir in Midlothian the same day.

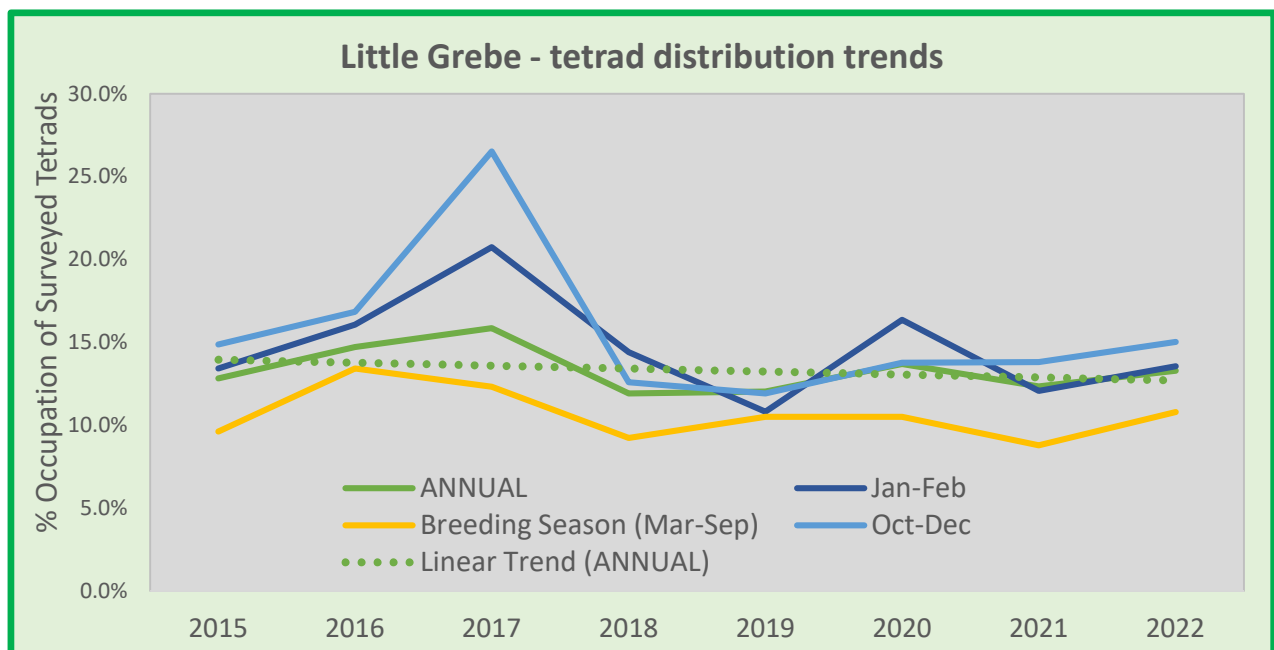
The other record was of four birds, a family party of two adults and two juveniles, at Hule Moss on 29-Sep (D Warden). These were reported (via Birdguides) on a stubble field at Rumbleton (Greenlaw) the following day, before flying off. On 1-Oct the same party was tracked at several points down the coast from Northumberland to Hornsea in East Yorkshire and then inland in the Lower Derwent valley on 5-Oct. It is possible this was one of the Scottish breeding pairs, moving back to the wintering area in Norfolk.

Little Grebe

Tachybaptus ruficollis

Well-represented breeding resident, with autumn assemblies. Wintering on rivers common. Most return to breeding waters from late February. Rare on coast in winter.

The overall distribution of Little Grebes has remained unchanged over the last few years, despite some fluctuations in the winter periods. Summer distribution is always a bit more restricted than in winter.



Like most recent years, The Hirsell has the largest congregations of Little Grebes, especially in the autumn months. This year's peak count there of 54 was on 6 Sep (**CDG**). This is the highest count recorded recently, with the next highest of 52 at Mellerstain (Gordon) in January 2017. There were still over 40 at The Hirsell on 6-Oct (**DP**) and over 20 there on 27-Nov (**RJ**). There were a further 9 sites, tabled below, where there was at least one count over 12.

Site/Tetrad - Little Grebe peak counts	Date	Number	Observer(s)
The Hirsell	28-Aug to 27-Nov	Max. 54	CD Green <i>et. al.</i>
Branxholme Lochs (Hawick)	10-Sep	25+	EL Bickmore
Cauldshiels Loch (Selkirk)	15-Dec	20+	D Parkinson
Fireburnmill (Coldstream)	24-Jul	c.20	K Robeson
Hare Moss-Green Diamonds (Selkirk)	15-Jul, 10-Sep	Max. 18+	EL Bickmore
Eckford-Wooden Loch (Jedburgh)	1-Feb	17	CD Green
Mellerstain House (Gordon)	14-Nov	16	M Moncrieff
Hendersyde Farm (Kelso)	5-Sep	15+	R Manning
Tweed: Broomlands-Whitmuirhaugh	24-Aug	13	K Robeson
Tweed: Banff Mill-Redden	11-Dec	13	WeBS

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	31	23	17	11	24	25	33	40

Of these 40 tetrads, there were 23 with confirmed breeding, 13 with probable breeding and 4 possible. The Tweed valley is the main concentration for breeding, but records extend throughout the region on lower waters.

Red-necked Grebe

Podiceps grisegena

Very uncommon passage migrant or winter visitor to the coast. Now not annual. Formerly summered and then bred in 2001.

Three records. This was the best year for Red-necked Grebe records since 2011, with **at least three birds seen** and possibly four. It follows a single record in 2021 and two in 2018.



Red-necked Grebe, Yetholm Loch, April (R Jackson)

The first was a summer-plumage adult at Yetholm Loch on 17-Apr (**RJ, CDG**). It was fleetingly in the same telescope view as a female Ring-necked Duck and a male Pochard!

Potentially the same bird was at The Hirsell for a few hours on 2-May (J Connor).

Two winter-plumage birds were then watched off Eyemouth on 19-Nov (**DKG**).

Great Crested Grebe

Podiceps cristatus

Scarce breeder, usually with poor success. Present mid-March to late August. A few birds on passage September-October on coast. Rare in winter.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of occupied tetrads for year</i>	9	8	7	10	7	7	6	11

A better year for recording Great Crested Grebes than in 2021, with almost double the number of records and tetrads, including 8 tetrads in summer (up from 4 in 2021), tabled below. The Haining Loch (Selkirk) still had the majority of records, and breeding was again confirmed there, with two successful pairs, fledging one juvenile each. Breeding was also confirmed at Essenside Loch (Hawick) for the first time.

Site/Tetrad – Great Crested Grebe summering	Date(s)	Br. Code	Observer
Haining Loch (Selkirk)	20-Feb to 11-Dec	FL (2br2)	Many
Essenside Loch (Hawick)	4-Apr to 18-Jul	FL (1br1)	MM, GP, MB Ross
Fruid Resr (Tweedhopefoot)*	19-Feb to 17-Apr	P, A	H Urquhart
Big Knock (Fruid Resr)*	17-Apr	P	S Hunt
The Hirsell	25-May	P	C Hatsell
Ale Moor Loch (Hawick)	22-Mar to 8-Apr	-	ELB, GP, R Watterson
Yetholm Loch	8-May	-	B Bell
Brawns Dod (Fruid Resr)*	3-Aug	-	D & M Thorne

* - records from the Fruid Resr area are probably referring to the same birds.

Perhaps due to breeding successfully, the birds lingered at Haining Loch for longer than in 2021, with both pairs around until 6-Sep, one pair and juvenile until at least 13-Oct and a single still there on 11-Dec.

There were further records at The Hirsell, with two on 18-Sep (A Spybey) and one present on 29-Dec (S Lyth). One was observed at Westloch (Portmore) on 14-Oct (B Kerr) and there was one on the Tweed near Kelso on 11-Dec (MB Ross).

Slavonian Grebe

Podiceps auritus

Very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor, mainly to coast. Not annual but has summered.

One record. A single bird was feeding off Eyemouth on 20-Nov, before flying off south (DKG). This is the third year in a row with at least one record.

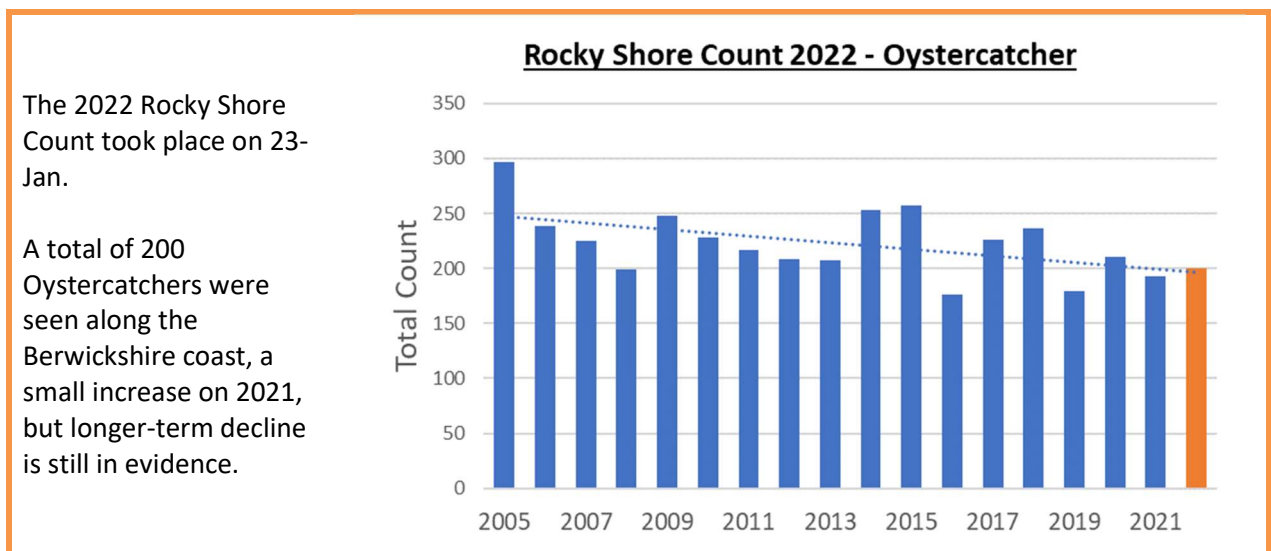
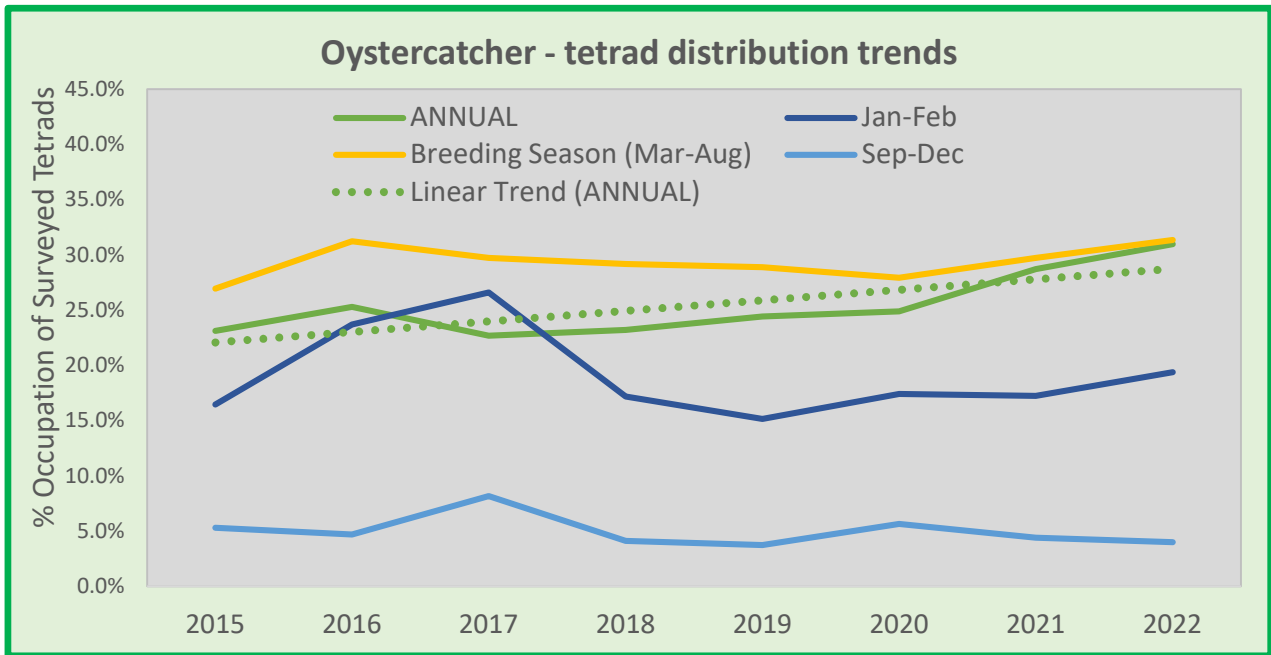
Oystercatcher

Haematopus ostralegus

Common widespread breeder. Abundant wintering population, mainly on the coast, many of which are birds from Iceland and Scandinavia, while local breeding birds overwinter around Irish Sea.

The overall distribution of Oystercatchers is dominated by the tetrads occupied during the summer breeding period, with many inland tetrads vacated during the winter months. Wintering in larger numbers is generally confined to the coast or along the Tweed/Teviot valleys. With Oystercatchers found in 273 tetrads (31.0%), which is the highest yet recorded, this remains a common and widespread bird in the Borders, with all the seasonal trends remaining broadly stable or increasing.

Flocks of pre-breeding birds assemble in certain locations (e.g. along the Tweed), before pairs disperse to their chosen breeding sites.



Aside from the Rocky Shore Count, the main peak counts were in February and March along the Tweed and at selected lochs and reservoirs, as tabled below, with all counts over 50 included. The highest number was 146 at Watch Water Resr (Longformacus) on 27-Mar (DKG).

Site/Tetrad - Oystercatcher monthly peak counts	J	F	M	A	M	J	A	S	O
Watch Water Resr (Longformacus)			146	86					
Tweed: Banff Mill-Redden	59	111	79	35					
Burnmouth	98					10	55	45	
Birgham (Kelso)	37	73	47	10					
Summerhope (St. Mary's Loch)		38	71	24					
Teviot Haughs	16	70	20						
Cammerlaws (Westruther)		52							
Stantling Craig Resr (Clovenfords)		34	51	46					
Eyemouth	33		32			14	19	51	
St Abb's Head						50			

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with breeding evidence	26	30	24	63	63	63	110	102

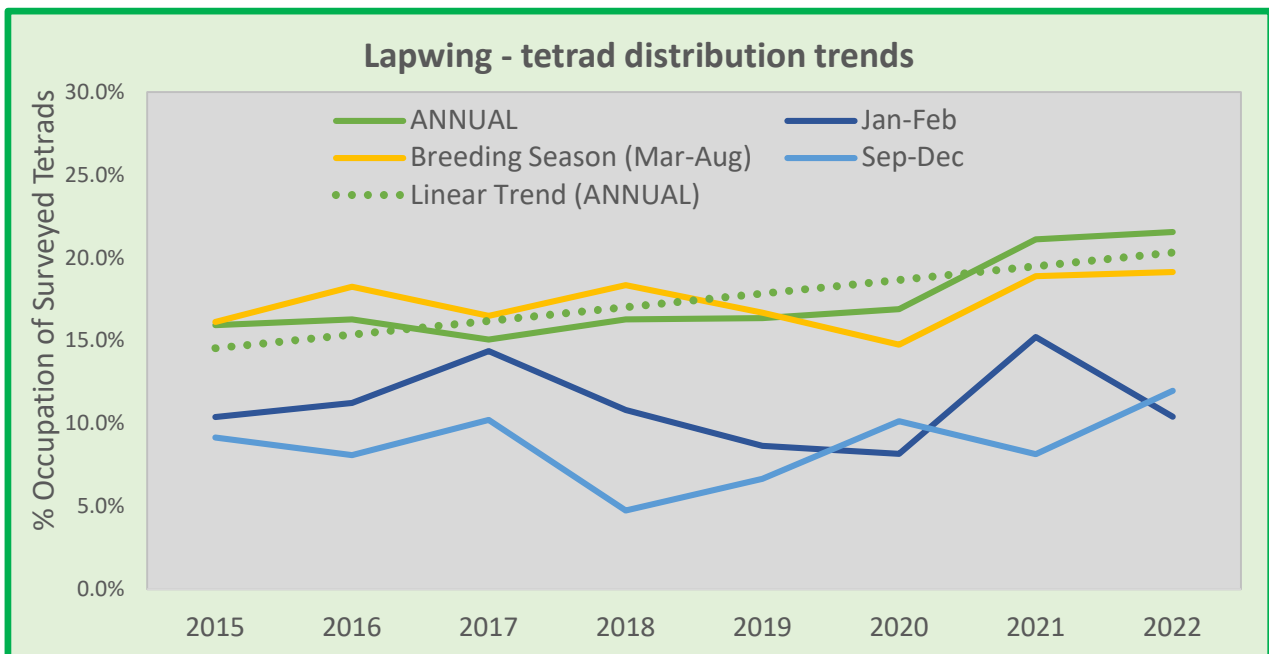
Although there was a slight drop in tetrads where breeding evidence was recorded, this is probably not too significant. There were 26 tetrads where breeding was confirmed, including several ringed chicks along the Leithen Water - Glentress Burn - Dewar Burn valleys. Probable breeding was recorded in a further 76 tetrads, spread throughout the region.

Lapwing

Vanellus vanellus

Common but declining breeding species. Many move south and west in winter and are replaced by abundant immigrants.

Overall Lapwing distribution has remained stable or increased over the past few years and the seasonal presence has also remained steady. Many of the summer Lapwings leave the region, particularly in a hard winter and those that remain are supplemented by an influx from other areas. and tend to move to lower areas and the coast, where larger flocks also congregate.



Most of the larger flocks occurred in the late summer and autumn period, perhaps reflecting the levels of inward migration from elsewhere. The highest count was at Newmains (Reston) on 18-Nov (DKG), which is similar to the peak flock size in 2021.

Site/Tetrad - Lapwing monthly peak counts	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Newmains (Reston)	98	50									340	
Scarce Rig (Portmore)									300			
Cammerlaws (Westruther)		100									300	
Folly Loch					165	280	176					
Tweed: Banff Mill-Redden				53	60	260	51					
Tweed: Broomlands-Whitmuirhaugh					210							
Rigfoot (Longformacus)				200								
Lochton (Kelso)						200	50					
Lynedale (West Linton)						200						

Site/Tetrad - Lapwing monthly peak counts	J	F	M	J	A	S	O	N	D
Teviot Haughs (Crailing)		50		60			111	134	180
Whitrig Bog-Westfield (Smailholm)		80					150		
Easter Deans (Portmore)							130		
Fireburnmill (Coldstream)					110	60			

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	22	23	32	32	24	32	52	50

This was another strong year for breeding evidence with confirmed breeding in 15 tetrads and further 35 tetrads where breeding was probable.

Site/Tetrad – Lapwing confirmed breeding	Date(s)	Br. Code	Observer(s)
Fruid Resr (Tweedhopefoot)	15-May	DD	H Urquhart
Mailingsland (Peebles)	11-May	ON	AG Reid
Ale Moor Loch (Hawick)	13-Jul	FL	M Moncrieff
Glentress Burn	2-Jun	NY	BRG
Blackhopebyre (Glentress Water)	12-May to 19-Jun	NY, ON, FL	BRG, A Cutter
Torfichen Hill (Heriot Water)	24-May	NY	BRG
Garvald Lodge (Heriot Water)	27-Apr to 9-Jun	NY	BRG
Broad Law (Heriot Water)	12-May, 15-Jun	NY	BRG
Raeshaw (Heriot Water)	1-Jun, 4-Jun	NY	BRG
Teviot Haughs (Nisbet)	14-Jul	FL	S Turnbull
Teviot Haughs (Crailing)	14-Jul	FL	S Turnbull
Upper Nisbet Moor (Ancrum)	28-May	FL	R Manning
Whitrig Bog-Westfield (Smailholm)	31-May	FL	A Cutter
Lurdenlaw N (Kelso)	23-May	FL	C Tees
Hule Moss	17-May	FL	AP Mossop



Lapwing, Buckholm, May (A Cutter)

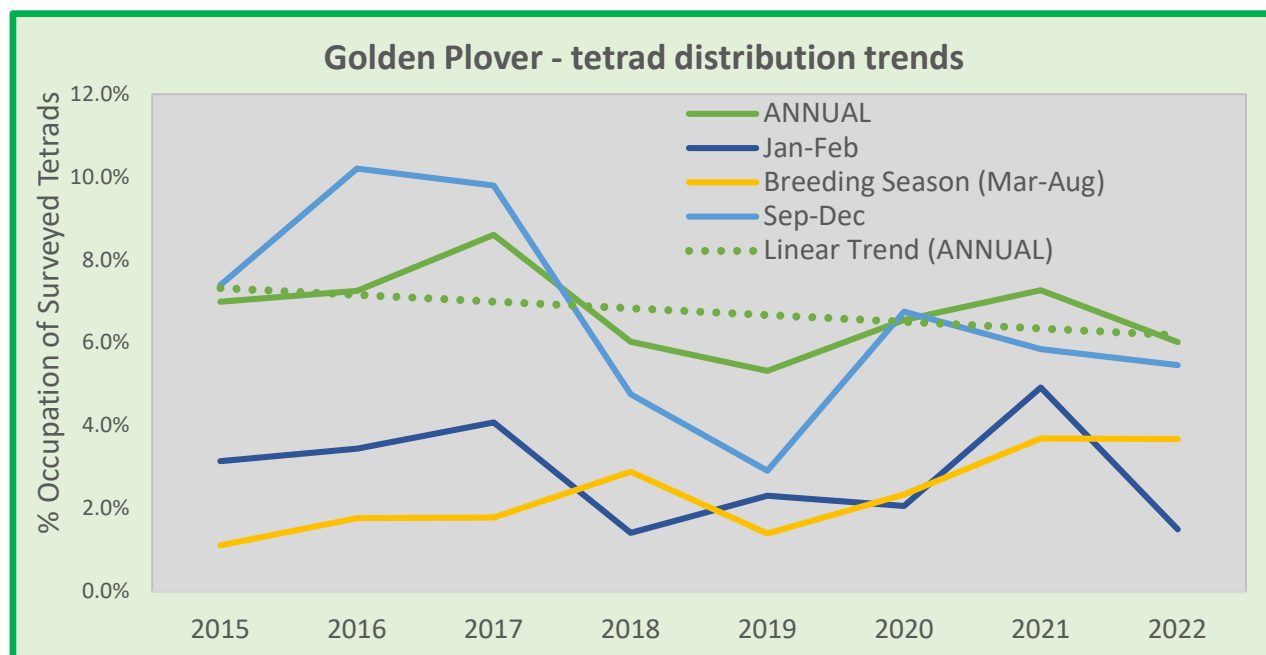
Golden Plover

Pluvialis apricaria

Uncommon and declining breeding species. Found mainly 200-400 m. Winter birds are locally abundant, swollen by immigrants.

The slow, but erratic, decline in annual distribution appears to have continued in 2022, although the proportion of summer tetrads does seem to be holding up, albeit on relatively small numbers. Distribution generally peaks in the autumn months and then falls off through the winter.

Upland tetrads occupied during the summer months are largely vacated in the autumn, with any incoming birds then occurring in new lower altitude tetrads. There was an almost total absence of records in the south of the region, which was not the case at the time of the last atlas (*SESA2*).



The peak counts were mostly in the autumn in the Whitrig Bog to Smailholm area. The highest count of 2000 birds was on 19-Nov at New Smailholm (MB Ross), which was substantially higher than the peak in 2021, although there were far fewer three-figure counts overall. All the monthly peak counts for the main sites (i.e. those with at least one count over 45) are shown in the table below.

Site/Tetrad - Golden Plover counts	J	F	M		S	O	N	D
Whitrig Bog to Smailholm (3 tetrads)		18	12			450	2000	
Raeleugh Head (Duns)		554						
Eckford-Wooden Loch (Jedburgh)						30+	300+	
Heiton-Roxburgh					50	200	275	
Teviot Haughs (Crailing)						121	228	
Old Greenlaw	200+							
Hule Moss						200+	8	
Haddenrig Wood (Kelso)			160			20+		
Hoselaw Loch (Yetholm)						120		
Brotherstone Moor (Earlston)						120		
Watch Water Resr (Longformacus)			90					
Cammerlaws (Westruther)							79	
St Abb's-Coldingham						50		27
Newmains (Reston)		45						

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	0	0	2	5	5	0	5	4

There were just two tetrads with probable breeding and two possible, with no confirmed breeding this year. The tetrads are tabled below.

Site/Tetrad - Golden Plover breeding	Date(s)	Br. Code	Observer
Watch Water Resr	25-Mar	D	S Kerr
Killpallet (Longformacus)	19-Apr, 29-May	T	AP Mossop
Birehopeburn (Clovenfords)	15-Apr	S	J Gordon
Big Knock (Fruid Resr)	17-Apr	S	S Hunt

Grey Plover*Pluvialis squatarola*

Scarce passage migrant, nearly all in coastal areas. Local movements in winter also apparent.

Four records. The records are detailed below; all are coastal in autumn/early winter, which is a typical picture for this wader. It has been annual in small numbers since 2008.

Site/Tetrad – Grey Plover records	Date/ No.	Observer
St Abb’s village	3-Sep (1)	P Safford
Killiedraught Bay (Eyemouth)	24-Nov (1)	R Jackson
Eyemouth golf course	19-Dec (1)	C Hatsell
Coldingham Bay	29-Dec (2)	D Bryant



Grey Plover, Killiedraught Bay (Eyemouth), November (R Jackson)

Ringed Plover*Charadrius hiaticula*

Very uncommon and decreasing breeder on river shingles, upland lochs and coast. Uncommon passage migrant to coasts and scarce in winter.

A total of 22 records were submitted, from 10 tetrads, an improvement on 2021, when there were just 8 records, from 7 tetrads. Probable breeding around Fruid Reservoir occurred for the third year running.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of occupied tetrads for year</i>	7	6	3	8	6	10	7	10

Site/Tetrad - Ringed Plover records	Date(s)	Number	Observer(s)
Fruid Resr (Tweedhopefoot) - 2 tetrads	20-Mar to 19-Jun	1-3 (P)*	H Urquhart, S Hunt
Millar's Moss (St Abb's Head NNR)	16-May	1	C Hatsell
Cowieslinn (Portmore)	28-Jun	1 (A)*	G Paterson
Dunglass Bridge (Cockburnspath)	20-Aug to 28-Aug	1-2	DK Graham, C Hatsell
Birgham (Kelso)	28-Aug	1	K Robeson
Mire Loch (St Abb's Head NNR)	5-Sep, 9-Sep	7	C Hatsell
Dowlaw (Coldingham)	8-Sep	12	N Hammatt
Pease Bay	8-Sep	2	C Hatsell
Coldingham Loch	8-Sep	1	C Hatsell
Dunglass Bridge (Cockburnspath)	27-Nov, 29-Nov	1-4	DK Graham, R Jackson

* - probable breeding recorded, see introduction for breeding codes

In addition to the observations tabled above the nocturnal audio recorder picked up Ringed Plover calls on five occasions between 12-Sep and 26-Oct, all at Eyemouth (GP).

Little Ringed Plover

Charadrius dubius

Scarce, but slowly increasing summer visitor and breeder along major river shingles.

This was the best year ever seen for Little Ringed Plover on almost all dimensions, but it remains a scarce bird that is still prone to disturbance, so site/tetrad details are not reported here. There has been a semi-regular summer presence in Borders since around 1995, although breeding was not confirmed until 2007 and there were no more than around three to four pairs thought to be breeding here by 2014.

The first returning bird for the year was seen on 21-Mar, which is the joint earliest arrival date, and within a few days pairs were already establishing their regular territories. The last sighting was on 8-Sep, with three birds, which is the latest departure documented to date.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>No. of occupied tetrads for year</i>	0	3	2	4	6	7	9	12
<i>No. of breeding pairs (minimum)</i>	0	2	1	3	5	5	8	16
<i>No. of hatched young (minimum)</i>	0	0	0	8	-	17	10	38

This species has been closely monitored by Steve Turnbull since 2020, which has undoubtedly improved the level of information about the species, especially around breeding success (or failure), as seen in the table above (in dark blue). Steve has contributed this summary of the breeding season for 2022.

Little Ringed Plover – Summary of Breeding Records Survey 2022

- Number of breeding pairs - **16**
- Number of breeding locations - **17**
- Number of nests - **21** (10 successful; 11 failed)
- Number of eggs laid - **78**

Little Ringed Plover – Summary of Breeding Records Survey 2022

- Number of independent young hatched - **28** (35.89%)
- Overall, the spring & summer experienced relatively little rainfall & was largely dry. This caused river levels to be unusually low for sustained periods which, in turn, resulted in an increase in areas of exposed shingle. This undoubtedly benefitted the breeding potential & consequential success for Little Ringed Plovers. The only substantial rise in river levels occurred during the last weekend in June, when three nests were flooded & failed.
- A long established breeding location that was partially destroyed during the breeding period in 2021 by unlawful shingle extraction, attracted a territorial breeding pair again this year. Unfortunately the level of disturbance by people & dogs has significantly increased at the location & the territorial pair subsequently deserted without nesting.
- Breeding Little Ringed Plovers are found throughout the Scottish Borders, although some apparently suitable locations have none. It is not yet certain that the breeding population is expanding (the increase in breeding records may be due in part to recording effort). Ground nesting species in a riverine habitat face significant & potentially existential threats, natural & human. In the Scottish Borders the species remains largely hidden from view.

Steve Turnbull
21 September 2022

Dotterel

Charadrius morinellus **LRC**

Rare passage visitor, mainly in spring. Most recent previous records in 2013 and 2020.

One record. A small party of four birds was seen briefly at Teviot Haughs (Crailing) on 13-Apr (ST).

Whimbrel

Numenius phaeopus

Uncommon spring and autumn passage migrant, mostly along coastal areas. Wintering exceptional.

There was a remarkable increase in records to 80 (22 records in 2021) from 19 tetrads. These were primarily along the coast, as expected, but some good inland records as well, most of which came from nocturnal audio recordings. Some of the increase was due to this observer effort, but surely not all, suggesting there was a strong passage of Whimbrels this year.



Whimbrel, Burnmouth, September/October (Left - J Montana, Right - R Jackson)

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of occupied tetrads for year</i>	3	7	7	4	6	7	8	19

Although wintering is generally considered to be unusual, the presumed returning bird was again present at Burnmouth in both winter periods. The first observation was on 22-Jan (**GP**), with intermittent records until 30-Apr (**DKG**). It apparently returned from 18-Aug onwards (**CH**), with the last record of the year on 13-Nov (**GP**).

There was just a single record of spring passage (of 2 birds), with a far more substantial autumn passage from 10-Jul through to 21-Oct, with the records summarised in the table below.

Site/Tetrad - Whimbrel coastal records	Date(s)	Number	Observer(s)
Linkim Shore (Coldingham)	22-May	2	R Safford
St Abb's Head	10-Jul	2	C Hatsell
Dunglass Bridge (Cockburnspath)	24-Jul	2	DK Graham
St Abb's Head	28-Jul	4	C Hatsell
Burnmouth	5-Aug	1	C Clark
Stockbridge (Cockburnspath)	8-Aug	1	A Kerr
Eyemouth	17-Aug	6	DK Graham
St Abb's Head	17-Aug to 12-Sep	1-9	C Hatsell <i>et. al.</i>
Dunglass Bridge (Cockburnspath)	20-Aug, 23-Aug	1-3	DK Graham
Eyemouth	23-Aug	1	D Bradnum
Dowlaw (Coldingham)	23-Aug to 10-Sep	1-4	N Hammatt
Coldingham Loch	8-Sep	3	C Hatsell
Eyemouth	17-Sep	1	R Jackson
St Abb's Head	29-Sep	1	C Hatsell
<i>Eyemouth</i>	<i>21-Oct</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>NAR (GP)*</i>

* - Results from Nocturnal Audio Recording carried out by Gavin Paterson.

Records away from the coast are tabled below. Overland passage appears to be more substantial than previously observed.

Site/Tetrad - Whimbrel inland records	Date(s)	Number	Observer(s)
Leitholm (Coldstream)	18-Aug	1	R Jackson
Teviot Haughs (Crailing)	25-Sep	3	S Turnbull
<i>Stichel Hill (Hermitage)</i>	<i>31-Jul, 1-Aug</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>NAR (GP)*</i>
<i>Whitrope Cott (Wauchope Forest)</i>	<i>31-Jul</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>NAR (GP)*</i>
<i>Stantling Craig Resr (Clovenfords)</i>	<i>31-Aug</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>NAR (GP)*</i>
<i>Ale Moor Loch (Hawick)</i>	<i>1-Sep</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>NAR (GP)*</i>
<i>Ashiestiel-Peel (Clovenfords)</i>	<i>3-Sep</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>NAR (GP)*</i>

* - Results from Nocturnal Audio Recording carried out by Gavin Paterson.

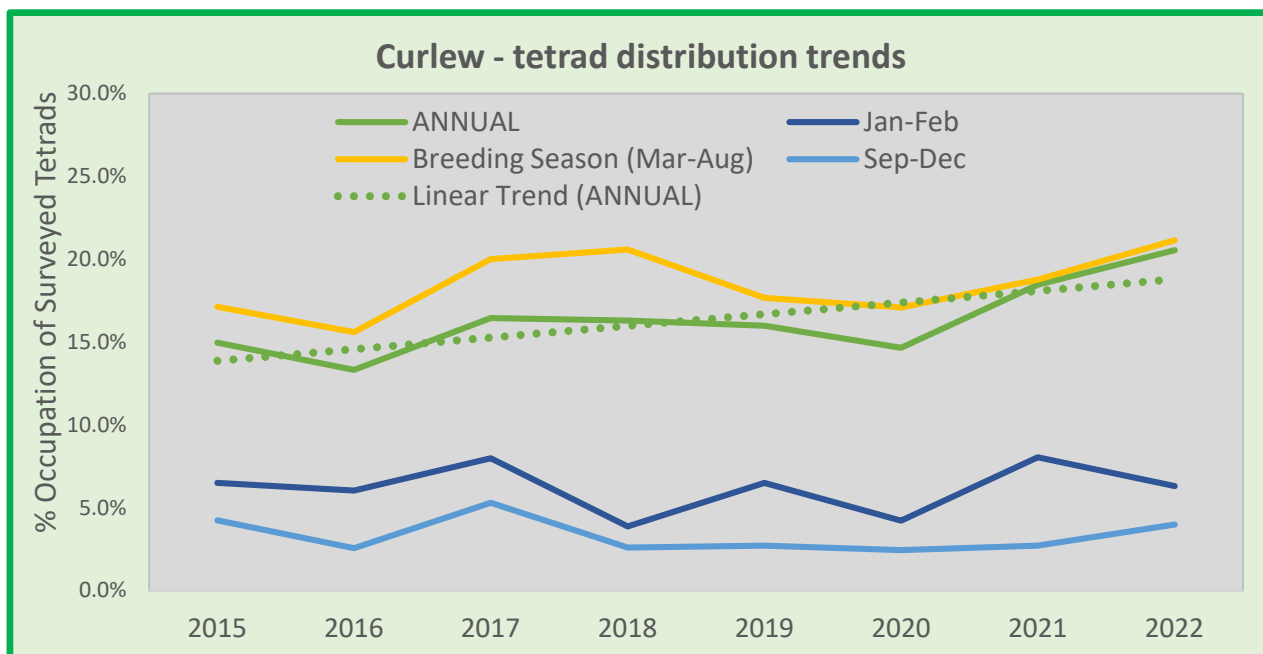
Curlew

Numenius arquata

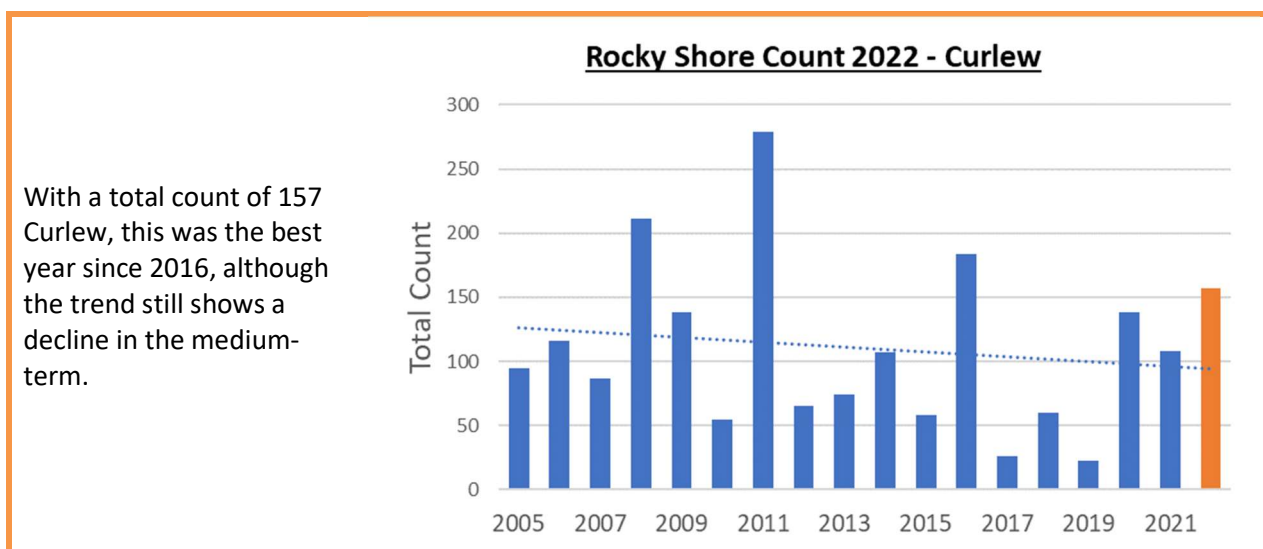
Common but declining breeding species. Less common along the coast in winter. Inland only from early March-June/July. Uncommon passage migrant in coastal areas.

Driven by an upward trend in observations in breeding season tetrads to 170 (21.1%), the overall annual trend is also positive, both reaching new peaks. This is probably as a result of better observer coverage in more remote areas, rather than any real improvement in distribution.

The distribution in winter, which is almost wholly coastal, remains steady, although evidence suggest that wintering numbers are in steady decline (see the Rocky Shore Count below).



The 2022 Rocky Shore Count took place on 23-Jan, with the following results.



With a total count of 157 Curlew, this was the best year since 2016, although the trend still shows a decline in the medium-term.

The table shows the monthly peak counts for the main sites (i.e. those with at least one count over 40). They have been separated into coastal sites (blue) and then inland pre-breeding gathering sites.

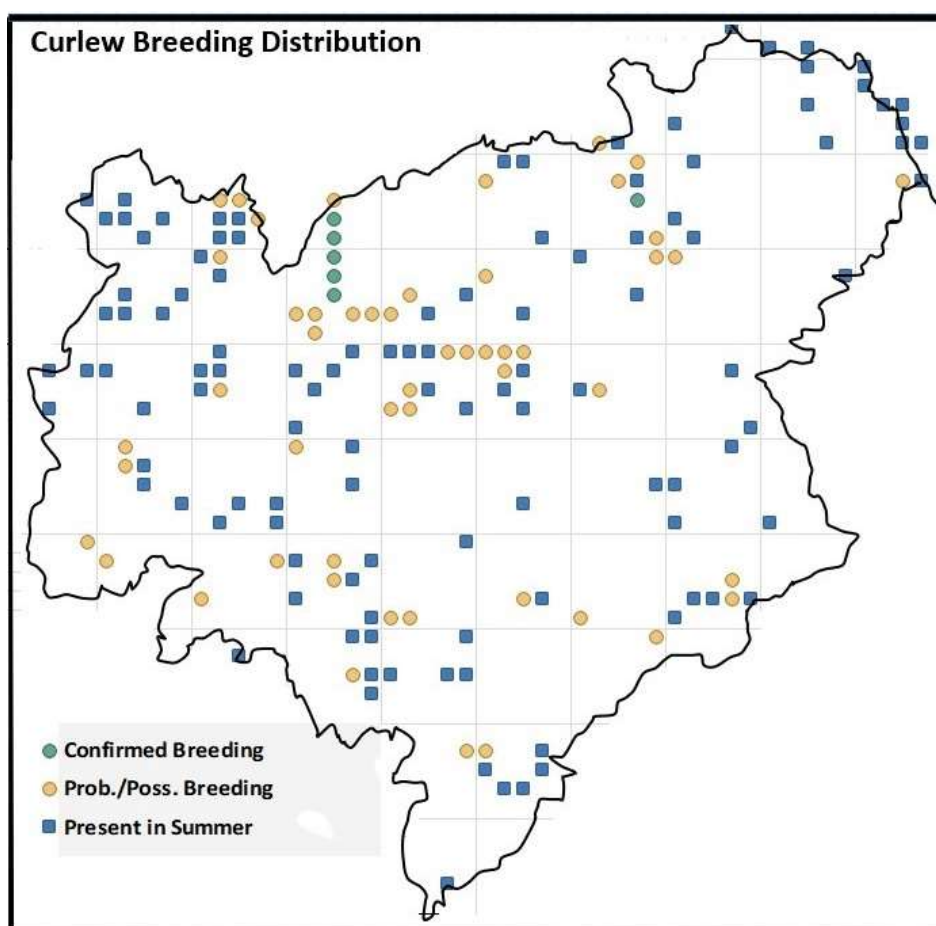
Sites/Tetrads - Curlew peak monthly counts	J	F	M	A	S	O	N	D
Siccar Point (Cockburnspath)	82			50				
St Abb's Head	55	59	58	72	82	39	33	
Pease Bay	30	27						81
Dunglass Bridge (Cockburnspath)		71		21				
Burnmouth	53				32	70		54
St Abb's-Coldingham	57		32	38+	30	32	42	49
Dowlaw (Coldingham)				55				

Sites/Tetrads - Curlew peak monthly counts	J	F	M	A	S	O	N	D
Traquair			70+					
Watch Water Resr (Longformacus)			61					
Torsonce (Stow)			56					
Caddonfoot (Clovenfords)			54					
Old Howford (Innerleithen)		39	50					
Stantling Craig Resr (Clovenfords)			44					

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	12	15	17	59	38	29	50	58

There were 6 tetrads with confirmed breeding evidence (listed below, although most are as a result of ringing activity), a further 29 tetrads where breeding was probable and 23 tetrads with possible breeding. The summer distribution is mapped below.



Site/Tetrad - Curlew confirmed breeding	Date(s)	Br. Code	Observer
Blackhopebyre (Glentress Water)	7-Jun to 22-Jun	3NY	BRG
Piper of Peebles Grave (Dewar Burn)	2-Jun to 7-Jun	3NY	BRG, TW Dougall
Dewar Burn: Dewar	17-Jun	2br2	CD Green
Garvald Lodge (Heriot Water)	24-May	NY	BRG
Broad Law (Heriot Water)	24-May to 6-Jun	3NY	BRG
Rawburn (Longformacus)	7-Jun	1br2	M Holling

Bar-tailed Godwit

Limosa lapponica

Uncommon passage migrant, mainly in autumn/winter.

This was the best year for Bar-tailed Godwits since 2007, with a total of **19 records** of a minimum of c.20 birds and over 50 bird-days. All but one came through in a three-week period from 22-Aug to 11-Sep, which are typical dates and all were at coastal sites.

Site/Tetrad – Bar-tailed Godwit records	Date(s)	Number	Observer(s)
St Abb's Head	22-Aug	2	C Hatsell
Dowlaw (Coldingham)	26-Aug	2	N Hammatt
Dunglass Bridge (Cockburnspath)	28-Aug	2	DK Graham
St Abb's Head/village	3-Sep to 11-Sep	1-13	C Hatsell <i>et. al.</i>
Eyemouth	3-Sep	1	R Safford
Eyemouth	20-Nov	1	R Jackson

Black-tailed Godwit

Limosa limosa

Uncommon late summer/autumn passage migrant.

After just a single bird in 2021 (at Folly Loch), this year showed a return to a more normal level of passage, with **14 records** and a minimum of c.23 birds involved. These records are tabled below.

Site/Tetrad – Black-tailed Godwit records	Date(s)	Number	Observer(s)
Newmains (Reston)	13-Aug	1	DK Graham
Upsettlington (Swinton)	17-Aug	1	J Towill
Dowlaw (Coldingham)	23-Aug	5	N Hammatt
Folly Loch	25-Aug	1	CD Green
St Abb's village	3-Sep	1	R Safford
St Abb's Head	7 Sep to 10-Sep	1	C Hatsell, F Evans
Dowlaw (Coldingham)	8-Sep	15	N Hammatt
Folly Loch	27-Sep	3	EL Bickmore, CD Green
Starney Bay (St Abb's Head NNR)	16-Dec	1	C Hatsell

The December record is quite exceptional for Borders, although there are many wintering records in the adjacent counties. The other dates and sites are typical for records in the Borders.

Turnstone

Arenaria interpres

Uncommon coastal winter visitor, August-May. Rare on passage to inland areas.

There were 90 records, covering every month other than June. There was a very unusual inland record of two juvenile birds at Teviot Haughs (Nisbet) on 30-Aug (**CDG**), but otherwise the picture is typical.

The highest count was 30+ at Burnmouth on 4-Jan (**RM**).

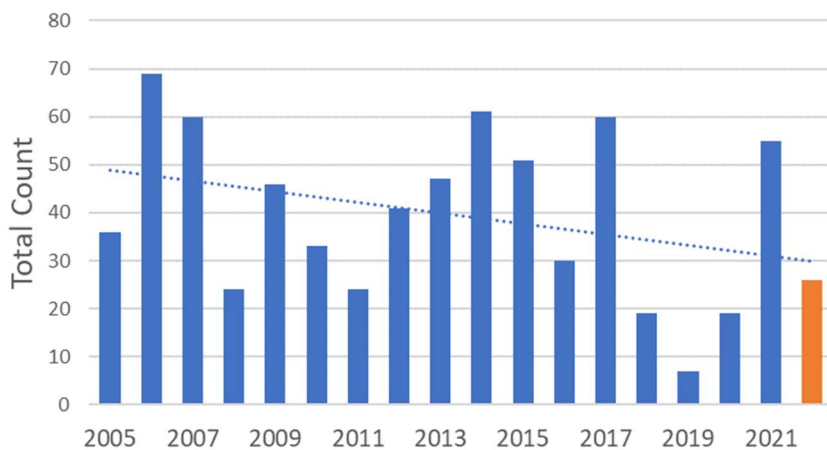
Site/Tetrad - Turnstone peak monthly counts	J	F	M	A	M		J	A	S	O	N	D
Burnmouth	30+	11	22	2					14	16	20	22
Dunglass Bridge (Cockburnspath)	14		26				1	2			4	10
Eyemouth	24									10	1	5
St Abb's-Coldingham Bay	16	22	1		3				16	15		8

Site/Tetrad - Turnstone peak monthly counts	J	F	M	A	M		J	A	S	O	N	D
St Abb's Head	4		1						12			
Pease Bay	6										5	1
Linkim Shore (Coldingham)											7	



Turnstone, Burnmouth, September, (A Cutter)

Rocky Shore Count 2022 - Turnstone



The 2022 Rocky Shore Count took place on 23-Jan.

Only 26 Turnstones were counted, which is a little below the average from 2005, although still the second highest since 2017.

The overall trend shows a c.40% decline.

Knot

Calidris canutus

Very uncommon coastal passage migrant, mostly in late summer and early autumn.

Five records. After a blank year for this species in 2021, this year showed a typical series of five records, with 26 birds involved, which makes it marginally the best year since 2016. All records are tabulated below.

Site/Tetrad - Knot records	Date	Number	Observer
St Abb's Head	25-Aug	11	C Hatsell
Eyemouth	3-Sep	2	G Paterson, DK Graham
Burnmouth	5-Sep	8	CD Green/A Cutter
Coldingham Bay	9-Dec	5	R Jackson

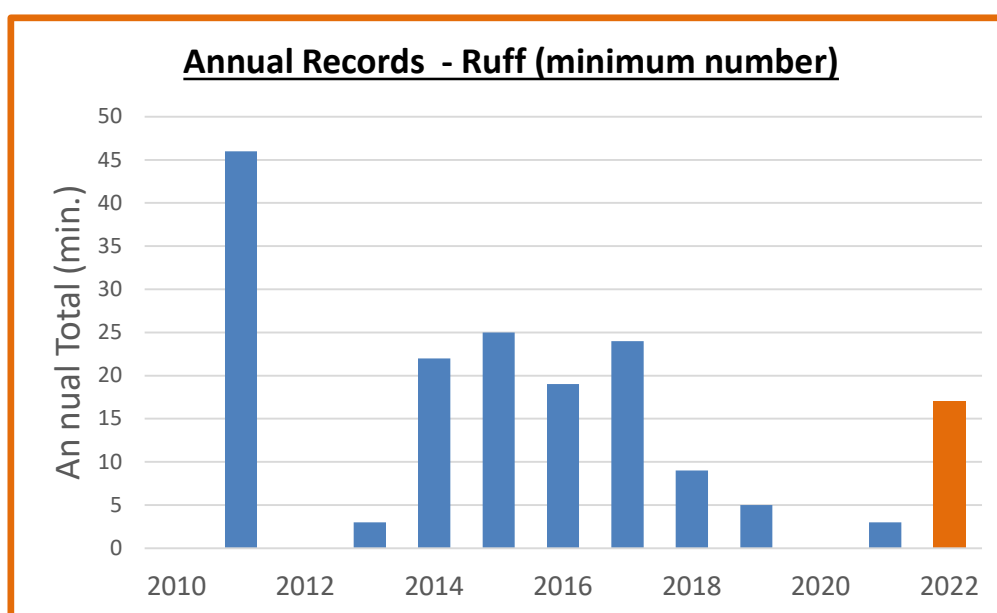
Ruff

Calidris pugnax

Very uncommon passage migrant, mostly in late summer and early autumn.

This year had the best set of records since 2017, with **14 records** of a minimum of 17 birds. These are detailed in the table below.

Site/Tetrad - Ruff records	Date(s)	Number	Observer(s)
Upsettlington (Swinton)	17-Aug	2	J Towill
Dunglass Bridge (Cockburnspath)	21-Aug	1	C Hatsell
Tweed: Sprouston	26-Aug, 2 Sep	1-4	K Robeson
St Abb's Head	3-Sep to 8-Sep	1-3	P & R Safford, DKG, CH
Dowlaw (Coldingham)	6-Sep	1	N Hammatt
Birgham (Kelso)	8-Sep, 12-Sep	1-6	S Turnbull, RJ, CDG



Sanderling

Calidris alba

Very scarce autumn passage migrant.

Three records. A typically sparse return for this surprisingly scarce shorebird. One of the records was as a result of some coastal audio recording, when 'several' birds were heard.

Site/Tetrad - Sanderling records	Date	Number	Observer
Burnmouth	11-Aug	2	J Montana
Dunglass Bridge (Cockburnspath)	20-Aug	1	DK Graham
Eyemouth	19-Sep	1+	NAR (GP)*

* - Results from Nocturnal Audio Recording carried out by Gavin Paterson.



Sanderlings, Burnmouth, August, (J Montana)

Dunlin

Calidris alpina

Very scarce moorland breeder, although limited recent evidence. Uncommon passage migrant and very uncommon winter visitor, mostly to coast.

There were 63 records from 18 tetrads, a notable improvement over the last few years (e.g. in 2021 there were just 13 records from 9 tetrads). There was a far stronger coastal passage noted, a similar passage to normal at inland sites and even a summering bird in the Moffatt Hills. Two birds were also seen on the Rocky Shore Count on 23-Jan at Burnmouth (RJ).

The highest daily count was of 93 (in three separate groups flying north) at St Abb’s-Coldingham on 1-Sep (RJ). The passage records are summarised below, for both coastal and then inland sites.

Dunlin coastal passage	Aug	Sep		Oct		Nov	Dec
No. of bird-days	13	229	+4 NAR*	2	+4 NAR*	6	15
No. of days	4	11	+4	1	+4	3	2
No. of tetrads	4	6	+1	1	+1	3	2

* - Results from Nocturnal Audio Recording carried out by Gavin Paterson.

Sites/Tetrads - Dunlin inland records	Date(s)	Number	Observer(s)
Teviot Haughs (Crailing)	11-Mar	1	S Turnbull
Newmains (Reston)	17-May	1	DK Graham
Teviot Haughs	14-Jul to 25-Jul	1-3	S Turnbull
Newmains (Reston)	1-Aug to 4-Aug	1	DK Graham
Fireburnmill (Coldstream)	21-Aug	1	K Robeson
Teviot Haughs	28-Aug to 5-Sep	1-4	S Turnbull, CD Green
Folly Loch	29-Aug, 31-Aug	1-3	M Holling, G Paterson
Birgham (Kelso)	7-Sep, 8-Sep	4	S Turnbull
Yetholm Loch	10-Sep	3	K Robeson
Hule Moss	13-Sep	2	AP Mossop
Teviot Haughs	21-Sep	1	S Turnbull
Newmains (Reston)	26-Oct	1	DK Graham

The summering record was found during a Breeding Bird Survey at Firthybrig Head (Moffat Hills) on 4-Jul, with a single breeding plumage bird observed (NS).

Purple Sandpiper

Calidris maritima

Uncommon winter visitor to rocky coast. Present August-May in very small and decreasing numbers.

There were 46 records from 10 tetrads, compared with 30 records from 7 tetrads in 2021, although all the records were in typical rocky coastal areas and at typical times of year. The last record in spring was on 27-Mar (**CDG**) and the first autumn arrival was on 18-Oct (**CH**).

The largest count of the year was 37 at Coldingham Bay on 31-Jan (**CH**), however just two birds were found on the Rocky Shore Count on 23-Jan (at Burnmouth), which is down from a running average of 18.

Site/Tetrad - Purple Sandpiper peak monthly counts	J	F	M		O	N	D
Dunglass	27		23			14	14
Pease Bay-Redheugh	16						
St Abb's Village-Coldingham Bay	37	1+	2		8		2
Eyemouth	3				2	3	4
Burnmouth	6	6	7			9	1



Purple Sandpipers, St Abb's Harbour, October (R Jackson)

Little Stint

Calidris minuta

LRC

Very uncommon on autumn passage. Last records in 2010 (3 birds) and 2020.

Three records. At the same time and place as the Pectoral Sandpiper (see below), there was a Little Stint seen at Birgham Haughs (Kelso) on 7-Sep (**MM**), with two there the following day (**ST**). A third record was of a single at Newmains (Reston) on the quite late date of 26-Oct (**DKG**).

Although there were several records in the 1990s, these represent only the 11th-13th birds since 2000.



Little Stint, Newmains (Reston), October (DK Graham)

Pectoral Sandpiper

Calidris melanotos LRC

Rare vagrant from North America/Siberia. Last records in 2003 and 2013 (two).

One record. The sixth record for Borders occurred as part of a wader 'fall' on the haughs at Birgham (Kelso) on 7-Sep (MM) and was still present early on 8-Sep (ST).



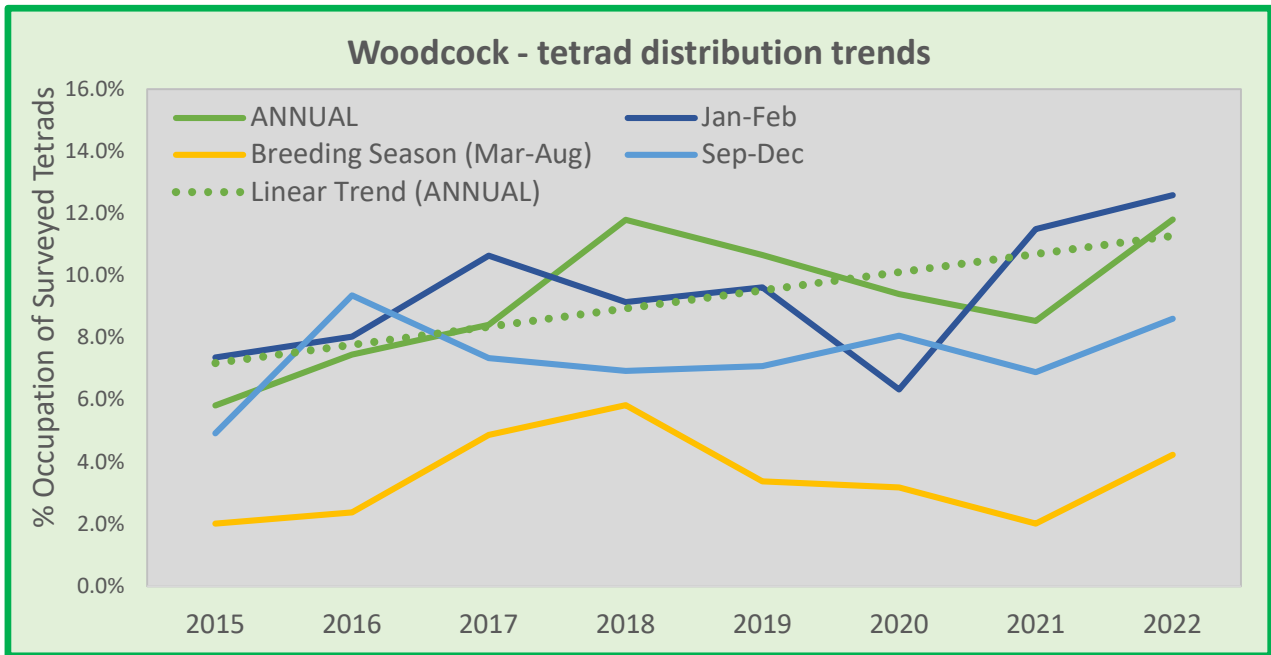
Pectoral Sandpiper, Birgham Haugh, September (M Moncrieff)

Woodcock

Scolopax rusticola

Uncommon to common breeding species. Roding display March-July. Occasionally strong late autumn passage. Variable numbers in winter but largely common, including immigrants from northern Europe.

Overall the distribution of this cryptic woodland wader is increasing, driven primarily by being found in more winter tetrads. Summer distribution is less recorded, as it relies on woodland visits at dusk, to detect the distinctive 'roding' displays. The BTO 10-year Woodcock survey in 2023 should identify more sites.



Most of the larger counts are identified during harsh winter conditions or occasionally on passage and this year was no exception. The largest group early in the year was at Prieston (Selkirk), with 8 on 15-Jan (M Henderson), with Manderston (Duns) - 6; Horsleyhill (Hawick) - 6 and Wiltonburn Hill (Hawick) - 6 close behind. After some evidence of passage movement with 5 at Dowlaw (Coldingham) on 21-Oct (JDH Hadfield), the highest count later in the year (and overall) was at St Abb's Head with 9 on 16-Dec (CH).

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with breeding evidence	10	2	5	9	9	10	4	16

There was no confirmed breeding, but probable breeding ('roding' display) was observed at 9 tetrads, with nocturnal audio recording (primarily for Nightjars) adding another 7 tetrads. As expected, these were all in semi-open areas in large forest blocks and a fuller analysis will be included in 2023, after the BTO survey.

Jack Snipe

Lymnocyptes minimus

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor. Much overlooked.

This small wintering snipe was identified at more sites than ever before, in part due to use the use of thermal imaging cameras by Alastair Cutter and also periods of hard frost that cause birds to leave their deep cover to feed in more open ice-free areas.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of occupied tetrads for year	6	10	3	10	7	13	9	18

Birds were seen until 1-May (at Newmains) and then the first autumn birds were seen on 25-Sep (also at Newmains) (DKG).

Site/Tetrad - Jack Snipe records	Date(s)	Number	Observer(s)
Newmains (Reston)	1-Jan to 19-Feb, 1-May	1-3	DK Graham <i>et. al.</i>
Teviot Haughs	1-Jan to 12-Mar	1	S Turnbull, M Henderson
St Abb's Head	8-Jan, 13 Apr	1	C Hatsell

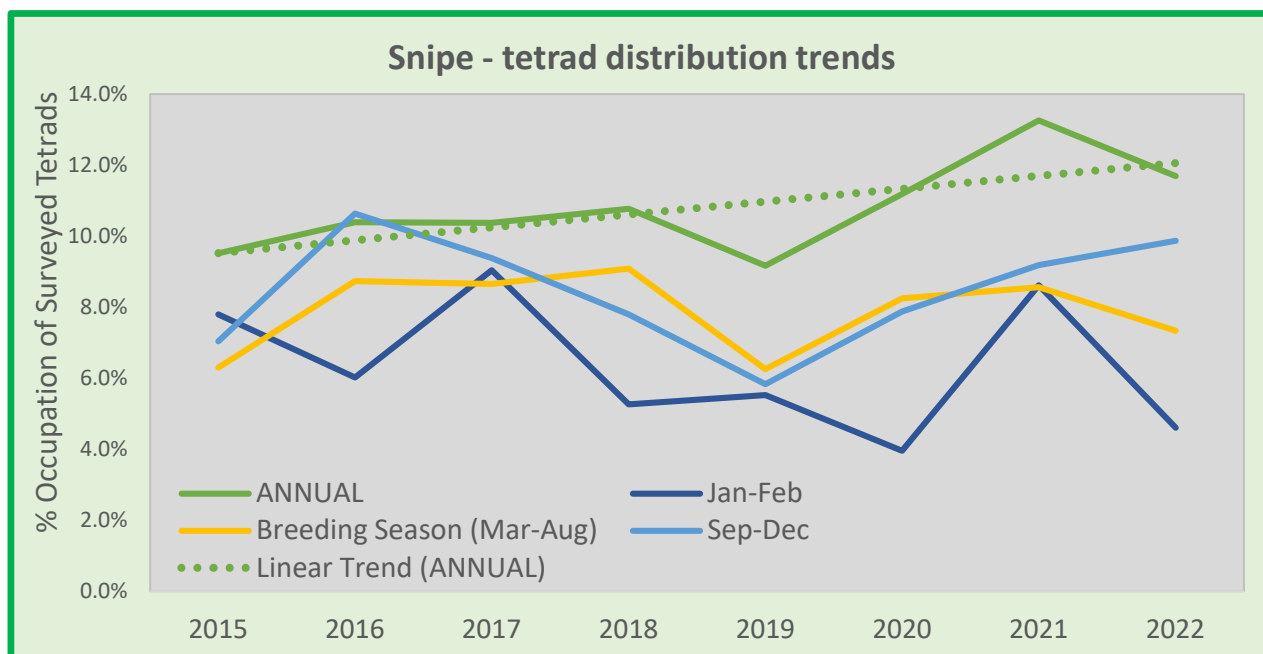
Site/Tetrad - Jack Snipe records	Date(s)	Number	Observer(s)
Whitrig Bog	20-Jan to 14-Apr	1-6	A Cutter, M Moncrieff
Cairneymount (Earlston)	30-Jan	1	A Cutter
Hundleshope (Manor Valley)	20-Feb	1	G Paterson
Little Cathpair (Stow)	1-Mar	1	G Paterson
Newmains (Reston)	25-Sep to 23-Dec	1-5	DK Graham
St Abb's-Coldingham	30-Sep	1	C Hatsell
Pease Bay	19-Oct	1	JDH Hadfield
Dowlaw (Coldingham)	20-Oct	1	JDH Hadfield
Teviot Haughs	21-Oct to 3-Dec	1-2	S Turnbull
Whitrig Bog/New Smailholm	29-Oct to 22-Dec	1-10	A Cutter
Cairneymount (Earlston)	5-Nov	8	A Cutter
Tweed: Melrose-Millmount	10-Dec	1	WeBS
Leitholm area (Coldstream)	12-Dec, 14-Dec	1-2	R Jackson
Innerleithen	16-Dec	1	R Bramhall
Tweed: Lowood-Gattonside	23-Dec, 29-Dec	1	J Gordon

(Common) Snipe

Gallinago gallinago

Well-represented breeding species, mostly in hilly areas. Large aggregations sometimes in winter. Slight spring passage.

The distribution during the breeding season remains largely stable, as is the autumn/winter distribution, but the overall distribution trend is slightly positive, suggesting different tetrads are being used seasonally.





Woodcock (top), Jack Snipe (middle, bottom right), (Common) Snipe (bottom left)

Peak counts were markedly down this year, as compared with 2021, although there were no records from the two sites with the highest counts last year (Ancrum Craig and Eddleston). The highest individual count in 2022 came from Cairneymount (Earlston) with 36 on 5-Nov (**AC**). Only the sites regularly holding more than 5 and having at least one count of 10 or more, are shown below.

Site/Tetrad - Snipe peak monthly counts	J	F	M	A		S	O	N	D
Whitrig Bog	8	9	7	4			32	12	23
Newmains (Reston)	7	4					12	19	18
Folly Loch						19	7		
Bemersyde Moss								11	9
Buckholm (Galashiels)			8	11				7	

Two coastal sites are worth mentioning, with 19 at Dowlaw (Coldingham) on 16-Jan (JDH Hadfield) and 11 at St Abb's Head on 12-Dec (**CH**), perhaps suggesting some displacement coastally in harsh weather.

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	9	6	10	21	20	27	22	19

As is usual, there was no confirmed breeding. There were 8 tetrads with probable breeding ('drumming' displays generally, table below) and a further 11 tetrads with possible breeding. Overall breeding numbers were a little down on the recent trend, and coupled with a slight drop in tetrad occupation, this is one to monitor in the coming years.

Site/Tetrad – Snipe probable breeding	Date(s)	Br. Code	Observer(s)
Fruid Resr (Tweedhopefoot)	17-Apr	D	H Urquhart
Blackhopebyre (Glentress Water)	18-Mar	D	R Bramhall
Broad Law (Heriot Water)	16-Mar, 20-Apr	2D, P	TW Dougall, MB Ross
Buckholm (Galashiels)	9-Apr to 22-Jun	7D, A	A Cutter
Watch Water Resr (Longformacus)	25-Mar	D	S Kerr
Kirndeane (Newcastleton)	23-May	D	N Stratton
<i>Loch Tima (Craik Forest)</i>	<i>28-May, 29-May</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>NAR (GP)*</i>
<i>Cockmuir S (Portmore)</i>	<i>9-Jun to 13-Jun</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>NAR (GP)*</i>

* - Results from Nocturnal Audio Recording carried out by Gavin Paterson.

Grey Phalarope

Phalaropus fulicarius

LRC

Very scarce autumn passage migrant. Last previous records in 2017 and 2021.

One record. A bird was seen near Hurkar Rocks, Eyemouth, before flying north on 20-Nov (**DKG**).

This is the second year running with at least one record after a gap of three years. The last Red-necked Phalarope was in 2005, so a bird in 2023 would be most welcome!

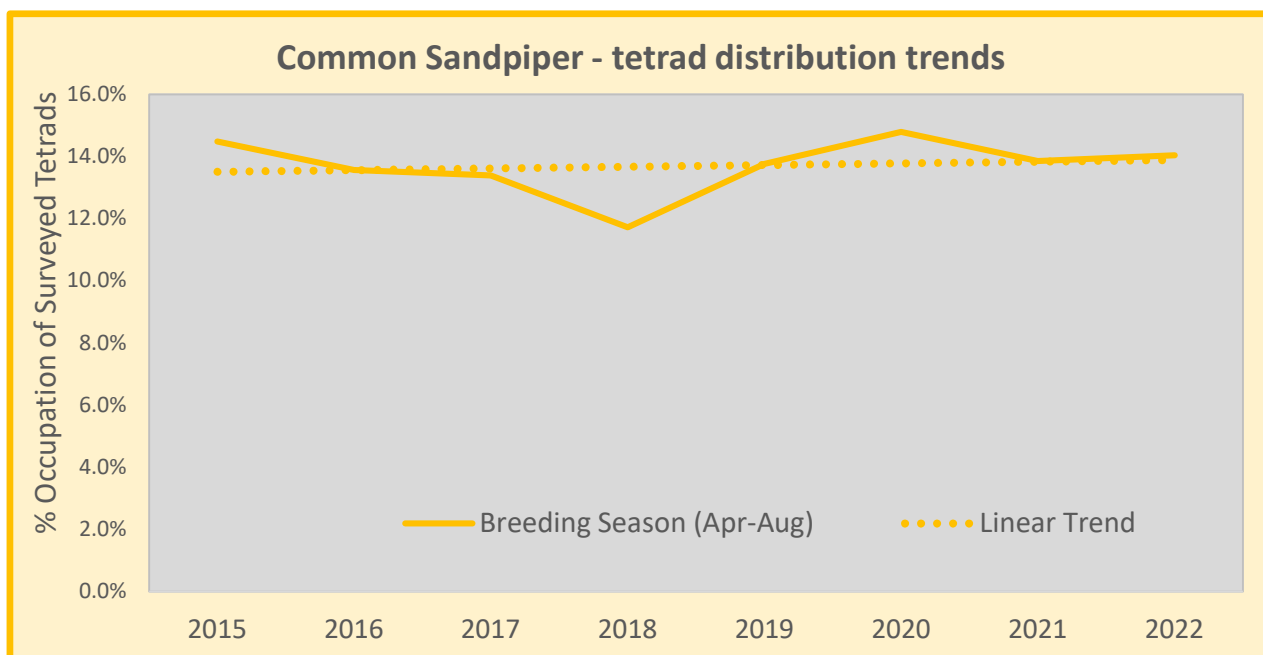
Common Sandpiper

Actitis hypoleucos

Well-represented, possibly declining summer visitor along rivers. Very rare in winter, mostly early April to late August.

A bird wintered on the Tweed at Upsettlington (Swinton), as recorded in BBR2021. It was seen again on 6-Jan and 14-Feb (J Towill). There was no repeat in winter 2022-23.

The distribution trend for Common Sandpiper (below), is the very definition of stability over the past few years, although there are some small annual fluctuations. With the increase in the tetrads being surveyed, the overall tetrad count is the highest yet at 107 and over double the 2015-17 tetrad counts.



Apart from the wintering bird, the first to arrive was on 28-Mar at Abbotsford (MB Ross), which is particularly early and only matched in 2018. The main arrival was from 12-Apr onwards at several sites.

At the other end of summer, the last bird to depart was on 30-Sep at Tweed: Broomlands-Whitmuirhaugh (RM), although most birds had left by mid-September.

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	9	10	9	21	35	34	43	35

Confirmed breeding evidence was found in 11 tetrads (below) and 23 tetrads with probable breeding.

Sites/Tetrads - Common Sandpiper confirmed breeding	Date(s)	Br. Code	Observer
Fruid Resr (Tweedhopefoot)	17-Jul	FL	H Urquhart
Leithen Lodge-Hunters Lodge (LW)	7-Jun	NY	BRG
Leithen Lodge-Glentress (LW)	11-Jun	NY	BRG
Glentress Burn	2-Jun	NY	BRG
Blackhopebyre (Glentress Water)	18-Jun, 20-Jun	2NY	BRG
Broad Law (Heriot Water)	1-Jul	FL	TW Dougall
Raeshaw (Heriot Water)	27-Jul	FL	MB Ross
Denholm	3-Jun	FL	N Cook

Sites/Tetrads - Common Sandpiper confirmed breeding	Date(s)	Br. Code	Observer
Teviot Haughs (2 tetrads)	14-Jul	FL	S Turnbull
Tweed: Mertoun Bridge-Mertoun House	19-Jul	FL	A Cutter

See Introduction for breeding codes

Green Sandpiper

Tringa ochropus

Scarce, mostly autumn passage migrant and increasing records of overwintering.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of occupied tetrads for year</i>	7	11	12	18	19	17	19	19

There was a similar presence of Green Sandpipers in the Borders to several recent years. Wintering was again evident at Teviot Haughs and the Tweed between Kelso and Coldstream, probably totalling 2-3 birds each winter, which is slightly lower than in 2021.

There were passage birds in both spring and autumn, with 2 birds and around 15-20 birds involved respectively, depending on the level of interchange around Folly Loch, Teviot Haughs and Wooden Burn.

Site/Tetrad - Green Sandpiper records	Date(s)	Number	Observer(s)
Tweed: Sprouston to Birgham Haugh*	5-Jan to 10-Apr	1	R Manning <i>et. al.</i>
Teviot Haughs	11-Mar to 18-Apr	1	ST, N Hammatt
Dowlaw (Coldingham)	15-Apr to 17-Apr	1	N Hammatt, CH, DKG
St Abb's-Coldingham	27-Apr	1	C Hatsell
Newmains (Reston)	19-Jun to 23-Aug	3	DK Graham
Teviot Haughs	22-Jun to 6-Oct	1-4	S Turnbull <i>et. al.</i>
Eckford-Wooden Loch (Jedburgh)	25-Jun to 11-Sep	1 + 2	CD Green
Burnmouth	24-Aug	1	F Evans
Folly Loch	25-Aug to 11-Sep	1-4	CD Green <i>et. al.</i>
Tweed: Sprouston to Fireburnmill*	26-Aug to 9-Oct	1-5	K Robeson <i>et. al.</i>
Bowhill (Selkirk)	3-Sep	1	AJ Pearson
Tweed: Banff Mill to Birgham*	31-Oct to 27-Dec	1-3	R Jackson <i>et. al.</i>
Teviot Haughs	4-Nov to 9-Dec	1	S Turnbull
Blakerstone Moor (Abbey St. Bathans)	17-Dec	1	R Manning

* - There were several sightings over 6 tetrads downstream of Kelso, assumed to be mobile birds.

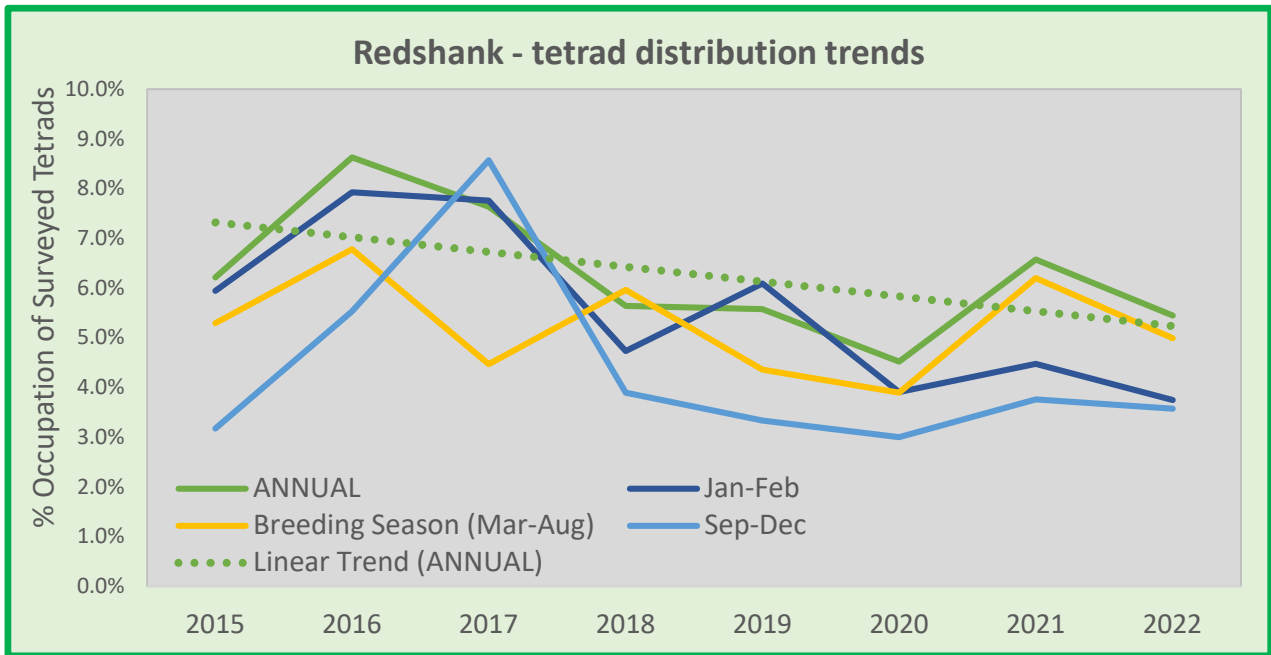
(Common) Redshank

Tringa totanus

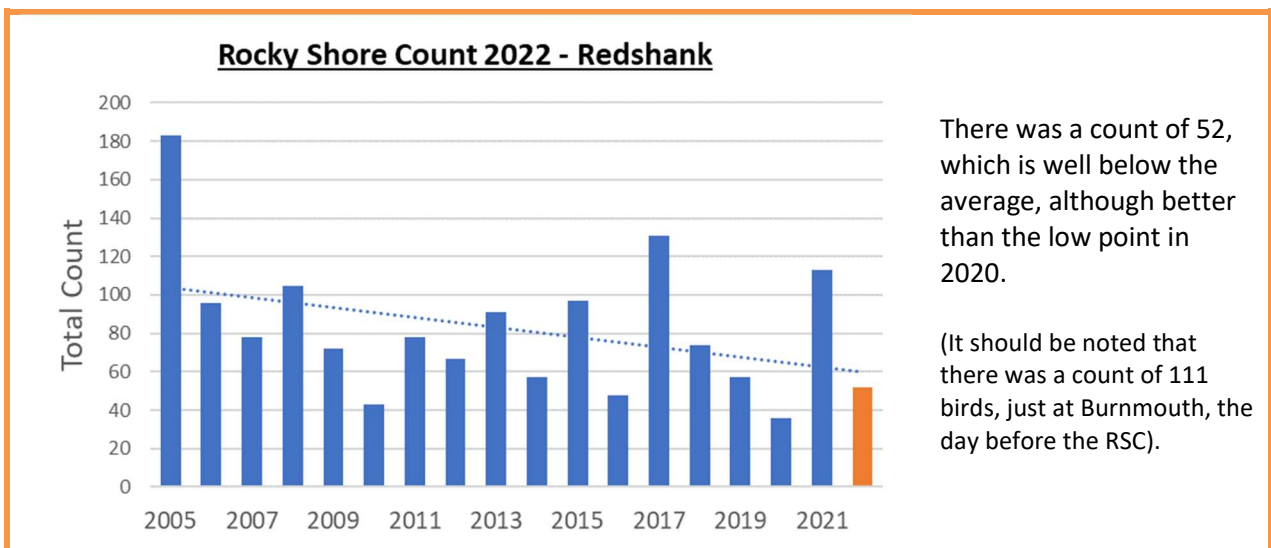
Now an uncommon breeding species. A few winter along the lower Tweed and coast, where well-represented. Some spring and autumn coastal passage.

Overall the distribution of Redshanks seems to be shrinking slightly, particularly in the winter months, with the breeding season tetrads more stable, albeit with some annual variation.

Numbers along the coast also seem to be decreasing (see the Rocky Shore Count below). There could be many reasons for this, including, for example, climate change responses or disturbance etc. and only time will tell as to how significant this trend is.



The 2022 Rocky Shore Count took place on 23-Jan, with the results below.



Burnmouth was once again the premier site, although none were present during the summer. The highest count was 111 on 22-Jan (GP), which was similar to the maximum count there in December 2021.

The largest counts inland were on the Tweed between Kelso and Birgham, with 18 there on 21-Jan (RM) and c.12-14 in December.

Sites/Tetrads - Redshank peak monthly counts	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Burnmouth	111	25	16	10				20	42	52	63	60+
Dunglass-Pease Bay	22	3	8					17	1	2	6	8
Eyemouth	4							2	12	8	4	8
St Abb's-Coldingham	5	3	2	1				1	2	2	12	4
Tweed: Sprouston to Birgham*	18	9	10	6				2	2	5	5	14

* - There were several sightings over 5 tetrads downstream of Kelso, assumed to be mobile birds.

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	19	23	15	7	13	6	12	11

There were 4 tetrads with confirmed breeding and a further 7 with probable breeding (below). There was more confirmed breeding evidence, primarily through the work of the ringers in the Moorfoot waters, but overall breeding evidence is slightly lower than in 2021 and also shows the longer-term trend of reduced breeding in Borders.

Site/Tetrad - Redshank breeding	Date(s)	Br. Code	Observer
Piper of Peebles Grave (Dewar Burn)	4-Jun	NY (1br4)	TW Dougall
Garvald Lodge (Heriot Water)	4-Jun, 14-Jun	2NY	BRG
Broad Law (Heriot Water)	28-May	NY	TW Dougall
Teviot Haughs (2 tetrads)	20-Jun, 14-Jul	DD, FL	S Turnbull
Fruid Resr (Tweedhopefoot)	17-Apr	P	H Urquhart
Blackhopebyre (Glentress Water)	19-Jun	A	A Cutter
Stantling Craig Resr (Clovenfords)	6-Apr, 14-Apr	2P	G Paterson
Watch Water Resr (Longformacus)	8-Apr	3P, 1D	M Moncrieff
Bedshiel (Westruther)	10-Apr	2P	G Paterson
Hendersyde Farm (Kelso)	19-Mar	P	R Manning

See Introduction for breeding codes.

Wood Sandpiper

Tringa glareola

Scarce passage migrant, almost annual in small numbers. Mostly seen in autumn.

Four records. These are tabled below and are all associated with autumn passage; a typical year.

Site/Tetrad - Wood Sandpiper records	Date	Number	Observer
Teviot Haughs (Nisbet)	29-Aug	2	S Turnbull
Hendersyde Farm (Kelso)	6-Sep	1	CD Green
Folly Loch	13-Sep	1	AT Bramhall
Teviot Haughs (Nisbet)	17-Sep	1	S Turnbull

Spotted Redshank

Tringa erythropus

Very scarce passage migrant, with less than annual occurrence. Mostly seen in autumn.

Two records. Both were on autumn passage. The first was at Ale Moor Loch (Hawick) on 7-Sep (ELB) and then another at Birgham (Kelso) on 8-Sep (ST). The latter bird was part of a 'mini-fall' of scarce and rare waders at Birgham. This is a similar picture to last year, after two blank years.

Greenshank

Tringa nebularia

Uncommon spring, but mainly autumn passage migrant, with recent rare wintering records.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of occupied tetrads for year</i>	7	10	7	13	7	9	18	18

The overall picture is similar to other recent years. Once again there was a wintering individual (the same one?) at Dunglass in both winter periods, a light spring passage of c.5 birds and an autumn passage, probably of c. 30 birds. The records are summarised in the table below.

Sites/Tetrads - Greenshank sightings	Date(s)	Number	Observer(s)
Dunglass Bridge (Cockburnspath)	1-Jan, 11-Feb	1	JDH Hadfield, M Holling
Teviot Haughs (Nisbet)	6-Apr	1	D Parkinson
Hendersyde Farm (Kelso)	10-Apr	2	N Hammatt
Tweedbank	21-Apr	1	AT Bramhall
Birgham (Kelso)	1-May	1	S Turnbull
<i>Eilrig (Craik Forest)</i>	<i>14-Jul</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>NAR (GP)#</i>
Teviot Haughs	17-Jul to 22-Sep	1-5	S Turnbull <i>et. al.</i>
Newmains (Reston)	30-Jul, 14-Aug	1	DK Graham
Maxwellheugh (Kelso)	31-Jul	6	K Robeson
Ale Moor Loch (Hawick)	9-Aug	3	R Bramhall
Mire Loch (St Abb's Head)	11-Aug	1	C Hatsell
Tweed: Sprouston to Birgham*	13-Aug to 13-Sep	1-6	R Manning, K Robeson <i>et. al.</i>
Burnmouth	14-Aug to 2-Sep	1	J Montana, G Paterson
Upsettlington (Swinton)	17-Aug to 1-Sep	1-2	J Towill, K Robeson
Folly Loch	25-Aug to 31-Aug	1-4	CD Green <i>et. al.</i>
Dunglass Bridge (Cockburnspath)	28-Aug	1	DK Graham
Mire Loch (St Abb's Head)	5-Sep	1	C Hatsell
Dunglass Bridge (Cockburnspath)	13-Nov	1	DK Graham

- Results from Nocturnal Audio Recording carried out by Gavin Paterson.

