

YORK ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB - REPORT 1981

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ORNITHOLOGICAL HIGHLIGHTS OF 1981

1981 proved to be the most remarkable year since publication of this report began, both for its rarities and for the total number of species recorded. Local watchers were rewarded for the many hours spent in the field and were reminded that one does not need to travel far for good birds.

A total of 185 species and eight sub-species were recorded during the year. This was the highest number for any single year since the York Ornithological Club area was designated in 1966. No less than eleven species were new to the area - Purple Heron, Bean Goose, Brent Goose, Ring-necked Duck, Ruddy Duck, Golden Pheasant, Kentish Plover, Great Skua, Bee-eater, Rock Pipit and Red-backed Shrike.

The year began with the occurrence of the now regular limping Glaucous Gull in the Lower Derwent on New Year's Day. A Great Grey Shrike arrived at the York University campus and remained in the area until 22nd March. Without doubt the bird of the month was a Purple Heron at Wheldrake Ings. Unfortunately it was found dead several weeks later. Other notable records were of a Merlin, Hen Harrier and Wax-wing, and a peak count of 2,000 Golden Plover in the Lower Derwent towards the month end.

February was quiet but produced a good count of 23 Barnacle Geese at Castle Howard.

A Hen Harrier was still present in early March and another Great Grey Shrike was found. A Grey Phalarope arrived at Hheldrake Ings on the 15th and was followed by a Ruddy Duck on the 22nd.

The 1st April saw a party of six Kittiwakes on the Lower Derwent and an early Cuckoo was heard on the 4th. Several good birds followed soon afterwards - Garganey, Mandarin, Ring-necked Duck, Brent Goose, Marsh Harrier, Quail, Bar-tailed and Black-tailed Godwits and Ring Ouzel. Heavy rain, snow and easterly gales towards the end of the month brought Little Gulls, Arctic Terns and the first record of a Great Skua.

Early May was still influenced by the severe weather of the previous month. During the first week strong passage was evident when an unprecedented 53 Arctic Terns, 14 Common Terns, six Black Terns, five Cormorants and two Turnstones passed through. May is always one of the best months and this year was no exception. The wide variety of species included two new to the area - Kentish Plover and Bee-eater. A Marsh Harrier and Little Gull were observed again and the Mandarin re-appeared at Wheldrake Ings. Other arrivals were Osprey, Buzzard, Wood Sandpiper, Grey Plover, Ringed Plover, Spotted Redshank, Temminck's Stint, Bearded Tit and Corncrake.

Interesting birds continued into June with a Nightingale singing on the 4th, followed by Hobby, Osprey, Buzzard, Goshawk and Pied Flycatcher during the next two weeks. A Quail was heard on the 18th and a Little Tern stopped to feed at Wheldrake Ings on the 26th.

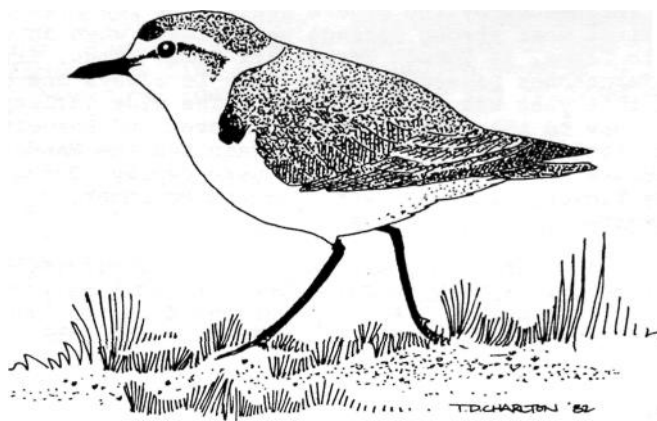
July and August were quieter and could only produce a few of the previous recorded species - Hobby, Hen Harrier, Short-eared Owl, Goshawk, Wood Sandpiper, Spotted Redshank, Little Gull, Black tern and Quail.

September began interestingly with the discovery of a Wryneck at Copmanthorpe on the 1st and. an immature Red-backed Shrike at the University the following day and an adult male put in a brief appearance at Heworth Golf Course five days later. A Little Stint and another Hobby also passed through during the same period.

A Shag at Castle Howard on 8th October was the first live record for the area - the only other was of a dead specimen at Naburn in 1979. Dringhouses Pond attracted a Little Gull for four days to the 14th and a Jack Snipe was found dead in a garden at Stamford Bridge the following day. The only other notable record of the month was a party of 12 Bearded Tits on the 18th.

The late months are rarely exciting but this year was against the trend. November brought four new birds, Bean Goose, Green-winged Teal, Ferruginous Duck and Rock Pipit, three of them in the first week. After the initial excitement the remainder of the month still proved interesting with records of Red-necked Grebe, Buzzard, Goshawk and Waxwing.

The interest continued during December with a well-watched Waxwing feeding outside the Rowntree Mackintosh factory from the 5th to the 8th, and a Smew arriving on Castle Howard lake on the 8th. A



Bittern was seen near Wheldrake village on the 12th, two Short-eared Owls passed over Fulford Golf Course on the 18th, and a Crossbill was seen on Allerthorpe Common and a Red-breasted Merganser in the Lower Derwent on the same day, the 29th.

Several of the records mentioned above are subject to acceptance by the

Yorkshire Naturalists' Union Reports Committee.

Details of all species mentioned above can be found in the classified list.

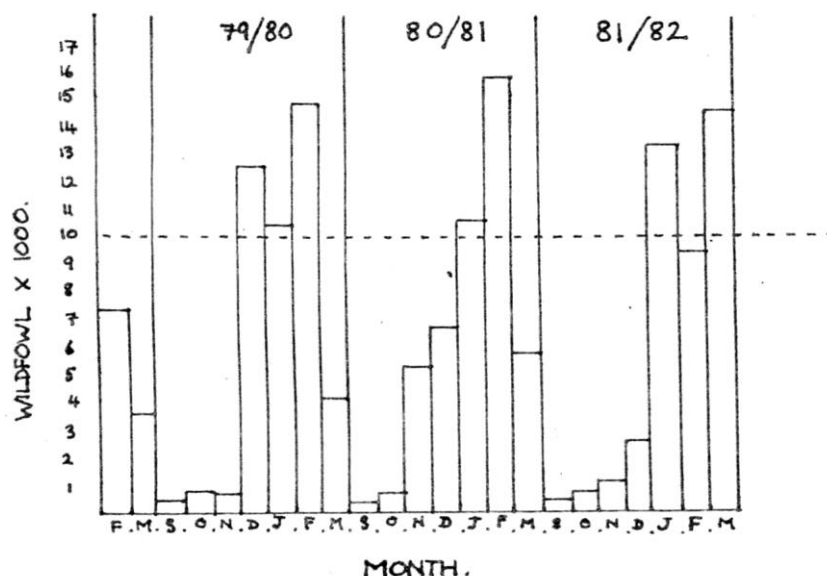
BRIAN G. PEPPER
Recorder.

THE LOWER DERWENT VALLEY : AN INTERNATIONALLY
IMPORTANT WETLAND

Since February 1979 the York Ornithological Club has undertaken a monthly wildfowl count between September and March, of the whole Lower Derwent Valley from Wheldrake to Bubwith for the Wildfowl Trust. The results have been most interesting and shown that more wildfowl use the valley than had been thought prior to the advent of these counts. They have also developed Wildfowl Trust and R.S.P.B. awareness of the importance of the site and provided essential data that was previously scant. It is fully intended to continue these counts into the foreseeable future.

Graph showing monthly counts of wildfowl in the Lower Derwent

NB dotted line = qualifying figure for an internationally important site



In the first full set of winter counts (1979/80, see graph 1) the maximum number of wildfowl using the Lower Derwent was 14,700 in February. This was the fourth largest count for an inland site in the British Isles for that winter and ranked the Lower Derwent sixteenth for numbers of wildfowl in the whole of the British Isles, coastal, estuarine and inland inclusive. The following February the Derwent ings land held 14,845 wildfowl, the second largest inland count and the thirteenth largest in the whole of the British Isles. Both these counts ensured that the Lower Derwent was listed amongst those sites deemed 'Internationally Important' by the International Waterfowl Research Bureau (I.W.R.B.) which determined the criteria

for an internationally important wetland at the Conference on the Conservation of Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat", at Cagliari, Italy in November 1980.

The criteria are as follows:

"A wetland is considered INTERNATIONALLY IMPORTANT if it:

- a) regularly supports either 10,000 duck, geese and swans;
or 10,000 coots; or 20,000 waders.
- b) regularly supports 1% of the individuals in a population
of one species or subspecies of waterfowl.
- c) regularly supports 1% of the breeding pairs in a population
of one species or subspecies of waterfowl.

N.B. "regularly" should be taken as meaning that the average maximum for the most recent FIVE seasons exceeds the qualifying level for the species in question.
(Salmon D.G. 1981, *"Wildfowl and Wader Counts 1980-1981"*
The Wildfowl Trust).

Table one shows the qualifying number for a species wintering or on passage in one wetland to make it nationally or internationally important in accordance with the rubric laid down by the I.W.R.B.

TABLE 1

	NATIONALLY IMPORTANT (1% of G.B. population only)	INTERNATIONALLY IMPORTANT (1% of N.W. European Population)
Mute Swan	180	1,200
Bewick's Swan	50*	120
Whooper Swan	50*	100*
Shelduck	600	1,250
Wigeon	2,000	5,000
Gadwall	50*	550
Teal	1,000	2,000
Mallard	3,000	10,000 ^
Pintail	200	750
Shoveler	60	1,000
Pochard	350	2,500
Tufted Duck	450	5,000
Goldeneye	100	2,000

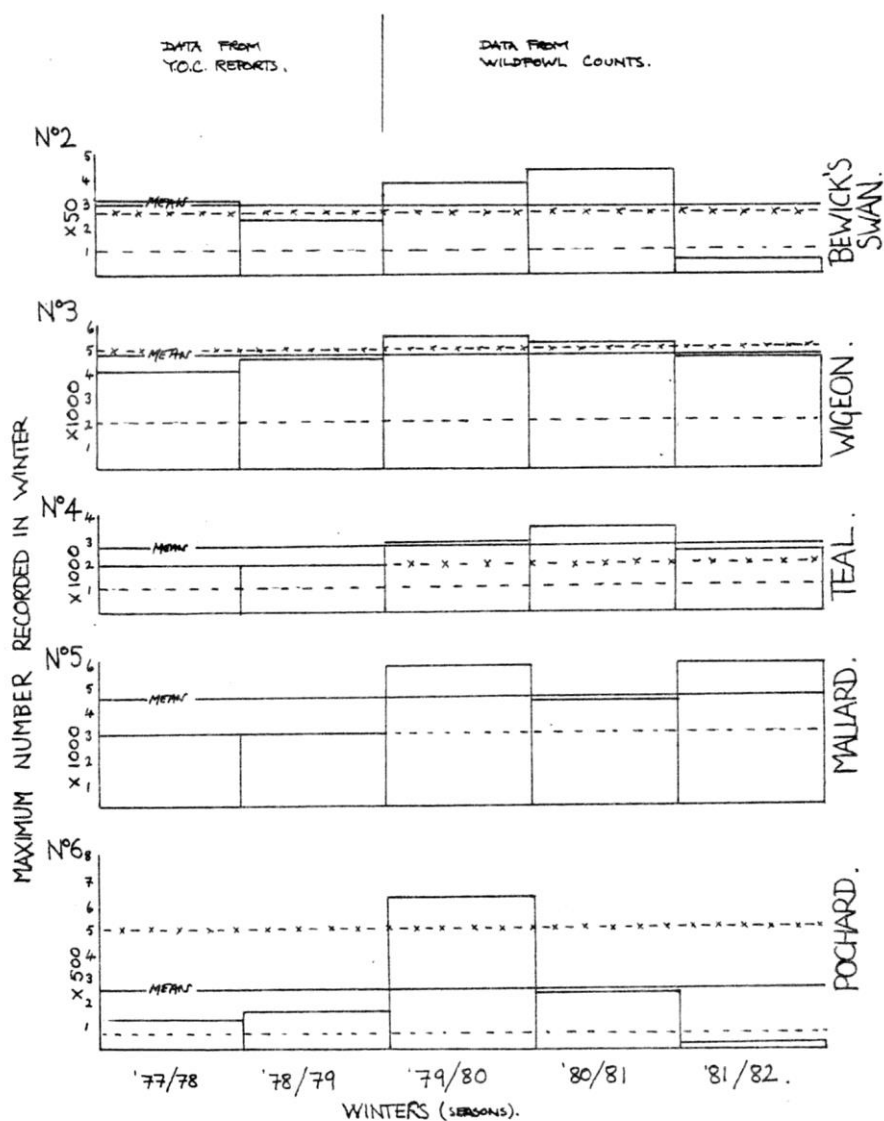
= Maximum number required, but represents less than 1% of population = Minimum number permissible, but represents over 1% of population.

(Scott 1980, in Salmon D.G. 1981).

The following histograms illustrate the wildfowl maxima in the Lower Derwent Valley for the five most recent winters showing the mean for those winters and the qualifying levels for international and national importance for five selected species.

Graphs showing the maximum numbers of species recorded in the five most recent winters.

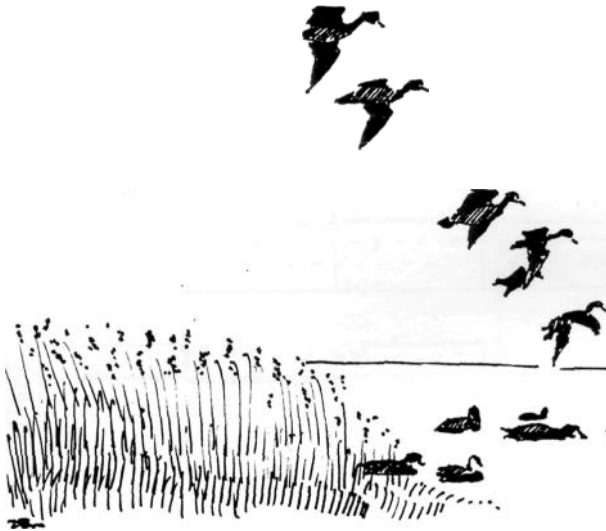
—X—X—X—X— = QUALIFYING MAX. NO. FOR THE FIVE MOST RECENT SEASONS FOR INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE.
 - - - - - = QUALIFYING MAX. NO. FOR THE FIVE MOST RECENT SEASONS FOR NATIONAL IMPORTANCE.
 —MEAN— = THE AVERAGE MAX. NO. FOR THE FIVE MOST RECENT SEASONS.



In conclusion it can be seen from the data shown on histograms 2 and 4 that the Lower Derwent is an INTERNATIONALLY IMPORTANT site for both Bewick's Swan, *Cygnus columbianus*, and Teal, *Anas crecca*, within criteria 'b' as determined by the I.W.R.B. It is clear also that (using Scott's figures) the Lower Derwent is generally accepted as being a NATIONALLY IMPORTANT site for Wigeon, *Anas penelope*, Mallard, *Anas platyrhynchos*, and Pochard, *Aythya ferina*. From the data shown in graph 1 it is probable that the site will qualify as being INTERNATIONALLY IMPORTANT within criteria 'a' as determined by the I.W.R.B. when a full five seasons of wildfowl count data is available.

In the light of this it is an important responsibility that this club holds to ensure that land and river usage (that may effect a change in the habitat of the Lower Derwent Valley) are closely monitored and to stress the importance of the whole of this insland as a refuge for wildfowl at every available opportunity in an attempt to safeguard its future.

DAVE BRAITHWAITE.



THE STATUS OF WADERS IN THE YORK AREA.

PART 1. OYSTERCATCHER TO DUNLIN

The perceived status of birds is not static but changes, both in reality, due to changes in behaviour, wintering sites, breeding range, etc. and also apparently, due to increased observer coverage and increased awareness of the possible occurrence of uncommon species. This is certainly true for the wader species. Since the mid 1970's new species have begun to winter regularly and to colonise the area as breeding birds. The increase in the number of active birdwatchers locally and the concentration of much of this effort in the Lower Derwent has revealed higher numbers of waders at all times of year, than hitherto suspected.

The following series of articles is intended to document the changing status of waders in the York area since the Y.O.C. began recording in 1966.

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*

Prior to 1976 a rather scarce visitor in small numbers (though 20 N.E. over York 18th August 1973) on spring and autumn passage, mainly in the Lower Derwent, and odd summer records from the Ouse above York.

One winter record - Bubwith 24th January 1971. Has bred annually since 1976 when pairs nested at Youlton and near Alne on the River Kyle, a pair summered at Benningborough on the upper Ouse and passage numbers increased dramatically. Has increased since with seven or eight pairs annually on the Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal. One or two pairs noted occasionally from the Ouse above and below York, birds may nest here annually, as these sites are rather under watched. Two pairs bred near Malton, a new site, in 1981.

Since becoming established as a breeding bird the first arrival date has been earlier :- pre - 1976 - c. mid April; average arrival 1976-81 - 2nd March (extremes 16th February - 8th March). Once birds are incubating they become rather elusive. Nest sites tend to be in arable fields adjacent to the Ings land which is used for feeding and loafing. Breeding sites are usually vacated by mid July to early August, although passage birds are usually seen after this time - latest record 26th October.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*

Has bred annually since 1972 prior to which the species was a scarce spring/autumn passage migrant. The species is still apparently expanding as a breeding bird in the area with one pair from 1972-77, three pairs in 1978, pairs at six sites in 1979, at five sites in 1980, and eight pairs at seven sites in 1981. Sites used have included runway edges, spoil heaps, rubbish tips, mineral extraction sites, dried mud at water margins and ploughed fields.

The average arrival date is 13th April (extremes 13th March - 28th April). Largest spring flock six at Aughton on 28th April 1969.

Autumn passage is most apparent in the Lower Derwent where birds pass through mainly from mid July to late August - maximum nine at Wheldrake Ings on 31st July 1978. The latest bird recorded being one at Naburn S.W. on 4th October 1968.

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

Prior to 1974 a rather irregular spring and autumn passage migrant not recorded in every year.

Recorded mainly from Lower Derwent and Naburn S.W. usually in low single figures, however a record of 25 in the Lower Derwent on 25th April 1970 was an indication of things to come.

Since 1974 records have increased dramatically viz. 1966-73 98 bird days; 1974-81 442 bird days.

The most striking feature of Ringed Plover passage is the preponderance of spring records (see histogram below) and also the marked increase in spring over autumn records since the mid-seventies, as illustrated in the table below.

