

# **Birds in Greater Manchester County Report 2010**



**Greater Manchester Bird Recording Group**





# Birds in Greater Manchester 2010

## Thirty-fifth Greater Manchester Bird Report

Report Production Team: Steve Atkins, Ian McKerchar, Steve Suttill

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Front Cover: Pied-billed Grebe, Hollingworth Lake, November, by Mike Lawrence

Inside Front Cover: Waxwing, Horwich, November, by Ivan Ellison

Rear Cover: Shorelark, Cutacre, February, by Adrian Dancy

Inside Rear Cover: Map of Birdwatching Sites in Greater Manchester by Nick Scarle

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# Acknowledgements

This 2010 County Bird Report is the first to be produced under the Greater Manchester Bird Recording Group's new three man Report Production Team. It is though, the result of a considerably larger team effort and a huge part of that team is of course those observers who contribute their annual bird records and/or participate in various bird surveys within the county; our sincere thanks go to them all, for without their contribution there could be no county report in the first place. A full list of those contributors appears at the back of this report. Special thanks, however, go to the following for their contribution to the production of this 2010 annual county bird report:

**Species Text Writers:** The work the following ten writers undertook to produce the species accounts within this report cannot be underestimated. Their analysis of many thousands of records forms the very basis of this report.

**Rob and Sonia Adderley** (Arctic Skua to Arctic Tern),

**Steve Atkins** (Red Kite to Peregrine; Barn Owl to Short-eared Owl; Goldcrest; Wood Warbler to Reed Warbler; Spotted Flycatcher; Pied Flycatcher),

**Steve Christmas** (Mute Swan to Ruddy Duck),

**Henry Cook** (Oystercatcher to Dotterel; Knot to Turnstone)

**Simon Hitchen** (Gannet to Black-necked Grebe)

**Ian McKerchar** (Feral Pigeon to Cuckoo; Swift to Lesser Spotted Woodpecker; Skylark to Red-rumped Swallow; Waxwing; Wren; Dipper to Mistle Thrush; Robin; Black Redstart to Dunnock; Yellow Wagtail to Rock Pipit; Black Swan to Canary),

**Tom Morton** (Blue Tit to Willow Tit; Long-tailed Tit; Nuthatch to Treecreeper; Starling; House Sparrow to Tree Sparrow)

**Bill Myerscough** (Chaffinch to Corn Bunting),

**Mark Rigby** (Water Rail to Crane),

**Steve Suttill** (Red Grouse to Pheasant; Golden Plover to Lapwing; Magpie to Raven).

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**Others:** Judith Smith for her assistance in contributing to the collation of 2010 county bird records and Nick Scarle for the production of the map of Birdwatching Sites in Greater Manchester.

*Steve Atkins, Ian McKerchar, Steve Suttill (Report Production Team)*



# Review of the Year 2010

*Ian McKerchar*

The discovery of true national 'mega' rarities in the county is a very rare thing indeed and so one of the undoubted highlights of the year was the finding of not one but two of these genuine 'megas'. They could not have been more 'chalk and cheese' though. One proved to be extremely observable and popular, being successfully seen by hundreds of birders from all points of the UK. The other by comparison, was seen by only a solitary observer, yet had it remained for long enough easily possessed the highly sought after rarity value sufficient to draw thousands of observers and in the process become one of the most popular rarities ever seen in the UK. Both did have one thing in common though, that they were each identified from images after their original discovery. So it was that the excellent Hollingworth Lake Pied-billed Grebe and the frankly staggering male Dusky Thrush in Leigh brought the total species now recorded in the county to 310, both rather unsurprisingly being new to the county.

Highlights of any year aren't always necessarily rarities though and 2010 was blessed with many highlights, affording something for every birder. The opportunity to record all six species of grebe on the British List within a single county in a calendar year is something which only a handful of UK counties can boast but Greater Manchester and with it a few fortunate county birders, did just that. Autumn migration through the Horwich Moors was frankly incredible, on a scale unlike anything ever witnessed in the county before and on more than one occasion this solitary county site bettered the daily migration totals that any one of the very best Bird Observatories around the UK coastline could muster. The breeding season brought several notable successes; none perhaps more so than the county's first and long overdue confirmed breeding success for Hobby. Several county record bird flock totals were surpassed during the year but none came anywhere near close to the impressive sight of 241 Black-tailed Godwits on Dover Basin, a new county record which will certainly take some beating!

194 species were recorded in the county during the year but notable omissions from that total included Long-tailed Duck, an unfortunate no show for the returning Wigan Flashes drake Green-winged Teal of winters 2008/2009, Quail, any divers, Caspian Gull, Spotted Redshank, any phalaropes and Nightjar.

## January

The very cold, snowy conditions of the second half of December 2009 continued until the middle of January 2010. The first week of the month brought some of the heaviest snowfalls for many years to the county and on the 7th a temperature of -17.6°C was recorded at Woodford. From the middle of the month there was a slight thaw but most waters remained frozen and as a result many birds suffered.

The first week of January brought with it the first county rarity, when a Great White Egret flew strongly NW over Pennington Flash on 7th and was seen by two observers, one of whom was fortunately armed with his camera and obtained a record photograph. The drake Scaup at High Rid Reservoir from November 2009 finally departed from the site on the 2nd, after spending a total of 50 days there. The severe January weather brought plenty of hardship to the county's birds, forcing many into larger flocks than normally encountered. Greenfinch on Worsley Moss built up to 400, Corn Buntings on Carrington Moss to 50 and the ice-free filtration beds at Hope Carr sewage works brought welcome relief for 200 Pied Wagtails, 10 Grey Wagtails, 100 Meadow Pipits and a single Green Sandpiper. Three Iceland Gulls were found during the month with a juvenile at Audenshaw Reservoirs on the 24th and 27th, a second winter at Castleshaw Reservoirs on the 26th and 27th but most intriguing though was

a juvenile stood out on the ice at Pennington Flash on the 6th. Apparently displaying brownish markings to the primaries, it clearly portrayed features indicative of Kumlien's Gull *Larus glaucooides kumlieni*, but despite being photographed it could not be confirmed and rather frustratingly became another which 'got away'. On the penultimate day of the month though, two sharp eyed observers picked out yet another of the year's rarity highlights thanks to a superb Shore Lark in the snow at Cutacre Open Cast Coal Site. Though it was seen only by a lucky few county birders before darkness fell on the 30th, it had the decency to remain faithful to the site until the 3rd February and with it drew grateful admirers from far afield.

## February

The cold weather from January remained and it was one of the coolest Februarys since 1991. Rainfall was below average and the county was therefore drier than usually expected at the time of year.

Usually a quiet month in the county, the continuing harsh weather brought one or two surprises and further larger than normally expected flocks. On the 1st, two Taiga Bean Geese dropped into Westlake, Hindley, a most unlikely location but their stay was short lived after being disturbed by a dog-walker. A Common Redpoll was picked out of the Lessers at Pearson's Flash on the 7th and a Marsh Harrier was unseasonal at Bryn Marsh from the 23rd-24th. Returning waders seemingly ignored the fact that many waters were still completely iced over with the first returning Oystercatcher stood out on the ice at Hollingworth Lake on the 11th and Ringed Plovers already returning to many sites. Tufted Duck, forced to find ice free sites, accumulated on the Manchester Ship Canal at Barton Locks and peaked at an excellent 748, whilst Nook Lane at Astley Moss attracted 400 Skylark and 200 Linnet to a single small stubble field. As an all too scarce county species, a Bar-tailed Godwit met an unfortunate end when its remains were found as the result of a Peregrine kill on Bolton Parish Church on the 1st.

## March

March remained cold into the first half and this, coupled with the previous very cold winter, resulted in a late start to the growth of plants and trees. The second half of the month saw more changeable weather with rain at times and culminated in strong winds, though generally it was a fairly sunny month.

The first half of the month was generally quiet, with a Snow Bunting at Brun Clough Reservoir on the 1st and 3rd and a Red Kite over Brownhouse Wham Reservoir on the 11th. On the 12th, Mediterranean Gulls in the roost at Pennington Flash peaked at a total of five and a Common Crane was very fortuitously seen flying north over the East Lancashire Road at Swinton whilst the observer was stuck in commuter traffic (justifying always having your binoculars in your car no matter what!). Three Twite at Elton Reservoir on the 19th involved a colour ringed bird and an Osprey took fish from Clegg Hall Fisheries on the 27th and 28th. The second half of the month saw the spring wader passage typically gather momentum with 22 Ringed Plover at Kingsway Business Park on the 22nd and 23 Oystercatcher at Pennington Flash and 121 Golden Plover at Ludworth Moor both on the 27th. Little Ringed Plovers put in their first appearance of the year on the 18th at Woodford, with Kingsway Business Park and Pennington Flash recording their first the very next day. This being generally the best month for Kittiwakes in the county saw the only two live records as something of a disappointment. Both were recorded at Audenshaw Reservoirs, on the 21st and 29th, but they were the lucky ones, as the third record of the month involved the remains of one found in the nest of the Rochdale Town Hall Peregrines!



## April

April was a generally settled month and was mostly fine and dry. It was a particularly sunny month though and was the sunniest April since 1929. Occasional temperatures of over 20°C during the month were welcomed by birds and birders alike!

April saw a remarkably heavy passage of Ring Ouzels through the county, the largest single flock consisting of 10 at Lees Hill on the 11th-14th and perhaps the most popular bird involving a lowland male at Astley Moss on the 28th which stayed faithful to a single ploughed field for 4 days. Little Gulls were recorded at Pennington Flash on the 6th, Elton Reservoir on the 18th and singles at Audenshaw Reservoirs and Pennington Flash both on the 29th. An influx of White Wagtails brought 41 to Audenshaw Reservoirs on the 11th and the first Cuckoos of the year made their presence known at Astley Moss on the 14th and at Pennington Flash the following day. The Horwich Moors logged 72 Wheatears in only one and a half hours in the mid-afternoon of the 19th but Ashworth Moor Reservoir went one better and recorded a new county record count of 150 on the same date. The very next day brought the rarest bird of the month though, with Audenshaw Reservoirs supplying the county and site's fourth and second record respectively of Red-rumped Swallow (and the first to be photographed in the county to boot). A Red Kite was also discovered on the 20th with one over Hurstwood, Whitefield. Waders were once again prominent in the last week of the month with weather conditions on the 29th bringing a prominent flush of Ringed Plover, Sanderling and Dunlin records to many sites in the county and a breeding plumaged male Bar-tailed Godwit to Warland Reservoir on the 24th. The now annual gathering of Whimbrel in fields at Astley Moss however, peaked at only a below par 10 individuals this year. Single Sandwich Terns visited Pennington Flash on the 24th and Hollingworth Lake on the 30th with Little Terns putting in appearances at Audenshaw Reservoirs on the 25th and three at Pennington Flash on the same date. After failing last year, the Wigan Town Centre Ravens finally saw breeding success, with 3 young seen on the 25th.

## May

The first half of May was generally cool with a north-east or northerly airflow. Temperatures rose during the second half of the month and this resulted in a very pleasant warm spell. It was the driest May for some years with below average rainfall and sunshine totals were close to, or a little above, seasonal average.

Beginning well with a pair of Avocets surprising everyone by staying the day at Audenshaw Reservoirs on the 2nd despite the usual disturbance, the show was quickly stolen by six Dotterel on Brown Wardle Hill on the 7th, rising to nine the very next day. Despite staying only four days, the fairly easy access to their chosen location coupled with their typically approachable nature and wonderful appearance made them rightly very popular indeed. As said previously though, not all highlights are necessarily rare or scarce birds and the 5000 Swifts at Pennington Flash on the 3rd proved the point, equalling the county record last achieved five years ago. A pair of Red-breasted Mergansers at Elton Reservoir on the 7th was well received; especially considering this species is increasingly difficult to catch up with in the county. On the 8th, a Wood Sandpiper dropped into Pennington Flash in what was to become a decent month for the species with another at Lightshaw Hall Flash/Dover Basin 13-15th and one at Elton Reservoir on the 29th. Audenshaw monopolised the Turnstone records during the month, recording singles on the 7th, 13th, 14th and 19th and mid-month brought a drake Garganey to Pennington Flash which epitomised the term 'showing well'. On the 15th of the month another real highlight brought joy to many county birders as a colour-ringed Osprey, originally ringed as a chick in Scotland in June 2007, found the fishing at Dover Basin to its liking and set up temporary home for four days. Black-tailed Godwits featured heavily throughout the county during the month, with many sites experiencing unsurpassed passage

numbers but few could ever have predicted the events of the 24th when an astonishing 241 built up on the mud exposed Dover Basin and neighbouring Lightshaw Hall Flash. A Kittiwake was found at Pennington Flash on the 29th and a Turtle Dove, now a genuine county rarity, was an excellent find at Haigh on the 31st. Breeding successes during May included proven breeding of Goosander at 7 county sites, the discovery of 8 territories of Grasshopper Warbler at Barlow's Farm alone and a nest of 9 Water Rail eggs located at Bickershaw possibly the first ever found in the county.

## June

High pressure dominated for much of June, producing plenty of dry and sunny weather, particularly over the second half of the month when temperatures rose significantly. The weather did turn unsettled towards the end of the month though but rainfall was still below average with less than 50% of the seasonal average.

Typically, June lived up to its reputation as a generally quieter month. A Red Kite over Woodford on the 4th was a nice find for the observer whilst enjoying a fluid replacement break at a local pub half way through a bike ride! A Little Tern put in an appearance at Elton Reservoir on the 6th and a fine adult Black Tern was at Pennington Flash from the 14th-17th. A female Marsh Harrier at the Wigan Flashes mid-June moved to Astley Moss East Peat Pools on the 24th (identified by wing moult as the same individual) and amazingly remained in the area for just over three months, decimating the local Moorhen and Lapwing chick population in the process. A Bittern at Bryn Marsh during the month was noteworthy as was confirmed breeding of a pair of Common Sandpipers at the decidedly lowland site of Banky Meadow.

## July

July saw the largely settled, static weather patterns of spring and early summer replaced by a more changeable Atlantic type. Overall, it was duller and wetter than average with over twice the average rainfall for the time of year. Torrential rain on the 20th brought flash floods to the county and later in the month, strong south-westerly winds were also encountered.

Early in the month, a Red Kite flew over Romiley on the 6th whilst on the 9th; a Bittern was seen and photographed at Pennington Flash. A male Ruff spent 18 days at Horrocks Flash and the annual gathering of post breeding Little Ringed Plovers prior to their departure from the county built up to a maximum of 21 at Rumworth Lodge on the 9th. Common Scoters usually feature strongly during July and this year was no exception with maximums of 11 at Hollingworth Lake on the 2nd and eight at Ashworth Moor Reservoir on the 14th plus smaller numbers at four other county sites. Sand Martin colonies at a single site in the county remarkably produced a total of 1320 nest holes on the 19th, more than the rest of the county put together! Return passage Wood Sandpipers featured with two juveniles, the only multiple sighting of the year, at Astley Moss East Peat Pools from the 19th-21st and a single at Pennington Flash on the 19th. A Sanderling at Audenshaw Reservoirs on the 17th was slightly unseasonal. July also saw a flurry of Little Egret sightings, probably coinciding with post-breeding dispersal, with two seen briefly at Etherow Country Park on the 19th and then three sightings all on the 29th with singles at Altrincham ETW and Hollingworth Lake and 2 at Horrocks Flash which lingered for a few days. Coal Tit numbers hit unprecedented figures at two county sites, both recording record single flocks, containing many juveniles; with 72 at Yeoman Hey Reservoir on the 23rd and 50 at Walker Fold Woods on the 25th. Long over due confirmed breeding of a pair of Hobbys in the county was secured late in the month after considerable effort over the past few years in a particular area, reiterating just how difficult these exciting but secretive raptors can often be to locate whilst nesting.



## August

Areas of low pressure dominating for most of the month saw August characterised by cloudy and rather cool weather with showers or longer spells of rain at times. As a result, it was the coolest August since 1993. Very heavy rain on the 12th brought flash flooding to parts of the county as about 50mm of rain fell during the afternoon alone.

The beginning of the month continued the Little Egret sightings with a juvenile at Cutacre on the 1st-3rd, a single at Broad Ees Dole on the 19th and four circling Elton Reservoir on the 3rd the largest flock ever recorded in the county. A French colour-ringed Black-tailed Godwit was present amongst still good numbers of the species at Horrocks Flash plus Ruff numbers there fluctuated between one to four individuals practically all month. A huge flock of 500 Goldfinch at Cutacre during much of August was quite a colourful spectacle! Return passage waders continued to move through with another Wood Sandpiper at Pennington Flash on the 8th-12th; a county maximum of 10 Green Sandpipers at Altrincham ETW on the 17th; four Ruff at Horrocks Flash also on the 17th; a single juvenile Dotterel on the Horwich Moors on the 18th, which was the first ever autumnal occurrence of this species in the county; 1000 Lapwing at Horrocks Flash on the 19th; a Turnstone at Audenshaw Reservoirs and four Greenshank at Pennington Flash, both on the 25th; a Knot over Georges Lane, Horwich Moors on the 27th and a juvenile Curlew Sandpiper briefly with a Dunlin at Astley Moss East Peat Pools on the 29th coinciding with a national influx of the species. A House Martin flock at Pennington Flash rose to 1600 on the 14th, the highest recorded number for five years and a very confiding and therefore rightly popular second calendar year Little Gull settled off the car park at the same location from the 15th to the month end whilst an adult was present at Horrocks Flash on the 16th. Careful surveillance of a pair of Black Redstarts in Ashton-under-Lyne throughout the summer finally paid dividends with breeding confirmed with three juveniles on the 19th. A Black Tern graced Elton Reservoir on the 26th and in the last week of the month, hirundine numbers began to swell significantly, one result being an impressive roost of 5000 Swallows in a Maize crop at Bowlee on the 31st, a count last matched in the county some 21 years ago. August also gave birth to the remarkable migration through the Horwich Moors above Bolton, migration never witnessed on such a scale in the county's history. Highlights during the month at this site included 51 Willow Warblers on the 5th and if four Redstarts together in the same hedgerow at Higher Meadows on the 15th wasn't enough, they shared the same small line of Hawthorns with 10 Spotted Flycatchers and two Pied Flycatchers, all feeding on a hatch of flying ants! Spotted Flycatcher migration began abruptly on the aforementioned 15th and extended beyond the end of the month, peaking with a fine Horwich Moors area total of 31 individuals on the 25th. Tree Pipit migration through the county at this time of year has always been a discrete affair, yet all that changed this year with a total of 55 individuals recorded at this one site alone. A full Horwich Moors count of Whinchat on the 26th produced a total of 10 whilst a count of Wheatear there on the 27th reached 99 and the total for the latter species recorded during the entire month hit an excellent 563.

## September

Autumnal weather continued into September with a changeable month with a few settled spells but plenty of rain too. Temperatures were about 1°C above normal but rainfall was up to 150% of the normally expected amount. Yet again, the county saw further wet weather on the 13th and 14th causing some localised flooding. The end of the month saw clearer skies and a more northerly airflow begin to dominate.

On the 2nd an Osprey flew south over Georges Lane, Horwich Moors and five days later, three Greenshank were found at Rainsford's Flash. An excellent 'tiger-striped faced' juvenile Red-necked Grebe entertained county birders at Pennington Flash from the 8th, departing on

the 24th and relocating to Woolston Eyes, Cheshire on the 25th. Pennington Flash produced the year's only Wryneck on the 12th, unfortunately only to be enjoyed by a single observer. A Knot was discovered at Elton Reservoir on the 14th and on the 18th Audenshaw Reservoirs produced a red-letter day with a juvenile Little Stint and an excellent, if typically fly-through, dark-phase adult Arctic Skua. The month saw a good run of Black Terns through the county, with 34 individuals from five sites, including a flock of 26 at Audenshaw Reservoirs on the 22nd. On the 27th, Audenshaw Reservoirs also played host to a Bar-tailed Godwit but the very next day, county birders rushed to catch up with a juvenile Gannet found late in the afternoon at Crompton Lodges, Moses Gate Country Park. Having always previously been one-day rarities to the county, hopes were not high of it still being present on the 29th but rather miraculously it was and became suitably enjoyed by many before departing later the same day. The migration through the Horwich Moors continued at a pace through the month with the first week seeing the last of the Redstart and Spotted Flycatchers, the latter peaking at an astonishing Horwich Moors total of 36 on the 1st. Tree Pipits continued to feature highly with the 2nd producing the highest daily total of the autumn and a new county record count with 15 recorded, including 10 in a single flock and their total numbers for the month through this single site reached 39, meaning a total of 94 had passed through these moors during the autumn alone. Meadow Pipit passage was no less impressive either, peaking with 1750 moving through Smithills Moor all day on the 17th. A huge national influx of Lapland Buntings during the month brought two to the Horwich Moors, with multi-observed birds seen on the 17th and 28-29th and a single Snow Bunting also passing through there on the 25th. Pennington Flash went on to record single Little Gulls on four occasions during the month.

## October

October began on another wet note with some widespread heavy rain. Pressure building from the east brought more settled weather though and some warm days. Average temperatures were close to normal and overall, it was actually a drier month than usually encountered in the county. Later in the month, temperatures dropped with the introduction of a northerly airflow.

On the 2nd, an excellent total of 134 Great Crested Grebes at Pennington Flash was to be the highest count of the year, whilst the same day saw a Black Tern also at Pennington Flash and a Snow Bunting over Heaton Park Reservoir. A further Black Tern was also found at Worthington Lakes on the 6th. A Shag was another remarkable and unfortunately brief visitor to Westlake on the 8th whilst an adult Red-necked Grebe was decidedly elusive at Pennington Flash on the 9th-10th. A Slavonian Grebe was found at Audenshaw Reservoirs on the 20th and on the same day, 40 Whooper Swans over Whitefield was an impressive sight. The 21st saw another Red Kite in the county, this time one over Wildersmoor which, for a change, was not a single observer sighting! Two Swift records during the month were the first October records for ten years with singles through Heaton Park Reservoir on the 9th and Watergrove Reservoir on the 10th. Passerine migration remained constant and impressive through the Horwich Moors during the month, with nine Twite south on the 4th and a single Snow Bunting on the 7th palling against the magnificent Fieldfare passage experienced from the second week of the month though to late November. Culminating in a colossal daily maximum count of 10,263 moving through on the 20th alone, the total number passing through this site during the month was a frankly staggering 26,125 with the county's October total reaching 28,645.



## November

The first three weeks of the month were characterised by areas of low pressure moving across the county from the Atlantic, giving plenty of rain and some strong westerly winds at times, though it remained generally mild. The final week of the month saw temperatures drop considerably due to northerly, then easterly, airflows, bringing hard frosts in places.

Elton Reservoir kick started the month with seven Bar-tailed Godwits circling over on the 6th. Hollingworth Lake then produced one of the county's finest ever rarities on the 7th, with a first winter Pied-billed Grebe entertaining many hundreds of delighted visitors from across the UK until it was last seen on the 21st. A Common Sandpiper at Chorlton Water Park on the 8th was unseasonal and Pink-footed Geese were in full swing moving to and fro across the county's airspace, with 2089 counted from 19 skeins in only an hour over Whitefield on the 10th. Rooley Moor hosted two Snow Buntings on the 14th and Starlings at Winton built up to an exceptional 10,000 on the 24th. Ever enjoyable, Waxwings spread throughout the county during November; the highest monthly total being 280 perched in conifers at Georges Lane, Horwich Moors on the 26th.

## December

The UK as a whole recorded the coldest December in over 100 years and the county didn't miss out on the freezing conditions either. Despite this though, it was generally drier and sunnier than normal with less than a third of the average rainfall recorded. The combination of low temperatures and frequent snowfalls though brought more disruption for both the county's birds and birders.

December turned out to be a bumper month, fuelled somewhat by the onset of the freezing weather again. Pride of place above all else though went to a particularly astonishing find only a mile from Leigh town centre. Britain's 9th Dusky Thrush, a beautiful male too, was photographed in a lucky observer's back garden but was not fully realised until it was identified from the images on the 20th January 2011. Nevertheless, that took nothing away from its true rarity value, being the first record in the UK since 1987, or the fact that it was a major coup for the county. A Common Redpoll was in a Hale garden on the 1st, 60 Reed Buntings at Red Moss on the 3rd was noteworthy and an unseasonal Knot was at Elton Reservoir on the 6th. The cruel weather forced many birds into unusually large flocks and 700 Skylark on Little Woolden Moss on the 9th; 100 Moorhen at Red Seas, Crooke on the 13th; a new county record (doubling the old record) of 74 Mandarin on the Poise Brook, Goyt Valley on the 19th; and a staggering 500 Yellowhammer at Grove House Farm, Dunham on the 1st, were all evidence of this. At Elton Reservoir, a Fieldfare flock on the 2nd-25th reached the county maximum for the year of 1000 and a single Bewick's Swan with 15 Whooper Swans at Pennington Flash on the 23rd was a genuine and much sought after county rarity. A male Black Redstart returned for its second year to winter in a Hulme garden and a Bittern at Hope Carr NR on the 29th was an excellent record for the site. Three Smew were found in the county during the month, all redheads. Pearson's Flash entertained the first from the 8th-23rd; the second at Clifton Marina, initially found on the 23rd and staying until the 8th January 2011, became hugely popular during its stay due to its incredibly confiding nature in a tiny pool of un-iced water; and the last, at Reddish Vale on the 31st, was seen and photographed by only a single lucky observer. Careful scrutiny of finch and bunting flocks at Daisy Hill sewage farm, Westhoughton produced a great reward for one observer, with a fine male Lapland Bunting entertaining all comers from the 28th until 3rd January 2011. The final day of the year produced the last of surprise of what had been another excellent year in the county; with a Brent Goose at Elton Reservoir.

# Notes for Contributors

## Submission of Records

The County Bird Report relies on the submission of bird records on an annual basis and the Greater Manchester Bird Recording Group (GMBRG) actively encourages observers to record their sightings and to formally submit them to the group. The importance of these records cannot be underestimated. Not only in their use within this report and as its function as the definitive and historic guide of the county's avifauna for years to come but perhaps more importantly, in their use in relation to conservation of birds and their habitats. Sightings posted on the Manchester Birding Forum, those sent only to bird news services and rarities not submitted to and accepted by the appropriate rarities committee are not utilised within this report, and as such can form no part of the county's definitive bird record database and cannot be utilised in conservation issues. Therefore, it is very important that observers submit their records formally to the GMBRG.

Further information explaining why we need your bird sightings in more detail can be found towards the back of this 2010 report in the article 'Why your Records are Important'.

The GMBRG has adopted MapMate recording software as its preferred method of record submission. Further details, including the purpose and advantages of using the software, can be found at <http://www.manchesterbirding.com/recordingcountybirds.htm>. The GMBRG continues to welcome other forms of record submission though and observers are advised to check the previous webpage link or to contact the County Bird Recorder to discuss their preferred method.

## National and County Rarities

The submission of descriptions for rarities is very important, so that a truly scientific record can be maintained of the county's avifauna.

National rarities are dealt with by the *British Birds* Rarities Committee (BBRC). A full list of species and forms considered by BBRC as well as full details of requirements, procedures and a downloadable reporting form are available on the BBRC website [www.bbrc.org](http://www.bbrc.org)

All national rarities should be submitted electronically in the BBRC format and sent to the County Bird Recorder (not direct to BBRC). Any accompanying sketches or photographs should be included as separate jpeg attachments.

County rarities are dealt with by the County Rarities Committee. Full guidelines for finders (or indeed potential finders) of county rarities can be found within the County Rarities Committee's Annual Report (see Contents page within this county report). Further advice, information and the downloadable rarity reporting form can be found at <http://www.manchesterbirding.com/records.htm>.

# Introduction to the Systematic List

In recent years, the British Ornithologists' Union has made various changes to the sequence of birds on the official British List and the Greater Manchester annual county bird report has always swiftly adopted these changes. Once again, this year, taxonomic research has recommended further changes and we have adopted them to reflect the ongoing development in the taxonomic arena and to keep the bird report as up to date as possible. Obviously, for those readers used to their thrushes, chats, wheatears, wagtails and pipits coming before their warblers; and their corvids, crests and tits after them, there will be some significant changes but it is perceived that any future changes will be only minor in comparison. It is also worth pointing out that we have not forgotten to include Long-tailed Tit, as it now nestles alone, in between the hirundines and warblers!

## Species Accounts

The systematic list includes all bird species recorded in an apparently wild state within Greater Manchester in 2010. It follows the status of British birds as determined by the British Ornithologists' Union Records Committee in the Official British List categories A, B and C (see below). Following the main section of the systematic list are also included the escapes, ferals and introduced species which are included in the BOU's Categories D and E (see below). The latter are included not only for the completeness of the report but also in order to monitor any population growth, to monitor potentially negative impacts of these species on our native birds and to establish any patterns of occurrence of potential vagrants.

Species names used are the British (English) vernacular names; those in common usage locally.

To minimise potential threats, some records of rare breeding birds within the report are purposefully vague and all records of Ruddy Duck sightings have been withheld once again this year.

Observer's initials are given in connection with species submitted to and accepted by BBRC or the Greater Manchester County Rarities Committee.

## BOU Official British List Categories

### Category A

Species recorded in an apparently natural state at least once since 1 January 1950.

### Category B

Species recorded in an apparently natural state at least once between 1 January 1800 and 31 December 1949, but have not been recorded subsequently.

### Category C

Species that, although introduced, now derive from the resulting self-sustaining populations.

**C1** - Naturalized introduced species – species that have occurred only as a result of introduction, e.g. Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

**C2** - Naturalized established species - species with established populations resulting from introduction by Man, but which also occur in an apparently natural state, e.g. Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

**C3** - Naturalized re-established species - species with populations successfully re-established by Man in areas of former occurrence, e.g. Red Kite *Milvus milvus*.



C4 - Naturalized feral species - domesticated species with populations established in the wild, e.g. Rock Pigeon (Dove)/Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*.

C5 - Vagrant naturalized species - species from established naturalized populations abroad, e.g. possibly some Ruddy Shelducks *Tadorna ferruginea* occurring in Britain. There are currently no species in category C5.

C6 - Former naturalized species – species formerly placed in C1 whose naturalized populations are either no longer self-sustaining or are considered extinct, e.g. Lady Amherst's Pheasant *Chrysolophus amherstiae*.

### Category D

Species that would otherwise appear in Category A except that there is reasonable doubt that they have ever occurred in a natural state. Species placed in Category D only form no part of the British List, and are not included in the species totals.

### Category E

Species recorded as introductions, human-assisted transportees or escapees from captivity, and whose breeding populations (if any) are thought not to be self-sustaining. Species in Category E that have bred in the wild in Britain are designated as E\*. Category E species form no part of the British List (unless already included within Categories A, B or C).

## The current status of species in Greater Manchester

The current county status of each species recorded is given immediately underneath the species name. These are prone to occasional change, as the fortunes and occurrences of county birds change and this report reflects their most current status.

Abundant: occurs in large numbers in suitable habitats and seasons.

Common: occurs regularly, or widely distributed in suitable habitat.

Fairly common: occurs in moderate numbers in suitable habitat.

Uncommon: occurs in small numbers.

Scarce: one or two records each year, or restricted to specific habitats.

Rare: occurs less than annually.

Very rare: less than 10 records in the past 20 years.

Vagrant: less than 2 records in the past 20 years

Resident: species breeds and is present all year.

Winter Visitor: mainly occurs in winter.

Summer Visitor: mainly occurs in summer.

Passage Migrant: mainly a migrant in spring and/or autumn.

Irruptive Visitor: occurs erratically in response to food shortage in home range.

Feral: a species originating from a domestic source.

Naturalised: an introduced species now breeding in the wild.

## Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC)

The systematic list also includes the National Conservation Concern Status of affected species as published in the *Birds of Conservation Concern 3; 2009*. The BoCC status is shown underneath the current county status and is included in full so observers might obtain a fuller appreciation of the conservation issues facing many of our birds.

Species that meet any of the following criteria are deemed **Red Listed**:

1. **IUCN** Global Conservation Status. Species listed by BirdLife International as being Globally Threatened using IUCN criteria. Further details on those affected species can be found on the BirdLife International website at [www.birdlife.org.uk](http://www.birdlife.org.uk)
2. **HD** Historical Decline. A severe decline in the UK between 1800 and 1995, without substantial recent recovery.
3. **BDp** Breeding Population Decline. Severe decline in the UK breeding population size, of more than 50%, over 25 years (BDp1) or the entire period used for assessments since the first BoCC review, starting in 1969 ("longer-term") (BDp2).
4. **WDp** Non-breeding Population Decline. Severe decline in the UK non-breeding population size, of more than 50%, over 25 years (WDp1) or the longer-term (WDp2).
5. **BDr** Breeding Range Decline. Severe decline in the UK range, of more than 50%, as measured by number of 10 km squares occupied by breeding birds, over 25 years (BDr1) or the longer-term (BDr2).

Species that meet any of the following criteria, but none of the red list criteria, are deemed **Amber Listed**:

1. **SPEC** European Conservation status. Categorised as a **SP**ecies of European Conservation Concern (SPEC 1, 2 or 3).
2. **HDrec** Historical Decline – Recovery. Red listed for Historical Decline in a previous review but with substantial recent recovery (more than doubled in the last 25 years).
3. **BDMp** Breeding Population Decline. As for red list criteria BDp1 and BDp2, but with moderate decline (by more than 25% but less than 50%).
4. **WDMp** Non-breeding Population Decline. As for red list criteria WDp1 and WDp2, but with moderate decline (by more than 25% but less than 50%).
5. **BDMr** Breeding Range Decline. As for red list criteria BDr1 and BDr2, but with moderate decline (by more than 25% but less than 50%).
6. **BR** and **WR** Rarity. UK breeding population of less than 300 pairs (BR) or non-breeding population of less than 900 individuals (WR).

7. **BL and WL Localisation.** At least 50% of the UK breeding (BL) or non-breeding (WL) population found in 10 or fewer sites.

8. **BI and WI International Importance.** At least 20% of the European breeding (BI) or non-breeding (WI) population found in the UK.

All regularly occurring species that do not qualify under any of the red or amber criteria are **Green Listed**. The green list also includes those species listed as recovering from Historical Decline in the last review that have continued to recover and do not qualify under any of the other criteria.

## Breeding Bird Survey (BBS)

The Breeding Bird Survey is run by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) and is jointly funded by BTO, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) (on behalf of the statutory nature conservation agencies: Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside, the Countryside Council for Wales, Natural England and Scottish Natural Heritage), and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB).

The BBS was launched in 1994, to provide more representative coverage than the main survey running at the time The Common Bird Census (CBC). The BBS is a line-transect survey based on randomly chosen 1km squares and volunteers make two early morning visits during the April-June survey period, recording all bird species encountered whilst walking two 1km transects across their square. The BBS provides reliable population trends for a large proportion of our breeding species and BBS data for species within this report are represented by two figures separated by a slash i.e. 11/16; the 11 representing total individuals of that species found during the early visit and the 16 the total individuals found during the late visit. A total of 67 squares were surveyed across GM in 2010 so, for example, Blackbird was recorded on at least one visit in 64 of the squares, so it occurred in 96% of squares.

Further information about the BBS and the full 2010 BBS report can be found at <http://www.bto.org/sites/default/files/u16/downloads/reports/bbsreport10.pdf>

## UK & GM Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP/GM BAP)

The UK was the first country to produce a national biodiversity action plan. The UK BAP describes the biological resources of the UK and provides detailed plans for conservation of these resources, at national and devolved levels. Action plans for the most threatened species have been set out to aid recovery, and reporting rounds every three- to five-years show how the UK BAP has contributed to the UK's progress towards the significant reduction of biodiversity loss. UK BAP priority bird species are indicated as such underneath their county status within the systematic list. Further information can be found at the JNCC website UK BAP priority bird species <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5163>

Similarly, the Greater Manchester Biodiversity Partnership has produced GM BAPs for four county species which are indicated with GM BAP below their county status. Further information about the partnership and the action plans for those species involved can be viewed at <http://www.gmbp.org.uk>

## Rare Breeding Birds Panel List (RBBP)

The Rare Breeding Birds Panel collects breeding data on the rarer species of birds breeding in the UK (which GMBRG supplies records towards) and its findings are published annually in *British Birds*. Generally speaking these are species with estimated breeding populations of fewer than 1,500 breeding pairs. In particular, its records allow the production of annual national totals of breeding pairs for each species on its list. Species on the Rare Breeding Birds Panel List are denoted by 'RBBP' below its county status.

## Abbreviations used within the text

BBRC - British Bird Rarities Committee

BBGM - Breeding Birds in Greater Manchester, the county breeding atlas, published in 1984

BBS - the joint BTO/RSPB/JNCC national Breeding Bird Survey

BOU - British Ornithologists' Union

BTO - British Trust for Ornithology

CE - Country Estate

CP - Country Park (not necessarily designated under the Country Parks Act)

ETW - Effluent Treatment Works (sewage farm/works)

GM/GMC - Greater Manchester/Greater Manchester County

JNCC - Joint Nature Conservation Committee

LNR - Local Nature Reserve

MSC - Manchester Ship Canal

NR - Nature Reserve

NRS - BTO Nest Record Scheme

OCCS - Open Cast Coal Site

PWNR - Peat Works Nature Reserve

Resr(s) - Reservoir(s)

RSPB - Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

TTV - Timed Tetrad Visit for the BTO national atlas 2007-2011

WBBS - Waterways Breeding Bird Survey

WeBS - BTO/WWT/RSPB/JNCC Wetland Bird Survey

WTW - Water Treatment Works

WWT - Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust

WP - Water Park



## Sites

A full list of county sites is given at the end of this report, along with six figure grid references and major bird sites are also indicated on the county map but please note:

Chat Moss is both a collective name for a number of smaller mosses which include Astley Moss, Barton Moss, Cadishead Moss, Irlam Moss, Great and Little Woolden Mosses and Worsley Moss, and is also its own separate site in the centre of the aforementioned mosslands.

Dove Stone is the same site referred to as Dovestone throughout this county report and that of all previous reports.

Hollingworth (near Hyde) is a different location to Hollingworth Lake (near Rochdale), which is always designated thus.

Horwich Moors is a collective name for the many moors and associated locations above Horwich/Bolton, comprising the following main sites; Adam Hill, Brownstones Quarry, Burnt Edge Moor, Coal Pit Road, Deans Ditch, Georges Lane, Higher Meadows, Holdens Farm, Mast Road, Montcliffe, Newfields, Smithills Moor, Two Lads Hill, Walker Fold, Wilder's Moor, Wilderswood and Winter Hill.

Lightshaw Meadows is the collective name for the sites of Lightshaw Hall Flash and Dover Basin (once termed the Abram Flashes), now under the ownership of Lancashire Wildlife Trust.

## WeBS Data

Data were supplied by the Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS), a joint scheme of the British Trust for Ornithology, The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and Joint Nature Conservation Committee (the latter on behalf of the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside, the Countryside Council for Wales, Natural England and Scottish Natural Heritage), in association with the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust. Although WeBS data are presented within this report, in some cases the figures may not have been fully checked and validated. Therefore, for any detailed analyses of WeBS data, enquiries should be directed to the WeBS team at the British Trust for Ornithology, The Nunnery, Thetford, IP24 2PU ([webs@bto.org](mailto:webs@bto.org))



# Systematic List of Birds Recorded in Greater Manchester during 2010

## MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

Fairly common resident.

Populations have generally remained stable with increasing numbers on the now cleaner water of the Manchester Ship Canal at the expense of other sites. Non-breeding flocks were present at several sites with numbers increasing during the moult period at Crompton Lodges/ Moses Gate CP and Pennington Flash. Monthly counts for sites at which more than 20 birds were recorded were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Barton/Irlam/MS</b>	12	22										24
<b>Moses Gate CP</b>	84	61	62		58	64	83	58	92	92	59	56
<b>Elton Resr</b>									15	10	25	31
<b>Pennington Flash</b>	12	20	15			66	72	68	28		10	
<b>Sale WP</b>		24							6	20	17	23
<b>Salford Docks</b>	20	30		14			12					
<b>Three Sisters</b>	40	28	39			27	35	36	34	21	15	16
<b>Wigan Flashes</b>	27	22	38	30	32	25	29		68	79	91	97

*Breeding*: - birds were present in 8 BBS squares (12%) up from 5 (8%) in 2009. A total of 40 sites recorded breeding with 4 of them producing 2 broods:- Abram (2); Ancoats; Clifton; Boarshaw; Boothstown; Buckley; Clegg Hall; Bryn Marsh (1-2); Bury Lakeside; Dunham Massey; Elton Reservoir (2); Fir Tree Flash; Glazebury; Gorton; Haigh Hall; Hope Carr NR; Horrock's Flash (2); Lightshaw WTW; Low Hall; Marsland Green; Moses Gate CP (2); Orchard Lane Pond Leigh; Parsons Meadow, Poolstock; Pearsons Flash; Pennington Flash; Platt Fields; Rhodes Lodges; Reddish Vale; Roman Lakes; Sale WP; Salford Quays; Shell Carrington; Shore Top; Trafford Park; Turner's Flash; Westwood Flash; Whitley Reservoir; Worthington Lakes; Worsley and Worsley Mesnes, although not all were successfully reared. Nest building took place but without success at:- Alkington; Blackleach Reservoir (eggs smashed); Chorlton WP; Diggle Flash; Etherow CP; Heaton Park Boating Lake and Hollingworth Lake. The 24+ year old male at Turner's Flash, originally ringed as an adult at Fleetwood in 1989, successfully reared a brood again.

## BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus columbianus*

Rare winter visitor.

BoCC Amber List (SPEC, WL, WI) and UK BAP species.

Only one record this year; of a single at Pennington Flash with 15 Whooper Swans on December 23rd.

## WHOOPE SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.

BoCC Amber List species (BR, WL).

During the early winter period, most records were of transient birds with none staying for more than a day. Three were at Chorlton WP Jan 3rd with 4 at Pennington Flash on Jan 4th.

Sixteen flew over Wythenshawe on Jan 6th and 2 flew NW over the Trafford Centre on 10th. At the end of the month, possibly the same pair was at both Elton Reservoir and Horrock's Flash on Jan 27th and one flew over Giant's Hall, Wigan on 30th. A pair was again at Elton Reservoir on Feb 13th and 4 flew north over Pennington Flash on 15th. A single juvenile was at Jumbles Reservoir on 22nd Feb. Seven at Pennington Flash on 8th March and 2 at Audenshaw Reservoirs on March 9th were the last records for the first winter period.

The first record for the autumn was a flock of 13 flying over Rumworth Lodge on Sep 20th. From Oct 13th there were numerous sightings of small flocks in many parts of the county, the largest of which were 40 flying over Whitefield on Oct 20th, 9 over Hindley Green on 21st, 13 at Castleshaw on 22nd and 6 stopped briefly at Hollingworth Lake and Piethorne Reservoir on 28th. A similar set of sightings were made in November: 8 flew over Smithills Moor on 1st, 12 over Bickershaw on 2nd, 17 over Besses o' th' Barn on 10th, 20 over the Hollingworth Lake area on 21st and 14 over Elton Reservoir on 22nd. On the Horwich Moors, three separate flocks of 5, 12 and 15 flew over in a 3 minute period on Nov 26th. There were no records during the cold spell of late November-early December. A tame juvenile was first seen at Amberswood Lake on Dec 14th and on 17th was taking food from the hand. Eighteen flew over Beech Hill, Wigan on 19th, 5 were at Audenshaw Reservoirs on 20th and 15 were at Pennington Flash on 23rd. Possibly the same flock of 8 were at Elton Reservoir the following day and a family of two adults and a juvenile were on ice on the Irwell at Kearsley on Dec 26th.

Correction to 2009 report; the 24 seen on January 30th were on Watergrove Reservoir and not Ashworth Moor Reservoir as stated. The largest known flock "down" in Rochdale.

### **BEAN GOOSE** *Anser fabalis*

Very rare winter visitor.

BoCC Amber List species (WR).

The sole record was of two of the tundra form *rossicus* which landed briefly at Westlake, Hindley Green on February 1st before flying off north-west (A. Makin).

### **PINK-FOOTED GOOSE** *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Common winter/passage visitor, mainly skeins flying over.

BoCC Amber List species (WL, WI).

As in previous years, the vast majority of records were of skeins flying between wintering grounds in Lancashire/Merseyside and Yorkshire/East Anglia. During the early winter period, 2,259 flew SE/E/NE over the county with 10,409 NW/W/SW and 1,953 N/S or unspecified. Although efforts have been made to avoid duplication, due to the large number of skeins crossing the county and of observers reporting them, some cross-counting will undoubtedly occur. A large return movement, overwhelmingly westwards, occurred throughout the county on Feb 6th with skeins totalling 7,793 birds recorded, although some duplication has been impossible to exclude. Westward movements continued until the last skein recorded during the early winter period, 190NW over Bryn Gates on March 2nd.

The incidence of grounded birds, usually in the company of Canada Geese, is apparently increasing and was noted more frequently in the later part of the first winter period. Singles were at Watergrove Reservoir, Castleshaw Reservoirs and Hollingworth Lake/Smithy Bridge on Jan 1st, in the latter case numbers increasing incrementally to a maximum of 6 on March 25th until April 2nd when all birds departed. Single birds were at Amberswood Lake on 17th Jan, Audenshaw Reservoirs on 6th & Feb 15th, Horrock's Flash on Feb 14th and several dates through to May 18th when it was in the company of Greylag Geese. Singles were at Watergrove Reservoir on Feb 21st and 28th, Red Seas Crooke on March 3rd, Daisy Nook Failsforth on 5th and Rumworth Lodge on 15th/16th.

In the late winter period, the first record was of 100 over Ashton-in-Makerfield on Sep 16th. Subsequently, 23,618 were noted flying SE/E/NE, 8,166 NW/W/SW and 5,274 N/S or unspecified. On Oct 3rd a juvenile from a skein of 14 landed briefly at Pennington Flash. In the late winter period, other grounded singles were at Dutton's Pond Flixton on Oct 29th, Hollingworth Lake on 19th-20th Nov, Heaton Park from Nov 27th to the New Year, Chadderton on Dec 19th, 3 at Stubshaw Cross on Nov 7th and 2 at Rhodes Lodges, Middleton on Dec 21st.

## **GREYLAG GOOSE** *Anser anser*

Uncommon feral resident and summer visitor.

BoCC Amber List species (WL, WI).

The Wigan Flashes are one of the main county sites for this species. At Horrock's Flash, the main breeding site in the county, 20 were present on Jan 27th, peaking at 41 on Aug 3rd, with the last record being 25 on Sep 11th. It seems likely that several pairs bred, as broods of 10 and 6 young were seen and a crèche of 15 young were on the Leeds-Liverpool canal on May 8th. At Scotman's Flash there were 33 on June 13th and 29 at Pearson's Flash on Sep 25th may have included some of the Horrock's birds.

At Doffcocker, the other main site (non-breeding) in the county for this species, up to 51 were present on several dates in Nov and Dec. Elsewhere, 7 were at Platt Fields on Jan 24th, 10 were at Bryn Gates on Feb 17th, a peak of 23 were at Heaton Park on Feb 6th and 32 at Etherow CP in Sep. Fifteen were at Pennington Flash on May 22nd, 7 at Ashworth Moor Reservoir on Jun 5th and 10 at Philips Park on Sep 1st. Smaller groups or singles were recorded at: Abram Flashes, Altrincham ETW, Astley, Audenshaw Reservoirs, Boggart Hole Clough, Bramhall, Bromley Cross, Castleshaw Reservoir, Chorlton WP, Crime Lake, Dover Basin, Edgeley Reservoir, Elton Reservoir, Hale, Haughton Dale, Hope Carr NR, Mesnes Park, Moses Gate CP, New Year's Bridge Reservoir, Ogden Reservoir, Reddish Vale CP, Rhodes Lodges/Alkington, Stamford Park Lake, Well Green and Woodford. Three flew west over Astley with Pink-footed Geese on Dec 19th.

Hybrids with Canada Goose were recorded at Higher Broughton and Stamford Park Lake.

## **CANADA GOOSE** *Branta canadensis*

Common Resident.

A common resident, occurring almost anywhere there is fresh water, sites at which more than 140 were counted and for which regular counts were available were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castleshaw Resrs		70	1	1	6	89	88	1	185	1	1	1
Chorlton WP	171	26	55		85				45	21	25	
Edgeley Resr		159										
Elton Resr	307	78	38			121		334	319	38	139	650
Hollingworth Lake	350	335	128	76	74	128	122	282	260	230	185	260
Hope Carr NR			8	8	20			80		200		50
Moses Gate CP	174	249	158			127	130		95	132	155	186
Pennington Flash						349	300			500	110	140
Royal George Lodge	160	15	11						101	112	1	94
Rumworth Lodge	40	50	55	50			60	140	110		40	57
Sale WP	91	152	149			181			130	94	62	55
Stamford Park, A-u-L	76	129	121	78				130	73	91	50	142
Woodford area					12			68	154	203	189	222



At both ends of the year, cold weather led to flocks moving onto rivers. Single counts of over 100 included: 137 Cheadle Bridge, East Didsbury Jan 8th; 115 Wigan Flashes Feb 20th; 139 Boggart Hole Clough Jun 15th; 125 (including 23 young) Whitehead Lodges Jun 16th; 132 Watergrove Reservoir in Jun; 138 Hopwood Jun 27th; 125 Alexandra Park, Oldham Aug 9th; 180 Billinge Higher End Oct 2nd; 500 Brocstedes Farm, North Ashton Oct 14th; 120 Little Woolden Moss Oct 24th; 215 Gigg Reservoir, Bury on Nov 7th; 160 Dec 7th on the River Irwell between Agecroft and Littleton; 160 Norbury Brook on Dec 7th and 120 Higher Boarshaw Dec 27th. An unusual record was of 2 half way up a cliff face at Montcliffe Quarry, Horwich on March 26th.

*Breeding*: control measures were in operation at several major breeding sites but nevertheless breeding was recorded at almost 100 sites as follows: Ainsworth, Altrincham ETW (2 pairs); Ashton-in-Makerfield; Ashton-under-Lyne canal (crèche of 21); Ashworth Moor (3 broods); Audenshaw Reservoirs; Birtle; Black Moss; Boggart Hole Clough (8 nests); Bradford; Bury N; Carrington Moss; Castleshaw Reservoirs (3 broods); Chadderton (8 nests); Cheadle; Cheetham Hill; Chorlton Ees (crèche of 35); Chorlton WP; Clifton (1 nest); Crime Lake; Eagley Mills (2 broods); Edgeley Reservoir; Elton Reservoir (crèche of 13); Etherow CP; Flixton (2 broods); Gidlow; Gorton Reservoirs; Hale, Hawk Green; Heaton Park (crèche of 13); Heywood; Higher Boarshaw; Higher Broughton; Higher Swineshaw Reservoir; Hope Carr NR (4 nests); Hopwood; Houghton Dale; Hyde; Islington Wharf, Ancoats (2 nests); River Irwell, Salford; Jumbles Reservoir; Kirklees; Ludworth Moor (2 broods); Luzley; Marple Bridge; Mesnes Park (1 brood); Mills Hill; Middleton (crèche of 27); Montcliffe Quarry, Horwich (2 nests); Moses Gate CP (5 broods); Mossley; Newall Green; New Moston; Norden; Pennington Flash; Philips Park, Bradford (1 nest); Pilsworth; Platt Fields; Prestolee (1 brood); Queens Park, Heywood (crèche of 19); Radcliffe Ees (3 nests); Rakewood; Red Moss Horwich (1 nest); Romiley; Rumworth Lodge (4 nests); Sale WP; Salford Quays; Scout Moor; Shawclough; Shell NR; Shuttleworth; Shore Top Reservoir; Sennicar Lane canal; Haigh (3 broods); Smithills Moor; Springfield Park, Rochdale (crèche of 33), Springside, Stalybridge, Stamford Park, Stand, Starmount Lodges, Stretford; Strines; Summit; Tottington; Trafford Park; Walkerwood Reservoir; Walmersley, Bury (2 nests); Watergrove Reservoir; Wigan Flashes (crèche of 34); Windlehurst (1 brood); Withins Reservoir; Woodford and Worsley (1 brood).

## **BARNACLE GOOSE** *Branta leucopsis*

All records are currently considered of feral origin.

BoCC Amber List species (BL).

The majority of records were from the winter periods although most if not all belong to feral populations. A single was at Elton Reservoir from Jan on several dates until Feb 23rd and intermittently from Sep 28th until the end of the year. Others during the early winter period were at Etherow CP on several dates in Feb, Alexandra Park Oldham on Feb 16th and Billinge Sep 30th. Possibly the same bird was seen on several dates between Aug and Dec at Ashton Canal, Audenshaw, Droylsden and Reddish Vale. Three were at Rumworth Lodge on March 6th. The probable hybrid was again at Chorlton WP on several dates during the autumn. A possibly wild bird flew SW over Horwich Moors with Pink-footed Geese on Nov 13th.

## **BRENT GOOSE** *Branta bernicla*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

BoCC Amber List (SPEC, WL, WI) and UK BAP species.

A single of the dark-bellied *bernicla* race at Elton Reservoir on Dec 31st was the only record (I. Boote *et al*).

Addendum to 2008 report; the juvenile bird of the pale-bellied race *hrota* seen at Ashworth Moor Reservoir was also present on October 12th (S. Atkins).

## EGYPTIAN GOOSE *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

Scarce resident.

Etherow CP remains the stronghold of this species in the county, although no records of breeding were received. One or two birds were present throughout the year, 3 in Jan, 4 on March 4th and 2 during the autumn period, either on the main lake or associating with Mute Swans on Keg Pool. The single bird remained almost continually at Platt Fields Park. The only other record was of a single at Audenshaw Reservoirs on April 20th, indicative of some movement.

## SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

Uncommon passage migrant and scarce breeder.

BoCC Amber List species (WL, WI).

Though largely an early spring and summer visitor to the county, there were records from January through to November. The only site at which breeding was proved was Pennington Flash where a pair with 6 young were seen on May 21st with another record of 7 young there the following day. As in previous years though, it may well be that these birds actually bred at Lightshaw Hall Flash and then followed the Hey Brook down to Pennington Flash. Counts from regular sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Abram Flashes	5	2	5	5	5	2						
Audenshaw Resrs		2	1	3								
Elton Resr			2	3	2			1	1			
Pennington Flash	5	13	4	4	8*	6		3	2			

\*including 6/7 young

Other records were: 1 Rumworth Lodge Feb 6th, 2 Coffin Brook Flash Feb 7th, 2 Hope Carr NR Feb 27th, 1 Blackstone Edge Reservoir Apr 24th, 4 Irlam Moss Apr 25th, 3 Hey Brook Apr 28th, 1 Carrington Moss May 5th, 1 Hollingworth Lake Jul 11th, 2 Horrock's Flash Jul 17th, 15 Blackstone Edge Reservoir Aug 7th, 3 Moses Gate CP Aug 31st, 1 Watergrove Reservoir Sep 4th and 1 Irlam Nov 23rd.

## MANDARIN DUCK *Aix galericulata*

Uncommon naturalised resident, breeding since 1993.

Monthly counts for the four major sites in the county were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Etherow CP	21	18	20		12	12	36		7	25	54	12
Goyt Valley area	66	36	7		7	9		25	20		22	74
Haigh area			3	7	4	4			11	14	13	14
Worthington Lakes	3										4	14

The cold spells at the start and end of the year may have driven some of the Etherow birds onto the River Goyt and the count of 74 at Offerton on Dec 19th more than doubles the previous county record. Additional records were: 9 Mesnes Park Jan 6th, 5 Whitley Reservoir Jan 10th, 6 Marple Viaduct Feb 27th, 10 Thorn Hill Wigan Mar 7th, 11 Gidlow Cemetery Mar 16th, 2 Lower Bredbury Mar 25th, 3 New Springs Apr 7th, 2 Dunham Massey Apr 17th, 4 Middle Hulton May 7th, 2 Low Hall Aug 3rd, 3 Rumworth Lodge Oct 22nd, 3 Hollingworth Lake Nov 10th, 2 Littleborough Nov 16th, 22 Bredbury Green Dec 24th and 11 Marple Hall Park

Dec 30th. Singles were recorded from Aspull, Bramhall Hall, Broad Ees Dole, Chelburn Reservoirs, Chorlton WP, Chudleigh Close Pond Stockport, Didsbury, Gatley, Levenshulme, Reddish Vale CP, Roman Lakes Marple, Stalybridge, Stamford Park Lake, Summit, Uppermill, Watergrove Reservoir, Wigan Flashes, and Woodbank Park.

Breeding was suspected or confirmed at: Abney Hall Cheadle, Chadkirk & Offerton (River Goyt), Etherow CP, Haigh area, Over Hulton (11 eggs predated by a fox), Marple Bridge and Thorn Hill Wigan. Most interestingly, some of the brood at Marple Bridge shared an adjacent nest box with a Tawny Owl. Apparently the female had laid several eggs in the owl's nest, the ducklings being tolerated by the owl and subsequently leaving the nest unharmed along with the rest of the brood. A male was seen displaying to a Canada Goose at Watergrove Reservoir Mar 24th and seen following perhaps the same goose on Apr 10th and 12th. The same male was then seen at Hollingworth Lake on April 30th, apparently paired with another, or perhaps even the same Canada Goose!

### **WIGEON** *Anas penelope*

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.

BoCC Amber List species (WL, WI).

Records from sites where at least one count was in double figures were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Audenshaw Resrs</b>	2	6	6	4					1	21	8	11
<b>Elton Resr</b>		26		11				2	5	9	6	10
<b>Heaton Park Resr</b>		4	3							12	4	
<b>Hollingworth Lake</b>	3	1	26						1		3	2
<b>Pennington Flash</b>	10	15	12	2	1	3	3	5	5	8	19	8
<b>Rumworth Lodge</b>		11								2		
<b>Wigan Flashes</b>	5							1	103	85	3	4

The peak counts at the Wigan Flashes, of birds on passage, were the highest here since September 1999, when 109 were on Pearson's Flash. However, only 3 waters recorded this species on WeBS counts compared to 13 in 2009.

Additional records were: 3 Ashworth Moor Reservoir Jan 31st, 2 Reddish Vale Feb 6th, Dunham Massey Feb 11th, Bollington Mill Feb 12th, 5 Watergrove Reservoir Apr 9th, 2 Blackleach Reservoir Sep 8th, up to 3 Roman Lakes Marple Sep-Oct, Hope Carr NR and Crompton Lodges Sep 28th, 4 Castleshaw Reservoirs and 9 Brun Clough Reservoir Sep 29th, 2 Watergrove Reservoir Oct 6th, 4 High Rid Reservoir Oct 9th, Queens Park Heywood Oct 15th, 4 flew west over Smithills Moor Nov 7th, Piethorne Reservoir and Salford Quays Dec 2nd and 3 Woodford Dec 14th.

Although there were no breeding records, up to 3 drakes were present during the breeding season at Pennington Flash and a single drake was at Woodford Jun 24th -Jul 15th.

### **GADWALL** *Anas strepera*

Uncommon localised resident and passage migrant mostly confined to the western half of the county.

BoCC Amber List species (SPEC, WI).

This species has become increasingly frequent at sites where it was previously rare. Some movements onto the larger canals were noted during both cold spells. Counts of 10 or more at regular sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Abram Flashes</b>		8	12									
<b>Altrincham ETW</b>		10		8	12	10	10		1	5		
<b>Clifton Marina</b>	5	15	20	7	13		7			9	34	26
<b>Davyhulme NR</b>	38	4	19							1	4	2
<b>Dover Basin</b>			21	16	10			1				
<b>Elton Resr</b>			2	1		10		2	2		2	
<b>Hope Carr NR</b>	11	46	42			2	10		33			
<b>Irlam Locks</b>	52		1	4								28
<b>Lightshaw WTW</b>		13	5	2	1		2	4			10	10
<b>Low Hall</b>		1	3	14						9	2	
<b>Pennington Flash</b>	22	20	41					20	11	50	57	
<b>Ringley ETW</b>			18	38		18	4	16		34		10
<b>Wigan Flashes</b>	23	21	23		5	2	2	48	187	258	203	67

Additional records of fewer than 10 birds were from: Amberswood, Banky Meadow, Bickershaw, 4 Blackleach Reservoir Aug 16th, Bury ETW, Crankwood Farm, 4 Dunham Massey Jan 23rd, 3 Flixton ETW Dec 7th, Heaton Park, Hollingworth Lake, 39 Shell NR in Sep, Little Woolden Moss, 8 Lower Kersal Sep 7th, 8 Sale WP Dec 28th, 5 Salford Quays Dec 2nd, Stamford Park Lake and Wigan.