* - There were several sightings over 5 tetrads downstream of Kelso, assumed to be mobile birds.

Kittiwake

Rissa tridactyla

Abundant coastal breeder, although dramatic declines in breeding population since late 1980s. Occasional heavy autumn passage. Rare inland but strays almost annual. Scarcer in winter.

There were records in every month of the year, except December; the first report was of 3 at Eyemouth on 8-Jan (DKG) and the last report, also there, on 24-Nov (GP).

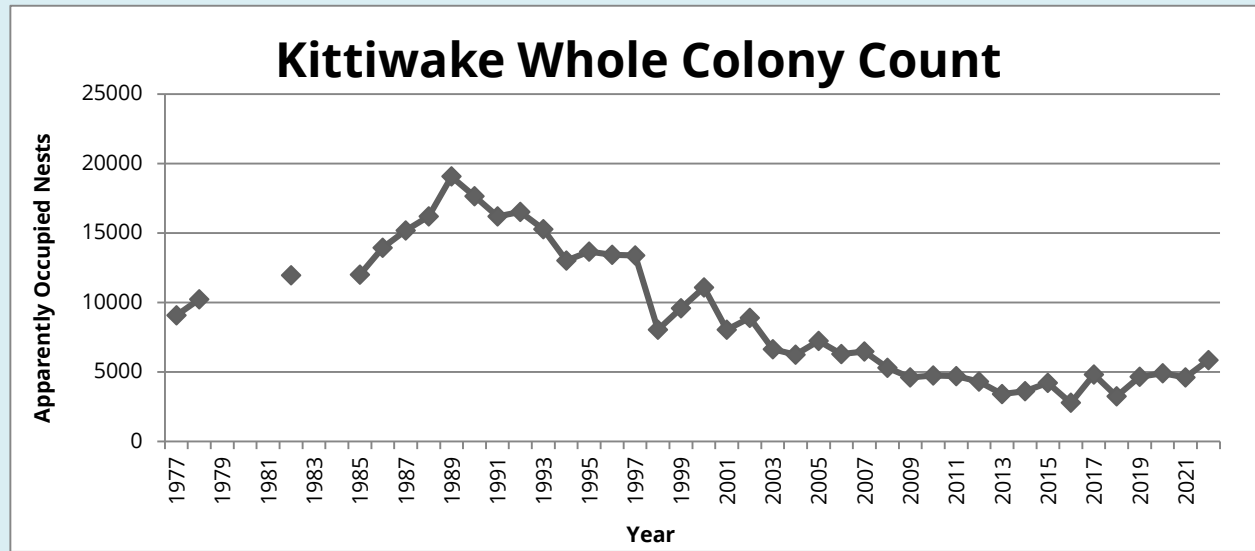
St Abb's Head is the main site for Kittiwakes and the NNR report is attached below. Although less monitored, important colonies were noted by Neil Hammatt around Dowlaw, with the following comment: "*Kittiwake nest numbers were difficult to count owing to many being below the cliff at Souter, out of view from land. However, at least 98 nests were at Souter and another 18 on a stack just East of Redheugh. I left Dowlaw when they were at the fluffy, "under parents' wings" stage. When I returned in August, there were lots of fledged individuals on cliffs and out to sea. So, there was success at least to the seven day chick stage.*" On the 31-Aug, there was the highest count of the year, with an estimated 5000 birds off Dowlaw (NH).

High numbers (1000-2000 birds) were noted on several dates in September and then, after a quieter spell in October, there were again 2000 birds passing off St Abb's Head on 18-Nov (CH).

There was an unusual inland record, with 'several' picked up by nocturnal audio recording at Softlaw (Kelso) on 25-Jun (GP).

Apparently Occupied Nests (AON) 5851	Active sites for breeding monitoring 213	Fledged chicks 179	Fledged young per active site 0.89
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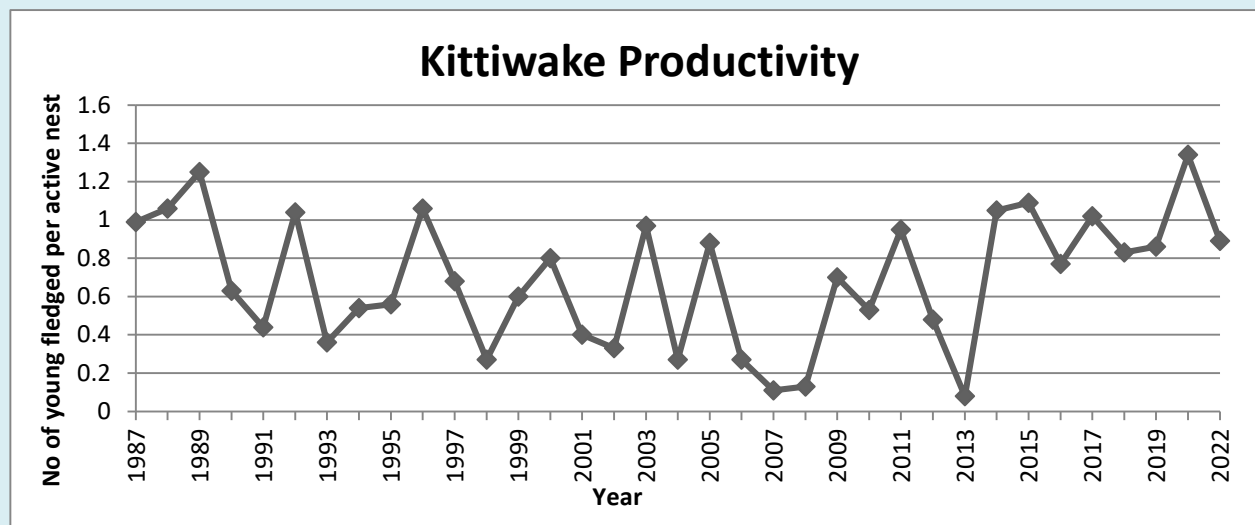
Whole Colony Count: - This was carried out from land on 17-Jun and a sea count on 14-Jun, with **5851 AONs**, which is a 27% increase on 2021. The long-term trend is downward, but there has been some small recovery from the low point in 2016.



Breeding Success: - 11 visits were made to the three monitoring plots between 2-Jun and 10-Aug. Nests were individually marked on laminated photos of the monitoring plots and the progress of each nest was recorded up to fledging.

A total of 213 active nests were mapped on the plots and 179 chicks successfully fledged. The breeding success, expressed as the mean of individual plot figures, was **0.89** young fledged per AON, a decrease of 34% on 2021, which was the highest seen in recent times. (The productivity at the separate plots was as follows: Hope's Heugh - 1.47; Headland Heugh - 0.52; Cleaver Gully - 0.67).

The RSPB research team also monitored a further 184 AONs and had an overall productivity of 1.17 across their sites.

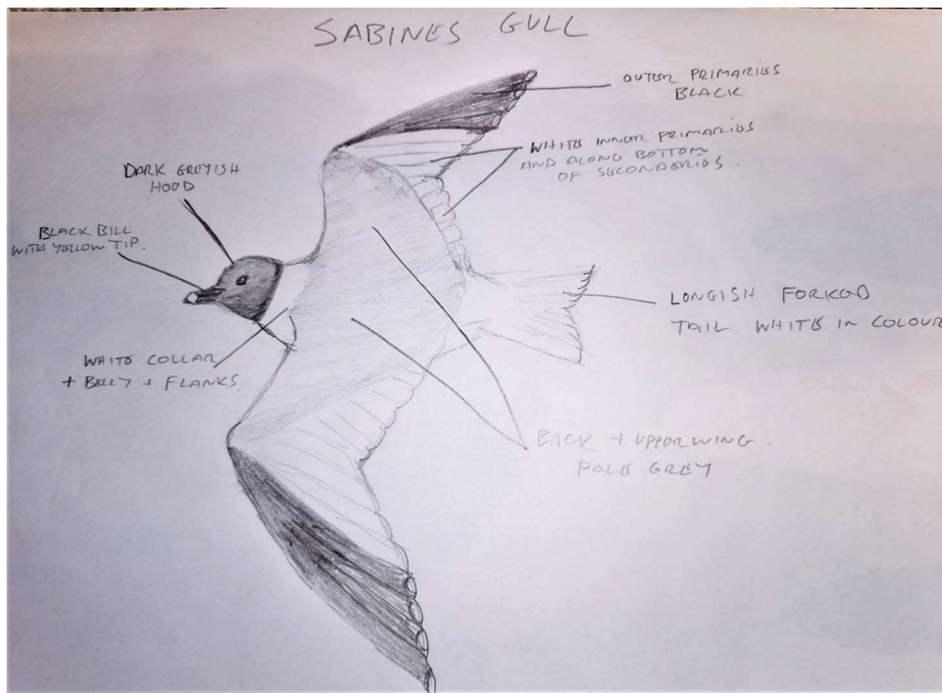


Sabine's Gull

Xema sabini LRC

A rare passage seabird, mainly seen in autumn gales. Not annual.

One record. An adult was seen off Eyemouth on 17-Aug (DKG), after a blank year in 2021.



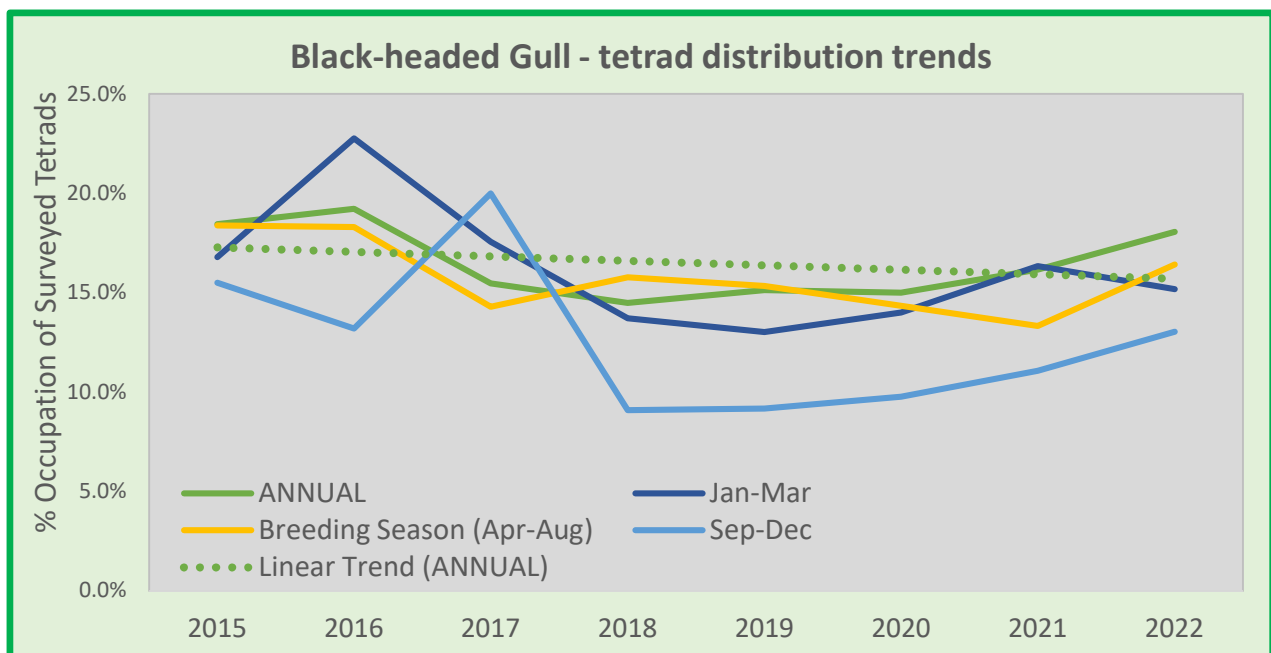
Sketch of adult Sabine's Gull, off Eyemouth, August (DK Graham)

Black-headed Gull

Chroicocephalus ridibundus

Common breeder but numbers have fallen greatly in recent years. Abundant and widespread in winter with several roosts.

The overall distribution trend is essentially level (or a slight decline) over the past few years, with a pronounced drop in distribution in the autumn/early winter period (apart from an anomalous 2017).



Numbers peaked early at the coast, with counts of 200 at Dunglass (Cockburnspath), 260 at Pease Bay and 210 at Burnmouth on 2-Jan (all **DKG**), rising to 900 at Burnmouth on 5-Jan (also **DKG**). Thereafter numbers dwindled sharply, with no counts over 170 and only 90 along the entire coast on the Rocky Shore Count on 23-Jan, which is well below the RSC average (of c.250 birds).

Three-figure coastal counts in the autumn included c.225 at Burnmouth on 23-Sep (**GP**) (with similar numbers in October and on 23-Dec); 180 at Coldingham Bay on 22-Sep and 300 at Linkim Shore (Coldingham) on 23-Oct (R Safford).

Inland counts tend to peak in the early spring and then again in late summer. So, counts of 600+ at Hule Moss on 26-Mar (**APM**); c.300 at Philiphaugh Farm (Selkirk) on 15-Mar and c.250 on the Tweed downstream from Kelso in April fit into this pattern. There were then 600+ at Greenlees (Yetholm) on 18-Aug (**RM**), with a peak of 184 at Tweedbank-Abbotsford-Langlee on 31-Jul and a peak of 166 on Tweed: Banff Mill-Redden on 17-Jul.

The largest breeding colonies reported were 152 birds at Waddelscairn Moor (Oxton) on 2-May (**BBS**) and 87 at Cairneymount (Earlston) on 1-Jun (**JG**).

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	3	9	0	10	6	4	13	12

There were six tetrads with confirmed breeding (tabled) and a further six with probable breeding.

Site/Tetrad - Black-headed Gull confirmed breeding	Date(s)	Br. Code	Observer
Fruid Resr (Tweedhopefoot)	19-Jun	NY	H Urquhart
Broad Law (Heriot Water)	28-May to 16-Jun	NY	BRG, TW Dougall
Tweedbank-Abbotsford-Langlee	3-Jul, 8-Jul	FL	AT Bramhall
Cairneymount (Earlston)	1-Jun, 13-Jun	ON	J Gordon
Birgham (Kelso)	16-Jul	FL	N Stratton
Fireburnmill (Coldstream)	19-Jul	FL	N Stratton

See Introduction for breeding codes.

Little Gull

Hydrocoloeus minutus

Very uncommon passage migrant to coast, mostly between August and October. Occasional inland reports.

All records were from the coast, with the first record on 16-Aug at St Abb's harbour (P Safford). Small numbers (1 to 3) were then reported on seven dates to the end of September, followed by 9 passing St Abb's Head on 25-Oct (**CH**). Unusually late, the strongest passage was over four days from 17-Nov to 20-Nov, mainly off Eyemouth, with the highest daily count of 20 on 19-Nov (**DKG**).

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of annual records</i>	3	8	0	2	5	8	18	14
<i>Estimated bird-days</i>	3	28	0	2	119	12	59	57

Mediterranean Gull

Ichthyaetus melanocephalus

A scarce-very uncommon but increasing visitor, mainly on the coast and in winter.

With a total of 20 records submitted and an estimated 16 birds, this has shown the increasing presence of these gulls in the Borders, with this being the equal best year yet (with 2019). All the records are tabled below. There have been records annually since 2007. Dates and sites were typical of recent years.

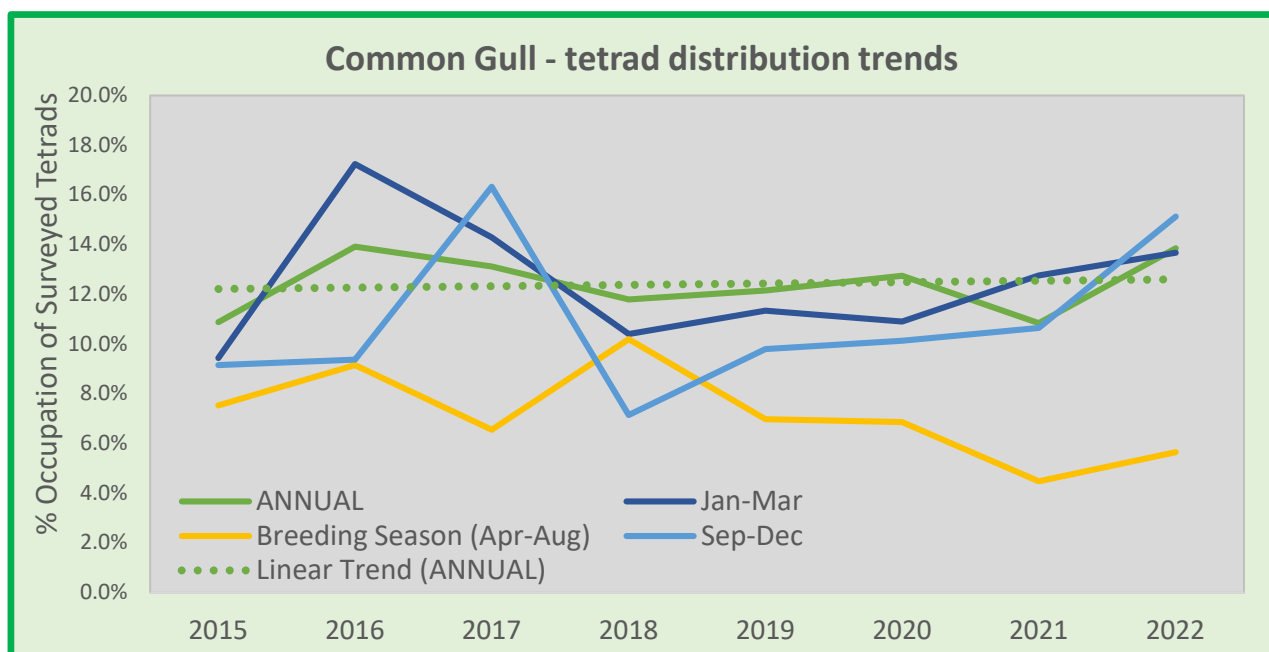
Site/Tetrad - Mediterranean Gull records	Date(s)	Number	Observer(s)
Cove Bay (Cockburnspath)	2-Jan	1	DK Graham
Eyemouth harbour	8-Jan, 9-Jan	1 Ad	DK Graham, G Paterson
Burnmouth	6-Feb	1 Ad	G Paterson
St Abb's Head (Mire Loch)	12-Jul	2	C Hatsell
St Abb's Head (Black Gable)	19-Jul	1	C Hatsell
Dunglass (Cockburnspath)	24-Jul	1	DK Graham
Dunglass (Cockburnspath)	20-Aug, 21-Aug	1	DK Graham, C Hatsell
St Abb's-Coldingham	1-Sep	2 Ad	R Jackson
St Abb's-Coldingham	22-Sep	1	R Safford
Eyemouth	29-Sep	1 Ad	G Paterson
Burnmouth	8-Oct to 22-Nov	1 Ad	CD Green, GP, RJ
Eyemouth	20-Nov	2 Ad	DK Graham, R Jackson
Eyemouth	17-Dec	1	DK Graham

Where recorded, all birds were described as adults. It is possible that there is greater mobility between sites than assessed here, reducing the overall number of birds involved.

Common Gull

Larus canus

Very uncommon and local breeder on hill lochs. Abundant passage migrant with several large roosts. Common and widespread in winter.



The Common Gull remains quite local in the summer and has seemingly declined at this season over the past few years, with a similar trend on breeding evidence. In contrast, the autumn and winter distribution has increased slightly since 2018, leaving the overall picture stable.

The highest counts were inland in the early part of the year, with 1350 along the Biggar Water on 20-Mar (D Stevenson), followed by 1000 at Whitfield (West Linton) on 28-Feb (B Gilmour), up to c.850 at Quixwood (Abbey St. Bathans) in February, 750 at Putts Pool (Innerleithen) on 6-Mar and 700 at Watch Water Resr (Longformacus) on 27-Mar.

Autumn counts were more limited, with 560 at Fireburnmill (Coldstream) on 25-Sep (RJ), 530 along Biggar Water on 13-Nov, c.500 at West Linton on 28-Oct and at Hule Moss on 19-Nov.

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with breeding evidence	4	5	1	1	2	1	2	2

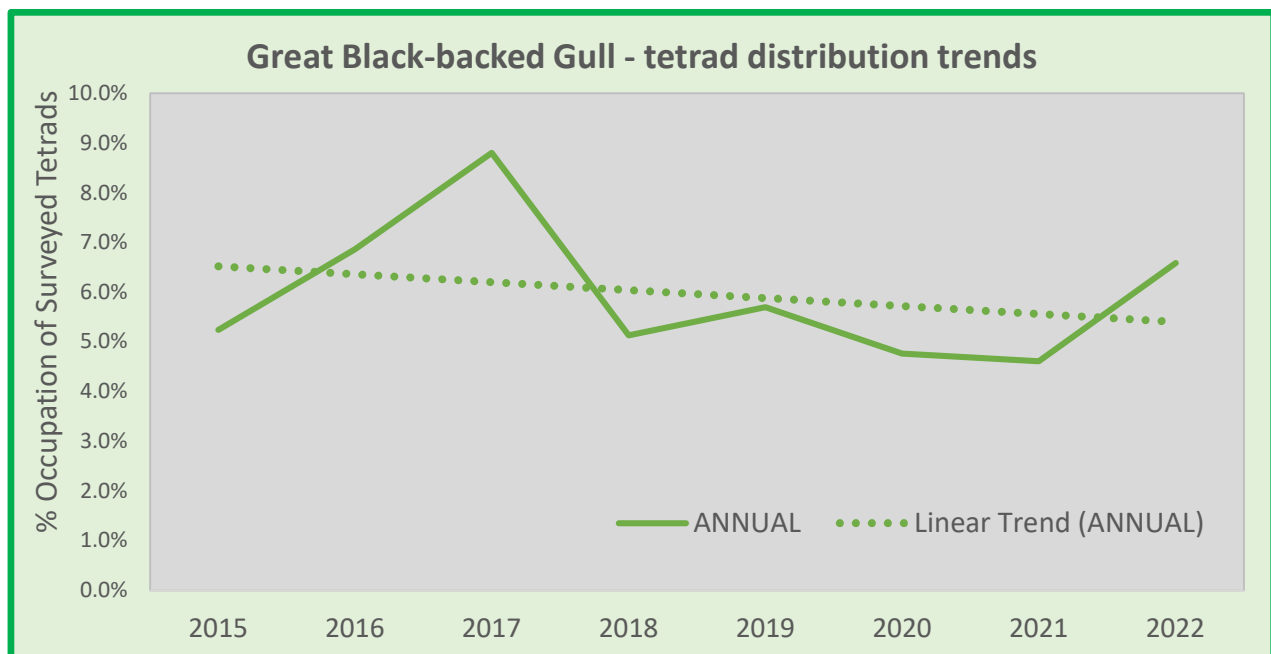
There was one tetrad with confirmed breeding, with occupied nests (ON) at Kirkhope Burn (Ettrick Water) on 29-May (GP) and probable breeding (pairs visiting probable nest sites) at Fruid Resr (Tweedhopefoot) from March to June (H Urquhart).

Great Black-backed Gull

Larus marinus

Scarce breeder along coast. Generally well-represented throughout, feeding widely inland during winter on carrion and roosting at the large reservoirs.

More sparsely distributed than the other large resident gulls and generally confined to the coast during the summer months, with some limited spread inland during the autumn and winter, this gull’s distribution does appear to be largely stable in recent years. Numbers do seem to be increasing though (e.g. RSC below).

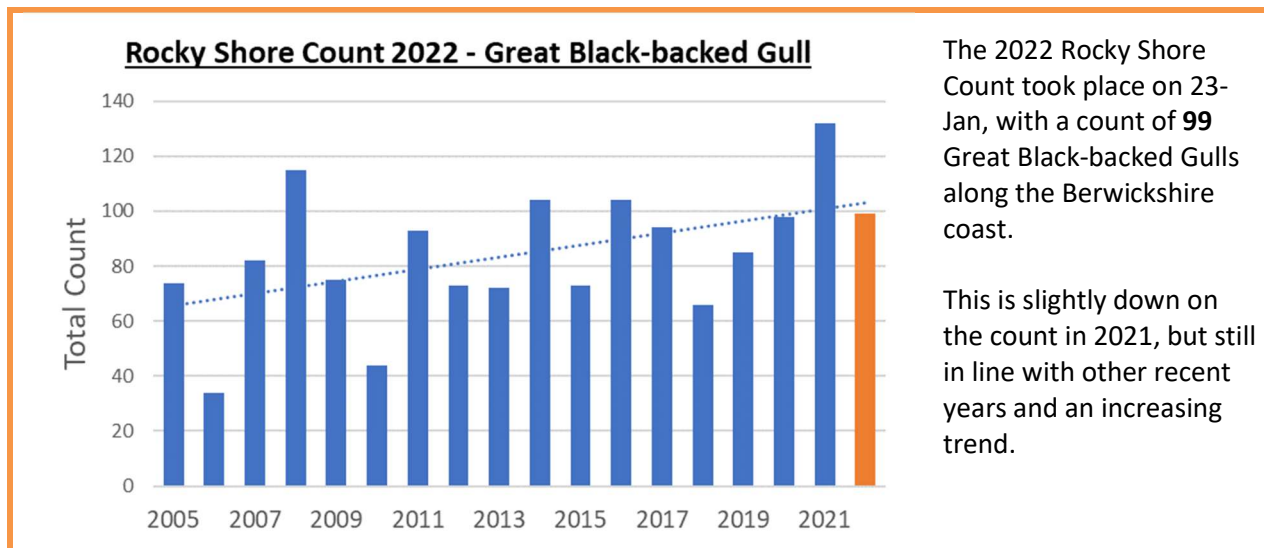


The largest individual count of the year was during the Rocky Shore Count (below), with 51 from Redheugh to Souter (C Hartley), making up more than half of the total count.

The only other large counts were 17 at St Abb’s Head on the SOC branch outing on 19-Oct, building to 45 on 22-Nov (RJ), with Burnmouth hosting up to 12 in January and then again in September. Most inland

counts were in low single figures, the exception being 11 at Folly Loch on 1-Nov (DP), 8 at Maxwellheugh (Kelso) on 26-Dec (KR) and 7 at Stantling Craig Resr (Clovenfords) on 6-Apr (GP).

Somewhat unusually for this species, confirmed breeding was noted at Dowlaw, with two nests observed in May, although both failed at the egg stage (NH).



Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*
Scarce winter visitor, near annual.

Nine records. The bird at St Abb’s Head was a juvenile and seen on 7 dates on different parts of the reserve over several weeks, but is assumed to be the same lingering individual. The individual at Burnmouth on 2-Jan was also a juvenile, which could be the same as the bird at Newmains and/or Berwick in December 2021 or the St Abb’s bird, but is here treated as separate.

Sites - Glaucous Gull records	Date(s)	Observer
Burnmouth harbour	2-Jan	DK Graham
St Abb’s Head NNR	13-Apr to 21-Jun	C Hatsell, P Safford <i>et. al.</i>

The summer presence of both Glaucous Gull and Iceland Gull (see below) into June at St Abb’s Head is notable, with both being seen on the same date (21-Jun).

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucooides*
Scarce winter or early spring visitor, recently become near annual.

Although there were 14 records, most of these related to the continuing presence of a juvenile bird in the St Abb’s area from 2021, which was last recorded on 13-Feb.

Six new records. These relate to four birds and each record is tabled below. The bird off Eyemouth in November was an adult, with the other birds either juveniles or first summer (*per* Birdguides).

Sites - Iceland Gull records	Date(s)	Observer
St Abb’s harbour/St Abb’s Head	30-Nov-2021 to 13-Feb	R Safford, P Safford <i>et. al.</i>
Dunglass (Cockburnspath)	1-Jan	JDH Hadfield

Sites - Iceland Gull records	Date(s)	Observer
Newmains (Reston)	22-Mar, 28-Mar	DK Graham
St Abb's Head	15-Jun, 21-Jun	C Hatsell
Eyemouth	20-Nov	R Jackson



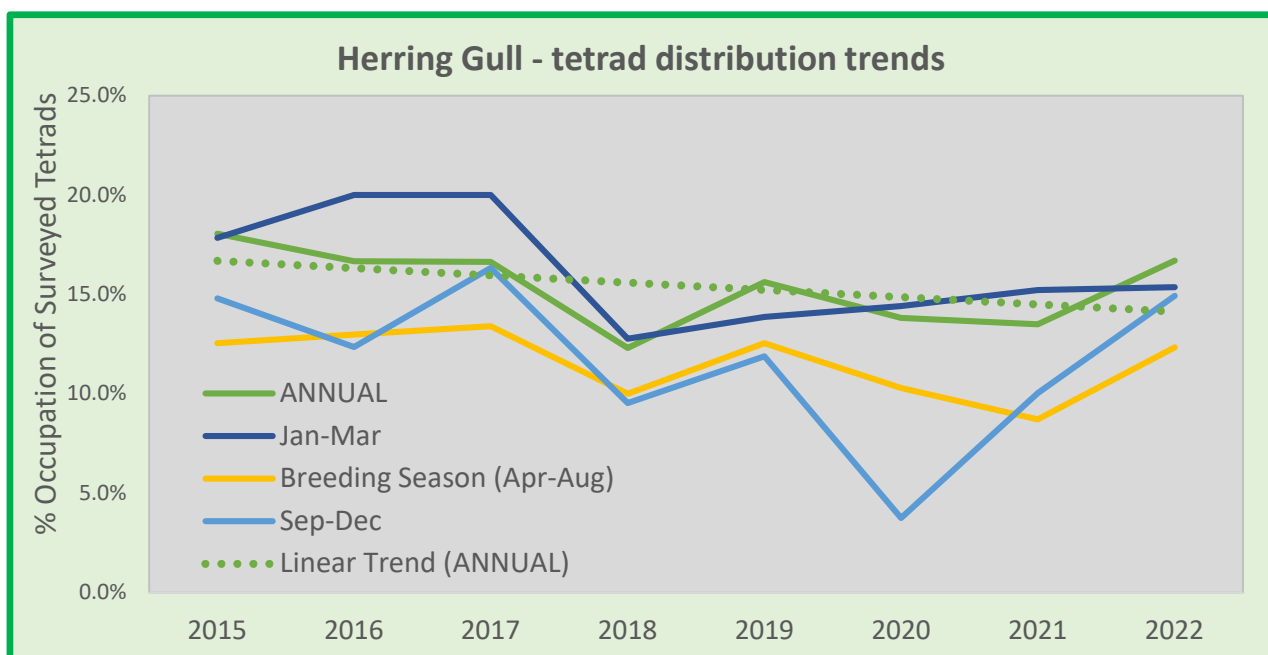
Iceland Gull, St Abb's harbour, January (P Safford)

Herring Gull

Larus argentatus

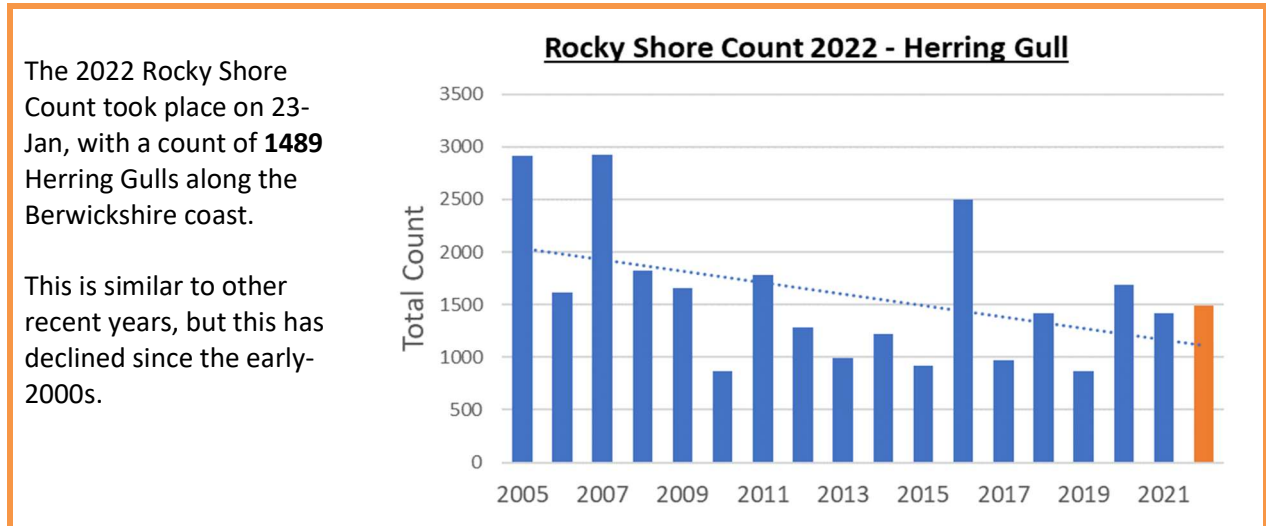
Common coastal breeder but also feeds widely inland. Few significantly large roosts.

Although remaining common and widespread, particularly at the coast, this gull continues to show a small, but steady, decline in distribution in recent years. The monitoring at St Abb's and in the Rocky Shore Count also suggests a long-term decline in abundance.



Although the RSC (below) represents the highest coastal count in the year, this is spread over several tetrads; the section through St Abb's Head NNR had the highest concentration with 429 birds. Burnmouth and Pease Bay are the other sites with similar peak counts, with 1100 at Burnmouth on 5-Jan and 450 at Pease Bay on the same date (both **DKG**).

The largest counts of all are at inland roost sites, particularly Hule Moss, with 3000+ there on 24-Jan, 500+ on 24-Feb, c.1000 on 11-Oct and 2500 on 19-Nov (all **APM**, WeBS). Other notable inland counts were 618 at Watch Water Resr (Longformacus) on 27-Mar (**DKG**), 500 at Quixwood (Abbey St. Bathans) on 15-Feb (**NH**) and c.400 at Chirnside Hall Hotel on 11-Sep (**GP**).



St Abb's Head NNR Seabird Report			Herring Gull
Apparently Occupied Nests (AON)	Active sites for breeding monitoring	Fledged chicks	Fledged young per active site
222	-	-	-

Whole Colony Count: - This was carried out from land on 6-Jun and a sea count on 14-Jun, with **222 AONs**, which is a 10% increase on 2021. The long-term trend is still a slow decline, after the marked halving of the colony in the late 1980s.

Year	Apparently Occupied Nests
1978	900
1982	720
1984	780
1985	720
1986	700
1987	720
1988	700
1989	380
1990	350
1991	400
1992	280
1993	380
1994	280
1995	400
1996	350
1997	320
1998	220
1999	250
2000	300
2001	280
2002	250
2003	300
2004	250
2005	150
2006	250
2007	220
2008	250
2009	180
2010	300
2011	220
2012	280
2013	220
2014	180
2015	200
2016	180
2017	200
2018	220
2019	180
2020	150
2021	200
2022	222

C Hatsell, National Trust for Scotland

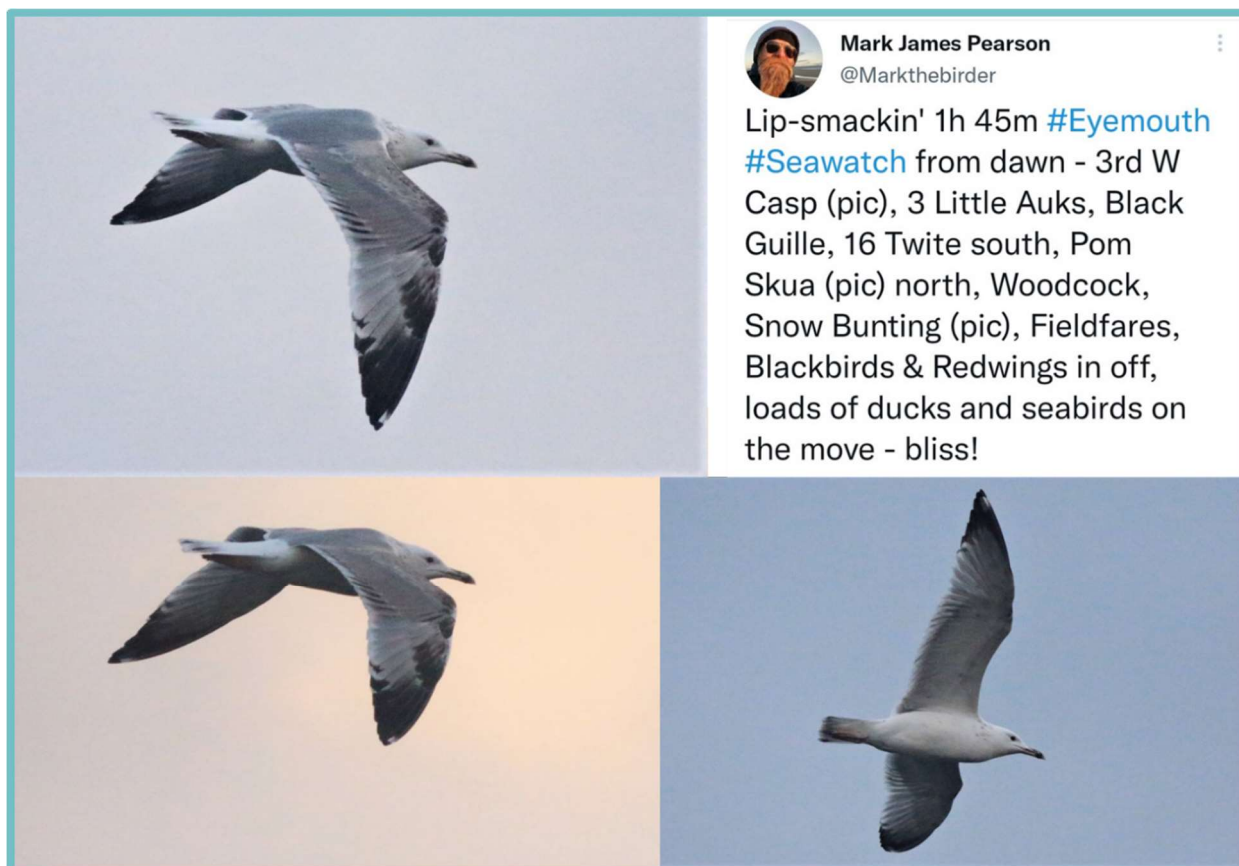
Although St Abb's Head remains the largest concentration of breeding birds (see report above), breeding was also reported at a number of other sites, including a count of 17 nests at Dowlaw and occupied nests between Eyemouth and Burnmouth and then around Lamberton Beach. There were no reports of breeding inland, in contrast to 2021.

Caspian Gull

Larus cachinnans **SBRC**

Extremely rare vagrant. First Borders record in 2022.

One record. This first record for Borders was seen and well photographed, going south off Eyemouth, by visiting Yorkshire birder Mark Pearson at 0755hrs on 14-Nov, at the start of a productive seawatch. **Accepted by SBRC.**



Caspian Gull, Eyemouth, November (M Pearson - Twitter report and photos)

Lesser Black-backed Gull

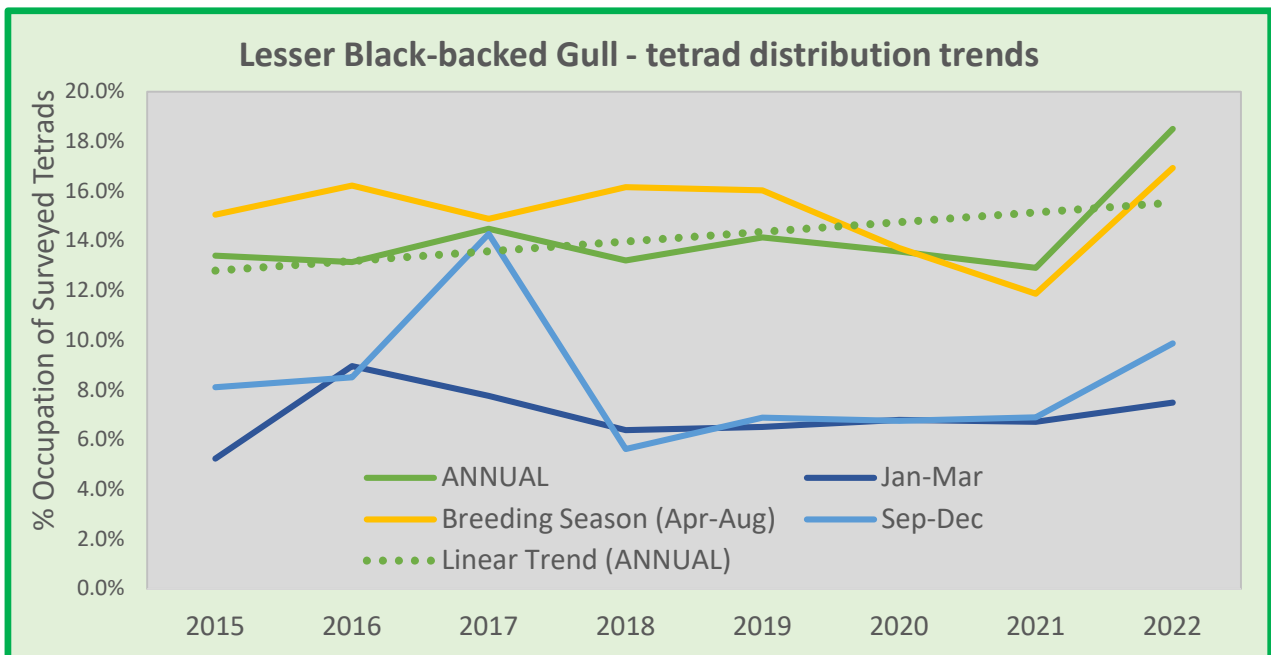
Larus fuscus

Scarce coastal breeder, not annual, perhaps just 2-3 pairs. Found locally inland in summer. Large roosts while on autumn passage but few sightings in winter.

There are marked seasonal differences in distribution, with a limited presence during the autumn and winter months, but it is our most widespread large gull during the summer months, albeit generally in small numbers. The overall distribution has been generally stable or increasing since 2015.

Generally reported in smaller numbers than Herring Gulls, although the peak counts are similar in scale and at the same combined roost sites. Thus Hule Moss had 3000+ birds on 11-Oct and 2500+ on 19-Nov (both **APM**, **WeBS**), which dwarfed the next highest totals of c.500 birds at Whitrig Bog on 3-Oct (**MM**), 265+ at Folly Loch on 7-Oct (**ELB**) and a combined total of c.330 birds over 3 tetrads west of Greenlaw on 30-Sep

(GP). Counts of up to 200+ following the plough at Eckford-Wooden Loch (Jedburgh) in September are also notable (CDG).



Although there were very limited reports of breeding, a count of 217 birds on a WeBS count at St. Mary's Loch on 18-Jul is encouraging, particularly as probable breeding has been recorded in the area in previous years. Fledged young (and thus confirmed breeding) was recorded at Innerleithen (for the second year running) (RB) and at Galashiels (D MacKenzie), with probable breeding pairs at Hundleshope (Manor Valley) and at Northfield (St Abb's Head NNR). This is typical for this species.

Sandwich Tern

Thalasseus sandvicensis

Very uncommon during spring passage, generally uncommon, but variable, during summer and autumn passage, despite breeding in the Forth and on the Farne Islands. Rare inland.

The first report was on the typical date of 14-Apr at Coldingham Bay (CH), with more records from there, off Eyemouth and at Dunglass within the following few days. The majority of spring/early summer records were from Coldingham Bay, with 16 there by 19-Apr (RJ) and at least 34 passing south on 22-May (R Safford). Other larger passage counts were 42 off St Abb's Head on 27-Jul (CH) and 35 off Eyemouth on 14-Aug (F Evans).

A spin-off of the nocturnal audio recording searching for Nightjars, was the unexpected identification of overland movements of Sandwich Terns during the summer, with 'several' birds recorded over the Wauchope Forest on 13-Jul and a single elsewhere above the forest on 15-Aug. There was a single at Stantling Craig Resr (Clovenfords) on 1-Sep (all records G Paterson).

There was an almost continuous September presence of Sandwich Terns right along the coast, although most records and large counts were concentrated around Coldingham Bay and between Eyemouth to Burnmouth. The largest counts were on 17-Sep, when it was estimated that over 200 mobile birds were feeding in the surf and settled on rocks between Eyemouth and Burnmouth (DKG, RJ, Photo Spot below). This is the largest count seen in Borders to date. The table below also shows a large increase in submitted records, which could be down to observer effort, but probably also records a true increase in presence.



Sandwich Tern juvenile, Burnmouth, September (J Montana)

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of annual records</i>	25	25	17	12	31	38	54	77
<i>Maximum count</i>	64	42	70+	20	83	38	125	200+

The last sighting was on 29-Sep, with 3N off Eyemouth (**GP**), although there was a further bird caught on nocturnal audio recording there on 21-Oct.

Roseate Tern

Sterna dougallii **LRC**

Very scarce passage migrant, usually in autumn.

Three records. This is the best showing of these terns ever seen in Borders and this is the third year in a row with at least one record. All the records are tabled below.

Site/Tetrad - Roseate Tern records	Date	Number	Observer
Black Gable (St Abb's Head)	27-Jul	1 ad, 1 juv	C Hatsell
Lower Burnmouth	17-Sep	1 ad, 1 juv	R Jackson
Eyemouth	18-Sep	1 ad	DK Graham

It is assumed that the bird at Eyemouth was the same adult present at Burnmouth the previous day, but that the earlier birds at St Abb's Head were separate. These four birds represent the 14th to 17th records for the Borders region. The first four records were in 1995-7, with a long gap to 2011 for the 5th.

Common Tern

Sterna hirundo

Very uncommon summer visitor on coast, most frequent August-September during passage but still uncommon, despite breeding in adjacent counties. Scarce inland.

The first record of the year was an unusual inland sighting of a bird passing along the Tweed at Fireburnmill (Coldstream) on 26-May, followed by a single off Eyemouth on 31-May (both **RJ**).

The next record was on 23-Jul, with three at St Abb's Head (**DKG**). Numbers in the St Abb's/Coldingham Bay area peaked at 12 on 1-Sep, with most records thereafter at either Eyemouth or Burnmouth and in unprecedented numbers for Borders. A total of 72 were counted at Eyemouth on 10-Sep (**DKG**) and there were similar numbers between Eyemouth and Burnmouth a week later on 17-Sep (**DKG, CDG, Photo Spot**). There was a late record on 16-Oct of a single off Eyemouth (**DKG**).



Sandwich, Roseate (Adult & Juvenile), Common and Arctic Terns

Arctic Tern

Sterna paradisaea

Uncommon summer coastal visitor (non-breeder), mainly August-September. Under-recorded.

The only spring record was of two birds off Eyemouth on 31-May (**RJ**), with the next record (like Common Tern, above) on 23-Jul, a single at St Abb's Head (**DKG**). Five were there on 27-Jul and three at Eyemouth on 31-Jul.

Three birds were picked up on the nocturnal audio monitor at Steele Road (Hermitage) on 1-Aug (**GP**) and, like Sandwich Terns, this identifies previously unknown overland movements.

The remaining records (15) were more typical, with up to 12 between St Abb's Head and Coldingham Bay in August and early September (**CH**), with larger numbers, of 62 birds, at Eyemouth on 3-Sep and still at least 54 between Eyemouth and Burnmouth on 17-Sep (**DKG, RJ**, Photo Spot), with 36 at St Abb's Head the following day (**CH**). A single bird at Pease Bay on 16-Oct was the last of the year (**RJ**), coincidentally the same last date as Common Tern (at Eyemouth).

White-winged Black Tern

Chlidonias leucopterus **SBRC**

Extremely rare Scottish vagrant, mainly in spring or summer months. First Borders record in 2022.

One record. The **FIRST** record for Borders was at Burnmouth on 5-Sep (**CDG, AC**). The finder's account and more photographs are on p.231. **Accepted by SBRC.**



White-winged Black Tern, Burnmouth, September (A Cutter)

Black Tern

Chlidonias niger

Scarce passage migrant, mostly coastal; not annual.

Two records. An inland bird was seen on the Tweed at Fireburnmill (Coldstream) on 21-Aug (**KR**) and then a more typical coastal record at Eyemouth on 18-Sep (**DKG**).

This is the fourth year in a row with at least one record, the last blank year being 2018. Before that, the years from 2008 to 2016 (inclusive) all had no records, with the exception of 2011, when there were two inland reports on the same day.

Great Skua

Stercorarius skua

Well-represented passage migrant from Jul to Nov. Very scarce in winter and very rare inland.

With just 19 records and an estimated 22 bird-days this was a relatively poor year for Great Skua records, the worst since 2015. The first of the year was relatively late on 29-May off Black Gable, St Abb's Head (**CH**), with a single at Dowlaw (Coldingham) on 1-Jun (**APM**). Numbers remained very sparse with ones or twos on just six dates through to the end of August.

Sightings improved a little in September, with singles or duos on 7 days, culminating with 3 North at Eyemouth on 29-Sep (**GP**) and another two (or perhaps the same) at St Abb's Head on the same day (**CH**), which were also the last of the year.

The devastation of avian flu in the Northern Isles has presumably had an effect on the numbers passing.

Pomarine Skua

Stercorarius pomarinus

Uncommon autumn passage migrant between Jul and Nov. No inland records.

A better year than 2021, with 9 records and 23 bird-days, making this the best year since 2014. All records are tabled below, in date order.

Sites - Pomarine Skua records	Date(s)	Number	Observer
Eyemouth	31-Jul	2	DK Graham
Eyemouth	17-Aug	1	DK Graham
Dowlaw (Coldingham)	1-Sep	2W	N Hammatt
Eyemouth	3-Sep	3	DK Graham
Eyemouth	18-Sep	2	DK Graham
Eyemouth	29-Sep	9N	G Paterson
St Abb's Head	29-Sep	2	C Hatsell
St Abb's Harbour	19-Oct	1	R Jackson
Eyemouth	14-Nov	1	M Pearson

Arctic Skua

Stercorarius parasiticus

Scarce on passage April-June, well-represented July-November. Rare in winter. A few inland records.

In contrast to the Great Skua, there was a better than recent average year for Arctic Skuas, with 48 records and over 180 bird-days logged, making this the best year since 2004. There were no birds in spring, with the first sighting, of three, on 20-Jul at St Abb's Head (**CH**). There were a couple of further singles in late July and then a gap to a more continuous presence from 16-Aug, although only singles each day.

The first day of more sustained movement was 29-Aug, with 14 past St Abb's village and 11 more there two days later (both records P Safford). There were records at several points along the coast for 14 days of September, the best daily total being 71 on 3-Sep, mainly off Eyemouth (**DKG**), but also at St Abb's-Coldingham. There was a secondary peak of 23 on 29-Sep across three sites.

After another gap, there were records of one on 16-Oct at Eyemouth, two on the SOC branch outing passing St Abb's village on 19-Oct and the last of the year, again at Eyemouth, on 22-Oct (**GP**).

Long-tailed Skua

Stercorarius longicaudus

LRC

A scarce passage migrant, mostly August-October. Almost annual in small numbers.

Generally our scarcest skua, but with six records, all singles, this year was better than average. All records are tabulated below. The bird at St Abb's village on 3-Sep was a juvenile and this could be the same as the bird at Eyemouth on the same day, but details are lacking to assess either way.

Sites - Long-tailed Skua records	Date(s)	Observer
St Abb's Head	16-Aug	C Hatsell
Eyemouth	3-Sep	DK Graham
St Abb's village	3-Sep	P Safford
Eyemouth	10-Sep	DK Graham
St Abb's Head	16-Sep	C Hatsell
Eyemouth	17-Sep	DK Graham

Little Auk

Alle alle

Scarce and erratic winter vagrant, typically seen passing offshore. Occasional 'wrecks'.

This was another seabird with an above average showing in 2022, with 21 records and 218 bird-days logged. This makes it the best year since 2012.

There was just one bird at the start of the year, in Eyemouth harbour on 9-Jan (**GP**).

In autumn, the first was on 5-Nov, also at Eyemouth, and then one the next day at Dunglass, which was watched being eaten by a Great Black-backed Gull (both **DKG**)! The main passage was concentrated between 18-Nov to 20-Nov, with 170 bird-days logged at St Abb's Head and Eyemouth (**CH, DKG, RJ**). Small numbers continued until 24-Nov, with a gap then until 17-Dec, with 12 at Eyemouth, 7 there two days later and a final single at Burnmouth on 22-Dec (**CDG**).

(Common) Guillemot

Uria aalge

Abundant, localised coastal breeder on large cliffs. Some movements in autumn with fewer records in winter.

High numbers remained in the North Sea during the winter 2021-22, sometimes close inshore and this resulted in 21 records being submitted in January and February, with the first four at Dunglass on 2-Jan. A total of 679 were logged on the Rocky Shore Count on 23-Jan, the vast majority at St Abb's Head NNR (**DKG**), with many more 'auks' seen too far offshore or in flight, so not diagnosed to species.

Numbers seemed slow to settle on breeding ledges, but most were well-established in April. The colonies at St Abb's Head are closely monitored (see report below) and breeding was also noted at Dowlaw (c.400-500 birds present, **NH**) and a continued summer presence south of Eyemouth and through to Burnmouth.

Generally small numbers were present offshore at most coastal locations, through almost to the year-end with one off Fleurs (Coldingham) on 29-Dec (D Bryant). The only counts of more than 10 were 100+ off St Abb's Head on 1-Sep and 18 at Eyemouth on 17-Sep (both **RJ**).

St Abb's Head NNR Seabird Report

Guillemot

Count at Study Plots

1,721

Active nest sites for breeding monitoring

264

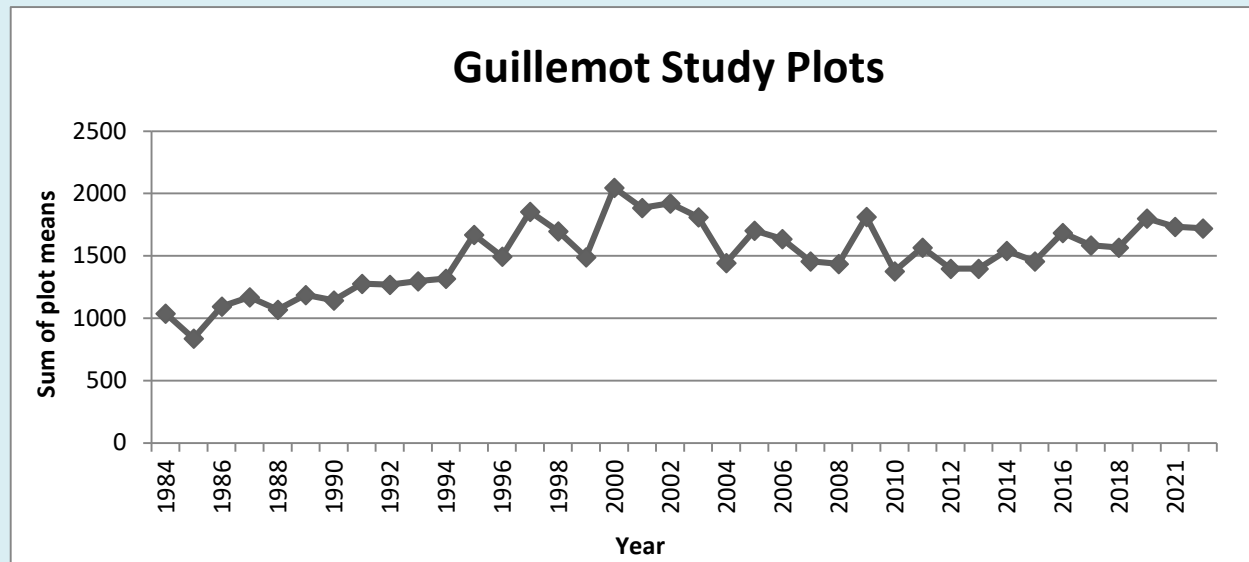
Fledged chicks

153

Fledged young per active site

0.59

Counts at Study Plots: - Ten counts of individual birds on ledges was carried out at each of the five study plots between 1-Jun and 14-Jun. The mean number of individuals on study plots was **1,721**, a 1% decrease on 2021, although it is 8% above the 10 year mean and 12% above the long-term mean.



Breeding Success: - Monitoring was again carried out by RSPB staff members, for the 7th time this year. 264 AOSs were individually marked on photographs of each of the monitoring plots selected, and 36 visits were made to observe progress at each AOS between 5-May and 18-Jul. From these monitored active sites **153** chicks successfully fledged. The breeding success, expressed as the mean of the individual plot figures, was **0.59** young fledged per active site.

C Hatsell, National Trust for Scotland

Razorbill

Alca torda

Common, localised coastal breeder on large cliffs. Some autumn passage but scarce in winter.

A very similar set of records to Guillemot, with the first sighting (of 5) at Dungalass on 2-Jan (**DKG**) and 60 recorded on the Rocky Shore Count on 23-Jan. There were a few at several coastal locations until the end of March/early April, when numbers started to build at the breeding cliffs at St. Abb's Head (report below), at Dowlaw (12 pairs, **NH**) and Fancove Head (Eyemouth) (c.10 pairs, **CDG**).

St Abb's Head NNR Seabird Report

Razorbill

Count at Study Plots

177

Active nest sites for breeding monitoring

52

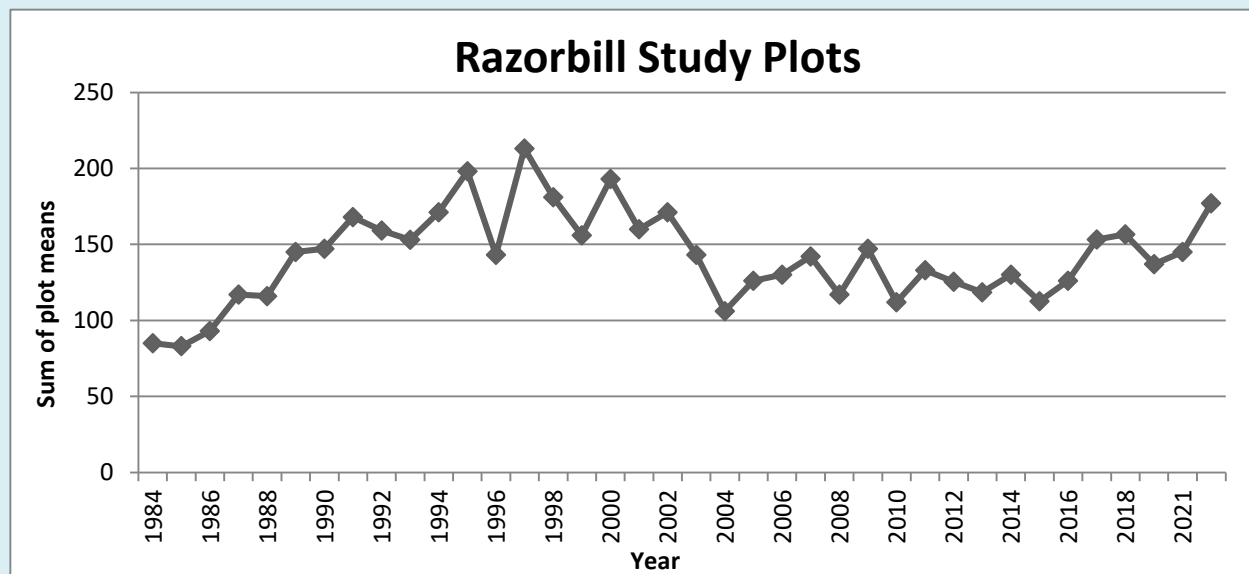
Fledged chicks

30

Fledged young per active site

0.66

Counts at Study Plots: - Ten counts of individual birds on ledges was carried out at each of the five study plots between 1-Jun and 14-Jun. The mean number of individuals on study plots was **177**, a 22% increase on 2021, a 28% above the 10 year mean and 20% above the long-term mean.



Breeding Success: - Monitoring was again carried out by RSPB staff members, for the 2nd time since 2015. 52 AOSs were individually marked on photographs of each of the monitoring plots selected, and 39 visits were made to observe progress at each AOS between 5-May and 3-Aug. From these monitored active sites **30** chicks successfully fledged. The breeding success, expressed as the mean of the individual plot figures, was **0.66** young fledged per active site. Not all sites were monitored this year, due to time constraints.

C Hatsell, National Trust for Scotland

Sea passage movements were recorded on several days in the autumn, with peak counts of 280+ from Eyemouth to Burnmouth on 17-Sep (**RJ**), 697 at St Abb's Head the following day (**CH**) and 245 at Eyemouth on 24-Sep (**DKG**). Single-figure counts continued into December, although 30 were at Eyemouth on 20-Nov (**RJ**); the last record was at Fleurs (Coldingham) on 29-Dec (D Bryant).

Black Guillemot

Cepphus grylle **LRC**

Very scarce visitor to Berwickshire coast. Not annual.

One record. The only record was from a visiting birder (M Pearson) off Eyemouth on 14-Nov (see Twitter report on Caspian Gull account, p. 100). This is the third year in a row with a single annual record.

Puffin

Fratercula arctica

Probably a former coastal breeder, mostly now seen only offshore. Uncommon offshore in autumn, scarce in winter.

As with the other auks, there were more winter reports than usual. The first records, totalling 5 birds, were seen between St Abb's village and Eyemouth on 9-Jan (**GP**) and singles/duos were present on 3 more dates in January, which included records at Pease Bay and Pettico Wick (**DKG**).

The next records were not until 23-May at St Abb's village (R Safford) and there were counts of up to 26 birds off St Abb's Head on ten dates during the summer (**CH**), although none came ashore there, which has been the situation since 2019. The last time more than 10 birds were seen ashore is 2009.

Counts of between 1 to 7 birds were seen on 16 days, generally within larger seabird movements during the autumn, with 14 at St Abb's Head on 6-Sep (**CH**), being the only larger count. The last was off Yellow Craig (Coldingham) on 28-Dec (J Drew).

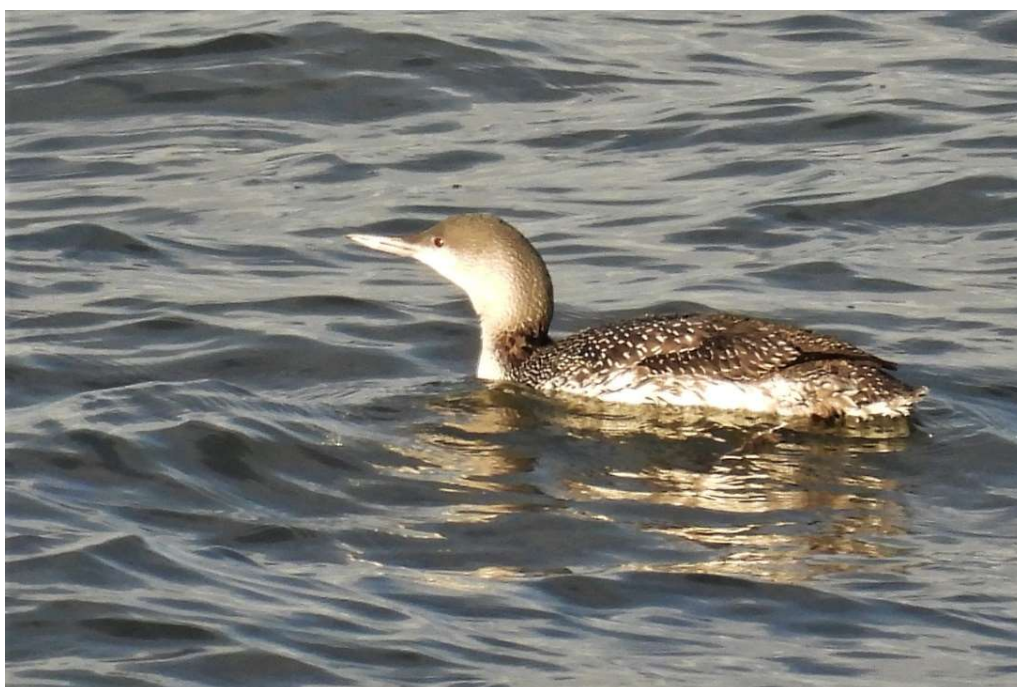
Red-throated Diver

Gavia stellata

Uncommon offshore August-May. Rare in summer. Passage during September-October while small numbers winter in sheltered bays. Very rare on inland waters.

There were records from every month of the year, although semi-regular sightings ceased on 16-Apr and did not start up again until 25-Aug. The sole records in the intervening period were passage birds on 29-May and 1-Jun, and then a single (perhaps summering) at Dunglass on 5-Jun and 24-Jul (**DKG**). All records were at the coast.

January-April: Small numbers of birds were seen all along the coast throughout this period, with the highest numbers in January. The peak count was 14 on 9-Jan at various coastal points (**GP**) and a similar number for the Rocky Shore Count on 23-Jan. The counts at Dunglass (Cockburnspath) were consistent, with 5 there on 2-Jan, 8 on 5-Mar and 6 still on 16-Apr (all **DKG**).



Red-throated Diver, off Eyemouth, November (R Jackson)

August-November: Following counts of up to 6 in late August/early September, the first peak passage was seen between 15-Sep and 24-Sep, with a peak daily count of c.40 off Eyemouth on 17-Sep (**DKG**). October was quieter, with a maximum count of 10 on 19-Oct, again off Eyemouth. In line with many seabirds, there was then a large movement of Red-throated Divers between 19-Nov and 21-Nov, with a count of c.80 past Eyemouth on 20-Nov (**DKG, RJ**). In addition, 13 birds were seen feeding off Dunglass for most of November.

December: A much quieter month, although 17 were seen spread along the coast on 17-Dec (**DKG, GP**), which included 7 at Eyemouth. Most other counts in the month were of singles.

Black-throated Diver

Gavia arctica

Very uncommon offshore from September to March. Rare in summer months and very rare inland.

A typical set of records, with 10 reports (9 birds), all of singles, at the coast during the autumn/winter.

Sites - Black-throated Diver records	Date(s)	Observer
St Abb's Head	8-Sep	C Hatsell
Pease Bay	8-Sep	N Hammatt
Eyemouth	17-Sep	R Jackson
Eyemouth	16-Oct	DK Graham
St Abb's Head	18-Nov	C Hatsell
Eyemouth	20-Nov	R Jackson
St Abb's Head	26-Nov	L Pulawski
Dunglass (Cockburnspath)	27-Nov, 29-Nov	DK Graham, R Jackson
Eyemouth	19-Dec	C Hatsell

Great Northern Diver

Gavia immer

Scarce in winter-spring and uncommon in autumn-winter. Rare in summer months and very rare inland.

A slightly lower number of reports than 2021, but broadly fitting in to the typical occurrence pattern. All records this year were coastal and are tabled below.

Sites - Great Northern Diver records	Date(s)	Number	Observer(s)
Pease Bay	9-Jan, 15-Jan	1	G Paterson, DK Graham
Coldingham Bay	23-Jan	2	DK Graham, C Hatsell
St Abb's-Coldingham	17-Feb, 22-Feb	1	R Safford, G Paterson
Pettico Wick (St Abb's Head)	12-Mar, 24-Mar	1	C Hatsell
St Abb's village	13-Apr	1	P Safford
Eyemouth	18-Sep	1	DK Graham
Eyemouth	16-Oct	1	DK Graham
Eyemouth	5-Nov	1	DK Graham
St Abb's Head	18-Nov to 21-Nov	1-2	C Hatsell
Eyemouth	19-Nov, 20-Nov	2-8	DK Graham
Dunglass (Cockburnspath)	27-Nov	2	DK Graham
Pease Bay	2-Dec	1	L Lamont
Eyemouth	17-Dec	1	DK Graham
Coldingham Bay	22-Dec	1	G Paterson

White-billed Diver

Gavia adamsii

LRC

A rare vagrant to the Berwickshire coast. Most recent previous records in 2017 and 2020.

One record. A bird was seen flying south close in at Black Gable (St Abb's Head) on 21-Nov (**CH**). This was the sixth record for Borders and is the third year in a row with at least one record. (It was seen on the same day that Ciaran later found the Hume's Leaf Warbler at nearby Mire Loch!).

Storm Petrel

Hydrobates pelagicus

Uncommon late summer and autumn passage migrant, mostly at night, although ringing has shown their constant presence. Extremely rare inland records, typically after severe storms.

There were no reports of this elusive small seabird, mainly due to the absence of any nocturnal ringing activity with tape lures. Also occasionally seen during seawatches, but none were sighted this year.

Fulmar

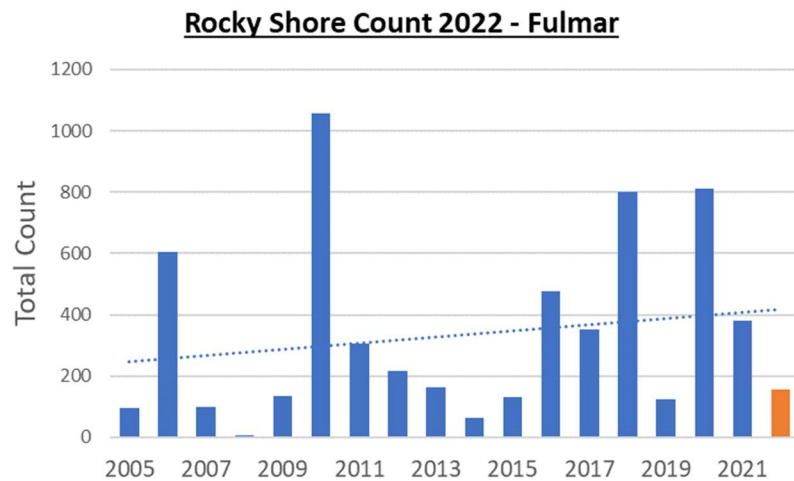
Fulmarus glacialis

Well-represented but declining breeder, found along much of coastline. Scarce in late autumn, few large movements in recent years. Rare inland.

As usual, Fulmars are present at breeding cliffs from the start of the year, with the winter Rocky Shore Count providing an early count of the numbers present.

The 2022 Rocky Shore Count took place on 23-Jan, with a count of **158** Fulmars along the Berwickshire coast.

This is a marked reduction on the numbers seen in the last two years, but is in line with the general pattern since 2005.



Small numbers probably breed all along the coast, including at Dowlaw/Fast Castle Head and between Eyemouth and Lamberton, but the main breeding colony is at St Abb's Head.

St Abb's Head NNR Seabird Report

Fulmar

Apparently Occupied Sites (AOS)

98

Active sites for breeding monitoring

55

Fledged chicks

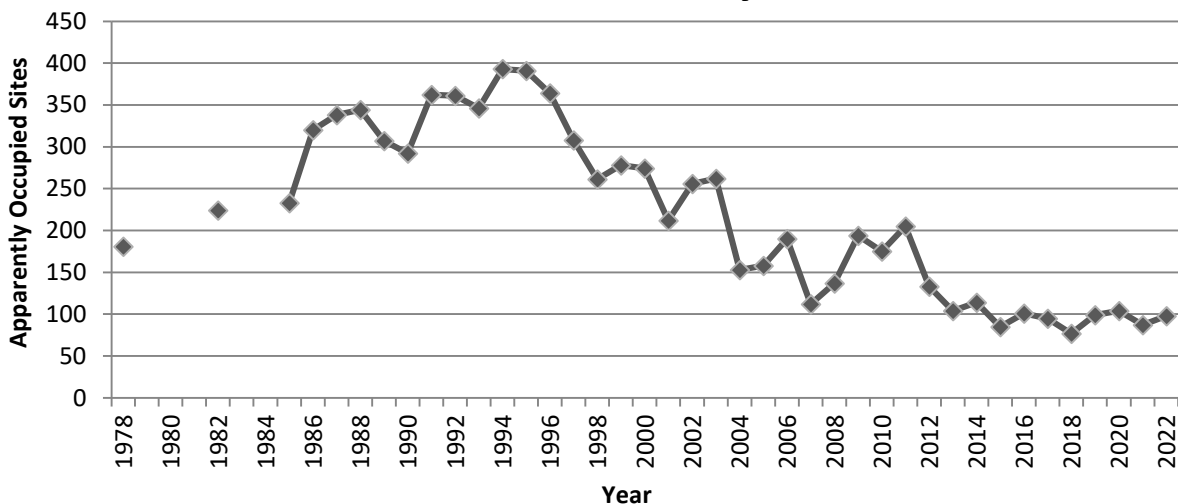
17

Fledged young per active site

0.38

Whole Colony Count: - This was carried out from land on 17-Jun and a sea count on 14-Jun, with **98 AOSs**, which is a 13% increase on 2021 and 2% above the 10-year mean, although the colony has seen a 75% decline since the heyday in the mid-1990s.

Fulmar Whole Colony Count



St Abb's Head NNR Seabird Report

Fulmar

Breeding Success: - Fulmar productivity monitoring was carried out in 2022 for the second time since 2008. Seven visits were made to the 10 monitoring plots between 2-Jun and 2-Sep. Nests were individually marked on laminated photos of the monitoring plots and the progress of each nest was recorded up to fledging. 55 AOSs were monitored (representing 56% of the population), from which **17** chicks fledged. The breeding success, expressed as the mean of individual plot figures, was **0.38** young fledged per AOS.

C Hatsell, National Trust for Scotland

Late summer/early autumn numbers were quite muted, with many records probably relating to local breeders, rather than any strong passage. The maximum daily count was 30 around St Abb's village on 3-Sep (R Safford). A darker 'Northern' (or 'Blue') Fulmar was seen on 1-Sep off St Abb's harbour (**RJ**).

There were no records for a couple of months after 29-Sep, until 19 were counted back on the breeding cliffs at Cove (Cockburnspath) on 29-Nov (**RJ**) and then at various places during December.

Cory's Shearwater

Calonectris borealis SBRC

Extremely rare passage seabird. Last previous record in 2011.

One record. A single bird was watched coming out of Coldingham Bay to go north past the St Abb's harbour area on 1-Sep (**RJ**). **Accepted by SBRC.** [Two birds were also reported at Dowlaw on the same date, but these were not substantiated].

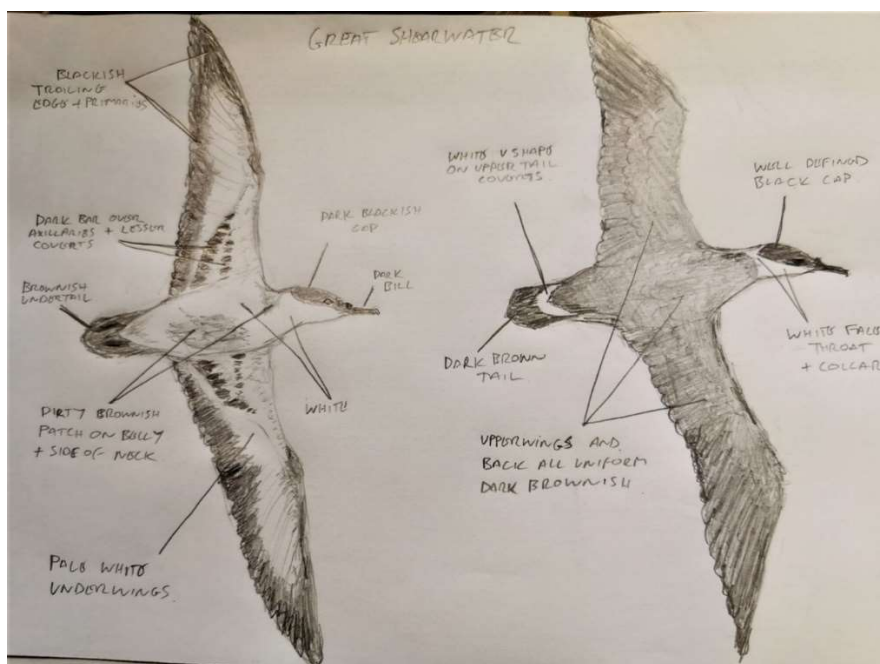
This is only the fourth confirmed record for Borders and the first since 2011, when two single birds were seen. All sightings to date have been in early- to mid-September.

Great Shearwater

Ardenna gravis SBRC

Extremely rare passage seabird. Last previous record in 2014.

Three records. There were an exceptional three reports of this large shearwater, the 5th, 6th and 7th records for Borders and the first records since a single bird in 2014.



Sketch of Great Shearwater, off Eyemouth, September (DK Graham)

The first bird was seen on 16-Aug going north at Eyemouth (P Stronach); the second, also at Eyemouth, on 3-Sep (**DKG**) and the third north at Black Gable (St Abb's Head) on 29-Sep (**CH**). **All accepted by SBRC.**

Sooty Shearwater

Ardenna grisea

Uncommon to well-represented autumn passage migrant along the coast, mostly mid-Aug to mid-Oct. Numbers can vary greatly.

There were many more reports than in 2021, although most were singles, so nowhere near the overall counts seen in 2020. However, this was the best year since 2013 (2020 aside).

All were seen between 17-Aug and 29-Sep, with over half of them seen in the four days from 15-Sep to 18-Sep. The majority were seen off Eyemouth, with the St Abb's area close behind. The records are summarised in the table below. Clearly, there could be some duplication between records.

Sites - Sooty Shearwater records	Date	Daily Number	Observer(s)
Eyemouth	17-Aug, 23-Aug	2,1	DK Graham, D Bradnum
Dowlaw (Coldingham)	22-Aug	1	N Hammatt
St Abb's village	29-Aug,30-Aug	1,1	P Safford
Eyemouth	3-Sep	10	DK Graham, G Paterson
St Abb's village	3-Sep,4-Sep	4,3	P Safford, R Safford
St Abb's Head	6-Sep	5	C Hatsell
Eyemouth	10-Sep	4	DK Graham, R Bramhall
St Abb's Head	15-Sep,16-Sep	3,10	M Hannam, C Hatsell
Eyemouth	16-Sep to 18-Sep	9,2,16	R Drew, DKG, R Jackson
St Abb's Head	18-Sep	1	C Hatsell
St Abb's Head	29-Sep	2	C Hatsell
Eyemouth	29-Sep	2	R Drew

Manx Shearwater

Puffinus puffinus

Offshore passage migrant in variable numbers. Scarce April-May with largest movements July-October. Rare in Nov to Dec.

In keeping with some good sea-watching periods that delivered the rarer seabirds in this report, the presence of Manx Shearwaters was also well above average, with 50 records and over 1700 aggregate bird-days, making it the best year since 2013. The highest daily count was 363 past Black Gable (St Abb's Head) on 26-Jul (**CH**), with further three-figure counts of 133 past Eyemouth on 17-Aug and 240 past Eyemouth on 18-Sep (both **DKG**).

The monthly presence is tabulated below and contrasted with 2021.

Year	Monthly aggregate bird-days for whole Borders coastline							Total
	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	
2021	4	158	46	46	10	8	2	274
2022	27	0	503	357	843	0	0	1730

In addition, there was an unusual winter record of a single going north past Burnmouth on 25-Jan (**GP**). There was a notably early end to the passage on 29-Sep, with 120 birds, split between Eyemouth and St Abb's Head, providing a strong finish!

Balearic Shearwater

Puffinus mauretanicus

LRC

Rare vagrant Aug-Oct along the coast. Most recent previous records in 2017 and 2021.

Two records. In an exceptional year for rare seabirds in Borders, it was perhaps not too surprising that this was the best year for Balearic Shearwaters since 2008 and the second year running with at least one record.

The first bird was seen in side-by-side comparison with a Manx Shearwater during the same seawatch that produced a Great Shearwater on 16-Aug at Eyemouth (P Stronach). The second was watched going north close inshore off Black Gable (St Abb's Head) on 6-Sep (CH).

White Stork

Ciconia ciconia

LRC

Very rare on passage, usually in spring. Most recent previous record in 2012.



White Stork, near Maxton, April (A Drummond)

One record. The first stork in Borders for ten years was in a field near the Temple, between Maxton and St. Boswells on 19-Apr (A Drummond) and was the tenth record for Borders. The position on vagrants is clouded by the potential uncertainty of local escapes. This bird was given the benefit of the doubt.

Gannet

Morus bassanus

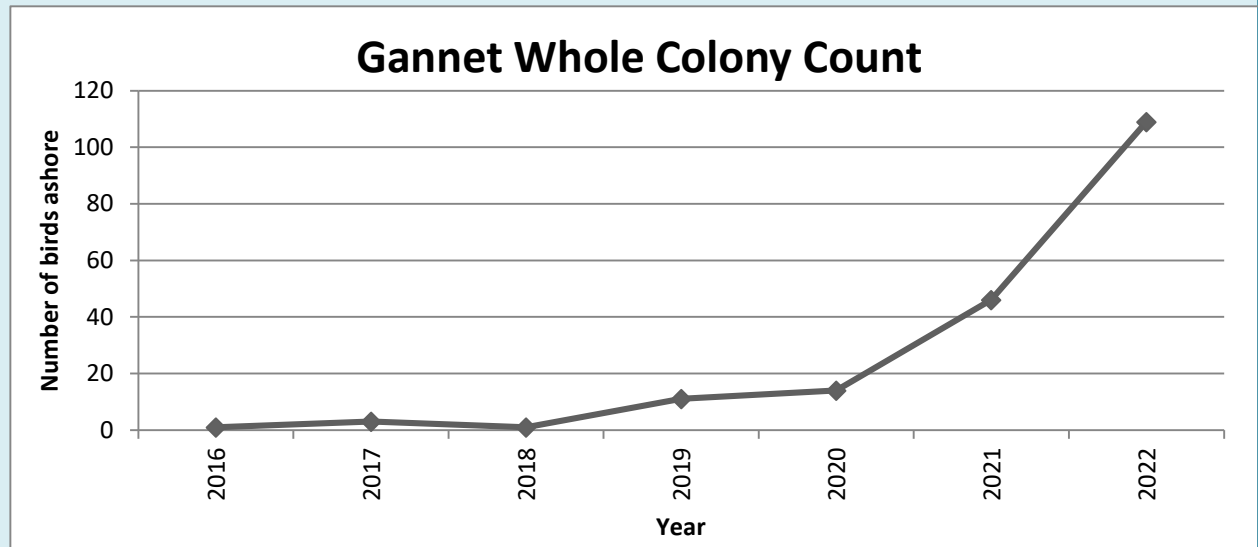
Rare, but increasing, breeder at St Abb's Head. Bass Rock residents abundant on feeding sorties offshore. Scarce in winter. Rare inland records, mostly juvenile birds.

There were records of Gannets passing offshore in every month of the year, although numbers in January and then again in November/December were generally low. In the months from February to October the passage remained almost continuous, despite the well-publicised crisis with avian flu in the main colony at Bass Rock. The developing colony at St Abb's Head is covered in the report below.

Many submissions do not record the numbers seen, which makes it impossible to assess when peaks occur. The largest daily numbers, however, were recorded in September, with 737 north off Eyemouth on 29-Sep (GP), 500 off St Abb's village on 3-Sep (R Safford) and 300+ there on 1-Sep (RJ).

Apparently Occupied Nests (AON)	Active sites for breeding monitoring	Fledged chicks	Fledged young per active site
109	85	1	0.01

Whole Colony Count: - This was carried out from land on 17-Jun and a sea count on 14-Jun, with **109 AONs**, a further 137% increase on the 46 nests in 2021; first colonisation was in 2017/19. The distribution of nests was once again interesting, with the main colony situated on Foul Carr. Several other sub-colonies are now forming, with Cleaver, Floatcarr and Skelly holding nest sites. The breakdown of nests consisted of: Foul Carr - 56 AONs (original site); Cleaver Rock - 7 AONs; Floatcarr - 30 AONs and Skelly - 16 AONs.



