

YORK ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB - REPORT 1979

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

It is with certain satisfaction and pleasure to report, that since my appeal of last year, members have responded magnificently to ease our Club's financial situation.

The attendances at our indoor meetings are most encouraging - "sometimes a full house" - and our membership numbers are increasing, all of which must enable our Club to flourish and improve its image.

Our A.G.M. in November produced a new Hon. Secretary, namely Mr. A. Potter, and a formal welcome was extended to him. I'm sure he will be a valuable asset to our Committee. Additionally, let us send our best wishes to Mr. T. Charlton, our retiring Secretary, who has now secured a position with the R.S.P.B.

This report is a compilation of 'observations' by members and the resultant "sweat" of our recorders, namely Mr. B.G. Pepper and Mr. D. Braithwaite, ably assisted this year by Mr. T. Dixon. To these members, my grateful thanks for their devoted efforts, and to all members who contributed their field notes.

How fortunate we are to have the services of Mrs. J. Pepper, as our Treasurer. June has more than kept our financial house in order, she has completely revolutionised the approach to this important "office" and her methods are to be admired.

Finally, may I thank all our hard working Committee for their help and advice, and conclude by wishing everyone "Good Birding" in 1980.

G.SMITH

SECRETARY' S REPORT

This report has been compiled by members of York Ornithological Club and nearly all the records have been submitted by members who are active in watching an area of about 550 square miles around York which the Club is responsible for recording.

The Club has a membership of about 70 enthusiasts. It meets once a month in the Priory Street Sports and Community Centre, usually on the first Tuesday of the month, for a full programme of talks and discussions and for the informal exchange of information which birdwatchers find invaluable.

In addition, on the first Sunday of each month, there is a Club excursion to an area of ornithological interest, usually outside the recording area.

Details of membership can be obtained from the Secretary, Alan Potter, 11 Devon Place, York, YO1 3HD, telephone York 411781.

ORNITHOLOGICAL HIGHLIGHTS OF 1979

1979 was a remarkable year that will long be remembered both for its weather and birds.

Variety and the unusual once again rewarded the local watchers for their efforts. The severe winter after a long succession of mild ones produced several good birds.

A total of 174 and two subspecies were recorded in 1979, this was the highest number ever recorded during a single year in the history of the club area since it began in 1966. Seven of which had never previously been recorded.

The Lower Derwent valley produced a high proportion of interesting birds; a male Hen Harrier was the first on 6th January and Smew were present on the following day. Short-eared Owl, Red-necked Grebe, Slavonian Grebe, Glaucous Gull and two further Hen Harriers were all recorded in the Valley before the end of March. Askham Bog was also a good place to watch, with adult Iceland and Glaucous Gulls arriving in January. A Buzzard appeared over Elvington Airfield in late January and a Hen Harrier in early February. A Short-eared owl at Acaster Malbis on 4th February and a Goshawk over Strensall Common on the 11th. Red-necked Grebe and Red-breasted Mergansers were both present on the River Ouse in York on the 24th February, with a male Hen Harrier and a Great Grey Shrike at Strensall Common on the same day. Red-necked Grebe increased to two in March and a Glaucous Gull that appeared at Wheldrake Ings on the 10th was without doubt the same bird that occurred at Askham Bog in January, showing damaged left foot.

Some migrants were slow to arrive with Willow Warbler over a week later than last year. Two records of Common Scoter in early April were, six on castle Howard Lake and three on Ellerton Floodwater.

May must surely have been the best month. Interesting waders during the first week were: Spotted Redshank and two Sanderling on the 7th. A Nightingale was singing for one week near Rufforth in mid-May.

A Common Buzzard was present in the Lower Derwent on the 14th and an Osprey there the following day. The main highlight of spring was without doubt a Red-rumped Swallow at Naburn Sewage Works on the 16th and 17th May which gave some fine views to several observers whilst obligingly perched on wires. A pair of Hawfinch at Fulford Ings on the 28th and a Corncrake heard at Lilling on the last day of the month.

The first week in June produced another new species, when two Little Terns were observed flying along the river at Wheldrake Ings. Marsh Harrier, Hobby, Kittiwake, Mediterranean Gull, Quail, Spotted Redshank and Black Tern were all noted before the end of July. August saw yet another Marsh Harrier and equally interesting, a Goshawk over Stamford Bridge on the 21st. September brought Knot and another Quail. An unexpected new species was an immature male Velvet Scoter at Castle Howard on 13th October, an exceptional party of 55 Grey Partridge arrived at Wheldrake Ings on the 21st. A Hen Harrier appeared over Fulford Ings on the 25th and a Mandarin on Castle Howard Lake on 31st.

Very late passage occurred in November when two Curlew Sandpipers and a Little Stint arrived at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd. December saw over-wintering Blackcaps in gardens in York and Haxby. Interesting species were in evidence until the very end with six Grey Plover on the 18th, Great Grey Shrike on 28th, Glaucous Gull on 29th and Scaup on the 31st.

BRIAN G. PEPPER.

CLIMATIC EFFECTS ON BIRDS IN THE YORK AREA IN 1979

The weather in 1979 played a major part in the lives of both birds and birdwatchers. The former undoubtedly endured much suffering, the latter enjoyed something of an annua mirabile in terms of the number of uncommon species which were seen, the occurrence of many of which was directly attributable to the weather conditions.

The two major climatic events were firstly the intensity and duration of the Arctic weather in the early months of the year; and secondly the very wet spring which ensured that the Derwent Ings never completely dried out and which culminated in the Derwent and Ouse over topping their banks in late May.

Many birds succumbed during the harsh winter weather. The waterfowl, especially in the Derwent Valley, were particularly hard hit. Feeding conditions were extreme with sheet ice covering the Ings for weeks on end. The Bewick's Swan herd was badly affected with 10 corpses found, others certainly died and were not found. Other corpses found included Heron, Whooper Swan, Grey Lag, Canada Goose, Mallard, Pochard, Tufted Duck, Coot, Moorhen, Great Black-backed Gull, Common Gull, Black-headed Gull and Short-eared owl. Several of these corpses were skinned out and without exception showed no trace of subcutaneous fat. These birds had obviously died of starvation and/or hypothermia.

Lapwing and Golden Plover were notable by their absence, presumably they moved away south and west in search of milder weather. Many species, normally uncommon inland, were forced to wander by conditions in Northern Europe and on the British coast. The York area received its fair share of these species. Red-necked Grebes were seen in the Derwent and on the Ouse in York and a Slavonian Grebe was seen at Wheldrake; these being our share of one of the biggest influxes of northern grebes ever seen in Britain. Sawbills were well represented, pride of place going to a party of five Smew which included three drakes; surely Europe's most exquisite duck. A Red-breasted Merganser spent several days on the Ouse and numbers of Goosander were well above average. Common Scoters and a Red-throated Diver added further interest. In what was an excellent year for gulls, an Iceland and two Glaucous Gulls provided excitement for many local ornithologists.

The effects of the winter on our resident passerines was not immediately apparent. Fortunately, our band of unsung heroes - the bird ringers and C.B.C. workers - provide a

mass of objective data from which to draw conclusions. Table 1 presents Askham Bog C.B.C. data for 1978 and 1979. The criterion used for inclusion was that species must be resident passerines with a minimum of 10 mapped territories in either of the two years. Table 2 presents ringing data for various resident passerines ringed by the Y.O.C. Ringing Group in 1978 and 1979. In order to allow for differences in catching effort in the two years, an index of relative abundance (R.A.I.) was calculated for each species using the formula. $R.A.I. = (\text{number of particular species ringed} / \text{total birds ringed in year}) \times 100$. These indices were then used to calculate percentage changes over the two years.

From this data it appears that many of our passerines were hard hit particularly Goldcrest, Long-tailed Tit and Treecreeper with Wren, Great Tit, Dunnock, Reed Bunting and Yellowhammer also faring badly. Robin and Blue Tit survived comparatively well, perhaps because of their ability to exploit food provided on bird tables. Song Thrush seemed little affected. I suspect because most Yorkshire Song Thrushes move south in the winter. For Blackbird, the ringing data is at variance with the C.B.C. data, this is almost certainly because 1979 saw us spending much time at the New Earswick Blackbird roost, a site not worked seriously in 1978. Ringing totals for Blackbird are therefore somewhat misleading; many Robins also roosted at this site and probably inflated the 1979 ringing total for this species.

Winter finally ended, the Swallows returned and we hoped for a good breeding season to help offset the winter losses. For many species it was not to be. Problems were most evident in the Derwent valley. Sheet water remained into late April delaying the start of breeding. Skylarks and Snipe were seen in display flight over the flooded ings. This is an interesting observation as it implies that these species were aware that the ings would at some stage dry out. This they duly started to do in early May and breeding got into full swing. However, heavy rain in late May once more inundated the valley with sheet water with disastrous results. The effect on Kingfisher and Black-headed Gull populations is documented in the Classified List, but also all the wader and duck species were washed off including a pair of Garganey and the grassland nesting passerines such as Skylark and Yellow Wagtail were badly affected. Fortunately the floods rapidly receded, the weather turned warm and most birds re-nested. The rain clouds had their silver lining however and the breeding season turned out to be exciting in terms of the quality if not quantity of birds present. Pintail, Wigeon and Garganey all nested, the above average amount of water producing ideal conditions for these species. Marsh Harrier and Short-eared Owl summered probably because the flooding initially provided 'winter-type feeding conditions with small mammals concentrated on the dyke banks.

Various other species occurred, almost certainly because of the water levels; these included Great Crested Grebes, Cormorants, Black and Little Terns and unprecedented numbers of Little Gulls.

It says much for the resilience of birds that they manage to bounce back after such enormous setbacks. It also says much for the dedication of Y.O.C. members that they braved some appalling conditions to provide the records without which this article could not have been written.

T.E. DIXON.

Table 1 : Askham Bog C.B.C. Data

<u>Species</u>	<u>Territories Mapped</u>		<u>Percentage Change</u>
	<u>1978</u>	<u>1979</u>	
Dunnock	32	4	— 87
Reed Bunting	13	4	— 69
Great Tit	18	6	— 67
Wren	62	23	— 63
Blackbird	37	21	— 43
Chaffinch	13	8	— 38
Robin	52	36	— 31
Magpie	10	7	— 30

Blue Tit	42	31	— 26
Song Thrush	8	10	+ 25

Table 2 Ringling Data

<u>Species</u>	<u>Number Ringed</u>		<u>R.A.I.</u>		<u>Percentage</u>
	<u>1978</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1978</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>Change in RAI</u>
Goldcrest	18	0	1.40	0.00	— 100
Long-tailed Tit	61	3	4.76	0.23	— 95
Treecreeper	18	5	1.40	0.38	— 73
Reed Bunting	48	17	3.74	1.29	— 66
Yellowhammer	31	12	2.42	0.91	— 62.
Dunnock	60	37	4.68	2.81	— 40
Blue Tit	136	87	10.61	6.61	— 38
Wren	52	37	4.06	2.81	— 31
Song Thrush	39	31	3.04	2.36	— 22
Robin	56	70	4.37	5.32	+ 22
Blackbird	138	225	10.76	17.10	+ 59

WILDFOWL COUNTS : 1979 Totals

The Lower Derwent, i.e. Wheldrake to Bubwith.

	18 Feb.	18 Mar.	8 Apr.	16 Sept.	14 Oct.	18 Nov.	16 Dec.
Mallard	1410	339	180	400	550	480	5900
Teal	424	419	346	100	250	172	2050
Wigeon	4500	1455	907	3	30	57	4000
Pintail	10	30	10			6	6
Shoveler	2	78	36	5	15	12	25
Pochard	221	715	190		1	12	163
Tufted Duck	70	90	76				48
Goldeneye		8	16			1	2
Goosander	11	1					
Shelduck		22	21				7
Greylag	21	29	21				44
Pinkfoot		40					
Canada	54	65	18			44	139
Mute Swan					1		5
Whooper		6					5
Bewick's	53	100				1	59
Coot	561	175	55				

Since February 1979 a wildfowl count to establish the numbers of duck species using the Lower Derwent has been undertaken. It is hoped to maintain these counts in the future.

DAVE BRAITHWAITE

COMMON BIRDS CENSUS

Common bird Census work in 1979 was carried out at: Skipwith Common, Askham Bog Common, Askham Bog, Wheldrake Ings and Brandsby. Details of this work is intended to be published in the 1980 report. Eds.

RINGING NOTES

Summary of the Year - Northern Section

The first three months of the year were quite hectic, with concentrated efforts being made to catch Blackbirds in the New Earswick reserve. This was moderately successful with 85 Blackbirds ringed in six visits (0.14 per visit). The maximum catch being 21 on 4th March. The number of Stockmussel birds caught (10) was interesting. These were second year males with marked grey-white tips and fringes to the head and body feathers. In some birds the effect was very striking. Among the more interesting birds caught in the reserve were Brambling, Pied Wagtail, Kestrel and Long-eared Owl. Three Moorhens ringed on 28th March were caught at corn and bread bait. During this period the lake was frozen to a depth of eight inches. The ground in the reserve became progressively more frozen and boring holes for mist-net poles became almost impossible.

Birds of prey were prevalent during these months with Kestrel, Sparrowhawk and Tawny owl seen on most visits. A Sparrowhawk escaped from the nets in early February. A single Tawny Owl pellet found on 27th March contained the remains of one Bank Vole and two Field Voles.

A total of 230 birds were ringed of 22 species.

Eastmoor wood was visited six times in 1979. One winter visit on 20th February, which produced 27 Blackbirds. Five summer visits made. Warbler totals again increased, Willow Warbler by 24% and Whitethroat by 70% compared with 1978. 158 birds were ringed, 56 retrapped of 20 species. Warblers comprised 42% of birds ringed.

One visit to the Phragmites bed produced six Reed Buntings including a retrapped male ringed as an adult on 15th December, 1976.

Most of my ringing activities were again concentrated on Anchor Plain. Yearly totals being 591 ringed, 265 retraps and eight controls/recoveries. 30% of the total ringed were Warblers, which considering that the site is worked for 11 months (no ringing occurs in June) shows the high concentration of Warblers present.

Eight species of Warbler were ringed: Willow Warbler, Whitethroat, Lesser Whitethroat, Blackcap, Garden Warbler, Sedge Warbler, Reed Warbler and Chiffchaff. The first six of these species bred. As at Eastmoor, Warbler totals again increased on 1978, increases were as follows: Blackcap 12%, Willow Warbler 48%, Whitethroat 260%, Lesser Whitethroat 400%, Garden Warbler 500% with Sedge Warbler increasing from none to 12. Increases in the last three species are due to the fact that they did not breed in 1978 with totals ringed in that year of three, one and none respectively.

