

YORK ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB

REPORT 1995

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Compiled by

**D. Anderson, I. MacDonald, J. Pewtress,
I. Traynor, R. Traynor, R. Ward-Smith**

Edited by J. Pewtress

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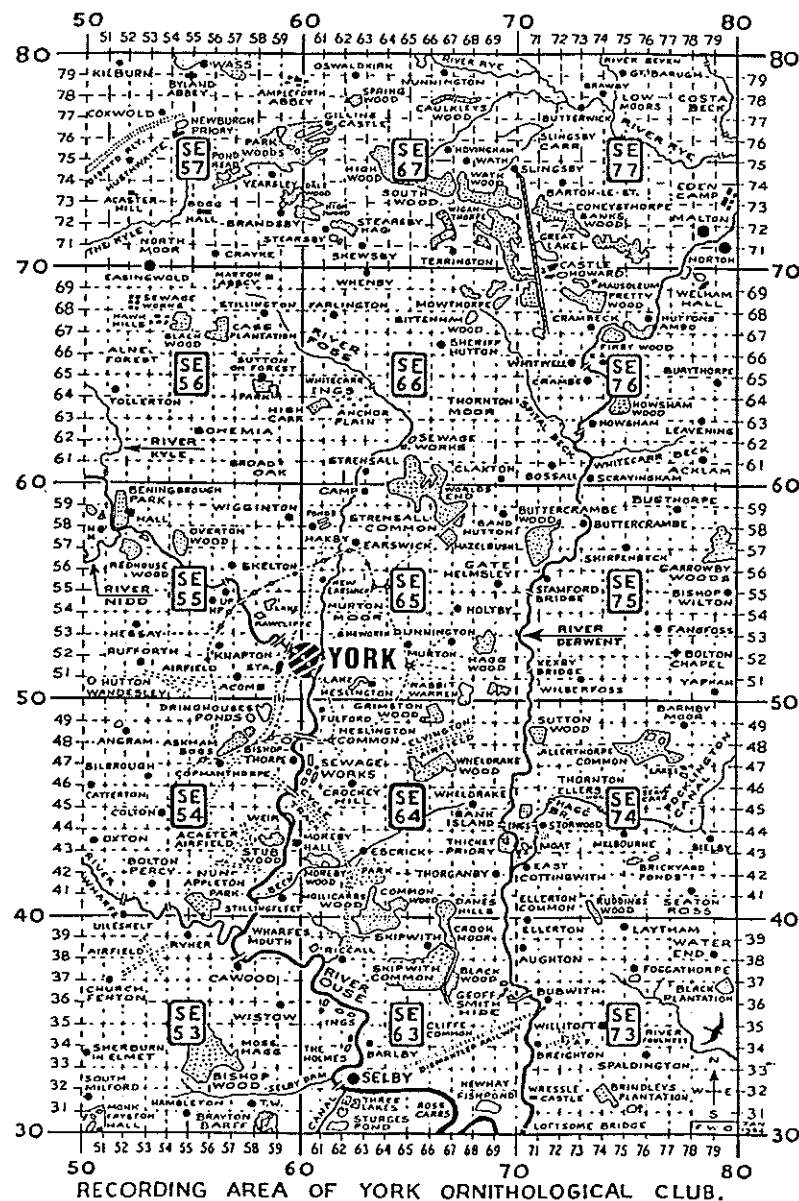
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CLUB RECORDING AREA



IT IS 18½ MILES WIDE (EAST TO WEST) AND 31½ HIGH (NORTH TO SOUTH)
 THE FIFTEEN 10 KILOMETRE SQUARES MEASURE 6¼ MILES BY 6¼ MILES
 AND EACH SQUARE COVERS ABOUT 37 SQUARE MILES WITH THE WHOLE OF
 THE RECORDING AREA TOTALLING ABOUT 560 SQUARE MILES.

YORK ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB

This report has been compiled by members of the York Ornithological Club with nearly all the records submitted by members who are active in watching an area of 550 square miles around York which the Club is responsible for recording. The area covers wetlands (Lower Derwent Valley), deciduous woodland (Hambleton/Howardian Hills), coniferous woodland (Yearsley and Ampleforth Forest), lakes (Castle Howard) and large agricultural areas of the Vales of York and Pickering.

The Club has a membership of about 85 and meets on the first Tuesday of the month (except July and August) in The Friends' Meeting House, Castlegate, York, for a full programme of talks and discussions, and for the informal exchange of information which bird watchers find invaluable. In addition excursions are arranged to areas of ornithological interest, usually outside the Recording Area.

EDITORIAL

Thanks are due once again to all those members and non-members who have submitted records for this report.

The species accounts have been compiled by Jim Pewtress (Divers to Auks), Ian and Ruth Traynor (Doves to Warblers) and Denise Anderson (Flycatchers to Buntings) and edited by Jim Pewtress. Muriel Pirozek has been responsible for the final production of the report. Thanks to Andy Booth for the illustrations.

The processing of records places a time consuming and often repetitive workload on the above persons who have given their time freely to produce this Report and our grateful thanks are due to them. The report has been slightly delayed this year due to circumstances that were not foreseen towards the end of the year.

Our thanks also go to the members of the committee for the work they have done throughout the year, our traveling members who kindly share with us their intrepid expeditions and those members who offer lifts to those without transport for club outings and other trips. We welcome to the club new members who have joined this year. We have tried to produce a report of interest and our aim is to have complete and accurate coverage of our area. Perhaps new members live in areas that are not covered by other club members and we would be delighted to receive records from you. Guide-lines for submitting records are available from the recorder. It was heartening to receive records from new areas Huby, Sutton on the Forest and Wigginton.

Seven species in the classified list have been bracketed as we have yet to receive descriptions for the YNU and/or BBRC. It was disappointing that no club member submitted a description of the Whiskered Tern at Wheldrake Ings and that it was left to a visitor to "do the right thing".

Jim Pewtress

Highlights of 1995

In order not to make this section overlong and duplicating the species accounts the large numbers of Wildfowl and Wader counts have not been included. On the whole a successful breeding season with some record numbers of Wildfowl and Wader pairs in the Lower Derwent with breeding Marsh Harrier, Buzzard and Black-tailed Godwit the highlights.

Rawcliffe Lake continues to attract the birds with six species added to the list for that site in 1995. A remarkable development when one considers that it is surrounded by a housing estate on Clifton Moor. Records came this year from new sites at Huby, Newton-on-Derwent, Sutton-on-the-Forest and Wigginton.

January

A generally mild month after a cold start. In mid-month unsettled weather brought long spells of rain with some snow towards the month end. It proved to be the wettest January since 1948.

A Bittern at Wheldrake Ings and a Chiffchaff at Wheldrake Woods got the year off to a good start with a Red-necked Grebe and Blackcap at Poppleton on 3rd. The Stonechat from 1994 remained at East Cottingwith until 8th and a female Scaup resided in the Lower Derwent NNR until 9th. Several species had record numbers with Grey Plover rising from seven on 7th to 11 by 14th, nine on 15th and 10 on 16th and 19th. An impressive 234 Ruff were present on 14th with up to four Jack Snipe on 22nd. A Red-head Smew at Red Hose Reservoir on 20th with a Blackcap again at Poppleton on 24th. A fine male Hen Harrier in the Lower Derwent on 25th and the month finished with a Twite at Thornton on 28th and a Chiffchaff at Wheldrake Woods on 29th remaining until 4th February.

There were at least five individual Peregrine in the Lower Derwent Valley all month.

February

The weather remained unsettled with above average rainfall. Winds remained mostly in the south to south-west. Two drake and one duck Scaup were in the Lower Derwent on 4th with a record 109 Whooper Swans on 5th. A Knot and adult Kittiwake on 9th and female Hen Harrier on 12th. A Brent Goose appeared on 14th and the 18th produced a record count of 5184 Pochard and in a record year for Wigeon 14,140 on the same day.

The gull roost at Wheldrake contained 33,000+ Black-headed Gulls on 25th, a Spotted Redshank and two Knot passed through on 26th. Single Grey Plover and Bean Goose on 28th were joined by ten Sanderling. A single Peregrine remained in the Lower Derwent all month and a Merlin at Huttons Ambo seen frequently during the month. A very early Wheatear at Wheldrake Ings on 26th.

March

A month dominated by Atlantic depressions producing cold north-westerly winds. Spring like conditions were brief with snow fall on 27th and 28th but the temperature soon recovering to spring like conditions.

Ten Sanderling remained until 11th and a pair of Peregrine passed through on 1st. A Glaucous Gull, seven Black-tailed Godwits, a Knot and a Shag appeared on 6th. The lovelorn Bittern boomed for a mate from 8th to 6th May. A good year for Grey Plover continued with one on 8th whilst a poor year for Merlin with one on 9th. A Buzzard at Heslington on 11th may have been the one in the Lower Derwent next day. Five Sanderling remained on 11th and a record count of 417 Redshank on 14th. A female Peregrine on 12th remained to 15th, a Kittiwake appeared on 19th, another white-winged gull on 21st this time an Iceland Gull and a second Merlin. South-westerly winds brought the first Swallow on 25th. Three Kittiwake passed through on 27th. Early migrants included Little Ringed Plover on 3rd, Sand Martin on 21st and Yellow Wagtail on 25th.

April

A month of two halves! The early part was generally warm and sunny with a cold northerly airstream bringing unsettled weather by mid-month. However the last week of the month saw a return to dry albeit cool weather.

The month opened with a record count of 811 Coot, a Knot and 16 Black-tailed Godwits on 1st when the small male Peregrine returned being seen to 14th. An early Cuckoo on 2nd when a Snow Goose arrived remaining to 4th. A Merlin on 3rd was joined by the first Osprey of the spring, with another on 5th. A poor spring passage of Common Sandpiper began on 8th. A drake Scaup remained from 10th to 16th with a duck on 22nd. Three Little Gulls in the Lower Derwent on 11th and a Water Pipit graced Rawcliffe lake on 14th. A depressingly poor passage of terns began with a Common on 19th and we had to wait until 30th when Arctic and Black Terns passed through. Another Osprey on 20th and a Brent Goose on 26th. In addition to the usual Whimbrel roost at Wheldrake Ings during the month 185 flew north on 29th. An Osprey remained at Newbrugh from late month to early May. The month saw a record breeding population of Little Grebe. As usual most migrants arrived during this month with arrival and departure times given below.

Species	Arrival Date	Last Reported
Wheatear	26th February	17th September
Little Ringed Plover	3rd March	24th June
Black-tailed Godwit	6th March	18th June
Chiffchaff	14th March	14th October
Sand Martin	21st March	10th October
Swallow	25th March	21st October

Species	Arrival Date	Last Seen
Yellow Wagtail	25th March	27th September
Cuckoo	2nd April	3rd September
Osprey	3rd April	22nd September
House Martin	5th April	11th October
Willow Warbler	6th April	8th October
Whimbrel	7th April	16th May
Tree Pipit	7th April	26th September
Common Sandpiper	8th April	18th September
Sedge Warbler	8th April	10th October
Blackcap	8th April	20th September
Spotted Crake	10th April	15th November
Reed Warbler	10th April	11th October
Common Tern	19th April	29th August
Whitethroat	19th April	17th September
Marsh Harrier	21st April	19th October
Swift	26th April	14th September
Wood Warbler	26th April	27th August
Arctic Tern	30th April	31st August
Black Tern	30th April	3rd September
Lesser Whitethroat	30th April	17th September
Garden Warbler	1st May	15th September
Turtle Dove	5th May	10th September
Grasshopper Warbler	10th May	
Quail	10th May	11th August
Spotted Flycatcher	0th May	14th September
Whinchat	26th May	21st September

May

The first week produced warm sunny weather with above average temperatures but the next fortnight brought cold easterlies and a northerly airstream with below average temperatures. Normal temperatures were experienced during the last few days of the month.

The roosting Whimbrel reached a peak of 107 on 1st and the first week saw a consolidation of migrant and breeding birds throughout the area. A Quail on 10th heralded an influx in to the Lower Derwent with 53-55 singing males located during the breeding season. Unfortunately this was not repeated elsewhere with only two more records from Claxton. A female Scaup was at Castle Howard on 13th and a Temminck's Stint graced the Lower Derwent on 16th, 19th and 20th when an Osprey passed through. A Nightingale gave a musical delight at the Wheldrake Ings car park on 21st and 22nd and a Snow Goose wandered by on 25th. A Little Gull was present on 26th with a second on 30th. Considering the abysmal passage of terns this year the highlight of the year was an unexpected Whiskered Tern that remained from 29th to 31st giving many people the opportunity to add this attractive marsh tern to their lists.

June

Eastern England had its coldest June start since 1911 with cold northerly winds. Weather improved from the beginning of the third week with warmer but unsettled weather. By the 20th more sunny and settled weather established itself although a north easterly airflow left the east coast much cooler.

As usual things began to settle down with birds breeding and looking after their young. A Little Gull remained in the Lower Derwent from 3rd to 16th, Quail seemed to spread along the valley with a further 10 located on 10th and a Corncrake was located at Wheldrake Ings from 14th to 23rd and one at East Cottingwith from 18th to 20th. Two Black-tailed Godwits on 18th, not the breeding pair, were an unexpected surprise. An Osprey that came in to roost overnight on the 27th had left by next morning.

July

The month remained settled with above average temperatures.

272 Curlew on 4th were exceptional. Quail were located at Claxton on 12th and 20th, an Osprey in the Lower Derwent on 9th and 18th indicated a trend over the last few years of summering birds in the recording area. An unexpected female Corncrake at Seavy Carr on the late date of 24th had presumably been missed previously. The small male Peregrine returned briefly on 28th.

August

The hottest August on record and possibly the driest summer since 1727.

An Avocet flew south on 2nd being only the second record for the Lower Derwent NNR and passage birds remained scarce. An Osprey wandered through on 15th and a Crossbill, a not too common species in the last few years, at Yearsley Common on 17th. The first returning Merlin on 24th.

September

A rather unsettled and cool month with a north-easterly airstream dominating the area. The last week brought more widespread rainfall from the west.

Merlin on 1st and 14th, the small male Peregrine on 3rd and again 25th, a Black Tern passed through on 3rd and a Little Stint was seen on 5th, 6th and 9th. A Buzzard at Ampleforth on 13th and a Pied Flycatcher on 14th was the sixth record for Lower Derwent NNR. 3502 Golden Plover on 16th, a maximum of 4167 Lapwing with a Ruff from 16th to 18th. A Buzzard and Osprey on 22nd. Most of the small passage migrants had left by the end of the month.

October

The weather was dominated by a southerly airstream for most of the month and rainfall remained very low. The previous 12 month period had been the warmest on record.

In eight days early in the month two Buzzards were seen moving south through Coxwold, Yearsley and finally Brandsby. Four Merlin passed through the Lower Derwent on 7th, six Jack Snipe on 13th and a record nine on 19th. Two Rock Pipits and a Little Gull were at Castle Howard on 22nd, a Red Kite in the Wheldrake area on 26th and three Bearded Tits at Bielby on 28th.

November

Generally a very mild unsettled month. Mid-month brought a brief spell of northerlies with a short lived sprinkling of snow.

A wreck of Little Auk on the east coast resulted in one being found dead at Heslington on 1st. A Chiffchaff at Wheldrake Ings remained to year end and 47 Water Rail were counted in the Lower Derwent Valley. A female Peregrine on 2nd, possibly as many as eight Merlin during the month and a Buzzard on 6th and 19th. A Blackcap at Dringhouses from 8th to 11th, a Twite at East Cottingwith on 18th, a Buzzard, a ring-tail Hen Harrier in the Lower Derwent on 26th when the Red Kite reappeared. On the same day a Blackcap at Selby.

December

The mild unsettled weather remained until the 5th when easterlies brought snow showers. A brief interlude mid month before cold wintry conditions gripped the area. Despite the below average temperatures 1995 remained the hottest year since 1659.

A Rock Pipit in the Lower Derwent on 5th when a late Oystercatcher at Red House Reservoir. Four Knot and a Slavonian Grebe in the Lower Derwent on 7th and two Red Kite appeared on 8th in the Wheldrake/Escrick area. A second Little Auk long dead on 12th at Lower Derwent with eight Bean Geese on 15th. A Redhead Smew on 27th, a Hen Harrier on 28th with two Kittiwake on 30th. Blackcaps present at Dringhouses and Thornton on 27th. Seven or eight Merlin and possibly six Peregrines throughout the month in the Lower Derwent.

The following species have been recorded in the York area since 1966 but were not seen in 1995:

Red-throated Diver
Black-throated Diver
Great Northern Diver

Pectoral Sandpiper
Curlew Sandpiper
Turnstone

Fulmar
Manx Shearwater
Storm Petrel
Gannet
Night Heron
Cattle Egret
Purple Heron
White Stork
Spoonbill
(Lesser White-fronted Goose)
Egyptian Goose
Ruddy Shelduck
(Wood Duck)
American Wigeon
Blue-winged Teal
Red-crested Pochard
Eider
Long-tailed Duck
Common Scoter
Velvet Scoter
(Barrow's Goldeneye)
Red-breasted Merganser
Honey Buzzard
Black Kite
Montague's Harrier
Red-footed Falcon
Crane
Black-winged Stilt
Stone Curlew
Kentish Plover
Dotterel
White-rumped Sandpiper
Baird's Sandpiper

Red-necked Phalarope
Grey Phalarope
Arctic Skua
Great Skua
Caspian Tern
Roseate Tern
Sandwich Tern
Little Tern
Guillemot
Puffin
Ring-necked Parakeet
Alpine Swift
Bee-eater
Hoopoe
Wryneck
Woodlark
Red-rumped Swallow
Richard's Pipit
Dipper
Black Redstart
Ring Ouzel
Cettis Warbler
Marsh Warbler
Barred Warbler
Red-breasted Flycatcher
Golden Oriole
Red-backed Shrike
Great Grey Shrike
Raven
Hawfinch
Lapland Bunting
Snow Bunting
Cirl Bunting

CLASSIFIED LIST

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

175 species were recorded in the area of which 101 bred with three possible breeding.

LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Status: Resident breeder.

In the Lower Derwent NNR early in the year up to 16 birds in each of January, February and March. Birds arrived rapidly in early April to reach a record breeding population of 23 pairs. The first completed clutch was found on 8th April. Six broods of young were seen, although others were undoubtedly missed. On 22nd June, a second brood was seen being fed by the parents and by fledged birds from the first brood.

As usual most birds left in early July with just a single at Wheldrake Ings and two at North Duffield Carrs by the month end. The Wheldrake bird left on 9th August but the North Duffield birds stayed to 15th September; numbers then began to rise with five on 16th, eight on 21st. Eleven were present on 8th October, 13 on 16th and 25 on 28th; 16 on 6th November, 24 on 26th and an excellent 35+ by year end.

