

YOC REPORT 1994

BIRDWATCHING IN THE CLUB RECORDING AREA

In 1993 Frank Oats went through the 1992 report and extracted 183 sites where 1,364 sightings had been reported. This would appear to indicate a good coverage of our area however as one would expect some sites were more productive than others e.g. Wheldrake Ings 153 and Derwent Valley 102.

No Sightings Sites Percentage

Over 100	2	1.09
50-99	2	1.09
10-49	29	15.85
3-9	57	31.15
1-2	93	50.82

Table 1. Number of sightings per site.

So sightings at 150 sites (82%) accounted for only 394 (29%) of the 1364 sightings, with the remaining 33 sites (18%) accounting for 970 (71%) of which 4 of these (2.2%) accounted for 406 (30%).

The four sites were Wheldrake Ings (153), Derwent Valley (102), Castle Howard (82) and Poppleton (69). Wheldrake Ings and the Derwent Valley is the best reported in our recording area which would be expected due to its importance as a National Nature Reserve RAMSAR site. Castle Howard although watched specifically for birds often produces records that are seen on a family day out or just in passing. Poppleton was a surprise but shows what three people can do on a local patch.

SE SQUARES	RECORDS	PERCENT
SE 53	35	2.57
SE63	218	15.98
SE 73	77	5.65
SE54	81	5.94
SE64	139	19.19
SE 74	269	19.72
SE 55	140	10.26
SE65	127	9.31
SE 75	33	2.42
SE 56	10	.73
SE 66	9	.66
SE 76	12	.88
SE 57	104	7.62
SE67	24	1.76
SE 77	86	6.30

100.00

Table: 2 Number of records per SE Square

Table 2 shows a breakdown of the individual SE squares as seen in the club recording area map at the front of the annual report. There is an expected bias for the area around York with SE54,64,74,55 and 65 being the most popular. In the south of the area SE63 which includes the area to the south of Selby, North Duffield Carrs, part of the Lower Derwent Valley and Skipwith Common was well watched however SE53 and 73 with the exception of Brayton Barff, Breighton Tip and Bubwith were under-watched.

A limited amount of observer coverage in the north of the area is confined to SE 57 (Brandsby, Newburgh Priory and Pond Head) and SE 77 (Castle Howard). The squares SE 56, 66, 76 and 67 accounted for only 55 records and SE 77 (excluding Castle Howard) could only add another 4. A former well watched site in SE 66 Strensall Common only produced four records a rather disturbing occurrence when one thinks that it is not to far from York and Skipwith Common produced 44 records although access is limited at Strensall.

It has to be said that some of the well watched sites are due on the whole to a sole

observer who has this as his\her local patch i.e. Brayton Barff and Dunnington Common. If they choose not to watch any more then these sites too could disappear from our reports.

The idea of this short report is to make members aware of the disproportionate coverage of our area and hope that they may find time during their bird watching trips to perhaps visit one of the under recorded areas once or twice a year so that we are able to build up a much fuller picture of the species that live, breed and visit these.

CLASSIFIED UST

The sequence and scientific nomenclature used is that of Voous K. H., *List of Recent Holarctic Bird Species (1913 and 1977)* B.O.U. 1977.

RED-THROATED DIVER *Gavia stellata*

Status: Scarce visitor

Two records of singles flying north in January in the Lower Derwent NNR:-one past Aughton on 2nd and another past East Cottingwith on 30th. Fifth and sixth records for the site.

LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Status: Resident/migrant breeder

Thirteen breeding pairs at Wheldrake Ings with at least seven broods totalling 18 young, two pairs double brooded at Dale Pond, Brandsby and also bred at Sturges Pond.

In the Lower Derwent NNR birds were seen regularly in the early part of the year mainly between East Cottingwith and Bubwith, with up to four in January, 15 in February and 13 in early March. Elsewhere singles at Rawcliffe Lake on 16th January and 22nd March, Moor Monkton on 31st January and 5th February with one on the River Ouse at Clifton Bridge on 27th.

Birds began to depart in July with the last young seen at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd August although a few adults remained on the river with up to five in August and September. Winter birds began to arrive in October with up to 14 from mid-month, up to seven in November and 10 in December. Elsewhere two juveniles were at Castle Howard on 21st August, three on 30th with two remaining until 6th September. Singles at Moor Monkton on 10th, 16th November with two on 22nd and 23rd. A single at Rawcliffe Lake from 2nd October until 12 December.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus*

Status: Resident/migrant breeder/passage visitor

Five pairs bred at Wheldrake Ings with one pair failing to hatch and the others producing 11 young with at least one pair raising two young to fledgling stage. They have made a determined effort to colonise here in recent years but this is the first time that young have fledged successfully. There appears to be a shortage of small fish of the correct size for the adult to feed small chicks. Three pairs bred at Castle Howard with broods of 3, 3 and 1 and single pairs at Rawcliffe Lake (four eggs were laid by 23rd May but only one left on 12th June and juvenile fledged), Dringhouses Pond, Sturges Pond and Wiganthorpe Pond. Pairs at Gilling Wood Lake (no breeding) and Pond Head (nesting outcome unknown) during breeding season.

An unusual mid-winter record of two in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR on 12th January. At Castle Howard two on 12th February increased to 12 the next day and remained at this number until 16 on 20th March increasing to twenty by 10th April. At Wheldrake Ings the first of the spring was on 11th March with three from the 15th increasing to two pairs by early April and five pairs by early May.

Twelve remained at Castle Howard on 14th September with 17 on 6th November and 15 on 8th December. A single immature was on the river Derwent from 28th September to end of October with singles on 25th November and 16th December.

RED-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps grisegena*

Status: Scarce visitor

In the Lower Derwent Valley NNR one at North Duffield Ings from 12th to 14th

January and one on the river at Wheldrake Ings on 18th November. Eight and ninth records for the site.

BLACK-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps nigricollis*

Status: Infrequent visitor/migrant breeder

The first bird arrived on 18th March and was seen again on 26th and 28th. A further seven arrived on 28th and next day all eight were displaying with some of them mating and nest building. By 12th April six pairs had been found and by late April seven. Emerging vegetation meant birds were difficult to find and the first young were seen on 12th May. Young Black-necked Grebes spend half their time underwater in dense, six foot tall vegetation. However by mid-June when the water levels drop they move into the ditches. Twenty four young were found, three broods of three, five broods of two and five broods of one. A pair had three newly hatched young on 11th July, being either a second brood or possibly a late arriving pair. Most birds had left by late July with the last two immatures seen on 6th August. This number represents one-third of the British breeding population.

MANX SHEARWATER *Puffinus puffinus*

Status: Scarce visitor

An exhausted bird was picked up on a garden path in York after heavy overnight rain on the unusual date of mid-July and later released at the coast. Sixth record for the area with the others being September 1983, February and May 1986, October 1990 and 1991.

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Status: Passage/winter visitor

A continued increase in records culminating in two pairs breeding - the first inland breeding in Yorkshire. Birds were seen in every month. A first winter bird on 1st and 29th January, and a sub-adult from 14th to 20th February. A first winter from 1st March to month end with a pair of adults from 12th to month end. A single adult on 1st April was joined by a mate from 10th and they were seen displaying regularly and occasionally copulating. A second pair arrived on 20th with a fifth bird seen on 26th. Birds were then seen regularly throughout the next three months. In September three immatures remained throughout on the river with another immature and adult at Loftsme Bridge on 25th. Two of the immatures remained throughout October with an adult and immature on 11th November and two immatures on 16th. Present throughout December with peaks of four on 17th and three on 27th. Elsewhere: Four were at Red House Res. from 2nd March to 29th April, singles at Castle Howard on 27th March, 27th May and 22nd December, with an immature at Cawood on 29th October.

BITTERN *Botaurus stellaris*

Status: Infrequent visitor

Single at Wheldrake Ings on 1st and 2nd January, a booming male from 7th to 12th May and one on 11th and 26th December.

The Lower Derwent Valley has been chosen as one of the sites for Project Bittern'. The site was chosen as being a promising area for re-growth of the dense reedbeds needed for breeding birds and last autumn £20,000 was spent in a scheme to stop the reedbeds from drying out.

The species has been an infrequent visitor to our area. The 1981 record was only the fourth for the area but was then recorded annually until 1984 with records from Askham Bog and Strensall Common as well as Lower Derwent Valley. Non appeared until 1989 when one was on Bielby Beck in late December then one in 1993 from January until early May. Could this bird conceivably be the 1994 bird returned?

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea* Status:

Resident breeder/winter visitor

A record 25 nests were occupied in April in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR with breeding also reported from Grilling (no counts) and a pair at Castle Howard raising two young was the first breeding record for this site. Despite good numbers often recorded in the north of the area these records are the first breeding noted (with the exception of a pair at Yearsley in 1983). Interestingly speculation to breeding in the north was made as long ago as the 1980 Annual Report (B. G. Pepper *et al*), but it may well be that the birds seen were from the colony at Sleightholmedale south of

Fadmoor just to the north of the recording area where up to twenty pairs nested.

In the Lower Derwent Valley NNR seen daily throughout the year with largest day counts being 11 in January, eight in February and 12 in March. The maximum count away from the heronry in April was 21. Numbers built up steadily as birds left the nests with larger counts of 37 on 28th June, 46 next day, 54 on 1st July, 49 on 17th and 37 on 21st. Numbers then fell as birds moved away with peak counts of 27 in August, 31 in September, 16 in October, six in November and ten in December.

Elsewhere: Few recorded in the early part of the year with two at Wharhill on 22nd March and one over Hubby on 18th April with two again at Wharhill on 25th May. Nine at Castle Howard on 9th August with 11 on 23rd, six at Barlow Grange on 21st and three at Bishopthorpe Bridge on 18th December. Reported irregularly from Moor Monkton.

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor* Status:
Resident breeder/winter visitor

In the Lower Derwent Valley NNR from the 24 pairs in May fourteen pairs laid a total of 90 eggs of which 13 pairs hatched 84 eggs from which 69 cygnets fledged. Five cygnets were fledged at Newburgh and the single cygnet fledged at Rawcliffe Lake had unfortunately to be taken in to care after swallowing a fishing hook. Pairs also reported from Dale Pond, Brandsby and Wiganthorpe Lake.

Monthly maxima in the early part of the year in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR were 38 in January, 64 in February and 67 in March. With the non-breeding heard reaching a peak of 44 in mid-April there was a record count of 90 birds. The non-breeding heard steadily declined to 21 at the end of May and 12 by the end of June and had all left by early July. The first two non-breeding birds returned from moulting on 20th September with five on 25th. Monthly maxima (breeders and non-breeders) at year end were 48 in September, 68 in October, 74 in November and 69 in December. Elsewhere numbers were few with four at Rawcliffe Lake on 3rd January with two on 16th. Singles at Castle Howard and Pond Head on 6th February, three immatures at Red House Res. on 10th April, singles at Castle Howard on 29th May with two on 18th August. A single there on 11th to 13th November with nine at Wiganthorpe on 17th. Two at Moor Monkton on 9th to 31st December. On the 24th the female had a large quantity of fishing nylon removed from her bill by RSPCA.

BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus bewickii*
Status: Winter/passage visitor

All records from the Lower Derwent Valley NNR. Continues to be very scarce. Up to 33 in January, 35 in February with eight on 1st March the last until a small group (c.5) were calling after dark at Bank Island on 26th.

First of the autumn were three very early birds flying south on 17th September then 17 flew south on 11th October with 13 south on 27th. Two adults arrived on 18th November and remained until month end. In December two daily to 5th with four next day, 23 on 14th and eight on 15th, then five from 17th to 25th and 13 from 26th to month end.

WHOOPER SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*
Status: Winter/passage visitor

With the exception of five on a slight flood at Moor Monkton on 15th November all records were from the Lower Derwent Valley NNR. Numbers were rather low in 1994. Twenty two adults throughout January and February and up to 17th March.

Then migrating parties of seven on 20th, 15 and 12 on 21st, nine on 22nd, seven on 23rd, eight on 24th and seven on 25th. Eleven birds from 7th to 11th April and four on 1st May.

Two early autumn migrants flew south on 23rd September. Forty-nine flew south in four flocks on 28th October with ten the next day. Eight adults on 16th November and 15 on 16th with 21 on 17th and 18th, eleven from 19th to 22nd, 16 from 23rd to 25th and 27 (including eleven immatures) from 26th to month end. Up to 27 regularly in December including a colour ringed bird, FTS, returning for its fourth consecutive year.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus*
Status: Passage/winter visitor

In the Lower Derwent Valley NNR one on New Years Day. Flocks of 36 and 40 flew south-east on 6th February, presumably to the Humber, when one also came in to roost. Two arrived on 20th March and remained to month end, 150 flew north on 27th. Three from 1st April increased to five from 4th and to seven from 15th to 1st May then five from 2nd to 6th with two staying until 12th.

A single on 24th July and 1st and 30th August. Four on 30th October. An excellent passage in November with 129 on 15th, 350 on 16th, 37 on 17th and 58 on 18th, a single from 27th November to 21st December with three from 22nd to year end. Elsewhere: Two at Castle Howard regularly to 27th February, 60 south-west over the city centre on 31 st January, an impressive 700 flew over Bootham Stray on 5th February and 100 over Osbaldwick on 19th. 40 north at Acaster Airfield on 4th March and 16 south at Skipwith Common on 19th October.

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons*

Status: Passage/winter visitor

In the Lower Derwent Valley NNR four adults and an immature present since November 1993 stayed until 13th March and another adult was present on 2nd January. In December, seven flew south on 10th with a single adult from 28th to year end. A single was at Castle Howard on 19th February.

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

Status: Resident breeder/feral species/winter visitor

34 Pairs nested in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR. Ten nests were checked and contained 78 eggs. The largest brood seen was of 13. A non-breeding herd of 60 was present throughout the breeding season. A count of breeding adults, young birds and non-breeding adults totalled 220 birds on 28th June.

Outside the breeding season monthly maxima were:

JAN	FEB	MAR	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	
840	450	225	621	723	207		490	620	416

Elsewhere: The only counts from Castle Howard were 346 on 15th January, 378 on 30th, 144 on 3rd April with 352 on 26th December. 23 on River Foss, city centre on 1 st January, up to seven were at Rawcliffe Lake from 3rd January to 15th May, nine at Pond Head on 18th March, eight at Red House Res. on 10th April, 410 flew south at Brandsby on 6th November with 50 at University 30th December.

