

South-east Scotland Winter Bird Atlas Newsletter 2010-11

Monday 1st November sees the start of the last full winter season for the BTO Winter Atlas

We still need volunteers to help us complete our coverage for BOTH atlases

State of play after three winters

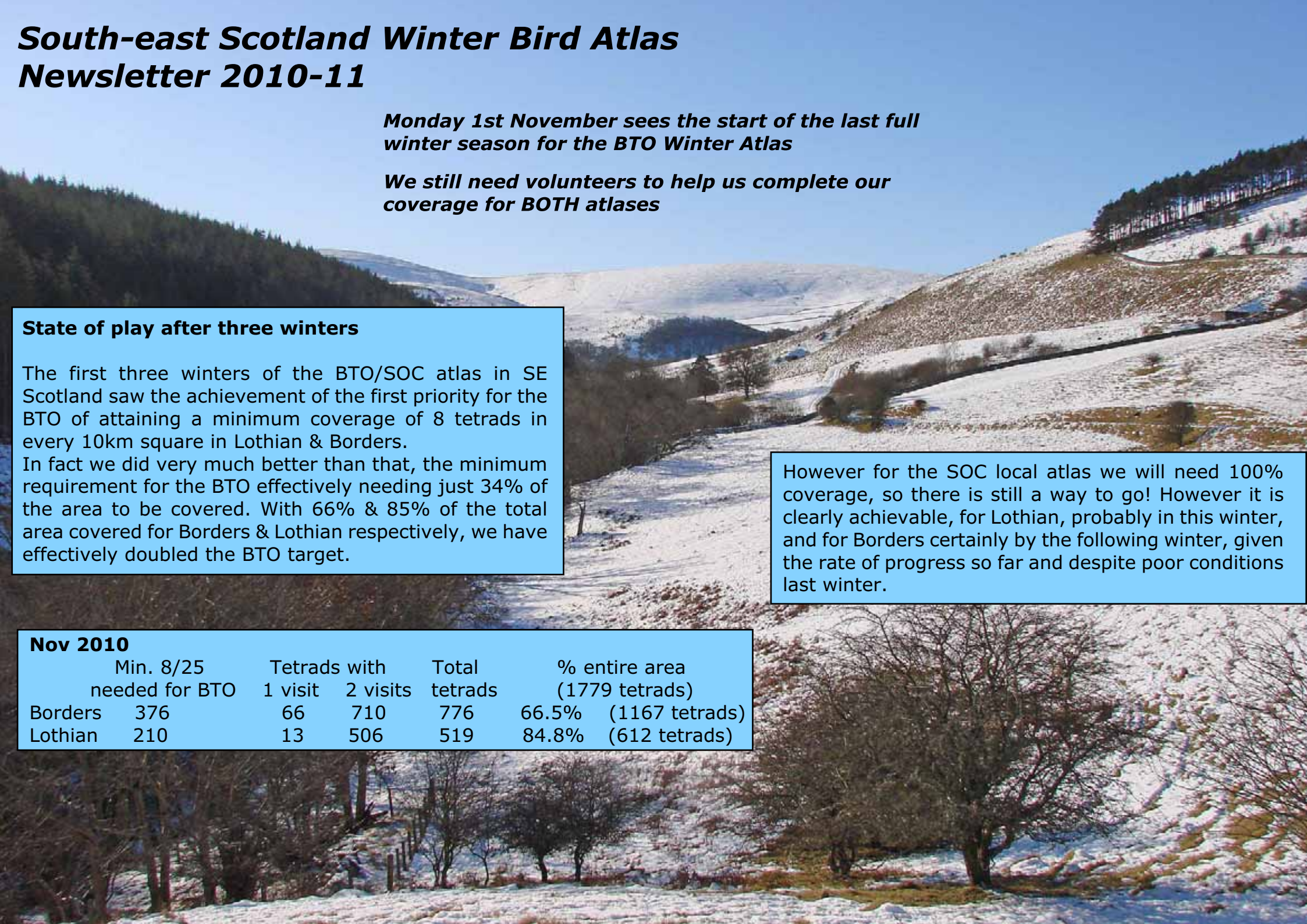
The first three winters of the BTO/SOC atlas in SE Scotland saw the achievement of the first priority for the BTO of attaining a minimum coverage of 8 tetrads in every 10km square in Lothian & Borders.

In fact we did very much better than that, the minimum requirement for the BTO effectively needing just 34% of the area to be covered. With 66% & 85% of the total area covered for Borders & Lothian respectively, we have effectively doubled the BTO target.

However for the SOC local atlas we will need 100% coverage, so there is still a way to go! However it is clearly achievable, for Lothian, probably in this winter, and for Borders certainly by the following winter, given the rate of progress so far and despite poor conditions last winter.

