

# YORK ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB - REPORT 1988

## CLASSIFIED LIST

### LITTLE GREBE

At least 2 pairs bred in Lower Derwent and two pairs at Dale Pond, Brandsby and Sturge's Ponds, Selby. Probably bred at Strensall Common.

Few records in early months, with six at Bolton Perry and three in the Lower Derwent in January, two at Ryther and one in Lower Derwent in February. Two in Lower Derwent in early March until the first influx of breeding birds brought ten birds on 20th.

In Autumn, two at Clifton Airfield lake on 19th August and from 29th to 4th September. Three at Strensall Common on 4th September with four on 9th and one at Clifton Airfield lake from 25th to 8th October. Two on the Nidd at Moor Monkton on 26th, one on 30th with three on 8th November. Up to three birds in Lower Derwent from 28th November to year end.

### GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus*

Two pairs bred in Lower Derwent, one of which hatched two young which failed to fledge. Single pairs raised two young at Dringhouses Pond, Cawood and Castle Howard and three young at Terrington

Few records in early months, with two at Wheldrake Ings and one at Dringhouses Pond on 6th February and three at Wheldrake Ings on 25th. In March, up to eight at Castle Howard, up to two in Lower Derwent and one at Sherburn in Elmet. Ten in the Lower Derwent and six at Castle Howard in early April with pairs at Dringhouses Pond and Pond Head and a single at Bottom lake A bird at the University lake from 26th April to 4th May, when found dead. Up to five birds at Wheldrake Ings in May, four at Castle Howard, one at Clifton Airfield and a pair with two juveniles at Dringhouses Pond. Three at University Lake 2nd to 9th June and again on 15th.

A single bird at Clifton Airfield from 28th August until 22nd December. Up to six birds at Castle Howard in September, seven in October with the last on 13th November. An oiled bird at Wheldrake Ings on 29th and 31st December.

### BLACK-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps nigricollis*

Three at Wheldrake Ings on 14th May with one on 15th to 19th (TB,DR,MH). One at Clifton Airfield on 31st (S,Ro).

Fifth and sixth records for the area.

### CORMORANT

In the Lower Derwent, 23 bird days in January, 18 in February, 16 in March, 12 in April and 16 in May with maxima of four on 1st and 9th May. One present from 5th December to year end.

One on 14th April showed characteristics of the continental subspecies *p.c. sinensis*.

Second record for the area of this subspecies.

Elsewhere: singles at University Lake on 25th February and one flying around York Minster on 13th March, with two on River Ouse in York on 16th. Three between Riccall and Roscarrs from 26th October to early December.

### SHAG *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

An immature on River Foss at Castle Hills Bridge on 19th March

Fourth record for the area.

#### GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

Sixteen pairs bred in the Lower Derwent.

Until post-breeding dispersal the only numbers of note were six at Rosscarrs on 10th January and at Wheldrake Ings on 6th February.

On 31st May nine were at Wheldrake Ings, four at Poppleton on 14th June, up to 35 in June, 22 in July and 16 in August at Wheldrake Ings, with 16 at Melbourne on 7th August and seven at Rosscarrs on 9th.

Few records in the later months with only one from Castle Howard where this bird is now considered to be very scarce.

#### MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

Five pairs bred in lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal and single pairs at Rosscarrs and Riccall.

Winter numbers in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal were up to four in January, 14 in February, nine in March, two in September, five in October, 11 in November and eight in December.

Elsewhere, disappointingly few records with two at Poppleton on 27th and 28th January, a pair at Stearsby Pond on 23rd to 27th April and one at Clifton Airfield from 31st July to 6th August.

#### BEWICK'S SWAN

Numbers in the Lower Derwent /Pocklington Canal were such lower than usual . Maxima 23 on 19th January, 15 on 21st February and 21 on 23rd March the last. First returning bird was an early adult on 29th September, then no more until two adults on 27th October with two to four in November and up to 19 in December.

Elsewhere, three adults at Wharfe Ings from 6th to 7th February and two adults and an immature at Ozendyke Ings on 7th February.

#### WHOOOPER SWAN

Monthly maxima in the Lower Derwent were; 50 in January, 51 in February and 62 in March. Ten flew over Acomb on 24th April.

The first returning birds were four adults at Wheldrake Ings on 27th October, up to five in November slowly increased to 16 by year end.

#### BEAN GOOSE *Anser fabalis*

In Lower Derwent, five on 10th January, six on 11th, then two regularly to 20th February. In March, four on 5th, one on 6th, two on 7th and 9th and one on 21st. A late single on 10th April.

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

Up to four in the Lower Derwent from January until early March then 40 on 12th March, with one from 20th to 15th May. Two at Castle Howard on 12th, 20th and 26th March.

Thirtyone at Wheldrake Ings on 29th October, then regularly to year end with 56 on 14th November, 21 on 29th December and 52 next day.

One at Castle Howard from 13th to 23rd November.

#### WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons*

A bird of the nominate race in the Lower Derwent from 1st January to 12th March, with seven on 16th and eight next day.

A first-winter bird from 17th December to year end.

#### GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

At least 30 pairs bred in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal and one pair at Castle Howard. Maxima in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal were 300 in January, 158 in February end 205 in March. 242 in July, 130 in August, 100 in September. An extraordinary influx in October

with numbers increasing from 150 on 22nd to 560 on 24th and 500 on 25th, declining to 200 on 27th; were wild birds involved here? 350 in November and 250 in December.

At Castle Howard, 205 in January, 241 in February, 227 in March, 237 in April, 125 in September, 130 in October and 163 in November and 95 in December.

Elsewhere, 150 at Barlby on 13th February, 250 at Selby on 22nd. 150 at Knavesmire on 18th September and 65 at Brandsby on 16th October

#### SNOW GOOSE *Anser caerulescens*

Three white phase birds at Wheldrake Ings on 28th and 29th April.

#### CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

Bred in Lower Derwent, Pond Head, Stearsby and Strensall Common.

Reported throughout the area but with reduced numbers. Maximum in the Lower Derwent were: 270 in January, 360 in February and 90 in March. 90 in August, 92 in September, 200 in October, 350 in November and 400 in December.

A large decrease at Castle Howard where they may have been more susceptible to the landscaping disturbance in the early part of the year than the Greylag, with maximum number of 92 on 21st February. 201 were there in October and 77 in November.

Elsewhere, 31 at Clifton Airfield on 31st May and 54 at Bolton Percy Ings on 20th August.

#### BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*

Six at Castle Howard from 26th March to 3rd April.

Up to five in Lower Derwent from 21st October to year end.

#### BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla*

A bird showing the characteristics of the race *B.b.bernicla* at Wheldrake Ings from 19th to 31st May (TED, DR, DW&TH) .An extraordinary record of 120 circling Castle Howard on 27th October (DGS).

#### RUDDY SHELDUCK

A first-spring male at Wheldrake Ings from 7th to 27th May.

#### SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

Thirty pairs bred in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal

In the Lower Derwent/ Pocklington Canal area nowhere numerous, with maxima of 27 in January, 18 in February, 29 in March, one in November and five in December.

Six at Wharfe Ings on 10th January, 22 at Riccall on 31st March, three northwest at Poppleton on 11th May and five juveniles at Castle Howard on 8th August. Five at Newburgh on 11th October and an immature at Barlby on 26th.

#### WOOD DUCK *Aix sponsa*

A drake at North Duffield on 15th to 17th January and a female at Wheldrake Ings on 27th November (JT).

#### WIGEON *Anus penelope*

Five pairs probably bred in Lower Derwent.

Numbers in the Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal area were: 5500 in January, 5000 in February, 8132 in March, 640 in April, 2000 in October, 4500 in November and 4000 in December.

Elsewhere: 70 at Bolton Percy Ings, 62 at Ryther and 38 at Riccall on 7th January, one at Castle Howard on 30th August, 10th September and 13th November.

#### GADWALL

A record 16 pairs bred in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal.

Recorded regularly in the Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal area during the first part of the year with 14 on 2nd January, 13 on 10th and 24 on 30th. Twenty on 17th February then up to 19 until 1st March. Birds dispersed to breeding sites from late March and most had left the area by late June. A single bird on 30th July, five eclipse males on 19th August with one on 31st. Then up to four regularly to year end.

Elsewhere: One at Bolton Percy Ings on 10th January, three at Wharfe Ings on 6th February and Melbourne on 22nd March. One at Poppleton on 9th September.

#### TEAL

Ten pairs bred in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal.

In the Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal area maxima of 1000 in January, 3800 in February, 3900 in March, 500 in April, 550 in September, 2500 in October, 1000 in November and 1400 in December.

Elsewhere: up to 80 at Bolton Percy Ings, Wharfe Ings, Castle Howard and Moor Monkton.

#### MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*

Numbers in the Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal area again low with maxima 150 in January, 1100 in February, 3420 in March, 200 in April, 600 in August, 400 in September, 1000 in October 700 in November and 1500 in December.

Elsewhere: Up to 100 at Bolton Percy Ings, Sturge's Ponds, Rosscarrs, York city centre and Clifton Ings.

A dramatic decline at Castle Howard where the only number of note was 220 on 5th September.

#### PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

In the Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal area maxima were: 40 in January, 78 in February, 70 in March, 17 in April with birds there regularly until the last on 15th May.

The first returning bird was a single on 11th and 13th September, then two on 24th until 2nd October and a single until nine on 19th November increasing to 26 on 11th December and 29 on 29th. A relatively good showing.

#### GARGANEY *Anas querquedula*

Two pairs bred in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal, raising three young.

First, birds were a pair on 19th April and the last two juveniles on 31st July.

#### SHOVELER *Anas clypeata*

Another good year in the lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal with c60 pairs breeding.

Winter maxima here were 40 in January, 20 in February and 82 in March. Ten in September, 30 in October and November and two in December.

Elsewhere: a pair at Bolton Percy Ings on 7th January, a drake at Strensall Common on 28th June. At Castle Howard seven on 5th and nine on 8th October, 12 on 30th November with 13 on 4th and 11 on 9th December.

#### TUFTED DUCK

At least fifty pairs bred in the Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal but success was very low due to the inclement summer weather.

Winter maxima there were 60 in January, 130 in February and 175 in March. Very few in autumn with up to ten from September to year end.

Elsewhere up to 35 were recorded at, Sturge's Ponds, University Lake, Melbourne, Clifton Airfield, Strensall Common and Castle Howard.

#### POCHARD *Aythya ferina*

Another record year in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal with nine or ten pairs breeding, at least three of which raised young.

Winter maxima were 55 in January, 850 in February, 412 in March. Twelve in October, two in November and 91 in December.

Elsewhere: 30 at Castle Howard on 1st January 130 at Wharfe Ings on 6th and 7th February with 93 there on 13th and 110 on 14th. 72 at Castle Howard on 4th December.

#### GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*

Monthly maxima in Lower Derwent of 21 in January, 20 in February, 26 in March and 43 in April with the last on 28th April.

In autumn two in November from 19th and up to 14 in December.

Elsewhere, seven at Riccall on 6th April.

#### GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser*

A pair bred and raised eight young on the Rye at Butterwick (IAHC, JE). First breeding record for the area.

Monthly maxima at Castle Howard of 35 in January, 22 in February, eight in March. First returning birds there were two on 27th October then up to 67 in November and 97 in December.

In Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal up to 15 in January, 25 in February, 26 in March, nine in April and one on 1st May there the last. An immature flew north there on 15th June. Up to ten in November and seven in December.

Elsewhere: one at Amotherby on 24th May, three at Wharfe Ings on 21st August and two at Moor Monkton on 1st September.

#### COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*

A female at Dringhouses Pond, York on 15th May.

#### RUDDY DUCK *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Presumably bred in Lower Derwent where a drake on 25th April, a female from 4th to 15th May, two females on 16th, two pairs on 27th, two drakes and a duck from 29th to 4th June, two drakes on 7th and a juvenile on 27th.

#### HONEY BUZZARD

One flew over Thornton Ellers in Lower Derwent on 2nd June (TED).

Sixth record for the area

#### HEN HARRIER

In Lower Derwent an immature male on 1st May and single cream crowns on 3rd, 5th, 6th, 7th and 18th.

#### GOSHAWK

Display noted at a known site (site and observer's name withheld). In Lower Derwent a male on 5th January. Males on 12th October and 11th November (TED). A female on 14th November (TED, FWO) and singles on 28th and 5th December (TED). A good showing.

#### SPARROWHAWK

Still widespread throughout the region but fewer records received.

Records from York suburb's in winter still increasing. One found dead with its prey - a Collared Dove - in Heslington.

Monthly bird-days in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
9	2	6	14	4	2	7	1	12	18	15	10

A total of 100 bird-days compared with 105 in 1987. Again a suggestion of autumn passage.

#### OSPREY

An adult at Castle Howard on 31st July

## BUZZARD

Singles at Brandsby on 7th March, in the Tollerton/Coxwold/Yearsley area on 29th to 31st August, at Brandsby on September 6th (PH) and in Lower Derwent on 12th and 13th November.

## KESTREL

While few records were received the species remains widespread in the area and a common breeding bird.

## MERLIN

In the Lower Derwent one on 28th February two on 6th March and one on 7th and 14th. An immature was picked up with a broken wing and taken into care on 16th September, one on 13th October, two from 15th November to year end with a third bird on 8th December. Elsewhere: singles at Dunnington Common on 1st January, Riccall on 17th, Barlow on 26th, Naburn Sewage Works from 9th January to 22nd February, Cliffe Common on 5th February, Riccall on 2nd March and Sutton-on-the-Forest on 14th. In autumn, singles at Riccall on 10th August, Bishopthorpe on 11th December and Slingsby on 23rd.

## HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

An excellent year.

In Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal singles on 9th and 17th July, 8th, 28th and 31st August. In September, one on 1st, two on 2nd, 3rd and 4th, one on 5th; two on 6th, one on 7th, two on 8th and one on 19th and 21st.

Elsewhere: singles at Knapton on 1st June, Stockton-on-Forest on 5th; Tadcaster Road, York on 26th August, Dringhouses on 24th September and Tadcaster Road, York on 12th October.

## PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus*

Singles at Brandsby on 11th January and in Lower Derwent on 14th (161), 31st and 18th February.

## RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE

Whilst this species is more common than the following one the only coveys of any significance were 5 at North Duffield Carrs on 6th and 9th January, 22 at Crockey Hill on 20th October and 22 at Aughton on 23rd December. A bird within the city walls at Walmgate on 20th March (DW).

Four birds in Lower Derwent on 6th January included two with much reduced streaking below the gorget and were probably Red-leg x Chukar hybrids (TED).

## GREY PARTRIDGE

Continues to decline. An intensive search in the Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal revealed only six breeding pairs. The only other breeding record came from Spilsby near Brandsby. Only three double figure coveys noted: 11 at Bottom Lake, Ampleforth on 21st October, 14 at Butterwick on 7th November and 13 at Skewsby on 30th November.

Throughout January to April a note was made of every partridge seen in the Lower Derwent. This produced a mere 16 bird-days for this species, compared with 108 for the preceding species.

## QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*

Single singing males at Wheldrake Ings on 30th June (TED) and Butterwick on 2nd July.

## PHEASANT

Other than a melanistic male at Escrick on 16th February and an albinistic male at Thorganby on 26th March no significant records received.

#### WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

Recorded regularly in Lower Derwent with one on 18th January, two on 7th March, singles on 16th and 23rd May and 6th June. Two on 15th June, singles on 20th August, 18th and 29th October, on seven dates in November and nine in December with two on 11th. Only one record from elsewhere - one at Rosscarrs on 11th January

#### MOORHEN

Although widespread the only counts of note came from Melbourne Slurry Pools where there were 72 on 5th August, 75 on 29th and 55 including two birds still incubating clutches on 9th September.

#### COOT

Large numbers bred in Lower Derwent /Pocklington Canal with an estimated 120 pairs. Early year maxima there were 200 in January, 300 in February, 400 in March and 303 in April. No significant figures at year end. Elsewhere, 14 at Wiggantherpe in mid-July, 42 at Castle Howard on 5th October, 19 at Sturge's Pond on 13th November, 135 at Castle Howard on 23rd and 21 at Sturge's Pond on 12th December

#### OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*

Despite a good spring passage breeding numbers in the Lower Derwent were slightly below average, with probably no more than six pairs. An extremely disappointing year in the Lower Wharfe, the only record being of two birds at Ryther on 16th March. On the Ouse below York two were at Acaster Malbis on 23rd February, a single at Barlby on 19th, two at Wistow Lordship on 22nd April and one at Riccall on 6th July. Single pairs bred at Naburn and possibly at Stillingfleet Ings. On the Ouse above York, Poppleton held two on 13th April and one on 1st July, while two were noted at Moor Monkton on 2nd May and 27th July - all were presumably passage birds.

Spring passage was substantial, following an early arrival; two were at Wheldrake Ings on 18th February (TF0), with four at North Duffield Carrs on 20th. The largest flock was of eight birds at the latter site on 9th to 11th March.

The return movement in the second half of July was rather poor, with only 21 bird-days in the Lower Derwent all from Wheldrake togs, and half of those were accounted for by a flock of ten on 28th July; these proved to be the last of the autumn.

An interesting series of December records came from North Duffield Carrs, with singles on 5th, 6th and 17th (ML, TED), constituting the first ever occurrence for that month in the York area.

#### LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*

Once again a very disappointing breeding season. Only one pair was proved breeding - by the Ouse at Wistow Lordship. At Riccall at least two pairs were seen displaying but did not breed. Pairs present at North Duffield Carrs and Wheldrake Ings for much of the period April to June, with display noted at the former site, but again no result. A pair possibly bred at Knapton but were thought unsuccessful because of interspecific aggression from nearby breeding Ringed Plovers. Single birds noted during breeding season at Clifton Airfield, Thornton and Whitemoor Mine.

The first of the year (and early) was an individual at Clifton Airfield on 20th March (SR). Subsequently spring passage was poor: 32 bird-days in April in Lower Derwent from 9th, with maximum of four at North Duffield Carrs on 11th.

Return passage similarly sparse. In July and August the Lower Derwent yielded 21 bird-days, maximum being five at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd July; Melbourne gave seven bird-days. Elsewhere, singles at Knapton, Clifton Airfield and York Waterworks. The last of the year was a juvenile at Melbourne on 14th August.

Two interesting examples of territorial behaviour were reported. Interspecific aggression was observed at North Duffield Carrs on 20th May when a Corn Bunting coming to the scrape to bathe prompted a Little Ringed Plover to display, attack and chase off the passerine before allowing it to settle (TED). At Clifton Airfield an unmated adult apparently held territory for four days from 17th July, even giving a distraction display on one occasion.

#### RINGED PLOVER

A pair bred near Knapton; a clutch of four eggs was found on 2nd July (thought to have been a second attempt) and on 13th and 17th the behaviour of one of the adults suggested the presence of young. Sporadic breeding attempts now seem to be the norm for this species. Interestingly, a total of 21 June bird-days in the Lower Derwent (maxima three at Wheldrake Ings on 15th, 18th and 21st) perhaps indicates a small summering non-breeding population. Spring passage was good and confined to the Lower Derwent. The first, on 27th February at Wheldrake Ings, was very early (DR) The same site produced the only March records; one on 6th and two on 12th. April yielded the fine total of 67 bird-days, with maxima of ten on 16th and 16 on 17th, at Wheldrake Ings. May's 16 bird-days included two of the small dark Siberian race 'tundrae'. First record for the area of this subspecies. Return movement, as usual, contrastingly thin, with five July bird-days and six in August, all records coming from Wheldrake Ings. The last of the year was a juvenile at Melbourne on 4th September (AF, TED)

#### GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

The species was present in excellent numbers in both winter periods, with many reports of large flocks received from a number of districts. In particular, the area just south of York seems to have returned to prominence for wintering birds. Spring and autumn passages were, however, unexceptional.

In January, Wheldrake Ings regularly held 1000 birds (maximum 1300 on 17th) while Ellerton hosted 1000 on 10th and 600 on 27th.

Elsewhere: there were 1000 at Poppleton on 14th and 600 at Bishopthorpe on 31st. February maxima comprised 1100 at Wheldrake Ings on 20th, 500 east of Ellerton on 7th (including a northern 'altifrons' type in summer plumage) and 350 at North Duffield Carrs on 19th. Contrary to the established pattern, numbers apparently increased in March with at least in the Lower Derwent; was this an early spring passage? North Duffield Carrs held 2000 in 12th, 1500 on 20th and 1000 on 29th, 800 were at Wheldrake Ings and 500 at Storwood on 6th, while 1400 were at Ellerton on 21st. In April passage was confined to the Lower Derwent and as usual mostly involved northern 'altifrons' birds. Various sites in the valley held flocks of 200-400 on 5th, 11th, 13th, 18th, 23rd and 25th, with a maximum of 700 at Aughton at 9th. The only May records involved singles at Wheldrake on 6th and 23rd and none was reported in June. Following 10 at Riccall on 6th July numerous small parties were noted during the remainder of the month with the only large count 153 at North Duffield Carrs on 10th. The same site produced August flocks of 90 on 1st, 60 on 6th and 150 on 9th, while 180 were at Barlow Grange on 22nd. Only five September gatherings were reported the most notable being 200 at North Duffield Carrs on 8th, 80. Wheldrake Ings on 21st and 10 at Escrick on 3rd. Very few in October, maxima being 40 at both Wheldrake Ings and Copmanthorpe on 29th. November wintering flocks were slow to build; largest counts were 200 at

Poppleton on 24th, 250 at Brighton on 26th and 350 at East Cottingwith on 28th. Early December saw a remarkable influx, with 5074 in the Lower Derwent on 5th; individual flocks numbered 1500 at Wheldrake Ings and 800 at North Duffield Carrs on 6th, and 1567 at Ellerton on 9th. Later in the month 1000 regularly at Wheldrake Ings. Elsewhere, a flock of 1600 frequented the Bishopthorpe area throughout the month and up to 2500 were noted at Copmanthorpe and 300 at Askham.

#### GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*



Having commented last year on the trend towards a spring bias in the records of this wader it comes as no great surprise to find that all five of 1988's reports fell in the mid-winter period! In January singles were at Wheldrake Ings on 1st and at Ellerton on 27th (DRC), while in December one was at North Duffield Carrs on 3rd, six were counted in the Lower Derwent on 5th and a single was noted at Wheldrake Ings on 11th (TED,DR,DW). Good numbers of Golden Plovers no doubt had a role to play in these occurrences, as flocks of that species generally act as 'vehicles' for wandering individual Grey Plovers.

#### LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

The species was present in good numbers in the early months of the year and apparently bred normally, though post-breeding flocks were rather disappointing in comparison with the previous year. Subsequently, few were present in autumn; from mid-November wintering birds began to arrive so that by December spectacular numbers were noted.

In January 2000 were regularly present at Wheldrake Ings, with 2500 on 3rd and 19th, Ellerton held 1000 on 10th. Away from the Lower Derwent, 1200 were at Bishopthorpe on 1st, 500 at Copmanthorpe on 2nd, 400 at Poppleton on 8th and 470 at Flaxton and 800 at Old Earswick on 14th. February maxima were 1000 at Wheldrake Ings on three dates and c1000 at North Duffield Carrs on 19th and 28th. Early March produced some notable counts, with 600 at Melbourne on 4th, 1200 at Wheldrake Ings on 6th and 2000 there on 9th.

Thereafter flocks rapidly dispersed, with 270 in the North Duffield area on 21st and 100 at Wheldrake on 5th April the last significant aggregations, no doubt these birds were en route to more northerly breeding grounds.

Display was first noted at Colton on the early date of 25th February. The first chicks in the Lower Derwent were observed on 3rd May. Breeding numbers were apparently normal, with 20 pairs on North Duffield Carrs, 20 pairs on Toft House Farm, Bielby, three pairs on Fulford Ings and 'good numbers' on Tilmire.

As usual the first post-breeding flocks appeared in late June, heralded by 102 at North Duffield Carrs on 18th and 120 at Wheldrake Ings on 27th. Numbers at the former site peaked at 600 on 31st July and 100 on 22nd August, while at the latter there were 650 on 6th August. Elsewhere, 90 at Knapton on 9th July and 150 at Barlow Grange on 9th to 13th August. The only September count submitted was 150 at Riccall on 18th. October reports comprised 650 at Roscarrs on 13th and 134 at Strensall on 17th.

Numbers built up through November; during 24th to 26th counts of 100 at Poppleton, 900 at Wheldrake Ings and 650 at Brighton. By 3rd December the Wheldrake Ings flock swelled to a healthy 1470 and the following day 6605 were counted in the Lower Derwent, stabilizing around the 3-4000 level later in the month.

Elsewhere, 300 at Askham Bog on 9th, 2000+ at Bishopthorpe on 11th, 1200 at Barton Hill on 18th, 1200+ at Knapton on 22nd and 28th (apparently commuting between here and Bishopthorpe), and 1000 at Strensall on 27th.

#### LITTLE STINT

Three records this year, all from Wheldrake Ings. The first, an adult in summer plumage on 22nd and 23rd May, constitutes only the second spring occurrence in the York area (the first was at Bubwith in April 1979). A bird on 15th July was the earliest autumn record for the area, while another individual on 2nd August was also rather early.

#### TEMMINCK'S STINT

An adult was present at Riccall on 5th and 6th September (TB, OR) and was relocated at the same site on 8th (MI, FWO) . Only the fourth definite record of this species in the York area, and the first for six years.

#### CURLEW SANDPIPER

Ten juveniles at North Duffield Carrs on the 7th and 8th September were feeding unconcernedly around the bulldozer which was constructing the scrape. Such numbers are quite unprecedented. A single bird from this flock remained until 16th.

Tenth record for the area, on a typical date

#### SANDERLING *Calidris alba*

An individual moulting into summer plumage was noted at Wheldrake Ings on 30th April (DR, OW, TED) and constitutes the eighth record for the area. All but one have been in spring.

#### DUNLIN

Counts submitted for the early months of the years were generally slightly disappointing. Spring passage was distinct, protracted and of above average size; similarly, the return movement (though small in comparison) was rather better than in most recent autumns. A pronounced influx of wintering birds in December produced by far the largest counts of the year. Two hundred at Ellerton on 27th January was easily the month's best, aggregation, though 60 had been at Aughton on 17th. In February, North Duffield Carrs held 105 on 19th and 130 the next day, while at Wheldrake Ings numbers rose from 32 on 19th to 100 on 21st. Apart from 150 at Wheldrake Ings on 6th, March's maxima occurred in mid-month, involving 178 at Aughton on 13th; 194 at North Duffield Carrs on 14th and 180 at Aughton/North Duffield Carrs on 18th; thereafter a rapid decline, with only seven bird-days in the last week.

In April the onset of spring passage was first evident at Aughton, with 15 on 5th increasing to 35 on 7th, 38 on 9th and 60 on 11th. At North Duffield Carrs numbers fluctuated between 20 and 30 from 9th to the month end, with peaks of 60 on 17th and 50 on 19th. Fewer were at Wheldrake Ings, maxima here being 20 on 16th and 16 on 23rd. May's records spanned almost the entire month but, typically, involved only small parties; altogether 97 bird—days, mostly at Wheldrake Ings, where there were 14 on 3rd and 16 on 9th. At North Duffield Carrs 11 were counted on 24th. At Wheldrake Ings on 14th one observer noted the size difference between one nominate 'alpina' and two 'schinzii' birds (DR) while a male 'alpina' was watched singing at North Duffield Carrs on 23rd (TED). The last of spring was at Wheldrake Ings on 25th.

July and August yielded 51 bird-days in the Lower Derwent between 20th July and 23rd August; maxima were five at North Duffield Carrs on 30th and 31st. At Riccall there were 66 bird-days from 12th July (TB) to 10th August, maximum seven on 1st. Typically, few September records, four (nine bird-days), maximum five at Riccall on 18th. Equally scarce in October, with six records (eight bird-days), while November maxima were 15 at Aughton on 18th and 16 at Wheldrake Ings on 20th. The Lower Derwent was re-occupied on a massive scale in early December, with 287 at North Duffield Carrs on 4th, and an excellent count of 790 throughout the valley the following day.

Subsequently, 300 were regularly present at Wheldrake Ings until the month end, with other large flocks elsewhere in the Derwent; for example, 259 at Ellerton on 9th and 50 at Bubwith/North Duffield Carrs on 10th and 11th.

#### RUFF

With the exception of a single at Naburn Sewage Works on 18th May all records came from the Lower Derwent /Pocklington Canal. Generally a good year for the species, average numbers were present in the early months and although spring passage was but a shadow of that of 1987, breeding was at last proved with five fluffy juveniles seen in mid June. Autumn saw substantial and protracted return movement and excellent numbers returned to winter at the year-end.

January maxima were 20 on 3rd and 32 on 17th (spread between two sites). Rather fewer in February, with no more than five noted at a time (on 3rd). A small but significant increase in March, daily maxima being 17 on 6th, 12 on 11th, 14 on 18th and 13 on 27th. A steady, if unspectacular, spring passage spanned the whole of April, amounting to 251 bird-days. (lekking observed at three sites). At one site maxima were 20 on 12th, 13th and 17th; a second site held 20 on 9th, while at a third up to five were regularly present (and continued to be so for much of May). All June records came from this last site and involved two males, one female and up to five fluffy juveniles.

Autumn passage lasted from 1st July to 18th September and comprised 46 bird—days in July (maximum 20 on 28th), 74 in August (maximum 15 on 30th) and 55 in September (maximum ten on 2nd and 3rd).

The gradual return of wintering birds was evident from 29th October, when 27 were noted, increasing to 43 on 3rd and 55 on 11th November. Surprisingly, numbers seemed to drop temporarily over the following four weeks; the largest gathering was of 18 on 23rd November and on 5th December only 37 could be found in the entire valley. However, by 22nd a flock of 40 was noted at one site, increasing to 53 on 23rd, a fine 86 on 28th and 29th, and 70 on 30th.

#### JACK SNIPE *Lymnocyptes aisles*

A further decline in records of this species took place in 1988. The only birds reported were up to two at Clifton Airfield from January until 20th March, and on 22nd and 30th October and 20th November. Elsewhere a single was noted at Coney Hill, Gilling on 17th and (8th October. None in either Lower Derwent or Fulford.

#### SNIPE

A rather unexceptional showing; though breeding numbers were apparently normal, counts at both ends of the year were generally unremarkable.

Sample counts of breeding birds in the Lower Derwent included 14 drumming at North Duffield Carrs on 3rd June. Along the Pocklington Canal drumming was first noted on 27th March, with 'several displaying at Seavy Carr in late April. Elsewhere, the species bred or probably bred at Tilmire, Bishopthorpe, Fulford Ings, Newburgh, Castle Howard and Wigganthurpe.

January maxima were 19 at Wheldrake Ings on 8th and 21 at Fulford Ings on 17th. In February 16 were in a ploughed field at Naburn on 6th, 53 at Wheldrake Ings on 25th and 25 on flooded land west of Melbourne on 26th. The largest March counts concerned 51 at Wheldrake Ings on 5th, with 53 at Fulford Ings on 17th declining to 29 by 30th. Wheldrake Ings still held 50 on 5th April but thereafter flocks dispersed rapidly as territories were occupied,

All significant post-breeding/early autumn numbers were at Wheldrake Ings; 50 on 13th July decreasing to 20 by the month-end, with 13 remaining on 19th August and 7th September. A definite increase took place through October; 15 at Bishopthorpe on 15th and 18 at Wheldrake Ings on 18th with 31 there by 29th. The latter site held 29 on 20th November. December produced the largest counts of the year: at Wheldrake Ings there were 40+ on 7th, 60 on 15th and 80 on 17th, while 35 were noted at Strensall Common on 28th. Outside the breeding season small numbers were observed at Clifton Airfield, Riccall, Holgate Road Allotments York, Selby and Sturge's Ponds.

#### WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

Bred successfully at Askham Bog where an adult and four young chicks were noted on 10th July. Breeding season reports (most referring to roding birds) came from Bishop Wood; Skipwith Common; Stub Wood, Acaster, three sites around Strensall Common, Upper Helmsley; High Wood, Brandsby, Hovingham and Newburgh.

There were few records in the early months, perhaps a reflection of the mild weather conditions. The only reports involved March singles at Naburn and Sturge's Ponds.

At the other end of the year seven records of singles were received, three of which came from urban or suburban environments: one near allotments at Burnholme, York on 19th November, one in a back garden at Backfield Lane, York on 19th December and one in the front garden of a house at Butterwick on 27th December. The other reports came from more typical habitats at Brandsby, Askham Bog, Thornton and Melbourne.

#### BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

Once again a poor year for this elegant wader, with no breeding attempted. In the Lower Derwent two on 3rd April heralded a protracted yet relatively small spring passage which

lasted until 19th May and amounted to 61 bird-days. April was responsible for 44 of these, with maxima of seven on 27th and nine on 28th. Four birds were recorded on 2nd, 18th and 19th May.

Unusually, there were four autumn reports; singles were in the Lower Derwent on 11th (DA,TEI) and 30th (FW0,TED) and in the Lower Wharfe near Ryther on 30th and 31st. The racial identity of two birds to the Lower Derwent on 10th April was established as one nominate and two of the shorter-billed, more brightly coloured Icelandic subspecies *islandica* (TED). Observers are urged to attempt racial identification where possible.

#### BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*

The species just maintains its 'annual' status in the present decade by virtue of a single flying west at North Duffield Carrs on 6th October (TED). Only the fourth ever autumn record and the first for October.

#### WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

Again a marvellous spring passage, the result of diligent observer coverage at the Wheldrake Ings roost. Return movement in early autumn was merely average.

The first two birds were recorded at Wheldrake Ings on 9th April, with what were presumably the same individuals there the following evening. Subsequently present at this site from 13th April (four birds) continuously to 20th May (one bird), with numbers peaking in the last few days of April and the first few days of May. April maxima were 87 on 23rd, 89 on 27th and 107 on 30th; in May, 102 on 1st, 113 on 2nd and 80 on 3rd declining to 20 by 6th and single-figures by mid-month. Altogether 677 bird-days in April and 180 in May.

Elsewhere, spring passage totalled 35 bird-days, with the only notable flocks comprising 12 north at Melbourne on 4th May and 13 north at Thornton Ellers on 12th May.

Autumn passage began with a single west, over Selby on 21st July. Thereafter or all records came from the Lower Derwent, with Wheldrake Ings being responsible for 36 out of the 43 bird-days. Maxima here were nine on 24th July and 12 on 17th August.. Last of the autumn was a single at this site on 23rd August.

A strikingly pale arid presumably leucistic individual was present at Wheldrake Ings on 4th May.

#### CURLEW

The species continues to fare well in the York area, apparently maintaining healthy breeding populations. Moreover, good numbers wintered at both ends of the year and spring and autumn passages were respectable.

Breeding took place as normal in the Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal, Bielby and Laytham districts, Skipwith Common, Cliffe Common, Acaster Ings, Tilmire, Naburn, Poppleton, Colton, Newburgh, Yearsley, Stearsby and Butterwick. Many breeding territories were re-occupied very early, for example on 17th February at Stearsby and 26th February at Melbourne.

Most significant counts in the first two months of the year came from Wheldrake Ings, which obviously acts as the focus and safe roost of the Lower Derwent's wintering population. Maxima in January were 47 on 4th, 64 on 11th, 53 on 17th and 52 on 21st; in February, 43 on 6th and 39 on 10th. Numbers were generally lower at this site in March (maximum 39 on 7th), but a large increase occurred at North Duffield Carrs as spring passage birds replaced the departing winterers; here treble figures were recorded on a number of dates, maximum being 150 on 23rd. The month's other notable count was of 48 at Storwood on 6th. Passage lasted until mid-April, with North Duffield Carrs again providing the best counts: 47 on 5th, 35 on 9th, 40 on 12th, 50 on 13th and ten on 18th.

Post-breeding flocks appeared from late June, with seven at Acaster Selby and a fine 91 north at North Duffield Carrs on 26th. There was, however, little evidence of the west and northwest movement remarked upon last year. Many small parties were recorded in the

Lower Derwent in July, amounting to 91 bird-days, with maxima of ten on 21st and 22 on 27th (both at Wheldrake Ings). Larger numbers were reported in August; 281 bird-days, the biggest flocks being 22 on 4th, 33 on 10th and 11th, 22 on 21st and 29 on 2nd (again, all at Wheldrake Ings). September yielded 364 bird-days, Wheldrake Ings maxima 27 on 1st and 9th, with 20 or more on a further eight dates. It is heartening to be able to report these healthy early autumn numbers (c.f. 1987 Report).

The species was apparently absent from the area for the first three weeks of October, though in the final week up to 22 had returned to Wheldrake Ings. November maxima here were 25 on 11th and 38 on 19th. Good numbers were present throughout. December, with 22 on 13th, 38 on 24th and 41 on 30th.

#### SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*

Apart from a quite exceptional winter record, generally an average year. A bird at Wheldrake Ings on the unprecedented date of 27th January; the York area's first winter record.

An individual in winter plumage frequenting North Duffield Carrs from 9th to 15th April was joined briefly by another in summer plumage on 10th. Wheldrake Ings held a single on 29th April, and what was presumably a late northbound bird on 14th and 15th June.

Altogether 10 bird days in spring.

Autumn's records all came in August and comprised singles at Riccall on 2nd, Seavy Carr Thornton on 23rd and North Duffield Carrs on 26th.

#### REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*

Apparently a good breeding season with fair number of juveniles present in the Lower Derwent in late June and early July. Around 25 pairs were estimated to have bred at North Duffield Carrs. Elsewhere the species bred successfully at Riccall and Colton; three pairs bred on Tilmire and 'several' at Fulford Ings. Breeding took place at Melbourne, however, none was reported from the Lower Wharfe.

Good numbers wintered in the Lower Derwent at both ends of the year, although the pattern of records suggests an early departure in February. Local breeders returned in March and passage of northbound birds was evident in the first half of April. As always the extent of the return movement in late summer was obscured by the presence of locally reared juveniles. Then typically few in autumn, prior to a 'sudden mass return' (to quote one observer) in December. As remarked in the 1986 Report, it would be fascinating to discover the origins of this wintering population.

January's fine total of 349 Lower Derwent bird-days included maxima of 60 at Wheldrake Ings on 17th, 10 at Aughton on 11th, 17th and 28th, and 30 at Ellerton on 27th. In contrast, February could muster only 21 bird-days: maximum 10 at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd. Only 8 in the valley on 6th March, though 20 at Aughton by 13th increasing to 30 on 18th. The Lower Derwent held 62 on 21st, and Wheldrake Ings 28 on 29th. Altogether 242 March bird-days in the valley, while Riccall had 51 bird-days from 21st (maximum six on 31st).

Passage birds were well in evidence during the first half of April: Aughton held 40 on 5th, 7th and 9th, and 50 on 11th; North Duffield Carrs 80+ on 9th and 50 on 11th, and Wheldrake Ings 55 on 9th and 30+ on 16th. Riccall yielded 137 bird-days throughout the month, maximum four on 6th and 22nd.

Sixty at Wheldrake Ings on 30th June was perhaps an indication of good breeding season certainly some reasonable July gatherings in the Lower Derwent, amounting to 203 bird days, with maxima at Wheldrake Ings of 15 on 3rd and 30 on 21st, 26th and 27th.

Present at Riccall from 8th with maximum nine on 25th; 126 bird-days here. Numbers declined rapidly in August: 15 bird days at Riccall up to 8th and only 15 Lower Derwent bird-days, with the last at Melbourne on 20th. None was reported in September and a mere three in October. Little improvement in November with ten scattered records producing 13 bird days.

A pronounced influx in early to mid-December, North Duffield Carrs held 12 on 4th increasing to 17 on 7th and 11th; Ellerton 21 on 9th; Wheldrake Ings 22 on 10th and 34 on 12th and Bubwith 29 on 12th. Fewer present later in the month (maximum 14 at

Wheldrake Ings on 29th but December produced 334 bird-days.

#### GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

Both passages were of near-average size. One winter record this year of a bird at North Duffield Carrs on 29th December (TED).

The first of spring were rather early: March singles at North Duffield Carrs on 20th (TED) and Wheldrake Ings on 27th and 29th. Only two April records, involving individuals at Wheldrake Ings on 4th and North Duffield Carrs on 12th. Passage was concentrated in May and was atypically late, with birds trickling through from 7th to 31st: a total of 24 bird-days in the Lower Derwent. (maximum four at Wheldrake Ings on 12th with three on 27th) and eight bird-days at Riccall (maximum three on 27th).

Return movement began in July with three singles in the Lower Derwent from 24th. Passage here during August amounted to 34 bird-days (maximum five at Wheldrake Ings on 9th), with 40 bird-days at Riccall from 6th (maximum seven on 31st).

Elsewhere: a single flew northwest over Poppleton on 18th and a bird at Bolton Percy Ings on 20th and 21st. With the exception of an individual at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd, all September's records fell within the first eight days: 12 bird-days at Wheldrake Ings (maximum three on 2nd and 4th) and 33 at Riccall (maximum six on 1st and 2nd). A single at Wheldrake Ings on 11th October ended an autumn passage which total led 122 bird-days.

#### GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

A similar pattern to last year, namely a dearth of winter records, a small spring passage and two sites being responsible for a fair-sized return movement in early autumn.

All records during the first half of the year referred to single birds, One was at Bielby throughout January and one at Melbourne on 10th; what was presumably this latter individual was noted at the same site on 4th February. The sole March report was one by the A19 (Tollerton) on 11th. Spring passage covered four singles in the Lower Derwent between April 12th and 29th, and one at Poppleton on 24th.

A bird at North Duffield Carrs on 18th June was the first of autumn, followed by another at Wheldrake Ings on 30th, then none in the Lower Derwent until 30th July when a single at North Duffield Carrs. July yielded 53 bird-days at Riccall from 10th (maximum five on 18th to 28th) and Melbourne 30 bird-days from 3rd (maximum seven on 24th and 31st). One bird noted at Poppleton on 25th. Numbers increased in August, with Riccall producing 117 bird-days (maximum five on 3rd in 17th) and Melbourne 129 bird-days (maximum 15 on 21st), The Lower Derwent managed 16 bird-days in August (maximum five at Wheldrake Ings on 21st) and Poppleton a single on 17th, A pronounced decrease in September 30 bird-days at Riccall up to 18th (maximum three on 6th to 10th), 24 bird-days at Melbourne up to 9th (maximum ten on 2nd) and five bird-days in the Lower Derwent. Elsewhere: singles at Strensall on 9th and Barlow Grange on 21st. October produced an interesting sprinkling of records; tardy autumn migrants or incoming winterers? Certainly the latter in the case of two at Bielby which arrived in October and remained to the year-end. Melbourne held singles on 2nd and 15th and three on 30th; Wheldrake Ings one on 11th and two on 23rd, and Seavy Carr one on 2nd. November's records comprised individuals at Melbourne on 6th and Thornton on 16th, while the only December report was one at Thornton on 13th.