SNOW GOOSE *Anser caervlescens* Status:

Scarce visitor possibly feral or escaped

In the Lower Derwent Valley NNR A white-phase bird seen from 20th April to 5th June. Two blue-phase birds on 29th and 30th June with two on 11th and 26th July considered to be hybrids possibly with Barnacle Goose Similarly a bird at Castle Howard on 27th March showed subtle markings inconsistent with this species and was thought a hybrid. A bird present here on 11th October.

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

Status: Resident breeder/feral species

A record 32 pairs laid 207 eggs with the first clutch found on 26th March and the first goslings on 22nd April in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR with a non-breeding herd of 59 present throughout the breeding season. A pair with seven young at Foss Island and now breeding in marginal habitats in the Brandsby area with 7prs (seven juvs) Dale Pond, 3 prs (eight juvs) at Stearsby Pond, 3prs at Wiganthorpe Pond, one pr (2 juvs) at Gilling Lake and present at Yearsley.

Monthly maxima outside the breeding season in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR were:

JAN	FEB	MAR	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
919	725	350	117	153	221	207	713	526

No counts this year from Castle Howard with the only other double figures counts being 40 at Red House Res. on 28th September, 33 there on 12th October and 12 at Rawcliffe Lake on 8th November.

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta bernicla*

Status: Passage visitor probably of feral origin

A single at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd May and was joined by a mate on 5th when both birds became territorial, one bird presumed to be the female disappeared in mid-month and was presumed to be on eggs. It failed to re-appear however and the male remained to 7th June. The only counts were 16 at the University on 29th March, 2 at Castle Howard on 20th May, 45 over Osbaldwick on 8th October and 36 at the university on 30th December.

SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

Status: Resident breeder with adults leaving for moult grounds in late June

Numbers continue to increase at all times of the year in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR

A record 56 pairs bred with the first young on 30th May with twelve broods totalling 69 seen. Most broods are missed as newly hatched young are usually taken on to the river where they travel downstream to the Humber Estuary. In January, seven on 1st increased steadily to 35 by month end, then up to 57 in February, 59 on 1st March increased to 86 by 27th by which time birds were holding territories. The last breeding adult was seen on 7th July with two young birds present till 9th and single to month end.

An odd record of six adults flying north on 12th August with another on 17th. Further single adults on 4th and 5th September, 22nd and 23rd October and 10th, 12th and 14th November then 14 on 16th, two on 17th and eight from 18th to month end. In December 16 on 1st, 18 on 11th increased steadily to 36 by month end. Few elsewhere with a male displaying at the University on 23rd March, two there on 18th September and 30th December with three on the river Ouse at Poppleton on 2nd.

MANDARIN *Aix galericulata*

Status: Escaped species usually staying for long periods

Four drakes flew into Wheldrake Ings on 14th December with a single at Thorganby on 17th.

WIGEON *Anas penelope*

Status: Casual breeder/winter visitor

In the Lower Derwent Valley NNR a female on nine eggs found on 19th April and the first brood of four on 12th May. Four pairs definitely bred rearing a record 20 young and another five pairs almost certainly bred also. Most breeding birds had dispersed in July but up to five were still seen regularly in August.

An excellent showing of this characteristic bird of the valley. In the early part of the year up to 10,350 in January, a record 11,650 in February (20th) and 9630 in March. Still 3,250 on 2nd April declining to 198 by 30th. 86 on 1st May declined by 31st to 31.

Birds returned in September with two on 10th, four on 14th, ten on 15th, 17 on 17th, 47 on 21st, 389 on 22nd and up to 300 regularly to month end. Then up to 1,300 in October, 5,600 in November and 7,300 in December.

Elsewhere: A pair at the University and on the Ouse at Poppleton on 29th March, one on Rawcliffe Lake on 10th October, five at Pond Head on 5th November and 11 at Castle Howard on 8th. Nine on the Ouse at Poppleton on 2nd December, two at Rawcliffe Lake on 3rd, four at Castle Howard on 27th and a pair at the University on 30th.

GADWALL *Anas strepera*

Status: Resident breeder/winter visitor

A total of 50 breeding pairs were located in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR and in an extended breeding season the first brood of 11 was seen on 12th May and the last newly hatched brood on 20th July.

Monthly maxima in the early part of the year was seven in January, 14 in February and 36 in March by which time breeding birds were arriving. A count of 94 on 17th April was a new record.

60 birds roosting on the pool at Wheldrake Ings on 21st July were mainly juveniles. An excellent breeding season no doubt accounted for the unprecedented numbers throughout autumn with up to 54 seen in August, up to 39 in September, seven in October, ten in November and 26 in December.

TEAL *Anas crecca*

Status: Resident breeder/winter visitor

A record year for this skulking little duck in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR. Breeding Teal are very shy and retiring and an estimated 40 pairs bred although very few hatched broods were seen. However a roost count of 150+ birds on Wheldrake pool on 21st July contained 80 fledged juveniles-probably the most young reared on a single sight in Yorkshire.

Huge numbers early in the year with up to 3,250 in January, 8,231 in February and 3,100 in March. Still 1,790 on 17th April declining to 205 by 30th.

In August, 155 on 1st increased to 274 on 30th probably reflecting a good breeding season. Numbers then increased steadily with up to 450 in September, 410 in October, 1,340 in November and 2,150 in December.

Elsewhere: few in the early months with the only double count figures in the autumn and winter with 22 at Castle Howard on 6th October increasing to 103 on 20th November then reducing to 64 by 27th December. 12 were at Wiganthorpe Lake on 24th October and 18 on the River Nidd at Moor Monkton on 15th November and 7 on 3rd December were the first at that site for five years.

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*

Status: Resident breeder/winter visitor

An estimated 500 pairs bred in the Lower Derwent NNR with the first birds on eggs by mid-march and the first young seen on 21st April and the last newly hatched brood on 28th July. Early season success was low with poor brood survival due to bad weather, but numerous hatched broods were seen on 20th July when there were 1,100 adults and fledged young.

Bred also at Foss Island where two pairs raised 4 young each, Castle Howard where the first brood, often, was seen on 17th April, Moor Monkton and Rawcliffe Lake although numerous pairs are known to breed on most small ponds and ditches throughout the area. A female nested in an Ash tree on Heslington Tilmire.

Although a common bird few counts were received from outside the Lower Derwent NNR with 40 on Burnholme Beck on 17th January, and 100+ at Castle Howard on 12th and 13th February. 70 on Ouse at Poppleton on 15th September. Numbers in the Lower Derwent NNR were 1,800 in January, 2,750 in February, and 1,750 in March. The April peak count of 1200 were probably breeding birds. 1,215 were present in August, 1,650 in September, 1,100 in October, 1,370 in November and 3,100 in December.

PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

Status: Casual breeder/winter visitor

All records from Lower Derwent NNR. Five pairs from early April stayed throughout the breeding season and four of these fledged 23 young in broods of seven, six, six and four - probably the highest number of young ever fledged from a single site in Britain. The fifth pair also bred and probably fledged a single young.

In the early part of the year up to 70 in January, a splendid 213 in February and 84 in March.

In Autumn, two on 11th September with singles on 17th, 22nd, 26th and 29th and on 14th October. Present regularly in November with peak of 28 on 16th. Up to 74 in December.

GARGANEY *Anas querquedula*

Status: Migrant breeder

Birds returned early this year in the Lower Derwent NNR with the first drake on 12th March then a pair on 15th, two pairs on 17th and a single on 31st. Birds arrived steadily to reach five pairs by the end of April and seven pairs by early May. Two pairs definitely bred with the first young, a brood of nine, seen on 14th June with another brood often a few days later. Four other pairs almost certainly bred and one more probably bred.

Up to 12 birds seen regularly in July. In August singles on 1st, 10th and 26th with two on 31st. Singles on 10th September and 17th, 20th, and 26th with the last on 5th and 6th October.

SHOVELER *Anas clypeata*

Status: Resident breeder/winter visitor

No records outside the Lower Derwent NNR this year. An excellent year with up to 76 in January, 113 in February and 121 in March. The monthly maxima in April of 235 on 17th comprised 104 pairs, 17 drakes and an incredibly early brood of ten ducklings. At least 117 pairs bred with the next brood seen on the more typical date of 31st May. A creche of 79 juveniles was on the pool at Wheldrake on 5th July and c 100 on the pool on 21st were predominantly juveniles also. In August up to 45, again many juveniles, up to 41 in September, 19 in October, 71 in November and 94 in December.

POCHARD *Aythya ferina*

Status: Resident breeder/winter visitor

Deep flooding in the early months in the Lower Derwent NNR always brings big numbers of Pochard and this year was no exception.

New Years Day saw 500 birds which increased rapidly to 2785 by 15th, 2400 still present on 1st February declined to 1160 by 20th. In March 1800 on 1st, 1350 on 13th, 507 on 20th and 91 on 30th. Up to 53 regularly in April, fifteen pairs stayed to breed, three broods totalling 13 young were seen but other broods were certainly missed with the first young seen on typically late date of 27th June. Numbers in autumn were typically low with just ones and twos until a small November influx brought 34 in mid-month and up to 48 in December. Small numbers reported from elsewhere included a hybrid drake at Castle Howard from 20th March to 31st May that looked a little like a Red-crested Pochard. On the last date the bird was showing signs of moulting into eclipse plumage.

RING-NECKED DUCK *Aythya collaris*

Status: Scarce winter/passage visitor

An adult drake at Wheldrake Ings on 11th March was presumably the bird at Wharfe Ings, Cawood on 7th and Fairburn Ings on 12th. Third record for this transatlantic duck but the first since 1983.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula* Status:

Resident breeder/winter visitor

The unusually large numbers in the Lower Derwent NNR in the early part of the year was not experienced at other sites with only 12 at Castle Howard on 12th and 13th February with 16 on 29th April. In the Lower Derwent NNR the monthly maxima of 450 in January, 211 in February and 395 in March. A record 90 pairs are thought to have bred with at least 30 broods seen totalling c. 140 ducklings: many more broods were missed. A prolonged breeding season with the first brood seen on 1st June and broods still hatching in late July with seven broods of day-old ducklings noted on 20th for instance. Birds moved out rapidly in July and August so that by late August only one or two were left. Then a small influx brought 27 birds on 25th September, then up to 22 in October, 21 in November and 14 in December. Elsewhere: 25 at Wiganthorpe on 13th October increased to 48 by 25th and up to 16 at Rawcliffe Lake in November and December.

SCAUP *Aythya marila*

Status: Passage/winter visitor

An interesting series of records from the Lower Derwent NNR. In January, three first year drakes, two ducks and an adult drake arrived on 23rd. They were joined by a further two adult drakes and a duck on 24th. Up to four birds remained to 19th February, on 20th eleven drakes were seen and birds were present to month end with at least 15 individuals present. Two drakes and a duck on 1st March increased to five drakes and a duck on 12th and 13th, a single drake remaining to month end. This bird remained at Wheldrake Ings throughout the summer, moulting into eclipse plumage in late June and finally left on 14th August. The bird was able to fly and appeared healthy and uninjured. This appears to be the first record of Scaup summering in Yorkshire.

In autumn a single duck present on the river from 18th November to year end with a drake on 24th December. Elsewhere: a drake at Red House Res. on 2nd March and 3 drakes and a duck at Pond Head on 5th November.

COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*

Status: Vagrant

Two drakes and a duck arrived at Wheldrake Ings from the north on 14th March and remained next day. A single female was still on Bank island on 16th.

VELVET SCOTER *Melanitta fusca*

Status: Vagrant

A drake with the three Common Scoter at Wheldrake Ings on 15th March was the first record for the site.

GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*

Status: Passage/winter visitor

Although reasonably common there are as usual no large numbers. In the Lower Derwent NNR early maxima were 17 in January, 22 in February, and 26 in March. Nineteen on 2nd April declined to 12 on 17th and five on 1st May then two on the 5th and 9th and a single female remaining until 24th. A very late record of a drake and a duck on 5th and 6th June.

Very scarce and late arriving in the autumn with two immature drakes on 6th November, four drakes on 16th, two immature drakes on 18th and single redhead on 27th. Then up to 12 regularly in December.

Elsewhere: Male on the Ouse at Ross Carrs on 17th January, 14 at Castle Howard on 28th with an adult and immature on 12th February with six on 13th and 2 drakes on Ouse at Poppleton on 9th March. Two females at Rawcliffe Lake on 4th October and a drake and duck on Ouse at Poppleton on 31st. A female at Rawcliffe lake from 13th November to year end. Two at Castle Howard on 8th December with 15 on 27th.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus senator*

Status: Passage/winter visitor

A drake and three red-heads on 8th April with a duck flying down river on 24th November in the Lower Derwent NNR.

GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser*

Status: Casual breeder/winter visitor

Continues to increase in the Lower Derwent NNR whereas numbers at Castle Howard have declined over the years.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	NOV	DEC
Lower Derwent	155	200+	113	59	11	47
Castle Howard	73	100	5	59		

Unseasonably 19 were at Wheldrake Ings on 10th September with seven at Castle Howard on 14th. Reported breeding along the river Rye in the north of the area and reported throughout the winter months from Moor Monkton, Pond Head, Poppleton, Redhouse Res., Rosscarrs and the University.

RUDDY DUCK *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Status: Migrant breeder

At last some signs that this pestilential little bird has stopped increasing in the Lower Derwent NNR. First of the year was a female on 5th and 6th February, then two drakes and a duck from 11th March to month end increasing steadily during April to the final breeding population of nine pairs. Only two broods were noted of one and

four with the first young bird on 12th June. Numbers declined steadily through July to the last immature on 2nd August.

However are they seeking new areas to conquer? A drake at Castle Howard from 20th May to 3rd June was seen to display on several occasions.

BLACK KITE *Milvus migrans*

Status: Vagrant

A bird being mobbed by crows above the pine wood at Brayton Barff on 29th April (DC).

Submitted to YNU and BBRC
(The first accepted record for the Y.O.C. area was on 19th May 1979 at Bubwith.)

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

Status: Passage visitor

Another record year at Wheldrake Ings. Single cream-crowns on 20th and 23rd April and two north on 29th. Several reports of singles during May with maxima of five on the 3rd and 21st and one north there on 5th June.

Two cream-crowns flew south on 8th September and a single on 9th.

With breeding now established at Blacktoft Sands it may only be a matter of time before a breeding attempt is made on the National Nature Reserve.

An interesting record of a second-summer male at Castle Howard on 29th April and again on 10th May (DR).

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

Status: Passage/winter visitor

One on the Tilmire, Heslington on 1st January (TC) and a male on 5th February at Wheldrake Ings.

At Wheldrake Ings there were males on 21st and 25th and a ring-tail on 27th October with a male on 13th and 15th November and a ring-tail on 7th December.

