

Recording areas of Great Britain

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Migrating Turnstones *Arenaria interpres* and a Dunlin *Calidris alpina* crossing an inland county boundary Alan Harris

It has recently become apparent that there are some confusions and anomalies in the way that national journals and organisations are reporting records received from County Recorders or taken from published sources. Examples of the problem can be seen in a recent *Ibis* paper on the British List (Dudley *et al.* 2006). We have, therefore, attempted to produce a definitive list of Recording Areas which will be acceptable to national and local authorities and which can be generally recognised. It is our intention to describe current practice, not to suggest corrections or improvements, except in some details of presentation.

The list incorporates all Recording Areas and relates them to old and new County, Regional and Unitary Authority boundaries, and (except in Scotland) to Watsonian Vice-counties. It is important that any code of practice should derive from County and Local Recorders themselves, and not be imposed upon them. In our view, a lesson can be learnt here from the recent attempt to establish vernacular names that would be internationally acceptable; these have been only partly adopted, and some have already been abandoned. Local patriotism is

always stronger than bureaucrats assume, and we have to recognise that some areas may for years continue to be claimed by both new and original 'owners', whatever centralisers may propose.

The main problems are in the London area, around the borders of Yorkshire, and in North and South Wales. Others arise from the use of the titles of Metropolitan Counties, Scottish Regions and Districts, and other (often ephemeral) creations, of which some actively survive in ornithology (e.g. Avon, Greater Manchester), while others have never been used for recording or have not been universally accepted (e.g. Tyne & Wear, North and South Humberside, Strathclyde).

The system of Watsonian Vice-counties, invented in 1852 for botanists and still widely used outside ornithology, is of importance in Wales (where it closely but not absolutely corresponds with the pre-1974 county boundaries), and also in Surrey, Suffolk and Yorkshire. In the last two it gains support because county reports have been produced by sections of general natural history societies. Vice-counties have the great drawback that their boundaries are not marked on Ordnance Survey maps where they

The version published here is a much abbreviated version of the paper submitted originally by the authors. A full version, which contains more details, especially with regard to historical boundary changes, county and local reports and maritime problems, is available as a pdf at www.britishbirds.co.uk/recordingareas

differ from those currently determined by Government. Although in general they approximate to the pre-1974 borders, familiar to older observers, there were many minor changes between 1852 and 1974, especially in the 1890s, following the introduction of County Councils, and in the early twentieth century, when cities such as Sheffield, Bristol and Manchester were expanding into neighbouring counties. The ornithological interest of an area can affect decisions on who is entitled to record it: the most famously disputed site is the south side of Breydon Water, which until 1889 was clearly in Suffolk, and whose observers still retain it. In Wales, some claims have recently been made to small areas where the shift of a border had passed unnoticed for more than a century.

Vice-counties have had no real effect on Scottish recording. Here, most local reports did not start until after 1974 and it was natural to look back to the system of Faunal Areas masterminded by Harvie-Brown before 1914. These were determined by geographical features, especially river basins, and their influence can be seen in the naming of central Scottish recording areas; part of the Clyde/Upper Forth border is a rare example of such a boundary not coinciding with any past or current political line. The controlling influence has been that of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club (SOC), founded in 1936, which produces an excellent map to define areas (www.the-soc.org.uk).

Occasions will arise when reference has to be made to pre-1974 records which were originally for counties that once had other names or boundaries than those of today. It is suggested that the standard form for this might be (for example): 'Chew Valley Lake (Avon; then [or 'formerly'] Somerset). Or (perhaps in a more strictly historical context): 'Chew Valley Lake (Somerset; now Avon)'.

There are some problems in marine recording. Obviously, birds visible with a telescope from the coast of a county can be safely claimed, at least up to the mid-line of a strait or estuary that marks the border with a neighbour. In England, Wales and the Isle of Man, there is no general policy on the inclusion within county or area frontiers of offshore records beyond these limits. Many such records used to come from manned lighthouses and lightvessels; the former, because they are built on rocks, can always be assigned to a Recording Area, but the latter may present problems. They remain of

some historical importance, especially for records published by the British Association (1879–89, etc.) and by Eagle Clarke (1912). The SOC map defines the allocation of remote islands, including all lighthouses, and the division of seas crossed by regular ferries; it also establishes an offshore limit of three nautical miles (5.5 km) for those stretches of north and east Scotland where there are no complications from ferry routes, islands or lighthouses. From the Humber to the English Channel, the situation is more complicated, largely because of offshore sandbanks, many of which used to be marked by manned lightvessels. Following automation, some of these have been replaced by floats or buoys, though a few survive and may be visible from the coast in good conditions, even if they are now visited only by service vessels. The writers of local avifaunas for coastal counties from Lincolnshire to Kent have often thought that they should mention records from such sites, which once included important rarities, but they have sometimes hesitated to accept them for a county list. It can be hard to find the exact position of marine sites, since land-based cartographers generally include as little sea as they can get away with; we suggest referring to the annual *Admiralty List of Lights and Fog Signals* (UK Hydrographic Office). Oil and gas platforms proliferate, especially in the North Sea; some that are permanently manned are regularly reported on by the North Sea Bird Club, which also covers records from service vessels. A few estuarine forts and other structures may attract breeding gulls (*Laridae*) and must therefore be assigned to Recording Areas.

Estuaries can raise local difficulties, such as those in the Tamar Complex (Devon and Cornwall). Boundaries are seldom mapped beyond the mouths of rivers, and some are unclear further upstream: the Lancashire & North Merseyside/Cheshire & Wirral border along the Mersey is marked as 'undetermined'. In the list below, the boundary should be assumed to be the midway line unless otherwise specified.