The Whitethroat totals increased from 19 in 1978 to 47 in 1979.

The majority of Warblers ringed are locally bred juveniles.

First early summer arrivals were Willow Warblers and a Chiffchaff on 16th April, 32 days earlier than 1978 when the first Willow Warbler arrived on 14th May. The first Whitethroat arrived on 14th May, one day earlier than in 1978. The first Lesser Whitethroat also arrived on 14th May, the same arrival date as the previous year.

The Sedge Warblers bred in an approximately 300 m² area of willow scrub which towards the end of the season became quite dense. In the hope that the species will nest again in 1980, eight willows were removed, adequately thinning the area, and were transplanted to another site.

Four new species were added to the Anchor Plain Ringing List during 1979. The first and most interesting was a 3J Redstart caught on 27th July which had been out of the nest only two or three days. The consensus of opinion on 3J birds is that they very rarely stray far from the nest until first winter plumage is attained. This being so, it seems probable that Redstart bred in or around Anchor Plain in 1979.

The 28th July produced a Spotted Flycatcher, a species which is seen occasionally, but had not previously been ringed. Two Turtle Dove pulli were ringed on 10th August, this species breeds regularly but this was the first year in which an accessible nest was found. Finally on 10th September a Tree Pipit, of unknown age, was caught on passage. Total species ringed at Anchor Plain now stands at 46.

The first three months of the year, unlike at New Earswick were very poor, even though corn was put down. In five visits up to 4th April only 64 birds were ringed. The most fruitless day was 6th March when in four hours only one retrap Tree Sparrow was caught, even ringers

have their off days.

One species which has suffered badly from the adverse weather was the Long-tailed Tit on Anchor Plain. During 1978 a total of 25 birds were ringed with 33 retraps, the figures for 1979 were three ringed and 19 retraps. From these figures it appears that birds fledged in 1978 and earlier survived reasonably well and that the decrease in birds handled was due to low recruitment of juveniles to the population in 1979.

It is interesting to compare the Long-tailed Tit figures with those for Wren, a species also known to suffer losses in hard winters. During 1978 38 Wrens were ringed on Anchor Plain with 14 retraps, the equivalent figures for 1979 were 30 ringed and 14 retraps. Thus for Wren, again survival over the winter seemed reasonable but unlike Long-tailed Tit recruitment of juveniles appeared only slightly down. Why then this apparent difference in recruitment between the two species? The answer may lie in differences of timing of breeding between the two species. Long-tailed Tits are one of our earliest breeders, laying commencing in late March/early April - some three weeks in advance of Wrens. The weather in this period was still very harsh and this may have affected the breeding biology in several ways. Females may have had trouble building up enough body reserves to produce eggs leading to a reduction in clutch size. Due to scarcity of food females may have spent longer away from the nest feeding than usual thus increasing the chance of predation or chilling of eggs. Birds may also have delayed their breeding season and thus come into competition for food for nestlings with later breeding, small insectivores such as Goldcrest and Coal Tit. The answer probably lies in a combination of factors, some of which may be those outlined above.

The only other major ringing exercise during 1979 was the ringing of 68 Black-headed Gull chicks and three young Mallard at Derwent Bridge. The mortality of fledglings and the number of destroyed eggs found was very high, probably due to easy access into the area by natural predators such as Fox, Stoat and Weasel. However 34 young gulls were ringed at the Derwent site and another 34 nearby. I would like to extend my thanks to Dave Braithwaite for contacting the landowners involved, to the landowners themselves for granting permission to enter their land and to three fellow ringers from the Manchester Ringing Group who came over to assist.

Previous Years' Warbler Retraps

These produced only three birds from 1977, all Willow Warblers, with 10 Willow Warblers, three Whitethroats and one Blackcap from 1978. These birds were all retrapped at their original ringing sites.

Some Interesting Anecdotes from 1979

On 3rd May I was driving along the Sheriff Button to Strensall Road following a car. The car disappeared around the last bend before Anchor Plain and on negotiating the corner I saw a Moorhen floundering at the side of the road and obviously in great distress. I managed to avoid the bird and pulled, up just past it. Running back, I picked the bird up. It was obviously choking. Opening its beak I found a worm wedged in its throat. I grasped the worm and withdrew it from the bird's mouth. No improvement was apparent in the bird as it lay not breathing and seemingly dead. I again opened the bird's beak and gently blew down its throat. To my surprise movement in the bird was detected, soon it was breathing on its own and from that moment got stronger and stronger. Further external examination showed no physical injuries. The Moorhen was retained in a box for two and a half hours, by which time the bird looked as good as new. It was then released on Anchor Plain and half ran, half flew back to the safety of its pond.

A Sparrowhawk ringed on 10th November caused worries during the previous month. These birds have been known to attempt to take birds caught in mist nets. After finding the remains of a Willow Tit in a net on 5th October, I began to have my suspicions, especially since a young Sparrowhawk had been seen on previous visits. Later in the day I observed the bird flying away from one of the nets. The same thing happened on 16th October, when a Bullfinch was found dead in a net, again the Sparrowhawk was in close proximity. This had become a real problem. During the afternoon of the 16th I saw it perched in a bush

close to a net apparently waiting for birds. The 10th November was the day when the problem solved itself. As before it was seen sitting in a bush adjacent to a net, but on this occasion the bush was between the path and the net, Walking steadily towards the bush the bird was flushed into the net. The bird was then ringed, processed and released. Apart from replacing a Sparrowhawk ringed on Anchor Plain on 7th November 1977 which was recovered dead in Strensall on 17th April 1979 after flying into a window, it also cured the bird of an unfortunate habit. No more birds have since been found dead in nets.

A Cuckoo ringed as a pullus on 29th June in Haxby was fostered by a pair of very hard working Dunnocks. The Cuckoo was subsequently observed being fed by both parents in a tree close to the nest site.

ROGER A. INNES.

South West Section

I have lived in the area for only three years and qualified for a C licence only late in 1979. As a member of the Ingsbirchworth Ringing Group most of my ringing in 1979 was done in the Penistene area and previously I trained at Wintersett, near Wakefield for two years.

The area surrounding Ryther is totally devoted to agriculture, mainly arable farming. Over the years hedgerows have been grubbed up at an alarming rate and what remains separates the cultivated land from the flood meadows of the River Wharfe. These low lying fields are often flooded in the autumn and winter and continue to be damp for much of the year. They hold good flocks of Lapwing, Golden Plover, Malard and Teal. As floodwater recedes these are joined on the tideline by Black-headed Gulls, Blackbirds, Redwings, Fieldfares and Starlings. Snipe are common, especially in the winter, though drainage improvements locally have affected the numbers. I have recently acquired equipment to construct a 4m by 5m clap net, which should be operative in time and which might catch some of these open habitat feeders.

There is normally a heavy passage of Meadow Pipits in this area, and these should be quite catchable using "tape lures" of the Pipit's song. The tape recorder should ideally be placed behind a mist net sited on the side of a bank. The drainage improvement scheme in the village has resulted in a steep, grassy bank being built which seems ideal for this method of catching. It will probably be worth experimenting with Yellow Wagtail and Skylark calls and songs.

My ringing so far has been confined to the village and the hedgerows nearby. I now have permission to ring at two other sites locally, but both are similar to my present ringing habitat. A water meadow at Kirkby Wharfe having cultivated, coppiced willow could be interesting. In 1978, after severe flooding, this small area held 50 to 60 Snipe.

MALCOLM PAULSON.

Control and Recovery List 1979

Because of the increasing numbers of local controls and recoveries only birds found further than 5 kms. from their ringing site are included, unless of outstanding interest.

List not included due to formatting problems

I am pleased to announce that there are more ringers now operating in the Y.O.C. Recording Area than ever before, with four A ringers, two C ringers and two trainees.

The 1978 ringing list includes all known birds ringed in our area during that year (pulli and full grown birds are totalled together), the grand total includes all known birds ringed in our area since 1963. Totals for 1960 to 1962 are not yet available but will be included in the 1980 report.

I would like to thank Gordon Cram for supplying all his early data, which has gone a long way to making the list as impressive as it is.

I would also like to thank Alan Walker for sending me his relevant ringing records, which have been included in the list. These are old records, mainly between December 1965 and October 1967, and mainly concern Blackbirds and Song Thrushes ringed in the York University Yew Garden.

Ringers operating In the Y.O.C. Recording Area:

Gordon D. Cram	A	St. Peter's School
Steve Flack	A	Elvington
Roger A. Innes	A	Strensall/New Earswick
Pete Reid	A	Selby
Tim Dixon	C	Naburn
Malcolm Paulson	C	Ryther
Richard Ward-Smith	T	Training with G.S. Cram
Dave Waudby	T	Training with G. Rogers, Knaresborough.

ROGER A. INNES

York Area Ringing Totals 1963-1979

<u>Species</u>	<u>1963-78</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>1963-78</u>	<u>1979</u>
Mallard		3	Mistle Thrush	37	9
Sparrowhawk	2	1	Grasshopper Warbler	1	
Kestrel	3	6	Sedge Warbler	161	56
Moorhen	1	5	Reed Warbler	188	39
Coot	1		Lesser Whitethroat	22	15
Lapwing	16	6	Whitethroat	210	72
Snipe	1		Garden Warbler	20	9
Woodcock	2	1	Blackcap	88	33
Redshank	1		Chiffchaff	21	8
Common Sandpiper	1		Willow Warbler	412	159
Black-headed Gull	15	89	Goldcrest	98	
Common Gull	2		Spotted Flycatcher	16	9
Wood Pigeon	11	1	Long-tailed Tit	305	12
Collared Dove	7		Marsh Tit	18	1
Turtle Dove		2	Willow Tit	104	17
Cuckoo	3	2	Coal Tit	71	7
Tawny Owl	1		Blue Tit	1170	364
Long-eared Owl		1	Great Tit	348	113
Short-eared Owl	1		Treecreeper	59	6
Swift	387	42	Jay	22	3
Kingfisher	4	3	Magpie	3	
G.S. Woodpecker	5		Jackdaw	2	
Skylark	12		Rook	3	1
Sand Martin	112	16	Carrion Crow	5	
Swallow	1321	201	Starling	2545	362
House Martin	364	35	House Sparrow	1194	186
Tree Pipit	1	1	Tree Sparrow	434	50
Meadow Pipit	22	6	Chaffinch	2056	47
Yellow Wagtail	84	5	Brambling	546	5
Grey Wagtail	7		Greenfinch	6176	175
Pied Wagtail	111	12	Goldfinch	48	3
Wren	340	56	Siskin	7	
Dunnock	843	111	Linnet	299	7
Robin	616	91	Redpoll	359	54
Redstart		1	Mealy Redpoll	5	3
Whinchat	3		Bullfinch	381	54
Blackbird	3281	408	Yellowhammer	166	26
Fieldfare	26	6	Reed Bunting	430	36
Song Thrush	620	74	Corn Bunting	9	
Redwing	1277	18	Total ringed	27543	3144
			Species Total	74	59

Total 1963-79 30687 ringed of 78 species.

CLASSIFIED LIST

RED-THROATED DIVER *Gavia stellata*

One on floodwater near Wheldrake Ings on 18th March. The bird was in full winter plumage. Third record for the area.

LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Bred at Strensall Common where four pairs reared 13 young (OW), Brandsby where a pair double brooded (PH), Appleton Roebuck where two young were reared, Sandburn House where three young were reared, Moorlands, North Duffield and Skipwith Common. Up to four birds were present on the River Ouse between Clifton and Acaster Malbis during the early part of the year. Up to three birds recorded at non-breeding periods of the year from New Earswick, the Lower Derwent, Dringhouses Pond, Riccall lags, Cawood, Strensall Common, Middlethorpe Ings and Ryther. A large number of records for the first part of the year were probably as a result of the hard weather experienced at that time throughout Europe. As with 1978 there were again no records for August a period when adult birds are in moult and there is an abundance of emergent aquatic vegetation in which to conceal themselves.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus*

Bred at Castle Howard where there were probably four pairs and Dringhouses pond where three young were reared. One on the River Ouse between Fulford and Naburn throughout January and February and one at Ryther on 5th April. 22 at Castle Howard on 8th (JMP, BGP) was the largest count for the area. The unusually late flood water in the Derwent valley attracted four birds to Wheldrake Ings during April and May with a maximum of seven on 10th June, and up to five at Aughton Ings over the same period with a maximum of 10 also on 10th June. There was a pair on the River Ouse at Beningborough on 17th, A single at Dringhouses Pond on 3rd November and five at Castle Howard on 10th where there were two during December.

RED-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps grisegena*

Singles recorded on the River Ouse at Fulford from 22nd to 24th February (BGP et al) and at Wheldrake Ings on 24th and 25th (TED, GS). One on the Pocklington Canal on 25th March (GS) and one at Ellerton on 8th and 10th April (GS, DB). All accepted by Y.N.U. Reports Committee. Third, fourth and fifth records for the area. The increase in records was undoubtedly due to the severe weather throughout Europe in the early part of the year.

SLAVONIAN GREBE *Podiceps auritus*

One at Wheldrake Ings on 25th February (GS). Accepted by Y.N.U. Reports Committee. Second record for the area, the first being at Castle Howard on 6th February 1972.

FULMAR *Fulmarus glacialis*

One flying over St. Mary's Gardens near the River Ouse on 9th June (PR). First record for the area

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

One in the Lower Derwent on 7th January where there were two On 8th March (Cs). A single flew W.N.W. over Ryther on 9th (JMPa) and a bird was seen flying downstream along the River Ouse at Fulford on 24th (BD, Jo), presumably the same bird was seen flying east over Riccall on the same day (PP). Four flew up the River Derwent near nubwith Bridge on 1st April

(ARP) and there were up to three adults in nuptial plumage at Wheldrake Ings during the month. Up to two birds were still present in the Lower Derwent throughout May and one at Wheldrake Ings remained until 3rd June when an immature was seen flying south along the River Derwent near Wressle (BGP et al) . The last summer record was of two in the Lower Derwent on 10th June (CS)

The only other record for the year was of an immature at Castle Howard on 11th November (HJW)

SHAG *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

A bird was found dead at Naburn Sewage Works in early January and now rests at the Yorkshire Museum.

First record for the area.

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

Bred at the Lower Derwent and may have bred at Nun Appleton and Ulleskelf. The effects of the severe winter may have caused considerable mortality. A bird was seen hunting on grass verge by the A64 at Murton in a heavy snow storm On 13th February (TED).

