

**The Honey-buzzard Season in SW Northumberland 2011:  
Report on Techniques, Results and Summaries  
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(Natural England permit 20111925)**

The techniques are split into two parts. In the first, the main techniques used from 1993-2003 are described. These techniques were also used in 2004-2010 for most sites but further techniques were introduced in 2004 to take advantage of disturbance permits for NR/MSK.

**Main Techniques 1993-2003, also used 2004-2011 on many sites**

Table 1 shows how a typical Honey-buzzard season progresses in Northumberland. The season in 2011 was normal in its timing with many birds back by mid-May and young fledging from mid- to late August. Upland sites run 2 weeks later so fledging at some of these does not appear to be until early September, or even later.

Table 1 shows how a typical Honey-buzzard season progresses in Northumberland.

Season stage		Activity	Visibility on site	Migration	Strategy
Court-ship	Mid-May Early June	Display/ nest building	Low on first arrival (feeding) followed by active display/ soaring over nest site for about a week to 14 days	Main arrival period	Walk around woods of known sites, particularly on edges; photograph and (from 2003) sound-record; birds seen at 100-500m (birds not worried by presence at this stage)
Sitting	Early June Early July	Egg laying/ incubation	Some soaring by male at start, declining to very poor by end	Late migrants still arriving	Look for new sites where activity is usually later in the season; birds seen at 500m

Rearing	Early July	Mid-August	Feeding young	Very poor at start, rising significantly with patrols by male when young approach fledging	Light movements probably occur	Visit known sites from courtship stage towards end of period; birds seen at 500m
Fledging	Mid-August	Early September	Young start to fly but are still dependent on adults	High with practice soaring in family groups	First adults (failed?) leave	Visit all known sites; birds seen at 500-1,000m (avoid any pressure on birds)
Post-nuptial	Early September	Early October	Adults leave at start of this period, juveniles depart about 2 weeks after adults	Gatherings occur on edge of breeding concentrations, often to the south in more scrubby areas. Much lower for solo juveniles which spend much time feeding well out of view.	Main departure period (adults at start, juveniles later)	Continue visiting sites but origins of birds are now open to question

Table 1: Timing of Breeding Season of Honey-buzzard in Northumberland

The timing of the season varies from year to year, necessitating corresponding adjustments in the fieldwork timing.

Using Table 1 as a guide, the strategy is ideally for each site, defined as a clump of trees, to:

- Find a pair displaying at the courtship stage.
- Observe some activity, however limited, in the Sitting and Rearing stages.
- Count the number of fledged young at the Fledging stage.

The full season is actually rather longer than the above:

February-April: visit wooded areas; locate Goshawks and other raptors; see changes in forests and woods and good vantage points.

October-early November: continue looking for late Honey-buzzard migrants.

mid-November-mid-February is break.

The strategy is an adaptation of that developed for Common Buzzards in their initial colonisation of Northumberland. Common Buzzards show the same basic pattern as Honey-buzzards with much activity at start and finish and almost complete invisibility at times during the incubation and rearing stages. The difference is that the Common Buzzard start and finish are much more drawn-out while the Honey-buzzard's are necessarily much more compressed because it is a long-distance migrant.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo* have courtship from February-early May, sitting from mid-April to mid-June, rearing from early June to late July, fledging from mid-July to early August and post-nuptial from late July to late October. They very rarely engage in full display in late May or early June and fledge about one month earlier than Honey-buzzards.

The standard criteria for breeding relevant to Honey-buzzard are based on those in the Atlas of Breeding Birds, 1968, by Sharrock. The ones actually used in Northumberland are shown in Table 2.

POSSIBLE: bird recorded in breeding season in possible nesting habitat, but no other indication of breeding noted (√).

PROBABLE: bird (or pair) apparently holding territory (S).

Courtship and display (D).

Visiting probable nest site (N).

Nest-building (B)

Adult with food for young (FY).\*

CONFIRMED:

Recently fledged young (FL)

Adult entering or leaving nest site in circumstances indicating occupied nest (ON).

\* moved starting in 2007 from Confirmed to Probable (Hardey et al (2006 p.66-71)).

Table 2: Criteria for Breeding used for Honey-buzzard in Northumberland

It can be seen that finding recently fledged juveniles for most species confirms breeding. However, with a rare breeder further evidence is usually considered essential and *recently* can be subjective. There is extensive habitat for Honey-buzzards in the rest of Northumberland and in Scotland so it is possible that some juveniles seen in September are migrants. It is also possible that some adults seen in May and June are migrants. However, it seems most unlikely that adults will engage in territorial display on their way north. They may explore for trial sites within an area but wasting energy displaying at a site say 300km from their base while under the very tight time pressures imposed by the limited time for breeding seems very unlikely. Put another way, given the scarcity of the species, the chances, without some attempt at breeding, of the same group of trees in large woods being the focus of display in June, unobtrusive occupation in July and of weak-flying juveniles in early September, seem very low. Furthermore the increase in population observed is consistent with a successful local population.

We would consider it safe to consider a site as being in the CONFIRMED category if event 3 and either event 1 or 2 were satisfied for a particular site (defined as a clump of trees):

1. A pair showed territorial behaviour in the Courtship phase

2. Some indication was found for presence in the Sitting/Rearing phases
3. Recently fledged juveniles were seen in the Fledging phase.

Sites for which only events 1 or 2 are observed are in the probable category at best, though some may really be failed breeding attempts. Sites for which event 3 is only observed once, are in the possible category as the birds may have moved in from elsewhere and may possibly even be long-distance migrants. Sites for which event 3 is observed more than once with a significant interval between the sightings are in the probable category.

The Dutch strategy for Honey-buzzard monitoring is very sophisticated (Bijlsma, 1997, p.28-30). We do photograph as many birds as possible but we do not identify individual birds on plumage. Also watching from tree-tops seems more appropriate to large forests in flat areas than to smaller woods in undulating country where many vantage points are available. Obviously we do put substantial time into this survey but living in the area means that local weather patterns can be seen as they develop. Ideal survey times are 09:30-12:30 (extending to 16:30 if a good day) in spring and the same but also as late as 17:30 in late summer and autumn. A fine day after several poor ones yields exceptional numbers. In 2002 some display was taking place in drizzle -- the birds just did not get much fine weather. After observation of the expected activity for the season at a site, that site is not usually visited again until the next stage of the season is reached.

### **Disturbance permit use in 2004-2011**

Disturbance permits enabled us to get closer to the birds and search for nests. In 2004 one nest was found, the first in the county since 1841. In 2005 six selected sites were visited at intervals from ten days to 3 weeks, with interruptions for holidays and other absences. No trees were climbed to inspect nests and the birds seemed unaffected with 100% success at the visited sites. No site was visited for more than one hour and calls were recorded during this time opportunistically with a digital sound recorder and a hand-held tele-microphone. Some still photographs and video footage were also obtained opportunistically during the site visits. A nest was found at each of the six sites. In 2006 some winter work was done in additional sites with the aim of finding a total of ten nests in this season. This aim was achieved.

Finding Honey-buzzard nests is extremely difficult when inexperienced but becomes easier with practice. The first lesson learnt was that although the birds display around the tops of wooded hills, their nests are often at much lower altitude, usually in rough terrain near water (stream, ditch, pond). The birds are of course large so the nest must be near a ride or clearing to give them easy access. The nests are almost invariably in the lower part of the crown of tall trees, estimated typically at about 25m in 30m trees. The nests are not in commercial forestry in the mass production sense, but in stands of trees grown on towards maturity by wealthy private owners or conservation bodies. In oak or pine they are not so difficult to see, once a precise area has been determined, but in the most favoured tree, Norway Spruce, the nests are only visible from the ground with some effort, even when the precise area has been well established, because of the relatively dense crown structure. The preference for Norway Spruce is attributed by Bijlsma *et al* (1993, p.72) to the cover and screening provided by the crown which is particularly useful when both adults leave the nest area to forage, which inevitably occurs at times. In Northumberland the nests of Honey-buzzard appear very large from the ground and usually have sprays and leaves on the edge. The nests also increase in size through the season until mid-August as new material is added. Once the young have fledged the nests then appear to become smaller again quite quickly as maintenance ceases. Bijlsma *et al* (1993, p.72) considers that most Honey-buzzard nests can be identified at a single glance from the ground.

The effort in finding a nest in a wood may be high initially but there is a tendency to re-use the same nest for a few years so effort per nest in subsequent seasons declines. Common Buzzards may nest within 200-300 metres of Honey-buzzards. There is some interaction when the Honey-buzzards first arrive back but this soon lessens and the two species ignore each other. Hobbies will also nest close to Honey-buzzards and appear to mob them aggressively.

In the target area in 2011 13 sites were searched for nests with 100% success this year. Number of sites was increased by one so that the lower South Tyne could also be covered in this respect. Scots Pine and Norway Spruce are now the most popular trees with Oak the only other type employed. Nests are much easier to find in Scots Pine than in Norway Spruce because of the structure of the crowns of the trees with Scots Pine being open and Norway Spruce closed. This year a series of photographs was taken from the ground of each nest in each site visit. Comparison of the photographs between visits showed a clean nest and an expansion of the structure between June/early July and late July/August confirming that the nest was in use. This comparison supports the nests being assigned to Honey-buzzard as a species because it is exactly what would be expected with a tidy late nesting species. Common Buzzard nests always appear very much more used near fledging in early July and are indeed already starting to decline in structure at this point.

## Survey Effort

Vast. 15-20 hours a week over the 25 week season in on-site fieldwork. With some breaks for holidays, perhaps 300-400 hours a year from early May to early October.

## Comparison with Work in Scotland/Britain

Hardey *et al* (2006 p.66-71) in their guide to raptor survey and monitoring, make a number of statements and suggestions about the monitoring of Honey-buzzards. Much fits in well with experience in Northumberland, but it is worthwhile highlighting a few differences:

1. Very few sites are ever occupied in late April in Northumberland (just one to date).
2. Territorial display does not occur from mid-June to early August in Northumberland with breeding birds (birds sit tight and adopt a very low profile). Non-breeding birds have been observed displaying in July.
3. Three visits, not four, are made to confirm occupancy in Northumberland. Visits 2 and 3 (June and July) are amalgamated into one in Northumberland. However, more visits are made in Northumberland to sites where the intention is to find the active nest using the disturbance permit.
4. Evidence of breeding categories are similar in that both treat recently fledged young as confirmed (though see above for corollary in Northumberland). Nest with eggs or young is represented by occupied nest (ON) in Northumberland. The other category for confirmed breeding in Northumberland of carrying food (FY), treated as probable in Hardey *et al* (2006), has been very rarely used in Northumberland to confirm breeding. Nests that fail in Northumberland will most likely be recorded as possible/probable rather than confirmed breeding but failed.

As a result of this comparison, the category FY has been moved in Northumberland from 2007 to match the 'standard' i.e. probable breeding. The treatment of calls is an area where some advance perhaps could be made nationally in future. A number of the calls such as anger, alarm, wailing and ticking surely confirm breeding but of course there is usually other evidence when the nest site has been penetrated sufficiently to hear such calls.

## **Disturbance permit use in 2011**

One additional site was selected, in lower South Tyne, so that the target of having a visited nest-site within each area was almost achieved (new area Tipalt has no visited nest site). Two visits were made to each of the 13 sites selected, the first from mid-June to mid-July and the second from mid-August to early September. After some experimentation over the years this timing appears to be optimal as it avoids disturbance when the birds are settling but is at an active point, egg hatching for first, young fledging for second, so that positive results can be obtained. An additional visit was made in early August to one site in Tyne E where the signs were not conclusive on the first visit; the extra visit proved conclusively that breeding was taking place.

