

CETTI'S WARBLER

Cettia cetti

BTO CODE: CW

JIM ALMOND www.shropshirebirders.co.uk



THE REMARKABLE COLONISATION by the Cetti's Warbler has progressed strongly across England and Wales, while in Ireland and in Scotland the species remains a very rare vagrant.

The explosive song means that fieldworkers will have overlooked few breeding sites but, because birds not in song can be unobtrusive, the winter maps may be incomplete. Little difference is apparent, however, between the breeding and wintering distributions. Proving breeding is difficult, because many sites are impenetrable, but probably nearly all summer records refer to breeding birds. Cetti's Warblers now occupy lowland wetlands in a broad but discontinuous band around southern British coasts and are relatively common in certain river basins, such as the Thames and the Great Ouse. Other lowland areas of England and Wales are also occupied, but at lower density.

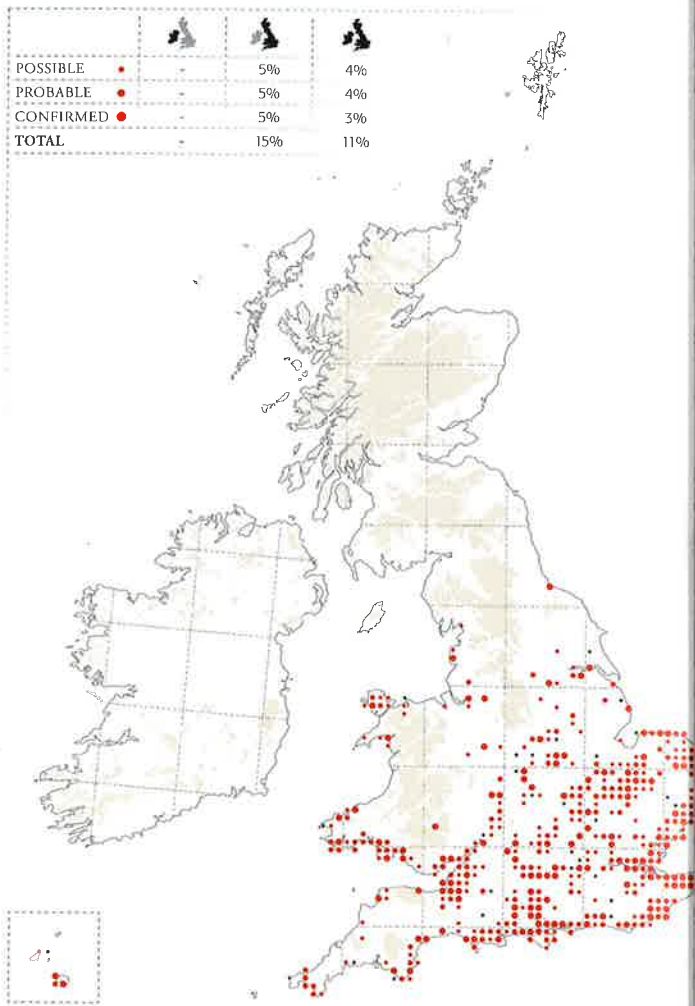
Range expansion since the first breeding record in Kent in 1973 (Holling *et al.* 2011b) has been documented thoroughly by atlases. In 1968–72, Cetti's Warblers were recorded in six 10-km squares, including a single instance of *confirmed* breeding. Occupancy had risen to 89 squares by the 1988–91 *Breeding Atlas*, despite substantial losses in Kent and East Anglia due to severe weather in the mid 1980s. By 1996 there were just under 600 territories in Britain and the Channel Isles (Wotton *et al.* 1998). From a range centred on the English south coast in 1988–91, rapid expansion has since occurred along both west and east coasts, and into Wales and the Midlands. Numbers have risen exponentially, recently doubling in periods of four to seven years, and now total at least 1,900 territories (RBBP 2010). Across western Europe, the population has increased almost fourfold since 1990 (PECBMS 2010).

The colonisation of Britain was part of a major expansion northwards from Mediterranean France during the 20th century (Bonham & Robertson 1975). There is some evidence that, as the population has increased, density-dependent regulation during cold winters has begun to limit growth rates (Robinson *et al.* 2007a). The hard 2009/10 winter brought about the first drop in reported numbers for 10 years (RBBP 2010) but, if the impact of previous cold winters is any indication, Cetti's Warbler numbers will recover rapidly.

