

YORK ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB REPORT 2008

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Front Cover: Red-legged Partridge *Terry Weston*

Inside Back Cover: Redstart *Nigel Stewart*
Bullfinch *Nigel Stewart*

Outside Back Cover: Hoopoe *Terry Weston*
Black Stork *Nigel Stewart*

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York Ornithological Club

This report has been compiled by members of the York Ornithological Club (YOC) with records submitted by members and others who are active in watching an area of some 550 square miles around York. The area covers wetlands (the Lower Derwent Valley), deciduous woodland (Hambleton and Howardian Hills), coniferous woodland (Yearsley and Ampleforth), lakes (Castle Howard) and the large agricultural areas of the vales of York and Pickering.

The Club has a membership of about 70 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. In addition, excursions are arranged to areas of ornithological interest, usually outside the recording area but with more local visits on selected summer evenings. See the club's website at www.yorkbirding.org.uk for full details of club activities.

Editorial

This will be the last annual YOC report to be prepared from largely printed or written documents. Future reports will be compiled from a computerised database of records most of which will have been submitted using the YOC spreadsheet which can be downloaded from the club's website at www.yorkbirding.org.uk. Most readers will be aware of these changes which will enable future reports to be edited more efficiently and provide more comprehensive coverage of the birds of our area by selectively linking to national databases like BirdTrack organised by the BTO as well as the BTO's Atlas project until its end (summer 2011).

This report has continued the practice introduced in 2006 of including WeBS counts of wetland birds (in the winter months) though it is a source of much regret to the editor that it has been impossible to provide detailed counts for the different parts of the Lower Derwent Valley as in the 2007 report. However, this report again contains specific information on the breeding of scarce and rare birds in the Lower Derwent Valley where, in 2008, there were significant numbers of Quail recorded. My thanks to Elaine Gathercole for providing details of WeBS counts from Castle Howard Lake and to Craig Ralston of Natural England for the provision of WeBS and breeding data from the Lower Derwent Valley.

In addition to the usual systematic list and the account of rare and scarce breeding birds in the Lower Derwent Valley, this report also contains two interesting accounts, one on the trials and tribulations of the finder, Russell Slack, in locating the 1st Black Stork for the YOC area, and secondly an account by our Recorder, Andy Booth, on the finding and identification of a Siberian Chiffchaff which first appeared in late December 2007 but which lingered until mid-January 2008.

One issue which is of some concern to myself and Andy is the absence of descriptions of species for which these are required for acceptance locally, by the YNU or nationally by the BBRC. The consequences of this are evident in this report where a record of a 2nd White-winged Black Tern for the YOC area, seen by several observers at Skipwith Common, cannot be accepted as a description was not submitted to BBRC as required at that time. It also means that the 1st record of this species, in 1993, must also now be considered unacceptable as a description of this bird was similarly not submitted to BBRC despite a statement to the contrary in the YOC report for that year.

Another record which again is not officially acceptable is the Caspian Gull seen first at Harewood Whin (by two observers) and later at Wheldrake Ings by a third despite being a potential 1st for the YOC area as again no description has been submitted.

It seems, too, that new technology despite its many benefits may also discourage the submission of descriptions. Information about scarcer species is so rapidly disseminated over the internet that many, even the finders, seem to feel that once the information is out there is no need to seek official acceptance. The fact that many sightings of scarcer birds in the YOC area are derived from unattributed entries on BirdGuides is another factor making authentication of records in our recording area quite challenging.

Acknowledgements

As before the species accounts have been compiled by Nigel Stewart (Wildfowl to Crane), Peter Watson (Waders to Auks), Ruth Traynor (Doves to Dunnock), Peter Reed (Thrushes to Flycatchers) and Paul Doherty (Tits to Buntings). My thanks to them and also to Andy Booth, our Recorder, for his expert input and help in compiling this report. My thanks also for the drawings and photos which illustrate this report to Andy Booth, Mark Coates, Jonathan Pomroy, Peter Reed, Sugoto Roy, Nigel Stewart and Terry Weston, and to Nigel once again for looking after production.

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HIGHLIGHTS OF 2008

January

Most of the interest at the start of the year was again in the Lower Derwent Valley until severe flooding made many areas inaccessible. However, a number of new or underwatched sites were visited as part of the ongoing BTO Bird Atlas and these yielded many additional records in this period. Up to 88 **Whooper Swans** were wintering in the North Duffield area and were joined by a single **Bewick's Swan** from the 20th. Small groups of **Pink-footed Geese** were recorded at both Castle Howard and Wheldrake Ings before a significant movement took place across the Vale of York on the 28th and 29th. Meanwhile five **European White-fronted Geese** remained at Wheldrake early in the month.

There were some notable reports of diving ducks with a female **Scaup** present at Castle Howard Lake throughout the month and this was joined by a second bird on the 22nd when good numbers of Goldeneye and Goosander were also present. A female **Smew** was reported from the same site around this time while a freshly dead but badly oiled **Red-throated Diver** was discovered by the side of the lake on the 5th.

A **Rough-legged Buzzard** was reported from Buttercrambe on the 4th and the floods in the Lower Derwent Valley attracted a selection of waders including large flocks of **Golden Plover** and **Lapwing**. Good numbers of **Ruff** were present throughout the month in the North Duffield/Bubwith area with a maximum count of 77 at North Duffield Carrs on the 28th. **Woodcock** were noted at a few scattered localities while single **Green Sandpipers** were present at Bubwith Bridge on the 6th and Middlethorpe Ings on the 29th when a first-winter **Yellow-legged Gull** was also present along with at least five **Lesser Black-backed Gulls**. A juvenile **Glaucous Gull** was seen at Harewood Whin on the 31st while the wintering **Water Pipit** remained at Catterton. The only **Waxwings** reported were three near Wilberfoss on the 22nd and a popular lingering bird in Strensall. The elusive **Siberian Chiffchaff** at Fulford Ings was last reported on the 14th while several **Bramblings** and a few **Mealy Redpolls** were also noted.

February

Another busy month for sightings with up to 63 **Whooper Swans** remaining in the North Duffield/Bubwith area while two **Bewick's Swans**

were seen with the herd on the 25th. An adult **European White-fronted Goose** lingered at Wheldrake Ings until the 28th and a good variety of ducks was attracted to the receding floods in the Lower Derwent Valley with large numbers of **Wigeon** and **Pintail** in particular. The female **Scaup** was still on Castle Howard Lake where the female **Smew** was rediscovered on the 9th but proved to be quite elusive during its stay. Good numbers of **Goldeneye** and **Goosander** were again reported from this site while spring was already in the air for a pair of **Great Crested Grebes** at York University, but their early breeding attempt failed due to the lake freezing over.

Records of **Red Kite** and **Common Buzzard** continue to increase with several noted in the Pocklington area while waders were well represented with most records coming from the Lower Derwent Valley: at least 100 **Dunlin** and **Ruff** were present with a single **Black-tailed Godwit** seen at North Duffield Carrs on the 25th. White-winged gulls were more prominent this month with **Mediterranean Gull** and at least three of each of **Glaucous** and **Iceland Gull** joining the roost at Wheldrake Ings though more unusual was a putative juvenile **Thayer's Gull** or hybrid seen by just a few observers on the evening of the 23rd. Single adult **Yellow-legged Gulls** were also reported at the roost as well as at Clifton Ings.

A number of small birds began to return to their breeding areas including **Sky Larks**, **Wood Larks** and **Meadow Pipits** while the lone **Waxwing** remained at Strensall until the 14th. **Chiffchaffs** of the nominate race were seen at three sites and a **Great Grey Shrike** put in an all-too-brief appearance at North Duffield Carrs on the 28th. Finch and bunting flocks were much in evidence, especially on farmland between Acaster Malbis and Copmanthorpe: among commoner species, several **Bramblings** and the odd **Mealy Redpoll** were still being reported.

March

Winter lingered on in most areas with the first incoming migrants having to face freezing conditions towards the end of the month! Up to 59 **Whooper Swans** remained in the North Duffield area with the herd still including up to two rather elusive **Bewick's Swans**. Fifty **Pink-footed Geese** flew over Wheldrake Ings on the 17th while at least one bird lingered at Castle Howard where a **Greenland White-fronted Goose** was also present from the 8th. Large numbers of duck were to be found in the Lower Derwent Valley including at least 100 **Pintail** while scarcer species were represented by an elusive drake **Green-winged Teal** at North Duffield Carrs from the 27th with a drake **Garganey** noted there from the 25th while the **Scaup** and **Smew** remained at Castle

Howard Lake and a female **Common Scoter** was seen at Wheldrake Ings on the 28th.

The **Great Crested Grebes** at York University were soon back on the nest again after an earlier attempt failed, and had hatched young by the end of the month. Meanwhile, a **Cattle Egret** was reported circling over Wheldrake Ings with two **Little Egrets** on the 10th but did not linger and one or two **Marsh Harriers** were noted at North Duffield Carrs from this date with another flying west over Selby on the 20th.

The start of spring wader passage was indicated by single **Ringed Plover** flying over Wheldrake on the 6th, followed by three Jack Snipe at Wheldrake Ings on the 13th, two **Black-tailed Godwits** at both North Duffield and Wheldrake and a **Green Sandpiper** along the Pocklington Canal on the 14th, a **Grey Plover** moving through North Duffield Carrs on the 29th, and another **Ringed Plover** at Thorganby Ings on the 30th.

Mediterranean, Yellow-legged, Glaucous and Iceland Gulls were still being seen at the usual sites though one Iceland Gull feeding on the River Ouse in central York during the early morning of the 29th was more unusual. However, a first-winter **Caspian Gull** identified at Harewood Whin landfill site on the 3rd was a new bird for the recording area and presumably the same individual as was reported later that day from the Wheldrake Ings roost.

Singing **Wood Larks** were reported from a new locality mid-month while **Sky Larks** were said to be numerous in some areas. A **Sand Martin** braved the wintry weather at Naburn Sewage Works on the 24th with single figure numbers being seen at other sites shortly afterwards while the **Water Pipit** at Catterton was still present on the 8th. A **White Wagtail** was at Naburn Sewage Works on the 24th and at least two pairs of **Stonechat** seemed to have survived the winter in the area. The first migrant **Chiffchaff** was noted at Bank Island on the 17th with wide-scattered reports of one to two birds thereafter. Small numbers of **Brambling** continued to be seen and at least one **Mealy Redpoll** was to be found with **Lesser Redpolls** at York University from the 5th–26th with two 'Mealies' also at Rawcliffe Lake on the 21st. A female **Hawfinch** was photographed near Wilberfoss on the 21st while a small influx of **Reed Buntings** was apparent in the Lower Derwent Valley.

April

This was a very busy month for local birdwatchers with constant comings and goings. Most winter wildfowl had decreased significantly in numbers though the adult **Greenland White-fronted Goose** stayed

at Castle Howard until at least the 5th. Five **Garganey** were noted at Wheldrake Ings on the 21st with two birds remaining until the 23rd while a drake **Green-winged Teal** was also at this site on the 22nd and a drake **Mandarin Duck** was seen there from the 23rd. The long-staying female **Scaup** was regularly seen on Castle Howard Lake until the 21st while the female **Smew** remained until the 23rd. The only reports of **Black-necked Grebe** were of a single adult at a potential new breeding site on the 16th and a pair at Bank Island on the 16th and 17th while a **White Stork** of suspect origin flew north over the A64 at Bishopthorpe Bridge on the 3rd.

It was a good month for raptor records with highlights being a male **Hen Harrier** drifting northwest over East Cottingwith on the 16th, up to two **Marsh Harriers** in the Lower Derwent Valley, an adult male **Goshawk** flying north over Danesmead Copse, Fulford on the 22nd, single **Ospreys** seen passing over North Duffield on the 7th and Acomb on the 22nd, a late **Merlin** at North Duffield Carrs on the 3rd and the first **Hobby** of the year at Wheldrake Ings on the 23rd. A **Spotted Crake** heard calling at the latter site on the 25th was the only record received this year while a **Common Crane** was probably lingering in the Lower Derwent Valley being seen at Wheldrake on the 17th and 25th.

A good selection of waders was again on show this month, attracted by flooding: a summer-plumaged **Bar-tailed Godwit** was reported with **Black-tailed Godwits** at Wheldrake on the 1st, two **Greenshanks** were at North Duffield Carrs on the 7th, single **Little Ringed Plovers** were at Wheldrake Ings on the 9th and 21st, with a **Knot** also present on the latter date, **Common Sandpipers** were found at North Duffield Carrs on the 13th and at Sheriff Hutton Park on the 21st and then four **Avocets** were located at Wheldrake Ings on the 22nd. The build-up of **Black-tailed Godwits** in the Lower Derwent Valley was impressive with a maximum count of 56 at on the 21st while the **Whimbrel** roost peaked at 62 birds on the 25th while a **Wood Sandpiper** was identified at Wheldrake Ings on the 29th. An adult **Little Gull** was seen at North Duffield on the latter date while single **Common Terns** were seen at North Duffield Carrs on the 21st and at Castle Howard Lake on the 27th.

Two **Cuckoos** were at Strensall Common on the 13th with the first **Swifts** noted at Bishopthorpe and Castle Howard on the 27th while single **Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers** were present at Castle Howard on the 19th and Wheldrake Ings on the 23rd.

A glut of migrant passerines arrived during the month with the most noteworthy being the first **Swallows** of the year at Wheldrake Ings on the 1st and the first **House Martin** at Naburn Sewage Works on the 12th where a **White Wagtail** was present on the 5th; a **Black Redstart**

was found at Askham Grange Prison, Askham Richard on the 20th and a **Grasshopper Warbler** heard reeling near Beningbrough on the 25th. At least 50 **Tree Sparrows** were counted at Hassacarr NR, Dunnington on the 18th while late **Bramblings** were seen at three locations with four **Twite** reported near North Duffield on the 7th and eight **Crossbills** at Yearsley Moor on the 25th.

May

Another busy month with spring migration now in full swing. Single drake **Mandarin Ducks** were noted at Wheldrake Ings up to the 9th and at Castle Howard Lake on the 6th. There were many reports of **Garganey** with up to four birds seen at various sites within the Lower Derwent Valley while a drake was also seen at CSL on the 8th. Suppressed news of a drake **Blue-winged Teal** said to be frequenting Wheldrake Ings for several days early in the month was certainly confused by the presence of an escaped **New Zealand Shoveler** at the same time! Two **Red-breasted Mergansers** made a brief appearance at North Duffield Carrs on the 4th while a **Quail** was calling at this site from the 18th with 11 in the Lower Derwent Valley by the 28th. Up to two birds were also at West Lilling from the 19th and singles at Ulleskelf from the 24th while two **White Storks** flew west over York on the 11th.

Interesting raptor records included two 'possibles' – a **Honey Buzzard** flying high northwest over Long Marston on the 20th and an immature **Goshawk** flying low east over South Bank in York on the 8th. A distant **Osprey** was seen from Coneysthorpe on the 18th while single **Hobbies** were reported from several sites during the month. More excitement was caused by single **Red-footed Falcons** either side of the southern boundary of our recording area – a first-summer male at Howden Station on the 26th and 27th and a female at Belby Hall around the same time.

A late **Jack Snipe** was at North Duffield Carrs on the 1st but waders were not as prominent this month with most migrants having passed through the region, but one to two **Grey Plovers** commuted between Thorganby Ings and Wheldrake Ings on the 5th and 6th, the first **Common Sandpiper** at Thorganby Ings was seen on the 8th and two **Temminck's Stints** were at Wheldrake Ings on the 9th with one there on the 13th. A **Greenshank** was noted at this site on the 10th and 13th with a **Little Ringed Plover** at Naburn Sewage Works on the 10th while up to five **Whimbrel** lingered at North Duffield Carrs between the 1st and 11th. The main roost at Wheldrake Ings reached an astounding 136 birds on the 1st though with just 16 there by the 6th.

A small but notable influx of **Black Terns** took place early in the month while the first records of **Turtle Dove** involved birds at Skipwith Common and near Bubwith on the 7th. An unseasonal report of a **Short-eared Owl** hunting at North Duffield Carrs at dusk on the 4th could well have been a misidentification while a **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** was noted at Wheldrake Ings on the 13th. A rarity these days, a **Dipper** was discovered at Crambeck on the 10th while singing male **Common Redstarts** were present at Castle Howard on the 9th and Yearsley Moor on the 19th. In this area two **Wood Warblers** were also on territory from mid-month in addition to a pair of **Spotted Flycatchers** seen on the 19th while four pairs were present at Strensall Common during the month.

June

Things started to quieten down in June leading up to the summer lull. On an unseasonal note, however, a **Whooper Swan** was still at North Duffield Carrs on the 2nd but this individual was known to be injured. Surprisingly there were no reports of **Garganey** which presumably became very elusive as they settled down to breed, but numbers of **Quail** in the Lower Derwent Valley were estimated to be in the mid-twenties by the 10th when three were at West Lilling. A **Little Egret** was at Wheldrake Ings on the 24th while two **White Storks** flew high east over Acomb in York.

An **Osprey** was watched flying north over North Duffield on the 4th while sightings of **Common Buzzard** included seven together at Castle Howard on the 5th with other raptors of note including single **Hobbies** at Allerthorpe Common on the 28th and over Haxby on the 29th and an immature **Peregrine** at Dunnington Common on the 13th.

Eleven **Black-tailed Godwits** were at Wheldrake Ings on the 3rd with a **Green Sandpiper** at the same site on the 24th and a **Common Sandpiper** at Rawcliffe Ings on the 30th. A pair of **Common Terns** was seen most days at York University Lake. **Nightjars** were heard churring in the Strensall Common area from the 4th with three noted in a new area of clear-fell at Yearsley Moor from the 8th and a single male at the now virtually defunct site of Skipwith Common from the 8th–16th.

A female **Black Redstart** was found at the unusual location of Fulford Golf Course/Heslington Tillmire on the 10th while an impressive gathering of up to 400 **Swifts** was seen hawking around the Marston Moor battle monument on the 24th. One to two pairs of **Reed Warbler** were breeding at a new site, Rawcliffe Country Park, with two **Wood Warblers** still at Yearsley Moor on the 24th. Single **Spotted Flycatchers** were seen at

Dunnington Common on the 13th and Pool Bridge Fisheries, Crockey Hill on the 27th. A most unexpected find, during a BTO Atlas survey, was a singing male **Golden Oriole** at Yearsley Moor on the 14th but unfortunately it soon moved on.

A fine adult male **Rose-coloured Starling** was photographed coming to feed on pears in a garden in Wetwang, not far outside the recording area, on the 3rd but again the bird did not linger while two **Crossbills** were noted at Askham Grange Prison, Askham Richard on the 6th with another duo at Yearsley Moor on the 9th and at least 50 birds at Allerthorpe Common on the 11th and 12th.

July

As would be expected for the time of year, this was another quiet month. A **Garganey** was seen at Wheldrake Ings on the 2nd while the pair of **Great Crested Grebes** at York University had produced their third brood of the year. A **Little Egret** was noted at Wheldrake Ings on the 2nd and 4th with two birds there on the 23rd and a probable **Black Stork** was reported flying northwest between Nunburnholme and Warter, just outside the recording area, on the 9th.

There was a good run of raptor records with single **Red Kites** over Ellerton on the 2nd and Sheriff Hutton on the 31st when a **Marsh Harrier** flew east at Burythorpe near Malton. A ringtail **Montagu's Harrier** was reported from Wheldrake Ings on the 2nd with single **Hobbies** seen at three sites and an adult **Peregrine** powered over Clifton Ings on the 8th.

There were some signs of return wader passage (and perhaps some indications of local breeding birds!) with three **Ruff** at Wheldrake Ings where a **Black-tailed Godwit** was seen on the 3rd, eight **Whimbrel** flying south over CSL on the 14th and a **Green Sandpiper** at the pools by the Moor Monkton turnoff on the A59.

A **Turtle Dove** was seen well along the Pocklington Canal near Hagg Bridge on the 29th while the highlight of the month for most local birdwatchers was the **Hoopoe** discovered in a farmyard on the outskirts of Dunnington which was present from at least the 20th; it remained in the general area until the 22nd and even made a TV appearance on a regional news programme! Two pairs of **Stonechats** on Strensall Common had raised broods of four and two fledglings respectively while a **Lesser Whitethroat** was feeding young at the Moor Monkton turnoff on the A59 on the 4th. At Wheldrake Ings, a pair of **Spotted Flycatchers** was also seen feeding young while 16 **Crossbills** were at Skipwith Common on the 14th.

August

More eventful than the previous two months as birds were obviously on the move again! Two **Pintails** were at Thorganby Ings on the 24th as were two **Garganey**. A **Quail** was heard calling during the night near Stockton on the Forest while presumably the same **Little Egret** reported in July was seen again at Wheldrake Ings on the 8th and 25th but the highlight of the month, or perhaps the year, for many was the juvenile **Black Stork** found at Wharfe Ings near Cawood on the 24th. It remained in the immediate area until the 29th but was often elusive and was then belatedly reported from Seavy Carr on the 30th before reappearing at Spurn Point on the Yorkshire coast. In fact, this bird had been tracked all the way down from Northumberland to Norfolk during its stay in Britain!

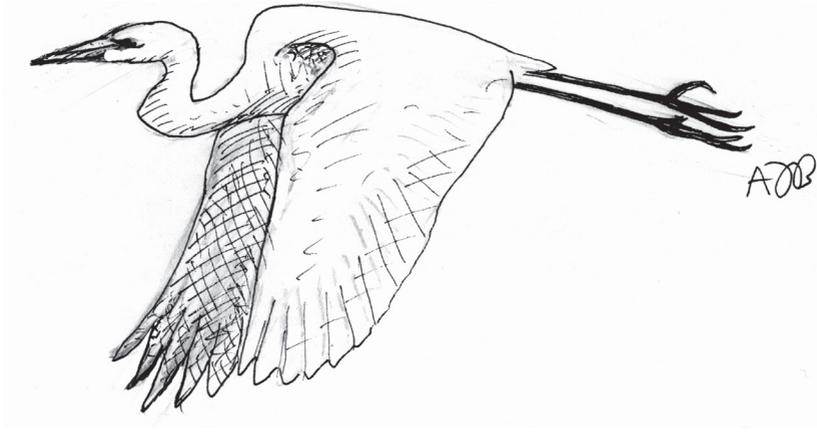
Up to two **Marsh Harriers** were frequenting the Lower Derwent Valley with a **Merlin** seen at Wheldrake Ings on the 25th and a **Hobby** noted at Clifton Ings on the 17th while five birds were hunting over Thorganby Ings on the 26th and a single was seen at Bank Island next day.

An intriguing record concerned a pair of **Little Ringed Plovers** breeding at York Railway Station while more waders were passing back through the recording area including **Dunlin**, **Ruff**, **Black-tailed Godwit**, **Greenshank**, **Wood Sandpiper** and **Common Sandpiper**. A single **Black Tern** was at Castle Howard Lake on the 30th and large flocks of **Swifts** were noted with thousands of **Swallows** reported to be roosting at Bank Island. Common species of warbler were moving through in some numbers while two **Spotted Flycatchers** were still at Wheldrake Ings with one at Malton on the 20th and three at Clifton Park on the 28th. Meanwhile, a single **Siskin** was seen at Fulford Golf Course on the 25th and **Crossbills** were noted at the unusual locations of Malton and Redhouse.

September

With autumn migration now well underway, birding interest certainly increased this month! Small numbers of duck which winter in the area started to put in an appearance including five **Pintail** at Wheldrake Ings on the 30th while a single **Garganey** remained at this site until the 20th. A noticeable passage of **Pink-footed Geese** was apparent during the final week and a group of six wary **Egyptian Geese** was found in a riverside field at Kexby on the 24th.

A **Great White Egret** settled down at Wheldrake Ings after initially flying north over Bank Island on the 14th, but was only viewable from the raised platform at Bank Island due to extensive flooding!



Birdwatchers waiting to see this bird were treated to a passage of **Honey Buzzards** with at least 11 logged through the Lower Derwent Valley during the afternoon. Further singles flew over Ellerton Ings on the 18th and North Duffield Carrs on the 21st, all part of a national influx. Other raptors seen from Bank Island on the 14th included **Marsh Harrier**, **Osprey** and **Peregrine** while up to four **Marsh Harriers** were seen at various sites in the Lower Derwent Valley during the month with further **Ospreys** noted flying north over Castle Howard Lake on the 23rd and the CSL pond later in the month. A **Merlin** was reported from North Duffield Carrs on the 23rd where two **Hobbies** were observed hunting on the 21st. A **Bittern** was also seen at Wheldrake Ings on the 23rd.

The month was rather uneventful for waders, though both **Green** and **Wood Sandpipers** were reported at Wheldrake Ings on the 2nd with six **Ringed Plover** at Bubwith Ings on the 21st. Just eight **Dunlin** were noted at Wheldrake Ings on the 30th along with six **Ruff** and a **Greenshank**. A juvenile **Common Tern** was seen at Thorganby Ings on the 14th with a **Black Tern** at North Duffield Carrs briefly on the 23rd when a **Short-eared Owl** was reported from Wheldrake Ings. Lingered **Swifts** were noted up to the 19th.

The remains of a **Hoopoe** wing found at Pocklington School on the 1st provided an intriguing postscript to the July record at Dunnington while belated news was received of a **Wryneck** which had been frequenting gardens around Water End and was picked up dead by the nearby River Foulness on the 16th. The only **Whinchat** records for the year concerned up to six birds in the Lower Derwent Valley while the first **Redwing** of the autumn was heard at York University on the 24th.

Lingering summer visitors included a **Reed Warbler** at Castle Howard Lake on the 13th and single **Willow Warblers** at Fulford Ings on the 14th and 21st with up to three **Spotted Flycatchers** in the Clifton Ings area until the 18th. A large charm of at least 350 **Goldfinches** was feeding in an uncut oilseed rape field at Newton upon Derwent on the 24th while other interesting finch records, both from Clifton Ings, concerned ten **Lesser Redpolls** on the 26th and three **Crossbills** the day before.

October

Typically this was another busy month for records. There was a noticeable southerly movement of **Whooper Swans** with the wintering herd in the North Duffield area increasing to 57 by the end of the month. In addition, six turned up at Castle Howard Lake on the 26th while a party of five **Bewick's Swans** dropped into North Duffield Carrs on the 17th. The six **Egyptian Geese** were relocated in stubble fields between Kexby and Dunnington in the first week but a single **Ross's Goose** at Wheldrake Ings on the 14th was perhaps a bit suspect. More typically **Pink-footed Geese** were also on the move still with a total of over 500 coming down at Wheldrake Ings on the evening of the 24th.

Numbers of winter duck species remained low but a **Gannet** flew over Pocklington School on the 4th and a **Bittern** was seen at North Duffield Carrs on the 9th. Interesting raptor records included a **Red Kite** passing over CSL on the 6th, up to two **Marsh Harriers** remaining in the Lower Derwent Valley throughout the month with a ringtail **Hen Harrier** present from the 20th–23rd and up to two **Peregrines** both here and at Barmby Moor.

Waders were more prominent with a roadside flash near Barmby Moor attracting a variety of species including a **Little Stint**, four **Dunlin** and a **Ruff** on the 13th, a **Pectoral Sandpiper** on the 13th and 21st, a **Curlew Sandpiper** from the 17th–22nd, a **Greenshank** on three dates and a **Wood Sandpiper** from the 13th–21st. A **Pectoral Sandpiper** was also seen at Wheldrake Ings on the 14th while an adult **Mediterranean Gull** was noted at the aforementioned flash near Barmby Moor on the 22nd. More surprisingly a juvenile **White-winged Black Tern** was reported over Wash Dyke at Skipwith Common briefly on the 16th before flying off in a southeasterly direction.