## **Results for 2011**

Appendix I shows the detailed reports on visits for 2011, both as site visits to find nests and as more general visits to check for occupation, breeding success and migration. Table 3 gives a summary of the breeding results by area and Table 4 a summary of the migration results.

Some sites were colonised early in May, or even in late April but the main arrival was later. The season started on time and fledging occurred from mid-August. The weather was fine in May and early June but declined through late June, July and August with increased dampness and wind but heavy downpours were largely avoided. September was windy, particularly in ten days before mid-month with the passage of the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina from 12/9-14/9 but as usual there were quite long spells of sunshine.

Fieldwork was performed continuously in the study area from end April – early November, except for the following absences in other parts of England and Scotland:

22-26 May, Devon; 16-22 July, north Wales; 26 July-3 August, Tuscany, Italy; 7-14 August, Liège, Belgium; 4-5 September, London; 18-22 September, Lake District, England;



The rather lengthy absences from 16 July-14 August did not significantly affect fieldwork as for the most part this is the quiet rearing part of the breeding cycle. It would have made studying the fledging easier though if the final visit had finished say around the 10 August. Compiling the results was delayed by a long-running broadband connection problem with BT from 5 August-23 September.

As shown in Table 3, it was yet another record-breaking season for Honey-buzzard in SW Northumberland in terms of occupancy with 46 (41 in 2010) occupied sites and 46 (41) confirmed breeding pairs. Productivity increased slightly with 74+ (64+) young fledged. Productivity was high in absolute terms with 28 of the 46 successful sites raising 2 young; 11 raising at least one young and 7 raising one young.

Although the number of pairs increased, the breeding density was maintained with no infilling. The increase in pairs occurred because of 1) the addition of a new area Tipalt on the extreme west of the study area (+2 sites); 2) the species started moving towards the Roman Wall in the lower South Tyne with a site on the north side of the lower South Tyne (+ 1 site); 3) the species moved to higher altitude in the East Allen (Allen), reaching 460m asl, and in the Beldon Burn (Derwent), reaching 380m asl (+2 sites).

Survey effort was maintained throughout the season. In the 3 phases of display, nest/rear and fledge the number of sites at which the species was recorded was 43, 16 and 46 respectively. The dip in the middle is because of absences elsewhere and the greater secrecy of the species in the middle of the breeding cycle. The display period was covered better than in 2010.

Gangs of juveniles, defined as gatherings of presumed local birds post-fledging, feeding-up prior to migration, comprised 4 juveniles in Derwent on high moors on 28/9, 3 in Tyne Valley W on 29/9, reducing to 1 on 30/9, and, in Allen, on high moors, 1 on 1/10 and 1 on 4/10. Total is 4 gangs from 28/9-4/10 totalling 9 juveniles.

Another feature of the year was the observed visible migration in autumn as shown in Table 4.

Spring visible migration was typically very light with a single bird, a male, flying N high-up on 9/5 at Devil's Water.

Autumn migration, delayed by bad weather in early September, took off on 15/9 with 13 birds, all adult, seen leaving the Devil's Water between 10:45-13:05, including a kettle of 7 birds from 11:59-12:02. 12 of the birds moved S and 1 SE. Movement coincided with very rapid exodus of Swallow over previous 24 hours. Later the same day a female flew S low-down at Parson Shields, upper South Tyne, not a known nest site, at 18:00 and came to rest in trees near the South Tyne. She may well have been a Scottish bird, perhaps making her 1st stop on migration from say the Tay Valley. Earlier in the month on 1/9 a male left a site to S in Tyne Valley W. On 17/9 a female intruder was at a site in Derwent, perhaps also a migrant from further N. Finally, for the month, migration of 2 juveniles must have occurred from 29/9 to 30/9 as the gang of 3 birds at a site in Tyne Valley W reduced from 3 to 1.

Much more attention was paid this year to locating late migrants, particularly in the upper South Tyne, which is ideally placed for birds from Scotland seeking orographic lift to assist their emigration. In October 8 migrants were located in the upper South Tyne from 11/10-22/10 at 3 sites with 4 juveniles feeding at one site on 11/10. A further juvenile flew SE in Tyne Valley W on 10/10. The final migrant of the year was a juvenile flying slowly S in Devil's Water on 1/11 off high moors.

### **Objectives for 2012**

Next season the plan is similar to that of 2011 in coverage and effort. However, an assistant is joining me to help in monitoring sites and in nest visits.

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2nd April 2012

Area	No. sites	No. adults	No. nests found	Observed Occupied			Breeding Category			Number young fledged	Gangs of juveniles post-breeding	Nests found in
				Display	Rear	Fledge	Conf	Prob	Poss			
Devil's Water	6	12	3	6	4	6	6	0	0	10 (4x2, 1x1+, 1x1)	0	Scots Pine (2), Norway Spruce
Allen	9	15	2	7	3	9	9	0	0	12 (3x2, 5x1+, 1x1)	2x1	Norway Spruce, Oak
Upper South Tyne	5	10	2	5	2	5	5	0	0	9 (4x2, 1x1+)	0	Norway Spruce, Oak
Lower South Tyne	5	9	1	4	1	5	5	0	0	8 (3x2, 1x1+, 1x1)	0	Scots Pine
Tipalt	3	4	0	3	1	3	3	0	0	4 (1x2, 2x1+)	0	
Tyne W	7	13	3	7	3	7	7	0	0	12 (5x2, 2x1)	1x3	Scots Pine (2), Norway Spruce
Tyne E	4	7	1	4	1	4	4	0	0	6 (2x2, 2x1)	0	Scots Pine
Derwent	7	12	1	7	1	7	7	0	0	13 (6x2, 1x1+)	1x4	Scots Pine
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>74 (28x2, 11x1+, 7x1)</b>	<b>4 (1x4, 1x3, 2 x1)</b>	<b>Scots Pine (7), Norway Spruce (4), Oak (2)</b>

Table 3: Results for the Honey-buzzard Breeding Season in SW Northumberland by area in 2011

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Locality</i>	<i>Age/Sex</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Movement</i>
May 9	14:05	West Dipton (Devil's Water)	Adult male	1	Even more remarkable was another male appearing high overhead above him at 14:05, so high that I'd never have picked him out unless I'd had the camcorder focused on the high clouds. He disappeared off to the N so think he was a migrant, interested in territory below and its occupying male, but quickly passing on to his own territory.
September 1	13:10	Shilford (Tyne Valley W)	Adult male	1	First Honey-buzzard was a male up over Shilford at 11:50, soaring very high and shortly disappearing to S so thought to be on his way to Africa.
September 15	10:45-13:05	Dipton Wood (Devil's Water)	Adult male 4 Adult female 2 Adult (gender not known): 7	13	13 birds, all adult, seen leaving the Devil's Water, including a kettle of 7 birds from 11:59-12:02 over Dipton Wood, an amazing sight, other than 2 birds doing a brief swoop the atmosphere is serious as normal for migrating birds; 12 of the birds moved S and 1 SE. Movement coincided with very rapid exodus of Swallow over previous 24 hours. The 1st fine day after a spell of 10 days of very windy weather. Others:11:27 male from West Dipton has another go, impatiently flapping at lower levels, then effortless soar, this time going higher, out of sight and off (trial soars are not uncommon); 11:47 male soars to moderate height at Viewley, then moves into solid flapping mode and moves off SE at speed;12:25-12:29 female appears flapping hard to S, then soars over Swallowship, before drifting N and meeting 2 males, who all depart together to S, males presumed as from Swallowship

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Locality</i>	<i>Age/Sex</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Movement</i>
					(her mate) and Farnley; 12:45-12:50 female soaring over W of Farnley at long range, going very high above clouds, lost to sight and presumed to leave.
September 15	18:00	Parson Shields (upper South Tyne)	Adult female	1	A female flew S low-down at Parson Shields, upper South Tyne, not a known nest site, and came to rest in trees near the South Tyne. She may well have been a Scottish bird, perhaps making her 1st stop on migration from say the Tay Valley.
September 17	13:50:00	Minsteracres (Derwent)	Adult female	1	Some dramatic action with the presumed female Honey-buzzard of the site soaring and then flapping very fast in a straight line to intercept another female Honey-buzzard, presumably a migrant (maybe a migrant from Scotland in the 15/9 movement). There's a bit of a skirmish with the presumed migrant drifting off to the E and the incumbent to the W. The migrant was where her young were just 10 minutes before but they had moved to the W and she moves off in this direction.
September 29	13:20:00	Bywell (Tyne Valley W)	Juvenile	2	Yesterday noted that the 3 Honey-buzzard at 13:20 reduced to one later on; suspect that 2 of the juveniles actually left while I was in the area. It did appear that the 2 birds were 'paired' while the 3rd bird was more on its own.
October 10	15:20:00	Stocksfield (Tyne Valley W)	Juvenile	1	Had inklings a Honey-buzzard was in the area with very nervous feeding corvid flock, an irate Grey Heron flying off from Tyne, and a brief glimpse of a soaring

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Locality</i>	<i>Age/Sex</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Movement</i>
					raptor over Shilford, mobbed by a Jackdaw, which looked just the part. At 15:12 a juvenile Honey-buzzard, mobbed by corvids, took off from the Tyne near Bywell Castle and in next 11 minutes, gave some of best views of the species for the year. Slowly gaining moderate height it flapped SE over to the Guessburn, where it turned at 15:17 and unbelievably came back towards me, stalling when over me and finally slowly and reluctantly making its way SE again into the distance, disappearing at 15:23.
October 11	12:50-14:25	Eals (upper South Tyne)	Juvenile	4	4 juveniles feeding in area identified from clips: bird A, heavy, missing secondary on right-wing, from 12:53-12:55, this bird is very similar in structure and plumage to the one at Harwood Shield on 1/11; bird B with the ragged wing, missing P4 on right wing, this bird was very visible, being up for about 15 minutes in all from 13:02-14:21; bird C was slim and full-winged, visible for 2 bursts of activity around 13:46 and 14:20; bird D was even slimmer, noted only once from 14:20-14:21, appearing while recording bird C.
October 15	15:50:00	North Wood, Haltwhistle (upper South Tyne)	Juvenile	1	The Honey-buzzard juvenile came flapping in low-down from the N, clearly looking for a B&B. A local Common Buzzard got up to intercept it but backed off from any interaction once it realised it was no threat. The Honey-buzzard certainly looked tired and came down finally on the S end of North Wood, close to a Honey-buzzard site, which had been active earlier in

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Locality</i>	<i>Age/Sex</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Movement</i>
					the season. These older juveniles show structural features closer to those of adults with fuller wingtips, longer tails and more obvious longer necks. By time they get going on migration, these older birds should be readily identifiable.
October 16	14:47:00	Parson Shields (upper South Tyne)	Juvenile	1	Main walk was at Parson Shields where had the 1st Honey-buzzard moving S along the ridge on E side of valley at 14:47, riding the updraught from the W breeze. Not as close as the Towsbank bird but shape and structure very clear. This bird covered about 1km in 1 minute 17 seconds so a little slower at 41 kph.
October 16	15:28:00	Eals (upper South Tyne)	Juvenile	1	The 2nd Honey-buzzard was moving S just after arrival at Towsbank, to the N of Parson Shields, at 15:28. It came right overhead after approaching from the N, then drifted off to S, where a brief interception was attempted by a Common Buzzard. Could time this bird: it covered 2.5km in the 2 minutes 27 seconds it was on the video, so roughly 60 kph (38 mph), with hardly a flap! It was also using the updraught from the W breeze on the E side of the valley to maximum effect.
October 22	15:00:00	Eals (upper South Tyne)	Juvenile	1	a juvenile, seen up 4 times above the canopy in a style really reminiscent of their behaviour in South Africa with fairly frequent short low-level forays above the canopy in between feeds on the ground. Many Woodpigeon, presumably feeding on acorns in the oak/birch wood, are flushed by the Honey-buzzard in

