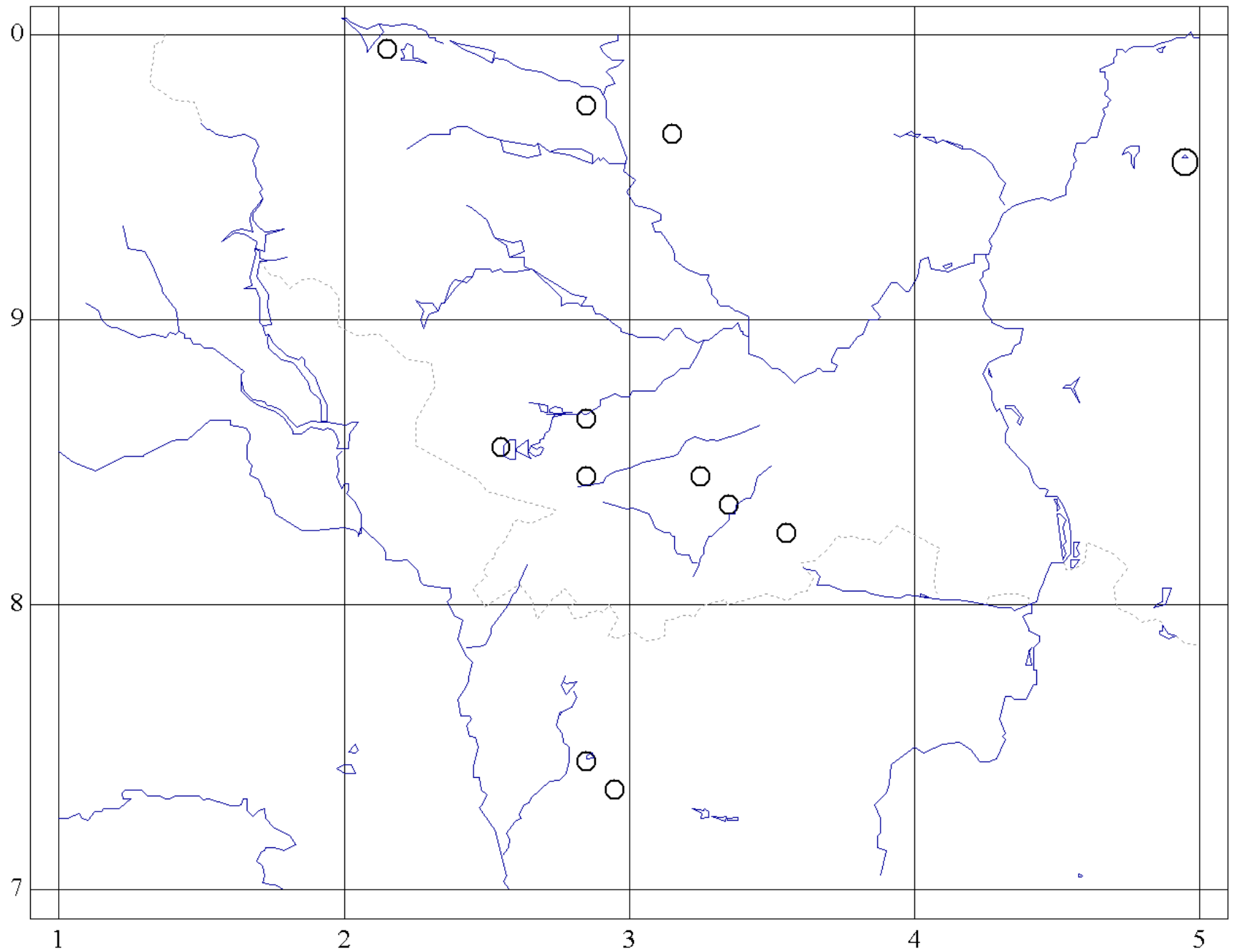


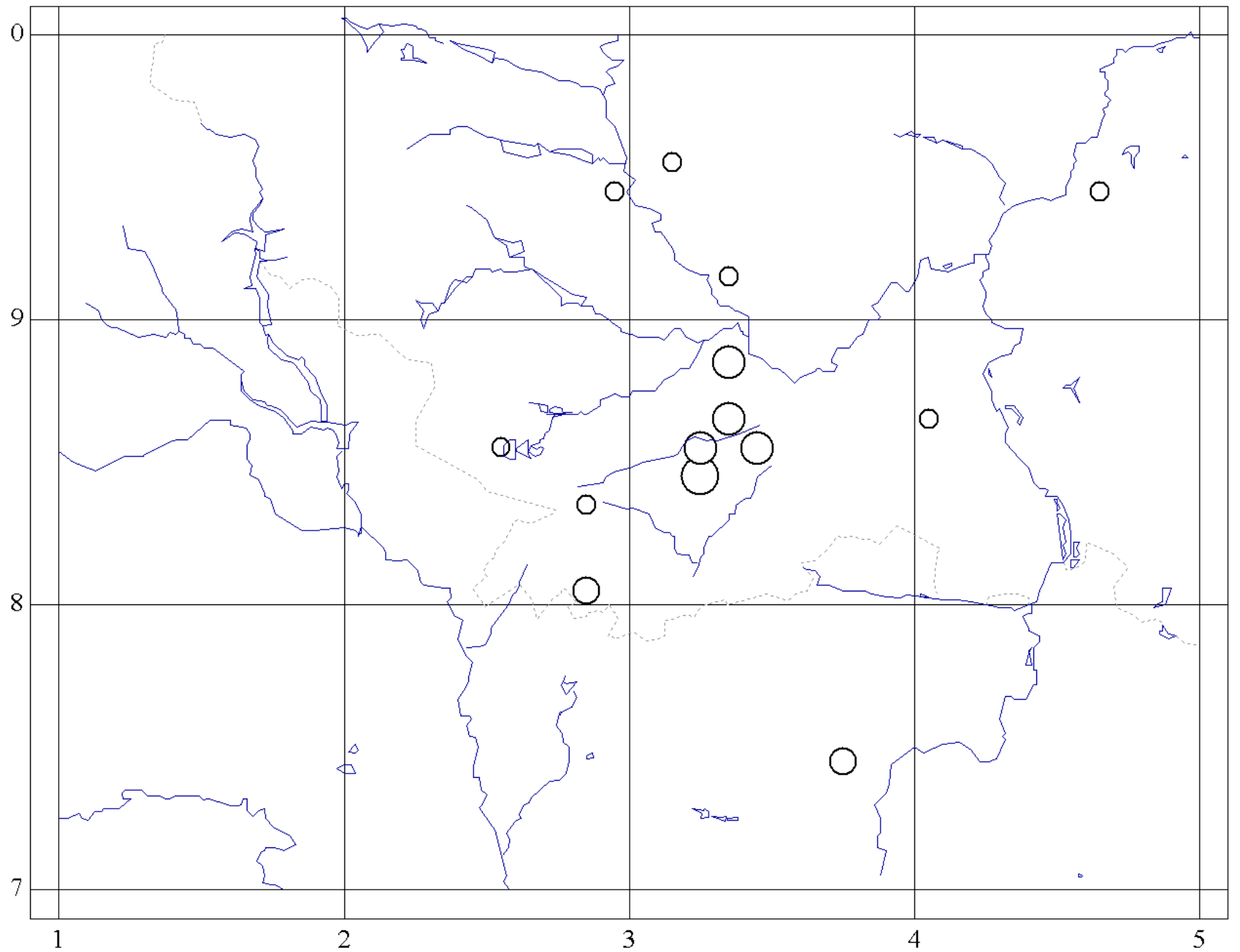
Waxwing identification (ageing and sexing)