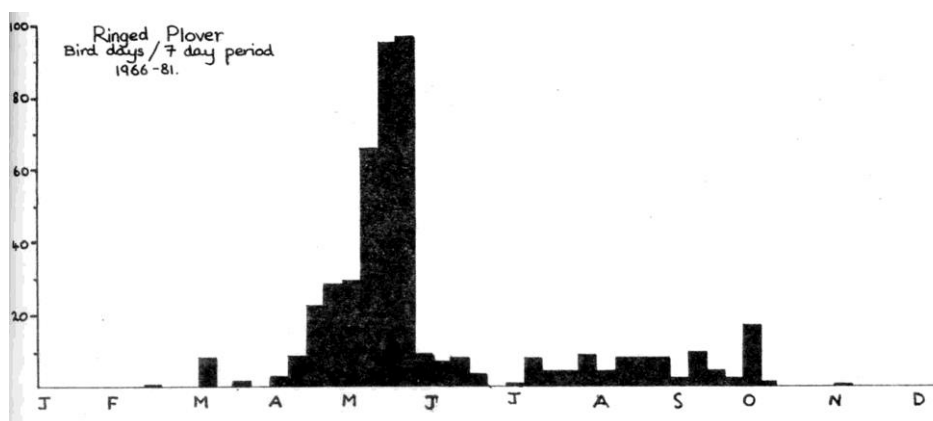
Years	Spring	Autumn	Ratio
	Bird Days		Spring : Autumn
1966-81	433	97	4.46 : 1
1966-73	63	35	1.80 : 1
1974-81	380	62	6.13: 1

The vast majority of recent records have been from the Lower Derwent Ings where birds can apparently feed quite efficiently on the pasture land. Recent peaks have been 20 at Bubwith Ings on 19th May 1979 and up to 28 at North Duffield Carrs in late May 1981. Spring passage usually starts in mid April and autumn passage is usually over by late September - extreme dates being 18th February 1980 and 29th October 1971.

Ringed Plovers have recently colonised inland sites in Britain and the upsurge in spring records has led to recent suggestions that the Lower Derwent is on the brink of being colonised.

In 1981 a pair held territory at a site in the Lower Derwent but no nest was found.

Charadrius Plovers during the summer months should be scrutinised carefully from now on, they need not be Little Ringed Plovers.



KENTISH PLOVER *Charadrius alexandrinus*

One record only, of a female at North Duffield Carrs on 22nd May 1981.

DOTTEREL *Charadrius morinellus*

Two records only. Three seen on Strensall Common on 15th and 16th May 1970 and one in a beet field at Cawood on 25th May 1971.

GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

Winters in large numbers in the southern part of the area (see map) , no significant counts have been noted from the northern six 10 km squares of the area. The major wintering areas are the Ouse below York/Wharfe - Ouse confluence, and the Lower Derwent between Wheldrake and Brighton. Other important areas are the Upper Ouse/Nidd - Ore confluence and two newly discovered sites: the foot of the Wolds north of Pocklington and the ancient carr lands north of Howden. The three latter areas may be more important than at present realised as they are seldom visited. Conservative estimates of mid-winter numbers are 2,500 at the two major sites and 1,000 at the remaining three, giving c. 8,000 birds in total. This is considerably more than were counted for the BTO Golden Plover survey in 1977-78 (Fuller and Lloyd 1981), reflecting increased observer coverage and increased flock counting. The southern Vale of York is probably the most important inland wintering area for Golden Plovers in Britain. More co-ordinated counts are urgently needed to confirm this.

Large flocks may be seen in most months, The maximum recorded monthly flock counts are as follows:

J	F	M	A	M.	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
2000	2500	2350	1400	1200	135	700	1000	800	1500	2100	3000

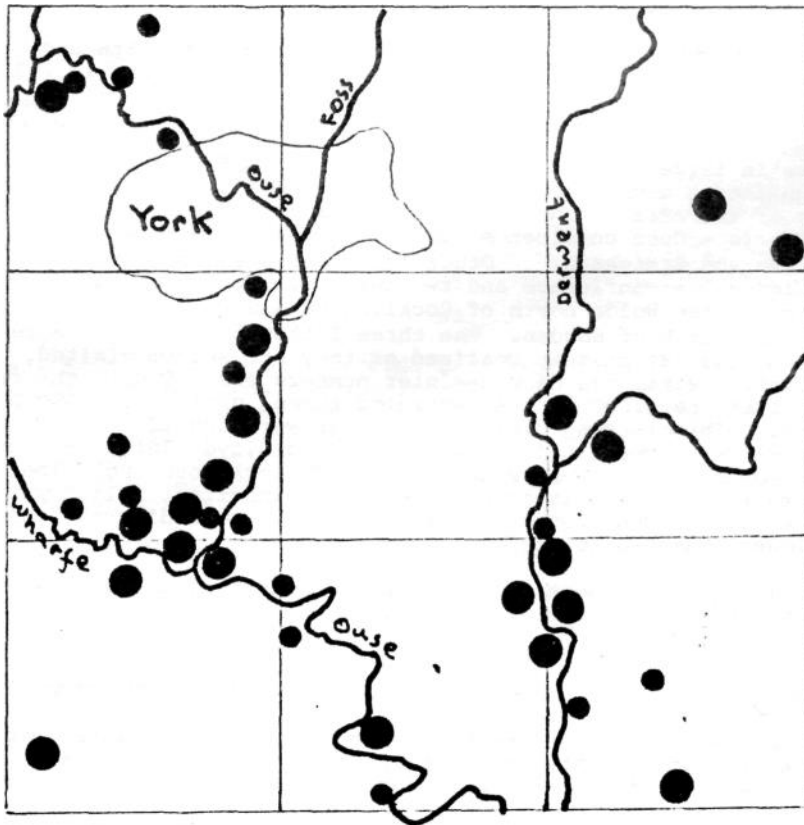
Peak numbers occur from December to February followed usually by a decline late in February/March as wintering birds move back. The racial identity of these birds is not known but they may be nominate birds from southern Scandinavia. Numbers increase again in April as passage birds of the race *altifrons* move through, on passage to Northern Scandinavia and possibly Iceland. Most birds have left by late April/early May although 1200 were at Appleton Roebuck on 5th May 1979. The period between passages is short, the latest spring record being 12th June 1973 and the earliest autumn record is 23rd June 1978. Autumn passage usually begins in early/mid July and continues until mid October, with flocks resting for a day or two and then moving on. Wintering flocks begin to build from mid October and peak in December to January.

As noted by Fuller and Youngman (1979) habitat utilisation varies, with spring passage flocks feeding mainly in winter wheat and autumn passage and wintering flocks usually feeding on permanent grasslands.

Golden Plover Flocks 1966-81

Small circle = 250-1000

Large circle = 1000+



GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

Before 1976 only two records, singles at Aughton on 28th May 1966 and Bubwith on 6th December 1970. Has been recorded annually since 1976. A pattern of occurrence has yet to be established as the table of monthly distribution of records shows.

	J	F	M	M	J	A	O	N	D
RECORDS	3	2	1			1	4	3	1
BIRD DAYS	4	7	1	4	2	2	5	10	1

6 7

There is some suggestion of late spring and late autumn passage and small numbers of wandering winter individuals. With the exception of three at Anchor Plain on 27th May 1981, all records have been from the Lower Derwent Ings. Most birds between October and April have been associated with Golden Plover flocks. See *British Birds*, Vol. 75 p. 127.

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

A ubiquitous breeder, as might be expected in a heavily farmed area such as the Vale of York.

Large flocks of birds may be encountered in most months as illustrated by the following table of maximum recorded monthly flock counts.

J	F	M	A	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
4000	3000	2000	120	1500	2000	1100	600	2000	4000	7000

* excluding March 1980 count (q.v.)

The main areas where flocks occur are similar to those for Golden Plover with by far the largest numbers recorded in the Lower Derwent. Peak counts occur between November and February with recent counts being 7500 on 9th December 1979, 4000 on 27th November 1980 and 4000 on 24th January 1981 all in Lower Derwent, these being consistently among the highest counts in Yorkshire. Numbers usually fall rapidly from early March and all flocks have dispersed by early April. Small flocks present in late March/early April are presumably northern breeding birds, local birds are by this time on eggs.

On the night of 8th/9th March 1980 an enormous and unprecedented fall of Lapwings and smaller numbers of other waders occurred in the Lower Derwent. On the 9th a minimum of 17,000 Lapwings were on the Ings land between Wheldrake and Bubwith with probably several thousand more birds north and south of this area. Within a week only 1000 remained. This is the largest number of Lapwings over recorded in Yorkshire and illustrates the importance of the Lower Derwent Ings as a staging post for migrant birds.

The first post-breeding flocks usually occur in early June and peak in late July/early August. These birds then disperse quickly so that numbers are often very low during September. Early October sees the first incoming northern wintering birds and flocks then build up to the mid-winter peak.

Co-ordinated counts are needed to determine the true numbers of Lapwings in the York area, and indeed in Britain as a whole.

It is possible that the Lower Derwent holds nationally important winter numbers of this species.

KNOT *Calidris canutus*

A scarce visitor, more regular of late, a pattern of occurrence has yet to emerge. Records as follows:

1966 Two on flood water on Elvington Airfield on 23rd January
 1970 One at North Duffield Carrs on 25th April
 1975 10 at Wheldrake Ings on 7th March
 1978 One at Wheldrake Ings on 11th September
 1979 Singles at Wheldrake Ings on 9th, 12th and 19th
 September
 with two on 11th and 15th
 1980 One at Bubwith on 23rd March.

SANDERLING *Calidris alba*

Three records only. One at North Duffield Carrs on 24th April 1977, one at Wheldrake Ings on 4th September 1978, two at North Duffield Carrs on 7th May 1979.

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*

Only one record prior to 1975 but recorded annually since. One spring record of a single at Bubwith on 18th April 1979. Seven autumn records (one from Naburn S.W., one from Castle Howard, rest in Lower Derwent), of one to six birds between 20th July and 4th November. Additionally a stint sp at Aughton on 12th February 1980 was probably this species.

TEMMINCK'S STINT *Calidris terminckii*

Two definite records. One at Bank Island, near Wheldrake Ings on 30th August 1980 and one at Aughton and North Duffield Carrs on 31st May 1981. In addition, Stints thought to have been this species were two at North Duffield on 20th May 1981 and one at Aughton Ings on 30th May 1981.

PECTORAL SANDPIPER *Calidris melanotos*

One at Ross Carrs, Selby, on 6th August 1976 is the only nearctic wader recorded so far.

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea*

A scarce autumn migrant with records as follows:

One at Naburn S.W. from 14th to 20th September 1967
One at Wheldrake Ings on 11th September 1978
One at Wheldrake Ings on 27th and 28th October with two from 29th to 3rd November 1979.
Two at Wheldrake Ings on 14th August 1980

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*

Large flocks of Dunlin may be encountered in the Lower Derwent between November and May as the table of maximum recorded monthly flock counts shows:

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
400	535	700	350	130	2	3	10	13	6	200	280

Peak counts usually occur in January/February and March/April with often an apparent decline in numbers between mid February and mid March. Two distinct populations of birds may be involved. Summer plumage birds can be racially identified in the field under suitable conditions. (Prater, Marchant and Vuorinen, 1977). Observers are urged to attempt this and also to retain any corpses found for examination.

The only indication of the racial identity of the Lower Derwent birds is a record of two small full summer plumage birds in a flock of larger winter plumage birds on 10th April 1979. These two may have been British breeding birds. It is possible that there is a wintering population of British birds and a spring passage of northern birds. More work is needed. The majority of birds have left by mid May with stragglers present occasionally to month end. Two birds on 12th and 16th June 1979 may have been late spring or early autumn birds. Autumn passage usually begins in mid July (extremes 2nd July - 22nd August) with single figures present regularly until November when the wintering birds begin to move in.

Smaller numbers (up to 130) have been noted occasionally from the Bumper Castle floods, York and the Ouse below York.

The wintering population in the Lower Derwent is probably the second largest inland population in Britain, exceeded only by those on the Somerset Levels.

Tim Dixon

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THE Y.O.C. TETRAD BREEDING BIRD ATLAS

At the Annual General Meeting of the York Ornithological Club in 1981, it was agreed that the club should carry out a tetrad breeding bird atlas of the recording area, the period of the survey being 1982 to 1986. The recording area for the atlas, at 150,000 hectares, is comparable with two published county atlases, those of Bedfordshire (113,600 ha) and Hertfordshire (163,415 ha) and is large enough to be of more than local significance.

The Y.O.C. recording area comprises mainly the flood plain of the rivers Ouse and Derwent, but also the relatively underwatched Howardian Hills (including a small part of the North Yorkshire Moors National Park) and the western edge of the Wolds. After 16 years of recording, the avifauna of these latter areas is still little known, and for the area as a whole our knowledge of the breeding distributions of several species, (Marsh Tit, Lesser Whitethroat and Barn Owl, to name but three) is less than complete.

The immediate result of the atlas will therefore be to introduce workers to hitherto relatively underwatched territory and to produce a comprehensive survey of the breeding distributions of all our breeding species. Some surprises are certainly in store. However, the atlas project is important for other reasons also. Bird distributions are not unchanging. One of the major causes of change is man's activities, so it is important to have an accurate record of present-day distributions. The completed atlas will therefore be an important conservation document and also an invaluable baseline for future studies.

As you read this, the first seasons fieldwork has been completed. The success of the project depends on as many field workers as possible participating in it. If you have not helped in 1982 please help in 1983, the field work is not difficult and is not only enjoyable but also a contribution to bird conservation.

NIGHTJAR SURVEY

1981 saw the B.T.O. co-ordinating a national survey of Britain's breeding population of the Nightjar. Several Y.O.C. members, armed with tape lures took part in field work. All past and present breeding sites and other apparently suitable sites were visited at least twice during the breeding season.

Nightjars inhabit two main habitat types in lowland Britain - conifer afforestation and dry lowland heath.

In the York area nightjars have bred in the past in coniferous areas at Bishop Wood, near Cawood and Black Woods, Wheldrake. With the maturation of the timber these woods were deserted in 1967 and 1972 respectively. No nightjars were recorded at these sites during 1981. However at Black Woods a large area of mature Scots Pine was clear felled in early 1982 and if replanted may provide suitable conditions again in the near future. A similar, smaller area has also been felled in Bishop Wood.

The three major areas of lowland heath in the York area - Skipwith, Strensall and Allerthorpe Commons all held nightjars in 1981.

Skipwith - possibly the most widely visited site in Yorkshire held four pairs. An average showing.

Strensall - Nightjars had bred here in the past but the area was thought to be long deserted. However recently received information show that birds bred here in 1979 and 1980. (See addendum) In 1981 three pairs were located.

Allerthorpe - A seldom visited area where birds had been noted on and off in the past. Surprisingly five singing males were found at this site.

The value of the survey was thus amply illustrated by the total of 12 churring males detected. The largest number ever recorded in the York area, (see table below).

CHURRING MALE NIGHTJARS IN Y.O.C. AREA 1966- 81 Skipwith

Churring male Nightjars in YOC area 1966-81						
	<u>Skipwith</u>	<u>Strensall</u>	<u>Allerthorpe</u>	<u>Black Woods</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>1966</u>	<u>5+</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3+</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>8+</u>
<u>1967</u>	<u>5+</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>7+</u>
<u>1968</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>1969</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>1970</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>1971</u>	<u>Y</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>5+</u>
<u>1972</u>	<u>Y</u>	<u>?</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2+</u>
<u>1973</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>1974</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>1975</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>1976</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>4</u>

1977	5	-	1	-	-	6
1978	5	-	-	-	-	5
1979	3	3	1	-	-	7
1980	3	1	-	-	-	4
1981	4	3	5	-	-	12

Postscript

On 3rd May 1982 Skipwith Common was devastated by a fire which burnt sporadically for four days before dying out. Several hundred acres of the common were affected and the two major Nightjar nesting areas were completely destroyed. The immediate effect of this on the Nightjar population remains to be seen. However the situation is not without promise. Several very large areas have been razed to the ground and if these are successfully recolonised by heather the amount of suitable nesting habitat may have increased twofold in a few years time.

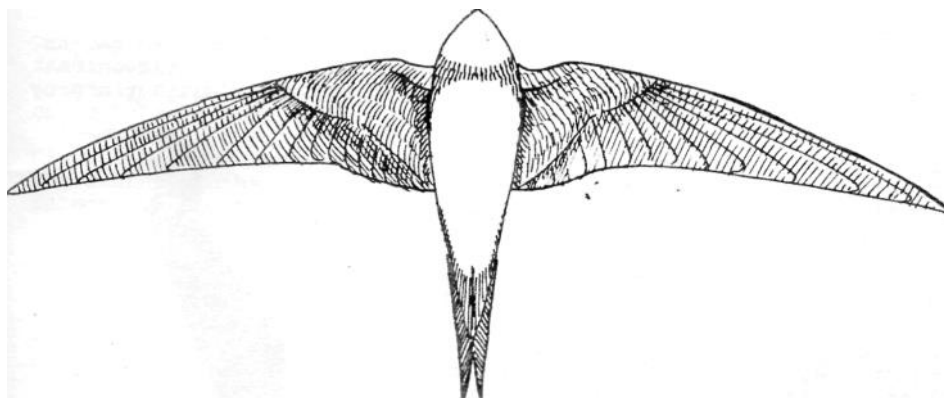
ABERRANT SWIFT AT NEWTON MASK

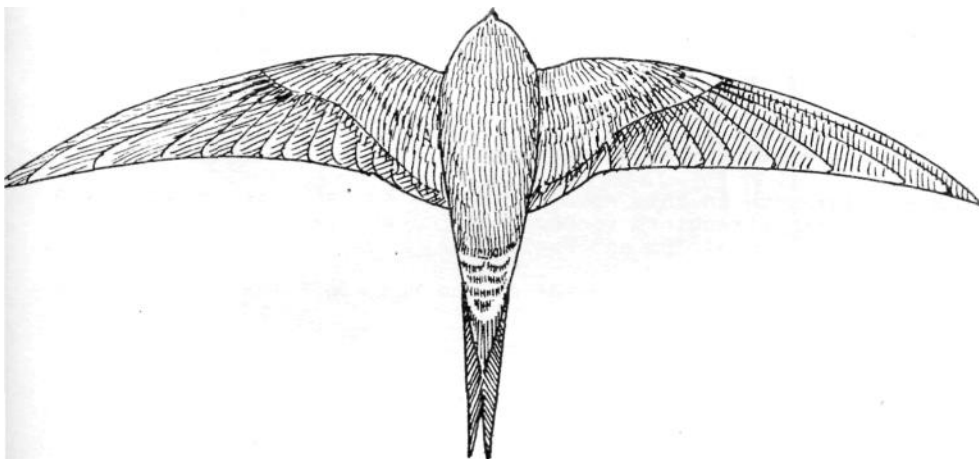
On 8th June 1981 at 2000 hrs. T. and V. Weston were watching a flock of c.75 Swifts *Apus opus* hawking over a riverside hay meadow near Newton-on-Derwent when they noticed a bird superficially resembling an Alpine Swift, *Apus melba* accompanying them. The underparts showed an identical plumage pattern to Alpine Swift with white chin and throat, dark upper-breast band, white lower breast and belly and dark undertail. The upperparts were similar to Swift but the back from nape to uppertail coverts was distinctly flecked and mottled with white.

The bird was identical in size to the other Swifts and flew in the same manner. The bird was watched for 20 minutes in good light with 10 x 40 Zeiss at ranges down to two metres.

