

YORK ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB
REPORT 1992

A SUMMARY OF THE STATUS OF BIRDS IN THE YORK AREA

This short summary of the status of birds in the York area includes all birds which have, during the years, been recorded in the York Ornithological Club recording area. Obviously the status of some birds may change over the next few years either as they increase or decrease in general abundance or changes in the efficiency of local recording. The summary is meant to act as a guide as to the status of individual species and may prove particularly useful to newcomers not familiar with the birds of the local area or their relative significance. It should come as a help to those people who are not sure whether they should submit records or not, as they do not know whether a bird is regularly seen in the area. Status accounts such as this can only begin to be written after many years of records have been collected. To ensure that the accounts are kept up to date in future requires many more records to be submitted and it is for this reason that all local birdwatchers are encouraged to hand in records of local bird sightings to the local recorder, whether they appear significant or not - even apparently abundant species need to be recorded so that changes in abundance can be monitored more easily.

The following may also be used as a local birds checklist. The total number of species recorded in the York area up to the end of 1992 is 253.

KEY TO STATUS ACCOUNTS

Resident Breeder: All or part of the local population is present throughout the year and breeds within the area. Migrant Breeder: Breeds annually in the area but all (or most of) the local population departs from the area in autumn or winter. Casual Breeder: Has bred in the area on an irregular basis since 1966 and is likely to do so again. Winter Visitor: All or part of the local population breeds outside the area but either spends the winter here or visits the area regularly during the winter months and has been recorded on at least 30 occasions since 1966. Passage Visitor: Has visited the area on a regular basis (more than 30 occasions) during the spring and/or autumn. Infrequent Visitor: Has been recorded in the area on more than 15 but fewer than 30 occasions since 1966. Scarce Visitor: Has been recorded in the area on fewer than 15 occasions since 1966. Vagrant: Has been recorded in the area in the past but is not normally expected, being well outside its normal range. Escaped Species: Records are most likely to refer to birds which have escaped from captivity.

SYSTEMATIC LIST

Red-throated Diver - scarce visitor.
Black-throated Diver - scarce visitor.
Great Northern Diver - scarce visitor.
Little Grebe - resident/migrant breeder; lakes, rivers, ponds.
Great Crested Grebe - resident/migrant breeder; lakes, ponds and rivers.
Red-necked Grebe - scarce visitor.
Slavonian Grebe - scarce visitor.
Black-necked Grebe - infrequent visitor/casual breeder; lakes & wetlands.
Fulmar - vagrant.
Storm Petrel - vagrant.

Manx Shearwater - scarce visitor.
Gannet - vagrant.
Cormorant - passage/winter visitor; lakes & rivers.
Shag - vagrant.
Bittern - infrequent visitor; reedbeds.
Night Heron - scarce visitor, wetlands.
Grey Heron - resident breeder, winter visitor; lakes & rivers.
Purple Heron - scarce visitor; wetlands.
White Stork - vagrant.
Spoonbill - scarce visitor.
Mute Swan - resident breeder, winter visitor, lakes, rivers & canals.
Bewick's Swan - winter/passage visitor; lakes & floodwaters.
Whooper Swan - winter/passage visitor; lakes & floodwaters.
Bean Goose - infrequent passage/winter visitor; floodwaters.
Pink-footed Goose - passage/winter visitor; lakes & floodwaters.
White-fronted Goose - passage/winter visitor; lakes & floodwaters.
Lesser White-fronted Goose - scarce visitor, possibly escaped.
Greylag Goose - resident breeder/feral species; lakes & floodwaters.
Snow Goose - scarce visitor, possibly feral or escaped.
Canada Goose - resident breeder/feral species; lakes & floodwaters.
Barnacle Goose - passage visitor, probably of feral origin; lakes & floodwaters.
Brent Goose - scarce passage visitor; floodwaters.

Egyptian Goose - scarce visitor/escaped species.
Ruddy Shelduck - escaped species.
Shelduck - resident breeder, passage/winter visitor; lakes, rivers & floodwaters.
Wood Duck - scarce visitor, possibly escaped.
Mandarin - escaped species.
Wigeon - casual breeder, winter visitor; lakes & floodwaters.
American Wigeon - scarce visitor; lakes & floodwaters.
Gadwall - resident breeder, winter visitor; lakes & floodwaters.
Teal - resident breeder, winter visitor; lakes & floodwaters.
Mallard - resident breeder, winter visitor; lakes, rivers, canals & floodwaters.
Pintail - casual breeder, winter visitor; lakes & floodwaters
Garganey - Migrant breeder; lakes & floodwaters.
Blue-winged Teal - scarce visitor; floodwaters.
Shoveler - resident breeder, winter visitor; lakes & floodwaters.
Red-crested Pochard - scarce visitor, escaped species or vagrant; lakes & flood waters.
Pochard - resident breeder, winter visitor; lakes & floodwaters.
Ring-necked Duck - scarce winter/passage visitor; lakes & floodwaters. Ferruginous Duck - scarce visitor, lakes and floodwaters.
Tufted Duck - resident breeder, winter visitor, lakes, rivers & floodwaters. Scaup - passage/winter visitor; lakes, rivers & floodwaters.
Eider - vagrant.
Long-tailed Duck - scarce visitor. Common Scoter - vagrant.
Velvet Scoter - vagrant.
Barrow's Goldeneye - vagrant
Goldeneye - passage/winter visitor; lakes, rivers & floodwaters.
Smew - infrequent visitor; lakes & floodwaters.
Goosander - resident breeder, winter visitor; lakes, rivers & floodwaters.
Red-breasted Merganser - passage/winter visitor; lakes, rivers & floodwaters.
Ruddy Duck - migrant breeder; lakes & floodwaters.
Honey Buzzard - scarce passage visitor
Black Kite - vagrant
Red Kite - scarce visitor
Marsh Harrier - passage visitor
Hen Harrier - passage visitor.
Montagu's Harrier - scarce visitor.
Goshawk - resident breeder; woodlands.

Sparrowhawk - resident breeder; woodlands, suburbs & farmland.
Buzzard - passage visitor.
Rough-legged Buzzard - scarce passage/winter visitor. Osprey - passage visitor; reservoirs, lakes, rivers & canals. Kestrel - resident breeder/winter visitor; most habitats.
Red-footed Falcon - scarce visitor.
Merlin - passage/winter visitor; farmlands.
Hobby - summer visitor, casual breeder; woodlands, heath & farmlands.
Peregrine - passage/winter visitor.
Red-legged Partridge - resident breeder; farmlands.
Grey Partridge - resident breeder; farmlands.
Quail - migrant breeder; unimproved meadows & crop fields.
Pheasant - resident breeder; farmlands.
Golden Pheasant - irregular escaped species.
Water Rail - resident breeder, winter/passage visitor, reedbeds.
Spotted Crake - scarce passage migrant.
Corncrake - irregular passage migrant; unimproved pastures.
Moorhen - resident breeder; all waters.
Coot - resident breeder, winter visitor; all waters.
Crane - scarce visitor.
Oystercatcher - casual breeder, passage visitor, wetlands & in the vicinity of water.
Stone Curlew - scarce passage migrant,
Little Ringed Plover - casual breeder .passage visitor; shores. Ringed Plover - passage visitor, water margins.
Kentish Plover - vagrant.
Dotterel - scarce passage migrant.
Lapwing - resident/migrant breeder, passage/winter visitor, farmland.
Golden Plover - passage/winter visitor, water margins & farmland.
Grey Plover - passage visitor.
Sanderling - scarce passage visitor.
Temminck's Stint - vagrant
Little Stint - scarce passage visitor.
White-rumped Sandpiper - vagrant
Baird's Sandpiper - vagrant
Pectoral Sandpiper - scarce passage visitor.
Curlew Sandpiper - passage visitor; water margins.
Dunlin - passage/winter visitor; water margins.
Ruff - casual breeder, passage/winter visitor.
Jack Snipe - passage/winter visitor; wetlands.
Snipe - resident/migrant breeder, passage visitor, wetlands.
Woodcock - resident breeder/winter visitor; woodlands & scrub.
Black-tailed Godwit - casual breeder, passage visitor.
Bar-tailed Godwit - passage visitor.
Whimbrel - passage visitor.
Curlew - resident breeder, passage/winter visitor; water margins & farmland.
Spotted Redshank - infrequent passage visitor, water margins.
Redshank - resident breeder, passage/winter visitor; water margins & unimproved pasture.
Greenshank - passage visitor.
Green Sandpiper - passage/winter visitor, lakes, sewage farms & streams.
Wood Sandpiper - infrequent passage visitor.
Common Sandpiper - migrant breeder, passage visitor, water margins & rivers.
Turnstone - infrequent passage visitor.
Red-necked Phalarope - scarce passage migrant.
Grey Phalarope - scarce passage migrant.
Arctic Skua - scarce visitor.
Great Skua - scarce visitor.
Mediterranean Gull - infrequent passage visitor.
Little Gull - infrequent passage visitor; lakes & floodwaters.
Black-headed Gull - resident breeder, winter visitor; lakes, floodwaters, tips & fields.
Common Gull - passage/winter visitor, lakes, floodwaters & fields.
Lesser Black-backed Gull - passage/winter visitor; lakes,

fields, tips & floodwaters.
Herring Gull - passage/winter visitor; tips, fields & floodwaters.
Iceland Gull - infrequent winter visitor.
Glaucous Gull - infrequent winter visitor.
Great Black-backed Gull - passage/winter visitor; lakes, floodwaters, tips & fields.
Kittiwake - passage/winter visitor, lakes & floodwaters.
Caspian Tern - vagrant.
Roseate Tern - scarce passage visitor.
Common Tern - passage visitor, casual breeder; lakes & floodwaters.
Arctic Tern - passage visitor; lakes & floodwaters.
Sandwich Tern - infrequent passage visitor; lakes & floodwaters.
Little Tern - scarce passage visitor.
Whiskered Tern - vagrant.
Black Tern - infrequent passage visitor; lakes & floodwaters.
White-winged Black Tern - vagrant
Guillemot - vagrant.
Little Auk - vagrant Puffin - vagrant.
Stock Dove - resident breeder; farmland.
Wood Pigeon - resident breeder; farmland & woodland.
Collared Dove - resident breeder; suburban areas & farms.
Turtle Dove - migrant breeder, passage visitor, woodland & farmland.
Ring-necked Parakeet - scarce visitor, possibly escaped.
Cuckoo - migrant breeder; most habitats except urban areas.
Barn Owl - resident breeder; farmland & pastures.
Little Owl - resident breeder; farmland & pastures.
Tawny Owl - resident breeder; woodlands & wooded suburban areas.
Long-eared Owl - resident breeder, winter visitor; woodlands.
Short-eared Owl - casual breeder, passage/winter visitor; rough pastures.
Nightjar - migrant breeder; heathlands.
Swift - migrant breeder, passage visitor.
Alpine Swift - vagrant.
Kingfisher - resident breeder; rivers, lakes & canals.
Bee-eater - vagrant.
Hoopoe - vagrant.
Wryneck - vagrant.
Green Woodpecker - resident breeder; open deciduous woodland & heaths.
Great-spotted Woodpecker - resident breeder; woodland & suburban gardens.
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker - resident breeder; deciduous woodlands.
Woodlark - scarce passage migrant.
Skylark - resident breeder; farmland & heaths.
Sand Martin - migrant breeder, passage visitor; rivers, lakes & sewage farms.
Swallow - migrant breeder, passage visitor; lakes, rivers, farmland & suburbs.
Red-rumped Swallow - vagrant.
House Martin - migrant breeder, passage visitor, most habitats except woodlands.
Richard's Pipit - vagrant.
Tree Pipit - migrant breeder, passage visitor, heathland & scrub.
Meadow Pipit - resident breeder, passage & winter visitor, farmland & pastures.
Rock Pipit - scarce visitor.
Water Pipit - scarce passage visitor.
Yellow Wagtail - migrant breeder, passage visitor, farmland & water margins.
Grey Wagtail - resident/migrant breeder, passage & winter visitor, near water.
Pied Wagtail - resident breeder, passage & winter visitor, most habitats except woodland.
Waxwing - casual winter visitor, gardens & hedgerows.

Dipper - resident breeder; rivers & streams.
Wren - resident breeder; most habitats.
Dunnock - resident breeder; most habitats.
Robin - resident breeder, winter visitor; most habitats.
Nightingale - scarce passage migrant, casual breeder.
Black Redstart - scarce passage migrant, casual breeder.
Redstart - migrant breeder, passage visitor, woodlands.
Whinchat - migrant breeder, passage visitor; heathlands & scrub.
Stonechat - passage visitor; heathland.
Wheatear - passage visitor, casual migrant breeder; open areas & farmland.
Ring Ouzel - scarce passage migrant
Blackbird - resident breeder, passage & winter visitor, woodland, parks, gardens.
Fieldfare - winter/passage visitor; gardens, parks & farmland.
Song Thrush - resident breeder, winter visitor; woodland, parks & gardens.
Mistle Thrush - resident breeder, passage visitor; parks, gardens & open fields.
Redwing - winter/passage visitor; farmlands, gardens & parks.
Grasshopper Warbler - migrant breeder, passage visitor, heath land & scrub.
Sedge Warbler - migrant breeder, passage visitor; reedbeds, marshes & scrub.
Marsh Warbler - scarce visitor.
Reed Warbler - migrant breeder, passage visitor; reedbeds & marshes.
Barred Warbler - vagrant.
Lesser Whitethroat - migrant breeder, passage visitor; hedgerows & scrub.
Whitethroat - migrant breeder, passage visitor; hedgerows & scrub.
Garden Warbler - migrant breeder, passage visitor; woodland & scrub.
Blackcap - migrant breeder, passage/winter visitor; woodland, scrub & gardens.
Wood Warbler - migrant breeder, passage visitor; deciduous woodland.
Chiffchaff - migrant breeder, passage/winter visitor; woodland.
Goldcrest - resident breeder, passage/winter visitor; woodland.
Firecrest - scarce visitor; woodland.
Spotted Flycatcher - migrant breeder, passage visitor; woodland, parks & gardens.
Pied Flycatcher - casual migrant breeder, passage visitor; deciduous woodland.
Red-breasted Flycatcher - scarce passage visitor.
Bearded Tit - passage visitor, reedbeds.
Long-tailed Tit - resident breeder; woodland, parks, gardens & scrub.
Marsh Tit - resident breeder; deciduous woodland.
Willow Tit - resident breeder; woodland, heathland & scrub.
Coal Tit - resident breeder; woodland.
Blue Tit - resident breeder; woodland, suburbs & hedgerows.
Great Tit - resident breeder; suburban areas & woodlands.
Nuthatch - resident breeder; woodland.
Treecreeper - resident breeder; woodland.
Golden Oriole - scarce migrant/passage visitor; woodlands.
Red-backed Shrike - scarce visitor.
Great Grey Shrike - scarce winter/passage visitor.
Jay - resident breeder, passage/winter visitor; woodland & scrub.
Magpie - resident breeder; most habitats.
Jackdaw - resident breeder; farmland & villages.
Rook - resident breeder; farmland & woodland.
Carrion Crow - resident breeder, passage/winter visitor; farmland & suburbs. Raven - scarce visitor.

Starling - resident breeder, passage/winter visitor ; urban areas & farmland.
 House Sparrow - resident breeder; urban areas & farmland.
 Tree Sparrow - resident breeder, passage/winter visitor, farmland and hedgerows. Chaffinch - resident breeder, passage winter visitor; woodland & farmland.
 Brambling - winter/passage visitor; woodland & farmland.
 Greenfinch - resident breeder, passage/winter visitor; most rural habitats & suburbs.
 Goldfinch - resident breeder, passage visitor; farmland, heath, scrub & gardens.
 Siskin - resident breeder, passage/winter visitor; woodland & suburban gardens.
 Linnet - resident migrant breeder, winter/passage visitor; farmland & heath.
 Twite - scarce visitor.
 Redpoll - resident/migrant breeder, passage/winter visitor; woodland, scrub & heath.
 Crossbill - casual breeder, passage visitor; coniferous woodland.
 Bullfinch - resident breeder, passage visitor; hedgerows, woodland & gardens.
 Hawfinch - casual breeder; deciduous woodland & parklands.
 Lapland Bunting - scarce winter visitor.
 Snow Bunting - scarce winter visitor.
 Yellowhammer - resident breeder; farmland, hedgerows & scrub.
 Cirl Bunting - scarce visitor.
 Reed Bunting - resident breeder, passage visitor, reedbeds, wetlands & scrub.
 Corn Bunting - resident breeder; farmland & hedgerows.

Danae Murfit May 1993

STATUS OF RARER SEABIRDS OCCURRING IN THE YORK

AREA SECTION 2: 1966-1990

The sequence and nomenclature used is that of Voous K.H., List of Recent Holarctic Bird Species (1973 and 1977) B.O.U. 1977.

RED THROATED DIVER (Gavia stellata)

Seven records, five of which were between 1 February and 13 April with a single late November record and one date unknown This species is the most frequently occurring Gavia in the York Area.

1970 - The 1976 bird was the 2nd record; I can find no trace of the first mentioned for 1970.

1976 - Single bird on the River Rye between Nunnington and Helmsley on 20 March.

1977 - One immature at Castle Howard on 24 and 27 November. On the latter date the bird was observed to fly in from the north, circle the lake twice and then depart to the south east.

1979 - Two sightings relating to the same winter plumaged individual. Observed at Wheldrake Ings on 18 March and at Bubwith on 24 March.

1985 - One elusive oiled bird was present on the River Ouse, York on 1 and 3 February before moving upstream to Poppleton where it

was present on 6 and 7 February.

1986 - One picked up freshly dead at Castle Howard on 13 April.

1987 - One flew south at North Duffield Carrs on 12 February.

With the exception of the 1985 individual which was devilishly difficult to catch up with most records are single date birds only. Surely it is only a matter of time before an obliging individual performs well for the area listers!

BLACK THROATED DIVER (Gavia arctica)

Three records of this delightful diver in February and March.

1979 - One at Bubwith on 18 March when amazingly a Red Throated Diver (Gavia stellata) was present at Wheldrake Ings.

1983 - One on a large goldfish pond at Bossall on 10 February remained until 14 when it succumbed to the extremely harsh weather.

1986 - Two birds, one of which was oiled, on the River Ouse at Poppleton from 18 February until 1 March.