The largest numbers quite naturally occur in July, August and September when young are out of the nest and not yet dispersed. Up to 10 were recorded in this period at Wheldrake Ings and up to 15 at Castle Howard, where there were 11 on 14th October. Five occurred at Wharfe Ings on 21st and six were present in the Lower Derwent on 18th November.

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

Breeding records from Ross Carrs, Riccall Ings, and the Lower Derwent, a pair were noted copulating at Wheldrake Ings on 6th May.

It was from Wheldrake Ings where the largest counts occurred, nine on 28th April and up to 10 for most of June and again on 27th October and 24th November with 14 on the following day. There were five recorded from the Lower Derwent on the wildfowl count of 16th December.

BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus columbianus*

53 at Aughton and Bubwith on 27th January. 56 adults plus five immatures were in the Lower Derwent on 4th February when an adult and an immature were found dead. 19 flew east over Acaster Malbis On 23rd, 15 at Kexby bridge on 4th March (BC) and 112 at Aughton on 4th, one of which had a yellow rump (PM, TMC) which had been dyed at Slimbridge in January. A similarly marked bird, presumably the same individual was seen in the following week (SCM) . Another corpse of an adult was found on the last day of March. The last birds departed the week ending 8th April (CS) when another two dead specimens were found.

The first of the following winter were two in the Lower Derwent on 20th October (CS) and there were 14 at Wheldrake Ings on 28th November which had built up to almost 100 birds by the end of the year.

Amendments to 1974 Report

135 (including 27 immatures) in the Lower Derwent on 16th March was the maximum count and 90 birds (including 23 immatures) were still present on 26th (1974 Y.N.U. Report).

WHOOPEE SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*

Nine adults in the Wheldrake Ings area during January, where there were 14 on 8th February. Three were on floodwater at Ryther on 1st March, a bird was found dead at Hagg Bridge on 25th and there were 17 at North Duffield on 30th with seven at Bubwith on the same date.

Two adults and two immatures at Wheldrake during December first occurred on the first of the month. A single flew north west over Fulford Ings on 28th when there were five adults and an immature at North Duffield.

GREY GOOSE *Anser sp*

115 flew N.W. over Ryther on 4th February (JMPa) were probably of the next species. (Note movements of the next species on 4th February).

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus*

10 feeding in a field east of Ellerton on 28th January (GS). The same number flew S.S.E. at dusk over Naburn on 4th February (TED) and 90 had flown west over Bubwith on that morning (FWO). 60 flew west over Hemingbrough on 5th March (TPM) and 40 flew in a similar direction over Bubwith on 18th (GS), both were presumably evening flights. There was a morning flight of 50 east over Brayton on 30th of the month (TPM). Four were recorded at Wheldrake Ings on 15th and 16th April with two on 20th.

A skein of 80 flew west over Riccall during the late morning of 7th December (PP).

Addition to the 1976 Report

350 flew N.W. over Selby on 7th January (1976 Y.N.U. Report).

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

Bred at Castle Howard, Bubwith and Wheldrake Ings where there were up to 10 pairs, the first clutch being noted on 8th April and the first brood on 5th May.

There are now it seems two distinct populations, one at Castle Howard and the other in the Lower Derwent Valley. The latter had up to 30 birds throughout the year with 37 on 9th May at Wheldrake Ings and 44 in the whole valley on the wildfowl count of 16th December. Castle Howard had a larger population of up to 100 birds during the year with 103 on 5th October. 130 on 3rd November and 147 on 8th December (HJW) when interestingly there were 25 at Wheldrake Ings. During the breeding season the herd sizes become smaller at both sites, in May and June there was a small post breeding bulge in the population but most birds disappeared from the recording area during August and in September when there are no records from either site. This disappearance may well be associated with moult.

Records from other locations were two at York University on 13th January, a single at Wharfe Ings during April and two at the University again on 23rd November.

Greylag and Canada hybridisations (Granada)

A bird paired with a normal Canada Goose *Branta canadensis* at Wheldrake Ings. The pair reared two young, the resultant offspring could be distinguished from those of normal Canada Goose goslings by being more of a yellow buff colour (c.f. domestic goslings) but after feathering so closely resembled Canada Goose juveniles that they were no longer distinguishable in the field (TMC).

A single at Duffield on 8th June with 13 Canada Geese and up to three at Castle Howard during the year.

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

Bred at York University, Castle Howard, Brandsby and the Lower Derwent where the first nest and eggs were recorded at Wheldrake on 19th April and the first goslings were on 1st June.

There are three main populations occurring in the area, Castle Howard, the University of York and the Lower Derwent. Up to 100 birds present at the latter site during the year with 139 on the wildfowl count of 16th December. There were up to 40 birds at York University with 55 during October and November. Up to 100 birds at Castle Howard during the year with 160 on 14th October (none recorded from the Derwent Valley on that date) and 109 on 19th November.

During March and April the birds generally dispersed from the main herds and groups of up to five were recorded from Dale Pond, Fulford, Anchor Plain and Strensall Common. There

was not a month when Canada Goose was not recorded in the area but there was a noticeable absence of the species from Wheldrake Ings between 11th September and 26th October.

Other notable records were 30 at Riccall Dam Dyke on 31st January, 25 at Fulford Ings on 21st September and 40 over Tang Hall on 19th November.

For migration to and from the York University see ringing recoveries.

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*

All the records were from Castle Howard where there were two on 8th April and one on 13th, with two again on 14th October and 8th December.

EGYPTIAN GOOSE *Alopochen aegyptiacus*

Two at Hagg Bridge on 25th March (GS) and four at Wheldrake Ings on 4th August (MS)

Published with the escape proviso.

First and second record for the area.

SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

Bred at the York University and the Lower Derwent where certainly six pairs produced young.

Two at Skipwith Common on 7th January and six at Bubwith Bridge on 20th. Two at Wheldrake during February with three on 25th when there were the same number at Naburn Ings. Up to 45 at Bubwith in March (DB, PM) when there were four at Wheldrake. Two flew east over Skipwith on 7th April and nine separate pairs were recorded in the Lower Derwent on 13th when there was a pair at Riccall Ings. There were seven non-breeding birds at Wheldrake on 12th May and 19 at Aughton on 13th, a single flew east over Skipwith on 27th. Most birds had left the area by August leaving two immatures at Wheldrake and one at Rosscarrs on 18th, the last two immatures being recorded at Wheldrake on 30th September. Five birds were then recorded at Wheldrake Ings on 15th December and two at North Duffield on 16th.

Amendment to 1975 Report

'Seven pairs plus some young in the Lower Derwent in late April/May'.

(1975 Y.N.U. Report).

MANDARIN Aix *galericulata*

A drake at Castle Howard on 31st October was full flighted (HJW). Published with the escape proviso.

Third record for the area

WIGEON *Anas penelope*

Probably bred at Wheldrake Ings where three drakes and at least one duck were present during the breeding season, and three flighted juveniles were recorded on 23rd and 30th June.

The wildfowl counts for the Lower Derwent were: 3000 on 27th January, 4500 on 18th February, 1455 on 18th March, 907 on 8th April and there were still 110 at Wheldrake Ings on 28th which had reduced to 15 by the month end.

80 at Wheldrake on 27th October when there were 22 at Castle Howard. The numbers slowly built up to 500 at Wheldrake on 25th November and then 4000 in the whole of the Lower Derwent by the wildfowl count on 16th December.

Up to 30 were recorded from Acaster Malbis, Wharfe Ings, Ryther and Castle Howard during the winter months.

Amendment to 1974 Report

"5000 in the Lower Derwent on 15th February", "2000 in the Lower Derwent on 30th December".

(1974 Y.N.U. Report)

GADWALL *Anas strepera*

Bred at Wheldrake Ings where there were two pairs present in the breeding season, one of which produced four young.

Three at Wheldrake on 27th January and one at Riccall Ings on 28th. A pair at Wheldrake on 22nd March and two pairs at Bubwith on 30th and again on 10th April. Three at North Duffield on 12th June and a duck at Strensall Common from 18th to 31st August. 10 at Wheldrake on 25th September where there were up to three during October, the last being recorded there on 10th November. Two drakes and a duck at Castle Howard on 3rd and 15th of the month and three there again on 8th December. The last record was of two at Naburn on 30th.

TEAL *Anas crecca*

Breeding records from Naburn Sewage Works, Skipwith Common and the Lower Derwent. The wildfowl counts for the Lower Derwent read: 500 at Wheldrake on 7th and 14th January, 424 in the whole valley on 18th February, 419 on 18th March and 346 on 8th April, there were still 200 present at Wheldrake on 23rd which had reduced to 40 by the month end.

100 at Wheldrake on 4th September from when the numbers steadily increased to becoming 2050 in the whole of the Lower Derwent by the wildfowl count of 16th December.

Other notable records were 40 on the River Ouse at the Wharfe mouth on 21st January where there were 70 on 25th February. 20 between Ulleskelf and Ryther and 160 at Wharfe Ings on 1st April with 230 at the latter site on the 8th which had reduced to 50 by the 15th. 65 at Riccall on 19th November and 148 at Castle Howard on 8th December with 220 at Riccall on 21st and 80 at Ryther on 30th.

Addition to 1974 Report

'1500 in the Lower Derwent on 30th December'. (1974 Y.N.U. Report).

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*

Breeds quite generally through the area. The first brood was noted at York University on 29th April. An occupied nest at Wheldrake Ings on 20th May contained nine eggs, forming a canopy over the top of the nest was the occupied nest of a Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus* containing two eggs (GS). Display and "copulation" was noted at Wheldrake Ings on 8th October and the York University on 9th when the first drakes had acquired nuptial plumage.

Wildfowl counts for the Lower Derwent Valley read: 3000 at Wheldrake on 3rd January, 1410 for the whole of the Lower Derwent on 18th February, 339 on 18th March, 180 on 8th April, 400 on 16th September, 550 on 14th October, 480 on 18th November and 5900 on 16th December.

Up to 150 were recorded in the winter months from the River Ouse at Fulford, Naburn Ings, Acaster Malbis, Wharfe Ings, Riccall, Ryther and Castle Howard where there were 800 on 13th October and up to 1000 from November to the year end.

PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

Probably bred at Wheldrake Ings where display was noted in April and a drake was present throughout the breeding season. Four flighted juveniles were recorded on 30th June.

The wildfowl counts for the Lower Derwent Valley show that up to 30 birds were present in the winter months with 69 on 16th December.

Other records were a duck and drake at Castle Howard on 5th October and a period of movement, probably due to hard weather, produced two drakes at Fulford Ings on 11th November, one at the University Lake on 13th and also at Dringhouses Pond on 18th. Five birds flew E.S.E. over Fulford Ings on 2nd December when there was a drake at Castle Howard.

GARGANEY *Anas querquedula*

Probably bred in the Lower Derwent where certainly two pairs were present.

The first arrival was of two birds at Wheldrake on 23rd April (BT, RT) where two drakes courted a duck in a display flight on 10th May (TMC).

The last record was of a female/immature that remained at Wheldrake Ings until 16th September (DB et al).

Addition to 1974 Report

"One pair at Wheldrake from 16th March to 4th May". (1974 Y.N.U. Report).

SHOVELER *Anas clypeata*

Bred at Fulford Ings, Naburn Sewage Works, and the Lower Derwent where up to 30 pairs were 'washed out' in the early June floods and display was noted during July (TMC). There was a late brood of downy young at Wheldrake on 2nd August.

The wildfowl counts for the Lower Derwent Valley reveal that the largest numbers occurred in early spring, with up to 25 generally in the winter months, 78 on 18th March and 60 on 12th April during which month there were up to two recorded from Acaster Malbis, Dringhouses Pond, Fulford Ings, Bolton Percy and Skipwith Common, which may indicate some passage.

Small numbers were also recorded in the winter months from Brandsby, Ryther and the York University.

RED-CRESTED POCHARD *Netta rufina*

Correction to 1978 Report

Should read second record for the area. The first record was of a drake at Aughton on 6th and 20th March, 1966. Published with the escape proviso.

POCHARD *Aythya ferina*

Bred at Wheldrake Ings where a duck was seen escorting her brood of five across floodwater on 6th June (TMC).

265 at Wheldrake Ings on 21st January, 380 in the whole of the Lower Derwent on 10th February and 221 on 18th. During February and March up to 10 were recorded from Fulford Ings, Naburn Ings, River Ouse at Bishopthorpe and York, and also Dringhouses Pond, this presumably as a result of large areas of frozen water in the Lower Derwent. 715 were on the few open areas of water in the Lower Derwent on 18th March where there were 190 on 8th April. Up to 20 were recorded in the Lower Derwent throughout May and June with generally fewer birds in July and August. There were no records in the area for September.

Up to 24 at Castle Howard in October where there were 35 on 15th November and 43 in the Lower Derwent on 25th. Up to 10 at Dringhouses Pond and up to 33 at Castle Howard in December. 163 in the Lower Derwent on 16th December wildfowl count, 374 at the Ferryboat on 29th and 242 at Ellerton on the following day.

Small winter numbers were also recorded at Dale End, Stearsby, Ryther and Wharfe Ings.

Addition to 1974 Report

"900 in the Lower Derwent on 15th February". (1974 Y.N.U. Report).

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

Bred at Castle Howard, North Duffield, Wheldrake Ings, Skipwith Common and two localities in the Brandsby area.

300 at Wheldrake Ings on 7th January with 50 on the River Ouse at Bishopthorpe on the same date and 69 at Fulford Ings on 27th. 250 at Wheldrake Ings on 25th February with 260 there on 27th. 90 in the Lower Derwent on 18th March with 11 at Acaster Malbis on the same day. 76 in the Lower Derwent on 8th April and 28 at Wheldrake Ings on 5th May.

Up to six at Dringhouses Pond and five at castle Howard during October with four at Wheldrake On 20th. Few records for November but there were up to eight at Dringhouses Pond during the month and to the year end. 27 at Naburn sewage works on 19th December and 48 in the Lower Derwent on 16th and 30th. Smaller numbers were recorded during the year from Kexby, Sand Hutton, Ryther and Riccall.

SCAUP *Aythya mania*

A drake on the River Ouse at Bishopthorpe from 18th to 20th February (nDm JG, BGP) . A party of three at Castle Howard on 15th September comprised of two drakes and a duck (DW) . A duck was present in the Bubwith area from 29th December to the end of the year (HJW, DB, TDC, MEW, JHL)

COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*

As with the previous species an increase in records this year presumably due to the severity of the winter throughout Europe.

Three drakes and three ducks at Castle Howard on 7th April (HJW) and two drakes and a duck at Ellerton on the following day (G5 et al) , may reflect a little inland movement.

Third and fourth record for the area.