Breeding Success: - 24 visits were made to the 4 monitoring plots between 21-Apr and 3-Oct. Nests were individually marked on laminated photos of the monitoring plots and the progress of each nest was recorded up to fledging. In a year blighted by Avian influenza, **just one chick** survived to fledge from the entire colony.

A heavy rain event in late June saw most birds abandon nest sites. This was after a few adults had started dying on the colonies (suspected Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza) and these two things conspired to bring about almost complete failure in our Gannets in 2022.

85 out of the 109 AONs could be monitored (viewed from land). All were seen to be apparently incubating at some stage, but only 19 were confirmed to contain an egg. Other birds may have been incubating and lost their clutch but due to visibility issues in the colony could not be confirmed. Seven chicks hatched and just **one bird** went on to fledge, giving a productivity of **0.01** expressed as an average across the plots.

The spread of the Gannet as a nesting species at St Abb's Head is going to be an interesting development in the seabird colony here in years to come. The new developments with Avian Influenza may change their status yet, as an exponential rise may be halted by this virus sweeping the UK and the world.

C Hatsell, National Trust for Scotland

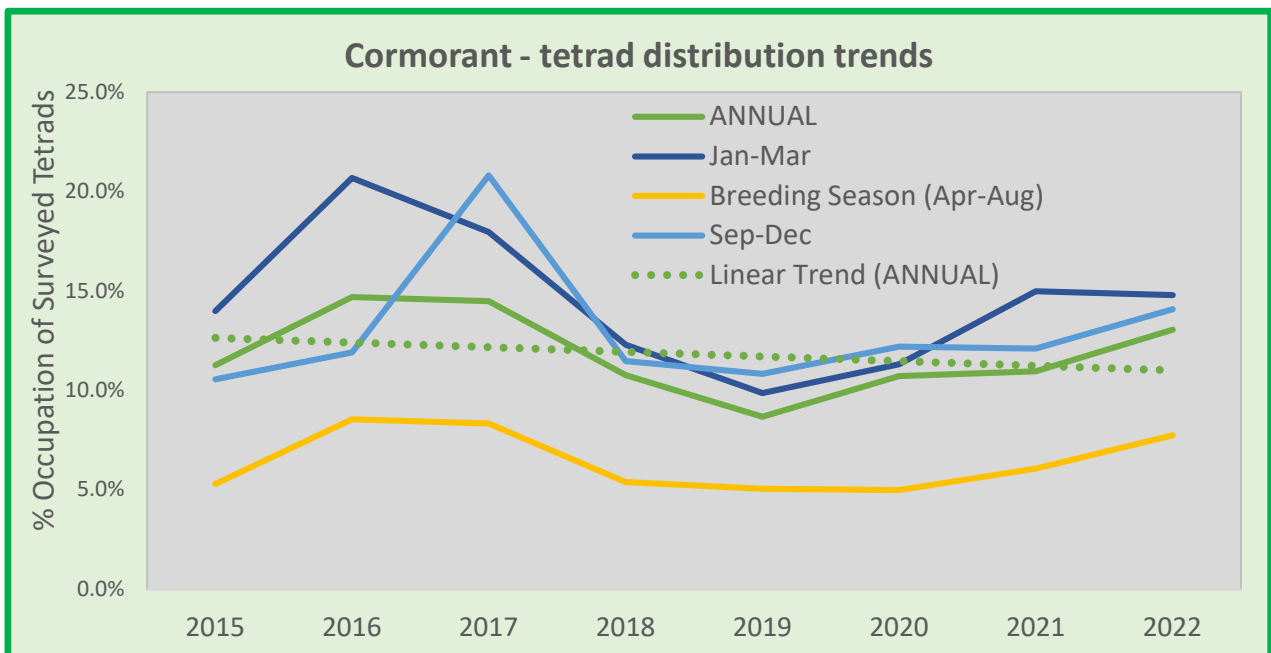
Cormorant

Phalacrocorax carbo

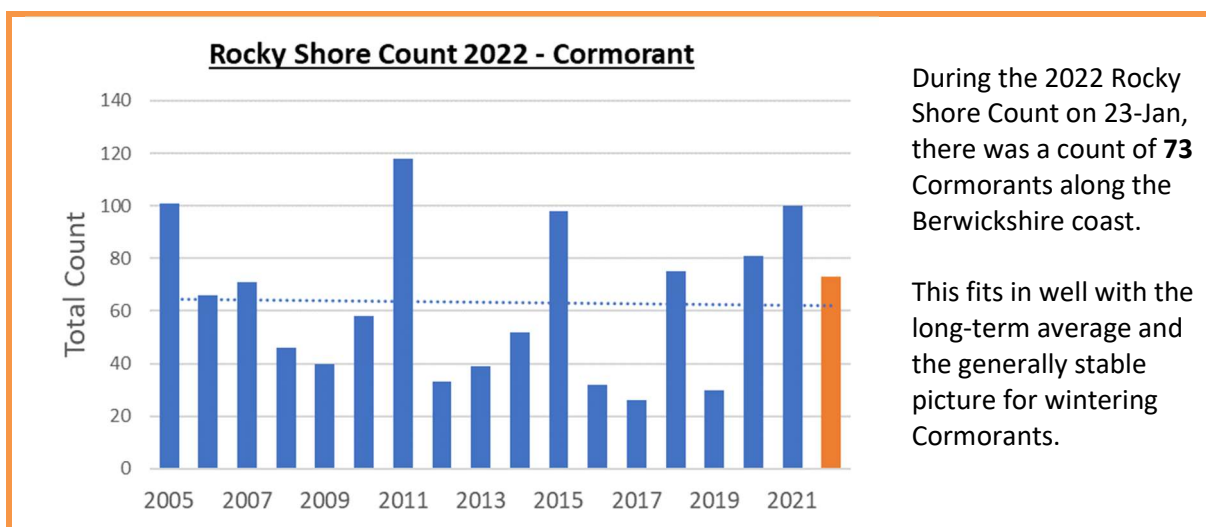
Uncommon breeder, mainly at Fast Castle stacks. Widespread on coast but often also seen on rivers and large lochs, mostly September-April.

The distribution of Cormorants appears to be slowly recovering from a dip between 2018 and 2020, although is still found in c.25% fewer tetrads than in 2016/17, the reasons for which remain unclear. It remains noticeably less widespread in the summer months, when it becomes primarily coastal.

The largest counts overall are seen at inland roost and feeding sites during the winter months, so 83 at Teviot Haughs (Nisbet) on 9-Feb (**ST**) and up to c.70 at Tweed: Banff Mill-Redden in early December (**GP**, **RM et.al.**) fit into this pattern. There were also 47 at Lees Haugh (Coldstream) on 17-Jan (A Spybey) and 67 at Tweed: Mertoun Bridge-Mertoun House on 15-Nov (**AC**).



Coastally, the Rocky Shore Count tends to monitor the total wintering numbers quite well (below). Individual tetrad counts of 23 at Dowlaw (Coldingham) on 28-Sep and 30 at Fleurs (Coldingham) on 29-Dec are typical.



During the 2022 Rocky Shore Count on 23-Jan, there was a count of **73** Cormorants along the Berwickshire coast.

This fits in well with the long-term average and the generally stable picture for wintering Cormorants.

As part of his Dowlaw 'big year', Neil Hammatt was able to confirm Cormorants breeding on the stacks at Dowlaw/Fast Castle Head, with a substantial count of 28 occupied nests, which is many more than in recent

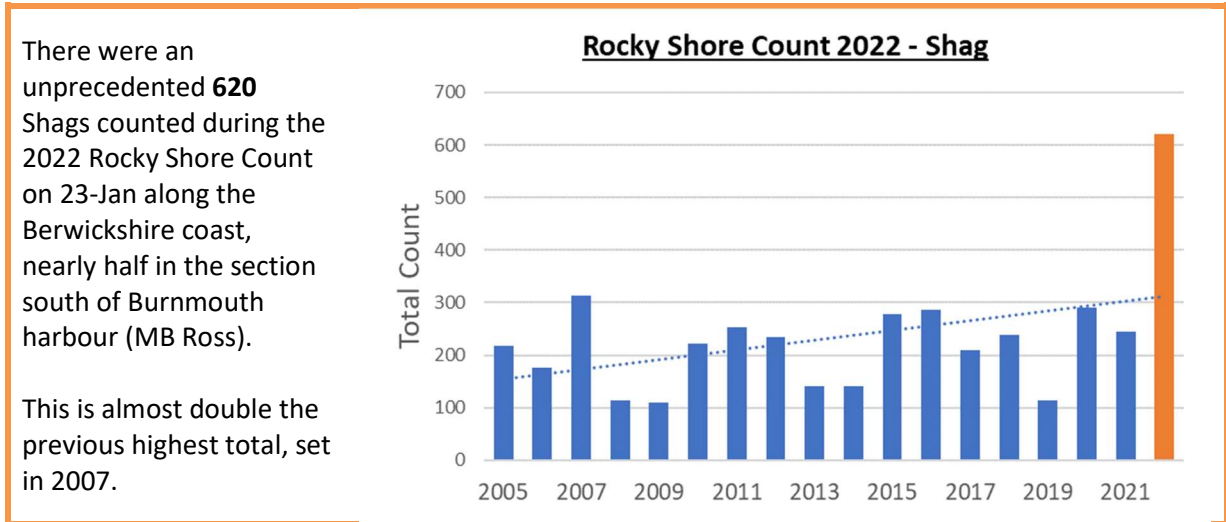
years. Apparent territories were also recorded at Coldingham Bay on 23-May (K Wood). There was also a single inland probable breeding record at Fruid Resr, with a pair there on 17-Apr (H Urquhart).

Shag

Gulosus aristotelis

Common breeder in variable numbers along parts of the coast. Autumn movements into Forth occur in September-October. Rare inland.

Exclusively coastal again, with record numbers at the start of the year on the Rocky Shore Count.

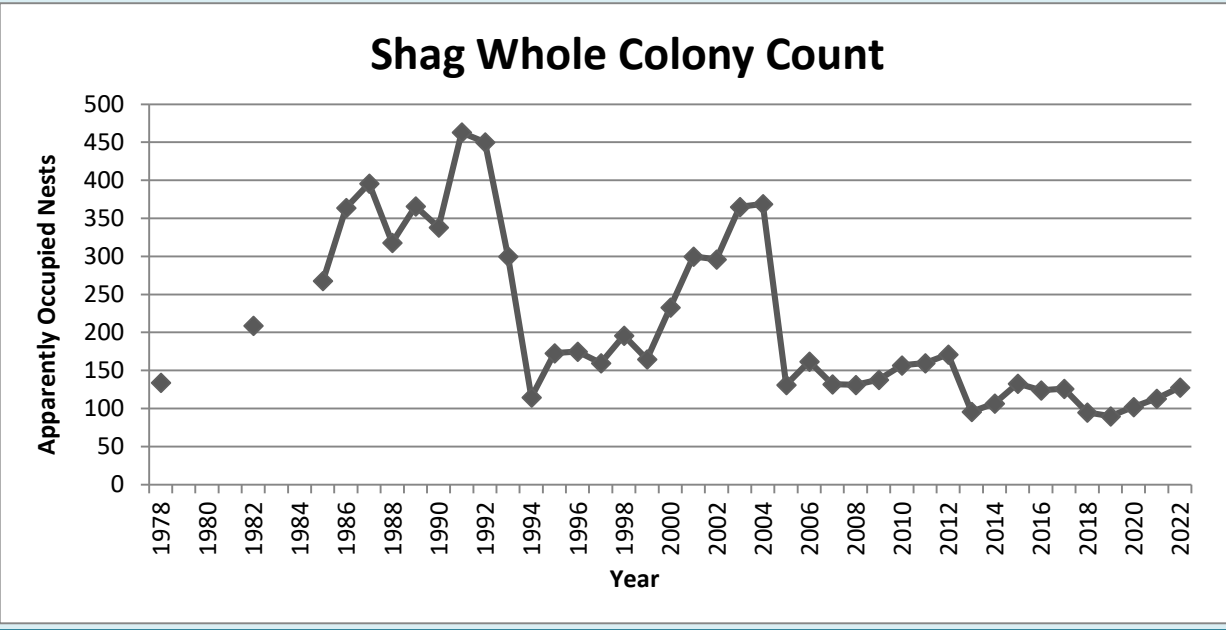


There were no similar concentrations at other times during the first quarter, the best tetrad count being c.43 at Coldingham Bay on 22-Feb (GP).

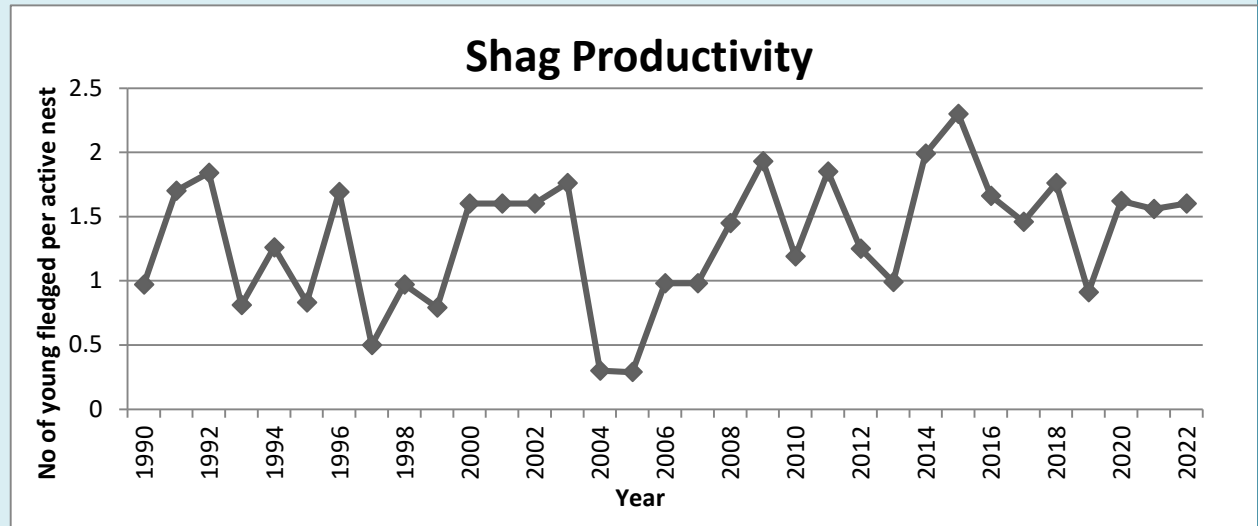
St Abb's Head NNR Seabird Report Shag

Apparently Occupied Nests (AON)	Active sites for breeding monitoring	Fledged chicks	Fledged young per active site
128	53	81	1.60

Whole Colony Count: - This was carried out from land on 6-Jun and a sea count on 14-Jun, with **128 AONs**, a 13% increase on 2021 and 15% above the 10-year mean, but just 63% of the long-term mean.



Breeding Success: - 19 visits were made to the four monitoring plots between 2-Apr and 5-Sep. Nests were individually marked on laminated photos of the monitoring plots and the progress of each nest was recorded up to fledging. A total of 53 active nests were mapped on the plots and **81** chicks successfully fledged. The breeding success, expressed as the mean of the individual plot figures, was **1.60** young fledged per active nest; an increase of 3% on 2021. (The productivity at the separate plots was as follows: West Hurker - 2.08; Downie's Goats - 1.00; Foul Bay - 1.14 and White Heugh - 2.18).



C Hatsell, National Trust for Scotland

As well as the main breeding site at St Abb's Head NNR, documented above, breeding was also noted at Dowlaw (34 nests, **NH**) and on the cliffs south of Eyemouth (c.10 nests, **RJ**).

There was a post-breeding gathering of 65+ birds at St Abb's Head on 30-Jul (G Liston) and 32 off Dowlaw on 22-Aug, which were judged to be mainly the young of the year (**NH**).

As the autumn progresses it becomes more difficult to assess whether birds are just passing through or settling in to winter feeding areas, the best counts being 60 off Eyemouth on 17-Sep (**RJ**), c.65 in Pease Bay on 24-Nov (**GP**) and 85 feeding offshore at Dungallass on 27-Nov (**DKG**).

Cattle Egret

Bubulcus ibis **SBRC**

Extremely rare vagrant to Scotland. First record for Borders in 2022.



Cattle Egret, Sprouston, December (D Gray, R Jackson)

One record. This small heron was found during an SOC branch outing in a horse field at Whitmuirhaugh Farm, near Sprouston on 3-Dec (N Hinchliff, G Paterson *et. al.*). It was then seen daily until early afternoon on the 7-Dec, although it occasionally went 'missing' for a few hours. [There were local reports that it had been present for several weeks, but these were not substantiated]. **Accepted by SBRC.**

This was the **FIRST** Borders record. Despite the huge growth in numbers and distribution in southern England, this remains a rare bird in Scotland, with annual numbers generally only two or three birds at most. The first record for Lothian was only in 2017 and there have only been a handful of records in Dumfries & Galloway.

(Another photograph of this bird is on p.234)

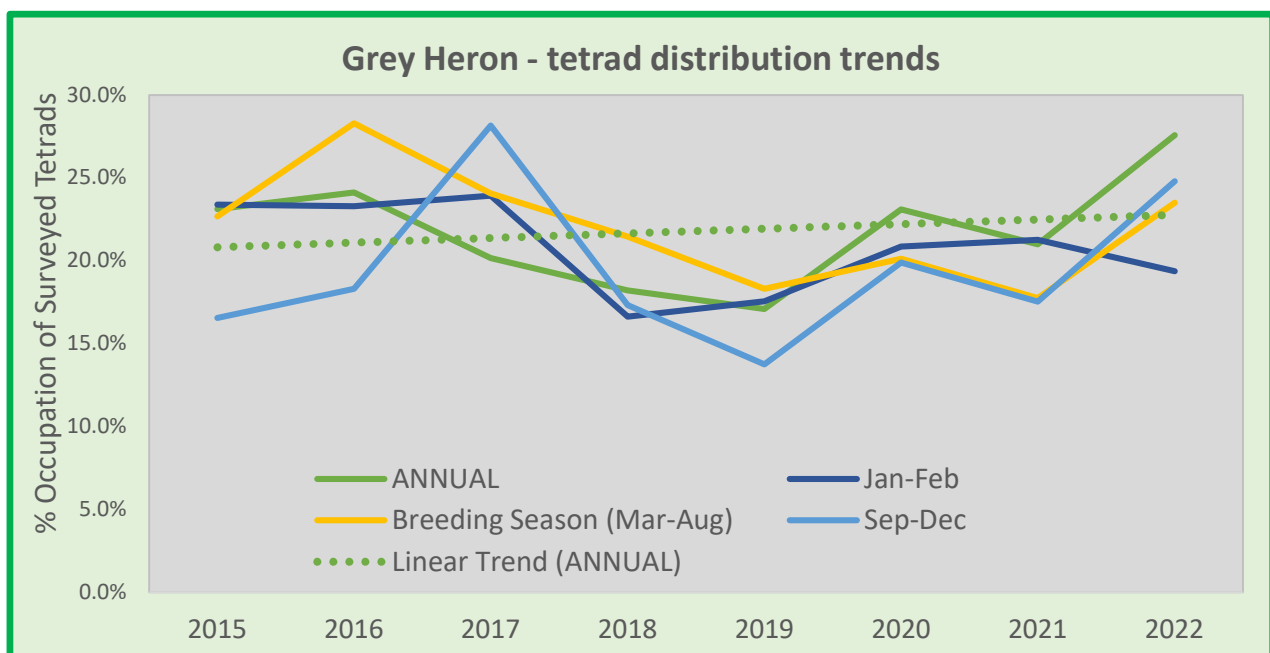


Cattle Egret, Sprouston, December (R Jackson)

Grey Heron

Ardea cinerea

Widespread and well-represented resident breeder. Assemblies of more than ten birds are unusual.



The distribution of Grey Herons has remained stable during the past few years and there are only minor differences in the trends over the respective seasons.

As in previous years, the larger counts are generally associated with known heronry sites or particular non-breeding feeding concentrations along the major rivers. Double-figure counts were consistently reported during several monthly WeBS counts at Tweed: Banff Mill-Redden, with 19 on 15-May being the largest, and nearby Hendersyde Farm (Kelso) had 13 counted on 15-Feb (**RM**). The only other count over 10 was of 12 at Bellanrigg (Manor Valley) on 10-Mar (B Gilmour), probably returning to a known heronry.

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	5	4	7	26	10	6	12	20

Known heronries (in **bold**) are censused every year and are the main source of information on breeding numbers. The sites are tabulated below, together with any other breeding sites observed.

Site/Tetrad - Grey Heron confirmed breeding	Date	Br. Code	Observer
Drumelzier	-	6ON	HC
Bellanrigg (Manor Valley)	-	7ON	HC
Tushielaw (Ettrick)	5-May	3ON	HC, G Christer
Cardrona	-	2ON	HC
Plora Wood (Innerleithen)	29-May	3ON,3FL	HC, R Bramhall
Clarilaw (Lilliesleaf)	26-Apr	3ON	HC, M Moncrieff
Tweed: Lowood-Gattonside	-	13ON	HC
Newtown St Boswells	-	2ON	HC
Monteviot House (Ancrum)		5ON	HC
Nenthorn House (Smailholm)	16-Apr	1ON	HC, M Moncrieff
Heiton-Roxburgh	-	5ON	HC
Maxwellheugh (Kelso)	10-Jun	9ON	HC, K Robeson
Allanbank-Craigswalls (Chirnside)	12-Jun	4ON	HC, AP Mossop
Fishwick (Paxton)	10-May	5ON	HC, M Holling
Ayton	-	1ON	HC
Fruid Resr (Tweedhopefoot)	15-May to 17-Jul	P, FL	H Urquhart
Harryburn House (Lauder)	25-Mar	N	R Catalano
Tweed: Mertoun Bridge-Mertoun House	21-Mar	P	M Moncrieff
Edrom (Duns)	15-May	1ON	AP Mossop
Lumsdaine (Coldingham)	31-May	5FL	N Hammatt

See Introduction for breeding codes. (HC = Heronries Census 2022).

New heronries: - Grey Heron colonies do move following disturbance (e.g. from tree felling, walkers) or for sometimes unknown reasons. It can be remarkably difficult to find these relocated or new colonies unless reported. If you think you have found a colony that is not on the list above, then please contact the local heronries co-ordinator (presently Malcolm Ross), with a six-figure grid reference, if possible.

Purple Heron

Ardea purpurea **SBRC**

Extremely rare vagrant, mainly in spring or summer months. Last record in 1999.

One record. Following reports on 25-Aug of a Purple Heron at the A1 bridge over the Tweed (in Northumberland), what was presumably the same bird was seen at Teviot Haughs on 27-Aug. Although it was flushed and appeared to fly off, it was found again in the same area the following day (both S Turnbull). **Accepted by SBRC.**

This is just the third record for Borders, with the only previous reports being an historic record at Duns in April 1917 and more recently an immature at Megget Reservoir on 28-Jun 1999.

Great White Egret

Ardea alba LRC

Rare, but increasing vagrant, with multiple records annually in recent years.

The number of records nearly doubled from 2021, with 16 reports, all in the non-breeding months. These are tabled below. It is becoming difficult to estimate the numbers involved, but at least three birds in the autumn to winter period and two passing records from the coast seems a reasonable minimum. The Yetholm Loch and Teviot Haughs birds may also have been returnees from earlier years.

The Yetholm Loch birds were also seen at the start of 2023, with a third also present there.

Site/Tetrad - Great White Egret records	Date(s)	Number	Observer(s)
Yetholm Loch	18-Jan, 20-Feb	1	M Holling, C Moses
Teviot Haughs (Nisbet)	17-Mar	1	S Turnbull
Yetholm Loch	3-Sep	1	CD Green
Birgham (Kelso)	8-Sep	2	S Turnbull
Eyemouth	29-Sep	1	G Paterson
Kalemouth (Kelso)	2-Oct	1	I Abernethy
Dowlaw (Coldingham)	21-Oct	1	JDH Hadfield
Yetholm Loch	1-Nov to 31-Dec	1-2	C Burton <i>et. al.</i>
Teviot Haughs (Crailing)	3-Nov, 4 Dec	1	S Turnbull

Little Egret

Egretta garzetta

Scarce but increasing visitor, particularly from late summer through to late winter. Quite coastal initially, but now occurring more inland along the major rivers.

This was a milestone year for the Little Egret, with the first confirmed breeding for the region and a further increase in distribution to reach 40 tetrads, which has effectively doubled in just 3 years. The maximum numbers counted also stepped up (see below).

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of occupied tetrads for year</i>	2	10	23	19	20	36	37	40

January-February: records came from 12 tetrads, which was actually lower than in 2021. Sightings of up to two birds in the Teviot Haughs area and on the Tweed between Kelso and Coldstream were regular and there were singles occasionally elsewhere, including Tweed: Mertoun Bridge, Yetholm Loch and an outlier on the Blackadder at Middlefield (Duns).

March-August: there was a large increase in summer records to 70 sightings over 21 tetrads (9 tetrads in 2021) and there were records from every month, although there was an increased number of reports from July onwards.

The main cluster was on the Tweed between Kelso and Coldstream, which culminated in **confirmed breeding**, with an occupied nest in an established heronry near Kelso on 10-Jun (**KR**). There were double-figure tetrad counts of 11 at Tweed: Banff Mill-Redden on 17-Jul (WeBS) and up to 8 in adjacent tetrads on different dates. A recently fledged bird was seen at Fireburnmill (Coldstream) on 19-Jul (**NS**).

There was also a semi-continuous presence at Teviot Haughs, with up to 4 in Jul and including 2 juveniles, although local breeding was never observed. The area around Paxton on the Tweed and Whiteadder also held up to 3 birds in June, probable overspill from a larger presence nearby as the Tweed enters England. The final cluster of records was at Upsettlington (Swinton), with up to 4 during July/August, rising to 10 on 1-Sep (J Towill).

Two at Newmains (Reston) on 14-Jul (**DKG**) and a single at Linkim Shore (Coldingham) on 11-Aug (**RJ**) were also recorded. Another single at Newcastleton on 2-Aug (C Blackie) had probably wandered from the Solway population.

September-December: a strong finish for the year, with 126 records in 33 tetrads (21 tetrads in 2021). These included several coastal sightings in addition to a near continuous presence at several regular sites along the Tweed from Paxton to as far upstream as Kelso (up to 6 birds) and to Teviot Haughs/Eckford-Wooden Loch (Jedburgh) (also up to 6 birds). One even reached as far as Innerleithen on 24-Dec (**RB**) and two stayed into 2023 in the Mertoun Bridge area (**AC**).

Coastal sightings stretched from Burnmouth through to St Abb's Head and also some fly-bys at Dowlaw on 21-Oct (JDH Hadfield) and past Pease Bay on 17-Dec (**GP**).



Little Egret, Burnmouth, December (J Montana)

Osprey

Pandion haliaetus

Uncommon, but increasing, summer visitor and passage migrant, April-September.

BirdTrack records submitted actually fell back a little from 2021, although the number of sites has increased again to a new record high. The RSG work also shows another increasingly successful breeding season (see below). A number of new nesting sites were located, including a further spread downstream along the Tweed catchment almost to the tidal stretches.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of occupied tetrads for year</i>	21	43	37	37	35	52	56	64

The first sighting was on 25-Mar at Innerleithen (**RB**), although most arrivals were from 8-Apr onwards. Nearly all birds had left on migration by mid-September, but there were notably late records of singles at Walkerburn on 26-Sep (M Cockburn), at Teviot Haughs (Nisbet) on 1-Oct (**ST**) and at Traquair on 5-Oct (M Cockburn), which is the latest departure date seen so far, by about a week.

SE Scotland Raptor Study Group Report

Osprey

Sites/ Territories checked	Sites/ Territories occupied	Sites with proven breeding	Minimum young fledged	No. of young fledged per occupied site	No. of young fledged per successful pair
20	15	15	34	2.26	2.43

2022 has been the most productive year since the Tweed Valley Osprey Project started back in 2002, when the second nest site was occupied; the first nest site recorded was located in 1998 and fledged a single chick. To date the project has fledged 305 chicks from nest sites, another notable milestone.

With more Osprey enthusiasts becoming involved in surveying and assisting with recording, 4 new nest locations were identified, with 3 of those fledging chicks. The only new site that failed to fledge any chicks still produced 2 eggs, but due to the unusual location of the nest site (on a timber stack), the eggs were predated and they built a frustration nest nearby.

Due to felling operations a couple of the regular sites were not occupied and alternative nest locations were not found due to time constraints. However, 4 new sites, 3 of which fledged chicks, were found in new areas, expanding the range of existing known sites further east along the river Tweed and a single site south, near to the border with England, nesting on a timber stack.

34 chicks were recorded as fledging and a single chick was euthanised by a vet due to being blind in one eye. 9 sites fledged 3 chicks, 2 fledged 2 chicks and 3 sites fledging singles, with a fairly even ratio of males to females from the birds that were rung.

Some of the chicks were not rung due to being unable to climb in the early part of the ringing season and later to avoid undue disturbance for the first time breeders. The good summer weather led to lower water levels in the river and larger water bodies, which probably contributed to the higher number of young produced to fledging age.

Main Camera Nest Site: Winter and early spring weather patterns seem to be consistently wetter over the past few years; however, 2022 turned out to be a very good late spring and summer breeding period for returning Ospreys. The female 'Mrs O' arrived back on 22nd March, with the male PW3 arriving late on 16th April for his second breeding. Prior to the resident male arriving, an un-ringed male mated with the female and a single egg was seen on 13th April, but not incubated and it was subsequently ejected from the nest by PW3 on his return. After some displaying and nest refurbishment, the first egg of a clutch of 3 was observed on the 21st April and two of the eggs hatched on 29th May with the third chick hatching on 31st May. The chicks named Tweed, Kirk and Glen were all fitted with satellite tags on 12th July and these were linked to the Flight of The Osprey project (link below). The first short flights were recorded on 20th July by two of the birds, with the third bird taking flight on 22nd, 52 days after hatching. The female was not seen at the nest site again after 13th August, with two of the young birds, Kirk and Tweed starting their migration on 25th August and Glen on 9th September.

The Flight of the Osprey project can be found at <https://www.conservation-without-borders.org>, which includes more details of bird 708 (Glen)'s slightly unusual southbound migration journey.

Although a few locally-fledged males from the project nest locations have returned to take over existing sites and new platforms, none of the fledged females have been recorded on any of the project sites. Two English reared birds nested in the project area this year - Blue 39 from Kielder and Blue 3AF from Rutland Water, as well as Blue 110, a 2018 bird, from the Black Isle.

Tom Lightley, Osprey co-ordinator for Lothian and Borders

Honey-buzzard

Pernis apivorus

LRC

Very rare summer visitor and potential breeder. Rare passage migrant May-June and August-September.



Honey Buzzard, St Abb's Head, Jun (N Hammatt)

One record. A migrating bird was seen and photographed, being mobbed by corvids, at St Abb's Head on 1-Jun (N Hammatt) (left).

Unlike in 2021, there were no sightings of possible breeding birds in the extensive forests to the west of the county.

Golden Eagle

Aquila chrysaetos

LRC

Rare breeder with a handful of reports of wandering immatures annually.

There was a further increase in casual records, although mostly consolidating the picture seen in 2021. Further releases in the re-introduction project should hopefully result in a wider and more frequent presence in Borders. The Raptor Study Group report is included below.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of casual records submitted for year</i>	3	5	0	1	4	3	12	14

Most of the records came from the Leithen Water/Glentress Water catchment of the Moorfoot Hills, with up to two birds present in early January through to 25-Mar (**RB**, **MM**, MB Ross), including the bird named 'Shine' from satellite-tracking. After a small gap in sightings to 17-Jun, one or two birds were intermittently seen in the area until 3-Dec (**CDG**, **RB**).

There were also singles reported at Roan Fell (Newcastleton) on 23-Mar (M Harper), Nether Phawhope (Ettrick Water) on 13-Aug (D Orr-Ewing) and White Shank (Ettrick Head) on 13-Nov (C Watson).

Sites/ Territories checked	Sites/ Territories occupied	Sites with proven breeding	Minimum young fledged	No. of young fledged per occupied site	No. of young fledged per successful pair
3	2	1	1	0.5	1

The wet winters seem to be the normal pattern now, which can have an effect on early spring breeding bird populations due to the resultant lack of prey items in certain areas.

This was the eleventh year of Roxy breeding, yet despite the lack of competition from other pairs of eagles, an abundance of prey items and lack of disturbance, the pair failed to produce two eaglets to fledging, although in 2020 there were 2 viable young, which should have both fledged if it were not for predation on one of the chicks.

The single eaglet in 2022 was fitted with a satellite tag and, as usual, stayed very close to both the nest area and the adult pair's home range for a number of months, before venturing further afield and interacting with birds from the golden eagle project releases.

A number of the young eagles are now roosting in regular areas. This suggests they are starting to occupy a territory, which looks very promising for future breeding attempts in their chosen locations. A breeding attempt was made this year by a young pair of birds, which built a nest but failed to produce any young. The site was left undisturbed by RSG members to hopefully ensure the birds return to the site in 2023.

With over 40 eagles of varying age groups now ranging in South Scotland and across the border into Northumberland it is expected that more pairs should start breeding in 2023 with a least 2-3 more sites and territories becoming occupied, including one in the Borders. It is essential to monitor the satellite tag data to determine suitable nest locations and to work with various landowners to safeguard future breeding attempts and help to bolster the spread of birds throughout South Scotland and into the central belt as well as Northern England.

Updates regarding the South of Scotland Golden Eagle recovery project can be found on web link www.goldeneaglessouthofscotland.co.uk

Tom Lightley, Golden Eagle co-ordinator for Lothian and Borders

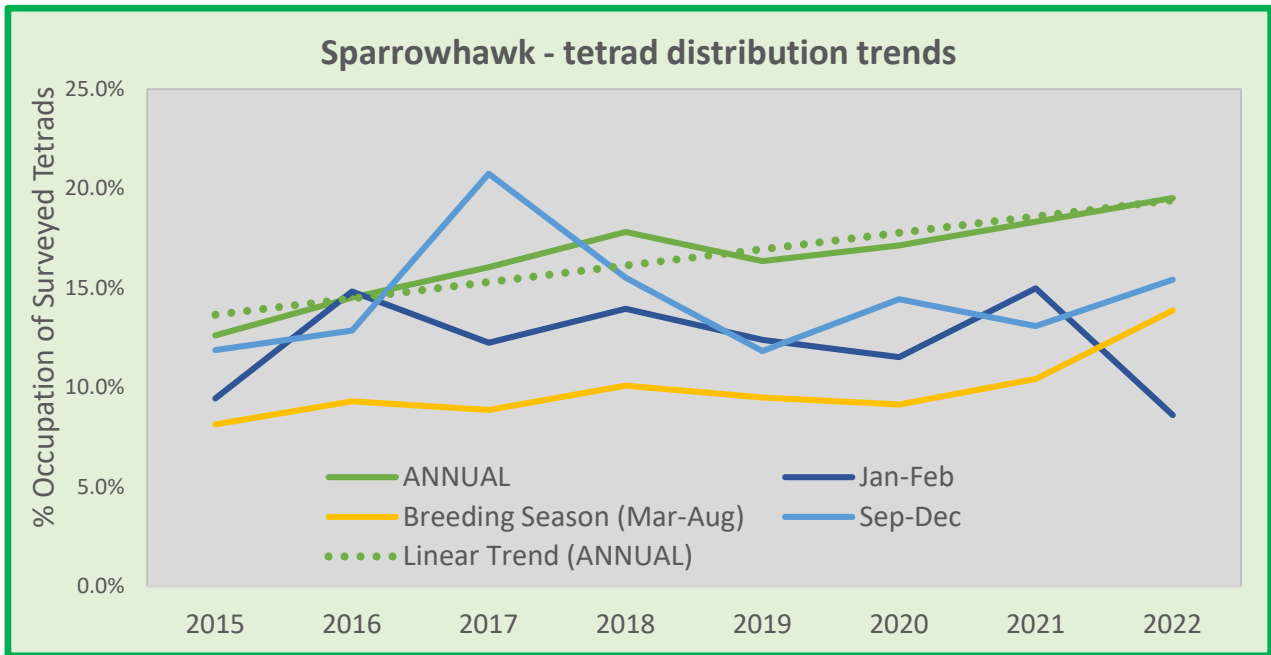
Sparrowhawk

Accipiter nisus

Common and widespread resident breeder. Some autumn passage.

The Sparrowhawk's distribution still appears to be steadily increasing, more so in the breeding season than in the winter months, which have generally shown a level trend. There also seem to be many tetrads where the occupation is not year-round, so that the annual trend is well above that of any one season.

Nearly all reports are of singles or duos/pairs, so the 3 reported at Mire Loch (St Abb's Head) on 5-Sep to 10-Sep are unusual. Similarly, the 3 together at Borthwick Quarry (Duns Castle) on 2-Nov, were recorded as "Possibly siblings from 2022 breeding", due to their playful behaviour (J Connor).



There were 11 tetrads with confirmed breeding (detailed below) and two more with probable breeding. This is a similar number to 2021, although most records last year came from nest ringing of young birds around Peebles and along the Heriot Water. The sites monitored by the RSG are probably also additional.

Site/Tetrad - Sparrowhawk confirmed breeding	Date(s)	Br. Codes	Observer
Talla Resr-Over Menzion	3-Aug	FF	D & M Thorne
Eilrig (Craik Forest)	22-Jul	FL	G Paterson
Thornielee (Clovenfords)	30-Jul	FL	G Paterson
Ashiestiel-Peel (Clovenfords)	27-Jun, 5-Aug	FF, FL	G Paterson
Charlie's Knowe (Wauchope Forest)	12-Jul	FL	G Paterson
Folly Loch-Harrietsfield	20-Jul	FF	CD Green
Eckford-Wooden Loch (Jedburgh)	28-Jul	FF	CD Green
Manderston (Duns)	30-Jul	FL	AP Mossop
Edrom (Duns)	28-Apr	FF	T Brewis
Harden Hill (Newcastleton)	22-Jul	FF	G Paterson
Hurklewinter Knowe (Newcastleton)	31-Jul	FF	G Paterson

See Introduction for breeding codes.

SE Scotland Raptor Study Group Report					Sparrowhawk	
Sites checked (a)	Sites with successful breeding	Failed breeding attempts	Minimum large Young	Mean min. large young per occupied site (a)	Mean min. large young per successful pair (a)	
17	6	1	16	1.3	2.7	

(a) These figures apply where outcomes/fledging success known

A total of seventeen sites were checked this year (6 in Edinburgh; 8 in Borders; 3 in Lothian), however, only 7 of these sites had fledging success reported, although 12 recorded signs of occupation.

SE Scotland Raptor Study Group Report

Sparrowhawk

Six of those sites recorded successful breeding, with only one breeding failure. The minimum number of large young produced was 16, which equates to a mean of at least 1.3 large young per occupied site where outcome and fledgling success was recorded, and 2.7 large young per successful pair where fledgling success was recorded. These productivity figures are very similar to those reported in 2021.

No chicks were ringed this year.

Additional Sparrowhawk breeding records would be welcome in future years.

Mike Thornton, Sparrowhawk co-ordinator for Lothian and Borders

Goshawk

Accipiter gentilis

Uncommon and local breeding resident. Some dispersal in August-September. Absent in some areas due to persecution.

The distribution of Goshawks appears to be remaining fairly stable and is being reported more frequently, which is to be encouraged. *BirdTrack* records should continue to be marked as "Sensitive" however, given the continuing persecution in some areas (see RSG report below). Although most reports were of singles, some larger groups were noted, particularly in March and generally in the north of the region.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of occupied tetrads for year</i>	10	12	12	12	19	17	28	31

Although there were some confirmed and probable breeding records reported on *BirdTrack*, the picture presented by the Raptor Study Group is clearly more representative of the overall picture.

SE Scotland Raptor Study Group Report

Goshawk

Sites/ Territories Checked	Sites/ Territories Occupied	Sites with Successful Breeding	Minimum Young Fledged	No. of young fledged per Occupied Site	No. of young fledged per Successful Pair
54	38	24	46	1.35	1.91

Nest productivity results are slightly down from last year but are comparable with other recent years.

A huge effort has gone into the monitoring of Goshawk nest sites this year and as a result 54 nest sites were checked compared to 34 last year. 16 sites appeared to be unoccupied, and nests were not found at 7 occupied sites, so the figure of 31 breeding attempts was used.

Some of these sites were damaged due to the severe storms during the previous winter and required fieldworkers negotiating large areas of wind-blown fallen trees. Some Goshawks had moved to new areas as their old nest site had been completely destroyed. So, the work involved in finding nests and monitoring the nests was even more impressive. Most of the nest sites were located in the large forested areas around Peebles and the upper Tweed Valley, Hawick, Newcastleton, Jedburgh and Kelso. A few others were monitored in Berwickshire and the Lothians.

These forests are generally managed by large commercial forestry companies who carry out very thorough pre-felling checks to locate nesting birds. Over the years we have built up a good working

relationship with these companies and we are very grateful for their cooperation in the monitoring of the nesting attempts. We regularly liaise with them regarding proposed felling of trees and the possible effect that it could have on nesting birds.

One site which contained an old established Goshawk nest was due to be felled this year. We suggested that the nesting area should be felled first during the winter and prior to any nesting attempt. The Goshawks would then be forced to nest elsewhere. When we checked the forest in the spring to establish that the birds had in fact moved out of the area, we found a new nest several hundred metres from the old nest in an area immediately adjacent to the area being felled. Felling by this time was well under way and was immediately suspended by the forestry company. Despite the initial disturbance caused by the felling, the birds continued to nest at this new nest and went on to fledge young successfully. A senior representative from the forestry company was delighted to observe the ringing of the chicks. The felling resumed after the young had fledged.

The accidental disturbance due to timber operations is not generally a problem. However, persecution has been a problem for many years and sadly continues today. At one of our established nest sites on a shooting estate, a succession of failed nesting attempts has coincided with the arrival of a new gamekeeper on the estate. Additional information has now come to light which shows that the adult birds at this nest site are being taken out each year.

In the north of the raptor group area one of our fieldworkers found two dead Goshawks, a male, and a female, in the spring of this year. These birds were found at separate locations in areas which have a history of raptor persecution. So, the deaths of these two birds is obviously suspicious. Unfortunately, the remains of the birds were too decomposed to establish the cause of death.

Despite these setbacks the overall success rate for nesting Goshawks was similar to the last few years. Most of this year's chicks were rung and had coloured Darvic rings fitted. This will help us to identify birds at future nesting attempts. This follows on from the work of our Aberdeen University student who was working with us for the past two years. We are hopeful that another student will continue this work next year.

Malcolm Henderson, Goshawk co-ordinator for Lothian and Borders

Marsh Harrier

Circus aeruginosus

Scarce passage migrant, usually April-May and August-September. May have summered in recent years.

The results from 2022 were another increase on the previous year, with 30 records from 11 tetrads, again including some birds that appear to be summering (and possibly even breeding), although mostly only single birds were seen. Surely confirmation of breeding will come in the next few years. The records are summarised below, roughly in date order.

Site/Tetrad - Marsh Harrier records	Date(s)	Number	Observer(s)
Bemersyde Moss	10-Apr, 5-May	1 Fem	C Grant, A Cutter
Dowlaw (Coldingham)	10-May	1 Fem	N Hammatt
Fishwick (Paxton)	10-May	1 Fem	IJ Andrews
Coldingham Loch	16-May	1	C Hatsell
St Abb's Head	20-May	1	R Safford
Fleurs (Coldingham)	26-May	1	P Bullock
Bemersyde Moss	12-Jun	1	G Runciman, D Belford
St Abb's Head	10-Jul	1	C Hatsell

Site/Tetrad - Marsh Harrier records	Date(s)	Number	Observer(s)
Newmains (Reston)	21-Jul to 14-Sep	1	DK Graham
Teviot Haughs (Crailing)	28-Aug	1	CD Green
Bemersyde Moss	30-Aug to 3-Sep	1-2*	A Cutter <i>et. al.</i>
Hule Moss	2-Sep to 11-Oct	1 Fem	D Warden <i>et. al.</i>
Yetholm Loch	9-Oct	1	B Bell (WeBS)

*- The two on the 3-Sep at Bemersyde Moss were recorded as a young male and an adult female.



Marsh Harrier (female), Bemersyde Moss, April (C Grant)

It is difficult to reconcile the potential numbers involved, given the geographical spread, large gaps in sighting dates and the mobility of individuals.

Hen Harrier

Circus cyaneus

Scarce breeding species. Scarce passage migrant in Mar-Apr and Sep-Oct. A few have wintered in recent years.

There were 14 casual records on BirdTrack, with those in winter or clearly outside the potential breeding habitat areas tabled below.

Site/Tetrad - Hen Harrier non-breeding records	Date	Observer	Comments
Alemoor Loch (Hawick)	1-Jan	MJ Bruce	Ringtail
Weensmoor (Bonchester Bridge)	1-Jan	MJ Bruce	Ringtail
Killpallet (Longformacus)	16-Jan	DK Graham	
Wether Law (Longformacus)	24-Feb	J Connor	Female
Kettlehiel (Duns)	25-Feb	AP Mossop	Ringtail
Leadburn	12-Sep	AG Reid	Female
Arnton Fell (Hermitage)	7-Oct	C Blackie	
Gordon Moss	28-Nov	AP Mossop	Male
Blackburn (Newcastleton)	4-Dec	C Blackie	Male
Broad Law (Heriot Water)	22-Dec	TW Dougall	Ringtail

The breeding situation is closely monitored by the Raptor Study Group and their report is shown below.

Summary: 5 sites occupied, 4 successful pairs with 13 young fledged.

The breakdown of hen harrier breeding records for 2022 is given in Table 1. In the core area monitored by the group, the Tweedsmuir hills, pairs were recorded at 4 sites early in the season and three pairs succeeded in raising three young each. All nestlings were ringed, colour-ringed and buccal swabs were taken. One female was also satellite tagged - more on this below. (Photos below by I Poxton).



In the south Borders, one pair and one single male on territory were reported on the Scottish side of this study area; the pair raised four young (although one chick was found to be blind in one eye). [On the English side 8 nests were found, fledging 23 young].

No Hen Harrier nests were found on the Borders side of Langholm Moor in 2022 (there have been no occupied sites in this area since 2017). The group also recorded a number of sightings outside of the known territories, including in the Lammermuirs, Moorfoots and Tweedsmuir.

Table 1: Hen Harriers breeding in the Borders in 2021

Areas	Territories checked	Pairs on Territory	Successful Pairs *	No. of fledged young *
Tweedsmuir	11	4	3	9 (4f, 5m)
Langholm (Borders)		0		
South Borders	4	1	1	4 (1f, 3m)
Total		6	4	13 (5f, 8m)

(* - fledged young or large young close to fledging noted at last visit)

In 2022 a tag was fitted to a female, Sia, fledged from a Tweedsmuir nest. Sadly only a little more than three months later the tag stopped transmitting in suspicious circumstances near Hamsterley Forest in the North of England. A search was carried out on 4-Nov by Durham Police, the National Wildlife Crime Unit, Police Scotland and RSPB, but nothing was found. Of the six fledglings tagged since 2018, five survived less than a year and disappeared in suspicious circumstances, and only one lived long enough to breed.

Extensive heather burning in the core breeding areas for Hen Harriers in the Borders is an ongoing cause for concern in terms of loss of precious moorland breeding habitat, and the rate of burning appears to have accelerated in some areas in recent years. In 2022 a number of burns apparently in contravention of the Muirburn Code were reported to RSPB via their website or app, in support of their campaign to gather evidence in support of a ban.

Helen Riley, Hen Harrier co-ordinator for Lothian and Borders

Pallid Harrier

Circus macrourus **BBRC**

Rare vagrant to Scotland, mainly on Northern Isles. First Borders record in 2022.

[**One record.** This potential **FIRST** record for Borders was seen on Wilson's Pike in the Newcastleton Forest, only about a mile from the border with England on 9-Nov, by a visiting birder from Co. Durham, (Paul Cook). The finder's account is on p. 234 and was also in *Scottish Birds* 43(1), March 2023. **Found 'not proven' by BBRC.**] *Editor's note: This record is retained here, but will not be admitted to the official Borders' list.*

Montagu's Harrier

Circus pygargus **SBRC**

Rare vagrant to Borders and Scotland. Last records in 2014 and 2020.

One record. A male Montagu's Harrier was seen at Alemoor Loch (Hawick) on 9-Aug (**RB**). **Accepted by SBRC.** This was the sixth record for Borders and the third in the last 9 years.

Red Kite

Milvus milvus

Annual in small but increasing numbers since the 1990s. Ceased to breed during the mid-19th century due to persecution but recorded breeding again since 2017.

There was a further increase in records submitted to 50 (up from 40 in 2021), although the number of tetrads remained unchanged. However, only 8 of the tetrads were common to both years, meaning 66 tetrads had at least one record in the last two years, with a good spread throughout the region.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of occupied tetrads for year</i>	11	3	13	11	21	28	37	37

Curiously, there were no sightings in November or December and only one in October, with 90% of sightings between March and early September. All were singles apart from two at Tinnis farm (Yarrow) on 17-Jan (MB Ross) and two at Wheelburn Law (Lauder) on 13-Jul (R Singleton). Breeding activity was again monitored by the Raptor Study Group (report below).

SE Scotland Raptor Study Group Report

Red Kite

Sites/ Territories Checked	Sites/ Territories Occupied	Sites with Proven Breeding	Minimum Large Young	Large young per Occupied Site	Large young per Successful Pair
4	4	3	6	n/a	n/a

Four Red Kite nest sites were monitored this year, the same three sites as last year and a new nest site in the upper Tweed valley.

Three of the nests were in small mature woods and all were occupied by adult pairs which went on to fledge young. The fourth site was occupied but despite several watches the nest was not located, and we are not sure if the birds actually nested or if they fledged young. The new nest site in the upper Tweed valley was found after several sightings of birds were reported last year in that area. These sightings were followed up with observations in the spring of this year and the nest site was eventually located.

Regular sightings of Red Kites are being reported throughout the area. While these birds are easily recognisable, the locating of an actual nest is not easy and takes some patience and regular watches. It

is likely that there are other nest sites to be found in the Raptor Group area and that this small population will increase in the future.

Two of the successful nests were climbed and the young were rung. One nest fledged three young while the other fledged a single chick. The third successful nest was in a tree which was judged as too dangerous to climb. Two fully grown chicks could be seen on this nest.

Malcolm Henderson, Red Kite co-ordinator for Lothian and Borders

Black Kite

Milvus migrans **SBRC**

Extremely rare vagrant to Scotland, mainly in spring or summer months. First record in 2022.

One record. After a few unsubstantiated sightings, this species has finally made it onto the Borders list, as the **FIRST** record, on the strength of a well-watched bird along the Liddel Water at Saughtree, north of Newcastleton on 10-May (D Braithwaite). **Accepted by SBRC.** The full finder's account is on p. 229 and it was also in *Scottish Birds* (Volume 43(1) March 2023, p. 66).

White-tailed Eagle

Haliaeetus albicilla **LRC**

Rare vagrant. Likely origins of recent birds from east Scotland or Isle of Wight reintroductions.

Two records. Probably the same immature individual was seen on two separate WeBS visits on 9-Oct and 18-Dec at West Water Resr, in the far NW of the county (both F Wragg). There was no repeat of any satellite-tracked birds from the I. of Wight releases, as in 2021.

Rough-legged Buzzard

Buteo lagopus **LRC**

Rare on autumn passage and occasionally winters. Last previous record in 2015.

One record. A juvenile was seen flying past Mire Loch (St Abb's Head) on 26-Nov (L Pulawski).

This is the first record in Borders since one near Paxton in April 2015 and only the fifth since 1995. Records were slightly more regular in the 1980s and early 1990s, a situation which is mirrored more generally throughout the UK.



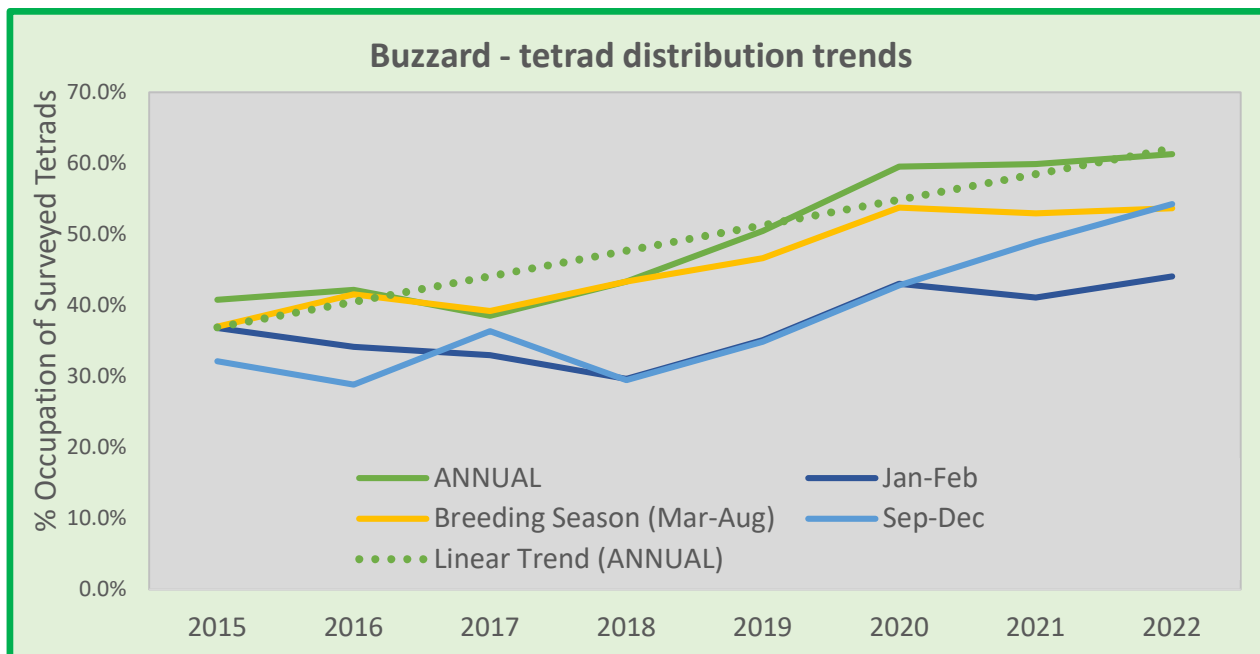
**Rough-legged Buzzard, Mire Loch,
November (L Pulawski)**

Buzzard

Buteo buteo

Common and widespread resident breeding species.

The Buzzard remains the most widely distributed bird in Borders by a large margin (as the top 'car-bird'), being seen in 540 tetrads (61.3%); this is a further small increase on 2021. The breeding season distribution is showing signs of levelling off, with the winter distribution now driving the recent upward trend.



Peak counts were down a little on 2021, with 8 at Dowlaw (Coldingham) on 31-Aug (NH) being the largest tetrad count, followed by 7 at Leithen Water: The Ley-Colquhar on 26-Mar (RB). Groups of up to 6 were then relatively widespread.

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	5	14	19	36	52	59	84	77

Although the number of tetrads with breeding evidence dropped slightly, confirmed breeding was noted in 23 tetrads (up from 7 in 2021), the remaining 54 tetrads having probable breeding. The close monitoring on selected territories from the RSG showed a slight drop in productivity over 2021, but this is still relatively strong against other recent years.

SE Scotland Raptor Study Group Report

Common Buzzard

Sites/ Territories checked	Sites/ Territories occupied	Sites with proven breeding (minimum)	Minimum young fledged	No. of young fledged per occupied site	No. of young fledged per successful pair
117	93	81	89	0.95	1.28

2022 fieldwork remained at near the usual level. The data is showing a reduction of productivity from 1.01 young per territorial pair in 2021 to 0.95 in 2022 and young per productive pair is now at 1.28.

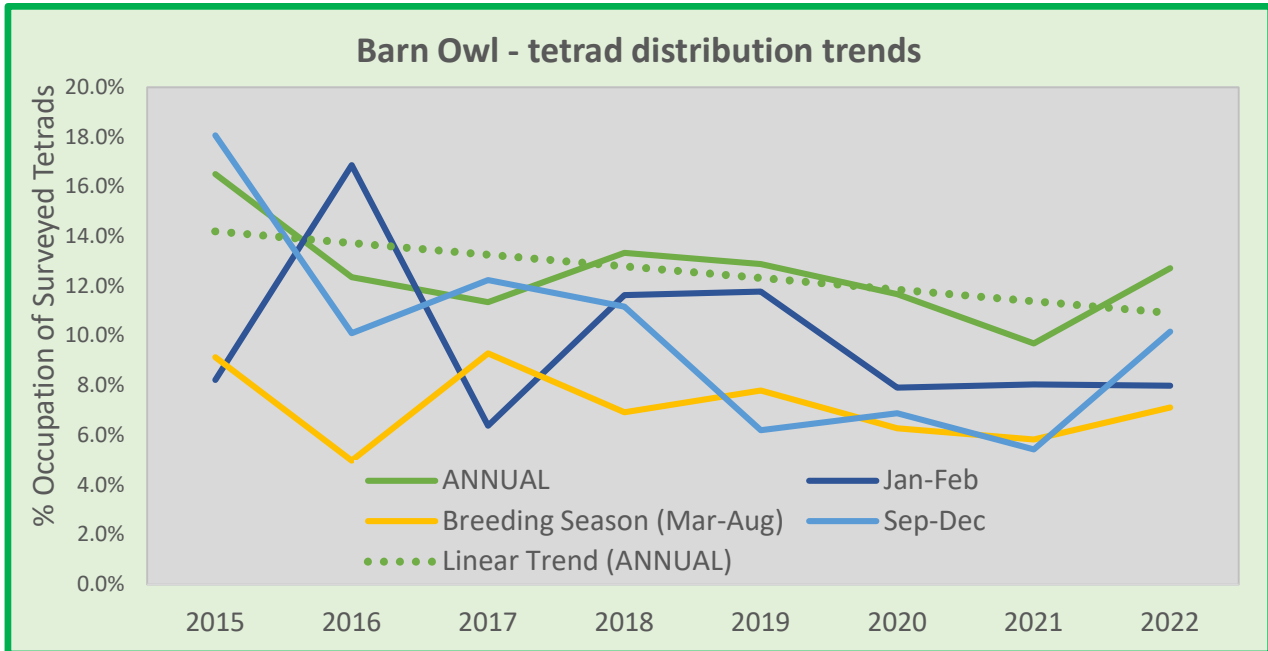
George Smith, Buzzard co-ordinator for Lothian and Borders

Barn Owl

Tyto alba

Uncommon but well-represented resident breeder. Annual populations fluctuate significantly, often in relation to vole populations and severity of winter.

Although there was a small increase in tetrad occupation in 2022, the general trend seems to be a small, but significant, decline over recent years, although annual fluctuations may mask the true picture.



Nearly all sightings were of singles, apart from probable breeding pairs noted at a few sites (including those monitored by BRG) and 3 at Brown Rig (Lauder) on 24-Sep (A Wetherill).

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with breeding evidence	4	2	5	3	16	15	20	20

There were 17 tetrads with confirmed breeding, mostly from ringing nestlings in a wide range of sites throughout the Borders and thus overlapping with the RSG monitoring below.

SE Scotland Raptor Study Group Report

Barn Owl

Sites/ Territories checked	Sites/ Territories occupied	Sites with proven breeding	Minimum young fledged	No. of young fledged per occupied site	No. of young fledged per successful pair
70	46	38	143	3.1	4.1

In contrast with last year this was a **very successful year**. The percentage of occupied sites was marginally up at about 66%, but 82% of these actually bred as opposed to only 50% last year and the number of chicks produced was also high (143 versus 34 in 2021). Most nests produced broods of 4 or 5 which is generally on the high side, although not the highest. However, the overall breeding success was one of the highest ever.

Alan Leitch, Barn Owl co-ordinator for Lothian and Borders

Little Owl*Athene noctua* **LRC**

Scarce and declining resident. Not annual. Confirmed breeding very rare. More common in the east.

Once again there were no reports via *BirdTrack* during the year and just one report to the RSG, which is identical to the situation in 2021. There was no evidence of breeding. With a minimal presence in the region (2 pairs at most) for the last 10-15 years, this owl could well disappear from Borders entirely.

Please report all sightings to the Recorder.

Long-eared Owl*Asio otus*

Uncommon and local breeder but under-recorded. Some passage on coast, mostly Oct-Nov.

One of the expected by-products of the nocturnal audio recording, primarily for Nightjars, was this notable increase in records of Long-eared Owls, including confirmed breeding in 15 tetrads, through hearing calls from juveniles. The actual distribution of the owl is still largely unknown, as even with this sizeable increase in records, it is likely to be still hugely under-recorded.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of occupied tetrads for year</i>	7	6	4	9	4	11	2	22

The report from the RSG is shown below, with a mixed picture - up on occupancy, down on productivity.

SE Scotland Raptor Study Group Report**Long-eared Owl**

Sites/ Territories checked	Sites/ Territories occupied	Sites with proven breeding (eggs laid)	Minimum young fledged	No. of young fledged per occupied site	No. of young fledged per successful pair
10	10	8	15	1.5	1.9

The same number of sites were checked this year as in 2021, but this year the occupancy rate was up. However, productivity was down in the 8 sites which managed to raise young, with 1.9 young per successful pair, compared with 3.5 in 2021. Records were more widespread across the Borders area this year thanks in part to data from the SOC Long-eared Owl survey.

Sarah Underwood, Long-eared Owl co-ordinator for Lothian and Borders

Short-eared Owl*Asio flammeus*

Very uncommon and localised in hill areas; scarce in lower areas. Breeding and wintering numbers vary with vole fluctuations. Some autumn passage on coast.

A typical year, with a total of 13 reports from 10 tetrads (tabled below), five of which were related to incoming autumn birds at the coast, leaving 8 records from 5 tetrads in potential breeding areas.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of occupied tetrads for year</i>	16	7	6	9	2	8	9	10

All records were of singles. Note the three birds present on the coast on 19-Oct.



**Short-eared Owl, Longformacus,
April (AP Mossop)**

Site/Tetrad - Short-eared Owl records	Date(s)	Observer(s)
Elba (Abbey St Bathans)	16-Jan	K Loudon
Broad Law (Heriot Water)	16-Mar, 20-Apr	TW Dougall, MB Ross
Horseupcleugh (Longformacus)	25-Mar, 31-Mar	AP Mossop
Killpallet (Longformacus)	19-Apr	AP Mossop
Cranshaws Hill	29-Apr, 11-Jul	AP Mossop, J Connor
Dowlaw (Coldingham)	19-Oct	JDH Hadfield
St Abb's Head lighthouse	19-Oct	C Hatsell
St Abb's harbour	19-Oct	R Jackson
Eyemouth GC	22-Oct	G Garner
Dowlaw Dam (Coldingham Common)	19-Nov	DK Graham

There were no reports of confirmed breeding, either as casual records, or at the sites monitored by the RSG.

SE Scotland Raptor Study Group Report

Short-eared Owl

Sites/Territories checked	Sites/Territories occupied	Sites with proven breeding (eggs laid)	Minimum young fledged	No. of young fledged per occupied site	No. of young fledged per successful pair
7	3	0	0	0	0

A relatively poor year for Short-eared Owls it seems. Only 7 sites checked this year, compared to 16 in 2021, and only 1 occupied by a single and 2 by pairs. There was no confirmed breeding observed.

Sarah Underwood, Short-eared Owl co-ordinator for Lothian and Borders

Tawny Owl

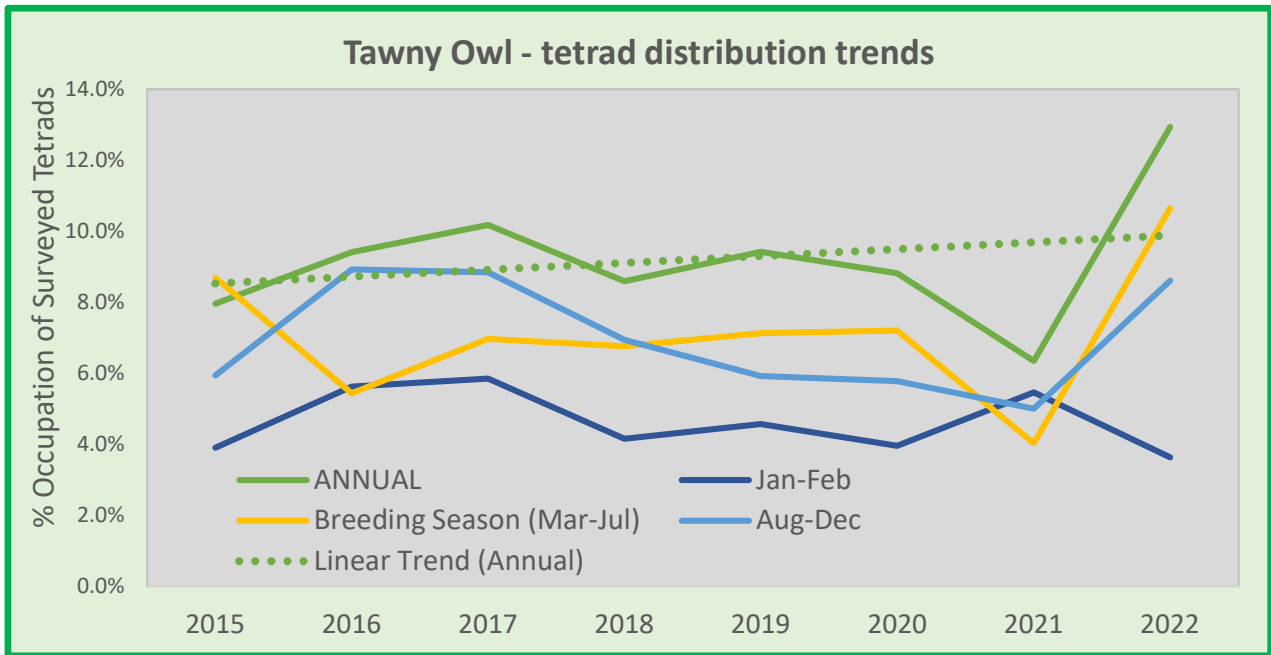
Strix aluco

Common breeding resident. Reported throughout the year, although peaking in autumn during the dispersal of juveniles.

Nocturnal audio recording has also benefited the recording of Tawny Owls, particularly to confirm breeding in more areas and to add more remote tetrads to the distribution.

Although the trends show this uplift, after the marked drop in 2021, it is likely that the distribution remains essentially stable in the medium-term, albeit with some annual fluctuations.

The highest count was 4 at Cowieslinn (Portmore) on 30-Jun (**AGR**) and then a further ten sites with occasional records of 3 birds.



Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	4	1	5	4	16	15	17	40

There were 18 tetrads with confirmed breeding (4 last year), 11 tetrads with probable breeding and a further 11 tetrads with possible breeding.

SE Scotland Raptor Study Group Report Tawny Owl

Sites/Boxes checked	Sites/Territories occupied	Sites with proven breeding	Minimum eggs laid	Minimum known young fledged	No. of young fledged per successful pair
51	24	22	n/k	34	1.55

In terms of FLS results, there have been a number of nest sites/boxes lost or become inaccessible due to wind blow, following storm Arwen in November 2021. Despite this there were four occupied boxes that successfully fledged chicks. This is particularly encouraging when considering that there were no occupied boxes at all last season. There has been no recorded evidence of brood failure due to predation. All pairs occupying boxes checked on FLS ground were successful in raising chicks.

Eve Schultze, Tawny Owl co-ordinator for Lothian and Borders

Hoopoe *Upupa epops* LRC

Rare vagrant. Most recent previous records in 2019 and 2021.

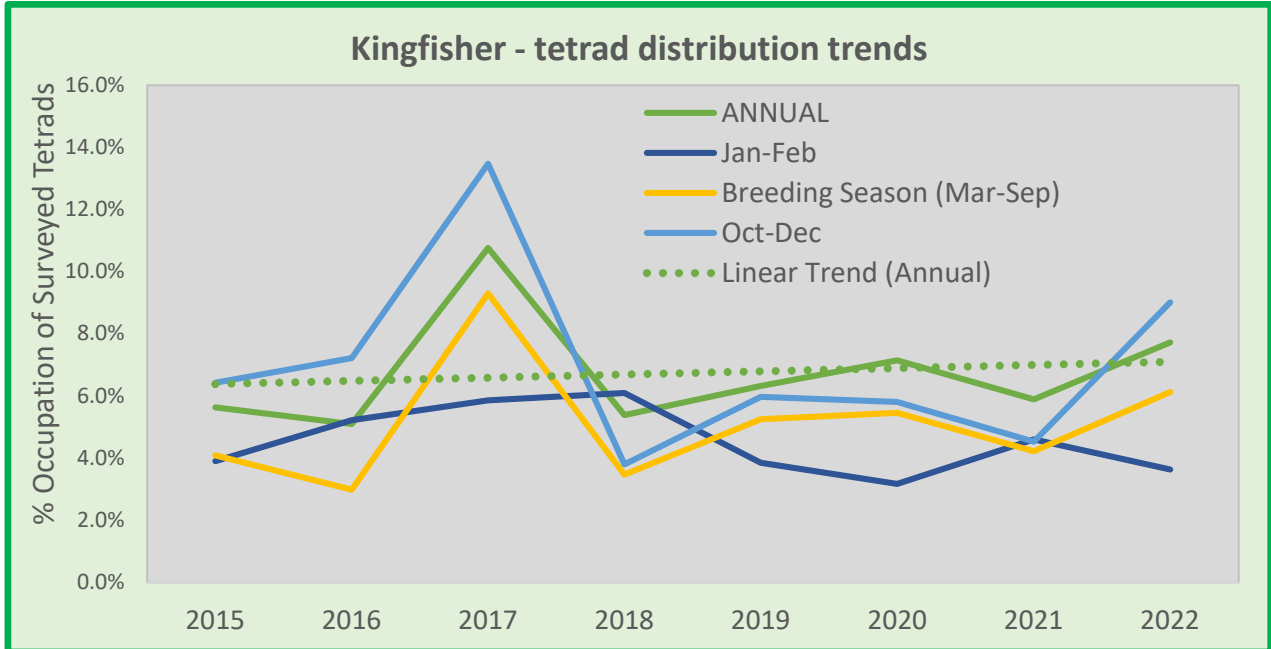
One record. One of these distinctive and exotic-looking vagrants was seen at Edrom (Duns) on 20-Sep (*per* AP Mossop). There has been at least one annual record for 12 of the last 20 years, so this is actually one of the commoner scarce vagrants to occur in Borders.

Kingfisher

Alcedo atthis

Uncommon resident of riverine habitats. Occasionally seen on coast.

The distribution of Kingfishers remains stable in the region. The 'peak' in 2017 seems to be somewhat anomalous on the trend graphs. It is generally less reported in the first couple of months of the year and nearly all records are inland from freshwater areas.



The limited coastal records came from Lower Burnmouth - singles on 28-Jul (F Evans), 22-Nov and 22-Dec (both **CDG**), and at Eyemouth on 2-Oct (**GP**).

The only sites where over two birds were recorded were Teviot Haughs (up to 6 on 4-Aug, **ST**), Upsettlington (Swinton) (up to 4 on 17-Aug and 10-Sep, J Towill) and 3 at Tweed: Banff Mill-Redden on 9-Oct (WeBS) and at Traquair on 11-Dec (**RB**).

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with breeding evidence	0	2	0	0	7	8	1	5

Breeding was confirmed at Teviot Haughs, with fledglings on 4-Aug (**ST**) and Eckford-Kalemouth (Kelso), with an adult carrying food on 27-Jun (**CDG**). There was probable breeding at Lees Haugh (Coldstream), Denholm and Ashiestiel-Peel (Clovenfords).

Wryneck

Jynx torquilla **LRC**

Rare passage migrant, usually in autumn. Most recent previous records in 2015 and 2020.

Eight records. This was the best year for Wrynecks this century, with three birds involved, two of which stayed several days and one showed very well on occasion. The records are tabulated below.

Site/Tetrad - Wryneck records	Date(s)	Observer(s)
Mire Loch - North end (St Abb's Head)	4-Sep to 9-Sep	C Hatsell
Mire Dean (St Abb's Head)	9-Sep, 10-Sep	C Hatsell <i>et. al.</i>
Eyemouth Golf Course	10-Sep	R Bramhall

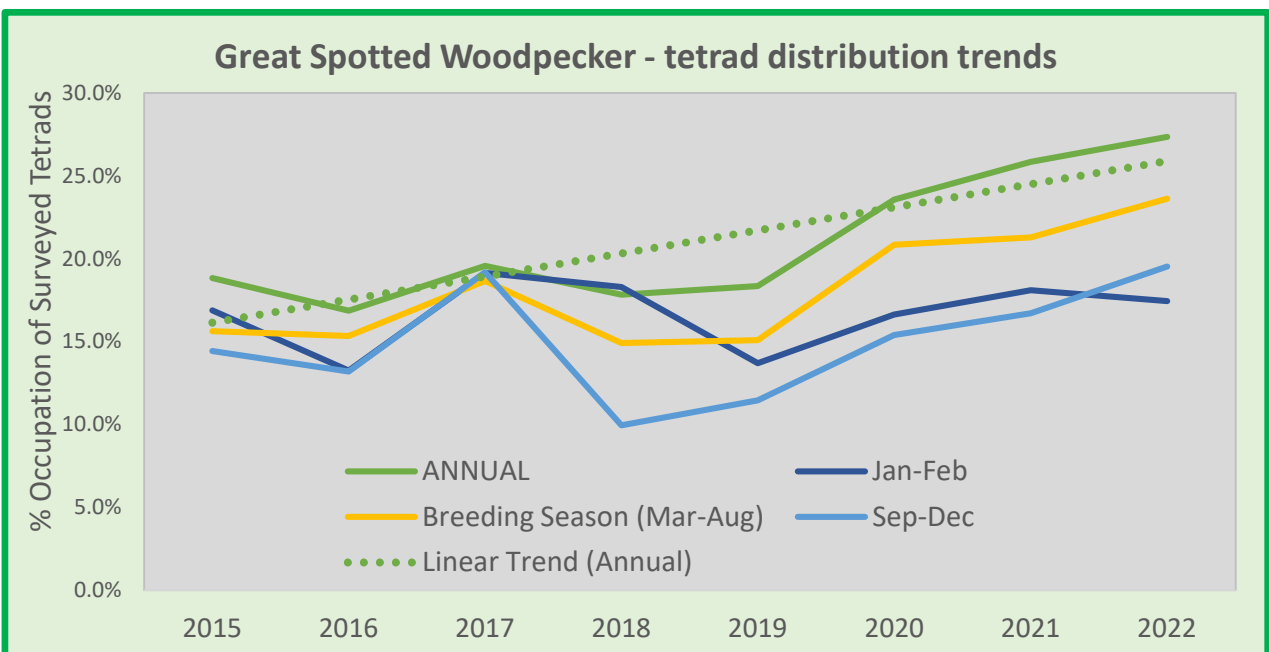


Wryneck, Mire Dean (St Abb's Head), September (R Jackson)
 (Another photograph of the same bird is on p. 256)

Great Spotted Woodpecker

Dendrocopos major

Common resident breeder, with a few records on passage.



Great Spotted Woodpeckers apparently continue to expand their distribution in Borders, noticeably after 2019 and particularly in the breeding season. However, the tetrads with breeding evidence has reduced a little from the peak of the last couple of years. Overall the species appears to be stable (or increasing).

Reports were primarily of singles or duos/pairs, but particular concentrations (up to 4) were seen or heard at The Hirsell and at various woodlands in the Galashiels to Melrose area at various times of year.

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with breeding evidence	17	30	19	17	23	48	54	44

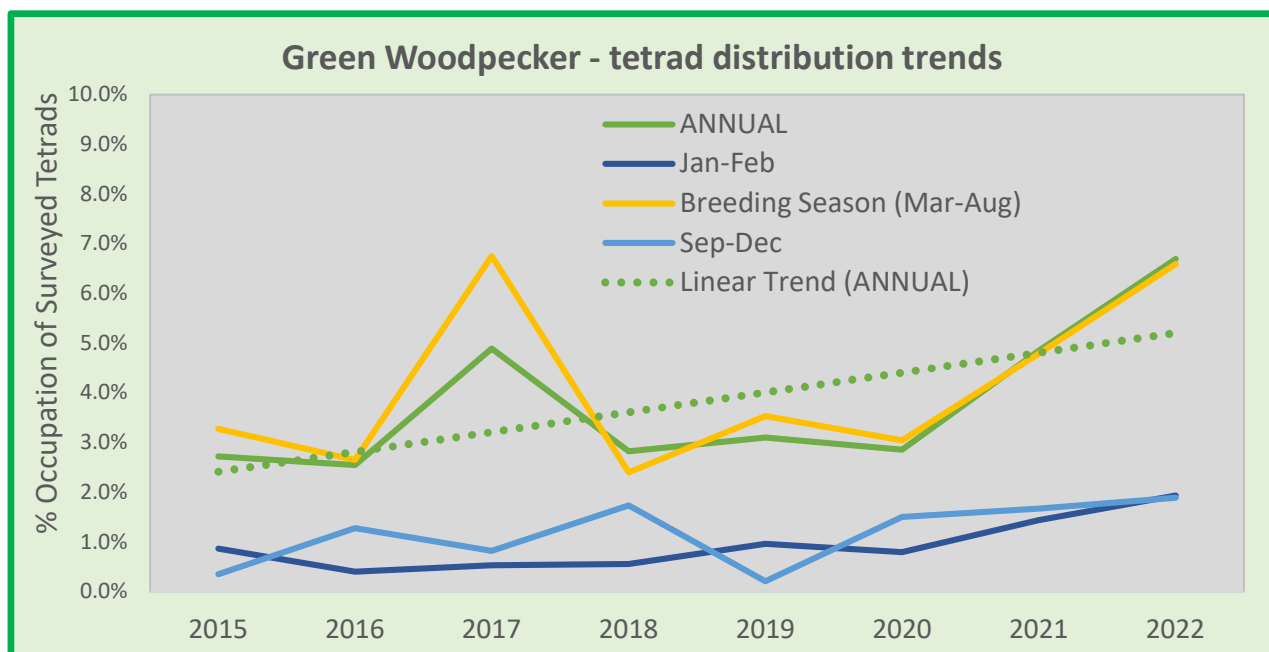
There were 10 tetrads with confirmed breeding (below), 11 tetrads with probable breeding and 23 tetrads with possible breeding (drumming heard).

Site/Tetrad - Great Spotted Woodpecker confirmed breeding	Date(s)	Br. Codes	Observer
Stobo (Peebles)	10-May	FF	H Urquhart
Blyth Bridge (West Linton)	10-Jun - 12-Jun	FL	D & M Thorne
Denholm	8-Jun, 15-Jun	FL	N Cook
Bowden (Melrose)	11-Jun	FL	M Moncrieff
St Boswells	16-Jun, 7-Jul	FL	A Cutter
Huntford (Carter Bar)	3-Jul	FL	CW Watson
Tweed: Mertoun Bridge-Mertoun House	9-Jun	FL	A Cutter
Eckford-Wooden Loch (Jedburgh)	5-Aug	FL	CD Green
Tweed: Broomlands-Whitmuirhaugh	16-Jun, 26-Aug	FL	R Manning
Tweed: Banff Mill-Redden	25-Jun	FL	R Manning

Green Woodpecker

Picus viridis

Declined historically and now uncommon and localised breeding resident, mostly in old estate or riverine woods.



The Green Woodpecker appears to be spreading in distribution in the last couple of years, mainly in the breeding season. This species has always been less recorded in the winter months. This is probably due to it becoming more retiring and less vocal and therefore less noticeable in winter, rather than vacating many tetrads, as it is quite sedentary.

Nearly all the 142 records were of singles, although pairs were noted in 6 tetrads and there were counts of 3 at Elba (Abbey St Bathans) on 3-Apr (**RJ**) and at Hyndlee (Wauchope Forest) on 2-May (**APM**). Nearly a quarter of the records came from Ashiestiel-Peel (Clovenfords) (**GP et.al.**).



Green Woodpecker

Above - **Abbey St Bathans, April (R Jackson)**

Right – **Eildon (Melrose), May (F Kilgour)**



Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	5	3	5	8	7	10	14	19

There was one tetrad with confirmed breeding and 9 with probable breeding. In a further 9 tetrads possible breeding was recorded by observers, although calls/drumming/'yaffling' could arguably be recorded as display (Br. code D or 5) or signs of a permanent territory (Br. code T or 4). Observers are in the best position to assess this, but are encouraged to record the highest breeding evidence seen/heard.

Site/Tetrad - Green Woodpecker confirmed & probable breeding	Date(s)	Br. Codes	Observer
Eildon (Melrose)	2-May	ON	F Kilgour
Liddel Water: Larriston	16-Apr	D	M Henderson
Kings Muir (Peebles)	30-Jun	T	G Paterson
Plora Wood (Innerleithen)	14-Apr	D	R Bramhall
Ashiestiel-Peel (Clovenfords)	1-Mar to 30-Jun	T	G Paterson
Hyndlee (Wauchope Forest)	2-May	D	AP Mossop
Greenlawdean	14-Mar	T	J Connor
Woodheads (Greenlaw)	16-Jun	T	R Jackson
Duns Castle	29-Mar, 21-Apr	T	J Connor
Elba (Abbey St Bathans)	3-Apr	T	R Jackson

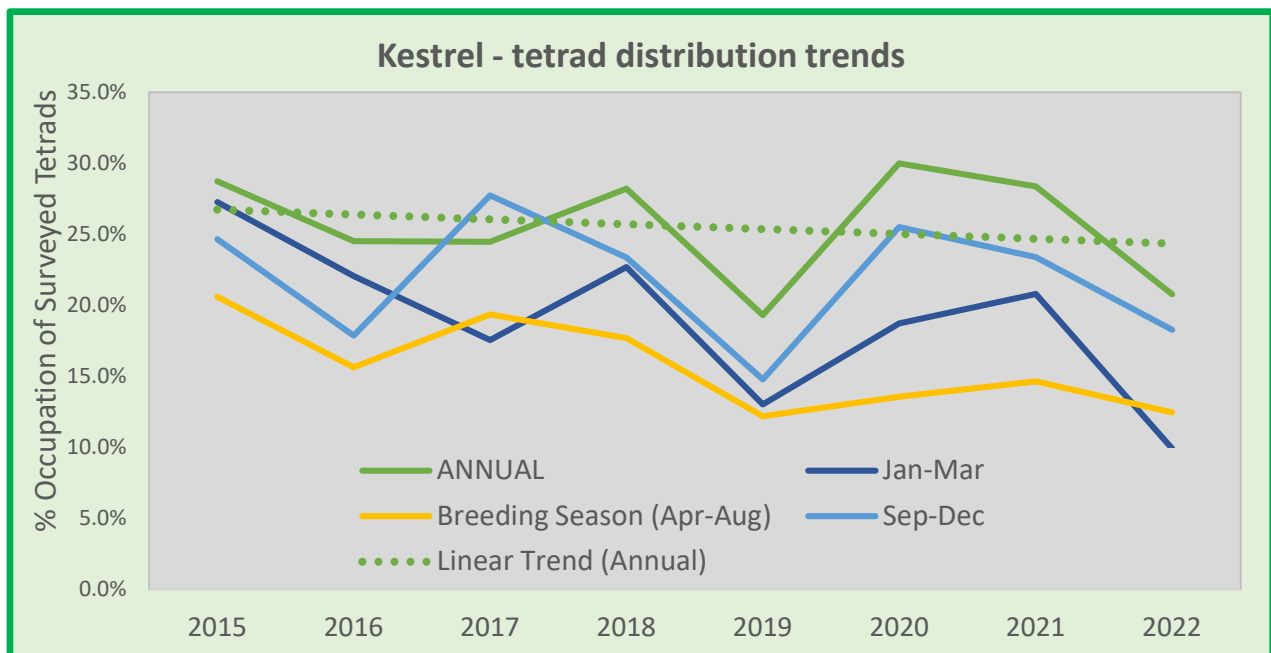
Kestrel

Falco tinnunculus

Common and widespread resident breeder.