Partial albino Swifts have been previously noted only twice in Britain (British Birds 63 : 384 ; 71 :222) and this is the first such bird recorded in the York area. The problem this bird would have caused had it flown overhead on its own are obvious.

The accompanying line drawings have been redrawn by D. Braithwaite from field sketches taken at the time by T. Weston.





PURPLE HERON *Ardea purpurea* AT WHELDRAKE

INGS

At 1430 hours on 4th January 1981 T. Barker and B. Bishop flushed a small Heron from the river bank at Wheldrake Ings, the bird flew onto the roadside and then into a field bordering Mattie Brown's covert. They were joined by T.M. Clegg and P. Marsh. The following description is drawn from the field notes of all four observers.

Size and Structure.

The bird was seen flying in direct comparison with a Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* also in flight.

It appeared smaller and of slighter build, the wings narrower, bill narrower. Feet distinctly long and twiglike. Flight feeble and slow in comparison with Grey Heron.

Plumage: Head and neck, breast and belly - reddish sandy brown (T.B.) russet (B.B.), brownish chestnut (T.M.C.), dark reddish brown (P.M.), with black streaking. Appeared blacker towards belly. Black stripe from forehead over crown to nape. Upper parts very dark (T.B.), almost black (B.B.), blackish (T.M.C.). Primaries and secondaries black, wing coverts dark grey.

Bare parts: Eye yellow, bill pale (T.B.), orangish (B.B.), yellow (T.M.C.), paler than Grey Heron (P.M.).

All observers commented on the hunched attitude of the bird on the ground. T.B. noted that the plumage was straggly and untidy. At one point the bird stalked and then lunged unsuccessfully at a Grey Squirrel *Sciurus carolinensis*.

The bird was photographed in fading light by B.B. and although very little plumage detail could be seen, the structure of the bird was consistent with that noted above. On 21st February 1981 the highly decomposed body of a Purple Heron was found in a dyke c. \ mile from Mattie Browns covert, unfortunately none of the plumage was preserved. However, the skeleton was retained by the Environmental Archaeology unit at the University of York and the bill sheaths by T.E. Dixon.

This is the first record of this species in the Y.O.C. recording area and a most unexpected date.

Autumn migration in this species "begins August, lasting well into October, with stragglers to December; found exceptionally in midwinter north to Belgium and England".



GREEN WINGED TEAL AT WHELDRAKE INGS

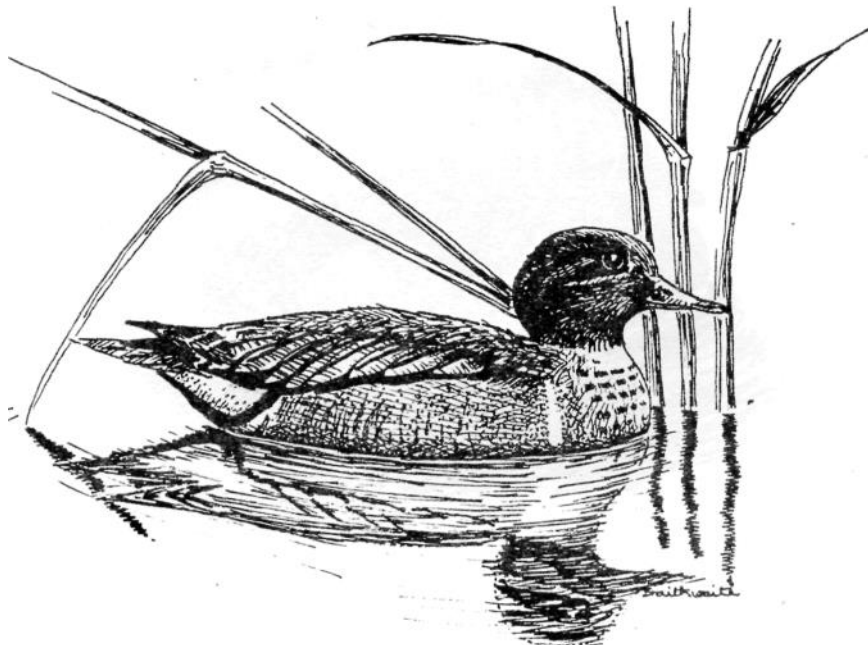
On the morning of 1st November 1981, T. Barker located a drake Teal of the North American subspecies *Anas crecca carolinensis*, known colloquially as Green Winged Teal, feeding with a party of nominate Teal on the pool at Wheldrake Ings. The bird was watched for one hour following which E.B. Blake and T.E. Dixon were contacted. All three observers then watched the bird in the afternoon. T. Barker relocated the bird on the morning of the 4th November but it was not seen subsequently.

Description: The bird appeared identical in size and structure to nominate Teal. The following plumage differences were noted.

1. An obvious white stripe from level with and just anterior to carpal joint down at least as far as water's surface. This stripe could be seen to be slightly curved and narrower at bottom. At greater range it appeared vertical and of uniform width.
2. No horizontal scapular stripe which was easily visible on nominate Teal at greater range than this bird.
3. The cream border to the green face patch was absent except for a small (1-2 cm) patch below each eye.

The bird was otherwise identical to drake nominate Teal. When feeding the bird "up-ended" more frequently and seemed to prefer slightly deeper water than nominate birds. During "up-ending" it could be seen that the bird carried no rings.

Given the large number of Teal present in the Lower Derwent during the winter months it is possible that this race is occurring undetected. Flocks of Teal would repay close scrutiny in the future.



RING-NECKED DUCK *Aythya collaris* AT WHELDRAKE INGS

On 14th April 1981, T. Barker located a drake Ring-necked Duck on the pool at Wheldrake Ings. The bird remained until 23rd April and was seen by several observers. The following description is drawn from the field notes of D. Braithwaite and T.E. Dixon.

A typical black and white *Aythya* species, showing dove grey flanks with a white upwards anterior extension, banded bill, and stiff tail reminiscent of Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*.

Size and shape: Body fractionally shorter than male Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula* in direct comparison. Sat very slightly lower in the water than male Tufted Duck, this combined with seemingly shorter neck gave a slightly hunched appearance at times. The tail was often held cocked in the manner of Ruddy Duck. The peaked, triangular head shape was very distinctive. -

Plumage: Upper parts, breast, tail and undertail black. Glossed blue/green on head. Sides and flanks dove grey with white border. Distinctive, white vertical extension of flanks just in front of carpal joint. Pale grey wing stripe in flight.

Bare Parts: Iris orange-yellow. Bill very distinct, greyish blue with white band at base and second white band behind black nail.

When swimming tail normally held cocked, also seen occasionally swimming and moving head and neck backwards and forwards with tail depressed. Often seen to head throw in manner of Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*.

This is the first record of this North American duck in the Y.O.C. recording area, and perhaps not unexpected in view of the recent increase in records nationally.



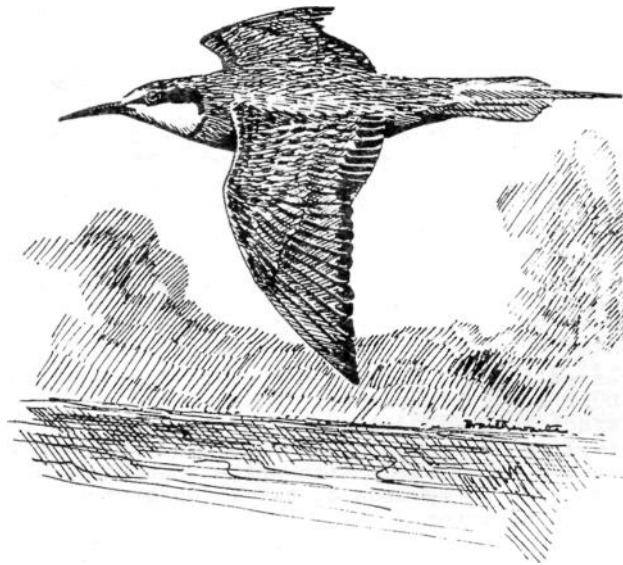
BEE-EATER *Merops apiaster* AT WHELDRAKE INGS

At 1846 hrs. on 23rd May, G. Smith was watching large numbers of Swifts *Apus apus* feeding over the southern end of the reserve, when he became aware of a monotonous call to the north and apparently approaching. The loud, regular chattering call - likened to "PRR-RK" - became louder and a bird came into view c. 100 yds. upstream. Its sharp angular silhouette and long decurved bill were immediately apparent. The bird passed, at its closest, within 30 yds, when with the sun from behind him, the following plumage details were noted. Underparts - iridescent blue, throat - bright yellow, upper parts multicoloured brown, yellow and green.

The bird flew c. 12 feet from the river surface calling continually and was watched until out of sight c. 300 yds downstream.

The rather elegant flight action was characteristic - slightly undulating with occasional closed wings, reminiscent of a woodpecker, wavering slightly from side to side.

The central tail feathers, while noticeable, were not as long and prominent as expected. The weather had been anticyclonic, with light south-easterlies and clear sunny skies for some days beforehand - classic conditions for overshooting southern vagrants c.f. Kentish Plover, *Charadrius alexandrinus*, the previous day.



AYTHYA HYBRID AT DRINGHOUSES POND, YORK

After a Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca* had been seen at Dringhouses Pond by D. Waudby on 29th November 1981, the site was visited by several observers including A. Fitchett and T.E. Dixon on the following few days. The original bird could not be relocated, but a bird showing some characters of Ferruginous Duck was present on 2nd December. The bird was thought, from brief views of it sleeping, to be possibly a Ferruginous Duck. However, once reasonable views had been obtained, it became apparent that the bird was probably an *Aythya* hybrid. The following description is compiled from notes taken by A.F. and T.E.D.

Size and Structure: Size as Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*, typical *Aythya* shape but distinctive angular head shape, reminiscent of Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula* (AF) or Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris* (T.E.D.)

Plumage: Head and neck darker and richer brown than female Tufted Duck, in sunlight appeared chestnut brown (A.F.), deep reddish brown (T.E.D.). A small pale indistinct area on the lores. On close examination an abortive crest was present, not nearly so pronounced as on female Tufted Duck and not easily seen. Breast dark chestnut brown. Mantle, rump and upper-tail coverts dark brown. Flanks brown, paler than rest of upperparts. Wing coverts dark brown. Primaries dark blackish brown. Belly white. Under-tail coverts - strikingly white in rear view but scarcely visible in side view.

Bare parts: Bill as Tufted Duck, eye pale brown.

The bird spent most of its time sleeping on the periphery of a small Tufted Duck flock and did not associate with the Pochard *Aythya ferina* present.

The bird is tentatively ascribed to a Tufted X Ferruginous Duck Hybrid, possibly a female or immature male. In a review of *Aythya* hybrids, Gillham, Harrison and Harrison (1966) describe two such Tufted X Ferruginous Duck hybrids. The first, a skin of unknown sex, showed dark coppery red head and neck with a short dependent crest. The undertail coverts were mostly white.

The second bird was an adult male at St James¹ Park, London, which made several lengthy stays between March 1959 and late May 1962. The bird was described as having at times a head shape similar to Ring-necked Duck. In eclipse plumage it showed a striking resemblance to a Ferruginous Duck. This bird had a short crest. It associated almost exclusively with Tufted Duck and never with Pochard.

The field characters of the immature male of this hybrid are not known.

To further complicate matters, on the following day a female Tufted Duck with striking white under-tail coverts was present.

It must be stressed that no doubt attaches to the original record of a Ferruginous Duck on 29th November. This record was supported by a perfectly satisfactory field description, during the acceptance of which the possibility of hybrid origin was discussed and rejected. The detection of two other birds with white under-tail coverts being due in all probability to upwards of twenty observers searching for birds showing this character.

In conclusion, it is worth stressing that when taking field notes on unusual *Aythya* Ducks, such as Ring-necked, Ferruginous and inland Scaup *Aythya marila*, structure and bill pattern are as, if not more, important than plumage features if the possibility of hybrid origin is to be discounted. Field descriptions are required for these three species by respectively the British Birds Rarities Committee, the Y.N.U. Reports Committee and the Y.O.C. recorders

CLASSIFIED LIST

SPECIES



- A Lesser Scaup.
- B Scaup
- C Tufted Duck
- D Ring-necked Duck (from life).



F



- E Ferruginous Duck.
- F i & ii Pochard variations.

HYBRID TYPES.



G



- G i, ii, iii & iv Lesser Scaup Type.
- H Pochard Type.
- I Tufted Type.
- J Ferruginous Type.
- 'Page's Pochard'.
- K i & ii Scaup Type.
- L Ring-necked Duck Type.
- 'Baer's Pochard'.



K



Diags. of 'Bills' of *Aythya* Spp.
and Hybrids.
(After Gillam et. al 1966 unless otherwise stated).
NB. Bill patterns of ♀♀ are similar to those of ♂♂ but less bright; applies also to eclipsed and immature ♂♂.

Reference

Gillham, E., James M. Harrison and Jeffery G. Harrison, 1966.
A study of certain *Aythya* hybrids. *Wildfowl Trust 17th Annual Report*,
(1966) pp. 49 - 65.

CLASSIFIED LIST

The sequence and scientific nomenclature used is that of Professor K.H. Voous 1977, *List of Recent Holarctic Bird Species*.

LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Breeding recorded from Strensall Common where four pairs reared 14 juveniles, two pairs double brooding. Brandsby where a pair double brooded, Wiganthorpe and Aughton.

Maxima were: up to six at Wheldrake Ings during February, up to three at Dringhouses Pond during November where there were four by the year's end), seven on the River Derwent by Wheldrake on 13th and four at Stamford Bridge on 23rd. The hard weather in the latter part of the year brought records of up to two from the Pocklington Canal, Ellerton, North Duffield, Bubwith, Fulford Ings, Sand Hutton, Towthorpe Bridge and the River Ouse at York, Cawood, Acaster Selby, Naburn Falls and Acaster Malbis. Two were rescued from the humus tanks at Naburn Sewage Works in December.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *podiceps cristatus*

Display noted at Newburgh Priory, successful breeding recorded from Wiganthorpe, Pond Head, Yearsley, Dringhouses Pond, and Castle Howard with a minimum of 14 young being reared in total.

Up to two at Dringhouses Pond and seven at Castle Howard in February where displaying was noted. Some indication of a Spring passage with seven at Storwood on 29th March, two on the River Ouse at Fulford on 2nd April, three at Wheldrake on 4th, with one on 5th and four on Bank Island on 7th, two at Aughton on 12th and one at Wheldrake on 15th and Bank Island until 9th May, two at Newburgh Priory on 26th and one at Sand Hutton on 27th.

Singles at York University on 11th September, Loftsome Bridge on 13th and Sand Hutton on 23rd October. Up to nine at Castle Howard from October to the year's end.

Correction to 1980 report:- 27 at Castle Howard Lake on 2nd April not 2nd March.

RED-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps grisegera*

One at Castle Howard from 29th November to 1st December (R.S., D.W.). Sixth record for area Accepted by the Y.N.U. Reports Committee.

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

More records this year than last. Four circled Naburn Sewage Works on 28th March and eventually flew north (B.D., A.M., G.T.). Two immatures at Wheldrake on 9th April where up to four were recorded between 3rd and 6th May with two at Naburn Marina on 17th.

One flew south west over Castle Howard Lake on 24th September.

An immature at Castle Howard on 8th October circled the lake several times before flying off in an easterly direction (D.W.I.).

Second record for the area and the first pertaining to a live bird.

BITTERN *Botaurus stellaris*

One near Wheldrake Village on 12th December (per G.S.).

Fourth record for the area.

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

Bred in the Lower Derwent where a now established heronry held 13 pairs. Recorded in all S.E.Squares with the largest numbers again coinciding with the emergence of juveniles from the heronries. Maxima were eight at Wheldrake on 17th July, and 19 at Castle Howard on 31st, 18 there on 10th August, with eight on 12th September, the same number being at Wharfe Ings on 3rd October.

PURPLE HERON *Ardea purpurea*

An exhausted sub-adult bird at Wheldrake Ings on the afternoon of 4th January was flushed a short distance and found dead several weeks

later. (T.B., B.B., T.M.C.). (See page 24)

First record for the area.

Submitted to British Birds Rarities Committee.

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

No records of breeding. A cob was present on the River Ouse at Naburn throughout the year.

There continued to be an increase in records, the larger counts were: ten in the Lower Derwent Valley on 18th January, 12 at Wheldrake Ings on 1st February and again on 8th, nine in the Lower Derwent on 29th March, 17 at Wheldrake on 10th April with 15 on 15th.

Ten at Hagg Bridge on 14th November and six at Ellerton on 27th December.

BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus columbianus*

Monthly maxima for the Derwent Valley were: 245 in January, 170 in February, 161 in March which had reduced to two at Aughton by 17th April. Eight which flew over Aughton on 24th October, 17 in November and 20 in December.

Other records from elsewhere were: seven which flew north over Heslington on 10th January, eight comprising four adults and four immatures at Fulford on 14th and 15th March and an exceptionally late single at Bielby on 17th May (P.D.). Seven flew west over Brandsby on 7th November.

WHOOOPER SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*

A bird with an injured wing was present at Wheldrake Ings throughout the year.

109 at Wheldrake Ings on 4th January had reduced to 12 on 25th. 34 in the whole of the Lower Derwent Valley on the Wildfowl Count of 14th February, where there were 59 on 8th March, 11 at Naburn Marsh on 14th, the last being 16 at North Duffield Carrs on 24th.

Four plus the injured bird at Wheldrake in the Lower Derwent during October. Six adults flew off north west from Wheldrake Ings on 6th November with up to 20 being present in the Lower Derwent Valley from November until the year's end.

GREY GOOSE Sp. *Anser sp.*

20 flew over Riccall on 15th October.

BEAN GOOSE *Anser fabalis*

Two adult birds showing characteristics of the nominate race, *A. f. fabalis*, were present at Wheldrake Ings from 6th November to the year's end with three being recorded on six dates during that period (D.W., TB et al). First record for the record.

Submitted to YNU Reports Committee

Records of up to three from Castle Howard, Wheldrake, Storwood, Aughton and Bubwith from January to May with a maximum of four at Castle Howard on 26th April (D.B.), amounted to 31 bird days.

The only Autumn record was of three at Wheldrake on 31st October (T.B.)

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons*

A 'pink billed' bird belonging to the nominate Eurasian race *A. a. albifrons* at Castle Howard on 22nd February (D.B.) and two similar birds at Storwood on 8th March (G.S., B.C.)

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

Bred at Castle Howard and the Lower Derwent. A goose paired with a Chinese gander *Anser¹ cyanoides* (domesticated) at Garrowby and reared five goslings successfully. The resultant offspring were all as the goose except a characteristic pale area around the base of the bill, giving them a 'look' of White fronted Geese *Anser albifrons* (D.W.) The first goslings were at Wheldrake on the 16th May, there was a creche of 20 goslings herded by four adults at Castle Howard on 17th.