VELVET SCOTER *Melanitta fusca*

An immature drake at Castle Howard on 13th October (OW)

'The dumpy, black, fast flying duck was obviously a male member of the Scoter group. It appeared all black except for pure white secondaries, and a small pale area on the belly. No white eye markings or any other pale area on cheeks, ear coverts or lores were noted (the bird was only seen in flight and had they been present may however have been difficult to distinguish). My attention was drawn to the pale area on the belly, described earlier, and such a feature indicated that the bird was an immature drake". Dave Waudby.

First record for the area

GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*

Up to three recorded from Wheldrake Ings, Bubwith, the River Ouse at Fulford and Acaster Malbis, Riccall and the River Wharfe by Wharfe Ings during January, February and March, with up to eight at Wheldrake during March where "head throwing" display was noted on 24th and there were seven at Aughton On 30th. There were 16 in the whole Lower Derwent On 8th April wildfowl count and a duck and drake remained until 12th May.

A duck with a damaged wing was on the River Derwent by Wheldrake Ings on 8th July (TMC)

Two immature drakes at Wheldrake Ings on 21st October and a single red head at Castle Howard on 27th and 29th. A pair at Stearsby from 3rd to 18th November, a red head at Castle Howard on 10th, a drake at Wheldrake Ings on 11th and at Castle Howard on 15th with two birds at Wheldrake on 25th. There was a single at Wheldrake Ings On 9th December and three on 23rd with four at Dringhouses Pond on 26th.

SMEW *Mergus albellus*

Two parties were seen flying along the River Derwent by Wheldrake Ings on 7th January, the first was of three drakes and two red heads and the second was of two drakes (CS, FWO, TDC, TED et al).

Second record for the area.

Correction to 1973 Report

A red head at Castle Howard on 25th November should read 25th February (BJW).

First record for the area.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator*

An immature drake was on the River Ouse at Fulford on 22nd and 23rd February (BC?, DB, TED, CS, HJW).

Fourth record for the area.

GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser*

Three at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd January, where there were 19 on 6th and 10 at Bubwith on the same day (TMC); a party of 35 at Wheldrake Ings on 7th (TED) when 16 flew west over

Dringhouses Pond (DW) all of which may have been indicative of some movement. A single on the River Ouse at the Wharfe mouth on 21st, five in the Lower Derwent on 27th and nine at Riccall on 28th (Pr). Four at Wheldrake Ings on 20th February, three at Ryther on 24th, six at Wheldrake on 25th with eight at Wharfe Ings on the same day. Six at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd March and a single on 11th and at Ellerton on 18th, three at Ryther on 26th and five on 28th. Eight on the River Wharfe by Wharfe Ings on 1st April and nine at Ryther on the same day may have been associated, there were 12 at Ryther on the following day (JMPa), a single on the River Derwent at East Cottingwith on 7th, nine on the River Wharfe by Wharfe Ings on 8th where there were six on 15th and four at Ryther on 17th. Eight at Wheldrake Ings On 28th December.

Information from Dr. Richard Chandler suggests that three very definite influxes of Goosander from the continent came into this country between 1st to 14th and 22nd to 28th January, and 19th to 25th February. The peaks noted in the York area certainly coincide with this pattern although the effect of weekend recording activity may not have been taken into fullest consideration.

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

Definitely two but probably three individuals were involved in a long series of records from the Lower Derwent beginning with a "female" at Wheldrake on 24th May (JC) and terminating with a male at Wheldrake on 19th August.

The identification of the individuals concerned was made difficult by the different stages of moult throughout the period.

A cream crowned male was first sexed at Wheldrake on 6th June and was identified as such by having grey greater under wing coverts. By 18th August this bird had completed its moult and was apparently in adult male plumage. There were several records of a "female" bird; at Wheldrake on 24th and 26th May, Aughton on 27th (CS), Ellerton on 17th June (Cs), Wheldrake on 22nd and again on 8th July (TMC). As no plumage details were submitted it is difficult to gather if this bird was different from a cream crown that had no cream forewing patches and had extensive mottling to its mantle. This individual was first seen at Skipwith Common on 16th June (PP) and then at Wheldrake on 4th August where it was seen hunting together with the male on 8th (DB, PP). When together with the male the cream crown was of similar proportions and not considered by DB or PP to be a female.

It is possible that these birds commuted between the Lower Derwent and Blacktoft Sands, although were thought to have roosted in the Lower Derwent Valley during part of the period.

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

Two ringtails roosted at Skipwith Common until mid-April (PP, FWO) A female at Wheldrake Ings On 1st January (PT). A male at Wheldrake Ings on 7th January (FwO) and a ringtail there on 21st which was accompanied by a Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus* as it hunted in fog (DB, JC, GS). All other records were of single ringtails at Elvington on 2nd February (JHL, BJ), Ellerton on 18th March (AR), Naburn sewage Works on 27th (JG), and the last of the winter records was at Skipwith Common on 17th April (PP) A ringtail at Wheldrake Ings On 2nd June (BE) and at Naburn Sewage Works on 28th November (BJD, JO)

GOSHAWK *Accipiter gentilis*

One at Strensall Common on 11th February (JR, MR) and one at Stamford Bridge on 21st August (TMC)

Accepted by Y.N.U. Reports Committee.

Addition to 1976 Report

One at Castle Howard during September (OW, SOP, JMP).

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

Breeding continues to expand. Two nests were within 600 metres of each other at Brandsby (PM), who comments "the pre 1958 population density is now recorded in SE 57, 67 and 77".

Recorded generally throughout the area. From January to March a bird regularly took Starlings *Sturnus vulgaris* from a roost at New Earswick. A female was mobbed by a Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus* at Elvington on 18th February.

Amongst the "casualties" was a female found dead on the road at Skipwith on 7th April (JHL) and one similarly found dead on the road near Naburn on 15th (TED). A first year female at Brandsby had killed itself by flying into a window whilst pursuing a Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* on 13th May and an adult female departed in the same manner on 29th August (PH). It may be rather more than just coincidence that all four noted mortalities should be of female birds.

BUZZARD Sp *Buteo* sp

A single at Elvington Airfield on 28th January was flying S.W. at a great altitude (JUL. BJ).

BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

One flew east over Wheldrake Ings on 14th May (UB).

ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD *Buteo lagopus*

Amendment to 1974 Report

A bird present in the Lower Derwent from 10th to 22nd November (1974 Y.N.U. Report).

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

A bird was viewed at close quarters as it flew low over the pool at Wheldrake Ings on 15th May. It was mobbed by Black-headed Gulls *Larus ridibundus* (BB).

Accepted by Y.N.U. Reports Committee.

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

Breeds quite generally about the area, 12 actual sites were recorded. A brood at the B.S.C. works York were ringed.

A bird was noted to be taking Starlings *Sturnus vulgaris* from the roost at New Earswick from January to March where a bird was caught and ringed on 4th (RAI, TED). Display was recorded over Piccadilly, York and a bird was seen entering a derelict building in Monkgate during, April (DB), a feral Rock Pigeon's *Columba livia* nest on the York Minster was robbed of its young by a Kestrel on 29th (per DB).

MERLIN

Continues to winter in the area in good numbers

Three distinctly different individuals were recorded from Askham Bog during the early part of the year (DRF). Singles at: Fulford Ings on 6th January (TC), Askham Bog on 13th (DRF), Elvington Camp Pond on 14th (TMC), Cawood on 2nd February (PR), a male and a female at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd, one at Coulton on 7th (Pu), Copmanthorpe on 8th (TMC), Wheldrake Ings on 10th and Askham Bog on 27th where there was a male on 1st March (DRF), one at Stamford Bridge on 2nd (TMC) and at Wheldrake village on 24th (ORE).

Singles again at Wheldrake Ings were on 14th and 23rd April.

A female at York University on 12th October (Cc).

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

One at Brandsby on 3rd June unsuccessfully pursued Swifts *Apus apus*, eventually landing in a dead Oak *Quercus* sp where it rested for several minutes before flying away (PH).

Accepted by Y.N.U. Reports Committee.

One at Wheldrake Ings on 10th July was hunting hirundines at dusk. It first flew east across the pool in front of where we were sitting and made a fruitless pass at a group of hirundines. As it did so the long elegant wings, short square tail and slatey blue upper parts were noted. The most striking feature however was the dark (black looking) hood contrasting with the very white cheeks. The underside was noticeably streaked but we were unable to note the thigh colour. The bird eventually

took rest in a dead elm *tilnus* sp on the eastern boundary of the reserve, where it was mobbed by 'angry' birds it had previously sought as supper. In the fading light the Hobby took to the wing again. It came back low and with purpose across the Ings. As it passed over the pool it climbed steeply into a mass of 'frantic' hirundines and swifts. With an almost imperceptible half roll the prey was taken. So dim was the evening light by this time that we could not identify the quarry save to say it was either hirundine or swift (DB, Jc) Presumably the same individual was again hunting birds on the following evening (JR, MR)

Sixth and seventh record for the area.

Addition to 1974 Report

One over Fulford, York on 4th August (JHL from 1977 Y.N.U. Report)

Addition to 1977 Report

One at Wheldrake Ings on 30th April (1977 Y.N.U. Report).

PEREGRINE FALCON *Falco peregrinus*

Correction to 1973 Report

One noted on the York/Tadcaster Road on 4th May was rejected by the Y.N.U. Reports Committee.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa*

Larger covies were 15 in the Lower Derwent valley during winter months (CS), 26 at Fulford village on 5th October and 28 at Riccall on 7th December (PP).

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix*

Does not appear to have suffered any great depletion in numbers generally, but "could be declining locally about the Ryther district" (JMPa). As far as can be gathered from the records the population appears to have been quite stable in the Y.O.C. area over the past 10 years. The previous species has however undoubtedly become more widespread over the same period, but subjective comments implying that it is competing more successfully for the same niche and therefore excluding Grey Partridge are not founded by statistical evidence. The larger covies were 59 at Acomb on 4th January, 21 in three separate covies at Buttercrambe on 21st and 27 at Askham Bog on 27th, where there were 13 on 3rd February. 14 in the Brandsby area during July and August and up to 14 at Fulford Ings and Naburn Sewage Works in the latter half of the year. 55 at Wheldrake Ings on 21st October may well have been taking refuge from the guns in Thicket Priory.

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*

Singles at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd July (PM) and calling at Escrick on the evening of the 26th (RH, BGP, JMP). One at Maidensworth on 3rd September was observed from a tractor cab (per PH)

PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus*

Very common throughout the area generally and especially where there are shooting concerns, which in actual fact excludes very little of the area. There was a high incidence of melanism recorded from the Wheldrake parish which may have been the result of a "special" strain that had been put down.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

Bred at Fulford Ings and probably bred at both Skipwith Common and Wheldrake Ings. Singles at Ryther in the early part of the year (JMPa), at Askham Bog from 6th January to 18th February (DR?), at Fulford Ings on 6th January and at Wheldrake Ings on the same date (recorded at three quite separate localities on 6th January may be indicative of some influx) where there was one on 28th, 3rd February and 24th March (On, JC). Calling was noted at Skipwith on 29th March (PP) and Dalby Bog on 9th May (PH). At least two birds were calling at Wheldrake Ings on the evening of 10th July where there was one on 28th.

Singles at Ryther on 8th and 15th October (JMPa) and at Naburn Sewage Works on 10th November where there were two on 2nd December with another single on 9th (nO, JG).

CORNCRAKE *Crex crex*

One calling at Lilling on the evenings of 31st May and the 1st and 5th June (HJW).

Addition to 1976 Report

One calling at Storwood Ings on 30th May (1976 Y.N.U. Report).

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

Five nests with brooded clutches and two broods were found along a 200 metre stretch of the Spittlebeck (DE, FWO). The first clutch was noted in the Lower Derwent on 5th May. Some large groups were recorded notably 18 in the Lower Derwent on 18th November and 72 in a field by Castle Howard Lake on 19th (BC).

COOT *Fulica atra*

Generally requires more water for breeding than the previous species which it does throughout the area on such waters,

300 at Wheldrake Ings during January had increased to 450 on 3rd February and had decreased to 150 by mid-March and throughout April, up to 80 there during May. There was a large count of 106 on 1st June thereafter being generally up to 40 during the month, up to 10 throughout August and up to three to the end of the year.

75 at Dringhouses Pond on 1st January had reduced to 39 by 28th February. There were generally up to 20 birds present there from March onwards until 32 were present on 25th September. 35 there on 5th October and 40 on 28th with 44 during November which had increased to 58 by the year end.

30 at Bubwith on 6th January and 17 at Fulford Ings on 27th with 29 there on 20th February and 23 on the River Ouse between Fulford and Middlethorpe and 17 at Acaster Malbis on 23rd. 50 at Castle Howard on 29th October and 30 in the Lower Derwent Valley on 30th December.

A large increase in numbers in the early part of the year must be largely attributed to the hard weather closing smaller waters and concentrating the birds on the remaining open bodies of water.

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*

Continues to increase with birds seen in the breeding season at Linton-on-Ouse, Bolton Percy, Ryther, Wheldrake Ings two pairs, Aughton, North Duffield, Bubwith two pairs and Melbourne. Early birds were one at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd March, and one over Dringhouses in darkness on 5th.

Most birds arrived from 27th March to 1st April, birds were displaying by 9th April. passage birds were two over Stillingfleet on 12th April, one at Selby on 22nd and one at Middlethorpe Ings on 22nd May. Most birds left the breeding areas in July with one at Wheldrake Ings on 4th August the last. A very late bird at Acaster Selby on 29th November (DW)

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*

Possibly six pairs bred in the area. Three of which were in the Lower Derwent. The first was at Wheldrake Ings on 13th April, the last were two on 8th August at the same place.

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

An increase in records. The first was one at Kexby on 2nd April, the main passage was in the second week of April with two at North Duffield on 8th, three at Bubwith on 9th, one at Ellerton on 10th, three at Wheldrake Ings on 14th with singles there on 16th and 22nd. In May eight at North Duffield on 12th (CGS) with one there on 19th when five were at Ellerton (GS), 10 at Bubwith on 20th (GS). In June, two at Aughton on 2nd, one there on 12th, two at Wheldrake on 23rd. All other records from Wheldrake Ings; in July singles on 23rd, 27th and 28th. In August singles on 4th, 5th, 26th and 28th with three on 6th. In September one

on 11th was the last.

GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

Winter numbers in the early part of the year were low due to the severe weather with 200 at Wigginton Road in January and February, 80 at Bishopthorpe on 9th January, 50 at Acaster Malbis on 22nd February, 200 at Wharfe Ings on 25th when 65 were at Wheldrake Ings. In March 200 at Lower Derwent on 11th, 220 at Acaster Malbis on 19th when 80 were at Wheldrake, 300 at Acaster Malbis on 21st (DRF) , 600 at Bubwith on 27th (DB).