Despite increased observation of the area's waters this species remains a great rarity.

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER (Gavia immer)

One record of this impressive species.

1986 - An extremely obliging immature was present at Castle Howard from 26 November until 21 December.

That there is only a single record of this not too infrequent visitor to other inland waters in Yorkshire is rather surprising.

DIVER SP (Gavia sp)

A diver which flew east over Anchor Plain on 5 November 1987 was thought to be Red Throated (G. stellata).

RED NECKED GREBE (Podiceps grisegena)

Nine records, eight of which have occurred in the period 26 January to 10 April, with a solitary early winter record. Away from the Lower Derwent two sightings from Fulford Ings and single observations from Castle Howard and Poppleton.

1978 - One at Wheldrake Ings on 19 March.

1979 - A notably hard weather influx occurred:-
One on the River Ouse, Fulford Ings, between 22 and 24 February. One at Wheldrake Ings on 24 and 25 February. One on the Pocklington Canal on 25 March. One at Ellerton on both 8 and 10 April.

1981 - One at Castle Howard between 29 November and 1 December represents the only record outside the January to April period.

1985 - One first winter on the River Ouse, Fulford Ings on 26 January was relocated further upstream at Poppleton the same day, where it remained until the 28th.
One extremely obliging individual was present on the River Derwent at East Cottingwith between 10 and 17 February.

1987 - One at Wheldrake Ings between 5 and 7 February.

A species particularly susceptible to harsh weather. The vast majority of York Area sightings have been associated with exceptional hard weather influxes of this species into Britain -notably so in 1979 and 1985.

SLAVONIAN GREBE (Podiceps auritus)

Six records of this rather attractive species; five in the period 8 January to 24 February and a singleton in December.

1972 - One winter plumaged bird at Castle Howard on 6 February.

1979 - One at Wheldrake Ings on 25 February.

1980 - One extremely well watched individual was present at Dringhouses

Pond between 10 and 24 February.

1984 - One at North Duffield Carrs on 31 January.

1985 - A single bird in transitional plumage was present on the River Derwent (Wheldrake Ings) between 8 and 21 January.

1990 - One on the River Ouse at Poppleton between 14 and 19 December.

Still quite a rarity in the York Area. Thankfully, it has been possible to connect with three of the six records.

BLACK NECKED GREBE (Podiceps nigricollis)

Seven spring records; becoming increasingly regular as a spring passage migrant.

1969 - One at Ellerton Ings 23 March and 4 April.

1983 - Two pairs bred unsuccessfully in the Lower Derwent. They were first seen displaying on 12 May. By 15 May both pairs were holding territory with the males fighting fiercely. The females were sitting by 16 May. The birds became extremely elusive as emergent vegetation grew and were last seen on 21 May. The cause of failure is not known but was probably due to aggression by Coots (*Fulca atra*).

1984 - Two summer plumaged birds at Castle Howard on 1 May.

1987 - One first summer individual at Wheldrake Ings between 16 April and 12 May and again on 14 June.

1988 - Three at Wheldrake Ings on 14 May, with a single bird

present from

15-19 May. One at Clifton Airfield on 31 May.

1990 - One summer plumaged individual at Wheldrake Ings between 28 April and 3 May.

Easily overlooked due to the species' secretive nature, frequent of late but a nice find all the same.

FULMAR (Fulmarus glacialis)

Seven records, six of which occurred between 1985 and 1990.

1979 - One flying over St. Mary's Gardens, York on 9 June.

1985 - One flying up and down Kirkham Gorge in fog on 30 May.

1986 - One flew east at Wheldrake Ings on 12 September.

1987 - One adult, dead for about a week, found at Barlby on 14 February.

One over Brandsby on 3 July.

1989 - One north over Castle Howard on 11 September, following north easterly gales.

1990 - One on the road between Escrick and Wheldrake at mid-day on 8 December flew off north into driving snow.

Increasingly encountered inland these days. Birds have been observed sitting on cliffs near Sutton-under-Whitstonecliff just to the north of the recording area during the breeding season.

MANX SHEARWATER (Puffinus puffinus)

Four records, two of 'wrecked' birds and two of quite healthy individuals.

1983 - An exhausted bird picked up at Stockton-on-the-Forest on 15 September was later successfully released at the coast.

1986 - A bird attempted to land on the A19 at Deighton on 11 February. It was blown aside by a lorry and was last seen flying weakly east. This coincided with the occurrence of many inland seabirds throughout the country. A single bird was located at 10.15am on 26 May resting on flood water towards the north eastern corner of Wheldrake Ings, remaining to at least mid afternoon. The bird was alert but spent a lot of its time resting. 'Shearwatering' was observed on many occasions - each with a posse of Black Headed Gulls (*Larus ridibundus*) for company. Weather prior to this observation had been of persistent strong south westerly winds.

1990 - One picked up unharmed in a field at Laytham on 8 October was ringed and released at Spurn the next day.

That two apparently healthy birds should occur within the same year is extraordinary. The 1986 May individual represented the first inland spring record for Yorkshire.

STORM PETREL (Hydrobates)

palagicus) Two records both of which met fatal endings.

1974 - One was recovered from a cat at Heslington and was passed to the Biology Department at the University of York where it subsequently died on 15 October.

1975 - One found dead at Sutton-on-the-Forest on 13 October following a period of strong north easterly winds.

This palaegic species is rarely encountered alive inland.

GANNET (Sula bassana)

Seven records of this large seabird, one each in March and October and five in September.

1967 - One at Newton-on-Ouse in mid September.

1974 - One juvenile at Holtby in September was widely reported upon in the local press.

1975 - An immature was found exhausted near High Carton on 13 October.

1980 - One adult flew east over York City centre on 21 March. One immature flew east over Wheldrake Ings on 2 September.

1986 - One first year bird flew south along the River Derwent at North Duffield on 27 September.

1989 - Two juveniles south west over Selby on 11 September.

A chance encounter with an autumn immature appears to be the best opportunity to 'connect' with this erratic visitor to the York area!.

SHAG (Phalacrocorax aristotelis)

Five records during the period.

1979 - One found dead at Naburn Sewage Works in early January.

1981 - One immature circled Castle Howard several times before departing to the east on 8 October.

1984 - One was present on the Fiver Foss, central York from 5-24 April when it was found dead.

1988 - One immature on the River Foss at Castle Mills Bridge on 19 March.

1989 - A second summer bird was present in the Wheldrake Ings/Pocklington Canal vicinity between 12 April and 26 June.

Careful observation of all cormorant 'types', especially singletons,

could prove rewarding!

ARCTIC SKUA (Stercorarius parasiticus)

Two records, both of 'fly throughs'.

1983 - A light phase individual followed the River Derwent southwards at Wheldrake Ings on 21 October.

1989 - A dark phase bird along the A64 towards Copmanthorpe on 28 September.

That there are only two records of this frequent inland visitor is surprising.

GREAT SKUA (Stercorarius skua)

Two records of this powerful skua.

1981 - One at Wheldrake Ings on 26 April, a day of snow, rain and force 8 north easterlies. The bird was seen attempting to force a Heron (*Ardea cinerea*) to disgorge.

1983 - One flew east over the University of York on 14 November.

Those who missed the 'twitchable' 1981 bird might have to wait some time for another opportunity to catch up with this species in the area.

MEDITERRANEAN GULL (*Larus melanocephalus*)

Seventeen records, sixteen of which were in the 1980s. This species has only failed to appear in two of the years between 1979 -1990. The majority were one day birds, exceptions being the first summer bird at Wheldrake Ings in 1979 and the second summer at Escrick in 1980.

TABLE 1: A MONTHLY BREAKDOWN OF BIRD DAYS

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Total												
Bird	1	1	5	5	9	0	5	1	0	1	0	1
29 days												

We observe a strong spring bias with March-May accounting for 66% of total bird days. These months coincide with the greatest movement of the smaller gulls through the York Area and birds at this time are no doubt associated with this movement.

Not too surprisingly only four records have occurred away from the Lower Derwent, with single records from Stamford Bridge, Dringhouses Pond, Escrick and Riccall.

1979 - First summer at Wheldrake Ings on 8, 10, 11, 12 and 22 July.

1980 - First winter at Stamford Bridge on 18 March.
One second summer at Escrick between 25-27 May.

1982 - First winter at Dringhouses Pond on 9 October.

1983 - First summer at Wheldrake Ings on 25 April.

1984 - An interesting series of records from Wheldrake Ings. First winter on 2 January, one adult on 28 March, first

summer on 9 and 14 May with a different first summer on 10 May and finally a second winter on 8 December.

- 1985 - One adult at Wheldrake Ings on 26 March.
- 1986 - First summer at North Duffield Carrs on 1 and 2 May was also seen at
Bubwith on 6 May.
A moulting individual between second summer and adult winter was on
the Ouse between Riccall and Barlby on 8 August.
- 1987 - One summer plumage bird on 27 and 28 March at Wheldrake Ings.
- 1989 - One second summer on 11 April and a first winter on 26 April at
Wheldrake Ings.
- 1990 - One first winter at North Duffield Carrs on 10 February and a similar aged bird at Wheldrake Ings on 7 April.

No doubt increased awareness of this species has led to almost annual records. Sifting through the Black Headed (*Larus ridibundus*) and Common Gulls (*Larus Canus*) in Spring appears to be the best bet.

LITTLE GULL (*Larus minutus*)

A single record prior to 1976 concerned a bird in 1966. Since 1976 it has occurred as an annual spring passage migrant and a scarce Autumn/Winter visitor. Many spring birds tend to linger in the Derwent Valley, particularly amongst the Black Headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*) colonies and display has been noted on three occasions, in 1966, 1983 and 1986, raising the possibility that it is only a matter of time before breeding occurs.

The largest number to be recorded was a party of seven (four adults and three first summers) at Wheldrake Ings on 28 April 1981.

Four records have occurred away from the Lower Derwent. At Castle Howard a second year bird was present between 31 July and 19 August 1976 and in 1989 a first winter bird was seen between 11 and 15 November. Elsewhere first winters have occurred at Cawood on 31 August 1981 and at Dringhouses Pond from 11-14 October 1981.

Outside the period April to June records are scarce and as such merit listing:

- Prior to April only one record:-
One Adult at Wheldrake Ings on 17 March 1990.

For the Autumn period extremes, 24 July - 14 October, six records:
One second year at Castle Howard 31 July - 19 August 1976.
Two adults at Wheldrake Ings on 26 July 1990.
Four sub-adults at Wheldrake Ings on 29 September 1981.
One first winter at Dringhouses Pond between 11-14 October 1981.
One first winter at Wheldrake Ings 27 September 1982.
One adult and a first summer at Wheldrake Ings 24 July 1985.
- Similarly early winter records are unusual with only three noted:
One winter plumaged adult at Wheldrake Ings 30 November 1980.
One first winter at Wheldrake Ings 24 December 1983.
One first winter at Castle Howard between 11-15 November 1989.

It is also of interest to note the accounts for the years when display was noted:-

In 1966 an adult in full breeding plumage stayed in a small Black Headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*) colony in the Derwent Valley from 14 -28 May and was seen displaying at the other gulls.

In 1983, in the Lower Derwent, an adult male arrived 14 May and was joined by a first summer female on 18th, whereupon they both took up residence in a gull colony. The male displayed and held territory until 11 June whilst the female remained until 13 July.

On 10 May 1986 an adult bird persistently attempted to settle in low vegetation between incubating Black Headed Gulls (*Larus ridibundus*) at a site in the Lower Derwent.
Surely it is only a matter of time

ICELAND GULL (*Larus glaucooides*)

Nine records, though only two 'fly throughs' since 1984.

1969 - 1979 was the second record. The first was apparently in 1969 but is not mentioned in the YNU Reports for that year.

1979 - One adult at Askham Bog Tip on 7 and 14 January.

1980 - One 'White' individual at Wheldrake Ings on 23 and 29 November and 6 December.

1983 - One first winter at Ellerton Tip on 24 February.
One first summer at Wheldrake Ings on 2 May was at Ellerton Tip the following day.

1984 - One first winter at Ellerton Tip on 2, 3 and 5 February with an adult
also seen there on 5 February.

1988 - One second winter at North Duffield Carrs on 18

February. 1990 - One first winter over London Bridge
Garage on 15 February.

As with the next species regular checking of local tips would no doubt reveal the species as an annual visitor to the area.

GLAUCOUS GULL (*Larus hyperboreus*)

Almost annual winter visitor during the 1980s though scarce of late.

unknown - 1979 bird was the second record but I have been unable to find the first.

1979- A fourth year/adult bird at Askham Bog Tip 10, 13 and 17 January; was also present in the Lower Derwent 10,18 and 19 March. This bird had a damaged left leg.
A second immature bird was present in the Lower Derwent 23 March, 6, 7 and 19 April.
A limping adult was again seen in the Lower Derwent on 29 and 30 December.

1980 - The limping adult remained until 9 March

and was seen at various locations in the Lower Derwent.

Single second year birds were seen at Wheldrake Ings on 21 February and 9 March.

The limping adult again returned and was first noted at Aughton on 8 November, being seen at various locations throughout the Lower Derwent until the year end.

1981 - The limping adult was last seen in the Lower Derwent on 22 February. It was also seen at Askham Bog Tip and Dringhouses Pond on the morning of 4 January and at Wheldrake Ings later in the day at 15.25 hrs.

A first winter bird at Askham Bog Tip on 4 January.

1982 - One adult at Aughton on 3 January.

An immature south at Storwood on 1 March.

An adult south at Wheldrake Ings on 29 December.

1984 - In the Lower Derwent, superficially a second winter with a first winter bill pattern was present from 18 January to 8 February. An oiled first winter bird from 6 February to 2 March and another second winter type from 6 to 8 February.

1985 - One first winter at Wheldrake Ings and Ellerton Tip between 10 and 11 February.

1986 - A complex series of records involving at least two birds, probably three or four and possibly five.

A second winter at Wheldrake Ings from 11 January until 17 February. A first year at Wharfe Ings on 12 January was seen at Brighton Tip 2 February.

A pale second spring bird at Wheldrake Ings on 6 and 13 April and at North Duffield Carrs on 25 April could possibly have been the bird seen at Wheldrake Ings earlier in the year.

A long dead first or second year bird was found at Barlby Sewage Works 15 April.

One third winter at Wheldrake Ings between 25 and 27 December.

1987 - A first winter bird at Dringhouses Tip 11 March was seen also at Wheldrake Ings 21 and 28 March and 8 April.

Surely increased scrutiny of the tips around the area would produce more birds?

KITTIWAKE (Rissa tridactyla)

Less than five records before 1978 since when it has been an annual visitor (except 1989) in small numbers, mostly in the period January to April with a distinct peak between mid February and late March. Also a somewhat scarce autumn/early winter visitor.

Twelve records away from the Lower Derwent:

Dringhouses Pond - One second winter 18 January 1983.

- One adult 1 April 1985.

- One adult 28 February 1987.

Castle Howard - One dead second winter 9 March 1987.

- Two adults 12 March 1988 1 on 13.

Locations on the Ouse - One immature north at Fulford Ings on 20 July 1979.

- One adult on Clifton Ings 15 January 1984.

- One juvenile on the Ouse in York 28 August 1985.

- One at Roscarrs 8 March and two at Selby 6 March 1987.

Locations on the Derwent - One adult at Kexby 17 December 1983.
 - One adult at Elvington 11 February 1985.

Outside the main winter/spring passage period records have occurred for the following months:-

(3), August (1), October (2), November (2) and December (2).
 The majority of records concern less than five birds, exceptions being six adults at Wheldrake Ings 1 April 1981; seven adults and a first winter at Wheldrake Ings 14 January 1984 and in 1985 at Wheldrake Ings 16 adults and a first year bird were briefly grounded by a hailstorm 24 March. Looking at the yearly breakdown of records (by bird days) we see that 1984 and 1985 accounted for nearly 47% of all bird days recorded for the period, also 83% of bird days are attributable to adult birds.

TABLE 2: YEARLY BREAKDOWN OF BIRD DAYS 1975-1990

Year	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	Totals
Bird days	2	0	0	0	6	6	6	6	3	28	21	1	12	8	0	4	103
Adults	2	0	0	6	0	5	6	5	1	20	18	1	11	8	0	3	86
Imms.	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	8	3	0	1	0	0	3	17

That the species is overlooked in the area during the period January to May there is no doubt. As with other species neglect of the gull roosts over the past few years has doubtless contributed to the paucity of records, especially from the Lower Derwent.

CASPIAN TERN (Sterna caspia)

Single record of this huge tern.

1988 - One summer plumaged adult flew south at North Duffield Carrs 3 May.

1988 was an exceptional year for this species in Britain with some 19 records many of which were at inland locations. As is so often the case for a bird of this calibre it was a fly through.

SANDWICH TERN (Sterna sandvicensis)

Thirteen records; somewhat scarce of late with only one record since 1983.

Unknown - The 1976 bird was apparently the fourth. I can find no mention of the first three sightings in the area.

1976 - One adult at Castle Howard 12 September.

1977 - One at Wheldrake Ings 7 June.

1978 - One south west over Stockton Lane 2 July.

Two north north east over Chapelfields, York 9 August.

1980 - Two immatures south at Fulford Ings 20 September.

1982 - One at Castle Howard 29 April.

One immature south east at Wheldrake Ings 2 September.

1983 - Two adults at Castle Howard 10 September.
 One at Wheldrake 1 October.

1989 - Two south over Acaster Airfield 5 August.

As might be expected an autumn bias, though it is interesting to note the decrease in records from almost annual passage migrant in the late 70s early 80s to extreme rarity during the latter part of the period.

ROSEATE TERN (Sterna dougallii)

Three spring records.

1966 - One in the Lower Derwent 21 May.

1978 - One adult at Wheldrake Ings 13.50-14.20 hrs

17 June.

1988 - Three flew north west at Wheldrake Ings 10

May.

An extremely scarce species inland anywhere!

LITTLE TERN (Sterna albifrons)

Eight records. The first birds were not until 1979 but it has been an almost annual visitor since.

1979 - Two at Wheldrake Ings 23 June.

1980 - One at Wheldrake Ings 2 May.

One at Fulford Ings 14 June.

1981 - One at Wheldrake Ings 26 June.

1983 - One at Wheldrake Ings 26 April.

1984 - One at Wheldrake Ings 27 April.

1985 - One at Bubwith 16 May.