The 8 distribution maps that follow, taken at fortnightly intervals during the influx of 2010-11 (when they arrived earlier), show a pattern of birds concentrating in Sheffield after a more dispersed arrival, then an eastward shift in records. Will we see the same pattern this winter?

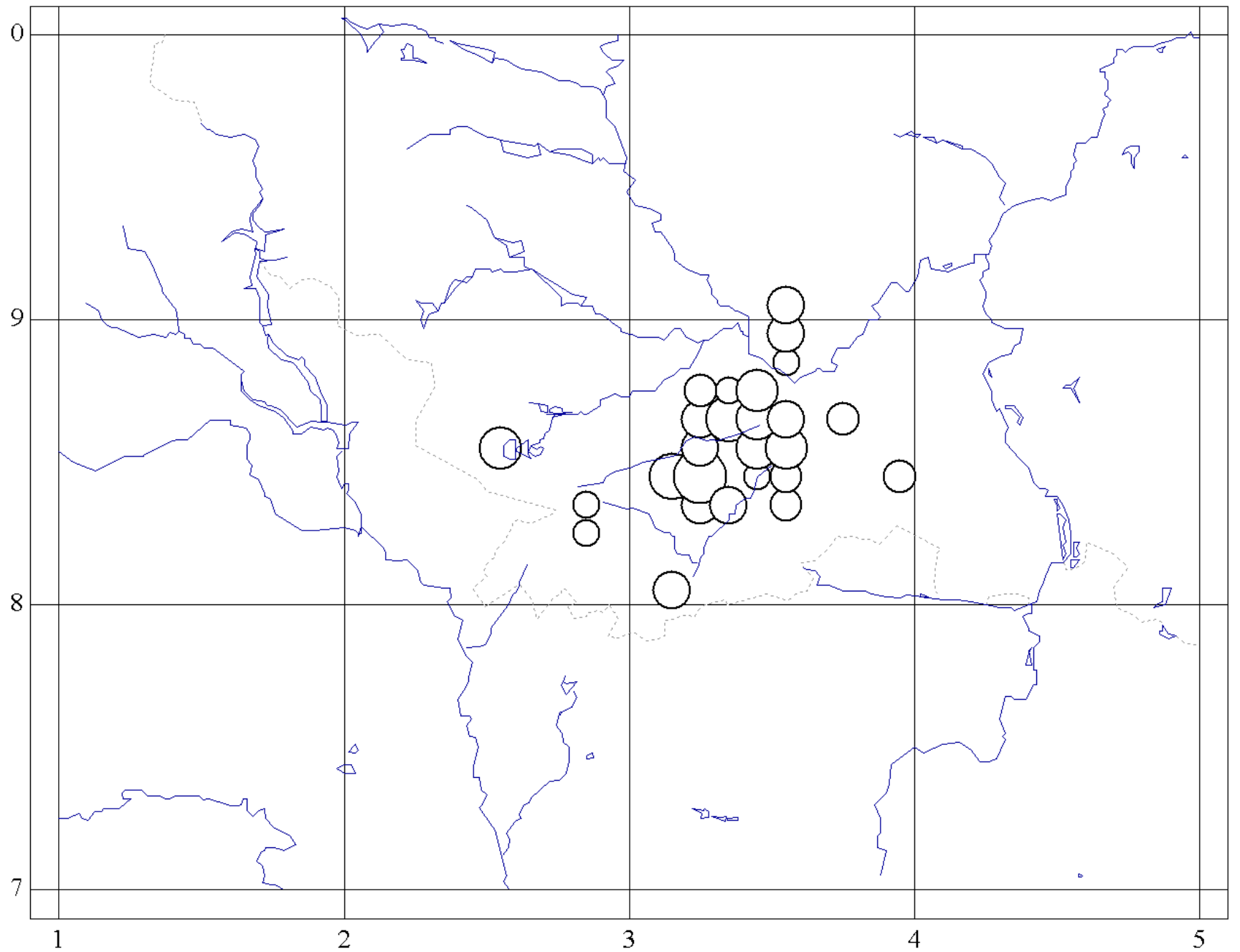
week 24 OCT



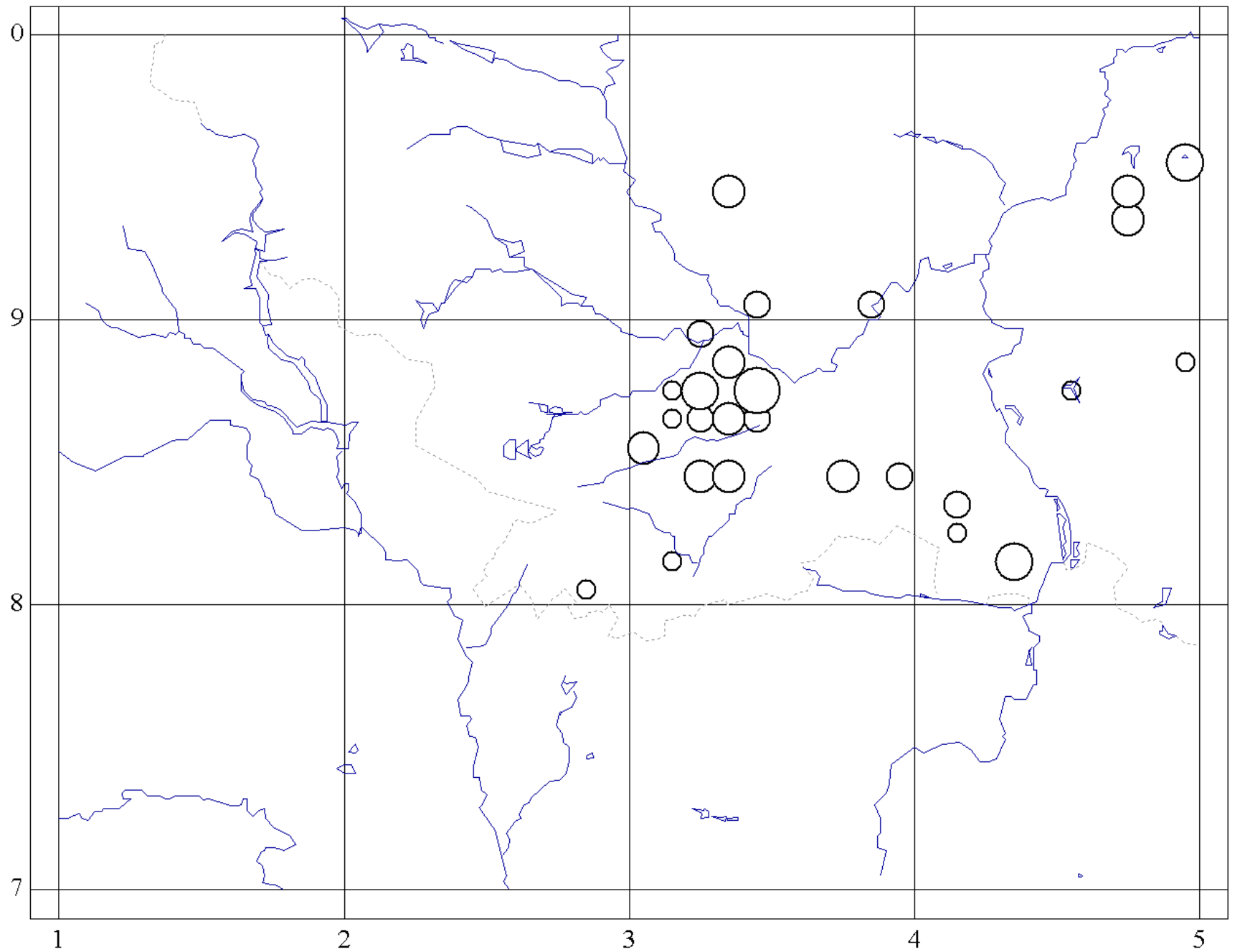
week 08 NOV



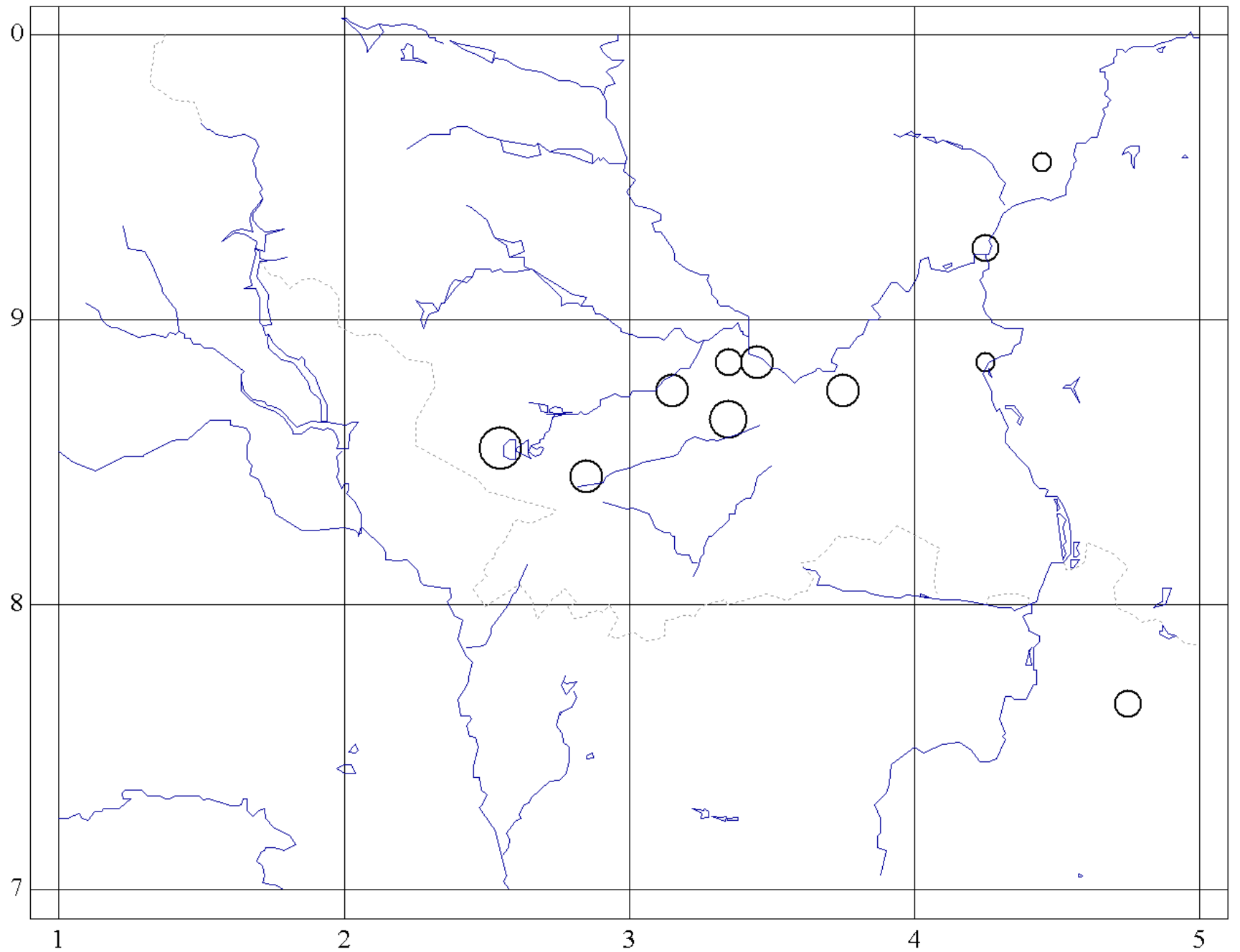
week 22 NOV



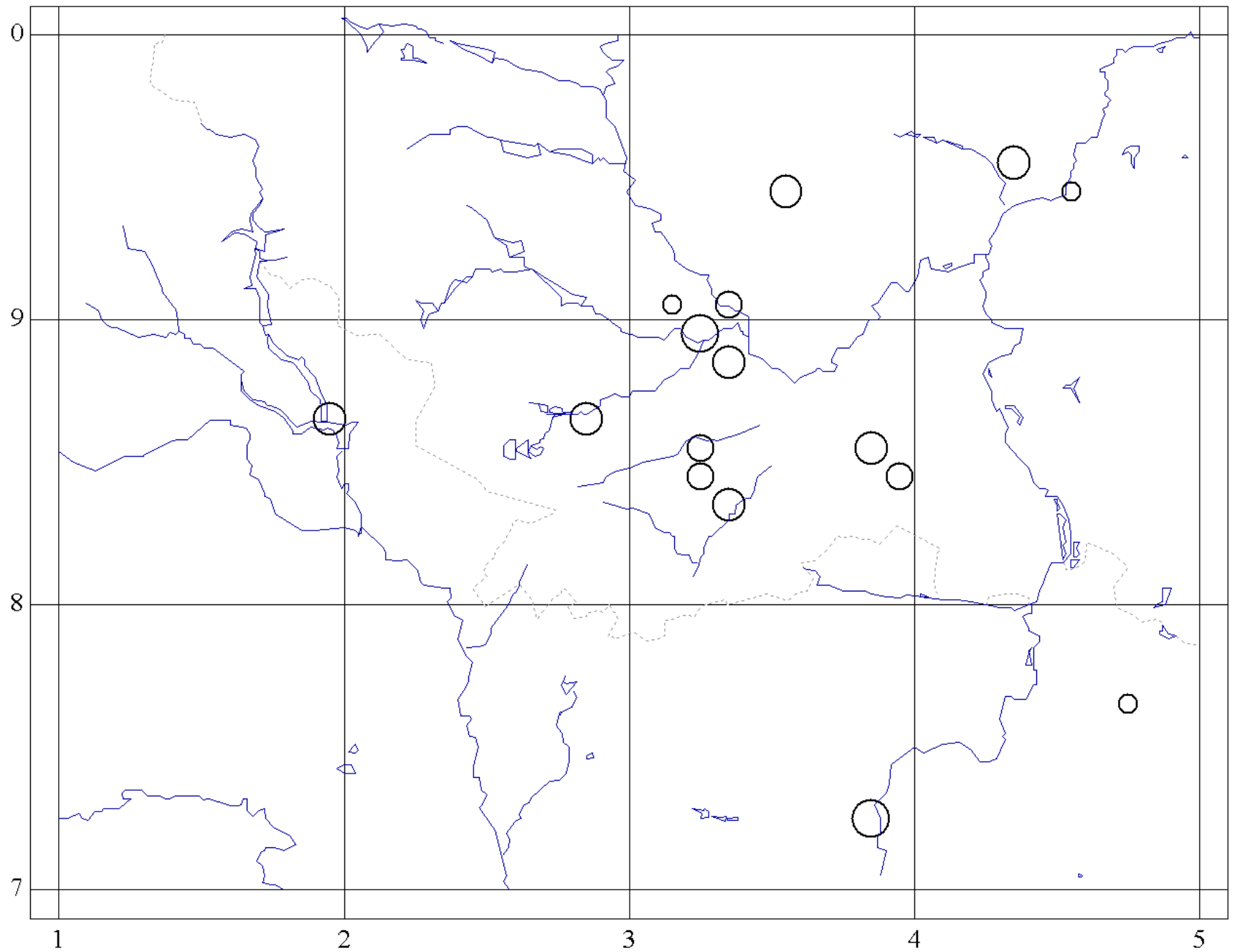