Sky Larks were moving through the region late in the month while lingering summer visitors included **Swallow** and **House Martin**. An invasion of **Waxwings** at the coast produced only two singletons in the YOC area towards the end of the month while winter thrush numbers

increased and late records of **Blackcap** and **Chiffchaff** probably involved birds likely to winter. A small influx or local movement of **Jays** was evident throughout the month and there were some notable counts of finches with scarcer species including 20+ **Brambling** at Skipwith Common on the 24th, small numbers of **Siskin** at a couple of sites and 50+ **Crossbills** at Allerthorpe Common on the 24th with 17 in Wheldrake Wood on the 28th and at least ten there the next day.

November

There was quite a bit of excitement this month before things gradually quietened down for the winter period. Nine **Whooper Swans** remained in the Castle Howard area until at least the 16th while the usual herd in the Lower Derwent Valley built up to a maximum of 90 birds by mid-month. Twenty **White-fronted Geese** were noted flying south at Kexby on the 17th while two **Tundra Bean Geese** were reported amongst a flock of 210 **Pink-footed Geese** at Wheldrake Ings on the 24th.

Numbers of other wildfowl were generally low with a drake **Green-winged Teal** seen at Wheldrake Ings on the 10th and three **Pintail** on the roadside flash near Barmby Moor on the 11th being the highlights.

Although just outside the recording area, the discovery of at least three **Rough-legged Buzzards** at Millington Pasture near Pocklington mid-month created a great deal of interest as these birds remained in the area until the end of the year. A rather late **Hobby** was reputedly seen at Crayke on the 1st while the ringtail **Hen Harrier** was noted again there at the start of the month. A female **Goshawk** was reported from Allerthorpe Common on the 15th while a **Marsh Harrier** was seen at North Duffield Carrs on the 20th.

A **Jack Snipe** was seen at Wheldrake on the 16th while an **American Golden Plover** was claimed at North Duffield Carrs on the 20th when 45 **Ruff** were also present. **Woodcocks** were reported from three sites while late records of summer migrants concerned a **Swallow** at CSL on the 4th and a **Swift** flying southeast over York Museum Gardens on the 13th.

The influx of **Waxwings** continued though records were still a bit sparse in our area. Finch flocks certainly increased but there were only small numbers of more notable species.

December

A rather cold month was warmed up to some extent by the variety of species on offer. Up to 61 **Whooper Swans** were again wintering

in the Lower Derwent Valley with a single **Bewick's Swan** being found with the herd at North Duffield Carrs on the 12th while three of the latter flew south at Thorganby Ings on the 26th. This site also hosted a single **Egyptian Goose** on the 17th while numbers of the usual wintering duck species picked up.

A few **Red Kites** were reported as well as two **Marsh Harriers** with a ringtail **Hen Harrier** seen at Millington Pasture on the 10th while a female **Goshawk** was reported flying over Everingham Park on the 31st. A Rough-legged Buzzard was reported from Thorganby Ings on the 1st while up to two **birds** remained at Millington Pasture. A **Water Rail** was an unexpected find at York University Lake on the 4th but there were no surprises amongst the wader species seen with c.2,000 **Lapwing** noted at Thorganby Ings on the 26th as well as 25 **Dunlin**, 18 **Ruff**, 23 **Redshank** and a **Black-tailed Godwit**. The godwit was still present the next day while 20 **Ruff** were again at Thorganby on the 30th. Sightings of **Jack Snipe** were made at Rawcliffe Cornfield NR on the 9th and Fulford Ings on the 30th where 20 **Common Snipe** were also present with 18 of the latter at Heslington Tillmire the previous day. A **Green Sandpiper** dropped into Rawcliffe Meadows Flood Basin briefly on the 15th while a late Lesser **Black-backed Gull** flew west over the River Ouse south of York on the 6th.

The major event this month, however, concerned a good scattering of **Waxwings** with the largest flock being 27 at Strensall on the 16th. Pairs of **Stonechat** were noted at both Millington Pasture and North Duffield Carrs while wintering **Blackcaps** and **Chiffchaffs** were noted at Copmanthorpe and York Science Park respectively. Three **Nuthatches** feeding on a dry-stone wall some distance from any trees at Terrington on the 28th was unusual and sizeable flocks of the commoner finches were noted with scarcer species including small numbers of **Crossbill** in the Wheldrake area and a **Hawfinch** at Millington Pasture on the 17th. Meanwhile, the largest flock of **Yellowhammers** reported was of 50 birds at Bielby on the 26th with both **Reed** and **Corn Buntings** numbering ten or less at any location.

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Classified List

The sequence and scientific nomenclature follow that of the British List maintained by the British Ornithologists' Union. The British List was changed in 2002 and places Anseriformes and Galliformes at the start of the list. It was updated again in 2008 and it is this version, with some further revisions, which is now used in YOC reports.

Where appropriate the following abbreviations appear in the report:

BBRC	British Birds Rarities Committee
BBS	Breeding Bird Survey (BTO)
CSL	Central Science Laboratory, Sand Hutton (now FERA)
NE	Natural England (formerly English Nature)
JRTNR	Joseph Rowntree Trust Nature Reserve, New Earswick
LDV	Lower Derwent Valley
NDC	North Duffield Carrs
NR	Nature Reserve
RNHSBR	Ryedale Natural History Society Bird Report
SHBR	Sand Hutton Bird Report (from CSL)
WBBS	Waterways Breeding Bird Survey (BTO)
WeBS	Wetlands Bird Survey (BTO)
WWT	Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust
YNU	Yorkshire Naturalists' Union
YOC	York Ornithological Club
YWT	Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

Note that the New Earswick Bird Report has no ceased publication.

The following nature reserves appear as sites in the report (apart from those listed above):

- Calley Heath NR (Barmby Moor)
- Cornfield NR (Rawcliffe Ings)
- Fireman's Leap (part of the JRTNRs)
- Hassacarr NR (Dunnington)
- Huntington School NR (part of the JRTNRs)
- Sessions NR (part of the JRTNRs)

Where appropriate WeBS counts are included under individual species. WeBS counts in the Lower Derwent Valley are normally conducted in the winter months when seasonal flooding attracts wildfowl. Months when counts are made will vary from year to year depending on conditions.

Note that WeBS counts reflect numbers on a specific date and do not necessarily indicate maximum numbers at any location.

Additionally WeBS counts are normally conducted every month at Castle Howard Lake but for consistency only data for January–April and September–December are included in the tables in this report. Any other noteworthy counts will be referred to in the text.

LDV WeBS counts took place in January, February, March, April, September, October and November; those at Castle Howard Lake in January, February, March, April, September, October, November and December.

In these tables a short dash (-) indicates no birds were present; a blank entry indicates that no count was attempted.

Records appearing in BirdGuides are also included in the report and marked as such where appropriate but we do not have details of the individual observer(s) and these records remain unverified. They are included for completeness as it is clear that many birders (local or from further afield) visit the Lower Derwent Valley in particular without otherwise submitting records. The systematic list also includes those species recorded in at least three of the previous ten years even if they were not recorded in 2008. The information given for these shows the year last recorded.

This report also includes, for added interest, some records of rarer species which have occurred outside the YOC recording area in 2008. These sightings will have no impact on the list of species accepted for the YOC area but are included as a matter of general interest and because in most cases there is no other local report to document such occurrences. Examples in 2008 include Rough-legged Buzzard and Hawfinch at Millington Pasture.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Resident breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor

Around 100 were present in the Lower Derwent Valley in the first part of the year with a peak count of 101 during the April WeBS count but fewer were present in the autumn. In contrast, while smaller numbers were also to be found regularly at Castle Howard Lake the peak count there, of 49, occurred in December. Breeding was again noted at this site and along the Pocklington Canal.

At Clifton two were on the floodedings on 10th January increasing to five by the 19th with two on the river there on 20th February. Two were also on the River Foss in York during January, seen again on 25th May.

An impressive count of 20 birds was made at Brighton on 6th February with three at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on the 10th and a pair

briefly at Wash Dike, Skipwith Common on the 12th. Up to three were seen on and off at Rawcliffe Lake between 25th February and 5th April and a male was on the CSL pond from 3rd–10th April. Another five graced the floods at Clifton Ings on 2nd April with three on the river there from 30th May through to late July.

Five were recorded at Newburgh Priory lake on 12th September with 18 at North Duffield Carrs on 20th October and 34 there on the 21st.

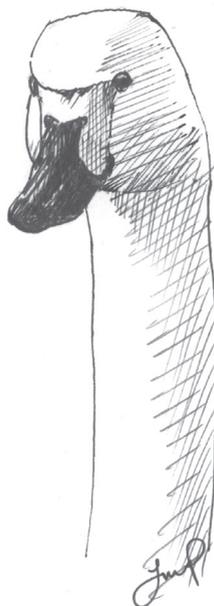
Monthly WeBS counts for Mute Swan

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	30	29	27	14	33	26	34	49
LDV	99	97	75	101	67	68	71	

Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus*

Declining winter visitor and passage migrant

A single was noted with Whooper Swans *Cygnus cygnus* at the southern end of the Lower Derwent Valley through January with two there from 25th February to late March. Later in the year five dropped into North Duffield Carrs on 17th October, with a single being found amongst the Whooper herd there on 12th December, while a group of three flew south at Thorganby Ings on the 26th.



Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Winter visitor

In the Lower Derwent Valley 40–55 were regularly seen in the North Duffield Carrs/Bubwith Ings area early in the year with 88 counted in the whole valley during the WeBS count on 15th January with 63 present during the count on 25th February. A total of 36 dropped into North Duffield Carrs on the evening of 5th March while 14 still remained in the valley at Wheldrake Ings on 1st April with an injured bird lingering at North Duffield Carrs into the summer.

In the autumn the first returning birds noted were singles at Wheldrake Ings on 12th October and at North Duffield Carrs on the 17th while three adults turned up on a flooded field at Black Dyke near Barmby Moor on the 19th (with one remaining to the 25th). At North Duffield Carrs 15 were noted on the 20th with 13 there on the 21st increasing to 57 by the 31st. Six were at Castle Howard Lake on the 26th with nine on the 31st remaining to 16th November; subsequently four were recorded at this site on 25th December. The wintering herd at North Duffield Carrs peaked at 90 in November and finally settled to around 60 birds by the end of the year.

Monthly WeBS counts for Whooper Swan

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	4
LDV	88	63	53	1	-	4	93	

Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*

Scarce winter visitor

Two birds of the Tundra race *rossicus* were reported amongst a large flock of Pink Footed Geese *Anser brachyrhynchus* at Wheldrake Ings on 24th November (NE), the first record for this species since 2004.

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Winter visitor and passage migrant

Just seven were at Castle Howard Lake early in January when three were at Wheldrake Ings, but a sizeable movement was documented later in the month. A skein of 85 moved north over Skipwith Common on the 25th and then, on the 28th, successive flocks of 80, 115, 140, 48, 90, 50, 27 and 130 (total 680 birds) flew over the Lower Derwent Valley followed by flocks of 90 and 110 on the 29th. Elsewhere on the 28th a flock of 220 was seen over Heslington, with 200 over Clifton Ings, 250 over Pocklington (in four separate flocks) and 120 over Acomb while

birds were also heard passing overhead at night in York; the following day 70+ flew west over Rowntree Park, York. In February 100 flew over South Bank on the 7th with 110 northwest over North Duffield Carrs on the 9th. A flock of 110 passed over Ellerton on the 29th while further birds were heard calling as they passed over Osbaldwick that night.

Two remained at Castle Howard Lake through March with singles at Wash Dike on Skipwith Common on the 14th and Dunnington Common on the 24th. In addition a skein of 50 flew north over Wheldrake Ings on the 17th and birds were heard again over Osbaldwick on the night of the 27th. On 18th April three were at Wheldrake Ings with a single bird at the same site between 3rd and 10th May and this or another flying high and north over Middlethorpe Ings on the 14th.

In the autumn noticeable passage occurred during the last week of September: skeins of c.50 birds flew southeast over Heslington on the 25th with 350 over Howden railway station on the 26th. Two days later, on the 28th, 41 flew south over Copmanthorpe while c.160, in two flocks, flew west and south respectively over Heslington, with skeins of 60 and 120 southwest over Osbaldwick, 96 over Allerthorpe and 200 headed east over Skipwith Common.

In October 20 were present at Wheldrake Ings on the 12th followed by an amazing 500+ which dropped in at the same site on the evening of the 24th with 150 still present on 17th November. A flock of 150 flew high over Pocklington on 3rd November heading southeast while three birds were also to be found at Castle Howard Lake during the month. On 3rd December another flock flew northwest over Knedlington heading towards the Lower Derwent Valley followed by 120 over East Cottingwith on the 20th.

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

Scarce winter visitor

The five birds from the end of last year (three adults and two first-winters) of the European race *albifrons* were present at Wheldrake Ings during early January with one remaining till 28th February. In addition a single bird of the Greenland race *flavirostris* was at Castle Howard Lake from 8th March to 5th April at least. In the autumn 20 were reported flying south over Kexby on 17th November.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Resident breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor

Common and reported widely throughout the recording area. The only large count early in the year was of 348 in the Lower Derwent Valley

during the WeBS survey on 25th February. A pair with eight goslings was seen at North Duffield Carrs on 5th May.

Good numbers were recorded in the autumn with 260 feeding on stubble at Hagg Lane, East Cottingwith on 6th September, an impressive 264 by Kings Staithe, York on 5th October, a peak count of 178 at Castle Howard Lake on 10th October, 330 at Lilling Green, West Lilling on the 27th and 353 counted at North Duffield Carrs on 8th November.

Monthly WeBS counts for Greylag Goose

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	638	100	429	346	43	150	139	20
LDV	1,056	348	101	168	1,003	1,472	1,126	

(Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens*)

Very rare winter visitor or escapee from wildfowl collections

Not recorded in 2008 the last record of this species being in 2003.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Resident feral breeder and winter visitor

Again a common species of goose that was recorded widely throughout the recording area. In the Lower Derwent Valley 180 were counted during the WeBS survey on 25th February while good numbers were present throughout the year at Castle Howard Lake peaking at 380 in November. Other high counts included 194 on stubble at Hagg Lane, East Cottingwith on 7th September and 198 at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on the 15th. In November there was a maximum count of 265 birds at North Duffield Carrs on the 10th.

Monthly WeBS counts for Canada Goose

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	12	98	179	67	25	67	380	274
LDV	573	180	35	88	357	589	607	

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Occasional winter visitor and feral wanderer

A single at Wheldrake Ings on 10th May plus two at Castle Howard Lake in July and a single reported there from 14th–31st October were probably all feral birds.

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

Not recorded in 2008 the last sighting being in 2007.

(Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca*)

Rare visitor from feral population

A group of six wary birds was found in a riverside field at Kexby on 24th September and remained in the area into early October while a single bird was on the River Derwent at Thorganby Ings on 17th December.

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Winter visitor, migrant breeder and scarce autumn passage migrant

Early in the year a single bird was on the floods at Clifton Ings on 3rd January with two on a scrape by Goosewood Caravan Park, Sutton-on-the-Forest and a single off Pottery Lane, Strensall on the 23rd, plus five in a field between Sheriff Hutton and Strensall on the 27th.

Eight were counted near Brighton on 6th February while at Skipwith Common three birds were present on the 15th with a pair frequenting the area of bracken between Wash Dike and Sands Lane in the following weeks.

In late spring three were at North Duffield Carrs on 19th April with two at Bank Island and one at Ellerton Ings the same day. A single was at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 10th May with 11 at Newburgh Priory lake on the 19th.

In the autumn a single bird was at Newburgh Priory lake on 12th September with 19 counted at North Duffield Carrs on 20th October, and 21 there the following day, while 16 flew northeast over East Cottingwith on 8th December.

Monthly WeBS counts for Common Shelduck

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
LDV	90	96	44	99	-	28	6	

(Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata*)

Scarce visitor mostly in the winter period

This species has become a more frequent visitor to the area in recent years. A drake at Wheldrake Ings from 23rd April to 9th May and another at Castle Howard Lake on 6th May maintained the recent run of records into 2008.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Regular winter visitor, spring passage migrant and resident breeder in small numbers

There were the usual substantial numbers wintering in the Lower Derwent Valley and again the majority of birds were at Wheldrake Ings and North Duffield Carrs peaking at 4,250 and 4,100 respectively at these sites during the WeBS survey on 15th January which revealed a total of 11,960 birds of this species throughout the valley.

At Clifton Ings ten were on the floods on 3rd January with a pair there on the 11th and another eight flew down-river on the 18th. The same month a total of 254 was counted at Castle Howard Lake with a similar number there at the back end of the year. Approximately 700 were still present between Aughton Ings and North Duffield Carrs on 30th March. Additionally two pairs were located on the ponds at Strensall Common on 23rd March.

In the Lower Derwent Valley birds remained into April with c.63 at North Duffield Carrs on the 15th, 94 there with five at Bubwith Ings and nine at Aughton Ings on the 19th, 84 at North Duffield Carrs on the 22nd, two pairs at Bank Island and 26 at North Duffield Carrs on the 24th with nine left at that site when counted on the 27th. A pair was seen at North Duffield Carrs on 16th May.

In the autumn 26 were recorded at Bank Island on 12th September with 287 counted at North Duffield Carrs on the 15th. During October there was a steady build up of numbers at Skipwith Common and on the 26th 400 flew in at dawn, presumably from the nearby Lower Derwent Valley where the only early winter counts were of 490 at North Duffield Carrs on 10th November and 300+ at Thorganby Ings on 26th December; a pair was also present at Naburn Marina on the 26th.

Monthly WeBS counts for Eurasian Wigeon

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	200	101	50	3	41	195	255	205
LDV	11,600	6,268	3,525	1,325	1,894	3,061	5,075	

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Winter visitor and migrant breeder

In the Lower Derwent Valley a maximum of 171 was counted on 25th February during WeBS counts; 112 of them were at Wheldrake Ings. Birds remained into April at various sites in the Lower Derwent Valley with counts of three pairs on the 5th, five pairs on the 17th, ten pairs on the 19th, four pairs on the 21st, five pairs on the 23rd, four pairs on the 24th and three pairs on the 27th. Small numbers were also seen at Castle Howard Lake throughout the year with up to 30 wintering there. The only other record was of three birds on the flooded field at Black Dyke near Barmby Moor on 20th November.

Monthly WeBS counts for Gadwall

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	23	28	6	6	7	20	10	22
LDV	144	171	69	75	35	114	104	

Eurasian Teal *Anas crecca***Winter visitor and resident breeder**

A WeBS count of 3,616 was noted in the Lower Derwent Valley on 15th January increasing slightly to 3,714 by the count on 25th February, the greatest numbers on both dates being at Wheldrake Ings but with good numbers also at North Duffield Carrs. On 28th March this site still held 147 birds falling to 129 by the 31st. Numbers here continued to decrease gradually through April but 78 were still recorded on the 24th.

Elsewhere five were on Germany Beck, Fulford on 18th February, 21 were seen near Frog Hall, Allerthorpe Common on 1st March and probably the same flock turned up in a flooded field near Wilberfoss from 3rd–5th March. Eight were at Newburgh Priory lake on 12th September with 30 at Bank Island the same day, followed by 260 at Aughton Ings on 23rd September and 120 at North Duffield Carrs on 10th November.

Significant counts away from the Lower Derwent Valley included 165 on the flooded field at Black Dyke near Barnby Moor on 19th October, 200 at Skipwith Common on the 26th and 126 at Castle Howard Lake in November.

Monthly WeBS counts for Eurasian Teal

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	62	27	8	5	-	52	126	120
LDV	3,616	3,714	1,589	586	1,318	2,505	2,487	

Green-winged Teal *Anas carolinensis***Rare visitor**

An elusive drake, found at North Duffield Carrs on 27th March (BirdGuides, RS, PR), was seen occasionally over the next few days and then turned up at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd April. Possibly this or another drake was at the latter site on 10th November (BirdGuides). This is the third year in succession that this species has been recorded in the Lower Derwent Valley.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos***Winter visitor and resident breeder**

Common and widespread and recorded widely throughout the area although few large counts were received this year. There were 1,272

Monthly WeBS counts for Mallard

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	177	83	73	45	179	185	228	163
LDV	1,245	1,272	728	586	1,386	1,265	1,270	

throughout the Lower Derwent Valley during the WeBS count on 25th February; at Castle Howard Lake numbers peaked at 177 in the first winter period and 228 in the autumn; the only other large count was of 156 at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 18th October.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

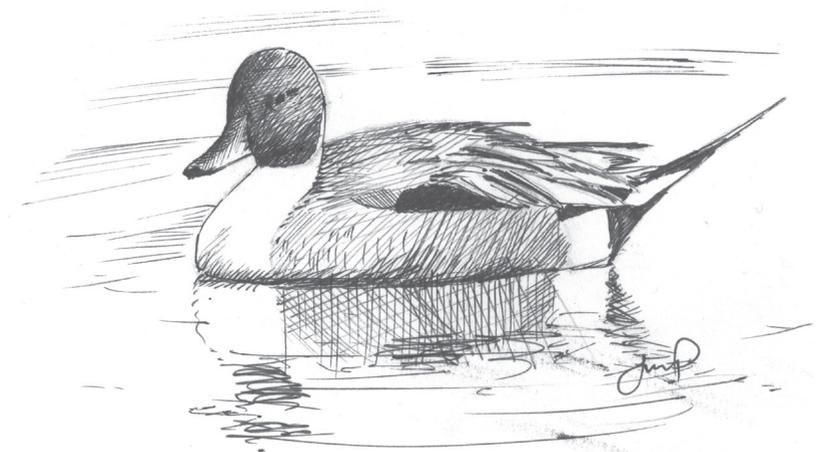
Winter visitor and scarce breeder

The usual numbers wintered in the Lower Derwent Valley with 674 counted during the WeBS count on 25th February with 100+ still present at Wheldrake Ings through March but only a few stragglers were left by April. Elsewhere, a pair was seen on Wash Dike at Skipwith Common on 11th and 12th February.

Two early returning birds were at Thorganby Ings on 24th August with five (including one drake) at Wheldrake Ings on 30th September. Another two dropped in at Skipwith Common, with good numbers of Wigeon *Anas penelope*, on 26th October. Five birds were back at North Duffield Carrs on 2nd November with three on the flooded field at Black Dyke near Barmby Moor on the 11th and 50+ back at Wheldrake Ings by the year end.

Monthly WeBS counts for Pintail

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
LDV	273	674	259	59	20	50	89	



Garganey *Anas querquedula*
Scarce migrant breeder

The first bird of the year was a drake at North Duffield Carrs from 25th March onwards while five (including three drakes) were at Wheldrake Ings on 21st April, with two remaining to the 25th at least. Many records were received for May with up to four birds being seen at various sites within the Lower Derwent Valley, particularly North Duffield Carrs and Wheldrake Ings; the only sighting from outside the valley concerned a drake which landed on the CSL pond on 8th May. There were a number of single bird sightings through the summer from Thorganby and Wheldrake Ings with the last being a drake at Wheldrake Ings on 20th September.

[Blue-winged Teal *Anas discors*
Vagrant

A drake said to be present at Wheldrake Ings in early May would have been the 2nd record for the YOC area, the first being in 1967. Unfortunately, news of this bird was not made public and identification could not be confirmed. A New Zealand Shoveler *Anas rhynchos* was also present at this site during this time.]

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*
Winter visitor and resident breeder in small numbers

Small numbers were present in the Lower Derwent Valley throughout the year with a maximum of 341 in March (a maximum of 107 at North Duffield Carrs on 27th March). Into April numbers continued to decrease with counts at North Duffield Carrs of 31 on the 15th, nine on the 19th, 12 on the 22nd and five on the 24th. Elsewhere eight were present on Wash Dike at Skipwith Common on 5th January with, in the autumn, a single there on 2nd September with a pair on the 30th. Very small numbers also occurred at Castle Howard Lake with four there in January and three in October.

Monthly WeBS counts for Shoveler

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	4	-	1	-	-	1	-	-
LDV	171	308	341	211	68	333	88	

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*
Winter visitor and breeder in small numbers

Up to 150 were at Castle Howard Lake during January with c.100 at Wheldrake Ings early in the year. During flooding 67 were counted

on 18th February at North Duffield Carrs, a site where this species is usually absent. Singles were noted at Allerthorpe Lakeland Park on 12th January, on Wash Dike, Skipwith Common on 11th May and on the boating lake at Rowntree Park, York on 18th October.

Monthly WeBS counts for Common Pochard

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	25	49	60	-	1	-	1	24
LDV	103	87	6	1	33	-	-	

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Winter visitor and breeder in small numbers

Up to 50 were at Castle Howard Lake early in the year while 162 were counted in the Lower Derwent Valley during the WeBS count on 25th February. Elsewhere, up to 19 were at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits in January while 12 were on Wash Dike, Skipwith Common on 24th February. As many as 30 pairs could still be found scattered at various sites in April while four pairs were still at North Duffield Carrs on 5th May.

Breeding was confirmed at Skipwith Common where a pair with eight ducklings was seen on 9th July, and at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits where a female with four ducklings was noted on 12th July.

Two graced the CSL pond on 21st July with three there on 4th September, a single drake remaining to the 11th, while a female was present through November. Another female flew over Rawcliffe Ings on 16th September and possibly the same bird was at Rawcliffe Lake from 27th September to 5th October. Wintering flocks during the latter half of the year peaked with 78 at Castle Howard Lake in November and 100+ at Wheldrake Ings on 30th December.

Monthly WeBS counts for Tufted Duck

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	68	72	66	66	33	39	78	128
LDV	116	162	107	136	323	36	43	

Greater Scaup *Aythya marila*

Winter visitor and passage migrant in small numbers

The single female from last year remained at Castle Howard Lake until 21st April at least with two present there on 22nd January.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Very scarce winter visitor

A female was seen from Swantail Hide at Wheldrake Ings on 28th March (Bird Guides), the third winter in a row for this species.

Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Winter visitor and passage migrant

Up to 28 birds were at Castle Howard Lake during the early part of the year with 20 counted in the Lower Derwent Valley on 25th February (WeBS count), and small numbers at both sites at the end of the year. Elsewhere a single female was on the floods at Clifton Ings on 15th December.

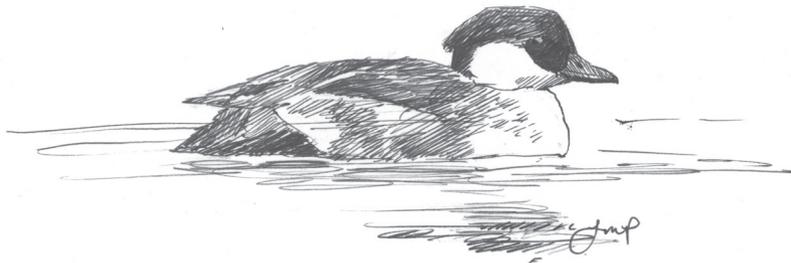
Monthly WeBS counts for Common Goldeneye

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	12	16	24	4	-	-	2	12
LDV	4	20	4	-	-	1	1	

Smew *Mergellus albellus*

Scarce winter visitor

A redhead was present at Castle Howard Lake from 22nd January to 11th April (MD *et al.*) but could be elusive at times.



Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Very scarce winter visitor

Two were reported from North Duffield Carrs briefly on 4th May (BirdGuides).