In the English Channel and the Irish Sea, the national boundaries are also normally assumed to be the midway line, but it is not clear whether such counties as the Isle of Wight, Devon or Lancashire & North Merseyside would actually claim records as far out as this, or how the Isle of Man fits into the system. The Isles of Scilly Bird Group has recently defined its own pelagic limits in the form of a rectangle

around the islands. Many sightings from ferries must go unrecorded, for want of knowing who would deal with them, but they can be sent to the Editor of *Sea Swallow*, the journal of the Royal Naval Birdwatching Society. Beyond the limit of any possible county attributions, records within British waters should be assigned to the appropriate Sea Area.

Reservoirs have often been created from rivers that form county boundaries. Sometimes the boundary has been diverted so as to place the water wholly within one county, but more often no change has been made, leaving an invisible submarine frontier, as in King George's Reservoir (Greater London/Essex). Local arrangements have sometimes been made for the recording of such sites.

Institutions such as the BTO are naturally eager to be given map references, which can be plotted on a computerised database, yet they must still be able to classify all entries by an agreed system of Recording Areas. Very few local observers use map references when submitting records, except perhaps for exact locations of breeding birds.

In order to compile a definitive list, we have consulted all current County Recorders and those national organisations that are most closely concerned with local recording. We received many replies, and corrections to a first draft. There are probably still confusions, and we should appreciate any suggestions, improvements or corrections.

List of recording areas

The order is that of the Vice-counties (VC), except for Scotland. There is no intention of emphasising their importance or of suggesting their general adoption, but they provide a convenient pattern and points of historical reference. In the Vice-county system, counties could be subdivided or merged; detachments (of which there were still many in 1852) were

included with the surrounding county.

Very small differences between old and new borders are usually given only where an area is of some importance. The many minor adjustments and exchanges of parishes (especially in the West Midland Bird Club area and in Gloucestershire) are another argument against the use of Vice-counties; for example, there were about 35 such adjustments to Worcestershire between 1895 and 1995, many of which have been long forgotten by its inhabitants.

The name in bold type is the **Recording Area**. Vice-counties and Sea Areas (SA) are given first, before the area is defined in relation to current or past administrative boundaries; most Unitary Authorities (UA) now functioning are mentioned, though hardly any of the wholly new ones have ornithological recognition. Some explanatory comment may be added, including a definition of any Areas of Double Recording (ADR), i.e. areas of any importance which are at present claimed by more than one county or area and included regularly in their reports. We suggest that, when records from these are published in the national literature, both areas might be given, the original county being placed first, e.g. Breydon Wall (Suffolk/Norfolk); Chingford (Essex/Greater London).

'Problem Areas' are places along the borders where records may be hard to assign definitively to either side. Their mention does not necessarily imply contentious claims; there are often local arrangements to assign, or duplicate, records. These may also concern river boundaries, which are far too common to mention individually.

The entry finishes with the titles of (extant) annual reports for the whole area and the organisations responsible for their production. In three counties where these reports are, or have recently been, in abeyance, local reports are mentioned.

England

1. Cornwall

VCS 1 (W) & 2 (E); SAs Plymouth, Lundy. Present county, excluding Isles of Scilly since 1969 but including offshore lighthouses except the Eddystone (see Devon).

Problem Areas: the Tamar Estuarine Complex below the Tamar and Saltash Bridges is generally considered as Cornwall, but above these is an ADR (with Devon). Tamar Lakes are usually assigned to Devon, though the west banks are in Cornwall.

Report: *Birds in Cornwall* (Cornwall Birdwatching & Preservation Society).

2. Isles of Scilly

Part of VC 1. Scilly lies in NE corner of SA Sole; SA Fastnet begins immediately to NW and SA Plymouth immediately to east, boundary being 06°15'W line of longitude. Pelagic area has recently been extended as follows: 50°15'N to 49°35'N, 05°50'W to 06°50'W.

Report: *Isles of Scilly Bird & Natural History Review* (Isles of Scilly Bird Group).

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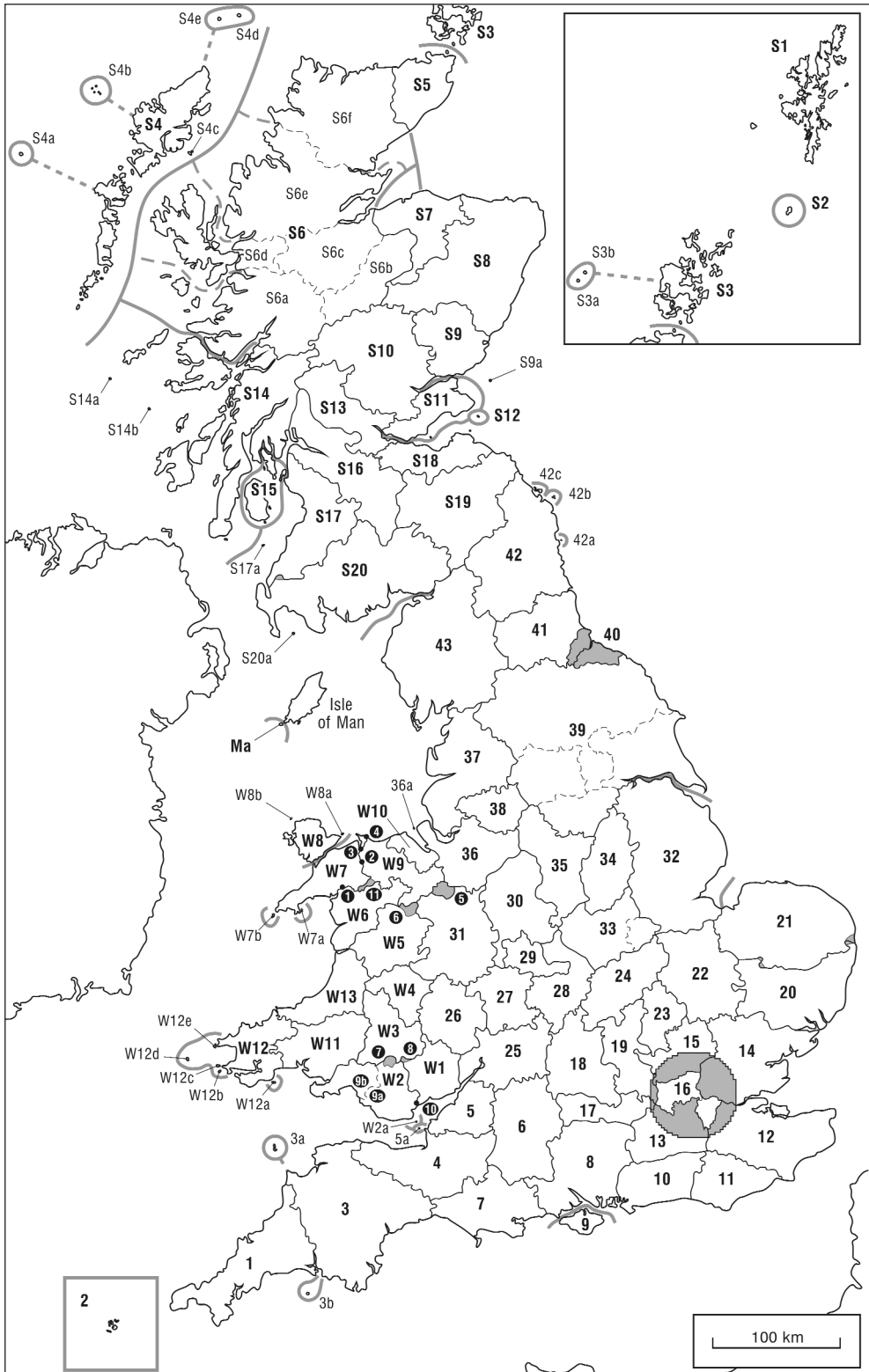


