

## YOC REPORT 1973

### YORK KESTREL CLUB.

There has been a long-standing need in York and district for an ornithological body to cater for the needs of youngsters. About six years ago prospects for such a body looked promising when members of York Ornithological Club formed a junior Section. This development was quite successful but after a couple of years floundered on transport problems and eventually became defunct,

Six, months ago, a group of us were approached by local Youth Leaders with a view to forming a bird-watching Club for the fourteen to eighteen age group. Our group was all reasonably competent (not to say, modest!) and experienced observers, after considerable debate, decided to go ahead. The enthusiasm and "know-how" of our group would be the centre that would attract and direct the latent interest on approved lines of study.

Now, six months later, we can claim to be successful - members are from all areas of York; the steppes of Dunnington, the Huntington tundra, the rain forests of Haxby and the Acomb savannas. Our Secretary requires an assistant.

The Youth Service is our focal point, and we have facilities not available to an independent Club. Support from Youth Leaders includes advice, moral support, use of school rooms at night and vast amounts of capital. Our own efforts to raise finance consist of making and selling nest boxes and bird tables, We also show R.S.P.B, films. We are financially independent now to the extent of simply hiring a mini-bus when private cars are not forthcoming; we also use a few clapped-out motor bikes for short trips.

York Kestrel Club have had outings to Filey, Gouthwaite, Castle Howard and the Spurn peninsular. More ambitious outings are envisaged: Skipwith Common, Rowntrees Pond and Naburn Sewage Farm for example. Our future looks good and our organisation is becoming really proficient,

We have lots of fun and enjoyment. A few of us may even get bitten by a worthwhile and lifelong hobby.

DAVID BRAITHWAITE

### ASKHAM BOG.

Askham Bog is a Yorkshire Naturalists' Trust Nature -Reserve. It is situated South- Vest of York, and can be seen from the A. 64 York to Tadcaster road near the 'London Bridge'. Its grid reference on the Sheet 97, 1 inch Ordnance Survey Map is 572479» It is a mixed habitat of thick deciduous woodland and marshy areas, It is a typical example of what the York area was like after the Ice Age.

When the glaciers pushed South during the Ice Age, one gouged out land now forming the Tale of York. The glacier melted and retreated North, leaving a vast area of water, bordered by two

moraines (Pennines and Yorkshire Wolds). The water gradually drained, forming a large marsh. The early settlements started to drain the area with channels and ditches, and the land eventually dried out, leaving the present day Vale of York Askham Bog, however, remained a marshy area reflecting this early age. It now has to be artificially maintained to keep this marshy habitat as it would quickly drain into the numerous channels and drains in the area.

The actual Reserve is divided into two by a path joining the Golf Course which surrounds it. The woodland contains a lot of silver birch and thickets of hawthorn and blackthorn. There are parts carpeted by ferns and brambles, and many specimens of plant can be seen, including some rare species. The edges of the woodland are bordered by phragmites beds and thick areas of scrubland.

As for the birds of the area, Reed and Sedge Warblers were very common in the reed beds, but over the past years they have declined as some of the reed beds have dried and others have been exploited by increasing numbers of golfers looking for lost balls. Jays appear to be numerous in the area and their raucous calls can be heard as one approaches the Reserve.

Great Spotted Woodpeckers breed most years and the birds tend to venture out to surrounding woodlands, and can often be seen flying across the fields.

Among other interesting birds seen there, are Woodcock. On warm summer evenings, Woodcock can be seen 'roding' over the

trees, and also Tawny and Barn Owls can be seen hunting over the reed beds. Also in the summer months, a varied selection of small passerines breed, including all the common Tits, Bullfinches, Corn Bunting, Willow and Grasshopper Warblers and Spotted Flycatchers,

Come winter, and the woodland is used as a roost for hundreds of corvidae, Jackdaws, Carrion Crows, Rooks and their flight lines can be followed from the South of York. In this roost the odd Hooded Crow can turn up and on some evenings the roost contains up to 4,000 birds.

Apart from the birds, there are, as mentioned before, a good selection of woodland, marsh and water plants. There is also a good selection of animals, including Water and Bank Voles, Foxes, Grey Squirrels, Weasels, Stoats, and Bats can be seen on light evenings hawking the rich population of mosquitoes around the reed beds.

Altogether, the Reserve is a varied habitat, containing a rich selection of wild-life and plants, but before venturing out it is best to write to the Y.N.T, for permission to wander round, but good views of the area can be obtained from the Golf Course.

PETER DUNN. FEBRUARY

1974, THERE IS PLENTY ABOUT - SHOULD YOU GO OUT AND FIND IT.

The words that echo in my ears, whenever bird-watchers meet each other in the "field" - "Seen anything? Anything about?" - The "bush telegraph" is again in motion.

Now some people prefer to sit in their cars to do their

bird-watching, and others "gear up" with pullovers and boots and foot slog an area. There is a lot to be said for both these attitudes, and quoting from Nethersole Thompson book, the celebrated Scottish Ornithologist, quote:- "There are Leggers and Arasers" unquote, well, I like to be classified under the category of a "Legger".

Anyway, one balmy evening in June, a young woman was horse riding over the fens South of York, when she suddenly noticed a large brown bird flying low over the marsh. Its size must have been imprinted on her mind because on her return home she eagerly told her father "I have just seen an Eagle"!

However, being conversant with the area, I decided to have a look at this "Eagle". Approaching the marsh with some caution, and surveying every possible angle, I espied the large brown bird at some 400 yards, its characteristic flight and bulky proportions immediately registered. No, it wasn't an Eagle, but a female Marsh Harrier. A magnificent bird with the evening sun reflecting on its pale head. In fact so conspicuously like that of a miner's lamp. I wondered what this species, the largest of the Palaearctic Harriers, was doing in this area, especially in the middle of June. A very rare British breeder and somewhat uncommon as a passage migrant.

However, I returned to the area several times on subsequent occasions, and watched and noted with interest, its habits. A set routine of hunting along favoured dykes, three flaps of its broadwings then a glide. Repeatedly the bird retired to its nightly roost amongst the reed beds at 7.40 p.m. each evening. One could set their watch to this routine, and additionally, a Barn Owl would also be seen hunting along the same flight path some 20 minutes before the Harrier retired.

One particular event, which I have never witnessed before, was one evening the Harrier, hunting for food along the river bank, did not notice the Barn Owl approaching in the opposite direction - also unaware of its competitor. Slowly the birds met, and not until the very last moment did the Owl take on a very strange evasive action, I was amazed; the Owl plummeted to the ground, lay on its back with claws raised, whilst the Harrier merely simply twisted its wings with an air of contempt, and carried on with its business of hunting for food. A Heron which was stood nearby hurriedly took to the wing, not wishing to argue with these magnificent raptors. I was absolutely fascinated by this incident, and my heart was thumping with awe, but I bet the Owl's heart was thumping equally as hard.