Proof of breeding was obtained at Clifton Marina (brood of 6), Hope Carr NR with sightings of two separate broods of 3, and broods of 8, 9 and 10, Pearson's Flash (5 broods of 1, 1, 3, 6 & 6), Pennington Flash (2 broods of 5), Ringley ETW (6 broods of 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, & 8) and Scotman's Flash (1 brood), a similar position to 2009. This species was recorded on 16 WeBS sites on core count days and just one BBS square. With effect from 2010, Gadwall is no longer assessed by the Rare Breeding Birds Panel as its UK breeding population reached record levels in 2009, estimated at over 2000 pairs. Nonetheless all breeding records from GM are still requested to enable the potential spread of the species across the county to be monitored.

### **TEAL** *Anas crecca*

Uncommon resident, common passage and winter visitor, scarce breeder.  
BoCC Amber List species (WI).

Along with many other wildfowl, the sub-zero temperatures of January and November/December drove some birds onto parts of larger water bodies that remained unfrozen.

Single counts of more than 20 birds were at: Altrincham ETW with 30 Jan 23rd, 20 Sep 23rd, 20 Nov 27th and 41 Oct 3rd; 22 at Boarshaw Mar 21st; Broad Ees Dole saw counts of 40 Jan 1st, 22 Mar 7th, 22 Sep 5th and 20 Nov 7th and 14th; 25 at Cadishead Moss Nov 25th; 50 at Daisy Nook Feb 22nd; Heaton Park Reservoir recorded flocks of 24 Jan 17th, 30 Sep 2nd, 22 Nov 14th and 47 Dec 5th; 28 at Hollingworth Lake in February; 38 at Lightshaw Hall Flash Mar 2nd and 23 Mar 17th; 45 at Low Hall Flash Jan 1st; 24 at Pearsons Flash Nov 26th; 75 at Rainford's Flash Jan 9th; Red Moss saw flocks of 20 Aug 21st, 20 Sep 15th, 26 Sep 13th and 22 Oct 18th; 21 were at Red Seas Crooke in October and 24 in November; 20 on the River Douglas Jan 14th; 27 at Bryn Marsh Jan 25th; 30 at Wince Brook Dec 7th; 30 at Whitehead Lodges Feb 13th; 70 at Woodford Aerodrome Nov 4th and 40 at Worsley Old Warke Dec 31st. Counts of less than 20 birds were received from: Ashworth Moor Reservoir, Audenshaw Reservoir, Bamfurlong, Castleshaw Reservoirs, Cheadle Heath, Chorlton WP, Coffin Brook Flash, Crime Lake, Denton, Didsbury, Doffcocker, Etherow CP, Far Bradshaw, Gatley, Heald Green, Higher



Broughton, Irlam Locks, River Irwell Agecroft, Levenshume, Lightshaw WTW, Loonts Lake, Ludworth Moor, Marple, Martland/Red Seas, River Mersey/Tame, Mortfield Lodges Bolton, Moses Gate CP, Ogden Reservoir, Olive Mount Farm, Pickley Green, Prince's Park Irlam, Reddish Vale CP, Rhodes Lodges, River Roch, Roman Lakes Marple, Sale WP, Scotman's Flash, Shell NR, Stretford, Strines, Three Sisters, Wardley, Watergrove Reservoir, Woodley and Worthington Lakes.

Records of 50 or more birds from regularly counted sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Abram Flashes	64	30	55	20		8		5			50	
Astley Moss E Pools			8			14	7	53	54	26		
Barton Locks, MSC	109	82										
Davyhulme NR	51	5	20									6
Elton Reservoir			2						53	52	42	37
R.Glaze/Woolden		70	10	2							12	
Hope Carr NR		85	19	14			3	6	41		50	
Horrock's Flash	97	53	19	2		1	3	16		8	48	77
R.Irwell, Clifton	40		20	16			4					55
Kingsway Bus. Pk.		50	16		2					16		6
Pennington Flash	340	100	40			2	15	14	8	20	103	200
Ringley ETW		16	50	43			2	19		30		
Rumworth Lodge	85	66	50	13	1			24	26	15	33	4
Turner's Flash	15											104
Worsley Filt. Lgns.	9									12		80

The only proof of successful breeding was a fledged brood of 7 at Astley Moss East Peat Pools July 9th. This was the first confirmed breeding record for the county since 2006, when 2 ducklings fledged at Pennington Flash.

## **MALLARD** *Anas platyrhynchos*

Abundant resident.

BoCC Amber List species (WDMp1, WDMp2).

Counts exceeding 100 birds were noted in all months of the year except April. Data for regularly counted sites were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bramhall Park Lake	220	118	74	34	102	151	82	185	73	113	87	52
Etherow CP	157	143	122				155		126	163	217	194
Fog Lane Park		74						160				
Hope Carr NR		48	24						138			
Moses Gate CP	70	49	50			150	172		105	155	172	120
Orrell WP	126	130			24	38						
Rumworth Lodge	25				2	4	1	66	180	20	1	
Stamford Park, A-u-L	35	12	16					215	92	136	161	135
Three Sisters	104	114	46						92	94	72	134
Westlake	135	105	90						93	126	108	211

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Wigan Flashes</b>	102	115	121						166	102	131	121
<b>Woodford Aerodrome</b>	49		37	18		19	18	13	39	89	150	73
<b>Worthington Lakes</b>	156	41				31			83	101	57	202

Other large counts were 113 at Dunham Massey Feb 11th and 163 at Rusholme Dec 12th.

As with many of the widespread species, Atlas surveys boosted the number of breeding records, confirmed at 103 sites throughout the county, compared to just 35 in 2007. Recorded on 68 waters during WeBS counts and on 46 (69%) BBS squares, virtually unchanged from 2009.

### **PINTAIL** *Anas acuta*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.

BoCC Amber List species (SPEC, BR, WL, WI).

As is traditionally the case for this migrant duck, the peak months were September and October, accounting for nearly 50% of the records. The autumn passage of this species through the county may consist primarily of birds en route to the Dee Estuary.

Pennington Flash accounted for the lion's share of the records with birds present on 17 dates: 1-5 were present between Jan 1st and Feb 11th, then 2 on Apr 4th and 1 on May 20th. In spring, a pair was at Watergrove Reservoir on Apr 7th, with singles at Ringley ETW Apr 18th & 25th and at Dover Basin May 18th-Jun 1st, an unusually late series of records.

During the autumn period, 1-3 were at Rumworth Lodge between Sep 10th & Oct 22nd, 2 were at Heaton Park Reservoir Sep 22nd, 1 or 2 at Pearson's Flash Sep 22nd-Oct 17th, 1 at Watergrove Reservoir Sep 22nd, 1 at Horrock's Flash Sep 27th & Nov 6th, 3 at Hope Carr NR Sep 28th and 2 at Audenshaw Reservoir Oct 10th.

### **GARGANEY** *Anas querquedula*

Uncommon summer visitor and passage migrant, very rare breeder.

BoCC Amber List (SPEC, BR) and RBBP species.

The first record of the year was a male at Pennington Flash from Apr 8th-15th with another drake present rather remarkably, from May 8th-15th. Another male was at Altrincham ETW from Apr 9th-13th. At Horrock's Flash, a male was seen on May 11th-12th and probably a different bird on Jun 1st.

During the autumn period an eclipse drake was at Altrincham ETW Aug 2nd-8th while at Horrock's Flash a single was seen on several dates between Aug 19th and Sep 7th.

### **SHOVELER** *Anas chlypeata*

Localised resident, passage migrant and scarce breeder.

BoCC Amber List (SPEC, BR) and RBBP species.

22 were at Firs Park Lake Jan 1st. Counts involving fewer than 10 birds were sighted at: Abram Flashes, Alexandra Park Moss Side, Amberswood Lake, Astley Moss, Audenshaw Reservoirs, Barton Locks, Broad Ees Dole, Carrington Moss, Chorlton WP, Dunham Massey, Elton Reservoir, Etherow CP, Gorton Reservoir, Heaton Park Reservoir, Hey Brook, Hollingworth Lake (pair in eclipse July 30th), Irlam Locks, Lightshaw Hall Flash, Low Hall, Moses Gate CP, Platt Fields, Reddish Vale CP, Red Seas Croke, Rumworth Lodge, Sale WP, Shell NR, Watergrove Reservoir, Westleigh, Woodford, Worthington Lakes.

Counts of 10 or more at regularly counted sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Altrincham ETW	12	14	11	5	2				2	5	10	
Dover Basin			1	6	2		3	15			2	
Horrock's Flash	6	32	35			1		16		5		
Pearson's Flash				2		2	2		63	66	28	
Pennington Flash	12	35	30		1			65	21	53	53	11
Rainford's Flash	5		1	6							14	
Ringley ETW			1					1		10		
Turner's Flash	2								11	10		
Westwood Flash	2									12		
Worsley Filt. Lgns.	10											1

There were no three figure counts this year due mainly to the decline in numbers at Pennington Flash, where compared to 2009, numbers were down in all months apart from August and November. No counts at this site reached the threshold for national importance of 148.

There were no confirmed breeding records this year although birds were present in the breeding season at Carrington Moss, Hey Brook, Horrock's Flash, Lightshaw Hall Flash, Pearson's Flash and Reddish Vale.

## POCHARD *Aythya ferina*

Abundant winter visitor and uncommon breeder.

BoCC Amber List (SPEC, WDMp1, WDMp2, WI) and RBBP species

Sites at which 10 or more were seen as part of regular counts were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Audenshaw Resrs	6	28	14	1				1	3	8	10	10
Barton Locks	20	26										
Chorlton WP	150	186	154									30
Hollingworth Lake		17	2					2		4	2	
Horrock's Flash			12	10	3	11				1		
KGV Pool Altrincham		1	12	7	5							
Pearson's Flash	2			2	6	13	16	32		7	2	
Pennington Flash	50	53	10					12	20	35	37	
Platt Fields Lake	5	10	10									
Rumworth Lodge		1	1							5	10	
Salford Quays	30											29
Scotman's Flash	5	19	29								12	

The sub-zero temperatures at both ends of the year led to movements onto the Manchester Ship Canal. Single counts of 10 or more were made as follows: 10 Shuttleworth Feb 27th, 13 Watergrove Reservoir Dec 4th when all other Rochdale waters were frozen over and 15 in tetrad SJ79N Barton Dec 31st. Other sites recording less than 10 birds were: Alexandra Park Moss Side, Amberswood Lake, Blackleach CP, Bradford Reservoir Great Lever, Bryn Marsh, Castleshaw Reservoirs, Clifton Marina, Daisy Hill, Dover Basin, Flixton ETW, Heaton Park

Reservoir, High Rid Reservoir, Hope Carr NR, Irlam, Lightshaw WTW, Loonts Lake, Low Hall, Moses Gate CP, Ogden Reservoir Milnrow, Pomona Dock, Reddish Vale CP, Ringley ETW, Sale WP, Shell NR, Stamford Park Lake, Three Sisters and Turner's Flash.

There was one successful breeding record from Wigan Flashes, though birds were also present during the breeding season at Carrington Moss, Dover Basin, Heaton Park Reservoir, King George V Pool Altrincham and Worsley Mesnes.

## TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

Abundant winter and passage visitor, uncommon breeder.

BoCC Amber List species (SPEC).

As with the previous species, movements onto larger rivers and canals were seen in the cold spells at both ends of the year. Regularly counted sites with at least one count of 80 or more birds were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Audenshaw Resrs	40	40	7	2	9	30	130	170	120	60	70	110
Barton Locks MSC	748											21
Chorlton WP	355	69	27	9	15	8		1	9	30	38	126
Clifton Marina	7	8	40		33		26		95	47	42	4
Davyhulme NR	14	79	81						1	7	47	262
Elton Reservoir		4		7	3	7			54	50	87	50
Heaton Park Resr	443				2		75	116	65		210	436
R.Irwell, Salford	200	47	47									137
Pearson's Flash	1				16	67	130	88	131	143	14	21
Pennington Flash	200	145	110				240	350	400	300	250	
Platt Fields Lake	175	83		10				5	1	9	12	12
Salford Quays	365											52

Maximum counts of 10 or more for other sites were as follows: 11 Alexandra Park Moss Side Feb 17th; 17 Alexandra Park, Oldham Feb 16th; 37 Amberswood Lake Aug 14th; 25 Astley Moss East Peat Pools May 4th; 26 Blackleach CP March 13th; 24 Boggart Hole Clough Feb 20th; 16 Broad Ees Dole Feb 20th; 13 Bryn Marsh Feb 24th; 14 Carrington Moss Jul 2nd; 26 Castleshaw Reservoirs through Aug; 12 Chelburn Reservoirs Jul 8th; 10 Clegg Hall Pools July 10th; 10 Croal/Irwell Dec 26th; 22 Diggle Flash Mar 13th; 16 Dover Basin May 19th; 27 Doffcocker Sep 15th; 22 Dunham Massey Feb 11th; 35 Eccles Nov 20th; 17 Etherow CP Apr 3rd; 70 Glazebury Feb 20th; 14 Gorton Reservoirs Feb 12th; 16 High Rid Reservoir Mar 9th; 22 Hope Carr NR Feb 27th; 30 Irlam Locks Dec 2nd; 12 Jumbles Reservoir Feb 20th; 13 Kitcliffe Reservoir, Milnrow Sep 20th; 21 Lightshaw WTW Mar 21st & 27th; 22 Little Woolden Moss Aug 9th; 25 Loonts Lake Oct 16th; 12 Low Hall Oct 4th; 60 Crompton Lodges/Moses Gate CP Jan 28th; 11 Pilsworth Fisheries Mar 6th; 17 Pomona Docks Jan 10th; 47 Reddish Vale CP Feb 21st; 26 Rhodes Lodges Feb WeBS; 51 Ringley ETW Jul 11th; 11 Sale WP Dec 5th & 28th; 60 Scotman's Flash Jan 18th; 32 Worsley Mesnes Apr 15th; 25 Oldham Feb 25th; 21 Springfield Park, Rochdale Mar 5th; 18 Stamford Park Lake Apr 6th; 12 Stretford Ees Apr 2nd; 15 Turner's Flash Feb 27th; 19 Whitley Reservoir Sep 18th and 18 Worthington Lakes Dec 4th.

*Breeding:* A total of 40 broods (41 in 2009) were recorded at the following sites: Alexandra Park, Oldham (3 broods); Astley Green; Broad Ees Dole; Bury ETW; Carrington Moss; Chorlton WP; Clegg Hall; Diggle Flash; Etherow CP; Glazebury; Heaton Park Reservoir (4 broods); High Rid Reservoir; Hope Carr NR; Horrock's Flash (4 broods); King George V

Pool, Altrincham (2 broods); Kingsway Business Park; Mesnes Park, Wigan (4 broods); Pearson's Flash; River Glaze at Hawkhurst; Rumworth Lodge; Scotman's Flash; Springfield Park, Rochdale; Stamford Park Lake (3 broods); Turner's Flash; Woodford and Worsley Mesnes.

A hybrid male Pochard x Tufted Duck was seen at Pennington Flash on Sep 16th.

### **SCAUP** *Aythya marila*

Uncommon visitor, mainly winter.

BoCC Red List (WDp2, SPEC, WL) and UK BAP species.

Single birds were recorded at several sites in both winter periods, in several cases possibly referring to the same bird. A male which first arrived at High Rid Reservoir Nov 12th 2009 remained until Jan 1st. One was at Audenshaw Reservoirs on Jan 30th and Sep 13th. A male was at Chorlton WP on several dates from Jan 30th to Mar 7th. A female was at Clifton Marina on Oct 19th. A male was at Elton Reservoir on Feb 20th and another bird was seen on several dates between Oct 28th and Nov 20th. A similar pattern of records was obtained from Heaton Park Reservoir with a male on Jan 31st and Feb 3rd and an autumn record on Oct 21st. Again, at Pennington Flash a male was present on Jan 30th, a female Oct 20th, 2 female/immatures Nov 11th and a first winter male on Nov 23rd. Finally, one was at Worthington Lakes on Nov 30th.

### **COMMON SCOTER** *Melanitta nigra*

Uncommon passage migrant.

BoCC Red List (BDp1, BDp2, BDMr1, BR, WL) and UK BAP species.

The largest numbers were typically recorded during July. A flock of 11 was at Hollingworth Lake on Jul 2nd with 7 present on Jul 21st. At Ashworth Moor Reservoir 8 were present on Jul 14th. At Audenshaw Reservoirs, records were spread throughout the year with 1 on Feb 20th, 2 on Mar 12th, 1 on Jun 29th, 2 on Jul 2nd, 1 on 14th and 3 on 17th Aug and 1 on Oct 14th. Heaton Park Reservoir recorded 4 on May 10th and 2 were at Elton Reservoir on Jul 21st and Sep 10th. One was near Shuttleworth on Jul 21st and a single female was present at High Rid Reservoir from 14th-23rd Nov. At Pennington Flash, apart from 3 on May 10th, records were confined to November with 1 on 7th, 3 on 16th, 2 on 27th and 4 on 31st.

### **GOLDENEYE** *Bucephala clangula*

Fairly common winter visitor, increasing summer records.

BoCC Amber List species (BR).

Counts of more than 20 birds at regular sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Audenshaw Resrs</b>	70	50	90	77	3	2	2	2	2	7	40	30
<b>Chorlton WP</b>	21	15	10							1	5	19
<b>Heaton Park Resr</b>	17	12	51	8	1			1	1	24	31	55
<b>R.Irwell, Salford</b>	19	41	28								39	58
<b>Pennington Flash</b>	21	43	58	24	15			2	2	14	26	15
<b>Scotman's Flash</b>	7	31	61						1	7		

Numbers at Audenshaw Reservoirs during the period January to April were almost double those for the same months in 2009, possibly due to birds being forced off smaller frozen waters. A passage flock of 15 at Pennington Flash on May 5th was exceptional, with normally just single birds recorded in this month.



10 were at Ringley ETW on Mar 21st with 13 at Moses Gate CP on Dec 14th. Other records of less than 10 birds were received from: Ashworth Moor Reservoir, Banky Meadow, Castleshaw Reservoir, Cheadle, Clarence Lido Bury, Clifton Marina, Davyhulme NR, Didsbury, Diggle Flash, Elton Reservoir, Gatley, Godley Reservoir Hyde, Greenbooth Reservoir, High Rid Reservoir, Higher Broughton, Hollingworth Lake, Horrock's Flash, Irlam Locks, Jumbles Reservoir, Loonts Lake, Norden, Ogden Reservoir Milnrow, Pomona Dock, Rainford's Flash, Rumworth Lodge, Sale WP, Salford Quays, Scholes, Watergrove Reservoir and Withins Reservoir.

### **SMEW** *Mergellus albellus*

Irregular, scarce winter visitor.

BoCC Amber List species (WR).

Almost all records were during cold spells when many waters were frozen. During the early part of the year, a single redhead was at Irlam Locks Jan 9th & 13th (K. McCabe *et al*). A redhead was at Pearson's Flash from Dec 8th to 22nd, visiting Scotman's Flash on the 23rd (A.J. Smith *et al*). A confiding redhead was at Clifton Marina and the River Irwell nearby on Dec 23rd and remained into 2011(K. Rice *et al*). Finally, a redhead was on the River Tame at Reddish Vale on Dec 31st (K. Dunning).

### **RED-BREASTED MERGANSER** *Mergus serrator*

Scarce winter and passage visitor.

The only record this year concerned a pair at Elton Reservoir on May 7th.

### **GOOSANDER** *Mergus merganser*

Fairly common winter visitor, increasing summer records and rare breeder.

Counts of more than 20 birds at regular sites were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Ashworth Moor Resr	15	15	21	14		10	18			53	39	
Audenshaw Resrs	62	30	20	14	14	4	35	52	20	11	65	65
Chorlton WP	20	16	7						3	2	6	7
Clifton Marina	16						20					6
Elton Resr	10	30	4	2	1				1	3	17	18
Heaton Park Resr	10	10		2	27				13	25	57	8
Hollingworth Lake	8	21	6					4				22
Moses Gate CP	3	4	11				20				25	8
Pennington Flash	37	46	21	4	3				1	6	27	44
Piethorne Valley	2	6	22	2					9	7	16	6
Watergrove Resr	16	24	18						1	3	13	23

Counts submitted for Ashworth Moor Reservoir were mainly day time observations and the apparent lack of regular roost counts explains the significant decline in numbers reported from this site.

Other counts of 10 or more were: Abram Flashes 14 Jan 30th and 11 Feb 24th, Boggart Hole Clough 16 Nov 12th, Castleshaw Reservoirs 10 Feb 25th and 12 Feb 28th, Chadkirk 17 Jan 4th and 15 Dec 30th, Cheadle Bridge East Didsbury 11 Feb 11th and 17 Dec 9th, Heaton Mersey

10 March 21st, Norden 15 Nov 28th, Offerton 10 Jan 3rd, River Irwell at Clifton 16 Jan 9th, River Irwell Ringley ETW 15 Jan 10th, River Irwell at the Cliff Broughton 12 May 15th, River Irwell Kearsley 18 Jan 10th, River Irwell/Croal confluence 10 Dec 26th, Pomona Dock 18 Jan 10th, Reddish Vale CP 13 Feb 6th, Rhodes Lodges 12 Nov 1st, Royal George Lodge 15 Feb 15th and 12 Feb 24th and Whitehead Lodges 30 Feb 13th. A further 85 sites in the county recorded counts of less than 10 birds. Breeding was proved at 7 sites as follows: Bury ETW (2 broods), Diggle Flash, River Irwell Salford, River Goyt Lower Bredbury, Kirklees, Reddish Vale and Unsworth.

### **RUDDY DUCK** *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Current county status withheld.

In view of the ongoing cull to preserve the genetic integrity of Spanish populations of White-headed Duck, submission of records has been withheld.

### **RED GROUSE** *Lagopus lagopus*

Uncommon resident.

BoCC Amber List (BDMp1, BDMp2) and UK BAP species.

On the eastern moors, winter atlas recording produced a count of 11 birds in the Laddow Moss tetrad on the Derbyshire border. The moorlands north of Bolton seemed to be holding greater numbers than in recent years, with a maximum of 10 on Winter Hill on New Year's Day.

Grouse were present on just 2 BBS squares (four in 2009) with Holcombe Rifle Range and Holcombe Hill having birds on the early visit. The only confirmed breeding records were from Smithills Moor (a brood found on May 6th); the Roe Cross, Stalybridge tetrad (recently-fledged young on Jun 26th); and the aptly-named Wilderness tetrad which borders Derbyshire. In addition, probable breeding records came from Alphin Brow (Greenfield), Noonsun Hill, RSPB Dove Stone, Cowbury Dale (Carrbrook), Higher Swineshaw Reservoir, Lees Hill, Black Moss, Holcombe Moor and Winter Hill.

The best post-breeding counts were from Smithills Moor with 17 seen on Aug 17th and 23 on Sep 26th. 18 were counted in the Dove Stone Moss tetrad on Dec 15th during the final winter of atlas recording.

### **RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE** *Alectoris rufa*

Uncommon introduction; populations may not be self-sustaining.

The usual mossland sites accounted for most records in the pre-breeding season, though numbers were down in comparison to last year. 5 were at Rindle Road on Jan 1st and again on the 18th. 4 were on Chat Moss on Feb 12th.

As in 2009, only two BBS squares (Astley Moss East and Ringway) recorded birds. Last year's finds at Carrington and Hartshead Green were not repeated. Despite the continued intensity of atlas surveys, proof of wild breeding came only from one site with an adult and 4 downy young seen on Astley Moss on Jul 25th.

Once again, there were no reports of introductions, nor any large numbers to suggest recent releases. 5 were noted at Astley Moss East peat pools on Jul 11th, with 3 at Woodstock Farm, Irlam Moss on Aug 19th and 23rd. Further north, Pike Road, Horwich had 7 birds on Sep 2nd and Smithills Moor produced a count of 9 on Nov 7th. 3 on Broadstone Moss, Saddleworth on Aug 14th was the best that the east of the county could muster.

## **GREY PARTRIDGE** *Perdix perdix*

Fairly common but declining resident; augmented by releases in some areas. BoCC Red List (BDp1, BDp2, SPEC) and UK BAP species.

Numbers reported in the early part of the year were better than usual with double-figure counts from Highfield Moss (Lowton), Little Woolden Moss and Piethorne Valley in January and early February.

Grey Partridge were found on just 3 BBS squares (8 last year), these being Abram, Chew Moor and Lane Head. Atlas surveyors confirmed breeding at a number of sites, with fledged young noted at Over Hulton, Bryn Gates landfill site, Cutacre open-cast coal site, Worsley Moss, the Dog Hill tetrad and Black Wood, Irlam Moss. In addition, nesting birds were reported from Oldfield Brow and Heywood, where at the latter site a nest containing 13 eggs was discovered on Jun 13th. Clearly an unlucky number for this pair as they were found to have been smashed on a subsequent visit.

Autumn and winter counts were also an improvement on last year. Highfield Moss, Lowton, held a maximum of 63 birds (coveys of 24, 21, 16 and 2) on Nov 25th. Best count from Cadishead Moss was 39, also on Nov 25th, whilst on the same day there were 25 on Great Woolden Moss. Unless some of these birds were counted more than once, that is a total of 127 in one day. Bryn Gates landfill site had 38 (2 coveys of 13 and one of 12) on Sep 26th and Little Woolden Moss had 46 in two adjacent fields on Oct 31st. No releases were confirmed this year.

## **PHEASANT** *Phasianus colchicus*

Common resident; frequent introductions for shooting.

Pheasant were found in 29 (43%) of the county's BBS squares (39% in 2009). Astley Moss East as usual appeared to have the highest population with 9 recorded on the late visit (14 last year). Other squares with 6 or 7 birds were Brushes, Holcombe Rifle Range, Ludworth Moor, Hartshhead Green and Carrington. Eight were recorded on the early visit to the Hey Brook WBBS plot.

Atlas surveyors recorded young birds from such a wide array of sites all across the county that it is difficult (given the limited data supplied) to know which were wild-bred and which were recently-released. "Hundreds" were released in the Astley Moss area in August and introductions surely took place in the Brushes Valley and Smithills Moor where 167 were counted during a timed tetrad visit.

## **GANNET** *Morus bassanus*

Rare visitor.

BoCC Amber List species (BL, BI).

A juvenile was present at Crompton Lodges, Moses Gate CP Sep 28th-29th (K. Brides *et al.*). This was only the twelfth county record since 1950 and the first during this period to remain for more than one day. It was therefore a rare opportunity for county listers to catch up with this species. Observers present at dawn on Sep 29th found it drifting lifelessly on the water and feared the worst as it was washed towards the shoreline. But as they went to retrieve what was assumed to be the corpse, it miraculously sprang to life and flew back into the middle of the lake. It was then seen to preen and dive before flying off strongly to the west a few hours later.

## **CORMORANT** *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Common winter visitor; summering in small numbers.

*Monthly maxima at sites where at least one count was in double figures:-*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Audenshaw Resrs		2	5	6	2		1	7	10	5	4	
Castleshaw Resrs	3	6	6	5				1	6	11	7	
Davyhulme NR	4	1	6						18	13	3	9
Elton Reservoir		31	20					2	8	39	42	
Etherow CP	28	18	15	18					4	5	11	6
Hollingworth Lake	18	24	10	5	1		1	3	8	5	20	18
Irlam Locks	30	8	6	1	6	2					3	28
Kearsley Park	13	8	3	2		1	1	2	8	9	9	12
Pennington Flash	27	37	37	13				19	72	41	44	6
Platt Fields Park	3	27							2	2	1	
Radcliffe Ees	63	54	22	19						41		31
Sale WP	2	20	10	3		2	5	3	21	16	11	6
Salford Quays	8		2	2	2	2	4			12		4
Wigan Flashes	2	48	31	2		1	6	4	11	15	56	1

There were also isolated double figure counts of 13 Cheadle Bridge, East Didsbury Jan 8th, 16 Heaton Park Reservoir Oct 17th and 12 Ogden Reservoir, Milnrow Oct 28th. Notable overflying flocks included 45 SW over Bamfurlong Sep 8th and 24 S over Sale Sep 2nd.

*BBS data:* This species was recorded in 7 BBS squares (10%) which was the same as 2009. There was no attempt at breeding although summering birds (mainly immature birds) were widely reported. Nationally BBS data suggested a 15% decline in the UK population but only a 1% decline in England over the period 2009-10.

## **SHAG** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Rare visitor.

BoCC Amber List species (BDMp1, BDMp2, BL, BI).

An adult was at Westlake, Hindley Green on Oct 8th (A. Makin). This was the ninth county record in the last twenty years.

## **BITTERN** *Botaurus stellaris*

Scarce visitor.

BoCC Red List (HD, SPEC, BR, WR), UK BAP and GM BAP species.

As usual the majority of records came from the Wigan Flashes area where Pearson's Flash was the favoured location. There was however no suggestion of breeding. Sightings were as follows (all singles):-

*Bryn Marsh:* Apr 5th; Jun 15th; Sep 3rd.

*Hawkey Reedbed:* Nov 30th.

*Pearson's Flash:* Jan 4th, 9th, 18th & 19th; Feb 1st & 2nd; Mar 16th; Sep 12th; Dec 14th, 26th & 27th.

*Scotman's Flash*: Feb 12th; Dec 25th & 27th.

*Turner's Flash*: Feb 25th; Dec 10th-11th.

*Westwood Flash*: Dec 27th.

Away from the Wigan Flashes the only records were of singles at Pennington Flash on Jan 1st & 22nd; Jul 9th; Oct 3rd; Dec 12th, 27th, 29th & 30th and at Hope Carr NR Dec 29th.

### **LITTLE EGRET** *Egretta garzetta*

Uncommon visitor.

BoCC Amber List species (BL).

Late summer appears to be the best time to catch up with this species in the county as birds disperse following breeding. This was the pattern again in 2010 with a raft of records in late July and early August. Many of these probably related to the same wandering individuals. All records were as follows:-

*Altrincham ETW*: one Jul 29th (G. McPherson)

*Broad Ees Dole, Sale WP*: one Aug 19th (T. George)

*Chadkirk LNR*: one Jan 3rd-8th (J. Rowland *et al*). The same bird was also seen nearby on the River Goyt at Offerton Jan 4th-6th (J. Rayner *et al*)

*Chorlton WP*: one flew west Oct 2nd (P. Hines)

*Cutacre, Middle Hulton*: juvenile from Aug 1st to 3rd (S. Warford)

*Elton Reservoir*: 4 circled the reservoir Aug 3rd before heading off west (I. Campbell). This is the highest number ever recorded in the county.

*Etherow CP*: 2 Jul 19th (C. Harper)

*Hollingworth Lake*: one Jul 29th (J. Whitham)

*Hope Carr NR*: one flew north Sep 15th (R. Ashcroft)

*Horrocks Flash*: 2 Jul 29th and Aug 3rd (A. J. Smith *et al*)

*Pennington Flash*: 2 Jul 29th (B. Hulme) later relocated to Horrocks Flash; 3 Aug 1st; one Sep 26th (I. McKerchar)

*Red Moss, Horwich*: one Aug 3rd (I. McKerchar)

*Timperley*: one Jan 24th (F. & D. Carrodus)

### **GREAT WHITE EGRET** *Ardea alba*

Very rare visitor.

An adult was photographed flying over Pennington Flash on Jan 7th (C. Hampson, D. Wilson). This was only the fifth county record but all of these have occurred since 1995.

### **GREY HERON** *Ardea cinerea*

Fairly common resident.

*Breeding*: The Heronries census recorded the following counts of occupied nests: Ashfield Lodge, Didsbury (3 nests); Boggart Hall Clough (11); Botany Bay Wood (61-80); Brandlesholme (3); Brookdale Clough, Clayton (4-6); Chorlton Ees (18); Crooke Wood, Wigan (10-20); Dunham Massey (3-8); Elton Reservoir (1 later abandoned); Horrocks Flash (6-7); Ladybridge, Cheadle Hulme (2); Pennington Flash (1); Platt Fields Park (1); Queen's Park, Heywood (9);



Saddleworth ETW (10-11) and Stamford Park Lake, Ashton-under-Lyne (1-2). Breeding numbers appeared to be slightly higher at most sites than in 2009 despite the preceding cold winter. *BBS data*: 24 sites (36%) reported this species (35% in 2009). BBS data revealed an 11% reduction in the English population from 2009 to 2010 although the figure for the NW region remained static.

*Winter*: The prolonged cold spell at the end of the year caused considerable hardship for this species and this led to unusual behaviour such as a bird at Heaton Park Boating Lake on Dec 20th taking bread to within 5 feet.

## **PIED-BILLED GREBE** *Podilymbus podiceps* Vagrant.

A first-winter was present at Hollingworth Lake from Nov 7th- 21st (M. Griffiths, M. Mitchell, I. McKerchar *et al*). Although it was first seen on Nov 7th, it was not positively identified until Nov 9th. It subsequently transpired that a rather bulky looking Little Grebe had been seen on the 4th but due to rough weather and very poor views out in the middle of the lake, it was not pursued. Although this sighting cannot be positively attributed to the Pied-billed Grebe, considering Little Grebe is a distinct rarity at this site, it does seem highly likely that the sighting on the 4th was the former species. This was only the 38th UK record of this American vagrant and the first in Greater Manchester. It was the first British record since 2002 and therefore attracted large numbers of birders from all over the country. It showed extremely well throughout its stay favouring the small lagoon at the nature reserve. The record has been accepted by BBRC who commented that it was a 'fantastic record for this landlocked, rarity-starved county'.

## **LITTLE GREBE** *Tachybaptus ruficollis* Fairly common resident and summer visitor. BoCC Amber List species (BDMp1, BDMp2).

*Counts*: Only the following five sites recorded double figures this year (maxima in brackets): Heaton Park Reservoir (16), High Rid Reservoir (12), Pennington Flash (20), River Irwell at Lower Kersal (10) and Wigan Flashes (19).

This species is now an uncommon visitor to the north-east of the county and therefore records of up to 2 birds observed intermittently on Kitcliffe Reservoir, Piethorne between Aug 18th and Oct 26th and singles at Watergrove Reservoir Aug 19th and Queen's Park, Heywood Oct 15th were noteworthy, as was a single at Castleshaw Reservoirs, Oldham Nov 7th.

*Breeding*: confirmed at 26 sites: Altrincham ETW; Astley Moss East Peat Pools; Bank Top Lodge, Bolton; Boggart Hole Clough; Broad Ees Dole; Brushes Clough Reservoir, Shaw; Bury ETW; Colliery Lane, Atherton; Dunham Massey; Elton Reservoir; Ferry Rd. Pond, Irlam; Heaton Park Reservoir; High Rid Reservoir; Hope Carr NR; Horrocks Flash; Lightshaw WTW; Lilford Park, Leigh; Parsons Meadow; Pearson's Flash; Pennington Flash; Radcliffe Ees; Ringley ETW; Scotman's Flash; Shell NR; Strinesdale Reservoirs and Whitley Reservoir. Breeding was also considered probable or possible at a further 20 sites: Ashton Moss; Banky Meadow; Bradley; Clifton CP; Clarence Lido; Drinkwater Park; Etherow CP; Gorton Reservoirs; Great Woollen Hall; Irlam Locks; Platt Fields Park; Rainford's Flash; Red Moss, Horwich; Rumworth Lodge; Salford University; Stretford Ees; Tinker Joe's Flash, Leigh; Woodford Aerodrome; Worsley Filtration Lagoons and Worthington Lakes. 26 confirmed breeding sites was one higher than 2009 but there has clearly been a marked decline since 1984 when BBGM estimated a county population of 150 breeding pairs. *BBS data*: 2 sites (3%) recorded this species - the same as 2009. Nationally BBS data indicated a 21 % decline in the UK population and a 10% decline in the English population from 2009 to 2010.

## GREAT-CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus*

Fairly common resident and summer visitor.



Numbers were generally higher at Pennington Flash than in 2009 with the maximum count being 134 Oct 2nd. Numbers were broadly similar to previous years at other sites. Elton Reservoir had low counts at the start of the year as the water level was artificially low. Numbers were very low throughout the county in December due to the long spell of freezing weather forcing birds out of the area. Indeed 2 birds were found dead at Worthington Lakes Dec 11th having frozen in the harsh conditions

*Monthly maxima at sites where at least one count was in double figures:-*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Audenshaw Resrs</b>	6	9	9	10	19	27	40	50	40	15	12	6
<b>Chorlton WP</b>	2	4	8	12	3		2	4		4	4	
<b>Pennington Flash</b>	4	27	37	41	10	22	40	72	127	134	12	
<b>Rumworth Lodge</b>	2	6	14	8	10	10	2	4	2	2	3	
<b>Wigan Flashes</b>		4	21	10	13	15	47	44				
<b>Worthington Lakes</b>		2	12	8	8	10	10	9	9	2	2	2

*Breeding:* confirmed at Bryn Marsh; Boggart Hole Clough; Chorlton WP; Crime Lake, Failsworth; Crompton Lodges; Diggle Flash; Doffcocker Lodge; Drinkwater Park; Fir Tree Flash, Leigh; Gigg Reservoirs, Bury (nest failed); Gorton Reservoirs; Heaton Park boating lake; Horrocks Flash; Jumbles Reservoir; King George V Pool, Altrincham; Ogden Reservoir, Milnrow (failed); Pearson's Flash; Pilsworth Fisheries; Rhodes Lodges; Ringley ETW; Roman Lakes, Marple; Rumworth Lodge; Turner's Flash; Stamford Park Lake, Ashton-under-Lyne; Walmsley's Flash; Westwood Flash; Withins Reservoir and Worthington Lakes. Although not all of these pairs successfully fledged young the total of 30 confirmed breeding sites compares favourably with the 18 reported in 2009. Probable or possible breeding was also reported at a further 10 sites. A pair at Watergrove Reservoir unfortunately failed. *BBS data:* Only 4 BBS squares (6%) recorded this species (3 in 2009). BBS data indicated a small 3 % increase in the UK and a 7% rise in England from 2009-10.

### **RED-NECKED GREBE** *Podiceps grisegena*

Rare visitor.

BoCC Amber List species (BR, WR).

A juvenile showed well at Pennington Flash from Sep 8th to 24th (B. Hulme *et al*). An adult was more elusive at the same site from Oct 9th to 10th (R. Gibson *et al*). These were the first county records since 2006. Pennington Flash is the most favoured locality for this species in the county and these constitute the 17th and 18th records for the site.

### **SLAVONIAN GREBE** *Podiceps auritus*

Scarce visitor.

BoCC Amber List species (SPEC, BDMp1, BDMp2, BR, WR).

An adult was at Audenshaw Reservoirs from Oct 20th to Nov 22nd (R. Travis, G. Gill *et al*), the seventeenth record for this site.

### **BLACK-NECKED GREBE** *Podiceps nigricollis*

Scarce breeder since 1992; uncommon passage visitor.

BoCC Amber List species (BR, WR).

*Spring arrivals:* Two birds returned to the sole breeding site Mar 19th and numbers had increased to 5 birds by Apr 4th and 6 May 10th. Other spring sightings were a single at Lightshaw WTW Mar 25th, 2 at Scotman's Flash Mar 29th and a single at Pennington Flash Apr 11th increasing to 2 Apr 17th-18th. 2 were then at Heaton Park Reservoir May 6th-14th.

*Breeding:* At the county's only current breeding site 4 pairs were present and 4 broods consisting of 4,4,3,2 young were seen on Jun 7th with 5 managing to survive to fledging.

*Post-breeding dispersal:* 2 adults were at Heaton Park Reservoir Jul 17th-21st, with 1 then seen intermittently until Sep 24th. A long-staying juvenile was at Pennington Flash Jul 17th until Oct 12th with 2 juveniles on Jul 28th-Aug 1st and again from Aug 25th-28th but there had been no breeding at this site. Elsewhere there were 2 adults at Audenshaw Reservoirs Jul 21st, 2 at Lightshaw Hall Flash Sep 3rd and a juvenile at Scotman's Flash Sep 6th-8th, with 2 on Sep 11th.

### **RED KITE** *Milvus milvus*

Uncommon passage migrant.

BoCC Amber List (SPEC) and RBBP species.



Given the proximity and success (700 young fledged 1999 - 2010) of the reintroduction programme in West Yorkshire, it is surprising that accepted records for this species remain in low single figures. After reaching an all time high in 2009, of eight accepted submissions, 2010 saw a dip back to five. All records were of single birds as follows:

Brownhouse Wham Reservoir, Syke on Mar 11th (S. Hitchen). Flew west, something appeared to be trailing from one of the bird's legs.

Philips Park, Whitefield on Apr 20th (R. Tuccillo)

Woodford on Jun 4th – flew east (J.W. Rayner)

Romiley on Jul 6th (A.J. Bissitt)

Wildersmoor on Oct 21st, flying low NW at 14:50 hrs (A. Makin, A. Warford)

Regrettably there were five further reports not substantiated by a rarities form submission.

### **MARSH HARRIER** *Circus aeruginosus*

Uncommon passage migrant (increasing).

BoCC Amber List (WR, BL) and RBBP species.

This species continues to extend its breeding range in the UK, nesting successfully in Cheshire for the first time in 2010. A 1st summer at Bryn Marsh on Feb 23rd and 24th was only our 3rd winter record. There was then a two month gap before the next, a migrant flying NE over Smithills Moor April 23rd followed by a further sighting 25th.

Numbers on spring migration were high compared to recent years with all records relating to female or 1st summer birds.

May 1st – Hawkey reed bed

May 2nd and 3rd – Red Moss, Horwich

May 13th – Pennington Flash and probably the same bird at Rumworth Lodge

May 17th – flying north at Bickershaw Rucks, then 55 minutes later, presumably the same bird at Rumworth Lodge

May 29th – Pearson's Flash

June 5th – Tinker Joe's Flash, Leigh seen to drop into the reeds

June 8th – Ochre Flash

12th and 13th June – Bryn Marsh

The Ochre/Bryn Marsh sightings were probably one and the same bird with this female then moving to Astley Moss East Peat Pools on the 24th June (identified from identical primary moult). She then stayed in the area until 28th Aug. Sightings elsewhere on the mosses in August relate to this wandering individual: Little Woolden Moss 9th and 11th; Astley Road, Chat Moss 16th and finally Little Woolden Hall area 17th. A juvenile Aug 29th was also at Astley Moss East Peat Pools.

### **HEN HARRIER** *Circus cyaneus*

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.

BoCC Red List (HD, SPEC) and RBBP species.

At the start of the year there were three sightings of an adult male which almost certainly relate to the same bird, as radio tracking by the Natural England Hen Harrier Recovery Project has shown that outside of the breeding season this species can easily cover a circuit of over 30 miles each day.

Jan 1st – Irlam Moss

Jan 2nd – Croxden Peatworks NR

Jan 12th – off the East Lancs Road (A580) at Lowton

One or more ringtails (adult females or immatures) were also present on the mosslands during the first winter period, seen on the following dates:

Feb 18th – Little Woollen Moss

Feb 27th and 28th – Rindle Road feeding station and surrounding area

Mar 2nd – Moss Lane, Astley Moss

Mar 11th – Little Woollen Moss

In the autumn attention switched to the Bolton and Rochdale moors. All observations with the exception of one (plumage not reported) were of ringtails.

Sep 19th – possibly the same bird flew north at High Rid Reservoir and flew south at Mast Road, Horwich.

Sep 21st – flew south at Dean Ditch, Smithills Moor and SE at Georges Lane, Horwich.

Sep 30th – circled over Two Lads Hill, Horwich until very high up and then drifted west towards the coast.

Oct 16th – Brown Wardle Hill, Watergrove, heading west and Smithills Moor flying NW.

At least one ringtail was reported from the mosslands in the late winter period.

Nov 19th - Croxden Peatworks NR

Dec 4th – Hope Carr NR – flew SE towards the mosslands

Dec 8th – Pickley Green, Westleigh the first record submitted from this site

An excellent series of records compared to just nine in 2009. Please ensure that times are included with all records in future. This will enable us to estimate more accurately the number of individuals involved.

#### **Addendum to 2009 report.**

An adult male and ringtail were on the moors above Watergrove Reservoir Oct 10th and 11th.

### **SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus***

Common resident.

The first Leigh Ornithological Society Newsletter issued in November 1971 commented: "Once a fairly common bird of prey in these parts, the Sparrowhawk is now a rare visitor." In fact it was said at the time to be even scarcer than Merlin. As well as the ban on organochlorine pesticides, the recovery of this species has undoubtedly been aided by the planting of new woodlands. The records received are thinly scattered across the county perhaps indicating that Sparrowhawk is now an under reported species.

*Early & Late Winter periods* - Atlas sightings from 55 tetrads illustrate how this raptor is to be found in a wide range of habitats from urban town centres in Failsworth, Oldham, Rochdale and Rusholme, to the moorland fringes of Crompton Moor, Holcombe Brook and Ramsbottom. Also observed at 66 sites many of which will overlap with the Atlas tetrads, including urban parks such as: Alexandra Parks in Oldham and Whalley Range; Birchfields Park, Rusholme; Buile Hill Park, Salford; Clowes Park, Broughton; Lightoaks Park, Salford; Lilford Park, Leigh; Mesnes Park, Wigan; and Woodheys Park, Woodhouses.

*Breeding* – after allowing for duplication of atlas/site records, confirmed at 20 sites/tetrads across the county compared to 27 in 2009. Whilst all boroughs reported at least one confirmed breeding pair the highest numbers were in Wigan (4), Bolton (3) and Rochdale (3). BBS occurrence increased from 10 squares (15%) in 2009 to 14 (21%) compared to 12% nationally in 2010. Sparrowhawk is a late breeder, waiting until the leaves are fully open in the tree canopy, before it begins nest building. The easiest way to confirm breeding of this species, is by listening in July or August for the hunger calls of juveniles, either still in the nest or recently fledged. An exceptional find was a nest containing 6 young in the Haydock area July 4th. Elsewhere chicks were heard calling from a nest in the Mossley area Jun 20th; fledged juveniles were calling at three sites in Rochdale Aug 7th, 8th and 10th; with the last of the breeding season in a Stockport borough park Aug 11th. Three young were stolen from a nest in the Wigan area.

Whilst the move into urban and suburban areas has provided opportunities to exploit new food sources, it brings with it the increased risk of collision whilst hunting at high speed in built up areas. As evidenced by a dead male, found Jan 23rd in a bus shelter on Wilmslow Road, next to Platt Fields Park.

## **BUZZARD** *Buteo buteo*

Common resident.

Buzzard is now the most widely distributed diurnal raptor in the UK, recorded on 44% of BBS squares nationally in 2010. It is therefore very surprising that in GM, BBS occurrence actually dropped from 13 squares (20%) in 2009 to 5 (7%) in 2010, the species apparently disappearing from Blackrod, Boothstown East, Carr Green, Clifton, Kenworthy Fields, Partington, Standish and Worthington. The maximum count during BBS surveys was 2 on Astley Moss, with singles in the Abram, Amberswood, Carrington and Ludworth Moor squares. However, the overall number of records submitted was only slightly down on the all time peak of 1049 received in 2009. The mosslands remain the stronghold for the species with a high number of sightings in the Horwich area and Stockport borough where the many mature deciduous woodlands provide ideal habitat. Whilst it remains relatively scarce in the east, records were received from all boroughs.

*Early & Late Winter Periods* - Reported from 41 Atlas tetrads and 89 sites, most observations (85%) were of one or two birds. The highest counts being: 12 Carrington Moss Feb 11th; 8 Rindle Road area Feb 20th; 7 Hope Carr NR Feb 13th; 7 Irlam Moss Feb 16th (5 seen in the air at the same time and 2 on posts); 6 Rindle Road area Jan 2nd; 6 overhead together Roman Lakes, Marple Feb 6th; and 6 Carrington Moss Nov 20th.

The highest count of the year was 15 over Carrington Moss March 21st.

*Breeding* – Confirmed in 5 Atlas tetrads (3 on the mosslands, and in Bolton and Manchester boroughs), including 2 pairs which nested within 700 yards of each other, but productivity was low with one and two young respectively. Probable breeding (display, nest building, pair or territory noted) was reported from 14 other tetrads, with possible breeding (single bird seen in suitable nesting habitat) observed in a further 31 tetrads. So breeding season presence was recorded in a total of 50 (15%) of tetrads. Reported from 97 sites during the breeding season (confirmed breeding at 10, probable at 31 and possible at 56). A juvenile on a post at Red Chalis SBI Aug 15th, suffered the indignity of being pecked on the back of the neck by a Wren and was also attacked by 4 Magpies.

*Autumn* – 10 were at Croxden Peat Works NR Aug 30th. There was clear evidence of passage during September with 13 (including a group of 6 with a Hen Harrier) flying south over Smithills Moor 21st, presumably the same birds as 6 flying south in just under two hours over Georges Lane, Horwich on the same day. In October 8 were at Pennington Flash 11th, 7 flew



south over Smithills Moor 20th; 8 south over Heaton Park Reservoir 20th: and 8 at Woodford Aerodrome 23rd.

A bird with yellow wing-tags (numbers and letters not seen) from a Cheshire colour ringing scheme was at Chelburn Reservoirs, Littleborough Aug 8th. Dead sheep is often the food of choice, with 3 observed feeding on a carcass at Castleshaw Reservoirs Oct 2nd and singles at Ludworth Moor Aug 27th and Hall Lane, Haigh Plantations Oct 20th.

### **OSPREY** *Pandion haliaetus*

Uncommon passage migrant.

BoCC Amber List (SPEC, BR) and RBBP species.

*Spring passage* – The first of the year flew N over Bromley Cross Mar 20th at 16:05 hrs

One at Clegg Hall Trout Fishery Mar 28th-29th caught a fish and was photographed by the fishery manager. It made the front page of the Rochdale Observer much to the surprise of local birdwatchers who were unaware of the bird's presence until after it had departed.

Passage peaked in April with 6 sightings as follows:

Great Lever: WNW at 16:30 hrs on 1st

Heaton Park Reservoir: NW at 19:15 hrs also on 1st

Elton Reservoir: Circling late morning on 10th

Stand Church: N at 13:45 hrs on 11th

Billinge Higher End: NW at 17:00 hrs on 22nd

Bispham Wood: NW on 23rd

Reported from 4 sites in May:

Castleshaw Reservoirs: N at 16:00 hrs on 15th. The 2nd year running Osprey has been seen here on spring passage.

Dover Basin: a bird carrying a darvic ring (VE) was present from 15th to 18th. Originally ringed as a pullus on 28th June 2007 at Kirriemuir Angus and sighted on the Ythan Estuary, Aberdeenshire in Sept 2009.

Rumworth Lodge Bolton: NE at 17:45 hrs on 17th

Blackleach Reservoir, Walkden: N at 10:00 hrs on 22nd

*Autumn passage* – A slight increase on 2009 with five records compared to three.

Bolton Town Centre: S at 10:00 hrs on Jul 19th

Manchester Airport: SE at 18:40 hrs Aug 8th

Linnyslaw: Soaring briefly with two buzzards then flew N on Aug 18th

Georges Lane and Higher Meadows, Horwich Moors: flying quite low SE after 9am on 2nd Sep

Heaton Park Reservoir: S at 08:15 hrs on 9th Sep, 13 days earlier than 2009's latest record.

### **KESTREL** *Falco tinnunculus*

Common resident and winter visitor.

BoCC Amber List species (SPEC).

*Early & Late Winter Periods* – Reported from 56 Atlas tetrads (17%) and 53 sites, with overlap between the two. The maximum counts were: 5 on Carrington Moss Feb 11th and 3 here Jan

1st; Other records of 3: In the Rindle Road area Jan 1st and 17th; Highfield Moss, Lowton Jan 3rd; Standish Hall Farm Jan 29th; Bickershaw Rucks (SD60F tetrad) Feb 23rd; and Pickley Green, Westleigh Dec 19th. Otherwise records were of singles or two birds.

*Breeding:* Confirmed in 17 Atlas tetrads and at 25 sites. This was a massive drop compared to 2009 (46 sites) and may reflect a downturn in record submissions for this species rather than an actual decline in numbers. Thankfully, there was an increase in the number of BBS squares reporting Kestrels, 19 (28%) compared to 15 (23%) in 2009 but still down significantly on the 2008 figure of 47%. The Ashton-under-Lyne and Dukinfield square (SJ9498) was the only one to record a maximum of two birds on both survey visits. Where reported, most broods comprised 3 to 4 young. A pair bred successfully in Manchester City Centre. Although, a female was killed by a Peregrine at Manchester Town Hall 15th May. Most records did not specify the type of nest site used. As well as requesting that all breeding records for this species are submitted in future, we would also appreciate nest site details be included. 5 pairs occupied nest boxes, including one who abandoned their eggs due to human disturbance. Another pair took over a hole in a quarry face previously used by Barn Owls. Four juveniles and the female were seen at the entrance to the latter nest site Jun 22nd with the family party, including the male, in flight on Jul 3rd.

*Family parties* – After fledging, juvenile Kestrels remain with the adults whilst they acquire hunting skills. 9 at Wildersmoor Horwich Jul 21st were in the air at the same time, hovering and hunting; and 9 in the Piethorne Valley Aug 10th were hunting together. Other parties suggestive of a good breeding season were 11 at Holcombe Moor Aug 11th and 9 at Georges Lane, Horwich Aug 19th.

Whilst Kestrels are known to be catholic in their choice of prey, a male observed catching frogs at Pennington Flash April 24th appears to be fairly unusual.

## **MERLIN** *Falco columbarius*

Uncommon winter visitor, passage migrant and scarce breeder.  
BoCC Amber List (HD) and RBBP species.

All upland sightings are withheld in the interests of breeding birds.

*Early winter sightings:* The mosslands remained the main wintering area with at least two birds (male and female) present. All records were of singles with male (6), female (4) and unsexed (7). In January: Chat Moss and Moss Lane, Astley Moss 1st; a female mobbing a Peregrine, Carrington Moss 8th; Hope Carr NR 9th; Barton Moss Eccles 15th; Rindle Road area 30th; Nook Lane, Astley Moss 31st. In February: Timperley 14th; Woodford Aerodrome 18th and 25th; Aspull 24th; Astley Green Village 25th; Chat Moss 27th; Worsley Moss 28th. In March three sightings of a male may have related to the same bird: Prospect Grange Farm, Irlam Moss 8th; Astley Moss area 12th; and Vicars Hall Lane, Boothstown 14th.

*Breeding:* The first bird returning to the moors was in the North East of the county on Mar 22nd. It has been noted in the past that Merlins time their return to coincide with the arrival of Meadow Pipits. A report from the SE of the county 10th Apr was followed by four sightings of a male and female in the north between Apr 20th and 28th. This was the only indication that breeding may have taken place. Although there was an isolated record of a single, seen in the east, on May 27th, at a time when birds would be on territory. Singles in the E July 23rd and NE Aug 4th probably relate to passage birds.

*Autumn:* The peak period of the year with moorland sightings on 17 days in Sep/Oct (mainly in the north of the county) and lowland sightings on 8 days. Birds were present on the same dates at sites in both the uplands and lowland mosslands. The first lowland bird was a male at Croxden Peat Works NR 25th Aug.

*Late winter:* A female was seen daily on the northern moors Nov 22nd-24th (when it landed after trying to catch a Bullfinch). All subsequent sightings were in the lowlands and of single birds, at least one male and one female. Apart from the usual mossland locations (eight Nov and four Dec records); a male was at Dunscair Lodges, Bolton Dec 6th, a female at Old Hall Farm, Woodford Dec 15th, a male at Woodford Aerodrome Dec 30th, and finally a male at Elton Reservoir Dec 31st.

### **HOBBY** *Falco subbuteo*

Uncommon summer visitor, rare breeder and passage migrant.  
RBBP species.

*Spring migration:* The trend towards earlier first arrival dates continued with a single over Irlam Moss April 14th, the second earliest since 2005. Birds were scarce for the remainder of the month with just three reported sightings: Astley Moss 18th; in the Hyde Atlas tetrad (SJ99M) 29th and at Audenshaw Reservoirs 30th.

May saw a surge in sightings, as migrants moved through the county, with 75% of records in the first half of the month. Reports came from Smithills Moor and Viridor Wood 1st; Altrincham ETW and Audenshaw Reservoirs 3rd; Astley Moss 4th, 14th and 28th; Hope Carr NR 5th; Newall Green tetrad (SJ88D) 10th; Heaton Park Reservoir, Pennington Flash and Sandy Pool Farm, Leigh 8th; Carrington Moss 12th; Stockport 14th; Princes Park Irlam 15th; Worsley Filtration Lagoons 18th; Chorlton WP and Hollingworth, nr Hyde 19th; and Dunham Massey 24th.

*Breeding:* As long ago as 1996 Hobby was suspected of breeding, at an upland site in Rochdale, whilst it has bred in neighbouring Cheshire since 1998. After a long wait, a pair was finally confirmed breeding for the first time in the county, at a mossland site. They chose to site their nest close to a Sand Martin colony and were observed on six dates between Jul 21st and Aug 7th hunting this hirundine and carrying prey to the nest. A juvenile was eventually seen on Aug 29th. A bird was also seen carrying prey at a woodland site in the west on Aug 26th, perhaps indicating successful breeding at a second location. An analysis of the records suggests five probable breeding pairs and four possible, spread widely across the county, including some in upland areas in the north and south east. August was the peak month for observations (32) due no doubt to adults becoming increasingly visible on hunting forays with growing young to feed.

*Autumn migration:* September was the second highest month for sightings (22) and included an adult and juvenile (not necessarily locally bred) harassing hirundines at Pennington Flash Sep 12th with a single seen on 8th and 26th. Other sites recording this migratory falcon were: Croxden Peatworks NR with three on 2nd, two on 4th and 6th, one on 8th; Woodford Aerodrome 2nd and 4th with one nearby at Church Lane 19th; Heaton Park Reservoir 7th and 22nd; Stubshaw Cross 7th; Dean Ditch, Horwich Moors; Cadishead Moss and Chat Moss 9th; Offerton 11th; Astley 17th; Rumworth Lodge 23rd. The final bird of the year was at Pennington Flash Oct 3rd.

### **PEREGRINE** *Falco peregrinus*

Uncommon resident and winter visitor.  
RBBP species.

*Early and late winter:* This species is now so widespread that it can occur virtually anywhere in the county outside of the breeding season. Two birds were seen regularly throughout February on St. Luke's church spire, Heywood. Other sites included Adswold Tip Cheadle; Altrincham; Barton Moss; Bredbury; Carrington Moss; Chadderton; Chat Moss; Chorlton Ees; Chorlton Water Park; Clifton Marina; Cutacre Open Cast Coal Site; Elton Reservoir; Etherow Country

Park; Goyt Hall Farm; on the chimney of Kearsley Mill, Prestolee; Linnyslaw Moss; Little Woollen Moss; Manchester Airport; Pennington Flash; Rumworth Lodge and Woodford Aerodrome.

*Breeding:* The number of successful breeding pairs saw a reduction from nine (2009) to seven, as a result of the Bolton Town Hall pair apparently not breeding, the pair at Quarry site A disappearing and only one pair breeding at Quarries B and C. However on the plus side the nest tray erected on Rochdale Town Hall in February 2009 was occupied for the first time. 2 young were ringed as V1 and V2.

Manchester city centre: a pair bred successfully for the 5th year running and were seen mating March 12th and 28th at the usual nest site. However, they then moved to one of the other nest trays on a different building. Only two young fledged compared to four in 2009, ringed as V3 and V4. On June 25th V4 flew into the Crown Plaza hotel, Shudehill and was taken into care overnight before being released in the vicinity the following day.

Leigh (the 2009 site): 3 young hatched on May 12th, the event being caught on CCTV. All female they were ringed as V9, Z1 and Z2 and fledged 22nd June. One was subsequently rescued from the street and put on a low ledge for safety.

Stockport (the 2009 site): 4 young ringed (2M: 2F) V5, V6, V7, V8.

Quarry B (in the east): 3 young fledged

Quarry D (in the east): 4 young were ringed by the High Peak Ringing Group.

Quarry E (in the west): Four eggs were seen in the nest April 2nd and 21st. The female sat tight April 17th when a man was seen throwing rocks, presumably trying to flush the bird off the nest. Subsequently, only one chick (4-5 days old) was seen in the nest on 10th May and was ringed as T9 (a male).

*Prey:* The nest trays were removed from Bolton Town Hall and revealed a diverse range of prey species: Bar-tailed Godwit, two Black-headed Gulls, a whole Dunlin, Lapwing, 1+ Woodcock and Dunnock. The remains of a Kittiwake were found beneath Rochdale Town Hall clock tower Mar 28th. A Jackdaw was caught at Kingsway Business Park development site, Rochdale 2nd March but after a brief struggle managed to escape. The raptor may have been distracted, as it was surrounded by a noisy mass of corvids.

## **WATER RAIL** *Rallus aquaticus*

Uncommon resident, winter visitor and passage migrant.

2010 proved to be an exceptional year with a record number of sightings and confirmed breeding at 3 different localities. BBGM 1979-83 reported no confirmed breeding of this species and since then there have been only 8 confirmed breeding records, the first being in 1991 and the last in 2006. During this period, there have also been 8 reports of juvenile birds. All of these records came in the months of July to September, so it is impossible to say for sure if these records relate to locally bred birds. Birds of the Western Palearctic states that juveniles from early broods begin dispersing in July. However, given that these records came from locations with suitable habitat and adults present during the breeding season, surely some of these records must involve local birds.