The main concentrations were again at Castle Howard and the Lower Derwent, maxima were: 120 in the Lower Derwent on 11th June, where there were 94 on 14th February and 47 on 15th March, 50 at Castle Howard on 26th April, 12 at Wheldrake on 19th May, including two birds colour ringed as goslings at York University in 1978. 130 at Castle

Howard on 28th June. No records for July. 112 at Castle Howard on 31st August, four in the Lower Derwent on 13th September, 94 at Castle Howard on 14th October, 200 at Wheldrake Ings on 6th November and at Castle Howard on 22nd, 105 in the Lower Derwent on the wildfowl count of 13th December.

SNOW GOOSE *Anser caerulescens*

Two birds, presumably 'blue phase' were recorded from Wheldrake Ings, York University, Storwood, Haxby and Castle Howard from March until the year's end with a total absence during May, June, July and August, giving 66 bird days.

Published with escape proviso.

Second record for the area.

There have been a number of small branta hybrid geese at both Castle Howard and Wheldrake some of which bore close resemblance to Snow Geese. However the above birds were generally thought by observers to be pure 'blue phase' Snow Geese. EDS.

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

Bred at Stearsby, Sand Hutton, York University, Garrowby, Castle Howard and the Lower Derwent. The first goslings were recorded from Wheldrake Ings on 9th May.

The main concentrations were again recorded from the Lower Derwent, where the population has grown considerably over the past decade, Castle Howard and York University. The monthly maxima for the area were: 156 from the Lower Derwent in January with 162 there in February and 87 in March. 50 at Castle Howard in April, after which there was the usual pre-breeding dispersal and subsequently no large flocks were recorded for May and June, but smaller numbers were recorded from: Sand Button, Strensall Common, Fulford Ings, Haxby and Dunnington Common.

Post breeding maxima were: 150 at Castle Howard in July, 210 there in August, 83 at York University in September, 120 at Castle Howard in October, 190 there in November and 125 in the Lower Derwent in December.

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

One at Castle Howard on 11th, 18th and 24th January and 8th February with 22, including two Barnacle hybrids on 15th (D.W.) and 23, including one hybrid, on 22nd (D.W., D.B.). One there on the 8th March and at Storwood on 4th April.

35 at Castle Howard on 8th December (D.W.), with 41 there on 12th December (T.B.), was the largest flock yet recorded, and two at Wheldrake on 25th.

The occurrence of hybrid birds in February is an indication that these are feral birds from a captive flock possibly at Flamingo Park zoo. EDS.

BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla*

A dark bellied bird at Wheldrake Ings on 7th April (T.B.) and another on 15th November (per J.H.L.).

First and second records for the area.

SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

Records continue to increase.

Bred in the Lower Derwent Valley where there were probably 12 pairs and two pairs nested in straw stacks at different sites, and York University where seven duckling fledged. The first ducklings were five at Wheldrake on 23rd May.

Up to ten present in the Lower Derwent in the winter months. Large spring numbers, maxima were 48 at North Duffield Carrs on 14th March, with 70 in the whole of the Lower Derwent on the Wildfowl Count of the following day was the largest number ever recorded, with 54 there on the 29th when there was a pair at Middlethorpe Ings, 45 at Wheldrake on 3rd April, 62 at North Duffield Carrs on 29th May, with 44 there on 1st of June. Up to ten at Wheldrake during July when the adults left for moult leaving the immatures which were last to leave on 16th August.

Two had returned to Wheldrake on 8th November and were present until 14th.

MANDARIN *Aix galericulata*

A full winged drake at Wheldrake from 22nd April to 1st May (A.R.P., T.B., D.B.)

Published with escape proviso

Fourth record for the area

WIGEON *Anas penelope*

Probably bred in the Lower Derwent Valley.

The main concentrations were in the Lower Derwent Valley from where the monthly maxima were: 3,669 in January, 5,200 in February, 2,770 in March, 3,000 in April, seven in May, three in June, one in July, four in August, 20 in September, 14 in October, 450 in November and 2,100 in December.

N.B. The count for February was an INTERNATIONALLY IMPORTANT number and those for January, March, April and December were NATIONALLY IMPORTANT (Salmon D.G. 1981, "Wildfowl and Wader- Counts 1980-1981")

Smaller concentrations were noted in the winter months from: Strensall Common, Castle Howard, Acaster Malbis,- Dringhouses Pond, Fulford Ings, Cawood and Riccall.

40 flew north over Cawood on 30th August (D.B.).

GADWALL *Anas strepera*

Probably bred in the Lower Derwent Valley.

A drake at Castle Howard on 11th January with two at Wheldrake on 25th February where there were four birds on 27th. A pair at Middlethorpe Ings on 15th March and up to three pairs at Wheldrake throughout April. A drake at North Duffield on 26th May and a drake at Strensall Common on 27th June. Four drakes, two females and at least one juvenile were present at Wheldrake during July, August and September. An unusually high number of records for October with up to five birds at Wheldrake during the month. A female on flood water at Acaster Malbis on 7th was joined by a drake on 8th, a single drake at Dringhouses Pond on the 11th, three at Castle Howard on 14th and 17th and one bird at Riccall on 15th'. Up to four at Wheldrake in November and a drake at Castle Howard on 13th with a pair there on 15th.

TEAL *Anas crecca*

Bred at Newborough Priory, Skipwith Common, Fulford Ings and the Lower Derwent.

The major concentrations again came from the Lower Derwent Valley, the Wildfowl Counts for which were: 2,155 on 18th January, 3,682 on 14th February, 1,000 on 15th March, with 1,000 at Wheldrake Ings on 11th April, 180 on 13th September, 150 on 18th October, 115 on 15th November and 130 on 13th December.

N.B. The numbers for January and for February are both INTERNATIONALLY IMPORTANT counts and the counts for March and April are NATIONALLY IMPORTANT (Salmon D.G. 1981, "Wildfowl and Wader- Counts 1980-81").

Smaller numbers were recorded throughout the year, but mainly in the winter months from: Castle Howard, Fulford Ings, Acaster Malbis, Strensall Common, Wharfe Ings, Askham Bog, Stearsby, Bielby and Wiganthorpe.

A drake, showing characteristics of the Nearctic sub-species *A.c.carolinensis*, known colloquially as Green-winged Teal at Wheldrake Ings on 1st and 4th of November (T.D., T.E.D., E.B.B.) (See page 25).

Submitted to British Bird Rarities

Committee. First record for the area.

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*

A nest was found 15 feet up a tree at East Cottingwith on 22nd March.

Wildfowl count totals for the Lower Derwent Valley read: 4,000 on 18th January, 4,436 on 14th February, 400 on 15th March, 259 on 13th September, 250 on 18th October, 261 on 15th November and 174 on 13th December.

1,153 at Castle Howard on 18th January, 738 there on 8th February, 350 at Wheldrake on 3rd April, 300 at North Duffield Carrs on 1st June, the same number at Loftsome Bridge on 13th September, 200 at Wharfe Ings on 3rd October, 280 on floodwater at Acaster Malbis on 10th and 500 at Skipwith Common on 18th, 600 at Castle Howard on 22nd November, 200 on the River Ouse at Bishopthorpe on 18th December and 1,000 at Wheldrake Ings on 28th.

Smaller concentrations were recorded from Dringhouses Pond, Wiganthorpe, Brandsby, Shearsby, and Fulford Ings during winter months.

PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

One pair confirmed breeding in the Lower Derwent Valley (GS)

Up to ten at Wheldrake Ings during January, 171 in the Lower Derwent on the Wildfowl count of 14th February with 58 on 1st March, 11 pairs at Wheldrake on 1st April had reduced to one pair by the end of the month, which remained into May.

Up to eight present at Wheldrake during August, where there were up to three in September, four at Selby Brick Ponds on 17th. A drake on floodwater at Acaster Malbis on 7th October was joined by another the following day and both remained until 10th. A drake at Castle Howard on 17th and a drake at Bubwith on 25th. With one at Wiganthorpe on 8th and 29th, two ducks at Castle Howard on 15th, two drakes at Wheldrake on 6th December.

GARGANEY *Anas querquedula*

A pair at Wheldrake on 21st and 23rd April (D.W., T.B., D.B.) and "present in the Lower Derwent in late May, early June" (G.S., B.C., T.E.D., E.B.B.)

SHOVELER *Anas clypeata*

The Lower Derwent provides a very important breeding site for this species, with an estimated 50 pairs (.T.E.D.), four places in the British Isles have such a population density.

Lower Derwent maxima were: 12 on the Wildfowl count 18th January, where there were 56 on 8th February, 20 North Duffield Carrs on 29th March with 50 at Wheldrake on 3rd of April and 109 in the Lower Derwent Valley on 5th during the summer and into autumn, the last were eight on 8th November.

Away from the Lower Derwent up to ten were recorded from Naburn Sewage Works, Middlethorpe Ings, Shearsby and Skipwith Common, with up to 30 at Castle Howard where there was strong evidence of an autumn passage (D.W.) the last being four on 30th November.

POCHARD *Aythya ferina*

Maxima were 1000 Wheldrake Ings 11th January, 700 in the Lower Derwent on the wildfowl count on 14th February, with 1010 on 15th March and 150 at Wharfe Ings on the same day. 152 were still at Wheldrake on 3rd April. Numbers remained into May with a duck and drake throughout the summer. Up to 40 in the Lower Derwent from September to the year's end.

Away from the Lower Derwent Valley up to 30 were recorded from Dringhouses Pond, Castle Howard, Middlethorpe Ings, Acaster Malbis, Fulford, Kexby, Brandsby, Loftsome Bridge, Wiganthorpe and the River Ouse at York during the winter months. Singles were recorded from Brandsby and Yearsley in June and July.

RING-NECKED DUCK *Aythya collaris*

A splendid drake was present at Wheldrake Ings from 14th to 23rd April CT.B., G.S., B.C.P. et al). (See description, page 26)

First record for the area. Submitted to British Birds Rarities Committee.

FERRUGINOUS DUCK *Aythya nyroca*

An immature drake at Dringhouses Pond on 29th November (D.W.).

Plumage : Rich reddish brown (almost chestnut) head, neck and chest, duller and slightly paler along sides and flanks. Back very dark brownish-black. Tail dark red-brown. Belly white (.seen when diving). Undertail coverts pure white, sharply demarked from sides and tail and easily the single most outstanding feature of this bird.

Bareparts; Bill: nail black, black extending across the tip of the bill, but very narrow, beyond this an indistinct pale grey area. Remainder of bill a medium blue grey. Eye: dull grey, not nearly as bright as any of the Tufted Ducks present. Prom D.W.'s. note book.

Published with the escape proviso. Accepted by the Y.N.U. Reports Committee. Second record for the area.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

Bred at Brandsby, Stearsby, Wiganthorpe, Newborough Priory, Skipwith . Common and the Lower Derwent.

The largest concentrations were in the Lower Derwent where the Wildfowl count totals were 80 on 18th January, 110 on 14th February and 142 on 15th March with 300 on 11th April which was reduced to 50 by the month's end.

Smaller numbers of up to 40 were recorded in the Lower Derwent from October to the year's end.

Up to 30 were recorded in the winter months from: Dringhouses Pond,

Castle Howard Lake, Sand Button Pond, Fulford Ings, Naburn Ings, Red House Reservoir, Acaster Malbis, Wiganthorpe, Dale Head Pond and the River Ouse at Fulford, Acaster Malbis and Naburn.

SCAUP *Aythya marila*

Records of a duck at Fulford Ings on 4th October, Acaster Malbis on 7th and 8th where it was feeding on flooded barley stubble with other *Aythya*s and at Dringhouses Pond on 9th, 10th and 11th, all relate to the same individual (D.W.).

GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*

Correction to 1980 report: "first spring drake and adult female at Castle Howard Lake" on 3rd May, not 3rd July.

Good numbers this year, maxima were: 22 at Wheldrake Ings on 31st January, 90 in the Lower Derwent on the Wildfowl count of 14th February, 35 on 15th March, up to 32 at Wheldrake Ings in April, where the last spring record was of a female on 6th May.

The first to return were three 'redheads' at Wheldrake on 18th October, eight there on 16th November and seven at Castle Howard on 8th December were maxima. Smaller concentrations were recorded from Hagg Bridge, Middlethorpe Ings, Stamford Bridge, Dale Head Pond, Stearsby, River Ouse at Bishopthorpe, Fulford Ings and Dringhouses Pond.

SMEW *Mergus albellus*

A 'redhead' at Castle Howard on 8th December (D.W.)

Fourth record for the area

Accepted by Y.N.U. Reports Committee.

RED BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator*

A pair at Wheldrake on 6th May (T.B., E.G.P., T.E.D., E.B.B.). A 'redhead' flew north up the river Derwent at Wheldrake on 29th December (D.W., T.B.).

Fifth and sixth records for the area.

GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser*

Up to three at Wheldrake during the early part of the year. Two at Kirkby Wharfe on 27th February and four adult drakes on River Ouse below Naburn locks in early March, with a pair at Stamford Bridge at the end of the month. The last record was of a female at Wheldrake on 12th April.

A 'red head' at Wiganthorpe on 5th November was the first returning record with a drake at Wheldrake on 6th and two birds there on 7th the same number being at Kirkham Gorge on 11th. A drake flew down river at Naburn on 30th December.

RUDDY DUCK *Oxyura jamaicensis*

A duck at Wheldrake on 22nd March (T.B., D.W.) with a pair present from 5th to 12th April (D.W., E.G.P., T.B. et al) .

First and second records for the area Accepted

by the Y.N.U. Reports Committee.

HARRIER Sp. *Circus Sp.*

A ringtail at Naburn on 6th September (per T.E.D.).

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

An immature male at Ellerton on 19th April (G.S., B.C.), a 'cream crown

at Wheldrake on 10th May (TB, BGP), an immature male in

the LDV on 12th and an immature at Skipwith Common on 3rd August (D.B., T.E.D.)

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

A 'ringtail' at East Cottingwith on 8th February (G.S., B.C.) and a cock at Wheldrake on 19th (R.T.). *A ringtail at Aughton on 1st March (G.S., B.C.) and one at Hagg Bridge on 5th (T.B.)

A 'ringtail' at Aughton on 12th August was not considered by the observers to have been a Montagu* Harrier, *Circus pygargus*, (G.S., B.C.) .

GOSHAWK *Accipiter gentilis*

A large number of records that certainly indicate the presence of at least one pair from June until the year's end. One at Middlethorpe on 13th June was mobbed by Redshank, *Tringa totanus*, Lapwing, *Vanellus* Starling, *Sturnus vulgaris* (J.G.) I One at Wheldrake on 26th July had killed a rabbit *Oryetolagus cuniculus* (T.B., S.J.). A female at Naburn Sewage Works was recorded eight times in August and seen to take Lapwings, from beside the filter beds (S.T., D.B.) A male and female were in the air together over the northern end of Wheldrake Ings on 3rd (D.B., T.E.D.), with singles at: Skipwith on 20th and 27th (T.E.D.), Fulford on the same day (D.B.), Aughton on 29th (G.S.) and again at Fulford on 31st (D.B.), Stillingfleet on 4th September (D.B.), Dunnington Common on 14th (T.W., V.W.) was mobbed by hirundines, York University on the same day, and again on 21st was mobbed by Black headed Gulls, *Lotus ridibundus*, and on the 15th October (T.E.D.) with one between Stillingfleet and Cawood on 21st October (R.H.) and at North Duffield Carrs on 27th (T.E.D.). At Wheldrake on 15th November (R.H.) at York University on 30th (J.H.L.), Stillingfleet on 8th December (D.B.) and at Heslington on 10th was chasing a Wood Pigeon, *Columba palumbus*.

All submitted to the Y.N.O. Reports Committee.

SPARROW HAWK *Accipiter nisus*

Recorded breeding from Bielby, Dunnington Common, Hazelbush Plantations, Black Wood, Garrowby Park, Middlethorpe, the three northern Squares SE.57, 67, 77 and Averhams Plantation where a tree holding a nest and five eggs was felled (not by D.W.)

Still continues to be recorded more than ever before, with an estimated 180 bird days being reported from all squares.

A bird was watched by 500 children at Easingwold School as it plucked a Wood Pigeon, *Columba palumbus*, inside the school quadrangle on 2nd May (per P.H.) A cock flew into a garage window at Escrick on 11th May adding to the long list of "window casualties" I (R.H.)

Other records of predations were Snipe, *Gallinago gallinago*, at Wheldrake on 7th April (T.B.) and. Long-tailed Tit at Dunnington Common on 26th December.

BUZZARD Sp. *Buteo Sp.*

One soaring over Black Woods, Wheldrake on 16th May, was chevied by corvids. (G.S., B.C.)

BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*.

One with Jessies landed in a tree in a garden at Fulford on 7th March, was retrieved by its owner (T.E.D., E.B.B.).

Other records of free flying birds were of singles at Brandsby on 7th and 8th June (D.H.), Walmgate Stray on 3rd August (per T.E.D.), Kirkham Gorge on 18th November (.H.J.W.) and again on the 2nd December (H.J.W.) with one at North Duffield Carrs on 6th (T.E.D. et al) .

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

One at Sand Button Pond on 18th and 9th May was seen catching fish and being chevied by corvids (R.S., T.B. S.M.). One at Coxwold for several days in early June (P.H.)

Submitted to the Y.N.U. Reports Committee.

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

Bred on York Minster, occasionally being mobbed by feral pigeon, *columba livia*.

Recorded in all squares. A bird was observed closely following a haymaking machine at Gilling on 7th June. There was a female with a white rump at Hambleton on 22nd September. Six in the Lower Derwent Valley on 15th November and nine along a stretch of the York By-Pass on 17th.

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*

An increase in records this year. All records of single birds. At Wheldrake on 11th January, Fulford Ings on 18th, Grimston on 25th and a hen at Copmanthorpe on 27th, Ellerton on 8th February, Sherburn Airfield on 10th, North Duffield Carrs on 15th, Cawood on 25th and Naburn on 27th. At Grimston on 22nd March. A female at Bubwith on

5th April was mobbed by Black-headed Gulls at Cliffe on 16th and Storwood 17th.

At Wheldrake on 19th September at Stearsby on 11th October, Skipwith

Common on 17th, Howden Station on 29th, at Deighton on 8th November, Crockey Hill on 12th, Poppleton on 14th and Askham Bog tip on 23rd, at Heslington on 3rd December and Naburn Sewage Works on 18th and 26th.

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

An adult at Naburn Sewage Works on 3rd June (J.G., G.S.) was seen to drop from a tree where it was perching and plucked a Lapwing chick, *Vanellus vanellus*, from the ground (G.S.). Although this is an uncommon mode of feeding, it is certainly within this species repertoire as they can take small ground mammals in this fashion. (*Birds of the Western Palearctic*, Ox. Uni. Press 1980. Vol II p. 302) One near Menthorpe on 10th July (A.G.H. A.H.) and 'one at Aughton' Ings on 3rd September (T.E.D., E.B.B.)

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

RED LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa*

With the removal of the traditional grass leys and hedgerows in the Vale of York, for modern grain production, this species has become predominant over the Grey Partridge, *Perdix perdix*. The largest covies were; 16 at Riccall on 15th October, 37 at Skipwith on 27th, 16 at Dunnington Common on 17th November, 15 at Stamford Bridge on 22nd December with 12 at Low Catton on the same day, 37 at Kexby on 23rd and 16 at Catterton on 27th.