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Regular winter visitor and passage migrant

Up to 21 wintered at Castle Howard Lake, a traditional site, early in the year. Elsewhere, a female was at Rawcliffe Lake on 9th January with

another by the weir at Buttercrambe on the 10th. Seven were on the River Ouse at Clifton on the 29th with three there on 8th February and two flying down-river on 9th April. There were also records in March from the River Ouse at Upper Poppleton with three there on the 15th, 11 on the 16th and three again on the 29th. A late spring record concerned a female on the River Wharfe at Ulleskelf on 27th May.

Interestingly there were only two records from the Lower Derwent Valley this year with nine males on the river by North Duffield Carrs on 12th September and two briefly on the pool at Wheldrake Ings on 25th November. However up to 18 were seen on a small lake between Wheldrake and Elvington between 6th February and 4th March.

In the autumn a female was at Redhouse Reservoir, near Moor Monkton on 29th October while four were at Castle Howard Lake on the 31st increasing to six in December. Six flew west over the CSL pond on 14th November, and three females dropped onto Rawcliffe Lake on 17th December with two remaining to the 20th.

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*
Resident breeder in small numbers

Now something of a rarity in the YOC area, a pair was present at Wash Dike, Skipwith Common from 28th March onwards and these two were later joined by a second pair. Early breeding attempts failed but the birds remained and on 3rd September one pair was seen accompanied by five ducklings, the first confirmed breeding record for the YOC area since 2003. The only other records comprised one at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd April, another at Castle Howard Lake on 9th May, a drake at the CSL pond on 25th June and a female at Bank Island on 30th September.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*
Resident breeder

Small numbers were again reported widely in farmland throughout the area with breeding noted in CSL grounds; the largest counts were of 25 at a farm near Bielby on 20th November and a covey of 21 at CSL around the same time.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*
Resident breeder

Not as common as the previous species but many reports were received of small numbers, mainly from the Strensall to Sheriff Hutton area and the eastern part of the recording area. More significant counts included nine at Buttercrambe on 5th January, ten at Cornborough near

Sheriff Hutton on the 12th, ten at Dunnington Common on 10th October and 23 at High Roans, Strensall on the 22nd.

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Summer visitor which breeds in good years

One heard calling at North Duffield Carrs on 17th and 18th May was the first of the year followed by two calling at West Lilling on the 19th and four at North Duffield Carrs on the 20th. Further records of singles came from Ulleskelf on the 24th and 28th, and at West Lilling again on the 27th. Two to three birds were calling at the latter site in early June. By then it was estimated that 20+ birds were in the Lower Derwent Valley as a whole (per RS). There were two further records: two birds were calling from a roadside barley field near Sutton upon Derwent on the 28th June while one was heard calling at night near Stockton on the Forest on 11th August.

Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Resident breeder

Common and regularly encountered in farmland throughout the recording area, the highest count was of 16 at Petersfield Farm, Bielby on 2nd November. Also seen again within the York outer ring road with seven or eight still present in and around the Cornfield NR at Rawcliffe where breeding again occurred.

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

Very scarce winter visitor

A freshly dead but badly oiled bird was discovered at Castle Howard Lake on 5th January (AB). This is the first occurrence of this species in the YOC area since 1996.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Resident breeder, more widespread in winter

A single was on the River Ouse at Fulford on 3rd January while 12 were counted on the Pocklington Canal by Melbourne on the 6th.

Extensive flooding early in the year resulted in several records from sites not normally noted for this species. Three were on floods at North Duffield Carrs on 27th January, with one remaining into March, while another was similarly at Germany Beck, Fulford from 11th to 14th February. In April a pair was 'whinnying' at North Duffield Carrs on the 3rd and seen again on the 15th. Additionally at this site three were found at the top pond on 17th April followed by two pairs there on the 19th and one pair on both 5th May and 3rd June.

Pairs were present throughout the year along the Pocklington Canal, at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits and at Frog Hall, Allerthorpe Common with two also seen at the Strensall Common pools on 23rd March. At Skipwith Common four broods were noted during the summer, each with two chicks.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Resident breeder and passage visitor

Present at Castle Howard Lake throughout the year with a maximum of eight in October. A pair bred again on York University Lake raising three broods; in contrast, the pair at Rawcliffe Lake made three attempts to breed but failed each time. An adult was at Naburn Marina on 5th April with a pair at Bank Island on the 20th, and further records of single birds on the River Ouse by Clifton Bridge on the 21st, at Waplinton Hall, Allerthorpe on 29th May and at Allerthorpe Lakeland Park on 26th October.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

Former summer visitor and scarce breeder, now predominantly a passage visitor

The only records this year involved two birds at Bank Island on 16th and 17th April with a third bird at a potential new breeding site in the valley (RS *et al.*).

Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus*

Scarce autumn visitor on passage

Not seen in 2008 after a run of three consecutive years from 2005–2007.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Passage and winter visitor; recently established resident breeder

Seen throughout the year in the Lower Derwent Valley where the breeding colony at Wheldrake Ings continues to prosper with around 25 nesting birds. The species was also seen all year at Castle Howard Lake but breeding was not confirmed, a maximum count of 33 being made there on 27th October. Singles were seen at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 10th May and 12th July with three there on 5th October and birds were also noted fishing at the CSL pond on several occasions. There were a number of sightings of birds flying up and down the River Ouse at Clifton where one was regularly seen perched in riverside trees through December, while another took up residence at Rawcliffe Lake from 27th October to 8th November.

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Very scarce, mostly winter visitor

There were two unverified reports: one at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd September (BirdGuides) and another, seen in flight, at North Duffield Carrs on 9th October (BirdGuides).

[**Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*

Very rare vagrant

One was reported circling over Wheldrake Ings with two Little Egrets *Egretta garzetta* on 10th March but unfortunately didn't land. No description was received for what was potentially the 2nd record for the YOC area (NE.)]

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Previously a rare vagrant but in recent years has become an annual if irregular visitor

A good series of records from Wheldrake Ings started with two birds circling over the area with a Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* on 10th March, one of them dropping onto the floods there and still present the next morning. Another was seen there from 24th June to 4th July with two present on the 23rd and another from 8th–25th August while probably the same bird was seen flying up-river at Thorganby on the 27th. Elsewhere, one flushed from the western edge of Wash Dike at Skipwith Common on 8th August could have been the same bird prior to it arriving at Wheldrake.

Great White Egret *Ardea alba*

Rare vagrant

One flew north over Bank Island on 14th September and then dropped into Wheldrake Ings although it could only be observed from the viewing platform at Bank Island due to extensive flooding (AB, RS). This is the 3rd record for the YOC area.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Resident breeder

No heronry counts were received this year but small numbers were reported from several locations throughout the area including Allerthorpe, Allerthorpe Gravel Pits, Buttercrambe Moor, Castle Howard Lake, Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings and Rawcliffe Lake, the Lower Derwent Valley, Newburgh and CSL ponds, and Strensall and Skipwith Commons. The largest concentration of birds was 17 by the Pocklington Canal at Hagg Bridge on 18th September.

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*

Very rare vagrant

A 1st record for the York area, a juvenile (the bird previously seen further north near Newcastle), was first reported at Wharfe Ings near Cawood on 24th August (RS) and remained in the area until the 29th although it could be elusive at times; there was also a belated report of presumably the same bird from Seavy Carr, Melbourne on the 30th (see report on page 104).

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*

Scarce vagrant, but free-flying birds from the Harewood Estate near Leeds are also likely in recent years

One was reported flying north over the A64, following the River Ouse, on 3rd April (BirdGuides), and two were reported together high to the west over York on 11th May (BirdGuides); all were presumed to be free-flying birds from the Harewood Estate.

Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

Irregular passage migrant

In the spring a possible sighting of a bird flying high northwest over Long Marston on 20th May was the only record.

In the autumn an incredible six birds, a group of four and two singles, passed through Bank Island on the afternoon of 14th September (RS), part of a national influx. In fact, a total of at least 11 birds passed through the Lower Derwent Valley in that period with three also seen over East Cottingwith and two over North Duffield Carrs. Further singles flew over Ellerton Ings on the 18th (PR) and North Duffield Carrs on the 21st; most were moving in a southerly direction.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Irregular visitor from re-introduction schemes

With the ongoing success of the Harewood release scheme and the subsequent establishment of a few pairs in the Yorkshire Wolds sightings are becoming more frequent in the YOC area, the first of the year being a single over the A1079 near Barmby Moor on 27th February. Other singles were seen flying west over Terrington on 9th March, high over Naburn Woods on the 14th and over Long Marston on the 24th, with two over Tollerton on the 27th and another there on 1st April. Another was at Raskelf on 26th April (just outside the YOC area but an interesting record) and one at Colton south of York on the 28th.

A pair was reported from Skipwith Common on 14th May with singles seen there on 8th August and 24th September. One flew over Ellerton on 2nd July with another over Sheriff Hutton on the 31st, while one over CSL on 26th October was the first for that site. A single bird seen flying from Askham Bog towards Askham Bryan on 5th December and another lone bird circling over Green Hammerton/Allerton Park near the A59 (just west of the YOC area) on the 30th were the last reports of the year.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Passage migrant and rare breeder, now also scarce winter visitor

Seemingly present in the Lower Derwent Valley for much of the year with ones and twos reported most months, the first being a female or juvenile hunting over Seavy Carrs, Thornton on 5th February. It was thought as many as nine individuals were around during the summer, with three seen together at North Duffield Carrs on 12th September followed by four at the same site on the 15th and 16th, and six on the 17th. Later in the same month three were over Aughton Ings on the 23rd with two at this site on the 24th. There were occasional further sightings of single birds in this area until the year end.

At Wheldrake Ings two immatures were seen in a period of four hours on 30th September. Birds from the Lower Derwent Valley also visited nearby Skipwith Common occasionally with a 'cream crown' hunting over Wash Dike on 29th March and at least four different birds visiting the common between July and September. Singles were also seen flying west over Selby on 20th March and east over Burythorpe near Malton on 31st July.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Winter visitor and passage migrant

In spring a male was reported flying northeast at Rossmoor near East Cottingwith on 16th April (PR). In the second half of the year a "ringtail" was seen at both Wheldrake Ings and North Duffield Carrs between 20th and 23rd October, and reported again from the latter site in early November.

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*

Rare vagrant

The 7th record for the YOC area, a 'ringtail', was reported from Wheldrake Ings on 2nd July (CR per RS).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Passage visitor and rare breeder

A change in fortune for this exquisite bird of prey has resulted in an increased number of sightings in the YOC area over the last few years. This year the first was seen over Skipwith Common on 20th January, with a pair displaying there on 3rd February (CR, DT), while an adult male flew north over Danesmead Copse, Fulford on 22nd April (AB) and a possible immature was seen flying east over South Bank in York on 8th May.

In the autumn females were reported from Allerthorpe Common on 15th November (IA) and Everingham Park on 31st December.

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Resident breeder and passage migrant

It is probably debatable whether this species or Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* is the commonest raptor in the YOC area, but birds were certainly reported from many sites throughout the area including suburbia where it was regularly encountered in gardens. Birds were also noted displaying at several sites including Clifton Ings, Fulford Ings, Askham Bog and Yearsley Moor.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Passage migrant and scarce resident breeder

Sightings continue to increase with birds becoming firmly established at several sites around the YOC area including Castle Howard Estate, CSL and Skipwith Common. Elsewhere the first report was of one over the Tillmire, Heslington followed, on 19th January, by a single at Black Plantation, Holme on Spalding Moor and two over Crockey Hill, with another single over Barthorpe on the 21st.

Two more were at Allerthorpe Common on 2nd February and the same day one went over the Tillmire at Heslington with three spotted over Escrick on the 8th. Four were seen together at Caulkley's Bank on 24th March with one nest located. One headed north low over South Bank, York on 7th May while another was mobbed by corvids over Rawcliffe Ings on 4th July and a pair was seen near Cawton on the 13th – the observer was informed by the local farmer that they were breeding nearby.

Up to four were at Wharfe Ings, Cawood in late August with two observed mobbing the Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* over Stillingfleet on the 28th, plus a pair at Scrayingham on the 17th and singles over Strensall on the 16th and 21st. Two were seen from the Thorganby viewing platform on 2nd September with another over Allerthorpe Common

on the 13th and three over Bank Island on the 14th during an influx of Honey Buzzards *Pernis apivorus*. Records of further singles came from Boon Wood, Howsham on the 19th, North Duffield Carrs on the 21st, Heslington Tillmire on 2nd October and again in December, Wheldrake Ings on 18th October, Rawcliffe Meadows at dusk on 11th November (probably roosting), Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on the 19th and Seaton Ross on the 21st plus birds reported from Thorganby Ings in early December.

Rough-legged Buzzard *Buteo lagopus*

Rare visitor mostly in winter

There were two reports of this winter visitor in our area: the first was from Buttercrambe on 4th January (IA) while another was with Common Buzzards *Buteo buteo* at Thorganby Ings on 1st December (BirdGuides). Of more interest to local birders were the three birds discovered just outside the YOC area at Millington Pasture east of Pocklington in mid-November. They were seen regularly, sometimes all three together, to the end of the year.



Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Regular passage migrant

The first of the year involved two separate birds moving north over North Duffield Carrs on 7th April, while another was seen being mobbed by gulls high over Acomb on the 22nd. The next sighting was one seen distantly from Coneysthorpe on 18th May, while another flew north over North Duffield Carrs on 4th June and the species was also reported over Skipwith Common during the spring.

Return passage saw singles over Castle Howard Lake on 13th September with another over Bank Island the following day during a significant passage of raptors, while one was photographed as it flew over the CSL pond later in the month.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Resident breeder

A very common raptor frequently encountered hunting over roadside verges with singles and pairs reported from many sites throughout the YOC area. Of note were five birds in a brief communal display at Bank Island on 21st April. The species probably bred widely through the area as usual and, typically, a family party of two adults with three young were frequenting Rawcliffe Ings for a few days in late summer.

Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus*

Vagrant in summer

An immature male was first seen in the vicinity of Howden railway station on 26th May (CR) and seen again on the 27th (PR), the 7th record for the YOC area and the first since 2002. The location is about 2km north of Howden and just inside the YOC recording area.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Passage migrant and winter visitor

A female was seen flying south over Fulford Ings on 28th January while a male shot low over Clifton Ings on 29th February. Other singles were reported from North Duffield Carrs on 3rd February and again on 11th, 18th and 28th March and on 3rd April, and at Wheldrake Ings on 12th March.

In the autumn, a female/immature was seen at the latter site on 25th August with another at North Duffield Carrs on 23rd September while one was seen to make a kill at Bank Island on 1st December. The last record of the year was a male seen flying over the A19 near the Tollerton turnoff on 5th December.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Passage and scarce summer visitor

A good series of records this year started with one at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd April. This was followed by one over a private garden in Selby early on 1st May with another at Storwood on 5th May. One was at Wheldrake Ings again on 9th and 10th May, with a pair there on the 11th. Another was sighted chasing Sand Martins *Riparia riparia* over the River

Ouse at Clifton Ings on 29th May while a bird roosted in a dead Scots Pine on Skipwith Common for several days in mid-June. Further records came from Allerthorpe Common (west end) on 28th June and at Haxby the following day.

A single was at Seavy Carr, Thornton on 1st July with one at Wheldrake Ings on the 2nd and another over the A64 near Malton on the 6th while one flew west over CSL on the 8th, a blustery overcast day. Singles were also seen hunting over Strensall Common on the 13th and at Rawcliffe Meadows and at Scrayingham on the 17th. An impressive five were at Thorganby Ings on the 26th with one at Bank Island the following day.

One was over a Long Marston garden on 3rd September while two were watched for an hour hunting in front of the Geoff Smith Hide at North Duffield Carrs on 21st September and a single adult flew southwest over Ellerton on the 29th.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Winter and passage visitor

A regular winter visitor to the Lower Derwent Valley with probably two to three birds accounting for the many sightings during this period, mainly from Wheldrake Ings, Thorganby Ings and North Duffield Carrs.

Elsewhere singles were at Allerthorpe Common on 4th January and at Ellers Farm, Buttercrambe on the 10th, while an immature hunting over the Cornfield NR, Clifton on the 17th seemed to be trying to flush Sky Larks *Alauda arvensis* but without success. Another carrying prey was seen at Sheriff Hutton on the 30th. Birds were seen over Heslington on 9th March, and again on 19th April, with singles over the CSL pond on 4th April and near Copmanthorpe on the 8th.

A handful of summer sightings included an immature at Dunnington Common on 13th June, an adult over Clifton Ings on 8th July, one chasing a Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* at East Cottingwith on 21st August, one with prey near Long Marston on 24th August and another flying southwest over CSL on 11th September. One passed through Bank Island on 14th September during a remarkable raptor passage that day, with another at Wheldrake Ings on the 20th, at North Duffield Carrs on the 21st and at Wheldrake Ings again on the 30th. Up to two were seen at the flooded field by Black Dyke, Barmby Moor during October with an immature at North Duffield Carrs on the 21st. One powered over Rawcliffe Ings late afternoon on 13th November with others at North Duffield Carrs on 28th November, at Bank Island on 8th December, and by the Pocklington Canal at Bielby on 26th December.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Resident breeder and winter/passage visitor

This secretive bird is probably more widespread than records suggest, and a resident breeder at many sites in the Lower Derwent Valley. The only records received this year were of a rather showy individual in front of the Geoff Smith Hide at North Duffield Carrs on 6th January, with one calling there on the 12th, and a couple of single bird sightings along the Pocklington Canal, at Coates Bridge on 12th January and at Thornton Lock on 23rd February. At least three breeding pairs were at Skipwith Common this summer while one was at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 5th October. One was also reported from the York University campus on 4th December (per RS)

Spotted Crane *Porzana porzana*

Very scarce passage migrant and breeder

One was heard calling at Wheldrake Ings on 25th April (per I&RT) in an area with roosting Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*.

Corncrake *Crex crex*

Very scarce summer migrant and former breeder

Not recorded in 2008, but was noted in 2007.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Common resident and winter visitor

Again widely reported from suitable habitat throughout the recording area with good numbers seen at some sites. The most interesting counts received were of 32 at Hemingbrough on 22nd January, 181 throughout the Lower Derwent Valley during the WeBS count on 25th February, 25 breeding pairs at Skipwith Common and a maximum of 62 at Castle Howard Lake in October.

Coot *Fulica atra*

Common resident and winter visitor

Common but not as widespread as the last species owing to its dependency on more open water. The main strongholds are in the Lower Derwent Valley where 528 were counted during the WeBS survey on 25th February, the majority at Wheldrake Ings, and at Castle Howard Lake where 356 were counted in October. Breeding was reported from many sites including Wheldrake Ings and Castle Howard Lake. Additional breeding records came from the Pocklington Canal, Rawcliffe Lake, York University Lake, CSL pond, Strensall Common and Allerthorpe Gravel

Pits, while a more unusual sighting was of four on the floods at Rawcliffe Ings from 17th–24th February.

Monthly WeBS counts for Coot

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	247	151	149	59	277	356	273	238
LDV	125	528	323	373	126	108	25	

Common Crane *Grus grus*

Scarce vagrant

A single bird flew low over Wheldrake Ings on 17th April (IA), landing by the river to the south of East Cottingwith, and this bird then lingered in the area until the 25th (RS).

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Passage migrant and scarce breeder

First reports were of a single bird at Castle Howard on 16th February followed by one over Wheldrake Ings on the 17th. Numbers built up in March with 19 seen by the riverside at Thorganby Ings on the 4th followed by three at Castle Howard on the 9th and two there on the 29th while two were at North Duffield Carrs on the 27th.

April sightings included 25, in two groups, on the river bank at Thorganby Ings on the 2nd, two pairs at Middlethorpe Ings from at least the 5th to the 12th, four at Wheldrake Ings on the 22nd, two at Castle Howard on the 27th and 29th, and a single at CSL also on the 29th. Four were displaying at White Carr Flash on the 26th.

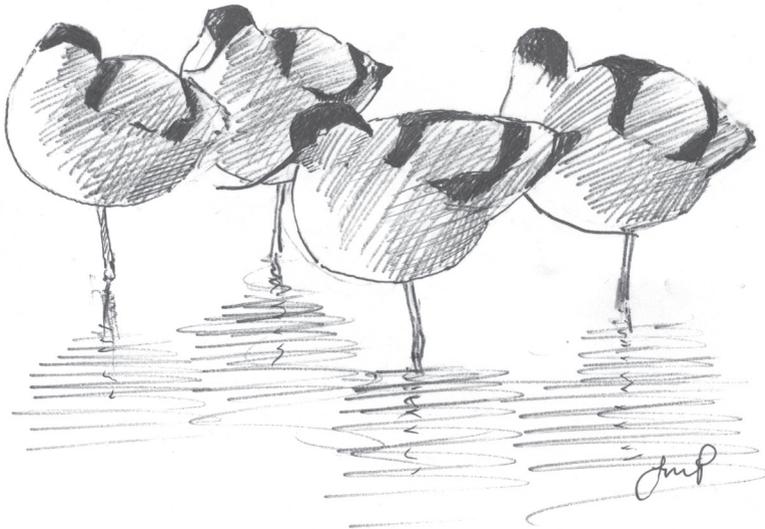
Widespread May records at Allerthorpe included birds at Allerthorpe Lakeland Park on the 20th, Moor Close on the 29th, as well as at Tank Plantation. Three were present at Naburn Sewage Works on 10th May with a pair there on the 25th. In June a single was at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on the 14th and a pair was at CSL on the 25th.

July records were again widespread and included, on the 1st, two at White Carr Flash; on the 3rd, two at CSL, four at the Moor Monkton turn-off on the A59 and two by a small pond between Long Marston and Hessay; on the 12th one at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits; on the 15th two at Allerthorpe Water Park; and on the 23rd one at CSL. The last records were of six in a meadow at Tollerton on 22nd July and four at the same location on 4th August.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Rare visitor

Four were present at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd April (BirdGuides) viewed from Tower Hide, the 6th record in the previous ten years.



Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Scarce summer breeder and passage migrant

The year's sightings comprised a single at Wheldrake Ings on 9th April, and again on the 21st, an adult at Naburn Sewage Works on 10th May and a pair which bred within the York Railway Station area where three young were fledged.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Passage migrant

There were only three sightings this year: one over Broad Highway, Wheldrake on 6th March (RS) with another at Thorganby Ings on the 30th (PR) and six recorded at Bubwith Ings on 21st September (per PR).

[American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica*

Rare vagrant

A single bird was reported amongst 600 Golden Plover at North Duffield Carrs on 20th November (NE) but no description was received.]

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

Winter visitor and passage migrant

Winter WeBS figures show a peak of 5,433 in the Lower Derwent Valley on 15th January, including 1,200 at Wheldrake Ings, 799 at Ellerton Ings, 234 at Aughton Ings and an impressive 3,200 at North Duffield Carrs. Other notable records included:

- 1,800 at Ellerton Ings on 5th January
- 100 at Tollerton on 12th January
- 500 from the Geoff Smith Hide, North Duffield Carrs on 19th January and 23rd February
- 2,000 over Fulford Ings and Middlethorpe Ings on 28th January
- 2,000 at Gunby on 6th February
- 50 at Sheriff Hutton on 7th February,
- 20 at Stittenham on 8th February
- 500 between Bishopthorpe and Acaster Malbis on 11th February
- 1,100 at Bank Island on 24th February
- 300 over the A64 York by-pass on 2nd March
- 800 at Ellerton Ings on 4th March falling to just 43 on the 30th
- 100 late stayers at Naburn on 11th April
- 13 in full summer plumage near Hagg Lane, East Cottingwith on 12th April.

The first returning birds noted were six at Wheldrake Ings on 4th August with subsequent records as follows:

- Four at Thorganby Ings on 30th August
- Two over Hagg Lane, East Cottingwith on 7th September
- 65 over Ellerton on 29th September
- 25 over the Malton by-pass on 4th October
- 170 over Ellerton on 7th October with 140 near there on the 10th
- 350 at Black Dyke near Barmby Moor on 23rd October with 80 on 26th October
- 500 at Seaton Ross on 28th October.
- 2,500 noted at North Duffield Carrs in early November
- More than 300 observed at CSL on 25th November.

The last count of the year was of 100 at Terrington on 23rd December.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Winter visitor and passage migrant

A single bird circled, calling, over North Duffield Carrs before continuing north on 29th March (DR). At Thorganby another bird in partial summer plumage was seen on 5th May (RS) with two there on the 7th and 8th. One at Wheldrake Ings on 6th May (RS), was possibly one of these birds.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Winter visitor, passage migrant and breeder

The peak WeBS count, from 25th February, showed 7,406 in the Lower Derwent Valley of which 1,420 were at Thorganby Ings, 1,340 at Ellerton Ings, 1,480 at Bubwith Ings and 950 at Wheldrake Ings.

Other notable reports in the first winter period included:

200+ around Huby on 3rd January

500 at Bubwith bridge, 250 at Cliffe and 200 at Gunby all on 19th January

500 on Middlethorpe Ings, following floods, on 28th January

280 at Castle Howard in February

650 present at Ellerton Ings on 4th March.

Other records, of smaller numbers, included up to 40 at Clifton Ings on 10th January, 60 between Strensall and Sheriff Hutton on 27th January, and birds from time to time at CSL. An unseasonal bird was in the Cornfield NR on 29th May.

Spring brought evidence of breeding with fifteen pairs on the Tillmire, Heslington on 11th April, four pairs at Aughton Ings on 19th April, two pairs displaying south of Towthorpe on 26th April, a pair displaying at Grimston Wood on 17th May, one agitated bird at Lilling Low Lane on 13th June and a pair with two chicks seen near Thornton-le-Clay on 1st July. It was also apparent that birds were breeding at Castle Howard, Flaxton, North Duffield Carrs, Bielby, Melbourne, CSL and Middlethorpe Ings.

Late summer/autumn records of note were as follows:

14 in a maize field at Dunnington on 13th July

500 at Thorganby on 23rd August

500 also counted over NDC on 6th September

190 at Aughton Ings on 23rd September

540 at Black Dyke near Barmby Moor 26th October

350 on 23rd November with 1,000 in mid-November at Norton

Towers

300 present at Terrington on 23rd December

2,000 in evidence at Thorganby on 26th December.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Winter visitor and passage migrant

The only sighting of the year was of a single at Wheldrake Ings on 21st April (BirdGuides).

Sanderling *Calidris alba*
Winter visitor and passage migrant

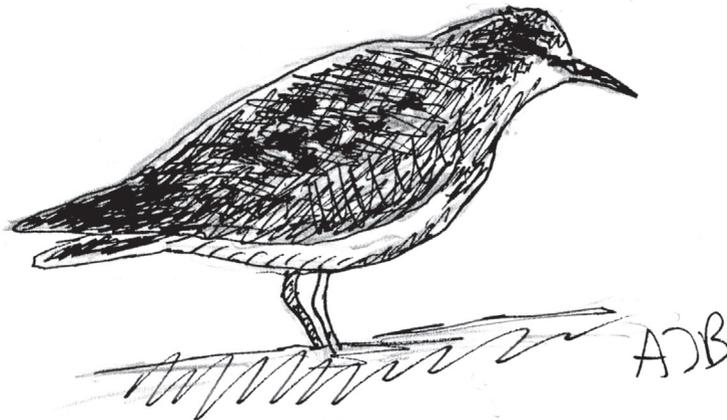
Not recorded in 2008, the last sighting being in 2006.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*
Scarce passage migrant, mostly autumn

A juvenile was noted along with other waders on the flash at Black Dyke near Barmby Moor on 13th October (RS).