It is a well known fact that the Harrier species are extra wary and cautious, but on an occasion that transpired; some time later really took some beating. Whilst keeping the bird in view some 500 yards away, and watching it swerve and dive into a large bed of overgrown nettles, I carefully attempted to anticipate which flight path it would take back to its roost in "the marsh, and advanced through a meadow positioning myself strategically behind some old hay stocks. I waited for about 20 minutes before the Harrier took wing, and sure enough, noticed it- coming directly towards my makeshift hide of straw. Not daring to breathe, closer and closer it came, to about 30 yards away, when suddenly it wheeled away to the left, and at the same time a look of disgust appeared imprinted on its face.

Not quite understanding the reason for its actions, I decided, to retread my steps back home; when it dawned on me - I had left a track of footprints in the dew of the meadow grass. I call that fantastic - these birds certainly are cautious.

Finally this beautiful bird of prey left the area during the last week of August.

It was now 8th September, in an area some three miles away the time was 6 p.m. and whilst flushing a Heron, and four Snipe from a riverside pool, I was happy at the serene view across the Ings. Suddenly, in my binoculars, away in the distance was another Harrier.

Laterally running and jog-trotting, one hand holding my optics and the other hand preventing the loose change and keys from making any noise, I deliberately kept behind the river bank out of view, until a more appropriate position was acquired. Peeping over the bank, there it was, a female bird, magnificent, quartering and hunting. Backwards and forwards it went, followed by a party of Linnets, attempting to mob this proud bird.

The evening was quite warm, I remember having no coat, and the perspiration was beaded on my brow, whilst like a Commando, crawling on all fours and not daring to break cover, I attempted a closer vantage point. To my astonishment, another look across the Ings proved there to be two Harriers present, the latter-bird, a juvenile, in all brown colouring. Keeping both birds in the glass at the same time proved a little tricky; first the female would glide and twist into the long grass and then the juvenile did likewise. Luckily, the juvenile Harrier eventually perched on a hawthorn bush some 30 yards away from my position, and I remember vividly the beautiful markings and colourations the chocolate brown variations, the breast slightly speckled, its back and wings shaded in brown, the yellow bill with, dark tip, viciously hooked. A small but distinguished pale eye stripe, just above the eye. The head appeared small for the proportion of its bulky body, its eyes never still, peering and searching uneasily for any movement. Unlike the other species of Harrier, it preferred to spend less time on the wing and took advantage of perching on this convenient bush.

Finally, gliding away towards its colleague it abruptly checked in flight and dropped to the ground with legs outstretched, possibly acquiring some mammal for supper. Several wonderful hours were eventually spent studying these birds over a period of three weeks. It was most noticeable how the Lapwings used to harass and "chivvy" these noble birds. The Lapwings would attempt their assault from the rear and swoop at the Harrier's rear quarters, generally working the attack in pairs. Gathering some speed at a very last moment, the Lapwings were relentless in their pursuit, but never did these Harriers seem to be objective, merely a twist of the wings was enough to evade any contact.

It may be a quirk of fate., but a colleague reported seeing an identical pair of Harriers some two weeks, later at Spurn Point, approximately sixty miles away.

Winter was now approaching, and the air much fresher, yet the urge to visit the area was unmistakable, the various species of Duck and Bewick Swans was always present, when yet another Harrier was seen. Yes! Another Harrier, but this time a HEN Harrier - an adult female - the conspicuous white rump patch always characteristic in field identification, and although more sombre in appearance than its mate, nevertheless a sight for sore eyes. The dark brown upper parts and upper wing coverts, the

pale buff underparts and the long barred tail blended well with the surrounding vegetation whenever seen at close quarters. An unusually large ear opening hidden by a ruff of facial feathers gives an owlsh appearance, and serves a good purpose in hunting as locating mice involves listening for their rustling and squeaking.

Many an eventful day was spent during the winter months watching this bird and to be joined by another female Hen Harrier was beyond apprehension. However, careful notes were made on these two birds, and several pellets were picked up, freshly regurgitated, and found to contain a diet mainly of moles and voles. Apparently it was said to be a good vole year, and with seven Short Eared Owls and eight Kestrels regularly hunting the area this information must prove to be correct. On damp, wet days these Hen Harriers were rarely seen hunting, probably roosting in nearby trees, but on occasions it was noticeable that the method of following earth banks proved fruitful in the capture of mammals. On one occasion, I saw the bird alight amongst a chain of mole hills and jump up and down abort!, a foot into the air, a strange sight, possibly excited at the noises beneath the ground. Anyway, after about ten minutes, its long yellow legs snatched a mole and trapping the mammal under its claws it systematically tore its prey with that wicked yellow beak. After it had eaten, I searched the area for mammal remains ~ but alas, none could be found - only a pellet of fur and bones. Fancy a mole coming up for air and noticing its relation in a sordid lump - just like that.

So, remember - there is plenty about, should you go out and find it.

GEOFF. SMITH, DECEMBER 1973.

#### 1973 REPORT

Another record was set in the number of record cards processed. Some problems this year were undecypherable writing, mutilated cards, date and area omissions, multi-visit dates and, the annual grouse, numerical dates; as each card is processed about thirty-two times the frustrations can perhaps be imagined. The single species cards are now in force and no other will be accepted.

The records are selective, often highly selective, but all were scrutinised.

Where group cards were submitted only the leader is acknowledged. The Recorder thanks all contributors to this report.

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York Kestrel Club.

### CLASSIFIED LIST.

The order used *is* that of the British Ornithological Union (1952) Check-list. English names follow current practice.

#### 5 GREAT CRESTED GREBE.

Castle Howard had six pairs during Spring and Summer. Some records are: Two on 7<sup>th</sup> January (Y.G.G.): Two on 1<sup>st</sup> March, four on 11<sup>th</sup>-April (P.H.) Six 22<sup>nd</sup> May and. young 27<sup>th</sup>. July (S.M.) Seven on 27<sup>th</sup> August, and ten on 10<sup>th</sup> September (J.H.I.) Five on 11<sup>th</sup> November (G.S.) No records of fledged young but (P.H.) noted two pairs with a single chick in late July. Anglers note that Coots sometimes attack and drown young water birds including perhaps, Grebes. Winter counts of one, three and two late November, and none late December (J.H.L.) Dringhouses pond had three birds on 25<sup>th</sup> November, (D.B.)

#### LITTLE GREBE

Four at Towthorpe in permanent residence and displaying on 29<sup>th</sup> January, (M.V., A.W.). (P.H.) heard a call at Dale End on 25<sup>th</sup> March. Young birds were seen only twice during the year. Another breeding record from Skipwith (A.M.W., J.F.W.) November records Clifton Ings, Castle Howard, Sand Button and Howsham Derwent.

#### 30 GREY HERON

No systematic counts from Healaugh, our only breeding colony (D.B., S.R.) recorded seven adults and one juvenile there on 18<sup>th</sup> June. Foragers from Wheldrake, Oswaldkirk, Wigginton, Moorlands, Castle Howard, Colton, Healaugh. (J.W.) noted twelve 2<sup>nd</sup> August, at Castle Howard. Two at Clifton Ings on 11<sup>th</sup> November, (A.M.W. & J.F.W.). A group of seven in Lower Derwent (G.S.) Winter sighting Dringhouses, Thorganby, Parlington, Brandsby, Hovingham.

