

# YORK ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB - REPORT 1976

## Chairman's Remarks

I think that this year the Club may congratulate itself not only on the increase in number and variety of its records but on the number of contributors of records, which now stands at 36, the highest in its history.

Now we have had ten years of recording on which we can work - Dave Braithwaite, the Assistant Recorder, has analysed some of the records and the results appear in this issue. Members will notice that the reports on the Warbler species have increased but we still need a continuing special effort in this direction.

The common species, on which insufficient records have been provided, are now reduced to five. We should, I think, reflect as to whether the Jackdaw is really such a common species in our area as one might suppose. I would be interested to know of breeding, including any colonies, also large flocks of this species.

JF WILSON

## Secretary's Report

1976 proved to be another successful year for the Club.

Indoor meetings were held regularly at the Community Centre in Priory Street, the exception being a visit to the Yorkshire Museum in April. Members were shown the collection of Bird Skins by Mr. T. M. Clegg, to whom we extend our thanks,

Illustrated lectures delivered through 1976 by our invited guests, who were:

a) "Marathon in Morocco"

b) "Birds of Norway"

a) "A Surprise Evening"

Our special thanks to these colleagues for their courtesy and interest.

Of the thirteen field outings only two were held outside Yorkshire, namely - Clumber Park in June and Teesmouth in September.

Away from the meetings members continued to provide reports and sightings for the Recorder and participate in survey work, A number of members gave assistance to the Y.N.T, in constructing a hide on the Wheldrake Ings Reserve, I am sure this amenity will prove invaluable for the future and would strongly advise members to book their seats well in advance, mine is booked!

Our Club Annual Dinner was again successful, as was our October Photographic Competition, The eventual winner turned out to be a new member, namely Mr J Tucker; our congratulations to him and our thanks to all members who submitted slides, better luck next time,

The Club continued its affiliation to the various bodies, being the Y.N.U, BTO, Y.N.T. and the R.S.P.B.

In the committee's endeavour to encourage younger members to participate more in the naming of the Club our Annual General Meeting in November produced two new officers, namely Mr, T. D, Charlton, 'Secretary, and Mrs. J, Pepper, 'Committee'. Our best wishes are extended to these members for the future.

Lastly, it is worthy of note that although our membership is not growing in numbers, it certainly is growing in stature and prestige.

G SMITH

## Summary for 1976

A total of 156 species and two sub-species were recorded during 1976, this was the highest number of birds recorded by the Club in a single year.

Once again the main interest early in the year was the large numbers of wildfowl in the

Lower Derwent Valley including Bewick's and Whooper Swans. Four Mealy Redpolls were caught and ringed at Eastmoor in February and a Red-throated Diver was present on the River Rye in March. Three Marsh Harriers passed through in April and the only record of Cormorant was on the 8th. Garganey, Turnstone, Wood Sandpiper and Dipper during May and a Wood Warbler at Skipwith Common in June were noteworthy, Four Little Stint in the Lower Derwent in July and a Little Gull arrived at Castle Howard on the 21st July and was present until the 19th August.

Waders throughout August and September included several Spotted Redshank, a flock of seven Grey Plover, 12 Green Sandpiper and 50 Ruff, The highlight of September was when an Osprey stopped to feed at Castle Howard Lake, Amongst many interesting records late in the year October brought Scaup, November produced Hen Harrier, Great Grey Shrike and Red-breasted Merganser. December saw two Jack Snipe, a flock of ten Snow Bunting and a Waxwing which all added to what had been another interesting year.

As a follow up to the appeal for more records of the commoner species, I would like to take this opportunity of thanking all those concerned in the additional effort, Keep up the good work.

BG PEPPER

#### Assistant Recorder's Notes

Having now eleven years of records for the York Ornithological Club (YOC) census area, the opportunity to look at a few species and see what has happened to their status over the past eleven years was too good to miss, It must be remembered that this is an exercise done primarily for the readers interest and because of the short history involved should not be seen as a conclusive bit of statistical evidence.

Nevertheless I have tried to make the exercise as objective as possible and have referred to Sharrock's book "The Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland" (known more affectionately as just "The Atlas") where ever relevant, The more discerning reader will no doubt note that reference to this book becomes almost monotonous. I justify my action by saying, quite subjectively but few will argue, that this book is by far the most comprehensive and informative published work on the status of breeding British birds ever carried out, mainly due to the amount of statistical evidence collected, Veterans of the YOC may quite correctly claim that the book wouldn't be quite the same without their contributions, Over the past eleven years the number of people submitting records has tended to vary from year to year and this may have an effect on the statistics collected,

Number of Recorders

1966 - 12	1967 - 23	1968 - 23	1969 - 19
1970 - 21	1971 - 19	1972 - 24	1973 - 23
1974 - 23	1975 - 23	1976 - 34	

Which as a matter of interest makes, if my maths is up to scratch, an average of 22.18 recorders per year.

Common Buzzard, *Buteo buteo*.

Since 1969 has been recorded regularly in the less cultivated regions of the area with 1970 and 71 producing 4 and 5 records respectively, being recorded mainly out of the breeding season. Sharrock (1976) notes that by the First World War the numbers of Common Buzzard had reached their lowest ebb since records had been kept, this has been attributed to persecution from game keepers in the main. Since the First World War, however, the population has steadily increased, Birds in South West England have become adept at living in an agricultural biosphere; if the present trend of expanding population continues Common Buzzard may well become a breeding species in the Y.O.C. census area.

Merlin, *Falco columbarius*,

The first record was in 1974 of a bird that apparently wintered in the Derwent Valley. That

same winter a bird was noted at Whitwell, In 1975 there were 4 birds recorded; 2 in autumn and 2 during the winter months, There appears to be a steady decline in the national population (Sharrock 1976), this decline has been attributed mainly to the loss of satisfactory breeding grounds (Prestt 1965). There has however been an increase in records of birds in the Y.O.C. area, this could be due to one of three factors -

- i) There has since 1966 been a genuine increase in the Merlin population,
- ii) Observers have become more proficient and, or, more diligent.
- iii) The birds have, or are, changing their wintering haunts.

It may well be of course that a combination of these factors is the cause of these more frequent occurrences of Merlin.

Little Ringed Plover, *Charadrius dubius*.

1968 saw the first record of this species, it was a passage bird, after that they were recorded in the spring of 1969 and regularly on autumn passage. In 1972 the first breeding record was made, a pair have bred regularly since. Sharrock (1976) makes reference to the expansion of Little Ringed Plover on a national scale since 1944. This expansion correlates well with the demand for gravel by the building industry and hence the rise in the number of suitable breeding sites in the form of gravel pits. Murton (1971) notes that it is interesting that the close relative of the Little Ringed Plover, the Ringed Plover, *Charadrius hiaticula*, has not been able to capitalise this newly formed habitat although Ringed Plover have been known to nest at inland sites for some years, This illustrates how some species may be ecologically more 'opportunistic' than others.

Collared Dove, *Streptopelia decaocto*.

When the Club began documenting the status of birds in the York area, in 1966, the species was already well established, especially it seems at the B.O.C.M, works at Selby where it would appear there is an abundance of grain. The first actual breeding in York City itself was in 1969, The bird is seen regularly about the area and most observers consider it common and it is subsequently not recorded, Because of this it is difficult to make an estimate of the full range and density of the population in this area. Sharrock (1976) points out that the species, because of its close association with man and his grain agriculture, has filled a vacant ecological niche, thus explaining their rapid expansion through the British Isles since the early 1950's, this idea is held by Lack (1968).

Nightjar, *Caprimulgus europaeus*.

In 1966 birds bred at Barlow, Wheldrake and Skipwith with a probable breeding total of 10 pairs. In 1970 there were probably 11 pairs breeding, yet in 1971 the Recorder noted "The range of the species is contracting", and in 1976 breeding is restricted to Skipwith Common where probably 3 pairs bred. Whereas the habitat at Wheldrake has changed due to the maturation of the afforestation, the habitat at Skipwith has not, or at least not drastically. Habitat conditions cannot be held totally responsible for this decline then. Since the 1930's this declining trend has been evident but the reasons are not clear as with the activities of forestry enterprises suitable habitat for Nightjar has been created, Neither has this decline correlated with climatic conditions as the species was declining in the warmer climatic period which was marked up until the Second World War, this warmer period would have made food for their insectivorous diet more plentiful. The true cause of the decline of Nightjar still awaits explanation. Murton (1971) considers that disturbance might be a contributing factor and certainly in the Y.O.C. census area this might hold true,

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, *Dendrocopus minor*.