Passage flocks seen in April, 190 at Riccall Ings on 13th, 1400 at Wharfe Ings on 15th (DW), 70 at Lower Derwent on 22nd when 1250 were at Ryther (OW) with 140 there on 1st May. 30 flew N.E. over Askham Bog on 4th May with 1200 at Appleton Roebuck on 5th (OW) , a late date for such a large flock. The majority of birds in April and May were characteristic of the northern form *P. apricaria altifrons*.

First returning birds were six at Wheldrake on 11th July. 183 at Copmanthorpe on 12th August, 61 at Acaster Malbis on 1st September with 750 on 12th, 100 at Aughton on 16th and 120 at Acaster Airfield on 26th. In October 1000 at Yapham Common on 11th (OW), 150 near Riccall on 28th. 1500 at Yapham Common on 6th November (DW), 600 in Lower Derwent on 18th with 200 at Bubwith on 25th, 400 at Acaster Selby on 29th. 1500 at North Duffield on 2nd December (TED, EBB). 1000 at Fangfoss Common (OW) and 350 at Bubwith On 3rd, 1000 at Moor Monkton Moor on 16th (OW), 200 at Bubwith on 17th, 200 at Askham Bog on 18th, 400 at Wheldrake on 22nd and 23rd, 400 at Moor Monkton Moor on 23rd, 200 at Bishopthorpe on 28th, when 300 were at Ryther.

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

More records than usual. Singles at Wheldrake (TED, EBB) and Lower Derwent on 19th May (OS). Seven at Bubwith on 3rd June (BGP). Six at Wheldrake on 18th December Ings on 3rd February.

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

Many birds left the area during the harsh weather of January to March. Flock counts were much reduced. In January 20 at Wheldrake on 7th, 46 at Askham Bog on 13th. A return in late February with 250 at Acaster Malbis on 22nd. 375 at Askham Bog on 24th (ORF), 250 at Wharfe Ings and 125 at Wheldrake on 25th. In March 250 at Wheldrake on 11th with 300 On 18th, 350 at Acaster Malbis on 21st and 550 at Eastmoor on 27th (RAI).

Nocturnal passage was noted over York on 6th and 7th April (TIC). 60 at Bubwith on 6th June when 32 flew in over Acaster Malbis and 120 at Aughton on 12th were probably failed breeders. Many birds are known to have failed due to late spring flooding in the Lower Derwent. Probably associated with this was the rapid and early build up of post breeding flocks with 1500 in the Lower Derwent on 16th June (GS), 1000 at Wheldrake on 23rd and 24th with up to 2000 there throughout July. Post breeding dispersal then occurred rapidly in August, at Wheldrake numbers decreased from 600 on 1st to 80 on 5th with none the next day. Numbers were low throughout the area with the exception of 1600 at Copmanthorpe on 8th (ORF). In September 600 at Copmanthorpe on 1st (DW), 248 flew south in small parties throughout the day at Wheldrake on 12th (TED, EBB). 850 at Grimston Bar on 10th October. 1500 at Yapham Common on 11th, 1200 there on 6th November (OW), 600 at Wheldrake on 19th with 800 On 28th when 500 were at Acaster Selby. In December 1000 at Wheldrake on 2nd, 1400 at Bubwith On 3rd when 2500 were at Fangfoss Common (OW), 2000 at Cawood on 4th (PR), 1000 at Wheldrake on 8th and 1500 on 9th. 2000 at Hessay on 16th (OW) when 1000 were at Copmanthorpe.

Addition to 1974 Report

5-6000 in Lower Derwent on 29th December (1974 Y.N.U. Report).

KNOT *Calidris canutus*

All records refer to adult birds at Wheldrake Ings in September. One on 9th, two on 11th, one on 12th, two on 15th and one on 19th. Probably only two birds involved (DB, TED, EBB) Fourth record for the area.

SANDERLING *Calidris alba*

Two at North Duffield on 7th May (Cs). Third record for the area.

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*

All records from Wheldrake Ings. Singles on 30th July (aS) and 1st, 2nd and 4th November (MS, MKW). Fourth and fifth records for the area.

TEMMINCK'S STINT *Calidris temminckii*

Correction to 1976 Report

One reported as present at Wheldrake Ings in midsummer "was not substantiated by a description to the Y.N.U. Reports Committee and must remain in doubt" (1976 Y.N.U. Report).

PECTORAL SANDPIPER *Calidris melanotos*

Addition to 1976 Report

One at ROSS Carrs, Selby on 6th August PR). First record for the area. (1976 Y.N.U. Report).

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea*

All records from Wheldrake Ings. A single on 27th and 28th with two on 29th October and 1st to 3rd November (SH, 1W). Third record for the area.

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*

Two at Wheldrake on 7th January and one at Fulford Ings on 14th. Present in the Lower Derwent from February to April with 50 at Bubwith on 4th February, 120 at Aughton on 4th March, 200 at Wheldrake on 18th, 100 at Bubwith on 30th, 150 at Bubwith on 9th April, 236 there on 10th when two birds were noticeably smaller and in full summer plumage - these may well have been British breeding birds (DB), 100 there on 13th.

35 with black bellies in the Lower Derwent on 12th May with 30 there on 19th. Two at Aughton on 12th and 16th June. Away from the Lower Derwent birds were seen in March with 12 at Fulford Ings on 18th when four were at Acaster Malbis, and a single at Fulford Ings on 24th.

First returning passage birds were three at Wheldrake Ings on 9th July with up to three present throughout the rest of July and August.

Low numbers were seen occasionally in the Lower Derwent from October to year end with a maximum of 19 at Bubwith on 28th December.

Addition to 1975 Report

500 at Ellerton on 22nd March with 250 there from 3rd to 10th May. (1975 Y.N.U. Report).

RUFF *Philomachus pugnax*

Three at Wheldrake on 24th March, three at Bubwith on 9th April, a single at Wheldrake on 15th April with seven on 16th and 19th, 15 on 22nd, 19 on 23rd, four on 24th. Singles at Wheldrake on 29th July, 5th August with two on 13th, two on 19th, singles on 11th and 12th September. Three at Fulford Ings on 7th October.

JACK SNIFE *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Singles recorded at Askham Bog on four dates in January with three on 3rd (DRF). Singles at Naburn on 3rd January, Fulford Ings on 6th, Wheldrake Ings on 7th and Murton on 29th. In February, singles at Wheldrake on 4th, Askham Bog on 11th and 17th, Naburn on 16th and 23rd, Strensall on 17th and Aughton on 18th. A passage bird at Wharfe Ings on

1st April.

In November three at Fulford Ings on 4th with singles on 10th and 25th (BD, JG). Singles at Strensall Common on 10th and Wheldrake on 26th. Two at Fulford Ings on 2nd December with one there on 20th.

SNIFE *Gallinago gallinago*

Numbers were low in the early months due to the severe weather. The only concentration of any size being 150 at Aughton on 18th February. Most breeding birds had returned by mid-March. Passage flocks were seen in late March/early April with 80 at Naburn Sewage Works on 24th March, 120 at Fulford Ings on 22nd and 24th, 41 at Naburn Sewage Works on 29th, 20 at Bubwith on 30th when 50 were at Wheldrake. In April 50 at Wharfe Ings on 1st, 80 on 8th, 50 on 15th with 100 at Fulford Ings on 8th.

An unusual episode was recorded at Wheldrake Ings on 27th July, when a Snipe was seen fluttering above a swimming Coot *Fulica atra*. It attempted on three occasions to land on the Coot's back, in each case touching down and then lifting off again. After the third attempt it gave up and flew off (A?).

Numbers at Wheldrake Ings increased steadily from July onwards. Monthly maxima were - July 20 on three dates, August 32 on 31st, September 60 on 12th, October 75 on 14th, November 150 on 30th, decreasing to 40 on 9th December.

Elsewhere 80 at Fulford Ings On 4th November and 102 On 2nd December.
103 at Aughton on 18th November.

DOWITCHER Spp *Limnodromus* spp

Correction to 1976 Report

A single at Wheldrake Ings in mid-summer was not substantiated by a field description and must remain in doubt.

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

Roding birds noted at Bishop Wood, Brandsby, Flaxton, Maidensworth, Skipwith Common, Wheldrake Woods and Howsham Wood.

Other records were singles at Brockett Wood on 1st and 17th January, one dead under wires at Acomb on 2nd, one at Askham Bog on 3rd with two on 5th when one was at Fulford Ings, singles at Wheldrake Ings on 6th and 7th and at Strensall Common on 21st. Two at Eastmoor on 20th February, three at Anchor plain on 21st. Four at Wheldrake Ings on 14th April with two there on 16th may have been passage birds.

Singles at Fulford Ings on 22nd, 23rd and 27th July, at Naburn Sewage Works on 22nd and 23rd October, at Strensall Common on 25th November and at Castle Howard on 16th December.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

Four at Bubwith On 27th March with six on 30th. In April two at North Duffield on 5th and 8th, singles at Wheldrake on 8th, Bubwith on 10th, 13 at Wheldrake on 13th, four on 14th, nine on 15th and 16th. In July 18 at Wheldrake on 7th, two on 27th and 28th and singles on 2nd and 30th. One at Naburn with Lapwings on 29th. One at Wheldrake on 5th August with one on 1st September, three on 2nd, one on 3rd, two on 4th with singles on 6th, 8th, 9th and 26th.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*

One flew north at East Cottingwith on 7th April (JHL) . 12 flew west over Riccall on 2nd september (F?) . Seventh and eighth records for the area.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

Singles at Dringhouses Pond on 22nd April and at Wheldrake on 23rd and 26th, and 10th May. One flew west over Brayton on 12th May.

One at Wheldrake on 17th July and two there on 12th september.

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*

Breeding season records from Lower Derwent, Brandsby, Howsham, Cliffe Common, Wharfe Ings, Ryther, Bolton Percy, Strensall Common, Skipwith Common, Fulford Ings, Naburn, Whenby, Acaster Malbis, Askham Bog and Nun Appleton.

Some birds returned very early with singles at Aughton and Wharfe Ings on 21st January, Brandsby and Wheldrake on 3rd February, Wheldrake on 25th February and 3rd March. One found dead at Bubwith on 4th March.

Most birds arrived during the last two weeks in March with 12 at Wheldrake on 24th, 40 there on 26th, 20 at Bubwith on 27th. In April, 15 at North Duffield on 8th, 20 at Wheldrake on 21st with 18 the next day.

The last birds were one at Wheldrake on 22nd September and two flying west over Fulford Ings on the same day.

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*

More records than usual, all from the Lower Derwent. In April, two at Bubwith and one at Wheldrake on 13th. Singles in the Lower Derwent on 7th May and 16th June, at Wheldrake on 22nd and 23rd June, 19th and 22nd August and 4th September.

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*

Bred at Lower Derwent, Wharfe Ings, Ryther, Bishopthorpe Ings, Fulford Ings, Naburn Sewage Works and Elvington Airfield.

Records show an increasing tendency to over-winter and also to arrive earlier on the breeding grounds.

Singles seen at Wheldrake on 3rd, 7th and 21st January and 3rd February. Birds then started arriving back with 20 at Bubwith on 4th February, six at Naburn Sewage works on 11th, five at Aughton on 18th. Another arrival in late March, birds returned to Fulford Ings on 18th, 10 at Acaster Malbis on 19th, 20 at Wheldrake on 24th and 30 at Bubwith on 30th. Most birds had left the area by the end of August, but a single was at Wheldrake on 7th October with two on 7th November. One at Bubwith on 11th November. In December singles at Fulford Ings on 22nd and Bubwith on 28th and 30th.

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

Many more records than usual. Singles at Bubwith on 4th and 27th January, 4th February, one at North Duffield on 4th February probably refers to the same bird. The second wintering record for the area the first being in 1975.

In April, two at Wheldrake Ings on 19th, singles at Strensall Common and Bubwith on 28th and Wheldrake on 30th. Singles at Middlethorpe Ings on 12th May and Wheldrake on 16th. Two at Wheldrake on 28th June, an unusual date. The autumn, passage was heavy, especially at Wheldrake where birds were present on six dates in July, throughout August with 30 bird days - maxima nine on 26th and five on 31st. In September, present from 1st to 16th (22 bird days) with maxima of eight on 3rd and five on 9th. In October three on 7th and singles on 14th and 17th. Recorded elsewhere as follows: two at Strensall Common on 5th August with one there on 18th when five were at Rosscarrs. A single at Strensall Common on 2nd September.

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

A further increase in records, the majority coming from the Fulford/Naburn/Acaster Malbis area along the Ouse below York, where birds were recorded in 10 months as follows: singles on 20th February, 18th March with two on 19th, singles on 21st March, 8th and 11th April, 16th and 17th May, 22nd and 30th July, 8th August, two on 11th, singles on 30th September, 7th and 14th October and 10th November.

Other records were as follows: a bird wintered at Askham Bog and was present from January until 1st April. In April, singles at Kexby on 2nd, Skipwith Common and Bubwith on 4th with two at Bubwith on 8th. In August one to three at Strensall Common throughout the

month with four on 19th and 25th. Singles at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd August and at Rosscarrs on 8th with two at Wheldrake on 18th. Singles at Appleton Roebuck on 1st September, Strensall Common on 2nd, Stillingfleet on 9th and Kirkham Gorge on 15th and 16th. In October, singles at Heslington Outgang on 13th, Wheldrake on 17th and Bulmer Beck on 20th. A single at Grimston Bar on 9th November.

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*

One at Naburn Sewage Works on 16th April was the only record (TED, EBB).

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos*

One pair bred and reared two young in the Lower Derwent. First breeding record for the area. This long predicted record has finally occurred but not in the area one might have expected.

Birds arrived back early with singles at Wheldrake Ings on 24th and 30th March. Singles were at Wheldrake in April on 11th, 25th and 28th, up to two there on eight dates in May. Elsewhere, one at Ryther on 27th April with two the next day, singles at Fulford Ings on 1st May, University on 3rd, Ryther on 10th and 15th, Naburn Sewage Works from 16th to 18th and Kirkham on 20th. singles at Wheldrake on 3rd June, 9th, 24th and 30th and at North Duffield on 28th. In July singles on eight dates at Wheldrake, at Castle Howard on 1st and 21st, at Naburn Sewage Works on 25th with six at Riccall Ings on 27th (PP) . Up to four at Wheldrake on 19 days in August with two at Rosscarrs on 18th. Three at Wheldrake on 2nd, 3rd and 8th september.