#### 45 MALLARD

Spread throughout the area. Bred in all suitable habitats including farm and village ponds. Displaying Castle Howard 19<sup>th</sup> January (P.H.) Castle Howard 600 on 13<sup>th</sup> January; 700 on 28<sup>th</sup> November (B.P.) 250 on 11<sup>th</sup> November

(G.S.) 480 on 9<sup>th</sup> December, (P.H.) increasing to 1,000 on 30<sup>th</sup> December (J.H.L.).

Dringhouses had a large flock of 500 on 25th November (IXB.)  
Wheldrake Ings 100 (G.C.) August Healaugh 300 (T.C.)

#### 46 TEAL

Low counts and widely dispersed groups were noted:-Wheldrake  
Ings - Four on 13th January (J.H.L.) 28th January,  
C100 Lower Derwent (G.S., B.C.) and seventeen in May and  
July. Skipwith Common had nine early April (R.H. -, G.S.,  
B.C.)

#### Post-breeding records:-

Healaugh counts were fifty on 29th August, forty in late  
October, rising to 76 in mid-November, and 75 Christmas Day  
(D.B., Y.K..C.) Castle Howard also had low numbers (J.H.L.)  
counted twenty in raid-August, and seventeen on 10th September. By  
the 11th November, the number was three (G,S.) but on 30th. December  
(J.H.L.) counted nine. Lower Derwent carried 200 (G.S., B.C.)  
on 30th December. Newburgh was heavily shot over the season, the  
only record being twelve on 17th October (PE) Dringhouses. pond  
had fifty in mid-November (D.B.)

#### 50 WIGEON

No extraordinary counts over the Winter. First record at  
Healaugh was a single on 11th July (D.B.); fifteen on 10th ,  
October, thirty nine on 25th October, sixty in mid-November and  
nine at Christmas (D,.B., Y.K..C.)

Not a common species at Castle Howard - three over Christmas  
(J.H.L.. (Y.O.C.) seven on 20th January, rising to sixteen on 3rd  
February, (P.H., J.W.).

Lower Derwent populations followed the flood water, such as  
there was: 1,000 on 25th February, fifty on 9th December, and  
500 on 30th December (G.S., B.C.). (D.B., M.R.) counted a  
maximum of twenty at Dringhouses during November.

#### 52 PINTAIL

Reported from three localities: Lower Derwent with forty  
was a high count on 28th January, (G.S., B.C.) and no other early  
sighting was reported. Winter records: Late September, two  
males were seen at Healaugh, stayed a week (DB, Y..K.C.) and a  
single appeared on 29th October. Lower Derwent also produced the  
next high number - sixteen on 30th December, (G.S., B.C.) (J.H.L.)  
reported a single on 30th December.

#### 53 SHOVELER

Higher numbers this year, Healaugh and Dringhouses having  
particularly good records. All records shown: 28th January,  
four Derwent (G.S., B.C.) 7th January, six at Castle Howard  
(J.W.) (S,M.) and six on 18th February, three on 25th May (I.0,0.)  
6th June, Naburn (A.M.V., J.F.W.) Late July, near Wheldrake, a  
pair (G.S.) but no positive sign of breeding in this area. Castle  
Howard had three birds on 12th May, but only a pair 14th May  
(P.H.). Other sightings are as follows: Two on 10th. September

(J.H.L.), forty-two on 28th November (-B.P.) and four on 9th December, reduced to five on 30th December, (J.H.L.) (Or.S.) noted three males at Aughton on 9th December. Some winter counts at Healaugh were: Twenty-two on 25th October, and twenty-one on 11th December, (D.B., Y.K.G.). (D.B. and M.R.) counted seventy on Dringhouses pond in mid-November - the largest count for some years.

56 TUFTED DUCK

No breeding studies received. Present during the breeding season at the usual places; Brandsby, two pairs and one spare male; Castle Howard, twenty four pairs (P.H.); Newburgh, four pairs; Wiganthorpe, three pairs (P.B.). Present over winter; Castle Howard, thirty, thirteen and seventeen (P.H.) (J.H.L.), also Lower Derwent, six and Sand Hutton, three (G-S.)

57 POCHARD

Present at Healaugh from 15th October, through to Christmas (M.R., D.B.5 Y.K.C.) fifteen on that date, ten a month later and six, December, (M.B.). There were no spring records. Spring numbers on the Derwent were: six late January (G.S., B.C.) and eleven on 2nd February, (P.H.), unusually low counts. Castle Howard records were at both ends of the year: nineteen on 30th January, three on 3rd February (P.fl.) (J.H.L.) abruptly rising to ninety-seven by 4th February (J.W.), seven birds present (J.H.L.) on 7th August. A singleton on 11th November (G.S.) stayed until 30th December, (J.H.L.)

60 GOLDENEYE

January Castle Howard, had the most records: sixteen on 10th (P.H.), twenty seven on 13th (J.H.L.) and thirty (Y.O.C.). 25th February, "saw displays among ten birds" (J.W.) but all had departed by 1st March, (P.H.) First post-breeding birds arrived on 27th October, seven (T.C.) then six on 11th November ((J.S.), four on 9th December, (B.P.) and three on 30th December, (J.H.L.) A single record came from Sand Hutton when a pair were noted on 11th November (G.S.). Dringhouses pond had a single male on 24th November, (P.B., M.R.), Healaugh, seven on 4th November (B.B., I.K.C.) and Lower Derwent, a single on 28th January, (G.S., B.C.)

70 GOOSANDER

8th, 14th and 20th January, at Castle Howard, had counts of fourteen, four and nineteen (J.W., P.H., I.O.C.) - thirteen males was the maximum. (J.H.L.) noted four on 30th December. A single was seen (J.W.) on 13th February. A pair at Sand Hutton on 11th November, (G.S.)

71 SMEW

A female at Castle Howard on 25th November, in company with Goosander, (J.W.) was a very rare record for the Survey area and a new record.

73 SHELDUCK



A few winter records from Lower Derwent (G.S., P.H.) but long suspected breeding area was scrutinised by (G.S.) at length, without conclusive proof. (J.H.L.) noted two juveniles on 10th September, however. Other sightings were at Castle Howard - single on 7th January (I.O.C.) and noted on 13th/14th January, (J.W., J.H.L.):. Another single, (J.H.L.) on 12th May.

#### 75 GREYLAG GOOSE

The four captive geese have drawn small numbers of passage birds to Castle Howard. From four a year ago, groups of twelve to forty-six were recorded this year. 8th January, twelve feeding in shallows (P.H.), 13th January, forty-six, including resident group (J.H.L.) who reported a very late group of twelve on 13th May. On 27th October (T.C., M.B., D.B.) thirteen were counted, which increased to sixteen by 11th November, and reduced, to five on 28th November (B.P.). Last count was twelve on 30th December, (J.H.L.)