*January to March:* There was an abundance of sightings during this period, mainly due to the severe frost which gripped the county. This normally shy and secretive bird was forced to feed in the remaining small bodies of ice free water, often in full view. An example of this behaviour was at Bennies, Elton Reservoir where 2 birds could regularly be seen feeding out in the open, often at very close range. Other sightings were as follows; Pennington Flash (3), Pickley Marsh (3), Pearson's Flash (3), Hawkey feeding station (2), Worsley Woods (2). Single birds were reported from at least 20 other sites within the county. A single bird frequented

the dipping pond at Bank Top, Lees and was seen intermittently from Jan 1st until Mar 14th. A bird seen at Greenfield constituted the most easterly record in the county.

*Breeding:* Tape censusing was again carried out at the Wigan Flashes but only 5 territories were identified, these being Pearson's Flash (3), Hawkley Reedbed (1) and Bryn Marsh (1). It was noted that at Scotman's Flash, there was no response to the tape despite there being up to 4 territories there in previous years. Confirmed breeding came from Bickershaw Colliery where a nest containing 9 eggs was discovered. Unfortunately, the eggs were later predated. A pair was seen at Red Moss, Horwich on May 2nd with 1 chick. Breeding was also confirmed at Astley Moss East Peat Pools on June 24th.

*October to December:* Sightings in this period came from 18 different locations, mainly relating to single birds. Multiple sightings came from the following sites; Pennington Flash (6) on Oct 31st, Turners Flash (4) on Nov 28th, Elton Reservoir (4) Nov 28th, including a dead bird which had succumbed to the freezing conditions. Of note, a bird was found on Oct 24th and seen again Nov 28th at Kingsway Business Park and a single bird was found during the Pied-billed Grebe 'twitch' at Hollingworth Lake on Nov 10th.

## **MOORHEN** *Gallinula chloropus*

Abundant resident.

*Maxima at sites where at least one count reached 20:*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Altrincham ETW</b>	3		7	6	8		14		26	22	36	
<b>Heaton Park</b>	30	13	12		10							
<b>Mesnes Park, Wigan</b>	3	2	6						16	20	20	20
<b>Pennington Flash</b>	25	6	25		6					14	70	38
<b>Sale WP</b>	21	9	4						8	7	10	23
<b>Shell Pool NR</b>			12	9					20	13	20	21
<b>Wigan Flashes</b>	22	29	16						39	13	59	39

Hope Carr NR, Low Hall, Roman Lakes and Woodford Aerodrome leave the table and are replaced by Sale WP, Altrincham ETW and Shell Pool all of which left the table in 2008! The highest count was of 100 birds at Red Seas, Crooke on Dec 13th with other isolated notable counts of 23 at Doffcocker on Nov 23rd and 22 on Pearson's Flash on Nov 26th. A single bird was recorded in an Astley garden on Jan 2nd, presumably due to the severe weather.

Breeding was confirmed at 114 sites with the earliest, a family party on Heaton Park boating lake on Mar 11th and the latest from Amberswood on Oct 4th. BBGM 1979-83 reported 234 occupied tetrads compared to 219 during current atlas work 2008-2010. For the 2nd year running there was a 5% decline in BBS occurrence which means the species was only found on 37% of squares compared to 47% in 2008; perhaps due to the impact of two successive harsh winters. Nationally there was a 14% decline between 2009-10.

## **COOT** *Fulica atra*

Abundant resident and winter visitor.

It has been noted that wintering numbers have seen quite a reduction in recent years and this trend seems to be continuing. Peak counts of over 1000 birds were regular during the winter months in the late 80's and early 90's. Since then, numbers have dropped off significantly and peak counts at the two county strongholds this year were 855 birds at Wigan Flashes in

October and 564 at Pennington Flash in September. However, the low numbers could be due to birds moving to the coast to avoid the particularly harsh winter weather.

*Maxima at sites where at least one count exceeded 100:*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Elton Resr</b>									127	51	138	167
<b>Moses Gate CP</b>	120	101	26						57	71	61	118
<b>Pennington Flash</b>	100	55	80				146		564	442	240	80
<b>Wigan Flashes</b>	271	362	213	50				436	749	855	802	672

Clifton Marina leaves the table this year to be replaced by Elton Reservoir. The number of sites where 100 birds or more were recorded has reduced from 7 in 2002 to 4 in 2010.

Breeding was confirmed at 62 sites this year, up from 47 in 2009. A bird was seen on a nest at Whitley Reservoir on March 20th and the latest brood came from Lightshaw WTW on Sep 1st. Current Atlas work has shown the total number of occupied tetrads in Greater Manchester was 122 compared to 100 in BBGM 1979-83. Coot was recorded on 10 (15%) BBS squares compared to 12 (18%) in 2009.

## **CRANE** *Grus grus*

Rare visitor.

BoCC Amber List species (SPEC, BR).

One flew north over the A580 East Lancashire Road at Wardley Industrial Estate, Swinton on the morning of Mar 12th (S. Warford). This was only the 7th county record and the first since 2003.

## **OYSTERCATCHER** *Haematopus ostralegus*

Fairly common passage migrant and summer visitor, uncommon breeder.

BoCC Amber List species (WL, BI, WI).

The first bird of the year was Jan 5th at Offerton Green. It wasn't until the first week of February that further sightings came with a flurry of returning birds logged at Elton Reservoir, Hollingworth Lake (stood on the ice covering the lake), Pennington Flash and Rumworth Lodge. A further increase of records in March (at a total of 27 sites) related to birds returning to territories. Double figures were recorded most days of the month at Pennington Flash (max 23 on 27th) and Rumworth Lodge (max 15 on 18th).

*Breeding:* confirmed at 18 sites compared to just 13 in 2009 - Stake Hill (on an industrial estate roof), Rhodes lodges (on roof), Rumworth Lodge (3-4 pairs; one pair having a second brood), Birch Hill Industrial Estate (on roof), Ashworth Moor Reservoir, Astley Moss East Peat Pools (2 pairs), Castleshaw Reservoirs (one pair fledged 2 young), Dover Basin, Hope Carr NR, Lightshaw Hall Flash, (1-2 pairs fledged a total of 3 young), Boothstown, Over Hulton, Pilsworth South, Ainsworth North, Carrington Moss West, Woodford East, Chat Moss and Botany Bay Wood. Probable breeding came from further sites including Broadheath Retail Park (on roof), Elton Reservoir, Salford Quays, Altrincham ETW, Horrocks Flash, Dimplington and Ringway (commuting to the airport grounds). The species' use of industrial unit roof-tops appears to be increasing in the county, opening up new breeding grounds. BBS data shows this species was recorded on 7 squares (11% of squares surveyed) as in 2009. This is similar to the national average of 11.1% of squares.

A post-breeding gathering of 11 birds at Hollingworth Lake Jul 15th represented the highest ever count reported at this site. Further sightings during August came from Banky Meadow (3



Aug 5th), Castleshaw Reservoirs (3 until Aug 14th), Rumworth Lodge (4 Aug 1st with the last seen on the 21st) and Smithills (one Aug 16th). No further records were received until December, where Pennington Flash had a bird on 12th and 23rd Dec - in place nice and early for the 2011 season.

### **AVOCET** *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Scarce passage migrant.

BoCC Amber List species (BL, WL).

Two birds graced Audenshaw Reservoirs May 2nd (P. Hammond *et al*). They showed from dawn until dusk, visiting all three reservoirs during their stay. This continues a steady run of sightings over the last 10 years as the species continues to go from strength to strength in the wider region of the North-West.

### **LITTLE RINGED PLOVER** *Charadrius dubius*

Fairly common summer visitor, uncommon breeder.

RBBP species.

The first record of the year came right on cue Mar 18th from Woodford Aerodrome. By the end of March a further 6 sites had recorded returning birds including Audenshaw Reservoirs (19th), Pennington Flash (19th), Kingsway Rochdale (20th) and Rumworth Lodge (24th). April saw larger numbers of passage birds arriving at an array of sites including Altrincham ETW, Astley Moss, Chadderton, Horwich, Light Hazzles Reservoir and Lightshaw Hall Flash.

*Breeding*: Estimated numbers of pairs were confirmed at 29 sites, probable at another 12 sites and possible at 10 further sites; the highest number of breeding pairs ever recorded in the county. An Ecologist monitoring the species on a development site with 4 pairs commented that their numbers in GM was one of the highest concentrations he had come across in England. Records came largely from nature reserves, brownfield sites and reservoirs. However, one pair chose to nest on riverine shingle, a habitat which is being used more frequently as the species expands its range in the north-west of England. The final outcomes of many nests in the county were unknown. It is still likely a pair or two went undetected in the diminishing number of brownfield sites towards the inner city.

One BBS square had this species (0.84%), of 14 squares nationally (0.4%).

Later records came from Rumworth Lodge (the highest count this year of 21 Jul 9th consisted of passage migrants, and the last record was Aug 23rd from this site), Ringley ETW (one Jul 15th), Woodford Aerodrome (one Aug 12th) and Pennington Flash (one late juv Sep 10th).

### **RINGED PLOVER** *Charadrius hiaticula*

Fairly common visitor, scarce breeder.

BoCC Amber List species (BDMp1, WI).

One at Audenshaw Reservoirs Jan 25th was a very early record. Further records came in Feb with one at Elton Reservoir (10th, which had risen to 4 by 18th), 2 at Kingsway Business Park, Rochdale (20th) and one at Pennington Flash (28th). Plenty of sightings were to be had in March of prospecting birds and migrants at further sites including Ashton Moss (one on 1st), Rumworth Lodge (one on 5th), Crumpsall (3 on 21st), Carrington Moss (3 on 25th) and Irlam Moss (one on 26th). During March numbers at Kingsway Business Park increased dramatically with 12 on 15th rising to an impressive peak of 22 birds on 22nd; the highest number recorded in the county this year. Additional returning records were at Woodford Aerodrome (2 Apr 1st), Riding Lane, Ashton-in-Makerfield (3 Apr 16th) and Lightshaw Hall Flash (2 May 23rd). 20 at Rumworth Lodge Apr 29th were part of a multi-species pulse of wader migration through

the county (see Dunlin and Grey Plover). Non-breeding records during the summer were reported from Chelburn Reservoirs (2 Jun 10th), Hollingworth Lake (2 Jul 2nd and one Aug 21st) and Audenshaw Reservoirs (11 May 1st and 10 Jul 8th).

*Breeding:* confirmed at 8 sites, probable at 7 further sites and possible at 3 further sites. An occupied nest at Crumpsall had feisty owners who were seen driving away both Little Ringed Plovers and Lapwings (Apr 13th) but this attempt was not successful. On 24th April a bird was sat on a nest at Woodford Aerodrome, by 21st May 3 young had reduced to 2. One pair bred at Riding Lane, Ashton-in-Makerfield in sparse corn crops with another pair failing nearby. One youngster was successfully raised at Trafford Park (May 15th). After a failed attempt in April, one pair fledged young at Pennington Flash (Jun 14th). At Astley Moss East Peat Pools 2 pairs fledged at least 4 young during the season. A pair at Bryn Gates Landfill were present from Jul 22nd, but 2 juvs on Aug 20th had reduced to one by 27th. The high counts at Kingsway Business Park were followed with territorial and display behaviour seen but breeding was not confirmed. A fox problem plagued breeding attempts at Rumworth Lodge, though 12 birds lingered until Jun 1st. No BBS squares recorded this species.

No breeding records were received from the regularly used site at Shell, Carrington this year.

Late records consisted of a lingering juvenile at Astley Moss East Peat Pools (until Aug 29th) and one at Audenshaw Reservoirs (Sep 10th).

### **DOTTEREL** *Charadrius morinellus*

Scarce passage migrant.

BoCC Amber List species (BL).

A 'trip' of 6 on Brown Wardle Hill on May 7th became 9 the following day (R. Turner, M. Rigby *et al*). This flock, consisting of 3 females, 5 males and a probable 1st summer female, remained until the 10th and represented the largest number reported since the county record of 14 at nearby Crook Moor in 1997. The arrival of this flock occurred in the peak week for finding and seeing this scarce wader in the county (May 1st-8th).

A juvenile was found at Smithills Moor Aug 18th (A. Makin); the first ever record outside of the classic window of Apr-May in the county.

### **GOLDEN PLOVER** *Pluvialis apricaria*

Fairly common but decreasing winter visitor; uncommon breeder.

BoCC Amber List species (W1).

Just two three-figure counts were received this year: 121 at Ludworth Moor on Mar 27th and 104 at Woodford Aerodrome on Apr 1st, both at the time of peak spring passage. Highfield Moss, Lowton had 16 birds on Jan 24th, 20 were by the Astley Tip access road on Mar 2nd and the site of the old Monsall Hospital had a flock of 30 on Mar 7th and a minimum of 24 on Mar 21st.

Records from Ludworth Moor are interesting as it is not a breeding site, but is used as a feeding area for off-duty birds which nest in the well-studied Snake Summit area in Derbyshire. Birds present during the day will be females as males feed at night and take over incubation duties in the morning (D.W.Yalden in litt). Their numbers are boosted by northerly-breeding birds on passage, which would account for particularly high counts in March and early April.

Our own county breeding birds were holding territories from late March in 15 tetrads surveyed for the atlas project, from Holcombe Hill in the north to Roe Cross, near Hollingworth, in the east. Last year's lack of confirmed breeding records was made up for by nests found at two sites and chicks at two others. This species is restricted to such small areas of the county that the population cannot be accurately assessed by BBS, but its presence was noted in three squares. Nationally, BBS figures showed a continuing decline.

The arrival of wintering birds saw 60 present on a recently-landscaped area on Grimshaw Lane, north of the Manchester City football club's Etihad Stadium on both Oct 26th and 28th. This was the biggest flock recorded in the late winter period. Rooftop roosting was noted at Oldham St., Denton (32 on Nov 14th) and Howard St., Bolton (6 on Oct 24th, 20 on Nov 16th and 25 on Nov 21st). 15 were at Rooley Moor on Nov 23rd.

## GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

Uncommon passage migrant.

BoCC Amber List species (WL, WI).

Four records was a great improvement on last year's single sighting. April saw Audenshaw Reservoirs attract a lone bird on the 12th and two on the 18th. Two were also present at Rumworth Lodge in what was described by site regulars as a "waderfest" on the evening of Apr 29th. The sole return passage record was one at Pennington Flash which was present only in the early morning of Sep 26th.

## LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

Common but declining resident and winter visitor.

BoCC Red List (BDp1, SPEC, BDMp2, WI) and UK BAP species.

Numbers at Rumworth and Woodford were down this year, as they were at Pennington Flash (except in October and November). Counts from Horrocks Flash however were generally higher than in 2009.

*Monthly maxima at ground roosts where at least one count exceeded 200:*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Rumworth Lodge</b>	210	278	70	10	20	35	50		50	50	195	287
<b>Pennington Flash</b>	282	500	80		6	1	300	440	320	400	530	200
<b>Little Woollen Moss</b>	160	207	32	16		13		3				
<b>Horrocks Flash</b>	97				2	119	640	1000	400			
<b>Woodford</b>		58	89	47	39	88	200	294	302	159	359	58
<b>Astley Moss East</b>			1		155			215				

*Rooftop roosts:* Only two instances of this, now regular, behaviour were received for the early part of the year: 50 on a warehouse at Three Sisters in February and 18 on Ashton Moss in March. From July onwards, post-breeding flocks boosted numbers and counts of over 100 came from Birch Industrial Estate (230) and Altrincham (170) in July and Amberswood (500), Woodford (294) and Pilsworth (260) in August. The September peak count of the Woodford hangar roost was 208, whilst October saw 100 birds using roofs in Horwich and Middleton. In November the Middleton roost doubled to 200 and 150 were in the Halliwell area of Bolton, where numbers were generally reduced this year. Before the December cold snap led to birds moving out of the area, 180 were on roofs in Denton. A flock of the same size on Hattersley Industrial Estate may have been the same flock moving along the connecting motorway.

*Breeding:* Records of nesting birds came from all around the county as usual, boosted again by atlas surveys. Birds were displaying over their territories before the end of February, but the first occupied nests were not noted until April 1st on Irlam Moss. The usual wide range of nest sites was in evidence, though there was no proof of roof-nesting this year. Normally single-brooded, Lapwings will relay if first clutches are lost and this was noted at Bowlee where 3 pairs were successful in a field where their first attempts had been destroyed by ploughing. At Moss House Farm, Boothstown, and at Malkin Wood, a large number of nests were moved so that they would not be crushed by tractors.

45% of BBS squares recorded Lapwings, compared with 47% last year (52% in 2008). The Hey Brook WBBS plot had 38 birds on the first visit and 31 on the second. BBS squares with the most birds were Astley Moss East (20/22), Mossley (16/11), Mellor Moor (4/10), Ludworth Moor (10/0), Heaton Park Reservoir (15/4) and Trub (2/12). Nationally, BBS results show mixed fortunes for this species with the Yorkshire population showing a significant increase whilst those in the North West are declining.

### **KNOT** *Calidris canutus*

Scarce passage migrant.

BoCC Amber List species (SPEC, WL, WI).

Singles were at Georges Lane, Horwich; a flyover (Aug 27th) and Elton Reservoir; a winter plumaged bird (Sep 14th and another on Dec 6th).

### **SANDERLING** *Calidris alba*

Uncommon passage migrant.

*Spring Passage:* Records commenced in April, at Audenshaw Reservoirs (4 on 29th), Pennington Flash (firstly 2 and then a good size flock of 8 flew through west on 29th) and Rumworth Lodge (2 on 29th). May saw the bulk of records; Norman Hill Reservoir (one on 7th was the first record at this site), Heaton Park Reservoir (one on 10th), Audenshaw Reservoirs (one on 14th, 3 on 22nd, and 2 on 30th), Pennington Flash (singles on 14th, 20th, and 28th) and Elton Reservoir (2 on 22nd).

*Autumn Passage:* Whilst spring passage was slightly up on 2009, autumn migration was very poor with only a single record; at Audenshaw Reservoirs (Jul 17th).

### **LITTLE STINT** *Calidris minuta*

Rare visitor.

An evening visit from a juvenile at Audenshaw Reservoirs (Sep 18th) was the only record this year (James Wild *et al*).

### **CURLEW SANDPIPER** *Calidris ferruginea*

Rare passage migrant.

A single record was of a juvenile with a Dunlin (Aug 29th) at Astley Moss East Peat Pools (I. McKerchar).

### **DUNLIN** *Calidris alpina*

Common passage migrant, scarce breeder.

BoCC Red List species (WDp2, SPEC, WDMp1, BL, WL, WI).

*Monthly maxima at major sites:*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Audenshaw Resrs</b>		1	1	25	16	2	5	6	5	1	3	2
<b>Elton Resr</b>				1	4				2	4		2
<b>Horrocks Flash</b>					2		7	1	4			
<b>Pennington Flash</b>	1		2	11	5	8	3	5	6	10	1	1
<b>Rumworth Lodge</b>			1	31	5	1	1	4				

The large count of 31 at Rumworth Lodge occurred on the evening of April 29th. This was the same date as the large count of 25 at Audenshaw Reservoirs and coincided with some visible migration of the species at Pennington Flash (11 through in the late afternoon). This was possibly the same flock being relocated, although the sheer quantity of waders recorded throughout the county suggests a larger movement. The following day only 5 remained at Rumworth Lodge. Further records included a dead bird in Bolton which had fallen prey to a Peregrine in February, Kingsway Business Park, Rochdale (one Mar 27th, rising to 3 by 29th and one May 16th), Heaton Park Reservoir (5 Mar 31st), Castleshaw Reservoirs (4 Apr 22nd, rising to 5 by 25th), Lightshaw Hall Flash (one Apr 27th), Woodford East (1+ May 2nd), Horrocks Flash (2 May 18th), Swineshaw Reservoirs (one May 18th), Piethorne Reservoir (one May 19th; seemingly the first record at the site since 1996) and Watergrove Reservoir (one May 29th). A whole Dunlin was also found as a prey item brought to the nest of the Bolton Town Hall Peregrines.

*Breeding:* atlas surveying produced just one confirmed breeding pair this year with distraction display seen at Chew Head (Jun 18th). Probable breeding was reported from 2 further sites, all in the far north and east of the county: Cheesden and Dovestones Moss. Further possible breeding included a bird reported singing at Black Moss on two separate dates a fortnight apart and a bird in suitable habitat at Ramsden Clough. No BBS squares recorded this species this year.

Following a quiet June for sightings, the first signs of return passage appeared at Astley Moss East Peat Pools (one Jul 8th), Ashworth Moor Reservoir (2 Jul 11th), Rakewood (one Jul 14th), Hollingworth Lake (one Jul 14th, the first at this site since Apr 2007), Horrocks Flash (4 Jul 17th, rising to 7 Jul 26th) and Rumworth Lodge (one Jul 26th, with the last here Aug 31st). Last records of the year came from Pennington Flash (10 Oct 1st, one Nov 12th and a Dec 13th), Watergrove Reservoir (2 Oct 31st), Heaton Park Reservoir (one Nov 7th), Elton Reservoir (2 flew through Dec 3rd) and Audenshaw Reservoirs (on 3 dates in Dec).

### **RUFF** *Philomachus pugnax*

Scarce passage migrant.

BoCC Red List species (BDp1, BDp2, SPEC, WL, WI).

All records as follows:

*Audenshaw Reservoirs:* a male Sep 29th.

*Hope Carr NR:* a juvenile Aug 18th.

*Horrocks Flash:* All records of singles unless otherwise stated: a male (of the black form) Jul 6th-10th; Jul 24th; Aug 8th; and Aug 12th-13th; 2 Aug 16th rising to 4 on 17th (one male and 3 female/juveniles); a juvenile remained until Aug 30th.

*Pennington Flash:* 2 Aug 5th, 3 flew through east Aug 16th, and 2 Aug 20th.

*Rumworth Lodge:* one Aug 13th.

### **JACK SNIBE** *Lymnocyrtes minimus*

Uncommon winter visitor.

BoCC Amber List species (SPEC).

No double figure counts were received this year.

*Early winter period* (all records of singles unless otherwise stated): Elton Reservoir (Jan 2nd, and on several other dates in the month), Hazel Grove Golf Club (Jan 2nd and 9th), Hawk Green (Jan 3rd), Ellenbrook (Jan 9th), Hopwood Golf Course (5 Jan 9th was the equal highest count this year), New Manchester, Salford (Jan 9th), Thornham Fold (5 Jan 16th, then left with

the thaw-out), Croxden Peat Works NR (4 Jan 29th, 2 Feb 8th and one Mar 26th), Barton Moss, Eccles (Feb 2nd, 5 Feb 16th, 2 Feb 25th and one Mar 29th), Black Wood, Irlam Moss (2 Feb 25th with 2 on further dates until Apr 5th), Clegg Hall Marsh, Smithy Bridge (Feb 27th), Astley Moss (Feb 28th), Gidlow Coal Rucks (Mar 16th and 20th), Bickershaw Colliery (18th Mar and again on three further dates in the month) and Red Moss, Horwich (Apr 25th).

*Late Winter Period:* Three Winters Recreation Area (1+ in Oct); Red Moss, Horwich (Oct 2nd and Nov 5th); Barton Moss, Eccles (Oct 12th); Bickershaw Colliery (1+ Oct 17th rising to 4 Nov 2nd); Ringley ETW (Nov 2nd); Broad Ees Dole, Sale (Nov 6th); Werneth Low (Nov 10th); Croxden Peat Works NR (Nov 19th); Kingsway Business Park, Rochdale (Nov 26th); Seven Acres (Nov 27th); Thornham Fold (Nov 27th-28th); Piethorne Brook (Nov 29th; the first site record); Simpson Clough (Nov 30th); Cheesden (Dec 1st); Hopwood Golf Course (3 Dec 3rd); Elton Reservoir (Dec 4th); Great Wood, Hattersley (Dec 4th-5th); Norden (Dec 4th); Hazel Grove Golf Club (Dec 5th); Caldershaw (Dec 7th); Hollingworth Lake (Dec 8th) and Davenport Green, Hale Barns (Dec 24th).

### SNIFE *Gallinago gallinago*

Fairly common passage/winter visitor, uncommon breeder.

BoCC Amber List species (SPEC).

*Monthly maxima at major sites:*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Barton Moss</b>	30	45	22	8						16		
<b>Bickershaw Rucks</b>	20	10							9			
<b>Chadkirk CE</b>	19	22										10
<b>Challenge Way</b>	11		18						27		10	
<b>Croxden PWNR</b>	4	2	17	10	2	2	3	4	1	30	25	
<b>Cutacre OCCS</b>		5						20	25			
<b>Pennington Flash</b>	18	9	9	6	1	1		3	4	30	6	4
<b>Red Moss, Horwich</b>	1	1	3	4	2		8	13	29	34	13	
<b>Rumworth Lodge</b>	10	8	11	5			2	11	8	18	3	2
<b>Wigan Flashes</b>		1	1				7	64	46	30	30	1

The counts in the above table probably fell short of true numbers at many sites as access is restricted in certain prime areas of habitat and because of the disinclination to disturb day-roosts.

*Other early winter period records:* Sennicar Lane, Wigan (11 Jan 6th); Holcombe Moor (15 Jan 9th); Worsley Woods (12 Feb 5th); Higher Boarshaw (24 on 20th Feb); Clegg Hall Marsh, Smithy Bridge (23 Feb 27th); Adswood Tip, Cheadle (21 Mar 3rd) and Black Wood, Irlam Moss (10 Mar 20th and 13th Apr 5th). Single figures were reported from 57 further sites during the early period including Bryn Gates Landfill (4 Jan 1st), Haigh CP (8 Jan 7th), Hindley Green (1 Jan 9th, attempted to land in a garden during extreme weather conditions), Hareshill (7 Jan 10th) and Dunham Massey (8 Feb 11th).

*Breeding:* Probable breeding at 22 sites: display witnessed at Dover Marsh, Ludworth Moor (2 birds drumming), Elton Reservoir, Winter Hill and Smithills Moor (4 birds present), Holcombe Hill, Red Moss, Horwich (8 birds present and 3 seen displaying), Roe Cross, Croxden Peat Works NR (summer presence shown on the table above), Birch, Worsley Woods (drumming), Horrock's Hill, Cheesden, Hamer Pasture Drained Reservoir (3 birds present, drumming and chipping), Clegg Hall Marsh, Smithy Bridge (chipping), Longden End, Shaw Moss,



Hollingworth Lake, Chelburn Reservoirs (chipping), Lightshaw Hall Flash, Dover Basin and Elton Goyt SBI. Possible breeding at a further 7 sites involving birds singing and seen in suitable habitat. Five BBS squares recorded Common Snipe in 2010 (7%); an increase from the previous year which recorded 2 squares (3%).

*Other autumn and late winter period records:* Hope Carr NR (11 Jul 24th); Astley Moss East Peat Pools (11 Aug 10th, and 17 Oct 17th); Bradley Wetland, Wigan (28 Aug 17th); Woodford Aerodrome (11 Aug 19th, 11 Sep 30th, and 10 Nov 18th); Altrincham ETW (11 Sep 2nd, rising to 12 Sep 4th); Werneth Low (10 Sep 17th); Elton Reservoir (18 Oct 23rd); Adam Hill, Horwich Moor (10 Oct 27th); Chat Moss (12 Nov 4th); Shuttleworth, partly in Rossendale (18 Nov 6th); and Great Wood, Hattersley (11 Dec 5th). Single figures were reported from 76 further sites during the late period including Sandyforth Former OCS (3 Aug 30th), Lightshaw Hall Flash (4 Sep 3rd), Castleshaw Reservoirs (7 Oct 2nd), Abney Hall Park, Cheadle (one Oct 22nd), Agecroft Bridge, River Irwell (5 Dec 7th feeding at the river's edge in very cold conditions), Chadderton (one Dec 6th, along brook near Foxdenton Park in freezing conditions, the first site record) and Audenshaw Reservoirs (6 Dec 10th).

## **WOODCOCK** *Scolopax rusticola*

Fairly common winter visitor and uncommon breeder.  
BoCC Amber List species (SPEC).

*Early winter period:* (all records of singles unless otherwise stated) The species was widespread throughout January - Piethorne (1st and 2 on 18th); Haigh CP (2 on 2nd); Hazel Grove Golf Club (2nd); Barlow Tip Chorlton (4th); Lightoaks Park Salford (8th); Hindley Green (8th, landed briefly in extreme weather); Aspull Sough Water Treatment Pools (2 on 9th); Factory Hill, Horwich (9th); Jackson's Boat, Sale (9th); Heywood (9th); Ashton-in-Makerfield (10th); Brook Wood, Sale (12th-13th); Bowdon (17th); Kenworthy Woods (2 on 17th); Mersey Valley VC (17th); Rumworth Lodge (3 on 18th); Trinity Central Manchester, at the junction of Chapel Street (21st); Viridor Wood (22nd); Red Moss, Horwich (2 on 23rd and one Feb 14th); Chat Moss (2 on 26th); Worsley Golf Course (26th); Watergrove Reservoir (10th, 13th and 28th Feb); Bickershaw Colliery (29th) and Cutacre Open Cast Coal Site (30th and 27th Feb). February – Bolton Parish Church (found dead, fallen prey to Peregrine); Denton (4th); Bedford Moss (6th); Botany Bay Wood (2 on 6th); Hawkley Reedbed, Wigan (6th); Dunham Massey (12th); Hope Carr NR (13th); Bury ETW (2 on 14th); Thorn Hill, Wigan (14th); Adswold Tip Cheadle (17th); Irlam Moss (20th); Marple Viaduct (27th); Romiley (27th); Cox Green Quarry (28th-Mar 1st); Foxholes Horwich (28th). March records lowered as most birds left the county for breeding: Pilsworth Tip (5 on 6th, joint highest count this year) and Horwich Moor (2 on 13th). April sightings came from Elton Reservoir, Cotterill Clough nr Hale (3rd), Cheadle Heath ETW (7th) and Burnt Edge Horwich (7th Apr).

*Breeding:* Astley Moss had 2 Apr 16th which could have been late migrants or contemplating breeding as could 2 at Kenworthy Woods (Apr 23rd). Probable breeding evidence was recorded at the traditional site of Etherow CP (Apr 8th) and Worsley Woods (Jun 4th; seen roding). No BBS squares recorded this species.

*Late winter period:* October saw records from Cox Green Quarry (2 on 12th) and Amberswood (1 on 28th). Urban finds of dead birds (usually collision fatalities) came from Reddish (Oct 9th) Chadderton (Nov 10th) and Levenshulme (Nov 10th). Another influx of a similar scale to the first winter period commenced in November, with multiple birds included Astley Moss (max of 3 during Nov); Westhoughton (max of 2 during Nov); Cox Green Quarry (3 Nov 14th); Bickershaw Colliery (2 Nov 18th); Crompton Moor (5 Nov 20th); Watergrove Reservoir (2 Nov 20th); Hopwood Woods (3 Nov 27th-28th); Chadkirk Country Estate (2 Dec 4th); Norden (4 Dec 4th); Roman Lakes, Marple (3 Dec 7th); Wigan Flashes (2 Dec 8th); Rochdale Cemetery (2 Dec 13th); Bury ETW (3 Dec 19th), Thorn Hill, Wigan (2 Dec 19th); Lilford Park,

Leigh (2 Dec 23rd); Banky Meadow (2 Dec 25th-26th); Elton Reservoir (3 Dec 25th) and Heaton Park (2 Dec 25th).

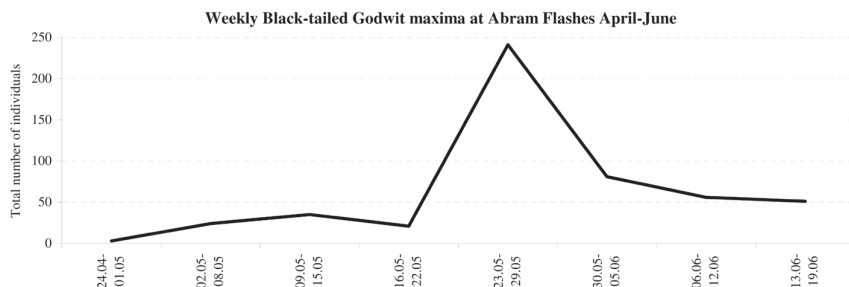
A further 58 sites had records of single birds during the late winter period.

## **BLACK-TAILED GODWIT** *Limosa limosa*

Uncommon passage migrant.

BoCC Red List (HD, SPEC, BR, WL, WI) and UK BAP species.

The first record of the year was at Lightshaw Meadows (one Mar 7th - Apr 13th), Pennington Flash (one Mar 9th - Apr 15th), Audenshaw Reservoirs (2 Mar 29th). Numbers increased during April: Kingsway Business Park (5 on 18th-19th), Rumworth Lodge (8 on 19th), Pennington Flash (5 on 21st) and Dover Basin (6 on 22nd). Come May, the floodgates opened and a modern day county phenomenon of unprecedented proportions took place. The arrival of a record-breaking flock into the county can be seen in the table below:



The discovery of 139 birds the day before the main event (May 24th) was in itself at the time a county record. The 241 in the Lightshaw Meadows area, May 25th, was specifically on Dover Basin but the whole flock moved between here and the nearby Lightshaw Hall Flash on occasion. A high percentage of the flock related to first-summer birds. It seems likely that a considerable regional movement occurred as the regular summering flocks in the Marshside area of Lancashire had diminished closely to the tune of the total at the Lightshaw Meadows. The flock broke up soon after its arrival due to rising water levels in the area, and several large flocks were seen flying north-west (70 over Wigan Flashes May 26th and 80 over Platt Bridge May 31st), heading back to Marshside, Lancashire perhaps? The previous county record was of 80 at Altrincham ETW, Jun 3rd, 2002. Following the influx, larger than normal numbers remained in the county, with double figure counts into August. Later records included: Astley Moss East Peat Pools (37 May 29th, and 2 Jul 21st); Pennington Flash (27 Jun 16th); Hope Carr NR (28 Jun 16th); Horrocks Flash (51 Jun 18th, 12 Aug 5th dropping to one Aug 24th); Red Moss, Horwich (3 Jun 27th); Pearson's Flash (31 Jul 1st); Rumworth Lodge (max of 11 Jul 16th-17th with 3 until Jul 21st); Altrincham ETW (3 Jul 24th-25th) and Audenshaw Reservoirs (5 Aug 7th).

## **BAR-TAILED GODWIT** *Limosa lapponica*

Scarce passage migrant.

BoCC Amber List species (WL, WI).

All records as follows:

*Bolton Parish Church*: one found in Feb had fallen prey to a Peregrine.

*Warland Reservoir*: a summer plumaged male Apr 24th.

*Audenshaw Reservoirs*: a long-staying juvenile Sep 27th - Oct 11th; resilient to frequent disturbance by dog-walkers.

*Elton Reservoir*: 7 Nov 6th flew over Capsticks Marsh.

## **WHIMBREL** *Numenius phaeopus*

Uncommon passage migrant.

BoCC Red List species (BDp1, BR).

*Spring passage*: (all records of singles unless otherwise stated) records commenced Apr 12th with a single flying north over Georges Lane, Horwich. A plentiful period of passage continued in April: Piethorne (13th); Astley Moss East Peat Pools (4 on 17th); Elton Reservoir (3 on 17th, flew W, 5 on 20th, one on 21st, flew NE, and 25th); Worsley Moss (4 on 17th), Ashworth Moor Reservoir (19th); Audenshaw Reservoirs (2 on 19th, one on 25th, and 29th); Smithills Moor, Bolton (19th, and 3 on 24th); Rindle Road, Astley (20th, 6 on 25th-27th, and 7 on 28th-29th); Watergrove Reservoir (flew NW on 20th and N on 27th); Pennington Flash (21st-23rd, 4 flew over on 25th, 2 on 26th, and 4 on 28th); Georges Lane, Horwich (23rd, flew N, and 29th); Horrocks Flash (6 on 23rd, flew in to roost but were flushed by a microlight, and 2 on 25th); Werneth Low (23rd, flew east); Astley Moss SSSI (10 on 25th, the largest count this year, had reduced to 7 by 28th-1st May) and Croxden Peat Works NR (27th). Additional May occurrences included: Worsley Moss East (5 on 1st), Astley Moss East Peat Pools (4th, and 2 on 8th), Croxden Peat Works NR (2 on 6th), Dixon's Wood, Chat Moss (9th), Watergrove Reservoir (12th), Pennington Flash (21st, and 4 on 25th departed N at dusk). After being present throughout the period, the last record in the Astley Moss/Rindle Road area was of 2 on 8th.

*Autumn Passage* (all singles): Smithills Moor, Bolton (Jul 2nd, heard making agitated calls for over half an hour), Rumworth Lodge (Jul 17th), Pennington Flash (Jul 23rd, Jul 25th, and Aug 5th), Hope Carr NR (Aug 3rd), Astley Moss East Peat Pools (Aug 7th), Elton Reservoir (Aug 7th, flew over, Aug 13th, flew NW, and Aug 25th, flew over), Hollingworth Lake (Aug 10th), and Georges Lane, Horwich (Sep 9th, flew S).

## **CURLEW** *Numenius arquata*

Fairly common passage migrant and summer visitor, uncommon breeder.

BoCC Amber List (SPEC, BDMp1, BDMp2, BI, WI) and UK BAP species.

A few unseasonal winter records were documented in January (all records of singles unless otherwise stated): Hollingworth Lake (7th, flew east calling, and 17th, flew west calling), Pennington Flash (8th, flew south), Hope Carr NR (2 on 9th, flew west,); an indication of cold weather movement. February saw a larger sprinkling of sightings from: Bickershaw Colliery (14th), Woodford Aerodrome (2 on 25th), Castleshaw Reservoirs (2 on 27th), Astley Moss (28th), Chelburn Reservoirs (27<sup>th</sup> and 28th), Cow Lane, Hollingworth (28th, already territorial) and Rumworth Lodge (3 on 28th). During March, numbers of passage migrants and birds returning to breeding grounds grew at many sites including 4 at Rumworth Lodge (13th), 8 at Woodford Aerodrome (18th), 5 at Smithills Moor, Horwich (21st), 3 at Ashworth Moor Reservoir (26th) and 3 at Rindle Road, Astley (27th), with records from a further 14 sites. The highest count of the year was of 25 birds at Brushes Valley near Stalybridge, Apr 3rd, involved in aerial displays.

*Breeding*: confirmed at 9 sites (12 pairs), probable at 28 further sites, and possible at 22 further sites. Bolstered by heavy atlas surveying up on the moors, there were plenty of confirmed records this year from: Nangreaves, Ashworth Moor Reservoir, Yeoman Hey Reservoir, Higher Swineshaw Reservoir, Pendlebury Lane-Sennicar Lane area, Malkin's Wood Farm

Worsley, Over Hulton, Botany Bay Wood and Noonsun Hill Mossley. BBS data shows this species was recorded on 16 squares (24%), compared with 9 sites (14%) in 2009; a significant rise on the year before. Despite continuing nationwide declines, the good coverage of moorland sites has revealed there could be as many as 70 pairs breeding in the county; this is compared to c50 pairs in 2004 and c20 pairs at the time of BBGM (1984, although this figure was probably an underestimate).

*Later records* (singles unless otherwise stated): Tandle Hill (Jul 31st); Pennington Flash (Aug 13th, flew west, Sep 7th, flew south); Sale WP (4 Aug 15th, flew west); Running Hill, Diggle (2 Aug 16th); Elton Reservoir (Aug 26th); Hid Rid Reservoir, Bolton (Aug 30th, flew over); Horrocks Flash (Aug 30th); Smithills Moor, Horwich (Aug 30th, flew east) and Haigh (2 Sep 5th, flew south).

A series of records in December implied another unseasonable movement of the species. Birds were recorded from: Pennington Flash (6 on 2nd, one on 9th); Heaton Norris (13 on 3rd, flew over); Lower Spen Moor, Elton (3rd); Red Moss, Horwich (3rd); Elton Reservoir (4th, 6 on 11th, feeding in field at Crow Trees Farm); Northern Moor (5th, flew over); Newall Green (6th, flew over); Jack Lane, Flixton (7th); Cleworth (3 on 7th); Reddish Vale (8th); Audenshaw Reservoirs (10th) and Heaton Park Reservoir (19th, and 26th).

### **COMMON SANDPIPER** *Actitis hypoleucos*

Fairly common passage migrant and summer visitor, scarce breeder, rare in winter. BoCC Amber List species (SPEC, BDMp1).

*Spring passage* (all records of singles unless otherwise stated): an early bird at Rumworth Lodge (1st Apr) signalled the start of spring migration through the county. The main passage occurred during April with birds at: Chorlton WP (5th, and several other dates in the month); Pennington Flash (6th, with birds throughout, peaking at 8 on 22nd); Elton Reservoir (7th, present throughout, peaking at 6 on 24th); Broad Ees Dole, Sale (8th); Rumworth Lodge (3 on 10th, present throughout, max 8 on 22nd); Ashworth Moor Reservoir (18th); Cliff Broughton, River Irwell (19th); Audenshaw Reservoirs (2 on 19th); Montcliffe Quarry, Horwich (2 on 20th); Blackleach Reservoir, Walkden (2 on 21st); Dover Basin (2 on 21st); Cheadle (21st); Sale WP (2 on 21st); Castleshaw Reservoirs (22nd); Hollingworth Lake (3 on 22nd); High Rid Reservoir, Bolton (23rd); Moses Gate CP (23rd); Warland Reservoir (24th, and 2 on 30th); Croal/Irwell Confluence (27th) and Horrocks Flash (27th). By the month's end birds had returned to most breeding sites in the county. Further passage records in May came from: Heaton Park Reservoir (4th), Azko Pond (9th), Haigh Plantations (10th) and Audenshaw Reservoirs (22nd).

*Breeding*: confirmed at 4 sites (5 pairs), probable at 8 further sites, and possible at 8 further sites. Confirmed breeding was noted at Hollingworth Lake (2 fledged young at the nature reserve), Pots and Pans (2 pairs), Yeoman Hey Reservoir, and Banky Meadow (along the River Mersey; a very scarce breeder in the lowlands). Pairs on territory were seen at: Sale WP (the only other lowland site), Lees Hill, Black Moss, Dovestone Moss, Higher Swineshaw Reservoir (2 pairs), Piethorne (2+ pairs in valley) and Greenfield Reservoir. The BBS comprised 3 records this year (4%) at: Heaton Park Reservoir (likely a migrant), Blackstone Edge and Watergrove Reservoir; the latter two seen in suitable breeding habitat. This was the same frequency as last year and slightly higher than the 2% national average.

*Autumn passage*: birds passed through from June at: Pennington Flash (Jun 5th, max 2 Jul 31st, with the last Sep 18th), Elton Reservoir (4 Jun 26th, peaking at 8 Aug 2nd, last Sep 29th), Horrocks Flash (Jul 1st, max 3 Jul 16th, last Sep 27th), Jumbles Reservoir and CP (Jul 2nd), Rumworth Lodge (2 Jul 4th, peaking at 7 Jul 20th, last Sep 23rd), Chorlton WP (Jul 6th and Aug 3rd), Castleshaw Reservoirs (4 Jul 17th), Hope Carr NR (Jul 17th, and 3 Sep 8th), Prestwich (Jul

19th), Ashworth Moor Reservoir (Jul 19th), Altrincham ETW (Aug 2nd, and Aug 14th), Whitehead Lodges (Aug 15th), Hollingworth Lake (Sep 3rd), and Heaton Park Reservoir (Aug 24th, and Sep 11th). Late records came from Pennington Flash with one in mid-Oct and Chorlton WP with one Nov 8th, the latter possibly a wintering bird moving along the River Mersey in cold weather.

### **GREEN SANDPIPER** *Tringa ochropus*

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.

BoCC Amber List species (BR).

*Early Winter Period:* January sightings included 2 at Glazebury the whole of the month, Heaton Park Reservoir (one on 2nd), Manchester Ship Canal at Irlam (2 on 7th and one on 30th), Hope Carr NR (one on 9th, 2 on 10th, 18th, and 31st), Dunham Massey (2 on 17th flew into the park from the Bridgewater Canal direction, and one on 27th Mar) and Agecroft Bridge, River Irwell (one on 21st, 26th, later on 9th Apr). Records in February came from many of January's sites suggesting wintering birds. Additional sites in the period included: Elton Reservoir (seen on several dates during Feb, also one Mar 27th), Pennington Flash (one Feb 7th), River Irwell at Clifton Marina (one Feb 10th), Davenport Green, Hale Barns (one Feb 13th; the first site record, 18th Feb, and 5th Mar, all probably the same bird), Croal/Irwell Confluence (one Mar 5th and later Apr 23rd) and Mossley (one Mar 13th, flushed from ditch by river).

*Spring Passage:* Heralded by the arrival of 3 at Pennington Flash (Mar 27th), with regular sightings there until May 4th. Only two other records: Lightshaw Hall Flash (one Apr 11th) and Red Moss, Horwich (one May 23rd).

*Autumn Passage:* Without much of a mid-summer lull, Pennington Flash had a returning bird back by Jun 18th and Astley Moss had one Jun 19th. Further records came from: Astley Moss East Peat Pools (4 Jun 24th, max 7 Aug 10th, with 3 until Sep 9th); Pennington Flash (2 Jun 25th, max 7 Aug 27th, present throughout until Oct 23rd); Red Moss, Horwich (one Jun 27th, max 2 Jul 17th, with one until Oct 18th); Croxden Peat Works NR (one Jul 23rd); Horrocks Flash (3 Jul 6th, max 5 Jul 20th, present throughout until Sep 30th); Hope Carr NR (3 Jul 7th, max 9 Jul 23rd, present throughout until Oct 18th); Ringley ETW (one Jul 9th-17th, and Aug 29th); Hollingworth Lake (2 Jul 14th, and one Jul 23rd); Woodhouses Failsworth (one Jul 19th); Rumworth Lodge (one Jul 22nd); Altrincham ETW (one Jul 25th, max 10 Aug 17th; highest number in the county this year, present throughout until 30th Sep.); Banky Meadow (one Jul 25th); Cutacre Open Cast Coal Site (3 Aug 2nd, and 2 Sep 12th); Bryn Gates Landfill (one Aug 5th, 2 Aug 20th, and one Aug 27th); Elton Reservoir (2 Aug 2nd and 8th); Little Woolden Moss (2 Aug 9th, on freshly milled peat); Kitcliffe Reservoir, Milnrow (one Aug 18th); Lily Lane Farm, Stubshaw Cross (one Sep 30th) and Heaton Park Reservoir (one Oct 28th).

*Late Winter Period:* birds were back at Agecroft Bridge, River Irwell (one Nov 14th, then on occasions until Dec 20th), Astley Tip (one Nov 25th, and Nov 30th), Pennington Flash (one Nov 25th), Irlam Locks (one Dec 3rd rising to 2 Dec 5th), River Irwell at Clifton Marina (one Dec 24th) and Broadheath (one Dec 26th).

### **GREENSHANK** *Tringa nebularia*

Uncommon passage migrant.

*Spring passage* (all records of singles unless otherwise stated): Pennington Flash (2 Mar 31st), Heaton Park Reservoir (Apr 9th), Audenshaw Reservoirs (Apr 10th, Apr 13th, and May 10th), Elton Reservoir (Apr 11th), Astley Moss East Peat Pools (May 4th), Rumworth Lodge (May 4th-10th) and Lightshaw Hall Flash (May 23rd-25th).

*Autumn Passage:* a large series of records, but may have included some duplication with birds moving around sites: Pennington Flash (Jul 5th, max 4 on 25th Aug, the highest count this year, plus another 6 records with the last on Oct 7th); Ringley ETW (Jul 11th); Horrocks Flash (Jul 14th, Aug 16th, and a juvenile on Aug 18th); Watergrove Reservoir (2 Aug 15th, circled over then flew N); Smithills Moor, Horwich (Aug 16th, flew N); Rumworth Lodge (a juvenile on Aug 17th, and Aug 20th, then flew south); Castleshaw Reservoirs (Aug 25th-28th); Rainford's Flash, Wigan Flashes (3 Sep 7th); Hope Carr NR (Sep 9th, flew off W); Audenshaw Reservoirs (Sep 12th, and Sep 18th) and Astley Moss East Peat Pools (juv Sep 19th and an adult Sep 26th).

## **WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola***

Scarce passage migrant.

BoCC Amber List species (SPEC, BR WR).

*Spring passage:* Three records during the period came from Pennington Flash (one May 8th), Lightshaw Hall Flash (one May 13th-15th visited nearby Dover Basin on 15th) and Elton Reservoir (one May 29th).

*Autumn passage:* Four records of return migration came from Horrocks Flash (one Jul 16th), Astley Moss East Peat Pools (2 Jul 19th-21st), Pennington Flash (one Jul 19th; a different bird to Astley Moss and one Aug 8th-12th).

## **REDSHANK *Tringa totanus***

Fairly common passage migrant and summer visitor, uncommon breeder and scarce winter visitor.

BoCC Amber List species (SPEC, BDMp1, BDMp2, WI).

There were just two January records, singles from: Pennington Flash (7th, flew through) and Manchester Ship Canal at Irlam (9th). This species remained thin on the ground in February (all records of singles unless otherwise stated) with sightings at: Pennington Flash (20th, and 2 on 27th), Heaton Park Reservoir (20th) and Rumworth Lodge (3 on 28th). During March an increase in records included birds returning to breeding grounds as well as passage migrants, at: Dover Basin (2nd, rising to 6 on 28th), Pennington Flash (2 on 9th-10th, rising to 12 on 18th, the highest count this year), Shaw Moss Hollingworth Lake (11th, 2 on 18th), Castleshaw Reservoirs (15th, max 2 on 26th), Kingsway Business Park Rochdale (20th), Rumworth Lodge (3 on 23rd, rising to 5 on 24th), Hollingworth Lake (25th), Astley Moss East Peat Pools (27th), Audenshaw Reservoirs (4 on 27th) and Ashworth Moor Reservoir (29th).

*Breeding:* confirmed at 3 sites – Rumworth Lodge (2 pairs present throughout but only fledged one young in total, it was possibly then predated by a fox), Horrocks Flash (fledged one young) and Astley Moss East Peat Pools (fledged one young which remained until Jul 23rd). Probable breeding occurred at 6 further sites – Dover Basin (up to 2 pairs), Lightshaw Hall Flash (up to 3 pairs), Irlam Moss (one bird in display), Pennington Flash (one pair), Castleshaw Reservoirs (one pair), and Chelburn Reservoirs (one pair). There was one BBS record (1%), from Astley Moss which probably related to the successful pair on the Astley Moss East Peat Pools. The county frequency falls short of the 2.5% of squares recording this species nationally.

Post-breeding and wintering records (involving singles unless otherwise stated) came from: Hollingworth Lake (2 Jun 30th, and one Jul 22nd), Elton Reservoir (Jul 6th, Sep 14th, Nov 28th, Dec 4th, rising to 2 Dec 5th), Horrocks Flash (4 Jul 21st), Castleshaw Reservoirs (Jul 22nd), Pennington Flash (Aug 5th, Sep 17th, Nov 26th, and flew over on Dec 14th), Audenshaw Reservoirs (3 Nov 26th-28th, one Dec 3rd and Dec 5th), Doffcocker (Dec 8th) and the last at Croal/Irwell confluence (Dec 17th).



## **TURNSTONE** *Arenaria interpres*

Uncommon passage migrant.  
BoCC Amber List species (WI).

Rather quiet this year for Turnstone occurrences. Audenshaw Reservoirs played host to all this year's records, with singles on May 7th, 13th, 14th and 19th.

A single returning migrant was present there on Aug 25th.

## **ARCTIC SKUA** *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Rare visitor.

BoCC Red List (BDp2, WDp1, BDMp1, WI) and UK BAP species.

A typically short staying dark phase adult bird was seen at Audenshaw Reservoirs during the morning of Sep 18th (I. Johnson). This individual represents the 15th record for the site, and the first in seven years. The bird arrived shortly after a couple of early morning Audenshaw Reservoirs regulars had just departed the site, proving that the early bird doesn't always catch the worm, so to speak!

## **KITTIWAKE** *Rissa tridactyla*

Uncommon passage migrant.  
BoCC Amber List species (BDMp1, BL).

A very poor year for this species in the County, with just four records, only three of which were seen alive!

Single short staying adults were noted at Audenshaw Reservoirs Mar 21st and 29th. Another brief adult bird was at Pennington Flash May 29th. The only other record concerns the remains of an adult bird found on the ground underneath the Peregrine nest at Rochdale Town Hall Mar 28th.

## **BLACK-HEADED GULL** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Abundant resident and winter visitor, uncommon breeder.  
BoCC Amber List species (WDMp1, WI).

During the first winter period, four figure counts came from the major roost sites. In January, 4000 were at Audenshaw Reservoirs on 2nd (however, the roost size here reduced to just 850 during the severe weather spell on 10th). 2000 were in the roost at Pennington Flash on 10th and 1,200 were counted at Hollingworth Lake on 28th. Numbers increased in February, with 5000 at Pennington Flash on 2nd, with 4000 at the same site on 24th, 6,800 at Audenshaw Reservoirs on 4th and 2000 at Hollingworth Lake on 10th. The only very large count received in March was of 7000 at Pennington Flash on 12th.

During the breeding season the principle locality was typically the Wigan Flashes with c200 nests counted, the vast majority of which were on Horrocks Flash with a maximum of 162 nests/broods noted May 28th. The eventual outcome of the number of young fledging is not known, but Mink were a problem during the breeding season at this site. Elsewhere 12 nests were counted at Pennington Flash May 12th, and four pairs nested at Altrincham ETW, at least one of which was successful. No records were received from the previous largest county breeding site of Shell Pool NR this year. Post breeding dispersal increased numbers at many sites during the late summer, with c1000 birds noted feeding on flying ants at Wigan Aug 9th.

A series of four figure counts were made at Pennington Flash during the autumn and second winter period with 3,800 Sep 12th, 2000 Oct 1st, 7000 Nov 9th doubling to 14,000 Nov 12th

(the highest count in the County during 2010), and finally 1,500 Dec 9th. Elsewhere 2000 were noted at Heaton Park Reservoir Nov 13th, and 4,800 were in the Audenshaw Reservoirs roost Dec 12th.

Leucistic adult birds were noted at Altrincham Feb 6th, Audenshaw Reservoirs Feb 21st, and Altrincham ETW May 1st. Two birds were taken as prey items by the Bolton Peregrines in February, presumably fancying a change from Feral Pigeon. Finally, six birds were watched at Ludworth Oct 22nd taking Haws from the trees, an indicator of the diversity of food items taken by this species.

**LITTLE GULL** *Hydrocoloeus minutus*  
**Uncommon visitor.**

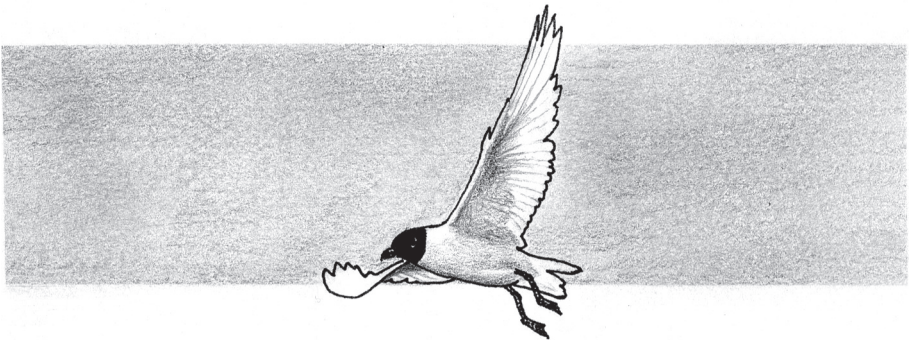
BoCC Amber List species (SPEC).

It was certainly not one of the more memorable years for this attractive and graceful gull, with no multiple sightings at all.

An adult at Pennington Flash Apr 6th was the first record of the year, followed by a 1st summer bird at Elton Reservoir Apr 18th. Audenshaw Reservoirs reported it's worst ever year for this species with just a single adult Apr 20th, with a 1st summer bird at Pennington Flash on the same date.

Return passage started with an adult at Pennington Flash Jul 22nd, followed by a 1st summer at Horrocks Flash Aug 14th. A popular and photogenic 1st summer bird was at Pennington Flash from Aug 15th to 31st, whilst an adult bird was recorded from Horrocks Flash Aug 16th. Singles were recorded from Pennington Flash on four dates in September, with a 1st winter on 11th, and adults on 12th, 16th and 17th, the last of the year.

**MEDITERRANEAN GULL** *Larus melanocephalus*  
Uncommon visitor, rare breeder.  
BoCC Amber List species (BR).



The year started slowly with just a single record in January of an adult in the Audenshaw Reservoirs roost on 22nd. Typically, spring passage started early in the year with birds noted at several sites from mid February. At Audenshaw Reservoirs single adults were noted in the roost on seven dates between Feb 14th and 28th. An adult seen at Lark Hill, Delph Feb 28th was described as flying off towards Audenshaw Reservoirs, so was presumably the same individual in the roost that night. Elsewhere in February, single adults were reported from

Ashton on Mersey on 10th, Davenport Green on 23rd, and at Pennington Flash on 17th and 28th. Spring passage continued in earnest in March, with the species being recorded almost daily at Pennington Flash with single adults on 1st, 4th, and 10th, and records of two adults on 12 dates between 8th and 21st. At least five (possibly seven) adults were noted in the Pennington Flash roost Mar 12th, and a 2nd summer bird was seen on 14th. It is difficult to ascertain exactly how many different adult birds were involved in this series of records. Elsewhere in March, single adults were noted at Castleshaw Reservoirs on 1st and Elton Reservoir on 19th, while pairs of adults were at Audenshaw Reservoirs on 15th, Rumworth on 21st, and Horrocks Flash on 27th.

A single adult was also reported in February and March from a private site where the species has bred previously. In April a pair of adults were at Pennington Flash from 4th to 6th, and 19th to 21st, with the latter birds at least, observed displaying. A 1st summer bird was at the same site on 8th.

An adult at High Rid Reservoir Apr 23rd was the last of the spring.

A series of summer records from Rumworth were possibly wandering birds from the Belmont Reservoir breeding site in Lancashire, with adults Jun 21st, Jul 6th and 8th, and juveniles Jul 18th and 21st and Aug 17th. Other summer records involved adults at Cadishead Moss Jul 4th and Horrocks Flash Jul 9th, and a juvenile at Pennington Flash Aug 17th.

Far fewer records were received for the autumn and second winter period. There were four records in September with an adult at Ashton on Mersey on 1st, and 1st winter birds at Rumworth on 6th and at Scotman's Flash on 16th and 26th. Just one record in October of an adult at Pennington Flash on 1st.

The final records of the year were in December with single adults at Pennington Flash on 9th, Heaton Park Reservoir on 18th and Audenshaw Reservoirs on 21st.

## **COMMON GULL** *Larus canus*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant.  
BoCC Amber List species (SPEC, WI).

The roost at Audenshaw Reservoirs maintained its status as the key site for this species during the winter months. In January, the Audenshaw Reservoirs roost count was of 1,700 on 2nd, however, a further count of 490 made on 10th was no doubt reflective of a dispersal of birds during the big freeze.

Other notable counts in January were of 63 at High Rid Reservoir on 3rd, 200 at Pennington Flash on 10th, 52 at Scotman's Flash on 13th, 161 at Salford Quays on 17th, and 170 at Hollingworth Lake on 28th. In February, the Audenshaw Reservoirs roost count had returned to a more typical 2,200 on 2nd (although still a decrease on 2009), while other counts included 200 at Pennington Flash also on 2nd, and 77 at Trafford Park on 16th.

In Spring, Hollingworth Lake recorded counts of 150 Mar 6th and 120 Apr 5th. Small numbers were reported from several sites during the late spring and summer months, presumably non-breeding birds.

Numbers built up again during the autumn with more notable counts of 68 at Ludworth Moor Oct 22nd, with 104 at the same site Oct 27th, 110 at Rooden Reservoir Nov 2nd, 95 at Bowlee Community Park Nov 4th, 100 at Pennington Flash Nov 12th, and 61 at Lower Kersal Nov 22nd. Finally, there were 2000 in the Audenshaw Reservoirs roost Dec 12th, with other notable December counts of 200 at Pennington Flash on 9th, and 59 at Pemberton on 28th.

## **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL** *Larus fuscus*

Common passage and winter visitor, uncommon resident.  
BoCC Amber List species (BL, BI).

Typically reported in small numbers from many sites across the county during the year, and seen from a variety of habitats.