The trend graph shows the Kestrel is shrinking in its tetrad occupation, especially in the breeding season, although there are some pronounced annual variations, with 2019 and this year being particularly poor. This distribution trend was also recorded in breeding evidence and the monitoring of the RSG.

Autumn and winter occupation is generally higher than in summer, although the tetrad distribution at the start of the year was markedly poor. It is still quite widespread in the region, but increasingly in smaller enclaves.



There was a count of 4 at Cacrabank (Buccleuch) on 21-Jun (G Christer) and the same number at Birgham (Kelso) on 3-Jul (KR), with counts of 3 at a dozen further tetrads, all in the second half of the year.

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with breeding evidence	11	7	4	18	7	13	18	12

There were 8 tetrads with confirmed breeding (up from 3 in 2021) but just a further four with probable breeding, underlining the poor state of play for Kestrels in 2022.

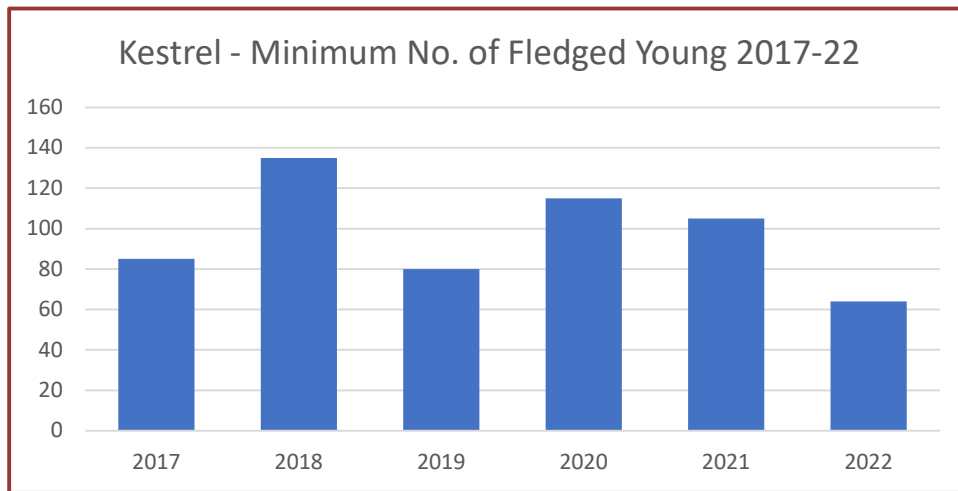
Site/Tetrad - Kestrel confirmed breeding	Date	Br. Codes	Observer
Castlehill (Manor Valley)	14-May	NY	S Hunt
Blackhopebyre (Glentress Water)	15-Jul	FL	M Moncrieff
Garvald Lodge (Heriot Water)	15-Jul	FL	M Moncrieff
Broad Law (Heriot Water)	26-Jun	FL	MB Ross
Hurklewinter Knowe (Newcastleton)	31-Jul	FL	G Paterson
Hyndlee (Wauchope Forest)	31-Jul	FL	G Paterson
Birgham (Kelso)	3-Jul	FL	K Robeson
Pease Bay	5-Jun	FL	G Waters

Areas	Sites/ Territories checked	Sites/ Territories occupied	Sites with proven breeding	Minimum young fledged	No. of young fledged per occupied site
South of Tweed	7	0			
Berwickshire (S./E.)	8	1	1	4	4
Moorfoots	3	0			
Pentlands	33	19	10	50	2.6
Ettrick	15	5	3	10	2
Total	66	25	14	64	2.56

(x) = young fledged from 5 nest sites, estimated and recorded as average of 4 chick per nest site.

As you can see from the above table and the trend graph below, it has been a very poor season for the Kestrel within our group study areas. However, every area recorded many sightings of single adult birds within territories, but unfortunately not many breeding pairs. Productivity, in those birds that did breed, was similar to 2021, although poor in comparison with the previous three years.

In the Pentland Hills several key nest boxes were taken up by Tawny Owls this season, and in one case a female Kestrel died in a fight to the death with a Tawny Owl over the occupation of the nest box. Also nest boxes which have been successfully used by Kestrels year after year have been checked and found empty and unused this season.



The graph illustrates the drop in the number of young fledged Kestrels within the whole group over the last few seasons.

Keith Burgoyne, Kestrel co-ordinator for Lothian and Borders

Merlin

Falco columbarius

Very uncommon breeder, best known in northern hills. Widespread but scarce passage migrant and winter visitor, mostly to coast.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of occupied tetrads for year</i>	10	8	12	18	15	23	21	33

The number of records rose to 39, from a recent record of 33 tetrads. Most were outside the breeding season and quite a few of these came from lowland areas and the coast. All were singles.

Season	No. of records	Tetrads with records
Jan - Mar	12	Cloich (Eddleston), Philiphaugh Farm (Selkirk), Tweed: The Rink-Boleside, Lauder, Teviot Haughs (Crailing), Smailholm, Lempitlaw (Kelso), Lennel (Coldstream), Dalks Law (Grantshouse), Newmains (Reston), Hutton (Paxton)
Apr, Jul	10	6 upland tetrads, Manderston (Duns), Dowlaw (Coldingham)
Aug - Dec	17	Altrieve (St. Mary's Loch), Wull Muir (Heriot Water), Arnton Fell (Hermitage), Hyndlee Glen (Wauchope Forest), Crib Law N (Oxton), Eckford-Wooden Loch (Jedburgh), Hendersyde Park (Kelso) - below , Lurdenlaw N (Kelso), Hume (Kelso), Allanton (Chirnside), Coldingham Common, Dowlaw (Coldingham), Tweed: Horncliffe-Paxton House, St Abbs-Coldingham, Burnmouth.



Dead Merlin with Meadow Pipit prey, Hendersyde Park (Kelso), October (N Stratton)

The highs and unfortunate lows of watching raptors were well illustrated by this record on the road passing Springhall Farm, near Kelso.

Neil Stratton picks up the story: -

“The Merlin was picked up freshly dead from the A698 outside Hendersyde Park at 16:30 on 9-Oct. It was still warm and supple. It had some decapitated prey it had just killed in the left talon -a Meadow Pipit.

Presumably it had been hit by a vehicle in the act of flying through after a successful hunt”.

There were confirmed breeding records from the Borders Ringing Group, with chicks ringed in two nests along the Glentress Water/Dewar Burn catchments. There was also a record of agitated behaviour in the Caddon Water catchment. However, the breeding areas are more closely monitored by the RSG (below).

SE Scotland Raptor Study Group Report					Merlin
Areas	Territories checked	Territories occupied	Sites with proven breeding	Minimum young fledged	No. of young per successful territory
Lammermuirs	11	1-2	1	3	3
Moorfoots	4	4	3	7	2.3
South of Tweed	15	8	4	12	3
Pentlands	18	3 (5?)	1	5	5
Langholm (Borders)	3	0			
Total	51	16+	9	27	3

Unlike the previous season the weather patterns seems less likely to have influenced Merlin success or failure this year. Weather was generally fine during the crucial period when birds settle to breed.

Coverage was similar to recent years in the Pentlands (not detailed below) and again some useful, if curtailed coverage, was again managed in some parts of the Lammermuirs. Some interesting positive data was obtained from four monitored Moorfoot sites. Across the 'South of Tweed' area some sites were only proven to have been successful when fledged young were seen. We again received information from the Borders side of Langholm moor but this year there were no occupied breeding sites here.

LAMMERMUIRS The only reports received this season were from two of the group who did manage to visit around 11 areas/sites where birds had been seen in previous years. Usefully a member of Lothian Ringing Group was also involved and ringed the only brood of three found. The one known successful brood of three had a nest scrape very close to where birds have nested in the past.

Unfortunately regular monitoring was necessarily somewhat curtailed this season, but enough was achieved to suggest that this area continues to be far less used by Merlins as a breeding area than during the well monitored period 1984 – 2014 (see British Birds, March 2017). This is very unlikely to be a complete picture as not all known sites were monitored.

MOORFOOTS The usual contributor had some success this year with birds in occupation at three sites in his usual monitoring area. Another contributor was able to monitor another known old site which hasn't been checked in more recent years. It still seems likely that these grouse moors will contain at least a few breeding pairs in areas we are not monitoring.

At one site the nest was not located but 3 fledged young were seen with adults in what must have been close vicinity to the nest. One found nest contained a late clutch of 4 on 4th July suggesting perhaps a re-lay? The four young were ringed and three fledged young later seen. The other nest found had an unusual history, with 5 young in the nest at end of June. By the next visits this had reduced to two live and one dead and finally just one live and two dead young. A late visit suggested that this one young had likely fledged.

SOUTH OF TWEED Data submitted to date suggests around 15 known areas were monitored. No signs of occupation were detected at six sites.

The regularly monitored site straddling the Northumberland border was occupied by a pair on an early visit, but later visits suggested any breeding attempt had failed.

At least 7 Tweedsmuir sites were found to be occupied. A similar number to last season but this year there were more successful outcomes. At one of these sites a pair defended territory when a Hen Harrier flew by but these were not seen again on later visits and was presumed to have failed. At another, a pair was in a known territory early on, but appeared to later move to a nearby cleuch, with no signs of any occupation in later visits. At a third site a pair appeared to be nesting and a female was seen carrying prey into a likely area in mid-June. There was however no sign of any fledged young when expected in July and a fox was seen in the vicinity.

The first confirmed tree nesting pair for a long time raised four young (in a birch). Three other ground nesting pairs were seen to have fledged at least three, three and two young respectively. As these nests were not actually located the actual numbers of young might have been a little higher. It is interesting that one of these successful sites was thought likely to have failed and at another no signs of occupation were found until late visits showed the presence of fledged young. This shows the potential value of late checks when it is possible to undertake these.

LANGHOLM MOOR (Borders side only) Three known breeding areas were monitored but disappointingly none of these were occupied this season. This was also a poor year for breeding Merlins on Dumfries and Galloway areas of Langholm, with only one successful known pair.

Alan Heavisides, Merlin co-ordinator for Lothian and Borders

Hobby

Falco subbuteo **LRC**

Scarce passage migrant, but odd records now in summer, with the breeding range moving northwards in England.

Three records. This was a typical annual picture (detailed below), with between 1 and 5 sightings each year for the last 13 years. There are still no signs of any significant change to this status, despite a continued spread northwards in England. It is still only a rare straggler in Northumberland as well.

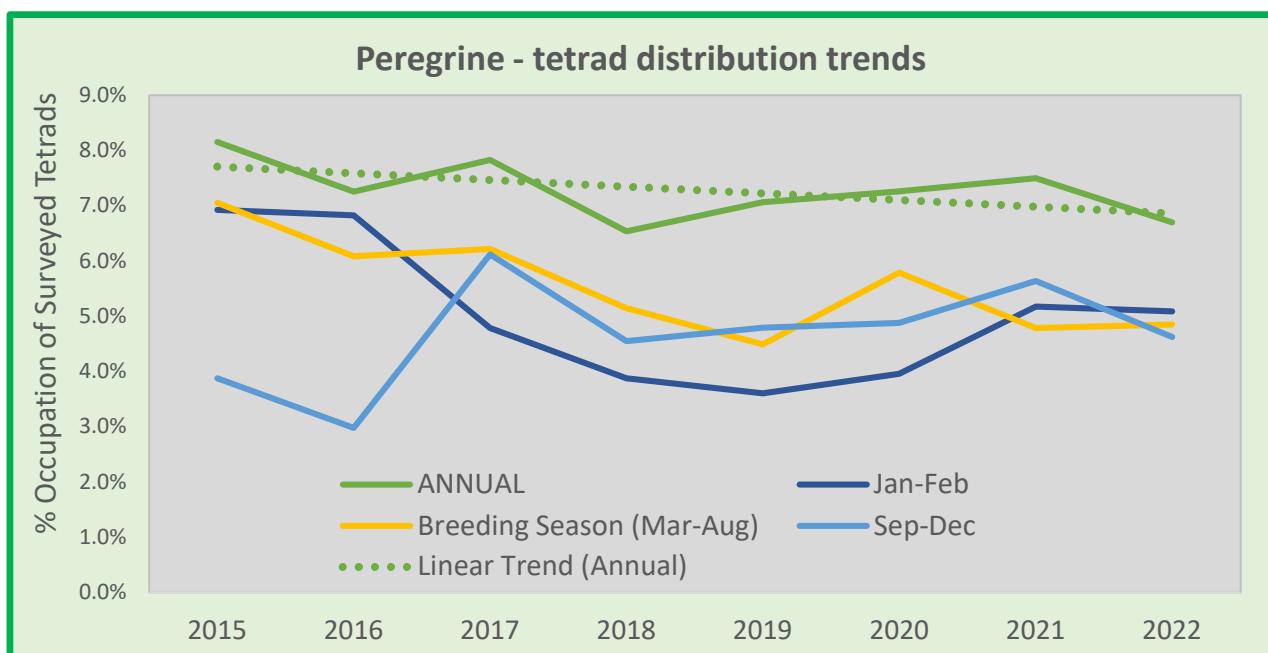
Site/Tetrad - Hobby records	Date	Observer
The Hirsell	2-Jul	K Robeson
Newmains (Reston)	7-Jul	DK Graham
Teviot Haughs (Nisbet)	25-Sep	S Turnbull

Peregrine

Falco peregrinus

Uncommon and local breeder. Still persecuted in some areas. Casual records widespread outside the breeding season, mostly Sep-Mar.

Whilst the Peregrine continues to have a widespread distribution in the Borders, encompassing coastal, upland and urban tetrads, the trend does show a small decline in presence over the last few years, particularly during the breeding season. Overall numbers and productivity monitored by the Raptor Study Group (RSG) seem to be stable, however, so there may be no cause for concern.



Most records were of singles or pairs. The only tetrad counts of 3 or more (excluding obvious juveniles) were 4 at Lennelhill (Coldstream) on 18-Jun (D Richens), 3 at Mozie Law (Hownam) on 13-Jul (M Cummings) and 3 at St Abb's Head on 5-Sep (CH).

The Rocky Shore Count on 23-Jan noted 7 birds along the Berwickshire coast, with 3 on the stretch between Redheugh and Souter (C Hartley) and singles elsewhere.

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	6	3	3	4	8	7	11	11

There were 6 tetrads where breeding was confirmed and 5 where there was probable breeding. Well known sites such as Galashiels and St Abbs Head again had confirmed breeding (e.g. two pairs fledged 7 chicks at St Abbs), although the RSG is clearly in a better position to monitor the wider situation.

SE Scotland Raptor Study Group Report								Peregrine	
No. of Sites	Sites Checked	Sites Occupied by Pairs	Sites Occupied by Singles	Sites Laid	Sites Hatched	Sites Fledged	Young Fledged	Young/Terr. Pair	Young/Prod. Pair
2022 Data									
168	160	58	4	38	31	30	88	1.51	2.93
2021 Data									
164	157	54	10	39	34	29	85	1.57	2.93
2020 Data									
160	156	54	9	35	33	33	101	1.87	3.06
<p>This season was not one of the best, a bit less productive than 2020, but certainly not the worst from recent years; 2015 being the worst on record in this region since the early 1960's.</p> <p>The fieldwork in 2022 was a vast improvement on 2021, which got us back to the level of data we normally expect. The season seemed to be one of two halves, there were some early sites, then a gap of about 2 weeks before the majority got underway, whilst clutch size was down in some areas with several clutches of 2 eggs.</p> <p>This year we are showing little increase in sites occupied by pairs, and at least 38 pairs laid eggs. Productivity was variable, but nothing significant - young per territorial pair decreased from 1.57 to 1.51 per pair and remained the same at 2.93 young per productive pair. Another four sites were occupied by singles.</p> <p>The young produced in this region over the last few years has varied considerably.</p>									
Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Young	100+	66	82	103	103	96	101	85	88
<p>PIT tagging: - The project fieldwork returned to normal and 35 sites in Lothian, Borders, Lanarkshire and Dumfries and Galloway were visited with a view to trapping and PIT Tag reading. We noose trapped at 7 sites, with 7 falcons captured (5 females, 2 Males). All birds had buccal swab samples taken. We PIT read at 23 sites, with 36 falcons "captured" (22 females and 9 males). A female colour-ringed as a chick in Mid-Wales in 2020 returned to a site that had been unoccupied for 3 years. We also had an Irish female nesting near Peebles and a little movement between L&B sites.</p>									
<p><i>George Smith, Peregrine co-ordinator for Lothian & Borders</i></p>									

CLASSIFIED LIST (Passerines)

Red-backed Shrike

Lanius collurio

Very scarce passage migrant. Not annual.

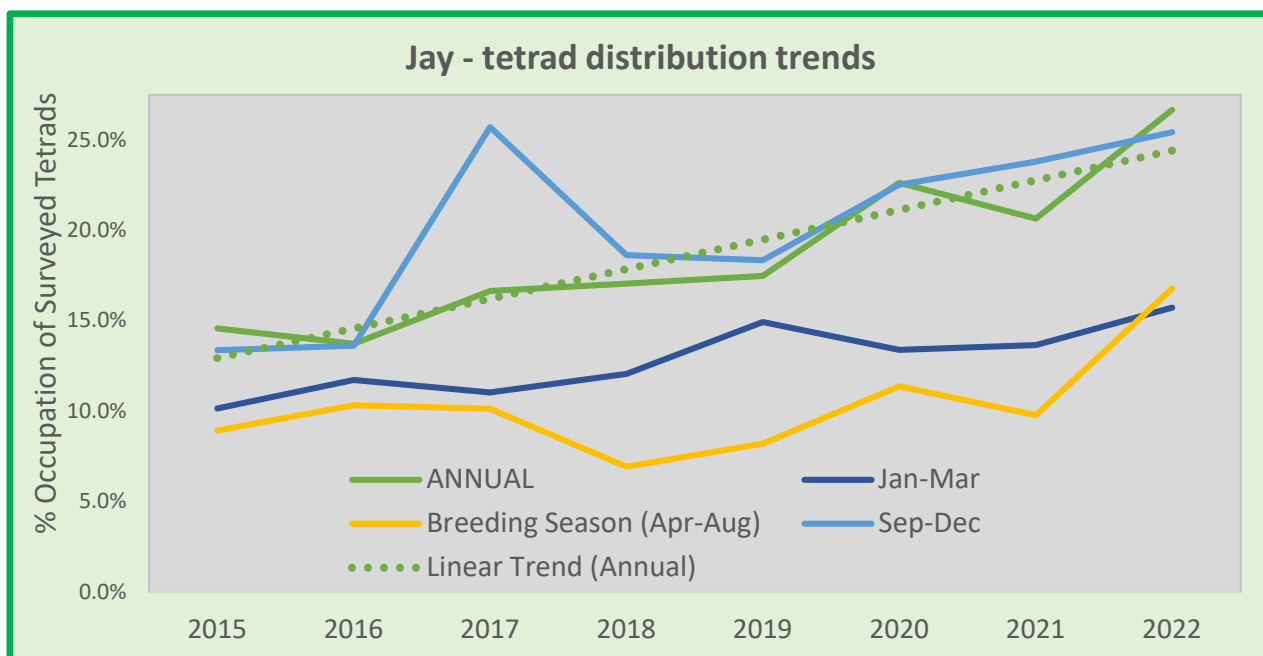
One record. A bird at Dowlaw Farm (Coldingham) on 9-Sep (NH) was the only shrike sighted. This is the third year in a row with a single record of Red-backed Shrike, after a three-year hiatus from 2017-19.

Jay

Garrulus glandarius

Increasingly well-represented breeding resident. Secretive in the breeding season and therefore significantly under-recorded.

Jays have significantly increased their tetrad distribution in the last few years, which is particularly noticeable in the trends in autumn and winter, but increasingly supported by summer presence and breeding evidence. Whilst some of this may be due to observer effort, it seems that Jays are undoubtedly extending their range in the Borders. They are more widespread now than Magpies!



There were some particular concentrations in prime woodlands, with the highest count of 10 at Grieston Hill (Traquair) on 10-Jul (RB). There were also loose groups at The Hirsell of up to 5 birds in January and then up to 7 again in September/October. Other autumn groups of 5 were at Haining Loch (Selkirk), Ploughlands and Windywalls (both Kelso) and Leitholm (Coldstream). The only spring group of 5 was at Gala Water: Torwoodlee-Bowland Wood on 28-Mar.

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with breeding evidence	4	2	8	7	1	6	2	14

There was one (unusual) record of confirmed breeding and 13 tetrads with probable breeding (below).

Site/Tetrad - Jay breeding	Date	Br. Code	Observer
Leitholm (Coldstream)	4-Aug, 25-Aug	FL	R Jackson
Kingside Loch (Buccleuch)	18-Apr	P	AG Reid
Elibank (Walkerburn)	30-Apr, 29-May	P	G Paterson

Site/Tetrad - Jay breeding	Date	Br. Code	Observer
Calaburn Farm (Hawick)	1-May	B	G Paterson
Philiphaugh Farm (Selkirk)	2-Jun	A	G Scott
Caddonfoot (Clovenfords)	30-Jul	P	G Paterson
Prieston (Selkirk)	15-Apr	P	G Paterson
Sorrowlessfield Mains (Earlston)	5-Jun	A	J Gordon
Upper Nisbet (Ancrum)	3-Mar	P	R Manning
Tweed: Mertoun Bridge-Mertoun House	12-Apr	P	A Cutter
Windywalls (Kelso)	3-May	P	R Manning
Elba (Abbey St Bathans)	21-Apr	P	CD Green
Georgefield (Coldstream)	12-Apr	P	R Manning
Hurklewinter Knowe (Newcastleton)	31-Jul	P	G Paterson

See Introduction for breeding codes.

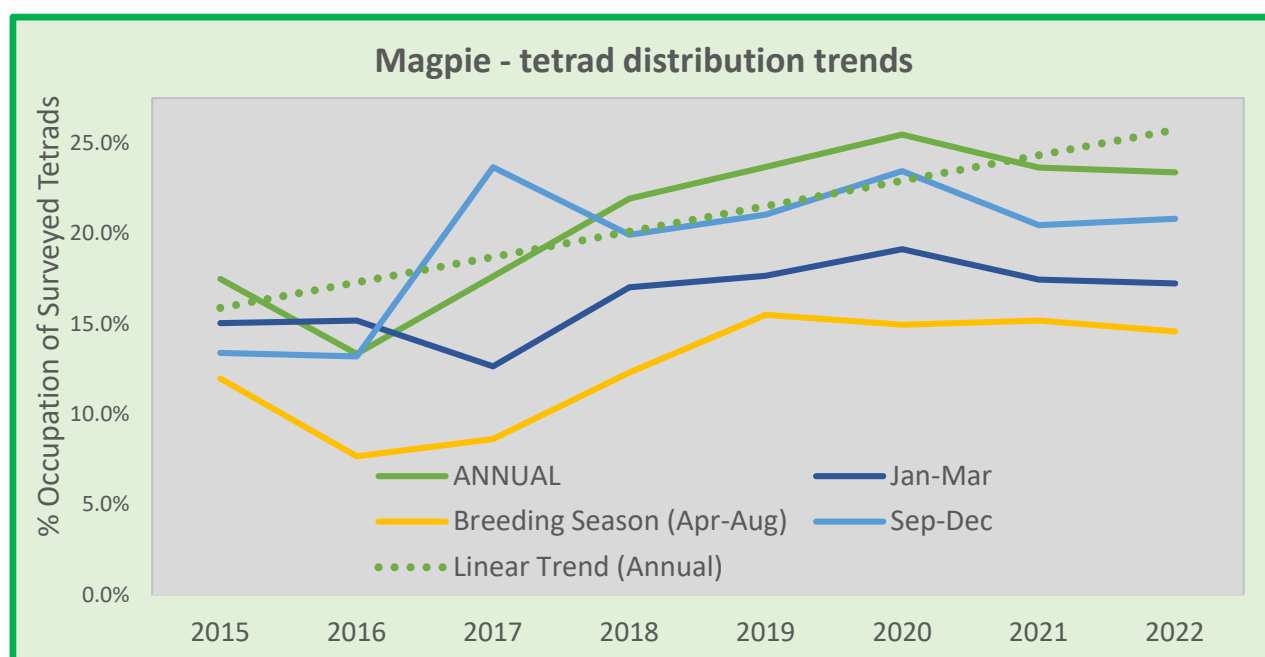
Magpie

Pica pica

Well-represented but localised breeding resident. Some dispersal in winter.

Although still more widespread than in 2015/16, there appears to have been a dip in the number of tetrads for Magpies since the peak in 2020, which is consistent across the seasons. Whether this is an observer effect or signs of a range contraction is probably too early to tell.

The largest group was 12 at Rumbletonlaw (Greenlaw) on 10-Jun (J Towill) and there were groups of 9 at St Abb's Head in March and October, Hummelknows (Hawick) in April and West Linton in November.



Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with breeding evidence	9	2	2	7	15	17	23	20

The marked rise in breeding evidence since 2018 has levelled off, with 4 confirmed breeding tetrads (tabled below) and a further 16 with probable breeding.

Site/Tetrad - Magpie confirmed breeding	Date	Br. Code	Observer
Shiplaw (Eddleston)	20-Jun	FL	G Paterson
Tweed: Lowood-Gattonside	18-Jun	FF	J Gordon
Frogden (Morebattle)	26-Jul	FL	R Manning
Dowlaw (Coldingham)	5-Jun	FL	N Hammatt

See Introduction for breeding codes.

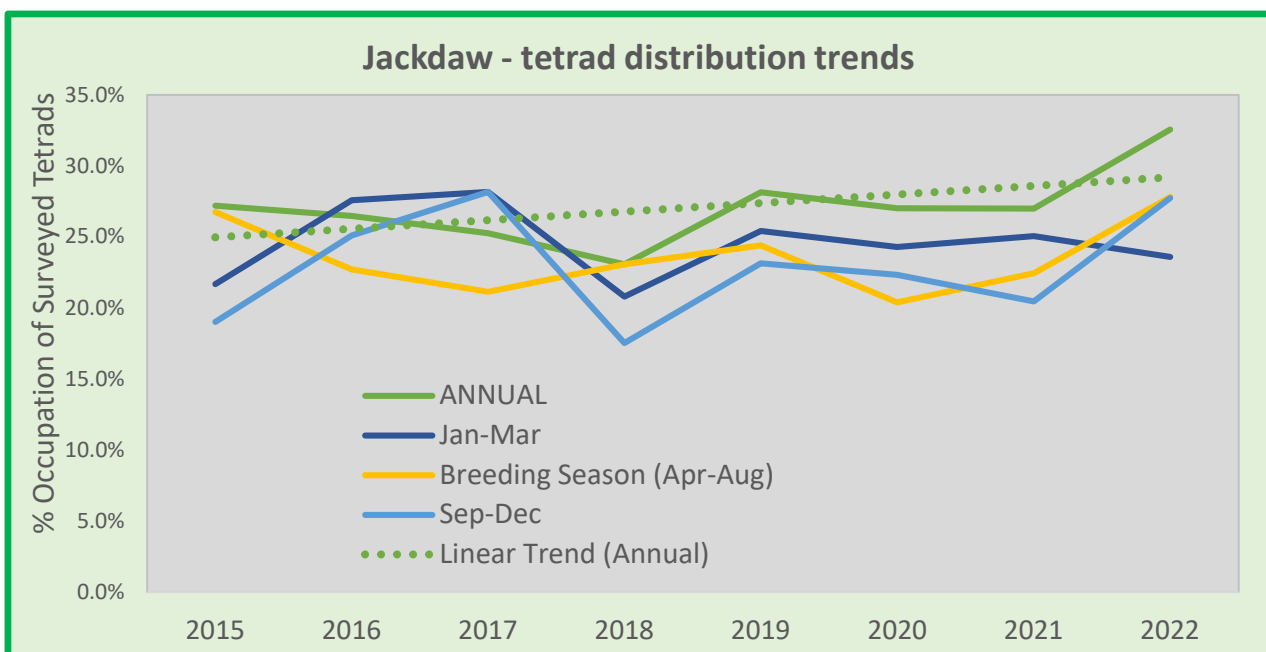


Magpie, Gordon, April (R Jackson)

Jackdaw

Coleous mondelula

Widespread and abundant breeding resident, often forming large mixed flocks with other corvids on fields and at winter roost sites.



The distribution of this bird has remained stable or increasing over the recent past, with 2022 showing a new high of 287 tetrads (32.6%) in the year. The seasonal trends for this species are very similar, although there is some variability between years.

As usual, there were some large flocks outside the breeding season. In the early part of the year, the largest flock of the year, c.2000 birds, was seen at Yetholm Loch on 16-Jan (**CH**), with Ashiestiel-Peel (Clovenfords) - c.750; Sorrowlessfield Mains (Earlston) - 600 and Foulden-Clarabad - 300+ (all in January).

In the autumn, all the largest pre-roost flocks were in the Leitholm - Anton's Hill (Coldstream) tetrads, with c.1200 on 9-Oct and c.800 still coming in on 9-Dec (**RJ**). The only other flocks over 200, were at Mailingsland (Peebles) - 215 on 5-Nov and The Hirsell - 200+ on 26-Dec.

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	12	12	13	19	20	25	26	47

There was a marked step-up in breeding evidence being provided by observers, with confirmed breeding in 13 tetrads and probable breeding in 34 tetrads.

Site/Tetrad - Jackdaw confirmed breeding	Date	Br. Code	Observer
Stobo (Peebles)	10-May	ON	H Urquhart
Carcant (Heriot Water)	6-Jun	NY	BRG
Bowhill (Selkirk)	26-May	ON	G Scott
Selkirk	17-Jul	FL	G Paterson
Tweedbank-Abbotsford-Langlee	9-Apr	ON	AT Bramhall
Eildon Hill-Dingleton	10-May	ON	D Parkinson
Tweed: Melrose-Millmount	7-Jun	ON	D Parkinson
Eckford-Wooden Loch (Jedburgh)	11-May to 19-May	FF, 2NY	CD Green
Eckford-Kalemouth (Kelso)	28-May	NY	CD Green
Kelso	23-May	NY	CD Green
The Hirsell	13-May, 20-May	FF	D Parkinson
St Abb's Head	20-Jun	FL	D Parkinson
Blackburn (Newcastleton)	12-Jun	NY	C Blackie

See Introduction for breeding codes.

Rook

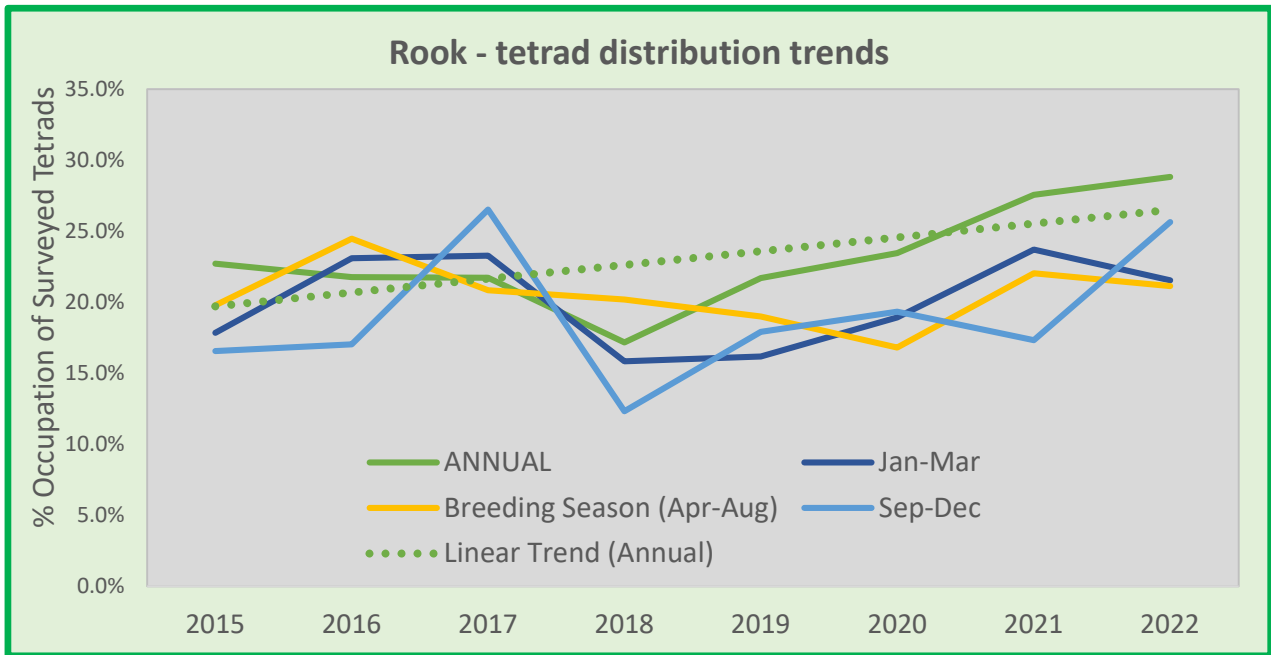
Corvus frugilegus

Widespread and abundant breeding resident. Forms large autumn-winter flocks for feeding and roosting, often with Jackdaws.

Overall Rook distribution appears to have recovered since a pronounced dip in 2018, perhaps as a result of the 'beast from the east'? This is most pronounced in the winter distribution, with a relatively flat trend on breeding season distribution, perhaps as a result of limited availability of sites for communal rookeries.

The largest Rook flocks at the start of the year coincided with those of Jackdaws, with c.1000 at Yetholm Loch on 16-Jan (**CH**), c.500 at Ashiestiel-Peel (Clovenfords), 300 at Foulden-Clarabad and 250 at Sorrowlessfield Mains (Earlston) all fitting this pattern.

There are quite a few rookeries of over 50 active nests and the birds from these, sometimes including juvenile birds, could be seen locally in large flocks. So 350 at Sorrowlessfield Mains (Earlston) on 5-Jun (JG), 248 at West Linton in April or 200 at Charterhall (Greenlaw) in July probably fit this circumstance.



Towards the end of the year, the larger groups yet again often coincided with Jackdaws. The largest autumn group was thus c.400 on 9-Oct (**RJ**) and up to 300 at Bettyfield (Smailholm) in November, both associated with Jackdaws, although c.310 at Dunlee Hill (Clovenfords) on 31-Dec was solely Rooks.

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	24	19	17	20	20	31	35	45

Of the 45 tetrads where there was evidence, 23 had confirmed breeding and 22 probable breeding.

The last large censuses of rookeries were conducted in 2011 and again in 2013 and then only in Peeblesshire by Ray Murray. They were linked in with work on the atlas (*SESA2*) and similar exercises in Lothian. These found around 80 rookery sites and over 3000 active nests each year. A similar census across the Borders now, would clearly provide a valuable milestone in our understanding of distribution and numbers.

Carrion Crow

Corvus corone

Widespread and abundant breeding resident.

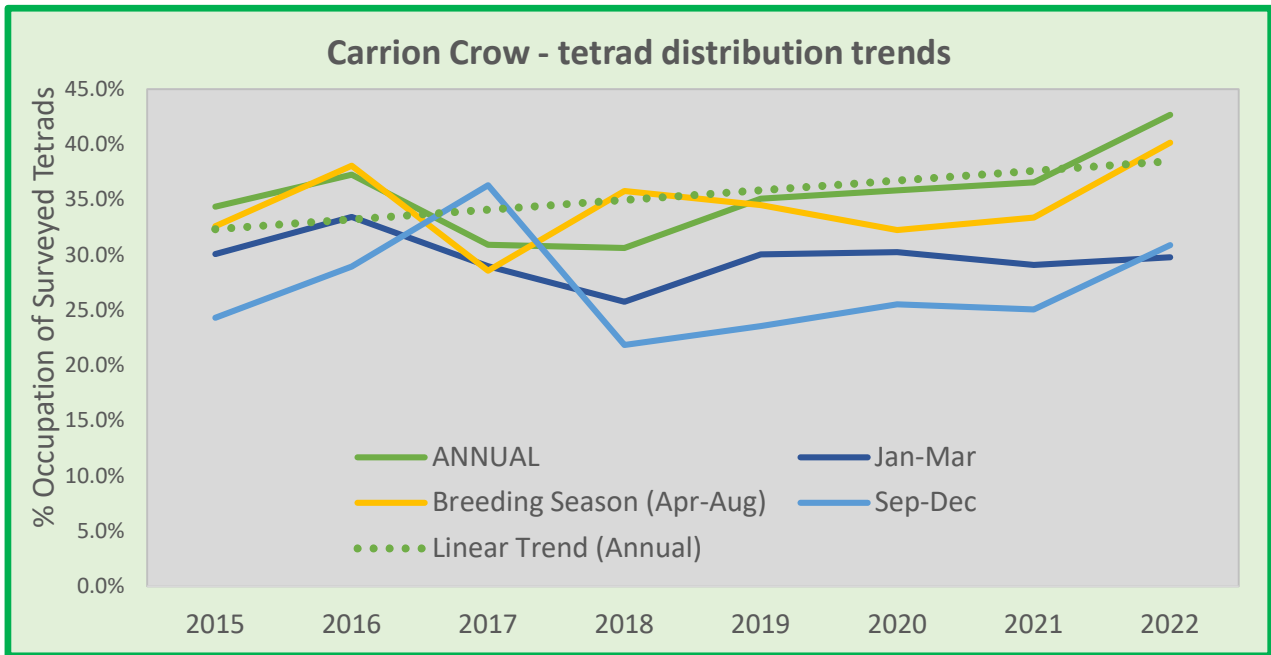
Carrion Crows have always been our most widely distributed crow and their overall range appears to be stable or slightly increasing. Relatively less observed in winter than in summer; the breeding season distribution is 306 tetrads (40.2%), which is the highest yet observed and is driving the overall trend.

Not usually in big flocks, unlike Rooks or Jackdaws, the c.400 Carrion Crows at Wormiston (Eddleston) on 2-Sep (**AGR**), 200+ at Innerleithen on 25-Jan and the 120 at Cralaw (Westruther) on 25-Mar are all notable and larger than any count in 2021. The only other flocks of over 50 were at Gavinton (Duns) and at Burnmouth, both in April.

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	20	16	23	33	20	32	41	51

There were 10 tetrads with confirmed breeding (below) and 41 with probable breeding.



Site/Tetrad - Carrion Crow confirmed breeding	Date	Br. Code	Observer
Tweed: Lowood-Gattonside	10-Jun to 26-Jun	FL	J Gordon
Tweedbank-Abbotsford-Langlee	21-Apr	ON	AT Bramhall
Fruid Resr (Tweedhopefoot)	19-Jun	FF	H Urquhart
Paxton	8-Jun	FL	M McNeely
Eckford-Wooden Loch (Jedburgh)	16-Apr	ON	CD Green
Dowlaw (Coldingham)	6-May	ON	N Hammatt
Lamberton Beach	27-May	ON	AP Mossop
Hoselaw Loch (Yetholm)	19-Jun	FL	G Paterson
Yarrow Knowe (Hermitage)	19-Jun	FL	M Cummings
St Abb's Head	20-Jun	FL	D Parkinson

See Introduction for breeding codes.

Hooded Crow

Corvus cornix

Pure Hooded Crows are rare visitors, generally in winter and spring. Hybrid genes exist in the Crow population, especially in the west.

Three records. All three reports were from St Abb's Head NNR on 19-Apr, 23-Jun and 27-Jun (all **CH**). Clearly, these may relate to just one or two individuals.

In addition there was a Carrion x Hooded Crow hybrid at Innerleithen on 29-Jan (M Cockburn).

This is a typical annual showing, where Hooded Crows, particularly pure birds, remain very scarce.

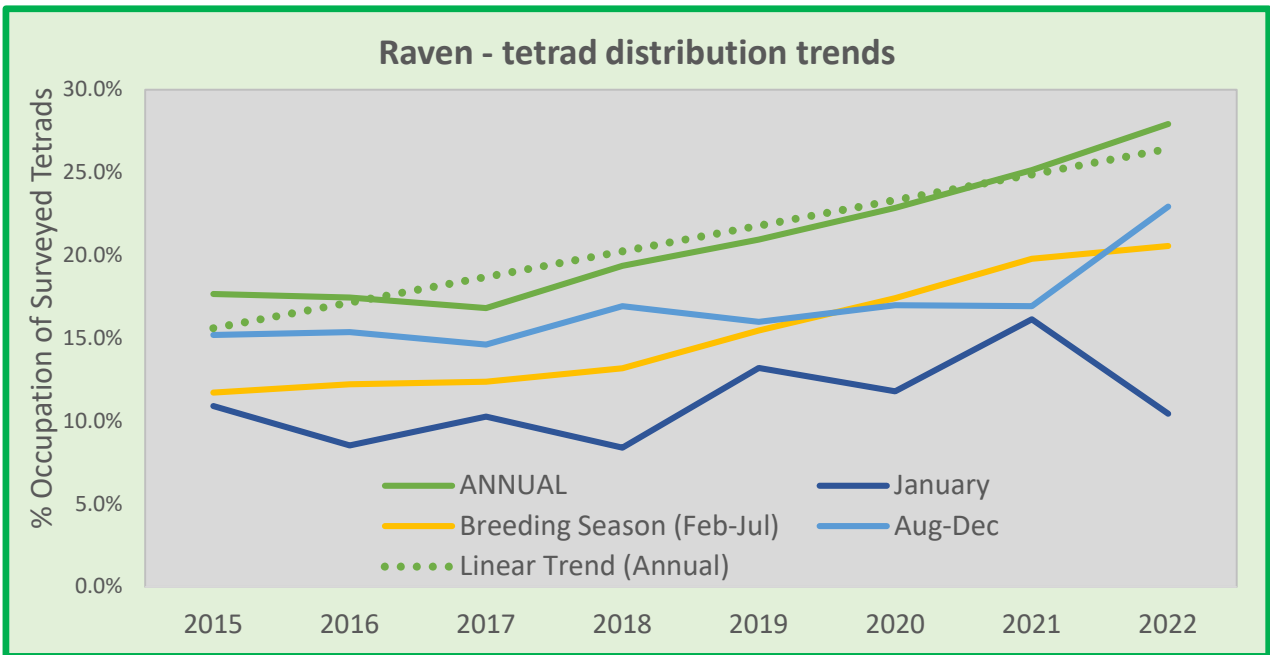
Raven

Corvus corax

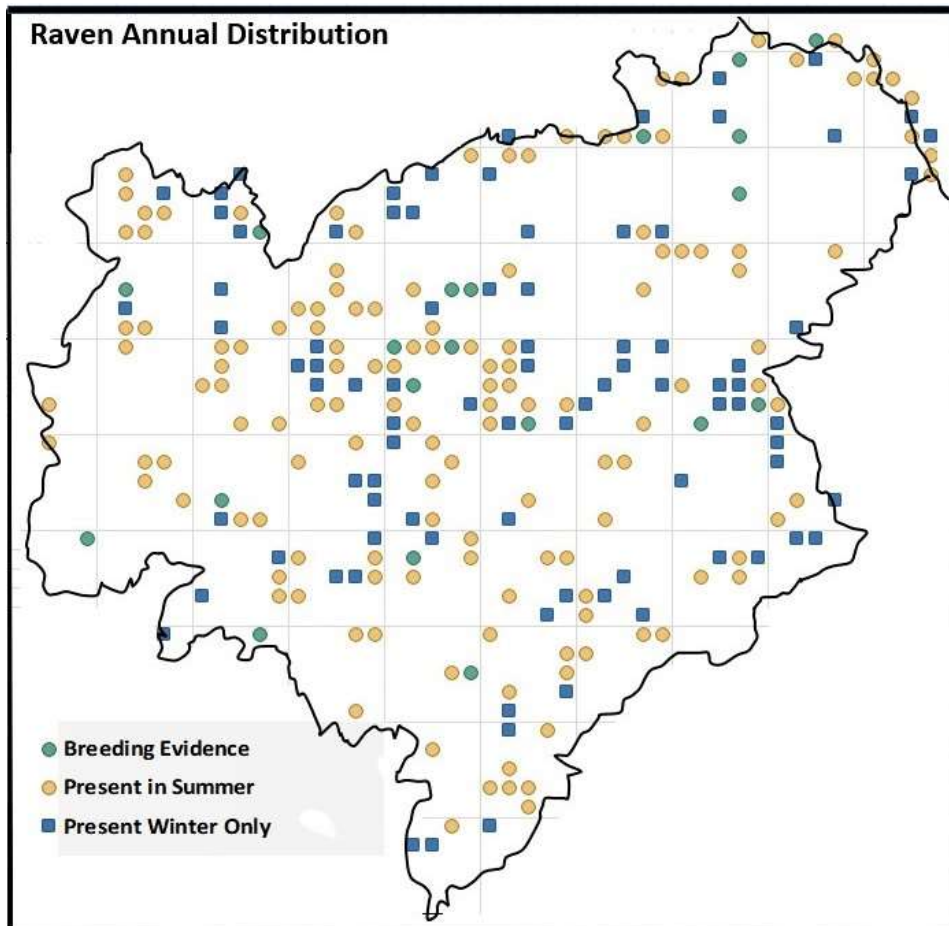
Well represented and increasing resident, found mostly in hilly areas but a few pairs on coast. Winter breeder, few confirmed records. Some winter roosts developing.

The inexorable rise in the distribution of Ravens has continued, which is particularly marked in the breeding season. It now appears to be spreading into lower altitudes and closer to population centres from the core areas in the uplands and at the coast. It is now almost as widespread as Rook and more widely distributed

than both Jay and Magpie. There is also considerable seasonal turnover, in that many winter tetrads appear to be different to those in the breeding season (see map below).



The larger groups are considerably smaller than the other 'black crows', with 19 at St Abb's Head on 5-Sep (**CH**) being the largest of the year. Similarly there were up to 17 at Blackhopebyre (Glentress Water) on 5-Aug (**RB**), with groups of 10 or more also there in February, July and October. Other groups of 10 or more were at Dabshead (Lauder) - 16; Broad Law (Heriot Water) - 16; Hule Moss - c.10; Wormiston (Eddleston) - 10 and Newmains (Reston) - 10.



Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	6+	4+	6	10	7	14	18	19

Breeding by this species has not traditionally been monitored through BirdTrack observations, but is now reaching a similar level of tetrads with breeding evidence as many other birds. There were 3 tetrads with confirmed breeding (tabled below) and 16 tetrads with probable breeding.

Site/Tetrad - Raven confirmed breeding	Date(s)	Br. Code	Observer
Fruid Resr (Tweedhopefoot)	17-Apr	FF	H Urquhart
Nether Dalgliesh (Craik Forest)	19-Apr	NY	G Christer
Duns Castle	23-Apr to 8-May	ON	J Connor

See Introduction for breeding codes.

The more specific monitoring from the Raptor Study Group (below) is still probably the best gauge of breeding status at the moment, but this is already becoming overwhelmed by the number of sites that need checking, alongside the other raptors. For now both measures will be reported in BBR.

SE Scotland Raptor Study Group Report					Raven	
Sites/territories checked	Sites/territories occupied	Sites with proven breeding	Minimum young fledged	No. of young fledged per occupied site	No. of young fledged per successful pair	
49	41	28	69	1.68	2.65	

Due to limited availability of fieldworkers, the number of sites monitored remains relatively low. We still suffer from a lack of monitoring continuity on some of the known Raven sites, where there are potentially 122 known sites that could be checked. The lack of monitoring is mainly due to the workload of the fieldworkers carrying out work on other species. Productivity was not great for a species that can and has had large broods.

There is an opportunity for much more fieldwork to be carried out on this species and the population is still expanding.

George Smith, Raven co-ordinator for Lothian & Borders.

Waxwing	<i>Bombycilla garrulus</i>
Scarce and erratic winter visitor in small numbers, sometimes more numerous during 'irruption' years.	

Six records. Following early signs of large numbers in southern Scandinavia, late 2022 was anticipated to be a long overdue 'Waxwing Year', but sadly it did not materialise. There were only a few sightings of this charismatic bird in the Borders (and the UK more generally), although there was some improvement over the last couple of years, with 6 records submitted.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Peak count	6	50	23	100	15	5	1	6
No. records	2	58	7	13	6	2	1	6
Occupied tetrads	2	16	6	12	3	2	1	6

The records are tabled below in date order. All were seen fairly fleetingly, with none lingering for more widespread appreciation. There were no records at all in the winter 2021-22.

Site/Tetrad - Waxwing records	Date(s)	Number	Observer
Dowlaw (Coldingham)	21-Oct	1	JDH Hadfield
Newcastleton	17-Nov	6	Birdguides
Oxton	25-Nov	1	E Rooney
Town Yetholm	26-Nov	1	J Towill
St Abb's Head NNR (Ranger's Cottage)	29-Nov	4	C Hatsell
Burnmouth	13-Dec	1	B Maynard

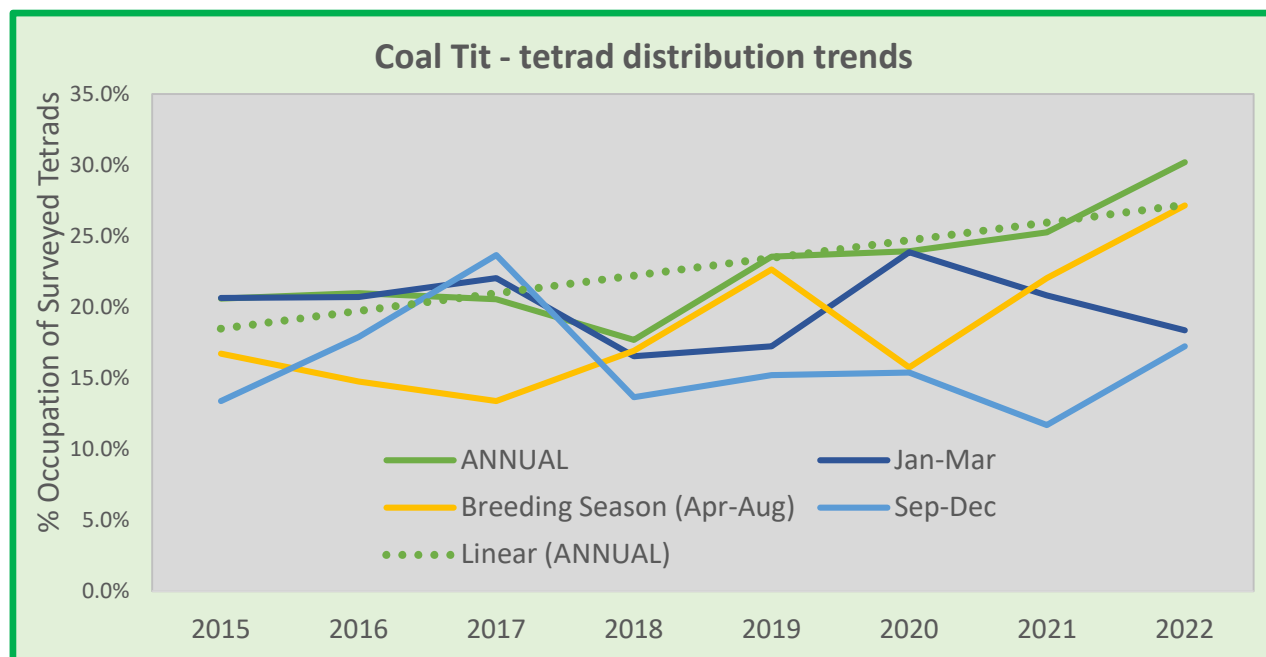
Coal Tit

Periparus ater

Abundant and widespread resident breeder, particularly in coniferous and mixed woodlands.

The overall distribution of Coal Tits now seems to be increasing after a dip in 2018, mainly driven by a greater numbers of occupied tetrads in the breeding season, while the distribution in the autumn and winter has remained largely flat. Even so, it is now marginally the most widespread of the tit family.

The main concentrations were in a mix of widespread sites and at various times of the year, the largest count being 20 at Elba (Abbey St. Bathans) on 3-Apr (**RJ**), the neighbouring tetrads at Hopehouse and Gamescleugh (Ettrick) with 16 and 15+ respectively in November, Paxton - 14 in April, Whitton (Morebattle) - 14 in June, Kirk Hill (Newcastleton) - 12 in January and The Hirsell - 12 in November.



Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with breeding evidence	14	10	21	11	48	44	115	110

Although the number of tetrads with breeding evidence fell back slightly, there were 15 tetrads with confirmed breeding (1 in 2021), 14 tetrads with probable breeding (13 in 2021) and 81 with possible breeding (singing males). Observer recording of breeding has noticeably increased and is welcome.

Marsh Tit

Poecile palustris

Formerly local and uncommon resident breeder, mainly in the East.

No records. A specific survey, targeting the areas where Marsh Tits had been seen within the last 10-12 years, was carried out in the late winter and spring of 2022. Unfortunately this did not find any presence of this tit in the Borders, and as this was the last known population in Scotland, it looked likely that Marsh Tits were now extinct here! The last record was in 2019 of two birds at Gavinton (Duns) on 6-Jul. A short article on the 'loss' of Marsh Tits was in Scottish Birds Vol43(3), September 2023, p.233.

[As a postscript, a completely unknown new population was found in the deep south of the county, near to Newcastleton, in 2023. This is being surveyed to assess the size and distribution in more detail].

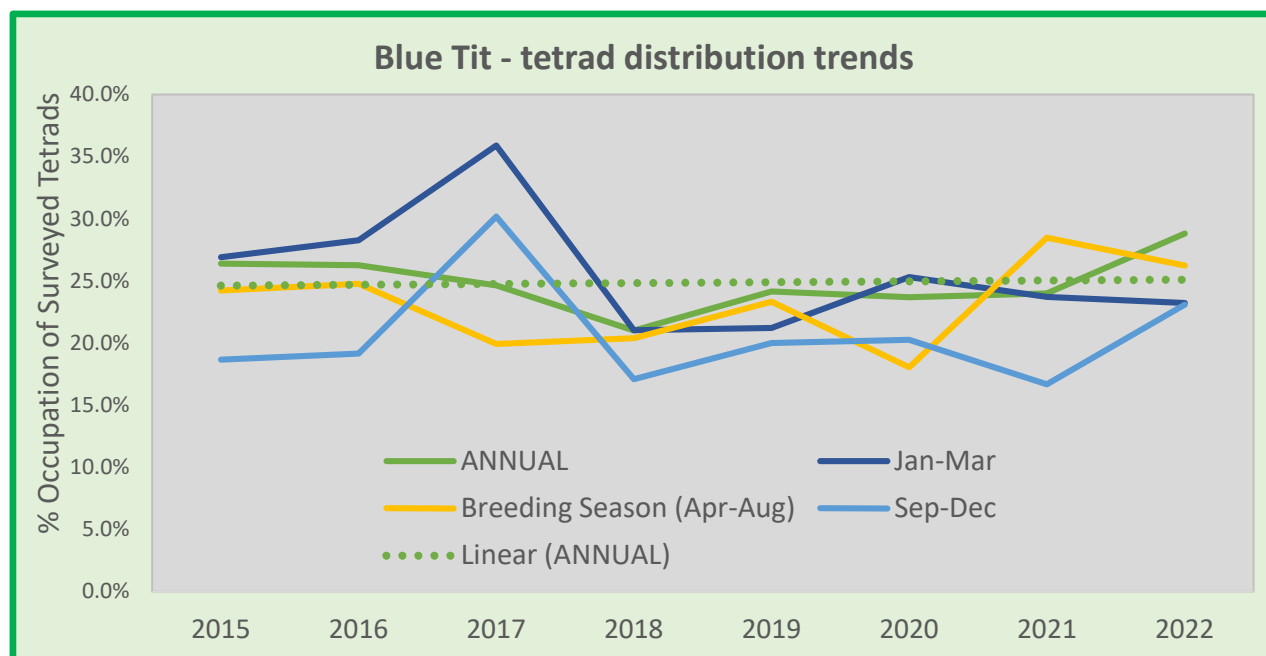
Blue Tit

Cyanistes caeruleus

Abundant and widespread resident breeder.

Blue Tit distribution has remained essentially unchanged over the last few years, although there have been some small annual variations, which include a small uptick in 2022. Seasonally, the picture is fairly similar, with many tetrads occupied all the year round.

Maximum counts were similar to last year, with the largest gathering of 35 at Kirk Hill (Newcastleton) on 31-Jan (P Crabtree), followed by up to 30 at Ashiestiel-Peel (Clovenfords) in January, Tweed: Lowood-Gattonside - 30 in March, Elba (Abbey St Bathans) - 30 in April, Tweed: Melrose-Millmount - 24 in April, Tweedbank-Abbotsford-Langlee - 24 in June, Sorrowlessfield Mains (Earlston) - 23 in January, Edrington Castle (Paxton) - 22 in February and nearby Paxton - 21 in April.



Breeding evidence:

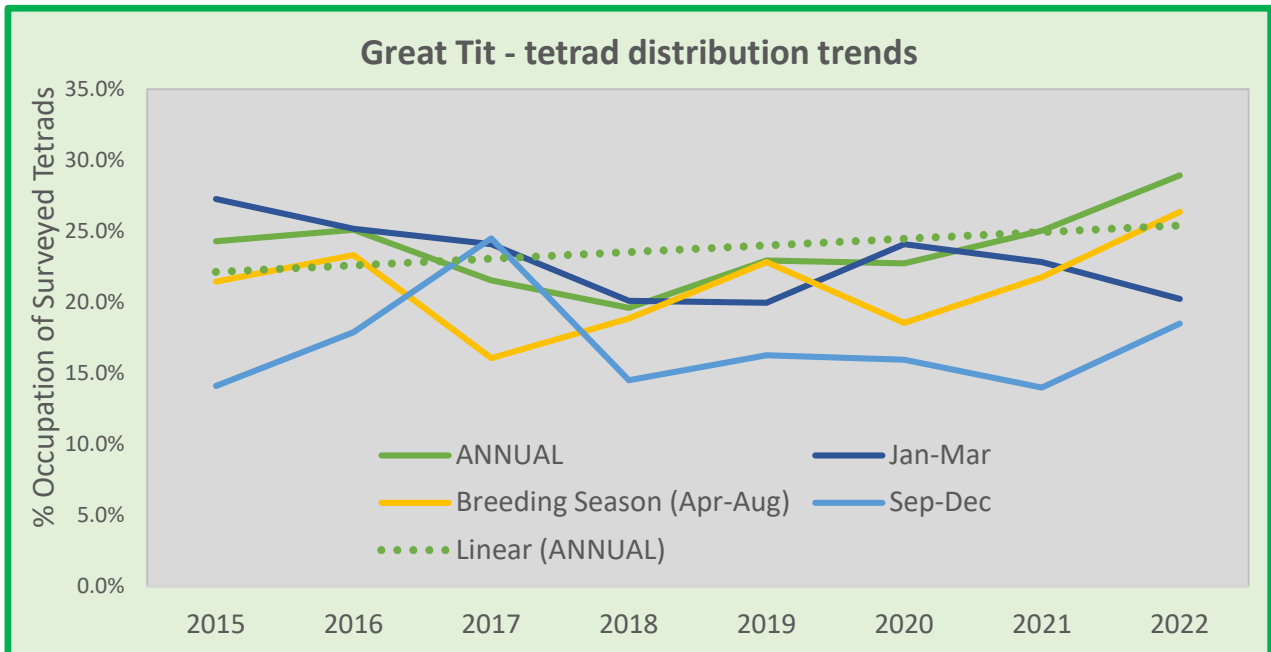
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	19	17	26	29	45	42	62	68

There was another increase in breeding evidence being provided to 68 tetrads. Of these, 36 tetrads had confirmed breeding (at least partially as a result of nest boxes and ringing activity), 19 tetrads had probable breeding and 13 had possible breeding.

Great Tit

Parus major

Abundant and widespread resident breeder.



The distribution of Great Tits shows a largely stable (or slightly increasing) picture over the last few years.

The observed distribution towards the end of the year is consistently lower than occupation during the breeding season and also the pre-breeding period.

Groups of Great Tits are generally smaller than Blue Tits, although the largest gathering of 32+ at The Hirsell on 20-Feb (**KR**) was similar in scale. Other large counts came from many of the same sites as the other tits - Kirk Hill (Newcastleton) - 31 in January, Tweed: Lowood-Gattonside - up to 19 in several months, Tweedbank-Abbotsford-Langlee - 13 on New Year's Day and Gamescleugh (Ettrick) - 12 in November. Different sites included St. Boswells - 21 in December, Tweed: Millmount-Ravenswood (Melrose) - 13 in March and Linthill (Eyemouth) - 12 in April.

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	18	19	27	34	47	41	87	105

There was another strong increase in tetrads with breeding evidence, including 28 tetrads with confirmed breeding (10 tetrads in 2021), 25 with probable breeding and 52 with possible breeding. This increase in breeding evidence, and particularly confirmed/probable breeding, is a welcome impact of observer effort.

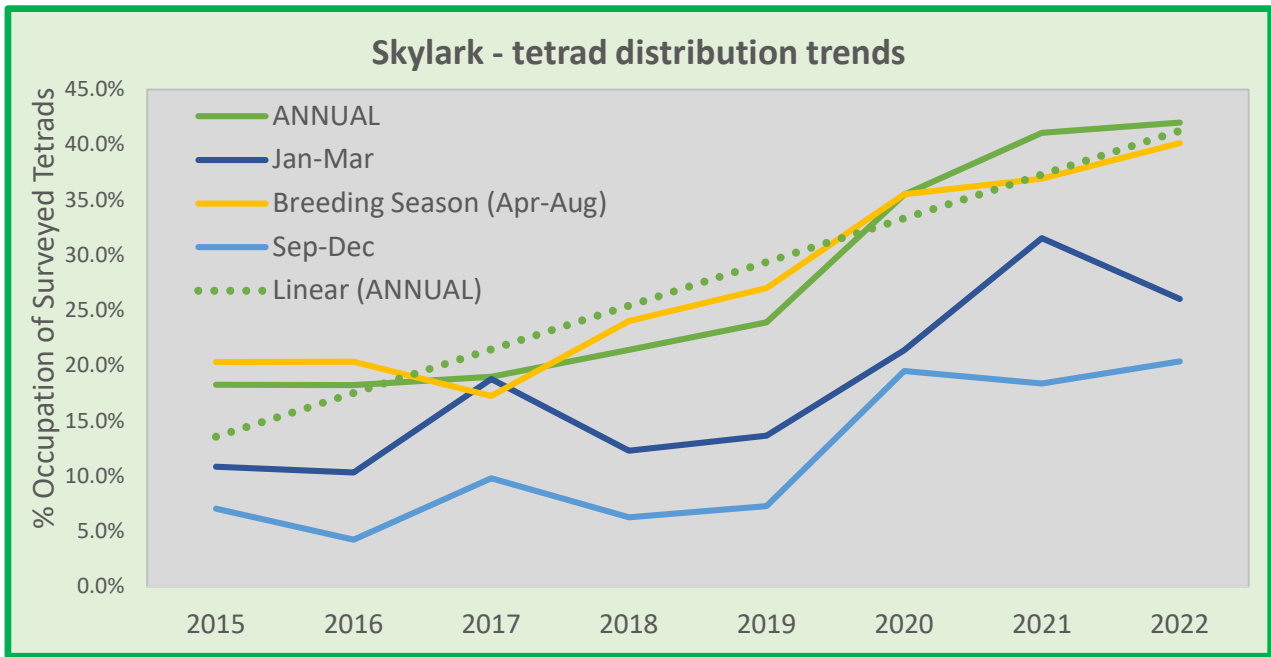
Skylark

Alauda arvensis

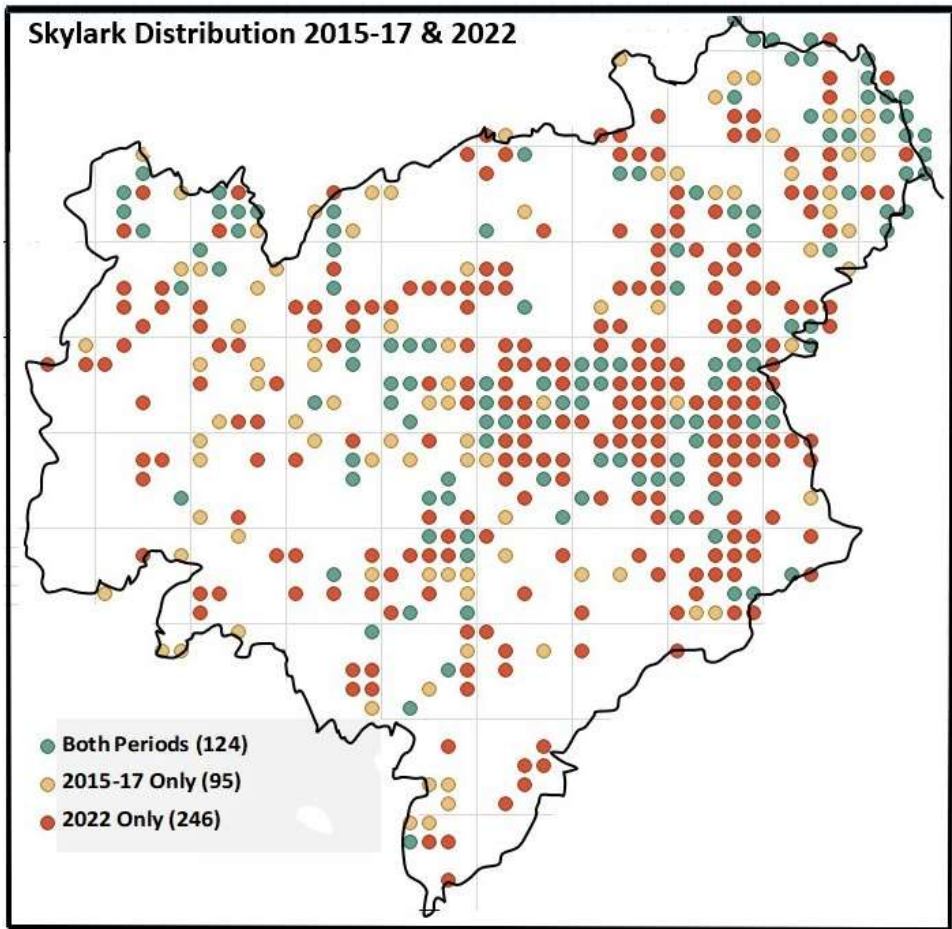
Common and widespread breeder. Mostly absent during winter months except in coastal areas. Return from late Jan-Feb, with departure and passage Sept-Oct.

With 370 tetrads (42.0%) occupied in 2022, the distribution of Skylarks has shown a remarkable increase, doubling since 2017 (see tetrad map and graph below). The increase is across all times of year, although the breeding season occupation is the main driver, as it is more extensive than the autumn and winter tetrad

occupation. Breeding evidence has also risen dramatically and whilst this will have an element of increased observer recording, this is also likely to be another indicator of improving status, further supported by an increase in BBS data.



The largest counts were smaller than in 2021 however, although many of the same sites were involved. At Teviot Haughs c.260 were counted over two tetrads on stubble fields on 2-Oct (**ST**), followed by Hopehouse (Ettrick) - 150 in March, Bettyfield (Smailholm) - 120 in November, Newmains (Reston) - 110 in December and St Abb's Head - 86 in October.



Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	32	29	33	76	107	118	141	162

Although the majority of breeding evidence was singing territorial males (128 tetrads), there were 4 confirmed breeding tetrads (fledged young at Dowlaw (Coldingham) and St Abb’s Head; carrying food at Priestthaugh (Hawick) and Buckholm (Galashiels)) and 30 tetrads with probable breeding.

Sand Martin

Riparia riparia

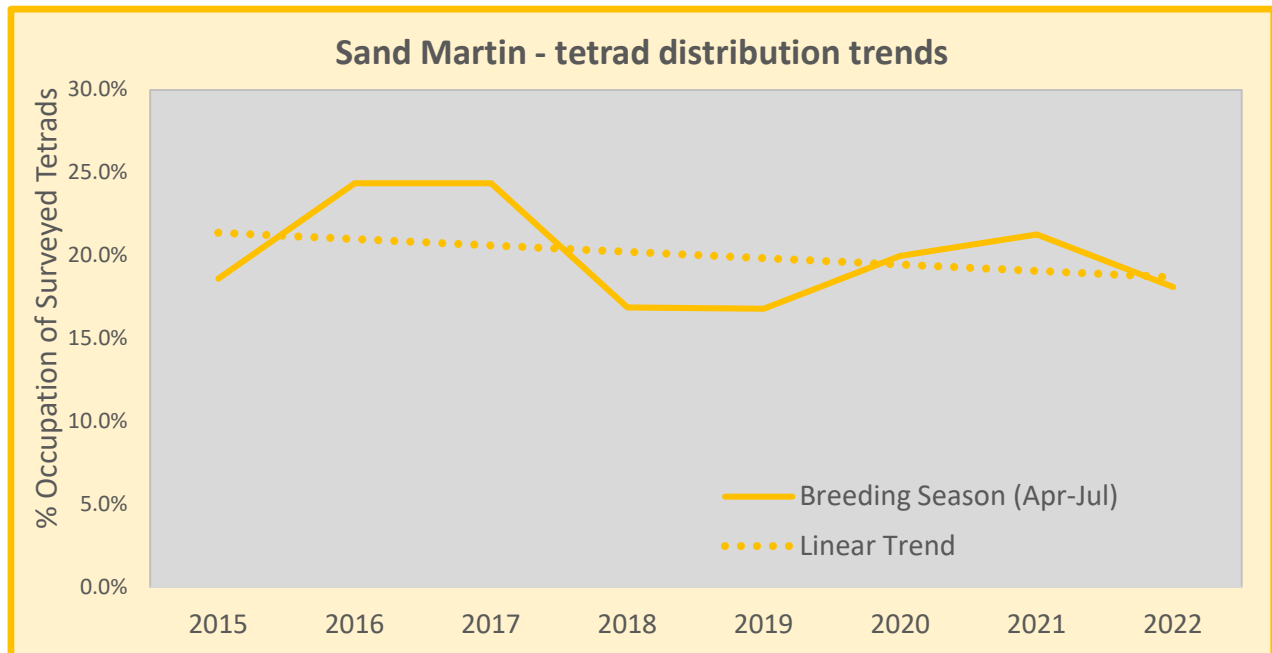
Abundant breeding summer visitor along river systems and in sandpits. Arrives from late March-mid April and departs mostly August to mid-September.

Although the trend shows a small decline in the % occupied, the number of tetrads is still higher than in all years, except 2021. For now, the distribution is assessed as stable, but needs to be monitored.

The first arrival was two at Birgham (Kelso) on 20-Mar (**NS**), which is a fairly typical date.

Being a very colonial breeder, large numbers can be counted at their main colonies, but also at feeding sites on arrival, during adverse weather and especially after breeding, with the new juveniles in tow.

Early in the season, most of the larger counts were at various points along the Tweed, with c.250 around the weir at Lees Haugh (Coldstream) on 2-May (**RJ**), c.200 at Birgham (Kelso) on 22-Jun and 150 at Tweed: Mertoun Bridge-Mertoun House on 20-Apr, although there were 140 at St Abb’s Head on 4-May.



From mid-July, there were 400+ at Birgham (Kelso) on 16-Jul (**KR**), 155 at Teviot Haughs on 29-Jul and over 100 at Hendersyde Farm (Kelso) on 14-Jul. The largest group of the year was 410 at Bowmont Forest (Kelso) on 22-Aug (**NS**), presumably readying for departure. There were still c.120 at Birgham (Kelso) on 20-Aug, with numbers dwindling into September. The last record was 7 together, again at Birgham (Kelso), on 12-Sep (**RJ**). This is an abnormally early departure date in recent years.

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	16	19	16	16	21	20	28	22

There were 9 tetrads with confirmed breeding, which were widely scattered across the region (tabled below) and a further 13 tetrads with probable breeding. Although this is a slight reduction on 2021, it concords with other recent years.

Site/Tetrad - Sand Martin confirmed breeding	Date(s)	Br. Code	Observer(s)
Westloch (Portmore)	28-Jun	ON	G Paterson
Innerleithen	17-Jun	ON	CD Green
Piper of Peebles Grave (Dewar Burn)	15-Jun	FL	TW Dougall
Philiphaugh (Selkirk)	30-May	ON	D Parkinson
Ashiestiel-Peel (Clovenfords)	22-Jun	ON	G Paterson
Buchtrig (Hownam)	8-Jul, 31-Jul	FL	A Kerr, R Jackson
Maxwellheugh (Kelso)	14-Jun	ON	CD Green
Kelso	6-Jun	ON	J McTague
Birgham (Kelso)	16-Jul	FL	K Robeson

See Introduction for breeding codes.

(Barn) Swallow

Hirundo rustica

Abundant and widespread breeding summer visitor. Most arrive early April to early May and depart late August to late Sep. Late birds sometimes to November.

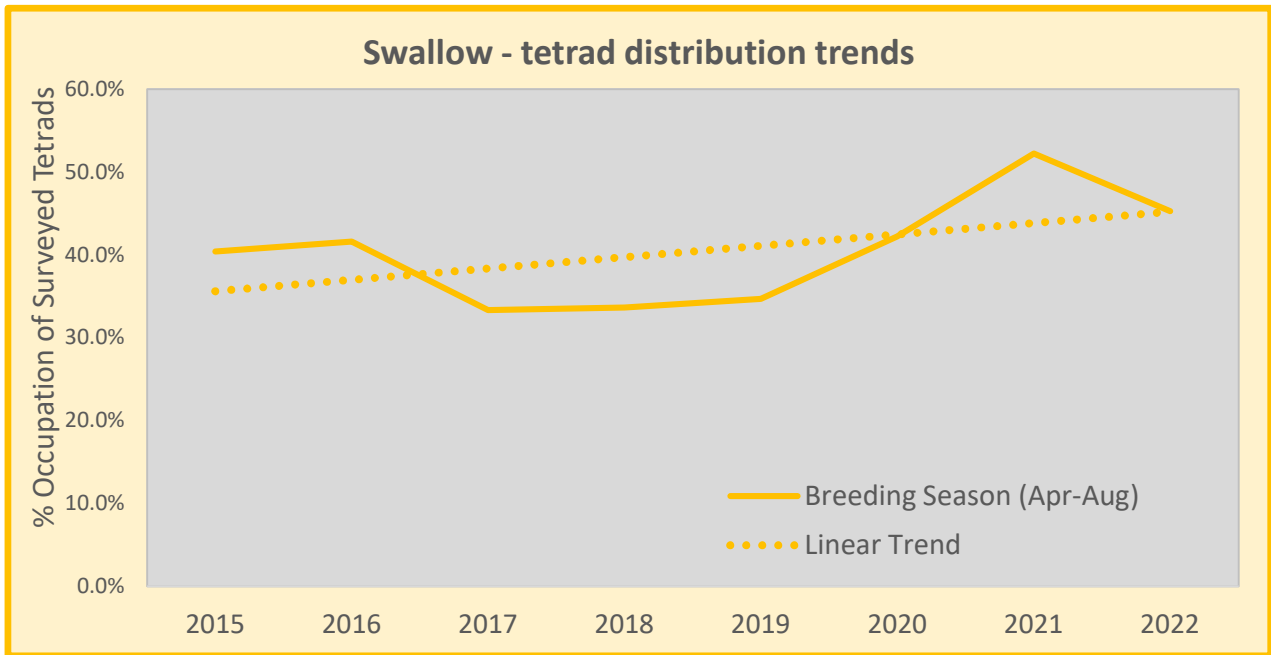
The first Swallow of the year was notably late, at Lewenshope (Yarrow) on 11-Apr (**RB**). This is almost two weeks later than the recent average and the latest since at least 2013. More arrivals quickly followed, although it wasn't until the end of the month that they were noticeably widespread.

The distribution trend remains stable (or even positive) and, even though occupation fell slightly from 2021, it remains one of the most widely distributed birds, present throughout the Borders.

Large gatherings tended to be associated with coastal movements this year, with 720 at St Abb's Head on 4-May and 180 there on 19-Jul (both **CH**) and in the autumn at Dowlaw (Coldingham), with up to 180 on 28-Aug and 100 still there on 6-Sep (both **NH**). Away from the coast there were c.175 at Burnfoot (Hawick) on 22-Jul (**GP**) and c.350 at Abbey St. Bathans on 28-Aug (RM). The only other counts of c.100 were at Eckford-Wooden Loch (Jedburgh) and Teviot Haughs (Crailing) on separate dates in August (both **CDG**).



Swallow, Torwoodlee, May (A Cutter)



Numbers started to drop from mid-September, with the last double-figure count (14) at Mailingsland (Peebles) on 28-Sep (**GP**) and nearly all had departed by early October. Stragglers were about along the Tweed at Hendersyde Farm (Kelso) until 31-Oct (**RM**), which was observed as particularly late for this location. Overall this was a fairly typical date for the last sighting.

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	8	13	23	19	28	28	24	47

There was a large increase in breeding evidence being noted, with confirmed breeding in 18 tetrads and probable breeding in 29 tetrads, both at least double the numbers in 2021. This presumably reflects the willingness by observers to seek out and record this evidence.

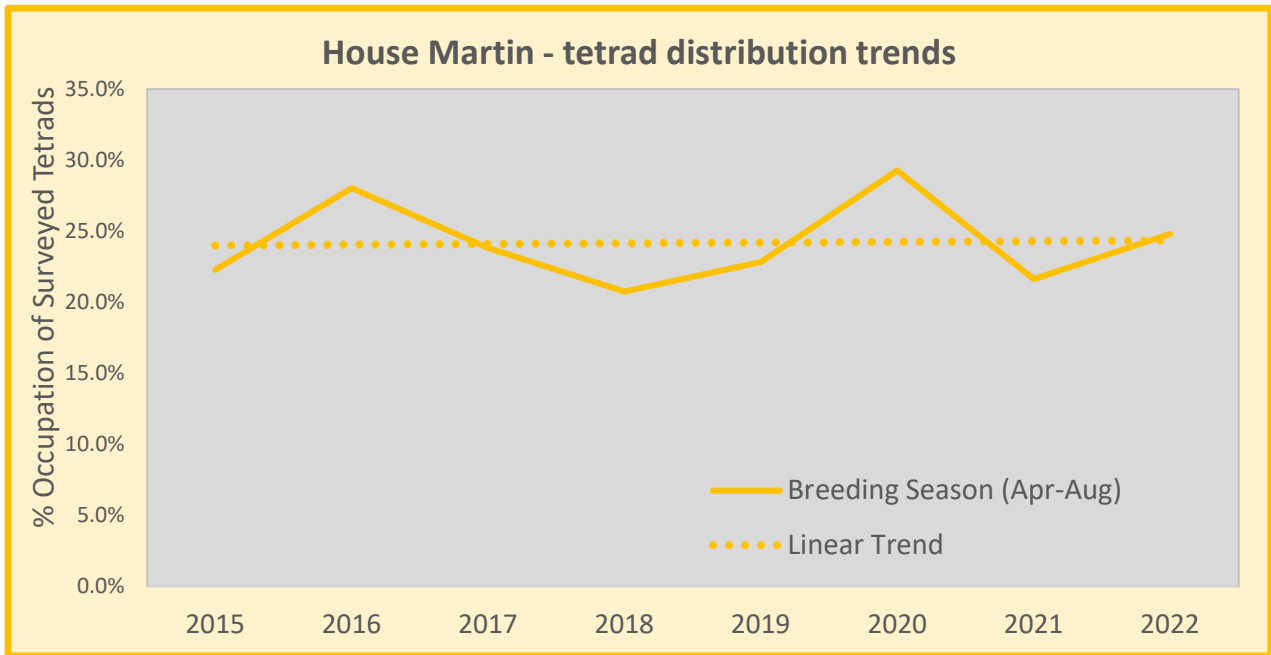
House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>
Abundant and widespread breeding summer visitor. Mostly April-October.	

The first four House Martins back were at Ashiestiel-Peel (Clovenfords) on 12-Apr (**GP**), which is a little later than average. More arrivals followed quickly, with c.200 at Tweed: Old Melrose-Dryburgh by 18-Apr (L Hanson) and most areas seeing birds by the end of April or start of May.

The trend of occupied tetrads is the very essence of stability, with 189 occupied tetrads (24.8%) in 2022.

Like Swallow, many of the larger congregations were associated with coastal movements, with 280 at St Abb's Head on 19-Jul and 200 on 25-Aug (both **CH**) and even in spring counts of 100+ there in May. Dowlaw (Coldingham) also had counts of 100 there on 25-Aug, rising to 210 on 1-Sep (both **NH**).

Away from the coast the largest count was on 18-Apr (see above), with other groups over 60 at Kirndeane (Newcastleton) - c.70 on 22-Jul; Harehead (Selkirk) - 120; Floors Castle (Kelso) - c.100; Lempitlaw (Kelso) - 80+ and Millheugh (Jedburgh) - 80, on various dates in August.



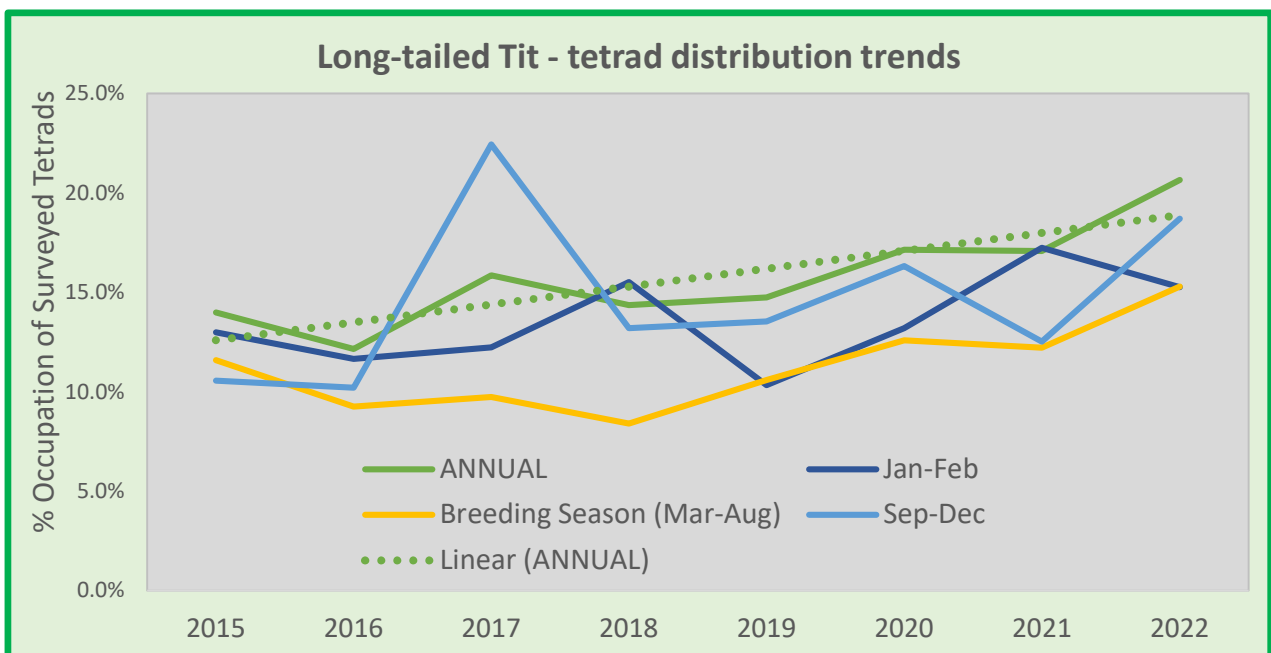
Departure tends to be a little later than with the other hirundines and 2022 was no exception, with even some nests being attended until the end of September and a count of 33 at Teviot Haughs (Nisbet) and 4 at Eckford-Wooden Loch (Jedburgh) on 1-Oct (**ST, CDG**). After this there was a single at Eyemouth on 25-Oct (F Evans) and the last at Manderston (Duns) on 17-Nov (**APM**), which is a not untypical date.