GOSHAWK *Accipiter gentilis*

Status: Passage visitor

Female at Wheldrake on 1st and 2nd January, with another there on 23rd (MA).

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

Status: Resident breeder

Almost daily records at Wheldrake. Singles reported throughout the Y.O.C. area, including suburban York. Birds seen taking a wide variety of prey. A pair displaying at Askham Bog. At least nine pairs breeding on or near Wheldrake Ings; a pair bred at York Water Works (TC). Female released unharmed from a Larson Trap at Heslington.

BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

Status: Passage visitor

One at Clifton Park on 7th March being mobbed by four corvids (MA). At Wheldrake Ings singles on 13th March, 3rd and 17th September, 15 and 19th October with three on 30th. One flew south on 9th and 10th December and one south at Slingsby on 28th (MJD).

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

Status: Passage visitor/has summered

Singles north at Wheldrake Ings on 1st, 9th, 10th and 23rd April, 3rd and 26th May and also two north on 26th. One on 20th June flying north-west over Wheldrake Wood was mobbed by a variety of species (BC).

Single over Foss Island on 24th April (MH) and a single over Bank Island on 12th May (MA).

A single at Ousehorpe for ten days from 22nd September and single at Lonsborough on the late date of 12th December with presumably the same bird at Wheldrake next day (SE).

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

Status: Resident breeder/winter visitor

Recorded throughout the year in all parts of the Y.O.C. area.

Six circling York Minster on 16th May (MA). Breeding at Claxton, York Water Works and Tilmire, with up to 21 pairs on Wheldrake NNR

Five over Bishops Wood, Selby on 12th July (DC). At Wheldrake Ings, 16 on 27th

November and 19 on 17th December.
A female took a large worm at Monk's Cross on 13th November (AH).

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*
Status: Passage/winter visitor

Males at Aughton on 4th January, East Cottingwith on 7th and around Bubwith/North Duffield/ Aughton area on 3rd, 5th and 12th. February. A small passage in March with males at Storwood on 1st, East Cottingwith 27th, two at Wheldrake Ings on 19th and one on 27th

First of the autumn was at Thornton on 23rd August. Two at Wheldrake Ings on 11th September, single at Crayke Bank on 16th, two at Wheldrake Ings on 29th and a single at Easingwold Golf Club on 30th.

At Wheldrake Ings, males on 3rd, 17th and 19th October and females on 23rd and 30th. Males on 16th and 26th November with females on 18th and 23rd. Single males on 2nd, 4th and 7th December with females on 1st, 14th and 22nd.

A female was present in a garden at Acomb for some 10 minutes on 28th December, where it attempted to take a Blackbird.

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*
Status. Summer visitor/casual breeder

A male chased feeding hirundines at Moor Monkton on 5th September (B&I McD)..

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus*
Status: Passage/winter visitor

All records of this duck/wader assassin were at Wheldrake Ings.

One on 2nd January and a male on 21st, 22nd and 29th. The small male seen in 1993 was recorded almost daily in February, with a female on 20th. The small male remained throughout March and was joined by another male from 17th to month end with a female also seen regularly. The small male remained until 21st April. Birds arrived back early in autumn with a male and a female on 17th September and a single on 30th. An immature on 1st October, the small male reappeared on 8th with a female on 28th. November records were a male on 16th and a female on 18th and 19th. In December, three were present throughout the month with four (two adult females, an adult male and an immature female) from 20th to year end.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa*
Status: Resident breeder

There were no reports of any large coveys.

Thought to be more common in the North of the area than Grey Partridge (PH).

Present in the breeding season at Forest Farm, Brayton Barff and several pairs in the Lower Derwent Valley.

Pair with 12 chicks at Acaster Airfield on 8th June (FWO); 13 at Acaster Airfield on 15th December.

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix*
Status: Resident breeder /declining

Again there were no reports of any large coveys.

At least 50 pairs bred in the Lower Derwent Valley.

Other pairs reported from Huby, Forest Farm, Rufforth and Melbourne, with breeding at Skewsby, Castle Howard, Easingwold, Tollerton, Terrington, Brayton Barff and Red House Reserve.

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*
Status: Summer visitor/breeds in good years

First male was calling at Thornton fillers on 30th April and 1st May. Male heard at Wheldrake Ings on 4th and 5th June, joined by two more on 7th with a female on 8th and 9th. A calling bird in a set-aside field near Whenby on four days in May (DRO). Further influx of five singing males on 25th June in Lower Derwent. Singles at East Cottingwith on 23rd July and Thornton on 10th August. Two at Harton on 30th August.

PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus*

Status: Resident breeder/many released on shooting estates

Probably because of the uncertain source of the majority of this very common bird very few records were submitted. Frequent road casualty throughout the area.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

Status: Resident breeder/winter/passage visitor

One or two calling regularly January - March in Lower Derwent with up to 21 calling at night April/May - 14 of these at Wheldrake Ings.

Other calling birds on 24th May at Thornton fillers and 26th June at Skipwith Common.

CORNCRAKE *Crex crex*

Status: Irregular passage migrant/possibly bred

Three singing males on 8th and 9th June at Wheldrake Ings and three birds were seen in the same area on 13th July.

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

Status: Resident breeder

Six on River Foss in the City on 1st January, two at Yearsley Moor 6th February, two at Huby on 10th and 10+ at Castle Howard on 12th and 13th. At Wheldrake Ings, 33 on 20th February and 41 on 13th March. Ten plus at Castle Howard on 24th April.

An estimated 160 pairs bred on the Lower Derwent. Breeding also at Moor Monkton, Newton on Ouse and four pairs at York Water Works.

In the Lower Derwent Valley there were counts of 102 on 17th July, 220 on 16th October, 145 on 16th November and 17th December.

COOT *Fulica atra*

Status. Resident breeder/winter visitor

Counts on the Lower Derwent of 336 in January, 474 in February and 676 in March with an estimated 330 pairs breeding, but as usual there were only single figure counts in the autumn to year's end.

At Castle Howard, 10+ birds on 12th and 13th February and also on 24th April.

Small counts received from suitable habitat throughout the area.

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*

Status: Summer breeder/passage visitor

Most records from the Lower Derwent NNR. Seven flew south on 1st January with singles seen on the 21st, 23rd, 24th and 29th. Two from 1st-3rd February, three from 4th-19th and four from the 20th to month end. During March numbers increased to 18 by the middle of the month with birds moving into breeding sites by the month end. Ten nesting pairs were found during the breeding season.

Elsewhere, six were noted at Red House Reservoir on 29th March with up to three birds during April and May. A pair present at Castle Howard Lake from 3rd April to 31st May and a pair bred at Naburn Sewage Works (DM)

The return passage through the Lower Derwent started in June increasing in July with 10 southbound birds on the 9th and a record 17 on 16th and 22nd. At Thorganby a pair still had unfledged young on 21st.

Elsewhere, parties of five to seven birds were seen flying west over Moor Monkton between 8 and 8.30pm every night from 11th July to 21st.

The last sighting in the Lower Derwent was thought to be on 17th August but unexpectedly there were further sightings at the end of the year - one bird on 18th November, three on 24th and two from 16th to 31st December.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*

Status: Casual breeder/passage visitor

Except for a single bird at York Water Works on 1st July all records are from the

Lower Derwent NNR.

Three there on 1st April with one staying to 5th, another flew south on 24th. Three pairs arrived at two sites on 5th May. Two of these pairs stayed to breed and fledged one chick each, the first chick hatching on 28th June. A single passage bird on 9th July. Last of the year was a single immature on 26th August, possibly one of the birds raised on the site.

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

Status: Passage visitor

Two flying south over North Duffield Ings on 23rd January was the first ever January record with one at North Duffield Carrs on 19th February with two there next day. Singles at Wheldrake Ings on 12th and 13th March with two there on 14th and one at Bank Island on 27th and on 1st April. Eight at Wheldrake on 8th May and one there on 16th September ended a rather poor showing. Elsewhere, three over Cattal 1st January (PH).

GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

Status: Passage/winter visitor

The largest concentrations were again recorded in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR. Monthly counts were:-

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	JUL	AUG	OCT	NOV	DEC
2000	2500	3850	630	119	3700	643	310	3300

The last of the spring birds was on 20th April and the first autumn bird was one on 9th July.

Elsewhere, significant flocks were mainly in the second half of the year with 300 at Hollicar on 30th September, 400 at Challis Nurseries 27th October and 1000 on Dunnington Common on 18th December.

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

Status: Passage visitor

One at North Duffield on 19th and 20th February and a single at East Cottingwith on 20th March Two flew north over Wheldrake Ings on 22nd October.

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

Status: Resident, migrant breeder/winter, passage visitor

In the first quarter of the year maximum numbers recorded in the Lower Derwent NNR were:-

3,200 in January, 5,200 in February; 2,500 in March.

Other flocks recorded in January were 1000+ in the Shipton area, 450 at Easingwold, 250 at Sheriff Hutton and 200 at Bishopthorpe.

An estimated 250 pairs bred on the Lower Derwent NNR with the first completed clutch found on 19th April. In an extended season the first young were seen on 2nd May and the last newly hatched young on 21st July. Twelve pairs were on territory on the Tilmire (TC) and breeding confirmed at Wheldrake Woods, Moor Monkton and Naburn Sewage Works - at least one pair with three chicks seen on 8th May.

Post-breeding flocks were 39 on 14th June in the Lower Derwent increasing to 937 by 9th July.

Elsewhere 42 were recorded at Wigginton and 32 at Rawcliffe Lane in August.

In September large numbers of birds moved south through the Lower Derwent: 1,600 on 13th; 1,000 on 18th; 1,300 on 20th and 23rd with 3,500 moving north-west on the 25th.

Wintering flocks began to settle into the Lower Derwent Valley NNR in October with a peak of 3,700 on 28th increasing to 5,000+ in November and 7,400 in December. Elsewhere significant flocks were 1000 at Ampleforth in November and 3,000 on Dunnington Common in December.

KNOT *Calidris canutus*

Status: Scarce passage visitor

A good series of records in February at North Duffield Carrs with three on 19th, five on 20th and a single from 21st to 26th and from 1st to 16th March, 27th to 29th and again from 1st to 5th April.

SANDERLING *Calidris alba*

Status: Scarce passage visitor

Two with Dunlin at Thorganby on 13th March.

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*

Status: Scarce passage visitor

A single juvenile at Wheldrake Ings with three Dunlin on 22nd September.

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea*

Status: Infrequent passage visitor

A remarkable record of six on the banks of the Ouse at Poppleton on 14th August (PW). Interestingly away from the usual wader sites and makes one wonder what is missed along other water courses in the area.

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*

Status: Passage/winter visitor

An outstanding year in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR with up to 53 in January then a truly astonishing influx with 50 on 1st February increasing to 200 on 25th, 85 on 19th and 1,239 on 20th, numbers then declined to 110 on 1st March, 403 on 5th and then a staggering 2,326 on 12th with 1,950 on 13th, 1,780 on 20th and 1000+ to month end. In April still 820 on 17th declining to 520 on 20th, 310 on 30th, 207 on 1st May, 47 on 15th and two on 25th. A single on 25th and 26th June.

One flew south on 25th July. In August, two on 15th, three on 16th, three on 28th, five on 29th and three on 30th and 31st. In September, five from 1st to 5th, three on 6th, five on 15th, nine on 16th, seven on 20th and three on 22nd. One from 1st to 14th October, two from 15th to 24th with a single to month end. One from 1st to 4th November with 46 on 16th, 246 on 17th and 37 from 20th to month end. In December, present throughout with maximum of 271.

The only other record is of one at Castle Howard on 3rd May.

RUFF *Philomachus pugnax*

Status: Casual breeder/winter, passage visitor

All records are from the Lower Derwent Valley NNR.

An excellent year with up to 131 in January, 88 in February and 128 in March. Up to 31 Ruff and 27 Reeve were lekking during April and early May. Proof of successful breeding, for the second year running, came on 2nd July when three newly fledged juveniles were seen with two females and seven males.

As usual rather few records in early autumn. In August, one to three from 15th to month end (21 bird days) and one to four throughout September (37 bird days). Four on 26th October, one on 29th and seven on 31st. In November, seven on 1st increased to 62 on 11th, 101 on 16th, 107 on 19th and a staggering 166 on 26th with 61 from 27th to month end. Up to 70 regularly in December with 89 on 17th the peak count.

JACK SNIBE *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Status: Passage/winter visitor

One at Seavy Carr on 17th February and one at Wheldrake Ings from 1st to 17th April,

An excellent autumn showing. At Wheldrake Ings, three from 4th to 22nd October with four from 23rd to month end. One at Seavy Carr on 21st October. In November, two at Wheldrake Ings from 1st to 10th.

Elsewhere, a single bird at York Water Works on 28th October.

SNIBE *Gallinago gallinago*

Status: Resident/migrant breeder/passage visitor

The first drumming bird noted in the Lower Derwent was on 21st March. In a protracted breeding season a record 210 drumming birds were present. The first clutch was found on 19th April and the last full clutch was located on 11th July.

Early year counts close to the Reserve were, 300 in January, an excellent 451 in February and 250 in March. Two hundred were at Bank Island on 19th April and 150 on Wheldrake Ings on 20th.

On 9th July 340 birds were present at Wheldrake Ings, presumably many of these were recently fledged juveniles. Autumn flocks were 50 in August, 120 in September, 300 in November and 310 in December.

Elsewhere, drumming birds were noted at Strensall Common and at Gilling with four at Tilmire.

After a heavy snow fall in February a single bird resorted to feeding in a garden at Moor Monkton.

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

Status: Resident breeder/winter visitor

Roding birds were noted at Biggin, Coxford Golf Club, Brayton Barff, Skipwith, Haxby Common, Strensall Common, Fulford Golf Club, Bishops Wood, Easingwold Golf Club, Ampleforth and Yearsley.

Breeding was confirmed at Brandsby High Wood and Stutton in the Lower Derwent. Up to four were at Thornton Ellers in January with two there in February. The only other records in the first quarter of the year were singles at Stubb Wood in January and February. There were singles at Naburn Sewage Works in May and on the Ings at Poppleton in July.

Wintering birds were one at Thornton Ellers on 5th October with three there on 27th November and up to five in December. One was flushed on Skipwith Common on 6th December.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

Status: Casual breeder/passage visitor

All records came from the Lower Derwent Valley NNR where once again breeding was attempted but appeared to fail.

An early arrival this year with one on 6th February and three from 10th to 15th. In March, one on 10th, 19th and from 26th to month end.