In January, 200 were counted at Pennington Flash on 1st, with 150 at Audenshaw Reservoirs on 2nd, 100 at Heaton Park Reservoir on 10th, 200 at Scotman's Flash on 13th and 153 at Castleshaw Reservoirs on 18th. Counts in February included, 210 at Audenshaw Reservoirs on 4th, 100 at Pennington Flash on 24th and 596 at Heaton Park Reservoir on 27th.

Spring passage saw an increase in numbers in March, with 300 at Pennington Flash on 1st and 12th, and 224 there on 26th, also Heaton Park Reservoir recorded an impressive 1,200 birds on 14th with 1000 at Pilsworth the same date. Another count of 200 birds was made at Pilsworth Mar 19th. Away from the key sites, 50 were noted at Woodstock Farm Mar 21st, 60 at Ashworth Moor Reservoir Apr 23rd, and 56 at Castleshaw Reservoirs Apr 25th.

Reports during the summer period included 75 at Pilsworth Jun 12th, 53 at Castleshaw Reservoirs Jul 19th, 100 at Audenshaw Reservoirs Jul 25th, and 430 on Astley Tip Aug 15th. More of note, however, were an impressive run of records from the lowland mosses. The Turf and Pig fields at Cadishead Moss attracted good numbers in July, with 600 on 4th, 100 on 5th and 1,040 birds on 18th. Elsewhere, at Little Woollen Moss in August, 65 were noted on 9th and 66 on 16th, while 50 were counted on nearby Chat Moss on 15th.

Pennington Flash logged an impressive series of counts in September and October, with 970 Sep 12th, 1018 Sep 19th, and 500 Oct 1st, while Audenshaw Reservoirs mustered 455 Oct 7th. The Cadishead Moss area continued to attract this species with 112 Sep 9th, 76 Sep 27th, and 165 Oct 7th. Elsewhere, 82 were counted at Worthington Lakes Oct 1st. In November, 50 were at Audenshaw Reservoirs on 2nd, (a low count for this site), 276 were at Pennington Flash on 9th, with 313 there on 12th and 74 were counted at Castleshaw Reservoirs on 20th. A passage of birds was noted from Burnt Edge, Horwich Nov 28th, with 163 over South-East. Finally, 127 were in the Audenshaw Reservoirs roost Dec 12th.

A total of four 'four figure' counts is an improvement on last year (with no four figure counts); however, this still falls well short of the counts made at Heaton Park Reservoir of 2,500 in April and November 2008.

Single adult birds displaying very dark upperparts indicative of the Scandinavian race *intermedius*, were noted at Heaton Park Reservoir Jan 1st, and at Audenshaw Reservoirs Jan 10th.

## **HERRING GULL** *Larus argentatus*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant.  
BoCC Red List (BDp2, WDp1, BDMp1, WI) and UK BAP species.

Small numbers were reported from many sites, particularly during the two winter periods and relate to individuals of the British race *L. a. argentatus* unless otherwise stated.

The largest counts of the year were made in January, starting with 400 at Pennington Flash on the 1st, but reducing to 50 there on the 10th. A count of 650 birds in the Heaton Park Reservoir roost Jan 10th was on the low side for this site. However, counts of 2,100 at the nearby Pilsworth tip Jan 24th and 28th were the highest of the year, but no corresponding count was received from the Heaton Park Reservoir roost at the time and birds were obviously roosting elsewhere. Numbers in the Audenshaw Reservoirs roost during January were typically variable, ranging from less than 20 some afternoons to counts of 50 on 2nd, 120 on 22nd, and 700 on 28th. A good proportion of the birds on 28th arrived en-masse from the north just prior to

dusk, so presumably birds dispersing from the Heaton Park Reservoir/Pilsworth areas. Other reasonable double figure counts in January included 36 at Barton Locks on 10th, 76 at Scotman's Flash on 13th, 36 at Hollingworth Lake on 17th, with 42 at the same site on 24th. In February, 250 were in the Audenshaw Reservoirs roost on 4th, while reasonable double figure counts included 35 at Hollingworth Lake on 6th, 50 at Boothstown on 7th, 55 at Pennington Flash on 20th, with 55 at Scotman's Flash also on 20th, and 40 at Pennington Flash on 24th. In March, 150 were counted in the Heaton Park Reservoir roost on 14th, with just 40 noted at Pilsworth Tip the same day.

No really large counts were received for the second winter period. In November, 133 were counted at Bamfurlong on 27th, with 41 there the next day and 47 were noted at Cadishead Moss on 29th. A south-east passage of 61 birds over Burnt Edge Horwich, Nov 28th corresponded with a passage of Lesser Black-backed Gulls there the same day. In December, 50 were at Little Woollen Moss on 9th, with 60 at Pennington Flash on the same date, 93 were in the Audenshaw Reservoirs roost on 12th, with 113 noted at Bamfurlong on the same date.

Birds of the Scandinavian race, *L. a. argentatus*, were certainly noted in the Audenshaw Reservoirs and Heaton Park Reservoir roosts, but no counts were made, while returning birds of this race were noted in September at Pennington Flash on 19th (1st winter) and 29th (adult).

Lastly, two birds at Scotman's Flash Jan 19th had some sort of yellow dye on the vent area.

## **YELLOW-LEGGED GULL *Larus michahellis***

Scarce passage and winter visitor.

BoCC Amber List species (BR).

Records during the year were predominantly from the two large roost sites of Audenshaw Reservoirs and Heaton Park Reservoir.

An adult in the roost at Heaton Park Reservoir Jan 1st was distinctive in that it was an unusually small individual. What was almost certainly the same bird was seen the following day, Jan 2nd, in the Audenshaw Reservoirs roost. When stood on the ice, it appeared only slightly larger than nearby Common Gulls. Also in the Audenshaw Reservoirs roost Jan 2nd was a 2nd winter bird first seen here in November 2009, and also seen and confirmed from photos as the same bird in the Heaton Park Reservoir roost. This individual became a regular feature in the Audenshaw Reservoirs roost, being seen on at least five further dates in January, nine dates in February, and two dates in March, when it was last noted on 6th. However, the bird did "take a break" from Audenshaw Reservoirs, being seen and confirmed as the same individual from photos at Hollingworth Lake Feb 6th. This constituted only the second record of Yellow-legged Gull for Hollingworth Lake. The bird was last seen at Heaton Park Reservoir Mar 14th, when another 2nd winter bird was also observed. Further adult birds were noted in January at Audenshaw Reservoirs, with two on 25th, singles on 26th and 27th, and three on 28th. An adult at Castleshaw Reservoirs, during the day Jan 28th, was probably one of the birds in the Audenshaw Reservoirs roost that afternoon.

During February, Heaton Park Reservoir recorded adult birds in the roost on four days with two on 6th, three on 7th, one on 27th and two on 28th, while Audenshaw Reservoirs recorded single adults Feb 3rd, 9th, 11th, 14th, 18th, 21st and 27th, with two adults Feb 4th. The adult bird seen at Audenshaw Reservoirs on 18th was a noticeably small individual, very similar in appearance to the bird seen Jan 2nd. Also in February, a 3rd winter bird was noted in the Audenshaw Reservoirs roost on 27th.

Records tailed off in March with the regular 2nd winter bird noted in the Audenshaw Reservoirs roost on 4th and 6th, and the same bird at Heaton Park Reservoir on 14th, together with another 2nd winter and an unaged bird on the same date.

Summer records are infrequent, so an adult bird standing with Lesser Black-backed Gulls on the roof of one of the warehouses adjacent to Audenshaw Reservoirs Jul 3rd was unusual. More impressive however, were two juvenile birds at Astley Tip Aug 15th, the first juveniles to be recorded in the county.

In September and October records came from two sites with two birds (adult and 1st winter) in the Pennington Flash roost Sep 12th, a single adult at Audenshaw Reservoirs Sep 18th, and two adults at Audenshaw Reservoirs Sep 22nd and 28th, and Oct 4th and 7th. Records increased in November and December, but with the exception of an adult at Castleshaw Reservoirs Nov 20th, were concentrated from the two key sites Audenshaw Reservoirs and Heaton Park Reservoir. Single adults were noted in the Audenshaw Reservoirs roost Nov 13th, 19th, 22nd, 24th, and Dec 12th, 17th, 18th and 31st. Two adults were noted Nov 12th and 28th, and Dec 5th and 21st, and lastly three adults were logged Dec 10th. Heaton Park Reservoir recorded single adults Nov 28th, Dec 18th and 26th, with two adults Nov 13th and 20th, and a 2nd winter bird Dec 12th. An interesting adult bird at Heaton Park Reservoir, Nov 28th, was very unusual in displaying a rather heavily streaked head with a fine demarcation, where the streaking ended at the rear of the crown, contrasting with the white nape, creating a distinctly hooded effect.

### **ICELAND GULL** *Larus glaucoides*

Scarce winter visitor.

BoCC Amber List species (WR).

The first record of the year concerns a rather coarsely marked 2nd winter bird, photographed stood on the ice at Pennington Flash Jan 6th. This individual displayed strong characteristics of the North American form Kumlien's Gull *Larus glaucoides kumlieni*, showing apparent brownish washed primaries with pale edges. What was probably the same individual, with a very similar appearance, was seen twice in the Heaton Park Reservoir roost in December 2009, but unfortunately was rather distant on both occasions. Elsewhere, single juveniles in the Audenshaw Reservoirs roost Jan 24th and 27th, probably related to the same individual, although the roost was checked on the days in-between. Lastly, a 2nd winter bird was at Castleshaw Reservoirs Jan 26th, with a 2nd winter bird again at the same site a month later Feb 27th.

No records from the second winter period and no records of Glaucous Gull this year, which was the first blank year for this latter species since 2006.

### **GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL** *Larus marinus*

Uncommon winter visitor.

BoCC Amber List species (WDMp1).

Heaton Park Reservoir and nearby Pilsworth Tip maintain their status as the premier sites for this species in the County.

Counts made at Heaton Park Reservoir were as follows: 250 Jan 10th, 154 Nov 13th, 138 Nov 20th, 181 Nov 28th and 409 Dec 12th. The January count in particular is down over 75% on the last couple of years. A count of 220 was made at Pilsworth Tip on both Jan 24th and 28th. Numbers in the Audenshaw Reservoirs roost were very variable from day to day, with often less than ten recorded. Notable counts at Audenshaw Reservoirs, however, were of 85 Jan 22nd, 95 Jan 28th, 107 Feb 4th, and 35 Dec 12th. Elsewhere, counts were made of 25 at Pennington Flash Jan 10th, 63 at Castleshaw Reservoirs Feb 6th, with 14 there Feb 21st, and 13 at Hollingworth Lake Jan 24th, with 10 there Feb 6th. Single figures were noted at several other sites flying over.



### **LITTLE TERN** *Sternula albifrons*

Scarce passage migrant.

BoCC Amber List species (SPEC, BDMr2, BL).

A single bird through Audenshaw Reservoirs and three birds at Pennington Flash both on Apr 25th coincided with several other reports of this species from inland waters in the Midlands the same day.

The only other record of the year was a bird at Elton Reservoir Jun 6th.

### **BLACK TERN** *Chlidonias niger*

Uncommon passage migrant.

BoCC Amber List species (SPEC).

The sight of this graceful Marsh Tern in smart summer plumage hawking insects in spring is enough to lift the spirits of any county birder. However, in 2010, we had to wait until early summer for the privilege, with the first of the year being an adult at Pennington Flash from Jun 14th-17th, by which time it was already showing signs of moult on the head.

The next record was of a bird at Elton Reservoir Aug 26th. A spate of sightings followed in September, with one at Audenshaw Reservoirs on 7th, an adult in moult at Elton Reservoir 7th-9th, a juvenile at Audenshaw Reservoirs on 11th, with further juveniles at Scotman's Flash on 14th, Elton Reservoir 15th-16th, two at Scotman's Flash on 15th with one remaining 16th-22nd, and one at Pennington Flash from 16th-21st. An impressive flock of 26 birds was found over Audenshaw No 2 Reservoir feeding during the afternoon of Sep 22nd, the biggest count for the site and county since 1992. The following morning, Sep 23rd, seven birds remained at Audenshaw Reservoirs, reducing to two later in the day. The last records of the year were in early October, with singles at Pennington Flash 2nd-3rd, and at Worthington Lakes on 6th. The latter record was the latest date recorded in the county since 2001 when an exceptionally late first winter bird was present at Audenshaw Reservoirs from Oct 31st to Nov 12th, the latest ever reported in Greater Manchester.

### **SANDWICH TERN** *Sterna sandvicensis*

Uncommon passage migrant.

BoCC Amber List species (SPEC, BDM, BDMr2, BL).

A very lean year for this maritime species, with just two records of singles at Pennington Flash Apr 24th and Hollingworth Lake Apr 30th.

### **COMMON TERN** *Sterna hirundo*

Fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant, scarce breeder.

BoCC Amber List species (BL).

The first of the year was a bird at Audenshaw Reservoirs Apr 3rd, followed by further singles at Pennington Flash Apr 11th, over Carrington Moss Apr 12th, and at Dover Basin Apr 13th.

Small numbers were then recorded at several sites, with the first double figure count being 11 at Pennington Flash Apr 25th, increasing to 12 the next day.

Breeding activity was reported from four sites during the year. At Horrocks Flash c25 pairs made a nesting attempt, however, due to a combination of factors, productivity was low. As in previous years, Mink were reported to be a problem, with at least four animals at large during the breeding season. Elsewhere, one pair nested at Rumworth, with two young seen Jun 24th, and three adults and four juveniles noted Jul 6th. A larger group of 23 birds at

Rumworth Jul 17th included 11 juveniles from Doffcocker Lodge. At Moses Gate CP, two pairs nested, with three fledged young noted Jul 16th.

A total of 23 chicks were ringed at Doffcocker, using orange rings for 2010. This represents an increase on the number of chicks ringed in 2009 (20), in this growing colony, where predation is low.

Small numbers were reported from many sites during the late summer/early autumn, with 14 birds at Pennington Flash Oct 2nd, the last of the year.

### **ARCTIC TERN** *Sterna paradisaea*

Uncommon passage migrant.

BoCC Amber List species (BDMr2).

No double figure counts from any site this year.

Spring passage started through the county during the last few days of April, with three at Pennington Flash on 25th, two at Audenshaw Reservoirs on 26th, with four at Pennington Flash also on 26th, and further singles at Pennington Flash on 29th and 30th. In May, two were at Pennington Flash on 3rd, then two at Elton Reservoir on 5th, followed by singles at Pennington Flash on 5th and 6th, Elton Reservoir on 7th, Heaton Park Reservoir also on 7th, and Audenshaw Reservoirs on 8th. The last of the spring passage were two at Pennington Flash May 17th and two late birds at Audenshaw Reservoirs Jun 9th.

Return passage commenced with two at Audenshaw Reservoirs Jul 26th. In August singles were noted at Elton Reservoir on 13th, 23rd and 26th, with two juveniles at Audenshaw Reservoirs on 16th, two juveniles at Pennington Flash on 24th, and a juvenile at Heaton Park Reservoir on 29th. The final records of the year were of a juvenile at Hollingworth Lake Sep 29th and a single at Pennington Flash Oct 11th, which was the latest confirmed sighting in the county since 2003 when a single was present at Audenshaw Reservoirs on Oct 12th.

### **FERAL PIGEON** *Columba livia*

Abundant resident.

Despite their abundance in our towns and cities, three figure counts remained relatively few this year of what is a highly visible but seemingly largely ignored species. Counts exceeding three figures were 300 at Centenary Bridge, Eccles on Jan 10th; 110 at Alexandra Park, Oldham on Aug 9th; 200 at Platt Fields Park on Aug 11th; 200 at Worsley Filtration Lagoons on Oct 18th; 130 at Rusholme on Nov 17th; and 150 at Alexandra Park, Oldham on Nov 29th.

A total of 142 atlas tetrads recorded the species through the year but counts of 50 or more came from only the following tetrads: - Bolton Town Centre (75 on Nov 30th); Edgeley (166 on Jan 1st, 75 on Nov 29th); Failsworth (363 on Nov 19th); Gorton (92 on Nov 29th); Higher Broughton (161 on Nov 21st); Hope Carr (50 on Nov 6th); Hollinwood (146 on Nov 20th); Hulme (60 on Nov 12th); Levenshulme (119 on Dec 7th); Lower Kersal (84 on Nov 2nd); Manchester City Centre (74 on Jan 1st, 50 on Jan 21st, 55 on Feb 12th); Manchester University (50 on Feb 12th); Middleton Junction (57 on Jun 16th); Stalybridge (58 on Feb 7th); Newtown (74 on Jan 25th); Ramsbottom (52 on Nov 15th); Stretford (78 on Nov 7th); Whitefield (70 on May 16th).

38 BBS squares (57%) recorded this species, compared to 62% in 2009. Typically it was mainly the urban squares, those in town centres, which produced the highest densities as follows: - Dukinfield (40/25); Levenshulme (37/55); Priory Gardens, Sale (21/54); Rochdale Town Centre (67/12); and Wigan Town Centre (73/73). The first confirmed breeding record of the year was on Jan 26th, with the last on Dec 19th. Part of the success of this species may very well be due to the fact that it breeds all year round.

## **STOCK DOVE** *Columba oenas*

Fairly common resident.

BoCC Amber List species (BI).

There were no very large flocks found during the early winter period this year. A rather paltry 17 at Prospect Grange Farm, Irlam Moss on the 18th was the largest flock January could muster and February was only slightly better with counts of 43 at Nook Lane, Astley and 45 on Carrington Moss, both on the 21st. March could only manage one count over 30 birds, of 34 at Carrington Moss on the 27th, though a count of 50 at the latter site on Apr 9th was much better.

The first successful breeding of the year (recently fledged young observed) was confirmed on May 24th at Wickenhall Clough with further breeding during May from; Horrocks Fold; the old Ladyshore colliery site; Lilford Park; Moses Gate CP; Nuttall Wood, Ringley; Prestolee Aqueduct; and Windy Bank Wood. In all, 15 locations (of which 5 were atlas tetrads) recorded confirmed breeding with the final report of the year coming from the Well Green tetrad on Jul 29th. The BBS recorded Stock Dove in 14 squares this year, which at 21% of all BBS squares was a very modest increase on 2009. Other than confirmed breeding, seven other locations held birds on territories and many others had birds in suitable breeding habitat. Larger flocks encountered during the breeding season were as follows: - 60 on Irlam Moss on May 5th; 21 at Lightshaw on May 16th; 21 at Windy Bank Wood on May 16th; and 25 at Pennington Flash on Jul 8th.

Post breeding and late winter flocks were typically larger than those in the early winter period but Woodford appeared to be the prime site this year with an excellent run of records which began with 48 on Aug 26th. This number quickly grew to 80 by Sep 9th, 100 by Sep 23rd, 150 by Oct 10th and finally to its maximum of an estimated 200 on Nov 4th before reducing to 41 by Dec 30th. Other counts of 40 or more were recorded from Astley Road, Chat Moss (120 on Nov 29th, reducing to 50 by Dec 9th); Moss Brow Farm, Irlam Moss (40 on Sep 9th); and Rindle, Astley (57 on Nov 2nd).

## **WOODPIGEON** *Columba palumbus*

Abundant resident and passage migrant.

Oddly, there were only 3 four figure flocks during the entire year, which fell well short of the abundance of such large flocks in 2009.

The early winter period was comparatively unproductive for the species and it may be likely that the exceedingly harsh weather during the period forced many birds to move to other areas in the UK and abroad. Only eight flocks exceeded 300 strong and these were: - 400 at Highfield Moss on Jan 3rd; 1000 at Standish Hall Farm on Jan 31st; 425 at Little Woolden Moss on Feb 1st; 500 at Woodford on Feb 4th with 600 also there on Feb 11th; 500 at Croxden Peat Works NR, 350 at Woodford and 600 at Woodstock Farm, all on Mar 4th.

The first evidence of confirmed breeding occurred in the Jubilee tetrad on Apr 2nd with a further 6 locations subsequently recording breeding during the remainder of the month. A total of 59 atlas tetrads and other locations recorded confirmed breeding this year, with a further 27 sites noting nest building and many more noting possible breeding, so there is little doubt that the true figure is substantially higher. Sites with particularly healthy breeding populations were Banky Meadow with 18 nests, Sinderland Brook at Woodcote Road with 20 nests and Woodheys Park, Woodhouses with 21 nests. On the BBS 65 squares recorded the species, which at 97% was a 2% increase on 2009 and back up to the level achieved in 2008. It was also clearly higher than the 93% of squares achieved nationally during 2010. Birds per BBS square also rose with 19.75 per square this year, against 17 in 2009. The top Woodpigeon producing squares were Ashton-on-Mersey (44/28), Boothstown East (32/37), Hartshead Green (35/31), Lane Head

(25/42), Priory Gardens Sale (45/20) and Romiley SW (23/44) and their high numbers encountered reinforced the fact that Woodpigeon was the most numerous species recorded by atlas timed tetrad visits and roving records.

The first three figure post-breeding flock occurred in the Shevington Moor tetrad with 125 on Jun 21st. It was not until Jul 7th for the next though, when 100 were at Bradley feeding station. Thereafter, the following July flocks were noted: - 120 on Chat Moss, 110 on Irlam Moss and 340 at Rumworth, all on the 22nd; 300 at Birch on the 23rd; 200 at Astley Road, Chat Moss and 100 at Little Woolden Hall, both on the 27th; 260 at Croxden Peat Works NR and 150 at Horrocks Flash, both on the 29th. August numbers remained fairly low, with 250 on Irlam Moss and Little Woolden Moss during the final week the largest flocks encountered. September flocks increased with 9 reaching over 200 birds, the largest of which was 800 on Little Woolden Moss on the 28th. Passage during October really began to take hold, with visible migration over the Horwich Moors and Heaton Park Reservoir generally recording southerly movements. A flock of 500 at Olive Mount Farm, Chat Moss on the 21st was the largest during the month. Typically, November was the most productive month for Woodpigeon migration in the county with 14 flocks exceeding 200 strong; the Horwich Moors logging its highest numbers during the first two weeks of the month and mainly heading in a southerly direction yet again. A total of 7 flocks breached 500 strong and 2 broke the four figure barrier with 2500 at New Moss Wood, Cadishead Moss on the 2nd and 1544 over Georges Lane, Horwich Moors on the 10th. December brought only 3 flocks over 200 though, the largest of which was 430 at Higher Barn Farm, Borsdane on the 3rd.

## **COLLARED DOVE** *Streptopelia decaocto* Abundant resident.

The early winter period saw few large flocks and only one roost broke the three figure barrier. Flocks of 20 or more occurred as follows: - 30 at Bedford, Leigh and 38 at Pennington Flash, both on Jan 1st; 20 still at Bedford and 22 on Little Woolden Moss, both on Feb 1st; 22 in the Droylsden tetrad on Feb 7th; and an excellent 200 in the roost at Little Ees, Ashton-on-Mersey on Feb 8th. A count of 70 at Little Ees, Ashton-on-Mersey on May 31st was also noteworthy.

The very first nest building of the year was observed at Shaw on Jan 10th, closely followed by a pair in Winton on Jan 15th and another pair in Leigh building on Feb 1st. March 14th brought the first confirmed breeding with young seen in Eccles and six further pairs in the county went on to produce young during March. In Long Lane, Hindley a pair which nested on a satellite dish in 2009 chose an old Magpie nest in Leylandii this year. A total of 35 locations confirmed breeding this year, which was exactly the same situation as last year and must still represent the 'tip of the iceberg' with regards this species' county breeding status. On the BBS, 51 squares (76%) recorded the species which was a slight drop from the 79% achieved in 2009 but birds per square increased from 5.06 to 5.98 this year. The most productive squares were as follows: - Ashton-on-Mersey (19/16); Boothstown E (11/19); Boothstown W (19/9); Dukinfield (7/21); Higher Folds (13/12); Ladybridge (12/8); and Romiley (14/11). At Spring Mill during the May to June period, nests were occupied behind 3 satellite dishes though it is not known how many pairs were involved in the building of the nests, or how many of the nests were successful. The final breeding of the year occurred with a pair occupying a nest in Lowton on Jul 28th and recently fledged young in the Billinge Higher Ends tetrad on Jul 31st.

Larger post breeding flocks began with 23 at Great Woolden Moss on Jun 28th and 23 in the Pilsforth South tetrad on Jul 10th. Thereafter, flocks over 20 strong were encountered as follows: - *September*: 28 at Astley Road, Chat Moss on the 2nd and 20 on the 4th; 27 at Birch on the 2nd; 23 at Bradley Fields on the 2nd; 31 at Moss Brow Farm, Irlam Moss on the 9th; 80 at Kenworthy Woods, Fairy Lane, Sale on the 21st had increased to this number having been attracted there by the presence of pigswill. *October*: 70 at Chorlton Water Park, off Fairy Lane,

on the 13th; 20 at New Moss Wood, Cadishead Moss on the 29th; 48 at Altrincham ETW on the 30th. *November*: 22 at New Moss Wood, Cadishead Moss on the 2nd; 70 at Rindle, Astley Moss on the 2nd. *December*: 40 at Hurst Farm, Leigh on the 1st; 25 in the Haydock tetrad on the 4th and 20 there on the 6th; 84 in the Fairy Lane, Sale roost on the 14th; 20 at Little Woolden Moss on the 28th; 26 in the Pemberton tetrad on the 28th; and 20 in the Sinderland Green tetrad on the 31st.

**TURTLE DOVE** *Streptopelia turtur*

Rare summer visitor.

BoCC Red List (BDp1, BDp2, SPEC) and UK BAP species.

One was at Pendlebury Lane, Haigh on May 31st (I. Woosey *et al*). This now genuinely rare county bird was enjoyed by many county birders and was a highlight of the spring, being only the 6th county record in the past 10 years and the first to be truly twitchable! The last confirmed breeding in the county (which was itself an isolated breeding occurrence) was in 1993 and it is now 34 years since the species' heyday back in 1976, when a conservative estimate of 12 pairs bred in the county and the largest August flock involved 20 birds.

**RING-NECKED PARAKEET** *Psittacula krameri*

Uncommon mainly localised resident.

The South Manchester sites of Alexandra Park, Birchfields Park, Fallowfield allotments, Fog Lane Park and Platt Fields Park which remain the species' stronghold in the county, are all relatively close together and there is inevitably much duplication of records between the sites. Nevertheless, monthly maxima through the year at these main sites were as follows: -

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alexandra Park	3				1							
Birchfields Park			2	2	4							2
Fallowfield allotments	4	3	4	5	7	9	9	8	8	11	9	10
Fog Lane Park		3			2							2
Platt Fields Park	1			1				3		1	6	12

The current South Manchester population appears to be slowly attaining true Category C status with breeding confirmed yet again this year and it is likely that two pairs bred successfully. On Apr 22nd at Fog Lane Park, Burnage, a pair attempted to breed in an old Great Spotted Woodpecker nest but unfortunately failed. At Birchfields Park, Rusholme a female was in a nest hole being visited by the male on Apr 22nd and by May 6th a single young was being fed by its parents outside the nest hole. At the Fallowfield allotments, a male and a fledged juvenile were present on Jun 6th when a further 3 males and 2 juveniles also arrived. On Jun 14th, a total of 5 probable juveniles were present at the latter allotments.

Away from the main South Manchester locations the following sightings were made through the year: - 1 at Palmerston Street, Ancoats on Mar 15th had been present since the summer of 2009; 1 flew north over Smallbrook, Leigh on Jun 7th; 2 were at Heaton Moor on Jun 8th; 1 flew over Chorlton Water Park on Aug 7th and the same or another flew over on Aug 8th; 1 flew north over Green Avenue, Astley on Sep 26th; 1 flew noisily SE over Heaton Park Reservoir on Oct 7th; 1 was at Morley's Hall, Marsland, Astley on Oct 10th; and one was at Pickley Green, Westleigh on Nov 15th.

## **CUCKOO** *Cuculus canorus*

Uncommon summer visitor; declining.

BoCC Red List (BDp1, BDp2) and UK BAP species.

The much awaited first arrival of the year was one singing at Astley Moss on Apr 14th from which point there was little let up in their arrival during the remainder of the month as follows (all singles unless otherwise stated): - Pennington Flash on the 15th; Olive Mount Farm, Chat Moss on the 17th; Holcombe Rifle Range and Brushes Valley, both on the 18th; Horrocks Flash and 3 at Astley Moss, both on the 25th; birds at Bedford Moss on the 26th and Croxden Peat Works NR on the 27th are probably likely to have been wandering birds from the Astley and Chat Mosses; Bickershaw and Jack Lane, Flixton, both on the 28th; Redisher Woods and Woodhouses, Failsworth, both on the 30th. Additional sites also recording the species during May were: - Barlows Farm; with subsequent records at Swineshaw Reservoirs and Cow Lane, Hollingworth, Hyde possibly all relating to the same bird; Chorlton Water Park; Crankwood, which may well have been the earlier Bickershaw bird; Dove Stone; Etherow Country Park; Hope Carr NR; Radcliffe Ees; Watergrove Reservoir.

There was no confirmed breeding in the county this year and only 1 BBS square, Holcombe Rifle Range on its late visit, recorded the species; a serious decline from the 5 squares in 2009. The Astley/Chat Moss area maintained up to 3 birds during June though and it is possible that breeding took place but went unsurprisingly unnoticed when one considers the breeding strategy of the species and the rapid departure south of fledged young. Other than the latter mosses, birds considered on territories were recorded from Dove Stone, Dover Basin and Watergrove Reservoir. Birds still singing elsewhere during June (but not necessarily considered as on territory by the observers) came from Barlow's Farm, Bickershaw; Delph; the Pots and Pans tetrad (SE00C); and Tanner's Lodge. On Jun 10th an adult male was seen feeding an erythristic (hepatic/brown phase) female with an earthworm on wires at Astley Moss.

There were 3 July records with singles at Dove Stone on the 1st, Castleshaw Reservoirs on the 19th and an apparent erythristic female at Sale Water Park on the 31st. There had been no August Cuckoo records in the county since 2006 and so 3 this year was surprising, all also identified as juveniles. One was at Georges Lane, Horwich Moors on the 1st, another was at Castleshaw Reservoirs on the 19th and the final bird was by Woodford Aerodrome on the 27th.

## **BARN OWL** *Tyto alba*

Uncommon resident.

BoCC Amber List species (SPEC).

*Early & Late Winter:* Reported from 16 sites and 7 winter atlas tetrads.

*Breeding:* Despite the harsh winter of 2009-10, confirmed at 18 (15 in 2009) widespread sites across Bolton, Bury, Rochdale, Salford and Wigan boroughs. However, during what should have been a peak year for voles, success seemed poor, with small young disappearing from one nest box, probably due to squirrel predation; eggs failing to hatch in another; and a third nest on Jun 28th contained a live juvenile, as well as a dead sibling and an unhatched egg. This is also reflected in the low number of chicks ringed, 16 compared to 30 in 2009. The incomplete nature of the available information does not permit an estimate of the number that fledged successfully. Traditionally associated with buildings, individuals were seen roosting in a holly tree and hawthorn bush at a time of year that might indicate a female nesting nearby (males roost separately to females during the breeding season). Isolated sightings from locations away from this species stronghold (in the west and north west of the county) may indicate that breeding pairs are more widespread than previously thought. There is some evidence that Barn Owls are expanding their range in Greater Manchester.



*Casualties:* Dead birds were found at 2 sites in Wigan on Jan 10th and Apr 22nd; at a Bolton site end of Feb/early Mar; and a wing was found near a farm in Stockport Mar 27th. Birds were also seen hunting close to motorways in Bolton and Stockport boroughs.

### **LITTLE OWL** *Athene noctua*

Fairly common resident.

The most widely recorded of the owl species present in GM, probably due to it being more active during the day time.

*Breeding:* Confirmed at 12 sites and 6 additional tetrads, mainly by sightings of recently fledged young between May and the end of August. Locations were: farm outbuildings at Birch; Blackrod; Brun Clough Reservoir; Elton Reservoir vicinity; Pilsworth; Holcombe Moor; Irlam Moss; Prestolee; Piethorne Valley; Roe Cross; Rumworth and Woodford. Also confirmed in the following additional atlas tetrads: Over Hulton (SD60X); Ramsbottom (SD71Y); Norden (SD81M); Oldfield Brow (SJ78P) and Carrington Moss (SJ79K) where young were in the nest Jun 30th. These must only represent a small percentage of the numbers actually breeding, as singles, or pairs were observed at the following additional locations during the breeding season: Abram Flashes SSSI; Alt Hill; Altrincham ETW; Ashworth Moor Reservoir; Astley Road, Chat Moss; Barlow's Farm, Bickershaw; Borsdane; Brinsop Hall Farm, Westhoughton; Bromley Cross; Bryn Gates, Viridor Wood; Burnt Edge, Horwich; Chat Moss; Chelburn Reservoirs, Littleborough; Coggra Fold; Cutacre Open Cast Coal Site; Dovestone; Dunham Massey; Goyt Hall Farm; Hartshead Pike; Hazel Grove; Higher Shore; Hobson's Moor; Kickety Brook, Stretford; Lane Head, Lowton; Lees Hill, Swineshaw; Leigh; Lightshaw Hall Flash; Little Woolden Moss; Ludworth Moor; Lydgate; Mellor; Mossley; Naden Valley; Poise Brook LNR; Shore Top; Smithills Moor; Standish; Stubley Cross; Watergrove Reservoir; Westhoughton; Wilderswood, Horwich and Windy Bank Wood. BBS – present on double the number of squares, 6 (9%) compared to 3 (5%) in 2009.

Little Owl is a sedentary species and records were submitted from 25 sites during the winter months, most of which were the same as the above breeding locations.

### **TAWNY OWL** *Strix aluco*

Fairly common resident.

The long running survey by P. & N. Johnson found 23 pairs raised 30 young in Bury, although the final figure may have been higher, as young had already fledged from five boxes before they were checked. The extent of under recording elsewhere is demonstrated by the total of just 17 confirmed pairs across the rest of the county. Birds were on territory at a further 11 sites with occasional sightings from 14 other locations. Atlas recording located territories, or pairs, in just 5 tetrads, with possible breeding in a further 12.

Listening out for the squeaky hunger calls of recently fledged juveniles is one of the easiest ways to identify successful breeding and the first young of the year were reported in March, at Westhoughton, and in the Hilton House atlas tetrad (SD60J). In April, 2 were in the Astley Green area, one of which was taken into care with eye problems, and a single on Chat Moss 29th. May reports came from 7 sites spread across Bolton, Oldham, Rochdale, Stockport and Wigan boroughs. Juveniles were located at 4 sites in June with the latest record of 3 to 4 at New Springs Jul 28th. Tawny Owls breed in built up areas where there are mature trees and nest box provision. A pair was successful in a Breightmet garden in May and 2 juveniles were seen in a Pickley Green garden Jun 9th. In the Rochdale area reports of calling birds came from 4 gardens between April and June. This owl establishes its territory in the autumn with calling birds (male and/or female) heard from August, in Littleborough, through to Dec 30th at Woodford Aerodrome.

*Casualties:* One at Worthington Lakes was found hanging upside down entangled in fishing line Dec 15th and taken into care. It made a full recovery and was subsequently released in the same area. Less fortunate were dead birds found on Scout Road, Smithills Moor Apr 24th and Beaumont Road, Rumworth Dec 15th.

### **LONG-EARED OWL** *Asio otus*

Uncommon resident.

RBBP species.

With effect from 2010 this species is assessed by the RBBP, as its national population is believed to be under or close to 1500 pairs. Accordingly, records from the county were submitted to the panel for inclusion in their database and a summary will appear in the next RBBP report. All locations are withheld in the interests of breeding birds. Eight pairs were confirmed to have bred at 7 sites (4 pairs in the east, 3 in the west and 1 in the north of the county). Where known, the number of young fledged were 3, 3, 2-3, 2, 1+ and 1+. Three pairs probably bred at two additional sites with a male seen wing clapping at one of these on Feb 27th and Mar 2nd. One was seen standing on a fence post Mar 6th and hunting Mar 8th at a site in the north of the county, indicating possible breeding.

*Early & late winter:* Present at 6 sites with a single roosting Jan 27th in one lucky observer's garden in the east of the county. The maximum counts were of 4 at one location Feb 14th and 3 at another Feb 8th. Long-eared Owl is almost certainly significantly under recorded in Greater Manchester. Prior to 2010 no records had been submitted from one of the confirmed locations since 1995.

### **SHORT-EARED OWL** *Asio flammeus*

Uncommon winter visitor, passage migrant and rare breeder.

BoCC Amber List (SPEC) and RBBP species.

*Early winter & spring:* Very scarce with just 3 records of singles: near Ash Farm, Carrington Moss Mar 7th; Hopwood Golf Course (an unusual location) Mar 8th; and Winter Hill Apr 2nd.

*Breeding:* Also added to the RBBP species list in 2010. Two April sightings in the same area (east of the county), of a single 8th and 2 on 14th were the only indication that breeding may have taken place.

*Autumn & late winter:* All records of single birds. Far more numerous than in the early part of the year with the first at Scout Road, Smithills Moor Sep 25th; Oct 23rd flew out of Pimbo Brushes (West Lancs) at 10:50 hrs, gaining height over Brickworks at Billinge Higher End and headed south; Oct 24th pursued by 2 Ravens over Deans Ditch, Smithills Moor, then glided WSW towards the coast; 10th Nov flew SE over Besses o'th Barn mobbed by corvids; 6th Dec at Chorlton Ees. Woodford Aerodrome was the only site where a bird lingered being seen Dec 2nd, 9th and 10th.

### **SWIFT** *Apus apus*

Common summer visitor; declining.

BoCC Amber List species (BDMp1).

The first arrivals of the year were a single over Ludworth and 3 over Timperley, both on Apr 18th; a day earlier than their expected average arrival date for the county. The following day brought a more widespread arrival with 4 at Audenshaw Reservoirs, 2 at Elton Reservoir, 2 at Lightshaw Hall Flash and 5 at Pennington Flash. For the remainder of April birds continued to arrive daily, with Pennington Flash attracting the lion's share via counts of an excellent 200 on the 23rd, 60 on the 26th and 90 on the 28th. Apr 29th saw the first major arrival of returning

birds though as the first really large counts of the year were recorded with 600 at Pennington Flash and 500 at Audenshaw Reservoirs. May quickly saw Swift numbers reach their maximum, including one count which equalled the highest ever in the county. 900 at Pennington Flash on the 2nd quickly became 5000 the following day, a figure only ever witnessed three times in the county before, remarkably all at Pennington Flash, on July 19th 1981, May 15th 2001 and May 23rd 2005. Further three figure May counts were 120 at Barlows Tip on the 1st, 1200 at Audenshaw Reservoirs on the 10th, 250 at Elton Reservoir on the 23rd, 100 at Bickershaw Rucks on the 26th and 100 at Chorlton Water Park on the 29th.

On the BBS, Swift numbers reached their lowest levels nationally since the survey began in 1994 but within Greater Manchester the species appeared to maintain its current status. Despite only 63% of squares recording the species this year it remained on par with the 64% recorded in 2009 and avoided a further decline similar to the fall from 73% in 2008. 16 locations recorded confirmed breeding during the year but only 3 (Mossley, Norley Hall and Ramsbottom) were not atlas tetrads, surely hinting at our under recording of their breeding? Those atlas tetrads with confirmed breeding were SD70P Breightmet South, SJ78U Broadheath, SJ99N Dukinfield, SD78T Hale, SD80H Heaton Park Reservoir, SD81K Heywood, SJ69U Hope Carr, SJ89X Levenshulme, SD88D Newall Green, SJ78P Oldfield Brow, SD50H Orrell, SD78Y Well Green and SD80C Whitefield. Large flocks continued to be observed throughout the breeding season though, once again surely signifying other unrecorded breeding locations and those counts of three figure were as follows: - 150 Croxden Peat Works NR Jun 6th; 300 Boothstown Jun 27th; 500 Audenshaw Reservoirs Jun 29th; 200 Little Woollen Moss Jul 1st; 100 Atherton and 100 Carrington Moss Jul 2nd; 120 Chat Moss Jul 6th; 1100 Astley Moss Jul 8th with high numbers recorded throughout the month with up to a further 1000 on Jul 25th; 100 Scotmans Flash Jul 11th; 110 Ringley ETW Jul 17th; 230 Irlam Moss Jul 17th; and 1000 Chat Moss Jul 24th, at least some of which were probably the same as the previous high numbers seen on Astley Moss.

Return passage was over typically swiftly and after August flocks of 1000 on Irlam Moss on the 2nd, 100 on Little Woollen Moss on the 8th and 100 during a thunderstorm at Pennington Flash on the 20th, their numbers declined dramatically from the third week of August with only a count of 42 at Pennington Flash on the 24th reaching above double figures. There were only 3 September records, all seen on the 7th, consisting of 2 at Audenshaw Reservoirs, 1 over Chat Moss and 3 south over Heaton Park Reservoir. Two October records this year were remarkable and were the first county records during this month for 10 years, though there have been 2 November records within that time. One flew SE over Heaton Park Reservoir on the 9th and 1 was seen at Watergrove Reservoir on the 10th.

## **KINGFISHER** *Alcedo atthis*

Fairly common resident but perhaps declining.  
BoCC Amber List species (SPEC).

Outside the breeding season this seemingly well reported species was recorded at 80 widespread locations throughout the county. In January a total of 23 locations recorded the species but the extremely cold weather during the month obviously had a serious effect as during February locations numbered only 11 and in March only 9 locations recorded any Kingfishers. Several were found dead around the North West of England due to the extreme cold and the lack of open water it brought and others were forced to utilise areas well away from any water courses, including one using the ditch by the feeding station track at Rindle, Astley Moss during January. April saw an increase in locations recording the species with 18; probably including birds moving back to breeding areas after the cold weather had abated. Singles at Astley Moss East Peat Pools (only the second site record), Watergrove Reservoir and one on the River Irwell in Manchester City Centre were perhaps evidence of this. Post-

breeding, September saw 23 locations record the species, with October recording sightings at 21 locations, November with 20 sites and December with 22 sites.

On the 2010 BBS nationally, Kingfisher numbers fell to their lowest since 1994, possibly as a result of the prolonged freezing conditions experienced during the winter. The fact that GM saw a 50% increase in BBS this year should perhaps be taken with a pinch of salt considering that only meant a rise from 1 (in both 2008 and 2009) to 2 squares this year. 7 locations did record confirmed breeding though, which included 4 atlas tetrads and several further sites recorded possible or probable breeding with birds seen in suitable habitat during the breeding season.

### **WRYNECK** *Jynx torquilla*

Very rare migrant.

BoCC Red List species (HD, BDp1, BDp2, SPEC, BR).

One was alongside the canal by Ramsdale's Ruck at Pennington Flash on Sep 12th (C. Owen). Seen by only a solitary fortunate observer it could not be relocated later the same day but was a welcomed first record for the site. It became the 17th county record of this species since 1979, all but one (a 1979 April record at Longendale) occurring in autumn and was the first record since 2006.

### **GREEN WOODPECKER** *Picus viridis*

Uncommon resident.

BoCC Amber List species (SPEC).

In the first and last four months of the year the usual wandering individuals were recorded away from breeding areas or those with regular sightings, the following of which managed such records: - Altrincham ETW; Amberswood; Astley Village; Barton Locks; Carrington Moss; Hope Carr NR; Lightshaw Meadows; St. Anne's Hospice, Worsley; Windy Bank Wood; and Wythenshawe Park. A juvenile found in the Piethorne Valley on Sep 23rd was unable to fly and was taken into care where it recovered and was later released.

A total of 16 locations recorded birds on territories during the breeding season but only 8 managed to actually confirm breeding: - Dunham Massey, Haigh CP, Holcombe Moor, Piethorne Valley, Rakewood and atlas tetrads SJ59U Ashton-in-Makerfield, SJ78N Bowden and SE00B Dove Stone. Excluding sites with breeding or birds on territory, a further 11 locations also recorded birds in suitable habitat during the breeding season. BBS records came from 7 squares this year (10%) as opposed to only 4 (6%) in 2009 but this increase went against the generally unchanged status on the BBS nationally during the same period.

### **GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER** *Dendrocopus major*

Fairly common resident.

Breeding or at least the recording of it increased this year with 74 locations, of which 39 were atlas tetrads, managing to confirm breeding; a dramatic and welcome increase over the 46 locations in 2009. There were also many further reports of possible and probable breeding, birds in suitable habitat, birds on territories and of their conspicuous drumming, which seems to indicate a healthy and widespread population within the county. This would appear to tie into the national picture for the BBS, in which during 2010 this species reached its highest levels since the start of the survey. It was a surprise then that Greater Manchester recorded only 20 BBS squares (30%) this year against the rise to 29 in 2009 (which represented 44% then).

One at Ludworth Moor on Aug 15th was seen eating ants from a road.

## **LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER** *Dendrocopos minor*

Uncommon resident; declining?

BoCC Red List (BDp1, BDp2), UK BAP and RBBP species.

Yet again, a small number of restricted sightings were received this year but amongst them there were no reports of breeding activity akin to the nest hole excavations of previous years. As of 2010, this species is now monitored by the RBBP and all breeding data from the county is submitted to them.

The year began with a single un-sexed bird in the Ladybrook Valley, Cheadle Hulme area on Jan 24th. This former breeding site went on to record a male on Mar 2nd and then a pair on Mar 18th with the female seen and male heard calling. The final sightings for this site was one heard drumming on Apr 3rd. Dunham Massey Park recorded singles heard on Feb 17th and 19th and finally one seen on the 25th in suitable breeding habitat. The traditional site of Poise Brook, Offerton could only muster 2 records of drumming birds this year with one Mar 17th-19th and the same or another May 1st. Chadkirk Country Estate recorded a single bird on Apr 12th. The Ley Hey Park area of Marple continued its intriguing run of sightings after last year's encouraging signs of breeding, with a male seen drumming on the same dead willow snag on May 1st as was used in 2009. One at Etherow CP on Jul 11th was in suitable breeding habitat. In September, one was along the Eagley Brook at Birtenshaw on the 9th, whilst in October one was recorded at Worthington Lakes on the 25th. The final record of the year involved one reported in the SJ99C tetrad at Dane Bank on Dec 31st.

## **MAGPIE** *Pica pica*

Abundant resident.

Counts in the early part of the year were down with few reports of over 40 birds. These were: a roost of 51 at Horrocks Flash on Jan 19th; atlas records of 45 in the Pilsworth North tetrad on Jan 28th and 42 in the Heaton Park tetrad on Feb 6th; Haigh Country Park had 55 on Feb 5th.

Records came from 94% of our BBS squares (95% last year and 98% in 2008). Numbers counted were also down. 2009 saw counts of more than 20 from 7 surveyed squares; this year there were only four; Levenshulme, Kenworthy Fields, Sharples and Bradley Fold. Breeding records were numerous and widespread as expected. A Chadderton pair had commenced building their 2011 nest on Nov 26th this year. The success of this species is due to its resourcefulness and ability to exploit a wide range of feeding opportunities. Birds were reported killing a Song Thrush nestling, ripping up cowpats, feasting on a sheep carcase and standing on the back of a horse, pecking insects from around its mane, back and hindquarters.

On Sep 6th there were 52 birds together on a grass verge in Moss Side. The Platt Fields Park roost was up with 224 on Nov 20th, compared to 189 in the same week last year (though there were 400 in 2008). 45 were recorded in a timed atlas visit to the Lower Kersal tetrad on Nov 22nd. Biggest December roosts were: the former Swinton ETW (116), Egerton (220) and the Bickershaw Rucks (45).

## **JAY** *Garrulus glandarius*

Common resident.

New Year's Day saw 8 birds near the Rindle feeding station and on the following day 10 were noted at Barlow Tip, Chorlton. On Feb 17th it was the turn of Adswood Tip, Cheadle, where a single small tree hosted 10 Jays. 9 were at Mirrlees Playing Fields, Woodsmoor on Apr 2nd. At Bryn Marsh on Apr 7th a bird was rescued after being caught in fishing line at the canal edge.

BBS occurrence was 45% (exactly the same as 2009), with more than 2 birds recorded on the following squares: Park Bridge, Kenworthy Fields, Norden, Top Lock and Higher Folds.

Nationally, this corvid is now at its highest level since the start of BBS recording in 1994. Atlas surveys and casual records produced evidence of confirmed breeding from over 30 sites around the county. A remarkable proportion of these came from designated Country Parks, showing that municipal tree planting has paid dividends for this species.

From early September, when acorn gathering was first noted, to the end of October, counts of over 6 were reported from Blackleach Reservoir, Walkden (7), Bedford Moss (7), Georges Lane, Horwich (7), Pennington Flash (11), Hollingworth Lake (7) and Heaton Park (10). In November, when atlas surveys restarted, 9 were at Olive Mount Farm (Chat Moss), and 8 in the Heaton Mersey tetrad. December's best count came from Sinderland Green when 10 were present on New Year's Eve.

### **JACKDAW** *Corvus monedula* Common resident.

The largest flocks recorded in January and February were concentrated in the South East of the county. Around 1200 were noted at Etherow Country Park flying down the valley at dusk on New Year's Day. Two weeks later a different observer in Hazel Grove counted 1212 birds flying to evening roost. On Feb 1st the latter observer noted an elongated flock of 2300 flying NE over Hazel Grove. A roost at Chadkirk Country Park held 300 birds on Feb 24th. Elsewhere, 300 were in a Carrington Moss field on Feb 11th.

61% of our BBS squares recorded this species (67% last year). Of the usual "hot spots" for this species, Mossley, Grasscroft and Holcombe Hill still had over 35 birds on one of the two visits, but were eclipsed by Caldermoor where 73 birds were counted on the late visit. Numbers at Uppermill and Brushes were down this year. Atlas surveys resulted in a large number of breeding records from a wide variety of sites, including house chimneys, trees, quarries and church towers.

Post-breeding roost counts were again dominated by reports from Stockport borough. On October 1st 1370 were flying West over Roman Lakes, Marple, and 1650 were heading down the Goyt Valley on Nov 28th, the observer suggesting that the actual roost site might be over the county border – perhaps in Poynton? In other parts of the county, roosting behaviour was noted at Pennington Flash (350 on Nov 9th), Burrs, near Bury (1000 in 5 flocks heading SW on Dec 11th), Giants Seat (300 on Nov 2nd) and Heaton Park (240 heading NW on Nov 7th). The roost at Audenshaw still holds around 1000 - 2000 birds, with 1500 being counted on Nov 28th. A series of counts came from the Buckley area of Rochdale in December with 500 on 1st, 570 on 3rd, 600 on 9th, 1350 on 17th and 800 on 21st. The movements were a daily occurrence throughout the winter with birds flying E or NE before dawn and west at dusk to an unknown roost.

### **ROOK** *Corvus frugilegus* Fairly common resident; declining due to urbanisation.

Rook distribution showed a slight recovery this year (27% of BBS squares compared to 23% in 2009). It is surely significant that, despite our ongoing atlas surveys, fewer records of Rooks were submitted this year than for any other corvid - including Raven!

Rookery nest counts (with last year's figures where available): Banky Meadow 7; Birch 108 (109); Bridge Hall Lane, Heap Bridge 25 (25); Chamber House, Rochdale 7 (8); Healey Dell 16 (14); Higher Shore 10 (11); Hogswood Covert, Carrington Moss 39 (40); Holcombe 10 (24); Jubilee Park, Ashton-in-Makerfield 19 (17); Larkhill, Delph 24 (8); Millgate crossroads, Delph 15 (15); Rowlands Road, Summerseat 1 (7); St John's, Shuttleworth 43 (45); St. Thomas', Golborne 40 (38); School Covert, Haigh 108 (126); Tyldesley Cemetery 23 (26); White Lion, Delph 11 (9); Wolstenholme Hall, Norden 19 (19).



There were few reports of post-breeding flocks of any significance: 45 at Banky Meadow on Aug 5th; 167 at Highfield Moss on Oct 1st; 40 at Factory Hill, Horwich on Nov 12th and 57 at Offerton Green on Dec 8th. This lack of large flocks is puzzling, given that nesting numbers do not show any significant decline and counting for atlas purposes has been consistent for the last few years.

### **CARRION CROW** *Corvus corone*

Abundant resident.

Reports of flocks in excess of 100 birds came from Heaton Park (120 on Jan 2nd) and Pilsworth Tip (160 on Jan 24th and 254 on Jan 28th). Flock sizes dropped in February and it wasn't until Jul 18th, when 130 were at Rumworth Lodge, that post-breeding groups of significance were noted. Counts of 140 at Higher Meadows, Horwich, on Sep 23rd and 189 (Oct 13th) and 100 (Nov 2nd) on Smithills Moor were considered to be migrating birds. An estimated 120 at Carrington Moss on Nov 14th was the best for this part of the county all year. 120 were flying over Boggart Hole Clough on Dec 29th.

Crows occupied 96% of the county's BBS squares this year but counts during this survey were generally down on 2009. The Trub area had 50 birds on the first visit and 20 on the second, with Astley Moss East (9/38), Watergrove Resr (24/29), Caldermoor (19/33) and Top Lock (32/8) being the other favoured spots.

An albino or leucistic Crow was noted at the end of March near Hopwood Woods where, in October there was a report of a leucistic bird with "pure white wings, tail, rump and belly with mottled grey back, sooty grey head and breast". From Standish Hall Farm came a record of a "chocolate coloured bird around for 10 years now". Another leucistic bird was at Red Moss, Horwich, and a brood at Chorlton Water Park included a partially leucistic youngster.

### **RAVEN** *Corvus corax*

Scarce breeder, but increasing.



A site within the Horwich Moors recording area did better than last year, fledging 4 young (just 2 last year). The young were ringed as usual and the whole family remained in the area until the end of June. Another site, in the North of the county, also fledged young but the nest may, or may not, have been just over the border in Lancashire. At the Flixton site, nesting was noted in early April. No outcome was reported but 3 juveniles at Cadishead Moss in June could have been offspring of this pair. The traditional Dove Stone site was successful yet again with fledged young reported in mid-May.

Following last year's failed attempt at the DW Stadium, Wigan a pair nested successfully in Wigan Town Centre, fledging 3 young. The secret of their success may have been revealed when a Raven was noted at the football stadium on Mar 9th - it picked up a piece of pie and flew off towards the town centre! At the Kearsley site, where Ravens started nest-building in 2009, further checks were not possible in 2010 due to access restrictions.

Whilst the Wigan birds may have raised their young on scraps of pie, elsewhere in the county Ravens stuck to a more traditional diet. Feeding on sheep's carcasses was recorded from Elton Reservoir in February, on Ludworth Moor in August, at Castleshaw Reservoirs in September, at Haigh Plantations in October and at Woodford in November.

A group of 12 birds, plus one other, were noted moving westwards over Georges Lane, Horwich, on Aug 7th. Also in August, 7 flew over the Piethorne Valley on the 10th and 9 over Ludworth Moor on the 15th. In October, 7 flew over Wilderswood, Horwich, on the 7th and in November 10 were over Smithills Moor on the 7th.

## **GOLDCREST** *Regulus regulus*

Increasing breeder, fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor.

It was to be expected that the harsh winter of 2009-10 would have a major impact on the numbers of Goldcrest wintering in the county. An indication of how great this was can be gauged by comparing the 42 tetrads recording the species in January and Feb 2009 (Atlas and BirdTrack records) with a mere 7 tetrads in the same months in 2010. Maximum counts were 3 at Drinkwater Park Jan 23rd and 4 in Jubilee (SD91K) tetrad Jan 29th. Otherwise records which also came from 17 sites (43 in Jan-Feb 2009) were of 1 or 2 birds up to the end of February.

Song was first heard at Queen's Park, Heywood Mar 5th and singles were singing at four other sites and in four tetrads during the remainder of the month. BBS results did not show as dramatic a fall as might have been expected, down from 11 squares (16%) in 2009 to 9 (13%) in 2010, although it has never been well recorded by this survey in Greater Manchester with the highest occurrence being 18% in 2005. BBS Top Lock (SD6007) reported the maximum 6/2, otherwise 1-2 were found on the other squares. Despite the absence of Goldcrest from much of the county in the early winter, it was widespread during the breeding season and very successful. Confirmed breeding was reported from 12 sites and 5 additional tetrads, with the first precisely dated sighting, of an adult carrying food Ashton-in-Makerfield (SJ59U) tetrad May 30th, a nest with young located Newall Green (SJ88D) tetrad Jun 15th and a green Lacewing providing food at Hindley Green Jul 3rd. All other confirmed records were of family parties, the largest reported being 6 young at Lesley Road Tip, Urmston Jun 27th and the latest at Bruntwood Park Aug 24th when 2 young were being fed. Probable breeding was established at 13 sites and in 11 additional atlas tetrads. 23 at Yeoman Hey Reservoir Aug 1st gave an indication of breeding success in the area.

This success and migrants boosted the numbers present during the autumn but Georges Lane, Horwich Moors was the only site to record double-figures with September counts as follows: - 16 on 8th, 25 on 25th, 11 on 28th and 15 on 29th.

Birds were far more numerous in November and December compared to the early winter period; records were submitted from 47 sites and 31 additional atlas tetrads. Despite plunging temperatures in early December (minus 10°C, 7am on the 3rd, at Wardle, Rochdale), Goldcrests remained in upland areas. One was heard calling at Watergrove Reservoir on the 3rd and 2 were present there on 11th. The highest counts were also in December, of 4 at Swinton ETW (former) 23rd and Ashton on Mersey 28th.

## **BLUE TIT** *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Abundant resident.

*Early winter counts:* Significant counts (i.e. between 25 and 35 birds) during Winter Atlas surveys were recorded in seven tetrads while Hopwood Woods and Dunham Massey regularly recorded twenty birds throughout the period. At Pennington Flash on Mar 1st a total of 63 individuals were noted throughout the site.

*Breeding:* In the BBS this species was observed in 94% of squares (compared to 92% in 2009). The national figure was 87.5%. Amongst the widespread number of breeding reports the earliest was on Apr 25th in the Pilsworth North tetrad. There were a number of unusual nest sites reported. At Clayton Vale a "tiny hole" in a metallic post that supported a small wind turbine at the side of the railway line was utilised, while at Elton Reservoir a bullet hole in Benny's Wall provided a welcome site! At Higher Boarshaw local houses provided varied accommodation, one being in a cavity in an overflow pipe, with another nest at a hole in a house wall. Even more unusual was the use of an alarm box at a dwelling in Piethorne Valley, a site used also in 2007. A railway bridge was the location for another pair in Springside in Bury while three pairs used a stone retaining wall on a section of the disused canal at Agecroft.

*Post breeding/late winter:* No less than ten tetrads in the second period of Winter Atlas recording produced counts of twenty or more. These were at Ramsbottom (40); Pennington Flash (20); West Leigh (33); Heywood (23); Timperley (21); Woodford (31); Worthington (30); Nangreaves (22); Pemberton (21) and Romiley (20). Twenty were at Great Woollen Moss on Nov 25th.

## **GREAT TIT** *Parus major*

Abundant resident.

*Early winter counts:* There were four tetrads with significant counts of between 22 and 29 during atlas work but the highest number recorded was of 36 on Mar 1st at Astley Road, Chat Moss.

*Breeding:* In the BBS this species was observed in 91% of squares (compared with 90% in 2009). The national figure was 84%. A total of 165 confirmed breeding records were submitted, the earliest being from Chadderton on Apr 28th and the latest being on Aug 13th from Pennington Flash. As with the previous species some odd nest sites were reported, with perhaps the accolade for the most unusual going to a pair which nested successfully in a hole in the cross bar of rugby posts at Rakewood. Three pairs used nest boxes at Clifton Marina, while another pair utilised a nest box where the hole had previously been widened by a Great Spotted Woodpecker with no adverse effect. Other sites included a hole right at the top of a tall dead tree by the canal at Withins and a hole in a wall at Royal George Lodge. High counts during the breeding season were received from New Springs, Hale Barns, Jumbles Country Park and Whitefield, all during atlas surveys.

*Post breeding/late winter:* Four tetrads produced numbers of over 20 birds in atlas counts during this period - Ramsbottom with counts of 28 and 22 on two dates; Pennington Flash with 20 birds and Woodford with 28 recorded.

## **COAL TIT** *Periparus ater*

Common resident and winter visitor.

*Early winter counts:* Only two tetrads produced six birds during this period of atlas counts. The highest number recorded was of up to 20 daily at Heaton Park, followed by 7 on Apr 6th at Etherow CP.

*Breeding:* This active species occurred in 37% of BBS squares the same as in 2009. The national figure was 34.7 %. Atlas surveyors confirmed breeding in 65 tetrads, when they also reported high counts of: - 13 at Hale Barns on Jun 11th; 7 each at New Springs Jun 20th and at Well Green Jun 16th; and 6 each at Bromley Cross Apr 24th and at Jumbles May 9th. Amongst the many breeding reports one nest was active in a hole in the wall of Milnrow C of E School May 9th; another pair were feeding young in St Chads Church, Rochdale as observers watched the nearby Peregrines at the Town Hall; a pair nested in Blackley Cemetery ; and another pair nested in a front garden in Chadderton. Three broods were noted in Piethorne Valley and along the Whelley Loop Line in Wigan.