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with breeding evidence	16	22	21	27	28	35	29	38

Breeding was confirmed in 19 tetrads, including some natural coastal cliff sites at Lamberton Beach and St Abb's Head, and probable breeding in a further 19 tetrads. This is a small increase on previous years and probably down to the efforts of observers.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*
 Well-represented to common breeding resident. Forms flocks and family parties June-March.



The distribution trend for this species looks positive over the past few years, although there is quite a lot of variation between years and across the seasons. It is generally less widely recorded in the summer breeding season, perhaps through becoming more retiring and generally in smaller groups.

The number of tetrads occupied, at 182 (20.7%), is around 70% that of the other tits, although generally in similar tetrads, with a strong concentration in central areas (perhaps where the observers are?).

Roving groups of 20 or more Long-tailed Tits are quite a common sight, either during the winter months or in post-breeding family groups. The largest count of the year was 25+ at Cauldshiels & Faldonside Lochs (Selkirk) on 22-Jan (**MM**) and other flocks of 20 or more, in the early part of the year, were at Tweed: Lowood-Gattonside on 5-Jan (**JG**) and Kirk Yetholm on 24-Jan (**RM**).

The only sizeable count in summer was c.20, again at Tweed: Lowood-Gattonside, on 1-Jun (**DP**), with similar sized groups in the autumn at Lower Burnmouth - 24 on 14-Oct (**RJ**); Folly Loch - 22 on 10-Sep (**MM**) and St Abb's Head - 22 on 22-Oct and 30-Nov (**CH**). A wintering flock of 19 was at Plora Wood (Innerleithen) on 28-Dec (**RB**).

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	7	5	19	9	16	31	26	37

There were 17 tetrads with confirmed breeding, 19 with probable breeding and 1 with possible breeding. This continues the general increase in reported breeding evidence, particularly for confirmed breeding, which was only observed in 4 tetrads in 2021. Mostly the evidence was fledged young (code FL/12), with James Gordon contributing nearly half the confirmed breeding records. An occupied nest (code ON/13) was found, as were some adults with food (FF/14).

Wood Warbler

Phylloscopus sibilatrix

Now a scarce and declining summer visitor, formerly found breeding more widely. Few records after singing stops in July. Very scarce on passage.

There were 12 records submitted, from 7 tetrads, which is a slight reduction on the situation in 2021. All records are tabled below, including an unusual autumn migrant record.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of occupied tetrads for year</i>	2	2	3	7	2	10	7

Site/Tetrad - Wood Warbler records	Date(s)	Number/ Br. Code	Observer(s)
Cauldshiels & Faldonside Lochs (Selkirk)	5-May	1	J Waddell
Gamescleugh (Ettrick)	7-May	1	G Christer
Castleweary (Teviothead)	17-May	1 (roadkill)	CD Green
Abbotrule (Bonchester Bridge)	21-May, 25-May	1, S	A Cutter
Plora Wood (Innerleithen)	29-May to 7-Aug	1-3, P/D	AG Reid, R Bramhall
Thornielee (Clovenfords)	27-Aug	1	N Jervis
St Abb's Head	10-Sep	1	DK Graham

See Introduction for breeding codes.



Wood Warbler, Bonchester Bridge,
May (A Cutter)



Hume's Leaf Warbler, Mire Loch (St. Abb's Head),
November (K Gibb)

Hume's Leaf Warbler

Phylloscopus humei **BBRC**

Extremely rare vagrant to Scotland, mainly on Northern Isles. First Borders record in 2022.

One record. The (putative) **FIRST** record for Borders was picked up by the warden at St Abb's Head, at the south end of Mire Loch, on 21-Nov (**CH et. al.**). It stayed until 25-Nov, frequenting the area around the boathouse and the buckthorn at the loch outlet, allowing it to be seen by many birders.

The finder's account is on p. 233 and this was also included in a broader article on Borders' Firsts in *Scottish Birds* (Volume 43(1), March 2023, p.70). **To be submitted to BBRC.**

Yellow-browed Warbler

Phylloscopus inornatus

Scarce to uncommon, but now fairly annual, Siberian passage migrant, mainly along the coast.

A much better year for this species, following a lone single last year, although below the post 2010 average of c.24 birds. There were 20 reports in total, with (probably) at least 14 birds involved, some staying a few days. All were coastal on typical autumn dates and are tabulated below.

Site/Tetrad - Yellow-browed Warbler records	Date(s)	Number	Observer
Dowlaw (Coldingham)	10-Sep	1	N Hammatt <i>et. al.</i>
St Abb's Head (Mire Loch)	20-Sep	2	C Hatsell
St Abb's (Ranger's Cottage)	21-Sep to 23-Sep	1	C Hatsell
St Abb's village	22-Sep	1	R Safford
Dowlaw (Coldingham)	29-Sep to 2-Oct	1-3	N Hammatt <i>et. al.</i>
St Abb's (Ranger's Cottage)	30-Sep to 4-Oct	1-2 (singing!)	C Hatsell
St Abb's Head (Mire Loch)	30-Sep	1	C Hatsell
Lower Burnmouth (Cowdrait)	14-Oct	1	R Jackson
Dowlaw (Coldingham)	19-Oct	1	JDH Hadfield
St Abb's Head	21-Oct	1	DK Graham



Yellow-browed Warbler, St Abb's Head, September (C Hatsell)

Pallas's Warbler

Phylloscopus proregulus

LRC

Very rare passage vagrant. Recent records in 2019 and 2020.

One record. After an absence last year, one of these delightful warblers was seen around the Ranger's Cottage at St Abb's Head NNR on 13-Nov (**CH, DKG**).

Although about 30 birds have been seen in Borders since the first in 1982, only ten of these have been seen in the last 20 years; the last year with more than two was 1997, when there were at least seven.

Willow Warbler

Phylloscopus trochilus

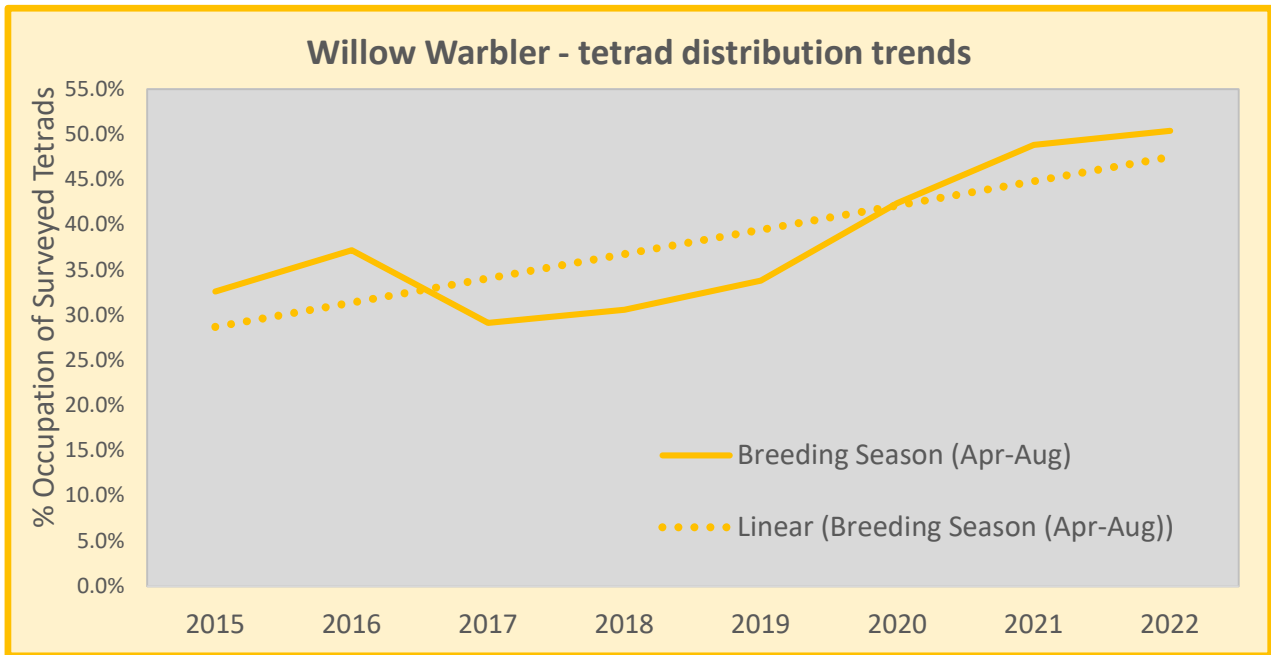
Abundant summer breeding visitor. Common passage migrant in coastal areas, especially in the autumn. Passage numbers peak April and September.

This species remains our commonest and most widespread summer visitor and the trend (opposite) shows it is still being found in more tetrads in Borders than ever before, which is at odds with the declines reported in many parts of England.

The first record for 2022 was on 10-Apr at Manderston (Duns) (**APM**), which is the latest arrival since 2013 and almost a week behind the recent average.

Particularly numerous in the west and centre of the county, the largest tetrad counts were up to 35 at Eildon Hills-Dingleton on 2-Jun (**JG**), 30 at Gamescleugh (Ettrick) on 30-Apr (**TB**), 27 on the Breeding Bird Survey at Gordon Community Woodland on the same date, 24 at Ladyurd (Broughton) on 29-Apr and 23 in each of two tetrads in the Hermitage area in May.

There was also a count of 40 migrants at St Abb's Head on 10-Sep (**CH**) and 20 at Teviot Haughs (Crailing) on the same date (**ST**), with a similar gathering at Tweed: Lowood-Gattonside on 16-Aug (**JG**).



Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	33	30	13	73	118	111	236	233

Breeding status was noted in 233 tetrads, with confirmed breeding in 16 tetrads and probable breeding in a further 19 tetrads. Singing males, indicating possible breeding, were heard in a further 191 tetrads. Many of these could, in all likelihood, have been “upgraded” to probable breeding, since they were seen or heard for several days (or even weeks) in the same area, thus marking out a probable permanent territory.

There were many records noted until mid-September, mainly at the coast, although the last inland record was at Lennel (Coldstream) on 21-Sep (**RJ**). After a short gap there were two at Dowlaw (Coldingham) on 21-Oct (**NH**) and a single at Mire Loch from 22-Oct to 30-Oct (**CH, RJ**). This was also the latest departure since 2013 and over 3 weeks later than the recent average.

Chiffchaff

Phylloscopus collybita

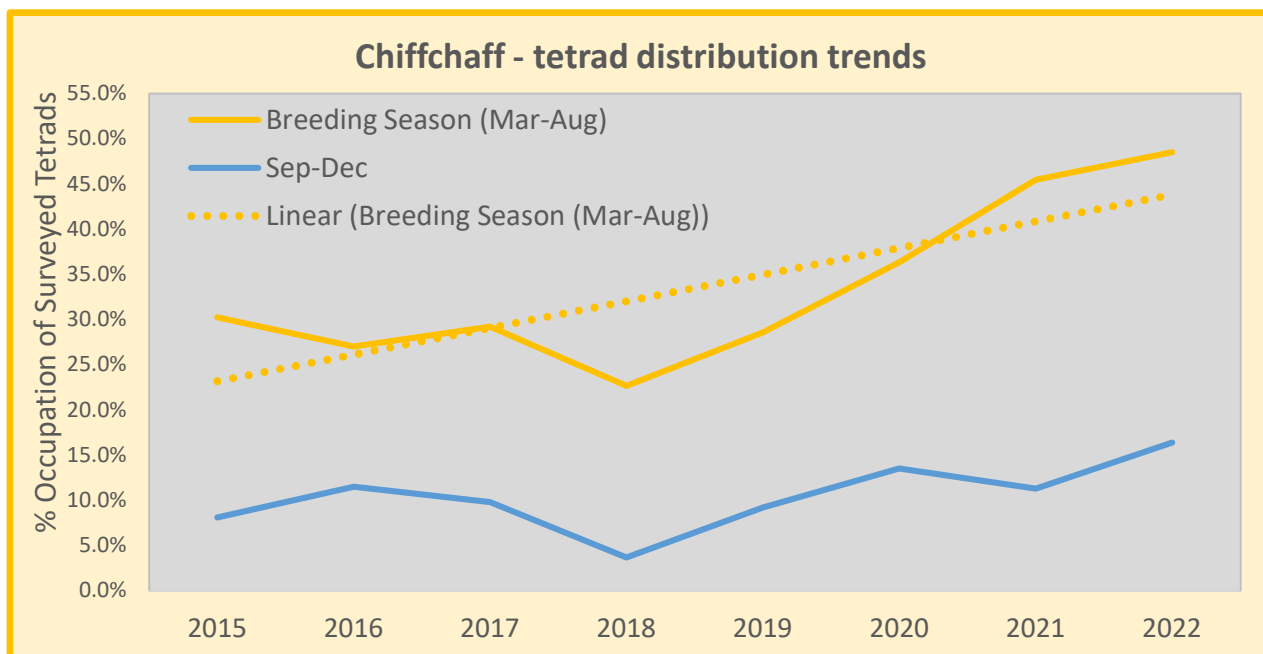
Abundant summer breeding visitor. Uncommon passage migrant in spring, more common in autumn. Increasingly a few sometimes remain in winter.

Like with Willow Warbler, the distribution of Chiffchaffs continues to increase in Borders and it may surpass its close congener as the commonest summer migrant in the coming years. It is particularly numerous in the east and centre of the region, but even in western tetrads it is often very common and easy to find, although generally only at lower altitudes.

The largest spring tetrad counts were Eildon Hills-Dingleton - 35 on 18-Apr (**JG**), Elba (Abbey St Bathans) - 30+ on 3-Apr (**RJ**) and 21 at Tweed: Lowood-Gattonside on 9-Apr. Linthill (Eyemouth) and Paxton also saw counts of 18 and 17 respectively in early April.

Although becoming slightly more widespread in the late autumn and early winter, the population remaining into the New Year is still very small, with only a handful of records in January/February each year. In early 2022 there was a record of two at Tweedbank on 14-Jan (**ATB**), and singles at Tweed: Mertoun Bridge-Mertoun House and Dykes (Denholm) on 1-Mar were also probable wintering birds.

The first incoming migrants were on 11-Mar, with singles birds at Duns (A Tharme), Oxtou (E Rooney) and St Abb's-Coldingham (CH), before a widespread arrival over the next few days. This is a fairly typical first migrant date, but this can be difficult to be definitive due to the presence of possible winterers.



Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with breeding evidence	45	53	51	69	129	133	194	237

There was another large rise in breeding evidence, although confirmed breeding was recorded in only 10 tetrads and probable breeding in a further 31 tetrads, leaving 196 tetrads with singing males denoting possible breeding.

Inland records were still widespread during September and October, with up to 40 at Teviot Haughs on 11-Sep (ST) the highest count of the year. The last records were singles at Plora Wood (Innerleithen) on 22-Oct, at Bemersyde Moss on 23-Oct, Teviot Haughs on 1-Nov, Mailingsland (Peebles) on 9-Nov and a probable winterer at Eckford-Wooden Loch (Jedburgh) on 3-Dec (CDG).

Coastally there were records in reduced numbers through to 9-Nov, particularly at St Abb's Head. After a gap, there were up to two there from 21-Nov to 30-Nov and then probable wintering birds at Mire Loch on 12-Dec and then one at the Ranger's Cottage on 15-Dec (CH).

Sedge Warbler

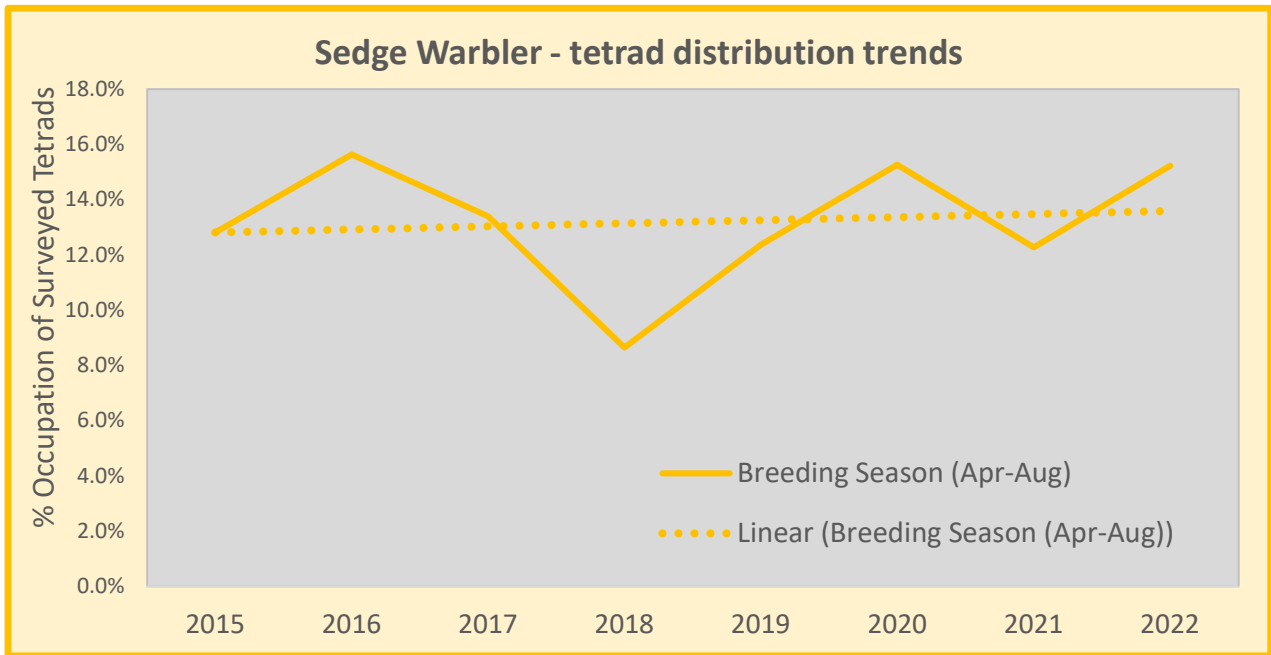
Acrocephalus schoenobaenus

Common summer breeding visitor, especially to wet areas, April-September. Scarce on passage.

The distribution of Sedge Warblers has remained steady over the last few years, although there are small annual variations. The absolute number of tetrads (116) was the highest recorded to date and more than double the 53 tetrads that gave the peak % occupation recorded in 2016.

The first record of the year was at Kerchesters (Kelso) on 19-Apr (RM) and then at The Hirsle on 22-Apr (KR), before a general arrival. Typical dates, although slightly earlier than the recent average.

The strongest populations were at Bemersyde Moss with up to 12 birds on 14-May (AC), Mire Loch (St Abb's Head) also with 12 on the same date and Fireburnmill (Coldstream) with 6 on 26-May (RJ).



Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	19	18	22	19	45	50	45	60

There were 5 confirmed breeding tetrads (below), 8 with probable breeding and 47 with possible breeding.

Site/Tetrad - Sedge Warbler confirmed breeding	Date(s)	Br. Code	Observer
Mailingsland (Peebles)	30-Jun	FL	AG Reid
Broad Law (Heriot Water)	18-Jul	FL	TW Dougall
Selkirk Common	2-Jun to 27-Jul	4NY	BRG
Bemersyde Moss	12-Jun, 6-Jul	FF	A Cutter
St Abb's Head	15-Jun, 30-Jun	FF, FL	C Hatsell

See Introduction for breeding codes.

There were records from the various breeding areas until the end of August, with the last two sightings of singles at Sprouston on 2-Sep (**KR**) and at Mire Loch on 8-Sep (**CH**). This is earlier than on average, but there is a lot of variation on last dates, as per the migrants table on p.219.

Paddyfield Warbler

Acrocephalus agricola **BBRC**

Extremely rare vagrant to Scotland. Only previous record in 2016.



Paddyfield Warbler, Mire Loch, August (P Safford)

One record. The second record for Borders was found around Mire Loch (St Abb's Head) on 31-Aug (P Safford), and appeared to go to roost, but despite searches the following day it could not be re-found. **Accepted by BBRC.**

The full finder's report was in *Scottish Birds* (Volume 43(1) March 2023, p.85). The first record was trapped, and was also at St Abb's Head, on 5-Jun 2016.

Reed Warbler

Acrocephalus scirpaceus

Scarce spring and autumn passage migrant, and rare localised breeding summer visitor.

After three years with some optimism around potential regular breeding at Mire Loch (St Abb's Head), this year had a disappointing reduction in sightings and numbers, although there were also records from a couple of other tetrads. All records are tabulated.

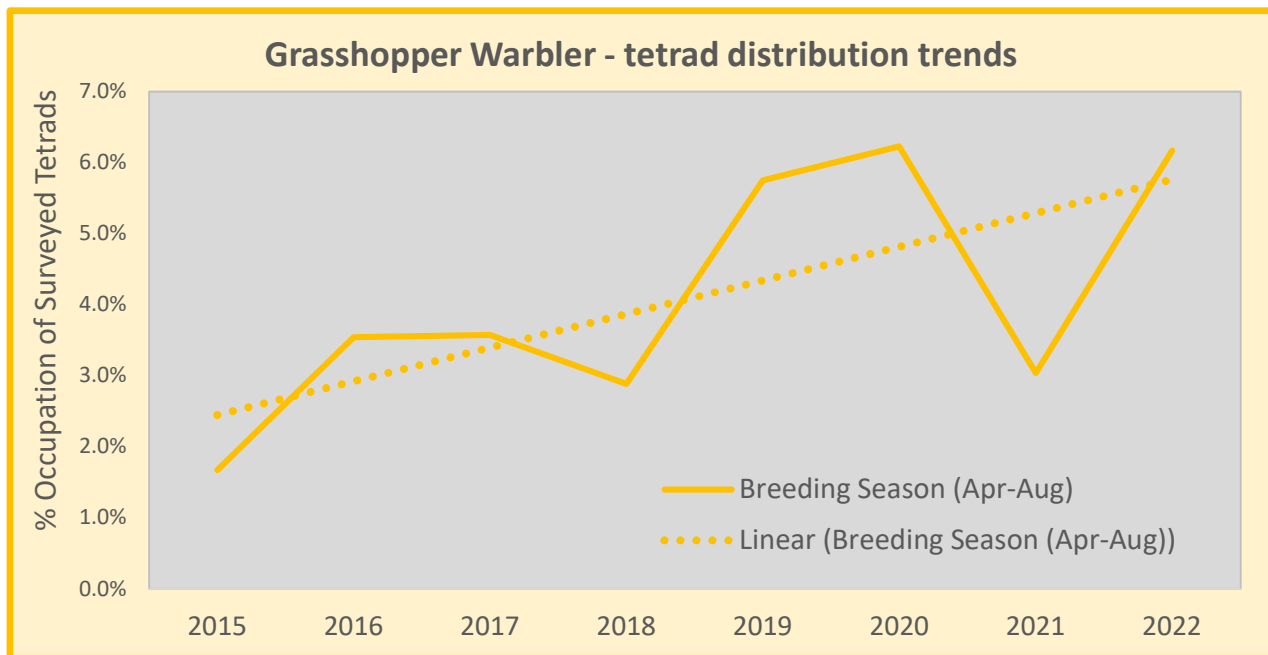
Site/Tetrad - Reed Warbler records	Date(s)	Number	Observer
Mire Loch (St Abb's Head NNR)	12-May to 10-Sep	1-2	P Greaves, K Wood, C Hatsell, BRG <i>et. al.</i>
Alemill (Eyemouth)	15-May	1	DK Graham
The Hirsell	25-May, 7-Jul	1	C Hatsell, K Houston

At least the birds at St Abb's and The Hirsell appear to have lingered, giving some hope for the future.

Grasshopper Warbler

Locustella naevia

Very uncommon and localised summer visitor and passage migrant April-early September.



The distribution of Grasshopper Warblers has increased in the last few years, although there are large annual variations. This year the distribution was much more extensive than last year's poor result and overall similar to 2020, although tetrad numbers were boosted as a result of the monitoring recorders.

The first reeling bird arrived on 17-Apr at Tweed: Lowood-Gattonside (**JG**), with others at Whitsome (Chirside), Doorpool (Bonchester Bridge) and Anton's Hill (Coldstream) in the next few days. This is around a week earlier than the recent average. Most records were of single male birds reeling, although 3 (2 reeling males, 1 probable female) were at Burnmouth on 30-Apr (**DKG**), 4 were on the BBS at Yarrow Knowe (Hermitage) on 2-May and 3 reeling males at Myredykes (Wauchope Forest) on 23-Jun (**GP**).

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	4	4	5	7	20	30	16	30

There was no confirmation of breeding this year (unlike in 2021), but singing males, mostly holding territory were present in 30 tetrads, scattered throughout the region. The audio recorders added several new tetrads in the extensive Wauchope Forest, as a side benefit of the Nightjar monitoring there.

The last records were typically early, with the last sighting on 6-Aug at Easter Deans (Portmore) (**TWD**), although a later bird was picked up on the nocturnal audio recording on 15-Aug at Whitrope Cott (Wauchope Forest) (**GP**). Departure dates typically vary widely from late July to mid-September.

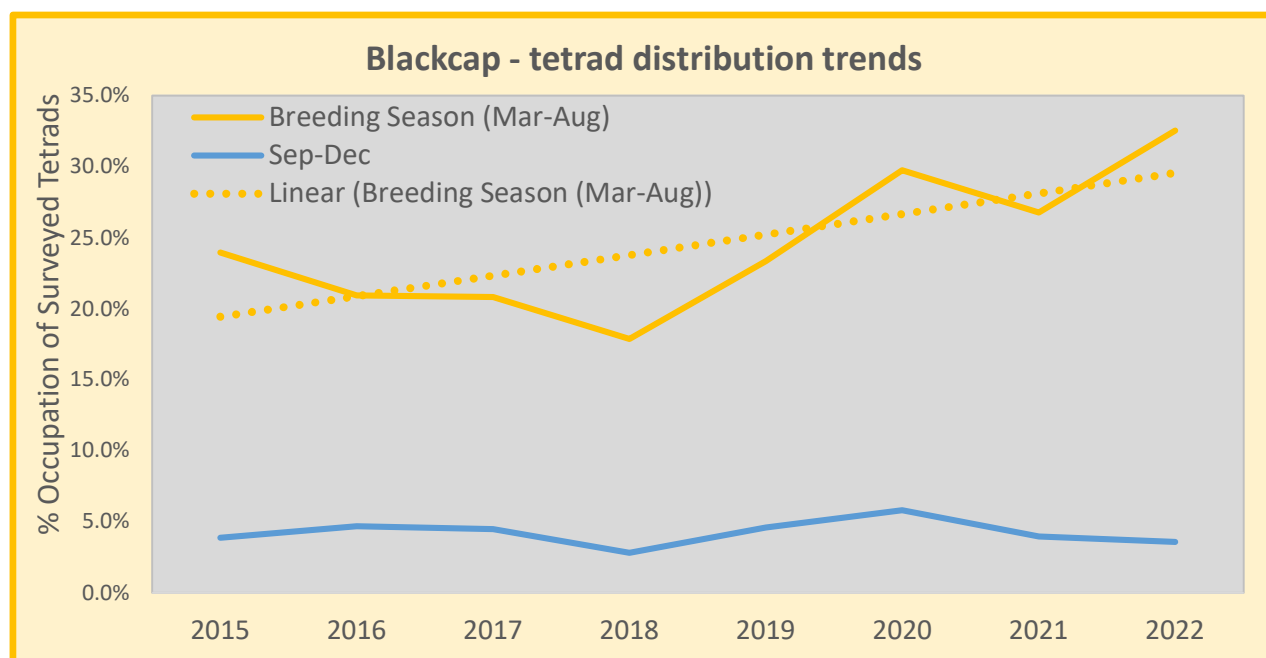
Blackcap

Sylvia atricapilla

Abundant summer breeding visitor. Very uncommon on passage April-May, well-represented in autumn from August to October. Scarce but annual in winter.

Wintering numbers in the early part of the year remained quite low, with four records reported: a female at Eildon (Melrose) on 15-Jan (F Kilgour), another female at West Morriston (Earlston) on 17-Jan (**RM**) and an unprecedented group of six birds at Eckford-Wooden Loch (Jedburgh) on 21-Jan (**CDG**). Also probably wintering was a single at Burnmouth on 28-Feb (F Evans).

Although early as a first migrant, the bird at St Boswells on 22-Mar and again on 28-Mar (**AC**) is treated as the first spring arrival, with more arriving from 1-Apr onwards at Crailinghall (Jedburgh) and along the Tweed downstream of Kelso (all **RM**).



The tetrad distribution trend shows an overall growth in the last few years, after a decline to 2018. This may be due, in part, to the effect of greater observer coverage, but overall stability seems assured.

The largest concentration of birds were at Tweed: Lowood-Gattonside - up to 19 on 3-Jun (**JG**) and several other tetrads around the wider Melrose to Tweedbank area held double-figure counts at various times. Other counts were Lennelhill (Coldstream) - 12 on 27-Apr (**APM**), 12 on a WBBS along the Ale Water upstream of Ancrum on 3-May (**NS**) and 11 at Edington Mains (Chirnside) on 9-May (also on a WBBS, this time on the Whiteadder).

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with breeding evidence	40	28	51	39	84	105	97	124

Another record high number of tetrads with breeding evidence, although 95 of these were possible breeding (singing males), although confirmed breeding was observed in 7 tetrads (tabled below) and probable breeding in a further 22 tetrads.

Site/Tetrad - Blackcap confirmed breeding	Date(s)	Br. Code	Observer
Dawyck House (Drumelzier)	24-Jul	FL	M Betts
Selkirk	22-Jun	FL	CD Green
Buckholm (Galashiels)	22-Jun	FF	A Cutter
St Boswells	7-Jul	FL	A Cutter
Tweed: Old Melrose-Dryburgh	16-Jun	FL	A Cutter
Tweed: Mertoun Bridge-Mertoun House	9-Jun	FF	A Cutter
Bemersyde Moss-Brotherstone (Smailholm)	30-May, 12-Jun	FF	A Cutter

See Introduction for breeding codes.

Records continued in both coastal and inland areas through September, before a gap in the first half of October. Thereafter migrants were at the coast from 20-Oct until the last on 4-Nov, with up to 9 at Dowlaw (Coldingham) (**DKG**) and up to 4 at St Abb's Head NNR (**DKG, CH**).

Wintering birds were again very localised, with 1 at Maxwellheugh (Kelso) on 19-Nov (**KR**) and 2 at Mire Loch (St Abb's Head) on 21-Nov (**CH**) which could have been late migrants, but are assumed to have wintered somewhere at the coast.

Garden Warbler

Sylvia borin

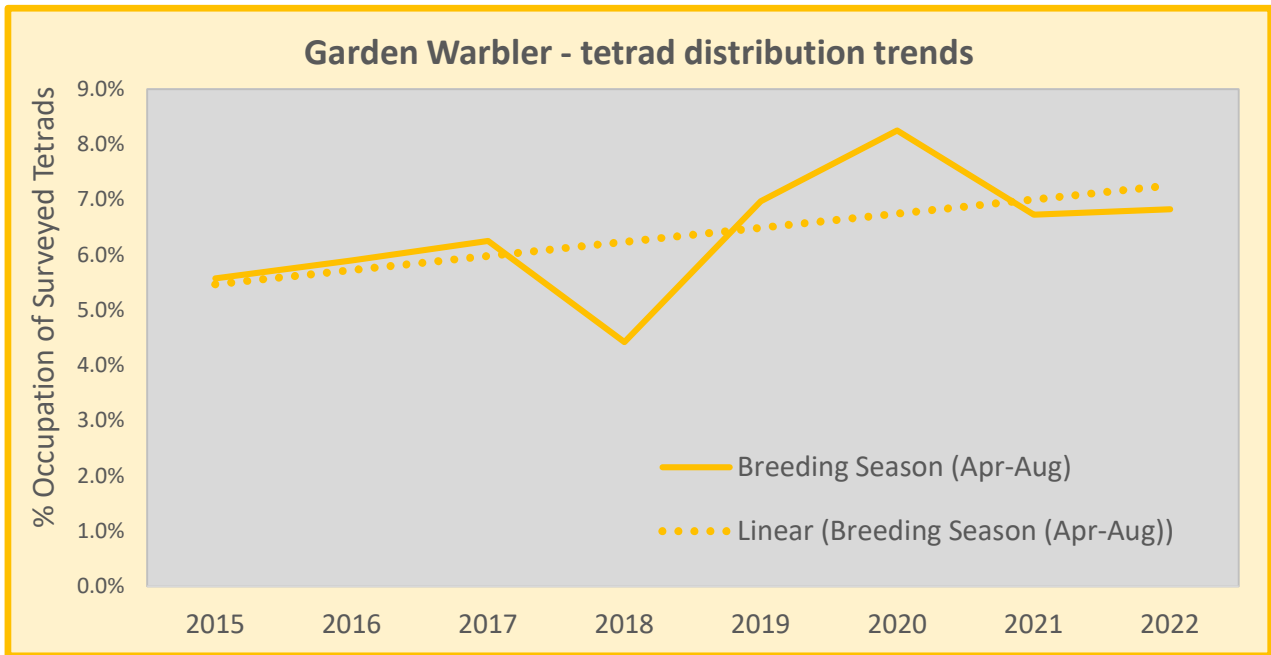
Well-represented to common summer breeding visitor. Scarce on autumn passage.

The distribution trend shows a small increase in tetrad occupation over the last few years, despite some variations in some years e.g. low in 2018, high in 2020. Whether this is representing a real increase is uncertain, due to the nature of the 'survey', although a generally stable picture seems likely.

The first arrivals were on 24-Apr (a typical date), with two at Haining Loch (Selkirk) (**ELB**) and one at Charterhall (Greenlaw) (**RJ**). The next arrivals were on 4-May, with widespread sightings from then on.



Garden Warbler, St Boswells, May (A Cutter)



Garden Warblers tend to be spread quite thinly across the region, with no more than 2 or 3 calling birds or pairs reported in any tetrad.

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with breeding evidence	8	6	13	12	25	30	35	31

There was only one record of confirmed breeding - the ringers (BRG) finding a nest with young at Selkirk Common on 20-Jun. There was probable breeding in 8 tetrads (pairs or territory-holding males in most cases) and then 22 tetrads with possible breeding (singing males only).

There were few records after mid-July, with the last inland report from Thornielee (Clovenfords) on 8-Aug (RB). Unlike last year, there was some obvious migration at the coast from 30-Aug to 12-Sep, with up to 3 birds at both St Abb's Head and Dowlaw (Coldingham) (P Safford, CH *et.al.*).

Barred Warbler

Curruca nisoria

Rare on autumn passage and not annual.

One record. A relatively late bird was found at Mire Loch (St Abb's Head) on 22-Oct, staying in the same area until the 25-Oct (P Burns, CH, DKG).

Although 2021 was a blank year, this followed three years, each with single records.

Lesser Whitethroat

Curruca curruca

Very uncommon summer visitor and passage migrant. Erratic sightings. Mostly on passage late April to May and August to October. Found in less than 2% of tetrads in summer.

During the spring and summer there were just 11 records, from 4 tetrads (tabled below).

Site/Tetrad - Lesser Whitethroat records	Date(s)	Br. Code	Observer
Newmains (Reston)	16-Apr to 11-Jul	2S	DK Graham
Edrington Castle (Paxton)	1-May	S	T Brewis
St Abb's Head	2-May, 3 May	S	C Hatsell

Site/Tetrad - Lesser Whitethroat records	Date(s)	Br. Code	Observer
Leitholm (Coldstream)	10-May	S	R Jackson

This is a further decrease in summering numbers, after a slightly more positive picture in 2020.

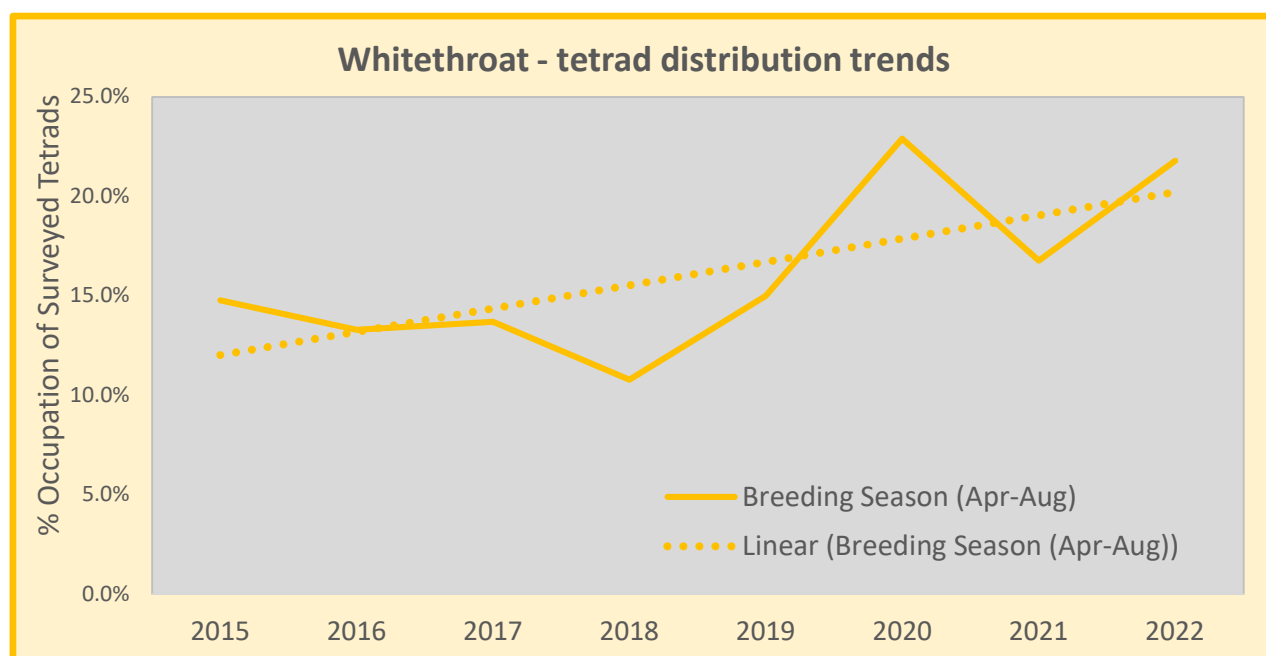
The autumn migration was, however, far more productive, with 23 records from 1-Sep to 12-Sep at 3 sites - Dowlaw (Coldingham), St Abb's Head (up to 2 birds) and Eyemouth and then further records on 21-Oct at the first two locations and a last single at St Abb's Head on 25-Oct (**CH**). This is the latest departure date yet seen, but only by a few days.

(Common) Whitethroat

Curruca communis

Abundant summer breeding visitor, mostly on lower ground.

This is another warbler with a seemingly positive trend in distribution over the past few years, despite some marked drops in 2018 and in 2021. This may be an artefact of the increased number of observations being made in a wider range of tetrads, although overall stability does seem to be assured.



The first record of the year was at Tweed: Lowood-Gattonside on 17-Apr (**JG**), which is nearly a week earlier than the recent average. Two days later, 8 birds were counted across 3 tetrads east of Kelso (**RM**) and birds were then seen and heard in many areas by the end of the month.

Particular concentrations were noted at Linkim Shore (Coldingham) - 12 on 22-May (R Safford); Holefield (Kelso) - 8 on 5-May; Dowlaw (Coldingham) - 8 on 1-Jun and on the Eildon Hills - 8 on 15-Jun.

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	19	15	29	24	49	62	57	76

Breeding was confirmed in 12 tetrads, probable in a further 12 and possible in 52 tetrads. Confirmed breeding was spread from Easter Dean (Portmore) and Huntford (Carter Bar) through to St Abb's Head.

Most breeding birds had left by the end of August, with the last inland records at Bemersyde Moss on 2-Sep (**AC**) and at Teviot Haughs on 10-Sep/11-Sep (**ST**).

Coastal migrant records were more limited than in some years, with up to 5 birds at both St Abb's Head and Dowlaw (Coldingham) in early September, with the last at Dowlaw on 12-Sep (NH). Although the departure date is very variable, this was 3 weeks earlier than the recent average.

Firecrest

Regulus ignicapillus

Rare on passage, mainly in autumn. Not annual.

Two records. Both records were at St Abb's Head NNR, the first on 8-Oct at the Ranger's Cottage (CH) and the second at Mire Loch on 21-Oct (DKG).

2021 was a blank year, although there were four in 2020 and one in 2019.



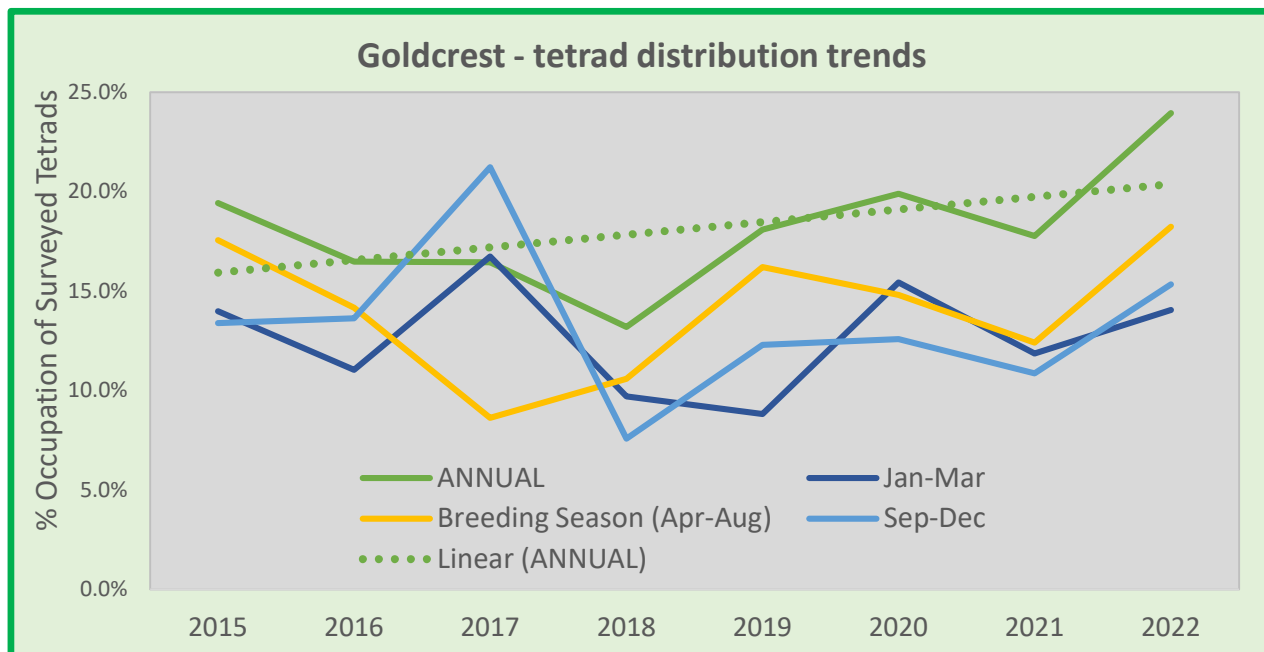
Firecrest, St Abb's Head NNR, October

Goldcrest

Regulus regulus

Abundant resident breeder. Subject to large-scale mortality in hard winters. Abundant migrant and winter visitor, especially in autumn.

A rather complex set of seasonal and overall tetrad distribution trend lines, with quite marked annual variations, which probably represent the very real population and distribution swings of such a small bird responding to weather patterns. The overall medium-term trend is probably one of stability, however.



There were no particularly high tetrad counts, until coastal movements in late summer; 9 at Gamescleugh (Ettrick) on 30-Apr (TB) being the highest, with up to 7 at some other sites.

Up to 20 were at Dowlaw (Coldingham) in late August and early September (NH). From 10-Sep numbers started to build at St Abb's Head, with 30 on 22-Sep (R Safford) and 20 again at Dowlaw on 29-Sep. Another pulse of migrants then came in on 19-Oct, with 90 at St Abb's Head NNR (CH), rising to 140 there on 21-Oct (DKG). Numbers then fell sharply by the month end.

The highest inland counts were 40 at Tweed: The Rink-Boleside on 24-Nov (M Lindsay) and 10 at Gordon Community Woodland on 15-Oct (RJ), with all other counts in single figures.

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with breeding evidence	11	4	29	25	65	69	55	60

There were 3 tetrads with confirmed breeding (tabled), 5 more with probable breeding, but the bulk (52 tetrads) were possible breeding only (singing males).

Site/Tetrad - Goldcrest confirmed breeding	Date	Br. Code	Observer
Bowhill (Selkirk)	26-May	FF	G Scott
Cauldshiels & Faldonside Lochs (Selkirk)	9-Jun	FL	J Gordon
Tweed: Millmount-Ravenswood (Melrose)	23-Jun	FL	J Gordon

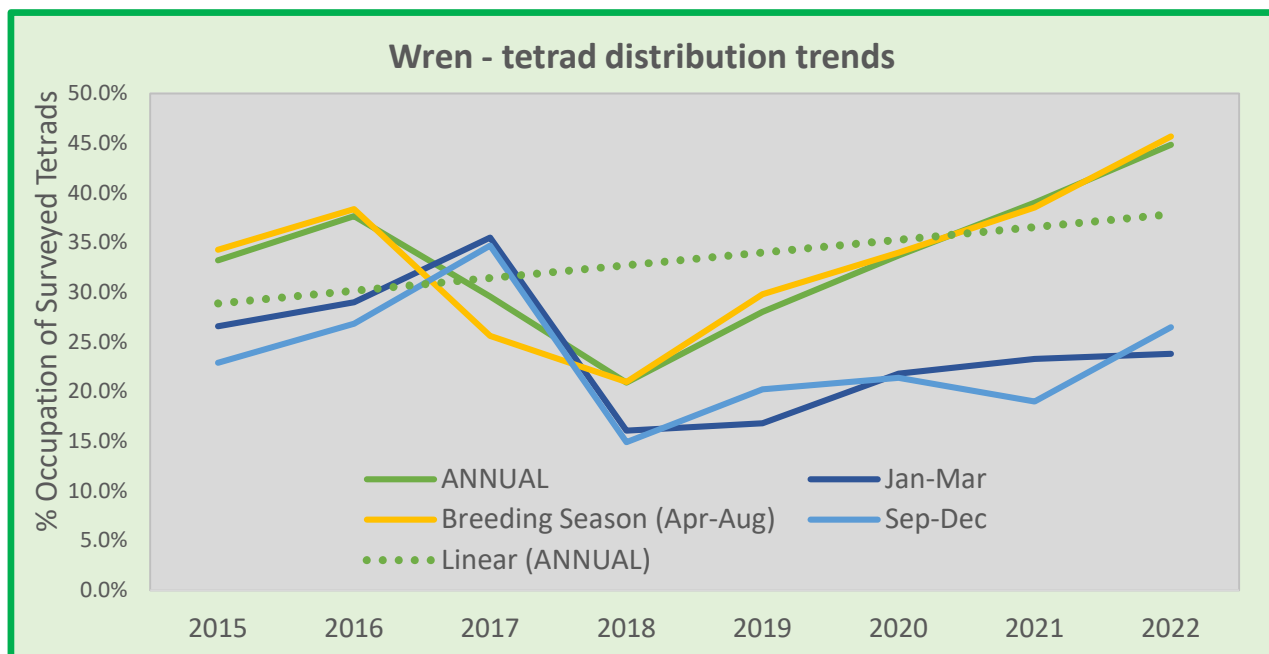
See Introduction for breeding codes.

Wren

Troglodytes troglodytes

Abundant and widespread resident breeder. Some passage in autumn.

Wrens now seem to have recovered their wide distribution after the pronounced dip in 2018, although winter tetrad numbers still seem to be struggling somewhat. The summer distribution has reached a new high at over 45% of tetrads surveyed.



Early on, the maximum tetrad counts were quite low, with 15 at both Tweed: Lowood-Gattonside and Sorrowlessfield Mains (Earlston) on 6-Mar and 7-Mar respectively (both JG) and 14 at Dunglass-Pease Bay (W) during the Rocky Shore Count on 23-Jan (R Singleton).

Counts picked up during the breeding season, with up to 41 at Eildon Hills-Dingleton in April (**JG**) and 36 still to be found there on 2-Jun. The WBBS at Rain's Hill (Hermitage) scored 27 on 14-Apr and 37 on the second visit on 19-Jun. The tetrad at Tweed: Lowood-Gattonside also had over 30 birds, in both April and June (**JG**).

Counts during the autumn were a little smaller, with 20 at St Abb's Head on 30-Oct (**RJ**) perhaps suggestive of passage movements. Counts on the Eildon Hills - 18; around Gattonside - 14 and at The Hirsell - 12, were all similar to spring counts.

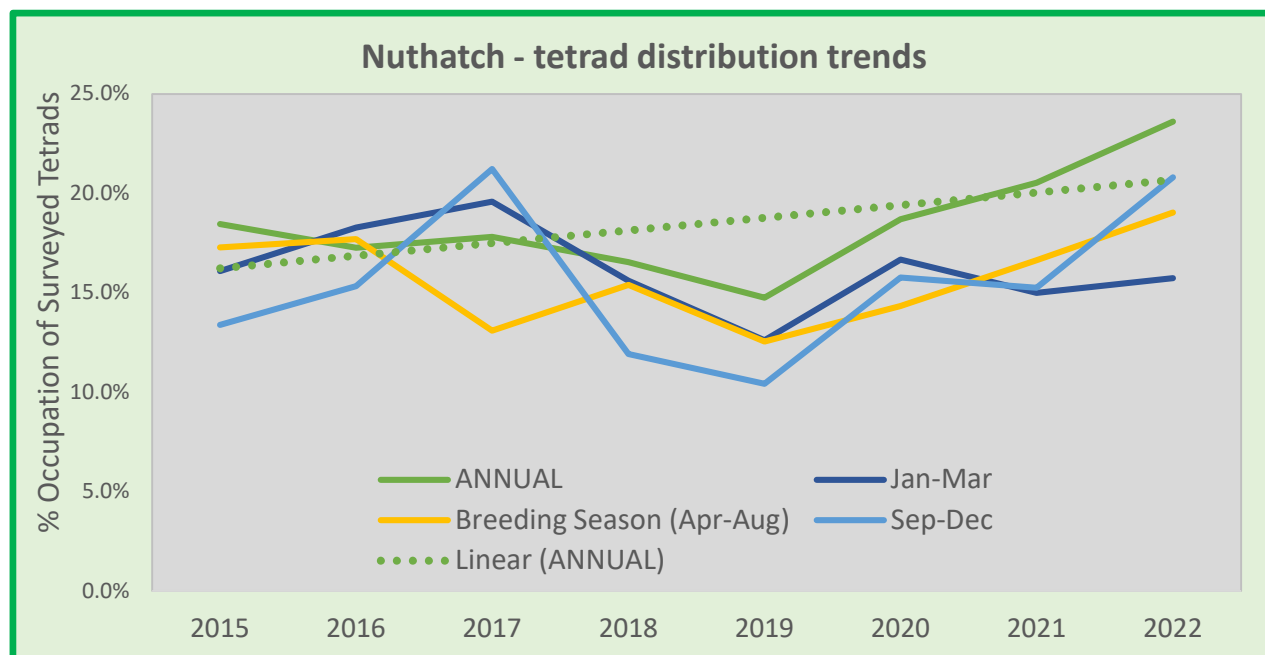
Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with breeding evidence	31	33	53	33	71	77	210	223

Confirmed breeding was recorded in 29 tetrads, there were 17 tetrads with probable breeding, but the bulk was possible breeding in 177 tetrads. In many cases the singing males could be recorded as probable breeding (code T or 4 - Permanent Territory), if they have been singing in the same area for several days, or several birds are heard 'competing' in an area.

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*
 Now a common breeding resident. First bred 1989 and spread rapidly.

The distribution of Nuthatches has now largely stabilised in Borders, with expansion in some years, but retreat in others. This year showed a largely positive picture, especially from spring onwards, although the seasonal trends are generally similar over recent years.



The highest counts were from Tweed: Lowood-Gattonside - 9 in both April and June, 7 in August (all **JG**); Rink Hill and Dunlee Hill (both near Clovenfords) - 8 in April (BBS/WBBS); Blackburn (Newcastleton) - 8 in June (C Blackie); The Hirsell - 8 in October (**RJ**) and Paxton - 7 in April (**TB**).

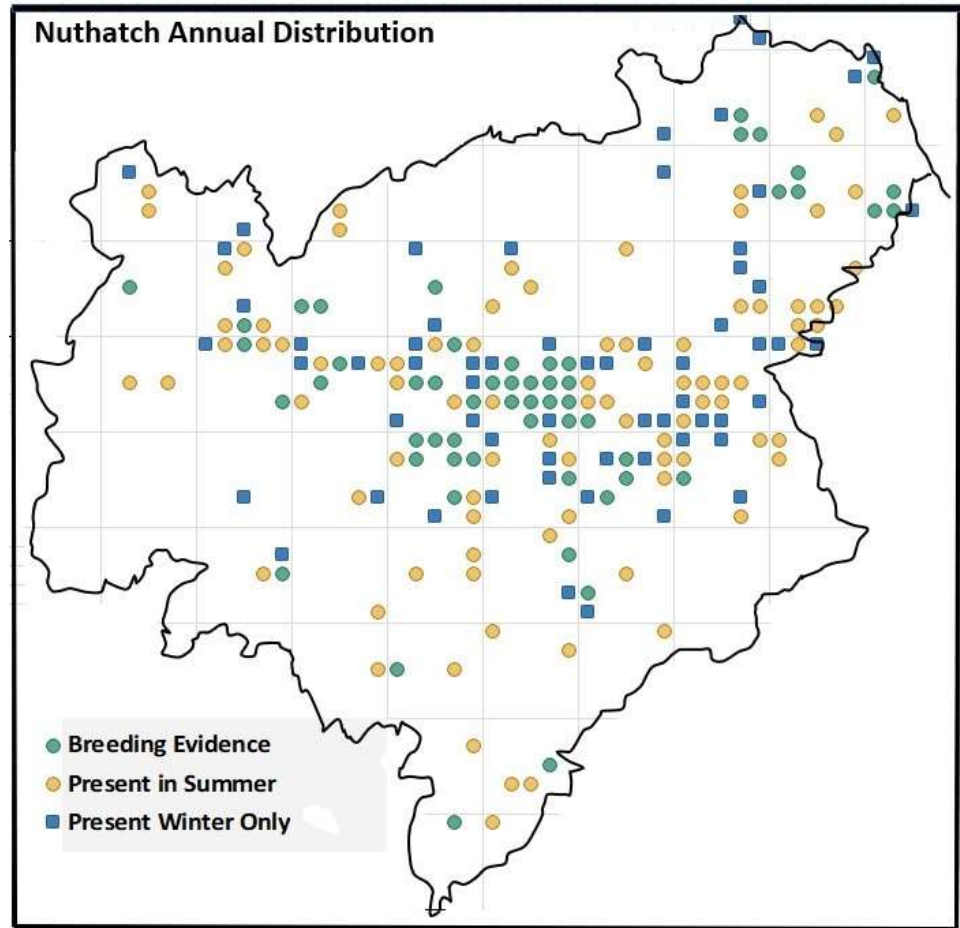
Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with breeding evidence	26	24	25	26	37	40	49	56

Breeding was confirmed in a record 17 tetrads, with 18 further tetrads with probable breeding and 21 tetrads with possible breeding.

Four tetrads in the Selkirk area had confirmed breeding as a result of nest ringing activities.

The overall distribution has not changed substantially since the time of the last atlas (SESA2).

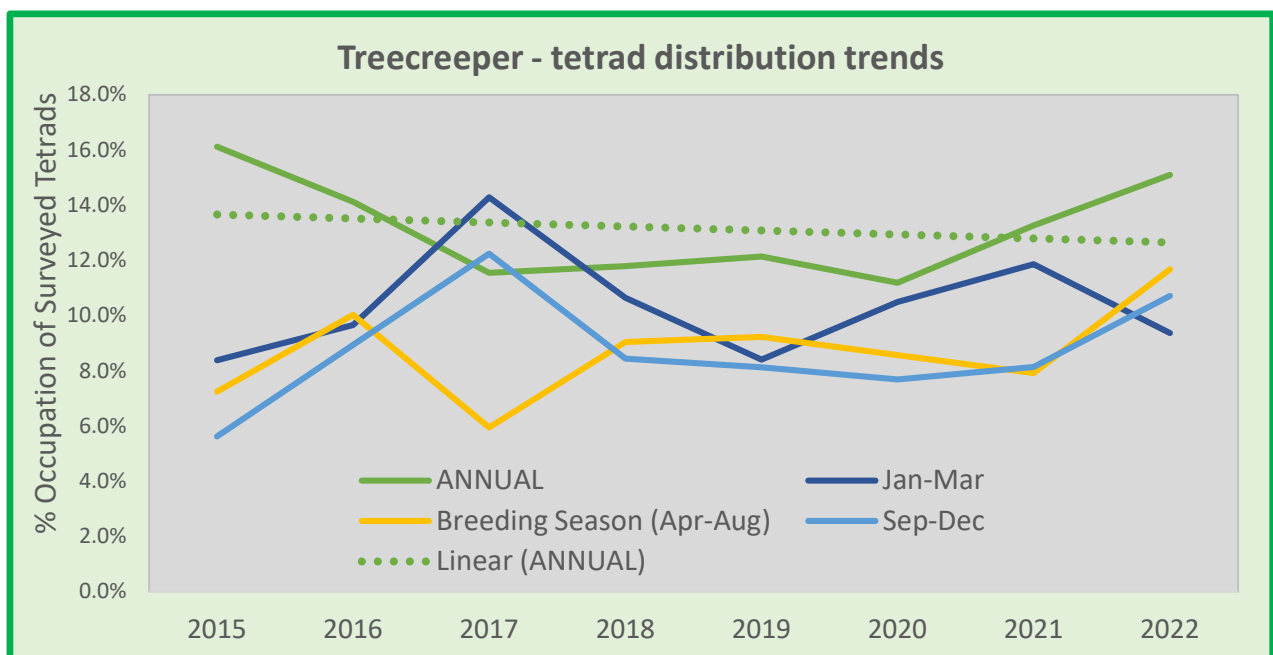


Treecreeper

Common breeding resident.

Certhia familiaris

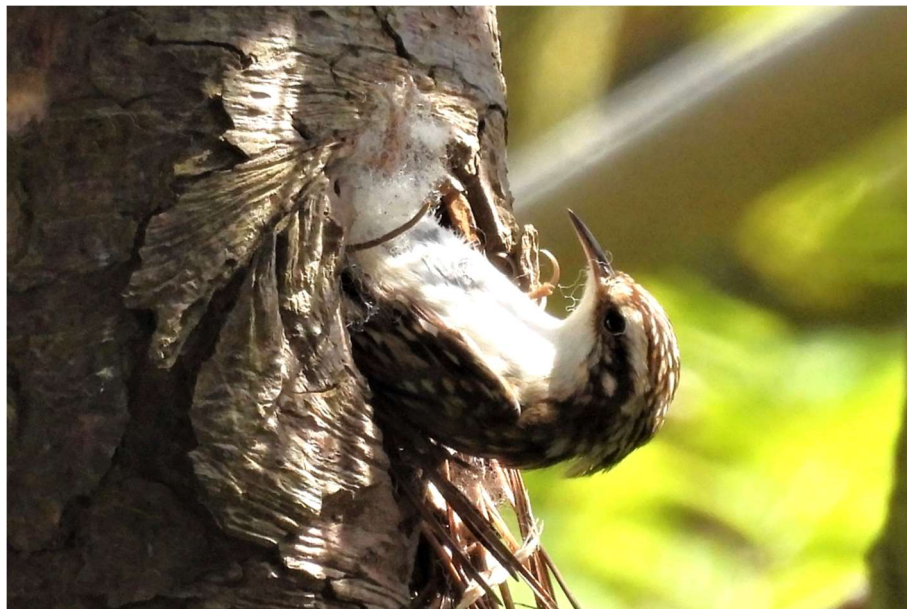
In contrast to most passerine species, which show a positive distribution trend, the Treecreeper is showing a small decline over the past few years, although there is a lot of inter-year variation, particularly at a seasonal level. The last two years have been a little more positive, however.



Mostly seen in singles and pairs, there were only a few records with more. The highest count was 6 at Lennel (Coldstream) on 21-Sep (**RJ**), with 5 at Tweed: Mertoun Bridge-Mertoun House on 13-Jan (M Henderson) and the same number at Haining Loch (Selkirk) on 2-Oct (**MM**). One of the groups of 4 seen consisted of 2 pairs (of migrants?) at St Abb's Head on 22-Nov and another was two pairs 'squabbling' at a presumed territorial boundary at Leitholm (Coldstream) (**RJ**).

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	7	8	7	13	14	27	25	21



Half of the tetrads with breeding evidence were limited to singing males only (possible), with probable breeding in 4 tetrads and confirmed breeding in 6 tetrads (tabled below). This was a welcome increase in confirmed breeding, although the overall breeding picture remains weak.

Treecreeper at nest, Dowlaw, June (R Jackson)

Site/Tetrad - Treecreeper confirmed breeding	Date	Br. Code	Observer
Ettrick	26-May	FL	G Paterson
Kings Muir (Peebles)	13-May	FF	G Paterson
Old Kirkhope (Ettrickbridge)	26-May	FF	G Paterson
Tweedbank-Abbotsford-Langlee	18-May	NY	AT Bramhall
Kyles Hill (Woodheads (Greenlaw))	3-Jun	FL	AP Mossop
Dowlaw (Coldingham) (see photo above)	1-Jun	ON	R Jackson

See Introduction for breeding codes.

(Common) Starling

Sturnus vulgaris

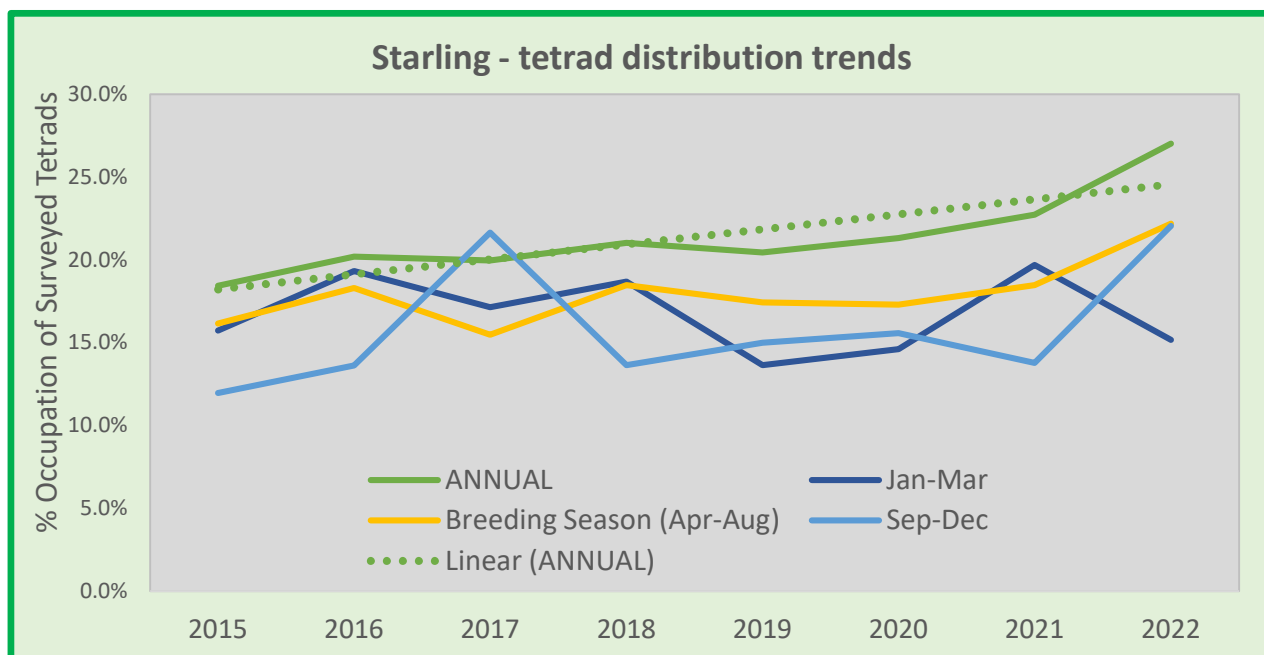
Abundant and widespread breeding resident. Flocks form from late May. A common passage and winter visitor September-March. Occasional large 'murmuration' roosts.

The distribution of Starlings appears to be steadily expanding, driven by the growth in the breeding season (see graph below). Outside the breeding period, the distribution is more variable and generally more concentrated, although this is when the largest flocks form, including murmurations at roost sites.

The highest count of the whole year was 3000 at Grantshouse on 9-Jan (**GP**), with other high counts in the early part of the year at Tweedbank-Abbotsford-Langlee - 600 on 17-Jan (**ATB**) and Lamberton - 500 on 30-Jan (R McBeath).

The largest flocks in the breeding season were 450 at Easter Housebyres (Galashiels) on 1-Jun (**JG**) and c.370 at Floors Castle (Kelso) on 19-Aug (**KR**), with other counts below 200.

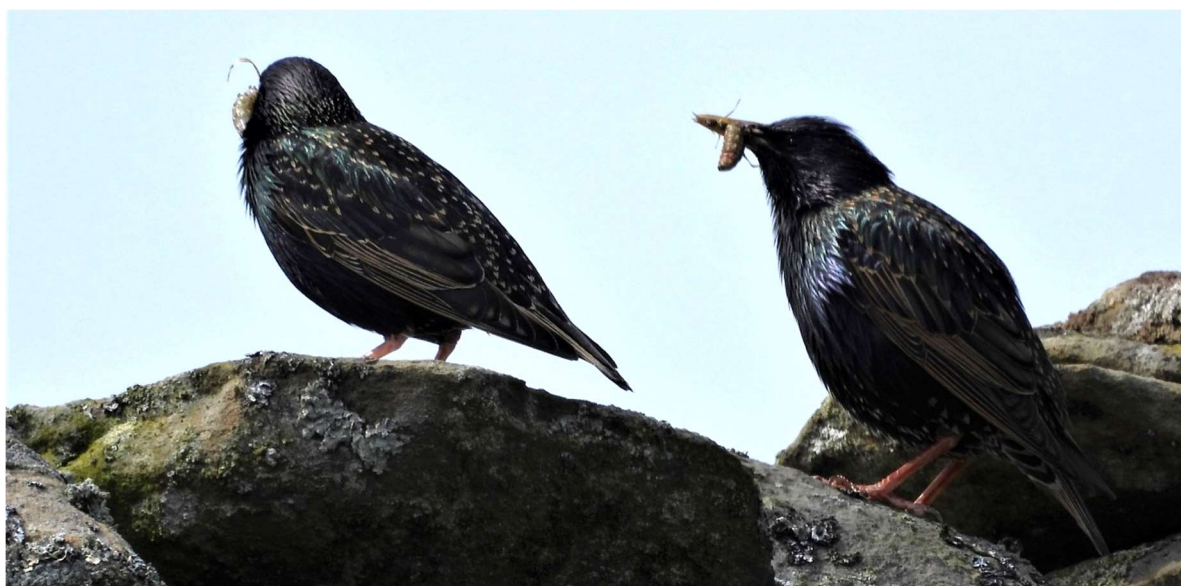
In the latter part of the year, flocks of 1000 were at Dunglass Common (Abbey St Bathans) on 26-Dec (**NH**) and then two flocks of that size at Buskinburn House and Fleurs (either side of Coldingham) on 29-Dec (I Brown and D Bryant respectively). Around the same time there were c.800 at Caverton Mill (Morebattle) on 24-Dec (**RM**), c.550 at Kirklands (Cockburnspath) on 22-Dec (**GP**) and 400+ at Lempitlaw (Kelso) on 19-Dec (**RM**). Earlier in the autumn c.600 were at Mack's Mill (nr. Gordon) on 30-Sep (**GP**).



Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	11	15	21	20	20	28	43	54
<i>breeding evidence (excl. FF)</i>	4	5	16	17	10	20	33	38

The number of tetrads with confirmed breeding was 42, although excluding the code FF (carrying food for young) reduced this to 23 tetrads. Feeding dependent young can continue after the family has moved away from the tetrad where breeding occurred, so excluding the FF code produces a more conservative breeding estimate. Nevertheless, the numbers of confirmed breeding tetrads is steadily increasing on both measures, suggesting that Starlings are generally doing well in the region.



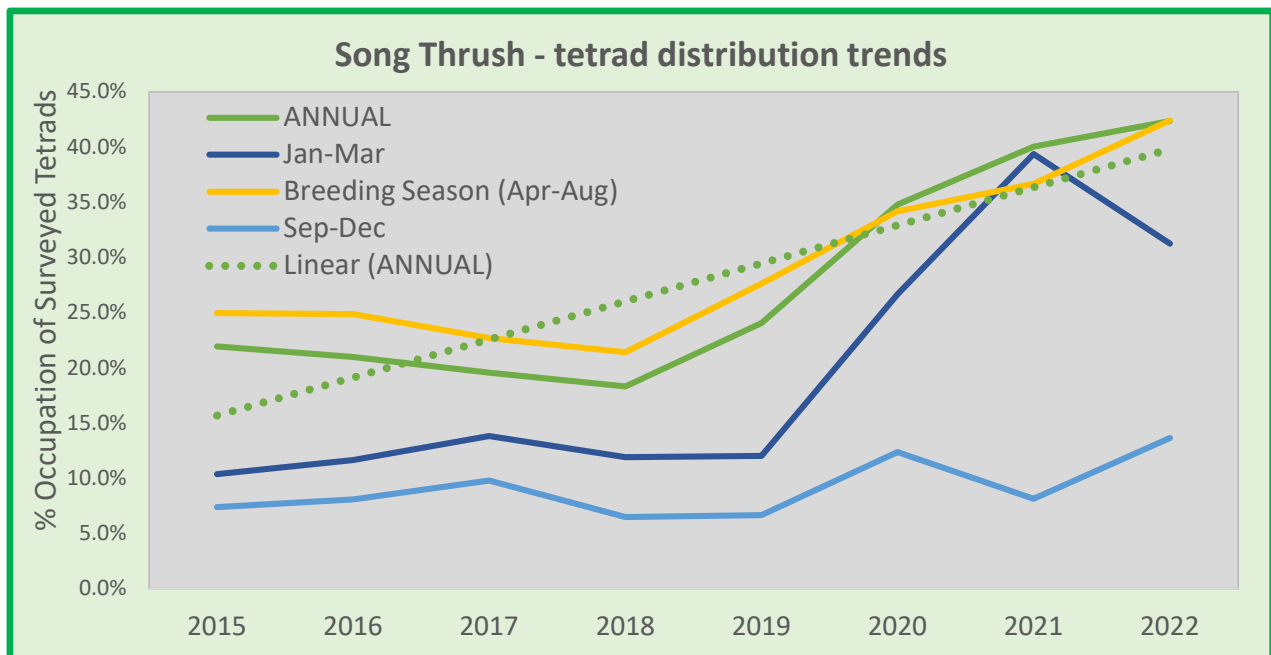
Starlings, Easter Housebyres, May (R Jackson)

Song Thrush

Turdus philomelos

Abundant breeder. Largely abandons the area after September. Occasionally strong autumn passage. A few November-January, mostly near coast.

The Song Thrush appears to be doing well in the Borders, with over double the tetrad occupation seen in 2018, driven by the trends in both the breeding season and in the early part of the year. The autumn and early winter presence remains more limited, however, perhaps suggesting that many of our birds move away from the region after breeding, only returning in the New Year.



The largest count came from migrants at St Abb's Head, with 36 there on 30-Sep (**CH**) and there were 10 birds at Easter Deans (Portmore) on 13-Oct (**TWD**). Other double-figure counts were in the breeding season, with 14 at Eildon Hills-Dingleton on 2-Jun (**JG**), 11 on a BBS at Swinside Hall Plantation (Jedburgh) and 10 each at Lethem (Carter Bar), Tweed: Mertoun Bridge-Mertoun House, Sorrowlessfield Mains (Earlston) and Dunlee Hill (Clovenfords), all in spring.

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	31	34	45	46	117	133	160	197

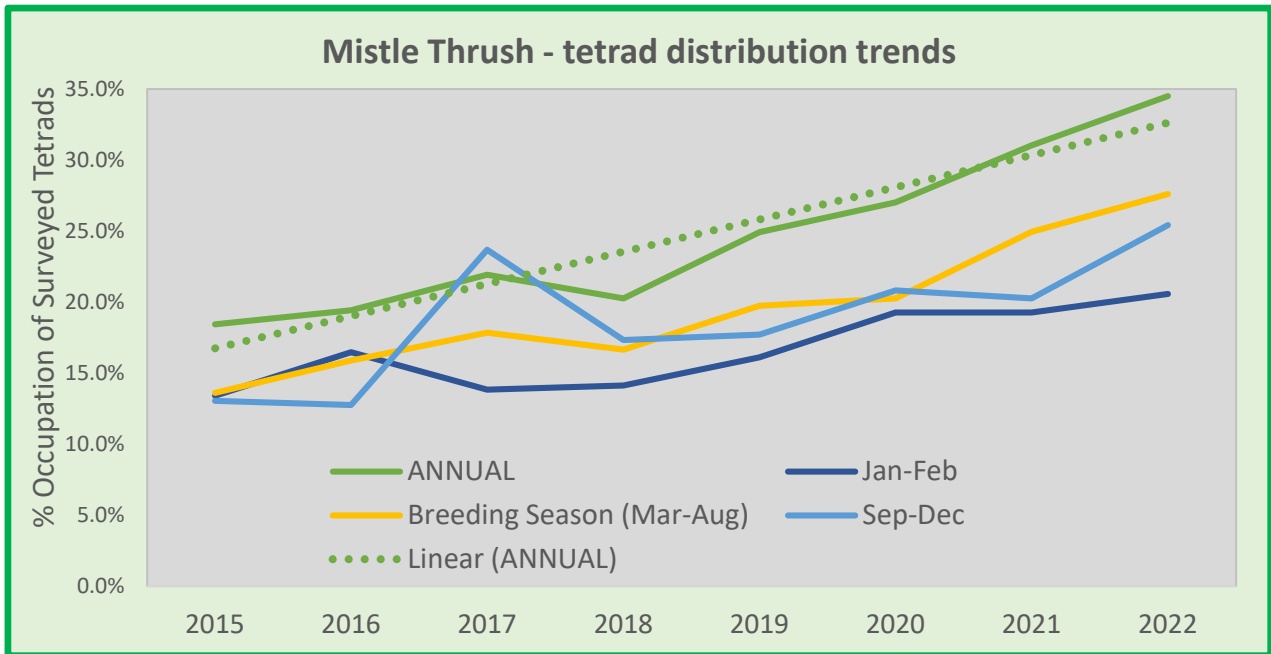
Although the majority of breeding evidence was singing males (137 tetrads), there were 40 tetrads with confirmed breeding (nearly all food carrying adults or fledglings seen) and another 20 tetrads with probable breeding (mostly pairs or territorial birds). This huge growth in reported breeding is further evidence of these birds doing well here.

Mistle Thrush

Turdus viscivorus

Abundant breeding resident. Forms large flocks in late summer, but generally smaller flocks in winter. Few flocks in spring.

This thrush also appears to be steadily expanding in Borders, with the overall tetrad occupation up by nearly 90% since 2015. The seasonal trends are all also positive over the last few years, although distribution is slightly reduced outside the breeding season.



Most of the higher counts were in the late summer/early autumn, with 95 at Stockbridge (Cockburnspath) on 5-Aug (A Kerr), 44 at Mervinslaw (Jedburgh) on 9-Oct (**AC**), c.27 at Charlie’s Knowe (Wauchope Forest) on 12-Jul (**GP**) and c.25 at Easter Deans (Portmore) on 21-Aug (**TWD**). Other groups of about 20 were at Hurdlaw (Westruther), Hare Moss-Green Diamonds (Selkirk) and Swinton House (Coldstream) during this period.

The only double figure counts outside this season were 10 at Leithen Water: The Ley-Colquhar on 22-Mar (**RB**) and the same number at Cacrabank (Buccleuch) on 26-Dec (G Christer).

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with breeding evidence	11	17	27	30	30	57	65	88

Another species with an extraordinary increase in reported breeding (now nearly treble the tetrad numbers since 2019). Of these there were 22 tetrads with confirmed breeding, 22 with probable breeding and the remaining 44 with possible breeding.

Redwing

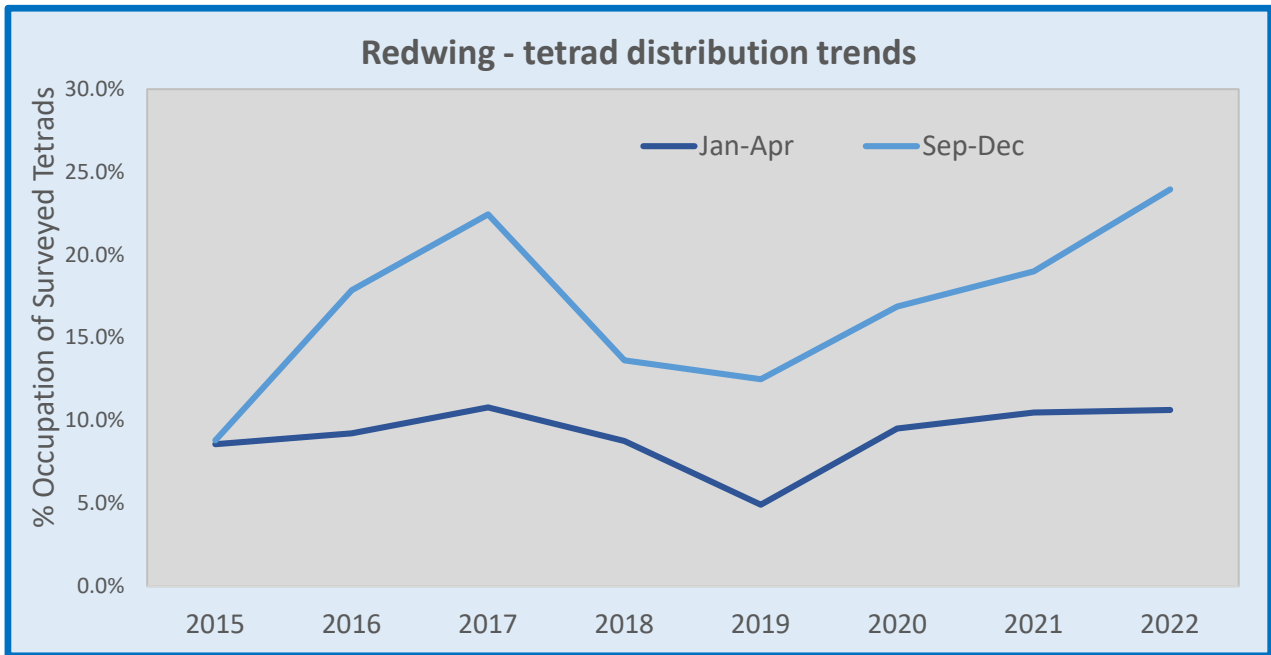
Turdus iliacus

Abundant but fluctuating winter visitor and sometimes abundant autumn passage migrant in September-October. Less common on spring passage, March to early April. Rare in summer.

Redwings remain well distributed throughout the county, with a generally higher presence in the autumn-early winter months than in later winter-spring (see graph below). There are no recent summer records.

The latest departing bird in spring was a single on 1-May at Branxholme Lochs (Hawick) (**GP**), which is the latest exit since 2015. Most birds had left by early April, with 170+ at Rutherford (Kelso) on 5-Apr (**RM**) being the last large count and the last coastal record was 2 at St Abb’s Head on 17-Apr (**CH**).

Incoming autumn migrants first arrived with two at Yarrowford on 19-Sep (AJ Pearson), which was a little earlier than average, but not exceptional. A large ‘fall’ of 683 birds was counted at St Abb’s Head on 30-Sep (**CH**), with a few hundred present around the reserve on various dates during October.



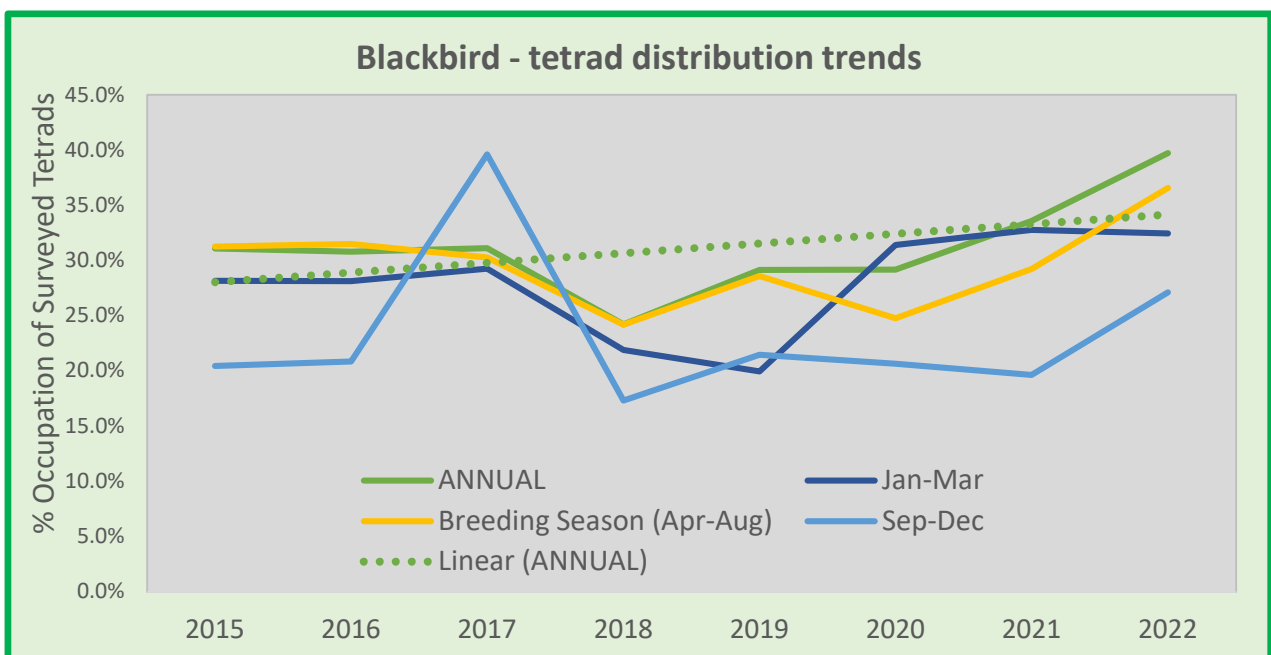
There were a number of large flocks seen, generally in central Borders in late October to mid-November, with 1200+ at Tweed: Broomlands-Whitmuirhaugh on 29-Oct, 800+ at Teviot Haughs (Crailing), 700+ at Hadden (Kelso), 450+ at Tweed: Banff Mill-Redden and 400+ at both Kerchesters (Kelso) and Lurdenlaw (Kelso) (all records from **RM**). There was also a count of 1100 birds at Buskinburn House (Coldingham) on 29-Dec (I Brown).