A pair from 1st April to 30th May were noted displaying and copulating and are thought to have failed during incubation. Two further pairs were present from 22nd April to 7th May and displayed but moved on.

An excellent spring passage of Icelandic birds included eight on 16th April, 26 on 21st, 28 on 22nd, 118 on 28th and 15 on 30th (204 bird days).

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*

Status: Passage visitor

One on 10th March, four on 13th, one on 18th and two on 26th were the only records, again from the Lower Derwent Valley NNR.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

Status: Passage visitor

The first of the spring were three on 11th April with up to four daily to 21st then successive maxima of 39 on 22nd, 90 on 24th, 112 on 25th and 28th and 117 on 30th (816 bird days). A further 800 bird days in May with 121 on 2nd, 137 on 3rd (a new record), 127 on 5th and the last a single on 14th. The spring roost totalled 1616 bird days, almost double the previous record.

First of the autumn were three on 17th July then seven on 21st, 17 on 22nd when at least a further 50 birds moved through after dark, nine on 23rd and singles on 25th, 27th and 29th with two on 31st. Two on 1st August, four on 2nd, three on 4th and two on 19th.

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*

Status: Resident breeder/passage, winter visitor

In January lower numbers than usual were recorded on the Lower Derwent NNR with just 21 on 1st and one on 30th, increasing to 26 regularly in February. Numbers

continued to increase in March with 57 on 1st, 140 on 4th, 210 on 9th to a maximum of 298 on 13th.

A record 73 pairs bred on the Reserve with eight more pairs on nearby arable land.

The first newly hatched chicks were seen on 15th May.

Post-breeding flocks there reached a maximum of 27 on 25th June, decreasing through July and August. Numbers remained low until November when up to 31 were seen daily, falling again in December to a maximum of 11.

Elsewhere, pairs were recorded in the breeding season at Elvington Airfield, Moreby Wood, Stillingfleet, Strensall Common, Wass, Rufforth and Moor Monkton where chicks were seen on 16th June.

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*

Status: Infrequent passage visitor

A poor year with only one record of a single bird seen from the Geoff Smith Hide at Wheldrake Ings on 12th August (MA).

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*

Status: Resident breeder/passage, winter visitor

With the exception of a single at Naburn Sewage Works on 1st May and two pairs on territory at Tilmire during the breeding season all records were from the Derwent with up to 73 in January, 91 in February and 132 in March.

A record 130 pairs bred with the first full clutch seen 24th April and the first chicks on 21st May; birds were still on eggs on 19th June with two unfledged broods still running around at the end of July. Up to 70 birds were still present in early July but most had left by 20th.

Singles on 22nd and 28th September. One on 22nd October, four on 27th, one on 28th and three on 31st. Wintering birds began to arrive in November with three on 11th increasing to 21 on 16th and 31 on 26th with 53 next day. Numbers continued to increase in December with 102 on 19th as maximum.

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

Status: Passage visitor

Most reports were from the Lower Derwent NNR with the now usual early winter records reporting singles on 7th January, from 4th to 19th February and on 29th March. Four flew north on 11th April, one on 2nd May. A very poor passage in July with one on 6th and two on 9th. Numbers picked up well in August with two on 5th, three from 15th to 24th, seven on 25th to 29th and four on 30th and 31st. Four from 1st to 5th September with two from 6th to 15th with a single remaining until 25th.

A single at Melbourne on 3rd August.

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

Status: Passage/winter visitor

A slight spring passage saw singles throughout February, two on 13th March and singles at the end of the month, up to two during April and odd sightings in May - all from the favoured Pocklington Canal, Melbourne and Wheldrake Ings areas.

Autumn passage was more impressive with the first bird on 4th July, increasing to nine by the end of the month. Peak passage was during August with up to five daily, 14 on the 7th up to a maximum of 18 on 25th. Up to seven were seen regularly in September, up to nine in October, eight in November and four in December. Four at Melbourne on 19th August increased to 8 by 24th with 8 on 2nd September. Elsewhere, two were seen on the Ouse at Poppleton on 5th August and a single at the same location on 23rd December (Kh.P). Two were recorded at Castle Howard on 16th August.

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*

Status: Infrequent passage visitor

Mainly singles, all recorded in the Lower Derwent NNR.

One on 26th April, two on 5th May and a single from 6th to 9th. A late single from 1st to 6th June.

In the autumn, singles on 23rd July and 5th, 15th and 17th August.

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos* Status:
Occasional migrant breeder/passage visitor

The first bird of the spring was at Castle Howard on 24th April with three on 29th; up to three seen regularly at the same location during May. Singles were reported in May from Poppleton, Naburn Sewage Works, Rawcliffe Lake and the Lower Derwent where three were present on 24th.

Singles were seen at Rawcliffe Lake on 19th June and 10th July and at Poppleton on 22nd and again on 11th and 24th August. A single was on the Nidd at Moor Monkton on 5th September.

Meanwhile in the Lower Derwent NNR the first returning birds were on 2nd August with three from 7th to 9th. The last bird at this site was on 24th September.

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*
Status: Infrequent passage visitor

One flew over Wheldrake on 23rd April.

LITTLE GULL *LARUS minutus*
Status: Annual spring visitor

In April in the Lower Derwent NNR a first-winter on 1st, two second-summers on 2nd, an adult on 4th and two adults on 23rd. In May, single first-summers on 8th, 10th and 20th with two first-summers on 25th.

BLACK-HEADED GULL *LARUS ridibundus*
Status: Resident breeder/winter visitor

The larger counts in the Lower Derwent NNR during the early part of the year were 17,000 on 12th January with 55,000 on 20th, 30,000 on 21st: 20,000 on 4th February and early March, declining to 5,000 by the month end.

Numerous three figure counts were recovered throughout the area with 950+ at Castle Howard Lake on 13th February being the highest.

Bred in the Lower Derwent as usual but no records from elsewhere.

In August roost movements towards the Humber began every evening with up to 200 birds. By October increased markedly with 3,200 on the 25th and around 2,000 every evening in November. In December 2,000 roosted at Wheldrake and 2,950 at Thorganby.

The first birds returning to wintering feeding areas were 11 adults and two juveniles at Osbaldwick Sportsfield on 15th July.

COMMON GULL *Larus canus*
Status: Passage/winter visitor

The Lower Derwent NNR saw the largest roosts in the area with 5,000 most evenings in January and 15,000 on 20th. Up to 12,000 regularly in February with still good numbers in March - 6,500 on the 1st and 4,200 on 29th.

There were fewer records and smaller numbers recorded elsewhere in the area with 200+ at Castle Howard in February the highest number in the early part of the year. Returning birds were first noted at Osbaldwick Playing Fields on 14th July and there were 600 at Oswaldkirk on 14th August.

In the Lower Derwent only small numbers were recorded through June and July with up to 30 moving south daily at dusk in August and September. Numbers increased in October to a maximum of 170 on 20th. Up to 300 daily in December moved south at dusk with up to 100 roosting.

LESSER BLACK BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*
Status: Passage/winter visitor

In the Lower Derwent NNR the first bird of the year was on 11th March with up to seven daily thereafter. Spring passage continued through April and May with up to 17 birds daily and 10 daily in June. Birds were scarce at this site during July and early

August when 21 were recorded on 26th and 31 on 30th. Steady records continued in September with up to 10 birds and a large flock of 73 on 18th. Up to seven present almost daily in December.

Birds showing characteristics of the race *L.f. fuscus* regularly in March and two on 3rd December.

The only other records submitted was for singles at Rawcliffe Lake on 26th March and 1st, 10th and 25th of August.

HERRING GULL *Larus*

argentatus Status: Passage/winter visitor

Again under recorded. Apart from 10 reported at Castle Howard Lake on 12th and 13th February all records are from the Lower Derwent NNR where up to 71 were present in January, 53 in February, 20 in March and 27 in April. A poor winter showing.

A large dark-backed Northern type bird was noted on 5th April and a leucistic second-winter.

As usual scarce during the summer months until 14 on 13th August and 21 on 26th. Then only odd singles until December with up to 27 present almost daily.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*

Status: Passage/winter visitor

Very poor numbers this year with up to 96 in the Lower Derwent in January, 40 in February, only five in March then up to 62 in April, with six at East Cottingwith on 24th and only records of singles from May to August.

Low numbers present at Wheldrake Ings during September and October increasing rapidly in December with up to 98 almost daily.

KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*

Status: Passage/winter visitor

On 25th January a flock of 31 arrived at Wheldrake Ings during gale-force westerlies with heavy rain - the largest flock recorded in the area. One flew north on 14th March and another came in to roost on 27th.

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

Status: Passage visitor/casual breeder

The first bird was at Wheldrake Ings on 9th May with singles at Castle Howard on 13th and 23rd. Five birds flew north over the Ouse at Cawood on 22nd (DC) and two on the Ouse at Poppleton on 22nd July.

Single immature flew south at Wheldrake Ings on 17th and 18th September.

'COMMIC TERN' *Sterna hirundo/paradisaea*

Were reported from central York on 3rd May and two on the Ouse at Poppleton on 1st July.

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea*

Status: Passage visitor

In a poor year two remarkable passages saw a massive 79 north-west at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd April with 14 north-east on 25th. Three at the same site on 15th May.

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger*

Birds were restricted to the Lower Derwent NNR with two on 23rd April, two on 2nd May and 11 on 3rd.

A poor passage in September with five immatures on 15th, one on 24th and two the

next day.

Deletion from 1993 report

WHITE-WINGED BLACK TERN *Chlidonias leucopterus*

Unfortunately this species was not submitted to BBRC despite the statement that it was when submitted by the observer.

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*

Status: Resident breeder

A good breeding season in the Lower Derwent, with about 60 pairs in the area. Elsewhere, several pairs nested in nest boxes at York Water Works (TC), and pairs were recorded in the Bransby area.

Other records in the breeding season came from Fulford (Germany Beck), Newton-on-Ouse, Strensall and Poppleton.

The only large winter flocks recorded were in the Lower Derwent with 100+ on 18th December and 150 on 28th.

WOOD PIGEON *Columba palumbus*

Status: Resident breeder

In the early part of the year, large flocks were recorded at Poppleton (100+ on 17th January) and Castle Howard (600 on 13th February). In the Lower Derwent, some 1,600 birds flew West on 19th January. In March, 30 birds were present at Malton Lane on 13th and 40 at Warhill on 22nd.

The only large count later in the year was at Thornton Ellers, where 1,500 birds roosted on 1st December.

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

Status: Resident breeder

Breeding was reported from many parts of the area. Earliest displays were noted in Osbaldwick on 1st February (I&RT) and the latest at Bransby on 21st October (PH). Small colonies were noted in many villages in the area, including Hessay, Murton, Newton on Ouse, and Poppleton.

Up to 20 birds visited a garden at Huby between 27th January and 15th February. Elsewhere, there were counts of 21 at Murton on 27th April, 80+ at Poppleton on 17th August, where 70+ birds were also recorded on 23rd November.

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*

Status: Migrant breeder/passage visitor

The first record was from the Lower Derwent on 24th April, then no records from that site until 19th May. A single bird was at Howsham Wood on 8th May, with two at Poppleton playing fields on 11th when a single also seen flying at Newton Kyme. Other records came from Gilling on 15th May, Bubwith (Geoff Smith Memorial Hide) on 2nd July and a pair at Youlton on 26th.

The only possible breeding records were from the Lower Derwent with six pairs found ("a poor breeding season"). A bird flew from a nest in hawthorn at Thornton Bridge, Pocklington Canal on 15th July (TC).

The last birds were two at Wheldrake Ings on 25th August

CUCKOO *Cuculus canons*

Status: Migrant breeder/passage visitor

The first records came from the Lower Derwent on 21st April with two birds at Copmanthorpe on 22nd (B&JP). By the end of the month birds had been recorded over most parts of the area, reaching Ampleforth on 25th.

A hepatic phase female was at Wheldrake Ings from 14th May. A rufous female has been recorded at this location every year since 1989 (with the exception of 1991) and it

is possible that it is the same bird.

Outside the Lower Derwent, birds were recorded at Acaster Malbis, Whenby, Poppleton, Newton on Ouse (2 birds), Howsham Wood, Stub Wood, Skipwith Common, Huby and Warthill. Three birds, including one female, were at Strensall on 22nd May, possibly prospecting the nests of Meadow Pipits (*Anthus pratensis*), where a single was heard calling between 3.45 and 4.15 am on 14th June.

The last adult was at the Lower Derwent Nature Reserve on 20th June, and the last juvenile at Stub Wood on 25th August (FO).

BARN OWL *Tyto alba*

Status: Resident breeder

Bred at Bransby Heights, Clifton Gate, Wiggington, Morby (in nest box -TC), Elvington, Skipwith, Stillington. Thornton, Ellerton, Storwood and Ousethorpe

A single was recorded screeching from an old beech tree at Clifton Park Rugby Club on 19th April (MA) and a pair was seen hunting round ponds at Wheldrake Lane on 1st October (TC). Other sightings, all of single birds, came from Latham, South Holme, Stamford Bridge (unfortunately dead, a road casualty), Dunnington, Tilmire, Oswaldkirk, Poppleton, Huby (in a garden), Newton and Bishop Wilton.

A three year BTO/HOT survey started in November 1994

Addition to 1993 Report: a single at Sutton-on-Forest on 5th October

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

Status: Resident breeder

Breeding was reported from Poppleton (where singles were regularly seen in the same ash tree), Hessay, Marton (Stillington) and Lower Derwent (11 pairs). Juveniles were also seen at Heslington, Askham Bryan (on 21st June) and Claxton (three on 11th July). An pair were seen (nesting?) in an oak tree at Thorganby on 3rd March, where a single at a nest hole on 2nd July.

Other sightings came from Coxwold, Eskrick - Stillingfleet (3 pairs each a mile apart), Warthill, Castle Howard, York By-pass (A19 slip road), Thornton Ellers and Rossmon (Melbourne area).

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

Status: Resident breeder

At least 16 pairs nested on or adjacent to the Lower Derwent Nature Reserve. Here, they were seen daily in August and September, and regularly in October, November and early December, suggesting a successful breeding season. In January, a bird roosted in the entrance to the old Tower Hide throughout the month. Seven birds were at Wheldrake Ings on 19th September and eight at Thornton Ellers on 17th October.

Other breeding records came from Wheldrake Woods, Naburn (Hull Road), Acomb Green (with one juvenile reared in a nest box) and Welburn Woods (one juvenile). At Muncastergate, a pair occupied a nest box by 10th April, with a well fledged chick seen on 18th June. A pair had fledged by late June and were still in the area and being fed by adults in late September. .