Renowned for evading the most vigilant of birdwatchers, the first recording of the species was in 1968 with one sighting that year. Since then the numbers of recordings have steadily increased, in 1974 there were 13 sightings in a total of six different months, Yorkshire is of course a fringe county for the range of Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, and this secretive little

chap has defied attempts to prove conclusively that the bird breeds in our area, or not at all. Sharrock (1976) states that the range and numbers of the species is not known to have changed up until 1973, nevertheless it remains that we are recording more of them, more frequently. April has proved to be a successful month for recording this species.

Stonechat, *Saxicola torquata*.

Was not recorded until 1972 when one was recorded in May; in 1973 one bird was recorded in October, In 1974 there were four sightings split between October and December, and in 1975 there was a total of 16 sightings in four months, May, October, November and December. The trend is clearly an upward one, The Stonechat is a bird that is particularly affected by hard winters, its strongholds being on the western coast lines of the British Isles where the warming effect of the North Atlantic Drift bringing warmer waters from the Gulf of Mexico minimises the effect of such hard winters. The last winter falling into the category of "hard" was in 1962/63, this was before the recording days of the Club and of course we have no records for the pre-1962 status of Stonechat, but since then this upward trend noted might well be just a recovery by the bird to that level,

Redstart, *Phoenicurus Phoenicurus*.

In 1966 Redstarts bred in 3 areas, this was so until 1969 when they were recorded breeding in 4 areas. In 1971 birds were recorded present during the breeding season in 5 different areas. There was a sharp drop in records in 1972, there being only one proven breeding record. In 1973 the Recorder commented "A severe drop in population is being commented on by the B.T.O., a parallel to the 'Whitethroat Crash' is feared." Since 1973 breeding has continued at Strensall Common and Brandsby, recovery has a long way to go to reach the 'norm' preceding the 1969 'peak' in population.

This fall in population on a national scale has been attributed to the failure of rains to penetrate to the Sahel zone on the southern fringe of the Sahara Desert (Winstanly et, al. 1974) impairing their passage through to wintering quarters in West Africa, resulting in many birds perishing en route. The drop in population of Redstart correlates closely with that undergone by the Common Whitethroat, *Silvia communis*,

Grasshopper Warbler, *Locustella naefla*.

Until 1969 records ran at about 20 singing males heard in 4 months of the year beginning in April. 1969 appeared to be somewhat of a 'bumper year', with 23 records of singing male plus "Probably 15 pairs at Skipwith". The Recorder did note however "a sudden desertion at Grimston Common". 1970 returned to what was the norm for the three years previous to this 'Grasshopper Warbler year' in 1969. The records for 1971 become a little vague with no specific numbers being given but birds recorded at eight potential breeding sites. 1972 produced only three successful nesting sites, the Recorder made the addition that two sites near Brandsby Dale were 'abandoned'. There were only birds recorded at 4 breeding sites in 1973 and the Recorder sensed that the species needed closer observation. In 1974 Grasshopper Warbler was only recorded in July with one breeding record and one singing bird elsewhere that did not appear to stay. 1975 produced again only one breeding record but 5 birds were recorded in four months of the year elsewhere, In 1976 single singing birds were only recorded in four places.

In summary, between 1966 and 1976 there has been a peak in population in 1969 followed by a continual drop in numbers in the five post 1969 years that almost saw the disappearance of the species from our area. Numbers since 1974 have, however, tended to recover a little of the lost ground. Since the records do in fact show a clear trend over the eleven year span, variables due to inconsistencies in the notes of field recorders can be almost disregarded, It is interesting to note that in the years 1968, 1969, 1970 and 1971, when the population 'peaked' and subsequently 'crashed', the Atlas Project was underway. There has been no such crash on a national level however, Sharrock (1976) does note that locally population numbers may 'fluctuate' markedly from year to year, he in part attributes habitat changes for such population variations, Drainage of wet land is

probably an irreversible trend that will mean the loss of breeding sites to Grasshopper Warbler. Forestation, however, creates ideal breeding sites in the form of young plantations. As such plantations mature they are lost as suitable habitat for the species but as timber matures and is felled new plantation is put in its place, once more becoming suitable for Grasshopper Warbler.

Habitat change cannot be held totally responsible for such fluctuations in population however, as although the activities of the forester has altered habitat, birds have disappeared from areas where habitat form has remained relatively stable, such as Skipwith and Strensall Commons. It is more probable that when a succession of conditions come right such as those for breeding and migration, and other key factors affecting mortality, the species is able to capitalise readily on these thus leading to 'bumper populations in 'Grasshopper Warbler Years'. Conversely when these conditions are adverse the population rapidly suffers. No simple explanation is possible as with this species factors affecting mortality are probably complex and indeed equally complex in their relationships.

Grey Wagtail, *Montacilla cinerea*.

First recorded in the winter months of 1968, then not recorded again until 1971 when there were 3 breeding records from SE57, where they've bred ever since. Since 1972 Grey Wagtails have been recorded regularly in all months of the year, becoming more frequently recorded toward 1976. This increasing trend shows similarities to that shown by the Stonechat, *Saxicola torquata*. This again is due to the birds' susceptibility to 'hard' winters which may cause birds to disappear from areas on the periphery of their range, such as the Y.O.C. census area is for Grey Wagtail and Stonechat. As with Stonechat this steady increase in the frequency of recordings may only be a gradual return to the pre 1962/63 winter status.

#### Bibliography.

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Murton, R. K., 1971. "Man and Birds".  
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Winstanly et. al., 1974, in Sharrock, 1976.

Dave Braithwaite

The following are notes and numbers of species ringed etc. from an area near Sutton-on-the-Forest; weekend visits were made mainly in Spring and Autumn by Roger A. Innes and Geof. A. Rogers.

Extract from "From Aeroplane to Ornithology" a report on birds of Eastmoor Aerodrome, Sutton-on-the-Forest.

#### RINGING NOTES

On 14th February 1976 at 1300 hours, a winter party of Redpolls with a few Siskin was observed feeding on the ground along an access road through the wood, They seemed very attracted to a patch of very short moss about quarter inch high. The numbers present, put at 140+, were in close proximity to mist nets already in operation. It was decided to erect a spare 60 feet, 4-shelf net over the area of moss in the hope of catching a few of the party. Having duly erected the net we retreated to a safe distance and keeping the net in sight, we waited to see what the outcome of our efforts might be. We did not have long to wait, for within five minutes the whole flock had returned to the patch of moss which covered approximately six square feet. Within twenty minutes, the net had become so full of birds that instant extraction and the furling of the net became our prime target. We had caught as many as we could safely process in one session. The incredible total of birds caught in the one net was 79 which brought the total of birds caught for the day to 142. Included in the 79 were 7 Siskin and a Redpoll ringed in Nottinghamshire by Geoff in 1974.

Four Mealy Redpolls were also subsequently identified, though one of these caused an added excitement to the proceedings. It was at first thought to be an Arctic Redpoll, unfortunately after further deliberation it was verified as another Mealy in paler form. Just for good measure on the same day a continental Chaffinch was also caught and ringed. The first of the two Kestrels ringed on Eastmoor was caught on the 11th May at 12.15p.m. It had apparently noticed a Willow Warbler, which was caught in one of the nets. Roost netting in the Phragmites reed bed proved a most worthwhile exercise with the discovery of a large Reed Bunting roost, numbers estimated at 350+, 65 have so far been ringed with a male and female catch of 66% male and 34% female; with 37% adults and 63% juvenile. Very little is known on the distribution of Reed Buntings from winter roost and it is hoped some of these birds will be controlled during next Summer at their nesting areas. The complete report is available from Roger A. Innes, 44, North Lane, Haxby, York. Cost 50p

### CLASSIFIED LIST

The sequence used is that of the 1972 B.O.U. Check List of the Birds of Britain and Ireland as amended, and published by the B.T.O. in A Species List of British and Irish Birds, 1971.

#### RED-THROATED DIVER *Gavia stellata*

A bird on the River Rye between Nunnington and Helmsley on 20th March was observed feeding and behaving in an active manner (ru).

Last recorded at Lower Derwent in 1970.

#### GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus*

Bred at Castle Howard, Newburgh and Wiganthorpe (DV, DB, PH, pwaa).

One on 17th January and two on 13th March at Pond Head Reservoir (CUP), A single at Dringhouses Pond on 15th February (DV) and a pair displaying on 22nd March (TDC), Three at Bishopthorpe on 28th December (TDC).

#### LITTLE GRIBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Bred at Dale End, Brandsby, Stearsby, Wiganthorpe (PH), Lower Derwent, Skipwith, Naburn Sewage Farm (as). Moorlands (MICW) and Strensall (ia).

Up to eight adults at the Lower Derwent (as) and Moorlands (MKW). An adult and an immature bird at Eastmoor from 29th September to mid-October (RAI).

#### CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

A bird in flight at Cawood on 8th April (RH).

#### GREY HERON

Up to four were recorded in most months throughout the area. Eight in Lower Derwent (as) and 11 at Castle Howard on 27th July and 1st August (BGP, DW) were maxima.

#### MALLARD

Maxima were: 967 at Castle Howard in January, 321 in February, 121 in March (GET), 650 in August (JHL), 700 in September (DB), 500 in October, 250 in November and 624 in December, (DI). 200 at Wheldrake Ings at the end of August, 500 in September, 400 in October (SM) and up to 1,000 to year-end (as, RH). Acaster Malbis flood water had 206 in November (DI). Smaller concentrations at Eastmoor (HAI), Askham Bog (TC), River Ouse at York (DII, DB). Dringhouses Pond (DII), Strensall, Towthorpe (SF11), Pond Head, Wiganthorpe Hall (GET) and Oxtou Pond (DI).

#### TEAL *Anas crecca*

Five at Wiganthorpe Hall Lake on 18th January (GET), 11 at Castle Howard on 18th January, 19 on 14th February (GET), 30 on 10th August, numbers increasing steadily

through September to 9th October when 200 were maximum (nit). 150 in the Lower Derwent in April (as), 250 in September and October (SM), increasing to 600 by the year-end (aS), 12 at Oxtou Pond on 28th March (nit) and up to 47 birds on Acaster Malbis flood water in November. Stearsby, Brandsby and Newburgh had small numbers in the winter months.

#### GARGANEY *Anas querquedula*

One drake at Wheldrake Reserve on 16th May.

#### GADWALL *Anas strepera*

Previously a casual visitor but is now regular at Lower Derwent in winter, A single at Wheldrake Ings from 11th September to year—end, three on 19th September, five on 6th November, 16 on 13th CAP), three on 17th, nine on 21st (SM, as) and five on 28th (SM, as), 14 on 27th December (as). A drake at Acaster Malbis flood water on 3rd November (DW).

#### WIGEON *Anas penelope*

Up to 4,000 in the Lower Derwent during winter months (ajw), numbers reduced to 60 by 11th April and 20 on 28th (as). Three on 10th August and five on 30th (RH), two on 4th September, five on 18th, 21 on 19th (as, RH) and 32 on 24th (SM), Numbers increased to 1,000 in November and 2,000 in December (as). Six in September at Castle Howard and 22 in October (Dir). Acaster Malbis flood water had birds on ten dates in November with a maximum of seven on 29th (DW).

#### PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

One at Wheldrake Ings on 15th February (SM) and two at Castle Howard on 13th March (CBT). Three in Lower Derwent on 11th April (as), One pair stayed until 18th (as, RH). One pair at Wheldrake Ings on 24th August (RH). A single in Lower Derwent on 14th November increasing to six on 20th, 17 on 21st, 30 on 28th and a maximum of 70 to the year-end (as).

#### SHOVELER *Anas clypeata*

Bred in Lower Derwent and at Skipwith Common (as). Up to 150 in early months at Lower Derwent 20 at Bubwith on 7th November 130 at Wheldrake Ings on 14th, 100 on 28th (5145 and a maximum of 250 on 27th December (RH). 30 at Castle Howard on 22nd August (Dii), 18 on 22nd September (DB) and 15 on 25th, 39 on 9th October (Dii), 22 on 24th (JiIL) and 29 on 26th (514), 10 on 4th December (BGP, JI4P).

#### SCAUP *Aythya marila*

A female at Wheldrake Reserve on 24th October (RH, SM, as) was observed amongst Tufted Duck *A. fuligula* and Pochard *A. ferina*. The bird had a prominent patch of white surrounding the base of the bill, the head was distinctively rounded and the general colour was dark brown black, Size was larger than that of female Tufted Duck, The last record was of a dead specimen which had been shot on Skipwith Common in 1968.

#### TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

Bred at Skipwith Common, Lower Derwent (as, SM), Stearsby five pairs, Brandsby two pairs and Newburgh two pairs (PH). Four at Castle Howard on 13th January (SM), five on 14th February (CDT). Numbers increased in March from six on the 3rd t. 30 on 23rd (sit), six on 14th May (~vaa), 24 on 21st July (iv). Low numbers during August, September and October, five on 18th September was maxima for these months (DV). There were 13 present on 28th December (DV).

11 at Wheldrake lags on 6th April (sit) and 15 on 19th (w), up to ten young birds in June and July. Numbers increased towards the year-end with 50 on 9th October (as) and 150 on 27th December (RH). Up to 12 at Dringhouses Pond in January and February (Dv), one on 31st May (DE) and 19 in November and December (DV).

23 on 17th January at Pond Head Reservoir and 16 on 13th March (an). 35 at Wiganthorpe Hall Lake on 18th January, 21 on 13th March (an) and 12 on 23rd (SM), 20 at Skipwith Common on 17th April.

#### POCHARD *Aythya ferina*

Ten at Castle Howard on 13th January (sit), 42 on 18th (CDT, DV), 33 on 14th February, 30 on 31st March (BOP, JMP), 14 on 30th June (ic), 27 on 22nd September (DB), 30 on 9th October, 33 on 26th (SM), 60 on 31st, 73 on 28th November (DV), 68 on 4th December (BGP, Ji?) and 22 on 28th (Dv) Up to 14 at Dringhouses Pond in January increasing to 24 on 15th February (DV), ten on 22nd March (no), seven in November and nine in December (Dv). Up to 300 at Wheldrake Ings in October, November and December (RH, CS, SM), Seven at Acaster Malbis flood water on 24th October and 6th November (ni), Six at Pond Head Reservoir on 17th January and three on 13th March (CDT), Small numbers at Skipwith in the winter months (as). Four at Stearsby on 26th February.

#### GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*

12 at Castle Howard on 7th February (SF), ten on 11th (SM), eight on 14th (CBT), two on 21st (fflcw) and six on 7th March (pic). Two on 16th October (Di!) and three on 4th December (BaP, JNF), One at Acaster Malbis flood water on 31st October and singles on River Ouse at Acaster Malbis on 15th November, 8th, 14th and 20th December (mi). Two at Lower Derwent on 15th February (SM), seven on 7th November (an), two on 14th (SM), three on 27th (as, an), four on 28th (SM) and up to six to year-end (as), A single at Pond Head Reservoir on 17th January (CBT), a female on the River Ouse near Overton Wood on 8th June (n), an immature on the River Ouse near Ouse Bridge York from 26th August to 4th September (BaP, ~w) and a female at Dringhouses Pond on 28th December (Di!).

#### RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator*

A male followed the course of the River Ouse downstream at Acaster Malbis on 23rd November (Di!).

Second record for the area. The first was at Castle Howard on 12th February 1967.

#### GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser*

A single at Newburgh on 1st January and four on 23rd February (PH), 17 at Pond Head Reservoir on 17th January (CBT), 39 at Castle Howard on 3rd January was maximum (.Jw), Other counts were, one on 17th January (SF), two on 18th (Di!), 12 on 7th February (SF), 22 on 11th (SM), 17 on 14th (CBT) and 14 on 21st (MKW), Five on 3rd March (Ri!) and 21st (Ba?, jr.tp) and five on 26th December (Di!). Two at Bubwith on 29th December (RH).

#### SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

Bred in Lower Derwent with 11 young observed on 31st May (sn).

Recorded in most months in the Lower Derwent with up to 15 present (SM, A?, CS, PWGC, RH). One at Newburgh on 1st and 23rd February (PH), one in flooded fields near the Bumper Castle on 11th February (Mn), three at Acaster Malbis flood water on 31st October, one on 1st and 2nd November and two on 3rd (DW).

