

YORK ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB - REPORT 1978

Summary for 1978

1978 was again another memorable year for many local bird watchers and looking through the list of birds one can soon realise that you don't need to travel far for good watching or indeed the unusual.

A total of 167 and three subspecies were recorded in 1978 of which four were new for the area list since it began in 1966. Once again a record number of species recorded.

Wildfowl in the Lower Derwent Valley early in the year once again made it one of the most interesting places to visit. Bewick's Swan numbers were up to 150 with Mallard and Wigeon both peaking at 4,000 and Teal at 2,000. Many other species were present in the Valley during the winter months. Some of the more interesting were: Hen Harrier, Kittiwake, Twite and a Red-necked Grebe which arrived in March. April was our best month for rarer species. Five of these which must head the list are: a Firecrest near Askham Bryan, a Black Redstart at Skipwith Common, a Hoopoe on the Knavesmire, three Common Scoter at Castle Howard and a Corncrake heard near Brayton.

With spring passage now in full swing the following month 'was also to produce a good variety of birds: Marsh Harrier, Turnstone, Spotted Redshank, Wood Sandpiper, Quail and two Little Gulls. A Roseate Tern, which was one of the new species for the area, was observed at Wheldrake Ings on 17th June and was without doubt the bird of the month. A Sandwich Tern on 2nd July, a Hobby on 16th and a Crossbill on 18th. A Wryneck found dead at Askham Bog in mid-August was handed in to the Yorkshire Museum. An Osprey visited an area to the north of Castle Howard from 17th to 28th August. Wader passage in the Lower Derwent during September produced a Curlew Sandpiper and a Sanderling, both of which were second records.

Six Little Stint and 28 Ruff were also unprecedented. A Red-crested Pochard at Wheldrake Ings on 11th September and a Hen Harrier at Moor Monkton on the 16th. A Grey Plover at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd October was followed two days later by a Grey Phalarope, which was yet again another second record. The month of November brought two Great Grey Shrike observed together on 5th and two juvenile Bearded Tit on 18th. The year ended as it began with interest, when a Bittern was reported on the last day of the year from Newton-on-Derwent.

Once again selection of records for publication has meant that others have had to be left out; however all notes submitted are kept and filed for future reference. Details of all species mentioned above can be found in the classified list which follows the sequence and scientific nomenclature of The 'British Birds' List of Birds of the Western Palearctic (1978).

BRIAN G. PEPPER

Assistant Recorder's Notes

'Stowers', 'creeping sticks' and 'cripple stoppers' are terms probably meaningless to all but a few readers. Nowadays somewhat antiquarian terms, but to a rare breed of men were rendered with affection for their sport. I speak of a lost race of stalwarts, the punt-gunners. Nowhere that I know of do punt-gunners operate today, contemporary wildfowlers tend to concentrate on flight shooting and not the nautical pursuit of roosting wildfowl on open waters with the single shot, boat bound cannon. The punt itself was rather a fragile craft, those used along the Yorkshire Derwent being somewhat frailer than their counterparts used elsewhere. They were long hulled vessels with a shallow draft, the weapon and hunter could be laid down flat to merge with the profile of the boat, giving as little as possible of its lethal intent away to its wary quarry. Propulsion of the craft was by 'stower' (a ten foot punt pole shod with a weighty iron fork at the bottom) and 'creeping sticks' (two thin shafted poles, six to eight feet long and again shod with iron forks, splayed to allow easy release from

mud). The former was used where the punt was to be propelled close to a river bank or where it could be 'poled', the bottom being easily reached. To pole the punt in this manner the pilot stood upright, and may well, if not skilled, have encountered all the embarrassment suffered by the Cambridge undergraduate who taking to punting the Cam for the first time succumbs to the precarity of the exercise and receives a ducking to the amusement of his peers. The undergraduate's fortune is that he never had to contemplate the wintry waters of the Derwent. The 'creeping sticks' were most important in imparting the momentum of the craft. These poles, taken one in each hand as the hunter laid out flat in the punt allowed the boat to inch silently towards the quarry with minimal disturbance.

The armourment although termed 'punt-guns', could probably better have been described as cannons as they were never intended to rest against the shoulder, but were mounted into a recoil system in the punt. Slights, the most famed and possibly most adventurous of all the Derwent punt-gunners, did however try an optimistic shoulder mounting of his 'big gun', some ten foot long and one hundred and forty pounds in weight, at a gathering of Pochard when circumstances prevented him from using it boat mounted. The gun went off with a loud report, the resultant recoil from which sent Slights (by no means a slight man) tumbling backwards down the river bank and into the Derwent for an icy immersion. The two mile walk home in the sub-zero conditions nearly proved to be the end of the hardy wildfowler, doubtless many lesser men would have perished from the same experience. This big gun of Slights was loaded with four ounces of coarse punt powder and eighteen ounces of Number 1 shot, indeed a lethal charge that destroyed many wildfowl.

This picture probably portrays something akin to the great North American Passenger Pigeon massacre. Of course far from the actual truth as the technological progress of wildfowling has been slow and thus matched by the evolution of cautious prey. Punt-gunning was economical in that it required less powder to destroy number of duck than using a rifle. but to take nothing away from those that practiced the sport, it was a skilful business. Conditions had to be right and the hunter having to employ all his intuition and knowledge of his quarry as there was only one chance of a shot; reloading was impossible whilst afloat and after the blast all the duck in the Derwent Valley must have taken flight. There wasn't great decimation of the duck species along the lower Derwent, but what was effectively a population determined culling, providing conditions held good to keep duck in tight parties. Slights who shot the Derwent Ings for a living was undoubtedly the most proficient of the Derwent wildfowlers. He shot the Ings in the latter part of the last century and the early part of this. Described affectionately as the last of the Yorkshire wildfowlers, he was tougher than old boots, a man of steel. Obsessed by wildfowling he would spend nights out on the wintry Ings in his punt pursuing the elusive duck. Many nights never even firing off his gun, but going home only for a bite to eat and to catch three hours sleep before returning once more to the lure of the fowl. So cold had some of his exploits been that he had to be removed from his punt by friends, taken home and thawed out. Exactly what passion drives a man to expose himself willingly to such harsh conditions as to come literally to nearly freezing to death I cannot hope to understand, yet the yearning called the old wildfowler back night after night, often without reward. At the end of one such week of endeavours he made a fine shot at a sleeping party of Mallards and Wigeon. The object was to creep to within thirty yards of the birds and to fire the moment they took wing, at that instant showering the flighted birds with B.B. shot. The ball bearings ripping through the flock despatched forty birds lifeless to the icy waters. Four more injured, bounding wings on water, splashed frantically away from their assailant. The experienced eye of the fowler guided his 'cripple stopper' (Slights often used his favoured double fourteen-gauge muzzle loader) which swiftly despatched these 'cripples' to the same fate as the forty birds floating silently and lifelessly on the calm. Twenty-four Mallard and twenty Wigeon, Slights' best ever shot.

Anything endowed with feathers was considered fair game by Slights - 'shoot first and ask questions afterwards' was his motto. Over the years the old wildfowler had accumulated a number of unusual species to his list of bagged birds. Bittern, Spoonbill, Bean, Brent and Barnacle Geese, an escaped Black Swan, Long-tailed Duck, Common Scoter, Harlequin Duck, Smew, a male Hooded Merganser which may well be the specimen resting in the

Yorkshire Museum, Spotted Crake, Cream-coloured Courser, Black-winged Stilt, Great Snipe and a Red-throated Diver being amongst the most interesting. Most of these birds were procured at Wheldrake Ings, the most favoured haunt of the fowler. Wheldrake Ings is today a 400 acre nature reserve managed by the Yorkshire Naturalists' Trust and forms a refuge for birds.

In the days of Snowden Slights the pressures from wildfowling were not enough to threaten populations of birds using the Lower Derwent Valley and today because of controls imposed upon wildfowling this is still the case. Ironically the real pressure on birds today probably comes from the vast numbers of people all seeking recreation in a bit of country. Things have come a long way since Slights walked the Ings in almost solitude. In order to preserve what he knew, the public will have to be controlled. At Wheldrake Ings this happens and because of this people can enjoy more fully what has been preserved. This surely is what should happen to the rest of the Derwent Ings before people unwittingly destroy what they leave their homes to find.

D. BRAITHWAITE

COMMON BIRD CENSUS WORK

Askham Bog

This year this survey was undertaken by John Cobb and Dave Braithwaite. In the previous two years the work has been done by four people but unfortunately due to circumstances only two recorders were available. This has meant that this year's work has been a little thinner than normal.

However, it was obvious that the effects of the severe winter had taken their toll on the Wrens and Long Tailed Tits which were noticeably down on numbers. This was the third year of what is intended to be a five year project.

Skipwith Common

This was a new undertaking and was organised by Tim Dixon in conjunction with the Yorkshire Naturalists Trust. Three other enthusiastic ornithologists helped with the work, namely Messrs. Pete Piringer, Steve Candwell and John Heslop. The project went off without any hitches and the results will be published in next year's report. It is hoped that this census will also run over five years.

Wheldrake Ings

This was another new area for Common Bird Census work and was worked by two people; Geoff Smith and Tim Dixon. Work on the census started late because of the late flooding. The survey was eventually started when conditions improved but unfortunately were short lived as inclement weather set in for several weeks which caused further flooding and many of the breeding birds were washed out: however some breeding was able to continue. The main object of the census on Wheldrake Ings is to compare the effects grazing the area will have on the breeding species of birds in comparison with an ungrazed plot.

CLASSIFIED LIST

LITTLE GREBE *Podilymbus podiceps*

Bred at: Strensall, Lower Derwent, Skipwith, Naburn Sewage Works, Brandsby, Wiganthorpe, a pair at Stearsby were unsuccessful.

Up to three recorded throughout the year at: Fulford Ings, Acaster Malbis, Dringhouses Pond, Beningborough Park, Appleton Roebuck, Wharfe Ings, Moor Lane and Ryther, with four at Bolton Percy on 12th December (DW)

There were no obvious fluctuations in population but there was an absence of records for August.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus*

One pair bred at Dringhouses Pond, three pairs at Castle Howard, and two pairs at Wiganthorpe. A pair at Newburgh did not produce a brood.

Records from Castle Howard were: 19 on 12th and 19th March (CS, BC) , seven on 29th (TS) , 16 on 16th April (JHL) and 10 on 30th (APP) 25 adults on 13th May (IC) , eight on 17th (SM) and 16 on 29th (TS) , 16 adults and eight juveniles on 1st July (DW) and 17 on 17th (CET) . 18 on 3rd August (TS) and 6 adults and 7 immatures on 27th (DB, FWO) , 14 on 17th september (CBT) , 10 on 18th October (SM) and two on 13th November (CDT). Other records were: one on the River Ouse between Fulford and Acaster Malbis throughout the year (nW, TED, EBB, MKW) . Two at Dringhouses Pond on 7th March where they took up residence until 12th November rearing two young (DW) . Two at Wiganthorpe Lake on 11th March (CDT) one at Wheldrake Ings on 29th April (TED, EBB) and at Cawood Park Lake on 30th May (JMPa) with an immature at Wheldrake on 7th August (ARP) Addition to 1977 Report: Bred at Sand Hutton where two young were reared.

RED-NECKED CREBE *Podiceps grisegena*

One at Wheldrake Ings 19th March (DB, FWO, TDC, JC) The bird was on shallow water and could not fully dive. It appeared unsettled and was thought by the observers to be 'stopping off' on a migration flight. It was mainly in winter plumage but had hints of traditional plumage about the neck.