Other sightings came from Osbaldwick, Fulford (Heslington Lane), Huby, Tang Hall Lane, Warthill, Tilmire, Poppleton, Clementhorpe and Clifton Bridge. Birds were hooting around midday at Stub Wood on 23rd February, 18th, 20th and 30th August and a pair on 7th September (FO).

LONG EARED OWL *Asio otus*

Status: Casual breeder/winter visitor

No breeding records at all this year. The only sightings recorded were at Skipwith on 1st June and Seavy Carr on 27th November.

SHORT EARED OWL *Asia flammeus*

Status: Casual breeder/passage, winter visitor

Breeding was probably attempted at Lower Derwent Nature Reserve, where a pair was first noted on 7th May and remained until at least 21st May. The birds were strongly territorial and were seen displaying.

Other records from the Reserve were a single at North Duffield Carrs on 8th February and 18th March. In the autumn, early birds were seen on 11th and 22nd September, then singles on 11th, 19th, 22nd and 26th November and 2nd December.

Outside the Reserve, the only record was a single at Tilmire, first seen on 17th July and which remained for two weeks (TC).

NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Status: Migrant breeder

Very few records, the first being of two singing males on Skipwith Common on 24th June (JSH) and another two at the same location on 21st July. A worrying decline at this well known site or perhaps not well watched this year. Elsewhere, 3 pairs were recorded in the square SE57 - "probably under-recorded"

SWIFT *Apus apus*

Status: Migrant breeder/passage visitor

The first was a single at Bank Island, Lower Derwent on 25th April, with two there on 28th and seven on 30th and 30 on 2nd May. Over the next seven days, birds arrived over most of the southern part of the area. In the North, the first pair arrived at a Bransby nest site on 19th May, where seven pairs produced a total flock of 26, all departing by 8th August.

Large counts during the summer included 600 in the Lower Derwent on 8th and 11th June, 250 at Naburn Sewage Works on 16th and 100 at Bishop Wood on 12th July.

Dispersal flocks in August included 3000 at Dunnington and 200 at East Cottingwith. In the north, the last bird at Castle Howard was on 2nd September (JR) and in the Lower Derwent a single bird was seen on 25th.

KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

Status: Resident breeder

Nine pairs bred on the Lower Derwent Nature Reserve and sightings indicating breeding were recorded at York Water Works ("probably bred on Clifton Ings"), Sturges Pond, and Clifton Bridge (where a bird was seen carrying fish into a nest hole • R&GPG).

Other records during the breeding season came from Poppleton, Naburn Sewage Works, Albemerle Road (York), Castle Howard and on the river Nidd at Moor Monkton

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

Status: Resident breeder

More breeding records submitted than in the previous two years, with the first successful breeding reported from the Lower Derwent Nature Reserve at Thornton Ellers. Other confirmed breeding records came from Yearsley Forest and Heslington, where birds were seen at a nest site in the woods.

Other records came from Wheldrake Woods, Askham Bog, Brayton Barf (2 birds), Strensall Common, Gilling Woods, Skipwith Common, Stub Wood and Stillingfleet (Morby Wood - 2 birds).

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopus major*

Status: Resident breeder

Recorded widely throughout the area. Breeding reported from Lower Derwent Nature Reserve (seven pairs), Gilling (male, female and two juveniles visited a garden feeder), York Water Works, Heslington, Naburn Park and Stub Wood. At the latter site, a juvenile was seen being fed on the wing by an adult male on 19th June, whilst at the same site on 5th July, a juvenile was seen feeding by itself (FO).

On 1st June, play stopped at a cricket match in Clifton Park whilst everyone watched a

bird drumming on a tree by the score box! (MA).

Birds were reported to be common in squares SE56 & 57, where they were "persistent predators of small birds" (PH). Other sightings through the year came from Poppleton, Askham Bog, Dringhouses, Osbaldwick, Yearsley Moor, River Foss (Monk Bridge), Strensall Common and New Earswick.

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos minor*

Status: Resident breeder

Again few sightings this year. The only breeding record came from the Lower Derwent Nature Reserve, where one pair probably bred

Elsewhere, drumming birds were observed by Heworth golf course on 16th April and Bishopthorpe (River Ouse) on 8th May. Other sightings were at East Ness on 4th January, Arran Place York (in a tall ash tree) on 24th April, in the Claxton area on 30th April and at Seavy Carr on 27th November.

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

Status: Resident breeder/passage visitor

Flocks in the early part of the year included 80+ at Poppleton on 7th January, 100 at Ross Carrs on 17th and 10 at Warhill on 22nd March. Ten birds remained at Warhill from 22nd March up to mid-May.

The earliest song in the year was from 15 birds in the Lower Derwent Nature Reserve on 26th January, where 100 birds in an hour had flown west on 25th.

250 birds were estimated to have bred on the Reserve, whilst elsewhere, evidence of breeding was reported from Riccall, Strensall Common and Poppleton. Birds seen during the breeding season included 12 at Newton on Ouse (1st May) and a single in a garden at Huby on 16th July.

In the Autumn a strong westerly movement was noted in the Lower Derwent, starting with 50 birds on 12th September, 80 on 13th, 230 on 18th, 100 on 30th, 100 on 17th October, 220 on 25th and 60 on 27th.

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

Status: Migrant breeder/passage visitor

Another early arrival time, with the first three in the Lower Derwent on 16th March, only three days later than last year. A further two were at Bubwith on the 23rd and three reached Castle Howard on the 27th. By early April birds were widespread throughout the southern part of the area. 100 birds were recorded in the Lower Derwent on 29th March, building up to 200 on 1st April and 350 on the 24th. 20 were at Castle Howard on the 19th and ten at Poppleton on the 24th

Very few confirmed breeding reports were received. Seven pairs bred on the river bank at North Duffield Ings, and there was a small breeding colony at Moor Monkton at the confluence of the rivers Ouse and Nidd (IMc), River Rye at East Ness and at Salton.

Elsewhere, sightings were reported from Rufforth, Sturges Pond (Selby), York Water Works, Bishopthorpe, East Cottingham and York centre (Monk Bar, flying south).

At the end of the season, 300 birds passed through the Lower Derwent on 1st September, with the last birds in the area at that site on 4th October.

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica* Status:

Migrant breeder/passage visitor

A slightly earlier arrival this year with the first bird in the area in the Lower Derwent on 28th April and at Castle Howard on 31st (JW). Numbers built up by mid-April with 100+ birds in the Lower Derwent on 17th April and 150 on 20th. Other 'first arrivals' were at Naburn Sewage Works on 9th April, Poppleton and Clifton on 21st, Hessay on 22nd and Moor Monkton on 24th.

The only noteworthy reports during the breeding season were of an "all-white swallow" at Crayke, reported to JW on 16th August, (but this was not confirmed!) and a pair which bred in the Geoff Smith Memorial Hide at North Duffield - the third successive

year when this has been recorded.

A return passage of 1000 birds was noted in the Lower Derwent on 8th September and 2000 on the 18th. Young were still being fed by parents at Osbaldwick on the 15th (I&RT). The last birds in the area were a pair at a garden centre near Poppleton on 24th October (AH).

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbica*

Status: Migrant breeder/passage visitor

The first bird was at the Swantail Hide, Wheldrake Ings on 30th March (MA), but "numbers remained low" on the Reserve, with a maxima of 60 birds on 17th and 20th April. Elsewhere, early arrivals were reported at Rawcliffe Lake (22nd April), Castle Howard (24th), Hessay (28th), Dringhouses (30th) and Poppleton (1st May).

Few breeding reports were received, but counts during the season included 200 at Strensall Common on 22nd May and 500 at Naburn Sewage Works on 16th June.

In September, 2500 birds flew south through the Lower Derwent Nature Reserve, one of the largest movements ever recorded from that site. The last birds were 50 at Naburn on 7th October (B&JP).

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

Status: Migrant breeder/passage visitor

First arrivals recorded were two at Strensall Common on 12th May (MJD) - much later than the previous three years - with one at Bishop Wood on the following day.

Four pairs were reported to have bred in Wheldrake Woods, but Baryton Barff held no birds this year (DC). The largest counts came from Strensall Common, with eight singing males on 10th June and it is likely that breeding occurred here. There were no reports this year from the northern part of the area although usually common in the clear fell areas of forest plantations.

The last birds were two which roosted in the Lower Derwent Nature Reserve on 12th August, with a single the following day.

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

Status: Resident breeder/passage, winter visitor

Early year counts included 60 in stubble fields at Bielby on 16th January, 30 by Moreby Woods on 23rd and 50 at Wheldrake Ings on 18th March.

Breeding reported from Heslington, Tilmire, Clifton Ings, Elvington Airfield and the Lower Derwent (300 pairs, with a late full clutch on 13th July).

Movements in the Lower Derwent noted in September were 100 birds on 13th, 200 on 17th, 170 on 20th and 240 on 24th. This continued through October with 150+ birds counted on the 13th. The passage seems to have been a little more prolonged than in some previous years.

WATER PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta*

Status: Scarce passage visitor

Two records this year, both from the Lower Derwent. Single birds were at Thorganby on 22nd April and at Melbourne on 28th August (unusually early for autumn birds).

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*

Status: Migrant breeder/passage visitor

The first were four at Aughton on 11th April, with one in the Lower Derwent on the 17th, two on the 19th, four on the 20th, 11 on the 23rd, then seen daily. 80 pairs eventually bred in the valley.

There were few other reports, but pairs were seen at Sturges Pond, Poppleton, Brandsby and Warthill, and single birds at Naburn sewage works, Newton on Ouse, Clifton Lake and Copmanthorpe. Three juveniles were seen on the Ouse on 12th July. The last were four at Thorganby on 24th September.

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

Status: Resident, migrant breeder/passage, winter visitor

Seen singly near the centre of York on the Ouse throughout the year, where a pair were frequently seen with at least two young until October (RC). Two pairs bred on Pocklington Canal, with birds present in the Lower Derwent throughout the year, up to ten in October and nine in November.

Breeding was also noted in Gilling Village, on Sturges Pond, at Bransby Mill and Kirkham Abbey bridge.

Wintering birds were seen on the River Foss, Nunnington sewage works, Rowntree Park, Moor Monkton, Osbaldwick village (two present) and Tang Hall cycle track.

PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba*

Status: Resident breeder/passage, winter visitor

Winter flocks included 50 near Skipwith on 3rd January, 40 by the Ouse near Poppleton on 4th February, and 15 at Strensall sewage works on 20th March.

Counts at the Bank Island roost, Wheldrake, peaked on 210 on 18th March, following a movement of birds. Breeding in the Lower Derwent appeared to be as usual.

Post breeding concentrations of 80 noted at Melbourne on 30th August had increased to 178 on 3rd September with 100 on 29th. Four juveniles were seen on the Ouse at Poppleton, with two adults, and birds were also reported from Warthill and Sturges Pond in the breeding season.

Birds showing the characteristics of White Wagtail (*M.a. alba*) were seen in the Lower Derwent on 12th, 13th and 16th March.

DIPPER *Cinclus cinclus*

Status: Resident casual breeder

The only report was one on the Hovingham estate, near to the weir, on 23rd January (MA).

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Status: Resident breeder

A very common bird throughout the area, seen most days, numerous pairs breeding in the Lower Derwent, Gilling Woods, Warthill, Poppleton, Huby, and in every conceivable habitat round Bransby, amongst other places.

31 were counted at Brayton Barff on 19th March (DC). Five were counted in a kilometre square on 1st May and 12th June, at Newton on Ouse (RC).

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*

Status: Resident breeder/winter visitor

Seen and heard in all areas, including Poppleton, Huby, Elm Park, Osbaldwick, the Lower Derwent, and Bransby, where they were found in most suitable hedges. Song was noted throughout the year.

20 were counted on Brayton Barff on 19th March. Only one was counted in the kilometre square at Newton on Ouse on 1st May, but seven there on 12th June (RC)

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

Status: Resident breeder/winter visitor

Reported as seen daily or regularly from many areas, including the Lower Derwent, Huby, Sturges Pond, Warthill, Skipwith Common and Moor Monkton. 30 were counted at Brayton Barff on 19th March, and 10 in Howsham Wood on 8th May. Young were seen in Poppleton on July 20th.

What appeared to be a pair were observed in a garden in Osbaldwick on 3rd March about 18 inches apart, one displaying with head movements and quiet song. One bird was seen feeding from a peanut hanger suspended from a bird table in a garden in Heworth on 9th October.

NIGHTINGALE *Luscinia megarhynchos*

Resident: Rare passage migrant

The only report this year was from Brayton Barff, where one bird was singing on the old army camp from 30th April to 9th May (DC).

REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Status: Migrant breeder/passage visitor

The first reported was a male singing along the Derwent between the Tower Hide and the windpump, on 11th May, present to the 19th.

Other reports were from Skipwith Common; a male seen in Gilling Woods a number of times in May and June; a female at Moor Monkton on 30th July, and a female/immature at Harewood Whin, Rufforth, on 14th August.

The last was a female/immature on Wheldrake Ings on 25th September.

WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*

Status: Casual migrant breeder/passage visitor

The first was a male at East Ness on 26th April (JP). On Strensall Common, two males were seen 800 yards west of the railway crossing, and later in the season, two, possibly three (including free flying young?) were seen near the north west end of the MOD lane, suggesting that birds may have bred in the vicinity.

Other reports were from Skipwith Common, the Ouse near Poppleton, where two were seen on 13th September, and the Derwent Valley. Here, a pair were at Thornton on 2nd May, a male at Bank Island on 26th June, with one seen at Storwood on 9th September, also the 10th, with another at Aughton on 10th and three at Wheldrake Ings.

The last was at Thornton on 17th September.

STONECHAT *Saxicola torquata*

One was reported from East Ness in January, and a male seen in roadside gorse bushes at Strensall Common on 6th February. At East Cottingwith, a male was present from 29th January until 20th March, with a second male on the 19th and 20th February, and also a female at Wressle on the 20th.

There was a very unseasonable sighting of a male at Bank Island on 2nd June. The male returned to Wheldrake Ings on 17th October, and was present to the 26th with a female from the 18th to the 24th. The male then moved to East Cottingwith, and stayed there to the year end.

The only other report was of a juvenile male at Pond Head on 22nd October.

WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Status. Passage visitor/casual migrant breeder

The first of the Spring passage were a pair near the sewage tanks at Bank Island on 13th March (MA), also seen on the 27th, with a pair at East Cottingwith on the 30th, when there were four at Wheldrake Ings. One female was on the Ouse near Poppleton on 31st March, seen again on 24th April.