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*
Rare passage migrant

Two were seen from Swantail Hide, Wheldrake Ings on 9th May. Eventually, the birds were seen to have a brief fly-around and then land back along the central channel. Ten minutes later they were spooked again and headed off to the northeast after circling a couple of times, with the white outer tail very obvious (RS, DW). Perhaps, surprisingly, a further bird was sighted from the Refuge at Wheldrake Ings on 13th May (CR). These are the 8th, 9th and 10th records for the YOC area.



Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*
Rare vagrant but becoming more frequent

The only sightings were in October: one on the flash near Black Dyke, Barmby Moor on 13th (RS *et al.*) and again in the same area on a flooded field to the east of Barmby Moor on the 21st. These are the 8th (and maybe 9th) records for the YOC area.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Infrequent passage visitor, usually in the autumn

A juvenile was present on the flash at Black Dyke near Barmby Moor from at least 17th to 22nd October (RS, MW, DR).

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Passage migrant and winter visitor

The first report was of one at Bubwith Bridge on 19th January increasing to 54 (on the flood bank) by the 28th. Up to 100 were reported in the Lower Derwent Valley in February but this could be an underestimate as around 100 were seen just at Gunby by the River Derwent during the first hour of a BTO Atlas TTV. Subsequently 110 were reported from Ellerton Ings on 4th March reducing to 30 there by the 30th. Singles were additionally reported from the fishing ponds between Long Marston and Moor Monkton on 29th April and at Thorganby Ings on 8th May.

Late summer revealed a single at Wheldrake Ings on 18th August with eight there on 30th September. The flash at Black Dyke near Barmby Moor held up to four birds from 1st to 25th October while 11 were counted at North Duffield Carrs on 18th November. Twenty-five were back at Thorganby Ings on 26th December.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Rare breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor

Good numbers were noted throughout January in the North Duffield/Bubwith area with 88 on the flood bank by North Duffield Carrs on 28th January and up to 100 in the Lower Derwent Valley in February. Individual records included five at Bubwith Ings on 6th January while a single bird on North Duffield village green on 19th was disturbed by local children. Eight were present at Gunby on an Atlas TTV on 6th February, part of the 40 counted in the Lower Derwent Valley that day. March found 14 at Ellerton Ings on the 4th increasing to 45 there on the 30th, with 40 at North Duffield Carrs on the 11th and 30 at Wheldrake Ings Refuge on the 18th. In April Aughton Ings hosted 64 on the 5th and 12 on the 17th with nine off the river bank opposite Ellerton Ings on the 19th.

There were then no more records until three were recorded at Wheldrake Ings on 4th July. Up to eight were noted at various sites in the Lower Derwent Valley during August with Thorganby Ings the most favoured location: six were found there on the 23rd, with three on the 24th and eight on the 30th. Twenty-five were counted at Bubwith Ings on 21st September with eight at Aughton Ings on the 23rd and six at Wheldrake Ings on the 30th. In October one was at Wheldrake Ings on

the 12th with one at Black Dyke, Barmby Moor on the 13th but then 24 were counted at North Duffield Carrs on the 31st.

In November numbers started to build with up to seven at Wheldrake Ings on the 16th and 17th and a maximum of 45 at North Duffield Carrs in the same period. In December 18 were at Thorganby on the 26th, with four at Aughton on the 27th and 20 at Thorganby on the 30th.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Winter visitor and passage migrant

Three were present at Wheldrake Ings on 13th March while a late bird was at North Duffield Ings on 1st May.

The first autumn record was of three at Wheldrake Ings on 18th October (RS), followed by two at Skipwith on 29th October (RS) and a single back at Wheldrake Ings on 16th November (RS). Other records were singles at Rawcliffe Cornfield NR on 9th December (MH) and at Fulford Ings on 30th December.

Jack Snipe were often present at Skipwith Common throughout the autumn and winter, with birds spending the day roosting on marshy areas and probably feeding on nearby farmland at night. Four birds were present on 23rd January with a single on 1st February. The first returning bird was seen on 19th September with numbers increasing during October to three on the 11th, four on the 26th and ten on the 28th. Birds continued to be present until the ground froze at the end of the year (DT, RS).

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Resident and migrant breeder; passage visitor

Small numbers wintered at Clifton Ings but the highest counts were of 18 at the Tillmire, Heslington on 29th December and 20 at Fulford Ings on 30th December. Other winter records were a single at Turnham Hall, Cliffe on 12th January and a single at Strensall Common on 10th February. However, the WeBS for 25th February, for example, showed 245 in the Lower Derwent Valley as a whole.

The first intimation of breeding was six displaying on the Tillmire, Heslington on 11th April. Other evidence came from Ellerton Ings and North Duffield Carrs with three drumming at the latter site on 25th April. At Strensall Common one was drumming on 22nd April and four territories were identified during the MOD survey on 23rd May.

The most unusual record was a bird in a garden at Sheriff Hutton on 4th July. In the autumn about 30 birds were flushed by a Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* at Wheldrake Ings on 14th September while five were noted over Castle Howard on 27th September.

Day-roosting birds at Skipwith Common were present throughout January on most of the marshy areas. Thirty-four were present on the 18th and numbers peaked at 40 on the 25th. Drumming males were not heard in the spring and, unlike 2007, there was no evidence that breeding took place. Three birds, probably from the breeding grounds in the Derwent Valley, were present on 5th August. Likely returning passage migrants were in evidence by early September and 20 were present on the 3rd while 36 were flushed off the northern marsh on the 25th. The maximum count was 41 on 6th October. A few birds remained until the end of November but the freezing conditions in December caused them to move off the site though they returned during brief mild spells.

Elsewhere 18 were flushed from a flooded area in the centre of the Tillmire, Heslington on 29th December.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*
Resident breeder and winter visitor

There were widespread reports early in the year from the usual sites with four at Heslington Common on 1st January, two at Allerthorpe Common on the 16th, two at Frog Hall, Allerthorpe the same day, one, maybe two, at Askham Bog on the 22nd, one flushed at Grimston Wood, Brandsby on the 20th, another in a shelter belt near Riccall on the 27th and one spotted at Birkdale Farm southeast of Terrington on the 30th.

In February a single bird was near Sheriff Hutton on the 8th with one at Yearsley on the 9th, another at Askham Bog on the 10th and six present throughout the month at Skipwith Common.

One was also flushed by a driveway in Nether Poppleton on 27th March.

Spring produced roding birds at CSL on 19th May with two at Yearsley Common on 23rd June. A male was roding throughout spring and summer at Skipwith Common and a pair was thought to have bred here.

Later in the year, reports of single birds came from CSL on 31st October, Frog Hall, Allerthorpe Common on 1st November, The Retreat, York on the 15th, Askham Bog on the 25th, Kexby Stray Farm, near Kexby on the 26th and at Fulford Golf Course on the 29th.

In December, one hit a window at CSL on the 3rd while a bird was at The Retreat, York on the 20th.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*
Passage migrant and rare breeder, occasionally seen in winter

The first record was of a single bird at North Duffield Carrs on 25th February followed by two there on 11th March and the same number

at Wheldrake Ings on 31st March. Numbers built up in April with 25 at Bank Island on the 10th and the 11th and again on the 20th while seven birds of the *islandica* race were present at this site on the 17th. At North Duffield Carrs 23 were counted on the 19th with 33 there on the 23rd while 56 were counted at Wheldrake Ings on the 21st but numbers then dropped to a just single bird at Thorganby Ings on 5th and 8th May. At Wheldrake Ings, 11 were noted on 3rd June, one on 3rd July and two on 23rd August. At Thorganby Ings, in August, singles were present on the 23rd and the 24th, with three on the 25th, building to 21 on the 27th but dropping to only three on the 30th.

Finally, a single winter visitor was present at Thorganby Ings on 26th and 27th December.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Scarce passage migrant

There was just a single spring record, of one in summer plumage with 14 Black-tailed Godwits *Limosa limosa* at Wheldrake Ings on 1st April (TD). In the autumn one was seen flying south over Thornton Ings on 30th September (PR).

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Passage migrant

Wheldrake Ings remains an important staging post for these birds in spring. The first was a single bird on 11th April but with 62 present there on the 25th and a peak count of 136 on 1st May though only 16 were present on 6th May (RS) and just one or two birds noted on further dates till the 11th. Small counts, generally less than ten but peaking at 28, were also recorded on pastures at Storwood during April (PR).

Further records came from Storwood in May with 19 on the 1st, 11 on the 2nd, but then diminishing with two there on the 6th being the last.

Elsewhere five birds were located in a field between the two hides at North Duffield Carrs on 28th April and remained there until 4th May (BirdGuides) with two by the river bank there on the 10th and 11th, while a single bird was discovered at Thorganby on 8th May (RS).

Eight on return passage flew south over CSL on 14th July.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Winter visitor, passage migrant and migrant breeder

There were few birds reported from the Lower Derwent Valley in the first part of the year though the WeBS count on 25th February showed 110 in this area as a whole. Two were reported at North Duffield Carrs

on 27th March and again on 23rd April, while one or two pairs were also noted at other sites in the second half of April.

A single bird was at Strensall Common on 27th February and displaying birds were seen here on 23rd March, 15th, 22nd and 26th April, as well as on 7th and 21st May. The MOD Survey of 23rd May found that five territories were being held on the Common.

Other reports included a pair at White Carr, Flaxton on 26th April, displaying birds at Chapel Hill, Pocklington on 17th May and two at the Pocklington Canal by Melbourne on 22nd May. A pair was present at Fulford Ings on 9th June with one over Middlethorpe Ings on 24th June. The last report was of seven on a pond between Long Marston and Hessay on 3rd July.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*
Passage migrant and scarce migrant breeder

There were six records through April and May, the first at North Duffield CARRS on 13th April followed by another at Sheriff Hutton Park on the 21st, then at Thorganby on 8th May, Castle Howard Lake on the 9th, Bishopthorpe Palace on the 17th, Hull Road Park, York on the 25th and York University on the 27th. A single bird was subsequently present at Rawcliffe Lake on 30th June with two seen near Ellerton Landing on 6th August.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*
Passage migrant and winter visitor

Winter records included singles at Bubwith bridge on 6th January, Middlethorpe Ings on the 29th, near Moor End off the A64 on 21st February and along the Pocklington Canal on 14th and 18th March.

Summer and early autumn records came from Wheldrake Ings on 24th June, 4th, 8th and 10th August and 2nd September, Ellerton Landing on 14th and 30th July, and again on 6th August, Moor Monkton turn-off on the A59 on 3rd July, two at Hagg Bridge on 29th July, one at East Cottingwith on 21st August with four at Thorganby on the 23rd and two at North Duffield CARRS on the 28th. A single bird was chased by a Peregrine *Falco peregrinus* at East Cottingwith on 21st August. Another was sighted at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd September followed by three flushed from the flooded Pocklington Canal on the 18th and four flushed near Storwood on the 20th.

At Skipwith Common the first returning bird was seen on 1st July, with a peak of four at Wash Dike on 16th August, but these moved on within the week, possibly because of high water levels.

One dropped into a ditch at Rawcliffe Meadows flood basin on 15th December, the only early winter record.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

Passage migrant and occasional winter visitor

This usually annual migrant was not recorded in 2008, the last being in 2007.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Passage migrant and occasional winter visitor

All records indicate birds on passage with the first in early summer, then again in late summer and early autumn. The first sighting was of two at North Duffield Carrs on 7th April followed by singles there on 10th and 13th May. On 3rd May a calling bird flew north over Allerthorpe Gravel Pits. One bird was also at Wheldrake Ings on 10th May and again on the 13th.

In late summer, a single bird was flushed from the western side of Wash Dike, Skipwith Common on 16th August while at Thorganby Ings four and six were present on 23rd and 27th August respectively. Nine were at Wharfe Ings on 26th August while a single was at Wheldrake Ings on 30th September. Finally, a single bird spent time at Black Dyke, Barnby Moor from 13th to 19th October.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Passage migrant

The first report was of a single at Wheldrake Ings on 28th April (BirdGuides), the only spring record. The next reports were of birds, again at Wheldrake Ings, on 10th August and 2nd September (both BirdGuides), and at Thorganby Ings on 27th August (RS).

A bird was regularly seen between 13th and 21st October at Black Dyke near Barnby Moor (RS, DR).

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Passage migrant, migrant breeder and winter visitor

Most records showed birds in the Lower Derwent Valley early and late in the year with the WeBS Survey on 27th February indicating 113 in the Valley. Individual records showed six at Bubwith bridge on 28th January, three at Gunby on 6th February, two at North Duffield Carrs on 17th February and again two on 27th March with one on 19th April, while 15 were recorded in the Thorganby area on 15th April. Elsewhere there were eight at Middlethorpe Ings on 5th April.

There were no more records until June when a single was flushed off the southern edge of Wash Dike, Skipwith Common on the 14th with two at Middlethorpe Ings on the 20th.

Later in the year, one was observed at Yapham Common on 20th November with 30 along the river edge at North Duffield Carrs on 6th December and 23 at Thorganby on the 26th.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Passage migrant, usually in spring

This was the second year in succession that this species was not recorded after near annual occurrences up to 2006.

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Passage migrant and winter visitor

A first-winter bird was seen coming in to the Wheldrake Ings roost on 3rd February and again on 17th March (RS), while an adult was observed mixing with a flock of gulls at Black Dyke, Barmby Moor on 22nd October (RS).

Common Gull *Larus canus*

Winter visitor and passage migrant

There were regular sightings in wet areas and on farmland, particularly in autumn and into winter but the species was absent in the summer months.

Records of note include 100 at Hagg Lane near East Cottingwith on 13th January, 600 on plough at Bowbriggs, Bugthorpe on 1st October, 110 at Full Sutton Industrial Estate on 8th September, 180 at Fat Rabbit Farm, Fangfoss on 10th September and 120 at Tollerton on 23rd November.

At Osbaldwick Sports Field numbers peaked at 20 on 26th February reducing to just three by 11th April before the first returning birds were noted on 4th August. Ten wintered at Rawcliffe Lake and good numbers appeared on the floods in winter at Rawcliffe Ings.

Monthly WeBS counts for Common Gull

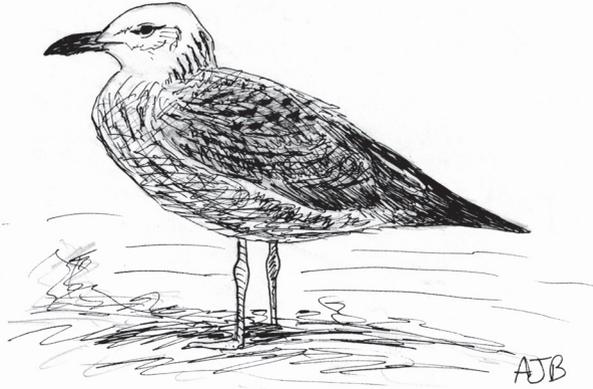
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	12	10	3	3	-	-	-	100
LDV	1,070	1,000	30	-	-	-	320	

[Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans*

Very scarce winter visitor

A first-winter bird was seen at Harewood Whin on 3rd March (GT, RS). This is, potentially, the 1st record of this recently separated species within the YOC recording area. A first-winter, probably the same bird, was also seen from Swantail Hide at Wheldrake Ings early afternoon the

same day (TD). Regrettably no descriptions have been submitted and the record is currently unacceptable.]



Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*
Passage migrant and scarce winter visitor

Records occurred throughout the year with a peak in late summer, but this species is probably under-recorded generally. In the early part of the year there were five immature birds at Middlethorpe Ings on 29th January and an adult at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd March.

Small numbers appeared regularly over Clifton Ings during the summer months, while specific summer sightings included a single bird at CSL on 7th July, another at Osbaldwick also on 7th July and seven including two juveniles in a field at Osbaldwick on 27th July. A further two adults were at Melrosegate, York on 28th July. The maximum number seen together was 63 on a ploughed field at Terrington on 23rd August. A single was noted at Fat Rabbit Farm, Fangfoss on 10th September while three were seen on a ploughed field at CSL on 10th October. A late bird was over the River Ouse between York and Naburn on 6th December.

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*
Scarce winter visitor

Birds were seen regularly between Wheldrake Ings and Harewood Whin between January and March. A single juvenile was noted at Harewood Whin on 31st January with two first-winter birds there on 23rd February (DR) and three birds on the 24th (BirdGuides). Two juveniles were seen heading off at Harewood Whin on 25th February. Three were observed in the Lower Derwent Valley during the WeBS count on 27th February by Natural England.

At Wheldrake Ings a juvenile was present on 2nd and 5th February, with three juveniles there on the 24th and 25th while one adult and three juveniles were located at both Wheldrake Ings and Harewood Whin during March (RS, DR, GT).

At North Duffield Carrs a juvenile bird roosted on 16th February.

What appeared to be a first-winter Glaucous x Herring Gull *Larus argentatus* hybrid was at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd February (DR).

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucooides*

Scarce winter visitor

There were regular sightings in the Lower Derwent Valley and at Harewood Whin from February to April as follows. During February a single bird was mixing with other gulls at Acaster Malbis on the 20th (TW) while at Wheldrake Ings an adult and a first-winter bird were present on the 23rd, a juvenile on the 24th and a second-winter bird on the 26th. At North Duffield Carrs an adult roosted with 10,000+ large gulls on 15th February (BirdGuides) and a juvenile was present at Bubwith Ings on the 25th (BirdGuides).

In March an adult, a juvenile and an advanced juvenile or second-winter bird were at Harewood Whin on the 3rd, with a juvenile there on the 5th and an adult there on the 8th while an adult was at Wheldrake Ings on the 1st (BirdGuides) with another there on the 13th (BirdGuides) and the 25th (RCo). An adult and three juveniles were regularly seen during March at Wheldrake Ings and at Harewood Whin, one of which could be the bird responsible for an unusual record of one over the River Ouse in the centre of York on the 29th (BirdGuides). The last report was of an adult at the Wheldrake Ings roost on 25th April.

Addendum to 2007 Report

On 21st January 2007, during a BTO plover survey, a 1st/2nd winter bird was found on floods at Bishopthorpe (JL).

[Thayer's Gull *Larus thayeri*

Very rare vagrant

A putative juvenile Thayer's Gull or hybrid was reported from the roost at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd February (BirdGuides) but was not seen again, and is likely to remain as "one of those that got away".]

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

There were a few winter records for the early months of the year as follows. A first-winter bird was at Middlethorpe Ings on 29th January

while on 2nd February a single was preening, along with other large gulls, in a pre-roost gathering at Clifton Ings (NS). Birds were reported roosting at Wheldrake Ings in February including an adult on the 24th (BirdGuides) and another bird on the 28th (TW) with an adult there on 18th March (TD). Lastly a first-winter bird flew west over Middlethorpe Ings on 12th April.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

Winter visitor and passage migrant

Another gull under-reported by most observers, but 1,500 were recorded by Natural England at Wheldrake in the WeBS count on 25th February. Several over Osbaldwick on 27th July were reported as an unusual sighting, but this bird was regularly reported from CSL.

Monthly WeBS counts for Herring Gull

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
LDV	1,250	800	1,500				800	

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Winter visitor and passage migrant

Yet another gull under-recorded by most, but regularly seen between Wheldrake Ings and Harewood Whin in the winter months. The WeBS count on 25th February by Natural England showed 550 at Wheldrake Ings.

At CSL, two were present on 2nd May, with singles on 8th and 16th July and on 13th October.

Monthly WeBS counts for Great Black-backed Gull

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
LDV	870	560	550				390	

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Passage migrant and scarce winter visitor

There was a single record, of an adult at North Duffield Carrs on 21st April (BirdGuides).

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Resident breeder, winter visitor and passage migrant

This species was widespread throughout the area in the winter months with a notable 4,500 at Wheldrake Ings on 25th February and 400 at Castle Howard in the early afternoon of 15th December, both during WeBS counts. At least 1,500 were also at Castle Howard on 27th December.

One leucistic gull at Wheldrake Ings roost on 3rd February was recognised from the previous winter. Small numbers were reported at

Rawcliffe Lake in the winter months and large numbers were attracted to Clifton Ings during flooding. In Melrosegate, York and at Osbaldwick Sports Field up to 40 were observed on 17th January with around 50 in late February, although none were seen after the beginning of April until several pairs showed up again in late July.

Twenty-six birds were around probable nests on ponds during the MOD Survey of Strensall Common on 23rd May (PR).

For over 130 years at Skipwith Common the Black-headed Gull colony was one of the main features of the summer bird life there. During much of this time the colony, which was the only one in the former East Riding, was protected, monitored and frequently photographed. Numbers have fluctuated over the years. At the peak in 1911 1,000 pairs were present and 500 pairs still nested throughout the 1980s. The last successful breeding year was 2001 when 46 chicks were ringed. Since then, although breeding attempts have been made, very few chicks have fledged (six in 2004 and one in 2006). Predation by Carrion Crows *Corvus corone* is probably the main cause of the recent failures. When the colony was active the aggressive gulls formed a protective umbrella for many species of breeding duck and other water birds. The loss of this protection may well explain the recent poor breeding record of those other species (DT).

Monthly WeBS counts for Black-headed Gull

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	9	200	48	19	-	7	14	400
LDV	11,600	-	321				3,500	

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

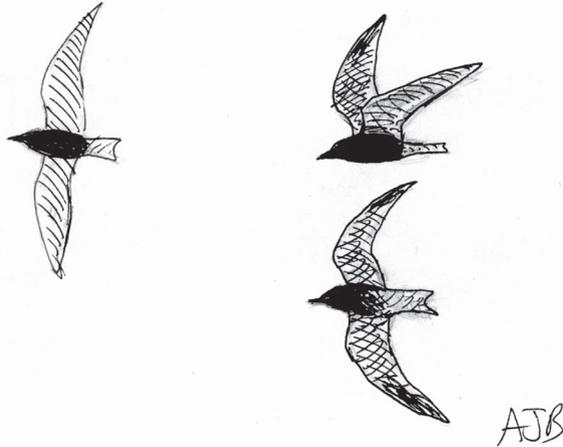
Scarce passage migrant

Not recorded in 2008 after being seen in both 2007 and 2006.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

Rare passage migrant

A good year for this less than annual migrant. Two were observed for ten minutes at Wheldrake Ings on 4th May (RS) while three were seen over Castle Howard Lake on the afternoon of the 5th (BirdGuides). Another was reported on the 7th from Wheldrake Ings again (BirdGuides) while further sightings came from Newburgh Priory lake and Castle Howard Lake (two birds) on the 9th (RB, RCo). A juvenile was present at Castle Howard on 30th August (DR) and, finally, a single was present at North Duffield Carrs on 23rd September (BirdGuides).



White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*
Rare passage vagrant [1993 (1st) – not submitted to BBRC]

A potential juvenile was observed for five minutes over Wash Dike, Skipwith Common, on 16th October (CR, DT *et al.*). Regrettably, although a description was received by the editor, it was not submitted by the observer to YNU or BBRC for assessment and this record is currently not acceptable.

It has also been discovered that a previous record of this species, at Wheldrake Ings in 1993, was likewise never submitted to BBRC for authentication (although the YOC Report for that year claimed otherwise) and this older record also cannot now be accepted. White-winged Black Tern therefore no longer remains on the list of species recorded by the YOC since its inception and first report in 1966.]

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*
Passage migrant and rare migrant breeder

There were several records of this species close to water across the central belt of the recording area. The first sighting was a single bird at North Duffield Carrs on 21st April followed by another at Castle Howard Lake on the 27th while one was seen following the River Derwent at North Duffield Carrs on 23rd May. A pair was at York University Lake on the morning of 22nd May (AB) and on the 27th (PB) and through most of June. Birds were noted at Naburn Marina and surrounding area on 31st May, and on 5th, 21st and 24th June (MH), and a single was at Scarborough Bridge in the middle of York on 19th June (MH).

An adult was briefly hawking over Wash Dyke, Skipwith Common on 5th July (DT). In August, singles were seen at Clifton Ings on the 5th (NS), at York University on the 15th, at North Duffield and Wheldrake Ings on the 21st and at Castle Howard on the 27th.

Lastly, a juvenile was sighted at Thorganby Ings on 14th September.

'Feral Pigeon' *Columba livia*

Resident breeder

Common in urban areas, with reports from Pocklington, Bielby, Meltonby, Osbaldwick, York and others. Colonised CSL in the spring, being now often seen on rooftops, generally in a flock of about 20.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Resident breeder

Generally widespread but usually seen in small numbers, even ones and twos, and probably under-reported. A total of 149, on a newly worked field south of King Rudding Lane near Skipwith Common, on 21st February was impressive; the observer noted that sometimes large flocks are present in this area. Twenty-three were feeding on a newly harrowed field by Fulford Golf Course on 22nd March.

Birds have taken to nesting in Tawny Owl boxes on Skipwith Common, once the owlets have fledged, five boxes being used this year. There was a minimum of 15 breeding attempts and 17 chicks were ringed. Three broods were reared in two of the boxes, with young present well into September (DT).

In addition, five were at Flat Lane, Barlby Moor on 13th July, with four at Pocklington, and two at Thornton on the 19th. Six–seven pairs were resident in the Clifton Ings area.

Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus*

Resident breeder

Common throughout the recording area, particularly numerous in winter, and also a frequent visitor to gardens. Present throughout the year on Clifton Ings with some fairly large gatherings during the winter months. Several hundred were always present in the vicinity of CSL where around 200 were counted in an oilseed rape field on 7th January and 1st February. In York city centre ten were feeding on ivy berries on 2nd January and on other dates in winter. Other larger counts included 20 in Bielby village on 12th January with 300 at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits the same day, a count of 61 in a BBS square at Moreby, Naburn on 3rd May (with 53 there on 15th June) and 72 at Melbourne on 22nd May.

On 11th October 53 were counted at The Retreat, York. Flocks of 800–1,000 were estimated in fields off Brecks Lane, Strensall from October to December. A roost of 200 was at Frog Hall, Allerthorpe Common on 1st November with over 500 to the south of CSL on the 14th, 92 in Bielby village on the 20th, 500 at Monument Farm, Welburn on the 23rd and 200 near Strensall on 21st December.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*
Resident breeder

Generally widespread throughout the YOC recording area in small numbers. Ten were in Bielby Village on 12th January, with 15 there on 20th November. A pair was on the YWT Reserve, Strensall Common on 7th May, and again on 24th June. Young were seen in an Osbaldwick garden on 17th June. Ten were at Grange Farm, Newton upon Derwent on 2nd November. Recorded from other farms and urban areas, frequently seen during Atlas work at Cornborough and Stittenham, and frequent in Osbaldwick and Strensall gardens all year.

Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*
Passage migrant and increasingly scarce migrant breeder

A pair was present in the area of the new plantation on Skipwith Common on 7th May and remained there until late June. Also seen on wires near Bubwith on 7th May. On 10th May one was at Acaster Selby while on the same day another was heard purring at Silburn Lock on the Pocklington Canal. One was at Yearsley Moor on the 19th, heard there again on 9th June, while another was singing at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 30th May and again on 28th June. A further bird was calling from the southeast corner of Skipwith Common on 29th June. A calling bird was heard near Coates Bridge on the Pocklington Canal on 4th July and another was seen flying by the canal near Hagg Bridge on the 29th during a YOC evening field trip. From early July to 8th September a bird, which called at times, was regularly seen in a clump of pines north of Morris's pond at Skipwith Common but no evidence of breeding was found.

(Ring-necked Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*)
Occasional but scarce visitor

After being recorded in each of the previous six years this species was not sighted in 2008.