Elsewhere: In the early part of the year a single on the River Nidd, Moor Monkton on 8th January with two on 22nd and a single on 9th March and two on 18th. Bred at Brandsby Pond where three pairs raised 7 young from two broods the last being on 17th August, Gilling Lake, Stearsby and Wiganthorpe and possibly Pond Head. A single at Rawcliffe Lake on 10th July, Castle Howard on 29th September, Rawcliffe Lake 3rd October, Castle Howard on 28th, Rawcliffe Lake on 2nd November, Castle Howard on 4th with one at Moor Monkton on 12th December and two on 27th.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus*

Status: Migrant breeder and passage visitor.

The first in the Lower Derwent NNR was one on 6th March and then a pair from 14th onwards. Four pairs from 1st April with a fifth pair from 13th. All five pairs bred but only two broods were seen - both of two chick, hatching on 21st and 22nd June. As usual no young fledged, probably due to a shortage of small fish. Another pair bred close to Newton Mask and fledged three young.

Elsewhere: Bred Gilling Lake, Sturges Pond and Wiganthorpe. Although up to 15 were at Castle Howard between February and October the only evidence of breeding were seven adults and two juveniles seen on 1st September. A pair on Rawcliffe Lake had two broods, the first brood of two fledged and two from the second brood of four. Six were at Gilling Lake on 14th November with three at Castle Howard.

RED-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps grisegena*

Status: Scarce winter visitor.

One on the Ouse at Poppleton on 3rd January. (DA)

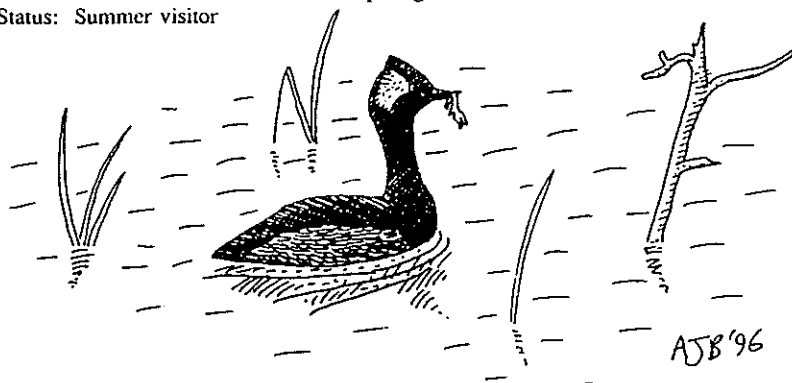
SLAVONIAN GREBE *Podiceps auritus*

Status: Scarce Winter visitor.

A single floated downstream on the river at Wheldrake Ings on 7th December.

BLACK-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps nigricollis*

Status: Summer visitor



Bred for the third year in succession. The first was seen on 14th March with another or the same from 29th to 31st. Two pairs were seen on 1st April and numbers then apparently increased steadily. Birds were even more elusive than usual this year but many hours of searching finally revealed a minimum of nine breeding pairs which reared at least 15 young (including three broods of three). The first newly hatched brood of three chicks was seen on 29th May with five broods found by late June. The first fledged young were seen on 22nd June. As usual most birds left in July with the last, an immature, seen on 4th August.

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Status: Passage and winter visitor and recently established resident breeder.

Again bred in the Lower Derwent NNR. Up to four in January and three in February. For the second consecutive year two pairs bred either on, or more adjacent to, the Reserve. The first pair appeared in early March and they were joined by the second pair in early April and successfully fledged broods of one and two young in early July. Passage birds were seen in April with single first-winter birds on 1st, 4th and 22nd when also three second-winter birds. Up to five in September and seven in October were thought to be the breeding birds and their offspring. In addition, there were one

or two passage birds in October with one large party of nine flying south at dusk on 22nd. Up to four regularly in November including two first-winters and up to three regularly in December.

Elsewhere: Numbers continue to increase. A single at Cawood on 14th January with two on 24th. Four at Poppleton on 15th February, three on 3rd March with one at Selby on 22nd. Five were on the River Kyle at Tollerton on 5th May with a single at Selby on 20th. Birds present at Castle Howard from September to December 14th with five on 15th and 24th November and three on 14th December. Two at Cawood on 13th October, a single at Wiganthorpe on 23rd, at Moor Monkton on 4th and 5th December, one over Selby also on 5th, three at York Water Works on 18th and six at Red House reservoir on 23rd.

SHAG *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*
Status: Vagrant.

A first-winter bird on 6th March was the second record for the Lower Derwent NNR.

BITTERN *Botaurus stellaris*
Status: Scarce winter and spring resident.

A single male in the Lower Derwent NNR once again delighted birdwatchers in the area. One on New Year's Day gave one or two people a good start to their year lists.

For the third year in succession a single male was heard booming. This lonely bird becomes more vocal each year in his desperate search for female companionship. This year he was heard booming in early March (and was seen on 14th), on 23rd April and on 3rd, 4th and 6th May.

Later in the year a single was seen on 3rd, 8th, 9th and 12th December with two from 15th to year end.

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*
Status: Resident breeder.

Twenty-four pairs bred in the heronry in the Lower Derwent NNR where success was thought to be high. The first fledged juvenile was seen on 13th May. Highest counts away from the heronry included up to 19 in March. Large feeding parties were seen at Wheldrake fens as young left the nests with up to 47 in June, 43 in July and 39 in August. Largest day counts for the rest of the year were - 29 in September, 21 in October, 31 in November and 16 in December.

Probably bred again at Castle Howard with bird on nest on 26th February. Up to five were seen throughout the year at Appletree Village, Castle Howard (five on 26th February), Claxton, over Clifton, Farlington, Heslington (found dead), Huby, Moor Monkton and Warthill.

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

Status: Resident breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Continues to go from strength to strength in the Lower Derwent NNR. Continued colour ringing allows us to follow the movements and fortunes of our birds in some detail. Record numbers were present in the early months with up to 88 in January, 96 in February and 128 in March.

Breeding seems to start earlier each year. By late January several pairs were holding territory - the first completed nest was found on 25th March, by which time 14 pairs were on territory. Eighteen pairs finally held territory of which 13 pairs laid 67 eggs (including four repeat clutches), a total of 51 cygnets hatched of which 47 subsequently fledged.

Good numbers of immature non-breeding birds stayed through the spring and summer with up to 97 in early April, declining to 78 by late April and between 37 and 43 during May. In June, 41 on 1st, 53 on 4th and 21 on 5th with 12 birds which remained throughout and which were in moult by the month end. This is the first time that non-breeding birds have summered and moulted in the valley. In July, 11 birds throughout the month (in addition to the breeding adults and their cygnets). Incoming passage birds then started to appear with a very early single on 30th July then one on 26th August with three on 27th, four on 28th and seven on 29th. Numbers increased rapidly from mid-September as passage birds moved through, with 56 on 16th, 65 on 17th, 81 on 24th, 84 on 26th and 87 (a new September record) on 30th. The first flying cygnets were seen on 24th September. Autumn numbers peaked at 89 on 1st October and then declined as passage birds moved on with birds holding winter territories by the end of the month. Up to 69 in November and 59 in December.

Elsewhere: The pair from 1994 at Rawcliffe Lake bred again with eight cygnets on 18th May of which seven survived. Also bred Easingwold and Wiganthorpe. A single at Moor Monkton from 1st January to 17th March frequented a local garden, the pair at Newbrugh failed to breed, three were at Castle Howard on 28th September and eight at Red House Res. on 30th December.

WHOOPE SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*

Status: Winter visitor.

In the Lower Derwent NNR up to 50 regularly in January, then 53 on 1st February increasing to a record 109 on 5th with 46 on 18th and 32 on 26th. In March, 47 on 6th, 70 on 14th and 23 on 20th with seven from 25th to 31st being the last.

The first of the autumn were 11 which flew south on 19th October with two on the pool at Wheldrake Ings on 28th. In November, 14 flew south on 2nd, with six arriving on 3rd. These birds remained, increasing to 21 on 18th with 12 on 19th again increasing to 16 on 14th December and 21 by 26th.

The injured male present since 19 stayed throughout the year and has now regained

the power of flight so he may not be with us for much longer.

13 flew over Warthill on 1st March, five at Castle Howard on 23rd with one on 30th.

BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus columbianus*

Status: Winter visitor.

A welcome return to the form of the mid-eighties after almost a decade of disappointing numbers in the Lower Derwent NNR.

Up to 53 regularly in January, then 63 on 1st February, 83 on 4th and 94 next day; numbers then fluctuated as birds moved through the valley but 74 were seen on 18th, declining steadily to 17 on 26th. A further small influx brought 41 on 6th March which declined to 23 on 14th and to the last single on 21st.

The first returning wintering birds arrived on 15th November when 34 were present including 11 immatures; twenty-nine of these stayed to 18th and then three to month end. In December, six on 13th, four on 14th, two on 29th and four on 30th.

BEAN GOOSE *Anser fabalis*

Status: Winter visitor and late winter passage migrant.

A reasonable showing of this lovely little goose along the Lower Derwent NNR. A single on 28th February then two on 9th and 12th March with an excellent 11 on 14th and four on 15th.

In December, eight adults on 15th.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchos*

Status: Winter visitor and passage migrant.

The three birds which arrived in late December 1994 stayed until at least 13th March. In addition, there were six on 6th January with 11 next day. Fifty-five flew north-east on 18th February. In March, nine on 14th, 17 on 15th and six from 20th to month end. In April, five on 1st, six on 3rd, seven from 9th to 13th, eight on 15th, nine on 16th and 14 from 17th to 19th.

Six early birds flew south on 11th September, then 34 on 1st October, 33 on 6th, 89 flew west on 7th and three were with Greylags on 22nd. In November, 240 flew west on 27th. A good December with three on 12th, 13 next day and three on 14th; 72 flew south on 15th, 23 south on 17th and four on 20th.

At Castle Howard four on 20th February, five on 19th March, four from 3rd to 17th April, with five from 5th to 8th, the last being on 21st. A single on 20th October with four from 4th to 15th November. One with Canada Geese at Red House Res. on 23rd November

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons*

Status: Winter visitor.

A single nominate race adult from 1st January to 28th February.

At the end of the year, nine flew south on 26th November, then eight on 7th December, 10 on 9th, 12 on 12th, three on 13th, 43 on 14th, seven on 15th, eight on 20th, 17 on 27th and 16 from 28th to year end.

Away from the Lower Derwent NNR two with Canada Geese at Red House Res. on 30th December.

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

Status: Resident breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Lower Derwent NNR. Up to 658 in January and 449 in February. In March, 636 on 6th declined to 371 by 25th and 213 by 1st April. A record 48 pairs bred with good success. The first brood of goslings was seen on 6th May. A non-breeding herd of 63 from mid-April to mid-May increased to 93 on 23rd May and 207 on 27th - presumably as failed breeders from elsewhere arrived in the valley. Good numbers in June with 507 on the pool at Wheldrake lngs on 22nd including at least 250 goslings. Up to 700 in July, 570 in August, 533 in September, 521 in October, 780 in November and 673 in December.

At Castle Howard up to 418 in January, 375 in February and 293 in March. No counts at the end of the year.

Elsewhere: Up to 40 at Dringhouses Pond throughout the year, 15 on the River Foss at Monk Bridge on 16th February and two pairs bred on the river. 50 were on the university lake on 16th November.

SNOW GOOSE *Anser caerulescens*

Status: Winter visitor.

An annual visitor to the Lower Derwent NNR. A single white-phase bird with Pink-footed Geese from 2nd to 4th April. Two blue-phase birds with Greylags on 27th May.

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

Status: Resident breeder and winter visitor.

The Lower Derwent NNR is now the stronghold of birds in the area with no records from Castle Howard since 1993. Up to 733 in January and 775 in February. In March, 659 on 6th declined to 404 on 25th and to 189 by 1st April. A record 36 pairs bred. In a prolonged breeding season the first brood of goslings was seen on 4th May and the last newly hatched broods were seen on 22nd June. A crèche of 73 goslings on

the pool at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd May. A non-breeding herd of 91 from mid-April to mid-May increased to 107 on 23rd May; 317 (including goslings) on the pool at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd June. Up to 350 in July, 189 on 1st August, then very few until birds returned from moult with 127 on 21st September, a peak of only 67 in October, rapidly increasing numbers from early November with 570 on 11th, 720 on 22nd and a new Reserve record of 1127 on 27th and up to 970 in December.

Single birds showing characteristics of one of the small migratory races, probably *minima*, were seen on 14th January with five newly arrived Barnacle Geese and from 2nd to 4th with Pink-footed Geese.

Bred at Sutton on the Forest. Up to 35 were seen regularly flying between Dringhouse Pond and Copmanthorpe throughout the year.

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*

Status: Winter visitor and feral wanderer.

Six birds arrived in the Lower Derwent NNR on 9th January, a further five came in on 14th and all 11 birds stayed until 21st. On 28th February a flock of 11 flew north. It is tempting to assume that these were the same birds. A single was seen on 31st May.

At the end of the year, one on 26 November remained to year end with a party of nine, including a colour ringed bird on 16th December. The origins of Barnacle Geese away from the main wintering grounds is always suspect but it seems likely that the winter records relate to wild birds and the May individual was probably of feral origin.

A single bird present at Castle Howard on 15th January, 36 at University Lake on 16th, a single on the Foss on 8th February and four at Castle Howard on several dates in April.

BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla*

Status: Scarce winter visitor and spring passage migrant.

A dark-bellied adult on 14th February and an unaged dark-bellied on 26th April were the sixth and seventh records for the Lower Derwent NNR.

SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

Status: Winter visitor, migrant breeder and scarce autumn passage migrant.

Numbers increased steadily from the start of the year in the Lower Derwent NNR with 28 on 7th January, 33 on 14th, 54 on 28th, 63 on 5th February, 65 on 18th, 98 on 26th, 102 on 6th March, 104 on 14th and 91 on 25th. The bulk of the breeding population had arrived by early April with a few more pairs trickling in to reach a record population of 61 pairs in and around the site by early May.

As usual birds moved out in early July (to the Humber?) with the last, two adults, on 17th July.

An immature was present from 14th to 21st August and an adult arrived on 19th October but left next day. In November, eight on 15th then three on 18th which increased to seven by month end. Then one or two regularly throughout December.

WIGEON *Anas penelope*

Status: Winter visitor, spring passage migrant and resident breeder.

Splendid and record winter in the Lower Derwent NNR with 9230 on 7th January increasing to 14000 on 28th and 14140 on 18th February. Numbers then declined slowly but steadily to 13200 on 6th March, 9300 on 14th, 8250 on 25th; 6090 on 1st April, 4150 on 5th, 1000+ on 14th and 257 on 22nd. Colour-ringed birds from the Trent valley were seen regularly from mid to late March.

A record 20 pairs were present during the breeding season although as usual few young were seen. Wheldrake Ings held 18 pairs where a brood of six was seen on 13th May with a further two broods seen at the end of the month. Numerous pursuit flights were seen here in mid-May and eight pairs subsequently appeared on the pool during June. Two pairs bred at a second site where a brood of four was seen on 29th May. Up to nine were seen regularly in July and August.

First arrivals of the winter were 43 on 11th September increasingly quickly to 120 on 17th, 250 on 18th and 300+ by month end. In October, 400 on 1st with a notable influx of 1250 on 15th, 800 of which stayed to month end. In November, 1250 on 3rd increased to 2500+ on 18th, 3600 on 26th; 4300 on 3rd December, 5600 on 16th and 7200 on 27th.

Elsewhere: A male at Rawcliffe Lake from 6th January to 24th, 20 at Castle Howard on 15th, five on 18th and 19 on 28th February. Single on Rawcliffe Lake on 5th September with two on 18th and 3 on 27th with four from 4th to 11th October. 19 at Castle Howard on 25th and 14 on 28th. Two males at Brandsby Dale on 24th November was a rare occurrence for that site. Five at Red House Res. on 30th December.

GADWALL *Anas strepera*

Status: Winter visitor and migrant breeder.

Early in the year, up to 20 regularly in January until 47 on 29th, 31 on 18th February, 43 on 6th March, 71 on 14th and 105 on 25th. By early April the bulk of the breeding population had arrived which totalled a record 61 pairs. The first completed clutch was seen on 15th April and the first of 23 broods appeared on 27th May. Birds usually leave in July but many stayed on this year, probably a reflection of the excellent breeding season, with up to 41 in July and up to 89 in August. Seventy nine were still present on 1st September but numbers then fell rapidly to low single figures by mid-month. Hardly had these birds gone than wintering birds began arriving with

up to ten by late September and up to 29 in October.

Rarely recorded away from the Lower Derwent NNR and usually in small numbers. Four at Castle Howard from February to 1st May and 24th September to 3rd December. Two at Rawcliffe Lake on 24th September were a new record for that site.

TEAL *Anas crecca*

Status: Winter visitor and resident breeder.

The Lower Derwent NNR produced excellent early winter numbers with monthly maxima of 6576 on 28th January, 5600 on 26th February and 7050 on 14th March. Numbers then fell with 6350 on 25th March, 4390 on 1st April, 500 on 15th and 317 on 22nd.

Teal are shy and elusive little devils when breeding and accurate census work is horribly difficult! However, we estimate that somewhere between 65 and 80 pairs bred - easily a record. The first completed clutch was found on 19th April and the first brood on 14th June (earlier broods were undoubtedly missed). Three Teal eggs were found dumped in a Mallard's nest in late April but the whole nest was subsequently predated. Birds began to move onto the pool at Wheldrake Ings in late June with 89 there on 1st July increasing to 180 by late August as water levels fell in the ditch network. Numbers continued to rise steadily as winter birds arrived, with up to 300 in September, 730 in October, 1610 in November and 3700 in December.

Scarce elsewhere with Castle Howard having 42 in January, 27 in February, 37 in September, 30 in October, 67 in November and 21 in December. The only other record was a single at Rawcliffe Lake from August 1st to 3rd September.

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*

Status: Winter visitor and resident breeder.

Reasonable early winter numbers in the Lower Derwent NNR with up to 2641 in January, 3150 in February and 1340 in March. A count of 1250 on 25th March comprised mainly dispersed pairs and 1260 on 1st April included 480 pairs. An estimated 500 pairs bred. The largest brood, of 18, on 12th April was also the first. Early season success was low due to poor weather but repeat clutches fared better, although late summer counts were lower than in recent years with 890 on 1st August the maximum. In early September up to 800 were still present until an influx on 11th brought 1300. Then up to 1250 in November and 4100 in December.