*Post breeding/late winter:* Evidence of a successful breeding season came in the form of some large flocks which contained a high proportion of juveniles. For instance, among a count of 72 birds in plantations at Yeoman Hey Reservoir on Jul 23rd, "many juveniles" were recorded. Twelve juveniles were seen together at Holcombe Moor on Jul 24th, with 50 birds being noted at Walker Fold Woods on Jul 25th, again containing many juveniles. Twenty were at Dove Stones RSPB on Jul 28th with 25 at Burnt Edge Aug 23rd and 20 at Georges Lane, Horwich Sep 9th. As birds dispersed winter atlas surveys recorded lower numbers with 10 at Pennington Flash on Nov 11th and 12 at Jubilee on Nov 20th being the highest counts.

## **WILLOW TIT** *Poecile montanus*

Uncommon resident, mostly in the south and west of the county.  
BoCC Red List (BDp1, BDp2), UK BAP, GM BAP and RBBP species.

A total of 358 records of this species of conservation concern were submitted. All but thirteen related to areas in the south or west of the county. The exceptions were at Elton Reservoir on various dates throughout the year, mainly of single birds but with 2 on Nov 1st and 13th and Dec 25th, along with a record of a single bird at Castleton on Mar 9th. This species was added to the RBBP list during 2010 due to considerable range contraction and we request all records for this species be submitted. It is of particular importance that breeding codes are included during the breeding season.

*Early winter counts:* Again the bulk of records came from the south and west of the county. The maximum count at Amberswood in Jan was 5 and at Pennington Flash was 6. Four were at Red Moss, Horwich Jan 22nd. Up to 8 were at Hawkley feeding station Wigan Flashes in Feb and 4 were at Low Hall on Feb 6th. This species was recorded within eight tetrads during this period's winter atlas surveys. On Mar 1st, 8 were around the feeding station at Pennington Flash, with 5 at Abram Flashes on Apr 3rd and 4 at Worsley Mesnes on the 15th.

*Breeding:* The species was reported from 5% of BBS squares (compared with 4% in 2009, continuing a gradual increase). The national figure was only 1.4% (46 squares) which means that in the near future BBS may no longer be able to monitor this species, as the minimum number of squares required nationally is 40. Confirmed breeding was reported from sixteen tetrads in the breeding atlas surveys. They all related to parties of fledged young and were at the following locations:- Astley Colliery Fields; Hawkley (Wigan Flashes); Ringley ETW; Worsley Mesnes; Clifton; Carrington Moss; New Springs; Barton Moss; Eccles; Red Moss Horwich; Lightshaw WTW; Bryn; Pennington Flash (3 families); Horrocks Flash; Chat Moss and at Scowcrofts; Bickershaw.

*Post breeding/late winter:* Significant numbers were reported from Bradley feeding station during August with 4 on the 21st and 3 at Horrocks Flash Aug 28th, one of which was feeding on Honeysuckle berries. Later 11 were at Wigan Flashes on Oct 10th and there were maxima of 5 at Bickershaw and 6 at Three Sisters both in November. A total of 19 tetrads had records during winter atlas counts. The freezing weather at the end of the year brought birds to tables in gardens at Aspull and Gathurst.

## **SKYLARK** *Alauda arvensis*

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.  
BoCC Red List (BDp2, SPEC, BDMp1) and UK BAP species.

The largest flock of the early winter period came from Nook Lane, Astley Moss when 400 were discovered feeding in a small roadside stubble field. There were other respectable flocks too and their location and numbers were as follows: - 200 at Carrington Moss on Jan 3rd; 30 over Pennington Flash on Jan 5th; 60 at Little Woolden Moss on Jan 18th; 20 at Highfield Moss on Feb 3rd was a particularly good site count which was then bettered with 50 there on Feb 18th; 60 at Kingsway Business Park on Feb 28th flew in from the east and dropped noisily onto the mudflats there, 40 of which remained until Mar 2nd and a further 60 were seen again here on Mar 18th.

The first Skylark in song was heard over Ludworth Moor on Feb 7th, followed by singing birds at only 3 other sites during the month. March saw an increase in songsters however, with a further 17 locations noting it. On the BBS, national results reached their lowest levels since the start of the survey, yet 32 squares (48%) recorded the species in the county, a small but potentially significant increase on 2009. An average of 5.09 birds per square was achieved this year, an increase from the 3.55 last year, with the most productive squares managing a double figure count on at least one visit being Holcombe Moor (24/28), Rooley Moor (12/19), Astley Moss East (15/15), Blackstone Edge Moor (11/12) and Holcombe Rifle Range (8/12). Atlas work discovered confirmed breeding in 19 tetrads during 2010, an increase of 58% on the results from 2009 and a further 2 'non-atlas' sites also confirmed breeding. As usual there were many other instances of probable breeding such as the historically productive sites within the collective Chat Moss area which failed to register any confirmed breeding despite recording many birds singing or on territories. Surely breeding went unnoticed amongst these difficult to survey fields, as is likely to have been the case at many other county sites too?

Autumn passage began in mid-September and much of it was observed as visible migration with birds moving mainly west or north-west across the county. Thereafter, notable winter flocks remained largely on stubble fields with the majority involving traditional sites on the lowland mosslands. There were many records received of small flocks but those consisting of 30 or more were as follows: - *September*: 36 at Cutacre Open Cast Coal Site on the 9th; 57 over the Horwich Moors on the 21st and 80 on the 25th. *October*: 40 at Carrington Moss on the 2nd; 63 over the Horwich Moors on the 4th and 95 over on the 24th; 140 at Little Woolden Moss on the 7th was the highest recorded total for this flock during the month at this site; 48 at Longshaw, Billinge on the 19th; 50 at Hart Common on the 20th; 30 at Bryn Gates on the 26th; 58 at Barton Moss on the 27th. *November*: 180 at Little Woolden Moss on the 6th was the highest recorded total for this flock during the month at this site; 31 at Carrington Moss on the 14th; 68 at Astley Road, Chat Moss on the 18th; 40 at Highfield Moss on the 25th; a maximum monthly flock total of 80 at Gillibrand's Farm, Westhoughton on the 30th. *December*: an exceptional count of 700 were on Little Woolden Moss on the 9th; and a monthly maximum of 65 were at Gillibrand's Farm, Westhoughton on the 31st.

## **SHORE LARK** *Eremophila alpestris*

Vagrant.

BoCC Amber List species (WR).

One was found on the Cutacre Open Cast Coal Site on Jan 30th and remained until Feb 3rd (A. Warford, S. Warford *et al*). This became the 4th county record but the first for 20 years, since the only other multi-observer county record, at Adswold Feb 1st to Mar 2nd 1990.

## **SAND MARTIN** *Riparia riparia*

Fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant.

BoCC Amber List species (SPEC).

The first returning migrants of the year were 22 at Pennington Flash and 17 at Scotmans Flash both Mar 18th, a whole week later than the first of 2009 but still slightly earlier than their average expected arrival date in the county. The next sightings were not until Mar 20th though, when 8 were at Audenshaw Reservoirs, 3 at Elton Reservoirs and 17 at Pennington Flash. Birds continued to arrive in dribs and drabs thereafter, until the first major arrival which occurred on the 26th with 50 at Pennington Flash and 100 at Scotmans Flash. Further significant flocks for the remainder of March were 300 and 200 at Scotmans Flash on the 29th and 31st respectively and 150 at Pennington Flash on the 30th. April saw arrivals en masse throughout the county with the highest numbers at Scotmans Flash with 800 on the 6th and Pennington Flash with 1400 on the 20th and 1000 on the 29th. By early May birds were already back at breeding locations and only two flocks of particular size were noted; 400 at Elton Reservoir on the 1st and 1000 at Pennington Flash on the 3rd.

Breeding was reported from 23 locations in the county this year but one site alone possessed more breeding pairs than the rest of the county put together! Recording 314 nest holes in 2009, this single site held 562 nest holes by Jul 8th 2010, all new for this year due to the old nesting bank collapsing during the winter. On Jul 19th however, a second colony at the same site was discovered, with the combined total for nest holes at this one site now 1320, most of which had young peering out of the entrance holes by this date. Other breeding locations, with the number of breeding pairs in brackets where known, were: - Bury (2 sites), on the River Roch (11) and on the River Irwell (6); Dukinfield, on the River Tame (8-10); Dimplington (5); East Lancs Paper Mill Lodges (3); Elton, on River Irwell at Hinds Weir (8-10); Higher Broughton, on the River Irwell at Cromwell Bridge (9); Hollins Vale (1); Hopwood Golf Course, where a breeding 'face' was purpose built for this species (30); Longden End (150); Morley's Sand Quarry (4); Prestolee Aqueduct, on the River Irwell (7-8); Radcliffe town centre, on the River Irwell (20, with 5 still in use on Aug 8th); Rakewood (6); Reddish Vale; Ringley, on the River Irwell (4-5); Rochdale, on the Whit Brook (14); Shuttleworth (24); Stockport (central); Wince Brook (7); Windy Bank Wood, on the River Glaze. On the BBS there were records from 4 squares (6%) which remains a very small increase on that achieved in 2009.

Return passage built up during August with large number gathering on many waters prior to departure. 1000 had congregated at Pennington Flash on the 20th, a number which grew to its maximum of 1800 by the 24th and Heaton Park Reservoir recorded the only other large number with 400 on the 9th. Typically, numbers reduced dramatically during September, with 200 at Barlow's Farm on the 16th the only three figure flock recorded. Other numbers noted during the month were; 34 flying SSE over Heaton Park Reservoir on the 7th; 40 at Pennington Flash on the 11th; 1 over Smithills Moor on the 12th; 2 at Rumworth Lodge on the 15th; 4 at Audenshaw Reservoirs on the 18th; 50 at Low Hall Park on the 19th; 1 south through Heaton Park Reservoir on the 21st; and the final record of the year of 7 through Heaton Park Reservoir on the 24th.

## **SWALLOW** *Hirundo rustica*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant.

BoCC Amber List species (SPEC).

The first returning bird of the year found its way to Scotmans Flash on Mar 22nd and by the end of the month a further 15 locations had also recorded their first of the year, with Pennington Flash logging the highest daily total during the month when 12 were present on the 30th. Records swelled into April as expected with many birds heading directly to their annual breeding locations. The only prominent arrival of large numbers occurred on the 19th of the



month, when 200 were at both Audenshaw Reservoirs and Pennington Flash. May high counts came from only Pennington Flash with 200 on the 3rd and Rumworth Lodge with 100 on the 10th. A local breeding bird at Smithy Lane, Ludworth was seen chasing a Little Owl in broad daylight on May 13th.

A total of 92 locations, including many atlas squares, reported confirmed breeding this year. Ten pairs bred at Broadbent Fold Farm, Dukinfield, all of which had second broods. On the BBS 50 squares noted this species, which at 75% was a very similar to the 73% of 2009 but still fell short of the 82% in 2008.

From mid-August through to late September the usual flocks consisting of many juveniles gathered prior to their departure south to a warmer clime and there was also excellent visible migration across the county too. No count of Swallows for 21 years in the county has been anything like as impressive as the 5000 which roosted in a tall maize crop at Bowlee on Aug 31st, a figure last matched at Scotmans Flash at the end of August 1989. All other three figure counts were as follows: - *August*: 150 at Scotmans Flash on the 12th; 100 at Bradley feeding station and nearby wetlands and 100 at Holdens Clough, Horwich Moors, both on the 21st; 100 at Scotmans Flash on the 24th; 100 on Cadishead Moss, 300 heading south over the Horwich Moors and 300 estimated at Woodford Aerodrome, all on the 26th; 153 over Heaton Park Reservoir and 118 at Smithy Lane, Ludworth, both on the 29th; 300 at Georges Lane, Horwich Moors and 100 at Rumworth Lodge, both on the 31st. *September*: 340 south over the Horwich Moors on the 1st; 110 at Birch and 100 at Tyldesley, both on the 2nd; 169 south over the Horwich Moors on the 3rd; 150 at Woodstock Farm on the 4th; 130 at Rumworth Lodge on the 6th; 329 headed south over Heaton Park Reservoir on the 7th and 300 roosted in a cornfield by the reservoir the same evening; 100 at Cadishead Moss and 200 at Hollingworth Lake, both on the 9th; 100 at Pennington Flash on the 11th; 100 at Cutacre Open Cast Coal Site on the 12th; 310 south over the Horwich Moors on the 17th, followed by 100 south on the 18th, 403 south on the 21st and 162 south on the 22nd; 400 at Heaton Park Reservoir on the 28th. *October*: there were only two large counts during the month, both at Heaton Park Reservoir, with 155 on the 2nd and 44 on the 11th. Other counts during the first half of the month came from 9 locations but from mid-month onwards there were only three records with 9 south over Pennington Flash on the 15th, another 3 south there on the 19th and the final record of the year which involved a lone individual heading west over Ramsbottom on the 21st.

## **HOUSE MARTIN** *Delichon urbicum*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant; declining?  
BoCC Amber List species (SPEC, BDMp1, BDMp2).

The first of the year were 2 at Altrincham ETW on Mar 27th but the next record was not until April, when a single bird was at Scotmans Flash on the 1st. The 2nd saw records from four locations and from then on birds arrived to all points of the county, with several heading straight to their annual breeding locations as usual. Peak counts for the spring involved 130 at Pennington Flash on Apr 29th, 80 at Altrincham ETW on May 2nd and then 500 at Pennington Flash on May 3rd.

This species has experienced a rather serious breeding decline in the county in more recent years and this fall has also been mirrored nationally. In 2010, the BBS across England revealed the lowest levels of House Martin since the start of the survey and the 20 BBS squares (30%) recording the species in Greater Manchester during the year was a further decline from the 23 squares (35%) in 2009. Considering that in 2008, 56% of Greater Manchester BBS squares recorded the species, their decreasing breeding status appears patently obvious and for the second year running none nested at a usual location in Heald Green. That said a total of 74 locations reported confirmed breeding in the county, an improvement on last year which may

well have been influenced by increased atlas work judging by the many atlas tetrads included in that figure. The first successful breeding was a pair at Ashton-on-Mersey, as early as May 17th and the latest was a pair at Prestwich which had two young just ready to fledge on Sep 30th. Areas with more successful breeding colonies were as follows, with the number of nests in brackets: - Birch, Langley Lane (12); Leigh, Nel Pan Lane and Pennington Road (51); Northenden, Palatine Road (22); Radcliffe, Ainsworth Road area (13); Sale (15); Stretford (12); Elton, Bury (11). On Mellington Road, Didsbury a pair successfully utilised an artificial nest.

Return passage brought some excellent three figure counts as follows: - *August*: the 14th served up two very large flocks with 1600 at Pennington Flash easily the highest count of the year and indeed the largest for the past five years, whilst 800 at Scotmans Flash meant there were 2400 at two sites in the county alone on this one date!; 110 were over Tyldesley RUFC on the 25th; 236 were at Heaton Park Reservoir on the 29th. *September*: 713 flew SE over Heaton Park Reservoir on the 7th; 100 flew S through Pennington Flash on the 11th; 181 flew N (!) in 40 minutes over the Horwich Moors on the 17th; 133 at Heaton Park Reservoir on the 21st and a further 300 also there on the 28th. *October*: saw only 5 records in the county with 30 S through Heaton Park Reservoir on the 30th, 4 E through Ashton-on-Mersey on the 5th, 26 at Heaton Park Reservoir on the 7th, 4 at Hope Carr NR on the 9th and the final record of the year which saw 3 over Chorlton Water Park on the 13th.

## **RED-RUMPED SWALLOW** *Cecropis daurica*

Very rare visitor.

One was found at Audenshaw Reservoirs on the morning of Apr 20th (Rob Adderley *et al*). This became the 4th county record and the 2nd record for this site following the last county record which occurred here on May 4th 2008.

## **LONG-TAILED TIT** *Aegithalos caudatus*

Common resident.

*Early winter counts*: There was a site count of 64 birds at Pennington Flash on Jan 20th, but by Mar 1st numbers there had dwindled to 20. The winter atlas surveys during this period produced 4 tetrads with numbers of 20 or over amongst the 67 tetrads recording this species.

*Breeding*: The continued rise in the population of this species was evident during BBS with 57% of squares recording them, a huge rise from 42% in 2009. The national figure was 49%. The first evidence of breeding was nest building at Elton Reservoir on Mar 11th, with three nests being constructed at Hopwood Golf Club on Mar 21st and a nest at Red Brow Wood, Compstall the same day. By Apr 27th seven nests had been located at Pennington Flash. Confirmed breeding was reported from 133 tetrads in the Breeding Atlas surveys, the first being at Burrs near Bury on Apr 19th. During the survey 4 pairs were noted at Moses Gate CP and 5 nests at Sinderland Brook. At one nest at Pearsons Flash no less than 10 young were being fed on May 1st, while at Milnrow 2 nests were found in brambles along the River Beal on May 9th.

*Post breeding/late winter*: Significant post-breeding flocks were found at Black Wood, Irlam (25 Aug 2nd); Ringley ETW (30 Aug 3rd); and Birch (25 Sep 2nd). By Oct the number of larger flocks increased with 30 at Reddish Vale 3rd; 31 Georges Lane, Horwich 6th; 30 Lower Bredbury 7th; 36 Carrington Moss 18th; 25 Pennington Flash 22nd; 45 Heaton Park Reservoir 23rd; 29 Irlam Moss 26th; and 40 in a garden in Kearsley 31st. The winter atlas returns also revealed some large counts within the total of 125 tetrads recording this species. These included Kearsley (40); Didsbury; Worthington and Eccles (all 30); Whitefield (36); Heaton Mersey (29); Timperley and Cadishead Moss (both 21); Romiley (23); Etherow CP and Westleigh (both 24) and Glazebury East (28).

## **WOOD WARBLER** *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant  
BoCC Red List (BDP1, SPEC) and UK BAP species.

The rapid decline of this species continues with possibly the worst year ever. For the second year running no records were received from the traditional site at Etherow Country Park. Two singing at opposite ends of the county, on the late arrival date of 30th Apr, were the first to be reported, at Apethorn Lane, Gee Cross and Redisher Woods, Holcombe. The male continued to sing at the latter site through May, on 1st, 3rd, 4th and 16th but there was no indication that it attracted a mate. Elsewhere, in the Ramsbottom area one was singing May 1st at Top Wood, Lower Dickfield. A pair in the Horrocks Hill (SD61W) tetrad May 22nd suggests that breeding may have occurred but no subsequent records were received from the area.

## **CHIFFCHAFF** *Phylloscopus collybita*

Fairly common summer visitor, uncommon overwinterer.

Very scarce in the early winter period, almost certainly as a result of the harsh conditions, with records from just two sites in January, singles at Pennington Flash 1st and in the Sale tetrad (SJ79V) 2nd.

There were no further reports until the first spring migrant singing at Pennington Flash 18th March, one week later than in 2009. During March single date records came from 48 sites, indicating that the majority of these were migrants, with birds on 2 to 4 dates at a further eight sites and 5 dates at Pennington Flash. Most observations (65%) were of single birds with the peak passage taking place during the final week of March: Highest counts were 5 along the River Mersey from East Didsbury to Heaton Mersey Nature Park 24th; 5 in the Rindle area and at Pearson's/Scotman's Flashes 25th; 6 Dunham Massey and 12 (the highest spring count) around the Wigan Flashes 27th; 8 Daisy Nook Country Park 28th.

*Breeding:* BBS occurrence rebounded from 36% (2009) to 48% (32 squares), illustrating the danger of drawing conclusions from year on year fluctuations. However, numbers were significantly down with 13 squares recording only single birds on one or both visits. The maximum counts were Clifton (SD7903) 8/5; Uppermill (SD9906) 4/3; Romiley NE (SJ9591) 3/4; Bradley Fold (SD7508) 4/2; WBBS Douglas Valley 12/4; WBBS Hey Brook 6/2. There was little difference between the early and late visit totals, 55 and 50 birds respectively, indicating that those recorded on the early surveys had stayed to breed. The average number per BBS square (excluding WBBS) was 1.75. Double figure counts during the breeding season were 14 singing Abram Flashes SSSI 3rd Apr; 11 Hazel Grove Golf Club 8th Apr and 14 on 9th Jun; 10 Banky Meadow 24th Apr; 12 singing between Kickety Brook, Stretford and Banky Meadow 10th May. Confirmed breeding was reported from 9 sites and 25 tetrads (with some overlap between the two) compared to just 7 BBGM tetrads.

Autumn passage highlights were as follows: at Pennington Flash - 18 in a single flock with 12 Willow Warblers, 7 Blackcaps, 1 Reed Warbler and 1 Whitethroat, 17th Aug with 18 on 13th Sep and 15 on 10th (12 of which were in a single tree). Elsewhere in September, a total of 21 at George's Lane, Holden's Farm and Smithills Moor on the 1st; and in the same area, 21 again on the 8th, with 15 on the 9th.

More numerous in the late winter period than at the start of the year, with records of singles from 6 sites and 2 additional tetrads.

## **WILLOW WARBLER** *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Abundant summer visitor.

BoCC Amber List species (BDMp1, BDMp2).

The first of the year arrived at Pennington Flash 26th Mar, 9 days later than in 2009, followed by a small influx of single birds 27th March at Lightshaw WTW, Scotman's Flash and Worsley Filtration Lagoons. Additional March records of singles came from Daisy Nook Country Park 28th and Raspberry Lane, Irlam Moss 29th. Migration peaked during the second half of April with the highest counts (all singing) of 25 Pennington Flash 17th; 25 Watergrove Reservoir 24th; 23 Barlow's Farm, Bickershaw 24th; 18 Ringley ETW 25th; 15 Horwich Moors 24th.

*Breeding:* There was a decline on BBS squares from 67% (2009) to 61% with the maximum counts in Brushes (SJ9899) 14/8; Hartshead Green (SD9501) 11/7; Astley Moss East (SJ7198) 11/0. An average of 4.54 birds per occupied square were recorded during the early visits, dropping to 3.59 during the late visits, perhaps due to some migrants moving through, or a decline in song by late June. WBBS Hey Brook had 21/21, compared to 31/14 in 2009 and WBBS Rochdale Canal 9/6 (7/8 2009). BTO Atlas surveys identified a number of areas with good numbers of Willow Warblers: 24 Highfield Moss (SJ69C – only part of the tetrad falls within GM) May 20th; 20 Hawkshaw (SD71S) May 1st; 19 Luzley (SD90Q) Apr 30th with; 18 Highfield (SD70C) May 21st; and 15 Roe Cross (SJ99Y) Apr 29th. Breeding was confirmed at 18 sites and in 33 tetrads with some overlap between the two, ranging from urban areas such as Crumpsall, to Castle Clough, Blackstone Edge at an altitude of 275M above sea level. Adults were recorded carrying food for unfledged young between May 30th at Watergrove Reservoir and Blackstone Edge Jul 25th. Fledged young being fed by adults were seen from Jun 2nd at Bowlee Community Park through to Aug 17th at Strinesdale Resrs.

An idea of the numbers moving through the county (the majority probably having bred or fledged elsewhere) can be gleaned from the following counts in the Horwich Moors area, including Georges Lane, Brownstones Quarry and Smithills Moor: In July, 49 on 24th, 39 on 30th and 49 on 31st. Numbers peaked in August with 51 on 5th, 39 on 14th, 26 on 15th and 31 on 25th. Numbers here declined rapidly through September with 21 on 1st and thereafter a maximum of 4 at Holden's Farm on 8th. The latest of the year was in a Rochdale garden on Sep 26th.

## **BLACKCAP** *Sylvia atricapilla*

Common summer visitor and uncommon but increasing overwinterer.

*Early winter period:* Significantly fewer records were received during this period than in 2009. Single females were reported from gardens in Ashton-on-Mersey Jan 27th to Mar 28th; Hale (single visits Jan and Feb); Hindley Green (8 dates in Jan and 3 in Feb from 2 gardens within a stones throw of each other, with possibly a different bird seen on 3 dates in Apr); Leigh Jan 31st and Worsley Jan 6th. The only male was observed in a Cheadle Hulme garden on 4 dates in February.

The first probable spring migrants were singles in March at Audenshaw Reservoirs 19th and Lesley Road Tip, Urmston 27th. There was clearly an influx during the first week of April, with the first singing male at Pennington Flash 2nd, increasing to 6 on 5th with sightings at a further 5 sites and in 5 additional tetrads. Based on the number of sites from which the species was reported, passage peaked during the second half of April, with the highest counts being 10 Pennington Flash 17th; 15 in the Newtown tetrad (SD50S) 21st; 12 singing Etherow CP 22nd and 18 singing Ringley ETW 25th.

*Breeding:* Measured by the number of territories, 2010 was a very successful year for Blackcap with BBS occupancy jumping from 53% in 2009 to 66% (44 squares), the second highest percentage ever recorded in the county since the survey began in 1994. Double figure counts

came from Amberswood (SD6004) 14/8; Clifton (SD7903) 12/8; Haigh CP (SD5908) 10/2 and Astley Moss East (SJ7198) 10/1. Timed Tetrad Visits for the BTO and GM Atlases also found good numbers with 20 in Highfield tetrad (SD70C) May 21st; 14 in Clifton (SD70W which overlaps the Clifton BBS square) May 2nd; 12 in Luzley (SD90Q) Jun 11th; 10 were in both Elton Reservoir (SD70Z) and Worsley Mesnes (SD50R) tetrads Jun 16th. Ten territories were recorded at Barlow Tip, Chorlton Water Park May 1st.

*Autumn:* Reported from 28 sites August to October (13 in August, 15 in September and 7 in October). The largest numbers in August were 6 Blackleach Reservoir 16th and 7 Pennington Flash 17th in one flock. In September the highest count of the autumn was 13 Elton Reservoir 3rd with 6 Cutacre Open Cast Coal Site 12th. A bird at Ince Moss Landfill Oct 16th and 19th was probably the last departing migrant of the year.

*Late winter period:* Far more numerous than in the early winter probably as a result of the freezing weather forcing birds into gardens from the open countryside. One fed on sunflower hearts in a Prestwich garden during snowy conditions Dec 23rd to 30th. With the exception of 2 in the Bramhall tetrad (SJ88X) Nov 7th and 2 at Ashton-on-Mersey Dec 13th, all records were of singles. Again the majority of sightings were of females (or immatures), 9 compared to just 5 reports of males. Additional sites, to the early winter, were gardens in Ashton-under-Lyne Dec 31st; Bolton Nov 30th; Heald Green Dec 18th; Irlam Locks and Timperley. Other locations were at Cox Green; Ellenbrook; Lowton; Miry Lane Industrial Estate, Wigan; Pennington Flash; Scholes, Wigan; and Seven Acres.

## **GARDEN WARBLER** *Sylvia borin*

Uncommon summer visitor.

Reported from 14 sites in April, the first confirmed sighting of the year was at Pennington Flash Apr 19th, the same earliest date as in 2009, the next at Carrington Moss North 23rd. The remaining records for the month came during the final week, with birds at 5 sites on the 28th. All were singles, apart from 2 at Banky Meadow 24th and at Pennington Flash 29th. A bird in song at Clayton Vale May 2nd appears to be the first reported from this north Manchester site.

Recorded on just 4 BBS squares (6%) compared to 5 (8%) in 2009. However, mapping of the 2010 records shows its presence in 57 additional 1km squares with approximately half of these in Wigan (19) and Bolton (11), and a further 15 squares occupied in the south of the county from Salford to Stockport. In the East and North East of the county the numbers fluctuate markedly from one year to the next, as evidenced by its disappearance in 2010 from the WBBS Rochdale Canal and other sites such as Watergrove Reservoir. Its skulking nature and preference for singing from cover makes it difficult to locate and confirm breeding of this species. However, one observer with the necessary patience and skill was able to prove successful breeding in the Carrington Moss (SJ79K) tetrad Jun 18th when recently fledged juveniles were being fed by adults. At Reddish Vale adults were also seen feeding young Jun 5th. Elsewhere the highest breeding evidence recorded was either birds holding territory or pairs seen in suitable nesting habitat, both classified as probable breeders. Such records came from 16 sites and 2 tetrads. Possible breeding (mainly birds singing on single dates) was reported from 38 sites with song last heard at Marklands Disused Reservoir, Horwich Jul 8th.

Autumn passage was first noted in the Horwich Moors area with 2 at Georges Lane and singles at Newfields and Burnt Edge, all Jul 24th. During August singles were reported from 7 sites with 2 at Blackleach Reservoir 16th. Just two sightings in September of one at Elton Reservoir 3rd and 2 at Cutacre Open Cast Coal Site 12th.

## **LESSER WHITETHROAT** *Sylvia curruca*

Uncommon summer visitor.

The monotonous rattle of this species singing from deep cover is usually first heard during the 3rd week of April and this year was no exception, with the first reported from Crime Lake, Failsworth 18th. Two were singing at Newall Green the following day and a further 2 were seen at Abram Flashes SSSI 21st.

2010 was an excellent year for Lesser Whitethroat (perhaps one of the best ever in the county) with singing reported from 44 widespread sites mainly on single dates, indicating possible breeding. Birds were on territory at a further 18 sites compared to just 8 in 2009. Atlas surveys also found 6 tetrads with probable and 11 with possible breeding, although there is some overlap with the site records. Pennington Flash was the only site with multiple territories and had 3 singing on Apr 25th, May 25th and Jun 2nd. 3 were singing at Abram Flashes SSSI Apr 22nd but there were no further records received from here. Singles were recorded on 5 BBS squares, Carrington (SJ7490); Haigh CP (SD5908); Park Bridge (SD9402); Romiley NE (SJ9591) and Top Lock (SD6007). All on the early visits only, most of which were in late April/early May suggesting that these were migrants that did not stay to breed. Surprisingly, these were all different to the 3 squares occupied in 2009. WBBS Rochdale Canal logged a male on territory singing at the same location on Apr 26th and Jun 5th. Like many of the warblers this species is expanding its range north and east. Breeding was confirmed, for the first time, in the 10km square SD91at Wardle, Rochdale with 2 recently fledged juveniles being fed by an adult Jul 23rd. The day before young were being fed in the Newall Green (SJ88D) tetrad, a traditional area for the species which in 1979-83 (BBGM) bred in a nearby tetrad, 4km to the east. 2 recently fledged juveniles were also seen in the Stretford tetrad (SJ79X) Jun 27th.

*Autumn:* Not surprisingly, given the number of birds in the county during the breeding season, returning migrants were reported from significantly more sites than in 2009, with 12 in total. The maximum seen was 3 at the following locations, all in August: Hope Carr NR 3rd; Astley Tip 5th; Tyldesley 17th; and Elton Reservoir 22nd. In September singles were seen at Hollingworth Lake 3rd and Pennington Flash 16th.

## **WHITETHROAT** *Sylvia communis*

Common summer visitor.

BoCC Amber List species (BDMp2).

The first of the year was at Haigh Country Park April 9th, 2 days earlier than in 2009. Birds were not present on the majority of early BBS visits and only singles were reported from most sites during the second and third weeks of April, except for 2 Kenworthy Woods 18th. It was only during the final week of the month that the main influx occurred with double figure counts at: 11 singing at Banky Meadow 24th; 10 singing at the Abram Flashes SSSI 27th; 15 in the Carrington tetrad (SJ79K) also 27th; and a peak spring count of 17 singing at Chorlton Ees 30th. During the same period Whitethroats had returned to the upland edge with individuals singing Ludworth Moor Apr 25th; Watergrove Reservoir 26th and Montcliffe Quarry, Horwich 27th.

BBS presence dipped from 47% (31 squares) in 2009 to 42% (28 squares), the same percentage as in 2008. Astley Moss East (SJ7198) maintained its pre-eminent position, recording 19/12. The only other plot to reach double figures was Lostock West (SD6608) 7/10, 13 others reporting just one bird on either the early and/or late survey dates. WBBS Hey Brook found 17 Apr 28th and 11 Jun 12th. However, the breeding season appears to have been good with confirmed breeding at 35 sites and in 45 atlas tetrads (some overlap between the two). Apart from a few early records in May, observations of adults carrying food and feeding recently fledged juveniles were overwhelmingly concentrated in June and July. Locations with good numbers of Whitethroats were: Barlow's Farm 27 territories Jun 21st; Clifton (SD70W) tetrad 16



May 2nd; Haigh Country Park 15 singing May 3rd; Barlow Tip, Chorlton 14 territories May 1st; Carrington (SJ79K) tetrad 14 Jun 18th; Highfield (SD70C) tetrad 14 May 21st; and Pilsworth North (SD80J) tetrad 11 May 2nd. 10 Whitethroats were observed at each of the following locations during the period 2nd to 10th May: Barton Triangle area; Hulton Park, Bolton; Pendlebury Lane to Sennicar Lane; and Bedford Moss (SJ69Y) tetrad. Preliminary analysis of the atlas records from 2008-10 shows Whitethroat extending its range north and east across the county with confirmed breeding established in 10 tetrads in SD80 (north Manchester, south Rochdale, east Bury and west Oldham) compared to one at the time of BBGM. There also appears to have been an increase in population density in its strongholds at the time of BBGM, the south and west of the county.

During autumn migration the highest counts came from: Elton Reservoir 8 Aug 27th; Rumworth Lodge 5 Aug 22nd; and Smithills Moor, a minimum of 5 on Aug 25th. Numbers dropped off rapidly in September, reported from 11 sites during the first week, falling to 4 in the second week and 2 in the third. The latest sightings, all singles in September, were at Billinge Higher End 21st; Lily Lane Farm, Stubshaw Cross 26th; and finally Chat Moss 30th.

## **GRASSHOPPER WARBLER** *Locustella naevia*

Uncommon summer visitor.

BoCC Red List (BDP1, BDP2) and UK BAP species.

*Spring migration:* Two reeling at Adswold Tip, Cheadle Apr 7th and one at Ludworth Moor on the same date, were the first of the year; these were 3 days earlier than in 2009 and became the earliest ever arrivals recorded in the county. Singles were recorded from 9 widespread sites during the third week of April: Audenshaw Reservoirs (surprisingly only the second site record) and Dover Marsh 16th; Coal Pit Road and Gilligants Farm, Horwich Moors 17th; Holcombe Moor 18th; Dovestone Reservoir 19th and on 21st from Barlow Tip, Chorlton; Hollingworth Lake and Rumworth Lodge. Migration peaked in the fourth week of April with birds reported from 32 sites (26 additional to the above) and in higher numbers: 7 reeling at Barlow's Farm, Bickershaw and 4 at Amberswood 25th; 4 Altrincham ETW 27th; 7 on the WBBS Hey Brook 28th; 4 Elton Reservoir 29th.

*Breeding:* 2010 was an exceptional year for Grasshopper Warbler in the county, probably the best since 1997 when over 45 pairs were considered to be present. The number of BBS squares recording this species reached an all time record, more than doubling from 4 (6%) in 2009 to 9 (13%). Unlike 2009, when birds were only present on the early visits, 6 plots found Grasshopper Warblers during late surveys between 31st May and 26th June, indicating that breeding may well have occurred. Without doubt, the most difficult of all the warblers to actually confirm breeding, this was achieved by 3 observers: in New Springs (SD60D) tetrad, one seen carrying food, or a faecal sac, Jun 20th; 3 or 4 birds seen together on Clegg Hall Marsh, Smithy Bridge, including 2 recently fledged juveniles with obvious gape lines Jul 17th; and an adult seen feeding a juvenile (a very rare sight) at Newall Green Jul 23rd. However, a far better indication of the numbers actually breeding in the county can be ascertained from 40 territories recorded across 24 locations. The premier site was Barlow's Farm, Bickershaw with 7 reeling May 12th; 8 May 24th and 7 again Jun 20th. In addition reeling was heard on single, or widely dispersed dates, at a further 34 sites during the period May to July, indicating possible breeding at these. The last reported reeling was at Watergrove Reservoir Aug 7th.

*Autumn migration:* Singles at Astley Moss East Peat Pools Aug 29th and Georges Lane, Horwich Moors Sep 1st. Records during October are rare indeed yet, amazingly, singles were seen on Oct 2nd at two sites some distance apart; along the Astley Tip access road and on the Horwich Moors in the vicinity of Haslam's Farm and Lomax Wife's Farm.

## **SEDGE WARBLER** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Fairly common summer visitor.

As in 2009, the first arrival was at Horrock's Flash, one day later on Apr 9th. There were only two further records during the first half of April, at Chorlton Water Park 10th to 12th, and one singing at Barlow's Farm, Bickershaw on 14th. The main influx occurred during the last 10 days of April with records from 22 sites between 20th and 30th, the highest numbers being 8 at Abram Flashes SSSI 27th; and 4 at the following: Red Moss, Horwich 25th; Altrincham ETW and Astley Tip 26th. The peak counts were during May with the premier site being once again Barlow's Farm, Bickershaw which registered 24 territories on 24th. 13 were singing in the Elton Reservoir area on the 1st with 12 territories recorded between Elton and Withins on the 18th.

Sedge Warbler's population fluctuates from year to year depending on over winter survival rates in West Africa which are linked to rainfall patterns in the Senegal and Niger deltas. So after two relatively poor years in 2008-09, it was pleasing to see a slight recovery on BBS squares with 5 (7%) recording this warbler compared to 4 (6%) in 2009. WBBS Hey Brook also saw an increase from 3/10 in 2009 to 11/5. Breeding was confirmed at 9 sites and in 3 additional atlas tetrads. The earliest being Jun 6th when a bird was seen carrying food at Bickershaw Rucks. At Watergrove Reservoir, a pair was double brooded and observed carrying food Jun 22nd and feeding 3 recently fledged juveniles Aug 20th. Their presence at this upland site, 250 metres above sea level, is clear evidence of range expansion. These may well be the highest altitude breeding Sedge Warblers in the county!

Records of 1 to 2 came from 4 other sites in August. September sightings were confined to singles at Castleshaw Reservoirs and Hope Carr NR 5th with the last of the year being a family party of 4 at Birch Industrial Estate on the 8th.

## **MARSH WARBLER** *Acrocephalus palustris*

Vagrant.

BoCC Red List species (BDP1, BDP2).

**Correction to 2009 report:** The belated accepted record from Pennington Flash was from 12th Jun 1996 and not 2006 as stated. This remains only the second accepted record of this species in the county following the first at Rumworth Lodge, May 22nd 1996.

## **REED WARBLER** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Fairly common summer visitor.

The first arrival, a singing bird on Apr 16th at Dover Basin was a week later than in 2009. Birds were generally much later arriving than in 2009, with the next not reported until Apr 21st when 2 were singing at Jack Lane, Flixton and one at Chorlton Ees. Numbers then increased rapidly with 5 at Turner's Flash 22nd; 3 at Pennington Flash 23rd; 4 Doffcocker Lodge 25th; peaking at 24 Pearson's Flash 27th.

Mapping of the 2010 records shows that unlike many of the other warbler species, the distribution of Reed Warbler is still restricted to the west of the county due to lack of suitable habitat, this species nesting exclusively in common reed (*Phragmites*). Records were received from 24 1 km squares in the Wigan borough, 4 each in Bolton and Trafford, 3 in Bury, 2 in Manchester and 1 in Salford. BBS counts found 2 squares (3%) with this species, Amberswood (SD6004) 7/6 and Haigh Country Park (SD5908) just a single bird on the early visit. WBBS Hey Brook reported 6/3. During the breeding season 11 pairs were found at Diggle Flash, Bickershaw Rucks Jun 4th; 5 singing at Chorlton Ees Jun 3rd; but there were no significant counts submitted

from the Wigan Flashes, the species' stronghold. Breeding was confirmed at Chorlton Water Park; Elton Reservoir; Pearson's Flash; Pennington Flash and Red Moss, Horwich and in 5 additional atlas tetrads: Carrington Moss (SJ79K); Gidlow (SD50T); Hope Carr (SJ69U); Lostock (SD60U); Rumworth (SD60T). In September, reports of 1 to 3 birds came from 5 sites. However, a very late breeding record of an adult with 5 newly fledged young (2nd brood) at Pennington Flash Oct 3rd was quite exceptional.

## **WAXWING** *Bombycilla garrulous*

Irregular winter visitor.

The early winter period of 2010 continued the dearth of records in the county during late 2009 and as a result only three sites recorded the species with records of 8 at Astley Bridge, Bolton on Feb 16th; the same, or a further maximum of 9 at Astley Bridge, Bolton again (favouring the car park of Topps Tiles) from Mar 2nd-11th; 1 in Bolton Town Centre on Feb 5th; and a single at Offerton on Feb 19th.

The late winter period however saw an excellent supply of this birder and photographers favourite and sightings came thick and fast from Oct 22nd onwards throughout the county. The following monthly breakdown of sightings identifies locations which recorded the species with their maximum numbers in brackets.

*October:* The very first record of the late winter period was of 3 at Gilnow, Bolton on Oct 22nd. The next record, only two days later, saw the first of many sightings over the Horwich Moors with their subsequent steady passage being in a generally west or north-west direction, with 38 individuals recorded in total from five dates during the month. Further sightings came from: - Chorlton WP (16); Eccles (5); Elton Reservoir (2); Oldham Town Centre and environs (9).

*November:* during the month a larger influx occurred and all points of the county became pleasantly saturated in Waxwings, with sightings as follows: - Ashton-on-Mersey; Ashton-under-Lyne (4); Atherton (10); Besses o' th' Barn, Whitefield (7); Bolton Town Centre and environs (55 at Bridgeman Street/Fletcher Street on Nov 21st); Castleshaw Reservoirs (1); Compstall (32); Drake Street, Rochdale (6); Dukinfield (4); Elton Reservoir (8); Etherow CP (70); Fairy Lane, Sale (15); Hale (30); Hazel Grove (1); Heald Green (1); Heaton Park Reservoir (1); Highfield Moss (1); Hollingworth Lake (13); Horwich Moors recorded a total of 387 individuals on 11 dates during the month with a maximum flock, the largest recorded during the year in the county, of 280 at Wilderswood on the 26th which had possibly roosted in Larch trees before flying off east. Other than this large group, flocks were only seen flying over and generally moved in a south-westerly direction for the first two weeks of the month, thereafter changing to a easterly flight path; Horwich Town Centre, around the leisure centre area (112 on Nov 27th); Little Lever (4); Lower Kersal (65); Lowton (6); Marple (1); Moston (28); Offerton (5); Oldham Town Centre and environs (30); Pennington Flash (39); Sale WP (6); Salford (30); Pickley Green, Westleigh (11); Philips Park, Prestwich (16); Stockport Town Centre and environs (2); Timperley (20); Tonge Moor (60); Wigan Town Centre and environs (230 at Hardybutts on Nov 30th); Woodford; Woodley Precinct (13); Woolley Bridge (3).

*December:* the freezing weather during the month continued to hold Waxwings to areas of good food sources and it was noteworthy that their movements across the Horwich Moors ceased completely during the month. Sightings were as follows: - Ashton-in-Makerfield (30); Ashton-on-Mersey (50); Ashton-under-Lyne (37); Atherton (146 on Crabtree Lane on the 21st); Baguley (3); Besses o' th' Barn (6); Bolton Town Centre and environs (60); Bredbury (32); Bromley Cross (2); Carrbrook (1); Chadderton (50); Chorlton (20); Cox Green (5); Daisy Hill, Westhoughton (7); Davenport Green (32); Doffcocker (11); Dovestone (4); Drake Street, Rochdale (12); Dukinfield (1); Elton Reservoir (9); Hale (20); Hazel Grove (9); Heaton Mersey (25); Hindley (15); Hope Carr NR (40); Horwich Town Centre, around the leisure centre area

(37); Hulme (22); Leigh (8); Liverpool Street, Salford (21); Milnrow (17); Oldfield Brow, Altrincham (20); Oldham Town Centre and environs (130 at Derker on the 6th); Orrell WP (5); Pennington Flash (13); Pickley Green, Westleigh (5); Prestwich (4); Sale Town Centre and environs (39); Sale WP (2); Slattocks (8); Stockport Town Centre and environs (60 at Grand Central Station on Dec 17th); Stretford (9); Timperley (14); Watergrove Reservoir (5); Wigan Town Centre and environs (220 at Scholes on the 1st); Winton (6); Woodford (20); Woodley Precinct (12).

## **NUTHATCH** *Sitta europea*

Fairly common resident.

*Early winter*: twenty seven tetrads recorded this species during winter atlas. There were some significant counts too during this period, with 4 at Heaton Park on Jan 4th, 7 at Haigh CP on 7th and 4 at Boggart Hole Clough on the 25th of the same month. In February numbers were higher with 8 Dunham Massey 11th; 9 Poise Brook LNR, Goyt Valley 16th; and 8 Eastwood CWT reserve 28th. A total of 7 were at Healey Dell on Mar 2nd.

*Breeding*: This species was recorded from 13% of BBS squares down from 17% in the previous year. The national figure for 2010 was 22%. Breeding was confirmed in the following widely spread atlas tetrads:- Walmersley, Shawclough, Haughton, Prestwich, Whitefield, Well Green, Jumbles, Hale Barns, Etrop Green, Orrell, Boggart Hole Clough, Newall Green, Luzley, Dunham Massey, Roe Cross and Carrington Moss. Breeding was recorded for the first time at Hollingworth Lake when parents were seen taking food to a nest hole in Whittaker Wood on May 20th. Similarly the first breeding record from Mesnes Park in Wigan was confirmed when fledged young were seen on Jul 18th. Five pairs bred in Borsdane Wood LNR in Hindley, one pair in De Quincey Park, Timperley and three pairs at Clifton Marina. A pair used an artificial nest box in Falinge Park in Rochdale and another pair was seen feeding young with "small insects" at Boggart Hole Clough. Confirmed breeding came also from Elnup Wood, Shevington (May 9th); Haigh CP (May 10th); the Peak Forest Canal at Strines (May 17th); Barrow Bridge, Bolton (Jun 1st) and Dove Stone RSPB (Jul 3rd).

*Post – breeding*: notable counts were of 5 Abney Hall Sep 1st; 5 Chadkirk Country Estate Sep 8th; 7 Etherow CP Oct 2nd; 8 Wythenshawe Park Nov 11th; and 6 Worsley Woods Dec 31st. A total of seventy six tetrads produced sightings for the winter atlas.

## **TREECREEPER** *Certhia familiaris*

Fairly common resident.

*Early winter/spring*: this species was recorded in 12 winter atlas tetrads during this period. Significant numbers were of 3 at Borsdane Wood, Hindley Jan 10th; 6 Dunham Massey Jan 23rd; 4 Pennington Flash Feb 1st; 4 Hazel Grove Golf Club Mar 23rd; 3 Etherow CP Mar 24th; and 4 Pendlebury Lane, Haigh Apr 2nd, the latter comprising two pairs apparently setting up breeding territories.

*Breeding*: There were records from only 4% of BBS squares, as against 6% in the previous year. This compares with the national figure of 12.6%. The first confirmed breeding record came from Borsdane Wood, when fledged young were seen on May 1st and then from Clifton Marina where 4 young were seen on May 15th. A total of 61 tetrads located the species during breeding atlas work, many recording confirmed breeding. The first tetrads recording confirmed breeding were of two pairs at Wigan Flashes on May 17th and at Reddish Vale on the same date. Other tetrads/sites were at Woodbank Park; Dunham Massey ("several"); Heaton Park (nest in loose bark); Pots and Pans; Chesham Woods; Walmersley; Drinkwater Park, Prestwich;

Hale Barns; Newall Green; Haigh; Hogswood Covert; Shell NR and Carrington Moss; Chadkirk Country Estate; Roe Cross; Ashley; Bedford Moss; Worthington Lakes; Bamfurlong and Wicken Hall Clough, Piethorne.

*Post breeding/late winter*: a further 34 tetrads provided sightings during this period of winter atlas counts. Three birds were noted at the following locations:- Horrocks Flash Sep 11th; Audenshaw Nov 11th; Plantation Farm Dukinfield Nov 14th; Haydock Park Estate Dec 6th; Roman Lakes Marple Dec 7th and Pickley Marsh Dec 14th. Four were at Sinderland Green on Dec 31st.

## **WREN** *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Abundant resident.

The highest single count of the year involved a nest box roost at Seven Acres during the early winter period which peaked at 30 individuals on Feb 1st. Other than counts of 23 at Pennington Flash on Mar 1st, 12 at Croxden Peat Works NR on Oct 17th and 11 in a pre-roost flock at Chorlton Water Park on Dec 18th were possibly using a nest box; all other records outside atlas counts involved single figures.

94% of BBS squares recorded this species, exactly the same result as in 2009 and their average birds per square remained practically the same this year with 7.46, compared to 7.55 the previous year. Given the harsh winter during 2009-2010 this figure is somewhat surprising considering that this species is usually hard hit by such conditions. 2010 also saw a new site break into the 'top of the Wren BBS charts', with Ringway (22/18) pipping annual champion Priory Gardens (20/15) to number one whilst ex-front runner Clifton (with only 11/18 this year) left the chart and Sale (20/15), Higher Folds (14/22), Amberswood (17/15) and Carrington (15/16) all performed particularly well. On the WBBS, Hey Brook (16/20) and Rochdale Canal (25/27) both produced good counts. Confirmed breeding was obtained from 97 sites, 42 more than 2009 and probable breeding took place at many more; which must surely be only the tip of the iceberg for this under recorded species? Atlas tetrads performed well during the breeding season with the following managing counts of over 20: - 27 at SD80B Prestwich on Apr 4th and 21 also there on Jun 14th; 36 at SD80R Boggart Hole Clough on Apr 12th and 30 on Jun 15th; 30 at SD90Q Luzley on Apr 30th; 21 at SD70W Clifton on May 2nd; 25 at SD80C Whitefield on May 31st; 28 at SJ78Y Well Green on Jun 16th; and 26 on SD81Q Hopwood on Jun 27th.

## **STARLING** *Sturnus vulgaris*

Abundant resident and winter visitor.

BoCC Red List (BDp1, BDp2, SPEC) and UK BAP species.

*Early winter counts*: all counts of any significance came from the moss land area, apart from 300 at Pilsworth Tip on Jan 24th. At the mosses there were eight counts of 300 birds or more, the largest being 3000 at Astley Tip Feb 6th with 2000 there on 21st; and 1000 at Goyt Hall Farm in a "pre-roost display" on Feb 12th. The winter atlas surveys found this species in 53 tetrads, the largest number being 384 in Pilsworth North on Jan 28th.

*Breeding*: This bird was recorded in 87% of squares in the annual BBS, compared with 85% in 2009. The national figure for 2010 was 57%. A total of 127 tetrads noted confirmed breeding during the breeding atlas surveys. The first was of a nest at Bamford on Apr 1st, followed by sightings of adults carrying food or faecal sacs at Edgeley on Apr 23rd. At Elton Reservoir, two nests were found in a boat house and a leucistic bird was seen in a potential breeding area at Marple on May 26th. On May 31st a minimum of 200 birds at the golf course near to Woodford Aerodrome included many juveniles. That same date at Little Ees, Ashton-on-Mersey a flock of 350 birds contained "nearly all juveniles", whilst a high percentage of juveniles was noted among a flock of 250 at Stock Nook Farm, Birch on Jun 7th.

*Post breeding/late winter:* The first major post-breeding flock was one of 450 roosting at Wigan Flashes on Jun 17th, followed by 600 at Woodford Aerodrome on Jul 1st. At Cadishead Moss, 500 birds on Jul 4th increased to 2000 three months later on Oct 7th and 9000 on Nov 25th. Thereafter this flock declined to 5000 on Dec 24th. Other notable counts on the mosses included 1400 at Astley Tip on Oct 17th, 2000 at Rindle Road Nov 19th and 1000 at Olive Mount Farm Nov 29th. Visible migration counts from Georges Lane, Horwich Moors included 410 on Oct 27th and 518 on Nov 1st to a peak of 1078 on Nov 24th. Other notable counts were of 3000 at Newtown, Wigan Nov 7th and 1000 at Castle Hill, Hindley Nov 18th. The biggest count however was of an estimated 10000 at Winton at 11.45 on Nov 24th between junctions 11 and 12 of the M62 motorway.

## **DIPPER** *Cinclus cinclus*

Fairly common resident; perhaps increasing with cleaner rivers.

Outside the breeding season, approximately 45 locations recorded this species, although the inevitable cross counting of birds moving up and downstream (particularly during the periods of harsh weather) may have occasionally crept in. Nevertheless, its distribution and status within the county remains healthy with the more upland areas of the north and east of the county maintaining their monopoly of the species. There were no true lowland records received this year (at sites of 50 metres above sea level or less).

The first nest building of the year was noted as early as Feb 6th at Wright Mill Bridge on the River Tame at Mossley and many others followed during the remainder of the month with the first pair on eggs at Mill Lane, Horwich on March 19th. Sites with confirmed breeding were: - Adswold at Lady Brook at Seven Acres Viaduct; Boarshaw Clough Lodges; Bramall Hall Park; Burrs, near Bury; Cheadle Hulme; Diggle Brook at Dobcross; Dove Stone; Etherow CP; Greenfield, 4 pairs; Happy Valley, where a dead female was found to have been ringed at Sutton, Macclesfield in 2009; Longden End; Marple Bridge; Measurements, Delph; Mossley, 4 pairs, one of which raised a second brood on Aug 22nd; New Delph, Oldham; New Year's Bridge Reservoir; Norman Hill Reservoir, Piethorne Valley; Reddish Vale; River Beal, Milnrow Town Centre; River Roch, Bury; River Tame at Dukinfield Town Centre, Linfitts and Woodland Mill; Roman Lakes, Marple; Mill Lane, Horwich, with a second brood on Aug 25th; Stalybridge town centre where the young were predated by Grey Heron and Mink; Summerseat, on the River Irwell, 2 pairs; Uppermill Garden Centre; and Woodbank Park. On the BBS, only 3 squares recorded the species though (Park Bridge, Greenfield and Uppermill) which was a reduction from 5 in both 2008 and 2009. Breeding, or at least thinking about it, seems an almost full time preoccupation with Dippers, particularly the two seen displaying at Burrs, near Bury on Nov 25th!

## **RING OUZEL** *Turdus torquatus*

Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant.  
BoCC Red List (BDp1) and UK BAP species.

Spring passage began with a single in the SJ99Y Roe Cross tetrad at Hobson's Moor, Stalybridge on Apr 8th, with four males there the next day. After this initial date the county experienced perhaps its best ever spring migration of this attractive and highly sought after thrush with 12 locations recording the species and an excellent county maximum for the month of 10 at Lees Hill, Swineshaw from Apr 11th-14th. All locations recording Ring Ouzels were as follows, with data recorded in brackets equating to total days recording the species during the month/maximum daily total: - Astley Moss (3/1), a male remained faithful to a small ploughed field at Rindle from Apr 28th – May 5th; Barlow's Farm, Bickershaw (1/1); Barrow Bridge (4/1), a male which remained in the area from 11th-14th; Broadhead Noddle, near Denshaw (1/1); Horwich



Moors can be split into some of its constituent sites: Burnt Edge (2/3), Higher Meadows (1/3), Holden's Clough (4/3), Winter Hill (2/1); Cow Lane/Hobson's Moor/Hollingworth/Lees Hill/Middle Bank area (10/10); Holcombe Moor (4/7); Light Hazzles Reservoir (1/2); Ludworth Moor (1/1); Piethorne Valley (1/7); and Watergrove Reservoir (1/3). May records came from 2 locations with the male at Rindle, Astley Moss remaining until the 5th and a single bird singing at in the SE00H Yeoman Hey Reservoir tetrad on the 7th.

During June, up to 3 were in the Chew Valley at Dove Stone from the 14th-19th, consisting of a pair and a solitary male but no evidence of breeding was found.

Autumn migration was less pronounced than spring with the Horwich Moors attracting the lion's share of the records. There was only one September record, of a single flushed from the side of Mast Road at the very top of Winter Hill in extremely poor, low cloud conditions on the 29th. October saw two records away from the Horwich Moors with 3 at Watergrove Reservoir on the 14th and 4 at Holcombe Moor on the 16th. The Horwich Moors attracted no less than 17 individuals in total from 10 days during the month, with a monthly maximum count of 4 at Burnt Edge on the 25th. A single male at Burnt Edge on Nov 13th flew SW and probably the same bird was then relocated at Rumworth Lodge later the same day.

## **BLACKBIRD** *Turdus merula*

Abundant resident and winter visitor.

There were many double figure counts recorded during the early winter period this year including some forced together in domestic gardens due to the snow and extreme cold weather experienced during the period. Those of 20 or over were as follows: - *January*: 27 in the SJ89P Manchester City Centre tetrad on the 1st; 25 in a garden at Lower Green Lane, Astley on the 2nd; 21 at Three Sisters on the 5th; and 21 in the SD80X Middleton Junction tetrad on the 26th. *February*: 20 in the SJ99E Droylsden tetrad on the 7th. *March*: 46 at Pennington Flash on the 1st was the largest count of the early winter period; and 21 were at Moss Brow Farm, Irlam Moss on the 21st. *April*: this month saw all the larger counts occurring in atlas tetrads with 20 in the SD80B Prestwich tetrad on the 9th; 41 in the SJ88W Woodford tetrad on the 17th; 23 in the SD50S Newtown tetrad on the 21st; 21 in the SD60D New Springs tetrad on the 21st; and 20 in the SD90Q Luzley tetrad on the 30th.

The first confirmed breeding record of the year was of a male with 3 young in a Middleton garden on Apr 5th and this was quickly followed by a further 15 by the end of the month. A total of 88 atlas tetrads recorded confirmed breeding with many other non-atlas locations recording confirmed and probable breeding along with plenty of pairs managing multiple broods. Moses Gate Country Park registered 22 confirmed breeding pairs alone. On the BBS, 96% of squares recorded this species (94% in 2009) with an average of 15.13 birds per square. A total of 21 squares recorded 20 or more individuals on at least one of their visits, with 8 exceeding that figure on both visits.

Autumn saw its first notable influx on Oct 14th when 30 were noted at Hollingworth Lake as migrants. The influx appeared to continue into the 15th when 22 were at Gingham Brow and Wallsuchers, Horwich and also to the 16th when 19 were at Brabyns Park, Compstall. The following counts of over 30 individuals were recorded during November: - 30 at Cow Lane, Hollingworth on the 1st; 50 together at Blackleach Reservoir on the 9th; 33 in the SD80V Failsworth tetrad on the 19th; 40 in the SD50V Bamfurlong tetrad on the 14th and 39 also there on the 20th. There was only a single count which reached 30 during December, which occurred at Elton Reservoir on the 5th.

## DUSKY THRUSH *Turdus eunomus*

Vagrant.

A single, magnificent male was in a Leigh garden for all of 30 minutes on Dec 8th (I. Reynolds). The record was accepted by BBRC and became only the 9th for Britain. There have been some remarkable rarity records from Greater Manchester over the years but this one was regarded by many observers as one of the very best, if not *the* best and a full account can be found in the short notes section of this report.

## FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant.

BoCC Red List species (BDp2, BDMp1, BR).

Peak counts over three figures for the first four months of the year were as follows: - *January*: 132 at Liverpool Street, Salford on the 7th; 160 at Pomona Dock, Salford on the 10th; 100 at Rindle, Astley Moss on the 26th. *February*: 158 at Bryn, Wigan on the 3rd; 100 at Cutacre Open Cast Coal Site and 168 at Landgate, both on the 3rd; 100 at Elton Reservoir on the 6th; 100 at Carrington Moss on the 9th; 200 at Barrack's Lodge, Bury on the 13th; 118 at Rindle, Astley Moss on the 14th; 150 at Elton Reservoir on the 20th; 200 at Rindle, Astley Moss on the 24th. *March*: 120 at Lightshaw on the 9th; 105 at Pilsworth Fisheries on the 21st; 128 at Oldhall Farm, Woodford Aerodrome on the 26th; 300 at Moss House Farm, Glazebury on the 27th. *April*: 130 at Ludworth Moor on the 16th. There were only four reports during May, with a single at Rindle, Astley Moss from Apr 29th remaining there until May 4th; a single at Cow Lane, Hollingworth, Hyde on the 7th; and singles at Lightshaw Hall Flash on the 13th and 21st.