Fig. 1. Recording areas of Great Britain.

3. Devon

VCs 3 (S) & 4 (N); SAs Portland, Plymouth, Lundy. Present county, including Lundy (3a) and the Eddystone (3b – technically in Cornish waters and in VC 2), and incorporating UAs of Plymouth and Torbay.

Problem Areas: Tamar Estuary (see Cornwall).

Report: *Devon Bird Report* (Devon Bird Watching & Preservation Society).

4. Somerset

VC 5 (S) & part of 6 (N). Post-1974 county, excluding UAs of North Somerset (with Steep Holm) and Bath & NE Somerset (see Avon).

Problem Areas: Axe Estuary (with Avon).

Report: *Somerset Birds* (Somerset Ornithological Society).

5. Avon

Part of VCs 6 (N Somerset) & 34 (S Gloucestershire). 1974–95 county, consisting of UAs of North Somerset (including Steep Holm 5a), Bath & NE Somerset, Bristol, and South Gloucestershire.

Problem Areas: Axe Estuary (with Somerset).

Report: *Avon Bird Report* (Avon Ornithological Group).

6. Wiltshire

VCs 7 (N) & 8 (S). Present county, incorporating UA of Swindon; see also Gloucestershire.

Problem Areas: Cotswold Water Park West (with Gloucestershire).

Report: *Hobby* (Wiltshire Ornithological Society).

7. Dorset

VC 9 & small part of 11 (S Hampshire); SAs Wight, Portland. Post-1974 county, incorporating UAs of Bournemouth and Poole.

Problem Areas: for older records only, former Hampshire areas (which included Christchurch & Bournemouth).

Report: *Dorset Bird Report* (Dorset Bird Club).

8. Hampshire

VC 12 (N) & most of 11 (S); SA Wight. Post-1974 county, incorporating UAs of Southampton and Portsmouth.

Problem Areas: see Dorset, above.

Report: *The Hampshire Bird Report* (Hampshire Ornithological Society).

9. Isle of Wight

VC 10; SA Wight. Present county. Separately recorded since 1977; three earlier avifaunas included it with Hampshire.

Report: *The Isle of Wight Bird Report* (Isle of Wight Natural History & Archaeological Society and Isle of Wight Ornithological Group).

10/11. Sussex

10. West Sussex: VC 13 & fragment of 17 (Surrey); SAs Wight, Dover. 11. East Sussex: VC14; SA Dover. Generally recorded simply as **Sussex**, these two political divisions (introduced in 1865 and not exactly equivalent to the VCs) have sometimes been treated separately, but that is not current practice. Present counties, incorporating UA of Brighton & Hove. West Sussex includes Gatwick Airport, formerly mostly within Surrey and an ADR.

Report: *Sussex Bird Report* (Sussex Ornithological Society).

12. Kent

VC 15 (E) & most of 16 (W); SAs Thames, Dover. Post-1965 county, excluding areas taken into London in 1889 and into Greater London in 1965 (see London); incorporating UA of Medway.

Problem Areas: parts of the present county within 20 miles (32 km) of central London (St Paul's) are an ADR, from the Thames at Northfleet SW to Sevenoaks and Westerham.

Report: *The Kent Bird Report* (Kent Orn. Soc.).

13. Surrey

VC 17. Surrey thus incorporates the Greater London Boroughs of Richmond-upon-Thames, Kingston-upon-Thames, Wandsworth, Merton, Sutton, Lambeth, Croydon and Southwark, which are collectively an ADR with Greater London, as are Walton-on-Thames Reservoirs and some or all of the Surrey Boroughs of Elmbridge, Epsom & Ewell, Reigate & Banstead and Tandridge, where these fall within 20-mile London circle. Part of site of Gatwick Airport transferred to West Sussex in 1974, but remains an ADR. For Spelthorne, see Greater London; see also Wheatley (2007).

Report: *Surrey Bird Report* (Surrey Bird Club).

14. Essex

VCs 18 (S), 19 (N) & small part of 15 (Hertfordshire); SA Thames. Pre-1965 county, thus incorporating Greater London Boroughs of Waltham Forest, Redbridge, Barking & Dagenham, Newham and Havering, collectively an ADR, and UAs of Southend and Thurrock. Other parts of W Essex are also double-recorded within London circle, and are known ornithologically as 'Metropolitan Essex'. Changes along Hertfordshire border in 1992, from Bishops Stortford area south to Waltham Abbey, now accepted by both counties.