Nov 2010

	Min. 8/25 needed for BTO	Tetrads with		Total tetrads	% entire area (1779 tetrads)	
		1 visit	2 visits			
Borders	376	66	710	776	66.5%	(1167 tetrads)
Lothian	210	13	506	519	84.8%	(612 tetrads)



We are also well ahead, in terms of species found, compared with the last time the BTO did a Winter Atlas for the three winters between 1981/82 and 1983/84.

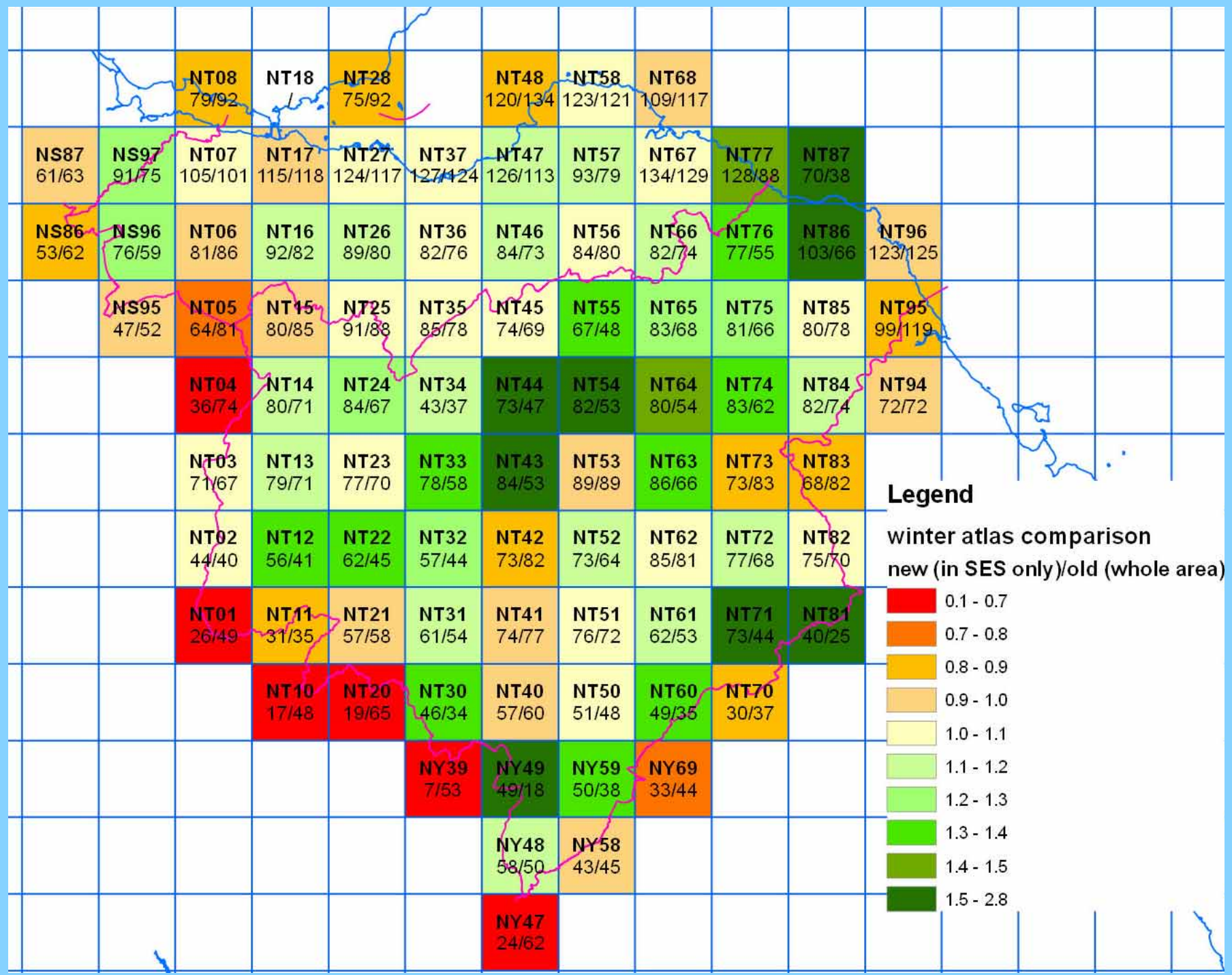
We should be, in some respects, as just 6 hours of fieldwork was required then per 10km square.

The map shows the species total per 10km square.

The current atlas total is on the left, the old atlas total on the right.