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*
Migrant breeder]

The first record of the year was of two seen at the Towthorpe end of Strensall Common on 13th April, with another noted in The Brecks, Strensall on the 25th, one at World's End Plantation near Flaxton on the 26th, another at Storwood on the 26th and 27th, two at Skipwith Common on the 27th (also heard there on 10th May), one at Pocklington on the 28th, and another heard in Brecks Lane, Strensall on the 29th. At CSL, one that held territory in May was first heard on 29th April. Further records came from Moreby near Naburn on 3rd May, at Naburn on the 5th, Osbaldwick on the 11th, and Strensall Common on the 20th where an estimated three males were calling on the 23rd during the annual MOD survey. Four were by the Pocklington Canal on the 22nd, with one heard at Melbourne the same day, one at Allerthorpe Common on the 29th, and one at the Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on the 30th. In June, the last heard at CSL was on the 4th while singles were at Naburn on the 16th and 19th, and at Skipwith Common on the 21st. No young birds were seen on Skipwith Common at the time when they usually fledge so it is unlikely that successful breeding took place. An adult at Dunnington on 21st July was the last record of the year.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*
Resident breeder

Three were seen together at North Duffield Carrs on 12th January while a road casualty was noted on the A64 at Barton Hill on the 24th and two were seen at Dunnington Common on 7th February.

In the spring, one was seen by Cliffe mid-morning on 15th May during an Atlas survey, while a male was hunting at 10:00 by the Pocklington Canal on 22nd May. An adult and a juvenile were seen at North Duffield Carrs on 4th June and another was along Lilling Low Lane east of West Lilling on the 13th. A female was hunting at 09:00 at Fat Rabbit Farm, Fangfoss on 2nd July while an adult was hunting around 08:00 at Newton Carr on the 3rd, and another female was seen hunting at 07:00 on the 12th at Canal Head, Pocklington. The YOC evening walk of 29th July along the Pocklington Canal managed to connect with one near Hagg Bridge while three were seen together, all carrying food, at Wheldrake Ings on 20th August.

One was seen over the York northern bypass near Monks Cross on 7th October and a male was hunting near Castle Howard on the 27th. Another was observed hunting outside the front entrance to CSL on 25th November. Also recorded at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits, Bielby (where seen

regularly in winter), Brighton, Buttercrambe Weir, Fulford Golf Course, Melbourne, Nun Monkton, Pocklington Airfield, Skipwith Common, Smylett Hall near Yapham and Thornton.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Resident breeder but can be elusive

Singles were near Harewood Whin on 6th January, at Ellers Farm, Buttercrambe on 7th February and at CSL on the 15th. A pair was seen at Springfield in Heslington on three dates in March while another was at North Duffield Carrs on the 31st. One was at Rabbit Warren Wood, Dunnington on 24th April while a pair was seen at Thorganby on the 26th. One was seen and another heard along the Pocklington Canal on 10th May while another was heard calling at High Roans Farm near Strensall on the 22nd when a further bird was heard at Brownmoor Farm, Sutton-on-the-Forest and again on the 27th.

A nest was found with two owlets in Naburn Lane, Fulford on 30th May, with young last seen on 5th June (MH). One was at Grange Farm, Haxby on 1st June and an adult was at Middlethorpe Ings on the 9th and 24th. A pair was believed to have bred on Skipwith Common in one of the dying birch trees along the northwest boundary; adults were seen in this area feeding on the rough grass margins which surround the arable fields (DT). One was at Welburn on 25th December with another at Bielby the next day and a further record of one seen on power lines near Shipton on the 29th. At CSL, one took to perching in a corner of the allotments and was often seen at midday.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Resident breeder throughout the area

Generally to be found throughout the YOC area. One was being mobbed by Blackbirds *Turdus merula* at Black Dike Plantation, Sand Hutton on 9th January while the same day another was seen at Foston sitting in a yew tree in the churchyard. At Wheldrake Ings an approachable bird gave good views on 1st April. A pair was calling on 8th May at East Moor, Thornton while another was calling on the 17th mid-morning at Chapel Hill, Pocklington. The same day a recently fledged juvenile was in Danesmead Copse, York while at CSL two pairs nested in High Plumps and Nursery Wood respectively, with a chick seen in High Plumps on 19th May. A family group of two adults and one chick were in Pocklington Wood on 12th July. One was seen on a chimney pot in Osbaldwick on the evening of the 27th while another was heard calling at 10:00 at Frog Hall, Allerthorpe Common on the same date.

One was found dead, a road casualty, at Street Farm, Stamford Bridge on 21st November while another was sitting beside the road at Meltonby on the 27th.

Heard occasionally along Sixth Avenue in Heworth and regularly in Osbaldwick where more vocal in March than earlier in the year, and with young birds calling in the autumn. Heard calling in Strensall on 17th November and 21st December and also heard regularly throughout the year at Clifton Park. Also reported from Allerthorpe Gravel Pits, Pocklington and Hodgson Wood (Great Givendale).

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*
Resident breeder and winter visitor

One was flying at dusk over Strensall Common on 22nd April (PeR) and again on 4th June (per Julian Small, Natural England) while birds were also reported from East Cottingwith on 28th May (KD per PR) and Yearsley Moor on 9th June (ABa per RS). However, this was the first year since 1945 that this species failed to winter or breed on Skipwith Common (DT).

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*
Casual breeder, passage and winter visitor

An unseasonable bird reported from North Duffield Carrs on the evening of 4th May (BirdGuides) might have been a Long-eared Owl. Another single was also reported from Wheldrake Ings on 23rd September (BirdGuides).

Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*
Scarce migrant breeder

One was calling at World's End Plantation near Flaxton on 4th June and again on the 13th, with another or the same on Strensall Common the same day (JS). Three were noted in a newly cleared area on the northwest side of Yearsley Moor from 8th June (ABa per RS). On the same date a churring male was reported from Skipwith Common, heard again on the 12th, when it clapped its wings and called for 20 minutes, and also on the 16th. However, no female was seen, and after a week the male departed. It is considered probable that the increased number of grazing animals has caused deterioration in the preferred nesting habitat (DT, RS).

Common Swift *Apus apus*
Migrant breeder

The first records of the year were three at Castle Howard and one at Bishopthorpe on 27th April, with another on the 28th at Clifton Ings.

At least 20 birds had returned to Pocklington by the same date, and another eight were seen at Copmanthorpe the following day. First seen in Fulford, York on 3rd May while five were over Rowntree Park, York on the 4th. Other records in May came from Strensall Common on the 7th, Osbaldwick on the 9th, Allerthorpe village on the 10th and Cawton on the 17th. By this date birds were numerous and widespread with, for example, 100+ at Naburn Sewage Works where there was a partial albino on the 25th.

Breeding records came from Hemingbrough where birds were seen frequently entering a nest site from the 20th May (MW) and in Knapton Close, Strensall, nesting in the eaves of a house (PeR). Seven were visiting a probable nest site at Stittenham near Sheriff Hutton on 1st July while three were at Calley Heath, near Barmby Moor on the 3rd, nesting at the Steer Inn. Reported from many other areas in the breeding season.

An impressive gathering of 300–400 was seen hawking around the Marston Moor battle monument on 19th June while over 100 were seen feeding low over the freshly cut Clifton Ings on 1st July. Birds had left many sites by mid-August but late records included over 50 at Long Marston on 17th August, with 20 over Poppleton the same day, two over Osbaldwick on the 20th, and a total of 100 heading south over Pocklington on the 24th when last seen in Cliffe. One was flying south over Heslington on the 25th, and several were flying south over Poppleton on the 27th. One went over CSL on 4th September, with two over Ellerton on the 10th, one through Long Marston on the 14th, one over East Cottingwith on the 19th and a very late bird southeast over York Museum Gardens on 13th November (BirdGuides).

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Resident breeder

The first of the year was seen along a drainage ditch on the west side of the Tillmire, Heslington on 2nd January, with another seen along a similar small ditch on the edge of Hemingbrough on 22nd January during an Atlas survey and another similarly seen at Birkdale Farm, Terrington on 31st January. One was also present on 2nd February at the mouth of Germany Beck, Fulford where one or two were seen all month. Another was viewed from the Geoff Smith Hide at North Duffield Carrs for more than an hour on 13th April catching small fish while two were seen at Sessions NR, New Earswick on 2nd May. One was seen briefly along the southern edge of the Wash Dike at Skipwith Common on 8th August.

Most reports came from the autumn period with one seen perching on a post at Bank Island on 14th September, one at Thornton Lock, Melbourne on the 20th, and one at Castle Howard on 3rd October (also seen there on the 10th). Two were seen in Osbaldwick Beck on 12th October, the first time more than one had been seen there, and another was at Foss Bridge, Sheriff Hutton on the 22nd. Two were observed in a territorial chase at the southeast corner of the Tillmire, Heslington on 16th November with another at New Plantation, Seaton Ross on 22nd November, foraging along a farm ditch while a further bird, also along a small drainage channel, was seen at Wressle Clough, south of Brighton on 3rd December.

A pair was in the Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings area throughout the year. Seen regularly all year at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits, with two ringed there on 19th January and a pair seen on 12th July and 2nd November. One or two were often seen at the CSL pond, but one sadly died after hitting a window.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

Scarce summer visitor

One was found in a farmyard on the western outskirts of Dunnington from at least 20th July (per I&TW), the 6th record for the YOC area; the bird remained largely in the same place until the 22nd allowing many birders to connect with this exotic-looking visitor which even made a TV appearance on a regional news programme while an on-site collection raised money towards the upkeep of nearby Hassacarr Nature Reserve.

An interesting footnote:

"During a training day at Pocklington School on 1st September I was handed a bird's wing by a colleague who had just found it on the floor of the Sports Hall where the training was taking place.

"Only the primaries were there, and a couple of secondaries: black with a large white spot near the middle of the outer primaries, reduced to a small white dot near the tip of the inner primaries. I ring woodpeckers so knew it wasn't one of those! In fact I thought I knew what it was and on checking ... I was right." *Ian Andrews*

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

Rare passage migrant

One was picked up dead by the River Foulness just west of Water End on 16th September, having been present in local gardens for two days (per NE). Only the 6th record for the YOC area.



Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*
Resident breeder but not widespread

Seen and heard at Allerthorpe Common on various dates through the year; also present on most visits to Strensall Common and World's End Plantation near Flaxton. One was at the Tillmire, Heslington on 28th January with further reports from Chapel Hill, Pocklington on 17th May and Walmgate Stray, York on 16th June. Often seen around the perimeter of CSL, occasionally by the pond, with a juvenile there on 17th September. At least two pairs bred on Skipwith Common, one pair in a decayed silver birch near the southern entrance where two fledged young were subsequently seen while another pair probably nested in the northeast corner and brought their two young onto the dead pines east of Wash Dike in July (DT). More unexpected was one in the Rawcliffe Meadow flood basin on 15th December.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*
Resident breeder throughout the recording area

One or two pairs were quite regularly encountered throughout the Clifton Ings area, mainly around Clifton Park. Regular on Strensall Common throughout the year with two on the YWT reserve there on 17th February. Seen on Allerthorpe Common regularly, with a maximum

count of six on 10th February and 29th May, and two juveniles there on 12th July. At least four pairs bred on Skipwith Common, mostly in decaying silver birches. Attracted to feeders at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on various dates. Seen in gardens in Strensall and also noted on feeders at CSL, at Landing Lane in Haxby, by the Pocklington Canal, at The Retreat in York and at Stittenham.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor*
Scarce resident breeder though localised and elusive

One was calling and drumming briefly by the lake at Castle Howard on 19th April (DR). Another was heard down Ings Lane at Wheldrake on the 23rd (RS), and again at Wheldrake Ings on 13th May (YOC Website). Others were seen on 6th August at the eastern end of the bomb bays on Skipwith Common (DT) and from the vicinity of the car park at Wheldrake Ings on the 11th (CG).

Wood Lark *Lullula arborea*
Resident colonist in small numbers

For the first time we report on all known breeding sites for this species as these have all now been identified elsewhere. Birds were recorded from five different sites in 2008 with breeding likely to have taken place at four. Birds returned to CSL in late January but had gone from there by late April though possibly two pairs had bred (SHBR).

A pair was present at Skipwith Common on 8th February but moved onto surrounding farmland while two were seen west of Riccall Grange on the 11th. They had returned to the Common by the 24th, with three males singing. In all, some five pairs attempted to breed on Skipwith Common though probably without much success due to the wet summer and high levels of predation; one nest was monitored but later predated in May and the wing of a young bird was discovered in the nest of a Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*. Two were seen on 17th June at Skipwith Common, with one carrying food, while six seen including three singing males were located on the 20th. A bird remained at Skipwith Common until 6th October, but there were no signs of a post-breeding flock or newly fledged young (DT).

In the Strensall area a pair was located at World's End Plantation near Flaxton on 26th April while four territories were recorded during the MOD survey of Strensall Common on 23rd May (PeR).

Three were singing on Allerthorpe Common on 29th May with one seen there on 13th July sitting on an oak tree (PB). One was flushed at Calley Heath on 5th May (RCy).

Sky Lark *Alauda arvensis*

Resident breeder and winter visitor

Atlas work has shown evidence of small flocks in many localities during the winter months. More notable counts in January included 16 in a field north of the Stillington Road, Huby on the 3rd, ten in a pig field at Yearsley on the 12th, 20 by the Pocklington Canal near Bielby the same day, 30 in stubble near Riccall on the 27th and 20+ flying at Thornton Ellers on the 29th.

Six were counted at Cliffe during a one hour Atlas survey on 2nd February with 20 at Allerthorpe Common on the same date and 12 present at Stittenham near Sheriff Hutton on the 8th. Eight were counted near Averhams Plantation, Flaxton on 5th April, with ten singing at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on the 12th. Ten were in fields to the south of Cliffe on 15th April, with two in song, and 12 in the Cliffe/Newhay area on the 22nd, with three singing there on 15th May.

In a BBS square near Riccall 14 were counted on 19th April and again on 14th June. A count of 29 was made during another Atlas survey near Cornborough on 25th April while ten were counted in a BBS square at Moreby near Naburn on 3rd May. Eight were singing in the Westfield Farm area, Thornton on 22nd May, with five near Stittenham on the 24th and 15 there on 1st July, while four were at Allerthorpe Common on 29th May with 11 at nearby Moor Closes the same day. On 13th July, the last song was recorded from Yapham Grange and Feoffe Lane, Barmby Moor with eight at Keldspring Crossing, Pocklington. Birds bred at Clifton and Rawcliffe Ings and at the adjacent Cornfield NR, small numbers being present in these areas all year.

In the autumn ten were moving south over Allerthorpe Common on 28th September while an impressive 150 were at Ousethorpe Farm, Pocklington on 23rd November.

Reported from other areas including Newton Carr, East Moor (Thornton), North Duffield Carrs, Melbourne, Meltonby, Newton Carr, and various localities round Allerthorpe Common, but with just one record from CSL on 11th March.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Migrant breeder and passage migrant

The first of the year was at Naburn Sewage Works on 24th March, with two at the nest bank at CSL on the 27th. Nine were at Naburn Sewage Works by the 29th with two at Ouse Bridge in York, two at North Duffield Carrs, and seven at Castle Howard the same day. Three were at Palace Ings, Fulford Ings on the 30th while another was at Wheldrake Ings on

the 31st. Five were over the River Ouse in York on 2nd April with eleven feeding there on the 4th, some apparently prospecting holes near the Park Inn. Around 100 were at Castle Howard on the 5th by which date at least 30 could be seen at Naburn Sewage Works building to c.50 by the 12th. Seven were at CSL on the 10th, with the first at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on the 11th, followed by ten on 30th May and 30 on 12th July.

Good numbers were present along the river at Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings but breeding was again disrupted by summer flooding. At Allerthorpe Lakeland Park the number of nests was down to just 60, so the colony is apparently in decline. However, at CSL, 61 nest holes were counted, mostly at the west end, with more pairs than in recent years. Twelve adults were ringed here on 23rd July, birds departing early in August. Family parties joining Swallows *Hirundo rustica* and House Martins *Delichon urbicum* were present over Skipwith Common during much of August, up to 50 in number, slightly higher than in recent years. Six were at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 25th August, with the last moving through Clifton Ings late in October.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*
Migrant breeder and passage migrant

The first were two over the pool at Wheldrake Ings on 1st April followed by one at Copmanthorpe on the 2nd, another at Naburn Sewage Works on the 4th, with eight there the day after, and one also at Castle Howard. At least 12 were at Bank Island on 9th April, briefly, with two there on the 21st. The first in Cliffe village was on the 14th while the first at Clifton Ings was on the 23rd. Several were at Thorganby and some at North Duffield on the 26th with first arrivals in Fulford on the 30th. Nine were counted over Strensall Common on the 27th, with 16 on 9th May, 19 on 24th June and 12 on the 28th. Six were over Allerthorpe village on 10th May, and four at Pocklington on the 17th.

Seen nesting by range buildings on Strensall Common on an evening field trip on 20th May while 21 were visiting probable nest sites at Stittenham near Sheriff Hutton on the 24th, and also there again on 1st July. Only one nest was found at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits this year, with three chicks (ringed on 14th June, PB). Young were seen being fed by the cattery near Escrick on 27th June. On 11th July about 50 were seen feeding young birds perched on dead pines at Skipwith Common, in the area of new flooding. Twelve, including young, were seen round Cawton on the 13th, with 22 over Barmby Moor the same day, 15 around Keldspring Crossing, Pocklington and 14 at Yapham Grange.

In late summer thousands, possibly in excess of 5,000, were reported coming in to roost at Bank Island on 20th August. Up to 100 were

seen over Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on the 25th, moving through in small numbers all day, while around 50 were over the pond at CSL on the 29th. Approximately 160, with some House Martins *Delichon urbicum* were over East Cottingwith Ings on 9th September with 20 at Frog Hall, Allerthorpe Common on 13th September, ten together over Cliffe on the 29th and 12 going south over Skipwith Common the same date. Five were near Hessay on 3rd October, with 12 at the Rawcliffe Park&Ride site on the 6th, four flying south at Dunnington Common on the 10th, and two at Long Marston on the 25th. The last was at CSL on 4th November.

House Martin *Delichon urbicum*
Migrant breeder and passage migrant

The first was at Naburn Sewage Works on 5th April, with at least ten there on the 12th, when one was sighted at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits. A single bird was over North Duffield Carrs on the 17th with four there on the 19th. One was seen at Tollerton on the 21st and one flying east at CSL on the 28th. Eight were at Allerthorpe Village on the 10th, 15 at Pocklington on the 17th, 15 at York University on the 27th, and 15 at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on the 30th.

Seen breeding round Hovingham Spa House on the 17th, with 15 there on 13th July. Also seen to be breeding at Grimston Manor Farm, near Gilling East on the 13th. Nested on Environment Agency buildings near Riccall. Six were visiting probable nest sites at Stittenham near Sheriff Hutton on the 24th, and also on 1st July. One was seen on 3rd July at Calley Heath NR, near Barmby Moor, nesting under the Steer Inn, with 20 counted at Castle Howard Great Lake car park the next day and 45 at Pocklington on the 12th. The breeding colony at Rawcliffe Lake continued to do well, birds also being present in the Clifton Ings area. Regular breeder around Strensall.

Around 200 were moving through Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 25th August with in excess of 100 feeding over and around Wash Dike at Skipwith Common on 3rd September. Some 300 were counted with Barn Swallows *Hirundo rustica* at East Cottingwith Ings on 9th September while others gathered round the CSL pool, also with Barn Swallows, with around 40 of each on the 19th. Still present in reasonable numbers at the beginning of October, with 20 at Crockey Hill on the 2nd (some possibly still feeding young in the nest), six at Pocklington on the 2nd (with four there on the 6th) and three at Beningbrough on the same date, with 20+ over Clifton allotments on the 7th being the last recorded in 2008.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Migrant breeder though numbers have recently declined

One was back on territory at Strensall Common on 22nd April (PeR) with one in song by the car park at North Duffield Carrs on the 24th (PR) while at least seven were scattered around Yearsley Moor by the 25th (MD) and another was heard singing at Skipwith Common on 29th April (RCy). One was singing at Coneysthorpe on 18th May (DR) while two were in song at Strensall Common on the 20th with seven territories recorded there during the MOD survey on the 23rd. Four were singing at Yearsley on 8th June with two there on the 14th. Heard singing on various dates at Skipwith Common, where no survey was done this year, but there appeared to be fewer than the 11 pairs reported in 2007 (DT).

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Resident and migrant breeder, and passage migrant

Good numbers were present on Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings where they bred while at least 50 were at Naburn Sewage Works on 16th February. Several were seen at Strensall Common on 20th May and four were recorded there during the MOD survey on the 23rd.

Seen moving south in small numbers in September at Full Sutton Industrial Estate, with 20 on the 3rd, and 43 on the 17th (PB). Five were at Skipwith Common on the 30th, with three on 16th and 26th October. One was at Meltonby and two at Bielby on 20th November. On 20th December, 15 at Cornfield NR was an unusually high number, while a flock of 30 was recorded at Bielby on the 26th.

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

Rare winter visitor and passage migrant

The bird seen frequently in late 2007 remained on the flooded field near Catterton until at least 8th March (RS, BirdGuides).

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Scarce, mainly winter visitor

Not recorded in 2008, the last record being in 2007.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

Migrant breeder and passage migrant

The first was seen at North Duffield Carrs on 15th April with another at Wheldrake Ings on the 17th and 19th. Two were seen at Hagg Lane near East Cottingwith on the 18th with further singles at North Duffield Carrs and at the new Campus East site of York University on the 22nd, and

one at Naburn Sewage Works on the 25th. A pair seen at Hagg Lane, East Cottingwith on 3rd May was seen carrying food at the same site on the 8th. At least 20, a high number, were at Copmanthorpe on 5th May. One was singing in Allerthorpe Village on 10th May when one was also by the Pocklington Canal while another was seen south of Cliffe during an Atlas survey on the 15th with a further bird at North Duffield Carrs on the 17th. Six were at Moor Closes north of Thornton on the 29th.

In late summer at least 12 were observed gathering to roost on the roof of a farm building adjacent to the Thorganby village hall car park on 3rd September. Two (an adult and a juvenile) were at still Hessay in the last week of the month.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Resident breeder

Winter records were scattered across the recording area with one, sometimes two birds reported from the following locations between January and March or between September and December: between Bishopthorpe and Acaster Malbis, Buttercrambe Weir (2), Castle Howard (2), Cliffe, CSL, Frog Hall (Allerthorpe Common), Huntington, Naburn Sewage Works, North Duffield Carrs, Ouse Bridge (York), Pocklington, Pocklington Canal (Thornton Lock), Rawcliffe Lake, River Foss (York city centre), between Strensall and Sheriff Hutton, and at Welburn Sewage Works.

A pair seen in March in the eastern boundary ditch at Skipwith Common was considered to be possibly the same birds which later bred at North Duffield Sewage Works. Two were at Welburn Sewage Works on 5th April with one seen there again in September while another was at the CSL pond on the 21st. A female at Newburgh Priory lake on 19th May was collecting insects suggesting young nearby.

Three or four were seen regularly throughout the year in the Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings area, mainly around the sewage works where breeding probably occurred. One was at Silburn on the Pocklington Canal on 10th May, with another by the River Foss at New Earswick on the 25th, and on the same day by the River Ouse in Clifton. Two were at York Lock by the Castle Museum in the centre of York on the 27th.

A juvenile was seen at Coates Lock, Pocklington Canal on 4th July, being fed by an adult.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

Resident breeder

At the filter beds of the Walbutts Sewage Works there were 14 birds on 10th January, while in the latter part of the year 17 were recorded

at this site on 19th November. As many as 16 were counted at North Duffield Carrs on 12th January. Reasonable numbers were seen feeding on filter beds at Naburn Sewage Works in February and again in March.

A pair bred just off Skipwith Common, near the old runway, while a juvenile was seen at CSL on 19th May, with two there on 4th September. Around 50 were feeding on York University playing fields on 17th August with 35 by Sheriff Hutton bridge on 6th October and 60 at CSL roosting in November.

Present throughout the year in the Clifton/Rawcliffe lngs area, with good numbers attracted to the flood. Also reported from Yapham Common, Bielby village, Cornborough, and Stittenham, near Sheriff Hutton.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba alba*
Uncommon spring migrant

One was seen with Pied Wagtails *M. alba yarrellii* and Meadow Pipits *Anthus pratensis* at Naburn Sewage Works on 24th March, and seen there also on 5th April with some 65 Pied Wagtails (RS).

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*
Occasional winter visitor though more regular in recent years

A lingering bird in Strensall attracted much local interest in what was a lean winter for the species; according to a local resident six birds had been there originally. The bird remained until 14th February, and continued to draw a steady stream of admirers. That apart the only other record in the first winter period was of three sitting on a hedge alongside the A1079 at Wilberfoss on 22nd January.

First of the autumn was one on 29th October, seen flying over the city walls near York railway station. Seven were briefly at Melbourne on 4th November, with one flying east at Upper Poppleton on the 5th. Twelve were seen at Askham Bryan College on the 11th followed by two flying over CSL on the 17th, a single bird feeding on apples at Scrayingham on the 23rd and at least one in a garden at Tang Hall, York on the 29th.

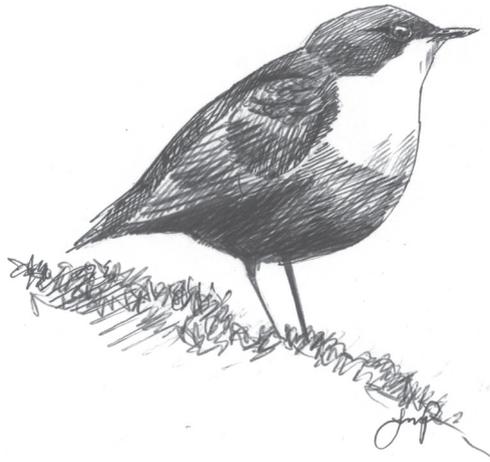
More were seen in December starting with four in Shipton Road at the entrance to Rawcliffe Park&Ride on the 9th. The largest flock was 27 at Strensall on the 16th with 21 later in Heath Ride, Strensall the same day while five were seen over the next week in neighbouring Thompson Drive and Littlethorpe Close. One was reported feeding and calling in the Minster gardens in York opposite St Williams College on the 8th followed by one in a Sheriff Hutton garden on the 10th, two in roadside hawthorn between Pocklington and Barmby Moor on the 15th, another at Bolton (near Fangfoss) on the 18th and one at the Designer Outlet, York on the morning of the 19th. One at the junction of Heslington Lane and Heath

Moor Drive in York on the 23rd had increased to six there the next day while several were also reported along Bishopthorpe Road at Acaster Malbis on the 24th there were three in Barmby Road, Pocklington on the 25th and 26th. On the 29th one was located again at Heath Ride, Strensall where a larger flock had been present earlier in the month while on the same date eight were sighted over The Retreat, York.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Former breeder now scarce mostly winter visitor

One seen at Crambeck on 10th May was the first reported in the recording area since 1999 (AW per RS).



Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Resident breeder throughout the area

Common and widespread throughout the recording area, noted in rural and suburban areas, and often more numerous in the winter (or maybe more often seen). One was seen carrying nesting material into a hedge in Osbaldwick garden on the early date of 14th February.

Dunnoek *Prunella modularis*

Resident breeder throughout the area

Common and widespread throughout the recording area, and seen in rural and suburban areas. Song was first heard in Bielby village on 12th January. One was seen carrying nesting material into a conifer in an Osbaldwick garden on 15th March, with young seen there on 16th June. Last song was heard on 13th July at Yapham Grange and Barmby Moor.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Resident breeder throughout the area

Generally distributed over the whole area, with breeding recorded at Allerthorpe, Osbaldwick, Skipwith Common and Strensall. At the latter site a pair nested in an old teapot while at Skipwith Common numbers are thought to have declined due to the loss of bramble cover.

