

Elsewhere in northern Europe records are rare. From Scandinavia there are three from Finland (4th-5th October 1983, 1st-17th June 1996, 3rd-4th July 2007), three from Sweden (26th August-2nd September 1993, 6th July 1997, 9th-10th October 2004) and singles from Denmark (1st-2nd June 2003), Norway (trapped 12th September 2004) and Iceland (15th-22nd September 2008).

In northern Europe there are three from Germany (two from Helgoland: 20th September 1883, 1st October 1936; and one caught near Berlin on 29th October 2000 which was released on 30th and identification confirmed by DNA analysis), three from Austria (9th May 1998, 9th September 2000, 29th May 2005) and one from Belgium (trapped 22nd September 2005). There are three records from France (6th September 1961, 22nd May 2001, 24th July 2001), plus two further Eastern or Western (13th April 1990, 14th May 2000). There is also a record of Eastern or Western from Estonia (30th June 2004).

Interestingly, there is a record of Western Olivaceous Warbler *H. opaca* from Sweden (trapped 25th September 1993) and three from France (21st May 1960, 1st May 2004, 19th May 2005). These records indicate that there is still a chance for this species, which lacks the classic tail-dip of *elaeica*, to reach Britain and Ireland.

Unusually for a rare warbler it exhibits an erratic spread of arrival dates in Britain and Ireland. There are singles in May, June and July, three in August, eight between 13th-27th September and two in mid-October. The spring records probably involve overshoots (*elaeica* do not arrive back on southeast European breeding grounds until May). Departure for wintering areas takes place from mid July to late September. British and Irish records during the autumn would appear to involve migrants on a northwesterly orientation. Conveniently, several have lingered for extended stays; the three birds on Scilly, plus the Benacre individual, have all attracted crowds, as did the long-staying bird in Northeast Scotland.

Hippolais identification used to be rather more straightforward, but nowadays an expanded number of trickier possibilities need consideration during the ID process. The early individual at Portland from 4th-5th July 1999 was noteworthy. The August birds at Benacre in 1995 and Portland in 2003 offer further guidance to would-be finders that the late summer period may be a good time to seek out an encounter with this pallid warbler.

Booted Warbler *Hippolais caligata*
(M.H.C Lichtenstein, 1823). Breeds central Russia and western Siberia to Yenisey valley, central and northern Kazakhstan to western Mongolia and western Xinjiang province, China. Range expanding west to southern Finland. Winters northern and peninsular India south to Karnataka.

Monotypic. Previously treated as conspecific with Sykes's Warbler *H. rama*. A BOU review of molecular, morphological and vocal



evidence indicated that these taxa should be treated as separate species (Knox *et al* 2002). The Dutch presently consider Booted Warbler to be within *Acrocephalus*; see Eastern Olivaceous Warbler above.

Rare, but regular, migrant from northeast Europe or Asia, mostly in the early autumn.

Status: There have been 115 records to the end of 2006, 111 in Britain and four in Ireland.

Historical review: The first was a female shot on Fair Isle on 3rd September 1936. Thirty years later the first of the modern recording period, another on Fair Isle from 28th August-17th September 1966, was quickly followed by one on St. Agnes on 23rd October 1966. The last of the 1960s was trapped on Fair Isle on 8th September 1968. It was accepted as a Booted Warbler, but is now considered to have been either Booted or Sykes's Warbler *H. rama*.

The next came from the Isle of May in 1975, followed by Shetland records in 1976 and 1977. The first for the mainland was trapped at Kilnsea, East Yorkshire, on 9th September 1978. Since this run of finds there have been just four years with a blank return.

In the 1980s, 20 birds (including a then record four in both 1981 and 1987) created a rapid change in status. The southwest accounted for the bulk of records, with six on Scilly and three in Dorset. Three graced Kent and four singletons made landfall between Norfolk and North Yorkshire. There were just two in Shetland and one in Orkney.

As with many other eastern species, the 1990s produced a relative glut of records. No fewer than 50 were found during the decade. Off the back of an exceptional spring influx of eastern drift migrants in 1992 came the first spring records with three birds over a 10-day period in mid-June from Cleveland, East Yorkshire and Cumbria. Another prolonged easterly airflow in autumn 1993 revised the record books again: no fewer than 13 arrived, with 11 between 7th and 27th September. Records were spread along the east coast between East Sussex and Northeast Scotland. One on Skokholm from 25th-28th September was the first for Wales. A Booted Warbler ringed at Spurn on 16th-17th September 1993 was recovered in Belgium on 5th October. A further spring bird was in song at Beachy Head on 5th June 1994. Seven in 1994 and eight in 1998 were creditable annual counts.

The period 2000 to 2007 continued in a similar theme with 38 birds noted, including the first for Ireland, on Tory Island, Co. Donegal, on 27th September 2003 part of another good

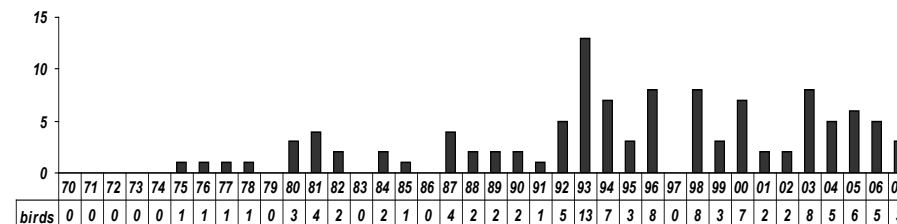


Figure 64: Annual numbers of Booted Warblers, 1970-2007.