The only counts from Castle Howard were 250 in January, 300 in February, 75 in March and 150 in May and September. A female with nine small young were at Dunnington on 1st April. Up to 40 were at Rawcliffe Lake throughout the year but had a poor breeding season, at University Lake on 16th January and at Burnholme Beck on 26th February and 31st October.

PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

Status: Winter visitor and scarce migrant breeder.

Relatively good early counts, with 54 on 7th January, 79 on 29th; 109 on 18th February; 103 on 6th March, 163 on 14th and 189 on 25th. Birds were displaying by 29th March and the bulk of the breeding population of 98 pairs was well settled by mid-April. The first brood was seen on 24th April but then no more until eight broods appeared on 17th May. A successful breeding season was reflected in record July and August counts of 87 and 79 respectively, mainly birds of the year.

Numbers declined to around 20 by late August and stayed at this level through most of September until rising to 33 on 25th and 43 by 11th October. Then up to 67 in November and 76 in December.

A pair at Castle Howard on 5th November was the only record away from the Lower Derwent NNR.

POCHARD *Aythya ferina*

Status: Winter visitor and migrant breeder.

A record breaking winter for the Lower Derwent NNR. In January, 33 on 6th, 310 on 12th, 1355 on 21st, 1400 on 28th. February saw 2785 on 5th, 3963 on 9th with a record 5184 on 18th and 4900 on 26th. In March, 4700 on 6th, 1150 on 14th and 387 on 25th.

After those extraordinary counts the breeding season was something of a disappointment with only 9 breeding pairs and only one juvenile seen. As usual all these birds had left by 17th July.

A single drake was seen on 1st October but it did not stay. No November records, then 47 on 7th December, 31 on 9th, 25 on 30th and 57 on 31st.

Castle Howard also witnessed an increase in numbers with up to 50 in January, 70 in February, 17 in March and what was probably a record count of 104 on 14th December. Parties of up to 20 reported from Brandsby Dale, Rawcliffe Lake and Wiganthorpe in January and February.

[RING-NECKED DUCK] *Aythya collaris*

Status: Vagrant.

A female on 6th, 11th to 13th and 20th January was the fourth record for the Lower Derwent NNR and the first female for Yorkshire.

Awaiting description and not yet submitted to YNU.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

Status: Winter visitor and migrant breeder.

The Lower Derwent NNR produced excellent early counts with 84 on 14th January,

131 on 28th, 271 on 4th February, 467 on 12th, 471 on 18th and 390 on 26th. In March, 304 on 14th, 289 on 25th then 263 on 1st April. Numbers then quickly fell to the record breeding population of 103 pairs. The first of numerous broods was seen on 23rd June with the last unfledged young on 11th August - a count of 81 on 17th was noteworthy as most birds usually leave the Reserve in early August as water levels fall. Numbers then fell rapidly to leave 12 on 21st August, then six on 16th September, nine on 11th and 25th and 33 on 26th. Up to 21 intermittently in October, 29 in November and 39 in December.

Elsewhere: Dredging at Brandsby Dale proved beneficial when a pair raised eight young. Small numbers at Castle Howard with only 10 in January, 21 in February and 28 on 9th April. 13 at Wiganthorpe on 22nd March and 31 at Brandsby Dale on 9th April.

Up to 16 at Rawcliffe lake from September to year end with 25 on 18th December. 16 were at Red House Res. on 30th December.

SCAUP *Aythya marila*

Status: Winter visitor and passage migrant in small numbers.

A rather disappointing showing given the excellent numbers of other *Aythya* species. A duck from 1st to 9th January, two drakes and a duck on 4th February and a drake from 10th to 16th April in the Lower Derwent NNR.

A male at Castle Howard on 22nd April and a female on 13th May.

GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*

Status: Winter visitor and passage migrant.

In the Lower Derwent NNR up to 34 in January and 54 in February. In March 39 on 6th fell to 27 by month end, then 20 on 1st April, six on 17th, three from 19th to 21st and two from 23rd to 1st May. A female flying south on 19th October was the first returning bird, with two on 3rd and a single on 30th November. Two from 11th to 28th December, three on 29th and 17 on 30th.

Smaller numbers at Castle Howard where numbers were up on previous years. Two on 9th January increased to ten next day, numbers fluctuated during the month and February with 10 on 7th February with two males displaying to a female on the 8th. Four remained to 13th April. A female at Poppleton on 3rd January and one at Rawcliffe Lake from 1st to 9th April.

Three returned to Castle Howard on 28th October with four on 4th November and seven on 24th. Nine on 5th December and eight on 14th. Up to six at Gilling Lake from 6th to 10th and six at Poppleton on 30th.

SMEW *Mergus albellus*

Status: Almost annual winter visitor.

A single redhead on 20th January and another on 27th December in the Lower Derwent NNR.

GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser*

Status: Winter visitor and passage migrant.

A good early part of the year with peak counts at the two main wintering areas:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lower Derwent NNR	60	127	74	41	n/c	8	71
Castle Howard	168	174	35	2	20	43	142

Elsewhere: Up to 10 on the Ouse at Cawood, Moor Monkton, Poppleton and at Wiganthorpe in the early part of the year and a male and female at Rawcliffe Lake on 6th and 7th January were the first record for the site. Other than 36 in Brandsby Dale on 26th December small numbers were on the Nidd at Moor Monkton and on the Ouse at Poppleton.

RUDDY DUCK *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Status: Migrant breeder.

In the Lower Derwent NNR the first of the spring was a female on 1st April, then a pair on 6th increasing to a pair and two drakes by 22nd. Numbers increased steadily to reach a record 16 drakes and at least eight ducks by late May. However, it would appear that all pairs failed during incubation. No young birds were seen and all birds had apparently left by 3rd July.

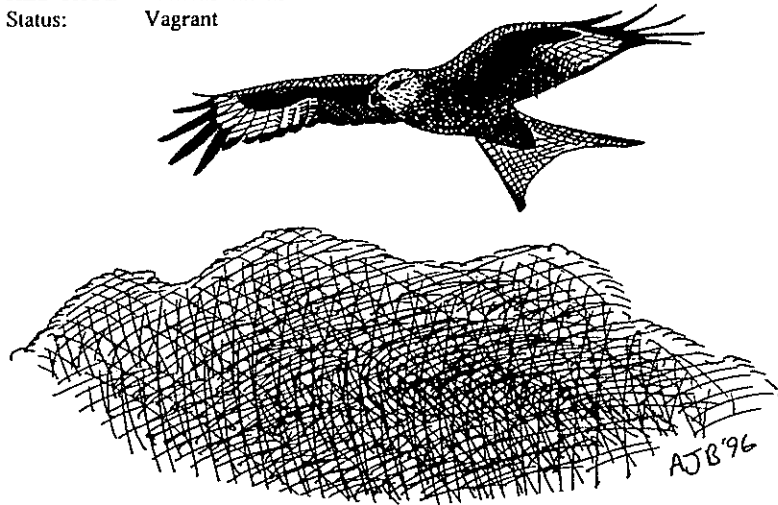
One to two males at Castle Howard from April to October. After a male last summer perhaps a foretaste of things to come. Two males also summered at Rawcliffe Lake from 18th June to 14th August.

[HONEY BUZZARD] *Pernis apivorus*

Status: Rare passage migrant.

Singles flew north-west on 29th May and east on 13th September. Fourth and fifth records for the Lower Derwent Valley NNR. Awaiting description and not yet submitted to YNU.

RED KITE *Milvus milvus*
Status: Vagrant



One was at Wheldrake Ings on 26th October with another, or the same, on 26th November. On 8th December two birds were located close to the Reserve, which remained to year end.

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*
Status: Passage migrant and rare breeder

In the Lower Derwent NNR a cream-crown on 21st April with two next day. Birds were then present daily from 30th. At first it was difficult to work out how many birds were involved but by mid May it was clear than an adult female and an immature male were in residence. By 29th May they had built a nest in an area of *Phalaris* marsh. However, they apparently deserted this site on or after 5th June. The same birds reappeared in early July hunting occasionally at Wheldrake Ings but always flying off in the same direction. They continued to be seen throughout July and by 12th August they were carrying off food in the same direction as earlier. Both adults continued to be seen throughout August until finally a juvenile also appeared on 5th September. While a nest with eggs was not found the inescapable conclusion is that the birds bred successfully, rearing one young. In addition to the breeding pair another female was seen daily from 25th May to 2nd June before moving on. The female and juvenile remained until the end of September and single distant-cream-crowns which may have been one or other of these birds were seen on 1st, 2nd and 19th October.

In addition, passage birds were seen as follows: two on 20th May, one from 25th to 27th, four on 29th and one on 31st and two on 1st and 2nd June. In September, two on 11th and 12th, one on 14th, two on 15th, one on 16th, and three on 20th.

A rare record away from the Ings with a cream-crown north near Newton-on-Ouse on 6th May.

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

Status: Winter visitor and passage migrant

In the early part of the year, a male on 25th January and a female on 12th February. Later, a ringtail flew south on 26th November. Another ringtail from 28th December to year end.

All records from the Lower Derwent NNR.

GOSHAWK *Accipiter gentilis*

Status: Rare breeding resident

One or two birds seen intermittently in January and February along the Lower Derwent. Birds were showing signs of breeding activity by early March. Three pairs were seen regularly in the early spring. Two of the pairs successfully raised young. At one site two young were seen from 3rd August and at another a single flying juvenile was seen from 24th August. Single immature on 10th and 28th September. In October, a female on 10th and a male on 15th. A female on 3rd November. A good December showing, with single males on 6th, 9th and 15th, a female on 27th and an unsexed bird on 30th.

Singles were also reported from Easingwold on 10th January and Brandsby on 2nd October.

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

Status: Breeding resident and passage migrant

In the Lower Derwent NNR birds were seen daily and seventeen pairs were located breeding on or adjacent to the site.

Reported breeding from Askham Bog and Dunnington and from the northern part of the area where it was thought that they may have become the target for game shooters. Displaying birds were noted at Claxton and Selby and numbers appeared to be maintained throughout the recording area. Sightings in the York centre seem to be common and the staple diet of birds in the Acomb area during January and February seemed to be Collared Doves.

BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

Status: Passage migrant and rare breeding resident

One pair bred close to the site and reared two young, these were later scandalously and illegally shot by a local keeper. Another pair may have bred close to another part of the Lower Derwent NNR where a different, recently fledged juvenile was seen

regularly in July and August. This was close to a site where breeding has strongly been suspected in the last three years. Records have clearly been increasing in recent years in what seems a determined attempt to re-colonise the old lowland haunts.

What were thought to be passage birds were seen as follows: One flew west on 12th March and singles on 22nd September and 6th and 19th November.

A single at Heslington Tilmire on 11th March. Two in the Hambleton Hills area were seen at Ampleforth on 13th September and in eight days in October at Coxwold, Ycarsley and Brandsby. (Prospecting the area?).

[ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD] *Buteo lagopus*

Status: Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

Singles in the Lower Derwent Valley on 22nd January and 7th and 20th December. Awaiting description and not yet submitted to YNU

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

Status: Regular passage migrant

The only record from elsewhere in the area was a single bird at Newbrugh in late April/early May.

In the Lower Derwent NNR spring birds flew north on 3rd and 5th April with two on 20th and one on 20th May. One which roosted on 27th June was still present next day. In the autumn birds flew south on 9th and 18th July, 15th August and 22nd September.

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

Status: Resident breeder

Bred at Naburn and York Water Works in nest boxes each raising three young. Bred Dunnington Common and throughout the area where it is very under recorded. In the Lower Derwent NNR an estimated 19 pairs bred in or immediately adjacent to the site.

A record 47 birds were on the WeBS count on 15th September may well have included some passage birds. Other good counts were made on 28th October when 31 were seen and 25th November when 32 were counted.

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*

Status: Passage migrant and winter visitor

Outside the Lower Derwent NNR the numbers of sightings appear to have fallen dramatically with only two records of birds at Huttons Ambo in February and Crockey Hill in December.

Early year in the Lower Derwent NNR was disappointing with singles on 9th and 21st March and 3rd April. In contrast an excellent autumn with singles on 24th August, and 1st and 14th September. In October regularly from 7th with three birds present and possibly four. Seen daily in November and December with at least seven and probably eight birds involved.

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

Status: Passage migrant

An excellent year in the Lower Derwent NNR. One on 18th June and two on 22nd, then singles on 29th, 3rd, 16th, 17th, 21st and 27th July and 5th August. An immature on 23rd August with an adult and an immature next day then singles daily to month end. In September the adult and immature were seen daily until 16th then singles on 18th and 20th. In October singles on 3rd, 10th and 11th. The August and September birds were seen almost exclusively at the Swallow roost at Wheldrake Ings. The records suggest that a pair probably bred either on or nearby the reserve. The only other record was a male at Hessacarr Pond, Dunnington Common on 20th July.

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus*

Status: Passage migrant and winter visitor

All records from the Lower Derwent NNR. Another great year for this spectacular bird which is now well established as a regular winter resident. At least five individuals seen in January. A single regularly throughout February. A pair on 1st March, a female on 12th and 15th and a single on 27th. The regular small male was the last remaining bird and was seen on 1st, 5th and 12th April. He was also the first to return on the early date of 28th July but he seemingly moved on before being seen again in September on 3rd and 25th. Surprisingly there were no October records but birds arrived in force in November with an adult female on 2nd and an adult male on 19th and 22nd, up to three birds present from 25th to month end as an immature male joined the two adults, finally an immature female also arrived on 30th. Birds continued to be seen regularly in December, with six different individuals identified.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa*

Status: Breeding Resident

The only coveys of note were 26 at Newton-on-Derwent on 31st October, 25 at Claxton on 8th December and 13 on Dunnington Common on 26th. Still commoner than the Grey in the north of the area with a few chukar hybrids still being seen. An estimated 70 pairs bred on or adjacent to the Lower Derwent NNR.

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix*

Status: Breeding resident. Numbers appear to have stabilised

The largest coveys were: ten at Thornton Ellers on 12th January, 12 at Naburn on 22nd, 27 at Wheldrake Ings on 12th August with 13 at Thornton Ellers on 21st, 19 at Melbourne on 14th October and 10 at Dunnington Common on 15th.

An estimated 45 pairs bred on the Lower Derwent NNR or adjacent areas whilst good breeding success was recorded in the Brandsby area where farmers were persuaded to crop spray more thoughtfully.

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*

Status: Migrant breeder and passage migrant

Unprecedented numbers in the Lower Dewent NNR were not matched elsewhere with the only records of a single in sugar beet at Claxton on 12th July and two in winter wheat on 20th.

A total of 53-55 singing males were located during the breeding season. The first was on 10th May with birds arriving steadily thereafter. Most birds arrived in the first half of June with an obvious influx on 10th when ten new birds were found. Birds were still being found steadily in July with another small influx of six new males on 25th. Yet another small influx of six males was noted on 13th August. That some of these birds certainly found mates is confirmed by three broods of young seen-of eight at Thornton and six at Gunby in July and of 13 at Wheldrake on 11th August.

PHEASANT *Phasianus colchis*

Status: Resident breeder with many thousands released on the large shooting estates

No census but a minimum of 30 broods were seen on the 400 acre Wheldrake Ings section of the Lower Derwent NNR. When upwards of 20,000 are released in some of the larger estates in the north of the area then any numbers seen become superfluous.

GOLDEN PHEASANT *Chrysolophus pictus*

Status: Irregular escape

A male at Bishopthorpe on 25th April.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

Status: Resident breeder and winter visitor

In the Lower Derwent NNR up to six were seen regularly in January, 14 in February and seven in March. A record 27 singing males were found during the breeding season, partly as a result of tape lures. The first brood of nine was seen on 29th May, two further broods of one and five were found on 15th and 24th July. In addition 15 immatures were tape lured on Swantail Ings in mid August. In the autumn up to four birds occasionally in September, up to three in October until an arrival on 29th

brought nine birds. Excellent numbers in November with 38 birds by month end, 26 of these at Wheldrake Ings. Good numbers were maintained in December with 22 birds located. Assuming that birds were holding winter feeding territories, as they are thought to do, then at least 47 individuals were recorded from early November to year end with presumably many more birds present but undetected.

Elsewhere: Singles at York Water Works on 24th February, Castle Howard on 5th March and 15th November.

SPOTTED CRAKE *Porzana porzana*

Status: Rare passage migrant and rare migrant breeder

An astonishing year for a species that had only previously occurred three times, all in the Lower Derwent. A singing male at one site on 10th and 11th April. Two singing males at Wheldrake Ings on 31st May increasing to four on 10th June and five on 12th. The Wheldrake birds became less vocal after mid-June but continued to call until at least 9th July. When it was realised how many were present the original April site was re-checked and presumably what was the same male was heard singing on 18th June. The bird called almost exclusively between 2300 and 0300 hrs and it is quite possible, if not probable, that they had been around for some time before they were first heard. A single immature was seen on 20th August and tape-luring over the next few days revealed four immatures and an adult. The immatures were seen in three separate places, suggesting the possibility of three broods. In November, one on 13th and 17th with a different bird on 15th.

[BAILLON'S CRAKE] *Porzana pusilla*

Status: Vagrant

One at Wheldrake Ings on 27th March.

Awaiting description and not yet submitted to BBRC or YNU.

CORNCRAKE *Crex crex*

Status: Passage migrant and rare passage breeder

Two singing males were heard - one at Wheldrake Ings on 14th and 23rd June and the other at East Cottingwith Ings on 18th and 20th June. A female was also seen at Seavy Carr on 24th July - due to events elsewhere this site had hardly been visited previously and it is possible that this bird had been present undetected for some time, it is certainly an odd date for it to have arrived.

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

Status: Resident breeder

In the Lower Derwent NNR highest counts in the early part of the year were: 167 in

January, 183 in February and 289 in March. An estimated 260 pairs bred with good success. In an extended breeding season the first newly hatched brood was seen on 22nd March and the last on 15th August. A pair were nest building on 22nd August. Numbers at Wheldrake Ings declined, possibly because of aggressive encounters with the rapidly expanding Coot population here.

Maximum monthly counts later in the year included 289 in July; 160 in August; 207 in September; 300 in October; 441 in November and 367 in December.

Two pairs bred Rawcliffe Lake, two broods at Hessacarr Lake and also bred Red House although any small ponds in the area are likely to have a breeding pair. 18 in January at Castle Howard increased to 30 in February through to 1st September. 10 were on the Derwent between Howsham and Scrayingham on 16th January and 11 on the River Foss between Layerthorpe Road and Monk Bar on 8th February.