#### WOOD SANDPIPER

An unremarkable spring showing was followed by a poor autumn.

In May, a single spent four days at North Duffield Carrs from 12th, another graced Wheldrake Ings on 18th and 20th and a third was on Skipwith Common on 20th.

The only two autumn records came from Riccall where singles were noted on 10th July and 3rd August.

#### COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos*

Once again no breeding was attempted. Spring and autumn passages were below average, with at least one observer commenting on the species' scarcity.

The only April records concerned singles on the Ouse at Barlow on 21st and 23rd and at Riccall on 22nd. A total of 19 May bird-days (12 of them in the Lower Derwent) between 2nd and 16th involved only ones and twos, with reports from Castle Howard, the Ouse at Poppleton and Barlow and the Nidd at Moor Monkton. The sole June record was of one at Wheldrake Ings on 12th. July yielded a total of 54 bird-days, 27 of which came from Riccall (from 6th), 16 from the Lower Derwent (from 10th) and smaller numbers from Melbourne, Castle Howard, Moor Monkton and Poppleton.

Maxima were five at Castle Howard on 27th, three at Wheldrake Ings on 28th and three at North Duffield Carrs on 31st. 66 out of August's 88 bird-day total came from Riccall (maximum four on 16th) three birds were at North Duffield Carrs on 1st and on the Ouse at Barlow on 9th, with one or two in the Lower Derwent on three dates, Melbourne on six dates, the Ouse at Barlow on 13th, Bishopthorpe and Bolton Percy on 21st and Castle Howard on 31st. Riccall produced 35 September bird-days up to 29th (maximum three on 3rd). Singles at Melbourne on 4th and 18th, Wheldrake Ings on 11th and Barlow on 9th. Two birds at Poppleton on 13th. The two October records received comprised singles at Wheldrake Ings on 12th and (rather late) on the Ouse at Barlow on 26th (ORE).

#### TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*

The best year ever, with the eight records and thirteen bird-days fitting neatly into the established pattern of spring occurrences. All records came from Wheldrake Ings, where one on 30th April was followed by singles on May 14th, 15th, & 17th, three on 16th and two on 18th, 20th and 21st (TB, TED, MH, DR, DW).

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

No information regarding breeding numbers in the Lower Derwent was received, though 2900 were at Wheldrake Ings in early April. The Strensall Common colony held 150 adults on 23rd May and at least 45 pairs on 29th June,

Wheldrake Ings produced some good roost counts in the early months: 10,000 on 4th January, 10,000+ on 4th February and a fine 40,000 on 20th March. The largest feeding flocks were noted in January with 1000+ on Dringhouses tip and adjacent fields on 6th and c1500 around Naburn Sewage Works on 9th. A roost containing some 1200 was found at Wharfe Ings on 7th January. Other counts involved 82 at Clifton Airfield on 21st February, and in March 200+ on the Knavesmire on 17th and 100 at Rosscarrs on 28th. The only significant numbers in early autumn were 100 at Poppleton on 10th July and 1500 at North Duffield Carrs on 22nd August. Numbers increased in October with 1000+ at Castle Howard on 27th. In November 1500 fed at Brighton Tip on 12th. No counts of the Wheldrake Ings roost were submitted for the later months of the year; more records please!

An adult at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd January and 15th February had pure white primaries and primary coverts and was presumably the same aberrant individual noted there in the early months of 1987 (as a first-winter) and in December of that year (as an adult)

An adult at North Duffield Carrs on 13th April had a piece of black plastic bin-liner wrapped round its neck; in flight this extended underneath to the vent and above over onto the mantle. The bird appeared not to be seriously inconvenienced either in flight or whilst walking (when the bin-liner trailed between its legs), but was mobbed furiously by c500 other Black-headed Gulls and caused panic amongst c200 Teal and all the breeding waders.

A late ringing recovery indicates the origin of many of our wintering birds: one controlled at Selby on 13th January 1987 had been ringed as a nestling at Pavni, Estonis on 22nd June 1980 (PR).

#### COMMON GULL *Larus canus*

Another relatively poor year, with few large flocks reported. January's records comprised 800 at Wheldrake Ings on 4th and 200 at Tadcaster Road York on 13th. The only February count was of 37 at Clifton Airfield (the annual maximum there) on 21st. March produced easily the biggest aggregations of the year with 3000 at the Wheldrake Ings roost on 9th and an excellent 10,000 there on 20th; 170 at Brandsby on 12th and 290 on the Knavesmire on

17th, decreasing to 1320 by 30th. Some 320 remained at Wheldrake Ings on 1st April but numbers dwindled quickly as birds left for their breeding colonies. Roscarrs had its last of the spring on 2nd May. The month yielded 18 bird-days at Wheldrake, maximum being seven, on 14th. Most of course were first-summer types, and this applied equally in June where a group of 14 flying NW over Wheldrake Ings on 19th boosted the month's bird-day total to 19. Return movement in late summer was barely discernible, with July's eight records all in single figures. Maximum nine at Poppleton on 10th. There were five records in early August the maximum being 17 at North Duffield Carrs on 18th. Subsequently only single figures were reported until November when 70+ foraged at Brighton Tip on 12th and 110 on the Knavesmire on 22nd. The only December records concerned 50 at Wheldrake Ings on 15th and 450 on the Knavesmire (the annual maximum here) on 28th. An aberrant first-summer individual at Wheldrake Ings on 19th June had pure white wings, except for faint buffish markings on the outer primaries and their coverts (OR).

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

Typically few in winter but reasonable numbers were recorded on both passages. During the first two months of the year up to two recorded sporadically in the Lower Derwent and a single adult was noted at Bolton Percy Ings on 10th January. In March spring passage was evident at Wheldrake Ings, with three on 6th and 20th increasing to 14 on 25th and 27 on 26th; four here on 27th were of the Scandinavian race 'intermedius' while on 29th a bird of the North Scandinavian/Russian race 'fuscus' was identified. Elsewhere up to five were noted at Brighton Tip, North Duffield Carrs and Clifton Airfield. Peak numbers in April came early: At Wheldrake Ings 10 on 1st and 15 on 2nd (this last flock possibly containing all three races). Subsequently only single figures in the Lower Derwent, with 'fuscus/intermedius' individuals noted at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd and 27th. Four were at Roscarrs from 6th to 22nd. Wheldrake Ings was responsible for almost all of May's total of 51 bird-days, hosting groups of 20 on 2nd, eight on 21st and 10 on 27th. Two were noted at Osbaldwick on 17th. After the first week of May most records referred to first and second-summers, as did all of June's records, which comprised 20 bird-days in the Lower Derwent, maxima being six at Wheldrake Ings on 4th and 10 on 19th. July produced some good counts: following eight at North Duffield Carrs on 2nd, 58 were at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd and 59 (including three 'intermedius' adults) at Dringhouses the next day. At Wheldrake Ings 31 flew south on 9th and 28 were present on 26th. Clifton Airfield achieved its annual maximum of three on 17th. August's maxima concerned 20 birds at North Duffield Carrs on 22nd and Wheldrake Ings on 23rd. No data from Brighton Tip during that month, but on 5th September 300 were counted on this site. Other September records referred to 10 south at Wheldrake Ings on 7th, 10 at Castle Howard on 10th and eight at North Duffield Carrs on 16th. Only two October reports: two at Clifton Airfield on 8th and at Wheldrake Ings on 19th. Brighton Tip held eight on 12th November and seven on 18th. Four were present in the Lower Derwent on 7th December, with a single adult remaining at Wheldrake Ings on 17th and 26th.

#### HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

Few records received but numbers were slightly higher than in 1987, especially at the year end.

January opened with 200 roosting at Wheldrake Ings on 1st. Wharfe Ings contained a roost of 18 on 7th and three were at Harlow Grange on 26th. None was reported in February, but in March 200 were at North Duffield Carrs on 5th and 95 at Wheldrake Ings the next day; the latter site held five on 25th and 12 on 20th. April's records comprised six at North Duffield Carrs on 6th, a pair at Wheldrake Ings on 25th and a single at Dringhouses on 28th. The species is scarce in May, so a first-summer at Wheldrake Ings on 7th, and a first-summer and third-summer there on 13th were unusual.

In July, five were at Askham Bog on 4th and a single at Wheldrake Ings on 15th. Thereafter only two autumn records; an adult at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd August and a juvenile at Castle Howard on 10th September. Twenty at Brighton Tip on 12th November signalled a winter



build-up; 90 at this site on 18th. The Wheldrake Ings roost held 40 on 7th December and 120 on 11th.

An individual at Brighton Tip on 18th November showed the characteristics of the large, dark mantled, yellow-legged and heavily head-streaked subspecies 'heuglini', which breeds in the USSR from the White Sea eastwards (TED). First record for the area of this subspecies.

#### ICELAND GULL

A second-winter bird at North Duffield Carrs on 18th February constitutes the first record in the York area since February 1984 (TED).

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

Present in healthy numbers in both ends of the year, but characteristically scarce during the intervening months.

January maxima at the Wheldrake Ings roost were 217 on 1st, 180 on 3rd and 80 on 18th and 19th. On 7th 31 roosted in floodwater at Wharfe Ings. In February Wheldrake Ings held 110+ on 4th and 80 on 7th; 105 noted there on 6th March decreased to 12 on 26th and 19 on 27th. Forty at North Duffield Carrs on 5th March. April's sole record concerned six first- and second-years at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd, and the same site produced two unexpected May reports: nine on 2nd and one on 20th. In November Brighton Tip held 21 on 12th, 80 on 18th and 35+ on 26th; at Wheldrake Ings a single on 25th was followed by three on 29th. December maxima at the Wheldrake Ings roost comprised 55 on 7th, 180 on 11th and 101 on 17th. Elsewhere during the month 12 were noted at North Duffield Carrs on 6th and three at Strensall on 27th.

#### KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*

An average showing, with all five records and seven bird-days in spring, thus fitting neatly into the species' established pattern of occurrence. All birds were adults, although that of 20th March still retained traces of second-year plumage. Wheldrake Ings held one on 9th March, two on 12th and one on 20th and two were noted at Castle Howard on 12th. An individual on Wheldrake Ings on 20th April was rather late (TB, TED, DR, DW).

#### CASPIAN TERN *Sterna caspia*

A single observer was fortunate enough to connect with a summer-plumaged adult which flew south over North Duffield Carrs on 3rd May. This, the first record for the area, has been accepted by the YNU and the BBRC.