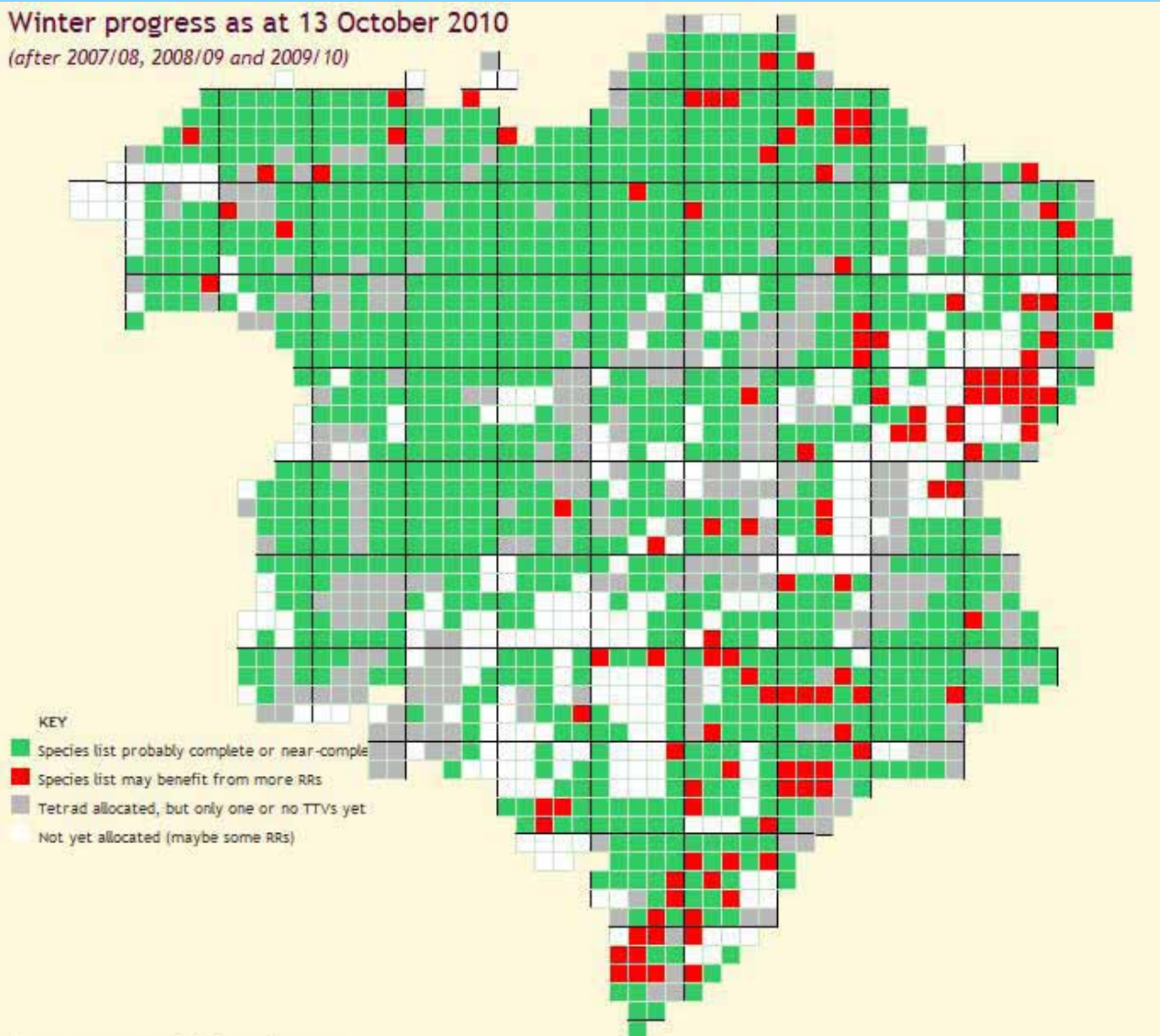
Thus NT57 has 93 species now, compared to 79 species before.

Boundary 10km squares only show the current totals for our side of the 'border' so levels will generally be poorer (the red squares).



Winter progress as at 13 October 2010

(after 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10)



This map depicts the current state of play. We used a similar map in the last summer newsletter.

The **green** tetrads are probably as well covered as we might expect and really no more effort needed for the time being.

The **white** tetrads have not been visited and are a priority this winter.

Those that are **grey** have either been allocated, but not been visited, or have just had a single TTV. Again there is an urgent need to either start surveying in the tetrad and to complete the second TTV, if a second needs to be done.

In Lothian these 'blank' white & grey tetrads are mostly confined to the periphery of the area, mainly in SW West Lothian. In Borders there are still large gaps in the Merse, Lammermuirs and southern Roxburgh but surprisingly also in the central Borders. We hope we will get volunteers to cover some of the areas this winter.

The **red** areas have had their TTVs done but the species totals are perhaps lacking in some species and so need some topping-up visits. Feel free to have a look at any of these.

Appeal to all volunteers

When entering data on the website - please check your entry. It's very easy to 'click-on through'.

Please check your total species lists (under View/edit) and locations map (bottom right on My Square summaries)

This will hopefully cut down on queries during validation. If you are not sure is something is 'new' to the atlas, species or numbers - enter it anyway. Duplicates are easy to deal with.

Potential species lacking are hinted at by the *species names in italics*. The current species lists of any tetrad can be printed out from the website.

Click http://www.the-soc.org.uk/se-atlas/sesa2w/sesa2_winter_progress.html.

It's the same map as the one above.

Just click on the tetrad that interests you and you can then print out the sheet to take into the field.