MEDITERRANEAN GULL *Larus melanocephalus*

A first summer bird at Wheldrake Ings on 8th, 10th, 11th, 12th and 22nd July (HJW, BGP, DB, JC, TMC).

The following are some of the details noted: Head - smudgy grey ear coverts, with several flecks on forehead, dark patch immediately in front of eye. Upperparts - light pearl grey mantle and wings, slight flecking to coverts. Leading primaries - blackish, with inner primaries

whitish. secondaries were white with prominent dark sub-terminal band and white terminal band. Underparts - white. Tail was white with partial sub-terminal band. Bill - pale brownish with dark one third tip and showed stouter and more blunt ended than Black-headed Gull *L. ridibundus*.

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

LITTLE GULL *Larus minutus*

All records from Wheldrake Ings. An exceptional year. Single immatures were noted on 28th April, 7th, 14th and 15th May, a subadult on 21st May and an adult on 23rd. Two immatures on 20th June with one immature on 23rd. There have been only five previous records for the area, three of which were in the last three years. This species is now of regular occurrence in the Lower Derwent and if conditions are right, as they were this year, it must be considered as a potential breeding species.

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus*

Bred at Strensall Common - 14 nests produced 20 flying young, Skipwith Common - not counted, Wheldrake Ings c.350 pairs. The Wheldrake birds were washed off by floods in late May. many of these birds moved to North Duffield where 300 pairs nested in June. However, this site dried out, the majority of chicks were predated and very few young fledged.

Large numbers roosted at Wheldrake Ings during the winter months - counts of this species are difficult to carry out and some are thought to be under-estimates. Maxima were 10000 on 10th January, 7000 on 3rd February, 50000 on 7th April and 10000 on 23rd December.

1400 were at Wheldrake after the colonies were washed off. An albinistic bird was seen at Wheldrake on a number of occasions between April and July (DB, TED), on 19th May a bird in otherwise adult plumage showed a winter plumage head (DB).

Elsewhere, up to 1500 at Askham Bog Tip in January, 734 at Eastmoor on 27th February, 1000 at Wharfe Ings on 8th April when a dead bird had been ringed at Lake Druzno, Zolwiniec, Elblag, Poland (1345 Kms. E) as an adult on 19th May, 1975. 3000 roosted at Castle Howard on 15th November and 3500 there on 29th December. 1000 on Knavesmire on 15th December.

COMMON GULL *Larus canus*

Birds were present at the Wheldrake roost during the winter months, the only counts being 950 on 7th February, and 400 on 23rd December, these counts are certainly under-estimates. Up to 1000 at Askham Bog Tip in January with up to 200 in February, up to 60 at Brandsby in February. In April up to 200 at Wenby and 420 on Knavesmire on 8th were probably passage birds. Numbers were very low in summer months but built up again in the autumn with 39 at Ashfield School on 9th August, 300 at the Castle Howard roost on 15th November and 140 there on 29th December.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*

Small numbers recorded in January and February at Askham Bog Tip, Fulford, Norton and the Lower Derwent, maxima were four at Wheldrake on 10th January, 12 at Askham Bog Tip on 3rd February. One at Acaster Malbis on 21st March was the only record in that month. April and May records were mainly in the Lower Derwent with a maximum of three adults and 11 sub-adults at Wheldrake on 19th May. Numbers increased in June, July and August with monthly maxima of 150 at Bubwith on 8th June, up to 150 at Askham Bog Tip in July, up to 90 at Ashfield School during August. Thereafter, apart from 20 at Rosscarrs on 4th November, birds were generally scarce, with low single figures seen mainly in the Lower Derwent.

HERRING GULL

Up to 80 roosted in the Lower Derwent during January and February, present at Askham Bog Tip during these months with maxima of 200 on 13th January and 20 on 3rd February. 80 at Strensall Tip on 10th and 17th February. Thereafter rather scarce with monthly maxima of 12 at Wheldrake on 18th March, four at Wharfe Ings on 1st April, three at Wheldrake on 7th May, 12 at Acaster Malbis on 5th June, nine at Wheldrake on 14th July, 22 flew south at Wheldrake at dusk on 3rd August, two records of singles at Wheldrake in September, no records in October. Numbers then built up with 10 at Wheldrake on 4th November and up to 200 roosting in the Lower Derwent in December.

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucoides*

An adult bird was at Askham Bog Tip on 7th and 14th January (DW et al).

The following are some of the details noted: Head - white with faint grey streaking, mantle and wings uniform pale grey with white trailing edge and outer primaries white. Underparts and tail was white. Bill - pale yellow with red spot on gonys. Legs - flesh. Size - larger than Common Gull *L. canus*, slightly smaller than Herring Gull *L. argentatus*. Head and bill much less robust than Herring Gull, more like Common Gull. Wings extended quite noticeably beyond the tail.

Second record for the area, the first was in 1969

Accepted by the Y.N.U. Reports Committee.

GLAUCOUS GULL *Larus hyperboreus*

A fourth year/adult bird was at Askham Bog Tip on 10th, 13th and 17th January (BGP, DRE et al) and in the Lower Derwent on 10th, 18th and 19th March (TED, EBB, BGP, FWO et al). These records all refer to the same bird which had a damaged left leg and a noticeable limp. A second 'biscuit immature bird was present in the Lower Derwent on 23rd March, 6th, 7th and 19th April (TED, EBB, JML et al).

A limping adult was seen again in the Lower Derwent on 29th and 30th December (HJW, BGP, JMP) . This was assumed to be the same bird as was present in the early part of the year.

Second, third and fourth records for the area.

Accepted by the Y.N.U. Reports Committee.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*

Up to 80 at Askham Bog Tip during January. 30 at Wheldrake on 7th January, 40 there on 3rd February, 20 at Strensall Tip on 17th February, 41 at Ellerton Tip on 25th November and up to 250 in the Lower Derwent in December. Otherwise, records were of single figures throughout the area in all months.

KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*

An immature flew north over Fulford Ings on 20th July (3D) . Sixth record for the area.

COMMON/ARCTIC TERN *Sterna hirundo/paradisaea*

Two at Wheldrake Ings on 12th May, one at Aughton on 3rd June and two at Bubwith on 7th. A juvenile at Castle Howard on 16th September.

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

Two at Wheldrake Ings on 29th May, five there on 31st when one was at Bubwith. Two at Wheldrake on 6th June, one there on 10th, two there on 9th July.

ARCTIC TERN

Birds were seen at Wheldrake as follows: two on 15th May, three on 31st, three on 10th June and two on 9th July. A juvenile was at Bubwith on 16th June.

LITTLE TERN *Sterna albifrons*

Two at Wheldrake on 23rd June (MS, SB, Edt). First record for the area.

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger*

All records from Wheldrake Ings. Two on 14th May, one on 31st, singles on 6th and 20th June, 12th and 19th August.

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*

Present in breeding season at Wheldrake, Storwood, Aughton, Ellerton, Naburn, Fulford, Anchor Plain, Brandsby and Skipwith Common.

Flocks of up to eight birds in winter months at Askham Bog, Fulford, Brockett Wood, Yapham and Naburn.

WOOD PIGEON *Columba palumbus*

Up to 200 at Askham Bog in January. 700 at Buttercrambe on 21st January, 300 in the Lower Derwent on 27th and 1500 at Escrick on 31st (PR). 300 at Eastmoor on 4th February with 270 on 20th. 125 at Ryther on 25th May. 2000 at Bulmer on 10th November and 900 at Yapham on 30th (DW).

400 at Bubwith on 16th December.

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

Over 200 birds were destroyed by a Pest Control Officer at a farm near Selby in two days in January (per TED). The only other count received was of 38 at Ryther on 30th October (JMPa)

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*

An early bird at Ellerton on 14th April (DB), the next being at Skipwith Common on 27th (pp). The main arrival occurred in the second week of May with birds in Lower Derwent on 7th, Wistow on 8th, Stillingfleet and Wheldrake on 12th. The largest flock was 17 on wires at Eastmoor on 9th July (PAI) . Last records were singles in September at Wheldrake on 12th and Murton on 16th (OW)

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*

First birds were at Dringhouses on 12th April (OW) and Wheldrake Ings on 13th (TED, EBB) - an early arrival. The next birds were in May at Anchor Plain, Castle Howard and the Lower Derwent on 7th, Askham Bog and Ryther on 8th, Wheldrake on 10th and Fulford Ings on 12th. Note the coincidence of arrival with Turtle Dove. The last bird was a juvenile at Stillingfleet on 7th September (OW).

BARN OWL *Tyto alba*

Only breeding records received were four pairs in the Lower Derwent (CS). Elsewhere recorded from Askham Bog, Ryther, Fulford Ings, Deighton, Naburn, Bumper Castle, Pocklington Airfield, Stillington, Hessay, Buttercrambe and Full Sutton. A bird showing characteristics of the dark phase continental subspecies - *T. alba guttata* - was seen hunting Fulford Ings on 15th December (BD).

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

Bred at three sites In the Lower Derwent, at Brandsby and at Cherry Hill. Now appears to be very widely distributed throughout the area with records from Ryther, Wharfe Ings, Colton, Skipwith Common, Naburn, Stillingfleet, Riccall, Acaster Malbis, Elvington Airfield, Askham Bog, the Hopgrove, Marton, Whitwell and Rufforth.

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

Very few records were received for this species. Only two confirmed breeding records at Skipwith Common, where two young were reared, and at Acaster Malbis.

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus*

Bred at Skipwith Common. Two were hunting the A64 by-pass embankments at Bishopthorpe in fog on 15th January (OW), one caught and ringed at New Earswick on 24th March (RA, TED) and two at Black Woods, Wheldrake on 24th May.

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

A good year for this species. At least one bird summered at a site in the Lower Derwent, where the species was seen as follows - a single on 4th January, a pair displaying on 14th, two on 21st, singles on 18th February and 18th March, one found dead on 27th, two on 30th. Singles on 14th, 19th April. In May singles on 1st, 2nd, 9th, 16th and 29th. One on 11th June, one on 29th July. Elsewhere birds were noted at Fulford Ings on 21st January, 26th January, 30th March and 29th May - all singles. At Strensall Common, two on 28th January, singles on 10th and 24th February, two on 18th March, one on 22nd April. Singles at Acaster Malbis on 4th February, Elvington Airfield on 18th, Scrayingham on 18th March when one was at Church Fenton. Singles at Riccall on 3rd and 4th April with one at Elvington Airfield on the latter date. A single at Gate Helmsley on 6th December.

NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Bred at Skipwith Common (three pairs) and Allertorpe Common. Addition to 1975 Report Bred at Skipwith Common, with at least three and possibly five pairs present (1975 Y.N.U. Report).

SWIFT *Apus apus*

First arrivals were 20 at Wheldrake on 3rd May, then mainly singles at University on 4th, Riccall, Strensall Common and Naburn Sewage Works on 6th, Askham Bryan, Alne and Ryther on 8th. Birds were not widely distributed until the third week of May. Large concentrations noted were: up to 700 at Naburn Sewage Works from 16th to 18th May (TED, EBB), 300 at Wheldrake on 27th May.

Peak southward passage occurred at Wheldrake on 30th June and 7th July when 130 were seen on both dates. 1000 moved slowly south over Dringhouses on 27th July (DW). Last birds were two at Wheldrake on 15th September and a single at Strensall Common on 22nd (OW).

Addition to 1976 Report

One at Naburn Sewage Works on 29th April was the first (1976 Y.N.U. Report).

KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

Generally a poor year for this species with very few records received.

The severe winter depleted the population and breeding success was low due to flooding of nest holes in late spring. Between Fulford and Naburn, where normally four or five pairs are present, only one pair bred and was unsuccessful. Three birds at Dringhouses Pond on 10th April included a pair courtship feeding. Noted in the breeding season but with no evidence of breeding at Askham Bog, Anchor Plain, Strensall Common and the Wharfe at Bolton Percy. Only four records from the Lower Derwent, seen on three dates in October and one in December. Elsewhere, outside the breeding season, noted from Askham Bog, Anchor Plain, New Earswick, Naburn, Strensall Common and Sand Hutton Pond.

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

Breeding proved at Skipwith Common, Black Plantation and High Wood.

Other breeding season records were from Strensall Common, Naburn Sewage Works, Kirkham, Howsham and the Lower Derwent. Singles were noted at Sand Hutton on 10th January and Whitwell on 28th February.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopus major*

Breeding season records from Skipwith, Brandsby, Askham Bog, Archbishop's Palace, Bishopthorpe Ponds, Naburn, Deighton, Strensall, Brocket Wood, Stillingfleet, Scoreby Wood, Ryther and Moorlands.

Outside the breeding season, noted at Colton Hagg Wood, Middlethorpe, Castle Howard, Yapham, Low Catton, Sand Hutton, Fulford Ings and Wheldrake Ings.

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopus minor*

Bred at Spellar Wood, Wiggington and Askham Bog, other breeding season records from New Earswick, Wheldrake, Fulford, Brocket Wood, Stillingfleet Wood, Dringhouses Pond and Bishopthorpe Palace.

Singles also noted at Poppleton Road on 3rd March and Yapham on 28th October.

Addition to 1975 Report

Four at Castle Howard on 26th April (1975 Y.N.U. Report).

Addition to 1977 Report

A pair at Moorlands in May with a juvenile on 14th August (1977 Y.N.U. Report).

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

First singing birds were recorded at Wheldrake Ings on 25th February (TED, EBB).

Maxima counts were: 70 at Strensall on 18th January (RAI), with 45 on 26th (TED, EBB), 350 at Colton Lane on 16th February (DRF), 90 on Anchor Plain on 20th (RAI) and 70 in stubble at Barmby Moor on 13th October (DW).

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

The first to arrive were 10 days earlier this year. The first were two at Wheldrake Ings on 10th April (OB) with an increase to 10 on 13th and the main influx on the 20th.

10 at Wheldrake Ings on 15th September were the last.

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

First arrivals were 10 days earlier than last year. Three at East Cottingwith on 10th April (JBL) and one at Nether Poppleton (RAI), with singles from seven localities on the 13th. 600 at Naburn Sewage Works from 16th to 18th May (TED, EBB).

Roosting birds in August were; over 1000 at Wheldrake Ings, 10000 at Rosscarrs (PR) and 270 at Strensall Common (DW).

Passage was evident at Stillingfleet on 23rd September when 175 birds per hour between 12.00 and 13.00 hours increased to 750 per hour between 15.00 and 16.00 hours, all were moving southeast in a fresh northwesterly wind. The following day showed no noticeable movement (DW).

The last was over Monk Stray, York on 4th November (MKW).