Problem Areas: Suffolk border along R. Stour, which now follows low-water mark on Suffolk side; any problems easily resolved with Suffolk.

Report: *The Essex Bird Report* (Essex Birdwatching Society).

15. Hertfordshire

VC 20, small parts of 18 (S Essex) & 21 (London).

Post-1965 county. Parts of S and SW Hertfordshire (from Rye Meads along south side of Ware and Hertford to Hatfield, St Albans, King's Langley and Rickmansworth) are an ADR with Greater London. See also Essex.

Report: *The Hertfordshire Bird Report* (Hertfordshire Bird Club).

16. Greater London

VC 21, parts of 16 (W Kent), 17 (Surrey), 18 (S Essex), 20 (Hertfordshire), 22 (Berkshire) & 24 (Buckinghamshire). Recording area is a circle of 20 miles (32 km) from St Paul's; for most purposes now converted to polygon of grid-squares of slightly larger area. The only parts now recorded solely in the *London Bird Report* are the former county of Middlesex, including small additions made from Hertfordshire to Greater London in 1965 and Spelthorne, ceded to Surrey in 1965 but not recorded by that county (except in Wheatley 2007); and the London (post-1889 and post-1965) corner of W Kent. Additions to Greater London in 1965 within Surrey (south of Thames) and Essex are ADRs with those counties; as are parts of Surrey, Kent, Essex, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire and (present-day) Berkshire that fall outside Greater London but inside the recording circle; for details see those counties. In referring to surrounding counties, London NHS has generally used VC boundaries rather than later ones. Apart from Spelthorne, records within the LNHS area, but outside Greater London, are in *national* literature normally assigned only to their current county, e.g. most of the Rainham Marshes reserve is in Essex, not Greater London, though it all lies within the LNHS circle. The map (fig. 2) has been adapted from Hewlett (2002).

Problem Areas: Wrybury Reservoir was in Buckinghamshire from 1971 to 1974, then was shared between Berkshire and Greater London until 1991, and is now recorded by Greater London.

Report: *London Bird Report* (London Natural History Society).

17. Berkshire

Much of VC 22, parts of 24 (Buckinghamshire) & 21 (London). Post-1974 county; in 1995, slight eastward extension into Buckinghamshire, SW of the M25/M4 junction (around Colnbrook), brought county into 20-mile Greater London circuit.

Problem Areas: Wrybury Reservoir (see

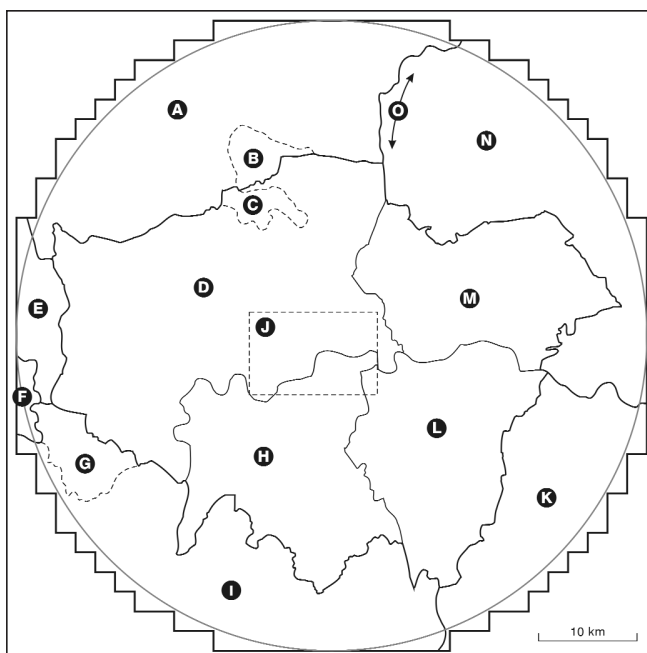


Fig. 2. The London Recording Area.

A: part of Hertfordshire; **B:** part of Middlesex (Potters Bar, etc.) transferred to Hertfordshire, 1965; **C:** part of Hertfordshire (Barnet area) transferred to Greater London, 1965; **D:** former county of Middlesex, now Greater London; **E:** part of Buckinghamshire; **F:** part of Berkshire; **G:** district of Spelthorne, formerly Middlesex, now Surrey but generally recorded by London; **H:** part of Surrey VC, now Greater London; **I:** part of Surrey; **J:** Inner London; **K:** part of Kent; **L:** parts of Kent transferred to London in 1889 & 1965; **M:** 'Metropolitan Essex'; **N:** part of Essex; **O:** various adjustments between Hertfordshire and Essex, 1965.

Greater London).

Report: *The Birds of Berkshire* (Berkshire Ornithological Club).

18. Oxfordshire

VC 23 & part of 22 (Berkshire). Post-1974 county.

Report: *Birds of Oxfordshire* (Oxford Ornithological Society).

19. Buckinghamshire

Most of VC 24. Post-1974 county, incorporating UA of Milton Keynes (but see Berkshire, above). A corner of the SE, from Denham south to M4, is an ADR with Greater London.

Problem Areas: Wrybury Reservoir (see Greater London).

Report: *Buckinghamshire Bird Report* (Buckinghamshire Bird Club).

20. Suffolk

VCs 25 (E) & 26 (W); SA Thames. The two vice-counties. The Lothingland area was transferred to Norfolk, partly in 1889 and more extensively in 1974, thus (from 1889) the south shore of Breydon Water was lost from Suffolk. This remains an ADR with

Norfolk, as does the SW edge of Thetford, ceded to Norfolk in 1894.

Other Problem Areas: Stour Estuary (see Essex).

Report: *Suffolk Birds* (Suffolk Naturalists' Society & Suffolk Ornithologists' Group).

21. Norfolk

VCs 27 (E) & 28 (W), small parts of 25 (E Suffolk) & 26 (W Suffolk); SAs Humber, Thames. Post-1974 county.