#### 78 PINK-FOOTED GOOSE

Castle Howard produced another surprise, when two were seen feeding in stubbles on 10th December, in a flock of 240 Canada Geese. Twenty two flying East over Lower Derwent was the only report from the Survey area, 30th December, (G.S., B.C.)

#### 81 BARNACLE GOOSE

A single bird in flock of Canada Geese at Castle Howard (D.B., T.C., M.R.) on 27th October was yet another welcome visitor. It was checked again the following day (B.P.)

#### 82 CANADA GOOSE

Some random counts from Castle Howard:

131 on 30th January, 80 in mid-March, 98 late August, °270 on 27th October, 206 on 11th Nov. 18 plus on 28th Nov.

#### 84 MUTE SWAN

Records from nine areas.

#### 85 WHOOPER SWAN

The Lower Derwent floods were rather late. (G.S., B.C.) saw eleven adults and two juveniles on 13th November, "there was no sheet water at this time".

(M.R., Y.K.C.) watched four birds circle Healaugh pond which was iced over on 21st November. They did not alight,

#### 86 BEWICK'S SWAN

First arrivals at Lower Derwent were two adults with two juveniles on 9th December, (G.S.). One week later a total of seven adults and four juveniles was seen.

The negligible winter rainfall was reflected in the count. Flooding began on 30th December, (Gr.S., B.C.)

91 BUZZARD

The wintering bird in S.E. 57 was seen frequently from Christmas until 10th February, it caused much interest in the vicinity, chiefly because of impressive size and relative tameness. It did not re-appear as winter came (P.H.)

A single bird passed East over Brandsby Village on 5th July, and again on 10th July, (P.H.)

A bird passed over Heworth (York) flying North-West on 23rd December, (J.H.L.) Otherwise .a decrease on 1972 records,

92 ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD

" - followed a corvid, while being closely followed by a small dark bird - possibly a hawk - all making an erratic South-Westerly flight against a gale" (A.M.W.) This on 28th September, was a very close view as the flight was over the observer's garden and next door house at 30' or so high, and initially without glasses, and in 'brilliant sunshine. At about this time this species was recorded near Hutton-le-Hole (not our area) by (B.P.) and in a Dale area.

(NB there is a comment in the weather report section which states that this bird was "low over Haxby")

93 SPARROWHAWK

The figures are slightly more optimistic this year, and. it is obvious from the records that the population is building up in the area. A closer scrutiny of likely breeding site could be rewarded. Button Bank area 6th February, and Gale Lane, 14th February, when a male flew parallel to the road. A pair displayed over Maidensworth on 29th April, and eventually climbed out of binocular range; a Woodcock was killed near here on 8th July, by a Sparrowhawk. A single specimen - male - prospected Dale End on 28th May (P.H.).

A male was seen by (Gr.S.) near Aughton 1st July, and near the same place on 30th December a single bird was pursued by a corvid (CuS., B.C.) On 30th September (F>0») watched a female fly from Stubbwood and across the Ouse into Moreby Park,

A pair bred near Wigginton and was seen throughout the (P.M.) A,B.) A pair, male and female, seen at Swallow Hall on 4th November. A male hunted near Thorganby on 23rd December (J.H,L.) Two were seen near Shel Drake over October/November (J.L.) A male at Healaugh was recorded on 25th November.

95 RED KITE

Probably the year's most remarkable record for the area. A single bird wintered from late November to Christmas (P.H.)

99 MARSH HARRIER

"A female in the area throughout June". Some reward hers to (C.J.S.) who put in a lot of work in the Lower Derwent. Then a female on 26th July, watched for some time before it roosted at 20\*45. Other records by (G.S.), female on 10th August and again with a male quartering for two hours on 8th September, Last record was a female on 15th September. Another report was on 26th July, when a bird followed the line of the Derwent (Cr,S» (P,H.) saw a female at Castle Howard on 14th May.

100 HEN HARRIER

A female was pursued by four corvids down the Dei-vent Valley on 30th December, Close views were obtained (G.S., B.C.)

103 OSPREY

A single record this year. (G.C.) observed a straggler passing over Wheldrake on 26th July.

104 HOBBY

While on routine inspection of 1970 Montagu's Harrier's nesting area, (P.H. ) watched a bird feeding at 70 yards range. A Starling screeched from 4 feet along the same branch. After three minutes the Hobby took off and passed 60 feet away - it was then seen to adjust or bite the prey, a Starling - on 23rd May.

105 PEREGRINE FALCON

A single report. (S.R. , P.K. and D.B.) reported good views on the York/Tadcaster Road. "Observed flying South~West on 4th May - intercepted by a Curlew". A winter record was to the North, outside the Survey area.

110 KESTREL

Reported from all 10 k.m. squares, but little nesting research or area counts. Family groups as late as 27th October (T.C., D.B., S.R.). Winter passage birds from late September and, in general, a common bird in the area.

115 RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE

Recorded in far fewer new areas this year and none strictly within breeding period - late April/May: Crayke, Easingwold, Colton, Ampleforth. At Stillington (P.H.) watched an adult and two juveniles take cover from an approaching hay baler in the very windrow to be baled. One chick escaped at the last second to rejoin the family - the other two were compressed inside a straw bale. This could be an important factor in the success rate of ground nesting birds and worth investigation.

116 GREY PARTRIDGE

Common throughout the year, but few large coveys reported - mostly between three and seven, but one of eight and one of ten.

120 WATER RAIL

A call heard late March near Brandsby was not repeated (P.H,) Disappointment from the scrutiny at Skipwith and Derwent Valley.

An under recorded species,

126 MOORHEN

Common in all suitable areas. Dispersal from breeding areas noted from late October (B.B., X.K.C.). Note that December counts at Healaugh and Dringhouses are half that of summer.

127 COOT

Now seem to be over populous on some waters and probably to the detriment of other species - examples are Skipwith, Norton, Sand Hutton, Castle Howard, Newburgh, Wiganthorpe, Stearsby. Older anglers know them to be drowners (not necessarily eaters) of duck, grebe and moorhen chicks.

131 OYSTERCATCHER

Twenty flew North East over Stockton Lane on 18th August (B.P.)

133 LAPWING

Post breeding flocks of 400 from 5th August, and one large flock of 1,000 near Healaugh on 15th August (D.B.) and another of 1,000 from Bubwith (G.S.) From late November flocks were thirty to fifty until late January, when several flocks of 250 were recorded,

134 RINGED PLOVER

From the 9th to 14th July, two juveniles with one adult were recorded at Healaugh (D.B., P.K., S-R. )

Two other records were from Lower Derwent - six mid-July and six at Wheldrake on 10th August (G.S.)

135 LITTLE RINGED PLOVER

The second year of breeding in the area and not without hazard: "Three birds (a spare male was present throughout) produced eggs in May in S.E. 63. These were destroyed by an unknown agency. A new nest with four eggs was discovered a few days later. 'There were four chicks on 17th June' (G.S.).