#### RUDDY SHELDUCK *Tadorna ferruginea*

Two in Lower Derwent on 26th April (as) and one on 18th September (as, Al). Published with the escape proviso.

#### GREY GEESE *Anser sp*

Three at Wheldrake Ings on 1st February (DW), 55 flew over Eastmoor in a southeasterly direction (nll). 22 flew from the northwest and turned east between Acaster Malbis and Appleton Roebuck on 25th November (DV).

#### GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*



22 birds at Castle Howard on 13th January (SM), 28 on 18th (CBT), 17 on 14th February (CBT), 25 on 21st March, 16 on 21st July (SM), 8 on 22nd September (DB), 29 on 9th October (DW), 11 on 24th (JiL), 26 on 1st December (no) and 27 on 26th December (DV), Seven flew in from the north west at Bubwith on 7th November (RH).

#### WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE

Addition to 1975 Report: 11 adults at Castle Howard on 9th March (PH).

Correction to 1975 Report: Records under White-fronted Goose should read Pink-footed Goose *A. brachyrhynchus*.

#### LESSER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser erythropus*

A bird at the University Lake stayed for several days towards the end of May (GET) and one at Wheldrake on 30th (SM). Published with the escape proviso.

#### PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus*

24 flew north over Cliffe on 31st October (RH), three in Lower Derwent on 13th November and a single on 28th December (as).

Addition to 1975 Reports One flew from the Lower Derwent in a northeasterly direction on 1st January (as). Two at Castle Howard on 2nd November (BGP, et. al.).

#### BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*

Two feral birds were recorded regularly at Castle Howard during January, February, March and April, six on 2nd May was maximum (JW, JEIL).

#### CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

Two pairs at Stearsby, one of which produced five young (PH). Seven at Strensall Common on 28th May (AMW, JFW), Treble figures most months at Castle Howard with a maximum of 183 on 18th September (mi). The Lower Derwent had two on 18th April (as), seven on 10th (PWGC), seven on 25th, two on 9th May, six on 13th and two on 21st, A single bird was present throughout the year (as).

Three Canada Greylag hybrids at Castle Howard on 18th January, two on 14th February, 13th March (CMI), 22nd September (DB), 3rd and 9th October and 26th December (DW).

#### MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

Bred successfully on the River Ouse, River Foss and Lower Derwent (GS,BGP).

Up to 12 birds in Lower Derwent (as) 16 on River Ouse (DB), two at Beningborough (PK5), six at Acaster Malbis and five at Dringhouses Pond (DW).

#### WHOOPEE SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*

All records from Wheldrake Reserves Five on 25th January . A single bird summered and associated with a Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*. Three on 3rd November (SM), three on 13th and up to six to year-end,(G5, DW).

#### BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus bewickii*

All records from Lower Derwent up to 62 in January (RH) and 180 in February (GJW), Most birds had departed by 1st April but one stayed until 28th (as).

First of autumn were 22 on 1st November, 67 on 12th increasing to 78 by year-end (as).

#### BUZZARD *Buteo* sp.

One flew northeast over Castle Howard on 7th March (JFW, AfI).

#### BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

Singles at Potterhill on 8th April and Fulford Golf Course on 25th September (PH).

#### SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

Four pairs bred successfully in the Brandsby area (PH).

Only five records from the southern part of the area but numbers well maintained in the north with 40 records throughout the year (PH, JW, SM, JKW, DI, RAI, as, PK, ~w).

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

Three birds passed through the area in April.

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

One ringtail at Acaster Malbis on 13th November

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

One at Castle Howard on 18th September (DI).

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*

Singles at Aughton on 18th and 25th January (RH, SM), near Easingwold on 2nd February (PH), Acaster Malbis on 9th November (Dw) and the Knavesmire on 26th (EM), Addition to 1975 Reports One at Selby on 19th February (PR).

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

Bred at three localities within the city boundary (DB).

Up to seven hunting in Derwent Valley where a bird was observed taking a Lapwing chick from the nest (as).

RED-LEGGED PATRIDGE *Alectoris rufa*

Bred at Eastmoor (Iiii), Marton, Stearsby and South Hutton (PH).

Regular in the Askham Bryan area (DW). Coveys of up to 12 in Lower Derwent (as). Single birds at Line and Huby in April, Spella Park (PH) and Acaster Airfield in May (pwac).

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix*

Coveys up to ten throughout the area with a maximum of 25 at Eastmoor (Rn, PH, pwaa, as).

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

One at Wheldrake Ings on 17th April (DW),

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

Numbers maintained with successful breeding on most suitable waters throughout the area.

COOT *Fulica atra*

Bred in Lower Derwent, Strensall, Castle Howard and Eastmoor.

50 at Dringhouses Pond on 10th January (mx), 46 at Pond Head Reservoir on 17th (CBT), 20 at Castle Howard on 3rd March (sn), 40 in Lower Derwent during summer (SM), up to 69 at Dringhouses Pond in December (DW) and 250 in Lower Derwent on 27th December (aS) were maxima counts,

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*

Bred at Youlton near Easingwold and Alne (pa). Singles at Beningborough on 8th June (PK), Tockwith on 4th July (TDC), Lower Derwent on 23rd (CS) and Castle Howard on 1st August (DW). Three at Castle Howard on 6th October (per DW) and one flew north over Woodthorpe on 26th (DW).

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

Largest winter count was of 2,000 birds in Lower Derwent on 17th and 18th January (DW, RH).

First post breeding flocks were 85 at the Hop Grove on 24th June (iiw) and 16 at Askham Bog on 29th (TDC), 400 in fields between Church Fenton and Ulleskelf on 17th July (ic) and 200 at Castle Howard on 22nd (BGP, JMP). 400 at Wheldrake on 20th September (SM), 271 at Eastmoor on 6th August increasing to 1,100 by mid-October (Rn). 1,000 at Bubwith on 7th November (RH), 1,000 at Acaster Malbis on 13th (DW), 400 at Moor Lane on 16th (iw), 500 at Bishopthorpe and 1,000 in Lower Derwent on 20th (as, Ba?) and 400 at Fulford on 27th (DW), 1,200 at Wheldrake on 4th December (nix) and 1,200 between Appleton Roebuck and Acaster Malbis on 18th (Dix).

#### RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

All records from Wheldrake Ings: one on 8th May (as), two on 12th and 18th (AP, PWGC), four on 13th (AP, **as**) and one on 21st (AI', **as**). Single on 17th August and two on 25th (BGP, JIG'),

#### LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*

Bred in SE74.

One at Wheldrake Ings on 25th April (RH), up to three in May (AI') and June (RH), eight in July (RH) and five in August (SM). Singles on six dates at Castle Howard in August and three on 25th (Dw). Two on 1st September.

#### GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

All records were from Wheldrake Ings one on 31st January (Dw), seven on 18th September (RH, as) and singles on 10th October (RH) and 14th November (as).

#### GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

Up to 600 in Lower Derwent in January (RH) and 450 at Appleton Roebuck (Dw). 20 at Bumper Castle floods on 11th February (MICW), 300 regular at Appleton Roebuck from January to early April, 525 on 18th (DII) and 110 in Lower Derwent on 11th April (as). 12 flew north over Clifton Aerodrome on 20th April (Nfl) and two flew S.S.E. over Acomb on 11th July (DB), 50 at Overton on 30th August (Nfl).

Wheldrake had low double figures in July and August. 175 on 19th September (RH), 40 at Copmanthorpe on 31st September (DB), Lower Derwent had 300 on 10th October (~wo) 650 on 7th November (RH) and 500 to year-end (as).

Acaster Malbis had up to 100 during August, 200 in September, 500 in October, 450 on 3rd December and 350 to year-end (DII). 571 in one flock near Bishopthorpe on 20th November (Em', JMP) and 330 at Moor Lane Dringhouses on 27th (DI).

A high percentage of the 110 birds observed in Lower Derwent on 11th April and of the 525 at Appleton Roebuck on 18th showed characteristics of the northern race *altifrons*,

#### TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*

One at Castle Howard on 8th May (AI').

#### DOWITCHER *Limnodromus* sp.

A single at Wheldrake Ings in mid-summer (GJW). (Y.N.T. Annual Report 1976.)