Problem Areas: Ouse Washes (with Cambridgeshire), where border was moved south in 1895. For ADRs with Suffolk, see above. Birds at Wisbech Sewage-farm, operational until the 1980s, were recorded jointly by Norfolk and Lincolnshire.

Report: *Norfolk Bird & Mammal Report* (Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society).

22. Cambridgeshire

VCs 29 (Cambridgeshire) & 31 (Huntingdonshire), part of 32 (Northamptonshire). Post-1974 county, including Huntingdonshire and the Soke of Peterborough (this was recorded with Northamptonshire until 1974 and became a separate UA in 1997).

Problem Areas: Ouse Washes (see Norfolk).

Report: *Cambridgeshire Bird Report* (Cambridgeshire Bird Club).

23. Bedfordshire

VC 30. Present county, incorporating UA of Luton.

Report: *The Bedfordshire Bird Report in Trans. Bedfordshire Natural History Society*.

24. Northamptonshire

Most of VC 32. Post-1974 county (see also Cambridgeshire).

Problem Areas: Stanford Reservoir (with Leicestershire).

Report: *Northants Birds* (Northamptonshire Bird Club), in abeyance since 2001. The report of the Banbury Orn. Soc. covers part of SW Northamptonshire.

25. Gloucestershire

VCs 33 (N) & part of 34 (S). Post-1974 county, thus excluding Bristol and South Gloucestershire (see Avon).

Problem Areas: Cotswold Water Park West (with Wiltshire).

Report: *Gloucestershire Bird Report* (Gloucestershire Ornithological Co-ordinating Committee).

26. Herefordshire

VC 36. Present county; merged with Worcestershire from 1974 to 1998, but with no effect on recording.

Problem Areas: Malvern Hills (ridge forms part of Worcestershire border).

Report: *The Birds of Herefordshire* (Herefordshire Ornithological Club).

27. Worcestershire

Most of VC 37. Post-1974 county, thus excluding areas in NE transferred to Warwickshire in 1911 and to West Midlands in 1974. See also Herefordshire.

Problem Areas: Malvern Hills (ridge forms part of Herefordshire border).

Report: *The Birds of Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire and the West Midlands* (West Midland Bird Club).

28. Warwickshire

Most of VC 38. Post-1974 county, thus excluding areas in NW (some gained from Worcestershire) which were then transferred to West Midlands.

Report: see Worcestershire.

29. West Midlands

Parts of VCs 37, 38 & 39. 1974–95 county, now dissolved for most purposes into its seven UAs: Coventry, Solihull, Birmingham, Walsall, Sandwell, Wolverhampton and Dudley.

Report: see Worcestershire.

30. Staffordshire

Most of VC 39. Post-1974 county, thus excluding areas in SW then transferred to West Midlands, and incorporating UA of Stoke-on-Trent.

Problem Areas: Chasewater was from 1974 to 1995 partly in West Midlands, now again wholly in Staffordshire.

Report: see Worcestershire.

31. Shropshire

VC 40. Present county, incorporating UA of Telford & Wrekin.

Report: *The Shropshire Bird Report* (Shropshire Ornithological Society).

32. Lincolnshire

VCs 53 (S) & 54 (N); SA Humber. Present county, incorporating UAs of North Lincolnshire and NE Lincolnshire.

Problem Areas: former Wisbech Sewage-farm (see Norfolk).

Report: *Lincolnshire Bird Report* (Lincolnshire Bird Club), now in abeyance. Local reports are produced by Gibraltar Point NNR and by Scunthorpe.

33. Leicestershire & Rutland

VC 55. Present counties, incorporating UA of Leicester.

Problem Areas: Eye Brook Reservoir is shared between the two counties, and Stanford Reservoir with Northamptonshire. All records should be classed as 'Leicestershire & Rutland'.

Report: *The Leicestershire and Rutland Bird Report* (Leicestershire & Rutland Ornithological Society).

34. Nottinghamshire

VC 56. Present county, incorporating UA of Nottingham City.

Report: *The Birds of Nottinghamshire* (Nottinghamshire Birdwatchers).

35. Derbyshire

Most of VC 57 & small part of 58 (Cheshire). Present county, incorporating UA of Derby and excluding some losses to Yorkshire in 1934 and 1968; see also Cheshire & Wirral, below.

Report: *The Derbyshire Bird Report* (Derbyshire Ornithological Society).

36. Cheshire & Wirral

Most of VC 58, parts of 57 (Derbyshire) & 59 (S Lancashire); SA Irish Sea. Post-1974 county, incorporating UAs of Wirral (including Hilbre Island 36a), Halton and Warrington. Many small adjustments along Lancashire/Greater Manchester and Derbyshire borders from 1932 to 1974.

Problem Areas: on Dee border with Flintshire, border does not follow mid-line, but includes, in Flint, reclaimed land (Shotton Pools, etc.) on north bank; up to 1960s this was recorded by Cheshire, and it was included by Coward (1900) and Bell (1962). All records should be classed as 'Cheshire & Wirral'.

Report: *Cheshire and Wirral Bird Report* (Cheshire & Wirral Ornithological Society).

37. Lancashire & North Merseyside

VC 60 (W), parts of 59 (S) & 64 (Mid-west Yorkshire); SA Irish Sea. Present county of Lancashire and UAs of Sefton, Liverpool, Knowsley, St Helens, Blackburn-with-Darwen and Blackpool. Furness has been recorded with Cumbria since 1974. See also Cheshire. All records should be classed as 'Lancashire & North Merseyside'.

Report: *The Lancashire Bird Report* (Lancashire & Cheshire Fauna Society).

38. Greater Manchester

Parts of VCs 58 (Cheshire), 59 (S Lancashire) & 63 (SW Yorkshire). Metropolitan County of Greater Manchester (1974–86), now UAs of Wigan, Bolton, Salford, Bury, Rochdale, Oldham (including part of pre-1974 Yorkshire), Tameside, Stockport, Manchester and Trafford. See also Cheshire & Wirral.