CORMORANT

One on the River Derwent at Huttons Ambo on 25th February (IC, HJW) . One flew west over Acomb on 13th April (TDC) and two flew along the River Ouse at Fulford Ings on 16th (JO, AF) . A first winter bird at Castle Howard on 26th and 27th of September (DW) . Single adults at Ampleforth College Lake from 14th to 18th December (JBD) River Ouse at Skelton Bridge from 21st to 23rd (MR) and on the city stretches of the River Foss throughout the MONTH

BITTERN

One at Newton-on-Derwent on 30th December (per TED) It was flushed by a shooting party from a small stand of Common Reed, *Phragmites communis*, along the Black Foss Beck. It was described as being a big brown bird, like a Grey Heron, *Ardea cinerea*, but smaller and with a shorter bill. Fortunately the gun-men realised what the bird was and did not shoot at it. The 'hard' winter caused Bittern to be recorded from a number of unusual sites throughout the country, presumably as result of cold weather dispersion from more favoured, but frozen haunts.

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

Bred at the Lower Derwent and Nun Appleton.

Singles were recorded throughout the year from Rufforth, Strensall, Bishopthorpe, Askham Bog, Skipwith Common, Brandsby and Acaster Malbis. Up to four birds were recorded throughout the year from Fulford Ings, Naburn Sewage Works and Cawood. The largest counts were from Ryther where six were recorded, the Lower Derwent Valley where a maximum of eight were recorded, Wharfe Ings where there was a maximum of 19 birds and Castle Howard where there was a maximum of 20 birds.

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

Bred at the Lower Derwent, where a pair produced five young (CS).

Four adults and an immature at Wheldrake on 9th January (DB, JC) . One at Naburn on 15th February (PWGC) Two at Ryther Village from March to April did not attempt to breed (JMPa) and up to nine adults at Wheldrake from the end of March until July.

BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus columbianus*

A herd of up to 150 birds, approximately 19% of which were immatures were present in the Lower Derwent from the beginning of the year until mid-March. All had departed from the valley by 2nd April (CS). 1977/78 winter mortalities included an adult found at Ellerton on 24th

March (CS, BC) and one at Aughton on 9th April (TED, EBB).

Seven at Wheldrake Ings on 1st November (RB) and during the month. 39 adults and four immatures in the valley on 11th December (CS) and 64 at Wheldrake on 16th.

Addition to 1977 Report: Three adults and an immature at Wharfe Ings on 29th December (DW)

WHOOOPER SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*

One bird with only limited powers of flight was present at Wheldrake throughout the year, 10 adults at Wheldrake on 9th January (DB, JC) , eight there on 25th February (PP) and 12 on 26th (CS). Six birds in the valley during March and two on 2nd April (TEO, EBB). One at Castle Howard on 2nd December, stayed very briefly (JILL) , three at Wheldrake on 16th (TED, EBB) and two there on 24th (PM)

GREY GOOSE Sp *Anser spp*

52 flew south over Dringhouses on 17th January, four at Clifton Ings on 12th April (MR) . Nine over Appletree on 14th June (BGP) . 15 flew SE over Ryther on 10th September (JMPa) . Two flew west over Copmanthorpe on 3rd December (DRF, DA) , 35 flew over Wheldrake on 17th and seven flew west over Bubwith on 24th (RH, PM)

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus*

One at Castle Howard on 15th January (CET) . Another was observed flying down stream along the River Ouse at Naburn on 10th March (TED, EBB) and one at Acaster Selby on the following day (DB) may well have been the same bird. A single at Castle Howard on 17th July (CBT) and again on 27th August.

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

Bred at Castle Howard and Wheldrake Ings.

Records from Castle Howard: monthly maxima were, 63 in January (CBT) , four in February, nine in March, 20 in April (JHL) , a brood of four young on 17th May (SM) 33 in July, 50 in August (DB, FWO) , 43 during September, 44 in October, 46 in November and 53 in December.

Records from Lower Derwent: monthly maxima were, two in January (TED) , 24 in February (SM) , six in March, 16 in April, 11 in May (APP) , 14 in June (DW) , 18 in July (DB, JC) , 19 in August, 40 in September and 20 in December (CS)

Records from elsewhere: one at Fulford Ings on 6th and 7th May (BD, JG) 75 flew SE over Dringhouses on 13th December and 42 flew NW over York Water Works on 18th (MR)

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

Bred at Newburgh Priory, Stearsby, Strensall Common; Castle Howard and the Lower Derwent Valley.

Records from Castle Howard: 150 from January to March (CET) , when a dispersal took place presumably a pre-breeding movement to suitable sites. 100 during July, 300 on 27th August (DB, FWO) and then up to 180 to year end.

Records from the Lower Derwent: 30 from January to March with up to 20 during April, and again in July, August and September with 12 at Wheldrake Ings on 10th December (DB)

Records from elsewhere: 27 at the York University Campus on 15th February (TED, EBB) and 20 at Stearsby on 20th (PH) . March, April and May brought records of smaller parties of up to six birds from: Naburn, Strensall, Acomb, Ryther, Haxby, Dringhouses, Fulford, Tang Hall and Dale pond, again as a result of dispersion from main herds presumably associated with breeding. Seven at Newburgh Priory on 28th October (BT, RT) , and two at Copmanthorpe on 1st November.

CANADA GOOSE x GREYLAG GOOSE HYBRIDS

B. canadensis x *A. anser*

Two throughout the year at Wheldrake Ings. One at Castle Howard from January to July, two in September, four in October and November and five on 19th December (CBT).

These birds, aptly named 'Granadas' by the famed Mike Clegg, are becoming more frequently recorded. Although it is almost certain that the birds are as a result of Canada x Greylag hybridisations they tend to associate themselves more with the former - comment on this and observations on the fertility of the birds would be welcomed along with any confirmation of their assumed parental origin.

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*

Up to four at Castle Howard from January until the 16th April. Also four birds at the Lower Derwent over a similar period with seven on 19th February and eight on 8th March (CS, BC). It isn't clear whether or not the four birds crossed over from the two sites but on 12th March a bird was at Castle Howard (CBT) and four were recorded from Wheldrake Ings (TMC) . Up to five at Castle Howard from September until year end and three at Wheldrake Ings on 24th September (APP)

The birds were absent from the YOC recording area during May, June, July and August and re-appeared in

September, a similar pattern occurring in 1974,75,76 and 77 (ref YOC Reports) since a single first occurring on 27th and 28th October 1973 (DB, TDC, MR) . Although almost surely feral birds it is apparent that they undergo some migratory movement as do Canada Geese, *B canadensis*.

SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

Bred at the York University, Wheldrake, Aughton and North Duffield.

Five at Clifton Ings on 5th February (MKW) and also at Bubwith on 7th, two flew over Wheldrake Ings on 18th. Present at the Lower Derwent from March until July, maxima being eight on 23rd March (GS) , 11 on 9th April (CS) and eight on 29th (TMC) . A female at the university stayed into late September the young leaving earlier in the month. A drake at Fulford Ings on 10th December (DW) and a bird at Bishopthorpe Ings on the same date (PWGC).

WIGEON *Anas penelope*

Records from the Lower Derwent: 2000 during January (DB, JC, TDC) , 4000 in February (mc) , 2800 in March (DB) with a leucistic drake on 21st and 24th (DB) . 2000 during April (CS, BC, SM) . The numbers fell in May leaving three pairs at Wheldrake by the end of the month and throughout June, but there was no proof of breeding (TMC) . Four birds at Wheldrake on 25th August (DB, JC) , up to five there throughout September (BB, CS, DB) , one duck on 12th November (DB) and 15 on 14th (TED, EBB) . Numbers in the Valley had built up to 1500 by the end of December (CS, BC)

Records from elsewhere: 20 at Castle Howard on 5th January (TS) and one at Pond Head on 14th. 10 at Ryther on 11th February (JMPa) , a drake at Acaster Malbis on 5th February (DRF, DAi DW) , 10 there on 4th March (DRF, DA) and one at Dringhouses Pond on 12th (DW) . A partially eclipsed drake at Castle Howard on 25th August (DB, FWO) Up to five at Castle Howard during September (DW, TS) and October (CBT) . Three at Wharfe Ings on 22nd October (OW) A drake at Fulford Ings on 18th and 19th November (BD, JG, AF) and seven at Wharfe Ings on 26th (DW) . 11 at Wharfe Ings on 9th December (DW).

GADWALL *Anas strepera*

Bred at Wheldrake Ings.

Up to five at Wheldrake Ings throughout January. A pair at Bubwith Ings on 19th February (JHL) . One at Ryther on 11th March (JMPa) and up to six at Wheldrake throughout the month, where two pairs were present throughout April (TED, EBB, SM, PP) and display was noted on 15th (CS, BC) Two drakes and a duck there on 3rd May and a pair remained until the end of the month, One bird on 21st July (PF) and nine birds present, including seven

juveniles, throughout August (DB, TED, EBB, TMC) . One at Castle Howard on 27th (DB, FWO) Two at Wheldrake on 10th September (DB, FWO, JC, CS) and a drake there on 16th December (TED, EBB)

TEAL

Bred at Skipwith, Aughton, North Duffield, and Newburgh. The first clutch was found in the Lower Derwent on 13th May.

Maxima were: in the early part of the year, 2000 at the Lower Derwent, 100 at Acaster and 62 at Acaster Malbis. 100 at Wheldrake Ings in August.

From September to year end, 2000 in the Lower Derwent and 130 at Castle Howard.

Smaller concentrations were recorded at Fulford Ings, Wharfe Ings, Strensall Common, Skipwith Common, Bolton Percy and Ryther.

MALLARD

A drake was noted copulating with a domestic duck at York University on 9th March (DB) . The first clutch was at the Lower Derwent on 2nd April (CS) . The first broods were of two ducklings on the River Ouse at York on 22 April and of six ducklings at North Duffield on 23rd (DB, FWO)

Maxima were: in the early part of the year, 3000 at the Lower Derwent floods (TMC) and 600 at Castle Howard. 450 at Wheldrake Ings on 31st July (DW) and 750 on 28th August (DB, JC)

From September to year end, 1500 at Castle Howard (CBT) , 700 at Wheldrake Ings (TED, EBB) and 100 at Dringhouses Pond (DW).

Smaller concentrations were noted Fulford Ings, Wharfe Ings, Acaster Malbis, Strensall Common, Skipwith Common, Bolton Percy and Ryther.

The first bird noted in nuptial plumage after eclipse was on 10th September at Wheldrake Ings (DB, FWO, CS).

PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

Records from the Lower Derwent: 15 at Wheldrake during January (DE, TED, EBe , CS) . Up to 50 recorded about the valley in February. 90 at Aughton on 21st March (DB) . Six at Wheldrake on 8th April (TED, EBB) where a pair, both shot damaged, lingered into June, there was no proof of breeding (TMC) . Two drakes and a duck on 16th December and five drakes on 18th (TED, EBB, BE).

Records from elsewhere: three ducks at Fulford Ings on 7th January (JG, AF) and a drake at Dringhouses pond on 26th December (DW).

GARGANEY *Anas querquedula*

Bred at Wheldrake Ings.

All records from Wheldrake. Male and female on 3rd May (DB, TED, EBB, BGP, JMP) , and one on 19th (CS, BC) . One on 4th June (SM, GS, BC) , a female on 11th and a male on 24th (TMC) . A pair were seen together on 23rd July (TMC, SC) . One male in eclipse on 8th August (TED, EBB) , a female and three juveniles on 23rd and two on 31st.