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Locality</i>	<i>Age/Sex</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Movement</i>
					its first recorded flight. From feather damage, with at least 2 feathers missing in P1 area on its left wing, have a good idea this is a new bird, not one in long term rest-mode!
November 1	13:45:00	Harwood Shield (Devil's Water)	Juvenile	1	juvenile Honey-buzzard up over a conifer plantation for 5 minutes, without a real flap, from 13:45-13:50. The juvenile floated around for a while, including a dive, and then soared high before skittishly flying off S. As not seen again, suspect it was on migration but care-free behaviour suggested it was not going too far!
<b>Summary/ Comments:</b>					
May: 1 Sept: 18 Oct: 9 Nov: 1	11-12: 2 12-13: 11 13-14: 4 14-15: 2 15-16: 3 16-17: 1	upper South Tyne: 9 Devil's Water: 15 Tyne Valley W: 4 Derwent: 1	Adult male: 6 Adult female: 4 Adult (gender not known): 7 Juvenile: 12	29	IN: 1 N OUT: 17 S, 3 SE, 6 resting, 2 direction unknown
Most records are for migrating adults this year, hence peak in mid-September with move delayed by bad weather earlier	Most records at height of day in GMT terms (12-13 BST), many birds move through afternoon	Birds at Devils Water in autumn, bar 1, were local breeders exiting; upper South Tyne appears to be a popular route for Scottish-bred juveniles; Tyne Valley	Unusual this year in that most records are of adults	A high total with pent-up adult movement on 15/9 and notable movement through	In autumn birds went mainly S with 17 in this direction and 3 SE; this year 6 resting birds were found, an adult in Derwent in September and 5 juveniles in October in upper South Tyne. Direction unknown refers to 2 birds having clearly left but their final trajectory was not followed.



<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Locality</i>	<i>Age/Sex</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Movement</i>
in month; juveniles bred in northern Britain, particularly Scotland, continue to move through October		W is another popular route for birds bypassing the Pennines		upper south Tyne of juveniles in October	

Table 4: Visible Migration Movements noted for Honey-buzzard in SW Northumberland in 2011

**Appendix I. Detailed Reports on Survey Work in 2011 for Honey-buzzard in SW Northumberland (Italics new sites)**

Site code (as used from 2001)	Occupation in phases display=1, rear=2, fledge=3 (total number adults seen)	Courtship	Sitting/Rearing	Fledging	Post-nuptial	Nesting activity Disturbance permit	Breeding category & Outcome
B2	1, 2, 3 (2)	<p>24/4 not quite so high as one at Ordley, being caught at the end of its glide. He was also seen at the end of the visit at 18:05, flying W across the valley in flap-flap-glide mode to feed on the moorland edge.</p> <p>18/5 female up over the long-standing site at Staward N at 15:15. Female Honey-buzzard appear able to vary freely their appearance from close to Common Buzzard to close to male Honey-buzzard. This is partly because when the neck is retracted and</p>	See nest activity (2 birds 6/7, 1 bird 14/8)	3/9 from 13:15-13:20 had female up above site dragging 2 juveniles out of the canopy to provide a few minutes flying practice. Thought the male must have left but he turned up at the end at 13:20, looking a bit detached and flying off to W low-down presumably to resume search for food		6/7 nest is still in Norway Spruce but it's moved c30m from last year towards the edge of the wood and is resting on a bough. They don't just choose the tallest tree in a wood. That would give them exposure to both the weather and predators. Another factor is the need for an easy entrance so they need an opening in the canopy to accommodate their 115-135cm wingspan. Also had both birds up in the air for about 2 minutes at 16:57, with the lighter male weight-wise looking quite frisky; they were obviously celebrating my exit as shown in this clip.	CONF- FL 2 juv  NEST found – Norwegian Spruce

		<p>they have a full crop, they can look more like Common Buzzard. When they extend their neck the Honey-buzzard profile is obvious. Whatever the tail is always long, equal to wing width, and the effortlessly floating jizz is very characteristic. She's suffering from feather damage, missing P2-P4 on her left wing and P1-P2 on her right wing. The feather loss is asymmetrical and extensive so suspect it is not moult. Picture 1 shows 2-3 sparse broad bars over the secondaries; this picture has been processed with increased contrast and exposure to produce picture 2, which shows the expected barring for female Honey-buzzard more clearly. Note also the long P10 and the bulging tail near the terminus.</p>				<p>Also had owl-like calls from the Honey-buzzard in between screeching of Jay when leaning on the nest tree (a good tactic!), small amount of splash, and 3 large white down (59mm, 64mm, 67mm) and a small elongated brown feather 1 (60mm) on the ground near the nest. A pigeon kill 1 2, an empty pigeon egg and various prey items including rabbit/vole were also on the ground near the nest</p> <p>14.8 single Honey-buzzard (adult, presumed female, alarm calling occasionally), The Honey-buzzard have not fledged yet from their nest very high-up in Norway Spruce. The heavy recent rain in continuing monsoon had washed away most signs no doubt but there was some splash concentrated below one tree close to nest and one large white downy feather (67mm) near the nest.</p>	
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B (moved from U)	1, 3 (2)	6/6 observed from 14:48-14:58. First male floated over territory, second female floated; third male displayed followed by female floating followed by pair up together followed by male alone in frisky mood; fourth male floated followed by Common Buzzard passing close by at low altitude. Lot of calling from 2 Common Buzzard below peevd at the display over their territory		10/9 2 Honey-buzzard (female, juvenile) were chasing each other from 16:56-17:00 and 3 birds, with addition of male, were up at 17:12. At 17:16 there was a brief vigorous display flight by the male and female. Could have been another juvenile around.			CONF- FL 2 juv
I5	1, 2, 3 (2)	9/5 He spent 1 hour and 4 minutes up in the air, almost continuously, over the nesting area from 13:50-14:54, hanging in the S breeze with wing/tail flexing and some flapping, sometimes wheeling off to W and then returning to E, and diving/rearing display. Even more	24/6 male drifting over site at 18:10  15/8 at 11:45 male climbing quickly over site then gliding back rapidly to ground	30/8 a fairly full-winged juvenile Honey-buzzard flew across a clearing at 15:06. One still has been lightened and contrast increased to show the 3 broad bars more clearly along the underside and topside. This bird also shows small			CONF – FL 1 juv

		<p>remarkable was another male appearing high overhead above him at 14:05, so high that I'd never have picked him out unless I'd had the camcorder focused on the high clouds. He disappeared off to the N so think he was a migrant, interested in territory below and its occupying male, but quickly passing on to his own territory.</p>		<p>head, long narrow tail, relatively long P10 and contrasting upperside. This bird doesn't always show 5 protruding primary tips (P6-P10) but it might be that the feathers are overlapped rather than missing; young birds seem to have difficulty in flexing all their feathers at times. As usual there are Common Buzzard mixed up in the action with one moulting P7 on both wings; in all 2 very agitated adult Common Buzzard were present and Honey-buzzard might well have been their concern. The presumed same juvenile Honey-buzzard flew E down the valley low-down at 15:25, coming out of the cover it had flown into earlier</p>			
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				<p>8/9 at 11:45 had the male at West Dipton up above the skyline, then flying low over fields, coming down near a hedgerow</p> <p>15/9 11:08-11:12 very large juvenile from West Dipton soars to moderate height and then flap-flap-glides, losing height steadily mobbed by Rooks, and sinking into wood SW of Ordley, one anxiety call at 3:03 into action; 11:27 male from West Dipton has another go, impatiently flapping at lower levels, then effortless soar, this time going higher, out of sight and off (trial soars are not uncommon); 11:35 female from West Dipton soars to moderate height and comes down again</p>			
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				(where's he gone?) -- she is a new mate as expected from male's vigorous solo display in the spring, first time she's been seen, not as heavy structurally as previous mate, perhaps a real catch! 11:44 female up again at West Dipton, not up high, mobbed by Crow and Hobby			
12	1, 2, 3 (2)	24/4 at 13:50 high-flying male. This is a bird with up to 1.35m wingspan on x20, not really sure how to gauge its height but the dot could have been 3km away on the horizontal making it 3,000m up (10,000 feet)! At this height on migration not many would be picked up from the ground. Hardly a flap in float moving E over site.  3/5 female near home,	15/6 a female Honey-buzzard appeared from 14:25-14:28, mobbed first by Black-headed Gull and then by Carrion Crow before drifting off S to feed. This is the first Honey-buzzard to be seen here since 4/5: suspect they laid early and may even have small young now; will be visiting them soon. She is	21/8 See nest activity (2 birds)  20/8 male gliding in to site from N  28/8 older juvenile up above the canopy at 15:00 in active flight against a moderate W breeze		16/6 Did local site from 14:00-16:00, crossing burn at 14:30 to reach nesting area. No action until 15:15 when the pair of Honey-buzzard came closer from S with much calling. Nest appears to be a re-use of last year's in Norway Spruce. Left site at 15:35 as put a limit of about 1 hour on each nest visit to avoid undue disturbance. The birds do seem to have a strategy of ignoring visitors for 30-45 minutes so that casual disturbance is readily	CONF – FL 2 juv  NEST found – Norwegian Spruce

		<p>mobbed by Crows over the Devil's Water from 16:55-17:03, moderate height, to and fro oversite, then down on E side</p> <p>4/5 at 10:30 male was up to W of garden at Ordley slowly gliding back towards Devil's Water; he was rising and falling a bit and gave a butterfly flap at top of one rise; at 10:52 female was over top of site near Devil's Water floating around with some flapping before descending into site; at 11:04 female was back up floating effortlessly over site moving off to E; at 11:18 pair came over in vigorous display -- the male is the pale one with the pale grey-looking head; he's got feather damage missing what looks like P7/P8 on left wing and P1 on right wing with damage in P5 area; on slide 9 you can</p>	<p>not in moult.</p> <p>See nest activity (2 birds 16/6)</p> <p>2/7 female at 15:45 rising up from valley with deep flaps and gliding off to SE to feed</p> <p>15/7 at 14:45 male up briefly over field N of site; at 16:45 female up briefly over same field, mobbed by Crow</p>			<p>accommodated. On clearing the site at 15:45 the female was beating over it, demonstrating to her young that she'd seen me off! Large nest well below top of canopy in Norway Spruce; because the woods chosen for nesting have to be open to accommodate their wing span, there is quite often luxuriant ground cover as here and splash can be located readily on the foliage.</p> <p>21/8 The circumstances: I was half-way across the burn when the young Honey-buzzard started calling; the stones were very slippery and the burn a little higher than I like but realised that if I went to the bank the bird would fly off; so balanced in the middle, got the camcorder out and picked up the bird; sure enough when I did make the bank the bird had flown off. Stills of the incident were taken as well. Could say why this is 100% a juvenile</p>	
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		<p>see sparse broad bars on his left wing. The female is darker and she's missing 2 secondaries on left wing and P5 is damaged on right wing. They certainly are a bit battered in general after the spring migration. In the display they fly alongside each other with vigorous flapping rather like kites; also the female chases the male twice; there are some close clinches as they fly towards each other</p>				<p>Honey-buzzard and 0% anything else: dark eye eliminates adult Goshawk; barred breast and dark eye eliminate juvenile Goshawk; broad tail bars eliminate Common Buzzard; pale bill, except for dark tip, and dark eye eliminate adult Honey-buzzard. There are some juvenile anger calls, at medium range, at the end of the clip. Much louder such calls were given as left the site, again crossing the burn. They were recorded as well. The young bird was acting a bit like a sentry. See General Notes also: A covert feather was found in the area in which the photographed juvenile was perched – not necessarily its feather as the adults will keep it company from time to time. The nest in Norway Spruce, occupied for a number of years, is now colossal. The overall situation was similar to that in the March Burn on 22/8 with one juvenile 100m to S of nest in Scots Pine and</p>	
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						another 50m N of nest also in Scots Pine but no adults were seen or heard in this case. Quite a lot of white downy feathers were found, mostly below the nest and splash was concentrated in the areas where the juveniles perched.	
I	1, 3 (2)	3/5 male floating over Dotland on 3/5 at 17:45 before circling slowly N towards West Dipton Burn at 17:48;		at 11:40 had male flying N from Dotland, out to feed. Later had female floating up from site and flying 2km to NW corner of Dipton Wood for feeding purposes at 13:05. Next older juvenile followed her at 13:18. Finally younger juvenile followed both of them at 13:23. Behaviour has been used to some extent in making these assignments; the female is showing the younger birds where to feed. But the younger juvenile			CONF – FL 2 juv