Speculation arises as to whether this was the same individual seen four days later by the Trent near Newark (and subsequently much twitched), though it must be remembered that several birds were involved in a 'mini—influx' into Britain in spring 1988.

#### ROSEATE TERN

Three flew northwest at Wheldrake Ings on 10th May (TED); these are the first to be recorded in the York area this decade. It is strange that they should have occurred in a year of such relatively poor spring passage of other 'Sterna' Terns.

#### COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

The worst spring showing for years with the only records being of singles at Wheldrake Ings on 30th April and 1st June and three at Naburn on 14th July. At North Duffield Carrs an adult was noted on 5th October, with an adult and a first-winter there the following day; very late.

#### ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea*

Spring passage was poor, though rather better than that of the previous species. At Wheldrake Ings singles on 10th and 15th April were followed by two on 16th; in May the same site held one on 2nd and two on 16th, while at Castle Howard two were present on 21st. Altogether nine bird-days.

The sole autumn record involved two adults and two juveniles at Castle Howard on 28th August.

#### "COMMIC" TERN

All spring records came from York University Lake, where one on 26th April preceded two on 10th May, three on 11th and a single on 31st.

In July, an individual was seen on the Ouse at Bishopthorpe on 22nd.

#### BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger*

A reasonable spring passage amounted to 25 bird-days, with all records falling in the last week of April and the first half of May at Wheldrake Ings.

In April, one on 23rd was followed by two on 24th and 25th and singles on 27th and 28th. Next were two on 7th May, seven on 8th, five on 9th, one on 13th, two on 15th and one on 16th.

None was reported in autumn.

#### STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*

A dearth of records again this year.

Bred in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal. Several pairs nested at York Water Works in boxes provided and birds probably bred at Heslington, Holgate Road allotments York, the Archbishops Palace Bishopthorpe, and Crayke. Outside the breeding season birds were at Appleton Roebuck, Wheldrake Ings, North Duffield Carrs. Highest counts of 10 were at Castle Howard on 12th January and North Duffield Carrs on 6th November.

#### WOOD PIGEON *Columba palumbus*

Even fewer- record of this species - 200 at Askham Bog on 2nd January, 600 in Lower Derwent on 11th, 200 at Poppleton on 5th 370 at Lilling and 600 at Slingsby on 17th November, 800 near Lower Derwent on 21st and 5th December, 1000 there on 13th and 200 on 17th. A leucistic bird at North Duffield Carrs in Lower Derwent on 21st April and 5th and 17th May.

#### COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

There were small flocks during the year at Poppleton, Bolton Percy, Selby Canal and Brandsby, with largest numbers 90 seen at the University on 16th February and 103 at Thorganby in Lower Derwent on 8th November. On 16th March birds with young were at Acomb, a rather early date.

#### TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*

The first arrival was noted in Lower Derwent on 20th April (TED), with birds there daily thereafter, followed by birds at Laytham on 29th, Acaster Airfield on 7th May. Pairs were at Crayke (May) and Clifton (June). A nest with two young was found on Bubwith Ings and breeding was reported at Naburn, Crockey Hill, Sturge's Pond (two pairs) and Brayton Barff. Thereafter three or four were in Lower Derwent in August and the last seen also there on 3rd September (AF).

#### CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*

Present daily in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal from 18th April (TED, TW, VW) with birds before month end at Laytham, Brandsby, Holtby and Amotherby. Widely distributed from early May with highest counts in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal of 12 on 6th and 20 on 13th. A brown phase hepatic female seen regularly nest searching at Wheldrake Ings. Last of the year was a juvenile at Barlby on 6th September.

#### BARN OWL *Tyto alba*

Bred at Acaster Selby and in Lower Derwent area at North Duffield, Thorganby, Wressle and Laytham (two pairs). Two were on Dunnington Common and singles at Melbourne Ings and

Bishop Wilton in June. Outside the breeding season noted at Cockey Hill, Ellerton, Aughton, North Outfield, Wheldrake, Brind, Thornton, Pocklington Canal, Sheriff Hutton, Little Barugh, Moor Monkton, Walmgate Stray, Heslington, Wressle, Rufforth, Skipwith and Shipton. One road casualty on the A59 at Poppleton on 16th August.

#### LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

Seems to be declining in the area.

A well-watched bird first seen on 9th January at Appleton Roebuck was paired by 12th March but not until 23rd July did they appear with one juvenile (FWO). Others bred in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal (five pairs), Laytham and Stillington, probably at Heslington Tilmire and Kexby and possibly at Butterwick and Amotherby. Noted outside breeding season at Lower Derwent, Pocklington Canal, Barton-le-Willows Fulford Golf Course, Naburn, Riccall and Skipwith.

#### TAWNY OWL

The only confirmed breeding records came from Lower Derwent/ Pocklington Canal (three pairs), Brandsby (two pairs), Moorlands and Brayton Barff. Few records received but remains widespread and common. One calling from a television aerial at Clifton on 25th April.

#### LONG-EARED OWL

Two pairs bred at Skipwith Common and one pair at Allerthorpe - all successfully. A juvenile hunting in daylight at Thornton Ellers on 20th June had presumably fledged nearby. One found dead on the road near Wheldrake Woods on 20th July. An undated winter record from Bielby.

#### SHORT-EARED OWL

A much better showing this year.

A pair bred at Rufforth Airfield raising four young.

In January up to nine at Fulford and Clifton Airfield, five in Lower Derwent, three at Poppleton and two at Selby and Walmgate Stray. In February up to nine in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal, five at Clifton Airfield and three at Poppleton and Walmgate Stray. In March, one or two in Lower Derwent, Poppleton and Heslington. Present in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal until 9th April, then singles on 5th and 6th May. One at Tilmire on 11th April. Singles in Lower Derwent on 11th and 14th July. One at Poppleton on 9th August, followed by two at Strensall on 4th and two at Poppleton on 5th September. Thereafter up to four in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal and singles at Poppleton and Barby.

#### NIGHTJAR

Five pairs bred at Skipwith Common with the first arrival on 14th May.

#### SWIFT

The first birds of the year were 12 over Wheldrake Ings on 1st May, by the 7th numbers had increased to 60 and to 400 by 12th. 50 were at Selby on 20th July and 150 moving east at Melbourne on 2nd August. Thereafter only ones or twos recorded, the final one on 12th September at Riccall (TB).

#### KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

A slight increase in breeding records. Bred at Poppleton Ings, Fulford, Kexby and Butterwick; probably at Bielby, Bishopthorpe and Moor Monkton and possibly at Riccall, Sturge's Pond, Wheldrake Ings, Strensall, Melbourne and Thornton. Also seen at Roscarrs, Skewsby Beck, Peel Park Beck, Terrington, Clifton and Selby.

#### GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

Bred at Castle Howard, Skewsby Wood and Strensall where four were seen on 24th July and some were present most of the year. Possibly bred at Ampleforth, Skipwith, Stearsby. Seen at Askham, Barlow Grange, Sturge's Pond, Earswick Moor and Fulford Golf Course. One flew across the scrape at North Duffield Carrs on 10th February.

#### GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopus major*

Remains common and widespread. Confirmed breeding from Newburgh, Brandsby, Blackmoor, Bielby and Holgate Road, York (only one mile from city centre). Probably bred at Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal (four pairs), Brayton Barff, Sturge's Pond, Laytham, Askham Bog, Stubb Wood and Moorlands.

One at North Duffield Carrs on 19th July was watched for 20 minutes as it systematically took spiders from holes drilled through, concrete fence posts on the river bank.

#### LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopus minor*

No confirmed breeding reports this year but birds were seen during the breeding season at Morby Park, Bishopthorpe Crematorium, Jerry Carr Wood, Newton-on-Ouse and heard drumming in Knavesmire Wood.

Other reports from later in the year came from York Water Works Strensall, Melbourne, Naburn and Askham Bog.

#### SKYLARK

No large flocks seen this year and present in any numbers only on Clifton Airfield where there were 12-15 pairs.

#### SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

Continues to recover from its recent crash. Bred at Langton (110 pairs), Bielby (30 pairs), Poppleton, Fulford (27 pairs), Riccall (one pair which arrived very late on 6th June), Moor Monkton (six colonies) and Butterwick.

First arrivals were 51 in Lower Derwent (TD, TED, TW, VW) and one at Sturge's Pond on 4th April. Numbers soon built up with 250 at Castle Howard on 17th, 150 in Lower Derwent on 22nd and 350 there on 1st May.

Larger counts in autumn came in August in the Lower Derwent, with 170 on 20th, 162 on 21st, 500 on 22nd, 250 on 23rd and 760 on 31st. Birds then dispersed rapidly with the last 18 at Moor Monkton on 15th September.

#### HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbica*

First returning birds were at Lower Derwent, Sturge's Pond and York on 12th April (TED, DRC) hut the arrival was very slow and protracted and nest building was not noted at Poppleton for instance until 30th May.

Autumn concentrations were small with 56 at Clifton Airfield on 6th August, 70 at Melbourne on 14th September and 100 at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd. Most birds had left by late September but birds present daily in Lower Derwent to 17th October with the last five on 23rd (TED).

On 12th October two were still at a nest in York.

#### SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

The first arrivals were on 11th April at Brandsby (PH) and Naburn (PR). Small numbers to month end at eight further sites and larger numbers in Lower Derwent with 200 on 14th and 300 on 21st.

Although few breeding reports were received it is common throughout the area where the habitat is suitable.

The larger autumn counts came from Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal, where 2000 on 10th August, 250 on 17th, 350 on 23rd, 300 on 24th, 3000 on 31st, 200 on 3rd September and 1000 on 21st. Birds were seen daily to 19th October with ten on 24th and one on 27th, the last (TED, JL).

#### TREE PIPIT

Two made an early arrival at 9th April at Yearsley (PIP) where six were subsequently seen on 31st. July. Four were present in the breeding season at Brayton Barff and were thought to be breeding in good numbers on Strensall and Skipwith Commons. One pair bred in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal. The only other report was from Bishop Wood on 21st May.

#### MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

No significant early winter counts.

Bred in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal. During May birds were present at Poppleton, Clifton Airfield and on Strensall Common in June. Ten pairs were on Clifton Airfield and present in Barlow during the breeding season. Seventy at North Duffield Carrs on 21st July.

In September '100s' were at Selby and two on Skipwith Common in October. On 4th December 20 flew south over Wheldrake Ings; 20 were at Strensall on the same date.

#### WATER PIPIT

One on the 5th April on North Duffield Carrs in full summer plumage. Fourth record for the area.

#### YELLOW WAGTAIL

First birds were in Lower Derwent on 26th March (early), 11th and 12th April ((TED), followed by birds at Roscarrs, York Water Works and Riccall by month end.