Report: *Birds in Greater Manchester* (Greater Manchester Bird Recording Group).

39. Yorkshire

VCs 61 (SE), 62 (NE), 63 (SW), 64 (Mid-west) and 65 (NW) – of which only the first remains complete within post-1974 borders – and parts of 57 (Derbyshire) & 59 (S Lancashire); SAs Tyne, Humber. Present counties of North Yorkshire and East Riding of Yorkshire (incorporating UAs of Kingston-upon-Hull), and UAs of York, Bradford, Calderdale,

Kirklees, Leeds, Wakefield, Barnsley, Sheffield, Rotherham, Doncaster, Redcar & Cleveland and Middlesbrough. The last two (with part of Stockton-on-Tees) form SE part of 1974–95 county of Cleveland (below), the whole of which forms two ADRs with VCs 62 & 66; see also Durham. The five Recording Areas are the VCs, less their various 1974 excisions, but they include expansions of Yorkshire into Derbyshire, south of Sheffield (1934 and 1968), and into Lancashire, west of Todmorden (1889). The ornithological world outside Yorkshire has tended to reject its claim to Cleveland and to adopt the four 1974–95 divisions, which are still the Lord Lieutenancies: **East Yorkshire** ('North Humberside', now again substantially the East Riding, but including York and Hull UAs); **South Yorkshire** (Barnsley, Doncaster, Sheffield and Rotherham); **West Yorkshire** (Wakefield, Leeds, Bradford, Calderdale and Kirklees); and **North Yorkshire** (today's county, including Selby District). There is much to be said for continuing this division, since VC boundaries cannot be found on OS maps, although for rare and scarce breeders 'Yorkshire' may be more desirable.

Reports: *Yorkshire Bird Report* (Yorkshire Naturalists' Union, Ornithological Section), 1940–1997, revived 2005–. In the absence of a county report, various local reports have been important, notably Hull Valley, York, Bradford, Doncaster, Huddersfield, Barnsley, Sheffield, Halifax, Harrogate and Leeds.

40. Cleveland

Parts of VCs 62 (NE Yorkshire) & 66 (Durham); SA Tyne. Recording Area since 1974, consisting of two ADRs (see also Durham and Yorkshire), in both of which, validation of rarity records lies with Cleveland. **Report:** *Cleveland Bird Report* (Teessmouth Bird Club).

41. Durham

VC 66 & part of 65 (NW Yorkshire); SA Tyne. Present county, incorporating UAs of Stockton-on-Tees (in part) and Hartlepool (the NW parts of the former county of Cleveland; see above), Darlington, Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland. The former county of Tyne & Wear (1974–95) has no ornithological recognition.

Problem Areas: Derwent Reservoir (with Northumberland).

Report: *Birds in Durham* (Durham County Bird Club).

42. Northumberland

VCs 67 (S) & 68 (N); SA Tyne. Present county, incorporating UAs of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and North Tyneside and including Coquet Island (42a), the Farne Islands (42b) and Holy Island (42c).

Problem Areas: Derwent Reservoir (with Durham).

Report: *Birds in Northumbria* (Northumberland & Tyneside Bird Club).

43. Cumbria

VCs 69 (Westmorland) & 70 (Cumberland), with part of 65 (NW Yorkshire); SA Irish Sea. Post-1974 county. **Report:** *Birds and Wildlife in Cumbria* (Cumbria Naturalists' Union).

Wales

In addition to coverage by individual county reports, Wales has been covered by the annual *Welsh Bird Report* (Welsh Ornithological Society) since 1998. The following names should not be used in ornithological recording: 'Clwyd' and 'Dyfed' (which are now obsolete); 'Gwynedd' and 'Powys' (still in administrative use); 'Conwy' (created in 1995); or any of the post-1974 subdivisions of Glamorgan and Gwent. Records from these should be assigned to the appropriate VCs, as given below. In general, Welsh Recording Areas are the VCs, but some adjustments have been made. The index numbers in the Area sections correspond to those on the map; they indicate sites with problems, mainly where the accepted boundaries differ from the Watsonian ones.

W1 Gwent

Most of VC 35 & small part of 42 (Breconshire). Pre-1974 county of Monmouthshire, known as Gwent from 1974 to 1995, and now divided into UAs of Monmouthshire, Newport, Torfaen, Blaenau-Gwent and east part of Caerphilly. Includes Denny Island and the former Breconshire areas of Trefil, Brynmawr and Llanelly (8). The Glamorgan boundary is now accepted to be the Rhymney River, but near its mouth the area of Rumney and St Mellons (10), transferred to Glamorgan in 1974, remains in that county (in UA Cardiff).

Report: *Gwent Bird Report* (Gwent Ornithological Society).

W2 Glamorgan

VC 41, small parts of 42 (Breconshire) & 35 (Gwent). Divided into two Recording Areas (East Glamorgan and Gower), but at a national scale all records are simply for Glamorgan.

East Glamorgan (9a) incorporates UAs of Bridgend, Rhondda/Cynon/Taff, Vale of Glamorgan, west part of Caerphilly, Cardiff, and Merthyr Tydfil (including Vaynor and Penderyn from Breconshire (7)). Includes Flat Holm (W2a). For border with Gwent, see above. **Report:** *Eastern Glamorgan Bird Report* (Glamorgan Bird Club).

Gower (9b) incorporates UAs of City & County of Swansea and Neath Port Talbot.

Report: *Gower Birds* (Gower Ornithological Society).

W3 Breconshire

Most of VC 42. Pre-1974 county (now part of Powys), apart from areas ceded in 1974 to Glamorgan and Gwent (see above).

Report: *Breconshire Birds* (Brecknock Wildlife Trust).

W4 Radnorshire

VC 43. Pre-1974 county (now part of Powys). No report since 1987.