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix*

Agricultural land between North Duffield and York held a ratio of 1:8 Grey Partridges to Red-legged Partridges, *Alectoris rufa*, during May and June, however the birds on 'Ings' grassland were exclusively Grey Partridges (T.E.D.)

The largest covies were; 25 at Catterton on 8th November, 27 at Wheldrake on 13th December, 37 at North Duffield Carrs on 25th, 15 at Catterton on 27th and 22 at Bilborough on the same day.

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*

After no records in 1980 this year's records must amount to a 'Quail year'.

One calling on Anchor Plain on 1st May (R.A.I.), with two feeding in a ploughed field near the York Knavesmire on 7th (N.J.C.). Singles at Wheldrake on 18th June (T.B.), North Duffield on 18th July (A.G.H. A.H.) Wheldrake on 21st July (T.B.) and Bielby throughout August. A bird was killed by a harvester in an oat field near Hagg Bridge in August. One at Newton on 25th (P.O.) and two at Wheldrake on the following day (T.B. et al). One at Pocklington Airfield on 5th September and two at Newton on 14th and 16th September (P.O.).

PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus*

Recorded in every square, particularly where there are shooting concerns where they are 'put down'.

Chicks were being predated by Sparrowhawk, *Accipiter nisus* at Black Plantation on 9th June. The predator was particularly persistent returning to the same brood several times. (T.B.).

GOLDEN PHEASANT *Chrysolophus pictus*

A female at Naburn Sewage Works on 19th to 24th October was caught and is now kept in-captivity (S.T.).

Published with the escape proviso.

First record for the area.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

Bred at Fulford Ings

More records this year than last, with one present at Acomb Water Works throughout the year (T.C.) and up to six at Fulford Ings in the early part of the year, when singles were recorded from Castle Howard, Anchor Plain and Wheldrake Ings, where calling was heard in May. One at Anchor Plain on 27th August.

Mainly singles recorded between October and the year's end from, Wheldrake, Fulford Ings, Cawood, Naburn Sewage Works, Bielby, York University and Bank Island.

CORNCRAKE *Crex crex*

One calling at Wheldrake on 17th May (T.B.) was later flushed

and one was calling at Tilmire in mid June (T.C.).

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

An estimate of 95 pairs bred along the River Derwent between Kexby and Elvington (T.W., V.W.).

Recorded in all squares, maxima were: 14 at Acaster Malbis on 13th December, 13 at Scoreby on 22nd and 16 at Kexby on the following day.

COOT *Fulica atra*

Recorded breeding at Dringhouses Pond, Years ley, Newborough, Oxton Pond, the Mask, Naburn Sewage Works, Bishopthorpe Ings, and the Lower Derwent.

Maxima were: up to 64 at Dringhouses Pond in January, 950 in the Lower Derwent on the Wildfowl count of 14th February, 38 at Castle Howard on 15th November.

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*

Two pairs bred near Malton, a new site. In the Lower Derwent, five pairs bred in the Aughton/North Duffield/Bubwith area and one or two pairs near Wheldrake Ings.

First returning birds were five in the Lower Derwent on 8th March, numbers increased slowly into early April when birds were holding territory. One was on Fulford Ings on 13th March. Copulation noted at North Duffield Carrs on 19th April, the first complete clutch was found near Aughton on 24th April and the first downy young seen at Aughton on 7th June.

A bird at Barmby Moor on 13th May may indicate further spread. One flew north-west over Eskrick on 19th May. Most birds had left the breeding areas by mid-July but low single figures present in Lower Derwent until month end - the last being four north at Wheldrake Ings on the 26th and a single at Naburn S.W. on 1st August.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*

Records received from several breeding areas:-

- A SE 54. Birds displaying on 12th April, three adults on 20th. nest C/4 on 24th May, two adults with four downy young on 6th June
- B SE 55. A pair displaying on 7th June was not followed up.
- C SE 63. One bird on 9th May, a pair on 29th, displaying on 31st, three chicks on 14th June.
- D SE 64. A pair on 13th April at a former breeding site but no further indications of breeding.
- E SE 64. A pair holding territory on 29th May, later laid three eggs which were predated.
- F SE 65. Three birds holding territory on 11th April at a former breeding site but no further indications of breeding.
- G SE 74. Wheldrake Ings. A pair present from 20th April with two pairs on 3rd June but only three adults seen thereafter. A pair displaying on 27th June with a third adult in attendance. Two adults with three juveniles on 4th July but only one young bird by 9th. On 12th three adults with four juveniles seen. The situation later became confused as a series of passage birds moved through, the last being three (unaged) on 31st August and two (unaged) on 10th September. It is unclear how many breeding adults were involved but it seems that two broods were raised by at least three adults.

Away from the breeding areas, two on Middlethorpe Ings on 1st May, singles at Cawood on 26th July and Windmill Lane Pond, Heslington on 5th August, and six at Barlow on 30th August.

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

Unprecedented numbers in the Lower Derwent in spring culminating in a probable breeding attempt.

Singles at North Duffield Carrs on 19th April and Wheldrake Ings on 21st. A pair at Aughton on 1st May increased to eight by 10th. 25 at North Duffield Carrs on 19th increased to 28 by 23rd but only 10 next day. A pair held territory on ploughed out ings land at Aughton from mid-May to mid-June, but no nest was found.

An adult at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd and 23rd June, a juvenile on 4th July, an adult on 9th, three adults and three juveniles on 12th.

Single juveniles there on 26th, 30th and 3rd August. An adult and two juveniles on 2nd August and single adults on 8th, 9th, 22nd and 31st with the last a single on 9th October.

KENTISH PLOVER *Charadrius alexandrinus*

A female with a Ringed Plover, *Chamdrius hiaticula*, flock on North Duffield Carrs on 22nd May. (T.E.D.) First record for the area.

Submitted to Y.N.U. Reports Committee.

GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

The usual Lower Derwent wintering flocks present with maxima of 2,000 in the valley on 25th January and 1,000 at Bubwith throughout February. Birds were generally scarce in March with 250 at Wressle on 1st and 200 regularly at Bishopthorpe the only counts received. Passage flocks built up in April with 300 at Willtoft on 5th, 300 at Cawood on 14th, 600 at Moor Monkton Moor on 18th and 19th, 1,000 at Bubwith on 23rd, 100 at Willtoft on 29th, 500 at North Duffield Carrs on 1st May, 100 at Gilberdyke next day and 91 at Moor Monkton Moor on 3rd the last spring flock. The majority of birds in April and May were as usual characteristic of the northern form *P. apricaria altifrons*.

Birds began to return very early this year, perhaps due to a poor breeding season. The first were 135 at Wheldrake Ings on 27th June, then ISO at North Duffield Carrs on 14th July with 200 there on 16th 400 at Brighton and 200 at Bubwith on 25th, 500 at Bubwith on 26th increased to 700 next day, 200 flew south there on 31st. The June and July counts are the highest yet recorded, 550 at Bubwith on 8th August, 200 at Kelfield on 22nd, 250 at North Duffield Carrs on 23rd, 600 at Kelfield on 28th, 670 at Ellerton on 6th September, 200 at Aughton on 3rd October, 400 at Wheldrake Ings on 18th, 250 at Bishopthorpe on 22nd, 1,000 at Cawood on 25th, 568 at North Duffield on 13th November, 2,000 at Cawood on 15th and 21st, 1,000 at Bishopthorpe on 6th December when 2,000 were at North Duffield Carrs, 119 at Elvington Airfield on 10th was the last flock noted. The arctic weather set in at this time and birds disappeared overnight, presumably to the south-west. A lone bird was seen at Dringhouses on 30th, flying north!

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

One at Bank Island on 11th May (D.W.), three at Anchor Plain on 27th May (R.A.I.) and one at North Duffield Carrs on 3rd October (F.W.O.).

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

1,200 at Moor Monkton Moor on 1st January, 650 at Storwood on 2nd 400 at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd had increased to 4,000 by 24th, when 1,300 were at Bishopthorpe. 2,000 at Wheldrake Ings on 29th had decreased to 1,500 on 1st February. 1,000 at Bubwith on 8th, 700 at Cawood on 11th, 3,000 between Wheldrake and Bubwith on 15th, 1,000 at Wheldrake Ings on 25th and the same number at Bubwith on 27th. 1,000 at Bishopthorpe on 9th March was the last spring flock of note.

The first post breeding flock was 50 at Bugthorpe on 19th June which increased to 300 by 9th July. 450 at Wheldrake Ings on 15th. 500 at North Duffield Carrs on 22nd had increased to 1,000 on 26th. 300 at Bubwith Ings on 25th had increased to 1,500 on 27th. Flock sizes then fluctuated somewhat with monthly maxima of 1,100 at Riccall on 25th August, 400 at Bishopthorpe on 28th September and the same number at Bondhill Ash, York on 30th. 1,000 at Aughton on 23rd October. Larger numbers in November/December as continental birds came in. 1,000 at Barton Hill on 13th November, 1,500 in Lower Derwent on 15th when 2,000 were at Cawood. 1,020 at Gate Helmsley on 18th, 2,000 at Cawood on 21st when 1,000 were at Bubwith 950 at Barton-le-Willows on 22nd. 2,000 at North Duffield Carrs on 6th December. 1,500 at Bubwith Ings in first ten days of December. The cold weather set in on the 8th. Birds flew west over University continuously on 10th/11th. By 13th only one bird remained at Bubwith Ings. During the rest of December the only birds located in the area were seven at Fulford on 14th and a single at Dringhouses on 30th.

On 24th October, Dr J.H. Lawton carried out a count by bicycle from Grimston to Bubwith Bridge between 1400 and 1630 hours. Exactly 25 km of road was covered. All lapwings on either side of the road, up to 300 m away were counted: i.e. a strip 600 m. wide and 25 km long. The route passed through squares SE 65, 64, 74 and 73. A total of 834 lapwings were found in fields, in scattered, small groups with a maximum single flock of 188 at Dunnington Common. The cumulative frequency of lapwings with distance is more or less linear. Although unspectacular, this gives:- 834 lapwings in 15 sq. km sample strip, i.e. 5,560 lapwings per 10 km sq., suggesting

that there were probably of the order of 20,000 lapwings on the four sample squares on this day. With the exception of 46 birds on unploughed stubble at Aughton, all the birds were on winter-sown cereals.

STINT *sp. Calidris sp.*

Two on North Duffield Carrs on 20th May (T.E.D.) and one at Aughton Ings on 30th (D.I.M.W.) were thought to be *C. terminckii* but the birds were too distant for certain identification.

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*

A juvenile at Wheldrake Ings on 9th and 10th October (T.D., D.W.) seventh record for the area.

TEMMINCK'S STINT *Calidris temminckii*

An adult in summer plumage on Aughton Ings on 31st May (G.S., B.C., B.C.P. et al) was seen later on North Duffield Carrs (T.E.D., E.B.B.). Second record for the area. Accepted by the Y.N.U. Reports Committee.

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*

As usual some high counts from the Lower Derwent with monthly maxima as follows: 80 at Wheldrake Ings on 1st January, 125 at Ellerton on 8th February, 366 in Bubwith/Aughton area on 1st March with 280 at North Duffield Carrs on 15th. 60 at North Duffield Carrs on 17th April, 38 at Aughton on 9th May with the last spring record 20 at Aughton on 24th.

First returning birds were early - two at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd July with up to three throughout the month. Up to four at Wheldrake in August, up to 13 in September and up to four in October. Numbers then increased with 35 at Wheldrake on 22nd November and 115 at Bubwith on 6th December as maxima. The only report away from the Lower Derwent was of four at Anchor Plain on 18th February.

RUFF *Philomachus pugnax*

All records from Lower Derwent except a male north at Cawood on 26th June.

In the Lower Derwent, up to five on three dates in January, two on two dates in February. Generally low single figures throughout March, but 11 males at one site on 15th with 12 on 29th. Birds were present regularly at this site throughout the spring and summer with 15 males and three females on 13th April and 13 birds including eight males at a lek on 16th. Thereafter at least 13 different summer plumaged males were identified and up to three females noted on several occasions to mid-June. Up to three males seen at another site in May/June and a single male at a third site on 9th June.

Autumn passage was poor with up to seven birds on 10 days in July from 9th (21 bird days), up to two on seven days in August (9 bird days) with 12 on 18th October and a single on 31st.

JACK SNIFE *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Present at Fulford Ings for the sixth consecutive year. With records on seven dates in January, maxima three on 18th and 29th; six dates in February, maxima three on 26th and singles on 1st and 5th March.

Four at Wheldrake Ings on 5th March, one at Aughton on 20th. One at Anchor Plain on 3rd April. Two at Wheldrake Ings on 25th and 26th April were very late.

The first of the autumn was a single found dead at Stamford Bridge after a heavy overnight frost on 15th October (per A.D.). The bird was very light and probably newly arrived (T.E.D.). Singles at Wheldrake Ings on 1st November, Fulford Ings on 8th and 15th, Wheldrake Ings on 15th, shot at Sutton-on-Derwent on 21st and Askham Bog Tip on 28th. Singles at Naburn Marsh on 6th December and Fulford Golf Course on 12th. Three at University on 21st and two there on the 24th during hard weather.

SNIFE *Gallinago gallinago*

Flocks were small this year with significant counts from Lower Derwent and Fulford Ings as follows: Lower Derwent:- 20 on 7th January, 30 on 17th, 42 on 21st February, 110 on 25th, 230 on 1st March (of which 200 at Ellerton), 27 on 10th April, 30 on 15th July, 73 on 15th August, 40 on 22nd and 25 on 6th October.

Fulford Ings:- 34 on 11th January, 76 on 26th February, 100 on 15th March, 120 on 29th, 48 on 2nd April, 50 on 15th November and 55 on 6th December.

No significant counts from other sites.

One was taken by a male Sparrowhawk at Wheldrake Ings on 7th April.

Birds became very scarce after the cold weather in December, during which time one was picked up alive in Main Street, Heslington (per E.B.B.). Birds were noted feeding between the tide lines on the Ouse at Cawood in mid-December - a count on 11th revealed a density of one bird/30 metres (D.B.).

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

Bred at Dunnington Common, Skipwith Common, Blackmoor, Spellar Wood, Potter Hill and Stearsby. Roding birds at Bishop Wood, Allerthorpe Common, Black Woods, Strensall Common, Anchor Plain and Everingham.

Noted outside the breeding season at Stub Wood, Fulford Ings, Sand Button, Naburn S.W., Wheldrake Ings, Garrowby, Whitemoor, University, Poppleton, Bubwith, Rowntrees - York, Hazelbush Plantation, Castle Howard, Laytham and North Duffield.

An increase in records from 7th to 16th November suggested a small influx of migrants into the area. Noted from several areas from 8th December to year end, bird presumably forced into the open by the hard weather. One fed in a North Duffield garden on 26th (A.F.). 47 shot at Buttercrambe on 12th December during the hard weather surely deserved a better fate (per D.W.).

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

A godwit seen briefly at Middlethorpe Ings on 17th January was thought to be this species (J.G.)/j One was at Ellerton on 20th March. Two at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd April increased to six on 10th and seven on 11th and 12th. 14 at North Duffield Carrs on 16th, four on 17th, five on 19th and 11 on 20th. Three at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd May, two on 3rd, three on 4th when one was at Middlethorpe Ings. One at Wheldrake Ings on 5th, two on 7th when four were at North Duffield Carrs, three at Bubwith Ings on 10th and two at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd. No autumn records.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*

Two birds north of Wheldrake on 17th April (G.S.).

Ninth record for the area.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

The first (and early) was one east over University on 29th March. Three at Wheldrake Ings on 9th April, one north on 21st, singles on 23rd and 25th, three on 26th and 27th, four on 29th, one on 2nd May, three at Storwood on 4th and singles at Wheldrake on 10th and 16th.

In the autumn, one west at Wheldrake on 18th July, four on 20th and two on 26th. One over Cawood in darkness on 4th August, four west at Wheldrake Ings on 8th with singles on 15th and 3rd September. The last birds were three on Elvington Airfield on 4th September.

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*

Widely reported in the breeding season from usual sites (see previous reports). New sites this year were Swargate, Terrington, Sheriff Hutton, Laytham Green and Everingham Carr.

Now established as a wintering bird in small numbers in Lower Derwent, with up to two in January and up to three in February. The first spring arrival was 41 at Wheldrake Ings on 8th March with monthly maxima thereafter in Lower Derwent as follows: 43 on 15th March, 18 on 23rd April, 15 on 6th May, 11 on 25th June (the first post breeding flock). 12 on 2nd July, 27 on 23rd August, 24 on 13th September, four on 7th October, four on 8th November. The last bird was a single on 21st November.

Spring passage in the Lower Derwent was lighter than usual. Conversely autumn passage was relatively heavy with most birds passing in September with 310 bird days recorded on 22 days.

Nocturnal passage was noted over Fulford on 25th, 27th and 30th September with one, two and ten birds respectively.

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*

One at Anchor Plain on 25th and 30th March. Two at Bank Island on 11th May, one at Pocklington Canal on 12th and one at North

Duffield Carrs on 29th. Two at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd June with singles on 25th and 26th June, 21st and 22nd July, 22nd August and 5th September. An above average showing.

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*

Bred at the usual sites (see previous reports) and also at Rufforth.

Present throughout the year in Lower Derwent with significant counts as follows: Up to two in January, up to seven in February. A major arrival of 62 on 1st March, 69 on 15th, 26 on 12th April, 40 (North Duffield Carrs) on 31st May when first chicks noted, 19 on 22nd June, 17 on 21st July, numbers then declined rapidly with up to six in August, two in September, one in October and November and five in December.

Elsewhere, one at Fulford Ings on 23rd February, up to 14 there in March and early April with four displaying in May and a lone bird on 31st December. Four at Wharfe Ings on 15th March, two at Kirkby Wharfe on 23rd April, one south at Strensall Common on 4th July and one at Cawood on 21st November.

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

An above average spring passage of 28 bird days in the Lower Derwent.

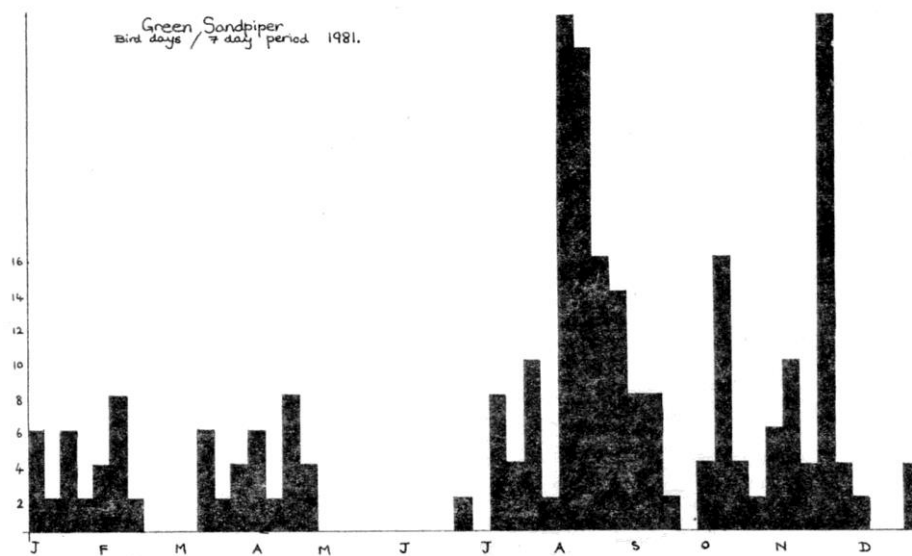
Two at Aughton on 11th April, two at Wheldrake Ings on 29th. In May up to four (11th) in Wheldrake/Bank Island area from 9th to 26th, with two at Aughton on 7th and singles at Ellerton on 9th and North Duffield Carrs on 19th.