140 GOLDEN PLOVER

Sixty at Aughton on 4th February, and forty the same day at Rawcliffe aerodrome (J.V., P.H.). A flock of 700 by (J.W.) at Bolton Percy on 22nd March, after which much smaller flocks were noted. A straggler flew over Kilburn on 12th June (P.H.) Winter flocks from 15th September were mostly from Lower Derwent:-thirty and twenty five mid-September and small groups in November (P.H.3 G.S.) Increased number by mid-December, 300 and 350 (G.S., B.C.) Small groups at Rawcliffe during November/December (P.H.)

145 COMMON SNIPE

Again widespread in all suitable areas, (G.S.) counted 50 near North Duffield. Counts of seven to fifteen at Healaugh. between October and December were reported (D.B.)

147 JACK SNIPE

The first record from Castle Howard for seven years was of a single bird flying North to South on 28th November (B.P.)

148 WOODCOCK

There are indications that a high toll is taken in game areas. Some are often wintering birds obviously as territories are mostly occupied by late March. The first roding pair noted was on 27th March, near Pottle Hill (P.H.) Other breeding areas were Brandsby, Swallow Hall, Black. Plantation, Yearsley, Hunt House, Crayke and Ampleforth (P.H., G.S., S.P., J.W., D.B.)

150 CURLEW

Fewer records this year, and some of the usual nesting sites vacant. In other areas "prospecting pairs moved away after a few days (P.H.) and were not replaced by others". First prospectors 9th March, at Stearsby and Rackelf. By 20th March, many flying single birds were reported.

151 WHIMBREL

Three calling whimbrel flew North over Skipwith on 22nd. April (B.C., R.V.)

156 GREEN SANDPIPER

No Spring passage records, but good return passage numbers in July/August, and more widely spread than 1972:- Healaugh, 9th to 11th July, two birds. From 14th July to 20th August, four present. A single on 2nd September was the last record of the year (D.B., B.C., P.K.) Two birds spent July and most of August at Skipwith (GS,). Naburn Sewage Farm held a pair from 2nd to 11th August (P.H., G.S.) and (J.W.) noted a single at Castle Howard on 2nd. August. Strensall Common also had a single on 24th August (J.H.L.)

159 COMMON SANDPIPER

The largest single count was a pair over He-worth, flying low, 11th May (J.H.L.) on Spring passage. No Autumn groups were noted, A single was seen at Castle Howard from 2nd May to 15th August (P.H.) and nearby Kirkham also had singles in May and June\*

161 REDSHANK

-

Present in early May at Castle Howard, Wheldrake Ings, Aughton. "A flock of 20 passage birds flighted from Castle Howard on 20th September, (J.H.L.).

Other reports were widely spread from the centre to the South of the area.

165 GREENSHANK

Improved number over last year, when only two Spring passage birds were recorded. At Castle Howard, which has repaid some systematic watching this year, (J.H.L.) recorded three birds on the 26th and 27th August. The same applies to Healaugh, (D.B., S.R.) P.K.) recorded from one to three birds from 9th to 14th July, and from the 15th to 20th August, with the last record -

a singleton - being noted on 15th September. Only one record \_ came from the Lover Derwent Valley, (G.S.) observed a single bird feeding at the river edge on 8th September.

178 DUNLIN

Mid-winter counts from two areas, Lower Derwent and, pleasing Castle Howard. 40 in Lower Derwent area on 9th December. "A group on the lags on 30th December. Twenty on 28th January. All Derwent records from (G.S\* and B.C.). Five flew over Castle Howard from South to North on 28th November, (B.P.). The above records are interesting insofar as the area records are usually those of Spring passage groups - this year there were none.

184 RUFF

Only post-breeding season counts were made - at Healaugh. there was a male in winter plumage on 15th August (B.B., S,E.) On the Derwent, a group of six was noted on 9th July (G.S.) and five at Wheldrake Ings on 10th August. This area produced the last record - one - on 8th September.

198 GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

The species may frequent inland areas in larger numbers now. The odd record from the East Riding inland areas in recent years has become six this year, with one count alone showing 150 (14th October at North Duffield) (G.S.) Mostly the records, are of singles within gull flocks, 28th January, Lover Derwent Valley: 15th April, Skipwith Common and again Lower Derwent, 26th April - all (G.S.) - also a single on 30th December at Aughton. There was a single at Castle Howard on 7th January (I.O.C.). Five visits to Healaugh in November and December by (D.B., Y.K.C.) produced counts of two, five, five, one and two.

199 LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL

Again all records are from mixed flocks. One record from Castle Howard on 7th January, (I.O.C.) and two from Aughton on 28th February, (G.S., B.C.) and. thirty five from North Duffield on 14th October, Another winter record was two in mid-October and one and two in mid-November, at Healaugh (D.B., Y.K.C.), The Summer visitors were a single on 15th July, at Healaugh, and three later the same month (D.B.).

200 HERRING GULL

No records of particular significance. The largest Winter counts were at Strensall tip - 700 on 19th January,

201 COMMON GULL

Increased numbers noted inland from late August onwards. Noted in small numbers on agricultural land during colder weather. In late November a maximum count of 350 was made at Castle Howard (B.P.) and 200 with Black-headed flock following a plough in cold April gales (P.H.). Smaller inland counts as late as 18th April,

208 BLACK-HEADED GULL

Feeding groups throughout the year in all parts of the area. Some high counts were taken during Winter, viz: at Castle Howard 20th January (P.H.) counted an "enormous raft" of "5,000 and on 29th January an inland flock of 600 carpeted a field - "they

took up the precise shape of the field and although birds were constantly in flight none landed outside the field".

Early winter counts were 2,300 flying mostly North to South on 28th November (B.P.) and 2,500 on 9th December, both at Castle Howard,

(T.O.C.) noted that "a few" bred at Strensall - no details of the Skipwith roost were given this year.

#### 212 BLACK TERN

This welcome species was observed at least twice in the area. "Three fed briefly on the lake" on 3rd May at the University Campus (J.H.L.) Two noted at the same place (G.S.) in 'May. Three singles passed up Newton Ouse" during last Sunday in May (P.H,

#### 218 ARCTIC TERN

Two juveniles with one adult spent some time feeding at Castle Howard lake on 27th August (J.H.L.) Four Spring passage birds in a flock of Black-headed Gulls at Foss Island on 29th May, (B.B.) Unknown Spring and Winter passage birds pass along the Ouse. They are well known to anglers who can often distinguish between 'Comic' and Black Terns,

#### 232 STOCK DOVE

While no precise counts or nesting pairs are recorded this year, the species is frequently seen throughout the year in all parts.

#### 234 WOODPIGEON

Some shooters noticed a decrease in numbers about last August September. They became alarmed within a few weeks when the great migrations from Scandinavia failed to appear. From this time commercial shooting became unprofitable. Shooters believe, according to their Magazines, that they themselves are to blame for over-shooting; other opinion is that the vast flocks of 1971 and 1972 could not be shot out in such a short period, Y.O.C. observers confirm that the population has crashed; no great winter flock was noted; the largest was 400.