SHOVELER

Bred at Wheldrake, Aughton, North Duffield and Bubwith, a pair were present at Skipwith Common during Spring (PP)

Records from the Lower Derwent, 16 at Wheldrake Ings on 12th January (DB, JC) , where there was 20 on 14th February (SM) , and 20 on 21st and 31st March (LiE, TS) , with 42 in the whole valley on 24th (DB) 20 at Wheldrake on 1st August (DB) , 30 on 27th (DB, JC, DW) and 15 on 10th September (DB, FWO, JC, OS) where there was up to 11 from November to the year end.

Records from Castle Howard, three on 5th January (TS) 42 on 27th August (DB, FWO) . Up to 30 during September (CBT, TS, Ow) and 25 in October (DB, JFW, CBT, SM) , Four on 13th November and 14 on 19th December (CBT).

Records from elsewhere, 12 flew south over Naburn Sewage Works on 31st January. One at Bishopthorpe Ings on 5th February (MKW) . A pair at Naburn Sewage Works on 5th April (TED, EBB). Three at Stearsby Pond during October.

A bird accompanying a drake Shoveler, *Anas clypeata*, at Wheldrake Ings on 12th January was structurally as Shoveler but had complete ferruginous underparts. The head was blue with a white, vertical, anterior crescent, recalling in this aspect a drake Blue Winged Teal, *Anas discors*. In flight the bird showed extensive blue to the forewing. This description fits that of drake New Zealand Shoveler, *Anas rhynchotis variegata*, but certain Shoveler hybridations occurring in captivity can result in hybrid offspring that closely resemble the New Zealand Shoveler. In light of this the observers decided to leave a question mark against the sighting. (Da, JC).

RED-CRESTED POCHARD *Netta rufina*

One at Wheldrake Ings on 11th September (PP) published with the escape proviso. The first record for the area.

POCHARD *Aythya ferina*

A pair were present at Skipwith Common during the breeding season but there was no proof of breeding.

200 at Castle Howard on 5th January (TS) , 20 at Wheldrake Ings on 9th, 39 at Pond Head on 14th (CDT) and a pair at Acaster Malbis on 21st and 22nd (DW) . Up to 500 at the Lower Derwent in February, one at Newburgh on 6th (PH) , six at Bishopthorpe Ings from 5th to 10th (MKW, PWGC) , one at Dringhouses Pond from 5th to 11th (DW) , 11 at Castle Howard on 12th (CDT) , 20 at Clifton Ings on 25th (MKW) and 15 at Castle Howard on 27th (PS) 653 at North Duffield on 12th March, four at Dringhouses Pond on 19th (DW) , 32 at Wheldrake Ings on 21st (DD) and up to 15 at Castle Howard throughout the month (CDT, CS) Two at Wheldrake Ings during April (SM, CS, DB, BC) where there was a single bird on 13th May (CS) and one drake throughout August (DB) . Up to 10 recorded at Wheldrake, Castle Howard, Wiganthorpe and Dringhouses Pond throughout September, October and November with a maximum of 40 at Castle Howard on 29th October (CBT). Numbers built up to 200 at Wheldrake by the year end (PWCC, TED, EBB, CS) Five at Dringhouses from 17th December to year end (DW) and 22 at Castle Howard on 19th of the month.

COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*

Two drakes and a duck at Castle Howard on 16th April (JHL) . The second record for the area.

GOLDENEYE

Up to three at Wheldrake during January, two at Pond Head on 13th and one at Castle Howard on 15th (CBT), 10 at Wheldrake Ings in February, two on the River Ouse at Fulford during the month (SD, JO), a red head at Sherburn on 5th (RLC) and one on the River Ouse at Overton on 19th. 10 birds were still present at Wheldrake during March and a pair at Wharfe Ings on 12th. Up to eight, all red heads, at Wheldrake during April (SM, TED, OS, DE) . A pair at Wharfe Ings on 26 November and an immature at Dringhouses Pond between 12th and 24th (DW) . Two drakes flew up stream along the River Ouse at Red House on 2nd December (DB, FWO) Nine on the River Ouse at Bolton Percy on 17th (DW) and up to four at Dringhouses Pond during the month (EM, OW).

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

Bred at Stearsby, Newburgh, Wiganthorpe, Lower Derwent and Skipwith Common.

Records from the Lower Derwent, 100 at Wheldrake Ings on 12th January (DS, JC) , 100 in February, 40 during March (DB) and 200 at North Duffield on 12th. 30 at Wheldrake in April (DE, FWO) . Up to 10 recorded through out the summer months. 70 at Wheldrake during December.

Records from Castle Howard, 30 on 5th January (TS), nine on 12th March (CBT) , four on 13th May (IC) and 10 on 3rd August (TS) . Up to 10 to the year end.

Records from elsewhere, 18 at Pond Head on 14th January (CAT) , 21 at Dringhouses Pond during the month and 14 there on 5th February (OW) . 24 at Wiganthorpe Lake on 11th March (CBT) and five at Dringhouses Pond on 23rd with three there on 15th April (DW) . One drake at Naburn Sewage Works on 18th April. Up to five at Dringhouses Pond during May (DW) , nine at Pond Head on 6th (JMW, JFW) and a pair at Naburn Sewage Works throughout the month (TED, EBB). Besides where breeding was proven, three birds were recorded during June and July at Strensall Common (DW), a duck at Hull Road Tip on 26th and 27th (CA) and 38 at Stearsby towards the end of the month (PH) . Seven at Dringhouses Pond on 28th September and 17 there on 18th October (DN). Two at Cawood on 15th December (JMPa).

SCAUP *Aythya marila*

A duck at Wheldrake Ings on 12th March (TMC) , a drake flew west over Fulford Ings on 16th July (ED, JO) and a duck at Newburgh on 27th August and 7th September (MKW, TS) Addition to 1975 Report: A bird ringed as pullus at Lake Myvatn, Iceland on 18th July 1968 was shot at East Cottingwith in January 1975. From Report on Bird—Ringling for 1977 in Ringling and Migration Vol 2 No 2 Dec. 1978.

GOOSANDER *Merganser merganser*

Three drakes at Castle Howard on 1st and 5th January (BGP, JMP, TS) with 14 there on 15th (CDT), with a female on the Lower Derwent on the same date (CS) . Two red heads at Castle Howard on 27th February ('CS) . 11 at Ryther on 18th March with nine there on 24th (JMPa) , two at Cawood on the 29th (PR) and a female at Bubwith on 21st which was present along that stretch of the Derwent throughout April, May and early June (DR, MEW, DCI, JMP). Five immatures were roosting at Wheldrake Ings throughout August and early September, strongly implying that breeding may have taken place in the area. One drake on the River Wharfe at Wharfe Ings on 26th November (DW) and in December singles were recorded at Fulford Ings on 9th (JC) , on the River Ouse at the Wharfe mouth on the same date (DW) , a drake at Dringhouses Pond on 10th, River Wharfe at Bolton Percy on 17th (CDW), Dringhouses Pond from 26th to 28th (DW) and at Castle Howard throughout the month (CDT) . 23 passed north at Stamford Bridge on 16th December (TMC) and two females were recorded at the Lower Derwent on 17th (GS)

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

A bird thought to be a second year female from its plumage, although there is terrific variation, at Wheldrake Ings on 24th May (BGP, JMP).

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

A ringtail at Wheldrake Ings throughout January, two at Bubwith on 5th February (RH, CS, TMC) and again on 13th (TED, EBB) , one at Aughton on 11th March and at Skipwith Common 17th (PP) . One near Moor Monkton on 16th September (CDT), a male near Askham Bog on 10th December and a ringtail at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd.

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

Proven breeding at Hagg Wood, Skipwith Common, Castle Howard, Newburgh Priory, Wheldrake, Crayke and at five localities in the Brandsby Parish.

Singles and occasionally pairs recorded from 38 different sites throughout the year, as compared with ten years ago when it was only recorded at two sites in the YOC recording area. A female at Tilmire on 24th September was seen a Magpie, *Pica pica* (DB, JC)

BUZZARD Sp *Buteo*

One at Castle Howard on 24th December circled the lake twice, it showed certain characteristics of Rough-legged Buzzard, *B lagopus* (BC)

BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

One at Acaster Airfield on 16th February was being mobbed by a Kestrel, *Falco tinnunculus*.

OSPREY

One at Castle Howard on 17th August (ARN) , Roscarrs on 26th (PR, TM) , Cockerdale on 27th (LFC) and Newburgh Priory on 28th (Yorkshire Evening Press)

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

Recorded breeding at Askham Bryan, Tilmire, Acaster Airfield, Askham Bog, Acaster Malbis, Fulford Ings, Strensall Common, Naburn, Fulford, Brandsby, the Lower Derwent, Heslington and Skipwith.

A bird was seen to snatch a House Sparrow, *Passer domesticus*, from a suburban garden, at York in June, The bird took its quarry to a stench pipe top which acted as a plucking post.

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*

Single males at Acaster Malbis on 22nd January (Dw) Wheldrake Ings on 14th February (SM) and near Dunnington on 30th April (TMC) . A brown bird flew 55W over York on 23rd July (NH) . Two flew south over Dringhouses Pond on 16th October (DW) , a single at Brayton on 29th October (PR) and a male at Acomb on the same day (TDC) . A young male was present in the Lower Derwent Valley from early November to the year end where a female was recorded on 26th November (GS) . A male at Malton on 20th December (IC)

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

One at Wheldrake Ings on 16th July (TMC) . Accepted by the YNU.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa*

Recorded breeding at Appleton Roebuck, Acaster Malbis, Acomb, Askham Bog, Lower Derwent, Fulford Golf Course, Marten, Stillington, Sheriff Hutton, Stearsby, Crayke, Naburn and quite generally about the arable land in SE squares 64, 74, 63 and 73. *Covey maxima* were 27 at the Lower Derwent on 5th February (GS) and 47 in a field bordering Skipwith Common on 9th November (PP)

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix*

Recorded breeding at Strensall, Askham Bog, Acaster Malbis, Acaster Selby, Appleton Roebuck, Acomb, Naburn, the Lower Derwent, Brandsby, Dalby, Bishopthorpe and Ryther. *Covey maxima* were 20 near Ryther during January and February (JMPa) , 19 at Acaster Airfield during February (PWGC) , 27 at Acomb on 10th April (MR) , 14 at Brandsby in November (PH) . 20 at Askham Bog and 25 at Fulford Ings during the winter months.

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*

One calling on rough land by the west bank of the River Derwent at Wheldrake Ings on 5th May was briefly seen as it ran over dumped river bed spoil.

PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus*

The total sum of birds put down for shoot annually in the York area must run into tens of thousands at least. 200 alone were observed at Newburgh Priory on 15th August (TS) Any comments as to how a number for the birds that are annually put down to shoot could be arrived at would be very welcome.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

Two present at Fulford Ings throughout the early part of the year and into Spring (TC, BD, JO) . Singles at Naburn Sewage Works on 5th January (TED, EBB), Loftsome Bridge on 8th (mc) and at Aughton on 22nd (CS) , Strensall Common on 5th March (DW), and by the River Ouse at Ulleskelf on 11th (JMPa) . A pair heard calling at Strensall Common on 5th July

(DW) . One present at Wheldrake Ings from 16th November to the end of the month (BB, TMC)

CORNCRAKE *Crex crex*

A bird heard calling at Brayton in mid-April (per PR)

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

The first clutch was at Ellerton on 2nd April. Maxima were 35 at Wharfe Ings on 22nd January (DW) 30 on flood water at Kirkham Gorge on 25th February (IC) and at Fulford Ings during winter months. 19 at Acaster Malbis on 26th November and 22 at Wharfe Ings on 9th December (DW).