1987 - One at Castle Howard briefly 16 May.

That all records occur in the spring period is not too surprising - they never seem to hang about though!

WHISKERED TERN (Chlidonias hybridus)

Single record of this superb marsh tern.

1983 - One first summer bird was present until dark at Castle

Howard 4 June.

1983 was an exceptional spring for this species in Britain. This was an excellent evening find for its two observers. Sadly it was gone by first light the next morning.

BLACK TERN (Chlidonias niger)

Annual spring passage migrant in all years since 1972 (with the exception of 1989) and scarce, occasional autumn visitant.

DAYS 1972-1990																	Total			
Year	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	
Spring	0	8	10	63	2	15	5	5	10	22	10	40	10	12	42	43	25	0	71	393
Autumn	0	0	0	0	5	0	4	2	2	1	5	0	2	2	2	3	0	0	1	29
Total	0	8	10	63	7	15	9	7	12	23	15	30	12	14	44	46	25	0	72	422

From the above table we can see that 93% of bird days have occurred in spring. Also of interest are the exceptional spring influxes occurring in 1975, 1983, 1986, 1987 and especially 1990, which between them accounted for some 66% of total spring bird days for the nineteen year period.

It is interesting to note that the largest number of records occur in the second week of May, though contrastingly the bird days are somewhat lower than those occurring in the first week of the month. Generally speaking the larger groups of birds are moving through in the first week, decreasing towards the end of May with a few late birds moving through in June.

The earliest spring record since 1972 concerns three at Wheldrake Ings 12 April 1980, the next earliest being three at Wheldrake Ings 17 April 1987. In all 114 sightings have occurred since 1972 with observations from (number of records in parentheses): Wheldrake Ings (72), Castle Howard (21), Dringhouses Pond (5), Aughton (4), University (2), Bubwith (2) with single records from Newton-on-Ouse, Red House, Storwood, Bank Island, North Duffield Carrs, Full Sutton, Strensall Common and Stillington.

Outside of the spring/autumn migration periods Wheldrake Ings has accommodated three 10 July 1984, two 19 July 1985 and a late bird 16 and 17 October 1976. However, the latest date for the area was an exceptionally late bird passing north west over Dringhouses Pond 5 November 1984.

GUILLIMOT (Uria aalge)

Four records, all in the early eighties.

1982 - An extraordinary record of a summer plumaged bird moving low to the east over Wheldrake Ings during a heavy storm 29 June.

1984 - One found dead under wires at Wilberfoss 13 April.
One juvenile on the River Ouse at Roscarrs 28 August.

1985 - One swam up the Ouse with the rising tide at Selby 14 November. It was also seen later in the day at Cliffe Bend.

A scarce bird inland and one that could conceivably turn up anywhere in the area.

LITTLE AUK (Alle alle)

Twelve records, nearly all of which relate to exhausted or dead birds, resulting from large numbers of displaced birds on the East Coast.

1975 - One exhausted bird recovered from Leavening Beck 5 November.

1982 - One found alive at Sand Hutton 9 January died later.

1983 - One found exhausted at Strensall 10 February was later released at the coast.

One at Fangfoss 13 February.

One found dead at Bank Island 20 February.

One at Poppleton 29 October.

- 1984 - One found in a garden at Tockwith 16 January.
- 1987 - One picked up at Huby 23 November later died.
One picked up in Coney Street, York 23 November later died.
Two taken into care at Haxby 24 November were later released as was an individual at Clifton Airfield.
- 1990 - One picked up at Wheldrake 13 December was released at the coast the following day.

The chances of a healthy bird are slim. The best bet is to keep an eye on the weather maps - and start searching!

PUFFIN (Fratercula arctica)

A single record for this rare inland visitor.

- 1983 - One 'whirred*' upstream along the River Ouse at Fulford Ings 5 September.

The above was presumably the bird seen to enter the mouth of the Ouse at Faxfleet a few hours earlier and was an excellent record for the area.

REFERENCES

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RINGING REPORT 1992

1992 was essentially a quiet year as far as ringing goes. Richard Ward-Smith continued with his CES site near the River Wharfe at Thorpe Arch but noticed a great reduction in the total numbers of birds caught there during the 12 CES visits. CES ringing (Constant Effort Site) is one of the most useful forms of ringing, using the ratio of juveniles to adults totalled over a large number of study sites as an index of productivity. The underlying assumption of this approach is that the number of young birds caught is related to the numbers present. Reduced catches of most species were recorded at all CES sites around the country (of which there are about 200), so the decrease in numbers noticed at Thorpe Arch was reflected countrywide. Adults of all 23 target species were less abundant in 1992 than they were in 1990. The largest adult declines since 1990 have affected Whitethroat, Chiffchaff, Reed Bunting and Treecreeper. Five species are now at their lowest level of abundance since CES ringing began in 1981 - these are Blue Tit, Song Thrush, Reed Bunting, Willow Warbler and Lesser Whitethroat, the latter two now seem to be experiencing serious declines in Britain. However, not all the news is bad - adult Wrens, Reed Warblers and Blackcap made a good recovery in numbers caught following a poor year in 1991. Also, breeding productivity was very good for all species except Greenfinch in 1992, following on from a poor year in 1991. Whitethroat had their most productive season since CES ringing began.

There is a wealth of information to be gained from CES ringing and it is for this reason that Richard Ward-Smith's site at Thorpe Arch, which has been running since the scheme began, is included in our data and totals list. It is also for this reason that a new CES site will be run in the

York area during 1993 at Thornton fillers in the Lower Derwent Valley National Nature Reserve.

As well as CES ringing a number of other ringing activities are taking place in the York area, the most obvious one being the Mute Swan study. It is hoped that this particular study will continue to grow during the coming years and produce some interesting - if not surprising - results. A full report on the first year's Mute Swan Study in the York area can be seen later in this ringing report. Further information is also available from Craig Ralston or Danae Murfitt.

Studies into Owl and Raptor distribution and productivity were also started in 1992 but these are long term projects and will take some time to yield results.

A total of 2,579 birds, of 64 species, were ringed in the York area during 1992 -this is a very low total and in part reflects the poor season. It is hoped that 1993 will be a better year both because of the number of birds present and the fact that there are more ringers active in the area now than for a while. Two new species were added to the ringing totals' list for the area - Nightjar and Mute Swan, the latter with a total of 69 birds ringed as part of the Swan study, putting the species well and truly on the totals list.

May we take this opportunity to thank all the landowners who have given us permission in one form or another, and to all the observers who have given us details of sightings of ringed birds - without this help our work would be much more restricted. May we also thank all those who have assisted us in the field, especially P. Fletcher and M. Housden, their help has been much appreciated.

Ringers Operating in the Y.O.C. Recording Area

Richard Ward-Smith A Thorpe Arch, Bilton, Naburn S.W.
Pete Reid A Selby
Geoff Rogers A Stub Wood
Chris Wright A Thorganby
Danae Murfitt C Lower Derwent Valley, Dringhouses
Craig Ralston T Lower Derwent Valley, Dringhouses
Tim Dixon C Lower Derwent Valley

D. MURFITT, January 1993
RINGING RECOVERIES AND CONTROLS 1991-1992

KEY

<u>Age</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Manner of Recovery</u>
Pull Pullus (nestling)	M Male	V Caught and released
juv Juvenile	F Female	+ Shot or killed
1Y Bird in first year		X Found dead or dying
Ad Adult (at least 1 year old)		

CANADA GOOSE Ad 06.01.92
5121825 Pull 27.06.84

BLACK-HEADED GULL

EP24280 1Y Harewood Park, Nr Leeds, West Yorks
12.12.91 X York University Lake 28km
30.04.92

Selby
Farsund, Vestagder, NORWAY

OSPREY

??? Pull 02.07.92 Tayside, SCOTLAND
X 03.09.92 Melbourne (LDV NNR) 337km

BLACKBIRD

K881417 Juv M25.10.91 Texel, THE NETHERLANDS
X 17.02.92 Selby 402km

BEARDED TIT

H160444 Juv 09.07.92 Walberswick, Suffolk
V 23.11.92 Wheldrake Ings (LDV NNR)
245km

GREENFINCH

VE40966 Ad 15.03.91
X 27.07.92 Dringhouses Bishopthorpe
2km

COLOUR MARKED BIRDS 1992

BEWICK'S SWAN

Colour ringed AdF 11.02.92 Slimbridge (named 'POLAR') 14.02.92
Lower Derwent Valley NNR

(This bird which has both colour dyed and colour ringed with a white darvic TLS' took only three days to travel from Slimbridge to LDV NNR)

WHOPPER SWAN

Colour ringed Ad 08.08.91 Sandvatin, Myvatnshldi, ICELAND
27.11.91 Arrived Lower Derwent Valley NNR
03.02.91 Left Lower Derwent Valley NNR
14.11.92 Sighted in flock of 14 LDV NNR
09.03.92 Left Lower Derwent Valley NNR

(This bird bore a yellow colour ring with the letters FTS)

Colour ringed AdF 29.11.90 Caerlavarock, Dumfries(SCOTLAND)
27.11.91 Arrived Lower Derwent Valley NNR
03.02.91 Departed LDV NNR

(This bird was wearing a yellow colour ring with the letters JHB and was seen with FTS)

WHOPPER SWAN

Colour ringed AdM ??.10.92 Killingworth Lake, Northumberland
16.11.92 Arrived Lower Derwent Valley NNR
09.03.92 Departed LDV NNR

(This bird was ringed with a yellow darvic CAB when it dropped into Killingworth Lake and associated with a flock of Mute Swans for a short while before continuing its journey south)

NOTE ON COLOUR RING SIGHTINGS

It is only fair to mention that ALL these colour ring sightings were received from only two observers (CSR and TED). Most colour rings can be easily seen on birds in the field using either binoculars or a telescope. Colour ring sightings can reveal particularly useful information regarding the species concerned and therefore warrant more effort being put into noting any such sightings. It is worth

checking any species of bird for colour rings, particularly wildfowl, waders and gulls - however, even the smaller species are worth checking, the recent Bearded Tit caught at Wheldrake Ings carried a dark green colour ring, thus indicating its origin.

MUTE SWAN (*cygnus olor*) in the York

Ornithological Club Recording Area

A New Ringing Study

Introduction

Since January 1992 various aspects of Mute Swan (*cygnus olor*) biology and movements have been studied in the YOC Recording Area. This was part of a continuation of a population study occurring in the North East (Northumberland, Tyneside and Cleveland).

NORTH EAST SWAN STUDY - NORTH YORKSHIRE

As a preliminary study, five birds were caught and ringed on the Pocklington Canal at Melbourne on 23 February 1992. The resulting movements from these birds were quite unexpected and as a result the study was extended southwards to encompass the YOC area.

The area was covered on numerous visits during the Spring to determine the number of breeding and non-breeding pairs and nesting sites and territories were located and plotted (Coleman & Minton, 1979). The hatching success of each breeding pair was determined and families parties were again located in August and September to determine the number of young reared to fledging.

Birds were ringed on the left leg with a numbered BTO ring and on the right leg with a large numbered and lettered blue darvic colour ring. The darvic ring is large enough to be read at a distance with binoculars (and up to 200m with a telescope), thus allowing the behaviour and movements of known individuals to be made without the need for recapture (Ogilvie, 1972).

This paper is a summary of the findings during the first year of the study within the YOC area. Sixty nine birds were caught and ringed during the year, including 30 out of 31 fledged cygnets, 20 breeding adults (10 pairs) and 19 non-breeding/passage birds.

Results

The main site for Mute Swans in the York area is the Lower Derwent Valley/Pocklington Canal. Shown below are the counts of non-breeding birds (NB) and the total number of birds present in each month.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
NB	9	27	15	21	34	20	6	7	25	13	18	15
Total	9	27	15	47	60	56	72	56	56	33	30	28

Note: No differentiation breeding/non-breeding January-March.

Records - January to June 1992

Fifteen were found at Gateforth on 6 January, presumably from Fairburn Ings moving out along the River Aire in flood. This included a ringed bird, Z27216 (see ringing data).

Two were present at Clifton Lake throughout January, increasing to three by the month end when a small movement began. This involved two birds on the River Foss (19 January), four south, high over the University on 20th with two arriving there on 22nd. One of these latter birds was colour ringed and so was individually identifiable when it reappeared with its partner on 4 February.

This was the start of a more substantial movement, followed by six over Bishopthorpe on 5 February, five in the City Centre on the 6th with 27 arriving on the Pocklington Canal at Melbourne on the 15th. Three immatures flew over Norton on the 19th and 31 including nine immatures were present on the Canal

at Melbourne on 23rd, when the first five birds were caught and ringed.

Numbers decreased in March as birds dispersed, with 15 in the Lower Derwent by the 12th. Birds then moved off the Canal as breeding birds took up territory, moving to the refuge area at Wheldrake Ings where a count of 21 non-breeders was made on 22 and 26 April increasing to 34 on 10 and 14 May, including 12 first summers.

The flock gradually declined as water levels dropped and birds moved off to moulting sites, spreading out along the Derwent as they did so. Twenty non-breeders were still in the Derwent on 2 June but only three first summers remained by the 15th.

Breeding Results

This is by far the most impressive breeding season the York Recording Area has witnessed and this is discussed later.

In the Lower Derwent Valley 13 pairs were located holding territory at the beginning of the season: nine pairs laid a total of 39 eggs all of which hatched and from which six pairs fledged 23 cygnets.

Elsewhere in the area, nine pairs found during the breeding season resulted in six pairs laying 33 eggs from which four pairs hatched 18 cygnets but with only two pairs managing to fledge eight cygnets.

Records - July to December 1992

July and August were quiet except for breeding birds in the area and most time was spent monitoring and ringing cygnets.

Four non-breeders were found moulting in the Lower Derwent. A return movement from the moulting sites began on 26 August when three second year birds arrived at Wheldrake Ings and an adult was seen at Fulford on the same day. Swans were generally more visible and mobile after moulting and this was reinforced by a swan which had moulted in the Derwent flying into overhead wires at East Cottingwith on 26 August, after regaining the power of flight. Three more birds arrived 30 August and from then numbers increased rapidly with 13 new birds in on 3 September, 17 on 6th and 23 on the 12th (giving a total count of 56 birds in the Valley).

Birds also returned to other ponds in the area such as Riccall (2), Barlby (2), Pond Head (2) and Settringham (3). October was fairly steady with birds moving around the inner City waters and within the Lower Derwent Valley. Thirty-three were in the Derwent on 21 October, 14 of which had arrived since July, a decrease from last month's total suggesting that some birds had moved through. It was at this time that York-bred cygnets began to disperse with those ringed at Roscarrs appearing at Riccall while young disappeared from the Derwent.

Twenty-seven birds in the Derwent on 1 November was the peak count for the month with unringed cygnets arriving there (from outside the area). Large scale flooding at the month end, combined with widespread freezing in mid-December caused a dramatic movement of swans throughout the North East of England. This resulted in seven birds arriving at Clifton Lake on 31 December, to join the resident pair present since October. Five of these seven were already ringed and indicated not only their origin but timescale of movement and possible route.

The same conditions had forced swans from small ponds and lakes out of the area while 28 birds remained in the Derwent, many of them newly arrived.

Mortalities

Nine birds were picked up dead in the area this year. Two most disturbing cases involved paired females being battered to death at Newburgh Priory and Clifton Lake.

The remaining seven birds were picked up in the Derwent, of which six were power line fatalities. I am pleased to report, however, that this matter is being dealt with to prevent further losses. The remaining bird was an unfledged cygnet (*the* runt of a brood of five) which simply did not make it.

Another power'line casualty was recovered at the year end and was taken into care.

birds_ringed_in_York - 1992

U1870 (9BD) Ringed Melbourne, Pocklington Canal 23 February
Adult male Sighted Melbourne, Pocklington Canal 27 February
Sighted Tynemouth, Tyne & Wear 24 April
Sighted Berwick-on-Tweed 24 August.

U1871 (9BE) Ringed Melbourne, Pocklington Canal 23 February
Adult male Sighted Wheldrake Ings NNE 30 April-21 May

Sighted Amble, Northumberland 7 June.

It is interesting to note that three first winters, ringed at the same time, remained in the Derwent until 16 June and reappeared on 11 September to the year end, while the above adults were apparently moving in a rather definite manner.

Birds recovered in York - 1992

Z58834 (9HJ) Oiled; rehabilitated, ringed and released at 2nd year male Berwick-on-Tweed 20 February 1986. Sighted Newburgh Priory from 8 March 1992 (subsequently bred, raising five cygnets).

- (KAJ) Ringed at Berwick-on-Tweed 19 August 1992.
Adult male Sighted Blyth Estuary 27 December 1992.
Sighted Clifton Lake 31 December 1992.

- (k9k) Ringed Blyth Estuary 2 February 1992.
Adult male Sighted Amble, Northumberland 22 December '92
Sighted Clifton Lake 31 December 1992

- (H3C) Ringed Big Waters, Northumberland 13 July '91
Cygnet male Sighted Hay-A-Park, Knaresbro' 20 September '92
Sighted Staveley, Knaresbro' 17 October 1992 Sighted Hay-A-Park, Knaresbro' 15 November 1992 Sighted Clifton Lake 31 December 1992.

Z76801 (9NA) Ringed Hya-A-Park, Knaresbro' 21 September 1992
Adult male Sighted Steveley, Knaresbro' 17 October 1992
Sighted Hay-A-Park, Knaresbro' 15 November 1992
Sighted Clifton Lake 31 December 1992.

It would appear that the birds ringed in Northumberland travelled down to York not only in four days but via Knaresborough and in so doing avoided the high ground of the moors and dales.

Discussion

The National Mute Swan Survey of 1990 revealed that the Mute Swan population of Britain had increased considerably since previous surveys and it now stands at the highest level yet recorded.

In studies on the Thames the increase in numbers and breeding success has been positively linked to a decline in exposure to lead weights used in angling (Sears, 1988; Sears & Hunt, 1991). Lead poisoning still occurs (although no birds showing symptoms were recorded in the YOC area in 1992), but as discarded lead becomes buried in sediments and effectively locked away the population will continue to recover.

A little documented factor which may influence Mute Swan numbers in many areas is the increasing number of 'Swan Hospitals' and other such refuges. Although no such hospitals or sanctuaries exist in the YOC recording area their combined effect on the British population may be significant. The breeding cob at Newburgh Priory is one such example of this.