#### 235 TURTLE DOVE

Present in many parts of the area:- Kilburn, Easingwold, Brandsby, Sutton-on-the-Forest, Strensall, Wiggington, Hovingham, Ampleforth, Stamford Bridge, Westow, Escrick, Bishop Wood, Skipwith Common, Castle Howard, Overton. It is probably that breeding took place in all these areas.

#### COLLARED DOVE

Present in breeding season almost throughout the area, though often widely dispersed. Wheldrake Village has become tenanted by a pair - the first village record {G.S.}

#### 237 CUCKOO

Present from early May. A late rufous bird - 27th August - was seen near Kilburn.

241 BARN OWL

A bird at Haxby regularly hunted a beat from January to April (A.M.V.), This bird could, be the well known Wigginton Road hunter (P.H.). Some other records came from Wheldrake, Moorland, Huntington, Wheldrake Ings, Howden, Ampleforth, Wass, Easingwold and Tollerton, between February and early July, and are likely breeding birds. (P.O., G.S., D.B., R.H., A.B., P.H., J.W.)•

246 LITTLE OWL

Fewer records received this year. Once again some familiar haunts were deserted. Nesting sites were at: Healaugh - found on 14th June (P.K., S.R.), Moorland area (A.B.), Stubb Wood, near the roadside - the parent stood in a nearby ploughed field for one hour (P»0.)> and near Wigginton through-out the year (P.H.) pp (J.L.).

247 TAWNY OWL

Winter records from Wigginton, Selby, Gilling and Colton. Four birds conducted a long-range conversation at Brandsby on 22nd February, (G.S.) found the only read casualty of the year on 5th May at Wheldrake, and the only severe mobbing on 27th April, at Colton. Present in the breeding season at Wigginton, Haxby (A.M.W.), Moorlands (S.M.) Brandsby, Grimston and Gilling (P.H.), Healaugh (B.B.).

248 LONG-EARED OWL

A single at Skipwith Common noted in. late November (T.C. and M.R.).

249 SHORT-EARED OWL

Recorded, only in the Lower Derwent Valley. A juvenile at Aughton on 1st July, and an adult flushed, from grass (Gr.S.) A report of a. single bird on 10th August, and 11th September at Wheldrake (G.S.), also between there and Bubwith a count of seven was made on 16th December.

252 NIGHTJAR

Once again the breeding records all came from one area - Wheldrake and S.E.67 observers had no records. One male and two females were present at Skipwith on 25th May (J.H.L.), later, five pairs were present (G.S.) remarking that new sites were used and old forsaken. Information required on all potential breeding areas.

255 SWIFT

Some early visitors were: Wheldrake on 5th May (GS.) Gilling on 8th May (P.H.), Heworth on 16th May (J.W.), and Strensall on 21st May (J.F.W. arid A.M.V.). No date later than 8th August was reported. This was of three birds at Healaugh (B,



258 KINGFISHER

Few records and no probable breeding pairs. Only three sightings were made (nine in 1971) this year. On 17th February; (A.M.W., J.F.W.) - a mock nesting exercise at New Earswick. On 2nd September, at Howsham (P.H.) and on 24th November at Healaugh, (D.B., Y.K.C.)

262 GREEN WOODPECKER

A paucity of recorders, with no additions to the 1972 report.

263 GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER

Maintaining a constant population apparently. Observers heard or saw birds in several new breeding areas: New Earswick, Gilling, Howsham, Dale End. Most of the existing breeding areas were also used. "Drumming on 12th February continued for long spells in sunshine" (P.H.) Records from (R.H., A.B., P.O., A.M.W., D.B., J.W., M.R., P.H.)

264 LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER

A single bird seen at Healaugh on 14th June (S.R) on 25th June a pair displayed in an oak for some time, but no subsequent records from the area (D.B., P.K.). A sighting near Helmsley in October was noted by (P.H.). Information is lacking on this fringe breeding species.

272 SKYLARK

Noted throughout the area. Some weather movement noted in late January. Snatches of song heard from mid-February. Winter flocks feeding from September onwards. An interesting account of "an enormous flock of 2,000 in a Healaugh stubble field a very cold 1st December, mixed with Corn Bunting, Yellowhammer, Reed Bunting, Chaffinch, Tree Sparrow and Blue Tit (D.B., Y.K.C.)

274 SWALLOW

Another cold, wet April gave a slow start to the Spring migration, only three records for the month, 17th, 25th and 26th April, at Heworth, Easingwold and Naburn. The first prospecting group did not arrive until the 4th May - they did not stay long. Departing bird notes of interest were: 3,000 over Healaugh on 2nd September, (M.B.) Late birds near York on 27th. September (J.P.W.) and over Heworth on 21st October, (J.W.)

276 HOUSE MARTINS

Started building at Flaxton on 13th May (A.M.W. and J.P.V.) "some pairs failed to complete building by late July at Haxby". First passage bird at Castle Howard on 11th April, and then disappeared for a week (P.H.).

277 SAND MARTIN

First group flying West-South-West near Crockey Hill in first week in April (P.H.). A second group of thirty six were present

at Naburn Sewage Farm on 17th April (J.W.). Bred in most suitable sites on the Ouse, the Foss, Wharfe, Rye and Derwent.

280 CARRION CROW

Commonly recorded throughout the area. - no significant detail

282 ROOK

The large rookery at Shire Oaks gave the following counts: 19th July, 1,500 (T.C.); 20th August, 1,000 and 30th September, 4,000 (B.B., S.K.) A common species throughout the area at all times of the year. Rook shooting, which takes place in May, before the young fledge, must be the main control most years, however, populations seem to be buoyant.

283 JACKDAW

No information of new colonies this year. Apparently successful in the area. First nesting efforts made on 29th March

284 MAGPIE

Again widely noted. Groups of six, ten and twelve between January and February. Bred at New Earswick, Strensall, Bishop Wood, Colton, Skipwith, Grimston, Overtoil and Coxwold.

286 JAY

Reported present during breeding season at Overton, Strensall, Dale End, Yearsley, Strensall Common, Healaugh, Skipwith Common, Moorlands, Maidenworth, Grimston, High Wood and Buttercrambe. (P.H., S.M., G.S., J.V., L.M., J.G., and T.G.) Winter records from many other areas.

288 GREAT TIT

A common Summer bird that is noted even more often in Winter. The song is noticed from mid-February whenever mild sunshine occurs.