#### SNIPE *Gallinago gallinago*

Bred at Derwent Valley and Skipwith Common (as). Low double figures at Strensall, Towthorpe, Fulford Ings and Tilmire,

Up to 40 at Castle Howard in August (DI), 35 at Eastmoor on 15th October (RAI), 30 at Middlethorpe Ings on 6th November (DI) and 150 in Lower Derwent on 14th was maximum (as). Acaster Malbis flood water had 30 on 1st November increasing to 110 on 6th, 140 on 15th to a maximum of 250 on 20th. Numbers fell in December from 76 on 3rd to a single on 14th. Shortly after this date the area dried out producing no more records (DI).

JACK SNIFE *Lymnocyptes minimus*

One at Stearsby on 3rd March (PH). An injured bird found at Tang Hall Beck was taken to the museum on 6th December (per sFw). Single at Dringhouses Pond on 28th December (DI).

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

Bred at Skipwith Common (as) and Tilmire Roding birds at Sand Hutton, Allerthorpe, Roding birds at Sand Hutton, Allerthorpe, Acaster Airfield, Skewsby, Grimston, Stearsby, Brandsby and Wheldrake.

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*

Displaying birds at Strensall Common, Oxton, Acaster Airfield and Askham Bryan. Present throughout the year at Wheldrake with up to 15 in September (RH, as). All other records were from York northwards, up to three birds at Strensall Common, Stearsby, Skelton, Poppleton, Moorlands, Tilmire, Stockton Lane, Haxby, Kirkham Gorge, Brandsby, Castle Howard and Eastmoor.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

One at Wheldrake Reserve 27th July (RH), stayed for several days.

Addition to 1975 Reports six over Selby on 17th July (PR).

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

First at Tilmire 11th April (14KW). One in Lower Derwent from 11th to 27th July (as). Birds at Wheldrake throughout August with a maximum of 12 on 24th (RHO) and singles on 2nd and 11th September (AP, as).

Mostly one's and two's at Castle Howard (DW, JW), Tilmire (MKW) and Stearsby Pond (DII) throughout August and September. Five at Oxton Pond on 21st August and three on 29th (DV). Singles at Tilmire on 10th October (mat) and Stockton—on—the—Forest on the 19th December (DV).

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*

One at Wheldrake Reserve on 11th, 12th and 13th May (AP, as).

COMMON SANDPIPER *Tringa hypoleucos*

Three at Wheldrake on 9th May (no, as), Singles at Bishopthorpe on 23rd (14KW). Lower Derwent on 25th and 30th (CS, SM), Kirkham Gorge on 19th June (JW) and Wheldrake on 17th July (sr). Regular at Lower Derwent from mid-July to the end of August with up to four birds present (as). Also regular at Castle Howard during August with a maximum of five on 12th (sw, mi). One heard flying over York Railway Station on 29th August at 21.00 hours (IC).

Correction to 1975 Report: Seven on 11th August at Sand Hutton Pond, not Sutton Pond,

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*

Bred in Lower Derwent (as). Five with some displaying at Strensall on 18th April (JW). Single figure numbers in Lower Derwent during the winter (as). Two at Oxton Pond on 18th April (DV), Acaster Malbis from 30th March to 27th May (DW) and eight on 16th, 17th and 18th June (DW). Singles at Castle Howard in March, July and August (BOP, SM). Eight on 15th October (RAI).

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*

A male in summer plumage at Wheldrake on 8th May was the only spring record.

One at Castle Howard on 10th and 12th August (Jw, Di!). Two at Wheldrake Reserve on 12th August (an) and singles on 14th (Ba?, JNP, as), 19th (SM), 22nd (HbIP) and 24th (an).

Also singles at Castle Howard on 25th August (Di!), Eastmoor on 16th October (Rn) and Wheldrake Reserve on 30th (as).

**GREENSHANK** *Tringa nebularia*

One at Wheldrake on 28th April (as), one on 10th July (RH), two on 11th and one on 20th (as). Up to eight during August (SM), four in September (RH) and one on 10th October (an). Castle Howard had three on 10th August increasing to seven by 28th (Di!, Ba?), and three on 23rd October (Di!),

**LITTLE STINT** *Calidris minuta*

Four at Wheldrake Ings on 20th July (SM).

**TEMMINCK'S STINT** *Calidris temminckii*

A single at Wheldrake Ings (GJW)  
(Y.N.T. Annual Report 1976)

**DUNLIN** *Calidris alpina*

A maximum of 300 in Lower Derwent on 25th January (SM). Numbers generally dropped during February, March and April although a flock of 100 on 8th May at Wheldrake (as). Ten including one with a dark belly on 25th April (an). A juvenile at Wheldrake Reserve on 22nd August (BCP). 15 at Eastmoor on 15th October (PAI). A build up of 150 birds at Lower Derwent towards the year-end (as).

Acaster Malbis floods had birds regularly during November with a maximum of 60 on 24th.

**RUFF** *Philomachus pugnax*

Wheldrake Reserve had up to seven during April (DV, RH, as). Singles in May (no, IF) and five in August (as, RH). 50 on 18th September (as, RH) was a remarkably high count, the highest ever for the area, Five on 20th November and at least one until the year-end (as), Castle Howard had up to three in late August (Dv). Acaster Malbis floods had up to five birds during November (DV).

**GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL** *Larus marinus*

Two over Eastmoor on 4th May (RU). One at Castle Howard on 10th August, two on 22nd and one on 28th (DV). Two at Castle Howard on 23rd October (DV). One at Acaster Malbis on 13th November, five at Acaster Airfield flew southeast on 18th December and three on 20th (DV). Up to seven flying southwest during cold December weather in the Brandsby area (PH). Up to 12 in Lower Derwent when flood water prevailed (as).

**LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL** *Larus fuscus*

A large increase in records with no fewer than 60 reports on this species. Mainly singles throughout the area. Nine at Wheldrake on 7th September, seven on 24th (sit) four at Acaster Airfield on 18th December (DV5 and up to 20 in the Lower Derwent during winter months (as) were maxima counts.

**HERRING GULL** *Larus argentatus*

Seven adult and three sub-adult at Castle Howard on 21st March (BC! , s~a) and two adult on 25th September (DV), Five at Eastmoor on 16th October (RH). One at Acaster Malbis on 9th November and a second winter bird over Moor Lane on 16th (Dii). Remaining records were during December with two over York city centre on 5th, two at Acaster Malbis on 6th and one at Appleton Roebuck on 7th (DW). Up to ten each day at Bishopthorpe between 1st and 18th except 10th and 14th (pwac). Up to 50 during winter months in Derwent Valley (ic).

**COMMON GULL** *Larus canus*

Recorded in all months except May and June, with low double figures throughout the area. The only two large counts observed were 500 at Castle Howard on 21st March (BOP, JMP) and 100 at Ashfield School fields on 6th August (nw).

#### LITTLE GULL *Larus minutus*

A second-year bird at Castle Howard from 31st July to 19th August (jw, BGP, JMP, DW, ja). When first observed on 21st July the bird had begun its adult moult, showing dark underwings, the remaining plumage was that of an immature, dark crown, black bill, black diagonal bar across the wings and dark legs, No subterminal tail band, By mid—August the upper wing moult was complete. It is of interest that the dark underwing developed well in advance of the disappearance of the diagonal wing bars (BGP). Last recorded at Lower Derwent in 1969.

#### BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus*

Bred at Skipwith Common with 120 pairs present, also bred in Derwent Valley (as), 3,000 at Castle Howard on 21st March (BGP, ji.tp), 2,000 at Lower Derwent on 26th April (CS) and 2,500 flew over in a southeasterly direction in a space of 30 minutes on 18th September (as). 3,000 at Naburn Locks on 11th October (MKW). 5,000 at Lower Derwent on 30th October was maximum (as). 2,500 at Castle Howard on 28th November (DW).

#### BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger*

One in full summer plumage at Wheldrake Reserve on 23rd May (Dm10, mi, as). One at Dringhouses Pond on 24th May (per sw) and two on 17th August (as). Singles at Wheldrake Reserve on 17th and 18th August (BGP, mi, as) also 16th and 17th October (as, Nncw).

#### COMMON/ARCTIC TERN *Sterna hirundo/paradisaea*

One flying up—stream along the River Ouse in York city centre on 12th September (3M). All remaining records were from Castle Howard: one immature on 25th August, three immatures plus five adults on 12th September (DW) and two immatures on 18th (Jw, DW).

#### COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

Wheldrake Ings had a single on 25th May (as), two on 31st (RH, as) and one on 11th September (as). Two adult summer birds at Castle Howard on 12th September (UK!).

#### ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea*

One adult summer bird at Castle Howard on 10th August (uk!).

#### SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis*

An adult in summer plumage was fishing with “commics” at Castle Howard on 12th September (DW)

#### STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*

Bred at Skipwith Common (GB) and Eastmoor (RU), 12 near Stockton—on—the—Forest on 21st March was the only flock recorded (BGP, j~p).

#### WOOD PIGEON *Columba palumbus*

A bird carrying nesting material on 22nd. September (DE). Maxima counts were 70 at Eastmoor in October (RAI) and up to 700 at Appleton Roebuck and Acaster Airfield during December (DW), Addition to 1975 Report: 600 at Hambleton on 26th January (PR).

#### TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*

Bred at Wheldrake Woods and Skipwith Common. First in to the area was at Bubwith on 9th May (RH), Ten to 15 were seen regularly at Skipwith Common between 23rd May and 26th June (IC).

The last was at Acaster Airfield on 28th September (nit).

**COLLARED DOVE** *Streptopelia decaocto*

Continues to increase especially in the southern part of the area.

**CUCKOO** *Cuculus canorus*

Earliest at Bonnygate on 19th April (PH), Wheldrake on 25th (as, RH) and Haxby on 30th.

Four at Wheldrake on 30th May was maximum (Mn).

A juvenile was present at Wheldrake on 1st August (RH).

**BARN OWL** *Tyto alba*

Recorded in all months, mostly singles from Castle Howard, Eastmoor, Reighton, Wheldrake, Cawood, Bolton Percy, Appleton Roebuck and Gate Helmsley.

**LITTLE OWL** *Athene noctua*

One at Brandsby on 6th January (PH). Singles during May at Ganthorpe (SF), Wheldrake (IC) and Appleton Roebuck (DW), Acaster Airfield from 2nd to 10th June (DV), A bird being chased by a Blackbird *Turdus merula* at Acomb Green on 19th June. Singles at Skewsby on 22nd June, Colton 3rd July (DV) with two at Acaster Airfield on 7th (PWGC), one at Tilmire on 11th (14KW) and Castle Howard on 14th August (DW), Two at Eastmoor on 16th October (Rn) and one near Askham Bog on 28th December (DV). Up to three seen regularly in S.E.63 (as).

**TAWNY OWL** *Strix aluco*

Nine records of single birds in York at Lord Mayors Walk (ic), Micklegate, Dringhouses, Woodthorpe, The Minster, Mount Vale, Bishopthorpe Road, Nunthorpe School (DV) and Hull Road (as).

**LONG-EARED OWL**

Bred in Huby Woods (PR). One at Averhams Wood on 1st April (DI),

**SHORT-EARED OWL** *Asia flammeus*

Two at Wheldrake on 24th January (Ar) and Aughton on 1st February (MKW).

Singles at Wheldrake on 18th September and Bubwith on 28th December (as),

**NIGHTJAR**

Bred at Skipwith Common (as). Up to three males at Skipwith Common throughout May and June (Ja, P0, IC, as).

**SWIFT**

Arrived a week earlier this year with singles at Allerthorpe on 6th May (sw) and the Knavesmire on 8th (SM),.

An influx of 100 at Stillingfleet on 8th August were possible weather movement birds due to stormy conditions and a large gathering of up in to 2,000 over Acomb on the same date.

A late bird passed over Fulford Road on 5th November (TC).

Addition to 1975 Report: 1,000 at Selby on 27th July (PR).

**KINGFISHER** *Alcedo atthis*

Bred at Sand Hutton, Bishopthorpe and Lower Derwent. Singles between April and November at Ouse Bridge, Hull Road, Fishergate, Tilmire, Bishopthorpe, Castle Howard, Howsham Bridge and Wheldrake Reserve.

A bird was seen regularly at Acaster Malbis during November (DW), Two flew over Castle Mills Bridge, York on 13th November (PIC).

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

Bred successfully at High Wood, Dale End, Grimston and Skipwith Common (PH, as).  
Singles at Kirkham, Flaxton, Lower Derwent, Castle Howard, Burton Stone Lane, Strensall Common, Averhams Wood end the Museum Gardens

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopus major*

Bred at Thorganby, Kirkham Gorge, High Wood and Maidensworth (PH, JW, RH, pwo).  
Noted at Stearsby during March (PH), Two drumming in Knavesmire Woods in spring (EM) and at Skipwith Common on 18th April (RH). Singles at Stub Wood on 8th July (PWGC) High Carr Wood on 4th October and 20th November (Rn).

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER

Bred at Ampleforth and Castle Howard (PH), A female on 16th April and a pair on 24th at Askham Bog (DW).

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

The largest flock was 87 at Eastmoor on 22nd October.

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

The first to arrive was at Appleton Roebuck on 9th April (aw). Up to 400 at Castle Howard in August (DW), 600 mixed hirundines at Wheldrake Ings on 18th September of which a high percentage were *H. rustica*. The last were at Bishopthorpe on 16th October (MKW) and Appleton Roebuck, also on 16th (Dw).

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbica*

Numbers were down on previous years in the Dringhouses area (Elvi).

First was at Bishopthorpe on 23rd April (PWGC). Up to 200 at Castle Howard in August (DW).

Addition to 1975 Report: 500 at Selby on 27th July (PR).

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

New breeding area near Askham Bog, 40 nest holes in sandy banks left over from construction of York bypass (nw).

Six birds over the River Ouse in city centre on 24th April were the first (DW). The last was at Castle Howard on 3rd October (DW),

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone corone*

The largest autumn gathering was at Eastmoor with 122 on 30th October (hAl).

HOODED CROW *Corvus corone cornix*

One at Tilmire on 7th November. All remaining records were from the Lower Derwent with singles on 6th and 14th November. Up to three birds from late November to year- end (as).

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

A bird with a typically dark body but grey mantle and wings becoming paler to wing tips was observed at Wheldrake on 21st November (irn, no).

A mixed corvid flock of 3,000 birds at Buttercrambe on 19th December (DW).

MAGPIE *Pica pica*

Nine at Askham Bog on 16th April and 12 at Moor Lane on 16th October were maxima counts (DW).

JAY *Garrulus glandarius*

Bred in High Carr Wood (Rn) and Skipwith Common (as), Singles at Tilmire (MKW), Askham



Bog (TDC), Strensall Common (BOP, JMP) and Lower Derwent (as). Three at Redhouse Wood on 2nd June (pic).

**GREAT TIT** *Parus major*

25 singing males at Escrick Park in a three-quarter of a mile stretch (IC). Six at Askham Bog on 29th June (TDC).

**COAL TIT** *Parus ater*

The only breeding record was from Skipwith (as). Single at Castle Howard on 14th May. Pairs noted at Sand Hutton, Blackwood, Strips Wood, Strensall and Eastmoor.

**MARSH TIT** *Parus palustris*

Singles at Skipwith, Acaster Airfield, Appleton Roebuck and Stub Wood. Up to three at Castle Howard (1W, as). Small numbers at Eastmoor during January and February, singles recorded in July, August, September and October (an). Four pairs at Blackwood (PH),

**WILLOW TIT** *Parus montanus*

Only breeding records were from Highwood, Blackwood and Peel Park (pa). One at Askham Bog on 16th April, two at Appleton Roebuck on 3rd May and one at Stub Wood on 22nd (PWGC), Two at Averhams Plantation Flaxton on 30th August (ANN, JPW), Three at Eastmoor on 7th October (RAI) and two at Stub Wood on 20th November (DW). Singles during the year at Skipwith Common (as). Addition to 1975 Report: six at Selby on 3rd April (PR).

**LONG-TAILED TIT** *Aegithalos caudatus*

Mild winters recently appear to have helped this species increase, parties of between eight and 12 at Escrick, Tilmire, Strensall, York, Moorlands, Aughton, Bishopthorpe and Lower Derwent. Maxima were 20 at Skipwith on 26th June (ic) and 27 at Eastmoor on 13th November.