As some of you did last summer, you can top-up the species lists.

The example given here is for NT54T at Thirlestane, near Lauder.

With only 18 species, and the three adjacent squares to the west with 40-50 species each, this tetrad definitely needs more work done.

Species known to occur in some of the adjacent squares are shown on the sheet in italics. With this information, some targeted fieldwork can be contemplated, and hopefully done!

'Top-ups', whether in *new species* to the tetrad, or to *higher counts* than those given on the print-out sheet should be entered as Roving Records on the BTO website.

NT54T Thirlestane [Borders], both TTVs and 4 RRs

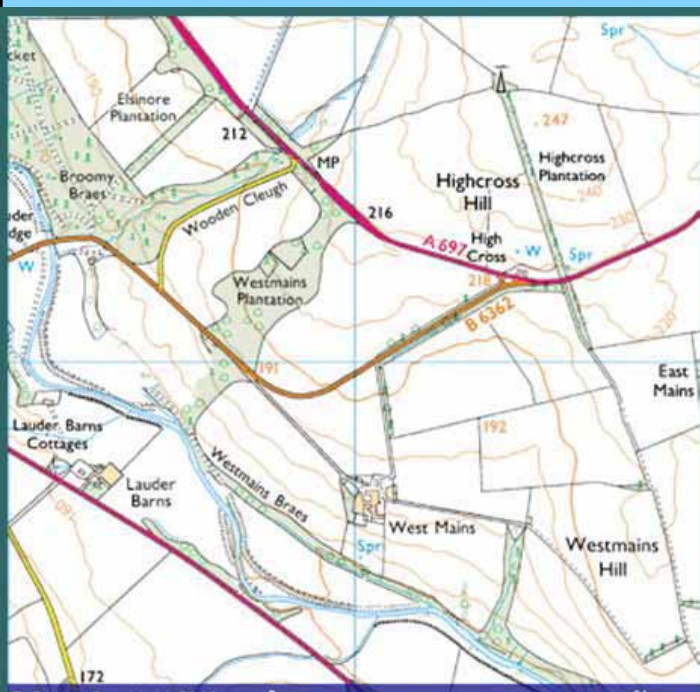
Mute Swan		Red-throated Diver		Jack Snipe		<i>Skylark</i>		Jackdaw	20
Whooper Swan		Black-throated Diver		<i>Snipe</i>		Meadow Pipit		Rook	40
Pink-footed Goose		Great Northern Diver		Woodcock		Rock Pipit		Hooded Crow	
Greylag Goose		Little Grebe		Black-tailed Godwit		Grey Wagtail		Carriion Crow	5
Canada Goose		Great Crested Grebe		Bar-tailed Godwit		<i>Pied Wagtail</i>		Hybrid Crow	
Barnacle Goose		Red-necked Grebe		Curlew		Waxwing		<i>Raven</i>	
Brent Goose		Slavonian Grebe		Greenshank		Dipper	2	<i>Starling</i>	
Shelduck		Fulmar		Redshank		<i>Wren</i>		<i>House Sparrow</i>	
Wigeon		Gannet		Turnstone		<i>Duncock</i>		Tree Sparrow	
Gadwall		Cormorant		Mediterranean Gull		Robin		Chaffinch	15
Teal		Shag		<i>Black-headed Gull</i>		Black Redstart		Brambling	
<i>Mallard</i>		Grey Heron	1	Common Gull	10	<i>Stonechat</i>		<i>Greenfinch</i>	
Pintail		Sparrowhawk		Lesser Black-backed		Blackbird	1	<i>Goldfinch</i>	
Shoveler		Buzzard	3	Herring Gull	1	<i>Fieldfare</i>		<i>Siskin</i>	
Pochard		<i>Kestrel</i>		Great Black-backed G		Song Thrush	1	<i>Linnet</i>	
Tufted Duck		Merlin		Kittiwake		<i>Redwing</i>		Twite	
Scaup		Peregrine		Guillemot		<i>Mistle Thrush</i>		Mealy Redpoll	
Eider		Water Rail		Razorbill		Blackcap		<i>Lesser Redpoll</i>	
Long-tailed Duck		Moorhen		Little Auk		Chiffchaff		Crossbill	
Common Scoter		Coot		Feral Pigeon	20	<i>Goldcrest</i>		<i>Bullfinch</i>	
Velvet Scoter		Oystercatcher	1	Stock Dove		Long-tailed Tit		Lapland Bunting	
Goldeneye		Ringed Plover		Woodpigeon	6	Marsh Tit		Snow Bunting	
Red-breasted Mergan		<i>Golden Plover</i>		<i>Collared Dove</i>		<i>Coal Tit</i>		<i>Yellowhammer</i>	
Goosander	2	Grey Plover		<i>Barn Owl</i>		Blue Tit	1	<i>Reed Bunting</i>	
Red Grouse		<i>Lapwing</i>		Tawny Owl		<i>Great Tit</i>			
Black Grouse		Knot		Short-eared Owl		<i>Nuthatch</i>			
<i>Red-legged Partridge</i>		Sanderling		Kingfisher		<i>Treecreeper</i>			
Grey Partridge		Purple Sandpiper		Green Woodpecker		<i>Jay</i>			
Pheasant	1	Dunlin		<i>Great Spotted Woodp</i>		Magpie			

SE Scotland Tetrads Atlas winter data after 3 winters (2007/08 to 2009/10). Species that have been recorded are in bold, followed by a maximum count (where submitted). Additional species recorded in 3+ adjoining tetrads are shown in italics.