289 BLUE TIT

A common breeding bird recorded also as a daily winter sight,

290 COAL TIT

Bred at Overton., Strensall, "eight pairs in two hours". Healaugh, Overtoil "an increase in breeding pairs", Castle Howard, Dale End, High Wood and Brandsby. Fledglings at Strensall on 17th June. Winter records were all from areas where breeding took place»

292 MARSH TIT

At Castle Howard, two in January (P.H.), Wheldrake on 5th May (G.S.), Ampleforth on 4th March (P.H.), Skipwith Common on 4th June (A.M.W. & J.P.W.), Overton on 24th May (J»G., L.M.), Healaugh - two on 1st December (D.B., T.K.C.) Proved breeding from Castle Howard - two pairs - Jerry Carr, Skipwith

Common and at least two pairs at Overtoil,

293 WILLOW TIT

Winter birds from Dale End, Castle Howard and Healaugh. Breeding records mostly within a, ten mile radius of York City; Colton, Healaugh, Haxby, Skipwith and Strensall Common, (A.M.W., J.F.W., M.E., B.P., P.H., T.K.C., G.S.).

294 LONG-TAILED TIT

Winter parties of seven to eleven in January/February at Grimston, smaller groups at Aughton, February, and Gilling. Breeding took place at Skipwith Common, Strensall Common, Overton Woods, Bishop Woods, Healaugh and Castle Howard. First nest at Skipwith on 15th April, (R,H.) A group of thirty noted at Hull Road, York, on 4th September, (M.R.). Groups of five and seven at Healaugh in December (B.B.)

296 NUTHATCH

A good record from Wigginton in July; (A.B.) noted a single bird and three at the turn of the year in the same vicinity - a record to follow up. Two Winter records were at Castle Howard - one - on 28th October (D.B., T.C., M.E.) and "A York suburb" in November, "A small group" (D.B., M.E) within 400 yards, some calling. The species is almost certainly under-recorded in the area. More information is required.

298 TREECREEPER

Noted in suitable habitats. No records of particular interest.

299 WREN

Very common. The area carries a high population now. For example, "At least ten territories at Healaugh". "many breeding pairs" at Brandsby, "very successful" at Skipwith Common. "Six pairs" at Grimston. Winter birds heard or seen throughout the area. (R,H., J.G., G.S., B.C., L.M., A.M.W., J.F.W., P.H., M.R., G.S., D.B.).

301 MISTLE THRUSH

Dispersed to Winter territories and berry trees by late November, Before this groups of three to five moved about foraging. Single wintering birds were noted at Bubwith, Castle Howard, Bulmer, Coneysthorpe, Aughton, Hovingham, Sheriff Hutton, Whitwell, Crayke, Oulston, and Coxwold. A few birds nested in or near the Winter berry tree - Brandsby and Coxwold. The first nest was noted on 12th April. (J.G., L.M., D.B., G.S., P.H., J.F.W., B.C., R.H.).

302 FIELDFARE

Nothing exceptional was noted. Groups of twenty to forty in early January, either moving or feeding in many areas. Far fewer birds were seen from mid-January to late February and this appears as a pattern in the area. The return build up began in early March when groups are often bigger (maximum 400) and more common.

Movement continued to mid-April in sharply decreased numbers, i.e. nine on the 15th, seven on the 11th and twenty six at Stillington on 26th (P.H.) No May counts this year. Winter migrants crossed the area moving West-South-West or Vest from the 24th October. After the first group of twenty five, small groups moved across on the usual wide front every day for about nine days.

303 SONG THRUSH

At Brandsby a gardener reported that after spreading slug bait three clutches were made infertile, and the parents developed bald patches (P,H.) A common breeding bird.

304 REDWING

(A.M.W., J.F.W.) heard a singing bird at Haxby on 7th January, Some small groups in January, but less than might be expected. There was an area-wide increase from mid-February to mid-April, when small widespread groups in icy gales were noted North of York. The straggler this year was at Strensall on 13th May (A.-MW. & J.P,W,) The first incoming records were for fifty at Duffield on 14th October, (G.S.), thirty at Castle Howard two days later (P.H.) and eighty at Healaugh the same week (D.B., Y.K.G.).

308 BLACKBIRD

No significant reports. Some winter flocks of seventeen to thirty were counted. (G.C.) counted a loose flock of 35 in December.

311 WHEATEAR

A single record, in July near Easingwold (P.M.). A surprisingly few of these known passage birds are recorded.

317 STONECHAT

A cock bird at Strensall on 21st October (J.W.) makes the second record for the area. A Spring and Autumn movement.

318 WHINCHAT

Of the four breeding areas mentioned last year, only Strensall was reported upon. Birds were present from early May. Some indications of breeding success would be welcomed.

320 REDSTART

A severe fall in population is being commented on at B.T.C. and a parallel with the Whitethroat crash is feared. The winter home - the Savannah immediately South of the Sahara - has suffered drought to the extent that little life remains. Only four records were received; our second poor year - Skipwith Common (P.O.), Naburn (A.M.W. & J.F.V.), two nests at Strensall (,J,W,); and a pair which failed to produce eggs near Skipwith (Of.St). Records needed.

325 ROBIN

A well established breeding bird, and equally, well noted

over the Winter,

327 GRASSHOPPER WARBLER

Bred in at least four areas, More detailed records and notes are needed. (J.H.L.) A.M.V., J.F,W.) (P.H.)

333 REED WARBLER

Bred at Strensall Common (Gr.S.). Pocklington Canal had several colonies totalling thirty pairs (J.H»L«), Wheldrake Ings (Cr.C.), Melbourne Canal (J.W.). Naburn (A.M.W. & J.F,W.) and Askham Bog (M.R.).

337 SEDGE WARBLER

Seven at Wheldrake within 400 yards on 5th May (G.S.) Four pairs at Healaugh (D.B.) Askham Bog, several pairs (M.R,, P.H.) Naburn (A.M.W., J.F.W.). Overton Wood (L.M., J.G.)

343 BLACKCAP

Bred in the following places:- Naburn, Brandsby, (two pairs) Stubb Wood, Healaugh (four pairs), Askham Bog, Strensall, St. Johns, Moorlands, Ampleforth and Maidensworth. (A»M«W,, J.J?.W., P.H., R.O., D.B., "S.R., P.K., S.M.) Four were ringed at Millington Woods.

346 GARDEN WARBLER

First record on 10th May at Bishop Wood (R.H.), Bred also at Dale End, Strensall, Flaxton, Healaugh and Ampleforth

Millington Wood held a considerable number, six of which were ringed. The species is difficult to identify and is frequently overlooked. Records welcomed.

347 WHITETHROAT

Read the remarks under Redstart which shares the Sahel zone Winter home. All records; Breeding reports came from Overtoil, Skipwith Conation, Bishop Wooo, Strensall, Allerthorpe Common, Dale End, Stearsby (R.H., .L.M., P.H,, A.M.W., J.F.W.. J.W.). (T.C.) noted several failures at Healaugh. All records required, (A.H.W.) heard a singing bird at Haxby Village on 24th. to 30tli September.

348 LESSER WHITETHROAT

A single singing bird was heard on 11th May at Stubb Wood (F. O) similar report came from Healaugh on 17th July, but no subsequent evidence of breeding (D.B., S.R., P.K.) A third record was at Heworth in a garden, from 24th to 26th July (J.H.L.) Good records.