Fieldfares were first recorded back in the county after their summer absence on Sep 20th this year with 65 at Rumworth Lodge and 150 at Tyldesley Rugby Union's ground. Though large flocks of Fieldfare moving through the county are not unheard of, the events during October 2010 were on a scale never recorded before. At the one site of the Horwich Moors alone, hugely impressive flocks of Fieldfare could be witnessed sweeping low across the moors on many occasions and its total of 21,397 passing through during October alone was attained mainly during the last two weeks of the month. Large flocks abounded throughout the month at this one site and 8 daily totals in excess of four figures were achieved but even those almost paled into insignificance next to the incredible events of the 20th. During a three hour period alone mid morning to early afternoon some 9479 Fieldfares passed through one Horwich Moors watch point in a NW direction and the final total for that one day, at that one location was a monumental 10,263 in 68 flocks! On the same date Heaton Park Reservoir also recorded significant passage overhead during a similar time period, finishing with a total of 3895 NW from early morning to early afternoon. Many other locations in the county also recorded fine numbers on passage during October, the largest of which were 450 through Castleshaw Reservoirs on the 19th and Heaton Park Reservoir with 674 over SW on the 23rd and 964 NW on the 25th. By the end of the month, a conservative total of 28,645 Fieldfare had migrated through the county of Greater Manchester during October alone. November saw migration slow somewhat with only the Horwich Moors once again maintaining good numbers overhead with weekly totals of 3024 in the first week, 529 in the second, 911 in the third and 264 in the final week, meaning a total of 26,125 had passed through the site during the autumn! Other locations in the county also recorded flocks during November with many now settled and feeding particularly on haws, with the following sites managing flocks of 200 or more: - 520 at Rindle, Astley Moss on the 2nd; 240 at Hollingworth Lake on the 4th; 260 at Lanslow Green, Hollingworth, Hyde on the 7th; 200 at Red Moss on the 13th. Passage practically ceased during December but large feeding flocks could still be encountered with those exceeding three figures as follows: - 100 at Elton Reservoir on the 11th; 100 at Pickley Green, Westleigh on the 13th; 116 at Carrington Moss on the 20th; 200 in the SJ79F Sinderland Green tetrad on

the 22nd and an excellent 1000 at Elton Reservoir on the same date, remaining in the area until the 25th; 200 at Pickley Green, Westleigh on the 25th-27th; 500 at Gillibrand's Farm, Westhoughton on the 28th.

### **SONG THRUSH** *Turdus philomelos*

Common resident and winter visitor.

BoCC Red List (BDp2) and UK BAP species.

Outside the breeding season the following double figure counts were recorded: - 10 singing in the Mersey Valley on Feb 14th; 24 at Pennington Flash on Mar 1st; 12 in the SD911 Littleborough West tetrad on Apr 9th; 18 singing at Moses Gate CP on May 1st; 11 in the SD80G Heaton Park tetrad on May 24th; 20 together at Linnyslaw Moss on Sep 18th; 11 at Worsley View Farm, Irlam Moss on Oct 7th; and 29 migrating south over Green Avenue, Astley in two hours mid-morning on Oct 11th.

The first confirmed breeding record of the year was received from the SD71R Tottington tetrad on Apr 24th and subsequently, 46 locations and atlas tetrads went on to record successful breeding. Song Thrush was one of four Red List species which declined significantly 2009-2010 and this appears to have been reflected within Greater Manchester too. BBS figures portrayed a significant decline, down to only 67% (45 squares) this year from 82% in 2009. Birds per square were roughly the same as the previous year at 2.4 in 2010 compared to 2.25 in 2009. Clifton maintained its standing at the 'top of the BBS sites' for this species, recording 10/10 on its 2 visits.

### **REDWING** *Turdus iliacus*

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant.

BoCC Red List species (BDp2, BR).

Early winter sightings were widespread but locations attracting three figure counts included 100 at Buile Hill Park, Salford on Jan 1st, which included a single leucistic bird; 120 at Alexandra Park, Moss Side on Feb 2nd; 110 at Platt Fields Park on Feb 7th involving many birds indulging in communal singing; 200 in the SJ79Z Eccles tetrad on Feb 18th; 160 at Heaton Park on Feb 20th; 100 at Carr Wood Park, Bramhall on Mar 16th; and 100 at Heaton Park again on Mar 22nd. April records came from 11 locations or atlas tetrads as follows: - 3 at Church Lane, Woodford on the 1st; 3 at Abram Flashes on the 3rd; 2 at Astley Road, Chat Moss, 5 at Blackleach Reservoir and 3 at Elton Reservoir, all on the 7th; 2 in the SJ99Y Roe Cross tetrad on the 8th; 10 at Audenshaw Reservoirs on the 11th; 1 at Cloughend, Ludworth Moor on the 14th; 1 at Ludworth Moor on the 16th; and 1 in the SJ88D Newall Green tetrad on the 19th. There was also a single May record which involved 2 at Rindle, Astley on the 5th.

Autumn migration through the county was pronounced and closely observed this year. The first record of the autumn came from Altrincham where 9 roosted on Sep 20th but the next record was not until a week later when a single bird was at Bickershaw Rucks on the 27th. The 28th saw 3 sites encounter newly arrived birds with 13 over Georges Lane, Horwich Moors; 3 over Heaton Park Reservoir; and 4 over Hindley Green. The final record for September was of a single at Vicarage Cottage, Ringway on the 30th. October was met with a flood of sightings to all areas of the county but the 9th saw the first significant day of autumn migration with 12 SE through Elton Reservoir; 13 S over Heaton Park Reservoir; 3 at Pickley Green, Westleigh; 6 at Stiles Avenue, Marple; and 15 at Sunfield Estate, Romiley. A flock of 79 S over Chorlton Water Park on the 10th was the first major flock encountered during the autumn but as it happened, was merely the prelude to a much larger movement, the bulk of which occurred during the second and third weeks of the month. For visible migration watchers, the 11th dawned with an obvious movement of Redwings through the county, finishing the day with

482 and 286 S over 2 different Astley gardens; 603 SE over Heaton Park Reservoir; 40 at Piethorne Valley ; and 407 in 20 flocks over the Horwich Moors. For the remainder of October, the following counts over 100 strong were noted: - 243 through the Horwich Moors on the 13th; 180 at Hollingworth Lake on the 14th; 150 at Dover Basin on the 15th; 453 in 22 flocks over the Horwich Moors on the 16th; 177 NW over Heaton Park Reservoir and 340 through the Horwich Moors, both on the 17th; 119 in 8 flocks, the largest of 60 individuals, through the Horwich Moors on the 25th; 163 SW over Heaton Park Reservoir on the 28th; 196 in 7 flocks through the Horwich Moors on the 29th. November saw evidence of continued visible migration and also of the settling of many flocks for the winter as follows: - 250 at Barlow's Farm, Bickershaw on the 1st; 120 at New Moss Wood, Cadishead Moss and 250 through the Horwich Moors in 11 flocks, both on the 2nd; 141 over Heaton Park Reservoir on the 7th; 100 at Crime Lake, Failsworth and 100 at Pennington Flash, both on the 14th. December unsurprisingly saw no visible migration recorded but good sized flocks were encountered with 200 at Pickley Green, Westleigh on the 4th, with a flock of 300 also recorded there on the 13th-20th, decreasing to 150 by the 27th; 200 at Werneth Low on the 9th; 550 in the SJ99T Matley tetrad on the 12th; 500 (the largest recorded single flock of the year) at Elton Reservoir on the 19th; and finally, 300 at Gillibrands Farm, Westhoughton on the 21st.

### **MISTLE THRUSH** *Turdus viscivorus*

Common resident.

BoCC Amber List species (BDMp1, BDMp2).

The extreme cold during the early winter forced many birds into gardens where they are usually very uncommon visitors and 14 in the SJ89G Southern Cemetery tetrad on Feb 20th was the largest of only 8 double figure counts recorded.

The first breeding record of the year came typically early with 2 young being fed in Manchester United's Old Trafford football ground on Mar 10th. There were a total of 58 locations recording confirmed breeding this year including, not to be outdone by their red rivals, a pair at Manchester City's Etihad Stadium football ground! On the BBS the significant decline from 73% in 2008 to 65% in 2009 appeared to have at least been halted somewhat, with 63% being recorded in 2010. This still represented a small decline of course but considering the species reached its lowest levels in England since the start of the survey it could perhaps have been much worse.

The first of the post breeding flocks was encountered at Blackleach Reservoir with 25 on Jul 7th, the next being at Higher Meadows, Horwich Moors with 49 on Jul 15th increasing to 57 by the 17th. 50 were at Rindle, Astley Moss on Jul 25th and 50 were also at Cutacre Open Cast Coal Site on Aug 18th. The largest flocks recorded during September were of 25 at both Elton Reservoir and Heaton Park Reservoir on the 5th and 28th respectively. October saw only 5 flocks reach double figures, the largest of which was 18 at Billinge Higher End on the 2nd. Late winter numbers dwindled to single figure counts, broken only on two occasions with 15 in the SJ89E Pendleton tetrad on Nov 24th and 10 in the SD80W New Moston tetrad on Dec 19th.

### **SPOTTED FLYCATCHER** *Muscicapa striata*

Uncommon and decreasing summer visitor, uncommon passage migrant.

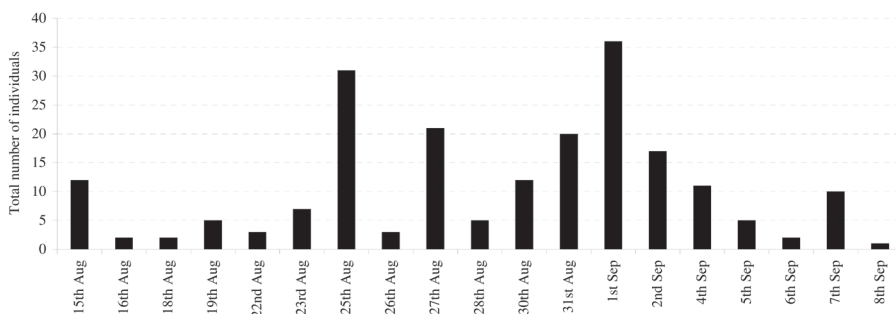
BoCC Red List (BDP1, BDP2) and UK BAP species.

Unless otherwise stated all records are of singles. The first arrivals were at Orrell Water Park and Woodhouse Park May 12th, after which there were birds at Mossley and Swallows Wood May 15th. The remainder of the month saw a thin scattering of records: at Broadoak Wood, Fairfield 17th; Lees Hill (SK09E) tetrad 18th; Dunham Massey 2 on 23rd and a single 24th to 26th; Hindley Green Pond 26th; Etherow Country Park, 2 on 28th; Astley Moss East Peat Pools 29th; and Greenfield 30th.

Confirmed breeding was restricted to just 2 sites and 3 tetrads (none of which are completely within the county). A pair was seen carrying food at Astley Road, Chat Moss on Jun 17th and Jul 6th; and at Barton Moss, Eccles, a pair were present from Jun 24th and 3 juveniles seen Aug 19th. A nest with young was located in the Hale Barns (SJ78X) tetrad, and recently fledged young seen in the High Lane (SJ98M) and Hollingworth (SK09D) tetrads. An adult accompanied by a juvenile was at Castleshaw Reservoirs Jul 4th but the absence of earlier records suggests they may not have bred locally. Probable breeding was established at Dunham Massey, Etherow Country Park, Irlam Moss and Swallows Wood with one territory at each location.

Autumn passage usually sees greater numbers than in spring but this year was exceptional, especially on the Horwich Moors, where a single at Georges Lane 24th Jul marked the start of migration. Birds were then recorded on 19 dates from 15th Aug to 8th Sep with three distinct peaks. 10 at Higher Meadows Aug 15th, (the first double-figure count since 1992), was followed on 25th Aug by a minimum of 31 at 5 locations, the maxima being 11 at Newfields and 8+ at Brownstones Quarry. The following day only 3+ were found (showing how quickly Spotted Flycatcher move through on autumn migration), increasing to 21 on the 27th and back down to 5 on the 28th. The highest count of the autumn occurred in the area on Sep 1st when a total of 36 were logged at 11 separate locations. These peak dates on the Horwich Moors corresponded with good numbers elsewhere, indicating a general movement through the county. The 25th August must have been one of the best days for this species in Greater Manchester for many years, indicating an excellent breeding season, either elsewhere in the UK or in northern Europe: 6 on Crompton Moor, 4 on Holcombe Moor, 3 at Coggra Fold, and 2 at Rumworth Lodge, though there are no times attached to the records, so there may be some duplication as birds moved south through the day. Nonetheless, the total count of 51 birds all on the same day is quite remarkable. The 1st of September also saw 2 at April Cottage, Ludworth Moor and 3 at Tyldesley ETW. Good numbers were seen elsewhere during the first week of September: 6 at Crompton Moor 2nd and 4 on 3rd; 5 at Elton Reservoir 2nd; and 1-2 at four other sites. Thereafter numbers tailed off rapidly with just 5 records in the 2nd week from 4 locations, the highest being 3 at Elton Reservoir 13th. The last two of the year were at Elton Reservoir Sep 21st and a very late individual at Swiss Cottage, Carrington Moss Oct 2nd. An analysis of the historic records will hopefully, in due course, enable this remarkable autumn passage to be more fully assessed.

Autumn Spotted Flycatcher migration through the Horwich Moors



## ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

Abundant resident.

The first winter period saw the usual songsters, particularly during spells of sunshine, enabling many counts to be made. The highest came from Pennington Flash as usual, where an all-site count on Jan 20th recorded 61 individuals and a similar count on Mar 1st produced 112, the

vast majority in song. Other counts over 20 during this period, all for the atlas, were recorded as follows: - 22 at SD80X Middleton Junction on Jan 26th; 25 at SD90Q Luzley on Feb 17th; 23 at SJ89V Stockport town centre on Apr 1st; 23 at SJ88E Baguley on Apr 7th; and 26 at SD80B Prestwich on Apr 9th. A count of 13 feeding at Bunting Hide, Pennington Flash on Jan 20th was also noteworthy.

The first confirmed breeding record of the year came from the SD90E Summit tetrad on Mar 21st, followed next by SJ79G Carrington Moss West tetrad on Apr 12th. Further April confirmed breeding records came from Borsdane Wood; Foxholes, Horwich; Pennington Flash; Rochdale town centre; and Shevington Moor South. There was a very slight increase in BBS squares recording the species this year at 93% with Higher Folds (25/13), Priory Gardens, Sale (17/16) and Heaton Park Reservoir (19/11) the most productive squares. There was a notable increase in birds per BBS square too this year, up to 7.4 from 6.6 last year. Outside the BBS, 95 atlas tetrads or other locations recorded confirmed breeding, with probable breeding being noted at many other sites. On the WBBS, Rochdale Canal recorded 23/17.

The latter half of the year produced few exceptional counts with the pick of the bunch being 45 either singing or in alarm call at Stamford Park Lake, Ashton-under-Lyne on Sep 12th; 66 in an all-site count at Pennington Flash on Oct 11th; and 38 at Pennington Flash on Dec 20th.

### **PIED FLYCATCHER** *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Scarce and declining summer visitor and scarce passage migrant.  
BoCC Amber List species (BDMP1).

A migrant male at Pennington Flash Apr 20th to 21st, was a fairly typical first arrival date for this species even though the location was not, the first here since May 2002. Pied Flycatcher is on the verge of disappearing as a breeding species in Greater Manchester, with just one other reported in spring, a male singing at Swallows Wood from 9th to 19th May. The bird was ringed but did not attract a mate. For the first year since 1989 none were reported from Etherow Country Park, following just a single record in 2009; it would appear that this site has been abandoned. Four broods were raised here as recently as 2006. Another traditional location, Great Wood, Hattersley was searched Apr 24th without success.

Autumn migration was confined to the Horwich Moors in August when 2 at Higher Meadows 15th were accompanied by 10 Spotted Flycatchers, 4 Redstarts and a huge cloud of flying ants! The other sightings were of 2 at Newfields Farm 16th (considered different individuals to the previous day's birds at Higher Meadows) and the last involving a single first winter bird at Higher Meadows 25th.

### **BLACK REDSTART** *Phoenicurus ochrurus*

Scarce migrant and winter visitor, rare breeder.  
BoCC Amber List (BDMp1, BDMp2, BR) and GM BAP species.

The year began with a male wintering in a Moss Side garden from Jan 1st to Mar 13th. A singing male in Ashton-under-Lyne, a previous breeding location for this species, on Apr 7th saw observers' hopes heightened and close surveillance followed. A female at Hampson's Farm, Smithills Dean on Apr 10th relocated to nearby Barrow Bridge on the 14th where it associated with a Ring Ouzel. Chorlton Water Park recorded a single male on Apr 24th.

On May 5th a dull male, probably a second calendar year (first summer), was found singing in the 'Northern Quarter' of Manchester City Centre and continued to hold a territory until Jun 25th though unfortunately his persistence appeared to be to no avail and a female or any evidence of breeding was never reported. During this time though, he initially remained faithful to the 'Northern Quarter' around the Tib Street/Oldham Street area but later in his stay



it appears the same individual was seen singing from the Chinatown/Manchester Cathedral/Shudehill areas, no doubt in an attempt to widen his search for a mate. Though two or even three singing males were mooted on occasions, the eventual consensus from observers was that all sightings related to the one desperately wandering male. The singing male in Ashton-under-Lyne was much more successful though and a female was observed on Jul 5th, with the successful fledging of 3 young confirmed on Aug 19th and the final sighting of the family party being made on Aug 31st.

On Aug 18th a male passed through Smithills Moor and up to 3 birds which took up temporary residence around the mast buildings on the top of Winter Hill during September and October, only a very short distance over the border in Lancashire, saw two of them (female or immatures) stray into Greater Manchester on at least two occasions; on Sep 30th and Oct 20th. A male was along Dean Ditch, Horwich Moors on Oct 11th and another unaged/unsexed there on Nov 3rd was associating with 3 Stonechats. A male at Gilligants Farm, Horwich Moors on Oct 30th could perceivably have been the same as the first Dean Ditch bird though. An immature bird was on the dam wall at Piethorne Reservoir on Nov 16th and the male returned to winter in the same Moss Side garden on December 10th. The final record of the year involved one in Cheetham Hill, around derelict buildings and overgrown wasteland at the junction of Broughton Street and Waterloo Road on Dec 31st.

### **REDSTART** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Uncommon passage migrant and scarce summer visitor and breeder.  
BoCC Amber List species (SPEC).

The first record of the year involved a male at Hazel Grove Golf Course on Apr 4th. There was then a ten day wait until the next record however, when a male was present at Birch on Apr 14th and another male arrived in the Cow Lane, Hollingworth area the next day. A singing male was present at Roscow's Tenement Clough, Horwich Moors on Apr 16th and thereafter, the main arrival of this splendid chat ensued. At Cow Lane, Hollingworth, singing males increased to 3 on Apr 23rd and then 4 by May 9th, with 2 still singing on May 11th and Jun 13th. This was perceived as a very good year for the species at this location yet despite being in suitable breeding habitat no confirmed records of breeding were received. Other April records involved another male at Hazel Grove Golf Course on the 24th; a male at Moorbottom, Holcombe on the 21st; and a female by the Sports Village at Pennington, Leigh on the 26th. May records saw the first singing male back at Etherow CP on the 8th (increasing to 2 by the 18th), a female at Werneth Low on the 5th and a male along the edge of Astley Moss SSSI on the 12th.

During the breeding season two pairs bred successfully, the first confirmed multiple breeding occurrence since 2004; with a pair seen carrying faecal sacs at Swallows Wood on Jun 10th and a pair with young at Etherow CP on Jun 12th. Single males were also holding territories at Pots and Pans on Jun 5th and Dog Wood on Jun 11th in addition to a lone female at Etherow Country Park on Jun 17th seen near to where a male had held a territory earlier in the year.

Return passage through the county was frankly remarkable, on a scale never witnessed before and 44 migrants were recorded from late July through to the third week in September. Once again the Horwich Moors attracted the lion's share of all records, with 31 individuals alone being recorded in the recording area's plantations, woods and hedgerows. Taking into account that records were received from 8 smaller locations within the much larger collective area of the Horwich Moors, which coupled with admirable and almost daily observer coverage, allowed duplication of individuals to be eliminated as much as practically possible. Records of 'new' individuals therefore involved a single male on Jul 30th and then a succession of sightings in August as follows: - 2 on 2nd; 1 on 9th; 1 on 13th-14th; 2 on 14th (one of which had also been present the previous day); 4 on 15th, three of which were feeding on a large hatch of flying ants at Higher Meadows along with 10 Spotted and 2 Pied Flycatchers in the same hedgerow;

5 on 25th; 2 on 26th; 2 on 27th; 3 on 31st, one of which remained at Lomax Wife's Plantation until Sep 7th. Further September records were as follows: - 1 on 1st; 2 on 2nd; 3 on 3rd; 2 on 6th; and 1 on 8th, the final record from the Horwich Moors. Outside the latter site's 'migration magnet' records were received from Barrow Bridge on Aug 9th; Naden Valley Aug 15th-16th; Rumworth Lodge on Aug 23rd and another on Aug 27th; Holcombe Moor on Aug 25th; 2 at Heaton Park Reservoir on Aug 30th; Pennington Flash saw singles on Aug 31st, Sep 7th and the final record of the year in the county on Sep 20th; Elton Reservoir on Sep 2nd; Castleshaw Reservoirs on Sep 5th; and Horrocks Flash on 19th.

### **WHINCHAT** *Saxicola rubetra*

Uncommon passage migrant and breeder.  
BoCC Amber List species (BDMp1).

April 21st heralded the first record of the year with a fine male at Moss Lane, Astley Moss closely pursued by the following other April records of single birds: - Astley Moss East Peat Pools and Barlow's Tip, Chorlton Water Park, both on the 24th; Altrincham ETW, Dove Stone, Lily Lane Farm at Stubshaw Cross and Carrington Moss, all on the 26th. The next record wasn't until May 1st though, whereafter 10 additional locations recorded the species as follows: - Cutacre Open Cast Coal Site; Dover Basin; Highfield Moss; Horwich Moors; Lesley Road Tip, Urmston; Rindle, Astley Moss; Sennicar Lane, Wigan; Swineshaw Reservoirs; Windy Bank Wood; Woodford Aerodrome.

For the second year running there were no confirmed breeding records. BBGM 1979-1983 estimated that the county population then was probably only 20 pairs and that the species was also in decline; a situation which has clearly not improved over the years.

Autumn passage was both well observed and very productive. *July*: a juvenile was at Rumworth Lodge on the 13th; 4, including 2 juveniles, were at Dove Stone on the 23rd; and a male was at Elton Reservoir on the 29th. None of the July juveniles were thought to have been reared locally. *August*: saw the bulk of the passage with 22 locations recording the species and the Horwich Moors recording the monthly maximum with counts of 10 on Smithills Moor on the 26th and 12 (including 8 in one flock at Holden's Farm) on the 27th, with 7 still remaining at the latter site on the 31st. Those other locations recording the species during the month were: - Ashworth Moor Reservoir; Barrow Bridge, Bolton; Blackleach Reservoir, Farnworth; Brun Clough Reservoir, Oldham; Cadishead Moss (New Moss Wood); Carrington Moss; Chelburn Reservoirs; Clegg Hall Marsh, Smithy Bridge; Far Bradshaw; Hanging Lees Reservoir, Piethorne Valley; Hope Carr NR; Jackson's Boat, Sale; Kingsway Business Park; Linnyshaw Moss; Ludworth Moor; Naden Valley; Rumworth Lodge; Sandyforth Open Cast Coal Site; Watergrove Reservoir. *September*: 1 at Nook Lane, Astley Moss on the 3rd; 1 at Chelburn Reservoirs on the 4th; 1 at Rumworth Lodge on the 10th and another from the 18th-19th; 1 at Elton Reservoir on the 16th and 2 there on the 17th; 1 at Diggle near Saddleworth on the 27th. The close attention of birders on the Horwich Moors produced Whinchat sightings on 13 days out of the month with a maximum count of 3 there on the 9th. *October*: a single at Astley Tip on the 2nd was the only record of the month and the last of the year.

### **STONECHAT** *Saxicola torquatus*

Uncommon winter visitor, passage migrant and breeder.

Early winter sightings were few, with the severe cold weather detrimentally affecting this species. As a result, only 3 January records were received with 2 in the old Astley Colliery area on the 1st, a male on Bickershaw Rucks on the 3rd and a single at Highfield Moss on the 6th. February records increased to 4 with singles seen at Rindle, Astley Moss; a male at Twelve Yards Road, Chat Moss; a male at Chelburn Reservoirs; and a male at Barton Moss.

March saw birds slowly moving back into the county, probably from the very slightly milder coastal areas and 8 locations recorded the species with a pair at Naden Valley the only multiple sighting. A female at Audenshaw Reservoirs on the 17th was also noteworthy. April produced another increase, to 11 sites recording the species, now with pairs at Chelburn Reservoirs (with up to 3 on the 9th and also one singing), Horwich Moors (up to 4 at Burnt Edge including one on territory and one singing at Higher Meadows) and Naden Valley (one singing). Additional sites recording singles were Ashworth Moor Reservoir, Dove Stone, Higher Swineshaw Reservoir, Holcombe Moor and Watergrove Reservoir. In May, additional sites recording the species to those previously mentioned were Barlow's Tip, Chorlton Water Park; Lees Hill; Norman Hill Reservoir; Pendlebury Lane; and Sennicar Lane.

Breeding was confirmed with only 8 pairs this year, 2 others having possibly or probably bred, which was a far cry from the good breeding season of 2009. Confirmed breeding was discovered in the Ashworth Moor Reservoir tetrad (SD81H) on Apr 26th; Cheesden on May 31st; Chelburn Reservoirs on Jun 17th (3 fledged young); Dove Stone on Jun 16th; 2 pairs at Higher Swineshaw Reservoir on May 23rd; Horwich Moors, at the Holden's Farm end of Coal Pit Road on Jun 27th (2 fledged young); and in the Littleborough East tetrad (SD91N) on Jun 17th. An agitated pair was seen at Naden Lower Reservoir on Jun 27th but 2 independent juveniles seen at Norman Hill Reservoir on Jul 25th and Aug 7th-8th were not considered to have been bred locally despite an agitated pair being present on May 19th. On the BBS only 3 squares recorded the species (4%) although this was one more square than in 2009. Stonechat was one of 5 species nationally which showed the greatest decline on the BBS 2009-2010.

Autumn passage and post breeding dispersal away from the breeding locations began in August with a juvenile at Elton Reservoir on the 13th; and then continued with a juvenile at Clegg Hall Marsh, Smithy Bridge on the 14th; 2 juveniles at Holcombe Moor on the 25th; 9 in the Naden Valley on the 26th, which included 5 juveniles and an obvious family party of 2 adults and another 2 juveniles; and a single at Far Bradshaw, Ludworth Moor on the 30th, where an observer commented that the species appeared to have been 'wiped out' there by the early winter weather, resulting in only 2 records from the site all year. September brought sightings to 11 locations, with a monthly maximum of 10 at Holden's Farm, Horwich Moors on the 3rd-6th, reducing to 6 by the 18th. With the majority of records coming from the county's moorlands, records away from there were at a premium and only came from Great Woolden Moss on the 9th, Elton Reservoir on the 11th and 28th and Lily Lane Farm, Stubshaw Cross on the 26th. October saw the Horwich Moors maintain its Stonechat stronghold, claiming the county monthly maximum again via 4 at Holden's Farm on the 12th. Away from the moorlands records came from Astley Tip (2 on the 2nd), Pickley Green, Westleigh (a male on the 8th-9th) and Little Woolden Moss (1 on the 7th). Only 6 locations recorded the species during November, which were: - Elton Reservoir on the 1st and 4th; Ashworth Moor Reservoir on the 6th; Cheesden tetrad SD81I on the 11th; Swineshaw Reservoirs with a male on the 20th; Rooley Moor tetrad SD81P on the 25th; and the Horwich Moors, which maintained individuals throughout the month and a monthly maximum for the county yet again of 4 still at Holden's Farm on the 6th. With the onset of more cold weather Stonechat records for December reduced to only 2, with singles at Ashworth Moor Reservoir on the 1st and a male at Holden's Farm, Horwich Moors on the 5th.

## **WHEATEAR** *Oenanthe oenanthe*

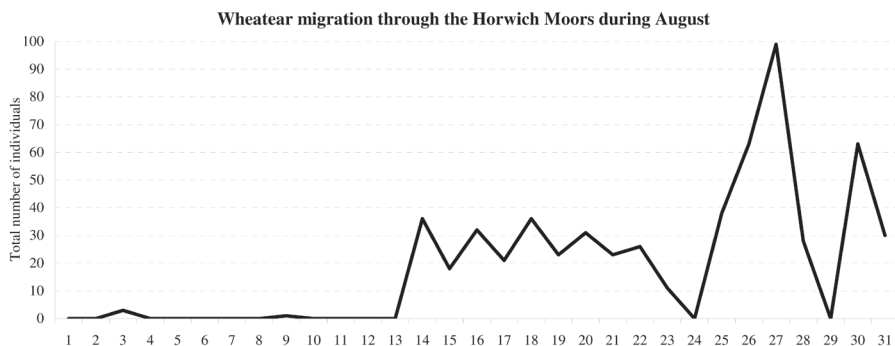
Fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant.  
BoCC Amber List species (SPEC).

The first bird of the year appeared on Carrington Moss on Mar 15th (the third year in a row this date has seen the first arrival!), closely followed by singles at Piethorne Valley on the 16th, Woodford on the 18th and then 2 at Piethorne Valley on the 19th. The 20th saw the first multi-

arrival with 3 locations finding a total of 5 birds and thereafter 19 locations recorded the species to the end of the month with a maximum of 3 together at 2 sites. April, as expected, saw the bulk arrival of Wheatears and passage numbers were very high, with a superb monthly total of 1038 birds being recorded at 57 sites in the county. Though there were 10 dates recording high numbers during the month, the 19th saw a substantial fall with 11 locations recording a total of 279 individuals, with Ashworth Moor Reservoir managing to set a new single site county record of 150 and the Horwich Moors a not too shabby 72. Some birds continued to migrate through the county during May whilst others established territories and bred successfully but there were only 5 double figure counts during the month as follows: - 20 at Dove Stone on the 2nd; 11 at Far Bradshaw on the 3rd; 14 on Chat Moss and 16 on the Horwich Moors, both on the 6th; 15 on the Horwich Moors on the 10th.

Confirmed breeding came from 7 atlas tetrads and one other location with the first instance at Watergrove Reservoir on May 30th and the last on Holcombe Moor on Aug 1st. Birds were also present in suitable habitat during the breeding season at a further 11 tetrads or locations and 2 also held birds on territories but breeding remained unproven. On the BBS 10 squares recorded the species (8 in 2009) and 7 of those had birds present on the late visit, compared to only 3 in 2009.

Return migration began somewhat abruptly during August with 35 on the Horwich Moors on the 14th starting it all off.



From that date onwards to the end of the month, passage through this one large site was remarkable, with birds recorded on 18 days and their amassed total standing at 563 with a peak count of 99 on the 27th. Away from the Horwich Moors, 27 other locations in the county also recorded Wheatears during the month. September continued to see good numbers in the county with 10 sites recording birds and 9 managing double figure counts, the highest of which was 25 on the Horwich Moors on the 8th. This latter site once again monopolised the bulk of the passage with the first week of September recording a total of 98, the second week 36, the third week 70 and the final week 20 individuals. October records dwindled and passage slowed down considerably with the following sites managing records: - 1 at Heaton Park Reservoir on the 1st; 1 at Pickley Green, Westleigh on the 7th; 1 at Ludworth Moor on the 11th; 1 at Stockport Retail Park on the 15th; 1 at Audenshaw Reservoirs on the 18th; 1 at Hart Common on the 20th; and the Horwich Moors recorded a total of 54 individuals on 10 dates during the month. There were 2 November records this year, both considered to be of the Greenland race *O. v. leucorhoa* and both confined to the Horwich Moors with singles on the 3rd and 6th. The final total for Wheatears recorded on the Horwich Moors alone from the last week in July to the end of the second week in November was an impressive 817 individuals.

## **DUNNOCK** *Prunella modularis*

Abundant resident.

BoCC Amber List (BDMp2) and UK BAP species.

This species continued its high density within the county again this year, being recorded in 84% of BBS squares as opposed to only 78% nationally. During 2010 the BBS across England recorded its highest levels since the survey began and similarly, the number of birds per square in Greater Manchester rose from 3.2 in 2009 to 4.3 this year. Breeding was confirmed in 69 atlas tetrads or other locations, an increase of 33% on last year but due to the skulking nature of this species there were many other possible and probable breeding instances. The cold winter therefore appeared not to have affected the species and this was certainly apparent at Hollingworth Lake where its presence was remarked upon by the site's regular observer.

Outside the breeding season there were several double figure counts but none came close to the 35 recorded on an all-site count around Pennington Flash on Mar 1st.

## **HOUSE SPARROW** *Passer domesticus*

Abundant resident.

BoCC Red List (BDp1, BDp2, SPEC) and UK BAP species.

*Early winter counts:* New Years day saw a count of 51 birds on one square during the survey for the winter atlas while 40 were in the garden of Vicarage Cottage at Ringway; 30 were at Bedford, Leigh and 37 were at Goyt Hall Farm getting observers' lists for 2010 off to a good start. Amongst the 51 atlas tetrads recording this species during the period, a further nine recorded numbers of thirty or over ranging from 33 to 99.

*Breeding:* BBS records came from 81% of squares, slightly up on the 2009 figure of 77%. The national figure was only 58%. Some high numbers were found during these visits too with 49/73 recorded from Higher Folds; 33/56 Ashton on Mersey; 43/46 Urmston; 40/46 Langley; 20/40 Watergrove Reservoir; 46/24 Sale East; 45/66 Fallowfield; 40/30 Healey; 36/27 Holcombe Brook; 34/39 Sharples; 39/46 Top Lock; and 37/44 Dukinfield. It was a similar story during breeding atlas surveys in May and June with counts of 46 and 85 at Woodford; 77 at Boggart Hole Clough; 45 Prestwich; 63 Glazebury; 78 in Stockport town centre; 62 in nearby Edgeley; 46 in Langley; 48 at Whitefield and also at Middleton Junction; 75 at Hareshill and 100 at Pilsforth (Jul 10th). There were widespread reports of confirmed breeding from all parts of the recording area. Small flocks of 12 and 6 were seen at different sites in Manchester city centre on the suggestive date of May 5th. Three or four pairs at Oak Hill Farm, Prestolee used nest boxes occupied in previous years by Tree Sparrows, although there is no evidence that they ousted their scarcer cousins.

*Post breeding/late winter:* A large post breeding flock of 133 birds were seen in hawthorn bushes by the canal at Hall House Lane, Leigh on Jul 13th. Other notable counts during this period came from Elton Reservoir 70 Jul 19th; 60 Hart Common Jul 29th; 54 Borsdane Wood Jul 31st; 75 Banky Meadow Aug 5th; 76 Lower Bredbury Aug 8th; 120 Higher Boarshaw Middleton Aug 9th; 65 Prospect Grange Farm Irlam Moss Aug 26th; 80 Birch and 75 Tyldesley both Sep 2nd. Counts in the last quarter dropped in numbers with the exception of 110 at Birch on Nov 26th. The maximum at the popular Vicarage Cottage at Ringway was 40 during this period and the highest winter atlas counts were of 44 at Woodford Nov 11th; 39 Higher Broughton Nov 21st; 42 Lower Kersal Nov 22nd; 56 Gorton Nov 29th and 43 Hazel Grove Golf Club Dec 5th.

## **TREE SPARROW** *Passer montanus*

Uncommon resident.

BoCC Red List (BDp1, BDp2, SPEC) and UK BAP species.

There was a total of 345 records of this species of high conservation concern submitted, compared with 281 in 2009. These indicate that the county's stronghold lies in a belt in the western half, running between Dunham Massey in the south to Bradley in the extreme north west. In addition there appear to be isolated pockets in the Birch/Pilsworth area, Ludworth Moor and the vicinity of Woodford Aerodrome. The only other sightings outside these areas were at Bowlee, Middleton "present" on Jun 28th and 1 Nov 11th, 1 at the canal near Elton Reservoir Aug 30th and a rare occurrence of 1 at Pennington Flash on Sep 26th. The year also saw the completion of Operation Tree Sparrow initiated by the RSPB, with additional funding from Natural England, set up in 2004 as a result of a decline in Tree Sparrow numbers by 95% in the previous 30 years. It aimed to provide a supply of seed for winter feeding and nest boxes for breeding. Initially 11 "hot spots" were identified in Cheshire, Lancashire, Merseyside and Greater Manchester, the two in the latter comprising farms in the Bolton and mossland areas. The Bradley area was identified and added later. Information about the scheme was circulated to most farms and many took part. Whilst according to the 2010 BBS report there has been a 73% increase nationally between 1995-2009, we are still well below the levels of 1970.

*Early winter counts:* Large counts were noted at Chat Moss with 41 Jan 1st and 30 Feb 7th, Irlam Moss 30 Feb 1st and the maximum at Bradley feeding station was of 40 on Jan 13th.

*Breeding:* A significant and disappointing drop in the number of occurrences was recorded, 4% as opposed to 6% in 2009. The national figure was 6.5%. Confirmed breeding was received from 13 locations as follows – Highfield Moss; Ludworth Moor; Haigh; Bradley; Billinge; Pilsworth; Bispham; Hart Common; Barton Moss (Moss Lane Farm); Great Woolden Moss and Four Gates (Radcliffe House Farm).

*Post breeding/late winter:* The moss land area produced noteworthy counts throughout the second part of the year although the Bradley area failed to produce a count in double figures after 50 were present on Aug 2nd. There were 35 at Billinge Higher End on Oct 2nd but all other large counts were within the moss land area. At Cadishead Moss there were 40 Aug 19th with 45 at Chat Moss Sep 30th, 38 there Oct 23rd and 40 Nov 11th. At Irlam Moss 30 were present on Oct 27th and 40 were at Prospect Grange Farm on Nov 29th and Dec 9th. The number at Rindle Road feeding station and nearby woods doubled from 30 on Nov 12th to 60 on Dec 3rd. Finally 32 were at Moss House Farm, Glazebury on Nov 11th.

## **YELLOW WAGTAIL** *Motacilla flava*

Uncommon summer visitor, passage migrant and breeder.

BoCC Red List (BDp1, BDp2) and UK BAP species.

The first record of the year was encountered a few days earlier than the average expected arrival date in the county, with a single at Audenshaw Reservoirs on Mar 31st, the earliest ever for the site. There were then a small handful of scattered records until the main arrival of birds into the county occurring from Apr 21st onwards, generally involving 1 or 2 individuals per location. Sites recording Yellow Wagtail during April were: - Altrincham ETW (with a maximum of 4 present on the 21st); Astley Moss East Peat Pools; Astley Moss SSSI; Audenshaw Reservoirs (recording its best spring passage of this species for many years, culminating with a maximum of 8 present on the 25th); Bryn Gates Landfill; Carrington Moss; Chadderton, with a male feeding around the feet of horses by the Rochdale Canal on the 26th; Chat Moss; Elton Reservoir; Irlam Moss; Norbury Brook; Pennington Flash; Red Chalis Farm, Chat Moss; Rindle, Astley (in fields around Rindle Wood); Rumworth Lodge; Smithills Moor; and Woodford Aerodrome. Additional sites recording the species during May were: - Astley Moss; Barton Moss; Blackleach Reservoir; Moss Brow Farm, Warburton; and Slag Lane, Lowton.



2010 in Greater Manchester saw a very successful breeding season for this generally declining species, perhaps one of the best years in the past decade, though of course it remains a tiny proportion of the 200 pairs BBGM estimated in 1984. Indeed on the BBS across England, 2010 saw the species reach its lowest levels since the survey began in 1994 and only two county BBS squares (3%) recorded the species with Carrington Moss recording a single on the late visit but Astley Moss East managing a pair on both visits. Nevertheless, 23 territories were estimated in the county, which was double the number estimated in 2009. Of those in 2010, the collective Chat Moss area maintained its stronghold with 10 territories and Carrington Moss claiming a further minimum of 6. Breeding was confirmed at Astley Moss (2 pairs); near to Astley Moss East Peat Pools; Barton Moss (5 families of fledged young); Bispham; Bryn Gates (2 fledged young); Cadishead Moss; Carrington Moss (4 fledged young); Chat Moss; Hareshill, Pilsworth, which was the first confirmed breeding in the Rochdale borough since 2003; Irlam Moss; and Rumworth Lodge.

Small family parties remained on or around breeding locations until early September but pre-roost gatherings around Astley Moss East Peat Pools in the first half of August built up to a maximum of 31 on Aug 15th, with the flock (consisting of a good proportion of juveniles) heading off the short distance to the Malkins Farm area, probably to roost in arable fields there. Away from the breeding locations, post-breeding dispersal and/or migrants were encountered in singles unless otherwise stated at: - Green Avenue, Astley on Jul 6th (2 juveniles, with one wandering around the roof of a house!); Hope Carr NR on Jul 31st and Aug 18th; Heaton Park Reservoir on Aug 21st; Elton Reservoir and Irlam Moss, both on Aug 22nd; Rumworth Lodge with 6 juveniles on Aug 25th; Georges Lane, Horwich Moors recorded 3 on Aug 7th and then singles on Sep 9th, Oct 2nd and the final sighting for 2010 of one travelling south with Skylarks on Oct 4th; Chelburn Reservoirs on Sep 4th; Altrincham ETW with a maximum of 8 on Aug 28th; Clegg Hall Marsh, Smithy Bridge (a former breeding site) on Aug 31st; Astley Moss on Sep 5th; Lily Lane, Stubshaw Cross with a maximum of 4 (3 males and a juvenile) on Sep 7th; Mast Road, Horwich Moors on Sep 9th and 30th, Horrocks Flash on Sep 22nd; and High Rid Reservoir on Sep 30th.

No records of Blue-headed Wagtail *Motacilla flava flava* were received this year for the first time since 2002.

## **GREY WAGTAIL** *Motacilla cinerea*

Fairly common resident.

BoCC Amber List species (BDMp2).

During the year, this charismatic species was recorded at 238 locations across the county; hinting at its widespread distribution and occasionally included birds visiting domestic gardens.

Outside the breeding season, birds were found in 52 winter atlas tetrads and larger gatherings included 10 during very cold weather on the unfrozen filter beds at Hope Carr ETW on Jan 9th-10th and again on Jan 31st; 9 at Compstall Lodges ETW on Mar 21st; 6 feeding in gullies at Liverpool Street, Salford on Nov 3rd; and 8 at Centenary Bridge, Eccles on Nov 23rd. A male singing at Wince Brook on Dec 7th was rather unseasonal.

England as a whole saw a significant 21% decline on the BBS in 2009-2010 and Greater Manchester fared little better with 21% of squares recording the species against 26% in 2009, meaning a 20% reduction which was very close to the national trend. The first confirmed breeding record during the year was on Apr 26th and the last, on Aug 8th. In between these dates, confirmed breeding came from a total of 58 locations which included 27 breeding atlas tetrads. Locations with confirmed breeding were: - Agecroft Bridge; Ashton-under-Lyne, on the Portland Basin; Audenshaw; Barrow Bridge; Blackley Forest; Broughton, at the Cliff; Burrs, near Bury (2 pairs); Carrington Moss; Castleshaw Reservoirs; Chadderton Hall Park; Chorlton

Brook; Chorlton Water Park; Clifton; Daisy Nook; Dovestone Moss; Dovestone Reservoir; Dukinfield Town Centre, on the River Tame; Edenfield; Elton Reservoir; Etherow CP; Gatley Carrs; Greenfield Reservoir; Hale Barns; Haughton Dale; Heaton Park; Heywood; Higher Boarshaw, Middleton on the Rochdale Canal; Horwich, Church Street area; Irlam Locks; Irlam, River Irwell old course; Leigh Spinners Mill; Liverpool Street, Salford; Lower Kersal; Luzley; Marple Dale; New Springs; Norden; Pennington Flash (4 pairs), including a regular pair nesting in an equipment storage unit; Pickley Green, Westleigh; Piethorne Valley (2 pairs); Philips Park, Bradford; Prestwich; Radcliffe Town Centre; Rhodes Lodges (on the adjacent River Irk); Riversdale, Bardsley; Rochdale Town Centre; Seven Acres; Shawclough; Stalybridge (3 locations); Summit; Sunbank Wood, on the River Bollin; Timperley; Uppermill; Walkerwood Reservoir; Whitehead Lodges; Wigan, Top Lock; Worthington Lakes; Yeoman Hey Reservoir. There were many more records received of birds holding territory and/or being present in suitable habitat during the breeding season and some confirmed breeding inevitably went unrecorded.

### **PIED WAGTAIL** *Motacilla alba*

British race *M. a. yarrelli* is a common resident.

Continental Race *M. a. alba* (White Wagtail) is an uncommon passage migrant.

Winter roosts of this species in town and city centres, supermarket car parks and the like are often a pleasant distraction from our late afternoon and evening ventures but some of these roosts go unrecorded, mainly due to the fact that observers are not actually out birdwatching when they see them and they are quickly forgotten about or not noted down. As these roosts are very important to the GMBRG and to our understanding of the species' status in the county, we would ask that wherever possible, all such winter roosts are formally submitted to us. That said, several winter roosts were recorded, with those in the early winter period as follows: - 120 St. Annes Square, Manchester City Centre on Jan 16th; 82 at Mesnes Terrace, Wigan on Jan 18th; up to 200 at Warrington Road, Ashton-under-Lyne on Jan 26th; 40 on the roof of Hollinwood Travel, Hollinwood, Oldham on Feb 10th were a pre-roost assembly; 80 outside Tesco at Woodfields Retail Park, Bury on Feb 20th; 200 outside Sainsbury's on Ashfield Road, Sale on Feb 25th; 100 in St. Peter's Square, Manchester city centre recorded on Mar 1st were harassed by local Sparrowhawks; and 60 outside Café Nero, Bolton on Mar 12th. Other than roosts, all larger gatherings recorded in the county during this period involved effluent treatment works (ETW), with their always unfrozen filter beds highly attractive to insects and wagtails alike. Counts of 40 or more involved; 40 at Tyldesley ETW on Jan 1st; 200 at Hope Carr ETW on Jan 9th, with a further count of 50 there on Feb 13th; 45 at Offerton Green ETW on Jan 13th; 41 at Altrincham ETW on Feb 11th and 40 on Mar 21st; 45 at Compstall ETW on Feb 27th and 80 there on Mar 21st.

Breeding was confirmed at 61 locations this year, practically the same as in 2009 and of those locations, 37 were atlas tetrads. Worryingly though, BBS nationally reported that Pied Wagtail levels have declined significantly between 2009-2010 and reached their lowest levels since the BBS began in 1994. Greater Manchester this year revealed its own reduction in BBS with only 30 squares (45%) recording the species compared to 53% in 2009. There were though many reports of possible and probable breeding but we would urge observers to submit all records of the species, particularly breeding activity, so we can obtain a clearer picture of their current status.

Autumn Pied Wagtail passage through the county saw visible migration counts recording birds travelling in a mainly southerly direction with the bulk of their migration from the third week in August to the first week in October. During this time, larger counts (of 30 or more) involved 50 at Rumworth Lodge on Aug 21st and 30 on Sep 9th; 31 at Lily Lane, Stubshaw Cross on Aug 31st and the same amount again on Sep 17th; 45 at Bowlee Community Park and

30 at Hollingworth Lake, both on Sep 9th; 30 at Heaton Park Reservoir on Sep 28th and a further 76 all flying over south, on Oct 2nd; and 50 at Hope Carr ETW on Oct 9th.

The late winter period saw Manchester City Centre's Christmas markets once again the most productive sites, with their multitude of bright lights and food stalls giving off much appreciated warmth for the noisy gatherings of wagtails and 200 in St. Anne's Square on Nov 14th to Dec 1st rose to its maximum of 350 on Dec 12th and was the largest gathering recorded during the entire year; once again occasionally being harassed by local Sparrowhawks. Other larger roosts in the county involved: - an early roost of 73 on Irlam Moss on Oct 1st; 50 at The Snipe Retail Park, Ashton Moss on Oct 7th; 180 at Mesnes Terrace, Wigan on Nov 25th; 60 outside Asda, Trafford Park on Sep 24th; 100 outside Tesco at Woodfields Retail Park, Bury on Nov 30th; 100 in Ashton-under-Lyne town centre and 100 at Leigh Parish Church, both on Dec 7th; and 205 in the St. Peter's Square, Manchester City Centre roost on Dec 11th still being harassed by local Sparrowhawks. Away from the roosts, other larger daytime flocks included 30 at Irlam Locks on Nov 2nd; 30 at Centenary Bridge, Eccles on Nov 23rd; 40 at Hope Carr ETW on Dec 11th increased to 130 on Dec 29th; and 70 were at Altrincham ETW on Dec 12th.

### **Continental race White Wagtail** *M. a. alba*

Unsurprisingly, all but one record during the year was encountered in spring; not least due to the difficulty in separating autumn birds from the British race *M. a. yarrelli*.

The first record of the year was of single birds at both Kingsway Business Park and Pennington Flash on Mar 19th. Thereafter, a further 4 locations encountered this species during the remainder of March; Audenshaw Reservoirs, Elton Reservoir, Hazel Grove Golf Course and Rumworth Lodge, but only Pennington Flash recorded more than a single, with 2 there on the 23rd. April saw the bulk of the records as usual and although 12 locations were involved during the month, the majority saw only ones and twos recorded. Audenshaw Reservoirs was the main exception though with some excellent 'falls' of the species beginning with 20 on the 7th, then 30 on the 10th and 41 on the 11th when there was a slight lull before counts of 28 on the 24th and 21 on the 26th. Other than this site, others recording more than 2 birds involved 4 at Pennington Flash on the 7th, 3 at Elton Reservoir on the 8th with 3 there again on the 19th, and 6 in the fields behind Rindle Wood, Astley Moss on the 20th. May saw passage decline with only five sites noting any numbers: Audenshaw Reservoirs with a maximum of 8 on the 1st and 2 on the 2nd, 5 on the 3rd and 1 on the 5th; Elton Reservoir with only a single on the 20th; Pennington Flash with only a single on the 2nd; Rindle, Astley with 3 on the 9th and a single on the 15th; and Rumworth Lodge recording singles on the 5th, 6th, 9th and 11th.

The only autumn record was of a single at Castleshaw Reservoirs on Sep 11th.

### **TREE PIPIT** *Anthus trivialis*

Scarce summer visitor and uncommon passage migrant.

BoCC Red List (BDp1, BDp2) and UK BAP species.

The disheartening downturn in this species' breeding fortunes continued again this year, with no reported instances within the county and BBS levels in England reached their lowest since the survey began in 1994. Tree Pipit passage through Greater Manchester however, despite never previously being a particularly notable feature of our migration periods, saw unprecedented numbers, particularly at one location during the autumn.

Spring migration began in April with the first record, a single over Watergrove Reservoir on the 18th, occurring right on their average arrival date in the county. Barlows Tip, Chorlton Water Park attracted 3 on the 24th all of which remained until the 26th, reducing to 2 on the 28th and then finally to a single from Apr 29th to May 1st. Their prolonged stay at this latter site

allowed many county birders to catch up with these usually all too briefly present spring migrants. Other April records involved singles at Irlam Moss on the 20th, Winter Hill on the 24th, Red Moss on the 25th and at Mast Road, Horwich Moors on the 29th. There were only 2 records during May; with singles at Pickley Green, Westleigh on the 13th and at Hollingworth, Hyde on the 14th.

Autumn migration began in late July with singles at Georges Lane on the 30th and Gilligants Farm on the 31st, both locations within the much larger site collectively known as the Horwich Moors. Few could have ever perceived the events to follow at this site though. During August alone and taking into consideration the possibility of the same individuals perhaps being present on consecutive days, 55 Tree Pipits were recorded on the Horwich Moors on twelve dates. Beginning with a single on the 4th, no further birds were reported until the floodgates opened from the 16th with the following records:- 1 on 16th; 13 on 19th; 5 on 20th; 10 on 21st; 9 on 22nd; 1 on 23rd; 2 on 25th; 6 on 26th; 3 on 27th; 3 on 28th; 2 on 30th. September continued this extraordinary passage with 39 individuals recorded on only 8 dates from the beginning of the month to its abrupt termination mid-month as follows: - 1 on 1st; 15 on 2nd, a new county record and included a single flock of 10 birds feeding in a horse paddock at Holden's Farm; 4 on 3rd; 6 on 4th; 3 on 5th; 3 on 7th; 3 on 8th; 4 on 17th. Outside the Horwich Moors, other county sites were also recording this species, albeit in considerably reduced numbers and with considerably smaller observer coverage, with sightings of single individuals as follows: - Cow Lane, Hollingworth on Aug 8th; Watergrove Reservoir on Aug 17th; Holcombe Moor on Aug 25th; Billinge Higher End on Aug 28th; and Sandyforth former Open Cast Coal Site on Sep 2nd.

### **MEADOW PIPIT** *Anthus pratensis*

Fairly common resident, summer visitor and passage migrant.

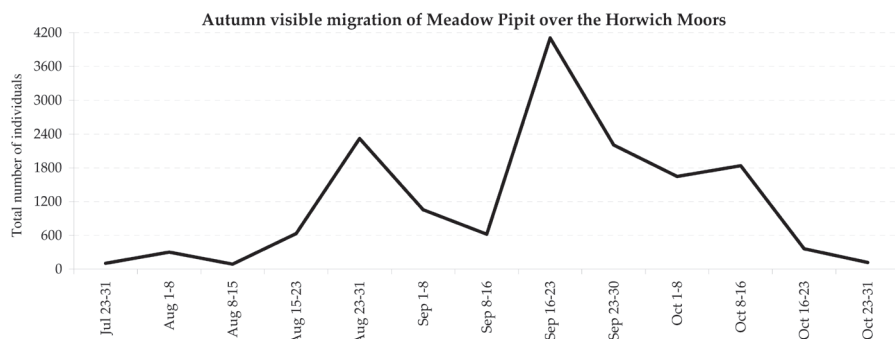
BoCC Amber List species (BDMp1, BDMp2).

The beginning of the year to mid March found some small flocks in the county, though there was one exception and counts of 10 or more were as follows: - 15 at Rindle, Astley Moss on Jan 2nd; 25 at Offerton Green ETW on Jan 9th and 14 on Jan 13th; 50 were on unfrozen filter beds during extremely cold weather at Hope Carr ETW on Jan 9th-10th, which rose to a remarkable 100 on Jan 12th; 10 at Rumworth Lodge on Feb 16th; 16 at Woodford Aerodrome on Mar 4th; and 12 at Billinge Higher Ends on Mar 12th.

Spring heralds the passage of Meadow Pipits back to their breeding grounds and brings with it good sized flocks to the county. Those numbering 20 or more during March were as follows: - 50 at Pilsworth Fisheries on the 19th; 20 at Chelburn Reservoirs on the 21st; 100 at Castleshaw Reservoirs on the 26th; 36 at Croxden Peat Works NR on the 26th; 23 at Billinge Higher End on the 27th, included 12 flying north in 2 hours; 50 at Ludworth Moor on the 27th and 20 on the 29th; 84 flew north west over Heaton Park Reservoir on the 28th; and 40 at Elton Reservoir on the 31st. April witnessed the usual notable increase in migration through the county, with a flurry of activity particularly in the first two days of the month this year, with records on the 1st of 40 at Akzo Pond; 40 at Castleshaw Reservoirs; and an estimated 300 at Woodford Aerodrome; continuing on the 2nd with 50 at Cutacre Open Cast Coal Site; 52 at Elton Reservoir; 61 at Far Bradshaw; and 20 on fields opposite Horrocks Flash. Thereafter, migration through April became more settled with the following flocks of 20 or more: - 20 Holcombe Moor on the 3rd; 50 at Ludworth Moor also on the 3rd; 40 at Elton Reservoir on the 5th; 30 at Holdens Farm, Horwich Moors on the 7th; 20 at Audenshaw Reservoirs on the 9th; 50 at Ashworth Moor Reservoir on the 18th and 120 on the 19th; 50 at Castleshaw Reservoirs on the 21st and 40 on the 22nd; 40 at Moss Lane, Astley Moss also on the 21st; 40 at Woodford Aerodrome on the 22nd; and 40 on Winter Hill on the 24th was the last of the main spring migration.

Breeding in the county was relatively poorly recorded with only 27 atlas tetrads and other sites confirming breeding. This is clearly not the true picture of their status in the county though and BBS results saw a very slight increase from 20 squares in 2009 to 21 squares in 2010. The average birds per square was up too with 11 per square now being recorded. Unsurprisingly, the upland moors supplied the bulk of the records during the breeding season with Holcombe Moor proving very productive with 30/44 birds on its two BBS visits and Blackstone Edge Moor (15/26), Holcombe Hill (19/29), Holcombe Rifle Range (24/26) and Rooley Moor (10/22) all also providing good returns.

Autumn Meadow Pipit passage has become something of a prominent feature through the county, typified by the diligent efforts of the county's visible migration (VisMig) watchers.



Amongst these, the geographically gifted Horwich Moors reigns supreme and migration for the autumn period totalled 15,359 birds passing through from its abrupt start with 41 on Jul 30th to its similar end with 70 on Oct 24th and the average birds per day total during that period soared to 256. Between the latter dates the Horwich Moors recorded 10 daily counts of over 500 birds and 2 of over 1000; with 1550 passing through north-west over Higher Meadows for much of the day on Sep 17th and 1323 moving south over Dean Ditch in only 2 hours on Sep 25th. Up until the last week in September, birds passed through in a north-westerly direction but for the next two weeks their flight path was southerly, moving to south-easterly during the second week in October. Other sites in the county too recorded good migration of this species, with the larger flocks consisting of: - 60 at High Rid Reservoir and 70 in the Piethorne Valley, both on Aug 5th; 187 heading west at Ludworth Moor on Aug 25th and a further 105 on the 27th; 65 at Dove Stone on Sep 9th; 234 south in 2 flocks over Cutacre Open Cast Coal Site on Sep 12th; 200 heading south over Heaton Park Reservoir on Sep 21st with additional counts of 96 west on Oct 1st, 150 south on Oct 7th and 209 south on Oct 11th; 100 at Castleshaw Reservoirs on Sep 27th; and the lowlands also got in on the action via 75 south in 2 hours over Green Avenue, Astley on Oct 11th and 130 on Ramsdale's Ruck, Pennington Flash on Oct 19th.

During the late winter period numbers settled back to single figure counts from a small number of widespread county sites, with the following all achieving counts of 20 or more: - 20 by the River Roch at Smallbridge Industrial Estate on Nov 3rd; 38 at Bamfurlong on Nov 11th, with further counts from the same location of 40 on Nov 20th, 27 on Nov 27th and 35 on Dec 12th; 100 at Horrocks Fold, Bolton on Nov 15th; 20 at Flixton ETW on Dec 7th; and 20 at Altrincham ETW on Dec 12th.

## **ROCK PIPIT** *Anthus petrosus*

Uncommon passage migrant.

Typically, all records during the year conformed to the spring or autumn migration periods, no doubt owing to the migratory Scandinavian racial origins of all our records.

Only two sites recorded this species during spring with Audenshaw Reservoirs typically the most productive of all, recording 1 on Mar 21st, 2 on Mar 24th, 1 on Mar 31st, 2 on Apr 1st and 1 on Apr 2nd. Elton Reservoir recorded 1 on Mar 31st and 1 on Apr 1st-3rd, the latter of which displayed the characteristic breeding plumage traits indicative of the Scandinavian race *Anthus petrosus littoralis*.

Autumn migration was recorded at 3 county sites but was generally poor with the only records as follows: - 1 at Audenshaw Reservoirs Sep 28th and another single Oct 1st; 2 at Castleshaw Reservoirs Oct 2nd; 1 at Elton Reservoir Oct 24th.

## **CHAFFINCH** *Fringilla coelebs*

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Thankfully yet again a good selection of records were received from across the length and breadth of our recording area but a sizeable majority of the largest flock counts came once more from a few favoured mosslands sites.

*Early year counts:* the Rindle area in January reported 270 on 1st, 160 (roosting) 24th, 150 on 26th and 100 on 30th. February counts there included 120 on 3rd, 50 on 6th, 170 on 12th and 200 at the feeding station on 14th and finally 150 on Mar 26th. Other noteworthy counts included: - 120 Astley Moss area Jan 17th; at Prospect Grange Farm, Irlam Moss - 71 Jan 18th, 60 Jan 25th and 70 Feb 12th; 50 Orrell WP Jan 19th and a maximum of 70 reported there in February; 45 Worthington Lakes Feb 5th; 42 Pennington Flash Mar 1st; 50 Nook Lane, Astley Moss Mar 7th; 78 Castleshaw Reservoirs Mar 19th and 70 at Longshaw, Billinge Mar 20th.

*Breeding and surveys:* recorded on 59 (88%) of BBS plots - 83% in 2009 and 92% in 2008. Sites recording double-figure counts on both early/late visits were: - Astley Moss East (24/10), Carrington (10/12), Trub (14/11) and Worthington (14/17). This species has shown a statistically significant increase of 19% on the BBS in North-West England for the period 1995- 2009. On the WBBS, Douglas Valley recorded 22/4 and Hey Brook 11/5. By 2010, our on-going national and local atlas projects were well into their third years and many birders kindly dedicated considerable extra time and effort into monitoring our local breeding birds throughout the spring and summer. The rewards were considerable, as is evidenced by the high percentages of confirmed breeding records for many of the finches and buntings this year, directly obtained through their atlas endeavours. Confirmed breeding for Chaffinch was reported from a really excellent total of 60 atlas tetrads/sites this year, up from 46 in 2009, with over 90% of this total generated from atlas records. A few selected entries included: - the first singing male was reported from Platt Fields on Feb 7th, with the last songster heard on Jun 30th. The first record of nest building was of a female seen collecting and carrying animal hairs at Chesham Woods, Bury on Apr 5th. The first confirmed breeding record came from tetrad SD80P Hareshill on Apr 19th and the last from tetrad SD81N Naden Aug 13th.