Common Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*

Scarce summer migrant and occasional breeder

Not recorded in 2008; the last record was in 2007 when a pair bred in Bishop Wood near Selby.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Very rare visitor

One was found at Askham Grange prison, Askham Richard on 20th April (AH) while a female was seen at Fulford Golf Course/Tillmire, Heslington on 10th June (JL). A late bird was at CSL on 10th November (SHBR).

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Migrant breeder and passage visitor

A male was seen at Bank Island on 22nd April (JG) and near Warter (just outside the recording area) on the 28th (BirdGuides). In May one was singing at High Plumps, CSL on the 16th (SHBR) with two singing males at Castle Howard on the 9th (RCo) and 18th (DR).

Another at Yearsley Moor on 19th May (MD) was still on territory on 8th June and on the 24th (DR and YOC website) while another was at Wass the same day (DR).

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Casual migrant breeder and passage migrant

Four were at North Duffield Carrs on 17th September (per PR) with two on kale stubble at Hagg Lane near East Cottingwith on the 25th (PR).

Common Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus*

Casual breeder and passage visitor; sometimes over-winters

Pairs spent the early part of the year at North Duffield Carrs and Heslington Tillmire, the latter until 5th March. Elsewhere a male was located along Hagg Lane near East Cottingwith on 26th January and a pair was found along the York-Selby cycleway south of Naburn on 26th March.

Birds were frequent at Strensall Common during most visits in the year with an estimated seven territories recorded during the MOD survey on 23rd May. Two pairs remained there on 13th July with broods of four and two fledglings.

On 8th February a pair was seen at Skipwith Common and these appeared to be the first to winter on the site. They remained into spring and nested producing two young which left the nest on 16th May. A second brood was attempted but proved unsuccessful and birds were not seen after 13th June. This was the first nesting attempt recorded at this site and may be the start of a new colonisation.

Returning wintering birds were seen near Strensall on 3rd October, at Ellerton Ings on the 8th and separately at Hagg Lane near East Cottingwith and Thornton Ellers on the 11th with further records from East Cottingwith and North Duffield Carrs in November and December.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*
Summer visitor and passage migrant

Only a few records were received this year. Passage birds were at Naburn Sewage Works on 5th April and at Strensall Common on 13th and 22nd April with three there on 5th May. At Hagg Lane near East Cottingwith a male was seen on 18th, 19th and 27th April and on 28th May.

During the autumn one was at Church Fenton on 21st August with another at Thorganby Ings on the 30th while a further bird was located at North Duffield Carrs on 17th September.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*
Very scarce passage migrant

Not recorded in 2008 with the last record being in 2006.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*
Resident breeder, winter visitor and migrant

Regular breeder around Allerthorpe, Osbaldwick, Strensall, and York and frequently seen during Atlas work at many sites. One nested at CSL in an owl nest box and five nests were found at Skipwith Common in gorse with six young successfully fledged from two of them.

Present throughout the year in the Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings area and at Rawcliffe Lake; there was a noticeable influx of winter birds from mid-October with at least 60 plus 20 Song Thrushes *T. philomelos* in just one tree on 9th October.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Winter visitor

Frequent throughout the recording area during the winter months with larger counts as follows: over 300 in several flocks over Huby on 3rd January, with similar numbers of Redwings *T. iliacus*; 500 between Sheriff Hutton and Strensall on 12th January; 100 in the Hagg Lane area of East Cottingwith on the 13th; 600 at Catterton on the 19th; 250 in the Gunby-Brighton area on 6th February and 500 near Great Wood, Strensall on the 17th. Generally, this species and Redwing were thin on the ground later in March, although a few flocks of up to 40 were seen in various locations until 14th April.

First of the autumn were ten over CSL on 16th October followed by flocks of c.80 and c.90 flying over North Duffield Carrs and 60 west over Ellerton on the 17th, while five were at Seaton Ross on the 28th and 100+ over Redhouse on the 29th. A large flock of 1,200 was seen near Sutton-on-the-Forest on 31st October followed by further reports of 100+ at Colton Lane by Copmanthorpe on 19th November, c.80 at the Tillmire, Heslington on 29th November and 80+ at Pike Hills Golf Course by Askham Bog on 5th December.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Resident breeder but in decline in some areas

Occurs regularly over most of the area throughout the year with singing commencing on 8th January at Clifton Park though six together at CSL on 3rd March may have been migrants.

Recorded during summer Atlas surveys with breeding confirmed in Osbaldwick, Skipwith Common and Sheriff Hutton.

An influx of thrushes to Rawcliffe Ings on 9th October produced at least 20 with 60 Blackbirds *T. merula*.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Winter visitor

Good numbers were present throughout the winter months in the Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings area and small parties were frequently recorded at CSL. Over 300 in several flocks flew over Huby on 3rd January with similar numbers of Fieldfares *T. pilaris*. Fifty were at Dunnington Common on 3rd February with 240 near Averhams plantation, Flaxton on the 8th while three flocks totalling c.280 birds were feeding in permanent pasture at Wilberfoss on the 9th.

A flock of 85 was singing from Silver Birches at Skipwith Common on 28th March while c.100 were still feeding on the aftermath of flooding at



Middlethorpe Ings late in March with 120+ at Thornton on the 29th. The last recorded in spring were c.40 passing west over Naburn Sewage Works on 5th April.

The first of the autumn was one heard calling over the York University campus in the early morning of 24th September followed by one at Castle Howard on the 27th. A steady stream of birds flying over Skipwith Common was heard before dawn on 16th October and 100+ flew over CSL on the 17th when c.100 were also seen at Bank Island. On 18th October there were 18 at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits, 50+ at Rawcliffe Meadows and the same number along the River Ouse between York and Naburn.

At CSL on 17th November there were several parties going west at lunchtime, c.100+ in one hour and in the afternoon two more parties of 20 and ten; this was on a day of large arrivals on the east coast. Other, larger counts were 50, with Fieldfares, beside Castle Howard Lake on 23rd November and 80+ birds on the golf course adjacent to Askham Bog on 5th December.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*
Resident breeder and winter visitor

Few records were submitted this year though present through all months in the Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings area and fairly frequent around Allerthorpe, Bielby, Flaxton and Strensall. At least three pairs bred at Skipwith Common and an adult was seen feeding young there on 11th May.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*
Scarce migrant breeder

Only three records this year with one heard 'reeling' near Beningbrough on 25th April (YOC website), one reported from Wheldrake Ings on 7th May (BirdGuides) and one at Melbourne on 19th July (P&SB).

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*
Migrant breeder and passage migrant

The first records were of three at Wheldrake Ings on 21st April, Bank Island on the 24th, Hagg Lane near East Cottingwith on the 25th and one at North Duffield Carrs on the 26th. Other records during the summer came from Allerthorpe Gravel Pits, along the River Derwent at Malton, Fulford Ings, Castle Howard Lake, the Pocklington Canal area and the River Ouse near Riccall.

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*
Migrant breeder and passage migrant

One was reported from Wheldrake Ings on 25th April but there were no more reports until one was heard singing at Rawcliffe Bar Country Park pond from 7th May with two birds singing for a time; at least one pair bred with three or four fledged young seen during late July into early August.

Breeding also occurred at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits where 18 nests were located, the same as in 2007, with a total of 23 pairs present and a juvenile seen on 5th August, but it was considered another poor breeding season. At least three pairs bred successfully at Skipwith Common and eight chicks fledged during June.

Other records during the breeding season came from Wheldrake Ings (where ten were in the reedbed on 9th May), Castle Howard Lake, Pocklington Canal (where noted as "abundant" on the 18th) and the River Ouse near Riccall.

Birds at Rawcliffe Bar Country Park were feeding fledged young by mid-August but all had departed by the last week, while at least two fledglings were being attended by adults at Castle Howard Lake on 23rd August and others lingered there with the last seen on 13th September.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*
Migrant breeder with some birds overwintering

Overwintering birds were found in a Copmanthorpe garden on 15th January (TD) and at Averhams Plantation, Flaxton on 8th February, with another at the YWT reserve, Strensall Common on the 10th. A female was in a Huntington garden on 1st March

The first presumed migrants were two at Wheldrake Ings on 1st April with singles at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on the 4th, Castle Howard and Heslington on the 5th, and Clifton Park on the 10th.

Recorded frequently throughout the YOC area during the summer with seven to eight pairs present in the Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings area while a pair also bred at Rawcliffe Lake. Only two or three pairs bred at Skipwith Common, down on previous years due to grazing, and an adult with four young were beside Castle Howard Lake on 8th August. Breeding was also confirmed or suspected at CSL, Strensall Common and at various other sites.

In the autumn a male was at the Clifton allotments on 8th October, with a female at Danesmead Copse, Fulford on the 18th and one at Castle Howard on the 26th.

A male, probably the same individual, was seen visiting different gardens in Copmanthorpe on 24th and 27th December.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Migrant breeder

One singing at Castle Howard on 27th April was the first of the year, followed by one singing in Lady Spring Wood, Malton on 5th May, five at Wheldrake Ings on the 9th, one at Naburn Sewage Works on the 10th and another at Moreby Wood on the 11th.

Thereafter birds were recorded throughout the area with records from the Allerthorpe area, Bishop Wood, Clifton Ings, CSL, Fulford Golf Course and Sewage Works, Naburn Wood, Pocklington Canal, Stittenham near Sheriff Hutton and Yearsley Moor.

One pair, possibly two, bred at Skipwith Common. No 'last' date was noted this year for this species.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Migrant breeder

A large arrival occurred on the 25th April when birds were recorded at Cornborough, Naburn, Sheriff Hutton, Storwood and Wheldrake. Other new arrivals were at Fulford Ings on 1st May, Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on the 3rd and the Tillmire, Heslington on the 8th.

During the summer birds were recorded quite frequently throughout the area with records at Allerthorpe, Heslington, Hovingham Spa House, North Duffield Carrs, Malton, Osbaldwick, the Pocklington Canal and Riccall. Breeding was confirmed at Moor Monkton where one was watched feeding young at the turnoff from the A59 on 4th July.

The last recorded was one at Castle Howard on 6th September.

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Migrant breeder

The first arrival was on 22nd April at CSL, then at Bank Island on the 24th with two at Wheldrake Ings on the 25th. Thereafter numbers increased quickly with 15 counted along the River Ouse between York and Naburn on 10th May, six round Cawton and Stonegrave on the 17th and ten at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on the 29th.

One pair bred at Skipwith Common and the adults were seen feeding young on 16th June. Elsewhere at this site, the loss of bramble due to grazing is thought to have caused the species to abandon this area. Seven, including fledged young, were near Cornborough on 14th June and eight to ten pairs were present throughout the summer in the Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings area with good numbers on autumn passage.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Scare passage migrant and probable but very local breeder

A probable bird was singing in Nursery Wood, CSL (SHBR) on 1st May and up to two were singing at Yearsley Moor from 19th May until at least 24th June (MD, DR).

Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Migrant breeder and passage migrant with some birds overwintering

Wintering birds of the nominate race showed well near Naburn Sewage Works on 16th February, with another at CSL on the 19th and the 21st, and one reported from Askham Bog on the 23rd.

The first returning migrants were noted at Bank Island and Wheldrake Ings on 17th March with one by Fulford Golf Course on the 22nd, one at Askham Bog on the 23rd and two at Naburn Sewage Works on the 24th, with others at Wheldrake from the 29th. From the beginning of April numbers built up quickly with, for example, a count of 12 singing along the River Ouse between York and Naburn on 12th April and others throughout the area.

Five singing males were at Skipwith Common but breeding was not confirmed there while two–three pairs were present throughout the summer in the Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings area with good numbers noted passing through this area during the autumn.

One was in a Heslington garden on 18th August with several at Malton on the 20th. In September six were singing along the River Ouse between York and Naburn on the 14th with three along this stretch on the 21st. Birds lingered into October at Allerthorpe, Long Marston and at Rawcliffe Lake, York with the last at CSL and Skipwith Common on the 10th.

A presumed overwintering bird showed well outside an office window on York Science Park on 5th December.

(Siberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita tristis*)

Rare vagrant

The 'Siberian Chiffchaff' *Phylloscopus collybita tristis* from the previous year remained at Fulford Ings until at least 14th January (MH) before flooding apparently forced it to move on. Although sometimes elusive, photographs were obtained although attempts to trap the bird were unsuccessful. Another observer (RS) reported that views were difficult but it showed well and was quite vocal, with the 'ieep' lost chick call and that plumage was whiter than expected, but cheeks and supercilium appeared quite buffy (see note on page 108).

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Migrant breeder and passage migrant

Two were at Wheldrake Ings on 1st April followed by three at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on the 4th, one at Naburn on the 5th and one in the Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings area on the 9th. Thereafter birds were widespread and frequently recorded throughout the YOC area.

Breeding was proven at Skipwith Common where adults were seen feeding young on 2nd July and birds were present in mixed flocks until mid-September while in the Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings area ten to twelve pairs were present throughout the summer with a pair also at Rawcliffe Lake. Four juveniles were at Castle Howard on 8th August while two passed through a Long Marston garden on the 17th when several were at Hessay while others were also at Malton on the 20th.

The last were six on 25th August at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits followed by singles at Fulford Ings on 14th and 21st September.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Resident breeder and winter visitor

Fairly common and widespread over the recording area where regular at Allerthorpe Common where up to ten were recorded during the year, at Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings, CSL, Skipwith Common and Strensall Common. A small influx was noted at Clifton Ings with two birds seen at Redhouse on 29th October

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*

Scarce passage migrant

Not recorded in 2008 with the last sighting being in 2007.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*
Migrant breeder and passage visitor

Quite a good year for sightings with four pairs present during the MOD survey of Strensall Common on 23rd May and four there again on 24th June. Pairs were noted at Yearsley Moor on 19th May and another pair was seen feeding young at Wheldrake Ings during July. Two adults were seen feeding two recently fledged young at Skipwith Common on 13th July and this family party was still present in the area in mid-August.

Singles were also seen during the spring and summer at Allerthorpe, Dunnington Common, Crockey Hill, Heslington Tillmire, Malton, Pocklington, Pool Bridge Farm where it was reported to have bred in previous years with three pairs present in 2005, Waplinton Hall (Allerthorpe), Welburn and Wheldrake Ings.

The last seen were three in Clifton Park from 28th August into early September and a single by the allotments there on 18th September.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*
Resident breeder

Commonly seen throughout the year in the Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings area and at Rawcliffe Lake. Frequently seen during winter and summer visits at Cornborough and Stittenham near Sheriff Hutton and also frequent at both Strensall and Skipwith Commons, with 17 being the highest count at the former. Birds were noted less often through the year at CSL while up to 15 were recorded at Allerthorpe Common on any one date.

A party was in Grimston Wood, above Brandsby on 20th January and ten were in the Tank Plantation at Allerthorpe on 2nd February with six there on 29th May. Further spring sightings included four at Averhams Plantation on 8th February, with 13 there on 26th June, five at Askham Bog on 9th April, six by the Pocklington Canal on 22nd May and three at Pocklington Wood on 26th May.

In the autumn a Strensall garden had seven on 8th November while 24 were in Brecks Lane, Strensall on 17th November. Seven were at Meltonby on 13th November, and seven at Bielby on 20th November. Eight were counted at The Retreat, York on 20th December.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*
Resident breeder

Commonly seen throughout the year in the Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings area and at Rawcliffe Lake. Regularly seen around Strensall with 21

on 8th February and frequently seen at Cornborough and Stittenham near Sheriff Hutton. Up to 20 could be seen at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits with maxima of 15 at Frog Hall, Allerthorpe Common, and five at Meltonby, Barmby Moor and Pocklington. At Nursery Wood, CSL 12 nest-boxes checked on 9th May had three sitting birds plus nine eggs. At High Plumps wood, CSL 21 chicks fledged from about 47 eggs (45%).

There were counts at The Retreat, York of 15 on 11th October, seven on 15th November, and 14 on 20th December.

Great Tit *Parus major*

Resident breeder

Commonly seen throughout the year in the Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings area and at Rawcliffe Lake. Up to ten could usually be found at Frog Hall, Allerthorpe Common. Twenty-nine were counted at Strensall Common on 10th February with eight counted on 19th November. A common resident at Skipwith Common, though numbers have declined in recent years. At High Plumps, CSL ten chicks fledged from about 39 eggs (26%). Further records included 11 at Haxby on 12th January, eight at Moreby near Naburn on 3rd May but with only two on 15th June, and ten at The Retreat, York on 20th December.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Resident breeder

Two or three were seen regularly throughout the year at Clifton Park. Five nest-boxes were occupied at CSL, with four pairs successfully raising young. Up to ten were present at Allerthorpe Common and reported also as a common resident at Skipwith Common though numbers have declined there in recent years. A regular visitor to Strensall gardens especially in winter. Regularly seen visiting feeders in Osbaldwick, more frequently than in recent years. Further records came from Barmby Moor, Cliffe, Grimston Wood, Meltonby, Pocklington and The Retreat, York.

Willow Tit *Poecile montana*

Resident breeder

Up to two birds were seen on regular visits to Allerthorpe Common. However, no breeding birds could be found at Skipwith Common and the only record there was one on 6th August. Three were reported at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd February with two there on 1st April while records of single birds came from Askham Bog, the Pocklington Canal

near Bielby, Calley Heath, Coates Bridge on the Pocklington Canal, Copmanthorpe, CSL and Wheldrake Ings. Four were counted at Castle Howard on 8th August, with four at Kexby and three or four at Heslington on 26th November, and ten spread over Allerthorpe Common on 28th November.

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

Resident breeder

Several were seen in Yearsley Forest on 27th January. A pair bred in a nest-box in Nursery Wood, CSL and a pair was seen at Skipwith Common on 8th February. Records of single birds came from Bielby, Meltonby, Seaton Ross and Strensall with up to four present at Allerthorpe Common.

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Resident breeder

Up to three birds were observed at Askham Bog, Bishopthorpe Palace, Buttercrambe, Castle Howard, Coneysthorpe, Terrington and at Rowntree Park in York. Breeding was noted at Yearsley Moor and a pair nested in a hole in brickwork above the reception entrance of Askham Grange prison. Unusually, on 28th December, three were observed at Terrington feeding on a dry-stone wall.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

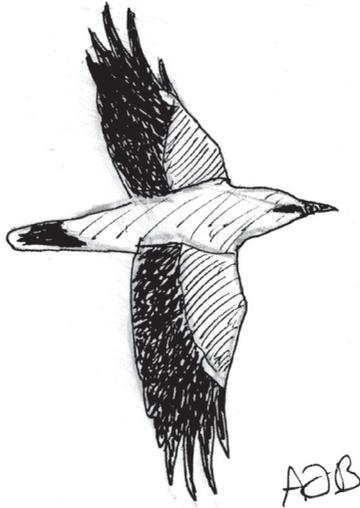
Resident breeder

Present throughout the year in the Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings area and at Skipwith Common. Up to three birds were noted at a variety of locations: Allerthorpe, Brandsby, Calley Heath NR, Castle Howard, Coates Bridge on the Pocklington Canal, CSL (High Plumps), Hemingbrough, The Retreat (York), Strensall Common, Sutton-on-the-Forest, Waplinton Hall (Allerthorpe), York University campus. Six were at Askham Bog on 27th December.

Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

Rare summer migrant

At Yearsley Moor a singing male was an unexpected discovery near Redcar House during a BTO Atlas survey on 14th June but did not linger, much to the disappointment of local birdwatchers (MK, PW, MD). This was the 8th record of this species in the YOC area, the previous one being in 2006



Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*
Very scarce mostly winter visitor

One was reported in the northern part of North Duffield Carrs on the morning of 28th February and seen again in the afternoon but then subsequently seen flying west (BirdGuides).

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*
Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

Up to three birds were recorded at Allerthorpe Common, Clifton Ings, Clifton Park, CSL, Flaxton, Frog Hall (Allerthorpe Common), Heslington (York), Meltonby and Strensall Common. There were three or four breeding pairs on Skipwith Common.

A small influx or local movement was evident in October with birds seen at Heslington Tillmire on the 2nd, Wheldrake Ings on the 24th (two), Redhouse on the 29th (two) and Clifton Park at the month end followed by singles at Ellerton and North Duffield Carrs on 1st November.

Magpie *Pica pica*
Resident breeder

Regular in the Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings area, at CSL, Rawcliffe Lake, Skipwith Common and Strensall. About 30 roosted in Danesmead Copse, Fulford on 20th January. Good numbers were counted at The Retreat, York with ten on 11th October, 12 on 15th November and 12 again on 20th December.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

Resident breeder

Up to 30 were present throughout the year in the Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings area. Regular around Strensall and frequent near Cornborough and Stittenham near Sheriff Hutton with a maximum of 33 present around Cornborough on 12th January. Roosting movements were noted at CSL with a maximum of 200 on 18th November. Single or low double figures were reported from Castle Howard, Cawton, Flaxton, Osbaldwick, Stonegrave and Wheldrake, plus 60 at Bielby on 20th November.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Resident breeder

Up to 80 were present throughout the year in the Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings area with a rookery at the northern end of Rawcliffe Ings. On 12th January 120 were counted in Allerthorpe and 59 at Coat's Flat, Bielby. Frequent near Cornborough and Stittenham with six apparently occupied nests near Cornborough on 25th April. Forty-five were seen and 26 nests counted along the Avenue, Castle Howard on 10th May. Other larger counts included 250 at Pocklington Airfield on 13th July, 44 at East Moor, Thornton on 20th July, 45 at High Roans Farm near Strensall on 23rd October, 45 at Grange Farm, Newton upon Derwent on 2nd November, and 150 at Petersfield Farm, Bielby on 20th November. Roosting movements were noted at CSL with a maximum of 800 on 18th November.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Resident breeder

Up to 70 were present throughout the year in the Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings area and often seen at CSL. Four or five pairs bred on Skipwith Common but in the summer months there is often an additional non-breeding flock and on 28th September 70 were counted.

There was a large roost at Strensall Common during the winter, with 22 on 8th February, while 31 were at Walbutts Sewage Works, Strensall on 24th June. Other larger gatherings included about 80 in a flock at Thornton on 18th March, 13 at Allerthorpe Common on 29th May, 11 round Grimston Wood on 13th July and ten at Petersfield Farm, Bielby on 20th November. Recorded in single figures from Bielby, Cornborough, Melbourne, Meltonby, Osbaldwick, Pocklington, Stittenham and The Retreat, York.

Raven *Corvus corax*

Rare visitor

Not recorded in 2008 after sightings in each of the previous four years.

Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*
Resident breeder and winter visitor

Recorded in single or double figures at a variety of locations. Higher counts included 150 on power lines near Hundred Acre Farm, Strensall on 14th February, 100 at Grange Farm, Long Marston on 22nd February, 120 over the YWT reserve, Strensall Common on 3rd April, 1000+ at Thornton on 24th March, 100 at Pocklington on 17th May, 100+ flying west at CSL on 31st October, 300 at Low Roans Farm, Strensall on 22nd October, 200 at Market Bridge, Bielby 2nd November, 150 at Grange Farm, Newton upon Derwent on 2nd November and 112 at Bielby village on 20th November.

Rose-coloured Starling *Sturnus roseus*
Rare vagrant

Of interest to local birders, a fine adult male was photographed coming to feed on pears in a garden at Wetwang (13km east of the YOC recording area) on the 3rd June, but again this star bird did not hang around for others to see! (Mr&Mrs Clark per H&KS)

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*
Resident breeder

At Rawcliffe Lake 30–40 were present throughout the year with up to 30 at Strensall. Maximum counts elsewhere included 15 at Allerthorpe on 12th January, 33 at Bielby also on 12th January, 20 around Cornborough Manor on 12th January, 40 at Pocklington on 17th May, 83 at Melbourne on 22nd May, 25 in Riccall on 14th June, 23 at Meltonby on 13th November and 35 near Walbutts Sewage Works, Strensall on 22nd December.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*
Resident breeder

Good numbers were present all year in the Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings area with many feeding in the Cornfield NR during the winter months. Present all year around at Strensall with 50 on 29th December and 40 in stubble near Walbutts Sewage Works, Strensall on 22nd December.

At CSL a maximum of 70 was recorded on 16th December. Single or double figures were noted at Allerthorpe, Allerthorpe Common, Allerthorpe Gravel Pits, Bielby, Castle Howard, Cliffe, Copmanthorpe, Cornborough, Dunnington, Full Sutton Industrial Estate, Hemingbrough, Long Marston, Naburn, Newton Carr, North Duffield Carrs, Pocklington, Riccall, Stittenham, Terrington, Ulleskelf, Welburn, West Lilling and Wilberfoss. Notable counts included 32 near Stittenham on 8th February, 50 at Hassacarr NR, Dunnington on 18th April, 80 at Full Sutton Industrial

Estate on 3rd September, 40+ in a hedge at Town Ings, Thornton on 11th November and 50 at Earfit Lane, Copmanthorpe on 2nd December.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

Commonly seen throughout the year in the Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings area and at Rawcliffe Lake. Present all year at Skipwith Common with an impressive flock of 150 on 24th September.

Single or double figures were noted at Allerthorpe Common, Bielby, Cawton, Coates Bridge (Pocklington Canal), Copmanthorpe, Cornborough, Flaxton, Grimston Wood, Newton Carr, North Duffield Carrs, Osbaldwick, Pocklington, Stittenham and Yearsley Forest. Notable counts included 100 in a pig field at Yearsley on 12th January, 100 at Westfield Farm, Allerthorpe Common on 2nd February and a flock of 40 in November at CSL.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Winter visitor and passage migrant

Up to four were on feeders by the Geoff Smith Hide at North Duffield Carrs in early January, with six there in February and eight on 1st March. Four were on garden feeders in Strensall on 24th April, while 20+ were at Skipwith Common on 24th October followed by four at Gipse Lane, Heslington on 26th November. Elsewhere records of one or two birds came from Allerthorpe Common, Askham Bryan, Bank Island (3rd January), Castle Howard, Cawton, Copmanthorpe, CSL, Grimston, Huby (25th March), Langwith Stray, Meltonby, Strensall and Yearsley.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

Present throughout the year in the Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings area and at Rawcliffe Lake. Regular at CSL with 20 on 3rd October and also regular at Skipwith Common.

Recorded at Allerthorpe, Barnby Moor, Bielby, Cornborough, Melbourne, Meltonby, Naburn, Newton Carr, Pocklington, Stittenham, Strensall and Yapham Grange. High counts included 57 at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 12th January, 150 feeding in a sunflower strip at Heslington Common on 13th November, c.100 in a game strip near Fir Tree Farm, Heslington on 16th November, and about 100 at Birker Fields, Wilberfoss on 1st December.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

Regular at Skipwith Common and present throughout the year in the Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings area and at Rawcliffe Lake with a late summer flock of 60+ in Clifton Park. Regular at CSL with 40 on 16th June. Widely reported elsewhere in single or low double figures, but with notable counts of 350+ in an old, uncut oil-seed rape field at Newton upon Derwent on 24th September and 60 in the Dunnington Common area on 26th November.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

Resident breeder in small numbers, passage and winter visitor

Good numbers were reported from many areas in January with 200 in alders at Calley Heath on 2nd January, 100 at Askham Bog on 6th January and 100 at Yearsley on 12th January. Three at a garden feeder in Strensall on 12th January visited daily until March 18th when five were counted. The next visit was on 21st June when two adults and two juveniles were seen and these continued to visit until 21st September. Skipwith Common had 16 on 9th July with 24 on the 12th and 60 on the 13th. Present in late autumn and winter at CSL with a maximum of 12 on 15th December while at the year end there were 70+ by the River Rye east of Nunnington Hall on 23rd December and 50 at Askham Bog on the 27th.