				does look less developed in terms of feather growth			
H	1, 3 (2)	12/5 from 12:35-12:40 female up over site in rain shower, quite impervious to it; came from wood to N, hanging over site, rising higher, then coming down and a little more acrobatically disappearing into the nest site wood		1/9 a juvenile, the less dark but still basically grey-brown juvenile, perhaps with a purplish tinge, was hovering and than flapping back towards its nest site before the main action at 12:08 before going into the nest wood; then build up to the action at 12:09 of all 4 birds up in the air, with the darker grey-brown of the 2 juveniles soaring to medium height and flapping into the nest area, followed by the male soaring and enticing the juvenile higher. There are 2 plaintive calls from the juvenile early-on in the clip. After the display of 4 birds, with the whole family party of 4 Honey-	29/9 The Honey-buzzard comprised a gang of 3 juveniles in Cottagebank/Newton area with 2 birds up from 13:07-13:11, 13:13-13:15, 13:22-13:23, 3 birds from 13:18-13:20 and 1 bird at 13:40 and 14:36. Such gangs spend quite a lot of time feeding but also get flying practice, particularly in effortless floating, useful for survival, at relatively low altitude compared to the heights that adults achieve.		CONF – FL 2 juvs

				<p>buzzard (pair adult, 2 juveniles) in the air around 12:12, the male glides back to the site from 12:14-12:16, frequently calling. this time the male stayed.</p>	<p>Many wasps were around still. With 6 juveniles raised at the 3 nearby sites, this indicates some dispersal already, as expected.</p> <p>30/9 The last was a juvenile at 14:50, rising up from Cottagebank and then moving E down to the valley below Short Wood. Yesterday noted that the 3 Honey-buzzard at 13:20 reduced to one later on; suspect that 2 of the juveniles actually left while I was in the area. It did appear that the 2 birds were 'paired' while the 3rd bird was more on its own.</p>		
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R2	1, 2, 3 (1)	1/6 had a female Honey-buzzard going through the trees at the March Burn site for a few seconds	See nest activity (2 birds 28/6)	See nest activity (4 birds 22/8)		<p>28/6 female calling angrily and flying along the side of the wood, flushed from N side initially moving to nest site; nest in Norway Spruce, high up and concealed well; much splash around; 3 feathers found, small white body, 62mm, 41mm and 32mm long; on exit from site female calling again from nest site angrily with male (slightly shriller) calling c100m further S.</p> <p>22/8 very similar situation to yesterday (21/8) with 2 juveniles out of the nest but too weak-flying to get up above the canopy. Had a mixture of the angry juvenile calls recorded yesterday and chicken-like juvenile calls, latter recorded and probably a food begging call. The adult also made occasional alarm calls, including one wail. The nest in Norway Spruce is very bulky and there were many downy feathers in the vicinity of the nest; many photos of down still to</p>	<p>CONF – FL 2 juv</p> <p>NEST found – Norwegian Spruce</p>
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						process but this one showing the Wood Ant bringing down feathers into their nest is shown here. Three larger feathers were found near the nest, perhaps scapulars with 2 being white (121, 92mm long) and one brown (111mm long). There was very little splash, just one patch, presumably because of recent persistent rain	
A	1, 2, 3 (2)	<p>1/5 female in the Lambley Viaduct/Glendue Burn/Towsbank area, covering a lot of ground, first seen coming off the moors at Glendue Burn at 15:45, then flying into Towsbank N before settling more near the Viaduct at 16:00. They are mobile on first arrival, easily flying 2-3km in one move, seeking good feeding</p> <p>29/5 The pair were up in the strong wind from 14:45-14:52 but because</p>	See nest activity (2 birds 30/6)	See nest activity (4 birds 23/8)	11/10 incredible end to season with 4 Honey-buzzard juvenile at Towsbank in visit from 12:50-15:05. First Honey-buzzard juvenile, heavy A missing secondary on right-wing, seen from 12:53-12:55. This bird is very similar in structure and plumage to the one at Harwood Shield on 1/11.	30/6 Male hanged over site, first from 14:29-14:30 and second at 16:16. He looks a bit battered, showing missing feathers around P4 on his left wing and a damaged, shortened, tail. In the clip an agitated Oystercatcher is first heard; waders don't seem to like Honey-buzzard at all, suspect they try and catch their chicks. He does land on a post at the top of a glade but tends to just hang above the site in a fairly stationary manner. The female was seen from 16:08-16:12. She's in a bit	<p>CONF – FL 2 juv</p> <p>NEST found -- Oak</p>

		<p>of the distance only a small amount was captured on the camcorder. The birds spent some time close together alongside each other holding against the wind; they also did some diving down the hillside followed by a sharp rather wild rearing up again as shown in the clip – this behaviour is almost like Chough on sea cliffs.</p>			<p>Second Honey-buzzard juvenile, heavy B missing P4, P6 on right-wing, was very visible, being up for about 15 minutes in all from 13:02-14:21 in 12 clips totalling about 1GB in mpeg format. This bird is in a bit of a mess, plumage-wise, though it flies very well. The 3rd bird juvenile C was slim and full-winged, visible for 2 bursts of activity around 13:46 and 14:20. The 4th bird juvenile D was even slimmer, noted only once from 14:20-14:21, briefly together with bird C</p>	<p>of a mess with the outer primaries on her left-wing missing their ends and missing feathers around P4 and tertials on her right-wing. The tail also looks as if it's a little worn. She's mobbed by a Lapwing at the end and actually gives up hanging over the site. She's quite heavily built as is quite common in females but long neck, small head, flat or bowed wings, long bulging tail and graceful flight confirm the family. See log for comments on nest and site. The nest was in a birch tree last year. The new nest is relatively low down in the oak tree in a hollow in a fork; the birds have placed oak sprays on the edge of the nest to provide cover. On almost arriving at the nest, the female sneaked out of the back door. Five patches of splash were found in ground vegetation near the nest, one being heavy. Two small white feathers were found, one hanging from a leaf near the</p>	
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					<p>16/10 The 2nd Honey-buzzard was moving S just after arrival at Towsbank, to the N of Parson Shields, at 15:28. It came right overhead after approaching from the N, then drifting off to S, where a brief interception was attempted by a Common Buzzard. Could time this bird: it covered 2.5km in the 2 minutes 27 seconds it was on the video, so roughly 60 kph (38 mph), with hardly a flap! It was also using the updraught from the W breeze on the E side of the valley to maximum effect.</p>	<p>nest and another on the ground. The site as a whole must be rated as optimal for Honey-buzzard as this was the first site colonised and is a popular stop-over with Scottish-bred migrants.</p> <p>23/8 The young are very weak flying but they're up above the canopy and the males look very restless; suspect this is the cue for some of the males to say goodbye! Had a cross juvenile at 13:20 giving anger calls while I was right on the nest; another juvenile came into a clearing to the S near the old mine railway and was mobbed heavily by a Jay. This was before the family party got up for training from 14:35-14:55 so the young petulant bird must have been removed by a parent and told to get on with it! Video 877a, with derived stills, shows the female and juvenile up briefly in the air together, then the female is seen flying into the trees where</p>	
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					<p>22/10 seen up 4 times (3 recorded) above the canopy in a style really reminiscent of their behaviour in South Africa with fairly frequent short low-level forays above the canopy in between feeds on the ground. Many Woodpigeon, presumably feeding on acorns in the oak/birch wood, are flushed by the Honey-buzzard in its first recorded flight. From feather damage, with at least 2 feathers missing in P1 area on its left wing, have a good idea this is a new bird, not one in long term</p>	<p>the practice is taking place with flap-flap-glide action, finally a juvenile is seen flapping weakly low-down in the same area. From close observation of all the action, the male was seen at tree-top level and by the directions of the birds it was thought that 2 juveniles were involved.</p>	
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					rest-mode!		
V	1, 2, 3 (2)	14/5 had 2 Honey-buzzard in 2 separate incidents; a pair up high in follow-me at 12:05 and a male up high doing a rapid dive near end of flight when joined by female at 12:07	See nest activity (2 birds, 25/6)  See nest activity (1 bird, 17/8)	11/9 at 17:28 juvenile flew fast over site with wind behind and quickly came down in the trees	15/9 11:47 male soars to moderate height at Viewley, then moves into solid flapping mode and moves off SE at speed	25/6 nest is in Scots Pine, flattish nest on bough, re-use of last year's. Complex scenario with pairs of Common Buzzard and Honey-buzzard very active but only one bird appearing at any given time overhead. Honey-buzzard were silent, male generally appeared high-up and the female lower-down; there was no direct interaction with the Common Buzzard. The male and female were closer in size than is often the case, both full-winged although the male had some stunted feathers due to tip damage on its right wing. The male was slightly slimmer with respect to tail width and neck, had more pronounced pinching of wing width next to body and had reduced black on its wing-tip. [cont] Masses of video taken. Not surprising from weather that there was an enormous insect hatch on and you can even hear	CONF – FL 1+ juvs  NEST found – Scots Pine

					<p>them buzzing and getting in the way of the focus on a few shots. Some more material from the stills camera such as feathers, splash and prey remains is still to be published.</p> <p>17/8 They've certainly not fledged yet as secrecy is maintained at super-high levels. Nest in Scots Pine continues with minimal signs below the nest, including a bit of splash and a brown tarsal feather (84mm). But in a nearby glade plenty of signs with feathers (brown tarsal 84mm, long thin tarsal 112mm, barred small feather 58mm, small brown feather 60mm, previous 3 feathers shown here, large white down 68mm, small white down 38mm), splash (6 lots in all) , a few small pigeon feathers and rabbit remains on a plucking post. So what's going on? Looks as if the birds bring oven-</p>	
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						ready food into the nest having sorted it out for the young in the glade. One piped call in 2 hours was all I got for direct evidence of the birds in 1st part of visit. So decided to retreat a few 100 metres and see what materialised. Well after an hour's wait the female came out of the nest area and flew off NW to feed. Never underestimate this species' capability to lie low!	
F	1, 3 (2)	13/6 First Honey-buzzard was up at 16:07 a male flying in a straight line out of the site S down the valley; then from 16:50-16:54 had a female Honey-buzzard flying in skittish form to W of site; suspect male had come back to relieve her at the nest and she was releasing some of her pent-up energy. This is a long-standing site so pleased but not surprised it's occupied this year.		31/8 2 juveniles were seen from 15:38-16:15, one from Lambley watchpoint, feeding about 500m apart. They also were very reluctant to get high, simply gliding quickly into cover	15/10 The Honey-buzzard juvenile came flapping in low-down from the N at 15:50, clearly looking for a B&B. A local Common Buzzard got up to intercept it but backed off from any interaction once it realised it was no threat. The Honey-buzzard certainly		CONF – FL 2 juvs