week 05 DEC



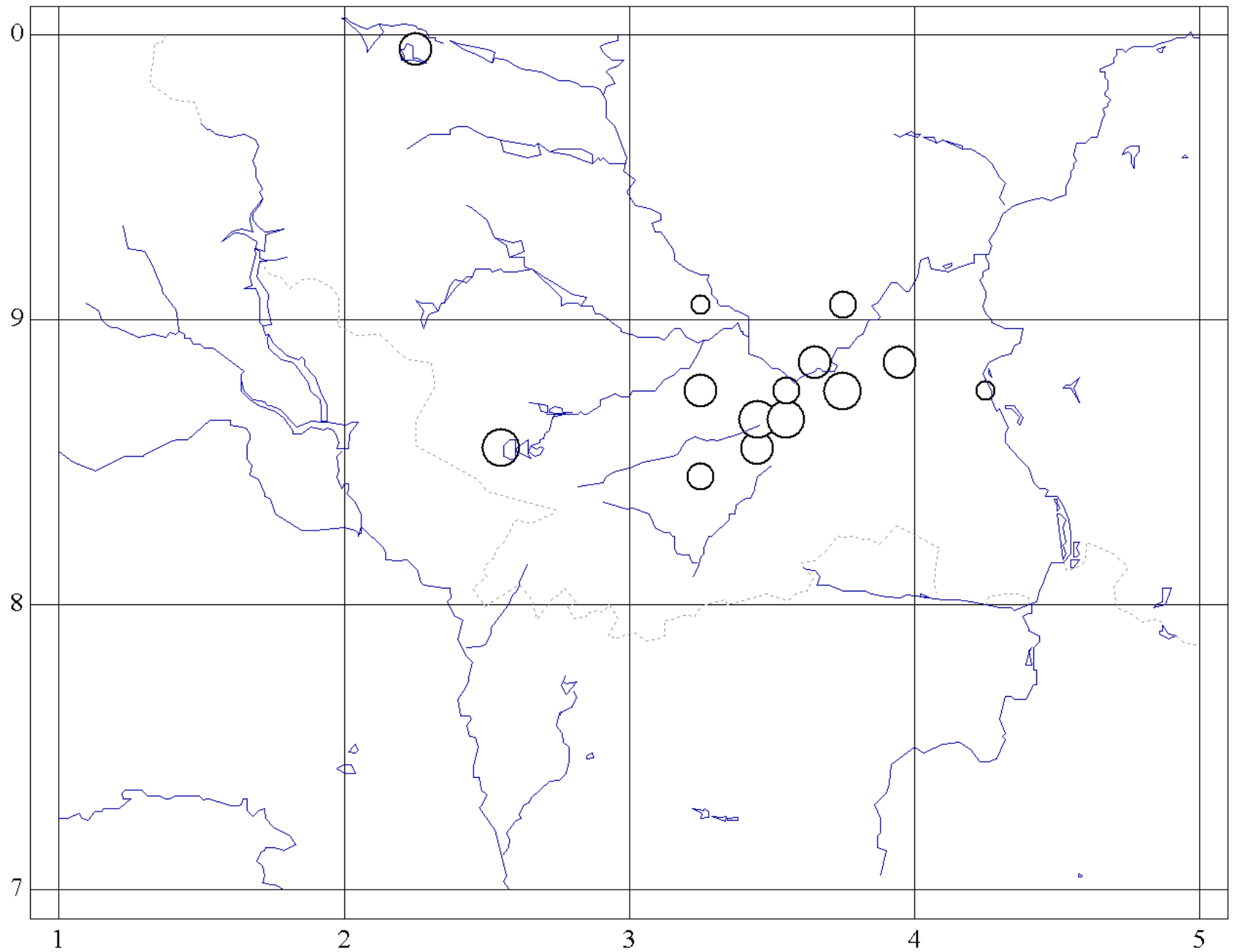
week 19 DEC



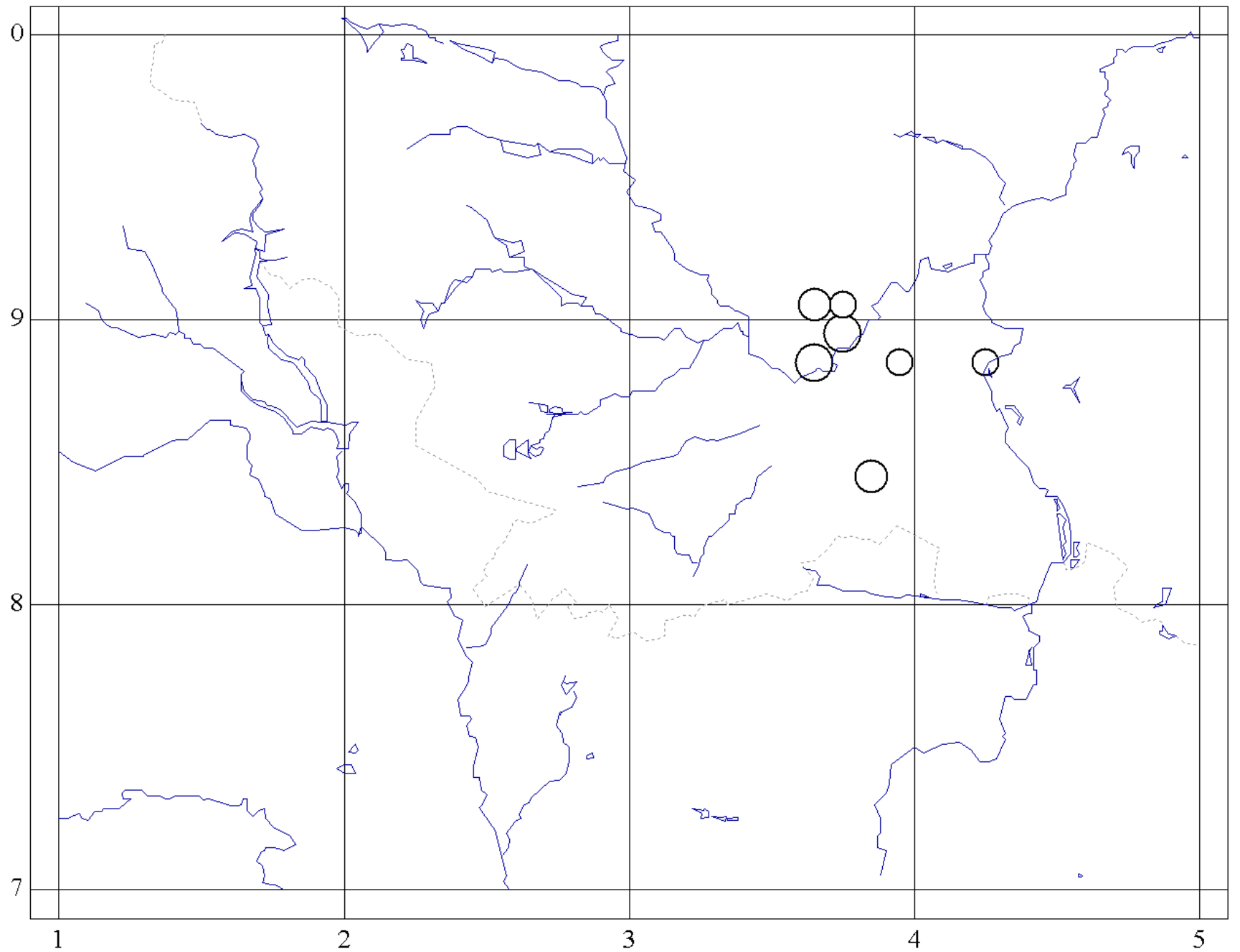
week 02 JAN



week 16 JAN



week 23 JAN



Stopping off en route to the regular roost in the plantations at Redmires: parties can be seen heading W around sunset to the extensive conifer stands.



How do we know they're Waxwings, even at distance?
Body shape and posture are the key indicators: these
show the 'hunched' short-necked look of Starlings.