The Leader Water should hold Mallard, Goosander and Moorhen, and probably Snipe in the marshy bits. Pied & Grey Wagtail are also likely there, if an early visit is done. There ought to be a chance of Sparrowhawk over the woods and perhaps Lapwing if an early November visit is made. The fields may well hold Stock Dove, and finches. I'd look for a Linnet flock and search for Goldfinch, Greenfinch, and perhaps Yellowhammer. Redwing and Fieldfare would also be possibilities, especially in November.

The woodland by the bridge ought to have more than Blue Tit and two thrushes. So I'd go for Coal & Great Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Nuthatch, Treecreeper, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Crossbill, Siskin and Lesser Redpoll

Remember to boost numbers as well. You may well come upon 7 Pheasants - so enter it as it exceeds the current top count.



Song Thrush in UK

Winters 81/82 - 83/84

BTO Winter Atlas



10km squares

This winter is the last opportunity to fill in any local gaps in the maps that will appear in the Atlas that the BTO will publish. Remember that the BTO maps are on 10km basis and that if we have missed any species in a 10km square, it will remain blank on the UK maps that will appear in the National Atlas.

To assist with the national 'topping-up' process, the BTO have added a button to the BTO website to let you know what species are potentially missing from your home 10km square.

In the lower right-hand corner, the 'Priority Squares' button allows you to see which species are missing from any 10km square.

Press the **winter** button and it reveals a page based on the 10km of your home address.

Your ATLAS options

- Request TTVs
- Add TTV Timed Tetrads Visit
- View my TTVs
- Add Roving Records
- Contact my local RO
- Non-TTV list to BirdTrack
- My local gaps
- View/Edit my records
- My Square summaries
- Extra summaries
- Any Square Summary Open access
- Winter Priority Breeding Squares

Map Satellite Terrain

Mouse currently hovering over: NT16
Using mouse, shift-click to select any other central 10km

Colour coding of richness labels as follows:

- Less than 50% of previous Atlas species recorded so far (white background)
- Between 50% and 74% previous Atlas species (yellow background)
- Between 75% and 89% previous Atlas species (orange background)
- More than 90% of previous Atlas species recorded so far (red background)

Species not observed in NT24 but recorded in adjacent squares

Species missing from NT24	No. of other squares
Black Grouse	6
Hen Harrier	5
Merlin	5
Golden Plover	5
Pied Wagtail (yarrellii)	5
Curlew	3
Carrion/Hooded Crow hybrid	3
Red-breasted Merganser	2
Wheatear	2
Tree Sparrow	2
Twite	2
Snow Bunting	2
Barnacle Goose	1
Pintail	1
Shoveler	1
Slavonian Grebe	1
Water Rail	1
Redshank	1
Short-eared Owl	1
Chiffchaff	1
Marsh Tit	1
Bar-headed Goose	1
Total:	22

Previous page Data Home

If the page is centering on an old address, please contact web.support@bto.org

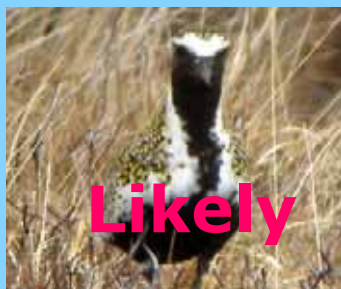
Note that you can move the map to any 10km square by hovering the mouse over a 10km square and clicking, at the same time as pressing the Shift key (for capitals) on the keyboard.

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Total: 22	



Likely



Likely



Unlikely



Possible



Possible

A quick look at the list of species that might potentially be found in Peebles North (NT24) shows some more and some less likely to be there. The criterion the BTO has used for this list is how many are found in the neighbouring 10km squares.

Now in NT24, with no large water bodies, most of the waterfowl are highly unlikely, and so probably can be ignored. Indeed most of the species that are only present in one or two neighbouring squares can also probably be ignored. Likewise Pied Wagtail (*yarrellii*) – another one of those annoying BTO routines, as Pied Wagtail (no brackets) has already been recorded!

So really that just leaves Black Grouse, Hen Harrier, Merlin, Golden Plover, Curlew & hybrid Crow. It's not too difficult to figure out where you might visit in the square to get those, the hilltops on the east side that abut against Glentress Forest. Twite might just be a possible amongst any finch flocks.