*Late year counts:* 63 Smithills Moor, Bolton Sep 8th; the Rindle area in November reported 140 and 100 on 2nd and 12th respectively and 250 were there Dec 3rd; 70 in tetrad SJ69P Pennington Flash East Nov 4th; 100 Chat Moss Nov 7th; 130 Nook Lane, Astley Moss Nov 21st; 150 Irlam Moss Nov 28th and 100 at Barton Moss, Eccles Dec 28th.

*Movements:* with autumn visible migration watching now a regular feature of a few enthusiastic bird watchers' calendars, some substantial counts of birds on the move were logged this year. Selected records included: - at George's Lane, Horwich Moors- 22 moved NW Aug 22nd, 72



NW Oct 16th; 180 S Oct 25th and 41 NW Nov 26th. At Heaton Park Reservoir in October: - 71 flew S 2nd; 100 S 7th; 86 WSW 17th and 102 W 20th. 30 headed SW over Holcombe Moor Oct 16th. At Burnt Edge, Horwich Moors in October: - 74 went SW 18th; 100 SW 20th; 153 NW 22nd and 135 WNW 24th.

### **BRAMBLING** *Fringilla montifringilla*

Uncommon winter visitor.

Of just 154 records on the 2010 database over 55% were of a single bird. Of all records, approximately 20% and 80% were from the first winter and second winter periods respectively. There were only 12 double-figure tallies, 4 of which were of birds flying over, or on passage.

*First winter period:* the only double-figure count was of 22 in the Rindle area Feb 28th. Otherwise birds in low single-figure numbers were reported from a wide range of sites across our recording area. These included :- at Pennington Flash in January and February, Hale Jan 6th; Orrell WP January to March; Castleshaw Reservoirs Jan 28th; Chadkirk Country Estate Feb 7th; Ashton-on-Mersey Feb 26th; Smithills Pond Wood Mar 14th; Astley Green Village Apr 7th; Cow Lane, Hollingworth Apr 10th and at Haigh Country Park Apr 13th. This last sighting was the final one from the first winter period and represented a slightly earlier than average departure date.

*Second winter period:* the first reported record was on Oct 2nd, a slightly earlier than average autumn arrival date. 15 were in tetrad SJ99Y Roe Cross Oct 7th. In November, Landslow Green, near Hollingworth reported 10, 15 and 10 on 7th, 14th and 21st respectively. 73 but "probably 100+" were at Hollingworth Hall Farm Nov 11th and 30 were seen at Barton Moss Eccles Dec 28th. Other selected records included: - 4 Smithills Moor Nov 16th; 2 Giant's Seat Nov 20th; 2 Ludworth Moor Dec 6th and 6 at Eagley Dec 20th.

*Movements:* in October, Heaton Park Reservoir reported one S, 3 W and 10 flying over on 2nd, 20th and 23rd respectively. Also in October, at Burnt Edge, Horwich Moors: - 10 moved W, 31 W and 44 NW on 17th, 20th and 28th respectively. 2 flew over Pickley Marsh Oct 17th.

*Garden sightings:* two were in an Ashton-on-Mersey garden Feb 26th: a Carrbrook garden enjoyed small numbers in both winter periods (a highest count of 5 Dec 28th) and the last week of the year saw small numbers of Bramblings visiting gardens in Marple, Mossley and Stretford too.

### **GREENFINCH** *Carduelis chloris*

Common resident.

There were 10 counts of 50 or more birds in 2010, 3 in the earlier part of the year and 7 in the latter. For comparison, in 2009 there were 17 similar sized counts, split 12 and 5 respectively.

*Early year counts:* 50 at Woodford Aerodrome Jan 21st; 400 Worsley Moss Jan 24th and 100 roosting at Newall Green Feb 8th. Other selected counts included:- 30 at Orrell WP Jan 19th; 30 in tetrad SJ69U Hope Carr NR Jan 27th; 40 roosting in Wigan Town Centre Feb 28th and 30 at Pilsworth Fisheries Mar 6th.

*Breeding and surveys:* keen atlas surveyors provided the earliest records of singing males, which came from tetrads SD80K Cheetham Hill and SJ99I Audenshaw, both on Feb 6th. The first records of nest building were from tetrads SD81X Shawclough Apr 6th and SD50I Gathurst Apr 18th. Confirmed breeding records came from an excellent total of 49 sites or tetrads (51 in 2009 and 44 in 2008), with the earliest from Ashton Moss on May 15th and the latest from tetrad SJ88N Cheadle SW on Aug 24th. 57 plots (85%) recorded this species on the BBS in 2010, very similar figures to those noted in both 2009 and 2008. Just a single site - Trub (13/17) recorded double-figure counts on both visits (3 sites in 2009). On the BBS nationally this

species has generally been stable for the period 1995 - 2009 but has shown a 17% increase in the same period for North-West England.

*Late year counts:* 80 at Woodford Aerodrome Jul 8th, with 90 there Aug 5th; 50 Crime Lake, Failsworth Jul 11th; 60 Wilson's Farm, Hart Common Jul 29th; 70 Pennington Flash in September and 70 in tetrad SD61R Walker Fold Dec 14th. Other selected counts included:- 30 Hollingworth Lake Aug 15th, 35 Piethorne Valley Sep 15th; 31 Smithills Moor Oct 24th; 40 in tetrad SJ69P Pennington Flash East Nov 4th; 30 roosting on Hopwood Golf Course Nov 14th; 30 the Dip, near Elton Reservoir Nov 27th and 25 Rumworth Dec 9th.

*Movements:* there were 11 records on the database of birds on the move, all logged between Sep 23rd and Nov 23rd. Selected sightings included: - 36 S/W over Smithills Moor, Horwich Oct 6th and in November - 6 and 5 NW on 13th and 23rd respectively. 19 flew W over Heaton Park Reservoir Oct 20th and 77 N Oct 28th.

*Garden sightings:* a Hindley Green garden had a maximum of 13 birds in January but the observer noted for comparison that this was but a quarter of the number of birds visiting his garden, in the same month, around a decade ago. A Marple garden also reported "numbers generally lower". Between 50 and 60 were in a Ringway garden in November and December.

## **GOLDFINCH** *Carduelis carduelis* Common resident.

All counts of 50 or more birds are listed.

*Early year counts:* 120 roosted at Ringway in January and throughout the first half of February. In January reports were of 80 Prince's Park, Irlam 4th; 50 Kenworthy Woods 5th; 150 Barlow's Farm, Bickershaw 19th; 90 at the Irwell (Old Course) Irlam 24th. 50 were at Nook Lane, Astley Moss Mar 7th.

*Breeding and surveys:* on the BBS, 57 (85%) of plots recorded this colourful finch, a slight increase on the 2009 figure. 9 sites (7 in 2009) recorded a double-figure count on at least one visit - Abram (4/10); Ashton-on-Mersey (16/8); Astley Moss East (7/13); Boothstown East (17/17); Caldermoor (8/10); Holcombe Brook (11/14); Levenshulme (1/12); Priory Gardens, Sale (7/12) and Trub (14/13). Goldfinch has seen a phenomenal increase of 118% on the BBS in North-West England for the period 1995 - 2009. Atlas surveyors reported the first singing birds in February from tetrads SD90C Werneth 11th and SJ79X Stretford 16th. The first reported nest building was from tetrad SD91R Piethorne Reservoir Apr 7th. Confirmed breeding records were logged between Apr 27th (occupied nest found in tetrad SJ78I Dunham Massey) and Sep 5th (fledged young seen at Cheadle). 73 sites or atlas tetrads managed to confirm breeding this year, well up on the figures for 2009 and 2008, which were 57 and 40 respectively.

*Late year counts:* in July - 65 Walker Fold, Bolton 15th; 100 Irlam Moss 22nd; 60 Piethorne Valley 25th and 50 Crumpsall 31st. In August - 500 Cutacre Opencast Coal Site on both 1st and 3rd, with 300 there 14th; 60 Crow Trees Farm, Elton 6th; 50 Werneth Low 8th; 130 Astley Tip 22nd; 80 Woodford Aerodrome 26th; two flocks totalling 116 birds at Prospect Grange Farm, Irlam Moss 31st and 150 Horrocks Hill Farm and 90 Windy Bank Wood on unspecified dates in this month. In September - 96 Ludworth Moor 1st and 3 flocks there totalling 291 birds 30th; 90 Bowlee Community Park 3rd; 50 Burnt Edge, Horwich 4th; 90 Woodstock Farm 4th; 50 Pickley Marsh 5th; 100 Pike Road, Horwich 6th; 80 Raspberry Lane, Irlam Moss 6th; 240 George's Lane, Horwich 7th; 60 Hollingworth Lake 9th; 200 Newfields Farm, Horwich 17th; 60 Chorlton WP 21st; 50 Winter Hill 22nd and 140 there 26th; 57 Bickershaw Colliery area 27th; 180 Makinson Moor, Horwich Moors 30th; a single flock of 380 birds at Wildersmoor, Horwich 30th and 200 at Astley on an unspecified date in this month. 50 at Elton Reservoir Oct 11th; 100 Pennington Flash in November, with 60 there Dec 3rd; 70 Rindle area Nov 12th; 55 in tetrad SD50V Bamfurlong Nov 14th and 100 roosting at Ringway in December.

*Movements:* just a few records from October and November and only 4 double-figure counts, all of which came in October - 15 S over Billinge Higher End 2nd; 28 SE Smithills Moor 7th; 13 SE Burnt Edge, Horwich Moors 28th and 18 S Heaton Park Reservoir also 28th.

*Garden sightings:* for a species that has supposedly taken a liking to garden feeding stations in recent times there were remarkably few records received! A Hindley Green garden had noteworthy maxima of 50, 57 and 61 for January, February and December respectively. A Marple garden reported small numbers all year round but generally "down a little...compared to 2009". A Romiley garden held 20 Feb 14th whilst 7 Rochdale gardens and 1 in Oldham recorded double-figure counts (maximum 20) in January, June and August to December.

## **SISKIN** *Carduelis spinus*

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant; rare breeder.

Once again a relatively poor year for this species in Greater Manchester, with no three figure flock counts received and just a single record of 50 or more birds. There were 19 counts of 20 or more birds, 5 in the first winter period and 14 in the second winter period. All counts are listed below.

*First winter period:* 20 at Barlow's Farm, Bickershaw Jan 19th; 40 Moses Gate CP Feb 9th, 25 in tetrad SD90G Fitton Hill Feb 14th; 25 Ladybrook Valley, Cheadle Mar 1st and 20 Smithills Hall CP Mar 7th. There was just a handful of other double-figure flock counts in the early part of the year:- 13 at Woodbank Park, Stockport Jan 10th; 12 Boggart Hole Clough Jan 25th; 10 Colliers Wood, Leigh Feb 4th; 14 Worsley Woods Feb 9th and 15 in tetrad SJ89E Pendleton Feb 18th.

*Breeding and surveys:* whilst this species has shown a statistically significant increase of 47% on the BBS in England for the period 1995 - 2009, it still remains an irregular breeder in our recording area. There were no sightings on any of our local BBS surveys this year and other records might only suggest, at the very best, possible breeding this year, with birds reported as being in suitable habitat in June and July at Binn Green/Dovestones; in tetrad SD91M Rakewood; at Whitefield Golf Course; Croxden Peat Works and Reserve and with a bird singing in the Bickershaw Colliery area on Jun 6th. The only hint of a higher level of breeding activity for this species this year was of a juvenile seen at Norden on Jun 18th.

*Second winter period:* a maximum of 35 at Barlow's Tip, Chorlton WP in October; 30 in tetrad SJ69P Pennington Flash East Nov 4th; 24 Etherow CP Nov 10th, with 20 there Dec 15th; 20 in tetrad SJ78J Sinderland Nov 11th; 20 Newall Green Nov 21st; 25 Hollingworth Lake Nov 22nd; 20 Pennington Flash Dec 3rd; 20 Red Moss, Horwich Dec 3rd; 22 in tetrad SJ89A Sale East Dec 5th; 20 in tetrad SJ99G Haughton Dale Dec 6th; 36 in tetrad SJ78T Hale Dec 13th; 80 Rock Hall, Moses Gate CP Dec 19th and 25 Kearsley Park Dec 30th.

*Movements:* dedicated visible migration watching at George's Lane, Horwich Moors in autumn produced some interesting totals of birds on the move. One observer noted the tendency of birds to move in small flocks, usually very early in the morning. Counts there, with directions included: - 32 S/SE Oct 4th; 46 NW Oct 18th; 83 NW Oct 20th; 61 NW Oct 24th and 43 NW Nov 3rd. In October, birds counted flying S over Heaton Park Reservoir were 5 on 2nd, 7 on 7th and 15 on 25th. Other records were as follows:- 10 flew over Carrington Moss Oct 7th; 3 flocks totalling 88 birds moved NE over Billinge Higher End Oct 23rd and 20 passed over Wigan Town Centre Dec 7th.

*Garden sightings:* just a small number of records, with a Romiley garden having maxima of 4 in January, 8 in February, 2 in March and 6 in December, whilst in Royton 3 were seen in November. A Marple garden had just single birds on Jan 9th and 10th, Nov 5th and Dec 29th. A male Siskin visited a Bramhall garden Feb 28th and singles were seen in Rochdale gardens in January and December.

## **LINNET** *Carduelis cannabina*

Common resident and partial migrant.

BoCC Red List (BDp2, SPEC, BDMp2) and UK BAP species.

A good series of records this year for this species, with 31 counts of 50 or more birds and an additional 15 of 100 or more birds, all of which are detailed below. However, many of these counts came from just 2 separate locations - Woodford Aerodrome and Chat Moss and its constituent mosslands. Whilst full thanks is given to all observers who took the time to submit precise site specific records from the individual mosslands of Chat Moss, for the ease of summarizing and for reading they have all been listed below under the generic site name of Chat Moss.

*Early year counts:* Chat Moss and environs: - 80 Jan 31st; 150 Feb 4th; 200 Feb 21st; 50 Feb 25th; 90 Feb 28th; 60 Mar 20th and 52 Apr 13th. Woodford Aerodrome: - 63 Mar 18th; 150 Apr 1st; 100 Apr 15th; 80 Apr 22nd and 50 May 6th. Other records included: - 78 at Barlow's Farm, Bickershaw Feb 19th and 60 at the Kingsway Business Park site, Rochdale Apr 18th.

*Breeding:* it is very pleasing to report that confirmed breeding records came from 33 sites or atlas tetrads this year - a total considerably higher than the 2009 and 2008 figures. The first records of singing males came from the Bickershaw Colliery area Mar 27th and from Far Bradshaw and Montcliffe Quarry, Horwich, both on Apr 2nd. The first entries for nest building were from tetrad SD71T Holcombe Hill Apr 18th and Winter Hill, Horwich Apr 24th. The first confirmed breeding record logged on the database was of an occupied nest in tetrad SD80P Hareshill May 12th. Also in May, a nest was found at Altrincham Sewage Works but this unfortunately ended in failure. The last confirmed breeding record was of fledged young seen at Chelburn Reservoirs Aug 20th. Locally on the BBS this year 25 (37%) of plots recorded this species, up from 19 (29%) in 2009. On the BBS in England this species showed a welcome increase of 14% for 2009 - 2010 but sadly posted a statistically significant decline of 32% for the period 1995 - 2009, highlighting the Linnets longer term decline and some rationale behind its Red Listed status. In GM - 4 BBS plots recorded a double-figure count in 2010 - Boothstown West (0/14), Brushes (15/3), Ludworth Moor (15/9) and Worthington (4/11).

*Late year counts:* Woodford Aerodrome: - 50 Jul 15th; 50 Aug 5th; 200 Aug 26th; 50 Sep 9th; 150 Sep 16th; 150 Oct 7th; 80 Oct 28th; 80 Nov 25th; 60 Dec 2nd and 150 Dec 30th. Chat Moss and environs: - 50 Aug 23rd; 120 Sep 2nd; 160 Oct 7th; 75 Oct 23rd; 100 and 62 Oct 31st, in 2 separate locations; 50 and 85 Nov 4th, again in 2 separate locations; 82 Nov 10th; 50 Nov 18th and 50 Dec 9th. Other records included: - 60 Longden End Jul 25th, with 50 there Aug 5th; Astley Colliery fields - maxima of 200, 100 and 200 in August, September and October respectively; 50 Compstall ETW Aug 28th; 50 Piethorne Valley Sep 2nd; 90 (2/3rds juveniles) Smithills Moor Sep 23rd; 87 Astley Moss East Peat Pools Oct 17th; 50 PF Oct 22nd and 200 Astley Green Village Nov 1st.

*Movements:* just 4 double figure counts: - 20 S and 15 S Smithills Moor Sep 22nd and Sep 25th; 35 S (two flocks) Billinge Higher End Oct 2nd and 14 S over Heaton Park Reservoir, also Oct 2nd.

## **TWITE** *Carduelis flavirostris*

Scarce resident; passage migrant and winter visitor.

BoCC Red List (HD2, BDp1), UK BAP and GM BAP species.

With just over 30 records on the GM database for this red listed species in 2010 and with only one double-figure count logged this year, the future for this hard-pressed species in our recording area remains on a knife edge. The RSPB/Natural England Twite Recovery Project continued with its excellent work, attempting firstly to maintain and then to reverse this species' fortune but with much of its considerable efforts focused on neighbouring Calderdale populations. Just 13 records were received from our "traditional" location of Light Hazzles Resr and surrounding areas and none after September 2nd. A plea is made for all observers to submit every single record for sightings of Twite. However, please remember that with effect

from 28th July 2010 all records away from recognised upland areas will now require verification by the Greater Manchester Rarities Committee. This is to ensure that we are correctly identifying and recording the whereabouts and status of this important county species.

*Light Hazzles and environs:* at Light Hazzles Resr there were 4 Mar 23rd, 5 Aug 30th and 11 Sep 2nd; Chelburn Resrs recorded 3 Apr 10th, 2 Apr 22nd, 4 Jun 17th and 3 Jun 19th; 7 in tetrad SD91T Blackstone Edge Apr 10th; 2 Blackstone Edge Moor Apr 23rd and 3 at Warland Resr Apr 24th.

*All other sightings:* three at Elton Resr Mar 19th, one of which had been ringed at Cant Clough Resr, Lancashire; 2 at George's Lane, Horwich Moors Apr 20th; recorded as being present in tetrad SE00J Black Moss May 24th (note - tetrad not wholly in GM) and 5 on the ground near Holden's Plantation, Smithills Moor Sep 26th and 3 feeding nearby at Holden's Farm, Smithills Moor Nov 10th.

*Breeding and surveys:* one component of the on-going multi-pronged Twite Recovery Project action plan is the close monitoring of known breeding colonies. A summary of the RSPB's data for the Rochdale area showed a significant increase in breeding pairs this year, with 21 – 23 observed, up from 12 – 15 in 2009 and closer to the 20 – 30 pairs reported in 2008. Of this year's total, 4 pairs successfully fledged two broods and a total of 77 pulli were ringed from 16 broods. Aside from this dedicated project but reported from the same geographical area, one observer was delighted to watch a colour ringed adult bird feeding 2 juveniles on Aug 8th. Twite was recorded on just one BBS square in 2010 – Blackstone Edge – with a single bird noted on the late visit.

*Movements:* one flying over tetrad SD91E Watergrove Resr May 31st; one over Holcombe Moor Jul 24th; the Smithills Moor area recorded 4 SW Sep 22nd, one E Sep 25th, one S Sep 26th, 9 S Oct 4th, one S Oct 12th; one and then 7 NW Oct 24th.

## **LESSER REDPOLL** *Carduelis cabaret*

Uncommon resident and winter visitor.

BoCC Red List (BDP1, BDp2) and UK BAP species.

Of approximately 350 records on the database for this red listed species in 2010, just 23 were of counts of 20 or more birds – compared with totals of 21 in 2009 and 13 in 2008. All such counts are listed below.

*First winter period:* 22 at Chorlton WP Jan 18th, with 42 there Feb 23rd; 40 Barlow's Farm, Bickershaw Jan 19th; 25 Red Moss Flood Pools Jan 23rd; 90 Ince Moss Landfill Feb 25th, with 30 there Apr 2nd; 30 Moss Bridge, Wigan Flashes Feb 27th; 20 PF Feb 28th and 70 roosting at Turner's Flash Mar 26th. Other selected counts included: – 15 at Bryn Marsh Jan 3rd; 15 Cox Green Quarry Mar 1st; 17 Stamford Park, Ashton-under-Lyne Mar 31st and 15 Wilderswood, Horwich Apr 18th.

*Breeding:* just 5 (7%) of plots recorded this species locally on the BBS in 2010, one less than in 2009. Sites recording this species, with early/late counts were as follows: – Ashton-on-Mersey (1/0), Brushes (1/0), Lostock West (4/5), Shuttleworth (1/0) and Walmersley (3/5). On the BBS in England this species has shown a decline of 28% for the period 1995 – 2009. The first singing birds were heard in April – at Watergrove Reservoir on 17th and in the Brushes Valley, Stalybridge 24th. Probable breeding was reported from 11 sites or atlas tetrads: – Horrocks Flash; Turner's Flash; Croxden Peat Works Reserve; Watergrove Reservoir; Montcliffe Quarry, Horwich and from tetrads – SD91K Jubilee; SD90Q Luzley; SJ99Y Roe Green; SD81D Shuttleworth; SD60D New Springs and SJ99R Werneth Low. Breeding was confirmed at 4 sites/atlas tetrads: – SD71S Hawshaw May 1st; Ringing Pits, Irlam Moss Jul 6th; Dovestones Jul 11th and at Brownstones Quarry, Smithills Aug 23rd.

*Autumn/second winter period:* 10 at Watergrove Reservoir Sep 17th, peaking at 40 Sep 30th, followed by 12 Oct 2nd and 15 on 23rd; 30 at Clifton Marina Oct 19th; 30 Red Moss, Horwich Nov 5th; 50 Horrock's Flash Nov 16th; 32 in tetrad SJ88D Newall Green Dec 1st; 40 Red Moss disused tip area Dec 3rd; 30 PF Dec 9th; 40 Pearson's Flash Dec 12th; 23 Cox Green Quarry Dec 15th; 25 Grove House Farm, Dunham Town Dec 17th and 50 in tetrad SD70G Walkden Dec 31st. Other selected counts included:- 18 in tetrad SD81K Jubilee Nov 5th and 30th; 15 in tetrad SD90P Dog Hill Nov 10th; 15 Eagley Brook Nov 19th and 17 in tetrad SD50U Bamfurlong Nov 20th.

*Movements:* just small single-figure numbers were reported, mostly flying southwards, over the Cutacre Opencast Coal Site; Georges Lane and Dean Ditch, Horwich Moors in September, October and the first week of November. 14 flew S over Heaton Park Reservoir Oct 2nd; 3 W Audenshaw Reservoir Oct 16th; 2 S Holcombe Moor Oct 16th and visible migration watching at Chorlton WP noted 10 S Oct 4th and then smaller numbers through until Oct 9th.

*Garden sightings:* 4 visited a Rochdale garden in Dec with another nearby garden seeing 1 on Apr 3rd and 2 on 5th. A maximum of 3 fed on niger seed in a Marple garden in January and December. Also in December, a single bird visited a Romiley garden on 13th, with 2 there on both 18th and 19th.

## **COMMON REDPOLL** *Carduelis flammea*

Scarce winter visitor.

Two accepted records of "Mealies" were as follows:-

One at Pearson's Flash Feb 7th (C. Higson).

One at Hale Dec 1st (H. Cook).

## **COMMON CROSSBILL** *Loxia curvirostra*

Uncommon passage migrant, with occasional winter influxes; possible rare breeder.

After a quieter year in 2009, this year saw a welcome return to the excellent level of sightings last noted in 2008. In 2008, approximately 58% of records were from the Binn Green/Dovestones area. Once again there was a good series of records from this traditional site, however in 2010 over 60% of records emanated from our other local "hot-spot" for this species - the Horwich and Smithills Moor areas of Bolton. Selected records from these last two moorland areas are listed below together under the generalised heading of Bolton Moors and environs.

*Bolton Moors and environs:* there was a total of 31 records from this area on the 2010 database, with approximately 2/3rds of these of birds seen or heard in flight. Records were logged between Jul 7th and Nov 27th. All double-figure counts were as follows: - 21 feeding on larch cones at Wilderswood, Horwich Jul 7th and 12 doing likewise Jul 21st. 15 were at Smithills Moor Sep 29th. Eager visible migration watchers at George's Lane, Horwich recorded the following flocks in flight and noted their directions: - 11 NW Jul 17th; 14 W Jul 31st; 13 and 5 NNW Oct 2nd; 13 NW Oct 18th; 17 NW Oct 20th; 17 N Oct 22nd and 27 NW Oct 24th. 25 flew N over Mast Road, Horwich Oct 22nd.

*Dovestones/Binn Green and environs:* 9 Apr 10th; 14 Jul 23rd; one Jul 24th; 26 and 2 Aug 1st; 2 Aug 3rd; 8 Aug 4th; 5 Aug 5th and one Aug 22nd.

*Other sightings:* 2 flying NW over Orrell WP on Mar 22nd and 9 over Oct 18th; 3 Tandle Hill CP Apr 9th; 2 Rough Bank Plantation, Piethorne Jul 4th and 7 there Jul 25th; 1 Ernecroft Wood, Etherow CP Jul 26th; 4 S over Billinge Higher End Aug 31st; 3 flying S over the Cutacre Opencast Coal Site Oct 6th; 1 flying W over Billinge Plantations Oct 17th and 1 over Brushes Clough Reservoir, Shaw Nov 10th.



## **BULLFINCH** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Fairly common resident.

BoCC Amber List (BDMp1, BDMp2) and UK BAP species.

In the most recent Greater Manchester bird reports all counts of 5 or more birds have been listed. However, with over 90 of these on the 2010 database and too many to list individually, the threshold to gain a much coveted entry into this year's county report has therefore been increased to 6 birds!

*Early counts:* - in January - 8 at Hale 3rd; 10 Mossley 9th; 14 Worsley Moss 15th; 6 Amberswood 17th and 10 Orrell WP 19th. In February - 7 and 6 Cutacre, Middle Hulton 6th and 14th respectively; 7 Broad Ees Dole, Sale 7th; 15 Gorton Resrs 12th; 6 Carrington Moss 14th; 6 Marklands Disused Reservoir, Horwich 21st and 28th; 6 in tetrad SD60F Bickershaw Rucks 23rd. In March - 8 Davyhulme NR 7th and 6 River Mersey, East Didsbury 16th. In April - 6 Smethurst Hall, Birtle 15th. In June - 6 in tetrad SD60D New Springs 20th and 6 Frodsham's Wood, Standish 25th.

*Breeding and surveys:* on the BBS nationally this amber listed species has shown just the slightest of declines for the period 1995 - 2009, although North-West England has witnessed a 10% increase during this time. Locally on the BBS this species was logged on 19 (28%) of plots this year, up from 14 (21%) in 2009. Just one site - Park Bridge (5/7) - had a count of 6 birds or more on early/late visits. The first song was reported from Hollingworth Lake, as early as Jan 3rd; the first display observed (a male courtship feeding a female) in tetrad SD81R Bamford Apr 25th and the first nest building noted in tetrad SD80B Prestwich Apr 25th. Breeding was confirmed at 32 widely spread sites or tetrads this year, similar to the 2009 total. The first confirmed record was of an occupied nest at Red Moss Flood Pools Apr 23rd and the last of fledged young seen at Chorlton WP Sep 9th.

*Late year counts:* in August - 8 Mossley 30th. In September - Blackleach Reservoir, Walkden had 11 on 3rd, 8 on 8th and 10 on 18th; 6 Chat Moss 7th; 6 Adswood Tip, Cheadle 20th and 10 Bickershaw Colliery 27th. In October - 8 Cutacre Opencast Coal Site 6th; 10 Red Seas, Crooke 10th; 14 Wigan Flashes 14th; 6 Gilligants Farm 20th; 8 Smithills Moor, Bolton 20th, with 18 there 28th and 10 on 30th; 6 Watergrove Reservoir 21st; 6 Marklands Disused Reservoir, Horwich 22nd; 9 Wilderswood, Horwich 28th; 7 Gatley Carrs 29th and 6 Jack Lane, Flixton 29th. In November - 13 Wilderswood, Horwich 3rd; 11 in tetrad SD50V Bamfurlong 7th, with 6 there 28th; 6 Pickley Marsh 9th; 12 Smithills Moor, Bolton 10th; 6 Mandale Park, Rochdale 14th; 8 Cowbury Dale 15th; 6 Brushes Valley, Stalybridge 20th; 8 in tetrad SD91K Jubilee 20th; 6 in tetrad SD90P Dog Hill 25th and 6 Carrington Moss 27th. In December - 7 in tetrad SJ88D Newall Green 1st; 8 Hazel Grove Golf Club 5th; 7 in tetrad SD70W Clifton 11th; 6 in tetrad SD80C Whitefield 11th; 7 Altrincham ETW 12th; 7 in tetrad SJ79K Carrington Moss 12th, with 6 at Carrington Moss itself on 17th and finally 7 at Fairy Lane, Sale 18th. Pennington Flash is probably one of the most reliable sites in Greater Manchester at which to see this species - selected monthly maxima there were as follows:- 41 in Jan, 10 Feb, 33 Mar, 12 Jul, 13 Aug, 6 Nov and 17 Dec. Peak monthly counts from Chorlton WP were - 7 in Apr, 8 May and 11 Nov.

*Garden sightings:* a Marple garden reported birds all year round. Numbers were up there compared to 2009, with several counts of 10 birds in January, October and November and a peak count of 11 on Nov 6th. Two were in a garden in Lower Green, Astley Jan 2nd. A Rusholme garden had up to 3 birds regularly throughout the year. An Ashton-in-Makerfield garden reported its first ever Bullfinch there May 12th.

## **SNOW BUNTING** *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

BoCC Amber List species (BR).

All records were as follows:-

One at Brun Clough Reservoir, Oldham Mar 1st and 3rd.

One flying SSW over Dean Ditch, Smithills Sep 25th, with 1 heard flying over there Oct 7th.

One heard calling and flying S/SE over Heaton Park Reservoir Oct 2nd.

One flying W over Winter Hill Oct 7th.

Two in tetrad SD81P Rooley Moor (note - this atlas tetrad is not wholly in Greater Manchester) Nov 14th.

## **LAPLAND BUNTING** *Calcarius lapponicus*

Rare winter visitor and passage migrant.

BoCC Amber List species (WR).

Three accepted records this year, the first since October 2007.

One female/immature at Winter Hill Sep 17th (A. Makin *et al*).

One female/immature at Winter Hill Sep 28th and 29th (A. Makin, M. Rigby, J. Rayner *et al*).

One adult male at Daisy Hill, Westhoughton Dec 28th, remained there until 3rd January 2011. (P. Rhodes *et al*).

## **YELLOWHAMMER** *Emberiza citrinella*

Fairly common resident.

BoCC Red List (BDp1, BDp2) and UK BAP species.

Once again this year's database of records reflected this red listed species preference for our areas of arable farming and our mosslands. Of special note this year was a record flock count of 500 Yellowhammers seen at Grove House Farm, Dunham Town on Dec 21st. What a really spectacular and colourful sight that must have been!

*Early year counts:* Carrington Moss reported 20 Jan 1st; 30 Feb 9th; 34 Feb 11th; 50 Mar 6th; 20 Mar 19th; 20 Mar 21st and 43 Mar 28th. In the Rindle area, including the feeding station, there were: - 46 Feb 3rd; 60 Feb 14th; 30 Mar 6th; 30 Mar 12th and 20 Mar 14th. Other counts included:- 35 Borsdane Wood, Hindley Jan 19th; 30 Grove House Farm, Dunham Town Jan 15th; 53 Moss House Farm, Glazebury Jan 26th, with 73 there Feb 11th; 33 at Grange Farm, Leigh in February; 26 Little Woollen Moss Feb 1st; 60 Nook Lane, Astley Moss Feb 21st; 30 Billinge Higher End Mar 16th, with 38 there Mar 27th; 30 Longshaw, Billinge Mar 21st; 20 Highfield Moss, Lowton Apr 14th and 24 Raspberry Lane, Irlam Moss Apr 18th. 15 were at Orrell WP Feb 3rd and 15 at Hulton Park, Bolton May 2nd. Other areas holding small populations away from its recognised heartlands were around Goyt Hall Farm, Bredbury, where thankfully 4 local birders and atlas surveyors from this area north-east of Stockport, provided regular sightings throughout most months of the year, with a maximum of 8 noted Mar 12th. Additionally, the Outwood/Ringley Valley area produced 3 records in 2010:- one at Ringley ETW Mar 28th; 4 Carter's Hill Farm May 15th and 2 Hurst Farm, Outwood also May 15th.

*Breeding and surveys:* breeding was confirmed this year from an excellent total of 10 sites or atlas tetrads, up on the 2009 and 2008 figures of 2 and 7 respectively. Continuing efforts by atlas devotees throughout the third summer of our local breeding birds' atlas project contributed towards half of this total. Confirmed records came from Cutnook Lane, Irlam Moss; Grange Farm, Leigh; Carrington Moss North; Ringing Pits, Irlam Moss; Malkins Wood Farm, Irlam Moss and from tetrads SD50J Shevington Vale; SD60D New Springs; SJ78J Sinderland; SJ79F Sinderland Green and SJ79K Carrington Moss. 2 pairs "probably bred" at Carter's Hill Farm, Ringley Valley and territories were held around Goyt Hall Farm, Bredbury. David Steel reported 31 territories on Chat Moss this year (28 in 2009, 33 in 2008, 36 in 2007 and 39 in

2006). Recorded on 8 BBS plots this year (Abram, Astley Moss East, Boothstown West, Carr Green, Carrington, Haigh, Lane Head and Top Lock), the same as the 2009 total. Also present on the WBBS Douglas Valley plot. Sadly this much loved species has shown a statistically significant decline of 33% on the BBS in North-West England for the period 1995 - 2009.

*Late year flocks:* a slightly different pattern to sightings, with the earliest significant flocks from the Westhoughton area, with 22 at West Westhoughton Jul 23rd; 20 Hart Common Oct 20th; 20 Westhoughton/Daisy Hill ETW Nov 26th; Gillibrand's Farm, Daisy Hill had 40 on both Nov 30th and Dec 31st and 30 on both Dec 5th and 29th. No really sizeable flocks were noted on Carrington Moss, although there was a series of substantial records from the Dunham area to its immediate south-west. This included counts in December of 50 at Grove House Farm, Dunham Town 2nd; 70 there on 8th; 150 on 17th; a record 500 on 21st and 130 on 31st. 54 were in tetrad SJ79F Sinderland Green Dec 31st. Other counts included:- 110 Rindle Wood, Astley Moss Dec 3rd; at Prospect Grange Farm, Irlam Moss in December there were 20 on 9th, 50 on 23rd, 55 on 24th and 20 on 28th.

*Movements:* just a handful of records:- one W and one S over Smithills Moor Sep 2nd and 3rd respectively; Georges Lane, Horwich - one S Sep 29th and one W Oct 24th; 3 S over Heaton Park Reservoir Nov 6th.

*Garden sightings:* extreme weather conditions at the time resulted in an immature male making an unexpected appearance in a Hindley Green garden Jan 5th, the first sighting there in 30 years!

## **REED BUNTING** *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Fairly common resident and partial migrant.

BoCC Amber List (BDMp2) and UK BAP species.

*Counts:* 30 roosting at Worsley Filtration Lagoons Jan 9th; 14 PF Jan 20th, with 17 there Mar 13th; 12 Barlow's Farm, Bickershaw in February, with 17 there Apr 13th and 10 in May; 18 Nook Lane, Astley Moss Feb 21st, with 10 there Mar 7th; 12 Cutacre Opencast Coal Site Feb on both 6th and 14th; 40 Carrington Moss Feb 9th, with 18 there Feb 11th and 10 Mar 19th; 15 in tetrad SD60X Over Hulton Feb 14th; 11 in tetrad SD91N Littleborough East Feb 23rd; 12 Rindle area Mar 12th; 10 Hope Carr NR Mar 16th; 11 Sennicar Lane farmland Apr 20th; 17 in tetrad SD51K Shevington Moor North May 5th; 12 in tetrad SD70Z Elton Resr May 18th; 13 in tetrad SJ69C Highfield Moss May 20th; 10 in tetrad SD81H Ashworth Moor Reservoir Jun 14th; 17 Astley Moss East Peat Pools Aug 5th; 12 Ringing Pits, Irlam Moss Oct 21st, with 16 there Nov 11th; 10 Moss Brow Farm, Irlam Moss Oct 31st; 10 Astley Green village in November and 30 there in December; 15 Bedford, Leigh in November; 10 Little Woolden Moss Nov 6th, with 12 there Nov 10th and 30 Dec 9th; 25 Fir Tree Flash, Leigh Nov 7th; 15 Westhoughton/Daisy Hill ETW Nov 26th and 15 there Dec 3rd; 20 Gillibrands Farm, Daisy Hill Nov 30th; 50 in tetrad SD91K Jubilee Nov 30th and 12 Dec 8th; 15 Irlam Moss Dec 12th; 50 Grove House Farm, Dunham Town Dec 17th and 21st; 30 Prospect Grange Farm Dec 23rd and 23 feeding on a snow covered Syke Moor, Littleborough, same date; 10 Highfield Moss, Lowton Dec 27th and 42 at Chat Moss Dec 29th. Observers at two particular sites provided some noteworthy all-year-round counts. At Red Moss, Horwich monthly maxima were:- 5 in Jan, 16 Feb, 20 Mar, 9 Apr, 11 May, 5 Jun, 8 Jul, 13 Aug, 14 Sep, 46 Oct, 55 Nov and 60 Dec. Maxima at Croxden Peat Works Reserve were:- 3 in Jan, 2 Feb, 9 Mar, 11 Apr, 10 May, 14 Jun, 15 Jul, 10 Aug, 13 Sep, 22 Oct, 16 Nov and 3 Dec.

*Breeding and surveys:* in 2009 this species moved from Red List to Amber List status on the Birds of Conservation Concern listings, following an improvement in this species fortunes. This improvement is reflected in the fact that Reed Bunting has shown a 30% increase on the BBS in the UK for the period 1995 - 2009. The increase in North-West England hasn't been quite as dramatic but still shows a healthy 16% rise. Locally in the BBS this year 20 (30%) of

plots recorded this species, only slightly down on the 2009 figure. Just 2 plots recorded 5 or more birds on either early or late visits - Astley Moss East (3/5) and Worthington (6/2). 34 sites/atlas tetrads provided confirmed breeding records this year, again only marginally down on last years excellent total. The first singing male was heard at SD80E Fishpool Feb 28th; the first nest building observed on Red Moss, Horwich Apr 25th: the first confirmed breeding record, an occupied nest, in tetrad SD80J Pilsworth North May 6th and the last of a female seen carrying food on Red Moss, Horwich Aug 16th. For a species that is often easily overlooked, it was really pleasing to see on the database that several observers had taken the time to provide their estimates of territories being held across a range of sites in GM. Locations and number of territories assessed were as follows:- 4 at Westwood Flash; 5 at Bickershaw Rucks North; 4 at Red Moss, Horwich; 5 at Ashworth Moor Reservoir; 3 at Bowlee Community Park; 14 at Elton Reservoir and environs and 4 at Gigg Resrs, Bury.



*Movements:* 2 moved S over Heaton Park Reservoir Oct 2nd. The monthly tallies of migrants counted passing over Smithills Moor, Bolton in October and November were 77 and 24 birds respectively.

*Garden sightings:* three in a garden near Hollingworth Lake Jan 10th was unusual; a maximum of 10 visited an Egerton garden in February; a Hindley Green garden enjoyed this species presence on 13 days in January and February, with a maximum of 2 birds present. Bad weather also attracted birds there on 5 days in December, when a maximum of 5 visited. A single bird dropped in on a Pickley Green garden from Mar 11th to 19th.

## **CORN BUNTING** *Emberiza calandra*

Uncommon resident.

BoCC Red List (HD2, BDp1, BDp2, SPEC) and UK BAP species.

There was a welcome increase in the total number of records received for Corn Bunting this year. Approximately two thirds of the records on the database were from the first half of the year and a third from the second half. Please remember that every single record for this struggling red listed species will be very gratefully received.

*Early year counts:* numbers appeared to be higher at Carrington Moss, than in the corresponding period in 2009, with selected counts there of: - 37 Jan 1st; 50 Jan 3rd; 14 Feb 20th and 7 Mar 21st.

15 were at nearby Altrincham ETW Feb 6th and 3 were at Grove House Farm, Dunham Town May 16th. Other counts included:- 16 roosting at Highfield Moss, Lowton Jan 24th and 4 in tetrad SJ69C Highfield Moss Jun 17th. 4 were seen at Billinge Higher End Apr 24th. A few sightings from the Chat Moss area included: - 3 at Croxden Peat Works Nature Reserve Feb 6th and 3 at Irlam Moss Feb 12th.

*Breeding:* nationally on the BBS this species has shown a statistically significant decline of 33% for the period 1995 - 2009. Disappointingly, there were no records on any local BBS plots this year. There was a total of just 14 records of singing males reported this year, between an early date of Apr 18th (Little Woolden Moss) and a late date of Jul 31st (Longshaw, Billinge). Occupied territories were reported from several mosslands sites - Chat Moss; Astley Moss; Carrington Moss; Moss Brow Farm, Warburton and in tetrad SJ69C Highfield Moss. Unfortunately, breeding was confirmed at just a single location in 2010 - in tetrad SJ78P Oldfield Brow Jul 9th.

*Late year counts:* in July, 3 were at Little Woolden Moss on both 1st and 19th. Just 3 records were received from the Carrington Moss area: - 2 Jul 9th; 16 Nov 20th and 2 Dec 12th. 10 were at Grove House Farm, Dunham Town Dec 17th. Other selected sightings included:- one at Longshaw, Billinge Jul 31st and one Billinge Higher End Sep 4th; 6 at Highfield Moss Farm, Lowton Nov 25th and a single bird in the Daisy Hill area Dec 28th to 31st.

## Escapes, Introduced, Released & Feral Species

### BLACK SWAN *Cygnus atratus*

In April, two birds were at Bradley Wetlands on the 5th, with a further two, or perhaps more probably the same, being seen again on Sep 4th. In October a single bird was at Pearsons Flash on the 14th and likely the same bird was then seen at Pennington Flash on the 17th.

### BAR-HEADED GOOSE *Anser cygnoides*

Only were 2 birds recorded this year, at Chorlton Water Park on Jan 16th and Pennington Flash on March 2nd.

### EMBDEN GOOSE *Anser sp.*

Domestic form of Greylag Goose

WeBS counts of this species recorded during 2010 were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Doffcocker Lodge			20						60	58	51	
Heaton Park	25	28	19									
Pennington Flash	9								7	7	8	8
Stamford Park A-u-L	5	5	4						5	6	3	2
Strinesdale Resrs	4	4	4						3	3	3	2

Outside the WeBS counts, a further 7 were present at Reddish Vale CP on Jan 1st and 54 eggs from 2 nest dumps were destroyed at Hope Carr NR on May 5th.

## **RUDDY SHELDUCK** *Tadorna ferruginea*

A pair were at Castle Hill on July 6th.

## **MUSCOVY DUCK** *Cairina moschata*

Sightings of this species were as follows: - Bradley feeding station: 1 on May 29th. Bruntwood Park: 1 on Aug 24th. Greenfield, near Oldham: 1 on May 15th. Heaton Park Boating Lake: maximum counts of 5 on Feb 6th, Mar 11th and May 25th. Pennington Flash: Singles recorded on Feb 28th, Mar 6th. Jun 2nd, Nov 25th and 28th. Platt Fields Park: Singles on Jan 24th, Apr 8th, Aug 11th and Nov 14th. River Tame at Reddish Vale: Singles on Jan 1st and Nov 14th. Sale Water Park: singles on Jan 23-24th and Feb 14th, 3 on Mar 7th, 2 on Apr 2nd and May 6th. SD91P Summit tetrad: singles on Feb 27th and Jul 25th. SJ88T Cheadle Hulme tetrad: 1 on Aug 24th.

## **CHILOE WIGEON** *Anas sibilatrix*

A drake was present at Queens Park Lake, Heywood on Nov 29th.

## **RED-CRESTED POCHARD** *Netta rufina*

A female, from the introduction by Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council some years ago, was present at Bruntwood Park, Cheadle Hulme on Aug 24th and Nov 9th.

## **RINGED TEAL** *Callonetta leucophrys*

There were five reported sightings of this attractive little escapee in the county during the year. On Jan 28th, a drake was present at Reddish Vale CP and also again, Apr 27th and 29th. Lower Gorton Reservoir recorded a single on Feb 12th, Low Hall recorded a female on Apr 9th and two drakes were present at Rumworth Lodge on Jul 4th-21st. A pair was present on the Ashton Canal, Droylsden/Fairfield from May 6th to Nov 15th.

## **BOBWHITE QUAIL** *Colinus virginianus*

A single bird was seen in a Hazel Grove garden on Mar 22nd.

## **GOLDEN PHEASANT** *Chrysolophus pictus*

A single bird was in a Marple Dale garden on Mar 13th and 14th.

## **RED-TAILED HAWK** *Buteo jamaicensis*

The individual in the Chadderton area from 2009 remained into 2010 and was typically conspicuous at times. On Feb 19th it was seen over Chadderton but had also been often seen on the flagpole of Werneth Mill! On April 10th and 11th it was seen on the Anchor Mill chimney and again there regularly from April 17th to May 1st. The last sighting of this individual was over Watts Street, Chadderton on Oct 11th.



## **HARRIS HAWK** *Parabuteo unicinctus*

Increased sightings (or perhaps reporting?) of these eye-catching and fairly widely kept falconers favourite were received during 2010. In February, one was seen at a West Didsbury garden on the 15th and the next day another, or perhaps the same wandering bird, was seen at a Chorlton garden. Elton Reservoir and Whitehead Lodges logged sightings of this species on Sep 11th, Oct 3rd and Dec 31st. During December, one landed on the Holy Trinity Church, Stalybridge on the 2nd and another was over Highfield Moss on the 11th.

## **KESTREL** *Falco tinnunculus*

A bird with jesses was seen over Cross Lane, Salford on Jul 14th.

## **SAKER FALCON** *Falco cherrug*

A large falcon probably of this species was reported over Highfield Moss during January. Regularly escaping captive birds seriously cloud the issue of what is clearly a potential wild vagrant to the UK and as such the species remains on categories D and E of the British List.

## **EAGLE OWL** *Bubo bubo*

On Feb 18th one was in an Upholland garden, having escaped from an aviary in Orrell.

## **CRIMSON ROSELLA** *Platycercus elegans*

A solitary bird in a Fallowfield allotment on Jun 27th was associating with 8 Ring-necked Parakeets and an Orange-winged Parrot, no doubt making quite an exotic spectacle for the observer.

## **RINGED-NECKED PARAKEET** *Psittacula krameri*

A completely blue coloured bird, an autosomal recessive mutation of our more common green variety, was in a Birtle garden on Sep 22nd.

## **SENEGAL PARROT** *Poicephalus senegalus*

One was seen at Tyldesley loopline on Apr 4th.

## **ORANGE-WINGED PARROT** *Amazona amazonica*

The individual first seen in 2008 was again present in a Fallowfield allotment with 8 Ring-necked Parakeets on Jun 26th.

## **COCKATIEL** *Nymphicus hollandicus*

Singles were seen over Scotman's Flash on Apr 28th, Altrincham ETW on Jun 30th, Withington on Jul 18th and Horrocks Flash on Nov 11th.

## **CANARY** *Serinus canaria*

One was in an Upholland garden on Feb 19th.

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**Red-breasted Merganser**, Elton Reservoir, May [Paul Wilson]

# Early and Late Dates for Migrants in 2010

(Excluding presumed wintering/summering individuals)

SUMMER VISITORS	Earliest arrival in 2010	Earliest arrival ever	Latest departure in 2010	Latest departure ever
Garganey	8th Apr	6th Mar 94	29th Sep	2nd Nov 93
Osprey	20th Mar	15th Mar 07	9th Sep	12th Oct 01
Little Ringed Plover	18th Mar	17th Feb 99	10th Sep	2nd Oct 86
Whimbrel	12th Apr	13th Feb 95	9th Sep	7th Nov 07
Common Sandpiper	1st Apr	13th Mar 03	8th Nov	28th Nov 92
Common Tern	11th Apr	24th Mar 08	2nd Oct	5th Nov 89
Cuckoo	14th Apr	20th Mar 77	27th Aug	27th Sep 81
Swift	18th Apr	13th Apr 96	10th Oct	15th Nov 04
Sand Martin	18th Mar	7th Mar 94/03	24th Sep	17th Nov 86
Swallow	22nd Mar	2nd Mar 97	21st Oct	26th Nov 97
House Martin	27th Mar	16th Mar 93/97	13th Oct	20th Nov 85
Willow Warbler	26th Mar	10th Mar 93/94	26th Sep	25th Nov 84
Garden Warbler	19th Apr	7th Apr 98	16th Sep	20th Nov 82
Lesser Whitethroat	18th Apr	10th Apr 94	21st Sep	30th Sep 96
Whitethroat	9th Apr	28th Mar 98	30th Sep	9th Oct 78
Grasshopper Warbler	7th Apr	7th Apr 10	2nd Oct	23rd Nov 81
Sedge Warbler	9th Apr	8th Apr 09	8th Sep	28th Oct 82
Reed Warbler	16th Apr	4th Apr 03	3rd Oct	10th Oct 80/94
Ring Ouzel	8th Apr	8th Mar 86	13th Nov	26th Nov 05
Whinchat	21st Apr	31st Mar 85	2nd Oct	30th Oct 93/05
Wheatear	16th Mar	4th Mar 03	6th Nov	16th Dec 00
Yellow Wagtail	31st Mar	29th March 03	4th Oct	23rd Oct 84
Tree Pipit	14th Apr	31st Mar 98	17th Sep	5th Nov 96
WINTER VISITORS	Earliest arrival in 2010	Earliest arrival ever	Latest departure in 2010	Latest departure ever
Fieldfare	20th Sep	16th Aug 08	21st May	31st May 82/08
Redwing	20th Sep	1st Sep 89	5th May	15th May 99
Brambling	2nd Oct	28th Sep 07	13th Apr	7th May 78

# Greater Manchester Ringing Report 2010

*Steve Christmas*

Nationally, 2010 was the best ever year for ringing in the UK with over a million birds ringed for the first time. Within the county, the cold spells at each end of the year brought influxes of wintering species such as Brambling, Waxwing and wildfowl. The warm, dry spring and early summer weather resulted in a good breeding season with generally high productivity of warblers, tits and hirundines. Ringing totals for 2010 were around 50% higher than in 2009 with notable increases in hirundines, Coot, acrocephalus warblers, Bullfinch, Reed Bunting and the four common tit species. However, Starling and Siskin numbers were substantially down.

There were a number of interesting recoveries and controls (birds caught by other ringers) during the year. Although Canada Geese are largely resident, a short-term cold weather movement across the Pennines was reported and a bird ringed at Pennington was sighted almost 15 years later at Salford. The two Grey Heron recoveries were of birds found dead during the early year cold spell and followed the well established northward winter dispersal pattern.

The obliging Osprey that spent a couple of days at Lightshaw in May had been ringed as a nestling in Tayside in 2007. Two young Peregrines ringed in 2008 at confidential sites in the north of the county both came to grief two years later further south. A colour ringing study of Coot in North-West England has now been running for two years and has begun to reveal some interesting movements. A first year bird ringed at Moses Gate in November was sighted near Durham the following spring. Black-headed Gulls regularly produce interesting long distance movements and birds from Gloucester, Nottingham, Sweden, Finland and Lithuania had their rings read in the field in the Wigan area during the year.

Hirundine ringing produced several useful controls. A Sand Martin caught at a Shakerley colony had been ringed as an adult the previous autumn in Sussex while one from the same colony was caught in Eastern France later in the autumn. Swallows caught roosting in September had been ringed as nestlings earlier in 2010 in Clwyd and, more unpredictably, Northamptonshire. Targeting of migrating Meadow Pipits in autumn resulted in the capture of an adult bird ringed the previous autumn as a juvenile in the Scottish Borders.

Regular ringing of acrocephalus warblers at Bryn Marsh has produced a useful set of controls to or from France and Belgium. The adult male Reed Warbler V070461 migrated in an easterly direction later in the same autumn after it had been ringed, whereas all three of the French controls involved individuals which had migrated in a southerly direction. Nearer to home, a Goldcrest ringed in the autumn on the Wirral coast was recaptured near Leigh a month later.

A Fieldfare ringed near Wigan in 1995 hit a window in Kent almost 15 years later, easily breaking the UK longevity record by several years! A Blackbird caught in late autumn on the east coast was found dead three weeks later in Hyde, probably illustrating the Scandinavian origin of some of our wintering birds. The rapid movement of a first year female Great Tit in spring from Bolton to Pilling was unexpected. Short term spring movements of Siskin to Scotland are quite routine now but Chaffinch movements are less often noted and an autumn bird from north Lancashire was recaptured at Shakerley a fortnight later, possibly on its way further south.

The ongoing Twite colour ringing project on the moorlands resulted in several useful sightings of birds illustrating the different populations visiting the county. Four Greater Manchester ringed nestlings were subsequently sighted wintering in Norfolk, while an adult female ringed in October was also sighted on the east coast before being found in Scotland several springs later. Finally, a Reed Bunting caught in spring at Shakerley had moved south to Worcestershire for the autumn.

Many thanks to all contributors: Leigh Ringing Group, South Manchester Ringing Group, Cheshire Swan Study Group and North West Swan Study Group. Further details of ringing totals and recoveries affecting the County and the rest of the UK can be found on the BTO web site:

<http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/ringing/publications/online-ringing-reports>

Ongoing colour ringing schemes within the county and contact details are as follows:

Mute Swan	weshalton@btinternet.com
Coot	kanebrides@gmail.com
Black-headed Gull	bhgulls@gmail.com
Dipper	tony.wilkinson@tantronics.co.uk
Starling	kanebrides@gmail.com
Twite	<a href="http://dalebirdringing.co.uk/colour%20rings.html">http://dalebirdringing.co.uk/colour%20rings.html</a>
Tree Sparrow	se.christmas@ntlworld.com

For all other species, colour ring sightings can be reported via: <http://www.cr-birding.be/>

Birds with metal rings only can be reported at: <http://blx1.bto.org/euring/main/>

## Greater Manchester Ringing Totals

Species	2009	2010	Species	2009	2010
Mute Swan	90	71	Kingfisher	4	4
Canada Goose	60	107	Gt. Spot. Woodpecker	6	15
Mallard	-	2	Sand Martin	7	69
Mandarin Duck	2	-	Swallow	308	759
Tufted Duck	3	2	House Martin	10	177
Great Crested Grebe	1	-	Meadow Pipit	36	92
Grey Heron	11	7	Grey Wagtail	6	26
Sparrowhawk	5	7	Pied Wagtail	13	23
Kestrel	4	-	Waxwing	-	36
Peregrine	10	12	Dipper	87	65
Moorhen	2	-	Wren	34	48
Coot	85	177	Dunnoek	68	76
Lapwing	19	12	Robin	55	101
Snipe	4	-	Stonechat	1	-
Woodcock	-	1	Wheatear	3	-
Common Sandpiper	1	-	Blackbird	148	141
Redshank	8	-	Fieldfare	1	-
Black-headed Gull	1	6	Song Thrush	17	22
Common Tern	20	26	Redwing	1	2
Stock Dove	7	3	Mistle Thrush	2	2
Woodpigeon	20	13	Cetti's Warbler	1	-
Collared Dove	9	5	Grasshopper Warbler	-	5
Barn Owl	30	18	Sedge Warbler	20	109
Little Owl	3	-	Reed Warbler	49	262
Tawny Owl	4	4	Blackcap	33	32
Long-eared Owl	-	3	Garden Warbler	3	-
Swift	21	6	Whitethroat	7	35

Species	2009	2010	Species	2009	2010
Chiffchaff	21	35	House Sparrow	18	15
Willow Warbler	41	64	Tree Sparrow	8	6
Goldcrest	13	28	Chaffinch	235	337
Firecrest	1	-	Brambling	-	17
Long-tailed Tit	73	154	Greenfinch	147	116
Blue Tit	584	707	Goldfinch	329	334
Great Tit	266	427	Siskin	56	10
Coal Tit	43	80	Linnet	-	4
Willow Tit	7	14	Twite	115	77
Nuthatch	18	25	Lesser Redpoll	36	82
Treecreeper	5	5	Common/Lesser Redpoll	10	3
Jay	10	9	Bullfinch	57	131
Magpie	8	9	Yellowhammer	15	22
Jackdaw	2	2	Reed Bunting	30	157
Raven	2	4			
Starling	300	68	<b>Total</b>	<b>3,796</b>	<b>5,529</b>

## Selected ringing recoveries affecting Greater Manchester

### Mute Swan

Z87929	Nestling	06.08.1996	West Burton, Retford, Notts
	Freshly dead	30.08.2010	Worsley, 107km W
U6830	Nestling	03.09.1996	Llanymynach, Powys
	Ring read	19.01.1997	Warrington, 76km NNE
	Ring read	16.02.2008	Woolston, Warrington
	Freshly dead	25.01.2010	Irlam, 87km NNE

### Canada Goose

5086246	Adult	07.08.1995	Pennington Flash
	Ring read	26.01.2010	River Irwell, Salford, 19km E; 14+ years
5253298	Adult	30.12.2008	Southport, Merseyside
	Ring read	21.06.2009	Fairhaven Lake, St Annes
	Ring read	29.09.2010	Moses Gate, Farnworth, 43km ESE
5255964	Adult ♀	09.01.2010	Three Sisters, Ashton-in-Makerfield
	Shot	23.03.2010	Soyland Town, Ripponden, Yorks, 50km ENE

### Teal

EG05649	1st Yr ♂	11.02.2004	Pennington Flash
	Shot	22.01.2010	Golborne, 3km

### Mallard

GC21866	1st Yr ♂	14.11.2006	Martin Mere, Lancs
	Dead	20.07.2010	Standish, 15km ESE



**Grey Heron**

1500714	Nestling Dead (cold)	02.05.2006 26.12.2010	Botany Bay Wood, Worsley Bury, 16km NNE
1500768	Nestling Dead (cold)	19.04.2010 16.01.2010	Botany Bay Wood, Worsley R Wyre, Thornton, Lancs, 59km NW

**Osprey**

1408005	Nestling Ring read	28.06.2007 15.05.2010	Aucharroch Wood, Tayside Lightshaw Hall Flash, 359km S
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**Merlin**

EL61774	Nestling ♀ Dead (car)	22.06.2008 24.07.2008	Site Confidential, Derbys. Blackstone Edge, 26km NNW
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**Peregrine**

GC47818	Nestling ♂ Dead	29.05.2008 03.06.2010	(North Gtr Manchester) Ashton-under-Lyne, 22km SE
GC47828	Nestling ♂ Sick	29.05.2008 05.10.2010	(North Gtr Manchester) Daresbury, Warrington, 31km SW

**Coot**

GC87895	1st year Rings read	26.11.2009 03.04.2010	Moses Gate, Farnworth Hurworth Burn Resr, Durham, 143km NNE
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**Black-headed Gull**

EL78572	Nestling Ring read Ring read	12.06.2005 27.09.2005 12.11.2010	Cerney Wick, Gloucester Pennington Flash, 207km NNW Pennington Flash
EW74366	Nestling Ring read	12.06.2010 21.09.2010	Attenborough NR, Nottingham Three Sisters, Ashton-in-M'field, 115km NW
6407062	Adult Ring read Ring read	14.03.2003 19.11.2007 26.08.2010	Pildammsparken, Malmo, SWEDEN Pennington Flash, 1,029km WSW Pennington Flash
HA06762	Nestling Ring read Ring read	13.06.2008 12.01.2009 28.09.2010	Kalvia, Klaipeda, LITHUANIA Pennington Flash, 1,555km W Pennington Flash
ST263065	Nestling Ring read	06.07.2010 28.09.2010	Helsinki, FINLAND Pennington Flash, 1,837km WSW

**Lesser Black-backed Gull**

GH98544	1st year Ring read Ring read	12.09.2000 30.10.2003 02.01.2010	near, Bury Mieras, Valdovino, SPAIN, 1,194km SSW Priorslee, Telford, Shropshire, 101km S
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**Woodpigeon**

FS13977	Adult	20.12.2009	Dales Brow, Swinton
	Dead (road)	19.06.2010	Chelford, Cheshire, 27km SSE

**Tawny Owl**

GN76871	Nestling	03.05.2006	Glossop, Derbyshire
	Dead	04.04.2010	Mellor, 8km SW

**Sand Martin**

X737328	Adult ♂	31.08.2009	Pett Level, Sussex
	Controlled	15.06.2010	Shakerley, Atherton, 362km NW
L190689	Adult ♂	15.06.2010	Shakerley, Atherton
	Controlled	24.08.2010	Etang de la Horre, Aube, FRANCE, 749km SE

**Swallow**

L252193	1st year	22.08.2010	Storton's GP, Northants
	Controlled	07.09.2010	Worsley, 172km NNW
X938393	Nestling	02.06.2010	Marchwiell, Clwyd
	Controlled	07.09.2010	Worsley, 66km NE

**Meadow Pipit**

X704275	1st year	26.09.2009	near Nether Falla, Borders
	Controlled	18.09.2010	Smithills, Bolton, 242km S

**Dipper**

NX46938	1st year ♀	13.04.2009	Sutton, Cheshire
	Dead (glass)	02.04.2010	Bramhall, 15km N
RV21997	Nestling ♀	15.04.2007	Dobcross, Uppermill
	Controlled	10.04.2010	Bowerclough Head, 8km SE

**Blackbird**

LC06851	1st year ♀	24.11.2010	Kilnsea, Humberside
	Dead	15.12.2010	Hyde, 148km W

**Fieldfare**

RE89488	Adult ♀	31.01.1996	near Goose Green, Wigan
	Dead (glass)	25.10.2010	Shone, Kent, 316km SE; 14+ years

**Sedge Warbler**

	1st year ♀	03.08.2009	Etang de Kergalan, Plovan, Finisterre, France
4851747	Controlled	12.06.2010	Bryn, Ashton-in-Makerfield, 636km N

**Reed Warbler**

	1st year ♂	16.08.2007	Marais de Suscinio, Sarzeau, Morbihan, France
5383418	Controlled	24.06.2010	Bryn, Ashton-in-Makerfield, 667km N
V070461	Adult ♂	05.06.2008	Bryn, Ashton-in-Makerfield
	Controlled	27.08.2008	Essen, Antwerp, Belgium, 532km ESE
X925197	1st year	15.08.2010	Bryn, Ashton-in-Makerfield
	Controlled	22.08.2010	Frampton, Hundred Acre, Gloucs, 198km S
X925353	1st year	22.08.2010	Bryn, Ashton-in-Makerfield
	Controlled	11.09.2010	Floirac, Gironde, France, 979km S

**Chiffchaff**

CHN509	Juvenile	26.06.2009	Woolston, Warrington
	Dead (glass)	08.05.2010	Tyldesley, 14km NNE

**Goldcrest**

DCV398	1st year ♀	22.10.2010	Meols, Wirral
	Controlled	25.11.2010	Lilford Park, Leigh, 45km ENE

**Great Tit**

T947376	1st year ♀	21.03.2010	Barrow Bridge, Bolton
	Controlled	13.04.2010	Ridge Farm, Pilling, Lancs, 49km NW

**Starling**

LC25281	1st year ♂	30.11.2010	The Rea, Upton Magna, Shrewsbury
	Dead (glass)	08.12.2010	Lostock, Bolton, 95km N

**Chaffinch**

X656746	1st year ♀	05.10.2009	Dobcross, Uppermill, Oldham
	Controlled	17.12.2009	Wyke, Bradford, W Yorks, 27km NE
L114442	1st year ♂	14.08.2010	Woolston, Warrington
	Dead (glass)	03.09.2010	near Marylebone, Wigan, 20km NNW
L333984	Adult ♀	30.09.2010	Heysham Harbour, Lancs
	Controlled	14.10.2010	Shakerley, Atherton, 64km SSE

**Goldfinch**

V354051	Adult	14.01.2007	Woodford, Poynton
	Predated	27.10.2010	Wolstenholme, Rochdale, 32km N

**Siskin**

R444861	Adult ♂	21.02.2010	Orrell, Wigan
	Controlled	05.04.2010	Aberfoyle Forest, Central, 314km NNW

**Twite**

R687429	Adult ♀	11.10.2004	Light Hazzles Reservoir
	Controlled	04.02.2005	near North Somercotes, Lincs, 149km E
	Rings read	23.04.2010	Machrihanish, Strathclyde, 308km NW
X647956	Nestling	10.06.2010	Blackstone Edge Pasture
	Rings read	27.10.2010	Titchwell, Norfolk, 195km ESE
X647963	Nestling	11.06.2010	Chelburn Moor
	Rings read	08.08.2010	Britannia Quarries, Lancs, 8km W
	Rings read	17.10.2010	Titchwell, Norfolk, 195km ESE
X647993	Nestling	26.06.2010	Chelburn Moor
	Rings read	28.10.2010	Titchwell, Norfolk, 195km SSE
X648201	Nestling	30.06.2010	Blackstone Edge Pasture
	Rings read	14.08.2010	Manshead End, Yorks, 6km SE
	Rings read	20.10.2010	Titchwell, Norfolk, 192km SSE

**Lesser Redpoll**

T559515	Adult ♂	22.10.2005	Turf Lea, nr. Strines
	Controlled	26.12.2009	Light Oaks, nr. Stoke-on-Trent, 36km S
	Controlled	21.02.2010	Light Oaks, nr. Stoke-on-Trent, 36km S
X154171	1st year	31.03.2009	Dobcross, Uppermill, Oldham
	Controlled	20.03.2010	Light Oaks, nr. Stoke-on-Trent, 56km S
X629162	Adult ♂	27.06.2009	Belmont, Bolton
	Controlled	02.03.2010	Shakerley, Atherton, 14km S

**Reed Bunting**

X922999	Adult ♂	07.04.2010	Shakerley, Atherton
	Controlled	15.10.2010	Grimley, Heref & Worcs, 144km S

Other interesting longevity records from birds ringed at Dobcross, Uppermill include: Chaffinch (7+ years), Great Spotted Woodpecker (7+ years), Coal Tit (4 years) and Long-tailed Tit (4+ years).