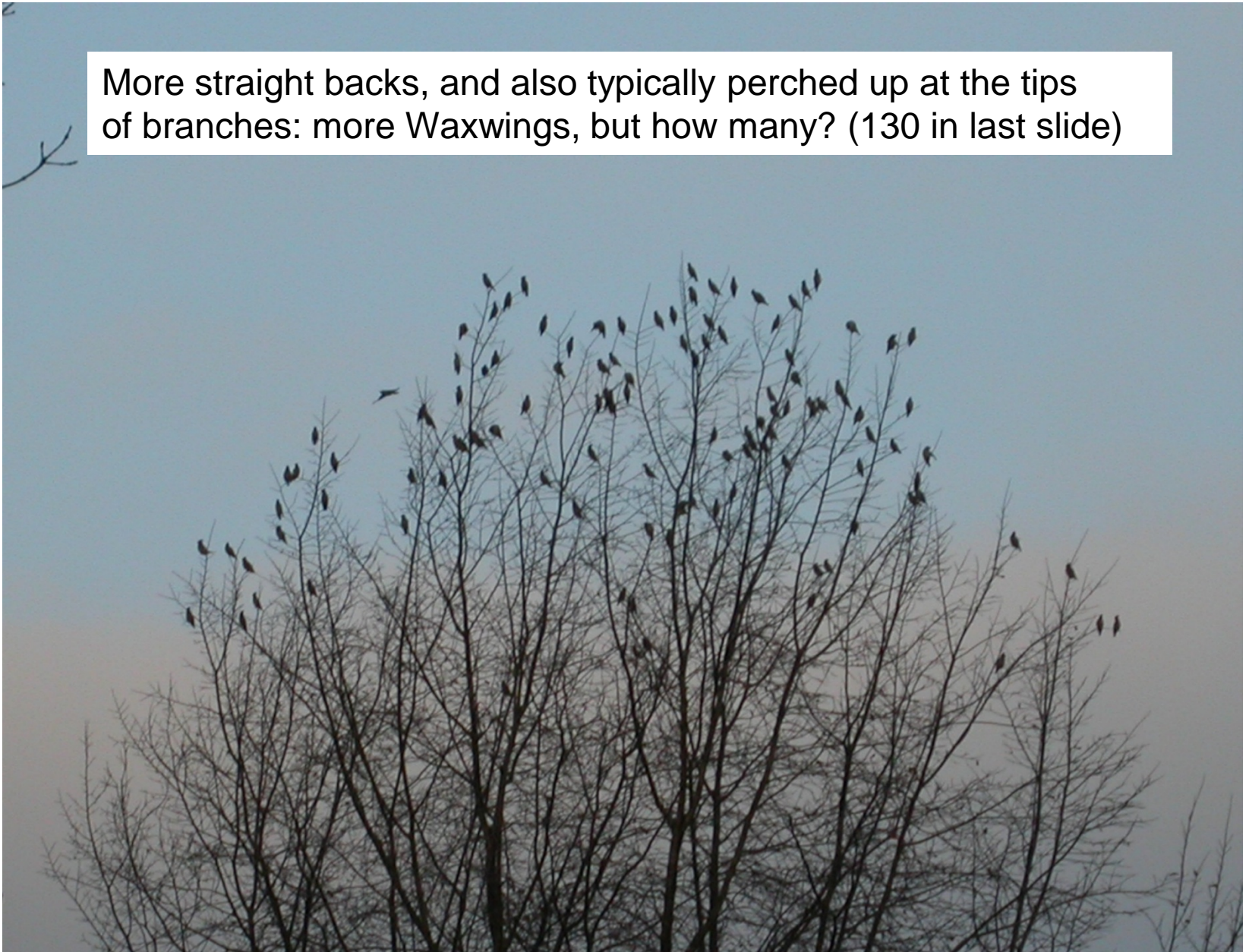


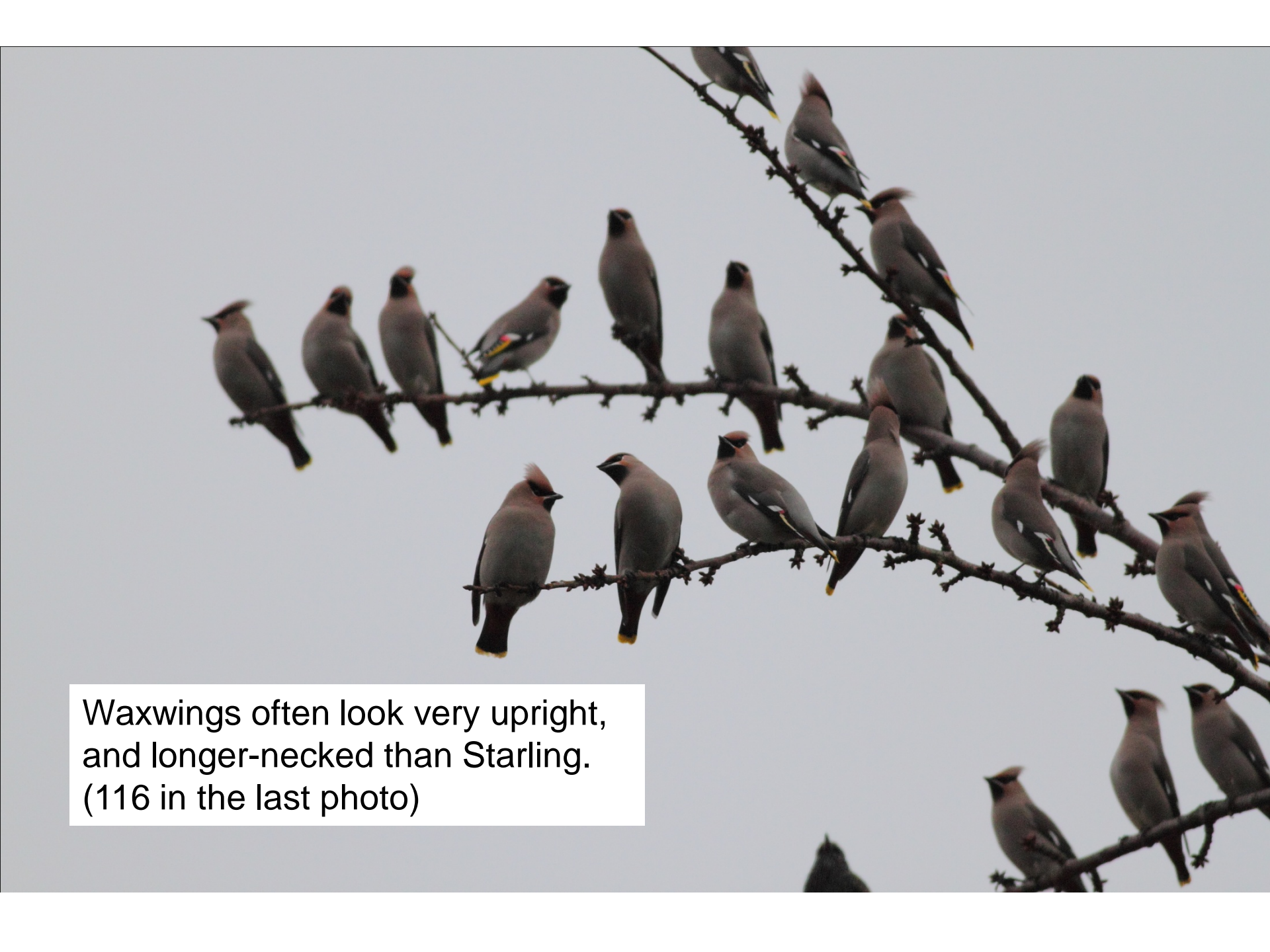
Waxwings or Starlings?

One (top right) has an obvious crest, but all show the straight back and typically upright perch of Waxwing. How many here?