During the year single or low double figures were also reported from Allerthorpe Common, Allerthorpe Gravel Pits, Cawton, Fulford Golf Course, Hemingbrough, Heslington, Naburn, Pocklington, Rawcliffe Lake, Wheldrake and Yearsley Forest.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

Present throughout the year in the Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings area with good numbers wintering at Cornfield NR including 60+ in December, while the flock at Rawcliffe Meadows peaked at 100+ birds in mid-February. Present at CSL with up to 20 in April and October. At least 15 pairs were at Skipwith Common. Counts at Castle Howard included 100 on 27th January, 40 on 13th September and 30 on 26th October.

Elsewhere 85 were by the Pocklington Canal, Bielby on 12th January with 50 at the Coates Bridge area of the Pocklington Canal on the same date, 45 along Hagg Lane, East Cottingwith on the 13th and 60 on a game strip by the Tillmire, Heslington on the 30th. A flock of c.110 was feeding on maize stubble at North Duffield on 15th April.

In the autumn 150 were at Meltonby on 13th November and 45 at Petersfield Farm, Bielby on 20th November. Elsewhere birds were recorded in single or low double figures at Allerthorpe Common, Barmby Moor, Bielby, Cornborough, Flaxton, Grimston Wood, Meltonby, Newton Carr, Pocklington, Riccall, Stittenham, Strensall, Thornton and Yapham Grange.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

Very scarce winter visitor

Four with a flock of Linnets *C. cannabina* near North Duffield on 7th April was the only record (CR per RS).

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*

Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

Singles were at CSL in January, February, October and November. At least 30 were feeding on nettle seeds at the end of Broadway West in Fulford and remained throughout January with up to 20 in February and seven on 2nd March. Up to five were at Rawcliffe Lake through January into early February and ten frequented the alders on the edge of York University Lake during March.

One seen in song flight over Fulford Golf Course on 10th June was the only summer record.

In the autumn, ten were at Rawcliffe Meadows flood basin on 26th September with a similar number at Clifton Ings on the same date. Forty were at Frog Hall, Allerthorpe Common on 28th September and again on 4th October with three at Strensall Common on 22nd October, six at Wheldrake Ings on 24th October and two at Redhouse on 29th October. About 30 were in birch trees at Fulford Golf Course on 21st November with four between Gipsey Corner and Langwith Lodge on 26th November. Three were at Earfit Lane, Copmanthorpe on 2nd December with 40 at Bielby on 16th December, 17 at The Retreat, York on 20th December, 20 at Askham Bog on 22nd December and 16 at Skipwith Common on 25th December.

Mealy (Common) Redpoll *Carduelis flammea*

Scarce winter visitor

Up to four were with the Redpoll flock at Broadway West in Fulford in January, with one still there on 3rd February. Additionally one was at CSL in February and two at Rawcliffe Lake on 21st March. At least one was present at York University from 5th–26th March with two at Rawcliffe Lake on the 21st.

In the autumn two were at Frog Hall, Allerthorpe Common on 7th November.

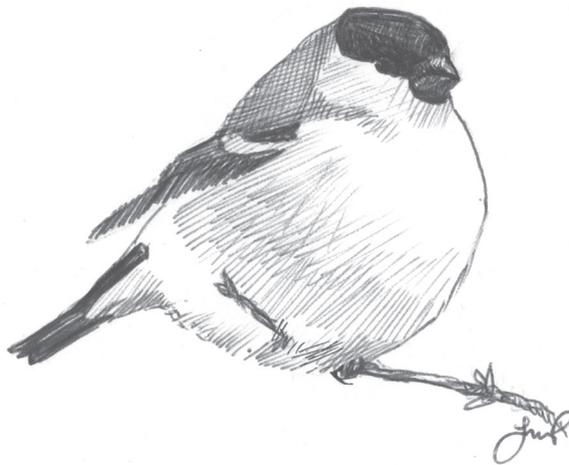
Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*
Casual breeder and passage migrant

Eight were seen at Yearsley Moor on 25th April while two were at Askham Grange Prison, Askham Richard on 6th June with another two at Yearsley Moor on the 9th and as many as 50 birds at Allerthorpe Common on the 11th and 12th.

On 14th July 16 were at Skipwith Common while one flew over Malton on 20th August and three were at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 25th August. Three were at Clifton Ings on 25th September followed by singles at both Allerthorpe Common and Wheldrake Wood on 26th October and 17 in Wheldrake Wood from 28th–29th October. Up to 50 could be found over Allerthorpe Common in late November while one was at Castle Howard on 9th November plus three in Wheldrake Wood on 6th December and five flying east over Wheldrake Ings on 27th December.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*
Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

Present throughout the year in the Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings area while up to six were seen at CSL. Elsewhere records of up to four birds came from Allerthorpe Common, Allerthorpe Gravel Pits, Clifton Park, Cornborough, Flaxton, Frog Hall (Allerthorpe Common), Fulford, Melbourne, Meltonby, North Duffield Carrs, Osbaldwick, Silburn Lock/Giles Lock area of the Pocklington Canal, Pocklington, Seaton Ross, Skipwith Common, Strensall and Welburn. Two brightly coloured and chunky birds seen near Sutton-on-the-Forest cemetery on 3rd January could have been of the northern continental race *P. p. pyrrhula*.



Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Rare winter visitor

A female, the only bird of the year in the YOC area, was photographed in a tree by the Stamford Bridge turnoff on the A1079 near Wilberfoss on 21st March. One was also reported from Millington Pasture (about 5km to the east of the YOC recording area) on 17th December by birders looking for Rough-legged Buzzard *Buteo lagopus* in the area.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

Recorded in single figures from Barmby Moor, Bielby, Cawton, Coates Bridge area of the Pocklington Canal, Cornborough, CSL, Frog Hall (Allerthorpe Common), Grimston Wood, Hovingham, Long Marston, Melbourne, Meltonby, Pocklington, Silburn Lock/Giles Lock area of the Pocklington Canal, Strensall Common, Tank Plantation (Allerthorpe), Thornton, Wigginton and Yapham Grange. Higher counts included 36 at the Tillmire, Heslington on 2nd January with some 30 there on the 30th, about 40 along the Cliffe Common to South Duffield road on 16th January, 20 at Fulford Golf Course also on the 16th, 16 at Cliffe on 2nd February, 76 near Stittenham on 8th February, up to 50 on farmland between Acaster Malbis and Copmanthorpe during February and 30 counted at North Duffield Carrs on 27th March.

In the autumn thirteen were on the eastern border of Strensall Common on 29th November, six at both Heslington Tillmire and The Outgang on the same date, 20+ at Earfit Lane, Copmanthorpe on 2nd December, 30+ in stubble near Terrington on the 23rd and 50 at Bielby on 26th December.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Resident breeder and passage visitor

Commonly seen throughout the year in the Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings area and good numbers bred here again this year. Recorded in single figures from Allerthorpe Gravel Pits, Bielby, Buttercrambe, Cawton, Cliffe, CSL, Fulford, Melbourne, Meltonby, Pocklington, Riccall, Silburn Lock/Giles Lock area of the Pocklington Canal, Strensall Common, Thornton and Towthorpe.

Up to 10 roosted at Skipwith Common in the early part of the year. A small influx into the Lower Derwent Valley was apparent in March with ten separate flocks located, each of up to 20 birds. Other double-figure counts were 40 at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 19th January, up to 25 on farmland between Acaster Malbis and Copmanthorpe during February, 15

at Terrington on 9th March, 20 at North Duffield Carrs on 27th March, 13 territories recorded during the MOD survey of Strensall Common on 23rd May, 11 at the Pocklington Canal, Bielby on 10th May, 40 at Pocklington Canal, Thornton Lock on 20th September, 30 at Lund Lane, Brighton on 3rd December and 10 at Heslington Tillmire on 29th December.

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*
Resident breeder

Records in single figures came from Allerthorpe, Allerthorpe Common, Bielby, Cliffe, Hagg Bridge, Hagg Lane near East Cottingwith, Long Marston, Pocklington, Sheriff Hutton, South Duffield, Strensall, Sutton upon Derwent, Thornton, West Lilling and Yapham Grange. Ten roosted at Melbourne on 6th January while ten also roosted at Clifton Ings on 2nd February with 18 on the 16th and ten on the 18th, just four on 4th March, but then 17 on 5th April. About 170 at Wilberfoss on 9th February was a particularly large count.

In the autumn around 30 were counted on kale stubble by Hagg Lane, East Cottingwith on 28th September. Sixteen roosted at Clifton Ings on 28th October, with 12 on 25th and 28th November. About 30 were between Barmby Moor and Yapham on 17th November with 25 near Poppleton on the 29th.

Introductions/Escapes

Black Swan *Cygnus atratus*

One at Castle Howard Lake on 3rd January but no further records from this site until September and October. Another record came from Derwent Cottage Farm south of North Duffield Carrs on 9th February. One was resident at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits throughout the year with two at this site on 3rd May and 5th October.

Ross's Goose *Anser rossii*

A probable escape was seen at Wheldrake Ings on 14th October.

New Zealand Shoveler *Anas rhynchos*

A drake was seen at Wheldrake Ings on 8th and 9th May.

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the YOC Bird Report**
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John & Terry Millett (J&TM)	YOC website reports
Andrea Parker	
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Earliest and latest dates for summer visitors/passage migrants

Species	Arrival date/ first reported	Last Reported
Garganey	25th March	20th September
Quail	17th May	11th August
Osprey	7th April	>14th September
Hobby	23rd April	1st November
Oystercatcher	16th February	4th August
Little Ringed Plover	9th April	10th May
Whimbrel	11th April	14th July
Common Sandpiper	13th April	6th August
Wood Sandpiper	28th April	21st October
Common Tern	21st April	14th September
Turtle Dove	7th May	8th September
Cuckoo	13th April	21st July
Nightjar	4th June	16th June
Swift	27th April	13th November
Sand Martin	24th March	late October
Barn Swallow	1st April	4th November
House Martin	5th April	7th October
Tree Pipit	22nd April	14th June
Yellow Wagtail	15th April	late September
Redstart	22nd April	24th June
Whinchat	-	25th September
Wheatear	5th April	17th September
Grasshopper Warbler	25th April	19th July
Sedge Warbler	21st April	-
Reed Warbler	25th April	13th August
Blackcap *	1st April	26th August
Garden Warbler	27th April	-
Lesser Whitethroat	25th April	6th September
Whitethroat	22nd April	-
Chiffchaff †	17th March	10th October
Willow Warbler	1st April	21st September
Spotted Flycatcher	19th May	18th September

* Overwintering birds seen on 15th January, 8th, 10th, 1st March and 24th–27th December.

† Overwintering birds seen on 16th, 19th, 21st and 23rd February, and 5th December.

Earliest and latest dates for winter visitors/passage migrants

Species	Last reported in Spring	First reported in Autumn
Whooper Swan	1st April*	12th October
Pink-footed Goose	14th May	25th September
Goosander	27th May	12th September
Golden Plover	12th April	4th August
Jack Snipe	1st May	18th October
Green Sandpiper	18th March	24th June
Fieldfare	14th April	16th October
Redwing	5th April	24th September
Brambling	24th April	24th October

*An injured bird lingered into summer at North Duffield Carrs

Rare Breeding Birds of the Lower Derwent Valley 2008

Compiled by Craig Ralston

Cat A – Rare Species

Whooper Swan: A single summered on the site having acquired a damaged wing during the winter period. It remained at North Duffield Carrs until 21st August when it was found predated.

Eurasian Wigeon: Up to 12 drakes and 11 females summered. Up to nine pairs were recorded during mid-late May. On 17th June three pairs were still present at Wheldrake Ings and three drakes and a duck at North Duffield Carrs on the same date. Single pairs bred at North Duffield Carrs with a brood of at least two on 5th June, and a single pair at Wheldrake where a duck was accompanied by a single newly hatched duckling on 17th June.

Max no. of adults: 23 No. of pairs: 9 No. of young: 3+

No. of pairs

Poss: 4 Probable: 3 Confirmed: 2 Total: 2–9

Pintail: No evidence of breeding during the year

Garganey: Early May brought a large arrival, started with two drakes and a duck at North Duffield Carrs on 6th. The following day a total of 12 birds (nine drakes) were seen with five (3m, 2f) at Wheldrake Ings, a pair at Aughton Ings, four (3m, 1f) at North Duffield Carrs and single drakes at Bank Island and Thorganby Ings. On the 8th, four were still present at North Duffield Carrs but included two ducks. By 15th May, it appeared breeding was well under way, and a full survey of the valley on that date produced nine drakes and four ducks to be still present, by which time it was thought that six females could be incubating. As the season progressed, broods of six, seven and eight were recorded at Wheldrake Ings, with broods of six at Bank Island and three at North Duffield Carrs.

Max no. of adults: 12 No. of pairs: 9 No. of young: 29

No. of pairs

Poss: 2 Probable: 1 Confirmed: 6 Total: 6–9

Northern Shoveler:

Max no. of adults: 223 No. of pairs: 102 No. of young: 68

No. of pairs

Poss: 39 Probable: 51 Confirmed: 17 Total pairs: 17–102

Black-necked Grebe: A concentrated period of passage started with a pair at Bank Island on 16th April (JS, RS), the latest since 1992. They remained until at least the 19th, while two pairs were present at North Duffield Carrs from the 18th to 22nd (CR). A single pair was then present in the refuge area at Wheldrake Ings, possibly the Bank Island birds relocating. At least one bird also arrived at Skipwith Common on the 16th and remained to the 21st at least (DT) but with no further evidence of breeding.

Max no. of adults: 7 No. of pairs: 3 No. of young: 0

No. of pairs

Poss: 3 Probable: 0 Confirmed: 0 Total pairs: 0–3

Little Egret: In relation to breeding activity, a small party of four arrived on 11th June at Wheldrake Ings, with six there on the 19th and four again on the 22nd. A single then lingered thereafter, with two present on 26th July. They were watched displaying and seen standing upon vacant Cormorant nests and moving twigs round on the nests. They then remained in the area until late September.

Marsh Harrier: Up to four cream-crown birds summered in the area during the year with the usual post-breeding autumn build up from July onwards resulting in a peak of eight birds during August and six during October and November.

An adult female and first-summer male were observed nest building at Wheldrake Ings for four days in late April but appeared to desert (presumably due to the male's age) and moved on.

Probable: 1 Total pairs: 0–1

Water Rail:

Max no. of adults: 6 No. of pairs: 6? No. of young: 2

No. of pairs

Poss: 0 Probable: 5 Confirmed: 1 Total pairs: 1–6

Spotted Crane: Maintains a toe-hold as a breeding species in the valley. A single was singing at Wheldrake Ings on the evening of 27th April (DT, FW, JW, JT) and was heard again briefly at dawn on 2nd May (CR). Two were then discovered after dark on 17th June calling from the scrape at North Duffield Carrs (CR) while two birds were heard singing at Thornton Ellers on 5th and 11th July (CR, FW *et al.*).

The final record of the year related to a bird singing briefly at Wheldrake Ings in front of Pool Hide on 11 August (TD). Although this may well relate to a passage bird, there were few records in the county of passage birds at this time, and such birds appear not to call. It may well have been a late breeding bird.

Max no. of adults: 5? No. of pairs: 5? No. of young: 0

No. of pairs

Poss: 5 Probable: 0 Confirmed: 0 Total pairs: 0–5

Corncrake: No reports from the Lower Derwent Valley area during the year, but a single singing male was reported to have been present in the Pool Bridge Farm/Tillmire area from 18th to 27th June. Investigated and considered to be a reliable record.

Ruff: Up to 54 (46 males) lekking birds present during March and early April with 27 (21 males) present to late April and five males and three females present into early May. No further evidence of breeding on site.

Black-tailed Godwit: A single pair was present throughout April at Wheldrake Ings and was thought to be incubating by mid-month with activity noted being consistent with incubation. However, subsequent summer flooding late in the month is thought to have washed the nest out, and both birds relocated to Thorganby Ings where they remained for a week before moving on.

No. of pairs

Poss: 0 Probable: 1 Confirmed: 0, Total pairs: 0–1

Cat B – Less Scarce Species

Gadwall

Poss: 21 Probable: 48 Confirmed: 26 Total pairs: 21–95

Common Pochard: Three drakes and two ducks remained from late March into early June with two pairs thought to be incubating by mid-May. However, both appeared to fail.

Poss: 0 Probable: 2 Confirmed: 0 Total pairs: 0–2

Common Quail: A single singing bird reported at Thornton Ellers on 15th May represented the first record of the year and was followed by a single at North Duffield Carrs on the 18th. There then followed an influx which brought four singing birds into the North Duffield/Bubwith Ings area on the 20th despite the frost on this date (DT). Over the following few days it became clear that up to seven birds had arrived in this area (DT, CR, MJ, AW, EB *et al.*). Another singing male was located adjacent to the Pocklington Canal at Melbourne on 22nd May, with one at East Cottingwith Ings on 26th May and two at Bank Island on the 27th.

During June many of the early arrivals were still calling with up to ten birds in the southern end of the valley around Bubwith. Calling was much reduced, suggesting some birds were pairing up, and breeding may have been attempted. However, new birds continued to arrive or to be located with two at Thornton Ellers on the 1st (CR) and a single at Wheldrake Ings on the 2nd (DT), at which time it was thought that 16 different singing males were present throughout the area. Further birds were located as field work progressed with seven on Ellerton Ings from the 8th, two on Aughton Ings from the 9th and a single at Thorganby Ings on the 10th and 15th. Other birds were located on arable land adjacent to the reserve, including one singing for several days in a newly established *Mycanthis* plantation near Wressle bringing the total to 37 calling males by 15th June (CR, FW, DT, AW, EB *et al.*). Although calling was by now much reduced birds did continue to call, albeit intermittently, indicating their continued presence.

Breeding as ever was difficult to prove, but four males caught during late May and early June – two at North Duffield Ings and singles at Melbourne and Bubwith – showed enlarged cloacal protuberances and partial brood patches confirming breeding had taken place. A single brood of five newly hatched young were seen at North Duffield Ings on 21st June (suggesting a presence earlier than detected singing) with another, of seven, at Ellerton on 14th July.

Breeding Definition	Singing males
Possible	14
Probable	17
Confirmed	6
Total	6–37 (12 young)

Further ‘new’ singing birds continued to be located during July and August but given the cutting of the ings’ hay meadows and other possible movements around the area none of these birds has been included in the totals. To do so would give a grand total of 62 singing males during the breeding season, if all the additional birds were recorded as ‘possible’ breeders.

Hobby

Poss: 3 Probable: 1 Confirmed: 0 Total pairs: 0–4

Woodlark

Poss: 1 Probable: 4 Confirmed: 1 Total: 1–6

Black Stork at Wharfe Ings, North Yorkshire First for the YOC area

by Russell Slack

Saturday 9th August 2008 was a wet morning. We were packing in preparation for a family camping holiday in Northumberland. The campsite had already called to warn us that the ground was sodden but salvation was at hand on the way up as a slight diversion off our route would take me to see the juvenile Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* in Durham. I don't really bother too much with lists but I'd never seen Black Stork in Britain so it was of interest.

Typically we were late setting off and due to traffic we were much later than expected passing Newcastle so plans for the stork were ditched. As it turned out the campsite had slightly underestimated their ground conditions which resembled Wheldrake Ings more than somewhere we were going to live for the next few days! While trying to assemble the tent my mobile rang – it was John Hewitt. Conversation switched to the stork and both of us agreed it would have been far more interesting if it had been in Yorkshire where fly-overs are the norm, albeit an increasing number of them.

Fast forward just over two weeks. It's Tuesday 26th August and I'm sat at work late morning. The Bank Holiday weekend had not delivered much excitement to the Lower Derwent Valley despite decent water levels following recent floods. Casually browsing birding stuff on the net I notice a message of a "Black Stork in Yorkshire". My first thought was that it was bound to be along the coast, Spurn probably. I look for more details and am a tad gutted to read "juvenile reported on Sunday on Ings just northeast of Stillingfleet, but no sign yesterday". Not only is the location of the sighting just a few miles away from my home but it is two days old and appears vague to say the least! However, I endeavour to find out more but draw a blank. I know the area well enough but am puzzled as to where it could have been (it later transpires that it roosted in a tree next to a house and the owners contacted the RSPB).

If it was one then it sounds like it's gone anyway. Ever the optimist though I'm tempted to give the area a cursory look on the way home after work. I receive several calls from people chasing up more information but I know little more than they do, apart from the daunting prospect of searching the area. During these conversations I start to lull myself into believing that it might just have moved onto the floods beside the nearby Ouse, but where? The whole area is massive with plenty of nooks and



The Black Stork found by Russell at Wharfe Ings photographed at Newburn, Northumberland before it turned up in North Yorkshire (Photo: Andy Booth)

crannies into which it is impossible to see. Even a large bird such as a stork could happily wander around there undetected for a lifetime.

However, chatting over the bird with others stirs me into action and with little hope I head off for an “extended lunch break”. As I reach Stillingfleet I find myself wishing that I’d not bothered. Picking several different vantage points I find nothing to offer hope, no floods, no stork, no nothing actually. Disheartened I have two options. Going back to work seems the obvious solution, so I head out of the village. Reaching the junction I’m just about to turn left (and work) when at the last minute I head right. It’s a long shot but Wharfe Ings a couple of miles away is usually very good after floods and if I was a stork looking for food that’s where I’d be. I decide to go and check it out, just in case. Wharfe Ings has untapped potential but is hardly ever watched. It lies at the confluence of the Ouse and Wharfe and I had Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris* there back in the early 1990s.

As I pull up in the layby next to the riverside path from where you can watch the Ings it’s certainly changed since I last visited. There now appears to be a ‘forest’ growing alongside the Ouse – the river and Ings must be out there somewhere! Half-heartedly I got out of the car, slung my bins around my neck and hopped over the fence. It didn’t look

promising at all as there was nowhere obvious to peer through the trees and onto the ings. I walked on a bit further and stopped at an opportunity to see across the river onto the ings which were – a grass field! The floods had obviously drained very quickly. I heard a Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* call and intrigued walked further along the flood bank. Finding a good clear stretch through which to look I gazed across the river to where a large flock of gulls and Lapwings *Vanellus vanellus* was present along with some Grey Herons *Ardea cinerea* towards the back of the field. I looked through my bins at the herons when suddenly a Black Stork walked into view from a ditch!

Through bins the views were brief and awful; I could see no detail and the bird instantly walked out of view through a hedge. The elation was short-lived, I needed my scope which was some distance away in the car. I turned to run back to the car to pick up a scope and my mobile – both of which had been lazily left in the car (one day I'll learn to carry my scope and tripod everywhere)! As I did so all of the gulls and Lapwings got up into the air.

The run back to the car and then back to my viewing spot seemed to take an eternity, but on return there were very few birds to see and there was certainly no stork. I called out the news and tried to alert other observers. Despite further searching I couldn't relocate the bird and had to get back to work as I had a meeting to go too and I'm sure that my boss wouldn't have been as interested in the stork as I was.

Although I was chuffed, to say the least, that I'd relocated such a Yorkshire mega I was annoyed about the circumstances of the viewing. The drive back to work was one spent cursing the Environment Agency for their poor husbandry of the scrub along the riverbank and frustration at not being able to grill the bird in detail!

During the afternoon numerous people contacted me to try and get more details regarding the site. It's not a well known place at all and news initially broadcast by the birding news services was a tad confusing. Later that afternoon several calls/texts brought glad tidings that several people had connected with the bird – at least others had managed to see it. That evening I returned for second helpings and was met by a mass of cars and several sizeable groups of birders peering across from the floodbank. Many familiar (smiling) faces were present in the crowd and it was great to see that a Yorkshire bogey had fallen for so many Yorkshire listers. Joining them I was treated to distant views of the stork, but at least I was able to pick out some detail this time. Stopping until dark I was also able to watch it fly off to roost – storks always look so much better in flight!

It remained on Wharfe Ings to the 29th. I went back on the 30th but despite an extensive search could not find it. That is not surprising as on that date it was wandering around on Seavy Carr near Melbourne where it was watched by a member of the public – it had probably flown over my house to get there! The irony for many Yorkshire (and Spurn) listers was that the same bird decided to pitch up at Spurn just after midday on 1st September where it remained, albeit mobile, to early on the 2nd when it headed off towards Lincolnshire across the Humber. What was presumably the same bird was seen over Great Yarmouth, Norfolk on the 3rd, making this an extremely well tracked rarity.

Russell Slack

Siberian Chiffchaff at Fulford Ings

by Andy Booth

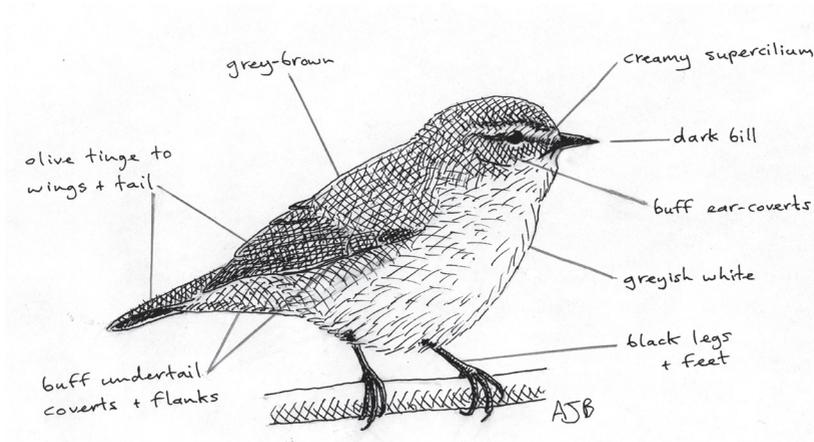
On Christmas Eve 2007 Mark Killeen telephoned me to say he had found a strange bird at Fulford Ings near York that he did not recognize. He described it as a small rather plain grey-brown warbler with obvious supercilia and an unusual piping call. It fed almost constantly low down in vegetation by the River Ouse and was often elusive though vocal and could be located by its call.

Unfortunately I was at my mother's house in Newcastle upon Tyne for the Christmas period, so could not go and check out the bird for myself but suggested over the 'phone that it could be a Siberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita tristis* or even, rather ridiculously, a Plain Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus neglectus*, these being the only small plain brown warblers I could think of off the top of my head!

I consulted a couple of respected birders, including John McLoughlin of Birdline Northeast with whom I agreed the news should be broadcast as a 'probable Siberian Chiffchaff'. Fortunately, the bird remained faithful to its favoured area more or less opposite the large white house at the back of Fulford Ings well into the New Year, allowing a number of people the chance to see it although that was no easy matter!

On my first visit on 28th December 2007 I only managed to hear the bird but the call was distinctive – a bit like that of a Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* though louder and stronger, often described as a 'lost chick' call. I finally managed to see the bird during further visits on 2nd and 3rd January 2008: initial impressions were of a small grey-brown leaf warbler with obvious pale supercilia, although prolonged observations were difficult due to its habit of actively feeding low down in rank vegetation, although it did come up to the tops of bushes on a couple of occasions. Often, though, only fleeting glimpses were obtained and so the description below is compiled from a combination of mainly brief views.

At a distance, the bird appeared to be rather grey-brown above and off-white below although at close range more subtle features could be seen such as green fringes to the wing and tail feathers. No yellow was visible anywhere on the bird. The main plumage features not only varied with distance but also with the light conditions with the bird appearing paler and more uniform in dull light. The bare parts appeared to be all dark although photographs taken by Mark Coates seem to indicate these were paler than they were in the field, but the available images of the bird are rather overexposed so caution must be taken in reading too much into them.