The raptors would be difficult and Curlew unlikely as they are not there between August and March but you never know. As Water Rail occurs at one pond in the breeding season, it may be worthwhile trying to tape-lure one to see if it could have wintered. An early visit before it freezes might be best.

So a list of 22 is reduced to 7 or 8, a much more manageable effort!

The Atlas Group have already been through the BTO lists and removed the more unlikely of the 'missing' species. In most cases there are about 10-20 species per 10km square.

The 10km squares with 'missing species' are mapped on the next page

We would like observers to volunteer to take on a 10km square and so have a go at finding 'missing' species. Please count them, so we have a number value for the atlas, and enter any you see as Roving Records, **at tetrad level** rather than 10km level, so we know which tetrad they were in.

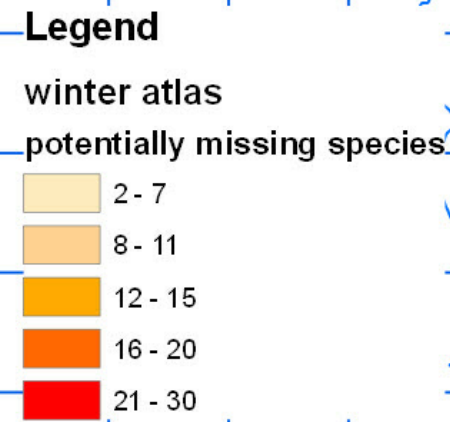
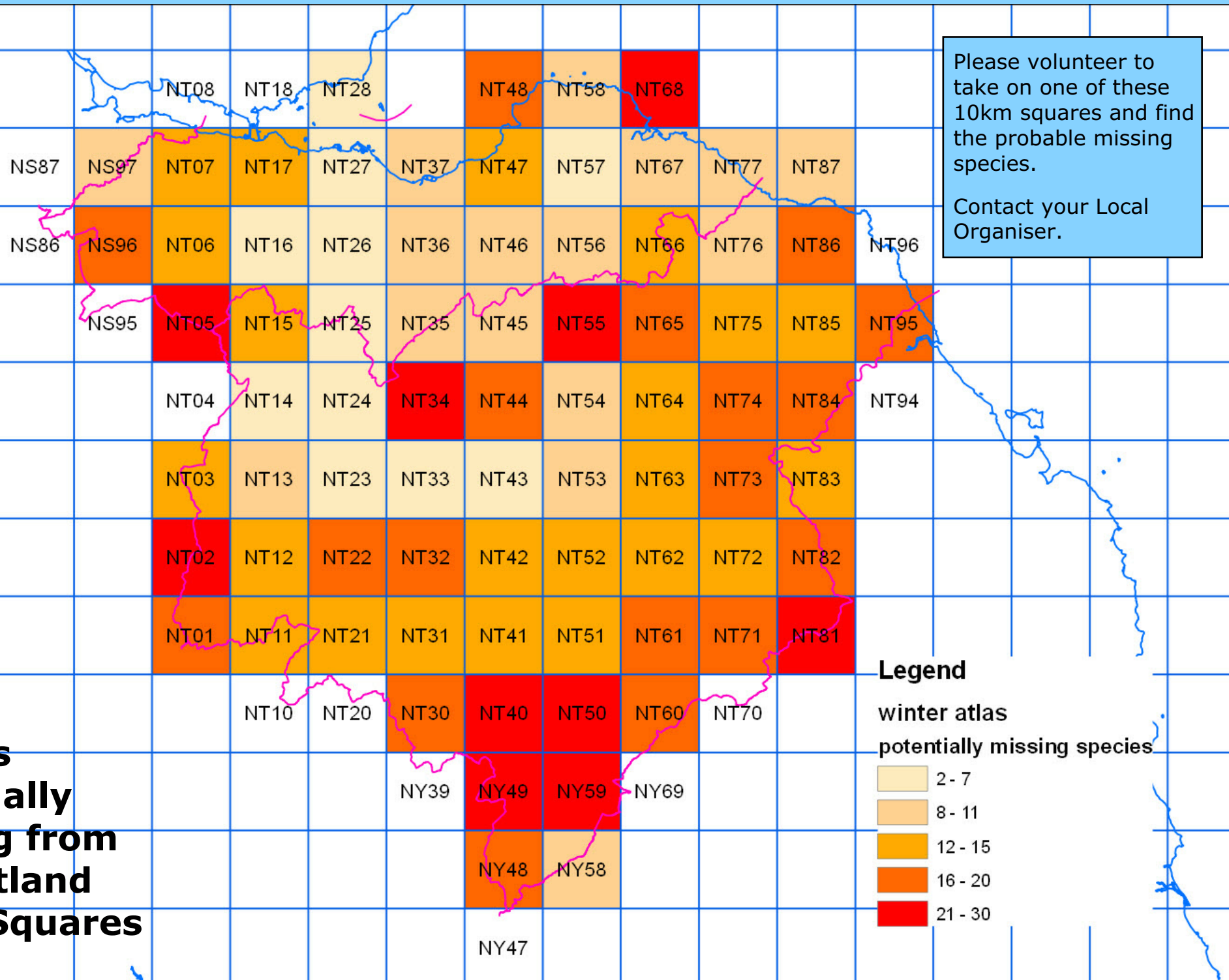