COOT *Fulica atra*

Status: Migrant and resident breeder and winter visitor

Nine on 6th January increased to 37 on 14th, 60 on 28th; 344 on 12th February, 502 on 18th, 443 on 26th; 641 on 6th March, 740 on 25th and a record 811 on 1st April. Numbers then fell to a record breeding population of 360 pairs. Breeding success was good despite the usual heavy predation by Carrion Crows. Most birds usually leave the valley in mid-June as water levels fall so 134 on the pool at Wheldrake Ings was noteworthy. Birds seem to be lingering later each year in the summer, this is presumably a reflection of the increased breeding numbers. In early July 91 were still present, declining to 47 on 1st August and 13 by the end of the month. Monthly maxima thereafter were 16 in September, nine in October and November and 27 in December.

Away from the Lower Derwent NNR 60 at Castle Howard on 7th February with 50 on 30th March to end of June. Seven pairs bred at Rawcliffe Lake which held up to 40 by the year end.

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*

Status: Passage migrant and migrant breeder

In the Lower Derwent NNR the wintering pair from 1994 remained until at least 4th February when they were joined by three more birds. Numbers then increased to 11 by 18th and to a record February count of 20 on 26th. Numbers continued to rise to reach a highest ever count of 35 on 14th March. Birds were well on territory by late March. Most birds breed off-site, with the adults and young feeding on the Reserve, making survey work less straightforward for this species. Nevertheless, a record 20 pairs bred. The first completed clutch was found on 1st April and a minimum of eight broods totalling 24 young were found.

Passage birds were: three north on 4th May, five on 3rd June with four next day; five

on 21st and three on 22nd. Up to 16 were seen regularly throughout July and then singles in August on 1st, 13th, 21st and 23rd.

Elsewhere: Bred along the river Ure at Ouseburn, Stillingfleet, Naburn and Elvington Airfield. Single at Castle Howard on 26th February with two from mid-April to July. Passage birds were two at Red House Res on 3rd March, a single at Tollerton on 5th, single at Warthill on 10th April and two at Red House on 13th. Two at Red House on 7th May, singles at Warthill on 22nd and Rufforth on 26th. Singles flew over Gilling on 21st June and 28th. A late bird at Red House Res. on 5th December.

AVOCET *Recurvirostra avosetta*
Status: Vagrant

One flew south on 2nd August. Second record for the site.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*
Status: Passage migrant and migrant breeder

An early single, in the Lower Derwent NNR, on 3rd March was followed by another on 14th. A pair arrived in 22nd March and was joined by a second pair on 1st April - at least one of these pairs thought to be incubating eggs by mid-April. A third pair at a second site had laid four eggs on 6th May all of which hatched and all four young fledged. A fourth pair was at a third site all summer but no signs of breeding were seen. As well as these breeding birds the following passage birds were seen: two on 16th May, six on 19th, three on 20th; one from 21st to 24th and two on 24th June. Elsewhere: One at York Water Works on 24th April and a pair for one day only at Monk Cross on 7th May. Two pairs bred at British Sugar but both nests destroyed by lorries due to construction work.

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*
Status: Passage migrant

The only records were from the Lower Derwent NNR. One on 26th February. A pair arrived on 10th March and settled down at the southern end of the valley until 16th May when they moved to the northern end. By 23rd they were thought to be incubating eggs but they apparently failed almost immediately and moved on at the month end.

Passage birds were also seen as follows: one on 30th April; two on 5th May, three from 20th to 22nd, 12 on 23rd and one from 24th to 27th. A sole autumn record concerns an immature on 24th August.

[KILLDEER] *Charadrius vociferus*

Status: Vagrant

One with Lapwing flocks on 11th, 25th and 26th December. First record for the reserve of this spectacular trans-atlantic vagrant.

Awaiting description and not yet submitted to BBRC and YNU

[AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER] *Pluvialis dominica*

Status: Vagrant

A moulting adult in the Lower Derwent NNR on 21st August.

Awaiting description and not yet submitted to BBRC or YNU.

GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

Status: Winter visitor and passage migrant

Once again the largest counts were from the Lower Derwent NNR. Highest count in the early part of the year was an excellent 6800 on 14th January, declining to 3570 on 26th February, then 5750 on 6th March, 4300 on 14th, 6300 and on 25th; 1700 on 1st April, 3100 on 10th, 1200 on 16th, 690 on 22nd and finally 45 flying north on 30th were the last spring birds.

The first returning bird flew south on 22nd June, then three on 28th and one on 30th. Two were seen on 2nd July, nine on 3rd, one on 21st, 150 on 26th; seven on 8th August, 17 on 11th, 69 on 19th, 200+ on 21st, 31 next day and 29 on 27th. Then, 3502 on 16th September declining to 3000 on 29th with 1200 on 8th October, 2100 on 15th and around 1000 daily, then 3200 on 12th November. Again around 1000 regularly with a December peak of 2075 on 13th.

Counts from elsewhere were 300 at Rosscarrs on 12th February with 230 between Wiggington and Sutton on Forest on 13th. Occasional records were received from Huby and Clifton Ings. 300 were at Knapton on 11th October, 400 at Newton on Derwent on 31st and 250 at Heslington on 29th November with 400 at Bishopthorpe on 18th December.

The fields around the new bypass seem to attract a number of late winter flocks with 250 on November 16th, 150 on 21st and 400 on 15th December. Two from a party of 22 at Castle Howard on 4th November repeatedly plunge dived in the middle of the lake.

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

Status: Passage migrant and winter visitor

A quite unprecedented 114 bird days in January in the Lower Derwent NNR exceeding all the previous bird days since 1980!

Seven on 7th increased to 11 on 14th, nine on 15th, ten on 16th and 19th and three on 22nd. A single on 28th February and two flew south on 8th March.

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

Status: Migrant breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor

The Lower Derwent NNR highest counts early in the year were: 3150 on 6th January; 3350 on 1st February, 7110 on 12th and 9790 on 26th. A splendid 11300 on 6th March, 3100 on 14th and 3670 on 25th; 1027 on 1st April with 360 on 4th the last flock of the spring.

Many breeding birds were on territory by mid-March. A record 290 pairs bred with nine completed clutches on 1st April the first of the year. Many broods appeared in early May but cold wet weather caused high clutch and chick loss, leading to numerous repeat clutches. In a protracted season the last unfledged young were seen on 26th July. The value of the Reserve as a chick rearing area was vividly illustrated by the minimum of 15 newly hatched broods which were seen being walked across a busy road and onto Bank Island from adjacent arable land.

The first post-breeding flock was of 370 on 21st June, then 240 on 2nd July, 407 on 15th, 1010 on 19th and 600+ on 21st; 200+ on 7th August, 450 on 12th and 1124 on 19th. Monthly maxima thereafter were: 4167 in September; 3700 in October; 3900 in November and 4700 in December. In addition, passage birds were: 2000 north on 26th September; 700 south on 10th October with 1700 north on 15th; 1000 south on 13th November.

Only other counts of note were: 900 at Moor Monkton on 1st January, 1000 between Wiggington and Sutton-on-Forest on 13th February, 410 at Stillington on 28th July and 400 at Heslington on 29th November.

KNOT *Calidris canutus*

Status: Winter visitor and passage migrant

One on 9th February with two on 26th; one on 6th March, three on 14th and one on 1st and 2nd April. Four flew south on 7th December with three on 30th and 31st. An excellent showing.

All records from Lower Derwent NNR.

SANDERLING *Calidris alba*

Status: Winter visitor and passage migrant

In the Lower Derwent NNR a splendid 10 on 28th February and 1st March with five on 11th and three next day.

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*

Status: Autumn passage migrant and rare winter visitor

Single juveniles on 5th, 6th and 9th September in the Lower Derwent NNR

TEMMINCK'S STINT *Calidris temminckii*

Status: Rare spring passage migrant

One at Bank Island on 16th May was relocated at Wheldrake Ings on 19th and 20th.

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*

Status: Passage migrant and winter visitor

In the Lower Derwent NNR in January, 271 on 1st increased to 970 on 6th, 1480 on 8th, 1540 on 9th, a maximum of 1900 on 14th and despite extensive flooding 1050 remained to 30th. Then, 3000 on 1st February, 620 on 5th, 337 on 18th and a new record count of 2128 on 26th. This record was promptly broken by an astonishing 2485 on 6th March. Numbers then declined to 2200 on 14th, 1050 on 25th, with 1061 on 1st April, 820 on 11th, 310 on 16th and 21 on 30th. In May, 20 in 1st, five on 2nd and a single on 17th. Two flew south on 21st June.

Surprisingly there were no records in July or August.

In September, three flew south on 7th, two south on 14th and one north on 26th. In October, one on 7th, two on 8th, three south on 10th and one south on 22nd. Single figures regularly in November with a maximum of 11 on 21st. In December, 127 on 3rd declined to a mere 10 during freezing weather from 27th.

RUFF *Philomachus pugnax*

Status: Rare breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor

An excellent January with 98 on 1st, 102 on 7th and a new record winter count of 234 on 14th and 100+ regularly to month end. In February, 136 on 1st, 151 on 5th and 104 on 12th and 18th. Five on 6th March, 59 on 14th and 71 on 25th, with lekking noted on 22nd. In April, 128 on 1st, 102 on 9th, 69 on 13th and 25th with 51 to month end. Lekking was noted regularly throughout April and six females were thought to be incubating by mid-May, with the last males departing on the rather early date of 12th May. No further proof of breeding was noted but presumably some of the females hatched young.

Autumn records were very sparse with singles on 7th August and from 25th to 4th September with another from 16th to 18th September. In October, one on 7th, seven on 8th, four flew west on 22nd and one south on 27th. Incoming wintering birds raised numbers in November with five on 18th, 13 on 19th, 15 on 22nd and 18 on 30th. Then, 56 on 4th December, 70 on 7th, 79 on 9th, 104 on 13th and a splendid 189 on 14th. Freezing weather reduced numbers to eight by year end.

Two white-headed males returned for their fifth and sixth winters on the Reserve.

Away from the Lower Derwent NNR a single at Red House Res. on 19th August.

JACK SNIFE *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Status: Winter visitor and passage migrant

An excellent year in the Lower Derwent NNR. Singles on 7th and 19th January with four on 22nd. One on 5th February. In April, singles on 1st, 11th and 14th with two on 15th, then singles on 17th, 26th and 27th.

A splendid October showing with six on 13th, singles from 16th to 18th, a record nine on 19th, one on 22nd and five on 28th. In November, up to nine regularly at Wheldrake Ings early in the month with further singles elsewhere on 13th and 18th. In December, four at Wheldrake Ings on 4th, two at Bank Island on 6th and singles at two further sites on 21st and 27th.

Appears to be scarce away from the Lower Derwent NNR with a few records from shooting parties in the north of the area, although I am glad to report that they do not shoot them.

COMMON SNIFE *Gallinago gallinago*

Status: Resident breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor

This skulking species is always grossly under-counted outside the breeding season. Peak counts this year in the Lower Derwent NNR were: 200 in January; 144 in February and a respectable 360 in March. An estimated 700+ on 10th April clearly included a large proportion of passage birds.

In an excellent breeding season birds were drumming from the early date of 5th March. A record 240 drumming males were found. In what was a protracted season the first completed clutch was found on 16th April and the last on 6th July.

Birds were flocking in early July with 160 on 2nd. Then, up to 200 in August; 57 in September; 100 in October; 97 in November and 470 in December.

Bred in the Ampleforth/Coxwold/Newbrugh area and up to five were reported from Castle Howard, Clifton Ings, Elvington Airfield, Gilling and Red House Res.

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

Status: Winter visitor and occasional rare breeding resident

Up to three regularly in Lower Derwent NNR in January and February. Probably bred at one site where two were seen on 16th April and regularly throughout May.

In autumn, three on 28th October and 4th November with a single on 26th. Singles regularly in December with an influx on 27th bringing an impressive 20 birds.

Bred Blackmoor and Peel Wood, Brandsby and at Newbrugh with regular roding at Yearsley. Only records in winter of a probable newly arrived migrant along the path at Castle Howard Lake on 26th November and two at Blackmoor on 28th December.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

Status: Passage migrant and rare breeder

The Lower Derwent NNR retains its monopoly of this delightful wader. Seven from 6th to 10th March, with six from 11th to 20th and two pairs remaining to month end. A single pair held territory during April with the female thought to be on eggs by mid-month. Both birds then disappeared in early May and were thought to have failed as usual. However, they reappeared on 22nd June accompanied by a very fluffy and very recently fledged juvenile, presumably having re-nested. First successful breeding since 1985 after many failed attempts. In addition, a male remained throughout April.

Passage birds included: 16 on 1st and 2nd April, five on 9th, 10 on 11th, 26 on 17th, five on 19th, 18 on 20th and 52 on 29th; two on 1st May, three on 6th and two on 21st. Two adults (not the breeding pair) on 18th June were intriguing.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*

Status: Passage migrant and winter visitor

One from 6th to 15th January in the Lower Derwent NNR.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

Status: Passage migrant

At the nationally important Wheldrake Ings roost the first bird appeared on 7th April with up to three daily thereafter until 23 on 18th and 53 on 19th and 20th. Counts then fluctuated with 79 on 28th and 86 on 29th; 107 on 1st May, 89 on 2nd, 70 on 3rd, 99 on 4th and 76 on 5th. Numbers then dropped to around 50 until 8th with 16 on 9th and then single figures until the last two on 16th.

In addition to the roosting birds a total of 185 birds flew north on 29th April.

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*

Status: Passage migrant, migrant breeder and winter visitor

Very scarce early in the year in the Lower Derwent NNR with up to four regularly in January, then up to 11 from 1st to 10th February, 32 on 12th, 37 on 18th and 230 on 26th. Record counts throughout March with 403 on 6th, 612 on 12th, 151 into roost on 21st, 210 on 22nd, 271 on 25th and 320+ on 26th. All these March counts were in addition to over 50 territorial pairs around the site. A further 445 passage birds were noted in April with 140 on 1st, 63 on 2nd and 17 on 3rd among the higher counts; nineteen on 29th moved through with Whimbrel at mid-day.

Another good breeding season with a record 97 pairs which included a notable increase in pairs on adjacent arable where 19 pairs bred compared with eight pairs in 1994. Success was excellent with the first chicks seen on 12th May. The main hatching period was from 24th to 26th May and the last unfledged young seen on 5th August.

The first post-breeding flock of 57 (including c.30 immatures) was noted on 22nd June. Good numbers of post-breeders/passage birds were seen from late June to end July with 272 on 4th July being exceptional. Then, up to 23 in August; 17 in September; six in October; five in November and 31 in December.

Elsewhere: bred Ampleforth, Coxwold, Terrington and Whenby and recorded in the breeding season at Castle Howard, Claxton, Dunnington Common, Newton-on-Ouse, Osbaldwick and Rufforth Airfield.

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*

Status: Passage migrant and occasional winter visitor.

In the Lower Derwent NNR one from 26th February until 21st March. A good April showing with two on 10th, three on 11th, one on 17th and one on 23rd.

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*

Status: Passage migrant, migrant breeder and winter visitor

Maxima early in the year were: up to 150 in January; 186 on 11th February, 220 + on 18th, a record (albeit short-lived) 381 on 26th; 396 on 6th March, 417 on 14th and 383 on 25th. The latter count was thought to be a significant under-count as many birds had dispersed onto breeding territories by then.

An estimated 200 pairs bred, a new record and a significant increase on recent years. The first completed clutch was found on 1st April, the first young being seen on 10th May with the peak of hatching on 21st when 14 broods were found on Bank Island alone. The last unfledged brood was seen on 18th July. Juveniles are staying later in the season now, presumably due to longer breeding seasons brought about by better water control.

Post-breeding flocks included 27 at Wheldrake Ings on 9th June, 67 at Bank Island on 20th, 39 and Wheldrake Ings on 26th and an impressive 216 there on 10th July with 39 remaining on 23rd and 11 on 31st. Eleven immatures remained on 3rd August, with seven on 7th and the last on 12th. A single passage bird on 28th August. In September, singles from 3rd to 7th and on 22nd. No records in October.,

First incoming winter birds were two on 6th November with four on 19th increasing to 11 by month end. Numbers increased rapidly in December with 18 on 4th, 89 on 9th, 97 on 13th and a respectable 112 on 14th but only six remained at year end following the hard freeze.

Few records away from the Lower Derwent NNR. Two at Elvington Airfield on 26th March and a single at Red House on 16th April. Absent from a traditional site at Palace Ings, Fulford.

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

Status: Passage migrant and occasional winter visitor

A single from 6th to 8th January was followed by a very disappointing spring passage with singles on 1st April and 2nd and 17th May.

Autumn passage was little better with singles on 25th July and 10th and 11th August, then three on 19th, one on 20th and 21st, two from 22nd to 30th and three on 31st. In September, singles from 1st to 3rd, two on 9th and one on 22nd.

Passage birds away from the Lower Derwent NNR were two at Castle Howard on 15th August, with one remaining to 25th and a single at Red House Res on 29th.

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

Status: Passage migrant and winter visitor

In the early part of the year the Lower Derwent NNR held up to four in January and February in the regular Pocklington Canal/Bielby Beck wintering site. In April, two daily with four on 14th and three on 16th. One daily throughout May. First returning birds were two on 21st June with three from 22nd to 30th. Four on 1st July with two daily from 2nd to 20th then five on 21st, three on 22nd, four on 24th and three on 31st. In August, five from 1st to 3rd, two from 4th to 16th, four on 17th, two on 18th, five on 19th, two from 20th to 26th, five on 27th and two from 28th to 31st. Good numbers in September with up to nine daily totalling 180 bird days. Birds then became virtually restricted to the canal area with, in October, four almost daily with five on 7th and six on 11th and 28th. Then up to five throughout November and December.

The only other record was of eight at Melbourne on 18th July.

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*

Status: Passage migrant

An average year in the Lower Derwent NNR. Singles on 16th and 17th May with two from 18th to 20th and one on 27th.

The only autumn record was a single on 23rd August.

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos*

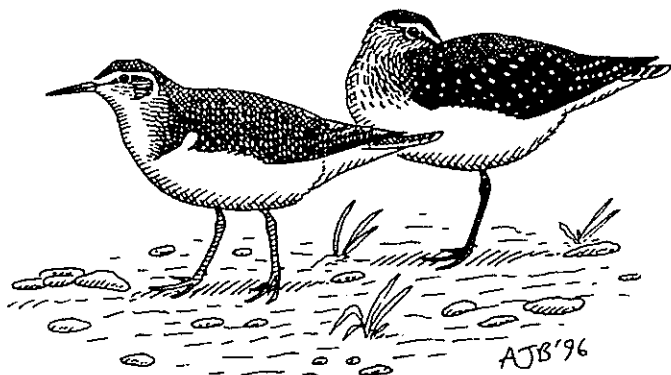
Status: Passage migrant and rare breeder.