A Stoat, *Mustela erminea*, was seen preying on a Moorhen, *Gallinula chloropus*, at Ryther on 9th April. The Stoat was disturbed before it could kill the Moorhen which it was attempting to do by biting the bird under its wing (JMPa).

COOT *Fulica atra*

Recorded breeding from Naburn Sewage Works, the Lower Derwent, Strensall Common, Pond Head, Angram and Naburn. The first clutch was found at Ellerton on 2nd April (GS). 21 at Wheldrake Ings on 9th January, 110 at Pond Head on 14th, and 87 at Dringhouses Pond on 21st where up to 78 were present during February. 85 at the Lower Derwent on 19th February (MIW) and 15 on flood water in Kirkham Gorge on 25th (IC) . 300 were present in the Lower Derwent throughout March (DE) with up to 43 at Dringhouses pond (DW) and 27 at Wiganthorpe Lake on 11th (CBT) . Post breeding maxima were 39 at Wiganthorpe on 26th September (DW) , 75 at Dringhouses Pond on 16th December (DW) and 142 at Wheldrake on 25th (BE)

CRANE *Grus grus*

Addition to 1977 Report: One at Haxby from 9th to 17th October (Brit. Birds Vol. 70 No. 11.).

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*

Bred in the Lower Derwent Valley.

Up to four birds in the Lower Derwent Valley from early March until end of May. One at the River Foss on 18th March (CS) with a pair displaying at Fulford Ings on 19th (JG, AF) . One flying along the River Ouse at Ryther on 9th April (JMPa) , at Wharfe Ings on 6th May (DW) and flying east at Ryther on the same date (JMPa) . The last recorded were two at Thorganby Common on 30th June (TED, EBB).

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*

Two pairs bred in the Wheldrake area successfully and a pair at Naburn Sewage Works were unsuccessful.

The first arrival was at Naburn on 14th April (TED, EBB) . First arrival at Wheldrake was on 23rd (DB, FWO) the maxima there being seven on 23rd July (MKW) , nine on 31st (DB, JC) and an adult with five immatures on 3rd August (TMC, DW) . Records from where breeding did not take place were two at Selby on 16th August (MKW) and at Hull Road tip from the 26th to 29th (CA, DA, DRF).

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

Singles at Wheldrake on 16th and 20th April (TED, EBB CS) , where there were two on 12th May (TMC) with one in the Lower Derwent Valley on 20th. One at Wheldrake on 17th June (TMC) , an immature near Wheldrake Village on 31st July (DW) and one at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd August (DRF, DA, TMC) and on 20th (PM) with one in the Lower Derwent on 3rd September (GS) and at Ryther on 16th and 17th.

GOLDEN PLOVER

70 at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd January (APP) , 1000 at Bishopthorpe on 13th (DW) and 400 at Ryther on 14th (JMPa) 1000 at Bishopthorpe (DW) and 800 at the Lower Derwent during February (CS) with 1350 flying down river to roost on 6th (TED, EBB) and 200 at the Bumper Castle on 5th (MKW) 350 at Ryther on 4th March (JMPa) and throughout the month 550 at Acaster Malbis, 650 at Wharfe Ings (DW) and 160 at Bubwith (DB, CS). A large number of records of smaller concentrations occurred in April with up to 100 being recorded at Rufforth, Wheldrake, Cockey Hill, Askham Bog, Ryther, Naburn, Acomb and Acaster Malbis, this could indicate an influx of passage birds, but as the sum totals are similar to earlier months it may also be related to a spring flock dispersal. Almost all the birds that showed signs of summer plumage in April were characteristic of the northern form *P. apricaria altifrons*. Two flying WSW over Ryther on 23rd June where 400 passed over on 25th July (JMPa) with 90 at Bishopthorpe on 26th (DW) . 247 at Acaster Malbis on 12th August and 210 at Wharfe Ings on 13th (DW) , 250 at Stillingfleet on 5th September (RE!) , 300 at Ryther on 9th (JMPa), 200 at Riccall on 14th (PP) , 550 at Bishopthorpe on 17th and 700 at Acaster Malbis on 29th (DW) , 300 at Wheldrake on 13th October (TED, EBB) with up to 500 at Acaster Malbis, Wharfe Ings and Bishopthorpe throughout October and November (DW) . 280 at Colton Lane on 12th November (DFR) and 500 at Thorganby on 26th (ST, HP) . 1000 at Nun Appleton on 17th December and at Acaster Malbis on 26th (DW).

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

One at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd October (DB) where there were two on 9th (PP)

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

Recorded breeding in all squares. In the north of the area the first chicks were recorded on 27th May (PH) however a Stoat, *Mustela erminea*, was seen to predate a brood in the Lower Derwent on 13th (CS).

Pre-breeding maxima were: 450 at Flaxton in January (BGP, JMP), 2000 at Acaster Malbis (DW) in February with 400 at Wigginton (AMW, JFW) and at Bishopthorpe Ings (PWGC) in the same month. 550 at Acaster Malbis in March (DB) and 400 at Fulford Ings throughout the early part of the year (BD, JG, AF, DM)

Post-breeding maxima were: 320 at Melbourne on 29th June (JHW) , 200 at Bishopthorpe on 1st July and 450 at Bolton Percy on 29th (DW) , 1000 at Acaster Malbis on 12th August (DW) , 900 at Wharfe Ings on 13th (DW) , 500 near Hessay on 15th and 250 at Castle Howard on 26th (IC) 500 at Wharfe Ings and 700 at Acaster Malbis during October (DW) , 440 at Colton in November (OaF) , 1100 at Nun Appleton (DW) , 450 at Broughton (IC) , 500 at Wheldrake and Wigginton Road in December. Movements of Lapwings was noted between York and Bishopthorpe on 24th, 25th and 26th February. Birds were seen flying SSE, the greatest numbers occurring on 24th when 2,200 passed in the two hours between 07.30 and 09.30 (DW). A party of 30 birds were grouped together on Bubwith Ings on 27th April whilst other birds were busily rearing young and holding territory. This party may have been of Scandinavian origin.

KNOT *Calidris canutus*

One at Wheldrake Ings on 27th August (BE) Third record for the area,

SANDERLING

One at Wheldrake Ings on 4th September (13Th) , second record for area.

LITTLE STINT

Four at Wheldrake Ings on 8th September (BR) , five on 10th (DB, FWO, TMC, CS) , six on 11th with one on 12th and 15th IPP.

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea*

One at Wheldrake on 11th September (PP) , second record for area,

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*

150 at Acaster Malbis on 3rd January (DRF, DA) and 100 at the Lower Derwent on 22nd (CS) , One at Acaster Malbis on 5th March (DW) , 12 flew over Fulford Ings on 19th (JG, AF) with up to 700 in the Lower Derwent valley during the month where there was up to 200 in April which had disappeared by the end of May, the last being 11 at Bubwith and four at Wheldrake on 3rd (BGP, JMP, TED, EBB). One at Wheldrake Ings on 31st July (DW) with a juvenile at Hull Road Tip on 3rd August (CA) and two at Wheldrake on the same date (DS), seven at the University Lake on 31st (CBT) where they were still on the following day, Six at Wheldrake on 1st October, three on 11th and 12th November (ARP, DB) and eight there on the 10th December (DB) , one at Wigginton Road on 13th (BGP), 16 at Wheldrake on 16th (SM) and 80 at Bubwith on 27th (JHL).

RUFF *Philomachus pugnax*

Five at the Lower Derwent during March (Cs) with up to eight in April. Two ruff and two reeve recorded in May and a single on 16th June (CS) . Two at Acaster Malbis on 2nd August (DW) and at Wheldrake on 8th (TED, EBB) and 13th (SM, MEW) five there on 22nd (SM) , one at Hull Road Tip on 26th (DEF) and 12 at Wheldrake to the end of the month where there was up to 28 recorded during September the last recorded being a single on 25th (DW)

JACK SNIBE *Lymnocyptes minimus*

One at Askham Bog on 3rd January (DRF, DA) , six at Fulford Ings on 7th (AF, JG) , one at Wheldrake on 12th (DB, JC) and two at Tilmire on 15th (MKW) , one at Wharfe Ings on 22nd and at Acaster Malbis on 29th (DW), Two at East Cottingwith on 5th February (TMC) , one at Tang Hall on 12th (JHL) and at Naburn Sewage Works on 20th and 21st (TED, EBB) , one at Wheldrake Ings on 5th March (TMC) and again in the Lower Derwent on 24th (CS). Singles in April at Naburn Sewage Works on 5th (TED, EBB) , Acomb on 8th (TDC) and the Lower Derwent Valley on 9th (CS) . One at Stamford Bridge on 2nd November (TMC) and at Askham Bog on 21st December and Askham Bryan Sewage Works on 31st.

SNIBE *Gallinago gallinago*

Maxima were: up to 250 at Fulford Ings during winter months (DM, JO, AF, ED) , 112 at Wharfe Ings on 22nd January (DW) and 55 at Acaster Malbis on 29th. 70 at Bishopthorpe Ings on 13th February (DWGC) and 175 at Clifton Ings on 19th (DW), 98 at North Duffield, 80 at Acaster Malbis, 60 at Wharfe Ings on 12th March (TED, Ei5~, OW) and 65 at Ryther on 24th (J~Pa) 150 at Aughton and 55 at Fulford Ings on 9th April. (TED, EBB, DW)O There was a marked influx of birds at Naburn Sewage Works during April, the most being 31 on 6th (TED) . 100 at Wheldrake Ings on 26th August (DB) with 30 there on 15th October (BE) and again on 10th December (DW)

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

Roding at Skipwith Common, Castle Howard, Wheldrake Woods, Maidensworth, Dale Wood, Spellar and Grimston, and recorded in May but not roding seen at Tilmire, Riccall Common, Yearsley and Barton-le-Willows. All single birds recorded in a suburban garden at Tang Hall in January (PaR) , at Wheldrake on 12th (DB), Towton on 14th and Skipwith on 29th (FWO) Again at Skipwith on 12th February (FWO) , North Duffield on 13th (TED, EBB) , Acaster Wood on 17th (DWGC) , Naburn on 19th and at Black Wood (TED, EBB) and Askham Bog on 26th (OW) At Naburn Sewage Farm on 6th and 8th March (TED, EBB), Moorlands on 12th and Castle Howard on 29th (TS) . At Askham Bog on 5th November and Brockett Wood on 27th (OW) in a suburban garden at Heworth on 2nd December (JHL) over Fulford Ings on 3rd (JO, BD, DM) and at York University Campus on 5th (per JHL)

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

30 near Thorganby on 12th February (CBT) and one at Acaster Malbis floodwater on 25th.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT

Two at Wheldrake on 16th April (GS) and three, two of which were in summer plumage, on 22nd (SM, TED, EBB) three there on 6th May (CS) , and one on 16th July (Jill-)

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

One at Fulford Ings on 19th March (JG, AF) and at the Lower Derwent on 15th April (CS) with two at Wheldrake on 20th (TED, EBB) where there was one on 3rd May (GW), two on 5th, three on the 7th and one on the 12th (TMC) Two flew north over Escrick on 6th July (RH) and one passed over Woodthorpe in darkness on 27th August (DW) . There was a single bird present in the Lower Derwent throughout July and August (DB, JC, BB) . The last was recorded at Wheldrake on 16th September (TMC).