Unlikely



Unlikely

Species potentially missing from SE Scotland 10km Squares

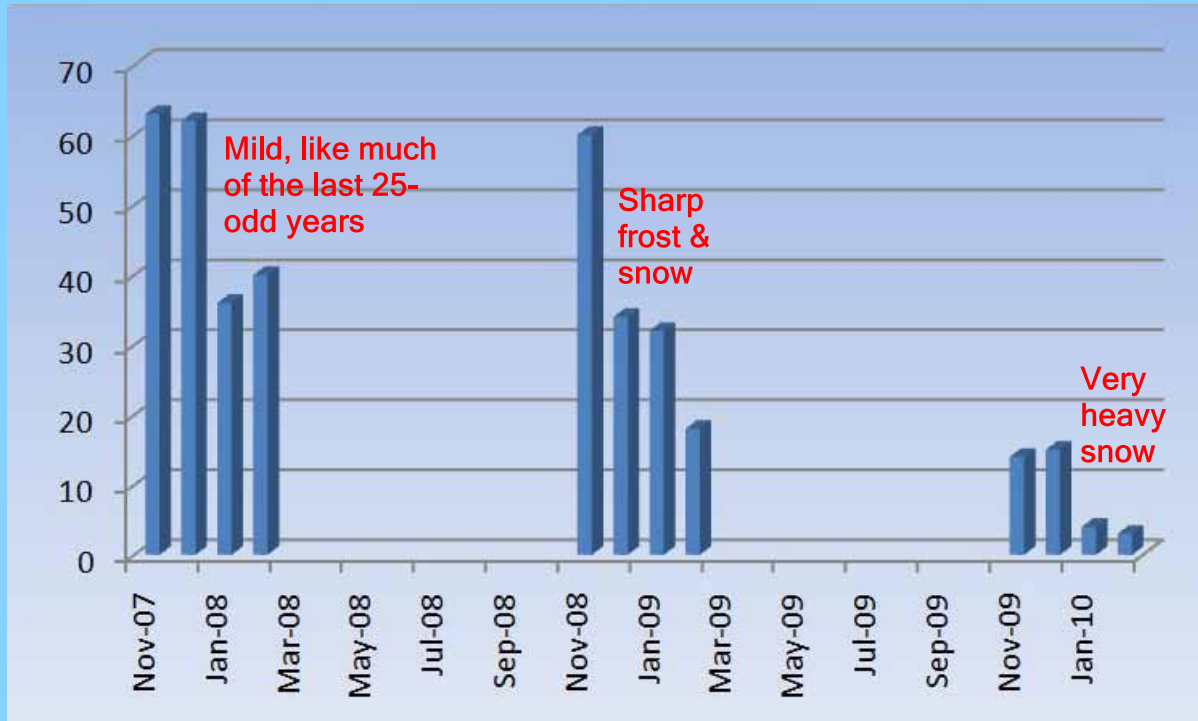


Winter 2009/10

Last winter was unusual in several respects, the peculiarities mainly associated with the weather. The snows that started in mid-December, and remained on the ground until almost the last day of atasing in late February, not only curtailed the atasing activities of many, but had a devastating impact on some species.

For Stonechat, which had been affected by the frosts and snow cover in winter 2008-9, the 2009-10 winter was a double-whammy that effectively wiped most of them out. With their food hidden under a thick blanket of snow, their choice was leave or die. Many appeared to have died! This also happened in the winters between 1980/81-82/83 and even almost 30 years later in 2009, the population was still expanding.

Stonechat Atlas records in Borders - winters 07/08. 08/09 & 09/10



The graph shows the die-off during winter 08/09 after the November/December frosts & snow, which reduced the population. That population is reduced further by the heavy snows that arrived in mid-December 2009. The population finishes up at very low levels by February 2010.

Now there are all sort of caveats about numbers of participants contributing in the atlas, the number of TTVs done etc. However the general picture is clear, Stonechat numbers have fallen drastically.