					<p>looked tired, perhaps having flown all the way from the Tay Valley, and came down finally on the S end of North Wood, close to a Honey-buzzard site, which had been active earlier in the season. These older juveniles show structural features closer to those of adults with fuller wingtips, longer tails and more obvious longer necks. By time they get going on migration, these older birds should be readily identifiable.</p>		
T	1, 2, 3 (2)	12/6 male overhead as I parked with the rain just starting. Again the	See nest activity (2 birds 4/7)	See nest activity (4 birds 27/8)		4/7 nest from last year, very high in an Oak tree near a glade, was thought to be	CONF – FL 2 juvs

		<p>Curlw were excited and 5 minutes later he reappeared with attendant Curlw low-down overhead in the gathering gloom. To the naked eye he appeared quite pale on the underwing, hence considered a male. He's not in moult at all and appears well fed: the tail is long with rounded corners, the head is small, the neck is long but not that thin, perhaps because he has a full crop</p> <p>19/6 male up hanging high over site on first hint of a clearance in weather</p>				<p>being re-used; plenty of splash around but no feathers and birds keeping a low profile with the male doing 2 brief fly-overs at 17:30 and 18:15 and the female making 3 short piped calls, 2 at 17:32 and 1 at 18:08. As it turned out from 2nd visit this nest was not in use this year. It may have been a trial nest but the absence of feathers should have been a a warning sign. The large amount of splash indicates that at least one of the adults was still spending time off-duty perched in the old nesting site, which was about 100m away from the new site. This pair appear to have 2 main sites, which they swap fairly regularly from year to year. Recorded as ON (Occupied Nest) breeding category as birds only call near nest sites.</p> <p>27/8 It was so wet underfoot and so overgrown that the logistics were difficult. The first clearing, which is more</p>	<p>NEST found – Oak</p>
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						<p>accessible, held the nest last year in oak even though a new track had been run through the wood close to the nest tree. Suspect that the birds were already committed to the tree when they started laying the new track. This year the birds appeared to be using the same tree but the late visit showed the nest in decline and so thought to be a mock nest as evidently Honey-buzzard can build several nests in spring, finally fixing on one in which to lay the eggs. The second clearing, where they have nested before, is very much more inaccessible as shown by the glade shots above. So it was a bit like a jungle adventure getting there but it was worth it as after 30 minutes drinking coffee with the midges a female flew over low-down at 14:29. The female must have been checking the area out of habit as had a single alarm call at the opposite end of the wood when arriving at</p>	
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						13:13 [cont] Honey-buzzard] and all 4 birds (adult male and female, 2 juveniles) got up in the air at the S end at 15:20 in drizzle. Firstly the female and older juvenile appear together; after 1 min 30 seconds the weaker-flying younger juvenile finally appears just above the trees and finally the male who was high up at the start is captured gliding back into the trees. The new nest is in the fork of an oak tree with many sprigs of oak, now brown, added to the top of the nest.	
S2	1, 2, 3 (2)	6/5 from 15:34-15:45; the pair were up at distance over the wood with much floating and mild interaction with the female keeping close to the trees and the male going a little higher, at one point they actually have a brief soar higher together; there is some interaction with a Common Buzzard which is trying to push the Honey-buzzard towards	See nest activity (2 birds 13/7);	See nest activity (1 bird 2/9);  8/9 to cap it all, driving past Houtley in 'Shire at 18:03 a female powered her way eastwards in powerful flapping flight, all the way to Swallowship	15/9 12:03 male, up over Swallowship comes down again, perhaps tempted by kettle but not quite ready; 12:07 female, up at Swallowship with juvenile below, she then dived and juvenile followed (they don't get up early	13/7 female landing in a tree in territory in Hexhamshire; perched on tree in full view for some time; flying around site anxiously giving some anger calls in contention with Common Buzzard; flying low over nest; male and female flying over site. Her calls are more of a whistle than those of the Common Buzzard. In particular on perched bird note long thin tail, stretching	CONF – FL 2 juvs  NEST found – Scots Pine



		<p>the E, there's no serious combat but definitely an effort by the Common Buzzard to lean on the Honey-buzzard to push them eastwards away from their own site; finally the male gains height and then flaps out to feed to S at Dipton Wood in fast flight</p>			<p>at this site!); 12:12-12:14 rufous female, up over Swallowship with another juvenile, which she left behind, female soared higher and higher above the clouds but then came back again to ground, false starts are quite common in migration; 12:16 male going high over Swallowship and actually doing some undulating display, he comes back to some extent; 12:25-12:29 female appears flapping hard to S, then soars over Swallowship, before drifting N and meeting 2 males, who all</p>	<p>far beyond wing tips, attenuated rear end due to both wings and tail being long, long neck, small head and fine bill. The nest has moved about 10m to another Scots Pine tree and there was much splash and a few feathers and prey remains below the nest.</p> <p>2/9 This was not a great visit for seeing the birds: A fairly fit juvenile Honey-buzzard was seen flying W low-down near the nest tree at 15:25 for 5 seconds. However, some interesting material was obtained on the nest in Scots Pine, in particular seeing how it has grown since the visit on 18/7 and how more sprays have been added to the edge. There's only one species still building up the nest this late: the Honey-buzzard! If for instance you compare stills of nest on 2/9 with those taken on 18/7, you can see that the nest has been built up on the right-hand side as viewed</p>	
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					depart together to S, males presumed as from Swallowship (her mate) and Farnley	and that there are the remains of new sprays (birch perhaps, as well as Scotch Pine) on the edge, not found in the early still where a few sprays of Scots Pine are apparent. Honey-buzzard are well-known for continuing to add to the nest structure through the breeding season, so this is consistent with that. Larger dead branches in area of nest result from the heavy snows of last winter. See log for further info: Some splash 4 spots was found near the nest on the vegetation. Also found were a 72mm long body feather, a white down feather 55mm long and 7 small white down feather 42, 46, 40, 25, 27, 16, 36 mm long.	
R3	1, 2, 3 (2)	4/5 A male Honey-buzzard was at Shilford drifting into the site at 15:05	See nest activity (2 birds 20/6);  See nest activity (1 bird 15/8);	1/9 first Honey-buzzard was a male up over Shilford at 11:50, soaring very high and shortly disappearing to S so thought to be on his way to Africa. At		20/6 Nest is in Scots Pine, same one as used last year. While studying the canopy noticed at 16:40 a male Honey-buzzard crossing over the site at moderate altitude, P8 on his left wing is either missing or	CONF – FL 2 juvs  NEST found – Scots Pine

				<p>11:55 his family of female and 2 juveniles were up for some practice flying for 5 minutes with usual floating, close-contact formations and diving in chases; on the clip at some distance the male can be seen high-up on left early-on before quitting</p>		<p>damaged. Did have a few calls from the depths of the wood but nothing very loud; could almost have ignored them if not switched on to the quiet communication between the pair at times. Then both birds flew quickly at 17:15 above the canopy. There was much splash near the nest and 2 feathers were found close-by: scapular (118mm), white body (64mm). The freshly-shed scapular is ruddy-brown with pale spots and other markings on the edge of the inner web</p> <p>15/8 Honey-buzzard were at home but, in keeping with view that young are still in the nest, kept a very low profile and only had 4 calls during time at nest with 2 soft piped calls and 2 sets of squeaky owl notes from presumed female. Nest in Scots Pine is in fine fettle, there was quite a lot of high-quality fresh splash under a larch tree close to the nest and a few feathers (ruddy-</p>	
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						<p>brown from female (110mm, tarsal ), large white down (4 in all, 68, 62, 68, 70 mm) and small white down (2 in all, 48, 40 mm)) also near the nest. A pair of Crow were very agitated for over 30 minutes; they get rattled when the Honey-buzzard retreat into their territory to watch me. A rabbit kill was found nearby and pigeon feathers were pretty widespread.</p>	
K	1, 3 (2)	<p>27/4 She has ruddy plumage on topside, 3 bars across the remiges, small head and long narrow tail, equal to wing-width. On her left wing she seems to be missing P6 and a number of inner primaries. This has affected her jizz, making her flight more laboured: quite remarkable how she has got here so early in this state. She flew into the wood causing some</p>		<p>20/8 Pair of Honey-buzzard in post-breeding display from 13:15-13:20. It's dynamic and warm with close contact and some follow-me, suspect such display serves 2 purposes: getting fit for the imminent migration and reinforcing the pair bond until they meet again next spring. Quite poignant really!</p>			<p>CONF - FL 2 juv</p>

		<p>consternation before flying out a few hundred metres to N and then returning</p> <p>29/5 male flying S across A69 low-down at 17:30</p> <p>30/5 male at 17:40 flying low across A69 to S (just 10 minutes later than day before)</p> <p>6/6 at 14:00 pair in conflict with a Crow right over the A69 road; this time found a lay-by nearby and saw the female crossing the road and the male, floating and in display, with exaggerated flapping, who was more distant to E. After 2.5 dull days the birds were itching to have a fly</p>		<p>29/8 Met Philip Latham on train, he described display of 4 'buzzard' over Greenshaw Plain on Monday (29/8); sounded like Honey-buzzard so think 2 juveniles have been reared there (see 20/8-21/8 where display of 2 adults recorded).</p>			
Z	1, 3 (2)	<p>29/5 The Honey-buzzard put in some superb power-flying in the strong wind from 16:40-16:48 with the one</p>		<p>31/8 On way back at 15:30 in stop from 15:10-15:40, after no success on way out at 12:50-13:00, in</p>			<p>CONF - FL 1+ juv</p>

		<p>Common Buzzard looking very cumbersome and unsteady in comparison. The pair displayed in the strong wind with derived stills; the attempted mobbing by a corvid is soon seen off with a quick turn of speed and one of the birds manages some dipping/rearing display despite the conditions. The female is also alone in display; the wind is so strong at the end that I get almost knocked over but she stays in the air! Common Buzzard up at the start in mild interaction with a female Honey-buzzard. It was too windy for the Common Buzzard to take the matter further and it quickly returned to the trees.</p>		<p>slightly brighter weather had more luck with a juvenile up to W of Lambley at 15:30 chased by 15 Rook before coming down again in trees nearer to the moors in the W. This bird flapped very hard to escape from the Rook, showing corvid jizz but obviously larger with narrower wings and shorter, wider tail.</p>			
N	1, 2, 3 (2)	<p>29/5 Female was up close to site in wild display at 14:35. Just a few seconds earlier had</p>	<p>See nest activity (1 bird 30/6);</p>	<p>23/8 family group of 4 up in air floating over nest site area at 12:30 on arrival at</p>		<p>30/6 one of the Honey-buzzard was flying from Towsbank into the Softley site; all very welcome and in</p>	<p>CONF – FL 2 juv</p>