The Lower Derwent NNR witnessed a very poor year. In April, singles on 8th, 11th, 12th and 15th with two on 16th and 19th. Singles 4th, 24th and 29th May.

In autumn, one on 3rd July, two on 4th and singles on 8th, 9th, 25th and 31st. One on 1st and 2nd August, two from 23rd to 26th and one from 27th to 31st. In

September, one from 1st to 17th with two next day.

Spring birds from elsewhere were singles at Red House Res on 27th April and 7th May. In autumn singles at Castle Howard on 7th and 21st August and again on 12th September. Singles Red House Res on 19th August and Monk Cross on 27th.



MEDITERRANEAN GULL *Larus melanocephalus*

Status: Passage migrant and winter visitor

Records continue to increase in the Lower Derwent NNR. An adult on 9th February with a first-winter bird on 11th. In March, adults on 2nd and 12th and first-winters on 9th and 25th. A good run in April with first-winters on 1st, 4th and 11th and two on 22nd; an adult in the gullery from 1st to 17th and a hybrid Black-headed x Mediterranean Gull on 13th and 15th. An excellent May with up to three first-winters and two hybrids all month in the gullery. Single first-winters on 2nd and 18th June and adults on 25th and 30th. A second-summer bird on 2nd and 8th July. The continued presence of birds loitering with intent in the gullery in the breeding season will surely produce a breeding pair in the not too distant future. The hybrids (first-winter birds) strongly support the belief that the hybrid pair of 1994 did indeed breed successfully.

At the year end, single adults on 22nd and 24th October and 3rd December.

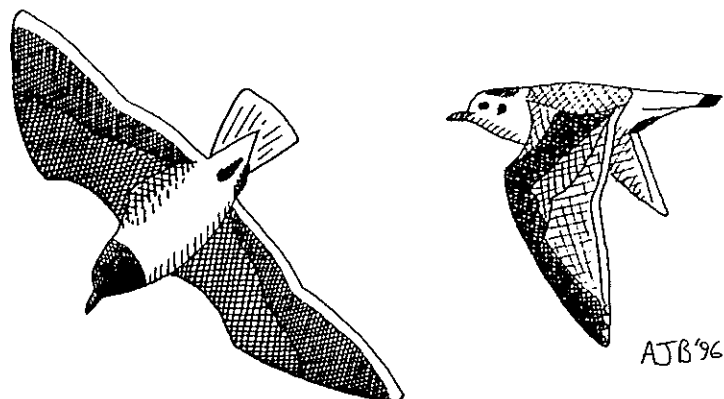
LITTLE GULL *Larus minutus*

Status: Passage migrant

An average year in the Lower Derwent NNR. Three adults on 11th April, one of which stayed to 14th, and a first-winter on 19th. A first-winter/first-summer bird in the gullery from 26th May to

5th June with a second bird on 30th May and another on 15th June, then three-second-summers next day.

A first winter at roost at Castle Howard on 22nd October.



BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus*

Status: Winter visitor, passage migrant and migrant breeder

Higher counts at the Wheldrake roost at the start of the year included: 5000 + on 7th January, 7000 on 8th, 11000 on 28th; 7000 + on 9th February, 23000 on 18th and an impressive 33000 + on 25th; 8500 on 8th March, 8000 on 22nd and 4300 on 27th; 1000 + on 2nd April, 574 on 19th and 300 on 19th.

Many birds had returned to the Wheldrake gullery by 15th March, eventually building up to a record 2910 pairs. In addition, 250 pairs held territory at North Duffield Carrs and 10 pairs similarly at Bank Island but both these colonies were deserted as water levels fell. At Wheldrake, the first eggs were noted on 16th April and the first young on 17th May with over 300 broods by 21st. The last juveniles fledged on 31st July.

Larger counts after the breeding season included: 730 on 29th August; 1150 on 17th September; 11000 south to roost on the Humber on 7th October with 17000 similarly on 11th. In November, up to 10000 flew south daily with 20000 south at dusk on 6th December and 6000 + roosting at Wheldrake Ings on 11th.

1100 were at Clifton Ings on 3rd January and the roost at Castle Howard held 3500 on 18th.

COMMON GULL *Larus canus*

Status: Winter visitor and passage migrant

Early year counts at the Wheldrake roost were: 350 on 8th January with 950 + on

28th; 2000+ on 9th February with 3000+ on 17th; 3100+ on 22nd March with 5000+ on 27th; 900 on 1st April with 100+ daily to 15th, 41 on 20th and 30+ to month end. Single figures regularly from May to July, then up to 40 flying south daily in August. No significant counts were made subsequently although birds were seen daily.

250 were at Clifton Ings on 3rd January, Castle Howard roost held 1500 on 11th and 500 on 4th February with 120 at Stillington on 12th March.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*

Status: Passage migrant and scarce winter visitor

Four on 28th January and two on 9th February were the only early winter records in the Lower Derwent NNR. Spring passage started at the beginning of March and up to ten were seen daily until the end of April. During this period regular single figure counts of *L. fuscus intermedius* and *L. fuscus fuscus* were made. Up to four daily in May, mainly first year birds and often involving birds loafing in the gullery. One or two in June, with a more marked movement from mid-month - four on 15th, six on 19th, seven on 20th, six on 22nd and 24th and 21 on 30th. Birds roosted regularly in the Wheldrake gullery throughout June. Up to five daily in July with 49 on 21st and 150 on 29th. Single figures throughout August with 39 on 27th including three *L. fuscus intermedius*. Up to 20 flying south daily in September with 29 on 17th and 127 on 26th. Seen daily in October with 105 on 3rd, 23 on 22nd and 73 south on 29th the larger counts. No November records and one on 30th the only December record.

The only other record was of six at Castle Howard on 1st September.

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

Status: Winter visitor and passage migrant

Counts in the early part of the year from the Lower Derwent NNR were: 31 on 8th January, 43 on 12th, 109 on 25th, 175 on 26th and 213 on 28th. Then followed by single figures until 270 on 22nd March and 281 on 27th. Up to 20 throughout April with 37 on 19th and 103 on 21st. Only occasional singles thereafter until 17 on 17th September, then up to 20 south each evening to month end. The only notable October count was of 65 on 3rd and there were no November records. In December, roost counts of 61 on 11th and 43 on 27th.

Four were at Clifton Ings on 3rd January with 50 at Castle Howard on 11th and ten there on 18th.

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucoides*

Status: Winter visitor

An adult at the Wheldrake roost on 21st March was the only record.

GLAUCOUS GULL *Larus hyperboreus*

Status: Winter visitor

A first-winter bird flying north on 6th March in the Lower Dewent NNR was the only record.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*

Status: Winter visitor and passage migrant

Early year roost counts at Wheldrake of 250 on 25th January, 310 on 26th and 429 on 28th. A dip in numbers in February with 23 on 1st and 21 on 12th the only notable counts. In March, 41 on 3rd and 17 on 22nd. Higher numbers in April, presumably of passage birds, with 30+ from 1st to 15th then 106 on 19th, 79 on 24th and 63 on 29th. Then regular single figure counts apart from 173 on 17th September. In October, 123 on 3rd and up to 30 daily thereafter. No November counts. In December, roost counts of 105 on 6th, 79 on 7th, 47 on 11th and 117 on 27th.

22 were at Clifton Ings on 3rd January, one flew north at Huby on 4th February and one to four were seen flying west throughout October at Brandsby.

KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*

Status: Winter visitor and passage migrant

Single adults on 9th February and in March on 19th and 24th with three on adults on 27th.

Two adults on 30th December.

All records from the Lower Derwent NNR.

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

Status: Passage migrant and rare migrant breeder

A dismal performance with one north on 19th April the only record in the Lower Derwent NNR. At Castle Howard two on 24th April with singles on 25th and 30th. Two at Castle Howard and Dringhouses on 20th July, three at Castle Howard on 31st and the last at Red House Res on 29th August.

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea*

Status: Passage migrant

Disappointingly in the Lower Derwent NNR only three singles were seen on 30th April, 20th May and 16th June.

An adult at Castle Howard on 31st August.

WHISKERED TERN *Chlidonias hybridus*

Status: Vagrant

A summer plumaged adult was found at 20.30 hrs. on 29th May and remained until 20.00 hrs. on 31st, giving good views and attracting many admirers.

First record for the Reserve (Lower Derwent NNR) and the first twitchable bird in Yorkshire since 1976. That it should turn up in the worst year ever for other tern species is quite extraordinary.

Accepted by BBRC. (S.C.Minns)

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger*

Status: Passage migrant

One of the worst years ever with just two singles - on 30th April and 3rd September in the Lower Derwent NNR and none from elsewhere.

LITTLE AUK *Alle alle*

Status: Vagrant

A dead bird at Heslington on 1st November and a long dead bird was picked up in the Lower Derwent on 12th December, presumably having arrived in the wreck on the east coast in November.

Last recorded October 31st 1991.

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*

Status: Resident breeder but very much under recorded away from the Lower Derwent NNR

100 plus at Thornton, 2nd January. 60 in the Lower Derwent NNR 28th January, with 31 on 1st February, 40 on the 2nd, 43 on the 11th and 21 on the 18th. Seen feeding in winter wheat field near Sutton-on-the-Forest, with 70 on 7th February, and 25 on the 13th. Resident breeder in the Lower Derwent where 137 were counted on 25th March mainly as pairs on territory. An excellent breeding season there with an estimated 100 pairs present. Seen daily around Brandsby, characteristically rising as a pair from a roadside puddle. Seen also in Sutton-on-the-Forest, A pair near Riccall on 22nd April, single at Newton on Ouse 6th May, with two on 24th June.

In the Derwent Valley, autumn flocks of 83 on 10th October and 79 on the 20th, then 17 on 3rd November were the only end of year counts.

WOOD PIGEON *Columba palumbus*

Status: Resident breeder.

Huge numbers present end of January in Wilberfoss. The only early count from the Lower Derwent NNR was over 2000 on 28th January. 100 plus were near Poppleton on 4th March. Counts from Newton on Ouse of 27 on 6th May and 11 on 24th June. Bred in Sutton on the Forest, Dringhouses and Askham Bog, where there was a roost of around 500 birds.

Bred as usual in the Lower Derwent NNR, with an estimated 500 pairs throughout the site. Bad weather from mid-November caused some visible movement, with 600 south on 16th, 1300 south on 17th and a flock of 2500 on 21st.

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

Status: Resident breeder.

Preyed upon by Sparrowhawk at Acomb Green in January and February and Brandsby Heights where they are apparently maintaining a steady population of between 11 and 15. Seen mating and nesting by mid March in Osbaldwick. Seen on 26th March in Poppleton, white bird with buff scaling, light grey primaries, dark eye, bill and collar, being courted by male. Still pale after moult (DA). Bred in Dringhouses. Regular visitor to the Lower Derwent NNR with an estimated 125 pairs breeding in surrounding villages. 10 pairs bred in Sutton on the Forest area, seen at High Carr plantation, Pond Head and daily in Huby area. Around 60 at Knapton on the 11th October. Five on Elm Park estate, York, 12th November, and 70 plus near Red Lion, Poppleton, on the 15th.

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*

Status: Migrant breeder, Passage Visitor.

First of the year was on the rather late date of 5th May, in the Lower Derwent NNR, where there were a record 19 breeding pairs, with two immatures present on 26th August. Heard in May in the Gilling area, however no record from the Brandsby area, despite a special search. A bird was calling at Naburn Sewage works on 7th July, also seen there 9th September. Observed throughout the breeding season at Bishops Wood and Brayton Barff. Last was on the Lower Derwent NNR on 10th September.

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*

Status: Migrant breeder.

First at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd April, with the next there on the more typical date of the 19th, then daily on the reserve from the 21st when one also at Poppleton. In Huby area from 1st May. Counts from SE5360 near Newton on Ouse were three on 6th May, one on 24th June. Male a mile NW of Warthill on 15th May and three in tops of oak trees in Stub Woods on 21st. Juvenile seen in Upper Poppleton being fed by

a Dunnock. Also recorded from Sutton-on-the Forest(male and female). Heard only occasionally in the Gilling area. A minimum of 42 singing males during the breeding season on the Lower Derwent NNR, with as usual a single hepatic female seen regularly. Most adults had left by the third week of June, with the first fledged juvenile seen on the 21st. Young birds were seen almost daily until 15th August, with seven on 31st July. The last were single juveniles in Poppleton on 1st September and the Lower Derwent Valley NNR on the 3rd.

BARN OWL *Tyto alba*

Status: Resident breeder.

One at Hagg Bridge on 29th March seen carrying food in June. On the Lower Derwent NNR, seen almost daily throughout the year and throughout the site. Survey work revealed an estimated 26 to 30 pairs in parishes around the reserve. In Elvington adults seen carrying food to nest site and also bred at Escrick. One seen to take a wren from the Wheldrake reed-bed in October.

Single birds at Wilberfoss on 6th and 20th January, Hovingham on 24th, Kexby on 5th February, Rufforth on 19th, Water Lane in March, Tilmire in the summer, Dunnington Common on 27th October, Riccall on 17th November, Ellerton on 1st December and in the Brandsby area on 8th and 10th, also Sutton-on-the-Forest. One dead at Castle Howard in February.

The BTO/Owl and Hawk Trust survey, now about to enter a second year of intense effort, has produced a fairly gloomy picture so far.

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

Status: Resident breeder.

Reported from Poppleton regularly in the same ash tree. Three individuals in SE56 and also recorded from Farlington and Crayke. The corpse of a long dead bird was found on Dunnington Common on 8th April. Bred at Crockey Hill, Fulford golf course, Heslington Tilmire and Langwith. A record 17 pairs bred on or adjacent to the Lower Derwent NNR, where the population seems to be spreading out from the long established core areas at North Duffield, Thorganby and Thornton. One pair bred in the same ash tree as a pair of barn owls. First fledged young seen on 14th June. One at Storwood on 19th September, and one calling near Appleton Roebuck on 22nd. Also seen near Deighton and Morby Wood.

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

Status: resident breeder throughout the area.

Still fairly well heard throughout the area. Roosting in Acaster church yard on 6th May in thick conifer. Two heard Skipwith Common on 21st June. Bred at Sutton-in-the-Forest and Dunnington Common, and as usual in Osbaldwick, with juveniles

calling from July. Two pairs regularly calling in the Gilling area. A record 29 pairs bred in the Lower Derwent NNR, with concentrations of five pairs at both Wheldrake and Thornton. Heard in Stub Woods in October, with two males south of Monk Stray on the 8th.

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus*

Status: Resident breeder and winter visitor.

One pair bred on the Lower Derwent NNR, raising a single juvenile which was first heard hunger calling on 16th July; this is the first breeding record for the site. Single birds also seen in February on 19th, 23rd, 24th and 26th, involving two birds. A long dead individual was found on 1st April. At the year end, a single on 17th December. The only other records were from Naburn Wood, Pool Bridge Farm and Sutton Park Wood.

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

Status: Casual breeder and passage/winter visitor.

On the Lower Derwent NNR, a pair were seen carrying food into a suitable nesting area during June. Presumably they were feeding young, although none were seen and the nest site was not checked. Otherwise it was an awful year for what was once one of the characteristic birds of the valley but one which is seemingly nowadays in severe decline. Singles were seen on a few dates in November and December. The only record outside the reserve was a dead bird at Woodthorpe in August (road casualty on the bypass).

NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Status: Migrant breeder.

Bred again in Yearsley Forest and possibly other woods in the same area. Two seen, and three heard, Skipwith Common on 21st June. An on going survey is being carried out on Skipwith Common during the summer months and it is hoped to have a report of the findings in the 1996 report.

SWIFT *Apus apus*

Status: Migrant breeder throughout the area and passage visitor.

First was on the Lower Derwent NNR on 26th April, then at Poppleton on 1st May, with three in Osbaldwick on 2nd and 3rd, then seen daily in increasing numbers throughout area. At nest site in Brandsby by the 4th.

Numbers on the Lower Derwent NNR built up to 100 on 13th May, 120 on 15th and over 300 on 16th. In Osbaldwick flocks built up to over 30. 60 plus in Poppleton by 11th June with 100 plus over Castle Howard lake on 17th and large numbers the same

month over Strensall Common. Noted in Wilberfoss that many previous nesting sites now useless due to house "improvements", probably reflected across the area and country - a bleak future unless they can adapt or we help by for example customised roof tiles, but who really cares?(ALW)

Large feeding parties in late July on the Lower Derwent NNR, with 80 on 21st, 170 on 22nd and over 400 on 24th. Birds left quite early, with most birds leaving mid-August, though singles were seen to 11th September. All departed from Brandsby area by 9th August, except one on 29th. Last at Rawcliffe lake on 14th August with one in York centre on the 21st. Eight were at Castle Howard on 1st September, with two there on 13th, and two in the Lower Derwent on the 14th the last.

KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

Status: Resident breeder.

Singles at East Cottingwith on 22nd January and Wilberfoss on the 30th. A good year on the Lower Derwent NNR with at least 11 and possibly as many of 15 pairs breeding, five of them in the Wheldrake Ings/Bank Island area. Two pairs were feeding broods of six and seven there in May and are thought to have reared second broods in June/July. A pair fledged five young at Thornton on 22nd June. Probably bred near Clifton Bridge, York and also present in breeding season on the Ouse at Fulford Ings, Naburn, Palace Ings, with young fledged at Clifton Ings. On the River Derwent during the breeding season at Howsham Bridge and Scrayingham and on River Rye at Butterwick. Seen daily throughout the year at Rawcliffe Meadows, feeding at ponds and ditches(MH). Three together in Poppleton on 25th July. Seen also in summer at Bishopthorpe and Acaster Malbis.

Post breeding singles on the Foss and tributaries and at Castle Howard on 20th September.

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

Status: Resident breeder but not widespread.

Singles on Derwent Valley NNR on 7th and 8th January and 19th February, Ampleforth on 7th May, Wheldrake Wood on 6th July, and in the Yearsley area. Present during the breeding season at Bulmer, Morby Wood, Stillingfleet and the first record for four years from Brandsby High Wood. One pair probably bred in the Lower Derwent NNR with birds seen regularly in the spring, a single on 14th August with an adult and an immature on the 23rd. Calling in Stub Woods in August, September and November.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major*

Status: Resident breeder throughout the area.