The highest early year counts were 300+ at Windywalls (Kelso) on 3-Jan and 180+ at Cappuck (Jedburgh) on 26-Jan (both **RM**, who else?!).

Blackbird
Turdus merula

Abundant breeding resident. Common passage migrant and winter visitor. Light passage March-April and strong passage in October.

The overall distribution of Blackbirds has remained stable over the last few years, despite some annual fluctuations and seasonal variability, with summer distribution being the main driver of the trend.



Peak counts have been similar to recent years, with the larger numbers generally due to falls of incoming wintering thrushes in autumn, with 100+ at St Abb’s Head on 21-Oct (F Evans *et. al.*) and 160 the following day (CH). There were also c.100 at Dowlaw/Lumsdaine area on 14-Nov (CH).

Winter feeding flocks can also be quite sizeable, with 70+ at Cappuck (Jedburgh) and 60+ at Crouchie Wood (Jedburgh) on 26-Jan (both RM) and later in the year, 150+ at Kerchesters (Kelso) on 13-Dec, c.90 around Foulden-Clarabad on 25-Dec (RM) and 47 at Newmains (Reston) on 18-Dec (DKG).

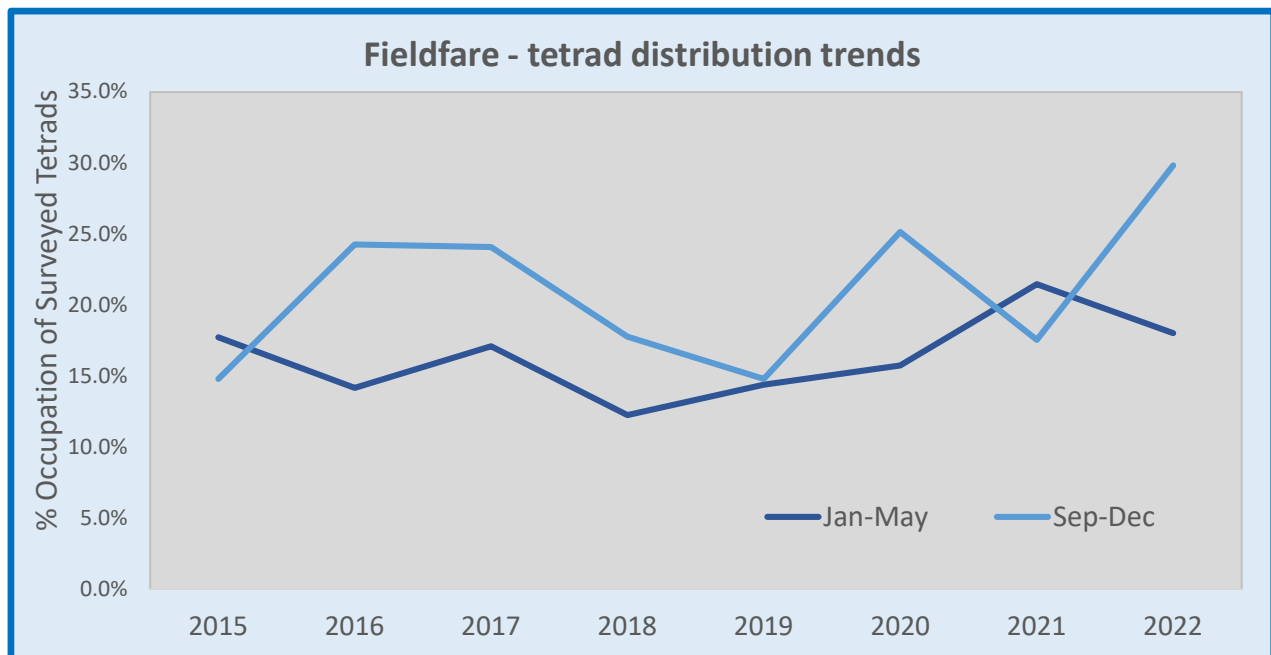
Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with breeding evidence	32	25	46	43	86	78	138	147

There were 37 tetrads with confirmed breeding, 30 with probable breeding and 80 with possible breeding. Although the step increase in the last two years is probably due to more thorough recording by observers, it certainly tends to suggest a stable breeding situation or better.

<p>Fieldfare <i>Turdus pilaris</i> Abundant but fluctuating winter visitor and passage migrant from late September to mid-May. Rare May-September. Very rare occasional breeder.</p>

Although there is some variability, the overall distribution trend for wintering Fieldfares is generally level, with slightly lower tetrad numbers in spring compared with autumn.



The departure of birds in spring tends to be more protracted than its congener, Redwing, and this year was no exception, with stragglers through late April and on to mid-May. The last double-figure count of 50 birds was at Dykes (Denholm) on 13-Apr (NS), 2-3 were at Branxholme Lochs (Hawick) on 1-May (GP) and then a single bird at Newmains (Reston) until 19-May (DKG).

In the autumn, the first arrival wasn’t until 11-Oct (comparatively late) - a single bird at Hule Moss (APM), but larger numbers soon came in, with 200+ at Old Kirkhope (Ettrickbridge) on 15-Oct (N Hunter) and c.60 at Blyth Bridge (West Linton) on 16-Oct (D & M Thorne).

There were some large counts during early spring, with 1500+ at Lurdenlaw N (Kelso) on 24-Mar, 1200+ at Rutherford (Kelso) on 5-Apr, 800+ at Ploughlands (Kelso) on 3-Mar and also 800+ at Graden Moor (Kelso) on 18-Mar (all records **RM**). Newmill (Hawick) also had c.550 birds on 8-Apr (**GP**).

In the autumn, the largest flocks were again around Kelso, found by R Manning, with c.1000 at Kerchesters (Kelso) on 8-Nov, rising to c.2000 on 13-Dec, in severe cold weather. Makerstoun (Smailholm) also had 1600+ birds on 7-Nov and Holefield (Kelso) had 600+ the next day. Teviot Haughs (Nisbet) and Brotherstone Moor (Earlston) also had over 500 birds in November. Around Coldingham there were almost 1000 birds on 29-Dec, when there were similar numbers of Redwings in the same area, with many coming to fallen apples throughout the month.

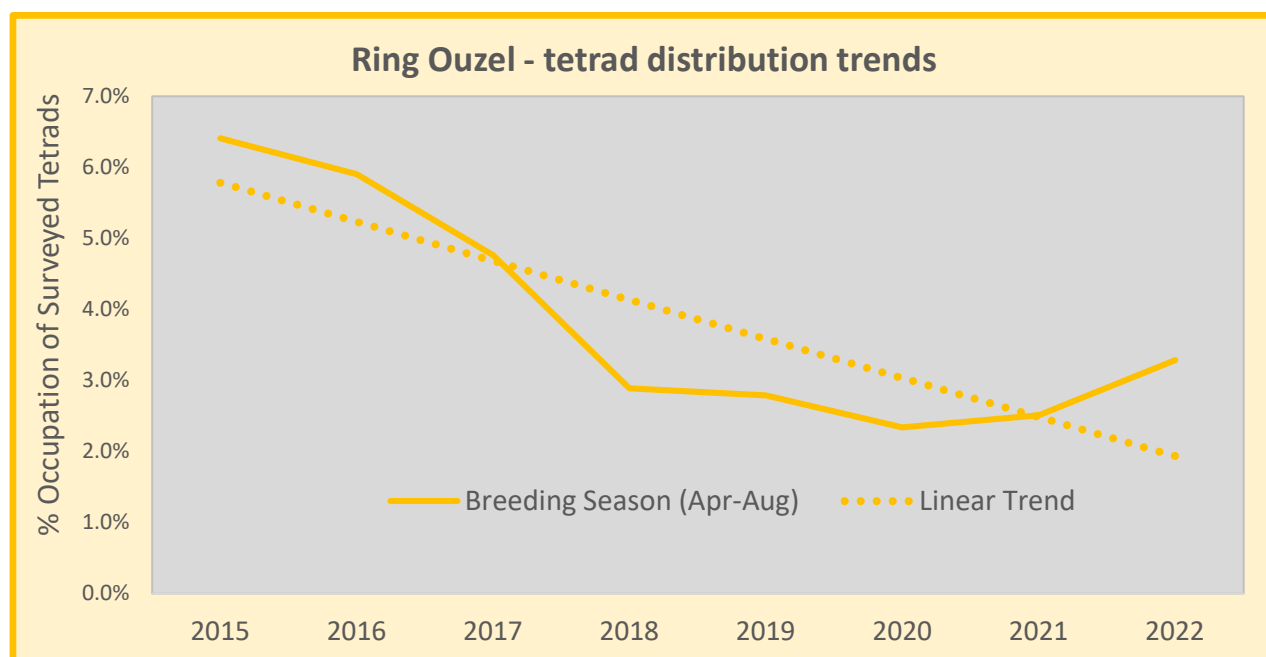
Ring Ouzel

Turdus torquatus

Uncommon and declining summer visitor to hill cleughs. Scarce passage birds late Mar-May and Sep-Nov. Very rare in winter.

There were a total of 60 records, from 25 tetrads, of which 17 were in potential upland breeding habitat. The graph shows a rather alarming reduction in the % of surveyed tetrads, although this is probably due to the greater number of overall tetrads now being covered by observers, at least in part.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of occupied 'breeding habitat' tetrads for year	20	16	15	16	15	18	17



The first records of the year were inland at Piper of Peebles Grave (Dewar Burn), with 2 on 22-Mar and a single at Blackhopebyre (Glentress Water) on 26-Mar (both **RB**). The first coastal records were 2 at St Abb's Head on 30-Mar (S Sonsino), with others tabled below, in what was a strong spring passage of an estimated 32 birds.

Site/Tetrad - Ring Ouzel coastal records	Date(s)	Number	Observer
St Abb's Head	30-Mar	2	S Sonsino
Dowlaw (Coldingham)	12-Apr to 19-Apr	1-6	N Hammatt, R Park
St Abb's Head	16-Apr	2	C Hatsell
Siccar Point (Cockburnspath)	16-Apr, 18-Apr	1-6	DK Graham, S Miller

Site/Tetrad - Ring Ouzel coastal records	Date(s)	Number	Observer
Haud Yards (Grantshouse)	19-Apr	4	R Jackson
St Abb's Head	19-Apr to 26-Apr	1-3	C Hatsell
Dowlaw (Coldingham)	23-Apr	2	DK Graham
St Abb's-Yellow Craig	26-Apr	1	D Bryant
Burnmouth	30-Apr	1	DK Graham
St Abb's Head	2-May to 16-May	1-3	C Hatsell, F Evans
Dowlaw (Coldingham)	7-May	1	N Hammatt
St Abb's-Coldingham	9-May	1	C Hatsell
St Abb's Head	21-Oct, 22-Oct	1	C Hatsell
St Abb's Head	30-Oct	1	R Jackson

The last inland reports were in late June and early July; the only one not covered in the breeding table being at Hunt Law (Tweedsmuir) on 29-Jun as part of a WBBS. There was then only a very light coastal passage, with the records included in the table above.

Breeding evidence:

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	4	10	8	10	4	11	13

The confirmed and probable breeding records are tabled below and there were 4 further tetrads with possible breeding (singing males).

Site/Tetrad – Ring Ouzel breeding	Date	Br. Code	Observer
Canada Hill (Manor Valley)	23-May, 22-Jun	FL	A Heavisides
Blackhopebyre (Glentress Water)	12-May	FF	A Cutter
Piper of Peebles Grave (Dewar Burn)	7-Jun, 15-Jun	FL	TW Dougall
Hundleshope (Manor Valley)	4-Jul	A	IR Poxton
Fifescar Knowe (Megget Water)	16-Apr	T	G Scott
Birkside Law (Tweedsmuir)	20-Apr	2P	A Heavisides
Stanhope (Tweedsmuir)	20-Apr	3P	A Heavisides
Ettrick	19-Apr	P	AG Reid
Birehope Burn (Clovenfords)	15-Apr	P	J Gordon

See Introduction for breeding codes.

Spotted Flycatcher

Muscicapa striata

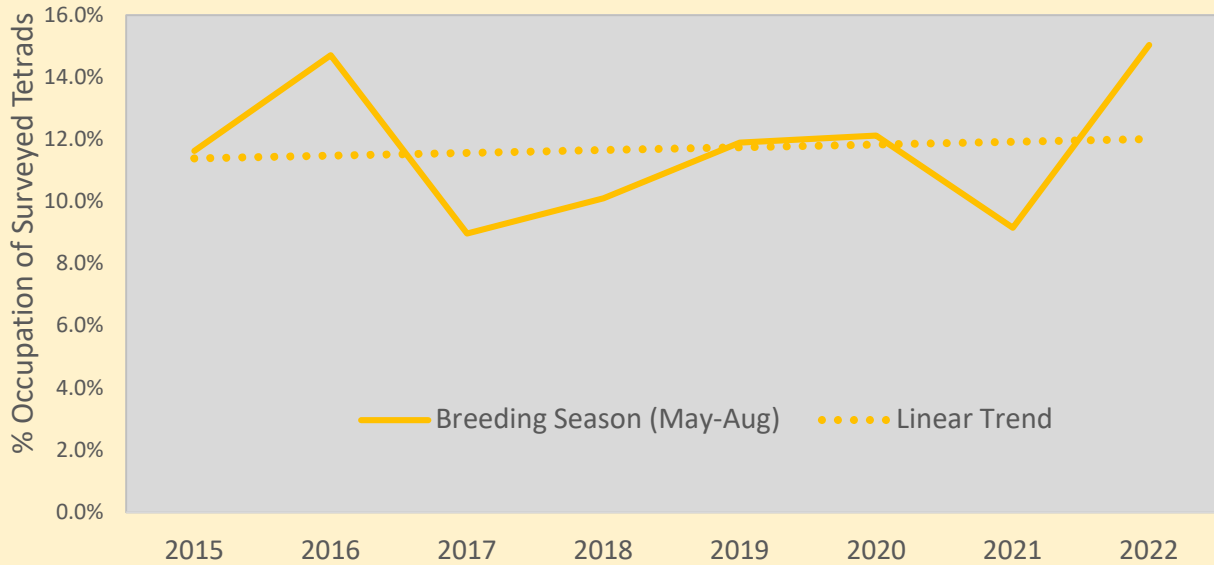
Common summer breeding visitor, May-September. Scarce passage migrant, less common in spring than autumn.

The number of tetrads occupied in 2022, at 102, was over 100 tetrads for the first time ever and far exceeding the last peak of 76 tetrads in 2020. Despite this, the trend of % occupation shows an overall level trend over the past few year, as the total number of 'surveyed' tetrads has also increased markedly. At 15.0% occupied tetrads in 2022, this was still the highest figure achieved on this measure, however.

Breeding evidence was also much higher than in other recent years, further suggesting that Spotted Flycatchers enjoyed a good year in the Borders in 2022.

Not usually arriving until well into May, the first this year at Alemill (Eyemouth) on 30-Apr (**DKG**) was the earliest since 2013 and around 10 days earlier than average. The main arrival started on 10-May with singles at Stobo (Peebles) and Floors Castle (Kelso) and widely from mid-May.

Spotted Flycatcher - tetrad distribution trends



Similar to last year, inland records continued past mid-September, with the last multiple count (of 3) at Gala Water: Torwoodlee-Bowland Wood on 14-Sep (AC) and the last singles at Blyth Bridge (West Linton) and Eckford-Wooden Loch (Jedburgh) on 19-Sep (D & M Thorne, CDG respectively).

In contrast to 2021, there were several coastal migrants this year in early September, the main sites being Dowlaw, with up to 5 birds on 5-Sep and St Abb's Head, with up to 3 birds on both the 4-Sep and 10-Sep.

Most records were singles or pairs, although sometimes with juveniles as well. Five together at Thriepland (Broughton) on 19-Aug and the same number at Black Barony (Eddleston) on 21-Aug fall into this category, but 5 at Huntford (Carter Bar) on 3-Jun is more likely to be 2-3 pairs in the tetrad. The record of 11 at Plora Wood (Innerleithen) on 7-Aug (AGR) is probably a mix of adults and juveniles as well, but probably shows several breeding territories in the tetrad.



Spotted Flycatcher, Dowlaw, September (R Jackson)

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	13	21	14	20	22	25	18	36

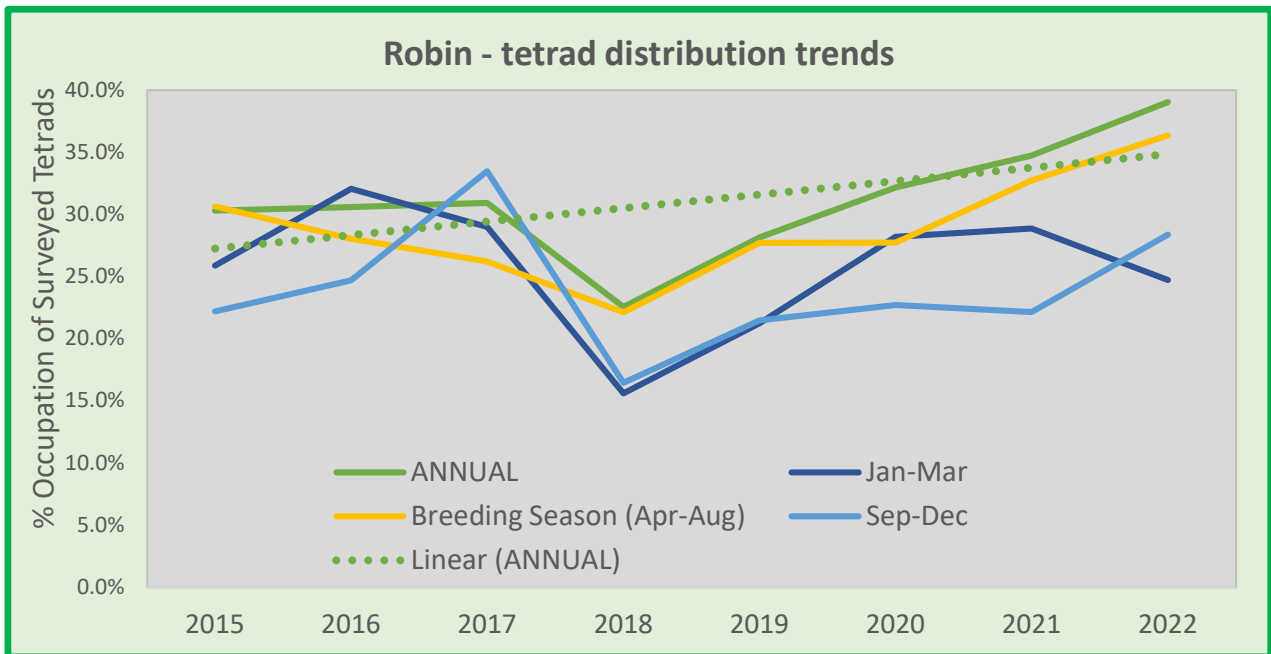
There were 16 tetrads with confirmed breeding, 11 tetrads with probable breeding and the remaining 9 with possible breeding, all of which were higher than in 2021, all suggesting a good breeding year.

Robin

Erithacus rubecula

Abundant breeding resident and common winter visitor, with passage birds arriving in September and departing in March.

The general distribution trend for Robins seems to be one of gentle expansion, although this masks the dip in fortunes in 2018 (perhaps caused by the ‘beast from the east’?). The winter occupation now seems to be reduced in comparison with the tetrad occupation in the breeding season.



Some well monitored inland tetrads had several high counts throughout the year, with Tweed: Lowood-Gattonside having peak counts of 23 on 7-Mar and 26 there on 25-Sep (**JG**), as an example. Similarly there were counts of 15-c.20 regularly at Tweedbank-Abbotsford-Langlee (**ATB**) and at Tweed: Millmount-Ravenswood (Melrose) (**JG**).

Small coastal ‘falls’ were evident in the autumn, with 27 on 10-Sep, split between Dowlaw (Coldingham) and St Abb’s Head, 75+ between Pease Bay and Eyemouth on 21 to 23-Oct (G Garner, R Safford) and 30, just at St Abb’s Head, on 30-Oct (**RJ**).

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with breeding evidence	25	31	42	40	68	81	183	139

Although tetrads with breeding evidence reduced overall from last year, there was increase in confirmed breeding to 34 tetrads (16 in 2021), 15 tetrads with probable breeding and 90 tetrads with possible breeding (152 in 2021). Taking all this into consideration Robins look to have had a good year.

Pied Flycatcher

Ficedula hypoleuca

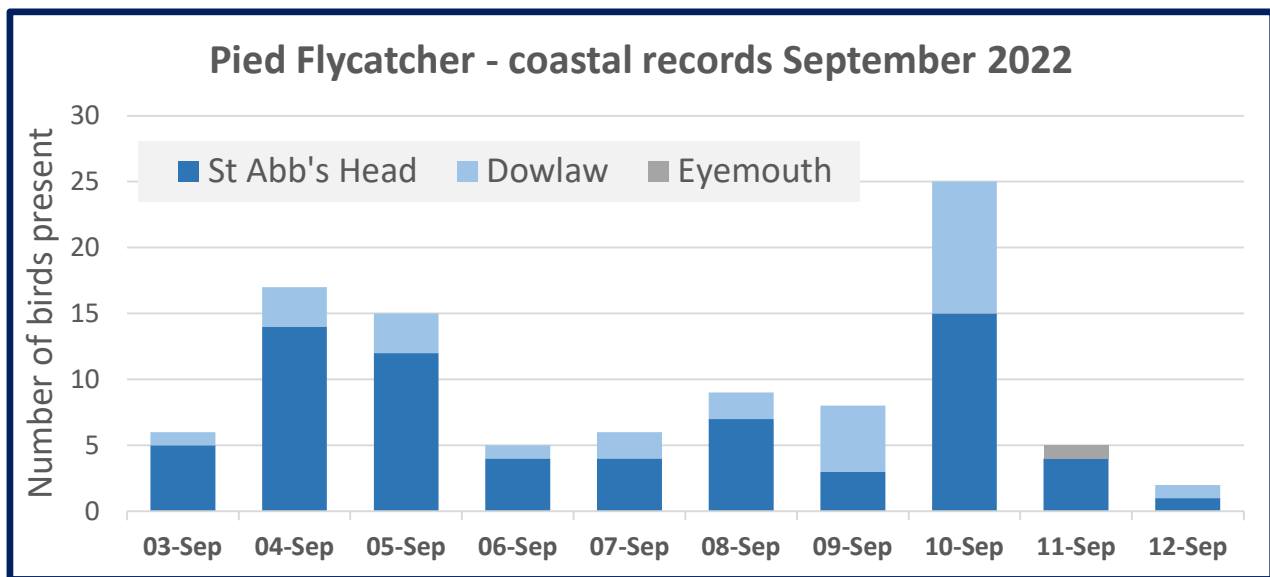
Very scarce breeding summer visitor. Scarce passage migrant in spring, occasionally more frequent in autumn, September-early October.

This attractive flycatcher continues to have a small breeding season presence, with 7 records from 6 tetrads in April and May (table below). This includes a confirmed (and at least partially successful) breeding record in a nest box in the Duns area.

Site/Tetrad - Pied Flycatcher records	Date(s)	Br. Code	Observer
Hyndlee (Wauchope Forest)	18-Apr	1m	M Harper
Abbotsford Woods (Faldonside)	3-May, 27-May	1m, S, T	AP Mossop
Duns area*	4-May to June	Pr, NY	per. AG Reid
Caddon Water: Millbank-Laidlawstiel Fm	22-May	1m, S	M Lindsay
Tweedbank-Abbotsford-Langlee	30-May	1m, T	D Parkinson
Elibank (Walkerburn)	30-May	1	R Bramhall

* - Pair bred in nest box first seen 4th May, feeding young 22nd May. Box checked after birds departed. 1 dead young inside, the rest of nesting materials well pressed down suggested remaining brood fledged successfully.

In addition, there was an unusually good autumn passage, with multiple records at two of the sites during the first half of September (see graph below). In total, it seems reasonable to estimate at least 40-60 birds were involved, allowing for some moving on and other new birds arriving. This is the best autumn migration period seen for this species in recent years.



Records came from DK Graham, JDH Hadfield, N Hammatt, M Hannam, C Hatsell, D Hosie, R Jackson, I McPherson, G Paterson, P Safford and R Safford.

Black Redstart

Phoenicurus ochruros

Scarce-very uncommon passage migrant mostly March-June and September-October. Occasionally winters.

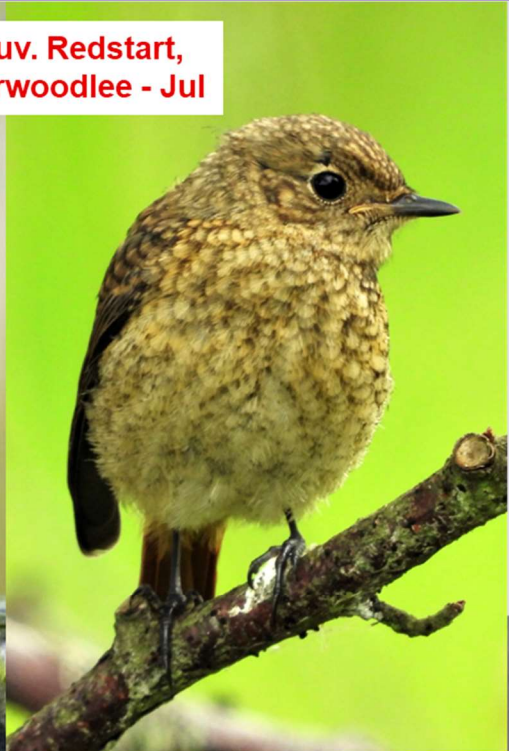
There were 13 records, all at the coast, probably representing at least 7 birds, as tabled below. This is a fairly average annual showing by recent standards, although there are occasional blank years, like 2014.

Site/Tetrad - Black Redstart records	Date(s)	Number	Observer
St Abb's Head	16-Apr	1	C Hatsell
Northfield Farm (St Abb's-Coldingham)	9-Aug	1	C Hatsell
St Abb's Head	20-Oct, 21-Oct	1	C Hatsell
Dowlaw (Coldingham)	21-Oct	2	JDH Hadfield
St Abb's Head	24-Oct to 30-Oct	1-2	C Hatsell <i>et. al.</i>
Burnmouth	19-Nov	1	F Evans

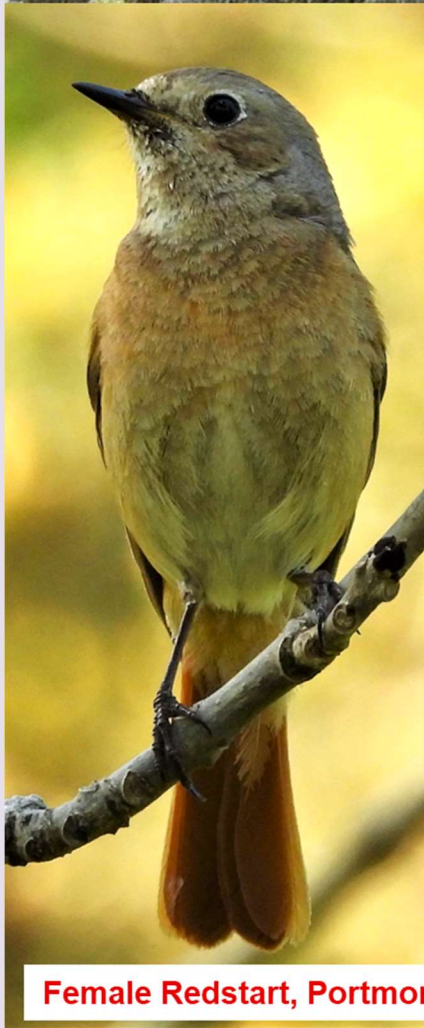
Photo Spot - Redstart special



**Black Redstart,
Dowlaw - Oct**



**Juv. Redstart,
Torwoodlee - Jul**



Female Redstart, Portmore - Jun



**Black Redstart,
St Abb's - Oct**



**Male Redstart,
Torwoodlee - Jun**

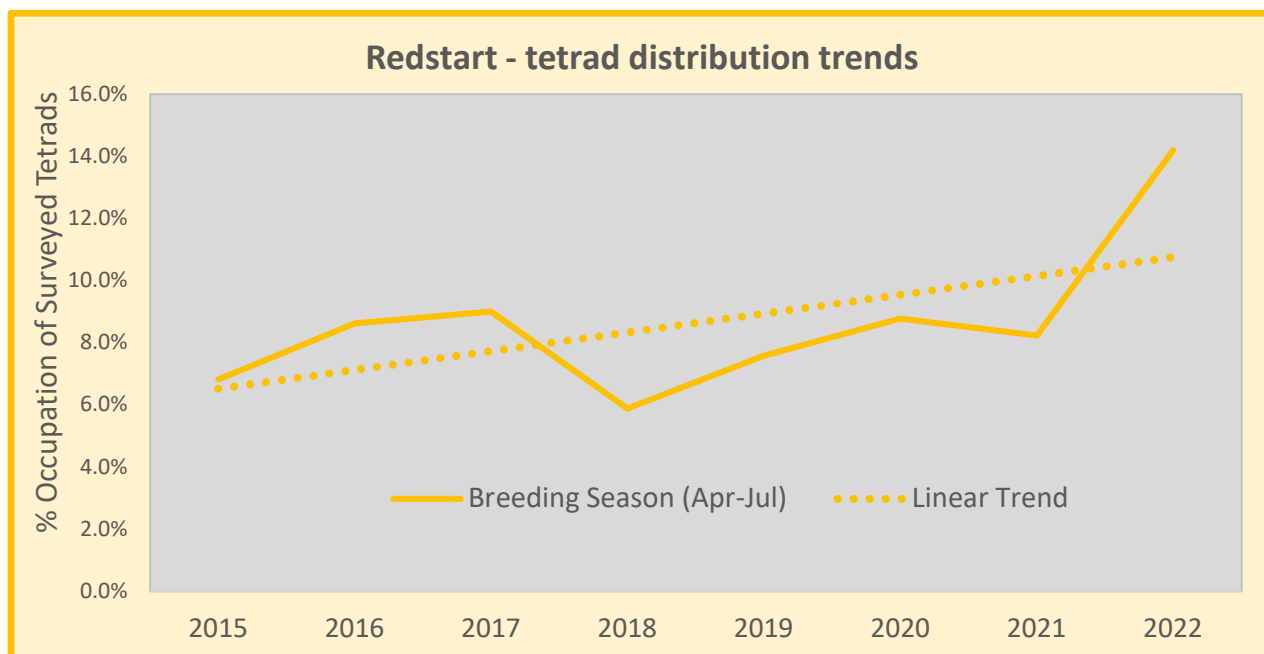
Photographs by JDH Hadfield, A Cutter, R Jackson

(Common) Redstart

Phoenicurus phoenicurus

Well-represented, widespread breeding summer visitor. Arrivals and passage migrants mid-April to May, return migration September-October.

The distribution trend for Redstarts is showing a small but steady increase in the percentage of surveyed tetrads, with 2022 showing a particularly strong step-up. Anecdotally a number of observers recorded Redstarts in 'new' tetrads and the breeding evidence was also correlated with this seemingly good year.



The first sightings were at Scroof (Stow) and Stow-Galabank on 15-Apr (both **JG**), with the next two at Elibank (Walkerburn) on 18-Apr (**RB**), followed by a more general arrival, all inland, to early May.

Most high tetrad counts were associated with confirmed breeding, the exception being 8 birds at two locations in the Priestthaugh (Hawick) tetrad on 13-Jun (BBS - **NS**).

Most birds had vacated inland territories by the end of August, with late birds at Blyth Bridge (West Linton) on 4-Sep (D & M Thorne) and singles at Whitsomehill (Swinton) on 10-Sep and then another nearby at Walterstead (Swinton) on 24-Sep (both J Towill).

Early September also brought a good passage of Redstarts at the coast across 4 tetrads, although most were at Dowlaw (Coldingham) (up to 6 on 10-Sep) and at St Abb's Head (up to 20 on the same day, **CH**). The last records of the year were 3 at Dowlaw on 29-Sep (**NH**) and one there on 2-Oct (**DKG**), which is a fairly typical date.

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with breeding evidence	6	11	19	12	20	34	36	53

Breeding was confirmed in 8 tetrads (tabled), probable in 7 tetrads and possible in a further 38 tetrads.

Site/Tetrad - Redstart confirmed breeding	Date	Br. Code	Observer
Lyne Station - Haswellsykes (Peebles)	4-Jul	FL	K Ingleby
Portmore Loch	13-Jun	3, FL, NY	K Ingleby
Elibank (Walkerburn)	15-Jun	FF	AG Reid

Site/Tetrad - Redstart confirmed breeding	Date	Br. Code	Observer
Gala Water: Torwoodlee-Bowland Wood	5-Jul	FL (1br3)	A Cutter
Bemersyde Moss	12-Jun, 6-Jul	4FF, 2FL	A Cutter
Kyles Hill - Woodheads (Greenlaw)	16-Jun	FL (1br1)	R Jackson
Anton's Hill (Coldstream)	25-Jun	FL (1br1)	R Jackson
Whitsome (Chirnside)	18-Jul to 31-Jul	FL	J Towill

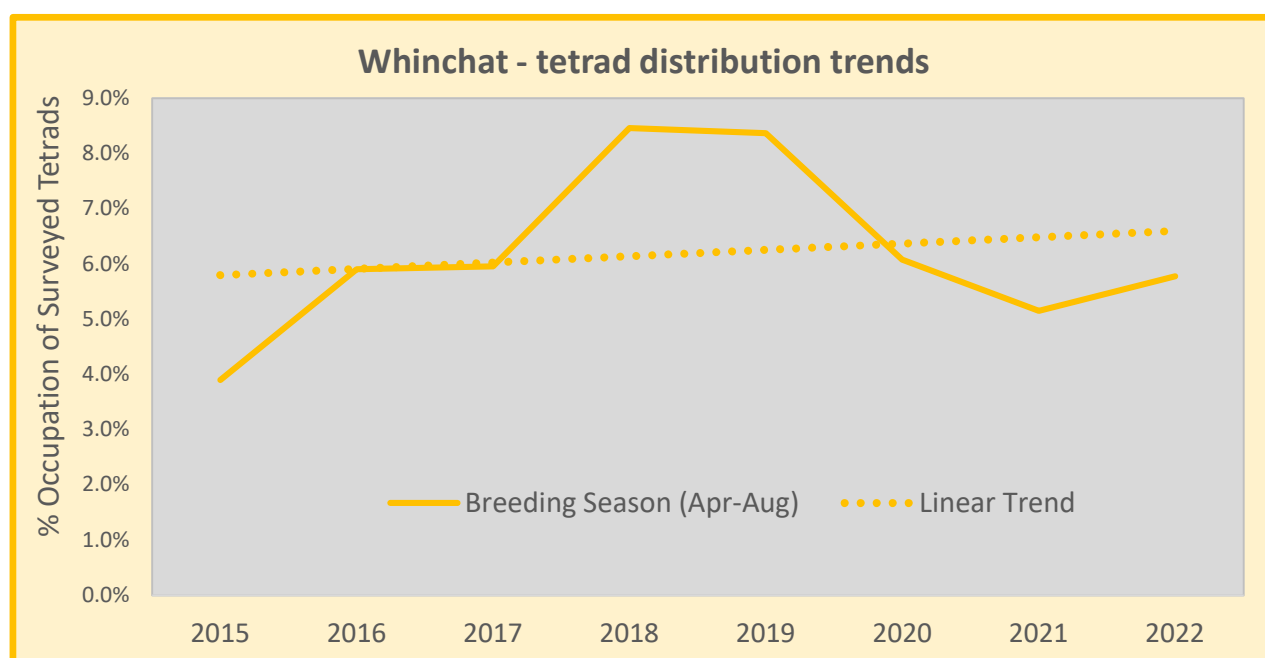
See Introduction for breeding codes.

Whinchat

Saxicola rubetra

Well-represented breeding summer visitor to hill valleys. Scarce passage migrant on coast, from late April to May and August to October.

Whinchat distribution has fallen slightly since 2019, although the trend since 2015 is broadly level. Like many upland birds, the trend is somewhat dependent on the effort put in by observers, which may vary at some sites from year to year. Even sites with normally good populations may not get visited every year.

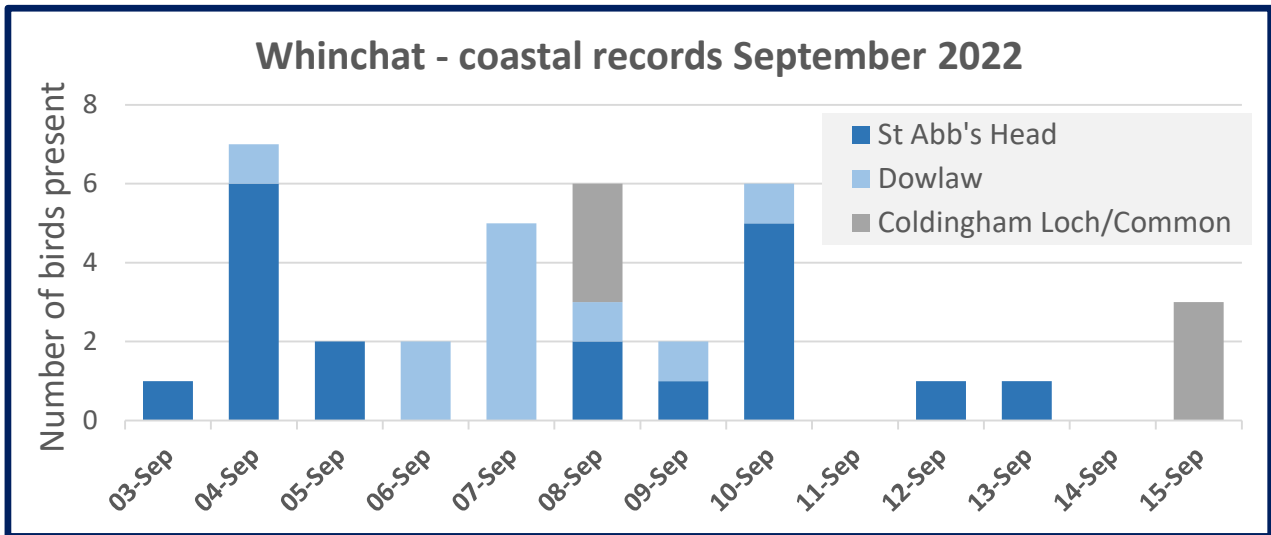


The first records of the year were at Gilmanscleugh (Ettrickbridge) on 24-Apr (**RM**) and Kippilaw (St Boswells) on 29-Apr (R Singleton), the next records then following from 6-May onwards, both at the coast and more sites inland. These are typical arrival dates.

Many of the sites with good tetrad counts are covered by the confirmed breeding table or were coastal migrants in September, the exceptions being 6 at Yarrow Knowe (Hermitage) on 19-Jun (BBS), 5 at Damhead Shiel (Traquair) on 14-May (**RB**) and 5 at Brownhart Law (Hownam) on 22-Jun (M Eaton).

Birds left most inland areas in early August, leaving stragglers at Buckholm (Galashiels) to 27-Aug and Bemersyde Moss to 2-Sep (both **AC**), although 3 migrant birds were also seen at Teviot Haughs (Crailing) on 10-Sep (**ST**).

Coastal migration in early September was more marked than in most years, and similar to the situation with other chats and flycatchers, although confined to the coast between St Abb's Head and Dowlaw. The highest counts were 6 at St Abb's Head on 4-Sep and 5 at Dowlaw (Coldingham) on 7-Sep, although the chart below shows that at least 20-25 birds were probably involved overall. The last record was at Coldingham Common on 15-Sep (J Connor), which is earlier than on recent averages.



Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	5	9	10	17	23	22	15	16

Although the breeding evidence trend mirrors the dip in overall tetrad distribution, there was a good proportion of confirmed breeding, with 6 tetrads (below), 4 probable and 6 possible breeding tetrads.

Site/Tetrad - Whinchat confirmed breeding	Date	Br. Code	Observer
Fruid Resr (Tweedhopefoot)	17-Jul	FF	H Urquhart
Hundleshope (Manor Valley)	4-Jul	FL	IR Poxton
Kirknie Law (Innerleithen)	13-Jun	FF, B	A Cutter
Brown Knowe (Yarrow)	6-Jul	FL	AJ Pearson
The Yett (Hownam)	31-Jul	FL (1br3)	R Jackson
Hownam Rings (see photo below)	31-Jul	FL (3br5)	R Jackson

See Introduction for breeding codes.



Juvenile Whinchat, Hownam Rings, July (R Jackson)

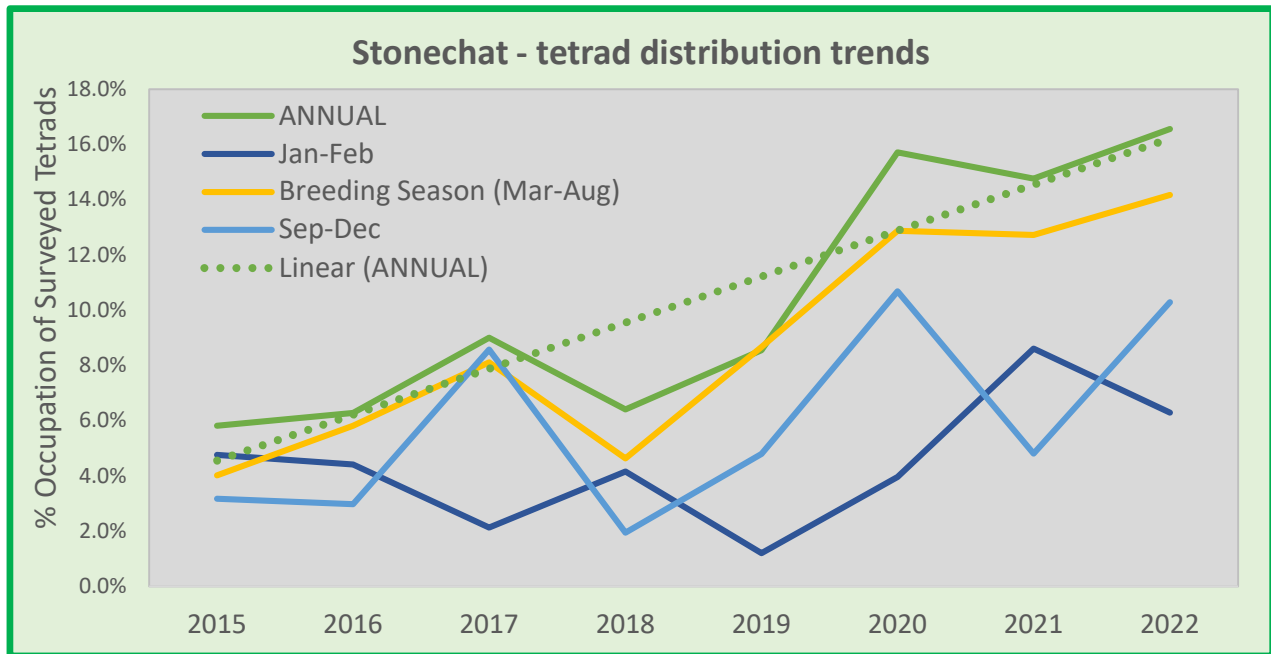
Stonechat

Saxicola rubicola

Common resident breeder, with some of population wintering mainly along coast but in mild winters many birds remain inland. Much of summer population found in hills. High mortality in severe winters.

The distribution of Stonechats has gone from strength to strength recently, despite the drop due to the harsh winter weather in 2018. In 2015 it was still recovering from the previous 'crash' in the winter 2010/11 (SESA2). The main driver has been the breeding season distribution and this has also been seen in the tetrads with breeding evidence, although this has also increased due to observer recording effort.

Many summer tetrads are vacated for the winter, with some movement to the coast or away from the region, but some tetrads well inland are still occupied throughout the year.



The highest tetrad counts were at the coast in autumn, with up to 20 at Dowlaw (Coldingham) on 2-Sep (NH), 15 at Linkim Shore (Coldingham) on 23-Oct (R Safford) and 12 at St Abb's Head on 5-Sep (CH). High inland counts were more associated with confirmed breeding territories (i.e. including juvenile birds), although 6 at Broad Law (Heriot Water) on 2-May (MM) and the same number at Kirknie Law (Innerleithen) the following day (AC) show rich areas, probably with multiple territories.

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	6	11	13	14	30	59	43	60

There were 34 tetrads with confirmed breeding evidence (mainly observations of recent fledglings), a further 16 tetrads with probable breeding and 10 with possible breeding, all similar numbers to 2020. The table below shows a sample of the most productive sites.

Site/Tetrad - Stonechat confirmed breeding	Date	Br. Code	Observer
Portmore Loch (East)	13-Jun	2br6	K Ingleby
Hule Moss	14-Aug	2br	AP Mossop
Canada Hill (Manor Valley)	22-Jun	3br	A Heavisides
Lauder Common E	24-Jun	2br	J Gordon

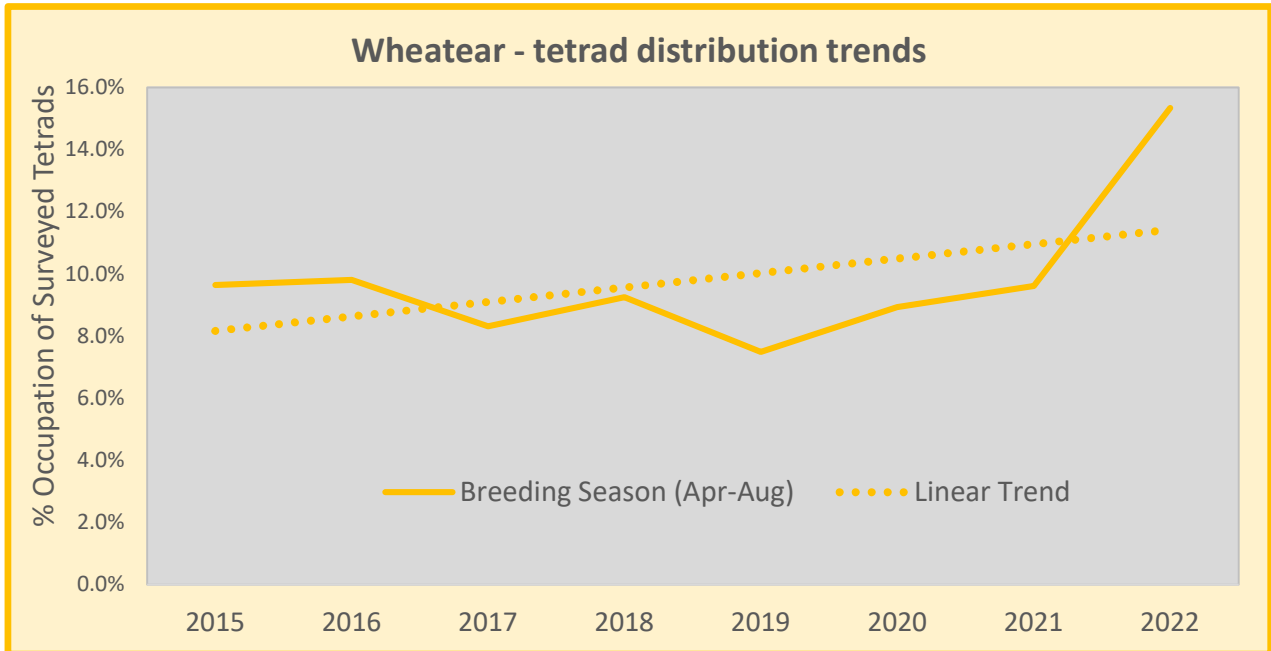
See Introduction for breeding codes.

(Northern) Wheatear

Oenanthe oenanthe

Common-abundant summer visitor, mostly to hill areas. Passage migrant, most common in spring, late March-May, but scarcer August-October, including a few Greenland race birds.

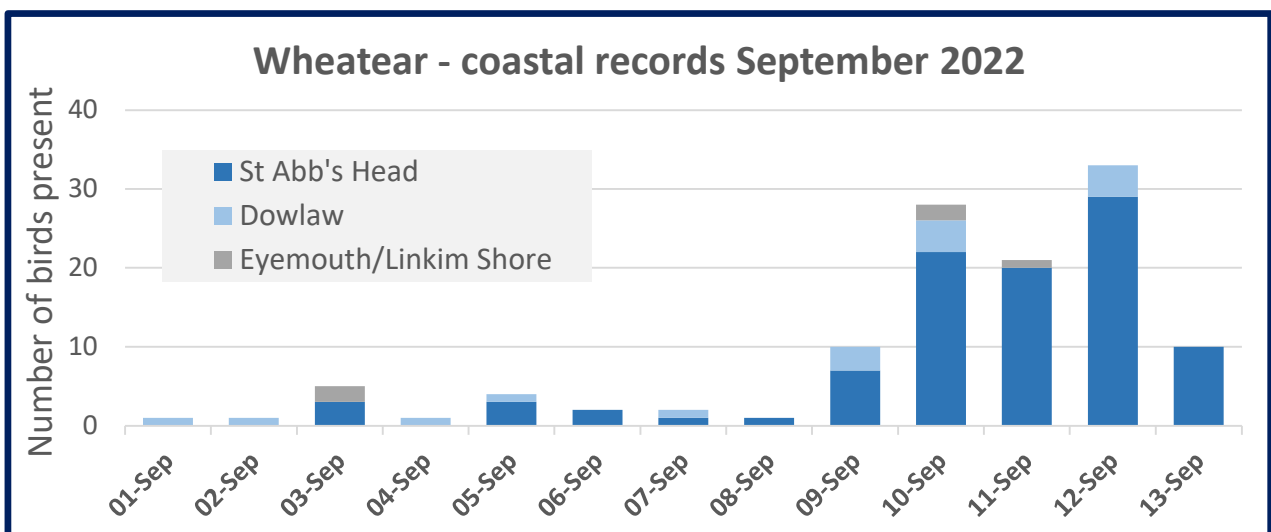
Although the distribution has risen suddenly in 2022, the overall trend is one of steady stability since 2015.



The first record was on Cademuir Hill (Hundleshope-Manor Valley) on 16-Mar (D & M Thorne), with five other inland tetrads with records before the end of March. This is earlier than on recent average. The first coastal migrant was at St Abb's Head on 23-Mar (**CH**), with 50+ there on 30-Mar (S Sonsino).

Tetrads with multiple territories were recorded between April and June at Stanhope (Tweedsmuir) - 8 birds; Killpallet (Longformacus) - 7; Priestthaugh (Hawick) - 7; Fifescar Knowe (Megget Water) - 6; Broad Law (Heriot Water) - 6; Raeshaw Fell (Hownam) - 6; Tinnis farm (Yarrow) - 6 and Hunt Law (Tweedsmuir) - 6.

Nearly all inland tetrads had been vacated by mid-August, with 4 birds at Halterburn (Yetholm) on 14-Aug (**KR**) being the last sighting of more than 2. The last two records (of singles) inland were at Bemersyde Moss on 23-Sep (**GP**) and at Hammer Head (Broughton) on 2-Oct (G Scott).



The graph shows the period of the peak autumn migration, which is a few days later than the peak for other species of chats and flycatchers, although 10-Sep was clearly an excellent day for nearly all species. Smaller numbers continued into October, with the last multiple sighting at St Abb's-Yellow Craig on 14-Oct (P Bullock), with singles until the last at St Abb's Head on 30-Oct (**DKG, RJ** - photo below). This is quite late and nearly two weeks later than the recent average.



Wheatear, St Abb's Head, October (R Jackson)

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	6	10	5	15	18	18	26	25

Breeding evidence was similar to last year, despite the step up in occupied tetrads, with confirmed breeding in 9 tetrads, probable in 13 and possible in 3. One of the confirmed breeding records was at St Abb's Head, with a fledged bird there on 6-Jul (C Hatsell), with the others in more typical upland areas.

'Greenland' Wheatear (*O. oenanthe leucorhoa*): There were 6 records, 3 in spring and 3 in autumn, which is a fairly typical showing for this race. Two were inland, with the rest at the coast. This is the only migrant that travels between Africa and the Nearctic (Americas) as part of its usual migration!

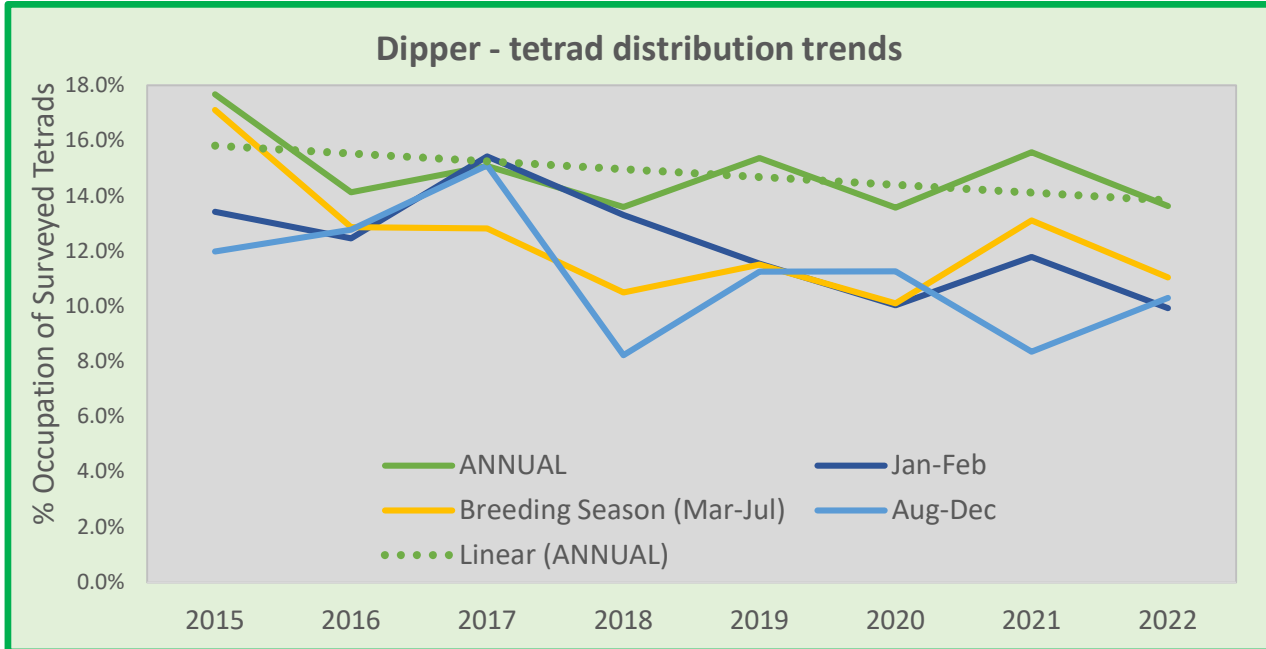
Site/Tetrad - 'Greenland' Wheatear records	Date	Number	Observer
St Abb's Head	13-Apr	1	C Hatsell
Bemersyde Moss	9-May	1	AT Bramhall
St Abb's Head	14-May	3	C Hatsell
St Abb's Head	5-Sep	1	C Hatsell
Dowlaw (Coldingham)	5-Sep	1	N Hammatt
Teviot Haughs (Crailing)	7-Sep	1	S Turnbull

Dipper

Cinclus cinclus

Well-represented breeding resident along most river systems, including coastal denes.

Although Dippers remain well-represented on the region's watercourses, the graph below would suggest a slow decline in their distribution and, indeed, the number of tetrads (at 120) is lower than in 2019 and 2021. One to watch, perhaps, although there are suggestions of some annual variability.



Most counts were of 4 birds or less, the exceptions being 11 at Castlehill (Manor Valley) on 26-Jun (WBBS) (and 5 on 3-Apr); 9 at Billhope (Hermitage) on 9-Jun (NS/WBBS); 6 at Neidpath Castle (Peebles) on 9-Oct (WeBS) (and 5 on 22-Jan) and 5 at Rink Hill (Clovenfords) on 24-Apr, Plora Wood (Innerleithen) on 6-May and Edington Mains (Chirnside) on 9-May.

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with breeding evidence	21	21	19	19	25	22	33	32

Although the total slightly reduced from last year, the number of confirmed breeding tetrads rose to 20 (12 in 2021), primarily as a result of ringing efforts in the Leithen Water/Glentress Water/Dewar Burn/Heriot Water catchments. There were also 9 tetrads with probable breeding and 3 with possible breeding.

House Sparrow

Passer domesticus

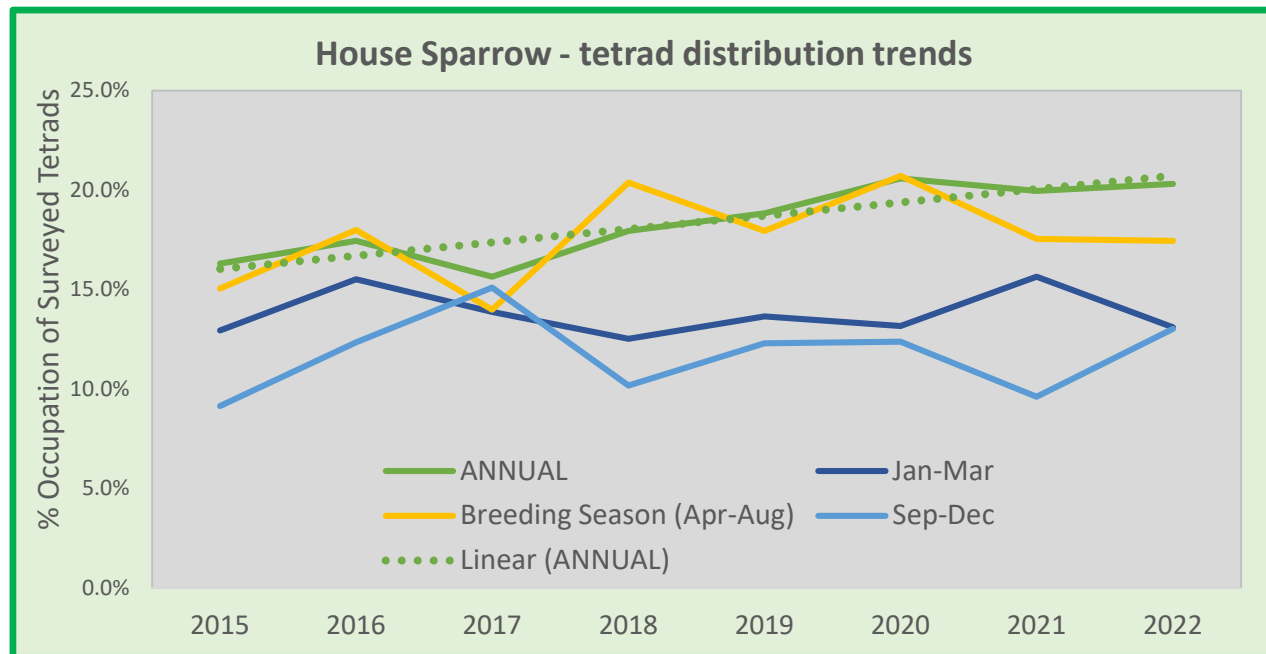
Abundant breeding resident around towns and villages. Forms flocks August-March.

House Sparrows are very steadily increasing in distribution over the past few years, although there is very little improvement over 2021. The winter distribution is generally lower and more variable, but a stable trend overall. See graph on next page.

The highest counts in the early part of the year were 34 at Newmains (Reston) on 12-Jan (DKG) and then flocks of 30 at Tweedbank-Abbotsford-Langlee and Chirnside in January and Tweed: Millmount-Ravenswood (Melrose) in March.

Breeding season flocks of 50+ were seen at Lauder on 24-Jun, up to 40 at Tweed: Lowood-Gattonside in June and August (all **JG**) and 25 at Lees Haugh (Coldstream) on 2-May (**RJ**).

The largest flock of the year was during the autumn and early winter, with 150+ at Peebles on 26-Nov (**AGR**) and smaller flocks of c.50 at Eckford-Wooden Loch (Jedburgh) on 10-Sep (**CDG**), 35 at Tweed: Lowood-Gattonside on 16-Nov and 23-Dec (both **JG**), 35 also at Newmains (Reston) on 18-Nov (**DKG**) and 32 at Pease Bay on 22-Dec (**GP**).



Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with breeding evidence	8	11	18	15	21	30	38	37

There was a strong increase in the numbers of tetrads with confirmed breeding, up from 9 in 2021 to 21 this year. There were also 14 tetrads with probable breeding and 2 tetrads with possible breeding.

Tree Sparrow

Passer montanus

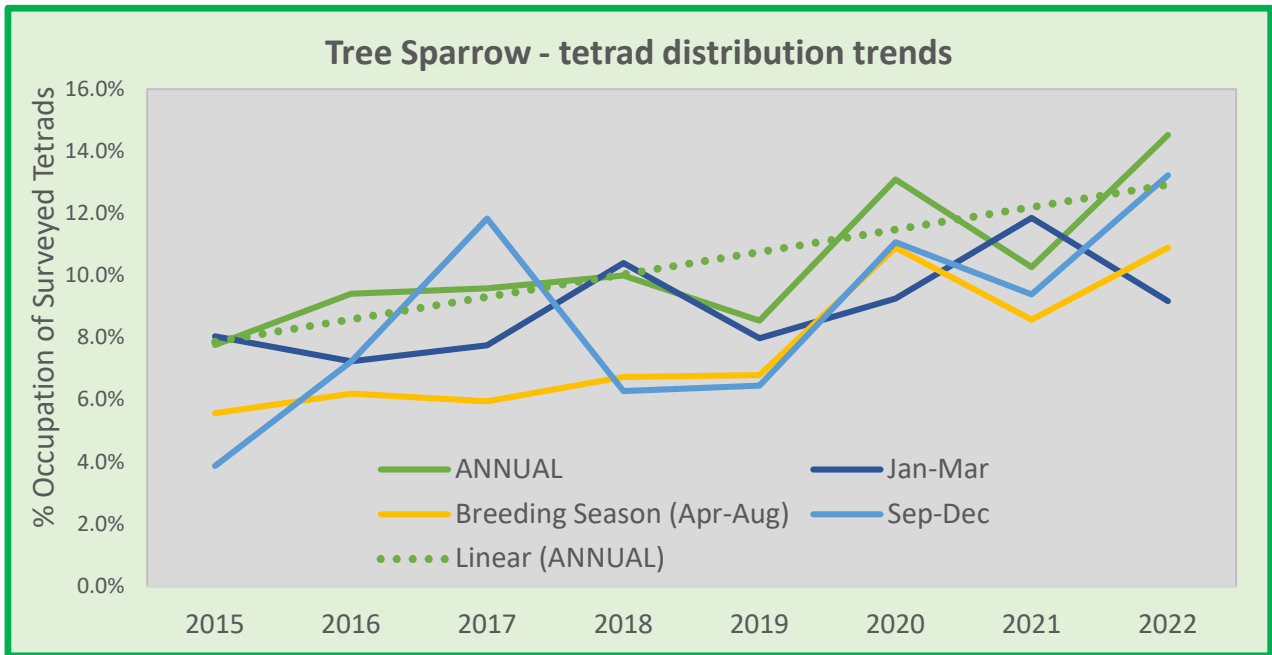
Common resident breeder, mostly in the eastern farms and villages. Populations prone to fluctuation, especially locally. Forms winter flocks.

Although there is quite a lot of variability in both the overall and seasonal trends, including dips in 2019 and 2021, this year's result is the best yet, with 14.5% of surveyed tetrads now occupied during the year and the trend has shown a steady increase.

All the highest counts at the start of the year were at Newmains (Reston), starting with 140 on 1-Jan and still at 130 on 28-Feb (all **DKG**). The next highest were 50+ at Makerstoun (Smailholm) on 28-Jan and 45+ at Lempitlaw (Kelso) on 28-Feb (both **RM**).

Breeding season colonies are a little smaller, the largest being c.40 at Teviot Haughs in July/August (**ST**), 30+ at St Abb's-Coldingham on 28-Aug (D Wilson) and 18 at Langrig (Coldstream) on 1-Apr (**RJ**).

The flock returned to Newmains (Reston) in the autumn, with 120 there on 31-Oct and 110 on 18-Dec (**DKG**). The only other reasonably sized flocks were c.60 at Caverton Mill (Morebattle) on 14-Sep (C Corrigan) and 46 at St Abb's Head on 4-Sep (P Safford, R Safford).



There only a few records from the west and south of the region, the main distribution still being east of Melrose. Up to 3 at Blackburn (Newcastleton) in December (C Blackie), small numbers around Peebles and 2 at Blyth Bridge (West Linton) in September (D & M Thorne) are therefore of interest.

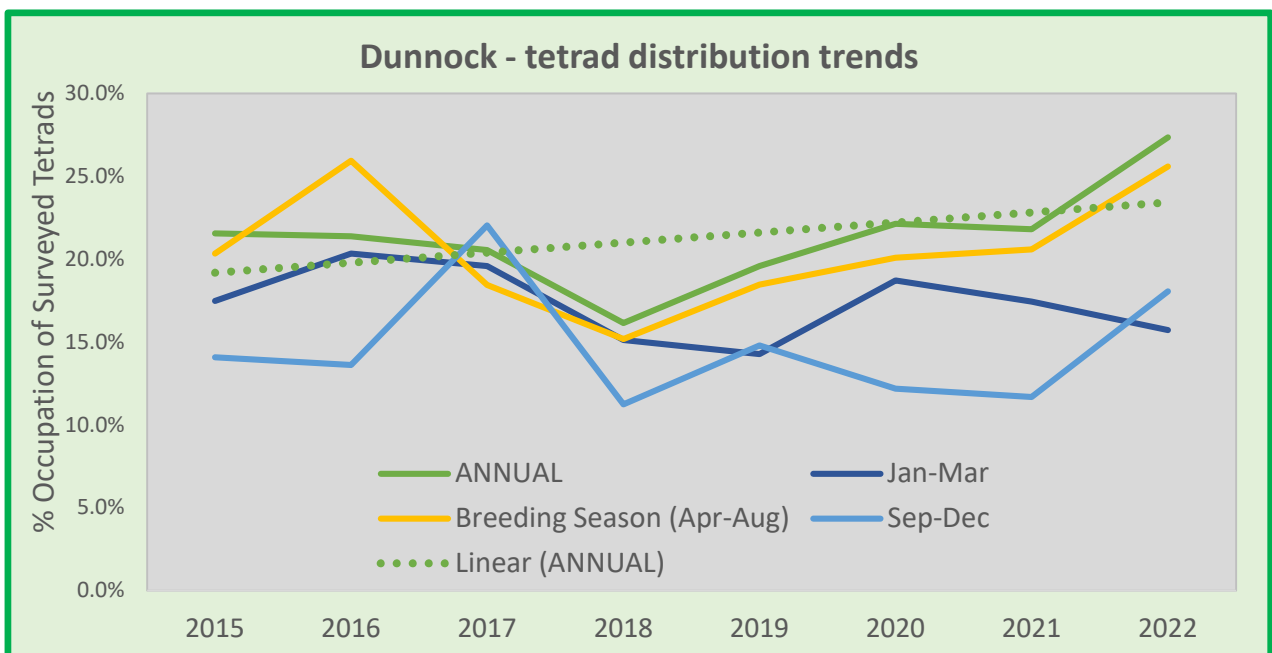
Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with breeding evidence	5	5	11	10	18	24	22	32

Like with House Sparrows, the proportion of tetrads with confirmed breeding was high, at 19 tetrads (up from 8 in 2021), 12 tetrads had probable breeding and 1 had possible breeding.

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*
Common breeding resident and well-represented passage visitor.

The Dunnock also shows a small but steady expansion of distribution after the dip in 2018.



The overall trend has been driven by the breeding season occupation, with the winter trends more variable, and generally level, if not declining slightly. Like with many species, 2022 has the highest occupation yet.

Some tetrads had a strong Dunnock presence throughout the year, e.g. Tweed: Lowood-Gattonside had counts of 16 in March and April and counts of 8-15 in five other months (all **JG**). Similarly Blackburn (Newcastleton) had 13+ birds on 3-Mar and 9 on two dates in December (C Blackie). The only other double-figure counts were at Eildon Hills-Dingleton - 15 on 18-Apr (**JG**), Lindean Resr (Selkirk) - 13+ on 25-Feb (**ELB**) and Foulden-Clarabad - 12 on 4-Jan (**APM**).

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	18	15	30	35	63	90	103	114

Another record count of breeding, with confirmed breeding in 14 tetrads (up from 8 in 2021), probable in 22 tetrads and possible in 78 tetrads.

Yellow Wagtail

Motacilla flava (flavissima)

Scarce-very uncommon summer (Apr-Aug) visitor, breeding along the Tweed and Teviot. Scarce passage migrant to coast April-May and August-September.

There were 47 records from 12 tetrads, which is a disappointing reduction on the situation in 2021.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of occupied tetrads for year</i>	8	6	9	10	8	9	16	12



Yellow Wagtail, Lees Haugh, May (R Jackson)

The first sightings of the year were at Lees Haugh (Coldstream) on 13-Apr (**RB**) and two there the following day (**RJ**). In the next few days there were more records further along the Tweed and Teviot, at Newmains (Reston) and one at St Abb's Head on 17-Apr.

At the end of the summer, there were records of singles at the St Abb's Ranger's Cottage on 17-Aug (**CH**) and at Dowlaw (Coldingham) on 10-Sep (**RJ**). The main sites, however, were at Newmains / Teviot Haughs (see table below) or at St Abb's Head, with up to 5 on 27-Jul and then 1 or 2 birds throughout August and September, until the last there on 5-Oct (**CH**).

Breeding evidence was similarly much more limited than in 2021, with confirmed breeding in 3 tetrads, probable in 1 tetrad and possible in 1. This compares with 12 tetrads in total last year.

Site/Tetrad - Yellow Wagtail breeding	Date(s)	Br. Code	Observer(s)
Lees Haugh (Coldstream)	13-Apr to 23-Jun	2FF	R Jackson, K Robeson

Site/Tetrad - Yellow Wagtail breeding	Date(s)	Br. Code	Observer(s)
Newmains (Reston)	16-Apr to 5-Sep	FF, FL	DK Graham
Teviot Haughs (Crailing)	18-Apr to 21-Aug	NY, FL	S Turnbull
Tweed: Broomlands-Whitmuirhaugh	18-Apr to 28-May	P	N Stratton, K Robeson
Birgham (Kelso)	17-Apr to 16-Jul	S	K Robeson

See Introduction for breeding codes.

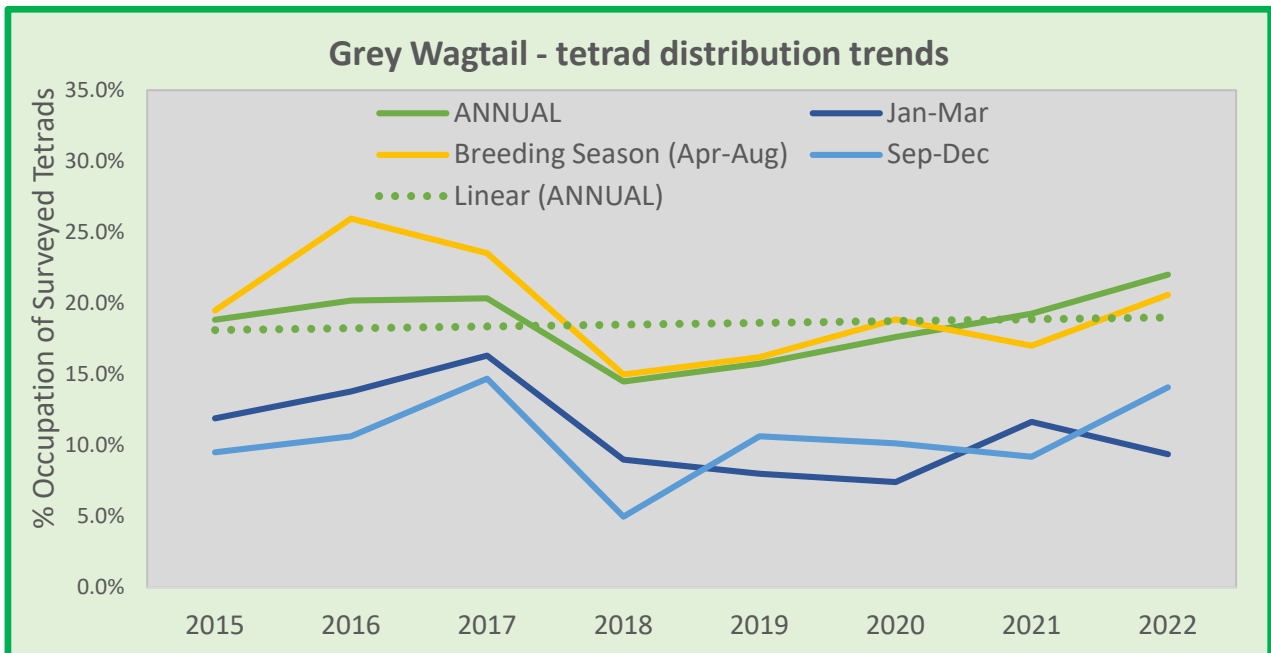
'Blue-headed' Wagtail (Nominate *M. flava*): No records of this race or of the hybrid 'Channel' Wagtail.

Grey Wagtail

Motacilla cinerea

Common breeder along water courses. Scarce through winter, mainly on the coast. Scarce but widespread passage migrant March-May and September-October.

Overall the distribution of Grey Wagtails has been stable over the last few years, with the dip in 2018 now all but recovered, especially during the breeding season. Winter distribution is always far more restricted, with many birds moving to the coast or away from the area, particularly if the winter is harsh.



The largest counts of the year were 23 at Yarrow Knowe (Hermitage) on 19-Jun (M Cummings) and 18 on the same day at Rain's Hill (Hermitage), both along the Liddel Water. Up to 8 birds were counted during March and September on various stretches of the Tweed downstream of Kelso (**KR, RJ**) and up to 7 at Tweed: Lowood-Gattonside in June and Tweed: Mertoun Bridge-Mertoun House in August.

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with breeding evidence	26	20	17	21	27	29	32	53

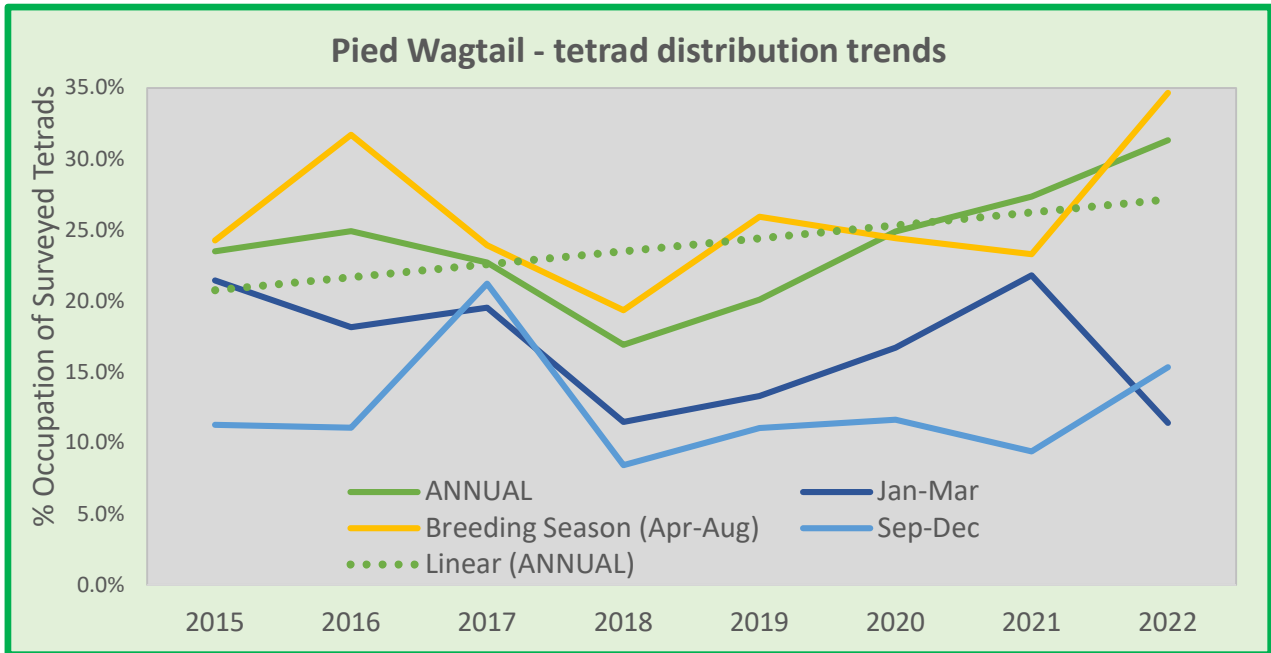
Confirmed breeding was observed in 25 tetrads (mostly fledged young), with probable breeding in a further 27 tetrads and possible breeding in 1 tetrad. This is a far stronger result than in 2021, probably through improved observer recording, and suggests that the breeding status remains stable in the region.

Pied Wagtail

Motacilla alba (yarrellii)

Abundant breeding summer visitor. Scarcer October-March, with variable wintering numbers and some roosts. Passage in March-April and September-October.

Like with many passerine species, the overall distribution of Pied Wagtails appears to be steadily increasing, driven primarily by the occupation during the breeding season, both of which have recovered from the dip in 2018. The more restricted winter distribution has remained more level and inconsistent, as birds either tend to move into settlements, towards the coast, or potentially away from the region.



The only sizeable count at the start of the year was of 40 at Tweedbank-Abbotsford-Langlee on 2-Jan (**GP**) and 26 (returning birds?) gathering at Newmains (Reston) on 11-Mar (**DKG**).

Tweedbank-Abbotsford-Langlee also had the highest count in the next winter with c.30 on 14-Dec and 50+ on 31-Dec (**GP**, **ELB** respectively). A count of 32 was at Leitholm (Coldstream) on 18-Oct (**RJ**) and 28 were roosting at Bemersyde Moss on 10-Sep (**AC**). The peak count of birds at the coast was 50 at Mire Loch (St Abb's Head) on 20-Sep (**CH**).

Spring and summer numbers were also quite high at some locations, with 51 at Tweed: Lowood-Gattonside on 18-Jun (**JG**), 36 at Tweed: Banff Mill-Redden on 17-Apr and 27 there on 17-Jul (both WeBS) and c.35 at Birgham (Kelso) on 20-Aug (**KR**).

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with breeding evidence	26	31	21	26	46	54	60	59

Overall breeding numbers were similar to last year, although there was a small increase to 30 tetrads with confirmed breeding (up from 27 in 2021), with 28 tetrads probable breeding and 1 tetrad possible breeding.

'White' Wagtail (*M. alba alba*): There were 7 records, all in the spring, although some records of 'alba' wagtails, particularly juveniles in late summer, could also be of this race, but are treated as *yarrellii* here.

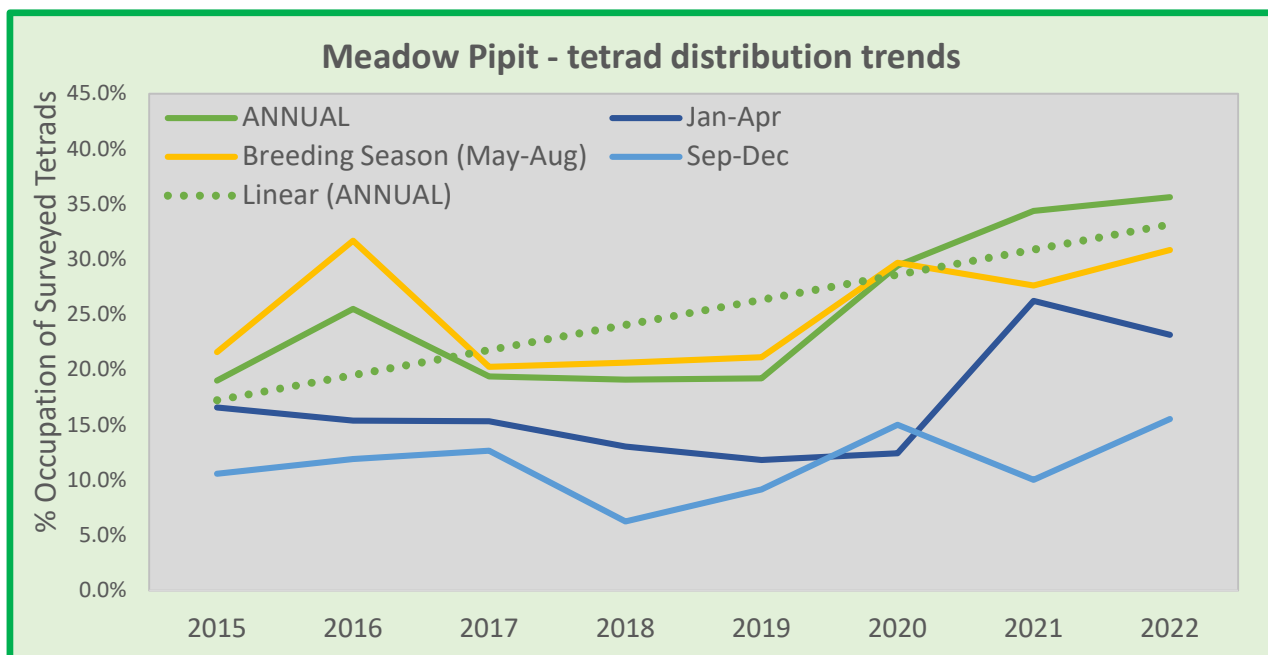
Site/Tetrad - 'White' Wagtail records	Date	Number	Observer
St Abb's Head	10-Apr	1	C Hatsell
St Abb's Head	16-Apr	2	C Hatsell
St Abb's Head	18-Apr	1	C Hatsell
Birgham (Kelso)	19-Apr	1	K Robeson
Teviot Haughs (Crailing)	25-Apr	1	S Turnbull
Tweed: Blount Is-St Thomas's Is	9-May	1	S Turnbull
Harryburn House (Lauder)	18-May	2	S Kerr

Meadow Pipit

Anthus pratensis

Abundant and widespread breeding summer visitor to hill areas. Common passage migrant March-April and September-October. Very few in winter.

The summer breeding distribution has remained largely stable over the past few years, but the winter (and overall) occupancy has increased slightly, although this could be due to changes in observer effort, rather than any substantial real changes of distribution. The winter distribution still remains lower than in the breeding season, as many birds leave the area during winter.



There were no counts over 10 inland until the middle of March, when returning birds started to arrive, with 57 between Blackhopebyre (Glentress Water) and Piper of Peebles Grave (Dewar Burn) on 22-Mar (**RB**) with 70 on higher ground at Broad Law (Heriot Water) on 8-Apr (N Milligan). Also c.80 at Stantling Craig Resr (Clovenfords) on 2-Apr and c.50 at Burnfoot (Hawick) on 8-Apr (both **GP**). Coastal numbers peaked with 30 at Dowlaw (Coldingham) on 8-Apr (**NH**) and 250 at St Abb's Head on 10-Apr (**CH**).