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*

Recorded breeding from Strensall Common, Ryther, Langwith, Askham Bryan, Lower Derwent, Wharfe Ings, Brandsby and near Askham Bog.

One at Strensall Common on 25th February (JR) returning generally to the area in the first two weeks in March. Maxima were: 65 at North Duffield on 4th March (TED, EBB) and 35 at Bubwith on 21st (DB) . Night passage over York included one on 17th May, a 'large flock' in late June and 'several' on 6th July (IC), 36 flew north over Escrick on the same date (RH) . The last was recorded at Wheldrake on 31st August (TC)

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*

Only singles recorded at the Lower Derwent on 16th April (CS) , East Cottingwith on 28th (TED, EBB) , Wheldrake on 13th May (CS) and a bird in full summer plumage near Leeman Road, York on 1st August (Nfi) with one at Wheldrake on 17th.

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*

Bred in the Lower Derwent, Rufforth and Riccall, eight pairs bred at Naburn Sewage Works, one pair at Elvington Airfield and Bolton Percy. Maxima were 22 at Bubwith on 26th March (DB) , 13 at Bolton Percy on 27th (DW) and 50 at Aughton on 9th April (TED, EBB).

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

Two in the Lower Derwent on 25th and 26th March (RH, DB, GS, BC), singles at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd April (GS, BC) , Fulford Ings on 9th (DW) and Wheidrake Ings on 21st (TED, EBB) , One at Wheldrake on 2nd, 5th, 11th and 19th May (TMC, GS) and Escrick on 5th (RH). A single at Wheldrake Ings on 7th July (PP) , two throughout August (DB) with four on 27th (MEW) , one staying until 11th September (PP) . One on Hull Road Tip on 26th August (DRF, DA, CA),

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

Fulford Ings: singles on 5th, 11th and 15th February (TC) and on 30th April (TC) and two on 1st May (BD), One over Melbourne Canal on 29th June (JIM). Naburn Sewage Works: two on 23rd February, singles on 6th March, and 2nd April (TED, EBB), one on 11th (PR), two on 14th, one on 15th, 21st and 26th (TED, EBB) , five on 27th and 28th July, two on 4th and 5th August, one on 8th September, two on 9th and 10th, singles on 17th and 24th, singles on 11th and 29th October and on 24th November (TED, EBB), Wheldrake Ings: singles on 31st July (PP) , 7th August (ARP) 1st and 3rd August (DB, JC) , 13th (SM, MEW) and on 23rd, three on 27th (DE, JC) and one on 31st (TMC) One on 2nd September and five on 10th (TMC) . One to two birds at Wharfe Ings on August and Appleton Roebuck in September (DW) One at Askham Bog on 13th August (DRF) , two at Castle Howard on 26th (IC) Singles at Wharfe Ings on 2nd, 6th and 13th August (OW) One at Askham Bog on 5th November, three at Acaster Malbis on 10th December and singles over Fulford Golf Course on 15th (per JHL) Askham Bog on 16th and 25th December.

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*
Two at Wheldrake Ings on 9th May.

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos*
Singles at Wheldrake in April, up to three in May, four in July and six in August. Up to seven at Fulford Ings in May and five at Naburn Sewage Works in August. Other records were mainly of singles from May to August at York University Lake, Ross Carrs, Castle Howard, Hull Road Tip, Selby, Bolton Percy, Nun Appleton, Wharfe Ings and Skipwith Common. Night passage recorded at Heworth on 28th April (JHL), and York on 3rd May (IC) and 1st August (DB) The last bird was recorded at Ryther on 1st October (JMPa).

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*
One at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd May where two were present until the 7th (ARP, TMC et al) A single by the River Ouse at Clifton on 28th November was seen to fly over SSW (MR).

GREY PHALAROPE *Phalaropus fulicarius*
One at Wheldrake Ings on 5th October (BE) , accepted by YNU reports committee, second record for the area.

LITTLE GULL *Larus minutus*
Two first year birds at Wheldrake Ings on 14th May.

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus*
Breeding at: Lower Derwent, Strensall Common and Skipwith Common.
Highest counts during winter months were: 10,000 at Lower Derwent (CS) , 2,000 at Castle Howard, 200 at Fulford Ings, 200 at Flaxton, 300 at Bishopthorpe and 750 at Dringhouses Pond.
500 roosting at Wheldrake Ings on 31st July (DB) and 700 flew 85w over Clifton Water Works on 20th November (MR).

COMMON GULL *Larus canus*
Up to 100 in the Lower Derwent in winter months (CS)
220 at Clifton Ings on 19th February and 450 on the Knavesmire on 25th (OW) , several flocks of up to 60 near Malton on 24th March (IC) , 210 on the Knavesmire on the same date (DW) , 270 at Askham Richard on 26th and 190 at Ashfield School fields on 3rd April (DVT) , 21 at Naburn Sewage Works on 6th (TED, EBB) . 200 at Clifton Ings on 6th (MR) , two at Wheldrake Ings on 30th April, 3rd and 13th May (TED, EBB). Singles near York during May up to three in June and nine in July (OW) , ten at Wheldrake Ings on 29th (DB) . 138 flew WSW over Dringhouses between 16.00 and 17.00 hrs on 21st October, 110 on Ashfield School fields on 22nd. 175 over Dringhouses between 15.00 and 15.50 hrs on 24th November and 181 between 15.00 and 15.35 hrs on 25th (DW) Common/Black-headed Gull *L. canus-ridibundus* roosting at Wheldrake Ings totalled 5,000 birds in January (COB).

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*
Recorded in all months with August giving maximum.
19 at Askham Bog Tip on 17th June, 24 on 18th, 46 on 22nd July and 68 on 29th (DW) . 11 on Ashfield School Fields on 15th June, 11 on 17th July, 33 on 6th August increased to 85 on the 12th, 14 at Wharfe Ings on 23rd July (DW) . 30 records of one to two birds throughout the area most months. Two records of probably the same bird showed characteristics of the Scandinavian race *L.f. fuscus* at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd and 29th April (TED, EBB)

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*
Up to 20 in the Lower Derwent in winter months (CS). Five at Bishopthorpe on 13th and 15th February (PWGC) , four over York on 18th and three on 19th, seven flew north at Acaster

Malbis on 24th (DW) Seven at Dalby on 12th March (PWGC) Seven at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd and one on 11th May (TED, EBB, DB). Four near Askham Bog on 18th June (DW) Singles at Askham Bog in November (DRA, DRF) Six at Bishopthorpe on 10th December (PWGC) and one at Wheldrake Ings on 16th (TED, EBB) . Six at Bolton Percy on 17th and three at Acaster Malbis on 26th (DW)

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*

Up to 18 in the Lower Derwent during winter months (CS) Five at Askham Bog on 14th January (DBA) and four at Acaster Malbis Floodwater on 5th February (DW) were maxima. 16 records of singles throughout the area most months.

KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*

All records were from Wheldrake Ings, Three on 11th February (CS, BC) singles on 5th May (TMC) 13th (CS, TED, EBB) and 17th (CS, BC)

SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis*

One flew southwest over Stockton Lane on 2nd July (DB) and two flew NNE over Chapelfields York on 9th August (fiR). Sixth and seventh records for the area.

ROSEATE TERN *Sterna dougallii*

An adult at Wheldrake Ings from 13.50 to 14.20 hrs on 17th June (TMC).

Accepted by Y.N.U. Reports Committee.

First record for the area.

The following were some of the details noted. Pallid, long tail-streamers, black bill, red at base approximately one sixth of whole length.

COMMON/ARCTIC TERN *Sterna hirundo/paradisaea*

A flock of seven flew east over Askham Bog on 8th May (BRA) . Singles at River Ouse York on 9th May (DB) Naburn Sewage Works on 26th (TED, EBB) , York University Lake on 4th June (JHL) , Castle Howard on 1st July (DW) and Acaster Malbis on 12th August (DW). Counts of 14 and eight at Castle Howard in August (PH)

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

One at Wheldrake Ings on 1st May (GS) and two on 2nd (TMC) . Three at Naburn on 27th May (MHR). Singles at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd July (TMC) , Fulford Ings on 6th August (MKW) and Stamford Bridge on 15th September (TMC).

Addition to 1977 Report: One at Fulford Ings on 1st October (AF).

ARCTIC TERN *Sternidae paradisaea*

All records from Wheldrake Ings.

Singles on 20th April (TED, EBB) and 2nd May (ARP, TMC), four on 5th May and five on 19th (TMC) . One on 4th June (SM, CS) two on 11th (SM) and one on 23rd July (TMC)

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger*

One at Castle Howard from 15.00 to 17.00 hrs on 17th May (SM) and a single at Wheldrake Ings on the same date at 20.10 hrs (CS) may have been the same bird. Three adults at Wheldrake Ings on 4th June (TMC, SM, TS, CS). Singles at Castle Howard on 16th (ARN) and 20th August (AR?). One at Wheldrake Ings on 6th September (BB). One at Castle Howard on 8th September

STOCK DOVE

Bred at Skipwith Common, Lower Derwent, Brandsby and Askham Bog.

Up to six birds at Fulford Ings, Beningborough, Newburgh, Wharfe Ings, Strensall Common and Cawood. 18 at Skipwith on 24th March (DB) , 21 near Askham Richard on 26th and 13 at Bishopthorpe on 8th May (DW)

WOODPIGEON *Columba palumbus*

Maxima counts were: 500 at Wheldrake Ings on 12th January (DB), 200 at Whitwell on 5th February (BCP, JMP), 2,000 in the Lower Derwent on 19th (CS, BC) , 200 at Appleton Roebuck on 11th March COB) , 200 at Dalby on 12th (PWGC) 1,500 at Stripes Wood on 11th April (fiR) 300 at Bubwith on 27th (DB) , 450 at Wharfe Ings on 6th May (OW) and 250 in the Lower Derwent from 6th to 13th May (CS, BC).

400 flew south at Cawood on 13th November (PR)

500 at Brockett Wood on 14th December, 1,200 at Colton on 17th.

400 at Broughton on 28th (IC) , 350 at Copmanthorpe on 29th (OW) and up to 500 at Askham Bog during winter

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

Largest gathering was 200 roosting in Selby Railway Station during January and February (PR)

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*

The first one was at Aughton on 3rd May (TED, EBB), then two at Wheidrake on 5th (TMC), one at Bishop Wood on 7th (PR, TM) and one at Appleton Roebuck on 9th (OW).

The maximum count was of 45 at Escrick on 18th May (TED, EBB). The last record was one over Fulford Ings on 26th September (BD)

CUCKOO

First were at Bubwith on 23rd April (FWO, DB) and Askham Bog on 28th (ORA) , with the main arrival taking place during the first week in May.

Addition to 1977 Report: A very late bird observed on Strensall Common on 3rd October (JR).

BARN OWL *Tyto alba*

Bred successfully at: Lower Derwent (OS, BC) Knapton a pair with four young (IC), Copmanthorpe four young (DRA, DRF), Acaster Malbis two young (DW) and Cawood three young (per BOP).

Up to four pair in the Lower Derwent (OS, BC) and singles at Stockton-on-the-Forest, Dunnington, High Hutton, Huntington, Melbourne, Barton Hill, Strensall, Brandsby, Castle Howard, Naburn, Elvington Airfield, Riccall and Grimston Bar.

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

An increase in records this year. Bred at: Lower Derwent, Wheldrake Woods (OS, BC) , Brandsby and Acaster Malbis.