In Autumn birds recorded at Wheldrake Ings as follows: singles on four days in July from 15th, with one at North Duffield Carrs on 26th. Up to seven (10th, 15th) on 19 days throughout August. One on 17th September. Singles at Aughton on 10th October and Elvington Airfield on 12th. 72 bird days on autumn passage in Lower Derwent.

Elsewhere, birds flew south at Cawood as follows:- one on 27th July, two on 16th August, one on 30th and eight on 2nd September. Three on Dunnington Common on 2nd August, two at Strensall Common on 15th and three at Anchor Plain on 26th.

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

Too many records to list individually. Most records coming from Bielby Beck where birds wintered at both ends of the year, the Lower Derwent and the Ouse below York. Largest flock was seven at Strensall Common on 15th August. Other sites recording birds were Grimston Tip, University, Kirkby Wharfe, Crockey Hil? , Elvington Industrial Estate, Escrick Brick Pond, Askham Bog Tip, Stockton on the Forest and Dringhouses Pond. The histogram below summarises the years records - a small wintering population, a small spring passage from mid March to late April, a prolonged autumn passage from early July to late September and a second wave of birds, presumably coming in to winter, from early October to early December.



WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*

Singles at Bank Island on 11th May (T.B.), Strensall Common (D.W.) and Wheldrake Ings (J.R.) on 18th July and one south at Cawood on 16th August (O.B.) .

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos*

No breeding records this year.

The first was early at Acomb Water Works on 8th April, followed by singles at Catterton on 20th, Bubwith on 29th, Naburn S.W. on 30th. Two at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd May with singles there on 3rd to 7th and 18th. Two at Aughton on 7th, two at New Earswick on 9th when one was at Stearsby, singles at Aughton on 10th and Naburn S.W. on 11th.

First returning birds were early with one at Naburn S.W. on 27th June, two there on 29th, five on 1st July and singles on 2nd, 9th and 18th. Recorded at Wheldrake Ings on 1st and 2nd July (singles) then almost daily from 19th July to 28th September. Mainly one to three birds but six on 8th August, nine on 9th, four on 10th when three were at Storwood and two at Cawood, and four on 20th. 78 bird days in Lower Derwent in Autumn - an above average showing.

Other records were - singles at Aughton on 12th August, Naburn S.W. on 27th, 1st September and 5th. Cawood on 3rd, 8th and 23rd September, and Stearsby on 27th September and 3rd October.

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*

Two at Wheldrake Ings on 6th May (T.B.).
Seventh record for the area.

GREY PHALAROPE *Phalaropus fulicarius*

One at Wheldrake Ings on 15th March (S.H., T.B.)
Third record for the area.
Accepted by the Y.N.U. Reports Committee.

GREAT SKUA

One at Wheldrake Ings on 26th April, a day of snow, rain and force 8 north-easterlies. The bird was seen attempting to force a heron *Ardea cinerea* to disgorge (T.B. et al) .
First record for the area.

LITTLE GULL *Larus minutus*

Single first summer birds at Wheldrake Ings on 26th and 27th April and Aughton on 31st May, A first winter bird at Cawood on 30th August, four sub-adults at Wheldrake Ings on 29th September and a first winter bird at Dringhouses Pond from 11th to 14th October. These latter three records being the first for the area for August, September and October.

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus*

Bred at Strensall Common - 55 young fledged, Skipwith Common - about 500 pairs, North Duffield Carrs - ISO pairs but success minimal and Wheldrake Ings - 30 pairs but few young fledged.

Roost counts were fewer and lower this year.

Wheldrake Ings - 10,000 on 2nd January and 5,000 on 8th March.

Castle Howard - 4,000 on 15th February.

Dringhouses Pond - 800 on 13th January, 450 on 16th. Up to 350 in November, up to 500 in December.

Other counts were - 1,200 over Fulford Ings on 12th March and 2,000 next day were on a flight line for the Lower Derwent. 200 at Wheldrake Ings on 18th April, an interesting movement of 4,000 south there at dusk on 26th, possibly going to roost on the Humber. 100 immatures at Naburn S.W. through the summer. 210 at Wheldrake Ings on 9th July. 200 on Ouse in York on 20th December and up to 500 at Askham Bog Tip in December.

Birds at the University were observed taking Alder catkins on 13th February (F.W.O.) and Beech mast and acorns on 13th November (T.E.D.)

A leucistic bird at Wheldrake Ings on 19th April had plumage completely white (E.G.P.).

COMMON GULL *Larus canus*

150 at University on 26th January, 400 at Castle Howard on 15th February, 1,100 on Knavesmire on 11th March, 1,640 over Fulford Ings on 12th with 3,000 next day had left Knavesmire at dusk and were on a course for Wheldrake Ings, but no Lower Derwent roost counts received.

115 at University on 30th March, 60 there on 1st April and 50 next day, all adults, were probably passage birds as none present before or after these dates.

1,000 flew south at Wheldrake Ings at dusk on 26th April with Black-headed Gulls *Larus ridibundus* (q.v.)

Some interesting records suggesting passage of first summer birds in June and second summer and adult birds in July. 30 (1st S.) at Ross Moor on 31st May, 29 to 61 (1st S.) at Bugthorpe from 9th to 18th June, 38 (1st S.) at Scrayingham on 9th June, 10 (1st S.) at Wheldrake on 8th July, seven (unaged) there on 15th, 15 (unaged) at Whenby on 19th, 15 (adults) at Wheldrake the same day, 15 (adults) at Hob Moor on 22nd (the only birds noted at this site during the year and obviously a passage flock), 124 (adults) south at Wheldrake on the same day. A known individual first summer (injured leg) was present at Wheldrake Ings from 15th June to 19th July. 24 (adults) at University on 23rd July. 900 (mostly 2nd S and adults) flew north at Garrowby between 0900 and 1600 hrs on 24th. More records of aged birds are needed to elucidate the situation.

Records in latter part of year were, 210 on Knavesmire on 3rd October, 100 at University on 27th November and up to 400 at Askham Bog Tip in December.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*

Single figures throughout the area in all months.

An increase in records in April and May suggesting passage of adults. Of a party of five (two adults, two 3rd S, one 2nd S) at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd May, the two adults were characteristic of one of the Scandinavian races, *L.f. intermedius* or *L.f. fuscus*. (T.E.D.).

As with Common Gull, *LOTUS canus*, evidence of passage of immature non-breeding birds in late May to mid June but more records needed.

Present daily in Askham Bog Tip area (up to 19) from 19th August to 25th October. 47 adults and two immatures on stubble at North Duffield on 30th August was the largest flock recorded.

HERRING GULL *Lams argentatus*

Very few records received for this species. 110 in the Wheldrake roost on 4th January with 80 there on 10th when 60 were at Askham

Bog Tip. 45 at Wheldrake on 11th, 60 there on 17th. 20 at Askham Bog Tip on 28th February. 25 at Wheldrake on 8th March. 45 at Askham Bog Tip on 14th December with 70 on 30th.

GLAUCOUS GULL *Lams hyperboreus*

The limping adult which returned to the Lower Derwent on 8th November 1980 was seen at Wheldrake Ings on four dates in January and four dates in February being last seen on 22nd. (T.E.D., E.B.B., D.W. et al). The bird was also seen at Askham Bog Tip on 4th January and at Dringhouses Pond and Askham Bog Tip in the morning of the 10th, later being seen at Wheldrake Ings.

A FIRST WINTER BIRD AT ASKHAM BOG TIP ON 4TH JANUARY. Seventh and eighth records for the area. Accepted by Y.N.U. Reports Committee.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*

Very few records received.

Up to 120 at Wheldrake roost in January (4th) and up to 50 at Askham Bog Tip in the same month (10th). 18 at Fulford Ings on 22nd January.

17 immatures at North Duffield Carrs on 29th May - a period of passage for immature gulls (see Common and Lesser Black-backed Gulls).

In late winter, 24 at Askham Bog Tip on 14th December and 29 on 30th.

KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*

Six adults at Wheldrake Ings on 1st April was the only record (D.W.).

COMMON/ARCTIC TERN *Sterna hirundo/paradisea*

Two north at Wheldrake Ings on 29th April and one south at Fulford Ings on 2nd October.

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

One at East Cottingwith on 1st May, two at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd with 14 there next day. A single at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd June with a juvenile there on 3rd October.

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisea*

Three at Aughton on 19th April. All other records from Wheldrake Ings, six on 25th were still present next day, one on 29th, two on 2nd May, 53 on 3rd - the largest flock ever recorded in the area, nine on 6th and a single on 27th June.

LITTLE TERN *Sterna albifrons*

One at Wheldrake Ings on 26th June (T.B.). Fourth record for the area, and seen at Wheldrake for the third successive year.

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger*

Six at Castle Howard on 7th May when two were at Wheldrake Ings. Two at Bank Island on 11th to 13th. One at Wheldrake Ings on 11th with two next day (known to be different birds from those at Bank Island). A single at Wheldrake Ings on 9th August.

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*

Again few records received. Bred at Dunnington Common, Fulford Ings, Bielby, Laytham, Barmby Moor, Hagg Bridge and Storwood. Present in the breeding season at North Duffield, Bubwith and Wheldrake Ings. 54 at Bank Island on 4th January, 18 at Wheldrake Ings on 18th, 40 at Wressle on 26th January, 14 at Askham Bog Tip on 1st March, 17 there on 7th and 15 at Naburn S.W. on 28th.

38 at North Duffield Carrs on 9th October, 14 at Acaster Selby on 6th December, 16 at Catterton on 25th with 20 on 27th when 37 were at Bilborough.

WOOD PIGEON *Columba palumbus*

530 at Dunnington Common on 11th January with 500 at Bubwith on the same date. 270 at Brandsby during January. 400 at Aughton on 1st February. 300 at North Duffield on 4th October, 350 at Storwood on 18th, 1,230 in Healaugh/Catterton area on 1st November 327 at Bubwith on 15th when 1,500 were at Bulmer, 600 at Askham

Bog on 26th and 500 at Castle Howard on 30th. No large flocks reported in December, presumably due to hard weather movements out of the area.

A leucistic bird at Bubwith on 26th May was buff with white wing bars and collar. (D.W.)

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

21 at Dringhouses Pond on 4th January, 36 at Aughton on 15th February, 52 at Selby B.O.C.M. on 26th with 30 there on 3rd July. 80 at Windmill Lane, Heslington on 14th September, 90 at Healaugh on 1st November when 50 were at North Duffield. The North Duffield roost increased to 70 on 15th November and 90 by year end. 75 at Skipwith on 15th November, 20 at Foggathorpe on 22nd. 60 at Knapton on 28th December when 21 were at Dringhouses Pond.

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*

Bred at Aughton, Barmby, Bielby, Dunnington Common, Naburn S.W. (three pairs), North Duffield, Skipwith Common and Storwood. Present in the breeding season at Bishop Wood, Escrick, Strensall Common, Wheldrake Ings and Wilberfoss. The first (and very early,) was a bird singing at Sherrieff Button on 31st March and 2nd and 3rd April (D.W.). The bird was not seen but was heard very clearly. Turtle Doves are kept in captivity and the bird may have been an escape, however several other migrants arrived around this time.

The next birds were at Stillingfleet on 16th April (P.R.), Anchor Plain on 1st May (A.C.) and Skipwith Common on 6th (P.P.). The major arrival was from 9th May. Most birds had left the area by early September, with two at Wheldrake Ings on 13th and a very late bird there on 14th October.

The nests of all three pairs at Naburn S.W. were constructed entirely of short strands of wire picked from, the road that runs through the works. These wire strands originating from the brushes of a road sweeper used at the works (B.D., J.G.).

CUCKOO *Cuculus oanorus*

The first (and very early) was at Riccall on 4th April (D.N.B.) then at Stamford Bridge on 12th (R.S.)., New Earswick and Fulford Ings on 23rd and Upper Helmsley on 1st May. The main arrival coming from 4th May onwards. A bird was being fed by Dunnocks on 14th May - an early date.

A rufous phase bird at North Duffield Carrs on 3rd June (T.E.D.). Several observers commented that this species was unusually common this year, even more so than in 1980. 15 singing birds located in Bishop Wood on 4th June.

The last birds were juveniles at Wressle on 5th September (A.G.H.) and at Naburn S.W. on 13th (J.G.)

BARN OWL *Tyto alba*

Bred at Wheldrake, Elvington and Riccall and recorded in the breeding season at Hagg Bridge, Storwood, Ellerton and Bubwith in the Lower Derwent and at Eastmoor and Wigginton.

Recorded elsewhere from Aughton Common, Bielby, Blackmoor, Brind, Cawood, Cliffe Common, Deighton, Dunnington Common, Escrick, Full Sutton, Fulford Golf Course, Grimston, near Howden, Buttons Ambo, Kelfield, Moreby Hall, Murton, Naburn S.W., Naburn, North Duffield Carrs, Woodthorpe and Wressle.

A welcome increase in records with birds noted at 31 sites (19 sites in 1980). However this may have been due in part, to birds being more obvious during the cold weather in December when more birds than usual were reported, including a bird hunting in bright sunlight at 1400 hrs. at North Duffield Carrs on 19th.

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

Bred at Wheldrake area (four pairs), Stillingfleet (two pairs), North Duffield (two pairs), Healaugh, Storwood, Elvington, Kexby, Ellerton, Dunnington Common, Brandsby, Peel Park, Skewsby and Naburn Sewage Works.

Present in the breeding season at Bielby, Laytham, Whitmoor, Spellar Park, Sutton-on-Derwent, Wressle, Grimston, near Howden, Skipwith and Deighton.

Outside the breeding season noted at Heslington, Bugthorpe, Oxton, Wistow, Woodthorpe, Whitwell on the Hill, Crayke and Rufforth.

With 18 pairs known to have bred and another 10 located in the

breeding season this species has reached a new level of occurrence. Whilst this is only a small proportion of the true numbers, it does indicate a very healthy population.

One was apparently roosting inside a factory at Wheldrake on 1st December.

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

More breeding records received this year with four pairs in Fulford/Naburn S.W. area and single pairs at Dunnington Common, Wheldrake Ings, Cawood, Wheldrake village, Sutton Wood and Skipwith Common. Recorded elsewhere from 19 sites throughout the area, in view of the sedentary nature of this species it is probable that breeding occurred at these sites also.

A grey phase bird at Skipwith on 7th September (T.E.D.). A record of seven birds calling noisily at Brandsby in mid-morning of 20th December during the cold weather lacks any obvious explanation (P.H.).

LONG-EARED OWL *Asia otus*

Only two records received this year. One at the University black-bird roost on 23rd January (T.E.D.) and one at Yearsley Moor on 14th May (H.O.B.). The first time breeding has not been proved in the area since 1975.

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asia flammeus*

A return to the normal level of occurrence after the poor numbers in 1980. Birds were seen as follows: one at Wheldrake Ings on 13th February with two at Poppleton the next day. One at Wheldrake Ings on 15th March and a very late bird at North Duffield Carrs on 12th May.

The first returning bird was at Strensall Common on 15th and 16th August. An obvious arrival in late September/early October with one at Wheldrake Ings on 27th; an obvious migrant flew south along the Ouse in York city centre in mist and drizzle on 1st (D.B.). One at Aughton next day, two on Elvington Airfield on 4th, one at North Duffield Carrs on 10th and 11th had increased to two by 17th which were seen regularly there and at Aughton to year end. One at Wheldrake Ings on 24th. One found dead at Elvington Airfield on 4th November, singles at Elvington Industrial Estate on 26th and 9th/10th December. One at Poppleton on 1st December, two at Riccall Ings from 9th to year end, two at Fulford Golf Course on 18th and one at University on 26th.

NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus*

First returning bird was at Skipwith Common on 13th May. Bred at Allerthorpe Common (five males), Skipwith Common (four males) and Strensall Common (three males). (See page 21). One was found dead between Bielby and Allerthorpe on 16th August. (R.D.)

BEE-EATER *Merops apiaster*

One flew south at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd May (G.S.). First record for the area. (See page 27). Accepted by British Birds Rarities Committee.

SWIFT *Apus apus*

The first was early, over York on 22nd April (G.S.). The next being two at Fulford on 6th May with the main arrival over the next two days. Few large concentrations noted, 188 at Naburn S.W. on 9th May with 100 at Wheldrake Ings next day. An interesting movement of 750 south over Wheldrake Ings between 0830 and 1100 hrs. on 17th May (B.C.P.) may have involved a re-orientation of overshooting migrants, winds were south-easterly on previous days. 150 at Naburn S.W. on 29th June, 500 over North Duffield Carrs on 22nd July. Most had left by late August but two at Garrowby on 7th September (D.W.) and two over North Duffield Carrs on 3rd October (A.F.).

An aberrant bird at Newton Mask on 9th June showed plumage characteristics of Alpine Swift *Apus melba* (T.W., V.W.). (See page 23).

KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

Bred at Fulford Ings (two pairs), Poppleton and Wheldrake Ings. Present in breeding season at New Earswick and Barlow Grange. Noted elsewhere from University, Dringhouses Pond, Strensall Common, Holgate Road - York, York Foss, Moreby Hall, Crockey Hill, Naburn,

Cawood, Escrick, Brandsby Dale, Dunnington Common, Malton, Bielby Beck and Riccall.

The slow recovery from the depletions of the 78/79 winter continues, as shown below. However the severe weather at year end, when only two birds were reported, may well have reversed this.

Year			Sites Recorded	Known Breeding Pairs
1978	1979	1980	20	7 + 1
1981			13	4 4
			1? 20	

WRYNECK *Jynx torquilla*

One in a suburban street at Copmanthorpe on 1st September was seen to walk along the pavement at one stage (D.F.)

Fourth record for the area.

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

Many records received. The species is seemingly well established in two distinct habitat types - the wooded scarps of the Howardian Hills and Wolds, with records from 14 sites stretching from Newborough in the west to Garrowby in the east; and the lowland heaths in the York plain with records from 10 sites around Skipwith, Strensall, Allerthorpe and Dunnington Commons and Wheldrake Woods.

Recorded elsewhere from Middlethorpe, Warthill, Poppleton and Barmby Moor.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major*

Noted at a record 46 sites in all months from all suitably wooded parts of the area. Now well established in York suburbs.