Some breeding season tetrads held good numbers, which were often identified during BBS or WeBS visits: Fruid Resr (Tweedhopefoot) - 137 (on 14-Aug, H Urquhart); Kirkhope Burn (Ettrick Water) - 100+ (on 8-Aug, B Quinton); Hunt Law (Tweedsmuir) - 97 in May; Polmood Craig (Tweedsmuir) - 54 in June; Weddelscairn Moor (Oxton) - 49; Raeshaw Fell (Hownam) - 42 and Yarrow Knowe (Hermitage) - 40.

Autumn counts inland were all below 15 again by the end of September, with c.100 at Easter Deans (Portmore) on 2-Sep (**TWD**), c.25 at Broad Law (Heriot Water) and 21 at Fruid Resr (Tweedhopefoot). Coastal movements included 175 at St Abb's Head on 5-Sep (**CH**) and 100 at Dowlaw (Coldingham) the next day (**NH**). There were still 44 counted at St Abb's Head on 30-Oct (**RJ**).

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with breeding evidence	11	12	27	25	38	48	66	94

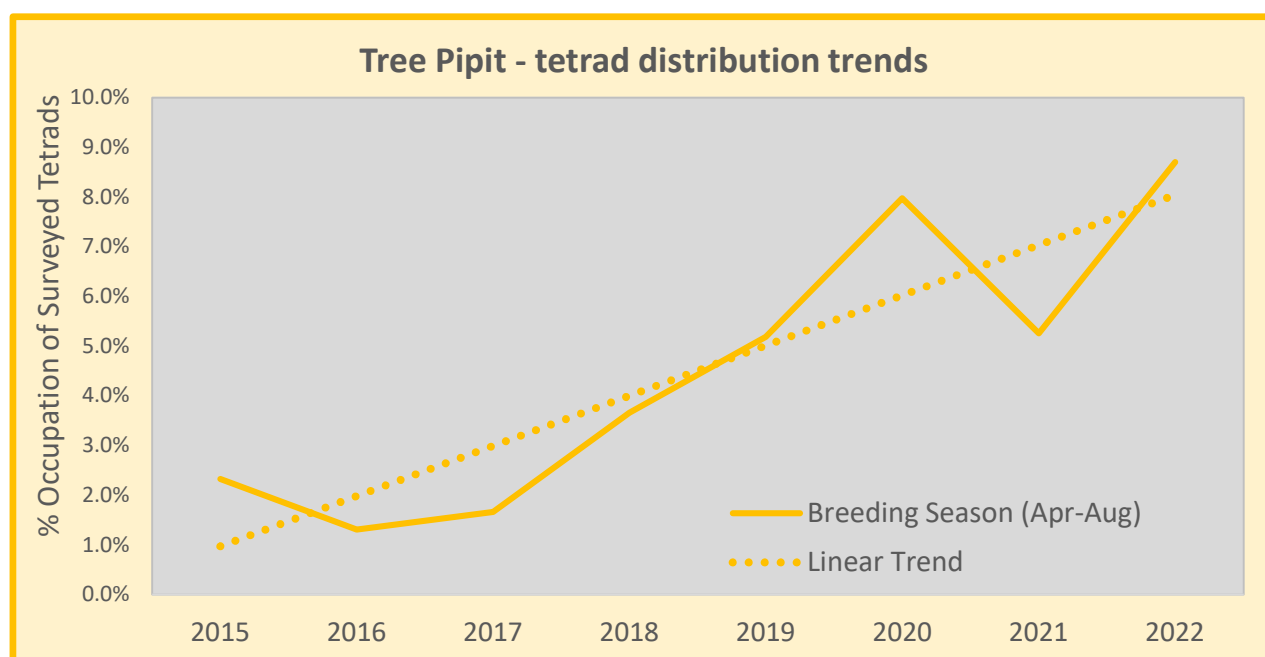
In another high year for breeding evidence, there were 29 tetrads with confirmed breeding (versus only 7 in 2021 and 26 in 2020), 33 tetrads with probable breeding and 32 with possible breeding.

Tree Pipit

Anthus trivialis

Locally common breeding summer visitor in forest clearings and clearfell. Scarce passage migrant April-May and September.

The trend line here would suggest a meteoric rise in distribution, but whether this is due, in part, to more observers now visiting likely habitat for Tree Pipits, rather than a genuine four-fold expansion, is difficult to tell. Nevertheless Tree Pipits seem to be doing well and have also recovered from the dip last year.



The first records of the year were at Hopehouse (Ettrick) on 16-Apr and Cacrabank (Buccleuch) the next day (both G Christer). The first multiple record was 3 at Elibank (Walkerburn) on 22-Apr and then 7 birds counted across a number of areas of the Wauchope Forest on 24-Apr (GP).

Most of the high counts were associated with the BBS squares carried out by Neil Stratton, and where breeding evidence was also recorded (see below). Five birds were recorded at Hopehouse (Ettrick) on 2-May (G Christer), but otherwise all tetrad counts were 3 or less.

August records inland came from just two tetrads - Easter Deans (Portmore) until 25-Aug (TWD/BRG) and Bemersyde Moss-Clintmains (Smailholm) on 13-Aug only (AC). There were only a few coastal records, with singles at Dowlaw (Coldingham) on 13-Aug and then from 4-Sep to 10-Sep (JDH Hadfield, NH) and singles at St Abb's Head on 9-Sep to 10-Sep (CH). This is a typical departure date.

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with breeding evidence	4	7	8	17	19	39	14	27

The number of tetrads with breeding evidence increased again, after the drop last year, but was still lower than the peak in 2020. There were 4 tetrads with confirmed breeding and 2 with probable (tabled), leaving 21 tetrads with possible breeding (i.e. singing males only).

Site/Tetrad - Tree Pipit breeding	Date(s)	Count	Br. Code	Observer
Saughtree Fell (Hermitage)	9-Jul	25	FF	N Stratton (BBS)
Swinside Hall Plantation (Jedburgh)	14-Jun	8	FF	N Stratton (BBS)
Whitrope Cott (Wauchope Forest)	15-Jun	4	FF	N Stratton (BBS)
Portmore Loch	13-Jun	2	FF	K Ingleby
Dunhope Rig (Craik Forest)	6-Jun, 5-Jul	6-8	T	N Stratton (BBS)
Eildon Hills-Dingleton	2-Jun	3	D	J Gordon

See Introduction for breeding codes.

Rock Pipit

Anthus petrosus

Scarce and local breeder along coast. Although wintering birds swell numbers in October-March the species remains uncommon.

There were 125 records, in 16 exclusively coastal tetrads, including 9 tetrads in summer, although counts and distribution are greater in the winter months.

The highest overall number was on the day of the Rocky Shore Count, when 67 were observed along the entire Berwickshire coast. This is well above the average since 2005, which is 46, but a lot lower than in 2021, when 98 birds were seen. Well over half the birds were seen in two stretches - Redheugh to Souter and around St Abb's Head NNR.

Numbers during the breeding season were far lower and many records only recorded 'presence', although see breeding (below).



Rock Pipit, Burnmouth, October (R Jackson)

The highest autumn count was 11 at Fast Castle Head-Hurker (Coldingham) on 14-Nov (**CH**), with 7 at Burnmouth on 8-Oct (**CDG**) and 6 birds each at Eyemouth and Netherbyres-Fancove Head (Eyemouth) during September, St Abb's village in late October and Fleurs (Coldingham) in December.

Breeding evidence: As usual, there was limited evidence of breeding (table below).

Site/Tetrad - Rock Pipit breeding	Date(s)	Br. Code	Observer
St Abb's Head	21-Apr to 3-Jun	5T, FF	C Hatsell
Eyemouth	29-Apr	D	CD Green
St Abb's-Coldingham	23-May	T	K Wood

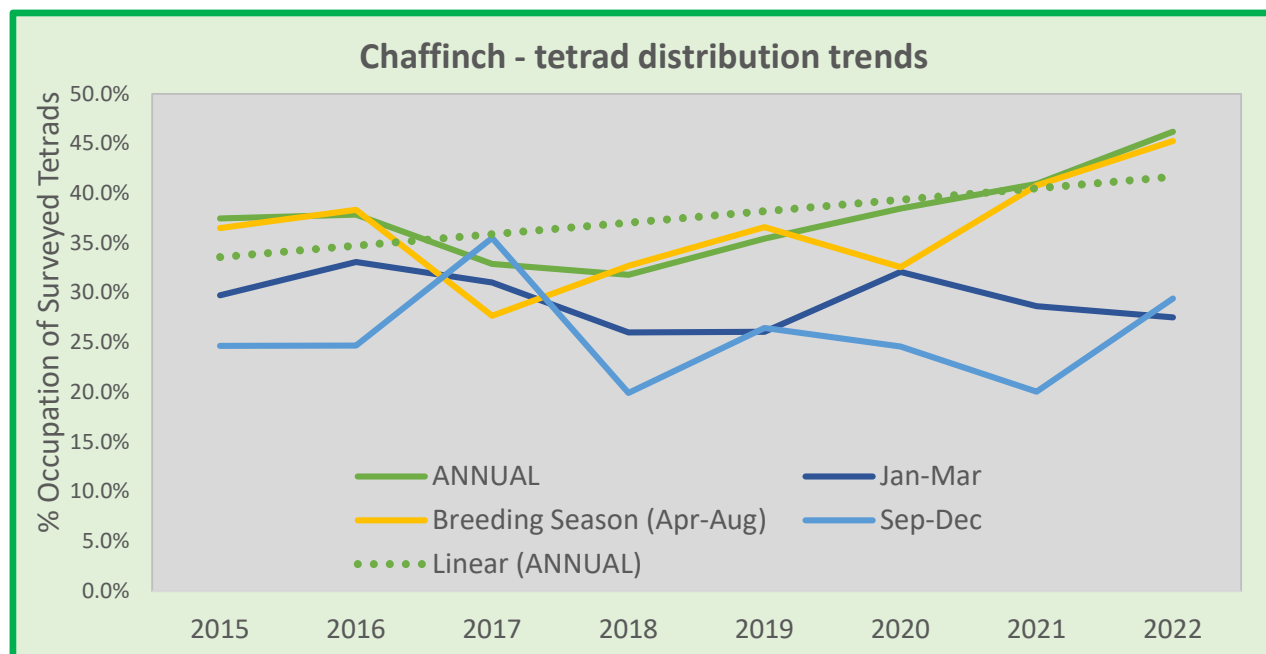
See Introduction for breeding codes.

Chaffinch

Fringilla coelebs

Abundant and widespread breeder, autumn passage migrant and winter visitor. Winter birds often occurring in large flocks, sometimes of several hundreds. Spring passage flocks are less common.

Although already very widespread throughout the Borders, it still seems to be occupying more tetrads in the last few years, particularly in the breeding season, although 2017 and 2020 showed a small retraction. Winter distribution has remained a little lower and on a more static trend.



The New Year kicked off with a flock of 120 at Newmains (Reston) (**DKG**), but the largest flock of the year, 500 birds, was seen at Teviot Haughs (Crailing) on 22-Jan (GJ Cundall). Other notable counts were c.170 at Walkerburn on 25-Jan (**GP**) and c.160 at The Hirsell on 20-Feb (**KR**).

The highest breeding season count was 35 at Elba (Abbey St Bathans) on 3-Apr (**RJ**), so the next three figure counts were in the autumn, with c.185 at Shielswood Loch (Hawick) on 23-Oct and c.180 at Tweed: The Rink-Boleside on 20-Nov (both **GP**), 140 at Cacrabank (Buccleuch) on 16-Oct (G Christer) and similar counts at Newmains (Reston) in both October and November (**DKG**). The highest coastal count was 105 at St Abb's Head on 18-Oct (**CH**).

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with breeding evidence	26	26	49	65	83	75	223	213

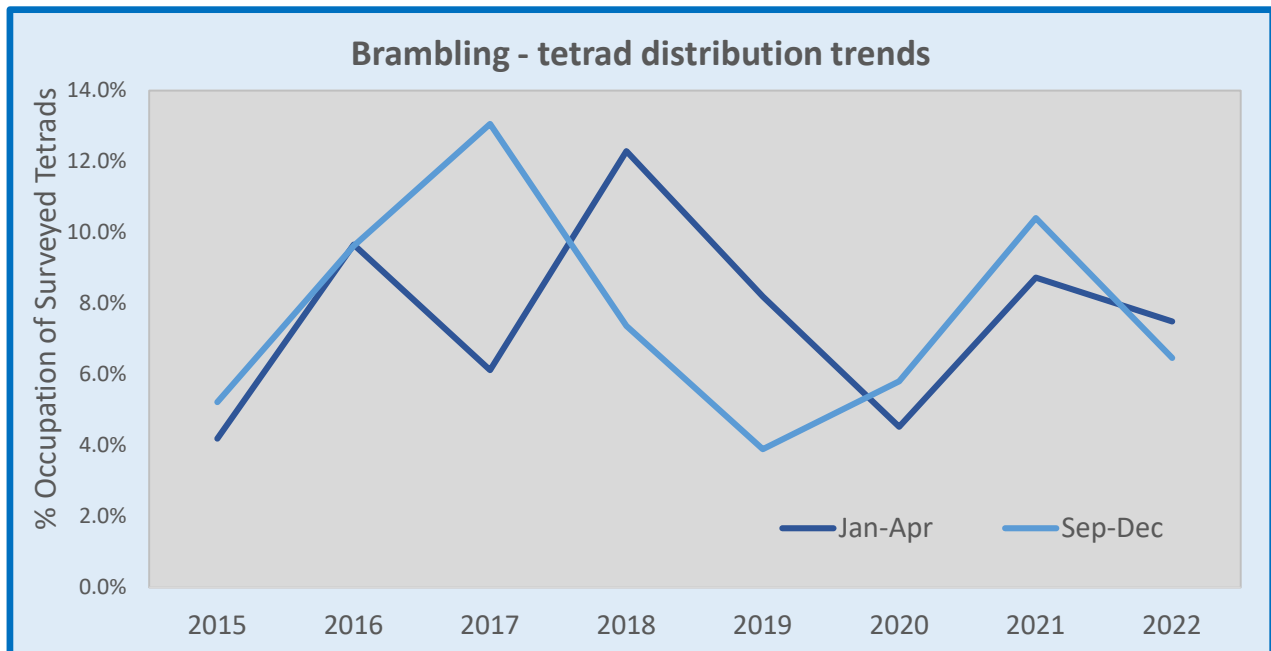
Although there was a small drop in the overall tetrads with breeding evidence, the numbers of confirmed breeding (15) and probable breeding (42) were both up on 2021. This is probably a reflection of more observers now feeling confident to record higher breeding evidence, which is further encouraged.

Brambling

Fringilla montifringilla

Well-represented passage migrant and winter visitor but numbers erratic. Some large flocks late September-April.

Very variable in both distribution and numbers each winter, with no clear trend. The distribution in both the winter periods in 2022 was about average, but numbers were greater in the first winter-spring period.



The largest flock at the start of the year was at Newmains (Reston), with 250 there on New Year's Day, rising to 800 on 15-Jan, before falling back to 180 at the end of February (**DKG**). The other main sites were Teviot Haughs (Crailing), with up to 500 on 22-Jan (GJ Cundall) and Stantling Craig Resr (Clovenfords), with up to c.400 on 2-Mar (**GP**). Any flocks at other sites were all smaller than 50 birds. The last sizeable flock (of c.60 birds) was at Stantling Craig Resr on 14-Apr (**RB**) and the last single was on 1-May at Eildon Hills-Dingleton (**DP**), which is an average spring departure date.

The first autumn arrivals were on 29-Sep, with two birds each at Dowlaw (Coldingham) and St Abb's Head (**NH**, **CH** respectively), which are also typical dates. There were a few more small counts (max. 7 birds) at the coast and inland flocks were also quite small, the largest being 10+ at Bowhill (Selkirk) on 23-Oct (**GP**), c.40 at Wormiston (Eddleston) on 4-Nov (**AGR**) and then 50+ at Blyth Bridge (West Linton) on 27-Dec (D & M Thorne).

Hawfinch

Coccothraustes coccothraustes

LRC

Rare potential resident and scarce autumn migrant and winter visitor. Not annual.

Two records. This is the third year in a row with at least one record, although numbers dropped from 2020 and 2021. There was just one record in the spring, a presumed migrant, at Coldingham Dean on 25-Apr and present again the following day (D Bryant). The only record at the most regular site, The Hirsell, was a brief bird on 9-Nov (**RJ**).



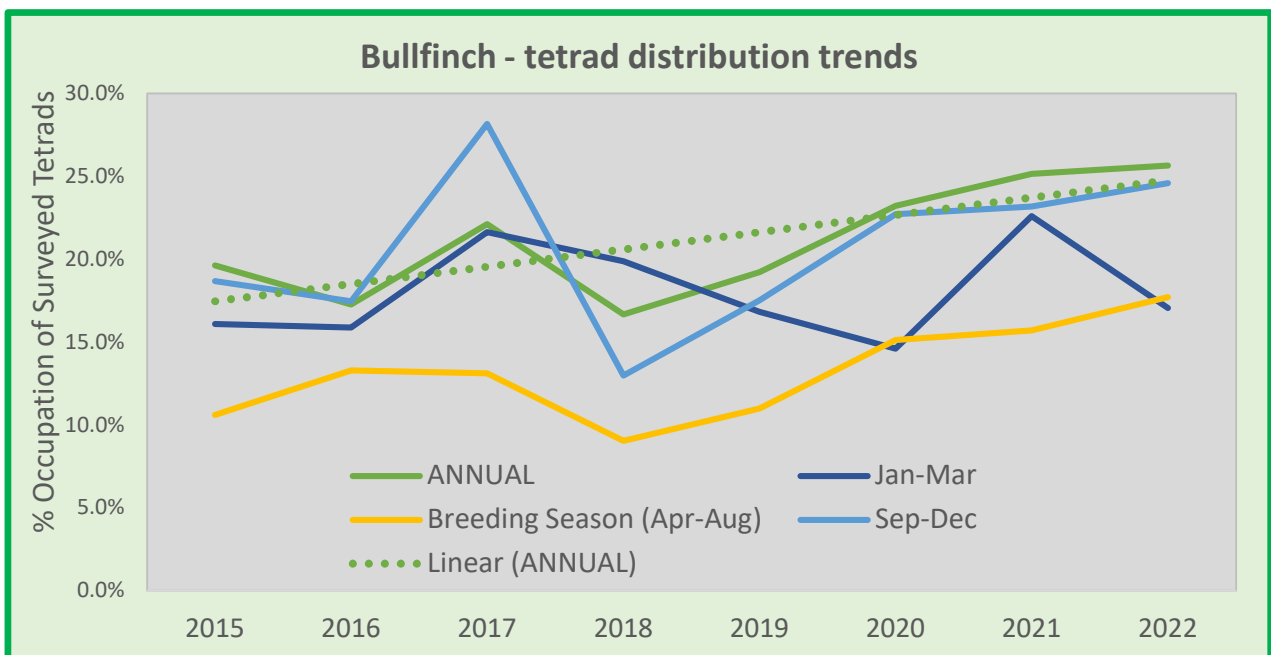
Hawfinch, Coldingham Dean, April (D Bryant)

Bullfinch

Pyrrhula pyrrhula

Common and widespread, but rather elusive, breeding resident.

In comparison with most resident birds, the distribution of Bullfinches is unusual in being apparently far smaller in the summer months and relatively widespread in winter. This is probably due to the generally quiet and retiring habits it has during the breeding season rather than any distribution changes. The trend is, however, gently rising, particularly in the summer months, with winter distribution on a level trend.



Flock sizes are far smaller than the other finches, so counts of 15 at Dabshead (Lauder) on 16-Jan (R Catalano), 11+ at Midburn (Bonchester Bridge) on 4-Jan (MJ Bruce) and 11 at Eildon Hills-Dingleton on 7-Jan (JG) were the largest of the year. Late summer saw c.10 at Easter Deans (Portmore) on 25-Aug (TWD)

and there were similarly sized groups in November/December at Law Kneis (Craik Forest), the Eildon Hills area, The Hirsle and Tweedbank-Abbotsford-Langlee.

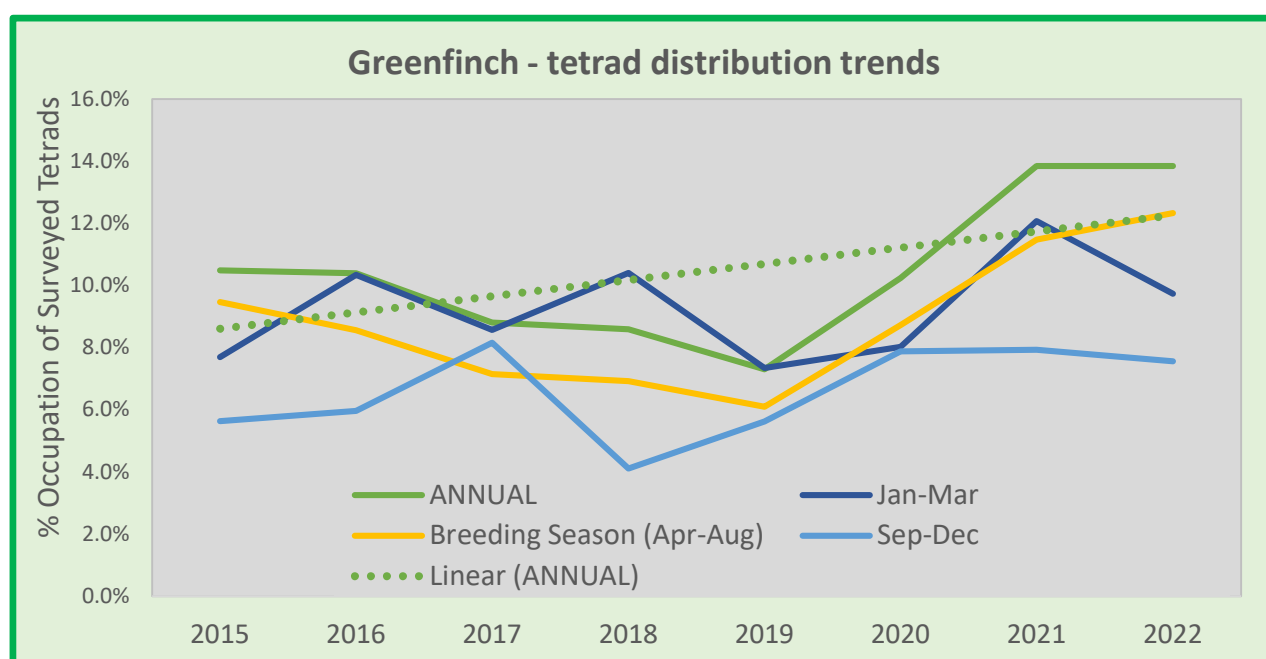
Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	13	17	20	15	19	38	34	39

Breeding was confirmed in 10 tetrads (only 3 in 2021), probable in 26 tetrads and possible in 3, making this the best year yet for breeding evidence, although only marginally above the 2020 numbers.

Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*
 Common breeding resident, now stabilising after decline. Forms flocks July-March.

The last three years has seen a marked improvement in the distribution of Greenfinches, which is particularly pronounced during the breeding season. The non-breeding season distribution has remained on a more level trend and has shown quite a lot of annual variability.



The largest flocks in the winter-spring quarter were 20 on Eckford-Wooden Loch (Jedburgh) on 12-Jan (**CDG**), 19 at Tweed: Lowood-Gattonside on 1-Jan (A Aldron) and 17 at The Hirsle on 7-Jan (**DKG**).

Autumn numbers were a little higher, with 37 at Bowhill (Selkirk) on 5-Dec (G Scott), up to c.25 at Eyemouth in September (**GP**) and 23 at Newmains (Reston) on 31-Oct (**DKG**).

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	3	8	10	18	17	25	32	31

This is one species where the breeding evidence has slightly bucked the general trend, with a reduction in confirmed breeding tetrads from 7 in 2021 to 3 this year, although the overall number has only reduced by one, with probable breeding in 8 tetrads and possible in 20 tetrads.

Twite

Linaria flavirostris

Very rare breeder in upland areas. Very uncommon but increasing winter visitor and passage migrant to hills and coast.

Six records. All records are tabled below. With a couple of inland records and several at the coast in autumn, this was a fairly typical year. There were no records in the hills in the summer months.

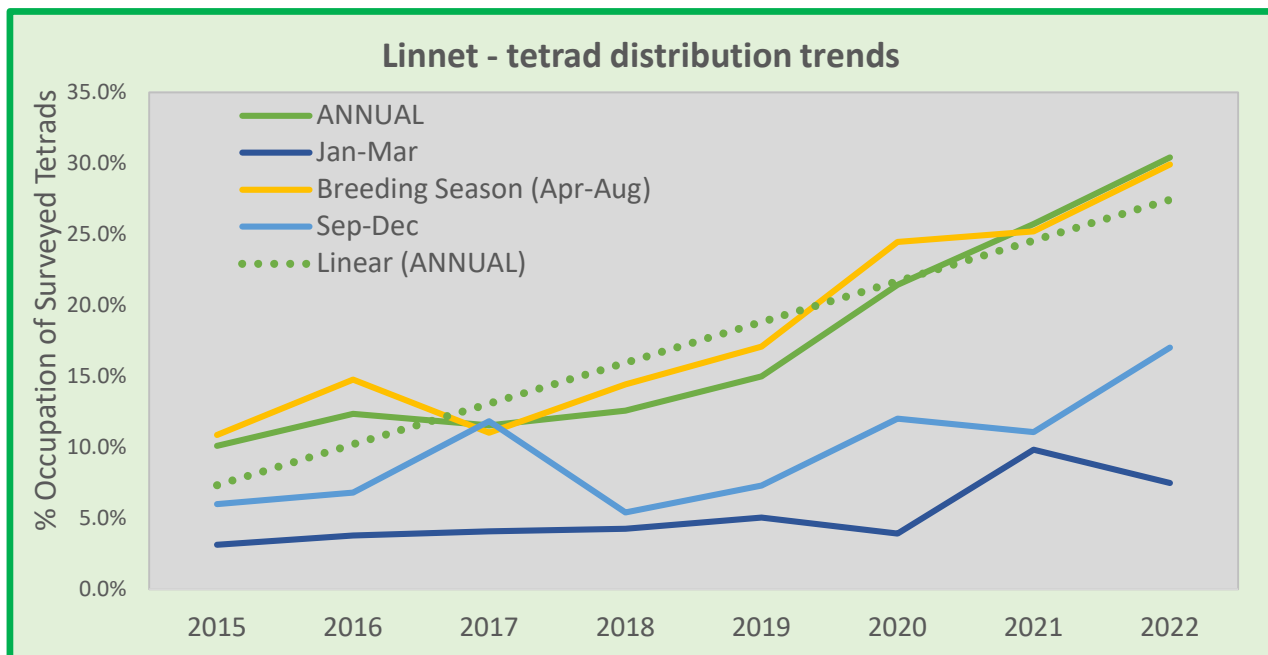
Site/Tetrad - Twite records	Date	Number	Observer
Biggar Water (Broughton)	23-Jan	12	D Stevenson
St Abb's Head	10-Sep	c.2	I McPherson
Leitholm (Coldstream)	24-Oct	2	R Jackson
Eyemouth	12-Nov, 14-Nov	4, 16	DK Graham, M Pearson
St Abb's Head	23-Nov	2	C Hatsell

Linnet

Linaria cannabina

Common resident breeder, particularly in the east of the region. Can form large and mobile winter flocks.

This is yet another species that appears to be strongly expanding its range within the region, particularly during the breeding season, with nearly treble the percentage tetrad occupation from 2015. The winter distribution, on the other hand has remained far more restricted, although this also now appears to be expanding slightly.



Most of the largest flocks were in January, with three-figure counts on a number of dates and c.860 at Teviot Haughs (Crailing) on 26-Jan (**ST**). The other site with a large flock was Newmains (Reston) that held up to 450 birds on 12-Jan (**DKG**). At the start of spring a site at Dyshaugh (Longformacus) had 250 birds on 8-Apr (**NH**).

Flocks formed again in the autumn, with Teviot Haughs (Crailing) again hosting the largest flock of c.490 on 9-Dec (**ST**), whilst Newmains (Reston) had up to 320 birds on 18-Nov (**DKG**). Counts of 250 at Heiton-Roxburgh on 19-Sep (**NS**) and 300 at Linkim Shore (Coldingham) on 23-Oct (R Safford) were also recorded.

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with breeding evidence	6	6	10	19	22	45	60	54

The number of confirmed breeding tetrads remains small (3), with mostly probable breeding being recorded (47 tetrads). The overall number has also decreased a little from 2021, even though the breeding season occupation has increased.

Common (Mealy) Redpoll

Acanthis flammea

Usually scarce autumn and winter visitor, typically amongst flocks of Lesser Redpoll. Almost annual.

Three records. All records are tabled below. Whether the spring records are passage birds or late detection of small numbers wintering is unknown. The single autumn bird was more clearly moving through.

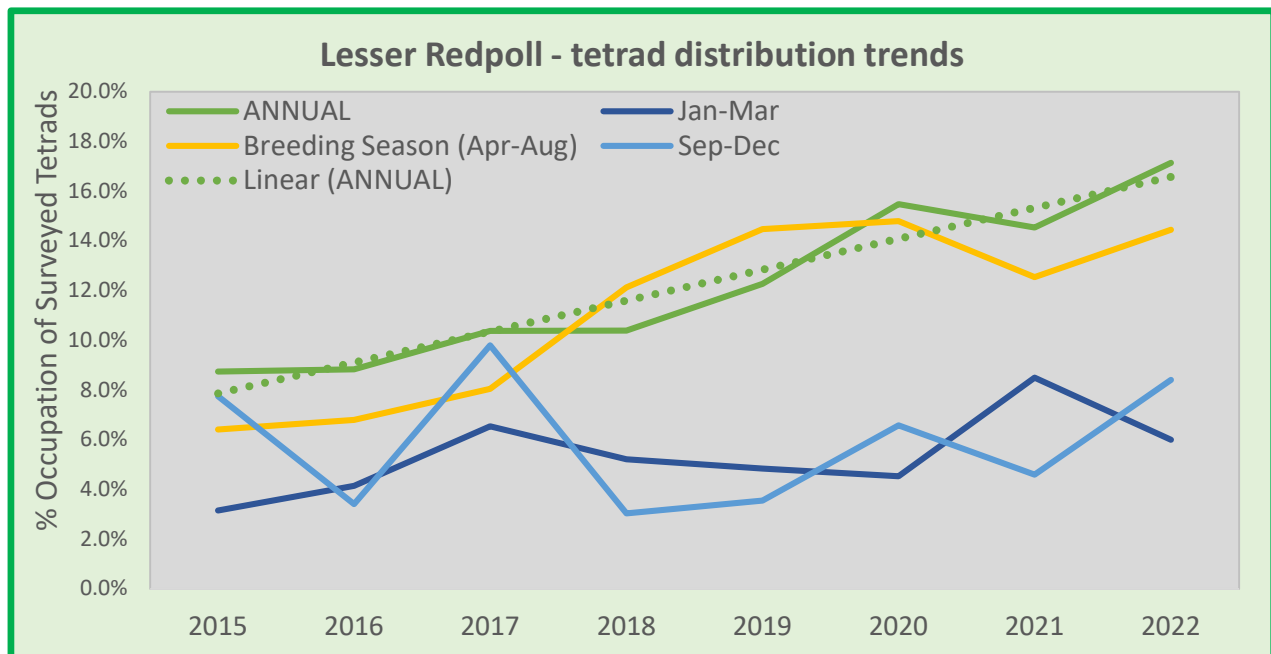
Site/Tetrad - Common Redpoll records	Date	Number	Observer
Auchencrow (Reston)	3	29-Mar	S Jones
St Abb's Head	1	16-Apr	C Hatsell
St Abb's Head	1	21-Nov	C Hatsell

Lesser Redpoll

Acanthis cabaret

Common but local breeder. Autumn passage migrant and winter visitor in variable numbers, mostly October-November.

Although the winter distribution has remained rather restricted and rather static, the breeding season distribution has increased markedly in the last few years, although it dropped last year and hasn't (yet) returned to the 2020 peak.



The only significant flock at the start of the year was at Innerleithen, which peaked at 42 birds coming to garden feeders on 19-Feb (RB). Notably one of the usual 'go to' sites, The Bell (Cranshaws) only held 8 birds. Later in the summer, numbers reached 36 at Note o' the Gate (Wauchope Forest) on 9-Aug (RB) and 24 at Steele Road (Hermitage) on 22-Jul (GP).

Autumn numbers were a little more impressive, mostly peaking in December, although c.30 were at Easter Deans (Portmore) on 2-Sep (**TWD**) and 30 were at Eildon Hills-Dingleton on 16-Nov (**JG**). At least 30 birds were seen at Tweed: Broomlands-Whitmuirhaugh on 27-Dec (**RM**) and also at Fireburnmill (Coldstream) two days later (**CDG**). Numbers peaked, with 60+ at The Hirsell on 29-Dec (**APM**) and then 70+ at Upper Nisbet Moor (Ancrum) on New Year's Eve (**RM**).

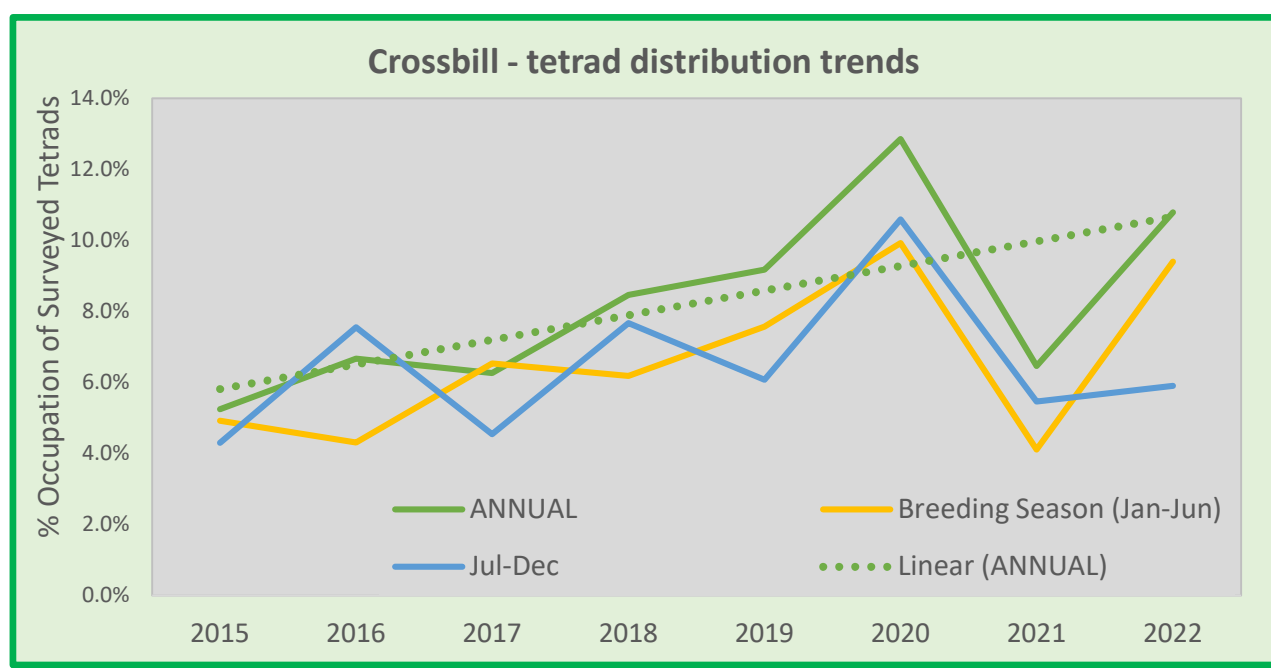
Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	0	5	6	10	13	14	15	12

Breeding evidence was quite limited, although there were 3 tetrads with confirmed breeding (fledged young at Note o' the Gate and Singdean (Wauchope Forest) (**GP**) and at Easter Deans (Portmore) (**TWD**)). There were 8 tetrads with possible breeding (singing birds), leaving 1 tetrad with probable breeding.

Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>
Sometimes common resident breeder, in extremely variable numbers, dependent on cone crop. Dispersing May-September when birds from elsewhere sometimes arrive in area.	

Although highly variable in distribution (and numbers) at all times of the year, the range of Crossbills appears to be expanding slightly, although increased observer effort in large forest blocks may also have an effect. Last year (2021) was clearly a poor year, with this year much better.



Most flocks were in single figures, although counts reached 21 at Hyndlee (Wauchope Forest) on 24-May (S Taylor), 14 at Heart Law (Abbey St Bathans) on 26-Mar (**DKG**) and 11 at Castlehill (Manor Valley). See also the confirmed breeding table.

Post-breeding flocks included 15 at Broad Law (Heriot Water) on 30-Aug (MB Ross) and then two counts of 50 and 70 at Law Kneis (Craik Forest) on 19-Sep and 19-Oct respectively (both G Christer).

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	0	5	3	5	6	13	5	21



Crossbill, Toxside Moss, June (R Jackson)

There was some good observer recording of breeding, which was confirmed in 7 tetrads (below), probable in 4 and possible in another 10 tetrads, giving the best overall breeding count to date.

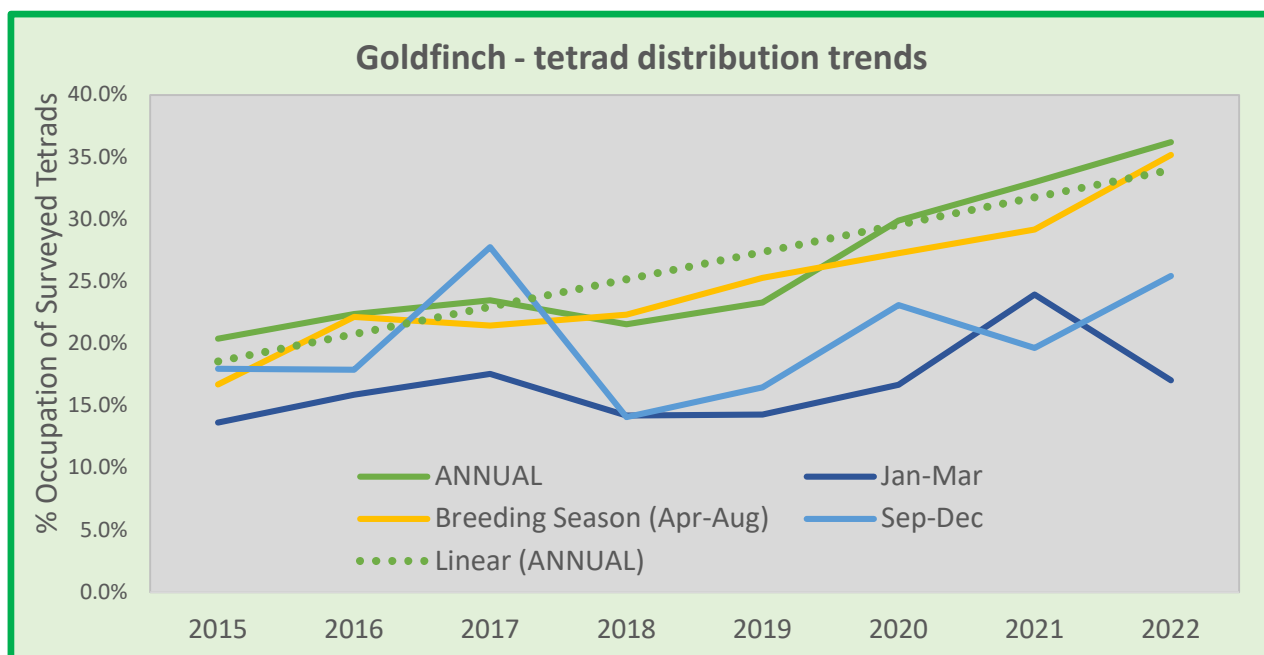
Site/Tetrad - Crossbill confirmed breeding	Date	Number	Br. Code	Observer
Upper Monymut (Cranshaws)	6-Mar	18	FF	M Holling
Dowlaw (Coldingham)	10-Apr, 15-May	5-11	FF	N Hammatt, DK Graham
Huntford (Carter Bar)	29-Mar, 4-May	3	FF	CW Watson
Giddenscleugh (Teviothead)	24-Apr	3	FF	G Paterson
Shoulder Hill (Yetholm)	9-May	3	FF	AP Mossop
Gamescleugh (Ettrick)	9-Aug	3	FF	AG Reid
Canada Hill (Manor Valley)	22-Jun	3	FF	A Heavisides

See Introduction for breeding codes.

Goldfinch

Carduelis carduelis

Abundant and widespread breeding resident. Forms some notable flocks July-March.



Yet another finch on a steady upward trend of breeding season (and annual) tetrad distribution, despite a relatively level trend of distribution in winter.

The largest flock sizes were similar to last year, peaking in late summer/autumn, with 80 at Dowlaw (Coldingham) on 25-Aug (**NH**), and 50 still there on 10-Sep (**RJ**). 80 were also at St Abb's-Coldingham on 29-Oct (**CH**). At this time, inland peaks showed at Tweed: Lowood-Gattonside, with 70 on 20-Aug (**JG**) and 50+ at Faughill Moor (Melrose) on 8-Oct (**MM**).

Peak wintering counts were c.60 at Teviot Haughs (Crailing) on 25-Jan (**ST**) and 51 at Ashiestiel-Peel (Clovenfords) on 15-Jan (**GP**). The following winter peak was c.60 at Mailingsland (Peebles) on 4-Dec (**AGR**).

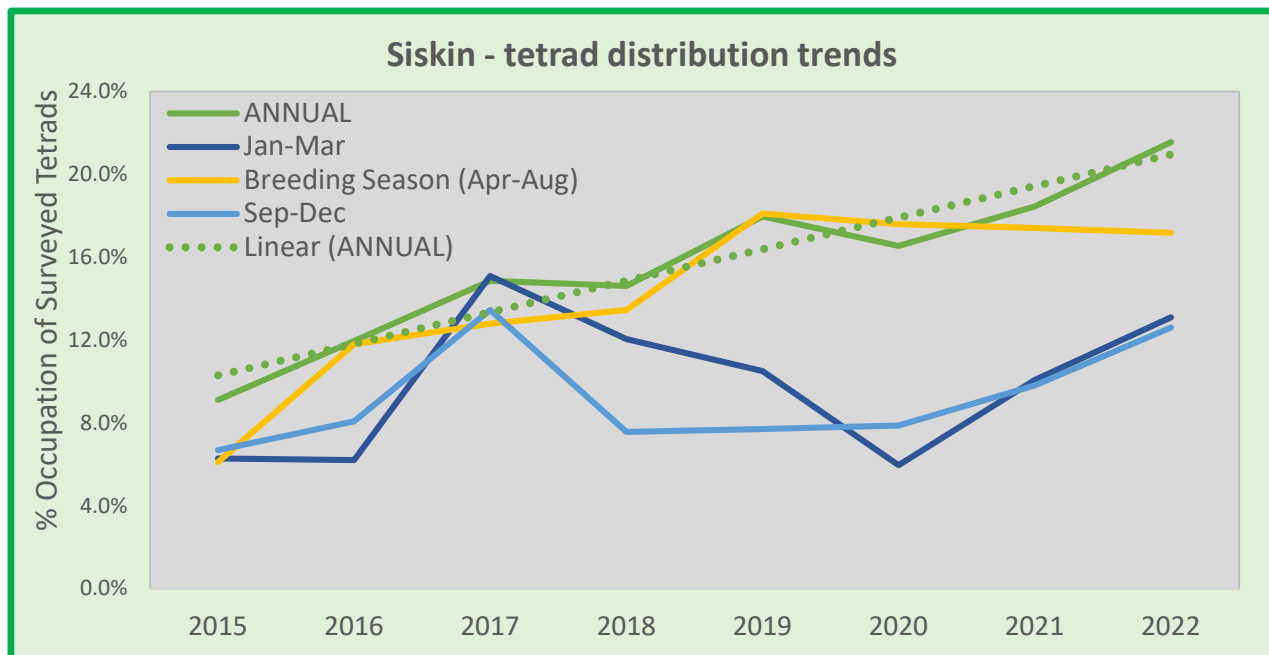
Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with breeding evidence	1	10	12	23	35	62	72	74

The tetrads with breeding evidence were similar to last year, with confirmed breeding in 7 tetrads, probable breeding in 48 tetrads and possible in 19.

Siskin *Spinus spinus*
 Abundant breeding resident and summer visitor in forestry areas. Common passage migrants with peaks October & April. Forms winter flocks of fluctuating sizes.

At first glance the distribution trend for Siskin looks similar to other finches, but breeding season occupation has declined slightly since 2019 and the overall distribution has only been boosted by an increasing distribution in the winter months, albeit from a low base in 2020.



There were “phenomenal” numbers of Siskins in Peebles nearly all year, as reported by the BRG (RS Craig) and far greater than in any previous year. Well over 4200 bird-days were recorded and flocks of 50-100 birds were regularly observed. One flock on 16-Mar was estimated at 130-150 birds. As an example, between 10-Mar and 18-Mar, the ringers trapped 1096 Siskin, with 876 being new birds.

The only other sizeable wintering flock reported in the first half of the year was at Plora Wood (Innerleithen) - 82 on 15-Jan (**RB**) and there were 45 birds at The Hirsle on 7-Apr (**RJ**), at the start of the breeding season.

Autumn flocks were larger, both inland and on the coast. Inland counts peaked at c.100 at Blyth Bridge (West Linton) on 5-Oct (D & M Thorne), c.80 at Mailingsland (Peebles) on 2-Nov (**GP**), c.60 at Eckford-Wooden Loch (Jedburgh) on 21-Oct (**CDG**), 55 at Tweed: Lowood-Gattonside on 29-Dec (**JG**) and 50 at Law Kneis (Craik Forest) on 17-Dec (G Christer).

Coastal records showed flocks of 60 at St Abb's Head on 7-Sep (and 45 at Burnmouth the same day), rising to 115 around the Ranger's Cottage (St Abb's-Coldingham) on 4-Nov (all records **CH**).

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with breeding evidence	2	7	14	16	19	17	33	29

In line with the reduced breeding season distribution, the number of tetrads with breeding recorded also fell back slightly, although there were still 4 tetrads with confirmed breeding (as last year), 14 with probable breeding and 11 with possible breeding.

Lapland Bunting

Calcarius lapponicus

Scarce autumn passage migrant and rare winter visitor.

One record. A typically limited showing, with a single at St Abb's Head on 5-Sep (**CH**) the only record.

Snow Bunting

Plectrophenax nivalis

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor in small numbers, mainly along the coast.

Nine records. The records came from one inland tetrad in the spring and three coastal tetrads in the autumn; all records are tabled below.

Site/Tetrad - Snow Bunting records	Date(s)	Number	Observer
Watch Water Res-Rawburn (Longformacus)	3-Mar, 3-Apr	1	S Wood, T Brewis
Dowlaw (Coldingham)	8-Oct	1	B Kerr
St Abb's Head	27-Oct, 30-Oct	12	C Hatsell, DK Graham
Eyemouth	14-Nov, 20-Nov	2	R Jackson
St Abb's Head	21-Nov	1	C Hatsell

Yellowhammer

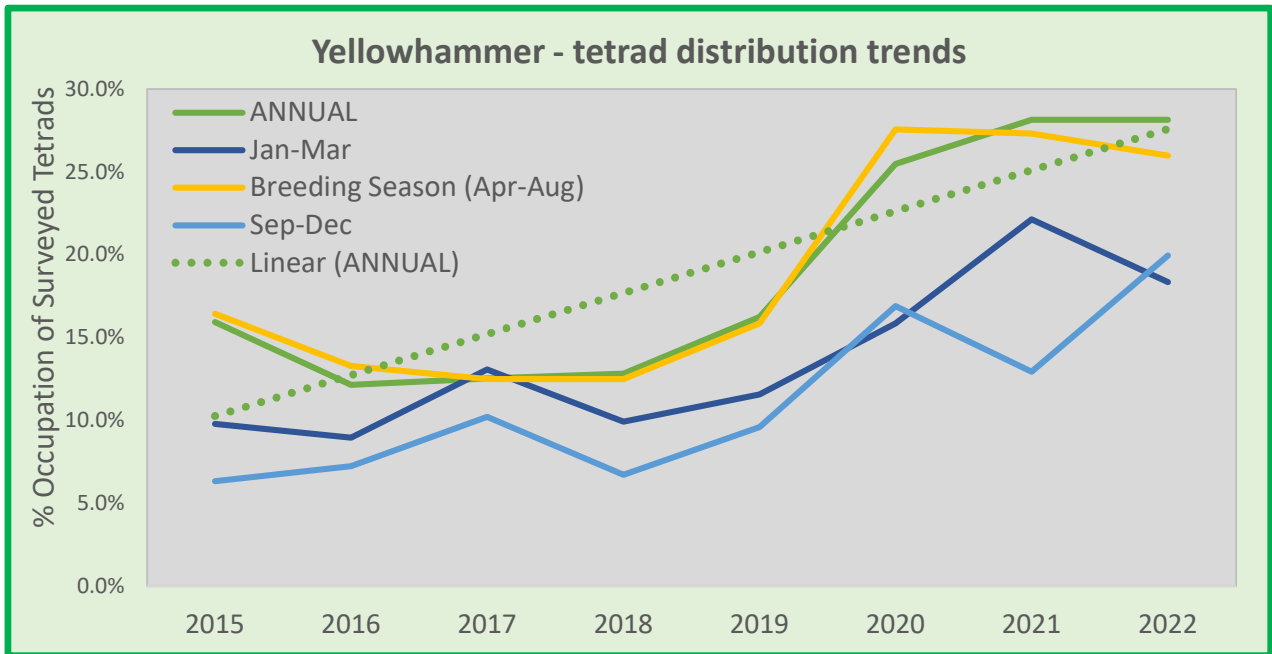
Emberiza citrinella

Abundant breeding resident, mainly in the east. Forms winter flocks.

The distribution of Yellowhammers appeared to surge in 2020, mainly during the breeding season, and this 'new' level has been maintained for the last couple of years. Meanwhile the winter distribution, whilst more restricted than during the breeding season, has continued to expand.

As reported previously, over 90% of the reports came from the east of the region and certainly all of the larger counts (except one, below), although small numbers continue to be reported regularly from the Broughton and West Linton locale and also occasionally in the Selkirk and Hawick areas, including one count of 80+ at Colislinn (Hawick) on 7-Apr (**RM**).

The largest flocks in both winter periods were at Newmains (Reston), with seeds deliberately made available for buntings and finches. The peak counts were 110 there on 12-Jan and 170 on 18-Dec (**DKG**). Other notable flocks in the first winter (all in January) were at Tweed: Millmount-Ravenswood (Melrose) - 70+ (**RM**), St Abb's-Coldingham - 65 (**CH**), Tweed: Broomlands-Whitmuirhaugh - c.50 (**GP**) and Newtown St Boswells - 50 (GJ Cundall).



In the second winter, the largest flocks (apart from Newmains) were at Chirsidebridge - c.120 on 17-Dec (GP), Bettyfield (Smailholm) - 55 on 23-Nov (AC) and Fleurs (Coldingham) - 50+ on 26-Dec (P Bullock).

Breeding evidence:

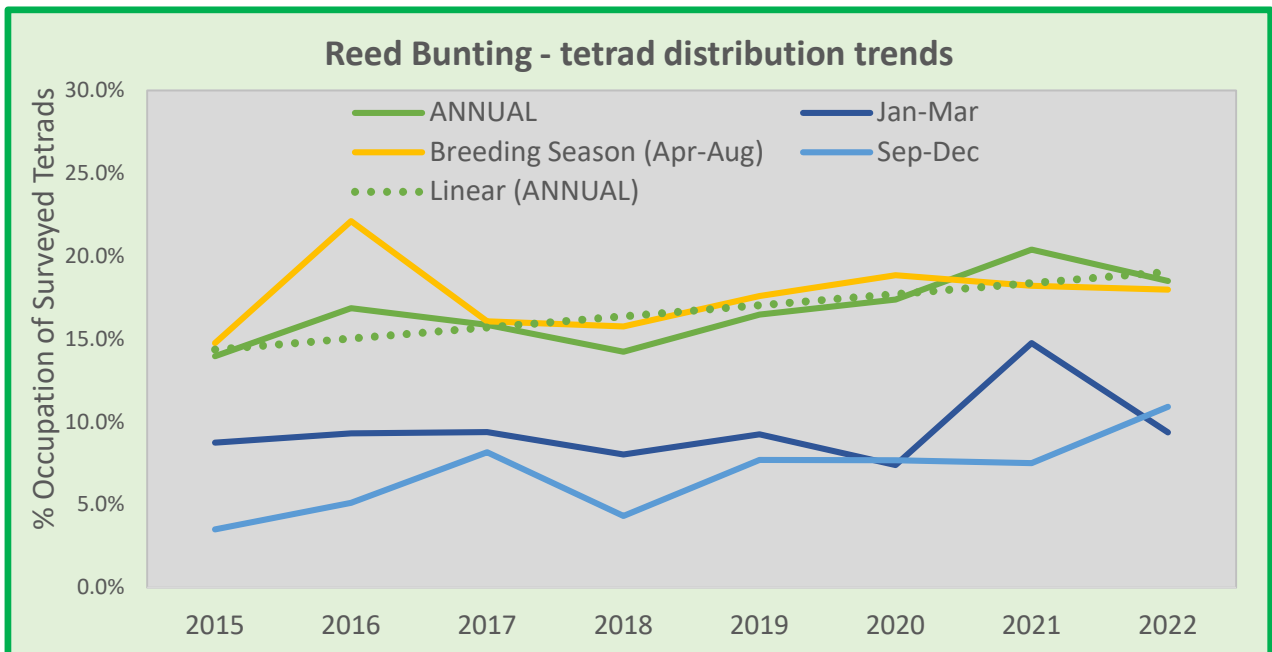
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
no. of tetrads with breeding evidence	20	17	25	27	44	80	69	67

In line with the slight fall in breeding season distribution, there has been a drop in the number of tetrads with breeding evidence. Even so, breeding was confirmed in 7 tetrads and probable in 22 tetrads, both of which are higher than in 2021. Possible breeding was recorded in 38 tetrads.

Reed Bunting

Emberiza schoeniclus

Common local breeder and an uncommon passage migrant. Less common in winter, especially inland. Usually small numbers in mixed finch/bunting flocks.



The tetrad occupation has been slowly increasing over the past few years, although it has not been uniformly progressing and 2022 distribution is lower than the previous couple of years in the breeding season. Many of the tetrads are vacated in the winter months, so the occupation here is generally lower and has generally not increased.

Generally in smaller numbers than Yellowhammers and many of the finches, there were 30 reported at Blackhopebyre (Glentress Water) on 19-Feb (**RB**) and a similar number in the autumn at Teviot Haughs (Crailing) on 2-Oct (**ST**). Newmains (Reston) continues to hold good numbers with 14 on 28-Feb and 25 on 18-Dec (both **DKG**). Other double-figure counts in April came from Lees Haugh (Coldstream) - 16 (**RB**) and Bemersyde Moss - 12 (**AC**), and in December from Faughill Moor (Melrose) - 18 (L Binns), Blackburn (Newcastleton) - 12 (C Blackie) and on 7-Sep at Dowlaw (Coldingham) - 10 (**NH**).

Breeding evidence:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	22	47	21	39	49	58	52	60

Despite the slight fall in breeding season distribution, there were more tetrads with breeding evidence than ever before, with confirmed breeding in 7 tetrads (up from 5 in 2021), probable in 21 tetrads (also up) and possible in 32 tetrads.



Berwickshire coast from Fast Castle

Exotics, Escapes and Hybrids

With the **Ruddy Shelduck** and **White Stork** given the benefit of the doubt and treated in the main Classified List, the only remaining definite escapees recorded are all gamebirds. These are almost certainly very local escapes or releases from nearby pens for shooting or farming, namely **Helmeted Guineafowl**, **Indian Peafowl (Peacock)**, **Crested Partridge**, **Golden Pheasant** and **Reeves's Pheasant**.

Errata and Addenda

Errata: The following data in BBR38 was found to have been incorrect; corrected versions are shown.

Swift - the tetrad occupation table for May-August had incorrect numbers entered. After a re-calculation the correct table is shown.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<i>% occupation in May-August surveyed tetrads</i>	12.0%	15.3%	19.0%	11.7%	15.0%	17.4%	12.8%

Magpie - the breeding evidence table had the incorrect numbers of tetrads entered. The correct table is shown here.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<i>no. of tetrads with breeding evidence</i>	9	2	2	7	15	17	23

Jackdaw - the annual tetrad occupation table was found to be incorrect. The correct table is below.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<i>% occupation of surveyed tetrads for year</i>	27.2%	26.5%	25.2%	23.1%	28.1%	27.0%	27.0%

Icterine Warbler - it was stated that the record at Innerleithen in 2021 was the sixth for Borders and the first inland. There have in fact been over 40 records since 1976, including another inland at Tweedbank in 2002. It was annually recorded between 1992 and 2002 and there have been 7 records since.

Stonechat - the September-December tetrad occupation table had partially incorrect numbers entered. The correct table is shown here.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<i>% occupation of autumn-winter surveyed tetrads</i>	3.2%	3.0%	8.6%	1.9%	4.8%	10.7%	4.8%

Addendum: A further record of a **Rose-coloured Starling** came to light from 2021, after the publication of BBR38. A bird in summer plumage was photographed in a Leitholm (Coldstream) garden on 17-Jul 2021 (frustratingly unbeknownst to the editor, about 100m away from his home!). This is considered to be a different bird to that seen at Eyemouth (and Ayton) between at least February and June 2021, although it is conceivable that it was the same.



Rose-coloured Starling, Leitholm, July 2021 (R Soave)

Dates of first and last records of common migrants

		Summer Visitors - Arrival and Departure Dates									
		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Quail	Arrive	05-May	19-May	22-May	21-Apr	24-May	23-May	15-Apr	16-May	17-May	15-Apr
	Leave	01-Sep	17-Sep	10-Sep	28-Aug	28-Jul	14-Sep	07-Sep	22-Aug	17-Aug	17-Aug
Swift	Arrive	14-Apr	26-Apr	27-Apr	29-Apr	01-May	28-Apr	21-Apr	25-Apr	01-May	05-May
	Leave	22-Aug	13-Sep	13-Sep	27-Sep	17-Sep	27-Aug	24-Sep	12-Sep	22-Sep	12-Sep
Cuckoo	Arrive	19-Apr	20-Apr	30-Mar	20-Apr	29-Apr	11-Apr	28-Apr	19-Apr	26-Apr	24-Apr
	Leave	17-Jul	02-Sep	07-Sep	16-Aug	15-Aug	13-Aug	26-Aug	21-Aug	27-Jul	10-Sep
Little Ringed Plover	Arrive	29-Apr	16-Apr	-	24-Apr	20-May	21-Apr	10-Apr	21-Mar	28-Mar	21-Mar
	Leave	-	19-Jul	-	25-Jul	-	05-Sep	03-Aug	16-Aug	08-Aug	08-Sep
Common Sandpiper	Arrive	13-Apr	11-Apr	08-Apr	15-Apr	13-Apr	28-Mar	02-Apr	05-Apr	02-Apr	28-Mar
	Leave	26-Aug	21-Sep	24-Aug	13-Oct	06-Oct	29-Sep	30-Sep	15-Sep	23-Aug	30-Sep
Sandwich Tern	Arrive	13-Apr	10-Apr	06-Apr	12-Mar	09-Apr	16-Apr	20-Apr	13-Apr	17-Apr	14-Apr
	Leave	13-Oct	16-Oct	25-Dec	01-Oct	24-Sep	22-Sep	04-Oct	29-Sep	03-Oct	21-Oct
Osprey	Arrive	07-Mar	27-Mar	04-Mar	04-Mar	04-Apr	05-Apr	25-Mar	02-Apr	05-Mar	25-Mar
	Leave	07-Sep	17-Sep	02-Sep	17-Sep	11-Sep	19-Sep	04-Sep	29-Aug	28-Sep	05-Oct
Sand Martin	Arrive	17-Apr	15-Mar	15-Mar	25-Mar	17-Mar	28-Mar	10-Mar	22-Mar	20-Mar	20-Mar
	Leave	11-Nov	24-Sep	29-Sep	13-Sep	13-Oct	24-Sep	26-Oct	13-Sep	07-Oct	12-Sep
Swallow	Arrive	03-Apr	02-Apr	07-Apr	12-Mar	29-Mar	28-Mar	30-Mar	05-Apr	01-Apr	11-Apr
	Leave	12-Dec	18-Oct	17-Nov	30-Oct	25-Oct	20-Oct	24-Nov	09-Oct	12-Oct	31-Oct
House Martin	Arrive	13-Apr	26-Mar	14-Apr	06-Apr	15-Apr	14-Apr	07-Apr	06-Apr	31-Mar	12-Apr
	Leave	11-Nov	22-Nov	07-Nov	29-Nov	08-Oct	17-Oct	08-Oct	23-Oct	15-Nov	17-Nov
Willow Warbler	Arrive	13-Apr	02-Apr	08-Apr	08-Apr	02-Apr	03-Apr	09-Apr	18-Mar	04-Apr	10-Apr
	Leave	11-Nov	01-Oct	23-Sep	13-Oct	05-Oct	11-Oct	10-Oct	15-Oct	12-Oct	30-Oct
Chiffchaff *	Arrive	03-Apr	11-Mar	07-Mar	13-Mar	14-Mar	07-Mar	03-Mar	15-Mar	01-Mar	11-Mar
	Leave	26-Oct	30-Oct	15-Nov	13-Nov	22-Oct	04-Nov	10-Nov	18-Nov	02-Nov	30-Nov
Sedge Warbler	Arrive	14-Apr	14-Apr	23-Apr	28-Apr	29-Apr	22-Apr	20-Apr	17-Apr	20-Apr	19-Apr
	Leave	11-Nov	24-Aug	05-Sep	28-Sep	20-Aug	30-Aug	26-Sep	05-Oct	14-Sep	08-Sep
Reed Warbler	Arrive	26-May	24-May	-	-	-	04-May	11-May	04-May	23-May	12-May
	Leave	-	-	14-Sep	-	-	-	09-Sep	28-Sep	28-Aug	10-Sep
Grasshopper Warbler	Arrive	14-May	10-Apr	06-May	30-Apr	27-Apr	17-Apr	19-Apr	23-Apr	25-Apr	17-Apr
	Leave	06-Aug	14-Sep	12-Jul	25-Aug	29-Jul	02-Aug	26-Jul	18-Aug	08-Aug	15-Aug
Blackcap *	Arrive	01-Apr	04-Apr	06-Apr	07-Apr	02-Apr	26-Mar	05-Apr	27-Mar	27-Mar	22-Mar
	Leave	01-Nov	20-Oct	15-Nov	30-Oct	23-Oct	21-Oct	04-Nov	30-Oct	03-Nov	04-Nov
Garden Warbler	Arrive	26-Apr	30-Apr	13-Apr	02-May	01-May	24-Apr	28-Apr	27-Apr	23-Apr	24-Apr
	Leave	06-Oct	18-Sep	23-Sep	04-Sep	10-Jul	02-Sep	07-Oct	05-Oct	02-Sep	12-Sep
Lesser Whitethroat	Arrive	01-May	26-Apr	23-Apr	21-Apr	08-May	13-May	22-Apr	23-Apr	25-Apr	16-Apr
	Leave	12-Oct	16-Oct	11-Oct	20-Oct	19-Oct	20-Sep	15-Oct	21-Oct	10-Sep	25-Oct
Whitethroat	Arrive	21-Apr	14-Apr	23-Apr	02-May	16-Apr	06-May	19-Apr	19-Apr	25-Apr	17-Apr
	Leave	11-Nov	19-Sep	11-Oct	08-Oct	30-Sep	08-Sep	01-Oct	22-Oct	09-Sep	12-Sep
Ring Ouzel	Arrive	30-Mar	19-Mar	21-Mar	31-Mar	26-Mar	06-Apr	31-Mar	26-Mar	31-Mar	22-Mar
	Leave	22-Oct	15-Nov	29-Oct	11-Sep	10-Nov	27-Nov	15-Oct	18-Oct	08-Nov	30-Oct
Spotted Flycatcher	Arrive	25-Apr	18-May	10-May	08-May	12-May	14-May	09-May	02-May	10-May	30-Apr
	Leave	15-Oct	18-Sep	15-Sep	27-Sep	23-Oct	24-Sep	23-Sep	06-Sep	21-Sep	19-Sep
Redstart	Arrive	01-May	12-Apr	12-Apr	19-Apr	18-Apr	15-Apr	18-Apr	09-Apr	16-Apr	15-Apr
	Leave	05-Oct	20-Sep	11-Oct	15-Oct	17-Sep	27-Aug	06-Oct	05-Oct	13-Sep	02-Oct
Whinchat	Arrive	30-Apr	20-Apr	11-May	06-May	02-May	04-May	23-Apr	25-Apr	24-Apr	24-Apr
	Leave	06-Oct	21-Sep	24-Sep	01-Oct	28-Sep	18-Sep	06-Oct	15-Sep	10-Sep	15-Sep
Wheatear	Arrive	07-Apr	24-Mar	20-Mar	28-Mar	02-Mar	15-Apr	21-Mar	20-Mar	24-Mar	16-Mar
	Leave	11-Oct	28-Nov	20-Oct	03-Oct	22-Oct	22-Sep	14-Oct	11-Oct	19-Oct	30-Oct
Yellow Wagtail	Arrive	18-Apr	26-Apr	16-Apr	19-Apr	18-Apr	26-Apr	20-Apr	16-Apr	11-Apr	13-Apr
	Leave	20-Sep	31-Oct	13-Nov	14-Aug	17-Sep	02-Sep	04-Oct	28-Sep	18-Oct	05-Oct
Tree Pipit	Arrive	29-Apr	29-Apr	04-Apr	08-Apr	01-May	20-Apr	30-Mar	27-Mar	14-Apr	16-Apr
	Leave	25-Aug	-	06-Oct	21-Jul	21-Aug	11-Aug	19-Sep	05-Oct	15-Aug	10-Sep

* - Chiffchaff and Blackcap dates are now shown, with obvious wintering birds excluded.

		Winter Visitors - Departure and Arrival Dates									
		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Barnacle Goose *	Leave	26-May	28-May	-	11-Jun	08-May	18-May	31-May	16-Jun	30-May	20-May
	Arrive	21-Sep	26-Sep	04-Sep	06-Oct	21-Sep	24-Sep	19-Sep	26-Sep	11-Oct	20-Sep
Pink-footed Goose *	Leave	19-Apr	05-May	01-May	20-Apr	30-Apr	21-Apr	06-May	28-Apr	11-May	20-Apr
	Arrive	03-Sep	08-Sep	19-Sep	02-Sep	14-Sep	13-Sep	03-Sep	27-Aug	11-Sep	02-Sep
Whooper Swan *	Leave	11-Apr	15-Apr	16-Apr	19-Apr	13-Apr	04-May	06-May	08-Apr	15-May	08-May
	Arrive	09-Oct	05-Oct	05-Oct	30-Sep	03-Oct	23-Sep	18-Sep	18-Sep	26-Sep	07-Sep
Goldeneye	Leave	26-Apr	06-May	13-Apr	09-May	06-May	06-May	11-May	26-Apr	24-Apr	02-May
	Arrive	21-Sep	30-Sep	13-Sep	14-Sep	20-Sep	25-Sep	06-Sep	01-Sep	13-Sep	07-Sep
Jack Snipe	Leave	19-Apr	26-Apr	19-Mar	22-Mar	23-Mar	02-Mar	23-Mar	31-May	12-Apr	01-May
	Arrive	28-Sep	04-Oct	23-Sep	05-Oct	12-Oct	20-Sep	01-Oct	02-Oct	02-Oct	25-Sep
Red-throated Diver	Leave	09-Jun	18-May	25-Apr	29-May	19-Mar	-	09-Jun	08-Jun	02-May	05-Jun
	Arrive	23-Aug	06-Sep	10-Sep	15-Aug	16-Sep	16-Sep	28-Aug	20-Aug	01-Aug	25-Aug
Redwing	Leave	03-May	15-Apr	28-Mar	03-Apr	26-Apr	27-Apr	24-Apr	01-Apr	13-Apr	01-May
	Arrive	25-Sep	07-Oct	05-Oct	02-Oct	26-Sep	05-Oct	06-Sep	19-Oct	07-Oct	19-Sep
Fieldfare	Leave	04-May	01-May	21-Apr	20-Apr	05-May	10-Apr	01-May	07-May	22-May	19-May
	Arrive	04-Oct	15-Oct	11-Oct	02-Oct	26-Sep	06-Oct	25-Sep	27-Sep	24-Sep	11-Oct
Brambling	Leave	06-May	05-May	27-Mar	29-Apr	29-Apr	20-Apr	26-Apr	03-May	27-Apr	01-May
	Arrive	25-Sep	07-Oct	06-Oct	04-Oct	09-Oct	07-Oct	04-Oct	22-Sep	26-Sep	29-Sep

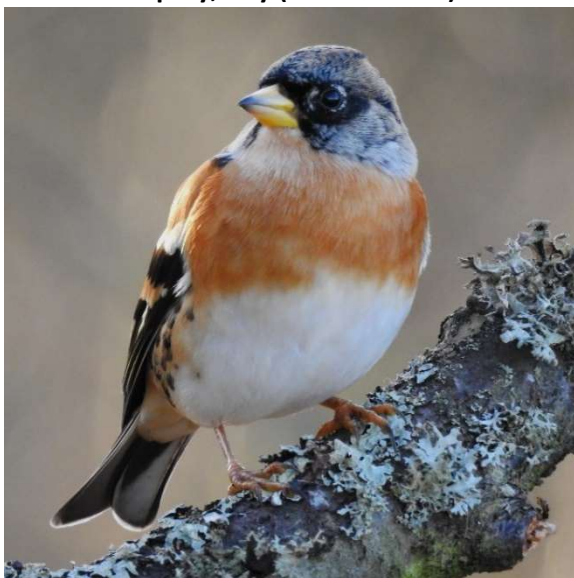
* - obviously summering birds excluded.



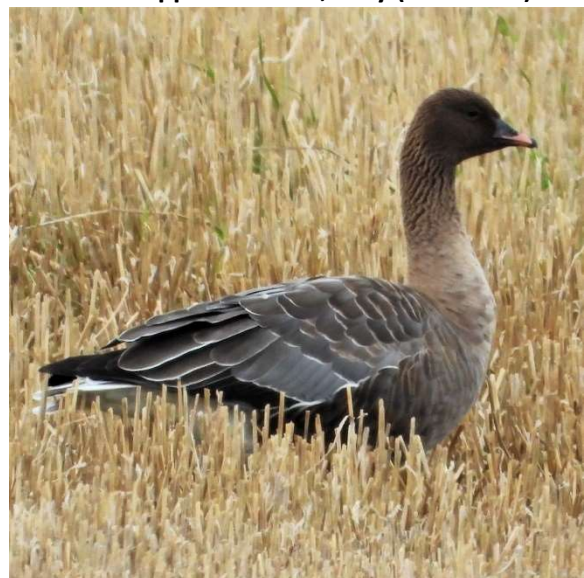
Osprey, July (D Wolfenden)



Grasshopper Warbler, May (L McLeish)



Brambling, January (A Cutter)



Pink-footed Goose, September (A Cutter)

Ringling in Scottish Borders 2022

Tom Dougall

This is the thirty-sixth report on the birds ringed annually in the Scottish Borders, and Northumberland north of the River Tweed. This report draws heavily on the online report published annually by BTO (see for example Robinson, R.A., Leech, D.I. & Clark, J.A. (2022) The Online Demography Report: Bird ringing and nest recording in Britain & Ireland in 2021. BTO, Thetford (<http://www.bto.org/ringing-report>, created on 30-August-2022). The online report for 2022 was unavailable at the time of submission for publication (other than national annual totals in draft form) so there may be some minor discrepancies in the data provided here. There will be no published cumulative totals (although this will be maintained separately for Borders Ringing Group), but that for BRG has now reached almost 165000 of 139 species (11305 of 62 species in 2022).

Ringling Activity

Table 1 (below) lists the species and numbers ringed in 2022 in the Borders area, excluding those deemed by BTO to be sensitive, where confidentiality is required.

The Covid-19 pandemic fortunately had little effect on bird ringing in 2022. Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) did, however, especially where seabird colonies were involved. In Borders this meant that only one visit was possible to ring the Black-headed Gull colony (where there was no sign of HPAI), before a ban on colony ringing was introduced. It is suggested that caution be exercised in comparing the 2022 (and 2020, 2021) ringing totals with those from previous years unaffected by diseases.

It is rewarding to see numbers of chicks of raptors and owls featuring, notably Golden Eagle, Red Kite and Barn Owl. There were also pleasing numbers of wader chicks. However, for the third year running, no Swift chicks were ringed at The Hirsell due to Covid-19 restrictions. Among the passerine species there were good totals for Nuthatch, Spotted Flycatcher and Dipper.

In terms of fully-grown birds, 2022 was a productive year for Goosander and owls. There were high numbers ringed of tits, warblers, thrushes, sparrows, Meadow Pipit and finches – particularly Chaffinch, Brambling, Greenfinch and Goldfinch, and especially Siskin – almost all in a modest garden in Peebles. It was a good year, also, for Yellowhammer and Reed Bunting, mainly at a single site near Reston.

Borders Ringing Group's contributions to the BTO's monitoring projects continued in full with CES and RAS projects and some further testing work was done for a future Winter Constant Effort project.

Recoveries and Controls

"Recoveries" are ringed birds that have been found dead or alive and reported to the Ringing Unit at the B.T.O. "Controls" are ringed birds that are caught alive and released by ringers, the birds having moved more than 5km. from the locality of their original ringing. Sightings of colour-ring combinations, inscribed colour-rings or neck-collars, inscribed wing-tags, and PIT (Passive Integrated Transponder)- and satellite-tags are assuming increasing importance in the reporting of ringed birds, as are reports of inscriptions on ordinary rings, read by patient observers with very good optics (see Table 2 for some examples), so please keep your eyes peeled!

Table 1: Birds ringed in the Scottish Borders in 2022

Species	Nest-ling	Full-grown	Total	Species	Nest-ling	Full-grown	Total
Mallard		6	6	Goldcrest		54	54
Goosander		6	6	Wren		79	79
Woodpigeon		14	14	Nuthatch	46	19	65
Oystercatcher	32		32	Treecreeper		11	11
Lapwing	33		33	Starling		48	48
Curlew	12		12	Song Thrush		51	51
Woodcock		6	6	Mistle Thrush		3	3
Common Sandpiper	9	9	18	Redwing		74	74
Redshank	5		5	Fieldfare		2	2
Black-headed Gull	34		34	Blackbird		108	108
Osprey	19	4	23	Ring Ouzel	3		3
Golden Eagle	1		1	Spotted Flycatcher	13	1	14
Sparrowhawk	5	7	12	Robin		145	145
Hen Harrier	9		9	Redstart		1	1
Red Kite	4	1	5	Stonechat	2	2	4
Barn Owl	144	28	172	Dipper	45	11	56
Long-eared Owl	2	9	11	House Sparrow	4	159	163
Tawny Owl	16	6	22	Tree Sparrow	5	125	130
Gt Spotted Woodpecker		12	12	Dunnock	1	157	158
Kestrel	4		4	Grey Wagtail		1	1
Merlin	5		5	Pied Wagtail	5	2	7
Peregrine	22	1	23	Meadow Pipit	5	124	129
Jackdaw	2		2	Tree Pipit		5	5
Rook		1	1	Chaffinch		979	979
Raven	11		11	Brambling		333	333
Coal Tit		111	111	Bullfinch		71	71
Blue Tit	76	369	445	Greenfinch		353	353
Great Tit	38	86	124	Linnet		2	2
Swallow	6	22	28	Lesser Redpoll		148	148
Long-tailed Tit		66	66	Goldfinch		534	534
Willow Warbler		152	152	Siskin		6268	6268
Chiffchaff		96	96	Yellowhammer		147	147
Sedge Warbler	14	62	76	Reed Bunting		58	58
Reed Warbler		2	2				
Blackcap		42	42				
Garden Warbler	4	2	6	Grand Total	636	11208	11844
Whitethroat		13	13				

Species in bold: total represents at least 15% of the British & Irish total for 2022

In Table 2 (below) the following codes are used: - F = female, M = male, Ad = adult, FG = fully-grown (immature or adult), Imm = immature, Juv = juvenile, and N = nestling. Where known, the straight-line distance and orientation between the localities of initial ringing and subsequent finding are given.

Table 2: Recoveries and Controls in the Scottish Borders in 2021

Species	Ring No. & Finding Circumstances	Age & Sex	Date	Location (Borders site = orange)	Distance (kms)	Direction
Mute Swan						
	ZY4556 - Ringed	Juv.	12.10.2019	Mire Loch, St. Abb's Head		
	colour-ring read	Imm.	28.03 - 26.12.2021	St Margaret's Loch, Holyrood Park, Edinburgh	64	W
	colour-ring read	Ad.	30.01 - 26.12.2022	St Margaret's Loch, Holyrood Park, Edinburgh	64	W
Common Sandpiper						
	NW35925 - Ringed	N	09.06.2019	Whitehope, Moorfoot Hills		
	Colour ring read	Ad	22.07.2021	Bentley, South Yorkshire	267	SSE
	Colour ring read	Ad	15.07.2022	Hayling Island, Hampshire	562	SSW
	NW35950 - Ringed	Ad. F	03.05.2021	Williamslee, Leithen Water		
	Colour ring read	Ad. F	19.04.2022	Priorslee Lake, Telford, Shropshire	337	S
Black-headed Gull						
			Many reports from within the British Isles, one foreign report below.			
	EZ20441 - ringed	N	20.06.20	breeding colony, Moorfoot Hills		
	colour-ring read	Ad.	22.11.2022	Daoulas, Finisterre, FRANCE	820	S
Great Black-backed Gull						
	MA43037 - ringed	N	03.07.2017	Rona, Isle of May, Fife		
	colour-ring read	Imm.	01.04.2021	Arbroath, Angus	41	N
	colour-ring read	Ad.	25.02.2022	Burnmouth	49	SE
Barn Owl						
	GV23389 - ringed	N	21.08.2019	Hendersyde, near Kelso		
	Dead - traffic casualty	Ad	11.01.2022	Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland	27	ENE
Great Spotted Woodpecker						
	RK79495 - ringed	Juv.	12.09.2021	Castlecraig, Blyth Bridge		
	Found dead	Imm.	22.05.2022	Near Blyth Bridge	2	S
Peregrine						
	GR50540 - tagged	N, F	12.06.2014	near Dunkeld, Perth & Kinross		
	ID by transponder	Ad F	29.04.2022	Borders, Confidential	105	
	GF23460 - tagged	N	03.07.2014	near Keighley, West Yorkshire		
	ID by transponder	Ad F	07.08.2021	near Peebles	206	
	ID by transponder	Ad F	29.04.2022	near Peebles	206	
	GC89050 - tagged	N	27.05.2015	Borders, Confidential		
	ID by transponder	Ad F	28.04.2022	North Lanarkshire, Confidential	112	
	GC74849 - tagged	N	03.06.2017	Wicklow, Ireland		
	ID by transponder	Ad F	19.04.2022	Borders, Confidential	323	
Long-tailed Tit						
	BLT570 - ringed	Juv.	26.06.2020	Cupar Muir, Cupar, Fife		
	Controlled	Imm	30.03.2021	Peebles	188	S
	Controlled	Ad	17.12.2022	Peebles	188	S
	BLT571 - ringed	Juv.	26.06.2020	Cupar Muir, Cupar, Fife		
	Controlled	Imm	29.09/23.11.2021	Peebles	188	S
	Controlled	Ad.	21.02.2022	Peebles	188	S

Table 2: Recoveries and Controls in the Scottish Borders in 2021

Species	Ring No. & Finding Circumstances	Age & Sex	Date	Location (Borders site = orange)	Distance (kms)	Direction
Willow Warbler						
	CEE329 - ringed	Ad.	23.04.2021	Walsey Hills, Salthouse, Norfolk		
	Controlled	Ad.	31.07.2022	Whitmuir Hall, Selkirk	380	NW
	HYE522 - ringed	Ad.	11.06.2022	St Abb's Head		
	Controlled	Ad. M	15.08.2022	Jonkershove, West-Vlaanderen, BELGIUM	642	SSE
Chiffchaff						
	NKL012 - ringed	Juv.	24.07.2021	St Abb's Head		
	Controlled	Imm.	29.03.2022	Hoyleake Shore, Wirral, Merseyside	288	SSW
	HYE520 - ringed	Ad. F	04.06.2022	St Abb's Head		
	Controlled	Ad	16.10.2022	St Brelade, Jersey, CHANNEL IS.	749	S
Sedge Warbler						
	AKC9531 - Ringed	Juv	10.08.2020	Squire's Down, Dorset		
	Controlled	Ad	14.05.2022	St Abb's Head	549	N
Reed Warbler						
	AZL1584 - Ringed	Ad. M	05.06.2021	St Abb's Head		
	Controlled	Ad. M	14.05.2022	RSPB Mersehead, Dumfries & Galloway	149	SSW
Redwing						
	8C51791 - Ringed	Imm.	18.09.2022	Verdal, Nord-Trondelag, NORWAY		
	Controlled	Imm.	29.09.2022	near Spylaw, Whim	1208	SW
Blackbird						
	LC49521 - ringed	Juv.	25.06.2021	Peebles		
	Found dead	Imm. F.	14.06.2022	Eshiels, Peebles	3	E
Robin						
	S732263 - ringed	Imm.	13.09.2019	Sandwich Bay, Kent		
	Controlled	Ad.	10.12.2022	Peebles	573	NNW
Chaffinch						
	AZL1486 - ringed	Imm M	21.02.2021	Garvald, near Heriot		
	Dead - traffic casualty	Ad. M	02.05.2022	Ladyside, near Heriot	3	SSE
	ANK3534 - ringed	Imm M	28.09.2021	Peebles		
	Controlled	Imm M	02.04.2022	Garvald, near Heriot	14	NNE
	ALP8327 - ringed	Ad. M	10.11.2021	Sand Villa, Pilling, Lancashire		
	Controlled	Ad. M	25.02.2022	Garvald, near Heriot	203	N
	ANK4081 - ringed	Imm M	01.12.2021	Peebles		
	Found dead	Imm M	30.01.2022	Eshiels, Peebles	3	E
	ATY3172 - ringed	Imm M	22.09.2022	Peebles		
	Dead - killed by cat	Imm M	05.12.2022	Ruthin, Denbighshire	284	S
Brambling						
	S992107 - ringed	Imm M	19.10.2017	Filey Brigg, North Yorkshire		
	Controlled	Ad. M	23.01.2022	Garvald, near Heriot	246	NW
	AAH5218 - ringed	Imm M	11.04.2019	Stanrule, Nethybridge, Highland		
	Controlled	Ad. M	21.03.2022	Garvald, near Heriot	168	SSE

Table 2: Recoveries and Controls in the Scottish Borders in 2021

Species	Ring No. & Finding Circumstances	Age & Sex	Date	Location (Borders site = orange)	Distance (kms)	Direction
Brambling						
	EP45918 - ringed	Imm M	08.10.2020	Surnadal, More og Romsdal, NORWAY		
	Controlled	Ad M	21.03.2022	Garvald, near Heriot	1028	SW
Plus four interchanges between Garvald and Middleton Moor (6km)						
Greenfinch						
	TY21681 - ringed	Juv M	08.07.2021	Peebles		
	Controlled	Ad. M	28.11.2022	Stobo	8	WSW
	PL28141 - ringed	Ad. M	02.05.2022	Peebles		
	Dead - killed by cat	Ad. M	04.08.2022	Hawick	36	SE
Plus two movements local to the ringing site in Peebles						
Lesser Redpoll						
	AJN8120 - ringed	Ad. F	05.11.2020	Anglers CP, Wakefield, West Yorks		
	Controlled	Ad. F	30.03.2022	Peebles	251	NNW
	ANK5362 - ringed	Ad. M	15.04.2021	Peebles		
	Dead - traffic casualty	Ad. M	18.07.2022	Pearie Law, Polbeth, West Lothian	32	NW
	ANK3043 - ringed	Juv.	22.08.2021	Peebles		
	Controlled	Imm.	15.04.2022	Hoyleake shore, Wirral, Merseyside	250	S
	AXK0250 - ringed	Ad. M	26.01.2022	near Bestwood, Nottinghamshire		
	Controlled	Ad. M	08.04.2022	Peebles	318	NNW
	ACA6026 - ringed	Ad. F	07.06.2020	Cockburnspath		
	Controlled	Ad. F	13.01.2022	Thornhill, Dumfries & Galloway	119	SW
Goldfinch						
	AZL0530 - ringed	Ad. M	17.10.2020	Peebles		
	Dead - traffic casualty	Ad. M	13.06.2022	Easter Balgedie, Perth & Kinross	64	N
	ALV0082 - ringed	Imm.	24.10.2021	Panshangar Lagoon, Hertfordshire		
	Controlled	Imm M	26.04.2022	Peebles	470	NNW
	AFV7119 - ringed	Imm M	11.11.2021	Whittington, Norfolk		
	Controlled	Ad. M	28.09.2022	Peebles	419	NW
	AFT8334 - ringed	Imm F	16.01.2022	Penrith, Cumbria		
	Controlled	Imm F	15.03.2022	Garvald, near Heriot	124	N
	ATY3362 - ringed	Ad. M	07.10.2022	Peebles		
	Controlled	Ad. M	23.12.2022	Stocksfield, Northumberland	114	SE
Plus six interchanges between Garvald and Middleton Moor (6km)						
Siskin						
	AEJ1863 - ringed	Imm M	30.09.2020	Peebles		
	Freshly dead - poor condition	Ad M	20.02.2022	Bitburg, Tier, GERMANY	903	SE
	B718164 - ringed	Ad. M	11.10.2020	Vallat Arnaud, Vaud, SWITZERLAND		
	Controlled	Ad. M	16.03.2022	Peebles	1244	NNW
	16795889 - ringed	Imm M	20.02.2021	Sourbrodt, Liege, BELGIUM		
	Controlled	Ad. M	12.03.2022	Peebles	846	NW
	BD74964 - ringed	Imm M	08.10.2021	Rasterhoffpark, Friesland, NETHERLANDS		
	Controlled	Imm M	16.03.2022	Peebles	643	WNW

Table 2: Recoveries and Controls in the Scottish Borders in 2021

Species	Ring No. & Finding Circumstances	Age & Sex	Date	Location (Borders site = orange)	Distance (kms)	Direction
Siskin						
	AJC3810 - ringed	FG F	26.02.2022	Barton Mills, Suffolk		
	Predated at garden feeder	FG F	18.04.2022	Stobo	442	NNW
	AEL7809 - ringed	Ad. F	05.03.2022	Brandon, Suffolk		
	Controlled	Ad. F	02.04.2022	Garvald, near Heriot	428	NNW
	AZL3372 - ringed	Imm F	02.04.2022	Garvald, near Heriot		
	Controlled	Ad. F	29.11.2022	Middleton Moor, Lothian	6	NNE
	ATY1161 - ringed	Juv.	07.06.2022	Peebles		
	Controlled	Imm M	04.11.2022	Staden, West-Vlaanderen, BELGIUM	662	SE
See Table 3 (immediately below) for summary of Siskin movements through Peebles						

Table 3: Siskin Movements To & From Peebles		
No. of birds from Peebles to: -	Location (administrative area)	No. of birds to Peebles from: -
16	Highland	3
1	Skye	0
2	Grampian	1
1	Perth & Kinross	0
3	Argyll & Bute	0
1	Mull	0
1	Midlothian	0
3	North Lanarkshire	0
3	South Lanarkshire	5
1	North Ayrshire	0
8	Borders	0
4	Dumfries & Galloway	1
6	Northumberland	8
0	Cumbria	1
1	Durham	0
0	North Yorkshire	2
0	Merseyside	2
1	Nottinghamshire	0
0	Gwynedd	4
2	Powys	0
0	Hampshire	1
1	GERMANY	0
0	SWITZERLAND	1
0	NETHERLANDS	1
1	BELGIUM	1
56	TOTALS	31
There were also nine within Peebles. Full details of the foreign movements are in Table 2.		