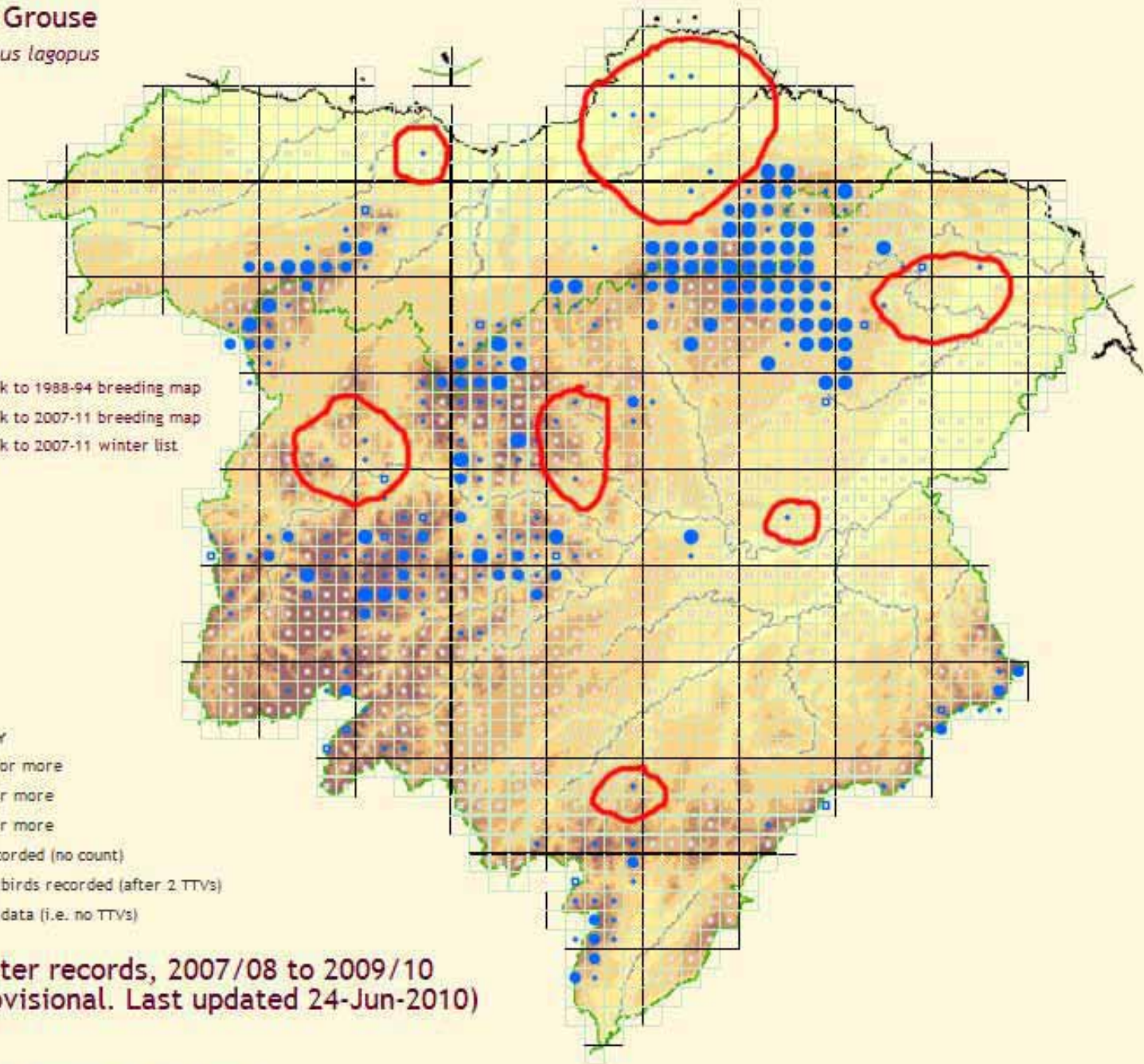
In winter 08-09 Coal Tit was badly hit in some areas in the south. In winter 09-10, in addition to Stonechat, Wren, Treecreeper and Long-tailed Tit also took a 'hammering'.

Other victims of hard winter weather in the last two winters





Red Grouse
Lagopus lagopus



Another species with a peculiar winter last year was Red Grouse.

The snowfall, covering the heather and hence their food, forced many Red Grouse away from their normal range in the hills. Some birds even reached the coast in their efforts to find snow-free ground.

Thus birds appeared at a number of lowland sites where they would not normally be encountered (marked in red circles on the map).

A number of other sites are known that have still to be added as Roving Records.

Winter Blitz days

There will be a number of 'blitzes', almost weekly, this winter to ensure that some of the more, and less, remote areas are covered.

Monday 1st November NT32 & NT42 - meet Selkirk, Selkirk Glass Car Park at 8:30 am - contact Ray Murray

Weekend early November NS86 & NS96 - Contact Harry Dott

Monday 8th November NT76 - meet Dunbar Road, Haddington 08:30 am - Contact Mark Holling

Weekend 20th-21st November NT54, NT55 & NT65 - Contact Ian Andrews

Borders travel Expenses

We still have some assistance for those travelling to reach remote tetrads in the Borders. This amounts to 10p per mile, not a lot, but enough to hopefully encourage visits to far away places.

Please contact David Parkinson & Graham Pyatt for details

Contact details

South-east Scotland Bird Atlas website:

http://www.the-soc.org.uk/se-atlas/sesa2_winter_index.htm

If you want to get more details of the blitzes and other atlas activity please join the South-east Scotland Bird Atlas Yahoo Group:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SEScotBirdAtlas/>

Jay

Garrulus glandarius