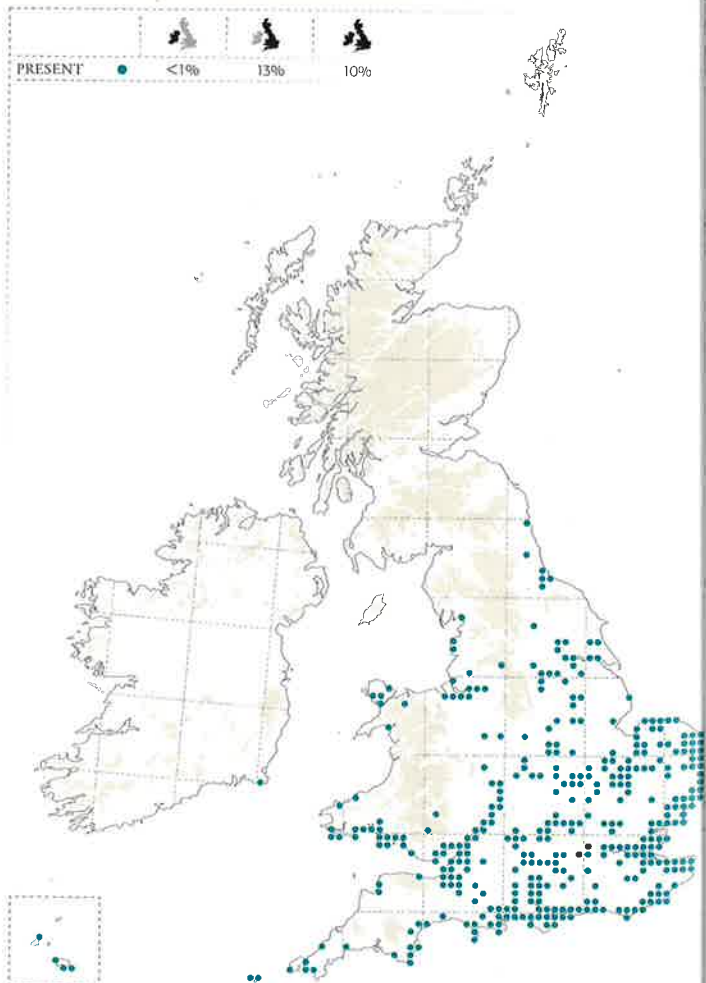


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BREEDING DISTRIBUTION 2008–11