Description

Upperparts – mostly grey-brown with olive tinge to back, wings and tail

Head – obvious creamy-buff supercilia; buff tinge to ear-coverts

Underparts – generally dingy greyish-white with buff tinge to flanks and undertail coverts

Bare parts – legs and feet black; bill dark

Call – sharp but plaintive single ‘peep’ note reminiscent of Bullfinch

Ideally, the bird would have been trapped so that it could have been observed closely in the hand and an attempt was made towards the end of the bird’s stay but this proved unsuccessful.

The bird was last reported on 14th January after which time the site was flooded and it is assumed that this caused the bird to move elsewhere.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks are due to Mark Killeen for finding this bird in the first place and to all those who have contributed to the constructive discussion on its identification.

Andy Booth

Species in the York recording area since 1966

This is a list of species recorded in the YOC area since 1966. Uncommon birds are marked in **bold**. Species for which the YNU requires descriptions are marked *. Species considered by BBRC are marked **R** and all require descriptions. Regular breeding birds are marked **B** and occasional breeders (**B**). Regular winter visitors are marked **W** and regular passage migrants **P** while regular non-breeding summer visitors are marked **S**. Brackets indicate species of dubious origin or subspecies.

In recent years the British List has been revised and updated as a result of taxonomic changes, and new species have been added to the official British List. All of these changes (up to the end of 2007) have now been adopted for YOC Bird Reports. These changes include revisions to the order of species, changes to the names (English and scientific) of species and includes the most recent splits (of races into full species). The list below reflects the revised order of species.

Recent taxonomic changes mean that Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*, which includes the Scandinavian *argentatus* and British *argenteus* subspecies, and American Herring Gull *Larus smithsonianus* are treated as separate species, as are Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans* and Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*.

If anyone can think of any species which should have been included in this list then please contact the YOC Recorder.

Mute Swan B	(Wood Duck) R
Bewick's Swan W	Eurasian Wigeon (B)
Whooper Swan W	American Wigeon *
Taiga Bean Goose W *	Gadwall B
Pink-footed Goose P	Eurasian Teal B
White-fronted Goose	Green-winged Teal
(Lesser White-fronted Goose) R	Mallard B
Greylag Goose B	Pintail (B)?
(Snow Goose)	Garganey B
Canada Goose B	Blue-winged Teal R
Barnacle Goose	Shoveler B
Brent Goose	Red-crested Pochard
(Egyptian Goose)	Common Pochard (B)
(Ruddy Shelduck)	Ring-necked Duck
Common Shelduck B	Ferruginous Duck *
(Mandarin Duck)	Tufted Duck B

Greater Scaup
Common Eider
Long-tailed Duck
Common Scoter
Velvet Scoter
(Barrow's Goldeneye) R
Goldeneye W
Smew
Red-breasted Merganser
Goosander (B)?
Ruddy Duck B
Red-legged Partridge B
Grey Partridge B
Common Quail (B)
Common Pheasant B
(Golden Pheasant)
Red-throated Diver
Black-throated Diver
Great Northern Diver
Little Grebe B
Great Crested Grebe B
Red-necked Grebe
Slavonian Grebe
Black-necked Grebe (B)
Fulmar
Manx Shearwater
European Storm-petrel
Leach's Storm-petrel
Northern Gannet
Cormorant B
Shag
Bittern (B)?
Night Heron *
Cattle Egret R
Little Egret
Great White Egret *
Grey Heron B
Purple Heron *
White Stork
Spoonbill
Honey Buzzard *

Black Kite *
Red Kite
Marsh Harrier
Hen Harrier
Montagu's Harrier *
Goshawk B
Sparrowhawk B
Common Buzzard B
Rough-legged Buzzard *
Osprey
Common Kestrel B
Red-footed Falcon *
Merlin
Hobby (B)?
Peregrine Falcon
Water Rail B
Spotted Crake (B)
Corncrake (B)
Moorhen B
Coot B
Common Crane
Oystercatcher B
Black-winged Stilt R
Avocet
Stone Curlew
Little Ringed Plover B
Ringed Plover
Kentish Plover *
Dotterel
American Golden Plover *
Golden Plover W
Grey Plover
Lapwing B
Knot
Sanderling
Little Stint P
Temminck's Stint
White-rumped Sandpiper *
Baird's Sandpiper? R
Pectoral Sandpiper
Curlew Sandpiper

Dunlin W & P
 Buff-breasted Sandpiper * _
 Ruff (B)
 Jack Snipe W
 Common Snipe B
 Woodcock B
 Black-tailed Godwit (B)
 Bar-tailed Godwit
 Whimbrel P
 Curlew B
 Common Sandpiper B?
 Green Sandpiper P & W
 Spotted Redshank P
 Greenshank P
 Wood Sandpiper P
 Common Redshank B
 Turnstone
 Red-necked Phalarope * _
 Grey Phalarope
 Pomarine Skua
 Arctic Skua
 Great Skua
 Mediterranean Gull
 Ring-billed Gull? * _
 Common Gull W & P
 Lesser Black-backed Gull S & P
 Glaucous Gull
 (Kumlien's Gull)? R
 Iceland Gull
 Yellow-legged Gull
 Herring Gull W & P
 Great Black-backed Gull W
 Little Gull
 Black-headed Gull B
 Kittiwake
 Sabine's Gull
 Little Tern
 Caspian Tern R
 Whiskered Tern R
 Black Tern
 Sandwich Tern
 Common Tern (B)?
 Arctic Tern
 Roseate Tern
 Guillemot
 Little Auk
 Puffin
 'Feral Pigeon' B
 Stock Dove B
 Woodpigeon B
 Collared Dove B
 Turtle Dove B
 (Ring-necked Parakeet)
 Common Cuckoo B
 Barn Owl B
 Little Owl B
 Tawny Owl B
 Long-eared Owl B
 Short-eared Owl
 Nightjar B
 Alpine Swift * _
 Common Swift B
 Common Kingfisher B
 Bee-eater
 Hoopoe
 Wryneck
 Green Woodpecker B
 Great Spotted Woodpecker B
 Lesser Spotted Woodpecker B
 Wood Lark B
 Sky Lark B
 Sand Martin B
 Barn Swallow B
 House Martin B
 Red-rumped Swallow * _
 Richard's Pipit
 Tree Pipit B
 Meadow Pipit B
 Water Pipit
 Rock Pipit
 Yellow Wagtail B
 (Blue-headed Wagtail)

Grey Wagtail B
Pied Wagtail B
(White Wagtail)
Waxwing
Dipper B?
Wren B
Dunnock B
Robin B
Common Nightingale
Black Redstart (B)?
Common Redstart (B)?
Whinchat (B)?
Stonechat
Northern Wheatear
Ring Ouzel
Blackbird B
Fieldfare W
Song Thrush B
Redwing W
Mistle Thrush B
Cetti's Warbler
Grasshopper Warbler (B)?
Sedge Warbler B
Marsh Warbler *
Reed Warbler B
Blackcap B
Garden Warbler B
Barred Warbler
Lesser Whitethroat B
Common Whitethroat B
Wood Warbler (B)?
Chiffchaff B
(Siberian Chiffchaff)
Willow Warbler B
Goldcrest B
Firecrest
Spotted Flycatcher B
Red-breasted Flycatcher
Pied Flycatcher (B)?
Bearded Tit
Long-tailed Tit B

Blue Tit B
Great Tit B
Coal Tit B
Willow Tit B
Marsh Tit B
Nuthatch B
Treetreeper B
Golden Oriole
Red-backed Shrike
Lesser Grey Shrike R
Great Grey Shrike
Jay B
Magpie B
Jackdaw B
Rook B
Carrion Crow B
Hooded Crow
Raven
Common Starling B
Rose-coloured Starling
House Sparrow B
Tree Sparrow B
Chaffinch B
Brambling W
Greenfinch B
Goldfinch B
Siskin B?
Linnet B
Twite
Lesser Redpoll B
Mealy Redpoll
Common Crossbill B?
Bullfinch B
Hawfinch (B)?
Lapland Bunting
Snow Bunting
Yellowhammer B
Cirl Bunting *
Reed Bunting B
Corn Bunting B

Guidelines for the submission of records

One of the most important functions of the York Ornithological Club is the publication of the Annual Report. The value of this publication depends on members submitting records of their sightings within the Club recording area. All members are encouraged to submit records, whatever their level of knowledge.

Records are received and split into sections which are distributed to the Assistant Recorders who compile reports for their particular section:

Swans to Common Crane
Oystercatcher to Auks
Pigeons to Dunnock
Robin to Flycatchers
Bearded Tit to Buntings
Introductions/Escapes

These are then returned to the Report Editor for editing and the addition of illustrations before a final version of the Annual Report is produced.

In order to ease their task and speed up the production of the Report please follow the guidelines given below.

1. Records should be submitted at the end of the year and certainly by end of March following the relevant year to guarantee appearance in the Annual Report.
2. For each species, records should give the site and date with numbers of birds provided where possible. Counts are preferable to terms such as 'few', 'several' or 'many' as these terms are very subjective and actual numbers enables the comparison of populations between years. The counts do not have to be too accurate – approximate numbers will do. This particularly applies to flocks of birds such as wildfowl and waders.
3. Records of scarce or rare birds will need a description for consideration by the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union Reports Committee and, if necessary, the British Birds Rarities Committee. Descriptions should be submitted to the Recorder as soon as possible after the sighting, preferably by email at recorder@yorkbirding.org.uk. A list of species and subspecies needing written supporting evidence can be found elsewhere in this Report or contact the Recorder for guidelines or rarity forms. The importance of such descriptions for the validation of rare records cannot be overemphasized.

4. Please do not forget to include your contact details, particularly name and telephone number or email address, with your records.
5. Records should, preferably, be submitted in electronic format as attachments to an email. Ideally records should be compiled as an Excel spreadsheet using the customised spreadsheet, developed for YOC use, which can be downloaded from the YOC website www.yorkbirding.org.uk. Records for inclusion in the YOC Report should be submitted to the editor by email at editor@yorkbirding.org.uk.
6. Records submitted using the YOC spreadsheet may be in any order but if you submit records by any other means then we ask that your records follow the **new taxonomic order** issued by the British Ornithologists' Union – a revised list of species recorded in the YOC area since the Club's inception in 1966 can be found elsewhere in this Report (or contact the Recorder who can also supply a full list of British birds in the new order). Records should also be split into the sections as opposite to facilitate distribution to the YOC Assistant Recorders.

Submission of records using the YOC spreadsheet has the advantage that it allows records to be entered in any order, for example in date order, as they can subsequently be easily re-ordered into the correct taxonomic order required by the YOC Bird Report (and most other bird reports). Observers wishing to submit records other than as a spreadsheet should contact the editor to check for acceptability of other formats.

Note that news of recent sightings, descriptions of rarities etc. should continue to be submitted to the Recorder and/or circulated on the YOC newsgroup (see the YOC website) as previously though caution should always be exercised over publicising records of rare breeding birds in the breeding season.

The need for field descriptions

To enable us to present our reports with complete accuracy, contributors are reminded that records of certain species must be supported by descriptions taken in the field or as soon as possible after the sighting – preferably before reference to textbooks. The updated list given below is of species for which the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union Reports Committee (YNU) require descriptions before acceptance for publication in their annual report. **It would help both the YOC Recorder and the YNU if descriptions were submitted as soon as possible after the sighting.** Forms for species considered by the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC) or the YNU can be obtained from the YOC Recorder or any YNU vice-county recorder.

In addition to species considered by the BBRC (which has now 'dropped' a number of more regular rarities from its remit), the following uncommon or difficult species/subspecies are those requiring descriptions for consideration by the YNU (as revised from 2007):

Taiga Bean Goose	Ring-billed Gull
Black Brant	White-winged Black Tern
American Wigeon	Alpine Swift
Ferruginous Duck	(Greater) Short-toed Lark
Surf Scoter	Red-rumped Swallow
Wilson's Storm-petrel	Tawny Pipit
Night Heron	Red-throated Pipit
Great White Egret	Aquatic Warbler
Purple Heron	Marsh Warbler
Honey Buzzard	Melodious Warbler
Black Kite	Dartford Warbler
White-tailed Eagle	Subalpine Warbler
Montagu's Harrier	Greenish Warbler
Rough-legged Buzzard	Radde's Warbler
Golden Eagle	Dusky Warbler
Red-footed Falcon	Woodchat Shrike
Kentish Plover	Red-billed Chough
American Golden Plover	Arctic Redpoll
White-rumped Sandpiper	Girl Bunting
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Rustic Bunting
Red-necked Phalarope (<i>in flight</i>)	Little Bunting
Caspian Gull	

In view of the increasing number of records of locally uncommon species being received and in the light of certain anomalies, particularly relating to coastal species never recorded in the YOC area like Sooty Shearwater and Razorbill which do not require submission of records by YNU, the recorders feel that some substantiation of records of some other species is needed.

Accordingly, contributors **MAY** be asked to provide details for the following species/subspecies (but observers should be expected to be asked to submit notes for the species given in **bold**):

White-fronted Goose	(Great) Bittern
Snow Goose	White Stork
Brent Goose – all races	Spoonbill
Egyptian Goose	Red Kite
Ruddy Shelduck	Marsh Harrier
Green-winged Teal	Hen Harrier
Garganey	Goshawk
Red-crested Pochard	Osprey
Ring-necked Duck	Merlin
(Greater) Scaup	Hobby
(Common) Eider	Spotted Crake
Long-tailed Duck	Corncrake
Common Scoter	Common Crane
Velvet Scoter	Stone Curlew
Red-breasted Merganser	Little Ringed Plover
Black Grouse	Dotterel
Quail	Knot
Golden Pheasant	Sanderling
Red-throated Diver	Little Stint
Black-throated Diver	Temminck’s Stint
Great Northern Diver	Pectoral Sandpiper
Red-necked Grebe	Curlew Sandpiper
Slavonian Grebe	Purple Sandpiper
Black-necked Grebe	Buff-breasted Sandpiper
Fulmar	Jack Snipe
Sooty Shearwater	Black-tailed Godwit
Manx Shearwater	Bar-tailed Godwit
European Storm-petrel	Whimbrel
Leach’s Storm-petrel	Spotted Redshank
Gannet	Grey Phalarope
Shag	Great Skua

Pomarine Skua
Arctic Skua
Long-tailed Skua
Sabine's Gull
Kittiwake
Little Gull
Mediterranean Gull
Lesser Black-backed Gull
(^ of Baltic race *fuscus*)
Yellow-legged Gull
Iceland Gull
(^ including Kumlien's Gull)
Glaucous Gull
Little Tern
Black Tern
Sandwich Tern
Roseate Tern
Arctic Tern
Guillemot
Razorbill
Little Auk
Puffin
Ring-necked Parakeet
Long-eared Owl
Hoopoe
Bee-eater
Wryneck
Wood Lark
Shore Lark

Richard's Pipit
Rock Pipit
Water Pipit
Yellow Wagtail (scarce races)
Bluethroat
Nightingale
Black Redstart
Ring Ouzel
Cetti's Warbler
Barred Warbler
Yellow-browed Warbler
Firecrest
Red-breasted Flycatcher
Bearded Tit
Crested Tit
Golden Oriole
Red-backed Shrike
Great Grey Shrike
Chough
Raven
Rose-coloured Starling
Twite
Mealy (Common) Redpoll
(Common) Crossbill
Scottish Crossbill
Hawfinch
Snow Bunting
Lapland Bunting

In addition, the Recorder may ask contributors to provide some supporting evidence for some species not listed here, taking into account such factors as observer experience, out-of-season occurrences and unusual or difficult plumages, etc. This will be at the Recorder's discretion and the list of species requiring descriptions is under constant review.

Gazetteer of sites in the YOC recording area

All grid references within the YOC recording area refer to the 100km OS square SE so this is not included in the grid references above. Six figure grid references are given throughout but for many sites this simply identifies a larger area for which the grid reference is the approximate centre.

Farm names with the nearest town/village name are included but street names are omitted except in rural areas where it might otherwise be difficult to locate the road referred to.

A

Acaster Aerodrome	575428
Acaster Malbis	590455
Acaster Selby	574415
Acklam	785618
Acomb, York	575515
Acomb Moor	585495
Allerthorpe Common	760476
Allerthorpe Gravel Pits (also known as the Old Gravel Pits, Allerthorpe)	792472
Allerthorpe Water Park	780465
Ampleforth	583787
Appleton Roebuck	555423
Askham Bog	575482
Aughton	705385
Aughton Ings	698383
Averhams Plantation, Flaxton	674608

B

Baldwins Bridge, Pocklington Canal	740450
Bank Island	695452
Barmby Moor	776490
Barthorpe	774598
Beningbrough	529578
Beningbrough Hall	516586
Bielby	789437
Billbrough	532468
Bishops Wharf, York	604512
Bishopthorpe	594476
Bishopthorpe Palace	596480
Bishop Wilton	797553
Bishop Wood	555337
Black Dyke, Barmby Moor	764502
Bolton Percy	532414
Bootham Stray, York	597548
Bossall	719607
Bowthorpe Hall	697331

Brandrith Wood, Castle Howard	706688
Brandsby	589724
Brayton	601305
Brayton Barff	586304
Brawby	738781
Breck's Lane, Strensall	641612
Brecks (The), Strensall	648618
Brighton	709341
Brighton Airfield	720350
Brind	742310
Brindley's Plantation	742318
Broomhill Plantation	703449
Brownmoor Farm, Sutton-on-the-Forest	618657
Bubwith bridge	705364
Bubwith Ings	705370
Bugthorpe	773579
Bulmer Hag Wood, Castle Howard	712671
Buttercrambe	733582
Buttercrambe Weir	734585
Butterwick	732775
Byland Abbey	549790

C

Calley Heath NR	753498
Campus East, York University	640508
Canal Head, Pocklington	798474
Cape Farm, Sheriff Hutton	652683
Cass Wood, Huby	562669
Castle Howard Lake	714706
Castle Museum, York	605515
Caulkleys Bank, Nunnington	670782
Caulkleys Wood, Nunnington	665780
Cawood	573377
Cawton	643767
Central Science Laboratory (CSL)	675585

Chanting Hill, Welburn	724683	Elvington	700476
Church Fenton	515370	Elvington Airfield	670480
Church Bridge, Melbourne	759445	Elvington Sewage Works	704485
Claxton	694602	Escrick	631427
Cliffe	662320	Escrick Park	635418
Cliffe Common	666339		
Clifton	593532	F	
Clifton Ings	583531	Fangfoss	765533
Clifton Park	584533	Fat Rabbit Farm, Fangfoss	745526
Clock Farm, Dunnington	658501	Fireman's Leap, New Earwick	609550
Coates Bridge, Pocklington Canal	785453	Fir Tree Farm, Heslington	646472
Common Bottom Wood, Thorganby	675425	Flaxton	680624
Coneysthorpe	713713	Foggathorpe	755377
Coneysthorpe Banks Wood	720725	Folk Hall, New Earwick	607552
Cook's Wood, Pocklington	801505	Foss Island, York	609520
Copmanthorpe	565469	Foston	698651
Cornborough Farm, Sheriff Hutton	624660	Frog Hall, Allerthorpe Common	768485
Cornborough Manor	630671	Fryton Wood, Fryton	688750
Cornfield NR, Rawcliffe	579542	Fulford, York	610496
Coulton	636742	Fulford Ings	608493
Coulton Moor Plantation	625748	Fulford Golf Course	624494
Coxwold	536772	Fulford Hall	606484
Crambe	733649	Full Sutton	746555
Crambeck	738674		
Crayke	562705	G	
Crockey Hill	625466	Ganthorpe	689704
D		Garganey Hide, North Duffield Carrs	698368
Danesmead Copse, York	607497	Garrowby Hill	798567
Derwent Cottage Farm, North Duffield	700360	Gatehouse, Castle Howard	711695
Designer Outlet, York	607477	Geoff Smith Hide, North Duffield Carrs	696372
Dringhouses, York	581498	Giles Lock, Pocklington Canal	795464
Dudley Hill Farm, Sheriff Hutton	642682	Gilling (East)	614769
Dunnington	671525	Goosewood Caravan Park, Sutton-on-the-Forest	591631
Dunnington Common	677504	Grange Farm, Haxby	589619
		Grange Farm, Long Marston	484526
E		Grange Fram, Newton upon Derwent	720483
Easingwold	529698	Great Barugh	750790
East Cottingwith	703425	Great Givendale	811539
East Moor, Sutton-on-the-Forest	600644	Great Wood, Strensall Common	668627
Ellers Farm, Buttercrambe	720574	Grimston	644514
Ellerton (Ings)	703399	Grimston Bar roundabout	649516
Everingham (Park)	804426		

Grimston Manor Farm,
Gilling East 620755
Grimston Moor 613744
Grimthorpe Wood,
Pocklington 812524
Gunby 710354

H

Hagg Bridge 717452
Hagg Wood, Dunnington 685528
Hagg Wood, Colton 550458
Harewood Whin 538518
Hartrigg Oaks, York 608559
Hassacarr NR 673518
Haxby 605583
Healaugh 500477
Heslington, York 627504
Hessay 524534
High Catton 718538
High Hutton 755685
High Lodge, CSL 675586
High Roans Farm, Strensall 622629
Hob Moor, York 585506
Hogg's Pond, Dringhouses 581493
Holtby 675542
Hopgrove (roundabout) 642553
Hovingham 667758
Howardian Hills 600750-760690
Howe Hill, Norton 803702
Howthorpe Farm, Terrington 676729
Huby 566655
Hull Road Park, York 620515
Hundred Acre Farm, Strensall 616623
Huntington, York 612550

I

Imphal Barracks, Fulford 610502

J

Jeffry Bog, Low Hutton 759667
JRTNR, New Earswick 608548

K

Keldspring Crossing,
Pocklington 786498
Kettlestring Farm,
New Earswick 604557
Kexby 705511
Kexby Stray Farm, Kexby 680495

Kilburn 504796
Kirkham Priory 736658
Knapton 562522
Knavesmire, York 594495

L

Lacey Bottom Wood,
Wheldrake 656442
Langton 798671
Laytham 749395
Leckby Farm, Flaxton 670619
Leppington 763613
Lilling Green Farm,
West Lilling 644634
Linton-on-Ouse 495607
Long Marston 502512
Low Cattton 705538
Low Roans Farm, Strensall 626646
Lower Derwent Valley 705511-705300

M

Malton 785717
Mausoleum, Castle Howard 727696
Melbourne 753441
Melbourne Slurry Pit 763427
Middlethorpe Ings 603486
Melbourne Scamland 766437
Meltonby 796525
Millennium Bridge, York 603497
Monks Cross 630550
Monument Farm, Welburn 717673
Moor Lane, Bishopthorpe 585470
Moor Monkton 506569
Moreby Wood 606428
Mount Ferrant, Birdsall 796639
Mount Ferrant Wood, Birdsall 806638
Murton 650527

N

Naburn 599455
Naburn Bridge 598467
Naburn Marina 599462
Naburn Sewage Works 601467
Naburn Wood 609438
Newburgh Priory (lake) 542767
Newhay 661307
Newton-on-Ouse 512599
Newton Carr 740494
Newton upon Derwent 720495

New Earswick 609555
 North Duffield Carrs 695375
 North Ings Farm, Terrington 652702
 Norton-on-Derwent 795710
 Nunnington (Hall) 667794
 Nursery Wood, CSL 678585

O

Osbaldwick 633519
 Osgodby 641338
 Oswaldkirk 625790
 Oulston Reservoir 570745
 Ousethorpe Farm,
 Pocklington 813516

P

Petersfield Farm, Bielby 793422
 Pocklington 802490
 Pocklington Airfield 793485
 Pocklington Canal 698426-800474
 Pond Head Farm, Oulston 566746
 Pool Bridge Farm, Tillmire 642464
 Poppleton 560546
 Pretty Wood, Castle Howard 732690
 Prospect House Farm,
 Terrington 661702

R

Raker Lakes, Wheldrake 684463
 Rawcliffe Bar Country Park 577547
 Rawcliffe Ings 575544
 Rawcliffe Lake 586546
 Rawcliffe Meadows 577545
 Redhouse Reservoir 529575
 Redhouse Wood,
 Moor Monkton 520573
 Refuge, Wheldrake 708435
 Riccall 620380
 Roscarrs 645316
 Rose Cottage Farm,
 Terrington 669721
 Rossmoor Park 722436
 Rowntree Park, York 604508
 Ryther 550392
 Ryton 795757
 Ryton Bridge 796754

S

Sand Hutton 695586
 Scackleton 650726
 Scoreby Lodge 684513
 Seaton Ross 780415
 Seavy Carr, Thornton 753451
 Selby 615324
 Sessions NR, New Earswick 610548
 Settrington House 839702
 Shaw Wood, Castle Howard 700715
 Sheriff Hutton 655664
 Silburn Lock,
 Pocklington Canal 797468
 Skewsby 625710
 Skipwith 657385
 Skipwith Common 653375
 Sleights, Amotherby 737758
 Slingsby 698750
 Slingsby Banks Wood 698733
 South Duffield 681335
 Stamford Bridge 715555
 Steeton Whin 520435
 Stillingfleet 594410
 Stillington 585678
 Stittenham 679677
 Stockton on the Forest 655561
 Stonegrave 657777
 Storwood 712442
 Street Farm, Stamford Bridge 740565
 Strensall 633608
 Strensall Common 655600
 St Nicholas Fields, York 615517
 Stubb Wood 585433
 Sutton-on-the-Forest 584647
 Sutton upon Derwent 707468
 Swantail Hide,
 Wheldrake Ings 707438
 Swinton 760731

T

Tang Hall, York 620520
 Terrington 670707
 Terrington Moor 685716
 The Retreat, York 617510
 Thorganby 691420
 Thorganby Ings 694416
 Thormanby 495747
 Thornton 760453
 Thornton Ellers 730460

Thurtle Wood, Terrington	692725	Welburn Sewage Works	714685
Tillmire, Heslington, York	638475	West Cottingwith Ings	695419
Tockwith	465525	Westfield Farm,	
Tollerton	513643	Allerthorpe Common	752482
Towthorpe	625586	Westfield Farm, Thornton	743456
Towthorpe Civic		West Lilling	648652
Amenity Site, York	648586	West Ness	690790
Towthorpe Moor Lane,		Wheldrake	682450
Strensall	625585-663579	Wheldrake Ings	705440
Triangle Meadow, York	604547	Wheldrake Wood	659466
U		Whitehill Mine	667359
Ulleskelf	520400	White Carr, Flaxton	663603
W		Wiganthorpe	662724
Waites Plantation, Heslington	630491	Wigginton	595585
Walbut Lock		Wilberfoss	734510
Walbutts Farm, Strensall	649620	Wilks Plantation, Flaxton	662619
Walbutts Sewage Works,		Winchmore, Stamford Bridge	727547
Strensall	646618	Wistow	594357
Walmgate Stray, York	617505	Woodhouse Farm, Strensall	622614
Waplinton Hall, Allerthorpe	776468	World's End Plantation	693594
Warren Farm, Dunnington	674505	Wressle	708313
Warren Wood, Dunnington	677503	Y	
Warthill	675555	Yearsley	585744
Wash Dike, Skipwith Common	662372	Yearsley Moor/Woods	590755
Wass Woods	550796	York Minster	603523
Welburn	720680	York University campus	627506
		York University Lake	620505

YOC Website

The YOC maintains a website at www.yorkbirding.org.uk which contains details of all the club's activities and summaries of local sightings. Records of birds seen within the YOC area can also be submitted through the club's website.