Recorded all months: singles at Rawcliffe Lane (IC), Huntington (RLG) , Strensall Common (DW) , Escrick, Cliffe Common (FWO) , Acaster Airfield, Dringhouses, Wharfe Ings (DW), Stamford Bridge, Tang Hall Lane York, Murton, Gate Helmsley, Tollerton, Pocklington, Kirby Misperton (TMC), near Skipwith Common (PP) , Church Fenton, Barton Hill (IC) Stillingfleet (PR) , Howsham Bridge (HJW) , Barlow (per PR) Tilmire (MEW) and Newburgh Priory

TAWNY OWL

Mostly singles heard or seen throughout the area.

LONG-EARED OWL

Breeding near Wheldrake (MEW) , Huby Woods (PH) and a pair with three young at Skipwith Common (PP, PM).

One at Wigginton on 28th April (PH) . A bird found dead at road side at Wilberfoss in mid-May, one at Deighton on 31st May (TED, EBB) . Singles at Grimston Wood on 29th July (PH) , Wharfe Ings on 24th September (DW) and at Rufforth on 24th October (MR)

SHORT EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

An increase in records this year.

One near Riccall during February (PP) singles at Fulford Ings on 30th March (BD, JO, AF), Wheldrake Ings on 9th May (BOP, JMP, DB, DRA) . Two at Pocklington Canal near Melbourne on 15th October and one there on 29th November (TED, EBB) , one at Leeman Road York on 28th (MR) One over Fulford Ings on 3rd December (ED, JO, AF) and two at Rufforth Moor from 26th December to year-end (JAL). One to two in the Lower Derwent during winter months.

NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Up to five pairs breeding on Skipwith Common (CS).

First heard was on 17th May

SWIFT

Arrived a week earlier this year, singles at Copmanthorpe and Bishopthorpe on 21st April with the main arrival during the third week in May. 600 arrived in a southeasterly with drizzle at Naburn Sewage Works on 18th May and 400 at Middlethorpe Ings on 21st. Up to 200 at Askham Bog in June and July. Passage over York on 11th and 12th September with 100 on the latter date. The last was at Fulford Ings on 9th October.

KINGFISHER

Bred at Askham Bog, Fulford Ings, Selby Brick Ponds, Kirkham Abbey, three pairs between Bishopthorpe and Naburn, at least one pair was successful. A pair with five young at Copmanthorpe Pumping Station.

Recorded in all months: one to two in the City along the River Ouse (MKSV) , Wheldrake Ings (SM) , Acaster Lane, Acaster Malbis, Clifton Ings, Dringhouses Pond, South Ings, Wharfe Ings and Nun Appleton (DW) , Stearsby, Dale End (PH) , Castle Howard (BGP) , New Earswick (DB) and Ryther.

HOOPOE

One on the Knavesmire, York on 22nd April was observed for one and a half hours whilst feeding in the area.

First record for the area.

WRYNECK

A bird found dead at Askham Bog in August was taken to the Yorkshire Museum in York where it was mounted in flight by Strensall taxidermist, David Astley.

Second record for the area.

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus, viridis*

Bred at: Skipwith Common (OS), Grimston Woods (PT!) and Strensall Common (BOP)

One at Howsham on 31st March and one near Garrowby in December (BOP) . Singles throughout the year in the Lower Derwent.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopus major*

Breeding at: Wheldrake Woods, Skipwith Common (CS) and Brandsby (PH) . Three pairs at Askham Bog (Common Bird Census)

Mainly singles at: Brockett Wood, Strensall Common, Kings Moor Plantation, Copmanthorpe, Dringhouses (DW), Tilmire, Moorlands, Fulford Ings (MKW) , Castle Howard, Acomb (IC) , Stubb Wood (FW0) , Acaster Wood (PWGC), Heslington (CBT) , Naburn, Deighton (TED, EBB) and New Earswick (DB)

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopus minor*

Another increase in records this year.

Bred near Ampleforth and at Castle Howard (PH). One pair at Askham Bog (Common Bird Census) , a pair attempted to breed at Fulford Ings but was unsuccessful (BD, DM, JG).

Singles at: Askham Bog during winter months (DRF) Bishopthorpe Palace on 24th March (DW) , Tadcaster Road during April (PHO) , near Copmanthorpe on 5th April (DRF), near Colton Wood on 16th (DRA) , Brandsby on 30th May (PH), Howsham Bridge on 15th June (1-!JW) , near Copmanthorpe on 29th Juno (DRF) , near Ampleforth on 20th August, Strensall Common on 27th (PM) and a pair at New Earswick on 6th October (DB) . Singles at Naburn on 27th October and 8th November (TED, EBB), Tang Hall Wood York on 16th November (BT, RT) , Stamford Bridge on 18th and Naburn on 29th.

SKYLARK

Maxima counts were: 40 at Wharfe Ings on 22nd January, 30 at Ryther on 29th, 150 feeding on waste ground behind York Railway Station on 10th February and 30 at Moorland Acomb on 11th April.

110 at Acaster Airfield on 23rd september, 100 on 29th, 100 on 1st October and 120 on 3rd. 120 at Acaster Malbis on 26th November (DW) . 60 at Stillingfleet on 28th September and 50 on 5th October.

SAND MARTIN

The first migrants recorded were a month later this year.

The first were six at Wheldrake on 20th April (TED, EBB)

Three at Naburn on 9th October were the last. The same departure date as last year.

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

First were at Wheldrake, Naburn (TED, EBB) , Askham Bog (DRA) and Selby (PR) on the 20th April. 1,500 at Naburn Sewage Works on 18th May (TED, EJB) . 5,000 roosting at Wheldrake Ings in August (DB) and 4,000 roosting at Rosscarrs on 26th August (PR) were maxima.

Main departure occurred from 7th to 13th October when hundreds moved south over Naburn (TED, EBB) , numbers dropped to 30 at Sutton-on-Derwent on 15th October (TED, EBB) , 23 at Strensall on 15th (DW) , 13 at Wilberfoss on 16th and the last was two late birds at Naburn Sewage Works on 21st November.

HOUSE MARTIN

First arrivals were singles at Bishopthorpe on 21st April (PWGC) , Wheldrake on 22nd (TED, EBB) and Acomb on 24th (EM) . 800 at Naburn Sewage Works on 18th May (TED, EBB) was maximum.

The last were four at Strensall on 15th October, ten at Brockett Wood on the 16th (DW) and five at Ryther an 21st (JMPa)

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

Bred at: Strensall]. Common, three pairs at York University Campus, one pair at Dale End and Stearsby Hag, two pairs at Grimston Wood (PH).

The first were three at Strensall Common on 23rd April and the last was at Askham Bog on 9th September (DW)

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

Bred at: Naburn Sewage Works (TED, EBB) , Lower Derwent, Skipwith Common (GS) , Strensall Common and Fulford Ings.

190 at Naburn Sewage Works in January (TED, EBB), 15 at Acaster Malhis on 10th February, 23 near Askham Bog on 26th, 34 on 4th March, 21 on Strensall Common on 5th

March, 45 on Fulford Ings on 19th and 32 near Askham Bog on 26th (DW)
42 at Acaster Airfield on 12th August, 54 near Askham Bog on 9th September, up to 130 at Acaster Airfield in September and 70 in October (DW) , 160 at Naburn Sewage Works in November (TED, EBB) and 38 at Fulford Ings on 10th December (DW)

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*

Bred at the Lower Derwent, Clifton Water Works, near Fulford Golf Course, near Askham Bog, Strensall and Skipwith Common. 15 pairs in and around Naburn Sewage Works. First of spring was near Skipwith on 15th April (PP) Recorded throughout the area mainly one to three individuals with highest counts at Naburn Sewage Works: 12 on 24th April increased to 20 on 26th and 60 on 9th May. The last was at Selby on 28th October (MKW) Birds showing characteristics of the blue-headed race *M.f. flava* were singles at Naburn Sewage Works on 9th, 15th and 26th May (TED, EBB) , one at Wheldrake Ings on 14th (TMC) and the 16th May (TED, EBB) with two on 19th (TMC)

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

A continuation of the previous year's increase with a record number of 24 localities mainly of singles throughout the year with three at Naburn Sewage Works on 9th and 10th May and six on 26th November were maxima.

PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba*

Maxima counts were: up to 1,500 roosting at York Railway Station during winter months (MR) , 75 at Naburn Sewage Works in February (TED, BBB) , 100 comprising mainly of juveniles in York University Playing Fields on 8th September (JiIL) and 63 at Naburn Sewage Works in December (TED, EBB)

Correction to 1977 Report: 132 at Middlethorpe Ings on 7th April not 7th February (DW) Singles showing characteristics of the White Wagtail *M,a, alba*: an early bird at Stamford Bridge on 14th February (TMC) , Naburn Sewage Works on 3rd April (TED, EBB) Bishopthorpe on 16th (MKW) , Wheldrake Ings on 2nd May (TMC) Naburn Sewage Works on 9th (TED, EBB) and Wheldrake Ings on 19th.

DIPPER *Cinclus cinclus*

Bred at Howsham Bridge.

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

62 breeding pairs at Askham Bog (Common Bird Census), 53 pairs in 1977.

DIJNNOCK *Prunella modularis*

32 breeding pairs at Askham Bog (Common Bird Census), 22 pairs in 1977.

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

52 breeding pairs at Askham Bog (Common Bird Census), 50 pairs in 1977.

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros*

A female on Skipwith Common on 10th April (PP)
Second record for the area.

REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

No breeding evidence this year, only records were: singles at Askham Bog on 7th May (DRF) , near Brandsby on 26th July (PH) , Acaster Airfield on 30th August (IWO) and three birds at Fulford Ings from 20th August to 10th September (BD, DM, JG).

WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*

Bred at Strensall Common where 13 pairs (19 pairs in 1977) and three non-breeding birds were located. A total of 21 juveniles (11 in 1977) were seen belonging to eight pairs, three of the remaining five pairs probably bred but no young were observed, a total of 50 birds on the common (DW)

Also bred at Wharfe Ings: one pair with two juveniles (DW) and South Ings, a pair with three juveniles (DW)

The first were a pair at Naburn Sewage Works on 4th May (TED, EBB), a pair near Crayke on 5th (PH), three near Askham Bog, Wharfe Ings (DW) and Wheldrake on 6th (GS), a pair at Westfield Bog on 16th (MR), a female at Wheldrake on 19th May (TED, EBB). Two at Melbourne on 29th June (HJW) a male at Beningborough on 4th July and a juvenile at Nun Appleton on 23rd (DW). Two at Acaster Selby on 25th August (OW) and two males and a juvenile at Fulford Ings from 29th August to 11th September (BO, DM, JG). Two adults and one juvenile at Wheldrake Ings on 31st July. Singles at Wheldrake on 10th September (DB, FWO), Acaster Selby on 17th and Acaster Airfield on 17th and 23rd (OW).

STONECHAT *Saxicola torquata*

One at Wheldrake Ings on 14th and 19th February (GS, BC, SM), two at Acaster Airfield on 28th September, two on 1st October, one on 8th and two at Strensall Common on 15th (OW). One at Wheldrake on 15th November (TED, EBB) and a male at Stillingfleet on 1st December.

WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Numbers were again high this year during the spring and autumn passage.