One flying east at New Earswick at dusk on 28th January and three together similarly next day may have been going to roost (D.B.).

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos minor*

Bred at Newburgh and probably at Archbishop's Palace where a bird was calling on 29th March and a young bird seen on 9th July. Recorded elsewhere at Fulford Ings on 15th March and 19th September, a male drumming at Askham Bog on 12th, singles at Elvington on 8th May, Ampleforth on 4th July and New Earswick on 24th August and 3rd October.

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

A bird with unusual buzzing song, locked all liquid notes of normal Skylark was holding territory on Walmgate Stray near the University from March to the end of May (J.H.L., D.B.).

100 flew east over Stamford Bridge on 3rd January and 184 flew east over Fulford Ings on 18th. Flocks of between 30 and 80 at Escrick, Cawood, Selby, Fulford Golf Course, Wheldrake, North Duffield, Anchor Plain and Poppleton from January to March and October to year-end.

100 flew east over Wheldrake Ings on 3rd October (T.B., R.S.) and 115 there on 7th November. 300 at Brighton on 12th December, 87 flew west over Dunnington Common on 14th and 70 west over North Duffield on the same date coincided with severe weather conditions when also several birds were recorded in suburban York gardens.

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

The first arrivals were two at Ellerton on 29th March (G.S.) and two at Bubwith Ings the same date (D.B., T.E.D.) 31 flew north over Wheldrake Ings between 1130 hrs and 1215 hrs on 3rd April (T.W., V.W.). 60 at dusk at Wheldrake Ings on 11th April (D.W.).

The last was at Wheldrake Ings on 4th

October (D.W.).

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

The first bird flew north over the University on 26th March (T.E.D.) then mainly singles during the first two weeks in April at Riccall, Osmotherly, Naburn Sewage Works, Bubwith, Sutton-on-Derwent, Wheldrake Ings, Cawood and Stamford Bridge. Large roosts in the Lower Derwent moved between Aughton and Wheldrake Ings and held up to 18,000 birds: 10,000 at Wheldrake Ings on 26th August (G.S.) and on 12th September (D.W.), 7,000 at Aughton on 29th August (G.S.) increased to 18,000 on 3rd and 4th September (B.C.P., T.E.D.), numbers gradually dropped at Wheldrake Ings to 5,000 on 25th September (T.B.) and 1,500 on 27th. 1,000 moved south-east over Wheldrake Ings on 3rd October (T.B., R.S.). Up to six at several localities to mid October with the last an immature bird at Naburn Sewage Works on 11th November (J.H.L.)

Birds roosted in wheat fields near Askham Bryan; one roost held 30 birds from 12th to 23rd July which then moved south west closer to the Village. Another roost of up to 300 until the second week of August with only 90 left by 21st when birds moved to an area south of Copmanthorpe. (Nature Notebook, *Yorkshire Evening Press*, 8th August, 1981).

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbica*

First of spring were singles at Heslington (P.W.) and Naburn on 14th April (P.R.) 100 over Strensall Common on 16th May and 27th June. 200 at Naburn Sewage Works on 28th June and 500 at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd October were maxima.

The last birds were singles at Naburn Sewage Works on 6th November and Wiggington on 7th (per T.E.D.).

An aberrant bird at Strensall Common on 26th June, had white head and body, wings and tail grey (D.W.).

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

Bred at: Bonnygate, Thorganby Common, Bishop Wood, Wheldrake Ings, Skipwith Common, Strensall Common, Garrowby, four pairs at Peel Park, three pairs at Grimston and one pair at Stearsby Hagg, Colton Wood and near Tillmire Common.

First record was of two at Anchor Plain on 7th April.

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

Bred in SE 57, 67 and at Naburn Sewage Works, Fulford Ings, Skipwith Common, University, Lower Derwent and Strensall Common.

Present in small numbers throughout the area during winter months with some large counts of 80 at Fulford Ings from 17th to 29th January increased to 400 on 14th and 15th February then numbers dropped to 150 by month-end (T.E.D.). Up to 108 at Naburn Sewage Works in January, 131 in February, 96 in November and 200 in December (J.G., B.D., D.W.), 25 on Dunnington Common on 16th September (T.W., V.W.), 45 at Skipwith Common on 21st (P.P.) increased to 100 on 18th October (T.E.D.).

ROCK PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta petrosus*

Two at Naburn Sewage Works from 7th to 12th November and one still present on 14th (B.C.P., J.G., D.B., D.W., T.E.D., J.H.L., B.D.).

A bird showing characters of the Water Pipit *A. s. spinoletta* was at Naburn Sewage Works from 15th December to year-end (B.D., J.G.). First and second records for the area.

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*

Bred at: 12 sites in the Lower Derwent, Naburn Sewage Works, Sutton-on-Derwent, Thornton, Melbourne, Kirkby Wharfe, Strensall Common, two pairs at Bielby and Middlethorpe Ings.

The first bird was early at Bubwith Bridge on 26th March (R.H.). Six at Naburn Sewage Works on 10th April and 18 at Wheldrake Ings on 20th (B.C.P.) 30 at Loftsome Bridge on 13th September and one at Wharfe Ings on 3rd October was the last (D.W.).

A bird showing characters of the Blue headed race *M. f. flava*, was at Anchor Plain near Strensall on 13th April (R.A.I.).

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

Bred at: Garrowby with at least two juveniles fledged (D.W.) and probably bred at Castle Howard and Crambe Beck.

Mainly singles recorded throughout the area from 19 localities in all months with October and November producing most records. The severe weather in December brought a bird to a suburban garden at Woodthorpe on 16th (D.W.) and two in Rougier Street, York City centre on 17th (per T.E.D.).

PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba*

Maxima counts were: 700 roosting at York Carriage Works and roosts at Naburn Sewage Works of 75 in January, 111 in February, 75 in November and 80 during December (J.G., B.D.).

A roost of 55 near Wheldrake Ings bridge from the end of March to 10th April (T.B.). Up to 50 at the University in September, 40 at Loftsome Bridge on 3rd September, 60 flew over Fulford Ings towards Naburn Sewage Works at dusk on 4th October (D.W.), 20 flew east to roost over New Earswick on 5th and a count from two flocks totalled 45 which flew south-east over Acaster Malbis on 7th (D.W.). 21 at Brighton on 12th December.

Two birds fed on bread and seed in a York garden during severe spell in mid-December.

Single birds showing characters of the White Wagtail *M. a. alba* were at Naburn Sewage Works from 4th April to 20th May (J.G., B.D.), Anchor Plain on 10th April (R.A.I.), Kirby Wharfe on 23rd (S.M.L.) and Wheldrake Ings on 18th October (D.B., T.E.D., E.B.B.).

WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulus*

Two at Tadcaster Road in early January (per T.E.D.)
Singles at Heslington on 11th November, Badger Hill on 18th (per T.E.D.) and Rowntrees Factory, York from 5th to 8th December (B.C.P. et al). Two at the University on 23rd December (per T.E.D.)

DIPPER *Cinclus cinclus*

One singing at Crambe Beck on 22nd February (D.B.) and present there during spring and probably bred. One at Kirkham Abbey on 3rd May (T.B.).

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Numbers throughout the area appear to be unchanged from 1980.

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*

Several groups of up to 20 observed during severe cold spell in December.

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

A nest with four eggs at the University on 18th March (T.E.D.).

25 at Anchor Plain on 28th January (R.A.I.), up to ten on Strensall Common Nature Reserve in February, 12 there on 11th April and up to six in other months (M.H., P.H.). 15 in West Bank Park, Acomb, York on 7th April were the only records.

NIGHTINGALE *Luscinia luscinia*

A bird in Bishop Wood on 4th June (per T.E.D.) and one at Naburn Sewage Works on 18th June (J.G.).

REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

A decrease in numbers this year.

Bred at: Peel Park and Grimston Wood (P.H.).
A Male at Castle Howard on 20th April (T.B.), a female at Escrick on 3rd May, one singing at Garrowby on 4th June (D.W.) a juvenile on the Knavesmire on 9th August (D.W.) and one at Selby Brick Ponds on 17th September (P.R.).

WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*

Bred at: Strensall Common but no counts made and a family party noted at Ryther.

Singles at Brandsby on 14th May, North Duffield on 26th, Allerthorpe Common on 15th and 16th June, Wheldrake Ings on 19th, 2nd, 12th and 31st July. Single juveniles at Bielby on 23rd July, Oxtun on 30th August and at the University on 3rd and 10th September and Wheldrake Ings on 13th, 12 along river banks at Cawood on 2nd September (D.B.), a pair on Hobmoor on 9th and 11th September and two near Allerthorpe on 10th September.

STONECHAT *Saxicola torquata*

A female at Wheldrake Ings on 16th and 18th October (T.B., D.W.).

WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

The first spring bird was a female at Bubwith on 5th April (G.S.), then 15 records of mainly singles throughout the area up to 29th May.

Autumn passage records were one at Heworth Golf Course on 8th September (B.C.P.), up to seven on Hobmoor from 9th to 13th (I.M.), two at Loftsome Bridge on 13th and the last was at Stearsby Village on 9th October (P.H.).

RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus*

A male and two females near the University on 9th April (.J.H.L.). A male near Scrayingham on 6th October (P.M.).

Second and third records for the area.

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

First nest and eggs at Aughton on 11th April (G.S.). A bird in full song in Nunnery Lane York on 17th January (D.B.). Up to 700 in roost at the University in January, numbers dropped to 100 by early March and 20 to 30 during summer, increased to 150 in November and 400 at year-end (T.E.D.). Fulford Ings held 62 on 22nd January, 90 on 8th February, 69 on 14th and 62 on 8th November (B.D., J.G.). 70 on Heworth Golf Course on 8th September (E.G.P.) and 157 at Anchor Plain on 21st October (R.A.I.). A colour ringed male at the University throughout the year is now 11 years old.

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

Maxima early month counts were: 300 at Storwood on 25th January 500 at Ellerton on 8th February, 678 at Anchor Plain on 22nd March, 400 at Aughton from 22nd to 29th and 438 at Anchor Plain on 30th. Up to 300 were still present in the Lower Derwent Valley until the 26th April, numbers dropped rapidly in May with 70 at East Cottingwith on 2nd, 47 at Dunnington Common on 4th and five at Wistow on 6th (I.M.) were the last.

First of the autumn were: one at the University on 12th October (T.E.D.) and two over Dringhouses on 13th (D.W.). Main influx occurred between 14th and 21st October with 300 to 600 birds recorded at Brandsby, New Earswick, Stamford Bridge, Selby, Anchor Plain and the Lower Derwent. Up to 1,000 in October and November at Wheldrake Ings and 800 at Scrayingham on 16th November were the largest counts.

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

The only records were: 16 on Fulford Ings on 4th February, 45 at Heworth Golf Course on 8th (B.C.P.) and 48 at Anchor Plain on 21st October (R.A.I.).

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

Up to 70 on Hobmoor in January and February, nocturnal passage over Cawood on 15th March (D.B.), 100 at Fulford Ings on 18th, 200 at Strensall Common Nature Reserve on 21st and 57 near Bubwith on 22nd, 143 between Naburn and Bishopthorpe on 2nd April, 20 at Wheldrake Ings on 15th, 17 near Fulford on 17th and the last was a single at Strensall Common on 26th (D.B.).

Three at Fulford on 4th October were the first of the autumn. Nocturnal passage over York on 6th (T.E.D.). Up to 20 at several localities from 8th to 15th then numbers increased generally with maxima of 200 at Anchor Plain during the third week in October and 300 at Wheldrake Ings on 1st November. Severe weather in December brought 30 birds to a suburban wood in York and four were found dead in one garden at Brandsby (P.H.)

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*

Post breeding counts of up to 40 on Strensall Common Nature Reserve in August and up to 70 near Brandsby at the end of August (P.H.), 20 to 30 birds recorded in September at Fulford Golf Course Heworth Golf Course (E.G.P.), Knavesmire, University and Strensall. 28 at Castle Howard on 14th October (D.W.) and birds fed from bird tables in Brandsby during severe December weather (P.H.).

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia*

Numbers were well down compared with the good year of 1980.

Single singing birds recorded from Rufforth Tip during May, Melbourne on 14th May, Anchor Plain on 22nd and Cliffe Common on 8th and 21st July. Two birds on Wheldrake Ings and Skipwith Common during July and August.

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

24 pairs bred at Wheldrake Ings the same number as in 1980 but still down on the 1979 count of 50 pairs. 14 pairs bred between Naburn and Bishopthorpe. Three pairs on Anchor Plain. These were the only breeding records received.

The first and last dates came from Wheldrake Ings, one on 12th April (B.C.P.) and 29th September (T.E.D.).

REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Bred at: six pairs at Wheldrake Ings, six pairs at Naburn Sewage Works, three pairs at Castle Howard and two pairs at Hag Bridge. Also bred but no counts made at Askham Bog, Strensall Common, Skipwith Common and Rosscarrs.

First of spring was at Naburn Sewage Works on 3rd May

(T.E.D.).

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

Bred at: Anchor Plain, Cawood, North Duffield, Skipwith, Escrick, Aughton, Wheldrake Ings, Naburn Sewage Works and two pairs on Dunnington Common. One pair at Fulford Ings which reared at least two young, this was the only definite breeding pair there, although five birds were singing in the area during May. Probably bred at Garrowby where a pair was present throughout June.

First spring bird was at Wheldrake Ings on 20th April (R.S.). One near Fulford and at Low Catton on 23rd April, singles at Aughton on 29th and 7th May (H.B.) 14 on Anchor Plain on 27th May (R.A.I.), one at Bugthorpe on 19th and 28th June, three singing at Outgang Heslington during June and July (J.H.L.), two near Fulford on 25th July and one in a garden in Selby on 16th August (P.R.). The last was at the University on 8th September (J.H.L.).

WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

Another good year with numbers higher than 1980.

The first was at Naburn Sewage Works on 3rd May (T.E.D.) and the last was on Heworth Golf Course on 8th September (B.C.P.)

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

Bred at Dunnington Common, Escrick, Dalby Hagg, Stearsby Gill, Peel Park, Brandsby Dale, three pairs at Grimston, one pair at Bielby and Garrowby. Single singing birds recorded from Bishop Wood, near Wheldrake, Castle Howard, Fulford Ings, Allerthorpe and Rufforth. Two singing at Bielby (plus breeding pair), two at Thicket Priory on 21st June and one at Garrowby in June (plus breeding pair). One on Anchor Plain on 13th May (E.G.P., R.A.I.).

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*

Recorded breeding from Dunnington Common, Grimston, Maidensworth, High Wood, Coxwold, Gilling, Hovingham, Laytham, eight pairs at Naburn Sewage Works, six pairs at Bielby, three pairs at Bishopthorpe and three pairs in Fulford Hall area.

Over-wintering birds were a male at Thorpe Willoughby on 25th January

(H.R.); a female at Acomb on 1st February (H.R.) and a female at a bird table at Haxby on 7th (per J.H.L.). A male at a bird table in Huntington from 29th November to 8th December (per J.H.L.) and a female at Thorpe Willoughby on 25th December (H.R.).

First of spring was at the Water Works, Acomb on 8th April (T.C.) and then at five localities on 10th and 12th.

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Singing birds were: one at Moorlands on 27th April (R.T.), one in Stubb Wood on 5th May (F.W.O.), two at Brayton Barff on 10th and singles at Bishop Wood (R.H.) and Strensall Common (A.G.H., A.H.) on 16th/near Stockton-on-the Forest on 27th (R.S.) and a bird at Warthill Common during May (I.E.).

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*

Recorded breeding from: High Wood, Peel Park, Low Farm, Brandsby, Strensall and Skipwith.

The first birds to arrive were near Elvington on 19th March (J.G.) and at Fulford Ings on 22nd (J.G., V.G.). Late records were three at Naburn Sewage Works on 24th November (per T.E.D.) and one on Skipwith Common from 4th to 29th (P.P.).

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

No breeding counts were made this year.

The first migrants were three on Skipwith Common on 3rd April (T.W.) and five at the University on 7th increased to 12 by the 10th (T.E.D.). The last bird was at Wharfe Ings on 3rd October (D.W.).

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*

Another good year with breeding again in SE 57, 67 and 77, also bred at Skipwith Common, near the University, Bishop Wood, Allerthorpe Common, Strensall Common and at least six pairs at Garrowby (D.W.). Probably bred at Bielby and Kirby Wharfe.

Up to six at Strensall Common Nature Reserve from January to March and at least 30 birds in Hazelbush Plantation during January.

18 at Garrowby on 2nd October, 25 in Hazelbush Plantation from mid-October to year-end. 100+ at Scoreby Wood on 16th October, 30 at Wheldrake Ings on 18th and 23 on Anchor Plain on 21st. Up to 15 on Strensall Common Nature Reserve in November and ten in December (P.H., M.H.). 114 on Skipwith Common on 21st November (T.E.D., E.B.E.) 30+ at Scoreby Wood on 23rd December and 12 on Allerthorpe Common on 29th.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*

Another good year with successful breeding pairs recorded throughout the area.

One at Strensall Common on 2nd May (P.H., M.H.) was the first and two at Garrowby on 22nd September (D.W.) were the last.

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*

A male at Anchor Plain on 1st and 5th May (A.C., R.A.I.) and a bird at Wheldrake Ings on 13th June (T.M.C.).

BEARDED TIT *Panurus biarmicus*

Two females at Wheldrake Ings on 10th May (T.B.), and 12 there on 18th October (D.B., T.E.D., E.B.B.).

Fourth and fifth records for the area.

LONG TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*

Winter parties of 15 to 40 throughout the area.

MARSH TIT *Parus palustris*

In some northern and eastern parts of the area this species is more numerous than Willow Tit *P. montanus*

Breeding occurred at Castle Howard, Stearsby, Oliver Wood, Brandsby Bank, three pairs at Garrowby, two pairs at Dale Pond and two pairs at Askham Bog. One pair at Naburn Sewage Works, Landing Lane near Wheldrake Ings, Bishopthorpe and near Newton Carr.

Three on Dunnington Common on 11th January. Mainly singles recorded from Yearsly, Hazelbush Plantation, Moreby Hall, Stubb Wood, Wigganthurpe, Upper Helmsly area, Sand Hutton area and in Thicket Priory.

WILLOW TIT *Parus montanus*

Recorded breeding from: Brandsby, High Dale, Blackwood, Stearsby Wood, Bielby (P.H.) and Garrowby (D.W.). Three pairs on Thorganby Common, two pairs at Skipwith Common, one pair with nine young in Wheldrake Woods and one pair with three young at Naburn Sewage Works.

Up to three birds recorded from 16 other localities throughout the area.

A bird showing characters of the North European form *P. m. borealis* at Seaton Ross on 23rd December (D.I.M.W.). Two birds showing characters of the larger pale Scandinavian form *P. m. borealis* were on Skipwith Common on 24th December (T.E.D., E.B.B.).

COAL TIT *Parus ater*

The only breeding record was from Dunnington Common.

Mainly single birds during winter months in SE 57, 67, 77, 56, 66, 76 and at Bielby.