Another important factor in Mute Swan population trends has been shown to be winter weather, not simply with respect to higher mortality in harsh winters but also to a decreased reproductive output the following spring. It is noted that the previous four or five winters have been relatively mild.

It would appear that the population of the York area, especially outside the Lower Derwent, is a relatively young one. Many of the unsuccessful pairs outside the Derwent included at least one immature partner or was a newly formed pair bond attempting to breed for the first time on a new site. Such pairs often result in the production of infertile eggs or the loss of hatched cygnets, due to being inexperienced parents. The Lower Derwent Valley has held a good population of Mutes for some time and as such has a more stable and 'mature' population based upon it, while the uptake of small ponds and lakes (which may be less suitable) never previously used also indicates an increasing population in our local area.

One can only predict that this trend will continue as the population matures, with the success rate and overall population size increasing, at least at the present. It must be noted, however, that this is, of course, a gross over-simplification of population dynamics.

It must be stressed that this paper is only a summary of the first year's results. In 1992 we achieved the colour-ringing of one complete generation of Mute Swans in the YOC area; as this continues in future years much more valuable information will be gained. By the close of 1992 sufficient numbers of birds had been ringed to provide useful data on the population and early 1993 saw a flood of records relating to our birds.

All sightings of colour-ringed Mute Swans will be gratefully received as the success of this study depends largely on volunteer sightings. Darvic numbers are, of course, very useful but any information on numbers of ringed or unringed swans is equally important. Please send your sightings to:

C.S. Ralston,
York Area Swan Study,
71 Moor Lane,
Dringhouses,
York, YO22QK.

Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks for the help and co-operation provided by:

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CLASSIFIED LIST

The sequence and scientific nomenclature used is that of VOOS, K.H., List of Recent Holarctic Bird Species (1972 and 1977) B.O.U. 1977.

LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Bred at Lower Derwent Valley NNR (15 pairs), Sturge's Pond, Selby (two), Riccall (one), Brandsby (one). Outside the breeding season recorded from Lower Derwent Valley, Pond Head, Newburgh Priory, Castle Howard, Roscarrs, Ozendyke Ings, Ryther, Riccall, Stearsby, Brandsby, Moor Monkton, Beningborough and Clifton Lake - mainly one to three birds but up to nine in

Lower Derwent Valley in March and up to five there in December.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus*

Bred at Lower Derwent Valley NNR (two pairs, seven young), Castle Howard (three pairs, three young), Pond Head (four pairs, two young), Sturge's Pond, Selby (one pair), Newburgh (one pair, two young), Wiganthorpe Pond (one pair), Ampleforth (one pair), Selby - three lakes (one pair), Sand Hutton (one pair, one young); nest building also noted at the University of York, Riccall and Dringhouses Pond.

As usual Castle Howard provided the most records of passage birds with 12 on 15 March, 13 on 20 April, 15 on 31 July, 17 on 11 August, 14 on 22 and 26 September and 12 on 11 and 17 October. Elsewhere odd records of ones and twos at Clifton Lake, Poppleton and Loftsome Bridge. No records in January and December.

BLACK-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps nigricollis*

Bred at Lower Derwent Valley NNR - first breeding record for the area. A pair arrived on 13 April and had built a mating platform by 27th. The birds were noted copulating from 1 to 4 May. On 14 June the adults were seen with two small young, both of which fledged. The last record was of one of the juveniles on 14 August. On 22 July a summer plumaged adult accompanied by a fledged immature was present in addition to the breeding birds. It is thus possible that a further pair had bred undetected.

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

As usual the majority of records from the Lower Derwent Valley NNR with three bird days in January, seven in April, 23 in May, 26 in June, one in July, 29 in August, 38 in September, nine in October and one in December.

Elsewhere, two at Poppleton on 3 January with one there on 19th, one at Cawood on 5 February, three at Poppleton on 16th, one at Beningborough on 25th, two at Poppleton and three at Riccall on 16 April, one at Castle Howard on 17th, one at Riccall on 1 May, singles at Castle Howard on 8 September and Poppleton from 10th - 12th, four at Poppleton on 21 November, three at Selby on 26th and one at Poppleton on 30th.

NIGHT HERON *Nycticorax nycticorax*

An immature at Lower Derwent Valley NNR on 29 June and the same or another on 4th, 5th, 6th, 14th, 18th and 19th September.

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

A record 20 pairs bred in the Lower Derwent Valley with good success contributing to some huge feeding parties on the NNR with up to 50 in June and 67 in July. An albinistic juvenile present from 9 to 14 June. Up to 28 in August and 21 in September.

The only significant counts from elsewhere came from Castle Howard with up to 12 in July, 10 in August and 11 in September and Roscarrs with 11 on 12 November.

CATTLE EGRET *Ardeola ibis*

Party of five at Nunnington 6th May (D & Mrs. J Turner).

Accepted by BBRC.

First record for the area.

(A small influx arrived in eastern England between 3rd and 20th May with four of the above birds presumed to have moved to Lincolnshire the following day. What else is missed in the under-watched northern area? J. Pewtress)

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

See separate report.

BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus columbianus*

Continues to decline in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR. Monthly maxima early in the year were 22 in January, 23 in February, 30 in March and a single in April which remained to 3 May. Fourteen on 22 November, singles on 9 and 12 December and 6 on 30th. No records from elsewhere.

WHOOPER SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*

Monthly maxima in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR were 35 in January, 25 in February, 28 in March and 10 in April with two on 17th the last. First returning birds were two on 8 October increasing to 22 in November and 48 in December.

Six were at Bishopthorpe on 8th January and five flew n.n.w. over Castle Howard on 11 October.

BEAN GOOSE *Anser fabalis*

A single in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR on 10 February was the only record.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus*

In the Lower Derwent Valley NNR up to four in February, three in March, one on 4 May, one on 6 and 7 September, up to five in October, one on 29 November, one on 6 December and nine on 12th.

Elsewhere, one at Castle Howard on 5 January and 3 February with three there on 8th and four on 19th, three on 22nd and two on 29th. Three on 15 March and 4 and 11 April and singles on 27 May, 24 October and 19 November. 130 flew north-west over Skipwith Common on 13 January, 150 over York on 20 February and 60 over the University on 7 December.

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons*

Three adult and three immature nominate race birds arrived high from the east in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR on 30 December. They fed for 30 minutes before departing to the south.

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

Bred as usual in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR and Skipwith Common - no counts made. One pair bred on the Foss in York, rearing seven young. Monthly maxima in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR and Castle Howard are tabulated below:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
LDV	150	215	475	N/C	N/C	114	100	121	150	156	260	250*
CH	508	440	430	335	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	119	N/C	465	N/C

* In addition to the December count, 800 flew south in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR in the three hours to dusk on 6th in parties of up to 120 birds. It seems probable that these were wild birds.

The only significant counts from elsewhere were 100 over Red House on 7 January, 84 at the University on 15th with 113 there on 18 September and 76 on

31 December.

CANADA GOOSE *Branta Canadensis*

Bred as usual in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR (no counts); Pond Head (two pairs, six young), Dale Pond (one pair, five young), Stearsby (one pair, six young), Sturge's Pond (one pair, two young) and Church Fenton (two pairs, 11 young).

Monthly maxima in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR and Castle Howard are tabulated below:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
LDV	100	250	79					77	24		1000	232
CH	142	180	90								144	

The count of 1000 in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR on 21 November was the highest ever recorded in the area.

The only significant counts from elsewhere were 44 at the University on 15 January and 37 at Red House on 4 September with 52 there on 18th.

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*

As usual most records from the Lower Derwent Valley NNR where one on 7 January and 28 February, two throughout March, two on 8th March and two on 24 April, one on 17 and 18 May and one 2 June. One on 23 August. Singles on 5, 6 (south with Greylags) 11 and 13 December.

Elsewhere, singles at Castle Howard on 22 January, 3 and 22 February and 8 September and 18 south-east over Osbaldwick on 17 November.

SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

Around 40 pairs bred in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR; elsewhere one pair probably bred at Roscarrs and two pairs probably bred at Riccall.

In the Lower Derwent Valley NNR up to 20 in January, 30 in February, 29 in March, 72 in April with 39 drakes holding feeding territories at Wheldrake Ings at month end. The first young were seen on 9 June. Most birds had left on their moult migration by late June but small numbers of immatures were seen regularly until the last on 30 September. First adult to return was on 7 November with four on 22nd and up to ten in December.

Elsewhere, three at Castle Howard on 4 May, two on 10th, one on 13th and two on 18th. One there on 11 September.

MANDARIN *Aix galericulata*

A drake at Castle Howard throughout the year with a pair on 2 March, a second drake on 5 May and a pair on 23 September.

WIGEON *Anas penelope*

A relatively good breeding season in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR with at least six pairs summering but with 21 pairs in early May and still nine pairs at the end of May. One juvenile in company with a female on 15 July provided the first confirmed breeding for several years.

Monthly maxima here were as follows:

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
3300	4000	1000	750	42	12	6	3	35	300	2500	7000

The only significant counts from elsewhere were of up to 41 at Fulford Ings in January and up to 25 at Ryther in March.

GADWALL *Anas strepera*

An average breeding season in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR with probably seven pairs breeding, first young seen on 8 June. Numbers were generally low in the early part of the year with one on 14 February, two on 25th, four on 4 March, a pair on 31st and then 18th April, with five pairs on 22nd of that month. Up to nine pairs in May. Most breeding birds had left by late July with just juveniles remaining - up to seven in August and occasional singles in September and October then up to seven in November and four in December.

The only other records was of two pairs at Castle Howard on 18 January.

TEAL *Anas crecca*

An estimated 30-32 pairs bred in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR where the monthly maxima were as tabulated below:

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
950	4000	140	N/C	N/C	N/C	25	20	250	450	1800	2000

The only significant counts from elsewhere were 14 at Poppleton 26 January, 56 at Cawood on 15 March, 16 at Riccall on 19 March, eight pairs at Newburgh on 20 July, 14 at Castle Howard on 16 September and 13 at Poppleton on 8 December.

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*

An estimated 250-300 pairs bred in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR where the monthly maxima were as tabulated below:

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
1050	260					70	250	750	350	2000	3200

The only other significant records were 371 at Castle Howard on 16 September, 202 at the University on 22nd, 143 at Tang Hall (York) on 20 October, 138 at Stamford Bridge on 22nd and 296 at Newburgh on 24th. At castle Howard in November, a pair had seven small ducklings on 7th, 237 adults and seven ducklings (estimated at ten days old) on 11th and still six ducklings surviving on 24th.

PINTAIL *Anas acute*

Three pairs probably bred in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR. They were seen regularly from early April to mid May and appeared to be on territory. One drake seen regularly to end of May and on 11 June and a female noted on 13 June. Outside the breeding season, four on 3 January with three on 7th, up to eight regularly in February, five on 5 March. In August, up to six regularly from 23rd, one or two throughout September, up to four in October, up to eight in November and 12 on 5 December.

The only records from elsewhere were singles at Castle Howard on 11 September and at the University on 3 November.

GARGANEY *Anas querquedula*

Between four and six pairs bred in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR with a further single pair possibly breeding. First returning birds were a pair on 19 April. Up to seven pairs present during May and June. First young were seen on 12 July with the last bird a female/immature on 7 September.

Elsewhere, at eclipse drake at Roscarrs on 21 August.

SHOVELER *Anas clypeata*

Around 40 pairs bred in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR. Monthly maxima outside the breeding season were 35 in January, 30 in February, 60 in March, 100 in April, 60 (mainly juveniles) in July, 11 in August, six in September, 25 in October, 100 in November and in December. The only other records were two at Castle Howard on 28 February, a drake there on 7 March and two on 7 July.

POCHARD *Aythya ferina*

Thirteen pairs bred in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR. Outside the breeding season numbers here were very low with up to 12 in January, 26 in February, 20 in March, seven in September and 140 in December.

In January, up to 33 at Castle Howard and up to 27 at Dringhouses Pond; in February, up to 51 at Castle Howard and up to 17 at Dringhouses Pond. Up to 25 at Castle Howard in March. Up to 10 at Castle Howard and Clifton Lake in November and up to 16 at Castle Howard in December.

RED-CRESTED POCHARD *Netta rufina*

A female at Castle Howard on 30 June (DAR).

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

Around 30 pairs bred in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR where numbers were low due to the continuing drought. Monthly maxima here, outside the breeding season, were six in January, 35 in February, 21 in March, 194 in April, six in September, three in October and 51 in December.

Elsewhere, two pairs bred at Brandsby and three pairs at Newburgh. The only significant counts were 34 at Dringhouses Pond on 6 February with 18 there on 2 March, 12 at Riccall on 16 April and 18 at Castle Howard on 10 July.

SCAUP *Aythya marila*

A female at Castle Howard on 25 September.

GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*

As usual the majority of records came from the Lower Derwent Valley NNR where up to six in January, nine in February, eight in March with the last on 23 April. One on 10 and 11 October and up to six in December/

Elsewhere, up to five sporadically at Pond Head, Castle Howard, Newburgh Priory and Poppleton and York Foss.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus senator*

A drake at Castle Howard from 18 to 20 January with a red-head there on 11 November.

GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser*

Bred at Butterwick (one pair).

Highest counts came from Castle Howard with up to 96 in January, 33 in February, four in March, seven on 26 September, up to 34 in October, 39 in November and 57 in December.

Monthly maxima in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR were 17 in January, 23 in February, 29 in March with three on 15 April the last apart from a single on 1 May. Then up to 12 in October (from 7th), 33 in November and 24 in December.

The only counts from elsewhere were of one to five birds at Cawood, Riccall, Poppleton, Moor Monkton, Roscarrs and Barlow in January to April.

RUDDY DUCK *Oyura jamaicensis*

Five pairs bred in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR - an unwelcome record population. First returning birds were two pairs on 9 April with the last a female/immature on 8 September. The only record from elsewhere was of a female at Castle Howard from 4 to 8 October.

HONEY BUZZARD *Pernis apivorus*

What was probably the same bird flew south west at Thornton Ellers on 28th and 29th May (CR & TED).

RED KITE *Milvus milvus*

A single untagged bird at Castle Howard on 11th October (CR).

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

The first returning bird was a 'cream-crown' at Wheldrake Ings and Ellerton on 9th April (TED).

An immature male at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd and 4th May (CR, TED & DR) with a 'cream-crown' following a tractor cutting silage by the side of the Wheldrake to Thorganby road on 22nd (DR). A pair displayed at Wheldrake

Ings on 27th with birds seen during the following two weeks.

A 'cream-crown' was in the Lower Derwent on 14th and 30th July (TED), at Wheldrake Ings on 14th August (BC) and 30th (TED), with the last on 1st September (TED).

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

A poor year with the only records being singles at Wheldrake Ings on 9th January and 9th February and a male south on 20th September.

Addition to 1991 Report

A female at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd January and a male on 2nd March.

GOSHAWK *Accipiter gentilis*

Probably bred in the area with a pair displaying at the beginning of April and a male seen frequently during the summer months with a female present in August. The male carried a BTO ring.

A male was at the University on 13th and 15th January (CR) and at Wheldrake Ings on 26th (TED); a well marked male at Heslington village on 27th (CR) and one at Thornton fillers on 31st (TED) may have been the one at Wheldrake Ings on 26th and again at Aughton on 6th February (TED).

A single was at Melbourne on 15th February (CR & TED) and Clifton Lake on 29th March (NS).

A poor autumn and winter with records of an immature male at Fulford Ings on 16th September (RSS), two in the Lower Derwent on 22nd (TED) and a male at Wilberfoss on 27th September (AW).

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

The species now seems to be well established throughout the recording area with many reports of good breeding success. Most sightings were of single birds with the exception of two displaying at Crockey Hill on 26th January, two contesting a caught sparrow at Moor Monkton on 3rd February, two at Thornton Ellers on 4th February, three at Wheldrake Ings on 7th April and possibly up to five at Askham Bog at the year end.

Prey items included: House Sparrow, Blackbird, Woodpigeon, Magpie, Collared Dove and Lapwing. Amongst the remains of a House Sparrow was a neat little bundle of peanuts - its last meal.

An immature female fell victim to the ever predatory cat.

BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

A bird remained at Stonegrave from 2nd to 26th January (JP).

A poor spring passage with one at Brandsby Heights on 11th April and a pair over Kirkham Abbey on 28th.

A single soaring over Cliffe Common on the unusual date of 10th July (FWO), with a pair passing through Brandsby on 12th August.

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

A poor spring passage with one north at Gilling on 3rd May and one at Wheldrake Ings and Raker Lake, Wheldrake on 15th.

A bird summered in the area, being first located at Gilling on 24th June until 29th. What was presumably the same bird was re-located at Castle Howard on 9th July and with the exceptions of two sightings at Pond Head on 16th July and 7th August remained until 19th August. It is possible that the bird moved to the Lower Derwent where two were present on 4th September with one remaining until 20th.

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

A good breeding season throughout the area indicated by good broods of five at North Duffield and six at Crockey Hill and Wheldrake.

A male successfully fledged a brood of six despite losing the female as a road casualty.

Singles were reported from many localities, however, nine were in the Monk Fryston area on 6th January.

RED-FOOTED FALCON *Falco vespertinus*

A female at Fulford Golf Course on 25th June (VG).

Accepted by BBRC and fifth record for the area.

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*

A relatively moderate year with singles reported in the early part from: Yearsley Bank mid-January, Castle Howard on 22nd, Bank Island and Skipwith Common on 11th February, Clifton Moor mid month, East Cottingwith on 23rd and Wheldrake Ings on 21st March and 7th April.

Early returning birds were at North Duffield Cam on 14th August and Wheldrake Ings on 2nd September.

Autumn passage was light with the only records being at Wheldrake Ings on 5th October, a male plucked a Skylark at Whelham Park, Norton on 11th and a single at North Duffield Carrs on 21st.

Few winter records with singles at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd November, Hessay on 26th and mid-December and Copmanthorpe on 20th December.

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

A disappointing year with only two records: a male at North Duffield Carrs on 28th May (TED) and a bird at the University on the late date of 15th October (CR).

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus*

A female was present at Wheldrake Ings from 5th February until end of March with males present on 15th February and 6th and 9th April.

A male at Kirkham Abbey and at Buttercrambe on 22nd June (CR) was an interesting sighting.