Bred at Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal, Naburn, Clifton Ings, Laytham and Selby (seven pairs).

Post-breeding flocks of 25 in Lower Derwent on 31st July and 40 at Riccall next day.

Present daily in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal to 1st September then sporadically to the last, four on 15th.

A male of the race *M.f. flava*, Blue headed Wagtail in Lower Derwent on 24th May (TED).

#### GREY WAGTAIL

One pair bred successfully at Butterwick (IAWC,JK) and possibly bred at Wass.

In January, one or two at Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal, Naburn Sewage Works and Fulford. In March singles in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal and Brandsby. Two at Brandsby in April.

In Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal singles from 15th July until 30th October. Elsewhere, four at Riccall on 16th August. September birds were at Moor Monkton, Middlethorpe Ings, Yearsley Wood, York, Riccall (three) and Brandsby. From October to year end birds were mainly reported from the Ouse banks at Moor Monkton, Fulford, Clifton, Poppleton, Middlethorpe, Barlby, York Water Works and York City, with the exception of singles at Huntington and Bielby.

#### PIED WAGTAIL

Remains a comparatively widespread breeding bird.

Few flocks noted this year. Thirty at Naburn Sewage Works on 9th January, 12 at Thornton on 7th February, 20 at Bielby on 23rd March, 20 at Wheldrake Ings on 30th September, 17 at Thornton on 20th and 15 at Selby on 21st, 25 at Strensall Sewage Works on 17th October and 10 at Strensall Common on 4th December.

A good series of records of White Wagtail, *M.a. alba* in Lower Derwent at Wheldrake Ings and North Duffield Carrs with three on 20th April (TB, TED, IL), one on 2nd May, two on 6th October, one on 7th. In November, one on 10th and 23rd. One at Riccall on 14th April.

## WAXWING

The large invasion of north east England produced far and away the largest numbers ever seen in the area.

The first was at Clifton Airfield on 19th November and then between 28th November (37 birds) and 29th December (40) flocks to a maximum of 72 on 7th December (TED) were seen by many delighted observers on the A64 near Copmanthorpe. On 5th December the flock of 52 consisted of 30 males, 7 females and 15 juveniles (DP).

Other records were 24 SW over Poppleton on 27th November, three at Poppleton on 29th (IDA), 31 at Fulford Golf Course on 3rd and 4th December and 30 on 5th and 6th (TED), ten at Skipwith on 10th (TED), 11 at Elvington and 30 at Rufforth (TED) on 11th, 25 at North Duffield Currs on 12th (TED), two at North Duffield Ings on 14th (BC), nine at Kelfield on 17th (TED) and six at Barlby on 22nd (TB).

## DIPPER

A pair bred at Crambeck.

## WREN

The only significant records received were 56 at Brayton Barff on 22nd March (DC) and six at Ampleforth on 21st October.

## DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*

Twenty-eight at Brayton Barff on 22nd March (DC) and one at St. Peter's School with all white tail feathers except the two central ones which were dark on 9th October to the year end (ML) were the only records received.

## ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

On 3rd February there were 12 on Brayton Barff and on 22nd March 51 at the same place (DC).

## REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

The birds were back in their breeding areas by 14th May when a male was singing at Wass and three males and one female were in Yearsley Moor Wood. On 28th May a pair was at Ampleforth where four pairs subsequently bred. On 17th and 26th June a pair and a singing male were on Strensall Common and one was at Howsham in June. One at Heron Wood, Escrick on 22nd July. A male was at Wheldrake Ings on 31st July and 9th August and a juvenile at Moor Monkton on 30th August. Breeding occurred in Gilling Woods. Last of the year was at Wheldrake Inn on 4th September.

## BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros*

A singing male on 28th May in York, British Rail yards (OR).

Ninth record for the area.

## STONECHAT *Saxicola torquata*

A wintering female was on Clifton Airfield on 24th January (SRt). A pair was seen on 6th and 13th November by the Pocklington Canal at Melbourne (ID) and a male at Brighton on 26th (JB). On 27th December a male and two females were on Strensall Common (BR).

## WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*

Spring passage birds were males in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal on 21st April and 16th May (TED) and at Barlow Grange on 17th May (TB). Two pairs bred on Strensall Common rearing five young. Two very fluffy juveniles at Wheldrake Ings on 11th July had presumably fledged nearby. An immature there on 16th July. One at Riccall on 7th and two at Bubwith on 7th August; two newly fledged juveniles at Poppleton on 13th where up to six seen until 11th September. Six at Clifton Airfield on 27th August. During September, singles

at Barlby on 3rd, Clifton Airfield on 4th, Thornton on 9th and Dunnington on 11th. Three at Clifton Airfield on 18th were the last (SRT).

A more encouraging season.

#### WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

An early bird was on Hobmoor on 18th March. The main passage started on 4th April in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal with 14 bird-days there in April; singles on three days at Clifton Airfield and on two days at Barlow Grange, with two at Malton. In May singles at Acaster Airfield on 7th and Wheldrake logs on 14th.

A very fluffy juvenile in Lower Derwent on 13th July raised speculation as to its origin.

Singles at Clifton Airfield on 17th and 20th. In August, singles at Riccall and Barlow Grange on 6th, six at Riccall on 17th with one there on 20th; Singles at Clifton Airfield on 21st and 27th and at Barlby Sewage Works on 22nd and 31st. One at the latter site on 10th September and the last at North Duffield Carrs on 3rd October (TED).

#### RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus*

A male at Barlow Grange on 30th April (DC).

A male on Wheldrake Ings on 28th October (IDA).

#### BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

A flock of 37 on 3rd February at Brayton Barff had increased to 48 by 22nd March. There were 30 on Fulford Ings on 6th February.

Post-breeding flocks were 100+ on Clifton Airfield on 22nd October and 60+ on Fulford Ings on 3rd November, 50 at Thornton on 27th and 100 at Fulford Golf Course on 6th December.

A female at Aughton on 4th February had most of its skull exposed at the back of its head but appeared otherwise perfectly healthy.

#### SONG THRUSH *Turdus merula*

The only significant record received was of 16 at Brayton Barff on 22nd March. Two very dark and secretive birds were on the river bank at Poppleton for several days from 28th January. They showed similarities to the subspecies *T.m. hebridensis*

#### FIELDFARE

Few large flocks in the early months with 105 at Naburn Sewage Works on 9th January, 180 in Lower Derwent on 14th, 100 at Butterwick on 16th and in Lower Derwent next day, 200 at Brawby on 6th February, 200 in Lower Derwent and 100 at Skipwith on 18th March, 400 north over Selby on 19th, 119 northeast over Brayton Barff on 22nd, 100 at Thornton on 27th and 200 at Riccall throughout March. 300 at Butterwick on 3rd April. Thereafter birds regularly in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal until 19th (One at Castle Howard on 20th May COGS) and one at Fangfoss on 26th (TW, VW).

First of the autumn were 29 in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal at Melbourne on 2nd October (CAP). Large numbers there to year end with 1050 on 12th October, 300 on 13th, 5970 on 16th, 3000 west in one hour on 24th, 2000 on 25th, 2600 on 26th, 3600 on 27th, 1250 on 29th, 600 on 30th and 300 on 31st. In November 500 on 11th, 300 on 13th, 450 on 18th, 600 on 23rd, 450 on 28th and 29th. 400 on 4th December and 650 on 5th, Elsewhere continuous passage of "huge numbers" southwest over Butterwick on 12th and 13th October and 500 at Barlow Grange on 13th

#### MISTLE THRUSH

Only one report of over ten early in the year, that of 11 at Brayton Barff on 3rd February, Bred at Stubb Wood, Fulford Golf Course, Bielby and Lower Derwent.

In July there were 12 at Tollerton on 12th, 28 at Melbourne on 27th, 36 at Thornton on 1st August and in October 30 at Moor Monkton on 13th. One singing at Selby Abbey on 12th December.

#### REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

Again very scarce during the early months, the only significant records being 41 on Hobmoor on 30th January, 400 at Brawby on 6th February and 60 at Ellerton on 4th March.

Spring passage was also very light the only significant number and the last of spring being 200 north over Selby on 19th April (PR).

Seven in Lower Derwent on 30th September were the first of autumn (MW), where larger counts were 350 on 12th October, 1670 on 16th, 300 on 18th, 1000 southwest in one hour on 24th, 800 on 25th and 1500 on 27th.

Nocturnal passage noted over York on 12th October (heavy), Osbaldwick 23rd and 24th and Lower Derwent 24th, 25th and 27th, 500 at Skipwith on 15th October, 116 at Osbaldwick on 28th and 250 at Fulford Ings on 3rd November. 2000 on Fulford Golf Course on 5th December and 1000 there on 6th.

#### GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia*

Four pairs bred in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal. Four other records all of singing males. The first at Heslington on 20th April (JHL) was in full song until 3rd May from a grassy hedge by the church. On 27th May one was at Crockey Hill (MN) and remained till 30th May, when one was also present at Wheldrake (MN). One was heard singing from a reedbed on Strensall Common on 17th June (SIUt).

#### SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

The first returning birds were two at Wheldrake Ings (TB) and one at Thornton Ellers (A?) on 20th April, two days later than last year,

Significant counts were ten at Roscarrs on 24th April, eight singing males at Wheldrake Ings on 29th April, eight at Selby Canal on 18th May.

Breeding reports came from Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal, Roscarrs, Sturge's Pond, Selby Tip, Strensall Common, and probable breeding was reported from Poppleton, Naburn Marina. The last was in Lower Derwent on 4th September.

#### REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

The first arrival was a single on Pocklington Canal on 28th May (TED), with ten at Roscarrs on 2nd May (PC); later reports came from Castle Howard and Sturge's Pond.

Sixteen singing birds were present at Roscarrs during the breeding season, where breeding was probable. The only other breeding records was of four pairs at Sturge's Pond and 40 pairs in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal.

The last recorded sighting was in Lower Derwent on 9th September.

#### LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

The first returning bird was a single at Brayton Barff on 24th April (DC).

Breeding records came from Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal, Brayton Barff, Sturge's Pond, Barlow Grange, Laytham and Bielby (several pairs), and Brandsby. Young were seen being fed at Morby Far Wood on 12th June and at Tollerton on 12th July. The last bird was in Lower Derwent on 11th September (TED).

#### WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

The first returning bird was in Lower Derwent on 21st April (TED). From then on small numbers were reported throughout the area. The largest count was of at least 16 singing males along the Riccall cycle path.

Breeding was confirmed at Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal, Clifton Airfield, Naburn, Ausgang Lane, Brayton Barff, and several pairs at Laytham and Bielby. Also present at a further eight sites during the breeding season.

#### GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

The first arrival was at Castle Howard on 23rd April (DOS). Further records were received from ten other sites. They bred near Brandsby (five sites) and were present during the



breeding season at Brayton Barff, Melbourne and Stillington and Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal.