RED-RUMPED SWALLOW *Hirundo daurica*

One was observed at Naburn Sewage Works from 1400 to 1930 GMT on 16th May and from 1530 to 1720 GMT on the 17th (GC, TED, BGP, DB et al).

The following details were noted: first impressions were of a stocky orange-buff Swallow *H.rustica* with shorter broader wings and shorter tail feathers. Head and upperparts — crown, dark blue extending to eye. Ear coverts and nape were chestnut red. Chin and throat, pale buff. Back and upperwing coverts, glossy dark blue. Primaries and secondaries, dull brown similar to Swift *Apus apus*. Rump varied in colour from orange-buff on upper rump to pale buff on lower rump and upper tail area. Underparts: orange-buff paler to vent. Tail, dark. First record for the area.

Accepted by Y.N.U. Reports Committee

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbica*

First arrivals were 10 days earlier this year, with the first at Acaster Malbis on 11th April. 200 at Naburn Sewage Works from 16th to 18th May (TED, EnB).

200 at Escrick on 14th September (RH)

Passage birds at Stillingfleet on 23rd September flying southeast with numbers peaking at 50 per hour by mid-afternoon (DW). Young birds were still being fed at the nest as late as 7th October at Thorganby.

The last to depart were 20 at Escrick and 25 over University on 10th October (TED, EBB).

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

Bred at: Grimston Wood, Stearsby Hagg, Blackwoods, Skipwith Common, York University Campus and three pairs on Fulford Ings.

The first were two at Skipwith Common on 14th April and the last was a single on Anchor Plain on 10th October (RAX).

MEADOW PIPIT. *Anthus pratensis*

Bred at: Lower Derwent, Skipwith Common, Fulford Ings, Strensall Common and 10 pairs at Naburn Sewage Works.

Up to 150 at Naburn sewage Works between January and March (TED, EBB) and 150 at Colton Lane on 16th February (DRF). 110 on Strensall Common on 22nd September (OW), 100 at Bubwith on 23rd (DB) and up to 120 at Naburn Sewage Works from October to year end. 90 at Strensall Common on 10th November (DW) and 55 at Stillingfleet on 27th.

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla f lava*

Bred at Wheldrake, North Duffield, Angram, Strensall and Skipwith Common, Fulford Gold Course, near Askham Bog and 20 pairs in and around Naburn Sewage Works.

First of the spring were five at Bubwith on 13th April (DB, JC). A large influx occurred on 6th with 66 males and 11 females at Naburn Sewage Works and 31 at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd (TED, EBB, DB). 200 roosting in Rosscarrs on 18th August (PR).

The last was on Fulford Ings on 7th October (BD, JO).

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

Bred near Howsham, a family party was observed in July (TMC, OB).

Numbers were well down this year with records from only 10 localities compared with 24 in 1978. Mainly single birds in every month except June and August.

PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba*

Roosting birds were: 1500 at York Railway station during winter months. 60 at Naburn Sewage works on 11th February (TED, EBB). 200 at Rosscarrs on 18th August (PR), 30 at Strensall Common on 31st increased to 60 on 22nd September (DW). 43 at Naburn Sewage Works on 28th October and 40 on 11th November (BD, JO).

Singles showing characteristics of the White Wagtail *M.a. alba* at Bolton Percy on 16th April (OW) and Middlethorpe Ings on 21st April (EM).

WAXWING

One arrived with a flock of Starlings *Sturnus vulgaris* in a garden at Osbaldwick on 1st February and stayed until the 5th (PT).

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

A general decline throughout the area due to the severity of the 78-79 winter. Numbers probably reduced by 50% or more, only 23 breeding pairs at Askham Bog (Common Bird Census) compared with 62 pairs in 1978.

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*

Only four pairs bred at Askham Bog (Common Bird Census) , 32 pairs in 1978.

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

Numbers throughout the area have probably dropped due to the bad winter of 78-79. In reflection Askham Bog had only 36 breeding pairs (Common Bird Census) compared with 52 in 1978.

NIGHTINGALE *Luscinia megarhynchos*

A male near Rufforth was heard in full song and occasionally observed from the 14th to 21st May (ME, BGP, JMP).

Addition to 1976 Report

One singing at Acaster Malbis during May (EBB et al).

REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

An increase this year with records from 10 localities compared with four in 1978.

Bred near Howsham where a female and three young were observed on 1st July (TMC).

The first was a male at Copmanthorpe on 16th April (DW) and two singing On Strensall Common on 22nd (oW). Single males at Lowther Street, York on 21st May (MW) and Castle Howard on 3rd June (TIC). A juvenile at Anchor Plain on 27th July (RAI). One at Fulford Ings on 7th August (no) and two juveniles at Thicket Priory on 18th (TMC). Singles at Acomb, York on 1st September (OB) , Copmanthorpe on 9th October (ORE) and a very late bird near Bubwith on 2nd and 3rd December (OB, BGP, TED, RAI, EBB).

WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*

The only breeding record this year came from Strensall Common where 10 pairs (13 pairs in 1978) were counted. A total of 21 juveniles reared from seven pairs (21 juveniles reared from eight pairs in 1978) (OW).

The first was early this year, a male at Wharfe Ings on 15th April (OW, HJW). Two weeks earlier than 1978. The main arrival came on 11th May with two at Wheldrake Ings and singles at Strensall Common, Naburn and Beningbrough. One at Wheldrake Ings on 19th

May and North Duffield on 27th. A pair at Fulford Ings on 16th June and a female at North Duffield on 7th July. One at Wheldrake Ings on 25th August, two on 9th September and singles on 11th and 12th.

The last was at Acaster Airfield on 25th September

WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Good passage numbers again this year

The first was a male at Wheldrake Ings on 24th March (OR?) . Singles at Elvington on 5th April, Middlethorpe Ings on 8th, Bishopthorpe on 13th (Dw), Knavesmire on 14th (EM) and Strensall Common on 28th (DW). Two at Riccall Ings on 7th May (PP), one at Fulford Ings on 7th (aD, JO), two pairs at Bishopthorpe on 10th (OW) , two at Thornton Hill on 10th (PH), a male at Askham Bog on 11th (OR?) and one at Fulford Ings on 12th and 13th (BO, JG). Two females at Naburn on 11th May (TED, EBB) , singles at Rufforth on 14th (BGP) , Bishopthorpe on 15th (OW) , Towthorpe, near Haxby on 17th (MCG), Aughton on 19th (GS), Bishopthorpe on 22nd (OW) and Wheldrake Ings on 27th.

Return passage began on 9th July (8th July in 1978) with an adult male on Anchor Plain (RAI). The next were two at Whenby on 30th July (PH) two juveniles on Strensall Common from 6th to 19th August, two adults at Acaster Airfield on 1st September and one at Stillingfleet on 5th (OW). A single at Naburn Sewage Works on 9th September (OW). Birds were observed from three localities on 16th September with singles at Grimston (PH) and Kirkham Gorge (HJW) and two at Bubwith (OS).

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

21 breeding pairs at Askham Bog (Common Bird Census).

100 at Naburn Sewage Works on 11th February (TED, EBB). Up to 500 roosting at New Earswick during winter months. Up to 400 roosting at the University from October to year end (TED, EBB)

A colour ringed male was observed all year at the University, ringed there in 1972 and age is now nine years old (TED).

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

Winter maxima were: 56 at Askham Bog on 18th March (DRF), 250 at Thicket Priory on 22nd (TED, EBB), 244 at Anchor Plain on 4th April (PAI), 250 at Askham Bog on 16th (PAI) and 78 at Acaster Malbis on 29th (DW). 80 at Castle Howard on 2nd May (flaW), 10 at Strensall Common on 6th (DW) and 53 at Ryther on 10th (JMPa).

First of the autumn was one on Strensall Common on 14th October (DB) 100 flew WNW over Yapham on 17th (oW) with birds arriving at Ryther, Skipwith Common, Fulford Ings and the Lower Derwent between the 18th and 31st October. 500 at Skelton on 1st November (EM), 100 over Bubwith Bridge on 11th (SM), 300 at Ryther on 18th (JMPa) and 100 at Askham Bog on 18th December (DRE).

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

10 breeding pairs at Askham Bog (Common Bird Census). Eight pairs in 1978.

The only significant counts were, 18 at Askham Bog on 18th March and 20 at Acaster Malbis on 21st (DRF).

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

Highest counts were: 50 at Naburn on 13th January (TED, EBB), 80 in the Lower Derwent on 11th March (GS), 50 at Acaster Malbis on 21st (DRF), 200 at Thicket Priory on 22nd (TED, EBB), 150 at Wheldrake Ings on 24th (DRF) and 100 at Anchor Plain on 4th April (RAY).

Nocturnal passage occurred over York on 2nd April (TIC). Several birds stayed throughout April with one bird still present at Naburn Sewage Works on 16th May (TED, EBB).

First autumn birds were a week earlier this year with singles at Stillingfleet and Dringhouses on 30th September (DW). Nocturnal passage occurred over Naburn on 1st October (TED,

EBB). The main influx coming on 13th and 14th October with 70 over Yapham (DW) and 300 at Castle Howard.

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*

12 at Naburn Sewage Works on 11th February (TEB, EBB). Up to 30 in the Lower Derwent and 25 at Strensall Common on 19th August (DW) were maxima.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia*

Bred in the Lower Derwent (TED, EBB) and on Skipwith Common with five singing males (PP)

The first bird was at Askham Bog on 4th May and a pair on 13th (DRP). Singles in May occurred at Aughton on 13th (TMC), near Rufforth on 14th and 18th (BGP), Ryther on 18th (JMPa) and Bishop Wood on 20th (RH). Singles singing at Strensall Common on 3rd June (RLG), Rufforth on 3rd August (DB) and Strensall Common on 11th (DW).

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Breeding at: 50 pairs at Wheldrake Ings (TED, EBB), 20 pairs at Naburn Sewage Works (TED, EBB), five pairs at Askham Bog (Common Bird Census), one pair at Askham Bog Tip (DW, DRF), two pairs at Wiganthorpe (PH), two pairs at Anchor Plain (RAI), with three singing males at Fulford Ings and Strensall Common. Two singing at Ryther on 18th May. Single singing birds at the University on 27th May, Overton on 3rd June and Dringhouses Pond on 4th and 5th (DW).

The first was at Wheldrake Ings on 12th April (BGP) and the last were three at Wheldrake on 30th September.

REED WARBLER

Bred at Strensall Common, Naburn Sewage Works, Fulford Ings, Wheldrake Ings, Skipwith Common, Castle Howard and near Allerthorpe Common.

10 breeding pairs at Askham Bog (Common Bird Census), 11 pairs in 1978.

The first was at Naburn Sewage Works on 7th May (JG).

LESSER WHITETHROAT

Another good year with records from 14 localities.

Bred at: Escrick, Skipwith Common (TED, EBB), two pairs at Anchor Plain (RAI) and one pair at Naburn (TED, EBB).

Singles singing in May at Wheldrake Ings, Dringhouses Pond, Strensall Common, Skipwith Common, Aughton, Brockett Wood, Fulford Ings and New Earswick. One singing at Acaster Malbis on 10th June, two at Wharfe Ings on 10th, singles at Acaster Malbis on 13th, Wheldrake Ings on 17th and Fulford Ings on 30th. One at Fulford Ings on 5th and 6th July, six at Anchor Plain on 10th (RAI), two at Naburn Sewage Works on 25th and one at Riccall Ings on 27th. Two at Naburn Sewage Works on 6th August, one at Fulford Ings on 11th and one at Wheldrake Ings on 13th.

WHITETHROAT

Over the last three or four years this species has steadily increased and now appears to have reached its peak with numbers throughout the area similar to 1978.

First bird of the year was at Skipwith Common on 27th April (PP), 21 at Anchor Plain on 10th July (RAI) and the last record was of a single bird at Naburn Sewage Works on 9th September

GARDEN WARBLER

Bred at: Kirkham Abbey (DB), Naburn Sewage Works (TED, EBB). One pair at Anchor Plain (RAI), four holding territories on the western end of Skipwith Common (PP). Two holding territories in Bishop Wood (RH). Three pairs at Blackmoor and two pairs at Dale End (PH). First spring record was of two birds at Wheldrake Road on 10th May (TMC).

Singles in May at Askham Bog, Stubb Wood, Naburn Sewage Works, Howsham, Terrington and Stillingfleet. One at Naburn Sewage works on 1st June, two at Stubb wood on 5th, singles at Stillingfleet Wood on 9th, Scoreby Wood on 16th, Bishop Wood On 27th and Fulford Ings on 30th. One at Skipwith Common on 6th July, six at Anchor Plain on 10th and one at Fulford Ings on 23rd.

BLACKCAP

The only breeding records were: Wheldrake Woods, Rufforth, Skipwith Common, Bishop Wood, near Malton, Brandsby and nine pairs at Askham Bog.

First spring record was a singing male at Brockett wood on 13th April (OW).

Again this year a number of late records probably from birds attempting to over-winter. A male at Yapham on 4th October (DW), a female ringed at Naburn on 6th (TED, EBB), one at Wheldrake Ings on 28th November (BB) and singles in December at Tadcaster Road on 5th and 8th (PBa) , a male at Haxby on 13th (r.P) and a female at Haxby on 29th (per HJW)

Addition to 1978 Report

A bird ringed at Naburn on 16th November, 1978 was recovered at Barnby Dun near Doncaster (35 Km. S) on 2nd February, 1979 (TED).

WOOD WARBLER

One singing in Stubb Wood on 15th May (FWO), a bird holding territory at Bishop Wood on 20th (RH, AP) and two in full song on 31st probably bred but not proven (RH). One singing at Naburn Sewage Works on 1st June (JG) and Stillingfleet Wood from 9th July to 13th August (DW). One at Naburn Sewage Works on 30th July (BD, Jo). Singles at Naburn Sewage Works on 7th August (BD, JG) and Stamford Bridge on 11th.

CHIFFCHAFF

Bred at, Brandsby Dale (PH), Skipwith Common, six eggs in nest at Aughton on 31st May (GS), three pairs at Askham Bog (Common Bird Census).

First were over three weeks later this year, with two at Askham Bog on 7th April (DRF). The main influx occurred two weeks later than in 1978.

Two calling at Naburn Sewage Works on 9th September (HO). One singing in mild sunny weather at York University on 16th November (TED, EBB).

Addition to 1974 Report

One at Selby on 23rd December (PR from the 1974 Y.N.U. Report).

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

58 breeding pairs at Askham Bog (Common Bird Census), 65 In 1978.