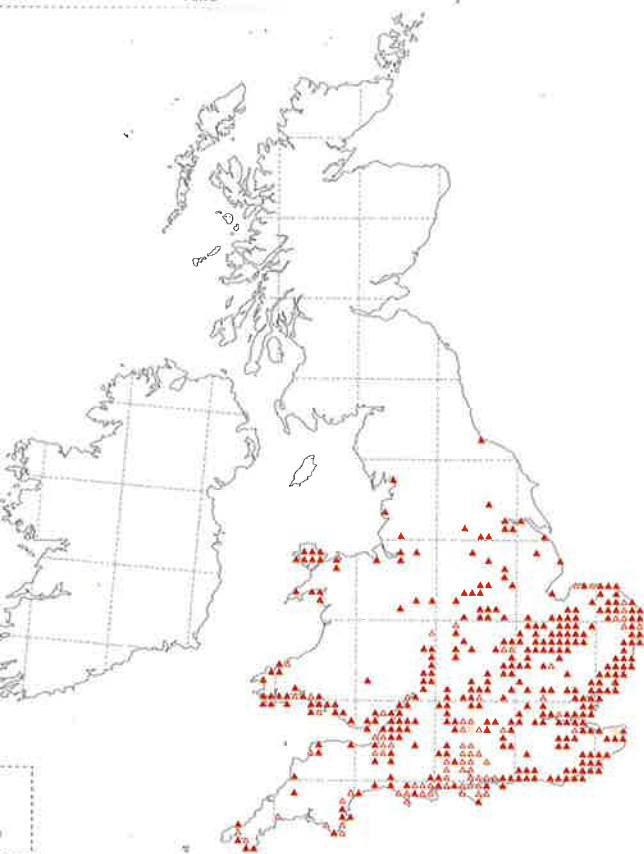


WINTER DISTRIBUTION 2007/08–2010/11

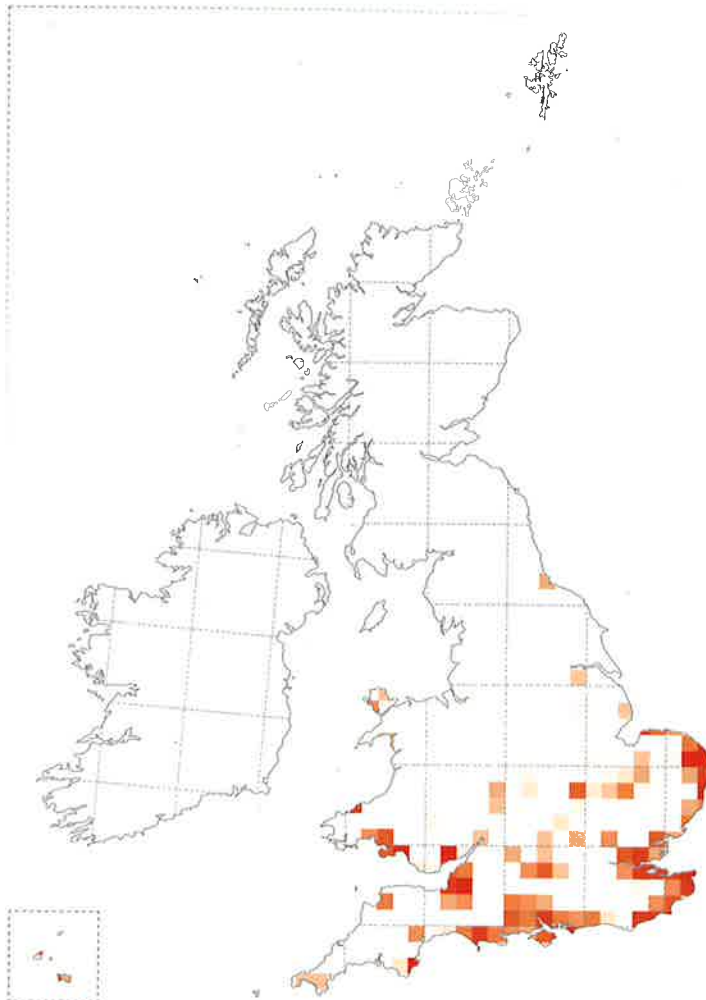


SPRING DISTRIBUTION CHANGE since 1968-72

▲	-	407	407
▼	-	0	0
PERCENTAGE CHANGE	-	+6783%	+6783%
INDEX	-	+0.75	

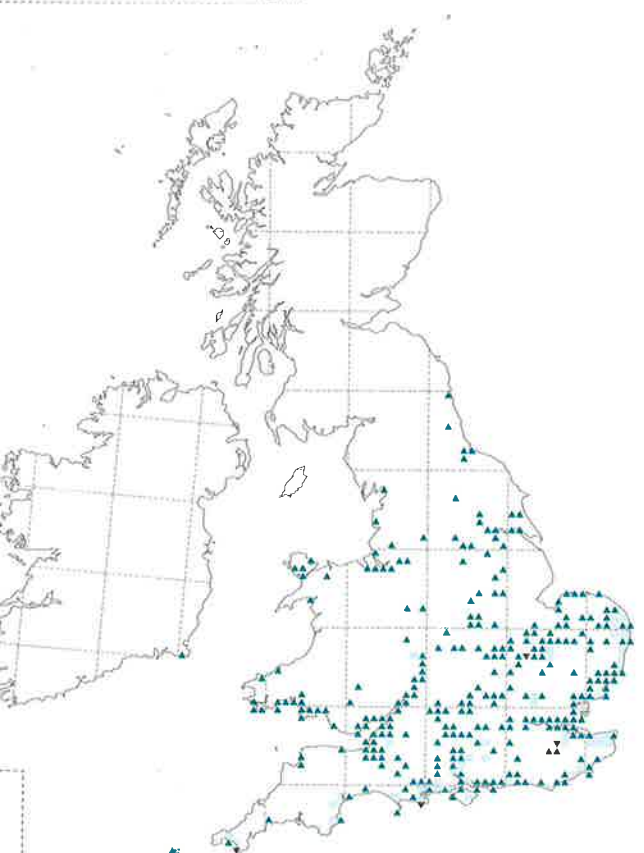


BREEDING RELATIVE ABUNDANCE 2008-11



AUTUMN DISTRIBUTION CHANGE since 1981-84

▲	1	281	282
▼	0	4	4
PERCENTAGE CHANGE	∞	+4330%	+4340%



WINTER RELATIVE ABUNDANCE 2007/08-2010/11