County summaries of recoveries for 2022 are available online at the BTO website (reference probably as above, but for 2022), and are well worth a look on a rainy Sunday afternoon! In the meantime, those detailed below are a sample from the Borders, based largely on Borders Ringing Group's efforts, since the non-BRG recoveries were not available at the time of going to press.

- Mute Swan ZY4556, now resident in Edinburgh, has escaped HPAI so far.
- Common Sandpiper NW35925 shows similar timing in autumn migration in two different years, and NW35950 gives an indication of the timing north of spring migration.
- Black-headed Gull EZ20441 is the first Borders bird reported from France.
- The Peregrine controls show the usefulness of fitting PIT-tags and getting returns via tag-readers at nests, while monitoring breeding birds under special licence.
- The two Fife Long-tailed Tits (see 2021 BBR) continued their residency in Peebles into 2022, one almost into 2023.
- The series of warbler species controls gives an idea of migration timing; was Reed Warbler AZL1854 still moving north through Mersehead, or had it stopped there to breed?
- The Robin movement is a long one within the British Isles.
- From the Chaffinch recoveries and controls it would seem that some of our birds winter to the south of the Borders.
- Reported movements of the other finch species give an indication of the itinerant nature of this family - with implications for conservation efforts - both within the British Isles and abroad.
- The Siskins in Germany and Switzerland are the first there with Borders links (see Table 3 for a summary of Siskin movements through Peebles).

Acknowledgements

As always, the co-operation and interest of landowners, tenants and their agents is much appreciated. The following observers and ringers are thanked for supplying details of their ringing activities and findings, and help in the field: - Graham Anderson, Stuart Bell, Andrew Bramhall, Alistair Cutter, Drew Dickman, David Grieve, Rob Hankey, Iain Livingstone, Sarah Long, members of Lothian & Borders Raptor Study Group, members of Lothian Ringing Group, Steven Ruffles, Megan Stamp, Nick Tokely and Anthony Wetherhill. Thanks, also, to all the reporters of colour-ring sightings, too many to mention individually. Lee Barber of BTO is thanked for his efforts behind the scenes.

Tom Dougall, 38 Leamington Terrace, Edinburgh EH10 4JL

Finder's Accounts

Ring-necked Ducks, Yetholm Loch, January & April 2022 – first Borders record

Finder: Richard Jackson

LRC

I (RJ) was on an organised count of wintering Gadwall in the Borders on Sunday 16-Jan 2022, covering the small pond at Yetholm village and the larger Yetholm Loch on the other side of the hill. At about 09:30 I was scanning with a telescope across the Loch from the boat house, trying to make sure there were no further Gadwall just popping out from the reeds, when I came across an *Aythya* duck in the middle of the loch, that I instantly recognised as a female Ring-necked Duck. It was loosely associating with a small group of Tufted Ducks and a Scaup, which were all diving occasionally and moving steadily to my right.

Reminding myself to check through the ID features systematically to confirm things and to rule out a dreaded hybrid, I looked away briefly, only to find the bird had now disappeared.



Female Ring-necked Ducks with Scaup and Tufted Duck, Yetholm Loch, 16-Jan (R Jackson)

After a few minutes searching, I re-found the bird, now away from the Tufties, on the far reedy bank of the loch. I could still see the peaked head shape, pale markings around the eye and bill base on both sides and a strong suggestion of a pale peak on the front of the flanks. The pale band on the bill tip was difficult to see sometimes, but after checking that this can be the case on first winter birds, I was happy to confirm the identification (at least to myself) and that I'd not made a mistake.

On continuing to observe the bird after each dive, I then noticed a second bird slowly emerging from the reeds that also looked like a female Ring-necked Duck! Surely not! After a few moments the two birds swam along happily together and confirmed I wasn't seeing double. The second bird was noticeably paler around the head, although the even paler markings on eyes and bill-base were still where they should be.



Two female Ring-necked Ducks, Yetholm Loch, 16-Jan (R Jackson)

I put out the news on our local WhatsApp group set up for the Gadwall Count and then on the Borders Rare & Scarce group and on Birdguides, as I've frequently benefited from quick news on others' finds.

Ring-necked Ducks, Yetholm Loch, January & April 2022 – first Borders record

However, no one had joined me by the time I had to leave at about 11am, but both birds were still in view when I left, although quite distant near the far shore.

When others arrived later in the day there was no sign of either bird, probably due to boating activity out on the water and they could also not be found the following day. Chris Green persisted, however, and enjoyed a view of both birds on the 18th and they continued to be seen intermittently until the 23-Jan by a number of local birders, amidst reports of further boat disturbance and pheasant shoots.

I was amazed to find that this was the first record for the Scottish Borders. The picture across the UK has shown an undoubted influx of Ring-necked Ducks in winter 2021/22 and these two were almost certainly part of this larger movement.

As a further post-script, I revisited Yetholm Loch on 17-Apr 2022, again as part of a co-ordinated Gadwall count. A visiting birder informed me of a summer-plumaged Red-necked Grebe on the loch and whilst I was enjoying this (and an uncommon Pochard) a female Ring-necked Duck again appeared in my 'scope. This was surely one of the birds from January, but where had it been in the meantime and was it hidden elsewhere in the Borders? Chris Green managed to see the bird later that day and it was reported again on the 18-Apr, but not subsequently.



Female Ring-necked Duck (right) with Red-necked Grebe (sleeping), Yetholm Loch, 17-Apr (R Jackson)

All in all, a nice start to my Borders birding!

This was indeed the first accepted Borders record (of two birds). [A record in 1990 from Hule Moss, by Ray Murray, was rejected by BBRC, for unknown reasons]. Borders would appear to be the last Scottish recording area to have a record of Ring-necked Duck, and long overdue it is too!

Black Kite, Saughtree nr. Newcastleton, May 2022 – first Borders record

Finder: David Braithwaite

SBRC

On 10th May I (DB) had taken a short trip down to Kielder Water to scan the reservoir and maybe see Osprey fishing. The day was one of quite strong westerly winds and the water was choppy, so without seeing much at all I headed for home in the afternoon.

Travelling back from Kielder to Newcastleton along the twisting single-track road by the Liddel Water and approaching Saughtree Farm, I turned a curving bend and saw two large raptors to my right. They were close to the ground and close to each other, flying away from me and struggling into the wind. The nearer appeared to be chivvying the further. The gusty headwind was obviously keeping them low. At this point they were close, down to about 50 meters at their closest. I pulled the car onto the grassy verge and grabbed the bins from the passenger seat. The two birds were so intent on their quarrel that they paid no attention to the presence of my car ... and I made no attempt to get out. Instead, I watched the birds both through the open driver's door window and the car windscreen.

Black Kite, Saughtree nr. Newcastleton, May 2022 – first Borders record

The closer bird was clearly a normal morph Common Buzzard. The other, due to the relatively long-wings, slightly forked tail, smallish head and jaunty flight pattern, was immediately recognisable as a 'kite'.

The buzzard broke off from its attack and went off to my left across the Liddel Water and into a small group of trees. The kite continued its low flight, making little headway into the gusting wind. It climbed occasionally as it wrestled with the wind that lifted it up over my head and over the banking to my right.



Sketch of Black Kite, Saughtree, Borders, 10-May (D Braithwaite)

I quickly became aware that this was not a Red Kite ... there were none of the orangey, rufous or warm browns with contrasting greys that make Red Kites such beautiful birds. The lack of 'colour' on this bird was immediately obvious on the upper tail that was a feature I had a clear view of as the bird was chivvied by the buzzard. Typically, the tail was being 'angled' as the kite contorted its flight path to avoid the buzzard's attentions. The tail was shallowly forked and dull greyish brown. This colouration was relatively uniform across the upper parts except for paler grey forewings which were only subtly contrasting. Additionally, the wings and tail were not as relatively long as with Red Kite, but the wingspan was nevertheless greater than that of the buzzard.

I had good views of the underparts as the bird lifted up above the bank ridge to my right a couple of times. The colouring was much as the upper parts with very little contrast. The primaries were dark tipped with a paler panel visible on the underside. This panelling was clear but only subtly contrasting. The small head was slightly paler but not markedly different in colour to the rest of the bird. There could be no doubt that this was a Black Kite. Certainly not a bird I had ever expected to encounter in the Borders, but that, as they say, is birding for you!

This is the first substantiated record of Black Kite in the Borders and has been **ACCEPTED** by SBRC. This follows rejected or un-documented records at Eyemouth in 1995, at The Hirsel in 2007 and at Camptown in 2014. There have been well over 50 records of Black Kite in Scotland, and the Borders should be well-placed to receive this continental species, so this one also counts as 'well overdue'.

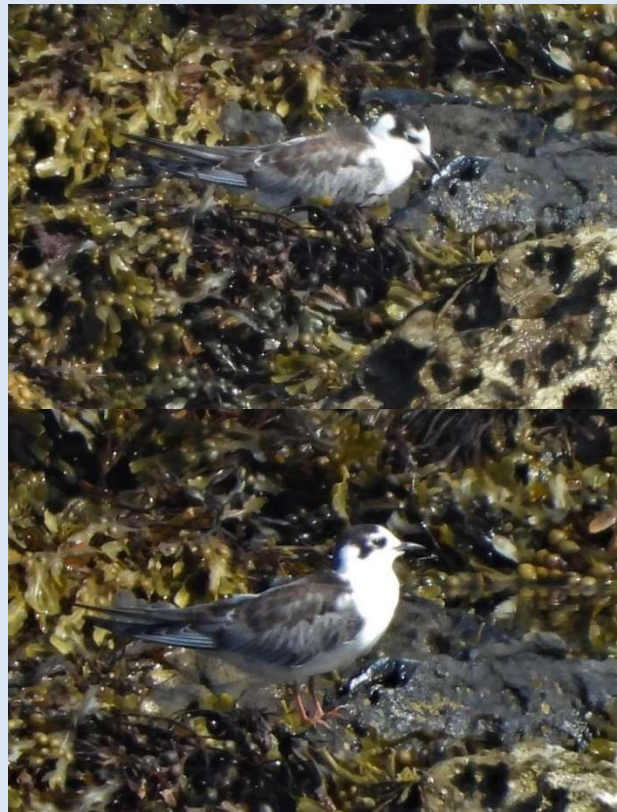
White-winged Black Tern, Burnmouth, September 2022 – first Borders record

Finder: Chris Green

SBRC

On the morning of 5th September 2022 I (CG) set out, determined to practice sea-watching (not a skill of mine) at Eyemouth. However, as I drove up the A1, I was unable to resist dropping in at Burnmouth - a site I'm far more familiar and comfortable with. As I left the car, just beyond the harbour, I immediately saw a flock of terns, in flight and perched - quite unusual for this location.

I started scanning those perched on the rocks - Sandwich and Common Terns, with a scattering of gulls, and soon came across a small tern perched low between a Kittiwake and a Black-headed Gull. My immediate thought was that this was a juvenile Black Tern - a thought I continued to hold even though consultation with Collins indicated that the lack of a dark breast patch pointed to White-winged Black Tern. Soon, the bird flew off, leaving me uncertain as to identification.



White-winged Black Tern, Burnmouth, Borders, 5-Sep (A Cutter)

A little later, by great good fortune, Alistair Cutter arrived (his first return to the site since I'd shown him around earlier in the year) armed with his camera. I told him about the bird, we searched for a while, then Alistair wandered off in search of waders to photograph.

Within 15 minutes, the tern returned - a phone-call brought Alistair hurrying back, and a series of photos was taken. At this point, I phoned my wife to tell her I may have found a White-winged Black Tern. Alistair and I then observed the bird on-and-off over a 3-hour period as it rested and intermittently fed along the surf-line amongst the other terns. We discussed the lack of a dark breast-patch, the pale rump visible as it dropped to feed along the surf and the darkness of the mantle, but ultimately decided to rely on the outcome of the photos to determine identity. We were both unaware at the time, that if identified as a White-winged Black Tern, it would be a Borders' first.

White-winged Black Tern, Burnmouth, September 2022 – first Borders record

That evening, looking through Alistair's excellent photos, it became apparent to us both that I'd found the Borders' first White-winged Black Tern - a record I may well not have had the confidence to claim without the serendipitous arrival of Alistair, and his photographic skills.

Unfortunately the bird was not seen thereafter. This is another first (**ACCEPTED** by SBRC) that could be seen as 'overdue', with over 80 records in Scotland to date, many of them along the eastern coastal counties. The Borders does not have any large wetland areas, however, unlike the neighbouring counties, which could explain this tardy addition to the Borders list!

Pallid Harrier, Newcastleton, November 2022 – first Borders record

Finder: Paul Cook

BBRC

On 9 November 2022, while walking in a forest close to Newcastleton in the Scottish Borders, I (PC) had already had a good day watching Hen Harrier and displaying Goshawk on a pleasant weather day.

The afternoon had gone a little quiet until I picked up a raptor at approx. 100 metre range flying directly towards me. As the bird banked, I knew I was watching another harrier. The jizz of the bird's flight however soon took me back to last year in Saudi Arabia. There, I was lucky enough to see thousands of harriers during 3 months spent in the spring and 3 months in the autumn whilst working. An experience of over 4,500 Pallid Harriers told me even on my first view this bird was a Pallid.

I've told many friends that Pallids in flight are very distinctive and have an almost Black-headed Gull type flight. It was the exact buoyant way this juvenile was flying, and as it came much closer to me I was able to nail all of the main features. The very pale collar with dark cheeks stood out immediately. The underside of the secondaries were a dark grey, and under wing coverts plain chestnut. The body of the bird was a clean chestnut colour too and no streaking was seen. The upperparts were a brownish colour with darkish secondaries. A white rump was clearly visible but I mainly watched the bird from below during the three minute view. The bird's wings were pointy which can be seen in my (poor I'm afraid) attached photograph.



The bird flew from the north east to a south westerly direction and I did not see it again. Thankfully my experience of many harriers in 2021 makes me 100% certain this bird was a Pallid Harrier.

Pallid Harrier, nr. Newcastleton,
Borders, 9-Nov (P Cook)

There were no further sightings in the area. A juvenile was reported on Islay a few days before on 6-Nov and one was in Cornwall from the 14-Nov, but there is nothing specific to link these records.

Although this raptor has become an increasingly regular vagrant to Scotland since 2011, with around 60 records, the majority of these are from Shetland and it remains a very rare bird on the mainland. Two records from St. Abb's Head in September 2010 and October 2011 were both rejected by BBRC, so this would become the first record for Borders (if accepted by BBRC). To have two rare raptors (this bird and the Black Kite) reported in much the same (under-watched) area is a remarkable coincidence.

Although this record was subsequently found to be 'not proven' by BBRC, this finder's account and the report of the species has been retained in the classified list (square-bracketed) for the information of readers. The species will (unfortunately) not be admitted to the Borders' list, at this time.

Hume's Leaf Warbler, St Abb's Head, November 2022 – first Borders record

Finder: Ciaran Hatsell

BBRC

It was seal season at St Abb's Head NNR and that means one thing – patrols and fence checks! After a cracking early morning seawatch on 21 November, during which I (CH) was lucky enough to have an absolute brute of a White-billed Diver head past south not far offshore, I discovered a Grey seal pup on a beach at Burnmouth harbour. I went back to base to get the equipment for the fence and headed back down the Mire Dean.

Walking with all the equipment, including a wheelbarrow and a backpack full of fencing kit, I was about to go through the small gate and noticed some movement in the buckthorn up ahead. Putting down the wheelbarrow and lifting my bins, I saw the head of a warbler partially covered by the undergrowth and was immediately struck by how pallid and greyish looking the cap and mantle were. This was a YBW type but given the overall colouration and late date I strongly suspected it would turn into a Hume's, WHICH IT DID!

Some birds hit you right in the chops but it never helps to be too hasty in the ID process, a trap I've fallen into quite dramatically in the past! As it flitted in the buckthorn, I noticed a weak second wing bar, lack of any green/yellow tones to the upperparts and an overall washed out, pallid impression. It was amazing how greyish and washed out the upperparts were - frosty and Sibe-chiff-esque!

Happy it was a Hume's after slightly better views, I stuck the news out and phoned two of the county's biggest legends, Fran Evans and Dave Graham. When I first moved to the area, they were both instrumental in making me feel welcome and providing tales of birding folklore which fed my enthusiasm to keep on birding here.

The bird eventually gave itself up and started calling frequently, a very distinctive, Pied Wagtail-esque disyllabic call which often gave away its presence.



Hume's Leaf Warbler, Mire Loch-St Abb's Head, Borders, 22-Nov (C Hatsell)

It would loosely associate with the tit flocks roaming between the Mire Loch boathouse and the buckthorn near the Loch outfall, often quite variable in its feeding habits, being very arboreal one minute and then keeping low and skulking the next!

Hume's Leaf Warbler, St Abb's Head, November 2022 – first Borders record



Hume's Leaf Warbler, Mire Loch-St Abb's Head, Borders, 22-Nov (K Gibb)

It was last seen on 25 November at 1405 in the same patch of buckthorn. I was chuffed most people who visited managed to see it - good birds should be shared! Anything, anywhere, anytime!

There are around 30 records of this Central Asian warbler in Scotland, although most have been in the Northern Isles and Northeast Scotland. This record coincided with multiple sightings in eastern England from Northumberland to Norfolk and there were two sightings in Shetland earlier in November.

This record still has to be submitted to BBRC, but it is presumed that it will be accepted.

Cattle Egret, Sprouston, December 2022 – first Borders record

Finder: Neil Hinchliff *et. al.*

SBRC

See species account on p. 118. The record was **ACCEPTED** by SBRC.



Cattle Egret, Whitmuirhaugh, Sprouston, Borders, 4-Dec

Nightjar Survey & Results from Audio Recording

Richard Jackson (based on a report to the SOC from Alasdair Reid)

Introduction: Historically Nightjars were once widespread and locally common, particularly in Berwickshire, but after a slow decline they virtually disappeared in the 1950s, with only intermittent sightings thereafter, and there were no records at all from 1991 to 2002. The last Atlas (SESA2) recorded a probable pair in one tetrad from 2011 onwards and then 4 birds were found in 2017, but only one in 2019 and then one again in 2021 (a record in 2020 was of a clear coastal migrant). This was despite a reported strong presence in the Kielder Forest just across the border in north-west Northumberland.

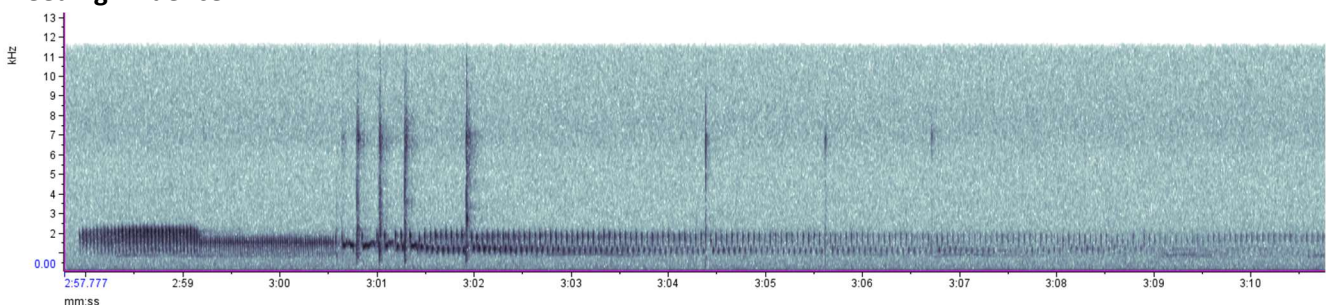
Aware of the possibilities of using rugged audio recording devices, left in the field, to passively monitor for Nightjar songs and calls, Alasdair Reid successfully applied for a SOC grant in early 2022. This was used to purchase five *SongMeter Micro* audio recording devices and the necessary ancillaries (e.g. batteries). Following a review of potential sites based on previous sightings, satellite maps and reconnaissance visits, these were then deployed by branch members to try and locate Nightjar locations during the Summer.

Results for Nightjar: As covered under the species account (p.53), at least 6 Nightjars were located in potential breeding areas, either directly as a result of recorded audio or due to a detection from the surveyor when visiting the site. These included several new territories in the extensive Wauchope Forest area, which is, in many ways, the mirror of the Kielder area across the border.

As Alasdair reports: *“What the branch finds particularly encouraging is that birds have been detected in the north, south and centre of the region and, as such, the species has been confirmed as more widespread than was previously thought. In addition to the survey records, a further four (unconfirmed) casual records were also submitted by members of the public, in part due to the increased publicity and awareness of the species by the branch. As such, the survey results alone amount to the strongest ever year for Nightjar records in the Borders”.*

“At one of the sites, with two birds seen, the audio recording (sonagram below), which includes very obvious wing-claps, also shows what is known as a “terminal song phase”, where the “churr” slows down very obviously from the beginning to the end of the segment. According to research, males are more likely to produce song with a terminal phase during the first clutch initiation period, when they are more likely to be paired or in the presence of a female (Docker, Lowe & Abrahams, 2020). This is strong evidence of probable breeding and all as a direct result of the audio recorder use”.

Breeding Evidence



Sonogram of churring Borders Nightjar on 13.7.22

Other Results: It was expected that the audio recorders would incidentally pick-up other nocturnal birds, such as owls and roding Woodcock, but it was a pleasant surprise to find that a large range of species, including unusual birds passing through, were captured as a result of the monitor deployments. These were captured and analysed by Gavin Paterson, including some from his home and, during autumn, at the coast, showing how the same monitors can be used for nocturnal migration records. Some of the results are included in individual species accounts, but the following table is an overall summary.

Species	Sites/Tetrads	Number of Records	Date(s)
Pink-footed Goose	3 tetrads	21	16-Mar to 22-Oct
Wigeon	Eyemouth	1	9-Oct
Red Grouse	Cockmuir S (Portmore)	1	13-Jun
Red-legged Partridge	Ashiestiel-Peel (Clovenfords)	2	19-Mar, 24-Apr
Cuckoo	Ashiestiel Hill, Loch Tima	3	9-May to 29-May
Water Rail	5 tetrads	9	26-Mar to 6-Jun
Moorhen	10 tetrads	24	15-Mar to 22-Oct
Coot	4 tetrads	14	20-Mar to 29-Oct
Little Grebe	5 tetrads	6	14-May to 4-Aug
Oystercatcher	19 tetrads	74	20-Mar to 2-Sep
Lapwing	3 tetrads	14	13-Jun to 11-Sep
Golden Plover	Ashiestiel-Peel (Clovenfords)	1	13-Sep
Ringed Plover	Eyemouth	5	12-Sep to 26-Oct
Whimbrel	6 tetrads (5 inland)	7	31-Jul to 21-Oct
Curlew	10 tetrads	45	15-Mar to 25-Oct
Sanderling	Eyemouth	1	19-Sep
Dunlin	Eyemouth	8	12-Sep to 29-Oct
Woodcock	10 tetrads	31	19-Mar to 15-Jul
Snipe	3 tetrads	8	28-May to 27-Sep
Common Sandpiper	7 tetrads	15	29-Apr to 21-Jul
Redshank	Eyemouth	6	13-Sep to 29-Oct
Greenshank	Eilrig (Craik Forest)	1	14-Jul
Kittiwake	Softlaw (Kelso)	1	25-Jun
Sandwich Tern	3 inland tetrads	4	13-Jul to 1-Sep
Sandwich Tern	Eyemouth	1	21-Oct
Arctic Tern	Steele Road (Hermitage)	1	1-Aug
Grey Heron	7 tetrads	24	24-Apr to 3-Oct
Barn Owl	10 tetrads	50	17-Mar to 29-Oct
Long-eared Owl	Cockmuir S (Portmore)	4	9-Jun to 12-Jun (FY)
Tawny Owl	23 tetrads	160	17-Mar to 28-Oct
Jay	Singdean (Wauchope Forest)	1	21-Jul
Raven	3 tetrads	3	17-Jul to 7-Aug
Skylark	4 tetrads	10	2-Apr to 20-Sep
Sedge Warbler	3 tetrads	7	23-May to 18-Jul
Grasshopper Warbler	5 tetrads	17	3-Jun to 15-Aug
Redwing	3 tetrads	15	20/26-Mar, 20-Sep to 29-Oct
Redstart	3 tetrads	7	24-Apr to 25-May
Stonechat	Nether Dalgliesh & Dunhope Rig (both Craik Forest)	5	30-May to 7-Jun
Tree Pipit	Cowieslinn (Portmore)	1	17-May
Bullfinch	Stichel Hill (Hermitage)	2	3-Aug, 5-Aug
Lesser Redpoll	Cockmuir S & Shankend Shiel (Wauchope Forest)	5	10-Jun to 7-Aug

Particularly significant results are marked in **bold** type

In addition, there were also records of Greylag Goose, Mallard, Teal, Woodpigeon, Buzzard, Chiffchaff, Wren, Song Thrush, Blackbird, Robin, Grey Wagtail, Meadow Pipit, Goldfinch and Reed Bunting.

References:

S. Docker, A. Lowe & C. Abrahams (2020): Identification of different song types in the European Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*, Bird Study 67:1, 119-127, DOI: [10.1080/00063657.2020.1780414](https://doi.org/10.1080/00063657.2020.1780414)

Analysis of 2022 Records

Tom Brewis

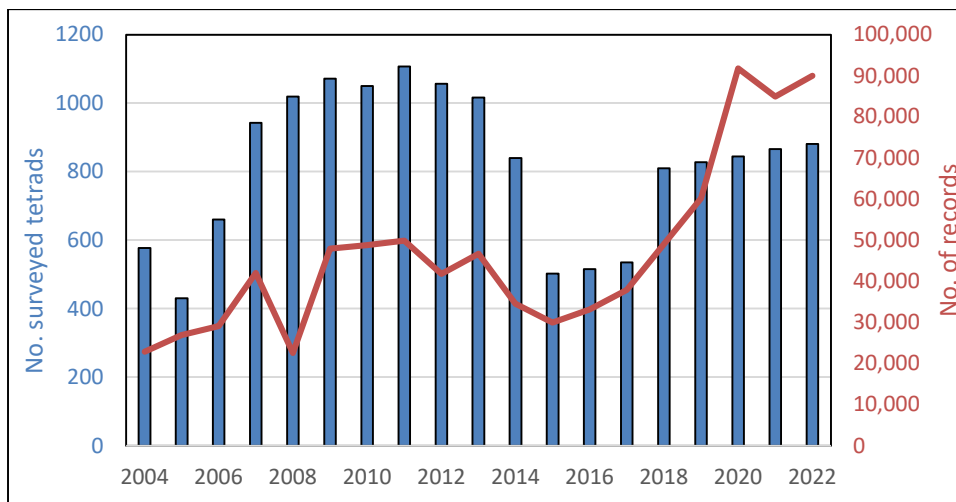
This *Report* is based on **89,939 records**. These records were not collected in a systematic way, ranging from perhaps a single record of a scarce species glanced through a car window to a series of records submitted by a single observer who might regularly cover a well-defined patch. The dataset is therefore, like that of any other annual county bird report, a rather random picture of the local avifauna. However, a sample of 89,939 records does give us some insight into the numbers and distribution of birds in the Region, albeit one which lacks the confidence of something like a local tetrad atlas survey. Nonetheless, in many instances, trends indicated by *Borders Bird Report* records have been reflected in both the BTO's *Breeding Bird Survey* and in the local tetrad atlases of recent years, lending confidence to the idea that some *BBR* records do give an indication of trends in both range and abundance.

The purpose of this section is to examine the nature of the records collected for this report but without reference to individual species, looking at such things as the spatial distribution of records, of observers and the pattern of the number of species recorded across the region. Historical trends in the number of records submitted, the number of tetrads from which records were submitted and annual changes in the number of full lists of species submitted are also considered.

An examination of these features gives us some insight into the level of confidence that we can have when making statements about any recent historical trends suggested by report records. It enables us to judge how much the dataset deviates from a more ideal dataset based on a greater level of consistency in data collection methods.

Numbers of records submitted

The 89,939 records submitted for the *Report*, 6% more than for 2021, is the second highest number of records in any one year since the first *Report* in 1979. The graph below shows the numbers of records for the *Report* and the number of tetrads that records came. The 881 tetrads supplying records was the highest outside of the two local tetrad atlases of 1988-94 and 2007-13.



The 881 tetrads returning records account for 69% of all 1,300 tetrads (complete and partial) in Borders. Care should be taken, however, when considering this statement since some of these tetrads have only skeletal records from perhaps a limited area within the tetrad. The term “surveyed” does not therefore imply any systematic data collection.

The table below shows the different sources contributing records to the *Report* for 2020-2022.

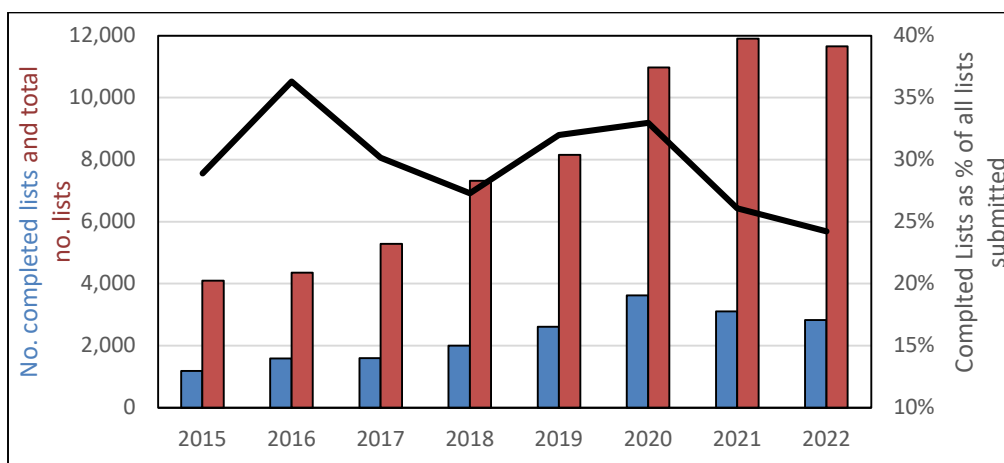
	2020		2021		2022	
	Actual	%	Actual	%	Actual	%
BirdTrack	87,481	95.3%	78,400	92.3%	81,636	90.8%
BRG	2,241	2.4%	2,973	3.5%	2,992	3.3%
WeBS	1,133	1.2%	1,173	1.4%	1,999	2.2%
BBS/WBBS	691	0.8%	2,130	2.5%	3,056	3.4%
RSC	171	0.2%	227	0.3%	199	0.2%
IGC	28	Neg.	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Independent	65	0.1%	6	0.0%	57	0.1%
Total	91,810		84,909		89,939	

See Introduction for abbreviations.

Complete Lists

The term “observer effort” is often used when interpreting the records for a species. We can think of observer effort as made of the following elements: numbers of records; numbers of tetrads surveyed; numbers of records that are part of a full list of species and the number of records that report breeding status. The maps, tables and graph presented here deal with those aspects of observer effort that can be measured in terms of numbers of records and number tetrads. When dealing with full lists of species, *BirdTrack* refers to such full lists as Complete Lists. The BTO distinguishes between submissions of records which are part of Complete Lists and part of Casual Lists. The former is where an observer submits all of the species seen on a single visit while the latter is an incomplete list, often made-up of species that the observer considers interesting. Obviously, the ideal would be to have all submissions as part of Complete Lists. Most records are part of casual lists.

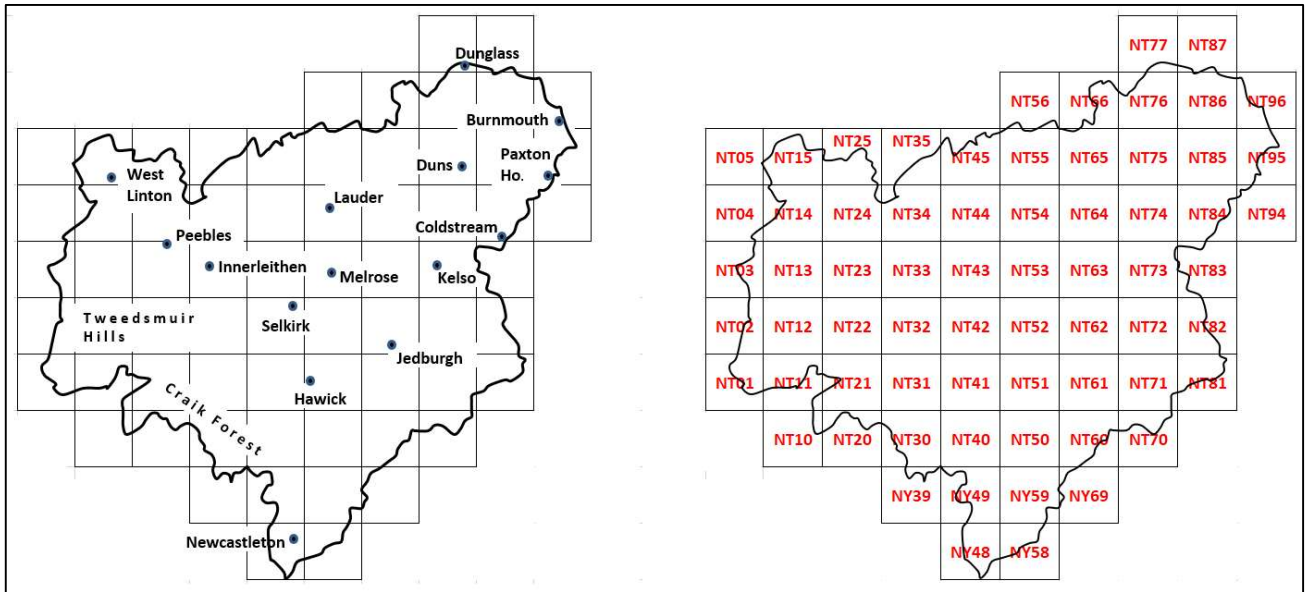
In order to improve on the significance of Report records, contributors are encouraged to submit Complete Lists whenever possible.



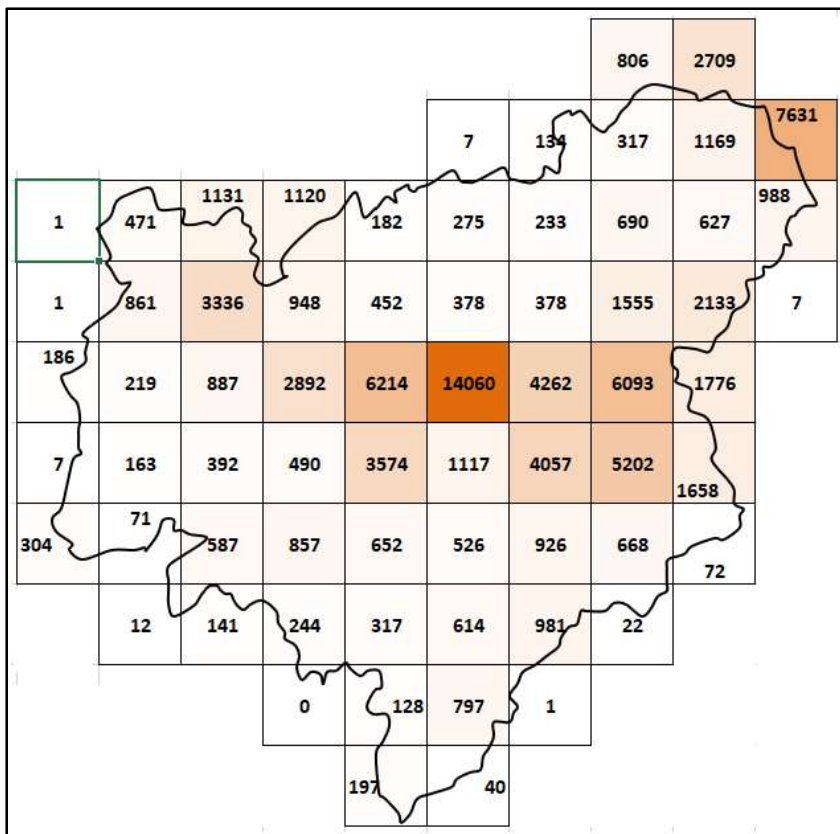
As can be seen from the above graph, which deals with BirdTrack submissions only, after a promising increase in the proportion of Completed Lists submitted for 2019 and 2020, the past two years have seen a significant decrease.

Distribution of records

Below is a series of maps showing the geographical distributions of features such as the number of records submitted, the number of species recorded and the number of observers. Since the maps are based on 10 km² grids (5 x 5 tetrads), the coverage of tetrads in each 10 km² square is also shown. The maps immediately below are meant to help readers relate the 10 km² squares to references given in the text and to some well-known places in Borders.



Spatial distribution of records submitted



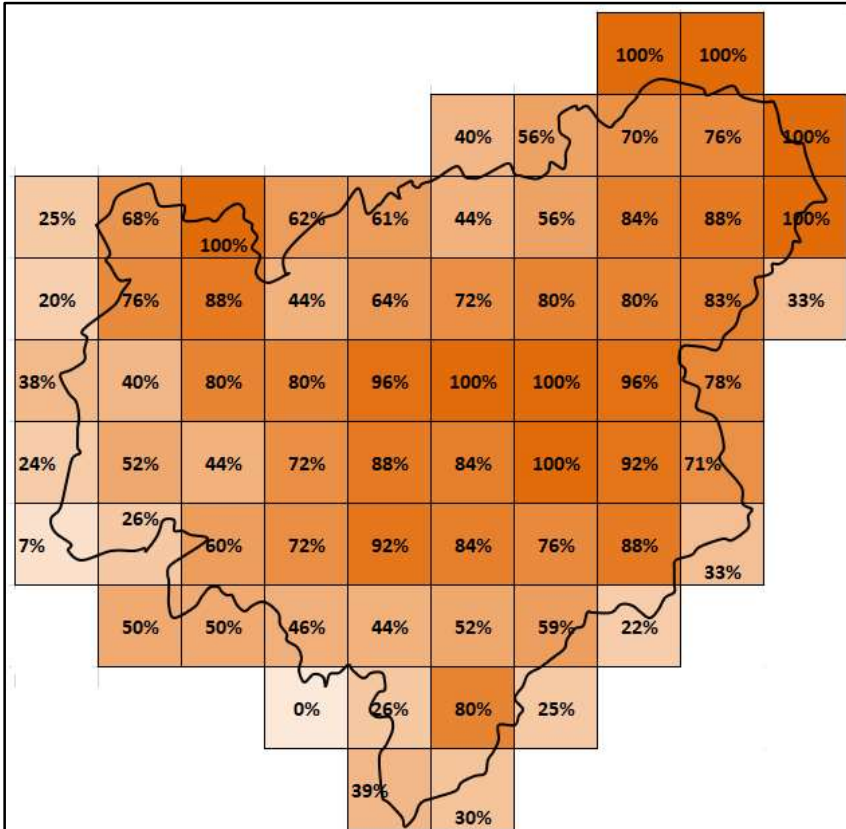
A similar spatial pattern to that in the past but with one or two smaller changes.

1. More centrally located squares, NT43, NT53, NT62, NT72, NT73, had an overall reduction of 8,213 records with about half of this loss from NT53 Melrose.
2. Coastal and near-coastal tetrads tended to show an increase in submissions.

As ever, the spatial pattern of submitted records illustrate well how the database for the *Report* is influenced by such factors as proximity to the homes of observers, a disproportionately greater contribution from a few observers (also living in those squares), e.g. NT53 Melrose and a greater number of visits to sites which are more productive, e.g. NT73 Tweed Haughs and NT96 St Abb's Head-Burnmouth.

Tetrad coverage per 10 km square

By looking at the number of tetrads that returned records, we get some insight into the spread of those records within each 10 km square. Remember that there are 25 tetrads in a 10 km square, but many of the squares on the edge of Borders will be made up of fewer tetrads, eg NT77 Dunglass Burn-Pease Bay only has 5 tetrads in Borders. The tetrad occupation is therefore shown as a percentage of the total number of tetrads in each 10 km square that occur in Borders.

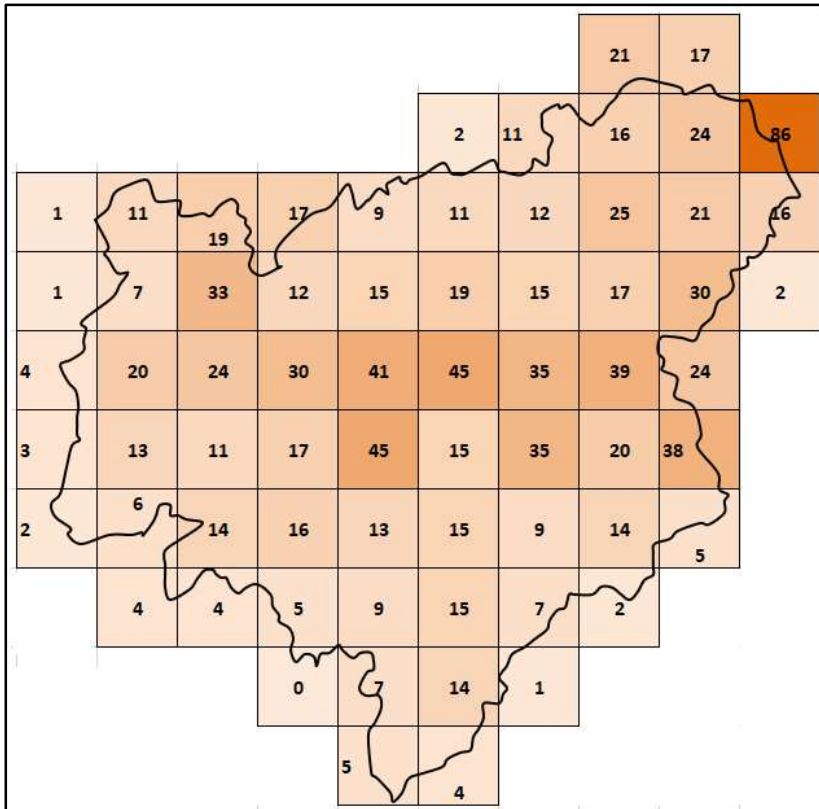


It is encouraging to note that a great many 10 km squares show a reasonable amount of coverage in terms of tetrads surveyed. Care should be taken, however, when attaching too much significance to this since the term surveyed might in some cases only amount to a single record, eg NY69 Rushy Knowe (Wauchope Forest) shows on the map as a 25% coverage of tetrads but is based on a single record from one tetrad.



Tetrads with records submitted in 2022.

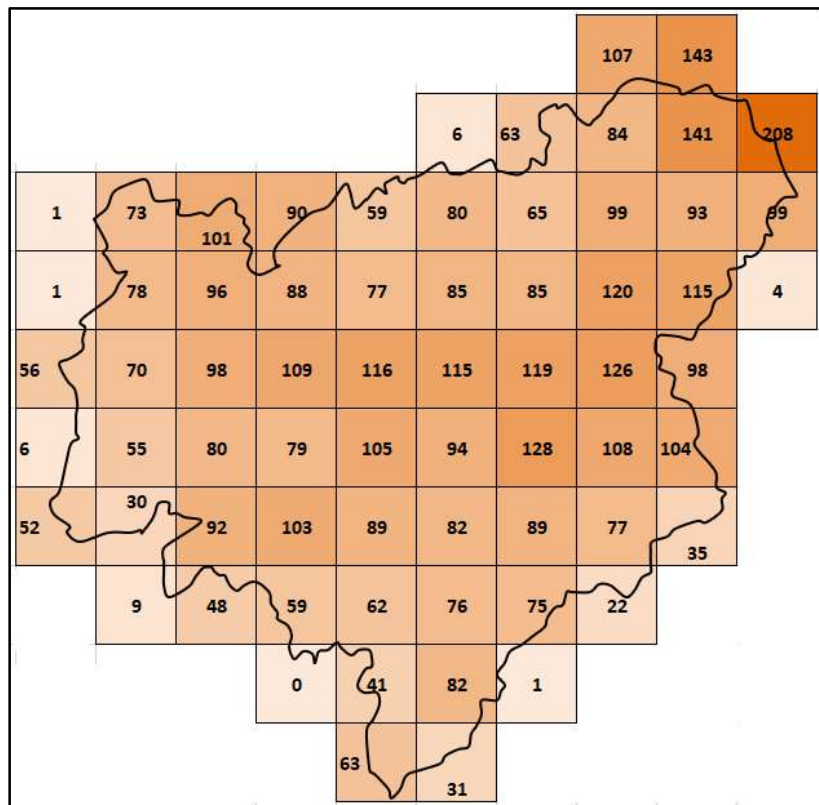
Number of observers reporting in each 10 km square



Overall, the general distribution of observers per 10 km² follows that of previous years, i.e. larger numbers for NT96 St Abb's Head-Burnmouth, followed by NT42 Selkirk-Yarrowford-Ashkirk, NT53 Melrose and NT73 Teviot Haughs.

About 75% of all records came from 14 observers.

Number of species recorded per 10 km square



The number of species recorded in any one 10 km square will be the product of the nature of the habitats in that square and the number of records returned from each square. The area covered in each square, indicated by the percentage of tetrads per square with records, will also be influential.

The distribution shown in the map opposite is similar to that of recent years. NY96 St Abb's Head-Burnmouth stands out more than usual as the prime site for birdwatching in Borders.

The Borders Bird List – Developments since 1980

Richard Jackson

Introduction- On the back of such a strong year for additions to the Borders list and some work done to collate all the previous documented records into one file, I thought it would be useful to set down how the Borders' list has developed and some of the general occurrence trends over the last few decades.

The start point is in 1979 and 1980, when systematic ornithological recording commenced and Ray Murray published the first overview of the local ornithology in *The Birds of the Borders* in 1986. Subsequently an annual *Borders Bird Report* (BBR) has been produced, collating and documenting the records in each calendar year and these have been utilised to produce this analysis.

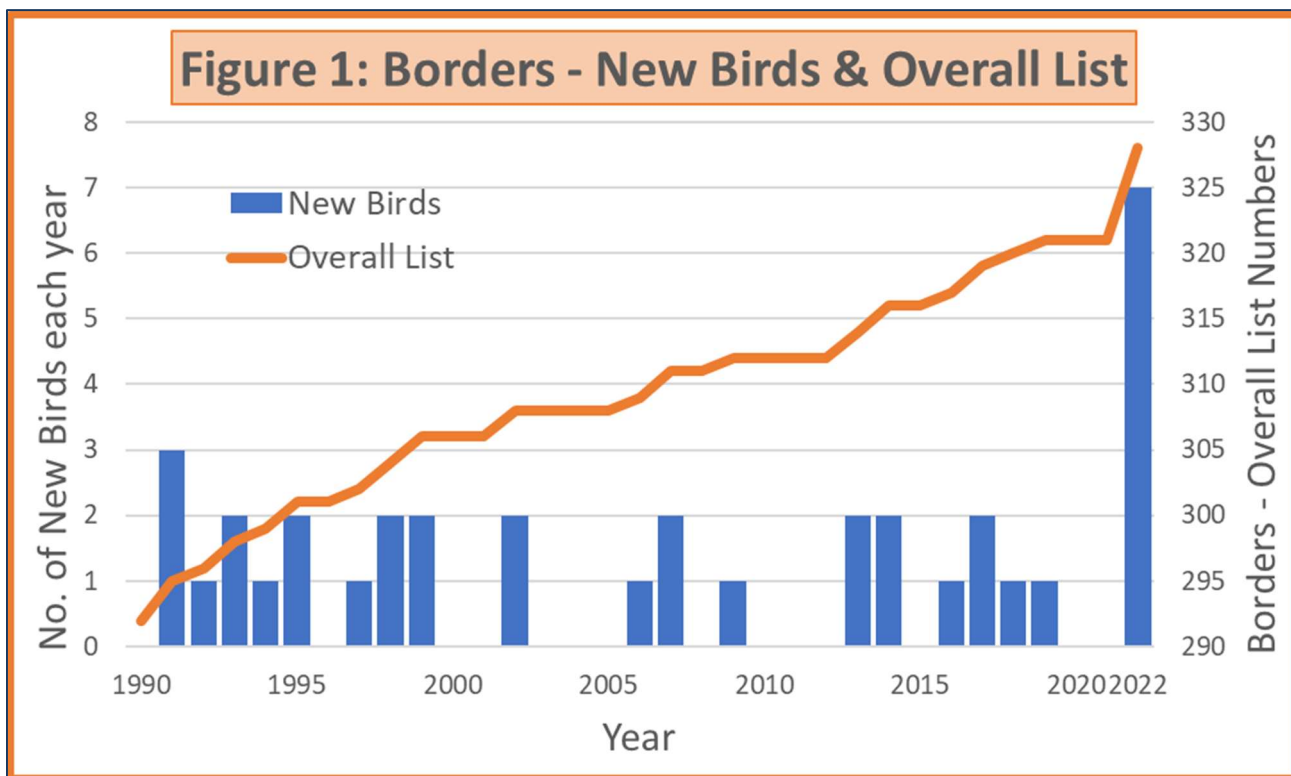
The Situation Prior to 1980- By 1980 the Borders list had 271 species on it, the majority being birds that continue to be relatively common and are seen annually (or nearly so). The first **Little Ringed Plover** had just been seen (in 1979) and the 1970s had also seen first documented records of birds like **Mandarin, Curlew Sandpiper, Sooty** and **Balearic Shearwaters, Little Egret, Reed Warbler** and **Firecrest**, together with several scarcer species such as **Sabine's Gull** and **Icterine Warbler**.

There are also 16 species on the 1980 list that have not been seen subsequently, including 5 species in Category B (birds that have not been seen in a wild state since 1950). These are tabulated below (ordered by the dates when they were last seen in Borders).

Species	Last Seen	Probable Reasons for Non-recurrence (if known)
Ivory Gull	1883 (B)	Bird shot at Cessford, so extremely unusual. Remains very rare.
Pallas's Sandgrouse	1888 (B)	Part of the last major irruption to UK. Extremely rare in UK since.
Ruddy Shelduck	1892 (B)	Last major irruption to UK. More recent records viewed as escapes.
Little Bittern	1904 (B)	Found injured at Eyemouth. Surprisingly nothing more recent.
Great Snipe	1925 (B)	Two records, both inland. Very rare in UK since 1950s.
Alpine Swift	1951	One record (nr. Hawick). Surprisingly nothing more recent. **
Harlequin Duck	1954	One shot (nr. Denholm). Remains extremely rare in UK.
Dowitcher sp.	1958	One at Hule Moss. Perhaps surprisingly no more recent records.
Capercaillie	1959	Introduced several times, last in 1950s, with last male nr. Portmore.
Nutcracker	1971	One record (of 5 birds) at Eddleston. Extreme vagrant in UK since.
Ferruginous Duck	1976	Two records (of 3 birds), both inland. Surprisingly absent since.
Gyr Falcon	1976	Two records, last at Hule Moss. Remains very rare in UK.
Golden Pheasant	1977	Introduced in 1960s/70s, with last birds at Glentress in 1977.
Nightingale	1977	One record at St Abb's. Surprisingly no further records.
Aquatic Warbler	1977	One record at St Abb's. Severe decline in breeding areas since.
Ptarmigan	c.1980	Historic records in Tweedsmuir hills. Last re-introduction in 1970s.

** - second record occurred in 2023

Since 1980- A total of 58 species have been added to the Borders list since 1980 (up to February 2023), most as a result of field observations, although some were reported as rare races at the time and were later taxonomically split as full species (e.g. **Siberian Stonechat**). As might be expected, the 1980s saw the most additions, with 19 species added and only one blank year (1980); the 1990s added 13 species, with 3 blank years and things became slower after 2000, with 9 species added in each of the next two decades and a total of 9 blank years. The years 2020 and 2021 continued this rather static picture, so it was somewhat surprising to see 7 new species added in 2022, making it the best single year on record. There has already been one new species added in 2023 (**Cetti's Warbler**) (at the time of writing). This progression is charted below. The Borders list now stands at a provisional 329 species.



Collared Flycatcher, St Abb's Head, Apr 2014 (DK Graham) - 1st record



Black Stork, Houndwood, nr. Grantshouse, Jul 2006 (DK Graham) - 2nd record

Table 2 (below) details these further 58 species, with some comments about further records (if any) and potential trends.

Table 2: Species added to the Borders List since 1980		
Year	Species	Comments
1981	Temminck's Stint	Sole record, from West Water.
	Woodlark	Two records, both at St Abb's Head, second in 1993.
	(Western) Subalpine Warbler	Total of 5 records, all at St Abb's, two identified to race/sp.
1982	Pallas's Warbler	Over 30 records, 6 in 1982!, all coastal. Last in 2022.
1983	Ruddy Duck	Rapidly colonised from late-80s. Last record in 2007 after cull.
	Chimney Swift	One at Coldingham, a very unexpected extreme vagrant.
	Red-necked Phalarope	Four records in total, the last in 2005, so overdue another.
	Black Stork	First west of Peebles, second in 2006 nr. Grantshouse.
	Dartford Warbler	One at St Abb's Head, remaining very rare in Scotland.
1984	Water Pipit	11 records, all coastal in Winter, last in 2016.

Table 2: Species added to the Borders List since 1980

Year	Species	Comments
1985	Mediterranean Gull	Many records now and annual since 2007.
	Arctic Redpoll	Six records, most at The Bell, the last in 2018/19.
1986	Black-winged Stilt	Two records, first at St Abb's, second at Foulden in 2019.
	Ortolan Bunting	Six records along the coast, the last in 2016.
1987	Richard's Pipit	Five records, most at St Abb's, the last in 2014.
1988	Lesser Grey Shrike	Sole record at Dowlaw Dean. Very rare in Scotland.
	Woodchat Shrike	Five records, all coastal, the last in 2021
	Radde's Warbler	Three records, all at St Abb's Head, last in 2013.
1989	Isabelline Shrike	Two records, first at Dunglass, second at Burnmouth in 1999.
1991	King Eider	Sole record, a male, off St Abb's Head. Returned in 1992.
	Siberian Stonechat	Two records, first at St Abb's Head, second at Dowlaw in 2016.
	Olive-backed Pipit	Two records, at Coldingham and St Abb's, the latter in 2016.
1993	Lesser Crested Tern	Sole record of long-staying 'Elsie'. Extremely rare in UK.
	Marmora's Warbler	One at St Abb's Head and still extremely rare in UK.
1994	Marsh Warbler	Six records, most at St Abb's Head, latest in 2020.
1995	Roseate Tern	13 records, last in 2022. Probably overlooked beforehand.
	Great White Egret	Over a dozen records, annual since 2018.
1997	Surf Scoter	Two records, first at St Abb's, second at Watch Water in 2014.
1998	Bearded Reedling	Sole record, trapped at St Abb's. Surprisingly no repeat.
	Serin	Sole record at St Abb's Head. Very rare in Scotland.
1999	Pallid Swift	Two records, first at Burnmouth and four at St Abb's in 2022.
	Red-flanked Bluetail	Three records, all at St Abb's Head, the last in 2016.
2002	Red-rumped Swallow	Two records, first St Abb's Head, second in 2009 at Eyemouth.
	Melodious Warbler	Two records, both at St Abb's Head, last in 2018.
2004	Taiga Bean Goose	Split from 'Bean Goose', with 20 birds seen, latest in 2013.
2006	Bee-eater	Sole record (of 3 birds) at Newmains (Reston).
	Western Bonelli's Warbler	Two records, both at St Abb's Head, latest in 2017.
2007	Yellow-legged Gull	Sole record at Dunglass, but probably overlooked.
	White-billed Diver	Six records, latest in 2022, all coastal, as expected.
	Great Shearwater	Five records (of 7 birds), all at St Abb's, latest in 2022.
2009	Cory's Shearwater	Four records (perhaps more), latest in 2022.
2013	Spoonbill	Four records (of 9 birds), latest in 2021. Surprisingly late addn.
	Sardinian Warbler	Sole record at St Abb's Head. Still very rare in UK.
2014	Egyptian Goose	Three records (of 4 birds), latest in 2021, increasing in Scotland.
	Collared Flycatcher	Sole record of an adult male at St Abb's Head. Very rare in UK.
2016	Paddyfield Warbler	Two records, both at St Abb's Head, second in 2022.
2017	Ring-necked Parakeet	Two records, second in 2017 at Kelso. Local escapes as well.
	Dark-eyed Junco	One in a Melrose garden was an unexpected great rarity.
2018	Lesser Yellowlegs	The sole record at Teviot Haughs was probably overdue.
2019	Lesser Scaup	Male at St Abb's Head, re-occurring in 2021.
2022	Ring-necked Duck	Two females at Yetholm Loch. Long overdue addition.
	Caspian Gull	One past Eyemouth; increasing Scottish presence.
	White-winged Black Tern	One at Burnmouth, also probably overdue.
	Cattle Egret	One at Sprouston, amongst a small number of Scottish records.
	Pallid Harrier	One at Newcastleton, a rare species on the mainland.*
	Black Kite	One at Saughtree, probably an overdue first record.
	Hume's Leaf Warbler	One at St Abb's Head of this still rare species in Scotland.
2023	Cetti's Warbler	One at Bemersyde Moss; increasing Scottish numbers.

* - the record of Pallid Harrier near Newcastleton was found 'not proven' by BBRC



Western Subalpine Warbler, St Abb's Head, May 2012 (A Kerr) - 4th record

By the standards of the adjacent recording areas the total of 329 species is low, with Northumberland to the south having around 100 species more and Lothian to the north over 40 more. This is due to a range of factors, including the geography, topography and habitat variety and, as importantly, the number of active bird-watchers. The Borders also lacks a large wetland or estuary, that are often a good draw for a range of migrant or vagrant species. Still, it does seem to suggest there is potential to further grow the Borders list. The most glaring gap is **Avocet**, with all UK recording areas having the bird on their list, with only the exception of **Borders**, Caithness and Clyde Islands!



Sardinian Warbler, St Abb's Head, Jun-Nov 2013 (DK Graham) - 1st record

Appendix 1: Overall Approach and Use of Tetrads

The approach to recording and analysis, detailed in the previous two reports (BBR37 for 2020 and BBR38 for 2021), has been continued here. This approach is summarised below, for convenience, but the previous two reports should be referred to for any further details.

The main changes were as follows:

- adoption of **tetrads** as the basic unit when dealing with sites
- representation of **tetrad occupation** as a percentage of all tetrads “surveyed”.
- where relevant, the use of **tetrad maps** to represent the distribution of a species.

Tetrads: - A tetrad is a block of land of 2km x 2km (i.e. 4km²), which is often used as a unit for biological recording. Within each 10km grid square there are therefore 25 tetrads. There are c. 1300 tetrads in the Borders region (from 67 x 10km squares), although some will overlap with adjacent counties such as Lothian or Northumberland and others along the coast may be partially over the sea.

E	J	P	U	Z
D	I	N	T	Y
C	H	M	S	X
B	G	L	R	W
A	F	K	Q	V

Layout of tetrad suffix letters in a 10km square

Each tetrad has been given a standardised name to ensure that data from different observers can be matched together and also giving continuity over the years. This will also assist any future atlas work and targeted species surveys. A full list of standardised names for these tetrads, and names for sections of the R Tweed and R Teviot is available on the Google Groups site, *Borders Birds*.

Although there are advantages to using tetrads, there are some downsides, as well. These were explained in the previous reports. The editor is taking a practical and pragmatic approach to describing the various sites where records are coming from - using the standardised tetrad name in the majority of cases, but using the specific site names (e.g. Yetholm Loch, Bemersyde Moss, Mire Loch), where this is clearly the site referred to. The key thing is that the sightings data is retained against the standardised tetrad names for easy cross reference in the future.

Tetrad occupation: - As described in the previous reports, analysis tools have been developed to try and ensure a consistency in measuring the amount of territory occupied by each species at the various times of the year, recognising that the number of tetrads being covered by observers has steadily increased each year (see table below). This has then led to the calculation of “% occupation of surveyed tetrads for year/season” for each of the commoner species.

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
515	510	511	780	807	840	867	881

Total of all tetrads with submitted records, 2015-2022.

Note that the expression “surveyed tetrad” does not mean that the tetrad was necessarily surveyed in a full and systematic way; it could, although unlikely, have a dataset made up of only one record. In most cases, only part of the full tetrad would have been “surveyed” and in many cases not all sightings and evidence of breeding would have been submitted.

For the last two years this information has been set out in a series of tables e.g. for Song Thrush in 2021.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
% occupation of surveyed tetrads for year	21.9%	21.0%	19.6%	18.3%	24.0%	34.8%	40.0%

January-March:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
% occupation of winter-spring surveyed tetrads	10.4%	11.6%	13.8%	11.9%	12.0%	26.6%	39.4%

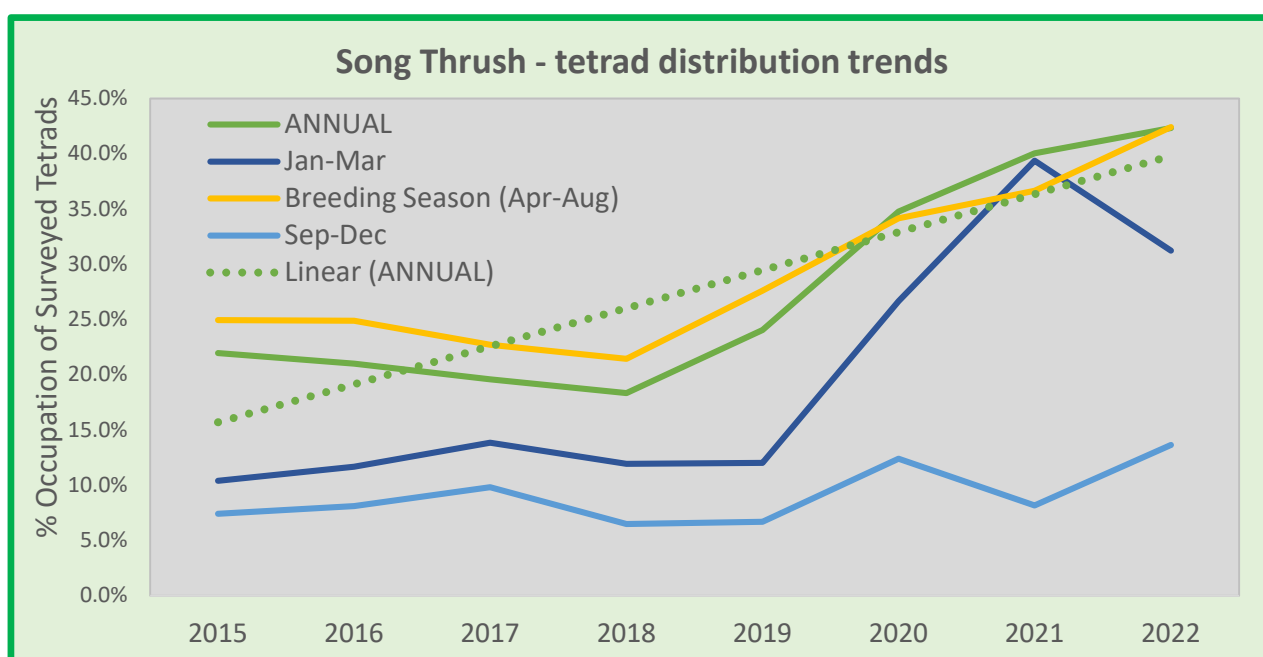
April-August:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
% occupation of breeding season surveyed tetrads	24.9%	24.9%	22.7%	21.4%	27.6%	34.2%	36.6%

September-December:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
% occupation of autumn-winter surveyed tetrads	7.4%	8.1%	9.8%	6.5%	6.7%	12.4%	8.1%

It has been decided to present this same information in a graph for each species, to better illustrate the trends in distribution and highlight any seasonal differences. A linear regression has been added on the overall annual trend. Resident birds, like the Song Thrush, will have a graph like the one below. Summer migrants will only have one (yellow) line recording the trend, whilst winter visitors will have two lines (light blue and dark blue) illustrating the trends in the respective winter periods. The text will include comments on these trend graphs, as appropriate, and to add some interpretation.



Tetrad maps: - As described in the previous reports, analysis tools have been developed to try and ensure a consistency of approach in managing the location data. The 2019 *Borders Bird Report* introduced a series of maps at a 10 sq. km resolution in order to show the distributions of records submitted, number of species recorded and so on. This proved popular with readers and has prompted the introduction of maps at tetrad scale in order to give some indication of geographical patterns of species records.

All of these changes are an attempt to make the Report more analytical and less purely descriptive. As such it is a departure from many typical bird reports and may not be what many readers are used to, but will hopefully be a more useful contribution to our awareness of the local avifauna.

Appendix 2: Guidelines for *BirdTrack* Submissions

The following guidelines are useful when submitting records via *BirdTrack*:

- give a site name which is as useful as possible, i.e. be as precise as is practicable; this is particularly useful if your site extends outside the boundaries of a tetrad (2km x 2km grid square). If you are unsure where your site is in relation to the OS grid of tetrads then you might want to use the Location Search tab in *BirdTrack* when establishing a new site or editing an existing one, i.e. if you know the likely tetrad of the site then input that into the “search grid reference...”. Alternatively, you can download the *Cucaera* app from www.cucaera.co.uk/grp. By zooming in and out you can see the location of tetrads. Make sure that you set the app at Previous version by clicking in the top right-hand corner.
- if your site extends outside of a tetrad then it is a good idea to give the terminal points or some locations at the approximate extremities when naming your site, e.g. Sprouston-Redden (Kelso).
- do not use site names that are meaningful to you only but not to others, e.g. “home” or “front garden”.
- please get into the habit of including breeding evidence; of all records submitted during the breeding season, only a small minority provide any information on breeding, although this has been improving in recent years.
- give the number of birds present; even a rough approximation is better than leaving this bit of information blank - you can give an idea of limits in the comments section, e.g. 10+, +/-20, etc.
- where possible give a complete bird list, i.e. all birds seen or heard rather than just the less common species.
- If you are a *WeBS* counter it would be easier for collation purposes to submit your records on *BirdTrack* and then use the facility on *WeBS* to automatically download those records. Refer to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MFIF5NVbMKc&feature=youtu.be>

Appendix 3: Use of Bird Identification Apps

The SOC, and partner organisations such as BTO, recognise the increasing presence and usage of tools/apps that use audio and/or image inputs to provide a species identification (or likelihood thereof), with the *Merlin Bird ID* application being a popular example. It is recognised that they provide great utility in aiding species’ identification and in learning about natural history more widely.

Whilst these tools are growing in maturity all the time, they are still too unreliable to provide confirmed identification on their own. Observers who use such apps should try to obtain a conclusive sighting or hear the song or calls well enough to be certain of the identification from their own experience, although clearly an app may provide an initial impetus to the identification process.

BBS/WBBS surveyors must not use Merlin/Auto ID apps for identification when in the field, with a survey conducted purely and solely by human observers. Use of such tools should only be used for confirmatory purposes and, where using it for identification of call or song, should be accompanied by a sighting of the bird in question. The sole use of apps would also be considered as a fundamental change in methodology. As such, even when it is deemed to be more accurate, field trials of its use are likely to be required to establish what difference it makes and how it could be taken into account when calculating population trends.

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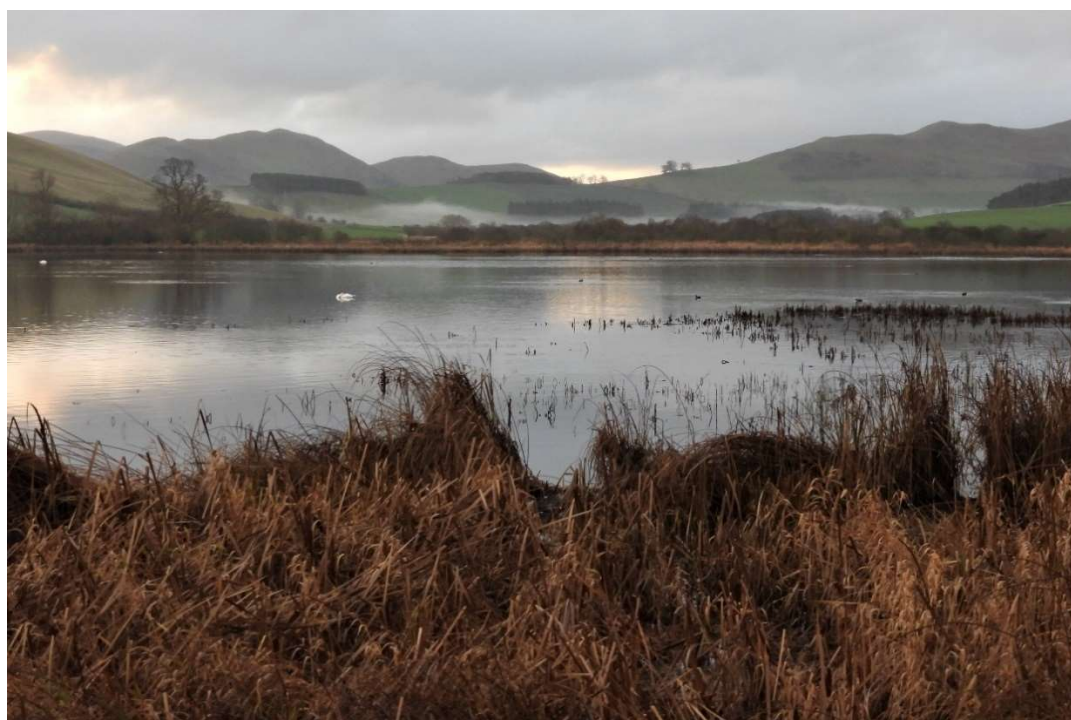
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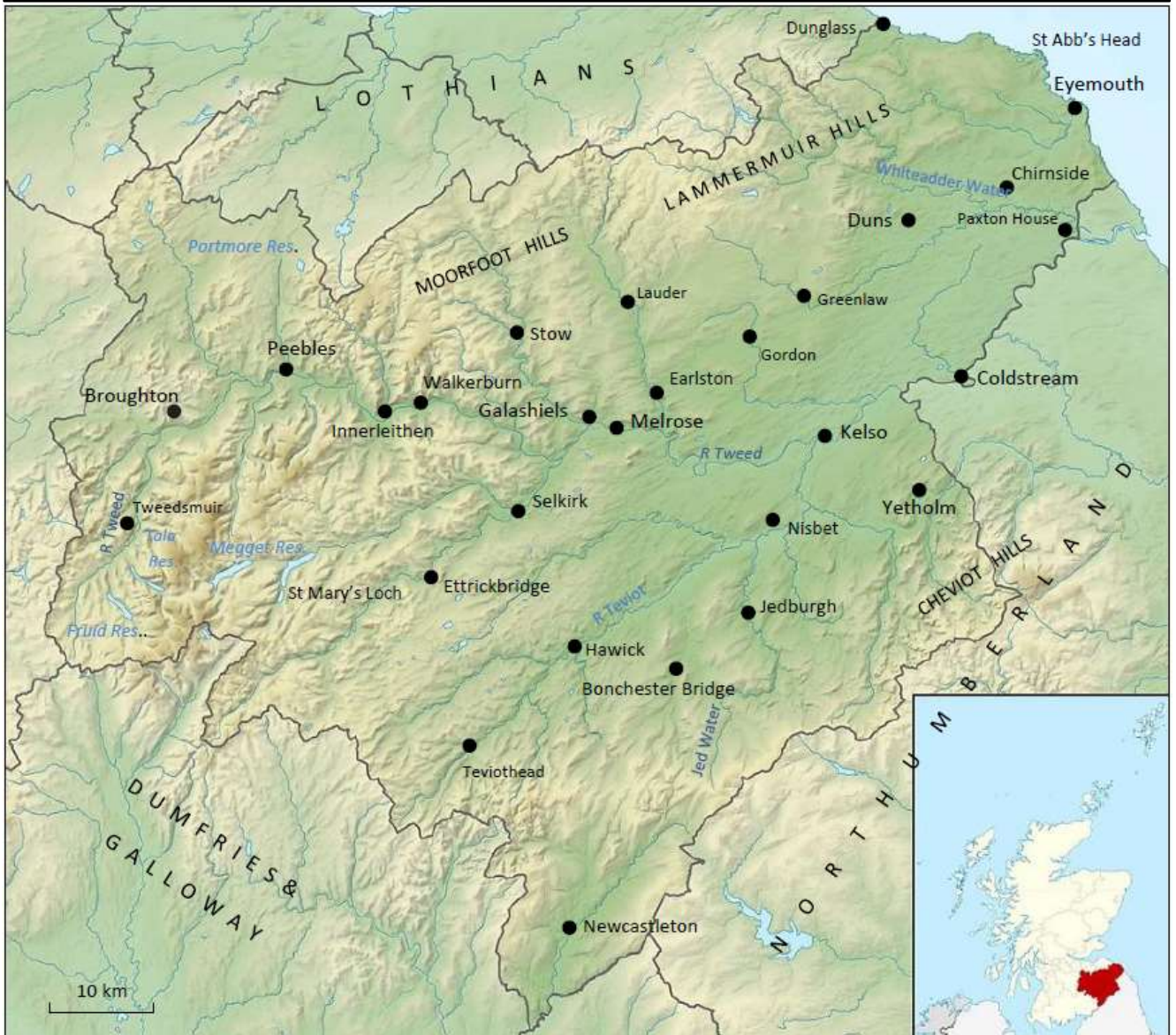
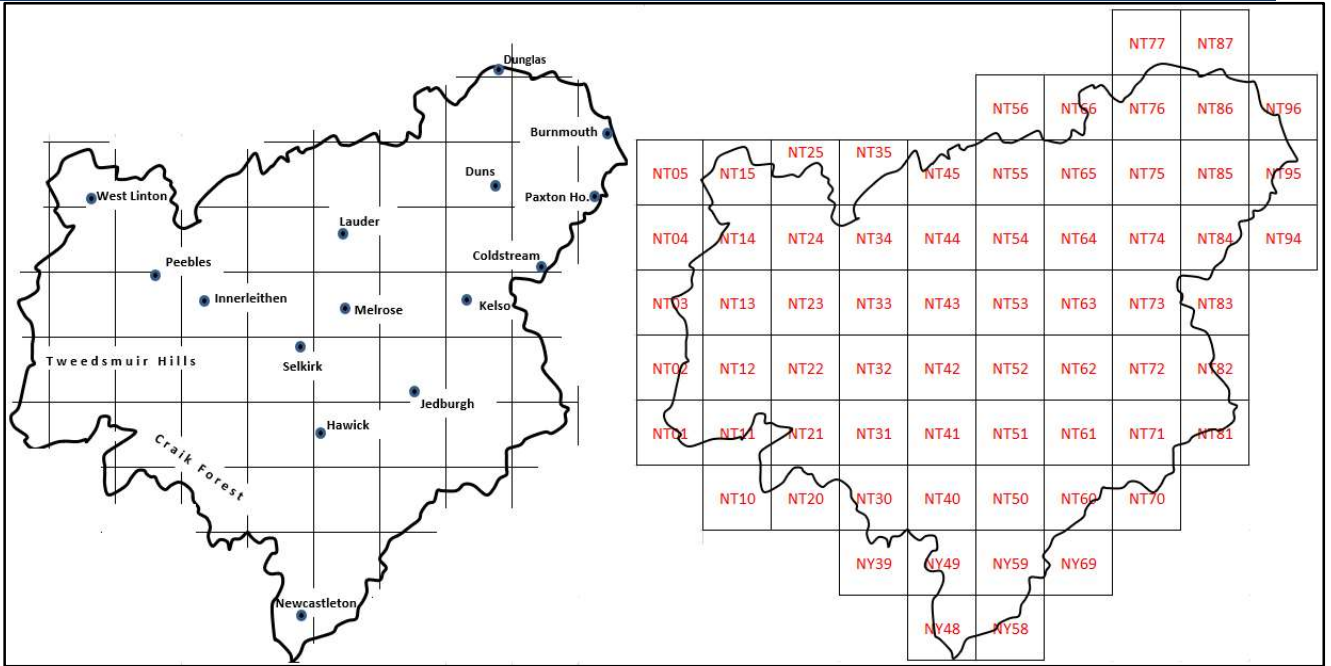
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Yetholm Loch, December (R Jackson)

Map and Gazetteer



Map and Gazetteer

The table below is designed to assist readers in locating some of the more frequently mentioned sites and locators used in the Report. It might be useful to use in conjunction with the maps opposite.

Name	Tetrad or 10-km square	Name	Tetrad or 10-km square
Ashiestiel-Peel	NT43H	Leader Water	NT53-54
Abbotsford	NT53C	Leithen Water	NT24-33-34
Alemoor Loch	NT31X	Liddesdale	NY48-58-59
Ancrum	NT62H	Longformacus	NT65Y
Ashkirk	NT42R	Lyne Water	NT14-15
Bemersyde	NT63B-63C	Manor Water	NT23
Birgham Haugh	NT73Z	Megget Reservoir	NT12-22
Blackadder Water	NT74-75-85	Melrose	NT53
Broughton	NT13D	Moorfoot Hills	NT24-34
Burnmouth	NT96K	Newcastleton	NY48Y
Coldingham Bay	NT96D/I	Newmains (Reston)	NT86Q
Coldstream	NT84	North Esk Reservoir	NT15P
Craik Forest	NT30-31	Peebles	NT24K
Duns	NT75W	Portmore Loch	NT35
Earlston	NT53U	River Teviot	NT30-40-41-51-52-62
Eildon Hills	NT53L	Selkirk	NT42U
Ettrick Water	NT21-31-32-42	St Abb's Head	NT96E
Eye Water	NT86-96	St Boswells	NT53V
Eyemouth	NT96L-96M	St Mary's Loch	NT22
Folly Loch	NT62I-62N	Stantling Craig Resr.	NT43J
Fruid Reservoir	NT01-02-11	Stow	NT44
Gala Water	NT35-43-44-45	Talla Reservoir	NT12
Galashiels	NT43-53	Teviot Haughs	NT62
Gordon	NT64L	Traquair	NT33H
Greenlaw	NT74	The Hirsell	NT84F
Hawick	NT51C	Tweed Haughs	NT73
Hen Poo (Duns)	NT75	Tweedbank	NT53
Hoselaw Loch	NT83A	Tweedsmuir	NT02X
Hule Moss	NT74-75	Watch Water Reservoir	NT65
Innerleithen	NT33I	Wauchope Forest	NT50-60
Jedburgh	NT62K	West Linton	NT15K
Kale Water	NT70-71-72	West Water Reservoir	NT15B
Kelso	NT73H	Yarrow Water	NT22-32-42-43
Lammermuir Hills	NT55-56-65-66	Yetholm	NT82
Lauder	NT54I	Yetholm Loch	NT72

E	J	P	U	Z
D	I	N	T	Y
C	H	M	S	X
B	G	L	R	W
A	F	K	Q	V

Layout of tetrad letters in a 10km square



Top - Kingfisher, Ladykirk, December (J Montana)
Bottom Left - Barn Owl (DK Graham)
Bottom Right - Wryneck, Mire Dean, September (DK Graham)



For further information about the activities of the
Scottish Ornithologists' Club and the Borders Branch visit
the SOC website at

www.the-soc.org.uk