The first was at Dale End (PH) and Selby on 12th April (PR). The main arrival occurred on the 17th and 18th. One at Naburn Sewage Works on 30th September was the last.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*

The only breeding record was from Scoreby Wood (DW). Only five records of this species which has almost certainly suffered from the severe winter.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*

Breeding recorded from: Naburn Sewage Works, Brockett Wood, Fulford Ings, Stubb Wood, Strensall Common and Bishopthorpe.

Four young were successfully reared at Tang Hall Wood, York (BT, RT).

Adults feeding young were noted in all the following areas: Wheldrake Village, Dringhouses, Beningbrough Hall, Castle Howard and Acaster Malbis.

The first was early with one at Brockett Wood on 23rd April (OW). Mainly singles throughout the area with four at Buttercrambe on 1st July.

The last was at Wheldrake Village on 16th September (AD).

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Two records both of adult males at Whenby on 11th May (RAI) and Aughton on 2nd June (TMC).

BEARDED TIT *Panurus biarmicus*

Four at Wheldrake Ings on 20th October (TED). Third record for the area.

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*

This species appears to be down in numbers, severe winter obviously taking effect.

Only two pairs bred at Askham Bog (Common Bird Census), six in 1978. Highest winter counts were: 30 at Askham Bog on 2nd January (DRF) , 10 at Acaster Malbis on 30th (MW), 15 at Askham Bog on 24th February (DRF) and 20 there on 18th March (ORE).

MARSH TIT *Parus palustris*

Only breeding record was five pairs at Askham Bog (Common Bird Census).

Mainly single birds recorded from Escrick, Strensall Common, Acaster Malbis, Stillingfleet, Yapham, Wharfe Ings, Castle Howard (OW), Bishopthorpe, Brandsby, Howsham, Rufforth and Wheldrake Ings.

WILLOW TIT *Parus montanus*

Only breeding records were; three pairs at Scoreby Wood, two pairs at Stillingfleet, two pairs at Askham Bog and Naburn.

Singing males at Bolton Percy, Dringhouses Pond and Brockett Wood. Mostly singles at Fulford Ings, High Wood, Hagg Wood, Bishopthorpe and Castle Howard.

COAL TIT *Parus ater*

Up to 50 at Stillingfleet Wood during September (OW) and 35 at Scoreby Wood during December (OW) were maxima.

BLUE TIT *Parus caeruleus*

31 pairs bred at Askham Bog (Common Bird Census) , 45 in 1978.

Maxima were: 40 at Askham Bog on 14th February (ORF) , 30 at Wheldrake on 4th September (TED) , 40 at Castle Howard on 9th December (oW) and 50 at Scoreby Wood throughout December (OW).

GREAT TIT *Parus major*

Only six pairs bred at Askham Bog (Common Bird Census), 18 in 1978.

NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

Bred at: Brandsby Village with adults feeding young on 26th May (PH), Coxwold and Newburgh. Almost certainly bred at Castle Howard. Two at Naburn Sewage Works on 30th January (nO). Singles at Castle Howard on 19th (BGP), 25th November (HJW) and 9th December (OW) . One at Brandsby village during November (PH).

TREECREEPER

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

Singing males at: Brockett Wood, Middlethorpe, Bishopthorpe, Scoreby Wood and Stillingfleet Wood (OW) . Up to five in winter months at Askham Bog (ORF).

GOLDEN ORIOLE *Oriolus oriolus*

Addition to 1974 Report

One called four times in Bishop Wood near Selby on 30th May. (1974 Y.N.U. Report). First record for the area.

Correction to 1977 Report

Should read second record for the area.

GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor*

Singles at Strensall Common on 24th February (DW) and Riccall Common on 24th March (TPM) . A bird was observed in the University area on 18th and 23rd October, 2nd and 15th November and 28th December. Two common frogs *Rana temporaria* were discovered impaled on thorns near the University on 28th December (per TED).

JAY *Garrulus glandarius*

Mainly singles throughout the area with the maxima being: eight at Askham Bog during the winter months (DRE) , eight at Strensall Common on 24th February (OW) and six at Strensall Common in April (DB). An influx into the Wheldrake Ings area occurred in October with three on 17th, four on 20th, 10 on 21st and five on 27th, a similar influx was reported there in 1975.

MAGPIE *Pica pica*

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

Maxima counts were: 35 at Askham Bog on 16th February (ORE), nine at Anchor Plain on 30th March, 24 at Askham Bog on 12th and 16th April (DRF, DW), 15 near Stockton-on-Forest on 4th August (MEW), 12 near Strensall on 15th September (OW) and 40 at Askham Bog on 4th November (OW).

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*

70 at Askham Bog on 17th February (DRF), 70 at East Moor on 20th (RAI), 24 at High Wood Beeches (PH), 40 at Castle Howard on 14th October (OB), 170 at Bulner on 2nd December (DW) and 1000 roosting in Buttercrambe Wood on 17th December (DW).

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

Several treble figure counts were: 400 at Stamford Bridge on 31st January (BGP), 500 in the Lower Derwent on 3rd February (GS), 100 at Anchor Plain on 20th (RAI), 200 in the Lower Derwent on 3rd March (GS), 800 at Eastmoor on 5th (RAI) and 200 flew over Wheldrake Ings on 2nd September (SM).

Four figure counts were: 1600 at Fangfoss on 4th December (DW) and 7000 roosting at Buttercrambe Woods on 17th (DW).

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*

Roosting birds at Askham Bog were well down in number this year with only 20 recorded on 31st January and 40 on 25th February (DEF), 40 at Strensall Tip on 10th February (OW), and 75 at Askham Bog on 31st May (DRF). One at Cawood with white wing bar on 2nd May (PR). A party of six at Acaster Airfield on 14th October, of which three birds had varying amounts of white in the wings. One had white wings but showed black tips to the primaries and secondaries, also black lesser coverts. The second bird was very similar but white was less extensive. The third showed white to greater coverts only (DW). One at Selby with white wing bar on 29th December (PR)

A bird showing characteristics of the Hooded Crow *C.c. cornix* was at Strensall Common on 10th February (AI, TED).

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

Roosting counts were: Up to 100,000 at New Earswick (TED, EBB) and 3000 at Strensall Common (RAI). 250,000 were counted flying over Bootham Stray towards New Earswick on 22nd March (MKW).

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

An aberrant female at Dringhouses Pond on 5th October had a white head and ear coverts. Nape was white with some grey/brown flecking. A long narrow brown stripe ran through each eye. Rump and under-tail coverts were white (DW).

A female/juvenile which appeared to be attempting to roost in a rockery at Ryther on 30th December at 22.30 hours was observed fluttering weakly away, however was easily picked up and kept overnight in a box in a warm kitchen, with some seed available (temperature outside was below freezing). Despite this it had died by morning and weighed 20 grams, healthy birds ringed four or five weeks before were averaging 28 to 30 grams (JMPa).

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*

30 at Acomb on 4th January (DB), up to 150 at Naburn from January to March (TED, EBB) , 70 at Strensall Tip on 10th February (DW) one on a bird table in Heworth, York on 17th (JHL) , 61 at Anchor Plain on 20th (RA) and 75 at Askham Bog on 17th March (DRF)

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

Eight pairs bred at Askham Bog (Common Bird Census) . Largest flocks counted were; 50 at Buttercrambe on 21st January (8Cr) , 100 on Strensall Tip on 10th February (DW), 130 at Naburn on 16th (TED, EBB) , 50 at Castle Howard on 17th August, up to 55 on Strensall Common in November (DW, PB) building up to 90 there on 2nd December (DW) and 40 at Castle Howard on 30th December (BGP, JMP)

An aberrant male on Strensall Common on 25th November had cream/white to head where normally slate blue (PB).

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

A continued increase in numbers with over 35 records.

Five at North Duffield on 4th January, six at Askham Bog on 14th, six at Dringhouses Pond on 25th February and 100 at Stillingfleet on 24th March (OW). Up to 50 recorded in Gilling, Skewsby, Colton, Castle Howard, Hovingham and Peel Park areas (PH).

Singles during January, February and March at the Lower Derwent, Acaster Malbis, Tiln1ire. Buttercrambe, Brockett Wood, Naburn, Anchor Plain and East Moor. Four at Knavesmire Woods on 8th March and a male there on 8th April (EM)

First autumn bird was one at the University on 4th October (CC). Four at Yapham on 10th October (OW), 20 flew west over Wheldrake on 14th (DB) and nine at Yapham on 28th (DW) . One to two birds in November and December at Stillingfleet, Lower Derwent and Rosscarrs. Six at the University on 20th November (TED, EBB) , 50 on Strensall Common on 2nd December (OW), eight at Knavesmire Woods on 15th and 20 at Strensall Common on 16th (JR, MR)

GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris*

200 at Buttercrambe on 21st January (BGP, iMP), up to 50 at Askham Bog during the winter months (DRF) . 70 at Stillingfleet on stubble on 24th March (Ow) , 120 at Strensall Common on 25th November (Dn) , 100 near Riccall on 7th December (PP) and 40 in Buttercrambe Woods on 17th (DW) were maxima counts.

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

Maxima were: up to 70 at Askham Bog during the winter months (DEE), 40 at East Gilling on 23rd March (BT, RT), 20 at Stillingfleet from 19th April to 20th May (DW) and 20 at Rufforth on 3rd August. 20 at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd September, 40 at Castle Howard on 2nd December, 80 there on 9th and 30 in Buttercrambe Woods. on 17th (DW)

Addition to 1974 Report

50 to 100 were on the York University Campus during late August and September (1974 Y.N.U. Report).

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*

Up to 18 in Stearsby area in the winter months (PH). Four at Fulford Ings on 5th and 6th January and one on 7th (ED, Jo). Six at the University Campus on 12th January (Jan), one at Naburn Sewage Works on 14th (MKW), 25 there on 18th (TED, EBB), two at the University cm 13th and three on 20th (TED, EBB). 75 at Strensall Common on 28th January

(DW), three at Acaster Malbis on 18th February (DW) and singles at Fulford Ings on 18th (ED, JG), Askham Bog on 24th (DRF), Anchor Plain on 26th (RAI) and eight at Kirkham on 28th (TMC). One at Escrick Park on 20th October (PP) 30 flew east over Wheldrake on 28th (DB), three at Castle Howard on 19th November (BGP), 85 on 25th and 15 on 30th.

LINNET *Carduelis cannabina*

20 at Buttercrambe on 31st January, 35 at Anchor Plain on 20th February, 70 at Riccall on 22nd March, 40 at Askham Bog on 12th and 17th April. A flock of 80 on Skipwith Common on 17th April, 30 flew south over Stillingfleet on 26th September, 100 at Escrick brick quarry in late September, 130 on Barmby Moor on 13th October, 100 at Grimston Bar on 21st and 200 at Askham Bog on 18th December were maxima gatherings.

TWITE

Three at Strensall Common on 22nd September (DW). Seventh record for the area.

REDPOLL *Carduelis flammea*

Bred at: Fulford Ings, Naburn Sewage Works, Askham Bog, Brockett Wood, Strensall and Brandsby.

Highest counts were: 120 at Askham Bog on 13th January (DW), 75 on Strensall Common on 28th (OW), 75 at Askham Bog on 3rd February (DB) and 40 at Acaster Malbis on 18th (OW). 90 in Stillingfleet Wood from 19th to 21st April reduced to 50 on 27th (DW). 30 over Dringhouses on 16th September, 40 at Castle Howard on 29th (DW), 150 at Strensall Common on 3rd October and up to 60 at Castle Howard in October (DB, DW). 50 at Escrick Woods on 20th October (PP), 180 at Askham Bog on 21st (DW) and up to 40 at Wheldrake Ings during November and December (BGP).

Addition to 1974 Report -

200 were in a mixed flock of 3000 finches on weeds in sugar beet at Brayton from 7th October to year end (PR, from 1974 Y.N.U. Report).

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Three pairs bred at Askham Bog, five in 1978 (Common Bird Census).

HAWFINCH

A substantial increase in records of this very local species

Two flew east over the University Campus on 1st January (JHL), one at Naburn on 23rd February with two on 24th, two on 9th March and one on 21st April (TED, EBB). A pair at Fulford Ings on 28th March (DW).

A bird was observed feeding in a garden at Broadway West, Fulford on 23rd August (DM, GM). One flew south over Heworth, York on 21st October (JHL). Singles at Naburn on 18th November (TED, EBB) and Castle Howard on 25th (Mac).

Addition to 1974 Report

Five at Garrowby on 7th April (SCM from the 1974 Y.N.U. Report).

A pair at Clifton on 2nd May (1974 Y.N.U. Report).

YELLOWHAMMER

Maxima counts were: 3B at Askham Sewage Works on 11th January (DRF), 40 on Tilmire on 21st (MKW) and up to 100 at Naburn from January to March (TED, EBB). 38 on Anchor Plain on 20th February (RAI) and 35 at Eastmoor on 21st (TED, EBB). 20 feeding on dairy meadow at Ryther on 10th May.

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Four pairs bred at Askham Bog (Common Bird Census), 30 pairs at Wheldrake Ings (TED, EBB) and 10 pairs at Naburn Sewage Works. 32 at Anchor Plain on 9th February (RAI), 43 at Naburn on 16th (TED, EBB) and 90 on Strensall Common on 17th (OW).

CORN BUNTING *Miliaria calandra*

Only four winter roost counts: 30 at Copmanthorpe on 11th February (OW), 12 at Anchor Plain on 20th (RAI), 12 at East Moor on 21st and nine at Naburn on 24th (TED, EBB).

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

B. Bishop	A. Malone
E.B. Blake	P. March
D. Braithwaite	E. Markham
T.D. Charlton	R. Merritt
B. Caffrey	T.P. Milsom
P.W.G. Chilman	D. Morritt
P. Chilton	G. Morritt .
P.M. Clegg	F.W. Oates
J. Cobb	J.M. Paulson (JMPa)
T.I. Corbett	B.G. Pepper
G. Craine	J.M. Pepper
B.J. Davies	P. Piringer
T.E. Dixon	M. Pirojek
A. Done	A.R. Potter
D. Fennell	J. Rawcliffe
F. Flintoft	M. Rawcliffe
D.R. Ford	P. Reid
M.C. Gibson	M. Richardson
J. Green	G. Smith
V. Green	P. Stead
Dr. R.L. Gulliver	M. Stronach
R. Hardcastle	R. Thomas
S. Harvey	G. Thomas
P. Hollindale (PHo)	B. Thompson
P. Hutchineon	P. Thompson
R.A. Innes	R. Thompson
B. Johnson	M.K. Ward
Dr. J.H. Lawton	R. Ward-Smith
R. Lowe	D. Wardby
S.C. Madge	M. Weeden
S. Maitland	H.J. Whitehead