354 WILLOW WARBLER.

Apparently in all suitable habitats. The first song was heard at Skipwith on 5th April by (R.H., GS, B.P.)

356 CHIFPCHAFF

Very well recorded, in all suitable habitats. Migrants were unusually late in arriving due to the unseasonal weather. The first record, was also at Skipwith on 15th April.

357 WOOD WARBLER

Three pairs were identified during the season, (P.O.) discovered a completed nest near Stubb Wood on 11th May. A new record for Healaugh, on 9th July, seen and heard (D.B., P.K.) Did not apparently stay. At High Wood, where two pairs bred last year, nothing was seen or heard after 16th May (P.H.)

364 GOLDCREST

Noted in all the usual places. Small groups appeared quite tame during the cold part of January and February. No details of movement.

366 SPOTTED FLYCATCHER

A surprising lack of records, The birds were absent from several known breeding places; for example, "no young were fed on the High Wood fence for the first time in eleven years" (P.H.) Healaugh had four families, Castle Howard lake area, three (70.B., P.K., P.H., F.O., S.M.) Families also at St. Johns, Westow, Ampleforth, Skipwith, Strensall (six pairs), York suburbs.

368 PIED FLYCATCHER

Following a report (P.H.) heard singing 1st June, near Ampleforth. No further evidence in three ensuing visits. The possibility of a new breeding species is suspected in this area.

371 DUNNOCK

A common breeding and Winter species.

373 MEADOW PIPIT

Bred in all the usual known areas. Strensall Common had twenty pairs (P.H., A.M.W., J..?¥.) Birds were returning to territories by late March/early April, and displaying mid-April ({J.S., P.H., J.H.L., D.B., S.R.) A general absence became obvious from mid-August, and by late November only odd birds were noted.

376 TREE PIPIT

First passage birds were at the University Campus on 29th. March (J.H.L.) - quits early. Breeding reports were no earlier than 12th June - Grimston and Dale End (P.H.). Present during Summer also at Dale End, Naburn, Castle Howard, Strensall (at least five pairs), Derwent Valley, Buttercrambe - all being additional to the 1972 report. A bird was ringed at Millington Wood.

380 PIED WAGTAIL

Highly successful judging by the large numbers of post breeding groups.

381 GREY WAGTAIL

(Y.O.C.) observed a singleton at Castle Howard during the cold on 7th January. A single at Wass was seen on 21st February, a pair was seen twelve days later, but there was no

subsequent evidence (P.H.) The Brandsby pair established a pair bond by 1st April, and apparently produced two broods (P.H.) At Skipwith on 23rd June (D.B.) saw a single bird; the same observer saw singletons at St. Johns College sports field on 13th October, and again at Heworth Croft on 23rd October.

382 YELLOW WAGTAIL

Another species that could be adversely affected by the prolonged drought in the Sahel zone of Africa. In addition to the known breeding colony, Healaugh had four pairs (D.B., P.K.) Bishop Wood had two pairs (R.H.) and of especial interest, (L.M., J.C.) recorded breeding at Overton - no counts.

First birds into Naburn, five pairs on 17th April (J.W.) Counts required from the Naburn and Strensall areas.

384 GREAT GREY SHRIKE

A single record was at Strensall on 21st October (J.W.)

388 RED-BACKED SHRIKE

In late August, farm workers near Westow, on the Derwent, noticed beetles and a young Tit impaled on a thorn hedge. They were employed, harvesting nearby, and saw the Shrikes over a period of three or four days. This record was not substantiated by the Recorder (P.H)

389 STARLING

No particularly large flocks (maximum 400) were recorded, and no roost of any kind.

392 GREENFINCH

Considerable numbers in Summer. Autumn flocks of 30 to 40 in October became 15 to 30 a month later (T.C., M.R.) Flocks - some mixed - were counted throughout the Winter, but none running into hundreds. Two ringed at Millington Wood.

393 GOLDFINCH

In mid-October a charm of 60 passed over Healaugh, and ten the following day (T.C., S.R) Other groups were from Kilburn, Colton, Skipwith, Clifton Ings, Derwent Valley and Ampleforth.

394 SISKIN

Two noted at Castle Howard on 25th February (J,W.)

395 LINNET

Present throughout the area, in all seasons. Winter flocks were not exceptionally large, 40 to 100 was the highest count at Strensall, (A.M.V,) in late September. A single ringed at Millington Wood, (J.G., L.M.) found only a single breeding pair in Overton Woods.

397 REDPOLL

Winter flocks of about twenty fairly frequent. Bred in all suitable habitats. Mocking began in late June. Two were ringed at Millington; the sole record.

401 BULLFINCH

Widespread but local in Winter and Summer. Post-breeding dispersal was not remarked, upon. Winter foraging parties - often two male and one female - usually near nesting site. An exceptionally large group was seven at Brandsby.

404 CROSSBILL

Near Sutton Bank on 20th February (P.H.) recorded four. A male and female were present at Skipwith Common on 4th June (D.B.J (J.H.L.) found many opened cones at Black Plantation on 4th November. No breeding evidence was discovered,

407 CHAFFINCH

No records of particular interest.

408 BRAMBLING

Disappointingly few records submitted. Fifteen at Castle Howard on 7th January, eleven at Brandsby on 12th January. Thirty five in a mixed, flock at Farlington on 24th March, Four at Skipwith Coalmen on 15th April, Two at Healaugh on 27th October. Many Winter records were of one to three in mixed flocks. The unusually mild Winters could account for the paucity of records. (Y.K.C., R.fl., P.H., D.B., S.R., I.O.C.,G.S.) Counts needed.

409 YELLOWHAMMER

Flocks of twenty five to "130 moved about the district from early to mid-January, after which an apparent evacuation occurred". Flocks in mid-February were seen to be about fifteen to twenty five (P.H.) Nesting records from every part of the area.

410 CORN BUNTING

Displaying birds seen at Bishop Wood, Healaugh, Colton, Oswaldkirk, Marton, Huby, Overton in breeding season - also Lower Derwent, Skipwith, Strensall, Sutton-on-the-Forest and Tollerton, (R.B., J.G., L.M., D.B., T.C., S.R., G.S., B.C.) A great many were seen in a mixed Winter flock at Healaugh in January (D. B.)

421 REED BUNTING

Widely spread throughout the area and bred wherever suitable conditions applied. Bishop Wood produced several pairs, Strensall Common at least three pairs, Overton Woodland Naburn, three pairs each., Wheldrake six pairs, Healaugh "probably seven pairs", Castle Howard only two pairs. Fledglings were noticed at Haxby on 13th May. Others at Wheldrake, Aughton, Colton, Skipwith, Oliver Bank and Stearsby.

424 HOUSE SPARROW

Highly successful in all parts. Often observed raiding hirundine nests and Tit boxes this year. Winter flocks of 300 common.

425 TREE SPARROW



Healaugh, Overton, Wheldrake, Derwent Valley, Colton, Castle Howard, Moorlands, Naburn and Newburgh. The largest flock numbered about 500 at Wheldrake in late February (G.C.)