Few recorded in the latter part of the year with singles at North Duffield Carrs on 12th October and the Lower Derwent Valley from 23rd to 28th November.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris ruffe*

Bred as usual in the Lower Derwent but no counts this year.

Reported from throughout the area but nowhere in large numbers although 'good' numbers were reported from the Crockey Hill/Heslington area and it was by far the commoner of the two species in the Northern area.

Largest covies were: 11 at Shipton in June, 24 at Heslington Tilmire on 26th, 14 at Acaster Airfield 3rd December and 10 at Skipwith on 28th.

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix*

Bred Lower Derwent, Huby, Marton/Stearsby area, Snaregate and Youlton but no counts of any significance were received from these areas. The only counts of note were: 12 at Poppleton on 13th January, 17 at Stamford Bridge on 5th October, 12 at Heslington Tilmire on 13th and 15 at Poppleton on 12th November.

QUAIL *Cotumix cotumix*

An excellent year with at least 27 singing males in the Lower Derwent including 13 at North Duffield Carrs on 11th June; however there was no evidence of breeding.

The first singing males were located at Seavy Carr and Ellerton on 22nd May (TED), Outgang on 24th, North Duffield Carrs on 26th, with two at Seavy Carr on 28th and 30th. Thereafter located in the Lower Derwent throughout June with singles also at Whenby on 12th and Melbourne on 17th. A single at North Duffield Carrs on 31st July was the last from the Lower Derwent. Two were at Full Sutton Airfield on 10th and 12th August with a single remaining until 18th (RSS).

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

Singles were at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd and 12th March, there were calling males on 2nd and 23rd May and two on 26th and 30th. No census was undertaken but there were at least six in June. The first young were seen on 15th June but only single adult birds were observed until 23rd August when three adults and an immature recorded. Single adults and juveniles were seen until 18 September when rising water forced the birds away. Singles appeared on 22, 23 and 28

November.

Away from the Lower Derwent, singles at Newburgh on 26th September, High Catton on 28th and 30th and Poppleton on 18th November.

CORNCRAKE *Crex crex*

Singing males were at Wheldrake Ings on 6th June (TED & CR), Seavy Carr on 15th (TED) and in the Malton area in June (PH).

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

Breeding confirmed from Lower Derwent (no counts), Moor Monkton, Newburgh, Poppleton, University and York Water Works. Many small pools and river banks have breeding pairs and the species is under-recorded away from the larger stretches of water. The first brood was recorded at Poppleton on 14th April.

Largest counts were: 41 at the University on 15th January, 23 at Newburgh on 12th September, 28 at Wheldrake Ings on 14th, 19 at Melbourne on 17th and 64 at the University on 22nd. Twentyone at Tang Hall on 20th October, 20 at Stamford Bridge on 23rd with 52 at the University on 21st November and 51 on 30th December.

Addition to 1991 Report

Thirty-seven at the University on 29th December.

COOT *Fulica atra*

Probably 100 pairs bred in the Lower Derwent. Also bred at Ampleforth, Clifton Lake, Stearsby, University (where all first broods failed) and Wigganhorpe Pond.

Larger counts were: 21 at Dringhouses Pond on 11th January, 61 at Castle Howard on 22nd and 56 on 25th. Twentytwo at Sturge's Pond on 11th February and 37 at Castle Howard on 29th. The only count of note in the latter part of the year was a small influx of 12 at the University on 31st December.

A single bird on the River Ouse at Poppleton on 3rd January and 6th February was an interesting record.

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*

A slight increase in breeding birds outside the Derwent, with confirmed attempts at Scoresby, Alne, Naburn and Skipwith, with pairs present in the breeding season at Castle Howard, Poppleton and the Ouse around Copmanthorpe.

Eight pairs in the Lower Derwent was average, with two pairs at Bank Island and Thorganby and singles at Wheldrake, Aughton, North Duffield and Thornton. The first chicks were seen at Thorganby on 14th June.

A single at York Water Works on 25th February (TC) heralded the start of a remarkable spring passage. Five were at Wheldrake on 27th with a flock of 13 next day: a single had made it as far north as Castle Howard by 29th. Fourteen at Wheldrake on 5th March, 15 on 12th and the largest area flock on record of 17 there on 17th (TED.CSR).

Return passage was rather early and confined to an eleven day period in mid June with six bird-days, with two at Wheldrake Ings on the 12th and 18th July the last.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*

Breeding was reported to have occurred to the north of York but no further information was forthcoming (PH). The first returning bird was at Wheldrake Ings on 7th April (CSR) with two at North Duffield on 10th and 11th (TED). Seven bird days were logged in the last week of April from three sites including an individual at York Water Works which remained till 5th May. This site has

been a breeding foothold for the species in recent years.

Two rather unusual mid-summer records were submitted, the first a single at Clifton Lake on 6th June, followed by a single flying north over Wheldrake Ings on 29th.

More typical were two at Bank Island on 15th July but an improved return passage failed to materialise with eight at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd and four there on 24th the only records.

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

With the exception of a single at Poppleton on 13th May (IW&CR) and a juvenile at Melbourne Scamland on 3rd and 9th September (RSS.CSR) all records once again came from the Lower Derwent.

As with the last species a very poor spring passage which, with the exception of the Poppleton bird, conceivably comprised only two birds.

A single arrived at Bank Island on 12th May, a somewhat belated arrival which was followed by a pair holding territory there from 22nd May to 9th June with a single remaining to 22nd.

Autumn passage was typically poor, as in recent years, with two records of singles at Wheldrake Ings 18th and 22nd July.

GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

Forty were at Grimston Bar and 100 on the Outgang on 1st January with 100 at Poppleton on 11th. Milder weather produced increased counts with 1200 at Knapton on 22nd January (BC) and 500 at Grimston Bar on 26th (BC&JMP). In February, 350 at Pocklington Airfield on 7th, 300 at Bank Island on 15th with 1800 in the Derwent Valley on 27th. A few strays noted at this time included three at Clifton Lake and four on Acaster Airfield.

One thousand at Bank Island on 17th March declined in April and moved across to Thorganby where 160 remained on 1st May, 148 on 4th, 70 on 5th and six by 18th. Thirty seven at Wheldrake on 22nd April was a slight increase - probably the result of northern bound birds moving through. Thirty four were at Wheldrake on 3rd May with the last being two flying north over North Duffield on 14th (CSR).

An isolated record concerned a single in the Lower Derwent on 2nd July but the next count detailed 200 at Acaster Airfield on 3rd October while the Derwent held 1200 on 5th with 365 remaining on 31st. In November, 140 were located at Clifton Moor on 7th and 350 on 9th with 2250 in the Lower Derwent on 14th and 2980 on 29th. A staggering 6800 there on 11th December (TED). A noticeable influx of waders including Lapwing and Dunlin was noted at this time and was probably the result of mild weather movements.

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

A somewhat below average year with a spring passage bird at Wheldrake Ings on 10th April (TED.DR.RSS) while another single roosted with Lapwing and Golden Plover at Dringhouses on 6th December (CSR).

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

An improvement with more four figure counts submitted than in 1991.

The year opened with 1800 at Grimston Bar, 400 on the Outgang and 200 at Wheldrake Ings all 7th January. Counts from the north included 270 at Stearsby on 12th and 440 at Stillington on 19th (PH). On 22nd 800 were at Knapton with 3500 present at Wheldrake Ings on 29th.. Several smaller flocks occurred widespread in the area; 1050 were still present at Grimston into February. By the end of February birds began to depart from the Derwent, settling down to breed and so dissolving the flock, 3000 at Wheldrake on 25th February fell to 1500 on 27th and to a mere 1000 by 11th March.

Territorial display was first noted at Stearsby 26th February while the first completed clutch was reported at North Duffield Carrs on 3rd April. Sample breeding counts from the Lower Derwent showed 18 pairs, with 37 at Thorganby, 13 at Aughton and seven at Thornton Ellers. Newly hatched chicks seen on 14th June again suggest a protracted breeding season.

The first post-breeding flock was of 655 assembled in the Derwent on 2nd July, this flock declined to 500 on 16th and 200 by 18th with no more counts until 60 at Wheldrake on 5th September. Acaster Airfield held 75 on 3rd October with 450 in the Derwent Valley by the month end. November saw the expected influx with 600 at Shipton on 2nd, 140 at Clifton Moor on 7th which increased to 350+. The Derwent held 700 on 14th with a healthy 3565 on 28th, 2500 remaining the next day and 800 at Brighton on 26th. All the December records came from the Lower Derwent in a concentrated period with 3300 on 9th, a massive 11,700 on 11th, 3300 on 12th and 7200 on 13th.

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*

1992 can only be described as a very poor year with one three figure count received. Apart from singles at Fulford Ings on 28th January, and at Castle Howard on 28th July and 11th September, all records came from the Lower Derwent Valley. Absent throughout January, 62 had built up by mid-February remaining to 5th April when the flock dispersed leaving 35 at Wheldrake on 17th and 19 on 29th, 13 birds lingered at Bank Island until 7th May with the last a single on 20th and 25th.

Three birds were noted in July, following the first two on 21st but amazingly no August records were forthcoming. Six on 11th September constituted that month's sole record as did the two on 7th October. November opened with two on 8th which slowly increased to 15 on 24th, returning to seven on 29th. The species was considered scarce during December except for an isolated peak on 20th.

RUFF *Philomachus pugnax*

A slight improvement on last year's spring passage followed by an encouraging breeding season in the Lower Derwent Valley, from where all records were received and where once again the species almost certainly bred but with no proof obtained. Numbers in the latter half of the year built up to a healthy wintering population.

Monthly maximum comprised 38 birds in January, 47 in February, 34 in March and 32 in April. Lekking was noted from three main sites in May with leks containing 18, 20 and eight birds respectively, although how much interchange was involved between these sites is difficult to ascertain. As usual males departed by the month end but females were seen in the Bank Island and Wheldrake Ings area up until early July.

Autumn passage was once again decidedly poor and concentrated from 27th August to 15th September, with eight and 15 bird-days for the respective months, maximum five on 2nd September. Returning wintering birds noted on 11th October by the arrival of a single, with three to 13th. Seventeen were present in the Valley on 7th November with a monthly maximum of 21, and 70 in December on 11th.

JACK SNIFE *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Seven records submitted this year indicate that this species is still at a low ebb in the area, as in recent years, with two records of very early returning birds in the later half of the year.

Only two records in the first half of the year both referring to singles on 11th January at Wheldrake Ings (TED) and Naburn Sewage Works (CSR).

A single at Melbourne Scamland on 18th August constitutes the area's first record

for that month (RSS) as does one the following month at Coxwold on 30th (JP). Possibly the same individual as seen in August was present at Melbourne Scamland 11th October while two arrived in the Lower Derwent on 22nd November.

SNIPE *Gallinago gallinago*

In the Lower Derwent Valley away from Bank Island/Wheldrake Ings area numbers were again very low due to the continuing drought. However, the ability to hold water on Bank Island for the first time, combined with water being held at Wheldrake for longer ensured excellent breeding at the northern end of the Reserve. Bank Island contained 30 drummers in 1992 compared with three or four in 1991. Other sample counts estimated 15 drummers at North Duffield Carrs/Bubwith Ings, four at Thorganby, three at Aughton and a single at Thornton Ellers.

Outside the Lower Derwent Valley, considered to have increased at Castle Howard where 60 bird-days were recorded (max. 13 on 7th November). This increase in observations may, however, be in part related to a reduction of cover around the waterline (DR). There were no records from elsewhere.

Peak counts submitted were: 80 at Wheldrake Ings throughout February, 47 on 21st August, 36 on 19th September and 22 on 4th November.

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

A good number of records received this year with widespread coverage in the breeding season, no doubt the result of coverage by Nightjar Survey workers.

Breeding was confirmed at Yearsley Forest (PH) and possibly bred at Thornton Ellers (TED). Roding birds were reported at Askham Bog (3), Buttercrambe (3), Skipwith (11), Bishops Wood (12), with singles at Dunnington Common, Escrick, Wiganthorpe, Stearsby and Tilmire.

Five at Fulford Golf Course on 7th January and up to three present there all month. A single found grounded in thick fog at York Cemetery on 27th January appeared exhausted (CSR) and eight were counted at Thornton Ellers on 31st. More unusual was a single feeding in daylight at Wheldrake Ings, possibly originating from Thornton Ellers where three remained on 9th.

Winter arrival was heralded by two winter residences occupied in the Tilmire area by 28th October (RSS.CSR) with another in the unusual surroundings of Tang Hall on 6th November. Birds were observed feeding after dark on flooded Ings land at Wheldrake in late November while Thornton Ellers held seven on 17th December, five on 18th but only one remaining following a hard freeze on 20th.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

An exceptional spring passage and encouraging breeding season. All records were to early June. Birds were seen displaying on several dates and also observed copulating but it seems likely that all three pairs failed during incubation (TED). This was mirrored in other breeding sites throughout the country.

Spring passage began with a single at Bank Island on 29th March (TED). April amassed a total of 83 bird-days, with an influx of birds between 13th and 20th, max. 12 on 20th. May bird-days totalled an amazing 116 with a second influx noted between 3rd and 19th comprising counts of 13 on 4th, 6th and 18th and a record flock of 16 on 7th. It is impossible to estimate how many individual were involved but from flock observations it seems quite likely at least some turnover involved. The last of spring were five on 23rd May (DR.).

Three birds were racially identified as the northern *islandica* subspecies, two on 27th April and a single on 4th May (CSR.TED).

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *limosa lapponica*

In true tradition for the species the appearance in this Report is maintained by a precarious foothold. A single bird in transitional plumage stopped briefly at Wheldrake Ings on 7th May (CSR) and yet another winter appearance is represented by a flock of seven at North Duffield Carrs on 1st October, the first occurrence in this month.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

The first bird was seen at the Wheldrake Ings roost on 4th April from which the month totalled 91 bird-days (max. 33 on 26th). 362 bird-days were logged in May, with larger counts of 86 on 6th, 81+ on 7th, 102 on 9th and 67 on 14th. (It was noted, however, that birds were coming in to roost after dark which made counting very difficult and it is also true to say that observer coverage was sporadic during the period of the roost, which would suggest that the true total of bird-days is somewhat higher than recorded. Personal comment, CSR.)

The return passage in autumn was typical, falling in the last week of July and the month of August, with the first two at Bank Island on 19th July. The month tallied 20 bird-days, all from the Lower Derwent Valley (max. 11 on 25th), while singles there on 6th and 27th and a single at Wistow on 7th account for August's records. A rather late party of eight flew east over Wheldrake Ings on 19th September, mirroring a record in the 1991 Report.

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*

Sample counts of breeding birds in the Lower Derwent Valley revealed 11 pairs in the Thornton Ellers area, seven pairs at North Duffield, three pairs at Aughton, two at Thornganby and a single pair at Brighton. First chicks seen were four accompanying an adult on North Duffield Carrs on 26th June (BC).

Thirtyseven at Wheldrake Ings on 6th January had increased to 44 by 6th February which then saw an exceptional increase in numbers with 100 by 25th, 96 on 27th, 152 on 28th, which finally peaked at a staggering 376 on 4th March - a Reserve and area record - (CSR.TED.EBB). This flock had declined to 23 by 15th March (BC). One theory for such unprecedented numbers is that many other roosting sites in the area and indeed the county were too dry, forcing birds to gather in the prime habitat from further afield than usual. Passage flocks were noted at Wheldrake Ings on 9th and 19th April with counts of 85 and 45 respectively.

Small parties of up to six were seen throughout July, while monthly maxima for the following three months were 10 on 1st August, 15 on 11th September and one on 18th October. Numbers then built up again to 38 on 18th November, 60 on 23rd and 24th, with a healthy 115 on 28th and 29th. However, mass exodus out of the Derwent Valley subsequently left only ones and twos still present throughout December.

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*

Two records received this year continue the occurrence of this annual visitor following blank years in 1989-90. One calling over Castle Howard on 21st July represents the first record for this site (RSS) and only the second record for July, following last year's record at Wheldrake Ings.

Castle Howard's second record was quickly documented with a summer-plumage individual present on 4th and 5th August which 'Fed in characteristic manner, flicking over small stones with great zeal' (DR.RSS).

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*

The poor showing of recent years continued with, amazingly, just a single record relating to a single which dropped onto Wheldrake Ings at dusk on 23rd August, accompanying a Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*) (DR).

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*

Breeding was maintained as usual in the Derwent with sample counts of 20 pairs at Bank Island, 20 pairs at Thorganby, eight pairs at North Duffield and four pairs at Thornton Ellers.

Elsewhere this bird seems scarce with one or two birds during the winter months at Fulford Ings, Naburn and Bishopthorpe but with no breeding records around the city for the first time (see comments in 1990 Report). A single at Walmgate Stray on 9th January, with four over the University on 27th may relate to two pairs subsequently breeding on the Tilmire. Another single was noted at Castle Howard on 13th March with five at Riccall on 25th.

The remaining counts, all from the Lower Derwent, suggest a poor year with monthly maxima of one in January, 18 in February and 17 in March. Following breeding, most birds had dispersed from the Valley by the third week in July with the next record concerning three on 30th October. November was as usual quiet with two on 11th and 10 on 29th and the species was considered scarce in December with an isolated peak of 20 on 11th (TED).

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

A below average passage at both ends of the year, particularly Autumn. The first returning bird was at Bank Island on 14th and 15th April (TED), two were present at North Duffield Carrs on 25th while another pair took up residence at Bank Island. It was this site which produced 15 bird-days in May. The last of spring were one at Bank Island and two at North Duffield on 1st June.

Return passage commenced on 15th July with two at Wheldrake Ings and totalled 17 bird-days until the last, a single there on 13th September.

The only record away from the Derwent concerned a single nearby on Melbourne Scamland on 16th August (DR).

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

Wintering birds in the area consisted of two on Melbourne Scamland throughout January and February with three there on 9th January. March birds were noted at Wheldrake Ings on 4th and 5th while Thornton Ellers held a single on 1st April followed by another at Wheldrake on 6th. In May, singles paused at Wheldrake on 27th while others were noted at Skipwith and Riccall (six bird-days).

Returning passage, as usual, was much better and commenced in late June with singles at Wheldrake on 21st and 27th. July produced 70 bird-days, mainly from Melbourne but also Riccall and Castle Howard. The regular site at Melbourne held 12 on 7th August (monthly maxi.) and an impressive 22 on 3rd September with seven remaining on 20th. Up to five were present there during October and November, which may account for birds seen in the Derwent Valley on 14th November and four on the river bank at Ellerton on 29th. They may also be responsible for birds frequenting the Canal. In contrast to last year, three remained at Melbourne throughout December until the year end.