The first were singles at the B.5.C. development area on 5th April (MR), Naburn Sewage Works on 14th (TED, EBB) Long Marston on 16th (CA) and Acaster Airfield on 28th (OW) Singles in May at: Naburn (TED, EBB), Clifton, Huby (TS) Acaster Airfield, Appleton Roebuck, Acaster Malbis (OW), near York Railway Station (MR), Buttercrambe (BT, RT) Wheldrake (GS, BC) and Lochelton Hall (JMPa). Maxima were~ four near Brandsby on 7th May (PH), 11 near Askham Bog on 8th (ORE), three at Tang Hall Tip York on 8th (BGP, JMP), six at Long Marston on 9th (CA) and ten on Knavesmire school fields on 21st (EM). Return passage began at Brandsby with one on 8th July (PH) and one at Copmanthorpe on 9th (DEF), one at Ryther on 18th July (JMPa). A female and two juveniles at Acaster Airfield on 6th August and a female on 12th (DW) Singles at Clifton Water Works on 9th and 10th (MR), Rufforth on 24th (JAL) and near Acaster Selby on 27th (DRA), a male on Ashfield School fields on 10th September (EM). Eight at Acaster Airfield on 17th and one to two to month end. Singles at Acaster Selby on 17th and Moor ?4onkton on 26th (DW), two at Skewsby in early October (PH).

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

37 breeding pairs at Askham Bog (Common Bird Census), 30 pairs in 1977.

70 roosted near Whenby in late October (PH). Nocturnal passage over York on 7th November, 100 at Dringhouses Pond on 5th and 12th November and 80 at Wharfe Ings on 9th December (DW)

A Continental adult male caught at Naburn on 8th November weighed only 87g and the following day was 92g; six other adult males caught the same week weighed between 105 and 113g (TED)

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

Winter maxima were: 350 on Strensall Common on 1st January (BOP, JMP), 200 at Castle Howard on 5th (TS), 100 roosting at Selby Railway Station during January and February (PR), 1,500 between Storwood to East Cottingwith on 5th February (TMC), 200 at Bramble Lane on 10th April (MR) and 1,500 at Rosscarrs on 6th May (PR, TM).

First of autumn were: seven at Acaster Malbis on 18th October (DW). 200 at Storwood Ings on 23rd October and 200 over Stillingfleet on 27th (RH). Roosting flocks of 400 at

Wheldrake on 12th November and 790 on 17th (TED, EBB). 200 flew southeast over Ryther on 16th November.

SONG THRUSH

Eight breeding pairs at Askham Bog (Common Bird Census), 20 pairs in 1977.

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

300 roosting at Selby Railway Station in January and February (PR) . 200 on Knavesmire in January and February (EM) . 400 between Storwood and East Cottingwith on 5th February (TMC) and 400 at Rosscarrs on 6th May (PR, TM) were maxima counts.

First autumn birds were a week later this year with one at Askham Bog (DW) and three at Naburn on 8th October (TED, EBB) . The main influx was also a week later with 600 flying south over Copmanthorpe on 15th October (DRF)

A leucistic bird at Askham Bog from 4th to 14th January. Eye and bill were black, pale eye stripes just visible, head, neck and throat were pale yellow; breast flanks, mantle and upper wing coverts were buff; rump white to buff. Primaries, outer tail feathers and tip were white, centre of tail was buff, patch of red on flanks and underwing, legs were very pale (DRF).

MISTLE THRUSH

40 flew southwest over Ryther on 20th July (JMPa) 15 at Beningborough on 4th August (TS), 15 juveniles at Acaster Malbis on 6th (DW) and 25 at Tilmire on 17th September (MRW) were maxima.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia*

Bred at Skipwith Common and in the Lower Derwent (Cs).

The first was at Selby on 20th April (PR) . Singles at Strensall Common (AMW, JFW) and Black Plantation on 6th May, Wigginton on 25th (AMW, JFW) , Acaster Airfield on 6th June (FW) and two at Melbourne Canal on 6th July (HJW)

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Breeding at: Fulford Ings, Strensall Common, Lower Derwent, six breeding pairs at Askham Bog (Common Bird Census), nine pairs in 1977. Ten pairs at Naburn Sewage Works (TED, EBB) . 15 singing males along River Derwent on Wheldrake Reserve (TED, EBB).

Mainly singles heard singing in May and June at Skipwith Common, Middlethorpe Ings, Tang Hall Tip York, Castle Howard, Moreby Park, Bolton Percy, Appleton Roebuck and Beningborough. A male singing at 23.15 hrs at Ryther on 26th May (JMPa) . Five at Wharfe Ings on 23rd July and one carrying food on 2nd August.

The first was at Naburn Sewage Works on 2nd May (TED, EBB) and the last were two at Appleton Roebuck on 24th September (DW).

REED WARBLER

Bred on Skipwith Common. No counts were made. 11 breeding pairs at Askham Bog (Common Bird Census) , 18 pairs in 1977. One pair on Fulford Ings (BD, JG) , these were the only breeding records. One at Wheldrake Ings on 5th May (TMC) and Naburn Sewage Works on 26th (TED, EBB) , with singing males at Brockett Wood from 30th May to 12th June, Wharfe Ings on 23rd July (DW) and Wheldrake during August (DB)

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

An increase in records this year with breeding at Tollerton where one pair was present (PH) and at least two pairs near Naburn (TED, EBB).

The first were at Brockett Wood on 4th May (DW) and Skipwith Common on 6th (PP) . One at Askham Bryan and Water Lane in May (DB). Five birds were caught and ringed in a garden in Naburn between 15th May and 5th July; a pair in Escrick Park on 18th May (TED, EBB) . One singing in Brockett Wood on 17th May (FW) and from 31st May to 6th July (DW) . One at Wheldrake Ings on 20th May (TMC) , a pair at Ferry Boat Inn near Thorganby on 1st

June (PH). Single singing birds at Acaster Airfield on 6th June (FWO). Low Catton on 17th (TMC), Fulford Golf Course on 18th (BGP) Copmanthorpe on 18th (DW) , Bolton Percy on 25th (DW) and Buttercrambe on 28th (TS) . One found dead on road at Acaster Malbis on 7th August (DW), one at Copmanthorpe on 10th (DRF) and Wharfe Ings on 13th (DV);

WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

Increase continues with records throughout the area with breeding at: Colton Lane, Wheldrake Ings, Brandsby, Braithwaites Bridge, Buttercrambe, Barton-le-Willows, Haxby, Strensall, Overton Wood, Blackwoods, Elvington, Naburn Sewage Works, Naburn Village, Askham Bog six pairs (Common Bird Census), three in 1977, Skipwith Common. First arrivals were at Haxby on 23rd April (ANW, JEW) and East Cottingwith on 28th (TED, EBB), the main influx occurring in the first week of May. The last was at Naburn on 18th September (TED).

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia sarda*

Bred at Kirkham Abbey (DB), 14 birds holding territories in the Brandsby area (PH) and one pair at Askham Bog (Common Bird Census). Single singing birds at Skipwith Common on 6th May, Fulford Ings on 6th and 7th (ED, JG), Thicket Priory on 13th (GS, BC) and Bramble Lane on 16th (NR). Two at Tilmire on 28th May (MKW), two at Huby on 1st June ('PS), one at Acaster Wood on 22nd, one at Burythorpe on 1st July and two at Kings Moor Plantation on 9th (TM). Two at Overton on 1st and 12th August (IS) and one on Skipwith Common on 20th (PM).

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*

Bred at: Wheldrake Woods (GS) and Skipwith Common, two pairs at Naburn Village and Naburn Sewage Works, two pairs near Barton-le-Willows (BC?, Jill').

c.a. 20 breeding sites in Brandsby area (PH) and 26 breeding pairs at Askham Bog (Common Bird Census).

Two at Askham Bog on 26th April (DRE) and two at Stubb Wood on 28th (TM). Four at Askham Bog on 3rd May and six on 6th (DUE). Single mostly singing birds at: Bishop Wood on 4th May (AUP), Beningborough on 25th (TS) and Malton on 31st (IC), Moorlands near Skelton on 7th June and one at Heworth York on 12th (JHL), Heworth 36th July and Acaster Airfield on 30th August (FWO).

An increase in late records probably due to over wintering trend. One at Dringhouses Pond on 28th September. Singles were caught and ringed at Naburn on 17th, 23rd, 27th and 30th September and 18th October (TED). One at Easingwold on 5th November (PR), single males at Naburn 16th (TED, EBB) and Tadcaster Road York on 20th and 21st November.

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Singles at Black Plantation near Wheldrake on 6th May (TMC), Fulford Ings on 6th (BD, JG) and Bishop Wood near Cawood on 7th (PR, TM) , Moorlands near Skelton on 17th, 20th, 21st, 27th May and 1st and 9th June (EM, TS).

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*

First was at Tilmire on 12th March (MKW) The main influx came during the first week in April with birds recorded from eight localities on the 2nd.

Addition to 1977 Report: One at Naburn Sewage Works on 16th November and two on 27th December, these birds were feeding in willow scrub on sludge lagoon (TED, EBB)

See (British Birds, Vol 71, No 4, p 183—186)

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

65 breeding pairs at Askham Bog (Common Bird Census), 70 in 1977.

The first was at Askham Bog on 3rd April (TDC). The main arrival occurred on the 20th and 21st. Four at Naburn Sewage Works on 24th September (TED, EBB) were the last.

Addition to 1977 Report: One singing at Rawcliffe Lane on 7th April was the first for the year(IC),

A bird found dead on Skipwith Common on 7th May was taken to Spurn Point where it was considered by B R Spence to belong to the northern race

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*

Breeding recorded from Brocket Wood (DW) , Kirkham Abbey (DB, FWO) and Brandsby area (PH)

Recorded throughout the area with a maxima of 300 in Black Plantation during January and February (TED, EBB), 22 at Kings Moor Plantation on 2nd September (DW) and 20 at Bishop Wood on 29th October (DRF).

FIRECREST *Regulus ignicapillus*

A female at Askham Bryan on 11th April (DE)

The following details were noted: Dark line through the eye, white supercillium, dark bordering crown stripes and a yellow (chrome) central crown stripe. About the throat and ear coverts was soft grey. The breast and general underparts were nearly white. The upper parts were quite green, bright around the mantle and nape. Two small dark bars appeared on the folded wing. Shoulders were of a bronze/copper colour. The bill was dark and legs a dark flesh.

Accepted by Y.N.U. Reports Committee. First record for the area.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa latirostris*

Bred at: Three pairs at Naburn and single pairs at Askham Bog (Common Bird Census), Escrick, Deighton, Kirkham Abbey, Escrick Park (TED, EBB) , Tang Hall Wood York (aT, RT) , Strensall Common and Fulford York (FWO) Breeding successful in three ten kilometre squares near Brandsby (PH).

The first was early with one at Askham Bog on 7th May (DRF) One to two in May and June at Brocket Wood, Lower Derwent, Farlington, Bishopthorpe Palace, Barton-le-Willows, Escrick and Rufforth.

The last was at Naburn on 19th September (TED, EBB).

BEARDED TIT *Panurus biarmicus*

Two juveniles at Wheldrake Ings on 18th November

Second record for the area.

LONG TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*

Six pairs bred at Askham Bog (Common Bird Census)

Highest counts of feeding flocks were 31 at Castle Howard on 26th August (IC) , 26 at Wheldrake Ings on 24th September (BB) , 40 on Skipwith Common on 12th November (PP) and up to 60 at Askham Bog from October to year-end (DRF).