		<p>male Honey-buzzard up at this site at close range, making 3 long calls, but he sank down very quickly back into vegetation. The female appears to be moulting P1 on each wing and one slide shows 3 broad bars across the inner primaries on her right wing.</p>		<p>adjacent site, juveniles only just above trees, female a little higher and male considerably higher; later at 15:20 male patrolling over site for 3 minutes</p> <p>See nest activity (1 bird 31/8);</p>		<p>my view shows limitations of doing this type of work without video for evidence. The male Honey-buzzard flew high over Towsbank and right into site on opposite side of valley at 16:12. Males in particular can range up to 5km from the nest in search of food. Details of nest are in log. Midges were a real problem – have heard they're increasing in NW England. No Honey-buzzard were seen or heard during this visit but plenty of splash was found in the glade very near the nest, well hidden in Norway Spruce. It had been quite wet so the amount of splash found indicated occupation. A pair of Oystercatcher were very agitated when I arrived at the nest, suggesting that I had displaced a raptor up above the canopy. The birds fly down the glade to access the nest without being seen and spend considerable time perched in it when off the nest.</p>	<p>NEST found – Norway Spruce</p>
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					<p>Here's a short clip showing the tree and the nest, built into the crown of the tree on the N side. Nests in Norway Spruce trees can be particularly difficult to see from the ground as the crowns are quite thick (multi-layered) and the birds can choose a bough in the middle of the crown.</p> <p>31/8 had juvenile floating over the moorland edge at 14:18. Nest site visited was Softley where family party of 4 birds already seen on 23/8 so getting a juvenile over the moorland was a bonus. As stated for the 1st visit the nest is very difficult to see in the Norway Spruce thicket but some further attempts made. In the glade, near the nest where remains are concentrated, found 7 patches of splash, rabbit fur, tarsal feather 82mm long, large white down 7 in all (53mm, 43mm, 48mm, 41mm, 41mm, 48mm) and one small white down (30mm)</p>	
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J4	1, 3 (2)	5/6 a male gliding N with occasional stronger flap-flap-glide in the rain all the way from edge of Whitfield Moor towards Unthank, a journey of about 5km, showing both their liking for feeding on the moors and the distances they'll travel for feeding.		11/9 at 13:05 had 3 birds up above a wood on the moorland edge of Plenmeller Common. The female appears first and quickly moves off to the NW; she appeared quite ruddy-brown when first seen in the field. Then 2 juveniles appear up above the wood, one dark and one pale, interacting with each other; the pale one is presumed to be the bird seen just over 30 minutes later. It could well have moved onto the moor after 13:05, returning at 13:37 by a circular route. These birds might well of course be the 'Marsh Harrier' of Plenmeller Common! At 13:37 saw floating over the moorland edge a juvenile fairly close up with dark			CONF - FL 2 juv
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				envelope to wing, small head, long neck and long tail; indeed getting fairly confident and fitter for emigration. Big emigration date, at least for adults, was just 4 days later on 15/9			
F2	1, 3 (2)	30/5 Female, who I didn't stop for when seen form road soaring at 14:05, was very obliging coming towards me in flap-flap-glide mode before doing some floating and soaring high into cloud base; she disappeared but then made a repeat run a few minutes later just in case I hadn't noticed! All this from 14:35-14:48. The male made an appearance at 15:42 coming in from the fields S of the Wall towards the site.		11/9 at 13:36 female and 2 juveniles up together, moving slowly SW into valley from top of hill where they nest			CONF – FL 2 juv
J	1, 3 (2)	18/5 at 14:24 female		13/9 a juvenile found			CONF –

		<p>gliding down the valley, coming out of gorge, and moving N descending into trees to feed. At 14:40 male came up quickly from gorge, coping well in the strong gusty wind as you'd expect for a long-distant migrant that crosses such windy areas as the Sahara Desert and the Straits of Gibraltar. The birds bobbed around and the camera and myself were buffeted. Same male up above the site at 14:42 and mobbed aggressively by a Crow. The Crow starts off by striking the Honey-buzzard but eventually the latter escapes in an impressive power glide into the strong wind, leaving the Crow well behind; also male up briefly at 15:40.</p> <p>31/5 female at 16:20 soaring high into base of clouds</p>		<p>at 14:20; the bird was in a long glide with a few flaps at the end, off the higher fields into the valley below, near the nest site; the calls heard were Common Buzzard who were actively contesting territory.</p>			<p>FL 1+ juv</p>
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M	1, 3 (2)	<p>21/5 female and male Honey-buzzard up separately over Monk Wood in very breezy conditions. The female was seen moving through the tops of the trees for a few seconds at 15:28; the male was up longer from 16:08-16:10 hanging over the wood virtually stationary in the strong SW breeze, a very strong flier.</p> <p>12/6 a female Honey-buzzard flapping heavily towards the Monk site, obviously carrying some prey. The Curlew had been very restive for a while but whether she'd grabbed a Curlew chick or a small rodent such as a vole or a rabbit, I'd no idea at the distance involved</p>		<p>26/9 finding on arrival at 15:12 a juvenile Honey-buzzard up over the rough grassland to W of Monk Wood; it was foraging in the rough pasture also being seen up again a little further W at 15:15-15:16 and slightly closer still to Ninebanks at 15:30, maybe keeping its distance from 2 Common Buzzard up over the fell.</p>			CONF – FL 1+ juv
K2	1,2,3 (2)	6/6 at 13:55 a female came tanking over the road near Hexham	See nest activity (2 birds 12/7);	See nest activity (1 bird 30/8);		12/7 Flushed female off nest at 16:45 with some close-up video, derived stills	CONF – FL 1 juv

		<p>Cemetery; I stopped briefly and she'd gone out of sight but her mate was way up in the sky above. Not a good place to stop so moved on</p>		<p>8/9 finding a family party of male, female and single junior Honey-buzzard at NW extreme of Hexham High Wood (one of core sites), near W end of bypass, doing some low soaring from 17:00-17:10. It's quite common for them to move the young a little way from the nest site, which may be less than sanitary by end of season and often in low-lying dips. Low-lying areas are fine for nesting but it's much easier to fly in a breeze on a slope. The clip shows some of this activity, first with the 3 birds up, male on the left, floating low over the corner of the wood; then the female and juvenile do a little diving together and finally there is a glimpse of a bird as</p>		<p>and anger calls, and also found a lot of signs around the nest, a re-use of last year's in Scots Pine, such as splash, feathers including down, plucking post, pellets and other prey remains. She put up a more passionate resistance than many! Stills emphasise the 3 broad wing bars. At 16:50 the male does 2 flights over the nest area, followed by the female, with stills showing in the male the much reduced black on the wingtip and reduced barring. The nest observed from 16:52-16:55 is a re-use of last year's and is quite bulky. Then at 17:25, in turn, male and female passed overhead in the clearing. After both disappear into the trees the female appears briefly again. The female has a notched tail with rounded corners. The male's tail is not notched but it does have rounded corners. Derived stills were made for male and female. There are</p>	<p>NEST found – Scots Pine</p>
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				<p>they disappear below the canopy</p>		<p>distant alarm calls at 51 and 61 seconds. See Log. At 17:28 a Common Buzzard comes up first of all followed by a pair of Honey-buzzard up together with focus on the male as he disappears behind the trees. At 31 seconds there's an alarm call. At 17:33 the male came up with a Common Buzzard, giving useful comparison showing the much heavier Common Buzzard structure. The male is missing an inner secondary on his left wing. More to follow on Honey-buzzard.</p> <p>30/8 stills taken on the Canon as the juvenile Honey-buzzard flushed at 30m in the very over-grown glade on entrance to the site flew away from me quickly, showing broad barring on the remiges as a chequered pattern. The bird is of the warm rufous phase and the body is very heavy as is quite common in just-fledged birds. In actual site</p>	
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						nest was vacated in good order and there was plenty of splash and feathers, including down, confirming that fledging had successfully occurred. But no further contact was made with any Honey-buzzard. Nest was in Scots Pine, close to a Common Buzzard nest in Norway Spruce, just 60m away, the closest yet for the 2 species, no wonder they were getting on each other	
R5	1,3 (1)	21/4 at 15:50 female floating over N side of Tyne among pine trees possibly looking for nests (eggs); at 16:10 flying through tops of trees; at 16:30 beating the bounds of the territory in exuberant manner, came over pond where mobbed hard by male Hobby, some quite sharp impacts but she was unperturbed; up to 17:10 seen on and off in active flight		20/8 at medium range 2 juvenile Honey-buzzard up above the canopy; up to 1min 30 sec what was thought to be the older bird (slightly better flier) is in view followed by the younger bird. Always think very young juveniles, perhaps for 1st 3 weeks after fledging, are very characteristic and different from both adults and older juveniles. First bird	15/9 12:45-12:50 female soaring over W of Farnley at long range, going very high above clouds, lost to sight and presumed to leave		CONF – FL 2 juv

				up at 16:25, second at 17:10.			
C3	1, 3 (1)	8/5 male seen from Ruffside at 17:16-17:20 in-between sites soaring very high and moving slowly W at great height, not far below clouds, then giving subdued display with a few dips before finally gliding down onto the moors to the W of Ruffside		<p>7/9 Spent 2 hours at Blanchland and was just getting into car to leave when a male Honey-buzzard came gliding at some speed into the site at 13:10.</p> <p>23/9 Scored almost straight away at Newbiggin at 14:45 with juvenile Honey-buzzard flapping over at low altitude, coming from the E (presumably Blanchland village site) and turning S before swinging around E again.</p> <p>28/9 Also got further information on the Blanchland site with one juvenile well up on the fells about 1km to the W at 15:20 and another</p>			CONF – FL 2 juv



				soaring high over the site at 15:43, converting the site from 1 to 2.			
C6	1,2,3 (2)	11/5 male came out from near nest site and flapped very strongly to W, moving c1km in first stage; then moved around a bit more erratically at low altitude a further km; mobbed by Crow as left nest area	See nest activity (1 bird 5/7);	See nest activity (3 birds 28/8);		5/7 last year's nest in Scots Pine is being re-used and is now massive. Plenty of feathers around, including one brown one a little larger at 89mm than the white body feathers, which predominated and were relatively large (5 feathers at 58mm, 52mm, 52mm, 54mm, 50mm) or small (5 feathers at 39mm, 40mm, 45mm, 48mm, 24mm, plus 3 more small down). Also 2 further wispy feathers (tarsal perhaps, 58mm and 64mm long), some splash (6 photos) and some prey remains, particularly rabbit on a plucking post (5 photos). As for the birds, around 16:38 had just 3 soft short piped calls, presumed from female, so hardly spectacular; Crows were very agitated at one point to NW of site where the female sometimes like to retreat.	CONF – FL 2 juv  NEST found – Scots Pine