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*

A slight improvement on recent years with all records from the Lower Derwent Valley. Two in the Wheldrake Ings/Bank Island area from 15th-17th May were very obliging (CSR, TED, DR). Another individual appeared at Wheldrake Ings on 9th June and remained until 11th (TED, CSR).

A single record in the autumn comprised two birds at Wheldrake Ings on 9th August.

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucur*

The first returning bird was an exceptionally early individual at Melbourne Scamland on 10th March (PJF) and was promptly followed by another on the R. Rye at West Ness on 15th (JP).

Passage began on 21st April with a single at Clifton Lake with birds at Wheldrake Ings and Riccall on 25th. In May, four bird-days were noted at Castle Howard and singles at Clifton Lake, Wheldrake Ings and the last of the spring at Pond Head on 25th (CSR.PF).

Twelve bird-days were logged in July with records from Castle Howard, Roscarrs and Wheldrake Ings, the latter holding four birds on 12th. Three birds at Clifton Lake on 5th was the maximum count in August while singles were also noted at Poppleton, Wistow and Castle Howard, totalling nine bird-days for the month. Seven bird-days in September (max. three at Castle Howard on 1st) concluded with the last at Roscarrs on 17th (DR).

MEDITERRANEAN GULL *Larus melanocephalus*

A full summer plumaged bird flew along the Pocklington Canal on 29th March (TED) getting the year off to an early start. More typical records were two spring passage birds at Wheldrake Ings, both first winters, on 7th April (TED) and 17th (DR). One record in the later months of the year came from the University Lake where a winter-plumaged adult spent a few hours feeding with c60 Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*) on 20th October (CSR).

LITTLE GULL *Larus minutus*

An obliging and long staying first winter bird, strongly tinged with pink on the breast, was present at Wheldrake Ings from 1st April to 24th (TED,RSS,DR,ML,CSR) and was joined briefly by an adult on 22nd (TED).

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus*

A poor first half to the year with counts at Wheldrake Ings reaching 700 on 15th February, 2500 on 27th and a slightly improved 6500 on 12th March.

Elsewhere, 400 were at Clifton Lake on 11th January, 2500 at Brighton Tip on 12th, 2000 at Naburn Sewage Works on 15th and 460 at Castle Howard on 22nd. Eighty-nine remained at Clifton Lake on 2nd February.

The breeding colony at Wheldrake Ings held a very healthy 650 pairs, increasing yet again possibly due to other smaller colonies drying up in recent years. For the first time no breeding attempts were reported from elsewhere.

A small passage of birds through Osbaldwick sports field was noted in the second week of July, after an absence for breeding, with up to 20 birds daily. Winter birds returning there from 25th October peaked at c100 in mid-December (I&RT).

Sixty seven were at Clifton Lake on 10th November when 3004- were at Red House Reservoir this flock increasing to 500+ by 17th. A respectable 8000 at Castle Howard on 11th November, with an impressive 16,000 roosting at Wheldrake Ings on 18th December.

COMMON GULL *Larus canus*

Once again a poor year with records received from only a handful of observers.

Three hundred present at Rufforth Tip on 21st January was the peak count for that month, as was 400 at Wheldrake Ings on 15th February. Up to 38 were present at Clifton Lake during the first quarter, a slight decrease on recent years (c55). However, as usual numbers built up during March and 1050 at Wheldrake Ings on 12th was more respectable.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*

Spring passage was noted at Wheldrake Ings with 40+ there on 7th April, declining to 17 on 8th and 22nd. Small flocks of sub-adults passed through the area into mid-May with 20+ at Wheldrake on 26th July the first signs of returning birds. On 10th September 22 flew south-east down the Lower Derwent while 16 passed over Hagg Bridge on the 12th when 196 were present at Brighton Tip (RSS).

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

As with most of the large gull species, probably under recorded in the area. Numbers were very low in the early part of the year with counts of up to 60 received from Brighton Tip, Rufforth Tip and Wheldrake Ings. The only three figure count concerned 100+ at the Wheldrake Ings roost on 17th April (RSS) which declined to 27 on 21st and 19 next day.

As with the preceding species movement was noted commencing on 10th September with 34 south-east over Wheldrake Ings, 10+ were at Brighton on 13th and included an individual of the Yellow-legged races, of the southern group.

GLAUCOUS GULL

Addition to 1991 Report

A first year bird at Naburn Sewage Works on 20th April (PF.CSR).

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*

The year opened with a healthy population wintering in the area, the largest concentrating being 180+ at Rufforth Tip on 5th January where 70 were still present on 21st while 30 remained at Brighton all month. The gull roost at Wheldrake Ings held 80+ on 7th April

Up to five passed through daily at Wheldrake during November and December until a heavy movement in December with 150+ on 12th.

KITITWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*

This year's records comprised an exceptional flock of 15 adults bathing in floodwater at Wheldrake Ings on the evening of 17th April (DR) and a single immature at Castle Howard on 31st July (DR.RSS).

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

An appalling spring passage with only two records received: a pair returning to the University Lake on 2nd May and a single at Castle Howard (CSR).

The above mentioned pair were seen displaying, courtship feeding and copulating, raising hopes of breeding. However, as the breeding season progressed birds were seen flying off over Walmgate Stray towards the city centre carrying small fish, suggesting breeding may well have occurred on the River Ouse. This was strengthened when two newly fledged youngsters accompanied the pair from 9th July (CSR) and may refer to the same birds seen at Naburn Marina as usual at the month end. It is also conceivable that a single fishing over a small pond at Appleton Roebuck on 6th June refers to the same pair. Elsewhere in the breeding season, one or two regularly in the Lower Derwent Valley throughout June but with no evidence to suggest a repeat of last year's breeding attempt (TED).

Autumn birds were noted only at Castle Howard, with two present from 12th to 17th July (BCAW.DR) and three on 15th, with an adult and juvenile there on 9th August the last (RSS).

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisea*

As with the last species a desperate spring passage from which the rest of the year failed to recover. The first were two at North Duffield on 18th April (TED) followed by singles at Wheldrake Ings on 27th and two at East Cottingwith next day. Two flew north at Wheldrake Ings on 7th May while the only two records of autumn were singles at this site and Castle Howard on 16th and 25th July (RSS).

TERN *Sterna hirundo/paradisea*

Two flying north at Wheldrake Ings during a thunder storm on 2nd May were too distant for positive identification but were considered to be Arctics. Two west over Selby on 15th July, one at Redhouse on 8th August and 11 late birds west over Selby on 5th September (PR) completed the showing.

SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis*

What can only be described as a remarkable year was observed, especially when one considers the paucity of other *Sterna* species. Previously only 14 records in the area, four records detailing seven birds were received in 1992. Two adults flew north at East Cottingwith on 28th April (TED) with the next a single at the University Lake 20th May (CSR). Two immatures were present at Wheldrake Ings on 12th July (DR) while an adult accompanied an immature at Red House Reservoir on 17th September (IW&CR).

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger*

The year brought a small but concentrated passage of spring birds in the second week of May, with eight at Castle Howard on 13th (AW), one there on 18th (DR) and a single on the River Ouse by the A64 next day (T&VW).

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*

Probably under-recorded and over-looked amongst flocks of feral pigeons. Bred at Outgang, Thornton, Bank Island (two pairs at each), Stearsby, Skipwith and several other sites in the Lower Derwent.

Sizeable flocks were reported from Thornton fillers (75 on 2nd April) and High Catton (45 on 13th December). Smaller flocks were at Grimston Bar (27 on 7th January) and Tilmire (24 on 13th October).

WOOD PIGEON *Columba columbus*

Large flocks were reported in January with over 2000 feeding on stubble fields near Selby on 19th, 200 at Castle Howard on 22nd, 600 at Barlow Grange on 23rd, over 1200 at Riccall on 26th with over 1800 at Roscarrs and 500 at Tilmire on the same date. Reported flock sizes decreased in February with 500+ on the playing fields at Poppleton and 100 on the west side of Skipwith Common. A later flock of 91 was reported from Wheldrake on 6th May.

Winter flocks included 230+ at Bielby on 23rd October, 400 at Yearsley on 24th and over 1700 at Castle Howard on 2nd December. 800 roosted at Selby in December and into January 1993.

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

No breeding reports received for this increasingly common and under-recorded species. Reported counts included: 43 at Thorganby on 11th January, over 40 at Poppleton on 1st March, 86 at Low Catton on 24th October, 32 at Thornton on 25th November and 50 at Poppleton on 27th.

A favourite prey species for a large female Sparrowhawk near Brandsby Hall (PH).

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*

Perhaps a slightly better year than 1991, with breeding confirmed in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal area and pairs in the breeding season at Brayton Barff, Poppleton and Sturges Pond.

First bird of the season was at Wheldrake Ings on 17th April (DP) with several sightings at the same location on 28th April, earlier than the past few years. In May, singles were recorded at Melbourne, Skipwith Common and Grimston Bar with five at Bank Island on 6th and five at Wheldrake Ings on 21st. In the North of the area, the first bird was at Brandsby on 27th.

June records included singles at North Duffield and Skipwith Common, with three near the Ouse at Poppleton. In July, two more sightings came from the North of the area, at Youlton and Cornborough on 7th, and two were at Clifton Lake on the same date. A count of six in the Lower Derwent on 21st August was the highest count of the year. Most birds had departed by the end of August, but a late bird was at Hagg Bridge on 19th September (CR).

CUCKOO *Calculus canorus*

First reported bird was at Melbourne on 21st April (CR), with two the following day at Wheldrake Ings. The first in the northern area was at Stearsby on 25th (DR). Other singles in April were at Stockton-on-the-Forest, Skipwith Common, Poppleton and Skelton.

A rufous "hepatic" phase female at Wheldrake Ings on 26th and 30th April (DR, TED) was also seen throughout May and in early June. There was a further sighting at Melbourne on 1st June (TED). This may have been the same bird reported at this location in 1989 and 1990 (but not seen in 1991).

Singles were reported from many locations in early May, with two at Poppleton on 10th and six at Wheldrake Ings on 14th (TED). One at Bank Island on 14th was mobbed by a whitethroat (CR).

A juvenile was at St Everelda's Church, Poppleton on 15th and 21st July (possible Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*) parent) (IW&CR). The last record of the season was on 21st August at Castle Howard (DR, RSS).

Addition to 1991 Report

Male, calling between midnight and 1 am at Hessay on 23rd April.

BARN OWL *Tyto alba*

Bred at Heslington, Ellerton Church, Melbourne, Escrick and Thornton. Failed to breed at Dunnington Common for first time in five years (T&VW). Number of breeding sites lower than in previous year, but not censused at Wheldrake Ings this year.

Including breeding reports, sightings were reported from 24 locations, with a bias towards the eastern part of the area. The only multiple sightings were two at Melbourne on 23rd February (CR) and two regularly around Hessay from August to the year end (DP). Only one casualty reported, at the bottom of Whitwell Hill. Day flying birds were seen at Thornton on 17th June and Ellerton on 21st (CR).

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

A continuation of last year's encouraging trend in breeding reports. Bred at Marton, Huby, Crayke Hall, Whemby Park, North Duffield Carrs, and probably Thornton Eilers. Pairs seen in the breeding season at Escrick, Hagg Bridge and Holtby and singles at Heslington, Poppleton, Dunnington Common, Skirpenbeck and Welham Park. A first winter male was a road casualty at Sherburn in mid-October - possibly raised nearby (CR).

Outside the breeding season, the only multiple record was of three birds at High Catton on 28th September (AW). Singles were reported throughout the area, but with an absence of records in November and December.

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

Bred: Osbaldwick (1pr. 2 yng.), Dunnington Common (1pr. 2 yng.), Naburn and York Water Works (both in boxes), and Fulford Golf Course. Juvenile seen in mid-September at Wheldrake Ings.

Mainly singles reported throughout the year except two at York University on 1st February and three at Melbourne on 19th September.

8th February marked "The start of the nightly chorus at Brandsby Hall Wood" (PH). A calling bird at Osbaldwick on 8th October "upset the local blackbirds" (I&RT). A dead bird at Blackwood, near Skipwith Common had some flesh taken from the neck (FWO).

Addition to 1991 Report

Freshly fledged bird at Bielby on 17th May.

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus*

Early records confined to singles at Seavy Cars on 8th January and Thornton Ellers on 23rd (TED).

Bred at Strensall Common (BG&JMP), Wheldrake Wood, Naburn Wood (2 prs) and Moreby Wood (DC). A pair and three immature birds were calling continuously at Skipwith on 11th June (CR) and one was heard at Bishops Wood on 21st (DC).

Three birds roosted at Thornton Ellers in December (CR, TED).

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asia flammeus*

As in previous years, birds were seen regularly in the Lower Derwent, but no reports of breeding were received and no sightings between early April and mid September. Most reports were of single birds although two were at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd February and on 23rd November (TED).

Elsewhere: singles were at Brighton Tip on 8th January (CR) and at Poppleton on 9th February (DA). A bird also at Poppleton on 26th October was mobbed by crows (DA).

NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus*

York area reports for the BTO National Nightjar Survey were compiled by members of BTO, Forestry and JNCC members. Birds were reported at Skipwith Common between 24th May (CR) and 28th June (I&RT), with nine birds there on 11th with a single at Buttercrambe on 16th (CR).

The only breeding report received was at Gilling where a nest held two young in August (JP).

SWIFT *Apus apus*

First reported arrival was at Wheldrake Ings on 25th April (TED), with singles reported from throughout the area during the next two weeks. A notable influx at Wheldrake Ings was seen on 9th and 10th May, on the latter date the first arrived at a nest site at Brandsby (PH). Double figure counts over the next two months included 40 at Cawood (13th May), 130 at Wheldrake Ings (28th May), 60 at Poppleton over breeding sites (8th July) and 50 at Skipwith Common (31st July and 4th August).

Departure was noted to be a little later this year although most birds had left by late August. Eight were at Castle Howard on 15th September with the last at Poppleton on 23rd September (IW&CR).

KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

Bred in Lower Derwent (Wheldrake Ings, Bank Island, Pocklington Canal, Melbourne Ings - although seemed scarce this year -TED), and at Naburn Lock, Poppleton, Fulford and Beningborough.

Reported from 20 sites throughout the year, but there were no reports this year from the north of the area. Most reports were of single birds, but two were displaying at Fulford Ings on 6th March and two and three birds were reported at Wheldrake Ings between March and August. A bird at Beningborough was seen catching fish and taking it to the nest site on 6th August (IM).

Addition to 1991 Report

One calling at Cram Beck (Gillylees/Spring Wood).

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

Only confirmed breeding report was at Wheldrake Wood (TC), although a bird was excavating a nest hole on Fulford Golf Course on 21st April (TC). Singles were reported throughout the year from Skipwith Common, Castle Howard, Lower Derwent, Ampleforth, Deighton (on bird table - TC), Thicket Priory, Pond Head, Brayton Barff and Sturge's Pond with two flushed at Wash Dykes Heath on Skipwith Common on 7th July (FWO).

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major*

Bred at Bank Island, Thornton Ellers, Wheldrake Ings, and several other sites near the Lower Derwent; at Brandsby High Wood (an early brood on 9th May), Peel Park, Stearsby Hagg, Fulford Golf Course, Bishopthorpe Palace, Dunnington Common, Skipwith Common and Fulford Ings.

Multiple numbers outside the breeding season were a male and female at Skipwith Common on 6th and 20th January, with three at that location on 2nd February (FWO). Two were at Stubbs Woods on 20th February and two near the Ouse at Poppleton on 26th October. Five birds were caught and ringed at Askham Bog between October and December (2 males, 3 females).

Addition to 1991 Report

Bred at Newburgh Priory and Ampleforth.

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos minor*

Bred at Newburgh and probably at Thornton Ellers (where they were present all the year). Drumming birds were heard at Archbishop's Palace, Middlethorpe and Knavesmire Wood.

Other records came from Dringhouses on 8th January and 14th November, Germany Beck, Fulford on 9th July, Brandsby Black Moor on 30th September and a pair at Askham Bog on 31st December.

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

Only breeding reports refer to the Lower Derwent. Possibly becoming less common with the trend towards winter-sown cereals removing sources of food and shelter (PH).

Early winter flocks reported were smaller than in earlier years, with 15 at Poppleton on 7th January and 30 at Rosscarrs on 26th. Up to 30 were at Wheldrake Ings by the end of February and a bird was singing at Melbourne on 26th February.

Flocks towards the end of the year included 49 at Tillmere on 13th October, 12 at Acaster Airfield on 26th November and 48 at Bielby on 28th.

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

Bred: North Duffield Ings (12 prs.) Fox Hill Covert (SE76) (120 prs) and the confluence of rivers Nidd and Ouse at Beningborough. Possibly bred near Layerthorpe Bridge, York, where several were seen flying into drainage holes (I&RT).

First arrivals were a little later than recent years, with the first sightings coming from North Duffield Carrs (ML) and Thorganby (TED) on 4th April. Fifty flew north at Wheldrake Ings on 15th and sightings from the north of the area were reported from 25th onwards, when 250 were at Castle Howard. Maximum count at Wheldrake Ings was 600 on 1st May.

Return passage was marked by 60 at Poppleton on 8th August, 60 at Clifton Lake on 21st, 100 in the Lower Derwent and 120 at Castle Howard on 1st September. The last report was a single at Newburgh Pond on 11th September (JA).

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

First report in the area was at Brandsby on 7th April (PH), with birds becoming widespread throughout by the third week. First reported fledglings were at Brandsby on 27th June. One pair reared two broods in the Geoff Smith Hide at North Duffield Carrs, but the breeding pair at Tower Hide, Wheldrake Ings, failed (TED).

No significant counts were recorded until the return movement, with over 300 at Poppleton on 22nd September and 28 flying west at the University on 23rd. An immature bird was at Sherburn on 14th October, with the last sighting in the area at Askham Bar on 30th.

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbica*

Possibly a better breeding season than 1991 with "twice the number at Bishopthorpe by early July, mostly two broods" (HR).

The first was at York Water Works on 11th April, and over 30 birds were at Wheldrake Ings on the 26th. First sightings in the north of the area were not until birds at Newburgh Pond on 30th April and Brandsby on 10th May. By 12th May two pairs were raising young at Acomb Green.