In the Derwent Valley in April, singles were on Bank Island on the 10th, the 11th at Thornton, with a pair at East Cottingwith on the 17th. In May, nine were seen on the 2nd, three on the 4th, and two on the 13th., also two were on Forest Farm, Warthill, on the 18th.

The return passage started on 27th August, with one at Thornton, also at Wheldrake Ings on 29th. Two were present on 8th September and singles on 14th, 19th and 29th.

RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus*

Status: Scarce passage migrant

Two females were seen at Byland Abbey on 16th April, with a male at Oswaldkirk on the 19th (JP). Two at Bank Island on 2nd October came in with an influx of Blackbirds.

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

Status: Resident breeder/passage, winter visitor

Common, resident, with many breeding reports, more being present in winter - 6 noted at one time in one garden at Huby, and 4 males seen in one tree in York at sunset on 2nd January. 38 were counted on Brayton Barff on 19th March (DC). Breeding sites included the top of a tit box in a garden in Huby; a Russian vine against a house in

Osballdwick (where two successive broods were raised), and an isolated tree in central York.

An influx was noted at Wheldrake Ings in the autumn, with 27 at Bank Island on the 2nd, 17 in the car park on the 5th, and 21 at Thornton fillers on the 8th Three were observed on Skipwith Common on 4th December to be feeding on fallen crab apples.

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

Status: Winter/passage visitor

Very large numbers were present in the Lower Derwent Valley in the early part of the year, peaking at 15,000 in January and 10,000 in February.

200 were at Long Marston on 1st January, 30 at Pond Head, and 1000 were reported from East Ness. 50 were at Poppleton on 23rd January, moving south-west. Seen almost daily in garden in Huby from 7th January to 17th February, with a maximum of 12 on 21st February. 25 were at Castle Howard on 13th February. 100 were at Poppleton on 23rd March, foraging, 30 plus on the Ouse near Poppleton on 29th March, still present on 13th April. 175 were on Acaster airfield on 31st March, showing a great variety of plumages, some with prominent light coloured rumps, and some with very light coloured heads (FWO). 30 at Bielby on 2nd April. In the Lower Derwent there were still 300 on 5th April, 270 on the 13th, and 60 on the 23rd. Following a possible sighting near the end of August, the first definite arrival was at Bubwith on 25th September. Numbers then built up in the Lower Derwent, but with totals much lower than the early part of the year. 22 were present on October 4th, 29 on the 5th, 120 on the 7th, 1000 plus on the 16th, 2100 on the 24th and 1600 on the 28th. Generally however they were scarce in November and December, but numbers peaked at 2100 on 17th December, with 1600 the next day.

Elsewhere, birds were noted in October in Poppleton and the Ouse; 50 flew south west over Appletree village on the 16th, there were 200 at Pond Head on the 22nd, and on the banks of the Nidd on the 24th, 1200 were seen indulging in a bathing frenzy with 300 Redwing (IM). Six were in Osballdwick on 8th November, and 100 plus along the Ouse on 2nd December.

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos* Status:

Resident breeder/passage, winter visitor

The first song recorded was on 1st February in Claxton. Birds were observed in Huby, central York, Stockton Lane (where 4 were seen at equal intervals in a half mile stretch); Dringhouses, Poppleton, Brayton Barff, Osballdwick, amongst other places. A few scattered pairs bred in the Lower Derwent.

Several were seen feeding young in Poppleton village on 9th June, where there appeared to be more here than in recent years (DA). A pair were feeding young in St Johns College on June 11th, and from 1st July a juvenile was seen regularly with an adult on Acomb Green.

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

Status: Winter/passage visitor

In the early part of the year, there were up to 5000 in the Lower Derwent Valley in January, with up to 4000 in February. 200 were present in Osballdwick in early January, with 100 at East Ness, 300 at Long Marston, and 30 at Monk Stray on the 18th, where there were 35 on the 29th. One seen in a garden at Acomb Green on 4th January was seen again on 12th February as a body without a head, a possible Sparrowhawk casualty (BC). The last was a single bird flying north in the Derwent Valley on 8th May.

As with Fieldfare and possibly Blackbird autumn numbers were much lower than normal. The first two were at Dringhouses on 22nd September (DM), with one at Wilberfoss on the 25th. On the same day there were 34 at Hagg Bridge, and from then on they were sighted daily in the Lower Derwent. 100 flew north west on 2nd October. Numbers were up to 800 by the month end. Birds were very scarce in

November and December, but there was an influx of 1200 on 17th December and 650 the next day.

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*
Status: Resident breeder/passage visitor

The first song was heard on 12th January, by Selby fire station (DC). 30 were seen at Castle Howard on 13th February. Breeding was noted at Acomb Green (where 2 young were raised), Newburgh, the Lower Derwent, and Askham Bog. At Newton on Ouse, 3 were counted in a kilometre square on 12th June; and 8 counted along the Ouse near Poppleton on the 20th. 47 were at Wheldrake Ings on 15th July, feeding on newly cut hay. In the Derwent Valley, small numbers were noted moving over in September, with ten on the 19th, 17 on the 20th, 21 on the 21st, and 8 on the 22nd. 17 were counted on 8th October. A flock of 24 was seen at Brandsby Heights from the 28th September (PH).

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia*
Status: Migrant breeder/passage visitor

The first was on Wheldrake Ings on 28th April. There were at least 6 singing males present during the breeding season, and one certainly bred, with the pair feeding young late in July.

Elsewhere, one was at Newburgh Priory on 6th May, one at Bishops Wood on the 7th, with two there on the 13th with one at Kelds, East Ness.

One at Melbourne on 20th June with the last two in passage at Thornton fillers on 29th August.

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*
Status: Migrant breeder/passage visitor

The first was on 20th April at Wheldrake Ings, with 41 there by the 28th and 58 on the 29th. Very large numbers bred, with 1000 singing males in the Lower Derwent valley, of which 200 were at Wheldrake Ings. Birds were still feeding young at the end of August.

Elsewhere, single birds seen in April at Elvington and on the Ouse, with birds on territory in Poppleton and Copmanthorpe in May. Ten were counted on the Selby canal in June, with birds also present on Sturges Pond. A juvenile was found dead in a garden at Poppleton on 6th August. The last was in the Lower Derwent on 17th September.

REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*
Status: Migrant breeder/passage visitor

The first was on 28th April on the Lower Derwent, with five on the 29th and 9 the next day. There were an estimated 100 breeding pairs on the site, with birds still incubating on 13th August, and still feeding young on the 26th.

Elsewhere, recorded from Sturges Pond, Castle Howard, the Ouse near Riccall, Skipwith Common, and Ross Carrs Ponds, where three were heard on 13th June, with five the same day on Selby Canal.

12 were still in the Lower Derwent on 23rd September, with 4 on 1st October, and 1 on the 7th.

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*
Status: Migrant breeder/passage visitor

First on 25th April at Woodhouse Farm, Rufforth (JSH), with one at North Duffield on the 26th and 1 on the Ouse at Poppleton on the 29th. A male was singing at Bank Island on the 30th. A male was on territory in Back Lane, Copmanthorpe, on the 30th, a pair being seen there on 2nd July, with a juvenile seen on the 31st. 2 were present on 1st May at Newton on Ouse in a kilometre square, but only 1 found on 12th June.

Three were at Brayton Barff on 9th May, with four in Bishops Wood on the 13th. 6 pairs bred in Wheldrake Ings/Bank Island, 3 pairs at Thornton Ellers, and a few scattered pairs elsewhere in the Lower Derwent. Around five were present on the Ouse between York and Bishopthorpe on 11th June, with a pair feeding fledged young. Two pairs bred at Dringhouses, and singing birds present in spring in Tang Hall.

Few seen in the north of the area, heard calling at Yearsley Bank and Terrington Flat Top only (PH). Birds were also reported from Sturges Pond, Moorlands and Harewood Whin, Rufforth.

The last was at Thornton Ellers on 1st October.

WHITETHROAT *Sylvia commtmis*
Status: Migrant breeder/passage visitor

The first was at Wheldrake Ings on 21st April, where they bred in good numbers. Single birds were also seen and heard in April in Poppleton; Woodhouse Farm, Rufforth; Gremmany Beck, Fulford; St Nicholas Fields, York; Acaster Malbis; Selby cycle Track, and Back Lane, Copmanthorpe, where 2 were on territory on the 30th. Two males were at Forest Farm, Warthill, on 4th May, and again on 18th. Pairs bred at Dringhouses and Moor Monlcton, and males were singing on the Ouse between York and Bishopthorpe; in Tang Hall; and at Sturges Pond. In the north of the area, the first nesting pair were seen on 28th May, and they were common there in all suitable hedgerows. At Bishops Wood 13 were present on 13th May, and on Outgang Lane on 28th June 10+ males and at least four females were counted in 200 yards. One was still singing on Acaster airfield on 30th July. The last was on 11th September at Wheldrake Ings .

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*
Status: Migrant breeder/passage visitor

The first was at Thornton Ellers on 21st April. It was an excellent breeding season in the Derwent Valley, with 18 pairs in the Bank Island/Wheldrake Ings area, 6 pairs at Thornton Ellers, and scattered pairs elsewhere.

One was at Forest Farm, Warthill, on 4th May, also on 10th June. On 8th May, one was recorded on the Ouse between York and Bishopthorpe, one singing in Howsham Wood, and one at Kirkham colliery. Seven were counted at Brayton Barff on 13th May, and 11 in Bishops Wood. A pair bred at Claxton. Single birds were also recorded from Sturges Pond, Strensall Common and Skelton. The last was on Wheldrake Ings on 17th September.

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*
Status: Migrant breeder/passage, winter visitor

One was thought to have over-wintered in a garden in York (DR), where in Muncastlegate a male was seen regularly on a bird-table between 14th January and 23rd March, with a female seen only on 19th January. A male was in a garden in Copmanthorpe on 5th February.

The first song was noted from Stubbs Wood on 20th April (FWO).

In the Lower Derwent, the first was on 21st April. 7 pairs bred in the Bank Island/Wheldrake Ings area, with 6 pairs at Thornton Ellers and scattered pairs elsewhere

In the north of the area, pairs bred in Newburgh, Brandsby Dale, Yearsley and Peel Wood.. Six were singing in Howsham Wood on 8th May, and 15 at Brayton Barff on the 13th, with 25 in Bishops Wood on the same day.

Birds were also seen in the breeding season at Poppleton, Elvington, Clifton, Copmanthorpe, York and Selby.

The last in the Lower Derwent was at Thornton Ellers on 30th October, but single birds were also seen in December at Dringhouses and Poppleton.

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*
Status: Migrant breeder/passage visitor

The only reports this year were two singing males at Wass on 29th April (JP), and a male displaying near the car park at Brayton Barff on 30th April and 1st May (DC)

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita* Status:
Migrant breeder/passage, winter visitor

One seen at Tang Hall on 15th January had probably overwintered (MJD), as had one heard calling on Tilmire on 18th February (TC), and one singing at Wheldrake Ings on 7th March. One was in a garden in Huby on 20th March, when another was seen on Strensall Common, heard singing on the 27th, and still singing on 15th July. Early song was also heard from Allerthorpe Common on 21st March, and Bubwith on the 23rd. Three birds at Wheldrake on 25th March were likely to be migrants. 3 males were in Buttercrambe Wood on 27th March, and one singing in Gilling Wood from 31st March. Song also reported in April from Brandsby, Skipwith Common, Stubbs Wood, Poppleton and Foss Island in York.

Breeding in the Lower Derwent was at a very low ebb, with only 2 pairs noted.

However, Brayton Barff had six to eight singing birds and Bishops Wood 18 on 13th May, an increase.

One was heard briefly in passage in Osbaldwick on 3rd October, and 3 at Bank Island on the 9th. No birds were seen in late winter.

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Status: Migrant breeder/passage visitor

The first was on 2nd April at Blackmoore, Brandsby (PH), with one at Poppleton on the 3rd, one at Sturges Pond on the 5th. Also on the 5th, two were in the Lower Derwent, with 23 on the 17th, 100 plus on the 23rd, the usual large numbers breeding. The main arrivals were around April 20th, with reports from Poppleton, Skipwith Common, the River Ouse near Bishophorpe, St Nicholas fields in York, and Copmanthorpe, where at least 4 were on territory on the 30th. On 8th May 12 were singing in Howsham Wood; on the 13th, 21 at Brayton Barff and 45 in Bishops Wood, and on the 22nd 20 counted in a 2 miles stretch on Strensall Common. The last was at Wheldrake Ings on 30th September.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regains*

Status: Resident breeder/passage, winter visitor

30 were counted in Bishops Wood on 7th January. On the Lower Derwent, one or two were present with tit flocks in the first three months. 10 were in Howsham Wood on 8th May. The first 4 returned to the Lower Derwent on 23rd September, and they were present in single figures to the year end.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*

Status: Migrant breeder/passage visitor

The first returning bird was at Wass on 29th April (JP) followed by a single at Burnholme on 10th May, seven at Brayton Barff on 13th, a pair at Brandsby Hall on 18th with a single at Warthill on the same day, one at Castle Howard on 20th and one in Skeldergate on 31st.

During June, singles at Poppleton, Copmanthorpe, Skeldergate (singing), Warthill, Appleton Roebuck and on eggs at Acaster Malbis.

In July, feeding in a garden at Claxton and a single at Huby.

Two feeding in the tops of oaks in Stubb Wood on 20th August and 14 in two family parties on 29th at Thornton Ellers.

Two again in the tops of oaks in Stubb Wood on 5th September and the last of the summer there on 10th (FWO).

Three pairs bred at Wheldrake Ings/Bank Island; three pairs on Thornton Ellers; also bred at Brayton Barff. Also recorded at Sturge's Pond and Gilling.

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Status: Casual migrant breeder/passage visitor

The first returning bird was a male seen at Wass on 29th April (JP).

On 3rd June, a male was on the bank of River Derwent at Wheldrake Ings.

This was the fifth record for the site (Lower Derwent NNR).

BEARDED TIT *Panurus biarmicus*

Status: Winter visitor

There were three in a reedbed at Wheldrake Ings on 16th November (Lower Derwent NNR).

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*

Status: Resident breeder

In the early months of the year there were two flock of over 20, one at Sutton on Derwent and one on Skipwith Common, with one to four at York Minster, Burnholme, Huby, Bishophorpe and Castle Howard.

There were five juveniles roosting at Wheldrake on 8th June and parties of 11 at Poppleton on 12th and 16 on 20th.