						<p>28/8 Well it was tense at Kellas yesterday. Sat by felled nest and waited for any sign of the birds. A sudden fly-pass of frightened Woodpigeon raised hopes and sure enough an adult Honey-buzzard was heard soft-calling in a neighbouring copse followed by a full-winged juvenile getting briefly up in the air. Decided to explore further, finding much down on E side of nest and on entering a clear-felled area flushed at close range another juvenile. This one's very young with primaries still growing, preliminary view is that only P8 is fully grown; the bill is entirely pale as on the very young bird at Ordley on 21/8. Looking at the state of the pine needles on the felled branches the thinning is recent, perhaps start of last week around 22/8.</p>	
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C8	1, 3 (2)	<p>10/6 male foraging on S side of road from Kiln Pit Hill – Barleyhill, with another sighting of the male on N side of road at 15:23. Bird moved quickly across a field in a 'gutter', and moved to the N side where had the further sighting 30 minutes later. Woodpigeon were perturbed.</p>		<p>17/9 a juvenile flushed from stubble field on arrival at 13:25; 2 juveniles moved to W of site at 13:40. They are now quite strong flyers and move well against a moderate breeze. The small pointed head appears to be a reliable identification feature for juveniles; the shape of the tail for juveniles often lacks the rounded corners of adults but the narrow base and length are still diagnostic. A juvenile floated in the distance from 13:35-13:38 There was some dramatic action with the presumed female of the site soaring at 13:50 and then flapping very fast in a straight line to intercept another female, presumably a migrant (maybe a</p>			CONF – FL 2 juv
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				<p>migrant from Scotland in the 15/9 movement). There's a bit of a skirmish with the presumed migrant drifting off to the E and the incumbent to the W. The migrant was where her young were just 10 minutes before but they had moved to the W and she moves off in this direction. The female is next seen in power-flight moving across at 14:06 to join the juveniles; cont The female and juvenile get into energetic display at 14:08, which can be profitably compared with the Common Buzzard display earlier today at this site: there's a lot of follow-me and close-contact diving in the Honey-buzzard action. there are some flight calls</p>			
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				<p>about half-way through, presumably the birds calling to each other; at the end the juvenile is up on the left greeting the female. The display ends with the juvenile coming down into the trees followed by the female. Last the juvenile is seen in unsteady flight coming out of the copse at 14:12, followed later by the female who gives one whistle – think she's trying to get the juvenile up for more practice. The ridge was chosen for display because of the stronger breeze, which gives added lift.</p>			
X2	1,3 (2)	29/5 in very windy conditions the pair were high up over Williamston S at 13:53 for 10 seconds, before power-		15/9 a family group (female, 2 juveniles) of 3 at 16:52 near Barhaugh Hall, on the N side of the			CONF – FL 2 juv

		gliding down into Barhaugh area. The male in particular was so captured at 13:54.		Barhaugh Burn			
I4	1, 3 (2)	<p>3/5 female floating at 17:25 over a field to which I'd been close the previous day</p> <p>1/6 female in rather grey conditions in effortless floating from 16:37-16:45 over the SW corner of the wood. Very characteristic jizz for the females in particular showing impressive aerodynamics with virtually no thermals to assist in lift</p>		<p>8/9 at 12:50 had juvenile up at Dipton Wood SW for a few seconds</p> <p>9/9 male over SW Dipton Wood at 17:45 from Lamb Shield road</p> <p>15/9 11:53 at Dipton Wood SW 2 juveniles just get above the canopy and sink down again</p>			CONF – FL 2 juv
C4	1, 3 (2)	3/6 female soaring high at 13:45		7/9 A pair of adult Honey-buzzard were at Ruffside on Durham side of border around 13:15. The male and to a lesser extent the female patrolled over the top of the nest site for a few minutes			CONF – FL 2 juv

				<p>but seemed to decide it was too windy to get the young up for some practice. It was almost gale force W wind. Male was up before female.</p> <p>17/9 female and 2 juveniles up at 15:06; one juvenile is very weak-flying and is only seen at the start; the female and older juvenile then do some follow-me display. The female was up on her own at 15:07, trying to encourage the juveniles up in the air again, but no joy</p>			
R9	1,3 (2)	2/6 female in action for 8 minutes in view from 17:47-17:55, effortlessly soaring and floating over her site. She does do a little hanging, flapping her wings while holding a stationary position.		9/9 female up low over wood at 14:18 and 14:21, a very heavy juvenile up briefly at 14:26 and a restless male soaring high above the site from 14:35-14:39. Looks as if only one			CONF – FL 1 juv

				juvenile fledged here, matching the situation at the site downstream of Wylam.			
K5	1,3 (2)	27/5 Had 2 birds up separately, a male floating over a wood for 10 seconds at 17:05 and a female flapping slowly N low-down for a similar time at 17:23. So the pair is back but food is the current emphasis.		25/9 Good omen at start with juvenile Honey-buzzard up over Hermitage on Hexham bypass at 12:25; could have been a migrant but seemed to be mainly foraging so attributed to Hexham Tyne Green site where one juvenile fledged earlier.  26/9 Juvenile Honey-buzzard was still N of Tyne, this time on fields towards Acomb, where it was seen at 09:55 up in the air heavily mobbed by corvids, a familiar picture.			CONF – FL 1 juv
S4	1, 3 (2)	10/5 male Honey-buzzard attacked by		2/9 single adult piped call at 17:38 from site			CONF – FL



		<p>everything around. Well he is mobbed by Carrion Crow, Jackdaw and Common Buzzard. But also he's joined by a female Honey-buzzard for a few seconds, maybe to show her solidarity! Clips were taken from 16:48-17:00 during which the male spent most of his time floating around, with the odd glide down into the trees, and being attacked at first by Carrion Crow, then seen off by Common Buzzard and finally attacked by 2 Jackdaw.</p>		<p>11/9 First went to Beaufront, near Egger, and had 2 very obliging juvenile Honey-buzzard up above a pine wood from 12:25-12:28, floating well against strong wind</p>			2 juv
R6	1, 3 (1)	<p>14/6 all was quiet until 17:35 when on exiting wood had female Honey-buzzard gliding down into wood; 4 minutes later and she was soaring effortlessly very high for 5 minutes where a Crow finally caught up with her and did some mobbing,</p>		<p>9/9 At Hyons Wood had nothing for a while but then a Common Buzzard adult got very irate and was seen to get mixed up with an adult and ruddy juvenile Honey-buzzard at 16:12 causing the former to</p>			CONF – FL 2 juv

		forcing her down a bit. She's missing at least one inner primary on her right wing.		call and the latter to fly through the trees. The Common Buzzard then flew about a km to intercept at 16:17 an older, dark Honey-buzzard juvenile, which took evasive action by climbing and altering course. So 2 young raised here, in richer woodland than at Dukeshagg, due to be opencast at some time!			
R10	1,2,3 (2)	19/5 from 16:50-16:55 male hanging over area to N of wood, then floating slowly to SE, gradually gaining height and disappearing into dark grey cloud	See nest activity (0 birds 22/6)  See nest activity (1 bird 5/8)  See nest activity (1 bird 19/8)	1/9 Onto West Wylam where wait before single Honey-buzzard juveniles seen to N of Horsley Wood at 12:56 and to W of wood on a grain field at 13:18. No adults were seen at Horsley but the main display was probably earlier, same time as at Bywell		22/6 did make 3rd site visit, to Horsley Wood, Wylam, from 15:40-17:10 but within actual area in vicinity of nest restricted to 40 minutes from 16:00-16:40 because of damp weather. No sign of the birds, suspect female was sitting tight and male was away foraging. Did find 2 white body feathers near where last year's nest was in Scots Pine, but old nest has gone perhaps due to snow damage with quite a	CONF – FL 2 juv

					<p>few limbs off the trees. New nest appears to be very close, perhaps 20m to W and again in Scots Pine. Not much splash but most of it would have been washed away anyway. Feathers are being dried out before being photographed again. The feathers are 60mm and 52mm long respectively. <b>Weather:</b> wet, visit curtailed</p> <p>5/8 The 2nd visit to the Honey-buzzard nest was made to confirm breeding as the 1st visit in poor weather indicated probable breeding only. The nest was found in Scots Pine, and was briefly attended by the female at 16:40, flying low over the nest and calling at her chick(s) to lie low. Shortly after a Lesser Black-backed Gull was calling angrily overhead, suggesting she was above the canopy somewhere. Also found 4 large downy feathers (63, 53, 59mm), 8 small white downy feathers</p>	
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					<p>(32, 31, 24, 27mm), 2 brown feathers (scapular, reddish-brown with 4 large white spots, very wispy at base, 133mm long; Common Buzzard P2 255mm long, width of 6 black bands from subterminal inwards 40, 10, 8, 7, 5, 5mm) and 3 patches of splash</p> <p>19/8 interesting to see whether the male's victorious behaviour yesterday was justified. Well maybe but they've not fledged yet with the nest in Scots Pine still occupied; where 2 nests visible in still, this year's nest is the higher one with the lower one an old nest. Male is very cocky, giving a single fly over top of nest swearing at me, then settled in trees at distance giving a single alarm call, followed by argument with Crow and some more muttered calls. Also an agitated Jay later. Masses of down on E side of nest, blown there by persistent westerlies; enough to build</p>	
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						a young bird almost. Also some splash, so ongoing but amount of down indicates fledging perhaps a day or two away. Still to process numerous shots of down, nearly all of which accumulated since previous visit on 5/8.	
Y2	1, 3 (2)	31/5 Had a pair here up together at 14:42 but the male quickly sunk back into the site leaving the female to glide off to feed to the N; female went over to a neighbouring wood over which she soared after an elegant bounce off a hill		14/9 a strong frisky juvenile flying wildly low-down over a field on moorland edge at 13:38 and a female, on way back at 15:53, flapping deeply high-up over the site, mobbed by a Jackdaw	4/10 a Honey-buzzard juvenile, latter seen twice, first at 14:58 flying over edge of moor low-down into a conifer stand on the moor itself, second at 15:17 repeating the manoeuvre but with a little flourish at start higher-up, showing more of its profile. Treating this bird as another gang of 1, that is a bird reared locally that has not left yet but is still		CONF – FL 1+ juv

					feeding-up in favourable habitat. View is that the bird could have been reared anywhere in the Allen complex but more likely to be from a higher site where breeding is later.	
M2	3 (0)			26/9 Walk was actually through Parmently as determined to check whether the site had really been vacated this year. Delighted at 15:40 to see a juvenile Honey-buzzard low over woods on the Carr's Burn soaring some way before coming down again as an aggressive Common Buzzard adult approached it. I've taken this bird as locally bred at this location as the site		CONF – FL 1 juv

				has been used before, the bird was very close to the presumed nest location and the proximity of the site to the grouse moor may cause the birds to be ultra secretive.		
V5					1/11 A juvenile up over a conifer plantation for 5 minutes, without a real flap, from 13:45-13:50. The juvenile floated around for a while, including a dive, and then soared high before skittishly flying off S. As not seen again, suspect it was on migration but care-free behaviour suggested it was not going too far! Derived stills showed 2 broad bars on inner	A very late autumn migrant

					<p>wing; barring on  upperside of tail  with subterminal  bar and 3 further  broad bars,  evenly spaced;  long neck and  small head in  dive, with carpals  pushed well  forward. The  Honey was  actually seen  earlier from  12:45-13:20 in at  least 3  skirmishes with a  Common  Buzzard, which  was obviously  very cross with  the intrusion of  the Honey-  buzzard into its  territory. The  Honey-buzzard  does seem to be  eventually driven  off a little way to  N, the Common  Buzzard keeping  above the Honey  in the action. A</p>		
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					male Goshawk is also mixed up in this action and the Honey-buzzard rises trying to keep above it, obviously wary of the potential predator	
J5	3 (1)			10/9 First seen today was a dark juvenile near Willmontswick c1km E of probable nest site at Haughstrother at 15:37; this bird was very young with primaries still growing; it showed weaker flight and similar plumage to other juvenile but with darker body; P7 is not visible on either wing. Eventually the Common Buzzard departed and an older juvenile Honey-buzzard came out of the wood at 15:55 and flapped around		CONF – FL 2 juv