Autumn passage records were no higher than in 1991, with 250 at Wilberfoss on 1st August, a peak count of 40 at Clifton Lake on 4th, and 200 over the Ouse at Acaster Malbis on 20th. Birds were still visiting nest sites in Tang Hall on 5th September, young were still in the nest at Bishopthorpe on 9th (possibly the third brood - HR) and on 20th at Melbourne. Late fledglings departed from Bransby on 16th October when the temperature was 34°F and the last sighting was at Yearsley on 24th (AW).

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

Only six reports were received. First reported arrival was at Fulford Golf Course on 21st April (TC) and two were singing in Wheldrake Wood on 23rd. The only other reports were in May at Bishop Wood (10th), Blackmoor (17th) and Skipwith Common (23rd). For the second year in succession, there were no breeding reports from SE57 and SE56 also lacked a breeding record.

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

Probably under-recorded this year, with the only breeding record from Clifton Lake.

40 birds were at Naburn on 11th January, and a bird was singing near the hide at Bubwith on 28th March.

Post-breeding numbers were again low, with 20 at Clifton Moor on 8th August

and 23 at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd September. Passages noted were 1,000 south at Wheldrake Ings on 10th September and 60 at Bubwith on 21st.

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*

Bred: Sturge's Pond, Selby Canal, Brandsby, Thorganby, Thornton, South Duffield, Acaster Airfield and throughout the Lower Derwent Valley.

First sighting of the year was at Wheldrake Ings on 20th April (TED) with three pairs at Forest Farm Warthill on 27th. A single was at Newburgh Pond on 30th. During May, birds were regular at Grimston Bar with three in fields on 5th. June sightings included four at Brayton Bridge on 6th and two at North Duffield on 24th. In July, two adults and three young were at South Duffield on 1st, six at Alne on 10th, two in a pea field at Copmanthorpe on 19th and 25 young birds were with 50 young Pied Wagtails (*Motacilla alba*) on a manure heap at Acaster

Airfield on 23rd. The only August record was of 23 birds at Brighton Meadows on 23rd.

The last bird at Wheldrake Ings was a single on 6th September, but up to 50 birds were still in the Lower Derwent Valley on 10th, with 500 over the valley on 11th (CR). Other September flocks were 16 at Kexby Bridge Hotel on 15th and 22 at Bubwith on 22nd and 23rd. Last sightings of the year were three birds at Kexby Bridge Hotel on 29th September (AW).

Birds showing characteristics of the race *M.f. flava*, Blue-headed Wagtail were at North Duffield Carrs on 27th April and a female at Naburn from 10th to 13th May.

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

Bred: Escrick, Newburgh Priory, with 3 pairs seen during the breeding season at Poppleton and a juvenile at Castle Howard.

In the early part of the year one or two were at Bank Island throughout January, a female fed in a Copmanthorpe garden from 24th to 26th January. One or two birds were seen at Melbourne Sewage Works, York University, Burnholme Beck, Newburgh Pond and Newburgh Priory. Thirteen were at Naburn on 13th January, where there were birds present throughout the year. Two males were fighting at Crambeck on 20th May (DR).

Sightings later in the year were three at Castle Howard on 18th August and seven roosting in Hull Road Park, Tang Hall on 20th October. One or two birds were reported from Brandsby (Rectory garden), Newburgh Priory, Burnholme, Moor Monkton, Pond Head and Roscarrs.

PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba*

Bred: Pond Head, Newburgh, Escrick, Clifton Lake, with juveniles reported frequently in York city centre, four juveniles at Poppleton and 25 young at Acaster Airfield.

Peak counts in the early part of the year were over 70 at Melbourne Slurry Pits on 9th January, 410 at Naburn Sewage Works on 11th and 23 at Fulford Ings on 3rd March.

Post-breeding flocks were 90+ at Melbourne on 12th September, with 114 there on 17th, 39 at Kexby Bridge Hotel on 15th, 27 at York University on 9th October, 18 at High Catton on 11th, 30 at Naburn Sewage Works and North Duffield Carrs on 21st, 10 at Clifton Lake on 1st November and 20+ at Poppleton (River Ouse) on 6th December.

Birds showing characteristics of *M.a. alba*, White Wagtail, were reported from York University on 27th February, Wheldrake Ings on 19th April and 19th May at Bank Island.

WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulus*

The flock of 40 birds at Brandsby Hall from mid-December 1991 remained until 3rd January (PH) and four were present at York University on 7th (CR). At Snargate, 35 birds were there on 2nd February (PH), with singles at New Earswick on 8th (JL) and Tadcaster Road (opposite Knavesmire) on 15th (DP). The last sightings were at Leeman Road, York, with six on 1st April and 13 on 2nd (BG&JMP).

No birds were reported in the recording area in the latter part of the year.

Additions to 1991 Report

30 at Copmanthorpe on 20th January, including two colour-ringed birds (JL), and two at Claxton on 26th (AW). In the latter part of the year, 2-3 birds were also at Claxton on 10th December, 20th and 27th.

DIPPER *Cinclus cinclus*

Probably bred at West Ness. Juveniles seen on 16th and 28th July (JP).

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Common and successful in all habitats. Numerous pairs bred in the Derwent Valley, no counts made.

Pair feeding in bracken, Skipwith Common on 17th February, with one singing in Stubbs Wood on the 18th (FWO). Maximum count was 30 birds at Brayton Barff on 3rd April (DC).

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*

Bred as usual in Lower Derwent Valley, York University (seven pairs) and Osbaldwick. Sixteen at Brayton Barff on 3rd April.

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

Few reports submitted. Noted feeding from nut feeder in South Lane, Bishopthorpe on 2nd February (HR). Bred as usual in Lower Derwent Valley.

NIGHTINGALE *Luscinia megarhynchos*

Only reports were of one on Yearsley Common on 21st June (RSS), and one at Pond Head on 23rd (CR). An empty nest was found at Pond Head on 9th July, with juveniles seen on 1st August (CR).

REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Two males singing in Coneysthorpe Bank Woods on 13th May, with four singing males at Acklam on 20th. A pair were at Pond Head on 20th May and two pairs bred in Hagg Wood, Stearsby. A female and two juveniles were at Yearsley Common on 21st June, and a juvenile near Cawton on 8th September.

Addition to 1991 report

Males seen carrying food at Horse Coppice on 28th June and Black Fir plantation on 24th July.

WHINCHAT *Sax/co/a rubetra*

For the first year there were no records from Dunnington Common (T&VW).

A single was at Grimston Bar on 4th May and one at Wheldrake Ings on the 6th

(DR). Pairs were seen at North Duffield Carrs on 15th, Bubwith Ings and Thornton Ings on the 16th, and Thornton Ellers on 17th and 18th (TED) when a female at Thornton Ings. A male was on Strensall Common on 15th June and another at North Duffield on 28th, with a juvenile there on 20th July. A female or immature was at Bubwith Ings on 10th August. Singles were seen in the Lower Derwent Valley on September 1st, 3rd and 7th and the last was at Wheldrake Ings on 14th September (RSS).

Addition to 1991 report

Two first-winter birds at Woodthorpe bus terminus (JL).

STONECHAT *Sax/co/a torquata*

The only report was of a male on Wheldrake Ings on 5th October (TED).

WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

First bird seen was a male at Wheldrake Ings at 21st March (TED). Singles also seen at North Duffield, Wheldrake Ings and East Cottingwith on 1st April with two at North Duffield on 20th, four males at Melbourne on 25th April and a female at Grimston Bar on 29th April. Others noted on passage in fields at Grimston Bar, Elvington, Outgang and Tilmire. May maxima were 17 in the Lower Derwent Valley, three at Elvington, five at Grimston Bar, and six at Ross Moor. From a pea field near Grimston Bar there were 17 bird days noted in May, with a maximum of five on 2nd.

There was a pair at Naburn and a male at Poppleton on 3rd May. one also seen at Forest Farm on 5th with five at York Water works on the same day. Males also seen at Colton Bridge, Appleton Roebuck on 6th and Thornton Ellers from 5th to 17th. A female was seen carrying food at Elvington Airfield on 23rd June (CR). An immature was on Clifton Moor on 7th August and again the next day (BG&JMP). Autumn passage began in August, with single birds seen at Appletree Village, Full Sutton Airfield and Scoresby park.

Final reports were on 13th September, with singles at Boothferry Golf Club (RSS) and Grimston Bar (DR).

Two on Heslington Tilmire on 18th May showed characteristics of the race 'O.O.leucorrhoea' Greenland Wheatear.

RING OUZEL *Turdus*

torquatus No reports from 1992.

Addition to the 1991 report

One seen at Aldby Park, Buttercrambe on 13th April (AW).

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

Winter maxima in January were 45 at Fulford Ings at 13th , 45 on University campus on 20th , 23 in Wheldrake Woods, 12 in garden at Poppleton on the 15th and 27 on 26th.

Breeding in the Derwent Valley was as usual. Two nests observed close together in garden in Osbaldwick, only one female seen, but both clutches hatched, seven chicks in all (IF&RVT).

Addition to 1991 report

Fortyone plus pairs breeding in the Heslington/University area, at least 20 nests were lost due to Magpie (*pica pica*) predation.

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

Largest winter counts were 1000 at North Duffield Carrs on 7th January and 2000 at Thorganby on 9th. There were 400 at Wheldrake on 6th February, 200

at Castle Howard on the 8th and 800 at Melbourne on the 9th. Forty were seen around Monks Cross on 22nd February and a party of 10 down Moor Lane, Bishopthorpe on 18th March. Two hundred were at Ampleforth on 17th April, 400 at Castle Howard on 18th and 100 at North Duffield Carrs on 20th. The last were 21 at Wass on 2nd May (JP).

On 15th June an adult was seen by the Derwent, at Brighton, showing signs of moult (T&VW).

The first returning bird was a single at Bank Island on 22nd September (TED). However unlike the early part of the year there were no large flocks with the only numbers of note being: 30 at Wheldrake Ings on 5th October, 50 at Pond Head and 40 at Castle Howard on 17th, and 30 on the River Ouse at Poppleton on the 17th.

Thirty flew over Skipwith Common on 7th November, and 50 on 10th. There were 250 at East Cottingwith on 29th November and 150 at Newton-on-Derwent on 6th December.

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomenus*

Decline in population noted; very evident in north YOC area (PH); rather scarce in Poppleton (IW&CR); only two singing males on Dunnington Common (T&VW); one only seen at Newburgh Pond, between March and June (JA). Breeding in Derwent Valley appeared to be as usual, but no counts were made.(TED)

TVo pairs bred at York University (PF). The first fledgling was at Brandsby on 3rd May (PH).

There was a small influx of 13 along the path at Wheldrake Ings on 31st March (TED).

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

No large counts in the Brandsby area (PH). 250 were at Sheriff Hutton and 14 at Poppleton playing field on January 21st and 16 in a garden at Poppleton on 23rd. Two hundred were at Wheldrake on 6th February, though generally numbers were decreasing by then. One was singing on Skipwith Common on 15th March (FWO). There were 30 at Moor Lane, Bishopthorpe, on 18th, 50 at Oswaldkirk on 3rd April and 65 flew north at Wheldrake Ings on 10th April. The last was seen at Castle Howard on 11th (DR).

First of the autumn was at Bank Island on 22nd September (TED). Birds were very scarce during the latter part of the year with the only records being one calling in darkness over Osbaldwick on 1st October, four at Bishopthorpe on 4th and eight at Wheldrake Ings and three at Stamford Bridge on 5th. The first counts were 100 on the River Ouse at Poppleton on 10th when 150 at Castle Howard. There were 30 at Heslington Tilmire on 23rd and 50 at East Cottingwith on 29th November.

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*

The first song was above Scarcroft Stray, York, on January 22nd. (FWO).

A pair was seen at Forest Farm, 8th April (JSH), and a pair bred successfully on Acomb Green (BC).

Scattered pairs bred in the Derwent Valley (TED).

Twentythree were at Heslington Tilmire, June 15th , 13 on the playing field at Poppleton, 12th July , 17 at Melbourne on 29th July. The biggest flock reported was of 29 at Scoreby on 22nd September (PH).

Addition to 1991 report

Sixtythree birds on commercial turf at Wilberfoss on July 1st.

CETTI'S WARBLER *Cettia cetti*

There was a report of one at Thornton Ellers on April 1st (TED) - not an April Fool!

First record for the area.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia*

The first was at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd April (TED). Birds also heard at Fulford Ings, Bishops Wood, Storwood, Thornton fillers and Selby. Two males were singing on the riverbank at Wheldrake Ings on 9th June and one in the reedbed on the 15th. Possibly Three pairs bred at Wheldrake. Birds heard in July, at Wheldrake Ings and Bank Island, may have been new arrivals (a secondary influx was noted elsewhere in the North East) (CR). The last were at Wheldrake Ings on 16th August (TED).

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Numbers generally appear to be increasing.

The first was at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd April with 17 by the 30th. 44 were counted along the river bank path on 2nd May with five at Bank Island on the 5th. Bred in the Derwent Valley, 11 pairs being at Thornton fillers with 10 pairs at Ross Carrs (CR), and two pairs at York Waterworks, during the breeding season (TC). Birds also heard at Acaster Malbis airfield (in a rape field), Castle Howard, Church Fenton ponds, River Ouse, Cowick Reservoir, Langton, Selby Canal and Skipwith Common. Last record was 14th September, in the Derwent Valley (TED).

REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Seems to be increasing slightly and a visit to any known reed bed in spring may well provide further breeding sites.

Bred at Brighton Meadows, Pocklington Canal, Thornton Ellers and Wheldrake Ings (20 pairs). Singing males were heard at Brayton Bridge on the Selby Canal, Castle Howard (2), Roscarrs (2), Skipwith Common, Sturge's Ponds, and York Waterworks (2) during the breeding season.

The first was at Wheldrake Ings on 27th April increasing to 12 by 14th May (CR). One was still singing at Skipwith Common, on July 27th. The last was at Wheldrake Ings on October 7th (TED).

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

The first was at Wheldrake Ings on 25th April (TED) with one there on 28th. One on usual territory at Copmanthorpe by 3rd May. Also heard at York Sixth Form College (JL) and on the eastern boundary of Skipwith Common (FWO). Also reported from Dunnington Common (in a garden), Forest Farm, Sutton on the Forest and River Ouse at Poppleton. Scattered pairs bred as usual in the Lower Derwent Valley with breeding also noted at Smargate Beck, Stearsby (PH) and Poppleton playing fields. The last was at Poppleton on 24th August (IW&CR).

WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

The first was at Riccall on 25th April (CR). Four at Wheldrake Ings on 30th April with 11 pairs by the 14th May with birds becoming widespread elsewhere by the middle of the month. A single at Naburn on 2nd May was the first of many and the species was later observed to be breeding in good numbers along the old Heslington and Naburn railway (TC). Four individuals were in the same bush on the Pocklington Canal on 14th June (T&VW) and one was singing along Germany Beck in Fulford, on 12th July (FWO). The last was at Roscarrs on 17th September (DR).

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

The first were at Copmanthorpe (JAD) and Naburn Woods (TC) on 3rd May, two at Wheldrake Ings on 6th, with two pairs noted throughout the month and one pair at Thornton Ellers (TED). One was seen taking food to the nest at Wheldrake on 9th June. Two pairs bred at Lodge Wood, Brandsby Heights (PH). Observed during the breeding season at University, Blackwood, near Skipwith, Kirkham Abbey, York Waterworks, Askham Bog and Red House Wood. Six were at Brayton Barff and three at Hambleton Hough on 8th June and four at Sturges Pond on 11th (DC). Again no further sightings after the middle of June.

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*

The first was a singing male at Sturge's Pond on 8th April (DC). Five were singing in Askham Bog on 22nd and males were recorded at Blackwood (near Skipwith), Castle Howard, Clifton and Wheldrake Ings by the month end. In May, three at Bishop Wood and seven singing on Dunnington Common (T&VW). There were single pairs throughout the month at Wheldrake Ings and Bank Island, and scattered breeding as usual in the Lower Derwent Valley, and throughout the recording area, including all suitable breeding areas at Heslington and Naburn (TC). Also recorded at Skipwith Common, Bishops Wood and Hambleton Hough. Thirteen were at Brayton Barff and four singing in Staynor Wood on 8th June and 20 were at Wass on 2nd August with a juvenile seen between Cawton and Oswaldkirk on 9th. A male was on Skipwith Common on 5th October (FWO) and one at East Cottingwith Ings on the 31st (TED). An adult female was caught and ringed at Dringhouses on 14th November, and there was a male at Askham Bog on 22nd (CR).

One was twice seen feeding on apple in a garden on Tang Hall Lane in December (BC), and a male was hit by a fire appliance in Stockton on Forest on 10th December (DC). At Wilberfoss, an immature flew into a window and was released 30 minutes later, unharmed (AW).

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

A poor year with no sightings from Brandsby High Wood (PH). One was singing in the south-east corner of Skipwith Common on 16th May (FWO) and two at Wass on 6th June (JP).

Addition to 1991 report

One flew into a window in Heslington and died, on April 19th (PF).

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*

A winter bird was at Selby on 19th January - also had been seen 31st December (PR). One was singing along Cornelius Causeway, east of Skipwith Common, on 5th March (FWO). A single at Bank Island on March 10th was considered to have overwintered in the Derwent Valley (TED).

The first summer bird was at Selby on March 21st (PR), with one at Sturge's Pond on 26th and two pairs there by April 19th. The first at Thornton Ellers was on 1st April. There were three singing at Brayton Barff on 3rd with six there by the 19th (DC). Became widespread by the end of the month, mainly single birds with the exception of four in Yearsley Moor Wood and Askham Bog. In May, there were seven at Ampleforth (CR). Breeding was reported at Bank Island, Thornton Ellers and Wheldrake Ings, although undoubtedly a common breeding bird throughout the area.

Singles at Osbaldwick on 6th September and in October at High Hatton and Wheldrake Ings (RSS).

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

The first was at Wheldrake Ings on 9th April (TED), with one at Sturge's Pond on 10th and one at Poppleton on 12th. Two were at Brayton Barff on 19th and

species was becoming widespread by the end of the month. Eight were at Wheldrake Ings on 6th May and at Bishop Wood on the 10th (B&JP).