More straight backs, and also typically perched up at the tips of branches: more Waxwings, but how many? (130 in last slide)





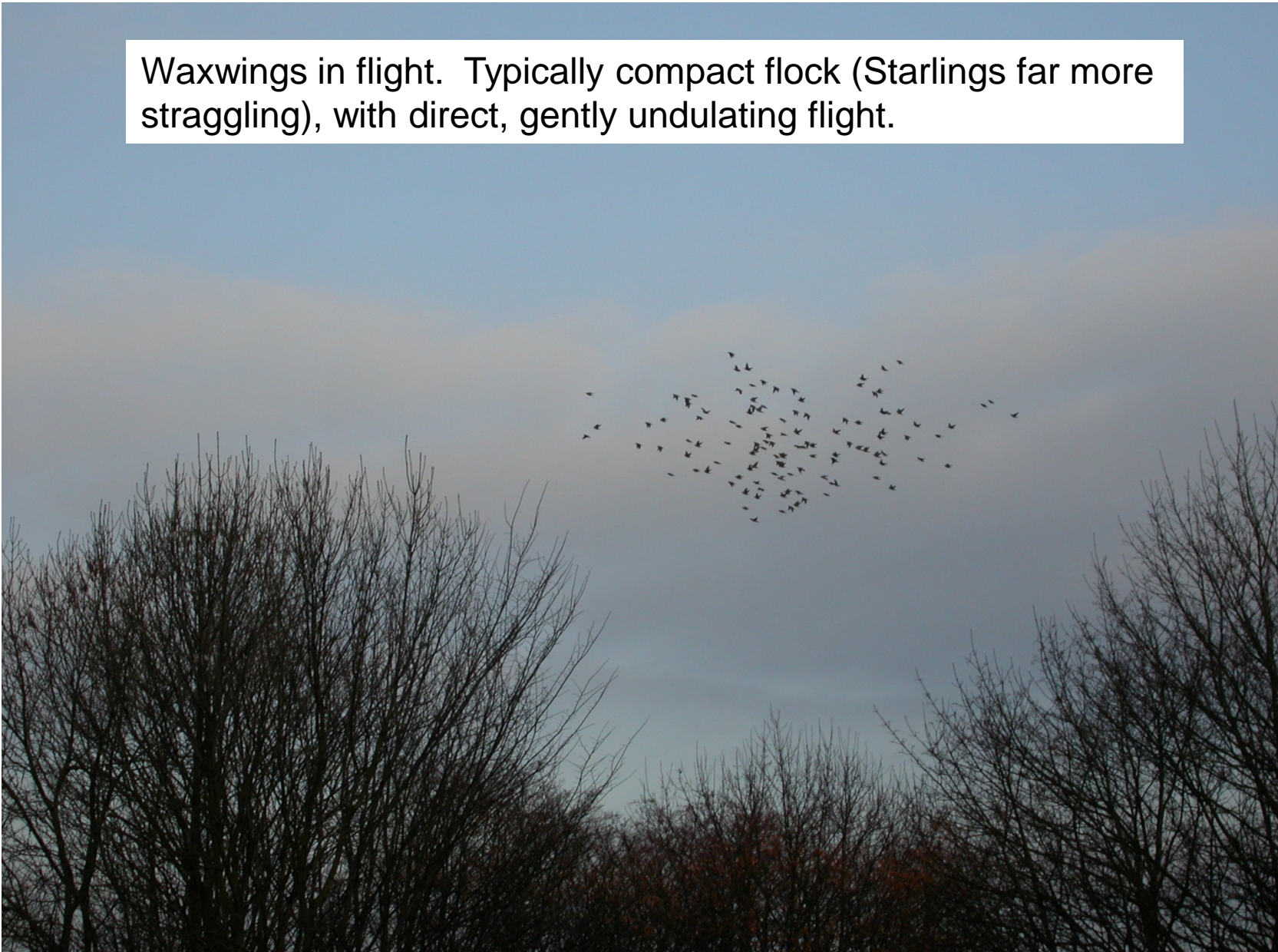
Waxwings often look very upright,
and longer-necked than Starling.
(116 in the last photo)