All other records were present on Skipwith in May and June but no counts made. Cawood in August, up to eight on Strensall Common Nature Reserve from October to year-end, two at Wheldrake Ings on 26th October, two at Sand Button on 18th November, 20 at Hazelbush Plantation on 5th December and 11 in Scoreby Wood on 23rd (D.W.).

BLUE TIT *Parus caeruleus*

52 on Fulford Ings on 25th January, 24 on 8th February, up to 40 on Strensall Common Nature Reserve in July, August, September and December. 18 at Anchor Plain on 21st October and 17 on Dunnington Common on 26th December were maxima counts.

GREAT TIT *Parus major*

15 on Dunnington Common in January, 18 at Naburn Sewage

Works in February and up to 20 most months on Strensall Common Nature Reserve (M.H., P.H.) were the only counts.

NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

Bred at: Moorlands Nature Reserve, Brandsby, Newborough, Coxwold and one pair with at least one young near Bishopthorpe. Probably bred at Castle Howard and Kirkham area.

One at Garrowby from 27th August to 30th September and two there on 18th September (D.W.). One at New Earswick on 8th September (D.B.) and a single on the Knavesmire on 2nd December (T.W., "W.).

TREE CREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

Recorded breeding from: Dunnington Common, Blackmoor, High Wood, Brandsby, Naburn Sewage Works, Fulford Ings, the University, Bielby, Thicket Priory, Bishopthorpe, Acaster Malbis, Sand Button, Upper Helmsley and Garrowby.

Also recorded from Scoreby Wood, Wheldrake Woods, Wheldrake Ings, Buttercrambe and Strensall.

RED BACKED SHRIKE *Lanius collurio*

An immature at the University on 2nd September (T.E.D) and a male on Heworth Golf Course on 7th (S.C.).

First and second records for the area.

GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor*

A bird in the University area from 1st January to 22nd March (.B.G.P., T.E.D. et al), was heard singing in mid-February and early March (T.E.D., et al). Observed taking Short-tailed Field Voles *Microtus ogrestis* on several occasions and impaling the body of one to a Hawthorn hedge on 10th January (T.E.D., E.B.B.) was also seen to take a Dunnock *Prunella modularis* on a different date. Several attacks on Blue Tit *Parus careuleus* and Siskin *Carduelis spinus* were unsuccessful. One at Fulford Ings on 13th February, 15th and 22nd March (T.E.D.) was no doubt the University bird.

Singles at Strensall Common on 5th January (D.W.), Anchor Plain on 5th March (R.A.I.) and near Elvington on 22nd December (T.B.).

JAY *Garrulus glandarius*

This species is always under recorded with breeding reported from only 12 localities spread throughout the area.

An increase in numbers in the Stillingfleet to Naburn and Thorganby/ Skipwith areas in late September and throughout October could possibly be vagrant evidence (D.I.M.W.).

MAGPIE *Pica pica*

Common throughout the area with mainly up to six birds recorded. Up to 40 near Huntington during winter months was the only high count (B.C.P.).

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*

Recorded breeding from Brandsby, Gilling, Fulford and Bishopthorpe.

Maxima counts were: 70 at Anchor Plain in February, 300 at Garrowby in June and 300 at Escrick in July.

A flock of 2,000 corvids, 50% of which were jackdaws flew west near Buttercrambe Wood at 1900 hrs. on 23rd September (J.H.L.). 150 at North Duffield on 4th October, 60 at Escrick on 9th, 200 at Castle Howard on 15th and 70 near Barton-le-Willows on 22nd (B.C.P.).

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

Largest gatherings were: 430 near Hovingham in January, 560 at Bubwith on 18th, 400 at Wheldrake Ings and 400 at

North Duffield in October, 2,300 near Buttercrambe on 16th November, 2,000 near Stamford Bridge during November (B.C.P.) and 380 near Barton-le-Willows on 22nd (B.C.P.).

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*

The only large count was of 110 on Anchor Plain on 27th February (R.A.I.).

Young birds showing white inner webbing to primaries at New Earswick from June to year-end (D.B.).

STARLING *Sturnus Vulgaris*

Leucistic birds at Devon Place, York on 3rd January (A.P.) and on North Duffield Carrs on 15th March.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

A female was observed taking nest material into a hole in the roof of an outbuilding at Haxby on the 4th January.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*

The only recorded breeding colony was of 20 pairs at Wistow (I.M.).

Two fed regularly at a bird table in Heworth, York from 17th to 26th December with four on 27th and an unusually large flock of 29 fed in the garden with Greenfinches *Carduelis chloris* and House Sparrows *P. domesticus* on 29th and 20 on 30th and 31st (J.H.L.) One fed on peanuts in a garden at Bishopthorpe in December (per T.E.D.) and eight on a bird table at Hobmoor on 23rd and 26th.

Maxima counts were: January; 50 at Anchor Plain, 25 at Bonnygate, 50 at Haxby and 100 on Dunnington Common. March: 70 on Anchor Plain, 30 at Acaster Malbis and 100 on Ellerton Tip. 60 at Fulford Ings in October, 30 at Naburn in November increased to 40 on 12th December. 187 at Brighton on 12th December, 50 at North Duffield on 13th, 35 at Poppleton on 16th, 38 at Thicket Priory on 19th and 50 at Escrick on 30th.

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

One in full song at New Earswick on 28th January (D.B.). 110 on Strensall Common on 11th January, 50 at Stillingfleet on 19th, 30 at Beech Grove York on 21st (B.C.P.) and 150 at roost in Sandburn Wood on 30th (D.W.). 80 at Gate Helmsley on 16th February, 40 at Anchor Plain on 27th, 30 at Askham Bog on 28th, 120 at roost in Stub Wood on 7th March, 30 at Sand Hutton on 5th April and 35 at Upper Helmsley on 22nd.

Up to 60 on Strensall Common Nature Reserve in October and 40 during November. 40 at Catterton on 8th November, 100 at Castle Howard on 15th, 72 on Skipwith Common on 21st and up to 100 at Hazelbush Plantation in November and December. 34 on Dunnington Common on 16th December, up to 30 at Thicket Priory in December and 100+ at Scoreby on 15th (D.W.) were maxima counts.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

Maxima were: Up to 200 in the Carr Lane area York during January, 100 in February with numbers dropping to 20 during March (B.C.P., F.F. et al). 200 at Malton from 1st to 7th January (per T.E.D.). 40 at Moorlands on 22nd March (A.C.), up to 38 at Anchor Plain in March, 17 in April (R.A.I.).

REDPOLL *Acanthis flammea*

Maxima counts were: up to 200 at Haxby in January, 150 in February and 300 in March (D.W.). Up to 50 at Strensall Common Nature Reserve from January to March, 25 at Stamford Bridge on 30th March, 30 at Strensall in April and 50 at Upper Helmsley on 22nd.

Up to 20 at Wheldrake Ings in August, 110 flew west over Wheldrake Ings on 18th September and up to 50 there on

several dates in September and October. Up to 30 on Strensall Common in October, 100 on Skipwith Common on 17th and 24th September, 100 at Middlethorpe Ings on 10th October, 79 at Anchor Plain on 21st and 143 at Fulford Golf Course on 28th (J.H.L.). 30 at Hazelbush Plantation in October and November, 31 at the University on 9th November and 50 on Anchor Plain on 11th. 80 at Naburn Sewage Works on 14th December, 40 at Askham Bog on 30th and up to 20 in the Lower Derwent during December.

A bird showing characters of the Mealy Redpoll A.f. *flammea* was in a flock of nine Redpoll A. f. *cabaret* at Bank Island Wheldrake Ings on 13th December (T.B.).

CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*

A male in full song at Black Dyke Plantation, Sand Button on 4th March and three observed in flight and calling the following day and two there on 6th and one on 20th (D.W.). A female at Allerthorpe Common on 29th December (A. P.) and two in Wheldrake Woods on 30th (J.H.L.).

A male killed by a car at Hovingham in mid-November was large and approached Parrot Crossbill; *L. pytyopsittacus*, proportions.

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

A late juvenile at Cawood on 19th September (D.B.). 32 at Anchor Plain on 21st October, up to 25 there in November and December and 17 at Naburn Sewage Works on 14th December were the only counts.

HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

The most ever recorded with at least 26 individuals observed from eight localities.

A male at Fulford Ings on 8th February (E.B.B.), seven at Lilling Wood on 17th (P.H.), one at Anchor Plain on 13th April (R.A.I.) and singles at Upper Helmsley on 19th, 20th and 24th May with three there on 23rd (D.W.). A pair at Sand Hutton on 3rd June (D.W.), six at Bishop Wood on 4th (T.W., V.W., T.E.D.), an adult feeding a juvenile at Tillmire Farm on 12th (T.C.), three near Farlington on 4th July (P.H.) and a male on Fulford Ings on 9th October (T.E.D.).

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citrinella*

Largest counts were: up 40 at Naburn Ponds in January, 200 in. a mixed flock of this species and Corn Bunting *Miliaria calandra* at North Duffield on 1st January (R.H.), 25 at Stillingfleet on 19th, 82 on Dunnington Common on 5th March, 26 at Anchor Plain on 22nd and 30 at Sand Hutton on 5th April. 80 at North Duffield on 13th December and 40 at Acaster Malbis same date. 30 at Scoreby on 15th, 17 at Catterton on 25th, 63 there on 27th and 20 at Bolton Percy same date.

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*

January maxima were 23 at Anchor Plain, 35 at North Duffield, 25 on Dunnington Common, 40 at Naburn Ponds, 170 at roost on Fulford Ings increased to 250 in February (T.E.D.). 30 at Brighton on 12th December, 100 at North Duffield on 13th, 32 at Thicket Priory on 17th, up to 30 at Naburn Ponds in December and 40 on Strensall Common Nature Reserve in December.

CORN BUNTING *Miliaria calandra*

Another good year for records of this previously under recorded species.

Recorded breeding from Bielby, Easingwold, Tollerton, Wiggington, Skipwith, Norton, Warthill, Stockton-on-the-Forest, Anchor Plain, Elvington, Lower Derwent, Ryther, five pairs in Stamford Bridge area and three in Naburn Sewage Works area.

Roost counts were: 15 at Knapton on 1st January, 50 at North Duffield on 4th, 60 on Fulford Ings in January increased to 70 on 10th February, 103 on 12th and 147 on 14th then numbers fell with 112 on 15th, 106 on 16th and 85 on 26th (T.E.D.). 47 at Aughton Ings on 25th October, 35

at Fulford Ings on 26th increased to 65 on 2nd and 3rd November, 75 at Riccall on 9th December, 30 at Acaster Malbis on 13th (D.W.) and 40 at North Duffield same date. 25 at Wheldrake Ings on 29th.

22 flew west over North Duffield on 5th October and 24 flew west there on 24th. Flocks of 18 and 30 at East Cottingwith on 18th November.

ADDENDUM

Once more several previously undocumented records, have reached the recorders. Thanks to all observers for furnishing past records.

Records are not attributed to observers unless they are contributors to the Y.O.C. report.

Any further outstanding records would be gratefully received.

RED-THROATED DIVER *Gavia stellata*

1979 One at Bubwith on 24th March (D.I.M.W.) was presumably the bird seen near Wheldrake on 18th March.

BLACK THROATED DIVER *Gavia arctica*

1979 One at Bubwith on 18th March (D.I.M.W.). First record for the area.

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

1979 An immature flew south at Acaster Selby on 15th April (D.W.)

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

1980 One pair reared three young on Pocklington Canal.

BEWICKS SWAN *Cygnus columbianus*

1976 125 on Lower Derwent on 20th March.

1980 20 adults at Acaster Selby on 12th and 13th February (D.W.)

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons*

1974 One at Castle Howard on 20th January and 24th February.

EGYPTIAN GOOSE *Alopochen aegypticus*

1979 A pair at Sutton-on-Derwent on 24th March (D.I.M.W.) were presumably the same as two at Hagg Bridge next day.

1980 One at Castle Howard on 27th July (T.B.). Third record for the area. All published with the escape/feral proviso.

RUDDY SHELDUCK *Tadorna ferruginea*

1976 Two on Lower Derwent (not one as previously published) on 18th September. Published with the escape/feral proviso.

SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

1980 A pair at Castle Howard on 14th and 16th May (D.W.).

GADWALL *Anas strepera*

1980 A pair at Everingham Carr on 6th May (D.I.M.W.)

TEAL *Anas crecca*

1980 Bred at Everingham Carr (D.I.M.W.)

GARGANEY *Anas querquedula*

1979 A male at a site in the Lower Derwent on 28th April, 12th May and 17th June.

(D.I.M.W.)

PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

1976 50 on Lower Derwent on 20th March.

POCHARD *Aythya ferina*

1979 490 on Lower Derwent on 4th March
(D.I.M.W.).

1980 1060 at Aughton on 10th February
(D.I.M.W.), 370 at Bank
Island on 30th October (T.B.)

SCAUP *Aythya marila*

1979 A female/immature at Bubwith on
24th December (D.I.M.W.)

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

1979 An immature male at Aughton on 10th
November (D.I.M.W.).

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

1979 One at Crambeck on 15th May.

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*

1979 One at Foggathorpe on 3rd February (D.I.M.W.)

1980 One at Bolton Percy on 18th November (T.B.).

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

1974 One at Skipwith Common on 11th July.

1976 One at Spaldington on 31st May.

As most Hobby records have been published as addenda
to annual reports the number and dates of records
have become somewhat confused. The records all of
single birds up to and including 1980 are as
follows:- Skipwith Common 11th

July 1974, Fulford 4th August 1974, Wheldrake Ings 11th
June 1975, Spaldington 31st May 1976, Wheldrake Ings 30th
April 1977 and 16th July 1978, Brandsby 3rd June 1979,
Wheldrake Ings 10th and 11th July 1979, Naburn Sewage Works
11th August 1979 and 1st June 1980.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*

1980 Bred at a site near Brighton. (per T.E.D.)

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius*

hiaticula 1979 20 at

Bubwith on 19th May.

GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

1976 1,300 at North Howden on 21st November

1979 1,250 near Howden on 10th October (D.I.M.W.)

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*

1979 One at Bubwith on 18th April (D.I.M.W.)

JACK SNIP *Lymnocyptes minimus*

1979 One at Bubwith on 1st April (D.I.M.W.)

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

1980 A flock of seven at Allerthorpe Common on 5th
November (T.B.)

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

1979 All records from Lower Derwent, three on 8th April,
three on
14th, six on 21st, seven on 22nd, one on 26th and
12th May.
One on 8th August.

1980 Three in Lower Derwent on 7th April.

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*

1979 One at Aughton on 16th and 17th June (D.I.M.W.)

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*

1980 Bred at Everingham Carr. (D.I.M.W.)

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

1979 One in Lower Derwent on 11th March (D.I.M.W.)

1980 Singles in Lower Derwent on 7th April and
19th August.
(D.I.M.W.)

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

1978 Five on the River Foulness near Holme-on-Spalding
Moor on
20th July (P.A.).

1979 Five on the River Foulness on 22nd July (P.A.).

1980 Six on the River Foulness on 25th July with four on
26th (P.A.).

An interesting series of records, unfortunately
the area was not checked in 1981.

LITTLE GULL *Larus minutus*

1979 A first year at Aughton on 12th June. (D.I.M.W.)

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus*

1973 A pair reared two young at
Skelton.

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

1977 One dead on road at Newton-on-
Ouse on 28th September (per T.E.D.)
.

NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus*

1979 Three singing males at Strensall
Common on 10th July (D.W.)

1980 One singing male at Strensall Common on
21st May (D.W.)

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

1979 One pair bred at Bielby (P.O.).
Present during breeding
season at Melbourne. (H.O.B.)

WOODLARK *Lullula arborea*

1976 One at Dunnington Common in May
(T.W.)

1980 One at Holme-on-Spalding Moor on 17th
January (D.I.M.W.)

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

1979 One showing plumage characteristics
of one of the grey,
eastern morphs - near Howden on 29th
September (D.I.M.W.).

1980 200 on Naburn Ings on 8th December
(J.H.L.)

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

1979 One at Bubwith on 24th March
(D.I.M.W.)

1980 One at Wheldrake Ings on 26th October
(T.B.)

WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulus*

1980 One at Water End on 25th December
(D.I.M.W.)

WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

1976 One near York on 29th March.

RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus*

1976 One male at Hob Moor, York on
6th May (I.M.). First record for
the area.

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

1980 14 at Buttercrambe on 14th
September (T.B.)

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Looustella naevia*

1979 One at Aughton on 12th May
(D.I.M.W.).

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca* | 1979 One
at Holme-on-Spalding Moor on 22nd September
(D.I.M.W.)

GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor*

1976 The bird reported as present at
Hob Moor, York on 6th May remained
in the area until 20th (I.M.).

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*

1980 A Hooded Crow *C.c. cornix* at Ulleskelf on 4th
November (T.B.)

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

1974 2,000 at Sheriff Hutton on 16th March

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*

1980 Three at Holme-on-Spalding Moor on 8th October
(D.I.M.W.)

REDPOLL *Acanthis flammea*

1980 One showing characteristics of the large
Greenland race *A.f. rostrata* at Water End on
8th February. ISO at Allerthorpe Common on
28th September (D.I.M.W.).

CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*

1979 Four in Bishop Wood on 12th June

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

1980 Birds showing characteristics of the northern race
P.p.pyrrhula
were seen as follows:- a pair at Seaton New
Hall on
22rx3December, the same birds at Bielby on 24th
and a male at Allerthorpe Common on 27th
(D.I.M.W.).

CORN BUNTING *Miliaria calandra*

1976 500 at Ross Carrs during August and 60 during
September (P.R.)

1978 150 to 200 roosted at Gascoigne Wood, near Selby
Coalfield in January.

1980 30 at Strensall Common on 4th May (D..W.).

THE FOLLOWING SPECIES HAVE ALSO BEEN RECORDED IN

THE AREA SINCE 1966 BUT DID NOT APPEAR IN 1981

RED-THROATED DIVER

BLACK-THROATED DIVER

SLAVONIAN GREBE

BLACK-NECKED GREBE

FULMAR

STORM PETREL

GANNET
NIGHT HERON
LESSER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE
EGYPTIAN GOOSE
RUDDY SHELDUCK
BLUE-WINGED TEAL
RED-CRESTED POCHARD
EIDER
COMMON SCOTER
VELVET SCOTER
BLACK KITE
RED KITE
MONTAGU'S HARRIER
ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD
RED-FOOTED FALCON
PEREGRINE
SPOTTED CRAKE
CRANE
DOTTEREL
KNOT
SANDERLING
PECTORAL SANDPIPER
CURLEW SANDPIPER
MEDITERRANEAN GULL
ICELAND GULL
SANDWICH TERN
ROSEATE TERN
LITTLE AUK
ALPINE SWIFT
HOOPOE
WOODLARK
RED-RUMPED SWALLOW
BLACK REDSTART
FIRECREST
RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER
GOLDEN ORIOLE
LAPLAND BUNTING
SNOW BUNTING
CIRL BUNTING
GRAND TOTAL 230 SINCE 1966

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