

association with wetland habitats and if anything this had become more pronounced by 2008-12.

Ringling shows interchange of birds between Hertfordshire and Belgium, Denmark and Finland but the most striking feature is the number of movements to and from counties in the south and southwest of Britain

(Figure 4). There seems to be a regular movement south and west in winter.

The Reed Bunting is not covered by the Hertfordshire BBS but the numbers of birds captured at CES sites seems to have declined since the late 1980s (Figure 5).

## Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*



Corn Bunting at West Hyde (Andrew Moon).

GB breeding population estimate: 11,000 territories.  
Estimated Hertfordshire breeding population: 138 males (range 21-317).

### A restricted resident species.

Atlas tetrad counts:

	Breeding			Winter
	1967-73	1988-92	2008-12	2007-12
Possible	39	17	31	-
Probable	222	158	36	-
Proved	40	33	16	-
Total tetrads	301	208	83	57

Over the last 40 years the distribution of the Corn Bunting in Hertfordshire has become more and more restricted to the chalk country of the north of the county both in the breeding season and in winter (Figures 1 to 4). The birds are also more abundant in the Baldock/Royston area in both seasons (Figures 5 and 6). Gladwin (1983) reported that the bird had expanded its range into the south and centre of the county in the 1950s and 60s so the more recent retraction appears to be a return to a former status. The Herts Bird Club has organised three surveys of breeding Corn Buntings which have documented this decline; in 1985 (Terry 1986), 1992/93 (Dee & Smith 1994) and 2003 (Smith 2006). These showed that the population estimate fell from 1046 males (range 681-1423) in 1985

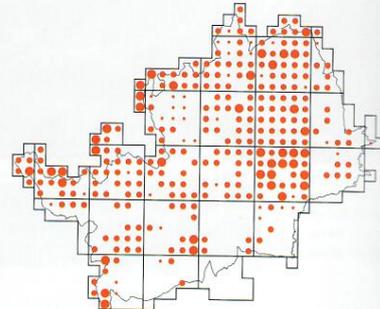


Figure 1. Corn Bunting breeding distribution 1967-73.

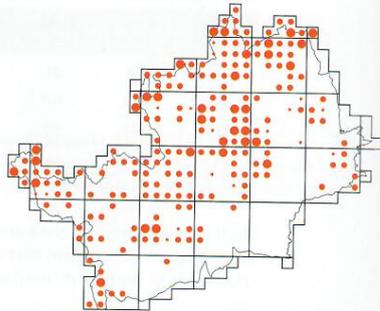


Figure 2. Corn Bunting breeding distribution 1988-92.

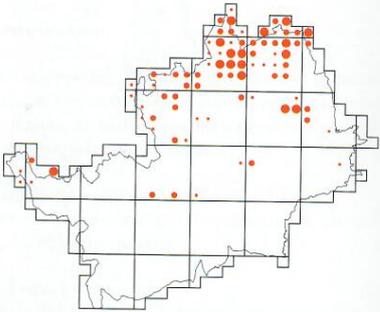


Figure 3. Corn Bunting breeding distribution 2008-12.

to 456 males in 1992/93 (range 237-739) and 138 (range 21-317) in 2003.

Apart from the general intensification of arable agriculture the causes of the decline are not known although the retraction of range to the light chalk lands suggests a link with the structure or timing of arable crops. The Corn Bunting is a late nesting species which could be adversely affected by early harvesting of cereal crops. Some studies have found they are dependant on spring sown cereal crops which may be more abundant on the light chalk land.

One feature of the 2008-12 breeding map was the small number of records in central Hertfordshire where singing males have been recorded around Harpenden and on the Woodland Trust 'Heartwood' site between Sandridge and Wheathampstead.

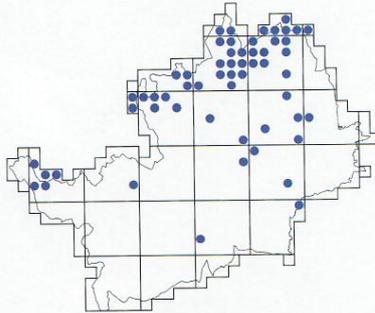


Figure 4. Corn Bunting winter distribution 2007-12.

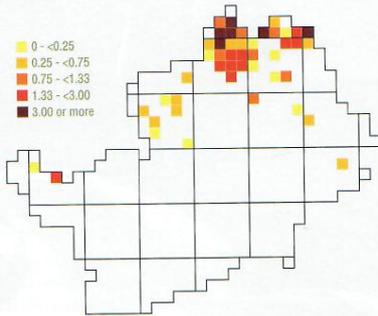


Figure 5. Corn Bunting breeding abundance 2008-12.

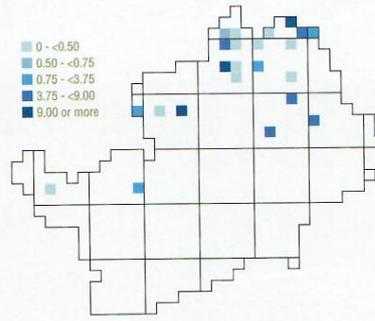


Figure 6. Corn Bunting winter abundance 2007-12.