Note the long-necked appearance that is more obvious in flight. Also, wing shape more rounded than Starling.



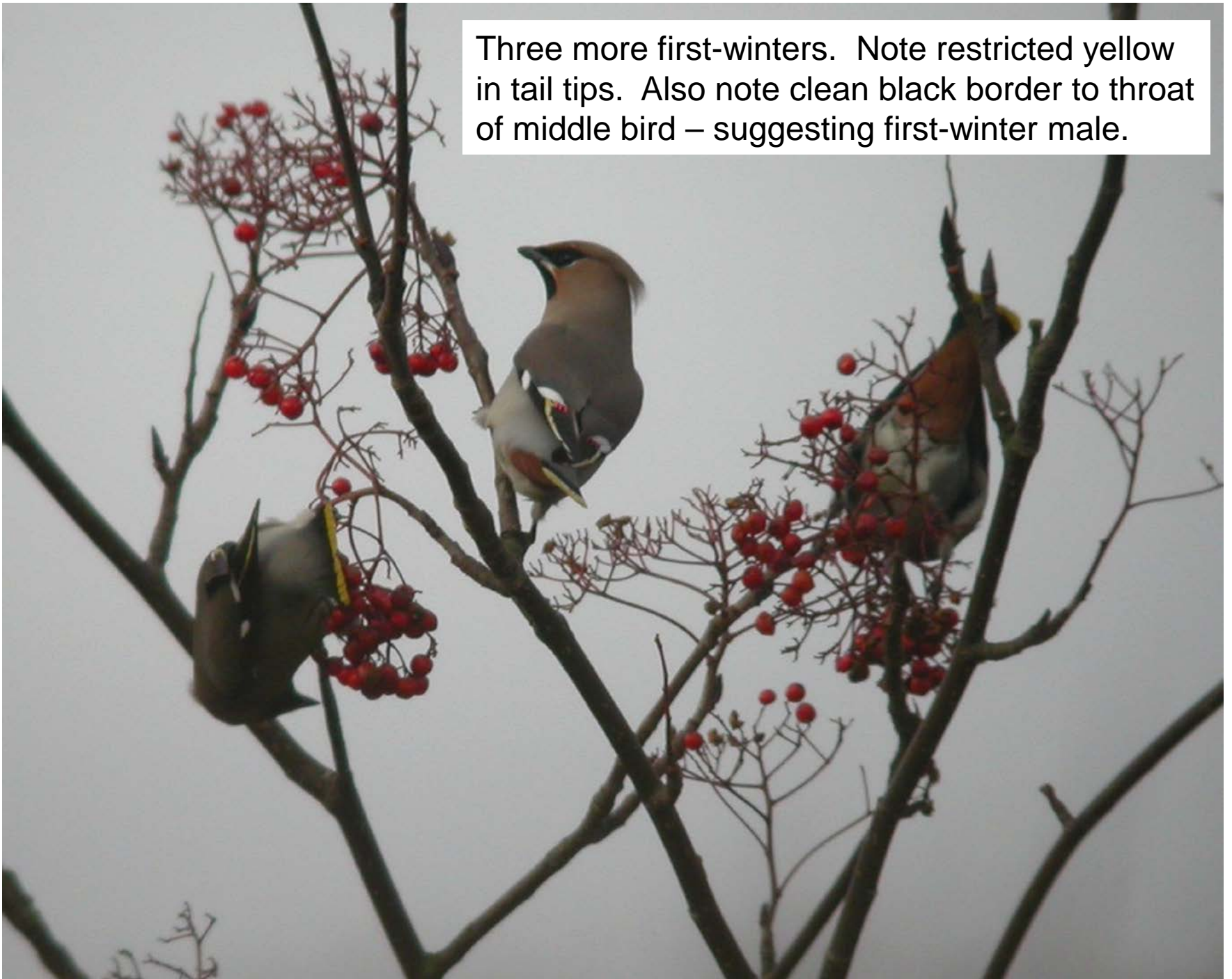
Waxwings in flight. Typically compact flock (Starlings far more straggling), with direct, gently undulating flight.



So it's a Waxwing, but what age? The limited white edging to primaries (and minimal red waxy appendages) means a first-winter. The lack of sharp border to black throat patch suggests a female.



Three more first-winters. Note restricted yellow in tail tips. Also note clean black border to throat of middle bird – suggesting first-winter male.



The same features can be observed in flight ,
with good views! Note restricted yellow
in tail tip and diffuse edge to throat patch.



Yellow edges to primaries and white webs to inner edges of primaries, forming 'V' on each feather, along with red waxy appendages and broad yellow tip to tail, tell us this is an adult.



All of the above,
combined with
clean-cut throat
patch = adult male.
Stunning birds!





Yellow edges to primaries, red waxy appendages and broad(ish) yellow tip to tail = adult. Limited white webs on primaries, resulting in much reduced 'V' and less clean-cut border to throat patch = female.

No white webs on primaries, resulting in no 'V' and narrow yellow tip to tail = first winters. Probable female (left) and male (right) on basis of throat patch.



Now get out and find some!