**NUTHATCH** *Sitta europaea*

Regular during January and February on bird table at Brandsby (PH). Singles at Castle Howard on 2nd and 17th January (RW). Near Brandsby on 6th April and during June and August (PH). One at Sand Hutton on 17th and 19th December (DW) and two at Naburn on 28th (MKW).

**TREECREEPER** *Certhia familiaris*

Bred at Skipwith Common, Lower Derwent (os), Thorganby (iwo), Flaxton (nni, JPW), Knavesmire Woods, Middlethorpe Ings (SM) and Brandsby (PH). Singles at Castle Howard, Flaxton, Tilmire, Moorlands, Blackwood, Bishopthorpe and Eastmoor

**DIPPER** *Cinclus cinclus*

One at Clifton Ings on 24th May (SW),

**MISTLE THRUSH** *Turdus viscivorus*

12 at Tilmire on 11th July (14KW), Up to 36 at Castle Howard during September (DW). 20 flew southwest over Burton Stone Lane on 24th September (IC) and 14 at Stub Wood on 18th December (DW) were maxima counts.

**FIELDFARE** *Turdus pilaris*

Most birds had left by mid-April, the last two flocks noted were 45 in SE76 on 24th April and 30 near the Buckles Inn on 27th (ni). Three late birds at Bishopthorpe on 29th May. The first autumn birds were three at Castle Howard on 3rd October, Maxima counts were of

500 flying northwest over Lower Derwent on 30th October (as) and 500 southwest over Acaster Malbis on 31st (DW).

**SONG THRUSH** *Turdus philomelos*

31 at St. Peter's School fields on 16th June. Nocturnal passage over York on 29th September, also on the 8th, 15th, 19th and 20th October (ic),

**REDWING** *Turdus iliacus*

Nocturnal passage over York between the 8th and 29th October. Heavy passage between 15th and 25th coincided with Filey's passage. Autumn night passage over York was particularly heavy between 19.30 hours and 23.00 hours with birds heard every two to three minutes on 16th October (DI!). Autumn maximum was at Castle Howard when 800 flew southwest between 22.00 hours and 23.00 hours on 23rd October (DW),

**BLACKBIRD** *Turdus merula*

A partial albino was seen on the Knavesmire during January (SMog).  
A ringed female was observed at Dringhouses on 1st May, there were no further sightings. This would suggest a possible passage bird.

**WHEATEAR** *Oenanthe oenanthe*

A considerable increase in passage birds this year with 19 in spring and seven in autumn. Three at Grimston on 8th April (PH), a female at Acaster Airfield on 9th (pWac), three males at Strensall Common on 18th (JW) and one at the Knavesmire on 5th. A pair at Acaster Airfield on 7th May, three on 8th (PWGC) and two females at Bubwith on 9th (RH, CS). All remaining spring records were singles in May at Tilmire on 2nd, Knavesmire on 6th (n), Towthorpe on 9th (JFW) and Askham Lane on 12th (DW).  
One at Wheldrake Ings on 15th August (SM) and a male at Eastmoor on 22nd (EII). Two at Tilmire on 12th September (MKW). Eastmoor had a male on 6th October and a juvenile on 16th (EII). One at Fulford Ings on 19th October (KiCK).

**STONECHAT** *Saxicola torquata*

Recorded singly at Wheldrake Ings on 25th January (SM), Gilling on 7th March (ji), Lower Derwent on 19th September (as) and the University on 22nd October (JiLL).

**WHINCHAT** *Saxicola rubetra*

The only breeding record was from Strensall Common where a pair feeding four young were noted on 4th July (BGP),  
Three males at Lower Derwent on 7th May, a single on 15th and two juveniles on 21st July (as). Two at Bishopthorpe on 1st August (MICW) and two at Wheldrake Ings from 8th to 19th September (SM, 'DE, AI', as), A late bird at Stockton-on-the-Forest on 11th November.

**REDSTART** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Only two records both from Strensall Common, a male on 18th April and fledged young on 20th June (jw).

**ROBIN** *Erithacus rubecula*

A first year bird caught in Eastmoor Wood near Sutton-on-the-Forest on 18th November had been ringed in Finland in 1976, Full details not through yet.

**GRASSHOPPER WARBLER** *Locustella naevia*

Single singing birds at Bolton Percy on 12th and 15th May and 3rd July (DW), Skipwith Common on 26th June (IC), Castle Howard on 21st July (Jw) and Lower Derwent (CS).

**REED WARBLER** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Bred at Skipwith Common Ca. 12 pairs (as), Melbourne Canal, two pairs (JW) and Naburn Sewage Fan, one pair (BEll'). Two at Askham Bog on 9th May and three on 2nd June (DW), one at Wheldrake Ings on 8th August (SM).

#### SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

An increase in breeding records this year. Bred at Oxtan Pond, Bolton Percy (DW), Wheldrake Ings (BGP), Clifton Ings (JiB), Naburn Sewage Farm and Tang Hall (BGP). Singing birds recorded from Askham Bog, Appleton Roebuck, Middlethorpe Ings, Strensall (DW, JFkl), Foss Island (ic), Fulford Ings (haKw), Overton and Castle Howard.

#### BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*

Bred at Eastmoor (RU) and Wheldrake Woods (as). Brandsby area had nine breeding pairs (PH) and Moorlands had two pairs on 10th June.

Three birds wintered at Crayke. Singing birds from Tilmire, Blackwoods (Mn), Clifton Ings, Skipwith Common (IC), Averhams Plantation (AMW, jn), Appleton Roebuck (Dw), Redhouse Wood, Poppleton and Rufforth Airfield (pic),

#### GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

Only recorded breeding from Brandsby area with 11 pairs present (pa), One singing at Sutton—on—the--Forest on 15th Kay (Mu, rw), a pair at Stub Wood on 22nd (nac) and two singing at Skipwith Common on 23rd (IC), Six singing at Redhouse Wood on 2nd June (~ic) and a pair at Lower Derwent on 19th (as), Singles at Tilmire on 8th August (MID!) and Eastmoor on 22nd (an).

#### WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

Bred at Strensall Common, Skipwith Common, Blackwoods and Lower Derwent, No specific counts were made in these areas but numbers were higher on the Lower Derwent than in previous years, Four pairs at Eastmoor, two pairs at Tang Hall, one pair on Foxwood Lane and a juvenile at Haxby, A pair displaying at Stub Wood.

Singing birds were: singles at Clifton Ings, Askham Richard, Askham Bryan, Sand Hutton, Appleton Roebuck, Bolton Percy, Poppleton Road to Knaption Lane, Acaster Malbis, near Healaugh and Red House School. Two at Strensall Common, Red House Wood and Poppleton, three at Averhams Plantation, Skipwith Common, Askham Lane, Acaster Airfield, Askham Bog and Rufforth Airfield. Four at Tockwith and seven at Brockitt Wood near Appleton Roebuck.

Eight pairs at Strips Wood, seven pairs between Acomb, Askham Bryan and Dringhouses, three pairs at Stub Woods. Singles at Moorlands, Bishopthorpe Ings, Overton, Tilmire, Naburn, Blue Bell Wood and Castle Howard. Three at Oxtan Pond.

The first was at Appleton Roebuck on 21st April (nw) and the last occurred at Eastmoor on 18th September.

#### LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

Bred at Askham Richard (DB), Thorganby (as) and Stearsby (PH). Singles singing at Rufforth Airfield on 9th June (PK) and Averhams Plantation on 28th July (sNw, jpw).

One at Eastmoor on 4th May (Rn), two at Acaster Airfield on 13th and one on 15th and 17th (DW). Three at Eastmoor on 6th August and one on 7th September.

#### WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

The first was at Skipwith Common on 11th April (RH). Singing birds were: ten in the northern half of Askham Bog on 16th April (nii), seven at Strensall Common on 25th and five at Averhams Plantation in May (AMW, JFW), 20 at Red Rouse Wood on 2nd June (plc) and nine at Strips Wood on 3rd (Tlle).

The last records were of singles at Castle Howard and Askham Bog on 3rd October (DW).

#### CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*

The first arrivals were at the Lower Derwent on 11th April (aS), Askham Bog on 16th (DW) and Bishop Wood on 17th (RH),  
Singing birds at Sand Hutton, Eastmoor, Skipwith Common and Tilmire.  
One at Askham Bog on 3rd October (DW) and a possible over-wintering bird feeding amongst nettles at Naburn Sewage Farm on 12th December.