One at Castle Howard on 18th January, one calling alarm call in Stub Woods 26th

January, drumming on 12th February and holding territory by the 16th. On 4th March, two drumming about 300 yards apart. One at Askham Bog on 4th April where breeding took place. One at Forest Farm 22nd May. Regular visitor to nut feeder in Gilling garden, bred in oak tree in adjacent field with male, female and two juveniles subsequently seen feeding in the garden (JW). On the Lower Derwent NNR, an estimated 15 pairs bred with six pairs in the Wheldrake Ings/Bank Island area. Broods were seen here during May and at Bubwith and Ellerton in June. Seen feeding young at Moor Lane on 2nd June. Juvenile out of nesting hole in Stub Woods by 10th June, juvenile there being fed by male on the 15th. Recorded throughout the year at Dunnington with two young raised, one of which fed on nuts in a local garden on 11th June. Seen at Yearsley Moor on 18th. Recorded throughout the year in Dringhouses and came to nuts in Upper Poppleton. Bred Hovingham Woods, Newbrugh Woods and Peel Park. Pair at Overton near Skelton during the summer. Pair feeding close together on the same branch in Stub Woods late November, and feeding on ground in December. Heard drumming on 17th.

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopus minor*

Status: Resident breeder but under recorded.

Once again a pair probably bred in or adjacent to the car park at Wheldrake Ings. A further two pairs were present in the area and may have bred in the adjacent Thicket Priory. Drumming was first heard on 18th February. Two singles were with tit-flocks on 14th October and a single on 6th and 14th December.

The only other report was a bird drumming and calling in Stub Woods on 8th April.

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

Status: Resident breeder and winter visitor.

50 feeding on Acaster airfield on 28th January when 1520 on Lower Derwent NNR. One singing and display flight 2nd February near Stillington. First singing on Lower Derwent NNR on 5th February where there were an estimated 300 singing males in the breeding season. 13 pairs present at Forest Farm, Warthill on 22nd March and also observed on the 31st and 30th May. Counts from SE5360 near Newton-on-Ouse of 13 on 6th May and 14 on 24th June. Noted in the Brandsby area to be still present in the usual habitats but in much smaller numbers. One pair bred in Sutton-on-the-Forest.

In the Lower Derwent NNR westerly passage in autumn included 90 on 11th September, 143 on 12th, 110 on 21st, 120 on 26th; 300 on 8th October, 50 on 9th, 450 on 11th then 120 on 13th November and 80 on 15th. 90 on Dunnington Common on 19th December with 200 plus at Newton-on-Derwent on the 30th.

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

Status: Summer breeder in suitable habitat and passage migrant.

First a single in the Lower Derwent on the 21st March with five on 24th and six the next day. Daily from 1st April with larger counts of 100+ on 4th, 150 on 5th and up to 250 on 15th. Single at Shiptonthorpe on 30th March with one at Poppleton the following day and four at Rawcliffe Lake and Castle Howard on 1st April, increasing there to 300 on the 15th and 500 by 12th May. Seen April 20th and 23rd, Rawcliffe Meadows.

Five near Ouse Bridge on 13th May and frequently seen in York city centre throughout summer. 50 plus in Poppleton by 7th June. Ten pairs bred in the river bank at North Duffield Ings and 17 pairs at Sutton on Derwent.

Large numbers roosting in the Lower Derwent in August built up to a peak of 4100 on 23rd. Up to 1000 in early September but most birds had left by 15th with up to 30 thereafter until singles on 29th and 30th with the last on the 10th October.

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

Status: Summer breeder and passage migrant.

An early single on 25th March on the Lower Derwent NNR was the first with the next on 23rd April, five on 15th, 15 on 7th, 60 on 15th, 200+ on 17th and daily thereafter. Elsewhere, single birds at Strensall on 4th April, Castle Howard on the 7th, Dunnington on the 8th, Gilling on the 12th and Poppleton on the 13th. Around 100 at Castle Howard on 12th May.

Pair inspecting cart shed, Acaster Malbis, 30th April. In Huby, nested under roof of open sided shed in garden. Three pairs bred in the hide at North Duffield Carrs, rearing a total of 12 young. Two seen to fly into garage in Osballdwick on 23rd July.

Roost counts of up to 5000 on the Lower Derwent NNR in August, then 3000+ on 12th September with 500 at Dunnington Common on the 14th. Noted to be leaving Osballdwick by 19th, 500+ on Lower Derwent NNR on the 20th and 200+ to month end. In October, 34 on 7th, 120 on 9th, 30+ on 10th with singles on 14th and 21st being the last.

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbica*

Status. Summer breeder although evidence of a slight decline in numbers and passage migrant.

First was a single on the Lower Derwent NNR on 5th April, then two on 7th, 25 on 15th, 60 on 22nd and mass arrival of over 1000 on 29th, after which birds were seen daily. Elsewhere, singles seen from 14th and to nest in the Brandsby area by 23rd. Here however at one observed nesting site with 13 existing nests, only seven were occupied and none were double brooded. Numbers also appeared to be less in

Osballdwick, however breeding in better numbers this year in the villages in the Lower Derwent. Nested in Gilling and Huby.

On 23rd August 2000+ feeding at dusk at Wheldrake Ings. In September 1000+ on 12th after which birds left very quickly with 34 on 28th. Birds were leaving Osballdwick by 19th September with large numbers passing from late September, the last party being on 2nd October. A pair still on nest on 30th September. 30 plus still present at Castle Howard on 2nd October with three on the 11th the last.

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

Status. Summer breeder although a decline in numbers in recent years.

First recorded 7th April in Black Wood where two pairs bred and they appear to be getting fewer each year. (PH) The only spring bird on the Lower Derwent was on 10th April. One at Skipwith Common on 24th April and one singing on Fulford Golf course on 3rd May. Male near Moorlands on 23rd May when two males at Strensall Common, with five in the area on 17th June where breeding took place. One calling Wheldrake Woods 6th July. Also recorded in Newbrugh, Stearsby and Slingsby.

Singles on Lower Derwent NNR on 31st July and 29th August, with four on 9th September, one on 11th and three on 26th. A relatively good showing for the reserve.

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

Status: Resident and migrant breeder and passage migrant.

30 at Newton Maske on 28th January with 60 on the Lower Derwent NNR on 1st February. A small passage at Huby on 21st February. Breeding birds arrived back on 20th March in the Lower Derwent valley, where an estimated 330 pairs bred, and as with most passerines this year, productivity appeared high.

Counts from SE5360 near Newton on Ouse were seven on 6th May and again on 24th June. Present around Sutton on the Forest with up to 5 regularly at Rawcliffe Lake throughout the year.

Flock of 30+ on 16th September at Poppleton and in the Lower Derwent autumn passage birds arrived from 10th September when a fall dropped 300+ birds on to the reserve. 400 flew west the next day with 50+ almost daily during the month from then on plus 150 roosting on 20th and 700 in a single flock on 26th. In October, 250 flew west on 8th, 800+ west in small flocks of up to 30 all day on 10th, 350+ roosted on 12th and 210 on 30th. In November, 90 flew west on 15th and 700 came to roost on 26th.

ROCK PIPIT *Anthus petrosus*

Status: An irregular visitor to the area.

Two at Castle Howard on 22nd October and one flying south in the Lower Derwent

NNR on 5th December were the only records.

WATER PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta*

Status: An irregular spring visitor.

The only record was of one at Rawcliffe Lake on 15th April.

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*

Status: Summer breeder and passage migrant.

First was a single on the Lower Derwent NNR on 25th March then seen daily from 1st April with 80+ on 29th. Singles at Rawcliffe Lake on 18th, Castle Howard on 21st and at Poppleton on 27th. Four were at Forest Farm, Warthill on 27th and again on 15th May with eight there on 22nd and six on 6th June. Singles at Spellar Beck, Stearsby on 2nd May, Newton on Ouse on the 6th and Poppleton on the 24th.

Approximately 65 pairs bred on the Lower Derwent NNR slightly down on 1994; those that did breed did well with many young birds seen. Two pairs on Naburn railway line walk 1st June and one near Wheldrake on the 17th while another was at New Lane, Huntington, on the 18th. At least one pair bred at Rawcliffe Meadows, a welcome occurrence given the apparent demise of this species on the Ouse Ings. One pair were at Overton near Skelton throughout the summer.

In the Lower Derwent NNR post breeding flocks were 17 on 5th July and 24 on 31st when four at Rawcliffe Lake. 24 at North Duffield Carrs on 5th August increased to 41 by 13th. Southerly movement was noted in late August, with 37 on 20th, 83 on 21st, 27 on 22nd, 13 on 29th and ten on 30th and 31st. In September, roost counts included 30+ on 9th, 33 next day, 160+ on 11th, then day counts of 17 on 15th, three on 19th and two on 27th the last.

A female showing the characteristics of Blue-headed Wagtail (*M.f. flava*) paired with a male Yellow Wagtail at Thornton in May and June with another at Barmby March on 8th July. A male on 10th September.

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

Status: Resident breeder, slowly increasing.

Two at Poppleton on 7th January, up to six on the Lower Derwent NNR in January with eight in February and also regularly in Dunnington during January and February. One at Mill Beck, Brandsby on 23rd February, where they later bred, also recorded from Rectory Beck. Singles at Burnholme Beck on 26th February and Castle Howard on 19th March, with two at Rawcliffe Lake on the 21st. One near Layerthorpe on 26th and one on the Foss near Rowntrees warehouses on 2nd May.

Frequent throughout the summer on the River Ouse in York centre from 6th May

where breeding took place and one was at Newton-on-Ouse 18th May. Two pairs bred on the Pocklington Canal, with another pair on the Bielby Beck. One pair probably bred at Bank Island.

Two at Castle Howard on 12th September, a single at Burnholme Beck on the 17th, a pair at New Earswick on 21st with a pair at Appletree Village on 30th. A strong September showing on the Lower Derwent with birds seen daily and up to 15 present, then up to nine in October and 19 in November, after which numbers declined. Two at Rawcliffe Lake from 4th October to 14th November singles on the Foss, Stonegate and Osbaldwick in October and at Hassacarr Pond Dunnington, where bird seen to year end. Two at Poppleton on 16th December.

PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba*

Status: Resident breeder.

Only counts early in the year on the Lower Derwent NNR were 31 on 8th January and 71 on 25th. 8 on Stockton Lane on 30th and 15 near Kwiksav, Clifton Moor on 19th February. 10 at Rawcliffe Lake throughout the year.

Bred in Sutton on Forest area. Probably bred at Huby. Dramatic increase in breeding birds on Lower Derwent NNR compared with recent years with 57 found holding territory many second broods seen. Pair feeding young in Copmanthorpe on 28th June and adult feeding juvenile in Stub Woods on 6th August. Three juveniles at Castle Howard lake 1st September.

In Lower Derwent NNR and surrounding area peak counts in September were 130+ on 10th and 230 on 12th. Then in October, 147 on 3rd, 193 on 7th and 61 on 23rd. In November, 270 on 13th and 73 on 25th and in December 1609 on 7th and 130 on 15th.

Amazingly, no records of birds showing the characteristics of White Wagtail (*M. a.alba*) for the first time in many years on Lower Derwent NNR, but one was seen at Rawcliffe lake on 5th April.

WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulus*

Status: Occasional winter visitor.

The only report was a single in the car park at Wheldrake Ings on 27th December. A forerunner of things to come?

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Status: Resident breeder throughout the area.

24 roosted in the reed-bed at Wheldrake Ings on 8th January.

Bred Askham Bog, many noted, and Dringhouses. Common around Gilling and Yearsley Woods, Huby, Yearsley Moor, bred in Sutton on Forest. Counts from SE5360 near Newton on Ouse 12 on 6th May and 6 on 24th June. Pair nested in an old swallow nest under roof of open sided shed in garden in Huby (MD).

On the Lower Derwent NNR sample breeding season counts of 57 singing males at Wheldrake Ings, 21 at Thornton Ellers and nine along the river bank between Wheldrake Ings and Bank Island would extrapolate to a total of 400 pairs across the whole site.

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*

Status: Resident breeder throughout the area.

Singing at Osbaldwick from 2nd February with display flight on the 26th.

Confirmed breeding in Dringhouses and many other areas. Four juveniles on Osbaldwick cycle track on 26th April and four in Poppleton 11th June. Common everywhere.

On Lower Derwent NNR sample counts of 57 singing males at Wheldrake and 17 at Thornton Ellers would extrapolate to a total of around 370 pairs across the whole site.

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

Status: Resident breeder throughout the area.

Common everywhere including Huby and Yearsley Moor, where over 20 were counted in an hour's walk on 25th February.

A bird began building a nest in an open fronted next box in Dringhouses during February. The first egg was laid on 2nd March with one laid at daily intervals until 6th when the clutch of five eggs was complete. The female then started incubating deserting on 10th March when the nest was predated (DM). Counts from SE 5360 near Newton on Ouse 5 on 6th May and 11 on 24th June

In the Lower Derwent NNR sample counts of 61 singing males at Wheldrake Ings and 19 at Thornton Ellers would extrapolate to a total breeding population of 400 pairs. 23 were singing at Thornton Ellers on 10th October.

NIGHTINGALE *Luscinia luscinia*

Status: Infrequent summer visitor.

A singing male in the car park at Wheldrake Ings on 20th and 21st May was the third record for the reserve.

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

Status: Resident breeder and winter visitor and migrant.

Large numbers - up to 50 birds feeding on fallen apples in Dringhouses during the winter months. Singing in Osbaldwick from 4th February where this species forms the major part of the dawn chorus. An early brood being fed in the nest on 2nd March on the Derwent Valley NNR. Defending territory and carrying food by 10th April in Osbaldwick with young in garden by 2nd May. Bred in Dringhouses, Huby and Sutton on the Forest. Counts from SE5360 near Newton on Ouse 12 on 6th May, 5 on 24th June. Bred in apparently normal numbers, estimated at 120 pairs, on Lower Derwent NNR but success low. Although many fledged birds were seen their subsequent survival seemed lower, presumably due to the long hot summer reducing food availability.

A roost at North Duffield Carrs regularly held up to 25 birds in September. 30 at Hassacarr Pond, Dunnington on 30th October. 47 came in to roost in the car park bushes at Wheldrake Ings on 25th November and an influx at year end brought small parties of 35 on 28th December, 19 on 29th and 17 on 31st.

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

Status: Winter visitor.

Numbers relatively low early in year with few staying any significant time in the area. 200 plus in a fields near Buttercrambe in January and up to 1500 in the Lower Derwent where there were no significant counts in February and up to 150 in March with 25 at Forest Farm on 31st. None seen in garden at Huby for the first time.

Passage birds moving in April with 370 in Lower Derwent on 1st, 43 on Dunnington Common on the 4th, 1000 at Claxton on the 13th, 50 at Tilmire on 22nd and 90 at Strensall on the 24th. Flocks of 300 and 250 moved north in the Lower Derwent NNR on 23rd with grounded flocks of 800 on 26th and 127 on 29th the last. Outside the reserve the last were on 10th May.

The first of the autumn were early with nine at Castle Howard on 31st August. In the Lower Derwent a single flying north-east on 26th September then none until 21 on 22nd October, 19 on 29th, 20 on 2nd November, 19 on 15th, 350 on 18th and an influx of 1050 on 26th - a very late and protracted arrival. Better numbers in December with 2000+ on 13th, 3500 on 24th, 4700 on 27th and 1500 on 30th. 200 plus were at Poppleton on 13th and 700 in the Black Barn area, Wheldrake, on the 15th when 150 at Wilberfoss. Around 400 descended on a holly tree near Bransdby on 27th December and 200 plus in the Gilling area on 29th December.

Late records for 1994: 2000+ on 6th February roosting at Newton Maske and 1 at Wilberfoss on 1st September

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

Status: Unclear. Resident breeder but with mixed success and in decline in some areas.

Song heard in Gilling 29th January where occasional single birds only were seen. Three males singing on 30th January in Wilberfoss with two on Stockton Lane and three on Hempland Avenue on 8th February. Singing in Osbaldwick from 4th and from the 7th at Acaster Malbis. The only significant winter record from Lower Derwent NNR was a small influx of 13 on 18th.

Five pairs bred at Wheldrake Ings, four pairs at Thornton Ellers, two pairs at Bank Island and scattered pairs elsewhere. Two pairs raised second broods and one pair a third. However, as with Blackbird, few immatures survived to autumn. Nested in garden in Osbaldwick where numbers of this species were still good, however now becoming uncommon in the Brandsby area. Bred in Dringhouses, a single adult feeding up to three recently fledged young in garden at Huby from 9th - 12th June. Bred at Sutton-on-the-Forest. At least one pair bred at Naburn sewage works with juveniles seen there on 7th July and at Hassacarr Pond, Dunnington. Pair at Coneythorpe wood, Castle Howard estate on 1st September.

A small influx on Lower Derwent NNR with 15 west over Wheldrake Ings on 8th and seven at Thornton on 17th. In December small parties of seven on 27th and nine next day.

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

Status: Winter visitor in varying numbers.

As with Fieldfare numbers on Lower Derwent NNR low early in year with 1000 on 28th January, no significant counts in February then up to 100 regularly in March. 20 plus at Poppleton on 15th February. The only April record and the last of the spring was of 247 on Lower Derwent NNR on the 4th.

Heard calling at roost near Askham Bog on 9th October with over 30 present at Poppleton on 27th. In the Lower Derwent the autumn arrival very late with 50 on 21st October the first then smaller numbers thereafter despite moderate nocturnal passage being heard each night from 22nd to month end. Nocturnal passage noted in Osbaldwick on the 13th and 85 were at Dunnington on the 30th. In November, in the Lower Derwent 600 on the 2nd, 45 on the 8th, 40 on the 15th and 550 from 26th to the month end. Then 1300 on 13th December and 2000+ from 24th to 27th. Elsewhere: none seen in Huby for the first time and none seen on passage in Brandsby area the first being 11 birds accompanying Fieldfares on 27th December. In Osbaldwick 40 in accommodation fields on 31st December when 100 in Dunnington.

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*

Status: Resident breeder and winter visitor.

Two at Heworth cricket ground on 6th February, one male singing at Breighton Barff

on the 12th and four on the 14th. The only early year count on Lower Derwent NNR was 17 on the 28th and 60 flew north-west on 22nd March at Poppleton. Pair with seven juveniles in Bransdby Rectory on 24th May seen often until 20th August. On the Lower Derwent NNR a total of 23 breeding pairs. Immature survival seemed to be better than that of Blackbirds and Song Thrushes judging by the number of family parties seen on newly cut hay fields. Twelve were on an early cut field on 21st June then many small flocks in July with 39 on 2nd and 47 on 15th the maxima. No August counts and flocks of 13 and 26 on 19th and 20th September the last significant parties seen.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia*

Status: Migrant breeder but only just hanging on.

Six singing males were found during the breeding season on the Lower Derwent NNR the first being on 5th May. Three of these were at Wheldrake Ings where one pair is thought to have raised two broods. There were no reports from elsewhere in the recording area.