				<p>at moderate altitude overhead, repeating flight at 16:05 but soaring higher after a while. It had full-grown wings, including rounded wing-tip with relatively long P10, long tail slightly wider than wing width, fine bill looking pale, long neck and small pointed head at times and characteristic loose flapping jizz in flap-flap-glide. Log: There was a lot of contention here with 4 adult Common Buzzard, resulting in much cursing during which time the female Honey-buzzard was picked up at 15:33 near the South Tyne; she gives an anxiety call, then appears (showing reduced black on wingtip) coming up briefly and goes down with some dive-bombing by a</p>			
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				corvid			
W2	1, 3 (1)	<p>7/5 female in feeding area at 15:15, focused on restricted area, flying a few times in rain between denser woodland and an isolated stand of pines, perhaps after bird nests. The female Honey-buzzard shows long tail, small pointed head, solid dark trailing edge, bulging secondaries, long wings and P10 as long as P5. She is missing P1/P2 on her left wing and P4 on her right wing. Slide 5 shows 3 broad bars on upper side of left wing across the secondaries. She is a heavy bird, might have been considered a juvenile in autumn; think might be a 3cy female.</p> <p>3/6 from 16:20-16:25 female sees off another female back to the middle site of latter. On return she is also</p>		<p>23/9 At the top site at 380m, good news with at 16:50 a juvenile seen to E flapping over from the N and coming down into the burn near the site. At the high woods over Riddlehamhope was sure there was a large hidden raptor by the behaviour of the Jackdaw but it was not until 17:15 that it finally emerged for a few seconds above the canopy mobbed heavily and accompanied by the bird seen at 16:50. So 2 raised at top site</p>			CONF – FL 2 juv

		<i>mobbed by waders including Oystercatcher. She appears to be the one seen here on 7/5, now moulting an inner primary on each wing.</i>					
R8					10/10 Had inklings a Honey-buzzard was in the area with very nervous feeding corvid flock, an irate Grey Heron flying off from Tyne, and a brief glimpse of a soaring raptor over Shilford at 14:16, mobbed by a Jackdaw, which looked just the part. At 15:12 a juvenile Honey-buzzard, mobbed by Jackdaw and Crow, took off from the Tyne near Bywell Castle and in next 11 minutes,		Migrant only

					<p>gave some of best views of the species for the year. Slowly gaining moderate height it flapped SE over to the Guessburn, where it turned at 15:17 and unbelievably came back towards me, stalling when over me and finally slowly and reluctantly making its way SE again into the distance, disappearing at 15:23. There is an amusing instance from 1:15-1:20 when the bird tries to use its tail as a rudder to turn. It doesn't seem to have proper control over this action yet. The bird finally moves</p>		
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					off SE at 15:23 but with some reluctance.		
R11	1, 3 (2)	5/5 from watchpoint to W, male beating the bounds moving W over Wylam Bridge, then turning and moving back E		1/9 Finally at 13:30 3 birds (male up high, female and juvenile below) were seen downstream of the Wylam road bridge over the Tyne.			CONF – FL 1 juv
A2					15/9 female flying S low-down at Parson Shields, not a known nest site, at 18:00 and coming to rest in trees near the South Tyne. She may well be a Scottish bird, perhaps making her 1st stop on migration from say the Tay Valley  16/10 1st Honey-buzzard moving S along the ridge on E side of		Migrant only

					valley at 14:47, riding the updraught from the W breeze. Not as close as the Towsbank bird but shape and structure very clear. This bird covered about 1km in 1 minute 17 seconds so a little slower at 41 kph.	
C2	1, 3 (2)	15/6 The pair of birds were up over their territory from 15:24-15:26; the female is the heavier bird. Later the female floated over the site and worried the waders from 15:49-15:54.		from 14:52-14:55 started drawing season to a close with 28/9 2 juvenile Honey-buzzard up together over heather moor to N of Nookton Burn in County Durham; they were hanging low-down in the SW breeze in fantastic hot sunshine for September with one affectionate tumble. At 14:59 one of them was at N end		CONF – FL 2 juv

				of wood being felled at top of Nookton Burn. From 15:24-15:27 had the first gang of juvenile Honey-buzzard up over the fell with 4 birds out on the moor towards Nookton West Fell at 470m asl. This gang is presumed to contain birds from Nookton and the even higher site at Riddlehamhope. The Nookton nest site at 400m asl is now the 4th high moorland site to raise young this year.			
Y3	1, 3 (2)	31/5 pair up at 15:54 with mutual circling and a few dips and rises, female then peeled off and glided towards me, out in foraging trip; she appears to be moulting P1 on each wing. Observer present from 15:40-16:00		13/9 at 15:28 the Honey-buzzard male rose up briefly from copse and went down again; after some time the pair at 15:52 had an exciting fly-around in the strong breeze for about a minute. At 15:56 pair adults were up with			CONF – FL 1 juv



				<p>juvenile below in display in strong wind. The pair peeled off towards me with the male going further S to feed. Another, you've guessed it thriving in the conditions, was the Honey-buzzard with 3 birds (male, female, juvenile) in vigorous and confident display from 15:55-16:01 in the wind. Some video 892b, reasonably close-up of the Honey-buzzard was taken, which will publish later. This shows they can fly well in such conditions but lack of migrants reported today suggests it's not chosen conditions for migration.</p>			
J6	1, 3 (2)	30/5 a female in excited mood over a field towards Vindolanda		31/8 A bonus was an adult male near Bardon Mill at 12:40, hanging over the site			CONF – FL 1 juv

				<p>but he failed to stir up any action below.</p> <p>10/9 Some action was noted at site to N near Vindolanda with a female up at 16:12, eventually attracting up a lighter juvenile, giving rise to some chasing and display. From 16:24-16:28 the male was up hunting to the E of the site</p>			
W	1, 3 (2)	<p>3/6 from 16:20-16:25, female Honey-buzzard flies downstream from top site. She has some feather damage and a Common Buzzard is swearing at her from the trees below. She is then mobbed by Lapwing and Curlew before another Honey-buzzard female appears, who is seeing her off the premises back to the middle site. At 18:12 meet in the middle site the female chased out of the upper site with male high</p>		<p>23/9 At the middle site at 15:35 a juvenile was seen in flap-flap-glide action deep in the burn, quickly coming down again when it saw me.</p>			CONF – FL 1+ juv

		above her; from 18:19-18:27 she floats over the site. She is missing 2 inner primaries on her right wing, at least one central tail feather and a significant section off the tip of her left wing. Stray strands of feathers can be seen sticking out on a few stills: this and the widespread asymmetric damage might indicate that she has been shot at recently. Still she could fly well and appeared quite trusting.					
Y4	2, 3 (1)		<i>3/7 Flushed off Wolfcleugh Common at 520m, soaring very high and then gliding off NW towards N of Allenheads where site with Scots Pine looks like the highest so far in the study area at about 435m. Altitude has no worries for these birds provided heather moorland</i>	<i>14/9 at 15:01 a male briefly up over Byerhope Reservoir at 460m followed by one juvenile flying out to feed c1km to N from 15:02-15:04 followed by another juvenile on same path at 15:12 and hanging over moor hunting from 15:40-15:42. So it appears that the Honey-buzzard can breed</i>			<i>CONF – FL 2 juv</i>

			<p><i>and mature woods are available. As he moved away at low altitude a Merlin stooped on him, emphasising his long neck and small head. He flapped away from the moor above me and began to move higher, eventually soaring very high and gliding NW at base of clouds. He was mobbed almost continuously by a male Merlin.</i></p>	<p><i>on the heather moors as high as this provided perhaps there are woods with mature trees to give them safe nesting areas. This shows how attractive the high heather moors are to Honey-buzzard</i></p>			
T2					<p>1/10 Between 15:50-15:55 had 2 sightings of a Honey-buzzard juvenile at 420m on Round Hill foraging low-down near an isolated conifer plantation. So this counts as a gang of 1, perhaps residue from the birds</p>		

					reared in West Allen and possibly other Allen sites.		
J7	1, 2, 3 (2)	<p>13/5 pair displaying over their new site from 16:52-16:56. The first half shows the male up at the start joined quickly by female, mutual circling by the pair with some flapping, female chasing the male, the pair diving together and rearing up and grappling. The male then goes off W and the female E. The second half shows the female floating, in flap-flap-glide action and gliding.</p> <p>6/6 Past Haydon Bridge at 14:15 a female was low-down over Whitechapel near A69; a male was seen soaring and floating over Whitechapel from 15:28-15:32</p>	<p>23/7 flushed a female Feeding on the ground at about 50m and she flew into the wood and was not seen again – very promising territorial behaviour</p> <p>See nest activity (0 birds 24/7)</p>	See nest activity (2 birds 25/8)		<p>24/7 Strategy today in visit was to first find the Common Buzzard nest as that would eliminate the area around it. There didn't look space for Honey-buzzard in this wood as well as the Common Buzzard nest was centrally spaced so searched an annexe containing mature Scots Pine and Norway Spruce. The Honey-buzzard nest was found on the N edge of the wood in Scots Pine. It's very large and is still being built-up, a strong indicator for Honey-buzzard at this stage of the season when the Common Buzzard young have left their nest, which is beginning to look unkempt. The two nests are 250m apart. This old nest in Norway Spruce might be last year's. Didn't see or hear any Honey-buzzard but from antics of Crows</p>	CONF – FL 1+ juv

					<p><i>had clear idea where the female was hiding, watching me; did of course see the female yesterday. In the Honey-buzzard area did find much splash near the tree holding the nest, one brown feather, some body feathers and a few remains probably of rabbit</i></p> <p><i>25/8 Large nest, in Scots Pine, was in fine fettle with plenty of downy feathers and some small tarsal and other feathers in area and also some splash below trees to W of copse. No birds around though so assumed fledged and at end of visit walked up lane, getting single adult Honey-buzzard alarm call c200m to N of site and seeing one juvenile in a tree c500m to N of site. So they've broken out but would expect them to return to roost, although it was past sunset when they were picked up.</i></p>	
<i>F5</i>	<i>1, 3 (1)</i>	<i>8/6 after 15 minutes heard a Honey-buzzard calling once, with long</i>		<i>25/9 At Gilsland wait was longer, indeed from 13:20 to 14:45</i>		<i>CONF – FL 1+juv</i>

		<i>call, at fairly close range; did not actually see the bird which is significant as it suggests a pair incubating at this stage of season and thus keeping a low profile. I'll assume the bird was a male as the most likely scenario is the female sitting and the male on a tree nearby giving a low-key warning to her.</i>		<i>before a Honey-buzzard was seen very high up moving slowly S; it then lost its nerve, dived down and disappeared into a field. It resurfaced, then clearly a juvenile, from 15:13-15:18, circling very slowly and moving N to W side of the Spa where it came down.</i>		
<i>F4</i>	<i>1, 2, 3 (1)</i>	<i>30/5 seen to the W over Greenhead, a female, floating high from 15:20-15:26. Later at 16:05 she was over Greenhead Bank low-down.</i>	<i>23/7 female at long range out of Greenhead W site to N to hunt</i>	<i>25/9 At Greenhead had no Honey-buzzard on way out but on return at 16:23-16:28 had a juvenile coming out from Blenkinsopp W, surrounded by corvids, and circling ever so slowly up to Blenkinsopp Castle where it came down in the trees.</i>		<i>CONF – FL 1+juv</i>
<i>16</i>					<i>15/9 11:59-12:02 kettle forms over Dipton Wood of 7</i>	<i>Migrants</i>

					<i>birds, all thought to be adults, moving very high and birds are lost to sight beyond the top of the clouds, an amazing sight, other than 2 birds doing a brief swoop the atmosphere is serious as normal for migrating birds</i>		
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