# Greater Manchester County Rarities Committee Annual Report 2010

*Ian McKerchar*

## **Current Rarities Committee Members:**

Rob Adderley, Adam Davison, Pete Hines, Andy Isherwood, Ian McKerchar (Chairman)

Gulls sub-committee members: Rob Adderley, Ian McKerchar, Roy Travis

## **SUBMISSIONS IN 2010**

A total of 90 county rarities were claimed via one means or another through the year and this left the rarities committee busy dealing with the 71 submissions gratefully received and assessed. Of those received 16 were gulls which were assessed by the gulls sub-committee. This left 19 claimed county rarities not submitted though and as always this is a great shame, as in the end it is the county's avifauna which suffers. One can only speculate at the reasons for not submitting these claims; perhaps those observers have a preformed opinion of the committee's assessment process, that they decided in hindsight their claims were probably not sufficient to warrant submission, that they realised they had simply made a mistake or perhaps they merely forgot to submit it at all! As always though, I remain ever available to discuss any matters relating to county rarities, whether that is a record submission, our assessment process or indeed individual submissions not yet submitted, those in circulation or those for which a decision has been made.

The acceptance rate for submitted records was lower than usual this year at 84% but there was a clear reason for this which was out of the rarities committee's hands and is explained within this report. A new 'work-in-progress board' is now in operation on the Manchester Birding website at [www.manchesterbirding.com/records.htm](http://www.manchesterbirding.com/records.htm) and as usual, this not only affords the latest information on the status of submissions within the committee but also attempts to offer an explanation as to the reasons why particular submissions were found not proven and indicates sightings for which a submission has not yet been received.

## **AUTUMN 2010 LAPLAND BUNTINGS**

Autumn 2010 saw a huge influx of Lapland Buntings throughout the UK and Greater Manchester didn't appear to miss out on this unprecedented invasion either. Although 2010 saw only three accepted records of the species a further seven were reported during the autumn, all from the Horwich Moors. Unfortunately, all were heard only flyovers and none were submitted with transcriptions of their calls. This left the county rarity committee in a very difficult situation. The observers involved were all experienced birders, one of whom had already found two well watched Lapland Buntings on the very same moors but yet despite their combined experience and apparent proven reliability with the species, the committee, quite rightly in my view, could not make any exception to our usual acceptance criteria. All submissions, without exception, must be accompanied by some form of representation and whilst the committee fully acknowledges the difficulty in transcribing bird calls in particular it would be invidious of us to make allowances in any case.

## **HEARD ONLY COUNTY RARITIES**

In view of the autumn 2010 Lapland Bunting situation and in the interest of future similar instances of heard only birds, the following points are intended to give some advice of both our guidelines for the acceptance of heard only birds and of what is expected of the observer in such circumstances:

1. The observer(s) must have good experience of the species concerned and demonstrate that the call of the bird claimed was heard clearly.
2. The call must be described in detail including transcription on paper (length, quality, tone etc of call), comparison with other calls heard either at or around the same time (or failing that, qualification as to why it was different to commoner species) and frequency/timing of call(s).
3. The observer(s) should provide an exact account of the record including, for example, how many times the bird called and over what time period it was heard.

## **BBRC NATIONAL RARITY DECISIONS**

Accepted:     Pied-billed Grebe, Hollingworth Lake, 7th-21st November 2010  
                  Dusky Thrush, Leigh, 8th December 2010

## **GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF RARITY RECORDS**

Full guidelines are available on the Manchester Birding website at [www.manchesterbirding.com/records.htm](http://www.manchesterbirding.com/records.htm)

If you do not have access to the Internet, please send an A5 s.a.e. to me and I will send a copy of the guidelines to you. The list also acts as a checklist for the Greater Manchester List, as all accepted species and subspecies ever recorded are included.

The County Rarities Committee urges all observers, however experienced, to complete rarity forms so that a truly scientific record can be maintained of the county's avifauna. Observers finding a national or county rarity should take a description in writing and if possible obtain a photograph and find another competent observer to confirm the identification. When submitting a rarity description, observers should include as much possible detail, taken from field notes written at the time of the observation (which should ideally be included in the submission), bearing in mind that the Rarities Committee can only assess the submission from the information provided by the observer. Line drawings are always useful and greatly appreciated by the committee, no matter how poor the artist perceives them, and can often provide great clarity to the overall submission.

Submissions to the committee including digital images continue to increase and whilst we would encourage the use of photographs, especially as an addition to a submission, observers should still continue to obtain high quality field notes even if the submission meets the criteria for assessment by photo only, as field notes may be invaluable in the event of a query. Digital photographs of any quality should be provided to the committee as an email attachment (not included within the text of an email or other document), preferably without any computer enhancement or touch-ups and of as large a file size as possible. Conventional film photographs should be included; preferably of at least 6"x4" size and home printed digital photographs are acceptable provided the print quality is of a sufficiently high standard. I would welcome observers requiring advice with any of the above processes to contact me to discuss the matter.

Depending on the circumstances, of which the welfare of the bird is paramount at all times with serious consideration given to access, disturbance risk and possible habitat damage, the sighting may be reported to one of the commercial bird information services. Observers in any doubt should immediately contact me for advice.

All national rarities should be submitted initially to me and NOT directly to BBRC, which enables me to make a copy of the submission and to iron out any queries before it is then forwarded to this very busy committee. This route for submissions is also that preferred and requested by BBRC.



# County Rarities List

**Descriptions are required for the following (non-BBRC) species:**

All diver species	Quail (non-calling birds)
Red-necked Grebe	Black Grouse
Slavonian Grebe	Spotted Crake
Fulmar	Corncrake
All shearwater species	Crane
Wilson's Petrel	Kentish Plover
Storm Petrel	Dotterel
Leach's Petrel	American Golden Plover
Gannet	Little Stint
Shag	Temminck's Stint
Night Heron	White-rumped Sandpiper
Cattle Egret	Pectoral Sandpiper
Great White Egret	Curlew Sandpiper
Purple Heron	Purple Sandpiper
Spoonbill	Buff-breasted Sandpiper
Bewick's Swan	Red-necked Phalarope
White-fronted Goose	Grey Phalarope
Bean Goose	All skua species
Brent Goose	Sabine's Gull
American Wigeon	Ring-billed Gull
Green-winged Teal	Yellow-legged Gull
Ring-necked Duck	Caspian Gull
Ferruginous Duck	Roseate Tern
Long-tailed Duck	White-winged Black Tern
Eider	All auks
Velvet Scoter	Turtle Dove
Smew	Nightjar
Honey Buzzard	Bee-eater
Black Kite	Hoopoe
Red Kite	Wryneck
Montagu's Harrier	Woodlark
Goshawk	Shore Lark
Rough-legged Buzzard	Richard's Pipit
Red-footed Falcon	Tawny Pipit

Red-throated Pipit	Bearded Tit
Water Pipit	Marsh Tit
Nightingale	Golden Oriole
Bluethroat	All Shrike species
Siberian Stonechat	Chough
Barred Warbler	Hooded Crow
Cetti's Warbler	Rose-coloured Starling
Aquatic Warbler	Serin
Marsh Warbler	Parrot Crossbill
Dartford Warbler	Twite (except in certain upland areas)
Subalpine Warbler	Common Redpoll (except in influx years)
Icterine Warbler	Common Rosefinch
Melodious Warbler	Hawfinch
Greenish Warbler	Lapland Bunting
Yellow-browed Warbler	Cirl Bunting
Pallas's Warbler	Ortolan Bunting
Radde's Warbler	Rustic Bunting
Dusky Warbler	Little Bunting
Red-breasted Flycatcher	

## SUBSPECIES

Iceland Gull (Kumlien's Gull *L.g. kumlieni*)

Yellow Wagtail (all races other than *flavissima*) and any purported hybrid individuals.

Chiffchaff - all races except *collybita*

Other records of **birds in unusual habitat, exceptionally early or late migrants** etc. may, at the discretion of the Rarities Committee Chairman, require a description, and in any case, records of rarer species will only be accepted with an observer's name attached (**i.e. mentions on site wardens' lists, birdline and pager reports will not be sufficient.**). In influx years, the requirement for a description may be suspended at short notice by the Rarities Committee Chairman.

Any species not on the above list should be assumed to be a national rarity; please contact the County Bird Recorder for a form (01942 701758) or fill one in online at [www.manchesterbirding.com](http://www.manchesterbirding.com)

## Shore Lark at Cutacre , Jan 30th - Feb 3rd

*Simon & Alan Warford*

Having read in the Bolton News about the open cast coal working site at Cutacre, and having driven past the area on several occasions, we were interested to find out what the area could support in terms of bird species since its transformation to slag heaps and rough ground. It was the afternoon of Saturday 30th January 2010 when my dad and I finally got around to visiting the site. Having found a public footpath from the A6 we were soon walking along the edge of one of the main slag heaps. The grassed over areas looked quite interesting and we decided to head to the top of the largest spoil heap. As we walked slowly over the very top part of the mound about 20 feet apart, we got the briefest glimpse of a bird which flew up by a small rocky ridge in front of us. Luckily my dad had seen where the bird had landed about 40 feet away in some grass but the bird wasn't visible. We could have easily have passed it off as a Meadow Pipit but waited to see if the bird would appear from the grass. Then after a few seconds I picked up the bird but it had its back to us then it turned around to reveal itself as an unmistakable Shore Lark! We looked at each other in complete disbelief and shock at what was in front of us as we knew instantly this would be a very rare bird in the county and certainly a first for the Bolton area. The striking and very distinctive yellow and black patterned face, along with the black upper breast band, was immediately obvious providing us with a straightforward identification. The bird was heard to call on a couple of occasions which was interesting as we had never heard one call before in 20 years of birding.

With about an hour of daylight left we quickly retreated about 50 yards to alert a few local birders who we knew would be interested in seeing this bird. Whilst I quickly phoned Ian McKerchar who I knew would be able to relay news quickly, my dad called a few other birders including Phil Rhodes. Whilst frantically trying to tell Ian directions to the site, whilst he was looking at an A to Z in a moving fire engine, he initially thought I had said to him we have just found a Short-toed Lark! It took about 30 minutes for the first few birders to arrive and typically the bird had disappeared! After a brief search by a few of us we relocated it not far from where we first found it, allowing six or seven birders to see it just before dark. It was good to see the bird still present the next morning and it was great to see the Shore Lark on a covering of snow with the yellow and black looking even more striking! The bird was last seen on the 3rd February but one wonders how long it could have been present before we found it in this unwatched area of the county.

## Red-rumped Swallow at Audenshaw Reservoirs, April 20th

*Rob Adderley*

I arrived at my local patch Audenshaw Reservoirs at around 7.15 am on 20th April. As I started walking around the bank of no 1 Reservoir I met Paul Hammond, who was just leaving to go to work. We had a brief chat in which Paul informed me that one of the Black-tailed Godwits from the previous day was still present and that he'd also seen Yellow Wagtail on the causeway.

I continued to walk round the bank of no 1 Reservoir until I came to the first well adjacent to the bank of no 3 Reservoir. On reaching the well I casually glanced at a hirundine which was feeding close at eye level over the grass bank of no 3 and was gobsmacked to see what was very obviously a Red-rumped Swallow! I immediately got my bins onto the bird and did a quick mental check of the key features; obvious square two-tone rump – whitish at the bottom and orange red at the top, solid black 'stuck on' tail and black undertail coverts, orangey face and collar across the nape with a dark eye and black 'capped' crown...yep, no doubt about it, a stunning Red-rumped Swallow!

Conscious that Paul would by now be well on his way back to his car, I immediately phoned him and not surprisingly he did a U-turn and walked back (although I have to say at a surprisingly casual pace considering the circumstances!). Over the next several minutes I juggled with binoculars, camera and mobile 'phone as I tried to ring as many birders as possible, whilst trying to follow the bird with hand held camera, hoping for the best! By now the earlier cloud cover had all but lifted, giving way to blue skies, the bird was feeding a bit higher and venturing more widely out over no 3 Reservoir, and occasionally over onto no 1 where the sunlight restricted viewing. After what seemed like an age, Paul arrived back, but I'd lost the bird over no 1 Reservoir. After a few tense moments, happily it reappeared and showed well again for what was to be its final appearance. We lost it over the north end of no 3, but at this point I thought it would be back. I hurried off site and drove home to collect my wife Sonia who was keen to see the bird. On our return several more birders had arrived, but despite intense scrutiny of the large number of hirundines present, the Red-rumped wasn't seen again. A Little Gull on no 2 Reservoir provided some compensation (but I suspect not much!).

During the period of observation the Red-rumped Swallow didn't seem to closely associate with the other Hirundines present, feeding largely on its own. Similar in size and shape to Swallow with obvious tail streamers, the bird's flight appeared somewhat more leisurely, with more gliding than Swallow. The most noticeable feature was a pale, square cut two-toned rump which was whitish at the base and orange red at the top. However when the bird fed more distantly over no 3 Reservoir or higher in the sky the rump just appeared pale. The prominence of the rump was enhanced by the blackish uppertail, mantle and upperwings. The bird's head pattern was distinctive with a pale rusty orange face, a rusty orange collar across the nape which created a capped effect with the black crown. The dark eye was also noticeable set against the pale face. The underparts (including the throat) were largely whitish with very fine dark streaking and contrasting black undertail / undertail coverts.

## Breeding Black Redstarts in Ashton-under-Lyne

*Karen Foulkes*

On Thursday 7th April 2010 while I was on my lunch break I went to see if I could see any birds in the centre of Ashton. Instead of looking at the usual Starlings, I found myself walking out towards the residential area to try and locate any nesting House Sparrows as they are normally present in good numbers. Having located several Sparrows, I was about to return to the office when a bird on a low rooftop caught my eye. I could see with my naked eye that the jizz of the bird appeared to be that of Black Redstart. Further investigations revealed the bird to be a 'classic' male in stunning plumage, similar to the one I had seen in 2009. Just to double check I grabbed my binoculars from my bag and confirmed this. The bird then gave a brief burst of song before disappearing over the rooftop. I immediately contacted Ian McKerchar and informed him of the presence of the bird stating as it was in a residential area, it would probably be unwise to put the news out. He asked me if the bird was singing and said he would contact Judith Smith and a decision would be made as to whether news of the bird should indeed be made public.

I made my way back to work and was contacted by text message several minutes later stating that the bird would remain out of public knowledge. I looked for the bird again after work but was unable to relocate it.

The next morning I was up and out early looking for the bird. I was easily able to locate him as he was now in full song. I went back in my lunch break and again located him and was even able to find him after work. This pattern continued throughout the week and on Saturday 9th April whilst out looking for him with my dad, we eventually located him singing in a tree in St Michaels churchyard, the first time I have ever knowingly heard Black Redstart singing from a tree, either here or abroad.

The bird continued to sing throughout April and did eventually move down Wood Street into the retail area of the town centre. I made it my mission to try and see him every day if I could and found myself spending a couple of hours both before and after work as well as my lunchtime trying to see if I could locate a female. I decided that as long as he was singing there was little chance of a female having arrived. His favourite song posts were usually television aeralis and he would sing along the entire length of Wood Street utilising these man made perches.

Working in Ashton meant I was able to track the movements of the bird and I was able to locate him almost every day, although I did have false alarms when I decided he had gone because I didn't see or hear him for a couple of days. I was always proved wrong, though he did on occasions take some tracking down. There were days when his presence seemed obvious to me and I was totally amazed he wasn't reported as I knew others were probably looking out for Black Redstart. He sang throughout May and I often heard him in the early hours when I was walking through Ashton town centre to the bus station, on my way to other birding locations. This was the best time as there was no traffic to drown out his song and I often took a quick detour just to see him. June came and as the male was still singing strongly, I decided it was unlikely that a female had arrived.

Monday 5th July was a dull day and I hadn't seen or heard the male for a couple of days, I searched for him to no avail, and then I had a brief view of a bird I knew was a Black Redstart, but lacked white wing patches, I knew it was probably a female or young bird, but before I could be 100% certain, it had disappeared. An hour of searching the area brought me no luck and I decided to call it a day.

The next day I saw the male, he wasn't singing and my mind went back to the day before. I searched for a female but if he had a mate, she wasn't showing herself. Wednesday 7th July found me checking a different area. A 100% certain female Black Redstart was present with the male in close attendance. It was almost like winning the lottery and it felt like all the time and effort I had spent was finally worthwhile.

I didn't see the female again in July although I saw the male on several occasions. I pondered over whether the female could be sitting on eggs. I hadn't much of a clue about Black Redstarts even though I had watched them both in England and abroad. The worst thing was I would be away at the end of the month and I decided that time-scales meant it was possible young would be fledged and I would never know, would anyone know though?

I spent two weeks in Wales wondering about the fate of a pair of birds in Ashton under Lyne. I'd asked Roy Travis to keep an eye on them if he could. I got no messages about them. Was this good news or bad news? The day after I arrived back from Wales, I went out early. The male wasn't singing and a quick look around Ashton revealed nothing.

On Monday 16th August, though, I stumbled across the male. This meant something now, surely there were young around. I remained hopeful. On Tuesday 17th August, I searched a likely area. The male was there with another bird, female or young though? I didn't see the tail but my brief view told me the bird was slim. At lunchtime on Wednesday, I saw the male carrying a large green caterpillar, and then in the evening I saw a bird in silhouette with quite a short tail, maybe this wasn't even a Black Redstart.

I received a phone call from Adrian Dancy on Thursday 19th August, news had filtered through about the Black Redstarts, and as there wasn't a pair in Manchester, he was hoping to see the Ashton birds and maybe photograph them, although I still wasn't sure where we were up to with them. He told me he would be on the next train. I told him where I had seen the birds and less than an hour later I had a text message telling me that there were definitely two birds, although I had no confirmation whether the male was with a female or a young bird.

Confirmation came later from Adrian that it was a pair of birds which looked like they were feeding young. He had also gained permission to enter the private area where they were

feeding. When I finished work I wanted to go to the area, Adrian asked could I wait for a short while. Of course the local weather being what it is saw quite a bright day turn cloudy and then quite persistent rain. I wasn't going to let that put me off though and by the time we left the site Adrian and I were rather bedraggled. I walked home with a large grin on my face though!

I went to see the birds the next day, but only briefly but they continued to take food to where they were presumably feeding young.

Robert and Sonia Adderley arrived on Saturday 21st August. We had the first sighting of a young bird. It was a ball of fluff which spent most of its time in a gutter hiding from corvids and gulls. Robert did manage to digiscope it though. I was joined later by Adrian and we spent the rest of the day watching the bird being fed by both parents, the male at one stage bringing a particularly large moth into the area we were watching. The young bird would often disappear when a potential predator appeared in the area. We also noted the male bird making a strange Starling-like sound which neither of us had ever heard before.

On the morning of Sunday 22nd August, we watched the adult birds flying off in different directions, convincing us that there were almost certainly two young birds. On Thursday 26th August I saw two young birds and I was told by some of the locals that the birds were always rather noisy! On Friday I watched the birds moving across nearby rooftops and I assumed they had left the area where we had been watching them; this though was not the case.

On Saturday I had other business to attend to and I received a call from Adrian informing me that there were now three young birds. I made my way over and we watched the three young birds being fed by both parents. When I arrived on Sunday, we again settled in to watch the birds for the day, they were becoming less dependant on their parents for feeding and occasionally we would catch them feeding themselves although they soon began begging from their parents again, especially if they had food! On Monday morning I bumped into Adrian who was walking around the area, he told me the birds may be on the move. We looked around the area and could neither see nor hear any birds, so we went back into the private area. The birds came down less frequently than they had been doing and it did indeed look as if they were moving around the area. I commented to Adrian that I hadn't seen the female and indeed I didn't see her again.

On Tuesday 31st August, I went back to look for the birds before I went to work, it was almost as if they had waited for me to turn up to say farewell because when I walked away from the area, I saw four birds fly towards the war memorial. I knew I wouldn't be seeing them again, and as I had seen three young birds and the male it looked almost certain that the female had sadly perished.

The male Black Redstart was present for 147 days in total, which is a remarkable 21 weeks. I ascertained from Judith Smith that as far as she knew this was the latest Black Redstart breeding recorded for the county.

Special thanks must be given to several Greater Manchester birders for their continuing support and advice.

## Lapland Bunting on Winter Hill in September

*John Rayner*

There had been one or more Lapland Buntings near Winter Hill from 17th – 21st September 2010 but most sightings were just over, or on, the border with Lancashire, although it/they had also made brief flights into Greater Manchester airspace.

On 26th September Simon Warford thought he heard either Snow or Lapland Bunting calling over the footpath that leads from Winter Hill to Coalpit Lane but couldn't pin it down. Lapland



Bunting would be a county tick for both Mark Rigby and myself so we arranged to search the area early on 28th September although, as it was now two days after Simon only possibly heard one, we were not hopeful.

On our arrival at 07.30 the weather was awful with heavy and persistent low cloud reducing visibility to a few yards at times - not promising. We first walked the general area then slowly along the path to Coalpit Lane and saw only one Wheatear and a couple of Meadow Pipits in the first hour. At 08.30 Mark noticed (using binoculars) another bird about 10-15 metres in front of us on the path. It was rear on and mist shrouded - on the very edge of visibility really but even in these conditions white lines down the mantle were noticeable and it looked interesting. I set up my scope just before it disappeared over a brow of the path. We both agreed in rather surprised tones, "That's it!"

What followed was a stalking game to get better views through the mist. We phoned Andy Makin and he arrived with Ken Haydock, eventually followed by Rob and Terry Thorpe. The cloud slowly lifted and the light brightened allowing everyone to get great views of this now confiding bird and for Mark to take a series of excellent photographs at close range. It flew once or twice calling a typical hard 'prrrrt' but never flew far.

I took only brief notes which read as follows: "Re-found Lapland Bunting at 08.30 then watched till 12.10. When the wind displaced the nape feathering quite a lot of chestnut showed. Prominent white 'tram lines' on mantle, rufous greater coverts, dusky breast side smudges suggest adult."

Whatever its age though it was a very welcome new county bird for Mark and myself and another memorable Greater Manchester moment.

## Pied-billed Grebe at Hollingworth Lake in November - a first county record

*Ian McKerchar*

On the 9th November 2010 I received a forwarded email from Mansfield RSPB member Martin Griffiths containing images of a grebe he had seen at Hollingworth Lake on the 7th of November whilst on a group outing there. Martin was clearly perplexed by the bird with his identification ranging from Red-necked to Little Grebe but neither seemed correct and fortunately he had the insight to seek assistance. The images weren't the best but it was certainly no Red-necked Grebe and instead hinted at appearing like a steroidal Little Grebe. I spoke with Judith Smith and we discussed the seemingly outrageous possibility of Pied-billed Grebe. That seemed almost too fanciful though and the photos were evidently inconclusive, so it was obvious that it required confirming either way. With that in mind I set off towards Hollingworth with no idea of what I might actually encounter or if the bird would even still be present.

Arriving around midday, I realised I also had no information as to where the bird had originally been seen and the lake is quite large. The open water of the main lake looked decidedly 'choppy' so I felt the best starting point would be the nature reserve section which is usually more sheltered. If I were a grebe that's where I would be! On arrival at the small section of nature reserve three Goosanders scarpersed as I peered through the trees, scanning the water in some form of desperate blind hope the 'odd grebe' would be present. Then, within two minutes, there it was, bold as brass, the only other bird present. A big gulp, I really couldn't believe it. Here, in Greater Manchester, at the very foot of the South Pennine moors was a Pied-billed Grebe! In my wildest dreams I hadn't expected it to actually turn out to be one and for the next five minutes I kept zooming in and out on the telescope, repeatedly confirming I wasn't making a huge mistake even though I have seen many before, including three individuals in the UK alone. There was no mistake though and so I rang Birdnet Information to release the

news and spoke to Tom McKinney. Such was the apparent calm in my voice that Tom actually thought I was joking but inside I was anything but calm! With the news now made public all I had to do was to wait for the first birders to arrive and share the moment. I still couldn't believe it though and found myself repeatedly checking I'd made the right call despite the fact that it so obviously was one. This wasn't helped when another very well known national bird information service rang me to check the report they had just received of the bird via their Birdnet pager. They too had received the photographs that morning (from the finder himself) and had felt the bird was most likely a Little Grebe! I assured them it was indeed a Pied-billed and then set about a few more minutes of stricken self doubt whilst watching the steroidal, chicken-billed grebe in front of me (which admittedly never came any closer than the very rear of the pool at this stage). Despite my best efforts, there was no doubting it though and within half an hour the first birders began to arrive, though shortly after, the grebe decided to go to sleep! As more birders turned up I took my cue and left, satisfied that Greater Manchester had secured yet another county first and something of a mega to boot.

The bird remained until the 21st of November, disappearing overnight during good weather. It stayed primarily faithful to the nature reserve 'pool' but would at times venture out onto the main lake and for the overwhelming majority of the time it showed tremendously well to the many hundreds of visiting birders and was equally magnificently photographed during its stay.

It subsequently transpired however, that Hollingworth Lake's ardent regular watcher had in fact seen an unusual grebe out in the middle of the lake on the 4th of November. Bearing in mind that Little Grebe is itself a rarity here and there hasn't been a record for some three years, the poor weather and his poorer views at the time constituted to him recording it as 'just' a Little Grebe, despite his concerns that it looked a little odd jizz wise. Patently, it now appears almost certain that it was in fact the Pied-billed Grebe and his dismay at passing off the site's rarest visitor in history as something all the more common was palpable.



*photo: Mike Killelea*

# Dusky Thrush in Leigh on December 8th

## - a first county record

*Ian Reynolds & Ian McKerchar*

In early December 2010 I had seen on the local BBC news that Waxwings had been seen in our area. I managed to photograph three which were visiting a berry tree in my front garden and which my brother (who is a keen birdwatcher) was particularly keen to see. He had asked me to keep an eye open to see if the birds returned as he hadn't seen any Waxwings before.

I was working from home for the next few days and was able to keep an eye on the birds visiting our garden. A couple of days later I saw something unusual in a tree at the back of our house, it obviously wasn't a Waxwing but I wasn't sure what it was so I decided to take a few photographs anyway. After a quick look on the internet I thought I had identified it as a Redwing (I am a plane spotter not a bird spotter, so this was all new to me). The bird was on its own and stayed perched in the tree for about half an hour. Unfortunately I didn't see it leave but it looked in good condition considering the recent bad weather.

I showed my brother the images and after checking numerous books he was unable to identify the bird. He said that it was obviously something very unusual and I should send the image to Manchester Birding for identification.

Unfortunately, due to a busy time at work and the Christmas/New Year holidays and despite my brothers constant reminders, I didn't get round to sending the image until 20th January 2011.

*Ian Reynolds*

On the 20th January 2011 I received an email asking for assistance in identifying an unknown avian visitor which was present in a garden in Leigh on the 8th December 2010. Nothing new there it seemed, as I receive several such requests each week, including a recent influx of which were leucistic House Sparrows. I recall the events vividly though as my mother (who lives in Cyprus) was over for the holidays and I casually opened the images on my mobile 'phone whilst sat on the settee watching the television. On viewing them however, this was clearly not in the same category as leucistic House Sparrows and was instead an undeniably rather magnificent male Dusky Thrush (*Turdus eunomus*)! My mother remarked on the instant pallor in my face as I fell over myself to dash upstairs to my waiting computer.

I contacted the observer, Ian Reynolds, immediately. Unsurprisingly, Ian had no idea of the magnitude of his find. Whilst the identification of the bird was patently not in question, the location of the photographs required verification and then there was the small matter of whether the bird was still present! After discussing the sighting with Ian I quickly established that it only spent approximately half an hour alone in this single tree and had certainly not been since subsequently. The next day, I visited Ian's garden to see the location in which the photographs were taken, an unfortunately necessary evil, especially since Greater Manchester had recently experienced and exposed its first entirely fraudulent photographic rarity claim. On arrival I quickly verified from the images that both the background and the highly distinctive tree in which the bird had been perched did indeed perfectly match that on view from Ian's window. Greater Manchester it seemed, had indeed recorded a monumental rarity.

Despite the fact that the bird went unseen by anyone other than Ian, he should be commended for capturing the images in the first place and, with the encouragement of his brother Gary, for seeking assistance in its recognition. Yet again, if proof were needed that rarities of any magnitude can occur absolutely anywhere, this should surely suffice.

*Ian McKerchar*

# Why Your Records Are Important

*Steve Atkins*

If you are reading this report then you will know that without Greater Manchester birders taking the time to enter and submit their records there would be no Greater Manchester annual report. You may also have noticed improvements to this 2010 report. These come at a price and without the income generated from supplying records to ecological consultants the Greater Manchester Bird Recording Group (GMBRG) would be unable to fund this higher quality report except by significantly increasing the cover price.

Ecological consultants are employed by developers to assess the impacts of proposed developments. These environmental impact assessments are then submitted with the planning application to the local authorities who have a statutory duty to protect biodiversity. As well as carrying out their own surveys, the consultants rely heavily on records collected over the previous 5 years from the area. These are supplied from the GMBRG database.

However, for all Greater Manchester birders who care about protecting their local bird populations and sites, there are many other reasons why it is of vital importance to submit your records to GMBRG.

The Greater Manchester Ecology Unit identifies, surveys and selects Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs) across Greater Manchester and regularly consults GMBRG for bird data which is used to select new SBIs and maintain the designation of existing sites. Your records can make the difference between sites being downgraded (there are 3 categories A, B and C) or even removed from the SBI register.

In 2010 we supplied a significant number of records of UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority species to Natural England for the West and South Pennines Integrated Biodiversity Delivery Area (IBDA). These data were used to identify both the area of geographic coverage and objectives of the IBDA which aims to reverse the declines in biodiversity on our moorlands by adopting an integrated approach to habitat management and species conservation action.

We have provided records for several years to the RSPB's Bird Conservation Targeting Project <http://www.rspb.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/projects/targeting/index.aspx> and are proud to be listed as one of the contributing organisations. These have been used to identify the important areas of the country for declining farmland and woodland birds such as Grey Partridge, Skylark, Tree Sparrow, Yellowhammer and Corn Bunting. The targeting maps generated by the records are used to ensure that environmental stewardship payments and woodland grants are directed to the areas where they will be most effective in trying to prevent further losses and eventually reverse the declines of these Priority species.

Many thanks to everyone who has submitted records to the GMBRG over recent years. With the exception of the most popular birdwatching sites, there are many areas of our county which are still significantly under recorded. So there is plenty of scope for your records to make a real difference and help us to fill in some of the gaps in coverage. With 178 (72%) of UK species now either on the red or amber list, records of even widespread species such as Dunnock, House Sparrow and Starling are of great value. Even though recording for the Atlases has been completed please continue to include breeding codes with your records. It's not too late to send in your 2011 records, preferably by June 2012 for inclusion in the next county report. For advice on how to submit your records and what to include then visit <http://www.manchesterbirding.com/recordingcountybirds.htm> If after reading this you still have questions then please contact the County Recorder.

# Contributors

The Greater Manchester Bird Recording Group and the Annual Bird Report Production Team would like to sincerely thank all those individual observers, societies and organisations who contributed to this 2010 report by submitting their sightings either directly to the GMBRG or via one of the many active bird surveys within the county. Whilst it is hoped that the list is as complete as possible there will inevitably be some omissions for which we apologise in advance. Editors of county site reports are shown in **bold**.

Data for inclusion in this report was also received from Audenshaw Ornithology Group, Birdguides, Blackleach Country Park Log Sheets, Bolton RSPB, BTO Birdtrack and Atlas, Leigh Ornithological Society, Mersey Valley Warden Service, Oldham Countryside and River Valley Report, Pennington Flash Log Book, Rochdale Field Naturalists' Society, Shell Pool Reserve Conservation Group, Stockport Birdwatching Society and WeBS.

Adderley R & S	Bourne C	Corbett I	Fuller R
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Atkinson J		Doherty J	Graham S
	Cameron N	Done A	Greer S
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Bannon J	Canovan S	Dutton D	
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Hunter A	Martin S	Platt J	Thompson D
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Johnson Christopher	McGeorge I	Ramsden C	Trevelyan R
Johnson I	McKerchar I	Ramsey V	Tuccillo R
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	Owen B		



# Directory of Birding in Greater Manchester

The county of Greater Manchester consists of 10 metropolitan boroughs: Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan. Below is a list of contacts, clubs and other information which you may find useful. There is much more detail and information for all aspects of birding in the county on the regularly updated website [www.manchesterbirding.com](http://www.manchesterbirding.com)

## County Bird Recorder

Ian McKerchar, 42 Green Ave, Astley, M29 7EH

Tel: 01942 701758 Mob: 07958687481 Email: [ianmckerchar1@gmail.com](mailto:ianmckerchar1@gmail.com)

## Assistant County Bird Recorder and BTO Assistant Regional Rep.

Steve Atkins, 33 King's Grove, Wardle, Rochdale OL12 9HR

Tel: 01706 645097 Email: [steveatkins@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:steveatkins@tiscali.co.uk)

## BTO Regional Representatives

*Manchester* - Stephen Suttill, 94 Manchester Rd, Mossley, OL5 9AY Tel: 01457 836360

Email: [suttill.parkinson@virgin.net](mailto:suttill.parkinson@virgin.net) (home) [info@marctheprinters.co.uk](mailto:info@marctheprinters.co.uk) (work).

*Cheshire N & E* - Mark Eddowes, 59 Westfield Drive, Knutsford, WA16 0BH.

Tel: 01565 621683 Email: [mark.eddowes@esrtechnology.com](mailto:mark.eddowes@esrtechnology.com) (the 10km squares SJ78, SJ88 and SJ98 are in this region although large parts of them are in Greater Manchester)

*Regional Organiser for the Breeding Bird Survey, Manchester Region:*

Mrs. A. Judith Smith, 522 Warrington Road, Abram, Wigan, WN2 5XX.

Tel: 01942 861759 Mob: 07970 778024 Email: [ajudithsmith@gmail.com](mailto:ajudithsmith@gmail.com)

*Wetland Bird Survey Organiser:*

Adrian Dancy, Flat 5, Kensington Court, Bury New Rd, Salford M7 4WU

Tel: 0161 278 5381 Email: [a.dancy@ntl.com](mailto:a.dancy@ntl.com)

## Clubs

### Greater Manchester Bird Recording Group

Contact: Ian McKerchar, 42 Green Ave, Astley, M29 7EH

Tel: 01942 701758 Mob: 07958687481 Email: [ianmckerchar1@gmail.com](mailto:ianmckerchar1@gmail.com)

### Leigh Ornithological Society

Contact: Raymond Meredith, 24 Samuel St., Hindsford, Atherton M46 9AY

Tel: 01942 793555 Email: [raymond.meredith@ntlworld.com](mailto:raymond.meredith@ntlworld.com)

### Stockport Birdwatching Society

Contact: Dave Evans, 36 Tatton Rd South, Stockport, SK4 4LU

Tel: 0161 432 9513 Email: [windhover@ntl.com](mailto:windhover@ntl.com)

## RSPB Members' Groups - Group Leaders or contacts:

**Bolton:** Barrie Shore (Secretary) Tel: 01254 772089 Email: B.Shore@sky.com

**High Peak:** Richard Stephenson (Group Leader) Tel: 07966198472

Email: richard.stephenson@manchester.ac.uk

**Manchester:** Peter Wolstenholme Tel: 0161 428 2175

**Stockport:** Jean Crouch (Group Leader) Tel. 01625 873147

**Wigan:** Neil Martin Tel: 01695 624860 or 01695 633419. Mobile: 07950137165

## Site Recording Groups or Local Contacts:

**Audenshaw Ornithology Group** (Audenshaw and Gorton Reservoirs)

Contact: Roy Travis, 188 Smallshaw Lane, Ashton-under-Lyne, OL6 8RA

Tel: 0161 330 2607 Email: roy.travis188@btinternet.com

**Elton Bird Recording Group** (Elton and Withins Reservoirs plus environs)

Contact: Peter Baron, 17 Elton Brook Close, Bury BL8 2SN

Tel: 0161 761 6531 Email: peter.baron2@btinternet.com

**Medlock Valley, Castleshaw Reservoirs, Strinesdale, Oldham**

c/o Kath Butterworth. Email: Kath.Butterworth@talktalk.net

**Shell Pool Reserve** (permit required: £20 p.a.)

Mrs Chris Neild, 70 Ardenfield Drive, Peel Hall, Manchester M22 5DD

Tel: 0161 436 7551 Email: chrisneild@surfbirder.net

*For local contacts for other sites, please contact the County Recorder*

## Greater Manchester Police Wildlife Liaison contact:

**GM County Wildlife Liaison Officer:** PC Mark Ryding, Leigh Police Station 0161 856 7040

**National Wildlife Crime Unit:** Andy McWilliam. Tel: 07884116585

Email: ukwildlifecrime@nwcu.pnn.police.uk

In the event of information relating to suspects involved in wildlife crime, details should be passed onto Andy McWilliam of the National Wildlife Crime Unit as well as the county Police WLO and the RSPB.

## Site Conservation and Records for Flora and other Wildlife

If a valuable site is threatened, its status as a County Site of Biological Importance (SBI) can be checked with The Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU), Tameside MBC, Wellington Rd, Ashton-under-Lyne, OL6 6DL, Email: [gmeu@tameside.gov.uk](mailto:gmeu@tameside.gov.uk) Tel: 0161 342 2250. Information on the unit's work and a copy of the SBI Selection Guidelines can be downloaded from <http://www.tameside.gov.uk/ecologyunit>

The Greater Manchester Local Record Centre (GMLRC)'s website <http://www.gmwildlife.org.uk/> provides information on wildlife recording in Greater Manchester. Over the next few years the website will build into a valuable information resource on the sites and wildlife of GM. Records of flora and fauna (excluding birds) can now be submitted to the Local Records Centre via the website using the recently launched on-line recording system <http://gmlrc.rodin.co.uk/>

GMLRC wishes to build up a detailed picture of the current distributions of Greater Manchester's wildlife, so that future changes can be monitored. Records are also used to inform GMEU's responses to planning applications, to support the designation of existing and new Sites of Biological Importance in GM and uploaded to the National Biodiversity Network Gateway where they are made available to Natural England and other organisations for conservation and research purposes. To ensure their protection, data on sensitive species are only available to the general public at 10km resolution. The datasets for Greater Manchester can be viewed at <http://data.nbn.org.uk/> by clicking on Browse Dataset Providers and selecting Greater Manchester Ecology Unit from the list.

## Contact Details for Permit Only Sites

A restricted number of permits are issued for Audenshaw Reservoirs and Heaton Park Reservoir by United Utilities. There is a waiting list at both sites. These are free of charge and are issued for one year (applicants must be members of the RSPB, BTO, WWT or similar organisation). For either site, apply to:

Edward Lawrence, UU Longendale Office, Woodhead Rd., Tintwistle, Glossop SK13 1HS  
Tel: 01457 851080 Email [Edward.lawrence@uuplc.co.uk](mailto:Edward.lawrence@uuplc.co.uk).

For access to Ringley ETW, apply to:

Ian Harper, Anderton Yard, Rivington Water Treatment Works, Horwich BL6 7RN  
Tel: 01204 664305.

Applications for permits for Shell Pool Reserve should be made to:

Mrs Chris Neild, 70 Ardenfield Drive, Peel Hall, Manchester M22 5DD  
Tel: 0161 436 7551. Email: [chrisneild@surfbirder.net](mailto:chrisneild@surfbirder.net)

Applications for a key to access Cotterill Clough should be made to:

Cheshire Wildlife Trust, Bickley Hall Farm, Bickley, Malpas, Cheshire SY14 8EF.

# Major Sites Mentioned in the Text with 6 Figure OS Grid Reference

\* Access strictly by permit only: see address in Directory section;

# No public access; £ Parking charge; (h) Hide

Abney Hall	SJ860890	Broadley Fold	SD876165
Abram Flashes SSSI	SD608077	Brookdale Clough	SJ892998
Adswood Tip	SJ887877	Brookheys Covert	SJ742903
Akzo Pond	SD935155	Brook Wood	SJ768917
Alexandra Park Moss Side	SJ835950	Brushes valley	SJ995992
Alkrington Woods	SD863050	Bryan Hey Resr	SD369412
Altrincham ETW	SJ753907	Bryn Marsh	SD585026
Amberswood Lake	SD607037	Burnt Edge	SD660126
Apethorn	SJ945935	Cadishead Moss	SJ699937
Ashworth Moor Resr	SD830155	Carrington Moss	SJ747915
Astley Green	SJ703997	Castleshaw Resrs	SD995099
Astley Moss East Peat Pools #	SJ715985	Chadkirk	SJ940895
Astley Moss SSSI *	SJ697977	Chadwick Lane	SD870101
Astley Tip #	SJ710995	Cheadle Heath ETW	SJ867897
Atherton Woods #	SD671017	Chelburn Resrs	SD951193
Audenshaw Resrs *(h)	SJ915965	Chew Valley	SE025025
Banky Meadow	SJ766933	Chorlton Ees	SJ805932
Barlow Tip	SJ815921	Chorlton WP	SJ820915
Barlow's Farm	SD628025	Church Lane Woodford	SJ883828
Barrow Bridge	SD690116	Clegg Hall Pools #	SD920141
Barton Moss	SJ735975	Clifton Marina	SD773044
Bedford Moss	SJ687974	Compstall Resrs	SJ967907
Bickershaw rucks	SD630005	Cotterill Clough *	SJ804839
Billinge Higher End	SD522028	Cox Green Quarry	SD715147
Binn Green £	SE019045	Crime Lake	SD917013
Birchfields Park	SJ860950	Crompton Lodges	SD742067
Bishop Park	SD965085	Crooke	SD555073
Blackleach Resr	SD738040	Croxden Peatworks NR	SJ715970
Black Moss Covert	SJ745888	Cutacre	SD942405
Blackstone Edge Resr	SD972181	Dainewell Wood	SJ756910
Boodle Wood	SD732003	Daisy Hill ETW	SD653036
Borsdane Wood	SD625060	Daisy Nook CP	SD920006
Botany Bay Wood #	SJ730985	Davenport Green	SJ800860
Bramhall Park Lakes	SJ890865	Davyhulme NR	SJ744960
Broad Ees Dole (h)	SJ800933	Deans Ditch	SD670145

Diggle Flash	SD632016	Holden's Plantation	SD662130
Ding Quarry	SD850187	Hollingworth Lake £ (h)	SD937150
Dixon's Wood	SJ716965	Hope Carr NR	SJ663986
Doffcocker Lodge	SD685103	Hopwood Hall	SD875083
Dover Basin	SD612001	Horrocks Flash	SD592025
Dovestones £	SE020033	Horrocks Hill	SD697130
Drinkwater Park	SD804024	Hough End	SJ835930
Dunham Massey £	SJ740870	Hulton Park #	SD680050
Dunscar Lodges	SD711136	Hyde Bank	SJ947903
Dutton's Pond	SJ739941	Ince Moss Landfill	SD585036
Ealees valley	SD944162	Irlam Moss	SJ710960
Edgeley Resrs	SJ887891	Jack Lane NR	SJ733940
Elton Resr	SD790095	Jackson's Boat	SJ811927
Ernocroft	SJ983910	Jumbles Resr (h)	SD734143
Etherow CP£(h)	SJ972908	Kenworthy Woods	SJ821914
Factory Hill	SD649121	Kickety Brook	SJ790920
Firs Park Lake	SD645005	Kingsway Bus. Park	SD915120
Fir Tree Flash	SD640010	Kirklees valley	SD790120
Flixton Fly Ash Tip	SJ738938	Kitcliffe Resr	SD960125
Flixton Lagoons	SJ733936	Knott Hill	SD960015
Gatley Carrs	SJ842889	Knott Lanes	SD924015
Gidlow rucks	SD569084	Knowl Hill	SD841167
Gingham Brow	SD651116	Ladybrook Valley	SJ903858
Glover's Pool	SD603014	Ladyshore	SD763066
Godley Resr	SJ965953	Light Hazzles Resr	SD963197
Gorton Resrs	SJ900963	Lightshaw Hall Flash	SJ617997
Goyt Hall Farm	SJ923901	Lilford Park	SD670011
Great Woollen Moss	SJ695945	Linneyshaw Moss	SD744038
Greenbooth Resr	SD855154	Little Ees	SJ779930
Gristlehurst Woods	SD847117	Little Woollen Moss	SJ695955
Haigh Plantations £	SD590075	Littlemoss	SD915000
Hawkley Reedbed	SD581032	Longworth Lane	SD706140
Healey Dell	SD877158	Loonts Lake	SJ838894
Heaton Park Resr * (h)	SD826050	Low Hall Park	SD611032
High Moor, Delph	SD972067	Lowton Heath	SJ613964
High Rid Resr	SD666101	Ludworth Moor	SJ997097
Higher Meadows	SD647129	Medlock Valley	SD922010
Highfield Moss SSSI	SJ612954	Middlewood	SJ952847
Hobson's Moor	SJ991973	Montcliffe	SD652123
Holcombe Moor	SD770179	Morley's SQ	SJ686991
Holden Clough A-u-L	SD934014	Moses Gate CP (h)	SD747065
Holden's Farm	SD666130	Moss Lane, Astley	SJ695985

Naden Resrs	SD853170	Shell Pool NR * (h)	SJ747922
Newfields Farm	SD671123	Shore Top Resr	SD767062
Nob End	SD747067	Simpson Clough	SD855125
Norman Hill Resr	SD968131	Sinderland	SJ749903
Ochre Flash	SD581032	Skitters Wood	SJ572991
Ogden Resr	SD953123	Slackcote	SD970092
Offerton	SJ920885	Smithills Moor	SD670137
Orrell WP	SD533037	Southern Cemetery	SJ830925
Otterspool	SJ936895	Springfield Park	SD875123
Outwood	SD775060	Spring Mill Resr	SD875171
Park Bridge	SD943025	Staley Brushes	SJ995995
Parson's Meadow	SD573046	Stamford Pk Lake Alt.	SJ774875
Pavilion Wood	SD940155	Stamford Pk Lake A-u-L	SJ956993
Pearson's Flash	SD583038	Starmount Lodges	SD756088
Pennington Flash £ (h)	SJ640990	Stretford Ees	SJ785935
Philips Park, Prestwich	SD800040	Strinesdale Resrs	SD955063
Pickley Green	SD655020	Swineshaw Resrs	SD995005
Piethorne Resr	SD965127	Tandle Hill CP	SD903086
Pilsworth Fisheries	SD830085	Three Sisters (h)	SD582010
Platt Fields Park	SD851944	Trub	SD890095
Poise Brook	SJ925895	Turner's Flash	SD588031
Pomona Docks	SJ820965	Urmston Meadows	SJ762939
Prestolee Road/Pond	SD766060	Vicars Hall Lane	SD710003
Priory Gardens	SJ797935	Viridor Wood	SD594007
Queens Pk Heywood	SD858116	Walker Fold Woods	SD675125
Radcliffe Ees	SD795074	Wallsuches, Horwich	SD653117
Rainford's Tip	SD587027	Walmsley's Flash	SD565064
Red Moss SSSI	SD635100	Walves Resr	SD747150
Red Seas, Crooke	SD556071	Warland Resr	SD960205
Reddish Vale	SJ905935	Watergrove Resr (h)	SD910180
Redisher Woods	SD776155	Werneth Low	SJ958925
Rhodes Lodges	SD857053	Westlake	SD636037
Rindle Wood	SJ702976	Wildersmoor	SD647125
Ringley ETW *	SD785040	Windy Bank Wood	SJ681972
Riversvale	SD935016	Winter Hill	SD662145
Roman Lakes	SJ969880	Withins Resr	SD785087
Rooley Moor	SD864172	Woodbank Park	SJ914905
Rumworth Lodge	SD678078	Woodford Aerodrome #	SJ893818
Sale WP	SJ800930	Worsley Moss	SJ730980
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Scotman's Flash	SD578037	Yeoman Hey Resr	SE023053
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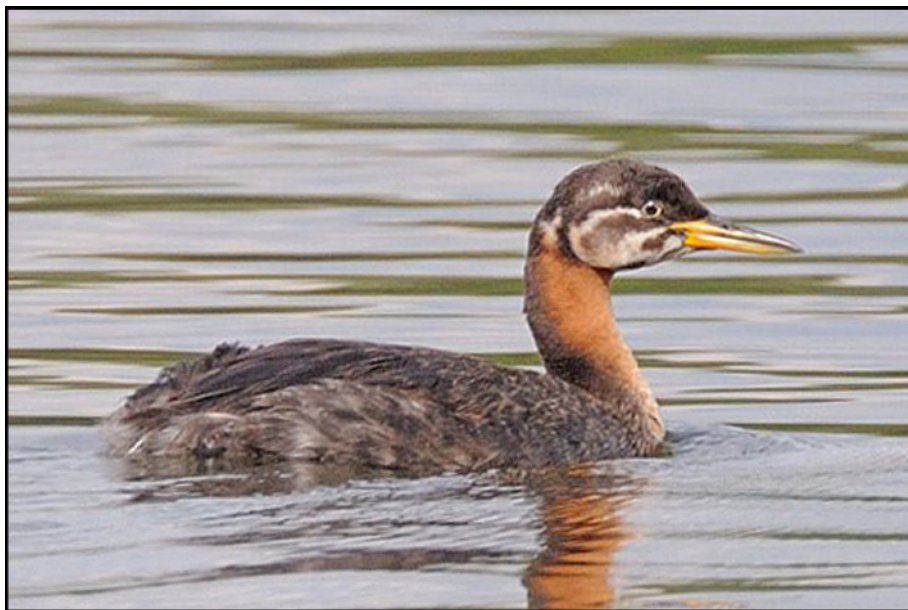
*Garganey, Pennington Flash, May (Jon Taverner)*



*Smew, Clifton Marina, December (Adrian Dancy)*



*Pied-billed Grebe, Hollingworth Lake, November (Gary Thoburn)*



*Juvenile Red-necked Grebe, Pennington Flash, September (Jon Taverner)*





*Osprey, Dover Lock, May (Pauline Greenhalgh)*



*Juvenile Gannet, Crompton Lodges, September (Mark Rigby)*





*Rooftop **Golden Plovers**, Bolton, November (Adrian Dancy)*



*Juvenile **Wood Sandpiper**, Pennington Flash, August (Pauline Greenhalgh)*



*Adult **Black Tern**, Pennington Flash, September (Dennis Atherton)*



*Turtle Dove, Haigh, May (Jon Taverner)*



*Juvenile leucistic **Starling**, Birtle, May (Mike Killelea)*





*First-summer **Little Gull**, Pennington Flash, August (Jon Taverner)*



***Shorelark**, Cutacre, January (Jon Taverner)*



*Male **Dusky Thrush**, Leigh, December (Ian Reynolds)*







*Juvenile **Whinchat**, Horwich Moors, September (John Tymon)*



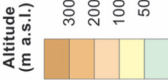
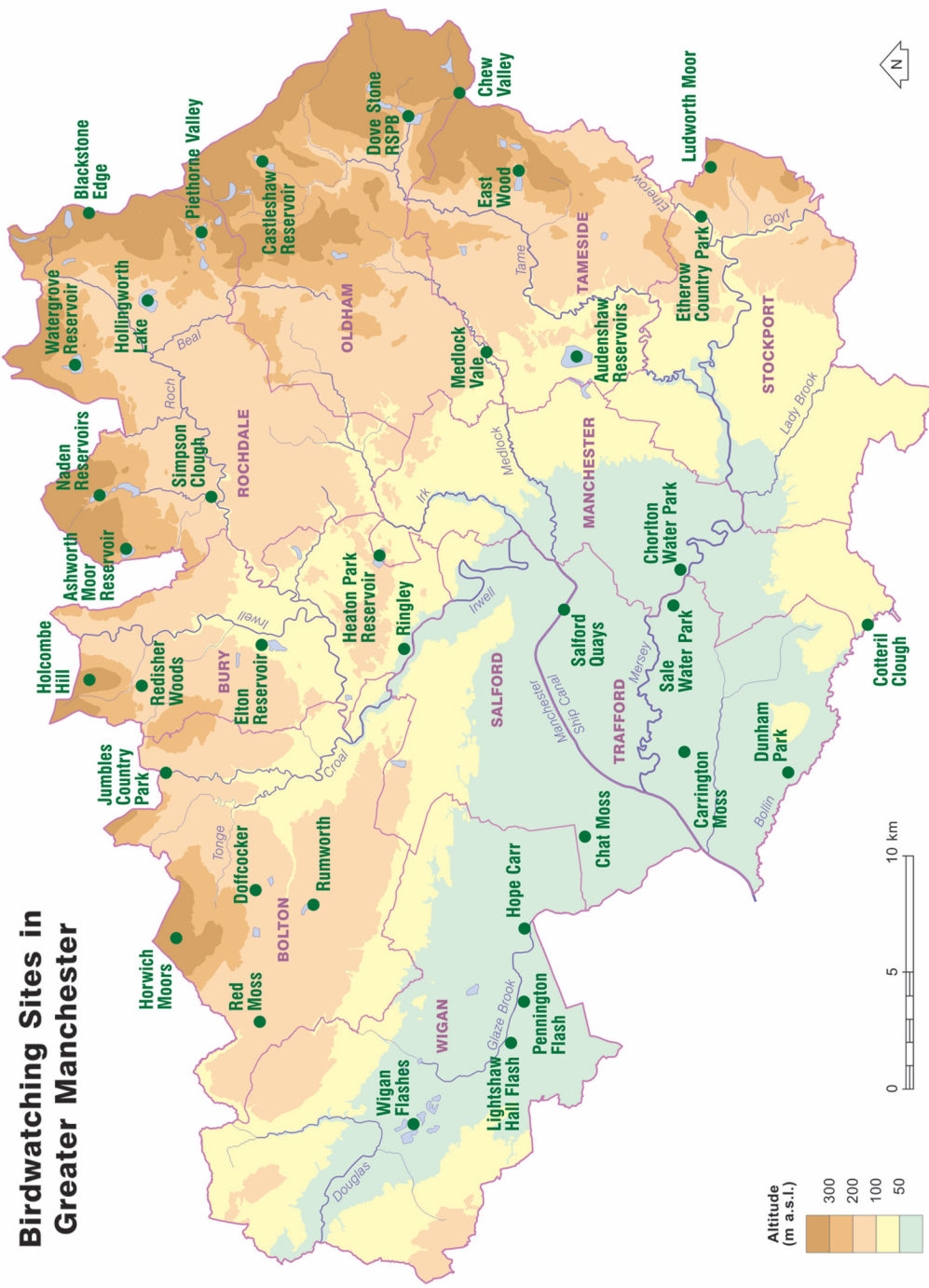


***Black Redstart, Ashton-under-Lyne, August (Adrian Dancy)***



***Lapland Bunting, Winter Hill, September (Mark Rigby)***

# Birdwatching Sites in Greater Manchester





£7