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Status: Migrant breeder which seems to be thriving and passage migrant.

First of the year on the Lower Derwent NNR were two on 8th April followed by three on 11th increasing to eight on 22nd and 14 on 30th. A single at Rawcliffe Lake on 5th May was first for this site. Present in SE5360 near Newton on Ouse on 6th May and near Appleton Roebuck the following day. By 17th May 346 singing males were at Wheldrake Ings. The first full breeding survey revealed a cacophonous 1360 singing males with 420 at Wheldrake Ings, 490 along the canal corridor and good numbers elsewhere. 17 counted on the Ouse between the Monument and Red House Res on 7th June. Bred at Rawcliffe Meadows, and by the Derwent at Old Malton and Howsham Bridge. One singing at Castle Howard on 24th July. Last at Rawcliffe Lake on August 9th but at Wheldrake Ings at least 200 were still present on 15th where adults were still feeding young on 22nd. In September, 11 on 9th, seven on 11th, five on 17th, three on 21st and the last singles on 29th and 10th October.

REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Status: Migrant breeder and passage migrant.

First near the wind pump at Wheldrake Ings on 10th April, with one on the reserve on 19th, two on 21st, four on 27th and seven on 30th. Singing at Hollow Swang, Skipwith Common, on 1st May. At Castle Howard present from 8th May and throughout the month. Over 100 singing males were at Wheldrake Ings by mid-May. Many of these left however to leave a breeding population of 127 singing males including 61 at Wheldrake Ings, 49 along the canal corridor and scattered pairs elsewhere. At least 100, mainly juveniles, were at Wheldrake Ings on 15th August, while adults were still feeding young there on 17th. A fall on 23rd with 15 at

Thornton Ellers. Last of the year were seven on 20th September, two on 26th, singles from 27th to 30th, up to five in the first week of October and finally two on 11th.

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

Status: Migrant breeder probably under recorded.

First were on 30th April, with a male at Heworth Without, a single on Bank Island and several on Dunnington Common. A single at Castle Howard on 6th May when a pair on Dunnington Common. One near Newton on Ouse on 24th June. Seen in SE5864, Sutton-on-the-Forest, and Park Woods nearby, also Marton, Batrudding Farm (in thick hawthorn), and singing near Brayton Barff between May and July.

A good breeding season on the Lower Derwent with 37 pairs located. One at Osbaldwick on 24th July and one at Poppleton on 4th August. On 21st and 22nd August, a family of four gave delightful views, playing, feeding and flitting around in Brandsby. Last of the year were one at Wheldrake Ings on 13th September and two at Thornton Ellers on 17th.

WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

Status: Migrant breeder probably under recorded.

First in the Lower Derwent NNR on 19th April with two on 23rd and six by 30th. One at Brayton Barff on 27th April with two on the 28th when one in Poppleton and at Heworth Without on the 30th and three at Dunnington Common. Two near Newton on Ouse on 6th May. One at South Holme on 7th when male in full song near Appleton Roebuck. Recorded from roadside territories around Brandsby from 11th.

Bred in apparently normal numbers in the Lower Derwent with 180 singing males throughout the site including 93 at Wheldrake Ings. Two near Rufforth on 26th May and eight in Bishops Wood on 30th. Seen Park Woods, Sutton-on-the-Forest. Large number displaying on Outgang at Heslington on 17th June. Two pairs bred at Hassacarr Pond, Dunnington and two held territories in Poppleton on 9th July. One present from August 7th to 11th at Rawcliffe Lake was a new bird for the site. Last in York on 4th September and last at Thornton Ellers

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

Status: Migrant breeder.

A single at Wheldrake Ings on 1st May was the first increasing to 11 on 13th. Eight at Brayton Barff on 7th, present at Forest Farm the same day and on 15th and 22nd. Singles at Castle Howard on 8th and 13th and ten at Bishop's Wood on 30th. Present at Moorlands on 7th June and in Yearsley Forest, Newbrugh Wood and Peel Park although probably under-recorded. Present at Sutton-on-the-Forest.

Breeding numbers in Lower Derwent NNR appeared slightly down on 1994 with an

estimated 60 pairs throughout the site. Some good late August counts from Thornton Ellers with around 60 there on 23rd, 20 plus on 30th and the last on 15th September.

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*

Status: Migrant breeder and winter visitor in small numbers.

Male at Poppleton on 3rd and 24th January with a pair present on 27th April. Singing males at Wheldrake Ings on 8th April and Stub's Wood on the 13th when single at Castle Howard. Male near Malton Road on the 14th, three at Wheldrake Ings on 17th and eight by 30th with three near Rufforth on the 26th. Nine at Brayton Barff on 24th April rose to 12 by 28th. One was at Huntington Road on 2nd May and 15 at Bishop's Wood on 30th.

Breeding numbers appeared to be slightly down on recent years in the Lower Derwent NNR with 37 singing males in Wheldrake/Bank Island area, six at Thornton Ellers and a further 27 elsewhere. Four on 15th September, with three on 20th and singles until month end.

A male at Dringhouses on 8th November, a female at Selby on 26th and a male at Thornton on 27th December. Present all year in Sutton-on-the-Forest

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Status: Migrant. Possibly lost as a breeding species.

A single at Brayton Barff on 26th April with two singing there on the 27th and one the following day.

The only other record is of a single juvenile with other passage warblers at Thornton Ellers on 23rd August.

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*

Status: Migrant breeder, passage migrant and occasional winter visitor.

A single at Wheldrake Woods on 1st January with one in a tit flock at Thornton Ellers on the 29th and again on 4th February.

First incoming birds were singles at Wheldrake Ings daily from 14th March, one at Brayton on the 15th and one in Appletree village on the 16th with two at Wheldrake Ings on 19th and from 25th onwards. One in Poppleton and one singing in Stub Woods on the 31st. Present in Gilling Woods from the end of March. Two at Sturges Pond on 1st April and seven at Brayton Barff on the 15th. Two at Moorlands on 28th May with 18 at Bishops Wood on the 30th. Common on Yearsley Moor in June. Breeding numbers in Lower Derwent NNR still at a very low ebb although seven singing males held territory compared with two in 1994.

Good numbers of passage birds in Wheldrake Ings in September with nine on 11th, 14 on 12th, three on 14th and 18th, seven on 21st and 11 on 30th. Passage bird near Tang Hall library on 22nd. Up to three birds singing regularly at Wheldrake Ings and Thornton Ellers at end of September. In October, three at Thornton Ellers on 7th, two at Wheldrake Ings on 10th, 11th and 13th with a single on 14th. A single from 1st November to year end.

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Status: Migrant breeder and passage migrant.

First at Barlow Common on 6th April with seven in the Lower Derwent on 8th, 14 on 11th and 33 on 16th with 57 singing males by 29th. Present at Osbaldwick from the 11th April, Gilling Woods from 12th and at Poppleton the following day, Stub Woods on 15th when 15 were at Brayton Barff increasing to 31 by the 24th. One at Muncastergate on the 19th, at Rawcliffe Lake from April 21st to June 16th and Forest Farm 27th April and 7th May. One at Huby on 9th seen mobbing a cuckoo. 29 at Bishop's Wood on 30th and common on Yearsley Moor by 18th June.

Bred as usual in the Lower Derwent with an estimated 300 pairs throughout the site. Good numbers in tit flocks at Wheldrake Ings and Thornton Ellers with around 200 at the latter on 23rd July. One present at Rawcliffe Lake from 7th August to 1st September. 40 regularly at Wheldrake Ings mid September declining rapidly to three on 22nd and 24th and then the last, rather late, on 8th October.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*

Status: Winter visitor in varying numbers.

Seven regularly in Lower Derwent NNR in February and up to ten in March along the river bank between Bank Island and Wheldrake Ings. Probably bred at Thornton Ellers where a pair were seen regularly during April and May with the male singing on several dates.

First of the autumn were five at Wheldrake Ings on 27th October with 21 on 30th, up to 20 in early November with 60+ there on 26th when 16 were also at Thornton Ellers. Much scarcer in December with mostly occasional ones and twos to year end but four on 21st.

With all the forestry woodland in the area it seems amazing that it was not recorded outside the Lower Derwent other than two at Sutton Wood, Sutton-on-the-Forest, in December.

FIRECREST *Regulus ignicapillus*

Status: Occasional winter visitor.

The only record was of a male at Thornton Ellers on 21st November.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*

Status: Migrant breeder/passage visitor.

Late arriving this year with the first returning bird at South Holme on 20th May followed by a single on Thornton Ellers on 28th, two there the next day. Singles at Poppleton and Warthill on 30th and in June at Huby and Wheldrake.

Early July a pair feeding young at Acomb and on 26th three young being fed in Wheldrake Woods. Two pairs bred at Sutton-on-the-Forest, 20 breeding pairs were recorded on Thornton Ellers and one pair probably bred at Hassacarr Pond, Dunnington.

Post-breeding birds were seen on 5th August at Sutton-on-Derwent, at Huby on 6th, 8th and 22nd, four were at Thornton Ellers on 23rd and a single at Huby on 25th. Finally, three were at Wheldrake Ings on 14th September.

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Status: Casual migrant breeder/passage visitor

The only record of a female in the car park at Wheldrake Ings on 14th September was the 6th record for the Lower Derwent NNR.

BEARDED TIT *Panurus biarmicus*

Status: Winter visitor

On 28th October three were by Pocklington Canal at Bielby (Lower Derwent NNR).

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*

Status: Resident breeder

Early winter flocks of more than ten were seen in Stub Wood, Thornton Ellers, Scavy Carr, Sutton-on-the-Forest Common and Escrick.

During the breeding season pairs were at Clifton Lake and Warthill and a pair feeding young at Castle Howard on 8th May. Eight pairs bred at Thornton Ellers, 17 pairs at Wheldrake Ings/Bank Island and bred at Sutton-on-the-Forest.

Post-breeding flocks were: 20+ on Skipwith Common on 21st June, 22 at Poppleton on 12th August and 18 on 22nd October with 12 at Wilberfoss on 27th. Four counts of 17 - 67 were made on Wheldrake Ings during October with 92 on 26th November. On 15th November 30+ were in Gilling and 15+ on Yearsley Moor on 26th December. Foraging flocks of between 10 - 36 were seen in autumn at Brandsby.

MARSH TIT *Parus palustris*

Status: Resident breeder.

Two were at Kirkham Abbey on 1st January, one at Yearsley Moor on 11th and two at Castle Howard on 15th where there were four on 17th February and a single on 30th March. Some were at nuts in a bird feeder at Gilling in early spring. Singles were in Askham Bog on 4th April, singing in Stub Wood on 24th and at Moorlands and Yearsley Moor on 18th June.

Juveniles were at Askham Bog on 30th July and bred at Brandsby, Stearsby and Sutton-on-the-Forest. Four pairs bred on Wheldrake Ings and the same number at Thornton Ellers.

Post-breeding flocks were: eight at the end of July on Thornton Ellers, seven there on 31st August, three in Stub Wood on 7th September, 22 on Wheldrake Ings on 12th October and 15+ on Yearsley Moor on 26th December.

WILLOW TIT *Parus montanus*

Status: Resident breeder.

Seven were at Thornton Ellers on 28th January, a single at Sturge's Pond on 12th February and three at Yearsley on 25th.

Juveniles were at Wheldrake Woods on 29th July and in Askham Bog on 30th. There were 21 breeding pairs on Lower Derwent NNR, two pairs at Brandsby and one pair at Sutton-on-the-Forest.

17 were at Thornton Ellers on 17th August and 11 at Wheldrake Ings on 28th. Two at Poppleton on 16th September and 30 were seen regularly that month on Wheldrake Ings.

COAL TIT *Parus ater*

Status: Resident breeder.

Regular visitors to a Gilling garden winter/early spring and seen in Huby in the winter months. There were 10+ on Yearsley Moor on 25th February, two at Haxby on 2nd March when there were two at Warthill and a single at Moorlands on 18th June.

Five pairs bred in nest boxes in Wheldrake Woods, nine pairs bred on Wheldrake Ings/Bank Island and seven pairs on Thornton Ellers. They also bred in several sites near Brandsby and Sutton-on-the-Forest.

Post-breeding flocks were: 13 in the car park at Wheldrake Ings on 14th October and 10+ on Yearsley Moor on 26th December.

BLUE TIT *Parus caeruleus*

Status: Resident breeder/winter visitor

A breeding bird throughout the area although a comment of "none bred in the nest box for the first time since 1987 in a Gilling garden" may have been fairly common this year due to weather conditions.

Breeding did take place in nest boxes in Wheldrake Woods, Dringhouses, Askham Bog, Huby and Sutton-on-the-Forest. Sixty three pairs bred on Wheldrake Ings/Bank Island and 27 pairs on Thornton Ellers.

A post-breeding count of 125 were at Wheldrake Ings on 26th November.

GREAT TIT *Parus major*

Status: Resident breeder/winter visitor

Seen throughout the year in small numbers at Huby, Yearsley Moor, Gilling, Clifton Lake and in the breeding season at Stockton Lane, Warthill and Newton-on-Ouse.

On 13th April a pair feeding young in a nest box in Stub Wood and on 13th and 14th June fledge juveniles were being fed in a Huby garden. Nest Boxes were used in Wheldrake Woods, Dringhouses and Askham Bog. Fifty one pairs bred on Wheldrake Ings/Bank Island and 16 pairs on Thornton Ellers.

A count of 61 was made at Wheldrake Ings on 26th November.

NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

Status: Resident breeder

Seen regularly in Gilling Woods and occasionally in a Gilling garden. Has bred for several years in Brandsby village adapting to road traffic and people, also in Sutton-on-the-Forest.

Recorded Castle Howard and Yearsley Moor.

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

Status: Resident breeder.

One to four seen during the year at Askham Bog, Bishop Wood, Brandsby, Buttercrambe, Castle Howard, Escrick, Gilling, Howsham, Huby, Moorlands, Skipwith, Strensall and Yearsley Moor.

Bred at Sutton-on-the-Forest, in all woodlands round Brandsby and 12 pairs on Lower Derwent NNR.

JAY *Garrulus glandarius*

Status: Resident breeder/passage, winter visitor but under recorded especially from the northern squares.

Single pairs bred at Wheldrake Ings, Bank Island, Thornton Ellers and Sutton-on-Derwent.

MAGPIE *Pica pica*

Status: Resident breeder

The larger gatherings of this species were of 17 at Thornton Ings on 11th February increasing to 24 on 18th. Six were at Newton-on-Ouse on 24th June and 32 in one field at New Earswick on 21st September. Recorded also at Huby, Yearsley and Clifton Lake all year and as 'a predator in Brandsby'.

Breeding recorded from Sutton-on-the-Forest, raised five young on Dunnington Common and 17 pairs bred on or near the Lower Derwent NNR.

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*

Status: Resident breeder.

The larger flocks noted, all in the first half of the year, were: 80 over Layerthorpe on 8th February, 45 at Sutton-on-the-Forest on 13th with 84 there on 2nd May. 17 at Newton-on-Ouse on 24th June and a colony of about 30 is based around Brandsby.

On the Lower Derwent NNR there were 71 breeding pairs.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

Status: Resident breeder.

900 in a pre-roost flock near East Cottingwith on 21st January, 450 at Thornton on 11th February, 350 at Sutton-on-Derwent on 2nd March with 100+ at Poppleton on 4th with 970 the following day on the Lower Derwent NNR. 116 were at Newton-on-Ouse on 16th May, 500+ at Hagg Bridge and 670 at Thornton on 23rd June. 124 were at Ellerton on 2nd July, 600 on the 5th at Thornton rising to 2,200 on 27th. The local flock at Brandsby reached 600 on 16th July.

There were 105 active nests at Newton-on-Ouse, c30 at Gilling, 54 at Brandsby and 16 pairs bred at Thornton Ellers, 23 pairs at North Duffield and 21 pairs at Sutton-on-Derwent.

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*

Status: Resident breeder

On 3rd January 52 birds on Clifton Ings was the only significant winter record

received. Nine were at Newton-on-Ouse on 6th May where there were six on 24th June. A juvenile on the ground was reluctant to fly at Huby on 14th June and another partly fledged was found dead on Yearsley Moor on 18th. Up to eight were seen all year at Rawcliffe Lake.

Forty pairs bred on Lower Derwent NNR, six pairs bred on Wheldrake Ings and fed on Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*) and Coot (*Fulica atra*) eggs in the breeding season.

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

Status: Resident breeder and winter visitor

Four thousand went to roost in Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) bushes in Stub Wood at 4.05pm - 4.35pm on 7th January. 3,000 were feeding on the filter beds at Naburn Sewage Works on 6th July. 600 roosted in reed beds on Wheldrake Ings throughout June and several thousand roosted under Lendal Bridge, York from late November to the year end.

Two hundred pairs bred on the Lower Derwent NNR.

Addition to 1994 Report: 10,000 on 1st August at Bubwith.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

Status: Resident breeder though often difficult to find.

There were 320 at Thorganby on 9th September, 100+ in a Poppleton garden feeding on newly sown grass seed on 5th October and 50+ at Wilberfoss on 23rd.

A bird roosting in the reed bed was the only record of what is truly an extremely rare visitor to Wheldrake Ings.

Addition to 1994: 60 at Wilberfoss on 16th June.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*

Status: Resident breeder/passage visitor although extremely rare in the northern part of the area.

Fifty at Wilberfoss on 1st January, 30 at Thornton on 3rd with 60 on 7th and 150 on 28th. 51 at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd February, 30 at Wilberfoss on 14th with 34 at Poppleton on 18th. 41 at Bubwith on 2nd March, 54 at Thornton on the same day with 44 at Poppleton on 18th.

Present in the breeding season at Sheriff Hutton, Holtby, Newton-on-Ouse and Poppleton where young were being fed on 2nd June. Five pairs bred in nest boxes at Dringhouses with one pair raising three broods. On the Lower Derwent NNR 180

received. Nine were at Newton-on-Ouse on 6th May where there were six on 24th June. A juvenile on the ground was reluctant to fly at Huby on 14th June and another partly fledged was found dead on Yearsley Moor on 18th. Up to eight were seen all year at Rawcliffe Lake.

Forty pairs bred on Lower Derwent NNR, six pairs bred on Wheldrake Ings and fed on Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*) and Coot (*Fulica atra*) eggs in the breeding season.

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A bird roosting in the reed bed was the only record of what is truly an extremely rare visitor to Wheldrake Ings.

Addition to 1994: 60 at Wilberfoss on 16th June.

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Status: Resident breeder/passage visitor although extremely rare in the northern part of the area.