On 1st October there was a family party in a garden at Osbaldwick, five in City of York on 6th November and 12 in Stubb Wood on 11th; c20 in Rowntree Park on 18th December and four in Knavesmire Wood on 30th; winter flocks of c24 maximum were seen foraging around Brandsby.

Bred at Brayton Barff and were seen at Sturge's Ponds and throughout the year on the Lower Derwent NNR.

MARSH TIT *Parus palustris*

Status: Resident breeder

Four were on Yearsley Moor on 6th February. A single calling at Stubb Wood on 12th February and one singing there on 24th March, with five in Askham Bog on 27th. Three on Strensall Common on 27th May, a pair in Stubb Wood on 17th July and a family party there on 20th September (FWO). Four were at Pond Head on 22nd October. One at East Cottingwith on 21st December, two on Wheldrake Ings on 22nd and a single at Sutton on Derwent on 23rd.

Also seen during the autumn/winter in Gilling where one was a regular visitor to a bird feeder.

One or two pairs bred on Thornton Ellers.

WILLOW TIT *Parus montanus*

Status: Resident breeder

Two at Poppleton on 28th January and two in Askham Bog on 26th and 27th March. Two/three at Wheldrake on 7th October and a single at Poppleton on 12th. Also at Sturge's Pond, Gilling Woods (May/July) Osbaldwick (November) and all year on Lower Derwent NNR). The only breeding record from Brayton Barff.

COAL TIT *Parus ater*

Status: Resident breeder

Early in the year single birds were feeding regularly on nuts in Acomb. Eight were on Skipwith Common on 4th March, 13 on Brayton Barff on 19th, two at Warthill on 21st April and again on 27th. Four juveniles were in Poppleton on 13th June, three adults there on 9th November and a single in Knavesmire Wood on 30th December. Breeding was confirmed at Brayton Barff, in a nestbox in Fulford and six pairs in nest boxes in Wheldrake Woods.

Seen at Brandsby, Sturge's Pond, Gilling, Huby, Moor Monkton, Osbaldwick and outside the breeding season in roving tit locks on Lower Derwent NNR.

BLUE TIT *Parus caeruleus*

Status: Resident breeder/winter visitor

Six were in Huby on 17th March, 54 at Brayton Barff on 19th, three/four pairs at Warthill on 22nd and again on 31st. They were still there on 10th June and at Newton-on-Ouse ten were present on 12th. On 15th August milk bottles were being opened at Poppleton.

Breeding reported from Brayton Barff, Huby, and in the Lower Derwent NNR although no doubt breeds throughout the area.

Recorded at York Minster, Burnholme, Newton-on-Ouse, Sturge's Pond, Gilling and all year in Lower Derwent NNR.

GREAT TIT *Parus major*

Status: Resident breeder/winter visitor

Two males in Stockton Lane on 9th January, two males in Woodland Grove on 28th and five on Monk Stray in January. Ten plus on Skipwith Common on 4th March, 10 in a Huby garden on 17th, 30 at Brayton Barff on 19th. A single on 1st May at Newton-on-Ouse, four to six juveniles at Osbaldwick on 4th June and four at Newton-on-Ouse on 21th.

Seen at Sturge's Ponds, Gilling all year (six on garden feeder) and Poppleton. Bred at Brayton Barff and Lower Derwent NNR.

NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

Status: Resident breeder

Recorded in Buttercrambe Woods on 27th March, Castle Howard on 17th April, a singing male in Wheldrake Ings Car Park on 22nd, nest found in Brandsby on 23rd and the singing male still in the car park was the 6th record for the site (Lower Derwent NNR). Seen at Ampleforth on 7th May and one on Thorganby Ings on 20th (7th record for Lower Derwent NNR).

Calls were heard around Brandsby during spring.
Breeding was confirmed at Lodge Wood, Brandsby and Gilling where a pair had two juveniles.

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*
Status: Resident breeder

A single in a Huby garden on 7th January when there was one in Poppleton, one in Huby on 24th. Three were on Strensall Common on 11th February and one trying to feed up a concrete bus stop post in the village of Poppleton on 2nd March; four at Brayton Barff on 19th, six in Askham Bog on 27th and one in Huby Wood on 30th. Two in Poppleton on 24th April. Also seen at Sturge's Pond, Gilling and three nesting behind peeling bark on storm shelters at Easingwold Golf Course. Bred at Brayton Barff, three pairs at Thornton Ellers and down the lane at Wheldrake Ines.
Ings.

JAY *Garrulus glandarius*
Status: Resident breeder/passage, winter visitor

Have increased dramatically in recent years. Now seen regularly through the year. Three pairs present in breeding season and presumed bred in the Lower Derwent NNR.

A single at Pond Head on 1st January, one in Stubb Wood on 5th February, a pair in Huby Wood on 10th, one on Strensall Common on 27th and two taking peanuts from a feeder in Stubb Wood on 28th. Four at Brayton Barff on 19th March, four at Poppleton on 5th April and two flying south calling high over Micklegate on 20th. One on Strensall Common on 18th May, at Warthill on 25th; at Newton-on-Ouse on 12th June, on Strensall Common on 16th and a juvenile and two adults there at 15th July. Also seen at Sturge's Ponds, Gilling Wood and bred at Brayton Barff, Askham Bog and Wheldrake Woods.

MAGPIE *Pica pica*
Status: Resident breeder

Three on Monk Stray on 4th January, four in Heworth on 11th February, a single at Warthill on 27th April, two at Newton-on-Ouse on 1st May and one at Warthill on 18th. Juveniles at Poppleton on 14th June.

Bred at Brayton Barff, Askham Bar, Acomb, Castle Museum, two pairs Dringhouses and as usual on the Lower Derwent NNR. Seen at Sturge's Ponds and Huby.

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*
Status: Resident breeder

Eleven pairs bred at Thornton Ellers three pairs on the Tilmire and scattered pairs elsewhere.
100+ were at Poppleton on 4th January, 400 going to roost over Wheldrake Ings on 12th October and 110 on 4th December.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*
Status: Resident breeder

Counts over one hundred were:-
100+ at Poppleton on 7th January, 163 at Newton-on-Ouse on 1st May, 500 going to roost over Wheldrake on 12th October and 3000 at Caulkely Bank, Nunnington on 17th December.
One hundred and fifteen pairs bred at Newton-on-Ouse, five pairs in Bootham, five pairs on the Knavesmire, 10 pairs at Crockey Hill, 19 pairs at Murton, 60 pairs at Bolton Hall, 55 pairs at East Ness, 40 pairs at Brandsby Hall, 30 pairs at Stearsby, 16 pairs at Oswaldkirk and 12 pairs on Thornton Ellers.

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*
Status: Resident breeder/passage, winter visitor

Only significant reports received were of six at Newton-on-Ouse on 12th June and 17 on Wheldrake Ings on 4th December.

Two pairs bred on Thornton Ellers and in scattered pairs elsewhere on the Lower Derwent NNR.

One showing the characteristics of Hooded Crow (*C.c. comix*) at Rufforth Tip on 7th March.

CORVID sp

One thousand plus at Poppleton on 1st February.

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

Status: Resident breeder/passage, winter visitor

Very few records received this year.

The only large count made was one of 2,000+ at Poppleton on 17th January. Bred on Strensall Common, Brayton Barff and as usual on Lower Derwent NNR.

An albino was seen at Copmanthorpe on 30th July and 21st August.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

Status: Resident breeder

Small flocks between seven and 25 were reported from the Malton Road, Heworth, Newton-on-Ouse, Gilling, Poppleton, Huby and Osbaldwick. There were c50 in Huntington on 29th July and 100+ in Bad Bargain Lane on 11th August feeding on spilt barley. On the Lower Derwent NNR odd singles were noted throughout the year.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*

Status: Resident breeder/passage, winter visitor

Four hundred on Thornton Ellers on 3rd January, 50 at Naburn on 10th and 200 at East Cottingwith on 15th. About 45 at Poppleton on 9th February and a flock at Healaugh on 27th. Small flock in Bad Bargain Lane on 26th March and 20+ at Poppleton on 31st.

In the breeding season two were at Riccall on 16th April, three at Woodhouse Farm on 25th and on 14th May a pair feeding young in nest box in Askham Bryan. Three pairs bred at Dringhouses, were seen regularly in Huby and nested in garden box and bred as usual on Lower Derwent NNR.

Post-breeding flocks were:- ten in Appletree Village on 13th November, c50 in Claxton on 26th, 230 on Thornton Ellers on 27th, 50 on 24th December feeding in a weedy potato field.

Also recorded at Gilling, Sheriff Hutton and Sturge's Ponds.

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

Status: Resident breeder/passage, winter visitor

Two hundred at Garrowby on 30th January; 300 feeding in field of unharvested flax at Oswaldkirk on 20th February; 50+ at Poppleton on 2nd March, c200 at Allertorpe Common on 4th, c60 on Skipwith Common on 13th, 50 in Wheldrake Woods on 19th when there were 38 at Brayton Barff and c25 at Warthill on 22nd. Seventeen at Newton-on-Ouse on 1st May and six there on 12th June. Remarkably no reports from the back end of the year.

Also seen at Sturge's Ponds and Huby and bred at Brayton Barff. Many pairs on Lower Derwent NNR.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

Status: Winter/passage visitor

After several years of poor numbers a welcome return of this northern finch. In January, all month, 500 near Thornton and 30 at East Cottingwith. One hundred near Thornton Village on 23rd January, 110 on Bank Island on 28th, when 20 at Bubwith. A single at Poppleton on 1st February, 100 at Cawton on 4th, 600 at Oswaldkirk feeding on flax on 20th. Two hundred plus on Allertorpe Common on 4th March, 40 in Wheldrake Woods on 19th and 10 on Allertorpe Common on 27th. One at Red House Reservoir on 4th April, six on Dunnington Common on 9th and the last remaining flock was one of c50 at Claxton on 10th April.

The first returning birds were two at West Ness on 29th September (JP), followed by three at Wheldrake Ings on 26th October with one there on the 8th and on 17th

November. 33 at Wheldrake Ings on 28th December.

GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris*

Status: Resident breeder/passage, winter visitor

Significant records received were of 400 on Lower Derwent NNR on 28th January; 300 in a flax field at Oswaldkirk on 20th February; 100+ at Poppleton on 30th August; 340 on Lower Derwent NNR on 17th December and 370 there on 27th. Breeding reports came from Osbaldwick where a pair were feeding five juveniles on 10th June, Brayton Barff and Lower Derwent NNR.

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

Status: Resident breeder/passage, winter visitor

Significant records received were of 75 at Seavy Carr on 23rd January; 200 at Oswaldkirk feeding on Flax on 20th February; 30+ at Huby on 6th March, 200 in Wheldrake Woods on 19th.

Bred at Brayton Barff and "an excellent breeding season with 100 pairs nesting with good productivity" at Lower Derwent NNR.

A post-breeding flock of 80 was on the Lower Derwent NNR on 2nd June, 40 on Bank Island on 20th September, 60+ at Wilberfoss on 25th, 50 on Thornton Ellers on 30th; c10 feeding on Burdock heads in Stubb Wood on 19th November.

In an Acomb garden during February and March one to eight fed on or under the bird table. In July a nest was built on nearby Acomb Green using *Cineraria maritime* leaves and the following September young were in the garden (BC).

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*

Status: Passage, winter visitor

There were c20 feeding in larch (*Larix sp.*) at Pond Head on 1st January, two or three on nuts in Poppleton on 9th and 10th, c10 in Tanner Row, York feeding on alder (*Alnus sp.*) on 17th. Two in Clementhorpe also feeding on alder on 26th February; 25 at Brayton Barff on 16th April. Present in the early winter months in Brandsby, Huby and a maximum of 85 on Thornton Ellers.

At the end of the year the first flock noted was of 10 on Thornton Ellers on 26th September which had increased to 53 by the month end. Two were at Naburn Sewage Works on 7th October, 15 at Sturge's Ponds on 4th November, two on Rawcliffe Ings on 8th, 20 on Dunnington Common on 19th and 25 there on 8th December.

Also present in Brandsby, up to 20 in Gilling Woods and 20 daily in October increasing to 60 in December on Lower Derwent NNR.

LINNET *Carduelis cannabina*

Status: Resident breeder/passage, winter visitor

Twenty on Bank Island on 16th January; one singing at Osbaldwick in March and on Acaster Airfield on 6th April, c1 5 at Warthill on 11th and three males at Elm Park Estate on 24th. Three at Newton-on-Ouse on 1st May; 20+ at Poppleton on 10th June, six at Newton-on-Ouse on 12th and nine at York University on 26th. A female nest-building in a conifer at Acomb on 15th July.

Post-breeding flocks of 60+ were at Poppleton on 9th September, c50 at Acaster Airfield on 28th and 37 at Ellerton on 11th November. Bred at Brayton Barff and seen at Sturge's Ponds.

REDPOLL *Carduelis flammea*

Status. Passage/winter visitor

Parties of this attractive species seem to be on the decline

Up to 35 along the riverside at Wheldrake Ings during January; three on Strensall Common on 27th February.

Bred at Brayton Barff and two or three pairs bred in the car park at Wheldrake Ings In October 60 and in November 30 were on Wheldrake Ings. Also seen at Sturge's Ponds.

CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*

Status: Casual breeder/passage visitor

One on 27th March in Buttercrambe Woods and one in Bishop Wood on 12th July, with a possibility of two in a mixed flock of finches in a flax field south of Oswaldkirk on 3rd March.

Even worse than last year's disastrous showing.

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Status: Resident breeder/passage, winter visitor

There were 20 in Bishop Wood on 7th January, two males and one female in Stubb Wood on 8th, four in Naburn on 10th, a pair feeding on raspberry cane buds in Tang Hall Lane on 16th when there was one calling in Stubb Wood, four in Poppleton on 19th and seven there on 28th, 10 at Heslington on 29th and a male at Burnholme on 30th when there were five at Heworth Green. A pair on Skipwith Common on 4th March, five in Askham Bog on 26th and seven on Wheldrake Ings on 29th.

They bred in Brandsby, Brayton Barff with four pairs on Wheldrake Ings/Bank Island and four pairs on Thornton Ellers.

One was calling in Stubb Wood on 27th August. There were 16 at Melbourne on 15th October, two were on Wheldrake Ings on 24th and 15 on Tilmire on 29th. One calling in Stubb Wood on 30th November and three calling there on 17th December.

Also noted:- Three out of the breeding season in Brandsby; a flock of 10/15 in September/October at Sturge's Ponds; small numbers of pairs at Yearsley/Gilling, also in September up to 17 seen by the pool on Wheldrake Ings and up to eight in the car park area. In October, up to 30 in Wheldrake Ings/Bank Island area.