**WOOD WARBLER** *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

A singing male observed at Skipwith Common in June (IC), One at Stub Wood on 7th July.

**GOLDCREST** *Regulus regulus*

Few comparative records considering the recent succession of mild winters. Bred at Blackwoods and Skipwith Common (as). Seen regularly throughout the year at Eastmoor with a maximum of 15 on 7th October (a&i).

All remaining records of single birds: at Homestead Gardens on 17th January CAP), Clifton on 3rd May (IC), Sand Hutton on 28th May (ni'i), Castle Howard on 3rd October and Haxby on 19th December (per Ablw).

**SPOTTED FLYCATCHER** *Muscicapa striata*

Bred at Strensall Common, Acaster Malbis, Eastmoor and Castle Howard. Two pairs attempted to breed near Appleton Roebuck but only two young eventually flew.

The first birds were at Lower Derwent on 25th May (as), Naburn on 30th and Moorlands on 31st. Six at Fulford Ings on 18th August and three pairs at Wheldrake Ings on 28th (14KW).

**PIED FLYCATCHER** *Ficedula hypoleuca*

One near Askham Bog on 3rd, 4th and 5th October (ii~, PA),

**MEADOW PIPIT** *Anthus pratensis*

Bred in Lower Derwent (as). Ten at Eastmoor on 18th September (Rn), 25 flew in a south easterly direction over Castle Howard Lake during the morning of 22nd September (nn). Addition to 1975 Reports 20 at Selby Railway Wood in January (PR),

**TREE PIPIT** *Anthus trivialis*

Bred at Skipwith Common (as). Two pairs bred near Grimston (PH).

A pair singing at Tilmire on 2nd May (14KW) and one at Strips Wood on 31st (DB). Four at Redhouse Wood on 2nd June (PK), two at Acaster Airfield on 5th (nii), three at Rufforth Airfield on 9th (-ic) and five singing at Strensall Common on 20th. Two at Tang Hall Tip on 14th July (BGP) and two at Eastmoor on 26th September (Rn).

**PIED WAGTAIL**

100 roosting in York Railway Station in October (DB) increasing to 1,500 by late November.

**WHITE WAGTAIL** *Motacilla alba alba*

Singles at Wheldrake Ings on 18th April (RH, as) and 7th-9th May (as).

**GREY WAGTAIL** *Motacilla cinerea*

An exceptional increase in records with singles at Selby, Strensall Common, Appleton Roebuck, Acaster Malbis and York City Centre. Pairs at Wheldrake, University, Foss Islands, Bishopthorpe and Castle Howard. Three at Naburn on 12th December.

**YELLOW WAGTAIL** *Motacilla flava*

Bred at Lower Derwent, Skipwith Common, Naburn Sewage Farm, Haxby, Strensall Common and Eastmoor (as, EM, .ANW), Three pairs with 13 juveniles at Towthorpe on 3rd July (JEW) and a pair with three juveniles at Acaster Airfield on 5th (P1400). 30 mostly juveniles at a refuse tip near Askham Bog on 29th August (DW).

First spring bird was at Wheldrake on 18th April (RH, as). Up to three at Riccall, Acomb,

Clifton Ings, Askham Bryan, Overton, Rufforth and City Centre (DB, TDC, BGP, IC, DI, PK),  
Up to eight pairs regularly seen at Lower Derwent and 25 pairs at Naburn Sewage Fan (as).

WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulus*

One at Bishopthorpe Palace on 28th December (TO),

GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor*

Singles at Wheldrake Ings on 30th and 31st October, Skipwith Common on 13th  
November, Tollerton in November and at B.R.Sports Field near Rob Moor on 6th May.

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

A roost of 7,000 at Castle Howard on 1st September (jw).

HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Bred near Brandsby, Eight birds noted during August (PH),

GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris*

Up to 100 recorded at Eastmoor during winter months (nii).

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

Charms of up to 20 noted at Clifton, Tang Hall Tip, Strensall Common, Wheldrake and  
Eastmoor.

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*

Five at Strensall Common on 3rd January (JU), nine at Stearsby on 14th (PH) and seven at  
Escrick on 18th (.iw), Sight at Brandsby on 11th February, seven at Sutton-on-the-Forest on  
14th (oAR) and 14 at Eastmoor on 14th (RAI). 20 at Skipwith Common on 26th April (PK).  
Two in the Museum Gardens at York on 22nd September (AMW) and three at Bishopthorpe  
on 28th December (Ta).

LINNET *Acanthis cannabina*

Eastmoor had 50 in February, 100 in April, 262 on 30th August, 490 on 7th September, 605  
on 16th, 200 in October and 40 until year-end (Rn). 35 at Tang Hall Tip on 23rd June (Ba?)  
100 at a refuse tip near Askham Bog on 9th September (Dy) and 100 at Lower Derwent on  
18th (as).

REDPOLL *Acanthis flammea*

Bred at Skipwith Common and Wheldrake Woods (as). 140 at Sutton-on-the-Forest on  
14th February (aan), 45 at Castle Howard on 22nd September (DB). Regular flocks at  
Acaster Malbis, with up to 50 in November and 70 in December (DW), Up to 200 at  
Eastmoor during the winter months (Rn).

A bird ringed at Wellow Wood, Nottinghamshire on 21st September 1974 was controlled at  
Eastmoor on 14th February 1976 a distance of 61 kilometres. When the bird was first caught  
in 1974 it weighed 11.7 grams and the wing length was 73 millimetres; on 14th February  
1976 the bird weighed 12.9 grams and the wing length was 72 millimetres.

Four birds ringed at Eastmoor on 14th February showed characters of the Mealy Redpoll  
*A.f.flammea*.

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

12 at Escrick on 11th January (ic), 30 at Eastmoor during January, 20 on 9th and 10th  
April and 36 on 16th September (au), Up to six birds seen regularly at Lower Derwent (as),

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

Only two flock counts, 60 at Sand Hutton on 17th December and 70 at Castle Howard on  
26th December (Dv). One ringed at Eastmoor on 14th February

was showing characters of the continental race *F. o. coelebs*.

**BRAMBLING** *Fringilla montifringilla*

A female at Escrick on 18th January (JI), No immature males and one adult female were ringed at Eastmoor on 14th February (RAI), Six at Moorlands on 24th March (14Kv). Two at Castle Howard on 24th October (Jim), six at Naburn Lane on 6th December (14KW), Six at Castle Howard on 26th December (Dv) and 60 in Knavesmire Woods on 27th December.

**CORN BUNTING** *Emberiza calandra*

Bred at Farlington, Osbaldwick, Norton, Westow, Kirkham, York Cricket Ground, Towthorpe, Warthill and Eastmoor (BGP, PH, Rn).

**YELLOWHAMMER**

Only two flocks recorded, 13 at Eastmoor on 7th September (nn) and 30 at Middlethorpe Ings on 6th November (Dv).

**REED BUNTING**

A flock of 50 at Lower Derwent on 18th September (as).

Two large roost counts were of 350 at Eastmoor from 13th November to the year-end (an) and 670 at Strensall Common on 28th December (jw).

**SNOW BUNTING** *Plectrophenax nivalis*

A flock of ten birds flew over Askham Bog in a southeasterly direction on 28th December (DW).

**HOUSE SPARROW** *Passer domesticus*

250 at Eastmoor in late spring (an) and 70 at Tang Hall Tip on 23rd June (BGP), A remarkably marked bird gave rise to some excitement for a few moments in October. Having a white head, large white wing bars and one white outer tail feather (RU),

**TREE SPARROW** *Passer montanus*

50 at Askham Bog on 16th May (Dv), 170 at Eastmoor on 26th September (Rn), 50 at Middlethorpe Lags on 6th November, 30 at Acaster Malbis on 18th December (Dv), 30 at East Cottingwith on 28th December (BR) 0 Up to 100 at Lower Derwent during the winter months and 490 at Eastmoor on 27th December were maxima.

The following species also occurred but were not included in the Classified List, due to insufficient records. More information on the birds listed below would be appreciated for the 1977 report.

**PHEASANT** *Phasianus colchicus*

**JACKDAW** *Corvus monedula*

**BLUE TIT** *Parus caeruleus*

**WREN** *Troglodytes troglodytes*

**DUNNOCK** *Prunella modularis*

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