Fifty at Wilberfoss on 1st January, 30 at Thornton on 3rd with 60 on 7th and 150 on 28th. 51 at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd February, 30 at Wilberfoss on 14th with 34 at Poppleton on 18th. 41 at Bubwith on 2nd March, 54 at Thornton on the same day with 44 at Poppleton on 18th.

Present in the breeding season at Sheriff Hutton, Holtby, Newton-on-Ouse and Poppleton where young were being fed on 2nd June. Five pairs bred in nest boxes at Dringhouses with one pair raising three broods. On the Lower Derwent NNR 180

pairs bred.

Post-breeding flocks of 63 at Thornton on 3rd September, 230 at Brighton on 17th and 320 at Melbourne on 26th. There were 300+ at Thornton on 7th October, 125 at North Duffield on 14th and 70 at Dunnington Common on 26th December. Up to 20 were at the feeding station at Rawcliffe Meadows during December.

Addition to 1994 Report: 15 at Barmby Moor on 16th January and 29 at Wilberfoss on 29th.

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

Status: Resident breeder/passage, winter visitor

Two hundred at East Cottingwith on 1st February, 50 at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd, 80 at Thornton on 11th and 100+ at Castle Howard on 17th. 15 at Newton-on-Ouse on 6th May with seven there on 24th.

A pair feeding young on Yearsley Moor on 16th June and 400 pairs bred on Lower Derwent NNR.

Post breeding flocks were 170 at Thorganby on 9th September and 110 at Melbourne on 25th. There were 110 at Bank Island on 21st November, 100 at Dunnington on 26th December and up to 60 at Gilling. "Chaffinch numbers lower this year" at Dunnington.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

Status: Winter passage/visitor and as with most finch flocks numbers unpredictable.

A single at Huby on 18th February, up to 3 - 6 in a mixed flock at Gilling, 29 at Strensall and 70 in Forest Lane, Brandsby. Forty at Castle Howard on 4th and 5th March, 35 at Dunnington on 26th and a single at Poppleton on 29th. No records after March.

Addition to 1994: 500 on Barmby Moor on 9th January remaining to month end.

GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris*

Status: Resident breeder/passage, winter visitor.

Early wintering flocks were: 38 at Poppleton on 3rd January; 100 at East Cottingwith on 14th February and 170 at Sutton-on-Derwent on 2nd March.

On 15th May an attempt at nest building was frustrated by a cat in Acomb. On the Lower Derwent NNR 65 pairs bred in boundary hedges and they commonly bred in SE56.

Post-breeding there were 21 at Wheldrake Ings on 13th October, 25 at North Duffield on 14th, 120 at Sutton-on-Derwent on 15th with 90 on Bank Island on 21st November. A mixed flock of 300+ Greenfinch/Yellow Hammer (*Emberiza citrinella*) was at Poppleton on 29th August.

Addition to 1994 Report: 150 on Barmby Moor on 16th January.

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

Status: Resident breeder/passage, winter visitor.

The larger flocks throughout the year were: 46 at Poppleton on 3rd January; 60 at Stamford Bridge on 5th February and 50+ at Riccall on 23rd April. 39 at Pocklington Canal on 24th June, 49 at Naburn Sewage Works on 21st July and 110+ at Wheldrake Ings on 24th August. 130 at Bank Island on 1st September, 80 at Thorganby on 10th, 120 at Ellerton on 17th, 50 flying south at Bubwith on 19th and 130+ at Melbourne on 26th. 130 at Bank Island on 8th October, 90 at Thorganby, 73 at Ellerton, 60 at Wheldrake, 35 at Bubwith and 40 at Poppleton on 27th.

On Lower Derwent NNR, 124+ pairs bred.

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*

Status: Resident breeder/passage, winter visitor

The larger gatherings early in the year were of 116 on Lower Derwent NNR on 8th January, 10 in Buttercrambe on 29th, 80 on Lower Derwent NNR on 11th February and 220 on 2nd March. On 25th/26th March there was a northerly passage over Selby in small parties of 4 - 8, probably not more than a few hundred in total. One to six were seen during January/March at Huby, Clifton Pond, Dunnington Common, Selby, Poppleton, York and Brandsby.

Single pairs were present in the breeding season at Thornton, Melbourne, Bubwith and Wheldrake. They bred in the car park at Wheldrake Ings.

The build up of post-breeding flocks began on the Lower Derwent NNR with 2 on 24th September, 16 on 28th, 47 on 29th and 22 on 11th October. Twelve were at Castle Howard on 2nd October, 150 - 200 fed on Alders (*Alnus glutinosa*) at Gilling on 7th - 9th December, 10 were at Dunnington on 12th, 28 at Hassacarr on 18th, two in a mixed sparrow/finch flock at Crockey Hill on 24th and 15+ with Redpolls (*carduelis flammea*) at Yearsley on 26th.

Present in larger numbers this year and possibly bred more than the records confirm.

Addition to 1994: 35 on Newton Maske on 29th January.

LINNET *Carduelis cannabina*

Status: Resident breeder/passage, winter visitor.

Thornton held c20 on 2nd January, which had risen to 150 by 28th. 45 at East Cottingwith on 1st February, 100 at North Duffield Carrs on 2nd with nine at Stockton Lane on 2nd April with 12 at Warhill on 19th.

Breeding pairs at Clifton Lake, Elm Park, York, Huby, Newton-on-Ouse and 226 pairs on Lower Derwent NNR.

Post-breeding flocks were of 200 on North Duffield Carrs on 30th June, 35 + at Poppleton on 19th August, 115 on Barmby Marsh on 16th September and 100 at Newton-on-Ouse on 28th, 60 at East Cottingwith on 18th November and 100 at Dunnington on 26th December.

Considered "less common than hitherto" at Brandsby.

Addition to 1994 Report: 200 at Sutton-on-Derwent on 18th January.

TWITE *Carduelis flavirostris*

Status: Scarce winter visitor.

Three at Thornton on 28th January and four at East Cottingwith on 18th November with a Linnet (*carduelis cannabina*) flock.

REDPOLL *Carduelis flammea*

Status: Breeder/passage, winter visitor.

Nine at Lilling on 5th January, three at Huby on 13th, four at Rawcliffe Lake on 26th. Six at Clifton in January when there were up to 40 on Thornton Ellers and two pairs at Bank Island. Singles at Rawcliffe Lake on 9th and 21st February, five at Wheldrake on 12th April with a single in Acomb on 19th and 20th July. Ten at Selby on 10th December, 25 at Hassacarr, Dunnington, 40 at Clifton and 30 on Tilmire on 24th December. Several flock of 50+ on Yearsley Moor on 26th December, many with noticeably pale bellies.

Five pairs bred on Thornton Ellers, three pairs on Wheldrake Ings and two pairs at Bank Island. "Still at a very low ebb as a breeding bird despite an increase over last year on the Lower Derwent NNR." Bred at Selby where small parties (up to 10) were in Birches (*Betula pendula*) all year. Twenty one at Newton Maske on 27th December and seen at Sutton-on-the-Forest.

Birds showing characteristics of Mealy Redpoll (*Carduelis f. flammea*) were seen in January at Sutton-on-the-Forest. Three were at Thornton Ellers on 12th November with a single at Rawcliffe Lake on 28th. Five were at Hassacarr, Dunnington on 24th December and seven at Newton Maske on 27th.

CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*

Status: Casual breeder/passage visitor. Unpredictable numbers with few recorded in recent years.

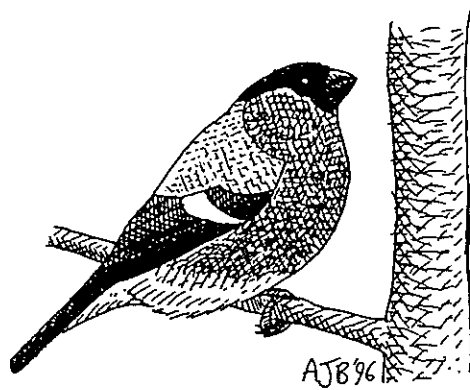
A female at Yearsley Common on 17th August.

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Status: Resident breeder/passage, winter visitor.

A single male in Huby on 13th January, five on Tilmire on 18th and five at Wheldrake Ings on 30th. Nine regularly in February on Wheldrake Ings, one in Stub Wood on 22nd March and a male in Huby on 5th May and 14th June.

Pairs were seen at Wheldrake Ings, Storwood, Appletree Village, Skipwith, Strensall, Allerthorpe, Bishop Wood, Howsham, Askham Bog, Tollerton and Castle Howard. The Lower Derwent NNR held 20 breeding pairs.



12 at Wheldrake Ings on 12th November and Dunnington Common on 17th December with 39 on Lower Derwent NNR on 31st.

Addition to 1994 Report: Eight males and four females on Sutton Lane/Barmby Moor on 16th January.

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citrinella*

Status: Resident breeder/winter passage visitor

50+ at Wilberfoss on 1st January, 90 at Scavy Carr on 28th, 40 at East Cottingwith on 1st February, seen at Yearsley Moor on 25th and singing at Acaster Airfield on 9th

April. Six at Newton-on-Ouse on 6th May, six males at Warthill on 15th and nine at Newton-on-Ouse on 24th June.

Bred at Sutton-on-the-Forest and on Lower Derwent NNR where there were 160 pairs.

On 29th August at Poppleton a flock of 300+ Yellow Hammer/Greenfinch (*carduelis chloris*). 40 were at Poppleton on 3rd November and 40 at Dunnington on 26th December. A regular winter visitor to Rawcliffe Lake.

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*
Status: Resident breeder/passage visitor.

50 at Seavy Carr on 2nd March and 90 roosted at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd. A regular winter visitor to Rawcliffe Lake a pair set up territory in spring but no breeding proved. Seen also in the breeding season at Castle Howard and on Lower Derwent NNR where 730 pairs were recorded.

Post-breeding flocks were: 150 roosting at Wheldrake Ings on 13th August, 170+ on 28th, 200+ on 3rd and 21st September, 150+ on 12th, 13th and 28th October. 80 roosted at North Duffield Carrs on 27th September.

CORN BUNTING *Miliaria calandra*
Status: Resident breeder.

The larger flocks in the early months of the year were: 20 at Askham Bryan on 20th January, 80 at Aughton on 9th, 100+ at Wilberfoss on 22nd, 91 at Brighton Airfield on 29th and 14 at Wilberfoss on 30th increasing to 50 on 4th and 14th February. Singing males were at Acaster Airfield on 26th and 30th March, 6th April with c20 at Dunnington on 4th.

Seen in the breeding season at Acaster Airfield, Wheldrake, Warthill, Riccall, Rufforth, Grimston Bar, Deighton, Langwith, Thorganby, Melbourne and Poppleton. Bred in Pocklington. A low but apparently stable population of 39 singing males was located on the Lower Derwent NNR.

Sixty were at Sutton-on-Derwent on 27th November and 95 there on 3rd December.

Comments received: "The great population crash which became apparent in this area (Brandsby) last year is now only too evident in the Strensall, Sheriff Hutton, Stillington and Sutton-on-the-Forest area where it is possible to circuit by cycle and fail to hear a single song. The species is still present but in very low numbers." (PH)
"Apparently absent during the breeding season in Clifton/Rawcliffe area for the first time in several years: numbers at a mixed winter roost of buntings and sparrows at Rawcliffe Meadows very low." (MH)

ESCAPES/INTRODUCED

Black Swan *Cygnus tratus*

One again resident throughout the year at Castle Howard with a single present at Wheldrake Ings from 11th March until 14th May and on 11th October.

Ross's Goose *Anser rossii*

A single bird with Greylags (*Anser anser*) on 19th June - 30th November on Wheldrake Ings.

Goose sp.

Two hybrid birds present at Wheldrake Ings on 27th March, superficially resembling Blue Snow Goose (*Anser caerulescens*) (DR)

Red Avadabat *Amandava amandava*

A single in a reed bed on Wheldrake Ings on 11th August.

Zebra Finch *Taeniopygia guttata*

On 20th July in Appletree Village, York.

REPORT ON RINGING IN THE YORK AREA DURING 1995

York area ringers reported mixed fortunes during 1995, some having a very good year in terms of number and variety of species caught, others finding the going difficult. It can be very frustrating to get up at 4.30 am on a morning in early summer and erect ten nets at a site, only to end up with a catch of a dozen birds! It is a tribute to amateur ornithologists and ringers everywhere that they do not get put off by a poor session.

Once the summer got under way though, those who persevered reaped the rewards, with encouraging numbers of most summer migrants being ringed, particularly warblers. Richard Ward-Smith had a better season with his House Martins at his colony in Bilton, whilst other ringers reported good catches of Willow Warblers at their sites.

My own effort was elsewhere during the early summer, with an ongoing study of breeding waders in upland areas. This work is going to continue in future years and include breeding waders in the lowland areas around York.

It was encouraging also to note that the number of finches and sparrows ringed in the area remains fairly high, even though a lot of these species, notably Tree Sparrow and Bullfinch are declining nationally at an alarming rate.

1995 was a good year for recoveries and controls of ringed birds, these providing a welcome piece of information for all ringers that 'their' birds are doing something, even if it is only to move to Icklesham! The reason that so many of the Sand Martins and Sedge Warblers ringed in the York area end up being reported from Icklesham is that there is a very large and active ringing group operating there. The group have access to a very large site, mainly reedbed and wetland, owned by one of the ringers and operate all year round there, though concentrate their efforts in the spring and autumn migration periods. They have a very large roost of migrating Sand Martins and therefore catch many birds ringed elsewhere in the country. This provides us with important information on the timing and direction of movement of local breeding birds.

The high number of Starling recoveries is due to the fact that Steve Huddleston devotes a lot of time to this species, enticing large numbers of birds down to his garden with a block of lard skewered to the ground. During the winter a high proportion of starlings in the York area are from the continent, hence the interesting recoveries of this species.

Once again I must thank all landowners who have given permission and support to local ringers in one form or another, particularly English Nature and the Forestry Commission. It is also necessary to thank all those who have submitted details of ringed birds in the York area, both ringers and members of the public. Without their assistance this report would not be possible.

Danae Murfitt

Ringers Operating in the York Area 1995

Name	Permit	Area
Richard Ward-Smith	A	Thorp Arch & Bilton-in-Ainsty
Pete Reid	A	Seibv
Chris Wright	A	Thorganbv. Wilbertoss & Iadcaster
Danae Murfitt	A	Lower Derwent Valley. Askham Bog & Naburn
Nike Jackson	A	Acaster Malbis
Dave Turner	A	Nunnington & East Ness
Steve Huddleston	A	Acomb & Stubb Wood
Tim Dixon SOC		Lower Derwent Valley

Species	Ring No	Ringed	Place	Found	Place	Km
Days Details						
Black-Headed Gull	EH60709	4.2.81	Seibv	27.3.95	Tokoinrata	
u/k u/kFieldR			N.Yorks	2.4.95	Finland	
Black Headed Gull	FN03812	23.3.94	Wladyslawowo	10.12.94	Rawcliffe	
Dead			Poland		ings York	
Sand Martin	J020773	25.8.93	Icklesham	23.06.95	Thorp Arch	359
667 Control			Sussex		Wetherbv	
Sand Martin	J021843	22.8.93	Icklesham	16.05.95	Thorp Arch	359
632 Control			Sussex		Wetherbv	
Sand Martin	J444552	8.8.94	Icklesham	23.06.95	Thorp Arch	359
319&6 Control			Sussex		Wetherbv	
Sand Martin	H981557	03.08.93	Icklesham	26.06.95	Thorp Arch	359
682 Control			Sussex		Wetherbv	
Sand Martin	H137789	04.09.91	Icklesham	20.05.95	Thorp Arch	353
1354 Control			Sussex		Wetherbv	
Sand martin	H926928	14.08.94	Isle of Grain	10.06.95	Thorp Arch	316
300 Control			Kent		Wetherbv	
Sand Martin	J361767	11.09.93	Reculver	16.05.95	Thorp Arch	323
612 Control			Kent		Wetherbv	
Fieldfare	RK71750	17.02.94	Dringhouses	15.06.95	Jviland	672
483 Dead			York		Denmark	

Species	Ring No	Ringed	Place	Found	Place	km
Sedge Warbler Days Details						
J007086 685 Control	08.08.93	Icklesham Sussex	24.06.95	Thorp Arch Wetherby	359	
J755434 316 Control	04.08.94	Icklesham Sussex	16.06.95	Ness N.Yorks	80	
J767392 u/ku/k Control	15.08.94	Icklesham Sussex	27.07.95	BarlowCommon Selby		
0F3642 u/k u/k	13.06.92	Barlow Common Selby	18.06.95	BarlowCommon Ketrapp		
0F3714 u/k u/k	18.07.93	BarlowCom Selby	6.07.95	BarlowCommon Ketrapp		
Spotted Flycatcher 105 Control	H587753 26.06.93	Thorp Arch Wetherby	09.10.93	Taounate Morocco	2166	
FR41768 3758 Dead	06.06.84	Clifford Wetherby	20.09.94	Boston Spa W.Yorks		
RK63996 325 Dead	07.10.94	Acomb York	20.05.95	Garthorpe Humberside	43	
RK63949 34Field k	04.10.94	Acomb York	07.11.94	Edgworth Lancashire	90	
K629731 771 Control	12.10.92	Rottumeroog Netherlands	22.11.94	Acomb York	508	
8834134 583 Control	12.04.93	Anholt Denmark	25.11.94	Acomb York	858	
H-212407 uk u/k u/k Control		Sweden	24.12.95	Acomb York		
RK14273 834 Dead	06.02.93	Dringhouses York	21.05.95	Hull Humberside	56	
9P38017 297 Control	02.01.94	Jylland Denmark	26.10.94	Nunnington N.Yorks	663	
uk 130Control	17.10.94	FileyBrigg N.Yorks	24.02.95	Nunnington N.Yorks	45	
VP96031 104 Control	13.02.95	Dringhouses York	28.05.95	Kanestrvm Norway	1148	
J994519 u/k u/k Control	23.11.94	ThorpeSalvin S.Yorks	12.3.95	Selby N.Yorks		

CONTRIBUTORS

List of those who kindly contributed to the 1995 Report. Apologies for any omissions.

Mrs D. Anderson
R. Atterby
A. Booth
R.E. Chapman
T. Chilton
B. Coddington
D. Cooper
R. Crossley
M.J. Dixon
Dr M. Douglas
S. Eaves
M. Hammond
J.S. Henderson
P. Hutchinson

Lower Derwent National Nature Reserve

M.I. & B. MacDonald
Mrs D. Murfitt
F.W. Oats
B.G. Pepper
J. Pewtress
P. Reid
D. Richardson
I.W. & C. Roberts
N. Steward
I. & R. Traynor
J. Watson
T. & V. Weston
D. Wharton-Street