LAPLAND BUNTING *Calcarius lapponicus*

Status: Scarce winter visitor

One flew over Wheldrake Ings, circling and calling repeatedly in dense fog on 14th October.

First record for Lower Derwent NNR.

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Status: Scarce winter visitor

One on the scrape at North Duffield Carrs on 7th January.

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Status: Resident breeder/passage visitor

Up to 100 roosted in Lower Derwent NNR in February increasing to 250 in March. Eight were at York Water Works feeding station during the winter and three at Rawcliffe Lane until early May.

Bred at Claxton, Brayton Barff, three pairs at York Water Works and an estimate of 500 pairs on the Lower Derwent NNR.

Seen at Rawcliffe Lane from October to year end; 200 in October and 300 in November on the Lower Derwent NNR.

CORN BUNTING *Miliaria calandra*

Status: Resident breeder

43 on the canal bank at Melbourne on 23rd January; 11 at East Cottingwith on 6th February and c!2 on Easingwold Golf Course on 17th. Two at Elvington on 27th March.

In the breeding season singing birds were at Acaster Airfield on 6th April, Riccall on 16th, six between Bishop Wood and Thorpe Willoughby on 13th May, three at Poppleton on 17th June and one there on 5th July; 40-50 on the Lower Derwent NNR and at Naburn Lock, Thorganby Ings and Heslington.

Seen in the breeding season at Claxton, Moorlands and five at Riccall with one or two between 19th March and 1st July. Two pairs on Pocklington Airfield in May and at Sturge's Ponds.

Bred at Claxton and Brayton Barff

Later in the year 20 were at Newton Marsh on 17th November and 170 at Thornton on 27th.

There were unconfirmed reports of the following species:

Black-throated Diver
Slavonian Grebe

White-tailed Sea Eagle
Hobby

Bean Goose	Spotted Crake
Red-crested Pochard	Mediterranean Gull
Ferruginous Duck	Bee Eater
Red Kite	Cetti's Warbler
Montagu's Harrier	Firecrest
Goshawk	Red-breasted Flycatcher
Rough-legged Buzzard	Chough

If descriptions of these species are submitted and subsequently accepted they will appear in future reports.

ESCAPES/INTRODUCED

Bar-headed Goose *Anser*

indicus

An adult at Castle Howard on 9th, 16th, 23rd and 30th August and 2nd and 9th September (DR).

Black Swan *Cygnus tratus*

Resident throughout the year at Castle Howard

Reeve's Pheasant *Syrnaticus reevesii*

Three extremely tame males by the lakeside at Castle Howard on 27th March and never subsequently seen again (DR).

Cockatiel *Leptolophtis hollandicus*

One at Dunnington on 27th January.

Addition to 1993 Report

Eastern Rosella *Platycercus eximius*

Attracted to kitchen scraps on compost heap at Huby between 24th July and 22nd August.

REPORT ON RINGING IN THE YORK AREA DURING 1994

1994 was another successful year for ringers in the York area. A total of 5204 birds of 73 species were caught and ringed during the year, only a slight decrease from 1993 totals. Several new ringers are now operating in the area - Dave Turner working in the north of the area is providing useful data from around Nunnington and East Ness. We have already had birds caught between his sites and sites nearer York, showing movement through the area by birds on passage.

Steve Huddleston is now ringing in Acomb, concentrating on the wintering Starling population. He has already controlled two foreign ringed birds of which we are awaiting details.

Richard Ward-Smith continued his CES site near Thorp Arch for the seventh year in succession. We are now looking at all the data gathered over that period with a view to publication. Because the site has been worked for so long following strict operative guide-lines we are able to compare each year's data, taking into account other influences and hopefully should come up with some interesting results from the mountain of paperwork.

Chris Wright and Pete Reid together put on a very successful ringing demonstrate at the Wheldrake Ings open event during the summer. Although not many birds were ringed due to poor weather conditions over the weekend, the two admirably answered the many questions put to them and also demonstrated various catching methods to the many members of the public who attended.

The Black-headed Gull colony at Wheldrake had a very poor breeding season due to the high water levels, with many nests flooded. Only 7 young were ringed compared with 223 in 1993 - a huge reflection on the fledgling rate.

Elsewhere in the area there were mixed successes with nest boxes. Those in the north of the area did poorly due to the cold spring, whereas the two schemes near York did extremely well. From 32 new nest boxes put up in March in two local woods we had 19 broods of tits, all except one went on to fledge successfully. One particular pair of Blue Tits managed to raise 12 young to fledgling from 13 eggs. In another nest box a Blue Tit egg was found amongst a clutch of Great Tit eggs. The Great Tit parents did a great job and 6 Great Tits and 1 Blue Tit were eventually fledged from that box.

If we compare the species totals for 1993 and 1994 we notice certain changes. Some of these are due to a change in ringer effort i.e. wildfowl and hirundine numbers have increased due to ringers targeting those species. Other changes however are more indicative of the general situation with bird populations and are reflected on a national level.

Warbler numbers are down considerably, particularly Willow Warbler and Blackcap which both had bad seasons and I have already discussed the problems Black-headed Gulls faced locally in 1994.

On a more positive note, Tree Sparrows and Chaffinches both seem to be doing well in our area. The tendency for farmers to leave areas of stubble over the winter and to devote more land to set aside is obviously helping populations of these species.

We have had some interesting recoveries and controls during the year, but are still awaiting final details on the foreign ones; these will hopefully be published fully in next years report.

May I thank all the landowners who have given local ringers permission in one form or another during 1994, particularly English Nature and the Forestry Commission. I also thank all the observers who have given us details of sightings of ringed birds and all local ringers for supplying their annual totals so promptly.

Danae Murfitt. March 1995

RINGING TOTALS IN THE YORK AREA 1994

	Pre 1994	Adults Ringed	Pulli Ringed	Total Ringed	Grand Total
Black-necked Grebe	2	4	0	4	6
Mute Swan	69	41	0	41	110
Whooper Swan	1	0	0	0	1
Greylag Goose	12	13	0	13	25
Canada Goose	14	10	0	10	24
Shelduck	7	0	0	0	7
Wigeon	1	1	0	1	2
Teal	9	42	0	42	51
Garganey**	0	1	0	1	1
Mallard	71	32	0	32	103
Shoveler	4	0	0	0	4
Pochard	4	0	0	0	4
Sparrowhawk	65	5	4	9	74
Kestrel	52	0	1	1	53
Grey Partridge	3	0	0	0	3
Pheasant	3	0	0	0	3
Water Rail	2	0	0	0	2
Moorhen	79	43	0	43	122
Coot	20	1	0	1	21
Lapwing	95	0	5	5	100
Snipe	8	0	0	0	8
Woodcock	9	0	0	0	9
Curlew	8	0	0	0	8
Redshank	7	0	0	0	7
Green Sandpiper	3	0	0	0	3

Common Sand	1	0	0	0	1
Black-headed Gull	489	0	7	7	496
Common Gull	4	0	0	0	4
Herring Gull	1	0	0	0	1
Stock Dove	6	1	2	3	9
Wood Pigeon	82	2	0	2	84
Collared Dove	87	3	2	5	92
Turtle Dove	15	0	0	0	15
Cuckoo	10	0	0	0	10
Barn Owl	2	0	0	0	2
Tawny Owl	22	0	0	0	22
Little Owl	18	0	0	0	18
Long-eared Owl	1	0	0	0	1
Short Eared Owl	1	0	0	0	1
Nightjar	2	0	0	0	2
Swift	787	32	0	32	819
Kingfisher	82	3	0	3	85
Green Woodpecker	2	1	0	1	3
Gt.S. Woodpecker	45	10	0	10	55
Lr. S. Woodpecker	2	0	0	0	2
Skylark	24	0	0	0	24
Sand Martin	1141	1	0	1	1142
Swallow	4593	11	24	35	4628
House Martin	3123	42	47	89	3212
Tree Pipit	11	2	0	2	13
Meadow Pipit	92	0	0	0	92
Yellow Wagtail	144	0	0	0	144
Grey Wagtail	82	4	0	4	86
Pied Wagtail	875	101	0	101	976
Wren	1911	112	0	112	2023
Dunnock	3312	266	2	268	3580
Robin	2537	159	9	168	2705
Redstart	54	1	0	1	55
Whinchat	6	0	0	0	6
Stonechat	1	0	0	0	1
Blackbird	9069	329	6	334	9403
Fieldfare	255	35	0	35	290
Song Thrush	1721	46	0	46	1767
Redwing	1766	8	0	8	1774
Mistle Thrush	123	6	0	6	129
Grass Warbler	2	1	0	1	3
Sedge Warbler	668	32	0	32	700
Reed Warbler	410	22	0	22	432
Barred Warbler	1	0	0	0	1
Lesser Whitethroat	273	22	0	22	295
Whitethroat	1136	83	0	83	1219
Garden Warbler	180	13	0	13	193
Blackcap	1442	62	0	62	1504
Wood Warbler	2	0	0	0	2
Chiffchaff	179	13	0	13	192
Willow Warbler	3628	134	0	134	3762
Goldcrest	592	7	0	7	599
Firecrest	1	0	0	0	1
Spot. Flycatcher	289	2	4	6	295
Pied Flycatcher	12	0	5	5	17
Long-tailed Tit	1374	153	0	153	11527
Marsh Tit	72	5	0	5	77
Willow Tit	408	25	0	25	433
Coal Tit	359	70	45	115	474
Blue Tit	8178	822	129	951	9129
Great Tit	3163	364	114	478	3641
Nuthatch	4	0	0	0	4
Treecreeper	341	21	0	21	362
Jay	56	4	0	4	60
Magpie	49	0	0	0	49
Jackdaw	29	2	3	5	34
Rook	26	1	0	1	27
Carrion Crow	16	1	0	1	17

Starling	6517	532	0	532	7049
House Sparrow	1640	79	0	79	1719
Tree Sparrow	1223	179	12	191	1414
Chaffinch	6378	435	0	435	6813
Brambling	681	4	0	4	685
Greenfinch	11752	661	0	661	12413
Goldfinch	1107	43	0	43	1150
Siskin	62	76	0	76	138
Linnet	758	2	3	5	763
Redpoll	606	2	0	2	608
Mealy Redpoll	8	0	0	0	8
Bullfinch	1149	43	0	43	1192
Yellowhammer	1032	65	0	65	1097
Reed Bunting	897	57	0	57	954
Corn Bunting	27	0	0	0	27
TOTAL	89774	5404	424	5828	95602

RINGING RECOVERIES AND CONTROLS

Species	Ringed	Place Found	Distance
Black-Hd. Gull FN03812	Poland	Rawcliffe Ings York	unknown
Black-Hd. Gull EJ92732 Adult '	Selby NYorkshire 27.0185	Sjaelland Denmark 0607.94	901km 3447days
Swallow H16I896 Nestling	Thorganby NYorkshire 13.0692	Jylland Denmark 240594	630km 710days
House Martin J309596 1 st year	Telford Shropshire 10.09.93	Naburn N. Yorkshire 1606.94	167km 279days

Blackbird RK82206 2nd yr male	Nunnington N.Yorkshire 16.02.94	Molltorp Sweden 08.10.94	1060km 234days
Blackbird XN95184 1st year male	University Heslington 04.12.83	Tang Hall York 12.05.94	1km 3812days
Sedge Warbler J547796 1st year	East Ness N.Yorkshire 17.07.94	Icklesham Sussex 02.08.94	380km 16days
Reed Warbler Details to follow	France	Barlow Common	unknown
Blackcap F840733 1 st year	Selby N.Yorkshire 13.06.92	Nador Morocco 12.09.93	2068km 456days
Starling RJ15251 1st year	Thorpe Arch N.Yorkshire 19.06.93	Appleton Roebuck N. Yorkshire 25.05.94	12km 340days
Starting	Denmark	Acomb	unknown
Starling	Netherlands	Acomb	unknown
Chaffinch	Denmark	Nunnington	unknown
Greenfinch VN90035	Dringhouses York	Nunnington N.Yorkshire	32km 259days

RINGERS OPERATING IN THE YORK AREA 1994

Name	Permit Status	Area
Richard Ward-Smith*	A	Thorpe Arch, Bilton in Ainsty, Naburn
Pete Reid	A	Selby
Chris Wright	A	Thorganby, Wilberfoss, Tadcaster
Danae Murfitt	A	LDV, Askham Bog
Mike Jackson	A	Acaster Malbis
Cilia Grant	C	Thorpe Arch
Dave Turner	C	Nunnington, East Ness
Steve Huddleston	C	Acomb
Tim Dixon	SC	LDV, wildfowl only

CONTRIBUTORS

Many thanks to those listed below who contributed records for this report. Apologies for any omissions.

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B. Coddington	J. Pewtress
D. Cooper	D. Richardson
R Crossley	IW & C Roberts
M J. Dixon	N. Stewart
Dr M. Douglas	I & R Traynor
S. Elliott	J. Watson
R & GP Guest	P. Watson
A. Hannington	
J.S. Henderson	
J. Henry	
A. Hutchins	

P. Hutchinson

The following species have been recorded in the York area since 1966 but were not seen in 1994:

Great Northern Diver	Red-necked Phalarope
Fulmar	Grey Phalarope
Storm Petrel	Arctic Skua
Gannet	Great Skua
Shag	Glaucous Gull
Night Heron	Caspian Tern
Purple Heron	Roseate Tern
White Stork	Sandwich Tern
Spoonbill	Guillemot
(Lesser White-fronted Goose)	Little Auk
Brent Goose	Puffin
Egyptian Goose	Ring-necked Parakeet
Ruddy Shelduck	Alpine Swift
(Wood Duck)	Bee Eater
American Wigeon	Hoopoe
Blue-winged Teal	Wryneck
Red-crested Pochard	Woodlark
Eider	Red Rumped Swallow
Long-tailed Duck	Richards Pipit
(Barrow's Goldeneye)	Rock Pipit
Smew	Waxwing
Honey Buzzard	Black Redstart
Montague's Harrier	Cettis Warbler
Red-footed Falcon	Marsh Warbler
Golden Pheasant	Barred Warbler
Spotted Crake	Firecrest
Crane	Red-breasted Flycatcher
Stone Curlew	Golden Oriole
Kentish Plover	Red-backed Shrike
Dotterel	Raven
Temminck's Stint	Hawfinch
White-rumped Sandpiper	Girl Bunting
Baird's Sandpiper	
Pectoral Sandpiper	