MARSH TIT *Parus palustris*

Only breeding records were from Askham Bog one pair (Common Bird Census) and Skipwith Common (GS)

One to two birds present at Bishopthorpe Palace, Knavesmire Wood, Brocket Wood, Kings Moor Plantation, Castle Howard, Strensall Common, Stubb Wood, Fulford Ings, Redhouse Wood, Howsham, Overton Woods, Rawcliffe Lane, Acaster Selby, Naburn, Stearsby, High Wood and Brandsby.

WILLOW TIT *Parus montanus*

Breeding at: Skipwith Common (GB) , Brocket Wood (DW) and five pairs at Askham Bog.

Two family parties of five at Strensall Common (DW).

Up to 20 at Black Wood in January and February (TED, EBB). Mostly singles at Dringhouses Pond, Overton Wood, Castle Howard, Askham Richard, Acaster Selby, Kings Moor

Plantation, Stubb Wood, Burythorpe, Acaster Airfield, Wharfe Ings, Acaster Malbis, Wheldrake Woods, Bishopthorpe, Peel Park, Wiganthorpe, Dale End, Grimston Wood and Spellar Wood.

COAL TIT *Parus ater*

Five pairs bred at Askham Bog (Common Bird Census).

Up to 100 at Black Woods near Wheldrake in January and February (TED, EBB) . 65 at Kings Moor Plantation on 2nd September (DW) and 30 at Bishop Wood on 29th October.

BLUE TIT *Parus caeruleus*

45 pairs bred at Askham Bog (Common Bird Census), 32 pairs in 1977.

Maxima were 30 at Moorlands on 12th March (TS) 40 at Strensall Common on 2nd September, 40 at Acaster Airfield on 23rd (OW) and 50 at Red House Wood on 2nd December (DB)

GREAT TIT *Parus major*

18 pairs bred at Askham Bog, 12 pairs in 1977.

Up to 20 in Black Woods near Wheldrake in January and February (TED, EBB) was highest count.

NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

Bred near Potter Hill Woods, Coulton (PH) . A pair at Fulford Ings during January (BD) , singles at Gilling on 2nd January (PH) and Castle Howard on 7th March (FWO). Two at Bellbottom Wood near Castle Howard on 27th September (TS)

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

Two pairs bred at Askham Bog (Common Bird Census)

Mainly singles throughout the area.

GREAT GREY SHRIKE

A bird on Strensall Common from 5th March to 18th April was observed to catch Common Lizard *Lacerta vivipara* and Bumble Bee *Bombus* sp (DW et al)

Two on Strensall Common on 5th November, one on 19th and 26th (JR, MR) and singles on 24th and 26th December (IF)

Addition to 1977 Report; One at Fulford Ings from 29th to 31st October (DM).

JAY *Garrulus glandarius*

tip to six at Strensall Common, Black Woods, Moorlands, Overton Wood, Red House Wood, Newburgh Priory, Thickett Priory, Stubb Wood, Malton Gorge, Askham Bog, Acaster Wood, Stearsby, Brandsby, Kings Moor Plantation and Acaster Malbis, Ten at Skipwith Common 16th April was maximum (GS) . One took a House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* at Brockett Wood on 13th July (DW)

MAGPIE *Pica pica*

25 at Askham Bog on 4th March, 22 on 22nd April and 38 on 14th October (DW) . Maximum were 50 in fields near Askham Bog on 16th December (DRA).

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*

Up to 50 at Wheldrake Ings in winter months (GS). 60 near Askham Bog on 14th October, 350 at Moreby Park on 29th October and up to 800 from October to year-end flew northwest to roost over Brockett Wood near Appleton Roebuck (EW) . 100 flew west over Aughton on 24th December (MKW)

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

2,000 at Moreby Park on 29th October (DW) and up to 2,000 over Brocket Wood near Appleton Roebuck flying northwest from October to year-end (DW) were maxima. A bird with typical dark body, but pale mantle and wings was observed for the third consecutive year in the Lower Derwent on 18th February.

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*

160 at roost at Askham Bog on 8th April with numbers down to 55 by the 9th May. 49 on Askham Bog Tip on 1st September and 65 on 16th December (DW) An exceptional number of up to 300 roosting birds on Strensall Common during November and December (3M, MR)

A bird with white inner webbing of primaries and secondaries gave an unusual wing pattern at New Earswick on 10th October (DR)

A bird showing characteristics of the Hooded Crow *C. c. cornix* was at Strensall Common on 15th and 16th April (DW, JR)

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

100,000 roosting at Selby Railway Station during January and February (PR).

A leucistic bird, buff in colour was present at Naburn Sewage Works in mid-May. See British Birds, Vol 72, No 2, p 79—80).

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

200 at Tang Hall Tip and Appletree Farm York from September to year end (BGP, JMP)

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*

Maxima were: 90 at Acaster Selby on 22nd January (DW). 70 at Naburn during January and February. 38 were caught and ringed (TED, EBB). 150 at Bramble Lane on 12th April.

CHAFFINCH

Highest counts this year with flocks of 70 at Skelton on 29th January (AMW, JFW) . 50 at Crockey Hill on 25th February (TED, EBB) , 30 at Acaster Selby on 11th March (DB) and 40 at Strensall Common on 19th April (BGP, JMP) 19 at Brocket Wood on 12th October, 40 at Strensall Common on 15th (DW) , 60 in Acaster Wood on 26th November (PWGC) , 150 at Yearsley on 6th December (TDC, PM) , 50 at Ampleforth on 9th (BGP, JMP) and 60 at Bolton Percy on 17th (DW)

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

Continued increase in numbers with over 30 records.

Up to 60 in Brandsby area during winter months (PH). Nine at Fulford Ings in mid-January (BD, JG, DM), two at Naburn on 22nd (TED, EBB), one at Lower Derwent on 11th February (GS, BC, PP) and three on 12th (GB, BC) Two at Naburn on 12th and singles on 13th, 19th and 21st (TED, EBB) . Two at Wheldrake Ings on 18th February (CARP) , one at Crockey Hill on 25th and two in Black Wood on 27th (TED, EBB) . Five on Fulford Ings on 19th March (DW) , 50 at Bubwith on 23rd (GS, BC) , 14 at Wheldrake (DB), 75 on Skipwith Common (1DB, GB, BC) and one at Tilmire on 24th (DB) . 30 at Escrick on 25th and 26th (RH) , and six at Moorlands on 27th (MKW) Singles at Strensall Common on 16th April (DW) , Askham Bog on 22nd and 28th (DRA, DRF, DB) with the last bird near Brandsby on 1st May (PH). First of the autumn was at Dringhouses York on 21st October (DW) Seven at Skipwith Common on 10th November and singles to year end (PP) , two at Dringhouses on 11th November, one at Askham Bog on 12th (OW) and four at Naburn Sewage Works on 24th (TED, EBB) . Six at Yearsley on 6th December (TDC, PM) , one at Askham Bog on 9th (DRF) and six at Knavesmire York on 30th (EM)

GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris*

A flock of 200 at Naburn during January and February (TED, EBB) and up to 400 at Rowntree Playing Fields during February (PR) were maxima winter counts.

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

Largest flocks were 70 at Strensall Common on 5th March, 60 at Acaster Airfield of which two thirds were juveniles on 23rd September, 35 at Naburn Sewage Works on 25th (OW) , 80 at Askham Bog on 9th October (DRF) and 150 at Yearsley on 6th December (TDC. PM)

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*

An increase in numbers this year.

Four at Fulford Ings on 3rd January (BD, JG, AF), 35 at Askham Bog on 5th (DRF) increased to 50 by the 9th, seven at York University during January (CBT) . One at Naburn Sewage Works on 5th February (MKW) , 25 at Holly Carrs Wood near Escrick on 7th (PP) , ten at Askham Bog on 11th (DEF) , two at Strensall Common on 25th (JR) nine at Copmanthorpe on 26th (DRF) and one in Black Woods on 27th (TED, EBB) . 28 at Askham Bog on 4th March (OW) seven at Wheldrake Ings on 5th (TMC) , 15 at Askham Bog on 10th (DRF) , three in Black Woods on 19th (TED, EBB) and one near Castle Howard on 29th. A pair at Askham Bog on 6th May (DRF).

20 at Askham Bog on 14th October (OW) and 30 at Howsham on 29th (TMC) . Ten at Skipwith on 17th November (PM) , two at Fulford Ings on 18th (BG, JG, AF) and one at Askham Bog on 25th (DRF) . Six on Skipwith Common on 4th December (PP) and two at Askham Bog on 16th (DRA, DRF).

LINNET *Carduelis cannabina*

38 at Brocket Wood on 2nd May, 180 at Acaster Airfield on 28th September and 3rd October (OW) , 120 at Askham Bog on 9th October (DRF) were maxima counts.

TWITE *Carduelis flavirostris*

One at East Cottingwith in a flock of Greenfinches *C. chloris* and three Bramblings *Fringilla montifringilla* on 5th February (TMC) . A flock of 15 in the Lower Derwent on 11th February (GS, BC) and four flew west over Acomb York on 11th April (TDC, DB, DRA, ORE, DW).

REDPOLL *Carduelis flammea*

Bred at: Colton and Strensall Common (OW). Eight pairs at Askham Bog (Common Bird Census) and 15 pairs at Naburn Sewage Works (TED, EBB) 70 at Askham Bog on 4th January (DRF) , 20 at Tilmire on 15th (MKW) , 60 at Askham Bog on 5th February (DW) , 200 at Wheldrake on 24th March (DB) , 30 at Kings Moor Plantation on 16th April (DW) and 50 at Askham Bog during April and May (DRF).

80 at Acaster Malbis on 23rd September (OW) , 35 at Wheldrake Ings on 24th (OB) , 60 at Strensall Common on 15th October, up to 100 at Askham Bog in October and 200 in November and December (DPI, DRA)

A bird in a flock of seven Siskin *C. spinus* at York University Campus on 12th January was very pale and could well have been of the race Mealy Redpoll *C. f. flammea* (TED, EBB).

CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*

One at Huby Woods on 18th July (TS)

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Five pairs breeding at Askham Bog, seven pairs there in 1977 (Common Bird Census)

HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

An increase in records of this very local bird.

Three at Acaster Malbis on 5th February (DPI) , singles at Tilmire on 21st May (MKW) , Fulford Golf Course on 2nd June (JHL) and Tilmire on 1st July (MKW) . Three at Ampleforth on 9th December (BGP).

YELLOWHAMMER

Largest gatherings were 130 at Naburn from 21st January to the end of February., 60 at Acaster Selby on 22nd January, 20 at Tilmire on 24th February, 55 near Askham Bog on 4th March, 25 at Strensall Common on 5th, 50 at Acaster Selby on 11th, 23 at Askham Bryan on 26th and 45 at Dringhouses on 26th, 15 at Acaster Selby on 9th December and 30 at Ampleforth on 9th.

REED BUNTING

Bred at Lower Derwent, 13 pairs at Askham Bog, same number as in 1977 (CBC), Stearsby Pond, Spellar Bog, Strensall Common, Skipwith Common, Fulford Ings and 15 pairs at Naburn Sewage Works.

Small groups totalling 100 birds between Bubwith and Aughton on 19th February, 45 flew to roost in Askham Bog on 26th March and 12 at Dringhouses Pond on 31st December.

CORN BUNTING

25 at Wheldrake on 12th January, 30 at Acaster Selby on 22nd, 13 at Middlethorpe Ings on 18th March, 16 at Fulford Ings on 19th, 22 on 24th and 30 at Tilmire on 24th. Naburn had 30 on 15th April, 26 on 17th and 22 on 18th. 30 at Bubwith on 27th April.

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