The last bird was in a garden at Bishopthorpe on 15th August (UP).

#### BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*

Wintering records were received from Poppleton, with a single on 17th January and Dunnington with a male and female on 22nd February.

The first migrant appeared at Sturge's Pond on 3rd April with the bulk of arrivals from 13th. From then on they were recorded from 13 sites throughout the area. A count of 16 was received from Brayton Barff for 24th May.

Breeding reports came from Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal, Bielby (at least 20 pairs) and allotments on Holgate Road, York; probably bred at Castle Howard, Brayton Barff and Askham Bog.

#### WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

The first bird of the year was at Brayton Barff on 6th May (DC) (an arrival 15 days later than last year), where it remained singing until 7th June but did not breed. Two were at Dale End Wood, Brandsby on 7th May, followed by five at Wass on 24th May, which included a female carrying nest material. One was at Escrick on 22nd July.

#### CHIFFCHAFF

No overwintering records received in the first three months of the year.

The first returning bird was in Lower Derwent on 29th March (TED). The largest count was six at Askham on 7th April. Birds were recorded at Wheldrake and Clifton in October, followed by singles in November at York Waterworks on 15th and Askham Bog on 26th. Wintering records were received in December from Askham Bog on 11th (MB) and finally at Selby on 18th (PR).

#### WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

The first was at Wheldrake Ings on 4th April (TW), with the main influx from 13th. Twenty were present at Skipwith on 15th. Birds were widespread by end of the month.

May counts produced 41 at Brayton Barff on 24th (DC) and 21 at Sturge's Pond the same day. In September two juveniles were present in Appletree Village on 30th. The last bird was at Melbourne on 12th November (ID).

#### GOLDCREST

A flock of eight present at Brayton Barff on 3rd February. A possible Goldcrest/Firecrest hybrid was present at York University on 19th February (JL). The bird had Goldcrest plumage and Firecrest song.

Autumn records came from ten sites. Noteworthy counts were 25 at Strensall Common on 19th October, 40 at Ampleforth on 21st October (JP), 34 at King's Moor Plantation on 13th November (JRR) and 16 at Moorlands on 10th December.

#### SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*

The first two birds on 11th May at Brayton Barff (DC); the main arrival came on 24th with 13 there.

Breeding reports came from Brandsby (many) and Selby. Birds were also present during the breeding season at Askham Bog, Melbourne and Tollerton, where one adult was feeding juveniles on 12th July.

Six were present at Castle Howard on 31st August.

Melbourne produced the last of the year on 14th September (ID).

#### PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Single pairs bred at Brandsby and Gilling East (PH, per (TED). First successful breeding records for the area.

A singing male in Escrick Park on 27th and 30th May.  
Addition to 1987 Report. Nested unsuccessfully in nest box at Wass, the female being killed by a cat. First proven nesting attempt for the area.

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

Recorded throughout the year and area, with 30 at Castle Howard 12th January being the largest count.

Breeding was recorded at Brandsby (two sites), Fulford Golf Course, Naburn and Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal.

Post-breeding flocks were at Melbourne (14), Strensall Common (7) (11), Skipwith Common (10), North Duffield (8) and Wheldrake Ings (25) (40).

#### MARSH TIT *Parus palustris*

Most records received were of singles at seven sites. Three were present at Castle Howard on 10th March.

They bred at two sites at Brandsby. A record of five was received from Yearsley on 31st July (INS). Bred in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal, first breeding record for this site.

#### WILLOW TIT *Parus montanus*

Bred in Brandsby, Morby Wood and Fulford Golf Course.

Also seen at Bielby, Melbourne, Poppleton, Thornton Ellis, Hilburn Thicket and Ampleforth.

#### COAL TIT

Bred at Yearsley Forest, Brandsby (two sites) and Bielby.

The larger flock counts were 20 at Castle Howard on 12th January, four at Brayton Barff on 22nd February seven at Skipwith Common on 13th and ten at Strensall Common on 27th December.

#### BLUE TIT

The only significant counts were 29 at Brayton Barff on 3rd February and 60 on 22nd March and 60 at Fulford Golf Course on 6th December.

#### GREAT TIT *Parus major*

The only significant counts were 16 at Brayton Barff on 3rd February and 26 on 22nd March.

#### NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

Present daily over winter at the Old Rectory, Brandsby. In the same area one pair bred on Brandsby Avenue.

Singles were present at Castle Howard in January and Morby Park in March. One was in song at Bishopthorpe Palace on 30th March and 19th April, and calling on 22nd July and 2nd August. Also present during the breeding season at Wass, Ampleforth and Castle Howard and Escrick.

No records till the end of the year after two at Terrington on 23rd August apart from an extraordinary record of a single at Wheldrake Ings on 12th November.

#### TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

Records from only nine sites this year.

Largest count was of eight at Brayton Barff on 22nd March (DC).

No confirmed breeding, but probably bred at Bielby and in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal.

#### CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

Maximum count was of 260 at Riccall Common on 30th January. Other January/February counts were: Acomb (30), Crockey Hill (100), Brayton Barff (19), Poppleton (30), Thornton

(60) and Aughton (80). March produced flocks of 200 at Crockey Hill on 5th, 40 at Aughton on 5th increasing to 280 on 18th, and 62 at Brayton Barff on 22nd. Wintering flocks appeared on 13th November with 75 at Strensall Common, followed by flocks of 60 in December, at Copmanthorpe on 5th and Moorlands on 10th with 200 at Fulford Golf Course on 6th.

#### BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

Maximum counts were 200 at Acomb on 7th January and 110 at Aughton on 5th March. The last bird, a male, was at the University on 19th April. The earliest returning birds were a flock of six at Wheldrake Ings on 14th October (TED). Only low counts followed, with the largest being 15 at Wheldrake Ings on 12th November.

#### GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris*

The only counts were 40 at Thornton on 5th January, 60 at Aughton on 8th, 230 at Aughton on 5th March and 80 at Thornton on 13th December.

#### GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

The largest counts were of post-breeding flocks with 50 (mainly juveniles) at Clifton Airfield on 11 July, 127 there on 21st August, 30 at Melbourne on 26th, 76 at Clifton Airfield on 27th, 36 at Poppleton on 13th September, 35 at North Duffield on 17th, 30 at Clifton Airfield on 25th and 27 at Strensall Common on 25th October.

#### SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*

Recorded in low numbers in most months, including one present at Yearsley on 31st July. Forty at Askham Bog on 26th November increased to 150 by 16th December. Up to 135 regularly at Thornton during November and December. Other notable winter counts were 50 at Melbourne on 27th November, 50 at York University on 1st December where present until 3rd. Finally, 75 at Melbourne on 26th December.

#### LINNET *Carduelis cannabina*

The largest flocks in the early part of the year were 30 at Storwood on 26th January and 100 at Brighton on 11th March. Fifty were present at Clifton Airfield on 31st July, with flocks of 20 and 30, increasing to 88 on 21st August. 103 at Thornton on 31st December.

#### REDPOLL *Carduelis flammea*

Late winter flocks were: 17 at Brayton Barff on 3rd February and 11 at Bishopthorpe Crematorium on 6th. Post-breeding flocks were 20 at Wheldrake on 18th September, with 35 there next day and 35 at Thornton on 20th, 15 at Wheldrake on 2nd October, 130 at Elvington on 12th November and 40 at Strensall Common on 4th December.

#### CROSSBILL

Only two records this year. A party of 12 present at Hovingham on 23rd March and ten at Yearsley on 31st July (NS).

#### BULLFINCH

Only two significant counts this year. Eleven at Brayton Barff on 3rd February and nine at Wheldrake on 8th September.

#### HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Only one record this year, of a single at The Old Rectory Orchard, Brandsby on 12th April.

#### YELLOW HAMMER *Emberiza citrinella*

The largest winter flock was of 30 at Clifton Airfield on 27th February. Smaller numbers were present at Roscarrs, Riccall Common, Scrayingham and Butterwick.  
Post-breeding flocks were at Clifton Airfield, Knavesmire and a site east of Copmanthorpe - none of which above 20.

**REED BUNTING** *Emberiza schoeniclus*

The only significant counts were ten at Aughton on 5th March, 12 at Roscarrs on 8th, and ten at Clifton Airfield on 16th October.

**CORN BUNTING** *Miliaria calandra*

Bred at Acaster Malbis and Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal.  
Largest flock of the year was 250 at Hagg Bridge on 25th March.

**JAY** *Garrulus glandarius*

The only significant count was 24 at Strensall Common on 25th October.

**MAGPIE** *Pica pica*

The largest counts were 43 at Riccall on 28th March and 18 at Grimston Bar, Hull Road on 14th December,

**JACKDAW** *Corvus monedula*

No records received.

**ROOK**

A flock of 340 present at Poppleton on 24th January (IDA). 2000 on a newly silaged field at Melbourne on 9th May (TED).

A single bird at North Duffield on 6th December had white primaries (ML).

**CARRION CROW** *Corvus corone*

Significant counts were: a flock of 40 at Wheldrake on 9th January and 36 on 14th February.

**RAVEN** *Corvus corax*

A single over Wheldrake Ings on 30th May was tatty, with many wing and tail feathers missing (TB). Presumably the same bird there on 12th June (TED).

First record for the area.

**STARLING** *Sturnus vulgaris*

A wintering flock of 2000 was present at Naburn Sewage Works on 9th January. A roost of c10,000 was at Acaster Airfield on 12th March and 2000 were present in willows at Barlow Grange in 6th August. On 4th December 500 were present at Wheldrake.

**HOUSE SPARROW** *Passer domesticus*

The only significant count was 36 at Selby on 5th August, 10 in a garden.

**TREE SPARROW** *Passer montanus*

150 at Poppleton on 1st January, 100 at Thornton on 5th, 80 at Ellerton on 6th and 70 at Aughton on 8th. Smaller flocks in January at North Duffield and Riccall Common. 70 at Aughton on 4th February and 100 at Brighton on 11th March. A flock of 16 at Knavesmire Wood on 11th April. An adult at Melbourne, on 16th May, was seen carrying food to a nest hole. Breeding was also noted at Poppleton.

Wintering flocks appeared on 8th August at Poppleton with 25, increasing to 150 by 10th November and down to 75 by 24th. Eleven were at Knavesmire wood on 10th November.

ESCAPES

#### CAPE TEAL

One at North Duffield Carrs on 17th April was subsequently observed at Wheldrake Ings from 4th to 29th May (CCL, DR)

#### RUDDY SHELDUCK

A male was present at Wheldrake Ings from 7th May until 4th June.

#### BLACK SWAN

Two were present at Wheldrake Ings on 27th April (DR,ML) and stayed until 14th May.

#### BAR-HEADED GOOSE

The only record was an adult at Wheldrake Ings on 29th May.

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