W5 Montgomeryshire

VC 44 & part of 50. Pre-1974 county, now part of Powys. Includes part of the Berwyn Mountains, formerly in Denbighshire, but now in Powys and considered an ADR with Denbighshire (6). No report since 1998/99.

The next three counties, W6–W8, were combined as Gwynedd during 1974–95. Anglesey was withdrawn in 1995, but the other two remain as districts of Gwynedd. They are all reported in *The Cambrian Bird Report* (Cambrian Ornithological Society).

W6 Meirionnydd

Most of VC 48 & small part of 50 (Denbighshire); SA Irish Sea. 1974 District, within Gwynedd, substantially the historic county. The NE section (part of Dee Valley and West Berwyns), ceded to Clwyd in 1974 and now in Denbighshire, is still included in the Recording Area. The Nantmor section of the parish of Beddgelert (1) was ceded to Caernarfon in 1895. The Migneint (11), the SW 'tongue' of Denbighshire, is an ADR with that county.

W7 Caernarfonshire

Most of VC 49 & small part of 48 (Meirionnydd); SA Irish Sea. 1974 District of Arfon, in Gwynedd; substantially the historic county, but excluding the salient of Maenan (2) east of the Afon Conwy, now in Denbighshire. The Ormes, Llandudno and Rhos Point (4) remain in Caernarfon. Includes St Tudwal's Islands (W7a) and Bardsey (Ynys Enlli) (W7b). The Conwy RSPB Reserve (3) is an ADR with Denbighshire, to which it belonged before 1879. See also Meirionnydd, above.

W8 Anglesey

VC 52; SA Irish Sea. Post-1995 county, including Puffin Island (Ynys Seiriol) (W8a) and The Skerries (Ynysoedd y Moelrhoniad) (W8b).

The next two counties, W9 & W10, were combined as Clwyd during 1974–95. Their subsequent revival has different boundaries from the old VCs, which largely remain the Recording Areas. They are reported in the *North-east Wales Bird Report* (Clwyd Bird Recording Group).

W9 Denbighshire

Most of VC 50 & small part of 49 (Caernarfon); SA Irish Sea. Pre-1974 county, includes ADRs with Montgomeryshire (6), Caernarfonshire (3) and Meirionnydd (11); see these areas, above. Incorporates UA of Wrexham, including the two pre-1974 detachments of Flintshire (below). The Afon Conwy is now deemed

to be the Caernarfon border.

W10 Flintshire

VC 51; SA Irish Sea. Pre-1974 county, without the two detachments that formed part of VC50 (see above; Maelor Saesneg (5) was sometimes recorded by Shropshire (Rutter *et al.* 1964), while Marford & Hoseley was always recorded by Denbighshire).

Problem Areas: Dee Estuary; see Cheshire & Wirral.

The next three counties, W11–W13, were combined as Dyfed during 1974–95.

W11 Carmarthenshire

VC 44; SA Lundy. Present county.

Report: *Carmarthenshire Bird Report* (Carmarthenshire Ornithological Recording Committee).

W12 Pembrokeshire

VC 45; SAs Lundy, Irish Sea. Present county, including all islands: Caldey (W12a), Skokholm (W12b), Skomer (W12c), Grassholm (W12d) and Ramsey (W12e). Most of the former enclaves of Ceredigion south of the Teifi Estuary (on either side of St Dogmaels) have recently been absorbed into Pembrokeshire, but remain in their original Recording Area.

Report: *Pembrokeshire Bird Report* (Wildlife Trust for South & West Wales).

W13 Ceredigion

VC 46; SA Irish Sea. Present county. For recent administrative changes, see Pembrokeshire.

Report: *Ceredigion Bird Report* (Wildlife Trust for South & West Wales).

Isle of Man

Now recorded as a separate unit from the UK, but still included in BBRC and Rare Breeding Birds Panel reports. VC 71; SA Irish Sea. Present area, including the Calf of Man (Ma).

Report: in *Peregrine* (Manx Ornithological Society).

Scotland

In addition to area reports, Scotland is covered by the annual *Scottish Bird Report* (not produced since 2001 report). The following regional terms, current from 1974 to 1995, should *not* now be used to define records: 'Strathclyde', 'Central', 'Tayside', 'Grampian'. The Scottish Raptor Study Groups use the following divisions (with approximate SOC equivalents in brackets, where different): Dumfries & Galloway; Lothian & Borders; South Strathclyde (=Clyde, Clyde Islands and Ayrshire), Argyll, Central (=Upper Forth), Tayside (=Perth & Kinross and Angus & Dundee), North-east (including the eastern half of Moray & Nairn), Highland (including the western half of Moray & Nairn, and Caithness), Uists, and Orkney (there are as yet no contributors from Lewis/Harris or

Shetland). For offshore and pelagic limits, see S21. All Scottish Recording Areas bear numbers, as given below. The pre-1974 counties are given but not the VCs.

S1 Shetland

Present UA, excluding Fair Isle.

Report: *Shetland Bird Report* (Shetland Bird Club).

S2 Fair Isle

Administratively part of Shetland. Often treated separately in avifaunas and has its own Recorder, but included in Shetland by Pennington *et al.* (2004).

Report: *Fair Isle Bird Report* (Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust).

S3 Orkney

Present UA; includes Pentland Skerries (which were sometimes placed in Caithness), Sule Stack (S3a) and Sule Skerry (S3b).

Report: *Orkney Bird Report* (Orkney Bird Report Committee).

S4 Outer Hebrides

Present UA of Western Isles. Includes Lewis (before 1974 in Ross & Cromarty), Harris, North and South Uist, Benbecula and Barra (before 1974 in Inverness-shire), St Kilda (S4a), the Flannans (S4b), Sula Sgeir (S4c), North Rona (S4d), the Shiantas (S4e), and (theoretically) Rockall.

Report: *Outer Hebrides Bird Report* (Western Isles Natural History Society).

S5 Caithness

Pre-1974 county, now administered with Highland. Includes Stroma, but not now the Pentland Skerries (see Orkney).

No report since 1997, but records in separate section of *Highland Bird Report* from 2004.