Birds widespread throughout May in the Derwent Valley (TED), where breeding was considered to be normal. Twenty singing males were counted between Dunnington Common and Elvington on the 25th May (T&VW). Fourteen singing at Brayton Barff on 8th June was considered a poor total for the area (DC). Eight were singing in Staynor Wood on 10th and the maximum at Struge's Pond was 11 on 11th. A juvenile was seen on the River Ouse on 26th June (IW&CR).

Considering that this is a widespread breeding species it seems remarkable that no records were forthcoming after the end of June.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*

Few records with the largest parties being: 100 at Wheldrake Woods on 14th

January and 15 at Askham Bog on 18th February. Eighty were at Yearsley Common on 24th October and 40 at Wheldrake Woods on 13th December.

The only breeding records were from Brandsby Dale, High Wood (PH), Brayton Barff and Bishops Wood (DC).

FIRECREST *Regulus ignicapillus*

The only report was of one in Wheldrake Woods on 14th January associating with goldcrests, and possibly heard again on 20th (CR).

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*

The first record was of a single at Warthill on 14th May (JSH) followed by a pair at Bishopthorpe on 18th. Three pairs at Castle Howard on 9th June, one at Thornton Ellers on 5th July where they subsequently bred. One at Burnholme, York on 8th July and a juvenile on Bank Island on 10th. In August, a single at Coxwold on 9th and on the 15th one was catching butterflies in Bishopthorpe. Finally, one at Roscarrs on 3rd September (DR).

A drop in numbers recorded this year, possibly from a dearth of returning birds.

Addition to 1990/91/92 Reports

Probably bred in Claxton as family parties were seen regularly on Buddleia (*Loganicaea*).

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*

A female at Wheldrake Ings from 3rd to 5th May

BEARDED TIT *Panurus biarmicus*

Singles on Wheldrake Ings on 7th October and 6th November. There were six there on 22nd November increasing to eight the next day and a count of five on 28th November.

A colour ringing study of this species is being undertaken by the RSPB at its reserves where they breed. The occurrence of the birds in late October allowed an opportunity for the attempted capture of three birds to complement the study. On 21st November an attempt to mist net the birds resulted in one being caught with a BTO ring and a dark green colour ring. It is an irruptive species and it was previously thought that birds in the area originated from Blacktoft Sands. However this bird was ringed at Walberswick in Suffolk, a distance of 245 kms. At the time of writing it is the first and only recovery of one of the RSPB colour ringed birds (CR).

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*

Surprisingly few reports early in the year but 19 were on Wheldrake Ings 6th February, two on Skipwith Common two days later and a single there on 21st March. During May, two at Warthill and four at Moorlands.

The first post-breeding flock was of 14 on Wheldrake Ings on 9th June which was still present on 10th July. A further 26 were on Bank Island on 7th July, 20 at Wass on 2nd August, 25 at Poppleton on 26th with 24 in the Lower Derwent Valley on 4th September. Six were seen on Middlethorpe Ings in October and 20 at Poppleton later that month. Six at Gate Helmsley on 14th December and 8+ at Acomb on 23rd December.

Widely recorded as a breeding species in the Howardian Hills where the maximum number of a foraging flock was of 23 in Peel Park. In Selby they were seen regularly but with no large flocks.

MARSH TIT *Parus palustris*

Noted early in the year at Castle Howard, Skipwith Common and Thornton Ellers, Breeding reports from Ampleforth where a nest with seven eggs, Brandsby Dale, Oliver Valley and Skipwith Common.

Twenty were at Wass on 2nd August, 20 at Yearsley Common on 24th October and a large mixed flock of Marsh/Willow Tit at Thornton Ellers on 16th and 19th December were mostly of this species.

WILLOW TIT *Parus montanus*

Fewer reports this year the first being 11 in Askham Bog on 6th February followed by a single at Thornton Ellers on 1st April. On the 8th of that month one was excavating a nest hole in Elder (*Sambucus nigra L*) in Stubb Wood, Acaster (FWO).

In the breeding season there were up to three pairs at Sturge's Pond and Brayton Barff.

Later in the year one or two in the Lower Derwent at Wheldrake and at Castle Howard Lake. Thirteen were at Askham Bog on 18th November (CR).

Three were recorded during the year at Dunnington Common but "none had fed in the garden for the last two years. A dramatic decline" (TW).

COAL TIT *Parus ater*

Twelve were at Fulford Golf Course on 7th January, five at Skipwith Common on 11th. Seven at Askham Bog on 6th February, 45+ at Allertorpe Common on 9th and 14 at Wheldrake Ings on 14th. Twenty-five at Skipwith Common 3rd March and 12 at Brayton Barff on 3rd April.

On 16th June a pair with young were in Foxhill Covert, Acomb and a pair with seven young bred in a stone barn at Pond Head. Confirmed breeding reports came from SE56, 66 and 76. Seen in the breeding season on Skipwith Common, Bishop Wood and Hambleton Hough.

Post-breeding flocks of 50+ at Wass on 2nd August, 10 at Skipwith Common on 18th October and 80+ at Yearsley Common on 24th October (RSS). "Thought to have declined in the last two years on Dunnington Common" (TW).

BLUE TIT *Parus caeruleus*

Early in the year flocks were: 20 at Fulford Golf Course on 7th January and 20 at Askham Bog on 11th, 32 at Dunnington Common 22nd February, four pairs at Warthill on 20th March and 45 at Brayton Barff on 3rd April (DC). No further significant reports received.

A small decline has been noted over the last few years but the paucity of records is probably because, as with most common species, they are either overlooked or just not being recorded. It is for this reason that all records are valuable to

enable us to record any such population trends accurately.

GREAT TIT *Parus major*

The only significant reports received were of 22 at Brayton Barff on 3rd April, two pairs breeding at Newburgh and 30 at Wass on 2nd August.

NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

Bred in the Howardian Hills at Brandsby, Castle Howard, Lodge Wood, Hovingham Woods and Newburgh. Scattered records of mainly single birds came from Ampleforth, Askham Bog, Bishopthorpe Palace, Fulford Ings, Newburgh, Pond Head (2), the University and Wass (2).

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

Recorded on Fulford Golf Course, Wheldrake Woods (max. 10 on 19th January), Dunnington Common (4), Thornton fillers, Wheldrake Ings and Wheldrake Wood.

Breeding proved at Newburgh, Pond Head, Thornton Ellers (where a single chick was being fed by both parents on 7th June), the University and Welham Park. A difficult species to observe in summer and no doubt breeds throughout the area.

Recorded throughout the year at Askham Bog (6 on 18th November), Brayton Barff (seven on 3rd April), Bishopthorpe, Dunnington (four on 27th February), Holly Cam, Moreby Wood, Thornton Ellers, Wheldrake Ings and Wheldrake Woods (10 on 19th January).

JAY *Garrulus glandarius*

Records only for the southern half of the area, with seven at Askham Bog on 11th January, five at Poppleton on 5th February, two at Bank Island on 10th July. Three at Wheldrake Ings on 13th October, five at Askham Bog on 18th November, eight at Middlethorpe Ings on 7th December, four at Melbourne on 11th, six at Dringhouses on 13th and four at Skipwith Common on 28th.

Bred Fulford Golf Course and Wheldrake Woods.

MAGPIE *Pica pica*

The larger congregations in the first three months of the year were: 34 on Walmgate Stray on 9th January (CR), 21 at Brighton Tip on 12th, 15 at the University and Riccall on 20th and 26th respectively. Seven at Wheldrake Ings on 27th February and 21 at Bishopthorpe 18th March.

On 24th June seen with young at Poppleton. Comments received about this species were "many east of York" and "common predator of all other bird species".

Addition to 1991 Report Bred at the University raising seven young with 10 there on 28th December.

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*

Six hundred over Castle Howard on 22nd January, 180 at Stamford Bridge on 5th October and 46 at Heslington on 21st were the only counts of note. Once again very few records of this species.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

Four thousand at Easingwold on 17th January, 300 at Castle Howard on 22nd with 600 at Melbourne on 10th February, a juvenile was learning to fly on 29th

April at Heslington; 450 at Stamford Bridge on 5th October.

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*

Significant reports received were: 10 at Clifton on 18th March, 31 at Heslington on 21st October and 17 at High Catton on 13th December.

A bird showing the characteristics of Hooded Crow (*C.c. cornix*) was seen at Bishopthorpe on 24th January (CR).

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

Roost counts of over 100 were: c. 1000 at Naburn Sewage Works on 15th January (FWO), 600 at Wheldrake Ings on 6th February and 100 at Monk Stray on 24th April.

Bred in the Lower Derwent Valley and in an owl box on Dunnington Common.

Post-breeding flocks were: 250 at Appletree Village on 30th July, 150 at Monk Stray on 15th September. There were 1000+ roosting at High Catton during September/October, 300+ at Poppleton on 21st November and 400+ at Newton-on-Derwent on 6th December.

Addition to 1991 Report Two pairs seen feeding young at Fulford Ings on 3rd May. Forty-five pairs bred at the University and 5000 were roosting there on 19th September.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

The only records received were of three birds collecting feathers for nesting material from a dead Collared Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*) in Burton Stone Lane, York on 2nd May, a 50+ post-breeding flock at Poppleton on 12th September and 20 at Huntington on 27th September.

As with some other seed eating species, i.e. Corn Bunting, this species has shown a steady decline over the last few years. I would urge observers to record all sightings of this species so we may assess its true position.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*

Four pairs possibly bred at Woodthorpe, a few scattered pairs bred as usual in the Lower Derwent valley and two broods were raised in a garden at Dunnington on 12th when 110 at Melbourne. Forty at Wheldrake/Elvington on 19th and 30+ at Riccall on 26th. One hundred at Melbourne on 9th February with 60 there on 10th. Fifty at Acaster Airfield on 11th March. A flock of 100+ at Poppleton on 12th November had risen to 200+ on 25th (IW & CR). Twentyfive were at Strensall Common on 22nd December.

Scarce in the north of the area with the only records nine at Brandsby on 27th June and 25 at Strensall on 23rd December.

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

Winter flocks much lower this year. Thirty at Stubb Wood on 14th January, 67 at Dunnington on 27th, 120 at Thornton Ellers on 4th February and 31 at Brayton Barff on 3rd April.

Bred in a garden at Dunnington and as usual in the Lower Derwent valley.

Twelve were near Skipwith Common on 27th October. One showing the biometrics and characteristics of a continental bird was caught at Thornton Ellers on 19th December (CR & TED).

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

With the exception of 10 at Bank Island on 28th February only FWO has records of this species early in the year. One or two, males and females, seen at Skipwith Sewage Works, Stubb Wood and Acaster Airfield through January to April, culminating with one singing at Skipwith Common on 19th April.

The first returning birds were two going south west at the University on 5th October (AW). Three were at Pond Head on 11th October increasing to five on the 17th when four were at Newburgh and one at Wheldrake Ings. Later in October, three at Castle Howard had increased to five on 24th November; on 22nd three were at Bank Island.

Poorest showing for many years.

GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris*

Flocks over 50 in the first months of the year were as follows: 150 at Aughton on 12th January, 110 at Thornton Ellers on 5th February, 80 at Bank Island on 28th and 70 at Aughton on 7th March.

The 41 at Melbourne on 30th May was possibly a post-breeding flock. "Scattered pairs bred as usual in the Lower Derwent valley" and "bred in good numbers around the University".

Autumn/winter flocks were: 25 at Huntingdon on 27th September, c400 at Poppleton on 10th October, 210 at Aughton Ings on 29th; 150+ at Poppleton on 23rd November and 300 at Terrington on 6th December.

Addition to 1991 Report Two pairs bred at the University but lost the eggs/brood due to Magpie (*Pica pica*) predation.

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

East Cottingwith held the largest wintering flock in our area having 50 on 3rd February rising to 80 on 4th March (TED). There were 10 at Poppleton on 3rd January, 40 at the University on 10th February and 14 there on the 15th with 15 present at Poppleton on 4th April

Bred at Acomb, Bank Island and in the Lower Derwent valley. Seen feeding young at Poppleton on 6th July and a family party was feeding five young on 12th August at Acaster Malbis.

Post-breeding flocks were: 80 at North Duffield Cans on 1st August, 30 at Clifton Lake on 4th August, 35 at Clifton Moor on 8th and 45 at Poppleton on 26th. This flock rose to 70+ on 4th September. Twenty-seven at High Carton at the end of September and the same number at the University on 4th October, which increased to 62 by 22nd November. Twenty at Terrington on 6th December and 11 at Easingwold on 28th.

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*

Thirty at Skipwith Common on 7th January, 55 at Askham Bog on 11th, 26 at Fulford Golf Course on 13th, 23 at Castle Howard on 19th and 60 at Thornton Ellers on 31st. The University held 55 on 4th February, Askham Bog 50+ on 16th; the Thornton Ellers flock reduced to 40 by the 4th. April brought a pair to garden nuts in Poppleton on 8th, one singing at Brayton Barff on 19th, a pair at Brandsby on 20th when 10 at Yearsley and c30 at Skipwith Common on 28th. Ten at Brayton Barff on 1st May.

On 26th June adults with young were at Kenyhorpe and on 8th August over five, mostly juveniles, were at Wass.

Wintering flocks over ten from October to December were: 12 at Bank Island on 5th October and 150 at Yearsley Common on 24th. Thirty-one at the University on 19th November and 150 at Kirkham Gorge on 29th. There were 15 at Moor Monkton on 6th December, 60 at Thornton Ellers on 20th and 24 at Acaster Weir on 27th. At the end of the year the Thornton Ellers flock had reduced to 20; small numbers were seen throughout the year at Brayton Barff and Sturge's Pond.

LINNET *Carduelis cannabina*

The wintering flock at East Cottingwith reached a maximum of 90 on 3rd February; there were 32 at Fulford Ings on 6th March and 40 at Sturge's Pond on 18th April.

A male was singing in a Copmanthorpe garden on 2nd May and they bred "in all areas" round Brandsby.

Post-breeding flocks over 50 were: 100 at North Duffield Carrs on 1st August and 150 at Hagg Bridge on 2nd; 150 at Kexby on 29th September, 150 at Wheldrake Ings on 1st October, 80 at Bylands Abbey on 29th and 110 at Brandsby.

REDPOLL *Carduelis flammea*

One at Poppleton on 1st January, 31 at Fulford Golf Course on 7th; 48 at Dunnington on 2nd February and 10+ at Askham Bog on 16th.

"A few pairs bred on Wheldrake Ings", "a sparse breeding species" in Brandsby.

Late winter flocks were 21 at Askham Bog on 11th November and 60 at Thornton fillers on 30th December. Small numbers were seen during the year in the Selby area.

CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostris*

An unusually poor year with the only records of three at Wheldrake Woods on 5th February and post-breeding flocks of up to 30 birds in nine separate wooded areas of the Howardian Hills during May/July; 100+ were at Hovingham High Wood on 27th July.

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

In the early winter months seen at Stockton Lane, Fulford Ings (6), Storwood (pair), Skipwith (pair), Wheldrake Ings (3), Copmanthorpe (1m & 2f), Bishopthorpe (m), Wheldrake Car Park (6).

In the breeding season seen at Wheldrake C.P., at Sturge's Pond and Brayton Barff. Confirmed breeding reports from Wheldrake Ings, Fulford Golf Course and the University. A pair feeding on honeysuckle berries (*Lonicera periclymenum*) at Dunnington Common on 27th July and a female at Skipwith Common on 28th. In September, two male and two female at Poppleton on 1st, one at Monks Cross on 6th and in November a pair at Poppleton on 12th, six at Heslington and 13 at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd.

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citrinella*

The major flocks in the early months of the year were: 70 at East Cottingwith on 7th January (reduced to 30 by 15th February) and 30 at Bishopthorpe on 12th March.

No significant reports of breeding.

Small flocks at year end were: c20 at Acaster Airfield on 3rd October, 25+ at Poppleton on 21st November and 30+ at Bielby on 28th; 60 in Howardian Hills on 18th December and 50 at Strensall on 26th.

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Five at Castle Howard on 18th January and 10 at Sturge's Pond on 23rd February. At Wheldrake Ings 41 roosting on 27th February reduced to six by 23rd March; a female in a Poppleton garden on 31st.

During the breeding season a pair at Warthill, seven singing males at Bank Island, a pair at Oulston Reservoir and two singing males at Morbly Park. A male holding territory at Clifton Lake failed to attract a mate. Five pairs bred at Thornton Ellers, two pairs at Pond Head, two pairs at York Water Works and at Roscarrs, Sturge's Pond and Selby Canal.

Winter roosts on Wheldrake Ings were 70 on 8th October and c200 there on 22nd November; 27 were roosting in Melbourne on 25th.

CORN BUNTING *Miliaria calandra*

During the early winter months: 60 at East Cottingwith all January increasing to 80 by 15th February; 40 were at Sturge's Pond on 11th and 45 at Wheldrake Ings on 25th. Four at Clifton Lake from 29th February to 22nd March. Twenty at Thornton Ellers on 1st April and 20 remained at Sturge's Pond on 4th.

Singing males from April until July at Acaster Airfield, Escrick, Elvington, Grimston Bar, Heslington, Poppleton, Roscarrs and Stillington. Confirmed breeding reports came from Barlow Grange, Sturge's Pond and in the Lower Derwent valley "as usual".

The only autumn flock was of 16 at Low Catton on 24th October.

ESCAPES/INTRODUCED

BLACK SWAN *Cygnus tratus*

One resident at Castle Howard all year was joined by a pair in the autumn.

One at Roscarrs on 10th November.

One on River Derwent at Wressle on 6th December later joined the Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*) flock on North Duffield Cams where it stayed until the year end.

BAR HEADED GOOSE *Anser indicus*

An adult at Wheldrake Ings from 20th September until 14th October.

One at the University 18th - 21st April.

CHUKAR *Alectoris chukar*

Two at Crockey Hill on 3rd May (DR).

BAHAMA PINTAIL *Anas bahamensis*

A leucistic bird at Wheldrake Ings 5th to 12th March (CR & TED).

BUDGERIGAR *Melopsittacus undulatus*

A yellow bird at Melbourne on 23rd February (CR & TED).

PIED COCKATIEL

At Clifton Lake on 16th February.

COCKATIEL *Nymphicus hollandicus*

Flying north at Breighton Meadows on 23rd August.

INDIAN HILL MYNAH *Gracula religiosa*

On Wheldrake Ings on 16th July (TED).