S6 Highland

Inverness-shire, Ross & Cromarty and Sutherland. Post-1974 UA, including all Inner Hebridean and inshore islands from Muck to Eilean Roan, but excluding pre-1974 Nairnshire and Caithness (but see above). Some internal use is still made of Districts, although they are not regarded as separate Recording Areas: Lochaber (S6a), Badenoch & Strathspey (S6b), Inverness District (S6c), Skye & Lochalsh (S6d), Ross & Cromarty (S6e; most of the former county of that name, apart from its Outer Hebridean component); and Sutherland (S6f; a slight expansion of the former county).

Report: *Highland Bird Report* (private & SOC).

S7 Moray & Nairn

UA of Moray and former Nairnshire, since 1974 part of Highland.

Report: *Birds in Moray and Nairn* (private).

S8 North-east Scotland

Aberdeenshire, Kincardineshire and part of Banffshire. Post-1995 Region, incorporating UAs of Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City.

Report: *North-east Scotland Bird Report* (North-east Scotland Bird Club).

S9 Angus & Dundee

Present Region, incorporating UAs of Angus and Dundee City, and including Bell Rock.

Report: *Angus & Dundee Bird Report* (Angus & Dundee Bird Club).

S10 Perth & Kinross

Before 1988, Kinross was recorded with Fife.

Report: *Perth & Kinross Bird Report* (private).

S11 Fife

Excludes Isle of May (below), Inchkeith and Inchcolm; last two reported in both *Forth Islands Bird Report* and *Fife Bird Report*.

Report: *Fife Bird Report* (Fife Bird Club).

S12 Isle of May

Administratively part of Fife but has its own Recorder; included in Elkins *et al.* (2003).

Report: *Isle of May Bird Observatory Report* (Isle of May Bird Observatory and Field Station Trust).

S13 Upper Forth

Now includes UAs of Clackmannanshire, Falkirk (created from parts of Stirling and West Lothian) and parts of Stirling within the Forth Basin. For ADR with Clyde, see below.

Report: *Forth Area Bird Report* (in *Forth Naturalist & Historian*).

S14 Argyll

Post-1995 UA of Argyll & Bute, but excluding the Bute section (see Clyde Islands) and the area between Loch Lomondside and Loch Long and north from Arrochar over Ben Vane to Maol Breac and the Lairig Arnan (formerly part of West Dunbartonshire) – see Clyde. Includes lighthouses of Skerryvore (S14a) and Dubh Artach (S14b).

Report: *Argyll Bird Report* (Argyll Bird Club).

S15 Clyde Islands

The 'Clyde Islands Report' is a separate section within *Clyde Birds*. Regarded by SOC as a separate Area, with its own Recorder. Includes Bute section of UA of Argyll & Bute (the Island of Bute, and Great and Little Cumbrae) and the Isle of Arran.

S16 Clyde

Now includes: UAs of East and West Dunbartonshire, South and North Lanarkshire, Glasgow City, East Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire and Inverclyde, and those parts of Stirling and Argyll & Bute that are in the

Clyde Basin. The Carron Valley Reservoir is sometimes considered an ADR with Upper Forth.

Report: *Clyde Birds* (SOC Clyde).

S17 Ayrshire

Most of UA of North Ayrshire, all of UAs of East and South Ayrshire – except that in the last, an area south of Ballantrae was ceded to Dumfries & Galloway in 1995, but is still recorded by Ayrshire. Also Horse Island, Lady Isle and Ailsa Craig (S17a). Arran and the Cumbraes, now in North Ayrshire, are recorded in Clyde Islands (see above).

Report: *Ayrshire Bird & Butterfly Report* (SOC Ayrshire).

S18 Lothian

UAs of West Lothian, Midlothian, East Lothian and City of Edinburgh. Monymut Water drainage area in East Lothian ceded to Borders in 1995.

Report: *Lothian Bird Report* (SOC Lothian).

S19 Borders

Mainly Peebles-shire, Selkirkshire, Roxburghshire and Berwickshire. Since 1974, all Scottish Borders Region; see also Lothian, above.

Report: *Borders Bird Report* (SOC Borders).

S20 Dumfries & Galloway

Dumfries-shire, Kirkcudbrightshire and Wigtownshire. Post-1974 Region, including The Scares (Scar Rocks). See also Ayrshire, above.

Report: *Birds in Dumfries & Galloway* (private & SOC).

S21 At Sea

The SOC map provides for records in this category in Scotland: almost all of SAs Forth, Cromarty, Hebrides and Fair Isle (which covers Orkney & Shetland and should not be confused with S2); most of SA Hebrides; the western parts of SAs Forties and Viking; the northern parts of SAs Rockall and Malin; the southern part of SA Bailey, and 'Waters North of Shetland'. Forrester *et al.* (2007) showed other marine boundaries used for that book. In the *North Sea Bird Report*, the North Sea Bird Club publishes records from a number of platforms and vessels, at present largely in SAs Forties, Viking, and North of Shetland; see also Forrester *et al.*

This paper does not deal with Recording Areas in the Channel Islands or Northern Ireland.

Acknowledgments

We are extremely grateful to Nick Scarle, Senior Cartographer, Manchester University Cartographic Unit, who kindly re-drew the maps for us. We are also indebted to a large number of County Recorders, other correspondents and librarians. Among those who were particularly helpful are I. J. Andrews, J. Barnes, A. Blake, J. Bowley, D. Clegg, D. L. Clugston, J. P. Cullen, A. Davies,

P. Daw, I. K. Dawson, G. E. Dobbs, R. M. Fray, L. Giddings, J. J. D. Greenwood, A. Hogg, M. Holling, N. Hudson, A. Mabbett, J. H. Marchant, A. McNee, C. W. Melgar, P. J. Reay, G. H. P. Rees, H. Roderick, H. E. Rose, I. M. Spence, D. W. Taylor, G. Thomas, H. Vaughan, J. J. Wheatley and J. Wilson.

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